SHAK ATTACK!

- Shak Mamedyarov wins Moscow Grand Prix and breaks the 2800 barrier!
- James Plaskett reports from the World Senior Team Championship
- Jonathan Speelman on drawn-looking rook and knight endgames
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Tripled pawns are always a sight to be cherished. The position has now become very complicated. White’s pieces have a lot of potential, but with the exception of the e1-rook, no immediate potency, whilst Black’s d4-knight and rook are tremendous, but his c5-knight is achieving little, and he’s an exchange down.

31...fxg7 d2

32 f6

The f- and g-pawn combo are quite stunning, but time will tell whether they will exert any influence.

32...d8 33 h4

White has played such a good game up until now, but the position begins to get away from him. 33 Ad1!, offering the f6-pawn, looks like a strong continuation: 33...Ad3 (33...Af6 34 Axh2 is an extremely favourable trade for White) 34 Axd3 and White is holding everything together – the question is whether he can activate his f1-rook. In this respect 34...b5 is a very valuable resource, pushing another passed pawn and preparing to meet 35 A.h3 with 35...Ab6 and b4. Nevertheless, I would fancy Rapport’s practical chances after 36 A.h1.

33...Af5 34 Ag5 Ae3 35 Ab1

35 A.h3 looks best, although Black’s position is rather dangerous after 35...Ae4. 35...Ac2!

The f- and g-pawn combo are quite stunning, but time will tell whether they will exert any influence.

32 f6

The f- and g-pawn combo are quite stunning, but time will tell whether they will exert any influence.

32...d8 33 h4

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33...Af5 34 Ag5 Ae3 35 Ab1

35 A.h3 looks best, although Black’s position is rather dangerous after 35...Ae4. 35...Ac2!

A very accurate move – Caruana doesn’t want an exchange, he wants a whole queen!

36 A.h3 Ae4!

The simplest route to a win. Alternatively, if 36...Axa1 37 A.f5 A.e1+ 38 A.f2 and once again 38...Ae4+ seals White’s fate – his position is hopeless once his light-squared bishop is off the board, as his beautiful f- and g-pawns frustrate his kingside attack.

37 A.f5 Axa1 38 Axa1 Ad6

A delightful killer blow – now ...A.e1+ is unstoppable.

39 We5

Rapport elects to create as strong a pawn chain as possible, before resigning.

39...Axe5 40 A.xe5 Ac4 0-1
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Chess Calculation Training
Romain Edouard Vol. 1: Middlegames
237 pages

Romain Edouard launches a brand new series of exercise books. In this first volume, he focuses on middlegames. Romain has carefully selected 496 positions, which arose in real games in the recent past. To obtain the best possible training result out of each position, he has separated the exercises into 11 different categories, covering both tactics and strategy, attack and defence.
White is in huge trouble here with ...g4 followed by a back rank mate in the air. Sam tried 65 f3, thinking, or perhaps hoping, that he was setting a trap. At first I believed him, but then I realised that Black can have his cake on f3 and successfully digest it.

65 f3

65...

The point. The white knight is trapped and so Black can defend e6 before eating it.

69 g4

Instead, 69 ...fxe5 70 dxe5 (70 ...f5 71 ...gxf5 ...c3 wins complete control, and if 72 ...f3+ ...xh4 73 ...xf3 74 ...xf6 gxf3+ ...g4. As such, 69 ...f5 70 ...xe5 was the best chance, but if Black is careful, he can certainly win: for example, 70 ...f8 71 ...h7 ...c3 72 ...g1 ...e5 is a winning pawn endgame: 73 ...f1 ...e4 74 ...e2 f4 75 ...f2 f3 76 gxh3+ ...f4. As such, 69 ...e5 70 ...a7 was the best chance, but if Black is careful, he can certainly win: for example, 70 ...f8 71 ...h7 ...c3 72 ...g1 ...g3 73 ...f2 f4 74 ...a7 e5 75 ...a4 (or 75 ...a4 e4 76 ...b2 e3+ 77 ...f1 f3) 75 ...f7 76 ...c4 ...f6 77 ...a4 ...f5 78 ...a5 g4 79 ...xg4+ ...xg4 80 ...a6 ...g3 81 ...h6 h3 and wins.

69...hxc3 70 ...xg3 ...e8 0-1

Jonathan Speelman was undefeated in the over-50 section of the World Senior Team Championship in Crete. Don’t forget that if you’d like to submit your ‘agony’ and ‘ecstasy’ games for his weekly ChessBase column to submit them to jonathan@speelman.demon.co.uk.
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tournament will be on August 12th and 13th at the Terafinals in Daventry, where the UK’s best players will compete for the top prize of £2,000 and the prestigious title of ‘STRAT’ – the overall grand junior chess title!

We are delighted that Lord Mark Price, the Minister of State at the Department for International Trade, who is a former CEO of Waitrose, an avid chess player and the author of the book The Foolish King [ed. – see this month’s book reviews], has agreed to support the Challenge by donating his book to all schools involved. He will be at the Terafinal to congratulate the winners.

Most of England’s top juniors and internationals are playing. The highest-rated players who have participated in the Megafinal so far are Koby Kalavannan (Under-15), Dominic Klingher (Under-14), and Alex Golding (also Under-14). Of the girls, Zoe Varney (Under-17), Lauren Weaver (Under-18), Imogen Camp (Under-16), and Cassie Graham (Under-16) also have high expectations to go far in the competition.

Organisers and Volunteers

The main thing that has become clear to me is that chess in the UK (like so many activities) relies on its volunteer and organisational network. I’ve met many inspirational people throughout the last 8 months who are the real backbone of chess in the UK and to those people I would like to say a warm thank you on behalf of myself and chess in the UK.

Not everything runs smoothly and as I have witnessed first-hand, it can be hard to run a chess event – especially with lots of young people and parents for whom this may be their first chess event: "What is a pairing board? Who plays White? What do you mean I can’t wait in the playing hall?".

What I have realised is that supporting organisers, teachers, coaches and volunteers has to be the number one priority in UK chess and it is absolutely my priority to ensure the UKCC holds this as its core objective. We have lots of ideas and are keen to start piloting them in the coming weeks.

We have big plans for junior chess in the UK and want to grow the numbers of participants at each level significantly in the coming years. To do that we need help and are looking for people to come forward and to reach out. If anyone is interested in one or more of the areas below and/or who would like to hear more about our plans, do please get in touch:

- UKCC schools ambassador
- Teacher
- Coach
- Organiser
- Event management
- Bookkeeping and administration
- Website design
- Full stack developers
- Publishing training materials

I’ll finish with a final thought. We estimate around 5% of UK schools have some form of chess participation, yet in areas with higher participation (for example, Surrey and Oxfordshire) this figure is as high as 20%. However, in other counties the figure is only around 1.5%. This shows how much of an impact an effective support structure can have. Please get involved if you, like me, want to see those numbers rising – www.delanceyukschoolschesschallenge.com or email me: sarahhegartychess@outlook.com.

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In May 1997, New York City, Garry Kasparov carried the weight of humanity on his shoulders. The undisputed strongest player in the world had never lost a match in his life, but now he was facing judgement day. IBM’s leviathan, Deep Blue, had been created specifically to take on the strongest human in a chess match. In what was billed as the ultimate test of man versus machine, the winner would inherit the mantle of most intelligent species on the planet. Kasparov viewed it as “The great cultural, scientific experiment of the 20th century”; IBM just wanted to win.

The final match score was 3½-2½ to the machine. Admittedly aided by an absence of celebrity deaths that week, the cover of Newsweek declared it to be “The Brain’s Last Stand” and murmurs of Skynet and an Artificial Intelligence takeover reverberated through the media following the result. It has taken Kasparov 20 years to be able to finally talk in depth about his loss, though when doing so at a packed hall in London in May this year, it was not without significant emotion.

It has been estimated that there are around 35 possible options at each move in a chess game, and a typical game consists of around 80 moves (40 for each side). That gives 35⁸⁰ possible sequences of moves. For comparison, there are only 10⁸⁰ atoms in the universe. No machine can solve chess by exhaustively searching through all sequences. Due to our own limited mental capacity, human players rely heavily on intuition to select a small set of candidate moves to consider at any point, which we then calculate the consequences of until we can assign some sort of evaluation to the resulting position. Being able to replicate this intuition in a machine might be argued to be a proxy for ‘intelligence’.

**An Artificial Adversary**

Deep Blue was not intelligent at all. It was simply a immense calculating box with added human input. It was capable of evaluating 200 million positions per second, and the search space was reduced by using sets of rules or heuristics gleaned from grandmaster games and feedback. In addition, ‘human’ touches were reportedly added.

In positions where the logical move would be immediately clear to everyone, Deep Blue was programmed to stall, adding an element of doubt about its thought process, details of which IBM kept firmly hidden from Kasparov. While these days we fear computer interference when playing other humans, at that point Kasparov feared human interference when playing the computer.

Thoroughly unsettled, the world champion turned their attention to the game of Go. In May of this year, a Go program created by Google DeepMind, AlphaGo, took on the World no.1 Ke Jie in a three-game match. While a typical chess game could have around 35⁰⁰ possible move sequences, a typical Go game is estimated to have around 250⁰⁰. But it is not only this huge increase in complexity that poses computational difficulties. The heuristics that can be used to prune the search space in chess are less well-defined in Go, and it is less easy to evaluate any given position (and thus know when to stop calculating a line). Nevertheless, AlphaGo triumphed convincingly, winning all three games. Perhaps this has marked a significant shift in the competency of machines?

If Artificial Intelligence does give rise to a malevolent superpower, then the chess world needs to bear its share of responsibility and the DeLorean should be sent back to 1987, Liechtenstein. One of the participants at an amateur level, a well-prepared player can blitz out a large number of moves at the board by relying on recollection over understanding or thought.

**Rise of the Machines**

20 years on, and the man versus machine challenge is back. With chess no longer a significant battlefield, the machines have turned their attention to the game of Go. In May of this year, a Go program created by Google DeepMind, AlphaGo, took on the World no.1 Ke Jie in a three-game match. While a typical chess game could have around 35⁰⁰ possible move sequences, a typical Go game is estimated to have around 250⁰⁰. But it is not only this huge increase in complexity that poses computational difficulties. The heuristics that can be used to prune the search space in chess are less well-defined in Go, and it is less easy to evaluate any given position (and thus know when to stop calculating a line). Nevertheless, AlphaGo triumphed convincingly, winning all three games. Perhaps this has marked a significant shift in the competency of machines?
Two great series come to an end...

In *Thinking Inside the Box* Jacob Aagaard describes his chess improvement philosophy, developed over more than twenty years of thinking about one question: *How do we make better decisions at the chess board?*

As the final volume in the award-winning *Grandmaster Preparation* series, this book unifies the concepts of the previous five books and delves into such topics as:

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*Thinking Inside the Box* is the ultimate self-improvement guide, written for amateurs as well as world-class players.

The King’s Indian Defence is one of Black’s most combative responses to 1.d4. A favourite of both Fischer and Kasparov, it remains a popular weapon at all levels of play.

In this, the fifth and final volume of the epic *Kotronias on the King’s Indian* series, Grandmaster Vassilios Kotronias completes his masterpiece by tackling all major variations after 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 which were not covered in the previous volumes. Starting with 3.f3 and working through numerous set-ups including the Smyslov, Sokolov and Seirawan Systems, followed by the Four Pawns Attack and culminating in the mighty Sämisch System, Kotronias has produced perhaps the finest book of his career.

As in previous volumes, the author supplements the hard analysis by sharing his expert knowledge of typical manoeuvres and positional motifs. Once again, a selection of test positions has been provided, enabling the reader to sharpen his tactical skills and improve his middlegame understanding.

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Mastering Complex Endgames, where middlegame strategy and endgame technique meet!

Adrian Mikhalchishin & Oleg Stetsko - 415 pages

Arriving from all different kind of middlegames, the authors compiled an impressive amount of most instructive endgames. The ideal material for any chess player or chess trainer to improve or teach the endgame skills!
after 3 d4 cxd4 4 cxd4 g7 both the critical 5 c4 and 5 c3 c6 6 e3 e6 7 c4 receive two quite meaty chapters.

The Modern Endgame Manual: Mastering Queen vs Pieces Endgames
 Efstratios Grivas, 312 pages, paperback
 RRP £22.95 SUBSCRIBERS £20.65

Chess Evolution continue their instructive endgame series as the famous Greek author, trainer and GM looks at some fairly uncommon types of endgame, namely those in which a queen finds herself up against an array of pieces. As one would expect, the examples are generally well chosen and the methods of winning, for instance, queen against rook where the defender is trying to set up a fortress, fairly well explained.

The New in Chess
 Book of Chess Improvement
 Steve Giddins (ed.), 352 pages, paperback
 RRP £19.99 SUBSCRIBERS £17.99

New in Chess Magazine has long been known for presenting a few games in every issue analysed by the very best players in the world. Now Steve Giddins has selected both some of the best and some of the most instructive of those, grouping them by theme, such as attacking or endgame play. With notes by the likes of Kasparov, Kramnik, Tal and Timman, it seems unlikely that most players won’t learn plenty from this compendium.

Forthcoming Events

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<td>Colwyn Bay Congress</td>
<td>June 30 - July 2</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.welshchessunion.uk/calendar/">www.welshchessunion.uk/calendar/</a></td>
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<td>Whitby Congress</td>
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<td>Hampstead U2200 Congress</td>
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<td>Hendon ‘First Thursday’ Blitz</td>
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<td>South Wales International, Cardiff</td>
<td>July 8-14</td>
<td>Cardiff</td>
<td><a href="http://www.southwaleschess.co.uk">www.southwaleschess.co.uk</a></td>
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<td>DeMontford Bell Kings Place Rapidplay</td>
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<td>London</td>
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<td>Scottish Championships, Dundee</td>
<td>July 15-23</td>
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<td>Leeds Congress</td>
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<td>Grand Chess Tour Rapid, Leuven</td>
<td>June 28 – July 2</td>
<td>Leuven</td>
<td><a href="http://grandchessguideline.org">grandchessguideline.org</a>, Aronian, Carlsen, Kramnik, Ivanchuk, Topalov, etc.</td>
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<td>Biel Chess Festival</td>
<td>July 24 – Aug 2</td>
<td>Biel</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bielchessfestival.ch">www.bielchessfestival.ch</a>, Bacrot, Harikrishna, Leko, Navara, etc.</td>
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