



# English Chess Federation eNewsletter Number 3

## ECF NEWS

### SARAH LONGSON IS DIRECTOR DESIGNATE OF WOMEN'S CHESS



The ECF is very happy to announce that WFM Sarah Longson (left) has agreed to take on the challenge of directing women's chess in England. Sarah is probably still better known under her maiden name of Hegarty – a name she still uses for coaching purposes - and, at a youthful 27, already has the experience gained from a long playing and coaching chess career to bring to this challenging role.

She has represented England at the World and European Chess Championships since the age of 10 and has represented England at the Adult Chess Olympiads, her most impressive performance being an unbeaten 7.5/9 at the 2010 Chess Olympiad in Khanty-Mansiysk, Siberia. She took a comparative break from chess in the early part of the decade to qualify as a lawyer, although she still found time to play some league games, coming back to become British Ladies Chess Champion in 2013.

Aside from her playing career, she has over 10 years coaching experience, including coaching the England Junior Team at the European Schools Chess Championships in Prague 2012 and Serbia 2013 and at the World Championships in November 2015.

She lives in Cheshire with her husband, FM Alex Longson, whom she married in February 2016. We wish Sarah every success in her new role!

### CHESS MOVES

'Chess Moves', the ECF magazine, is no more! It was a format which required quite dedicated editorial input to work properly and we have had no editor for some time, leaving Andrew in the office with the unenviable task of putting something together for each issue. Since much of what appeared in 'Chess Moves' was already available elsewhere, or will be covered in this newsletter, we decided enough was enough. The one original and very worthwhile article in the magazine was Gary Lane's book reviews. We are pleased to say that he has agreed to provide these for the eNewsletter and you can find these below, together with a short profile of Gary.

### REQUEST FOR LEGAL SERVICES



For a number of years the ECF has enjoyed pro bono legal services offered by David Anderton and David's law firm, Ansons LLP. At his retirement in October 2015, the ECF has been very fortunate to secure pro bono legal services of Melville Rodrigues and his law firm, CMS Cameron McKenna LLP.

The ECF Board and Melville recognise that the ECF Board is looking for a range of pro bono legal services i.e. services in addition to those services currently provided by Melville and CMS.

The ECF Board wishes to add to the team of law firms who can offer pro bono legal services to the ECF Board. Melville will co-ordinate with the representatives of the additional law firms so the ECF Board can benefit from

relevant expertise from the team of law firms (including CMS). The ECF will permit the additional law firms to publicise that they are pro bono legal service providers to the ECF Board, and the law firms' status will be confirmed on the ECF's website.

If you (i.e. a practising solicitor in England) feel that you and your law firm have areas of expertise and your firm would like being added to the team of law firms who would assist on a pro bono basis the ECF Board, please email ECF Chief Executive, Mike Truran at [chief.executive@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:chief.executive@englishchess.org.uk) before 24th June 2016 indicating your firm's areas of expertise. Mike will follow up with you and introduce you to Melville.

*- Mike Truran, on behalf of the ECF Board*

## ASK THE DIRECTORS



The 'Ask the Directors' button is located in the left sidebar of the website. On clicking on the button you will find a form where you can select one or more directors, which ensures your question goes to the director best placed to answer your question. We undertake to reply to your question within 5 working days. If it is not possible to provide a full answer within this time-frame, perhaps because the question is complex or all the required information is not readily available, you will receive a reply explaining this within the time frame which will include an indication as to when you can expect to receive a full answer.

Ask the Director has been receiving a growing but not unmanageable number of questions, and these are being answered within our self-imposed time-frame. Both questions and answers are being monitored and we think that some will be of general interest. You can expect to begin to see these appearing on the website during the coming month.

We hope everyone will find this useful.

## ENGLISH CHESS NEWS



### OBITUARY: CON POWER

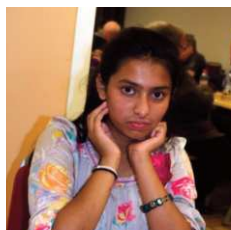
We are very sorry to report that Con Power, the long-time Director of Hastings Chess Congress, a post from which he retired in 2014, has died after a short illness. For the obituary published on the Hastings Congress website, follow the link below. Our condolences to his family and his colleagues ...

<http://www.hastingschess.com/con-power-remembered/>

### AN ARTICLE IN THE TELEGRAPH ABOUT MATTHEW WADSWORTH AND MORE ...

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/19/4ncl-chess-england-junior-matthew-wadsworth-15-launches-impressi/>

### THE TRADEWISE GRAND PRIX



As of 3rd May, GM Mark Hebden (far left) leads the 180+ Grand Prix on 703 with GM Keith Arkell, who has managed to win 7 domestic congresses in a row (!), in pursuit on 683. The fast improving and current Ladies British Champion, Akshaya Kalaiyalahan (369)(left) has overhauled Yasmin Giles (299) to grab the top spot in the Women's 180+ with IM Jovanka Houska (280) closely threatening Yasmin's current second place. Our new Director Designate of Women's Chess, WFM Sarah Longson(186), lies in a slightly

distant 4th place but some good results could push her into contention. For all current positions in the Grand Prix go to <http://www.englishchess.org.uk/competitions-plp/tradewise-grand-prix/>

### 4 NATIONS CHESS LEAGUE

Guildford 1 took the title with Cheddleton taking 2nd. The picture (below, right) is of the crucial match between



the two teams with Guildford coming out 5.5-2.5 visitors. Go to the 4NCL website for further details - <http://www.4ncl.co.uk/>

## **NORMS**

Reporting on norms achieved is usually a simple matter in all-play-alls and most tournaments but it seems that the nature of the 4NCL League makes for certain complications in confirming the situation which has caused us to publish the definitive norm position twice! Our information, it turns out, was still incomplete on the second occasion so here we are with the definite definitive version!

### **GM Norms**

ENG James Adair (White Rose) – 3rd and final GM norm. Rating required.

ENG Yang-Fan Zhou (Guildford) – 2nd GM norm.

### **IM Norms**

ENG Alan Merry – 5th IM norm.

ENG James Jackson (Barbican) – 2nd IM norm.

ENG Matthew Wadsworth (Guildford) – 1st IM norm.

IRL David Fitzsimons (Wood Green) – 1st IM norm.

James Adair (above, left) achieved his 3rd GM norm and will qualify for the Grandmaster title once his ELO grading reaches 2500. His present Elo is 2474, but given his recent form it is likely he will soon reach 2500 and beyond. Yang-Fan Zhou got his second GM norm which is a great achievement in itself, but even more so given that not only did he have to face strong opposition throughout 4NCL, but he was feeling very unwell during last weekend's games.

Congratulations are also due to James Jackson, who received his 2nd IM norm, and Matthew Wadsworth his first. Both are very promising young players, have a very good chance of achieving the IM title soon and have the potential to build on these successes and be on course for GM results. And Jonathan Rogers has let us know that Alan Merry in fact achieved his 6th IM norm and his title will be ratified by FIDE once he reaches the 2400 threshold. One of his IM norms is in fact a GM norm which he achieved at the Isle of White Congress in 2014.

We also extend our congratulations to David Fitzsimons from Ireland who qualified for his first IM norm.



## **THE EUROPEAN INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

The European Championships, which ended on Sunday, was a very strong affair with 5 2700+ GMs and 60 2600+ GMs competing for the prizes and a chance to end in the top 23, this giving qualification for the 2017 World Cup. The two English entrants, GMs David Howell (far left) and Gawain Jones, at 18 and 27 in the pecking order, whilst perhaps attracting long odds for a top prize, were in with a good chance of qualifying for the World Cup although, as Leonard Barden pointed out in his Guardian column on Saturday, their task would not be easy with such formidable competition. As it turned out neither player was really

at the top of their game and it gradually became apparent that had had left themselves with too much to do. Howell needed a win with Black against GM Demchenko in the last round to reach 7.5/11 and a reasonable mathematical chance of World Cup qualification, depending on other results.

He defended against a Giuoco Piano in a hair-raising variation which, according to the computer, remained level until Black's 15th move but was suddenly assessed as better for White after 16 g4. Puzzling ... It was downhill from there on in and Howell was crushed. The Jones-Hracek failed to depart from equality throughout and ended with Jones in a perpetual.

Inarkiev (above, right) is the new European Champion having scored 9/11 with a tournament performance of 2882. A more complete account of the tournament finale can be found at <https://www.chess.com/news/inarkiev-new-european-champion-tallies-9-0-11-1882>

## **27th FROME CONGRESS 13-15 MAY**

### ***Open (FIDE-rated)***

First: (4.5/5) David Buckley (Bath)

Second equal (4/5) WFM Jane Richmond (Brown Jack), Tim Kett (Cardiff), Matthew Payne (Bath)

British Championship Qualifying Places – Matthew Payne (Bath) 4/5; George Crockart (Wilts), Scott Crockart (Didcot) and David Onley (Combined Services) 3.5/5

FIDE 1930 – 2030 Grading Prize (3/5) Andreas Schmitz (Germany), William Taylor (London), Joe Fathallah (Cardiff)

Under FIDE 1930 Grading Prize (3/5) Mark Littleton (Wimborne)

For more: <http://www.englishchess.org.uk/27th-frome-congress-results/>

## **COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP UPDATE by Andrew Zigmond**

Reigning champions, Yorkshire, won a replay of last year's final against Kent and now face SCCU champions Surrey in the semi-finals. In the other quarter-final 2014 runner- up, Middlesex, defeated Lancashire and progress to play Staffordshire.

In the minor counties defending champions Essex are out at the hands of Lincolnshire who play Cambridgeshire next. Last year's losing finalists, Suffolk, defeated Somerset and face Norfolk.

There was another 2015 final replay in the U180 with Devon avenging their defeat against Middlesex last time around, although both matches were decided by the narrowest of margins. Devon play Essex next with Surrey vs Lancashire the other semi-final.

Defending U180 champions Lancashire lost in the quarter finals to Middlesex who face fellow SCCU team Surrey in the semi-finals. 2014 champions Yorkshire, who were eliminated after a board order dispute last year, defeated Greater Manchester to set up a fascinating semi-final clash against 2015 runners up Essex.

In the U140 Worcestershire saw off defending champions Kent and now play last year's runners up Nottinghamshire. The winner will play either Lancashire or Surrey in the semi-finals.

U120 champions Hertfordshire came through against Cambridgeshire as did 2015 champions Nottinghamshire (who didn't qualify last year) against Surrey. The semi- finals will be Norfolk vs Nottinghamshire and Hertfordshire vs Warwickshire.

Nottinghamshire will begin their U100 title defence in the semis against Essex (who beat Leicestershire) while 2015 runners up Kent saw off Warwickshire and play Lancashire next.

## **SCHOOLS CHESS: LATE NEWS**

We neglected to mention these significant junior competitions in the last edition so here are the links!

<http://englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/team-chess-challenge-2/team-chess-challenge>

<http://englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/team-problem-solving-championship>

<http://englishchess.org.uk/NSCC/junior-team-chess-challenge>



ECF is very active in junior chess and the new English Chess Academy is now up and running with the aim of assisting keen young players to reach their full potential and, hopefully, contribute towards the creation of a new generation of chess masters. Junior chess activity is regularly updated on the junior website [www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors](http://www.englishchess.org.uk/Juniors) and up to the minute news can be had on any number of junior Twitter accounts.

### NETTE ROBINSON'S MUSIC AND CHESS



An interestingly innovative event was held on May 6 at Polish Jazz Café Posk in London featuring live jazz from the event organiser, jazz singer and chess enthusiast, Nette Robinson and a blitz tournament held before the gig and in the performance break. The event was well attended, much enjoyed and Nette is keen to organise a follow-up which we will announce on all our web sources when we have the details.

The blitz event was organised as a 5-round Swiss with the top 4 qualifying for a knock-out decider. Pall Thorarinsson convincingly won the qualifying tournament with 5/5 and was joined in the knock-out by Andy Smith, James Stevenson and Natasha Regan all of whom scored 3.5/5.

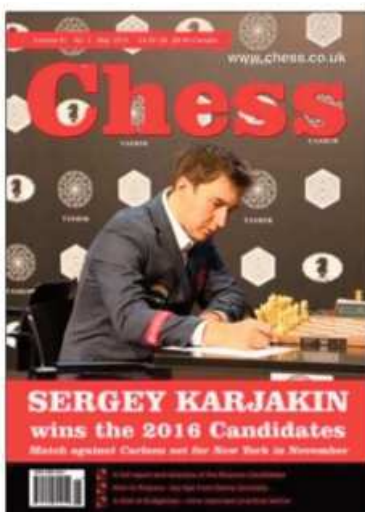
Paul McKeown takes up the story:

*"In the semi-finals, in which two games each were played at the rate of 3 minutes per player per game, Andrew Smith beat Jim Stevenson 2 - 0 (despite losing to him in the qualifying Swiss), whilst Natasha Regan won her second game against Pall Thorarinsson to tie the mini-match and take it to a tie-breaker, in which Natasha had White and 2 minutes and 15 seconds against Pall, who had draw odds but only 1 minute and 45 seconds. Pall won the tie-break.*

*The final, again two games played at the rate of 3 minutes per player per game, was again tied. Andrew Smith beat Pall Thorarinsson in the tie-break game when Pall made an illegal move, attempting to capture a queen with a rook, but through his own bishop! Oops!"*



Meanwhile the jazz, performed by Nette with a small combo of guitar, sax and double bass (above), was very well received. Readers, who are perhaps not all jazz aficionados, may have noticed something familiar about the double bass player in Nette's band: he was is none other than chess commentator and player, GM Daniel King!



### FREE EXCERPT FROM THE MAY EDITION OF 'CHESS'

"Chess" monthly magazine has kindly allowed us to share some content from the May edition of this great chess magazine. The focus this month is on the Candidates Tournament (you can find it after the main newsletter)

## BOOK REVIEWS BY IM GARY LANE

Gary has very kindly provided exclusive reviews for Chess Moves for some time and has agreed to continue to provide reviews for the eNewsletter. A little bit about Gary adapted from Wikipedia ---



Gary Lane is a professional chess player and author. He became an International Master in 1987 and won the Commonwealth Chess Championship in 1988. He has written over twenty books on chess, including *Find the Winning Move*, *Improve Your Chess in 7 Days* and *Prepare to Attack*.

After his marriage to Woman International Master Nancy Jones, he moved to Australia, winning the Australian Chess Championship in 2004. He won the 2005 Oceania Chess Championship and represented Oceania at the Chess World Cup 2005.

He has also represented Australia in the 2002, 2004, and 2006 Chess Olympiads. In the 2004 Olympiad he helped Australia score a 2–2 draw with his former country England, scoring a spectacular win over Nigel Short. He has been a chess coach for England or Australia at the World Junior and also European Junior championship for over a decade.

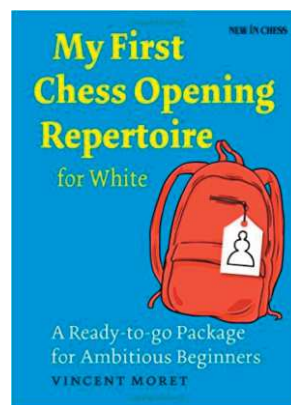
In 2012 he won the George Trundle Masters in Auckland, New Zealand with a score of 7/9 and the NZ South Island Championships in Dunedin, with a score of 8/9. He was unbeaten in both events.

In 2015 at the Australian tournament the Doeberl Cup he beat Loek van Wely the reigning Dutch Champion and one of the world's leading players. He played the Closed Sicilian which he has also written about in two books.

### **My First Chess Opening Repertoire for White by Vincent Moret**

published by New In Chess, 176 pages £15.99

What openings should you play as White if you are new to chess and want to win? The French chess coach Moret has some answers and as long as you like 1 e4 then the results will be inspiring. There have always been repertoire books offering short cuts to success which can save a lot of time and energy. Of course if you have weekends free and a database you might find better innovations on move twenty and prefer highly strategically lines. However, the average player simply cannot remember all the moves and prefers a plan and an understanding of the opening. The author wisely chooses openings that have been recommended many times for improving players because they work. The Sicilian will come up against The Grand Prix Attack which has the virtue of avoiding main line theory. Incidentally, in the biography he mentions my old Batsford book on the opening along with a list of other books and this is one of his strongest chapters. I am normally suspicious of bibliographies in the back of chess books as it is widely known that some authors simply Google the name of the opening and write down just about everything associated with the line. In this case, there are probably not enough books mentioned because when he recommends the King's Indian Attack against the French there is no mention of Angus's Dunnington highly acclaimed book on the subject. However, we are not looking for cutting edge theory because I think the openings are aimed at players rated 1200 -1700, with lots of insight on how to play the positions. The main games are from 2014 which makes it a bit dated because the book was originally published last year in French. The translator, Englishman Tony Kosten has done an excellent job of allowing the prose to run smoothly but even I was stumped upon seeing the The St. George Attack against the Pirc and Modern. I have never heard of such an opening but soon realised it is better known as the 150 Attack. The other openings covered include the Giuoco Piano, the Two Knights Defence, the Advanced Caro-Kann and brief suggestions against a variety of other replies such as the Scandinavian.

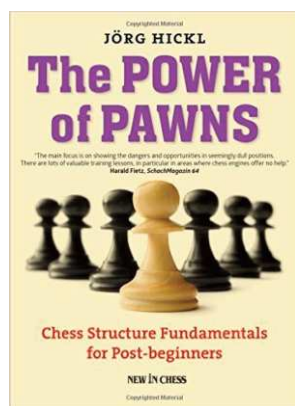


An opening repertoire book that will definitely improve your rating.

### **The Power of Pawns Jörg Hickl**

published by New In Chess, 192 pages, £14.99

The question is how can your pawn structure influence your pieces? The German grandmaster guides the reader through various complete games where he ignores the opening and then pinpoints a nuance connected with



the pawn structure. It is aimed at “post-beginners” but I think a lot of material is more suitable for players rated around 1800+ with debates on the merits of hanging or isolated pawns being entertaining and instructive. I think a keen player will learn a lot because basically it is a middlegame title that has a

lot to offer, especially when considering how to think up a decent plan in a blocked position. My only gripe is that apparently there have been no decent examples with pawn structures in the last eight years because the most recent main game is from 2008. Surely New In Chess could have asked for a new chapter or an update from the author but this version seems to be the old German edition which has been translated by Ian Adams.

A middlegame book that will make you think and play better.

## CHESS HUMOUR



Prompted by the anecdote last month that morphed into a short article about Leonid Stein, David Mabbs provides an anecdote about him from the 1961 World Student Team Championships ---

*“I remember Leonid Stein from the 1961 World Student Team Championship, when he scored 9.5 out of 12 on top board for the USSR, losing only to Christian Langeweg of Holland, and also winning the Brilliancy Prize for his game against Lothar Zinn (GDR).*

*We were all billeted in the Olympic Village which had been built for the 1952 Olympic Games. It had magnificent facilities for all the athletes, and so it was that on our Championship rest-day we arranged a challenge football match, West versus East. Of course, none of us chess-players had come equipped for a football match, so most of us played barefoot or in casual footwear. But Stein, playing for the East, had somehow*

*acquired a seriously heavy pair of boots. When Stein came charging down the pitch, brave indeed was the defender who dared tackle him. Coincidentally, Keith*

*Sales, who was in the team alongside myself, sustained a broken leg, and we could but laugh at the absurdity of travelling to a chess tournament and coming home with a broken leg! One of the heroes of the West team was Stein's bete noir Christian Langeweg, who played brilliantly in goal, helping the West to a memorable 3-1 victory.*

*My other memory from Helsinki was the personal one, of winning an individual Gold Medal for my record of four wins, two draws and a loss, which was the top result among the various first reserves. Happy days!”*

David tells me he has recently returned to competitive play after many years away from chess. Here's wishing him good luck for his comeback!

If you have a funny chess story to tell, a chess related joke, or a cartoon or any other chessy thing that might amuse, send it to [manager.publicity@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:manager.publicity@englishchess.org.uk) and you may well see it here!

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

If you'd like your event to appear in this newsletter then contact Mark Jordan at [manager.publicity@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:manager.publicity@englishchess.org.uk) to be considered for inclusion.

### 103rd BRITISH CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS, BOURNEMOUTH

Saturday 23rd July - Saturday 6th August 2016  
Whilst the premier domestic event, the British has received criticism in recent years due to its failure to attract enough of our strongest players. This is set to change this year with the news that the top England player and world class GM, Michael Adams, has agreed to play. Watch out for news of further GM entries in the coming weeks.

The British is not all about the main tournament and as well as having junior championships for various age-groups also has a number of tournament of great subsidiary tournaments for the chess enthusiast. Entries for all events are gradually building and if you are thinking of entering you are well advised to do so soon as, if you leave it too late, hotel rooms will certainly be at a premium! Go to the link for the entry form and more details:

<http://www.britishchesschampionships.co.uk/>

### THE ENGLISH WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIPS

The English Women's Championship will be held this summer in Birmingham between 15-17 July. De-



tails can be found at:

<http://www.englishchess.org.uk/competitions-plp/english-womens-championship/>

There is a £1,000 prize fund, with £500 for the winner. There is an additional prize for the winner of qualifying for the women's team at the 2017 European Team Championships in Halkidiki, Greece. This prize is normally awarded as part of the British Championships, and as a result, the British Women's Champion prize has been increased from £500 to £1,000.

Additionally, some money is available by application for participation in FIDE title-norm events. Grants of up to £250 may be awarded. Women who wish to apply for this should email the ECF Office at [office@englishchess.org.uk](mailto:office@englishchess.org.uk) in advance of participation in the event. Priority will be awarded to players who wish to participate in events under the auspices of the ECF.

### THE GLORNEY GILBERT INTERNATIONAL

The Glorney Gilbert International is being held in Daventry 18-20 July 2016. This year France is joining England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This is a long running junior tournament in which many future stars have competed, now also a memorial for Jessie Gilbert and, this year with a French contingent on the way, it'll be particularly competitive and will provide extra good playing experience. Further details can be found on the website: [www.glorneycupchess.org](http://www.glorneycupchess.org)

### 9th 4NCL CONGRESS

The 9th 4NCL FIDE Rated Congress will be held over the weekend of Friday 8 - Sunday 10 July 2016 at the Park Inn, Birmingham West, West Bromwich, B70 6RS - <http://www.4ncl.co.uk/>

### FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH HENDON BLITZ

Open section 10 Minutes each. [www.hendonchess-club.com/blitz](http://www.hendonchess-club.com/blitz)

### GOLDERS GREEN MONTHLY RAPIDPLAY

Open, U170, U145, U120 25 minutes + 5 secs a move - [www.goldersgreenchess.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.goldersgreenchess.blogspot.co.uk)

### 9 JULY SAT: 4th DeMONTFORD BELL KINGS PLACE RAPIDPLAY: ANNUAL EVENT

£3000 in prizes, £600 in junior prizes. 6 rds, 5 sections, Open / Under 170 / Under 145 / Under 120 / Under 85, 25 mins +5 secs a move, Kings Cross N1 9AG - ENTER EARLY! [www.kingsplace.co.uk/chess](http://www.kingsplace.co.uk/chess)

### THE 16th IPCA WORLD INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The IPCA World Individual Championships for 2016 will be held at Novi Sad between 21-30 July and is open to men and women who are physically disabled (min, 50% disability).

The Regulations of the tournament and the Entry form can be downloaded from the website: <http://ipca.sweb.cz>. Completed entry forms should be emailed to the organisers: [zpilimon@interia.pl](mailto:zpilimon@interia.pl) and [sinisadrazic@sbb.rs](mailto:sinisadrazic@sbb.rs)

The IPCA President, Zbigniew Pilimon, would much appreciate this information being passed on by readers to anyone you think might be interested.

Entry is open to three sections; FIDE Open, FIDE U2000 (ECF U175) and U135.

For more chess events go to the calendar on the website <http://www.englishchess.org.uk/event-calendar/> and to submit an event to the calendar <http://www.englishchess.org.uk/event-calendar/submit-your-tournament/>

### BITS & PIECES

An excerpt from an email that David Pardoe sent to me (Mark Jordan) which raises some useful points:

*"I was at a recent league AGM, and one or two points crossed my mind, as a result of discussions. Firstly, when it came to election of Officers, they had no new volunteers, so all current post holders, who have done a fairly reasonable job, were returned. I wondered about this, and it struck me that all present were either club Presidents, secretaries or captains, etc... the usual faces.*

*So it seems to me that clubs need to try to get some new faces along to these meetings to see what's going on, and maybe get some new volunteers to step forward.*

*This is the time of year when AGMs start to occur, at club, league, county and Union levels, and its vital that we encourage new volunteers to come forward to keep the wheels turning.*

*Quite often, just a willing pair of hands is all that's needed, and there is plenty of advice and support to hand, if required.*

*One point raised by the meeting was whether the league needed a publicity officer, who could put out news about clubs and leagues, and various congress*



*or other local events, maybe team or player performances etc., particularly to the local Press, to let local folk know that chess was indeed available in there area, and clubs would really like to welcome some new faces to their clubs...players of all ages and playing standards. Some contact details and website info would also help.. but the major sticking point, apart from finding a volunteer, is actually getting local Press to publish stuff (I'd suggested maybe on a quarterly basis). But I do believe such initiatives are vital if clubs and leagues are going to gain new members and teams. And prospective new members should not be put off... with the right encouragement, even the `beginner` will soon start to make progress, and in a season or so, might well become a regular team player."*

Of course, most people have rather a lot on their plates already and would rather just play chess than take on yet more responsibilities. Being a chess administrator or organiser at any level can also be a pretty thankless task, attracting more brick-bats than plaudits, but without those administrators and organisers clubs close down, leagues collapse, and there's less chess to play. So it's really important that people agree to do these jobs but what the heck is in it for them? For my own part I can say I'm something of a chess fanatic but not a particularly good player and I was keen to try to help chess in England thrive and do what I can to create more and better playing opportunities for my fellow fanatics. There is some satisfaction in that! It also doesn't look bad on a CV and gives one the opportunity to learn some new skills and work with some interesting people. I'm certainly glad I went for it!

David's suggestion of Publicity Officers for leagues is one I'm particularly enthusiastic about! I'm based in London and would like to publicise events all over England but, whilst I can do some digging myself, I am reliant on people telling me what is going on across the country as I can't be everywhere. Half-a-dozen publicity officers judiciously spread across England would be wonderful so if anyone is up for a job like that and counties and leagues agree this is a good idea, I'll do all I can to help as it'll certainly make my job easier!

Recruitment plea ended! I hope you enjoyed the ECF eNewsletter!

# CHECK!

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If you are over 25 years old and have held a full clean driving licence for more than two years; we will do our best to not only match your current insurance providers basis and premium, but aim to reduce it by up to as much as 10%.\*

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\*TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY

# Karjakin holds his nerve to win Candidates nail-biter

Steve Giddins very much enjoyed watching a dramatic Candidates tournament unfold



*They say a picture tells a thousand words, and, indeed, it is quite easy to see who the winner of the thrilling 2016 Moscow Candidates tournament was. Just look across from left to right. Aside from the medal around his neck, Sergey Karjakin is the only one smiling!*

The 2016 Candidates tournament opened in Moscow on March 10th, at the Central Telegraph Building, a prestigious location in the centre of the city. The sponsors were the Armenian Tashir Group, as a result of which it was Levon Aronian who got the wild card.

The first big controversy arose before a pawn had been pushed in anger. Two days before the start, Agon (read: FIDE) announced that it reserved for the official website the exclusive right to transmit the games live, and nobody else would be allowed even to quote the moves of the games until two hours after the end of each round. The reason was perfectly understandable – the event could expect a world-wide live internet audience of up to 500 million people, potentially rich pickings for advertisers, but if and only if they could be sure that the audience would all be watching the official site.

## Clickwrap me in your arms

However, as *CHESS* readers will doubtless be aware, previous attempts to copyright chess games have been firmly rejected by the courts, which have always held that the moves of a game are simply information, which cannot be copyrighted. So what was new here? For this event, Agon's lawyers had come up with a new legal gambit – a so-called 'Clickwrap Agreement'.

At this point, I should confess that I am neither a lawyer nor an IT specialist, but, blissfully untrammelled as I am by any knowledge of the technical details, I will nonetheless offer you my 'Janet and John' version of what is involved. Basically, in order to carry out their nefarious trade, the would-be pirates must access the official event website, in order to get the PGN file of the

moves. What Agon therefore did was to require anyone accessing the official site to click their agreement to a set of non-negotiable terms and conditions, which included the restrictions on re-broadcasting and other dissemination. In this way, they argued that they were not claiming copyright over the moves *per se*, but merely setting terms and conditions for access to their product, as any business would do. Their hope is that this will be upheld by the courts, though this remains to be seen.

After the predictable howls of outrage from the freeloading internet community, round one saw most websites ignoring the restrictions (assisted, in a coincidence of veritably Plaskettian proportions, by two 'denial of service' attacks, which crashed the official site during the round, whilst leaving the PGN file still visible to others...). However, that evening,



Agon showed they meant business, by serving legal documents on a whole set of offenders, including the ICC. Some sites continued broadcasting throughout the event (Chess24, for example), but others decided that discretion was the better part of valour and stopped their live broadcasts.

The final act in this drama will presumably be played out in due course before the courts, when we will discover whether a Clickwrap Agreement is the way forward, for organisers wishing to protect their product. All those with the commercial interests of the game at heart may hope so, as it could open up the possibility of chess finally being able to market itself effectively in the internet age.

## Round 1, Friday 11th March

The opening round set the trend in several ways, starting with the pattern of results. It saw three draws and one decisive result, something which was to occur in no fewer than ten of the 14 rounds. The sole winner came in the game between the tournament's two oldest players.

### V.Anand-V.Topalov

Round 1

*Ruy Lopez*

1 e4 e5 2 d4 f3 3 c3 b5 4 d3 c5 5 0-0 d6 6 c3 0-0 7 b2 d7 8 d4 exd4 9 cxd4 b6 10 e1 g4 11 h3 h5 12 a4 a6 13 f1 e8 14 a5 a7 15 b3 c6 16 d5 d4 17 xxd4 xd4 18 xb7 d7 19 c4 c5 20 c6



The crucial moment. Most commentators and spectators expected Topalov to go in for the sacrifice 20...xf2+ 21 xf2 Wh4+ 22 g3 dxe4+ 23 xe4 Wxe4 with a position which initially looks unclear, but is actually extremely nasty for White, as one realises the longer one looks at it. The exposed king and hopelessly misplaced queen leave White struggling. It seems a most Topalovesque way to play, but despite extensive thought, the Bulgarian veteran turned it down in favour of... 20...b3?!

...and after the further moves...

21 b1 dxc1?! 22 bxc1 b8 23 Wxa6 ...he was two pawns down and never really looked like getting back into the game.

23...Wh4 24 c2 xe4 25 e3 Wd8 26 Wc4 g6 27 d3 f4 28 xg6 hxg6 29 g3 e4 30 a6 We8 31 ce2 b6 32 Wd3 a8 33 g2 Wa4 34 b3 d4 35 bxa4 xxd3 36 c4 xa6 37 a5 d4 38 e8+ h7 39 e1e7 c3 40 d2 c2 41 e4 f6 42 h4 xa5 43 f7 g5 44 h5 xf2+ 45 xf2 a2 46 fff8 xf2+ 47 h3 g4+ 48 xg4 f5+ 49 xf5 1-0

Observers were quick to point out that, in the previous Candidates at Khanty-Mansiysk, Anand had started in round one by surviving a dubious position as White against Aronian, winning the game, and had then gone on to dominate the event. Could history repeat itself? Meanwhile, for Topalov, this was to be the start of a long nightmare, as he never escaped from last place and was eventually to end on 'minus 5', without winning a single game.

## Round 2, Saturday 12th March

The second round saw two clashes between the pre-tournament favourites. Caruana-Giri was a carefully-conducted draw, but in the Russia-America clash, Karjakin showed the first sign that he would be a force to be reckoned with in this event. He outplayed Nakamura positionally, then, when the latter lost patience and decided to grab what looked like a fleeting tactical opportunity, he demonstrated his outstanding tactical ability.

### S.Karjakin-H.Nakamura

Round 2

*Queen's Indian Defence*

1 d4

Karjakin has traditionally always been a 1 e4 player, but nowadays, when it is not only JFK who can claim 'Ich bin ein Berliner', no top player can afford to rely exclusively on that move.

1...d4 2 c4 e6 3 f3 b6 4 g3 a6 5 b3 b4+ 6 d2 e7 7 g2 d5

The main line is 7...c6, which as far as I know remains rock-solid and respectable, but it seems the text has also been growing in popularity recently.

8 cxd5 exd5 9 0-0 0-0 10 c3 bd7 11 Wc2 e8 12 fd1 f8 13 e5 b7 14 c1 e6 15 b2 d6 16 e3 a6 17 e2 c5?!



Certainly the move Black has been longing to play, but it does not work out well here.

18 dxc5 dxc5

18...bxc5 19 d4 is a typical trick in such positions.

19 d3 dce4 20 aac1 c8 21 Wb1

Black's pieces look superficially active, but this is deceptive. White is well-placed to exploit the IQP in the long run, and the positional trend is very much against Black here.

21...We7 22 d4 xxc1 23 xxc1 b5 24 b4 d7 25 a3 f8 26 a1 e6 27 Wa2 c7 28 d4 b6 29 h4



The critical moment in the game. Black is suffering and desperate to find a way of changing the course of the game. Here, Nakamura thought he had found one.

Those of you who wish to improve your playing strength might like to use the position as a test of your calculation skill: can Black take on g3 here? As a certain regular contributor to these pages would say, the answer is on the next line.

29...dxc3??

Actually a blunder, but one has to see a few moves ahead to realise it.

30 fxg3 dxd4 31 xd4 xd4 32 exd4 We3+ 33 Wf2 Wxd3

Thus far Black had seen. He has regained his piece with an extra pawn. Unfortunately, now comes a classic sting in the tale.

34 c7

Oops! Both b7 and f7 are hanging, and Black is losing a piece.

34...f5 35 Wxb7 h6 36 xd5+ h7 37 g2 e2 38 f1 1-0

## Round 3, Sunday 13th March

Once again, there was only one decisive result, as Aronian easily defeated Topalov with Black, first outplaying him early on and then reaping the benefits of a fairly elementary oversight by the Bulgarian, at move 17. It was already clear that the latter was in terrible form and was likely to suffer.

Giri-Karjakin and Anand-Caruana were both drawn without great adventure, but Nakamura-Svidler was a remarkable battle, and marked the start of series of missed opportunities for the Russian. The first incredible thing was the opening.



## H.Nakamura-P.Svidler

Round 3

*Slav Defence*

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 dxc4  
5 a4 e6 6 e3 c5 7 ♙xc4 ♘c6 8 0-0 cxd4  
9 exd4 ♙e7 10 ♖e2 0-0 11 ♜d1 ♘b4  
12 ♙g5 h6 13 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 14 ♘e4 b6  
15 ♘e5 ♙h4 16 g3 ♙e7 17 ♘c3 ♙f6  
18 d5 ♖c7 19 d6 ♖c5 20 ♘g4 ♙xc3  
21 bxc3 ♘c6 22 ♜ab1 a6 23 d7 ♙b7  
24 ♙d3 ♜fd8 25 ♖e4 ♙f8



The position looks fairly crazy, but astoundingly, Svidler had used almost no time up to this point and was clearly still in his preparation! Most GMs of previous generations would not have given the black position a second glance, in view of the huge d7-pawn and draughty black king, but in the computer era, everything is concrete, and the silicon beast had shown that Black was in fact OK here.

26 ♖h7?! h5 27 ♘e3 ♘e5!

All of a sudden, White is in considerable trouble, with his queen offside and his own king feeling the heat. With his back to the wall and the prospect of falling to 'minus 2' staring him the face, Nakamura started fighting like a lion. Even so, after...

28 ♙e4 ♙xe4 29 ♖xe4 ♜a7 30 ♘d5 ♘g4  
31 ♘e3 ♘f6 32 ♖b4 ♖xb4 33 ♜xb4 ♘xd7  
34 ♜xb6 ♘xb6 35 ♜xd8+ ♙e7 36 ♜d4

a5 37 ♘c4 ♘d5 38 ♜d3 ♜c7 39 ♘xa5  
♘xc3 40 ♙g2 ♘xa4



...an endgame was reached which most spectators, your correspondent included, thought should be winning for Black. I was even more certain of this when the American failed to play 41 h4 in this position, because it is known that the pure rook ending with 4 vs 3 is usually drawn if White can get in this move (the pure knight ending is considered a win more or less regardless). Instead, there followed:

41 ♜a3 ♘c3 42 ♘b3 g5!

Now surely, I thought, the position should be a win for Black, since the exchange of either rooks or knights leaves a position known to be winning? However, Nakamura found an interesting way to fight on.

43 ♘d2 f5 44 h3 ♙f6 45 g4!?

An interesting decision. Weakening f4 and leaving a vulnerable pawn on h3 is a considerable risk, but on the other hand, Nakamura probably felt he was losing with normal play anyway, and so it was worth trying to get rid of some pawns. It is hard to believe that this ought to draw with best play, but Svidler did not find a way to make progress.

45...♘d5 46 gxf5 ♙xf5 47 ♘f1 ♘f4+  
48 ♙g3 ♜c1 49 ♘e3+ ♙g6 50 ♙h2 ♜b1  
51 ♘g2 ♜b2?!

This pretty much abandons any serious winning attempts. Black had to keep the knights on, although it is not clear if he is actually winning.

52 ♘xf4+ gxf4 53 ♙g1 e5 54 ♜a5 ♜e2  
55 h4 f3 56 ♙h2 ♜xf2+ 57 ♙g3 ♜e2  
58 ♙xf3 ♜e1 59 ♜a8 ♜h1 60 ♙e4 ♜xh4+  
61 ♙xe5 ♜b4 62 ♜g8+ ♙h7 63 ♙g1 ♙h6  
64 ♙f5 ½-½

A narrow escape for one of the pre-tournament favourites, and a fascinating theoretical endgame.

So, the first rest day saw Karjakin, Anand and Aronian sharing the lead.

## Round 4, Tuesday 15th March

When battle recommenced after the break, we had a clash between two of the leaders, and a game which proved of great significance in the final result.

## S.Karjakin-V.Anand

Round 4

*Reti Opening*

1 ♘f3 d5 2 e3

A move that shows once again how modern top GMs will play almost anything, just to avoid prepared lines and reach 'a position'.

2...♘f6 3 c4 e6 4 b3 ♙e7 5 ♙b2 0-0  
6 ♘c3 c5 7 cxd5 ♘xd5 8 ♖c2 ♘c6 9 h4!?



Rather a remarkable idea, setting up potential kingside threats with ♘g5 at some





point. It looks rather out of keeping with White's modest set-up, but one sometimes sees Black play similar extravagances in Taimanov and Paulsen-type Sicilian set-ups, which are similar to what White has here.

**9...b6 10 a3 f5!?**

Putting paid to ♖g5, and probably not objectively bad, but even so, this struck one at the time as a slightly nervy reaction from Anand. He weakens various central squares, notably e5, and this later comes back to haunt him.

**11 ♟b5 ♟b7 12 ♜xd5 exd5 13 d4 ♜c8 14 dxc5 bxc5 15 0-0**

Rather remarkable. With the pawn back on h2, White would have a nice, comfortable positional advantage, thanks to Black's hanging pawns on c5 and d5, and the ugly gash on f5. With White's own gash with h4, things are less clear, but Karjakin outplays his opponent from here, and wins a nice technical game.

**15...♟f6 16 ♜fd1 ♜e7 17 ♟xf6 ♜xf6 18 g3**

Another remarkable move. It looks suicidal to weaken the long diagonal like this and invite ...d5-d4, but in fact there is no concrete way to exploit the tactics.

**18...♟a6?**

A strange reaction by Anand, and one

condemned by all commentators, as well as Karjakin himself. Black abandons any hope of counterplay on the freshly-weakened long diagonal, which is indeed an odd thing to do after White's last. Karjakin said he expected 18...♟h8 19 ♟e2, when the game continues, with a small edge for White.

**19 ♟xa6 ♜xa6 20 ♜c3**



A nice move, teeing up b4, to break up the hanging pawns. From here onwards, Karjakin's play is immaculate.

**20...♟b6 21 ♜ac1 ♜d6 22 ♜e5 ♟b7 23 ♜d3 c4 24 bxc4 ♜xc4**

24...dxc4 25 ♜e5 is no better.

**25 ♜e5 ♜xe5 26 ♜xe5 ♜xc1 27 ♜xc1 g6 28 ♜c5 ♜g7 29 ♜a5 ♟f6 30 ♜d3 ♜c7 31 ♜a6+ ♜g7 32 ♜f4 ♜d7 33 ♟f1**

Black is totally passive and is put away efficiently.

**33 ..♜g8 34 ♜e6+ ♟f7 35 ♜d4 ♜e7 36 ♜b5 ♜c8 37 a4 ♟b7 38 ♜c6 ♜e7 39 ♜a6 ♜c8 40 ♜c6 ♜e7 41 ♜d6 ♟b6 42 ♜d7 a6 43 ♜c3 1-0**

With the other three games drawn, we had a new, outright leader!

## Round 5, Wednesday 16th March

Four draws today left the leader board unchanged. Three of the games were fairly quiet, but Caruana surprised everyone by wheeling out the Modern Benoni against Aronian. He was lucky to survive the latter's thematic attack, but, as in so many games at this event, the defensive resources of chess were shown to be far greater than older generations of players would ever have believed.

## Round 6, Thursday 17th March

Today brought us everything – a brilliancy, a highly important decisive game between two of the favourites, and also a hugely controversial moment.

The brilliancy came in Anand-Svidler. Despite his quality, the latter would be the first to admit that he has been a very good customer of the Indian over the years, and today he was soundly crushed again, in a game where one can only speculate on the extent of Anand's preparation.

**V.Anand-P.Svidler**

Round 6

Ruy Lopez

**1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♟b5 a6 4 ♟a4 ♜f6**



*The organisers may have annoyed some fans with their website and legal threats, but it was impossible to question the quality of their commentary line-up, which included, amongst others, two former world champions in Vladimir Kramnik and Alexandra Kosteniuk.*



**5 0-0 ♗e7 6 ♜e1 b5 7 ♗b3 0-0 8 a4 ♗b7**

Once the main line, this move has nowadays been almost entirely superseded by 8...b4. The present game will certainly do nothing to revive it.

**9 d3 ♜e8 10 ♗bd2 ♗f8 11 c3 ♗a5 12 ♗c2 c5 13 d4 exd4 14 cxd4 d5 15 e5 ♗e4**



This position had been seen before in a game Shirov-Onischuk, Mallorca Olympiad 2004. At the post-game press conference, Anand affected not to know this game, but one wonders if this was possibly a bit of sandbagging. In any event, he produced a thumping improvement, from which the line will never recover.

**16 axb5!**

This is the key move. The immediate capture on e4, followed by the exchange sacrifice, would be less effective with the a-file closed.

**16...axb5 17 ♗xe4 dxe4 18 ♜xe4!**

This rather cries out to be played. In return for his exchange, White gets a pawn, plus a raging Spanish bishop, which will attack both a8 and h7, leaving Black no time to organise any defence.

**18...♗b3**

This loses by force. Taking the exchange is no better: 18...♗xe4 19 ♗xe4. Now 19...♜c8

just allows a lethal Greek Gift: 20 ♗xh7+ ♗xh7 21 ♗g5+ ♗g6 (21...♗g8 22 ♜h5) 22 ♜d3+ f5 23 ♜h3 mates. The only hope is 19...♜a6, which at least defends against the ♗xh7+ threat, but then simply 20 ♜d3 g6 21 ♜xb5 is much better for White: for example, 21...♜a7 22 ♗d2 ♗c6 23 ♜xa7 ♗xa7 24 ♜a4 followed by 25 d5 Black is not realistically going to survive this.

It seems that Black's only hope is *Houdini's* 18...g6, after which I see nothing decisive for White, although, in the words of the late Hugh Alexander, Black's position has the stench of death about it.

**19 ♜xa8 ♗xa8 20 ♗g5!**



Now the white pieces pour into the enemy kingside. There is no defence.

**20...♗xc1 21 ♜h5 h6 22 ♜xf7+ ♗h8 23 ♗g4!**

Simply threatening ♜g6.

**23...♜a5**

23...♗e2+ would set a final trap: 24 ♗f1! wins (but not 24 ♗h1?? when 24...♜a5! turns the tables completely, and White is mated).

**24 h4! 1-0**

The final point, which Anand had seen when offering the exchange at move 18. There is no defence against ♜g6.

While this game was over in not much above two hours, the other decisive game of the day lasted over seven, and saw Aronian grind down Nakamura in a nice technical game. But the finish was highly controversial, if not to say downright scandalous.



Aronian had been better throughout and may have been winning earlier, but had finally reached this position, which is objectively drawn, after 74...♜a4. The live video feed is worth seeing at this moment (it can be found easily on YouTube). Nakamura thought for a while, then reached out his hand and quite clearly took hold of his king, as if planning to move it. Moments later, he took it off again.

Then there was an inaudible exchange of words between the players, followed by several disgusted waves and gestures from Aronian, whose body language quite clearly indicated that he was saying something along the lines of 'Come on, you must be joking!'. The controller then approached the board, spoke to Nakamura, and then the latter played the losing move 74...♗f8.

It appears that Nakamura questioned whether he had touched the king and attempted to avoid having to move it. Aronian, quite justifiably from the video footage, insisted he move the king, and the arbiter agreed. Nakamura's reaction, when resigning a few moves later, was to refuse a handshake and storm off, and also not to attend the obligatory post-game press conference, for which he was subsequently fined 10% of his prize money.

Aronian refused to discuss the incident, but in a bizarre interview after the next round, Nakamura said, *inter alia*, that "It's not a big deal [...] I probably touched the king for a second or two", and, when asked if touching the king was deliberate or accidental, said "It was probably between the two...", whatever that means. He also said that what had upset him was that "Levon, instead of keeping it to chess, I felt that he decided to make it personal, with a couple of things that he said at the time."

All in all, a sorry business, but one which left the American on 'minus 2', and with his hopes of winning the event already pretty much in tatters.



All smiles as two old friends shake hands at the start of one of the games of the tournament. Peter Svidler demonstrated excellent preparation in so many of his openings in Moscow, but against Vishy Anand he found himself crushed by a major novelty and scintillating attack.



# Naughty Nakamura!

In the diagrammed position shown on the last column, Black needs to play his rook to a4 to keep the game drawn...



... but the American clearly touched his king intending to play 74...♔f8.



Aronian is less than impressed by Nakamura's j'adoube excuse...



or Nakamura's Oscar-winning innocent look. The arbiter was called over and Nakamura was forced after all to move his king.



Nakamura promptly resigned and left the venue without shaking his opponent's hand or attending the post-game interview, an action which saw him fined 10% of his prize money which amounted to roughly £2,000.

## Round 7, Saturday 19th March

A quiet round to reach the half-way point, in which the only decisive game saw Nakamura bounce back by winning the battle of the cellar-dwellers against Topalov. The leaders' game Karjakin-Aronian ended in a careful 30-move draw.

## Round 8, Sunday 20th March

Caruana, who had so far drawn all his games, finally showed his teeth and began a run which came within a whisker of taking him to the world title match. Today, he crushed Nakamura in a nice opposite-castling game, where the black attack initially looked quicker, but proved less effective than White's counter on the opposite wing.

### F.Caruana-H.Nakamura

Round 8

Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6 3 ♙b5 ♜f6 4 d3 ♙c5 5 ♙xc6 dxc6 6 ♜bd2 0-0 7 ♔e2 ♗e8 8 ♜c4 ♜d7 9 ♙d2 ♙d6 10 0-0-0 b5 11 ♜e3 a5 12 ♜f5 a4 13 ♙g5 f6 14 ♙e3 ♜c5 15 g4 ♙e6 16 ♙b1 b4 17 g5 b3 18 ♗hg1 bxa2+ 19 ♙a1



The device of leaving an enemy pawn sitting in front of the king is a well-known defensive ploy, and here it works a treat. Black does not manage to open lines against the white king, whilst on the other wing, having the f6-pawn to bite on allows White to open the g-file.

19...♜xf5 20 exf5 a3 21 b3 ♜a6 22 c3 ♙f8 23 ♜d2 fxc5 24 ♗xc5 ♜c5 25 ♗g3!

A nice move, just getting the rook out from under attack on g5, and thus threatening ♙xc5 and ♜e4.

25...e4 Desperation.

26 ♙xc5 ♙xc5 26...exd3 27 ♗g4 wins. 27 ♜xe4 ♙d6 28 ♗h3 ♙e5 29 d4 ♙f6 30 ♗g1 ♗b8 31 ♙xa2 ♙h4 32 ♗g4 ♗d5 33 c4 1-0

## Round 9, Monday 21st March

The one decisive result of the day was hugely significant, as Anand ground down Aronian in a fine technical game, to join

Karjakin in the joint lead. Suddenly, it looked as though the Indian maestro might repeat his success in the last Candidates tournament. However, no less significant was a desperate battle between Giri and Caruana, which saw the latter first land some strong-looking preparation on his opponent, then get outplayed in the middlegame.

By move 23, the Dutchman was no fewer than four (!) pawns up, but with his king exposed. To the computer, it was all easily winning, but for human players, it was far from simple. Giri eventually reached an ending with ♗+2♙s+3 vs ♗+2♙s+2, which looked as though it should be won. However, Caruana showed tremendous defensive tenacity, and peace was eventually concluded on move 96.

## Round 10, Tuesday 22nd March

Caruana continued his run, with a crushing win over Anand.

### F.Caruana-V.Anand

Round 10

English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 ♜c3 ♜f6 3 ♜f3 ♜c6 4 g3 ♙b4 5 ♙g2 0-0 6 0-0 e4 7 ♜g5 ♙xc3 8 bxc3 ♗e8 9 f3 exf3 10 ♜xf3 d5 11 d4 dxc4 12 ♗c2

A novelty, which caught Anand totally by surprise.

12...h6 13 ♙f4 ♜e4

Caruana claimed afterwards that the computer prefers 13 ..♜d5 14 e4 ♜xf4 15 gxf4, assessing the position as equal, but the Italian-American believed White was significantly better.

14 ♗ad1 ♙f5 15 ♜e5 ♜d6 16 e4 ♙h7 17 ♗e2 ♜e7



18 ♙xh6! gxh6 19 ♗h5 ♜ef5

19...♗f8 20 ♗xh6 with ♗f4 to come is very dangerous.

20 exf5 ♗g5 21 ♗xg5+ hxg5 22 f6

Black has avoided mate, but his position is very uncomfortable, and Anand lost without much further resistance.

22...♜e4?!

22...c6 looks a better try.

23 ♗fe1 ♜xc3?!



And here there was 23...♖d6.

24 ♖c1 ♜b5 25 ♙xb7 ♜ad8 26 ♙c6  
♜xd4 27 ♙xe8 ♜xe8 28 ♙f2 ♜c2 29  
♜ed1 ♙e4 30 ♜xc4 ♜e6 31 ♜d8+ ♜h7  
32 ♙g1 ♜xf6 33 ♜f1 1-0



In a rather bitter irony, the innovation 12 ♜c2, which went a long way towards deciding the game, was found only the night before by Rustam Kazimdzhanov, Anand's long-time former second, now working for Caruana (pictured above).

## Round 11, Thursday 24th March

As we approached the business end of the event, the twists and turns came thick and fast. Anand faced his fellow co-leader Karjakin, and avenged his defeat in the first cycle, grinding the youngster down in a long rook and opposite-coloured bishop ending, the latter's first defeat of the event. At the same time, Caruana missed a golden opportunity to take the outright lead, when he slipped up in a winning position against Topalov, and was forced to concede half a point. Finally, in the day's second decisive result, Aronian's chances suffered a huge blow, after he collapsed ignominiously to defeat as White against Svidler, turning a strongly favourable position into a lost one, in the space of about 10 moves.

So, with three rounds to go, Anand and Caruana shared the lead, half a point ahead of Karjakin, with Svidler, Aronian and Giri all a further half a point behind. Six of the eight players were still in with a real chance of winning the event.

## Round 12, Friday 25th March

This was perhaps the day a generation died and a new one took over the fight for the world title. Anand suffered his second crushing defeat in successive black games, this time against Nakamura. He was again bamboozled in the Four Knights English and was busted inside 15 moves.

## H.Nakamura-V.Anand

Round 12

English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 ♘c3 ♜f6 3 ♜f3 ♜c6 4 g3 ♙b4  
5 ♜d5 e4 6 ♜h4 0-0 7 ♙g2 d6 8 a3 ♙c5  
9 0-0 ♜e8 10 e3 g5!?

Objectively, this is playable, but with his opponent moving fast and clearly still in his preparation, it was a risky decision.

11 b4 ♙b6 12 ♙b2 ♜xd5 13 cxd5 ♜d4?

Over-the-board inspiration, it seems, and just bad. The computer's 13 ..♜e5 leaves things rather unclear, although Nakamura confirmed afterwards that he had looked at this position in detail.

14 d3 gxh4 15 dxe4 ♜e6 16 dxe6 ♜xe6



Black's position is a wreck, and Nakamura finished the job easily enough.

17 e5 hxg3 18 hxg3 ♜g5 19 exd6 ♜xd6  
20 ♜b3 h5 21 ♜ad1 ♜h6 22 ♜d5 ♜e7  
23 ♜c4 ♙g4 24 ♜f4 ♜g6 25 ♜e5 ♜d6  
26 ♙e4 1-0

Meanwhile, Karjakin, as expected, was beating Topalov, thus putting himself and Caruana into the lead, with Anand half a point behind. Somewhat to the surprise of cynical old men such as myself, in the event of a tie for first place, there would not be a sudden-death, one-minute blindfold, kriegspiel, Armageddon play-off, such as so often disfigures top events these days, but simply an old-fashioned tie-break, based in the first instance on the players' scores against each other. Unfortunately for Anand's supporters, he had the worse tie-break against Caruana, having lost to him as Black, so was effectively a further half a point behind him.

## Round 13, Sunday 27th March

With three games drawn, and the only decisive result seeing Nakamura complete a double over the hapless Topalov, the scene was set for the final round. Only two players could now qualify to meet Carlsen: Karjakin or Caruana. Amazingly, the pairings for the final round would see former as white against the latter! If they drew and tied for first with each other, then Karjakin would win on tie-break.

However, should Karjakin and Caruana draw

and Anand beat Svidler with Black (unlikely, but possible), then Anand would join them in a three-way tie for first. Although the Indian would not be able to finish first on tie-break, the effect of including him in the mix would be to hand Caruana the overall victory, because he had scored 1½/2 against the Indian, whereas Karjakin had scored only one point!

Given the unlikelihood of Anand beating Svidler with Black, it looked as though Caruana would need to try to beat Karjakin, also with Black, a tall order indeed, but one that could not be ruled out, especially in the pressure-cooker atmosphere of the final round.

## Round 14, Monday 28th March

## S.Karjakin-F.Caruana

Round 14

Classical Sicilian

1 e4!

The exclamation mark is for intestinal fortitude. Karjakin is not afraid to play his natural game. With no Berlin to worry about, he can stick to home field for the most important game of his life, rather than grovelling around in some sort of Reti or Queen's Pawn Game.

1...c5

Needing a win as Black, the Sicilian was a predictable bet.

2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 d6

The Rauzer is not very popular amongst the top players these days, but Nigel Short commented that it is the line which tends to appeal most to non-Sicilian specialists, who are used to getting their pieces out.

6 ♙g5 e6 7 ♜d2 a6 8 0-0-0 ♙d7 9 f4  
h6 10 ♙h4 b5 11 ♙xf6 gxf6 12 f5 ♜b6

Apparently a novelty, although a natural move in such positions.

13 fxe6 fxe6 14 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 15 ♙d3 h5  
16 ♙b1 b4 17 ♜e2 ♜c5



We have a typical Richter-Rauzer battle. White has pressure on the enemy central pawns, and his king has found safety, but Black has the two bishops and some activity. I am sure Caruana must have been pleased with the way the opening had gone, as he has achieved a position with imbalance, which is



all one can hope for in such must-win situations. In particular, the endgames are usually going to be very nice for Black, so White needs to keep queens on and play aggressively, never an easy thing to do when you know a draw is likely to be enough.

Somewhere around this point, all the other games had ended in draws, including Svidler-Anand, so both players now knew exactly what was required of them.

**18 ♖h1 ♗h6 19 ♖e1 a5 20 b3**

20...♗f6?! looks very dangerous after 20...♗g7 21 ♖f3 ♖e5.

**20...♗g8 21 g3 ♗e7**

Black's big issue here is his king. It is safe enough for the time being, but it makes it very hard for him to open lines in the centre, as his own monarch could easily be the casualty.

**22 ♗c4 ♗e3 23 ♖f3 ♖g4 24 ♖f1 ♖f8 25 ♗f4 ♗xf4 26 ♗xf4 a4**



**27 bxa4!**

Again, Karjakin does not allow the tournament situation to undermine his manhood. Letting the pawn reach a3 would be dangerous and leave permanent mating threats on the dark squares. The text looks risky, but the bishop will be a great defender on b3.

**27...♗xa4 28 ♖d3 ♗c6 29 ♗b3 ♖g5 30 e5!**

More excellent play by Karjakin. He seizes the moment to open lines against the enemy king, before Black establishes a blockade on e5. The position is still objectively balanced, but it is a dynamic balance, where excessive passivity can be as dangerous to White as excessive aggression to Black.

**30...♗xe5 31 ♖c4 ♗d5 32 ♖e2!?**

A very interesting decision. Karjakin had clearly programmed himself not to chicken out into an endgame, unless it was absolutely,

totally dead drawn. Objectively he has nothing to fear after 32 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 33 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 34 ♗xb4, but he chooses to keep queens on, to worry the black king. Caruana was getting quite short of time by now.

**32...♖b6 33 ♗h4 ♗e5 34 ♖d3 ♗g2 35 ♗d4 d5 36 ♖d2 ♗e4?**

36...♗e4 would keep the position unclear, but Caruana, in serious time-trouble, had missed White's next.



**37 ♗xd5!!**

White is seriously worse after any other move, but this effectively wins. Full marks to Karjakin for holding his nerve and finding it, forced though it was.

**37...exd5 38 ♖xd5 ♖c7**

The only way to stay on the board is the computer's 38...♗d4, but after 39 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 40 ♗xd4 Black clearly has no winning

chances. Unable to come back with his shield, Caruana prefers to come back upon it.

**39 ♖f5!** Again strongest, and also decisive.

**39...♗f7 40 ♗xf7 ♖e5 41 ♗d7+ ♗f8 42 ♗d8+ 1-0**

Thus ended a great event, with a deserved winner. Karjakin played the most consistent chess throughout, showing remarkable defensive tenacity at times, allied to his trademark tactical brilliance and fine technique. His victory will not be popular with some, who resent his pro-Putin public utterances, and I suspect the world championship match may not now take place in New York, as originally announced, but there is no doubt that he is a worthy challenger to Carlsen, and will give him a tough match.

For the other players, Caruana came very close, ultimately suffering due to a few dropped half points earlier in the event, whilst Anand almost brought off one of the great world championship stories, but was let down by his black openings. Most of the others will feel disappointed, especially Aronian, who has disappointed now in three consecutive Candidates' tournaments, whilst Veselin Topalov's exciting and uncompromising play has probably been seen for the last time at this level.

At the closing ceremony, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov said that FIDE had now found the best format for the Candidates' tournament. It is rare for the FIDE President to make a public utterance that one can agree with wholeheartedly, but on this occasion, one must concede that he is right.



*Sergey Karjakin started the Candidates as the second weakest player on rating, but walked away with €95,000, a new BMW (not just the model he's holding!), and, most importantly, a million dollar match with the world champion, Magnus Carlsen, scheduled for November.*

### World Championship Candidates Tournament, 11-30 March 2016, Moscow, Russia (Category XXII, 2778 average Elo)

Player	Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Points	TPR
1 Sergey Karjakin	RUS	2760	* *	½ 1	1 0	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	1 ½	8½	2860
2 Fabiano Caruana	USA	2794	½ 0	* *	½ 1	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	1 ½	7½	2804
3 Vishy Anand	IND	2762	0 1	½ 0	* *	½ ½	1 ½	½ 1	½ 0	1 ½	7½	2809
4 Anish Giri	NED	2793	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	* *	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	½ ½	7	2775
5 Peter Svidler	RUS	2757	½ ½	½ ½	0 ½	½ ½	* *	½ 1	½ ½	½ ½	7	2780
6 Levon Aronian	ARM	2786	½ ½	½ ½	½ 0	½ ½	½ 0	* *	1 ½	1 ½	7	2776
7 Hikaru Nakamura	USA	2790	0 ½	½ 0	½ 1	½ ½	½ ½	0 ½	* *	1 1	7	2776
8 Veselin Topalov	BUL	2780	½ 0	½ ½	0 ½	½ ½	½ ½	0 ½	0 0	* *	4½	2644