



COLUMNISTS

Susan Polgar on Chess

Susan Polgar



Breaking Through by Susan Polgar

Fierce Battle for the #1 Ranking

With a slim margin separating the first and second spots in the FIDE rating list, the #1 ranking may be decided this week in Spain. The two top players, Topalov (2783) and Anand (2779), are both competing in the Linares/Morelia Super Tournament, one of the strongest and most prestigious annual tournaments in the world. Other players include Ivanchuk (2750), Leko (2749), Aronian (2744), Morozevich (2741), Svidler (2728) and the young phenom Carlsen (2690). The players will face each other twice, once with each color.

Here are the standings after nine rounds:

- 1-2 Anand, Carlsen 5½ (+2)
- 3 Ivanchuk 5.0 (+1)
- 4-5 Svidler, Aronian 4½ (0)
- 6 Topalov 4.0 (-1)
- 7-8 Leko, Morozevich 3½ (-3)

The first half of the event took place in Morelia, Mexico and the second half is in Linares, Spain. Here is one of the most exciting games from Morelia.

Veselin Topalov (2783) - Alexander Morozevich (2741)
Linares/Morelia (7) 25.02.2007 [C11]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7

Morozevich is one of the very few top level grandmasters to still employ the French Defense.

5.f4

This is the most popular and most aggressive continuation.

5...c5 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.Be3 a6 8.Ne2 Qb6 9.Qc1 g5

9...f5 and 9...f6 have been played before.

10.c3

10.fxg5 cxd4 11.Nexd4 Ncxe5 12.Nxe5 Nxe5+=.

10...cxd4 11.cxd4 Bb4+ 12.Kf2



It is extremely dangerous to put the king in the line of fire. However, Topalov is more than used to this style of play.

12...f6

Black immediately wants to open the kingside, because of the location of the white king.

13.g3

The knight on e2 is stuck defending the d4- and f4-pawns. Therefore, White is trying to create some space for the bishop on f1 and the king.

13...Rf8

Black is putting pressure on the f-file, which is the right thing to do.

14.Kg2

Remember this rule of thumb: always get your king away from any potential pin. Otherwise, it will come back to haunt you.

Now Black has a dilemma! Does he want to break things open by gxf4 and allow some space for White's pieces, or does he want to squeeze White with g4? Black decided to squeeze.

14...g4 15.Nh4 Rg8

I do not like this move. My instincts tell me 15...Be7 is stronger. The idea is to target the knight on h4.

16.h3

White has to make some space for his kingside pieces. Even though opening up the kingside is dangerous, he has little choice.

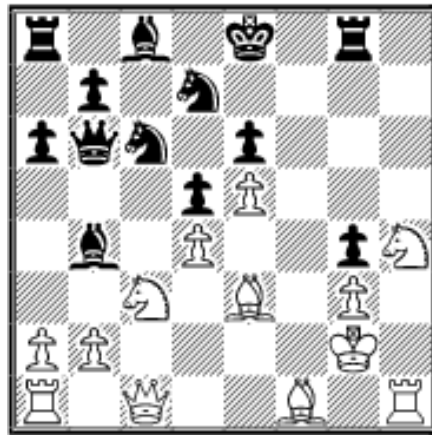
16...h5 17.hxg4 hxg4

White is slightly better, because Black's pieces are out of place on the queenside. That is why I suggested Be7. Now the best plan for White is to get the queen into action by Qc2 or Qb1.

18.Nc3 fxe5

Again, I prefer Be7.

19.fxe5



19...Ncxe5

Morozevich tries a cute sacrifice, but I believe he miscalculated, as it does not work. We shall see why soon enough.

20.dxe5 d4 21.Na4 Qa5 22.Qc4 Nxe4 23. Qxd4

Topalov played the last few moves perfectly and is now winning.

23...Nf3

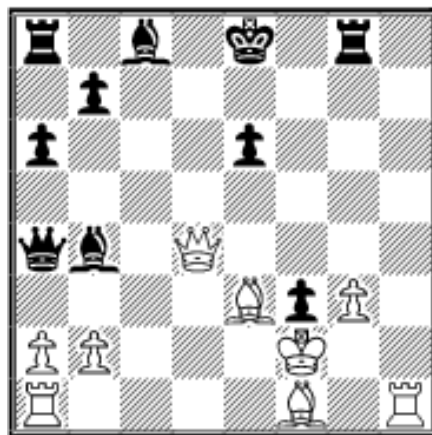
A desperate attempt to complicate things; however, Black has nothing.

24.Nxf3 gxf3 25.Kf2

More accurate is 25.Kg1+–.

25...Qxa4

This is why 25.Kg1 is better, because there would be no check on c2.



26.Bd3?

This is a gross inaccuracy. The strongest continuation is 26.Rc1. One possible continuation is 26...Bd7 27.Rh8 Rxb8 28. Qxb8+ Bf8 29.Qh5+ Ke7 30.Qh7+ Ke8 31. Qg6+ Ke7 32.Bg5+ Kd6 33.Qd3+ Ke5 34. Re1+ and White wins easily.

26...Qd7 27.Qe4?

Another inaccuracy! This simply gives away any advantage. The only chance to salvage the position and still come out ahead is 27.Rh8! Qxd4 28.Rxb8+ Kf7 29.Bxd4 Kxb8 30.Rh1+–.

27...Bd6?

Now Black returns the favor. Better is 27...Qg7.

28.Rag1?

White could have regained the advantage with 28.Rh7 Qc6 29.Qxc6+ bxc6 30.Rd1 Be7 31.Be4 Bd7+–, but Topalov was playing too fast, because Morozevich was low on time. This is a lesson for all chess players. Play the position; don't rush to try to flag your opponent.

28...Qg7 29.Rh6

Now White is taking chances to win. The position is equal.

29...Qxb2 30.Kxf3

30.Bc2 is a little stronger.

30...Rf8+ 31.Bf4 Qe5

This is a difficult moment in the game. Even with ample time, it would be hard to find the best continuation. It is ten times harder when you are in severe time pressure. This is one of the reasons why I think Morozevich wanted to trade queens, to simplify the position.

32.Qg6+

Topalov did not want to make Morozevich's life easier by trading queens before the time control. However, it was actually the best move 32.Qxe5 Bxe5 33.Rh7 Bd4 34.Bg6+Kd8 35.Rd1 e5 36.Ke4 Bg4 37.Rd2 Kc8 38.Bxe5 Bxe5 39.Kxe5+–.

32...Kd8 33.Kg2 Qb2+ 34.Kh1

34.Bc2 is better.

34...Bxf4 35.gxf4 Bd7

Even though both sides were moving at a rapid pace, their moves were relatively accurate.

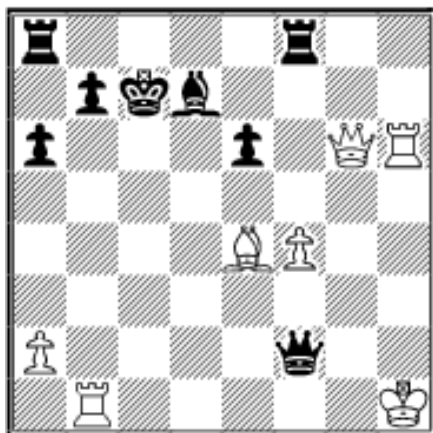
36.Be4 Kc7??

Morozevich blunders in time pressure. Two reasonable choices are 36...Qd4 or 36...Rh8. I prefer the latter, when the position is still close to even.

37.Rb1

White is completely winning.

37...Qf2



38. Rxb7+?

A horrible mistake! 38.Qg7!! wins immediately: 38...Rab8 39.Rh7 Rfd8 (39...Qd2 40.Qe5+ Kc8 41.Qc5+ Kd8 42.Qxf8+ Kc7 43.Qc5+ Kd8 44.Qg5+ Kc7 45.Qe5+ Qd6 46.Rc1+) 40.Qc3+ Kd6 41.Qe5#.

38...Kc8 39.Rb1?

This may have given away the win. 39.Bg2 is necessary to at least salvage the position.

39...Ra7

Instead of playing the position, Topalov was hoping to beat Morozevich on the clock, making about a half dozen mistakes in the process. It can even happen to the best player in the world.

40.f5 Rc7?

Morozevich blunders on the last move of the time control. 40...Qf4 is better, when Black is at least equal, if not slightly better.

41.fxe6+- Be8 42.Qg5

Now 42.Qg4 is the strongest continuation. Black is helpless against e7.

42...Qd4 43.Bg2 Rf4 44.e7 Rc5 45.Qg3 Rc3 46.Qe1

Topalov makes much stronger moves when he takes his time.

46...Re3

47.Rc1+ or 47.Qa5 are both strong, winning moves.

47.Qa5 Bb5 48.Rc1+ 1-0

Mate will soon follow.

2007 US Championship

It was officially announced that the 2007 US Championship will be held in Stillwater, Oklahoma, thanks to the generosity of Frank K. Berry. The thirty-

four player, nine round Swiss will be held from May 15-23, 2007.

I have known Frank and his twin brother Jim for about four years. Frank has been incredibly supportive of women's chess, including the 2004 US Women's Olympiad Program, the Susan Polgar National Invitational for Girls, NY City Mayor's Cup and the Susan Polgar Foundation.

When I visited Stillwater with my Olympiad teammates, we were treated very nicely, and I am confident that Frank will organize a very fine event and give the players the red carpet treatment. Thank you Frank, for your contribution to chess!

Here are the qualifiers at present:

- US champion: Alexander Onischuk, Maryland
- US Women's champion: Anna Zatonskih, New York
- US Senior champion: Joe Bradford, Texas
- US Junior champion: Robert Hess, New York
- Grand Prix champion: Jaan Ehvest, New York

Top three rated players from the 12/06 list:

- Gata Kamsky, New York
- Hikaru Nakamura, New York
- Gregory Kaidanov, Kentucky

Top two rated women from the 12/06 list:

- Susan Polgar, New York (since I cannot participate, there will be a replacement)
- Irina Krush, New York

US Masters:

- Bryan Smith, Pennsylvania
- Ron Burnett, Tennessee

Foxwoods Open:

- Eugene Perelshteyn, Massachusetts
- Alex Stripunsky, New York
- Alex Ivanov, Massachusetts
- Alex Shabalov, Pennsylvania

National Open:

- Varuzhan Akobian, California
- Nick De Firmian, New York

World Open:

- Joel Benjamin, New Jersey
- Ildar Ibragimov, Connecticut

US Open:

- Yury Shulman, Illinois
- Michael Aigner, California

Western States Open:

- Sergey Kudrin, Connecticut
- Enrico Sevillano, California

American Open:

- Melikset Khachiyan, California
- David Pruess, California

National Chess Congress:

- Justin Sarkar, New York
- Ray Robson, Florida

North American Open:

- Dmitry Gurevich, Illinois
- Michael Mulyar, Colorado

Online State Champions Tournament:

- The winner of the Xiao Cheng vs. Julio Becerra online match

Corpus Christi, Texas

The 1st Annual Susan Polgar National Chess Challenge for Boys and 2nd Annual Susan Polgar National Open Championship for Girls took place from February 16-18 in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Nearly 300 players took part in these events in which the Susan Polgar Foundation awarded more than \$10,000 in prizes, such as Nikon Digital Cameras, chess software, DVDs, clocks, etc. We also awarded five scholarships, courtesy of Texas A&M and Texas Tech University, totaling approximately \$50,000! Plus, this year we included special top family prizes to encourage family participation. Our goal next year is to break the 1,000 player mark and \$100,000 in chess scholarships!

The full results can be viewed [here](#). I would like to thank Texas A&M and Texas Tech for providing the scholarships, and Chief TD Victor J. Flores and his staff for running a great event! Special thanks also go out to Mr. Dan DeLeon, and the countless volunteers, sponsors and supporters who helped make this event possible!

Las Vegas

The Susan Polgar Foundation will once again team up with the organizer of the famous Las Vegas International Chess Festival (National Open) to host the 2nd Annual Susan Polgar World Open Championship for Girls and the 1st Annual Susan Polgar World Chess Challenge for Boys. These events will take place from June 8-10 at the famous Riviera Resort in Las Vegas. There will be plenty of awesome prizes!

There will also be scholarships available for qualified students; even foreign students will be eligible! For more information, please visit the Susan Polgar Foundation [website](#) or [email](#) us.

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

 [TOP OF PAGE](#)

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