

For Immediate Release

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London line-up: It's Carlsen v MVL & Ding v Aronian

- **Maxime Vachier-Lagrave** qualifies for **Grand Chess Tour Finals** at next week's **London Chess Classic** as Vishy Anand sensationally crashes out;
- **Magnus Carlsen** hot favourite for London after imperious 27/36 performance at Tata Steel India Rapid & Blitz;
- Semi-final matchups pit MVL against Magnus, just days before Frenchman faces another tough test to qualify for World Championship Candidates at Jerusalem FIDE Grand Prix;
- **Ding Liren** emerges as potentially strongest challenger to Magnus after beating World Champion twice in blitz games in Kolkata;
- Book your [spectator tickets online now](#) for London Olympia on December 2-4 (Semi-Finals) & December 6-8 (Final) to avoid disappointment.

The line-up for the \$350,000 [Grand Chess Tour Finals](#) at the London Chess Classic, starting next Monday, 2nd December at Olympia, has been revealed as **Maxime Vachier-Lagrave** squeezed into the fourth qualifying place after the dramatic elimination of **Vishy Anand**.

Anand narrowly lost out on his ticket to London after going down in the penultimate blitz game against Magnus Carlsen at the [Tata Steel India Rapid & Blitz](#) in Kolkata. Missing a one-move opportunity for [a brilliant rook sacrifice \(48...Rh6+!!\)](#) meant that the Indian former World Champion, playing in front of a heartbroken home crowd, was not going to the Grand Chess Tour Finals.

MVL, who was not playing in India due to already having played in his allotted five GCT qualifying events, thus squeaked through – setting up a Semi-Final clash with the Norwegian World Champion in London next Monday.

The timing is problematic for the Frenchman, however, who must now play two tough matches in London on December 2-4 and December 6-8, just two days before starting his challenge at the final [FIDE Grand Prix event in Jerusalem](#). At that knockout tournament, which runs from December 10-24, MVL is bidding to qualify for the first time for the World Championship Candidates tournament.

Magnus Carlsen will be most pundits' strong favourite to win the **Grand Chess Tour first prize of \$150,000** in London after an impressive victory in Kolkata. After four days of dominating the super-strong field, Magnus was laid low by a stomach bug early on the fifth and final day, and was forced into taking some unprecedented quick draws before recovering and winning the Rapid & Blitz a full 4 points ahead of the second-placed player, American Hikaru Nakamura.

Ding Liren, while not challenging for first place in Kolkata, had the distinction of beating Carlsen twice in blitz there – setting up the mouth-watering prospect of a possible Ding-Carlsen Final in London. The Chinese star became the first player to beat Carlsen in a playoff for a dozen years this

summer at the Sinquefeld Cup in St. Louis in August, so a Final between the two at London Olympia would promise a brilliant end to the 2019 Grand Chess Tour – and be a foretaste of a potential challenge by Ding Liren for the World title next year.

Levon Aronian, the ever-popular Armenian, qualified for the London GCT Finals by dint of his overall 3rd place finish in the Tour events, but he will be desperate to recover his form after finishing last in Kolkata.

Whoever gets to lift the Grand Chess Tour trophy in London on Sunday 8th December, chess fans can be assured of a brilliant and fitting climax to the biggest Grand Chess Tour to date, thanks to its [expanded roster of tournaments in Europe, Africa and Asia](#).

Alongside the Grand Chess Tour Finals, the London Classic will also play host to the **British Knockout Championship** Semi-Finals and Final, which take place simultaneously with the GCT Finals. A strong line-up includes England Open Team members **Mickey Adams, Luke McShane, David Howell** and **Gawain Jones**.

[Book your spectator tickets now](#) for the Grand Chess Tour Finals at the London Classic at Olympia to avoid disappointment. Play starts at 4pm on weekdays (Monday 2nd to Wednesday 4th, & Friday 6th), and 2pm on the final weekend (Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th).

A season ticket costs £80 – a saving of £70 on buying individual day tickets. [The London Chess Classic Box Office is open here](#).

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Tim Wall, [@London_Chess](https://twitter.com/London_Chess), press officer, London Chess Classic