

A world-class gathering
at a private party

The spirit of Amber in Amsterdam



NEW IN CHESS

Ilya and Adele Levitov with their young son and their special guests in front of the Waldorf Astoria: Anish Giri, Evgeny Bareev, Boris Gelfand, Vladimir Kramnik, Vishy Anand, Peter Svidler, Alexander Grischuk and Ian Nepomniachtchi.

The Levitov Chess Week will in all likelihood go down in history as the most unusual chess tournament of 2019. Eight top GMs competed at the Waldorf Astoria in Amsterdam, almost unnoticed, including Vladimir Kramnik, who briefly came out of retirement. **DIRK JAN TEN GEUZENDAM** joined the happy few.

What do you do to celebrate your 40th birthday? For Ilya Levitov it was an apt moment to make an old dream reality: to organize a private chess tournament. A tournament just for himself, a fine selection of grandmasters that he knew well, family and friends, and invited guests. In grand surroundings with nothing left to desire. His inspiration was the exclusive Amber tournament in Monaco that he had visited several times and where the players worked in secluded luxury and enjoyed each other's company after the games.

But he even went a step further. There was no need for spectators and the games were not broadcast live. In the evening, the games were sent to the main chess platforms and a daily recap by Peter Svidler was posted on YouTube (quite incredible, as Svidler also played himself and arrived jet-lagged in Amsterdam on the morning of the first day). In the meantime, everything was recorded by an omnipresent camera crew for a film by a leading Russian documentary maker.

Hanging out with the guys

Levitov had no wish to keep the event a secret; he just wanted his grandmaster friends to feel at ease and be allowed to create games that would not be rated. As he explained: 'For some reason I am upset with the situation in the chess world, especially with the role of the grandmasters. It's nobody's fault. The development of computer programs has made it clear that the grandmasters are no longer the magicians of the past, who knew more than the people who are watching the games. Now they know less. It's not that I don't want anybody to watch it, I just wanted to create a cosier atmosphere, so that they would feel as if they were playing more or less at home.'

And there was an added motivation: 'Lately I have been feeling that

chess is not a sport. It's more like an art, a social occasion; it's a game. And there is a big difference between sport and a game. Football is a game, but it's mostly sport. You're for somebody, you love some team, you want them to win. I don't see chess this way. It's more of a social thing, an intellectual thing. All this competitiveness at the top level, which has always been there – who is first in the rankings – I am not particularly interested in this aspect. For me it's much more important to hang out with the guys, because they are very interesting

'Chess is not for everybody. The game itself resists becoming too popular.'

people. I like being around chess players. That's my motivation for the tournament.'

Ilya Levitov's passion for chess first came to the attention of a wider circle when, together with Evgeny Bareev,

he wrote the award-winning modern classic *From London to Elista* (2007), a gripping insider account of the World Championship matches that Vladimir Kramnik won against Kasparov, Leko and Topalov. And from 2010 to 2014 he was the Executive Director of the Russian Chess Federation. In this capacity, he organized top-level events like the Tal Memorial and the 2012 World Championship match between Anand and Gelfand.

This time, his wish to organize a gathering of top players was purely private and had nothing to do with an urge to promote chess. 'Honestly speaking, I do not believe in the promotion of chess, because it's a very complex game. Chess, like classical music, is not for everybody. And there's nothing wrong with that. It's the best you can say about anything in the world right now, because everything is for everybody now. Chess is not for everybody. The game itself resists becoming too popular.'

Post-mortems returned!

The 'Levitov Chess Week' comprised three days of rapid chess, preceded by a blitz tournament and a classical



Chess for fun in the hospitality room with Genna Sosonko, Jeroen Piket, Peter and Olga Svidler, Jan Gustafsson, Judit Polgar and Anish Giri.

NEW IN CHESS

music concert by world-renowned musicians flown in from Moscow. For his venue, Levitov had chosen the Amsterdam Waldorf Astoria, an oasis of rest and luxury spread over six connected historical houses on Herengracht, the street along the city's most prestigious canal. Each round was divided into two two-game sessions, and at the request of the host, the players not playing followed the action in the hospitality room.

This, as Svidler noted, had a remarkable effect: post-mortems returned! Said Svidler: 'If you stop to think about it, it's really not a miracle that they disappeared. You just feel the futility of it, because you know you can spend two hours shuffling around pieces and then the computer will give you the answer in a couple of seconds. But when they do come back, it's very enjoyable, because this is a company of people who have known each other for ages, and for us to just sit at the board and discuss chess is very enjoyable.'

Not only chess-technical issues were discussed; there was also a lot of reminiscing, which actually added some useful footnotes to chess history. One day, the story was told of a young Kramnik who had gone out late during the 1993 VSB tournament in Amsterdam. He had done so in the company of Ivan Sokolov and it had been so late that Sokolov had spent the night in Kramnik's room. When Kramnik woke up, he asked who he was playing and with barely concealed worry, Sokolov said, 'Anand, with Black'. To which Kramnik replied, 'Ah, Anand with Black, couldn't be better!' A nice story, but Levitov added an important detail. It had not been a show of youthful self-confidence, but a sign of relief, since Kramnik had already prepared his opening for Anand.

And on the subject of Kramnik preparation, Anand revealed why 'Vladi' had made a very short draw



Vishy Anand and Peter Svidler in a light-hearted mood at the start of their last-round game that would end in an atypical loss in 23 moves for the former World Champion.

with the white pieces in his 1994 Candidates match against Yudasin, after he had won the first game with Black. Before the game, his second Tseshkovsky had provided him with a useful suggestion in the Sveshnikov, but in the playing hall Kramnik discovered – as he should have known, of course – that he was playing White!

Back to his best years

Only the youngsters Giri and Nepomniachtchi found it hard to completely detach themselves from their beloved

the final round was between them and Alexander Grischuk who, besides the starting fees, had persuaded Levitov to have a prize-fund and proved once more that such a stimulus works for him. 'Nepo' and Grischuk finished with the same number of points, but Nepomniachtchi was declared the winner of the 5,000 euro first prize on tiebreak.

At the end of this article, Nepomniachtchi annotates his win against Kramnik and has an interesting suggestion for Ilya Levitov in case he is going to organize another event. But first we'll look at some further highlights from a memorable tournament that produced a fine harvest of creative games. The notes are based on Peter Svidler's daily YouTube recaps and suggestions by Anish Giri.

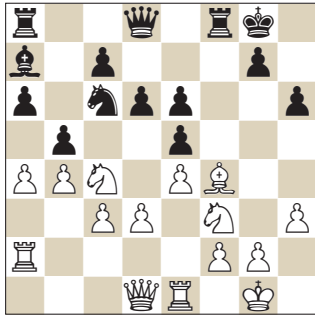
To begin with, a win by Anand against his old rival, about which Svidler said: 'It felt like Vishy was back to his best years.' After the second day Anand was half a point behind the leading Nepomniachtchi, but the Indian dropped back on the final day.

'For us to just sit at the board and discuss chess is very enjoyable.'

laptops. The Dutchman even had it with him all the time. Perhaps not surprisingly, the fight for first place in

Vishy Anand
Vladimir Kramnik
 Amsterdam rapid 2019 (4)
 Italian Game, Giuoco Piano

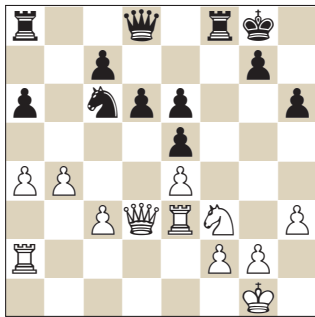
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5
 4.0-0 ♗f6 5.d3 d6 6.c3 a6 7.a4
 ♙a7 8.♞e1 0-0 9.h3 h6 10.♗bd2
 ♙e6 11.♙xe6 fxe6 12.b4 ♗h5
 13.♞a2 ♗f4 14.♗c4 b5 15.♙xf4



15...bxc4?

Better was 15...♞xf4, but Kramnik probably felt that after 16.♗cd2 White's play on the queenside was more promising than Black's counter-chances on the kingside.

16.♙e3 ♙xe3 17.♞xe3 cxd3
 18.♞xd3

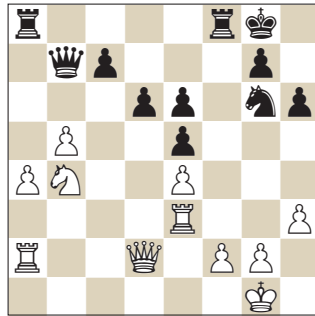


But this is a very pleasant position for White, and with pointed play Anand further increases his influence on the queenside. Watch how his knight on f3 will soon occupy a dominant position on c6!

18...♗e7 19.c4! ♞b8 20.♞d2
 ♞b7 21.♗e1 ♞ad8 22.b5 ♗g6

After 22...c6, 23.♞b2 cements White's advantage.

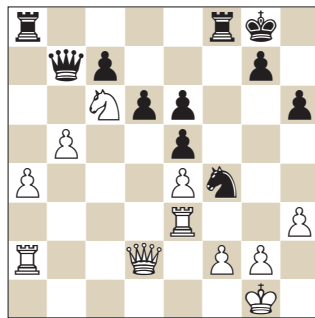
23.♗d3 axb5 24.cxb5 ♞a8
 25.♗b4



25...♗f4

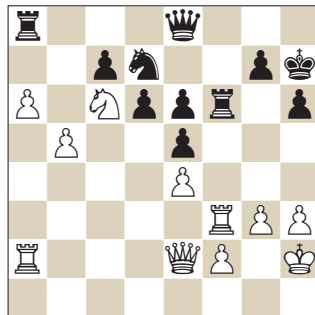
25...♗e7 was a better defence, but also insufficient after 26.♗a6!, when c7 and d6 are too vulnerable.

26.♗c6



There it is, exerting very annoying pressure and making the passed a-pawn an even bigger force. In fact, it will be unstoppable.

26...♗h7 27.♗h2 ♞f6 28.g3 ♗g6
 29.♞b3 ♗f8 30.a5 ♗d7 31.a6
 ♞c8 32.♞e2 ♞e8 33.♞f3

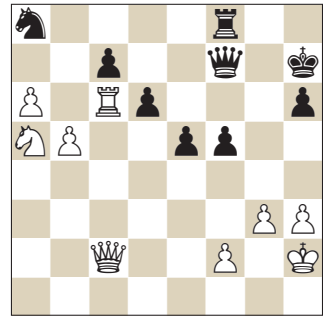


Trading off pieces only makes the situation on the queenside worse for Black.

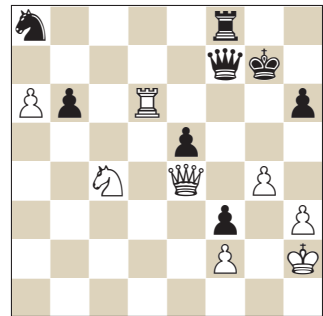
33...♞f7 34.♞xf6 gxf6 35.♞c2
 ♗b6 36.♗a5 f5 37.♞c6 ♞f8
 38.♞c2 Now there is only one way left to cling on to the c-pawn.

38...♗a8 39.exf5 exf5

But now Anand sacrifices one of his queenside pawns to fatally undermine Black's position.



40.b6! cxb6 41.♗c4 ♞g7
 42.♞xd6 f4 43.g4 f3 44.♞e4



Now Black's only move is 44...♞f4+, but after the exchange of queens his position is in ruins, so he resigned.

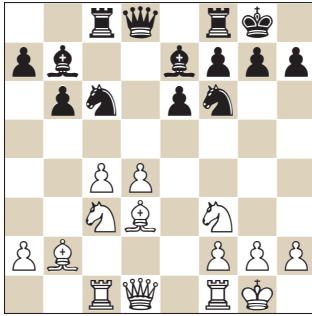
Don't tease Kramnik

Vladimir Kramnik was inevitably a bit rusty, but was ready to strike when the opportunity arose. Before this game, his friends were teasing him with his play on the first day, which may have had some effect.

Peter Svidler
Vladimir Kramnik
 Amsterdam rapid 2019 (6)
 Queen's Indian Defence

1.c4 e6 2.♗f3 ♗f6 3.b3 b6 4.♙b2
 ♙b7 5.e3 ♙e7 6.d4 0-0 7.♙d3
 c5 8.0-0 cxd4 9.exd4 d5 10.♗c3
 dxc4 11.bxc4 ♗c6 12.♞c1

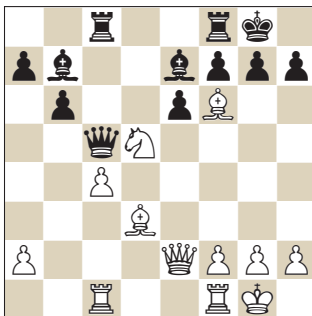
One of several choices White has here. Svidler also mentioned 12.♞e2.
 12...♞c8



13. ♖e2? This move leads to trouble. White should have played 13. ♖e1!, with the idea to meet 13... ♖b4 with 14. ♕f1, when after 14... ♕xf3 15. ♖xf3 ♖xd4 White has the strong 16. ♘d5.

13... ♖b4! A knight sortie that is quite unpleasant for White.

After the game Kramnik surprised Svidler by telling him that he had actually considered taking on d4. To make sure that no one will ever make this well-known mistake, Svidler showed the instructive punishment in his daily recap: 13... ♖xd4? 14. ♘xd4 ♖xd4 15. ♘d5 ♖c5 16. ♕xf6



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

16... ♕xf6 (also disastrous is 16... gx6 17. ♘xe7+ ♖xe7 18. ♖g4+ ♖h8 19. ♖h4, and the only way to stop 20. ♖xh7 mate is 19... f5, which loses the queen) 17. ♖e4. Again lethally eyeing h7: 17... g6 18. ♘xf6+ ♖g7 19. ♖xb7, and Black is a piece down.

14. ♕b1 ♕xf3 15. gxf3

Because 15. ♖xf3 ♖xc4 is not really an option. White seems to be holding some trump cards: the bishop pair and possible attacking chances along the g-file, too. But Kramnik finds a very strong continuation:

15... ♖h5! 16. a3?

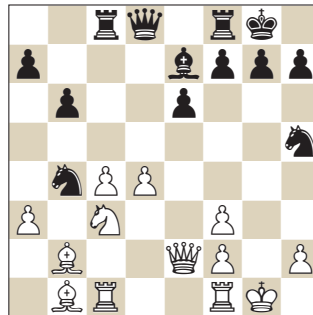


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Vladimir Kramnik briefly came out of retirement to meet old friends and, despite being a bit rusty, showing sparks of great chess.

Hoping for 16... ♘c6 17. d5, and things don't look all that bad for White. But Black does not need to withdraw the knight.

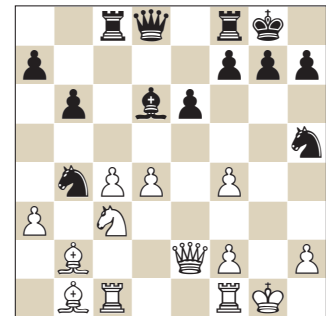
White should have tried 16. ♘e4, when Kramnik was planning to play 16... ♕g5 17. ♖c3 ♖f4, and although White is still in the game, this is a very unpleasant position to play.



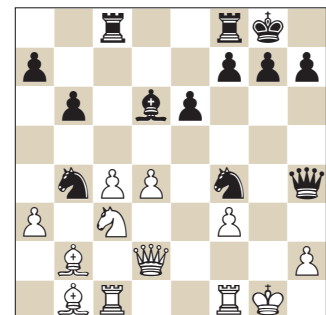
16... ♕d6! A killer. Suddenly White is totally lost. What to do against the threat of ... ♖g5+, followed by ... ♖f4, is the first question.

17. f4 Because 17. ♘e4 ♖h4 18. ♘xd6 ♖f4 was hopeless.

Another try that won't work was 17. ♖e4 f5 18. ♖xe6+ ♖h8, and all the threats are there again. Svidler gave the following nice line: 19. ♘e2 ♖c6 (threatening 20... ♕xf2+) 20. ♖e3 ♕xh2+ 21. ♖xh2 ♖h4+, followed by ... ♖g6+, and wins.



17... ♖h4! An aesthetic way to win.
18. f3 After 18. axb4 ♖xf4 19. ♖f3 ♘e2+ it's mate on h2.
18... ♖xf4 19. ♖d2



19... ♖bd3 A nice final shot. 0-1.

Rolling down the queenside

At 52, Evgeny Bareev was the oldest participant. After the following flashy win he thanked his daughters and grandchild, who had come to

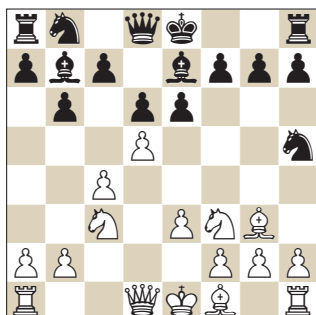
Amsterdam with him. This was the first game of his they watched in the hospitality room, and he urged them to do so more often.

**Evgeny Bareev
Boris Gelfand**

Amsterdam rapid 2019 (6)

Queen's Indian Defence

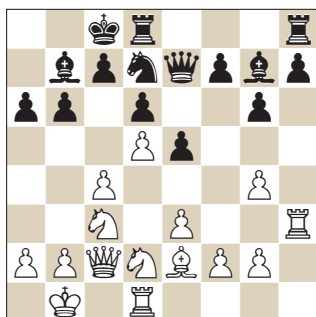
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.♗c3 ♘b7 5.♗f4 ♘e7 6.e3 ♗h5 7.♗g3 d6 8.d5!?



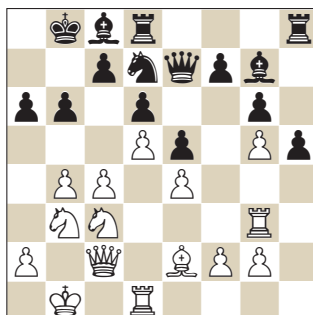
8...e5?! An understandable reply, but 8...♗f6! was stronger.

9.♗d2 g6 10.♗e2 ♗xg3 11.hxg3 ♗d7 12.g4! Forceful play, killing Black's kingside pawn mobility.
12...♗f6 13.♖c2 ♗g7 14.0-0-0 a6 15.♖h3 ♖e7 16.♗b1 0-0-0

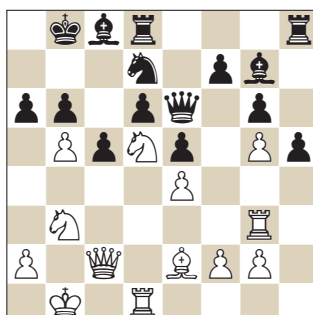
With the open h-file, it's understandable that Black castles queenside. But how safe is the king there?



17.e4! Now Black has no breaks and White will come rolling down the queenside. **17...♗b8 18.b4** Here we come. **18...♗f6 19.♗b3 ♗c8 20.♖g3 h5 21.g5 ♗d7** The white g-pawn may get lost at some point, but that's not what Bareev was worrying about.

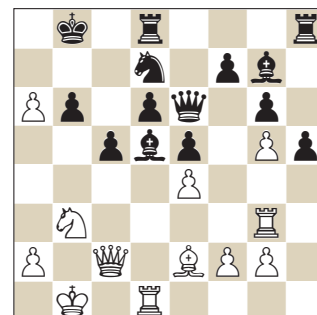


22.c5!? Making no secret of his intentions. More cautious would have been 22.♗a4, followed by ♖c3, to prepare the advance of the c-pawn. **22...dxc5 23.d6! cxd6 24.♗d5 ♖e6 25.b5!**



25...♗b7 Hoping to weather the storm by giving a pawn, when the white a-pawn might actually protect the black king. 25...a5 was clearly no option in view of 26.♗xa5!, followed by ♖a4 and ♖xa5, plus mate. Almost all white pieces are ready to join the attack, whereas Black's are mostly offside.

26.bxa6 ♗xd5



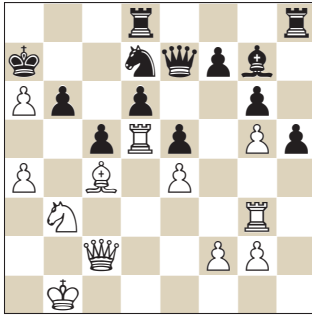
27.♖xd5 As pointed out by Svidler, more direct would have been 27.a7+ ♗xa7 28.♖xd5, and once the knight frees the way for the rook to the a-file, Black will be unable to save himself.

27...♗a7 28.♗c4 ♖e7 29.a4 Another invader joins the fray.



Evgeny Bareev with his daughters Anya and Olya and grandson Vova (Anya's son), who inspired him to create a classy attacking game against Boris Gelfand.

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29... ♖b8 A better defensive attempt was 29... ♖f8!?, although White retains good attacking chances after, for instance, 30. ♖c1 ♖e6 31. ♖e2 ♖d4 32. ♖b2 h4 33. ♖b3!?

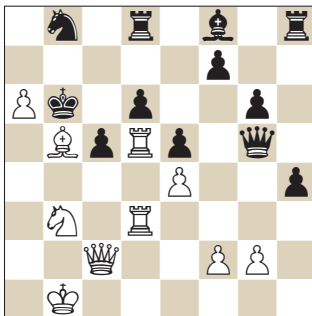
30. ♖b5!

Now White will soon crash through.

30... h4 31. ♖gd3 ♖xg5 There goes the pawn; but the real action is on the other side of the board.

32. a5 ♖f8 33. axb6+ ♖xb6

Time to wrap up:



34. ♖xc5 ♖a7 35. ♖b7 ♖e7 36. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 37. ♖c5+ ♖b6 38. ♖xb6+ ♖xb6 39. ♖b3 ♖a7 40. ♖c4 And Black resigned.

Fighting Nepo

In the last round but one, Giri had to beat Nepomniachtchi to catch up with him and Grischuk. He did so, but in the final round 'Nepo' decided the fight for first in his favour anyway.

Anish Giri

Ian Nepomniachtchi

Amsterdam rapid 2019 (6)

Caro-Kann Defence

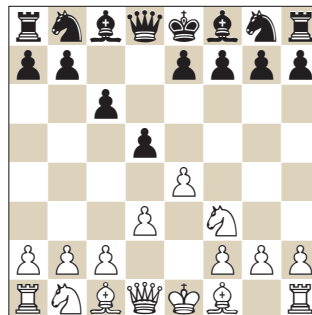
1. e4 c6 A regular choice of Nepomniachtchi of late.

2. ♖f3 d5 3. d3



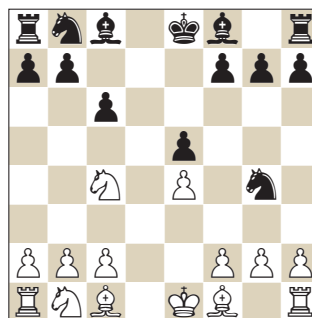
NEW IN CHESS

Spectating was an exclusive activity at the Waldorf Astoria, but besides Svidler's YouTube recaps an ever-present camera crew collected tons of footage for a chess film.



A rather unusual continuation, offering a queen swap and hoping for an edge in the resulting middlegame.

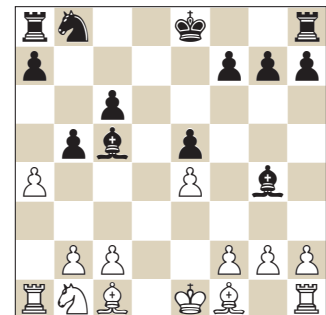
3... dxe4 4. dxe4 ♖xd1+ 5. ♖xd1 ♖f6 6. ♖fd2 ♖g4 7. ♖e1! e5 8. ♖c4



8... b5 8... ♖c5? looks tempting, but fails to 9. f3! ♖f2 10. b4! ♖d4 11. c3, and once Black has taken on h1 and White has taken the bishop, the black

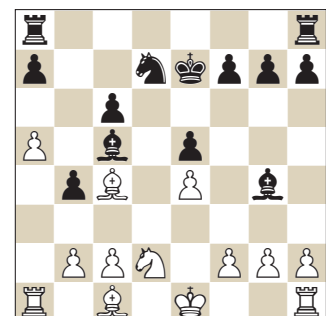
knight, together with Black, will be lost.

9. ♖e3 ♖c5 10. ♖xg4 ♖xg4 11. a4!



White has a very pleasant position thanks to the weak black queenside pawns and squares.

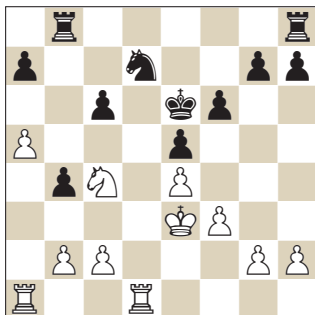
11... b4 12. a5!? ♖d7 13. ♖c4 ♖e7 14. ♖d2



14... ♖d6? This loses two tempi.

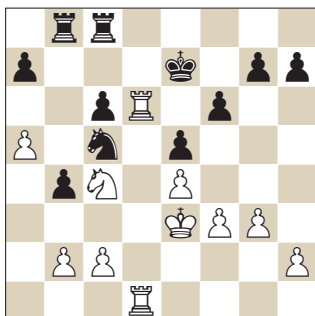
After 14...♖d4 15.f3 ♘e6 16.♘xe6 ♗xe6 White would still be better, but Black's situation would be less problematic than in the game.

15.f3 ♘e6 16.♘xe6 ♗xe6 17.♗c4 ♖ab8 18.♗e2 ♘c5 19.♗d1 f6 20.♘e3 ♘xe3 21.♗xe3

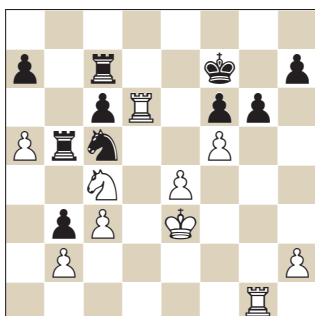


The situation doesn't look dramatic yet for Black, but White's advantage is considerable, thanks to his more active pieces.

21...♗e7 22.♗d6 ♖hc8 23.♗ad1 ♗c5 24.g3! Opening a second front.

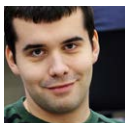


24...♖c7? Black could have put up more resistance with 24...♗d8! 25.f4 ♗b7. **25.f4 exf4+ 26.gxf4 ♖b5? 27.♖g1 g6 28.f5** Now Black's kingside is ripped open. **28...b3 29.c3 ♗f7**



30.e5! The winning breakthrough. The rest was not too complicated.

30...fxe5 31.fxg6+ ♗g7 32.gxh7+ ♗xh7 33.♗dg6 ♖b8 34.♗6g5 ♗h8 35.♗xe5 ♗a4 36.♗a1 ♗xc3 37.bxc3 ♖h7 38.♗d4 ♖xh2 39.♖b1 ♖h3 40.♗d6 ♗d8 41.♗e8+ Black resigned.



NOTES BY
Ian Nepomniachtchi

Vladimir Kramnik
Ian Nepomniachtchi
Amsterdam rapid 2019 (3)
Queen's Pawn Opening

1.♗f3

One of my favourite events was the Amber Tournament, where leading grandmasters competed not only at rapid chess, but also at blindfold play. Such an unusual format was very much to my liking, and I always read the reports from there with great interest. Alas, I never managed to play there, but thanks to the Levitov Chess

I would like to take the opportunity to suggest that blindfold chess is added next year.

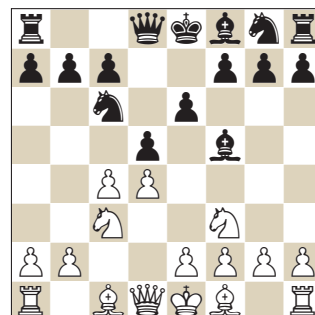
Week I was able partially to experience the atmosphere of the chess festival, which, as Ilya himself said, he wanted to recreate in Amsterdam. I would like to hope that the tournament will become a traditional one, and to thank Ilya for an excellent beginning! And I would like to take the opportunity to suggest that blindfold chess is added as one of the disciplines next year.

1...d5 2.d4 ♘f5

An interesting set-up, in which it is not

so easy for White to pose problems for his opponent – especially in games with a shortened time control.

3.c4 e6 4.♗c3 ♗c6!? This move is advocated by grandmasters Indjic and Li Chao. Previously I had exclusively played 4...♗f6. But the most popular continuation is 4...c6, as, for example, Morozevich has played.



5.cxd5!?

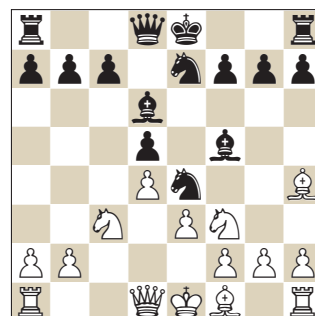
In principle, Black is not averse to capturing on d5 with a piece, so it may be interesting to deny him this additional possibility.

5...exd5 6.♘f4 ♘d6 7.♘g3!? 7.♗xd5 ♘e4 8.♗c3 ♘xf3 9.♘xd6 ♗xd6 10.gxf3 ♗xd4, and White can hope for a minimal advantage, Aronian-Li Chao, Moscow 2016.

7...♗f6 In my view, 7...♗ce7 8.e3 c6 is a more accurate move order: then Black is not threatened with any pins on the h4-d8 diagonal.

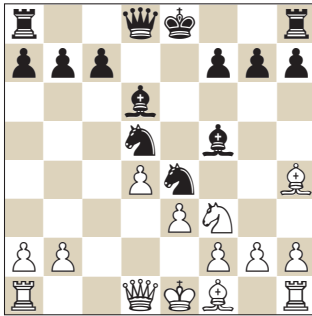
8.e3 ♗e7 9.♘h4 ♗e4

9...c6 10.♘xf6 gxf6 leads to a well-known structure from the Queen's Gambit, where the limit of Black's dreams is a draw somewhere around the hundred move mark.



10.♘d3

A restrained move. Important variations arise after 10.♟xd5 ♞xd5 and now:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

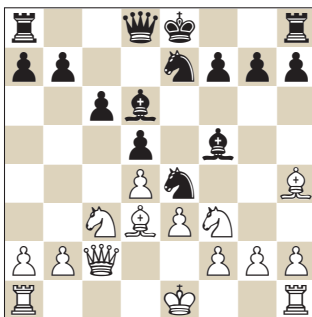
A) 11.♞xd8 ♞b4+ 12.♞e2 ♞dc3+ 13.bxc3 ♞xc3+ 14.♞e1 (14.♞d2? is bad because of 14...♞xa2+ 15.♞e2 ♞c3+) 14...♞xd1+ 15.♞xd1 ♞xd8, and the advantage of the two bishops allows Black thoughts about not just equalizing;

B) 11.♞b5+ ♞d7 12.♞xd8 ♞b4+ 13.♞f1 ♞xb5+ 14.♞g1 ♞ec3 15.bxc3 ♞xc3 16.♞c2 ♞e2+ 17.♞xe2 ♞xe2 18.♞xc7 ♞c8 19.♞g3 b5 with an unclear position.

10...c6?!

This allows the opponent to create unpleasant tension in the centre. After 10...♞xc3 11.bxc3 ♞xd3 12.♞xd3 0-0 13.♞b1 b6 White retains some pressure.

11.♞c2



11...♞a5?

Virtually the only move leading to a decent position is 11...♞b4 12.0-0 ♞d6 13.♞xf5 ♞dxf5 14.♞xe7 ♞xe7 15.♞b3 ♞xc3 16.bxc3 ♞c7.

12.♞xe7 ♞xe7

A choice of two evils: 12...♞xe7 13.0-0



NEW IN CHESS

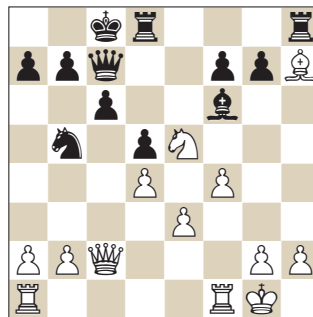
When in Amsterdam... Ilya and Adele Levitov decided that a boat was the perfect place to hand Ian Nepomniachtchi the winner's trophy and have the closing dinner.

♞xc3 14.♞xf5 ♞b5 15.e4, with an enormous advantage for White.

13.0-0 ♞xc3 14.♞xf5 ♞b5 15.♞e5 ♞c7

15...g6 fails to 16.♞xc6 ♞c7 17.♞xe7.

16.♞xh7 ♞f6 17.f4 0-0-0

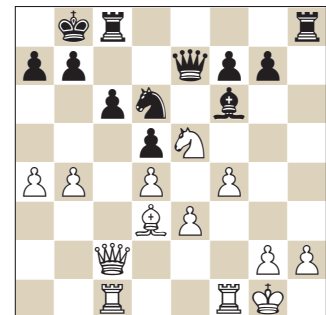


Vladimir and I hardly harboured any doubts about the result of the game. I realized that I had to rejoice over a small achievement: I had nevertheless managed to castle!

18.♞d3 ♞d6 19.♞ac1 ♞b8 20.b4 ♞e7 21.a4 ♞c8

Somewhere around here I finally realized that the game would not end immediately. Yes, Black is a pawn down, at the same time he has a bad

position... but nevertheless in rapid chess even a small spark of counterplay can kindle a big fire.



22.♞b3?

White falls into what is probably the only trap. The solid move 22.♞f2 deprives Black of even illusory chances of displaying activity.

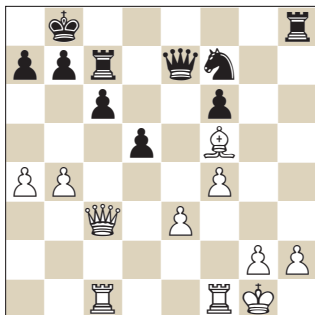
22...♞xe5 23.dxe5 f6

It stands to reason that Black cannot solve all his problems, but to force the opponent to defend a little is an unprecedented success by the standards of the course of this game.

24.♞c3

24.exd6?? is not possible because of 24...♞xe3+ 25.♞h1 ♞xh2+.

24... ♖f7 25. ♕f5 ♖c7 26. exf6 gxf6

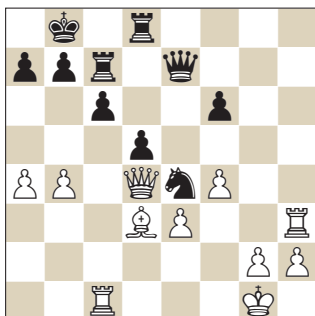


27. ♖f3 After avoiding an unpleasant thrust, Vladimir began making solid (and strong!) moves.

27... ♖d6 28. ♕d3 ♖d8

The rook on the third rank excellently defends the kingside against any encroachments, but it is somewhat cut off from the centre of the board, to where Black switches the theatre of operations.

29. ♖d4 ♖e4 30. ♖h3



30... a5! Sink or swim!

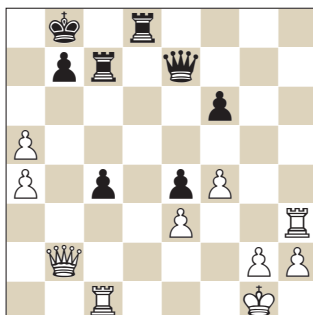
31. bxa5 c5 32. ♖b2 c4

Objectively the advantage is still with White, but the scene has changed. He has not managed to avert the oppo-

nent's desperate breakthrough, and for a human the position has become extremely unclear.

33. ♕xe4 33... ♕c2 ♖g8! with compensation for Black.

33... dxe4



34. ♖h5? I thought that this move was the most logical, since the rook must be brought into play as quickly as possible, but, strangely enough, now White loses.

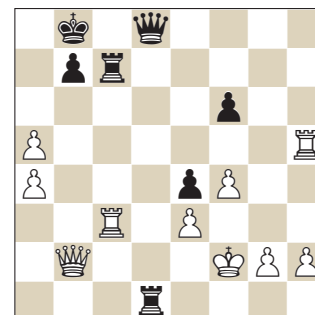
34. ♖g3! would have retained an advantage. It looks awkward, but the intention is revealed in the variation 34... c3 35. ♖xc3 ♖d1+ 36. ♖f2 ♖d8, and now 37. ♖g8! ♖xg8 38. ♖xc7 ♖d5 (38... ♖xc7 39. ♖c2+) 39. ♖c2 and wins. But with the rook on h5 a similar idea does not work. Of course, Black is not obliged to play 34... c3, but then White acquires time to safeguard his king and set up a blockade of the c-pawn. However, Black's position remains quite playable.

34... c3!

Now, after using nearly all of his remaining time, Kramnik played:

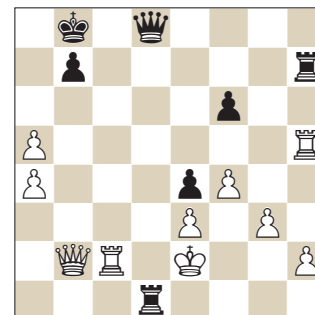
35. ♖xc3 but there is no longer any way of saving the game.

35... ♖d1+ 36. ♖f2 ♖d8



37. ♖g3 37. ♖h8? ♖xh8 38. ♖xc7 ♖h4+ and mate next move.

The best chance was the desperate 37. ♖e2, when to win Black would have had to find 37... ♖g7! 38. g3 (the escape square for the king is blocked) 38... ♖gd7 39. ♖c2 ♖h7!.

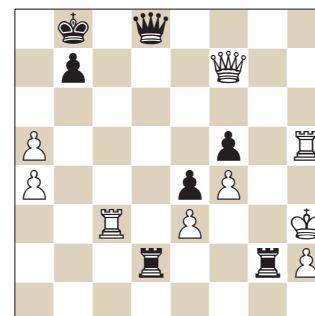


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

I am not sure that I would have coped ☹.

37... ♖d2 38. ♖b3 Black also wins after 38. ♖xd2 ♖g7+ 39. ♖h4 ♖xd2 40. ♖h8+ ♖a7 41. ♖cc8 b5 42. ♖a8+ ♖b7 43. ♖ab8+ ♖c7 44. ♖bc8+ ♖d6 45. ♖hd8+ ♖d7 46. axb5 ♖f2+ 47. ♖h3 ♖xe3+.

38... ♖g7+ 39. ♖h3 ♖gxg2 40. ♖f7 f5



The king has nowhere to hide from the quick mate. White resigned. ■

Amsterdam rapid 2019										cat. XXI				
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TPR		
1	Ian Nepomniachtchi	IGM	RUS	2773	*	1	0	1	½	1	½	1	5	2886
2	Alexander Grischuk	IGM	RUS	2788	0	*	½	1	½	1	1	1	5	2884
3	Anish Giri	IGM	NED	2730	1	½	*	½	½	½	½	1	4½	2837
4	Vishy Anand	IGM	IND	2757	0	0	½	*	1	1	0	1	3½	2734
5	Boris Gelfand	IGM	ISR	2702	½	½	½	0	*	1	1	0	3½	2742
6	Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	RUS	2756	0	0	½	0	0	*	1	1	2½	2635
7	Peter Svidler	IGM	RUS	2727	½	0	½	1	0	0	*	½	2½	2640
8	Evgeny Bareev	IGM	CAN	2664	0	0	0	0	1	0	½	*	1½	2532