

18th December 2016

LONDON CHESS CLASSIC DAY 9 ROUND-UP

The 2016 edition of the London Chess Classic ended with both a bang and a whimper as Veselin Topalov scored his first win of the tournament in the 6th hour of play and Wesley So effortlessly steered his final game towards a draw. Earlier in the afternoon the man of the moment had won both the LCC and the Grand Chess Tour, to scoop the \$100,000 tour bonus. The second prize of \$50,000 went to his compatriot Hikaru Nakamura as Caruana completed an all-American podium. The Super Rapidplay meanwhile saw the triumph of Valentina Gunina, who left 44 fellow GMs behind her as she stormed to a stellar 9/10 score and cashed in the £5,000 winner's cheque.



Wesley So was awarded the LCC trophy by Tournament Director Malcolm Pein (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

The first game of the day to finish was that between tournament leader Wesley So and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. In the interview that followed MVL explained 'Wesley, given the tournament situation, chose a very solid line and I didn't have any reason to force matters' before going on to say he would have done exactly the same in this situation. Wesley So meanwhile further expanded on what he had said yesterday by stating it was a big pleasure for him to win this London Chess Classic: 'I am very excited and proud. Winning the Grand Chess Tour is my best achievement yet.'

The next result was a draw in the clash between former World Champions Anand and Kramnik. Both players felt similarly about their +1 finish, with Kramnik saying 'It's of course nice to be unbeaten, but still I cannot say that I'm fully satisfied, because it's better to win more than one game in a

tournament’, while Vishy commented ‘It’s an improvement on last year, but it’s difficult to get too excited over +1’. There were more similarities in the players’ statements as they were both full of praise for Wesley So, but also made it clear they still had ambitions of their own.

The game between Adams and Nakamura was also a draw, with England’s number commentating about the game: ‘I had a bit of pressure. I beat the Berlin once in this tournament, twice was probably too much to ask for’, before going on to add he was quite happy with how he played in general. Nakamura meanwhile said he just tried to play solid. ‘If you play well good things tend to happen. I don’t know if I played great, but I played interestingly and enterprisingly. I’m very pleased; it’s quite good all things considered’. With those three results in, the top three finishers of the Grand Chess Tour were known with Wesley So and Hikaru Nakamura taking home the bonus prize money of \$100,000 and \$50,000 respectively.



The image shows a table titled "2016 GRAND CHESS TOUR Prizes & Final Standings" with the hashtag #GrandChessTour. The table lists the top 9 players, their ratings, nationalities, and performance across four tournaments: Paris, Leuven, Sinquefeld Cup, and London. It also shows their total Grand Chess Tour points and prize money.

POS.	PLAYER		PARIS POINTS	LEUVEN POINTS	SINQUEFIELD CUP POINTS	LONDON POINTS	TOTAL GCT POINTS & PRIZE MONEY
1	 (GM) WESLEY SO	2794	 7*	10	13	13	36 / \$295,000
2	 (GM) HIKARU NAKAMURA	2779	 13	4*	4.5	7	24.5 / \$144,166
3	 (GM) FABIANO CARUANA	2823	 3*	6	7.75	10	23.75 / \$108,750
T4	 (GM) LEVON ARONIAN	2785	 6	8	7.75	3*	21.75 / \$81,250
T4	 (GM) VISHY ANAND	2779	 DNP	7	7.75	7	21.75 / \$82,916
6	 (GM) M. VACHIER-LAGRAVE	2804	 8	5	4.5	3*	17.5 / \$55,000
7	 (GM) ANISH GIRI	2771	 5	2.5	1*	5	12.5 / \$50,000
8	 (GM) VESELIN TOPALOV	2760	 2	1*	7.75	1	10.75 / \$66,250
9	 (GM) VLADIMIR KRAMNIK	2809	 4	2.5	0**	7	13.5 / \$46,666

* Players final 2016 GCT point total = top 3 tournament results. ** Wild cards are not eligible for the overall GCT prizes.

The final standings of the Grand Chess Tour

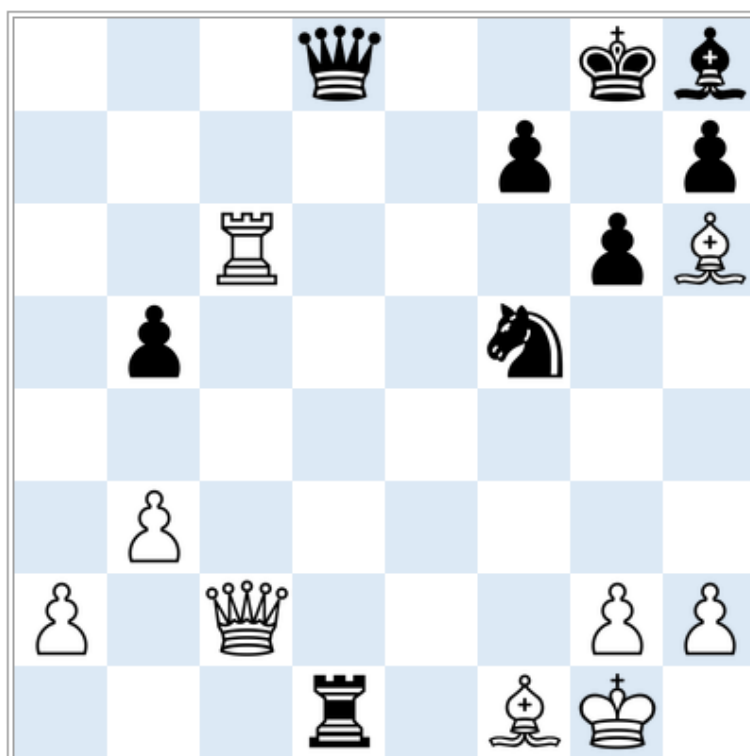
The game between Giri and Caruana was headed for a solid draw before the US Champion went astray. ‘Before the game I decided not to go crazy. I just got a slightly worse and slightly passive position. But then he played inaccurately and I thought I was pressing a little bit around move 20. I got optimistic when the position was probably always completely equal and then I made the ridiculous move 27...e5.’ He then cheekily added that after he played it he realised that he had put himself in some danger ‘but still, Anish is an unstoppable force’.

Finally, the last game of the day to finish lasted over six hours and saw Topalov get a consolation win as he beat Aronian in a crazy game, where he sacrificed a piece in the early stages. The game will leave a bitter taste in the Armenian’s mouth, as after his loss to MVL this was another case of over-pressing. Topalov explained what had transpired as follows: ‘After the first time control he pushed too hard. It was equal almost until the end, but then he made some imprecise moves and the ending was very dangerous for White’.

LONDON CHESS CLASSIC		FINAL STANDINGS		AFTER 9 ROUNDS		#GrandChessTour	
POS.	PLAYER	SCORE / GCT POINTS	PRIZE MONEY				
1	(GM) WESLEY SO	2794 USA 6 / 13	\$75,000				
2	(GM) FABIANO CARUANA	2823 USA 5.5 / 10	\$50,000				
T-3	(GM) VLADIMIR KRAMNIK	2809 RUS 5 / 7	\$31,666				
T-3	(GM) VISHY ANAND	2779 IND 5 / 7	\$31,666				
T-3	(GM) HIKARU NAKAMURA	2779 USA 5 / 7	\$31,666				
6	(GM) ANISH GIRI	2771 NED 4.5 / 5	\$20,000				
T-7	(GM) LEVON ARONIAN	2785 ARM 4 / 3	\$15,000				
T-7	(GM) M. VACHIER-LAGRAVE	2804 FRA 4 / 3	\$15,000				
T-7	(GM) MICHAEL ADAMS	2748 ENG 4 / 3	\$15,000				
10	(GM) VESELIN TOPALOV	2760 BUL 2 / 1	\$15,000				

The final standings of the London Chess Classic

Day 2 of the Super Rapidplay, held in [memory of Michael Uriely](#), was all about Valentina Gunina as she raced to the sole lead with a stunning score of 8/9. In the last round she was paired against Luke McShane (the defending champion, who had started last year's event with a perfect 9/9!) in what turned out to be a dramatic encounter. McShane worked his way to a winning position before blundering an entire rook in severe time trouble with 34...Rd1?, as the rook can simply be captured because of the back rank mate after 35...Qxd1? 36.Rc8. Luke fought on valiantly but it was a lost battle and Valentina went on to deliver checkmate on move 59.



Position after 34...Rd1, when 35.Qxd1 just wins an entire rook

Thanks to this stroke of fortune (although it has to be said Valentina had earlier in the tournament convincingly outplayed and beaten four other GMs) the Russian superstar, who had especially flown in to London to take part in the Rapidplay, became the new Champion with a spectacular score of 9/10 and a rating performance of 2831! Eltaj Safarli took sole second place with 8.5/10, while eleven players followed on 8/10, among them English GMs David Howell and Gawain Jones, as well as five(!) French GMs.



A happy and deserving winner of the Super Rapidplay: Valentina Gunina (Photo: Lennart Ootes)

So that's all from London for this year! We hope you enjoyed the tournament, be it on site or remotely, and we already look forward to the 2017 edition of the event. To find out all about the new and exciting developments planned for 2017, head to the official [Grand Chess Tour website](#).



Farewell from part of the LCC Team, and tournament winner Wesley So!

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/lcc09/games.pgn>
- Super Rapidplay: <http://www.games.livechess.co.uk/classic16/superrp/rp16all.pgn>

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