

Menchik Memorial Round 3

First, I would like to thank the various organisations without whose help this event would not be possible, so thank you to English chess federation putting on this event and the Department for Culture, Media for and Sport without whose support this would not be possible.

The first day of the competition passed by without any problems besides the one caused by public transport. This time the players all arrived without any trouble and we were all going within five minutes of 10am.

After two rounds of play here is where we stand at the moment:

Rank		Name	Rtg	FED	Pts.
1	IM	Hunt, Harriet V	2307	ENG	2
	IM	Garcia Martin, Marta	2356	ESP	2
3	WCM	Subramanian, Anusha	1997	ENG	1½
	GM	Arakhamia-Grant, Ketevan E	2290	SCO	1½
5	WCM	Sivanandan, Bodhana	2088	ENG	1
	WFM	Cosman, Andreea-Marioara	2115	ROU	1
7	WIM	Steil-Antoni, Fiona	2154	LUX	½
		Hryshchenko, Kamila	2186	ENG	½
9	WGM	Navrotescu, Andreea-Cristiana	2200	FRA	0
	WFM	Smith, Olivia	2054	WLS	0

Our two strongest players are right out in front leading the way with maximum points and Anusha right on track for the WIM norm. Just another four points to find from seven games and she has yet to face the strongest ones, until now.

This round she takes on the legend that is Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant. Should be a battle worth following so I think I will.

As for the second game lets go with players I haven't introduced to you yet. Kamila Hryshchenko vs Marta Garcia Martin.

Game 1 Anusha vs Ketevan

This was the last game to start but its one that will certainly see both players going for it. Anusha certainly as she wants the norm. The game started out as a Zukertort Opening: Nimzo-Larsen Variation, with both players opening with their kingside knights and Anusha developing her queen's bishop to the long diagonal. This could be one of those where the players want to control the centre of the board with their pieces, rather than pawns.

Indeed, by move 9, Anusha has most of her pieces developed and controlling centre squares on the queenside with pawns, but kingside is definitely being looked after by minor pieces.

Ketevan for her part, is keeping things nice and solid, doing her own development, and waiting to see how Anusha wants to play the game.

Knowing Keti once she finds a weak point to strike, she won't hesitate.

Let's see how it goes from here:



Its not often I see a game where a player fianchetto's both of their bishops but its always interesting when they do. Anusha pushed forward the e pawn to try to grab control of the centre. Ketevan decided to do the same making it a duel for the centre. There were several exchanges there on the d file and once that was over Ketevan decided to push on the queenside and liquidated the pawns and giving Anusha at least three pawn islands in the process. Now Ketevan has the rooks doubled on the e file ready to come into the battle. Anusha is playing this cautiously, holding the centre with pieces and perhaps a few sneaky traps can come into play.



This seems odd, what are Ketevan's knights doing on the centre of the board? We tell new players not to put your knights on the rim. Guess its one thing knowing what the rules are and another to know when to break them.

They didn't stay there for long though before they came into the attack, she broke through the centre taking away vital defenders with the doubled rooks and rerouted the knights to better positions, one putting pressure in the centre and the other right on the enemy king.



Then the pressure Ketevan was putting on finally got to Anusha, here she moved the knight to the rim to attack the queen. This just allowed Ketevan to bring the bishop in, hitting the king, then just shift the queen to offer a queen exchange. A few moves later with a combination of the bishops and the Rook mate was delivered on the board.

Again, it's knowing the rules and knowing when is a good time to break them.

Puzzle time.

Answer to Round 2's teaser is: ...Re1!

Round 3 challenge

This position occurred during one of the games in round 3.



What the best move to play here?

Game 2 Marta vs Kamila

Marta has been playing competitive chess for a while, I first spotted her when she came to Hastings for the Hastings Weekend Open event and scored 4.5/5 with the only one to be able to hold her to a draw being the legendary Keith Arkell himself. Not only that she has been putting in a number of solid results in the 4NCL. Finally, her rating makes her the strongest player in the competition and with that 2/2 so far, proving that is well deserved. She will be a tough player to go through for any of our players.

Meanwhile her opponent Kamila is a great player in her own right and one that as an arbiter it has been a pleasure to arbit at several competitions. She has made the final of the UK Open Blitz several times. In 2022 and in 2023 she came third. Not to mention alongside Marta plays in the 4NCL for the Sharks. Kamila is the only player not to have a title in the competition and given what she's accomplished I don't know how. Maybe this shark will take a bite out of Marta's winning streak.

Now to the game itself, it's a variation I haven't seen in a long time, Philidor's defence. Ill admit as an attacking player its one I stopped doing a long time ago, felt to passive for me but lets see how Kamila does with it. Though saying that how bad can it be for something to be called the Philidor Defense: Lion Variation. Its good to have a bit of pride in your chess so to speak.

Marta has developed her pieces very carefully, pushing for control of the central squares and with the pieces developed she needs to watch out for that isolated pawn she's given herself in the centre.

Kamila has got her pawns connected up, pointing towards the queenside. Guess this is why Marta has pushed the a pawn up the board to try and hold Kamila back on that side and remove a space advantage. But Kamila has her pieces on the move, and both players are castled on the same side so no major fireworks are coming yet.

This feels like one of those games at move 11 that's to close to call yet. How it goes from here, is anyone's guess.



Well, the players can answer it for us. Marta pushed h3, forcing the bishop to move and giving the king an escape square. Kamila took the knight off, and Marta recaptured with the bishop. Marta then went on to push the pawn on the a rank putting pressure on Kamila who went on to

target it bringing her pieces over to the queenside. Marta meanwhile focused her efforts on the centre and while Kamila has rook and queen staring down an open b file, Marta has her pieces pointing at the centre just wanting for a chance to make the d line open and break into the position.

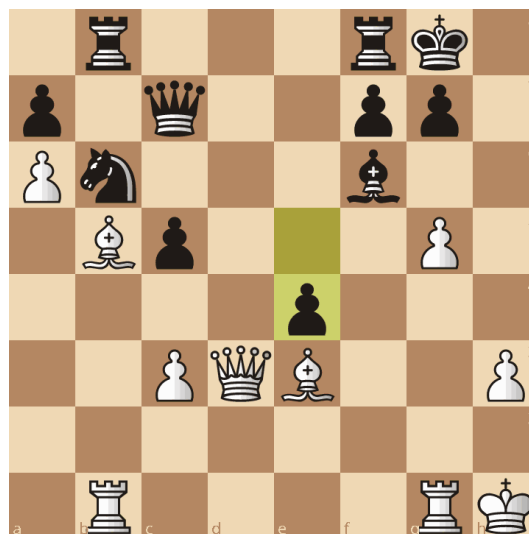
Both players have used their time well creating their plans and there's only 12 minutes between them with Marta having 14 minutes to Kamila's 26



Well Marta is preparing to make her move. The Rook and queen doubling up in the centre was only part of the plan, with the bishop backing up the queen down the a2-g8 diagonal Kamilas rook had to come back, now e5 here looks deadly.

But not yet played on the board. Marta has taken her to neutralise Kamila's control over the queenside before proceeding with her plan, using a combination of the queen, bishop and rook, the b file is now blocked off for blacks' pieces to Kamila will need to find another way to get in an attack.

And find a way to attack she did, when Marta started her attack, Kamila counterattacked in the centre with e4, hitting the white queen when Kamila's bishop was attacked.



Marta was not worried and simply took the bishop allowing her queen to be recaptured by the pawn. But now Marta comes in with the rook leaving the king with only one square to go. Kamila may have the queen up now, but its no good if she gets checkmated. Realising this Kamila handed the queen back to avoid being mated by playing it to g3, when the rook takes, she can release her knight to come over to the kingside and release some of the pressure on that open king.

She stopped the checkmate but is a piece down because of it. It didn't take long after this for Marta to coordinate her bishops and with the threat of going another piece down Kamila resigned. Tough fight there. Guess the counterattack is a double-edged sword sometimes.

Final results from Round 3

BNo.		Name	Rtg	Res.		Name	Rtg
1	WCM	Subramanian Anusha	1997	0 - 1	GM	Arakhamia-Grant Ketevan E	2290
2	IM	Hunt Harriet V	2307	1 - 0	WCM	Sivanandan Bodhana	2088
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Results on every board. Who says tournaments aren't action packed.

Answer to the puzzle.

bxc6

If you played the obvious Bxd1, well done you fell into the trap.