



GRAND CHESS TOUR™

2016

9th December 2016

LONDON CHESS CLASSIC DAY 1 ROUND-UP

The grand finale of the Grand Chess Tour, the London Chess Classic, could hardly have gotten off to a more exciting start as three of the five games ended with a decisive result. Elsewhere the first leg of the British KO Championship semis was played and the FIDE Open as well as various weekenders got under way. All in all, it was a feast both for onsite spectators and chess lovers around the world!



A view into the Auditorium shortly after the round got under way (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

Just nine days ago Magnus Carlsen retained his title after dominating Sergey Karjakin during a playoff which was held on his birthday. Today, on the day he turned 29, Hikaru Nakamura suffered a diametrically opposed fate as he blundered right out of the opening with 13.Ne2?. His second Kris Littlejohn later confirmed Hikaru had mixed up his preparation, which is strangely reminiscent of his first round encounter against the same opponent at the Sinquefeld Cup. Grand Chess Tour leader Wesley So happily accepted the present (he later admitted not being aware it was Hikaru's birthday before smilingly adding he was glad he didn't) and went on to convert the advantage that was gifted to him. The first game of the round to finish had been the encounter between prodigies MVL and Anish Giri. The Dutchman employed the Najdorf against Maxime, who is arguably the world's leading expert on this opening. An interesting game fizzled out to a draw by repetition on move 24, with Anish stating after the game: 'Maxime is the big Najdorf guy, so I thought let's try and steal that title from him!' Next up was to finish was the biggest grudge match in modern chess, where Vladimir Kramnik inflicted a crushing defeat on his nemesis Veselin Topalov. Shortly afterwards local hero Michael Adams blundered a piece to a queen fork against Levon Aronian and was forced to resign within a few moves. In the last game to finish Fabiano Caruana felt he had been better against Vishy Anand, but precise play by the former World Champion steered the game to a draw.



A game to forget for Hikaru Nakamura (Photo:Fiona Steil-Antoni)

But it isn't all just about the Classic at Olympia Conference Centre. Elsewhere in the building, the semi-finals of the British Knockout were being disputed, while 130 players turned up for the FIDE Open, which must be the strongest yet with 34 GMs and 24 IMs taking part. In the British KO McShane and Howell were slightly better against Short and Jones respectively, but it wasn't enough for a tangible advantage and both games ended in a draw. In the first round of the FIDE Open there were two major upsets as Charlie Nettleton (1963) beat IM Mahadevan Siva (2360) and Spiros-Avgerinos Giakoustidis (1800) took out Garg Aradhya (2231). In addition, four different weekenders (Open, U2050, U1825, U1600) also got underway, with an additional 300 players taking part in these.



The semifinals of the British KO and the first boards of the FIDE Open (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

In the morning the traditional school events resumed, where children get the chance to play against each other and learn from the best. Today they were lucky enough to be hosted by GM Chris Ward and IM Lawrence Trent. These special events will be held on a daily basis throughout the next week and will provide hundreds of children with both chess knowledge and entertainment.



Children clearly enjoy Lawrence Trent's commentary too (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

You can find all the photos from the festival, taken by Lennart Ootes, on the [following page](#). The results and tournament details are all on the [LCC website](#) and you can also download the PGN files of the games by clicking on the following links:

- London Chess Classic: <http://live.londonchessclassic.com/pgn/lcc2016/lcc01/games.pgn>
- British KO Ch'ship: <http://live.londonchessclassic.com/pgn/bco2016/round7/games.pgn>
- FIDE Open: <http://live.londonchessclassic.com/pgn/fide/round1/games.pgn>

All the live games will be broadcast at: <http://live.londonchessclassic.com/>

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