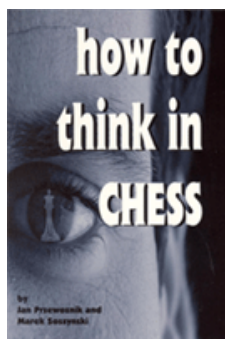




## COLUMNISTS

### *Dutch Treat*

Hans Ree



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## Magnus Carlsen's Glorious Year

Like moths flying to the light, Magnus Carlsen's opponents seemed to seek their doom during the first part of the Aerosvit tournament, played at the Crimean resort Foros. In the first round it was the great Vasily Ivanchuk, who, in a more or less equal position, first played too optimistically for a kingside attack and then, only slightly worse, committed a quick suicide.

In the next round Carlsen played a short and correct draw against Peter Svidler, but then, three times in a row, he won endings that could have been drawn by his opponents. Especially the third game in this series, against Alexei Shirov, was dramatic. Shirov, after defending an endgame with rooks and opposite-colored bishops, had finally reached a position that was clearly drawn, but then suddenly allowed himself to be mated.

Some call it luck and undoubtedly there was some luck to it, but of course it is also proof of Carlsen's great endgame technique and of his tenacity, always looking for the slightest chance until the end.



Magnus Carlsen

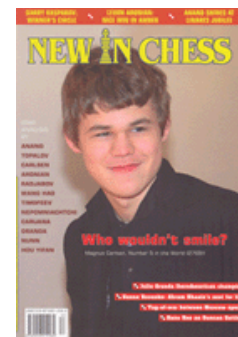
It has been a great year for him. Equal first in the Corus tournament and the Baku Grand Prix, second behind Anand in Linares, a shared second place at the Amber tournament in Nice, a 5-3 victory in his rapid match against Peter Leko, and now a clear first place in Foros, one point ahead of Ivanchuk. In between all these great successes he also found time to win a game in the Dutch club league. He seems indefatigable.

What would Botvinnik have thought of Magnus' tireless activity? The patriarch would have great worries, expecting a quick burn-out or more likely a creeping onset of superficiality.

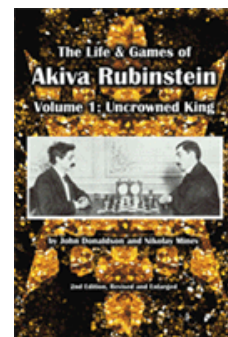
During his reign Botvinnik himself played about one tournament a year, apart from his World Championship matches and his secret training matches. The rest of his time was needed for his investigations "in the quiet of my study." Oh, how Botvinnik liked to use this favorite expression of his, Bronstein wrote.

Times have changed since Botvinnik and this was drastically expressed by Vladislav Tkachiev during the World Cup tournament in Khanty-

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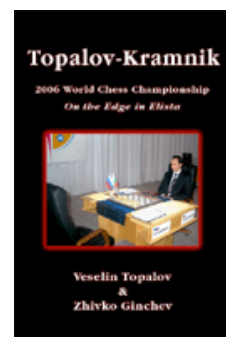


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Mansisk in 2007.

He complained that he hadn't been able to sleep, not even when there was a program about politics on TV. The interviewer suggested that a healthy walk in the woods might help, but Tkachiev brusquely rejected the idea: "These healthy walks are the heritage of Botvinnik. I wouldn't do it, even if it would help, on principle."

During the Aerosvit tournament people were calculating Magnus Carlsen's virtual rating and what place on the world ranking list he would reach. At the end of the tournament the conclusion was that he would be second behind Anand if the result would count for the FIDE rating list of July 1.

It would be a sensational and unprecedented feat for a 17-year-old youngster. Garry Kasparov reached second place for the first time in July 1982, when he was 19. When Bobby Fischer ascended to, let's say the top 5, FIDE ratings did not yet exist, but of course retroactive calculations have been made. According to Jeff Sonas' chessmetrics website Fischer was 21 when he reached second place on a virtual list that didn't exist at the time.

Of course this does not mean that Carlsen is a greater talent than Fischer or Kasparov. It just tells us, if we didn't know it already, that everything goes much faster nowadays.

Everywhere there are GM children who make chess appear a simple game that can be mastered at a high level in a few years. The computers did it by allowing masses of information to be handled quickly. The children of the pre-computer age were on a frugal diet, just at the time when their hungry young brains would enable them to absorb a glutton's feast.

However it seems that the Aerosvit tournament will not be counted for the next rating list. The Dutch website Chessvibes contacted FIDE to clear up this question and characteristically it got two clear answers, contradicting each other.

On June 18 Chessvibes received a message from FIDE saying: "Aerosvit tournament will be rated for July 2008 rating list." For the naïve this would seem conclusive, but two days later another message, from the same official Gennady Rakhvalov, came from FIDE's Elista office. Citing the FIDE Handbook he wrote: "Therefore, as this event finishes after the 15th it will not be rated by July."

It is a pity, for I would have liked to see young Magnus as number two. Maybe we shouldn't make too much of a fuss about mundane rating calculations, but on the other hand, we don't like to miss a historic moment, or see it delayed.

### ***Carlsen – Ivanchuk***

Aerosvit 2008

King's Indian Defense [E97]

**1.d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2.c2-c4 g7-g6 3.Nb1-c3 Bf8-g7 4.e2-e4 d7-d6 5.Ng1-f3 0-0 6.Bf1-e2 e7-e5 7.0-0 Nb8-c6 8.d4-d5 Nc6-e7 9.b2-b4**

Nowadays this is the main line in the King's Indian and probably the reason why Kasparov stopped playing this opening as black in 2000.

**9...Nf6-h5 10.Rf1-e1 f7-f5 11.Nf3-g5 Nh5-f6 12.f2-f3 Kg8-h8 13.b4-b5**

Up till here everything had been played before.

**13...Nf6-e8**

Manoeuvring the knight to g7, to catch the white pawn that will soon

appear on e6.

#### 14.Bc1-e3 Bg7-f6

Black could win a pawn by 14...f4 16.Bf2 Nxd5, but after 16.Nxd5 (or 16.Qxd5), followed by 17.c5, White would have good compensation.

#### 15.Ng5-e6 Bc8xe6 16.d5xe6 Ne8-g7 17.Be3-h6 Ng7xe6

An interesting exchange sacrifice. After 17...Ng8 18.Bxg7+ Kxg7, White's pawn on e6 would stay alive and be quite dangerous.

#### 18.Bh6xf8 Qd8xf8 19.c4-c5

White gives another pawn to activate his bishop.

#### 19...Ne6xc5 20.Be2-c4 Bf6-g5 21.Qd1-e2 Qf8-h6 22.Ra1-d1 Ra8-f8 23.a2-a4

Intending to weaken Black's d6-pawn by a4-a5 and b5-b6.

#### 23...b7-b6 24.g2-g3 Qh6-h3 25.Qe2-g2 Qh3-h6 26.Qg2-e2 Qh6-h3 27.Kg1-h1



Even though the position is about equal White disdains a draw by repetition.

#### 27...Nc5-d7

An equilibrium had been reached where it was very difficult for both players to undertake positive action. But now Ivanchuk removes his well-placed knight to reinforce a kingside attack that will not succeed.

#### 28.Rd1-a1 Qh3-h6 29.Ra1-a2 Nd7-f6 30.Kh1-g2 Nf6-h5 31.Nc3-d5 Ne7xd5 32.Bc4xd5 Bg5-f4 33.Qe2-f2 f5xe4 34.Bd5xe4 Qh6-g5 35.Ra2-c2



Now White is a bit better, but after the modest defensive move 35...Rf7 nothing special would be going on. Impulsively, Ivanchuk goes on a suicide mission.

#### 35...d6-d5 36.Be4xd5 Bf4xg3 37.h2xg3 Nh5-f4+ 38.Kg2-f1 Nf4xd5 39.Rc2-e2

The result of Ivanchuk's action is a position in which White's rooks, previously dormant, work perfectly.

White is winning.

#### 39...Qg5-f6 40.Re2xe5 Qf6xf3 41.Qf2xf3 Rf8xf3+ 42.Kf1-e2

This forces the exchange of rooks, after which Black is without chances.

#### 42...Rf3-f5 43.Re5xf5 g6xf5 44.Ke2-d3 c7-c5 45.Re1-e5 Nd5-b4+ 46.Kd3-d2 1-0

Black resigned, as his queenside pawns will fall.

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