

Chess Room Newsletter



IM Danny Rensch and IM David Pruess in Conversation!

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Contents

[Recent Tournaments at Mechanics' Institute by Alex Robins](#)

[Memories of MI in the 1960s by Mike Morris](#)

[Photos from IM Danny Rensch's Book Talk By Alex Robins - Photos Courtesy of Greg Habiby](#)

[The Pawn that Did Not Want to Promote – an Allegory by Renate Otterbach](#)
[Maybe the real Conference is the friends we made along the way? By Christian Brickhouse](#)

[Annotated Games from the TNM by IM Elliott Winslow](#)

[Tony's Teaser](#)

[Proper Etiquette for Offering a Draw in Chess By IA/NTD Dr. Judit Sztaray](#)
[Solutions - Contact Us](#)

Recent Tournaments at the Mechanics' Institute

By Alex Robins

Our **Winter Tuesday Night Marathon** ended on December 16th and had some great games featured in Elliott's column below and undefeated winners in each section! The top section had a clear winner with **Eilon Lavi** (2120) going undefeated and after some byes had a final score of 5.5. Behind him, we had a two way split for second place between US Women's Senior Champion **WFM Natalya Tsodikova** (2246) and **Quincy Chen** (2050). Shoutout also to **Cailen Melville** (1925) and **Daniel Perlov** (1826) for splitting both the u2000 and u2200 prizes.

The middle section was won outright with **Michael Cafiero** (1806) going undefeated and ending with a score of 6 points. **Calvin Dees** (1518) took home a clear second with a strong performance and 5 points and a whole host of eight(!) players behind him at 4.5 points, they were: **David Toczyski** (1455), **Zachary Wickliffe** (1480), **Christopher Powers** (1769), **Hayes Marvin** (1922), **Hoa Long Tam** (1721), **Nicholas Morello** (1712), **John Boyer** (1671), and **Nicholas Latourette** (1634).

In the bottom section **Soham Mehta** (1407) took a clear first with 6.5 points! **Milan Patel** (1380) had a strong showing and took second place with 5.5 points. Third place was a tie between MI scholastic instructors **Andrew Braithwaite** (1392), **Danny Cao** (1159), and yours truly.

Full results can be found [here](#).

This tournament was directed by ANTD Scott Mason.

Our **7th Donaldson Tournament** was, as always, a great tournament - and the only tournament we hold in honor of a living player - given John's history at the club and his immense contributions to chess in the Bay Area! The top section **Reyansh Paragiri** (2131) won outright with 3.5 points. Behind him was a 5-way split between **Yuvrah Sawhney** (2046), **Zachary Chua** (1928), **IM Vitaly Bachin** (2273), **FM Sergei Muratov** (2247) **Daniel Videna** (2009).

In the middle section, **Wayne Ballantyne** (1935) and **Varun Turaga** (1640) tied for first place with 3.5 points each. Behind them in third was a six way split between: **Calvin Dees** (1469), **Serena Liu** (1783), **Jason Wright** (1844), **Matthew Zhang** (1741), **Angela Wang** (1740), and **Darsh Goel** (1672).

In the under section, we had clear winners in first through third place. Our first place winner with a perfect score was **Ansh Doshi** (1252), who was followed by **Hossein Daghigh** (unr.) in second, and **Roshan Jagath** (1342) in third.

Full results can be found [here](#).

This tournament was directed by IA Judit Sztaray and FA Abel Talamantez.

We had another huge **Monthly Scholastic Swiss** in December with 50 players - we love that these have been growing and think they are a lot of fun! Don't miss out on our next one, our new Scholastic Championships on holiday Mondays coming up on MLK Day and President's Day.

In the over 700 section, first place went to **Wesley Berg** (882) with 3.5 points! Wesley was followed in order by: **Harrison Lin** (985), **Matthew Tang** (937), **Dylan Skurow** (828), and **Rishaan Nair** (1093). Great job to all the players in what was a tough section!

In the 400-699 section, **Rafael Petlin-Teisch** (593) also took home first with a perfect score - great job Rafael. **Ezra Mart** (597) took a clear second with three points and 3rd through 5th were decided by tiebreaks going to **Ean Park** (616), **Julian Liang** (641), and **Kanstantsin Halasiuk** (436).

In the under400 section, **Alenn Phan** (unr.) took home first again with a perfect score - nicely done Allenn! 2nd through 5th place went respectively to: **Aaron Lazorik** (unr.), **Leanora Piring** (unr.), **Adhwaith Panikkath** (133), and **Jaylen Chen** (125).

Full results can be found [here](#).

This tournament was directed by Senior TD Arthur Liou.

The next day we had our monthly Sunday of fast chess starting with our **December Mechanics' Weekend Rapid**. It was pretty strong for a smaller Sunday in the 1800+ section and Mechanics' Chess Coach **NM Daniel Cremisi** took home first place with a perfect score. Daniel was followed by **NM Pranav Sairam** (2258) in second place and former Mechanics' Chess Director and chess legend **IM John Donaldson** (2370) and **Sean Zhang** (1898).

In the ul800 section **Sujan Rachuri** (1754) took home first on tiebreaks just barely edging out **Satyakam Dash** (1504) in second. In third place we had a

three way tie between **Phil Ploquin** (1719), **Fadi Arodaki** (1255), and **Michael Kvasov** (1214).

Later that same day we held our **December Mechanics' Weekend Blitz** and **NM Daniel Cremisi** (2347) came in undefeated again with 6.5 points. **IM John Donaldson** (2370) was right at his heels and **Beckett Spence** (1877) took home third. In the under section, **Jeff Sinick** (1683) took home first place and was followed by **Caleb Martinez Cespedes** (1779), **Christopher Powers** (1769), **Satyakam Dash** (1504) all tying and taking home the second and third place prizes.

Full results can be found [here](#).

This tournament was directed by ANTD Scott Mason.

Our final classical tournament of 2025 was our **24th Bagby Memorial Tournament**. In the top section, **FM Ethan Guo** (2367) and **NM Daniel Cremisi** (2347) took first place. Behind them was a tie for third between **Nathaniel Zhang** (2189), **WFM Laurie Qiu** (2144), and **Sanat Singhal** (2044). In the middle section, **Anthony Ivanenko** (1833) took a clear first place with 3.5 points. In second place we had a four-way tie with **Frederic Dutter** (1900), **Raghav Ramesh** (1642), **Pranav Db** (1582), and **Wes Pereira** (1543). In the under section, **James Rao** (1365), **Kendall Poon** (1219), and **Luciano Lubesky** (1172).

Full results can be found [here](#).

This tournament was directed by ANTD Scott Mason.

Our last tournament of the year came over the holidays and **End of 2025 Celebration Blitz**. **IM Josiah Stearman** (2573) took the tournament by storm with a perfect score and is running some tournaments in the Bay Area now - so check them out! In second place, **NM Daniel Cremisi** (2347) won with 5.5 points and **NM Aadit Bhatia** (2220) won third with 5 points. In the ul800 section, **Caleb Martinez Cespedes** (1779) won first place with a perfect score, **Peter Vu** (1371) took second place with six points, in third place we had a four way split between **Rohan Kapre** (1681), **Isaac Mays-Smith** (1615), **Satyakam Dash** (1504), **Aaron Ingber** (1449).

Full results can be found [here](#).

This tournament was directed by ANTD Scott Mason.

Memories of MI in the 1960s

By Mike Morris

I first stepped into the Chess Room in 1962 when I was still 14. I had joined the library, which cost 50 cents per month, but included membership in the club. Arthur Stamer greeted me and sat me down for a game. I drew him and he said he was going to put me mid-way on the rating ladder. Mr. Stamer was a kindly gentleman that everyone revered. His photo playing on the Mechanics' team in a radio match during the 1920's was on the wall. Mr. Stamer maintained the rating board. If you played offhand games you would tally the results and he would calculate the rating changes.

Everyone was excited to hear that local legend Bill Addison was playing in the 1962-63 Rosenwald (US Championship) tournament. One day a member was talking on the wall pay phone with someone in New York. The member yelled out that Bill had beaten Sammy Reshevsky in the first round. His New York friend then related all the moves to him over the phone. We all crowded around and played over this remarkable game.

Roy Hoppe was an early mentor. He explained openings to me, including the King's Indian Defense, which I still regularly play. He had a solid positional playing style, contrasting with that of his friend, fellow master and rival, Don Sutherland, who loved gambits and was a great attacking player. Unfortunately, it was not possible to play over Sutherland's games afterwards because he was such a nervous player that by the 10th move or so his scoresheet was a mess.

Speaking of gambit lovers, Paul Vayssie was dubbed with the moniker, "World's Greatest C Player." His rating never rose to B level, but he was known to beat experts with his attacks. Paul was a fire fighter and a perpetually happy guy when he was around chess. He told me a story once of a horrendous fire he fought in a Tenderloin transient hotel, which resulted in several deaths. Chess was his escape from the reality of his work.

Carrol Capps was by far the most popular personality in the Chess Room. He was a classic raconteur who kept everyone amused by his stories. He was also a science fiction novelist and the only person I ever knew who used a monocle.

Charles Bagby, who was on the Board of Trustees, ruled the Chess Room with an iron hand. I think he had conflicts with some people. One for sure was with Vitaly Radaikin, or as he preferred to be called, "The Great Radaikin." I think he was banned for a while because after he won a game he stood on his chair to proclaim his greatness to the room.

I am not sure of this, but I think Bagby and Henry Gross had a conflict also. I know that Henry set up his own club, the Golden Gate Chess Club, which met in a side room of a bridge club in the Broadmoor Hotel, where my parents played bridge. They took me there on occasion and that is how I learned of the Mechanics Chess Room

In 1963 I played in my first USCF-rated tournament. I didn't have a driver's license yet, but Henry picked me up and drove me to Hamilton Air Force Base, where Chuck Savery had organized the event. Henry played Kenneth Grover in the last round. Grover was a chess master and the United States Checkers Champion. Henry played his beloved Petroff Defense but Grover played the Qe2 line, resulting in an early exchange of queens. Henry lost the game. On the way home he explained that without the ability to attack he became bored and lost interest in the game.

Chuck Savery was also a larger-than-life personality. He befriended me and encouraged me to play rated chess, which is how I ended up in his tournament. One day he said he needed me for a job. We walked to Guthrie McLain's office to help him assemble the *California Chess Reporter*, which he published. My job was to fold the issues in half.

Kurt Bendit was also an interesting fellow. In the days before 5-minute blitz became popular, the fast game was "Rapid Transit," in which you forfeited if you took more than 10 seconds for a move. Bendit invented a clock that beeped to warn you and then beeped to forfeit you. Although expert-rated, his chess play could be eccentric. In the only game we ever played he opened with 1. h4 and followed with 2. a4.

While we were still in high school, Mike Goodall and I obtained permission to organize an amateur tournament (no masters or experts allowed) and it was a big success, making money for the club.

In 1964 Bobby Fischer announced his tour. I asked Bagby whether the club would host him. He asked how much Fischer wanted and I related Bobby's \$500 fee. Bagby's response cannot be printed here, but eventually he relented and Bobby did appear. He gave a lecture and played 50 boards, although I think he allowed some who lost early to be replaced. The room had never been so packed with people; it was not even possible to stand and stretch. Our score of 4 wins and 8 draws was the best in the country, I believe.

Saturday was a big night at the club, especially during the Bay Area Chess League season. The participating clubs I recall besides MI were the Castle Chess Club (mainly UC Berkeley grads, including Neil Falconer and Robert Bergur, the renowned problemist), the Golden Gate Chess Club, and the Blue Unicorn, a coffee house near Haight-Ashbury. It was a beatnik coffee house, not a bar, as I went there after the club closed for late night chess. Max Wilkerson played their first board.

I recall that the strongest club players then were Peter Cleghorn (before he moved to Alaska), John Blackstone and Earl Pruner. I was honored when I was sometimes asked to play on the MI team. In a match against Golden Gate Chess Club in early 1964 I played Connor Schroth, who had cerebral palsy and moved the pieces with a rod he held in his teeth. He had a great sense of humor. His speech was hard to understand but I have a vivid memory of Roy Hoppe laughing uproariously at something Connor said.

In 1965 Bill Addison became director of the Chess Club. He instituted Friday night Blitz, which I tried not to miss, even after I was attending school in Berkeley. During the summer of 1966 I connected with Fred Wreden, whose father also played at the club. Fred and I would play until the club closed, then head to Sam Wo's in Chinatown for a heaping plate of Chow Mein for 75 cents and, of course, encounter their famous waiter who barked orders at the customers. Then we walked to

North Beach to drink tea and play chess in one of the beatnik coffee houses.

Because I was at school I had less time for chess, but still had some memorable experiences. In 1968 Larry Evans gave a simul. A group of us then took him to Alan Pollard's apartment in North Beach. He talked about his friendship with Stanley Kubrick, whose "2001 Space Odyssey" was just playing. I drove him to the airport around 5am.

In 1969 I told Bill Addison that I was leaving to live in Oregon. He said I would see a lot of fir trees, and he was right.

I met many unique personalities and had many memorable experiences in the Chess Room during the 1960's.

Photos from IM Danny Rensch's Book Talk

By Alex Robins - Photos Courtesy of Greg Habiby



Signed copies are still for sale - stop by our office!



IM Danny Rensch and IM David Pruess go back to the very beginnings of chess.com



Danny's life story is interesting and worth reading.



Unfortunately I was sick and unable to attend - huge thank you to IM David Pruess for substituting as an interlocutor at the last minute. Tune in next month for a full review of the book.

Bobby Fischer: The Pawn that Did Not Want to Promote – an Allegory

By Renate Otterbach

A pawn that does not want to promote? ---Absurd! All his life, a pawn labors to promote to a queen, so why, standing on the seventh rank, would the pawn decide he does not want to promote?

On the surface, this seems ridiculous, but maybe there are good, logical reasons why a pawn may get promotion shivers—especially if the pawn

happens to be a highly analytical pawn with uncanny foresight, as was the case for Bobby. Let's explore this idea further. Please join me on the journey.

Phase One:

From the first move, the pawn faces a dilemma: Full speed ahead or one step at a time?

Full speed ahead! But wait—there may be an enemy pawn waiting to torpedo you—better check.

Yes, there is a pawn waiting to en passant you. You can't move at all until it is removed.

Finally, the bishop took it.

Now, two squares, e4! Right into the middle of things. But wait, is it safe?

It's in the middle of the board, and there's no one to protect you. Naturally, c3 or d3 would help, but the c3 square is often occupied by the knight, cutting off the support that c3 would give.

Then, it could support you. But the d2 pawn is ambitious. He prefers to advance two squares rather than support you.

What? The d2 pawn just stepped forward two squares, leaving you behind. No, that does not work, e4!

Now, I am in the center of the board. I get a great view, but it is scary with all the pieces rushing around me.

The d-pawn disappears, leaving me alone. I am stuck; e5 was just played.

I'm waiting, waiting, endlessly waiting in the center of the board—the most dangerous place to be—alone and unsupported.

An attack, the pawn on c7 just moved two squares, attacking me. I must take it, but it will change my path, my projected path, forever.

There is no choice.

Phase Two:

Hurray! I am a passed pawn.

What is happening?

Why am I suddenly the center of attention? All the enemy pieces are rushing over to attack me, to destroy me, to keep me from being promoted.

Ah, my friends are coming to support me. I am not sure they will arrive in time, though. The enemy is closing in.

Ah, I see the King rushing over. Finally, I caught his attention. I could have used his support much earlier.

He really waited until the last minute to get moving—and he moves slowly, handicapped by all the bureaucracy.

I'll have to fight for my life; it will take all I have to survive.

Oof, that was a close call. Thankfully, the bishop came in to support me; he is a good friend and always willing to help me out. Unfortunately, he is often distracted by his clerical duties, but he saved my life this time.

But I made progress, only two more squares.

I wish the enemy piece would mind their own business and leave me alone. But no, they seem to be out to get me. I can't really blame them; a passed pawn is dangerous, as Nimzowitsch pointed out.

One more square, and I will be there.

Yeah, promotion is in sight; my life's dream is fulfilled. But wait, what then?

Phase Three:

What then? My pawn life ended forever; there is no turning back.

I must give up my identity, the only identity I have known, to become a queen, --a powerful queen gliding over squares across the board.

But there is a cost. Your life is constantly under observation, and you cannot move without creating a stir. It must be like being a passed pawn and, maybe, even worse.

Why, you can't even breathe without catching the attention of the opponent. A simple move, like stepping to an adjacent square, draws the immediate attention of the opponent.

Yes, I would be more powerful, but is the cost worth it?

And there is another problem: where does one go once one's dream is fulfilled?

Maybe, after the joy of victory, -- there is nothing, --just emptiness, -- alone in the middle of the crowd, craving for attention.

And being watched constantly by everyone. No privacy and no companionship.

The companionship of fellow pawns will be gone forever; you no longer belong. You have become different; promotion has changed you forever.

Is this what I want? Once the decision is made, there is no going back.

Maybe I should stay a pawn?

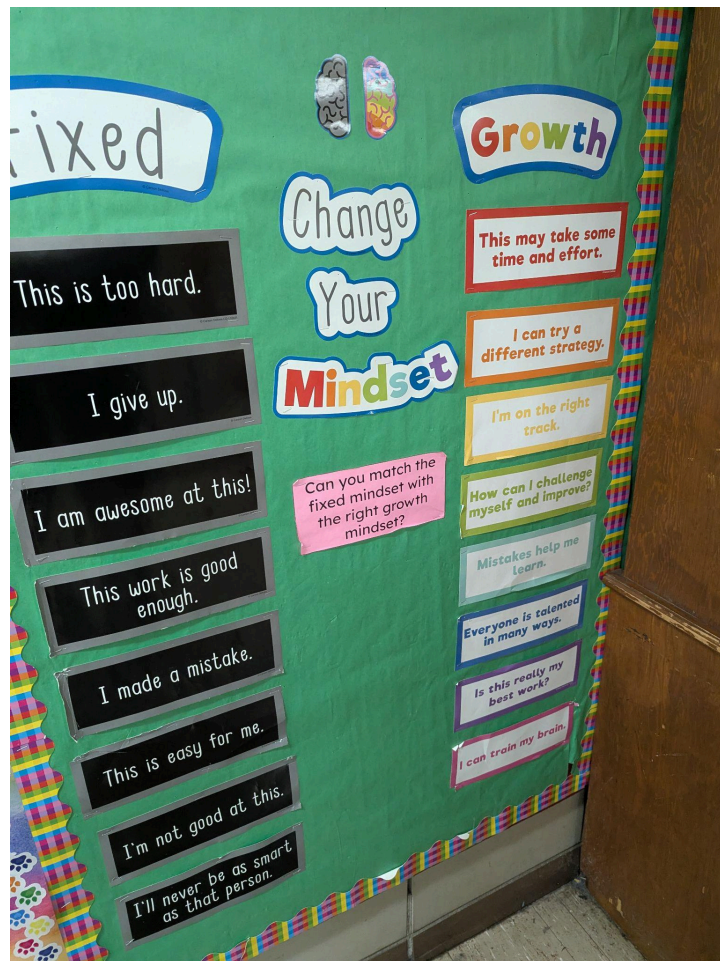
Maybe the Real Conference is the Friends We Made Along the Way?

By Christian Brickhouse

A month ago, I got to attend the [Chess in Education Conference](#) in New York City. The conference itself was December 6, and I got to hear a lot of great talks on the latest research and case studies from other chess education organizations. These were informative, and I have extensive notes on these talks. They are also of pretty niche interest. More interesting is the cool people I got to meet and the stories we got to share and create.

The day before the conference, I got to visit Hunter College High School and got a tour. There I met former US Women's Champion Alexey Root and former Japanese Champion Loren Schmidt who would turn out to be great companions for the rest of the weekend. Sunil Weeramantry gave an opening address at Hunter College, where he taught and established the

National Scholastic Chess Foundation. After his address, I also got to chat with William Graif, the New York State Chess Champion, who was recently featured on *60 Minutes* for his chess boxing World Championship attempt. He told me the hardest part was the transition from boxing to chess, getting your heart rate down, and focusing back on the match. I told him the hardest part for me would be the boxing.



Mindsets, the theme of the conference, on display for the students at Hunter College

The day of the conference, I got up early and took the 3 downtown to the conference location. I ran into Elisa Camps Troncoso who shared an interest in linguistics, chess, and video games. She also leads Duolingo's chess program. After Loren's panel with Troy Seagraves and Jeff Bulington on

learning through play, Elisa and I traded video game recommendations. I suggested *Tunic* and she suggested *Chants of Sennaar*.



A slide from “The Philosophy of Games and Learning Through Play” featuring (from left to right) Jeff Bulington, Loren Schmidt, and Troy Seagraves



Peter Wells (standing) and Barry Hyman deliver the keynote “Chess Improvement: It’s all in the mindset” with a slide describing Atkins’ distinction between Educational and Competitive chess

After the conference, most of us moved to a bar in Harlem. The crawl was its own adventure. I navigated with Elisa, Maria (an organizer from Florida), and Muditha Hettigama (Sri Lankan Chess Champion). From frozen surface to underground tunnel network, we made our way...somewhere. Eventually we decided that we were lost, and I called us a Lyft.

The food was good and so was the company. Muditha and I played some blitz games—the only time I played chess all weekend! He beat me many times, but I got lucky enough to win one. My prize was a magnet he brought with him from Sri Lanka featuring an Elephant rescue which we have hanging in the chess office next to Coach Marcie’s hand-made magnet.



Muditha Hettigama (left) and Christian Brickhouse play a blitz game at a bar

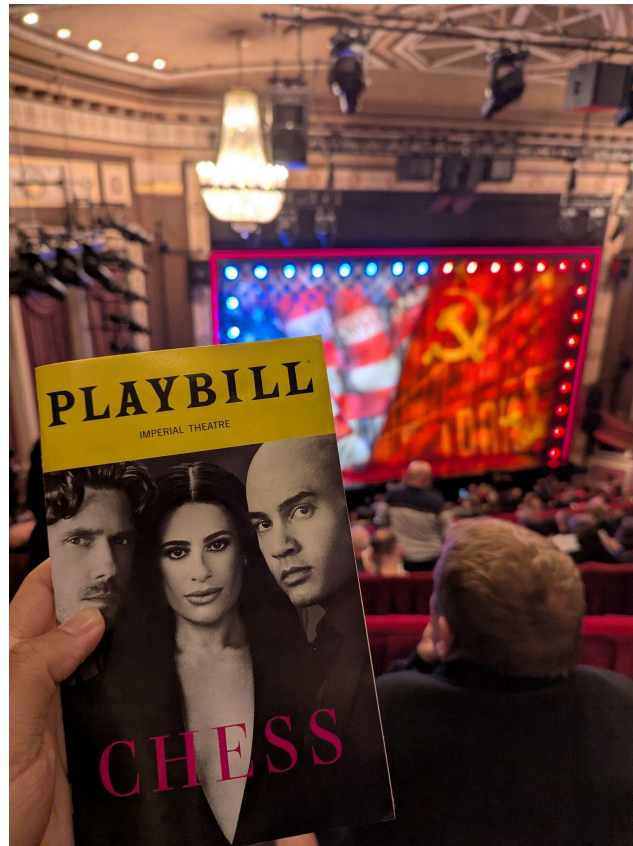


The magnet Muditha gifted to our chess club

The next day, I got a text from Alexey saying that she, Loren, and Nick Mueller were going to try and get rush tickets for *Chess* (the musical), a show I was already going to see thanks to the generosity of Alex Robins. We met up beforehand at the Met where I met Nick Mueller, founder of Cochise Chess and based out of Arizona. We didn't have much time before the show, but we made a beeline for the Man Ray chess set but had time to admire the ancient statues and pottery on display.



The Man Ray chess set on display at the Met



The play bill and curtain for *Chess*

After the show, we went out to the stage door where performers came to meet with the audience. It was freezing cold, but Leah Michelle (Rachel from Glee) was an idol of mine growing up. We waited for almost an hour, but she never appeared. The hunger and cold got the best of us, and



Selfies at the *Chess* stage door. From left to right: Christian Brickhouse, Loren Schmidt, Alexey Root, Nick Mueller, and a *Chess* cast member.

Annotated Games from the TNM

By IM Elliott Winslow

A selection of annotated games from the Fall TNM annotated by IM Elliott Winslow. All the games from the current TNM can be found here, and games from previous TNMs are in the [Tournament Archive](#).

□ Chen,Quincy

■ Tsodikova,Natalya

2025 Winter TNM: 2000+ (6.1) 09.12.25

[Winslow,Elliott]

C79

2050

2246

In the top section we have a situation: Eilon Lavi, with four wins and a draw, is a point ahead of four players (Tsodikova, Bhatia, Mallela and Chen) -- BUT, he has two pre-tournament byes in Rounds 6 & 7. So one of those four could catch him and tie for 1st, with two wins. Well call it anticlimactic, but those four played amongst themselves and both games were drawn -- so that solved the winner of the top section. Here are those two games, starting with Board 1. Tsodikova has a lot of experience with both the Black side of Double Kingpawn games and the King's Indian, and in a way this game was both! At first Chen handled the White side of what I've always called the Hybrid Defense of the Ruy Lopez (...Nf6 and ...d6, but not ...b5) quite well to a point, and was no worse to another point -- but then Natalya's KID side kicked in, she had her f- and g-pawns going and Quincy's position became critical and then just lost. Still the game ran on, and somehow, almost a miracle (but isn't that this sort of thing always feels?), Natalya overlooked Quincy's king and pawns with no moves -- and walks into a stalemate... An EPIC Game!! 1.e4 2 e5 9 2.Nf3 4 Nc6 8 3.Bb5 12 a6 47 4.Ba4 6 Nf6 25 5.0-0 1:25 d6 1:51 It seems that every old system makes a comeback sooner or later, and this has been one of the latest, being seen frequently at the top levels. Black could do without ...b5. But in this game something else happens. 6.Re1 1:04

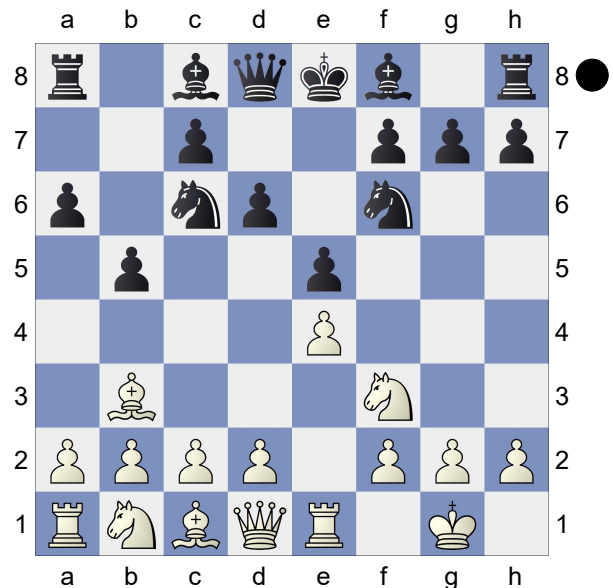
[6.c3 Bd7 is the main Steinitz-like

line, (but 6...Nxe4!? 7.d4 Bd7!? is also seen a lot, with Stockfish not giving White much (although White scores quite well with 8.Re1)) 7.Re1 g6 8.d4 Bg7 9.h3 0-0 was a rash of Giri-Niemann blitz games last June (and of course everybody else, Carlsen included).]

6...b5 7:45

[6...Bd7 is the old/new continuation.]

7.Bb3 12



Na5!? 3:10 And here we are, with something different again. Black is permitted the option of exchanging knight for bishop, usually avoided by White in the Ruy. But not always! I don't see Natalya studying the recent games, and in fact this line hadn't really broken through "at the top" except for one Prag game when our game happened -- but there are certainly a lot more games now! (January 2026)

[7...Be7 was played, here, 1400 times in the database. Unadventurous sellouts! Or is it what must still be done first? 8.c3 sees it heading directly into the orthodox Ruy Lopez lines, with the Marshall variation avoided. Hard to say by whom! A mere 100,000 games in the

database.]

8.c3?! 1:36 Surely he didn't think she was going to "forget" to play ...Nxb3!? I was just telling my co-coach Danny Cao about the great, great game Fischer-Benko, Candidates (10), Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade 1959. Benko neglects to actually take the bishop on b3 with his knight on a5, and Fischer launches this diamond gem of an attack.

[With the knight no longer on c6, White can play directly: 8.d4! Nxb3 and now there are three substantive moves (9...Bg4 has been played a lot as well, but White scores over 80%) 9.axb3

A) 9...exd4 10.Nxd4 (10.e5 goes *way* back: as in over 100 years!: dxe5 11.Nxe5 Be6 12.Nc6 Qd5 13.Qf3 Qxf3 14.gxf3 Bc5 15.Bf4 0-0 16.b4 Bb6 17.Be5 Nd5 18.Bxd4 Bxd4 19.Nxd4 Nxb4 20.Nc3 Rfe8 21.Nxe6 fxe6 22.Re2 Kf7 23.Ne4 h6 24.Nc5 Nd5 25.Rd2 a5 26.b3 Ra7 27.Rd4 Re7 28.Re1 g5 29.Kf1 Ra8 30.Nxe6 Rxe6 31.Rxd5 ½-½ (31) Schulz,J-Vitkovsky,A Pardubice 1923) 10...Bd7 11.e5? (11.Qe2!± c5 12.Nf5 Qb6 13.e5 dxe5 14.Qxe5+ Be6 15.Bg5 0-0-0 16.Bxf6 Rd5 17.Qxd5 Bxd5 18.Re8+ Kd7 19.Rd8+ Ke6 20.Nc3 gxf6 21.Rxd5 Qc7 22.Re1+ Qe5 23.Rdxe5+ fxe5 24.Ne3 f5 25.Ra1 1-0 (25) Pfeiffer, J (1591)-Mueller,P (1815) Berlin 2001) 11...dxe5 12.Rxe5+ Be7 13.Qe2 c5!= 14.Nf3 Be6 15.Bg5 0-0 Black is fine but goes bad later, in an iconic matchup from 1980: 16.Nc3 Qc7 17.h3 h6 18.Bh4 Rfe8 19.Re1 Kh8 20.Qe3 Nd7 21.Rxe6 fxe6 22.Bxe7 b4 23.Nh4 bxc3 24.bxc3 Qc6 25.Rd1 c4

26.Rd6 Qb5 27.Qxe6 Nf8 28.Qf7 Rxe7 29.Qxe7 Re8 30.Qc7 Re1+ 31.Kh2 Qe5+ 32.g3 Re2 33.Qb6 Kh7 34.Rd8 Ne6 35.Rh8+ 1-0 (35) Huebner,R (2600)-Kavalek, L (2600) Tilburg 1980;

B) 9...Bb7

B1) 10.Qd3 is the oldest/newest move:

B1a) 10...Be7! is closest to equality acc. to the Fish when 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.Nxe5 Nxe4 (12...Qxd3 0-1 (40) Schoenbach,P (1361)-Neighbors,T (1370) IECG email 2002) 13.Qxd8+ (13.Nc3=; 13.Rxa6!?) 13...Rxd8□=;

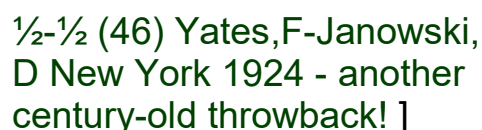
B1b) 10...Nd7 11.Nc3 Be7 12.Nd5N (12.dxe5 dxe5 13.Nd5 Bd6 14.c4 0-0 15.Be3 bxc4 16.bxc4 Re8 17.Red1 Nc5 18.Qc2 ½-½ (37) Takacs,S-Tarrasch, S Wiener Kongress Masters Vienna (Messepalast) 1922 (13)) 12...0-0 13.Bd2 f5 14.dxe5 Nc5 15.Nxe7+ Qxe7 16.exd6 cxd6 17.Qe2 fxe4 18.Nd4 Rf7 19.b4 Nd7 20.f4 exf3 21.Qxe7 f2+ 22.Kh1 f1Q+ 23.Rxf1 Rxe7 24.Kg1 Re4 25.Rf4 Rae8 26.Raf1 Nf6 27.c3 Rxf4 28.Bxf4 Ne4 29.h3 h6 30.Nf5 Re6 31.Nd4 Rf6 32.Be3 Rxf1+ 33.Kxf1 h5 34.h4 Kf7 35.Bf4 g6 36.Ke2 Ke7 37.g3 Kd7 38.Ke3 Nf6 39.Ke2 Ne4 40.Ke3 Nf6 ½-½ (40) Vachier Lagrave,M (2734)-Caruana,F (2795) Mumbai 2025;

B2) 10.dxe5! (sex Stockfish 17. 1) 10...Nxe4 (Diagram)



B2b) 11.Nc3! Not surprising this isn't all that well known, as it comes from over a hundred years ago (!). 11...d5!

(12...Bc5 13.Be3 Bxd4
14.Bxd4 Qe7 15.f3 Nxc3
16.bxc3 c5 17.Bf2
½- (50) ½ (50) Yarmolyuk,Y
(2335)-Babychuk,V (2216)
ICCF email 2016) 13.e6?
(13.f3! Nc5! 14.Nce2!
and White still has a clear
pull) 13...fxe6 14.Qg4
0-0-0=



10.d3 11:28

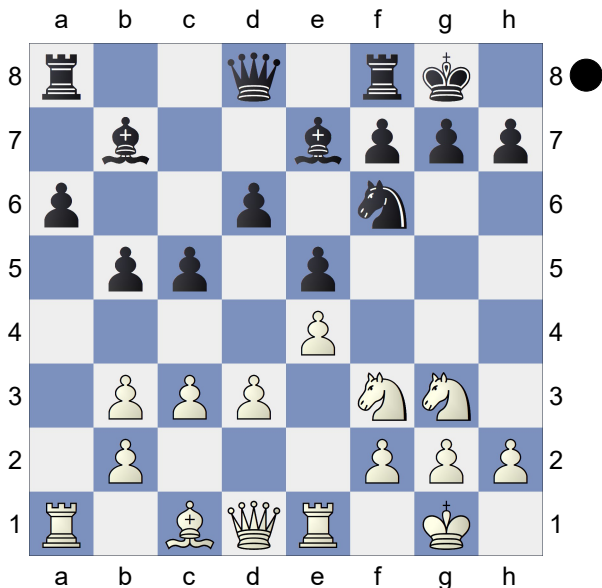
[10.d4 Nxe4 with a surprising percentage of decisive games (7/10) in the database. (10...Bxe4 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.Qxd8+±)]

10...Be7 33 11.Nbd2 23 c5 5:12

[At this point all the "serious" players just kept all their options except for where to put their king -- and castled: 11...0-0 when Stocky thinks 12.b4 is the only move that keeps complete equality.]

12.Nf1 1:05 Back to more standard Ruy themes. **12...0-0 19** Finally -- and this position has happened a dozen times, including once in 1967! **13.Ng3 1:11**

[Here's that earliest game: 13.Ne3 g6 14.g4!? h5 15.h3 hxg4 16.hxg4 White's aggression just handed the h-file to Black Qd7 17.Nh2 Kg7 18.c4 Rh8 19.Kg2 Rh4 20.Rh1 Rah8 21.Bd2 Ne8 22.Qf3 Nc7 23.Qg3 Bg5 24.Nf5+ gxf5 25.gxf5 f6 26.Ng4 Qxf5 27.f3 Qg6 28.Rxh4 Bxh4 29.Qh2 Bg5 0-1 (29) Gorbea Yoller,P-Garriga Nualart,J Spanish Chmp, Palma de Mallorca 1967]



13...g6 55

[13...Re8 14.Nf5 Bf8 15.Bg5 h6 16.Bh4 g6 17.Ne3 Be7 Black is fine. (17...Bg7 is also good by Stockfish, although the only games were a couple White wins)]

14.Bg5N 13:11

[14.Bh6 Re8 15.h3 0-1 (58) Gabdrakhmanov,A (2316)-Elier,A (2160) Titled Tuesday (blitz) 24 Sep 2024, but there are four other earlier games as well, two of them from the mid-1990s]

14...Nd7 8:04

[14...Ne8 15.Bh6 Ng7=]

15.Qd2 14:18

[15.h4!?]

15...f6?! 3:17

[15...Bxg5= 16.Nxg5 Bc8]

[15...f5=]

16.Bh6± 45 Rf7 1:06 17.h4 3:47

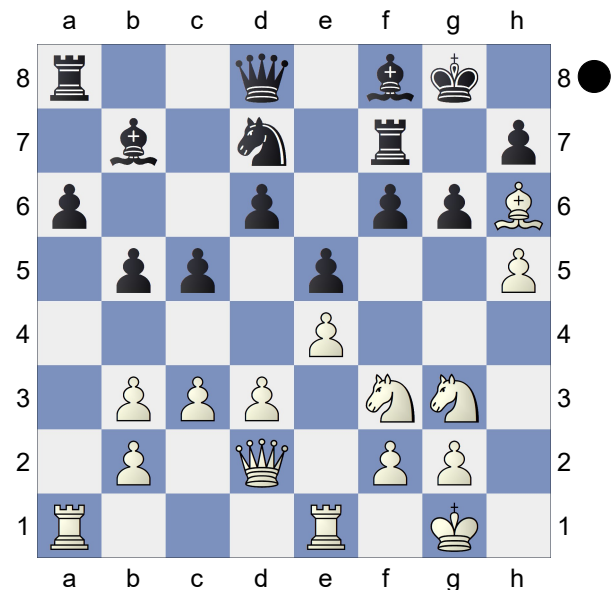
[17.d4±]

17...Bf8?! 4:53

[17...d5=]

[17...a5=]

18.h5± 1:47



Bxh6 1:52 19.Qxh6 6 Qf8 42 20.Qd2± 8:53 Definitely one of the three retreats here. **20...Nb6? 4:22**

[20...Qe7±]

21.Nh4± 4:26

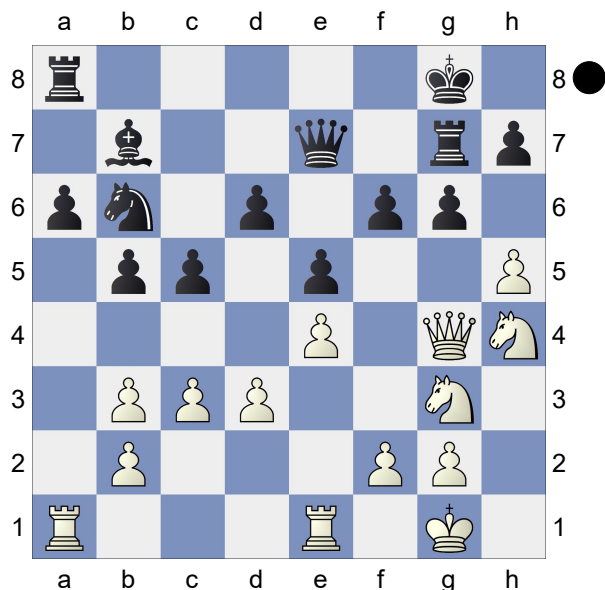
[21.d4]

21...Rg7 4:46 22.Qe2? 5:08 Just pieces alone isn't going to cut it;

[White needs to open up the d-file: 22.d4!±]

22...Qe7± 6:08

[22...d5!?]
23.Qg4? 9:33
 [23.b4± keeps the upper hand.]



23...Bc8!-+ 1:32 24.Qe2 7:33 f5! 5:45
 Black is rolling on the kingside, classic
 Tsodikova. **25.Nf3 12**

[25.h6 Rf7]
25...f4! 23 26.h6 5 Rf7 56 27.Nf1 10
g5↑ 1:43 It's funny to see the "Tactical
 Analysis" show the colored medal for
 "piece play" here -- what about those
 pawns! **28.d4?! 2:04**

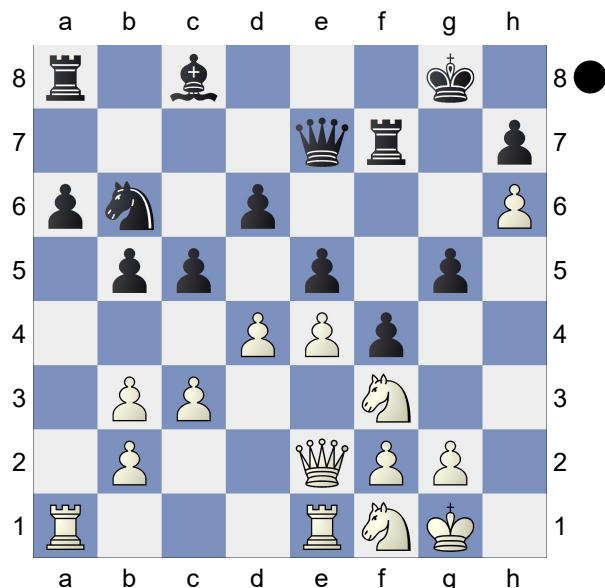
[28.N3h2!? Rf6]
 [28.b4!? cxb4 29.cxb4 Rf6]

(Diagram)

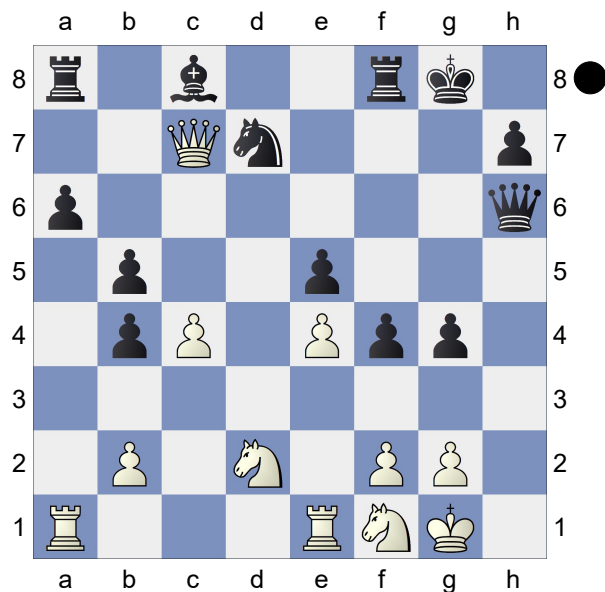
28...g4? 2:43 Premature!
 [Better is 28...Rf6!-+ 29.dxc5 dxc5]
29.N3d2? 58

[29.N3h2!± Qg5 30.dxc5 dxc5
 31.Red1 Qxh6 32.Rd8+ Kg7
 (32...Rf8? 33.Qd1+-) 33.Qd1 Qg5
 34.Rd6 Rd7= 35.Rxd7+ Bxd7
 36.Qd6 Qf6 37.Qxc5]

29...Qg5 3:11
 [29...cxd4 30.cxd4 Rf6-+ (30...exd4
 31.Nh2±) 31.Nh2±]



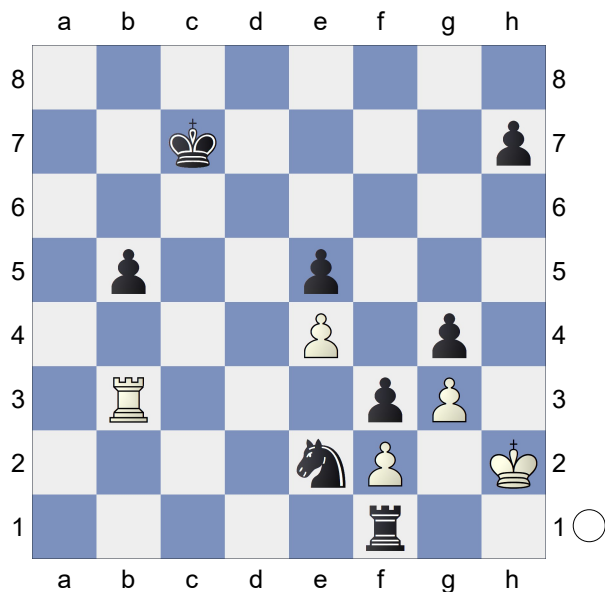
[29...Rf6!]
30.dxc5 1:15 dxc5-+ 54 31.Qd3 1:07
Qxh6 4:24
 [31...Rd7! 32.Qe2 Rd6]
32.Qd8+ 2:45 Rf8 16
 [32...Kg7!]
33.Qc7 1:27 Nd7 1:15 34.b4 1:15 cxb4
1:29
 [34...c4!]
35.c4? 40
 [35.cxb4 f3!-+ (35...Qb6 36.Rec1)]



A sort of desperation, which Natalya
 puts down efficiently. **35...Qb6! 2:30**
36.Qxb6 35 Nxb6 2 37.cxb5 9 axb5

2:21 38.Rxa8 25 Nxa8 2 39.Rc1 10
Bd7 3:11 40.Rc5 11 Re8 53 41.Rd5
2:24

[41.g3 Nb6 42.Nh2]
41...Nb6 2:09 42.Rd6 5 Re6 17
Chen just can't get anything going; the
two extra pawns stand. 43.Rd3 5 Kf7
1:12 44.Nb3 1:11 Ke7 1:46 45.Rd1
2:08 Rd6 1:40 46.Ra1 48 Na4 44
47.Rb1 32 Be6 1:35 48.Nbd2 33 b3
3:34 49.Rc1 1:11 Kd7 14 50.Ra1 28
Rc6 33 51.Ra3 56 Nxb2 59 52.Nxb3
11 Na4 54 53.Na5 54 Rc1 51 54.Rd3+
26 Kc7 1:00 55.Nb3 26 Bxb3 1:00
56.Rxb3 5 Nc3 21 57.g3!? 31 Ne2+ 33
58.Kg2 6 f3+ 9 59.Kh2 6 Rxf1 17

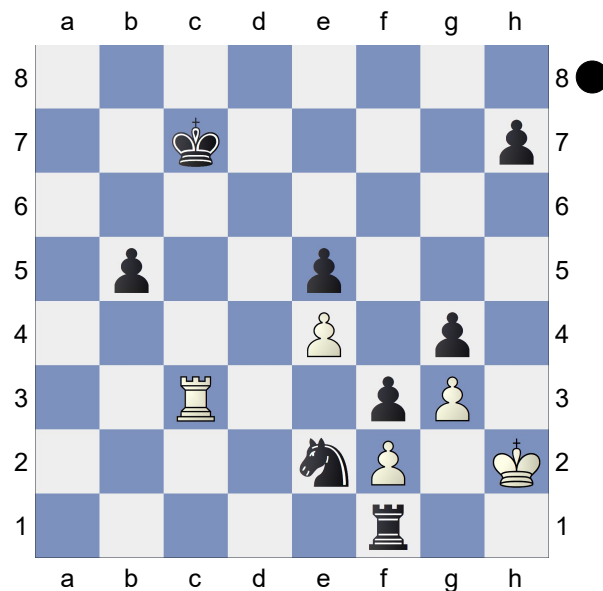


Chen sees a stalemate motif -- and
Tsodikova either misses it,
underestimates it, and/or miscalculates
it! 60.Rc3+! 4

(Diagram)

Kd6?? 1:01

[There is a way to break out of the
perpetual suicide by the rook: 60...Kb6
61.Rc6+ Ka5 62.Ra6+ Kb4 63.Ra4+
Kc3 64.Ra3+ (64.Rc4+ Kd2)
64...Kd2 65.Rd3+ Ke1 66.Rd1+ Kxf2
Quite a path the king has traveled!



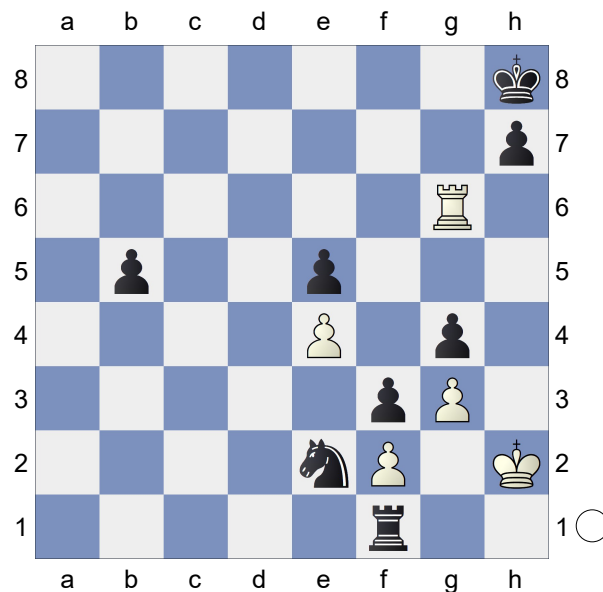
67.Re1!? (threatening 67.Rxe2+! but
Black has myriad stalemate-breaking
moves) (67.Rxf1+ Kxf1 and White
now has h1 for her king...; 67.Rb1!?
Rc1 is also just one of many moves
that mates quickly) 67...Ng1
(67...Nxg3; 67...Nf4; 67...Ng1;
67...Ke3)]

61.Rc6+!= 6 There is no "escape" now.

61...Kd7 24 62.Rd6+ 7 Ke7 24

63.Re6+ 5 Kf7 1:11 64.Rf6+ 7 Kg7 48

65.Rg6+ 8 Kh8 27



66.Rg8+! 6 Kxg8 3 Stalemate!

(Weighted Error Value: White=0.47/

Black=0.23 (precise))

1/2-1/2

□ Bhatia,Aadit

C13

2246

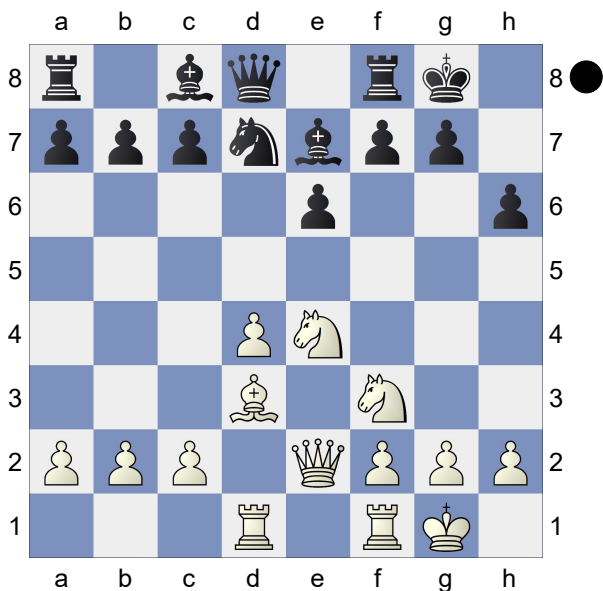
■ Mallela,Abhishek

2127

2025 Winter TNM: 2000+ (6.2) 09.12.25

[Winslow,Elliott]

And here's the other draw, guaranteeing Lavi clear first. Bhatia was so close to winning at a number of points in the game though -- and so was Mallela! It so happens I'd played Abhishek last weekend in Sunnyvale, at one of Josiah Stearman's Cornerstone events, and I didn't recognize him even after having looked at his Tuesday Night Marathon games. Just as well, sometimes I don't recognize my own play... 1.Nf3 6:19 Nf6 8 2.d4 11 e6 32 3.Bg5 4 h6 40 4.Bxf6 14 Qxf6 9 5.e4 50 d5 6.Nbd2 17 Qd8 1:00 7.Bd3 1:15 Be7 40 8.Qe2 4:01 Nd7 49 9.0-0 2:38 dxe4 1:16 10.Nxe4 17 0-0 33 11.Rad1 4:35



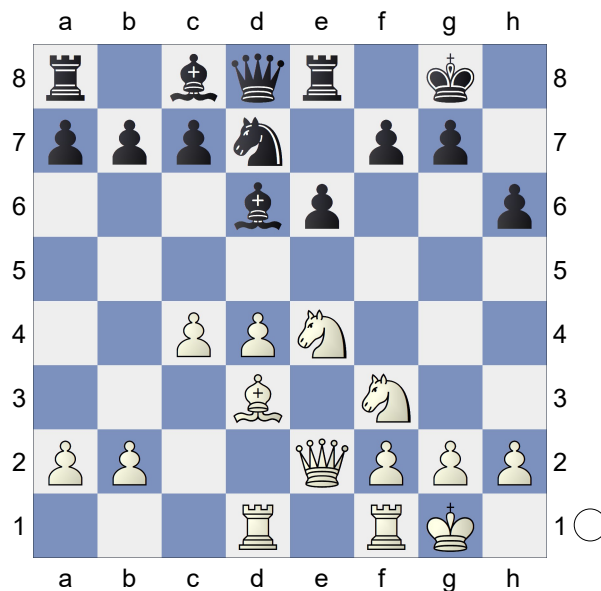
It's become a classical center, usually reached from a Rubinstein French Defence, where Black has exchanged on e4; Black plays for ...c5, which White

has discouraged for now. 11...Bd6?N

10:30

[Black has done well staying on point with 11...b6±, for example 12.Rfe1 Bb7 13.Ba6 Qc8 14.Bxb7 Qxb7 15.Rd3 Nf6 16.Ne5 Nxe4 17.Qxe4 Qxe4 18.Rxe4 Bd6± 1/2-1/2 (86) Dubov, D (2708)-Gauri,S (2307) Titled Tuesday chess.com 17 Jan 2023. An upset considering the ratings.]

12.c4+- 1:07 (Stockfish's numerical evaluation is +1.63/26, just across the threshold into "won") 12...Re8 1:03



13.Bb1?! 1:39

[13.c5+- Bf8 (13...Bf4 14.g3 Bg5 15.Nfxg5 hxg5 16.Bc4) 14.Rfe1 when "White is better developed" would be an understatement]

13...f5!± 1:50 14.Nc3 6:12 b6 2:50

(Diagram)

15.c5? 3:10 Here it's just a gratuitous pawn loss.

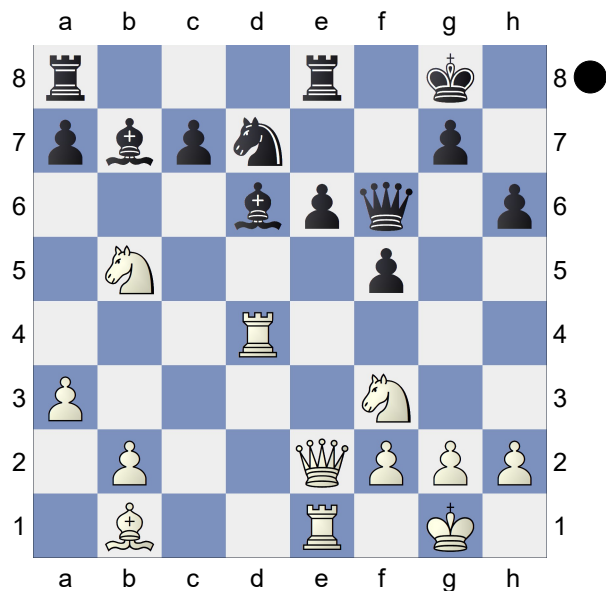
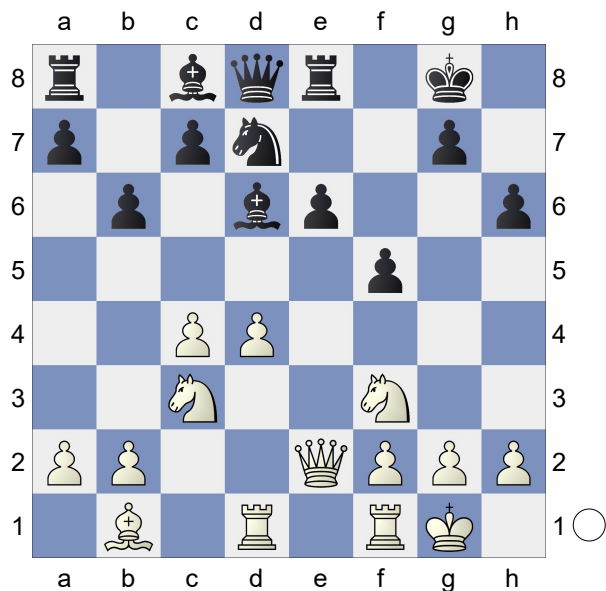
[15.Rfe1±]

15...bxc5± 2:33 16.Rfe1 5:17 Bb7 2:22

17.a3 3:46

[17.Bc2!± feels stronger.]

(Diagram)



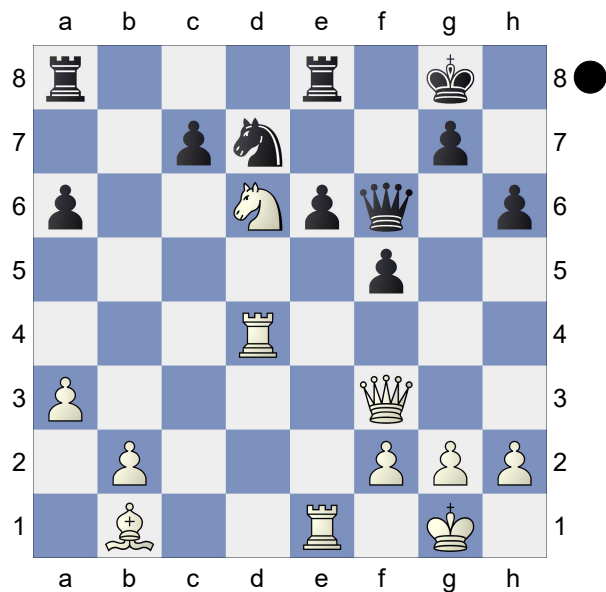
Bxf3?! 4:15 heading into a flurry of tactical exchanges

[Simply 19...Bd5+ would have stabilized the pawn advantage. 20.b4 Qf8]

20.Qxf3+ 35 a6 59

[20...Ne5+ 21.Qe2 Nf7]

21.Nxd6= 32



Qxd4 3:00 22.Nxe8 2:12 Rxe8 5

23.Bxf5! 14:10 Qxb2 5:12 24.Qc6 4:51

Qb5! 3:35 25.Qxb5 4:51

[25.Qxc7 Qxf5 26.Qxd7 Rb8]

25...axb5 6 26.Rxe6 33 Ra8 3:33

27.h4 1:07

[27.Re7!? Rxa3 28.g3 Nf8 29.Rxc7

17...cxd4?! 1:59

[17...Qf6+]

18.Rxd4? 5:26

[18.Nxd4+ Qg5 (18...Ne5!? 19.f4 Ng4 20.h3 Bc5 21.Qc4 Qd6 22.hxg4 Ba6 23.Qa4 Rad8 24.Kh1 Bxd4 25.Rxd4 Qxd4 26.Qxa6 Qxf4+ /=

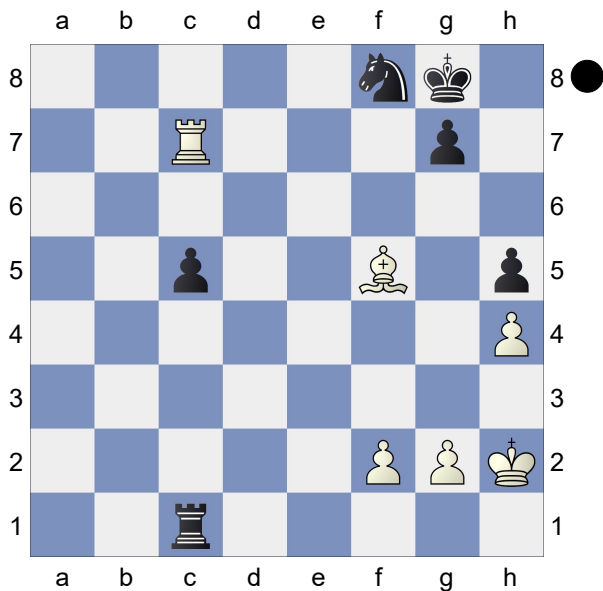
) 19.g3 Nf8]

18...Qf6?! 1:31

[18...Rb8+ is more deadly. 19.Ba2 Bxf3 20.Qxf3 (20.Bxe6+? Kh8+) 20...Nf8 (20...Rxb2 21.Rxe6 Kh8 22.Rd1+)]

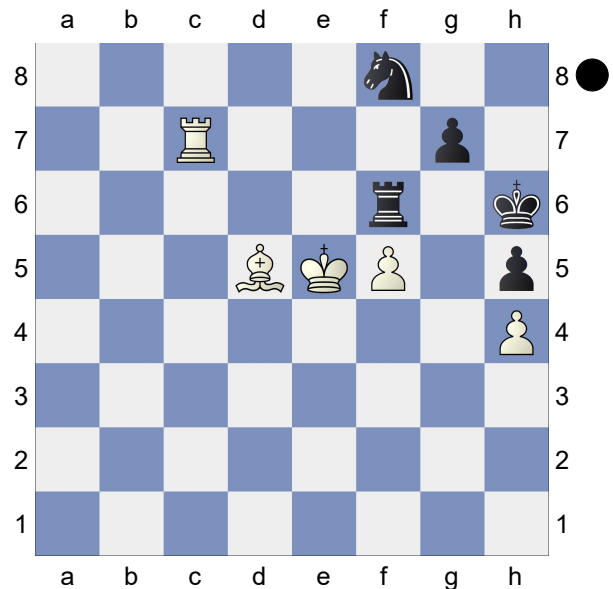
19.Nb5+ 9:30

g6]
27...Nf8 35 **28.Re7** 1:15 **c5** 1:19
 [28...Rxa3!=]
29.Rb7 22
 [29.Be4!?]
29...Rxa3 1:31 **30.Rxb5** 6 **Ra1+** 58
 [30...c4 31.Rc5 g6 32.Be4 c3=]
31.Kh2 17 **Rc1** 17 **32.Rb7** 34 **h5** 1:15
33.Rc7 1:21

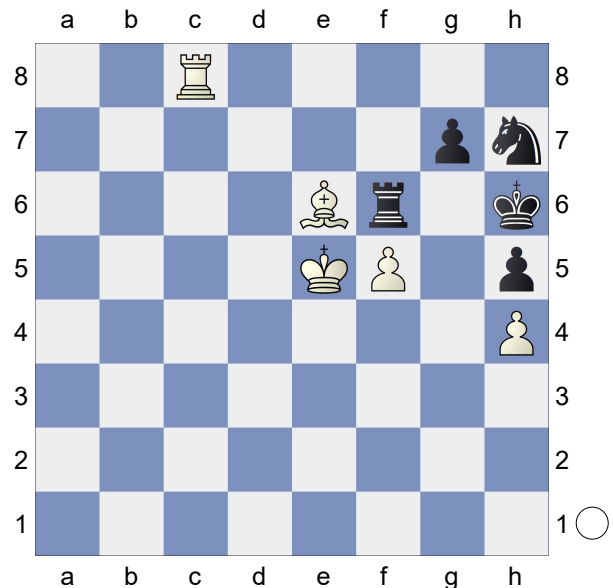


Rc3?? 58 A hard to recognize error.
 [33...Rc4= and Black stays safe.]
 [33...c4=]
34.f3? 18
 [34.Be4!+- (Bd5+ is a big problem!)
 g6 35.Bd5+ Kh8 36.Rf7 Nh7
 37.Be4 (g6 goes, h5 goes...)]
34...c4 1:12 Now this pawn gets to be a
 problem. **35.Kg3** 25 **Rc1** 56 **36.Kf4**
 2:43 **Rg1** 1:13 **37.Bh3** 2:02 **Rxg2** 28
 That squelches any chances for
 anybody. **38.Rc8** 6 **Rg6** 1:22 **39.Ke5**
 1:11 **Rf6** 1:25 **40.Bf5** 45 **c3** 14 **41.f4**
 55 **Rb6** 1:59 **42.Bd3** 1:44 **Rf6** 1:56
43.Be4 32 **Re6+** 1:00 **44.Kd4** 47 **Rf6**
 13 **45.f5** 12 **Kh7** 1:18 **46.Rxc3** 12
Rd6+ 1:20 **47.Ke5** 9 **Rf6** 7 **48.Rc7** 1:43
Kh6 14 **49.Bd5** 34

(Diagram)

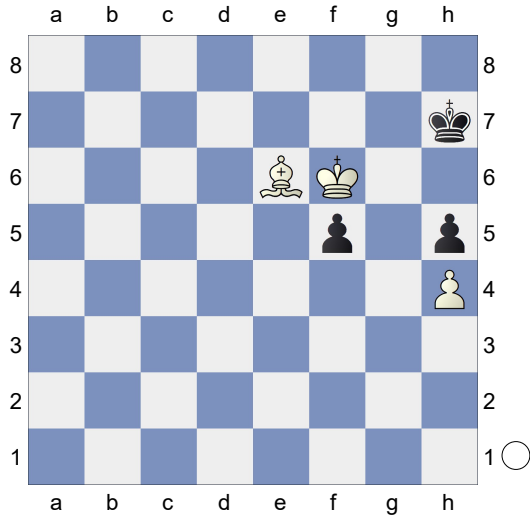


Kh7 1:49
 [49...Ra6=]
50.Be6! 34 This looks quite
 uncomfortable for Black! But we're
 running into one of the engines' blind
 spots: Mismatched bishop and rook
 pawn. **50...Kh6** 2:03 **51.Rc8** 1:51 **Nh7**
 41

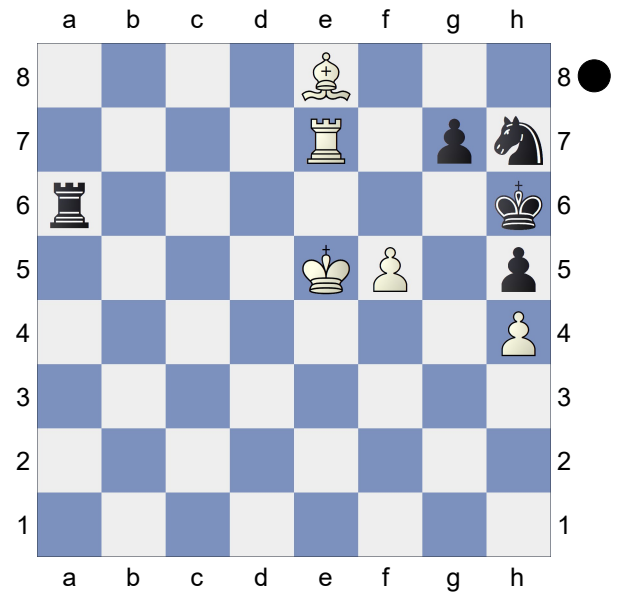


52.Rc7 5:36
 [52.Rh8± Stockfish 17.1, for all its
 impressive work, still hasn't learned.
 (Then again, neither have I -- I let
 two(!) opponents, one of them Daniel
 Cremisi, slip off the hook into this a
 couple months ago, in the same

week...) g6 53.Rxh7+
Remove Defender Kxh7 54.Kxf6 gxf5

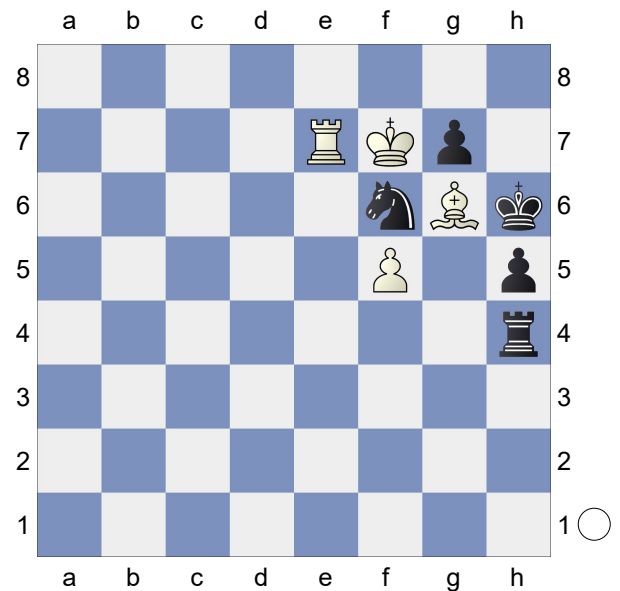


[75.Rd6+= Rxd6 76.Kxd6]



55.Kf7= (55.Bxf5+-; 55.Kxf5)
52...Rf8= 42 53.Bf7 40 Nf6 18 54.Bg6
7 Ng4+ 20 55.Kf4 24 Nf6 18 56.Ke5
15 Wards off Nd5 56...Ng4+ 7 57.Kf4 5
Rd8 36 58.Rc4 46 Nf6 58 59.Ra4 14
Nd5+ 42 60.Ke5 13 Nb6 2:09 61.Ra6
36 Nd7+ 4 62.Kf4 1:02 Nf6 1:04
63.Ra4 27 Rb8 4 64.Ke5 12 Rb5+ 25
65.Ke6 18 Rb6+ 4 66.Ke5 28 Nd7+ 14
67.Kf4 17 Nf8 19 68.Be8 29 Rf6 11
69.Ke5 22 Rb6 24 70.Ra8 22 Rf6 48
71.Rd8 34 Nh7 1:59 72.Bg6 18 Nf8 14
73.Be8 23 Nh7 44 74.Rd7 1:00 Ra6
1:02

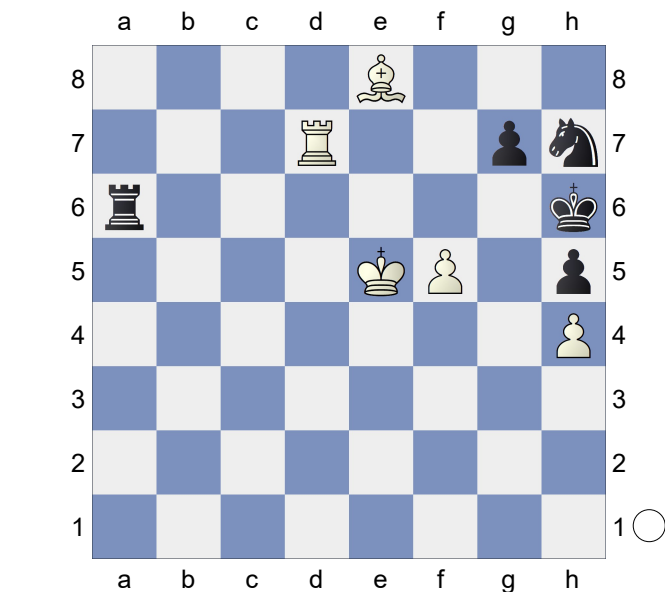
75...Nf6!-+ 25 76.Bg6? 1:16
[76.Bb5 is relatively best... Ra3
and ...Rh3xh4]
76...Ra5+ 7 77.Ke6 10 Ra4 28 78.Kf7
39 Rxh4-+ 22



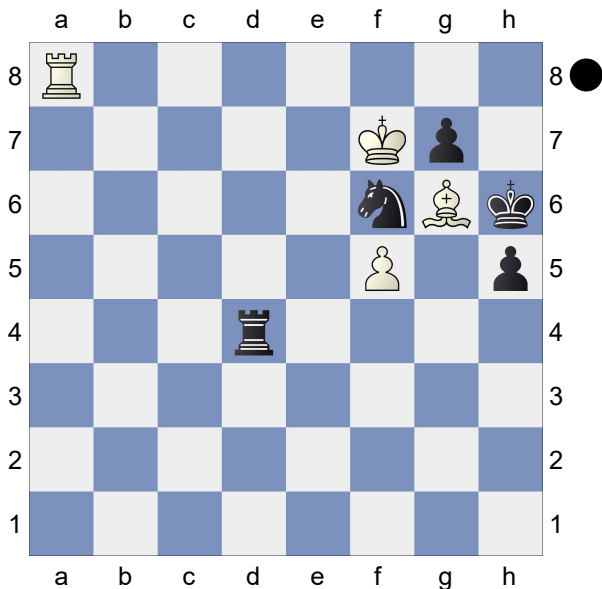
79.Ra7 13 Rd4 42 80.Ra8 46

(Diagram)

Rd7+! 30 (far and away the best) 81.Ke6
3 h4 35 82.Ra1 31 Rd4 40 83.Rg1 46
h3 41 84.Bf7 55 Re4+ 12 85.Kd6 3 h2
36 86.Rh1 29 Re2 33



75.Re7? 1:07



[86...Rh4 of course]

87.Bc4 11 Rg2 29 88.Ke6 1:45 Kg5 1:13

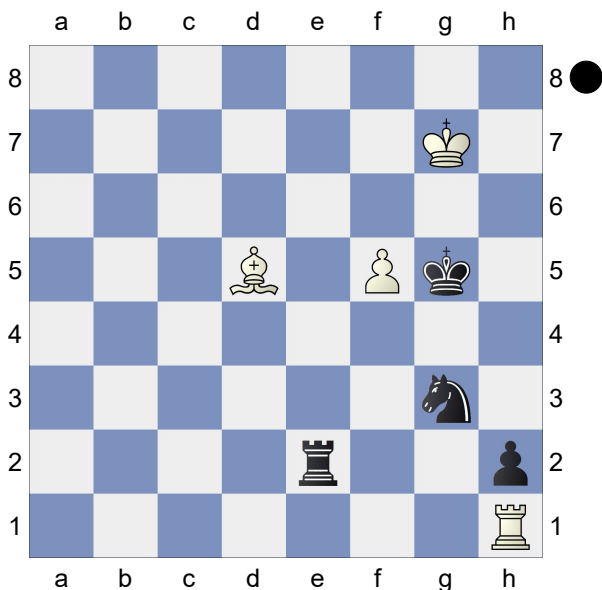
[88...Ne4]

[88...Nh5]

89.Bb5 59 Rb2 38 90.Bc4 1:49 Ne4 48

91.Bd5 13 Re2 1:35 92.Kf7 48 Ng3

1:27 93.Kxg7 38



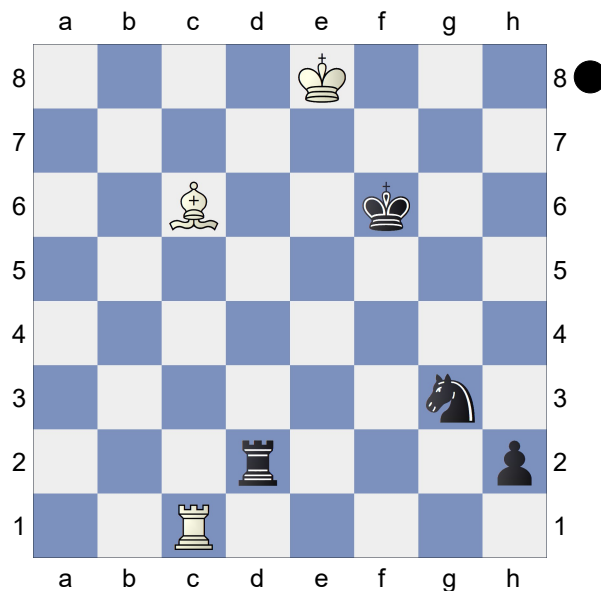
Nxf5+ 3:17

[93...Nxf1 94.f6 Ng3 is mate in under a dozen.]

94.Kf8 36 Rd2 1:06 95.Bc6 27 Ng3?! 41

[95...Kf6! (-> ...Ng3) 96.Rf1 Rd8+ 97.Be8 Ra8 (97...Rb8; 97...Rc8)]

96.Rc1 12 Kf6 31 97.Ke8 17



Ne2? 1:47 Finally, the last slip-up.

[We're in tablebase territory and lots of moves would have won, especially 97...Ne4!-+ 98.Rf1+ Kg5]

[97...Re2+]

[97...Kf5]

[97...Kg5]

98.Rf1+!= 13 White locks it up. Drawn.

98...Ke6 1:12 99.Rf2! 1:00 Rb2 4

100.Bd7+ 20 Kd6 22 101.Rxh2 4

(White never ran under two minutes (!), and R+N v R is pretty easy to hold. Of course, R+N v R+B is even easier...

101...Rb8+ 6 102.Kf7 4 Nc3 31

103.Rd2+ 12 Nd5 3 104.Bh3 10 Rb7+

13 105.Kf8 10 Rb8+ 20 106.Kf7 4 Kc5

35 107.Rc2+ 6 Kd4 8 108.Rd2+ 3 Ke5

16 109.Re2+ 3 Kf4 9 110.Bg2 33 Ne3

7 111.Rf2+ 6 Kg5 9 112.Be4 8 Rb4 10

113.Bd3 8 Rd4 13 114.Bb1 5 Ng4 29

115.Rf5+ 9 Kh4 3 116.Rf1 5 Rd2 19

117.Kg6 14 Rd6+ 7 118.Kf7 6 Rd5 16

119.Ke6 14 Re5+ 7 120.Kd6 4 Re2 14

121.Kc5 18 Kg3 34 122.Kd4 13 Rd2+

9 123.Kc3 4 Rg2 9 124.Bd3 12 Ne3 7

125.Rf8 3 Nd5+ 5 126.Kd4 4 Ne7 16

127.Rf7 5 Nc6+ 5 128.Ke3 7 Ne5 6

129.Rg7+ 12 Ng4+ 6 130.Kd4 14 Rf2 9

131.Rg8 25 Rf4+ 11 132.Kc3 5 Kf2 5

133.Re8 26 Ne3 14 134.Kd2 20 Nd5
12 135.Re2+ 7 Kg3 6 136.Re4 28
Rf2+ 5 137.Re2 3 Rf6 11 138.Re5 17
Nf4 4 139.Rg5+ 8 Kf3 5 140.Bc2 20
Rd6+ 6 141.Kc3 7 Ne2+ 9 142.Kb4 27
Ke3 16 143.Bb3 10 Nf4 15 144.Rg3+
11 Kd4 5 145.Rg4 9 Rf6 10 146.Kb5 8
Kc3 13 147.Rg3+ 18 Nd3 4 148.Bg8
11 Rf5+ 5 149.Kc6 8 Rc5+ 24
150.Kd6 5 Rc8 17 151.Bh7 14 Rd8+ 2
152.Kc6 10 Rd4 13 153.Rxd3+ 4 Rxd3
3 154.Bxd3 1 Weighted Error Value:
White=0.20 (precise) /Black=0.22
(precise)
1/2-1/2

□ **Parsons,Stephen** **E72**
 ■ **Winslow,Elliott** **1966**
 2025 Winter TNM: 2000+ (6.3) 09.12.25
[Winslow,Elliott] **2207**

A surprising number of players took half-point byes in Round 6, in fact four players with 3 took one, thus taking them out of contention for a tie for second. But this win by Parsons brought him up with the four we just saw, at 4-2. Courtesy of me neglecting to cash in a won game. 1.c4 3 Nf6 18 2.Nc3 27 g6 10 3.g3 41 Bg7 6 4.Bg2 5 0-0 16 5.d4 4:00 d6 18 6.e4 1:42 e5 1:47
 If I'd thought this through I might have decided this was the less logical central push, with White still having f2-f4 available (but of course that never happened).

[In Kotronias's epic Grandmaster Repertoire series on the King's Indian, he opts for 6...c5 with massive coverage of the alternatives here, so much so that I've never gone through it all (then there are the two(!) books on the Mar Del Plata...)]

7.d5 28 a5 2:36 8.Nge2 26 E72: King's Indian: 4 e4 d6 5 g3. 8...c6 4:38 9.b3N 4:18

[9.0-0±]

[9.dxc6 bxc6 10.0-0 Qc7 11.h3

Nbd7 12.Be3 Rd8 13.Qd2 Nc5

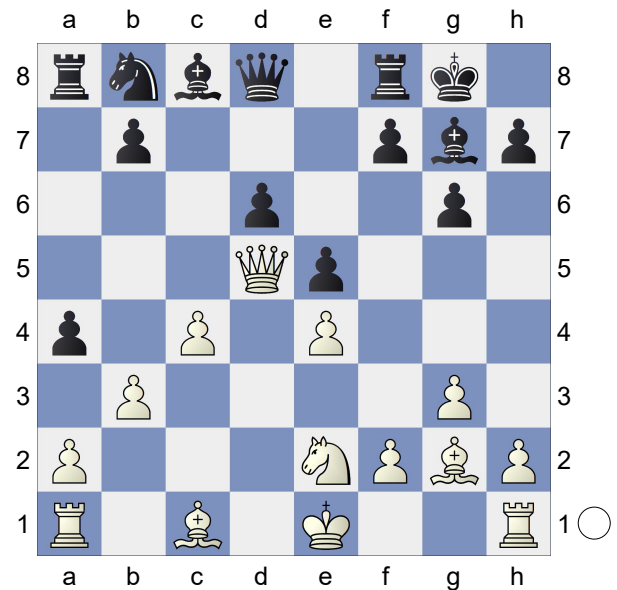
14.Rfd1 Be6 15.b3 Rab8

1-0 (35) Li,B (2310)-Yang,S (1286)

Qiziwan 2023]

9...cxd5!= 6:23 10.Nxd5 57 Nxd5 12

11.Qxd5 10 a4 29



12.b4? 1:14

[12.Rb1= remains equal.]

12...Qb6?! 4:18

[Black should try 12...Qc7!± 13.c5 dxc5 14.Qxc5 Qxc5 15.bxc5 Be6]

[or 12...Nc6!±]

13.a3 52 Be6 54 14.Qd3 3:09

[14.Be3± is a better defense. Bxd5 15.Bxb6 Bxc4 16.Rd1]

14...Qc7 2:56

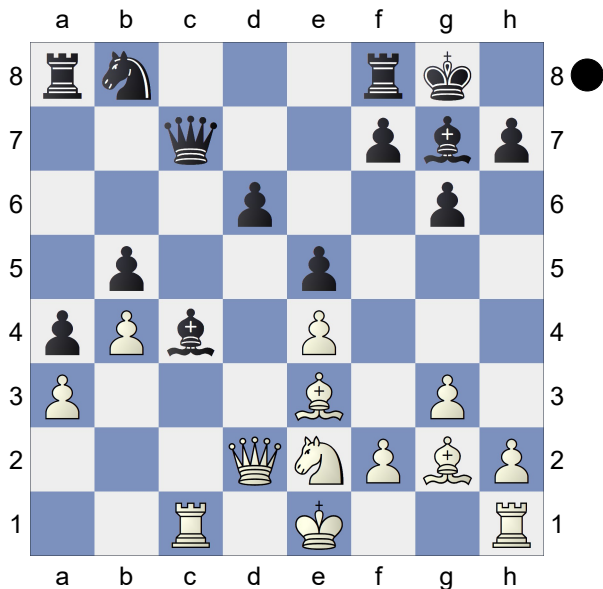
[14...Rc8+ 15.Be3 Qa6 (15...Bxc4? 16.Qxc4 Rxc4 17.Bxb6+-)]

15.Be3± 1:33 Bxc4 1:03 16.Rc1 2:47

b5 8:01 17.Qd2 2:28

(Diagram)

Ra6 3:38 Here I start to tie myself in knots ("Wince-low");



[I wouldn't call it "simple," but Black has a path: 17...Nc6 aiming for ...d5!? 18.0-0 Qd7 19.Rfd1 Rac8 20.Bf1 Rfd8 21.Bb6 Re8 22.Qxd6? (22.Be3 h5! 23.Qxd6 Qb7 24.Qd7 Qa8 and Black will push back with ...Red8 and ...Bb3) 22...Qb7! 23.Be3 Red8 24.Qc5 Nd4+]

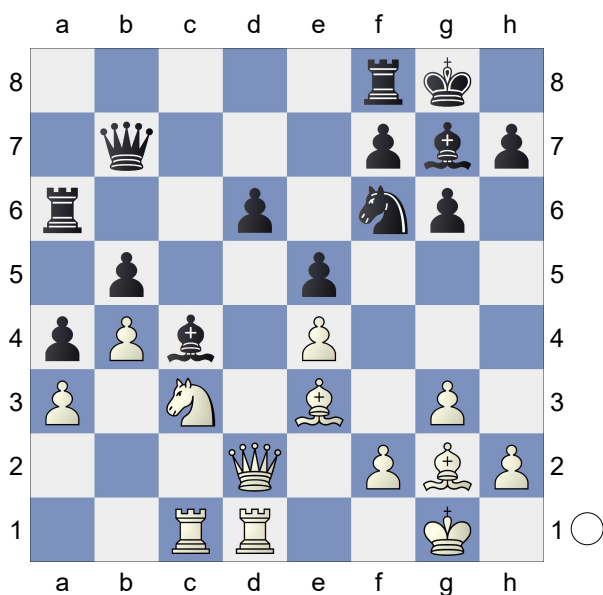
18.0-0 25 Nd7 3:03

[18...Ra8!]

19.Rfd1 30

[19.Nc3!? Qb7 20.Rfe1=]

19...Nf6 2:46 20.Nc3 7 Qb7 21



21.h3? 7:29

[21.Bf1=]

21...Rc8 4:43 22.Bg5 6:13 Ne8 4:19

[22...Rac6]

23.Nd5= 2:13 f6 4:25 24.Be3 2:12

Strongly threatening Bf1. White has compensation. **24...Rac6 1:18 25.h4 2:20**

[25.Rxc4!± Rxc4 (25...bxc4 26.Rb1±) 26.Bf1]

25...Kf7? 1:38

[25...Bb3=]

26.Bh3± 21 Strong Square White (d5)

26...Rd8 25 27.f4 3:01

[Better is 27.h5±]

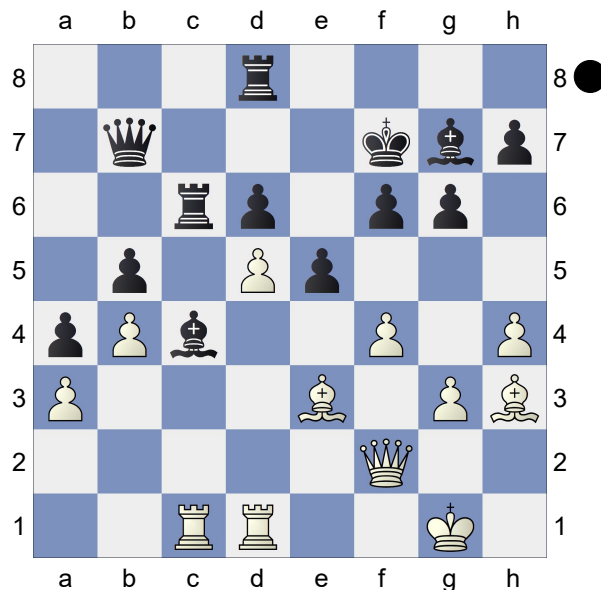
27...Nc7 1:50

[27...exf4!± is more appropriate. 28.gxf4 Nc7]

28.Qf2? 2:23

[28.f5!± keeps the pressure on.]

28...Nxd5!-+ 4:08 29.exd5 44

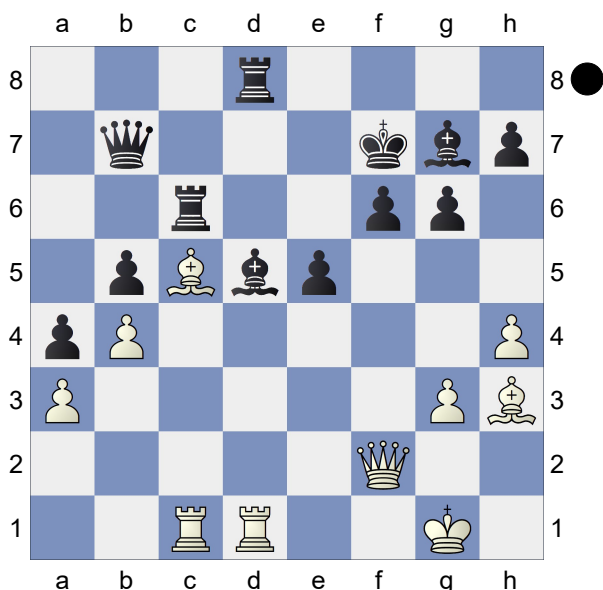


Bxd5! 16 30.fxe5 40 dxe5 2:42 31.Bc5 56

(Diagram)

Qc7?? 3:47 It was one of those "the moment I played my move I saw what I had done -- and so did he" blunders.

[Best of many good moves, by quite a bit, was 31...Bh6!-+ (-2.56/30) and all is fine. 32.Rc3 e4 (always the



followup)]

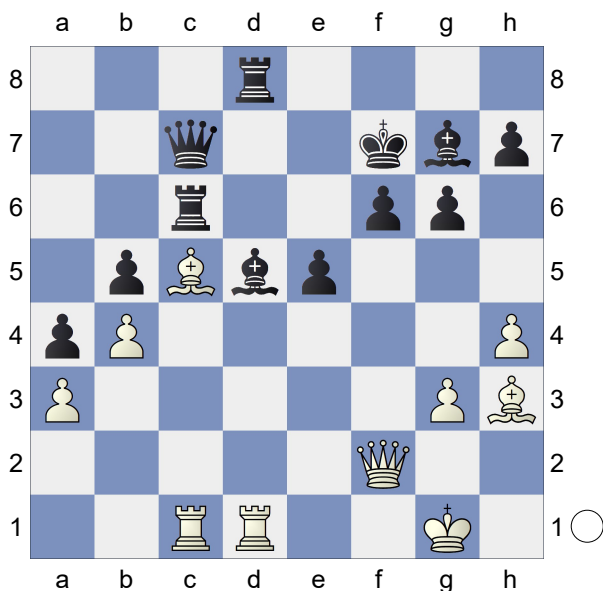
[31...Bf8-+]

[31...e4±]

[31...f5±]

[31...h5±]

[31...Ke8±]



32.Rxd5!+- 3:34 Rxd5 2:23 Maybe he'll mix up the move order?

[32...f5 33.Bg2]

33.Qa2 4:33 Nope. Weighted Error Value: White=0.37/Black=0.50

1-0

A40
2010
1925
 2025 Winter TNM: 2000+ (6.4) 09.12.25
[Winslow,Elliott]

After an early two losses and a forfeit win, Melville finishes strong, starting with this win with the (in)famous English Defense. White is provoked into ambitions in the center, but if you've never seen Black's ...f5!? idea you could be knocked off your feet! Cailen fumbled the "winning a won game" part of the game, but was helped by Sudarshan's overlooking the "Look! A draw! TAKE IT!!" responses. At least it reached a very instructive rook ending (well, I think I'm learning something). **1.d4 3:15:23 e6 1:54 2.c4 11**

[You can always "cooperate" and play 2.e4 and into the French.]

2...b6 10 3.Nc3 15 Bb7 6 4.e4 57

The theoretical move,

[but 4.a3 is a more practical approach.]

4...Bb4 9 5.Bd3 52

[Believe it or not, 5.f3 is the only move to score over 50%!]

5...f5!? 21 While first seen in 1899(!), this only got a real going over in the 1970s and 1980s -- highlighted with Tony Miles beating David Bronstein. It's certainly sure to befuddle younger players who haven't heard of it. The better player has usually won -- and it's usually been Black. **6.d5!?** 4:32 **fxe4 41 7.Bxe4 45 Nf6 12** Against Qh5+. **8.Bg5 4:19 Bxc3+ 1:58 9.bxc3 9 0-0 13** Black is slightly better. **10.Nf3?** 7:40 [10.Ne2±]

10...Qe8!-+ 55

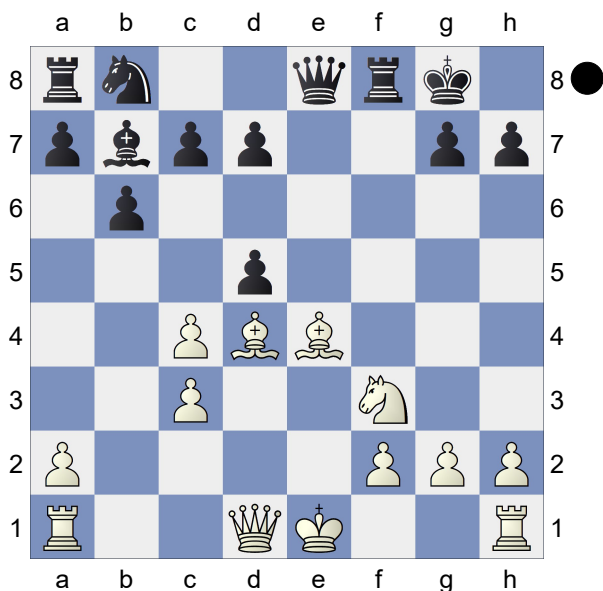
[10...exd5?! 11.Bxd5+ Bxd5 12.cxd5 Qe8+± 13.Kf1 Na6 14.Bxf6 Rxf6± 1-0 (37) Goroshkov,M (2261)-Bruned,

Y (2286) Titled Tuesday (blitz), 15 Nov 2022]

11.Bxf6? 41

[11.Bd3 exd5+ Discovered Attack (Check) 12.Be2 Ne4-+]

11...exd5 54 A completely won game by move 11!? Can't do much better than that! I'll let "TA" misanalyze every variation (!) from here... **12.Bd4** 12:49



Qxe4+ 7:38

[12...dxe4 13.Nd2 (13.Nh4-+) 13...Qg6-+]

13.Qe2N 1:22

[13.Be3 Qxc4 (13...dxc4!) 14.Qc2 Re8 15.0-0-0 Qe4 16.Qd2 Qg6 17.Bd4 c5 18.Be3 d6 19.h4 0-1 (31) Sieswerda,S-Dudeman Netherlands 1999]

13...c5 21:51

[13...dxc4 14.Qxe4 Bxe4 15.Ng5]
[13...Qxe2+! 14.Kxe2 dxc4 should be a routine win.]

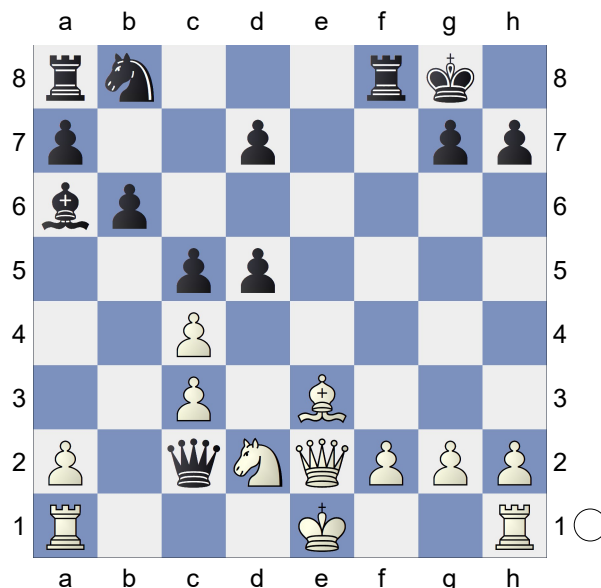
14.Be3 2:00 **Ba6** 6:49

[14...Qxc4 15.Qxc4 dxc4 16.Ne5-+]
[14...dxc4 15.0-0-0-+]

15.Nd2 33 **Qc2** 2:37

[15...Qxg2? 16.0-0-0 Nc6 17.Qh5-+]

(Diagram)



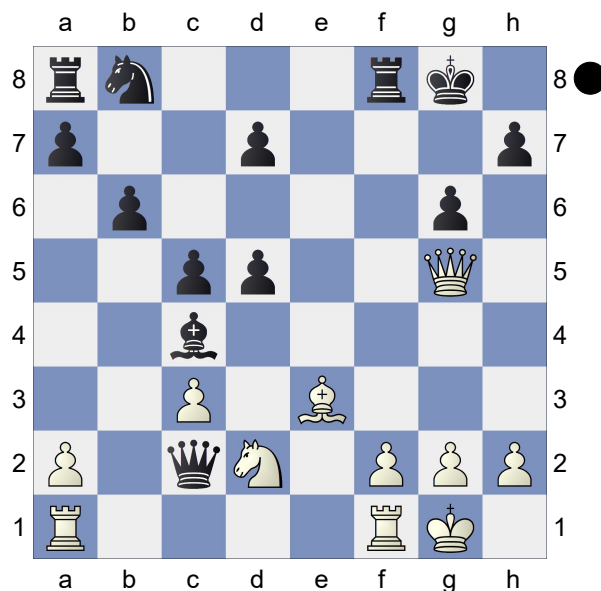
16.0-0 5:06 **Bxc4** 44

[16...Qxc3 17.Qh5 Qd3 (17...dxc4? 18.Qd5+ Kh8 19.Qxa8-+; 17...Bxc4? 18.Rfd1-+) 18.cxd5-+]

17.Qh5 9 **g6** 1:39

[17...Bxa2 18.Rfc1 Qb2 19.Rab1=]

18.Qg5 23

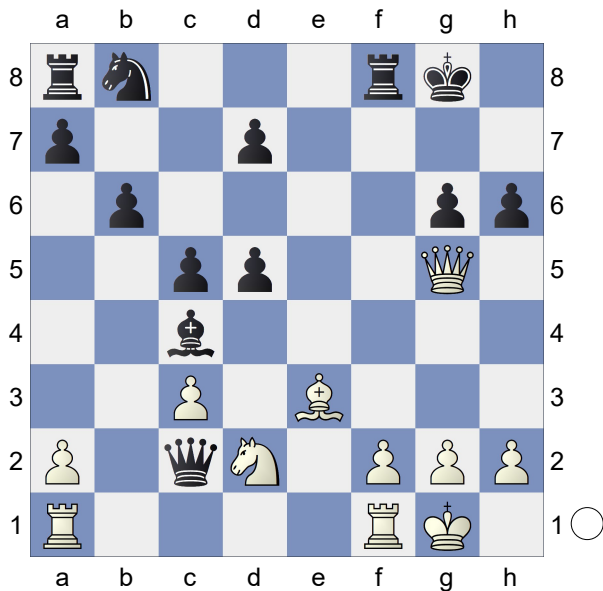


"and Nxc4 should not be overlooked" (TA) -- whatever. **18...h6??** 4:54

Horribly weakening the kingside! Losing all advantage! The idea must be to deflect the queen so that ...Bxf1 doesn't hang d5.

[18...Bxa2?? 19.Rfc1 Qb2 20.c4=]
[18...Qxc3!-+ 19.Rfd1 Qf6]

(19...Nc6) 20.Qxf6 Rxf6 21.Nxc4 dxc4]
 [18...Qf5!? isn't as good (no passed c-pawn(s)!) but still winning.]



19.Qe5? 3:54 Seshadri must be thinking the same thing (d5) but now Black gets a free ...Nc6 in.

[19.Qxh6? Bxf1 20.Nxf1 Rf7+ (20...Qxc3?! 21.Qxg6+ Qg7 22.Qh5+; 20...Nc6-+)]

[Incredibly 19.Qe7!= is equal, e.g.

A) 19...Qxc3? 20.Nxc4+- (!) Qf6 (20...dxc4 21.Bxh6+-) 21.Qd6! Qxd6 (21...dxc4 22.Qd5+ and a rook is too much) 22.Nxd6 and the knight has b5 to escape;

B) 19...Rf7 20.Qe8+ Rf8 21.Qe7= repetition!]

19...Nc6 + **33**

[19...Bxa2? 20.Bxh6 Rf7 21.Qe8+ Kh7 22.Qxf7+-]

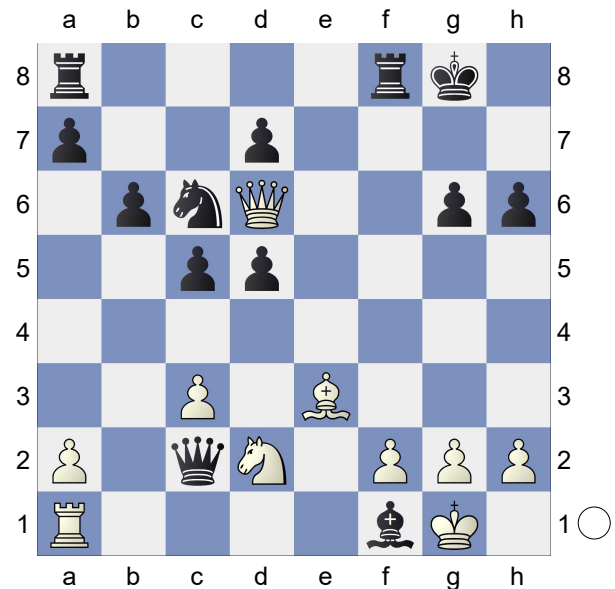
20.Qd6 23 Bxf1! 2:56

(Diagram)

Now it all works -- for Black. **21.Qxd5+ 3:06 Kh8 2:08**

[21...Rf7]

22.Rxf1 44



[22.Qxd7 Bb5 23.a4 Qxc3]

22...Qf5 2:51 Black consolidates, an Exchange and a pawn up.

[22...Qxc3 23.Qxd7 Ne5-+]

23.Qd6 2:09 Kg7 6:36

[23...Rf6!]

24.Nf3 1:38 Qe6 2:57

[24...Rae8!]

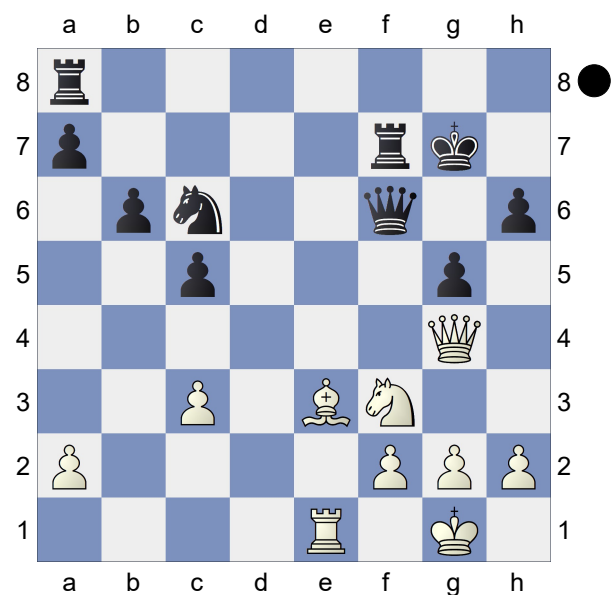
25.Qd2 1:09 g5 1:10 26.Re1 2:26

Qf6?! 8:45

[26...Qf5 27.h4 Rae8 28.hxg5 hxg5

29.Bxg5 Rxe1+ 30.Nxe1 Re8-+]

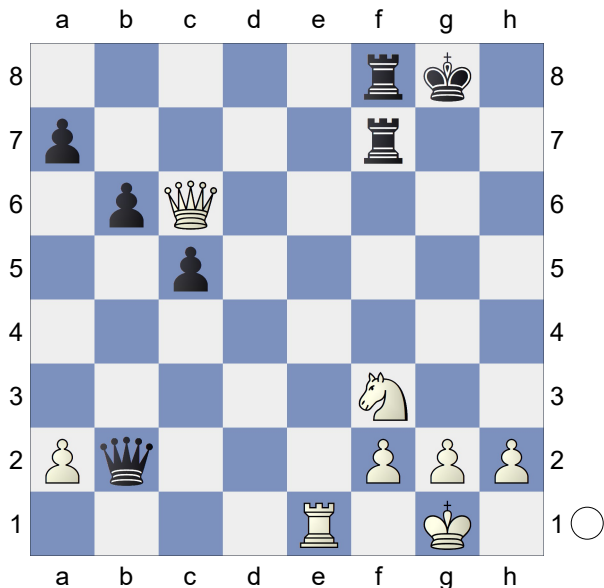
27.Qxd7+ 1:48 Rf7 6 28.Qg4 53



Qxc3? 3:53

[28...Re8-+ 29.h4 Qxc3 30.hxg5

Ne5! 31.gxh6+ Kh8]
29.Bd2?+ 5:29
 [29.Bxg5!= hxg5 30.Qxg5+ Kh8
 31.Qh6+ Kg8 32.Qxc6]
29...Qb2?= 3:27
 [29...Qd3+ Threatens to win with ...
 Rxf3!. 30.Qh5 Rf6]
30.Bxg5= 12:03 hxg5 7:08 31.Qxg5+ 9
Kh8 1:51 32.Qh6+ 37 Kg8 20 33.Qxc6
28 Raf8= 28

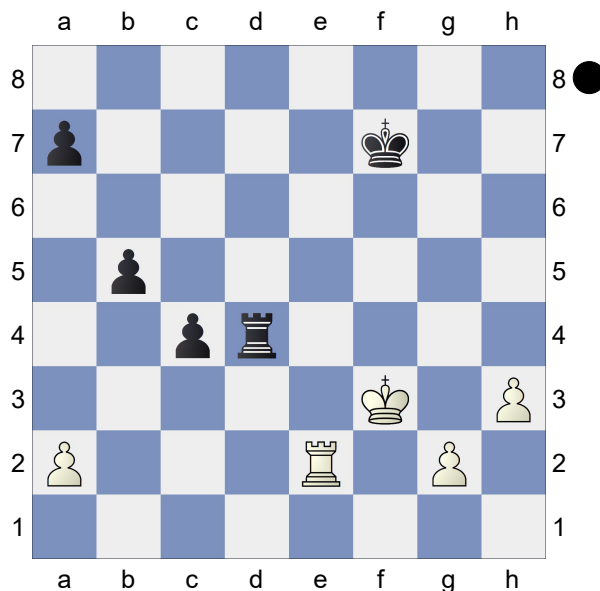


TA had Black with an attack, but on
 straight analysis the "0.00"s are piling in.
34.Qd5 3:29 Qf6 40 35.h3 7:59 Rd8 8
36.Qc4 43

[36.Qb3!]
 [36.Qh5!]

36...Kf8 13 37.Ne5! 3:59 Qxf2+ 25
38.Kh2 6 Rd4 3:52 39.Qxf7+ 1:01
 [39.Qe6 Qf6 40.Qxf7+ transposes.]
39...Qxf7 8 Successful Defense Black
40.Nxf7 2 Kxf7= 14 Endgame KR-KR
41.Re2?+ 18 It *looks* sensible, but it
 loses. My Stockfish window is showing
 seven lines right now (I usually have it
 on 5) and they're all 0.00. Eighth on
 down: -+. (41.Re2 comes in at 16th...)
 [41.Rf1+= Ke7 42.g4]
 [41.Kg3]
 [41.Kg1]
 [41.g4 Rd2+ 42.Kg3 Rxa2 43.h4]

[41.Rb1]
 [41.Re3]
 [41.Rc1]
41...c4!-+ 1:32 42.Kg3 2:34 b5! 27
only moves! 43.Kf3 14



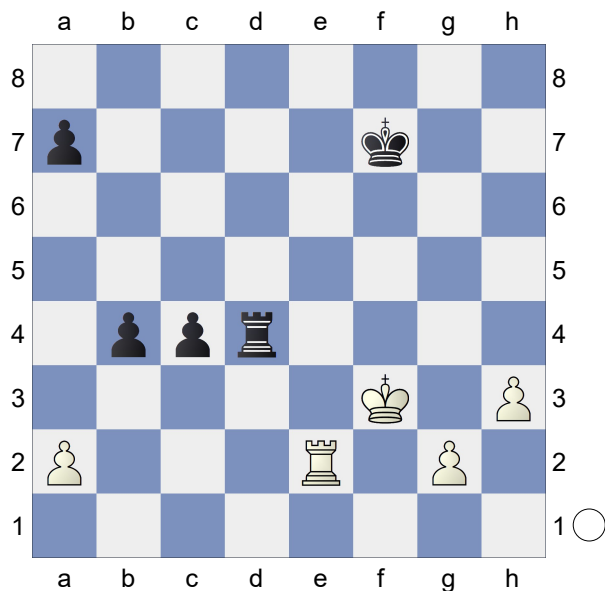
b4?? 24 So close, and it slips away
 again!

[43...c3!-+ (stops White's defense)
 44.Ke3 Rd1 45.Rf2+ (45.Rc2 b4
 46.Ke2 Rd6 and Black's next move
 will be ...a5.) 45...Kg6
 (well, anything but ...Ke8 is -+) The
 main thing is, Black's pawns turn
 into queens a lot sooner than
 White's..]

(Diagram)

44.Ke3?? 1:01

[44.Re4! and that ♖ took about 12
 seconds to turn into = on this monster.
 It is somewhat paradoxical: usually it's
 the rook endings that are drawn
 (Tarrasch: "all rook endings...") and
 the pawn endings lose; here it's the
 other way around! Rd3+!? (44...Rxe4
 45.Kxe4= both sides have connected
 passed pawns. Mutual nothing.)
 45.Ke2!= The only move.



A) 45...Ra3 46.Rxc4 Rxa2+ 47.Kf3? (47.Kd1=; 47.Kd3=; 47.Ke3=) 47...a5 which eventually goes -+;

B) 45...Rc3 White has, again, seven moves that draw. I "leave it to the reader" to figure out which those are.]

44...Rd3+! 12 45.Ke4 38 Rd6-+ 45

[45...Rd1!]

[45...Rd7!]

[45...Rd6!]

46.Rf2+ 5:17 Ke7-+ 5

[46...Kg7! and ...c3 next 47.Ke5 Rd1]

47.Rf5 1:26 Rc6?! 2:51 It really was on a better file already

[47...Rd1!]

[47...c3!]

48.Rf2 1:55 c3? 24 Black had a lot of moves that still held some advantage, but

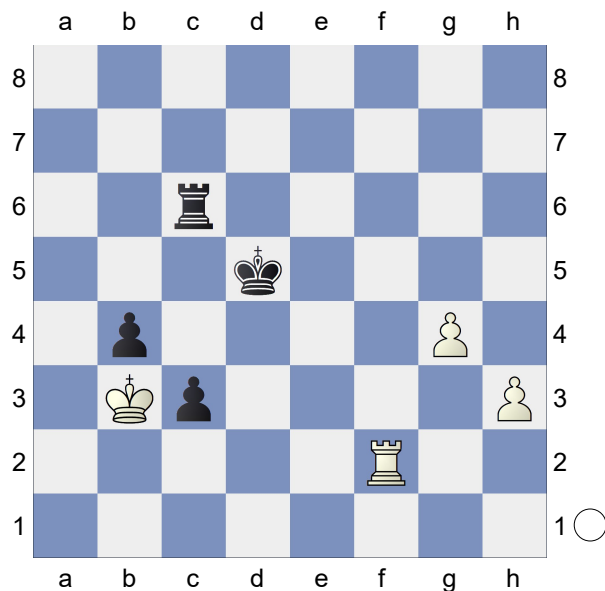
[Black only had two completely winning moves: 48...Rd6-+ 49.Ke3 c3]

[and 48...a5-+]

49.Kd3!= 12 Welcome to Zeroworld -- again. **49...a5 20 50.Kc2 21 Rd6 55**

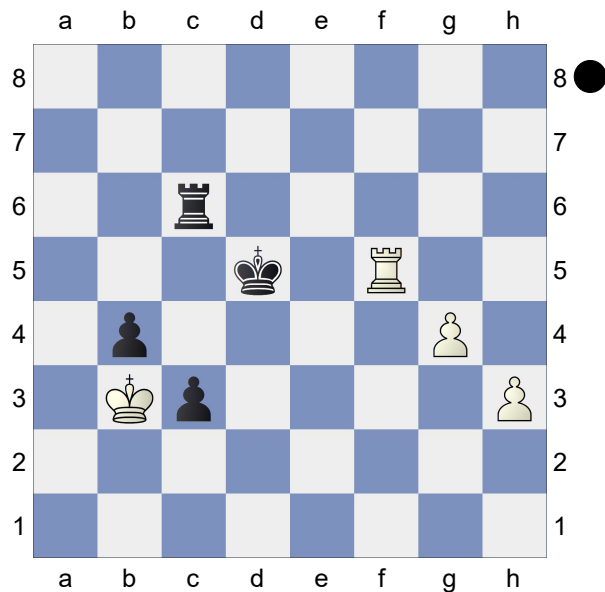
51.a3 1:04 Ke6 39 52.axb4 6 axb4 6

53.Kb3 2:09 Rc6 31 54.g4 56 Kd5 16



55.Rf5+?? 34 White had nine 0.00ers here.

[55.g5= and White is okay.]



55...Kd4? 4

[55...Ke4-+ (-> ...c2) 56.Rf2 Kd3]

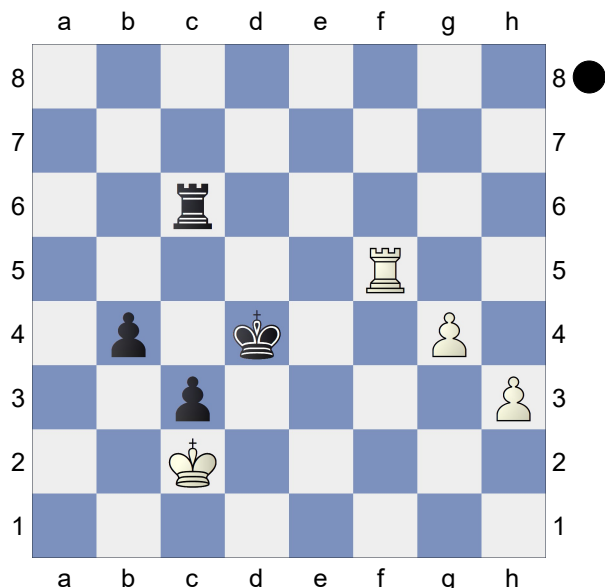
56.Kc2? 54

[56.Rf1!= and the only move.]

(Diagram)

56...b3+!-+ 1:18 Black muscles a pawn in for promotion. **57.Kxb3 24 c2 11**

58.Rf4+ 4 Ke3 1:59 Rook and pawn



endings! You gotta learn 'em. Weighted Error Value: White=0.69/Black=0.54
0-1

□ Tsodikova, Natalya

B31
2246

■ Parsons, Stephen

1966

2025 Winter TNM: 2000+ (7.1) 16.12.25
[Winslow, Elliott]

Tsodikova outplays Parsons in a complicated Rossolimo middlegame to get up to 2nd place. 1.e4 4 c5 5 2.Nf3 9 Nc6 4 3.Bb5 10 g6 38 4.0-0 12 Bg7 5 5.Re1 21 e5 1:56 6.c3 1:09 Nge7 2:23 7.d4 4:25 There are quite a few gambit lines in the Rossolimo, calling the bluff of Black's control of d4. In fact Black should be fine, theoretically, but in practice Black is put off balance frequently. 7...exd4 6:34 8.cxd4 1:31 Nxd4 1:31 9.Nc3N 4:24

[9.Nxd4 cxd4 10.e5 Qb6 11.Na3 0-0 12.Bf4 Nc6 13.Qb3 a6 14.Bf1 Qxb3 15.axb3 d5 16.exd6 Be6 17.Nc4 Rad8 0-1 (40) Bernadskiy, V (2530)-Karthikeyan, M (2624) Chess.com INT 2024]

9...0-0 3:52 Black is slightly better.

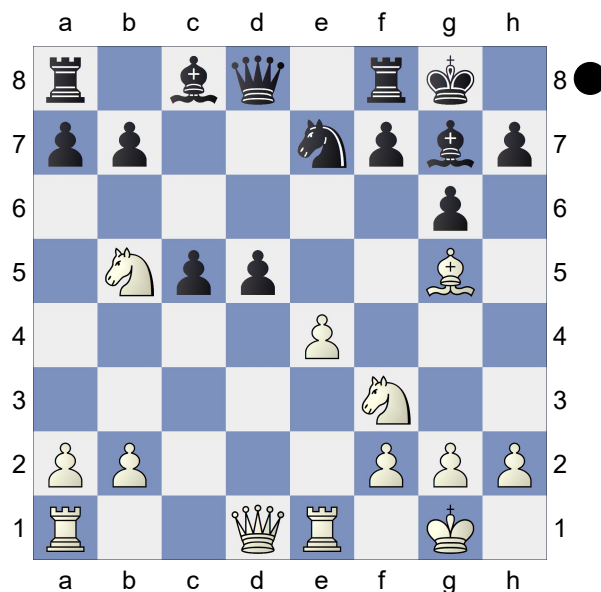
10.Bf4 2:00

[10.Bg5±]

10...d5± 1:39 11.Bg5 11:34

[11.Nxd4± cxd4 (11...Bxd4 12.Bh6±) 12.Nxd5 Nxd5 13.exd5 Qxd5 14.Qa4]

11...Nxb5-+ 5:21 12.Nxb5 18



Black must now prevent exd5. 12...d4 57

[12...Bxb2? 13.exd5 f6 (13...Bxa1? 14.Bxe7 Qb6 15.Qxa1+-) 14.d6+-]

13.e5 4:02 Be6 3:32

[Black should play 13...h6± 14.Bd2 Nc6]

14.b3? 8:16

[14.Qc1= and White stays safe.]

14...Qd7 2:44 15.Nd6 4:00 Nf5 1:49

16.Ne4 41 h6 5:26

[16...b6± ...Bd5 is the strong threat. 17.Bf6 Bd5 18.Bxg7 Kxg7]

17.Nxc5= 2:07 Qd5 38 18.Nxe6 54

hgx5? 4:35 Parsons chooses the wrong minor to recapture.

[18...fxe6= and Black is okay. 19.Bf6 Rac8]

19.Nc7!+- 3:04 A dynamic duo of knights.

[19.Nxf8 Rxf8 20.Nxg5 d3+-]

[19.Nexd4 Nxd4 20.Qxd4 Qxd4 21.Nxd4 Rfe8±]

[Less strong is 19.Nexg5 Rfe8±]

19...Qc5 2:39 20.Nxa8 43 Rxa8 15

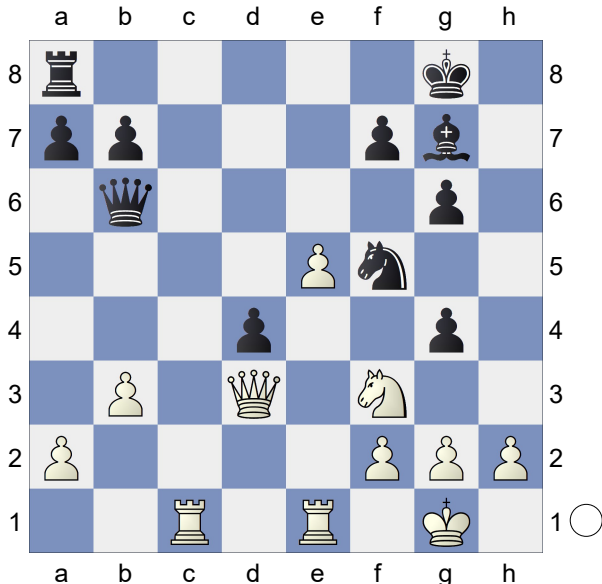
21.Rc1 1:27

[21.Nxg5 Bxe5 22.Qf3 Nh6
23.Qxb7 Rf8+-]

21...Qb6 2:45 22.Qd3 7:05

[Or 22.Nxg5 Bh6 23.Qg4 Bxg5
24.Qxg5+-]

22...g4 2:48



23.Nd2 40 Re8 2:09 24.Nc4 2:03 Qe6
6:31 25.Qe4 7:56 b5 7:44 26.Nd2 4:58
Bxe5 7:00 27.Qxg4 1:06 Qd7 8:19
28.Nf3 3:13 Bf6 35 29.Rxe8+ 1:11
Qxe8 5 30.h4 2:54 d3 5:49 31.Rd1
3:57 Qe2 3:34 32.Rd2 1:48 Qe7 6:32
33.Rxd3 1:25 Nxh4 49 34.Nxh4 53
Bxh4 5 35.Rh3 5:06 Qe1+ 3:40 36.Kh2
3 Be7 2:35 37.Qd4 1:58 Against Qxf2
37...f6 37 38.Qd5+ 45 Kg7 25 39.Re3
30

[39.Qxb5 Bd6+ 40.Rg3 Bxg3+
41.Kxg3 Qc3+ 42.Kh2 Qd4±]

39...Qb4 17 40.Re4 2:16 Qa3 36 41.g3
26 Bd6 43 42.Re8 2:01 Bf8 29
43.Qd7+ 56 Kg8 16 44.Qe6+ 37 Kg7
23 45.Qd7+ 1:33 Kg8 6 46.Qxb5 30
Qxa2 1:00 47.Qc5 33 Kh7 12 48.Rxf8
16

Weighted Error Value: White=0.38/
Black=0.61

1-0

□ Mallela,Abhishek

A01

2127

■ Chen,Quincy

2050

2025 Winter TNM: 2000+ (7.2) 16.12.25

[Winslow,Elliott]

Chen joined Tsodikova for 2nd-3rd with a quick win, using a radical response to Mallela's 1.b3. Castling queenside might have been too offbeat; Mallela was looking good for a while there (maybe *he* should have 0-0-0ed as well!), but he lost his way around move 23, and Chen took over. 1.b3 5 e5 9 2.Bb2 7 Nc6 6 3.Nf3 21 e4 28 4.Nd4 7 Nxd4 14 5.Bxd4 7 d5 4 6.e3 5 Nf6 44

[6...h5±]

7.Bb2 46

[7.c4!±]

7...Bd6 2:31 8.c4 49 Black is slightly better. 8...c6 27 9.cxd5N 7

[9.d3 0-0 10.dxe4 Nxe4 11.Bd3 Bb4+ 12.Kf1 f5 13.a3 Qh4 14.Qe2 Bd6 15.cxd5 cxd5 0-1 (24) Ladan,N (2105)-Le Goff,R (2299) Chess.com INT 2022]

9...cxd5 6 10.Bb5+ 21 Bd7 14

[10...Kf8!±]

11.Bxf6= 1:39 gxf6 3:58 12.Bxd7+ 28 Qxd7 15 13.Nc3 2:18 Be5 1:25

[13...Rg8 should be considered.]

14.f4 48 Bxc3 11:36 15.dxc3 6

(Diagram)

Rg8 4:22

[15...Ke7=]

16.g3 1:16

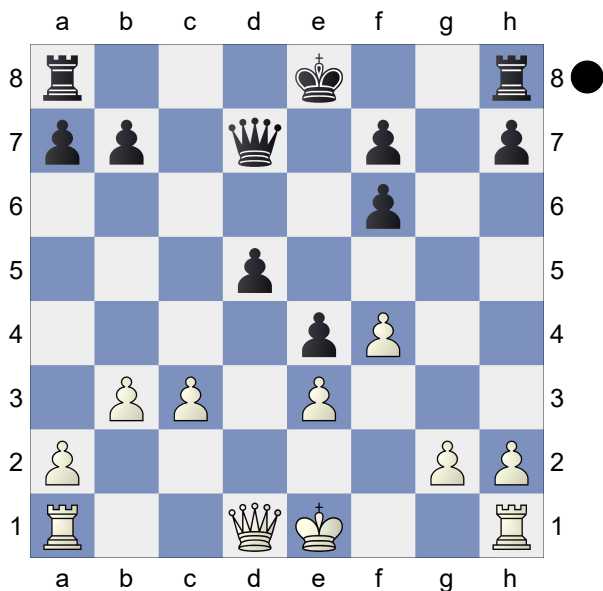
[16.Qd2±]

16...0-0-0? 3:11

[16...Rc8= remains equal. 17.Rc1 Ke7]

[16...Ke7!?= as well: in spite of the ruined pawns, Black is okay.]

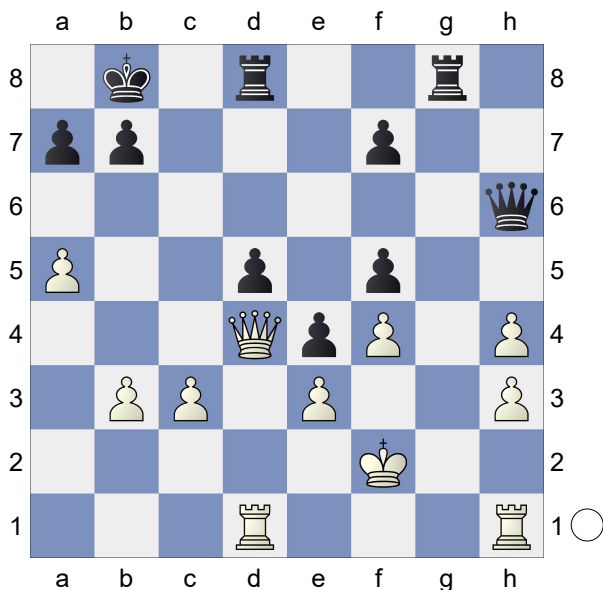
17.Qd4± 1:00 A simple double attack --



should be a plus... 17...Qc6 32 18.Kf2 2:00

[18.Qxa7? Qxc3+ 19.Kf1 Qxa1+-+]
[18.0-0-0± White's king heads for b2,
while Black's pawns are still hanging.]

18...Kb8 40 19.Rad1 47 Qe6 2:01
20.h3 48 h5 1:27 21.a4 2:23 f5 6:19
22.a5 3:44 h4 23.gxh4 6:54
[23.Rhg1=]
23...Qh6! 37

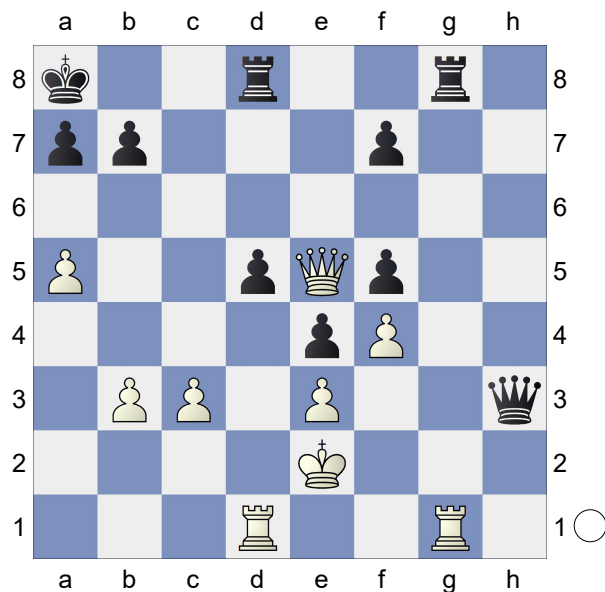


Really sharp! 24.Qe5+? 23 Now White is beyond hope.

[Better is 24.Rdg1 37]

24...Ka8-+ 9 25.Rhg1 17:26
[25.Rdg1 d4 (25...Qxh4+?

26.Ke2-+) 26.Rxg8 (26.cxd4?
perishes. Qh5-+) 26...Rxg8 27.Qxf5]
25...Qxh4+ 22 26.Ke2 41 Qxh3 1:51

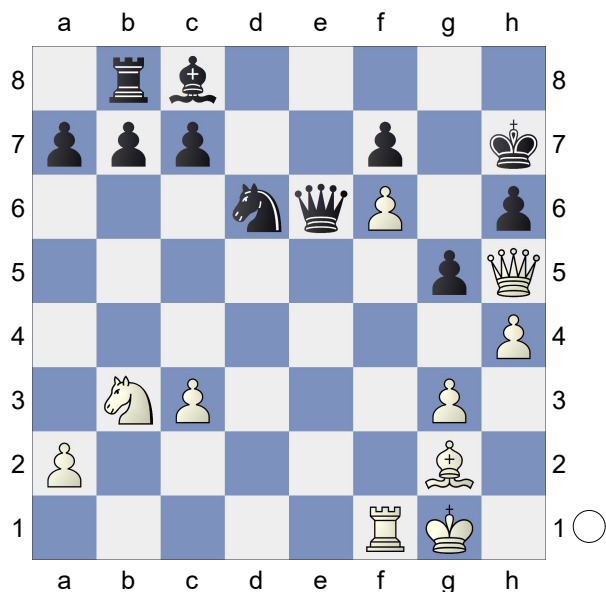


(-> ...Qh2+) 27.Rg5? 2:27 Qh2+ 24
And because of the pinned f-pawn, Black wins the rook on g5! Weighted Error Value: White=0.94/Black=0.18 (very precise)
0-1

□ Cafiero, Michael A17 1806
■ Marvin, Hayes Alexander 1922
2025 Winter TNM: 1600-1999 (6.5)
[Winslow, Elliott]

Michael Cafiero finished strong, two Whites, two English Openings, two wins. But this game wasn't going his way at *all* -- Hayes Marvin had him totally on the ropes. He messed up once two often, well twice, turning a win to a draw to a loss. 1.c4 4 e6 4 2.Nc3 7 Bb4 5 3.g3 9 Nf6 6 4.Bg2 32 0-0 11 5.Nf3 34 d6 29 6.0-0 20 Bxc3 7 7.bxc3 31 Nbd7 14 8.Rb1 2:11 Rb8 25 9.Nd4 10:34 Nb6 2:34 10.d3 1:29 e5 27 11.Nb3 1:02 Qe7 5:04 12.f4 11:31 e4 1:12 13.f5 4:06 h6 3:56 14.Qc2 4:05 Re8 58

15.c5 2:30 exd3 2:01 16.exd3 17 dxc5
 8 17.Bf4 9:04 c4 4:30 18.dxc4 1:41
 Nxc4 28 19.Rbe1 5:26 Qd7 1:54
 20.Rxe8+ 24 Nxe8 23 21.Qe2 9:34
 Ned6 5:09 22.f6 2:01 g5 2:34 23.Bxd6
 9:34 Nxd6 40 24.h4 4:46 Qe6 1:44
 25.Qh5 1:26 Kh7 1:37



26.Qf3? 3:22

[26.hxg5 Qe3+ 27.Rf2 Qxg5±]
 [26.Nc5 Qe3+ 27.Kh2 Bg4!=
 (27...Qxc5? 28.Be4+!!+-)]

26...Qg4+- 1:18 27.Qd3+ 1:29 Bf5 1:26
 28.Rxf5 52 Qxf5 2:01 29.Qxf5+ 8 Nxf5
 3 30.Be4 2 Kg6 9 31.g4 1:19 Kxf6
 1:10 32.hxg5+ 2:38 Kxg5 7 33.gxf5 23
 b6 43 34.Nd4 12 a5 37 35.Kf2 21 Re8
 1:07 36.Ke3 28 h5 41 37.Nf3+ 12 Kg4
 20 38.Nh2+ 23 Kg3 50 39.Nf1+ 12

(Diagram)

Kh3?? 10

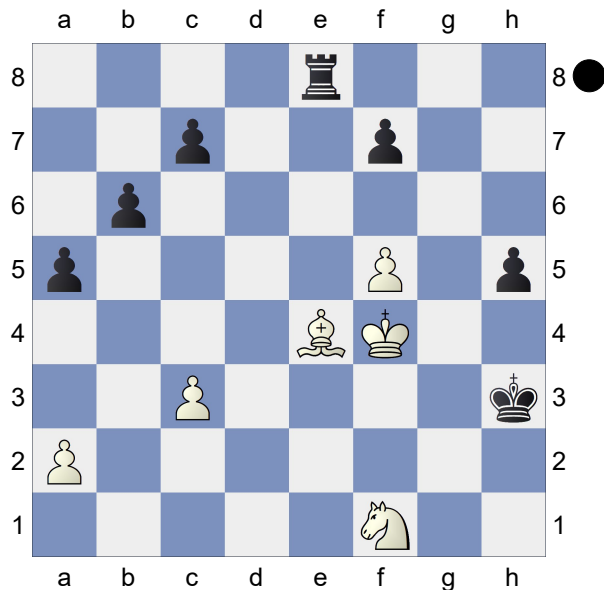
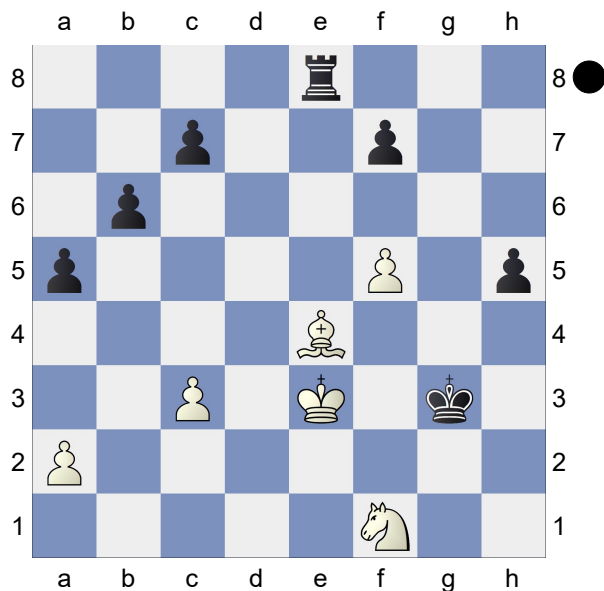
[39...Kg4+-]

40.Kf4= 2:03

(Diagram)

Rg8 36

[40...Rxe4+!? 41.Kxe4 Kg2 42.Ne3+
 Kg3= h-pawn vs. knight often turns



out well for the pawn. (42...Kf2=)
 41.f6 1:50 Rg1 1:11

(Diagram)

42.Nd2? 51

[42.Ne3+-]

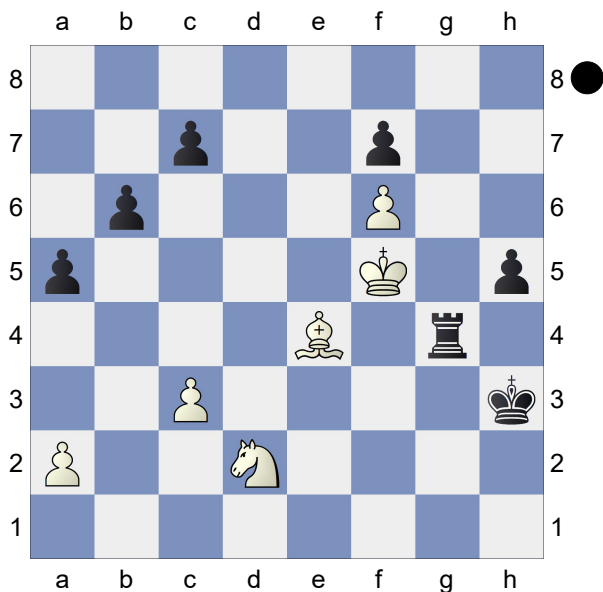
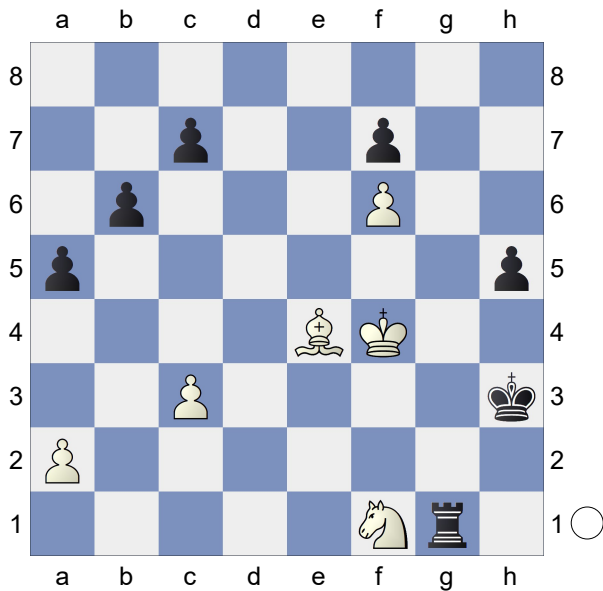
42...Rg4+ 50 43.Kf5 1:36

(Diagram)

Kg3? 37

[43...Kh4 44.Nf3+ Kg3± !=]

44.Bd5 1:19 Rf4+ 44 45.Kg5 33 h4
 1:31 46.Ne4+ 38 Kf3 3 47.Nd2+ 22



Kg3 12 48.Ne4+ 4 Kf3 5 49.Nd6+ 58
Kg3 1:16 50.Nf5+ 18 That was a close
 call!
1-0

A29
1806
1769
 2025 TNM: 1600-1999 (7.5) 16.12.2025
 [Winslow,Elliott]

Black loses the exchange quite early, but
 it is noteworthy that Cafiero handles the
 English Opening smoothly; often a sign

of positional excellence. Hmm, I used to
 play it, did I know what I was doing?
 Why did I even give it up? 1...e5? Bah!
1.c4 e5 17 2.Nc3 49 Nf6 9 3.Nf3 12
Nc6 25 4.g3 6 Bb4 1:09 5.Bg2 23 0-0
32 6.0-0 10 This used to be a line for
 the stars, but it's been passed by for
 some reason, all the 2700 games are
 from 8-10 years ago. I don't know what
 made them give it up, it's like an
 abandoned town. (I know my own
 quitting 1.c4 has nothing to do with the
 2700-plus world...) **6...Bxc3 3:46**

[6...e4 even has a plus score in the
 database.]

[6...Re8 was Carlsen's only
 appearance among all the other
 superstars 7.Nd5 Nxd5 8.cxd5 Nd4
 9.Nxd4 exd4 10.Qa4 a5 11.e3 b5
 1/2-1/2 (41) So,W (2788)-Carlsen,M
 (2863) Shamkir 2015]

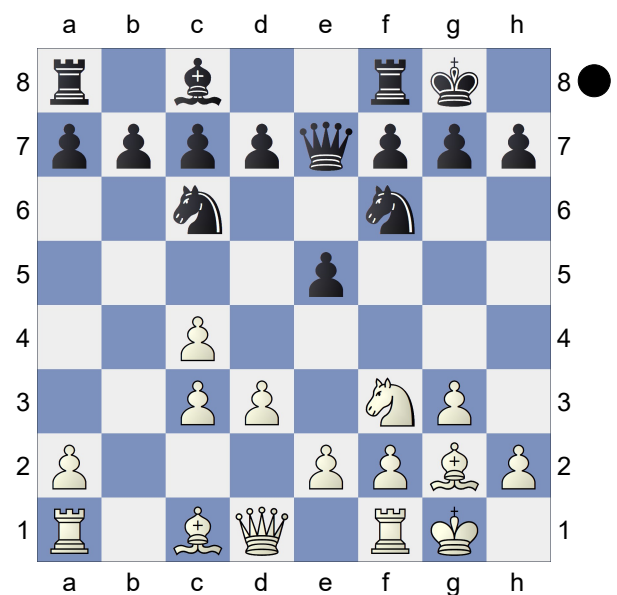
7.bxc3 11 Qe7 2:20

[7...Re8!?]

[7...e4!? 8.Nd4 Re8 9.d3 exd3
 10.exd3 Nxd4 11.cxd4 d5

Black takes shots at White's "blob"
 of pawns in the center, with good play.]

8.d3 3:20



d5N 3:51

[This isn't a game: 8...d6 9.e4 Rb8

10.h3 a6 11.a4 b5 12.axb5 axb5
 13.cxb5 Rxb5 14.Re1 Bd7 15.d4
 Rfb8 ½-½ (15) Timoshenko,G (2560)-
 Zinchenko,Y (2516) Tashkent 2008]
9.cxd5 2:10 Nxd5 9 10.Qb3 1:29 Nb6
13:20 11.Ba3 1:31 Qd8 6:12 12.Bxf8
10 Qxf8 1:36 13.c4 6:01 Qe7 4:16
14.e3 2:41 e4 6:23 15.Nd4 3:00 Ne5
3:34 16.Bxe4 42 Nexc4 8 17.Qc2 9:35
Nd6 1:41 18.Bg2 16 c6 2:13 19.a4
1:59 Bd7 3:26 20.e4 3:45 Rc8 4:44
21.a5 1:34 Na8 15 22.Rab1 1:02 Nc7
3:01 23.Qc5 2:13 Ncb5 4:40 24.e5
1:55 Nxd4 2:52 25.exd6 1:27 Qf6 4:43
26.Rxb7 1:14 Be6 1:39 27.d7 36 Rd8
1:40 28.Re1 1:36 h6 6:09 29.Qe5 2:01
Nf3+ 32 30.Bxf3 4 Qxf3 5 31.Qe4 30
Qh5 1:03 32.Qxc6 38 Bd5 34 33.Qc7
5:43 Qf3 5:46 34.Qxd8+ 20 Kh7 5
35.Re4 1:32 Bxb7 2:07 36.Qe7 1:13 f5
38 37.d8Q 1:07 fxe4 28 38.Qdf8 1:18
Qd1+ 1:00 39.Kg2 25 exd3+ 2:15
40.Qxb7 8 Qa1 23 41.Qe4+ 7 g6 14
42.Qee7+ 5 Qg7 5 43.Qexg7# 4
1-0

□ Dees,Calvin

■ Latourette,Nicholas James

2025 Winter TNM: 1600-1999 (6.13)

[Winslow,Elliott]

D53

1518

1634

Dees somehow slipped through the line with a half-point bye in the last round to take clear 2nd in the 1600-1999 section. It was like a well-executed football running play, and he wasn't even on the field. It's a win against Nick Latourette, so successful last TNM but not so here.

1.Nf3 d5 2.d4 Nf6 3.c4 e6 4.Nc3 c6
"Meran?" 5.Bg5 "No, Botvinnik?"

[5.e3 is the Meran]

5...Be7

[5...dxc4 is the Botvinnik 6.e4 b5

7.e5 h6]

[5...h6 preempts the above, since 6.Bh4 dxc4 7.e4 g5 Black "gets there first." But it's still very complicated!]

[5...h6 6.Bxf6 Qxf6 is the quieter line, although it can get frisky when White plays a la Catalan, 7.g3

(nothing wrong with 7.e3 although it's a bit staid)]

[5...Nbd7 6.e3 Qa5

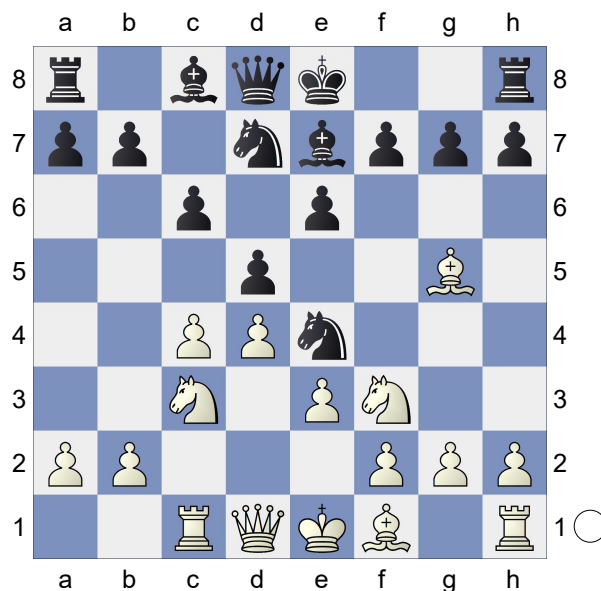
is the Cambridge Springs, still unusual and interesting.]

6.e3 Nbd7 and we've come around to the Orthodox Queen's Gambit Declined, with Black committed early to ...c6.

7.Rc1

[I used to think the right answer to the ...c6 already in was 7.Qc2 and 0-0-0, but lately I've seen otherwise. Still, I 0-0 whenever I can. :-)]

7...Ne4



8.Bf4?!

[8.Bxe7

A) 8...Nxc3 9.Rxc3± Qxe7
10.Qc2 (10.Be2);

B) 8...Qxe7 9.Bd3± Nxc3
10.Rxc3]

8...Qa5?!

[8...g5! Black is already calling shots

and discomfoting White (especially his bishop).]

9.Qc2?!

[9.Bd3! Nxc3 10.bxc3 Qxa2?!
11.c5!±]

9...h6?

[9...g5 10.Be5 Nxe5 11.Nxe5 f6
12.Nf3 g4 13.Nd2 f5]

10.Bd3 Ndf6

[♠10...Nxc3 11.bxc3 dxc4
12.Bxc4±]

11.0-0

[11.Ne5!]

11...Nxc3 12.bxc3 dxc4 13.Bxc4 0-0

14.Ne5 Nd5

[14...c5]

15.Bg3 Ba3 16.Rb1 Nxc3

[16...Qxc3?? 17.Qxc3 Nxc3
18.Rb3]

17.Rb3+- The development avalanche is worth way more than an irrelevant pawn.

17...Nd5 18.Bd3?!

[18.e4 Nb6 19.Bf4]

18...Nf6?

[18...Be7 19.e4±]

19.Nc4+- Qd5 20.Rxa3 b5 21.Ne5

Bb7 22.Rc1 c5 23.Bf1 c4 24.Ra5 a6

25.f3 Qd8 26.Qd2 Nd5 27.Nxc4 bxc4

28.Rc5 c3 29.Qf2 Rc8 30.e4 Rxc5

31.dxc5 Nb4 32.Rxc3 Qa5 33.Rb3

Ba8 34.Bd6 Rc8 35.Qd2 Nc6

36.Qxa5 Nxa5 37.Bxa6 Nxb3 38.Bxc8

Bc6 39.axb3

1-0

□ **Cao,Danny Du Uy**

C00

1159

■ **Mehta,Soham**

1407

2025 Winter TNM: u1600 (6.6) 09.12.25

[Cao,Danny Du Uy]

Apologies to Soham: I wanted to include this and his game with Richard Hack, which I see now is "broken" (the moves

don't work). I'll fix it for later, and wish

I'd expanded Danny's notes! **1.e4 5 e6 4**

2.d3 20 d5 10 3.Nd2 18 c5 29 4.Ngf3

28 Nc6 41 5.g3 18 Nf6 2:17 6.Bg2

1:52 b5 49 7.0-0 1:13 Be7 49 8.Re1

1:29 0-0 50 9.e5 39 Nd7 14 10.Nf1

1:22 Bb7 1:05 11.h4 1:30 Qc7 1:46

12.Bf4 41 Rac8 2:31 13.N1h2 1:23

[13.Ng5 Ncxe5]

[13.Ne3]

13...a5 3:06

[Ng5 13...Ndxe5 Qh5 h6 14.Bxe5

Nxe5]

14.h5 6:21

[14.c3]

14...h6 40 15.Ng4 1:56

[15.c3]

15...Kh7 1:53 16.d4 5:06

[16.c3]

16...cxd4 4:55 17.Nxd4 2:37

[17.Qd3+ Kh8 18.Nxd4 Nxd4

19.Qxd4 Qxc2]

17...Nxd4 9 18.Qxd4 3:39

[18.Qd3+ Nf5]

18...Qxc2 1:47 19.Rac1

[19.Ne3 Qc5 20.Qxc5 Rxc5]

[19.Qa7]

19...Qf5 52 20.Bh3 3:16

[20.Bf3]

[20.Qa7 Qxg4 21.Qxb7]

20...Qxh5 1:45 21.Kg2 5:46 Rc4 7:47

22.Rxc4 2:15

[22.Qa7 Rxc1 23.Rxc1 Nc5

(23...Rb8 24.Qxa5) 24.Qxa5]

22...bxc4 7

[22...dxc4+ 23.f3]

23.Qa7 3:47 Rb8 49

[23...Nc5 24.Be3]

24.Qxa5 3:22

[24.Qd4]

[24.Qe3]

24...Bc6 22 25.Qc7 1:38

[25.Qc3]

25...Ba4 14 26.Rh1 5:17

[26.Rb1]

26...Rxb2 50 27.Ne3 5:17 Qe2 2:04
 28.Rf1 4:26 g5 47 29.Nxd5 5:30 Qe4+ 1:07
 [29...exd5 30.Bxd7]
 30.Kg1 1:39 Qxd5 27 31.Bg2 1:14 Qc5 41
 32.Be4+ 3:14 Kg7 27 33.Qxc5 1:17 Bxc5 8
 34.Bc1 55 Rxa2 15 35.Bb1 2:42 Re2 10
 [35...Ra1 36.Bb2]
 36.Kg2 1:33 Bc6+ 28 37.Kg1 1:29 Nxe5 15
 38.Be3 2:51 Nf3+ 47 39.Kg2 40 Bxe3 6
 40.Kh3 1:08 g4+ 48 41.Kg2 20
 [41.Kxg4 Nh2+]
 41...Nd2+ 14 42.Kh2 58 Nxf1+ 6
 43.Kg1 28 Rxf2 11 44.Be4 59 Rf4+ 30
 45.Kg2 56 Bxe4# 6
 0-1

□ Mehta,Soham D31 1407
 ■ Robins,Alexander 1268
 2025 TNM: u1600 (7.6) 16.12.2025
 [Winslow,Elliott]

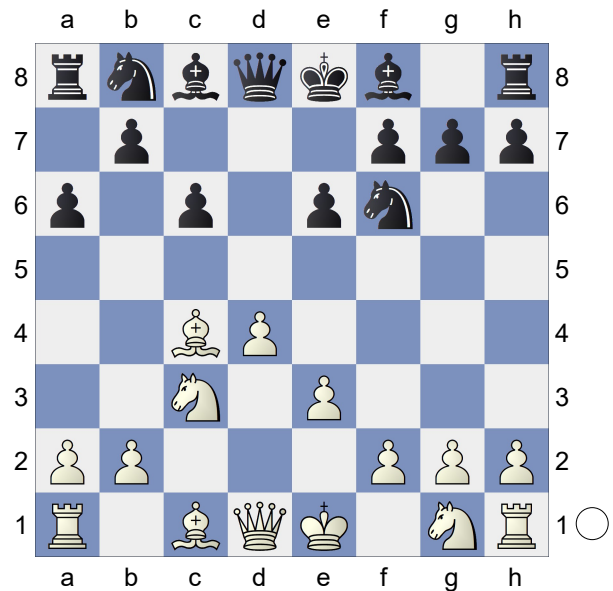
When I was talking to Alex about games for the Newsletter, he made the mistake of mentioning his last game where he hung his queen, and I agreed that didn't sound like great material. But in fact it was an interesting game to get there, and it *was* against the tournament winner in the last round, and, well... Sorry Alex! In any case, Mehta closes out with a point ahead of the field. Well done! Soham is still under 1600, but not for long! 1.d4 2 d5 7 2.c4 6 c6 3 3.Nc3 4 Nf6 6 4.e3 21 e6 17 5.Bd3 16
 [5.Nf3 would certainly be a Meran Defense, which is still going. I don't know what's happened to all the amazing "Big Slide" variations, that have been worked out since a hundred years ago! Wait, John

Donaldson is doing the pre-TNM lecture next week, and he even had a book on the Meran, maybe he knows.]

5...dxc4 21 (It can't be wrong to grab the tempo right away.)

[5...Nbd7 6.Nf3 dxc4 (6...Bd6!?)
 7.Bxc4 b5 and it's starting to happen. It's like a Go joseki (Go is the asian board game, harder than chess and more elegant -- there, I've said it!)(and joseki is the opening play in one (of the four!!) corners) -- the lines are forced and forcing, go on and on, leading to **more** complications...]

6.Bxc4 6 a6 36



7.Nge2 1:14 ("Different" but unjustified. f3 is The Square for that knight. White should probably just put it there now.)

[7.a4 stops ...b5 but not ...c5, and now b4 is all Black's]

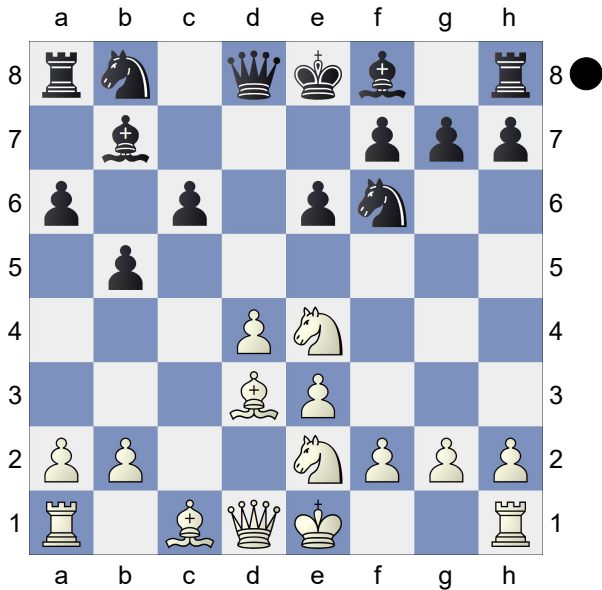
[7.Bb3 anticipates getting hit by ...b5 but so what.]

7...b5 1:24 8.Bd3?! 16

[8.Bb3 c5 9.e4!? b4? 10.Na4 Nxe4? 11.Qc2+- White takes the c-pawn with a big position. The knight then has b6 and no worries.]

8...Bb7 58 A taste of the Meran -- this is

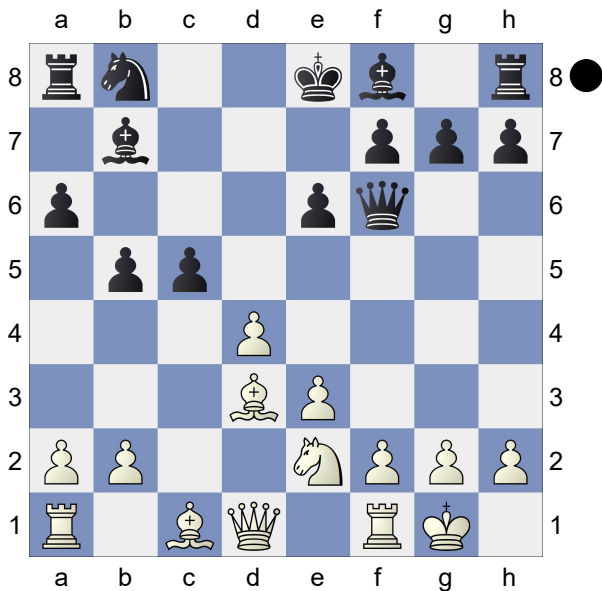
one possibility,
[8...c5 an other.]
9.Ne4!? 1:50



c5 11:52
[9...Nbd7 first is a bit more logical --
in any case Black is fine.]

10.Nxf6+?! 2:17
[10.Nxc5 Bxc5 11.dxc5 Bxg2
(a cost of Nge2 -- the diagonal is
open) 12.Rg1 Bf3 is not so bad for
White, Black misses the dark-square
bishop. Stockfish makes it 0.00]

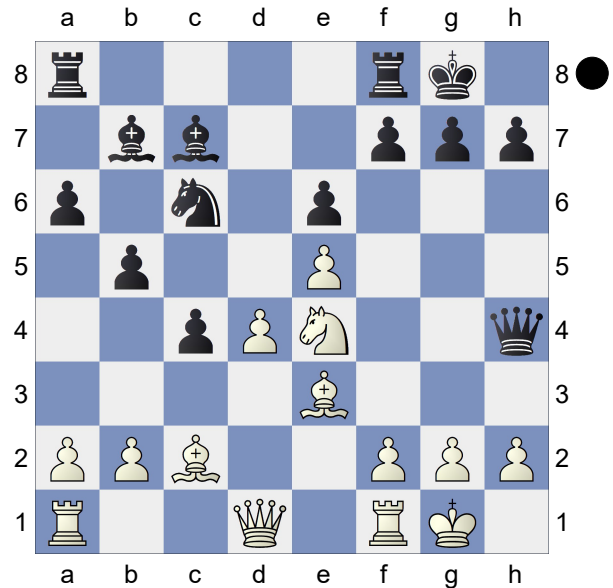
10...Qxf6 20 (= it's not much, but I've
blinked and it hasn't gone to 0.00, so
maybe Black has something. **11.0-0 20**



c4?! 1:17 (keep the tension!)

[11...Nd7! 12.Ng3 cxd4 13.Be4
Bxe4 14.Nxe4 Qe5 15.Qxd4 Qxd4
16.exd4 Nb6 it's not much, but Black
has pluses to work with here. White
easily gets outplayed in the endings to
come.]

**12.Bc2 1:07 Bd6 1:01 13.e4 3:01 Qh4
21 14.Ng3 1:33 0-0 2:12 15.e5 55 Bc7
26 16.Be3 11:08 Nc6 5:17 17.Ne4 22**



Nb4?? 13:33

[17...Nxe5? 18.g3 Bxe4!? 19.gxh4
Nf3+ 20.Kh1 Bd5±]
[17...f5! 18.Nc5! (18.Bg5 Qg4
19.Qxg4 fxg4 ≠) 18...Bc8 19.a4±]

**18.Bg5 35 Ayaaaa! 18...Bxe4 3:02
19.Bxh4 10 Bxc2 6 20.Qd2 26 a5 2:09
21.a3 4:50 Nd3 3:20 22.Qxc2 44 Rfd8
23.Bxd8 20
1-0**

□ **Patel,Milan**

■ **Menchchikov,A**

2025 TNM: u1600 (7.20)

[Winslow,Elliott]

A48

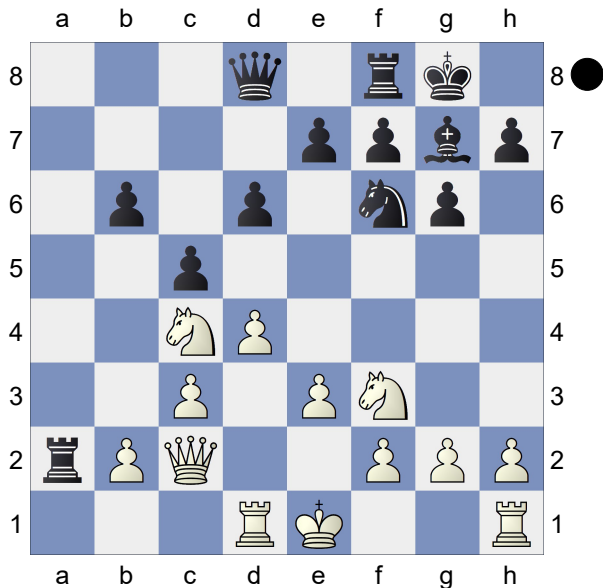
1380

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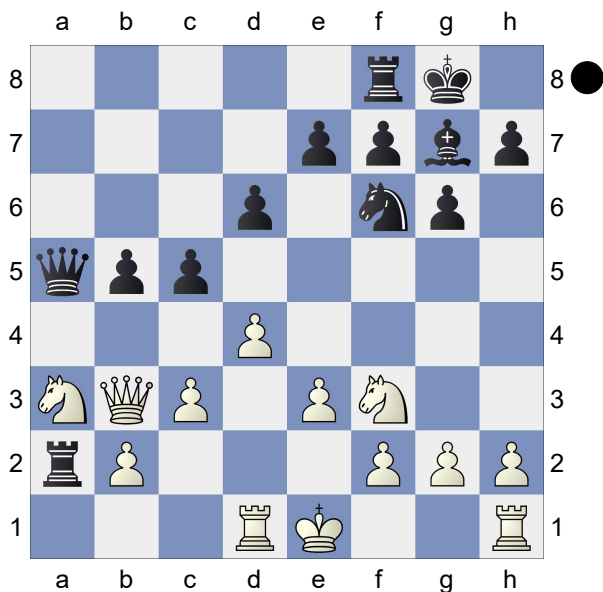
16.12.2025

Menchchikov recovered the a-pawn but
forgot to extract the rook. And then it

was trapped. And then Menchtchikov resigned, and Patel was clear 2nd.
BUT... 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bf4 g6
 4.e3 Bg7 5.Nbd2 0-0 6.Bd3 Nbd7
 7.c3 Re8 8.Qc2 c5 9.Rd1 b6 10.Bg5
 Bb7 11.Bb5 Rc8 12.Qa4 Rf8 13.Bxf6
 Nxf6 14.Qxa7 Bd5 15.Qa4 Ra8
 16.Qc2 Rxa2 17.Bc4 Bxc4 18.Nxc4



b5 19.Na3 Qa5 20.Qb3
 [20.Qb3 Rxa3!± and White's
 advantage after either recapture is
 there, but slight. Exchange for pawn,
 still needing to castle.]



Premature resignation!

1-0

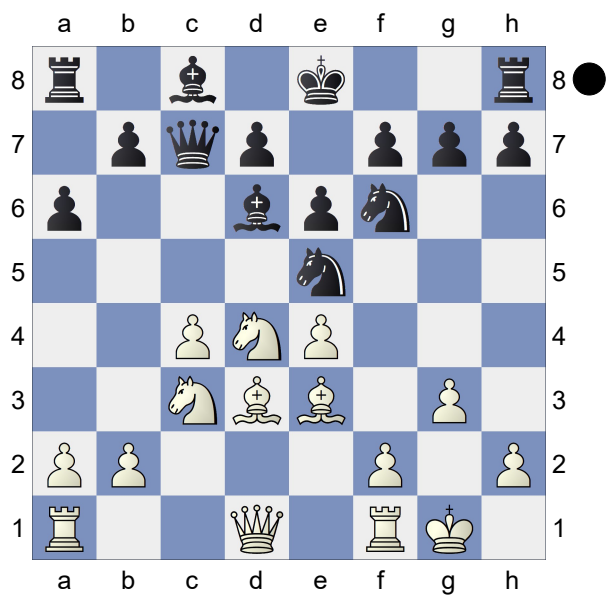
Ponnaluri,Naga Abhiram B42 1822
 Rajaram,Raghu 1839
 2025 Winter TNM: 2000+ (6.8) 09.12.25
[Winslow,Elliott]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4
a6 5.Be3 (Rare but not horrible) 5...Nf6
6.Bd3 Qc7
 [6...e5!?]
7.0-0
 [7.c4 Nc6 8.Nxc6 dxc6 9.f4 e5
 10.f5 Bb4+ 11.Nc3 c5 12.g4 h6
 13.h4 Bd7 14.Rg1 Bc6 15.Qc2
 Bxc3+ 16.bxc3 0-0-0 17.0-0-0 Qa5
 18.Rd2 Rxd3 19.Qxd3 Bxe4
 0-1 (19) Esipenko,A (2687)-Carlsen,M
 (2839) Chess.com INT 2025]

7...Nc6
 [7...d5!?]
8.c4
 [8.Nxc6! bxc6 (8...Qxc6 9.Nd2)
 9.c4]
 [8.Nxc6 dxc6 9.Nd2]
8...Bd6
 [8...Ne5]
9.g3
 [9.h3!±]
9...Ne5
 [9...h5]
10.Nc3

(Diagram)

Nxc4?? (Stock suicide) 11.Bxc4 Qxc4
12.Rc1 Qb4 13.a3 Qxb2 14.Na4
Qxa3 15.Nb6 Rb8 16.Nc2
1-0



Proper Etiquette for Offering a Draw in Chess

By IA/NTD Dr. Judit Sztaray

Offering a draw is a normal and respected part of chess, but how and when you do it matters. Good draw etiquette shows sportsmanship, respect for your opponent, and understanding of the game.

When to Offer a Draw

A draw should generally be offered only when the position on the board justifies it. Common situations include:

- Clearly equal positions with no realistic winning chances
- Repetition or fortress-like setups
- Endgames with insufficient material or balanced pawns
- Situations where both players have played accurately and progress has stalled

Avoid offering draws in clearly worse positions or very early in the game, as this can feel unsporting or distracting.

How to Offer a Draw

The correct procedure is simple:

1. Make your move on the board
2. Then say "I offer a draw"
3. Press your clock

The offer should be made **once**, calmly, and without any additional commentary. Never offer a draw before making your move.

What *Not* to Do

- Repeatedly offering draws
- Offering a draw during your opponent's turn
- Trying to negotiate ("It's a draw, right?")
- Offering a draw to distract your opponent

If your opponent declines, simply continue playing.

Important: If your opponent repeatedly offers draws, distracts you, or otherwise behaves improperly, you are entitled to **stop the clock and call the arbiter**. The arbiter may issue a **warning** and, in more serious or repeated cases, apply further penalties in accordance with the rules.

Responding to a Draw Offer

If you receive a draw offer:

- You may accept immediately.
- You may politely decline: verbally or by making a move.
- You may think during your time, without touching the clock.

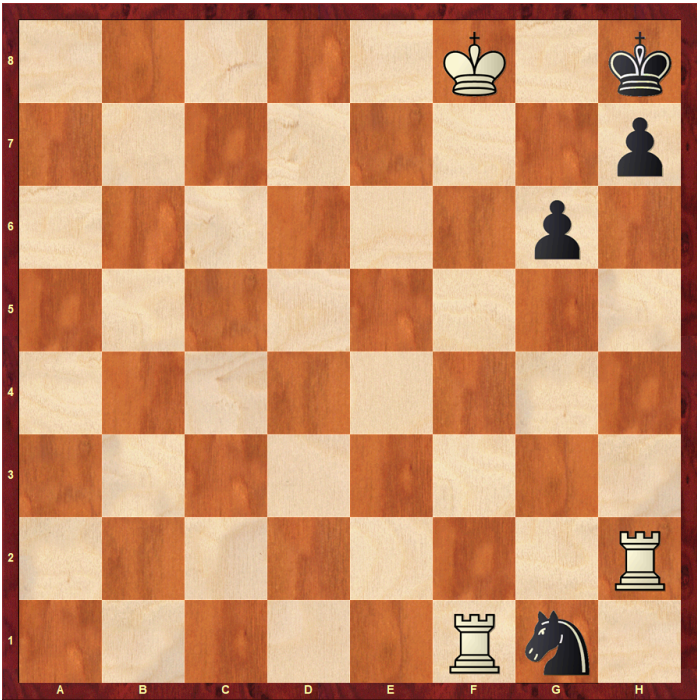
No explanation is required either way.

Final Thoughts

A well-timed draw offer reflects chess maturity. Let the board position guide you, keep communication brief and respectful, and remember: **the best draw offers feel natural, not forced**.

Tony's Teasers

Kenneth Howard, 1925.
White mates in 3 moves.



Solutions

For Tony's Teaser:

1. Rf6! And now black is in zugzwang. If 1...g5 2.Rg6!, h5 3.Rxh5# if 1...h5
2.Rxh5+!, gxh5 3. Rh6#

Contact Us

Mechanics' Institute Chess Club is on the 4th floor at 57 Post Street, San Francisco, CA.
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