



## A Historic Month

Plenty of chess history was made this month. For starters, my sister Judit tied for first at the Essent super-tournament in Hooageveen, Holland. This was not the first time she won a big event, but she did defeat the #1 player in the world, former world champion Veselin Topalov, by the score of 2-0. Here is her win from round two.

### COLUMNISTS

## Susan Polgar on Chess

Susan Polgar

**Polgar, Judit (2710) - Topalov, Veselin (2813)**

10th Essent, Hooageveen, NED (2) 10-23-2006 [B81]

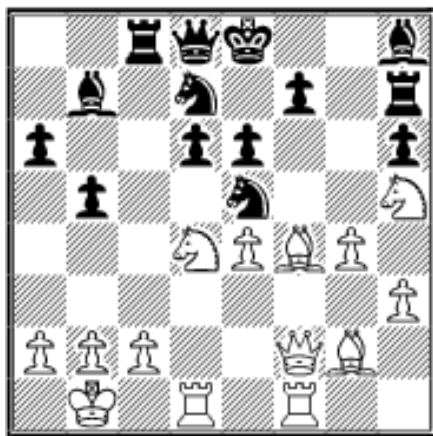
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 e6 7.g4 h6 8.Bg2 g5 9.Qe2 Nbd7 10.0-0-0 Ne5 11.h3 Nfd7 12.f4 gxf4 13.Bxf4 b5 14.Rhf1 Bb7 15.Qf2 Rc8 16.Nce2 Bg7

White is better, but this is the kind of position one expects when playing the Sicilian Najdorf. When you have two premier attackers playing against each other, the game will certainly not be dull.

17.Ng3 Rh7 18.Nh5 Bh8 19.Kb1



## Breaking Through by Susan Polgar



They key plan in the Sicilian Defense is for White to create an attack on the kingside and for Black to create a counterattack on the queenside.

19...Nc5??

However, this is too premature. Topalov miscalculated the weakness of his kingside, especially along the f-file.

20.Bg3?!

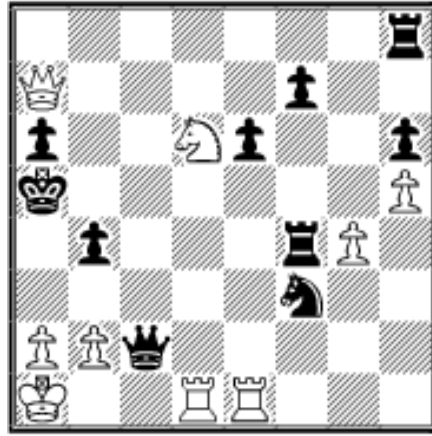
If Judit had played 20.Nf5, she would have a winning position! Black has no defense against this move: 20...exf5 21.Bxe5 Bxe5 22.Qxf5+-. With 20.Bg3, White still maintains a strong advantage, but unfortunately she missed the immediate knockout blow!

20...Nxe4 21.Bxe4 Bxe4 22.Bh4 Qc7 23.Bf6 Bg6 24.Bxh8 Rxh8 25.Nf6+

**Kd8 26.h4 Qc5 27.h5 Bh7 28.Qh4 Bxc2+ 29.Nxc2 Qxc2+ 30.Ka1 Rc4  
31.Ne4+ Kc7 32.Nxd6 Rf4?**

32...Nd3 33.Nxc4 bxc4 34.Qe7+ Kc6 35.Qa3+–.

**33.Qe7+ Kb6 34.Qb7+ Ka5 35.Qa7 b4 36.Rfe1 Nf3**



**37.Rc1**

More precise is 37.Nb7+ Kb5 38.Rd6, and mate will soon follow.

**37...Nxe1 38.Rxc2 Nxc2+ 39.Kb1 1–0**

### **The Unified World Championship**

Vladimir Kramnik defeated Veselin Topalov in the last rapid playoff game to win the World Chess Championship unification match. They entered the playoffs

tied at 6-6 with three wins and six draws each. Topalov won game five by forfeit. Here are the nerve-racking final two games of the regular match.

### ***Topalov, Veselin (2813) – Kramnik, Vladimir (2743)***

World Chess Championship Match 2006 (11) 10-10-2006 [D12]

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 Bf5 5.Nc3 e6 6.Nh4 Bg6 7.Nxg6 hxg6 8.Rb1**

A new move! In Game 9, Topalov played 8.a3 and won. Obviously, Kramnik was ready for Topalov to repeat it. The most popular moves are 8.g3 and 8.Bd2, while 8.Qb3 or 8.Qc2 have also been tried. However, just because a move is new, it does not mean it is a significant improvement over current theory.

**8...Nbd7**

Black responds with the most natural developing move.

**9.c5**

A logical follow up to White's previous move. If 9.b4, then 9...dxc4 10.Bxc4 Bd6=.

**9...a5**

It is good to exchange pawns before White advances b2-b4-b5.

**10.a3**

Continuing with the b2-b4 plan. 10.f4 b6 11.cxb6 Qxb6 and c6-c5 is fine for Black.

### 10...e5

This is one of Black's two main plans. The other was 10...b6 11.cxb6 Qxb6, with c6-c5 to follow.

### 11.b4 axb4 12.axb4 Qc7

Black is putting pressure on the h2-pawn.

### 13.f4

Similar to Game 9, Topalov makes many ambitious pawn moves. 13.h3 would be more reserved.

### 13...exf4 14.exf4 Be7



What an unusual position, after fourteen moves White has only one piece developed! If 14...Nh5, with the idea of Ng3 using the pin, it could be stopped by 15.Qf3.

### 15.Be2 Nf8

White is better after the natural 15...0-0 16.0-0, followed by f4-f5.

### 16.0-0 Ne6

Now, of course, 17.f5 would be a terrible blunder, allowing 17...Qxh2+. White's next move seeks to avoid that.

### 17.g3

After the solid 17.Be3, Black could answer with 17...g5.

### 17...Qd7

This is the beginning of a simplification plan, with the idea of Nf6-e4. If White is not careful, the black queen may appear on h3 in some variations.

### 18.Qd3

After 18.Bf3, the answer would have been the same 18...Ne4.

### 18...Ne4

This is a temporary pawn sacrifice.

**19.Nxe4 dxe4 20.Qxe4 Qxd4+ 21.Qxd4 Nxd4**

White is still banking on the power of the bishop-pair, but the position is very close to equal.

**22.Bc4 0-0**

Finally! Even though we are almost in an endgame, castling still puts the king to the safest place.

**23.Kg2**

Moving out of any potential knight or bishop checks.

**23...Ra4?!**

I don't particularly like this move. Perhaps Kramnik missed White's trap set on move 25.

**24.Rd1**

White hopes to enter the seventh rank if the Black knight moves away.

**24...Rd8 25.Be3 Bf6**

At first it seems that Black wins a pawn after 25...Nc2?! 26.Rxd8+ Bxd8 27.Bf2 Rxb4? (27...Nxb4 28.Rd1 Bf6 29.Rd7 Nd5 30.Bxd5 cxd5 31.Rxb7 Rc4 32.Rd7 d4 33.g4 Kf8 34.Rd5 and White is better), but, amazingly, White has a cute trap with 28.Bb3!! Na3 and 29.Bxf7+! Kxf7 30.Rxb4+.

**26.g4?!**

I prefer 26.Rd2 Raa8 27.Bf2 with a small plus for White.

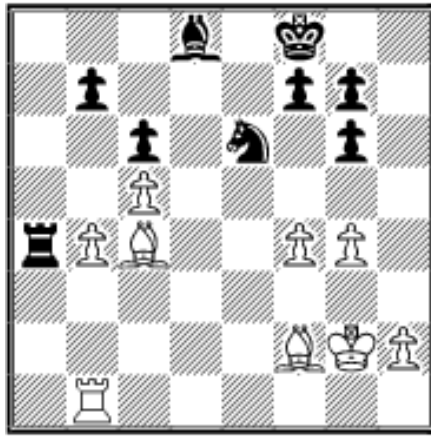
**26...Kf8?!**

More active is 26...Ra3! 27.Bf2 Rc3=.

**27.Bf2**

Now 28.g5 is a serious threat to win a piece. The immediate 27.g5 would weaken the f5-square and benefit Black after 27...Nf5 28.Rxd8+ Bxd8.

**27...Ne6 28.Rxd8+ Bxd8**



During the game I expected 28...Nxd8, but White would be slightly better then, too.

**29.f5?**

This is when the tide starts to turn. Instead of White having a slight edge, Black will shortly be the one playing for a win. Much better is 29.Bxe6 fxe6 30.Rb3 += (stopping Ra3).

**29...gxf5 30.gxf5 Nf4+ 31.Kf3 Nh5 32.Rb3**

**Bc7 33.h4 Nf6**

The upcoming bishop moves are a mystery to me, and lead White into an unpleasant position.

**34.Bd3 Nd7 35.Be4 Ne5+ 36.Kg2 Ra2 37.Bb1 Rd2 38.Kf1 Ng4 39.Bg1?**

Better is 39.Be1.

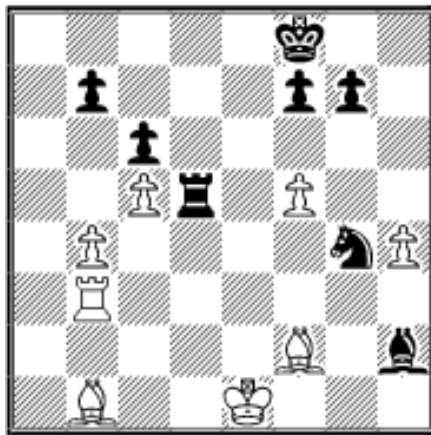
**39...Bh2 40.Ke1**

After 40.Bxh2 Rxh2, the h4-pawn is lost.

**40...Rd5?**

A better choice is 40...Rg2 41.Bd4 Be5! 42.Bxe5 Nxe5, with advantage to Black.

**41.Bf2?!**



Clearly better is 41.Bxh2 Nxh2 42.Rd3, with the following possible variations:

42...Rxd3 43.Bxd3 Nf3+ 44.Kf2 Nxh4?! 45.Kg3 g5 46.f6 Ng6 47.Bf5 Ne5 48.Bc8 Ke8 49.Bxb7 Kd7 50.Ba6 Ke6 51.b5 cxb5 52.Bxb5 Kxf6 53.c6 Ng6 54.c7 Ne7 55.Bd7= or 42... Rxf5 43.Rd8+ Ke7 44.Bxf5 Kxd8 45.Kf2 g6 46.Bh3 f5 47.Kg3 Ng4 48.Bxg4 fxg4 49.Kxg4=.

**41...Ke7 42.h5 Nxf2 43.Kxf2 Kf6 44.Kf3 Rd4**

44...Kg5 45.Be4 Rd1 46.b5=.

**45.b5 Rc4 46.bxc6 bxc6 47.Rb6 Rxc5 48.Be4 Kg5 49.Rxc6 Ra5 50.Rb6 Ra3+**

50...Kxh5 51.Rb7=.

**51.Kg2 Bc7 52.Rb7 Rc3 53.Kf2 Kxh5**

Black won a pawn, but, with so few pieces left on the board and opposite-colored bishops, it is easy for White to hold a draw here.

**54.Bd5 f6 55.Ke2 Kg4 56.Be4 Kf4 57.Bd3 Rc5 58.Rb4+ Kg3 59.Rc4 Re5+ 60.Re4 Ra5 61.Re3+ Kg2**

61...Kg4 62.Re7 Ra2+ 63.Kd1=.

**62.Be4+ Kh2 63.Rb3 Ra2+ 64.Kd3 Bf4 65.Kc4 Re2 66.Kd5 1/2-1/2**

***Kramnik, Vladimir (2743) - Topalov, Veselin (2813)***

World Chess Championship Match 2006 (12), 10-12-2006 [D12]

Both players have shown that they can handle the pressure of a last round game. Kramnik defeated Leko in the final game of their world championship match, and Topalov is known for strong comebacks. Who has the better nerves? Will someone score a critical victory? Will there be a shocking opening surprise?

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 Bf5 5.Nc3 e6 6.Nh4 Bg6 7.Nxg6 hxg6**

The players reversed colors from game 11!

**8.g3 Nbd7 9.Bd2 Bb4**

This seems to be a new move. I cannot find any game with it in my database.

**10.Qb3 Bxc3+ 11.Bxc3 Ne4 12.Bg2 Nxc3 13.Qxc3 f5**

I am not sure if I like this move, although Black is doing fine here. Whether Topalov is Black or White, he still pushes his pawns. Other more “normal” moves are 13...dxc4 and 13...Nf6.

**14.O-O**

Despite the h-file being open, White is safe to castle kingside.

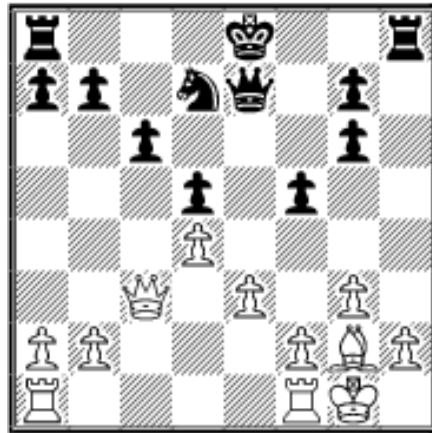
**14...Qe7**

Now, Black can castle on either side, but it would be safer to do so on the kingside. White’s only play is to attack on the queenside. Black’s position is solid, so he can attack on the kingside or just wait and see.

**15.cxd5**

Making Black decide which pawn to capture back with.

### 15...exd5



Black wants an unbalanced pawn structure. If Black takes back with 15...cxd5, then White would control the c-file for now. As I mentioned above, White has to attack on the queenside, with the idea of b4-b5, and put the rooks on the c- and b-files.

### 16.b4

Now Black has to be careful in defending this position. Rather than being a boring position, this is a perfect position for White,

as he has very little risk trying to squeeze out a win by grinding down his opponent. This is a dangerous position for Topalov, as it requires plenty of patience.

### 16...Nf6

This is a logical move, to get the knight toward the e4- or g4-squares.

### 17.Rfc1

17.a4 or even 17.b5 was possible. But as we know, Kramnik likes to be cautious.

### 17...Ne4

If Black plays 17...a6, White will continue the minority attack with 18.a4, with the idea of b5. My friend, the legendary IM Tony Saidy, sent me this message: "...as one who played 1,037 minority attacks and defended several, I point out a basic principle when facing the minority attack: play ...a6 and force White to trade the a-pawns, opening the a-file. The c6-pawn may be defensible in long run, but the a7-pawn is a second weakness. White traded the wrong pieces in this game to have a strong minority attack." These are very valid points; however, without the a-pawns it is also easier for White to attack along the a-file with the rook.

### 18.Qb2

To be honest, I would not be very comfortable to have this position as Black against players like Karpov, Kramnik or Kamsky. Black's options are kind of limited right now. He must be able to hold the minority attack on the queenside. There is no winning shot for Black. The idea is to create weakness for Black's pawn structure.

### 18...O-O

Unlike in the other games of the match, Topalov was using nearly as much time as Kramnik. He knew this game was important.

### **19.b5 Rac8**

19...cxb5 creates a weakness in the d5-pawn.

### **20.bxc6 bxc6**

Taking back with the rook would be a big mistake, as the d5-pawn would get extremely weak.

### **21.Qe2**

With the idea of Qa6, then White would double his rooks on the c-file and pound on the c-pawn.

### **21...g5**

Black *has to* create counterplay on the kingside. Otherwise, he is lost.

### **22.Rab1**

A logical move, putting the rook on the b-file.

### **22...Qd7**

Eventually, the idea for Black is to put the rook on f6 to protect the c6-pawn and then play g5-g4. Black has to create counterplay on the kingside and especially along the h-file.

### **23.Rc2**

The obvious plan of doubling the rooks on the c-file to attack Black's main weakness.

### **23...Rf6**

Black is continuing the plan.

### **24.Rbc1 g4 25.Rb2**

Here is an interesting note about computer evaluations: Fritz evaluates this position as equal; Fruit gives the position as slightly better for White; while Junior gives a strong advantage for White. I think this position is about equal.

### **25...Rh6 26.Qa6**



White has to continue attacking the queenside. Otherwise, Black's attack can get too dangerous on the kingside.

**26...Rc7**

26...Ng5 would lose to 27.Bxd5+. Another alternative was 26...Nd6 to stop Rb7.

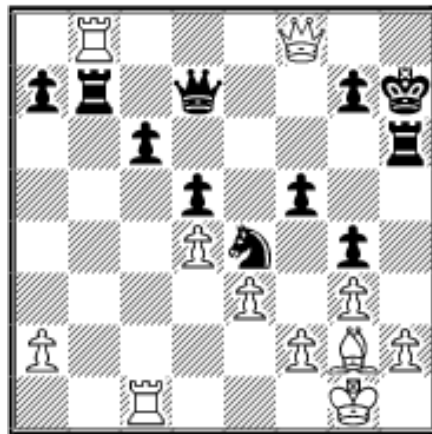
**27.Rb8+ Kh7 28.Qa3**

Kramnik made this move instantly.

**28...Rb7**

The best response.

**29.Qf8**



A natural move, but I am not sure if it is the strongest. Another alternative was 29.Ra8, with the idea of 30.Qf8.

**29...Rxb8 30.Qxb8 Qf7 31.Qc8 Qh5 32.Kf1**

Now the tide has turned. Black is fine and White needs to be extremely careful.

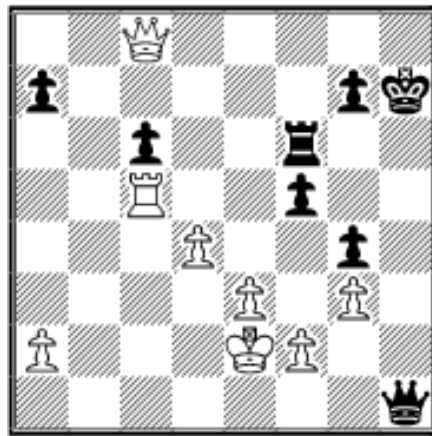
**32...Nd2+ 33.Ke1 Nc4 34.Bf1**

Trying to chase Black's knight from the outpost on c4.

**34...Rf6**

The strongest move.

**35.Bxc4 dxc4 36.Rxc4 Qxh2 37.Ke2 Qh1 38.Rc5**



Now Black could force a draw with 38...Qf3+ 39.Ke1 Qh1+.

**38...Qb1**

Even though this does not do much, Topalov is trying to win instead of taking a perpetual. Great fighting spirit!

**39.Qa6 Qb2+ 40.Kf1**

Topalov is trying, but the position is still

very much equal.

**40...Qb1+ 41.Ke2 Qb2+ 42.Kf1 Rh6**

What else can you expect from Topalov? He is trying even if it is a drawn position.

**43.Qd3**

Of course, Kramnik found the “only” move. Otherwise, it would be the blunder of the decade.

**43...g6 44.Qb3 Rh1+ 45.Kg2 Rh2+ 46.Kxh2 Qxf2+ 47.Kh1 Qf1+ 1/2-1/2**

I would have tried 48.Kh2 Qh3+ 49.Kg1 Qxg3+ 50.Kf1 Qf3+. Here 51.Ke1? g3 would still give Black chances. White’s only way to force a draw is with 51.Kg1.

### Will He or Won’t He?

Immediately after the world championship match concluded, rumors began to circulate as to whether or not Kramnik will play in the Mexico City world championship tournament scheduled to begin on September 12, 2007.

FIDE has signed a binding contract with the organizer and the prize funds have already been transferred to FIDE. In addition, four qualifiers have signed their contracts, while sixteen players are still competing for the final four spots:

- Levon Aronian – Magnus Carlsen
- Peter Leko – Mikhail Gurevich
- Ruslan Ponomarev – Sergei Rublevsky
- Boris Gelfand – Rustam Kasimdzhanov
- Etienne Bacrot – Gata Kamsky
- Alexander Grischuk – Vladimir Malakhov
- Judit Polgár – Evgeny Bareev
- Alexei Shirov – Michael Adams

According to my understanding, Topalov was among the seeded players

because he won San Luis last year, but now Kramnik will get that spot and Topalov is out. What will happen if Kramnik refuses to play in Mexico City? Sponsors are hard to come by.

Some fans suggested making Mexico a candidate's tournament. But this is not what the contract stipulates. I asked the Chief Organizer and Director of the 2007 World Championship in Mexico City, Mr. Jorge Saggiante about this matter, and here is what he said:

*We have a contract with FIDE to host the 2007 World Championship in Mexico City next fall. We will not permit FIDE to change the format of the World Championship from what has been agreed to. We already transferred 100% of the prize funds to FIDE's account and we have spent a significant amount of money and effort to promote this World Championship. We expect FIDE to stand by their word and honor the contract that we signed. The people in Mexico are looking forward to an incredibly exciting event. The world will witness one of the most spectacular chess events in history next year in Mexico City.*

I have met countless organizers in my 30+ years in chess and Mr. Jorge Saggiante is among one of the most professional organizers that I have ever met. I fully expect the 2007 world championship in Mexico City to be a fabulous event. I hope that Vladimir Kramnik will honor the contract to defend his title in September 2007. Only time will tell whether this happens or not.

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Paul Truong assisted Susan Polgar in the preparation of this column. Susan Polgar is available for chess instruction. For more information, visit the Polgar Chess Center, 103-10 Queens Boulevard, Forest Hills, NY 11375 (Tel: 718-897-4600) or email: [PolgarChessInc@aol.com](mailto:PolgarChessInc@aol.com)



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