

# Menchik Memorial 2024 Round 6

After two rounds where we had no draws, now we get one where all but one result were draws. I was not expecting this. Though that said it was not through a lack of trying to win. All players push hard to find the win, its just that the defences were to strong or just missed the right moves. Just goes to show you that every move counts, and one bad move can erase 30 good ones.

After the first 5 rounds this is where we stand.

Rank		Name	Rtg	FED	Pts.
1	IM	Hunt Harriet V	2307	ENG	4½
	IM	Garcia Martin Marta	2356	ESP	4½
3	GM	Arakhamia-Grant Ketevan E	2290	SCO	4
4	WFM	Cosman Andreea-Marioara	2115	ROU	3½
5	WGM	Navrotescu Andreea-Cristiana	2200	FRA	3
6	WCM	Subramanian Anusha	1997	ENG	2
7	WCM	Sivanandan Bodhana	2088	ENG	1½
8	WIM	Steil-Antoni Fiona	2154	LUX	1
		Hryshchenko Kamila	2186	ENG	1
10	WFM	Smith Olivia	2054	WLS	0

Unfortunately, now some of our norm chasers are only playing for points. Olivia and Kamila aren't able to get to the magic number of 5.5 with only four rounds remaining.

Bodhana can reach it but has to win all four of her next games. An incredible ask of her but one she should be capable of doing.

Anusha has a tough ask too, she needs 3.5/4 for a norm but at least she has one games breathing room over Bodhana.

Then finally the last norm seeker is Andreea-Marioara. At 3½ points she can get a WGM norm if she gets 3½/4 for her last games like Anusha. But only needs to win two of them for the WIM norm.

Hope is still alive here and let's get right into the action.

I had picked as one of my games for this round Olivia Smith vs Fiona Steil-Antoni. However, I can put their game in one line.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. d4 exd4 5. Nxd4 Bb4 1/2-1/2

Possibly wanting a quiet time after such tough games for them. Playing at a rate of two games a day will take it out of you. Have a nice evening Olivia and Fiona.

So instead lets focus on two other games.

### Game 1: Bodhana vs Andreea-Cristiana

Last game to start, Bodhana walked in fashionably late as always, and does look fashionable in that Optiver jacket.

We have another Sicilian and in true form Bodhana is making it a closed Sicilian, opting to bring the kings bishop to the long diagonal, controlling the flow of the game that way.

Andreea pushes her pawns forward to e6, develops the knights and crucially gets the d5 break in.

Remembering my lessons from the DVD I was always told to watch out when a Sicilian player goes for d5, it's one thing they're always aiming for. You let them have it, then it spells trouble for the rest of the game and that's exactly what we have on the board.

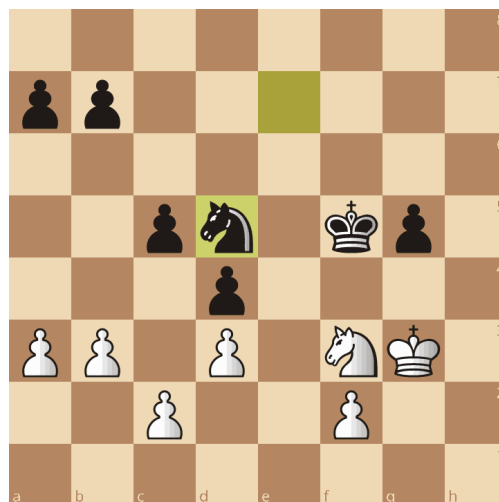
Let's see how Bodhana handles this little problem.



Well Bodhana castled here to get king safety but that just allowed Andreea-Cristiana to push d4, forcing the knight to move and exchanging itself off for the f6 knight. Now Andreea-Cristiana knows where Bodhana's king is she pushed her kingside pawns to first of all lock in the bishop. No squares to go to on the queenside with those advanced pawns and with pawns on h6 and g5, not coming out that way. She chose to fianchetto it queenside and possibly try to play c3 at some point. But Andreea-Cristiana never gave her the chance. Instead after completing development, it became a duel for the centre and with the bishop out of it that's one piece that's going to take a while for Bodhana to get where its needed.

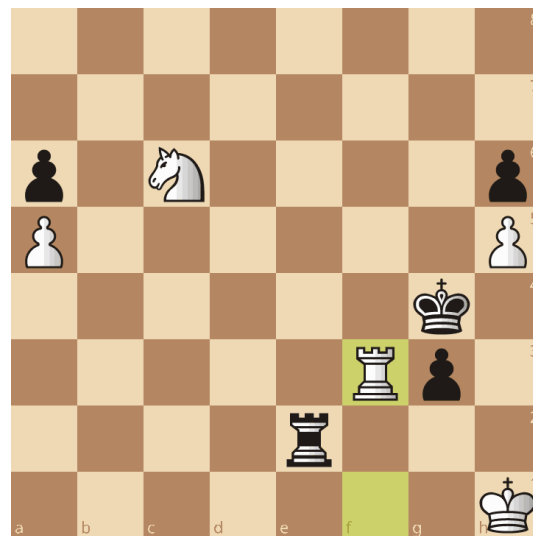


Here Bodhana pushed the g pawn to kick the bishop away and then the rook exchanges started in the centre with Bodhana emerging the winner of the e file with the queen on it. She went on to move her bishop back to the c1 square and the knight rerouted to the centre and Bodhana got the advantage. Andreea-Cristiana managed to trade off into an equal ending and the exact same pieces on the board on the same files.



When neither player could push through without letting the other get an advantage it was decided to call it a draw. The battle ebbed and flowed there for a bit, but those c and d pawns really made life hard for Bodhana. Word of warning in a closed Sicilian don't let your opponent play d5.

## Puzzle



Black to play and win

## Game 2: Anusha vs Marta

This game opened with the Larsen. 1.b3!

Interesting choice to pick for an opening play, perhaps trying to draw Marta out or give her something more to think about. She was the last game to finish last round so maybe making her think a little more might take her out of her comfort zone. It certainly had an effect Marta thought about her first move reply for over 10 minutes, settling on 1...d5.

This turned into what im told by the opening database is the Nimzo-Larsen Attack: Classical Variation.



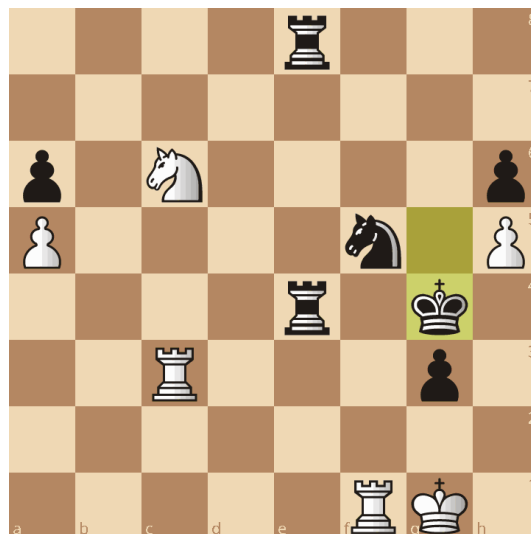
Black has good piece development and white may have good king safety but the position feels a little cramped. Guess that d pawn will eventually move and with the backup from the bishop can cause long term trouble down the long diagonal. Marta, I think has plenty of options to decide where she wants to attack. Let's see where she chooses.

Well, when Anusha advanced the knight to the centre Marta took the bishop off, figuring it could be to useful to Anusha, then for good measure removed the other bishop by playing Ba3. Once that exchange was complete that knight on d7, re routed itself to a6, perhaps to start a probe or put pressure on the queenside where Anusha pushed c4. Perhaps also Na6 brings some extra defence to the area. Eventually after a duel in the centre it found its way on to d5, with a rook for backup and the rook and queen pointing down the e-file.

Anusha has all her pieces pointing at the centre too but they feel slightly less coordinated than Marta's.



Both players continued their attack in the centre and queenside, liquidating the pawns and leaving only the a pawns available and in the chaos the queens came off. Now the attack shifts over to the kingside where Marta has her pawns lined up perfectly in a nice diagonal and Anusha pushed the h pawn to try and break them up. Unfortunately, this gives Marta an edge which allows her to go a pawn up in the ending and have her g pawn become passed and down it comes towards Anusha's king, all the black pieces surrounding the pawn, Anusha can't touch it.



But this was down to when both players had little to no time left on their clocks, and what do coaches tell us? Play on, even when it looks lost, you might find the unexpected reply or they may make a mistake and in an ending with seconds on the clock that's what happened. Anusha

was able to stop the attack, grab the pawn and go on to draw an almost lost ending. Exactly what she needed, well done to both players for a very exciting game.

Results for that round are as follows:

BNo.		Name	Rtg	Res.		Name	Rtg
1	GM	Arakhamia-Grant Ketevan E	2290	1 - 0		Hryshchenko Kamila	2186
2	WFM	Smith Olivia	2054	½ - ½	WIM	Steil-Antoni Fiona	2154
3	WCM	Sivanandan Bodhana	2088	½ - ½	WGM	Navrotescu Andreea-Cristiana	2200
4	WCM	Subramanian Anusha	1997	½ - ½	IM	Garcia Martin Marta	2356
5	IM	Hunt Harriet V	2307	1 - 0	WFM	Cosman Andreea-Marioara	2115

Weve had a lot more draws in that one, but that's not saying there wasn't any action. Thank you everyone.

Answer to the puzzle: Rh2+, then when the king moves pick up the Rook on f3.