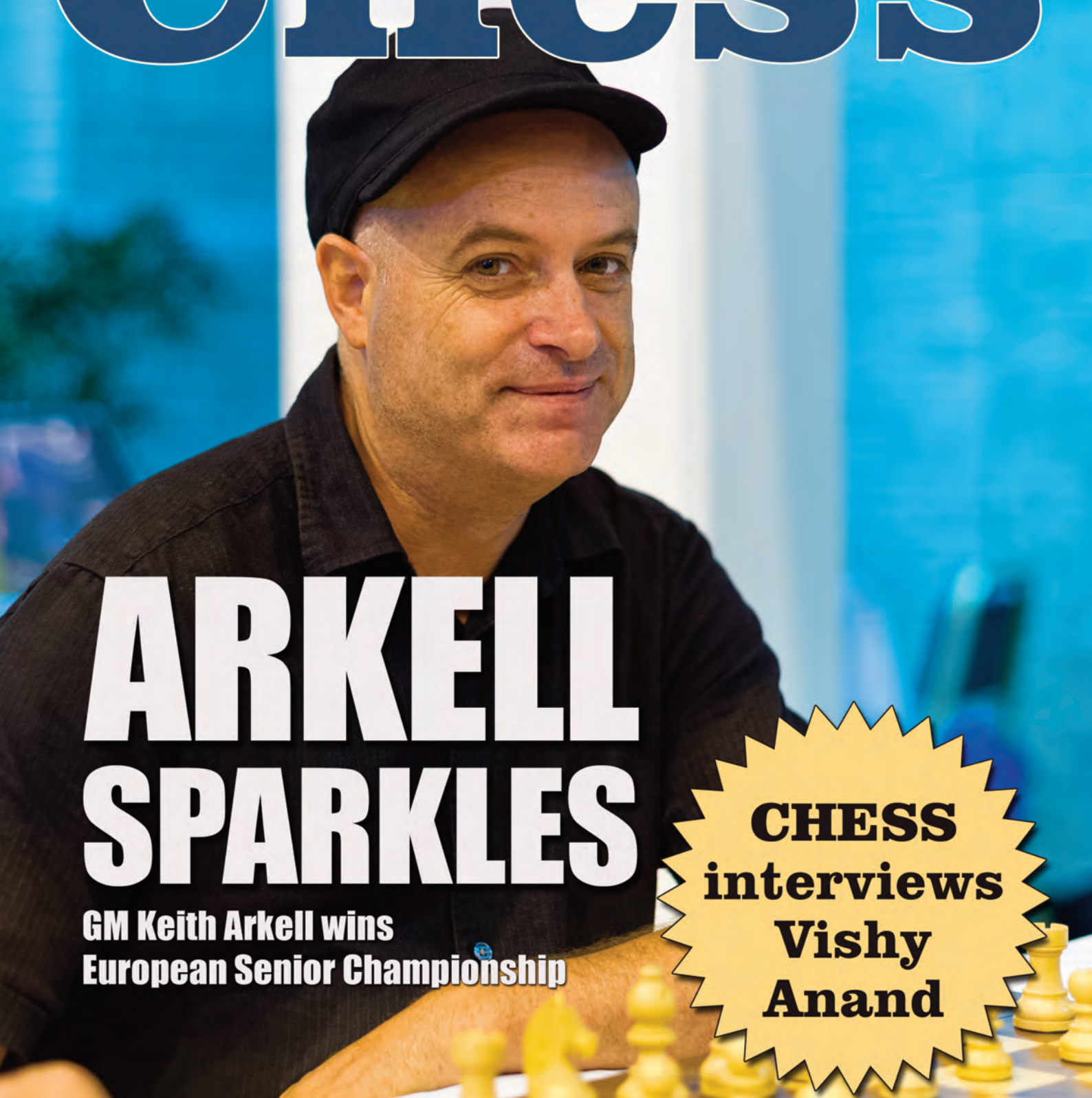


Chess



ARKELL SPARKLES

GM Keith Arkell wins
European Senior Championship

CHESS
interviews
Vishy
Anand



Anand wins Candidates Tournament - *Full Report Inside*
GM Daniel Gormally on the art of judgement in chess
John Henderson explores *The Myth of the Grandma-Tsar*

Chess

Chess Magazine is published monthly.
Founding Editor: B.H. Wood, OBE, M.Sc +
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Website: www.chess.co.uk

Subscription Rates:

United Kingdom

1 year (12 issues)	£49.95
2 year (24 issues)	£89.95
3 year (36 issues)	£125

Europe

1 year (12 issues)	£60
2 year (24 issues)	£112.50
3 year (36 issues)	£165

USA & Canada

1 year (12 issues)	\$90
2 year (24 issues)	\$170
3 year (36 issues)	\$250

Rest of World (Airmail)

1 year (12 issues)	£72
2 year (24 issues)	£130
3 year (36 issues)	£180

Distributed by:

Post Scriptum (UK only)
Unit G, OYO Business Park, Hindmans Way,
Dagenham, RM9 6LN - Tel: 020 8526 7779

LMPI (North America)

8155 Larrey Street, Montreal (Quebec),
H1J 2L5, Canada - Tel: 514 355-5610

Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editors. Contributions to the magazine will be published at the Editors' discretion and may be shortened if space is limited.

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Chess Magazine (ISSN 0964-6221) is published by:
Chess & Bridge Ltd, 44 Baker St, London, W1U 7RT
Tel: 020 7388 2404 Fax: 020 7388 2407
Email: info@chess.co.uk, Website: www.chess.co.uk

FRONT COVER:

Cover Design: Matt Read
Cover Photography: Ray Morris-Hill

US & Canadian Readers – You can contact us via our American branch – Chess4Less based in West Palm Beach, FL. Call toll-free on 1-877 89CHESS (24377). You can even order Subscriber Special Offers online via www.chess4less.com

Printed in the UK by The Magazine Printing Company using only paper from FSC/PEFC suppliers www.magprint.co.uk

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Judgement and Objectivity

by Danny Gormally

The ability to evaluate, to judge a position, is crucial. It's so easy to get it wrong and lose your objectivity. I'd like to show a couple of examples from my own games where judgement ended up being key.

D.Gormally-N.Stewart Hastings 2013/14 *Slav Defence*

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 dxc4 5 a4 ♙f5 6 ♘h4 ♙g4

6...♙c8! is probably the best reply. Both Kasparov and Carlsen have tried the white side after 7 e3 e5 8 ♙xc4 exd4 9 exd4 ♙e7 10 0-0 0-0, but without much success.

7 h3 ♙h5 8 g4 ♙g6 9 ♘xg6 hxg6 10 e4 e6

Solid. During my preparation I mainly looked at the more dynamic 10...e5 11 ♙xc4 exd4 12 e5! ♙b4 (12...♘fd7 was played in a game of Bacrot's and after 13 ♙xd4 White is better) 13 0-0! which, at the very least, looked funky.

11 g5

After 11 ♙xc4?! ♙b4 Black starts to put the centre under terrible pressure.

11...♘fd7

11...♘h5 seemed like the critical choice, taking the f4-square under control. 12 ♙xc4 ♙e7 13 h4 ♙c7 14 ♙f3 all looks very natural for White though, and there is a danger that the knight on h5 will fail to exert any influence on the game, becoming rather stranded at the edge of the board.

12 ♙xc4 ♙b4 13 ♙f1



This seemed the most sensible, to escape from the glare of the bishop on b4, while at the same time preparing ♘e2.

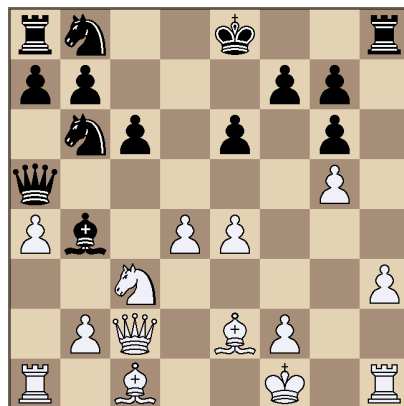
13...♙a5 14 ♙g2

The safe move, covering e4 and c3, and getting ready to consolidate the position with moves like ♙g2 and ♙e3.

The move my hand wanted to play was, of course, 14 ♙b3 with ideas of ♘a2 and also possibly teeing up a sacrifice on e6. 14...♘b6 troubled me though (not 14...0-0?! 15 h4! when White has an automatic attack). Was the sacrifice on e6 really going to be good? When I looked at this game with Mark Hebden later, he seemed very sure that White would be doing well after 15 ♙xe6 fxe6 16 ♙xe6+, but during the game I wasn't sure. It's easy to play well in analysis, but a very different issue to commit to such a line over the board. It's the burning all bridges variation. Moreover, Black is at the least on the board after 16...♘d8 17 ♙g2 (if 17 ♘e2 ♙a6!) 17...♘8d7 18 ♙xg6 (18 ♘e2 ♙e8 19 ♙xg6 ♙e7 is also very unclear) 18...♙xc3 19 bxc3 ♙xc3 20 ♙e3 ♘c4!.

14...♘b6 15 ♙e2

15 ♙b3 was also possible, but I wanted to retain the option of playing ♘a2 and then b4 – on b3 the bishop blocks the b-pawn.



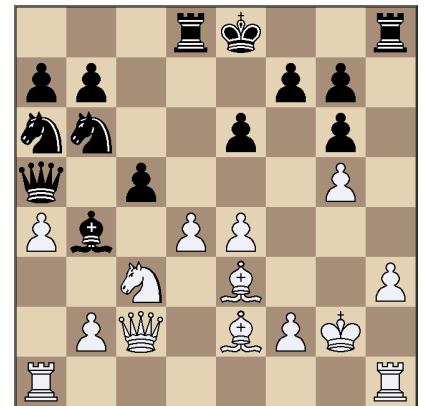
15...♘a6

I thought he would put the knight on d7, which looked more natural.

15...♙e7!? was an interesting idea, with the plan of sacrificing the queen: 16 h4 ♙xg5 17 ♙xg5 ♙xg5 18 hxg5 ♙xh1+ 19 ♙g2 ♙xa1, but this all looked extremely

dangerous for Black after the simple 20 b3! intending ♙b2, followed by a5, etc. Actually in my calculations at the board, I intended 20 ♙b3, thinking this was all very clever as he couldn't stop a5, forgetting that the rook on a1 was preventing it.

16 ♙g2 ♘d8 17 ♙e3 c5?



Black's position looked uncomfortable in any case but I don't like this at all. Now his pieces get cut off on the queenside.

18 d5!

Of course. A pawn is a small price to pay to bury his pieces. Have a look at his knights and the queen on a5, all huddled together.

18 dxc5 ♙xc5 would make sense of his last move, but 18 ♙b5+! was a strong alternative: 18...♙f8 (or 18...♘d7 and now 19 d5! is even stronger than in the game) 19 dxc5! ♙xc5 (19...♘xc5? 20 ♘a2!) 20 ♙ad1 ♙c8 (20...♙xd1 21 ♙xd1 ♙g8 22 ♙xc5 ♘xc5 23 ♙d4! is similar) 21 ♙xc5+ ♘xc5 22 ♙d4! and Black is in serious trouble, as shown by, for example, 22...♘a6 23 ♙d2! ♙g8 24 ♙f4 when his position seems beyond repair, so this was probably even stronger than what I played.

18...♙xc3 19 bxc3 exd5 20 ♙hb1!

The black queen is in serious danger, so he only has one or two tries.

20...♘c4!

20...♘c7 21 ♙b5+ ♘d7 is struck by 22 c4!! (22 ♙xc5 was my idea, but then Black can at least hang on with 22...♘b5 23 ♙xb5 ♙c7) 22...♘xb5 (22...dxc4 23 ♙d2 ♙b6 24 ♙xd7+ wins) 23 axb5 ♙b6 24 exd5 when White is a solid central pawn up and must be winning.

21 ♖f4!?

21 ♖xc4! was perhaps simpler: 21...dxc4 22 ♖xb7 0-0. I wasn't sure how to judge this, but in reality White must be winning. I felt like I wanted something even more meaty, but when you see a win, there's no need to look for anything more. After 23 ♖b5 ♗c7 24 ♗a2! White picks up another pawn.

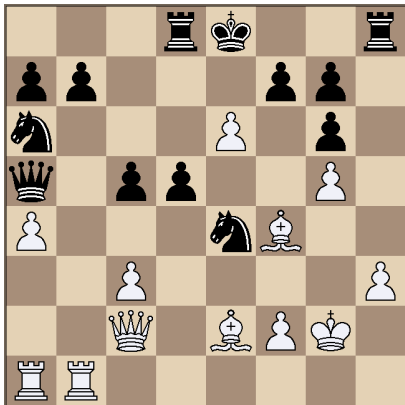
21...♗d6 22 e5

It's important when you have the initiative not to give your opponent time to breathe. To that end, although 22 exd5 did seem very promising, it at least gives Black a chance to get his king to safety without anything nasty happening in the interim. 22...0-0 23 h4 has the idea of crowbarring the kingside with h5, but Black gains some counterplay with 23...c4!.

22...♗e4!

22...♗f5? is far worse after 23 e6!.

23 e6!



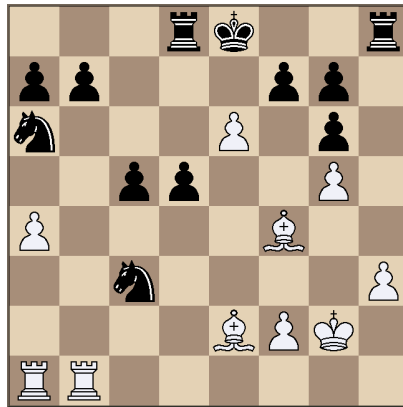
A few moves later I was regretting this decision, but now I think it's best. This move is directed against his plan to reorganise his knight to e6 via c7, where it would completely blunt my attack.

23...♗xc3

A critical moment of the game. When he played this, I became very concerned that I'd gone a bit over the top, and was about to suffer my second painful loss in a row. I had calculated this move earlier, but not in any great detail. Now I was afraid that the ending that we were about to reach, seemingly by force, would be nothing like as good as I'd hoped.

23...fxe6!? was in fact possible too: 24 ♖xb7 0-0 25 ♖e5! was my 'brilliant' idea, where I combine two threats: taking on g7 and coming back to b5 trapping the queen (the dark-squared bishop now covers c3). However, 25...♗xf2+ 26 ♖g1 ♗b8! is a very good practical try that the engine points out, which I doubt I could find over the board. It's a bit messy after 27 ♖xb8 (if 27 ♖c7 ♗xe2!, but 27 ♗xg7+ ♖f8 28 ♖b7 may well be best as the black king is now very exposed) 27...♗df8 28 ♗f1 ♗d8 29 ♗xf2 ♗xf2 30 h4 ♗c8 and the white king is vulnerable.

24 ♗xc3 ♗xc3



25 ♖xa6!

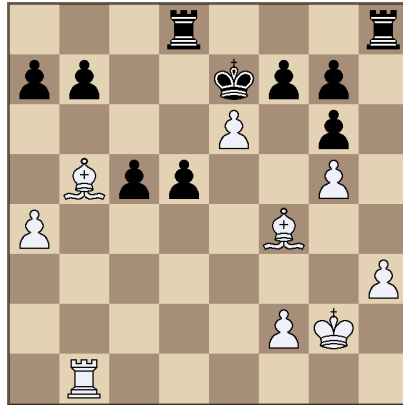
I had seen this far earlier. The subsequent ending is very unusual.

Instead, after 25 exf7+? ♖f8! 26 ♖d3! (I hadn't seen this idea at all, but it turns out to be insufficient in any case) 26...♗xb1 27 ♖xb1 (now there is a threat to take either the pawn on g6 or the one on b7, both of which would create havoc in the enemy camp, but Black has an excellent rejoinder) 27...♗h4! 28 ♖g3 (28 ♖g3 ♖b4 wins) 28...♗xf4 29 ♖xf4 ♗b4 30 ♖xg6 ♗d6 31 ♖f5 ♗c6 White is in serious trouble.

25...♗xb1

25...bxa6? 26 exf7+ ♖xf7 27 ♖b7+ is a wipe-out: 27...♖e6 28 ♗e1+ ♗e4 (28...♖f5 29 ♗f7#) 29 f3 and wins.

26 ♖b5+ ♖e7 27 ♖xb1



This is what I mean by judgement. When he took on c3 I thought that this ending would be very good for him, but by this stage I had no choice but to go for it in any case.

The ironic fact is that I probably wouldn't have played 23 e6 if I had calculated this far, as my judgement of this position was bad. I thought that he had too many pawns here, but in fact despite that Black is in serious trouble. My bishops are very strong and if the dark-squared bishop should find its way to e5, supported by a pawn on f4, he may already be lost.

Watching the commentary on a tournament in Zurich earlier this year, it was interesting to hear the views of Peter Leko. He claimed that the use of a computer just

The Trends in Chess Openings

The top twenty chess openings as played by International Masters and Grandmasters in March.

- 1 ♗ Nimzo-Indian Defence 117 games
- 2 ♖ Slav Defence 92 games
- 3 ♗ Caro-Kann Defence 90 games
- 4 ♗ King's Indian Defence 83 games
- 5 ♗ English, 1...c5 82 games
- 6 ♖ Ruy Lopez, Berlin Defence 71 games
- 7 ♗ Reti Opening 68 games
- 8 ♗ 1 d4 Nf6 sidelines 60 games
- 9 ♗ English, 1...e5 58 games
- 10 ♗ Queen's Gambit Declined 58 games
- 11 ♗ Semi-Slav Defence 57 games
- 12 ♗ Sicilian, Kan Variation 55 games
- 13 ♗ Grünfeld, Classical Var. 54 games
- 14 ♗ Queen's Indian Defence 50 games
- 15 ♗ Sicilian, 2 Nf3 d6 sidelines 48 games
- 16 ♗ Queen's Gambit Accepted 48 games
- 17 ♗ Sicilian, Najdorf Variation 46 games
- 18 ♗ Bogo-Indian Defence 44 games
- 19 ♗ Sicilian, Taimanov Variation 40 games
- 20 ♗ Pirc Defence 36 games

2,125 games played between 1-31 March 2014 where both players were rated over 2400 Elo.

Source: TWIC. Compiled by: HIARCS 14.

In association with HIARCS Chess Explorer – www.hiarcs.com

and The Week in Chess – www.theweekinchess.com

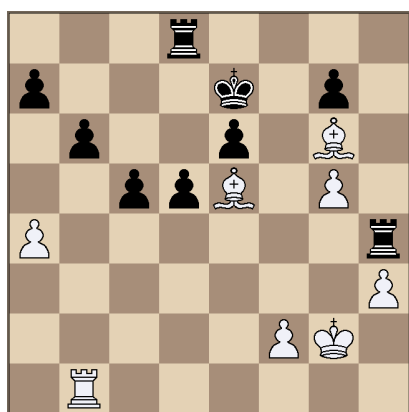


once during a game would improve a player's strength by 100-150 points, and I have to agree with that. That's because in a sharp position, you can just switch it on and see the evaluation. You wouldn't even need to really see variations, just the assessment of what's going on. For example, when I played 23 e6 I could switch it on and see that the computer likes White in this ending; then I could play the subsequent moves with much more confidence.

27...fxe6

After 27...c4 28 exf7 ♖xf7 29 a5! the b7-pawn will become a target. The computer already thinks it might be time to go into desperation mode with 27...♗h4! 28 ♖g3 ♗xf4 29 ♖xf4 ♖xe6 30 ♖e2, but it's very hard to resign yourself to this, as only White can play for a win here.

28 ♖d3 b6 29 ♖xg6 ♗h4 30 ♖e5



30...♖d7?

He really had to grab the pawn, for better or for worse: 30...♗xa4 31 ♖xg7 and I believed White must be winning here, as my pawns are likely to be much quicker than his. Also the bishops are dual-purpose pieces: not only can they support the march of the kingside, but they also help to hold up the black pawns. After 31...♗g8 32 ♖f6+ ♖d6 33 ♖h7 ♗f8 34 ♖g3 the plan is very simple: h4-h5-h6.

31 f4! c4 32 ♖g3 ♗hh8 33 h4

During the game I recalled a famous Polugaevsky game where he prepared an amazing variation in the Semi-Slav – the situation in that game was quite similar to this one, with the rook on h8 imprisoned by a chain of white pawns on the kingside.

33...♖c6 34 h5

34 ♖xg7 ♗hg8 35 ♖f6 was perhaps even more brutal.

34...d4

It's all over too after 34...♗hg8 35 ♖f7 ♗gf8 36 ♖xe6 ♗fe8 37 ♖f7 ♗e7 38 g6.

35 ♖xg7 ♗hg8 36 ♖e4+ ♖c7 37 ♖e5+ ♖c8 38 ♗b4 1-0

In the following game I allowed my objectivity to affect my judgement, and vice versa. For much of the game I laboured under the delusion I was better; even in the immediate aftermath I believed that I had

misplayed it somewhere in a winning position. Only later through more objective analysis (i.e. basically just running the game by an engine) was I able to identify the truth.

D.Gormally-A.Kosten

British Championship,
Torquay 2013
Catalan Opening

1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♖f3 e6 3 g3 d5 4 c4 ♖b4+ 5 ♖c3 dxc4 6 ♖g2 ♖c6 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♗e1

I quite like this way of playing the Catalan. Sacrifice the pawn on c4, obtain decent compensation, and, indeed, Carlsen has played this way with the knight on c3. However, 8 a3 might have been more circumspect: 8...♖d6 9 ♗a4 e5 10 ♗xc4 exd4 11 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 12 ♗xd4 leaves White with a slight but comfortable edge. More importantly, I can play this position for a win with little risk.

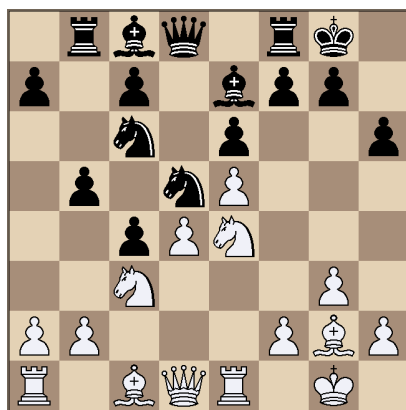
8...♗b8!

The most challenging reply, Black should try and hang on to his pawn for as long as possible, as it's his only real advantage in the position. It's no surprise that Kosten should know what he's doing in the opening, however, as he's the owner of the highly successful *Chess Publishing* website, which focuses on the latest developments in opening theory.

9 e4

9 a3!? can be met by 9...♖a5, but at least that takes away the possibility of retreating the bishop to e7 later. Here 9...♖e7 10 ♗a4! b5 11 ♖xb5 ♖d7 is also difficult to assess.

9...b5 10 e5 ♖d5 11 ♖g5 h6 12 ♖ge4 ♖e7



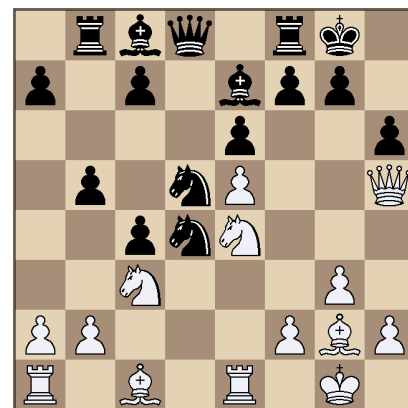
13 ♗h5

A first sign that my objectivity has been clouded. I already thought that I was pushing, but in fact this is a highly risky move – it gives up a very important central pawn. Still there's no easy way to develop the attack, since if 13 ♗g4 ♖h8! and what then for White? 14 ♗d1 may be best, when I have

typical compensation for the pawn, but I wanted something more meaty, something more forcing.

13...♖xd4!

Of course. I now thought the following sacrifice was very strong, but...



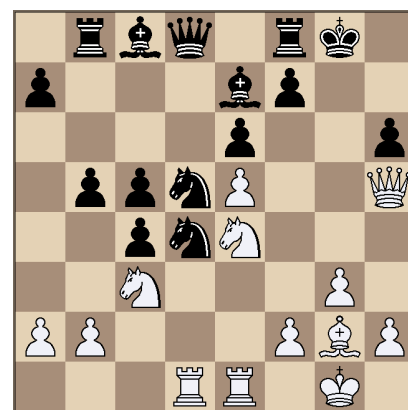
14 ♖xh6!?

...can such a sacrifice be good? After all Black has done little wrong, so if such an idea was to work, chess would be too simple a game. I suspect the problem was that I was playing too quickly at this point, thinking too superficially and generally failing to delve deeply enough into the position. Perhaps if I had slowed down a bit and wasn't so nervous, I might have realised that Black had a few defensive resources.

14...gxh6 15 ♗ad1

15 ♗xh6 loses vital time after 15...♖f5!

15...c4



16 ♗xd4

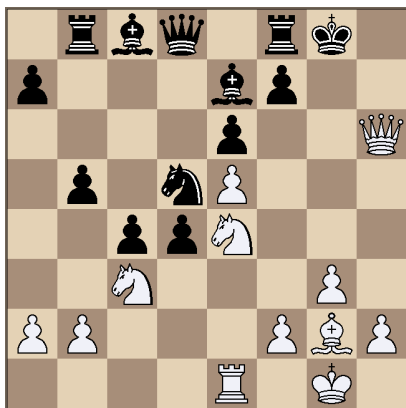
Chatting about the game with Tony afterwards in the pub, he admitted that the possibility of 16 ♖xc5 had scared him to death here. I must admit the move didn't cross my mind, which was hardly surprising, given how fast I was playing. The idea is 16...♖xc5 17 ♗e4 (17 ♖e4 can be played, but the problem is White is now two pieces down, so getting one back is unlikely to save him: 17...♖f5! 18 ♖xc5 ♗c7 19 ♖e4 ♗xe5 wins for Black) 17...♖f5 18 ♗g4+ ♖h8 19 ♖e4, trying to mate Black directly. However, it isn't difficult to refute: 19...♖xf2+! (19...♗b6! 20 ♖xf5 ♖xf2+ 21

♖h1 ♕e3 also wins, as White lacks a decent follow-up) 20 ♖xf2 ♜b6+ 21 ♗e1 ♞g1+ 22 ♖d2 ♜e3+ 23 ♖c2 ♜xc3 and the white 'attack' is going nowhere.

16...cxd4 17 ♜xh6

Despite his material deficit it now looks as if White's forces are well placed to deliver a dagger blow to the enemy king, but there are hidden resources in the position. When one side is material up, a well known defensive strategy is to return some to beat off an attack.

I now stalked around the spectator area like an alpha male predator, leaving Tony to stare at his shell of a position. He seemed to be spending a lot of time here, and I assumed this was just shock, as he was coming to terms with falling to a Gorm brilliancy. But it was I who was in for a shock.



17...♜e8!!

Very cool. I had actually seen this earlier, but had made a fatal miscalculation, or hadn't bothered to calculate far enough (superficial thinking again). I had only really been looking at weak stuff like 17...f5? 18 ♜xd5! exd5 19 ♜f6+! ♕xf6 20 exf6 with an overwhelming attack.

18 ♜d6?

Hardly what I had intended, but 17...♜e8 came as such a shock that I failed to re-orientate myself to the new situation. The text is a sign that I've lost my head, as it's very clear after it that the game is over.

My earlier intention had been 18 ♜xd5 exd5 19 ♜f6+, assuming this was winning, but forgetting about the simple refutation 19...♕xf6 20 exf6 ♜xe1+ 21 ♕f1 ♞xf6!. However, it's likely that I should try this anyway, as the game continuation is just losing. Although White seems to be worse after 22 ♞xf6 ♕d7 23 ♞g5+ ♖f8 24 ♞h6+ ♗e7 25 ♞d2 ♜a1 26 ♞xd4 ♜b6 27 b3 ♜e1 there are still some fighting chances.

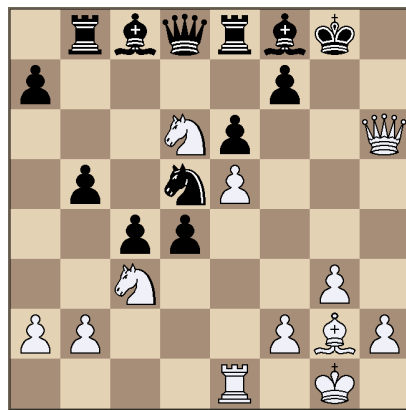
My reluctance to accept a line where I would be worse with no chance of winning, but some hope of saving the game is connected to my lack of objectivity earlier and my poor judgement of the position. Not seeing this line is I believe connected to wish fulfilment and ego. I 'wished' that my position was winning, my ego demanded that it should be so, and as a consequence of this I

was reluctant to look for anything that might go against this and lead me to rethink the situation. Then when the reality dawned on me and I saw that I might in fact be losing, my ego was equally unable to accept this change in situation.

Probably I underestimated Tony as well. I thought that he was some ageing, washed-up grandmaster (even more washed-up and ageing than me), despite the fact that he had a lifetime plus score against me going into this game, and felt he was just a stepping stone on the way to the clashes with the bigger fish, Jones and Howell.

18 ♜f6+ is another try, but seems insufficient: 18...♕xf6 (the depressing thing is that after the game Tony told me he would probably have gone for the line with 18...♜xf6 19 ♞g5+ ♖h8 20 ♞h6+ ♖g8 which is just a draw) 19 ♜e4 ♕g5 20 ♜g4 dxc3 21 ♜xg5+ ♞xg5 22 ♞xg5+ ♖f8 23 ♕xd5 cxb2! and there will be no perpetual, while Black has too much queenside booty.

18...♕f6



Black is just winning now. He can even give up his queen sometimes to fend off the attack, as he's too much material ahead.

19 ♞h5 ♕xd6 20 ♜e4 ♕xe5! 21 ♜xe5 dxc3 0-1

I've simply run out of pieces.

It came as quite a shock to me when I ran the game through an engine later to discover that the attack had not been winning, but in fact I had clearly been worse for almost the entire game.

I suppose you could argue that 'the romance of chess is dead' given that White's optimistic attack foundered on rock-solid defence, but the reality is that I lost my objectivity in this game, failed to judge the position correctly, and subsequently never fully recovered.

I also joked with Tony after the game that I wasn't used to such situations occurring in a game, as most of my games tend to end up being boring endings. So I wasn't used to double-edged attacking positions where one move can change the assessment entirely, and not used to finding defensive resources like the brilliant 17...♜e8!! move Tony found.



A little bird just told me...

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

Garry Kasparov - @Kasparov63

Hello from Kingston, Jamaica! Here to see a model initiative of chess in education by Ian Wilkinson & see if I can help w @Digicel_Jamaica.

Simon Williams - @ginger_gm

(1) Sad to hear that Kasparov let down a load of Irish kids on his recent trip to Ireland. Some had travelled for hours on the promise of

Simon Williams - @ginger_gm

(2) meeting the great man. Yet he failed to appear, leaving a lot of them in tears. Not a great way to win votes!

Magnus Carlsen - @MagnusCarlsen

@PlayMagnus hit 100,000 downloads today! Wondering: Will my next World Championship competitor use it for training?

Judit Polgar - @GMJuditPolgar

ONLY A TRUE CHAMPION! Can be able to do something like this! Wow! My deepest congratulations to Vishy!

Natalia Pogonina - @Pogonina

Anand says he tried to console Kramnik after his loss to Naka. They went for a dinner, and Vlad persuaded him to play in #Candidates2014

Hikaru Nakamura - @GMHikaru

Sad to see what's happening to Kramnik. Reminds me a lot of my result in Wijk where I would play normally and then suddenly blunder.

Mark Crowther - @MarkTWIC

@TarjeiJS The first question I want to know is when is the Tal Memorial? If as rumoured it won't be in late June as currently scheduled.

Tanya Jones - @decombustion

Congratulations @MGawain on winning Cork Congress Masters with 5.5/6. What I really wanted for Mothers Day!

Nigel Short - @nigelshortchess

Fails to understand why stalemate is a draw. Isn't #chess drawish enough as it is?

David Howell - @DavidHowellIGM

New FIDE ratings are out. Finally in the world's top 100!



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