

10th December 2016

LONDON CHESS CLASSIC DAY 2 ROUND-UP

If you thought yesterday's fireworks were a one-off, you couldn't have been more wrong. We got another action-packed day at Olympia, with three more decisive results in the Classic – and one of them turned out to be a historical benchmark. In other news the two finalists of the British Knockout Championship were determined, 12 players are still on a perfect score in the FIDE Open and this year's London Chess Conference, 'The Didactics of Chess' got under way at Hilton Olympia.



The man of the hour: Wesley So (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

Once again, the Classic had it all today: mistakes, twists and drama! But let's start with what is undoubtedly THE story of the day: on top of being both the sole LCC and GCT leader, Wesley So became the 12th player in history to cross the 2800 mark thanks to his victory over Michael Adams. It has been a painful start to the tournament for England's number one, who after a solid all-draws performance last year blundered in the two opening rounds. He is not alone on 0/2 though, as Veselin Topalov fell to Fabiano Caruana in the most dramatic game of the round. It is hard to do the

many twists and turns justice, so I recommend you play through the game and pay particular attention to one tactic Fabiano missed (30...Rxb7!), as well as one he didn't fail to spot with only seconds on the clock, and which sealed the game in his favour: 36...Re8! Even the two draws of the round were far from dull, as Giri and Nakamura fought an interesting battle, while Kramnik-Aronian was one of the most thrilling games of the round, with both players trying to mate their opponent's king on the same flank! And finally the last game of the round saw Anand take revenge on his loss against MVL from London 2015, where the players had also gone down a theoretical Najdorf line. After the game Maxime admitted to getting out-prepared and outplayed convincingly, while Vishy was clearly pleased with the game and its nice finish, 33.Bxb7! This means that after two rounds there is incredibly (some might disagree) only one player on a 50% score – Anish Giri with two draws – while Wesley So is the sole leader on 2/2, followed Anand, Caruana, Kramnik and Aronian on 1.5/2.



1.e4 turned out to be a lucky choice by Vishy's little helper (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

The return leg of the British Knockout Championship kicked off at 10.30am and while Short and McShane played out another rather balanced draw, Howell overcame Jones after a 98-move grind and thus became the first player to qualify for this year's final. He was soon joined by Short, who eliminated McShane with a convincing 2-0 victory in the playoff. The final will be a 6-game match, with one game a day from 11-16 December, starting at 4.30pm. Today was also the only double round day in the FIDE Open and most favourites managed to get through unscathed. One major upset in this morning's second round was Antanas Zapolskis' (2294) victory with the black pieces over 12th seed Andrei Istratescu (2596). In round 3 second seed Etienne Bacrot (2689) was held to a draw by his 18-year old compatriot Bilel Bellahcene (2496), while on board 5 the legendary Swedish Grandmaster Jonny Hector (2488) overcame Abhijeet Gupta (2634). In tomorrow's 4th round two American GMs will have the white pieces on the top two boards, as Shabalov and Ehlvest take on Safarli and Bacrot respectively.



Chess is art! (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

Last but not least, this year's London Chess Conference, 'The Didactics of Chess', got under way at Hilton Olympia. This fourth edition of the conference runs from 10-12 December and you can find a detailed programme as well as all other information on the [conference website](#).



Malcolm Pein and John Foley welcomed the conference participants (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/lcc02/games.pgn>
- British KO Ch'ship: <http://live.londonchessclassic.com/pgn/bco2016/round8/games.pgn>
- FIDE Open: <http://live.londonchessclassic.com/pgn/fide/round3/games.pgn>

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

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