

# Chess Canada

Drag on



## Chess Canada

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### subscriptions

CCN is distributed by email to CFC members who have submitted their email address to the CFC:

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### submissions

CCN is looking for contributions: tournament reports, photos, annotated games. For examples, see this issue or read the 2013.06 Appendix for other ideas.

### suggestions

If you have an idea for a story you would like to write, email me:

[cfc\\_newsletter\\_editor@chess.ca](mailto:cfc_newsletter_editor@chess.ca)

- John Upper  
editor CCN

# Chess Canada Drag on

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## Next...

- **Norms in Reykjavik**  
*Hambleton and Kleinman*
- **TATA Hansen**  
*Wijk aan Zee*
- **IM David Cummings**  
*"The English"*

## Upcoming...

- **IM Title Stories**
  - **Michael Kleinman**
  - **Shiyam Thavandiran**
- **Book Reviews**  
**Canadian chess books by:**
  - **Panjwani**
  - **Hebert**
  - **Song & Preetu**

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**Cover: Dragon**

Not a real dragon. Just Smaug's eye  
pasted on a hi-rez iguana.





# Critical Positions



selected by the editor

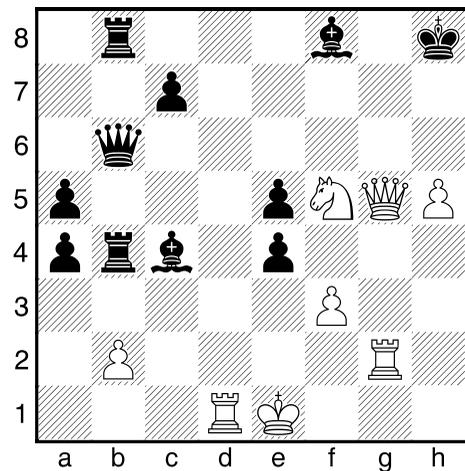
The following diagrams are critical positions from this issue of *Chess Canada*. You can treat them as exercises or as a teaser introduction to what you'll find this month.

These "critical positions" can be:

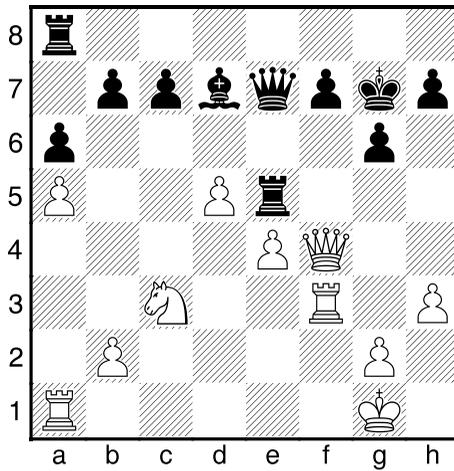
- winning combinations
- surprising tactics
- endgames requiring precise play
- simple calculation exercises
- variation-rich middlegames
- moments when one player went badly wrong.

The  and  squares next to each diagram indicate the player to move.

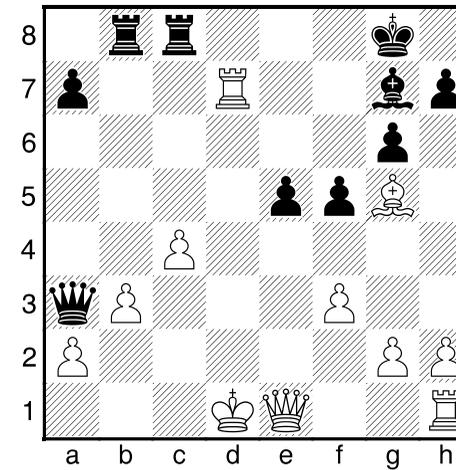
**Solutions** can be found by looking for *the red diagrams* which appear in the reports named under each diagram. Critical positions usually feature significantly more analytical commentary than the rest of the game.



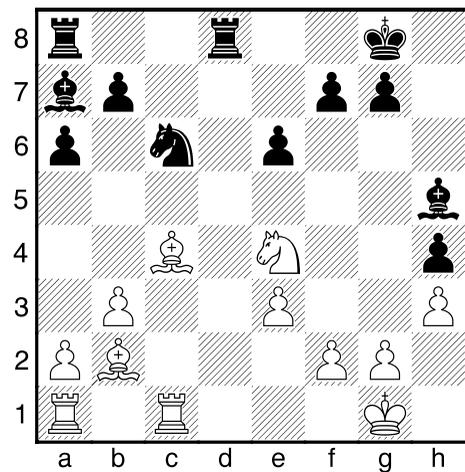
see: **Le Siège**



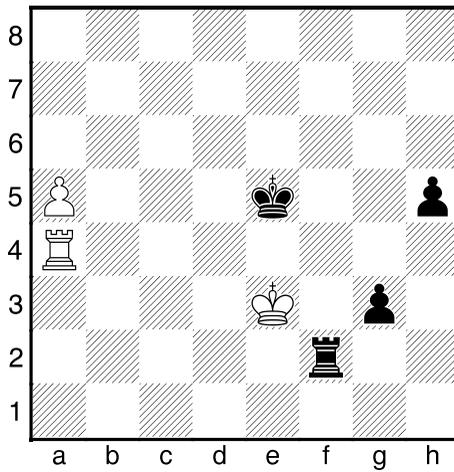
see: **Hambleton**



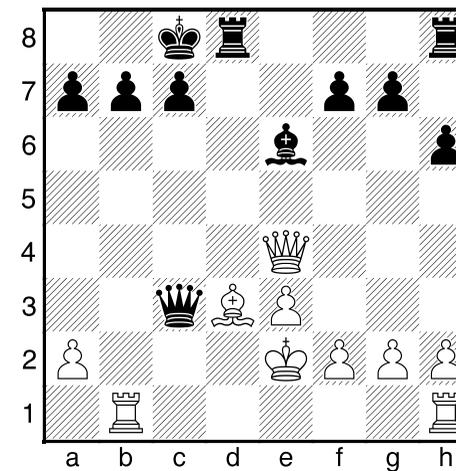
see: **Edmonton**



see: **Le Siège**



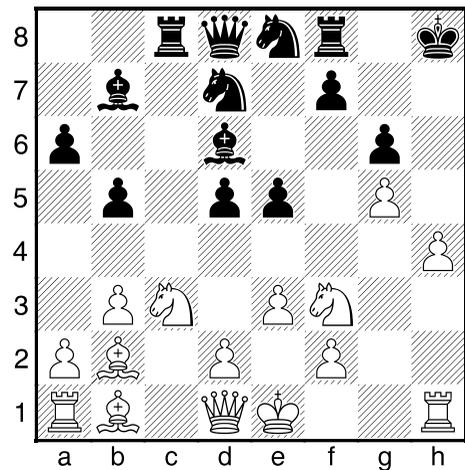
see: **Hambleton**



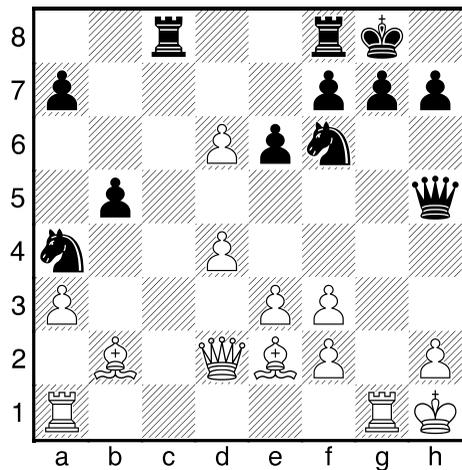
see: **Edmonton**



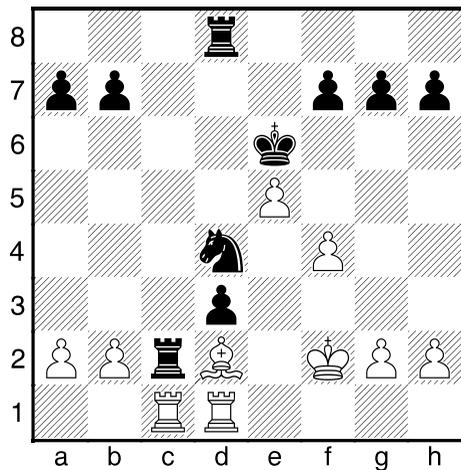
# Chess Canada Drag on



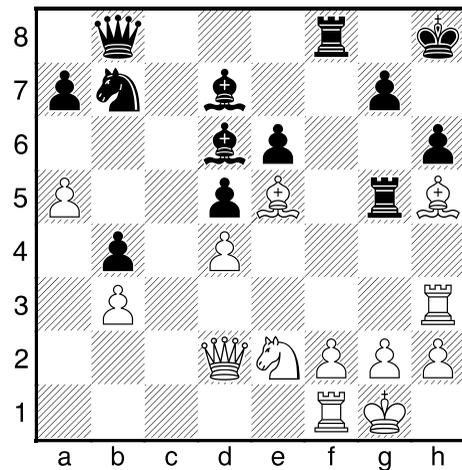
Should Black push in the center with ...d4 or improve his worst-placed piece with 17...♘g7?  
*see: Edmonton*



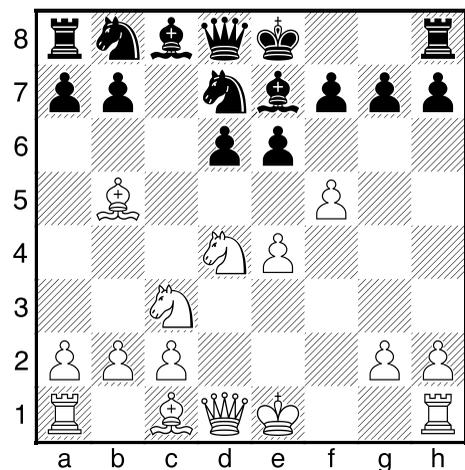
Can Black win the d6-pawn with ...♗fd8xd6, or does that maneuver lose a piece to e4-e5?  
*see: Edmonton*



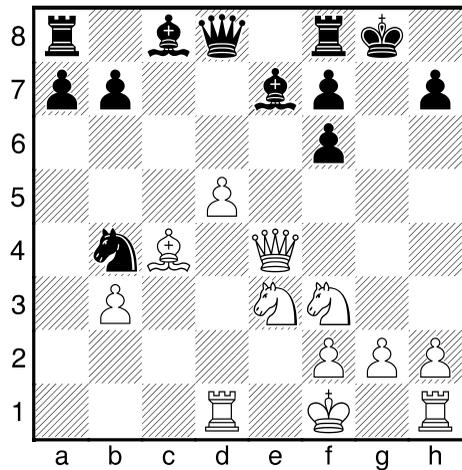
What happens after 23.♖xc2?  
*see: Across Canada*



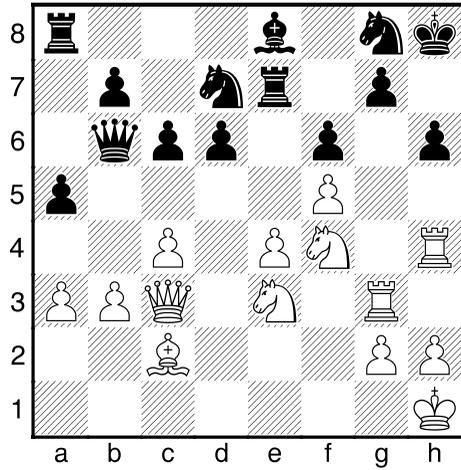
*see: Across Canada*



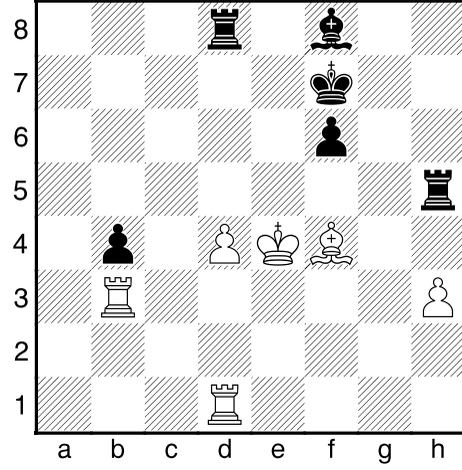
*see: Edmonton*



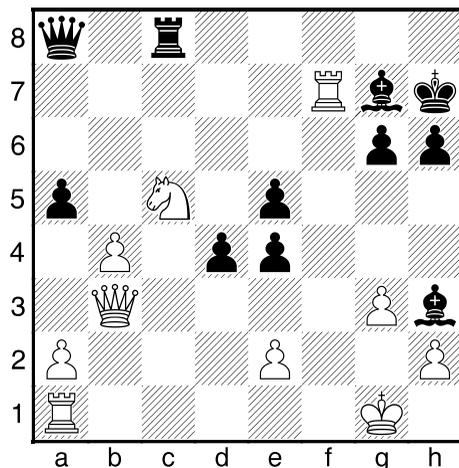
*see: Across Canada*



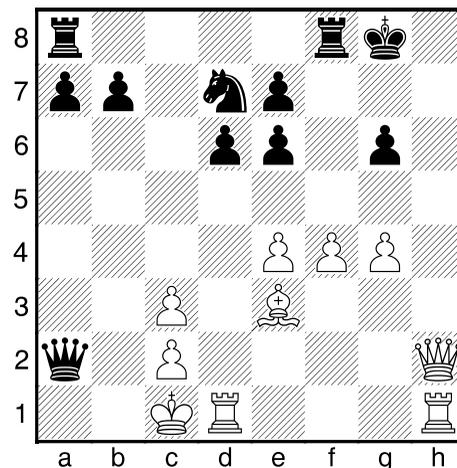
*see: Across Canada*



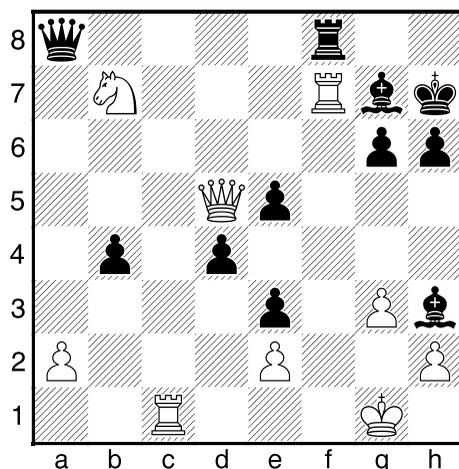
*see: On the Road*



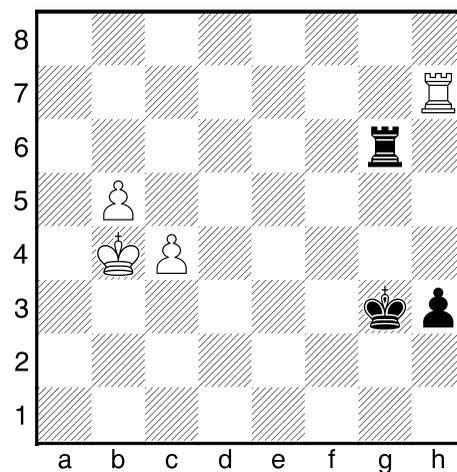
see: **On the Road**



see: **On the Road**



see: **On the Road**



see: **Appendix**

## Notes from the Odditor

### An Opening Gambit

A common complaint among chess players is that there is “too much opening theory”. Even a top pro like Anand — who has teams helping him cope with the flood of information and who is blessed with a freakishly powerful memory — complains that he can’t remember some lines he has studied recently.

I don’t like to study opening either, but I *do* like to complain *at least* as much as the next chess player... so, please indulge me while I offer *two* complaints about this common complaint.

First, openings are a part of chess, and studying an opening means learning how to play chess. Learning an opening isn’t like memorizing digits of  $\pi$  — it’s not a random sequence of unrelated data — rather, learning an opening involves learning the plans and typical maneuvers in middlegames and how early move orders can affect those plans. In other words: learning an opening means learning how to play chess well from move 1 on into the middlegame.

So, is it *just possible* that the reason some players don’t like study-

ing openings is that they no longer enjoy learning how to play chess?

Second, openings give us a rare point of contact with the world’s best players. Most of us will never get a chance to play Magnus Carlsen one-on-one — as **Isaac Wiebe** did (see: *Abroad*) — but with suitable prep, our games can seem like part of a conversation with the world’s best players, commenting and even improving upon their games.

You’ll see this in at least two places in this issue. The game **Ganguy-Wang (Edmonton)** is part of a discussion about the Sicilian Dragon that includes games by Magnus Carlsen as Black and White (see: *Appendix*). **Aman Hambleton** describes something similar when he found that an opening he played in St. Louis was, *on the very same day*, being played (better) by Carlsen in the World Championship in New York!

Feel free to complain about opening theory, but consider that acting on those complaints may cost you your best chance to engage with today’s best players.

- John Upper





**GM Alexandre Le Siège** continues to improve in his comeback from a 10-year absence from tournament chess. His results in 2015 were shakey, but his 2016 results show him finding the form that made him a dangerous and respected Grand Master.

In September he played board 3 for the Canadian Olympiad team, which had its best-ever result — playing board 1 in the final round, and finishing 11th overall. Alex annotated games from the Olympiad for the *Chess Canada* special Olympiad issue. Here, he annotates five games from three successful tournaments in the second half of 2016.

**exandre Le Siège**, and **Thomas Roussel-Roozmon**. GM Le Siège won his first seven games — including wins over Sambuev in round 5 and Roussel-Roozmon in round 6 — before clinching with a draw against Steve Bolduc in the final round. Sambuev was clear second with 7/8, followed by Roussel-Roozmon and Bolduc with 6/8.

**Notes:**  
**GM Alexandre Le Siège**  
**Le Siège, Alexandre (2494)**  
**Barbeau, Sylvain (2313)**  
*E06*  
*COQ 2016 Montreal (4),*  
*25.07.2016*

This is certainly my worst game of the tournament quality wise, but there were some interesting moments. Sylvain and I had many battles in the past. He's renowned for his fighting spirit and his endgame proficiency. If am not mistaken, this is a return to

competitive chess for him this year. Incidentally, there seems to be some kind of a trend going on: in the last year I've seen at least a dozen players return from long layoffs from chess. Your guess is as good as mine to pinpoint what sociological phenomenon is at play here. Since my own return, I've also noticed a new chess landscape

## Section Winners

- U2000** Mikhail Ivakhin, 7.5/8
- U1700** Jean-Philippe Robillard 7/8
- U1400** Skyler Dawson, 7.5/8.
- U1200** Chu Hang Zhang 6.5/8

photos: John Upper

## COQ

A total of 209 players competed across the five sections of the **2016 Championnat Ouvert du Québec**, 23-29 juillet 2016 at Montreal's **Collège Ahuntsic**.

The Open section was headed by three Quebec GMs: **Bator Sambuev**, **Al-**



with many young and promising players. 15 years ago, it was hard to tell who would succeed to the last generation of great players like Spraggett, Hébert, etc. Hopefully, it seems the future of chess is assured!

### 1. ♘f3

Sylvain cherishes both the Leningrad and the Grunfeld versus 1.d4. With my first move I wasn't intending to play the English opening, I was mostly giving myself extra flexibility against 1... f5.

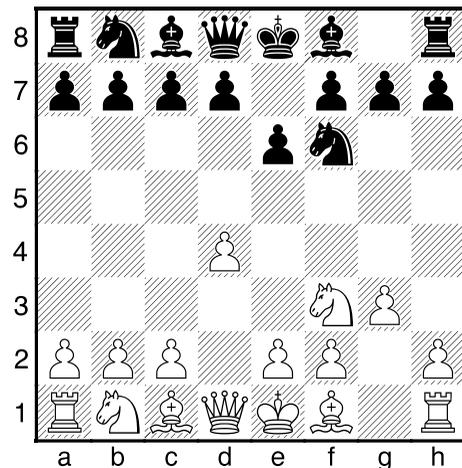
### 1... ♘f6 2.d4

According to plan, I am ready to meet the Grunfeld.

### 2... e6

A big surprise from my opponent, I don't think this is part of his usual repertoire.

### 3.g3



Aiming for the Catalan. This is one of the openings I've added to my arsenal since my return to chess. It's pretty trendy right now with great books written by Catalan specialist Boris Avrukh

for the Grandmaster Repertoire series. Independent of fashion, I think it's very important to learn the Catalan for both colours as many openings will transpose into it. Otherwise, you might find your openings choices contrived. For example White can play 3. g3 against the Nimzo-Indian or ♘f3, g3 against the orthodox queen's gambit. As you will see in this game I will make some mistakes due to my inexperience with the opening. The Catalan player is like a good wine, the more mature he gets the better he is.

### 3... d5 4. ♖g2 ♖e7

The fact that my pawn is still on c2 prevents many interesting options based on a quick... dxc4. On the other hand Black could try the direct 4... c5.

### 5.c4 0-0 6. ♖c2

Usually White castles right away, but I was attracted by this move that I just noticed a week ago in some of Nakamura games. It gives White some independent options to steer the game to a less known territory. I thought confronting my opponent with fresh problems in an opening he might not feel comfortable was a good idea. At worst, I could always fall back to the normal main line.

### 6... dxc4

My move order offers Black the popular extra option 6...c5!?

### 7. ♖xc4 a6 8. ♖f4!?

8.0-0 b5 9. ♖c2 ♖b7 10. ♖d2 leads directly to the main line. 8. ♖c2!?! b5 9. ♗e5 is playable and is one of those independent lines Black has



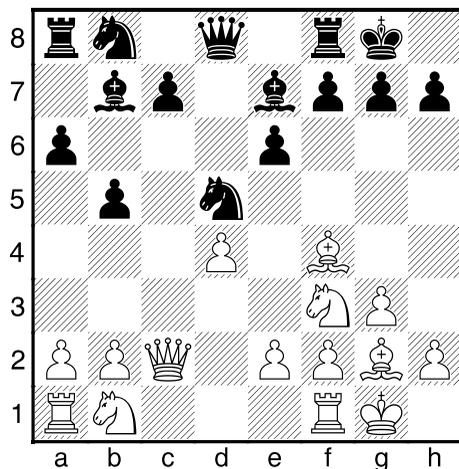
**An interested spcator**

*Alex watches the DGT projection while waiting for Sylvain to move.*



to think about even though it's not considered dangerous. The intention of the move 8. ♖f4 is to transpose into some old main line where Black had to commit to ...♘d5 quickly instead of the superior ...♘c6.

8...♘d5 9.0-0 b5 10.♙c2 ♕b7



I did end up in the position I was looking for but unfortunately didn't remember the theory properly. Dave Ross used to be a big expert on this line and was telling me when I was a youngster how Black should be careful about the potential

grip after the exchange on f4. Nevertheless, this line with ♕f4 and ...♘d5 is not considered dangerous by modern theory.

11.♖c1?!

Already a bad move. I thought I remembered this was the best move. This is a case where it would have been beneficial to not remember anything at all and instead take a fresh look at the position. Better is 11.♘c3!

11...♘c6?

Black can solve all his openings problems and then some with: 11...♘xf4! 12.gxf4 ♘d7 13.e3 (13.♙xc7? ♖c8-+ sorry, no more ♙f4!; 13.♘g5? ♕xg5 14.♕xb7 ♕xf4 15.♕xa8 ♕xc1⚡) 13...c5 14.♘g5 ♕xg5 15.♕xb7 ♖b8 with a super-comfortable position.

12.♕d2±

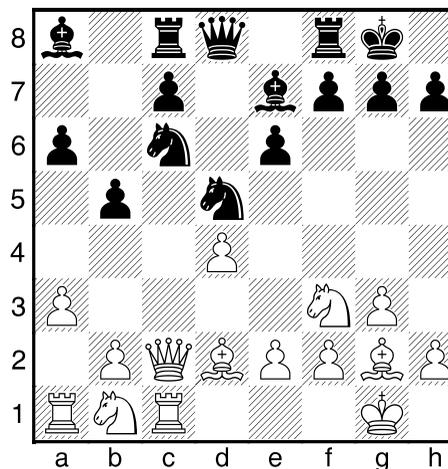
After this simple retreat Black has the common problem of liberating his position with ...c7-c5. By all means, his position

remains solid, but somewhat passive.

12...♖c8 13.a3

A typical Catalanish little move that takes control of b4 and allows b2-b4.

13...♕a8

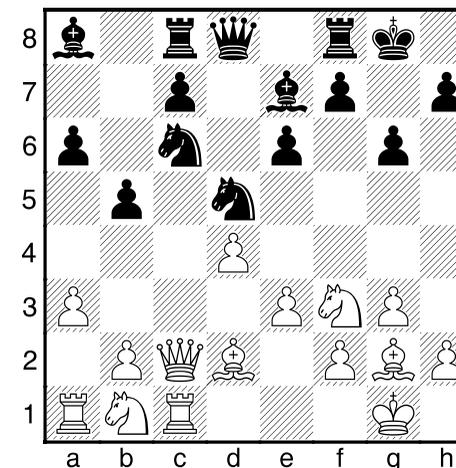


I don't like this move. Having been familiarized with computer play in the past year I was pretty sure the computer wouldn't like it. There is some kind of disharmony to it. My opponent's rationale, as he told me after the game, was that on a8 the bishop

would be protected in case of a tactical melee along the long diagonal. Fair enough, but let me offer some counter-arguments. First, the rook on c8 is no longer well protected. Second, in the eventual opening of the a-file the bishop will be a tactical target on a8. Let's not be results oriented, but it turns out that those two points will play a crucial role in some of the variations that I will show you later.

14.e3 g6?!

It's better to regroup right away with ...♘b8-d7.



15.♕e1?!

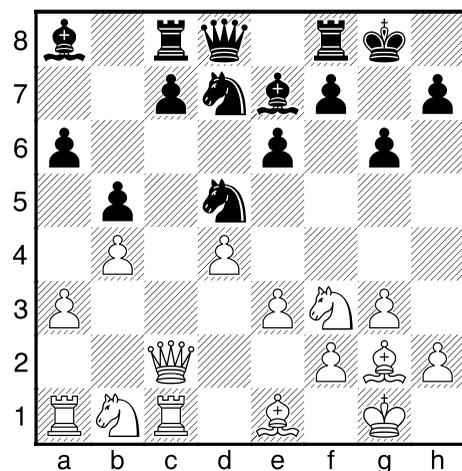




It's easy to play this kind of move and think you're playing a great positional game — slowly increasing the pressure with ♖bd2, ♖b3 until your opponent's position crumbles. But the reality is different, and that's where my inexperience with the set-up shows. There are a couple of different points. First of all, after an eventual b2-b4 my bishop will look pretty silly on e1. Second, the exchange of a pair of knights actually increases my grip on the position instead of lessening it.

♞15. ♖c3! ♖b8 (15... ♖xc3 16. ♙xc3±) 16. ♖xd5 ♙xd5 17. e4 ♙b7 18. ♙e3±.

15... ♖b8! 16. b4 ♖d7



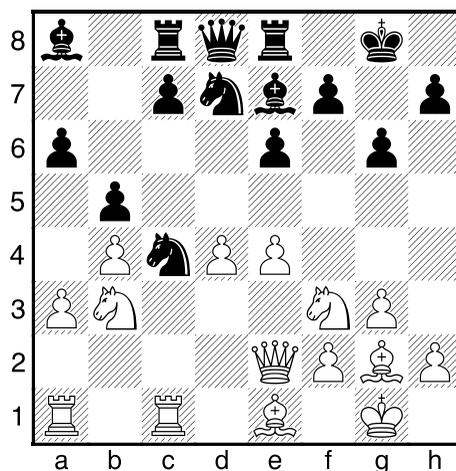
17. ♙e2

Not such a bad move, but an unnecessary precaution against ...a5. For example, I could simply play: 17. ♖bd2 a5? 18. bxa5 c5 19. ♖e4! c4 (19... cxd4 20. ♙xc8 ♖xc8 22. ♖xd4±) 20. ♖c3±. Having said that, the best thing to do for White is simply preventing ...f5 with e4!

17... ♖5b6

17... f5! blocks my e1 bishop and both players would then have their fair control of important squares.

18. ♖bd2 ♖e8 19. ♖b3 ♖c4 20. e4±



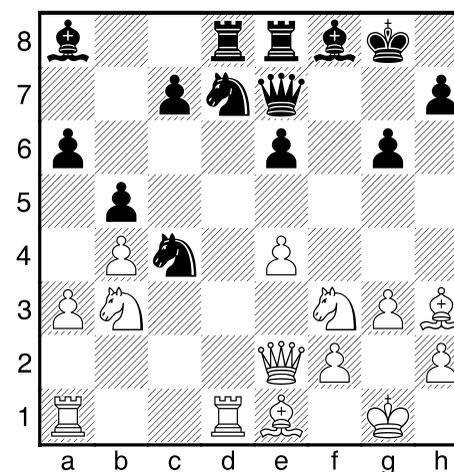
20... e5!?

I thought this move was too ambitious during the game because of the misplacement of the black queen on the d-file. Turns out it's not really worse than the alternatives.

21. dxe5 ♙f8?

Black had to play 21... ♖dxe5 22. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 23. ♖d1 ♙d6±.

22. ♖d1 ♙e7 23. ♙h3! ♖cd8 24. e6! fxe6



We were down to about 10 min each I think at this moment.

**Hello, my name is Alexandre Le Siège and I am a time trouble addict.** Things have gotten worse since my return, but I've always been plagued with this bad habit to some extent in my career. This is

something I will have to deal with if I want to improve my results. I can't count how many points I have dropped because of it.

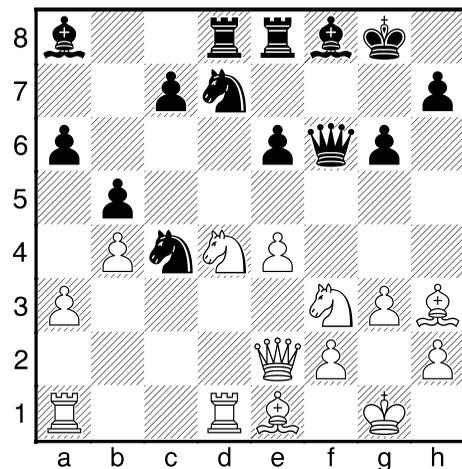
But the following mistakes that I (we) made can't be explained only by *zeitnot*. At this exact moment of the game I had the false impression that I had lost control and that the position was simply unclear. It was hard to make the mental shift from playing a slow grinding positional Catalan to a completely open tactical position. Since I was somewhat pessimistic about my chances, my brain couldn't find the best moves, which honestly weren't that hard to find.

25. ♖bd4?

25. a4!± is natural and strong, killing two birds with one stone: not only do I get rid of my weak pawn, but my rook will stand beautifully on the a-file.

25... ♙f6?

25... ♙g7! 26. ♖xe6 ♙xa1 27. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 28. ♖xa1 ♖f6 and Black is still in the game.



### 26.a4?

The second best move but 26.♘c3! was simply a killer, because after 26...e5 27.♘xb5! axb5 28.♖xd7+- is decisive. Strangely, I played 26.a4 because I could reply to... e5 with 27. ♘xb5. Sometimes the brain plays tricks on you.

### 26...♘de5?!

26...c5! is more combative.

### 27.axb5 axb5?!

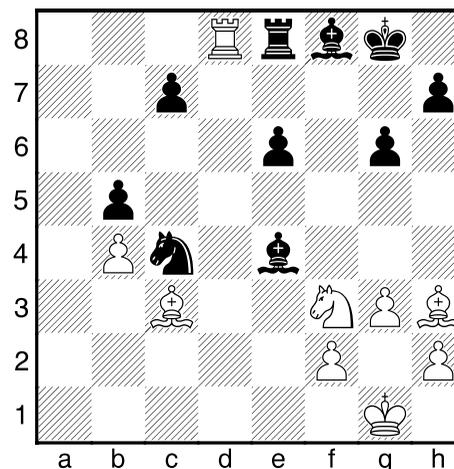
28.♘c3?  
It's funny, I am playing all the right

moves but in the wrong order! I should go 28.♘xe5! ♘xe5 and now White has the flashy (28...♖xe5 29.♘xe6+! ♖xe6 30.♘xe6 ♖xd1 31.♖xd1+- see comment about 13... ♘a8.) 29.♖xa8 ♖xa8 30.f4± with tremendous compensation for the exchange.

### 28...♘xf3+! 29.♖xf3 ♖xf3 30.♘xf3 ♖xd1+ 31.♖xd1 ♘xe4

Black appears to be doing well by liquidating to an endgame with an extra pawn. But White has a little surprise in store.

### 32.♖d8!



### 32...♖e7?

Sylvain was down to his last minute and failed to find a miraculous save.

32...♖xd8?? 33.♘xe6#;  
32...♘c6 33.♘d4 I thought this was winning during the game, but we discovered in the analysis the saving grace 33...♘e7!! and surprisingly everything holds.

### 33.♘g5 e5?

33...♘d5 is more resilient, but 34.♘f6 ♖f7 35.♘xf7 ♖xf7 36.♘c3 should be a technical win.

### 34.♘xe4

1-0

## Two GMs

Roussel-Roozmon and Le Siège

### Notes:

**GM Alexandre Le Siège**  
**Sambuev, Bator (2536)**  
**Le Siège, Alexandre (2497)**  
C54  
COQ 2016 Montreal (5),  
26.07.2016

Bator Sambuev has an uncompromising style. He calculates variations well and always plays for the win. When you play someone like him, you have to remain calm and alert because he's going to force you to find good defensive moves. This game is no exception, with Bator going early for a somewhat speculative but dangerous attack. Our personal score up to this game was 2-0 for him, so I was hoping to put up a good fight and stop the slippery slope. At that point in the tournament we both had 4 out of 4 so this was a very important game for the final result.

### 1.e4

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.e3 From time to time, Bator also likes to play his pet system: the Colle.



**1...e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4**

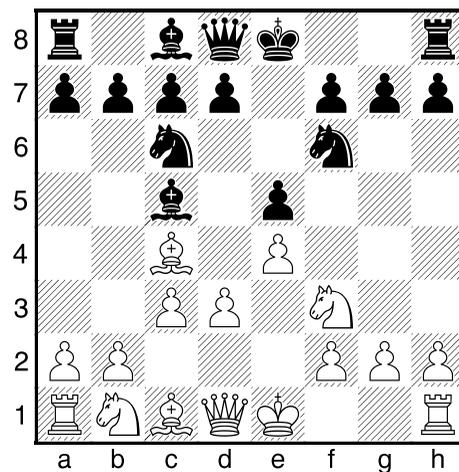
First time we met Bator opted for: 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙xc6 dxc6 5.♘c3 f6 6.d4 exd4 7.♘xd4 c5 8.♘de2 ♔xd1+ 9.♘xd1 ♙e6 10.♙f4 0-0-0 11.♘e3 ♘e7 12.h4 going straight to a typical exchange Ruy-Lopez endgame that theory doesn't consider very dangerous: **Sambuev-Le Siège, Varennes, 2015 (1-0, 39).**

**3...♙c5**

3...♘f6 4.♘g5 d5 is an old line that is still debated at the top level.

**4.c3 ♘f6 5.d3**

5.d4!? exd4 6.cxd4 ♙b4+ 7.♘c3 ♘xe4 8.0-0. This old gambit brought many quick White victories after: 8...♘xc3?! 9.bxc3 ♙xc3? 10.♙a3! d5 11.♙b5 ♙xa1 12.♖e1+ ♙e6 13.♔c2+-. Nowadays 8...♙c5! has taken much of the sting out of this early assault.

**5...0-0**

There are basically two ways to

play this position for Black. Either with a quick ...0-0, which gives Black the extra option of a quick ...d5; or by delaying castling by playing ...d6, ...a6, ...♙a7. This second method is more prophylactic in nature, preventing ideas based on d4 and b4. Also, by delaying castling Black never has to fear the annoying pin ♙g5 because he can simply push ...h6 and ...g5 with impunity.

**6.♙g5**

With 6.♙g5 my opponent wants to give an independent twist to the position, even though the move has been played frequently.

6.0-0 d5!? is an ambitious option played by the likes of Aronian vs Wesley So at the Sinquefeld Cup 2016 an interesting struggle developed after another interesting option: 6.0-0 h6 7.d4

**Top Dogs**

Sambuev - Le Siège

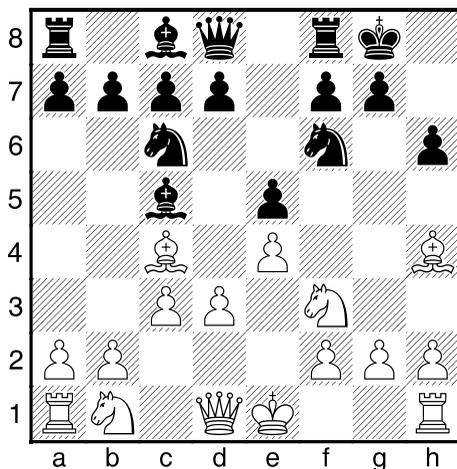


♙b6 8.dxe5 ♘xe4 9.♙d5 ♘xf2!∞  
So-Aronian, St.Louis 2016 (1/2-1/2, 29).

### 6...h6

It's useful to force the white bishop to commit.

### 7.♙h4



### 7...♙e7

7...d6 Tolerating the pin is quite OK and was played for instance, recently by the strong Grandmaster Pavel Eljanov. At some point in the future, Black intends to play ...g5, ...g4 and ...♘h5. On the other hand, the possible sacrifices on g5 are quite scary at every junction and I don't have that 2700 level of preparation yet to know the right moment to push ...g5. Even the

computers get confused, and it requires very deep analysis of many complicated line to play this way confidently. 7...♙e7 is a simpler option that is quite sound. Even though I am losing a tempo, the possibility to exchange the dark-square bishop allows me to free my position.

### 8.♘bd2

A flexible move that keeps both castling options available.

### 8...d6 9.♙b3 ♖h8

9...♘h5 10.♙xe7 ♙xe7 with a balanced position is more principled, but there is nothing wrong with my king move that prepares an eventual ...f5

9...♘a5 10.♙c2 c5 leads to some hybrid d3 Ruy Lopez.

### 10.♙e2

This looks a little artificial. 10.0-0 is more natural.

### 10...a5

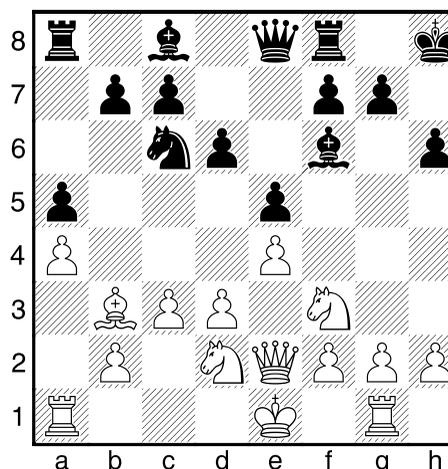
At this point, I was pretty sure Bator was going to long castle, and ...a5 prepares counterplay on that sector of the board.

### 11.a4

Of course this natural move prevents Black from gaining space. But now 0-0-0 has become more risky in view of ...b5.

### 11...♙e8 12.♙xf6 ♙xf6

### 13.♖g1!?

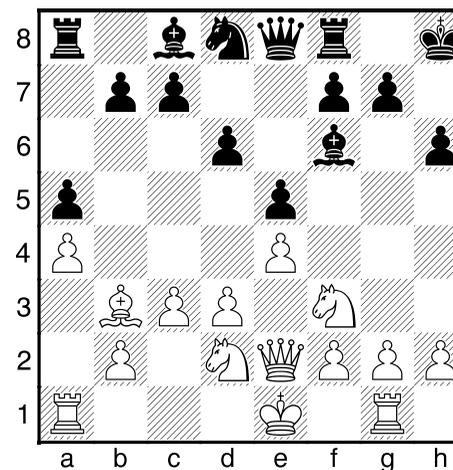


Typical Bator: he rejects the equilibrium offered by the normal 13.0-0 and is instead planning to mate my king! This plan is reminiscent of some modern lines in the anti-Berlin, where White plays ♙xc6, d3, ♙e2, g4. The motivation in such a direct attack lies in the position of my h-pawn. It offers a clear way for White to open my king side with g4-g5. If the pawn was on its original square such an attack

would be ill-advised. Objectively, up to this point, Black hasn't made any serious mistake and should feel confident to beat off the attack. In practice, White's position is much easier to play.

### 13...♘d8!?

It makes sense to reroute the knight to the king side. The idea is simply ...♘e6-f4. The only downside of this move is the possible exchange on e6. Another safer route was possible with: 13...♘e7 but I rejected it because after 14.h4! ♘g6 15.g3 my knight is paralysed while White can still improve his position with ♘f1-e3 or squeeze with h5 and g4.



### 14.♘f1?

Too slow. This will be a recurrent





# Chess Canada Dragon

theme in Bator's mistakes in this game: he tries to maximise his advantage instead of simply taking what's offered in the position. Such a strategy is prone to backfire against correct play, but on the other hand it puts you in some kind of urgency to refute your opponent's optimism before he controls the whole board. Here, Bator wants to improve his knight's position before launching the pawn avalanche.

Nevertheless: 14.g4! was the way to go. Black has two completely different ways to react to this advance:

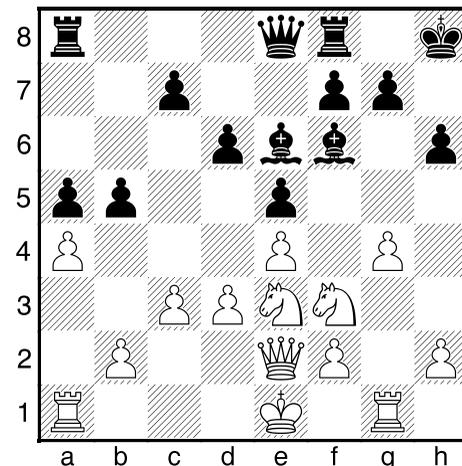
**14...g6!?** 15.h4 ♖g7 16.h5 g5 with a complicated struggle ahead;

**14...♗e6** 15.♕xe6 ♕xe6 16.g5 hxg5 17.♘xg5 ♕xg5 18.♖xg5 f6 19.♗g2 g5! planning ...♖f7-h7. Now White has to play precisely to secure the draw: 20.0-0-0 ♖f7 21.h4 gxh4 22.f4! ♖h7 23.f5 ♕f7 24.♙f2 ♔xa4 25.♖h2= and Black has nothing better than perpetual check.

**14...b5** 15.♗e3 ♗e6 16.♕xe6

The knight can't be allowed to reach f4.

**16...♕xe6 17.g4**



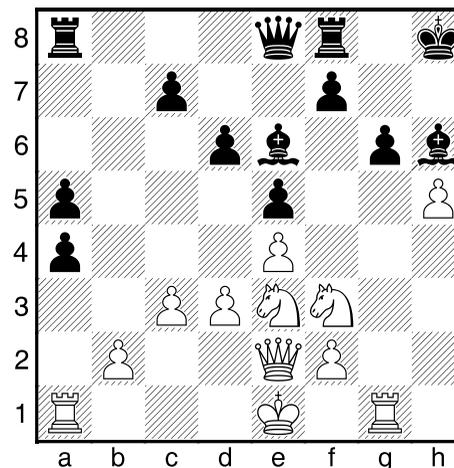
**17... g6**

Not the most precise, I should simply ignore White's threats and play: 17...bxa4! 18.g5 (18.h4 ♕e7 19.g5 f5!♣) 18...hxg5 19.♗xg5 ♕xg5 20.♖xg5 g6♣ and White's position looks more menacing than it really is.

**18.g5 ♕g7 19.gxh6  
♕xh6 20.h4 bxa4  
21.h5**

**Appealing to  
a Higher Power**

*between rounds at COQ*



**21... g5?**

Too frisky. This move is an enormous positional concession to safeguard my king. A simple calculation reveals that the attack is not dangerous: 21...♖b8! 22.♗h4 ♖g8♣ Black is clearly better, but in practice it's scary to let White open the h-file when you don't have the reassuring evaluation of the

computer that is telling you that everything is going to be OK.

Still, a grave misjudgment from my part, because with the white king stuck in the center I should have been confident in my defensive and counter-attacking chances.

**22.♗h2**

22.♗xg5? going after the material makes no sense because after 22...♖g8 23.♗f3 ♖xg1+ 24.♗xg1 my black bishop is back to life while White lost one of his main attacking pieces.

**22...f6!**





At least my kingside is super solid now.

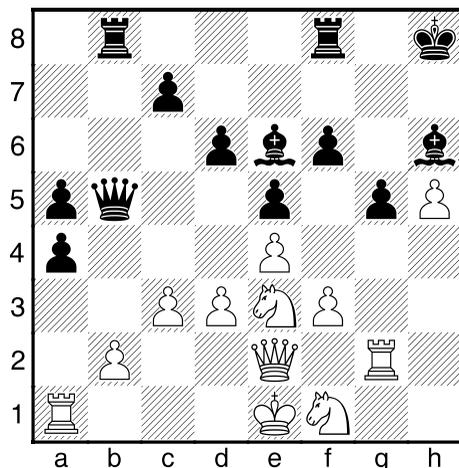
### 23. ♖hf1?

Once again Bator is not satisfied with what the position offered after 23. ♖hg4. He wants complete domination of the f5 square. This is way too optimistic with his queenside about to fall apart.

### 23... ♖b5 24. f3

A subtle move to defend b2 with ♖g2.

### 24... ♖ab8 25. ♖g2



### 25... ♖b7?

What do you know? The simple plan of tripling on the b-file doesn't get computer's approval! But in a way this turned out to be

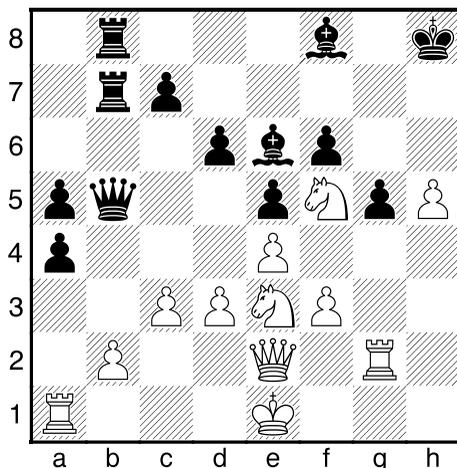
a great practical mistake versus Bator's plan of ♖g3-f5.

The essence of the position is that White needs to tie up some of my pieces with ♖g4 as soon as possible. That's why 23. ♖hf1 wasn't best and why the computer is now suggesting: 25... f5! 26. exf5 ♖xf5 27. ♖xf5 ♖xf5 ♣.

### 26. ♖g3?

This allows my bishop to drop back on the perfect f8 square. 26. ♖g4!

### 26... ♖fb8 27. ♖gf5 ♖f8 ♣



Black is close to winning. Any positional advantage gained on the kingside doesn't mean much with White's king stuck in the center.

### 28. ♖d1?!

The human move.

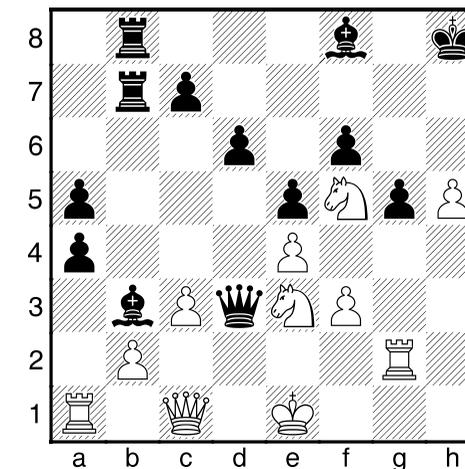
### 28... ♖b3?!

There is no need to block the b-file. 28... ♖d7 keeping an eye on a4 and f5 was more principled. I was under the false impression that White had to repeat the position, allowing me to gain some time on the clock.

Hello, my name is  
Alexandre Le Siège  
and I am a time  
trouble addict.

Nevertheless the counter-intuitive: 28... a3! was even stronger. 29. bxa3 d5-+ White got rid of his weak b-pawn, but also lost his counterplay on the a-file. The material is not so important in this kind of position, the initiative is.

### 29. ♖c1! ♖xd3!



Brave and correct.

### 30. ♖d2

Bator had a very good practical chance to complicate the game with 30. c4!? d5 ♣ 31. cxd5, forcing me to find an incredible move — with little time — to keep a decisive advantage. 31... g4!! a brilliant diversion out of the blue. All three recaptures come with shortcomings:

32. ♖xg4? ♖xf3-+;

32. fxf4? ♖xe4-+;

32. ♖xg4! ♖xd5! 33. ♖d1 (33.

exd5? ♖xb2-+; 33. ♖xd5?

♖xb2-+) 33... ♖xd1+ 34. ♖xd1

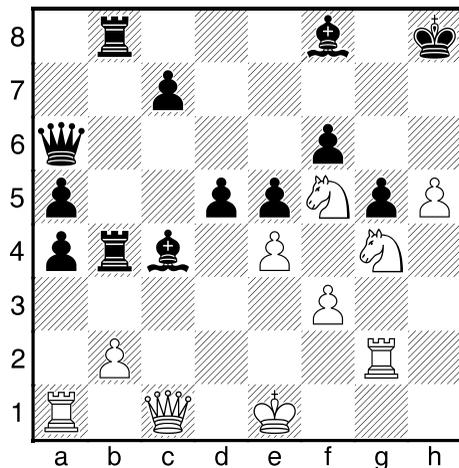
♖f7 35. ♖xa4 ♖d8-+ the white

king is still under enormous pressure.

### 30... ♖a6 31. c4?

A bad move in a difficult position.

31...♖b4 32.♖g2 ♘xc4  
33.♘g4 d5



34.♘xe5

Bator goes all in, the best practical decision as we were getting low on time.

34...fxe5 35.♖xg5 dxe4

Covers g8.

36.♖d1 ♖e6

Prevents ♖d8 or ♖d6.

37.♘g7

37.♘h4 ♔h7-+.

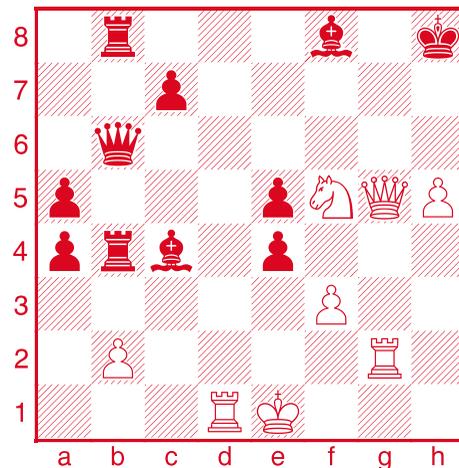
37.♖d8 ♖xd8 38.♖xd8 ♖xf5-+.

37...♖b6

Repositioning my queen on a more dangerous diagonal. The

unusual ...♖g8 was equally strong.

38.♘f5



38... ♖b3??

We were both on our 30 seconds increment and probably too focused only on ♖d8, so we both missed the interception ♖d6!

38...exf3! 39.♖d8 (39.♖d6 ♖xd6

40.♘xd6 fxg2-+) 39...♖xd8

40.♖xd8 ♘g8! I overlooked this move 41.♖xf8 ♖e4+-+.

39.♖d8??

39.♖d6! saves the day 39...♖b4+

40.♔d1?! ♖d3+ 41.♖xd3 ♘b3+□

42.♖xb3 ♖xb3+ 43.♔c1 ♖b6!

(43...♖f7 44.fxe4 a3 45.♔b1 a4

46.♖g6! ♖xg6 47.hxg6 ♖xb2+

48.♖xb2 axb2 49.♔xb2 despite the Black material advantage the ending is drawn.) 44.♘e3 ♖f7 45.♖xe5+ ♘g7 46.♖xe4 ♖e6 47.♖d5 ♘h6 and White is uncomfortable.

40.♖gd2! ♖e3+ (40...cxd6

41.♖f6+= is a draw) 41.♘xe3

cxd6 42.h6! and White has

enough resources to secure a draw.

39...♖xd8 40.♖xd8 ♖e3+

Mate follows shortly.

0-1

## Varennnes

Alexandre Le Siège won the 2016 Varennnes Open with 4.5/5, drawing with Chiku-Ratte and beating Roussel-Roozmon.

When I saw the following game, I complemented Alexandre on his “Ulf Andersson-like” technique. He disagreed, saying his play was *far* from the near-perfect technical play of the Swedish GM. I thought he was

just being modest, but now that I’ve read his annotations I see what he means... *and* I see why he keeps getting better.

This game and Alex’s notes give two excellent chess lessons. One is in how to press to convert a small advantage in a simplified position. The second is as an example of how an experienced GM analyzes his own games to continue to improve his technique.

### Notes:

**GM Alexandre Le Siège**

**Le Siège, Alexandre (2559)**

**Massé, Hugues (2280)**

D41  
Varennnes 2016 (3), 08.10.2016

Last time we played — a *long* time ago — Hugues played a Grunfeld. I didn’t feel like playing against it, hence my opening choice.

1.♘f3

I’ve been playing 1.♘f3 on a regular basis lately, but I feel I should switch back to 1.d4 as my main weapon as it generally





gives rise to more complicated positions. I also plan to add 1.e4 to my repertoire in 2017, but there is an insane amount of theory to learn. It's great to have many options in your toolbox to face a different opponent or different tournament situation. Some players, for example, are extremely hard to beat with 1.d4, but are a little more shaky against 1.e4

**1...♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.♘c3**

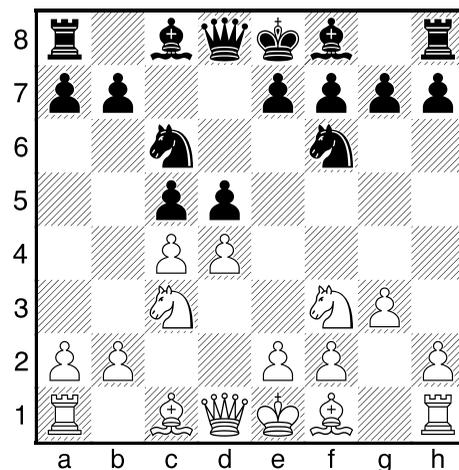
Against **Daniel Trahan** in the 2016 Quebec Open I chose 3.g3 ♘c6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♔b6! 6.♘b3 ♘e5 7.c5 ♔c6 and ended up in a difficult position after only 7 moves! You can see the full analysis of this game in *Échec+* if you're interested.

**3...♘c6 4.g3**

4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 e6 leads to the most important *tabiya* of the symmetrical English. White has been having problems proving any sort of opening advantage after either 6.g3, 6.a3 or 6.♘db5.

**4...d5 5.d4**

5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♔g2 brings the reverse Maroczy bind.



**5...e6**

5...dxc4?! 6.d5 ♘b4 7.e4 ♔g4 8.♔xc4 ♔xf3 9.♔xf3 ♘c2+

10.♔f1 is a dubious variation seen in my game **Ftacnik – Le Siège, Montréal, 2002**. The funny thing is, I did prepare for that game planning to take the rook, but at the board finally decided to play 10... ♘d4. This was clearly a case of irrational preparation since this line is supposed to be bad for Black.

**6.cxd5**

6.♔g2?! dxc4! with a Catalan-like position where White usually has castled instead of having his knight on c3.

**6...♘xd5 7.♔g2 cxd4 8.♘xd4**

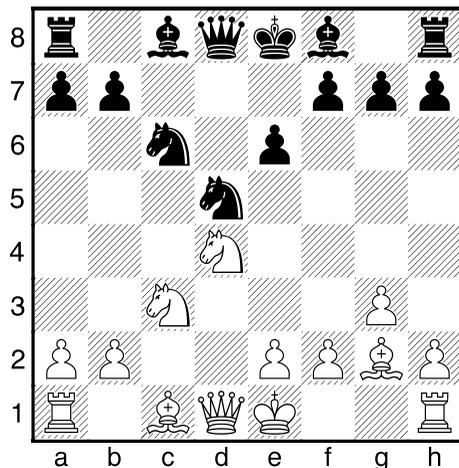


**No Grunfeld for Hugues!**

Hugues Massé at the 2017 Canadian Zonal.



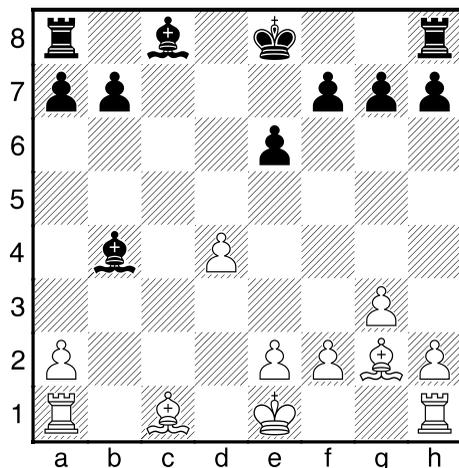
# Chess Canada Dragon



8...♘xc3

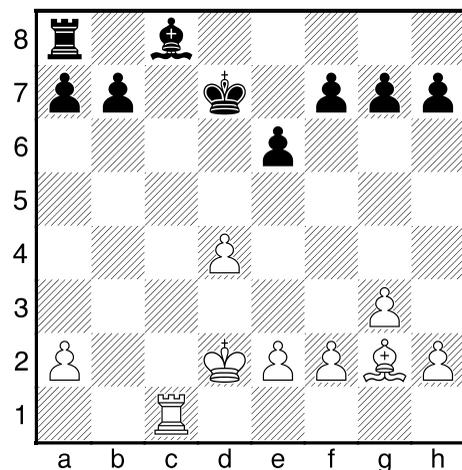
Black has to release the tension in the center because 8...♙b4? 9.0-0! ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♙xc3 11.♘xc6 ♚xd1 12.♖xd1 ♙d7 13.♖b1 ♙xc6 14.♙a3! is simply bad.

9.bxc3 ♘xd4 10.♚xd4 ♚xd4 11.cxd4 ♙b4+



This is the old main line. Nowadays, top players like Caruana prefer to defend the slightly worse position that arises after 11... ♙d6. A recent example is the game **Kovalyov – Nakamura** from the 2016 Olympiad.

12.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 13.♚xd2 ♙e7 14.♖ac1 ♖d8 15.♖c7+ ♖d7 16.♖hc1 ♙d8 17.♖xd7+ ♙xd7



This is the critical position to evaluate the validity of Black's whole concept. There are about 30 games in Megabase 2016, many played by very strong players from both colours.

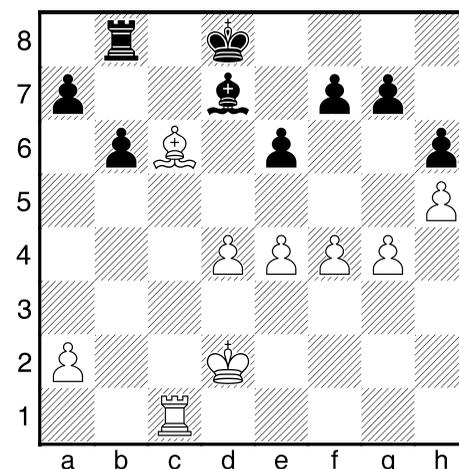
The only advantage White has is a slight lead in development. Black threatens

to play ...♖b8, ...b6 and ...♙b7 to completely level the position. The question is how White can best use those extra tempos to gain some positional advantage. There is no definite answer to that question, but certainly the advance of White's kingside pawns to gain space is a natural try. Planning for the future, many different endings are possible: rook endings, bishop endings, or king endings. White's goal is to gain a favourable version of those endgames by arranging his pawns in a favorable way. To illustrate my point, check the top level example in the next note.

18.f4

18.g4 h6 19.h4 ♖b8 20.f4 b6 21.♙c6+ ♙d8 22.e4 ♙d7 23.h5 was **Gelfand – Leko**, 2014:

*Analysis Diagram:*



Here Leko played ...b5 and went on to lose the Rook ending. But the alternative, 23...♖c8 24.♙xd7 ♖xc1 25.♙xc1 ♙xd7 26.e5 probably leads to a winning endgame for White, at least according to Ftacnik.

According to the computer Black can defend with perfect play, but that's beside the point. It mainly shows what White is trying to accomplish: get a favourable position that may or may not be winning but that will at least give him some practical chance. I have no doubt that after 17...♙xd7 Black has a theoretical draw, but he faces great practical discomfort and a lots of endgames are impossible to evaluate accurately in the time available in a tournament game.

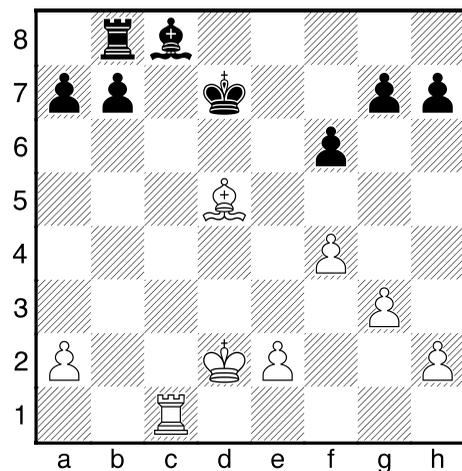
Another plan is that White can also use his extra time to harass the black kingside pawns. A couple of games have continued with 18.♖c5 ♖b8 19.♖a5 a6 20.♖h5 h6 21.g4 with the idea g4-g5. But even in that case Black can put up a successful defense.

18...♖b8 19.d5!?



My idea is to gain some space for my bishop and create weakness on the white squares. After 19.e4 b6 20.♔e3 ♕b7 White has a nice space advantage, but the problem is that after a subsequent exchange of rooks on the c-file the bishop endgame should be an easy draw. By the way, bishop endgames are probably the configuration where White has the most difficulty converting a space advantage.

19...exd5 20.♕xd5 f6



21.♕e4

21.♔e3 Centralising the king looks natural, but after 21...♔d6 22.♔d4 (22.♖d1 ♔e7! followed by ...♕e6 is about the same.) 22...♕e6 (22...♕g4!? 23.e4

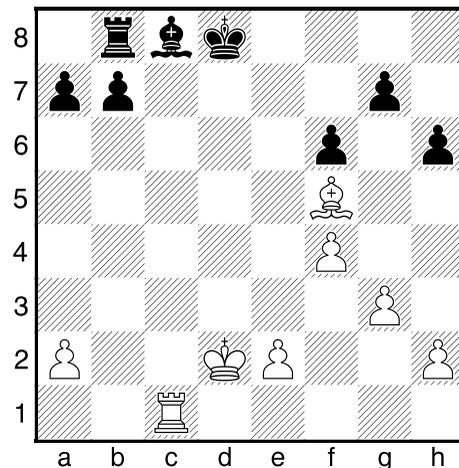
♖c8= if Black is afraid of the king endgame this is a simpler draw.) 23.♕xe6 ♔xe6 24.♖c7 ♖d8+ 25.♔e4 ♖d7 26.f5+ ♔e7 27.♖xd7+ ♔xd7 28.♔d5 h5 Black's position look lost, but it's only a draw.

*editor* – Stockfish rates this as high as +4, but at 36 ply it switches to 0.00. I'll leave it to readers to work out the details for themselves.

21...h6!

21...g6?! 22.f5 g5 23.h4 gxh4 24.gxh4 is highly unpleasant for Black as White can now use the g-file to invade.

22.♕f5+ ♔d8



23.g4!

The only practical chance to create an illusion of pressure.

23.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 24.♕xc8 ♔xc8 25.♔d3 ♔d7 26.♔d4 ♔d6 27.e4 is a draw. Normally, the side with the outside passed pawn (Black here) has the advantage in these types of endgames. But in this case Black is unable to safely create an outside passed pawn and lacks a clear entry point to attack my pawns. He actually has to be careful not to lose both of his queenside pawns when my a-pawn could prove decisive. A sample line could be: 27... b6 28.g4 a6 29.h4 b5 30.h5 a5 and now 31.e5+ fxe5+ 32.fxe5+ ♔e6 33.♔c5 ♔xe5 34.♔xb5 ♔f4 35.♔xa5 ♔xg4 36.♔b4 ♔xh5= leads nowhere for White.

I can't say I worked out all these variations during the game, but my general feeling that Black could hold is backed up by computer analysis.

23...♕d7

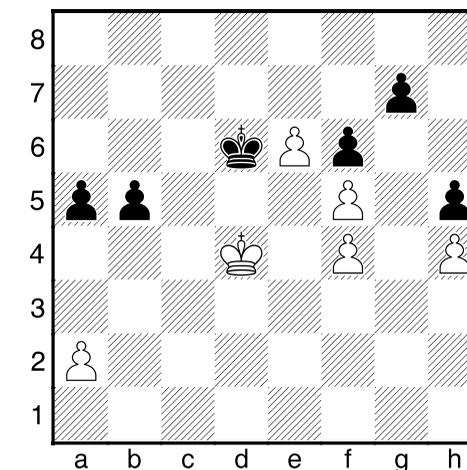
Black has tough choices at every move:

23...g5!?=.

23...♕xf5 24.gxf5 ♖c8? 25.♖xc8+ ♔xc8 shows the main point of

23.g4! The pawn endgame is now easily won for White because he can create a supported passed e-pawn. For example: 26.e4 ♔d7 27.♔d3 ♔d6 28.♔d4 b6 29.e5+ ♔c6 (29... fxe5+ 30.fxe5+ ♔e7 31.♔d5 b5 32.♔c5+-) 30.♔c4 b5+ 31.♔d4 h5 32.h4 a5 33.e6 33.♔d6:

*Analysis Diagram*



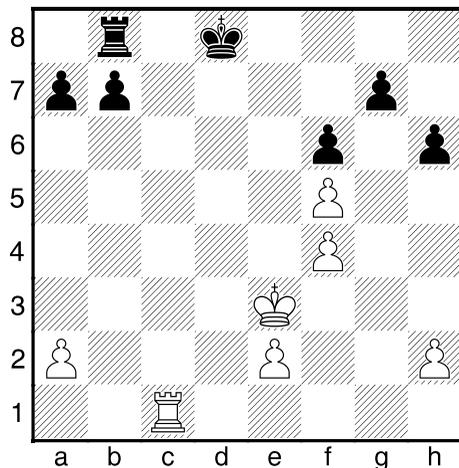
Black has the opposition, but White can triangulate to break through: 34.♔d3 ♔c6 35.♔e4 ♔d6 36.♔d4 ♔c6 37.e7 ♔d7 38.♔c5+-, now White will capture both queenside pawns and either queen his a-pawn before Black can promote, or use the a-pawn to decoy the Black's ♔ away from his kingside pawns.

24.♔e3 ♕xf5



24...♔c6!? 25.♙e4 ♔d7  
26.♙xc6+ bxc6 is objectively drawn, but White still has some practical chance to create some problems with his better pawn structure and a clear route for his king to g6.

### 25.gxf5



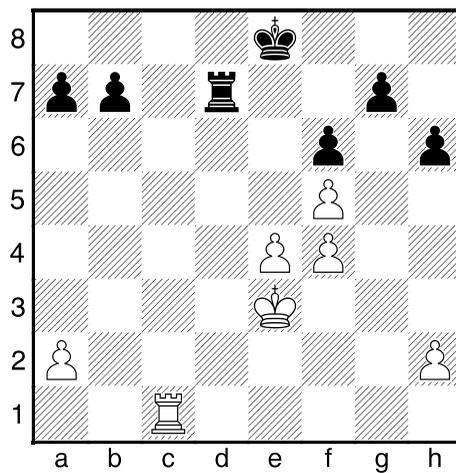
### 25...♔d7?

A natural move, but a clear mistake. After this Black is on the verge of defeat. White has many plusses: a more active king and rook, a potential passed pawn on the e-file, a nice target on g7. On top of that, as we've seen, Black can never trade rooks.

25...♔e7!! is extremely counterintuitive, but leads to equality according to the

computer. 26.♖c7+ seems deadly at first sight, but things are not so simple after 26...♔f8 and Black's plan is simple: try to trade the pawns on the queenside or activate his rook. 27.♔f3 a5! 28.e4 b5 29.♖a7 (29.e5 b4 30.♖a7 b3=) 29...a4 30.e5 ♖c8! 31.♔e4 ♖c4+=. If you compare this variation to what happens in the game, one of the main points is while Black is trying to gain counterplay he is also actively defending his 8th rank. This is really a key point and renders the e5-e6 advance less effective.

26.♔d4± ♖d8 27.e4 ♔e8+?!  
28.♔e3+- ♖d7



### 29.h4

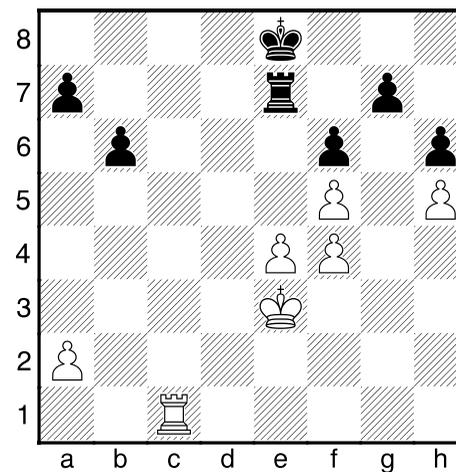
The human way to play and

following the classic endgame principle: Do not hurry! First, I want to lock the kingside to ensure all kinds of endgames will be clearly winning. This doesn't spoil the win, but a more direct approach is offered by the computer: 29.♖c8+ ♔e7 30.e5 ♖d5 31.♖c7+ ♔f8 32.e6 ♖xf5 33.♖f7+ ♔e8 34.♖xg7+- but even this final position doesn't appear completely clear to the human eye, even if the eventual fall of the f-pawn should decide.

### 29...♖e7 30.h5?!

♞30.♖c8+! ♔d7 (30...♔f7 31.h5 now this move: once the black king is locked up!) 31.♖a8 a6 32.♔d4 is the clear win according to the computer; e5 is on the agenda and Black's ♔ and ♖ are getting in each other's way.

### 30...b6!



The problem I now face is how to make progress. The black rook is ideally placed on e7 preventing the advance of the e-pawn while defending the vulnerable a7 and g7 pawns. If I play 31.♔d4, Black simply gives a check on d7 forcing me to go back.

### 31.♖c4

I am defending my e4 pawn so my king can start heading to Black queenside. Ideally, I would like to provoke a pawn move. Once a pawn moves, the black rook will become overload preventing both e5 and protecting its own army.

31.♖c8+ this check that was so strong on move 30 is not so effective now. The difference is that after 31...♔d7 32.♖a8

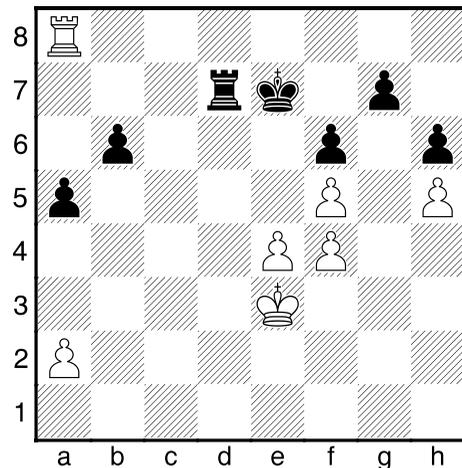
Black is not forced to move his a-pawn but can activate his king instead with 32...♔c6!

**31...♔d8 32.♔d4 ♖d7+  
33.♔c3 ♔e8?**

Now White implements his plan of successfully attacking black pawns while threatening e4-e5. 33... ♖e7! preventing e5 while guarding c8 was much more logical. White is much better, but it's unclear how to further progress.

**34.♖c8+! ♔e7 35.♔c4+- a6  
35...♖d2 36.♖c7+ ♔f8 37.♖xa7  
♖f2 38.♔b5 ♖xf4 39.♔xb6 ♖xe4  
40.a4** and the passed a-pawn decides.

**36.♖a8 ♖c7+ 37.♔d3 ♖d7+  
38.♔e3 a5**



**39.♖b8?**

I was very short on time and didn't want to alter the nature of the position before making time control. Turned out that this mistake lets the win slip away. White wins with 39.e5! ♖d5 40.♖a7+ ♔f8 41.♔e4 ♖b5 42.e6 ♖b2 43.♖f7+ ♔g8. I saw this position but failed to see how I could make progress...but there is a way: 44.♔d5! ♖xa2 45.♔d6 a4 46.♔e7 a3 47.♖f8+ ♔h7 48.♔f7+-.

**39...♖d6?**

Once again Hugues make the same kind of mistake he's been doing the whole endgame: playing too passively. What Dvoretzky has shown in his excellent endgame manuals is *that rook activity is paramount in rook endings even at the cost of material.*

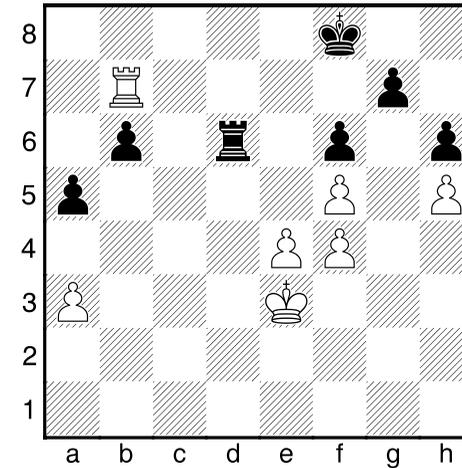
39...♖c7!! Very hard to find as Hugues was on his 30 second increment at that point 40.♖xb6 ♖c2 41.♖b7+ ♔f8 42.e5 (42.♔d4 ♖xa2 43.♔d5 ♖f2=) 42...♖xa2 43.e6 a4= White's king doesn't have time to penetrate the

enemy camp.

**40.♖b7+ ♔f8 41.a3**

41.e5! is more incisive.

Somehow I was very cautious with this pawn advance the whole endgame.



**41...a4**

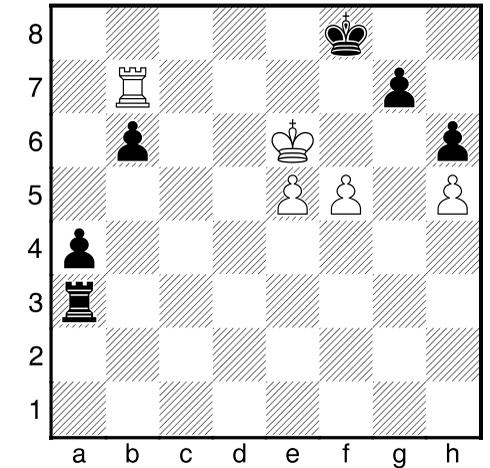
41...♖d1 is more stubborn, but after 42.♖xb6 ♖a1 43.♖b3 White is still winning. I will eventually pick up the a-pawn, probably giving a couple of my kingside pawns in the process. The fact that I have a complete bind with f5 and h5 means that Black won't be in time to gain enough counterplay.

**42.e5 ♖d1**

42...♖d5 43.♖b8+ ♔f7 (43...♔e7 44.♖xb6 fxe5 45.♖e6+ ♔f8

46.fxe5+-) 44.e6+ ♔e7 45.♖b7+ ♔f8 46.♔e4 ♖b5 47.♖f7+ ♔g8 48.♖a7 ♔f8 49.♖xa4+- This variation is why I played 41.a3 thus provoking ...a4.

**43.♔e4 ♖a1 44.♔d5 fxe5  
45.fxe5 ♖xa3 46.♔e6**



It's all over. The black king is boxed and my e-pawn is unstoppable.

**46...♔g8 47.♖xb6 ♖b3  
48.♖a6 a3 49.♖a8+ ♔h7  
50.♔d6 ♖d3+ 51.♔e7 ♖f3  
52.e6 ♖xf5 53.♔d6 ♖f3 54.e7  
♖d3+ 55.♔c5**

**1-0**



**Notes:**

**GM Alexandre Le Siège**  
**Chiku-Ratte, Olivier Kenta**  
**(2381)**

**Le Siège, Alexandre (2559)**  
**E20**

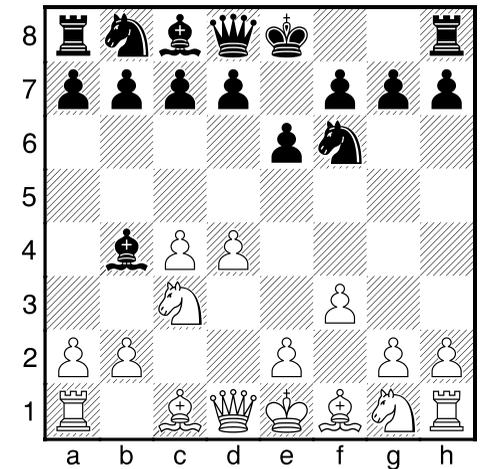
*Varenes 2016 (4), 09.10.2016*

This was the 4th round and Kenta and I were both leading the tournament with 3/3. Having Black, I was still in a position that a draw wasn't really a satisfactory result. Let me explain: following a new trend, the Varenes tournament has adopted the indivisible prize formula. What that means is prizes can't be shared. For example, if two players win the tournament with 4.5/5, one will get the first prize of \$1700 and the other one will get the second prize of \$800. What's worse is that the tiebreaker is left completely to chance: it consists of the total of the points of your opponents in the tournament. So, if one of your 'dogs' is having

a bad tournament, it's just too bad for you. As it turned out, I would have finished only second in the tournament had Kenta won his last game and joined me at 4.5/5 (he would have edged me at the finish line by a mere half a point on tie-break). Something seems broken with the system when you don't win a weekend tournament with 4.5/5. I think this

formula has its place, but not in a 5 rounder. The organizer has acknowledged the shortcoming of this rule and will probably revert to a more traditional formula next year. Perhaps the non-division of prizes would be a good thing for prizes under \$100. Who likes to win \$12.50 after an 8-way split?

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4**  
 I have been playing the Nimzo-Indian lately as the Queen Gambit Accepted is a little dry.

**4.f3**

This is Kenta's pet line.

**4...c5**

This is the best option if you're playing for a win.

**4...d5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 c5**  
**7.cxd5 ♘xd5 (7...exd5 8.e3 c4!?)**  
 is an interesting line seen in the 2013 World Championship between Anand and Carlsen.)  
**8.dxc5 ♖a5 9.e4** is solid for Black but tends to lead to drawish positions.

**4...0-0 5.a3! ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3**



**OKCR**

at the 2017 McGill Open



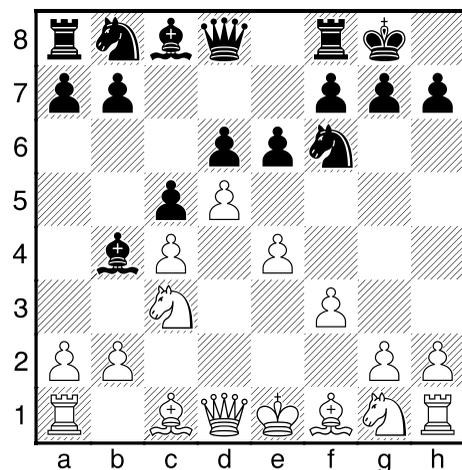
**Chess Canada**  
**Dragon**

is another interesting option. Usually the Saemish plan of a quick a3 is not so promising for White, but in this case, it's completely justified by the fact that Black has castled early, thus creating a target.

### 5.d5 0-0

The flexible approach. In my first encounter with Kenta, I chose 5...b5 6.e4 bxc4 7.♖xc4 and knowing 0% theory last year followed it up with 7...♗xc3+? 8.bxc3± (1/2-1/2, 23) **Chiku Ratte – Le Siège Montreal, 2015.**

### 6.e4 d6



### 7.♗ge2

We've reached some kind of hybrid Snake Benoni where the bishop has reached b4 without

taking the official route via d6 and c7. White has a mighty center, but is underdeveloped. I don't think he can really hope for an advantage but more for an interesting struggle. On the other hand, Black has to take concrete measure otherwise he might simply end up lacking space.

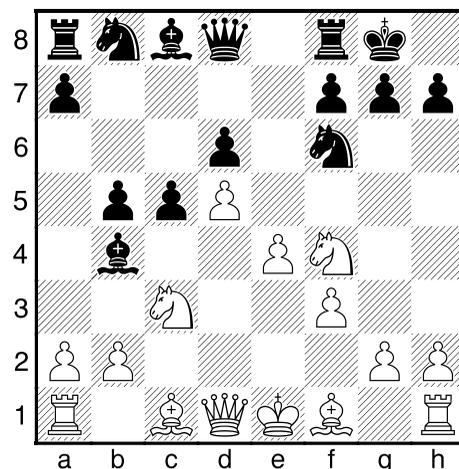
7.♗d3 is another option, but the bishop is exposed to a knight landing on e5.

### 7...b5 8.♘f4

This has all been played before, but we can't really call it mainstream theory. 8.♘g3 is another approach.

### 8...exd5 9.cxd5

9.♗fxd5 ♘xd5 10.♙xd5 ♙b6!



### 9...c4!?

In retrospect, I feel like this move is too committing. After 10. a4 I will have to sacrifice a pawn. I will definitely get compensation, but the onus will be on me to prove it with accurate play; this is always a dangerous situation to put yourself into. I much prefer the simpler alternative 9...a6 which also gives a sharp situation, but one where I don't have to prove anything.

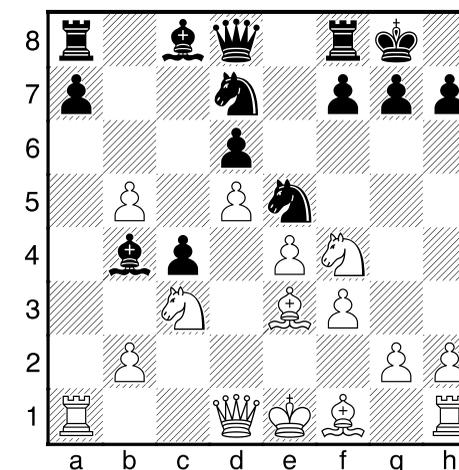
### 10.a4 ♘bd7

Losing b5 but establishing a superb knight on e5.

### 11.axb5 ♘e5 12.♗e3

It's important to control this diagonal.

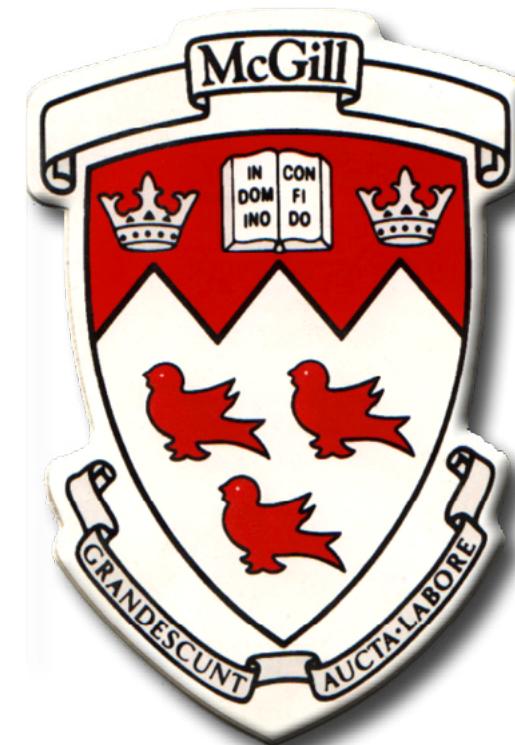
### 12...♗fd7!



The bulk of my compensation will come from controlling the dark squares after trading the black bishops. The pawn structure resembles some kind of Benko gambit, but with some differences: I don't have the typical pressure without the g7 bishop and lack the usual a-file pressure. One can argue that b2 will be weak once I regain the b5-pawn, but my a7-pawn is also vulnerable.

### 13.♗e2

Taking on a7 is suicide. Some sample lines to convince

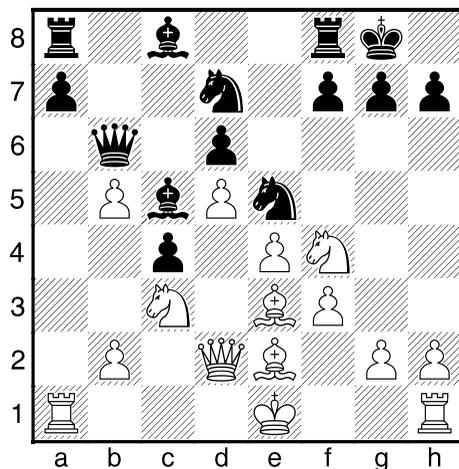


ourselves:

13. ♖xa7? ♜xa7! 14. ♜xa7 ♖b6  
15. ♜a8 ♖e3+ 16. ♖e2 ♜xf4-+;

13. ♜xa7? ♜xa7! 14. ♖xa7 ♘c5!  
followed by ... ♖a5 and White is  
in deep trouble.

13... ♖c5 14. ♖d2 ♖b6



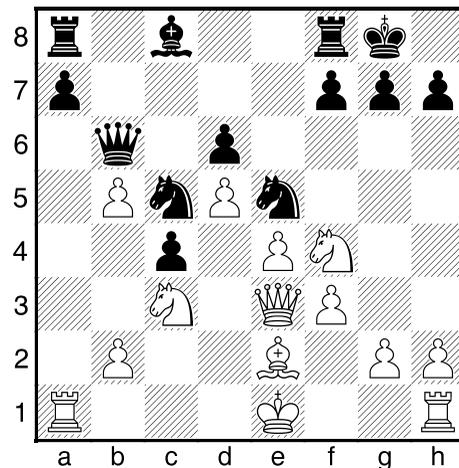
15. ♖xc5?

Kenta told me after the game  
that he rejected the obvious  
15. ♖f2 because he was afraid of  
...f5, but that would have been  
good for White:

15. ♖f2! f5?! is not so  
convincing after 16. ♘e6! f4  
17. ♖d4! ♘d3+ 18. ♖f1 ♖xd4.  
Of course, I can understand  
how this whole line could look  
extremely scary for White, but  
he's OK after 19. ♘a4±.

After 15. ♖f2! Black should  
play 15... ♖xe3+! 16. ♖xe3 ♘c5±.

15... ♘c5 16. ♖e3



16... ♖d7?

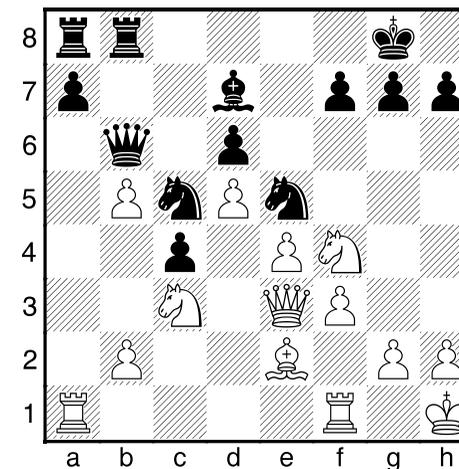
White's position seems in order  
as after 16... ♘cd3+ 17. ♖d2  
everything is defended; but here  
Black has an incredibly deep  
and unusual maneuver, yet so  
simple once you see it: 17... ♘c5!  
Threatening ... ♘b3+ and forcing

the king back 18. ♖e1. We've  
now reached the same position  
as in the game after 18... ♖d7 but  
the fact that White can't castle  
anymore changes the whole  
evaluation of the position. With  
no safe haven for his king, the  
combined pressure down the  
b-file and the threat of ...f7-f5  
could quickly prove decisive.  
For example, after the natural  
19. ♖f2?! f5! is decisive.

17.0-0

The worst is over for White. I  
will regain the b-pawn, but it  
won't suffice for an advantage.  
The rest of the game is still full  
of adventures, but incredibly the  
evaluation will never budge from  
being close to 0.00.

17... ♜fb8 18. ♖h1



18... ♘b3

I would have liked to keep the  
queens on the board and simply  
capture the b-pawn, but I didn't  
like the fact that White's knight  
is ready to jump to h5: 18... ♖xb5  
19. ♘h5! suddenly the threat of  
♖g5 followed by the advance of  
the f-pawn is really annoying.  
Black can certainly maintain  
the balance, but I wasn't going  
to hand the initiative to my  
opponent so easily.



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# Chess Canada Dragon

19. ♖xb6 ♜xb6 20. ♖a3!

Kenta tactically defends his b5-pawn because of ♜xb3. 20. ♖a6?! trying to ease the pressure is more comfortable for Black after 20... ♜xa6 21. bxa6 ♜b8.

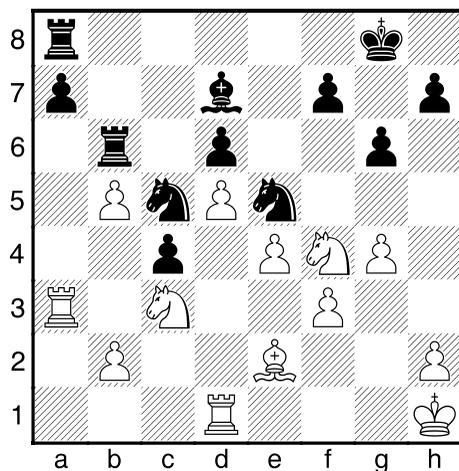
20...g6

It's often good to preemptively prevent the back rank mate. Besides, White can't do much for the time being.

21. ♜d1

By preventing ... ♞d2 White is forcing my knight to retreat. In the process he will be able to double on the a-file if he desires. 21. ♙xc4? ♞xc4 22. ♜xb3 ♞d2-+.

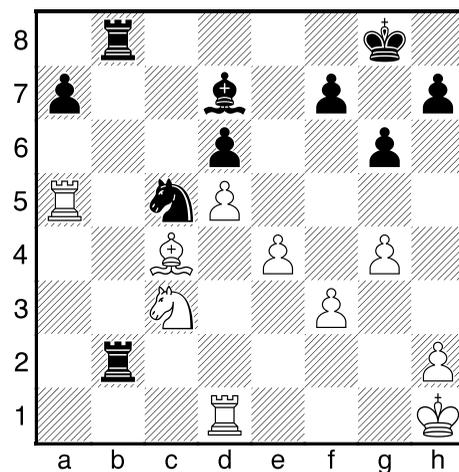
21... ♞c5 22.g4



I don't like this move, even if

it doesn't disturb the balance. Weakening the kingside is a big commitment. Understandably, White wanted to recycle his poor f4-knight via g2 and e3, but ♜da1! was simpler.

22... ♜b7 23. ♜a5 ♜ab8  
24. ♞g2 ♙xb5 25. ♞e3 ♙d7  
26. ♞xc4 ♞xc4 27. ♙xc4  
♜xb2

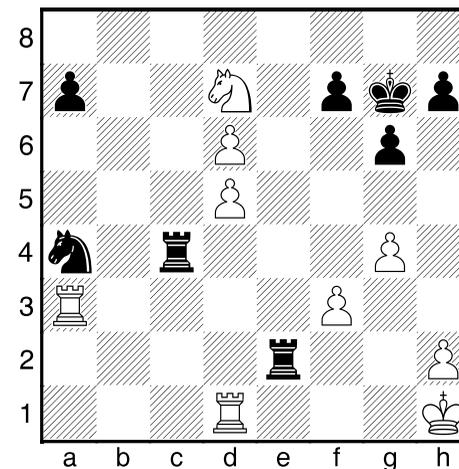


White's position seems to have become critical, but his next move saves him.

28.e5!

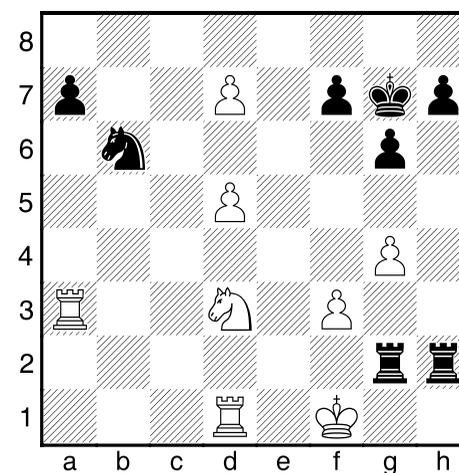
28. ♜xa7?! ♜c2 29. ♜a3 ♜bb2 is no fun.

28... ♜c2 29. exd6 ♜c8 30. ♜a3  
♞a4 31. ♞e4 ♜8xc4 32. ♞f6+  
♙g7 33. ♞xd7 ♜e2



I will double of the 2nd rank, but unfortunately the advanced d-pawn will force me to bail out with a perpetual check.

34. ♞e5 ♜cc2 35. ♞d3 ♜xh2+  
36. ♙g1 ♜cg2+ 37. ♙f1 ♜c2  
38. ♙g1 ♜cg2+ 39. ♙f1 ♜c2  
40. ♙g1 ♜hg2+ 41. ♙h1 ♞b6  
42. d7 ♜h2+ 43. ♙g1 ♜cg2+  
44. ♙f1



The final critical position of the game; I was trying to calculate if I had some funky mating idea with my knight.

44... ♜c2

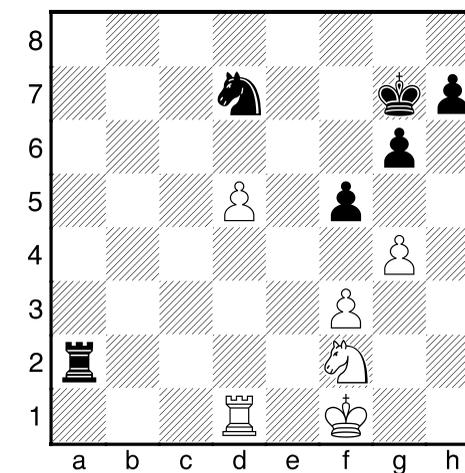
44... ♞xd5 White has only one good move, but it's enough 45. ♜e1! (45. ♞e1? ♜f2+ 46. ♙g1 ♞f4-+) 45... ♜c2 46. ♙g1 ♜cg2+=.

44... ♞c4 is also nothing special after most knight moves defending along the third rank.

45. ♙g1 ♞xd7 46. ♜xa7

Unfortunately, after eliminating the dangerous d7-pawn my knight has no way back into the attack.

46... ♜cg2+ 47. ♙f1 ♜a2  
48. ♜xa2 ♜xa2 49. ♞f2 f5





50.gxf5 gxf5 51.♖e1 ♘f6  
52.♖e5 ♗g6 53.♘h3 ♖a4  
54.♔f2 f4 55.♖g5+ ♔f7

An exciting and well played draw apart from the pair of mistakes we made in the opening.

1/2-1/2

## Pere Noel

GM Alexandre Le Siège continued his successful comeback with by topping the 2016 Pere Noel tournament in Montreal over the Christmas holidays. Five players tied 1/2 point behind Alex: GM Bator Sambuev, Zhong Yang Yu, Hugues Masse, Maili-Jade Ouellet, and Francois Leveille, each with 4/5.

### Notes:

**GM Alexandre Le Siège**  
**Beaulieu, Eric (2202)**

**Le Siège, Alexandre (2578)**  
D22

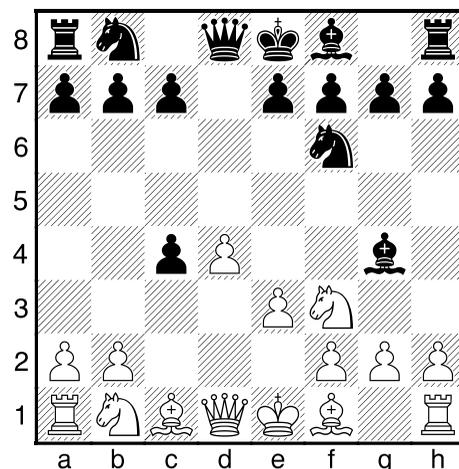
*Pere Noel Montreal (2),*  
27.12.2016

Eric is part of the wave of players who have returned to competition after a long break. He told me he's been studying a lot of Dvoretzky lately and really likes his book *Maneuvering: The Art of Piece Play*. And clearly, he made use of the great teacher's lessons, playing some nice positional moves in this game. It's really a great time to be a student of the game with so much good literature and the advancement of chess engines.

**1.d4 d5 2.♘f3**

I don't see a good reason for this move order if White is going to play 3.c4 next. Might as well keep more flexibility.

**2...♘f6 3.c4 dxc4 4.e3 ♗g4**



It's useful to have a second-tier opening repertoire when you need to play for the win with Black, especially in a crowded open section with only 5 rounds. I picked up this ...♗g4 system from the book *Understanding The Queen's Gambit Accepted* by Alexander Delchev and Semko Semkov. Magnus Carlsen used it to almost defeat Anish Giri in the 2016 Bilbao Masters.

**5.♗xc4 e6 6.0-0**

6.♘c3 is a crafty move order. The idea is revealed after 6...a6 (or 6...♘bd7 7.0-0 ♗d6 8.h3 ♗h5 9.e4! e5 10.g4 ♗g6 11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♘xe5 ♗xe5 13.f4 with advantage.) 7.h3 ♗h5 8.g4 ♗g6 9.♘e5 ♘bd7 10.♘xg6 hxg6 11.♗f1!±

To avoid those aforementioned lines, Black is advised to play 6...♘c6! instead. While committing the knight so early to c6 is not ideal, it's better once White has committed his own knight to c3.

**6...a6**

A flexible move. Black isn't afraid of h3, g4 since the white bishop can't drop back to f1 anymore.

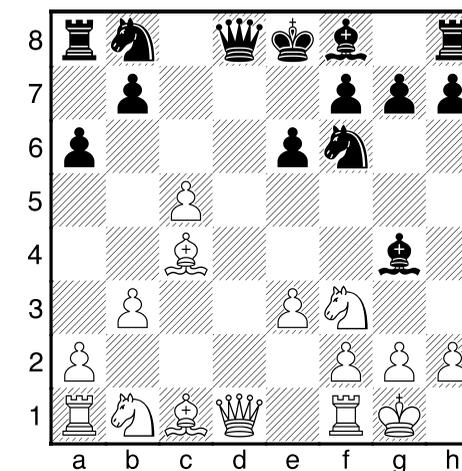
**7.b3!?**

White shows some flexibility of his own. It's nice to have the b1-knight able to go to c4 to rule out one of Black's main ideas: ...e6-e5.

**7...c5**

Reverting back to the normal QGA set-up because I was unhappy with: 7...♘bd7 8.♗b2 ♗d6 (8...♗e7!? follow by c5.) 9.♘bd2 0-0 10.♗e2 ♖e7 11.♘c4±.

**8.dxc5!**



The right decision. White will have a slightly more pleasant endgame. My opening strategy hasn't been a great success with the queens coming off the board so early. But I will try to



turn the tide next move with a concept employed by Carlsen in his World Championship against Karjakin.

## 8...♖c6!?

I am fighting hard for control of the d-file. The obvious drawback is that I might have some trouble regaining the c5-pawn. See game 7 Karjakin vs Carlsen to see this same ...♖c6 concept apply. The only 'minor' difference is that in Carlsen's case it was all preparation.

Black can get the c-pawn back with 8...♖xd1 but White keeps a development advantage after 9.♖xd1 ♘xc5 10.♘b2 ♖c6 11.♗bd2±.

## 9.♘a3!

White is justified in misplacing his bishop since it's not entirely obvious how to regain the pawn.

9.♖xd8+?! doesn't look right. And indeed after 9...♖xd8 10.♘a3 Black simply plays 10...♘e7!= 11.♗bd2? b5.

## 9...♗e4?

"Don't move the same piece

twice in the opening" applies here. 9...♖a5 is well met by 10.♖d2!±; but 9...♘e7! with the idea to regain the pawn later gives Black a fair chance to reach complete equality. Once again we see that general principles are often the best policy. Getting tactical is often a dangerous commitment.

## 10.♗bd2?

I was relieved when Eric played this move. He missed a nice chance to get a huge advantage with the paradoxal 10.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 11.♗d4!± The powerful threat f3 puts a stop to Black's ambitions; and regaining c5 doesn't solve the problems: 11...♗xc5 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.♖c1±.

On the other hand, 10.♖c2? ♘xf3 11.gxf3 ♗xc5∞ is fine for me.

## 10...♘xc5 11.♘b2 ♗xd2 12.♖xd2 ♖xd2

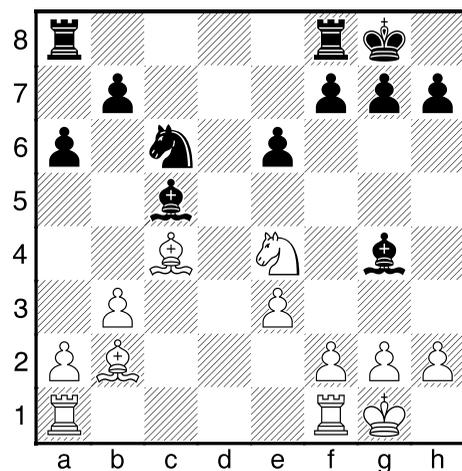
12...♘xf3 13.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 14.gxf3 ♖d2 15.♘c3 ♖c2 16.♖fc1 ♖xc1+ 17.♖xc1 ♘a3 18.♖d1 ♗e7 is equal as well, but offers less



**Eric Beaulieu**  
At the 2017 Canadian Zonal.

chance to outplay my opponent.

13. ♖xd2 0-0 14. ♘e4



This ♗g4 is a mixed blessing. On one hand, I am thrilled to control the d1 square. On the other hand, I am less thrilled that after ♘g3 it's getting in trouble.

14... ♗a7?!

Obviously the best move is the harmonious ... ♗e7, but playing for a win at all cost I was trying to force complications. After 14... ♗e7! I didn't like the fact that White can shut down my bishop with 15. ♘g3 h5! 16. f3 h4 17. ♘e2 ♗f5 18. e4 It's not such a problem for Black, since I can eventually trade it with the maneuver ... ♗h7-g8, f6, e5, but the resulting positions appeared

a little dry to me. This is a typical plan often employed in the Slav Defense. See the World Championship match between Kramnik and Topalov for a good example of how to deal with such a bishop.

15. ♘g3

15. ♖fc1!±.

15... h5!

As unusual as effective.

16. h3 h4 17. ♘e4

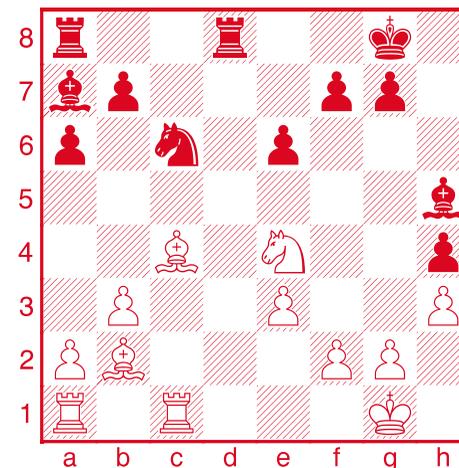
17. h3 h4 h3 is no fun for White with my ♗a7.

17... ♗h5 18. ♖fc1!

A very nice positional move. The a2 pawn is kept protected and the c4 bishop can drop back to f1.

18... ♖fd8!?

18... ♗g6! I rejected this move because after 19. ♘d6 ♘b4 20. ♘xb7?! I couldn't see anything better than a repetition of move after 20... ♘c2 (Turned out that I had 20... ♖fb8! 21. ♘a5 ♗b6 22. a3 ♘c2) 21. ♖ab1 ♘b4. In the end White should probably play 19. ♘g5.



19. ♗xa6?!

Tell you the truth, I missed both 19. ♗xa6 and 19. ♗f6. I was so concentrated on creating chances to avoid the draw that I forgot that my opponent had serious threats. I was mainly analysing 19. ♗f1 and 19. ♗a3.

Eric was more attuned to the truth of the position than me and took a long time deciding between the two very tempting options 19. ♗xa6 and 19. ♗f6. He correctly assessed that the latter would give me nice compensation, but didn't calculate deeply enough the game's continuation.

19. ♗f6! was still indeed the best move 19... gxf6 20. ♘xf6+

♗f8 21. ♘xh5 ♗b8! 22. ♗f1 ♗e5 23. ♖ab1 ♖d2 24. a4 ♖ad8 with decent compensation since I will swap the knight coming to f4.

19... ♗xe3!

Before Eric played 19. ♗xa6?! I had already worked out the winning continuation that happened in the game. I went from fearing the move once I saw it to actually hoping for it.

19... ♘b4? 20. ♗xb7 ♖ab8 21. ♘c5!± and the hanging bishop on h5 saves White.

20. ♗xb7?

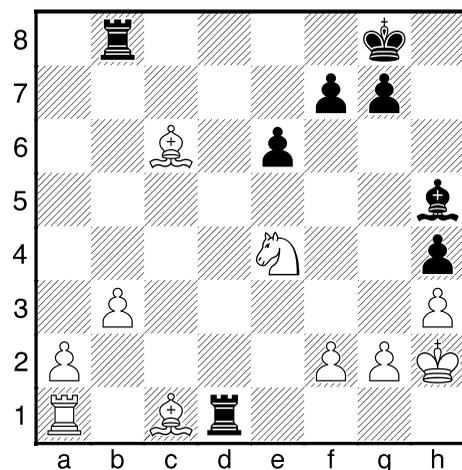
Played *a tempo*. Perhaps Eric should have recalculated the whole line before committing to it; what an extra move can do for a player's vision! It was still not too late to bail out with: 20. fxe3 ♖xa6 21. ♘c5 ♖a7 22. ♘xb7 ♖d2=.

20... ♗xc1 21. ♗xc1

21. ♖xc1 ♖xa2-+.

21... ♖d1+ 22. ♔h2 ♖b8 23. ♗xc6





### 23...Rc8

Oops, Black regains a piece! My opponent clearly made some kind of inexperienced tactical mistake. When you have a rook pinned on the first rank, this should be a warning sign to calculate more deeply than usual since some unexpected tactics often occur in those circumstances.

### 24. Qb5 Rxc1+ 25. Rxc1 Rxc1 26.a4

The two connected passed pawns look a little scary, but I am in time to stop them.

### 26...Qd1

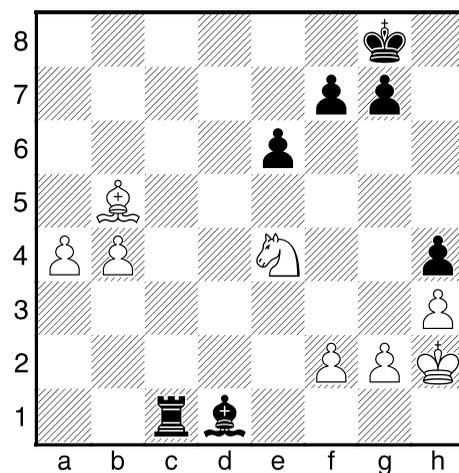
26...Qg6!? 27.f3 Qxe4 28.fxe4 Rb1 29.Qc4 Ra1+ is a clever way to put White in some kind

of *Zugzwang*. The real problem with White's position is the poor position of his king.

*editor* – If White's ♔ was on e3 he'd have decent compensation, and if the ♔ was on b4 he'd be winning.

### 27.b4

27. Qc4 Ra1 (27...Qc2!? 28. Nc5 Qxb3+) 28. Nc5 Ra2+.



### 27...Qc2!

27...Rb1? 28. Nc3! ♣.

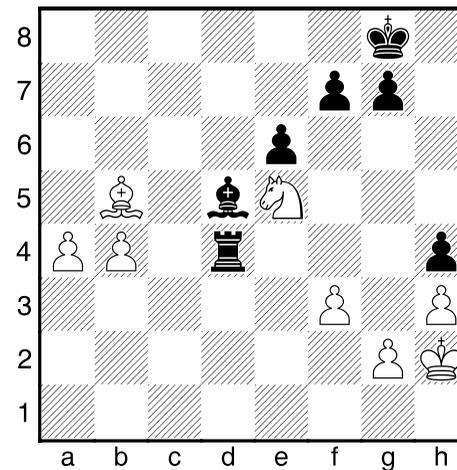
### 28. Nd2

28. Nc5 Rb1 29. Na6 Qe4+ White can't move.

### 28...Rd1 29. Nc4 Qe4! 30.f3 Qd5 31. Ne5

31. Ne3 Rb1 32. Nxd5 exd5+.

### 31...Rd4

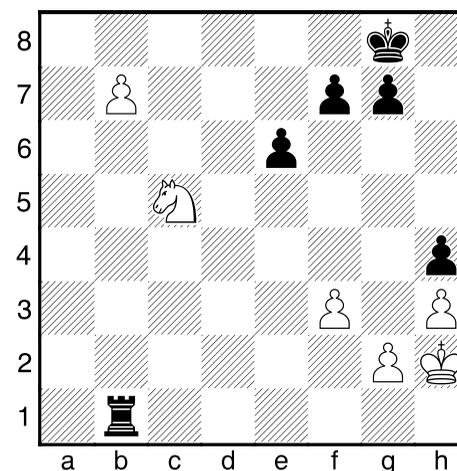


The simplest. I just had to make sure I was in time to stop the pawn after the bishop trade.

### 32. Nd3 Qc4 33. Qxc4 Rxc4 34.b5

34.a5 Rd4 35.b5 Rxd3+ followed by putting the rook behind the most advanced passed pawn.

### 34...Rxa4 35.b6 Ra1 36.b7 Rb1 37. Nc5



White is pinning his hopes on some kind of geometry; the f8, e5 and f6 squares are all mined. However, after Black's next, White will be left only with ♔ moves.

### 37...Rb2!

The cleanest, White is deprived of g4.

### 38. Qg1 Qh7 39. Qf1 Qg6 40. Qe1 Qf5 41. Qd1 e5 42. Qc1 Rb6

The rook creates an impenetrable barrier, allowing the black ♔ to mop up the kingside pawns.

### 43. Qd2 Qf4

The critical moment of the game was very strange. It seems that 19. Qxa6 should have worked under normal circumstances, but for some concrete reasons it didn't.

0-1

- GM Alexandre Le Siège



Aman Hambleton has contributed regularly to *Chess Canada* since 2013 when he was an FM.

While still an FM, Aman earned a double IM/GM norm, and it looked like it would be a smooth ride to get his remaining two GM Norms.

Not smooth.

For the next *five years* Aman has travelled the world to compete in tournaments where he could earn GM Norms.

Here, Aman annotates five games along that road.

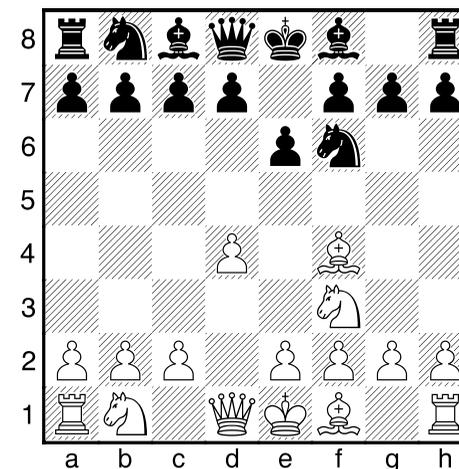
**Notes:**  
**IM Aman Hambleton**  
**Shimanov, Aleksandr**  
**(2650)**

**Hambleton, Aman (2436)**  
**A47**

*Millionaire Chess Open Atlantic City (7), 09.10.2016*

In Round 7 of the Millionaire Chess Open I was paired against a 2650 GM from Russia, Aleksandr Shimanov. After winning a few games in a row I found myself playing a much stronger player than I expected. Whatever preparation I had done was useless once I saw my opponent's opening choice.

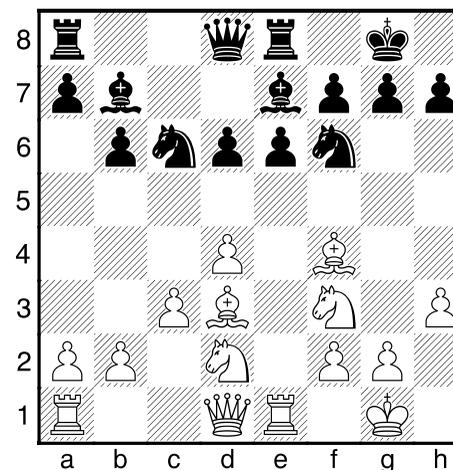
**1.d4 e6 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♙f4**



The London System, feared by many because of... how dull and annoying it can be to play against. After Magnus Carlsen used this opening, with varied success, it has become incredibly fashionable at all levels of play.

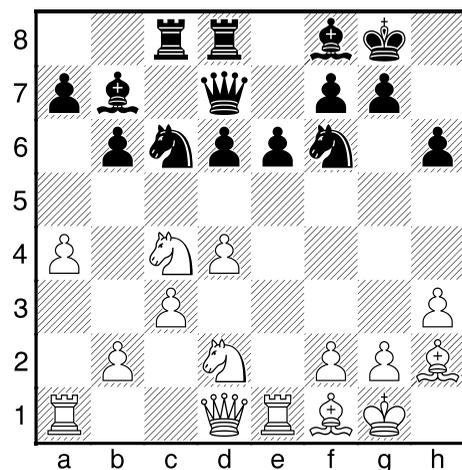
**3...c5 4.e3 ♘c6 5.♘bd2 ♙e7**  
**5...d5 6.c3 ♙d6 7.♙g3 0-0 8.♙d3**  
**b6 9.♘e5 ♙b7=** is the main line.

**6.h3 cxd4 7.exd4 b6 8.c3**  
**♙b7 9.♙d3 0-0 10.0-0 ♖e8**  
**11.♖e1 d6**



There are many ways to play against this system, but I always try to avoid playing ...d5, which gives White easy play with ♘e5 and ♘df3.

12. ♖h2 ♜c8 13.a4 ♙f8  
14. ♘c4 h6 15. ♙f1 ♚d7  
16. ♘fd2 ♜ed8



17. ♙g3

I had intended to meet 17.a5 with 17...b5 18.a6 bxc4 19.axb7 ♚xb7 but I missed the strong continuation 20.b3!± when 20...cxb3 21.♙a6 is very good for White.

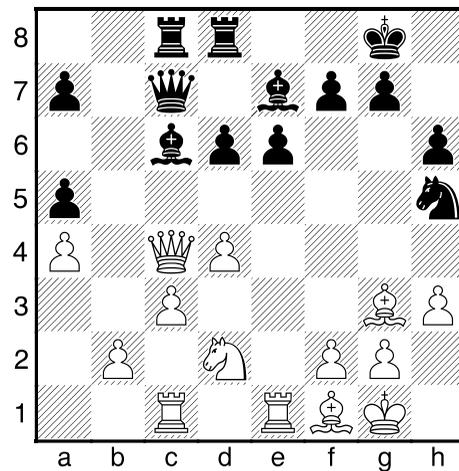
17...♙e7 18. ♚b3 ♘a5!

This move doesn't feel right, giving Black doubled and isolated a-pawns, but it was the trap I prepared against White's natural move ♚b3.

19. ♘xa5 bxa5 20. ♚b5 ♚c7  
21. ♜ac1

21. ♘c4 ♙d5! 22. ♘xa5 ♘e4  
23. ♙h2 ♜b8-+.

21...♙c6 22. ♚c4 ♘h5



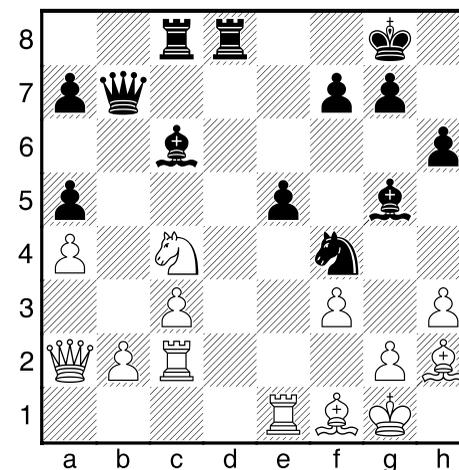
Taking advantage of White's 17th move and activating the pieces with tempo.

23. ♙h2 ♙g5 24. ♜c2 ♚b7  
25. ♚a2 ♘f4 26. f3 e5!

The last five moves have all

come with tempo; Black's position is improving with each move, but I was spending too much time to find the right plan. Time pressure started to become a big factor around this point in the game.

27. dxe5 dxe5 28. ♘c4



28... e4?

Based on how badly White's pieces are placed I assumed that any move to open the position would be in my favour, but I commit an error in time pressure. Better was 28...♙d5! 29.b3 ♙e6 30. ♜xe5 ♜d1± with a big initiative for Black.

29. fxe4 ♙xe4 30. ♜f2 ♘d3  
31. ♙xd3 ♜xd3 32. ♘d6 ♜xd6  
33. ♙xd6 ♙d5

With little time on the clock I am just trying to reach move 40. The two bishops put up great resistance.

34. ♚b1 ♙h4 35. g3 ♚d7!?

## Novelty Checked



**Millionaire Chess** was created by GM [Maurice Ashley](#) and his business partner [Amy Lee](#).

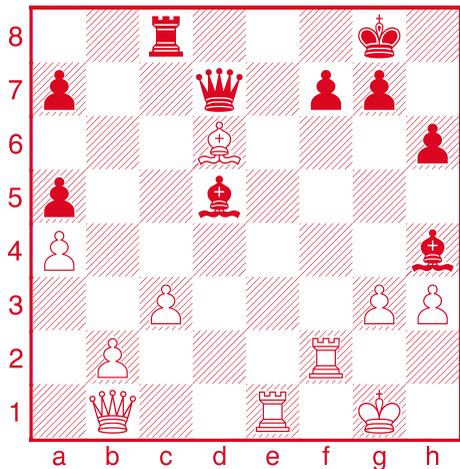
The third Millionaire Open was held in Atlantic City in August, 2016. It promised large prizes for section winners — even the U1600 winner would pocket over \$10,000 — topped by a chance to win a 1/64 chance to win \$1,000,000.

The prize fund attracted many strong players, with dozens of GMs and 13 players over 2600. Polish GM [Darius Swiercz](#) won the \$30,000 first prize check after beating English GM Gawain Jones in the final. Unfortunately for organizers and players, for the third time the attendance was again below break-even levels, and so 2016 will probably be the last Millionaire Open.





# Chess Canada Dragon



36. ♖f4??

My opponent played too quickly; and surprisingly White is dead lost after this move.

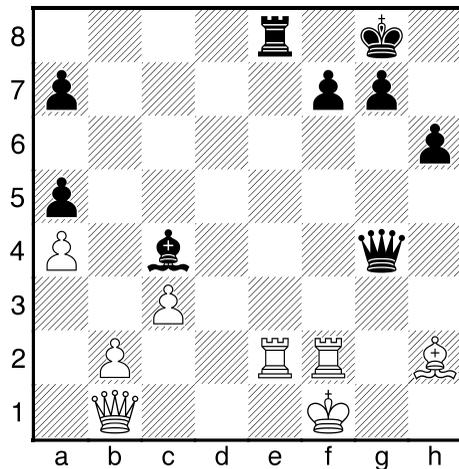
36. ♔d3! ♕xd6 37. gxh4+- by no means an easy conversion ahead, but White is definitely winning.

36... ♗xg3□

36... ♕xh3?? 37. ♖h2□+-.

37. ♗xg3 ♕xh3 38. ♗h2 ♕g4+

39. ♔f1 ♗c4+ 40. ♖ee2 ♖e8



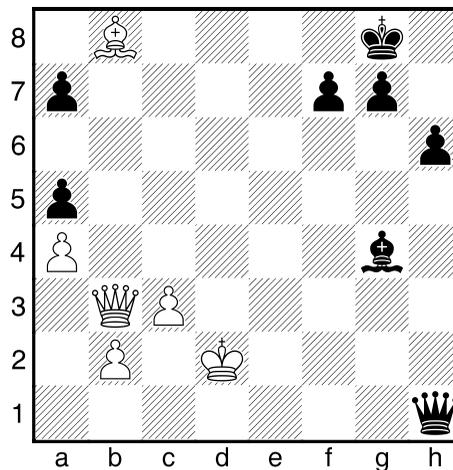
41. ♕c2

41. ♕e1 ♖xe2 42. ♖xe2 ♕f3+ 43. ♕f2 ♗xe2+ 44. ♔e1 ♕xf2+ 45. ♔xf2 ♗d1 with three connected passed pawns the opposite ♗ endgame should be easily winning.

41. ♕d1 ♗xe2+ 42. ♖xe2 ♕f3+ 43. ♔e1 ♕h1+ 44. ♔d2 ♖d8+-.

41... ♖xe2 42. ♖xe2 ♕f3+ 43. ♔e1 ♕h1+ 44. ♔d2 ♗xe2

45. ♗b8 ♗g4 46. ♕b3



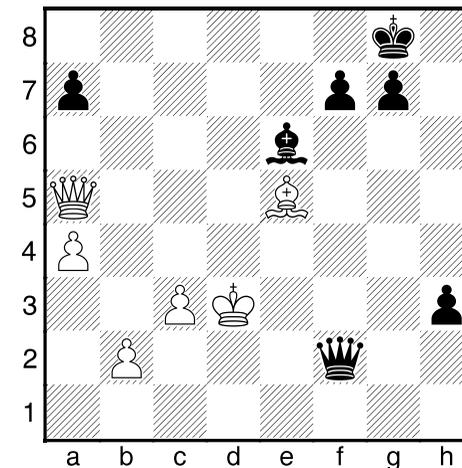
46... ♕g2+

46... ♕f3 47. ♕b5 ♕f2+ 48. ♔d3 ♗e2+-.

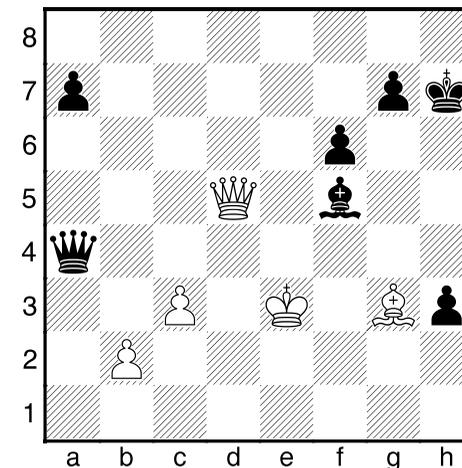
47. ♔e3 h5 48. ♕b5 ♕f3+

49. ♔d4 h4 50. ♕xa5 50. ♕e8+ ♔h7 51. ♕e4+ ♕xe4+ 52. ♔xe4 g5+-.

50... ♕f6+ 51. ♗e5 ♕f2+ 52. ♔c4 ♗e6+ 53. ♔d3 h3



54. ♕d8+ ♔h7 55. ♕b8 f6 56. ♗g3 ♕f3+ 57. ♔d4 ♕d1+ 58. ♔e3 ♕xa4 59. ♕d6 ♗f5 60. ♕d5



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60...♔d7 61.♔a8 ♔d3+  
62.♔f2 ♔d2+ 63.♔f1 ♔c1+  
64.♙e1 ♔f4+ 65.♙f2 h2

After a long endgame I finally managed to convert after some good fortune near the time control.

Shimanov is one of the highest rated players I've ever beaten, but despite a solid opening it took some help from my opponent to win this one.

0-1

**Notes:**

**IM Aman Hambleton**  
Hambleton, Aman (2436)  
Paragua, Mark (2503)

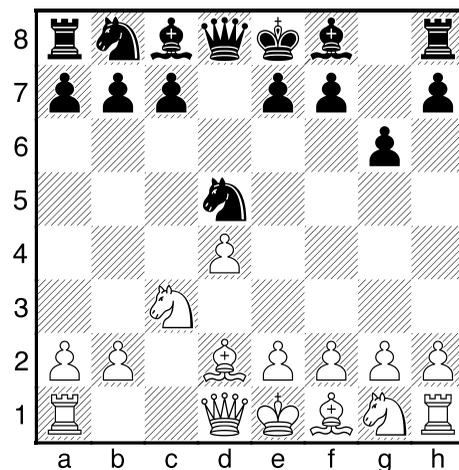
D90

Millionaire Chess Open Atlantic City (8), 10.10.2016

In round 8 of the Millionaire Chess Open, I was originally paired against IM Andrey Gorovets. I spent the entire night preparing for what would have been the Dutch Defense. To my surprise, I arrived to the board the next morning and found GM Mark Paragua sat across

from me! In a very unlucky series of events, the organizer informed me that after posting the pairings, they were changed and resubmitted 5 minutes later. I never bothered to check the pairings twice, which meant I was playing against GM Paragua cold turkey.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5  
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♙d2



One of my favourite ways to play against the Grunfeld. White avoids a lot of theory, but also sacrifices some of the advantage he obtains in the main lines.

5...♘b6

5...♙g7 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.♙xc3 is the main line, showing the purpose of ♙d2.

6.♘f3 ♙g7 7.♔c1!?

The alternative is a move like e3, but I prefer to trade my Bishop before committing my pawn structure.

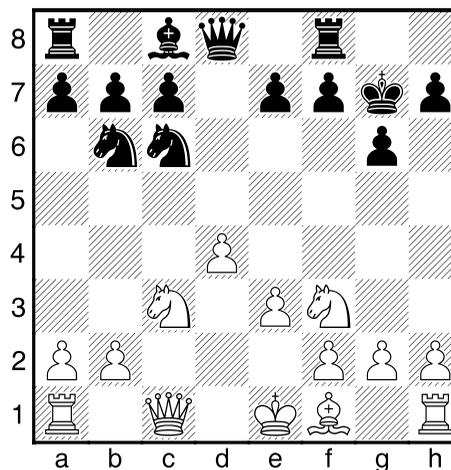
7...♘c6

7...h6 8.e4 ♘c6 9.d5± Black can't castle because of the h6 pawn.

8.♙h6 0-0

8...♙xd4 9.e3 ♙f6 10.♙e2 ♙g4  
11.0-0±.

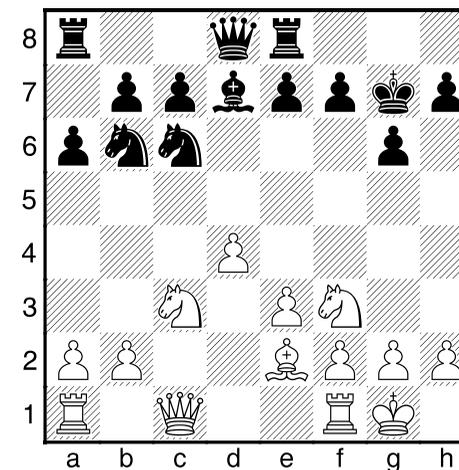
9.♙xg7 ♔xg7 10.e3



10...♙e8?!

10...♙g4 the main move, followed by a quick ...e5 11.♙e2 e5 12.0-0 ♙xf3 13.♙xf3 exd4 14.♙xc6 bxc6 15.♖d1 c5=.

11.♙b5 ♙d7 12.0-0 a6  
13.♙e2



I feel that White already holds a significant advantage here,



**GM Mark Paragua**  
photo: David Llada

although I had difficulty proving it during the game.

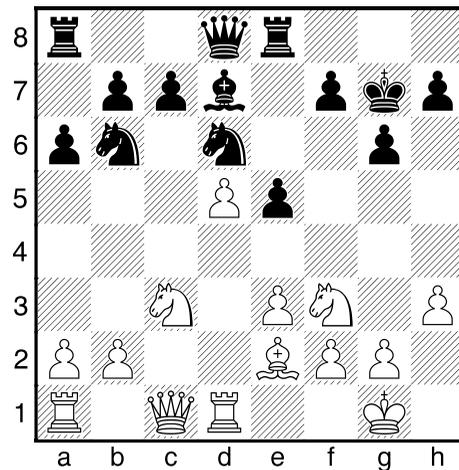
**13...e5 14.d5**

14.dxe5 ♞xe5 15.♞xe5 ♞xe5  
16.♙f3 c6 17.♞d1 ♞e7 18.b3±.

**14...♞a7 15.h3**

Without playing h3 Black's position is too easy to play with ...♙g4xf3: 15.a4 ♙g4 16.e4 ♞ac8 17.h3 ♙xf3 18.♙xf3 ♞d6 19.a5 ♞d7=.

**15...♞ac8 16.♞d1 ♞d6**



**17.a4**

17.e4 was necessary to stop Black's next move 17...♞a4 18.♞xa4 ♙xa4 19.b3 ♙d7=.

**17...e4 18.♞d4 ♞e5 19.f4**

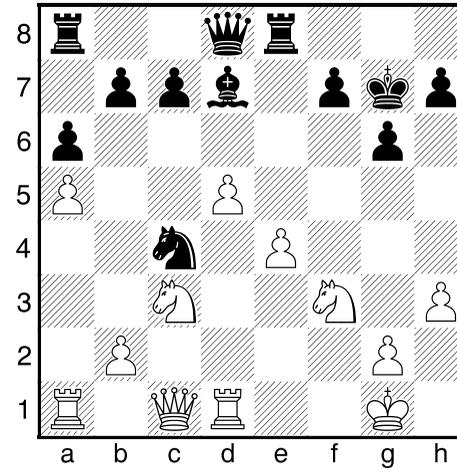
♞19.a5! ♞xd5?? (19...♞bc8♞)

20.f4! exf3 21.♞xf3 ♞xc3

22.♞xc3+-.

**19...exf3 20.♞xf3 ♞e8 21.a5**

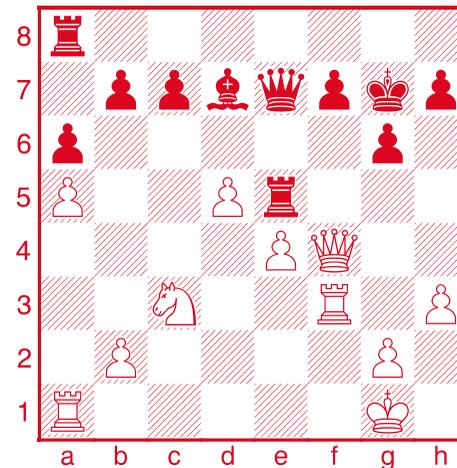
♞bc4 22.♙xc4 ♞xc4 23.e4



**23...♞e5 24.♞f1 ♞xf3+**

24...♞f6 25.♞e3±.

**25.♞xf3 ♞e5 26.♞f4 ♞e7**

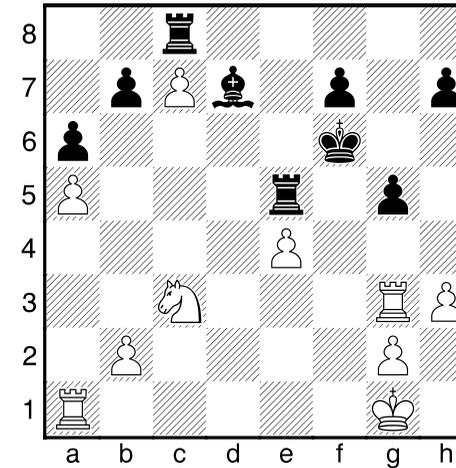


**27.d6! g5**

**27...♞xd6? 28.♞d1+-** overloads the ♞.

**27...cxd6 28.♞d5 ♞f8 29.♞f6+ ♞g8 30.♞h4♞±.**

**28.♞g3 ♞f6 29.♞xf6+ ♞xf6 30.dxc7 ♞c8**



I found this position extremely frustrating. It was clear that I was outplaying my opponent, ahead in material, and very close to a forced win. However, I couldn't find the winning variation and panicked from the notion of losing my c7-pawn and ending up slightly worse!

**31.♞d5+ ♞g6 32.♞c1 ♙c6 33.♞c5**

33.♞b3 with the idea of playing ♞b6 and ♞xc6 was winning on the spot, although not that easy

to see.

**33...♞xc7 34.♞f4+**

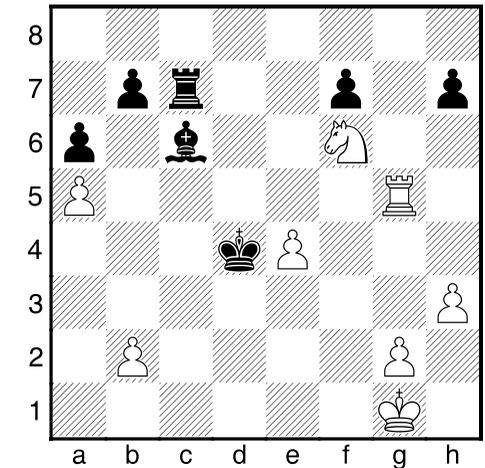
34.b4! ♞d7 35.♞f4+ ♞f6

36.♞h5+ ♞e6 37.♞g7+ ♞d6

38.♞d3+- and we see how the b4-pawn helps this variation, keeping the Rook defended.

**34...♞f6 35.♞h5+ ♞e6**

**36.♞xe5+ ♞xe5 37.♞xg5+ ♞d4 38.♞f6**



**38...♞e7?**

In mutual time pressure my opponent was scared to play 38...♙xe4! in fear of 39.♞g4 but it works tactically: 39...♞e5 40.♞xe4 f5! =.

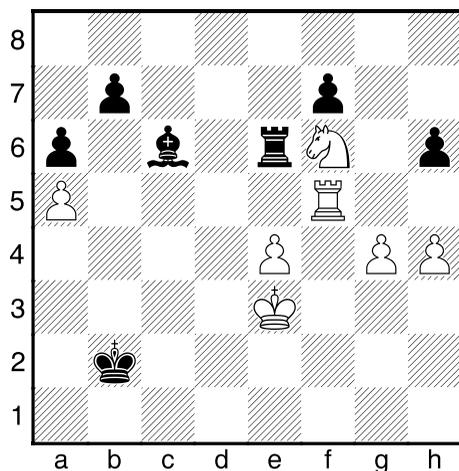
**39.♞f2 ♞e6 40.♞f5 h6**

Time control was reached, and the position clarifies. Black is



losing because White can easily create a passed pawn on the Kingside.

**41.g4 ♖c4 42.♔e3 ♔b3  
43.h4 ♖xb2**



**44.h5!**

44.g5? h5 is unnecessary: it prolongs the game and offers Black some valuable tempi which he can use to create counterplay via a passed pawn on the queenside.

**44...♞d6 45.g5**

This win was the second in a row against Grandmasters, and set me up for what I knew would be a very tough final-round pairing.

**1-0**

**Notes:**

**IM Aman Hambleton  
Shankland, Sam(2678)**

**Hambleton, Aman (2436)  
C07**

*Millionaire Chess Open Atlantic  
City (9), 10.10.2016*

In the final round of the Millionaire Chess Open in Atlantic City, I played on board three against GM Samuel Shankland, rated around 2680 FIDE at the time. He has a 2-0 lifetime score against me. We played most recently at the 2014 Olympiad where he won that game in the French Tarrasch. After a rocky start to the tournament, I beat two GM's in a row and went into this game with a lot of confidence.

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2**

Admittedly, although I prepared against this variation, I did not expect Shankland to repeat the exact line from our previous encounter.

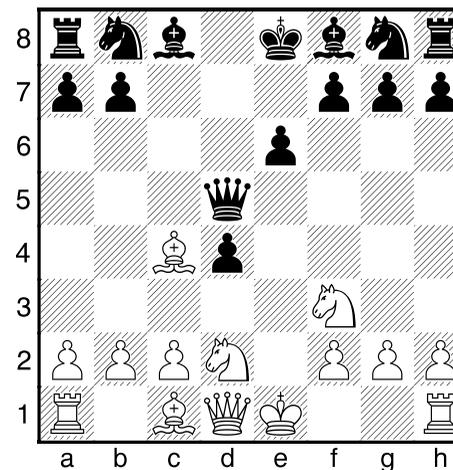
**3...c5 4.exd5**

4.♘gf3 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘f6 6.exd5 ♙xd5 7.♘b5 ♘a6± is another very double-edged variation. I played a game against [Ivanchuk](#) in [Edmonton](#) 2015, which ended as a draw.

**4...♙xd5 5.♘gf3 cxd4 6.♙c4**



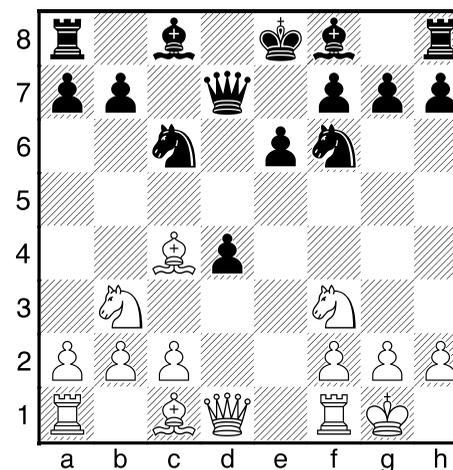
**GM Sam Shankland**  
photo: David Llada



**6...♙d7**

6...♙d6 is perhaps a more common move, although ...♙d7 is becoming more fashionable. Both are very reasonable and offer a different way to play. From what I have studied ...♙d7 is very direct and contains much less theory. 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.♘b3 ♘c6 9.♘bxd4=.

**7.0-0 ♘c6 8.♘b3 ♘f6**





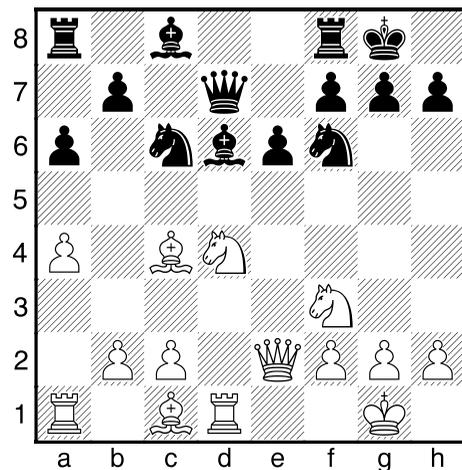
# Chess Canada Dragon

## 9. ♖e2

We are still following our game together from the Olympiad in 2014. When I saw ♖e2 I was extremely surprised — I really expected my opponent to test my French in one of the Tarrasch main lines after ♘bxd4.

9. ♘bxd4 ♘xd4 10. ♘xd4 a6 11. ♕f4 is the most natural way to play against the ♖d7 setup. Shankland is well-known for his strong preparation, so I was certainly expecting him to prepare something concrete for me here.

9...a6 10.a4 ♕d6 11.♖d1 0-0  
12.♘bxd4



I was very excited at this point, because we had been following

our game up until this point, and now I was ready to unleash the improvement that I had been practicing and preparing. My feeling was that Shankland was planning to deviate from 2014 on one of the next moves, but I beat him to the punch.

## 12...e5!

12...♘xd4 13.♖xd4 ♖c7 14.♕g5 e5 15.♖h4 ♕f5 16.♕xf6 gxf6 17.♕d3 ♕g6 18.♖g4 ♖fe8 19.♘h4 e4!= 20.♕xe4 ♕xh2+ 21.♔h1 ♕f4 22.♖f3 ♕g5= (1-0, 94) **Samuel Shankland**–**Aman Hambleton** Tromso Ol, 2014.

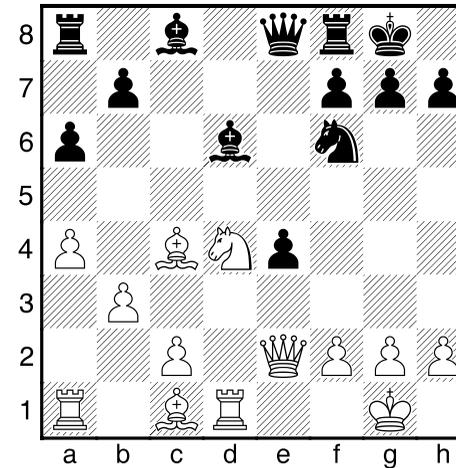
## 13.♘xc6 ♖xc6 14.b3

14.♕g5 still gives White serious chances for an advantage, although Black should be fine. The e5 pawn cannot be taken because of the hanging Bishop on c4. 14...♕c7 15.♕xf6 ♖xf6 16.♕d5±.

## 14...e4

14...♕g4!? 15.h3 ♕h5 16.g4 ♕g6 17.♖xd6 ♖xd6 18.♕a3±.

## 15.♘d4 ♖e8!



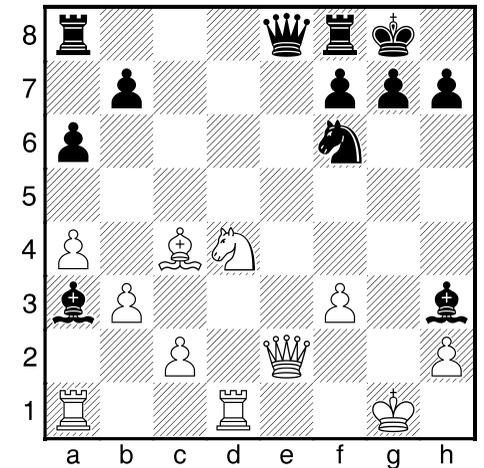
Another move I had prepared on my computer, with the help of one of my training partners in Montreal. This move, which appears crazy at first glance, intends ...♖e5 and ...♕g4, creating immense pressure against the White kingside out of nowhere.

## 16.f3?!

Perhaps not the best move, but it's hard to recommend an alternative. To my credit, I forced my opponent to think for what was now more than 30 minutes in the opening

phase of the game. This is an accomplishment considering my opponent is nearly 2700, and also known as one of the best theoreticians, especially dangerous in preparation.

16...exf3 17.gxf3 ♕h3  
18.♕a3 ♕xa3



## 19.♖xe8

Neglecting to trade the Queens by playing 19.♖xa3?! allows



*Bring the best...*

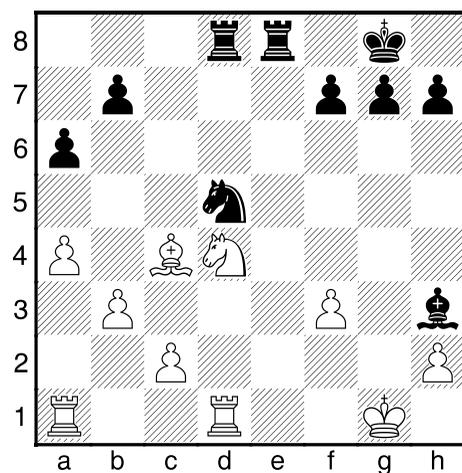
One thing Millionaire Chess did right was to add value by hiring the best people, including photographer **David Llada** and IA **Aris Marghettis**.



# Chess Canada Dragon

Black to gain the upper hand and exploit the weak Kingside with the major pieces still on the board, e.g. 19...♖b8! 20.♖aa1 ♞h5.

19...♖fxe8 20.♖xa3 ♞ad8  
21.♖aa1 ♞d5

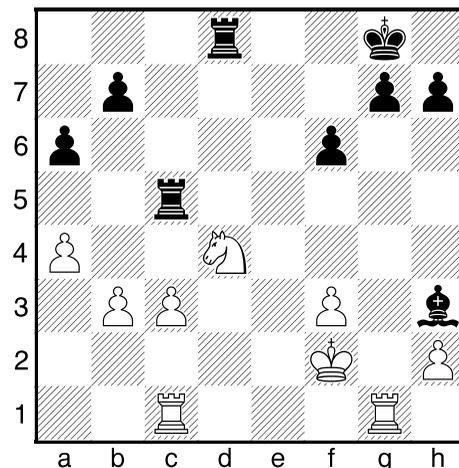


The ♞d5 must be captured, giving Black a very minimal, but lasting advantage with a better pawn structure, slightly better placed pieces, and a Bishop vs. Knight.

22.♙xd5

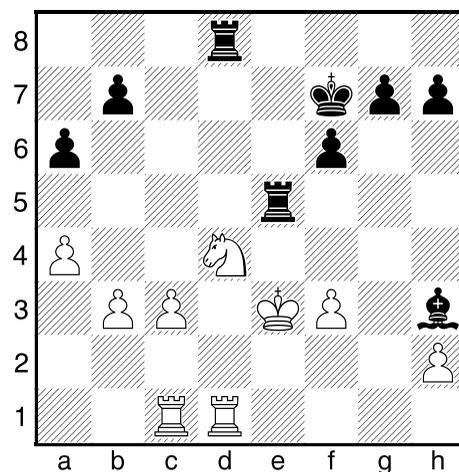
22.♖e1 ♞e3 23.♙d3 ♔f8 maintains an advantage.

22...♖xd5 23.♙f2 ♞ed8 24.c3 ♞g5 25.♖g1 ♞c5 26.♖ac1 f6



After my rook dances along the fifth rank fighting for the best square available, Black finally starts an active plan. I intended ...♔f7 followed by ...g5.

27.♙e3 ♔f7 28.♖gd1 ♞e5+

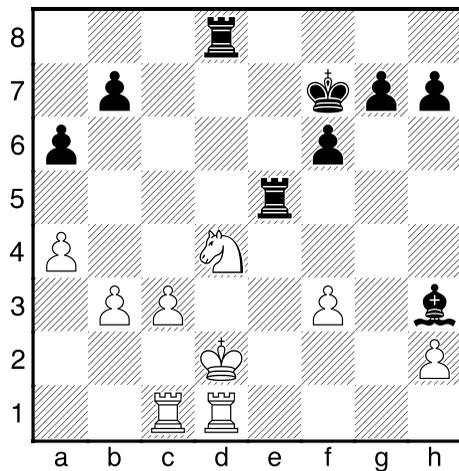


29.♙d2

29.♙f2 staying on the Kingside where I am trying to create a passed pawn seemed much



more consistent. 29...♖h5.



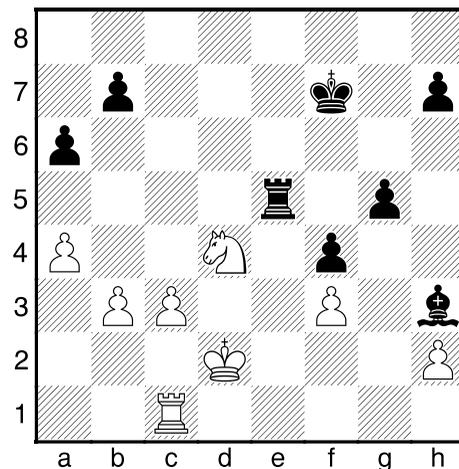
**29...g5!**

Starting an important plan: fixing the pawn on f3 as a weakness on a light square, and then pushing the h and g-pawns to create a passed pawn on the f-file.

**30.♔c2 f5 31.♖e1 ♖de8**

Keeping control of the important open file.

**32.♖xe5 ♖xe5  
33.♔d2 f4**



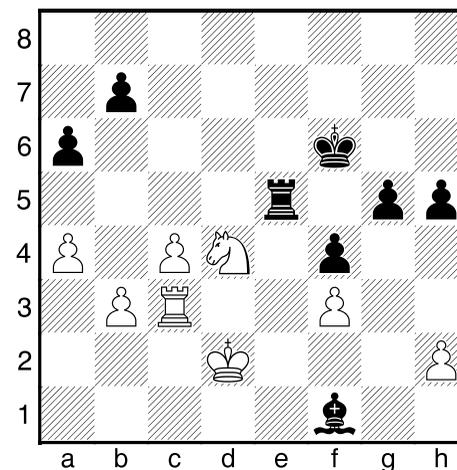
**34.c4**

The major alternative is: 34.♖e1 ♖xe1 35.♔xe1 ♔f6 36.a5 ♔e5. I feel that White can hold a draw, but it is a long and arduous task ahead.

**34...h5 35.♖c3 ♔f6 36.♗e2  
36.c5?** does not work with my Bishop on h3 because of 36...♖d5 37.♖d3 ♗f1 38.♗e2 ♖xd3+ 39.♔xd3 ♔e5+. This

tactic is important to remember for later in the game.

**36...♗f1 37.♗d4**



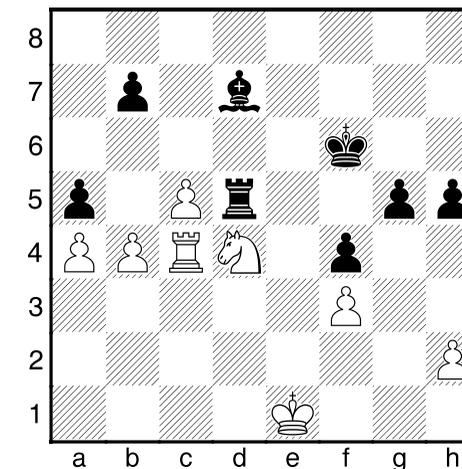
**37...a5!?**

I tried to be way too fancy here instead of realizing that it's time to start creating a passed pawn. 37...g4 probably just wins on the spot: 38.fxg4 hxg4 39.♖c1 ♗g2 40.♗e2 f3 41.♗g3 f2+.

**38.c5 ♖d5 39.♔e1 ♗h3**

39...♖xd4 40.♔xf1 ♖d2 41.c6= should be enough counterplay to draw.

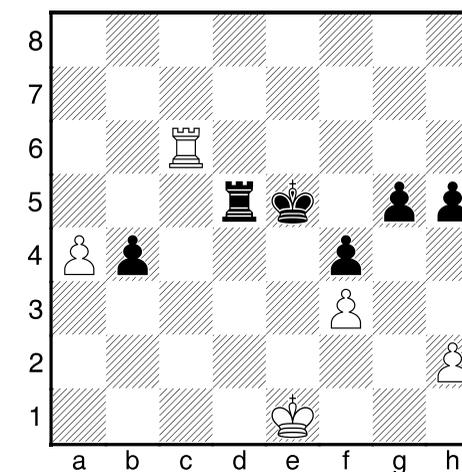
**40.♖c4 ♗d7 41.b4**



**41...♔e5**

41...axb4 42.♖xb4 ♖e5+ 43.♔f2 ♖xc5 44.♖xb7 ♗xa4 45.h4! with ♗e2 coming next I couldn't be sure that this would be enough to win.

**42.c6 bxc6 43.♗xc6+ ♗xc6  
44.♖xc6 axb4**

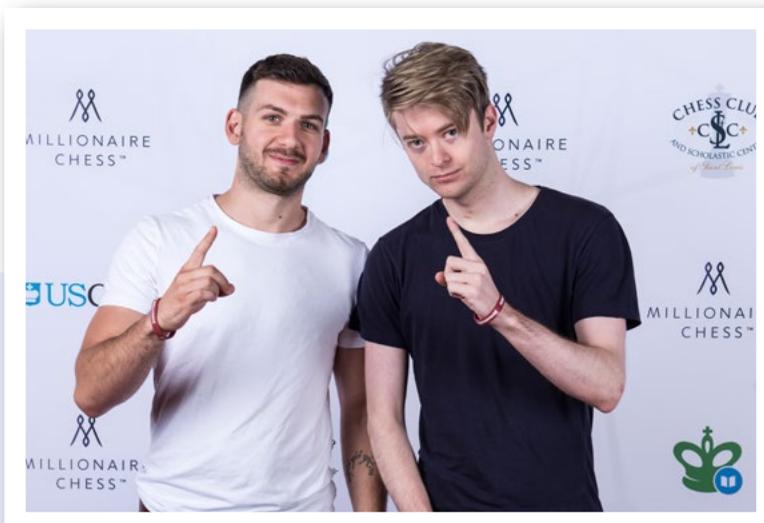


Going into this forced sequence,



**Chess Canada**  
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Photo  
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GM Cristian Chirila & Aman Hambleton pose on the red carpet for photographer **David Llada**

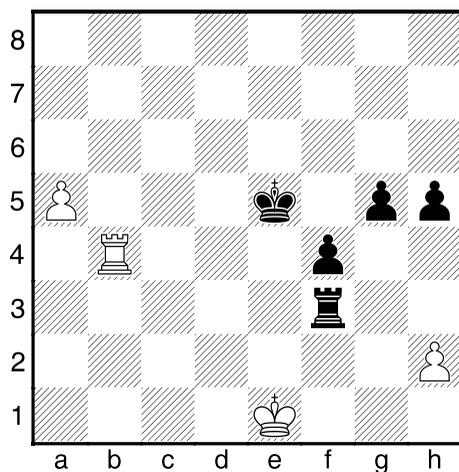
I was completely sure that the endgame was winning for Black.

**45. ♖b6 ♜d3 46. ♖xb4**

46. ♖b5+ ♔d4 47. ♖xb4+ ♔e3

48. a5 ♜a3-+ and everything falls.

**46... ♖xf3 47. a5**



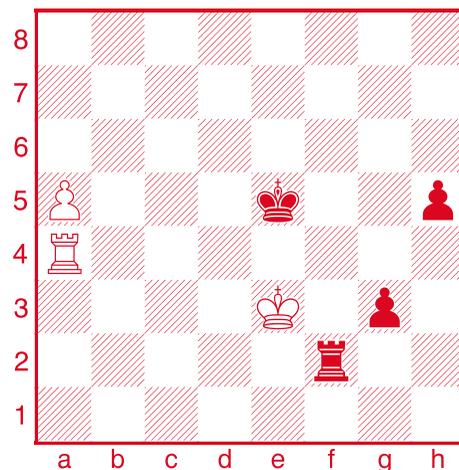
**47... g4**

47... ♖a3 appears a much easier win, but somehow I convinced myself that 48. ♖b5+ ♔f6 49. ♔f2 might be difficult to win with my King cut off.

*editor* – Black wins with ...h4 and ...h3, and can bring the ♔ around past the ♖ via h5.

**48. ♖a4 g3 49. hxg3 fxg3**

**50. ♔e2 ♖f2+ 51. ♔e3**



Even though 47 ... ♖a3 may have been more simple, I did calculate this variation very thoroughly, and saw it right until the end. Unfortunately, I chose another move at the very last moment that I considered to be winning as well, and got tricked.

**51... ♖f8??**

**51... ♖f1!** 52. ♖a2 h4 53. a6 h3 54. a7 g2 55. a8 ♖ g1 ♖+ queening with check and leading to mate in a few moves.

*editor* – The unnatural **51... ♖f5!** prevents the saving maneuver White uses in the game, and is the only other move that wins.

**52. a6**

52. ♖h4 This move scared me as

I was debating between ... ♖f8 and ... ♖f1. Although I knew ... ♖f1 was winning, I thought that this move offered me the chance to win the brilliancy prize as well as my game! A case of being overly and unnecessarily fancy — a real shame. 52... g2 53. ♖xh5+ ♔f6! 54. ♔f2 ♔g6+-+.

**52... g2 53. ♖a5+ ♔**

The in-between move that somehow slipped my calculation because the pawn used to be on the a5 square. Very sloppy in the last moment of this game.

**53... ♔d6**

We agreed to a draw because White simply plays ♖g5 and collects my g-pawn. Instead, ... ♔f6 was no better because of ♔f2.

I was very proud of my opening preparation, especially against a player as strong as Shankland — but to not finish off the game properly and collect the full point was definitely a sour taste to end the tournament.

1/2-1/2

**Notes: Keith MacKinnon  
Liang, Awonder (2406)  
Hambleton, Aman (2442)**

C07

2016 Saint Louis GM Invitational  
(3), 09.06.2016

The following game and notes first appeared on the CFC Newsfeed:

<http://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/847>

IM Aman Hambleton is currently finishing off a GM norm tournament in the chess mecca of the United States (St. Louis of course!). Though we typically focus on wins by Canadian players, this week, we're looking at a game he lost in the third round. After a bad opening in which he went down a pawn, his young opponent, fresh off a GM norm, makes one or two inaccuracies to let Aman back into the game. Just after everything is under control, Aman makes a big mistake in a 3-2 rook endgame.

**1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♘d2 c5**

Fashionable, yet I am convinced White gets good play in a

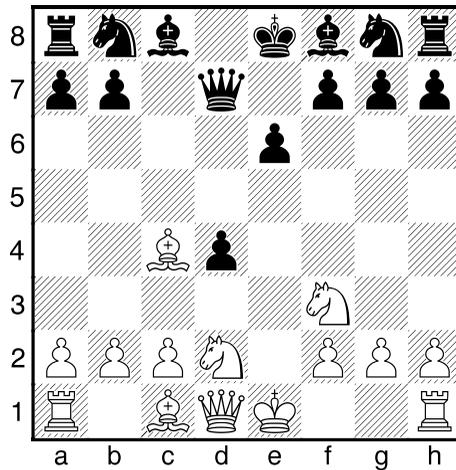


number of lines here.

#### 4.exd5 ♖xd5

4...exd5 heads to a different sort of game in which White plays against Black's isolated queen's pawn (IQP) after the inevitable exchange of the d4 for c5 pawn.

#### 5.♖gf3 cxd4 6.♕c4 ♔d7



#### 7.0-0

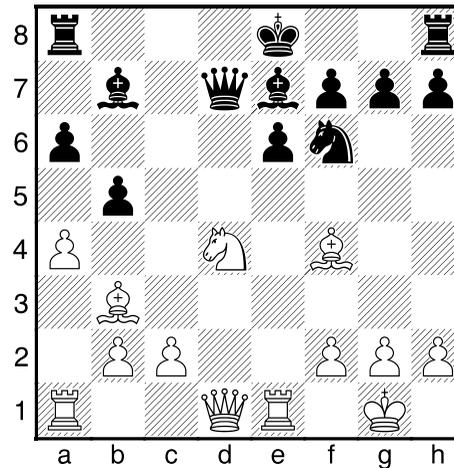
The main move. White will soon recover the d4 pawn.

7.♖e2 is also interesting and something I have played a few times. Here, Black may try and hold on to d4 but is generally ill advised to do so, as White can get quick development with moves like ♖b3, ♕g5, and 0-0-0.

#### 7...♖c6 8.♖b3 ♖f6 9.♖bxd4 ♖xd4 10.♖xd4 a6 11.♖e1 b5

Everything is still very normal here, and the position has been played many times. I suspect Aman was aiming for this position with his choice of opening; however, I would prefer to play White here.

#### 12.♕b3 ♕b7 13.♕f4 ♕e7 14.a4!



White activates his least active piece (the rook on a1).

#### 14...♕d5?!

A big decision.

14...b4 runs into the strong-looking 15.a5 after which ♕a4 is a very serious threat which cannot easily be parried, as

Black cannot castle due to ♖xe6.

14...0-0 looks impossible on account of 15.♖xe6 (15.♖xe6♞ ♕c5 (15...♖d5 16.♖e4=) 16.♕e3 ♕xd4 17.♖xf6 gxf6 18.♕xd4♞ ♖c6?? 19.♖g4+ ♔h8 20.♕d5!+-) 15...♖xd1 16.♖axd1 fxe6 17.♖xe6 where the threat of a discovered check as well as the attack on the e7 Bishop seems to guarantee White his piece back. However, Black is actually OK here! 17...bxa4 18.♕a2 (18.♖xe7+?? axb3 19.♖xb7 bxc2+) 18...♕d5! 19.♕xd5 ♖xd5 20.♖xd5 ♖xf4 21.♖xe7 ♖f7 and Black should have little trouble in holding the draw.

#### 15.axb5 ♕xb3?

Aman may have been worried about 15...axb5 16.♕xd5 ♖xa1 17.♕c6 (17.♖xa1 ♖xd5 18.♖a8+ ♕d8=) 17...♖xd1 18.♖xd1 b4 19.♕e5±.

#### 16.cxb3 ♕c5

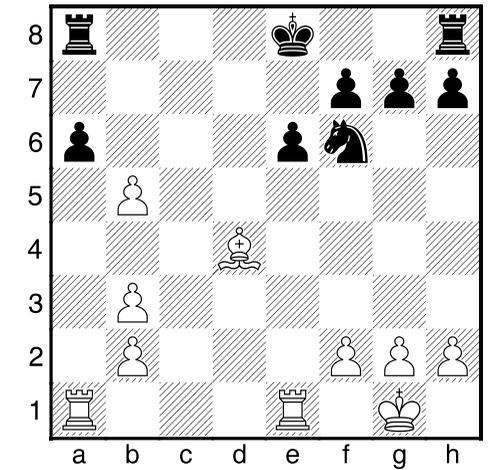
Otherwise Black is just down a pawn for nothing. 16...♕b4 17.♖f3+-.

#### 17.♕e5 ♕xd4

Black must accept the inferior

ending.

#### 18.♖xd4 ♖xd4 19.♕xd4



These positions are always a pleasure to play when you are on the advantageous side. White's chances of losing are slim to none, and he has a very real chance of bringing home the win, even without having done anything too special up to this point.

#### 19...a5 20.♕c3?!

White's first inaccuracy.

20.b4 a4 21.b6 ♔d7 22.♖a3 is an idea.

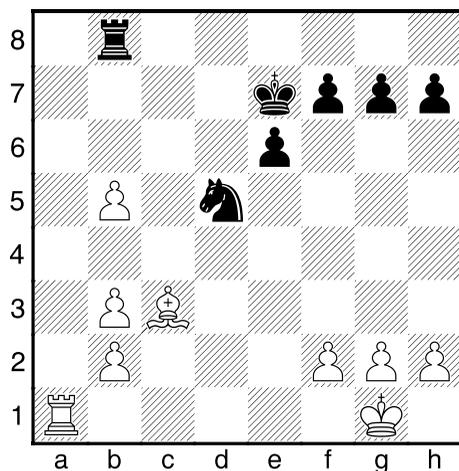
20.♕e5 with the idea ♖ec1 was strong as well.

#### 20...♔e7 21.♕xa5 ♖d5 22.♕c3 ♖xa1



editor – 22...f6 blunts the ♔, but it finds high-paying work on another diagonal after 23.♔d4! threatening both ♖a7 and ♔c5.

23.♖xa1 ♖b8

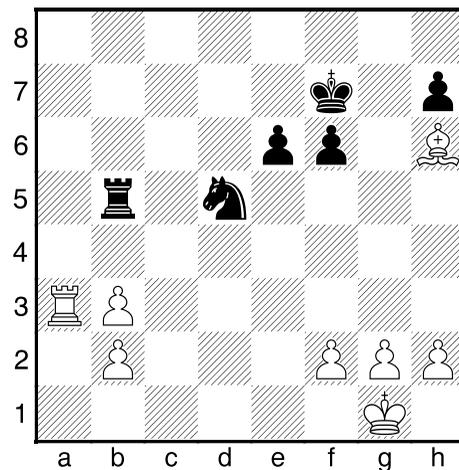


The loss of g7 is necessary as ...f6 or ...♖g8 run into ♖a7+. Black cannot trade minor pieces either, as that exchange would repair White's tripled pawns, leaving him with connected passers.

24.♔xg7 ♖xb5 25.♖a3

This is what Black had counted on — forcing White's rook into passivity. However, White soon finds a way to make progress.

25...f6 26.♔h6 ♔f7



27.♔d2?!

with the idea of playing perhaps ♔f1 (to avoid back rank problems) and b4 (followed by ♖b3 if Black were to capture the pawn with the ♞).

27.h4! ♖c5 28.h5 the point of playing h4. Now Black cannot play ...♖c2 due to ♖a7+.

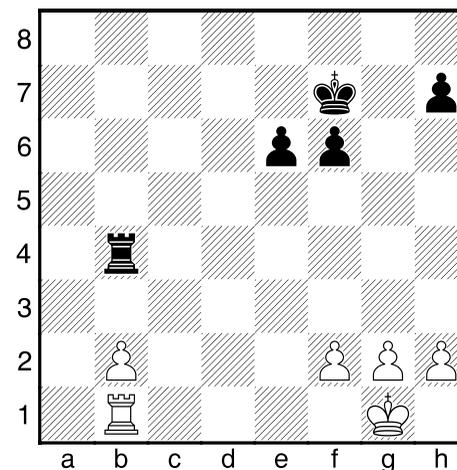
27...♖c5

Black tries to get active and use White's back rank problems to his advantage.

28.♖a1 ♖b5 29.b4

The only way to play for a win.

29...♞xb4 30.♔xb4 ♖xb4  
31.♖b1



My initial feeling when considering this position was that it should be a draw; but,

having won a similar position in a tournament last month, I now realize that the defender's task is far from easy.

31...e5 32.♔f1 ♔e6 33.♔e2  
f5 34.b3 ♔d5 35.♖d1+

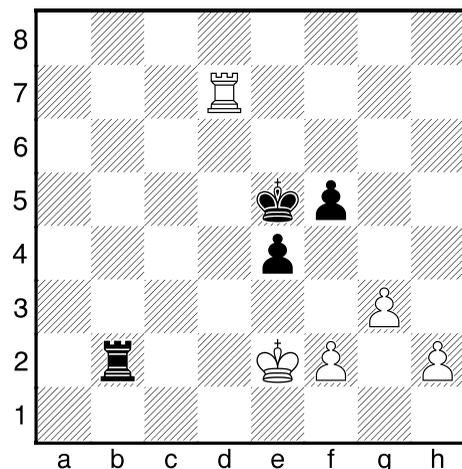
A clever way of bringing the rook to the more active d3 square.

35...♔c5 36.♖d3 e4 37.♖h3  
♔d4 38.♖xh7 ♖xb3 39.♖d7+  
♔e5 40.g3 ♖b2+



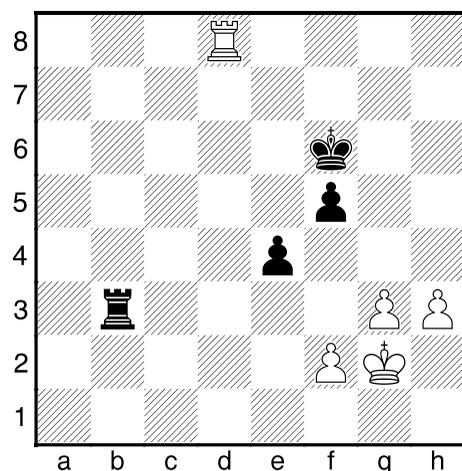
IM Awonder Liang





It's important to note the time control at the event: only 90 + 30s with no additional time after the 40th move. This position looks very holdable to me, but Aman strays, and things get out of control.

41.♖d2 ♜b5 42.♖d8 ♜b2+  
43.♔f1 ♔f6 44.h3 ♜b3  
45.♔g2



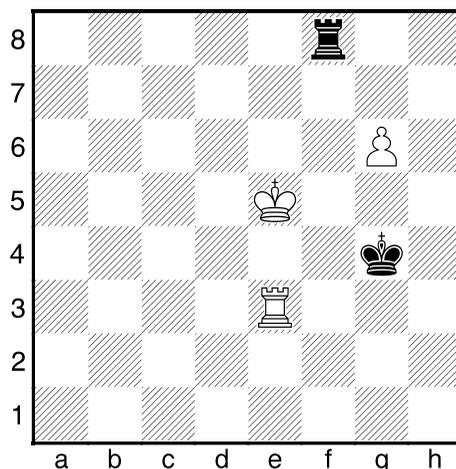
### 45...e3??

The crucial error. Black should try and sit still, as the onus is on White to improve his position. 45...♖b2 with the threat of ...e3 was the correct way to continue: 46.h4 (White cannot prevent ...e3 with his rook: 46.♖e8 ♔f7 47.♖e5 ♔f6 48.♖e8=) 46...e3 47.♔f3 exf2 48.♔g2=.

46.♖f8+! ♔g6 47.f4 ♖+- e2  
48.♖e8

The e2 pawn, though far advanced, becomes a sitting duck.

48...♖b2 49.♔f3 ♜b3+ 50.♔f2  
♔h5 51.♖xe2 ♜a3 52.♖e5  
♜a2+ 53.♔f3 ♜a3+ 54.♖e3  
♜a1 55.g4+ fxg4+ 56.hxg4+  
♔h4 57.g5 ♜f1+ 58.♔e4 ♔g4  
59.♔e5 ♜xf4 60.g6 ♜f8



### 61.g7

Awonder must have felt very confident about the ♔ vs. ♜ ending. I would have been tempted to simply move my rook off the e-file and push g7 later: 61.♖c3 ♔g5 62.♖g3+ ♔h6 (62...♔h4 63.♖g1 ♜e8+ 64.♔f6 ♖f8+ 65.♔e7+-) 63.g7 ♜g8 64.♔f6+- or 64.♔f5!?.

61...♖e8+ 62.♔f6 ♜xe3  
63.g8 ♜+ ♔f3 64.♔f5 ♔e2  
65.♜g2+ ♔e1

Aman must have felt that Awonder knew the technique for winning this position — but breaking the third rank defense is actually not so easy. I'd encourage you to look it up, as it is an important position to know!

1-0

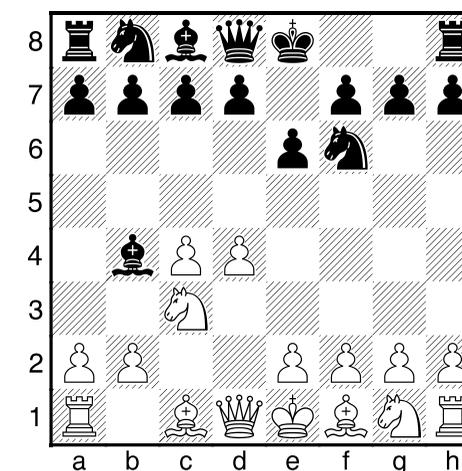
### Notes:

**IM Aman Hambleton**  
**Hambleton, Aman (2445)**  
**Sachdev, Tania (2431)**  
E46

CCSCSL Autumn GM Invitational  
St Louis (1), 17.11.2016

In round one of the Saint Louis Autumn Invitational I found myself playing against IM Tania Sachdev, from India. As it was a closed tournament, the players and even the specific pairings were known weeks in advance. I had prepared to play a new variation in the Nimzo-Indian at some point this tournament; this game gave me the perfect opportunity.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4



After looking briefly at my opponent's games, it became very clear that I should expect a Nimzo. Tania has a very narrow repertoire with the black pieces — something I share in common with my opponent.

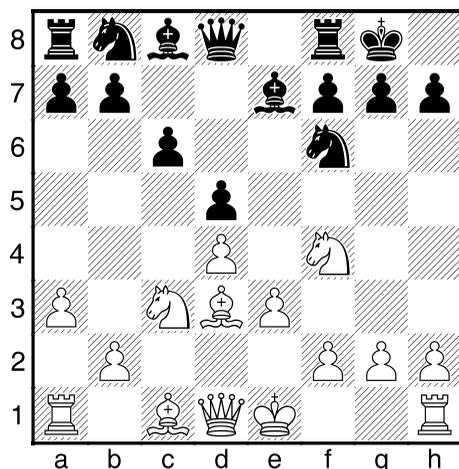
**4.e3**

The Rubinstein variation. I usually play 4.♞c2, so this must have been a surprise to my opponent, but certainly nothing abnormal.

**4...0-0 5.♘ge2 d5 6.a3 ♕e7**  
6...♕d6 is the only other option, but it is very hard to play for a win with Black in this variation, e.g. 7.c5 ♕e7 8.b4=, it's certainly not very ambitious.

**7.cxd5 exd5 8.♘f4**

8.g3 c6 9.♕g2 ♖e8 10.0-0= is another line, where White aims to play f3-e4 and expand in the center. If Black meets f3 with ...c5, he normally has sufficient counterplay.

**8...c6 9.♕d3**

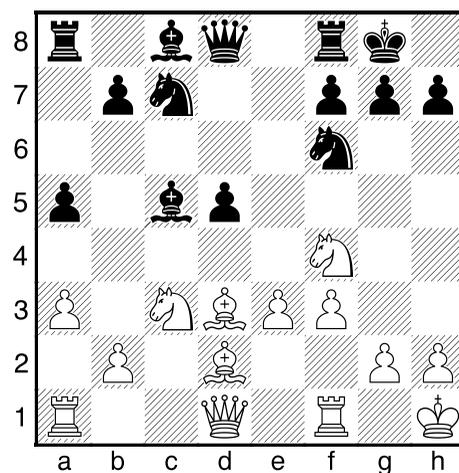
Black has an enormous choice of moves here: ...♞a6, ...♖e8, ...♞bd7, ...b6, ...♕d6, and the move played in this game.

**9...a5 10.0-0 ♞a6 11.f3**

Continuing with a standard plan in the Nimzo: controlling the g4 square and preparing f3-e4 to control the whole center.

**11...♞c7 12.♕d2 c5**

12...♞e6 13.♞xe6 ♕xe6 14.♕e1 c5 15.♕f2±.

**13.dxc5 ♕xc5 14.♙h1****14...d4**

This was the first time that my opponent deviated from the game So – Van Wely. I knew that the computer did not agree with ...d4, so I checked a few moves

**Tania Sachdev**

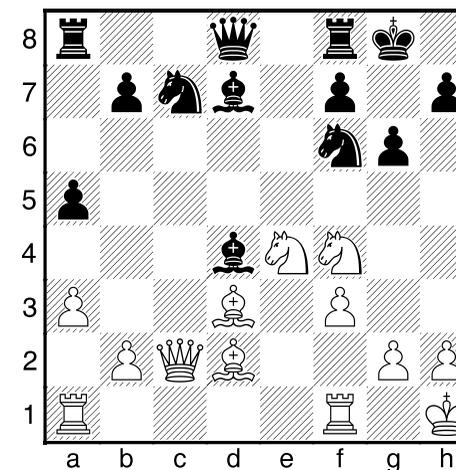
photograph unavailable

further to see the ideas, but this essentially ended my preparation here.

14...♞e6 15.e4 dxe4 16.♞xe4 ♕d4 17.♞c2 h6 18.♖ad1 ♕d7 (18...♞xf4 19.♕xf4 ♞b6=) 19.♞e2 ♖c8 20.♞b1 ♕e5 21.♕c3 ♕xc3 22.♞2xc3 ♕c6? 23.♞d6! ♖c7 24.♖fe1 ♞d4 25.♞c4 ♞a8 26.♞e5 ♖d8 27.♕c4 ♕e8 28.♞e4 ♞h5 29.♞d3 b5 30.♕a2 b4 31.♕b1 ♕b5 32.♞e3 ♞e6 33.♞d6 ♕a4 34.♞exf7 ♞hf4 35.♞xd8 ♞xd8 36.♖d2 bxa3 37.♕a2 ♞f6 38.♞xa3 ♕c6 39.♕xe6+ ♞xe6 40.♞a2 ♕xf3 41.gxf3 ♞xf3+ 42.♖g2 (1-0, 42) So,W (2706)–Van Wely,L (2693) Hoogeveen, 2013.

**15.exd4 ♕xd4 16.♞c2 ♕d7****17.♞e4**

17.♖ad1 ♖c8 18.♕c1± removing the two Bishops from the d–file and exerting pressure on the open file was also very logical and perhaps better.

**17...g6****18.♞e2!?**

I retain an advantage with this move, but ♖ad1 was begging to be played and yet I refused. I was following plans from the game I prepared, perhaps a little too closely. 18.♖ad1 ♞ce8 19.♕c3 ♕xc3 20.♞xc3±.

**18...♞xe4 19.♕xe4 ♕g7**

19...♕b5 20.♕h6 ♕xe2 21.♞xe2 ♖e8 22.♖ad1= is equal, but White has the two Bishops and both the ♞c7 and b7-pawn

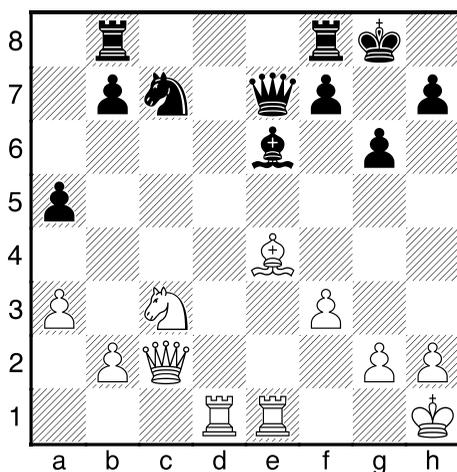


appear targets.

### 20. ♖c3

From this point on, I thought that I converted the position very effectively. I was happy with the way I turned a small visual advantage into a full point.

20... ♖xc3 21. ♘xc3 ♖b8  
22. ♖ad1 ♕e7 23. ♖fe1 ♖e6

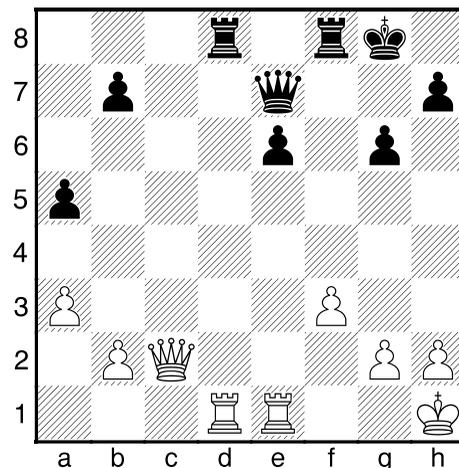


My last few moves have been very obvious, but now Black is very close to playing ... ♖fd8 and ... ♕f6 and being completely equal. I have to act fast...

### 24. ♘d5! ♘xd5

24... ♖xd5 25. ♖xd5 ♕d7 26. ♖e4 ♕c8± looks pretty bad for Black.

25. ♖xd5 ♖bd8 26. ♖xe6 fxe6



My only advantages are the weaknesses on a5 and e6, and the large time advantage I had accumulated over the course of the game. Added together, they prove more dangerous than you might think.

### 27. ♖c1 ♖d6 28. ♕b3

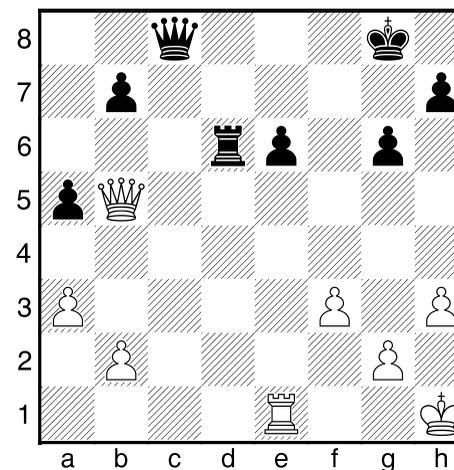
Preparing to target and pressure all the weaknesses in Black's position.

### 28... ♕d7 29. h3!

I give this an exclamation mark only to remind and encourage everyone to create an escape square for their King as early as possible in a slightly better position. Playing h4 would be too committal, as after ... ♖f4 or ... ♕e7 suddenly Black has a

target.

29... ♖c8 30. ♖xc8+ ♕xc8  
31. ♕b5



### 31...b6

31... ♖d5 32. ♕a4 b6 33. ♕f4± heading to the f6 square.

### 32. ♕e5!

A multi-purpose square: controls the all-important h2-b8 diagonal against the possible checks, protects the vulnerable b2 pawn, and places incredible pressure on e6.

### 32... ♖c6 33. ♖e4 ♖c2

33... ♕c7 34. ♕xc7 ♖xc7 35. ♖xe6 ♖b7± Black is in a Rook endgame down only a single pawn, but is also doomed to passivity. If the Rook was on b5 this type of endgame would be easily drawn, but I believe this is winning for White.

### 34. ♖h2 ♖c6

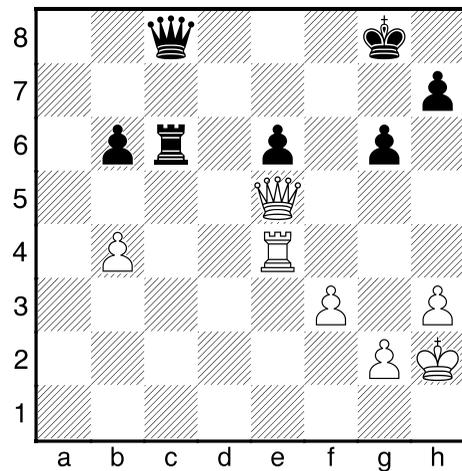
34... ♖c5 35. ♕g3 (35. ♕xe6+ would be a mistake as discussed above e.g. 35... ♕xe6 36. ♖xe6 ♖b5=) 35... ♖c6 36. b4 axb4 37. axb4± looks like it will transpose to the game.

**IM Aman Hambleton**

no easy Norms



35.b4 axb4 36.axb4

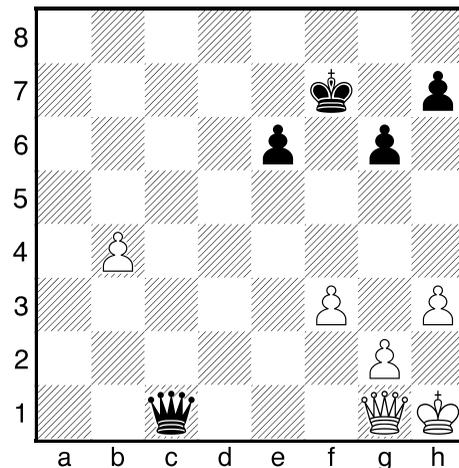


36...♖c4?

A miscalculation caused by the pressure of the White pieces and the time pressure that was now very severe. The rest of the game is just converting a winning Queen endgame.

*editor* – the game move trades ♖s, which makes the win simpler, but Black is in terrible trouble anyway, with two weak pawns and an exposed ♔; e.g. 36...♗d7 37.b5 ♖c5 (37...♖d6 38.♖a4+-) 38.♗b8+ ♔g7 39.♖f4+-.

37.♖xc4 ♗xc4 38.♗b8+ ♔f7  
39.♗xb6± ♗f4+ 40.♔h1  
♗c1+ 41.♗g1



Perhaps what my opponent missed. After this move, Black can give up on any ideas of perpetual check and White just has to cautiously escort the b-pawn down the board.

41...♗b2 42.♗c5 ♗a3  
43.♗c7+ ♔f6 44.b5 e5 45.b6  
♗a5 46.♗d6+ ♔f5 47.b7 ♔f4  
48.♔h2

After covering the g3 square my opponent resigned. There are no more perpetual check ideas and it is clear that the b-pawn will become a second Queen. Not a bad start to the tournament for myself, especially considering I played this opening for the first time. I was pleased with the result and optimistic for the following rounds.

1-0

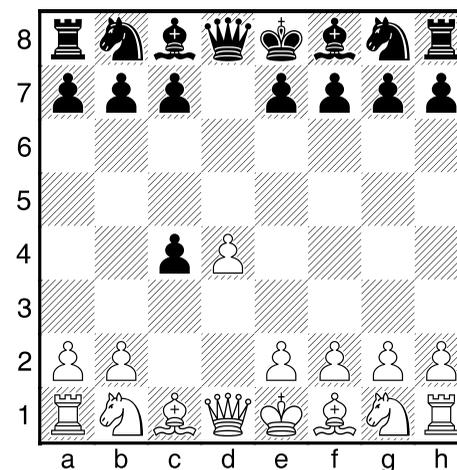
**Notes:**

**IM Aman Hambleton  
Chandra, Akshat (2509)  
Hambleton, Aman (2445)  
D27**

*CCSCSL Autumn GM Invitational  
St Louis (6), 20.11.2016*

In round six of the Saint Louis Autumn Invitational I was paired against IM Akshat Chandra, another participant chasing a GM-norm in this event. Since 6.5/9 points was necessary for a norm, it was clear that the winner of this game would have great norm-chances moving forward, and the loser would miss out on the norm altogether. An important round!

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4



An opening I've been playing recently, with mixed success. I manage to avoid all of the main line Queen's Gambit theory, but also concede the center and give White very easy moves to play.

3.♘f3

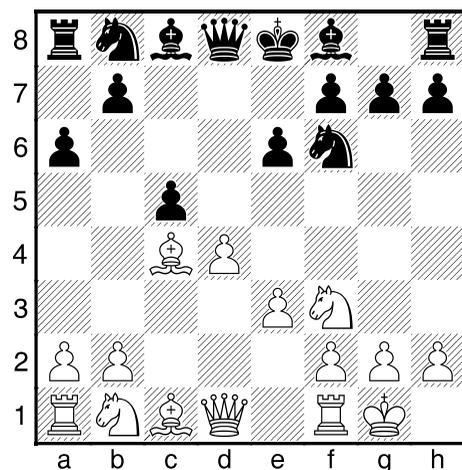
Chandra played 3.e3 e5 4.♗xc4 exd4 5.exd4 ♗d6= against me in our last encounter earlier this year, which eventually leads to equality with very precise play by Black. I was able to demonstrate that and we drew the game: 6.♘f3 ♘f6 7.♗e2+ ♗e7 8.♗xe7+ ♔xe7 9.0-0 ♗e6 10.♖e1 ♔d7 11.♗xe6+ fxe6 12.♘c3 ♖e8 13.♗g5 ♘c6 14.♘e5+ ♗xe5 15.dxe5 ♘d5 16.♖ad1 h6! 17.♗h4 ♘ce7 18.♗xe7 ♔xe7 19.♘xd5+ exd5 20.♖xd5 ♖ad8 21.♖dd1 ♔e6= (1/2-1/2, 36) Chandra,A (2464)–Hambleton,A (2439) Saint Louis, 2016.

3...♘f6 4.e3 e6

Trying to hang on to the pawn this early is not advised: 4...b5 5.a4 c6 6.axb5 cxb5 7.b3±

5.♗xc4 c5 6.0-0 a6





### 7. ♘c3

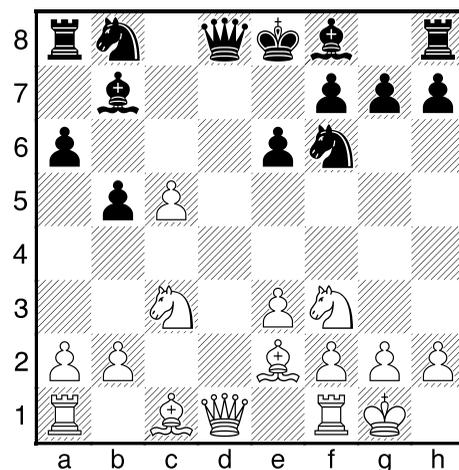
Not a move that I expected, and perhaps I played too quickly here. I am not used to being given a free tempo with ...b5.

7. ♖b3 cxd4 8. exd4 ♘c6 9. ♘c3 ♙e7 10. ♙g5 0-0 11. ♚d2± is the main line, with a classical isolated Queen-pawn position. White plays for activity and an attack on the Kingside using the open lines for his pieces. Black plays to exchange pieces where possible and control d5 in an attempt to prove the isolated pawn on d4 is a weakness.

7. dxc5 ♚xd1 8. ♖xd1 ♙xc5 9. ♙e2± is a very popular line, with no risk for White. The idea of ♙e2 is to play ♘fd2-b3 and

♙f3 to control the long diagonal. Black should continue with ...b6 here and not ...b5, which is a critical difference compared to the game.

### 7...b5 8. ♙e2 ♙b7 9. dxc5



### 9...♚xd1?!

I decided to take the Queen, launching myself into a poor version of the transposition I mentioned above after 7. dxc5.

On this exact same day, the World Championship was taking place and this exact variation took place! Magnus, with the black pieces, played ...♘c6 and showed precise preparation, earning a draw:

9...♘c6! 10. ♘d2 ♙xc5 11. ♘de4 ♘xe4 12. ♘xe4 ♙e7 13. b3 ♘b4 14. ♙f3 0-0 15. ♙a3 ♖c8 (15...♙d5=) 16. ♘f6+ ♙xf6 17. ♙xb7 ♙xa1 18. ♙xb4 ♙f6 19. ♙xf8 ♚xd1 20. ♖xd1 ♖xf8 21. ♙xa6 b4 one stops two, and the opposite ♙s make this an easy draw, (1/2 -1/2, 33) [Karjakin–Carlsen, World Championship g7, New York, 2016.](#)

### 10. ♖xd1 ♙xc5 11. ♘d2

White intends ♘b3 where a difficult choice is presented. Playing ...♙b6 and staying on the a7-g1 diagonal means White plays a4, and playing ...♙e7 and remaining on the f8-a3 diagonal means White can play ♘a5.

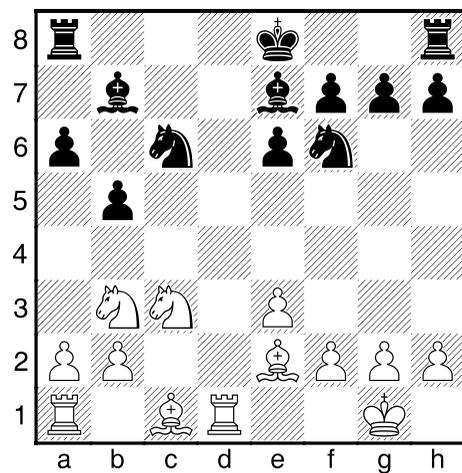
### 11...♙e7

11...0-0 12. ♘b3 ♙b6 (12...♙e7 13. ♘a5 ♙c8 14. ♙f3 ♖a7 15. e4± 13. a4 bxa4 14. ♘xa4 ♙c7 15. ♘ac5±.



**Norm Toasters**  
Celebrating Lefong's IM Norm

12. ♖b3 ♗c6



The only move that prevents ♖a5 reasonably.

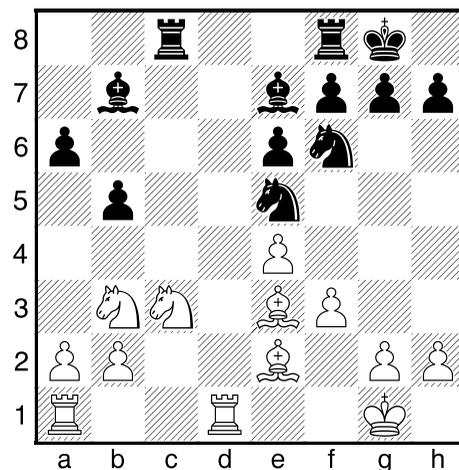
13. f3!

Such a calm move, but one that gives White a near-decisive advantage in my opinion. The idea is to play e4 and permanently lock out the b7 Bishop from the action.

13... 0-0

13... e5?! 14. e4 ♖d4 15. ♗xd4 exd4 16. ♖b1± is what the computer gives to try to keep the balance, but I believe this is much better for White.

14. e4 ♖ac8 15. ♕e3 ♗e5



16. ♖ac1

I spent a long time calculating 16. a4 ♗c4 17. ♕c1 b4 18. ♖a2 when incredibly, it feels like I am out of good moves. I cannot play ... ♖d8 or ... a5 without losing a pawn, and the ♗f6, ♕e7, and ♕b7 have no useful squares. Essentially a *zugzwang* on move 18.

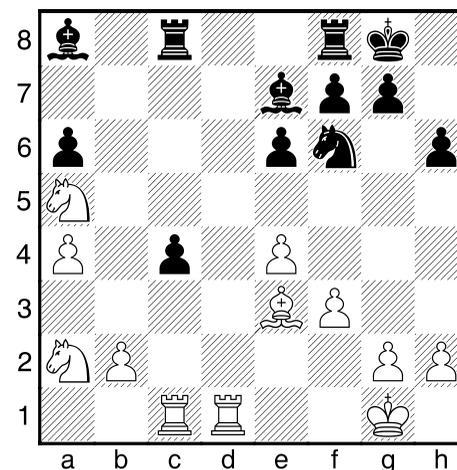
16... h6

I really did not know what to do, and White's advantage is slowly accumulating with every move. At this point I'm just waiting for a4 so that some forced variations will occur.

17. a4 ♗c4

17... b4 18. ♖a2 ♕c6 19. a5 ♕a4

20. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 21. ♖c1± a6 will fall or Black will have to give up the c-file.

18. ♕xc4 bxc4 19. ♖a5 ♕a8  
20. ♖a2

20... ♖fd8

20... ♕c5 fails unfortunately to 21. ♕xc5 ♖xc5 22. b4!+-.

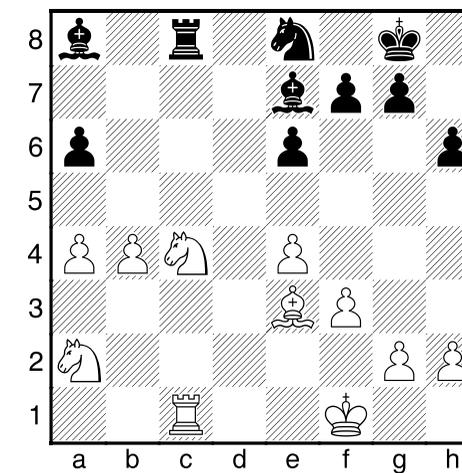
21. ♖xd8+ ♕xd8 22. ♖xc4  
♕e7

♖b4 and ♖d6 have to be prevented.

23. ♖f1

23. ♖b6 ♖xc1+ 24. ♖xc1 ♕c6 25. b3 ♗d7± and some chances for a draw with the two Bishops.

23... ♗e8 24. b4



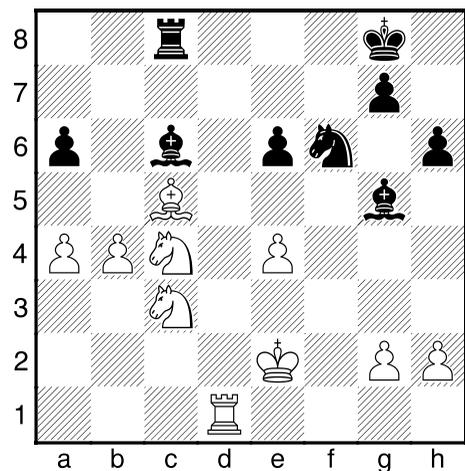
24... f5!

The correct way to search for counterplay, although my time was disastrously low as a result of how easy my opponent's position has been to play.

25. ♕c5 ♕g5 26. ♖d1 ♕c6

26... fxe4 27. ♖b6 ♖b8 28. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 29. fxe4 ♖c8 was an interesting attempt, intending ... a5. However, after White plays, 30. a5 ♗f6 31. ♖c3+- I think the position starts to look closer and closer to losing.

27. ♖c3 fxe4 28. fxe4 ♗f6  
29. ♖e2



29...♞d7

29...♞xe4 30.♞xe4 ♕xe4

31.♞d6+-.

30.♕e3 ♕xe4??

Just an outright blunder with extreme time pressure. The game cannot be saved at this point anyway, so at least I'm not spoiling any good chances.

31.♞xe4

This was a fairly crucial game as we were both chasing a GM-norm and, with this loss, my chances were ruined for this event. My opponent, Akshat Chandra, went on to share first place in the tournament and earn his final GM-norm and GM title all at once.

1-0

## !!!! BREAKING NEWS !!!!

Contrary to an irresponsible caption several pages ago, it appears a few photos of Indian woman chess player, Sachdev Tania, do exist.

Sources claim she is an International Master and "Red Bull athlete", whatever that is.

Our apologies to our readers, Miss Sachdev, and, as always, to the British Raj.

- the odditor



Chess Canada  
Dragon



The 11<sup>th</sup> Edmonton International took place June 18-26, 2016. It was a 10-player invitational Round Robin featuring: foreign GMs **Alexei Shirov** (LAT), **Surya Ganguly** (IND), **S. P. Sethuraman** (IND), and **Sam Shankland** (USA), and Canadians **Bator Sambuev**, IM **Richard Wang**, FMs **Ian Findlay**, FM **Dale Haessel**; and FM **Bitan Banerjee** (IND), **Belsar Valencia** (PHI).

GM **Sam Shankland** scored 8/9, which was equalled by GM **Surya Ganguly**, but Shankland won their individual game — stopping Ganguly's 7/7 start! — to take the title on first tie-break. Shankland conceded draws to third place finisher **Shirov** in the second round and to **Richard Wang** in the final round to secure the win.

FM **Bitan Banerjee** (IND, but now living in Alberta) scored an IM Norm with 4.5/9, which included draws with GMs Shirov, Sethuraman, and Sambuev. This was Bitan's fourth IM norm, leaving him needing only a 2400 rating to get the IM title.

*Chess Canada* has five games from the 11th Edmonton International.

## Ganguly, Surya (2654)

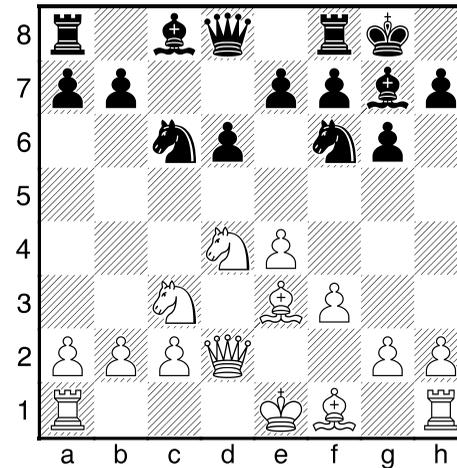
## Wang, Richard (2341)

B76

11th Edmonton (7), 24.06.2016

Notes: John Upper

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4  
4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♙e3  
♙g7 7.f3 ♘c6 8.♚d2 0-0



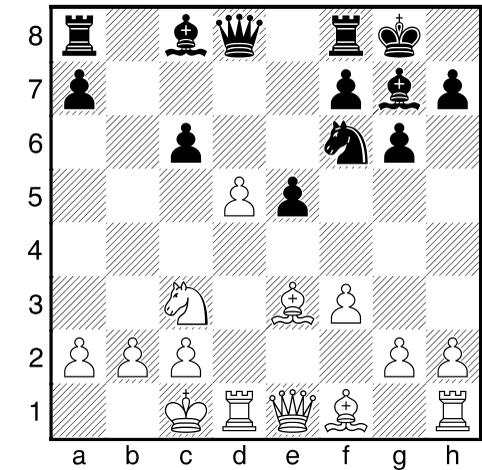
White's main moves are ♙c4 and 000. The former was Fischer's favourite, putting the ♙ on an active square, preventing ...d5, and aiming for h4-h5 "sac-sac-mate"; but the latter

move has become the modern mainline as Black's defences — ...h5! — to the Yugoslav attack have been more thoroughly worked out.

## 9.0-0-0 d5 10.♚e1!?

First played in the late 1980s, this has become White's top choice. The ♚ retreat creates an X-ray from the ♖d1 to the ♚d8.

10...e5 11.♘xc6 bxc6  
12.exd5



## 12...cxd5?!

12...♘xd5! see **Carlsen-Jones**, in the Appendix.

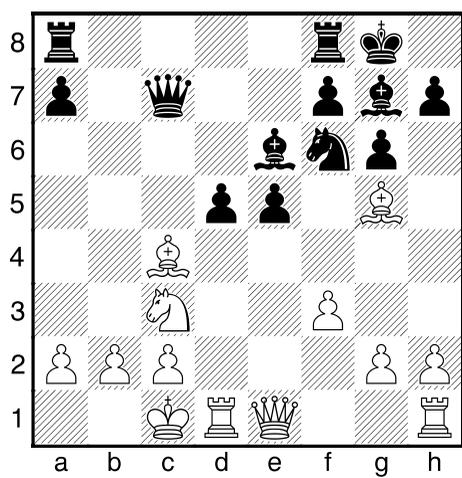
13.♙g5! ♙e6 14.♙c4 ♚c7

## Top Three Ganguly, Shankland, Shirov





# Chess Canada Dragon

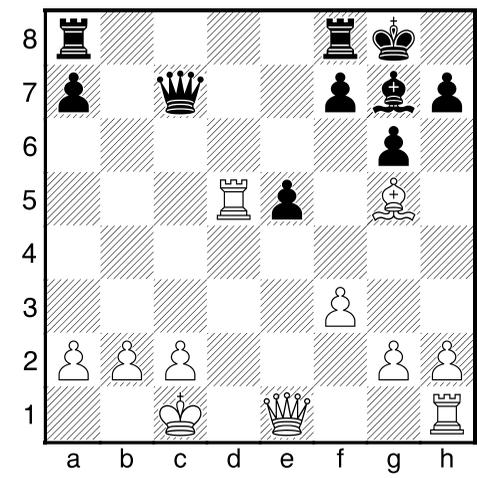


White has a choice: take on f6 and keep a small advantage against Black's weak pawns, or take on d5 to win a pawn while opening lines at the ♔c1.

15. ♙xd5

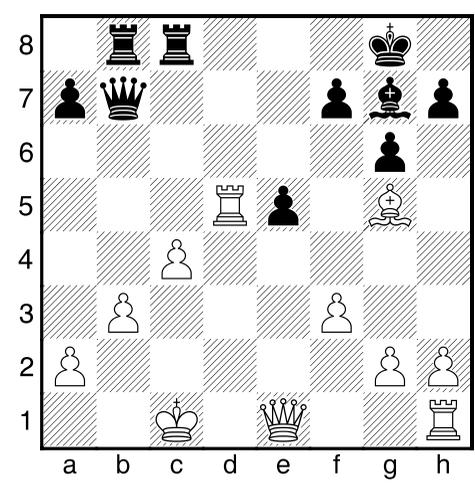
Ganguly plays the more dynamic move. For the more positional 15. ♙xf6 see [Leko-Carlsen](#) (in Appendix).

15... ♞xd5 16. ♞xd5 ♙xd5 17. ♞xd5



White is up a pawn, but Black has two half-open files and a ♙ pointed at White's ♔.

17... ♞ab8 18. b3 ♞fc8 19. c4 ♙b7



Threatening ... ♙xd5 and ... ♞xc5.

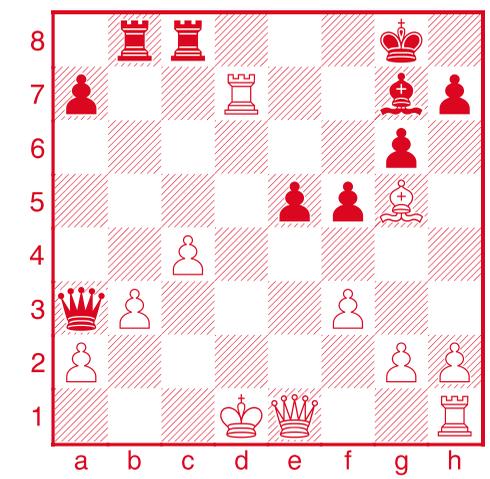
Threatening ... ♙c3.

21. ♔d1 f5 22. ♙e1? 22. ♙c2±.

22... ♙a3?

Black misses his chance: 22... ♞xc4!± 23. bxc4? ♙a4+! and ... ♙xc4.

23. ♞d7



23... h6?

In his notes to the game for ChessBase, Ganguly says he'd seen the following lines:

23... ♙b2? 24. ♙d2 ♙b1+ 25. ♔e2 ♞xh1 26. ♞xg7+ ♞xg7 27. ♙d7+ ♔g8 28. ♙e6+ ♔g7 29. ♙xe5+ ♔f7 30. ♙e7+ ♔g8 31. ♙e6+ ♔g7 32. ♙f6+ ♔h6 33. ♙e3+ ♔h5 34. ♙g5#.

20. ♙e4

20. ♙a5 ♞xc4 ♙b1+ 22. ♔d2 ♙xh1 (22... ♞b2+?? 23. ♔e3+-) 23. ♞d8+ ♞xd8+ 24. ♙xd8+ ♙f8 25. ♙e7 ♙xg2+.

20... ♙b4



Round 1

23...♔xa2! 24.♖xg7+ ♔f8□=  
25.♕h6 ♖xb3+□ (25...♗d8+??  
26.♗d7+-) 26.♔e2 ♖xc4+  
27.♔f2 ♖h4+-+.

### 24.♖d2!!+-

Suddenly White has a crushing attack.

### 24...♗b6?

If Black takes the ♕ then White can push his h-pawn to overload the defence: 24...hxg5 25.♖d5+ ♔h7 26.h4 g4 (26...♔h6 27.hxg5+ ♔xg5 28.♖d2+ ♔f6 29.♗d6+ ♔f7 30.♖d5+-) 27.h5! ♔h6 (27...g5 28.h6+-) 28.♖f7+-.

### 25.♗xg7+!

1-0

## Haessel, Dale (2234)

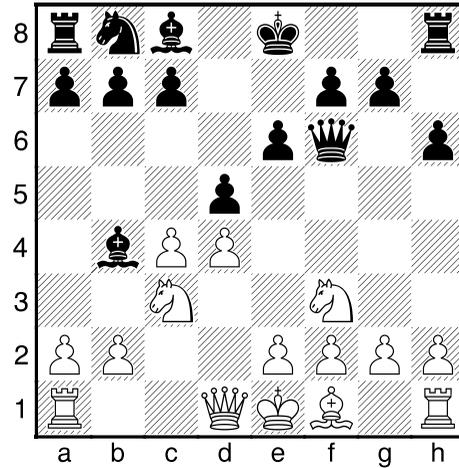
### Findlay, Ian (2257)

D38

11th Edmonton (2.4), 19.06.2016

Notes: John Upper

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5  
4.♘c3 ♖b4 5.♕g5 h6 6.♕xf6  
♖xf6



### 7.♖b3

7.e3 is more common, usually leading to IQP positions after ...c5.

### 7...♘c6

Both sides avoid the IQP. 7...c5 is more common, and better-scoring, though it can be hard for Black to scare up winning chances after 8.cxd5 exd5 9.a3 ♕xc3+ 10.♖xc3.

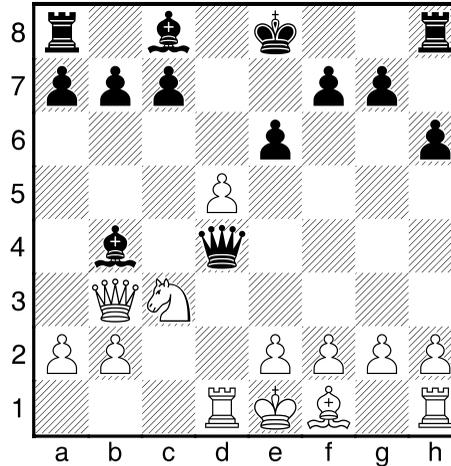
### 8.cxd5

8.e3 dxc4 9.♕xc4 0-0 10.0-0 ♕d6 11.♘e4 (11.♗ac1 ♘a5=) 11...♖e7± [Bu,X \(2656\)](#)–[Zhang,Z \(2621\)](#) China, 2007 (½-½, 29).

### 8...♘xd4 9.♘xd4

9.♖xb4?? ♘c2+-+.

### 9...♖xd4 10.♗d1



### 10...♕xc3+!±

Now Black will be ahead in development with pawn targets on the queenside.

10...♖b6 11.a3 ♕xc3+ 12.♖xc3 gains a tempo on g7. 12...0-0= [Rabinovich,I–Ragozin,V](#) USSR ch. Tbilisi, 1937 (0-1, 65)

10...♖c5 loses a tempo over the game line (compare with the next note) 11.e3 0-0 12.a3 ♕xc3+ 13.♖xc3 ♖xc3+ 14.bxc3 exd5 15.♗xd5 ♕e6 16.♗c5 c6 17.♕c4 ♗fe8 18.♔e2 ♗ad8 19.♕xe6 ½-½ [Khismatullin,D \(2643\)](#)–[Lastin,A \(2656\)](#) St Petersburg, 2009.

### 11.bxc3

11.♖xc3 ♖xc3+ 12.bxc3 exd5

13.♗xd5 ♕e6 (compared with the Lastin game above, White's pawn is still vulnerable on a2). 14.♗d2 ♔e7± again, with a lead in development and weak queenside pawns to target.

### 11...♖b6 12.e3

12.e4 0-0±.

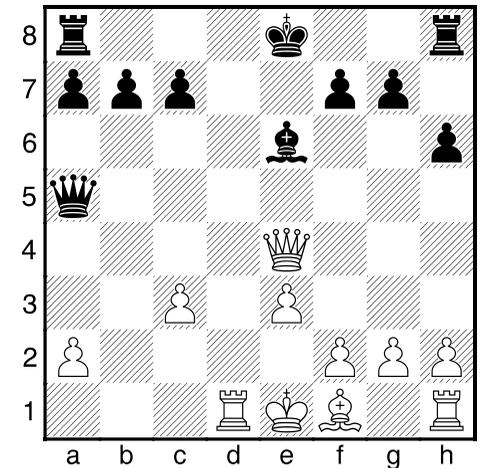
### 12...exd5± 13.♖xd5

13.♗xd5 ♕e6 14.♖a4+ c6 15.♗d2±.

### 13...♕e6 14.♖e4

14.♖e5 0-0 15.♕e2 ♗fe8±.

### 14...♖a5±



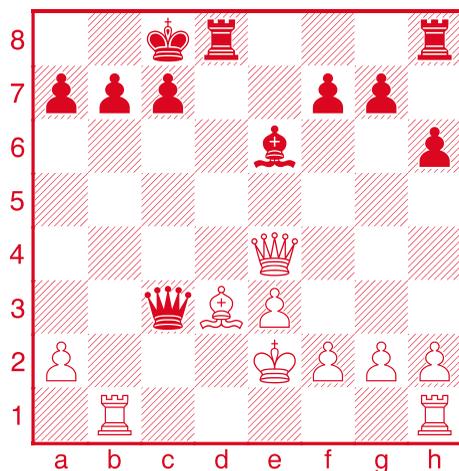
### 15.♕d3?!

Gives up a pawn to finish developing and maybe get queenside pressure.



15. ♖b4 ♕xb4 16. cxb4 ♘xa2  
(16...a5!) 17. b5;  
15. ♖xb7? ♖xc3+ 16. ♖d2 0-0-♠.

15... ♖xc3+ 16. ♔e2 0-0-0 ♠  
17. ♖b1?



17... ♖d5?!

Defends b7 and keeps a big advantage, but a big miss nevertheless, and maybe a sign that Black was not calculating well that day.

♠17... ♖xd3-+ is just winning 18. ♖xb7+ (18. ♖xd3 ♘c4-+) 18... ♔d8 19. ♖b8+ (19. ♖hd1 is nothing 19... ♖xd1 (19... ♘c4!; 19... ♖c2+ 20. ♔e1)

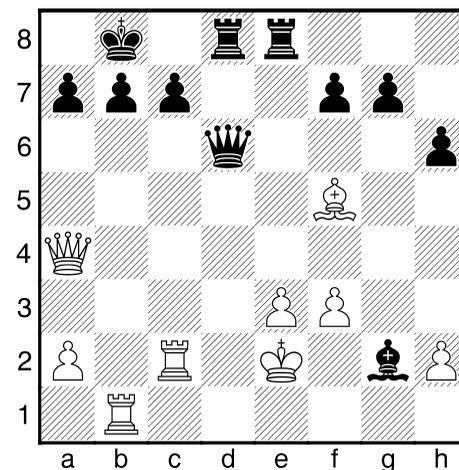
20. ♖xd1+ ♔e7-+) 19... ♔e7!  
(19... ♘c8 keeps the material and also wins, e.g. 20. ♖hc1 ♖d2+ 21. ♔f1 ♖c2-+) 20. ♖xh8 ♖d2+ 21. ♔f1 (21. ♔f3 ♖f6+ 22. ♔g3 ♖xf2#) 21... ♖d3+ 22. ♔g1 ♖d1+ 23. ♖xd1 ♖xd1#.

18. ♖f4

Threatening ♖hc1, skewering the ♖ and c7.

18... ♖f6 19. ♘f5+ ♔b8  
20. ♖hc1 ♖d6 21. ♖a4 ♘xg2!  
21...b6 is good too, but this wins a pawn and threatens mate on d2.

22. ♖c2 ♖he8 23. f3



Is White trapping the ♘g2?

23... ♖xh2??

Missing White's only good move...

The ♘ isn't trapped, and Black can even "give it up" with:

23... ♘h3! ♠24. ♘xh3 ♖xh2+-+.  
23...g6 24. ♘e4 b6♠-+.  
23...b6 24. ♔f2 ♖xh2-+.

24. ♖xb7+♠+-

Forcing mate: 24... ♔xb7  
25. ♖c6+ ♔b8 26. ♖b2#.

1-0

GM vs FM

Sethuraman v Haessel  
Shankland v Valencia

Canada's top finisher was GM Bator Sambuev. He played his usual enterprising chess, and outplayed Shankland and Shirov in the opening but made serious mistakes to lose both. *Chess Canada* has three games by Sambuev: against Shankland, Shirov and Sethuraman.

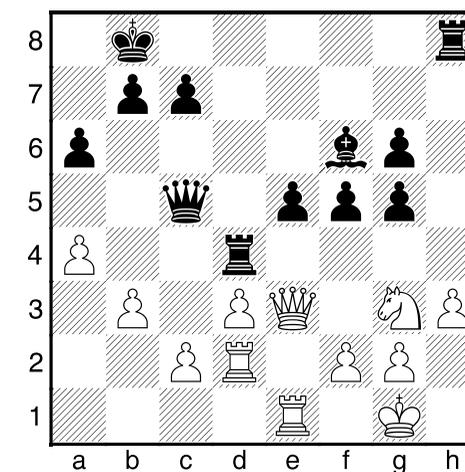
Shankland, Sam (2646)

Sambuev, Bator (2540)

B01

11th Edmonton (6), 23.06.2016

Notes: John Upper



Black has completely outplayed White and has a winning advantage with a straightforward plan: play ...g4 then attack down the h and or g-files. But...

30...♔b4??

30...f4? 31.♖f3 ♘f (31.♘e4 fxe3  
32.♘xc5 exd2-+).

30...♖f8 31.♖e2 g4.

31.c3 ♘∞

Decoy tactic and White is suddenly back in the game!

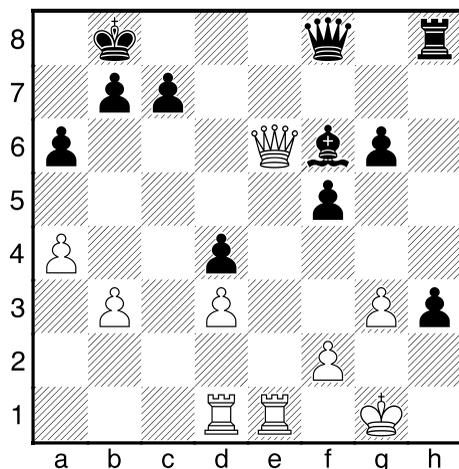
31...♖xc3 32.♘e2 ♖b4

32...♖xb3 33.♘xd4 exd4 34.♖e6  
and White forces off the ♖s.

33.♘xd4 exd4 34.♖e2 ♘g4

35.♖dd1! gxh3 36.♖e6 ♖f8!

37.g3



37...♖g7?

37...f4! keeps Black in the game  
38.gxf4 ♘g5!! 39.fxc5? ♖f3-+.

38.♔h2! f4 39.gxf4 ♘h4

40.♖e5 ♖h6 41.♖c1+- ♖c8

42.♖xd4

White went on to win in 72  
moves.

1-0

## Sambuev, Bator (2540) Shirov, Alexei (2682)

A11

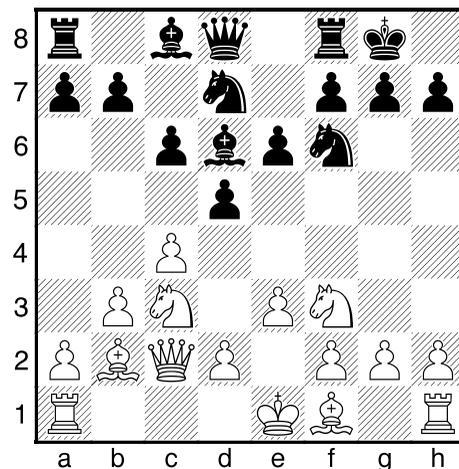
11th Edmonton (7), 24.06.2016

Notes: John Upper

1.♘f3 d5 2.c4 c6 3.e3 ♘f6

4.♘c3 e6 5.b3 ♘bd7 6.♖c2

♘d6 7.♘b2 0-0



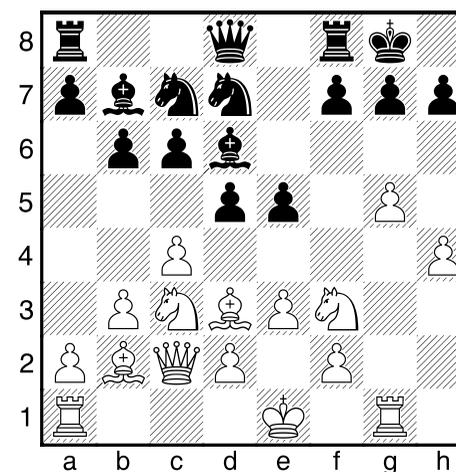
8.h3

8.♖g1!? is recommended in  
**David Cumming's** *The English*  
(Everyman, 2016); going for the  
same idea we see in the Giri

game below, but hoping to save  
a move with the h-pawn.

8.d4 transposes to a semi-  
Slav, more commonly reached  
by 1.d4, where Black has been  
doing fine after both ...♖e7 and  
the more direct 8...e5 9.cxd5  
(9.♘e2 e4 10.♘d2 ♖e8 with a  
reversed French, where White's  
b3 and ♘b2 aren't helping.) 9...  
cxd5 10.dxe5 (10.♘b5 ♘b4+)=)  
10...♘xe5= with a reversed QGA.  
8.♘e2 b6 9.♖g1 ♘b7 10.g4 e5  
11.g5 ♘e8 12.h4 ♘c7 13.♘d3:

Analysis Diagram



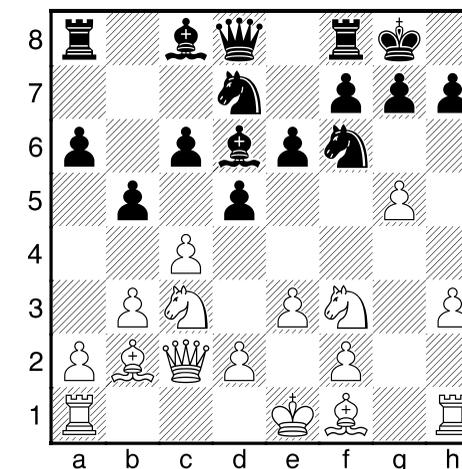
This game, and the Grandelius  
game in the next note, show why  
Shirov tries ...♘h5.

13...e4?? shows one attacking  
idea 14.♘xe4+- dxe4 15.♘xe4 g6

16.♖c3 f6 17.h5+-.

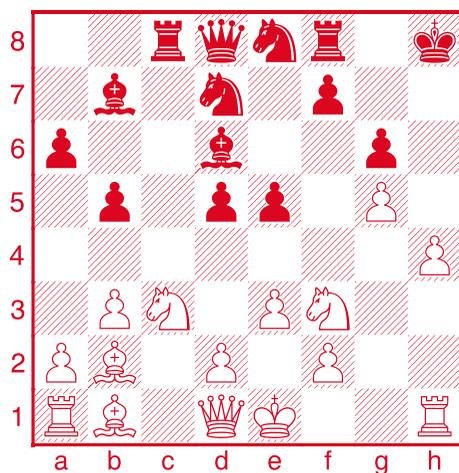
13...g6 14.h5 ♘c5 15.♘e2 e4  
16.♘xe4! ♘xe4 17.d3 ♘b4+  
(17...♘c5 18.♖c3+-) 18.♖f1  
♘c8 19.dxe4 ♘h3+ 20.♖g2  
♘e6 21.a3! dxe4 22.♖xe4  
♘xg2+ 23.♖xg2 ♘xg5 24.♖f4!  
♘xf3 25.axb4 ♘g5 26.hxg6  
fxg6 27.♖e5 Black is still up  
an exchange, but White's ♘  
slice him apart, and Black's  
edge-♖s are terrible defenders.  
27...♖f7 28.f4 ♘e6 29.♘g4  
♖e7 30.♖h1 ♘xf4+ 31.exf4  
♖xe5 32.♘xe5 h5 33.♘f3 ♖ad8  
34.♘xc6 ♖d2+ 35.♖f3 ♖d3+  
36.♖e4 ♖xb3 37.♖a1 ♖xb4  
Giri,A (2776)–Michiels,B (2536)  
Montpellier 2015 1-0.

8...a6 9.g4 b5 10.g5



**10...♘h5N**

10...♘e8 11.h4 e5 12.cxd5 cxd5  
13.♙d3 ♙b7 (13...g6?! 14.h5!  
with a strong initiative; 13...e4??  
fails for the same tactics we saw  
in the [Giri](#) game: 14.♘xe4! dxe4  
15.♙xe4 ♖b8 16.♙xh7+ ♔h8  
17.h5+- with three pawns and an  
attack for the ♘.) 14.♙xh7+ ♔h8  
15.♙f5 ♖c8± White has a pawn,  
but Black has some comp in the  
center and development. 16.♙d1  
g6 17.♙b1:

*Analysis Diagram*

Should Black push in the center  
with ...d4 or improve his worst-  
placed piece with 17...♘g7?

17...♘g7?? 18.♘e2??

Both players miss an immediate  
win. The cascade of sacrifices

might be difficult to believe, but  
they work:

18.h5!+-:

**18...♘xh5** 19.♖xh5+ gxh5  
20.♘xe5! threatening ♖xh5+  
20...♙xg5 21.♘xf7+! ♖xf7  
22.♘e4++-;

**18...gxh5** 19.♘xb5! axb5  
20.♖xh5+! ♘xh5 (20...♔g8  
21.♙h7+ ♔h8 22.♖h6+-)  
21.♘xe5 ♙xg5 22.♘xf7++-)

Instead, the game continued:

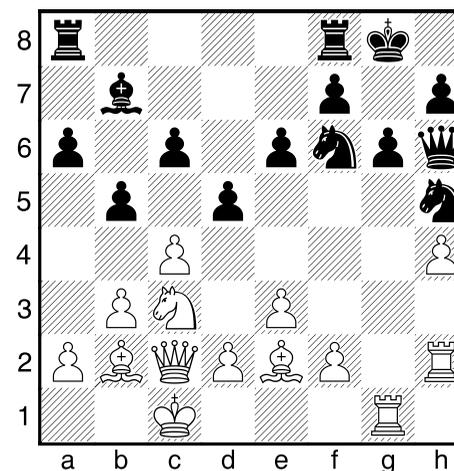
18.♘e2?? ♘h5? 19.♘f4! ♘xf4□  
20.exf4 d4 21.f5 ♔g7 22.♙e2  
♖h8 23.♖h3 ♙c7 24.fxg6 fxg6  
25.♙d3 ♘f8 26.♘xd4 ♙d7  
27.♘e2 ♔g8 28.h5 ♖xh5  
29.♖xh5 gxh5 30.♘g3 ♙e7??  
(30...e4 31.♙d4 ♙xg3±) 31.♘f5+-  
♙xg5 32.♘xd6 ♖d8 33.♙a3  
h4 34.♙f5 ♙xf5 35.♙xf5 1-0  
[Grandelius,N \(2562\)–Grover,S \(2516\)](#)  
Athens, 2012.

**11.♙e2 ♙b7**

11...g6 12.d4 bxc4 13.bxc4 ♖b8  
14.h4 dxc4 15.0-0 ♙a5 16.♖ab1  
♙b7 17.♘d2 ♙c7 18.♘ce4  
(18.♘xc4?? ♙h2+ 19.♔g2 c5+-)  
18...c5 19.♙f3 (♔19.♘xd6 ♙xd6  
20.dxc5 ♙xc5 21.♙c3+-) 19...  
cxd4∞ 20.♙xd4 ♙h2+ 21.♔g2  
♙e5 22.♙xh5 ♙xd4 23.♙f3

♙g7 24.♙xc4 ♙a5 25.♖fc1  
♖fc8 26.♖xb7 ♖xc4 27.♘xc4  
♙d8 28.♘cd6 ♖xb7 29.♘xb7  
♙b6 30.♖c8+ ♘f8 31.♘bc5  
h6 32.♘d7 ♙b4 33.♘ef6+  
♔h8 34.♘xf8 ♙xf8 35.h5 hxg5  
36.♘d7 g4 37.♙c6 gxh5 38.♘xf8  
♔g7 39.♘d7 ♙d6 40.♘b6 h4  
0-1 [Gareyev,T \(2611\)–Corrales Jimenez,F \(2530\)](#)  
Indianapolis, 2016.

**12.0-0-0 g6 13.♘h2 ♙xh2**  
**14.♖xh2 ♙xg5 15.h4 ♙h6**  
**16.♖g1 ♘df6**



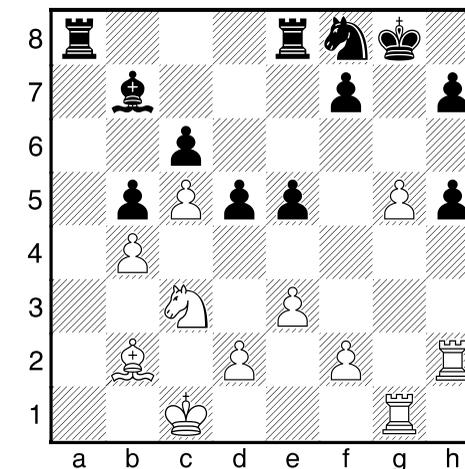
White is down a pawn, but has  
loads of comp due to the bad  
♙b7 and ridiculous ♙h6.

**17.c5**

I can't imagine why Bator didn't  
play 17.f4! which is obvious and

desirable.

**17...e5! 18.♙f5 ♖fe8 19.♙g5**  
**♙xg5 20.hxg5 ♘d7 21.♙xh5**  
**gxh5 22.b4 a5 23.a3 axb4**  
**24.axb4 ♘f8**

**25.♘e2?!**

Starts a sequence which, in  
effect, lets Black give his e5  
pawn to keep his h5 pawn.  
♔25.♖xh5 ♙c8 26.♖h6 ♘g6  
27.♖gh1 ♙f5! 28.f3! (28.♖xh7?  
♘f4!).

**25...♙c8! 26.f4**

26.♖xh5 ♖a4±.

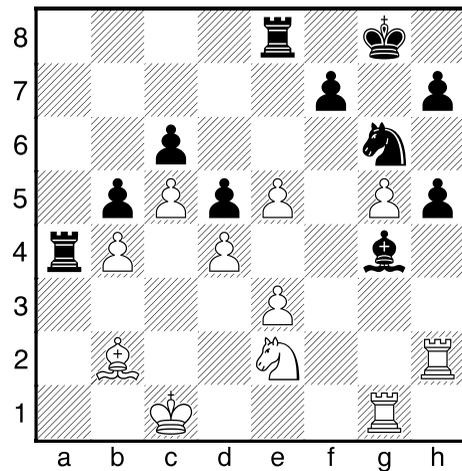
**26...♙g4 27.fxe5**

27.♙xe5?? ♙xe2 28.♖xe2 ♖xe5  
29.fxe5 ♖a1+-.

**27...♘g6 28.d4 ♖a4+-**



# Chess Canada Dragon



Now White has the horrible  $\text{♙}$  and his  $\text{♖}$ s have no play, while Black's  $\text{♜}$  rules the light squares and his  $\text{♖}$ s have the only open file.

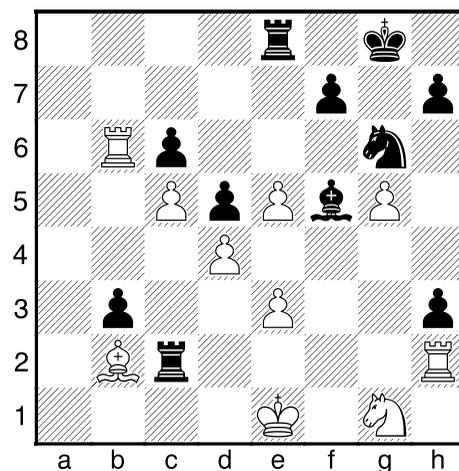
**29.♔c2**

29.♙c3 saves the b-pawn, but leaves Black in total control after 29...♖ea8  
30.♔c2 ♙f5+ 31.♔c1 h4-+.

**29...♖xb4 30.♖a1**

♙f5+ 31.♔c1 h4  
**32.♘g1? ♖c4+**  
**33.♔d1 b4**  
33...♖a4!

**34.♖a6 b3 35.♔e1**  
**h3 36.♖b6 ♖c2**



White could have resigned here, but may have been hoping against Black's time trouble. Shirov does not oblige, and converts smoothly.

37.♖xc2 bxc2 38.♘h3 ♙xh3  
39.♖xc6 ♙f5 40.♖f6 ♘e7  
41.♔d2 ♖c8 42.♙a3 ♙e4  
43.e6 fxe6 44.♖xe6 ♘c6  
45.♔c3 ♔f7 46.♖f6+ ♔e7  
47.♙c1 ♘d8 48.♖a6 ♘c6  
49.♙b2 ♔f7 50.♖a1 ♔g6  
51.♖g1 ♖b8 52.♖g4 ♘b4  
53.♙a3 ♘a2+ 54.♔d2 ♖b3  
55.♖xe4 dxe4 56.♔xc2 ♖xa3

0-1

**After the chess...**  
**...more chess.**

Sambuev vs Shirov vs table manners



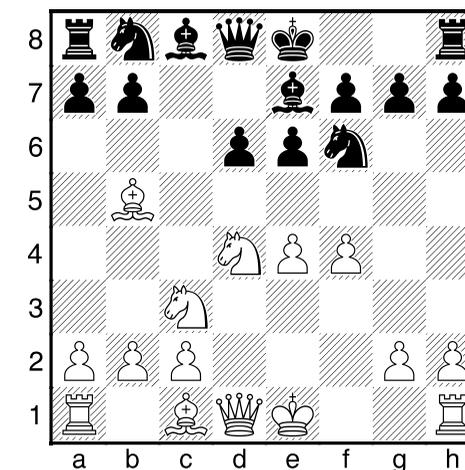
**Sambuev, Bator (2540)**  
**Sethuraman, SP (2653)**

B82

11th Edmonton (9), 26.06.2016

Notes: John Upper

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4  
4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.f4  
♙e7 7.♙b5+!?



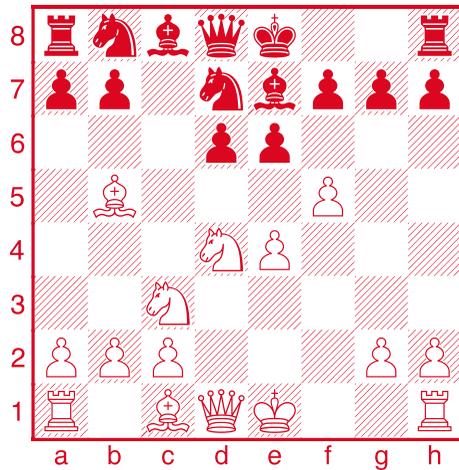
A tricky move which was played a few times by Dutch GM John Van der Weil in the 1990s, but has nearly disappeared since Black now usually plays 6...a6, which is what Kasparov always played.

**7...♙d7**

**7...♘bd7?** lets White gain a tempo on the ♘f6 to smash

through the center: 8.e5!+-  
dxe5 9.fxe5 ♘d5 10.♘xd5 exd5  
11.e6+-.

7...♘fd7 8.f5 *Analysis Diagram:*



**a)** 8...0-0 9.fxe6 ♘e5  
10.exf7+ ♖xf7 11.♖f1  
♙h4+ 12.g3 ♙f6 13.♘f5±  
Black didn't get enough  
for the pawn in: [Van der  
Wiel,J \(2526\)–Sokolov,I  
\(2624\)](#) Rotterdam, 1999  
(1-0, 26).

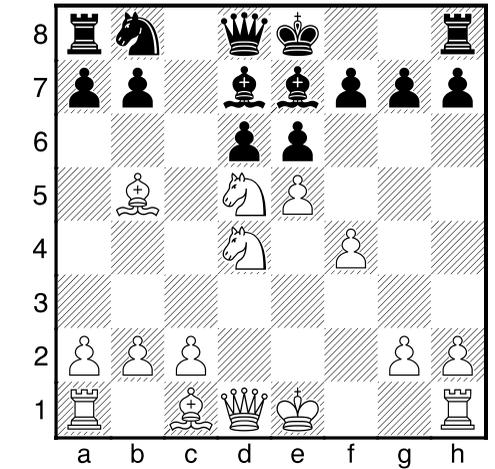
**b)** 8...a6!?N 9.fxe6 axb5  
10.exf7+!? (10.exd7+±)  
10...♔xf7 11.♙h5+ g6  
12.♙d5+ ♔e8 13.♘e6  
and White can force a  
draw with ♘g7-e6, or  
look for more.

**c)** 8...e5? Allows a typical  
Sicilian tactic: 9.♘e6!+- fxe6  
10.♙h5+ ♔f8 11.fxe6 ♙e8 12.0-  
0+ ♙f6 13.exd7 ♘xd7 (13...♙xd7  
14.♖xf6+! gxf6 15.♙h6+ ♔f7  
16.♘d5 ♙e6 17.♙e2 there's  
no good defence to ♙h5+, 1-0  
Semeniuk,A (2417)–Kurnosov,I  
(2660) Vladivostok, 2012.)  
14.♖xf6+! gxf6 15.♙h6+ ♔e7  
16.♘d5+ ♔d8 17.♙xd7+- and a  
fork on f6 wins in: [Schneider,L  
\(2435\)–Cebalo,M \(2495\)](#) Eksjo,  
1982 (1-0, 49).

**8.e5 ♘d5?**

8...dxe5! 9.fxe5 ♘d5 10.♘xd5  
exd5 11.♙xd7+ (11.e6?! ♙xb5  
(11...fxe6 12.♘xe6? ♙b4+ 13.c3  
♙h4+ and Black is calling the  
shots.) 12.exf7+ ♔xf7 13.♘b5  
♙b4+! 14.c3 ♖e8+ (1-0, 60)  
[Van der Wiel,J \(2531\)–Ulybin,M  
\(2583\)](#) Hoogeveen, 2000.)  
11...♙xd7 12.0-0 (12.♙f3!?)  
12...♙c5 13.♙e3 ♘c6 14.♘f5  
♙xe3+ 15.♘xe3 0-0 16.♙xd5  
♙xd5 17.♘xd5 ♖ad8 18.♖ad1  
½-½ [Timman,J \(2635\)–Salov,V  
\(2715\)](#) Madrid, 1995.

**9.♘xd5**



**9...exd5?**

♞9...dxe5 10.♘xe6 (10.♘xe7!?  
exd4 11.♙xd4± ♙xb5 12.♙xg7  
♔xe7) 10...fxe6 (10...♙a5+?  
11.♙d2+- the fork on c7 defends  
the ♙b5.) 11.♙h5+  
g6 12.♙xe5± with an  
advantage at no cost.

**10.e6!+-**

If we take off the  
pawns on f4 and d6  
this would be the same  
position as in Van der  
Wiel – Ulybin (above).  
The difference is that  
here the d6-pawn  
does not allow the  
black ♙ to defend d5  
after ...♙xb5, and that  
matters.



Sambuev - Sethuraman

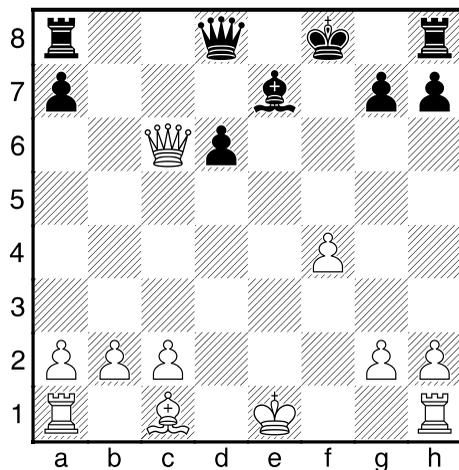


10...♙c6

10...♙xb5 11.exf7+ ♔xf7  
12.♖h5+ g6 13.♖xd5+ ♔e8 and  
takes on b5 with an extra pawn  
and a winning advantage.

10...fxe6 11.♘xe6+- ♙h4+  
12.g3 ♖e7 13.♙xd7+ (13.0-0!)  
13...♔xd7 14.f5 ♙f6 15.♖xd5  
♘c6 16.0-0 ♖ae8 17.♙f4 g5  
18.♖fe1 gxf4 19.♘c5+ 1-0  
Klinger, J (2450)–Ammann, P  
(2220) Velden, 1994.

11.exf7+ ♔xf7 12.♙xc6 bxc6  
13.♘xc6 ♘xc6 14.♖xd5+  
♔f8 15.♖xc6+-



White is up two pawns for  
nothing and converted with no  
drama.

15...♖c8 16.♖e4 ♙h4+ 17.g3

d5 18.♖f5+ ♙f6 19.0-0  
♖b6+ 20.♖f2 ♖e8 21.♔f1  
♖c6 22.♙d2 ♖e4 23.♙c3  
d4 24.♙b4+ ♔f7 25.♖c5  
♖a6+ 26.♔g1 ♖d8 27.♙a5  
♖d7 28.♖e1 ♖xe1+ 29.♙xe1  
♔g8 30.♖f5 ♖d8 31.♙a5  
♖e8 32.♖d5+ ♔h8 33.♙c7  
h6 34.♙e5 ♖d8 35.♖e4  
♖e8 36.b3 ♖xa2 37.♖c6  
♖f8 38.♖c5 ♔g8 39.♖xd4  
♙xe5 40.♖xe5 ♖a6 41.♖d2  
♖b6+ 42.♔g2 ♖c8 43.c4  
♖b8 44.♖d3 ♔h7 45.♖e4+  
♔h8 46.f5 ♖f6 47.♔h3 ♖f8  
48.♖d5 ♖b8 49.c5 a5 50.♖e5  
♖f7 51.c6 ♖d8 52.♖f3 ♖c7  
53.♖e6 ♖f7 54.♖g4 ♖f8  
55.♖g6 ♖g8 56.c7 ♖f8  
57.♖e7 ♖c8 58.f6

1-0

**Sethuraman, SP (2653)**  
**Shirov, Alexei (2682)**

D46

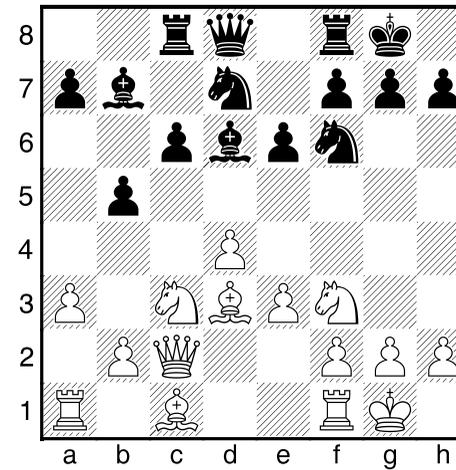
11th Edmonton (5), 22.06.2016

Note: John Upper

While SP got caught in the  
opening by Sambuev, he had  
clearly done his homework in a  
very topical line of the Semi Slav,

demonstrating it — and a sharp  
tactical eye — against Semi Slav  
stalwart, Alexei Shirov.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6  
4.e3 e6 5.♘f3 ♘bd7 6.♙d3  
dxc4 7.♙xc4 b5 8.♙d3 ♙b7  
9.a3 ♙d6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♖c2  
♖c8



**An important position for the  
Meran Semi-Slav**

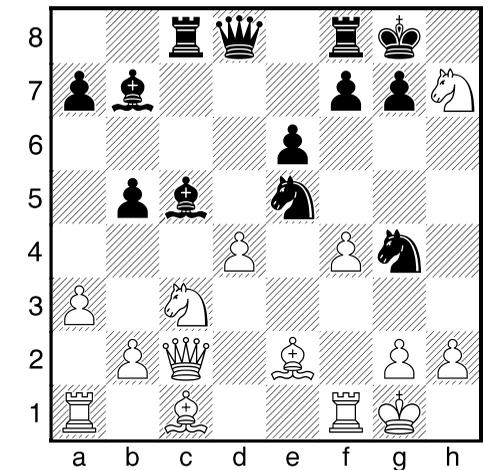
Black is obviously preparing  
for ...c5. Five years ago, the  
consensus was that if White  
played b2-b4 to prevent it, Black  
had a pawn and piece sac which  
would guarantee equality (see  
Topalov–Kasimdzhanov in the  
note to move 14). So White  
looked for other ideas — one  
of which led to the fantastic  
Aronian–Anand game in the next

note — but none of which have  
shown an advantage for White.  
So top players have gone back  
to trying to make b2-b4 work.

**12.b4**

Here's [Aronian – Anand](#), one  
of the Great Games of the 21st  
Century: 12.♘g5!? attacks h7,  
but White's idea is to play ♘e4,  
gaining a tempo off the ♙d6  
and helping control c5. 12...  
c5! 13.♘xh7 ♘g4! 14.f4 cxd4  
15.exd4 ♙c5! 16.♙e2 ♘de5!!

*Analysis Diagram*



White can capture four different  
black pieces, but only one  
capture doesn't immediately  
lose.

- Taking the ♖f8 or the ♘e5  
loses to a smothered mate:  
17.fxe5 ♖xd4+ 18.♔h1 ♖g1+!



**Chess Canada**  
**Dragon**

19. ♖xg1 ♘f2#.

- 17. ♘xf8 ♚xd4+-+ followed by ... ♚g1+ is the same smothered mate.
- Taking the ♘c5 loses in one of two ways, depending how White reacts: 17. dxc5 ♚d4+ 18. ♔h1 ♘f2+ 19. ♖xf2 ♚xf2 and White gets mated on g2 or on the back-rank.
- 17. dxc5 ♚d4+ if White tries to shore-up the back-rank with 18. ♙e3 then after 18... ♚xe3+ 19. ♔h1 Black switches the point of attack with 19... ♚h3 and White gets mated on h2 or g2.

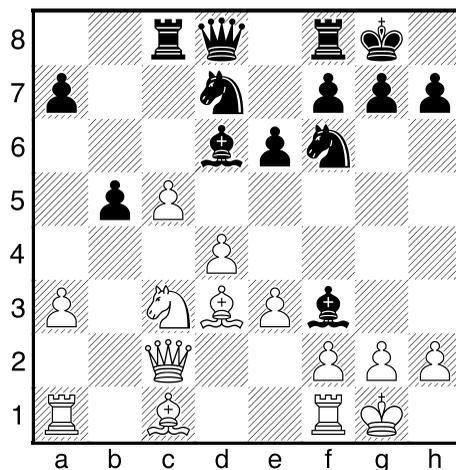
Aronian found the best capture:  
 17. ♙xg4! ♘xd4+ 18. ♔h1 ♘xg4  
 19. ♘xf8 f5!! (19... ♘h2??)

20. ♚h7+-)

"This move I am very proud of.  
 To find it over the board is very nice." – Anand

20. ♘g6 ♚f6 21. h3 ♚xg6 22. ♚e2  
 ♚h5 23. ♚d3 ♙e3! 0-1 [Aronian,L \(2802\)–Anand,V \(2772\)](#) Wijk, 2013. (for complete notes, see *Chess Canada* 2013.12).

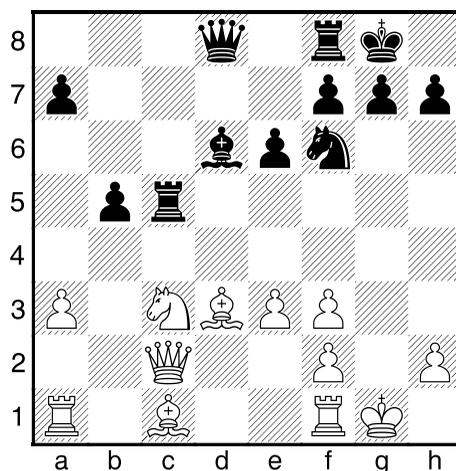
12...c5 13.bxc5 ♙xf3



### 14.cxd6

14.gxf3 ♘xc5! 15.dxc5 ♖xc5

*Analysis Diagram*



Black has sacrificed a piece, but has two threats:

- 1) pile up on the c–file to win back the piece on c3,
- 2) sac the ♙ on h2 for a perpetual.

White's only choice is which threat to stop:

If White defends h2, then Black wins back the piece on c3 with equality: 16.f4 ♘d5 17. ♙b2 ♘xc3 18. ♙xc3 ♚c7 19. ♖fc1 ♖c8 20. ♙xh7+ ♔h8 21. ♙d3 ♖xc3 trading down to a dead draw ♖ and opposite ♙ ending. 22. ♚xc3 ♚xc3 23. ♖xc3 ♖xc3 24. ♙b5 ♙xa3= (½-½, 37) [Topalov,V \(2752\)–Kasimdzhanov,R \(2684\)](#) London, 2012.

If White defends the piece with: 16. ♙b2 ♙xh2+! forces a draw 17. ♔xh2 (17. ♔g2 ♖g5+ 18. ♔h1 ♖h5= Δ... ♘d7, ... ♚h4.) 17... ♖h5+□ with a repetition 18. ♔g2 (18. ♔g3 ♖g5+□= going for more loses: 19. ♔f4?? ♚c7+ 20. ♔xg5 h6+ 21. ♔h4 ♚h2#) 18... ♖g5+ 19. ♔h3 ♖h5+ (½-½, 22) [Malakhatko,V \(2558\)–Khismatullin,D \(2638\)](#) St Petersburg, 2012.

14...♘d5 15.gxf3

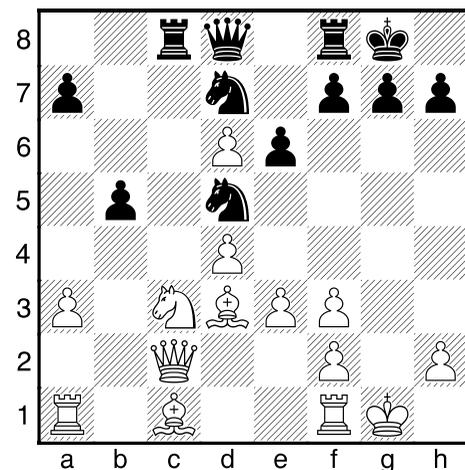
## SP Simul

Club players get to play a GM





# Chess Canada Dragon



Shirov has been here before.

## 15...♖g5+

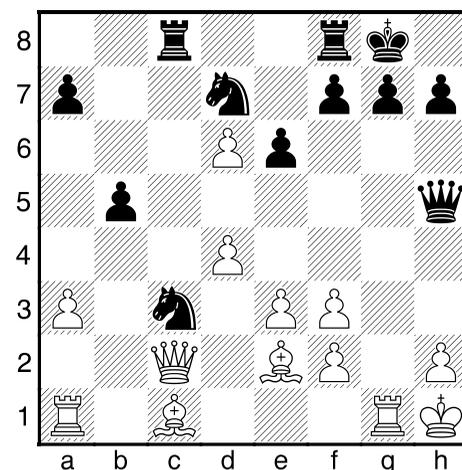
15...♖xc3 16.f4 (16.♔xh7+!? see: [Miton,K \(2604\)–Duda,J \(2610\)](#) Havana, 2015 (though the end of that game in the dB makes no sense).) 16...♖f6 17.♖b2 ♖d7! 18.♔d2 e5!! (threatening ...♖g4+ with a perpetual and/or breaking up White's center and giving the ♖s some decent squares) 19.f3! exd4 This is what I'd suggested in my 2013 notes to Aronian–Anand, but it doesn't seem to be good enough. (19...e4!?N 20.♔xc3 exd3 21.♖b3 ♖c4 22.♔d2 ♖fc8 23.♖xd3 ♖xd6± White's center and space look more promising, and the extra pawn doesn't hurt.) 20.e4 a5 21.♖ae1 ♖c5 22.♔c1 ♖h5

23.e5± White's center and ♔'s are too strong. 23...g6 24.♖f2 b4 25.axb4 axb4 26.♖xd4 ♖d5 27.♖e3+- (1-0, 51) [Wojtaszek,R \(2734\)–Shirov,A \(2715\)](#) Skopje, 2015.

## 16.♔h1 ♖h5 17.♔e2!

17.♔xh7+ ♔h8□ 18.♔e4 ♖xc3 19.♔b7 ♖d5 (19...♖f6!= 20.♔xc8?? ♖xf3+ 21.♔g1 ♖e2+-) 20.♖d1 ♖c2 21.e4 ♖c3 22.♖d3□ ♖e2?? 23.e5! ♖h3 24.♖g1 (♔24.♔d2+-) 24...♖xg1 25.♖xc2± ♖xf3 26.♔f4 ♖xd4 27.♖c7 ♖e2 28.♔g3?? ♖xg3+ 29.fxg3 ♖xe5 30.♔g2 ♖g4 31.♖e7 ♖g8 32.♖xa7 ♖e2 33.♖d4 (½-½, 33) [Nyzhnyk,I \(2622\)–Sheng,J \(2397\)](#) World Open, 2016.

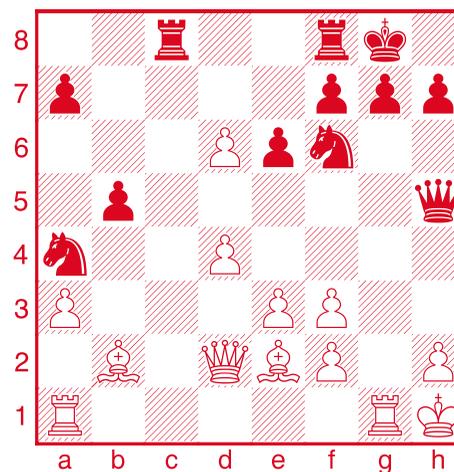
## 17...♖xc3 18.♖g1



## 18...♖f6?!

18...♖fd8! 19.e4 e5 20.♔e3 ♖xe2 21.♖xe2 exd4 22.♔xd4 (22.♖g5!? ♖h6 23.♔f4 ♖f6 24.♖f5 d3 25.♖e1 d2∞) 22...♖e5 23.♖e3 ♖xd6?! (23...g6!= makes g7 safe before taking on d6.) 24.♖g5 ♖xf3+ 25.♖xf3 ♖xf3 26.♖xg7+ ♔f8 27.♖xh7 ♖c4 28.♔xa7± (1-0, 65) [Gustafsson,J \(2629\)–Smirnov,A \(2479\)](#) Bangkok, 2016.

## 19.♔b2 ♖a4 20.♖d2



Can Black win the d6-pawn with ...♖fd8xd6, or does that maneuver lose a piece to e4-e5?

## 20...♖fd8

20...♖c6?? 21.d5+- with a double attack on ♖d6 and the

undefended ♖f6.

## 21.e4 ♖xd6 22.e5

Winning a piece! The point, which Shirov now noticed, is that after the move he had counted on 22... ♖xe5 White plays 23.♖h6! unpinning the d-pawn and threatening mate.

## 1-0

**Opening Summary:** the lines in the Nyzhnyk and Gustafsson games should keep Black afloat, but the tactics are challenging even for 2600+ GMs, so there's plenty of scope for the better player to win.

#	Player	Rating	TPR	Results	Total
1	Shankland, Sam	2631	2804	1X=111=111	8
2	Ganguly, Surya	2627	2805	0X11111111	8
3	Shirov, Alexei	2744	2614	=0X01=1111	6
4	Sethuraman, S.P.	2653	2580	001X0=1111	5½
5	Sambuev, Bator	2646	2536	0001X=1=11	5
6	Banerjee, Bitan	2384	2521	00===X=1=1	4½
7	Wang, Richard	2418	2384	=0000=X110	3
8	Haessel, Dale	2308	2307	0000=00X=1	2
9	Valencia, Belsar	2356	2302	00000=0=X1	2
10	Findlay, Ian	2304	2219	000000100X	1



## Saskatchewan at Last

The 28th edition of the Canadian Chess Challenge (CCC) was held at the University of Regina, Saskatchewan for the first time. With this year's event being in Saskatchewan, the CCC has now been hosted by all 10 Canadian provinces.

## Format

The CCC is a 10-team Round Robin. The provincial champions from Grade 1 to Grade 12 form their province's team. These provincial teams play their counterparts on the 9 other provincial teams vying for the team championship title and for the individual national championship titles of their respective grades.

The 2016 CCC ran on the Sunday (rounds 1-6) and Monday (final 3 rounds) of the May long weekend: May 22-23, 2016. Time control was 25 mins + 5 sec delay.

*Song & Awatramani;  
gift bag;  
Larry B. on the mike.*



## Hospitality

The key CCC Organizers, Laurie Lintott, Narom Sing, and Simon Li, arranged for players and families to enjoy the University of Regina's modern and spacious accommodations. Each unit had 3-4 separate bedrooms where 2-3 people could stay in one bedroom and share 2 separate bathrooms, a large living room, and full kitchen with fridge, microwave, and stove.

The CCC Organizers also planned a Blitz tournament, where BC's **Janak Awatramani** and Ontario's **Michael Song** tied. After the playoff game, Janak Awatramani won first place. This was followed by a nice Welcome

BBQ dinner and some after dinner fun — outdoor laser tag! Players were given **gift bags** full of goodies like chocolate chess pieces, chess erasers, chess pencil, souvenir 2016 CCC booklet, and CCC scorebook, as well as their **CCC certificate**.



## Opening Ceremony

During the opening ceremony, Chess'n Math Executive Director Larry Bevand introduced all the players as each team was paraded in by bagpiper Erin, with their Grade 12 player leading the way and carrying their provincial flag. Once all 10 teams were at their boards, Don MacKinnon sang "O Canada". Chief Arbiter Jeff Coakley announces tournament rules and pairings, and Round 1 begins.



As a goodwill gesture, players exchange provincial pins and shake hands at the start of each the game.

### Pairings and Results

The pairings are random except for the final round where the pairings are fixed based on last year's team standings. For this year, that meant Team Ontario (last year's winners) and Team Quebec (last year's 2nd place team) met in the final round, which resulted in a tied match 6 - 6. The tiebreak was the cumulative team points, which gave **Team Ontario** the team championship title once again. **Team Quebec** came second, **Team BC**

won third place, Team Alberta came fourth place, and the home Team Saskatchewan finished 5th place: their best ever result! The best maritime province was Newfoundland & Labrador.

### Adam Dorrance<sup>12</sup>

Larry Bevand presented Nova Scotia's Adam Dorrance with a cheque for \$1,200 to recognize his **participation in 12 CCCs**, from Grade 1 to Grade 12, and **winning the championship 8 times**. Per Larry Bevand:

"Adam Dorrance of Nova Scotia, took part in his last Canadian Chess Challenge. He has represented his grade every year from Grade 1 to Grade

12! Not only that, he has won the National competition for his grade eight times! Chess'n Math honoured the occasion by awarding Adam a special plaque and at the same time we presented him with a cheque for \$1,200...\$100 for each year he took part at the National level."

*Larry Bevand & Adam Dorrance*





## T-Shirts

There was a three-way tie for the Best T-Shirt: Newfoundland & Labrador, Quebec, and Saskatchewan. The three provinces split the \$200 cash prize evenly. Votes for the Best T-shirt are normally voted on by Team Captains. Next year, the players will be allowed to vote for the **Best T-Shirt**.



## Bughouse

After the main CCC tournament, the Bughouse tournament had 2 sections, where the Open section was won by **Janak Awatramani** and **Jeremy Hui**; and the U1200 section was won by **Leo Qu** and **Lucian Wu** – all of whom are from BC.



## Thanks to...

- Chess'n Math's Larry Bevand and Christian Lacasse.
- Chief Arbiter Jeff Coakley.
- CCC Organizers Laurie Lintott, Narom Sing, and Simon Li.
- the many volunteers from Saskatchewan.



## links

### Results and Stats

<http://www.chess-challenge.chess-math.org/national/results/2016/English/index.xml>

### more photos:

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/Chessn-Math-Association-Alumni-123643812058/photos/?tab=album&album\\_id=10154238371852059](https://www.facebook.com/pg/Chessn-Math-Association-Alumni-123643812058/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10154238371852059)

Team	ON	QC	BC	AB	SK	MB	NL	NB	NS	PEI	TB	Total										
ON	X	X	6	0.5	10	1	11.5	1	11	1	12	1	11	1	10.5	1	11.5	1	12	1	95.5	8.5
QC	6	0.5	X	X	8.5	1	11	1	10	1	10.5	1	11	1	11	1	10	1	12	1	90.0	8.5
BC	2	0	3.5	0	X	X	9.5	1	11.5	1	11.5	1	11	1	10.5	1	12	1	12	1	83.5	7
AB	0.5	0	1	0	2.5	0	X	X	9	1	8.5	1	8	1	9.5	1	10	1	9.5	1	58.5	6
SK	1	0	2	0	0.5	0	3	0	X	X	6	0.5	7.5	1	7.5	1	8.5	1	7	1	43.0	4.5
MB	0	0	1.5	0	0.5	0	3.5	0	6	0.5	X	X	6.5	1	6	0.5	7	1	8.5	1	39.5	4
NL	1	0	1	0	1	0	4	0	4.5	0	5.5	0	X	X	7.5	1	9	1	6.5	1	40.0	3
NB	1.5	0	1	0	1.5	0	2.5	0	4.5	0	6	0.5	4.5	0	X	X	6.5	1	9	1	37.0	2.5
NS	0.5	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	3.5	0	5	0	3	0	5.5	0	X	X	6.5	1	28.0	1
PEI	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.5	0	5	0	3.5	0	5.5	0	3	0	5.5	0	X	X	25.0	0



### Top Teams

- 1. Ontario
- 2. Quebec
- 3. BC
- 4. Alberta
- 5. Saskatchewan



(clockwise from top left)

# Chess Canada Dragon



# Chess Canada Dragon



## GRADE 1

1. ALEX JIKAI YAN
2. RYAN YANG
3. ANDREW KSENYCH



## GRADE 2

1. ANTHONY ATANASOV
2. KEVIN ZHONG
3. DANIEL WANG



## GRADE 3

1. MAX CHEN
2. RICHARD Q. ZHENG
3. VISHRUTH SHARMA

## GRADE 4

3. LUCIAN WU
1. NAMEER ISSANI
2. HARUAKI OMICHI



# GRADE 5

3. NEIL DOKNJAS

1. QUIYU HUANG

2. MAX ENGLAND



5.ALEXANDER SASATA 3.LEO QU 1.NICHOLAS VETTESE 2.WENXUAN ZHONG 4.IAN ZHAO

# GRADE 6



# GRADE 7

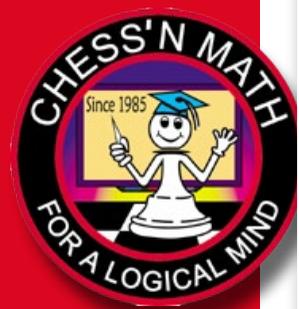
- 1. EUGENE HUA
- 2. GABRIEL PHILIP TINICA
- 3. ETHAN LOW

# GRADE 8

- 1. MAILI-JADE OUELLET
- 2. JOSHUA DOKNJAS
- 3. DEREK MA
- 4. JEFF WANG



# Chess Canada Dragon



# Chess Canada Dragon

3. MATTHEW GENG

1. RICHARD CHEN

2. ANANDA SAHA



GRADE  
9

2. JOSEPH BELLISSIMO

1. ZIYUAN (SAM) SONG

3. JASON CAO



GRADE  
10



GRADE  
11

2. MICHAEL SONG

1. JANAK AWATRAMANI

3. OLIVIER KENTA CHIKU-RATTE



GRADE  
12

3. ADAM DORRANCE

1. JEREMY HUI

2. ZEHN NASIR



Five games, from the Toronto Closed, McGill Open, and Canadian Open.

**Notes: Keith MacKinnon**

**Barron, Michael (2342)**

**Ivanov, Mike (2363)**

C63

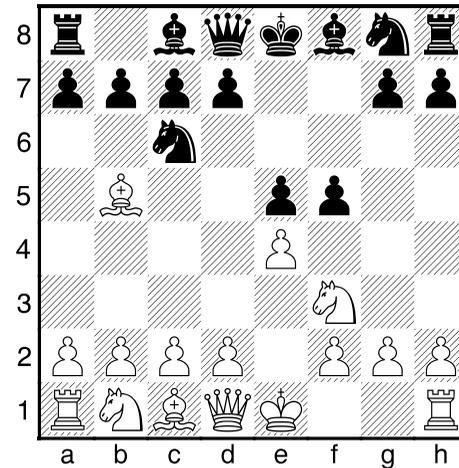
2016 Toronto Closed (1),  
04.04.2016

The following game and notes appeared on the CFC Newsfeed:

<http://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/830>

The 2016 Toronto Closed is a round-robin event played over two months, with one game per week. Mike Ivanov raced to lead with 4.5/5, but lost to Mark Plotkin, allowing Mark's father, and Canadian Olympiad Captain FM Victor Plotkin to finish =1st with Mike at 5.5/7. Mark was 3rd with +5 =0 -2. Here is Mike Ivanov's first round win (featuring the Schliemann Attack) with the black pieces against newly-minted IM Michael Barron.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 f5

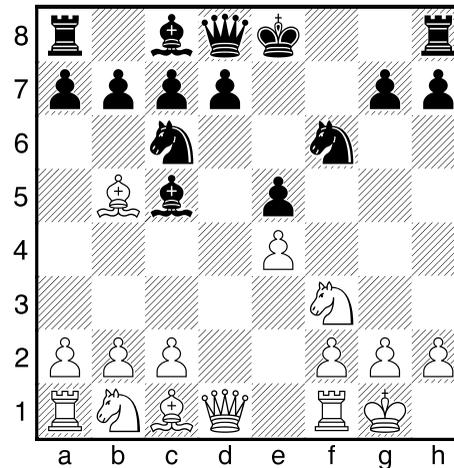


The Schliemann allows Black to play for the win straight out of the opening but it involves major risks.

4.♘c3

Not as common as it once was. 4.d3 fxe4 5.dxe4 ♘f6 6.0-0± has been the choice of a number of top players. White gets a comfortable position with a small edge while avoiding some fairly dangerous theory after 6...♙c5:

*Analysis Diagram*



7.♙d3 ♘d4 is the, let's say, non-positional approach (editor) 8.♘xd4 ♙xd4 9.♘d2 a6±



**Misha Ivanov**  
At the 2016 Canadian Open

(1/2-1/2, 49) [Grischuk,A \(2752\)](#)–[Kamsky,G \(2670\)](#) Sochi, 2016.

7.♙xc6 the positional approach 7...bxc6 8.♘xe5 led to a convincing win at the highest level back in 2013: 8...0-0 9.♘c3 d6 10.♘a4 ♙e8 11.♘d3 ♘xe4 12.♘axc5 ♘xc5 13.♘xc5 dxc5 14.♙e3 ♙g6 15.♙d3 ♙f5 16.♙c4+ ♙e6 17.♙e2 c4 18.f3 a6 19.♙d4 ♖ae8 20.♙h1 ♙d5 21.♙d2 ♖e6 22.♙c3 h6 23.♖f2 ♙h7 24.♖af1!? ♖f5 25.♖e1! ♖d6 26.♙e5 ♖d7 27.♙c3± White consolidated the kingside and took enough of Black's weak pawns to win the game (1-0, 51) [Caruana,F \(2772\)](#)–[Radjabov,T \(2793\)](#) Zug, 2013.

4...fxe4 5.♘xe4 d5

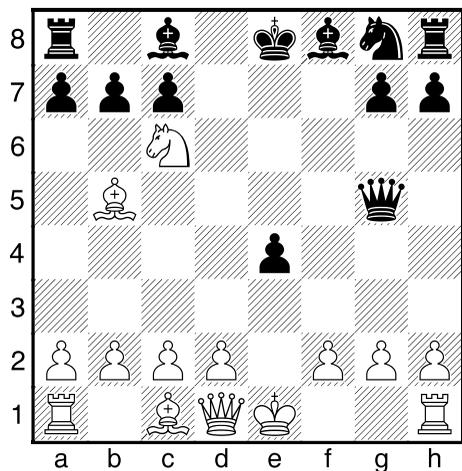
The critical test.

5...♘f6 6.♙e2 d5 7.♘xf6+ gxf6 8.d4 e4 9.♘h4 ♙e6 10.c3 ♙d7 11.♙h5+ ♙f7 12.♙f5 ♙e6 13.♙h5+ ♙f7 14.♙f5 ♙e6 1/2-1/2 [Deac,B \(2543\)](#)–[Radjabov,T \(2710\)](#) Bastia, 2016.

6.♘xe5 dxe4 7.♘xc6 ♙g5 7...♙d5 8.c4 ♙d6 9.♘xa7+



♙d7 10.♙xd7+ ♚xd7 11.♚h5+ g6 12.♚e5+ ♔f7 13.♘b5!± (13.♚xh8?! ♘f6 14.♘b5 ♖d8 15.0-0 ♙c5∞ and the Queen is trapped.)



### 8. ♘d4+

A good move, but perhaps not as testing as the alternative 8. ♚e2!:

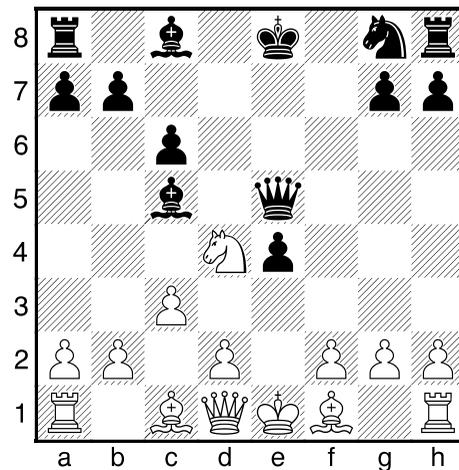
8... ♚xg2??? loses on the spot 9. ♚h5+ ♚g6 (9...g6 10. ♚e5+-) 10. ♘e5+-;

8... ♘f6 9.f4 (9. ♘xa7+!? very wild but needs more testing, as the main line doesn't feel extremely convincing to me anymore.) 9... ♚xf4 10. ♘e5+ c6 11.d4 is another popular continuation, in which White scores an impressive 65% 11... ♚h4+ 12.g3 ♚h3 13.♙c4 ♙e6 An

unclear situation arises where it seems Black is doing OK, as can be seen in the following game: in Nisipeanu's analysis, he mentions that the evaluation of this line depends on the strength or weakness of the e4 pawn... 14.♙g5 0-0-0 15.0-0-0 ♙d6 16.♖hf1 ♖he8 17.♙xf6 gxf6 18.♖xf6 ♙xe5 19.♖xe6 ♖xe6 20.♙xe6+ ♚xe6 21.dxe5= (1/2-1/2, 32) [Carlsen,M](#) – [Nisipeanu,L](#) Medias, 2010.

### 8...c6 9.♙f1 ♚e5 10.c3 ♙c5

10... ♘f6 11.d3 exd3+ 12.♙e3 and White should have some edge, but Black has enough activity that he has compensation for his pawn deficit 12... ♘d5 13.♚xd3 g6∞.



### 11. ♘b3

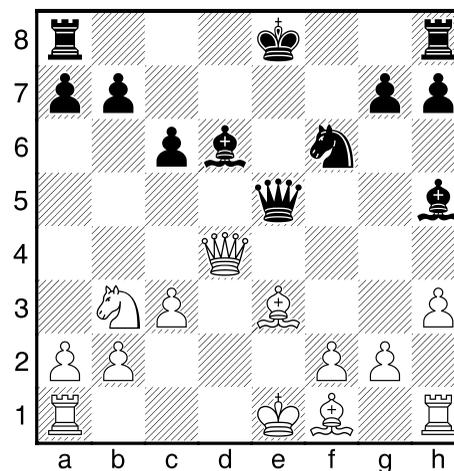
11. ♘c2 ♙f5 12.♚e2 ♙d6 13.♘e3 0-0-0 14.b3?! ♘f6 15.♙b2 ♙g6 16.0-0-0 ♖hf8∞ (1/2-1/2, 41) [Bluvshstein,M](#) (2449)– [Malinovsky,K](#) (2179) Heraklio, 2002

11.d3!? ♙xd4 (11...exd3+ 12.♙e3 ♘f6 13.♙xd3 0-0 (13... ♘g4 14.♚e2 ♘xe3 15.♚xe3 ♚xe3+ 16.fxex3±) 12.cxd4 ♚xd4 13.♚b3 offers White dynamic play with his two Bishops 13... ♘f6 14.♙e3 ♚e5 15.dxe4±.

### 11...♙d6 12.d4! exd3+ 13.♙e3 ♘f6 14.♚xd3 ♙g4 15.h3

A useful move, as now Black does not have g4 for his Knight.

### 15...♙h5 16.♚d4



White tries to exchange Queens, as he is up a pawn.

### 16...♚e7 17.g4

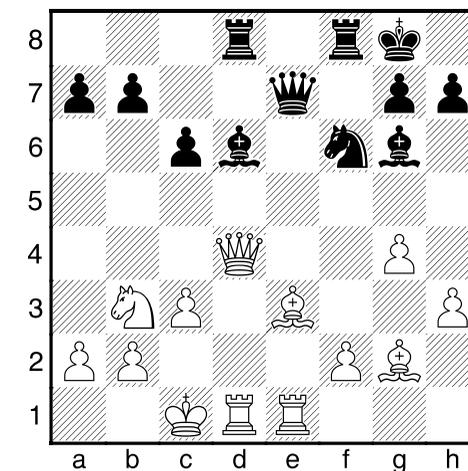
17.♙c4 ♖d8! a7 is immune due to ... ♚e4.

17.♙d3 ♖d8 18.♚h4 ♙e5 and White needs to move the d3 Bishop. This line was a valid alternative, however. The Bishop likely belongs on the b1-h7 diagonal as opposed to h1-a8 in order to put some pressure on Black's King, which will be castled shortly.

### 17...♙g6

17...♙f7 seems a little more natural.

### 18.♙g2 ♖d8 19.0-0-0! 0-0 20.♖he1±





When first browsing through this game, I was quite happy with White's position here. He has played the opening phase well, and Black must try and prove compensation for his sacked pawn.

**20...♙e5?!**  
20...♙b8.

**21.♙xa7 ♖a8**  
21...♞d5 22.♙xd5+ cxd5  
23.♙c5±.

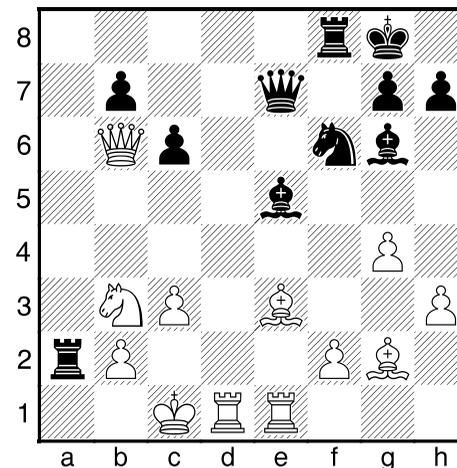
**22.♙b6?**  
And, just like that, White's advantage has disappeared!

♠22.♙c5! and Black doesn't have a good way to avoid the Queen trade since 22...♙c7 23.a3 and White is now up two pawns, but after 22...♙xc5 23.♙xc5 ♙f4+ 24.♙e3 ♙xe3+ 25.♖xe3 ♖xa2 26.f4 or 26.♖d4 are both ±.



*IM Michael Barron*  
At the 2016 Canadian Open.

**22...♖xa2**



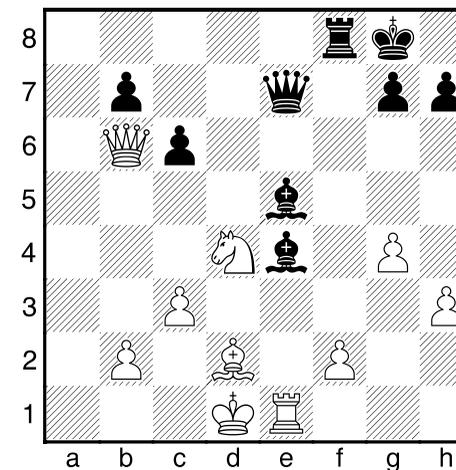
**23.♞d4?**

Mistakes come in bunches.

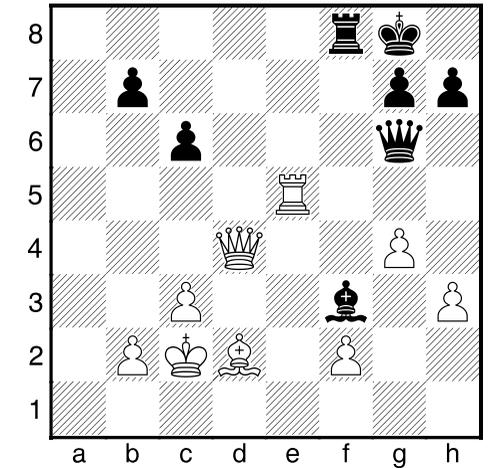
23.♙c5 ♙f4+ 24.♖e3! the point — White is not afraid of losing this exchange since he will pick off the f8 rook 24...♙xe3+ 25.fxe3 ♙e5 26.♙xf8 ♙g3□ (otherwise 26...♙xf8 27.♙b4+ ♙g8 28.♙c4+ ♙f8 29.♙f4±) 27.♙xb7 ♙xe3+ 28.♖d2 ♙e1+ 29.♖d1 ♙e3+=.

**23...♖a1+ 24.♙d2 ♞e4+?!**  
24...♖a6! 25.♙b3+ ♙f7±.

**25.♙xe4 ♖xd1+ 26.♙xd1**  
**♙xe4 27.♙d2=**



**27...♙xd4 28.♙xd4 ♙f3+**  
**29.♙c2 ♙f7 30.♖e5 ♙g6+**



**31.♙d3??**

My guess is that White was very low on time here due to the complex game. Much better was 31.♙c1 ♖a8 32.♖a5! ♖xa5 33.♙d8+ ♙f7 34.♙xa5 editor – White has an extra pawn, but the weak light squares should be good enough for a draw after 34...♙d3.

**31...♙d1+**

...and the Queen drops.

I found the game exciting and felt White had the upper hand out of the opening, but just when the position was getting critical (move 22) he went wrong and allowed Black some big counterplay. Mike Ivanov could have obtained a very nice

position with 24... ♖a6 which would have put White under serious pressure. After missing this chance, the game probably should have been a draw; however, IM Barron blundered leading to his defeat.

0-1

**Notes: Keith MacKinnon**  
**Yu, Zong Yang (2342)**  
**Hirschberg, Valerian (2317)**  
 A34  
*McGill Open Montreal (5.1),*  
*01.05.2016*

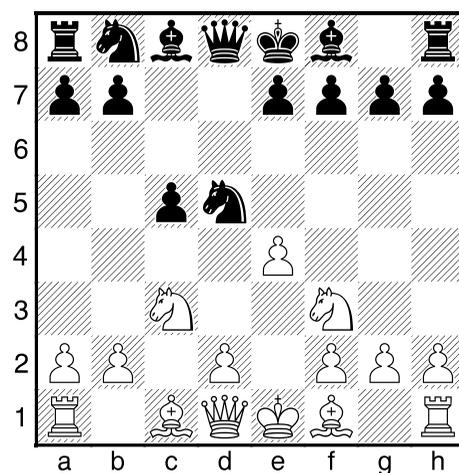
The following game and notes appeared on the CFC Newsfeed:  
<http://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/825>

From the final round of the 2016 McGill Open, I present you with an attacking masterpiece that is worthy of books on how to play the English for an attack. The tournament situation was such that FM Valerian Hirschberg was on 4/4 — having beaten yours truly in the second

round — playing his nearest competitor, FM Zong Yang Yu, with 3.5/4 (who took a first round bye). Zong Yang, needing a win, capitalized on one or two mistakes by Valerian in a complex opening leading to a quick 25-move win. Be sure to have a look!

**1. ♘f3 c5 2. c4 ♘f6 3. ♘c3 d5**  
 a principled decision to counter in the centre; however, sharp lines may ensue. The game continuation demonstrates that the English isn't always such a boring opening.

**4. cxd5 ♘xd5 5. e4**



A bold move leading to dynamic play. 5.d4 is a high-scoring

alternative (60%). 5.g3 ♘c6 6. ♖g2 ♘c7 7. 0-0 e5 8.d3 is a quieter continuation.

**5... ♘b4 6. ♖c4**  
 6. ♖b5+ a less successful alternative 6... ♘8c6 7.d4 cxd4 8.a3 dxc3 9. ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 10.axb4=.

**6... ♘d3+ 7. ♔e2**  
 One should only play openings like this after careful preparation!

**7... ♘f4+**  
 7... ♘xc1+ 8. ♖xc1 ♘c6 is pretty reasonable too.

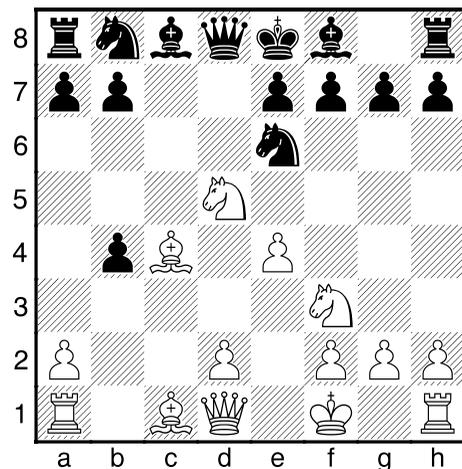
**8. ♔f1 ♘e6 9. b4!**  
 The correct way to follow up — White must continue with enterprising play, as otherwise Black will consolidate control of d4, and White will feel silly as he will need to castle manually.

**9... cxb4 10. ♘d5**



**Valerian Hirschberg**  
 2016 McGill Open





### 10...Nc6

The first deviation from the main line, yet still played by strong players

10...g6 11. Bb2 Bg7 and the advantage of having the Knight on e6 can be appreciated. Black scores well here, but White's position shows promise as he will recover the pawn on b4 and then push d4 with strong central control. One major proponent of this system was GM Yasser Seirawan who won the following instructive game: 12. Bxg7 Nxc7 13. Nxb4 Nd7 14. d4 Nb6 15. Bb3 a5 16. Nd3 a4 17. Bc2 0-0 18. h3 Qc7 19. Rxc1 Bd7 20. g3 Nc4 21. Qg2± *editor* – White has more centre control and Black's a-pawn is weak.

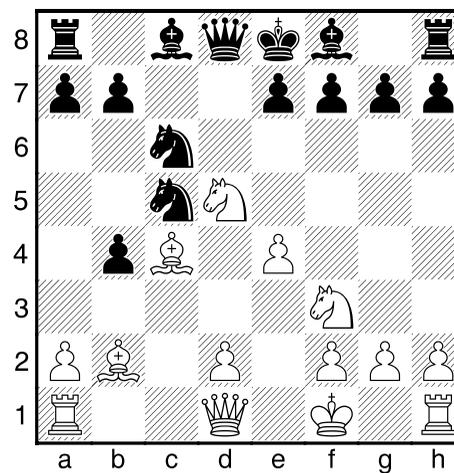
Black should either push on the queenside with ...b5 or try to make something happen on kingside with ...f5: 21...Bb5?! (21...f5!? 22. Nde5±; 21...b5!?) 22. Nc5 Qb8 23. Rb1 (*editor* – you have to be careful when your instincts make you (in Yasser's own words) "a dirty pawn grubber"; e.g.: 23. Nxa4? Bxa4 24. Bxa4 Nb2±; 23. Bxa4!? Bxa4 24. Nxa4 b5 25. Nc5?!

Rxa2 26. Nd7?? leads to a funny finish 26... Ne3+ 27. Kg1 Qxg3+! 28. fxg3 Rg2#) 23... Na3 24. Rb2 b6 25. Nxa4 Rc8! 26. Bb3 Qa7 27. Qd2! Bxa4 28. Qh6 Bxb3 29. Ng5 f6 30. Qxh7+ Qf8 31. Rxb3 fxg5 32. d5+- (32. Rf3+ +- ) 32... Nc4 33. Qh8+ Qf7 34. Rf3+ Nf5 35. Qh7+ Qf6 36. exf5 Ne5 37. Re1 g4 38. hxg4 Qd7 39. g5+ 1-0 [Seirawan, Y \(2600\)](#)– [Kuligowski, A \(2435\)](#) Wijk aan Zee, 1983.

### 11. Bb2

11. d4 g6 12. Be3 Bg7 13. Qd2 0-0 14. Rd1 a5 15. h4 h5 16. Bh6 Qh7 17. Bxg7 Nxc7 18. Ng5+ Qg8 19. Qf4 1/2-1/2 [Piket, J \(2605\)](#)– [Van Wely, L \(2635\)](#) Escaldes, 1998.

### 11...Nc5



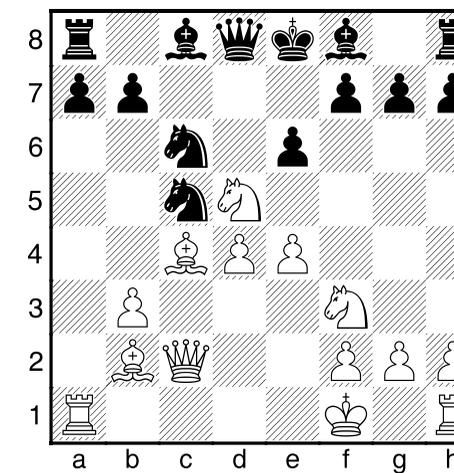
### 12. Qc2

The computer points out a crazy looking move 12. Be5! and after the natural looking 12... Nxe5? (Black would do best to go back and cover c7 12... Ne6 13. Rb1 and perhaps play d4 and drop the Bishop back to g3 if attacked with ...f6) 13. Nxe5 e6 14. Qh5+- the game will be over after 14... g6 15. Qf3 f5 16. Bb5+ Qd7 17. Nxd7 Nxd7 18. exf5 Qxd5 19. Re1+ +-.

### 12...e6 13. d4! b3?

I don't really understand the idea behind this intermezzo. It seems to be a mistake which begins Black's relatively quick decline from this point on. He should have tried 13... Nd7 14. Ne3±.

### 14. axb3



### 14...Nd7

*editor* – 14... Nxb3 might have been Black's idea when he played ...b3, but it doesn't help: 15. Qxb3 exd5 16. exd5+- with a crushing attack for free.

### 15. Ne3

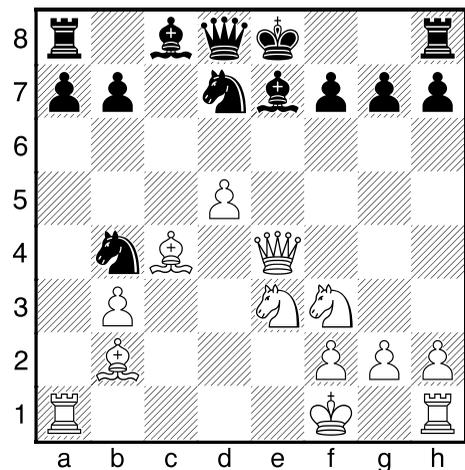
15. Nf4 is marginally more active and would likely have been my preference 15... Qc7 16. g3 Na5 17. Qg2 Nxc4 18. bxc4±.

### 15...Be7? 16. d5!

Opening up White's dangerous b2 Bishop. The end is near.

### 16...exd5 17. exd5 Nb4

### 18. Qe4



**18...♘f6**

One of only two moves which doesn't lose immediately.

**18...♘c5?** 19.♙b5+- picks up the b4 Knight.

**18...0-0** a hard move to make when I'm sure he saw 19.♙xg7!:

19...♙xg7 20.♘f5+ ♔h8

21.♘xe7 which is easily winning for White.

19...♘f6 prolongs the battle somewhat and was likely

Black's best 20.♙xf6 ♙xf6

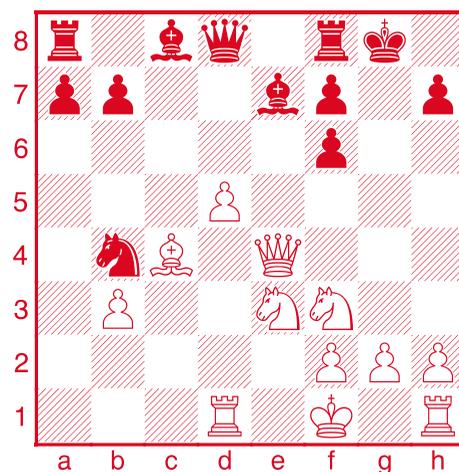
21.♖d1 ♔d6 22.h4 and White's attack continues.

**19.♙xf6 gxf6 20.♖d1**

20.♘d4 targeting f5 was likely a little easier, as it prevents Black from castling due to the devastation of either Knight

going to f5; for example 20...0-0 (20...♙f8□) 21.♘ef5 ♙xf5 22.♘xf5+- . But after seeing what White had planned, what he did was equally good.

**20...0-0**



**21.d6!**

A beautiful move which adds to White's attacking potential and forces Black's Bishop to d6, where it will be in trouble once a Knight gets to f5.

21.♘h4 does not quite have the same power due to 21...♙d6 22.♘hf5 ♔h8 and White is clearly better, but the win is a long way off.

**21...♙xd6 22.♘h4**

And again, it is getting a Knight

to f5 that matters.

**22...♙c7 23.♘hf5 ♙f4 24.♘e7+ ♔h8 25.♘7d5**

Winning a full piece. An exemplary display by FM Zong Yang Yu who is the deserving champion of the 2016 McGill Open!

**1-0**

## 2016 Canadian Open

The Canadian Open took place July 10-17 at the Caesars Windsor, in Windsor Ontario.

125 players competed in the 9-round swiss. Top section featured four GMs:

1. GM Gergely Szabo, ROU
2. GM Gergely Antal, HUN
3. GM Alexander Cherniaev, RUS
4. GM James E. Tarjan, USA

**GM Gergely Antal** was the clear winner. He started with a bye in round 1, but then won three games, drew with the second

and third place finishers, then ran off another three straight wins to finish with 7.5/9

Canadian FM **Andrew Peredun** was clear second with 7/9 — good for an IM Norm by more than a full point! Andrew played all four GMs in the Open. He drew GMs Antal, Szabo, and Cherniaev, and defeated GM Tarjan, and also defeated IM Kaiqi Yang; an impressive +2 =3 -0 vs FIDE-titled players.

**GM Gergely Szabo** was clear third. He won his first four games, then drew the next five to finish with 6.5/9.

### 2016 CO Podium Szabo, Peredun, Antal





## Section Winners:

- **U2000:** Jafar Faraji, 7.5/9
- **U1600:** John Young and Dora Koltai, 7/9
- **U1200:** Kevin Cui, 7.5/9 .

## Notes:

**GM James Tarjan**  
**Vettese, Nicholas (2147)**  
**Tarjan, James (2447)**  
 B12

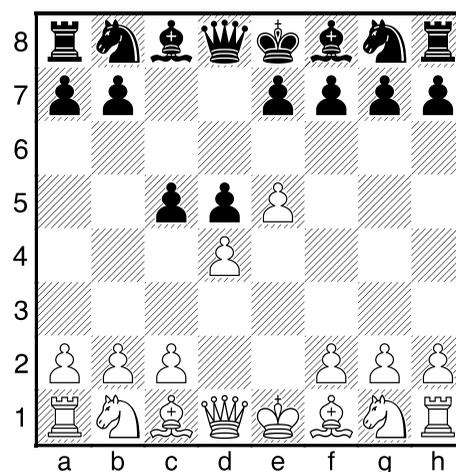
*2016 Canadian Open Windsor (2), 11.07.2016*

In this event I faced quite a number of talented, very young players. Clearly they had me, and my old man rating points, in their bombsites. Well then, turnabout is fair play and I prepared for them and researched them carefully.

I learned that Vettese at age ten had become the youngest National Master in Canadian history, though, if I am not mistaken, by the time of our game he had matured to the age of 12. He beat me there by a few years: I think I must have been 14 before I was master strength. A late bloomer, by today's

standards.

**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5**



Really an odd idea, moving the c-pawn twice. 3. ...♗f5 of course is the more common, and more logical approach. As opposed to the French, Black gets his bishop out in front of his pawn chain, where, presumably at least, it is better placed.

However, if these matters were so simple and straightforward, chess would be a much more trivial game, and we wouldn't be so willing to spend our time on it. If you go back, you will see Botvinnik using 3. ...c5 against Tal in their second World Championship match.

**4.♘f3**

Not the only move of course, but a popular one in this tournament. 4.dxc5 also makes sense, as does 4.c4.

**4...cxd4**

**5.♘xd4 e6**

Against Kaiqi Yang in the fourth round, I played the alternative: 5...♘c6 6.c4 e6 7.♘c3 ♗b4 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.♖a4 and then the interesting pawn sacrifice 9...♞b8.

**6.c4**

After 5. ...e6 White has a great deal of leeway. He could play practically any developing move. His 6.c4 is logical. 6.♗d3



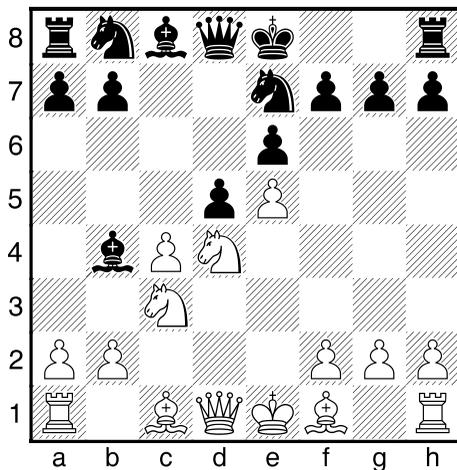
**GM James Tarjan**

or 6. ♖d2 with the idea 6. ... ♘c6  
7. ♖d2-f3.

**6... ♖b4+ 7. ♘c3**

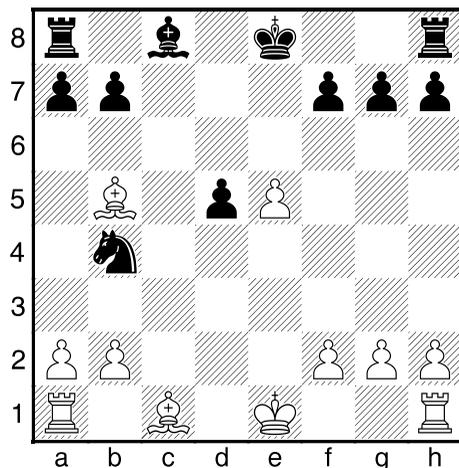
Sharper here would be 7. ♖d2  
♖xd2+ 8. ♔xd2 ♘e7 9. ♘c3 0-0  
10. 0-0-0.

**7... ♘e7**



It is pleasant for Black that he has delayed ... ♘c6, and is already set to castle. Now 8. ♔a4+ makes little sense because after 8. ... ♘c6 9. ♘xc6 Black can play 9. ... ♘xc6.

**8. ♔b3 ♘bc6 9. ♘xc6 ♘xc6  
10. cxd5 ♔xd5 11. ♔xb4  
♘xb4 12. ♘xd5 exd5  
13. ♖b5+**



I believe that had if we had played this game in another year or two, Vettese would not even consider this move. The exchange of bishops resolves the position in Black's favor:

- His remaining bishop is classically bad, blocked by his own pawns, especially after an f2-f4.
- Black's ♘ has promising outposts.
- The passed d-pawn is a plus, and Black still has a lead in development, getting his rook to the open c-file first.

13. ♔d1 is much more double-edged and unclear. White keeps his two bishops. There are still enough pieces on the board that White's king on d1 might be

uncomfortable; but things could also swing the other way and the centralized king could end up well-positioned for the endgame.

**13... ♖d7 14. ♖xd7+ ♔xd7**

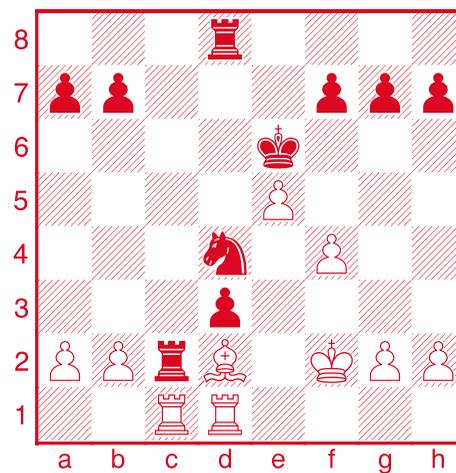
**15. 0-0 ♖ac8 16. ♖d2 ♘c6**

**17. ♖c3 ♔e6 18. ♖fd1 ♖hd8**

**19. f4 d4 20. ♖d2 d3 21. ♔f2**

*editor* – ? Fighting for the c-file with 21. ♖ac1! looks better. Now, ♘-move ♖xc8 will deflect the ♖d8 from defending d4, giving White time to bring over his ♔ and the black d-pawn may have advanced a bit too soon; e.g. 21... ♘d4 22. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 23. ♔f2.

**21... ♘d4 22. ♖ac1 ♖c2**



What happens after 23. ♖xc2?

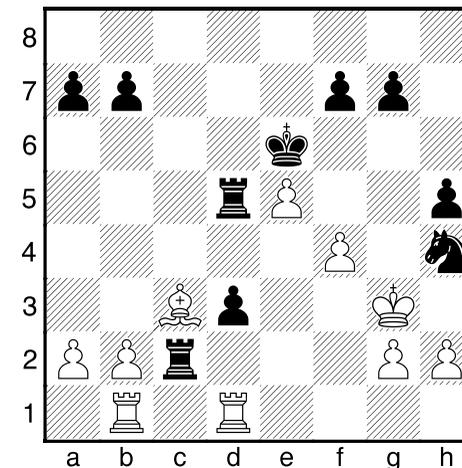
**23. ♖b1**

*editor* – there are some very sharp tactics here after 23. ♖xc2!? dxc2! (23... ♘xc2=) 24. ♖f1□ (24. ♖c1? ♘b3□-+ and ... ♖xd2.) 24... ♘f3! (24... ♘f5 25. ♔e2∞) 25. f5+□ (25. ♖c1 ♘xh2-+; 25. ♔xf3 ♖xd2 26. ♖c1 ♔d5-+) 25... ♔xe5 (25... ♔xf5?? 26. ♔xf3 ♖xd2 27. ♔e3+-) 26. ♖c3+ ♔xf5 (26... ♘d4? 27. ♔e3+-) 27. ♔e2□ c1♔ 28. ♖xc1♞ and Black can go into a nominally better ♖ ending after ... ♘d4+.

**23... h5 24. ♔e3 ♘f5+ 25. ♔f3  
♖d5**

White is clearly in trouble. He comes up with a nice trap.

**26. ♖c3 ♘h4+ 27. ♔g3**



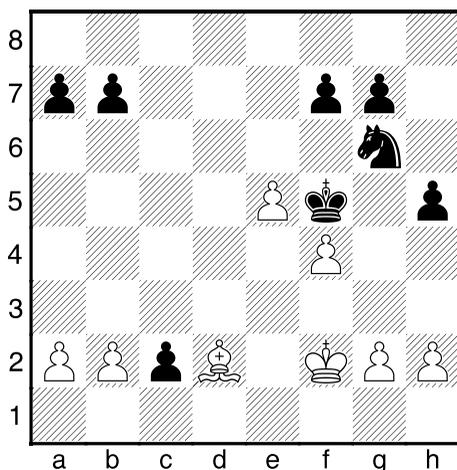
**27... ♘f5+**



27... ♖xg2? 28. ♕d2! traps the ♘.

After the game Vettese pointed out the possibility of 27... g5 28. fxg5 ♘xg2 29. ♕d2 ♖xe5+-. Seems convincing, though I don't see how he holds the position anyway, as the game went.

28. ♖f3 ♘h4+ 29. ♖g3 ♘g6  
30. ♖d2 ♖xd2 31. ♕xd2 ♖c5  
32. ♖c1 ♖c2 33. ♖xc2 dxc2  
34. ♖f2 ♖f5

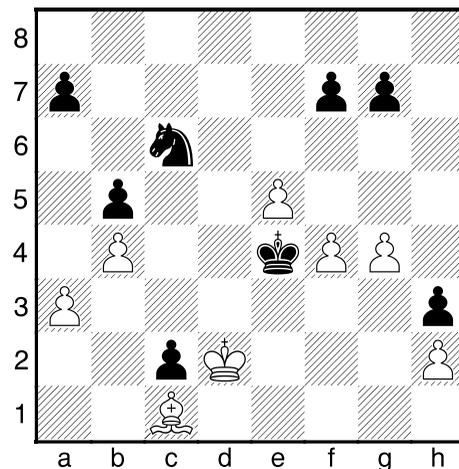


35. g3

The only hope is to keep Black's king out of e4 with 35. ♖f3 but after 35... ♘e7 it is lost anyway.

35... ♖e4 36. ♖e2 h4 37. ♕c1  
h3 38. b4?! b5 39. a3 ♘e7  
40. g4 ♘c6 41. ♖d2

Peredun - Tarjan  
1-0.



I gather that young players now are trained never to resign, or at least not until things are very very over. It was annoying the first time, seemed disrespectful, but now I am OK with it. And I have come around to agree that

it is a good practice for them.

After all, it was Tartakower, was it not, who said, "No one ever won a game by resigning." And people will indeed blunder... but not *this* time.

41... ♖xf4

Various ways to win I am sure, but always good in practice to choose the way that offers the opponent absolutely no chance whatsoever.

42. ♖xc2+ ♖xg4 43. ♕e3 ♖f3  
44. ♖d2 a6 45. ♕c5 ♘xe5  
46. ♕f8 g5

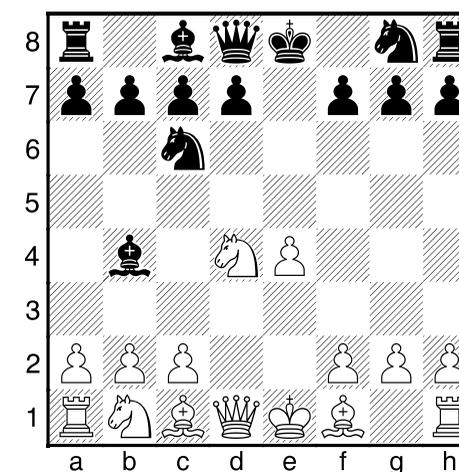
0-1



**Notes: Mike Ivanov**  
**Ivanov, Mike (2260)**  
**Tarjan, James (2443)**  
C45  
2016 Canadian Open Windsor  
(6), 16.07.2016

Going into this game, I prepared the Caro-Kann, hoping to play the sharp Karpov variation as White. However, James rightly sidestepped my preparations. In round 9 however, Andrew Peredun got the chance to show exactly why the Karpov variation (4... ♘bd7) is so fun for White (♘xe6!).

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. d4 exd4  
4. ♘xd4 ♕b4+!?



Even though I was aware that

he'd played the Scotch in the past, I wasn't expecting this particular variation from him. Thankfully, I recently read an article by Rublevsky showing how to get an advantage here for White.

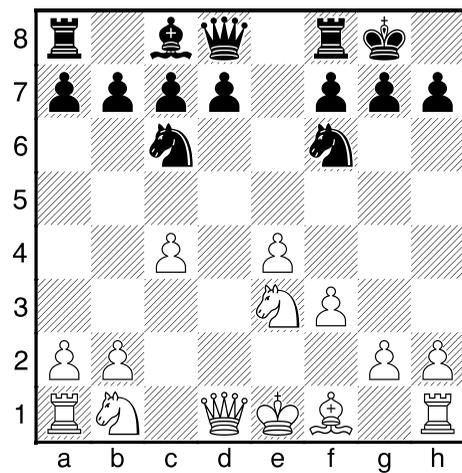
**5.c3 ♖c5 6.♗e3 ♖b6 7.♘f5**

The main move which allows White to get a solid position with a small plus due to the space advantage and bind on Black's counterplay.

**7...♗xe3**

7...g6 8.♗xb6 axb6 9.♘e3 ♘f6 10.f3 0-0 11.c4 d5! is interesting.

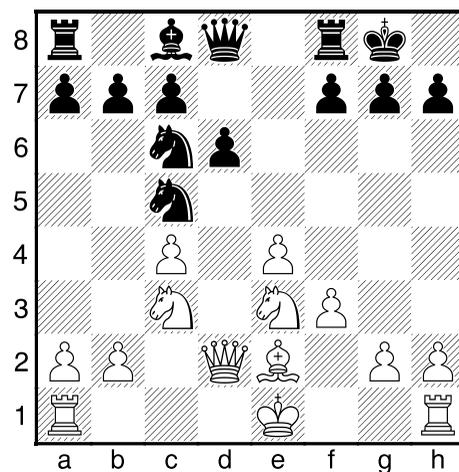
**8.♘xe3 ♘f6 9.f3 0-0 10.c4**



Getting a Maroczy Bind without dark-square bishops,

which normally benefits Black, but in this case Black has a less chance of a ...b5 or ...d5 breakthrough than in usual hedgehog structures.

**10...d6 11.♘c3 ♘d7 12.♙d2 ♘c5 13.♗e2**

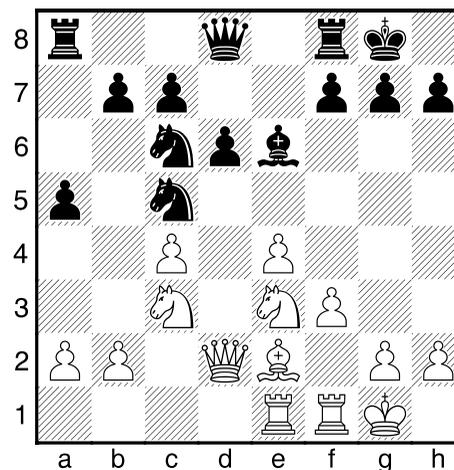


**13...a5?!**

Although this natural move can't

be bad, I think Black should consider ...♙h4+ here weakening White's kingside: 13...♙h4+ 14.g3 ♗d8 15.0-0 ♘h3 16.♗fe1 ♗e8 17.♗ad1 a5 with a bit more breathing space for Black than in the game. After the text move, Black slowly gets pushed back, while the c8 bishop has trouble developing.

**14.0-0 ♗e6 15.♗ae1**



The rook might be better placed on d1, in view of the eventual f4, e5 push. I wanted to keep the option of ♗d1-c2 open, not being the biggest fan of my e2 bishop.

**15...f6 16.♙h1 ♘e5 17.b3**

The second the knight leaves c5, b3 is playable since ...a4 can be met with b4.

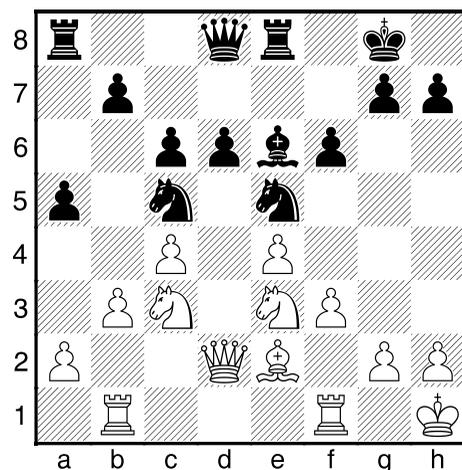
**17...♗e8 18.♗b1**

Switch in plans. Since Black has no play, it doesn't make sense to give him a target on e4 by pushing f4. More reasonable is to gain space on the queenside before committing to anything.

**18...c6!**

**2016 Canadian Open**  
Top Section

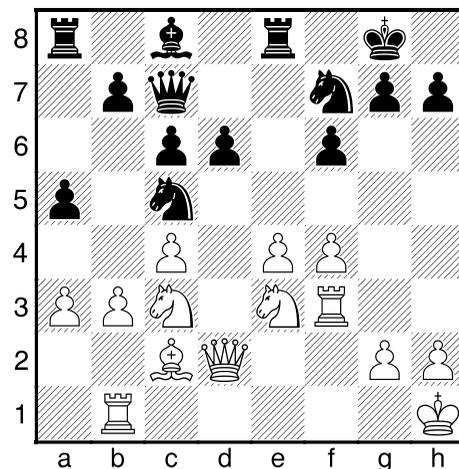


**19.f4**

19. ♖bd1 ♔b6 20. ♕xd6 ♖ad8 is where I stopped calculating, but the line might not even stop here :) 21. ♘cd5! ♙xd5 22. ♘xd5 ♖xd6 (editor – 22... ♔a7 23. ♘e7+ ♔f7 ♘ 24. ♕c7 ♕b8 ♘ 25. ♕xb8±) 23. ♘xb6 ♖ed8 24. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 25. ♖d1 ♖xd1+ 26. ♙xd1 ♘ed3 and even though White is up a pawn, Black's well-positioned knights and White's bad d1-bishop fully compensate.

**19... ♘f7 20. ♙d1 ♔b6 21. a3**

Creating the threat of b4, and if the knight dares to retreat to d7, f5! traps the bishop.

**21... ♙c8 22. ♙c2 ♔c7 23. ♖f3**

White can now slowly develop a kingside attack, bringing in the rooks and knights. At the same time Black's position is rock solid. This position is analogous to King's Indian Defenses where Black plays ...exd4 at some



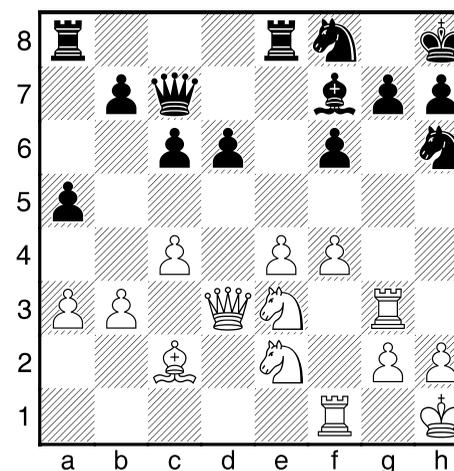
Hal Bond &  
Vlad Drkulec

TD & Organizer

point, except there is no black bishop on g7 to give any hope for counterplay.

**23... ♘d7 24. ♖bf1 ♘f8 25. ♖g3 ♔h8 26. ♕d1?**

A waste of time since the queen is scarier from d3.

**26... ♘h6 27. ♕d3 ♙e6 28. ♘e2 ♙f7****29. ♖h3**

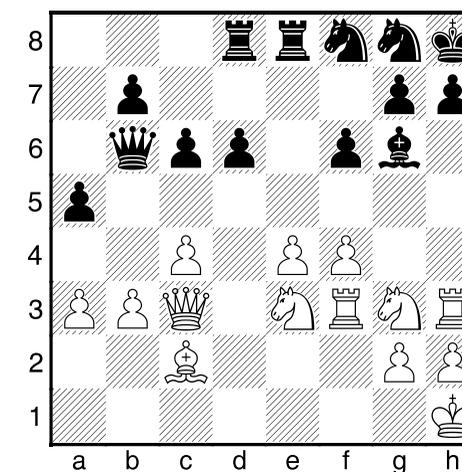
29. ♘d4 ♙g6! tempting the pawn forward to get the e5 square 30. f5 ♙f7 31. ♘f3 ♘d7 32. ♕d4 ♘e5 or 32...d5!?

**29... ♙g6 30. ♘g3!**

This way White doesn't have to lock the structure with f5 which immobilizes the pawns while giving the black knights outposts.

**30... ♖ad8 31. ♕c3**

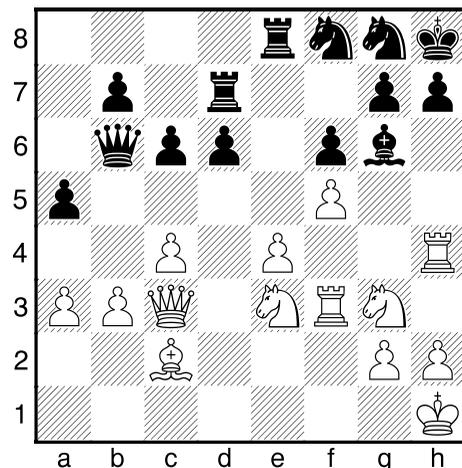
31. ♖xh6! gxh6 32. ♕c3 ♘d7 33. ♘gf5 h5 34. ♖d1 looked interesting but Black has enough rooks to cover the important squares.

**31... ♘g8 32. ♖f3 ♔b6****33. ♖h4?!**

Going for the wrong idea of doubling rooks, against which Black can always insert ...h6 and hold.

Slowly pressing on all sides was better: 33. ♘gf5 ♕c7 34. ♖f1 ♖d7 35. b4 axb4 36. axb4 ♖a8 37. g4; but I'm still convinced that Black can hold since everything is defended.

**33... ♖d7 34. f5?**



Impatience in action, as I got annoyed that Black's "sleeping beauties" could still ward off my pieces which are almost perfectly placed. The thinking behind it was to give up the e5 square for the f4/g6/e6 squares and double up with ♖h3.

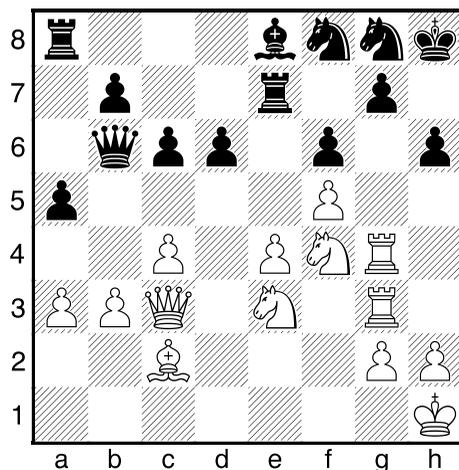
**34...♙f7 35.♘e2 ♜de7**

**35...d5** 36.exd5 cxd5 37.c5 ♙c7 38.♘d4 looked pleasant for White.

**35...h6** 36.♘f4 ♘h7 37.b4 ♘g5 gave more counterplay for Black, and is probably better than what happened in the game.

**36.♘f4 h6 37.♜g4 ♜a8**  
37...♘h7 38.h4.

**38.♜fg3 ♙e8**



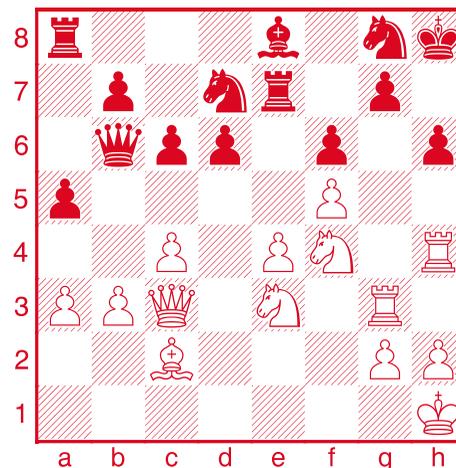
**39.♜h4**

Not wanting to make any big decisions before the time control. Ironic, because I ended up making one anyway.

39.♘e6! ♘xe6 40.fxex6+- would have been awesome to find, but I had only 30 seconds left. Black is in practical *zugzwang* since he can't take on e6 and ♘f5 is coming.

*editor* – At the end of this line Black might be able to untangle by scrambling White's ♜s with ...h5, but it's hard to believe that this won't leave White with other ways to crack the kingside.

**39...♘d7**



**40.♘g6+?**

The problem is that ...d5 is a potential threat plus ...♘e5 is coming, so I felt I had to do something fast, despite needing one move to reach that sacred time control. Another addition to the series of "Mistakes Played on the 40th Move".

40.♘e6! once again should be the way to go, and White can start to look for the final blow such as ♘g7:

**40...♜xe6** 41.fxex6 ♘e5 42.♜f4 ♜d8 43.♘f5+-;

**40...♘c5** 41.♘g7 ♜xg7  
42.♜xh6+ ♘xh6 43.♙xf6 ♙c7  
44.♙xh6+ ♙g8 45.♘g4+-;

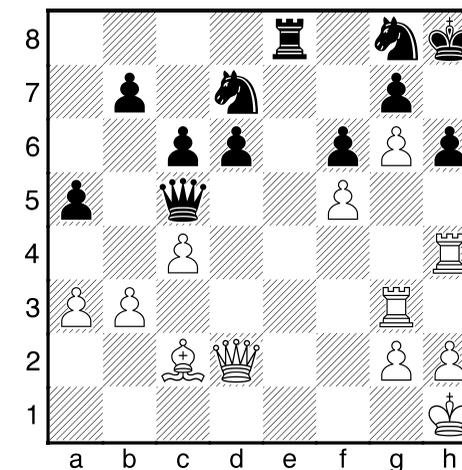
**40...♘e5** 41.c5! dxc5 42.♘c4!

♙a6 43.♙g1 ♘xc4 44.♜xg7!  
♜xg7 45.♜xh6+! ♘xh6 46.♙xf6  
#2.

**40...♘g6** 41.fxg6 ♙c5  
**42.♙d2 ♜e5** 43.♘f5

My plan when playing ♘g6 was simple: put all the pieces on h6 and sac the knight. Too bad the rook got in the way...

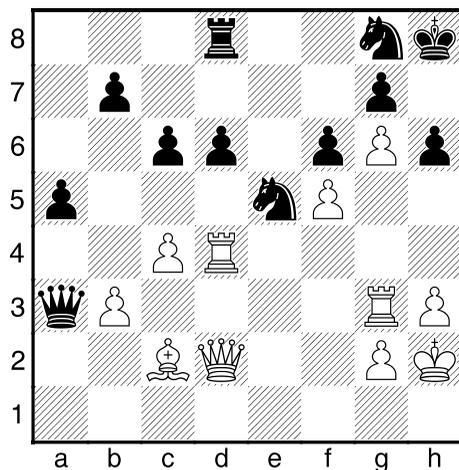
**43...♜xf5!** 44.exf5 ♜e8



**45.h3!**

Avoiding many annoying back-rank tricks. Although White is up an exchange, a3 is falling, and the bishop on c2 isn't much of a bishop. The knights can start to dominate the position if White's not careful: 45.b4 axb4 46.axb4 ♙e5 47.♙g1± (47.♜e4?? ♙a1+-+).

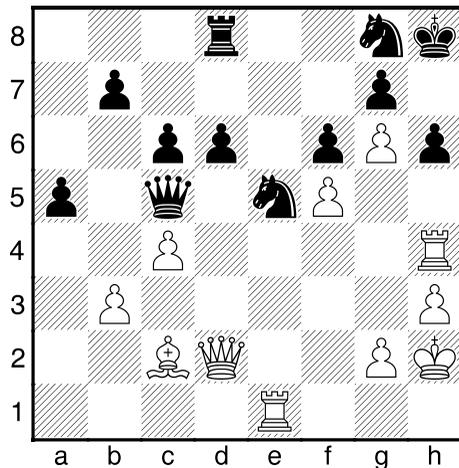
45...♔xa3 46.♖d4 ♘e5  
47.♔h2 ♖d8



48.♖e3?

Here I missed the last easy win, a neat simplifying tactic: 48.b4! ♖xb4 49.♖xb4 axb4 50.c5+.

48...♖c5 49.♖e1 ♘e7 50.♖h4  
♘g8



51.♖d4

Because of the texture of the position I decided to repeat moves, yet it turns out that because of the d6 weakness coupled with threats on h6, White can force ...d5, after which he has great winning chances.

Although at the time, looking at that bishop on c2 didn't inspire too much confidence in my winning chances, I should have tried: 51.♖d1! d5 52.♖d4 ♖d6 53.♔h1 a4 (53...♖b8 54.♖d2 (54.c5 ♘d7 55.b4 axb4 56.♖xb4 ♖a7 57.♙b3 ♘xc5) 54...b6±) 54.cxd5 axb3 55.♙xb3 c5 56.♖a4 With more chances to win than to draw.

51...♘e7 52.♖h4 ♘g8 53.♖d4  
♘e7 54.♖h4

And here we agreed on a draw, partially due to the respect I had for my experienced opponent. Nevertheless, the lesson that can be taken from this game is summed up by a [Nigel Short](#) quote:

*If your opponent offers you a draw (or a 3-fold repetition!) figure out why he thinks he's worse!*

1/2-1/2

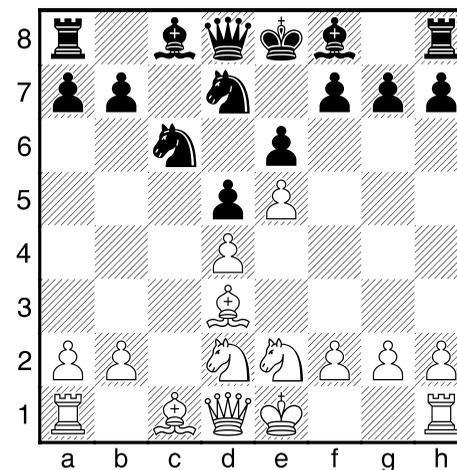
Finally, the tournament winner beats one of Alberta's top players in a very theoretical French.

**Antal, Gergely (2545)**  
**Banerjee, Bitan (2368)**  
C06

2016 Canadian Open Windsor  
(9.1), 17.07.2016

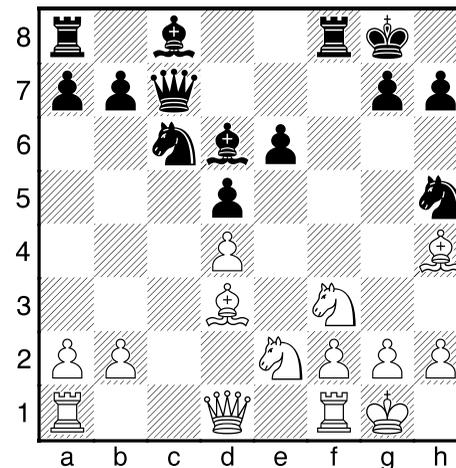
Notes: John Upper

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 ♘f6  
4.e5 ♘fd7 5.♙d3 c5 6.c3  
♘c6 7.♘e2 cxd4 8.cxd4



A familiar sequence from Tarrasch French. The next few moves are about trying to establish piece control over e5.

8...f6 9.exf6 ♘xf6 10.0-0  
♙d6 11.♘f3 ♖c7 12.♙g5 0-0  
13.♙h4 ♘h5

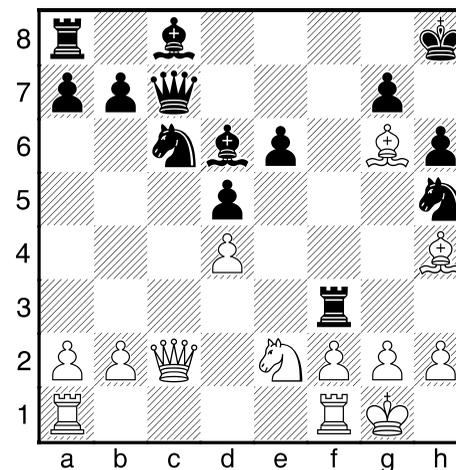


The ♘h5 discourages ♙g3. Now White tries to poke holes in Black's kingside.

14.♖c2 h6 15.♙h7+

15.♙g6 is also played, but the check is a useful finesse, since it makes Black's king vulnerable to back rank mates, and so rules out some equalizing tactics.

15...♔h8 16.♙g6 ♖xf3!



The necessary "sac", removing a defender of d4 and giving White a chance to wreck his kingside.

### 17. ♖xh5

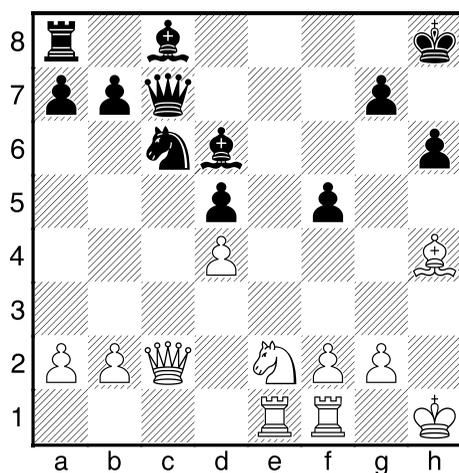
The prudent line. The macho line is: 17.gxf3!? ♕xh2+ 18.♔g2 ♘f4+ 19.♘xf4 (19.♔xh2 ♘xg6+ 20.♕g3 ♖f7) 19...♖xf4∞ with the sort of mess Black hopes for.

### 17...♖f8

Also the prudent choice. Black can insist on giving up the exchange with ...♖f5 or ...♕xh2+.

17...♕xh2+!? 18.♔h1 ♖f5 19.♕g6 ♕d6 20.♕xf5 exf5 21.♖ae1:

*Analysis Diagram*

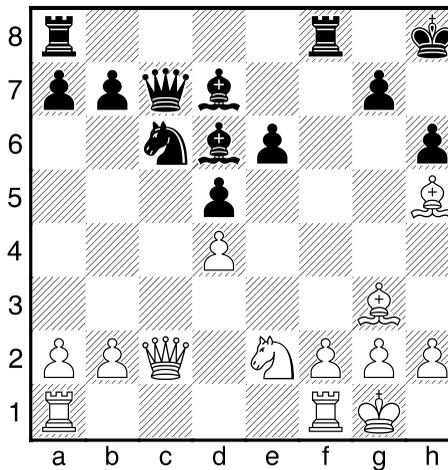


21...♔g8!?! 22.♕g3 f4 23.♘xf4 ♕xf4 24.♖e8+ ♔f7 25.♖h7!! ♕xg3 (25...♘xd4 26.♖g8+

♔g6; 25...♔xe8 26.♖g8+ ♔d7 27.♖xg7+ ♘e7 28.♖e1+-) 26.♖g8+ ♔g6 27.fxg3 ♖xg3 28.♖xd5 ♖h4+ 29.♔g1 ♘xd4 1-0 Matsenko,S (2435)–Arslanov,S (2365) Serpukhov, 2009.

21...♖f7 22.♕g3 ♕b4 (22...f4? 23.♘xf4 ♕xf4 24.♕xf4 ♖xf4 25.♖e8+-) 23.♖d1 ♕d7 24.a3 ♕a5 (24...♕e7 25.♖fe1 ♕f6 26.♖b3 b6? 27.♘f4 ♕xd4 28.♖xd5± (½-½, 46) Antal,G (2447)–Michielsen,J (2314) Pardubice, 2007.) 25.b4 ♕b6 26.♖fe1 ♖e8 27.♘f4 ♖xe1+ 28.♖xe1 g5= Boruchovsky,A (2536)–Williams,S (2429) Douglas, 2015 (1-0, 66).

### 18. ♕g3 ♕d7



There are over 100 games in the MegaBase from here, with no clear consensus on White's best try.

White has succeeded in opposing DSBs to fight for e5,

but he's a long way from being able to use that square.

Strategically, both sides have weak pawns (d4 and e6) which tie down their minor pieces. At some point White usually tries to dislodge the ♘c6 by advancing his queenside pawns, but this is easier said than done.

Emanuel Berg's *GM Repertoire 16: The French* (vol.3) for Quality Chess considers five moves for White here: ♖ad1, ♖ac1, a3, ♕xd6, ♖d2, and b4!?

### 19.a3

Here's one amusing little line from Berg: **19.b4!?** ♖ac8 20.♖ac1 ♖b6! 21.♕xd6 ♘xd4 22.♖g6 ♘xe2+ 23.♕xe2 ♖xd6 24.♕d3 ♔g8 25.♖h7+ ♔f7 26.♖g6+ ♔g8= and White should repeat.

19.♖ac1 ♖f6 20.♖d2 ♖af8 21.♖c3 (21.a3 ♕e8 22.♕xe8 ♖xe8 23.♖c3 ♖ef8 24.b4 a6 25.f3 ♕xg3 26.hxg3 ♖d6 27.♖fc1± (1-0, 52) Tan,J (2448)–Berg,E (2573) Oslo, 2017.) 21...♕e8 22.♕xe8 ♖xe8 23.b4 ♖b8 24.a3 ♖ef8 25.♖e3 a6 26.♖cc1 ♖e8 27.♖fe1 ♖ef8 28.♖f1= ♖e8 29.♖ce1 ♖ff8 30.♕xd6 ♖xd6 31.f4 a5

Antal - Banerjee

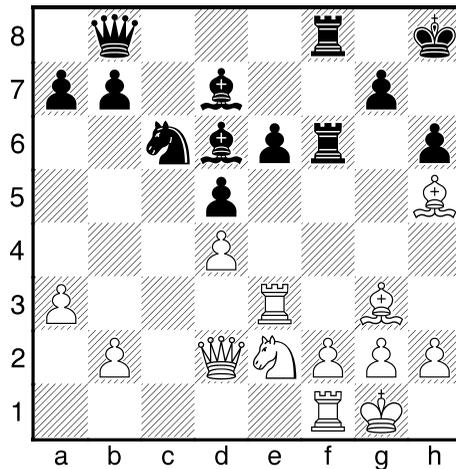


½-½ Vachier Lagrave, M (2696)  
–Ganguly, S (2614) Gibraltar,  
2009.

19...♖ac8

Berg's repertoire recommends trading the bad ♗ with 19...♗e8 20.♗xe8 ♖axe8 21.b4 a6!=.

20.♖ac1 ♔b8 21.♔d2 ♖f6  
22.♖c3 ♖cf8 23.♖e3



23...b6?!

Black's ♖c6 is crucial for control over e5, so destabilizing it with ...b6 and then sending it on a hike doesn't seem right.

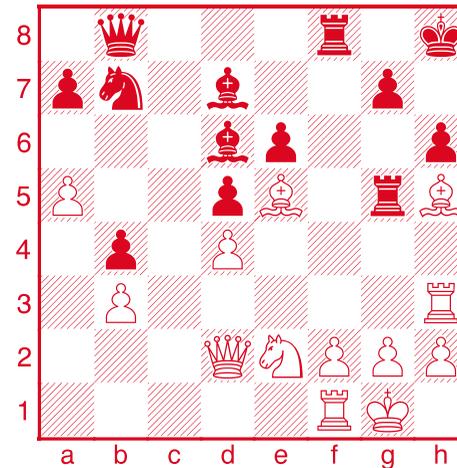
23...♗e8!? 24.♗g4 (24.♗xe8 ♖xe8 25.♖e1 ♔g8 26.♖c3 ♗xg3 27.hxg3 ♔d6) 24...♗f7 25.♗h4 g5 (25...♗xh2+ looks like a worse version of the exchange sac lines shown above.) 26.♗g3

Black's kingside looks a little ropey, but I don't see a way to break it down.

24.♗g4 ♖a5 25.b3 ♖b7  
26.a4 b5 27.a5 b4 28.♗e5!  
♖g6

28...♗xe5 29.dxe5 ♖g6 30.♔xb4 ♖xa5 31.♔xb8 ♖xb8 32.♗h5 ♖g5 33.g4 Traps the ♖ to win an ex.

29.♗h5 ♖g5 30.♖h3



Suddenly Black is in big trouble. White already threatens ♗xg5!

30...♖ff5?

White is attacking the kingside with his minors and Black is defending with his ♖s, so it shouldn't be surprising that Black's saving options all involve giving up an exchange, but it's

hard to say which one is best. Here are four tries:

30...♖gf5?? 31.♔xh6+ ♔g8  
32.♔xg7#.

30...♖xe5?! 31.dxe5 ♗xe5  
32.♗g6 ♔g8! and White can play for an attack with f4 or simply take on b4. (32...♗f4? 33.♖xf4 ♔xf4 34.♔xf4 ♖xf4 35.♖c1+-) .

30...♗g8!? 31.f4 ♖xh5 32.♖xh5 ♖xa5 33.♖h3 Black has some comp for the ex, but what should he do with his ♖?.

30...♗xe5!? 31.dxe5 (31.♔xg5 ♗xh2+ 32.♔h1 ♔g8±) 31...♗g8 (31...♖xe5? 32.♗g6 ♖f6 33.♖xh6+!! ♔g8 34.♗h7+-) 32.f4 ♖xh5± Black has some comp for the ex, but it doesn't feel like enough.

31.♖g3

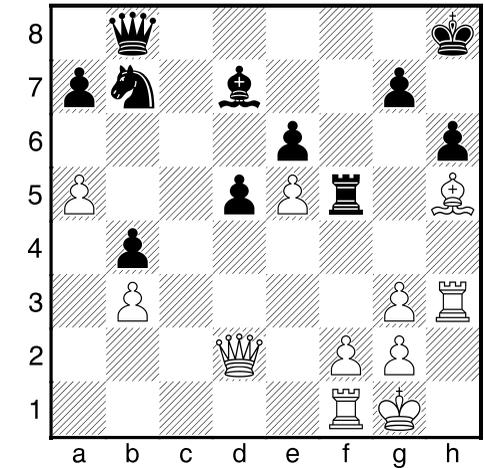
Now White wins an exchange while leaving Black with no play.

31...♗xe5

31...♖xe5 32.dxe5 ♖xe5 (32...♗xe5?? 33.♔xg5 hxg5 34.♗f7#) 33.♗g6 threatening ♖xh6+-. 33...♗f8 34.♗b1+- and

♔d3 with a deadly attack on the light squares.

32.dxe5 ♖xg3 33.hxg3



33...♖c5

33...♔xe5 34.♔xb4+-.  
33...♖xe5 34.♗g6 and ♖xh6.

34.♗g6 ♔xe5 35.♗xf5

White simplifies to win.

35...exf5 36.♔f4 ♔e2

36...♔xf4 37.gxf4 leaves Black down two exchanges.

37.♔d6

1-0

photos: Victoria Jung-Doknjas





The 2016 Canadian Youth Chess Championship (CYCC) took place July 5-8, 2016 at Caesars Windsor.

The CYCC determines the Canadian Champions in twelve categories: two divisions (Girls and Open), with six age groups in each (Under 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18). Winners of each section earn the right to be Canada's official representatives to the World Youth Chess Champion-

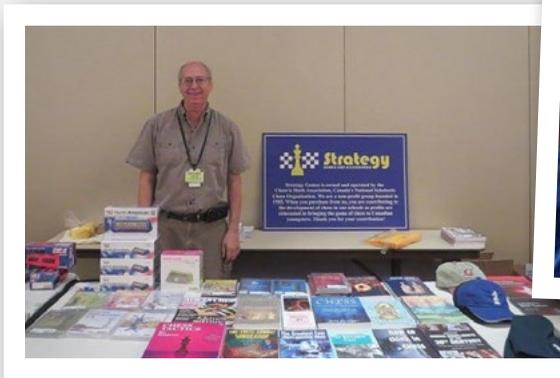
ship, and have their travel funds covered by money collected from the entry fees at the CYCC. Second and third place finishers qualify to be Canada's official representatives at the Pan American Youth Chess Championship and the North American Youth Chess Championship.

### Format

The format was a 7-round swiss in each section, with a 90 + 30 time control. A total of **277 players** competed. Even so, the U16g and U18g sections had too few entries and were combined with the Open sections.

**GM Alexander Cherniaev (RUS)**, gave free post-game analysis with the CYCC players.

Info and sales booths were on site from **Chess Kids** and **Strategy Games**.



CFC Youth Coordinator **Frank Lee**, Deputy Arbiter **Brian Clarke**, CFC President and Chief Organizer of the 2016 CYCC **Vlad Drkulec**, and Chief Arbiter **Aris Marghetis**.

### 2016 CYCC Winners

#### Open

- U8** Alexander Chang
- U10** Nameer Issani
- U12** Qiuyu Huang
- U14** Eugene Hua
- U16** Caleb Peterson
- U18** Michael Song

#### Girls

- U8** Michelle Hua
- U10** Mysha Gilani
- U12** Shi Yuan Tian
- U14** Maili-Jade Ouellet
- U16** Rahma Gillan
- U18** Rachel Tao





# Chess Canada Dragon



## U8g

- 1 MICHELLE HUA
- 2 JIN RONG ZHUANG
- 3 SOPHIA YU

## U8

- 1 ALEXANDER RZ CHANG
- 2 KEVIN ZHONG
- 3 ANTHONY ATANASOV



## U10g

- 1 MYSHA GILANI
- 2 ELAINE FAN
- 3 ISAMEL SHEN

## U10

- 1 NAMEER ISSANI
- 2 AIDEN ZHOU
- 3 PRINCE ERIC JR GUIPI BOPALA





# Chess Canada Dragon



## U12g

- 1 SHI YUAN  
[SHERRY] TIAN
- 2 KYLIE TAN
- 3 ELENA YANG

## U12

- 1 QIUYU HUANG
- 2 NICHOLAS  
VETTESE
- 3 SHAWN  
RODRIGUE-  
LEMIEUX



## U14g

- 1 MAILI-JADE  
OUELLET
- 2 SVITLANA  
DEMCHENKO
- 3 LILY ZHOU

## U14

- 1 EUGENE HUA
- 2 JOSHUA DOKNJAS
- 3 ROHAN TALUKDAR





# Chess Canada Dragon



## U16g

**RAHMA GILLAN** was the only U16 girl in the 2016 CYCC. She played in the U16 section, finishing with 1/7.

## U16

- 1 CALEB PETERSEN
- 2 KUN FAN RUN
- 3 ZIYUAN SAM SONG



## U18g

**Rachel Tao** (& mom) & **Agniya Pobereshnikova** were the only U18 girls in the 2016 CYCC. They played in the U18 section. Rachel finished =7th with 3.5/7, and beat Agniya in their head-to-head game. Agniya finished =11th with 3/7.

## U18

- 1 MICHAEL SONG
- 2 OLIVIER KENTA CHIKU-RATTE
- 3 RICHARD WANG AND DIWEN SHI





Five games featuring Canadians playing in: Reykjavik, Chicago, St. Louis, Philadelphia, and North Carolina.

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♙g7**  
Committing to the King's Indian Defense. It's a good opening for when you want to play for a win (often at all cost).

**8.♙e3 c6**  
8...♘g4 likely the most testing variation, but I suspect Marin did not want to enter forcing lines — as would occur after 9.♙g5 ♖e8 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.h3 h6 or 11...f6.

about 65%; e.g. [Gelfand,B \(2733\)–Movsesian,S \(2637\)](#) Fuegen, 2006 (1-0, 41).

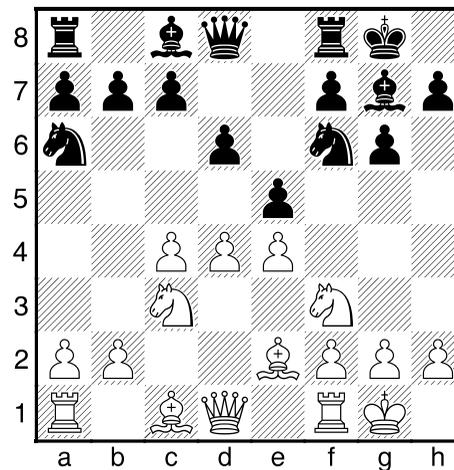
**9...♘g4 10.♙g5 f6 11.♙h4 c5**

**Notes: Keith MacKinnon**  
**Dougherty, Michael (2169)**  
**Marin, Mihail (2597)**  
E94  
*Reykjavik Open (3.22),*  
*09.03.2016*

The following game and notes appeared on the CFC Newsfeed:  
<http://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/804>

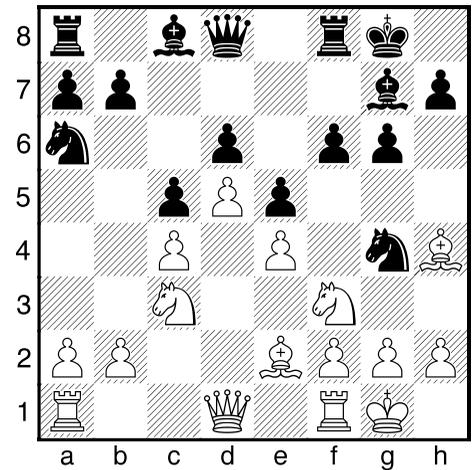
Trust me, this one doesn't disappoint! From the third round of the Reykjavik Open (a tournament which attracts a number of Canadians each year), FM Michael Dougherty found himself playing the white pieces against an experienced Grandmaster who was playing for the win with Black. The game was back and forth, with Marin eventually emerging the victor. There's a lot about strategy to learn from this one!

**4.e4 d6 5.♘f3 0-0 6.♙e2 e5**  
**7.0-0 ♘a6!?**



I give the interesting annotation because this is the first time that GM Marin has played the move (at least according to Mega 2015). An experienced professional, Marin knows that in playing lower-rated opponents, it is important to avoid long prepared lines. He has essayed the more common 7...♘c6 and 7...♘bd7 in the past.

**9.d5**  
9.♖e1 is another reasonable option, and less committal than d5, 9...♘g4 10.♙g5 ♖e8 11.h3 f6 12.♙c1 ♘h6 13.♙f1 and we reach a strange situation where both white bishops return to their starting squares, yet White is in the driver's seat here and scores



**12.♘d2**

12.♘e1 is played more often and would likely be my preference; however, the following game shows that here, too, Black can get a strong position: 12...h5 13.a3 ♘h6 14.h3 ♘f7 15.♘d3 ♙h6 16.b4 ♙d7 17.♖b1 b6 18.bxc5 ♘xc5 19.♘xc5 dxc5 20.a4 ♘d6 21.♖d3 ♙g7 22.♖b2 ♙g5 23.♙g3 h4 24.♙h2 ♖e8 [Wojtaszek,R \(2744\)–Ding,L \(2732\)](#) Wijk aan Zee, 2015 (0-1, 65).



### ***Walking the walk***

*GM Mihail Marin not only writes great chess books, he plays OK too.*





## 12...♘h6

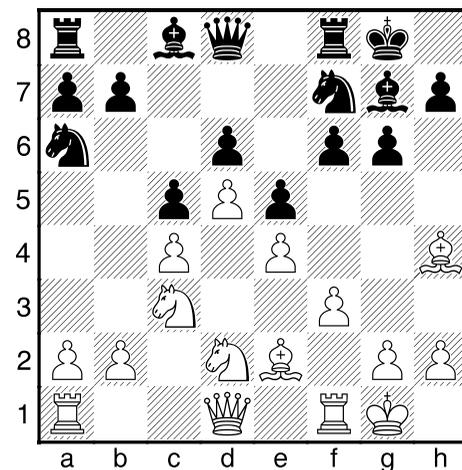
12...h5 looks more natural to me and has been played a number of times. I'm not a big KID expert though and I'm sure Marin had his reasons for the Knight retreat.

## 13.f3

Probably the first move I disagree with. I understand FM Dougherty's desire to support e4 and have an escape route for his Bishop on h4, but this just seems somewhat passive to me.

13.a3 ♘f7 14.♖b1 would probably be how I would like to continue here. As is typical for the KID, White's plan revolves around putting pressure on Black's queenside while parrying an attack on the kingside.

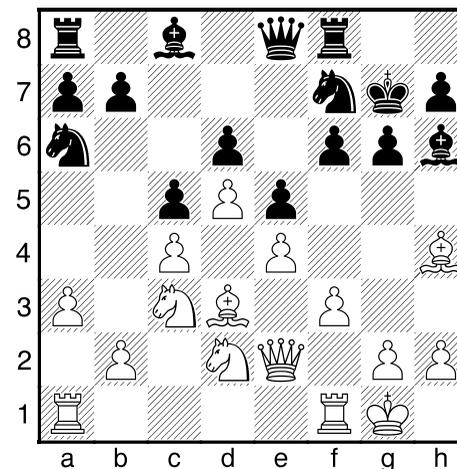
## 13...♘f7



## 14.♙d3N

*Chess Canada* editor, John Upper, points out the following crushing win for Black by GM Shabalov back in 2010: 14.a3 ♙d7 15.♖b1 ♙h6 16.♙f2 f5 17.b4 b6 18.♘b5 ♙f4 19.bxc5 ♘xc5 20.♘b3 fxe4 21.♘xc5 dxc5 22.fxe4 ♙xb5 23.cxb5 ♘d6 24.♙f3 ♘c4 25.♖a1 ♘d2 26.♖e1 c4 27.♖a2 c3 28.♖c2 ♖c8 29.♙e2 ♙g5 30.♙g4 ♖c4 31.h4 ♙f6 32.♙d3? ♙h2+!-+ 33.♙xh2 ♙xf2 34.♙g3 ♙xg3+ 35.♙xg3 ♖xe4 36.♖ec1 ♘b3 37.♙f3 ♖d4 38.♖e1 ♖d3 0-1 [Shankland,S \(2507\)-Shabalov,A \(2585\)](#) Philadelphia, 2010.

## 14...♙h6 15.♙e2 ♙g7 16.a3 ♙e8



The black queen moves off the

h4-d8 diagonal in order to play an ...f5 break

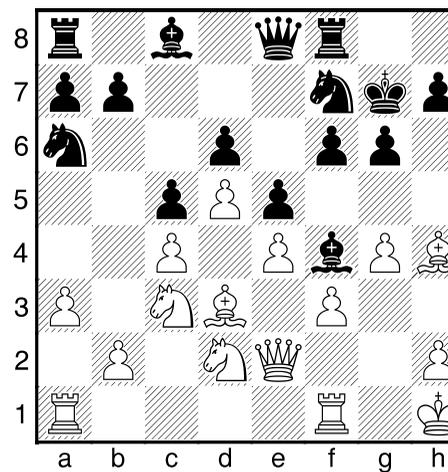
## 17.g4?

This just seems like a major strategic error and overreaction. It was not so serious to allow Black to get ...f5 in. White should have continued with the aforementioned plan of attempting to play b4.

## 17...♙f4!

White has created dark-squared weaknesses in his camp and has to contend with ideas of ...♖h8 and ...h5 coming very shortly.

## 18.♙h1



## 18...♖h8

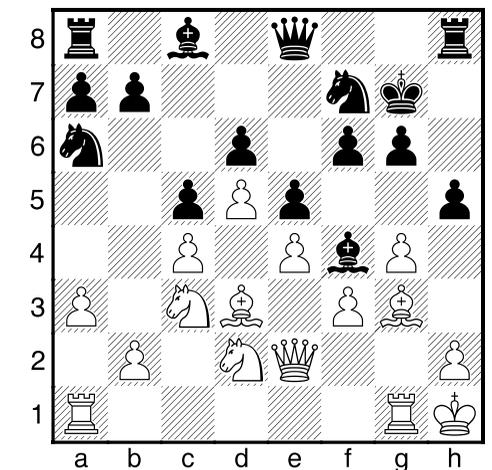
18...h5! 19.gxh5 ♖h8 20.♖g1 ♖xh5 21.♙g3 ♙d7♞ and Black is

firmly in the driver's seat. He will aim to play ...♙e7 and ...♖ah8.

Note that if Black goes with the natural move ...♘g5, bringing an extra attacker into the position, White has an unbelievable resource (which I cannot take credit for — Komodo found it in about 5 seconds): 21...♘g5? 22.♙xf4 exf4 23.e5!! dxe5 24.♘de4± the pawn sacrifice in order to open up the d3 bishop and put the Knight on the very powerful e4 square offers more than enough compensation. Black's king position now begins to feel slightly suspect.

## 19.♖g1 h5 20.♙g3

20.gxh5 ♖xh5 21.♙g3 would transpose to the variation above.





# Chess Canada Dragon

## 20...♖h6?!

I believe that both players made a number of inaccuracies starting around here. They both seemed reluctant to do anything about the tension on g4.

20...hxg4 21.fxg4 ♕xd2 22.♖xd2 ♕xg4 is very tempting, but I guess Marin preferred to keep the pressure up. The loss of the g4 pawn does ease White's task to some extent, however I don't see very much compensation for White after 23.♖af1 ♘g5 24.♕e2 ♕xe2 25.♖xe2 ♘h3.

## 21.♘f1?!

**21.gxh5!** While this move does open up the h-file, that will happen anyway, and here there is a tactical justification:

**21...♖xh5?** 22.♕xf4 exf4 23.e5! I wonder if White didn't see this resource. Here, White is almost winning 23...f5 24.e6 ♘e5 25.♘b5+.

**21...♕xg3** 22.♖xg3 ♖xh5 23.♖ag1 ♘g5 24.♖e3 and, although Black has some pressure, the position should

be fairly equal. The computer even recommends Black repeat moves after 24...♖h8 25.♖1g2 ♕h3 26.♖g1 ♕d7 27.♖1g2 ♕h3=.

## 21...♕d7

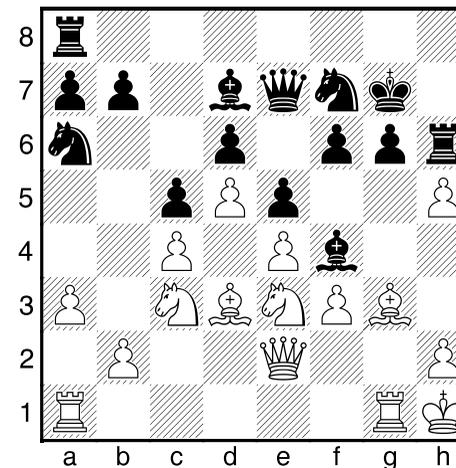
21...hxg4 22.fxg4 ♘g5→ looks very strong.

## 22.♘e3 ♖e7

22...♕xe3 23.♖xe3 hxg4 24.fxg4 ♕xg4 looks like a clear advantage to Black. There may be nuances to the position that I don't understand, but I really

don't know why Marin didn't take the material.

## 23.gxh5!



## 23...g5?!

Surely, this is taking it too far. Now White has the option of plopping a Knight on e4 after ♘f5+ and Black captures.

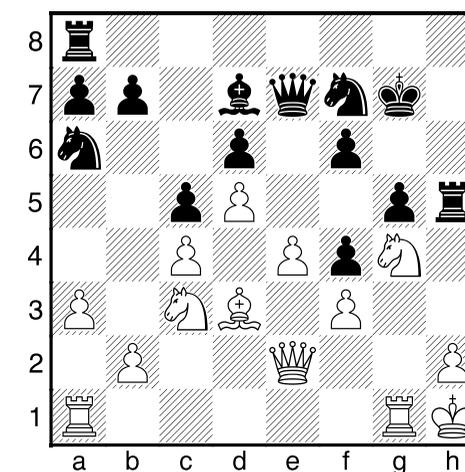
## 24.♘g4

A strange place for the Knight. ♘24.♘f5+ ♕xf5 25.exf5 ♖d8 the Queen needs to get off the e-file as the Bishop would otherwise be hanging on f4 due to the two pins.

## 24...♖xh5 25.♕xf4?

25.♘d1 heading for e3 could have been an idea.

## 25...exf4





# Chess Canada Dragon

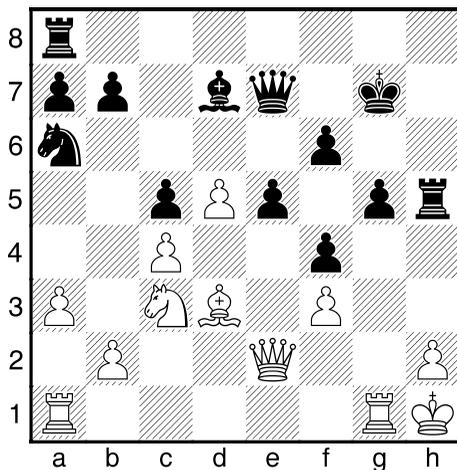
## 26.e5!?

Not as effective as in some of the lines previously, but probably still a decent try to mix up the position.

## 26...Nxe5

26...dxe5 may have been more difficult to handle. A black Knight landing on d6 would be tough to deal with. As a general rule, Knights do well blockading passed pawns.

## 27.Nxe5 dxe5



## 28.d6

Wow. Double pawn sacrifice to get some play — it's bold, but I doubt it's completely sound.

## 28...Qf7?!

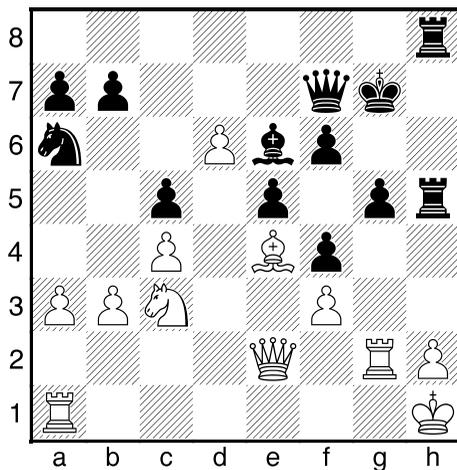
Marin probably wanted to

win cleanly, but I suspect that taking on d6 was safe enough. A sample line is as follows: 28...Qxd6 29.Rad1 Qe7 30.Qe4 R8h8-+.

## 29.Qe4 Qe6

29...R8h8 30.Qxb7 R7h2+ 31.Qxh2 R7h2+ 32.Qxh2 Qh5+ 33.Qg2 Qh4 34.Qf1 Nb8-+.

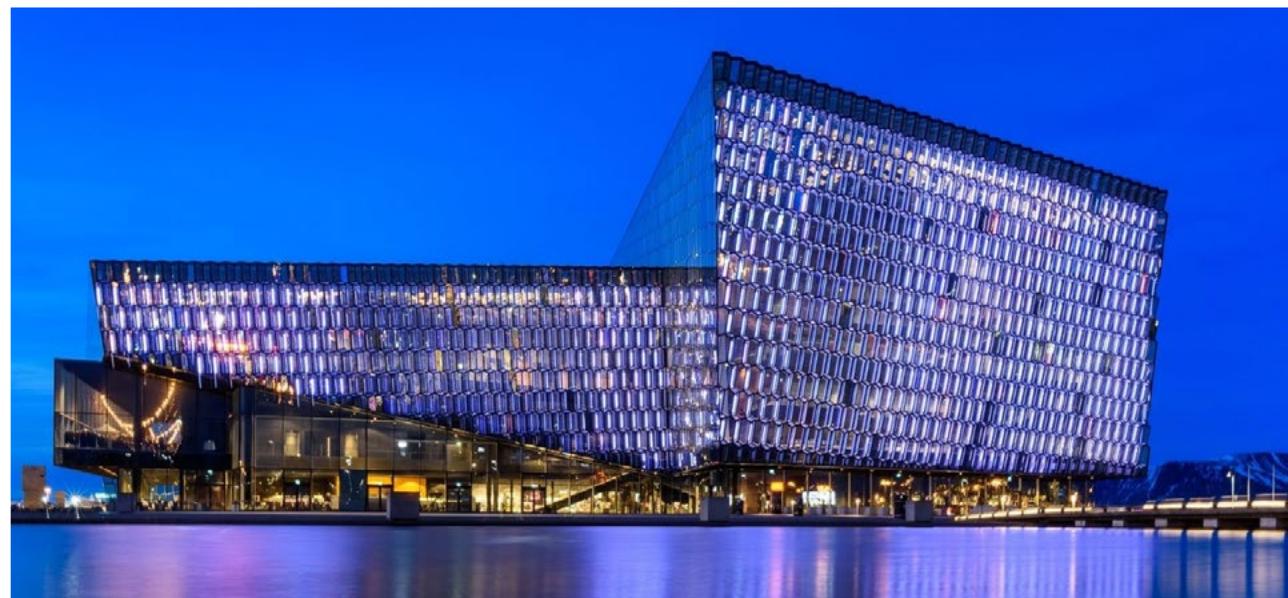
## 30.b3 R8h8 31.Rg2



## 31...Nb8!

A strong prophylactic move against Nb5, and it prepares to improve the Knight's position.

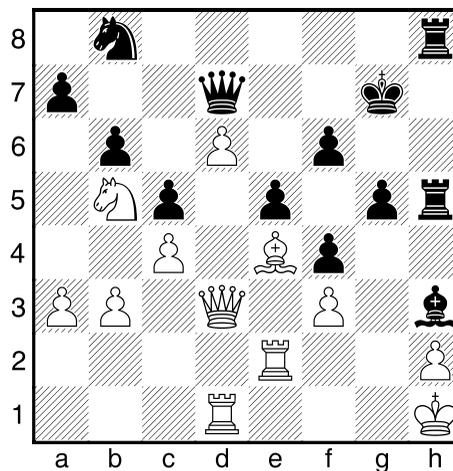
## 32.Rd1 b6



Harpa Concert Hall  
photo: Alina L'Ami

32...Qd7 with the idea of ...Nc6 and ...Nd4 looks good as well.

## 33.Nb5 Qd7 34.Qd3 Qh3 35.R8e2



At first blush, it might be tricky to see that this is a mistake, but White needed to act swiftly with Rb2 and b4.

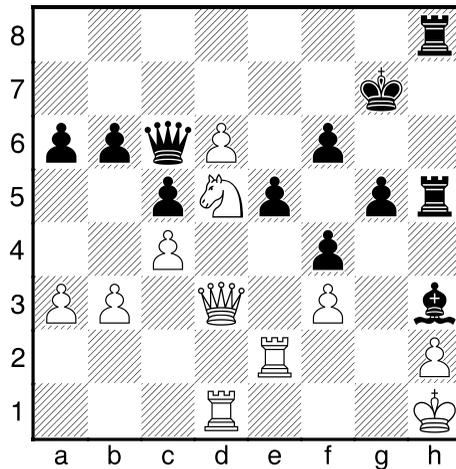
## 35...a6?!

A bit of an inaccuracy since now the white Knight gets to the d5 square. Instead, 35...Nc6! 36.Rb2 (36.Qxc6 wins a pawn but collapses on the light squares 36...Qxc6 37.Nxa7 (37.d7 R8d8-+) 37...Qb7 38.Nb5 Qg4 39.Rf2 R8h3-+) 36...Nd4 37.b4 f5 38.Qd5 Nxb5 (38...g4!) 39.cxb5 Qxd6.

36. ♖c7

White starts playing quite well here.

36... ♞c6 37. ♕xc6 ♖xc6  
38. ♖d5



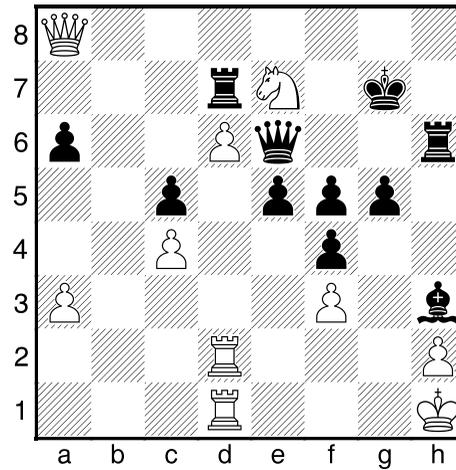
38... ♖5h6

38... ♕xd6? would be a good way to throw the win away! 39. ♖xf4 ♕xd3 40. ♖xh5+ ♖xh5 41. ♖xd3± and now Black fights (although not too hard) for the draw.

39. ♖e7 ♖d7 40. ♖g1 ♖e6

The dreaded 40th move.  
40... ♗e6 was preferable.

41. b4 ♖d8 42. ♖d2 ♖d7  
43. ♖gd1 ♗f7 44. bxc5 bxc5  
45. ♕e4 f5 46. ♕a8 ♗g7



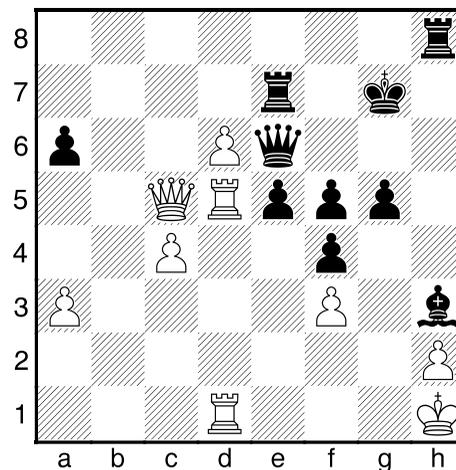
47. ♖d5??

The losing mistake. White would have liked to put pressure on e5 with ♖e1 instead. 47. ♖e1 ♖xd6?? 48. ♖xd6 ♕xd6 49. ♕g8+ ♗f6 50. ♖d5+-+.

47... ♖h8!

Forces the ♕ into a losing pin.

48. ♕c6 ♖xe7 49. ♕xc5



49... ♖d7

49... ♖c8? would have bungled it! 50. ♕xc8 ♕xc8 51. dxe7 g4 52. ♗g1! and, somehow, this is a draw, as White is threatening ♖xe5 or e8=♖ and then checks with the rooks. (52. e8♖ ♕xe8 53. ♖d7+ ♗f8 54. ♖d8 gxf3+- would be a painful way to go down as White.)

50. ♖xe5 ♕h6 51. ♖e2 ♖hd8

52. ♕e5+ ♕f6 53. c5 ♕xe5

54. ♖xe5 ♗f6 55. ♖de1 g4

56. fxf4 ♗xf4 57. h4?

57. ♖e6+ ♗f7 58. ♗g2 and I'm not completely sure the Black position is won.

However, White's margin for error would certainly be very slim.

57... ♗f3+

FM Dougherty didn't need to see: 58. ♗g1 ♗e4.

What a topsy-turvy game!

0-1

**Notes: Keith MacKinnon**

**Haessel, Dale (2212)**

**Stefansson, Hannes (2600)**

E12

Reykjavik Open (3.21),  
09.03.2016

The following game and notes appeared on the CFC Newsfeed:

<http://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/798>

A game played at the Reykjavik Open played by Alberta's Dale Haessel against GM Hannes Stefansson. This game has an interesting pawn structure that



**FM Dale Haessel**



dictates the flow of the game and features missed opportunities by both players.

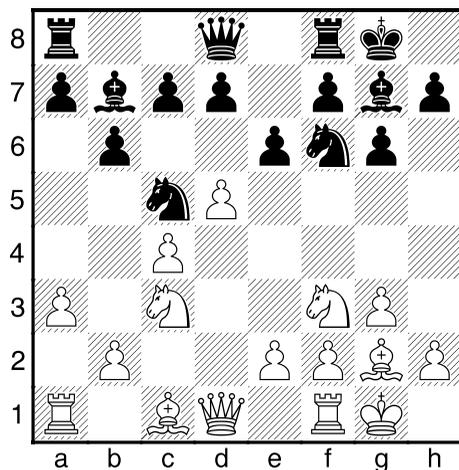
**1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6  
4.a3 ♙b7 5.♘c3 g6**

The double fianchetto leads to interesting positions. More common is: 5...d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.♙c2.

**6.d5 ♙g7 7.g3 0-0 8.♙g2  
♘a6**

8...exd5 9.cxd5 c6 10.0-0 cxd5  
11.♙g5 ♘a6 12.♖c1 ♘c7 13.♙d2  
♘e6 14.♙h6 ♙xh6 15.♙xh6 ♖c8  
16.♖fd1 ♖c5 17.♘d4 ♙e7 18.b4  
♖c4 19.♘b3 d4 20.♘b5 ♖xc1 (0-  
1, 29) [Georgiev,K](#) (2636)–[Vallejo  
Pons,F](#) (2706) Khanty–Mansiysk,  
2013.

**9.0-0 ♘c5**



*editor* – Dale has the only two games in the MegaBase from this position in the past 20 years.

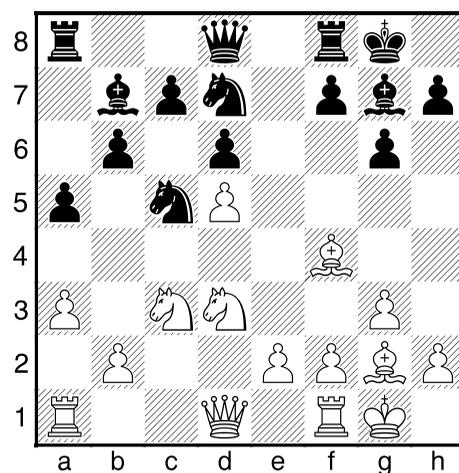
**10.♙f4**

10.♘d4 a5 11.♘db5 ♘e8 12.♙e3  
c6 13.dxc6 dxc6 14.♙xd8 ♖xd8  
15.♙xc5 bxc5 16.♖ad1 ♖c8=  
[Piket,J](#) (2495)–[Gelfand,B](#) (2585)  
Adelaide, 1988 (½-½, 41).

**10...d6 11.♘e1N**

11.♖c1 a5 12.b4 axb4 13.axb4  
♘ce4 14.♘xe4 ♘xe4 15.♙d3=  
[Haessel,D](#) (2262)–[Xiong,J](#)  
(2575) Las Vegas, 2015 (0-1, 29).

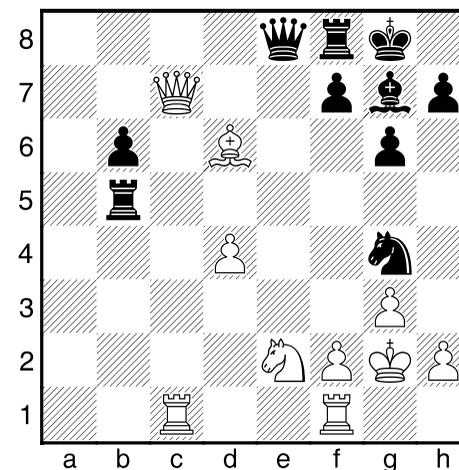
**11...a5 12.♘d3 exd5 13.cxd5  
♘fd7**



This position somewhat resembles a Benoni; the main difference being the black pawn

lies at c7 here instead of c5. This has the disadvantage of being a backward pawn, but does protect the d6 pawn, which is typically weak. This makes the bishop on f4 look somewhat misplaced.

**14.♖c1 ♙a6 15.b4 ♘xd3  
16.exd3 axb4 17.axb4 ♘e5  
18.b5 ♙b7 19.♙c2 ♖a5 20.d4  
♘g4 21.♘e2 ♖xb5 22.♙xc7  
♙xd5 23.♙xd6 ♙xg2  
24.♙xg2 ♙e8**

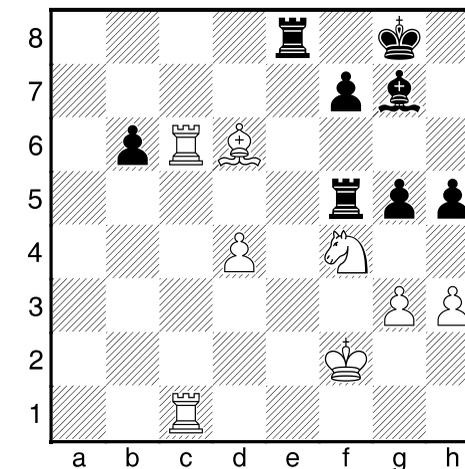


**25.♙c2**

25.♙xf8! leads to a crazy computer variation which is difficult to figure out over the board: 25...♙e4+ 26.♙g1 ♘xh2  
27.♙c5! (*editor* – stopping ...♖h5 and creating threats on the back rank.) 27...♘f3+ 28.♙h1  
bxc5 29.♙c8+ ♙f8 30.♘c3

♙b7 31.♙xb7 ♖xb7 32.dxc5  
♙xc5 White emerges with an advantage, though converting this is another story.

**25...♙a8+ 26.♙c6 ♙xc6+  
27.♖xc6 ♖e8 28.♖fc1 ♖f5  
29.♘f4 h5 30.h3 ♘xf2  
31.♙xf2 g5**

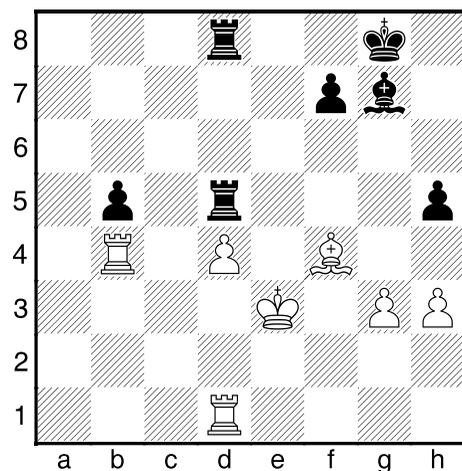


**32.♖d1**

It's important to exchange one pair of rooks. 32.♖c8 ♖xc8  
33.♖xc8+ ♙h7 34.♙e3 gxf4+  
35.gxf4 ♖b5 36.♙e4±.

**32...gxf4 33.♙xf4 ♖d8  
34.♙e3 ♖fd5 35.♖c4 b5  
36.♖b4**



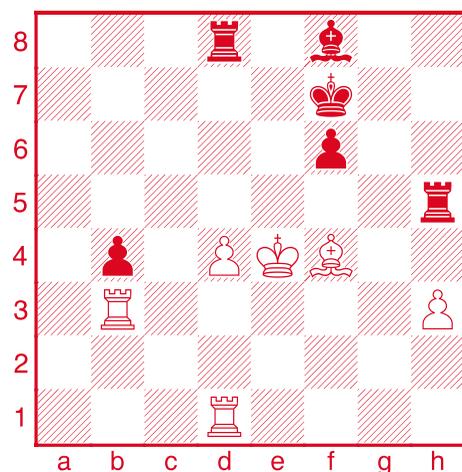


This endgame is equal, but more pleasant for Black.

**36...♙f8 37.♖b3 b4 38.g4 f6  
39.♚e4 ♚f7 40.gxh5**

This move is pretty committal; I don't know if it's needed.  
40.♖bd3!

**40...♖xh5**



Does Black have a threat, and

(if so) what should White do?

**41.d5??**

*editor* – ♖41.♖f3! gets the ♖ on the other side of the ♚, so that after 41...f5+ 42.♚d3 the h3-pawn is defended.

After 41.♖f3 Black could try 41...♙c5 42.♙c7 ♖d7 (42...♖h4+ 43.♖f4=) 43.♙g3 ♖xh3 44.♖dd3, but here White should be able to stop the pawns from crossing the light squares.

**41...♖e8+-+**

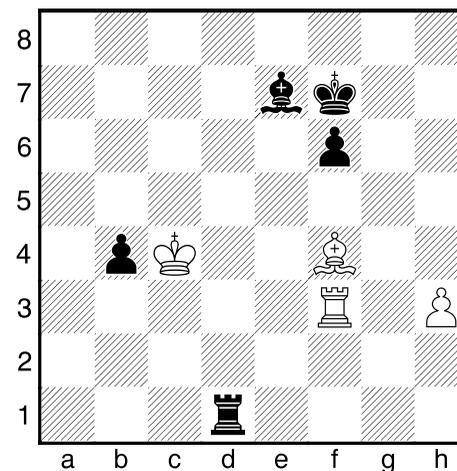
Or 41...f5+ 42.♚d4 ♖h4 43.♖f1 ♙d6 44.♖bf3 ♖c8! and White is paralyzed! It's a nice *Zugzwang*; e.g. 45.♚d3 ♖c3+ 46.♚d2 ♖xf3-+ wins a piece.

**42.♚d4 ♖xd5+?!**

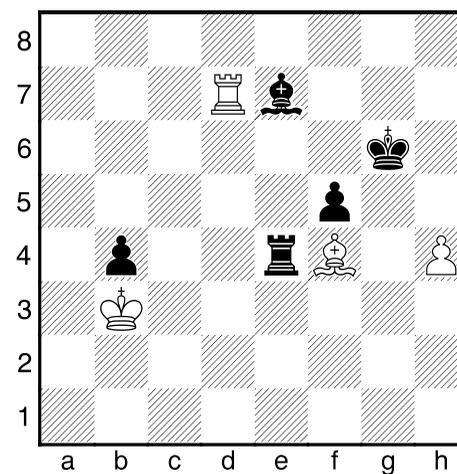
*editor* – wins a pawn, but it's neither the best nor the most beautiful move.

♖42...♖h4! 43.♖f3 ♙d6 44.♖df1 ♖c8! with the same *zugzwang* as above.

**43.♚xd5 ♖d8+ 44.♚c4 ♖xd1  
45.♖f3 ♙e7**



**46.♙g5 ♖b1 47.♙d2 ♖b2  
48.♖d3 f5 49.h4 ♚g6 50.♖d5  
♖c2+ 51.♚b3 ♖c5 52.♖d7  
♖e5 53.♙f4 ♖e4**



**54.♙d6?**  
54.♙d2 ♖e6 55.♖d5 and White should draw, though it's slightly unpleasant.

**54...♙xd6 55.♖xd6+ ♚h5-+**

**56.♖f6 f4**

**0-1**

## Chicago

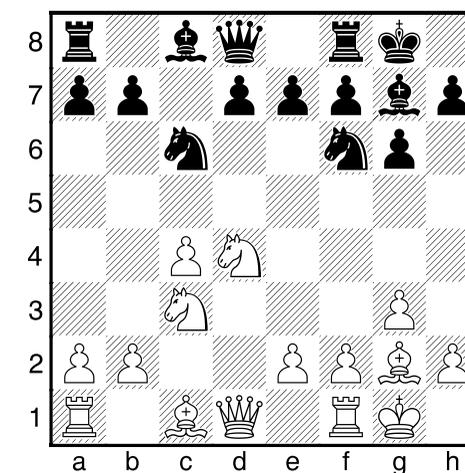
**Shetty, Atulya (2366)  
Song, Terry (2215)**

A39

25th Chicago Open (4),  
28.05.2016

Notes: John Upper

**1.c4 c5 2.g3 ♘c6 3.♙g2 g6  
4.♘c3 ♙g7 5.♘f3 ♘f6 6.d4  
cxd4 7.♘xd4 0-0 8.0-0**



**A Tabiya of the Symmetrical English**

White has a little more space



# Chess Canada Dragon

(due to c4) and no weaknesses, but lots of GMs are happy to defend Black's position, which has more room for creative play than it may appear.

## 8...a6

**8...dxd4** has long been the main move. It trades a minor piece in a position where Black has a bit less space, and brings the white ♖ to a square where it will (eventually) have to escape from the ♗g7. On the other hand, it scores decently for White, and is a well known position which an experienced IM like White probably knows well.

**8...d6!?** is an interesting gambit for fast queenside activity; it has been tried successfully by dynamic players like Topalov and Mamedyarov... but only in rapid games! 9. ♖xc6 bxc6 10. ♗xc6 ♖b8 11. ♖a4 (11. ♗g2! ♖a5 12. ♖d2±) 11... ♗h3 (11... a5!?) 12. ♗g2 ♗xg2 13. ♖xg2 ♖d7! 14. ♖b1 ♖xa4 15. ♗xa4 ♖fc8 ⇒ [Kramnik,V–Topalov,V](#) Monte Carlo, 1997 (½-½, 39).

**8...d4!?** 9. e3 d6 10. ♗de2 (10. ♗xc6?! is a better version for

Black of the gambit line above 10... bxc6 11. ♗xc6 ♖b8 12. ♗g2 ♗xc3!?) (12... ♗e5!?) ) 10... ♖a5 11. ♗d5! ♖c5 12. ♗d2 e6 13. b4! ♖xc4 14. ♖c1 ♖xa2 15. ♗ec3 and White was winning in [Kasparov,G –Kramnik,V](#) Moscow (blitz) 1998 (1-0, 27).

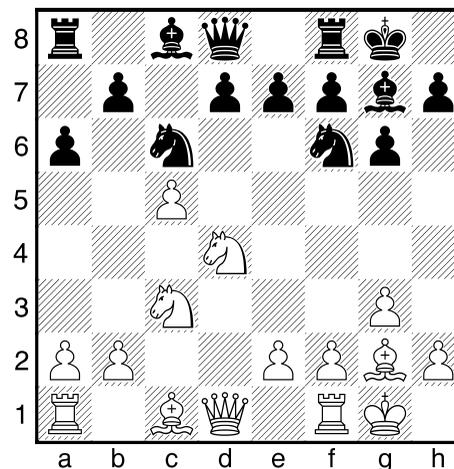
**8...♖a5!?** has been the most popular move among top players the last few years. The goal is not a hacker's attempt at mate with ... ♖h5, ... ♗h3 and ... ♗g4 (though that can happen if White is very careless), but it's more of an attempt to interfere with White's most natural developing scheme (e4, b3, ♗e3/b2) with space and solidity. White has:

**9. ♗b3 ♖h5** (9... ♖b4 10. c5±) 10. ♗d5 preparing ♗f4 10... d6 (10... e5? 11. h4! and Black's ♗ has to start looking for a way out.) 11. ♗f4 ♖e5 with games by Michael Adams and Wang Hao as models.

**9. e3** d6 10. h3 ♗d7 11. ♖e2 ♖fc8 12. ♖d1 ♖ab8 13. ♗d2 ♖e5 14. ♗c2 a6 15. ♗d5 ♗xd5 16. cxd5 ♗a7 17. ♗c3 ♖g5 18. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 19. ♗d4 (19. a4!?) would help

shut out the ♗a7.) 19... ♗b5 20. ♗f3 ♖f6 21. ♖ac1 ♖c5 22. a4 ♗c7 23. e4 ♗xa4 24. e5! with a complicated position where Black outplayed White in: [Ding,L \(2764\)–Svidler,P \(2742\)](#) EU Team Cup, 2016 (0-1, 44).

## 9.c5!

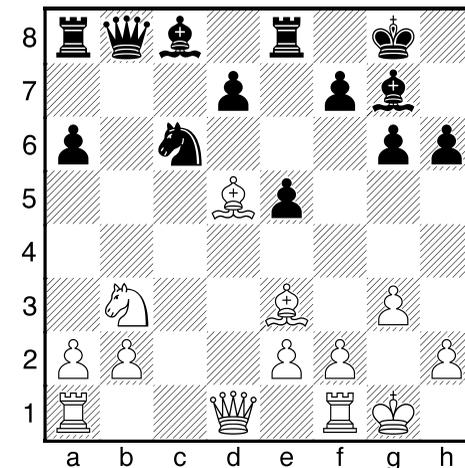


A good move, which gives White a choice of whether and how to disrupt Black's pawns after ... b5 or ... d6.

## 9...h6 10. ♗b3 b5

10... d6 is the computer's choice, though White has a trouble-free advantage after 11. cxd6.

**11. cxb6 ♖xb6 12. ♗e3 ♖b8 13. ♗f4 e5 14. ♗e3 ♖e8 15. ♗d5 ♗xd5 16. ♗xd5**



If Black does nothing, White will go ♖d2 (Xh6) and ♗c5 with an overwhelming advantage, so...

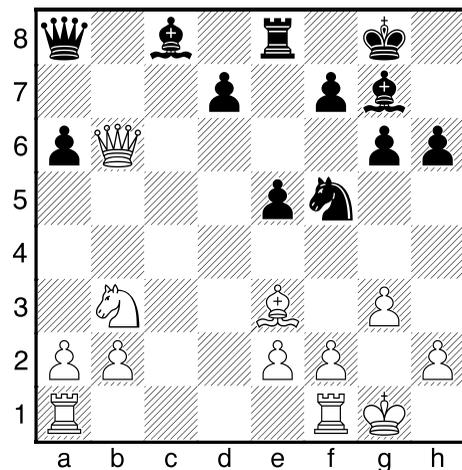
## 16...d6!

Black doesn't want to give up the exchange, but this gives him practical chances, while 16... ♗b7 17. ♗c5 threatening ♖b3 is much worse for Black.

## 17. ♗xa8 ♖xa8

For the exchange, Black has the ♗ pair, more pawns in the center, and the possibility of attacking the light squares around White's ♖. Is it enough? Objectively, probably not: at 25 ply, Stockfish rates the position +1 after normal moves like ♖c1 or f3.

**18. ♖d6 ♗f5 19. ♖b6**



### 19...Nxe3

Not the only move (...d5, which leaves a White piece on the board where it can be hit by ...d4, is also good) but now both Black's ♙s are unopposed.

### 20.fxe3?!

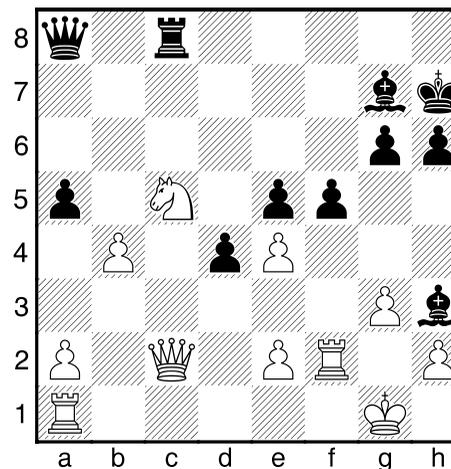
I imagine Terry was surprised and pleased to see this recapture, which is more creative than sound. White activates his f-rook, which attacks f7 and can defend g2 from f2, and White has an "extra" center pawn to slow Black's advance, but the e3-pawn is a target, and Black might even have ...h5-h4 as a way to switch the attack to the dark squares.

20. ♙xe3 should be better for White, but things can go bad quickly if Black's center pawns start to roll; e.g. 20... d5 21. ♖ac1?! ♕h3 22. ♖fd1 d4 23. ♙f3 ♘e4 24. ♙h1 ♘ (24. ♙f4? e3 25. f3 g5 26. ♙d6 g4-+) 24... ♙d5.

20...d5 21. ♘c5 ♕h3 22. ♖f2 d4 23. ♙b3 ♙h7 24. e4 ♖c8 25. ♙c2 f5 26. b4 a5=



FM Atulya Shetty



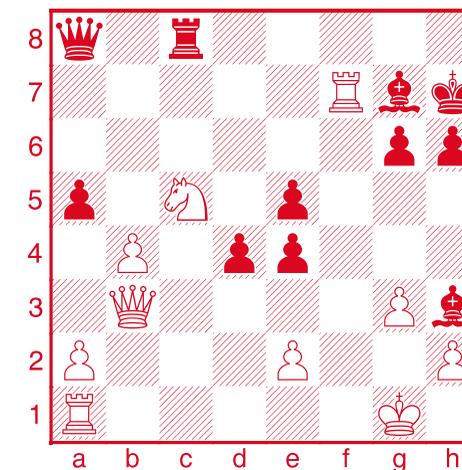
Compare this with the previous diagram: Black's center pawns are marching forward, both ♙s are creating threats, while White's ♖s are purely defensive and his ♘ is about to start scrambling for a supported square.

### 27. ♙b3?

27. exf5! gxf5! (27... ♕xf5?? 28. ♖xf5+-) 28. e4! it looks completely wrong to concede two connected passed pawns to Black, but stabilizing the pawn structure makes it easier for the ♘ to defend against the ♙-pair. 28...fxe4 (28...dxe3 29. ♖xf5 ♘∞) 29. ♙xe4+ ♙xe4 30. ♘xe4 axb4

Black has the more fun side of equality.

### 27...fxe4 28. ♖f7



### 28...e3!

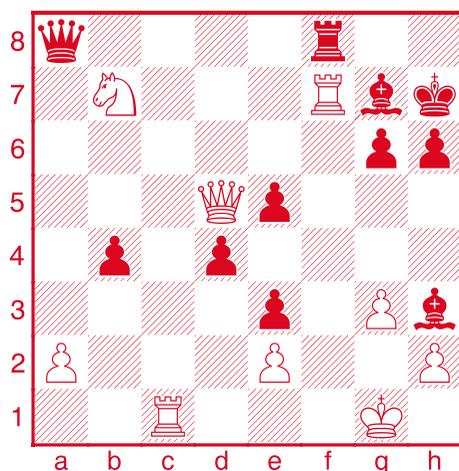
♘28... ♙c6! is even better: attacking the ♘c5 and staying on the g2 side of the long diagonal before White can block it with a piece; now ...e4-e3 is a winning threat. 29. ♙a4 trades the ♙s to save the ♙, but loses the game after (29. e3 axb4 30. ♘b7 d3-+) 29... ♙xa4 30. ♘xa4 axb4-+ with the offside ♘ and weak back rank, there's no good defence to ...♖c2. For example, 31. ♖b7 ♖c2 32. ♖e1 e3! (32...h5! so that ♖xb4 allows ...♕h6.) 33. ♖xb4 e4 34. ♖b2 ♖xb2 35. ♘xb2 d3 and the pawns and ♙s rule.



## 29. ♖b7!?

29. ♖b7! has the same idea (blocking the long diagonal) but leaves the ♖f7 to fight for the f-file and to sacrifice itself on g7. Black still wins with best play, but the necessary balance of attack and defence skills would have been much more challenging, and probably too hard during an OTB game. 29...axb4! 30. ♔d5! (30. ♖e1 ♔a6+ threatens both ...♔xe2 and ...♔c6.) 30...♖f8! (30...b3? 31. ♖xg7+! ♔xg7 32. ♖f1!! ♕xf1 33. ♔xe5+= with a perpetual.) 31. ♖c1:

*Analysis Diagram*



31...h5! A wonderful move, which might be found by one player in 1000. Black "simply" creates a safe square for the ♔ on h6, after which White's

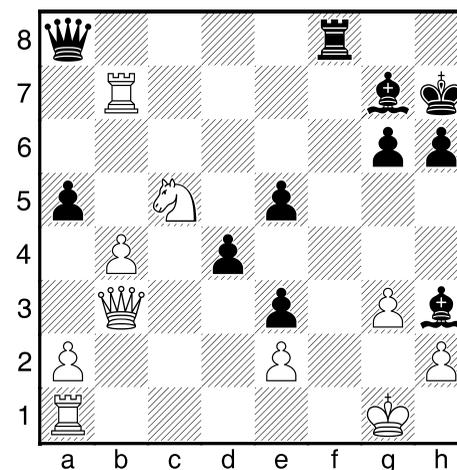
counter-attack is gone:

32. ♖xg7+ ♔xg7 33. ♖c7+ ♔h6-+ Black's mate threat on f1 comes first.

32. ♖cc7 ♔h6!-+ ♖xg7 is no longer check, so the ♕g7 is immune due to the mate-in-one on f1, and White has no good defence to ...♔a4 or ...♔a6, attacking White's defenceless ♔. 33. ♖xf8 ♔xf8 34. ♖f7! (34. ♔f7 White can't exchange ♔s in any of these lines as the Black pawns are too strong, though it's worth seeing exactly how they win: 34...♔xf7 35. ♖xf7 d3! 36. exd3 e4! 37. dxe4 ♕d4!-+ once again, showing the wisdom of unpinning the ♕ with ...♔h6.) 34...♔c8! 35. ♕c5 d3! 36. ♕xd3 ♔c2!-+ and Black gets to the back rank.

## 29... ♖f8?

29... ♖c7!-+ The ♖b7 is double-attacked and pinned to the mate on g2, so the only way to save it is 30. bxa5 which loses the ♕ 30... ♖xc5-+.



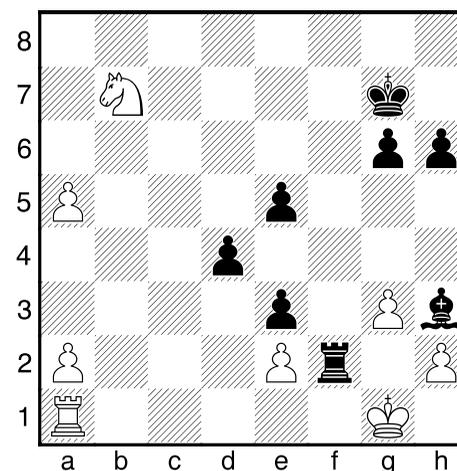
## 30. bxa5??

I have to assume both players were in serious time trouble here. 30. ♔d5!-+ contests the long diagonal and stops 30... ♖f2?? which now loses to 31. ♖xg7+ winning the ♔a8.

## 30... ♖f2!-+ 31. ♖xg7+

31. ♔d5 ♔f8!-+.

## 31... ♔xg7 32. ♔b7+ ♔xb7 33. ♕xb7



White has stopped mate at the cost of a totally lost endgame. Black's next few moves are not the most efficient, but they're safe and purposeful and never put the win in jeopardy.

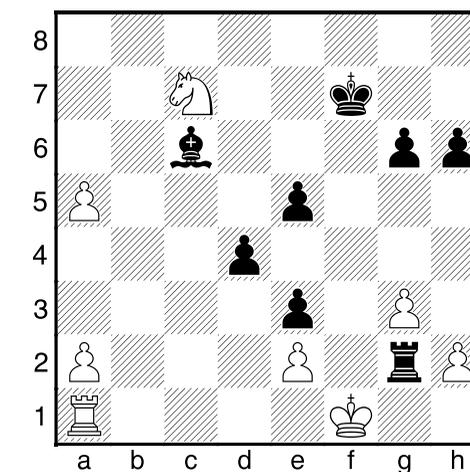
## 33... ♕g2

33... ♕g2+! 34. ♔h1 (34. ♔f1?? ♖xg3+ and mate on g1.) 34... ♖xe2 35. a6 d3 36. a7 ♕g2+ stops the promotion, while 36... d2 forces mate.

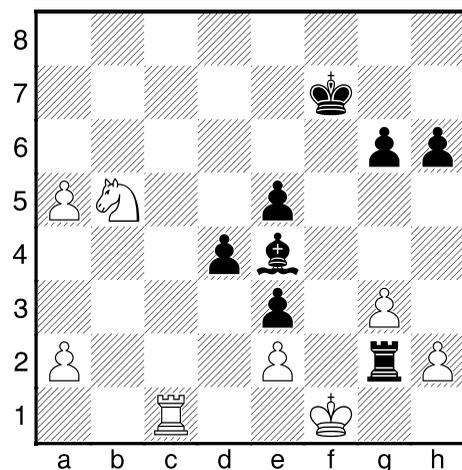
## 34. ♕d6

34. a6 ♕d5 35. ♖b1 ♖g2+ 36. ♔f1 ♖xh2 and mate.

## 34... ♕d5 35. ♕e8+ ♔f7 36. ♕c7 ♖g2+ 37. ♔f1 ♕c6



## 38. ♖c1 ♕e4 39. ♕b5 ♖f2+ 40. ♔g1 ♖g2+ 41. ♔f1



41...♖xh2 42.♘d6+ ♔e7  
43.♘xe4 ♖h1+ 44.♔g2 ♖xc1  
45.♔f3 ♖f1+ 46.♔g2 ♖f8  
47.a6 d3! 48.♘c3 dxe2

Black promotes or wins the ♘ and stops the a-pawn promotion with ...♖a2. FWIW, this tactic would not work if White's a2-pawn was on a3.

0-1

## St Louis Invitational

The St.Louis Invitationals are norm-generating events organized by the St.Louis Chess Club. Each is a 10-player RR, with two rounds a day for the middle three days, then one round per day for

the final two rounds. Time Control is 90 + 30.

The 2016 Saint Louis Summer Invitational took place June 8-16, 2016. Two Canadians played: IM **Aman Hambleton** scored +2 =4 -3 in the GM Norm event, and FM **Lefong Hua** scored +2 =5 -2 the the IM Norm event. Neither score was good enough for a title Norm.

The game below is between Lefong and IM Michael Brooks (USA). Lefong has hardly played a long tournament in 10 years, which would normally be fatal against strong opposition, but he is a full-time chess coach in Montreal. Is that enough to stay sharp? Play through the game and see...

**Notes: Elias Oussedik**  
**Hua, Lefong (2277)**  
**Brooks, Michael (2410)**  
A42

*Saint Louis IM Invitational St Louis (8), 12.06.2016*

The following game and notes appeared on the CFC Newsfeed: <http://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/855>



At long last, the return of FM Lefong Hua! It has been nearly ten years since Lefong's last tournament. Lefong used to be a chess prodigy himself representing Canada at the U10 World Youth Chess Championships competing with the likes of Grischuck, Aronian, Bacrot, McShane, Vallejo Pons, Ganguly etc..

**1.d4**

Even ten years later, Lefong still hasn't changed his openings. He has stayed loyal to his queen pawn.

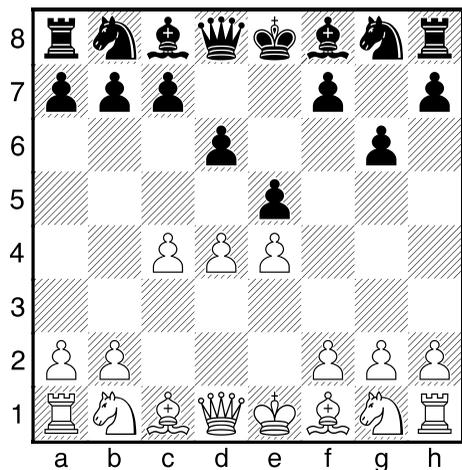
**1...g6**

IM Michael Brooks was the top seed of this Closed tournament. He's known for his offbeat openings.

**2.c4 d6 3.e4 e5**



# Chess Canada Dragon



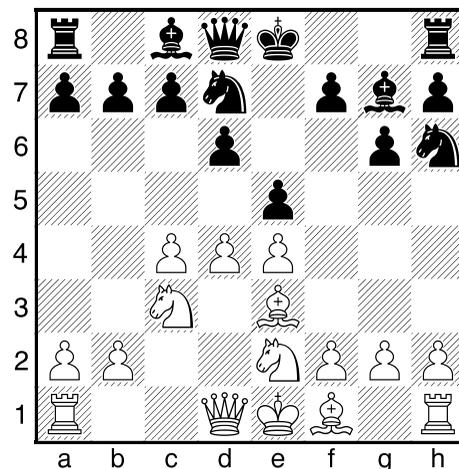
Already an interesting choice by Black. Insider information tells me that Lefong was expecting this opening and had received some outside help before the game. Who was his secret second? The "Gohan" of Canadian Chess: Aman Hambleton.

### 4. ♘e2

With this move, White is hoping to transpose into a Saemich. This was uncharted waters for

Lefong, as he usually opts for the four pawns attack in the KID.

4... ♘d7 5. ♘bc3 ♙g7 6. ♕e3 ♘h6?!



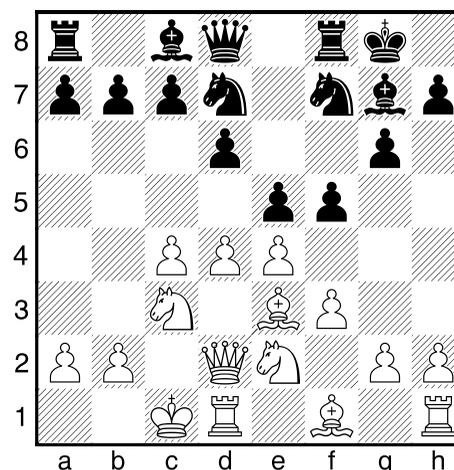
Creative! Typically ... ♘f6 is played. However, this isn't a new move and many games have gone ... ♘h6.

### 7. f3

White's idea here is to play ♕d2 and long castle. White then

has many different ideas in this position, he can either chose to play on the queenside or the kingside. Considering Black has played ... ♘h6, he might be aiming for an ... f5 type of break. This might be dubious as it might weaken Black's kingside.

7... f5 8. ♕d2 ♘f7 9. 0-0-0 0-0



In my eyes, this is a critical part of the game. White must decide on a plan. Will he play

on the queenside or kingside. If he chooses to play on the queenside, he will continue with ♖b1, ♘c1-b3, ♗c1, d5 and break with c5. If White wants to play on the kingside, he will take on f5 and try to blast Black on the kingside. Lefong plays the Benoni as Black, so he's the type of player who likes to tango. One can already guess what type of position he decided to play.

### 10. exf5!

Concrete and great preparation! I am sure Lefong had already looked at this position before the game.

### 10... gxf5 11. dxe5 ♘dxe5

White has a gorgeous position here. Two key squares have opened up for White's pieces. The f4 and d4 square will soon be launching squares for White's knights.

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### 12. ♖f4 c5?

An unnecessary weakening move. Black deliberately weakens his light squares and the d5/d6 squares. A hard move to understand.

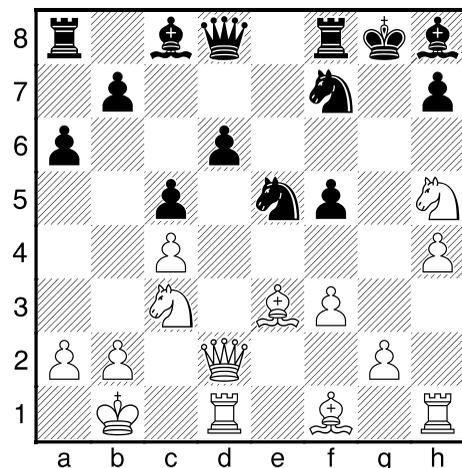
### 13. ♖h5 ♖h8 14. ♔b1

A prophylactic move. Simply putting the king away from danger.

### 14...a6

Black is in need of desperate counterplay. Hoping for a potential ...b5 in the future.

### 15.h4



White is hoping for a potential rook lift in the near future and controlling the g5 square if he chooses to play ♖g5.

White's plan is clear here. He is improving his pieces and bringing them closer to Black's king move by move. ♖d5 will follow and sooner or later a tactic will appear. What can Black do to create counterplay?

### 15...♖e8?

Too slow! Black needs to counterattack! ...b5 was a must! 15...b5 16.cxb5 axb5 17.♖xb5 ♖e6±, and even though White still has a very nice position, this was the type of counterplay Black should be looking for.

### 16. ♖d5 ♖e6 17. ♖g5

Threatening ♖f6+ winning the exchange on e8 or threatening to open the h-file for White's rook.

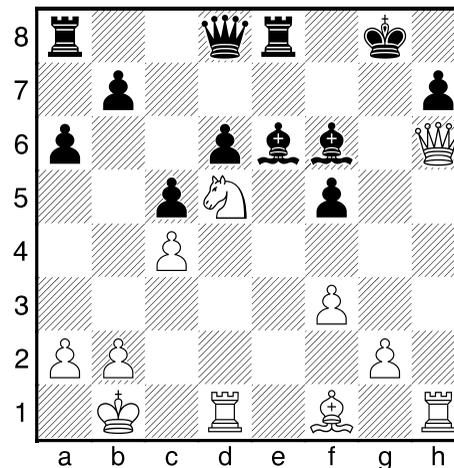
### 17...♖xg5 18.hxg5 ♖d7 19. ♖hf6+?!

Even though this move is still strong, Lefong had a calmer continuation. What piece isn't part of the attack and needs to be better placed? The bishop on d3! Hence, ♖d3 was a more eloquent way of playing the position.

19. ♖d3+- White will continue with

g4 and target the h7 pawn.

### 19...♖xf6 20.gxf6 ♖xf6 21. ♖h6



This is the continuation that Lefong had seen after playing 19. ♖hf6+. He is attacking the h7 pawn and the ♖f6 simultaneously.

### 21...♖g7?

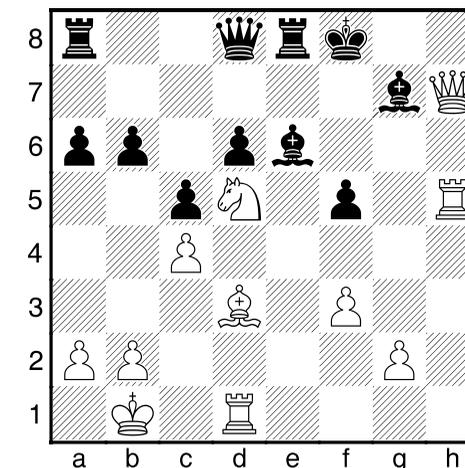
21...♖xd5! Black missed his chance to remove White's powerful knight on d5. The idea of this move stems from the fact that the check on h7 doesn't bring White too much. With bishops of opposite colour and Black's monster bishop on f6, he might have some chances of his own in this position. 22. ♖xh7+ (22.cxd5

♖e7 23. ♖d3 ♖g7 24. ♖d2 ♖g5) 22...♖f8 23.cxd5 ♖b6 As we can see, Black's counterplay has potential. 24. ♖h6+ (24.b3? ♖b4! Black infiltrates on the dark squares. 25. ♖xf5 ♖c3 White has nothing better than a perpetual here. 26. ♖h8+ ♖f7 27. ♖h7+ ♖f8 28. ♖h8+=) 24...♖g7 25. ♖d2± White is forced to retreat to protect b2. Even though Black's king is slightly weaker than White's king, Black still has a fully playable position.

### 22. ♖xh7+ ♖f8 23. ♖h5

Brooks lets Lefong loose, who is known to be dangerous in these tactical positions. Lefong is thirsty looking for ways to make his mark in St.Louis.

### 23...b6 24. ♖d3



Finally the final piece joins the show!

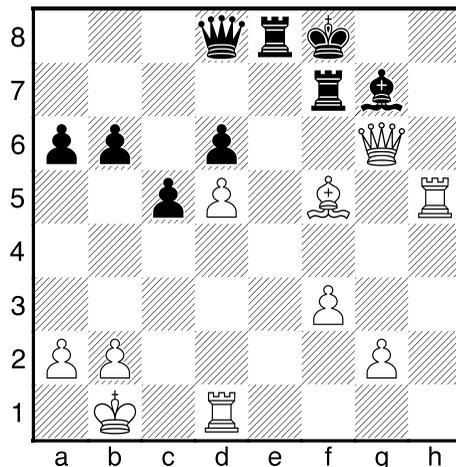
### 24...♖a7

The powerful knight should be removed even at the cost of the f5 pawn. It might seem that Black's king will succumb to White's attack if the f5 square falls into White's hands, but it isn't the case: 24...♘xd5 25.cxd5 ♖e5! 26.♖xf5+ ♖xf5 27.♘xf5 ♗f6 Again, a powerful battery is formed between queen and bishop. 28.♖d2 ♗h6 29.♗xh6 ♘xh6 30.♖e2± Bishops of opposite colour give Black holding chances though White's two connected passed pawns on the kingside make Black's defense difficult.

### 25.♗g6 ♖f7

26.♘xf5  
♘xd5  
Finally!

### 27.cxd5



### 27...♖f6

27...♖e2 Lefong had a trap up his sleeve if ...♖e2 had been played. 28.♘e6 ♖f6? (28...♗f6! 29.♗xf7+ ♗xf7 30.♘xf7 ♔xf7 31.b3 ♖xg2± with potential drawing chances for Black.)

29.♖h8+! ♘xh8 30.♗g8+ ♔e7  
31.♗h7+ ♔e8 32.♗xh8+ ♖f8  
33.♗h5+ ♔e7 34.♗g5+ ♔e8  
35.♗g6+ ♔e7 36.♖h1+- with  
mate in five!

### 28.♗g4 ♖e2 29.♖dh1!

The rook is eyeing h8!

29...♔f7 30.♖h7 ♗f8  
31.♖xg7+ ♗xg7 32.♖h7  
♗xh7 33.♘xh7 ♔e7 34.♘f5

And Brooks resigned. As a professional chess coach, Lefong Hua showed us some professional level opening preparation. Hopefully this is the start of something and the former chess prodigy can finally achieve the IM title he entirely deserves!

1-0

*And, five months later...*

Lefong and Aman posted three **Vlogs** from St.Louis:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOVugp4WeBc&t>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgNYH72q0cl&t>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSJ-P\\_dhhaE&t](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSJ-P_dhhaE&t)

**“It was really dirty. It was typical Lefong dirt. I feel bad. I really feel bad.”**

**- Lefong Hua**

*[said while grinning from ear to ear after his opponent hung his queen in the last round. see photo]*





The following game and notes *should* have been included in the issue with the feature interview with GM Razvan Preotu. They first appeared on the CFC Newsfeed

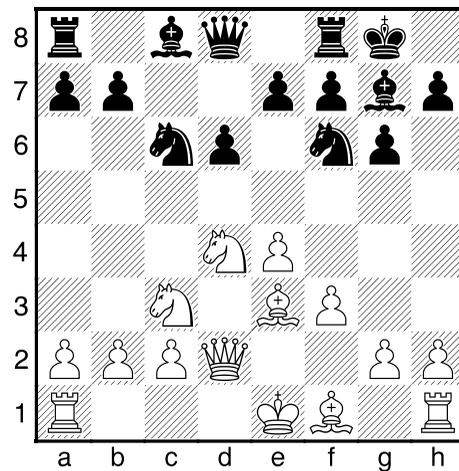
<http://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/860>

**Notes: Keith MacKinnon**  
**Preotu, Razvan (2462)**  
**Ludwig, John (2348)**  
 B76  
 44th World Open Philadelphia  
 (7), 03.07.2016

This week, it is my pleasure to show you a spectacular win by IM Razvan Preotu en route to his final GM norm at the World Open. His seventh round win against a slightly younger opponent named John Ludwig (now rated 2373) appears elementary, but the hours of preparation that go into games such as this one are what allow the win to look so easy. Don't miss this one.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4  
 4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 g6 6.♕e3

♗g7 7.f3 0-0 8.♙d2 ♘c6



This position should be quite familiar to many a Sicilian player.



FIM John Ludwig

It is the starting point for the Dragon Yugoslav Attack. Here, White has two major moves: ♗c4 and 0-0-0. However, Razvan decides to play a less popular continuation leading to similar attacking play.

**9.g4!? ♗e6**

This move may look somewhat strange to many amateur players. Why allow White to exchange his Knight for the Bishop and double the pawns? Black gains some advantages

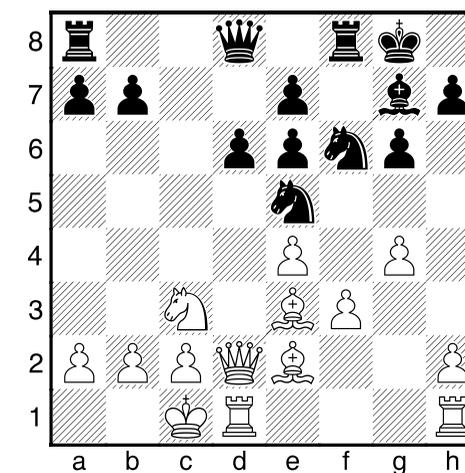
from the exchange as well. He has more central control (d5 specifically) and his f8 rook becomes more active.

9...♘xd4 10.♗xd4 ♗e6 is the continuation I've chosen previously as Black. White has a small edge, but his attack should not be as strong as in the main lines.

**10.♗xe6 fxe6 11.0-0-0**

11.♗c4 ♙c8∞ with ...♘a5 next.

**11...♗e5 12.♗e2**



**12...♙c8**

Neat. Instead of using the rook on the c-file (most common in these Yugoslav positions) the Queen will support a Knight jump to c4. This will increase pressure

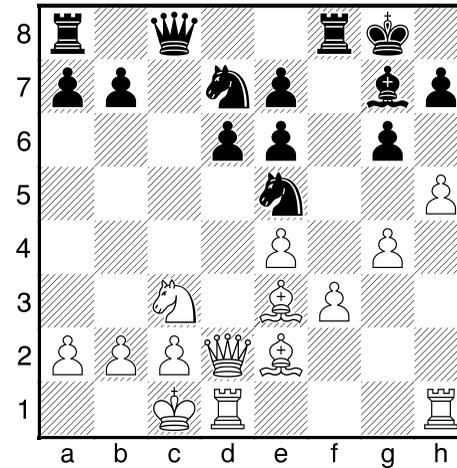
on a2 and have the added bonus of defending e6.

12...♖c8 13.♘b5 with White scoring strongly. Here's a sample game by one of the strongest creative players around: 13...♙d7 14.♘d4 ♘c4 15.♙xc4 ♖xc4 *editor* – notice how White's next three moves are all defensive; he knows that when if he stifles Black's queenside play then he's better. 16.♙b1 ♖fc8 17.c3 b5 18.♖c1 a5 19.h4 b4?! 20.cxb4 ♖xb4 21.a3 ♖bc4 22.♖xc4 ♖xc4 23.♙xa5 ♖c5 (23...♘xg4? 24.fxg4 ♙xd4 25.♙xd4 ♖xd4 26.♙a8+ ♙g7 27.♖f1+-) 24.♙b4+-.

*editor* – White is up a pawn, has two protected passed pawns, and Black's attack is over before it got started. 24...♙f7 25.♖d1 ♙c8 26.♘xe6 ♙xe6 27.♙xc5 dxc5 28.♙b5 c4 29.e5 ♘e8 30.f4 c3 31.♙d5 ♘c7 32.♙xe6+ ♙xe6 33.a4 ♘d5 34.a5 h5 35.g5 cxb2 36.a6 ♘b6 37.♖d8 1-0 **Vallejo Pons,F (2705)–Carlsson, P (2476)** Caleta, 2010.

**13.h4 ♘fd7 14.h5**  
14.f4 is the more common

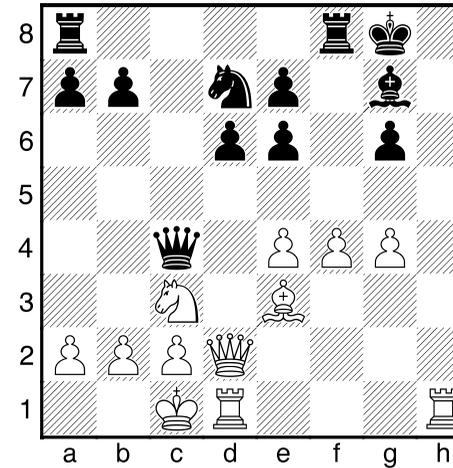
alternative 14...♘c4 15.♙xc4 ♙xc4 16.e5 but Black seems to be doing fairly OK after 16...♖ad8=.



#### 14...♘c4

14...♘xf3 seems too dangerous because 15.♘d5! comes out of nowhere! (15.♙xf3 ♖xf3 16.hxg6 hxg6∞, though objectively, Black might even be better here) 15...♘xd2 (15...♙e8 16.♙xf3 exd5 17.♙e2±) 16.♘xe7+ ♙f7 (16...♙h8? 17.hxg6 h6 18.♙xh6 ♙xh6 19.g5+- a very brutal finish.) 17.♘xc8 ♖axc8 18.hxg6+ hxg6 19.♖xd2± Grandmaster Cvitan successfully defended this position with the black pieces twice in 2013 and 2014, but White is clearly superior here.

#### 15.♙xc4 ♙xc4 16.hxg6 hxg6 17.f4



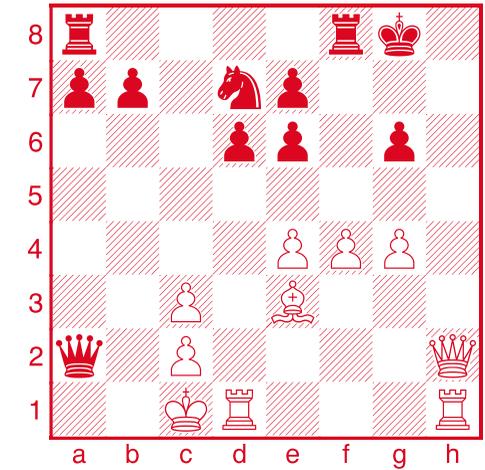
#### 17...♙xc3

As an occasional Dragon player myself, I know it's never fun to give up the g7 Bishop. Here, however, it's necessary, as otherwise White's pawns advance too quickly. Black is in trouble after the more natural 17...b5 18.f5! b4 19.♙h2!! ♘f6 (19...bxc3 20.♙h7+ ♙f7 21.♙xg6+ ♙g8 22.♖h7 ♖f7 23.♙h6 cxb2+ 24.♙b1+-) 20.♖d4 ♙c5 21.♘d1±.

#### 18.bxc3 ♙xa2

18...♙xe4 19.♖de1+- nearly winning almost on the spot with the threat of ♙d4 in the air.

#### 19.♙h2



Since I have no knowledge of the clock times, it's tough to say whether either player had this position in his preparation, but I would hope so, because going for this position unprepared is crazy!

#### 19...♘f6??

A very natural looking move... which answers my own question: John Ludwig had not prepared deeply enough.

19...♙f7□ played twice in 2014. White is only slightly better after 20.♙h7+ ♙e8 21.e5 (21.♙xg6+ ♙d8 22.♙g7 – KM) 21...dxe5 22.♙xg6+ ♙d8∞ 23.♙c5 (23.♙e4 ♙a1+ 24.♙d2 ♙a5∞ 1-0 (56) Iliushenok,I (2499)–Kanter,E (2375) Kazan, 2016.) 23...♙c7



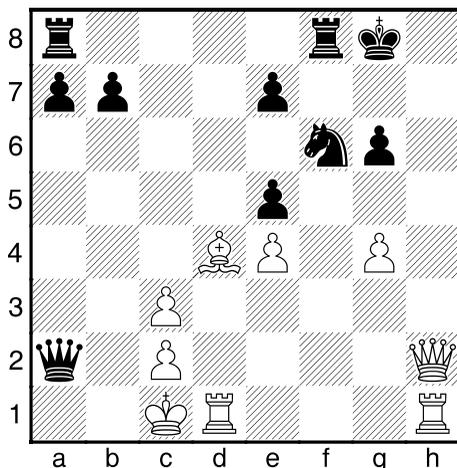
24. ♖xe7 ♜xf4 25. ♔d3 ♔a1+  
26. ♔d2 ♔a6 27. ♔xa6= (1/2-1/2,  
66) Sivuk, V (2532)–Jones, G  
(2657) Gjakova, 2016.

### 20. ♖d4! e5

Black puts up the best defence,  
but it's too late.

*editor* – nowhere to run and  
nowhere to hide: 20... ♔f7  
21. ♖xf6 ♜ exf6 22. ♔h7+ ♜ e8  
23. ♔xb7+- threatening ♔xa8 and  
♜h7, both mating; those edge-  
♜s are useless defenders.

### 21. fxe5 dxe5



### 22. ♔xe5 ♜

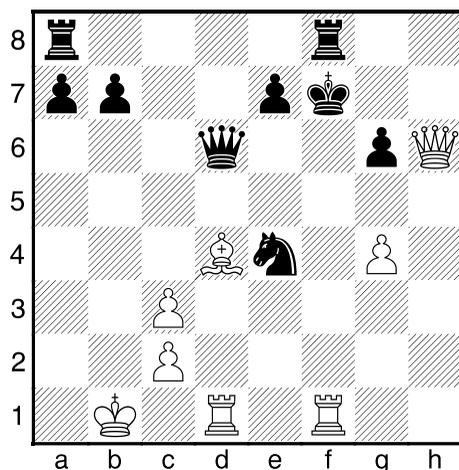
*editor* – 22. ♖xe5? ♔a1+ 23. ♔d2  
♜ad8+ 24. ♖d4 ♜xd4+ 25. cxd4  
♔xd4+= White's edge-♜s are  
no help against the perpetual

checks.

### 22... ♔a3+

22... ♔a1+ 23. ♔d2 makes no real  
difference.

23. ♔b1 ♔d6 24. ♔g5 ♜xe4  
25. ♔h6 ♔f7 26. ♜hf1+



### 26... ♜f6

26... ♔e6 27. ♔xg6+ ♔d7  
28. ♔xe4+-.

27. ♖xf6 ♔b6+ 28. ♔c1 exf6  
29. ♔h7+

Games such as this one can  
sometimes look easy for the  
victor, but the margin for error is  
very small. In this one, Razvan  
made no errors and played a  
perfect game.

1-0

## North Carolina

Dr. Elias Oussedik is currently  
working and studying in North  
Carolina. Luckily, he still finds  
time for chess, and (even bet-  
ter!) for annotating games for  
*Chess Canada*.

**Notes: Elias Oussedik  
Cunningham, Robin (2286)  
Oussedik, Elias (2234)**

C11

2016 NC Open North Carolina  
(4.2), 28.08.2016

This game was played in Greens-  
boro, North Carolina. The tour-  
nament was held in conjunction  
with the US Masters, a strong  
norm tournament. This year,  
there were two Canadians play-  
ing, Raja Panjwani and myself.  
Raja was playing in the US Mas-  
ters (2200+ FIDE only) and I was  
playing in the NC Open. Even  
though I was invited to play in  
the US Masters, the time com-  
mitment only allowed me to par-  
take in the NC Open. Being a five

round tournament, there are no  
opportunities for hiccups.

I was seeded #3 for this  
tournament. #1 was IM Irine Su-  
kandar from Indonesia and #2  
was FM Robin Cunningham, a  
statistics professor at UNC Chal-  
pel Hill. In the fourth round Rob-  
in was on 2.5/3 and so was I. IM  
Sukandar was leading the tour-  
nament with 3/3. We were both  
playing for the win.

### 1.e4

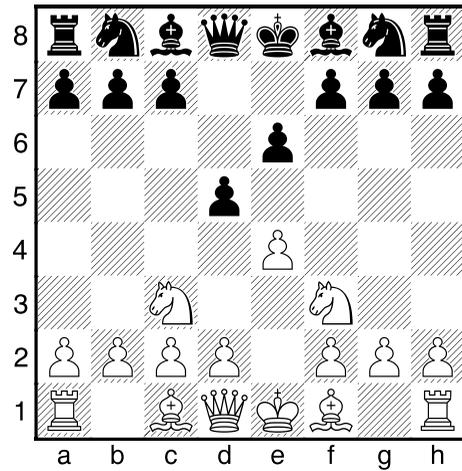
Robin is known as a positional  
e4 player. He reminds me of  
Michael Adams.

### 1...e6 2. ♜f3

This move caught me by  
surprise. I was expecting my  
opponent to follow Adam's  
repertoire *a la* ♜d2. 2.d4 d5  
3. ♜d2± the Tarrasch is a solid  
positional approach vs the  
French. I've noticed many of  
England's top Grandmasters  
prefer this setup as White.

### 2...d5 3. ♜c3





Sidelines! I am not too familiar with this opening and hadn't looked at it recently. For a slight second, I thought I was playing FM Hans Jung as he tends to play these kind of openings, albeit via 1.  $\text{Nc3}$ .

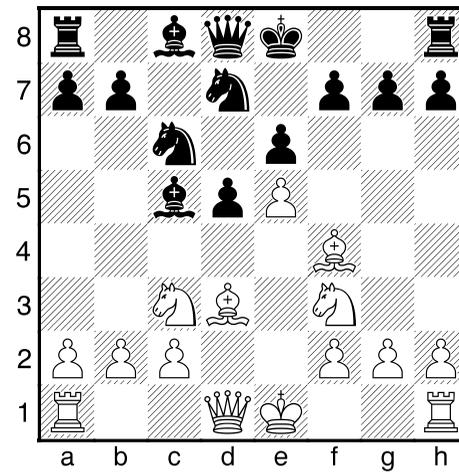
### 3... $\text{Nf6}$

Timid! I should be challenging White and be playing the critical 3...  $\text{d4}$ . However, I wasn't too familiar with the ensuing positions so decided to play it safe.

3...  $\text{d4}$  4.  $\text{Nc3}$   $\text{c5}$  5.  $\text{c3}$   $\text{Nf6}$ ! is a critical move that Berg in his *Grandmaster Repertoire* series advocates. Black sacks the  $\text{d4}$  pawn for great compensation. 6.  $\text{cxd4}$   $\text{cxd4}$  7.  $\text{Nexd4}$   $\text{Nxe4}$

8.  $\text{Nxe6}$  the point! 8...  $\text{Nxe6}$   
9.  $\text{Qa4+}$   $\text{Nc6}$  10.  $\text{Qxe4}$   $\text{Qd5}$ ! is Berg's suggestion.

4.  $\text{e5}$   $\text{Nfd7}$  5.  $\text{d4}$   $\text{c5}$  6.  $\text{dxc5}$   
 $\text{Nc6}$  7.  $\text{Bf4}$   $\text{Bxc5}$  8.  $\text{Bd3}$



We have now transposed to a sideline of the 3.  $\text{Nc3}$  French. This position can be very tricky to play for Black. Ian Nepomniachtchi is a practitioner of this line.

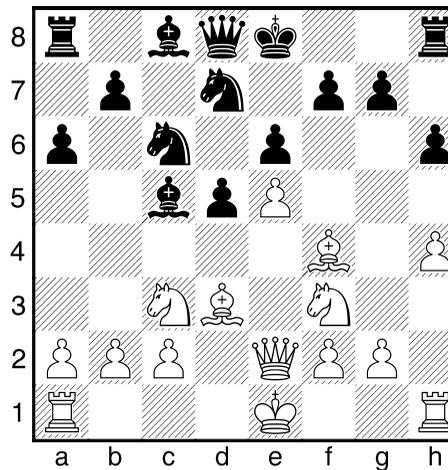
### 8... $\text{a6}$

This is a sideline I like. The main move is ...  $\text{f6}$ , but I didn't want to enter my opponent's theory. 8...  $\text{f6}$  9.  $\text{exf6}$   $\text{Nxf6}$  10.  $\text{Qe2}$  0-0 11. 0-0  $\text{a6}$  12.  $\text{Ne5}$ ± This position is known to be quite good for White. He usually continues with  $\text{g4}$  and mounts a Kingside attack.

### 9. $\text{Qe2}$ $\text{h6}$

The idea of the moves ...  $\text{a6}$  and ...  $\text{h6}$  are to continue with ...  $\text{g5}$  and ...  $\text{b5}$ . I don't know where White intends to castle, so I don't hurry with a move like ...  $\text{b5}$  yet. I first want to see where White intends to put his king.

### 10. $\text{h4}$



Preventing ...  $\text{g5}$  – a typical move in these structures. If Black can play ...  $\text{g5}$ , he can sometimes play ...  $\text{g4}$  and remove a defender of the  $\text{e5}$ -pawn.

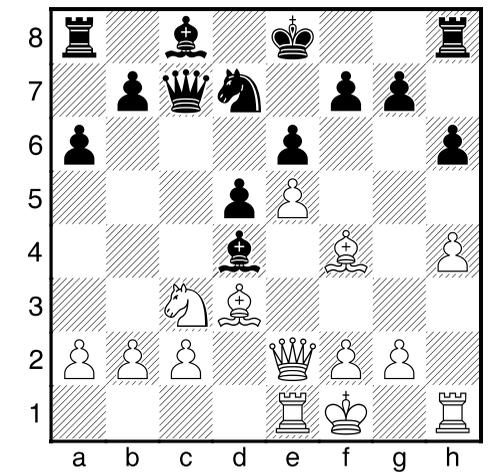
### 10... $\text{Nd4}$

A strong thematic move. The move ...  $\text{Nd4}$  has the same effect as the move ...  $\text{Nh4}$  in the advanced French. Black is happy to exchange the  $\text{Nf3}$ , the

defender of the  $\text{e5}$ -pawn.

11.  $\text{Nxd4}$   $\text{Bxd4}$  12.  $\text{Qf1}$   $\text{Qc7}$   
Putting pressure on  $\text{e5}$  and  $\text{c3}$ .

### 13. $\text{Re1}$



### 13... $\text{Bxc3}$ ?!

A dubious decision, giving up the key dark squared bishop. However, as mentioned earlier, I felt this was a must win game so I was eager to create some imbalances. The conservative approach would have me continue 13...  $\text{b5}$  14.  $\text{Rh3}$   $\text{Qf8}$  15.  $\text{Qg1}$   $\text{Bb7}$ ∞.

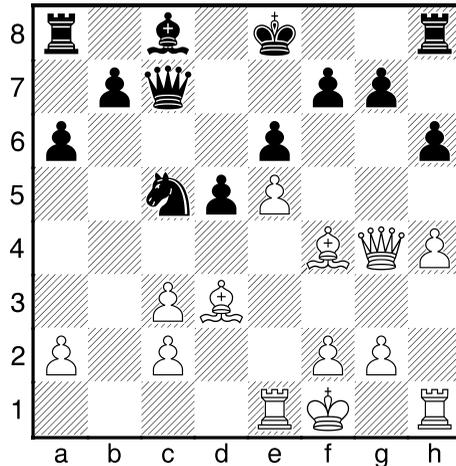
### 14. $\text{bxc3}$ $\text{Nc5}$

I need to exchange White's bishop, if not, I might be in big trouble. I plan here to develop my pieces as fast as possible

and long castle.

14...♖xc3? 15.♗g4 ♔f8 16.♖h3±  
for the pawn, White has  
tremendous kingside pressure.

15.♗g4



Surprisingly enough, White offered me a draw here. He told me after the game he felt as if he was a little worse. I would consider this position dynamically equal.

15...♞xd3

The point of this move is to remove White's powerful light squared bishop. Thing could get murky if White were able to swing his rook to h3-g3 and have the light squared bishop help him mount a kingside attack.

16.cxd3

16.♖xg7 ♞xf4 17.♗xh8+ ♔d7  
18.♗xh6 ♖c4+ 19.♔g1 ♞e2+  
20.♔h2 ♔c7♠.

16...g6!?

In hindsight, such a move might be a mistake and ...♖g8 might be better. Playing ...g6 weakens my dark squares. However, by playing ...g6 myself, I prevent White from playing h5 and fixing my g7 weakness.

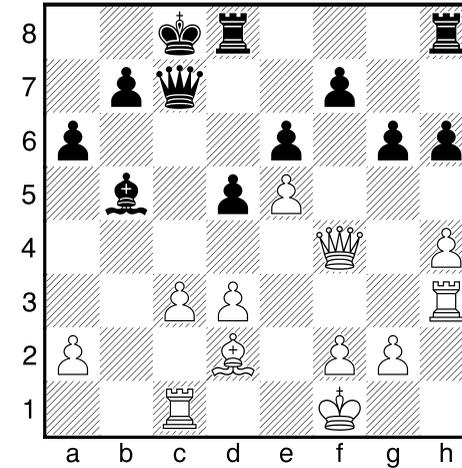
16...♗xc3? 17.♖xg7 ♖xd3+  
18.♔g1 ♖h7 19.♗f6±.

16...♖g8 17.♞xh6 ♖xc3∞  
double-edged — with bishops of opposite colour, the position is unclear.

17.♞d2 ♞d7

My idea is to long castle as Black and then try to control the c-file or break with ...g5.

18.♗f4 ♞b5 19.♖h3 0-0-0  
20.♖c1



20...♗e7

A one-threat move in a way. I want to bring my queen to a3. If my queen can get to a3, it might hinder White's queenside attack that starts with a4.

20...g5?! 21.♖e3 g4 22.♖g3 h5±  
was another possible variation.  
However, Black's pawn structure  
becomes static.

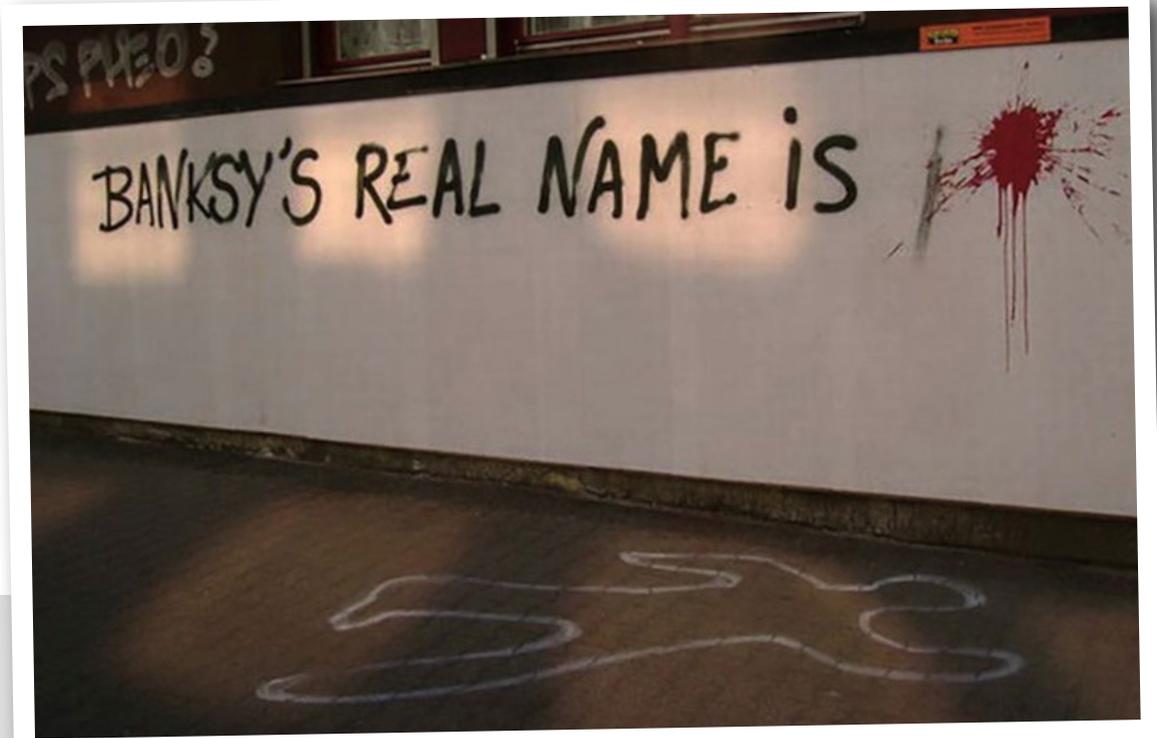
21.c4 dxc4 22.a4 ♞c6

22...♞xa4? 23.♞b4! ♖xb4  
(23...♖d7 24.♞d6±) 24.♖xc4+  
♖xc4 25.♖xc4+ ♞c6 as Black, I  
might be able to hold this, but it's  
uncomfortable.

23.♖xc4 ♔b8

23...♖a3? 24.♖xf7 ♖xd3  
25.♖xe6+ ♔b8±.

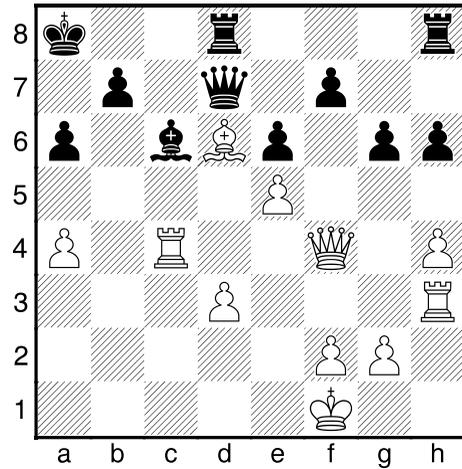
24.♞b4 ♖d7 25.♞d6+ ♔a8



*Robin Cunningham is really...*

*...hard to photograph.*





A critical position to understand and quite a complex one. White has a powerful bishop on d6 which is restricting Black's pieces. However, Black has a nice bishop himself on c6. The a4-pawn will always be a weakness for White, while the f7-pawn is a weakness for Black. Black's queenside pawn majority is also something to look out for. Overall, this is a dynamically equal position with chances for both sides. The perfect position one wants when playing for a win with either side.

**26. ♖e3**

White is trying to activate his rook and bring it to c1 or b1.

**26... ♜c8**

I was getting low on time here. I had about 15 minutes while my opponent had 30 minutes. The time control also included a 5 second delay. These American tournaments are quite interesting considering they prefer a delay rather than an increment.

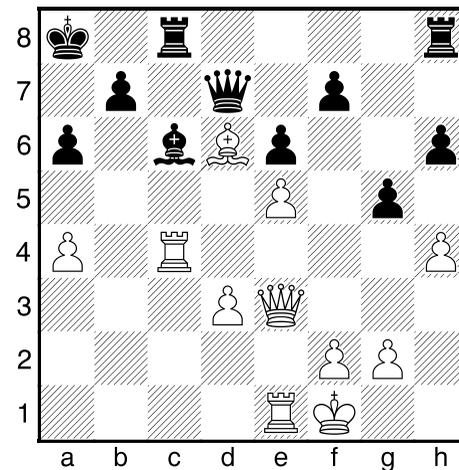
**26...g5!? 27. ♖d4 (27. ♖g4 f5; 27. ♖g3 f5) 27... ♙d5 28. ♜c7 (28. ♜c2 ♜c8) 28... ♚xc7 29. ♙xc7 ♙xg2+ 30. ♙xg2 ♜xd4.**

**27. ♜e1 g5**

And so I try to break!

**28. ♚e3**

**28.hxg5 hxg5 29. ♚xg5 ♜cg8 30. ♚e7 ♙xa4=** this position is probably equal.



**28... ♙xa4**

After taking the a4-pawn, I knew there would be a decisive result — no draws. Either Black would win with his passed pawns, or White would be able to breakthrough and checkmate me with his rooks and bishop. As Black, I was ready for a fight!

**29.hxg5 hxg5 30. ♜xc8+ ♚xc8?!**

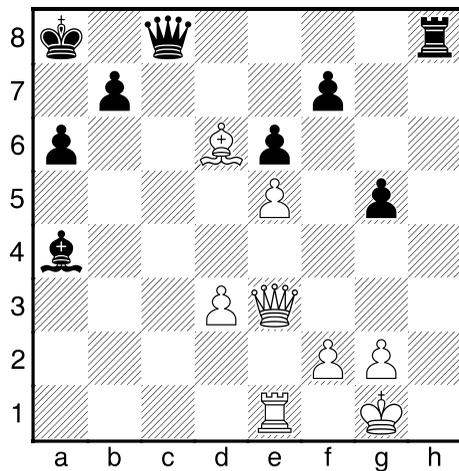
The start of a risky plan. I had ideas of swinging my Queen

over and checkmating the white king. I was vacationing in fantasy land. With White's dark squared bishop, he has his own threats too! The conservative 30... ♜xc8 would have been the better approach: 30... ♜xc8 31. ♚xg5 ♚b5 32. ♚d2 ♙c2 33. ♜e3 ♚ Black has tremendous winning chances here thanks to his connected passed pawns on the queenside.





31. ♔g1



31... ♕g8?

Terrible plan! Albeit not losing, Black shouldn't be leaving his queenside bare.

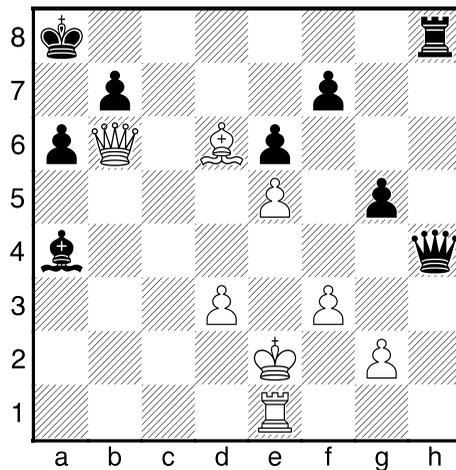
32. ♖b6!

We each had around five minutes left with a 5 second delay. Kudos to my opponent for finding the most critical moves.

32... ♕h7?

32... ♕d8! the only move that gives me a chance to keep on fighting.

33. f3 ♖h2+ 34. ♔f2 ♕h4+  
35. ♔e2



35... ♕g3?

35...g4 only move that saves the day! 36. ♕c5 gxf3+ 37. ♔d2 (37. ♔xf3 ♕c6+ 38. ♔e2 ♔b8 39. ♕d6+ ♔a8 40. ♕c5=) 37... ♔b8! 38. ♖a7+ ♔c8 39. ♕d6 ♕c6 If White isn't careful he might get into some trouble himself. 40. ♖b1 (40. ♖b8+? ♔d7 41. ♖c7+ ♔e8 42. ♖c8+ ♖d8 43. ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 44. gxf3 ♕xf3) 40... fxf2 41. ♖b8+ ♔d7 42. ♖xb7+ ♕xb7 43. ♖xb7+ ♔d8 44. ♖b8+ ♔d7 45. ♖b7+=.

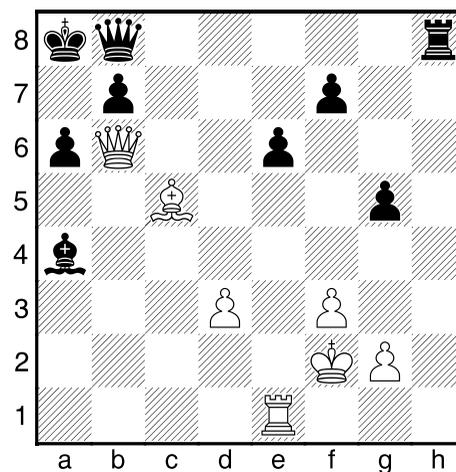
35... ♖c8 36. ♕c5 ♖xc5 37. ♖xc5 g4 I had this option to sacrifice the exchange, and it was probably something I should have done. However, I decided to gamble with 35... ♕g3 hoping it would lead to something. I

call this Hope Chess — not recommended at any age.

36. ♕c5+- ♖xe5+

36... ♔b8 37. ♖a7+ ♔c8 38. ♖a8+ ♔c7 39. ♕d6+ is mating.

37. ♔f2 ♖b8



For a split second I thought I was in time to play ... ♖c8 and ... ♖c6, but...

38. ♖a1!!

Only move and a crushing blow.

38... ♕b5

38... ♖h4 doesn't change anything: 39. d4+-.

38... ♕c6 39. ♖xa6+-

39. ♖xb5 ♖c8 40. ♖b6 ♔b8  
41. ♖xa6 ♖d8 42. ♖a8+

Kudos to Robin — he played a nice game. I learned a lot from this game. With bishops of opposite colour, don't keep your king naked! I ended up finishing the tournament with 3.5/5 which was good enough for =7th and some Benjamins. IM Irine for Indonesia lived up to expectations and captured clear first with a fantastic 5/5.

1-0



Each year, Play Magnus, the official company of [Magnus Carlsen](#), organizes an event called the "Play Live Challenge". This involves sending lucky users of the Play Magnus app — a chess playing and teaching program which is designed to let you "play" against a virtual Magnus Carlsen at different ages (strengths) — to play the real Carlsen live.

Carlsen played 11 opponents, from unrated up to 2257, in a 30 minute clock simul at the



Liberty Science Center in New Jersey — across the Hudson from lower Manhattan, in the park next to Ellis Island — September 22nd, 2016.

Manitoba's **Isaac Wiebe** was one of the lucky players selected. Isaac writes:

"Play Magnus is a very unique training tool which I enjoy using. Whenever I am trying out a new opening, I will run a variation by Play Magnus first, to make sure I know the opening theory especially well... I cannot wait to meet the greatest player of my generation, Magnus Carlsen. It is an honour to win the Play Magnus Live Challenge."

After the simul, each player sat center stage at a board with Magnus for a 5 minute post mortem.

Comments below from Carlsen are from his post mortem with Isaac.

**Magnus Carlsen**  
*Not just an app!?*

## Carlsen, Magnus (2857) Wiebe, Isaac (2017)

A96

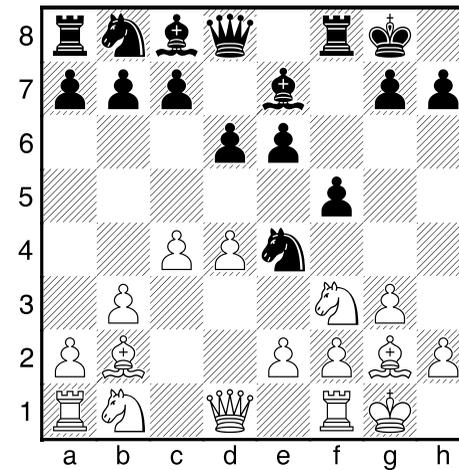
*Play Magnus simul (3.3),  
22.09.2016*

*Notes: John Upper*

**1.♘f3 e6 2.c4 f5**

Hard to believe, but there are no Carlsen games from this position in the MegaBase!

**3.g3 ♘f6 4.♙g2 ♕e7!? 5.0-0  
0-0 6.b3 d6 7.d4 ♘e4 8.♙b2**



**8...a5**

8...♙f6 is more common, then:



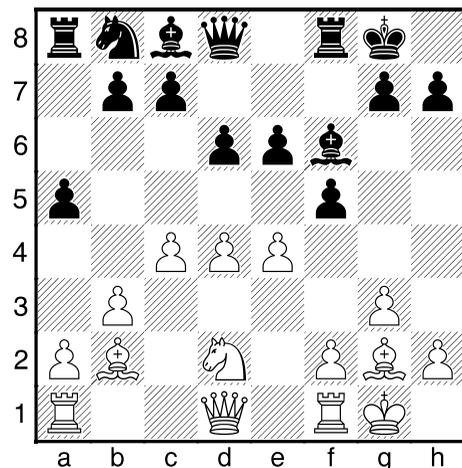
World Chess Champion Magnus Carlsen takes on 11 people in chess challenge

**9.♘e1 c5 10.♘d2 d5** White is a little ahead in development, so ought to welcome this break, but it's not easy to keep control, and Black can equalize even against strong opponents; for example:  
**11.cxd5 exd5 12.♘df3 ♘c6 13.e3 b5!?** (0-1, 42) **Zhao,X (2567)–Reinderman,D (2593)** Wijk aan Zee, 2014.

**9.♘bd2 ♘c6 10.♘xe4** (10.♘e1! d5 11.e3± followed by ♘d3 and f3 when White has a very comfortable set up vs Black's Stonewall.) 10...fxe4 11.♘e1 d5 12.♘c2 ♖f7 13.♙d2!? ♙g5 14.♙c3 ♙f6 15.♖ad1 ♙d7 16.♙d2 ♙g5 17.♙e1!? was White trying to be provocative? 17...a5 18.f3 ♘b4! 19.♘xb4 axb4= (1-0, 37) **Shabalov,A (2538)–Song,M (2316)** Arlington, 2015.

**9.♘fd2 ♘xd2 10.♘xd2 ♙f6** 10...f4!? 11.gxf4 ♖xf4 12.e3 ♖f8 13.f4± **Salomon,J (2452)–Dahl,T (2201)** Fagernes, 2016 (1-0, 55).

**11.e4**

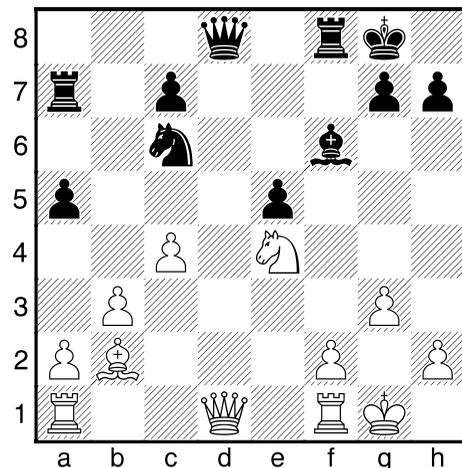


### 11...e5?

Black is way behind in development, so opening the center asks for trouble;  $\triangleleft$ 11... $\text{c6}$ .

**12.dxe5 dxe5? 13.exf5!  $\text{c6}$ xf5**  
13...c6 14.g4+- White has an extra pawn and the e4 square, and is still ahead in development.

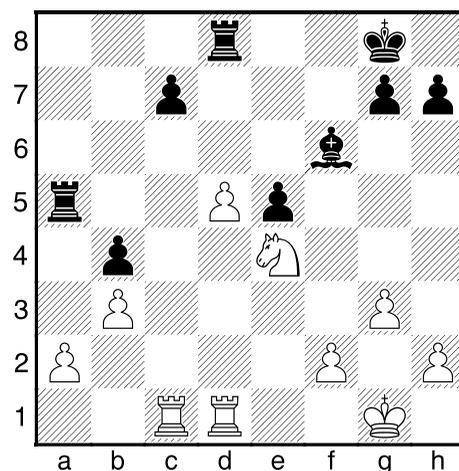
**14. $\text{c6}$ xb7+-  $\text{a7}$  15. $\text{e4}$   $\text{e4}$   
16. $\text{e4}$   $\text{c6}$**



### 17. $\text{d5+?!}$

Not the best, but transposing into a hugely advantageous endgame is a sensible decision in a clock simul. 17. $\text{g4}$   $\text{d4}$   
18. $\text{ad1}$  and f2-f4 would be a maximalist approach.

**17... $\text{xd5}$  18.cxd5  $\text{b4}$   
19. $\text{a3}$   $\text{d8}$  20. $\text{xb4}$   $\text{axb4}$   
21. $\text{fd1}$   $\text{a5}$  22. $\text{ac1}$**

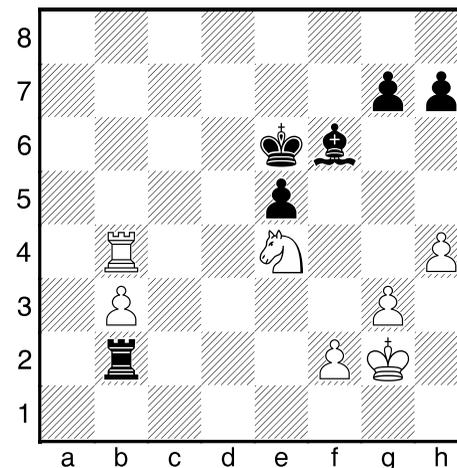


**22... $\text{axd5}$  23. $\text{xd5}$   $\text{xd5}$   
24. $\text{xc7}$   $\text{a5}$**

24... $\text{d4}$  25.f3  $\text{d1+}$  26. $\text{f2}$   
 $\text{h1}$  27.g4!? (27. $\text{g2}$   $\text{b1}\pm$ )  
27... $\text{hx2+}$  28. $\text{g3}$   $\text{h1}$   
(28... $\text{xa2}$  29.g5+- wins the  $\text{c6}$ .)  
29.g5  $\text{d8}$  30. $\text{c8}$   $\text{d1}\pm$ .

**25. $\text{b7}$   $\text{xa2}$  26. $\text{xb4}$   $\text{f7}$   
27. $\text{g2}$   $\text{e6}$  28.h4  $\text{b2}$**

*Postmortem with the Champ  
Isaac gets a lesson on stage.*



Magnus went straight to this position in the postmortem (see *photo*), but analyzed it as though it was Black's move. Here is what he said:



"You need to take control over the light squares on the kingside. Once I get in this [h4-h5], my king will come here [g4], my rook will... check your king away, and my king will come in [g4-f5]. So you need to play ...g6 and ...h5.

"Once you get this, 29... h5, I think I still have excellent winning chances, but it's much more difficult... Once I get control over the light squares it becomes very easy to play."

– **Magnus Carlsen**

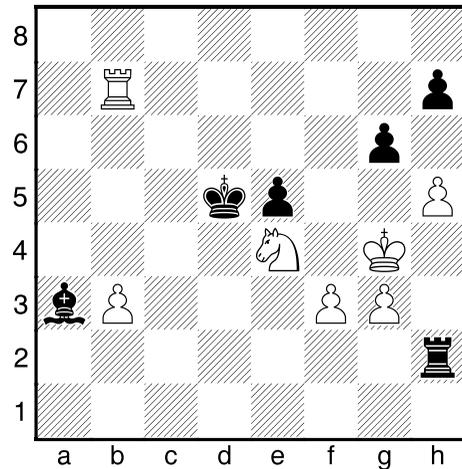


# Chess Canada Dragon

29.h5 ♕e7 30.♖b7 ♖b1  
31.♔f3 ♖b2 32.♔g4 ♖e2  
33.f3 ♖b2 34.♖b6+

Notice that keeping the pawn on b3 restricts the activity of Black's ♖.

34...♔d5 35.♔f5 ♖h2 36.♖b7  
♕a3 37.♔g4 g6



38.♖d7+!

Even in a simul Magnus finds the most accurate finesse!

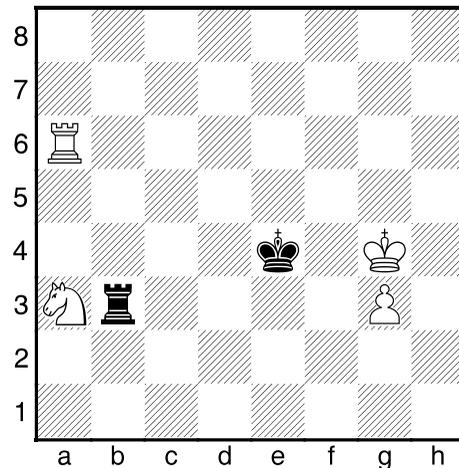
Pushing the black ♔ either away from the e5-pawn or to where it will be exposed to a check which enables White's ♖ to gain a tempo to get back to the queenside.

Instead, the more direct 38.♖xh7 gxh5+ 39.♖xh5 ♖b2 is winning, but trickier, and requires White to find some only moves:

40.♗c3+ ♔c5 41.♖xe5+ ♔d4  
42.♖a5□+- ♕b4 43.♗b5+ ♔c5  
44.♗c3+□ ♕xa5 45.♗a4+□+-.

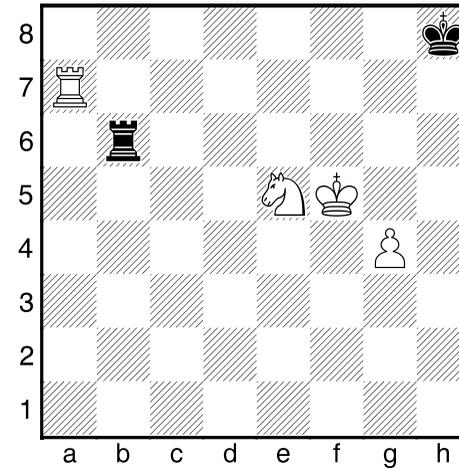
38...♔e6 39.♖xh7 gxh5+  
40.♖xh5 ♖b2 41.♖h6+ ♔d5  
41...♔e7 42.♖b6 saves the b-pawn with none of the fuss of the variations above.

42.♗c3+ ♔d4 43.♗b5+ ♔d3  
44.♗xa3 ♖xb3 45.♖a6 e4  
46.fxe4 ♔xe4



This would be a draw... if it weren't for that stubborn g-pawn.

47.♖a4+ ♔e5 48.♗c4+ ♔f6  
49.♖a6+ ♔g7 50.♗e5 ♖b5  
51.♔f5 ♖b1 52.♖a7+ ♔h8  
53.g4 ♖b6



It's a trivial win, but Magnus plays it computer-perfect for the minimum moves to mate.

54.g5 ♖b1 55.♔g6 ♖b6+  
56.♔f7 ♖b8 57.♗g6+ ♔h7  
58.♔f6+ ♔g8 59.♖g7#

1-0

photos are screen grabs from the video.

video The complete simul along with the nearly 30 minute long post-mortem session, one-on-one with each opponent, can be watched on the ChessBase website:

<https://en.chessbase.com/post/magnus-carlsen-plays-handicap-simul-live-video-from-new-york>

Isaac was the last player forced to resign, but...

**Magnus: 11**  
**Play Magnus customers: 0\***



\*no refunds offered.



Chess Canada  
Dragon

Chess Canada occasionally features a detailed study of an opening or middle game structure which has appeared in one of the games in that issue.

While reviewing the Ganguly-Wang game for the report on the Edmonton International, the game Carlsen-Jones, TATA 2018, was played. Both were Sicilian Dragons with 10.♞e1, and both led to very interesting middlegames. The Carlsen-Jones game may end up being best remembered for the fact that the World Champion blundered a piece and yet *still* went on to win! Even more remarkable, because his opponent was not only rated 2640, but has been a long-time Dragon player, and has published repertoire books on the Dragon for Quality Chess.

This Appendix includes an Opening Intro, and three annotated games:

1. Rogovoi - Sambuev, 1998
2. Leko - Carlsen, 2008
3. Carlsen - Jones, 2018

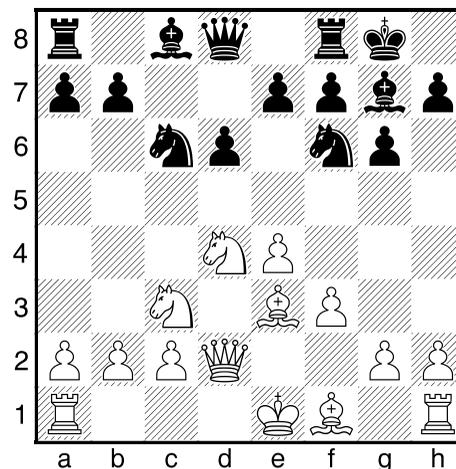
All three games feature evaluation swings of more than +2!

## Dragon: 10.♞e1 Intro B76

Opening Intro, 21.01.2018

Notes: John Upper

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4  
4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♙e3  
♙g7 7.f3 0-0 8.♞d2 ♘c6

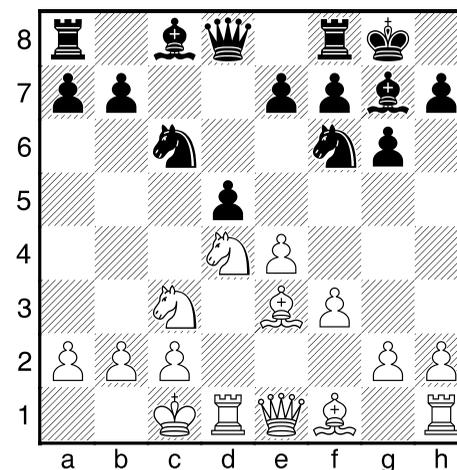


White's main moves are ♙c4 and 000. The former was Fischer's favourite, putting the ♙ on an active square, preventing ...d5, and aiming for h4-h5 "sac-sac-mate"; but the latter move has become the modern mainline as Black's defences — ...h5! — to the Yugoslav attack have been more thoroughly worked out.

## 9.0-0-0

Allows ...d5, which was long thought to give Black equality, but that's not so clear, and White has scored well by allowing ...d5 and then playing against Black's ragged center pawns.

## 9...d5 10.♞e1!?



First played in the late 1980s, this has become White's top choice. The Q retreat creates an X-ray from the ♖d1 to the ♞d8.

The older line goes: 10.exd5 ♘xd5 11.♘xc6 bxc6:

12.♘xd5 cxd5 13.♞xd5 would simply refute the Dragon if not for the following sequence:

13...♞c7! 14.♞xa8?! (14.♞c5 ♞b7∞) 14...♙f5 threatening mate and attacking the ♞. 15.♞xf8+ ♙xf8 16.♞d2 computers say 0.00, but in practice Black scores around Elo +80. Even so, this *might* be a good choice for older club players who want to take their eager young Dragon-loving opponents into a complex near-endgame.

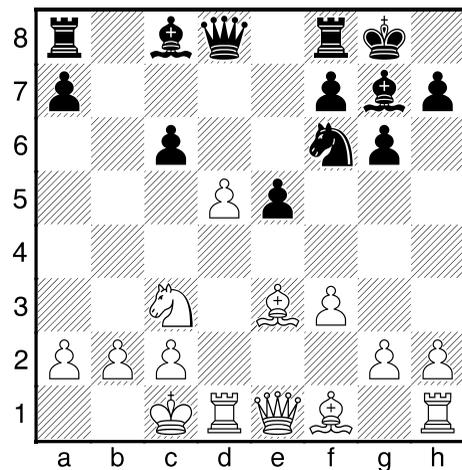
12.♙d4 12...e5 13.♙c5 ♙e6 14.♘e4 (14.♙xf8!? ♞xf8 15.♘xd5 cxd5 Black's center and ♙ pair and lack of open files for the white ♖s are reckoned to give Black the better game.) 14...♞e8 15.h4± with around 500 games in the MegaBase.

## 10...e5

10...dxe4?? 11.♘xc6+-.

10...e6 is also possible, but White has to know what to do on the more forcing ...e5.

## 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.exd5



### 12...d4!

12...cxd5?! 13.g5± Black's center cannot hold:

13...d4? 14.xe5 g4  
15.xg7+ White wins a piece. 15...xg7 16.xd8 dxc3 (16...f2 17.xd4+-) 17.fxg4 cxb2+ 18.xb2+- (1-0, 40) Zhou,Q (2239)–Qiao,C (1741) Ottawa, 2016.

13...e6 is Black's best, when White has several options:

a) 14.xe5? opens the long diagonal and hands Black an attack; e.g. 14...h6! 15.h4 (15.xf6 xf6 16.e1 b8+) 15...g5 16.e1 e4!? (16...h5!) 17.xe4±.

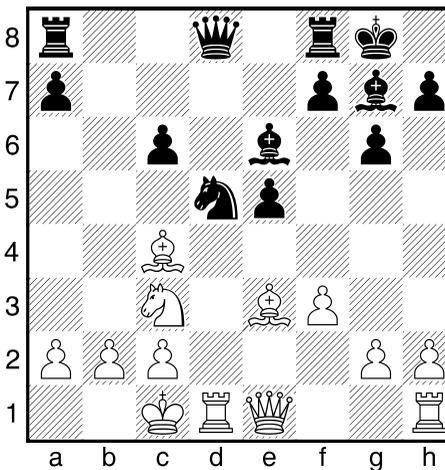
b) 14.b1? b8 Black has the center, two e's pointing at the White e, and two half-open files. 15.g4? Too slow. Stockfish says: -3.5. (15.c4! transfers a piece to defend the e, but Black is still much better.) 15...b6! (or 15...c7!+) 16.b3 fc8?? (16...c5+!) 17.xf6 xf6 (17...xc3!? 18.xg7 e3± 19.xe5!? xe1 20.xe1±) 18.dxd5± xf6 19.xd5 xc2?? (19...e4!; 19...c7?? 20.b5+-) 20.c2 c8+ (20...c6+ 21.c4 is what Black overlooked.) 21.c4 e4 22.xe4 b4 23.d1 c3 24.e2 f8 25.d7 1-0 Zhou,Q (2104)–Kalra,A (2145) Ottawa, 2013.

c) 14.c4!± is Rogovoi–Sambuev, 1998, and Leko–Carlsen, 2008, both below.

### 13.c4

13.c5? h6+! 14.b1 dxc3+ 15.bxc3 a5 leads to a position Jones evaluates as clear advantage for Black.

### 13...e6



### 14.b1

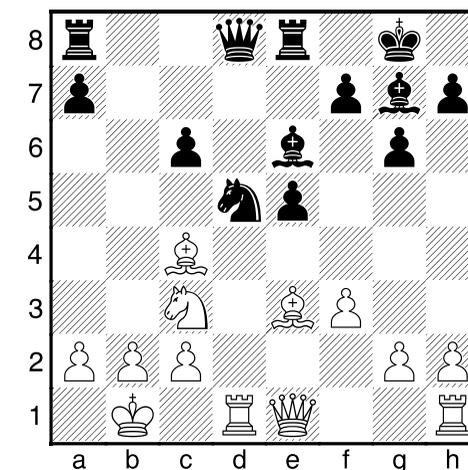
14.c5?! g5+! 15.b1 fd8 brings the f to d8 in one move.

14.e4 c7 15.g5? (15.c5 fd8± Jones's 2017 repertoire book on the Dragon for Quality Chess has a lot more analysis here, one main line continuing: 16.h4 f4! 17.xe6 xd1+! 18.xd1 xe6 19.e3 f5! 20.g5 xg5 21.hxg5 f4 22.d2 e4! 23.fx4 e5 24.c3 xg5 25.d7! xc3 26.xh7+ f8 27.b7! xb2+ 28.xb2=) 15...xe3! 16.e6 b6±+ 17.xf8 dxc4 18.c3 a6! 19.b3 (saving the e costs the e: 19.d7 xa2 20.b3 h6+-) 19...xf8+ 20.b1 e4 21.c3 e3 22.a1 d2 23.c2 e8 24.he1 e5 25.a3 c4 0-1

Timman,J (2629)–Fedorov,A (2575) Wijk aan Zee, 2001.

### 14...e8

14...b8 15.e4 f5 16.g5 c8 17.h4 h6 18.e4 (½-½, 52) Edouard,R (2659)–Jones,G (2661) London, 2014.



### 15.e4

15.h4 c7 16.dxd5 cxd5 17.xd5 xd5 18.xd5 e4 19.fx4 xe4 20.d2 xb2 21.xb2 b7+ 22.a1 xe3 23.h5 e7 24.h6 e8= Navara,D (2735)–Edouard,R (2641) Drancy, 2016 (½-½, 54).

### 15...f5N

15...c7 16.c5 h6 17.g4 f4 18.d6 b6 19.xe6 xe6 20.c5 b5 21.b3 ee8 22.h4 e2 23.xe2 xe2 24.g5± h5

Chess Canada  
Dragon

25.♖d6 a5 26.♜xc6 a4 27.♞e1  
♘f4 28.b4!+- (1-0, 36) Leko,P  
(2709)–Trent,L (2463) Douglas,  
2016.

16.♘g5 ♙c8

see Carlsen,M (2834)–Jones,G  
(2640) TATA, 2018.

## Illustrative Games

**Rogovoi, Mark (2225)**  
**Sambuev, Bator (2340)**

B76

*Chigorin Memorial 6th St Petersburg (9), 09.11.1998*

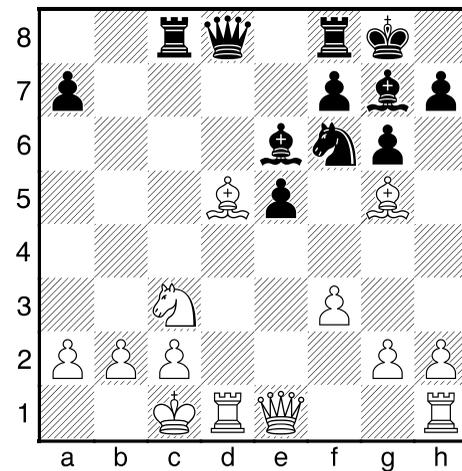
Notes: John Upper

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4  
4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♙e3  
♙g7 7.f3 0-0 8.♞d2 ♘c6 9.0-0  
0-0 d5 10.♞e1 e5 11.♘xc6  
bxc6 12.exd5 cxd5? 13.♙g5  
♙e6 14.♙c4 ♜c8

White has scored +4 =0 -1 from  
here, with Elo +220.

14...♞c7 is Leko–Carlsen,  
2008 (below), and Ganguly–  
Wang Edmonton, 2016 (earlier in  
this issue).

15.♙xd5



15...♘xd5!?

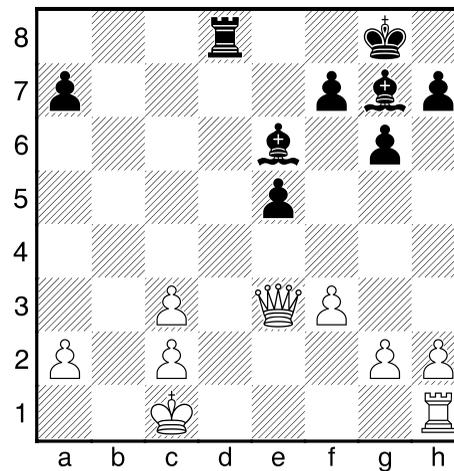
Preposterous, right? Against a  
skilled opponent — and White  
was over 2200 — this "has to"  
lose in a long game.... right?

OTOH, this looks like it would  
be FUN to play in a blitz game:  
Black gets active piece play,  
a safe ♙, two ♙s, compact  
pawns... and psychologically all  
the pressure is now on White,  
who "knows" he's winning.

15...♞b6± is the computer's top  
pick, but Black saw no prospects  
— for points or fun — in that  
position.

16.♙xd8 ♘xc3 17.bxc3  
♜fxd8 18.♜xd8+ ♜xd8

19.♞e3



White has a ♞ and pawn for two  
♙s.

Stockfish 9 says +4

Komodo says +3.4

What could go wrong?

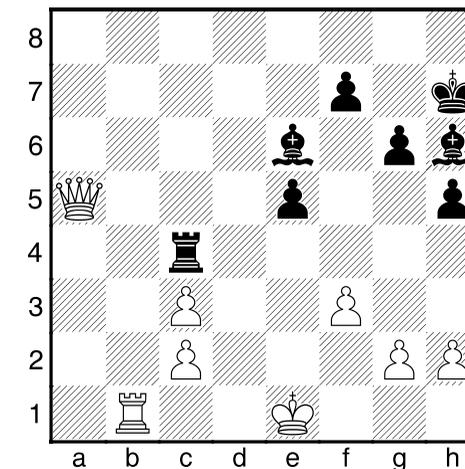
19...♜b8 20.♜d1

20.♞xa7?? ♙h6+-+ and ...♜b1  
wins the ♜.

20...h5 21.♙d2 ♜b2 22.♞xa7  
♜xa2 23.♞b8+ ♙h7 24.♜b1  
♙h6+ 25.♙d1 ♜a5 26.♙e1  
♜c5 27.♞b4

27.♜b6 aiming to kill the B–pair  
looks like a good idea.

27...♜c4 28.♞a5



28...e4

Gets rid of the iso, leaving all  
Black's pawns safe and freeing  
both ♙s.

The rest of this game plays like  
a bad dream for White: a long,  
slow, nightmarish slide into a  
hopeless position.

29.♙e2? exf3+ 30.gxf3

30.♙xf3?? ♜f4+ 31.♙e2 (31.♙g3  
h4#) 31...♙c4+-+ and White  
gets mated on loses the ♞ to a  
discovered check.

30...♙g7 31.♙d3 ♜f4

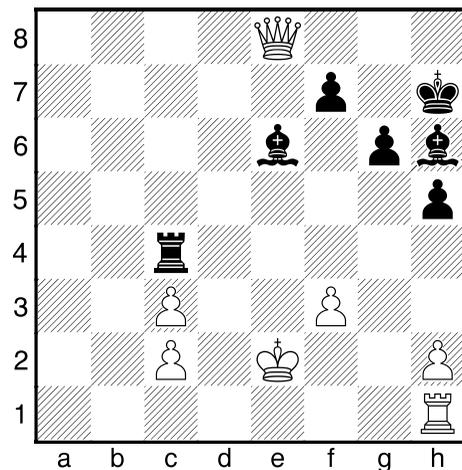
Stockfish says +1.7

Komodo: +1.

32.♞a8 ♙f5+ 33.♙d2 ♙h6

34.♙e2 ♜h4 35.♜h1 ♜c4

36.♞e8 ♙e6



37. Rxc3

37. Qd3 Qg7± 38. Qxe6?? Rxc3+-  
+.

37... Rxc3 38. Qa4 Rxc4

Stockfish: 0.00

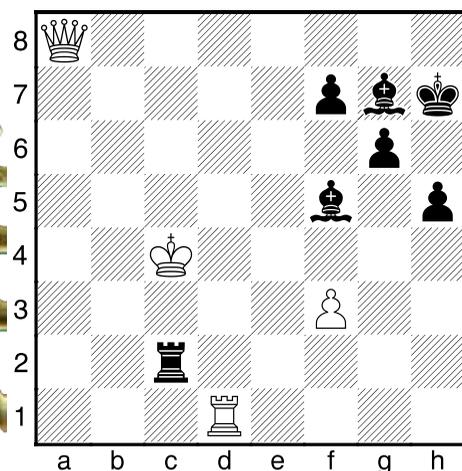
Komodo: 0.00

39. Qb3 Rh4 40. Qb8 Qf4

41. Qf8 Rxb2+ 42. Qd3 Rf2!

43. Qc3 Qe5+ 44. Qd3 Qg7

45. Qa8 Qf5+ 46. Qc4 Rxc2+



47. Qd5? Rxc8 48. Qa5 Qf6

49. Rh1 Rxc3 50. f4 Rxd3+

51. Qc5? Qe4!

wins the ♔ or the ♖.

52. Qa6 Rxd5+

0-1

**Leko, Peter (2741)**

**Carlsen, Magnus (2765)**

B76

*Miskolc m (5), 31.05.2008*

*Notes: John Upper*

Carlsen played the Dragon regularly in his early teens. This is a rapid game where Peter Leko gives Magnus a lesson in the kind of play against weak pawns which Carlsen would later deal out as World Champion.

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

4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 g6 6. Qe3

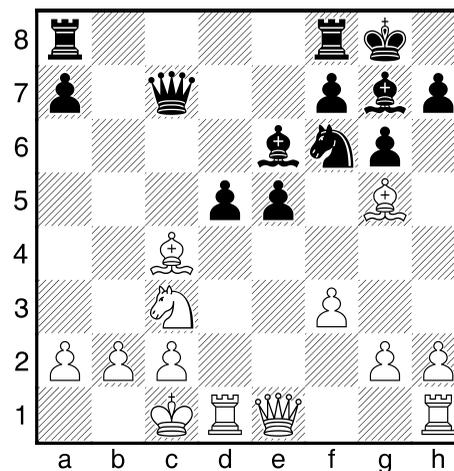
Qg7 7.f3 Nc6 8. Qd2 0-0 9.0-

0-0 d5 10. Qe1 e5 11. Nxc6

bxc6 12.exd5 cxd5?

12... Nxd5 see Carlsen-Jones,  
2018 (below).

13. Qg5 Qe6 14. Qc4! Qc7



White has a choice: take on f6 and keep a small advantage against Black's weak pawns, or take on d5 to win a pawn while opening lines at the ♔c1.

15. Qxf6

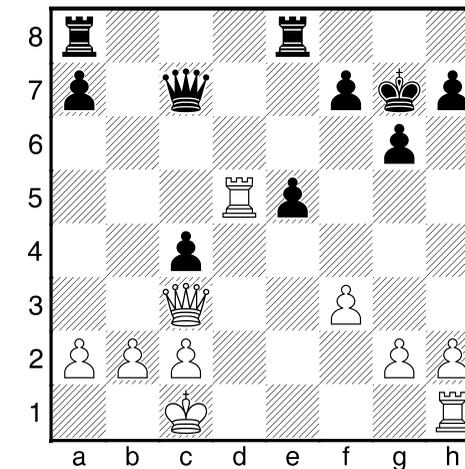
Leko takes the safe route.

Ganguly played the more dynamic move: 15. Qxd5 Nxd5 16. Nxd5 Qxd5 17. Rxd5 White is up a pawn, but Black has two half-open files and a Q pointed at White's ♔. See: Ganguly-Wang, Edmonton, 2016 in this issue.

15... dxc4 16. Qxg7 Qxg7

17. Nxd5 Qxd5 18. Rxd5 Rfe8

19. Qc3±

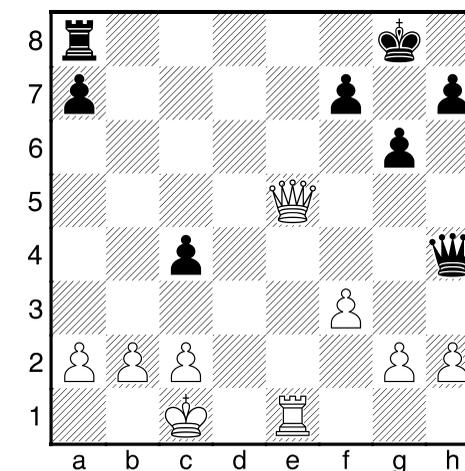


Compared to Ganguly-Wang: material is equal, and Black has less pressure on the queenside, but White has a better structure; and with open lines and major pieces, that better structure is likely to turn into an extra pawn.

19... Qg8 20. Qa5 Qe7

21. Re1 Qh4 22. Rdx5 Rxe5

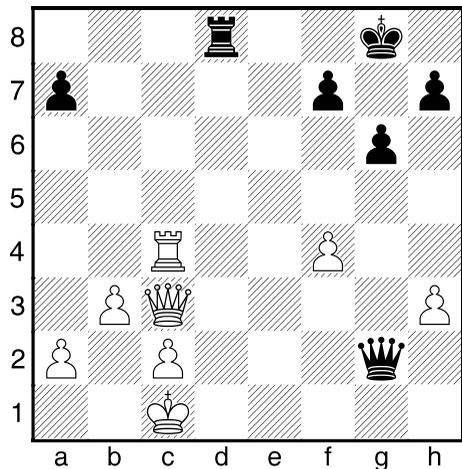
23. Qxe5±



# Chess Canada Dragon

White is up one safe pawn. The rest has hardly anything to do with opening analysis, but the players reach a very complex, interesting and instructive rook ending.

23...♖d8 24.h3 c3!? 25.♔xc3 ♕g5+ 26.f4! ♕xg2 27.b3 ♕f2 28.♖e4 ♕g2 29.♖c4!+-



White is up a protected passed pawn, his ♔ is safe and his pieces are coordinated.

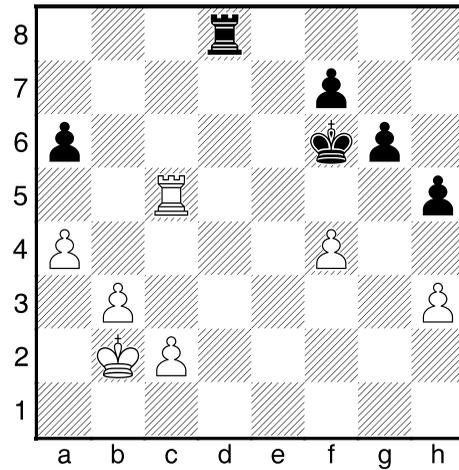
Stockfish says: +2.2  
Komodo says: +1.3

29...♕d5 30.♔b2 ♕f5 31.a4 h5 32.♕e3 a6 33.♖c5 ♕f6+ 34.♕e5 ♔g7!?

Rather than leave White's ♕ to dominate the board, Carlsen allows the trade so that he might

get some counterplay with his ♔.

35.♕xf6+ ♔xf6+-



36.♖c4?

Peter Leko: Safety first?

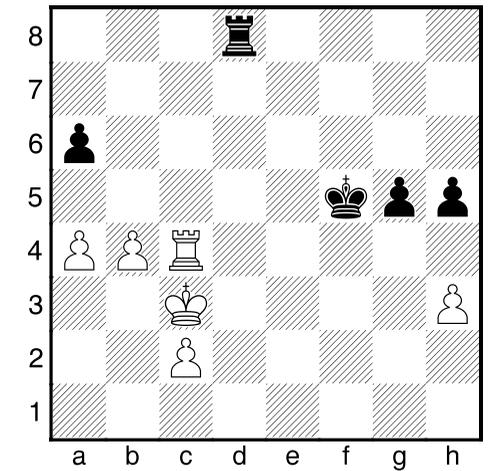
36.a5!+- is simplest, White's ♖ is already perfectly placed and the time it would take for ...♖d4xf4 (and the position it would leave Black's ♖) would give White an easy win.

36.♖c6+! gives Black dangerous-looking counterplay, but White is fast enough to win: 36...♔f5 37.♖xa6 ♔xf4 38.♖f6+ ♔g3 39.♖xf7 ♔xh3 (39...g5



40.♖g7 g4 41.hxg4 h4 (41...hxg4 42.b4+-) 42.♖h7+- is a much better version of the kind of ending we see in the game.) 40.♖g7 ♖d6 (40...h4 41.♖xg6+- White's pawns will be way up the board before the Black ♔ gets off the edge.) 41.b4+-.

36...♔f5 37.b4 f6 38.♔c3 g5 39.fxg5 fxg5



40.♖c7!

40.b5? axb5 41.axb5 g4 42.♖b4 g3= and the race is tied.

40.♖c6? g4 41.hxg4+ (41.♖c5+ ♔f4 42.♖xh5 g3=) 41...hxg4 42.♖xa6 g3 43.♖a7 ♔f6! prevents the ♖ from coming back. (43...♖g8 44.♖f7+ ♔e4 45.♖f1 g2 46.♖g1± only White has winning chances.) 44.♖a6+□

♔f5 45.♖a5+ ♚ ♔f6 46.♖a6+ ♚=.

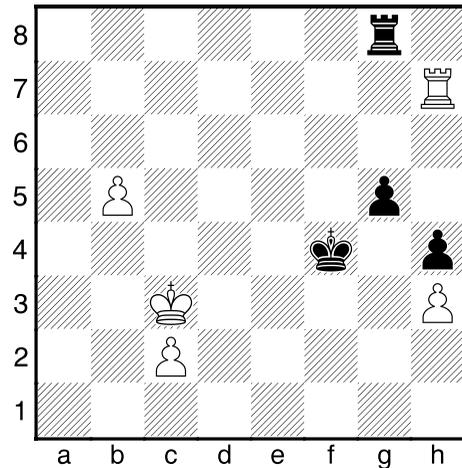
#### 40...♖g8

40...g4 41.hxg4+ hxg4 42.♖g7!  
♔f4 43.b5+-.

#### 41.♖h7! h4 42.b5!

42.♖f7+! ♔e4 (42...♔e6  
43.♖a7+-) 43.b5 g4 44.hxg4 h3  
45.♖h7+-.

#### 42...axb5 43.axb5 ♔f4



#### 44.♖d7 ♚

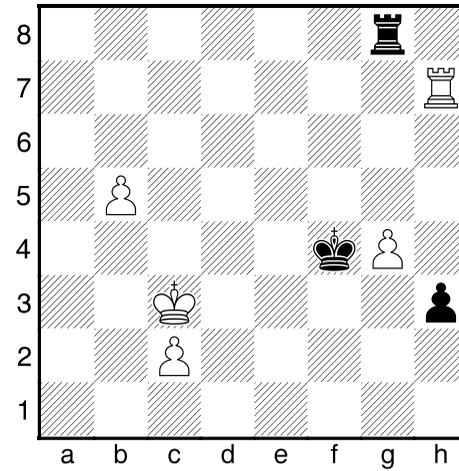
44.b6? ♔g3 45.b7 ♔xh3 46.♖g7  
♖b8=.

#### 44...g4 45.hxg4 h3

45...♖h8 46.♖d1+- is similar to  
the ending in the note to move  
51.

#### 46.♖h7?

46.♔b4 ♚+-.



#### 46...♔xg4?

46...♔g3 ♚= this would enable  
...♖xg4 with check, then ...♖h4,  
drawing. The extra tempo on  
...♔xg4-g3 leaves Black one  
move short and could have cost  
him the full point.

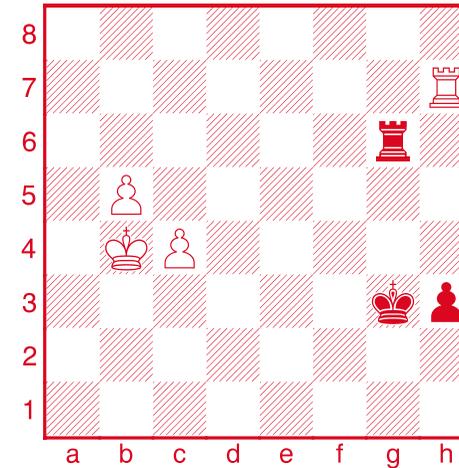
#### 47.♔b4+-

47.♖h6!+-.

#### 47...♔g3 48.c4 ♖g6!

Poses the hardest problem for  
White.

48...h2? 49.♖xh2+- or 49.b6+-  
*but not* 49.c5?? ♖g4+ 50.♔a5  
♖h4+-.



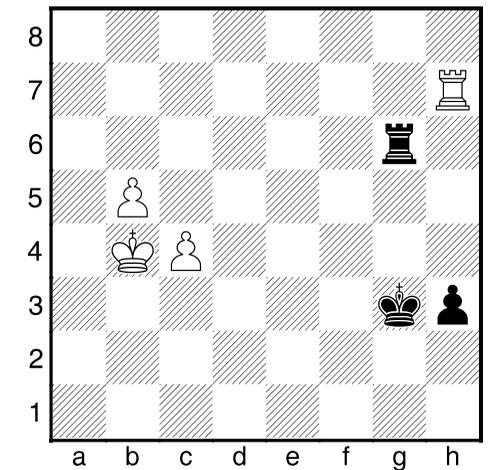
#### 49.♔a5

On 49.c5!+- Leko must have  
been worried about Black  
bridging with the ♖: 49...♖g4+  
50.♔a5 ♖h4, but White's ♖  
can get back to defend h1  
just in time: 51.♖d7! (51.♖xh4  
♔xh4= leads to a drawn ♖♖  
v ♔ ending.) 51...h2 52.♖d1  
h1 ♔ (52...♖f4 53.b6 ♔g2 54.b7  
♖f1 55.♖xf1 ♔xf1 56.b8 ♔h1 ♔  
57.♖b1+-) 53.♖xh1 ♖xh1  
54.b6 ♚+- (54.c6? ♖c1 ♚=  
55.♔b6 ♔f4 56.c7 ♔e5 57.♔b7  
♔d6 58.b6 ♔d7 59.♔b8 ♖c6=)  
54...♖a1+ 55.♔b5 ♖c1 if Black's  
♔ was on f4 this would be a  
draw, but it's one square too far,  
so White wins with 56.b7+- or  
56.c6+-.

#### 49...♖g5! 50.♔b4

50.♔a6? ♖c5 ♚=.

#### 50...♖g6



White has a winning position,  
but it's not remotely trivial, and  
Carlsen himself might be the  
only player who would know this  
ending cold enough to play at  
blitz tempo.

#### 51.♖xh3+? =

Peter Leko: Safety first.

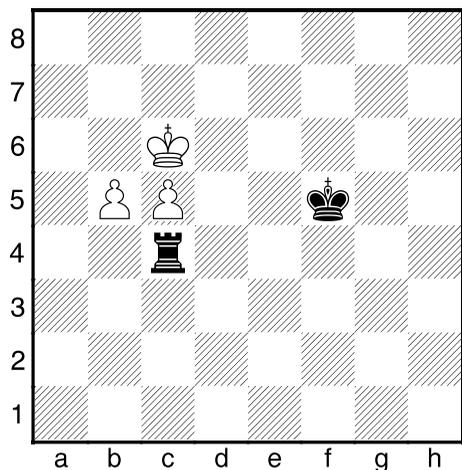
51.c5 would have won, as in the  
note to move 49.

#### 51...♔xh3 52.c5 ♖g4+ ♚

Carlsen plays the rest perfectly,  
no small trick when it's a long  
way into a rapid game and any  
inaccuracy loses.

# Chess Canada Dragon

53. ♖a5 ♜c4 ♘ 54. ♖b6 ♖g4  
55. ♖c6 ♖f5



56. ♖d5  
56. ♖d6 ♜c1 57. c6 (57. b6 ♜b1  
58. ♖c7 ♖e6) 57... ♜d1+ ♘  
58. ♖c7= (58. ♖e7=; 58. ♖c5??  
♖e6+) 58... ♖e6 59. b6 ♜b1 ♘  
60. b7 ♖d5= reaches the game.

56... ♜c1  
56... ♜b4= 57. b6 ♖f6 58. c6  
♜b5+!=.

57. b6 ♜d1+  
57... ♜b1=.

58. ♖c6 ♖e6 59. b7 ♜b1 ♘  
60. ♖c7 ♖d5 61. c6 ♜b2!  
62. ♖d7 ♜b6 63. c7 ♜xb7 ♘  
64. ♖d8 ♜xc7 ♘ 65. ♖xc7

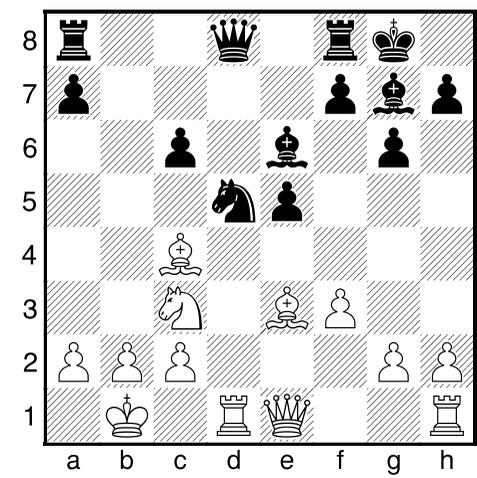
1/2-1/2

## Carlsen, Magnus (2834) Jones, Gawain (2640)

B76  
TATA Steel Wijk (8), 21.01.2018  
Notes: John Upper

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4  
4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 g6 6. ♙e3  
♙g7 7. f3 ♘c6 8. ♚d2 0-0 9. 0-0  
d5 10. ♚e1!? e5 11. ♘xc6  
bxc6 12. exd5 ♘xd5!  
12... cxd5? 13. ♙g5 ♙e6 14. ♙c4!±

13. ♙c4 ♙e6 14. ♖b1



After the game, Carlsen said he was surprised that Jones chose to play the Dragon! That seemed preposterous to everyone, since Jones has published a two-

volume repertoire for Quality Chess on the Dragon and plays it regularly (see notes).

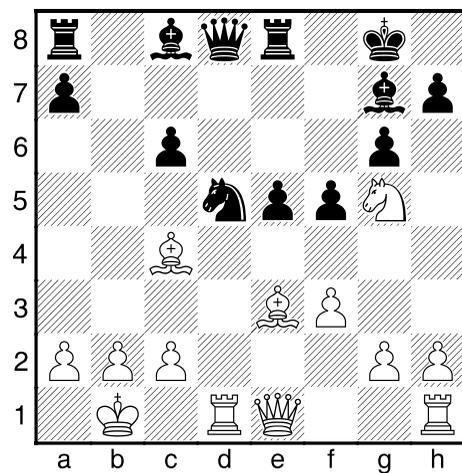
14... ♜e8  
14... ♜b8 15. ♘e4 f5 16. ♘g5  
(16. ♘c5 ♙f7 and the ♙f7 attacks and defends.) 16... ♙c8 17. h4 h6  
18. ♘e4 fxe4!? (18... ♙e6 19. ♘c5  
♙f7 20. ♘a6 ♜b7 21. ♙b3 ♚f6  
22. ♘c5 ♜e7 23. c3∞ (1/2-1/2, 52)  
Edouard,R (2659)-Jones,G (2661) London, 2014.) 19. fxe4  
White gets the piece back due to the pin, but here 19... ♜f4! is a good try for Black. 20. ♙xf4 exf4 21. c3 (21. exd5?? ♜xb2+

22. ♖c1 ♚b6+) 21... ♚b6 22. ♚d2  
♚c5 23. ♙b3 ♖h7 24. exd5 ♙f5+  
25. ♖c1 (25. ♖a1?? ♜xb3+) 25... ♜xb3 26. axb3 ♚a5 27. ♚e2 ♘  
♙xc3! 28. ♚e7+ ♘ ♙g7 29. ♚a3  
♚b6= (1/2-1/2, 61) Lampert,J (2442)-Jones,G (2643) Wunsiedel, 2015.

15. ♘e4  
15. h4 ♚c7 16. ♘xd5 cxd5  
17. ♙xd5 ♙xd5 18. ♜xd5 e4  
19. fxe4 ♜xe4 20. ♚d2 ♙xb2!  
21. ♖xb2 ♚b7+ 22. ♖a1 ♜xe3∞  
(1/2-1/2, 54) Navara,D (2735)-Edouard,R (2641) Drancy, 2016.



15...f5N 16.♘g5 ♕c8



17.g4??

Losing a piece for a pawn! Much better is 17.h4 h6 18.♘e4 as in Jones's games against Edouard and Lampert (above).

It is a sign of how much respect GMs have for Carlsen that during the live commentary, both GM [Ivan Sokolov](#) and GM [Eric Hansen](#) were not sure this was a blunder:

- Sokolov said there is *no way* Carlsen could have overlooked ...f4,
- Hansen speculated that giving the piece for positional domination by his minors might be some sort of AlphaZero-level preparation by Carlsen...

- But watching the live video, [Carlsen's sister](#) — not fooled by her little brother's Great Chess Reputation — tweeted that it was *obvious* to her that he must have blundered since his body language was "painful" to watch...
- after the game, Magnus confirmed that, of course, it was a blunder.

**How does the World Champion make a blunder like this?**

After the game, [Sambuev](#) told me he thought the problem is that Carlsen's positional evaluation is SO strong and so reliable that it prevented him from seeing the positionally awful move ...f4, it just wasn't on his radar. That same idea was also expressed by [GM Jonathan Rowson](#), who tweeted:



17...f4 18.h4 fxe3 19.♙xe3 h6!

Black wants to play ...♕e6 and wants to meet any pawn push on the kingside with an adjacent push of his own, keeping the g and h-files closed.

White has only a pawn for the ♕.  
Stockfish says: -2.2  
Komodo says: -1.6

20.♙c5!

Attacks c6 and so pulls Black's LSB onto an inferior diagonal which also blocks the b-file. Carlsen played this, and most of his next moves much more quickly than Jones.

20...♕b7

20...hxg5? 21.♙xc6 ♕e6  
22.♕xd5 ♕xd5 23.♖xd5 ♙b6♠  
and White can keep ♙s on

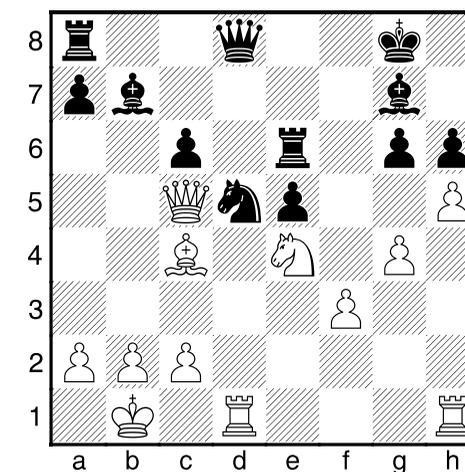
with ♙c4 or try to hold with three pawns for the ♕ by exchanging and taking on g5. Black is clearly better in either case as the f-pawn is a long term weakness.

21.♘e4 ♖e6!?

Prevents ♙d6! — a move which is unnatural (trading ♙s when down material) but tactically strong.

△21...♕f8 also prevents ♙d6, and gets the ♕ out from behind the e5 pawn. 22.♙e3 ♖g7 was Sokolov's suggestion, 22...♗h8 is Stockfish 8.

22.h5



♙b6?

The right idea — trading ♙s — but tactically flawed.

Much better is 22...g5, as [Eric Hansen](#) said several moves earlier during the live broadcast and as *everyone* said after: Black responds to any kingside push by closing the kingside, and only *then* worrying about developing and trading pieces.

**23.g5!**

White doesn't have to move his ♔ since a trade on c5 gives him winning tactics (see next note). If this was a normal position — add a white ♖c1 and a black f4-pawn — White would be clearly winning. Down a piece for a pawn, White is not winning, but has very strong play against the Black ♔.

Stockfish says: -0.7

Komodo says: -0.5

**23...hxg5**

**23...♔xc5??** loses: **24.♘xc5 ♖e7 (24...♖c8 25.♖xd5!+-)**  
**25.♘xb7 ♖xb7 26.♖xd5 cxd5 27.♖xd5++-** White wins one of the ♖s with an overwhelming material advantage.

**23...♖f8 24.♔g1! ♔xg1 25.♖dxg1.**

**24.♔a3!∞**

Black is up a whole piece, but Stockfish 8 rates the position 0.00.

**24...♖b8 25.b3 ♔d8**

**25...g4!?** gives the pawn back on the g-file to keep it closed.

**26.♔xa7!**

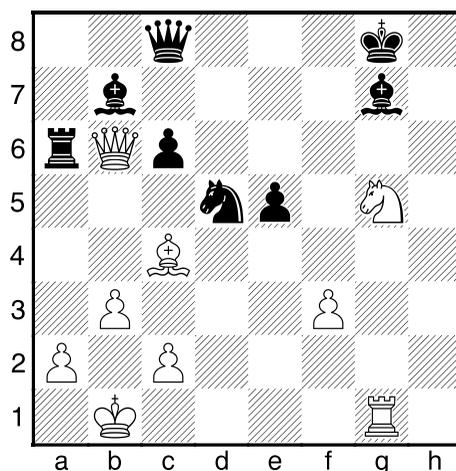
Around here, Sokolov and Hansen were predicting a Carlsen win.

**26...gxh5?**

**26...♖h6 27.hxg6 ♖xg6 28.♖d2** and White is ready to double on the h or d-files with advantage.

**27.♖xh5 ♖g6 28.♖xg5! ♖xg5 29.♘xg5 ♔c8**

**29...♔xg5?** loses the ♖ and ♖ to **30.♔xb8++-**.

**30.♖g1! ♖a8 31.♔b6! ♖a6****32.♔c5**

The first time since move 20 that the computer suggests a better move for White: **32.♔e3!?**+— either way, White is winning.

Materially, Black is up a ♖ for two pawns, but his ♔ is very exposed and his ♖b7 and ♖a6 are both very poorly placed.

**32.♖xa6??** unpins the ♘, allowing **32...♘xb6-+** when Black would once again have good chances against the World Champion ;)

**32...♔d7 33.♘e4 ♔h8 34.♔f2**

Threatens ♔-h-file check, then ♘f6+.

**34...♔e7 35.♖xa6 ♖xa6****36.♔h2+ ♔g8 37.♔h6 ♔a7****38.♔e6+ ♔f8**

**38...♔f7 39.♔xc6 ♖b7 40.♔d6+-.**

**39.♖g5**

**39.♔d6+!** is more ruthless, but White has found a simpler win.

**39...♘e3 40.♔d6+ ♔f7****41.♘c5 ♖c8 42.♖xg7+****42... ♔xg7 43.♔xe5+ ♔f7**

**44.♔xe3+-** with the better minor piece, safer ♔, and (for those irredeemable materialists), three extra pawns.

Jones was a good sport after his loss, and discussed it with Eric in the official feed.

**1-0**



*It takes more than one piece to kill this King.  
TATA Steel photos: Maria Emelianova*