



Tradewise Gibraltar Chess Festival 2017

Monday 23 January - Thursday 2 February 2017

Round 6 Report: Sunday 29 January 2017 - by John Saunders (@JohnChess)

Battle Royal on the Rock

Round six of the Tradewise Gibraltar Masters proved remarkably bloodthirsty as the top seven boards (and fifteen of the top twenty boards) ended in decisive results. Three leaders emerged victorious from the smoking carnage to stand together on 5½/6: Hikaru Nakamura, still on course for a third successive title, English number one Mickey Adams, and Spain's 21-year-old star David Anton Guijarro. But the highlight of the day was the defeat of the world number two Fabiano Caruana by a reinvigorated Nigel Short.

Maxime Lagarde of France seemed to have good chances of holding against Nakamura until about move 28 when 28...c4 would have been an improvement but, slightly short of time, he allowed this important pawn to drop off and resigned when his a-pawn was similarly doomed.



Hikaru Nakamura playing Maxime Lagarde

After playing and defeating the women's world champion the previous round Mickey Adams found himself up against the women's world number two Ju Wenjun today. I believe I proffered some advice about not taking Ju

Wenjun's e-pawn in an earlier report. In fact, Mickey did do this but only after the e-pawn had captured and become a d5-pawn. I'm not sure whether that counts. Anyway, Mickey was already well on course for victory by the time this occurred and he later expressed relief that he finally managed a shorter game than his previous marathon encounters. Ju Wenjun's 10...b5 move looked risky and once Mickey had established his a-pawn on the sixth rank her position was very uncomfortable.



Mickey Adams looks relaxed (bored?) against Ju Wenjun

David Anton Guijarro caught the eye with a stellar performance at last year's Tradewise Gibraltar Masters, losing only in the final round when a reversal of this result would have put him into a tie for first place. Still aged only 21, he seems destined to join the world's elite. This year he has been equally impressive, with three successive wins in rounds four to six against US prodigy Awonder Liang, chess legend Boris Gelfand and now Emil Sutovsky, with the black pieces. David has a quiet but assured spoken manner, rather after the manner of Mickey Adams, and his methodical dismantling of Sutovsky's overstretched pawn structure owed something to the great English player.



Emil Sutovsky makes his first move against David Anton Guijarro

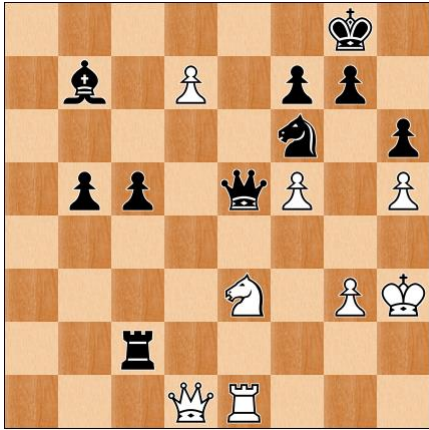
Tradewise Gibraltar Masters, Round 6, 29 January 2017

E.Sutovsky (2628) - D.Anton Guijarro (2650)

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Nd7 12.Nbd2 exd4 13.cxd4 Nc6 14.d5 Nce5 15.a4 Bb7 16.Nxe5 Nxe5 17.f4 Ng6 18.Nf3 Bf6 19.g3 Qd7 20.Kg2 Rfe8 21.Ra3 Bd8 22.h4 Nf8 23.h5 h6 24.f5 Bf6 25.Nh2 Nh7 26.Ng4 Bd4 27.axb5 axb5 28.Rxa8 Rxa8 29.b4 Ra2 30.bxc5 dxc5 31.Be3 Bxe3 32.Nxe3 Nf6 33.Kh3 Qd6



Material is level but White's pawn structure is creaking and he faces a coming onslaught from Black's connected passed pawns on the queenside. He decided it was time to mix things up tactically but the young Spaniard was ready for him. **34.e5!? Qxe5 35.d6 Rxc2!** Black's last hope was for Black to blockade the d-pawn with 35...Nd7? when he can draw with 36.Nd5! Qxd5 37.Re8+ Kh7 38.f6+ g6 39.hxg6+ but instead Black lands a powerful tactical counterstroke. **36.d7** 36.Qxc2 loses to 36...Ne4, etc; 36.Nxc2 Qxf5+ 37.g4 Qf2 leads to mate or huge material loss.



36...Nxd7 Good enough to win comfortably but engines find a spectacular way to victory: 36...Ne4!! 37.d8Q+ Kh7 when, despite the possession of two queens, White is unable to defend against the four-piece attack against his king, e.g. 38.Qh4 Nf2+ 39.Kh2 Qxe3!, leading to mate, though the blizzard of complications ensuing probably explain why Black rejected this line **37.Nxc2** 37.Qxd7 Rg2! 38.Nxg2 Bxg2+ 39.Kxg2 Qxe1 and Black will soon be two or more pawns up, with a very safe king. **37...Qxf5+ 38.g4 Qd5 39.Qxd5 Bxd5** There is still a technical task to win but with three pawns for the exchange, Black is assured of ultimate victory. **40.Re8+ Kh7 41.Rc8 b4 42.Ne3 Be6 43.Rc7 g5 44.hxg6+ Kxg6 45.Kg3 Kf6 46.Kf4 Ke7 47.Rc6 b3 48.Nd1** Allowing a mini-tactic but there is nothing to be done. **48...Bxg4! 49.Nc3 Be6 50.Rc8 c4 51.Ke3 Kf6 52.Ne4+ Kg7 53.Rc7 Nf6 54.Nc3 Nd5+ 55.Nxd5 Bxd5 56.Kd2 Be6 0-1**

SENIOR CITIZEN MUGS WORLD NUMBER TWO SHOCK HORROR

The day's big story was Nigel Short's defeat of world number two Fabiano Caruana. It's no secret that Nigel enjoys playing in Gibraltar, where he has won the title three times, but he also enjoys the social life, captaining the men's team in the Battle of the Sexes match on the Saturday night before this game, and also participating in the Teams of Four blitz event a few evenings ago. He was particularly annoyed with himself at the latter event where he was paired with Fabiano Caruana in the first round and seemingly had the world number two on toast before letting his advantage slip to lose the game. Nigel had been cross with himself because he had already put away a bottle of red wine by the time he had sat down at the board, bemoaning the fact that nobody had joined him at his dinner table to help him soak up the vino.

I guess that must have motivated him for their classical chess encounter in round six, providing him with the chance of instant revenge. This time, if the great US player will forgive me for saying so, it looked rather as if it was Fabby who had been hitting the bottle (though, before his lawyers hit me with a defamation suit, I should point out that he had done no such thing). But his play in the Caro-Kann looked well below par, going slightly astray as early as the eighth move. Note that Nigel didn't wheel out his eponymous variation against the Caro, it not being obligatory for players who have variations named after them to play them on every occasion, but steered it into something more pugnacious. This decision paid off handsomely. On move 17 Nigel went a pawn up, for which Fabiano had precious little compensation. But he didn't get to where he is on the rating list without knowing how to wriggle effectively and it was only after a long and arduous technical phase that Nigel could realise his material advantage to win.



Nigel Short close to victory against Fabiano Caruana

Before the game ended someone in the commentary room had looked through statistics to discover that Nigel hadn't beaten anyone rated in excess of 2800 in a classical game since his 1993 title match against Garry Kasparov. Quizzed on this later he himself commented that he was less impressed by the rating of his opponent than by his relative status as world number two. Then, even as he was discussing this, and with immaculate comic timing, a tweet flashed up on the commentary room screen, from Nigel's title match rival from a quarter of a century ago...



Garry Kasparov 
@Kasparov63

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A shame for Caruana, but I have to be happy for my fellow senior citizen, [@nigelshortchess](#)!
[#GibChess](#)

... which reduced all of us present in the commentary room, including Nigel, to fits of laughter.



The moment when Nigel and Jovanka saw Garry Kasparov's tweet on the screen

Incidentally, it is good to know that Garry Kasparov is following progress here in Gibraltar. He may have retired as a player but he still watches major chess events. Our social media manager cheekily suggested on the Twitter feed that he might like to turn up next year to see if he is still good enough to beat Nigel. As Jim Slater memorably said to Bobby Fischer, "come out and fight, chicken".

Nigel described himself as "ecstatic" at beating one of the world's best players. It was a nice touch that Garry Kasparov also spared a thought for his beaten opponent, for whom this was a triple whammy – loss of game, demotion to number three in the world ranking behind Carlsen and Wesley So, and consequently demotion to number two amongst the US players. Fabiano accepted defeat with his customary good grace and sportsmanship. Hope of first place is not quite extinct for him, given his unmatched record for spectacular streaks. Incidentally, we think he had gone something like 50 games without defeat before his game with Nigel but don't take our word for that. He'll be hurting today but he will bounce back.

It was a very good day for the Brits, with Mickey and Nigel winning in Gibraltar, while over at the Tata Steel event in Wijk aan Zee Gawain Jones wrapped up first on tie-break in the 'B' group, thus qualifying for the top group there in 2018. Not so good, however, for David Howell, who lost his round six game to Veselin Topalov.

One leading player who is probably now out of the running on $3\frac{1}{2}/6$ is Vasyl Ivanchuk, who lost to a 17-year-old Austrian IM, Valentin Dragnev. The Ukrainian looked to be winning but again the clock was his downfall. With only 40 seconds or so left he made a disastrous 34.Ree7 move which left his position in ruins. Thereafter the young Austrian exploited his opportunity very effectively.



Unlucky Chucky: Ivanchuk spoilt his game against Valentin Dragnev in time trouble

Leader board: 1-3 Adams (England), Nakamura (USA), Anton Guijarro (Spain) 5½/6, 4-9 Short (England), Vachier-Lagrave (France), Topalov (Bulgaria), Cheparinov (Bulgaria), Yu Yangyi (China), Dragnev (Austria) 5.
Women's leading scores: Ju Wenjun (China), Anna Muzychuk (Ukraine), Antoaneta Stefanova (Bulgaria) 4½.

Photos of round 6 by John Saunders: <https://flic.kr/s/aHskN3C3V4>

Photos of round 6 by Sophie Triay: <https://flic.kr/s/aHskMUxboQ>

Video footage and interviews from today's round are available to embed from our [YouTube Channel](#).

Report Ends

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