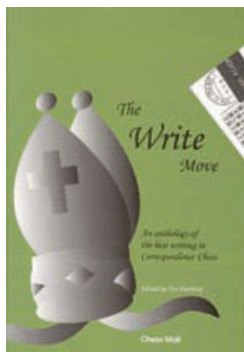




COLUMNISTS

The Kibitzer

Tim Harding



CHESSTHEATRE

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World Title Shenanigans

The victory of Anand in the world championship match is good for chess – but FIDE’s attempt to regain control of the title have been thrown once more into disarray by the negotiations around the match that is supposed to be held to decide his next challenger. As the deadline for this column arrived last weekend, it was still unclear what would happen. As so often before, bids, counter-bids, and fractious negotiations are part of the game. Let us hope we don’t return to the situation where chess becomes like boxing.

The recent Anand-Kramnik match, discussed in the second half of this column, was played as part of the unification process agreed between FIDE and others having a claim to the world title, notably Kramnik (who had become non-FIDE world champion in 2000 by defeating Kasparov). Under the terms of the unification agreement, Anand became recognised as world champion by almost everybody, by virtue of winning the unification tournament held in 2007, but there had to be two more title matches (in 2008 and 2009) before the process was complete, exhausting all the historic claims of various grandmasters to a stake in the title race.

Except in 1948 when Alekhine’s death meant there was no reigning champion, and later in the years of the lowly-regarded FIDE knock-out world contests, the world chess championship has always been decided by a direct match between the holder and a challenger. Anand’s win in the 2007 tournament therefore lacked some of the kudos of previous championships, and it was important for him to confirm this victory by winning a match against the man who had both dethroned Kasparov and then held off (however unconvincingly) the challenges of Leko and Topalov.

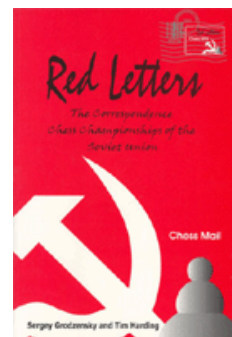
Since Kramnik did not win that tournament, he had the right to play the first challenge match against Anand, the right which he recently exercised without success. Fischer undoubtedly did not recognise the unification process and still believed himself to be undefeated champion, but he was a little mad, and his death this year has removed the last serious objector to the process.

Topalov vs. Kamsky: Semi-final Shenanigans

What happens next? The unification agreement recognised Bulgarian grandmaster Veselin Topalov’s right to special consideration following his controversial “toiletgate” match with Kramnik in 2006. (Originally the terms of the match with Kramnik excluded the loser from the next cycle, but he was restored.) It stipulated that he would play a “semi-final” match this year against the winner of the 2007 FIDE World Cup tournament played last December in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia.

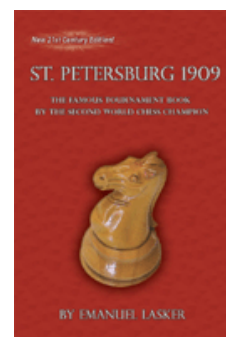
The World Cup tournament, still in progress when I wrote *Kibitzer 139*, was a 128-player knock-out series of seven rounds. It was surprisingly won by Gata Kamsky (USA), who some readers may remember played and lost a FIDE world championship match in 1996 against Karpov, in Elista, and then retired from professional chess for many years. In the final mini-match Kamsky defeated Shirov, having earlier defeated Svidler, Ponomarev, and Carlsen amongst others.

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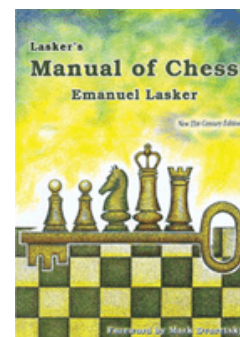
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by Emanuel Lasker

The next stage is that a Kamsky-Topalov should have been arranged. The winner is supposed to play Anand in the first six months of 2009? (Admittedly the schedule said the title match that just ended in October should have been played at latest in September, so evidently some slippage will occur, especially in the present financial climate, which makes it very hard to find sponsors.)

In February (2008), FIDE accepted a bid from the Bulgarian Chess Federation to host the match for \$150,000 but, understandably, Kamsky did not want to play an 'away' match. So FIDE set a deadline of 11 April for alternative bids to be submitted, from countries other than Bulgaria, USA, Russia and Spain (I am not sure why the last two were excluded), with a net prize fund of \$250,000. If none were forthcoming then the Bulgarian deal would stand. Rumours of a Ukrainian bid to host the match in Lviv for \$750,000 then emerged, but several deadlines set by FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov passed (23 April, 5 May, 12 May etc.) and the money guarantees were not forthcoming. Therefore, it seemed for a time that the match should be played in Bulgaria during November.

On 1 June it appeared that Ilyumzhinov himself was guaranteeing the \$750,000 and that the match would after all be played in the western Ukrainian city (formerly the Polish city of Lwów) from 26 November to 14 December, immediately following the end of the FIDE Olympiad currently being played in Dresden (12-25 November). As of 1 November, that was the current information on the World Events calendar at the FIDE [website](#). On 6 November, when I returned from an overseas trip without Internet access, I found I had to rewrite part of this column because of a FIDE press release just issued in Moscow. It states that Kamsky's manager Alexander Chernenko had still not produced the bank guarantees and the FIDE President wrote that 'I have deeply regretted the trust which I had shown' to Chernenko concerning the guarantee. He reopened the bidding, giving the Bulgarian federation until 14 November to reclaim the match by putting up the money (\$250,000 prize fund, \$50,000 to FIDE plus all organising expenses). If they did this, then the match could go-ahead on the announced dates right after the Olympiad, but in Bulgaria instead of the Ukraine.

Moreover, Ilyumzhinov demanded that both players had to confirm in writing (also within eight days) that they would play the match. If Topalov refused to confirm, Kamsky would play next year's match with Anand. If Kamsky refused, then Shirov (runner-up of World Cup 2007) would replace him and play the semi-final with Topalov. If the Bulgarian federation refused to pay, then a new bidding process would begin with a 31 December deadline for the semi-final match to be played next February or March, pushing back the match with Anand to later in the year.

On 7 November (deadline for this column), Kamsky's father Roustam protested against this short deadline to agree to a match for which the conditions were unclear – a fair point, although most of the rest of his protest published at the ChessBase website was paranoia typical of the man. The only good thing about the situation is that since most of the principals and negotiators can meet in person at the Olympiad in Dresden, maybe a last-minute solution will be hammered out.

So by this time next year, one of Anand, Kamsky, Topalov, or possibly even Shirov will be world champion. The procedure to decide the *following* challenger has also been specified some time ago. In 2010 a Challengers Match should be held between the Winner of the World Cup 2009 and the winner of the 2008-2009 FIDE Grand-Prix Series. FIDE announced that the winner of that match will play a World Championship Match of twelve games in 2011 against the reigning world champion.

It looks as if Anand has a good chance of remaining world champion until at least 2011, and perhaps will not even have to defend his title in 2009.

However, by the time you read this column, perhaps the situation will have changed!

The World Championship Match

Now let us take a look at some interesting moments from the Anand-Kramnik match. I am not going to look at every game in detail since readers have probably seen the games annotated elsewhere.

Those of us old enough to remember the matches of the 1960s and 1970s will probably agree that the best of twelve games seems rather short to decide the highest honour in the game; as was proved on this occasion, it hardly leaves any chance to come back from a bad start. In fact only eleven games were played and it might have been only nine or ten had Kramnik not started to look more like himself when it was too late. That makes it the shortest world title match since Lasker vs. Schlechter in 1910, which was for the best of only ten games (with no play-off) and ended in a 5-5 tie. Kramnik's match with Kasparov in 2000 saw only two decisive games out of fifteen: this has probably been decisive in making sponsors unwilling to put money up for longer contests. In a short match, each game has more weight.

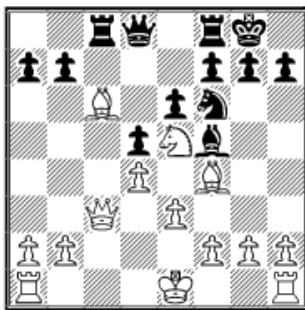
Having white in the first game is not always an advantage in a big match, just as serving in the first game of a tennis match is not always the best option. Players can be nervous and feeling each other out; a draw is the likely outcome, and so it was on this occasion. Kramnik played the Queen's Gambit and met the Slav Defence with the Exchange Variation: risk-free, but rarely offering winning chances at this level.

Vladimir Kramnik - Viswanathan Anand

First match game, Bonn 2008

Slav Defence [D14]

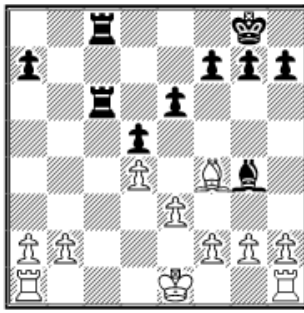
1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 cxd5 cxd5 5 Bf4 Nc6 6 e3 Bf5 7 Nf3 e6 8 Qb3 Bb4 9 Bb5 0-0 10 Bxc6 Bxc3+ 11 Qxc3 Rc8 12 Ne5



12...Ng4

This is not actually a novelty; it had been played in an international team correspondence tournament three years ago. Instead 12...bxc6 13 Rc1 (not 13 Nxc6? Qe8 14 Rc1 e5!) 13...Ne4 14 Qa3 f6! 15 Nd3 (15 Nxc6? Qe8 again threatening to win by ...e5) 15...g5 was unclear in Y. Visser-J. Brenninkmeijer, Amsterdam OHRA-B 1990.

13 Nxg4 Bxg4 14 Qb4 Rxc6 15 Qxb7 Qc8 16 Qxc8 Rfxc8



The opposite-coloured bishops and Black's dominance of the c-file totally negates any apparent winning chances from the extra queenside pawn.

17 0–0 a5

The first new move of the game! 17...Be2 18 Rfe1 Bd3 19 b3 ½–½, was A. Molde-J. Marti Pericot, European Team Corr. Ch., ICCF webserver 2005. Kramnik tried a little harder to make something of it.

18 f3 Bf5 19 Rfe1 Bg6 20 b3 f6 21 e4

White hopes to create either a potential weakness at d5 or a more fluid position for his pieces, but Anand demonstrates sufficient counterplay for Black.

21...dxe4 22 fxe4 Rd8

This is the downside of 21 e4: White's d-pawn becomes a liability.

23 Rad1 Rc2

Now White must soon return the pawn.

24 e5

By offering Black a choice, Kramnik maybe hopes to induce over-optimism, but Anand keeps his eye on the simplest drawing option. If 24 Rd2 Rxd2 25 Bxd2 Rxd4 26 Bxa5 Rxe4 27 Rxe4 Bxe4, the black king comes over to help blockade the pawns and it is equal. If anything, White has the worries.

24...fxe5 25 Bxe5 Rxa2 26 Ra1 Rxa1 27 Rxa1 Rd5 28 Rc1 Rd7 29 Rc5 Ra7 30 Rc7 Rxc7 31 Bxc7 Bc2 32 Bxa5 Bxb3 ½–½

What was not expected was that Kramnik lost two games with white in the same variation. The key was Anand's preparation in a sharp line of the Queen's Gambit, Meran variation of the Semi-Slav Defence.

Vladimir Kramnik - Viswanathan Anand

Third match game, Bonn 2008

Semi-Slav, Meran Variation [D49]

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 e3

Anand played 5 Bg5 in Game Nine.

5...Nbd7 6 Bd3 dxc4 7 Bxc4 b5 8 Bd3 a6

This is the original Meran; 8...Bb7 (the Wade variation) was popular in the 1960s and 1970s.

9 e4 c5



This is a major divergence point, and Black's reply in either case also makes a big difference to the subsequent play.

10 e5

Kramnik goes down the old main line, which has also become the current main line. At the time I wrote a book on the Semi-Slav for Batsford, 10 e5 was rarely seen. 10 d5 (the Reynolds Variation) was then considered an improvement on 10 e5, because if 10...exd5?! 11 e5! Ng4 (11...d4?? loses a piece: 12 exf6 dxc3 13 Qe2+) 12 Bg5, while 10...e5 also had drawbacks and other moves seemed to weaken the black pawn structure by allowing dxe6.

10...Qc7 seems to be the reason 10 d5 has lost its sting; Black does not worry about a weakness at e6, but develops his pieces. It seems that 10 d5 has rarely been played at the top level since 1996. One of the few examples, showing how Black copes, is Akesson-Ehlvest, Reykjavik 2006 (see [Informator 96](#)): 11 0-0 Bb7 12 dxe6 fxe6 13 Bc2 Bd6 14 Qe2 0-0-0 15 a4 b4 16 Nd1 h6 17 Ne3 Nxe4 18 Nc4 Ng5 (Better 18...Ndf6 according to Ehlvest, afterwards) 19 Nxd6+ Qxd6 20 Nd2 e5 21 Nc4 Qd5 22 Qg4 Nh3+ 23 Kh1 h5 24 Qxh3 Qxc4 25 Bd3 Qg4 26 Qxg4 hxg4 27 Bf5 Kc7 28 Be3 (Better 28 Bxg4 said Ehlvest) 28...c4 29 Rac1 Bd5 30 Bd3 c3 31 bxc3 b3 32 Rfd1 Nf6 33 Kg1 Be4 34 Bxe4 Rxd1+ 35 Rxd1 Nxe4 36 a5 Rb8 37 Bb6+ Kc6 38 Rb1 Nc5 39 c4 Rxb6 40 axb6 a5 0-1.

10...cxd4 11 Nxb5

The Blumenfeld Attack: complex tactics!

11...axb5

Black used to worry about the weak b-pawn, which is why this move was rare when I was doing my book, but improvements were found subsequently. The main alternative was 11...Nxe5 12 Nxe5 axb5 (Sozin).

12 exf6 gxf6

This used to be thought bad (e.g. my old book, page 52) but Black's play was radically improved in the game Alterman-Chernin, Groningen PCA 1993. 12...Qb6 13 0-0 gxf6 was in my book, reaching same position by transposition, while 13 fxg7 Bxg7 was a major line back in 1981.

13 0-0

13 Nxd4 had been considered the refutation, but Chernin introduced 13...Qb6 14 Be3 (After 14 Nxb5 Rg8, Black will use the g-file for attack.) 14...Bb4+ 15 Kf1 Bc5 16 Bxb5 (or 16 Be4 Ra4!) 16...e5! and Black has a big advantage.

13...Qb6 14 Qe2

This move was introduced successfully in Lautier-Morovic, Dos Hermanas 1994, but Black soon found remedies. 14 Be4 (Ftacnik's move) 14...Bb7 is an alternative line that Kramnik himself had played with

Black in the 1990s.

14...Bb7!

As Malcolm Pein wrote in his notes for chessbase.com, 'a brilliant novelty and brilliant preparation. Black has always tried to defend the b5 pawn here with Ba6 or b4'.



15 Bxb5 Bd6

Anand plans ...Ke7, ...Rg8 and ...Ne5.

16 Rd1

As Kramnik repeated this move, he must have considered his error came later.

16...Rg8 17 g3 Rg4



18 Bf4?!

This involves a questionable sacrifice. There are some very complicated alternatives on almost every move, for which I refer you to annotations that are sure to be available in your favourite chess magazine.

One commentator indicated 18 Nd2 Ke7 19 Bxd7 (or 19 Qxg4 Qxb5) 19...Rag8 20 Bb5 d3 21 Qxd3 Rxd3+ 22 hxd3 Rxd3+ but after 23 Kf1 Rxd3 24 Bxd3 White seems to have too much for the queen. Maybe Anand just planned 18...f5.

Analysis published on the day of games, or soon afterwards, often tends to be refuted later and I am not going to try and second-guess the guys with powerful computers analyzing these positions overnight. It will, however, be interesting to see if grandmasters in future continue to debate 14...Bb7, or will it be avoided by one side or the other, thus showing that a consensus has been reached about its value.

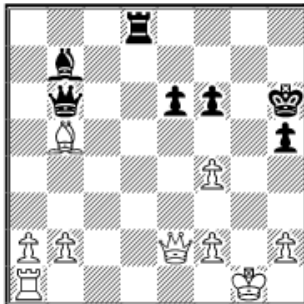
18...Bxf4 19 Nxd4

Presumably he should have taken with the rook.

19...h5 20 Nxe6 fxe6 21 Rxd7 Kf8 22 Qd3 Rg7!

This secures Black's king and leaves White's looking frail, although it has more pawn cover.

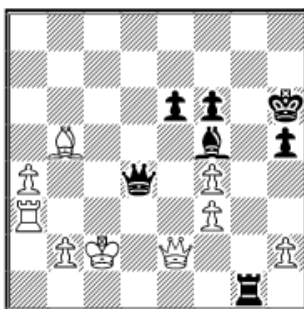
23 Rxd7 Kxd7 24 gxf4 Rd8 25 Qe2 Kh6!



26 Kf1 Rg8 27 a4

White is on a slippery slope. Some difficult endgames can arise. One question is whether after 27 Rc1 Bg2+ 28 Ke1 Bh3, White can save himself by 29 f5! Rg1+ 30 Kd2 Qd4+ 31 Bd3 Qxb2+ 32 Rc2 Qb4+ 33 Rc3 Bxf5 when his disadvantage may not be terminal after 34 Bxf5 or first 34 Qe3+.

27...Bg2+ 28 Ke1 Bh3! 29 Ra3 Rg1+ 30 Kd2 Qd4+ 31 Kc2 Bg4 32 f3 Bf5+



33 Bd3?

33 Kb3 was the last chance.

33...Bh3?

A quicker finish would have been 33...Bxd3+ 34 Rxd3 Qc4+ 35 Kd2 Qc1 mate.

34 a5 Rg2 35 a6 Rxe2+ 36 Bxe2 Bf5+ 37 Kb3 Qe3+ 38 Ka2 Qxe2 39 a7 Qc4+ 40 Ka1 Qf1+ 41 Ka2 Bb1+ 0-1

After a draw with white in Game Four, Anand repeated the variation.

Vladimir Kramnik - Viswanathan Anand

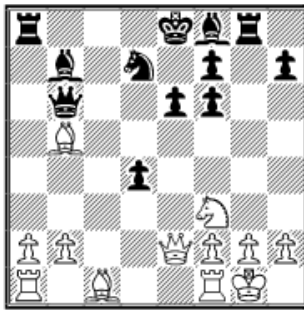
Fifth match game, Bonn 2008

Semi-Slav, Meran Variation [D49]

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 e3 Nbd7 6 Bd3 dxc4 7 Bxc4 b5 8 Bd3 a6 9 e4 c5 10 e5 cxd4 11 Nxb5 axb5 12 exf6 gxf6 13 0-0 Qb6 14 Qe2 Bb7 15 Bxb5

Both players are happy to repeat Game Three. Kramnik must have prepared an improvement on the previous game, but he is not given the opportunity to reveal it.

15...Rg8



Varying from 15...Bd6 of Game Three.

**16 Bf4 Bd6 17 Bg3 f5 18 Rfc1 f4 19 Bh4 Be7 20 a4 Bxh4 21 Nxh4 Ke7
22 Ra3 Rac8 23 Rxc8 Rxc8 24 Ra1 Qc5 25 Qg4 Qe5 26 Nf3 Qf6 27
Re1 Rc5**

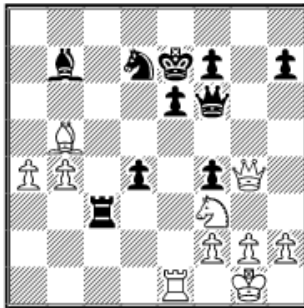
The game is complex with roughly equal chances perhaps, but White's next move creates a hole, which Black immediately exploits.

28 b4?!

Perhaps he expected 28...Ne5 29 Nxe5 Rxe5 30 Qh4+ Kf8 31 Bf1 when White has whatever winning chances remain, thanks to his superior pawns. 28 Rd1 must be correct, but then the rooks stay on the board if Black replies ...Ne5.

28...Rc3!

Kramnik now has problems; he must have overlooked Black's 34th move because he commits a fatal blunder.



**29 Nxd4?? Qxd4 30 Rd1 Nf6 31 Rxd4 Nxe4 32 Rd7+ Kf6 33 Rxb7 Rc1
+ 34 Bf1 Ne3!**

It's mate or a new queen.

35 fxe3 fxe3 0-1

Now two points down, Kramnik had to play black in a crisis of confidence.

Viswanathan Anand - Vladimir Kramnik

Sixth match game, Bonn 2008

Nimzo-Indian Defence [E34]

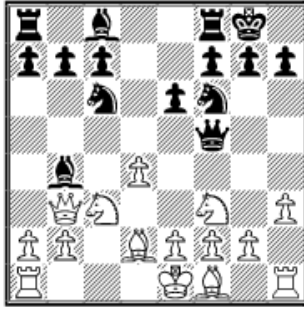
1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2

Anand had played 4 f3 in Game Two.

4...d5 5 cxd5 Qxd5 6 Nf3 Qf5 7 Qb3 Nc6 8 Bd2 0-0 9 h3

Apparently a new idea; 9 e3 was theory. Anand had played Black in that

line.



9...b6

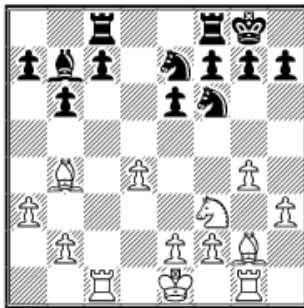
Kramnik's idea seems to be to fianchetto the bishop in order to exploit the diagonal White is going to weaken, but it seems slow. 9...e5 is one of Black's main ideas in this variation, but it no longer works because of 10 g4; 9...Rd8 (attacks the d-pawn and so limits White's choice) 10 g4 Qa5 may be better.

10 g4 Qa5 11 Rc1 Bb7 12 a3 Bxc3 13 Bxc3 Qd5 14 Qxd5 Nxd5 15 Bd2

Anand preserves his bishop-pair. Where is Black's compensation for that long-term advantage?

15...Nf6 16 Rg1 Rac8 17 Bg2 Ne7 18 Bb4

White has a nagging edge.



18...c5!?

Under some pressure, Kramnik plays for freedom by giving up a pawn for piece play, but he never gets it back and his bishop will be exchanged.

19 dxc5 Rfd8?!

As the c1-rook is unguarded, it appears White must lose the pawn back eventually?

If 19...Ned5? 20 Ne5; 19...Rfd8 20 g5 Nd7 21 Ne5 Bxg2 22 Nxd7; 19... bxc5 20 Bxc5.

19...Nc6 is possibly where Kramnik miscalculated: 20 Ne5! Nd5 21 Nd3.

19...a5 would regain the pawn, but maybe White has an improvement on the following: 20 Bd2 (20 Bc3? Rxc5= or nearly equal) 20...Ne4! (20... Rxc5 21 Rxc5 bxc5 22 Bxa5) 21 b4?! axb4 22 Bxb4 (22 axb4 bxc5) 22... bxc5=. Instead 21 cxb6 Nxd2 22 Kxd2 Rfd8+ 23 Ke3 Nd5+ 24 Ke4 Nc3+ 25 Ke3 Nd5+ would be an unusual perpetual check!

21 Ne5 looks safest; 21 Ng5 may be a try for advantage 21...Nxd2 22 Bxb7 Nb3 23 Bxc8 Nxc1 with various complicated possibilities depending where the bishop goes.

20 Ne5!

The black bishop is neutralised and White's KR can come into play via g3.

20...Bxg2 21 Rxb2 bxc5

This move settles for a permanent pawn deficit, but if Kramnik thought the resulting ending was a comfortable draw he was much mistaken.

21...a5 22 Bd2 Rd5 23 Nd3 (Now c1 is defended, this is the last chance to take the pawn.) 23...bxc5 24 Rc4 (not 24 Bxa5? c4) and clearly either the black a-pawn or c-pawn must eventually drop.

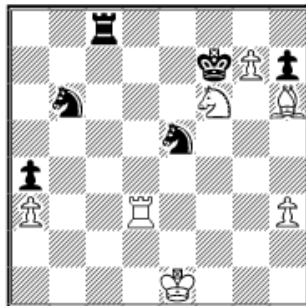
22 Rxc5 Ne4 23 Rxc8 Rxc8 24 Nd3 Nd5 25 Bd2 Rc2

Black has a ghost of counterplay, but again the beautifully placed knight holds everything together.

26 Bc1 f5 27 Kd1 Rc8 28 f3 Nd6 29 Ke1 a5 30 e3 e5 31 gxf5 e4 32 fxe4 Nxe4 33 Bd2 a4 34 Nf2 Nd6 35 Rg4

At last the rook comes into play, sealing Black's fate.

35...Nc4 36 e4 Nf6 37 Rg3 Nxb2 38 e5 Nd5 39 f6 Kf7 40 Ne4 Nc4 41 fxg7 Kg8 42 Rd3 Ndb6 43 Bh6 Nxe5 44 Nf6+ Kf7



45 Rc3!

Entertainment for the live audience!

45...Rxc3 46 g8Q+ Kxf6 47 Bg7+ 1-0

Thus Anand took a 3-0 lead at the half-way stage and effectively decided the match.

With two defeats in a row, one German commentator (according to the ChessBase news page) spoke of a tragedy in the making. It was certainly looking like a tragedy for the organisers and sponsors as one more Anand win would have meant an extremely premature close to the event.

How could one of the leading players of the last fifteen years collapse so pathetically? According to Ray Keene in *The Times*, observers who were following the play in the critical tactical stages of Anand's wins were admiring how he almost without fail found the moves recommended by the computer programs Fritz and Rybka, whereas Kramnik was missing tactical strokes, as was particularly obvious from his blunder Nxd4 in Game Five.

Under the match rules, the sequence of colours was reversed so that Anand's whites preceded Kramnik's in the second half of the match. This meant that Anand had two whites in succession, but he was unable to win Game Seven, the final position being a blocked king and pawn endgame where White's extra doubled isolated e-pawn was meaningless, there

being no possibilities of king entry for either side. Having reached 4½ points from six games, Anand seemed to go into safety-first mode, content to draw his way to the title.

Although Anand faltered near the winning post, this was largely because of Kramnik at last having the opportunity to play openings improvements (presumably prepared in advance) in games nine and ten. The importance of preparation at this level of chess cannot be overestimated. Players cannot use computers during the games themselves, but they do use them extensively at home to suggest and test new ideas.

As a result of his novelty 12...Qe7! in Game Nine, Kramnik at last took Anand out of his comfort zone and the most enthralling contest of the whole match developed. It was a very tense game throughout. Kramnik at last achieved winning chances. His failure to convert them meant that Anand was now on 5½ and almost home.

Viswanathan Anand - Vladimir Kramnik

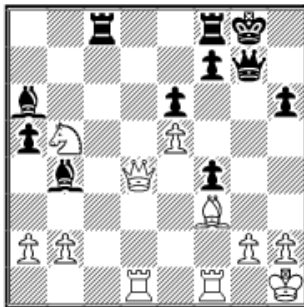
Ninth match game, Bonn 2008

Queen's Gambit [D43]

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 c6 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 dxc4 7 e4 g5 8 Bg3 b5 9 Be2 Bb7 10 Qc2 Nbd7 11 Rd1 Bb4 12 Ne5 Qe7!

With ideas of castling queenside if White tries, for instance, 13 h4.

13 0-0 Nxe5 14 Bxe5 0-0 15 Bxf6 Qxf6 16 f4 Qg7 17 e5 c5! 18 Nxb5 cxd4 19 Qxc4 a5! 20 Kh1 Rac8 21 Qxd4 gxf4 22 Bf3 Ba6



23 a4

This allows Black to complicate. 23 Qb6 was more likely to lead to equalizing exchanges.

23...Rc5 24 Qxf4 Rxe5 25 b3 Bxb5 26 axb5 Rxb5 27 Be4 Bc3 28 Bc2 Be5 29 Qf2 Bb8 30 Qf3 Rc5 31 Bd3 Rc3 32 g3 Kh8

Kramnik avoids the trap 32...Rxb3? 33 Bh7+.

33 Qb7 f5 34 Qb6 Qe5



35 Qb7?

In the notes published next day at ChessBase, it was shown that White could have drawn by 35 Bxf5! exf5 (35...Rxf5? loses to 36 Rxf5 exf5 37 Qxh6+ Kg8 38 Qg5+ Qg7 39 Rd8+) 36 Rfe1 Qg7 37 Re6 Bc7 38 Rxh6+ Kg8 39 Qe6+ Qf7 40 Rg6+ Kh8 41 Rh6+ draw. If instead Black plays 36...Qc7 (allowing no time to introduce the white rook into the attack) 37 Qxh6+ Kg8, then 38 Qe6+ will draw.

After Anand's error, the game is at crisis point. Black had several tempting attacking moves, of which 35...Rg8 is perhaps best, yet he chose to enter an endgame instead, underestimating White's defensive resources.

35...Qc7? 36 Qxc7 Bxc7 37 Bc4 Re8 38 Rd7! a4!

Kramnik has this last trick; otherwise drawn bishop of opposite colour ending is likely. Not 38...Bb8? 39 Rfd1 and if 39...a4? 40 Rd8 White wins.

39 Rxc7 axb3 40 Rf2

40 Rb1 probably transposes.

40...Rb8

The time control is reached, but the win has gone.

41 Rb2 h5!?

After the obvious 41...Rc2 42 Rxc2 bxc2, White has 43 Bxe6 (not 43 Bf1 Rb2!) 43...Rb1+ 44 Kg2 c1Q 45 Rxc1 Rxc1 46 Bxf5, which is unwinnable at this level. Black cannot create a passed pawn nor can he penetrate with his king without serious errors by his opponent, and if his last pawn is exchanged then it is a theoretical draw.

Rather than enter this long, and ultimately fruitless technical exercise, Kramnik tried something else, but soon had to concede he had no winning chances left.

42 Kg2 h4 43 Rc6 hxg3 44 hxg3 Rg8 45 Rxe6 Rxc4 ½-½

Anand now had six points and was "dormie three" as match-play golfers would say. He only needed one draw from three games to avoid the rapid play-off games that were now the Russian's only hope. Perhaps the situation, and the fact that he next had black, caused Anand to be mentally under-prepared for Game Ten, because he was unrecognisably poor in this game. Once more Kramnik was able to play an innovation and soon obtained a dominant position. A further slip from Anand meant he was going to lose material and he resigned early. It was now "dormie two".

In Game Eleven, however, Anand reverted to his more positive style of the earlier games and set Kramnik a problem by opening 1 e4 for the first and only time in the match. Some commentators were surprised at this choice, but it has long been dogma that if White only needs a draw, 1 e4 and direct play is the best way to get it – especially in view of Kramnik's opening repertoire (Petroff Defence or 'Berlin Wall' against the Spanish). He was more or less obliged to try the Sicilian, with which he is less familiar.

Viswanathan Anand - Vladimir Kramnik

Eleventh match game, Bonn 2008

Najdorf Sicilian [B96]

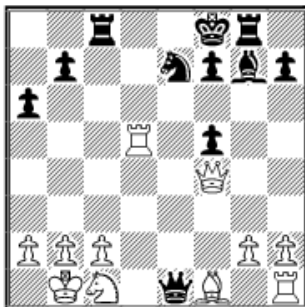
1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Bg5 e6 7 f4 Qc7

7...Qb6 would be Anand territory, as the chessbase.com notes by Kasparov and Pein point out. White has too many ways to force a draw. Interestingly, they observe that the old line 8 Qd2 Qxb2 9 Rb1 Qa3 10 e5 is being investigated again. The Kibitzer will look at that next year.

8 Bxf6 gxf6 9 f5 Qc5 10 Qd3 Nc6 11 Nb3 Qe5 12 0–0–0 exf5 13 Qe3
Bg7 14 Rd5 Qe7 15 Qg3 Rg8 16 Qf4 fxe4 17 Nxe4 f5 18 Nxd6+ Kf8 19
Nxc8

The opposite coloured bishops mean that, if White avoids tactical tricks, a draw is very likely, especially in view of Black's bad pawn structure.

19...Rxc8 20 Kb1 Qe1+ 21 Nc1 Ne7



This may not be objectively best, but Kramnik sets a last devious trap. Now if 22 Qd6? (threatening Qd8+ with mate in two) comes 22...Bxb2!, when 23 Kxb2?? allows mate in three by 23...Qc3+ 24 Kb1 Qxc2+ 25 Ka1 Qxc1, while 23 Qh6+ is ineffective and if 23 Rd1 Qc3 with a raging and probably decisive attack for Black.

22 Qd2 Qxd2 23 Rxd2 Bh6 24 Rf2 Be3 ½–½

With the queens off the board, Anand's safe edge is clear and Kramnik accepted the inevitable. He offered a draw, in effect resigning the match.

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