

### Round 12. Candidates Tournament

The day of miracles. Kramnik took the lead. Prestige goal by Ivanchuk.

This are not the whole list of headlines after round 12 in Candidates Tournament in London. Long Friday was really long Friday. For the first time in the tournament absolutely all games finished after first time control and 40 moves.

Today I will continue with ecologically clean annotations (Totally without computer analyzes) "online" comments by IM & FT Vladimir Poley. Text of the games you can find on organisers home page.

Pairs of the day:

Magnus Carlsen –Vasily Ivanchuk

Levon Aroian – Vladimir Kramnik

Teimour Radjabov – Alexander Grischuk

Boris Gelfand-Peter Svidler

Magnus avoid Rossolimo today and said straight no to Cheljabinsk (Sveshnikov) variation by 3.Nc3. Vasily after 5 minutes thought decided to transfer his Sicilian defense into Taimanov variation, old and solid version. Alternative was 3...e5, but this can lead after transformation into "The Spanish torture" where Magnus feels like fish in the water.

Kramnik chosen improved Tarrash defense against Aronian. The difference from normal Tarrash- is no isolated pawn on d5.

Radjabov-Grischuk- easy going with draw reputation Queens Gambit variation, probably quickpeace agreement. Both players lost chances and not enough motivated.

Gelfand plays anti-Grunfeld variation. To go into the main lines against biggest Grunfeld expert Svidler was not an option. Boris will look for fishy on sides.

Grischuk invites to some pawns capture for advantage in development in return and started to shake the boat. I don't believe that Teimour will accept the gifts. Just normal Nf3 will be good neutral response.

Aronian decided to get isolany himself. If black refuse Tarrash famous isolany pawn d5, ok, I can have my own on d4. Position transformed into famous standard standing, that can appear on the board after Queens Gambit accepted, Caro-Canns Panov attack or even Sveshnikov-Alapin c3 variation in Sicilian. The question of taste.

Ivanchuk tranfered to funny Paulsen system. Really, modern chess are lots of nuances in transformation from one opening system into another. Pin with Bishop on b4, half open c-file, especially against white long castling. The game promising to be hot.

Boris got the famous bishops pair and I think we will see good fight.

First surprise, Kramnik did 10...f5, ideas coming from Slav, stop the cannon, but in Slav is also

to prevent e4 and secure strong hold on d5. Now Bishop got brilliant square on f6 and will start to disturb isolani on d4. After Knights exchange on d5 Aronian got a symbolic advantage, because Queen is the worth blockade. The plan can be very simple, to trade d4 pawn with e6 and try to use f5 pawn into own advantage, pawns cannot go backwards.

Ivanchuk managed with Sicilian dream and promoted d5. But Magnus close the center with e5 and took the game on to French defense plans. D4-nice blockade square for white pieces, specially bishop to neutralise Bxc3 with double pawns structure.

Radjabov is still negative to take the pawn. No risk slogan goes first.

Svidler made standard e5 pawn move to clean up long diagonal a1-h8 for his favorite Grunfeld-Kings Indian Bishop and hopes for endgame with 3 against 2 on Queenside.

Ivanchuk looks out very happy after opening. French defense is one of his most played variations for black during last 5 years, specially such pawn structure in the center. Magnus spent half an hour more and he is still thinking what to do.

13...b5?! Kramnik avoiding Bc4 move with idea to remove his blockade Queen as well as solving the problem with his white square Bishop to place him on b7 and build up the cannon on the long diagonal. But anyway, position is very standard.

Gelfand regroup his Queen to the center, finishing development and after Kings safety (0-0), probably will start to promote his "Botvinniks" pawns majority 4 against 3 on Kingside.

Aronian 14.Qe2, preparing c;file with c5 outpost for the Rook and aiming b5 pawn. Look like Kramnik plays to much aggressive, not his style, but we can understand, he must only win,win,win.

Magnus is still thinking, maybe Vasily creating sensation today.

Gelfand placed f-Rook on d1, maybe he want to retreat Bishop on e1 as well and slowly, slowly to give start for his Kingside pawn acceleration.

Magnus placed Bishop on d4, after 30 minutes of thinking. Was it thoughts about this Bishop destiny?

Is this good or bad Bishop, can I allow bishops pair after Nf5 or Nc6?

Long thoughts also for Kramnik, he placed his Bishop on b7, saying yes to pawns exchange b5 against d4, thanks to the cannon on a8-h1 diagonal 15.Bxb5 Nxd4 and Knight from f3 cannot move, because mate on g2. Oops, one more funny idea 15...f4! 16. Bc4 (16.Bxf4 not working because 16...Nxd4 fork) 16...Qe4 17.Bd3 Qd5 18. Bc4 Qe4 and draw by three times repetition. I don't think this will happened, both want the war.

I was right with Gelfand plan, slowly preparation for attack. It is exactly what he is doing.

Teimour refused to take the pawn on c7 and Alexander pushed it forward to c5, protected it by the Rook.

Levon got control on c-file, Kramnik facing difficulties. Of course, Vladimir not willing to move back his Bishop to e7.

Svidler advancing his "a" pawn, the next destination will be a3 and diagonal a1-h8 will be even longer. After b3, black Knight on b6 cut off, probably trade him on d5 and a3 pawn becomes reserve free past pawn.

Kramnik refused to back off his Bishop and gave full control over c-file to Aronians Rook, but in another hand he can send his Knight to d5 and get control in center and c7

Boris put his Rook on b1 and prepared to capture on a3 if pawn appear there, getting b-file in his hands. I like his position.

Ivanchuk takes his time now and return half an hour time handicap back to Magnus. Maybe aggressive 13...g5 he is thinking about? 13...Nc5, done. Vasily is pressing, Ne4 looks nasty, so he goes for pure two bishops after Bd3, but Magnus can just move his Queen away from the pin, but consequences will be blocking other pieces from coming out.

Dream standing for Aronian.

Grischuk starting manoeuvres, no expected easy draws, fight. Unpleasant x-ray on c-file, Queen from b6 aiming b3 pawn. Black fighting for advantage.

Boris using good tactic – winning from behind. One Bishop on e1, another on f1, so start stopwatch, go Boris, go!

Kramniks Rooks on their best places. If a8 Rook moves away, pawn on a6 can be in trouble after a4, if f8 Rook moves away – than no support to f-pawn promotion. Something to think about. 16...f4, needs exact calculation, but to make this move just by exclude all others

Peter offers to trade the Rook to minimise Boris pressure on open files. Beautiful black pieces on c5 and e5 looks dangerous. 21.g3 follows own strategy and prepares f4. Bg7, better to back off.

By the way, Magnus in trouble, he is still thinking. 14.a3 this move forcing lots of exchanges and look like Magnus took a decision to simplify position and go to the endgame. Very strong Psychological action, got in trouble –forget about ambitions as the player with white and hold to safe waters.

Against all my expectations, Boris started attack on Queen side, famous pawn minority attack. Of course, to face black Knight on c5 is not the pleasure. But after axb3 Rook on b1 did not get open space.

Alexander evaluating his advantage on open c-file and plan to come in the file's from the flanks. His position is slightly better.

It starts to be hot at Aronian-Kramnik game. Levon sacrificing the Bishop, interesting idea. So far f5 pawn moved forward threatening Bishop on e3, the cannon on b1-h7 diagonal builds up in just a moment! No doubts, this is the central game of the day. Let's look at straight capture. 18...fxe3. 19.Bxh7+ Kf7 (19...Kh8 looks very scary after Rook comes to h5 will be mate in the air) So far I was writing this comment, Vladimir already took the piece. Levon answered immediately capturing on h7 with the check. Kramnik in thoughts, Actually 19...Kh8 is no straight mate construction, even no perpetual checks mechanism with Bg6+. 19...Kh8, done. Very brave, but this, of course, based on concrete calculations. Probably, Vladimir did not like 19...Kf7, because 20.Ne5+ no capture on e5, too risky and after 20...Ke7 21.Rxc6 looks very complicated. So, open battle began.

Carlsen accelerated his playing speed, centralising the King and press weak pawn on b6, easy to play, this is pure technical position and I am pretty sure, that worse for Magnus already in past. Now is typical French endgame and white pieces are now in control over the board.

Levon calmly captured the pawn on e3, getting two pawns against the piece and views for attack the black King.

Gelfand started one pawn attack against two on the Queenside.

Radjabov move by move neutralising small advantage from Grischuk.

Vladimir played Ne7 quick. Logical, bringing the Knight closer to the King and get control on central squares. 21.e4 to eliminate this possibilities. So, two pawns in center are equals the Knight (W.Steinitz), but here we have the Bishop.

Magnus neutralised all Vasily's threats, blocked everything and probably starting to think about getting something more. Knight can jump on d6. 24...g5! time to show activity, this is a typical plan against e5, f4 pawns chain.

Peter backed his Knight on d7 and plan to build up fortress after b5- c5. In closed standings Knights can jump better, but Bishops like an open space. 26.Ne4, to keep an eye on c5. Clear advantage for Boris.

26....Ra1, less pieces –less enemies, easy play.

Can Magnus play 26.c4 with idea to open d-file and try to come in the feet's. Yes, he did.

Kramnik is still thinking, the threat is nasty fork on e5. Time trouble can be decisive. Levon have 20 minutes for 20 moves and Vladimir 10 minutes more, but he is trying to find best move. Kramnik find 21... Rac8. Lots of tactics and calculations needed. Is it enough time for Levon. Fight for open c-file as the joke comment to Rac8. 22.e5 Bxe5 direct answer. Very impressive. Only 10 minutes left for Aronian 23.Nxe5 Rxc5 24. Ng6+Nxg6 25.dxc5 and like a Thunder in the sunny day 25...Be4! 26.Rxd6 Bxc2 27.Bxg6 Bxg6 5 minutes for 13 moves against 36 minutes for Kramnik. Look like we got the hero. Vladimir will win.

Magnus got pleasant play now, he should try to beat Vasily. Endgame is his strongest part in our days. Knight arrived on d6. Black opponent on d5. White King more active, but c2 pawn is weaker.

Boris got a draw against Peter. Svidler smiling on press conference :`"Be6-Bg4 funny idea, but after 0-0, Boris can play h4 and we got reverse from our first game. After 31.Nd3 white slightly better, 32.Qa7 was not the best line, better to keep Queen on a2-g8 diagonal."

Kramnik move 41...Rf1+?? Simple 41...Rc8, probably will win. 42.Re3 Bb1 43. Rc3! Rxc3 44.bxc3 Looks lucky for Aronian. Good draw sing –wrong colour Bishop-a1 corner. Kramnik in

deep thoughts. Seems he missed the victory. What a high level nerves battle.

Magnus probably drawing against Ivanchuk, to little material left.

Grischuk started complications against Radjabov. Everything based on Ne4+and mate threats.

Magnus instead of 45.Re4 has a funny variation 45.Rc8Rxe5 46.Nd6+Ka6??47. Ra8 mate.

Grischuk went over the line trying to play draw standing for win. This can end with consequences after for example 44.Rxc3 Rxc3 45.Bxc8 Rxc8 46. Kd3 and then take on f3 with good chances in Rook endgame. Now all moves done.

Kramnik found the last chance to give trouble, but unfortunately for him it leads only for a draw.48.Kc6 Ke7 49.Kxb5 Ke6 50.Kxa4 Kf5 51.Kb5 Kxg5 52.a4 Kxh6 53.a5=

Aronian 50.g6?? What he is doing? Loud voice in press center. Lucky Kramnik! 50...Kg5. Levon missed a draw 50 h6 bring the peace agreement.

Carlsen can fell into a trap 49...Ke7 50. Rxh6??Nf7 with double attack. Vasily played 49...Kd7, lets see if Magnus ready for the trap.

Grischuk got theoretical chances for draw in Rook endgame with f and h pawns. 20 years ago GMs will shake hands for a draw, because all books wrote, that this is a draw. But new computer era with Nalimov endgame bases can give win for two pawns favour.

Magnus discovered the trap, but now he will face pawn down endgame.



Kramnik luckily won. What a day. "It was a miracle" - V. Kramnik. "When I got to endgame, I was sure, that it's completely win, but suddenly I realise - it's a draw. 10...f5 I know that is anti-positional. Kh8 looks scary, but I calculated precisely."

Aronian: "I have feelings after 17. Rc5 I am winning. 21.e4-mistake"

Kramnik: "Before 41.g4 I was thinking about nice zugzwang, but after 41.g4 I got a horrible feeling - it's a draw. Force draw 50.h6, simple draw. (Q+B against Q+P). I was not looking for Magnus at all. Maybe in the last round I should."

Radjabov is still trying to promote f and h pawns in the Rook endgame.

Ivanchuk gave some draw chances to Carlsen in more or less technically winning position. But this is only my thoughts, definitely Vasily knows better.

Radjabov - Grischuk - draw, nice pat idea in the end.

Grischuk: "I underestimated in the endgame, my Knight was trapped, but I still thought why should I move my trapped Knight, it placed well. I did my last move just having 3 seconds left. I was not sure in the endgame can I make a draw or I am losing. I beat Eljanov in similar endgame, but pawns were on another side a and c."

Radjabov: "I thought I am winning everywhere, but did not see direct win."

Magnus got nearly similar endgame, but pawns on e5 and h5 and this is huge difference. Should be win with some technical difficulties for Ivanchuk. Vasily demonstrating technique on 30 seconds plus time control. After h1Q, I thought it became a draw, because Magnus can use front attack on the king, but Kf2 after Re1+ killing the king. Rxe5 Rh8+ and mate.

Carlsen:"13.Bd4 was awful, 49.Nb5- extremely stupid, I can do whatever and not losing, but I kept missing a lot of stuff. 71 Rh6?Before this move I was sure is a draw (71.c6 Ke6 72 Rb5) It was similar Endgame Kasparov –Short and Garry blundered something."

Ivanchuk:"I played not very technical, probably I should not exchange Knight or take with the pawn bxc5. I counting this tournament as preparation for Russian Championship. I got very good sparring, then not lets me to relax.(laughing) After 23...Rb8 I have understood if Magnus will not risk it will be a draw."

The end.

Tomorrow, oops, already today is the free day. Next round 13 on Sunday.

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London.

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