

Fabi gets on a Roll!

Yochanan Afek watched Fabiano Caruana triumph at Wijk aan Zee for the first time

The 82nd edition of the famous Wijk aan Zee tournament once again saw a remarkable festival in the Dutch coastal village, which combined exciting top-level chess with numerous amateur groups for all levels and ages, and all under the roof of the tournament's traditional home, De Moriaan. Hundreds more chess enthusiasts crowded each day into the neighbouring Café De Zon (The Sun), to attend the popular commentary sessions.

The record for winning the Masters belongs to the current world champion Magnus Carlsen, a regular participant here since 2004, who was seeking an eighth victory this year. British players have won the top section at Wijk five times. In 1982 John Nunn shared the top honours with Yuri Balashov before in both 1990 and 1991 finishing outright first, while Nigel Short was clear first in 1986 and joint first the next year along with Victor Korchnoi.

The modern tradition 'Chess on Tour', which sees two rounds of the Masters played away from Wijk in major Dutch cities, has been one of the successes of the past decade, during which the whole event has been supported by Tata Steel. This year, however, just one round, the fifth, went on tour, to the southern city of Eindhoven. Another fine tradition on one of the rest days is a friendly football match in the stadium of the local team Telstar in the town of Velsen. This year Carlsen's side defeated Van Wely's 8-5. In the conference hall of the same stadium a group of masters, your author included, played a mass simultaneous exhibition against regional schoolchildren (as well as a few Telstar players), who enjoyed both football and chess scenes at the very same time.

A Strong Masters

The Category 20 Masters Group (average rating: 2741) was headed up by the current world champion and his former challenger, Fabiano Caruana, while the host country was represented by Dutch no.1 Anish Giri and former Dutch Champion, Jorden van Foreest, the eldest child in the famous chess family from the northern city of Groningen. Wesley So, the winner of 2017 edition, also took part, while the eldest participant was the 15th world champion, Vishy Anand, who has been successful at Wijk on some five occasions.

The rest of the field contained a number of ambitious young stars and members of the 2700+ club: the Belorussian winner of last



Wesley So only added one victory to his early win over Anand, but did remain undefeated.

year's Challengers, Vladislav Kovalev; Poland's Jan-Krzysztof Duda; the Russians Vladislav Artemiev, Daniil Dubov and Nikita Vitiugov; Jeffery Xiong from the USA; and China's Yangyi Yu. The youngest participant was the 16-year-old Iranian Alireza Firouzja, who currently resides with his family in France and played under the FIDE flag.

The opening three rounds produced an unexpected early leader. It wasn't any of the favourites, but rather the youngest participant, Firouzja, who had drawn with Duda and defeated both Kovalev and Artemiev. Another interesting result in early rounds was the following short and highly aggressive battle.

W.So-V.Anand

Round 2

Giucco Piano

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙c4 ♙c5 4 c3 ♘f6 5 d3 d6 6 ♗bd2 0-0 7 h3 a6 8 ♙b3 ♙e6 9 ♙c2 d5!?

On an initial glance this looks rather premature in view of White's reply. Most players and also the engines would first prefer the prophylactic 9...h6.

10 ♗g5 dxe4 11 ♗xe6 fxe6 12 dxe4

Black's pawn structure is shattered, but can he take advantage of his momentary pressure along the open lines against f2?

12...♙xf2+!?

The most aggressive approach. An interesting alternative was 12...♞e8!? 13 0-0 ♖d8 14 ♞e1 ♗h5 15 ♗b3 ♙b6 16 ♙e3 ♗f4 17 ♗h2 ♞h5 with equal chances.

13 ♗xf2 ♗g4+ 14 ♗g1 ♙e3 15 ♞e2 ♗xc2



Regaining the sacrificed piece, but the knight has no way back to base.

16 ♖b1 ♗d4!?

The attempt to obtain counterplay with 16...♞h4 17 ♗f3 ♞g3 is met by 18 h4! ♙xf3!? 19 ♞xf3 ♞e1+ 20 ♗h2 ♞xh4+ 21 ♞h3 ♞xe4 (21...♞xh3+ 22 gxxh3! ♙f8 23 ♙g1 is excellent for White) 22 ♞xe6+ ♗h8 23 ♙g5, after which, despite the formal material equality, White is still better owing to his future control of the open files by his mighty

pair of rooks.

17 cxd4 ♖xd4+?

17...exd4 allows better chances to fight on.

18 ♖h2 ♜f2 19 ♖g4 ♜e3 20 ♖xe6+ ♖h8 21 ♜g1 ♖d3 22 ♖xe5 ♜af8

22...♜xg2 is met by 23 ♖h1! ♖hx3+ 24 ♖h2 ♖hx2+ 25 ♖xh2 ♜e1+ 26 ♖g3 ♜d3 27 ♜c4 ♜e2 28 ♖f3 ♜c2 29 ♖e3! when Black's efforts to obtain a third pawn for his sacrificed piece seem to reach a dead end.

23 ♖g3 ♖e2?



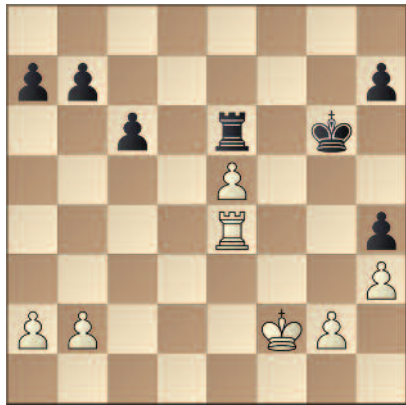
Accelerating the end. A better try was 23...♜8f6 24 ♖h1 ♖e2 25 ♖xc7 h6 26 ♜b3 ♜xg2! 27 ♖c8+ ♖h7 28 ♖g4 ♖d3 29 ♖g5! hxg5 30 ♜bd1 ♖c2 31 ♜c1 ♖xb2 32 ♜xg2 ♖xa2 33 ♜xf2 ♜xf2 34 ♖h5+ ♖g8 35 ♜c8+ ♜f8 36 ♜xf8+ ♖xf8 37 ♖f3+ and Black is still fighting.

24 b4! ♜xg2+ 25 ♜xg2 ♜xg2 26 ♖g4! 1-0

After 26...♜f4+ 27 ♖xe2 ♜xe2 28 ♖g2 ♜f4+ 29 ♖f2! ♜xh3+ 30 ♖e3 ♜f2 31 ♖b2 ♜g4+ 32 ♖e2 ♜f2+ 33 ♖d3 ♖g8 34 ♜c1 c6 35 ♖d4 White eventually will convert his material superiority.

Firouzja's sensational start was the talk of the village even when he was defeated in the very next round by Wesley So. That gave So the temporary lead, but it took the Iranian wunderkind just one round to catch up, thanks to the following endgame.

A.Firouzja-A.Giri
Round 5



39...♜e7?

This seems natural, but is wrong. Correct



The players in a future world championship? Firouzja was, though, no match for Carlsen at Wijk.

was 39...h5! 40 ♖f3 ♖g5 (and not 40...♖f5 41 ♜xh4 ♖g5 42 ♜b4 b6 43 ♖e4!) 41 ♜b4 ♜xe5! (41...b6 allows 42 ♖e4) 42 ♜xb7 ♜b5 43 ♜xb5+ cxb5 44 ♖e4 ♖f6, which draws.

40 ♖f3 ♖f5

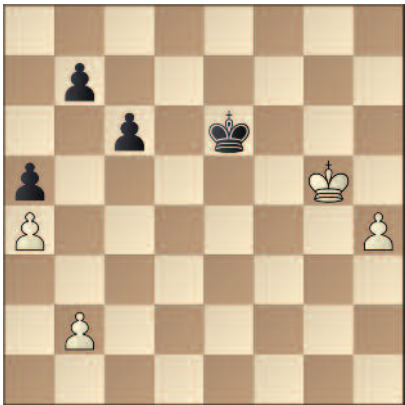
A superficial glance at this rook endgame might wrongly predict a drawish outcome.

41 ♜xh4! ♖xe5 42 ♜e4+! ♖f6 43 ♜xe7 ♖xe7

Following successful exchanges the resulting pawn ending is still equal material-wise, but White will be the first to create an outside passed pawn.

44 ♖f4 ♖f6 45 g4 a5 46 a4 h6 47 h4 ♖e6 47...b5 is naturally met by 48 ♖e4.

48 g5 hxg5+ 49 ♖xg5!



The further the outside passed pawn, the better, and not 49 hxg5? b5 50 b3 ♖f7 51 ♖f5 ♖g7 52 ♖e5 bxa4 53 bxa4 ♖g6 54 ♖d6 ♖xg5 55 ♜xc6 ♖f5 56 ♖b5 ♖e6! when the black king makes it back in time.

49...♖f7 50 ♖f5 b5 51 ♖e5 1-0

Black is clearly far too slow. A fine example of the common theme in the endgame of exchanges leading to a winning pawn ending.

While Anand managed in the same round to reach 50 percent, scoring his first win against Xiong, the natural favourite, Magnus Carlsen, though still unbeaten, was yet to taste his first victory.

Fabulous Fabi

The second part of the tournament was dominated by the brilliant gallop set by 28-year-old Fabiano Caruana towards his first Wijk aan Zee title, as he scored an amazing five and a half points from the final six rounds. Caruana secured outright victory with a round to go and still found the stamina to score the only win in the final round of the Masters, against Artemiev. His most important victory was arguably his fortunate win against Anand, which ended the legendary Indian's chances, while kick-starting Caruana's rampage.

F.Caruana-V.Anand
Round 8



In the early stage of the game Anand had made a risky acceptance of the exchange in return for allowing Caruana a strong and lasting initiative.

37 ♖f6+?

A terrible decision in time trouble. White is at least slightly better following 37 ♜f6! ♜e7 38 ♖d6 ♖xd6 39 exd6 ♜b7 40 ♜e8+ ♖f8 41 ♜c7 ♜b8 42 ♜e6+ ♖e8 43 ♖b5+ ♖f7 44 d5 ♜b3 45 d7 ♖e7 46 ♖f2.

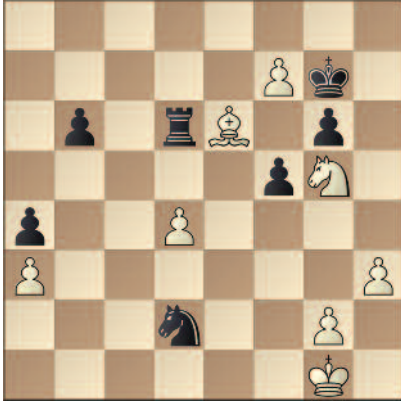
37...♖xf6 38 exf6+ ♖h7 39 ♜e5 ♜d6 40 f7 ♖g7 41 ♜f3 ♜b3

Even stronger is 41...b5!

42 ♖g5 ♗d2?!

Black wins more comfortably with 42...♗xd4 43 ♗h7 ♖d8 44 f8♙+ ♖xf8 45 ♗xf8 ♗xf8 46 ♗f2 b5 47 ♖d3 b4 48 axb4 a3 49 ♖c4 ♗e7 50 ♗e1 ♗c2+ 51 ♗d2 ♗xb4 52 ♗c3 a2 53 ♗b2 ♗f6 54 ♖b5 g5 55 ♖d7 f4, after which the black king approaches the kingside pawns while its counterpart is kept busy on the other side of the board.

43 ♖e6



Now simplifying by means of 43...♖xe6! 44 ♗xe6+ ♗xf7 results in a technically winning ending for Black thanks to his queenside pawn majority.

43...♖d8 44 ♗f2 ♗f6

Black still wins fairly easily after 44...♗b3 45 ♗e3 ♗xd4 46 ♗f4 ♗c6 47 ♖a2 ♖d4+ 48 ♗e3 f4+ 49 ♗f3 ♖d2.

45 ♖d7 ♗e4+ 46 ♗xe4+ fxe4 47 ♖e8 ♗e7 48 ♗e3 ♖b8 49 ♖xa4 b5 50 ♖b3 ♖a8 51 ♗xe4 ♖xa3 52 ♖e6 ♖a1 53 d5 ♖d1 54 ♗e5 ♖f1??

And a miracle has occurred. After 54...♖e1+ 55 ♗d4 ♖f1 56 ♗c5 ♖f2 57 ♗xb5 ♖xg2 58 d6+ ♗f8 59 ♖d5 ♖d2 60 ♗c5 ♖f2 61 h4 ♖f6 62 ♗c6 ♖f5 63 ♖c4 ♖f4 64 ♖a2 ♖f2 Black still draws.

55 d6+ ♗f8 56 ♗d5 ♖f6 57 d7 ♗e7 58 ♗c6! ♖f2

58...♖xe6+ 59 ♗c7 ♖d6 60 f8♙+ ♗xf8 61 ♗xd6 is game over.

59 ♗xb5 ♖b2+ 60 ♗c6 ♖b8 61 ♗c7 1-0

In the tenth round Caruana defeated Firouzja, while his victory in the penultimate round was a fine example of his impressive coordination and powerful play in complex middlegames, as he inflicted on Duda his sole defeat.

F.Caruana-J.K.Duda

Round 12

Catalan Opening

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 ♖g2 ♖e7 5 ♗f3 0-0 6 0-0 dxc4 7 ♙a4 c6 8 ♙xc4 b5 9 ♙b3 ♖b7 10 ♖d1 ♗bd7 11 ♗e5 ♗xe5 12 dxe5 ♗d7 13 ♖f4 ♙c7 14 ♗c3 ♗c5

14...♗xe5 allows White a strong initiative following 15 ♖ac1 (less clear is 15 ♖xe5 ♙xe5 16 ♖d7 ♖c8 17 ♖xe7 ♙d6 18 ♖xc6! ♖b8 19 ♖xa7 ♙xc6, which leaves Black with



With a powerful victory over Duda, Caruana sealed overall victory with a round to spare.

an unopposed light-squared bishop in return for the pawn) 15...a6 16 a4 owing to the pins along the c-file and long diagonal.

15 ♙c2 b4 16 ♗b1!?

A natural alternative was 16 ♗a4, but White avoids exchanges and prefers an elegant retreat, having spotted that Black's last move created an attractive outpost for the white knight on c4.

16...♖a6 17 ♖f3 ♖ac8?!

The rook doesn't belong here as Black will immediately realise.

18 a3! ♖b8 19 axb4 ♖xb4 20 ♖e3 ♙b7 21 ♗d2! ♖xb2 22 ♙c3 ♖b5 23 ♖a3 ♙b8 24 ♖da1



White is more than fully compensated for the missing pawn. All his pieces are ideally placed to target Black's multiple weaknesses on the queenside.

24...♖b7 25 ♖xa7 ♗d7 26 ♗c4 ♖d8 27 ♖e4 c5 28 ♙c2 h6 29 ♖d2 ♗f8 30 ♖d3 ♖d7? 31 ♗d6! ♖b6 32 ♙xc5 ♖d5 33 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 34 ♙c8+ ♗f8

34...♙xc8? fails to the forking 35 ♗xc8. **35 ♙xb8 ♖xb8 36 f4 ♖d8 37 ♗f2 ♗d7 38 ♖e3 g5 39 ♖d4 ♖b4 40 ♗e3 gxf4+ 41 gxf4 ♗f8 42 ♖b5!**



Converting White's edge is still far from easy, but Caruana has calculated most impressively the following sequence of only moves.

42...♗f6! 43 exf6 ♖xd4! 44 ♖c1! ♖xf6 45 ♖c7! ♖h8

45...e5 fails to 46 fxe5 ♖xe5 47 ♖c8+ ♗e7 48 ♗f5+.

46 ♖c8+ ♗e7 47 ♖xh8 ♖b4 48 ♗c8+ ♗f6 49 ♖d3 1-0

The victor ended up two points ahead of Carlsen, the largest ever winning margin since the current 13-round format was introduced. Caruana's 10/13 was only achieved before by Garry Kasparov in 1999 (the first of Garry's three successive victories), and by Magnus Carlsen in 2013.

Carlsen scored his first victory as late as round eight, after which he began to get going, while he finished the tournament unbeaten, surpassing in the process Sergei Tiviakov's record streak of 110 unbeaten classical chess games. The Norwegian's final round draw against So not only decided the fate of the second place, but was also his 120th unbeaten classical game. More than once in Wijk aan Zee he had to demonstrate his defensive skills, surviving inferior positions such as the following.

M. Carlsen-J. Xiong

Round 3



44 g5! hxg5 45 h6

White is three pawns behind, but his advanced passed pawn saves the day.

45...♖d6 46 ♖b6+ ♔c6+ 47 ♖xc6+!

A well calculated decision.

47...♗xc6 48 h7 ♖a4+ 49 ♗xe5 ♖h4
50 ♗f6 g4 51 ♗g5 ♖h2 52 ♗xg4 ♗d5
53 ♗g6 ♖h6 54 ♗g5 ♖xh7

Caution! Black even loses after 54...♖h2??
55 ♗h5.

55 ♗xh7 e5 56 ♗g4 ♗d4 ½-½

After 57 ♗f3 everything is under control.

Both 21-year-old Jorden Van Foreest and 23-year-old Daniil Dubov enjoyed good tournaments and shared fourth place. Meanwhile Firouzja, who is considered by many experts a future world champion, had to settle for an eventual share of sixth place after losing to all four top seeds.

D. Dubov-V. Artemiev

Round 6

Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♗f5 4 h4 h5 5 c4
e6 6 ♗c3 ♗e7 7 cxd5 cxd5 8 ♗d3 ♗xd3
9 ♗xd3 ♗c6 10 ♗f3 ♗h6 11 ♗xh6

In accordance with the nature of the closed position, as by heading for f5 the black knight was going to play an important role in the centre, while also being an instrumental part of Black's defensive set-up.

11...♖xh6 12 ♖c1 ♗f8 13 g3 g6 14 0-0
♗g7 15 ♗a4 ♖h8 16 ♗c5



Last year's Gibraltar Champion, Vladislav Artemiev, had quite a lively debut at Wijk.

16...♗xc5

Accelerating White's queenside attack. 16...♗b6 17 a3 a5 18 ♗a4 ♗a6 might be a better attempt to equalise.

17 ♖xc5 ♗d7 18 ♖fc1 ♖hc8 19 ♗c3

Preparing the standard follow-up, b2-b4.

19...a5 20 a3 a4 21 ♗e1?! ♗e7 22 ♗f3

White admits that he was wrong and seeks a better future for his knight.

22...♗d7 23 ♗g2 ♗c7 24 ♗c2 ♗d8 25 ♗d1!

Back home appears to be the best spot for the queen from where she can watch over the central pawn, pressure the potential weakness on a4, keep a black rook away from invading down the c-file, and prepare the upcoming kingside activity.

25...♗d7 26 ♗g5 ♖a6 27 g4!



The hidden intention behind 25 ♗d1 becomes clear as White's attack begins to gather momentum.

27...♗h8

Necessary as demonstrated by 27...♗b6 28 gxh5 ♗h8 29 ♗f3 gxh5 30 ♗g3 ♗f8 31 ♖a5!, winning a pawn in view of the double threat.

28 ♗f3 ♖b6?

The losing move. 28...hxg4 29 ♗xg4 ♖a8 was essential, although White is clearly better on both wings following 30 ♗f4 ♗h5 31 ♖5c3.

29 gxh5 ♗xh5 30 ♗f6+ ♗g8 31 ♖a5!
♗g4+ 32 ♗f1 ♗d8 33 ♖a8 1-0

J. Van Foreest-D. Dubov

Round 3

c3 Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 c3

What used to be an attempt to avoid the heavy theory of the Open Sicilian has become over the years a deeply analysed major line.

3...♗f6 4 e5 ♗d5 5 ♗c4

Postponing so the once standard 5 d4 is the typical modern handling of this line.

5...♗b6 6 ♗b3 c4 7 ♗c2 d5 8 exd6
♗xd6 9 0-0 g6 10 ♗a3 ♗g7 11 b3 cxb3
12 axb3 0-0 13 d4 ♗g4 14 h3 ♗xf3
15 ♗xf3 e5 16 ♗b5 ♗d7

16...♗d5 17 ♗d3 ♖fc8 18 c4 ♗d7 is another option for Black.

17 ♖d1 a6 18 d5 ♗b4!? 19 ♗a3 ♗xc2
20 ♗xc2 ♖ac8 21 c4 f5?!



Wrongly declining 21...e4 22 ♗xe4 ♖fe8 23 ♗f3 ♗xa1 24 ♗xa1 when White's dark-squared bishop and central pawn chain fully compensate for the sacrificed exchange.

22 ♗a3 ♖f7 23 ♖ac1 ♖e8 24 c5 e4
25 ♗e2 ♗c8 26 ♗c4 ♗a7 27 ♗d4 f4?
28 ♗e6

By no means a bad decision, but after 28 c6! ♗c8 29 ♗e6 ♗b5 30 ♗b4 bxc6 31 ♗g5! material losses are unavoidable for Black.

28...♗b5 29 ♗b4

Again 29 c6! bxc6 30 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 (or 30...♗xa3 31 dxc6) 31 dxc6 ♗e6 32 ♗b2+ ♗h6 33 ♖d5! would have been more vigorous.

29...e3 30 ♗g5 exf2+ 31 ♗xf2 ♗f5
32 ♗xf7 ♖e4 33 c6



Finally.
33...♗xf7?



Jorden van Foreest improved significantly on last year's debut in the Masters Group at Wijk. The 20-year-old Dutch star especially impressed against the top half of the tournament table.



Watched by Wesley and Magnus, Fabiano receives his first winner's trophy at Wijk aan Zee.

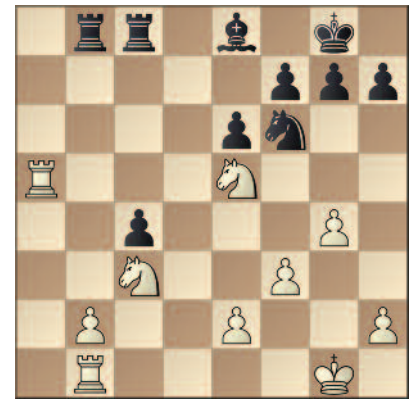
Missing the last chance to keep on fighting:
 33... ♖xc4 34 ♜xc4 bxc6 35 dxc6 ♟xf7 36 ♜d7+ ♟f6 37 c7 ♜xd7 38 c8 ♜xc8 39 ♜xc8 ♟f5.
 34 cxb7 ♜xc4 35 bxc4 ♜e5 36 cxb5 ♜b2+ 37 ♟f1 ♟e5 38 d6 f3 39 gxf3 ♜b3 40 ♟e2 ♜e6 41 ♜c7+ ♟f6 42 b8 ♜ ♟f4+ 43 ♟d3 ♜d5+ 44 ♟c2 ♜a2+ 45 ♟c3 ♟e5+ 46 ♟d3 ♜b3+ 47 ♟e2 1-0

The Challengers

The Challengers featured, besides a couple of experienced local and guest grandmasters, as well as the only female player on the podium, the Kazakh IM Dinara Saduakassova, an unusual large number of teenage stars: the Uzbek Nodirbek Abdusattorov, Germany's Vincent Keymer and the Indian Nihal Sarin, who are all just 16, as well as the 18 year olds, Australia's Anton Smirnov and the current Dutch Champion, Lucas van Foreest.

The eventual winner was David Anton Guijarro, who at the age of 24 has already won eight Spanish titles in various age groups and formats. He top-scored with 8½/13 to qualify for next year's Masters. Second place was shared by young Abdusattorov, Pavel Eljanov, who had already won the Challengers back in 2007, and Erwin L'Ami. The following game between two prodigies was especially subtle and entertaining.

V.Keymer-N.Abdusattorov Round 6



22... ♟d5!

The first surprise and a clever pawn sacrifice that speaks for itself.

23 ♟xd5 exd5 24 ♜xd5 f6!

White's knight is under siege and in addition Black is ready for ...♟g6.

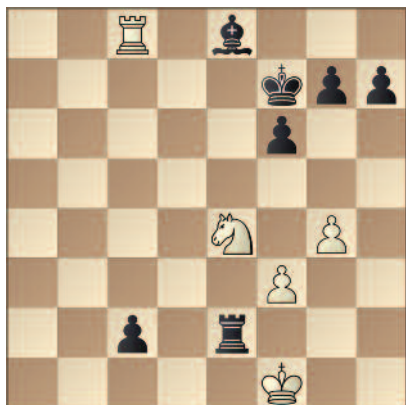
25 ♟d7 ♜b7 26 ♜bd1

The dominated knight costs white his most important pawn since 26 ♟c5? allows

82nd Tata Steel Masters - Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands - 10-26 January 2020 (Category 20, average rating = 2741 Elo)																			
Player	Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Pts	TPR	
1	Fabiano Caruana	USA	2822	*	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	1	½	1	½	1	10	2945	
2	Magnus Carlsen	NOR	2872	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	1	½	8	2817	
3	Wesley So	USA	2765	½	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	1	½	½	½	½	7.5	2795	
4	Jorden Van Foreest	NED	2644	½	½	½	*	1	½	½	½	½	0	0	1	1	½	7	2777
5	Daniil Dubov	RUS	2683	0	½	½	0	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	7	2774	
6	Anish Giri	NED	2768	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	0	½	½	½	½	6.5	2738	
7	Viswanathan Anand	IND	2758	0	½	0	½	½	½	*	½	1	1	½	½	½	6.5	2739	
8	Jan-Krzysztof Duda	POL	2758	0	½	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	1	½	6.5	2739
9	Alireza Firouzja	FID	2723	0	0	0	½	½	1	0	½	*	1	1	½	½	6.5	2742	
10	Jeffery Xiong	USA	2712	½	½	½	1	½	½	0	½	0	*	1	½	½	6	2713	
11	Vladislav Artemiev	RUS	2731	0	½	½	1	0	½	½	½	0	0	*	1	½	6	2712	
12	Nikita Vitiugov	RUS	2747	½	0	½	0	½	½	½	½	½	0	*	½	½	5	2653	
13	Yu Yangyi	CHN	2726	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	0	½	½	½	*	½	4.5	2631	
14	Vladislav Kovalev	BLR	2660	0	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	0	1	0	½	½	4	2605	

Black a deadly pin with 26...♖b5.

26...♖xb2 27 ♜c5 ♜xc5 28 ♜xc5 ♜xe2
29 ♜d8 ♜f7 30 ♜c8 c3 31 ♜e4 c2
32 ♜f1 ♜xh2 33 ♜g1 ♜e2 34 ♜f1



A repetition? Not quite!

34...♜b5!!

White was hoping for 34...♜e3 35 ♜d6+
♜g6 36 ♜xe8 ♜xe8 37 ♜xc2 with a
defendable rook ending.

35 ♜d6+ ♜g6 36 ♜xb5 ♜d2 0-1

L'Ami was the only unbeaten player
amongst the challengers and especially
impressed when making a positional double
exchange sacrifice.

E.L'Ami-A.Smirnov

Round 1

Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♜f3 ♜f6 4 e3 ♜g4

5 ♜b3 ♜b6 6 ♜e5 ♜f5 7 cxd5 ♜xb3
8 axb3 ♜xd5 9 ♜d3 ♜xd3 10 ♜xd3 ♜a6
11 ♜d2 e6 12 ♜e2 ♜e7 13 ♜a3 0-0
14 ♜c4 c5?

14...♜ac7 15 ♜c5 ♜fb8 would have
avoided the upcoming unpleasant events.

15 ♜xa6! bxa6 16 dxc5 ♜fc8 17 b4 f6
18 e4 ♜c7 19 ♜c3 ♜b5 20 ♜a1 ♜c6
21 e5 ♜d8 22 ♜d6



In return for the sacrificed exchange,
White enjoys, on top of an extra passed
pawn, the superior pawn structure, as well
as clear advantage in terms of space and
piece activity.

22...♜b8 23 f4 h5 24 g3 ♜c7 25 ♜e3!

The pawn formation has been
consolidated. It's time for the king to join
the offensive.

25...f5 26 ♜d2 ♜f8 27 ♜d4 g6 28 ♜e1
♜b5+ 29 ♜xb5 axb5 30 ♜xa7 ♜cc8
31 ♜c2 ♜a8 32 ♜d7 ♜e7 33 ♜e3 ♜e8



A little bird just told me

A round-up of what the top
players and chess personalities
have been saying on Twitter

2700chess - @2700chess

For the first time, there are only 35 players
on or above 2700.0 since 2700chess.com
was launched in May 2011, when there
were 39 (the maximum amount of players
on or above 2700.0 was 53) #deflation

Gibraltar International Chess Festival - @GibraltarChess

Congratulations to Ukrainian star Anna
Muzychuk on winning the "Go G Best
Game prize" at @GibraltarChess. The
highest rated woman player at the event,
Anna, won this award for her fantastic win
over Ori Kobo in round 10. Anna wins
£1000 as the Best Game Prize! #GibChess

Tania Sachdev - @TaniaSachdev

Back home from an incredible #gibchess
Big love back to all of you for engaging with
us, all the heartwarming feedback and
comments. Means a lot :)

David Howell - @DavidHowellIGM

Been a great 10 days. Congrats to David
Paravyan on a stellar performance!
Commentary was a lot of fun (especially
the 9.5 hours on the final day!). Special
thanks to @hammonds_tv and @fionchetta
for guiding me through it. Hopefully see
everyone at @GibraltarChess next year!

John Saunders - @johnchess

BREAKING NEWS: #GibChess hasn't finished
yet! The final event is the Airport Challenge
between Paul Haddock and Matthew
Wilson. Played every year since 2007, for
addicts who just can't get enough chess.

ECF - @ecfchess

ECF online chess is live! Please spread the
word. There are clubs on @chesscom and
@lichess. Open to ECF members and
supporters. You can play in ECF online
tournaments, internationals, and gain an
online rating.

Magnus Carlsen - @MagnusCarlsen

Luck is no coincidence. Really excited about
this partnership. @unibet @UnibetNorge

Simon Williams - @ginger_gm

I just noticed that I have pipped over
40,000 subscribers on my YouTube
channel. MASSIVE thanks to you all! Cheers
people! I have some crazy and messed up
ideas for future videos...



73RD WEST OF ENGLAND OPEN CONGRESS

incorporating the West of England
Championship & British
Championship Qualifier

Friday 10 - Monday 13 April
(Easter weekend)

at the Royal Beacon Hotel,
Exmouth EX8 2AG

The Championship & Major
sections are FIDE-Rated

An ECF Grand Prix event

Details from event Secretary: M. Shaw
mobile 07906682158

e-mail: wecu@hotmail.co.uk

2ND 4NCL EASTER FIDE RATED CONGRESS

Thursday 9 April to
Monday 13 April

Holiday Inn,
Kenilworth/Warwick, CV8 1ED

4 sections - all 7 or 9 rounds

FIDE Rated Open,
FIDE Rated U2050,
FIDE Rated U1850,
ECF Under 120

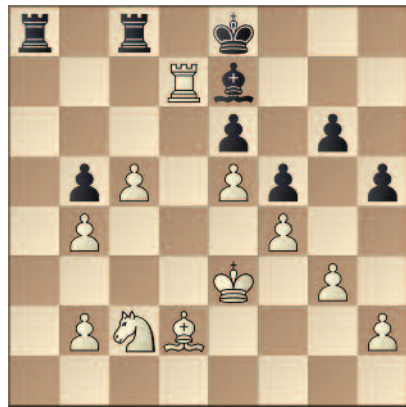
Prize fund £4,200

For further information
and entry visit:

www.4ncl.co.uk



Erwin L'Ami was unbeaten and tied for second in the Challengers - at the same time as playing some correspondence games!



34 ♖d6!

A rare example of a second positional exchange sacrifice in the endgame.

34...♗xd6 35 exd6 ♕d7 36 ♖d4 ♖a2

Seeking active counterplay behind enemy lines as passive defence with 36...♖ab8 is met by 37 ♗c3 ♖g8 38 ♖f3 ♗c6 39 ♕d4! ♖bd8 40 ♗e5, after which there is no way for Black's helpless rooks to stop the upcoming avalanche.

37 ♗c3 ♖a1 38 ♖xb5 ♖h1

Or 38...h4 39 gxh4 ♖h1 40 ♖a3 e5!? 41 ♗xe5 ♖xh2 42 ♖c4 ♖b8 43 ♖b6+ and wins.

39 h4 ♖g1 40 ♗f2 ♖d1 41 ♖d4 ♖a8 42 ♗e2 ♖g1 43 b5!

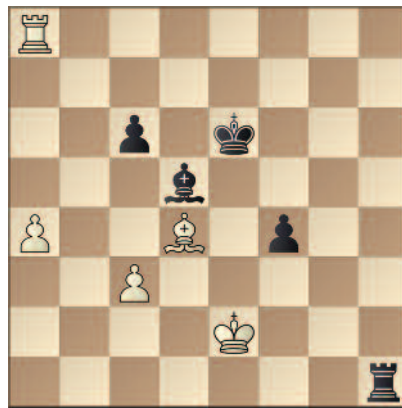
White pawns are much the faster.

43...♖xg3 44 ♗b4! ♖g2+ 45 ♕d3 ♖xb2 46 c6+ ♗c8 47 ♖xe6! 1-0

The second seed, Swedish no.1 Nils Grandelius, had to settle for 50%. Here is one of the reasons why.

N.Grandelius-V.Keymer

Round 13



44...c5! 45 ♖a6+ ♗f5 46 ♖a5?

46 ♖f6+ ♗g5 47 ♗e5 had to be tried.

46...f3+ 47 ♗f2 ♖h2+ 48 ♗g1 f2+! 0-1

In view of 49 ♗xf2 ♖h1#.

The top 10-player all-play-all group was a qualifying tournament for next year's Challengers and featured a wealth of young Dutch talent. However, the winner was the

German IM Roven Vogel, who finished on 7/9, along with the Dutch IM Nico Zwirs whom he managed to defeat in a pivotal final round. From this group enjoy the following instructive miniature between two young IMs from Apeldoorn and Leiden respectively.

T.Beerdsen-A.Pijpers

Round 7

French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 ♖f6 4 ♗g5 dxe4 5 ♖xe4 ♖bd7 6 ♖f3 h6 7 ♗xf6 ♖xf6 8 ♗d3 ♖xe4 9 ♗xe4 c5 10 ♖e2 ♖a5+ 11 c3 cxd4 12 ♖xd4 ♗e7 13 0-0-0 ♖xa2 14 ♖b5+ ♗d7 15 ♖xb7 ♖c8 16 g3 ♖a1+ 17 ♗c2 ♖a4+ 18 ♗b1 ♖d8?



After 18...♗d8 19 ♗c2! ♖c4 20 ♖f5! 0-0 21 ♖xh6+ gxh6 22 ♖xd7 Black is a pawn down and has a weakened kingside, so he might have tried 18...0-0 19 ♗c2 ♖b8 to avoid any sacrificial blows.

19 ♖xe6! fxe6

If 19...♗xe6 20 ♗c6+.

20 ♖d4! ♖a5

White wins too after 20...♖b5 21 ♖xd7! ♖xb7 (or 21...♖xd7 22 ♗c6) 22 ♖xb7 ♗f7 23 ♖xa7.

21 ♗g6+ ♗f8 22 ♖xd7 1-0

82nd Tata Steel Challengers - Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands - 10-26 January 2020 (Category 15, average rating = 2602 Elo)

Player	Country	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Pts	TPR
1 David Anton Guijarro	ESP	2694	*	½	1	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	½	0	1	½	8½	2704
2 Nodirbek Abdusattorov	UZB	2635	½	*	½	½	½	1	½	1	½	0	½	1	1	½	8	2686
3 Pavel Eljanov	UKR	2650	0	½	*	½	1	1	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	½	8	2685
4 Erwin L'Ami	NED	2606	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	8	2688
5 Surya Shekhar Ganguly	IND	2636	½	½	0	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	7½	2656
6 Vincent Keymer	GER	2527	½	0	0	½	½	*	½	½	1	1	½	½	½	1	7	2636
7 Nihal Sarin	IND	2618	0	½	½	½	½	½	*	0	½	½	1	1	½	1	7	2629
8 Lucas Van Foreest	NED	2523	½	0	½	½	½	½	1	*	0	½	½	½	½	1	6½	2608
9 Nils Grandelius	SWE	2673	0	½	½	½	½	0	½	1	*	½	0	1	½	1	6½	2596
10 Jan Smeets	NED	2585	0	1	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	*	1	0	½	½	6	2574
11 Rauf Mamedov	AZE	2659	½	½	½	0	½	½	0	½	1	0	*	1	½	½	6	2568
12 Max Warmerdam	NED	2498	1	0	0	½	0	½	0	½	0	1	0	*	½	½	4½	2499
13 Anton Smirnov	AUS	2604	0	0	0	0	0	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	*	1	4½	2491
14 Dinara Saduakassova	KAZ	2519	½	½	½	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	½	½	0	*	3	2397