

16th December 2016

LONDON CHESS CLASSIC DAY 7 ROUND-UP

There might only have been one decisive game in the main event today, but what a game that was! Nakamura played brilliantly to defeat Vachier-Lagrave in his pet Najdorf. Elsewhere Nigel Short became the new British Knockout Champion, while Frenchmen Bacrot and Mazé shared first place in the FIDE Open.

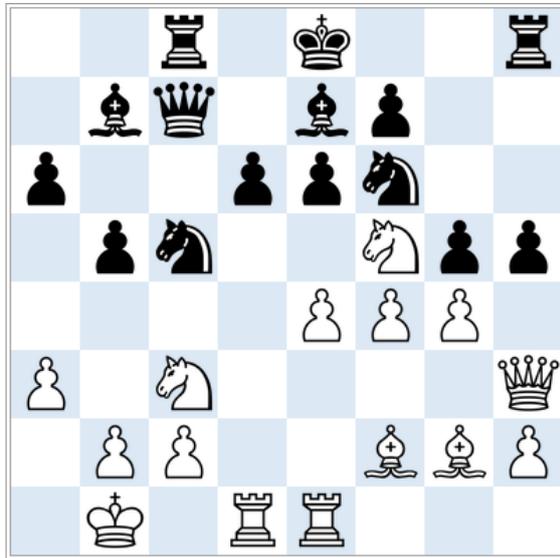


Nakamura has been having a topsy-turvy event in London (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

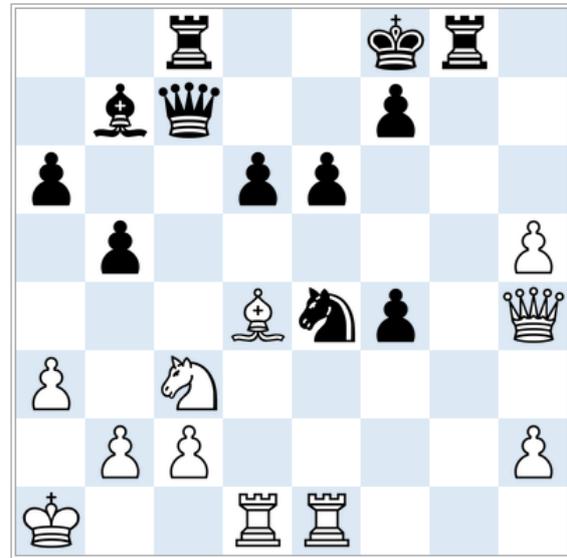
In what was clearly the game of the day, it became two consecutive setbacks for the Najdorf as Hikaru Nakamura repeated the opening from his horrible defeat yesterday, but from the other side of the board. Maxime Vachier-Lagrave deviated with 13...Bb7. A short while later the same thematic sacrifice played yesterday appeared on the board as Hikaru unleashed 18.Nf5! In his post-game interview the American pinpointed 24.Ka1 as the 'tricky move', while 'everything else was pretty straightforward', before realising the computer's suggestion 24.h6 was even stronger. However, the

position was very difficult to defend from a human point of view and MVL soon collapsed and resigned on move 37.

When asked how he feels about his topsy-turvy tournament (after 7 rounds, Hikaru has won three games and lost two), Hikaru was in high spirits: 'It's fun – it's better than drawing every game'.



Position after 18.Nf5



Position after 24.Ka1

Earlier in the day the first game to conclude was Aronian-Anand, where the Armenian was never able to apply any pressure. This draw means both players remain on a 50% score. Next up was a draw between Wesley So and Vladimir Kramnik, as the tournament leader chose a solid approach with the white pieces. After the game Kramnik was full of praise for his young opponent, stating that 'this year's he's played maybe the best chess in the world'. In the game between Adams and Caruana the Englishman managed to win a pawn, but at the cost of entering an opposite coloured bishop ending, which was just a draw. This left just Anish Giri and Veselin Topalov battling it out on the stage, in a game where the Dutchman tried for almost 6 hours but was ultimately unable to break through Topalov's defensive lines.

Looking forward to tomorrow, whatever you do, make sure you don't miss the 8th and penultimate round (which starts at 2pm GMT, two hours earlier than today) of the tournament as Fabiano Caruana, who is still hot on Wesley So's heels, takes on the tournament leader with the white pieces! Let's give the last word to Fabiano: 'It's not easy to beat him, but it's possible!'



The game on centre stage between So and Kramnik was a solid draw (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

In the 6th and final game of the British Knockout Championship, Nigel Short came fully recovered after yesterday's loss and took the title of British KO Champion from his opponent David Howell after a convincing victory. Make sure you play through this game in which Short slowly outmanoeuvred his opponent to reach a winning ending. After having to pull out of the tournament at the last minute due to illness last year, Nigel was clearly delighted to be the new British Knockout Champion.

Meanwhile, Etienne Bacrot took the strategic decision to conclude a quick draw with Abhijeet Gupta, which allowed his compatriot Sébastien Mazé to catch up with him by reaching 7.5/9. Mazé ground down Aravindh in 58 moves and almost 5 hours of play. It was an incredible day for French players throughout the top boards of the FIDE Open, as they scored 7.5/8!

It was also the conclusion of the two weekday events, where Graham Bolt and Alan Barton shared first place in the U2050 section with 4.5/5, while Oliver Finnegan won the U1750 outright with 4.5/5.



Congratulations to Nigel Short, Etienne Bacrot and Sébastien Mazé! (Photos: Fiona Steil-Antoni)

Before play got under way in the East Hall, Tournament Director Malcolm Pein and ECF Director of Women's Chess Sarah Longson awarded the ECF Tradewise Junior Grand Prix trophies to Jacob Yoon and Nadia Jaufarally. Many congratulations to the two youngsters!



Malcolm Pein and Sarah Longson awarding Jacob Yoon and Nadia Jaufarally (Photo: Fiona Steil-Antoni)

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/lcc07/games.pgn>
- British KO Ch'ship: <http://live.londonchessclassic.com/pgn/bco2016/round14/games.pgn>
- FIDE Open: <http://live.londonchessclassic.com/pgn/fide/round9/games.pgn>

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

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