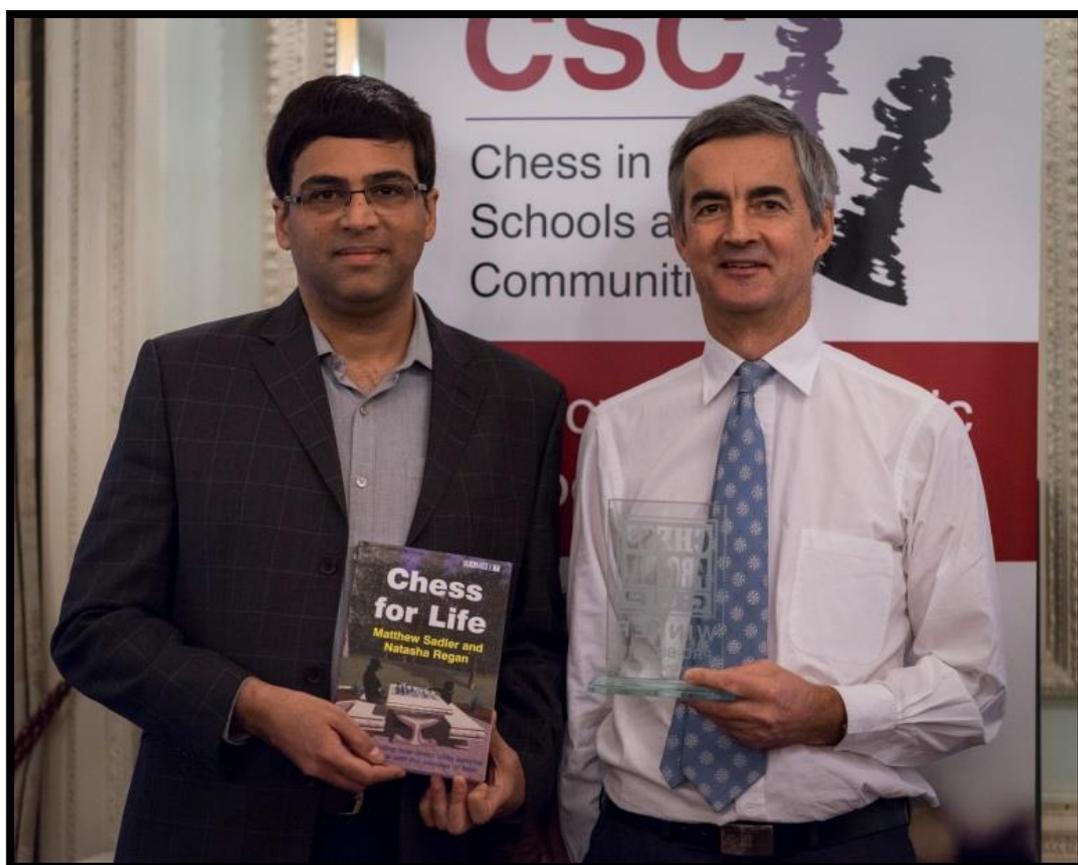


8th December 2016

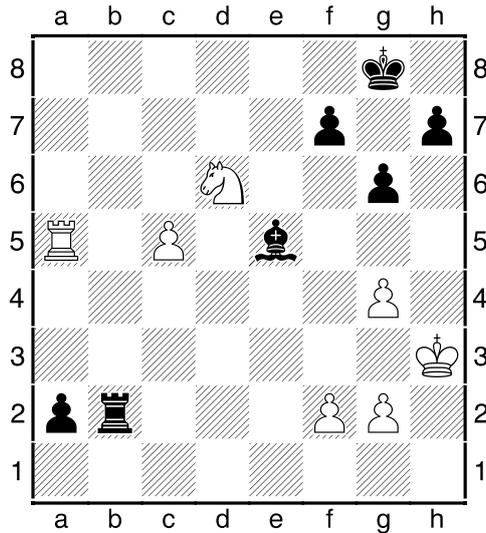
Day Zero: Pro-Biz Cup, Simuls, Masterclasses & British Knockout Championship

Before serious matters commence at Olympia Conference Centre tomorrow, nine of the ten participants of the Grand Chess Tour took a day trip to the prestigious Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall, near St James's Palace. While Kramnik, Anand, Vachier-Lagrave, Nakamura, Giri and So partnered up with amateur players to compete in the Pro-Biz Cup, Caruana, Aronian and Adams gave masterclasses and played simultaneous displays against invited children and RAC members.



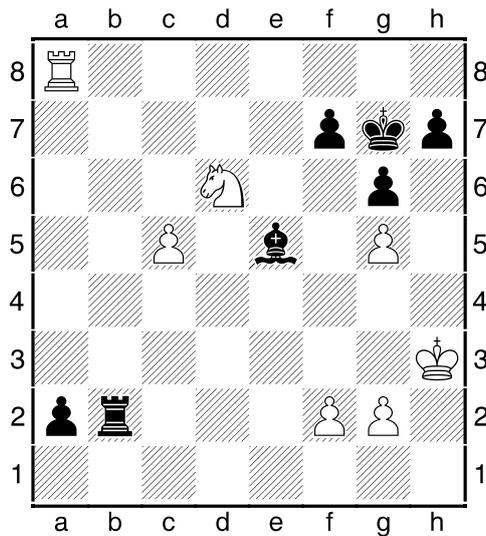
Pro-Biz Cup 2016 Winners Vishy Anand and Terry Chapman (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

The format of the 4th Pro-Biz Cup was slightly different from the three previous editions, as the teams contested a 3-round swiss event. The day started with a bang, as defending champions Hikaru Nakamura and Rajko Vujatovic fell to the pair Kramnik/Baptie. The latter also went on to beat Giri/Rafic in round 2 and thus set up an exciting finale against the other team on a perfect score, Vishy Anand and Terry Chapman. For the 30 first moves it looked like we were headed for an Armageddon decider, but a slip in the endgame from Kramnik/Baptie meant Anand and Chapman were the new Pro-Biz Champions! You can replay all the games from the event [here](#) and find all the photos in [this album](#). Finally, here are some annotations by Malcolm Pein on the tense last-round endgame between Anand/Chapman and Kramnik/Baptie:



Position after **38...a2** The position looks easily winning for Black as he intends Rb3+ and a1(Q), but matters are not so simple. Kramnik and Baptiste nearly saved the game. Anand and Kramnik played the odd numbered moves.

39.Ra8+ Kg7 40.g5! (Creating the threat of Ne8+, Nf6+ and Re8 or Rg8 mate. Black has to make space for his king) Anand/Chapman had only three minutes left and Kramnik/Baptiste just one!



Now there is a remarkable line. The obvious : 40...a1Q does not win 41.Rxa1 Rb3+ 42.Kg4 Bxa1 43.c6 and White promotes and draws. Then if 43...Rc3 44.c7 Rxc7 45.Ne8+ wins the rook. 43...Bd4 44.c7 Rc3 45.f3 Rc1 46.c8Q Rxc8 47.Nxc8 Bc5 pointed out by Kramnik afterwards traps the knight but 48.Kf4 f6 49.Ke4 draws and if 48...Kf8 49.Ke5 Ke8 50.Kf6?? Bd4# but 50.Nd6+ draws.

I was spectating and it occurred to me that 40...f5! was probably a winner.

40...h6! 41.Ne8+ (41.f4!! Bxf4 42.gxh6+ Kxh6 43.g3 Rb3 (43...Be5 44.Nxf7+) 44.Kg4 Bxd6 45.cxd6 Rd3 46.Rxa2 saves the game)

41...Kh7 42.Nf6+ Bxf6 43.gxf6 Rxf2 44.Ra6?! g5! (Black won easily) **0-1**



Aronian's simul and Adams' master class in full swing (Photos: Lennart Ootes)

While the Pro-Biz games were being fought out, RA club members as well as 30 children arrived at the RAC for the unique opportunity to play against three of the world's leading chess players and attend their master classes. Our thanks once again to the RAC for their generosity, which enabled the Chess in Schools and Communities charity to invite the children to this truly unforgettable day. LCC photographer Lennart Ootes took many great shots not only of the Grandmasters, but also of the participants and you can find them in [this album](#), dedicated to the simul and masterclasses.



The GCT participants clearly enjoyed their time at the RAC (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

Meanwhile across town seven Grandmasters and one International Master had much more serious business to get on with, as the quarterfinals of the British Knockout Championship got under way at the Hilton Olympia. Interestingly, last year's finalists David Howell – the defending champion – and Nick Pert were paired against each other from the get-go this time around. While the first game was a balanced draw, Howell made use of the white pieces to overcome Pert in the afternoon. In fact, Gawain Jones was the only player to draw blood in the morning as he beat Jonathan Rowson in a very nice attacking game. Their afternoon encounter was a draw, as were the games Fernandez-

Short and McShane-Hawkins, and so these four players were set to meet again at 8.30pm for blitz playoffs. There the rating favourites won both their games meaning that the big four had all made it through to the semi-finals, which will be played over two days - Friday and Saturday. The first match-up will see the clash between England number two Nigel Short and Luke McShane, while Jones-Howell is a repeat from last year's semi-final, where Howell made it through after playoffs. You can replay all the games from today's quarterfinals [here](#) and find all the photos [here](#).



Last year's finalists Nick Pert and David Howell clashing in the quarterfinals (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

So we're now all set for today's grand opening, with not only the culmination of the Grand Chess Tour and the semi-finals of the British Knockout Championship to look forward to, but also the kick-off of the very strong FIDE Open and various weekenders.

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