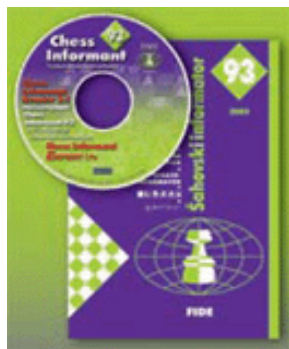




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The Year of Veselin Topalov

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Editor-in-Chief

Only a month has passed since the FIDE World Championship tournament in San Luis ended and already a new cycle will soon begin with 128 participants in a knock-out tournament in far distant Siberia. The tournament in San Luis was undoubtedly the best move FIDE could make in order to ensure a healthy future for the world championship.

We have witnessed many discussions as to whether Topalov is the legitimate world champion and whether he should play a reunification match against Kramnik to prove that he is the strongest player at the moment. But his results at Linares, Sofia and San Luis confirm that this is the year of Veselin Topalov.

Informant 94 features many of the high-quality games from this exceptionally well-fought struggle for the championship. The game I have chosen below, with annotations by GM Sergey Shipov, shows how theoretically well-prepared Topalov was for the tournament of his life.

The Najdorf Sicilian was played frequently at San Luis and the fourth round game Kasimdzhanov – Anand saw 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.Nd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 Ng4 7.Bg5 h6 8.Bh4 g5 9.Bg3 Bg7 10.h3 Ne5 11.Nf5 Bf5 12.ef5 Nbc6 13.Nd5 e6 14.fe6 fe6 15.Ne3 0-0 16.Be2 Be7 17.0-0 Rad8 18.Bh5! Kh8 19.Re1 d5 20.a4! with a small advantage for White, after which Anand suffered his first defeat of the tournament.

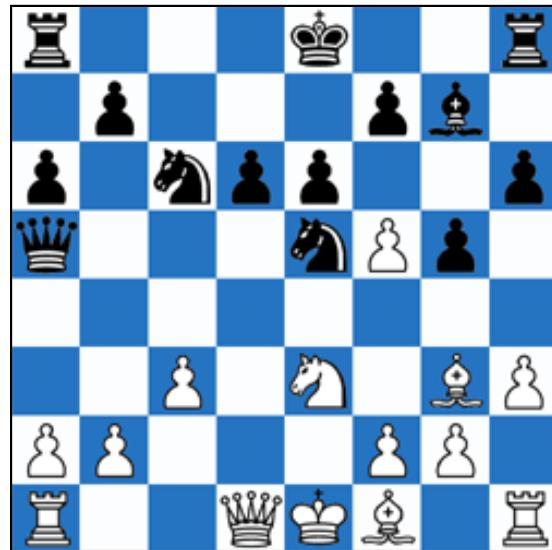
It would be interesting to know whether Anand knew about the game Cheparinov – I.C.Ibarra Jerez, Roquetas de Mar 2004 where Black continued 15...Qa5 16.c3 Nf3! (a novelty) 17.Qf3 Bc3 18.Kd1 Bb2?! 19.Rc1! Bc1 20.Nc4! Qa2 21.Qf6 with an unclear position, while 18...Qa4 19.Nc2 Bb2 transposes to the game which is the subject of this article. The young Bulgarian grandmaster Ivan Cheparinov was a member of Topalov's team in San Luis and his contributions were very important.

A crucial moment was the fifth round game Svidler – Topalov. This important victory gave Topalov additional self-confidence and he ended the tournament undefeated with 6 wins and 8 draws. After Svidler's 14.Ne3 a new move followed at once: 14...Qa5 (14...Qb6 was played in the game A.Sokolov – Sutovsky, Greece 2004 – 91/216) 15.c3 Nf3! 16.Qf3 Bc3 17.Kd1 Qa4! (But this key move is the real novelty, played as a result of home preparation 17...Bb2 18.fe6 fe6 transposes to the Cheparinov game, while 18...Qa4! 19.Kd2 Qb4 20.Kd1 fe6 would be even better) 18.Nc2 Bb2 19.fe6 fe6 20.Qb3

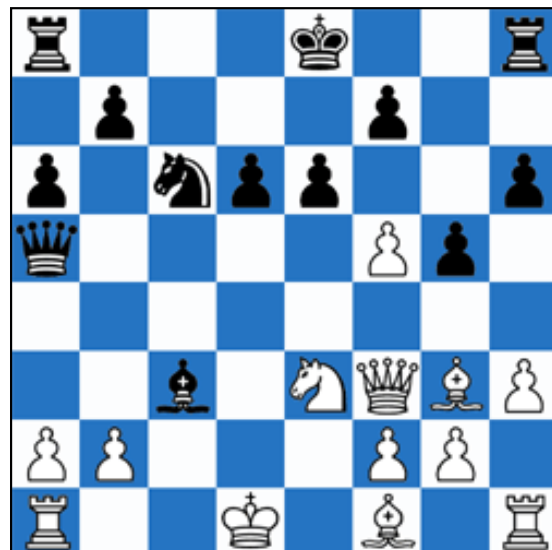
Qb3 21.ab3 Ba1 22.Na1 Ke7 and the position is equal.

Svidler 2738 – V.Topalov 2788 San Luis 2005 – 94/180

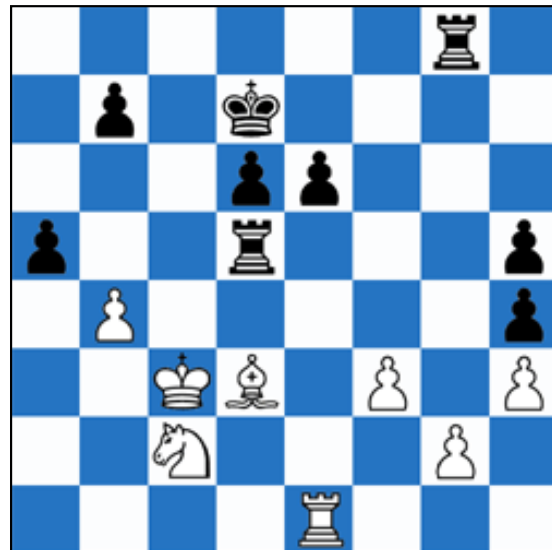
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cd4 4.Nd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 Ng4 7.Bg5 h6 8.Bh4 g5 9.Bg3 Bg7 10.h3 Ne5 11.Nf5 Bf5 12.ef5 Nbc6 13.Nd5 e6 14.Ne3 [14.fe6 fe6 15.Ne3 (15.Qh5? Nf7 16.Qg6 Bb2 17.Qe6 Kf8 18.Rb1 Qa5 19.Kd1 Re8 and Black is superior; Kasimdzhanov) a) 15...Qa5 16.c3 Nf3! (a novelty; 16...0-0-0; 16...d5) 17.Qf3 Bc3 18.Kd1 Qa4 (18...Bb2?! 19.Rc1! Bc1 20.Nc4! Qa2 21.Qf6 unclear; I.Cheparinov 2550 – J.C.Ibarra Jerez 2417, Roquetas de Mar 2004) 19.Nc2 Bb2 see 14.Ne3; b) 15...0-0 16.Be2 Qe7 17.0-0 Rad8 18.Bh5! (weak point g6; 18.c4 see 87/240) Kh8 (a novelty; 18...d5) 19.Re1 d5 20.a4! and White is slightly better; Kasimdzhanov 2670 – V.Anand 2788, San Luis 2005 see 94/179] **Qa5** [a novelty; 14...Qb6 see 91/216] **15.c3** [15.Qd2 Qd2 16.Kd2 Ke7 equal]



15...Nf3! 16.Qf3 [16.gf3? Bc3 17.bc3 Qc3 18.Qd2 (18.Ke2 Nd4 and Black is winning) Qa1] **Bc3 17.Kd1** (only move)



17... Qa4! [17...Bb2 18.fe6 Qa4! (18...fe6?! see 14.fe6) 19.Kd2 Qb4 20.Kd1 fe6 unclear] **18.Nc2** [18.Kc1?! Bb2 19.Kb2 Qb4 20.Kc1 Nd4 21.Qd1 Rc8!? (21...Qc3 22.Kb1 equal) 22.Bc4 Qc3 23.Kb1 Rc4 24.Nc4 Qc4 with compensation] **Bb2 19.fe6 fe6 20.Qb3** [20.Qg4?! Nd4! (20...Qg4 21.hg4 Ba1 22.Na1 and White is slightly better) 21.Rc1 (only move) Rc8 22.Bd3 Ke7 (22...Kd7 23.Re1 Rc3 24.Qe4! Bc1 25.Qb7 Rc7 26.Qb6 unclear) 23.Re1 Rc3 (23...Qa2 24.Re4 e5 25.Rd4!) 24.Kd2 (24.Qe4? Bc1 25.Qb7 Kf6 and Black is winning) Qa5 25.Bd6! Kd7 (25...Kd6? 26.Qd4) 26.Bb4 Rc2 27.Rc2 Qb4 28.Kd1 Nc2 29.Qe6 Kc7 30.Qe7 Kb8 31.Bc2 Qb6 and Black is slightly better, weak point Kd1; 20.Rc1!? Bc1 (20...Ke7 21.Qb3 Qb3 22.ab3 Bc1 23.Kc1 and White is slightly better; 20...Rc8 21.Bd3!) 21.Kc1 Qc2 22.Kc2 Nd4 23.Kd2 Nf3 24.gf3 e5! weak point Bg3] **Qb3 21.ab3 Ba1 22.Na1 Ke7** (equal) **23.Bd3** [23.Kd2 Rac8 24.f3 Nb4! weak point Na1] **Rac8** [23...Nb4 24.Be4! (24.Bb1 a5! 25.Re1 a4 with initiative) d5 25.Bf3 a5 26.Nc2 and White is slightly better] **24.Re1** [24.Nc2 Na5! 25.Nd4! (25.b4 Nc4 26.Ke2 Nb2 and Black is slightly better) e5 26.b4 Nc4 27.Nf5 Kf6 28.Ke2 d5 29.f3 e4! 30.fe4 de4 31.Bc4 Rc4 32.Ne3 Rc6 equal] **Nd4!** [weak point Na1] **25.f3!** [25.Nc2 Nb3 26.Bf5 e5 27.Bc8 Rc8 and Black is slightly better] **Rc3 26.Kd2 Rhc8 27.Rb1!** [27.Bc4 R8c4 28.bc4 Rc4 and Black is slightly better] **R3c5 28.b4** [28.Bf2 Rd5!] **Rd5!** **29.Bf2** [29.Be4? Nf3 30.Ke2 Rd2 31.Kf3 Rc3 32.Kg4 Rd4 33.Re1 Rb4! and Black is winning] **Kd7** [29...Nc6!? 30.Ke2 Ne5 31.Be4 Rb5 32.Nc2 d5 33.Bh7 a5 with initiative] **30.Be3** [30.Nb3? Nc6 31.Ke2 Nb4 32.Be4 Na2! 33.Bd5 Nc3 34.Kf1 Nb1 35.Bb7 Rb8 36.Na5 Kc7 and Black is superior; 30.Be4?! Nf3 31.Ke3 Rc3 32.Ke2 Rd2 33.Kf1 Rf2! (33...Nd4 34.Be1!) 34.Kf2 Nd2 35.Re1 Ne4 36.Re4 d5 37.Re2 Kd6 38.Nc2 Rc4 and Black is slightly better] **Nf5 31.Bf2 Nh4!?** [31...Nd4 equal] **32.Bh4 gh4** [weak point g2] **33.Nc2! h5 34.Re1?!** [34.b5! with the idea 34...a5 35.Ra1 b6 36.Ra4! with the idea Ne3, f4-f5 with initiative] **Rg8 35.Kc3** [35.Re2!?!] **a5!**



36.Bc4? Time [36.ba5! Rg2 37.Nd4! Ra5 (37...Rc5 38.Kb4 Rb2 39.Ka3 Rf2 40.Bb5 Rb5 41.Nb5 Rf3 42.Kb4 Rf4 43.Kb3 Rf3 44.Kb4 equal) 38.Ne6 Rg3 (38...Re5 39.Nf4!) 39.Nd4 Rh3 40.Rb1 (40.Bf5? Rf5!) Rg3! (40...Kc7 41.Nb5) 41.Rb7 Kc8 and Black is slightly better] **Rc8!** [weak point Bc4] **37.Ne3** [37.Kb3 a4! and Black is winning; 37.ba5 Rdc5 38.Ne3 d5 and Black is winning] **Rb5! 38.Kd3 Rb4** (and Black is winning) **39.Be6 Ke6 40.Nc2 Kd5 41.Nb4 ab4 42.Re7 b5 43.Rh7 Rc3 44.Kd2 Rc4!** [45.Rh5 Kc6 46.Rh8 b3

47.Re8 Kc5! with the idea Kb4] 0 : 1 [Shipov]



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