



ChessCafe.com



COLUMNISTS



## Man vs. Machine: Tactical Showdown — The Best Game of Volume 84

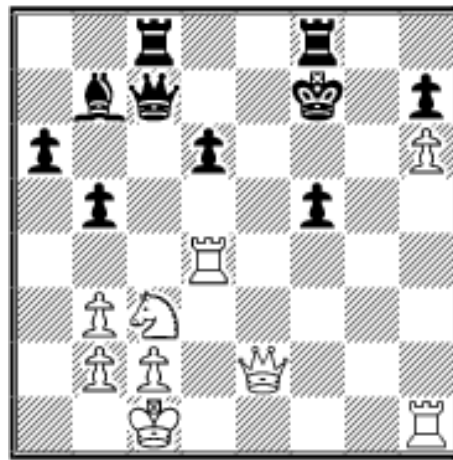
Ivan Markovic  
Chess Informant Editor

Not so long ago an e-mail from a US chess amateur Chris Cunliffe came to my inbox. In a short accompanying text he mentioned that, despite being unrated, his quality of play had been complimented by a player with an international title, and that he more or less wanted to see how the Chess Informant Editorial board would rate it. To be perfectly honest, when I read the game text I noticed that Black lost an important tempo in the opening (which immediately disqualified the game from the theoretical point of view), so I just kept reading the game without setting up the pieces on the board (that is, electronically speaking, without consulting an analysis engine or anything). As usual, my blindfold skills had failed me, so I suggested a “simple” refutation without noticing Black’s pawn on f5; Mr. Cunliffe was very kind when he mentioned in his reply that my “analysis” contained an illegal move, so I decided to make up for not being professional (to say at least) and give the game a second chance. Since Black was on the defensive side after the tempo loss, I shall just list first 24 moves of the game and start from the critical position:

*Multhopp 2294 — Cunliffe, USA 2002*

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cd4 4. Nd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. f3 Qb6 7. Bc4 e6 8. Bb3 Nc6 9. Be3 Qc7 10. Qe2 Nd4 11. Bd4 Be7 12. 0-0-0 b5 13. g4 0-0 14. h4 Bb7 15. h5 Rac8 16. g5 Nd7 17. g6 Nc5 18. gf7 Kf7 19. f4 Nb3 20. ab3 Bf6 21. h6 Bd4 22. Rd4 g6 23. f5 ef5 24. ef5 gf5

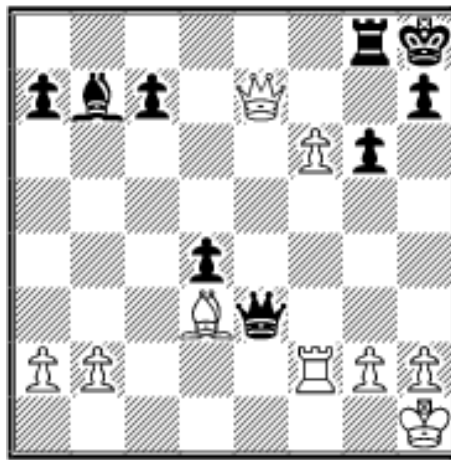
**Chess Informant**  
Subscription Service



Black king is extremely vulnerable and Mr. Cunliffe's position was hanging by a thread; therefore, I was surprised to see that my direct attempts to win were not quite successful, as my silicon friend

defended with its usual stubbornness. Eventually I decided to give up analysing for a while and joined a "principal" discussion with a fellow chessplayer who was pondering the difference between human and computer tactical skills. At the time of our conversation none of us had seen the recent article from *Nature* about brain areas that become active during a game of chess, so we were mostly focused on the strategy vs. tactics issues, or more specifically, whether strategy was nothing more than the long-term tactics, and whether or not all it would take would be more raw power to help computers make the final stretch. To make long story short, I shall immediately display the most fascinating examples that speak louder than words in support of the computer skills.

***Shredder — Comet, Paderborn 2002***



**1. Re2! Qf4** [1... Qd3 2. f7 Qf5 3. fg8Q Kg8 4. Qd8 Kg7 5. Qd4 and White is winning; 1... Qe7 2. Re7 Rf8 3. Rc7 Rc8 4. Rc8 Bc8 5. Bc4 g5 6. Kg1 h5 7. Kf2 Kh7 8. Ke2 Bf5 9. Bd3 and White is winning; 1... Qc1 2. Re1 Qd2 3. Bf1 (with the idea f7) Bd5 4. Qe5 Bf7 5. Bc4! and White is winning]

**2. Rc2** [weak point f1] **Qg5** [2... Qg4] **3. h4!! Qh4 4. Kg1 Qg5** [4... Qh6 5. Rc7 Bc8 (5... Ba8 6. f7 Rf8 7. Qe5 Qg7 8. Qe8 with the idea Rc8 and White is winning) 6. Qg7! Rg7 7. fg7 Qg7 8. Rc8 and White is winning] **5. Bc4 1 : 0**

**Galliamova 2547 — Korchnoi 2617, Amsterdam 2001**



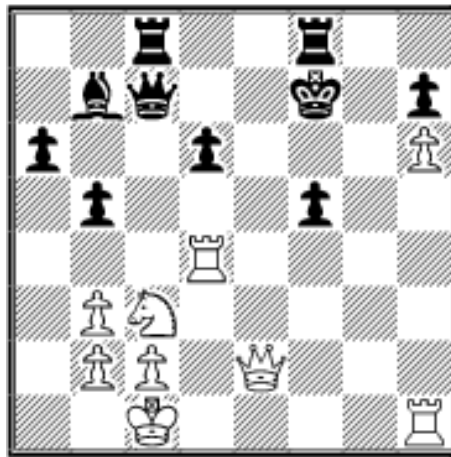
**1. Re6! fe6 2. Qg7?** [2.Rc7! Kd6 3. Rc6!! Kc6 (3... bc6 4. Qd8 Ke5 5. Qb8 Kf6 6. Qf8 equal) 4. Qc8 Kd6 (4... Kb6 5. Qd8 Kc6 6. Qc8 equal) 5. Qd8 Ke5 6. Qb8! Kf6 (6... Kd4?? 7. Qa7 and White is winning) 7. Qf8 equal] **Rf7 3. Qg5** [3. Rc7 Kd6 and Black is winning] **Kd7 4. Re1 Qe1 5. Kg1 a6 6. h4 d4 7. b5 d3** and Black

is winning.

From what we can see from the above examples, the tactics demonstrated by Deep Shredder are simply monstrous from a human standpoint, as it is hard to imagine that a mortal could ignore the first rank threats so cold-bloodedly, only unexpectedly to switch to 3. h4!! just to gain some breathing space for the final blow.

On the other hand, speaking of humans and the game between Galliamova and Korchnoi, the 3.

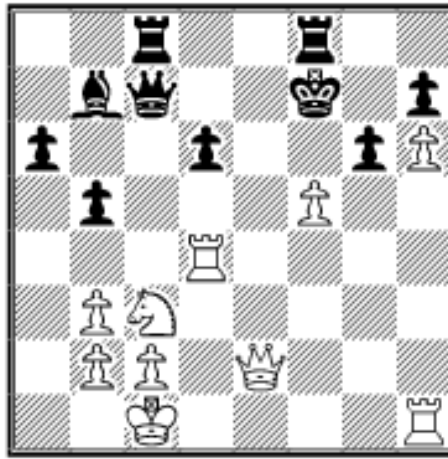
Rc6!! idea requires an absolutely extraordinary vision, and a tip of the hat to the legendary GM Mark Taimanov who managed to find it during the post mortem analysis. Needless to say, our German friend mocks our feeble moments of glory, as it takes him less than a second to find it even on my archaic Celeron. However, the idea of an unexpected rook sacrifice produced a rare effect upon my otherwise tormented mind, so I came upon a solution to the position from Mr. Cunliffe's game that is quite pleasing to the eye, and I hope that you will like it:



**25. Re1! Kg8** [25... Qd7 26. Qe5! and White is winning; 25... Rfe8 26. Qh5 Kf8 27. Qf5 Qf7 28. Qf7 Kf7 29. Rf4 Kg8 (29... Kg6 30. Rg1 Kh5 31. Rf2 with the idea Rh2 mate) 30. Rg1 Kh8 31. Rf7 and White is winning] **26. Rg4!! fg4** [26... Kh8 27. Rg7 Rf7 28. Qe8! and White is winning] **27. Qg4 Kh8 28. Qd4 Kg8 29. Rg1**

**Kf7 30. Qg7 Ke6 31. Re1 Kf5 32. Rf1 Ke6 33. Rf8** and White is winning.

To be perfectly objective, my solution is by no means the only way for White to obtain a winning position, not to mention that Mr. Cunliffe's suggested 24... Rfe8! would be clearly superior to the pawn snatching that could have cost him dearly had his opponent been more resourceful during the attack. In conclusion, the alternative winning manoeuvre, Black's best defensive resource and the remaining moves are all listed below, but something still seems to be missing...



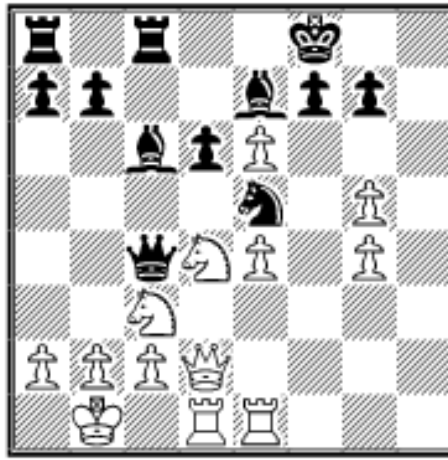
24... **gf5?** [24... Rfe8! 25. fg6 Kg8! 26. Qf1 Bh1 27. gh7 (27. Rg4? Qe7! weak point e1) Kh7 *a*) 28. Qh1 Re6! (28... Qe7 29. Rd1! with compensation) 29. Rg4 Rg8!; *b*) 28. Rg4 Rg8 29. Qf5 Kh8 30. Qf6 Kh7 31. Qf5 equal] **25. Qh5** [25. Rg1! Rg8 26. Qh5 Kf6 27. Rgd1 Ke6 28. Re1 Kf6 29. Rde4!! Be4 30. Ne4 fe4 31.

Rf1 Ke6 32. Qf5 Ke7 33. Qf7 and White is winning] **Kg8 26. Rg1 Kh8 27. Rg7 Qc5 28. Qh4 Rc7 29. b4 Qc6 30. Qg3 Qh1 31. Rd1 Qh6 32. Rg5 Rg7 0 : 1 [Cunliffe]**

So, what's missing then? If you happen to remember me praising GM Taimanov's skills, just wait 'till you see a tactical masterpiece created by another senior player - GM Evgeny Vasiukov, who won Chess Informant's best game award for his game against Van Wely. His colossal concept withstood all the defensive resources that his formidable opponent could come up with, so the game ended victoriously for White. Since it is possible to successfully complete such an attack only after all the positional factors have been correctly assessed, it seems that only players with decades of experience are capable of conceiving such masterpieces that require vision and depth inaccessible even to computers. Professor John Gabrieli from the Stanford University claims that "most of the stuff that we think of as smart is based on experience." To me it somehow seems too easy to attribute such great ideas of the two legendary grandmasters to their experience only. Or, perhaps I should leave it to the readers to judge...

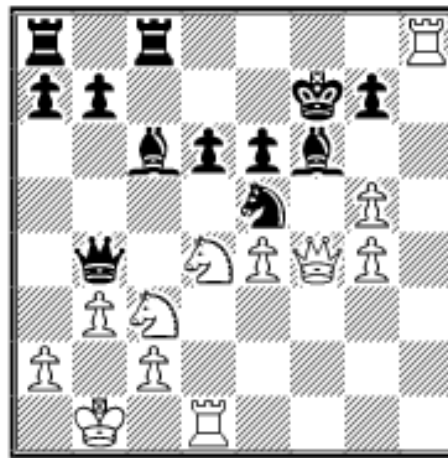
### ***Vasiukov 2524 — Van Wely 2697 Moscow 2002***

**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cd4 4. Qd4 Nc6 5. Bb5 Bd7 6. Bc6 Bc6 7. Nc3 [7. c4 – 84/(163)] Nf6 8. Bg5 e6 9. 0-0-0 Be7 10. Rhe1 0-0 11. Kb1 Qa5 12. Qd2 Qa6 13. Nd4 Rfc8 [13... Rfd8 – 67/(255)] 14. f4 [14. g4; 14. f3] h6 N [14... b5] 15. h4!? [15. Bh4? Ne4] Qc4 16. g4 Kf8 17. f5! [17. Bf6 Bf6 18. g5 Bd4 19. Qd4 Qd4 20. Rd4 equal] hg5 [17... e5?! (with the idea hg5) 18. Bf6! Bf6 19. Nf3 with the idea g5 with attack] 18. hg5 Nd7 19. fe6 Ne5**



**20. Rh1! fe6** [20... g6 21. Rh8 Kg7 22. Rh7! Kh7 (22... Kg8 23. Rdh1) 23. Qh2 Kg8 24. Rh1 Qf1™ 25. Rf1 Bg5 26. ef7 Nf7 27. Ne6 and White is winning; 20... Ke8 21. Rh8 Bf8 22. e7! (22. Nf5!) Ke7 23. Nf5 Kd7 (23... Ke8 24. Qd6 Ng6 25. Ng7 mate; 23... Ke6 24. Qd6 Bd6 25. Rd6 mate) 24. Nd6 Qb4 25. Nc8 Bd6 26.

Nd6 Rh8 27. a3! and White is winning; 20... Ng6 21. Rdf1! Be8 22. Nd5 (with the idea Qh2-h8) Bg5 23. Qg5 Qd4 24. Qe7 Ne7 25. Rh8 Ng8 26. e7 mate] **21. b3! Qb4 22. Rh8! Kf7 23. Qf4 Bf6** [23... Kg6 24. Ne6 and White is winning]



**24. Rh7!! Kg8** [24... Qc3 25. Qf6 and White is winning; 24... Ng4 25. gf6 Nf6 26. e5 de5 27. Rg7! Kg7 28. Ne6 Kf7 29. Qb4 Ke6 30. Qd6 Kf7 31. Rf1 and White is winning] **25. gf6!! Kh7 26. Qg5!! Rc7** [26... g6 27. Rh1 Kg8 28. Rh8! (28. Qh6! with the idea 28... Rc7 29. Qh8 Kf7 30. Rh7 mate) Kf7 (28...

Kh8 29. Qh6 Kg8 30. Qg7 mate) 29. Rh7 Ke8 30. Re7 Kf8 (30... Kd8 31. Ne6 mate) 31. Qh6 Kg8 32. Qg7 mate] **27. Ne6! Rac8 28. fg7 Kg8** [28... Be4 29. g8Q! Rg8 30. Qh5 mate] **29. Rh1 Be4 30. Rh8 Kf7 31. Nc7** [31. g8Q and White is winning] **Qc3 32. g8Q** [32. g8Q Rg8 33. Qg8 Kf6 (33... Ke7 34. Qg7) 34. Rh6 Ng6 (34... Bg6 35. Nd5) 35. Qh8] **1 : 0** [Vasiukov]



[TOP OF PAGE](#)



[HOME](#)



[COLUMNS](#)



[LINKS](#)



[ARCHIVES](#)



[ABOUT THE  
CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe.com Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Reviews\]](#) [\[Bulletin Board\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)

[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)

[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About The Chess Cafe\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2002 Russell Enterprises, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

"**The Chess Cafe®**" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.