





Commentator: GM & FST **Efstratios Grivas**

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Official Site: <http://www.anand-topalov.com/>

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Schedule

- April 21 - 17:00 CET - Opening
- April 24 - 16:00 CET - Game 1
- April 25 - 14:00 CET - Game 2
- April 26 - Rest Day
- April 27 - 14:00 CET - Game 3
- April 28 - 14:00 CET - Game 4
- April 29 - Rest Day
- April 30 - 14:00 CET - Game 5
- May 1 - 14:00 CET - Game 6
- May 2 - Rest Day
- May 3 - 14:00 CET - Game 7
- May 4 - 14:00 CET - Game 8
- May 5 - Rest Day
- May 6 - 14:00 CET - Game 9
- May 7 - 14:00 CET - Game 10
- May 8 - Rest Day
- May 9 - 14:00 CET - Game 11
- May 10 - Rest Day
- May 11 - 14:00 CET - Game 12
- May 12 - Rest Day
- May 13 - Tie breaks

The time control for each game is 120 minutes for the first 40 moves, 60 minutes for the next 20 moves and then 15 minutes for the rest of the game with an increment of 30 seconds per move starting after move 61 has been made. The prize fund is 2,000,000 euros. Chief arbiter is Panayiotis Nikolopoulos of Greece.

N	N/S	T/C/R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	S
1	Topalov Veselin	GM BUL 2805	1	0	½	0	½	½	½	1	½	½	½	0	5½
2	Anand Vishy	GM IND 2787	0	1	½	1	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	1	6½



Symbols

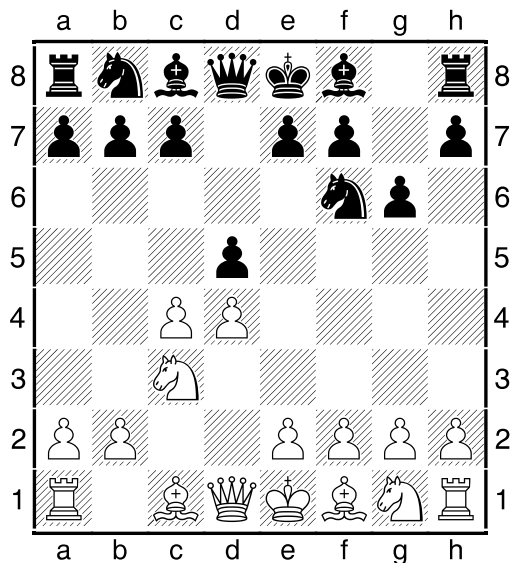
+	check	+=	White is slightly better
++	double check	=	equal position
#	checkmate	oo	unclear position
!!	brilliant move	oo/=	with compensation
!	good move	=+	Black is slightly better
!?	interesting move	-/+	Black has a large advantage
?!	dubious move	-+	Black is winning
?	bad move	1-0	the game ends in a win for White
??	blunder	½-½	the game ends in a draw
+-	White is winning	0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
+/-	White has a large advantage	(D)	see next diagram

□ Topalov, Veselin

■ Anand, Viswanathan

D87 Sofia 24.04.2010 – Game 1

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 (D)



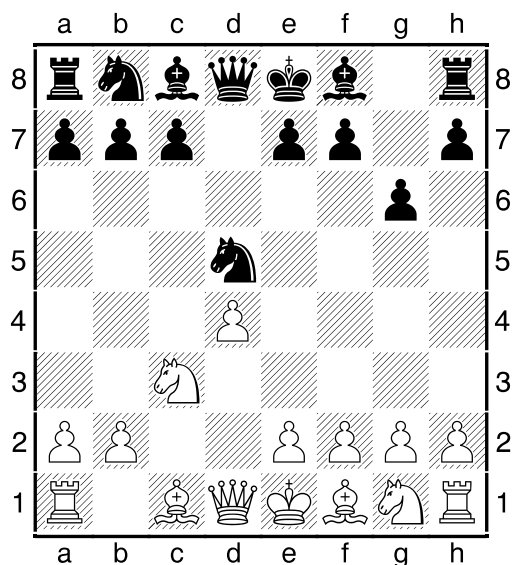
Anand's love affair with the 'Grunfeld Defence' dates back a long time. He played it regularly during the '90s but he recently (during 2009) he used it 7 times, scoring a respectable +1/=6/-0! So, the opening choice was hardly a surprise for Topalov.

4.cxd5

Some other games of Anand played in 2009 went as: 4.Nf3 (4.Bg5 Ne4 5.Bh4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 dxc4 7.e3 Be6 8.Nf3 Bg7 9.Be2 Nd7 10.Ng5 Bd5 11.e4 h6 12.exd5 hxg5 13.Bxg5 Nb6 14.Bf3 Nxd5 15.Qa4+ c6 16.Qxc4 Qd6 oo Ponomarev,R-Anand,V Zuerich 2009) 4...Bg7 5.cxd5 (5.e3 0-0 6.Bd2 c6 7.Qb3 e6 8.Bd3 Nbd7 9.0-0 Qe7 10.Na4 Re8 11.Bb4 Qd8 12.Bd6 dxc4 13.Qxc4 += Ivanchuk,V-Anand,V Moscow 2009 ; 5.Qb3 dxc4 6.Qxc4 0-0 7.e4 a6 8.Be2 [8.Bf4 b5 9.Qxc7 Qxc7 10.Bxc7 Bb7 11.Bd3 b4 12.Na4 Nxe4 13.0-0 Nf6 14.Rac1 Nbd7 15.Ne5 Rfc8 = Leko,P-Anand,V Miskolc 2009] 8...b5 9.Qb3 c5 10.dxc5 Bb7 11.0-0 Nbd7 [11...Nxe4 12.Nxe4 Bxe4 13.Bf4 Bd5 14.Qe3 Bxb2 15.Rad1 oo Leko,P-Anand,V Miskolc 2009] 12.e5 Nd5 13.Nxd5 Nxc5 14.Nxe7+ Qxe7 15.Qa3 Rfe8 16.Bg5 += Leko,P-Anand,V Miskolc 2009) 5...Nxd5 6.g3 Nb6 7.Bg2 Nc6 8.e3 0-0 9.0-0 Re8 10.d5 Na5 11.Nd4 Bd7 12.b3 c5 13.dxc6 Nxc6 14.Nxc6 Bxc6 15.Bxc6 bxc6 16.Bb2

oo Aronian,L-Anand,V Mainz 2009.

4...Nxd5 (D)



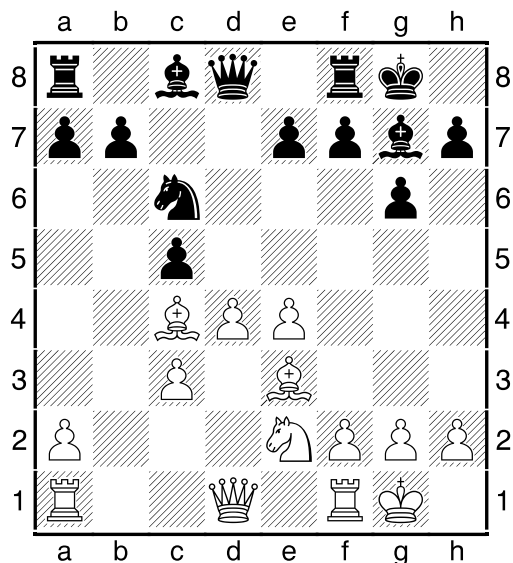
5.e4

This is the classical approach, which it seems to be the favourite line of Topalov and it suits his active style perfectly.

5...Nxc3 6.bxc3 Bg7 7.Bc4

This was no surprise; it has been Topalov's choice before. Kramnik didn't got much with 7.Nf3 c5 8.Rb1 0-0 9.Be2 cxd4 10.cxd4 Qa5+ 11.Bd2 Qxa2 12.0-0 Bg4 13.Bg5 h6 14.Bh4 g5 15.Bg3 Nc6 16.d5 Rad8 17.Rxb7 e6 18.Bc7 Bxf3 19.Bxf3 Rd7 20.dxc6 Rxd1 21.Rxd1 Qc2 22.Bd6 g4 23.Bxg4 Qxc6 24.Rc7 Qb6 25.Rd7 Rd8 26.Bc7 Rxd7 27.Bxb6 Rxd1+ 28.Bxd1 axb6 29.Kf1 1/2-1/2 Kramnik,V-Anand,V Moscow 2009.

7...c5 8.Ne2 Nc6 9.Be3 0-0 10.0-0 (D)



This is one of the main and well-developed lines of the 'Grunfeld Defence', which is recently under test on the top level. In the past, this variation has been seen on the occasion of historic matches between ex-World Champions Mikhail Botvinnik and Vassily Smyslov or between Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov. The main idea of this system is to build up a strong centre, which cannot be destroyed easily, but the course of this game will be rather non-typical for this traditional perception.

Both players were moving in blitz tempo, as both were aiming (and were prepared beforehand) for this position.

10...Na5

10...Bg4 leads to sharp and very deep theoretical disputes after 11.f3 Na5 12.Bd3 (or 12.Bxf7+ Rxf7 13.fxc4 which was the battleground in the 1987 FIDE-Wch at Seville with A.Karpov white and G.Kasparov black) 12...cxd4 13.cxd4 Be6 14.d5 is an exchange sacrifice from the 1950s that Topalov has enjoyed success with: 14...Bxa1 15.Qxa1, which Topalov has played in a number of games: 15...f6 16.Qd4 Bf7 17.Bh6 Re8 18.Bb5 e5 19.Qf2 Re7 20.f4 (20.Bd3 Rc8 21.f4 Nc4 22.fxe5 Nxe5 23.Qxf6 Bxd5 24.exd5 Ng4 25.Qf4 Nxh6 26.Qxh6 Qb6+ 27.Kh1 Qe3 28.Qh4 Re5 29.Qf6 Ree8 30.Bxg6 hxg6 31.Qxg6+ Kh8 32.Qf6+ Kh7 33.Qf7+ Kh8 34.Nf4 1-0 Topalov,V-Shirov,A Morelia/Linares 2008) 20...exf4 21.Qxf4 Qb6+ 22.Kh1 Bxd5 23.exd5 Qxb5 24.Qxf6 Qe8 25.Qd4 Rd8 26.h3 Rf7 27.Rxf7 Qxf7 28.Qc3 b6 29.Ng3 Nb7 30.Ne4 Qe7 31.Nf6+ Kf7 32.Nxh7 Kg8 33.Nf6+ Kf7 34.Ng4 Kg8 35.Qd2 Re8 36.Qf4 Qd6 37.Qf2 Qc5 38.Qg3 Qd4 39.Kh2 Nd8 40.Qd6 Ne6 41.Be3 1-0 Topalov,V-Shirov,A Wijk aan Zee 2007. Another try is 10...Bd7 but Topalov is well-prepared here as well: 11.Rb1 Qc7 12.Bd3 Rfd8 13.h3 Be8 14.d5 Ne5 15.c4 e6 16.Nf4 Rab8 17.Be2 Rd6 18.Qc2 Ra6 19.Rb5! Bf8 20.a4 Bxb5 21.cxb5 Rd6 22.Qc3 Bg7 23.Qxc5 Rc8 24.Qxa7 b6 25.Qxc7 Rxc7 26.Rd1 Bf6 27.dxe6 Rxd1+ 28.Bxd1 fxe6 29.Bb3 1-0 Topalov,V-Svidler,P Nanjing 2008. Finally, 10...b6 was tried in game 10.

11.Bd3 b6

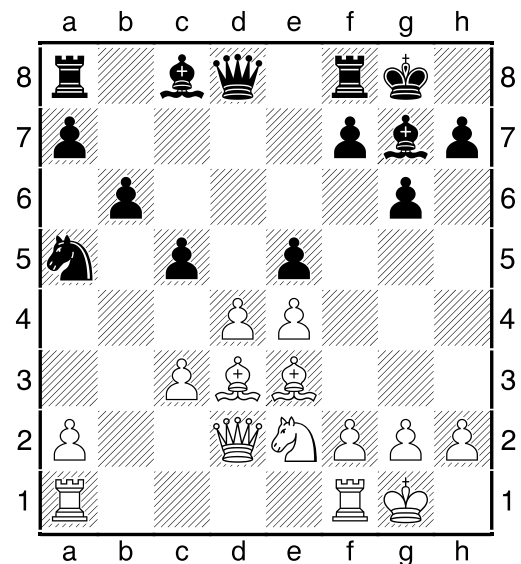
At first sight this seems to be a 'blunder' as Black just helps White to gain an extra pawn but this is far from the truth.

12.Qd2

In case of 12.dxc5?! bxc5 13.Bxc5 Qc7 Black gets a very active play for the pawn. For example: 14.Bd4 (14.Be3 Nc4) 14...e5 15.Be3 Nc4 (15...Be6!?) 16.Qc1 Rd8 17.Rd1 Be6 18.Bc2 Rxd1+ 19.Bxd1 Bf8 =+ with better chances, Rocha,A-Keres,P Hastings 1964. After 12.Rc1 e5 (after 12...cxd4 13.cxd4 e6 14.Qd2 Bb7 15.h4 White was successful in the game Carlsen,M- Ivanchuk,V Morelia/Linares 2007) 13.Qa4 (in the game Topalov,V-Svidler,P Morelia/Linares 2006, White played 13.dxc5 Be6 14.c4 and eventually outplayed his opponent but Black's play could probably be improved) 13...Bd7 14.Qa3 Be6 15.d5 Bd7 16.f4 Nb7 and Black got acceptable play in Sasikiran,K-Kamsky,G Dresden 2008.

12...e5 (D)

12...Bb7 is played more often: 13.Bh6 Qd7 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.d5 e6 16.c4 += Erdos,V-Banas,J Deizisau 2009. But of course the main debates lately have been around the text move.



13.Bh6

According to the present state of theory Black has no problems after it. Alternatives are:

a) 13.dxe5 Be6 14.Rad1 Nc4 15.Bxc4

(15.Qc1 Nxe5 16.Nf4 Qe8 17.Bb1 Bc4 18.Rfe1 Qc6 oo Vescovi,G-Mekhitarian,K Americana 2009) 15...Bxc4 16.f4 Qe7 17.Qc2 Rad8 18.Rfe1 h5 19.Nc1 Qe6 20.Rd2 Bb5 21.Nb3 Qc4 22.Bf2 g5! oo Navara,D-Kamsky,G Sochi 2008.

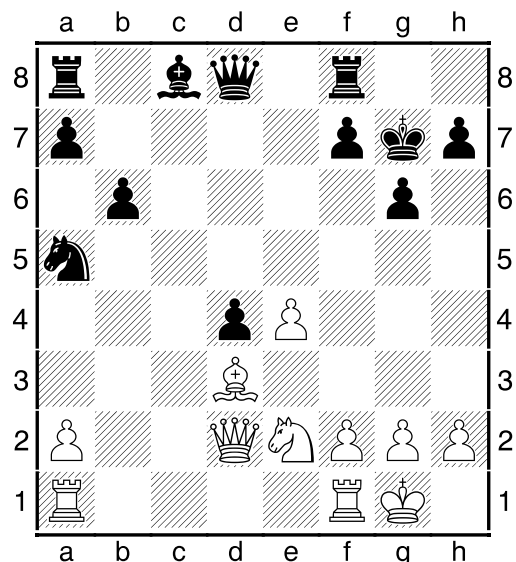
b) 13.dxc5 Be6 14.Rfd1 Qc7 15.cxb6 axb6 16.Bh6 (16.Qb2 Rab8 [16...Nc4 17.Bxc4 Qxc4 18.Ng3 h5 19.Qb4 b5 20.a3 Rfc8 21.Bd2 Bf8 22.Qxc4 Rxc4 23.f3 Bc5+ 24.Kf1 Rca4 25.Ke1 Rxa3 26.Nf1 Ra2 27.Rxa2 Rxa2 28.Ne3 h4 29.Ke2 f5 30.exf5 gxf5 1-0 Beliavsky,A-Sutovsky,E Natanya 2009] 17.f3 b5 18.Bf2 Rfc8 19.Kh1 Bf8 20.Bg3 Nc4 21.Bxc4 Bxc4 oo/= Korotylev,A-Areshchenko,A Moscow 2009) 16...Rfd8 17.Bxg7 Kxg7 and Black has excellent compensation for the pawn in view of White's queenside weaknesses and badly placed minor pieces, as in Ni Hua-Navara,D Dagomys 2008.

c) 13.d5 f5 (13...Nb7 14.Ba6 Nd6 15.Bxc8 Qxc8 16.Qd3 f5 17.f3 Qd7 oo Nguyen Thi Mai,H-Nadig,K Subic Bay 2009 or 13...c4 14.Bc2 Nb7 15.Bh6 Nd6 16.Bxg7 Kxg7 17.f4 f6 18.fxe5 fxe5 19.Rxf8 Qxf8 20.a4 Bd7 21.a5 Qd8 22.Qe3 bxa5 23.Qc5 Bb5 24.Nd4 exd4 25.e5 d3 26.exd6 dxc2 27.Qxb5 Rb8 0-1 Ress,T-Flumbort,A Nyiregyhaza 2008) 14.Bg5 Qe8!? 15.f3 (15.exf5 gxf5 16.Ng3 += Jumabayev,R-Das,A New Delhi 2010) 15...c4 16.Bc2 f4 17.Kh1 h6 18.Bh4 g5 19.Be1 Bd7 and Black achieved acceptable play and eventually won in the game Van Wely,L-Kamsky,G Dagomys 2008.

13...cxd4

13...f6 is passive: 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.f4 (15.Qe3!? seems to give White a pleasant advantage) 15...cxd4 16.cxd4 Bg4 17.dxe5 (17.fxe5 fxe5 18.Rxf8 Qxf8 19.Qg5 Bxe2 20.Qxe5+ Kh6! 21.Bxe2 Re8 =) 17...Bxe2 (17...Nc4! 18.Qc3 Rc8 19.exf6+ Rxf6 20.Qd4 Qxd4+ 21.Nxd4 Rd6 22.Be2 Rxd4 23.Bxg4 Rf8 =) 18.exf6+ (18.Qxe2!? fxe5 19.f5) 18...Rxf6 19.Qxe2 Qd4+ 20.Kh1 Rxf4 21.Rxf4 Qxa1+ 22.Rf1 Qe5 with an equal game as in Li Chao-Howell,D Gaziantep 2008.

14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.cxd4 exd4 (D)



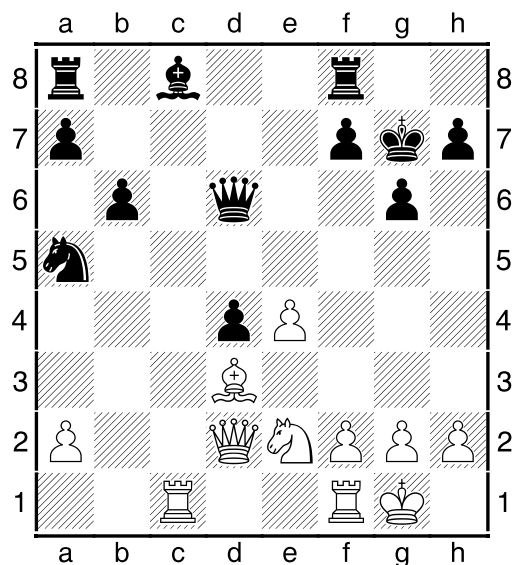
16.Rac1

Here Topalov has a great experience. The 'main line' goes 16.f4 and although there is almost nothing left from White's centre, Black is slightly underdeveloped and his king is vulnerable: 16...f6 (16...Bg4 17.f5 Bxe2 18.f6+ Kh8 19.Bxe2 oo/= or 16...Bb7!? 17.f5 Nc6 18.f6+ [18.Rf3 Ne5 19.Rg3 Rc8 20.Rf1 oo/= Antonsen,M-Teplyi,I Borup 2009] 18...Kh8 19.Rf4 [19.Qf4!? Rg8 20.Rad1 seems a better try, as White's compensation for the sacrificed pawn seems to be excellent] 19...Qd6 20.Raf1 Qb4 21.Qc1 Qc5 22.Qd2 Qb4 23.Qc1 Qc5 24.Qd2 Qb4 25.Qc1 ½-½ Antonsen,M-Teplyi,I Silkeborg 2009) 17.e5!? (17.Rac1 Bg4 18.Ng3 Bd7 [18...Rc8 19.f5 Nc6 20.h3 Bh5 is OK] 19.h4?! [19.f5!? Nc6 oo/= Ismailov,M-Bok,B Kemer 2009] 19...Rc8 20.Rxc8 [20.h5 Qe7 21.Ba6 Rxc1 22.Rxc1 Nc6 23.Bb5 Qd6 24.h6+ Kxh6 25.e5 Qd5 26.f5+ Kg7?? {26...g5} 27.exf6+ Rxf6 28.Qg5 Rd6 29.f6+ Kf8 30.Qh6+ Ke8 31.Bc4 1-0 Golichenko,I-Shishkin,V Kyiv 2008] 20...Bxc8 21.h5 Qe7 oo Cheparinov,I-Kamsky,G Sochi 2008 or 17.f5 Bd7 18.Nf4 Nc6 19.Bb5 Ne5 20.Qxd4 g5 21.Ne6+ Bxe6 22.Qxd8 Rfxd8 23.fxe6 +/- Najer,E-Safarli,E Moscow 2010) 17...Bd7! (in case of 17...Bg4 Black's pieces may lose coordination: 18.exf6+ [18.f5 is less promising: 18...fxe5 19.fxg6 Rxf1+ 20.Rxf1 hxg6 21.Nf4! exf4 22.Qxf4 Qe7 23.Qxd4+ Kh6! {23...Kh7? 24.Qxg4 Qe3+

25.Kh1 Qxd3 26.Rf7+ +-} 24.Qxg4 Qe3+ 25.Kh1 Qxd3 26.Qh4+ Kg7 27.Qe7+=] 18...Rxf6! [18...Qxf6?! 19.Ng3 Rac8 20.f5! would have given White a rather annoying initiative] 19.Ng3 Rc8 20.h3 [20.f5 Nc4 21.Bxc4 Rxc4 22.h3 {22.Qg5? d3!} 22...Bxf5 23.Qg5 Kf7! 24.Nxf5 gxf5 25.Rxf5 Rc5 26.Qh5+ Kg7] 20...Be6 21.f5 oo/=.

17...Qd5 is another interesting option: 18.Rac1 [18.exf6+ Rxf6 19.Ng3 Nc4 20.Bxc4 Qxc4 21.Rac1 Qd5 22.f5 Bxf5 23.Rxf5 Rxf5 24.Nxf5+ Qxf5 25.Qxd4+ Kg8 26.Qc4+ Qf7 27.Qxf7+ Kxf7 28.Rc7+ = as the passivity of the a8-rook compensates for the extra pawn] 18...Bd7 19.exf6+ Rxf6 20.Ng3 Nc6 [20...Raf8 21.Rc7!?] 21.f5 Raf8 22.Be4 Qe5 23.Rce1 Qa5 24.Qg5 Kh8 25.Qh4 oo/=) 18.exf6+ (18.Nxd4 Nc6 was OK for Black: 19.Be4 Nxd4 20.Bxa8 [20.Qxd4 Bb5 =] 20...Bb5 21.Rf2 Ne2+ 22.Rxe2 Bxe2 = 23.Qxe2?? Qd4+! -+) 18...Qxf6 19.Ng3 Kh8 and the position was equal in Topalov,V-Kamsky,G Sofia 2009: 20.f5 gxf5 21.Bxf5 Bxf5 22.Rxf5 Qd6 23.Raf1 (23.Ne4!? Qd7 24.Rxf8+ Rxf8 25.Rd1 Nc4! [25...Nc6? 26.Qh6] 26.Qxd4+ [26.Qh6? Qf5 27.h3 Ne3 28.Rc1 Rg8 -+] 26...Qxd4+ 27.Rxd4 Ne3 28.Nd2 Kg7 =) 23...Nc6 24.Ne4 Qe7 25.Qh6 Rxf5 26.Rxf5 Ne5 27.h3 Ng6 28.Rh5 Rg8 29.Nf6 Rg7 30.Nxh7 Rxh7 31.Qxg6 Qe3+ 32.Kf1 Qc1+ 33.Kf2 Qd2+ 34.Kg3 Qe3+ 35.Kh2 Qf4+ 36.Kg1 Qc1+ ½-½.

16...Qd6 (D)



The text move is a novelty which both sides had obviously looked at it in detail. Previously 16...Bb7 was seen: 17.f4 Rc8! 18.Rxc8 Qxc8 (18...Bxc8 19.f5 Nc6 20.Nf4 Ne5 21.Nd5 ½-½ Peralta,F-Alonso,S La Plata 2008) 19.f5 Nc6 20.Rf3 Ne5 21.Rh3 Rh8 22.f6+ Kg8 23.Qh6 Qf8 24.Qxf8+ Kxf8 25.Nxd4 Ke8 26.Bb5+ Kd8 27.Rc3 a6 28.Ba4 b5 29.Bb3 Re8 30.Nf3 ½-½ Karjakin,S-Carlsen,M Foros 2008. I am sure that Topalov has prepare something dangerous against it and probably Anand was sure also, as he avoid the known paths and instead chose 16...Qd6.

17.f4!

White's compensation for the sacrificed pawn is clear: he has activated all his pieces and he can create a dangerous attack against the black king. On the other hand Black is still undeveloped and his a5-knight temporarily out of play.

17...f6

Black must stop the main White's threat: f5-f6+.

18.f5 Qe5

It is vital to prevent the e5 advance in all circumstances as this would liberate White's pieces. Black would love to play ...Nc6-e5 but he really can't, as after 18...Nc6 19.Bb5! Ne5 20.Nxd4 White's position is preferable.

Till here both opponents were moving quickly, as both were aiming for this position! It must be noted that both opponents has just spend about 4 minutes (!) for these first 18 moves! For the first time someone is thinking and this is Topalov.

19.Nf4 g5

Black should seriously consider the alternative 19...Bd7 which after 20.Bc4! g5 (20...Nxc4? gives White a clear advantage: 21.Rxc4 Rae8 [21...Bb5?! 22.Rc7+! Kg8 23.Ne6 Rf7 24.Rxf7 Kxf7 25.Qh6! +-] 22.Rxd4 +/-) 21.Ne6+ (21.Nh5+!? Kh8 22.Bd5 oo/=) 21...Bxe6 22.Bxe6 leads to an unclear position.

20.Nh5+

Probably Black was concentrating in his pre-home analysis in 20.Nd5 which is also not bad: 20...Rf7 21.h4 h6 22.Qd1 Bb7 23.Re1 and White threats to penetrate through the

light squares (h5-g6). Putting the knight on h5 has to be justified by concrete analysis, as it could be badly placed later...

20...Kg8

The most natural move was 20...Kh8. I guess White would continue with 21.h4 Rg8 22.Qe1! Bb7 23.hxg5 Rxc5 24.Qh4 Rg8 25.Nf4 with good compensation for the sacrificed pawn (remember the weak black king the knight on the rim).

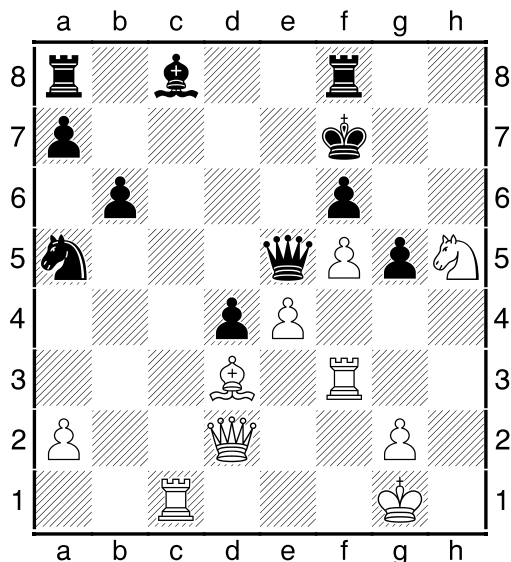
21.h4

When on the attack it is an obligation to open files and diagonals, so this is a quite natural move.

21...h6 22.hxg5 hxc5 23.Rf3!

New forces joins the attack!

23...Kf7? (D)



Both sides had been playing very quickly to this point but now Anand thought for 10+ minutes. He must still have been in preparation but here he forgot it! 23...Bb7 is not clearly refuted. A sample idea for White can be found in 24.Nxf6+!? Qxf6 (24...Rxf6? 25.Qxg5+ Kf7 26.Rh3 +-) 25.Rg3 Rf7 (25...Rac8 26.Rxc5+ Kf7 27.Be2! d3 28.e5! Rxc1+ 29.Qxc1 Qc6 30.Bh5+ Ke7 31.Qa3+ Qc5+ 32.Qxc5+ bxc5 33.Rg7+ Kd8 34.e6 Nc6 35.Rxb7 Rxf5 36.Rd7+ Kc8 37.Bg4 Rf4 38.Bh3 Re4) 26.Rxc5+ Rg7 27.Rxc7+ Qxc7 (27...Kxg7? 28.Rc7+ Kg8 29.e5! +-) 28.Qf4! Rc8 (28...Rf8?! 29.Rc2! and the e-pawn will roll) 29.Rxc8+ Bxc8 30.f6 Qg6 31.Qb8 Qg4 (31...Qe8 32.Qxa7 +/-) 32.Qe5 Be6 33.Be2

Nc6 34.Bxg4 Nxe5 35.Bxe6+ Kh7 36.f7 Kg7 37.Kf2 and White has some chances but Black can fight: 37...a5 (37...Nxf7? 38.Bxf7 Kxf7 39.Ke2 Kf6 40.Kd3 Ke5 41.g3! b5 42.g4 a5 43.g5 b4 44.g6 Kf6 45.Kxd4 Kxg6 46.Kc5 Kf6 47.Kb5 Ke5 48.Kxa5 Kxe4 49.Kxb4 Kd5 50.Kb5 +-) 38.Ke2 b5.

Another option is 23...Bd7 24.Rg3 (24.Nxf6+ Qxf6 25.e5 Qxe5 26.Qxg5+ [26.Be4!? Kf7 27.Bxa8 Rxa8 28.Qxg5 Rg8 29.Qh5+ Kf8 oo] 26...Kf7 27.Qg6+ Ke7 28.f6+ Kd8 oo ; 24.Bc4+ Nxc4 25.Rxc4 Be8 26.Nxf6+ Rxf6 27.Qxg5+ Rg6! oo) 24...Kf7 (this may well have been in Anand's preparation and in a way explains his 23rd move blunder as he might have mixed the move order) 25.Bc4+ (25.Nxf6 Qxg3) 25...Nxc4 26.Rxc4 Rh8 27.Rxd4 Be8 (27...Bxf5?! 28.exf5 Rxh5 29.Re3 with initiative to White) 28.Rh3 and although it seems unclear I certainly prefer White due to his initiative.

Of course 23...Rf7? 24.Nxf6+! Qxf6 25.e5 Qxe5 26.Qxg5+ Qg7 27.Qd8+ Rf8 28.Qd5+ +- is out of the question.

24.Nxf6!

An excellent sacrifice which destroys Black's defence. It is strange that Anand missed this relatively easy move. Did he was trying to remember his analysis and he 'forgot' to think?

On the other hand Topalov used just a few minutes to work out the various possibilities, so he should be still in his preparations!

The main tactical theme is that Black cannot hold c7 and g5, as his knight and rook are out of the game and the defence.

24...Kxf6

If 24...Qxf6 then 25.Rh3 Bxf5 (25...Rh8 26.Rc7+ Ke8 27.Rxh8+ Qxh8 28.Bb5+ Kd8 29.Rf7 +- or 25...Kg8 26.e5 Qxe5 27.Qxg5+ Qg7 28.Qf4 +- or, finally, 25...Bd7 26.Rh7+ Ke8 27.e5 Qxe5 28.Re1 +-) 26.Rf3! leaves Black without a chance either.

25.Rh3!

A 'quiet' but difficult to met move! White is attacking with all his pieces the poorly placed black king. Still Black's knight is on the rim...

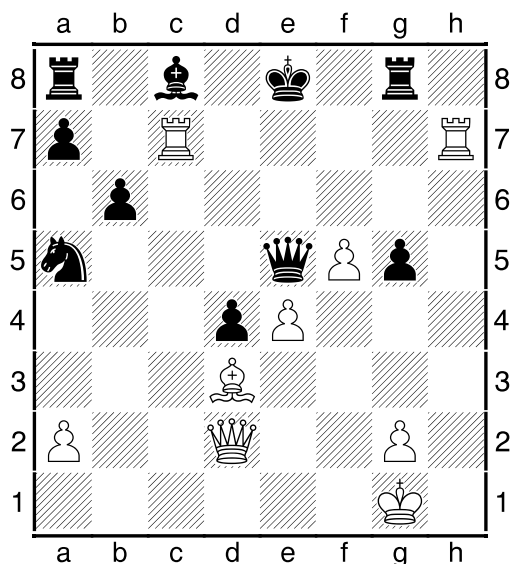
25...Rg8

Black has no good response anymore at his disposal: 25...Bd7 26.Rh6+ Kf7 27.Qxg5 (27.Rh7+ Kf6 28.Rxd7 Rad8 29.Rh7 Rh8 30.Rcc7 Rxh7 31.Rxh7 Qf4 32.Qxf4 gxf4 33.Kf2 Rc8 34.Kf3 Rc3 35.Kxf4 Rxd3 36.e5 # was found by P.Svidler just for fun) 27...Rg8 (27...Ke8 28.Be2! +- or 27...Rh8 28.Rc7! +-) 28.Rh7+ Rg7 29.Rc7! +- or 25...Qf4 26.e5+! Qxe5 (26...Kxe5 27.Re1+ Kd5 28.Be4+ Qxe4 29.Rxe4 Kxe4 30.Qe2+ Kd5 31.Qf3+ +-) 27.Re1 Qf4 28.Qe2 +-.

26.Rh6+ Kf7 27.Rh7+ Ke8

No salvation also could be found in 27...Rg7 28.Rxg7+ Kxg7 (28...Qxg7 29.Rc7+) 29.Qxg5+ Kf8 30.Qd8+ Qe8 31.Qxd4 +-.

28.Rcc7! (D)



The white rooks are dancing deep inside Black's camp! A rare picture for a World Championship game!

28...Kd8

28...Nc6 29.Qc1! was curtains either.

29.Bb5! Qxe4

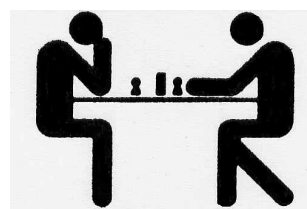
29...Nb7 30.Rc4! wins on the spot and 29...Qxb5 allows mate: 30.Qxd4+ Ke8 31.Rce7+ Kf8 32.Rhf7 #. Finally 29...a6 loses to 30.Rce7! Qd6 (31...Qxe7 32.Qxd4+) 31.Qxg5+! Rxg5 32.Re8 #.

30.Rxc8+

Black resigned as there is no defence left: 30...Kxc8 31.Qc1+ Nc6 32.Bxc6 Qe3+ 33.Qxe3 dxe3 34.Bxa8 +- 30.Rce7 Qxe7 31.Qxd4+ Bd7 32.Rxe7 was the alternative win.

1-0

Clocks: W: 0.40' - B: 1.23'

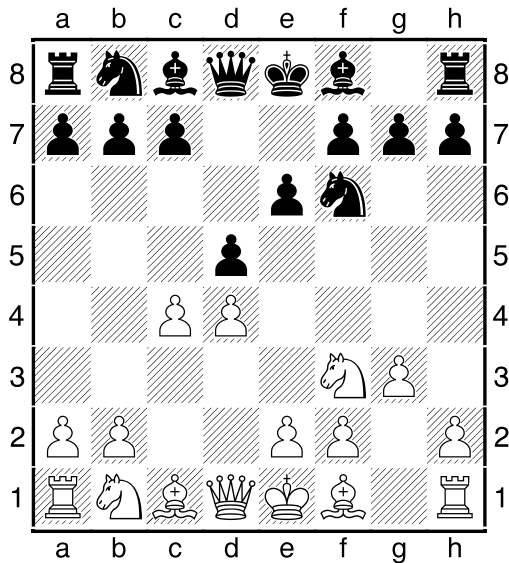


□ Anand, Viswanathan

■ Topalov, Veselin

E04 Sofia 25.04.2010 – Game 2

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.g3 (D)



A 'Catalan' appeared on the board. Although this opening has a solid reputation, lately many games have been 'sharply' played.

4...dxc4

4...Be7 is the classical positional approach, but Topalov is always ready to hand his glove...

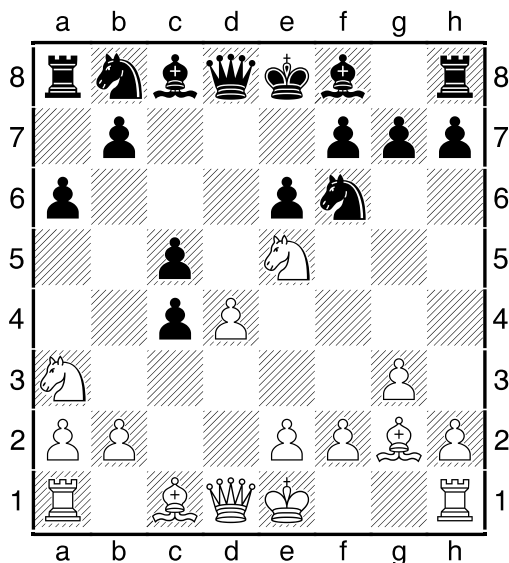
5.Bg2 a6

A popular alternative is 5...c5 6.0-0 Nc6 7.Ne5 Bd7 8.Na3 cxd4 9.Naxc4 oo/=.

6.Ne5

This move which was championed by GM Naum Rashkovsky is very solid.

6...c5 7.Na3 (D)



7...cxd4

Black has some other options as well at his disposal:

a) 7...Ra7 8.dxc5 (8.Be3 b5 9.dxc5 Nd5 10.Naxc4 oo Naumann,A-Kveinys,A Germany 2008) 8...Qxd1+ 9.Kxd1 Bxc5 10.Naxc4 b5 11.Nd3 oo Romanishin,O-Kveinys,A Gausdal 2006.

b) 7...Qxd4 8.Qxd4 (8.Qa4+!? Nfd7 [8...Bd7 9.Nxd7 Nbx7 oo] 9.Naxc4 b5 10.Qa5 bxc4 11.Nxd7 Qxd7 12.Bxa8 Nc6 oo/= Raetsky,A-Naiditsch,A NRW 2000) 8...cxd4 9.Naxc4 Nbd7 10.0-0 Nxe5 11.Nxe5 Bd6 12.Nc4 Bc7 13.Bf4 Bxf4 14.gxf4 Rb8 15.Rfd1 Ke7 16.Rxd4 += Karpov,A-Van Wely,L Monte Carlo 2001.

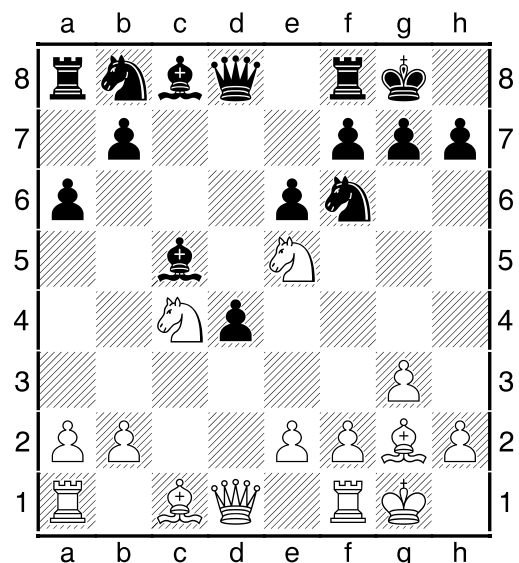
8.Naxc4 Bc5

A valid alternative is 8...Ra7 Black should be ready to meet the pressure on the diagonal by fianchetto: 9.a4 (9.Bd2 b6 10.0-0 Bb7 11.Bxb7 Rxb7 12.Rc1 oo Huzman,A-Novikov,I Montreal 2004) 9...b6 10.0-0 Bb7 11.Bxb7 Rxb7 12.Qd3! (12.e3 Bc5 13.exd4 Bxd4 14.Qf3 Nd5 15.Rd1 Bxe5 16.Nxe5 0-0 oo Chetverik,M-Postny,E Bad Wiessee 2006) 12...Qd5 13.Rd1 +=. Another interesting continuation is 8...Bb4+ 9.Bd2 Bxd2+ 10.Qxd2 0-0 11.0-0 += Schmitz,J-Sonntag,H Germany 2005.

9.0-0

The immediate 9.Bd2 is possible: 9...Nd5 10.Nd3 Ba7 11.Ba5 Qd7 12.Nde5 oo Alburt,L-Ivanov,I New York 1983.

9...0-0 (D)



10.Bd2

Here White is on crossroads, as usually he has many options at his disposal:

a) 10.Bg5 h6 11.Bxf6 gxf6 12.Nd3 Be7 13.Qd2 Kh7 14.Rac1 oo/= Raetsky,A-Panchanathan,M Biel 2004 (see game 6).

b) 10.Qb3 Nbd7 11.Nd3 Be7 12.Rd1 Nd5 13.a4 b6 14.Nde5 Nxe5 15.Nxe5 Bb7 16.Nf3 Rc8 17.Nxd4 Qc7 = Alburt,L-Adamski,J Kiev 1978.

c) 10.e3 Nc6 11.Nxc6 bxc6 12.exd4 Bxd4 13.Bxc6 Rb8 14.Bf4 e5 15.Bxe5 ½-½ Bach,M-Bodnar,A Hamburg 2006.

d) 10.Nd3 Be7 11.Bd2 Nc6 12.Rc1 Nd5 13.Qb3 b5 14.Nce5 Nxe5 15.Nxe5 Bb7 = Ivanisevic,I-Blagojevic,D Niksic 2008.

e) 10.b4!? Bxb4 11.Rb1 Bc5 12.Nd3 Be7 13.Nb6 Ra7 14.Qb3 oo/= Russo,G-De Haro,M/Guarapuava 1992.

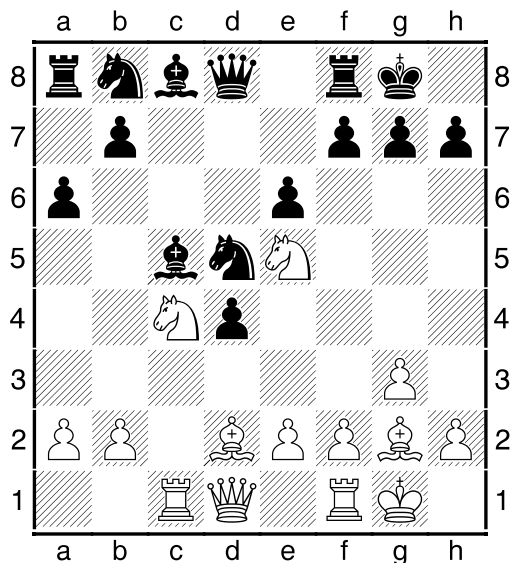
10...Nd5

10...Ra7?! now, is not working: 11.Ba5! (11.b4 Be7 12.e3 b6 13.exd4 Bb7 = Tkachiev,V-David,A Cannes 2006) 11...b6 12.b4! bxa5 13.bxc5 +/- Black is obliged to block the long diagonal, a sphere of influence of the 'Catalan Bishop', the g2 one.

11.Rc1 (D)

This looks better than 11.Qb3 Nd7 12.Nxd7 Bxd7 13.Rac1 Qe7 14.Ne5 Bb5 15.a4 Be8 16.Bxd5 exd5 17.Qxd5 ½-½ Kochyev,A-Tunik,G Sverdlovsk 1984.

As expected Anand is finishing his development on the queen's side. The c5-bishop is loose, but he can't benefit at once.



11...Nd7

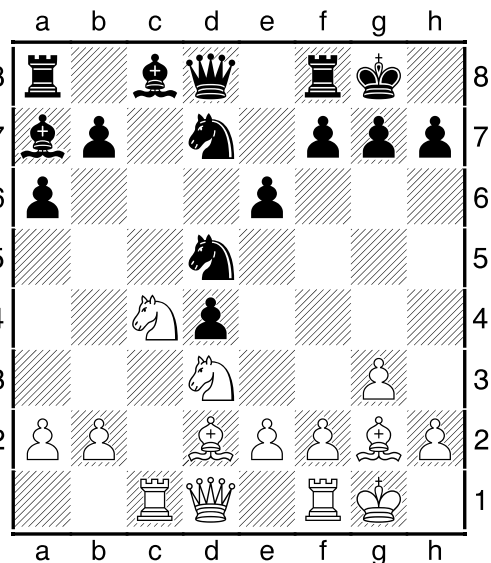
Black simply wants to get rid of the e5-knight, develop and/or exchange some pieces, in other words he is following basic opening strategies. Alternatives as 11...Qf6?! 12.Nd3 Be7 13.e4 +/- Gelfand,B-Aronian,L Bastia 2003, or as 11...b6 12.Qb3 Nd7 13.Rfd1 += Gustafsson,J-Berkes,F Gothenburg 2005, or finally as 11...b5 12.Ba5 Qe7 13.Nd2 Bd6 14.Nef3 Bb7 15.Nxd4 Nd7 16.Ne4 += Vidit,S-Venkatesh,M Chennai 2008, seem to be pleasant for White.

12.Nd3 Ba7 (D)

Of course Black again can vary:

a) 12...Be7 13.Nf4 Nxf4 14.Bxf4 (14.gxf4 Rb8 15.Be1 Bc5 oo Sharevich,A-Andriasian,S Vladimir 2007) 14...Nb6 15.Be5! +=.

b) 12...b6 13.Na5 (13.Qb3 Rb8 14.Nce5 [14.Nxc5 bxc5 15.Qa3 Bb7 16.Rfd1 Bc6 oo Le Roux,J-Edouard,R Nimes 2009] 14...Bb7 15.Nxd7 Qxd7 16.Rc4 Nf6 17.Bxb7 Rxb7 18.Rfc1 Qd5 19.Bf4 oo/= Henrichs,T-Schlosser,P Differdange 2007) 13...Qf6 (13...Re8 14.Nc6 Qf6 15.b4 Bb7 16.Na5 bxa5 17.bxc5 Bc6 18.Bxa5 e5 oo Kiss,P-Beliavsky,A Hungary 1999 ; 13...bxa5 14.Nxc5 Nxc5 15.Rxc5 Qb6 16.Qc2 Rb8 17.Bxd5 exd5 18.Bf4 Bf5 19.Qxf5 Qxc5 20.Rc1 Qb5 21.Bxb8 Qxb8 22.Rc2 Qb5 = Magerramov,E-Ivanov,I Beltsy 1979) 14.b4 Bd6 15.Nc4 Bb8 16.e4 dxe3 17.Nxe3 Bb7 oo Kiss,P-Istratescu,A Hungary 2005.



So, White has sacrificed a pawn in order to take over the initiative, which is mostly based to his superior development and his better placed pieces. Black still has to solve some problems, mainly his undeveloped queenside but at least he can claim that he is a pawn-up after all! As both opponents started to take some time on his moves from now on, I assume that they were not so much aware of the stem game (see below) or just they were trying to remember and verify their pre-home analysis.

13.Ba5!?

13.b4 N7f6 14.Na5 Rb8 15.Qb3 Bd7 Giemsa,S-Meier,V Germany 1989 or 13.Na5 N7f6 14.Qb3 Rb8 15.Rc2 Bd7 16.Rfc1 Bb5 17.a4 Bxd3 18.exd3 Re8 19.Nc4 Qe7 oo ½-½ Vidit,S-Venkatesh,M Nagpur 2008, are White's main alternatives on his turn. But the immediate 13.Qb3 makes more sense, as the threat of Ba5 becomes stronger (control of b6). If now 13...Nc5 then simple 14.Nxc5 Bxc5 15.Rfd1 and White's position seems preferable.

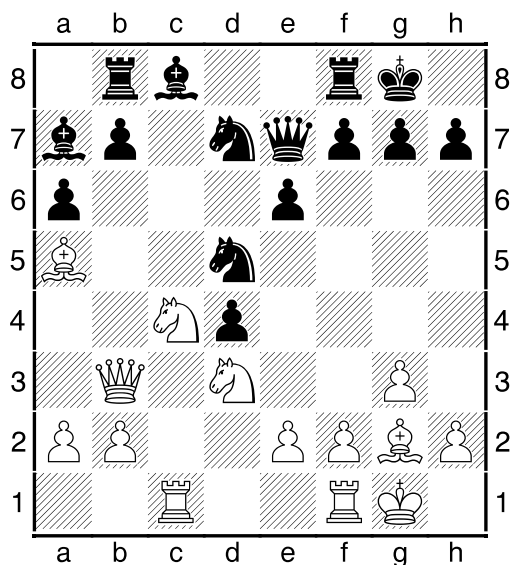
13...Qe7

A sensible and good move as it defends d6-square and saves the a3-f8 diagonal.

14.Qb3

Maybe 14.Bxd5 exd5 15.Bb4 Qf6 16.Nd6 += is not that bad but Catalan players hardly get rid of their pride; the g2-bishop!

14...Rb8 (D)



By the text move Black prepares ...b6, as after the immediate 14...b6 15.Bb4 Nc5

16.Qa3 Bb7 17.Bxd5! Bxd5 18.Nxb6 Bxb6 19.Bxc5 Bxc5 20.Rxc5 White enjoys an edge and pressure on the queenside.

15.Qa3

This is a novelty, played after some long consideration. White wants to weaken the d6-square and use it for his knight. Also the black queen defends many weak spots on Black's camp and Anand thought it would be useful to exchange it. The stem game went 15.Nce5 Nxe5 16.Nxe5 Qf6 17.Nd3 b6 18.Bb4 Rd8 19.Bxd5 Rxd5 20.Rc7 oo/= Gulko,B-Shulman,Y Tulsa 2008. 15.Nb4!? could be another interesting option, maybe for a later game (!): 15...N7f6 16.Nxd5 Nxd5 (16...exd5 17.Nb6 Bg4 18.Rfe1 oo) 17.Nb6 Nxb6 18.Bxb6 Bxb6 19.Qxb6 e5 20.Rc7 oo/= . But most commentators loved the natural 15.Rfd1! as after 15...b6 (15...Nc5 16.Nxc5 Bxc5 17.Ne5 +=) 16.Bb4! Nc5 17.Qa3 Bb7 (17...Nxb4?! 18.Nxb4 Bb7 19.Bxb7 Qxb7 20.Nd6 Qd7 21.Rxd4 +/-) 18.Bxd5! Bxd5 19.Nxb6! Bxb6 20.Rxc5! Bxc5 21.Bxc5 Qb7 22.Bxf8 Rxf8 23.Qb4 += White enjoys a small edge.

15...Qxa3 16.bxa3

16.Nxa3 just loses valuable time. The doubled a-pawns cannot be considered a weakness yet, as Black is not able to approach them; but the weakening of c3 might be.

16...N7f6

Although the text move is a solid one, Black could consider 16...Nc5! 17.Nd6 b6 18.Bxd5 Nxd3 19.exd3 exd5 20.Bb4 a5 21.Rc7 Ra8 oo as an interesting alternative. My personal preference is for Black but White's activity cannot be underestimated.

17.Nce5

Now 17.Nd6 is not much, as 17...b6 18.Bd2 Rd8 is fine for Black.

17...Re8!

This is preparing ...b6 and/or ...Bd7. If 17...b6 then 18.Bb4! += and if 17...Bd7 18.Nxd7 Nxd7 19.Bxd5 exd5 20.Rc7 +=.

18.Rc2

Probably White has no other good plan than doubling his rooks on the only open file of the board. Still Black has to decide what to do with his undeveloped queenside.

18...b6

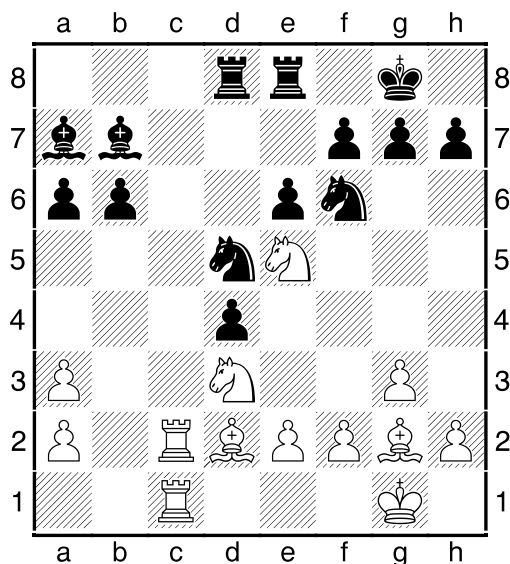
The natural follow-up, although it weakens c6-square. But maybe 18...Bd7!? 19.Nxd7 Nxd7 20.Rfc1 N7f6 21.Ne5 oo/= is better, as it avoids any further weakening.

19.Bd2 Bb7 20.Rfc1

Stronger than the immediate 20.Nc6. In general Anand plays very well from now on, without forcing things too much and just improving his position without caring much of his material deficit.

20...Rbd8 (D)

'Hoping' for the naive 20...Rbc8? 21.Rxc8 Rxc8 22.Rxc8+ Bxc8 23.Nc6 trapping the unfortunate a7-bishop! But of course Topalov is a very good player to fall for it! So far both opponents have used each around 55 minutes thinking time.



21.f4

Although the text move weakens e3-square, it takes under control the e5 one. The truth is that (it seems) White is running out of 'forceful' moves and he starts to apply the 'wait and see' policy, but not much was offered by the 'natural' 21.Nc6 Bxc6 22.Rxc6 e5 23.Nb4 a5 24.Nxd5 Nxd5 and Black should stand fine, although White can present sufficient compensation in the form of his bishop-pair and the control of the c-file.

21...Bb8

This is covering c7-square and improves the bishop to a protected square (having in mind an eventual Nc6). Another possibility to

activate it was by 21...b5 but this is just weakening the c5-square.

22.a4 a5

Defending against the treat 23.a5 which would weaken c5-square. The active 22...Bd6 looks good although then 23.Rc4 regains the pawn at first sight, but Black should feel fine after 23...Ba3 24.Rd1 Rc8 25.Rxd4 Rc2. On the other hand, in view of what happened, Black should seriously consider 22...Bxe5 23.Nxe5 a5.

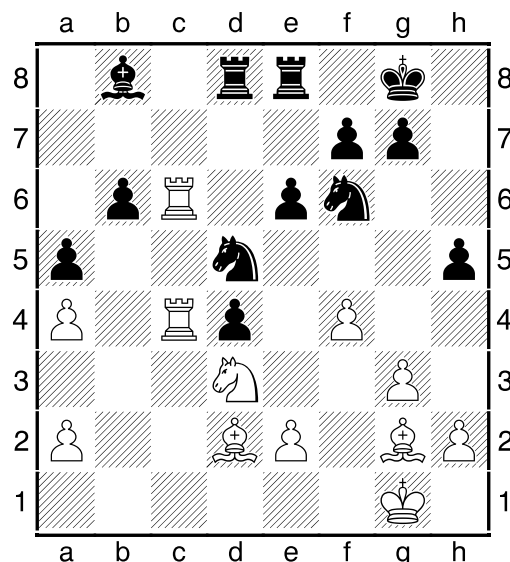
23.Nc6

Now that White has made all the useful moves, it is time for this exchange.

23...Bxc6 24.Rxc6 h5

Can't say that this is a better move than the obvious 24...Rd6 or 24...Kf8, aiming for the endgame. In the latest cases Black's game would be at least equal.

25.R1c4 (D)



Initiative is compensating the sacrificed pawn, so we have a clear case of 'dynamic balance'.

25...Ne3?!

Topalov's first inaccurate move. After 25...Ng4 26.Bf3 (26.Rxd4? Ba7! 27.Kh1 b5 -/+) 26...e5 27.Bxg4 (27.fxe5 Nxe5 28.Nxe5 Bxe5 29.Kf1 oo [29.Bxh5?! d3! 30.exd3 Ne7 31.Rxb6 Bd4+]) 27...hxg4 28.Nxe5 Bxe5 29.fxe5 Rxe5 30.Rxd4 Ree8 the chances would be completely equal.

26.Bxe3 dxe3 27.Bf3?!

No need for that. White could go for the immediate 27.Rxb6 Re7 28.Rb5 Ra7 and

only then 29.Bf3 +=. His rooks are much more active and generally his pieces better placed.

27...g6?!

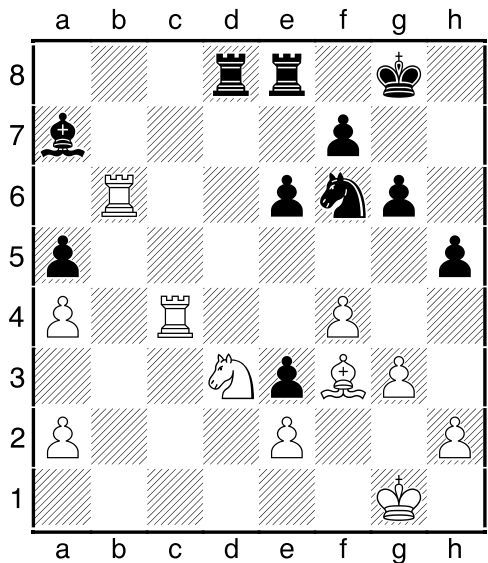
Black fails to react 'properly'. A better try seems to be either 27...Rd6 28.Rxd6 Bxd6 29.Rc6 Rd8 30.Rxb6 g6 = or 27...Nd7!? 28.Bxh5 e5 29.fxe5 Nxe5 30.Nxe5 Rxe5 31.Bf3 Bd6 32.Rxb6 Bb4 and Black should hold the endgame, although he will have to 'suffer' for many moves to come.

28.Rxb6

The regaining of the sacrificed pawn is not that important due to the doubled a-pawns, but the activity of the white rooks is! White has taken over the advantage.

28...Ba7?! (D)

28...Re7 29.Kg2 Kg7 30.Rb5 Bc7 += looks like the correct defensive set-up. A sample line could be 31.Bc6 Ng4 32.h3 Nh6 33.Be4 f5 34.Bf3 Nf7 35.Rc6 Rd6 36.Rxd6 Nxd6 37.Rc5.



29.Rb3!

At first sight 29.Ra6 looks strong, but after 29...Rxd3! 30.Rxa7 (30.exd3?? e2+ 31.Rxa7 e1Q+) 30...Rd2 31.Rxa5 (31.Rcc7 Rf8 32.Rxa5 Nd5!) 31...Rxa2 32.Ra7 Nd5 the activity of the black pieces should be enough to keep the balance. Anand rightly keeps HIS pieces active; the d3-knight is a much superior piece compared to the a7-bishop.

29...Rd4?!

Topalov feels that he is obliged to exchange his opponent's active pieces. The alternative

29...Re7 30.Kg2 Bd4 31.Rb5 Ra7 32.Nc1! +/- was not what he had wished for, but probably he had to live with it. On d4 the black rook is out of play.

30.Rc7!

White rightly declines the offer!

30...Bb8 31.Rc5

And the black a-pawn will fall. Black is in deep trouble.

31...Bd6

Of course not 31...Rxa4?? 32.Bc6 +=.

32.Rxa5 Rc8

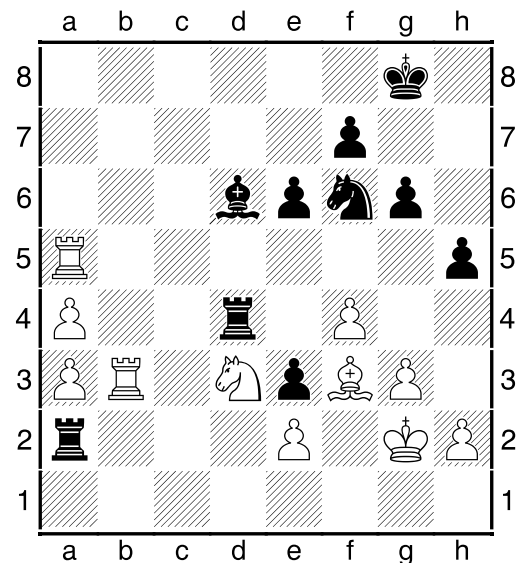
Top players rarely are giving up without a fight and they have a good feeling for the activity. So, Topalov rightly tries to activate his own rooks, but the excellently placed d3-knight is keeping them in bay!

33.Kg2 Rc2 34.a3!

Consolidating before the final blow! The World Champion already gave a pawn once in the opening and he doesn't want to give it now anymore. And he is right... this will be the decisive pawn! The 'active' 34.Ra8+ Kg7 35.Ra7 aiming at Black's weak f7-spot, would allow his opponent counterplay: 35...Ng4! 36.a3 Nf2!. Although White still would be in the driver's seat, there was no reason to go for it.

34...Ra2?! (D)

34...Ng4 35.Ra8+ Kg7 36.a5 Nf2 37.Nxf2 exf2 38.Kxf2 +- is also bad, but Black had to try 34...Nd5 and pray...



35.Nb4! Bxb4

35...Rad2 36.Ra8+ Kg7 37.a5 is also

curtains, as is 35...Rxa3 36.Rxa3 Bxb4 37.Ra8+.

36.axb4 Nd5 37.b5!

A typical attitude: returning some material in order to 'speed-up' the win...

37...Rxa4 38.Rxa4 Rxa4

Finally the miserable d4-rook found a nicer square but it is already too late.

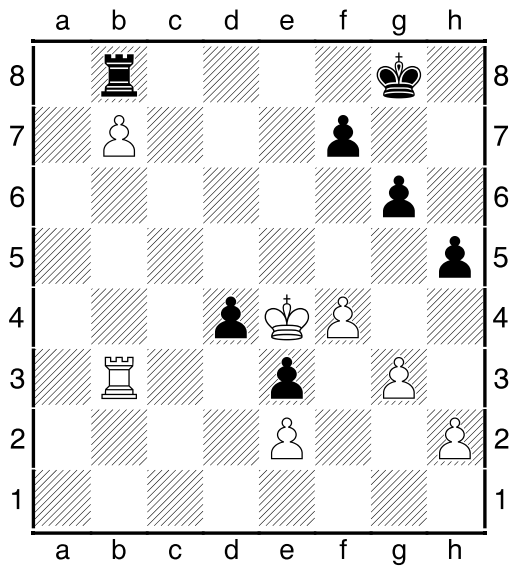
39.Bxd5

Simplification to a winning rook ending.

39...exd5 40.b6 Ra8 41.b7

At the end the decisive factor is the a-pawn! The little a-pawn that was standing on a2 at the beginning of the game...

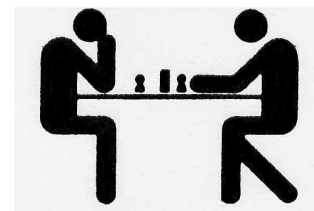
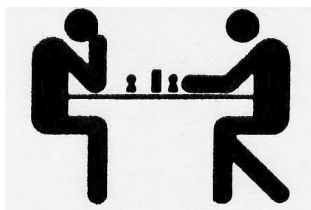
41...Rb8 42.Kf3 d4 43.Ke4 (D)



And Black resigned as the white king will collect the black d- and e-pawns, leaving White with a two pawns up advantage. 43...Kf8 44.Kxd4 Ke7 45.Kc5 would also do the job.

1-0

Clocks: W: 1.52' - B: 2.01'

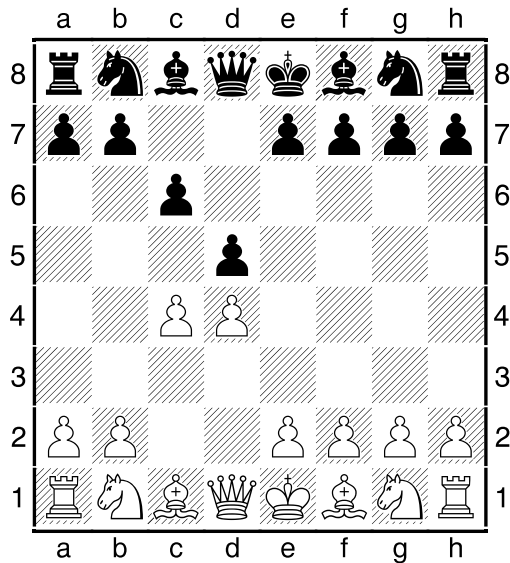


□ **Topalov, Veselin**

■ **Anand, Viswanathan**

D17 Sofia 27.04.2010 – Game 3

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 (D)



Here we are! Anand deviates from the 'Grunfeld Defence' which he let him down in the first game, choosing instead the hard nut to crack, the 'Slav Defence'.

3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.a4 Bf5 6.Ne5 e6 7.f3 c5

A very complicated line starts with 7...Bb4 8.e4 Bxe4 9.fxe4 Nxe4 10.Bd2 Qxd4, for example: 11.Nxe4 Qxe4+ 12.Qe2 Bxd2+ 13.Kxd2 Qd5+ 14.Kc2 Na6 15.Nxc4 b5 16.axb5 Nb4+ 17.Kc3 cxb5 18.Rd1 bxc4 19.Rxd5 Nxd5+ 20.Kc2 0-0 21.Qe4 Rfc8 22.h4 Rc5 23.Rh3 Rac8 24.Ra3 a5 25.Kc1 h5 26.Qd4 ½-½ Topalov,V-Anand,V Dos Hermanas 1997. Anand was not probably feeling ready for such complications... So, by choosing the text move Anand makes clear that he is just interesting to share the point and get a push with his next White - not a bad strategy for a match situation.

8.e4 Bg6

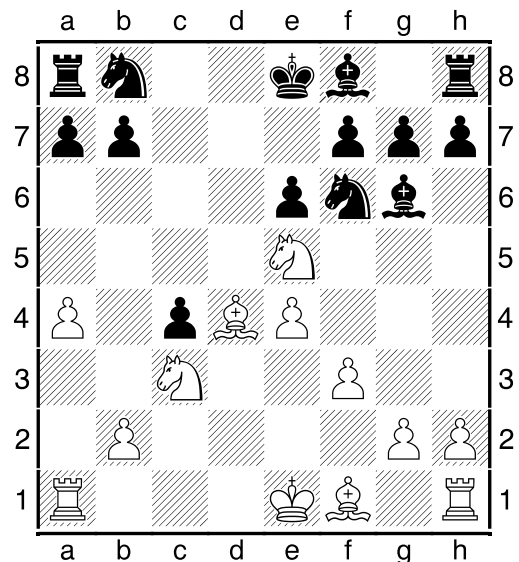
This is supposed to be a passive but valid line. The main alternative is 8...cxd4 9.exf5 Nc6 (9...Bb4 10.Bxc4 Qd6 11.Bb5+ Nc6 12.Nc4 Qc5 13.Bd2 0-0 14.Na2 Bxd2+ 15.Qxd2 Ne7 16.Qb4 Qxb4+ 17.Nxb4 a6 18.Nb6 axb5 19.Nxa8 Rxa8 20.fxe6 bxa4 21.exf7+ Kxf7 22.Kd2 Ke6 23.Rhc1 Kd6 24.b3 b5 25.bxa4 bxa4 26.Rc4 Nf5 27.Nc2 Nd7 28.Rcxa4 Rxa4 29.Rxa4 Nb6 30.Nxd4

1-0 Kasparov,G-Shirov,A Dos Hermanas 1996) 10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.fxe6 fxe6 12.Qe2 (12.Bxc4 dxc3 13.Qxd8+ Rxd8 14.bxc3 Nd5 15.Bd2 Bd6 16.0-0-0 += Kramnik,V-Piket,J Monte Carlo 1996) 12...dxc3 13.Qxe6+ Qe7 14.Bxc4 Qxe6+ 15.Bxe6 cxb2 16.Bxb2 Bb4+ 17.Ke2 += Topalov,V-Gelfand,B Dos Hermanas 1996.

9.Be3

9.d5 is another White's option: 9...exd5 10.exd5 Bd6 11.Nxc4 0-0 12.Be2 Na6 13.0-0 Nb4 14.Bg5 h6 15.Bxf6 Qxf6 16.Ne4 Bxe4 17.fxe4 Qe7 18.Bg4 (18.Bh5 Rad8 19.Qe2 Be5 20.Kh1 g6 21.Bg4 Bg7 oo Radjabov,T-Bareev,E Odessa 2007) 18...Rad8 19.Qe2 Bc7 20.Rf2 Be5 21.Kh1 g6 oo Bareev,E-Mastrovasilis,D Rijeka 2010.

9...cxd4 10.Qxd4 Qxd4 11.Bxd4 (D)



So, Anand for a second game in a row exchanges queens early. Probably he feels more at home than his opponent (or at least he thinks so) without them on board.

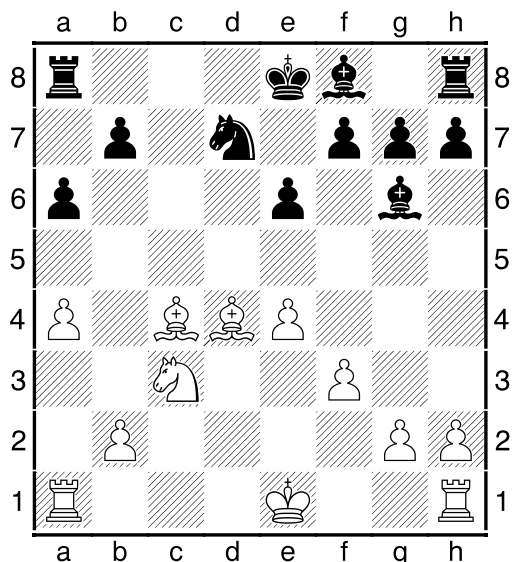
11...Nfd7

11...Nbd7 allows White to deviate with 12.Nxc4 as Black has lost the ...Nc6 option.

12.Nxd7!

12.Nxg6 hxg6 13.Bxc4 at first sight looks like giving the bishop-pair to White, but it really offers him nothing, as after 13...Nc6 14.Bf2 Bc5, Black has just solved his main problem in this position, his inactive lightsquared bishop.

12...Nxd7 13.Bxc4 a6 (D)



Here Black mainly chooses 13...Rc8 14.Ba2 a5 15.h4 h5 16.Ke2 (16.Rc1 Rg8 17.Ke2 Bc5 18.Nb5 Ke7 19.Bc3 b6 20.Rhd1 += Ponomariov,R-Rublevsky,S Elista 2007) 16...Rg8 17.Nb5 Bc5 18.Bc3 (18.Bxc5 Rxc5 19.Nc3 Ke7 20.Rhd1 Nb6 21.Rd4 Rd8 = Pogorelov,R-Serna Lara,S Albacete 2008) 18...b6 19.Rhd1 Ke7 20.Rd2 += Gustafsson,J-Mastrovasilis,D Rijeka 2010, when it looks more pleasant for White.

14.Rc1

Most common here are:

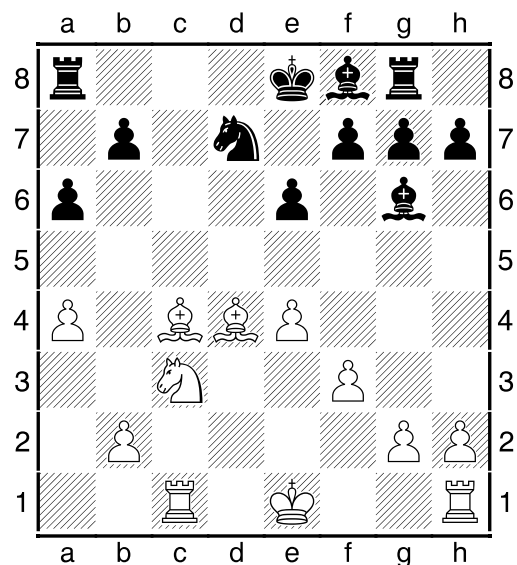
a) 14.h4 Rc8 (14...h6 15.h5 [15.Rc1 Bc5 16.Bxc5 Nxc5 17.h5 Bh7 18.Ke2 Ke7 19.b4 Nd7 20.Ke3 Rac8 21.Na2 f5 22.exf5 Bxf5 23.g4 ½–½ Grigorian,A-Minasian,A Yerevan 2009] 15...Bh7 16.Ke2 Bd6 17.g4 Rg8 18.Rad1 Ke7 = Jobava,B-Hansen,L Dresden 2008) 15.Ba2 h6 (15...h5 16.Ke2 Bc5 17.Rhd1 Bxd4 18.Rxd4 Ke7 = Bar,A-Papadakis,M Rijeka 2010) 16.Rc1 (16.Ke2 Bc5 17.Rad1 Bxd4 18.Rxd4 Ke7 19.Rhd1 Rhd8 = Banusz,T-Ferguson,M Budva 2009) 16...Rg8 (16...Bc5 17.Ne2 0–0 [17...e5 18.Bxc5 Rxc5 19.Kf2 Ke7 20.b4 += Jelen,I-Buzeti,J Ptuj 2007] 18.0–0 Bd6 19.Be3 Ne5 20.Nf4 Rxc1 21.Rxc1 Bh7 22.Kf1 Rb8 23.Ke2 Kf8 24.g4 Ke7 25.Ng2 f6 26.h5 Bg8 27.Ba7 Ra8 28.Bb6 Bf7 ½–½ Aronian,L-Kramnik,V Wijk aan Zee 2007) 17.Ke2 Bc5 18.Bxc5 (18.Rhd1 Ke7 19.Rc2 f6 20.Be3 Bxe3 21.Kxe3 Rgd8 = Stamenkovic,D-Oliveira,S San Jose de Rio Preto 2008) 18...Rxc5 19.Nb1 (19.b4 Rc6 20.h5 Bh7

21.Nb1 Ke7 22.Rxc6 bxc6 23.Na3 [23.Nd2 Rb8 24.Rb1 f5 25.exf5 Bxf5 26.Rc1 Ne5 27.g4 Bh7 28.Bb1 Bxb1 29.Rxb1 Nd7 30.Nc4 Nf6 31.Na5 Kd6 32.Nc4+ Ke7 33.Na5 ½–½ Beliavsky,A-Pajkovic,V Ohrid 2009] 23...Rb8 24.Nc2 c5 25.Bc4 f5 26.Bxa6 fxe4 27.f4 e3 oo Gupta,A-Kaplan,S Hoogeveen 2008) 19...Ke7 20.Rxc5 Nxc5 21.h5 Bh7 22.Rc1 Nd7 = Aronian,L-Kramnik,V Yerevan 2007.

b) 14.Ke2 Rg8 (14...Rc8 15.Ba2 Rg8 16.Rhc1 Bc5 17.Bxc5 Rxc5 18.b4 Rc6 19.Nd1 Ke7 20.Rxc6 bxc6 21.Bc4 += Kristjansson,S-Shaw,J Reykjavik 2007) 15.Rhd1 (15.h4 h5 [15...Rc8 16.Ba2 Bc5 17.Bxc5 Rxc5 18.Rac1 h5 19.b4 Rc6 20.Nb1 += Ponomariov,R-Rublevsky,S Elista 2007 ; 15...h6 16.h5 Bh7 17.Rhd1 Rc8 18.Ba2 Bc5 19.Bxc5 Nxc5 20.Rac1 Ke7 21.b4 += Pantsulaia,L-Margvelashvili,G Tbilisi 2009] 16.Rhd1 Rc8 17.Bb3 Bb4 18.Rac1 Ke7 19.Na2 Bc5 ½–½ Ruck,R-Gustafsson,J Austria 2006) 15...Rc8 16.b3 (16.Ba2) 16...Bc5 17.a5 Ke7 18.Na4 Bb4 19.Nb6 Nxb6 20.Bxb6 f6 21.Rd3 Rc6 22.h4 Rgc8 23.g4 Bc5 24.Rad1 Bxb6 25.Rd7+ Kf8 26.axb6 Rxb6 27.R1d6 Rxd6 28.Rxd6 Rc6 29.Rxc6 bxc6 30.b4 e5 31.Bxa6 ½–½ Topalov,V-Kramnik,V Elista 2006.

c) 14.a5!? Rg8 15.Kf2 Rc8 16.Be2 Bc5 17.Bxc5 Nxc5 18.Ra3 Ke7 19.b4 Nd7 20.b5 axb5 21.Rb1 += Grigore,G-Firat,B Ankara 2010.

14...Rg8 (D)



This is technically a novelty, although the idea (to free his f8-bishop) have been in various games in similar positions (see above). The main alternative again is 14...Rc8 15.Ne2 (15.Ba2 Rg8 16.Ke2 Bc5 [16...Nb8 17.Rhd1 Nc6 18.Bb6 Bb4 19.Rd2 Ke7 20.Rcd1 += Zhang Zhong-Megaranto,S Jakarta 2007] 17.Bxc5 Rxc5 18.b4 [18.Nb1 Ke7 19.Rxc5 Nxc5 20.Rc1 Nxa4 21.Rc7+ Kd6 22.Rxb7 Nc5 = Wells,P-Haba,P Nuremberg 2008] 18...Rc8 [18...Rc6 19.Nb1 Ke7 20.Rxc6 bxc6 21.Nc3 Rb8 22.Rb1 += Bluvshstein,M-Wang,P Budapest 2008] 19.Nd5 Rxc1 20.Rxc1 Kd8 21.Nf4 Ne5 22.h4 h6 23.Ke3 Kd7 24.a5 Bh7 25.Bb3 Kd6 26.h5 Rb8 27.Rd1+ Ke7 28.Nd3 Nxd3 29.Rxd3 Rc8 30.Ba4 Rc7 31.Kd4 f6 32.Rc3 Rxc3 33.Kxc3 Bg8 34.Kd4 ½-½ Ruck,R-Naumann,A Szeged 2007) 15...Bb4+ (15...Rg8?! 16.h4 h6 17.Kf2 Rc6 18.b4 Kd8 19.h5 Bh7 20.b5 +/- Gyimesi,Z-Bindrich,F Germany 2008) 16.Kf2 0-0 (16...Bc5? 17.Bxc5 Nxc5 18.b4 Nxa4 19.Bb5+ Rc6 1-0 Maslik,M-Vacek,O Brezova 2009) 17.h4 h5 18.Nf4 Kh7 19.Rhd1 e5 20.Nxg6 Kxg6 21.Be3 Nc5 22.Rd6+ Kh7 23.Rb6 a5 24.b3 += Rc7 25.Rd1 Nxa4 26.bxa4 ½-½ Mareco,S-El Debs,F Campinas 2010.

It must be mentioned that most games in this variation are very safe for White. Although the most common result is a draw, White can always play for a small advantage.

15.h4

Gaining space on any side cannot harm White's position.

15...h6

For 15...h5 see game 5.

16.Ke2

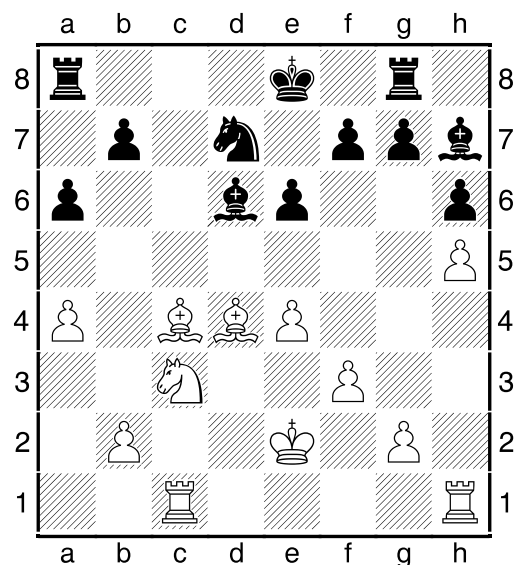
All these ideas (...Rg8, h4, Ke2) are quite common for this variation and not hard to be played or to be met! The pre-game training motifs that both opponents are 'taught' are helping them to choose probably the most accurate move order.

16...Bd6

Anand is aiming to activate his g8-rook by first playing ...Ke7 and then exchanging the opponent d4-bishop by ...Bc5. Another option is 16...Bc5 17.Bxc5 Nxc5 18.h5 Bh7 19.Rhd1 Rc8 20.a5 Ke7 21.b4 Nd7 22.Na4

+=.

17.h5 Bh7 (D)



18.a5!

The 'gaining space' policy continues, as White now plans to use the a4-square for his knight. Still Black has to solve his lightsquared bishop problem and complete his development. In the meantime White will have at his disposal a tempo or two to prove an advantage.

18...Ke7!

And what about the 'obvious' 18...Bb4? I think that Topalov was planning to sacrifice his a-pawn with 19.Na4!? (19.Ra1 Rc8 20.Bb3 Nc5 21.Bc2 Ke7 = ; 19.Nb5!? axb5 20.Bxb5 Bxa5 21.Rhd1) 19...Bxa5 20.Nc5 (20.b4!? Bd8 (20...Bxb4 21.Rb1 +=) 21.Bb3 oo/=) 20...Nxc5 21.Bxc5 oo/= as it will be hard for Black to complete his development. Obviously Anand doesn't feel it should be right to go out for complications before he is done with his development and piece coordination - this is a common attitude in the great players' thinking process.

19.Na4 f6 20.b4!?

20.g4 Rgc8 21.Rhd1 Bg8 doesn't look very impressive here, White tries to be creative. His main problem is that he needs a concrete plan to put pressure, as only his space advantage isn't enough.

20...Rgc8

Accepting the pawn sacrifice with 20...Bxb4 could be proven dangerous after 21.Rb1 Bxa5 22.Rxb7 (or 22.Nc5 b5 23.Bxe6 Nxc5

24.Bxg8 Bxg8 25.Bxc5+ and maybe this is what Anand was mostly afraid) 22...Rg8 23.Rhb1 Rxb7 24.Rxb7 with strong pressure along the 7th rank and immediate threats like Nc5. But it seems that Black can hold with 24...Kd6! 25.Ba7 Kc6 26.Bxa6 Bc7 27.Rb2 Kd6! (27...Rxa7 28.Bb5+ Kd6 29.Rd2+ +=) 28.Rd2+ Ke7 29.Bb5 Bd6 =.

21.Bc5

Not much is 21.Nc5 Bxc5 22.bxc5 Rc7 =.

21...Bxc5

The most safe, but Black could also go for 21...Nxc5 22.bxc5 Bc7 (22...Bxc5? 23.Bxe6! +/-) 23.Nb6 Bxb6 24.cxb6 Rc5 25.Bxa6! Rxc1 26.Rxc1 Rxa6 (26...bxa6? 27.Rc7+ +-) 27.Rc7+ Kd6 28.Rxg7 Bxe4 29.fxe4 Rxa5 30.g4!? (30.Rxb7 Rxh5 =) 30...Rg5! and he will be able to draw: 31.Rg6!? Rxg6 32.hxg6 Ke7 33.Kd3 Kf8 34.Kd4 Kg7 35.Kc5 Kxg6 36.Kd6 Kf7 37.Kc7 f5 38.gxf5 exf5 39.e5 f4 40.Kd7 f3 41.e6+ Kg7 42.e7 f2 43.e8Q f1Q =.

22.bxc5 Rc7

Simple and nice, preparing ...Rac8. Black should avoid either 22...Nxc5? 23.Nb6 +- or either 22...Rc6?! 23.Rhd1 Rac8 24.Rxd7+ Kxd7 25.Nb6+ Rxb6 26.cxb6 Bg8 27.e5! +=.

23.Nb6

The alternative 23.Rhd1 Nxc5 24.Bd3 Rac8 25.Nb6 Rd8 26.Na4 would end the game in a draw by threefold repetition. Although the text is not bad either, it is White that should be careful from now on. Anand passed the opening exam with success!

23...Rd8

23...Nxb6 24.cxb6 Rc5 25.Bxa6! transposes to the notes after Black's 21st move.

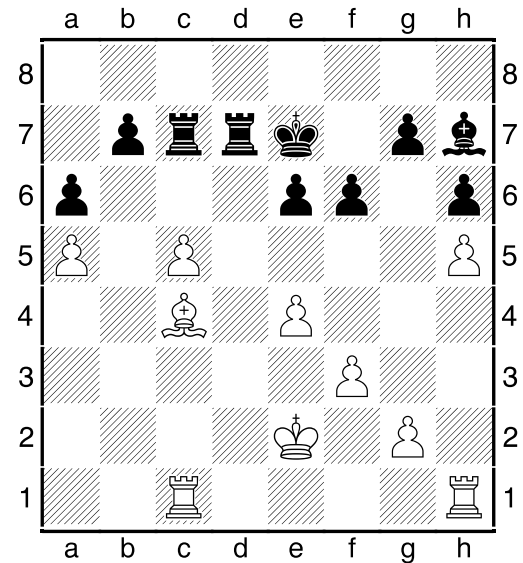
24.Nxd7

24.Bd5!? is interesting. Black shouldn't take anything now, not d5, not c5 and not b6, but play 24...Ne5 (24...Nxc5 25.Bxb7! ; 24...Nxb6 25.axb6 Rcd7 26.Bc4! ; 24...exd5? 25.Nxd5+) 25.f4 Nd3! 26.Kxd3 exd5 27.f5! dxe4+ 28.Kxe4 Ke8! =.

24...Rdx7! (D)

It seems that 24...Rcx7 would give White some chances after 25.c6! bxc6 26.Bxa6 Ra7 27.Rxc6 Rd6 28.Rxd6 Kxd6 29.Rd1+ Ke7 30.Bc4 (30.Bc8 Rc7!) 30...Rxa5 31.Rb1 as

Black's h7-bishop still remains a bad piece, but the liberating 31...f5! would do the job: 32.Rb7+ Kf6 33.exf5 Bxf5 =. With the text move Black is perfectly safe and even might try for something more of White overdo it.



25.Bd3 Bg8

Black thought about being immediate active by 25...f5 but after 26.c6!? (26.Rc4 fxe4 27.fxe4 [27.Bxe4?! Bxe4 28.fxe4 Kf6 +=] 27...e5 = ; 26.e5!? Rd5 27.f4 Rdx5 28.Rxc5 Rxc5 29.Rb1 Rc7 30.g4!? oo/= [30.Kd2 Bg8 31.Be2 Bf7 32.Bf3 Rc5! =]) 26...bxc6 27.Bxa6 fxe4 28.Bc4 exf3+ 29.gxf3 oo/= White's compensation (in view of the passed a-pawn) is not bad but probably not more than to keep the balance. 25...Rd4 seems to force a draw, but White has a resource: 26.c6! Ra4 27.Rb1! Ra2+ 28.Ke3 bxc6 29.Ra1! Rxg2 (29...Rxa1 30.Rxa1 Ra7 31.Rb1 +=) 30.Bxa6 +=.

26.c6

Sooner or later White has to get rid of his weak c-pawn.

26...Rd6

Black could also go for 26...bxc6 27.Rc2 Rd4! (27...e5 28.Rhc1 +=) 28.Ra1 e5 29.Bxa6 c5 30.Bb5 Rb4 31.a6 Ra7 32.Ra5 Kd6 =. 26...Rxc6 27.Rxc6 bxc6 28.Rb1 looks a bit more pleasant for White due to his active pieces - take a look at the g8-bishop.

27.cxb7 Rxb7 28.Rc3 Bf7!

Anand doesn't care to check Topalov's ideas and he rightly so! After the 'active'

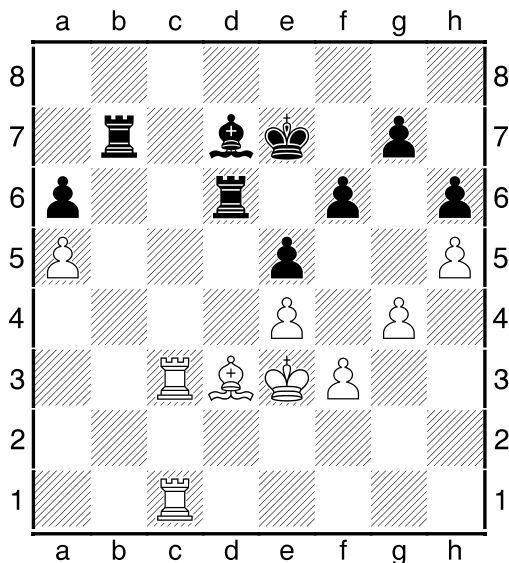
28...Rb2+?! 29.Ke3 Rxc2 30.Rc7+ Rd7 (30...Kf8? 31.Rc8+ Kf7 32.Rb1 +/-) 31.Rxd7+ Kxd7 32.Rd1! (32.Ra1 e5 33.Bxa6 Ra2 = ; 32.Bxa6 Ra2 33.Bb5+ Kd6 34.a6 Bf7 =) 32...Kc6 33.Rc1+ Kd6 34.e5+! Kxe5 35.Bg6 Black will end losing his unfortunate g8-bishop, but still might have some surviving chances due to his pawns. After all he doesn't have to go for it.

29.Ke3

The immediate 29.Rhc1 makes sense and was probably a better try, since it is risky to take the pawn: 29...Bxh5 (29...Be8! 30.Rc7+ Rd7 31.R7c5 Rd6 32.g4 Bd7 33.Ke3 =) 30.Rc7+ Rxc7 31.Rxc7+ Rd7 32.Rc8 +/-.

29...Be8 30.g4 e5 31.Rhc1 Bd7 (D)

It is true that it took Black much time to fully activate his bishop (...Bf5-g6-h7-g8-f7-e8-d7) but at the meantime White couldn't do much. Full equality and the opponents could easily shake their hands but not in this match... Playing till the very end is a 'must' for both players - Topalov made it completely clear before the match and Anand would love to follow!



32.Rc5 Bb5

What an excellent post for the previously 'bad' bishop! Now Black will not have to worry about his a-pawn, as with bishops off the board, the balance can't be ruined anymore. It is funny that Anand equalized without any of his pieces being on the opponent's half of the board.

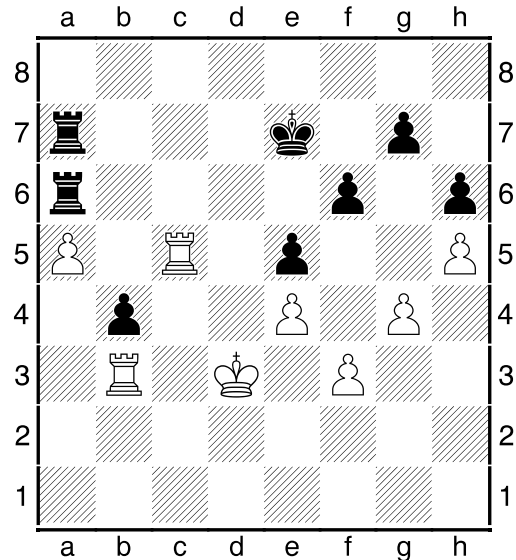
33.Bxb5 axb5

33...Rxb5? 34.Rxb5 axb5 35.Rb1 would just lose a pawn for nothing!

34.Rb1

After 34.Rc7+ Rd7! (34...Rxc7? 35.Rxc7+ Rd7 36.Rc5! [36.Rxd7+? Kxd7 37.Kd3 Kc6 38.Kc3 Kb7! =] 36...Rb7 37.Kd3 Kd6 38.Rd5+ Kc6 39.Kc3 +/-) Black would be OK.

34...b4 35.Rb3 Ra6 36.Kd3 Rba7 (D)



Now, after some further forced exchanges, the game will end in a draw.

37.Rxb4 Rxa5 38.Rxa5 Rxa5 39.Rb7+ Kf8 40.Ke2 Ra2+

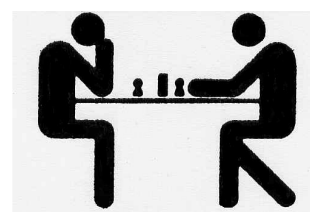
As no-one really wishes to offer a draw, the coming threefold repetition will 'solve' the problem.

41.Ke3 Ra3+ 42.Kf2 Ra2+ 43.Ke3 Ra3+ 44.Kf2 Ra2+ 45.Ke3 Ra3+ 46.Kf2

A draw offer through the Arbiter could not be rejected by Anand!

1/2-1/2

Clocks: W: 1.53' - B: 1.48'



□ Anand, Viswanathan

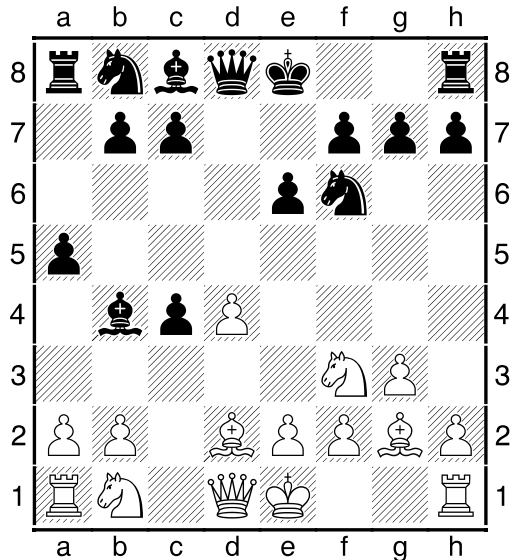
■ Topalov, Veselin

E04 Sofia 28.04.2010 – Game 4

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.g3 dxc4 5.Bg2 Bb4+

Topalov deviates from the second game, obviously trying to avoid any improvement by White's side.

6.Bd2 a5 (D)



This line is rarely seen in normal tournaments, but has been submitted to some intense theoretical discussion in high level events.

7.Qc2

It is interesting that Anand is trying to 'imitate' V.Kramnik in terms of style. His pre-match preparations proved him that this doesn't suit Topalov's style or at least it creates major problems in his opponent's decisions. Also playable are:

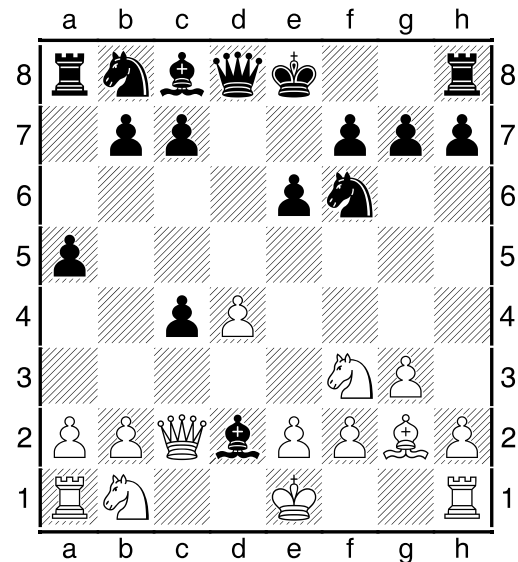
a) 7.Na3 Bxa3 (7...Nc6 8.Bxb4 axb4 9.Nxc4 0-0 10.0-0 Qe7 [10...Ra7 11.e3 Qe7 12.Qc2 Bd7 13.e4 += Filip,L-Manea,A Cluj 2008] 11.Qc2 Rd8 12.Rfd1 Bd7 13.a4 bxa3 14.bxa3 Be8 15.e3 Na5 16.Nce5 Rac8 17.Qb2 c5 1/2-1/2 Timoshenko,G-Baklan,V Lorca 2007) 8.Qa4+ (8.bxa3 Nc6 [8...a4!? as suggested by L.Psakhis would have allowed Black to consolidate his queenside by a further ...b5, without fearing the undermining of the b5-pawn] 9.e3 Rb8 oo Bolduc,S-Likavsky,T Montreal 2007) 8...b5 9.Qxa3 Qd6 (9...Bb7 10.Qc5 Bc6 11.Bf4 Qe7 12.Qxe7+ Kxe7 13.Bxc7 Rc8 14.Bf4

Nbd7 = Lelchuk,Z-Levitina,I Mogilev 1982) 10.0-0 Bb7 11.Rfc1 Bd5 12.Bf4 Qb6 13.Bg5 Nc6 oo Iskusnyh,S-Maletin,P Krasnoyarsk 2007.

b) 7.Bxb4 axb4 8.Ne5 0-0 (8...c5 9.dxc5 Qxd1+ 10.Kxd1 Nbd7 11.Nxc4 Nxc5 12.Nbd2 Ke7 oo Georgiev,K-Efimenko,Z Vrnjacka Banja 2005) 9.Nxc4 Ra7 10.0-0 b6 11.e3 Bb7 12.Bxb7 Rxb7 13.Nbd2 Qd5 14.Qe2 Nc6 oo Platzgummer,F-Socko,B Austria 2009.

c) 7.Nc3 Nc6 8.a3 Bxc3 9.bxc3 Rb8 10.Bg5 b5 11.Nd2 Ne7 12.Bxf6 gxf6 13.Ne4 Nd5 14.Qc1 oo/= Yevseev,D-Orlov,V St Petersburg 2006.

7...Bxd2+ (D)



Black has many reasonable options at his disposal, mainly 7...Nc6 8.Qxc4 Qd5 9.Qd3 (9.Qxd5 Bxd2+ 10.Nbxd2 exd5 11.0-0 Ne7 12.Rac1 c6 13.Ne5 Nf5 14.e3 Nd6 = Akhmilovskaya,E-Voiska,M Novi Sad 1990) 9...Qf5 10.Qxf5 (10.Qc4 Qd5 11.Qd3 Qf5 12.Qc4 Qd5 1/2-1/2 Wojtkiewicz,A-Stocek,J Philadelphia 2006) 10...exf5 11.0-0 Be6 12.Rc1 0-0 13.Bf4 Nd5 14.Nc3 Nxf4 15.gxf4 Ne7 16.Na4 c6 17.Nc5 Bxc5 1/2-1/2 Jovanic,O-Sulava,N Rijeka 2007 and 7...b5 8.a4 (8.Ne5 Ra6 9.a4 c6 10.e3 0-0 11.Nc3 oo Cioara,A-Nippgen,G Heidelberg 2009) 8...bxa4 (8...c6?! 9.axb5 Bxd2+ 10.Nfxd2 Qxd4 11.Qxc4 +/- Gulko,B-Ljubojevic,L Linares 1990) 9.Qxa4+ Bd7 10.Qc2 += Tadic,B-Mincic,S Herceg Novi 2005.

8.Qxd2

Of course the text is in slight contradiction with the general rules of development: White moves for the second time in a row with an already developed piece. But this has to do with the term 'quality of development'. It means that White is concerned to place his pieces on the best possible squares and not just take them out as quick as possible. And here the b1-knight belongs to a3! The most natural 8.Nbxd2 allows Black to maintain his extra pawn with 8...b5, although White certainly gets compensation for it, for instance: 9.a4 c6 10.0-0 (10.b3 cxb3 11.Nxb3 oo/= Jirka,J-Luch,M Czech Rep. 2007) 10...0-0 11.Rfd1 Dydyshko,V-Aleksandrov,A Minsk 1996.

8...c6

Black again is on crossroads, having a tremendous amount of options at his disposal. One or them might go 8...0-0 9.Na3 Nc6 10.Nxc4 Qd5 11.Rc1 Rd8 12.e3 Ne4 13.Qe2 Nd6 14.0-0 += Biliskov,V-Zelcic,R Sibenik 2009. But of course Topalov is not interesting to surrender his extra pawn so easily!

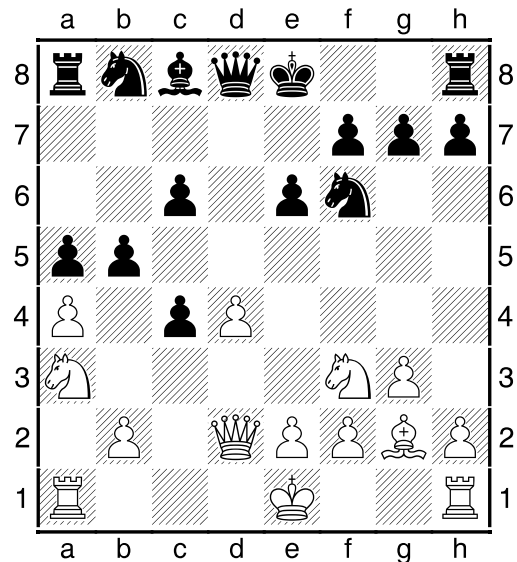
9.a4

The principled move. 9.Ne5 b5! 10.b3 (10.Nxc6 Qb6! =) 10...cxb3 11.Nxc6 Qb6! 12.Nxb8 Bb7 was fine for Black in Kornev,A-Landa,K Krasnoyarsk 2007.

9...b5

It is clear by Topalov's style that he is very persisting in maintaining his early earnings. Something like 9...Ne4 10.Qc2 Nd6 11.Nbd2 (11.0-0 Na6 12.Na3 Nb4 13.Qc1 b5 14.Ne5 Ra6 15.Rd1 Bd7 16.e4 0-0 17.d5 cxd5 ½-½ Brunello,S-Korneev,O Porto Mannu 2008) 11...Na6 12.Nxc4 Nb4 13.Nxd6+ Qxd6 14.Qc3 += Skoberne,J-Horvath,P Austria 2009 or 9...0-0 10.Na3 Na6 11.Nxc4 Nb4 12.0-0 Qc7 13.Rfd1 += Martinez,M-Coleman,T Philadelphia 2007, where only White can play for two results doesn't suit him at all! Now Topalov plans to place his bishop on b7, and his knights on d7 and d5 respectively, achieving a very good position, but this is easily said than done. Obviously Anand was expecting him to employ this variation, sooner or later...

10.Na3 (D)



This is a novelty, again played by Anand. So, this makes 4/4 novelties played by Anand in the four first games - a remarkable fact which shows both Anand's better preparation and his preference of not allowing Topalov to show his hand first. 10.axb5 cxb5 11.Qg5 0-0 (11...b4!? is not completely out of place. Black's aim would be to maintain a strong queen side majority: 12.Ne5 [12.Qxg7 Rg8 13.Qh6 Bb7 14.0-0 +=] 12...Ra7 13.Nxc4 Qxd4!? 14.Nd6+!? Qxd6 15.Qxg7 Rg8 16.Qxf6 Nd7 17.Qh4 Qe5 oo) 12.Qxb5 Ba6 (12...Na6?! 13.Qxc4 Nb4 14.Qb3 e5 15.Nxe5 Rb8 16.0-0 Qxd4 17.Rxa5 Be6 18.Qc3 Qd8 19.Rc5 +/- Grischuk,A-Moiseenko,A Sochi 2006) 13.Qa4 (13.Qxa5 Bb7 14.Qxd8 Rxa1 15.Qxf8+ Kxf8 16.0-0 oo Buhmann,R-Golubovic,B Rijeka 2010) 13...Qb6 14.0-0 Qxb2 15.Nbd2 Bb5 16.Nxc4 Bxa4 17.Nxb2 Bb5 18.Ne5 Ra7 19.Bf3 (19.Nbd3 Nbd7 20.Rfb1 Nxe5 21.Rxb5 Nxd3 22.exd3 ½-½ Ushenina,A-Kosintseva,T Rijeka 2010) 19...Nbd7 20.Nec4 Rb8 21.Rfb1 (21.Rfc1 g5 22.e3 g4 23.Bd1 Bc6 24.Nxa5 Rxa5 25.Rxa5 Rxb2 26.Rxc6 Rb1 27.Kg2 Rxd1 28.Rc2 = Potkin,V-Romanov,E Krasnoyarsk 2007) 21...g5 22.e3 g4 23.Bd1 Bc6 24.Rc1 Be4 25.Na4 was tested in a match of the FIDE Wch: Kramnik,V-Topalov,V Elista 2006. Obviously Anand didn't feel like facing Topalov's improvement over the board! By the text move White plans to destroy Black's queenside by putting

pressure on b5 with his a4-pawn and a3-knight. But the biggest problem for Black is White's g2-bishop which controls the very important h1-a8 diagonal and bothers his normal queenside development.

10...Bd7

This seems artificial, but on the other hand, if Black does nothing he will be left with the inferior pawn structure. The other option 10...Ba6?! 11.Ne5 Nd5 12.Nxc6! Nxc6 13.axb5 is anything but attractive for Black.

11.Ne5 Nd5

Again forced, as after 11...Ra6 12.Nxd7 Qxd7 (12...Nbx7 13.axb5 cxb5 14.Qg5 +/-) 13.axb5 cxb5 14.Qg5 0-0 15.Qxb5 += only White can play for two results.

12.e4

A natural follow up. White gains space in the centre, decentralise Black's knight and prepares an eventual d5 advance.

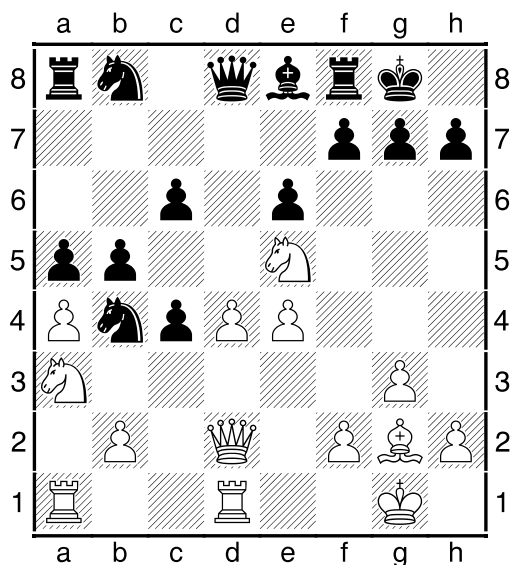
12...Nb4

12...Nb6?! 13.axb5 cxb5 14.Nxd7 Qxd7 15.Qg5 works good for White.

13.0-0 0-0 14.Rfd1

White finishes his development and prepares his d5 breakthrough (following the maxim 'the threat is stronger than the execution') even more forcefully, supported also by the d1-rook. Black has to think in his turn on what to do with his undeveloped queenside and 'fragile' pawn structure.

14...Be8?! (D)



Black want to go for 14...f6?!, a move that he cannot play immediately due to 15.Nxd7

Qxd7 16.d5 exd5 17.exd5 Rd8 18.Qe2 and White is on the top. But I feel that Black should think of 14...Qe7!? 15.Qe3 (15.Nxd7!? Qxd7 16.d5 Rd8 17.Qg5 h6 18.Qh5 oo/=) and only now 15...f6 16.Nxd7 Nxd7 17.d5 exd5 18.exd5 Qxe3 19.fxe3 cxd5 (19...Ne5!?) 20.Rxd5 Nxd5 21.Bxd5+ Kh8 22.Bxa8 b4 23.Nxc4 Rxa8 =.

15.d5!

The expected continuation; White has to take advantage of his piece superiority in the centre. It must be noted that Anand has thought just around 20 minutes for his 15 first moves; obviously he was in his prepared territory still.

15...Qd6

15...f6?! doesn't work due to 16.dxc6! Qxd2 17.Rxd2 fxe5 18.axb5 and Black will be forced sooner or later to return the piece on c6, leaving White with the superior pawn-structure.; Anand started to consume time after Topalov's last move, so I presume that he was only expecting 15...Qb6 when after 16.dxe6 fxe6 17.Qd6! (17.Bh3 Qc5 18.Bxe6+ Kh8 19.Qd4 N8a6 oo) 17...Nd3 (17...Qxf2+?! 18.Kh1 Qxb2 19.axb5 cxb5 20.Rf1! Nd7 21.Nxd7 Bxd7 22.Qxd7 Rxf1+ 23.Rxf1 Qxa3 24.Qf7+ Kh8 25.Qf8+ Rxf8 26.Rxf8 #) 18.Nxd3 cxd3 19.axb5 Ra7 20.Rd2 he would stand better.

16.Ng4?!

After about 23 minutes thought. But the alternative 16.dxc6! Qxe5 17.axb5 would force again Black to return the piece anyway: 17...N8xc6 18.bxc6 Bxc6 19.Nxc4 and White enjoys a nice advantage. Black will have to defend very carefully in order to share the point.

16...Qc5?!

Thinking of 16...f5! could be a better choice, although Black again will have to suffer in the endgame: 17.exf5 exf5 18.dxc6 (18.Ne3!? leads to a 'forced' draw: 18...f4! 19.gxf4 Qxf4 20.dxc6 N8xc6 21.axb5 Rd8 22.Nd5 Nxd5! 23.Bxd5+ Rxd5 24.Qxd5+ Kh8 25.Nxc4! [25.bxc6? Qxf2+ 26.Kh1 Qf6! -/+] 25...Nb4 26.Qd4 Qg5+ 27.Kh1 Bxb5 28.Ne5 Nc6 29.Qc5 Qf4! 30.Nd3 Qf3+ 31.Kg1 Qg4+ 32.Kh1 Qf3+ =) 18...Qxd2 19.Rxd2 N8xc6 (19...fxg4? 20.c7

+/-) 20.axb5 fxg4 21.bxc6 Bxc6 22.Nxc4 Rfe8 23.Ne3 +=. Black should hold this, even if it is not the most pleasant ending.

17.Ne3

Another 17 minutes of thought for the simple and natural continuation. Certainly Anand is out of his book for the last two moves.

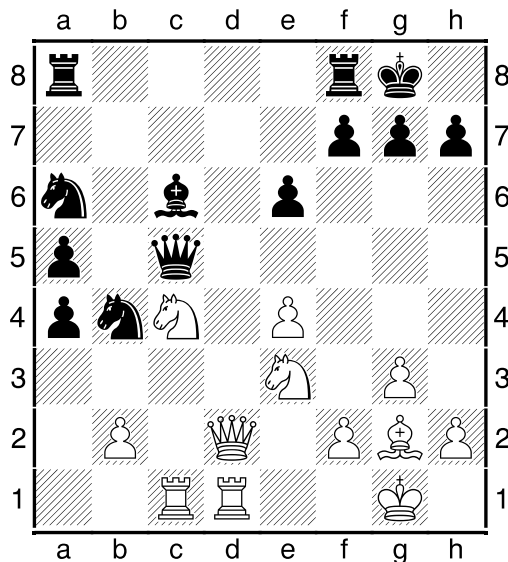
17...N8a6

The logical continuation, completing his development. But Black could think of promoting his b4-knight to an 'octopus' on d3: 17...Nd3 but after 18.axb5 (18.dxc6 Nxc6 19.axb5 Nce5 20.Nexc4 Nxc4 21.Qxd3 Nxa3 22.Qxa3 Qxb5 = ; 18.Qc2 Ne5! oo) 18...cxb5 19.b3 Nxf2! (19...exd5?! 20.exd5 Nxf2 21.Qxf2 cxb3 22.d6 and White again will have the first option) 20.Qxf2 cxb3 and Black's pawn mass on the queenside is very good compensation for the sacrificed piece.

18.dxc6 bxa4

If 18...Bxc6 then 19.axb5 Bxb5 20.Naxc4! Bxc4 21.Rac1 and White regains his piece with advantage.

19.Naxc4 Bxc6 20.Rac1 (D)



The smoke is cleared and White keeps a small but lasting advantage due to his better piece coordination. Black's extra doubled a-pawn is not important; actually he has to find a plan of how to proceed and of how to exchange some pieces in order to ease White's piece pressure.

20...h6?!

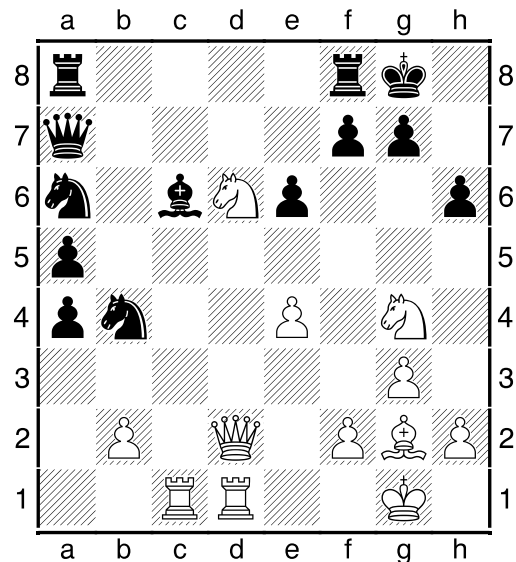
It's easy to criticise this move knowing what happened in the game, but it does look like a useful move anyway. If 20...Qg5 (planning ...Rfd8) then 21.Nd6 Rfd8 22.Qd4 and White dominates. Netherless, 20...Qe7! was more or less forced, defending the kingside. Now White can opt for 21.Nxa5 Bb5 22.Nac4 Rfd8 23.Nd6 Rab8 24.Rc3 and he stands better but nothing decisive yet.

21.Nd6 Qa7?!

Now the a-file is looking like a parking, but after providing some protection to the kingside by 21...Qh5 keeping his queen on that side of the board, after 22.f4 White certainly stands better. But netherless this was Black's best try.

22.Ng4! (D)

Suddenly Black's kingside seems to be completely 'nude', as there are no defensive pieces around the black king - these pieces are just 'dancing' around the useless queenside! Also, keep in mind that White can easily transfer more pieces on the attack (e5 and Rc4-g4), or simple sacrifice on h6. This is the concept of the 'pieces on the edge' employed in a World Championship match!



22...Rad8

Black overlooked White's sacrifice. He had to opt for the 'forced' 22...f6, when it is not clear how White can take an immediate full profit from his advantage. But with 23.e5! (23.Nxh6+?! goes nowhere after 23...gxh6 24.Qxh6 Qh7 while interesting is 23.Qc3 +=. But the main option must be 23.Rc4

Rad8 24.e5 Bxg2 [24...Bd5 25.Bxd5 Nxd5 26.Nxh6+! gxh6 27.Qxh6 Qh7 28.Rg4+ Kh8 29.Qd2! Qa7 30.h3!! {threatening 31.Rh4+ Kg8 32.Qh6 Qg7 33.Rg4} 30...f5 31.Rh4+ Kg8 32.Qh6 +-] 25.exf6 h5 26.fxg7 Qxg7 27.Kxg2 Nd5 [27...hxg4 28.Qe2 +-] 28.Nh6+ Kh7 29.Nhf5 Rxf5 30.Nxf5 exf5 31.Qxa5 Qb7 32.Kh3 +/-) 23...Bxg2 24.Kxg2 f5 (24...h5 25.Ne3 fxe5 26.Qe2 is a certain positional death) 25.Nxh6+! Kh7! (25...gxh6? 26.Qxh6 Qe7 27.Rc4 +-) 26.Nhxf5 exf5 (26...Rxf5 27.Nxf5 exf5 28.Qg5 +-) 27.Qg5! (27.Rc4?! Qe7 28.Rh4+ Kg8 [28...Kg6? 29.Qe2 Qg5 30.f4 +-] 29.Qe2 Qe6 oo) 27...Kg8 28.Nxf5 he seemed to head for the right path... 22...Nc5 do not help either: 23.Rc4! Nb3 24.Nxh6+ Kh7 25.Qf4 gxh6 26.e5! Bxg2 27.Nf5!! exf5 28.Qxf5+ Kh8 29.Qf6+ Kh7 30.Rh4 and mate follows. Finally, 22...Kh7 also looks safe, but here 23.Rxc6! Nxc6 24.e5 Ne7 25.Be4+! Ng6 26.h4! Nc5 27.Bb1 Nb3 (27...h5 28.Qg5! hxg4 29.h5 +-) 28.Qe2 h5 29.Nh2 Nd4 30.Qxh5+ Kg8 31.Ng4 Rad8 (31...Rab8 32.Nf6+!) 32.Rxd4! Qxd4 33.Ne4! Rfe8 34.Nef6+ Kf8 35.Bxg6, White is matting!

23.Nxh6+!

Time for action! The white rooks will help along the 4th rank while the black knight-pair on the queenside is just doing nothing... 23.Nf6+ was also not bad: 23...Kh8 (23...gxf6?! 24.Qxh6 Qe7 25.e5 +-) 24.e5 Bxg2 25.Kxg2 Nc5 26.Rxc5 Qxc5 27.Nxf7+ Rxf7 28.Qxd8+ Rf8 29.Rd6 Qc8 30.Qxa5 +/- but the text move just kills!

23...gxh6

23...Kh7 24.Ng4 f6 25.Qe2 Rd7 26.e5 cannot be really considered an option but rather a slow death.

24.Qxh6 f6

If 24...Qe7 then 25.e5! Bxg2 26.Rd4! Bf3 27.Rcc4! and mate follows.

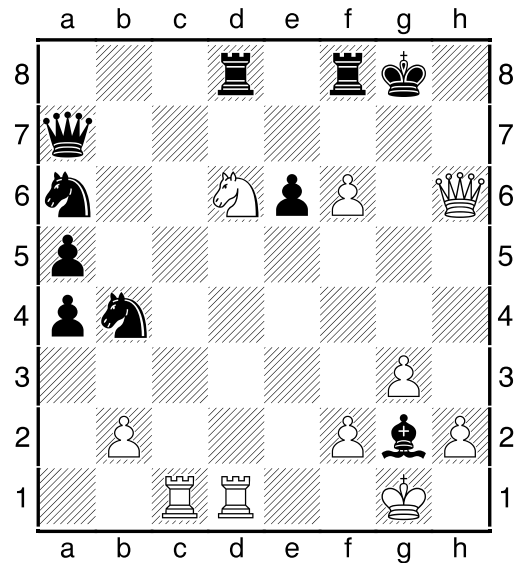
25.e5!

The most direct. White is winning.

25...Bxg2

Black's options are limited: 25...Qg7 26.Qxg7+ Kxg7 27.Bxc6 fxe5 28.Bxa4 and Black will lose the endgame or 25...Bd5 26.exf6 Rxd6 27.Rd4 and mate follows.

26.exf6! (D)



No need to retake on g2, the text is the correct continuation and the faster way to the point.

26...Rxd6

Or 26...Qh7 27.Qg5+ Kh8 28.Rc4! and it's all over: 28...Rg8 29.Nf7+ Qxf7 30.Rh4+ Qh7 31.Rxh7+ Kxh7 32.Qh5 #.

27.Rxd6 Be4

Black is also playing the most stubborn defence but his position is anyway hopeless.

28.Rxe6 Nd3

A very nice variation can be seen after 28...Qh7: 29.Qg5+ Bg6 30.f7+! Kxf7 31.Re7+ +-.

29.Rc2

Or 29.Qg5+ Kh8 30.Rc2 +-. It is rather important at this point not to blunder yourself into a mate!

29...Qh7 30.f7+

White can win as he feels like: 30.Qg5+ Bg6 (30...Kh8 31.Rxe4) 31.f7+ Kxf7 32.Rcc6 and mate follows.

30...Qxf7 31.Rxe4 Qf5

31...Nxf2 32.Rf4.

32.Re7

And as Black cannot avoid mate anymore (or losing the endgame as his best option!) he resigned.

1-0

Clocks: W: 1.39' - B: 1.51'

□ **Topalov, Veselin**

■ **Anand, Viswanathan**

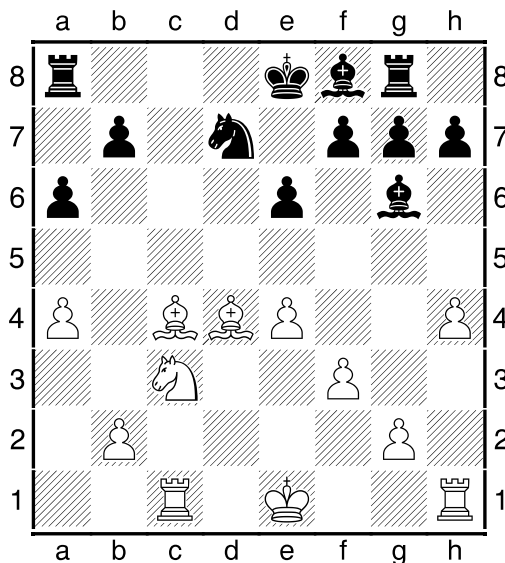
D17 Sofia 30.04.2010 – Game 5

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.a4 Bf5 6.Ne5 e6 7.f3 c5 8.e4 Bg6 9.Be3 cxd4 10.Qxd4 Qxd4 11.Bxd4 Nfd7 12.Nxd7 Nxd7 13.Bxc4 a6 14.Rc1 Rg8

Here Anand spend about 12 minutes in order to repeat his novelty form game 3! Well, it is not that he didn't trust his earlier idea, but probably he was just getting his brain in gear. It can often be very dangerous to just trot out 20 moves of theory, and then find you can't think properly. Spending 10 minutes looking at the position now is time well spent. But in a way Topalov somehow surprised Anand by choosing this variation again.

15.h4 (D)

Both players and their teams would have obviously spent a lot of time in this variation. Even though Anand managed to make a draw in the 3rd game, he did have some issues with his lightquared bishop on h7.



15...h5!?

This makes it 5/5 for Anand on what concerns novelties played in each of the games! Although his position was acceptable in the 3rd game, still he is the one to deviate and this is (on general grounds) a good match strategy, as it avoids your opponent preparation and put him in the wrong mood. Topalov's thoughts must be

something like: I will never get you in my preparations - why so much work spend without paying back? But this is not the case, as both opponents are very well prepared and rarely can miss such moves at such early stages in their pre-home preparations. On the other hand, keep in mind that the black pawn on h5 is a bit weak...

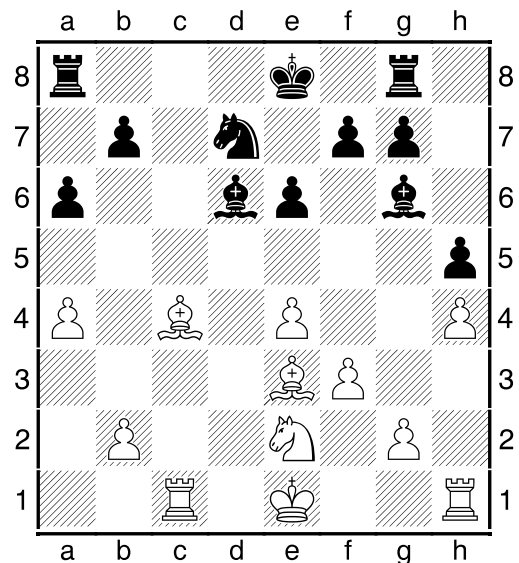
16.Ne2!

Identifying Black's main problem; the g6-h5 set up - the knight is heading for f4. It seems that White has a small but solid advantage, because it has much more active pieces and better development.

16...Bd6!

Stopping 17.Nf4. 16...e5? would be a very bad move for Black, as then square d5 will be weak and the c4-bishop will become much stronger. Furthermore, Black won't have ...f6 and as a result his g6-bishop will stay for a long time out of play. After 17.Be3 Rc8 18.Kf2 Black would be in deep trouble.

17.Be3 (D)



White renewed the threat but here the most unexpected 'move' happened - we had an electricity blackout in the playing hall (and the entire building - the Sofia Military Club), so the game was temporarily stopped.

17...Ne5

After the blackout was over (after about 20 minutes) Anand played the best move again. If he permits the white knight to come to f4

without any compensation, he will just stay much worse. It is also important to try to eliminate White's potential bishop-pair gain, as then Black will have to suffer for a long time (and maybe he will not be able to survive at all). The alternative 17...Rc8 was not fully satisfactory: 18.Kf2 Ne5 19.Bxa6! Rxc1 20.Rxc1 Ke7 21.Bb5 Bxe4! 22.Rc3 (22.fxe4?! Ng4+ 23.Kf3 Nh2+ 24.Kf2 Ng4+=) 22...Bc6 23.Bxc6 bxc6 (23...Nxc6 24.Rb3 Rb8 25.Ng3 +=) 24.b3 +=.

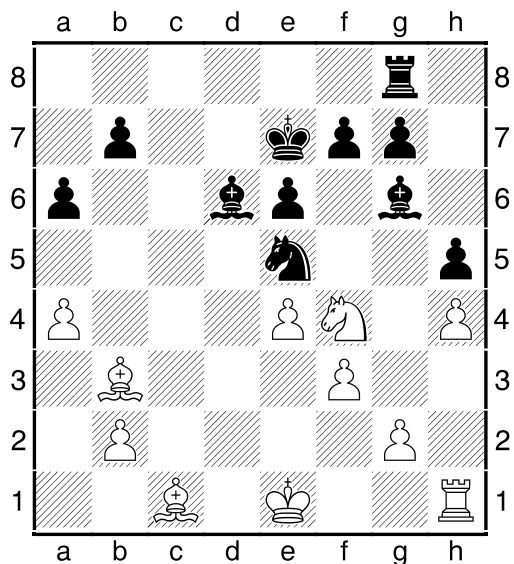
18.Nf4 Rc8

The main alternative is 18...Nxc4 19.Rxc4 b5!? (19...Ke7 20.Nxg6+ fxg6 21.Bg5+ Kd7 22.Rd4! and White keeps a solid advantage due to his superior pawn structure) 20.Rc2 (20.axb5 axb5 21.Rc2 Ra1+ 22.Kf2 Rxh1 23.Rc8+ Kd7 24.Rxg8 Bxf4 25.Bxf4 Rxh4 26.Be5 Rh1 27.Bxg7 Rc1 =) 20...bxa4 (20...Ke7 21.Nxg6+ fxg6 22.Bg5+ Kf7 23.axb5 axb5 24.Ke2 +=) 21.Ke2 Bxf4 22.Bxf4 f6 23.Ra1 e5 24.Be3 Rf8 25.Rxa4 Rf7 and Black's problems are limited (although he will still suffer a bit!).

19.Bb3

Best. After 19.Bb5+?! Ke7 and 19.Be2 Rxc1+ 20.Bxc1 Ke7 Black should feel OK.

19...Rxc1+ 20.Bxc1 Ke7 (D)



Black has succeeded by means of dynamic play to keep the balance. But his g6-bishop is still out of play and that's a negative point which cannot be underestimated.

21.Ke2

Both sides should place their kings on the

centre as queens are off the board. As we are 'more' approaching the endgame the kings would stay better in the centre; they will be more 'centralized'.

21...Rc8 22.Bd2?!

It must be noted that here or in the previous move, White cannot go for 22.Nxg6+ as after 22...Nxg6 he will face troubles with his h-pawn and the f4-square. If both h-pawns were back in their initial squares, then after 23.g3 White would have a nice plus due to his strong bishop-pair, but here Black has full compensation for it! But the text move is inferior to; 22.Rd1! Rc6 (22...f6? 23.Nxe6 Bf7 24.Nxg7! Bxb3 25.Nf5+ +-) 23.Be3 Bc5 24.Bd2 f6 (24...Rb6?! 25.Bc3 Rxb3 26.Bxe5 Re3+ 27.Kf1 +/- or 24...Bd6?! 25.Bc3 +/-) 25.Nxe6 Rxe6 26.Bxe6 Kxe6 27.f4 Bxe4 28.fxe5 Kxe5 which certainly gives some hope for a win to White, although Black's bishop-pair, pawn and centralised king cannot be underestimated.

At this stage, at the playing hall the father of Ivan Cheparinov (one of Topalov's seconds) confirmed that this is still home preparation for Topalov (!) but probably he had mixed something...

22...f6!

Anand is very much concerned to solve his lightsquared bishop problem. So he found the text move which is the best, avoiding the pseudo-active 22...Nc4? 23.Nxg6+ fxg6 24.Bg5+ Kd7 25.Rd1! +/-.

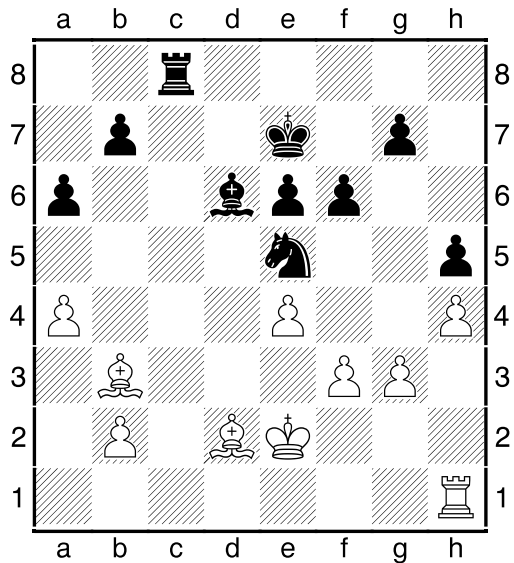
23.Nxg6+

Forced, otherwise Black will solve all his problems by ...Bf7. Note that White can't take the e6-pawn: 23.Nxe6 Bf7 24.Nd4 Bxb3 25.Nxb3 Rc2 and Black regains his pawn: 26.f4 (26.Rb1?! Nc4 27.Kd3 Rxb2) 26...Nc6 27.Rb1 Rc4, while 23.Bxe6 Rc2 24.Rb1 Nc4 25.Bxc4 (25.Nxg6+? Kxe6 26.Kd3 Rxd2+ 27.Kxc4 Rxd2 -) 25...Bxf4 26.Rd1 Rxb2 27.Kd3 = isn't much either.

23...Nxg6 24.g3!

Now White can protect his kingside pawn structure by using some simple tactics. As the pawn structure is ideal for the bishop-pair (open centre, pawns on both flanks) Black must prove that he is active enough to keep White in bay...

24...Ne5! (D)



Centralisation is the key-word. A blunder would be 24...Bxg3? due to the continuation 25.Rg1 Nf4+ 26.Kd1 Bh2 27.Rxg7+ Kd6 28.Rxb7 +/- . Black's main compensation against White's bishop-pair is the central dark squares, mainly d4 and c5, so Black plans ...Nc6-d4 and ...Bc5, which seems to give him enough compensation to keep a dynamic balance.

25.f4

Black's activity and central square control gives him an equal ending after 25.Rc1 Rxc1 26.Bxc1 Nc6 27.Kf2 Bc5+.

25...Nc6 26.Bc3

A sad necessity... Once White loses his two bishops he can't have much, though there are pawns on b7 a6 and h5 to be looked after. On the flip side, so often in the 'Slav Defence' White wishes he hadn't played a4.

26...Bb4!

Now the bishop-pair is off and this is already a psychologically victory for Anand!

27.Bxb4+ Nxb4

Black has fully equalised and again has passed the opening test with success. Although in these pawn structures themes the bishop is stronger than the knight (open centre with pawns on both sides), the later compensates its minimised range by controlling squares b4 and d4 (in the future, supported by ...e5).

28.Rd1 Nc6

28...g5!? 29.hxg5 fxg5 30.fxg5 Rg8 is also

equal. In general it's much easier for White to make a blunder because he doesn't have a clear plan and Black has: to put his knight on d4 or play ...Na5, following invasion on c2.

29.Rd2 g5!?

There was no point for 29...Rd8?! 30.Rxd8 Nxd8 31.Ke3 - with the text move the black rook can be proven more active than its white counterpart. But still, 29...e5! gaining d4-square for the knight seemed 'more logical'.

30.Kf2!

A good response preparing Bd1 if needed. 30.hxg5 fxg5 31.Bd1 Rg8 32.Kf3 h4 33.gxh4 gxh4 34.Rh2 Rg3+ 35.Kf2 Rd3 = was not what Topalov is wishing for.

30...g4

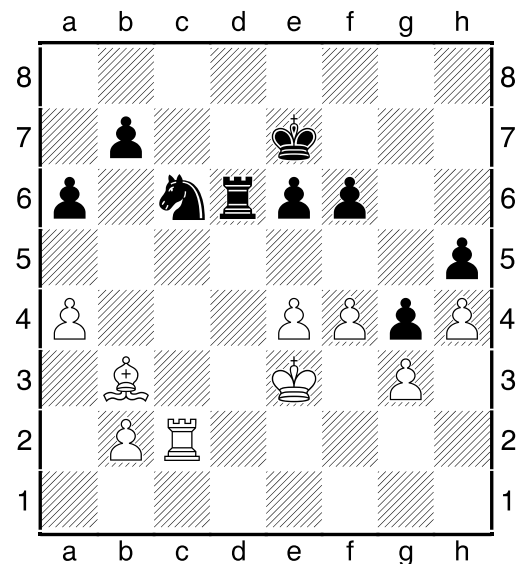
The text keeps the bishop in bay but is incredibly committal, fixing pawns on light squares. 30...gxh4 31.gxh4 Rg8 32.Bd1 makes the black h5-pawn a target.

31.Rc2 Rd8

31...e5 32.Ke3 Kd6 33.Bd5 wouldn't be easy for Black, as White has also achieved access to f7, in order to attack h5.

32.Ke3 Rd6 (D)

Precise play. 32...Nd4? 33.Rc7+ +/- is out of the question.



33.Rc5 Nb4

Again Black must avoid 33...Nd4? 34.Ba2 f5 35.Bb1 +/-.

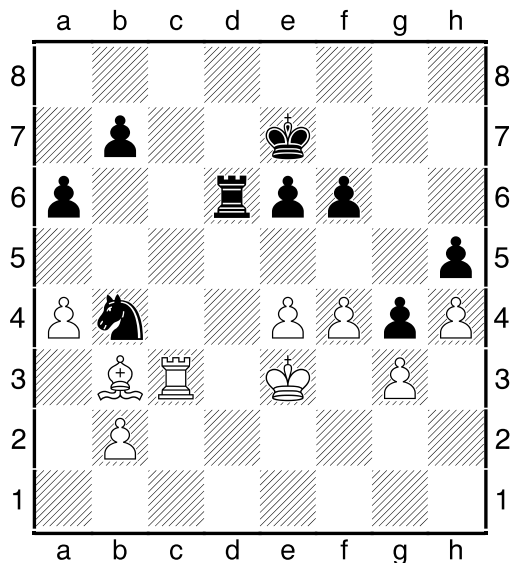
34.Rc7+ Kd8

Black cannot hold his weaknesses after the

naive 34...Rd7? 35.Rxd7+ Kxd7 36.f5! and h5 will fall.

35.Rc3 Ke7 (D)

Small tactics are on the air. Here White must avoid 35.Rxb7? Rd3+.



White has achieved something out of nothing (with some very little help from his 'friend').

36.e5!

As Black did not played ...e5 himself, White takes the opportunity to play that move, gaining some very small pluses.

36...Rd7 37.exf6+

It is sensible that the centre should be opened and not fixed, as this helps the bishop. After 37.a5 f5 (37...fxe5?! 38.fxe5 Nd5+ 39.Bxd5 Rxd5 40.Kf4! +/-) 38.Ke2 Nc6 (38...Rd4 39.Rc7+ Rd7 40.Rc8 +=) 39.Ba4 Rd5! Black would be active enough to keep the equilibrium. But as Black is doing fine after the text move, Topalov should seriously think of the mentioned alternative.

37...Kxf6 38.Ke2 Nc6!

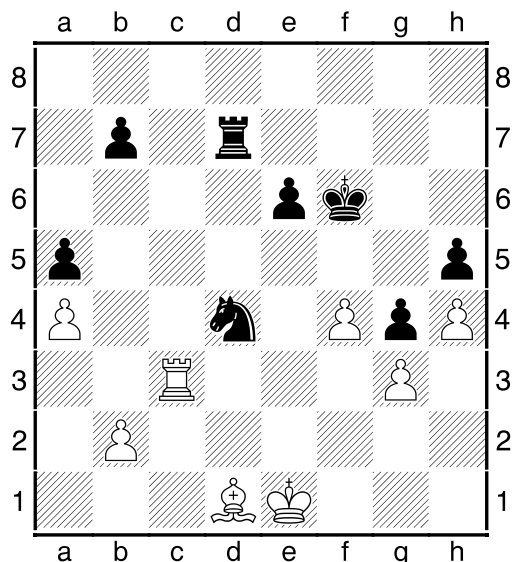
Black hurries to transfer his knight on f5 (via d4).

39.Ke1

A draw would arise after 39.Bc2 Nd4+ 40.Ke3 Nxc2+ 41.Rxc2 Rd1 =. Topalov always wants to try for more, as he has already declare before the match.

39...Nd4 40.Bd1 a5 (D)

A logical move, fixing the white a-pawn on the same colour as its bishop.



Both sides have something to show: White is been focused on the b7 and h7 targets, helped by his bishop, while Black has activity and better centralized pieces. All in all it seems like a dynamic equality case...

41.Rc5 Nf5

Or 41...Rd5 42.Rc8 (42.Rxd5 exd5 43.Be2 Nb3 44.Bd3 Nc5 45.Bc2 d4 46.Kd2 =) 42...Nf5 43.Rc3 =.

42.Rc3

White cannot afford to lose the (more important than Black's a5) g3-pawn.

42...Nd4

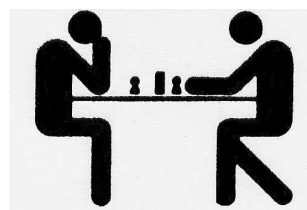
Anand decides that it would be OK to split the point - there not much White can do to avoid it...

43.Rc5 Nf5 44.Rc3

Draw by threefold repetition.

1/2-1/2

Clocks: W: 2.07' - B: 1.56'



□ Anand, Viswanathan

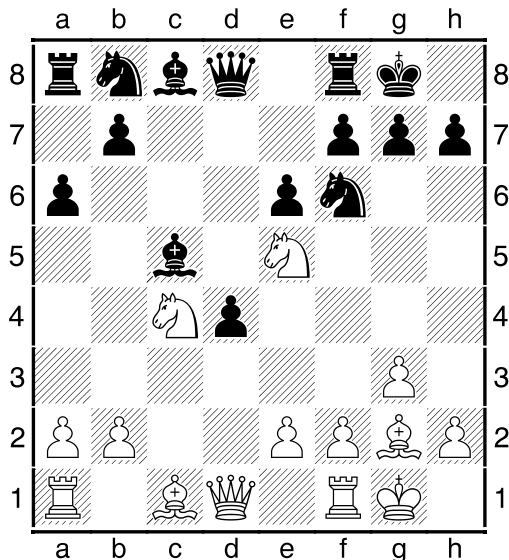
■ Topalov, Veselin

E04 Sofia 01.05.2010 – Game 6

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.g3 dxc4

Topalov remains faithful to his chosen variation against the 'Catalan', for the third time in three games!

5.Bg2 a6 6.Ne5 c5 7.Na3 cxd4 8.Naxc4 Bc5 9.0-0 0-0 (D)



10.Bg5

As usual Anand deviates first. Well, the reason behind this strategy has been already explained in the analysis of the previous games, so there is no point to repeat it here. But I am not sure that this is a better continuation than the one in the second game (10.Bd2).

10...h6 11.Bxf6 Qxf6

But at least it is Topalov who played his first novelty in the match! But of course this can be considered a rather natural response than a 'real' novelty. Now Black has an extra pawn and the bishop-pair, but still a long way ahead before completing his development. White has a more easy game, planning to put pressure on the queenside by moves like Rc1 and Qa4/b3. Previously 11...gxf6 has been seen: 12.Nd3 Be7 13.Qd2 Kh7 14.Rac1 oo/= Raetsky, A-Panchanathan, M Biel 2004.

12.Nd3 Ba7

A forced retreat, as square b6 must be covered. 12...Be7?! 13.Nb6 Ra7 14.Rc1 is not what Black had wished for...

13.Qa4

Also possible is 13.Qb3 Nc6 14.Rac1 Rb8 15.Qa3 oo/= but not of course 13.Nd6?! Qe7! 14.Nxc8 Rxc8.

13...Nc6

Black decided to return the pawn, aiming to exchange' it for completing his development and remain with the bishop-pair. Also, if White accepts it, then he will have to give-up his proud Catalan bishop on g2.

14.Rac1

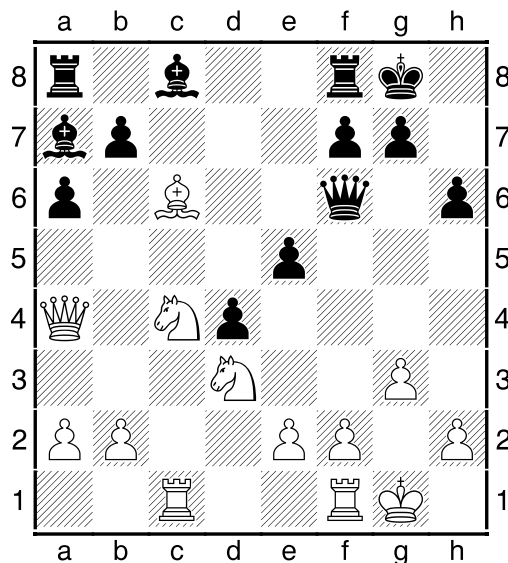
But Anand instantly refused to cooperate - there is no need for it or it can be done later, under more favourable circumstances. Important is initiative and development of all pieces - these are basic chess assets. 14.Bxc6?! bxc6 15.Qxc6 Rb8 can only be helpful to Black.

14...e5!?

With this Topalov opts for a (more or less) forced line which ends some moves later with a certain endgame. He decided to return the pawn once more for completing his development, instead of 14...Bd7 15.Na5 Ne5 16.Qa3 or 14...Qe7 15.Bxc6 bxc6 16.Nce5. Note that after 14...b5? 15.Qa3 bxc4 16.Rxc4 White is on the top.

15.Bxc6 (D)

White is forced to take the challenge; otherwise it would be just fine for Black and with an extra pawn in the bag.



15...b5!

Unexpected and strong. Rather passive would be the alternative 15...bxc6?!

16.Ncxe5 c5 17.Qc6 Be6 18.b3 += and out of the question 15...Qxc6? 16.Qxc6 bxc6 17.Ncxe5 +/-.

16.Qc2

White didn't even think about 16.Bxb5?! axb5 17.Qxb5 e4 where the strong central pawns and the bishop-pair fully compensate (to put it gently) his minimal extra material.

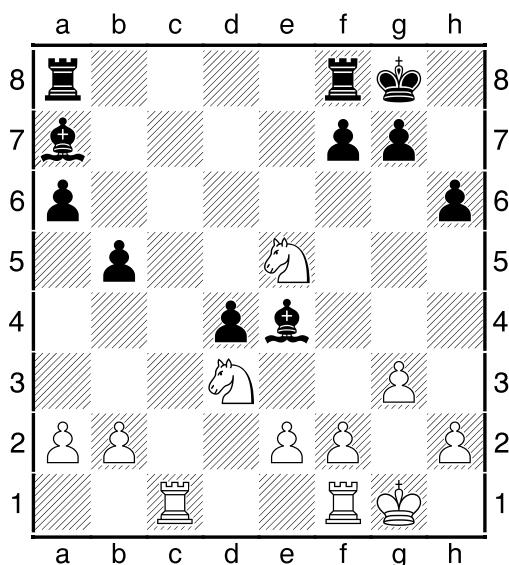
16...Qxc6 17.Ncxe5 Qe4!

17...Qxc2?! is just giving some extra tempos to White.

18.Qc6

White cannot allow queens on board - he might get mated!

18...Bb7 19.Qxe4 Bxe4 (D)



This is the position that Topalov was aiming for. Material is even and both sides can claim some plusses and minuses. White has the better pawn structure (due to Black's isolated d-pawn and weak queenside) and Black the bishop-pair versus the knight-pair. It seems like a fair battle, although I prefer a bit more the bishop-pair...

20.Rc2!

By the text move White takes full control of the c-file and simultaneously protects his e-pawn. The self-pin of the d3-knight is not important.

20...Rfe8

Naturally, Topalov takes an eye on the e-file and the backward e2-pawn.

21.Rfc1 f6

This is called the bishop-pair 'restriction method' first employed by William Steinitz.

The idea is simple: push the enemy knights behind and restrict them of any good squares by using healthy placement of the pawns.

22.Nd7

After 22.Nc6?! Bb6 the knight-pair would be stuck, not really doing anything important.

22...Bf5! 23.N7c5 Bb6

After 23...Bxc5 24.Rxc5 Bxd3 25.exd3 Re2 26.R5c2 Rae8 27.Kf1 R2e5 the game would be dead drawn. Topalov can perfectly continue the game with the text move and this proves the validity of his position - that he can try for two results. 23...a5 was the other option but is advisable for Black to delay the movement of the pawn which is always a responsible decision (pawns can't go backwards).

24.Nb7!

White's duty is to create threats and exploit his doubled rooks on the c-file; so his c5-knight has to move somehow from his good but useless c5 outpost.

24...Bd7

Black covers square c6, stopping a white rook invasion and defends against White's threat of Nd6. But preferable was 24...Bg4! 25.f3 (maybe 25.Kf1 Re7 is preferable) and only now 25...Bd7 as then White couldn't immediately move his d3-knight and the weakness on e3 cannot be underestimated.

25.Nf4

The main alternative was 25.Nd6 Re6 26.Nf5 (26.Nc8 Bd8 27.Kf1 Kh7 oo) 26...Kh7 oo.

25...Rab8?!

Topalov wants to be practical but he cannot live fighting against the doubled white rooks on the c-file. He had to opt for exchanging the major pieces with the natural 25...Rac8 26.Nd6 (26.Rxc8 Rxc8 27.Rxc8+ Bxc8 28.Nd6 Bd7 oo) 26...Rxc2 27.Rxc2 Re5 oo.

26.Nd6?!

26.Nc5! forces 26...Bxc5 (26...Bc8 27.Rd2 Rd8 28.Nfe6) 27.Rxc5 g5 28.Nd5 Kf7 29.R1c2! +=. If White exchanges one of the black bishops he will stay a bit better. In general White wants to exchange as many pieces as possible because then the d4-pawn would become a real weakness, while e2-

pawn can be easily defended with Kf1 for example.

26...Re5! 27.Nc8 Ba5 28.Nd3

28.Na7?! Rbe8 would be just bad for White.

28...Re8 29.Na7

White could also go for 29.Nd6 Re6 (29...Re7 30.b4 Bb6 31.Nc8 +=) 30.Nf5 Bb6 (the exchange sacrifice with 30...Rxe2 is about equal: 31.Nxh6+ gxh6 32.Rxe2 Bf5 33.Rd1 [33.b4 Bxd3 34.Rd2 Bxb4 35.Rxd3 Bc3 36.Kf1] 33...Bg4 34.Rdd2 Bxd2 35.Rxd2) 31.b4 Rbe8 32.Kf1 Rd8 oo.

29...Bb6 30.Nc6 Rb7

The problem for Black is that after 30...Ra8 31.Nf4 Bf5 32.Rd2 he cannot defend his isolated pawn. But Black could accept White's (temporary) pawn sacrifice with the natural 30...Bxc6 31.Rxc6 Rxe2. Probably the game will end to a draw after 32.Kf1 Re7 (32...Rd2 33.Rc8+ Rxc8 34.Rxc8+ Kh7 35.Rc6 Ba5 [35...Bd8? 36.Rxa6 +/- Rxd3? 37.Ke2 +/-] 36.Rxa6 Bc3 37.bxc3 Rxd3 38.cxd4 Rxd4) 33.Nb4 d3 34.Nd5 Reb7 35.Nxb6 Rxb6 36.Rxb6 Rxb6 37.Rc8+ Kf7 38.Rd8 Rc6 39.Rxd3 Rc2 40.Ra3 Rxb2 41.Rxa6 and maybe that's why Topalov was not attracted to...

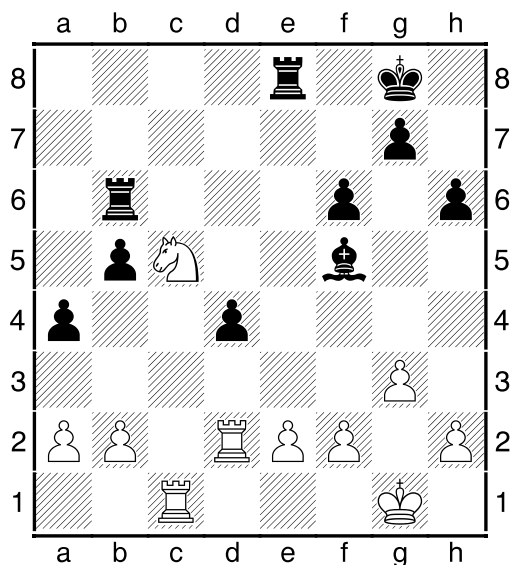
31.Ncb4! a5 32.Nd5

And White finally eliminates the black bishop-pair!

32...a4

32...Bf5 was also OK.

33.Nxb6 Rxb6 34.Nc5 Bf5 35.Rd2 (D)



So, after 13 consecutive knight moves (!),

White decided to change a bit and move something different! The main difference that took place during the last moves is the elimination of the black bishop-pair, but at least Black kept his good bishop, accepting to exchange the worst of them. His pressure against the e-pawn is enough to keep the dynamic balance, but probably there is nothing more than a draw to come sooner or later.

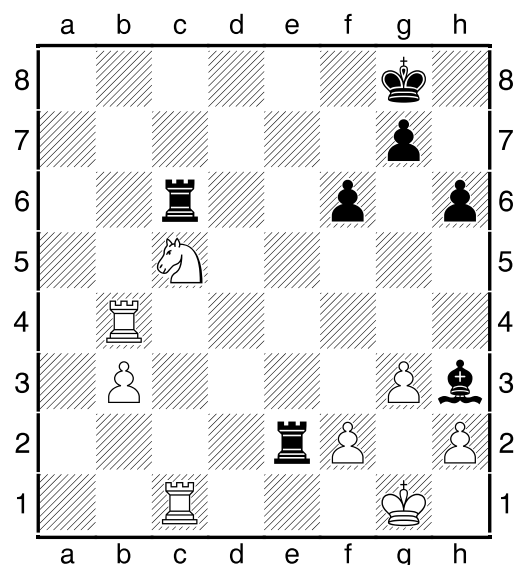
35...Rc6 36.b4 axb3 37.axb3

Correctly avoiding 37.Nxb3?! d3! 38.Rxc6 (38.exd3? Rxc1+ 39.Nxc1 Re1+) 38...dxe2 39.Rc1 e1Q+ 40.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 41.Kg2 Be6 =+ as the black bishop is a better minor piece than its counterpart.

37...b4!

Black has to act actively! After the passive 37...Rd8?! 38.b4 only White would have chances.

38.Rxd4 Rxe2 39.Rxb4 Bh3 (D)



White got an extra pawn but Black has a strong compensation due to White's weak back rank and the activity of his rooks.

40.Rbc4 Rd6

Threaten to invade the second rank by both rooks!

41.Re4

Or 41.Rh4 Rc2 42.Ra1 Ra2 43.Re1 Re2 = which verifies the previous note for the weak white back rank.

41...Rb2 42.Ree1

White is 'forced' to 'accept' the draw.

42...Rdd2 43.Ne4 Rd4 44.Nc5 Rdd2

45.Ne4 Rd3!?

Topalov feels like he has to try all his chances before he agrees to a draw. After 45...Rd4 46.Nc5 we would have another draw by threefold repetition.

46.Rb1!

Anand immediately goes for his best, securing the draw. A blunder would be 46.Nc5? Rf3 and White would be in deep trouble...

46...Rdxb3 47.Nd2 Rb4

Or 47...Rxb1 48.Rxb1 Rd3 (48...Rxb1+ 49.Nxb1 =) 49.Rb2 Kf7 50.f3 =.

48.f3 g5 49.Rxb2 Rxb2

The rest of the game could be skipped if there was not the 'Sofia Rules' (no draw offers).

50.Rd1 Kf7 51.Kf2 h5 52.Ke3 Rc2 53.Ra1 Kg6 54.Ra6 Bf5 55.Rd6 Rc3+ 56.Kf2 Rc2 57.Ke3 Rc3+ 58.Kf2 Rc2

1/2-1/2

Clocks: W: 2.05' - B: 2.16'

□ **Anand,Viswanathan**

■ **Topalov,Veselin**

E11 Sofia 03.05.2010 – Game 7

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.g3 Bb4+

Topalov decided to deviate first from 4...dxc4, his answer in games 2, 4 and 6.

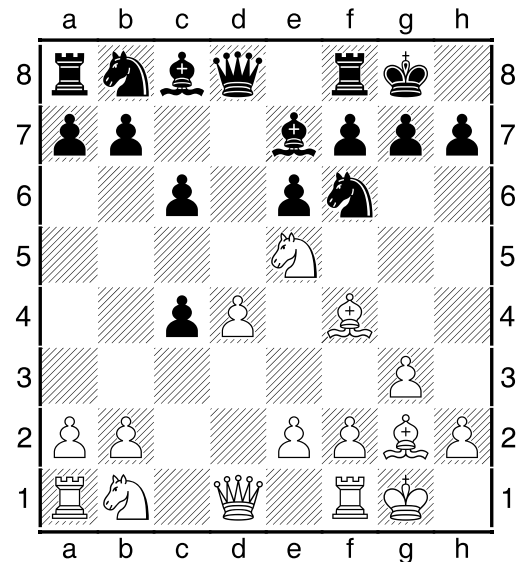
5.Bd2 Be7 6.Bg2 0-0 7.0-0 c6 8.Bf4

The main alternative here is 8.Qc2 and a recent example is: 8...b6 9.Bf4 Nbd7 10.Rd1 Ba6 11.Ne5 Rc8 12.Nd2 Nxe5 13.Bxe5 Ng4 14.e4 dxc4 15.Nxc4 Bxc4 16.Qxc4 b5 17.Qe2 Nxe5 18.dxe5 Qc7 19.f4 Bc5+ 20.Kh1 Rfd8 21.Bf1 Bd4 22.a4 bxa4 23.Rxa4 Qb6 24.Rd2 g6 25.Ra3 c5 1/2-1/2 Stefanova,A-Zhukova,N Dagomys 2010.

8...dxc4

Topalov chooses a (supposed to be) complicated position and at least remains faithful to his ...dxc4 concept in his black games! Beforehand he has also tried 8...b6 9.Nc3 Ba6 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.Rc1 Nc6 12.Nxd5 Qxd5 13.Ne5 Nxd4 14.Bxd5 Nxe2+ 15.Qxe2 Bxe2 16.Bxa8 Rxa8 17.Rfe1 Bb5 18.Rc2 Nd5 oo/= Kramnik,V-Topalov,V Dortmund 2005.

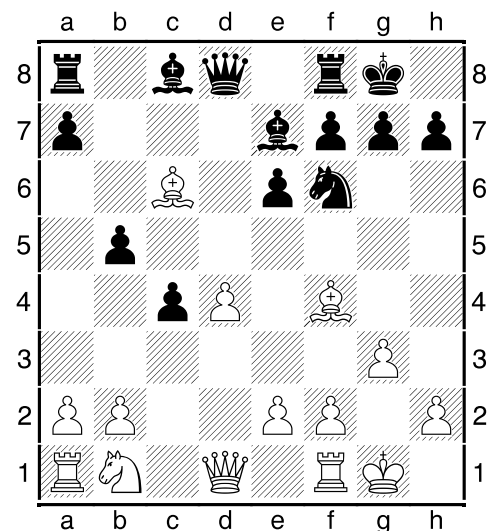
9.Ne5 (D)



9...b5!?

Entering a forced exchange sacrifice. Black main other option is 9...Nd5 10.Nxc4 Nxf4 11.gxf4 Nd7 (11...Qc7 12.e3 b6 [12...c5 13.dxc5 Na6 14.Nc3 Nxc5 15.Nb5 Qb8 16.Nbd6 Rd8 17.Qh5 oo Amura,C-Parker,J Benasque 1997] 13.Qf3 [13.Qb3 Bb7 14.Nc3 Nd7 15.Rfd1 Rad8 oo Sharevich,A-Kovalevskaya,E Kallithea 2008] 13...Bb7 14.Ne5 f6 15.Nd3 Nd7 16.Nc3 += Pavlovic,M-Kwiatkowski,F Hastings 2007 ; 11...Bf6 12.e3 Nd7 1/2-1/2 Isajevsky,A-Zubarev,A Kharkov 2007) 12.Nc3 Nb6 13.Ne5 Nd5 (13...f6 14.Nf3 Qe8 15.e3 Qh5 16.Ne4 Qf5 17.Kh1 Bd7 18.Nc5 += Tkachiev,V-Van der Wiel,J Cannes 1999) 14.e3 f6 15.Nd3 Bd7 16.Ne4 += Kachiani Gersinska,K-Mamedjarova,T Plovdiv 2008.

10.Nxc6 Nxc6 11.Bxc6 (D)



11...Bd7

This is a novelty. In the other known game that 9...b5 was played, Black continued with 11...Ba6 12.Bxa8 Qxa8 13.Qc2 Qc6 14.Bg5 Bb7 15.f3 e5 oo/= Gelfand,B-Ivanchuk,V Nice 2010.

12.Bxa8

White is obliged to accept the offer, as after 12.Bg2 Nd5 13.Bd2 f5 14.Nc3 Bc6 Black is already in the driver's seat.

12...Qxa8

Black's compensation for the sacrificed exchange lays on his bishop-pair, the weak white kingside and generally on his more active play. In order to understand better the idea behind Black's exchange sacrifice, I will edit a fragment of a new book of mine to be published which contains the 'Exchange Sacrifice' subject:

In the opening and middlegame our pieces should be identified as units that, by cooperating harmoniously, shape our plans, that in turn are executed by means of moves. Each unit is an integral part of our position and we can determine our advantage or inferiority only by taking all units into account, identifying and evaluating both their positive and negative aspects.

Naturally, it is not easy to identify which of our pieces (or even the opponent's pieces) is carrying out the most significant function. We have to take several strategic elements into consideration, such as the center, open lines, initiative, attack, etc.

When carrying out such evaluations, the value of our rooks barely differs from that of our minor pieces, since an advantage is only conferred by their fruitful cooperation and not their individual, predetermined value.

If we accept that, as a rule, the superiority of the rook is realized in the endgame (usually the rook is unstoppable in this part of the game), we naturally come to the conclusion that an exchange sacrifice in the opening or the middlegame (sometimes in the endgame too!) can occur more and more frequently and may be acceptable for many reasons, furthering several diverse aims. Of course, the primary aim is to seize the initiative, the momentum of which very often shatters the

opponent, as the sacrificing party is actually playing a 'piece ahead' (the rooks have not yet come into action) for some time.

13.f3

Anand started to consume much time, while Topalov hardly anything at all! An alternative could be 13.Nc3 when 13...b4 14.Na4 Qd5 15.a3 bxa3 16.bxa3 Ne4! (16...Bc6 17.f3) 17.Nc5 (17.f3 Bxa4 18.Qxa4 [18.fxe4 Qc6] 18...Nc3 19.Qc2 Qxd4+ 20.e3 Qd3 oo/=) 17...Nxc5 18.dxc5 Bxc5 19.e4 Qxd1 20.Rfxd1 Ba4 seems to offer Black enough compensation.

13...Nd5 14.Bd2 e5!?

At first sight I like 14...f5 15.Nc3 b4 16.Nxd5 Qxd5 17.Bf4 Bf6 18.Be5 Bg5 oo/=. But Topalov instantly played the text move and as I presume that this position had been on his seconds' daily schedule for a long time, I cannot object.

15.e4

Black can also show compensation after 15.dxe5 Bh3 (15...Bc5+ 16.Kh1 Bh3 17.Re1 Ne3 18.Bxe3 Bxe3 oo/=) 16.Rf2 (16.e4 Bxf1 17.Kxf1 Nb6 oo/=) 16...Rd8 17.Qe1 Bc5 oo/=.

15...Bh3!

Anand has been well and truly caught in the opening. The only question is whether Topalov is playing for a win or an easy draw. White doesn't look worse here... This position nicely demonstrates how materialistic modern computer chess programs still are. White has serious long term problems on the kingside, but nearly every software is not able to understand this. Many evaluations are behind their horizon...

16.exd5

Or 16.Rf2 Nb6 (16...exd4!? 17.exd5 Qxd5 is wild but not entirely clear that it fails...) 17.dxe5 Bc5 18.Qe2 Rd8 19.Nc3 b4 oo/=.

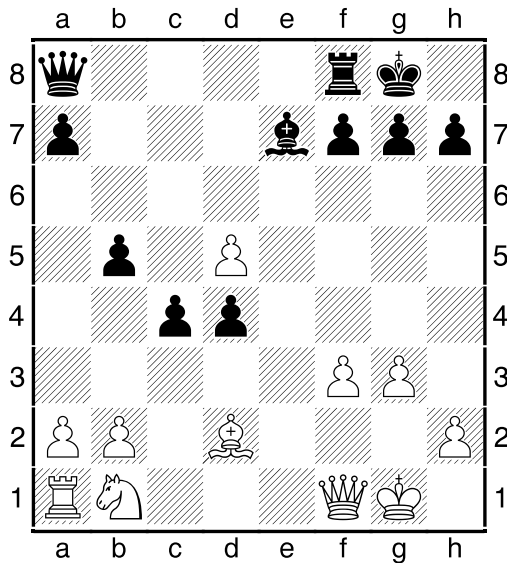
16...Bxf1 17.Qxf1

I think that after 17.Kxf1 a draw would be in cards: 17...exd4 18.a4 Qxd5 19.axb5 Qxb5 20.Rxa7 c3+ 21.Qe2 Qxb2 22.Nxc3 dxc3 23.Rxe7 cxd2 24.Rd7 =. This typical theme we will also meet in later stages of the game.

17...exd4! (D)

Accurate. If 17...Qxd5? then 18.Qe2! (18.dxe5? Qd4+ 19.Kh1 Qxb2 20.Bc3 Qc2

=+ or 18.Nc3?! Qxd4+ 19.Qf2 Bc5 oo/=)
18...Qxd4+ 19.Be3 +/-.



18.a4!

Now the sacrifice 'transformed' into a piece!
The text looks best as the b1-knight has to emerge somehow. If instead 18.Na3?! then 18...Qxd5 19.Nc2 d3 20.Ne3 Qe5 =+.

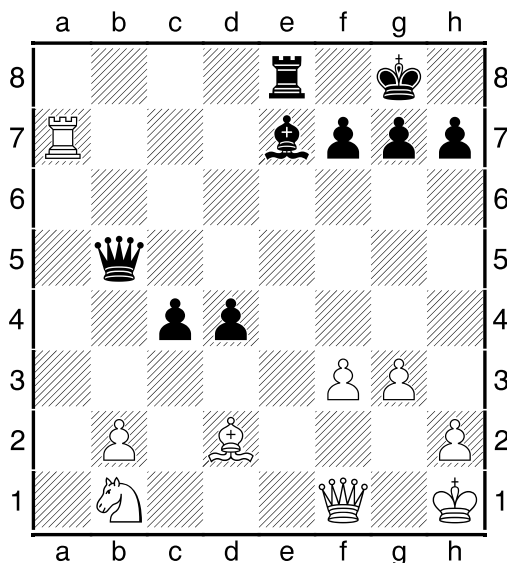
18...Qxd5 19.axb5 Qxb5 20.Rxa7

Natural. 20.Na3 is the main alternative:
20...Bxa3 21.bxa3 (21.Rxa3 Qxb2 22.Qc1 Qxc1+ 23.Bxc1 Rd8 24.Rxa7 c3 25.Rc7 h5 26.Kf1 d3 27.Rxc3 d2 28.Bxd2 Rxd2 =) 21...Rc8 22.Re1 Qd5 oo/=.

20...Re8!

Black's rook comes to help. Nothing was achieved with the naive 20...Bc5? 21.Ra5 +/-.

21.Kh1 (D)



At this moment Anand has spend 64 minutes

and Topalov just 3 (!) a good sign that (at least for him) it was all home preparation. But still he chooses the best! 21.Kg2?! Bd6! (21...Bf8? 22.Rc7 +/- ; 21...Qxb2? 22.Qxc4 Qxb1 23.Rxe7! +-) 22.Na3 Bxa3 23.Rxa3 (23.bxa3? d3 24.Bc3 h6 -/+ as the white rook is misplaced) 23...Qxb2 24.Qc1 Qb5 =+.

21...Bf8

After 17 minutes of thinking! But Black could have 'objectively' chose to accept the draw after 21...Qxb2 22.Qxc4 (22.Qe1 h6 [22...Kf8? 23.Rxe7 Rxe7 24.Bb4 +-] 23.Rxe7 [23.h4 Qb5 24.Rxe7 Rxe7 25.Qxe7 Qxb1+ =] 23...Rxe7 24.Qxe7 Qxb1+ 25.Kg2 Qb2 26.Qe8+ Kh7 27.Qe4+ g6 28.Qe8 Qxd2+ 29.Kh3 Kg7 30.Qe5+ =) 22...Qxb1+ 23.Kg2 Qb2 24.Rxe7 Qxd2+ 25.Kh3 Rf8 26.Rd7 =. I feel that Topalov did not want to 'waste' such good preparation and he also wanted to profit by Anand's time 'pressure'.

22.Rc7 d3

Forced. If 22...Bc5? then 23.b4! +/-.

23.Bc3

23.Nc3 Qxb2 24.Qf2 Bb4 25.Rxc4 Bxc3 26.Rxc3 h6 and the coming ...Re2 assures Black of at least a draw: 27.h4 (27.Rxd3? Qb1+ +- ; 27.Kg1?! Re2 28.Qc5 Qa1+ 29.Rc1 Qf6 -/+) 27...Re2 28.Qc5 Qa1+ 29.Rc1 Qf6 30.Bf4 d2 31.Qc8+ Kh7 32.Rg1 Qd4 33.Qf5+ =.

Now White has achieved some blockade and he is ready to activate his knight. But of course still Black has counterplay for the sacrificed piece, due to his passed d-pawn, his active pieces and the (a bit) weak white king.

23...Bd6

Black could 'fall' for 23...Bc5?! when White should continue with 24.Nd2! (24.Qh3?! Qxb2! 25.Qf5 [25.Bxb2 Re1+ 26.Qf1 {26.Kg2? Rg1 #} 26...Rxf1+ 27.Kg2 Rxb1 28.Rc8+ Bf8 29.Ba3 h5 30.Rxf8+ Kh7 31.Rd8 =] 25...Qxb1+ 26.Kg2 Re2+ 27.Kh3 Qf1+ 28.Kg4 h5+ 29.Qxh5 Re4+! 30.fxe4 Qe2+ 31.Kh4 Qxh2+ 32.Kg4 Qe2+ =) 24...Qb6 25.Be5!! Rxe5 26.Rc8+ Bf8 27.Nxc4 Qe6 28.Rxf8+ Kxf8 29.Nxe5 Qxe5 30.Qxd3 g6 31.Qd2 +/-.

24.Ra7

Or 24.Na3 Qd5 25.Rxc4 (25.Ra7?! d2 [25...Re3? 26.Rd7! +-] 26.Bxd2 Bxa3 =+) 25...d2! (25...Bxa3? 26.Rd4 Qb3 27.Qxd3 +/-) 26.Bxd2 Qxd2 oo/=.

24...h6

Black must open an 'emergency exit' for his monarch, sooner or later. 24...Re2 25.Nd2 Qh5 26.Ra8+ (26.h4 h6) 26...Bf8 27.h4 (27.Qg1 Rxd2 28.Bxd2 Qxf3+ 29.Qg2 Qd1+ 30.Qg1 Qxd2 31.Rxf8+ Kxf8 32.Qc5+ =) 27...Qd5 28.Ra4 h6 29.Ne4 (29.Nxc4? Qb5! 30.b3 Qxb3 31.Qa1 d2! 32.Nxd2 Qe6 -/+) 29...f5 30.Nd2 f4 oo/=.

25.Nd2

This looks natural, as it completes the development, but probably more interesting was 25.Qh3!?. A sample variation could go as: 25...Qg5 26.Nd2 Re1+ 27.Nf1 (27.Kg2 Re2+ 28.Kf1 Qe3 29.Ra8+ Bf8 30.Rxf8+ Kxf8 31.Qc8+ Ke7 32.Qb7+ =) 27...d2 28.Ra8+ Bf8 (28...Kh7? 29.Bxd2 Qxd2 30.Qf5+) 29.Rxf8+ Kxf8 30.Qc8+ Ke7 31.Bb4+ Kf6 32.Qc6+ Re6 33.Qd7 Qf5 oo. Note that after 25.Ra5 Qb7 26.Nd2 a draw arises: 26...Bb4! 27.Ra4 Bxc3 28.bxc3 Qb2 29.Nxc4 Qxc3 30.Ra3 Qxc4 31.Qxd3 =.

25...Bb4 26.Ra1!

Anand finds the best defence, as it can be proven by his alternatives: 26.Rc7? Bxc3 27.bxc3 Qb2 (27...Qe5? 28.Rxc4 Qe1 29.Rd4 =) 28.Nxc4 Qxc3 +- or 26.Bxb4? Qxb4 27.Ne4 f5 28.Nc3 Qxb2 -/+ or, finally, 26.Ne4 Bxc3 27.bxc3 f5 28.Nd6 Qb6 29.Nxe8 Qxa7 -/+.

26...Bxc3 27.bxc3 Re2 28.Rd1 Qa4 29.Ne4

White could also draw with 29.Ra1 Qb5 (29...Qc2 30.Qh3 oo) 30.Rd1 =.

29...Qc2

Black decided to call it a day. But he should go for 29...f5! 30.Rd2! (30.Nd6? Qc2 31.Nxc4 Rf2! 32.Qg1 Qe2 33.Rxd3 [33.Nd2?! Rxh2+ 34.Qxh2 Qxd1+ -+] 33...Rf1 34.Rd8+ Kh7 35.Nd2 Rxc1+ 36.Kxc1 Qe3+ 37.Kf1 Qxc3 -/+) 30...fxe4 31.Rxe2 dxe2 32.Qxe2 Qa1+ 33.Kg2 Qxc3 34.Qxe4 Qb2+ 35.Kh3 Qb5 when objectively is a draw but White has to be careful.

30.Rc1 Rxh2+ 31.Kg1 Rg2+

31...Qe2?! could be dangerous after 32.Qxe2

Rxe2 33.Rd1 Rc2 34.Nd6 Rxc3 35.Kf2.

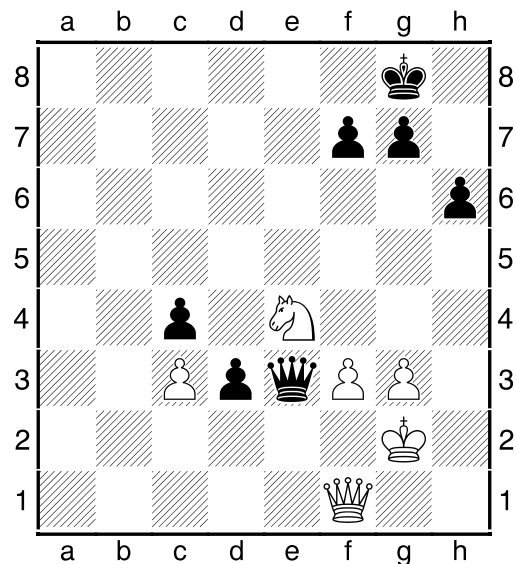
32.Qxg2 Qxc1+ 33.Qf1

33.Kh2? f5 -+.

33...Qe3+

33...d2 34.Nxd2 Qxd2 35.Qxc4 =.

34.Qf2 Qc1+ 35.Qf1 Qe3+ 36.Kg2 (D)



Anand decided to try a bit more, avoiding the threefold repetition. But the result is difficult to change.

36...f5 37.Nf2 Kh7 38.Qb1 Qe6 39.Qb5 g5 40.g4 fxc4 41.fxc4 Kg6 42.Qb7

White's threat to exchange queens (and win) on e4, makes Black's hand forced.

42...d2! 43.Qb1+ Kg7 44.Kf1 Qe7

44...Qe3 was also OK: 45.Qb7+ Kg6 46.Qc6+ Kg7 47.Qxc4 Qe1+ 48.Kg2 d1Q 49.Nxd1 Qxd1 50.Qd4+ Qxd4 51.cxd4 Kg6 52.Kf3 h5 53.gxh5+ Kxh5 =.

45.Kg2 Qe6

Although White is some small material up (a knight for two pawns) he cannot break Black's resistance mostly due to his strong passed d-pawn. Well, there is no harm for White to try a bit more but it is rather difficult for Black to blunder in this simple position.

46.Qd1 Qe3 47.Qf3 Qe6 48.Qb7+ Kg6 49.Qb1+ Kg7 50.Qd1 Qe3 51.Qc2 Qe2 52.Qa4 Kg8 53.Qd7 Kf8 54.Qd5 Kg7 55.Kg3 Qe3+ 56.Qf3 Qe5+ 57.Kg2 Qe6 58.Qd1

Draw by threefold repetition (as usual!).

1/2-1/2

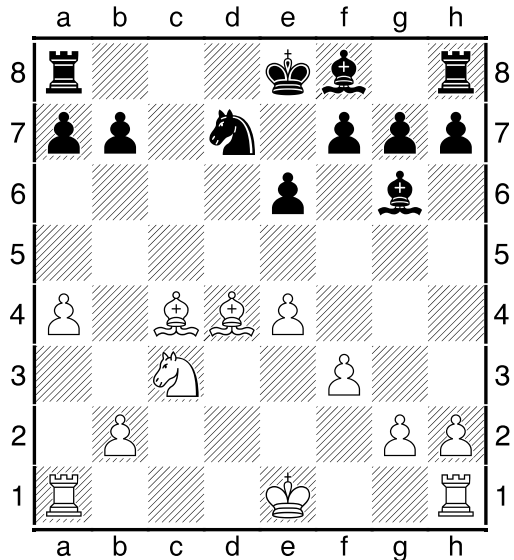
Clocks: W: 2.34' - B: 2.10'

□ Topalov, Veselin

■ Anand, Viswanathan

D17 Sofia 04.05.2010 – Game 8

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.a4
Bf5 6.Ne5 e6 7.f3 c5 8.e4 Bg6 9.Be3 cxd4
10.Qxd4 Qxd4 11.Bxd4 Nfd7 12.Nxd7
Nxd7 13.Bxc4 (D)



13...Rc8

Deviating from 13...a6 which was played in games 3 and 5. For once more Anand did not wish to be a 'part' of Topalov's pre-home analysis...

14.Bb5

Played quickly. Here White mainly chooses 14.Ba2 - there is relative analysis in game's 3 comments.

14...a6

The pin on the knight cannot be allowed at any cost. This loses time, create some weaknesses on the black queenside and 'centralises' the king, but Black's hand is forced.

15.Bxd7+ Kxd7 16.Ke2

A logical follow-up with the idea of connecting the rooks and bring them to life as soon as it is possible. Two alternatives have been played:

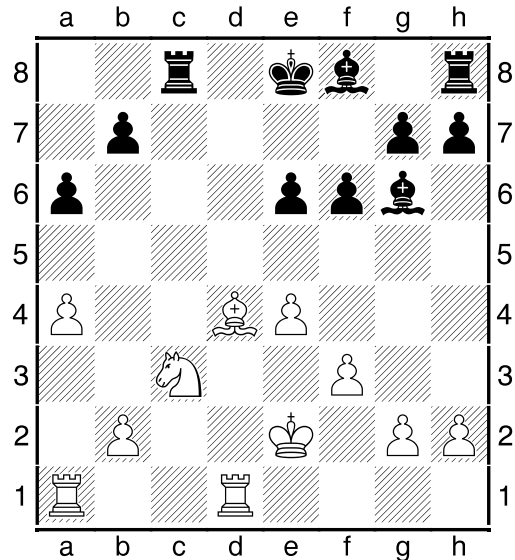
a) 16.h4 h5 17.Ke2 f6 18.Rhd1 Ke8 19.a5 Be7 20.Bb6 f5 21.exf5 Bxf5 22.g3 Bc2 23.Rd2 Bb3 24.Kf2 Rf8 25.Kg2 Bb4 26.Re1 ½-½ Van der Stricht, G-Wirig, A Belgium 2007.

b) 16.0-0-0 Ke8 17.Bb6 (17.Rd2 f6 18.Rhd1 Be7 =) 17...Be7 18.Rd4 Bf6

19.Rd3 Bd8 20.Bd4 f6 21.Rhd1 Ba5 22.Kb1 Ke7 = Gordon, S-Ledger, A Liverpool 2008.

16...f6 17.Rhd1 Ke8 (D)

A forced move. If 17...Bd6? then 18.e5! fxe5 19.Bxe5 Rc6 20.Bxg7 Rg8 21.Be5 Bc2 22.Rxd6+ Rxd6 23.Bxd6 Kxd6 (23...Rxc2+ 24.Kf1 +/-) 24.g3 +/-.



18.a5

This is a novelty. Previously White has tried (or suggested):

a) 18.Rac1 Be7 (18...Rc6?! 19.Na2 Rxc1 20.Nxc1 Be7 21.Bb6 e5 22.Nd3 Bf7 23.Rc1 +/- Maletin, P-Amonatov, F Novokuznetsk 2008) 19.Be3 Rf8 oo.

b) 18.Rd2 Bb4 19.Rad1 Ke7 20.Bb6 Be8 =.

c) 18.Bb6 Bc5 19.Bxc5 Rxc5 20.Rd6 (20.Rd2 Ke7 21.Rad1 Rc7 =) 20...Ke7 21.Rad1 Be8 = Bocharov, D-Amonatov, F Voronezh 2007.

White has a bit better prospects due to his better development - Black has somehow to bring into the game his kingside pieces. But as this advantage is not of a static nature (the black pieces will develop sooner or later) White is obliged to prove his initiative in the next few moves. Note that Topalov has used just 8 minutes by now - this easily means that he is still in known territory...

18...Be7

A modest but secure response, overstepping a potentially dangerous piece of preparation. 18...Bb4! is the 'obvious' response, surely deeply analysed by Topalov, although it doesn't seem to create serious problems for

Black: 19.Ra4 (19.Na4 Rc2+ 20.Kf1 Ke7 =) 19...Bxc3 (19...Be7 20.Bb6 Kf8! 21.Rad4 Be8 =) 20.Bxc3 e5 21.Rb4 Rc7 22.Rd6 Rf8 23.Ke3 Rff7 and I think that Black will be fine. Of course Black should sidestep; 18...Bc5?! as after 19.Bxc5 Rxc5 20.Rac1! Black is in trouble: 20...Rf8 (20...Rxa5?! 21.Na4! Rf8 22.Nc5 Rb5 23.Nxe6 Rxb2+ 24.Ke3 +/-) 21.Na4 Rxc1 22.Rxc1 Rf7 23.Rc4 +/-.

19.Bb6 Rf8

Black is preparing his activity with ...f5 and in a way he places his pieces 'together'.

20.Rac1 f5 21.e5

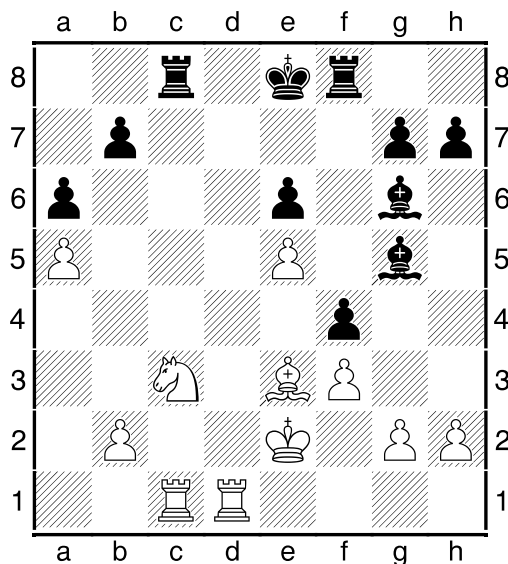
Best. 21.exf5 Rxf5! solves all Black's problems.

21...Bg5

White is threatening f4 and Black has to do something about it. 21...f4? cannot be accurate, especially after 22.Ne4! Rxc1 23.Rxc1 Bxe4 24.fxg4 +/-.

22.Be3 f4?! (D)

22...Bxe3 had to be preferred. After 23.Kxe3 f4+ 24.Kd4! Ke7 25.Ne4 Bxe4 26.Kxe4 g5 27.g3 fxg3 28.hxg3 h5 29.f4 gxf4 30.gxf4 += White has a slight advantage, although Black should hold.



23.Ne4!

A small tactic which gives White a nice advantage. The following moves are forced:

23...Rxc1 24.Nd6+ Kd7 25.Bxc1 Kc6

26.Bd2?!

Topalov missed a very good chance by playing 26.Rd4!. After 26...b5 (26...Kc5

27.Rc4+ Kd5 28.Bd2 Kxe5 29.Nxb7 +/-) 27.axb6 Kxb6 28.g3 +/- he would be in the right to clinch the point.

26...Be7!

Black will for sure lose on of his pawns, so he tries to escape to opposite colour bishops' endgame, where his saving chances would increase.

27.Rc1+ Kd7

27...Kd5 is worse: 28.Rc7 Bxd6 29.exd6 Kxd6 30.Rxb7 Rf7 31.Rb6+ +/-.

28.Bc3?!

It looks like it isn't Topalov's day today! 28.Nxb7 Rb8 29.Nc5+ Bxc5 30.Rxc5 Rxb2 31.Rc4 Rb5 32.Bc3 Rb3 33.Kd2 Rb5 34.Rxf4 += wasn't much either, but he could have opted for 28.Bb4 Bxd6 29.Rd1! (29.Bxd6 Rc8 30.Rxc8 Kxc8 31.Bf8 Kd7 32.Bxg7 Kc6 =+) 29...Bf5 (29...Rd8 30.Rxd6+ Kc7 31.Rxe6 Re8 32.Rxe8 Bxe8 33.Kd3 +/-) 30.Rxd6+ Kc8 (30...Kc7 31.Rd4 +/-) 31.Rxa6 bxa6 32.Bxf8 g6 33.Bh6 +/-.

The resulting endings with two pawns up, although with the presence of opposite coloured bishops, should offer excellent winning chances (if not winning anyway).

28...Bxd6 29.Rd1

If 29.exd6?! then 29...Rc8 =.

29...Bf5 30.h4

Trying to keep the f4-pawn 'isolated' (unprotected) from its pawn structure.

30...g6

30...h6 31.h5 is not helping Black, but he should have gone for 30...Kc7! 31.exd6+ (31.Rxd6 Rd8) 31...Kd7 32.Be5 Rc8 33.Bxf4 +=.

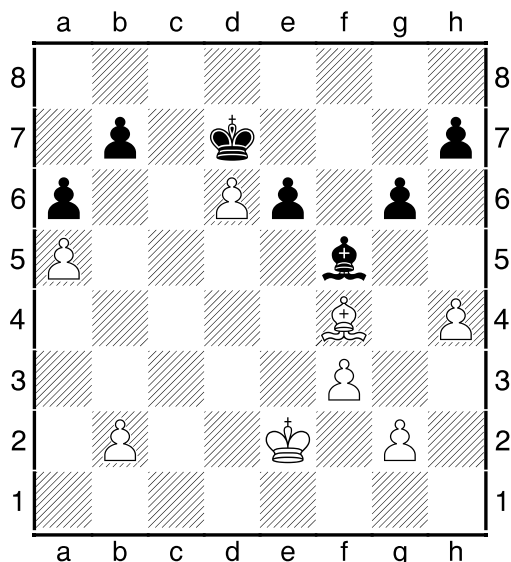
31.Rxd6+ Kc8 32.Bd2

The other way to capture the pawn was with 32.Rd4 but after 32...h6 33.Rxf4 Bd3+ 34.Ke3 Rxf4 35.Kxf4 Black should be able to hold the ending.

32...Rd8!

What else? If Black doesn't exchange rooks he will have to remain passive with 32...h5 33.Bxf4 Re8 34.Bg5. But then White has an easy winning plan: Bf6, king to g5 and then g4. With the text move Black is able to reach an opposite coloured ending a pawn-down, but with real drawing chances.

33.Bxf4 Rxd6 34.exd6 Kd7 (D)



So the players reached this intriguing endgame. White's goal is obvious: to create the second passed pawn. But as he cannot, it should be a draw.

35.Ke3

After 35.Kd2 Kc6 36.Be5 Kd7 37.Ke3 Bc2 38.Kf4 h6! White cannot make progress.

35...Bc2 36.Kd4 Ke8!

This is excellent defence by Anand. He refrains from ...h5 as this will give White the chance to create problems with a well-timed g4 and he plans ...Kf7 and ...Ba4-d7, creating a kind of fortress.

37.Ke5 Kf7 38.Be3 Ba4 39.Kf4 Bb5 40.Bc5 Kf6 41.Bd4+ Kf7

Computers like 41...e5+ 42.Bxe5+ Ke6 43.Ke4 Bf1 and claim it as a draw either, but of course there is no need for it.

42.Kg5 Bc6 43.Kh6 Kg8 44.h5 Be8!

44...gxh5? 45.Kxh5 Bd7 46.Kh6 Be8 transposes to the game: 47.g4!

45.Kg5 Kf7 46.Kh6 Kg8 47.Bc5 gxh5

Sooner or later Black has to take on h5.

48.Kg5 Kg7 49.Bd4+ Kf7 50.Be5

50.Kxh5 e5! 51.Bc5 (51.d7 Bxd7 52.Bxe5 Ke6 =) 51...Ke6+ 52.Kh6 Bg6 =.

50...h4

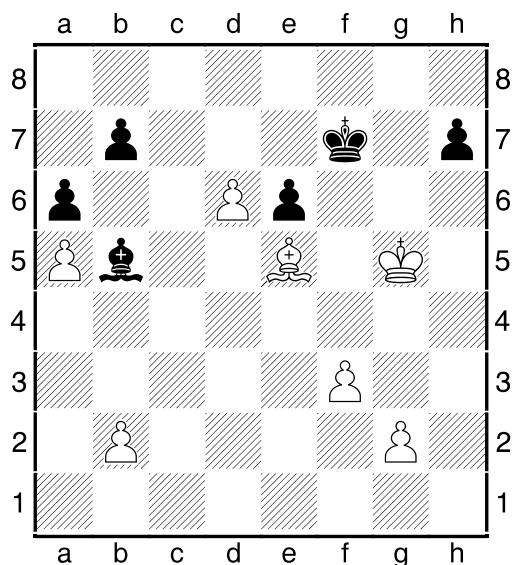
50...Bb5 51.Kxh5 Bf1 52.g4 Be2 53.f4 Ke8 was dead draw.

51.Kxh4 Kg6 52.Kg4 Bb5 53.Kf4 Kf7

Now Black (after the exchange of the pawns on the kingside) can relocate his pieces: his king to d7 and his bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal. There is nothing that White could

do...

54.Kg5 (D)



54...Bc6?

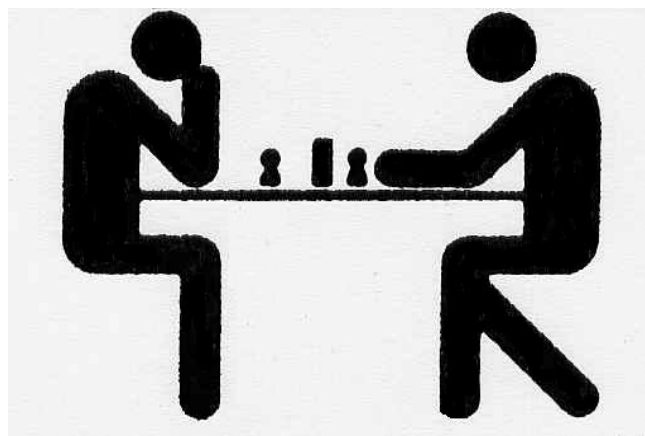
But suddenly Anand blunders! As was noted, the simple 54...Bd3 55.Kh6 Ke8 56.Kg7 Kd7 57.Kf6 Bg6 58.g4 Bd3 59.f4 Bc2 60.f5 exf5 61.gxf5 Bd3 was a draw.

55.Kh6 Kg8 56.g4!

Black resigned due to 56...Bd7 57.g5 Be8 58.Bg7 (zugzwang!) 58...Bc6 59.g6 hxg6 60.Kxg6 Bb5 61.Kf6 +-. I am sure that Anand has seen this idea beforehand as he avoided in previous moves, but suddenly he probably forgot it and played his rather unfortunate 54th move.

1-0

Clocks: W: 2.00' - B: 2.48'

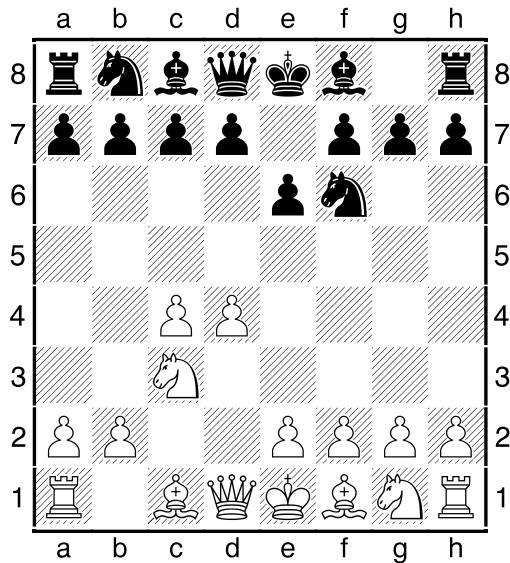


□ Anand,Viswanathan

■ Topalov,Veselin

E54 Sofia 06.05.2010

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 (D)



Finally Anand changes his menu from the 'Catalan' to the 'Nimzoindian Defence'. This is already a small win for Topalov who forced his opponent out of his prepared weapon (which by the way served him well with 3/4 here).

3...Bb4 4.e3

The classical 'Rubinstein Variation', which was in fashion during the 50s and 60s, but not nowadays.

4...0-0 5.Bd3

5.Nge2 is the other option here. The most recent game went 5...d5 6.a3 Be7 7.cxd5 exd5 8.g3 c6 9.Bg2 Bf5 10.0-0 Re8 11.f3 c5 oo Cramling,P-Zhao Xue Nalchik 2010.

5...c5 6.Nf3 d5

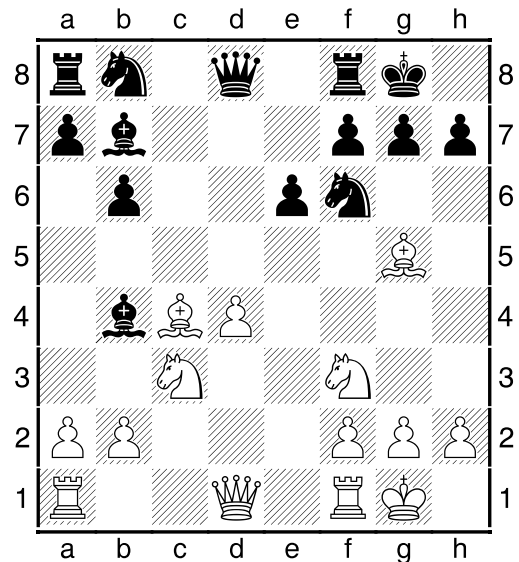
Topalov is for the classical approach once more.

7.0-0 cxd4 8.exd4 dxc4 9.Bxc4 b6

Another well-known continuation goes as 9...Nbd7 10.Qe2 Qc7 11.Bg5 Bxc3 12.bxc3 b6 13.Rac1 Bb7 14.Bd3 Ng4 15.Be4 Bxe4 16.Qxe4 Ngf6 17.Qe2 Rfe8 18.Rfe1 Rac8 19.c4 h6 20.Bh4 Qd6 1/2-1/2 Szabo,K-Sumets,A Cappelle la Grande 2010.

10.Bg5 Bb7 (D)

Both opponents move quickly and it is more than a certainty that both of them had made their homework and this certain position was analysed in depth by their seconds.



11.Re1

Natural and in my opinion best. Black faced no problems after 11.Rc1 Nbd7 12.Qe2 h6 13.Be3 Rc8 14.Bd3 Nd5 15.Ne4 Rxc1 16.Rxc1 N7f6 17.Nxf6+ Nxf6 18.a3 Bd6 19.h3 Qa8 Zinchenko,Y-Lastin,A Internet ICC 2010.

11...Nbd7

The development of the knight on c6 is not bad either: 11...Nc6 12.a3 Bxc3 13.bxc3 Rc8 14.Qd3 Ne7 15.Ba2 Ng6 16.Ne5 Qc7 17.Rac1 Rfe8 18.Bb1 Nd7 19.h4 Ndx5 20.dxe5 h6 21.h5 Qc4 22.Qg3 hxg5 23.hxg6 Qh4 24.Qxh4 1/2-1/2 Emms,J-Speelman,J Hinckley Island 2010.

12.Rc1 Rc8 13.Bd3

Another famous game continued with 13.Qb3 Be7 14.Bxf6 Nxf6 15.Bxe6 fxe6 16.Qxe6+ Kh8 17.Qxe7 Bxf3 18.gxf3 Qxd4 19.Nb5 Qxb2 20.Rxc8 Rxc8 21.Nd6 Rb8 22.Nf7+ Kg8 23.Qe6 Rf8 24.Nd8+ Kh8 25.Qe7 1-0 Kramnik,V-Kasparov,G London 2000.

13...Re8

With 13...Bxc3 14.bxc3 Qc7 a famous game Portisch,L-Karpov,A Bugojno 1978 took place: 15.c4 Rfe8 16.Qe2 h6 17.Bd2 Bxf3 18.Qxf3 e5 oo. The text move is the mostly played according to my Database.

14.Qe2

14.Bh4 is the other more important alternative: 14...Be7 15.Ne5 Nxe5 16.dxe5 Nd5 17.Bxe7 Rxe7 18.Ne4 Rxc1 19.Qxc1 Rc7 20.Qd2 Nf4 21.Qxf4 Qxd3 22.Nc3 Rd7

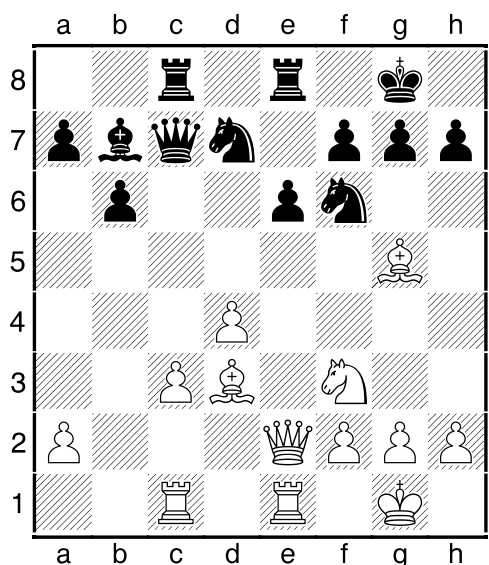
23.h3 h6 24.Kh2 a6 ½-½ Zvjaginsev,V-Lastin,A Sochi 2004.

14...Bxc3

Again this is the most frequently played move. An important option by the way is 14...h6 15.Bh4 Be7 16.Ba6 Bxa6 17.Qxa6 Bb4 18.Qxa7 g5 19.Bg3 Ra8 20.Qb7 Qc8 21.Qxc8 Rexc8 22.h4 Bxc3 23.bxc3 Nd5 24.hxg5 Nxc3 25.Kh2 hxg5 26.Nxg5 Nf6 27.a3 Rxa3 28.Ne4 Nfxe4 29.Rxe4 Nxe4 30.Rxc8+ Kg7 31.f3 Nxg3 32.Kxg3 b5 33.d5 exd5 34.Rc5 b4 35.Rxd5 Kf6 36.Rb5 ½-½ Spassky,B-Andersson,U Buenos Aires 1979.

15.bxc3 Qc7 (D)

With his last moves (...Re8, ...Qc7) Black prepares the liberating advance ...e5. 15...Nf8?! didn't performed well: 16.Ne5 Qd5 17.f3 Qa5 18.Bb5 Red8 19.a4 a6 20.Bxf6 gxf6 21.Nc4 Rxc4 22.Bxc4 Qxa4 23.Bd3 b5 24.Qd2 Qa3 25.Qh6 f5 26.Qg5+ 1-0 Salo,H-Kanko,I Finland 2005.



Hanging pawns appeared on the board (c3 and d4) with all their positive and negative aspects. By the way White has also achieved the bishop-pair, which in total makes his position a bit better prospective. I am not sure that Topalov felt comfortable with this position, as he had already used half-an-hour to get here, while still in well-known theory.

16.Bh4

White is hurrying to control the h2-b8 diagonal. Not much was offered by 16.h3 h6 17.Bd2 Qd6 18.Bb1 Qd5 19.Qe3 b5 20.Qf4

oo Moutousis,K-Kourkounakis,I Greece 1994.

16...Nh5

Best as usual, as Black does not wish to allow White to get his bishop to g3. Alternatives are:

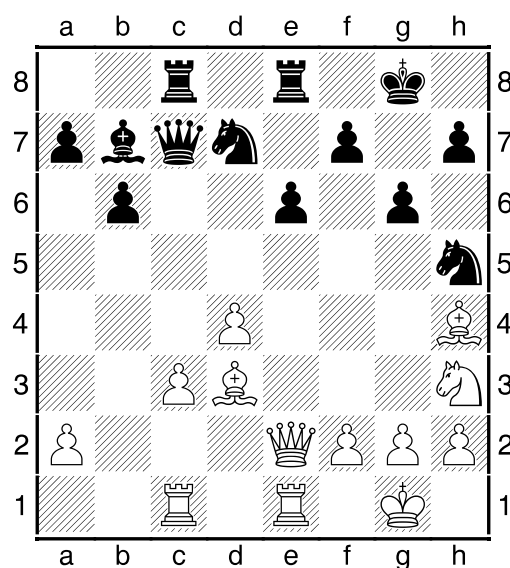
a) 16...Qd6?! 17.Bg3 (17.Ba6 Bxa6 18.Qxa6 Qb8 19.c4 Qa8 20.a4 += Gulko,B-Short,N New York 1994) 17...Qa3 18.c4 Ba6 19.Ne5 +/- Yagupov,I-Lastin,A Moscow 1997.

b) 16...Qf4 17.Bg3 Qg4 (17...Bxf3?! 18.Bxf4 Bxe2 19.Bxe2 +/-) 18.Nd2 Qxe2 19.Bxe2 Red8 20.f3 Nb8 21.Bf1 (21.Nb3 Nc6 22.Red1 Nh5 23.Bf2 oo Poobesh Anand,S-Gavrilov,A Pardubice 2005) 21...h6 22.Bf2 Ba6 23.c4 += Sherbakov,R-Macieja,B Polanica Zdroj 1996.

17.Ng5

The most aggressive, forcing Black to weaken his dark squares around his king. 17.Bxh7+ Kxh7 18.Ng5+ Kg6 19.g4 Qf4 20.gxh5+ Kh6 was good for Black in Knaak,R-Sturua,Z Trnava 1980, while 17.Qe3 Ndf6 18.Ne5 (18.Bg3 Nxg3 ½-½ Portisch,L-Andersson,U Buenos Aires 1978) 18...Nd5 19.Qd2 (19.Qf3 Ndf4 20.Be4 Bxe4 21.Rxe4 f6 22.Nd3 Nxd3 23.Qxd3 f5 24.Ree1 Nf4 oo Gligoric,S-Browne,W Novi Sad 1979) 19...Ndf4 20.Bf1 Ng6 21.Bg5 h6! oo Acs,P-Gaertner,G Austria 1999, is not much either.

17...g6 18.Nh3 (D)



A novelty, probably prepared beforehand, as this is the first choice of most chess engines.

Previously 18.Qd2 has been tried: 18...Bd5 19.f3 Bc4 20.Bb1 Qf4 21.Qf2 oo Psakhis,L-Hillarp Persson,T Torshavn 2000.

18...e5

The basic prepared advance.

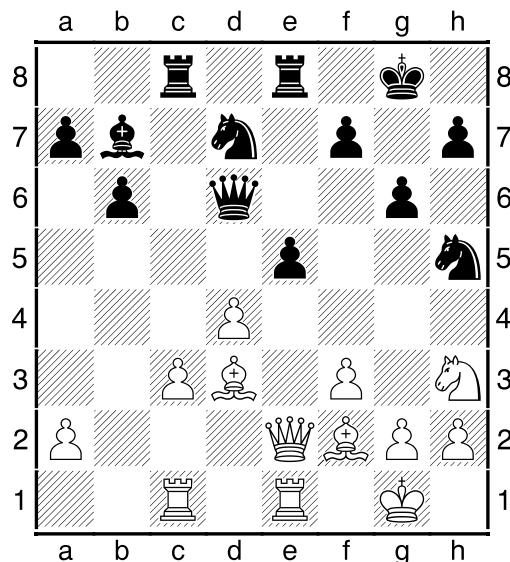
19.f3!

With his last move White stops an eventual ...e4 and prepares the relocation of his pieces.

19...Qd6

Black could consider 19...Bd5 planning to block the queenside with ...Bc4. After 20.Qd2 (20.c4?! Be6) 20...Bc4 21.Nf2 the position would offer more or less equal chances.

20.Bf2 (D)



20...exd4

Topalov decided to give up his rooks for White's queen, in order to liberate his position. 20...Nhf6 does not look bad either: 21.Qb2 (21.Bg3 Rxc3!) 21...exd4 22.Rxe8+ Rxe8 23.Bxd4 oo as White has the bishop-pair and Black the better pawn structure. Although this decision is not looking that bad at first sight, in general I am not in favour of it, as there was no need for and there was an OK continuation as an alternative.

21.Qxe8+ Rxe8 22.Rxe8+ Nf8

22...Kg7? 23.Bxd4+ Nhf6 24.Nf2 +/- would be bad for Black.

23.cxd4

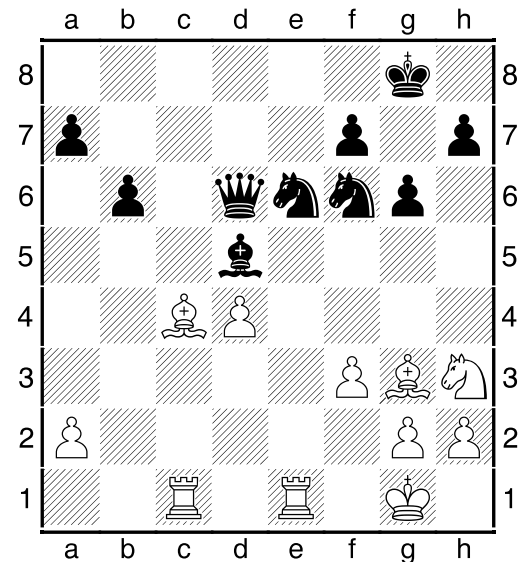
White would love to re-capture with the bishop, but after 23.Bxd4 Bc6 (23...Ng7 24.Re3 Nge6 25.Be5 +=) 24.Ree1 Ne6 oo

Black would be fine too.

23...Nf6 24.Ree1 Ne6 25.Bc4 Bd5

Square d5 must be controlled and d4-pawn must be blocked - this is the way that Black could keep a balanced game on.

26.Bg3 (D)



26...Qb4?!

26...Qd7 had to be preferred. After 27.Nf2 Bxc4 28.Rxc4 Nh5 (28...Nxd4? 29.Be5 +-) 29.Ng4 b5 a complicated position would be on the cards.

27.Be5 Nd7

After 27...Bxc4 28.Bxf6 the black king would feel rather unsafe, as mating threats along down his back rank should be always considered.

28.a3?!

White should go for 28.Bxd5 Nxe5 29.Bxe6 Qxd4+ 30.Kh1 fxe6 31.Ng5! (31.Rc8+ Kg7 32.Rc7+ Kf6 33.Rxa7 Qd2 34.Rf1 Nd3 oo) 31...Qd6 32.Red1 where he would stand clearly better due to Black's weak king and 7th rank.

28...Qa4

Also good was 28...Qb2!? 29.Bxd5 Nxe5 30.Bxe6 and now 30...Nd3! 31.Rc8+ Kg7 32.Rf1 fxe6 33.Rc7+ Kf6 34.Rxa7 Qxd4+ 35.Kh1 h5 oo, as White's pieces are uncoordinated, while Black's are standing fine and centralized.

29.Bxd5 Nxe5 30.Bxe6 Qxd4+?!

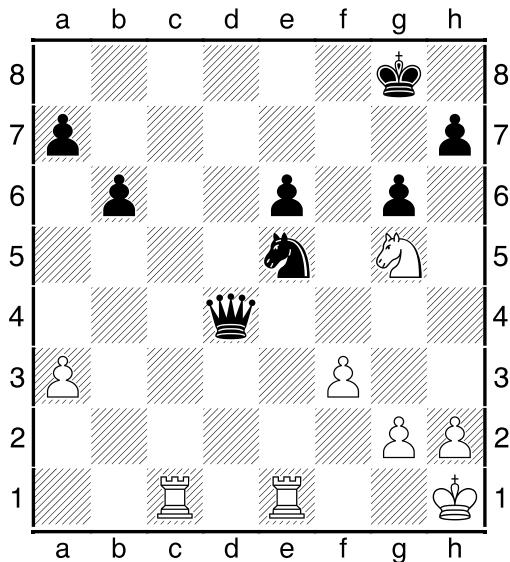
30...Nd3 should be OK for Black: 31.Rc4 (31.Bxf7+ Kxf7 32.Rc7+ Kf6 33.Rf1 Qxa3 [33...Qxd4+ 34.Kh1 Qa4 35.Rxh7 Qxa3

36.Rd7 +=] 34.Rxh7 b5oo) 31...Qxa3
 32.Bxf7+ Kxf7 33.Ng5+ Kf6 34.Ne4+ Ke6!
 35.Rf1 Qb2! oo.

31.Kh1 fxe6

Now its nearly back to the line analysed beforehand.

32.Ng5! (D)



32...Qd6 33.Ne4?!

Now 33.Red1 is not that strong as mentioned above due to the white pawn on a3: 33...Qxa3 oo. But White could go for; 33.Nxe6! h6 (33...Qxe6 34.f4 Kf8 35.fxe5 +/- ; 33...Qxa3 34.f4 +/-) 34.Rc8+ Kf7 35.Nd8+ Kg7 36.Rec1 and the coordination of his pieces gives him the advantage.

33...Qxa3

Black is very much on the game again - his queenside mass is the ideal compensation for White's active pieces.

34.Rc3

White could make a draw (of course with threefold repetition - how else in this match?) with 34.Rc8+ Kg7 35.Rc7+ Kh6 36.Nf6 Qa5 37.Rxh7+ Kg5 38.Ne4+ Kf5 39.Nd6+ Kf6 40.Ne4+ but he felt he is not in a danger to lose; always the rooks will find enough counterplay to keep the balance if in need.

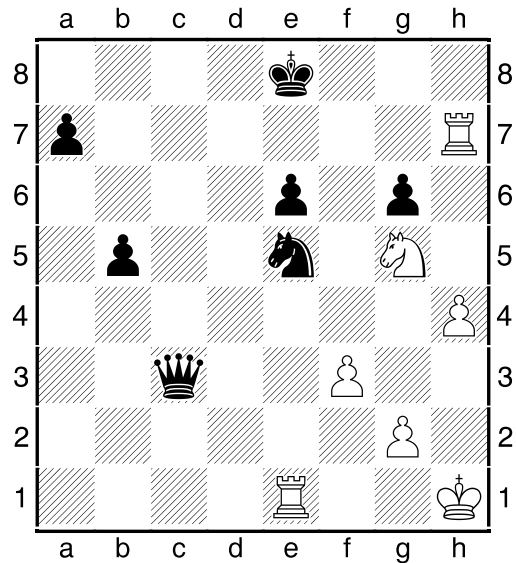
34...Qb2?!

It is important to disturb the rooks with 34...Qb4 35.Rd1 Qa4 36.Rdc1 oo. Now White has a free hand to attack the black king.

35.h4 b5 36.Rc8+ Kg7 37.Rc7+ Kf8?!

37...Kg8! should have been played. After 38.Nf6+ Kf8 39.Nxh7+ Ke8 40.Ng5 a5 nothing is still clear.

38.Ng5 Ke8 39.Rxh7 Qc3 (D)



40.Rh8+?

The legendary 40th move! White was in slight time trouble and let the king out of the box. The simple 40.Re2 a5 41.Nxe6 would probably bring the bacon home: 41...b4 42.Rc7 Qa1+ 43.Kh2 b3 44.Rb7 a4 45.Re4.

40...Kd7 41.Rh7+ Kc6!

Maybe Anand thought to 'repeat' moves with his 40th, but he forgot for the text move, expecting only 41...Ke8?.

42.Re4

Possibly the only move that takes the rook away from danger. White is hoping to insert Nxe6 and threaten Rc7+, but Topalov can push a5 and advance his pawn-mass. But the a5-square might be needed for his king's passage in case of some annoying checks.

42...b4

42...Kb6!/? is interesting. After 43.Re7 (43.Nxe6? Nxf3!) 43...Nc6 44.R7xe6 a5 oo Black has consolidated and can play for any result.

43.Nxe6 Kb6

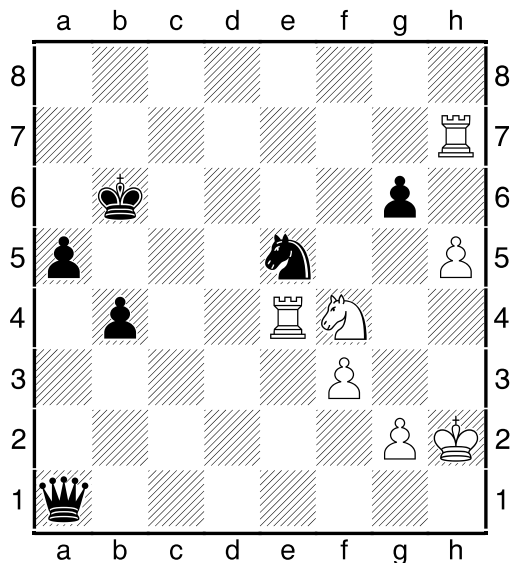
43...Kd5 (43...Kd6?! 44.Nd4 a6 45.Ra7 +=) is drawn: 44.Nf4+ Kd6 45.Rxa7 b3 46.Ra6+ Kd7 47.Ra7+ =.

44.Nf4! Qa1+ 45.Kh2 a5

A hair-cut position, difficult to calculate and evaluate to the bone.

46.h5! (D)

An excellent move, probably missed by Black. White's rook is coming back into play. The alternative was 46.Nxg6? Nxg6 47.Rh6 Qg7! 48.Re6+ Kc5 49.Rhxg6 Qc7+ 50.Kh3 b3 51.Re3 Qf7 52.Rg5+ Kb6 -/+.



46...gxf3?

The only move was 46...g5! 47.Rh6+ Kb5 48.Ne6 Ka4 (48...Nc6 49.Nc7+ Kb6 50.Rc4 Kxc7 51.Rhxc6+ Kd7 oo) 49.Nxg5 Nd3 oo. Note that 46...b3? 47.hxg6 b2 (47...Nxg6 48.Re6+ Kb5 49.Rh5+ Kc4 50.Re4+ Kc3 51.Rc5+ +-) 48.g7 b1Q 49.g8Q +- as the black king lacks shelter and 46...Nxf3+? 47.gxf3 gxf3 48.Rh6+ Kb5 49.Rxh5+ Ka4 50.Ree5 +- were plain losing.

47.Rxh5 Nc6 48.Nd5+

Now Black is back in trouble! With the second rook back into game, White obtains excellent and 'coordinated' play.

48...Kb7 49.Rh7+ Ka6 50.Re6 Kb5 51.Rh5 But his moves are easy and forced; at least the last five.

51...Nd4

Or 51...Nd8 52.Nb6+! Ka6 53.Rg6 +-.

52.Nb6+!

Keeping the black king in the 'box'.

52...Ka6 53.Rd6 Kb7

53...Nb5 54.Rg6 Qb1 55.Rgh6 leaves Black without a chance whatsoever.

54.Nc4

Time trouble again hit Anand who missed the straightforward 54.Nd5! as the coming Rh7+ is hard to meet.

54...Nxf3+

Black plays his last card, as the immediate 54...Qa2? fails to 55.Rh7+ Kc8 56.Nb6+ Kb8 57.Rd8 #.

55.gxf3

And not of course 55.Kg3? Qg7+!.

55...Qa2+ 56.Nd2 Kc7 57.Rhd5?!

57.Rhh6! was again stronger: 57...b3 58.Kg3 b2 59.Rdg6 and mate follows.

57...b3 58.Rd7+ Kc8 59.Rd8+ Kc7 60.R8d7+ Kc8

Anand repeated moves to reach the second time control and now he played the 'correct' continuation.

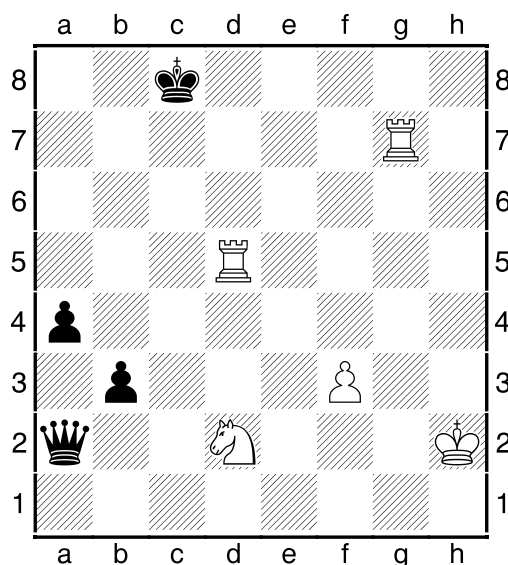
61.Rg7!

The white rooks will create mating threats on the black king who is boxed in his last rank.

61...a4 62.Rc5+

White again repeated moves in order to win time into the clock - from move 61st 30 seconds are added for each move.

62...Kb8 63.Rd5 Kc8 (D)



64.Kg3?

Anand continues his blunderstorm! The simple 64.Rdd7 Qb2 (64...Qc2 65.Kg3 b2 66.Ra7 Kb8 67.Rab7+ Kc8 68.Ne4 +-) 65.Kh3 Qf6 66.Rdf7 was curtains.

64...Qa1 65.Rg4?

65.Rdd7 was still giving serious chances to White: 65...Qg1+ 66.Kf4 Qc1 67.Ke5 +/-.

65...b2

Now it is a draw.

66.Rc4+ Kb7 67.Kf2 b1Q 68.Nxb1 Qxb1 69.Rdd4

69.Rxa4? Qc2+.

69...Qa2+ 70.Kg3 a3 71.Rc3 Qa1

71...Qg8+ 72.Rg4 Qb8+ 73.Kg2 Qd6 = was more accurate.

72.Rb4+ Ka6 73.Ra4+ Kb5 74.Rcxa3 Qg1+

Black has perpetual check as the white rooks cannot offer protection to their king; they are just too far away.

75.Kf4 Qc1+

75...Qh2+ would also do the job.

76.Kf5 Qc5+ 77.Ke4 Qc2+ 78.Ke3 Qc1+

79.Kf2 Qd2+ 80.Kg3 Qe1+ 81.Kf4 Qc1+

82.Kg3 Qg1+ 83.Kf4

1/2-1/2

Clocks: W: 3.21' - B: 3.11'



□ **Topalov, Veselin**

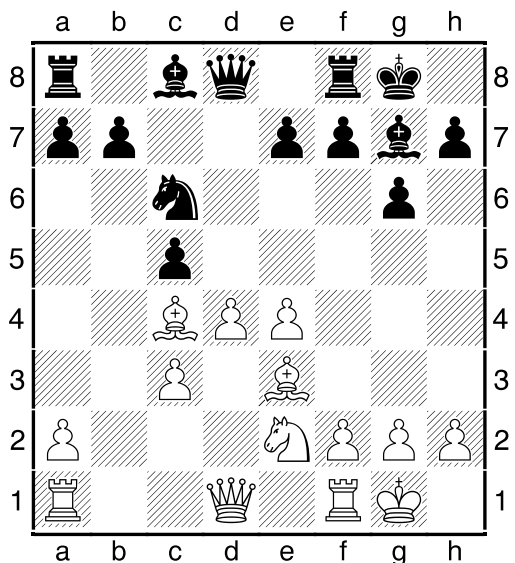
■ **Anand, Viswanathan**

D87 Sofia 07.05.2010 – Game 10

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5

The 'Grunfeld Defence' back in the match after game 1!

4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 Bg7 7.Bc4 c5 8.Ne2 Nc6 9.Be3 0-0 10.0-0 (D)



10...b6!?

Black deviates from game 1, where he tried 10...Na5 - see analysis. This is rare line, with not many games played and the most important of them are dated around 25-30 years ago. As this is a more or less not so 'forcing' variation, looks like a good choice - it is probably impossible for Topalov's seconds to have dig deeply enough in such a side-line.

11.Qd2

Probably best. Grabbing the pawn with 11.dxc5 Qc7! 12.Nd4 Ne5 (12...Bb7 13.cxb6 axb6 14.Nb5 Qe5 15.Bd5 e6 16.Bd4 Qf4 17.g3 Qh6 18.Bxc6 Bxc6 oo/= Christiansen,L-Jansa,V Luzern 1982) 13.Be2 (13.Nb5 Qb8 14.Bf4 bxc5 15.Rb1 a6 16.Na3 Qc7 17.Bd5 Ra7 18.Nc4 e6 19.Nxe5 Bxe5 20.Bxe5 Qxe5 21.Bc6 Qxc3 22.Qd6 Qd4 23.Rfd1 Qxd6 24.Rxd6 f6 25.Rc1 Kf7 26.Rxc5 Ke7 27.Rd1 Rc7 28.Rdc1 = Ristic,N-Jansa,V Smederevska Palanka 1984) 13...Bb7 14.cxb6 axb6 15.Nb5 Qc6 16.f3 Nc4 17.Bxc4 Qxc4 oo/=, gives Black able compensation, as in Portisch,L-Ftacnik,L Wijk aan Zee 1985. The other continuation with 11.Rc1 Bb7 12.d5 (12.Qd2 transposes to the game) 12...Ne5 13.Bb3 (13.Bb5 e6 14.c4 Ng4 15.Bf4 e5 16.Bd2 Qh4 17.h3 Nf6 18.f3 Bh6 19.Rc3 Ne8 oo Portisch,L-Schmidt,W Indonesia 1983) 13...c4 14.Bc2 e6 15.dxe6 Nd3! 16.Bxd3 Qxd3 17.exf7+ Rxf7 18.Ng3 Bxe4 19.Qa4 Qd5 20.Nxe4 Qxe4 21.Rfe1 Qd5 22.Rcd1 Qb7 23.Qxc4 Rc8 24.Qe6 Bxc3 25.Re2 Qc6 26.Qxc6 Rxc6 27.Rc2 Rcc7 28.Rd8+ 1/2-1/2 Polugaevsky,L-Miles,A Wijk aan Zee 1979, is not much either.

11...Bb7 12.Rac1 Rc8

12...Qd7 is possible: 13.Rfd1 Rfd8 14.dxc5 (14.f3!? +=) 14...Qxd2 15.Rxd2 Rxd2 16.Bxd2 bxc5 17.Be3 e6 oo Despotovic,M-Simic,R Belgrade 1988.

13.Rfd1

This is the natural follow-up, although it doesn't seem to offer White much. Topalov had some alternatives at his disposal:

a) 13.f3 Na5 14.Bb5 a6 15.Bd3 b5 16.d5 e6 17.dxe6 fxe6 18.Rfd1 Qe7 oo Lalic,B-Romanishin,O Sarajevo 1988.

b) 13.h4! (probably the most active and best) 13...Qd7! (13...Na5?! 14.Bd3 e6 15.h5 cxd4 16.cxd4 Qd7 17.Bh6 Rxc1 18.Rxc1 Rc8 19.Bxg7 Kxg7 20.h6+ Kg8 21.Rxc8+ Qxc8 22.Qg5 Qf8 [22...Nc6 23.Qf6 Qf8 24.d5 exd5 25.exd5 Nb8 26.d6 Qxh6 27.Bb5 Bc8 28.Nf4 Bd7 29.Nd5 Qg7 30.Qd8+ 1-0 Christiansen,L-Wurzel,A Porz 1991] 23.Nf4 Nc6 [23...f6 24.Qg4 Bc8 25.e5 Qxh6 26.exf6 Kf7 27.Ba6 Bd7 28.d5 Kxf6 29.dxe6 Bc6 30.e7 Kxe7 31.Qe6+ Kf8 32.Qd6+ Kf7 33.Qc7+ Kf6 34.Bc4 Nxc4 35.Qxc6+ Ke5 36.Qd5+ 1-0 Vladimirov,E-Semeniuk,A Soviet Union 1987] 24.Nh5 Qd6 25.Nf6+ Kh8 26.e5 Qd8 27.Be4 Na5 28.Bxb7 Nxb7 29.Qf4 Na5 30.d5 exd5 31.Nxd5 Kg8 32.e6 fxe6 33.Qe5 Qf8 34.Qxe6+ Kh8 35.Ne7 1-0 Knaak,R-Hartston,W Tallinn 1979) 14.h5 Na5 15.Bd3 cxd4 16.cxd4 Rxc1 17.Rxc1 Rc8 18.h6 Rxc1+ 19.Qxc1 Bf8 20.Nc3 += Lputian,S-Yudasin,L Lvov 1987.

13...cxd4

Technically a novelty by Anand, although this is a quite normal move in the 'Grunfeld Defence'. The old continuation was 13...Na5 14.Bd3 e5 15.dxe5 Bxe5 16.Bh6 Re8 17.Qe3 Qe7 18.f4 Bg7 19.Bxg7 Kxg7 20.Ng3 += De Boer,G-Smejkal,J Berlin West 1984.

14.cxd4 Qd6

14...e6 is a valid alternative.

15.d5

A committal move but Topalov had not much choice. It is true that Anand passed the opening exam with success, as his position is quite satisfactory.

15...Na5

After 15...Ne5 16.Bb3 Rxc1 (16...Ba6 17.Nd4 Ng4 18.Bf4 Bxd4 19.Bxd6 Bxf2+ 20.Qxf2 Nxf2 21.Bxe7 Nxd1 22.Rxd1 +=) 17.Rxc1 Rc8 18.Rxc8+ Bxc8 19.f4 += White can claim a very slight (tiny) advantage due to his strong centre.

16.Bb5

Inviting Black to play ...a6.

16...Rxc1

16...a6?! just weakens Black queenside, especially the b6-pawn. After 17.Bd3 White stands better.

17.Rxc1 Rc8

As Black is suffering from spatial disadvantage, naturally he exchanges rooks in order to ease his position.

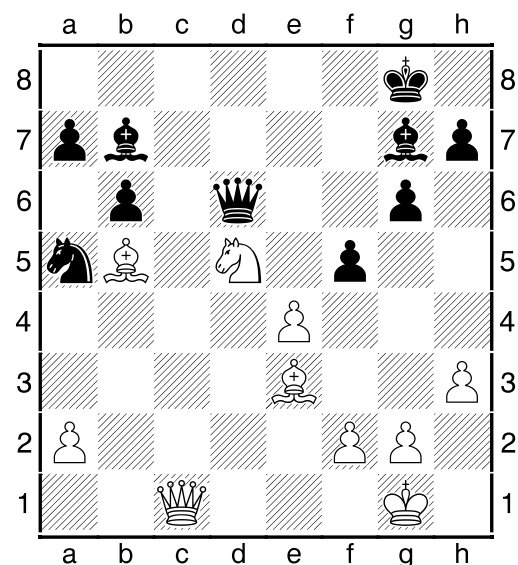
18.h3?!

I don't think that White can afford such moves. More or less he had to try 18.Rxc8+ Bxc8 19.Nd4 and hoping to get some initiative in the centre, due to his strong central pawns.

18...Rxc1+ 19.Qxc1 e6

19...f5 looks also fine and I would have preferred it. I think that White would continue with the simple 20.f3 =.

20.Nf4 exd5 21.Nxd5 f5 (D)



Of course 21...Nc6? would be just a blunder: 22.Bxc6 Bxc6 23.Qxc6! +- while 21...Bxd5?! gives White the advantage after 22.exd5 Qxd5 23.Qc8+ Bf8 24.Bh6 Qd1+ 25.Bf1 Qd6 26.Qa8 +/-.

22.f3

White still is trying to prove something (probably due to the knight on the rim) but probably he should accept his opening 'failure' by conceding to a draw: 22.Bf4 Be5 (22...Qc5 23.Qxc5 bxc5 24.Bd2 fxe4 25.Nc7! (25.Ne7+? Kf7 26.Nxg6 hxg6 27.Bxa5 Bd5! -/+) 25...Nc6 26.Bc4+ Kh8 27.Ne6 Ne5 28.Bb5 Nd3 29.Be3 Bd5 30.Nxc5 Nxc5 (30...Bxa2?! 31.Nxe4 Nb4 32.Bxa7 +=) 31.Bxc5 Bxa2 32.Bxa7 =) 23.Bxe5 Qxe5 24.Qg5! Kg7 25.Qd8 fxe4 26.Qd7+ Kh8 27.Qd8+ =.

22...fxe4 23.fxe4 Qe5

Black should not be greedy! Bad would be 23...Bxd5? 24.exd5 Qxd5 25.Qc8+ Kf7 (25...Bf8? 26.Bd7! Qd6 27.Be6+ Kh8 28.Qe8! +-) 26.Qe8+ Kf6 27.h4! and White's initiative is more than dangerous.

24.Bd3 Nc6

Black is happy with his position and he tries for something more. A draw should occur after 24...Bxd5 25.exd5 Qxd5 26.Qc8+ Bf8 27.Bf1 Nc6 28.Bh6 Qc5+ 29.Kh1 Ne5 30.Bc4+! Nxc4 31.Qe6+ =.

25.Ba6!?

25.Qc4 Kh8 is again equal.

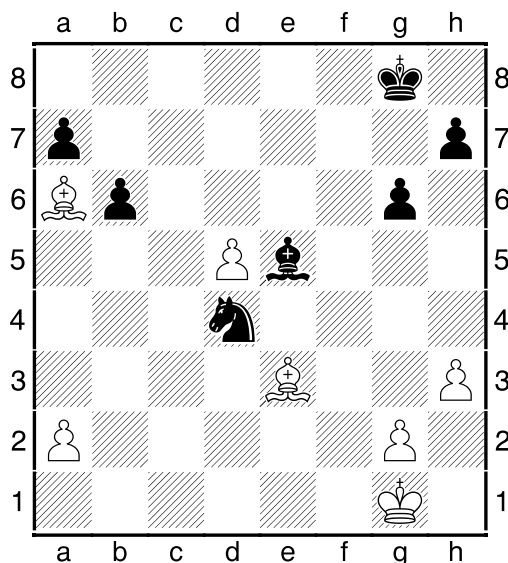
25...Nd4

25...Bxa6 is equal: 26.Qxc6 Qa1+ 27.Kh2 Be5+ 28.Bf4 Bxf4+ 29.Nxf4 Qe5 30.Qa8+ Kg7 31.Qxa7+ Kh6 32.Qxa6 Qxf4+ 33.Kh1 Qc1+ =.

26.Qc4 Bxd5

A forced exchange: 26...Bxa6? 27.Nf6+ Kf8 28.Qg8+ +-.

27.Qxd5+ Qxd5 28.exd5 Be5 (D)



In this ending chances are equal with mutual possibilities to gain the point, although the most expected result would be draw. White has the bishop-pair but his d-pawn would be more weak than passed, so his pawn structure is a bit worst. Black will try to blockade the d-pawn with his knight and then try to take advantage of his mobile pawn majority on the queenside. If White feels too much 'pressure' then he should exchange his darksquared bishop with the black knight, achieving an immediate draw

thanks to the opposite coloured bishops.

29.Kf2 Kf7 30.Bg5 Nf5 31.g4 Nd6 32.Kf3

As I do not believe that Black could have any real winning chances at all (the bishop-pair is nearly always strong!), it would be preferable to have taken a draw out of his many possibilities earlier.

32...Ne8?!

There is no need for that; the black knight belongs to d6... Black's plan only helps White to benefit by his bishop-pair.

33.Bc1

33.Ke4 Bg7 (33...Bd6 34.Bc8 Nc7) 34.a4 Nd6+ =.

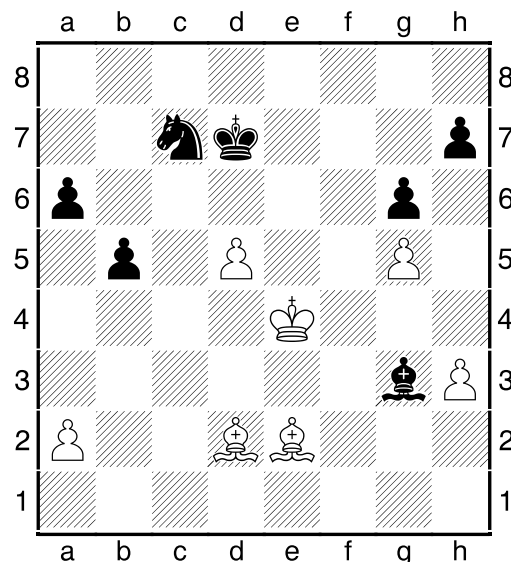
33...Nc7 34.Bd3 Bd6 35.Ke4 b5 36.Kd4 a6 37.Be2!

Now Black will face some trouble, as White's plan to expand on the kingside (g5 and h4-h5) and/or to go for Bg4-c8 and Bd2-a5 is dangerous. Black has to defend accurately.

37...Ke7 38.Bg5+ Ke7 39.Bd2

With the darksquared bishops off board, Black's advantage would be great; I would suggest to the readers to take a look at the game Zhu Chen-Korchnoi, V Marbella 1999.

39...Bg3 40.g5 Bf2+ 41.Ke5 Bg3+ 42.Ke4 (D)



42...Ne8!

The knight quickly gets back to its 'ideal' square.

43.Bg4+ Ke7 44.Be6 Nd6+ 45.Kf3 Nc4!

Black is now again OK, but nothing more.

46.Bc1 Bd6 47.Ke4 a5 48.Bg4 Ba3

49.Bxa3+

49.Bf4 Bd6 50.Bc1 is an immediate draw. As only Black has some tiny chances now, Topalov should have gone for that line - sometimes his desire to win might destroy him!

49...Nxa3 50.Ke5

Or 50.Be2 Kd6 51.Bd3 Nc4 (51...b4 52.Kd4 a4 53.h4 b3 54.axb3 axb3 55.Kc3 Nc2 56.Bxc2 bxc2 57.Kxc2 Kxd5 58.Kd3 =) 52.Bxc4 bxc4 53.Kd4 c3 54.Kxc3 Kxd5 =.

50...Nc4+ 51.Kd4 Kd6 52.Be2 Na3

52...Ne5!? was still interesting and surely more 'problematic' for White than Black: 53.h4 (53.Bxb5?! Nf3+ 54.Ke3 Nxc5 55.h4 Nf7 =+) 53...b4 54.Bd1 Nd7 55.Kc4 =.

53.h4

53.Bd3 b4 54.h4 transposes to the draw given above.

53...Nc2+ 54.Kc3 Nb4

Black could 'torture' White by 54...Ne3 although it should be still a draw after 55.Bxb5 Ng2 56.Kd4 Nxc4 57.Ke4 Nf5 58.Bd3.

55.Bxb5 Nxa2+ 56.Kb3 Nb4 57.Be2

White could also draw with 57.Ka4 Nxd5 58.Kxa5 Ke5 59.Bc4 Ne7 60.Kb6 Kf4 61.Kc5 Kg4 62.Kd6 Nf5+ 63.Ke5 Nxc4 64.Bg8 Nf3+ 65.Kf6 Nxc5 66.Bxc7 =.

57...Nxd5 58.h5 Nf4 59.hxc6 hxc6 60.Bc4

And the opponents agreed to draw, as after 60...Kc5 61.Bf7 Kb5 62.Be8+ Kb6 63.Ka4 Ka6 64.Bf7 there is nothing to fight for.

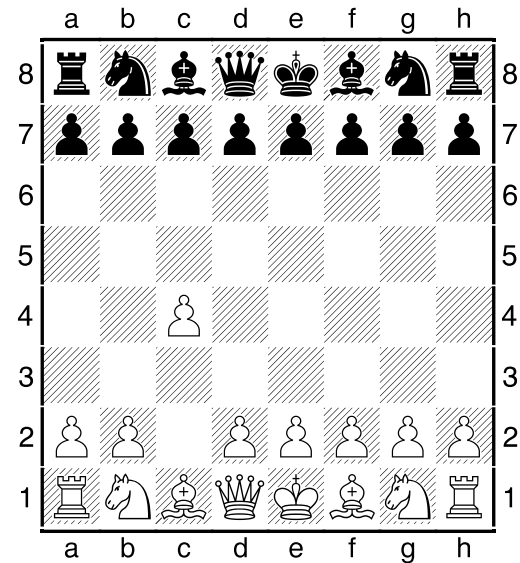
1/2-1/2

Clocks: W: 2.49' - B: 2.14'

□ **Anand, Viswanathan**■ **Topalov, Veselin**

A29 Sofia 09.05.2010 – Game 11

1.c4 (D)



A small surprise as all previous ten games started with 1.d4. It is obvious again that Anand wishes to side step Topalov's excellent opening preparation and just play a game 'over the board'.

1...e5 2.Nc3

Both opponents have some experience in this line: 2.g3 Nf6 (2...g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.Nc3 Ne7 5.Nf3 0-0 6.0-0 d5 7.cxd5 Nxd5 8.d3 += Anand, V-Boro Internet ICC 2007) 3.Bg2 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.Nf3 Nc6 6.0-0 Be7 7.d4 e4 8.Ne5 f5 9.Nxc6 bxc6 oo Paunovic, D-Topalov, V Villarrobledo 2008.

2...Nf6

Although Anand has played 1.c4 in very rare cases, while Topalov plays 1...e5 lines in nearly all his cases, as the games that are following can prove: 2...Nc6 3.Nf3 (3.g3 g6 [3...f5 4.Bg2 Nf6 5.e3 g6 6.d4 e4 oo Anand, V-Ljubojevic, L Roquebrune 1992] 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.e3 [5.d3 Nf6 6.e4 d6 7.Nge2 Nd7 8.0-0 Nc5 oo De Eccher, S-Topalov, V Forli 1988 ; 5.Rb1 d6 6.b4 f5 7.b5 Nce7 8.d3 Nh6 9.e3 0-0 10.Nge2 g5 11.h4 gxh4 12.Rxh4 Ng6 13.Rh1 += Anand, V-Weng, A Bad Mergentheim 1993] 5...d6 6.Nge2 h5 7.d4 h4 oo Cvetkovic, S-Topalov, V Vrnjacka Banja 1991) 3...Bb4 (3...g6 4.d4 exd4 5.Nxd4 Bg7 6.Nxc6 bxc6 7.g3 Ne7 8.Bg2 0-0 9.0-0 d6 10.Qd2 Be6 11.b3 Qd7 12.Bb2

+= Claesen,P-Topalov,V Arnhem 1989)
 4.d3 Bxc3+ 5.bxc3 d6 6.Rb1 Nge7 7.e3 0-0
 8.Be2 b6 9.Nd2 Be6 10.0-0 Qd7 oo
 Alterman,B-Topalov,V Elenite 1995.

3.Nf3

3.g3 Bb4 (3...d6 4.Bg2 c6 5.Nf3 Be7 6.0-0
 0-0 7.Qc2 Bg4 8.h3 Be6 9.b3 Qc8 10.Kh2
 Nfd7 11.d4 f6 12.Ba3 Qc7 13.Rad1 +=
 Hracek,Z-Topalov,V Arnhem 1989) 4.Bg2
 0-0 5.Qb3 a5 6.a3 Bxc3 7.Qxc3 Re8 8.d3 d5
 9.Bg5 d4 10.Qc2 Nbd7 11.c5 c6 12.Nf3 h6
 13.Bxf6 Nxf6 14.Nd2 Be6 = Galego,L-
 Topalov,V Yerevan 1996.

3...Nc6 4.g3

4.d3 d5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e4 Nb6 7.Be2 Be7
 8.0-0 0-0 9.a4 Be6 10.Be3 Nd7 11.d4 exd4
 12.Nxd4 Nxd4 13.Qxd4 c6 14.a5 Nc5 =
 Carlsen,M-Topalov,V Morelia/Linares 2008.

4...d5

4...Bc5 5.Bg2 d6 6.d3 h6 7.0-0 a6 8.a3 0-0
 9.b4 Ba7 10.Bb2 Bg4 11.h3 Be6 oo
 Lautier,J-Topalov,V Monte Carlo 1997.

5.cxd5 Nxd5

Now we have a reversed 'Sicilian Defence -
 Dragon Variation'.

6.Bg2 Nb6 7.0-0 Be7 8.a3

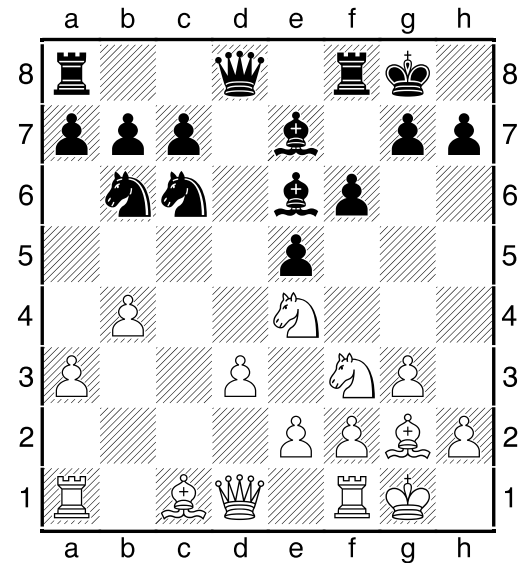
This is a finesse - White delays d3 in order
 to threaten b4-b5, when he would be able to
 take Nxe5 without being bothered by ...Bf6
 (his c3-knight is still covered by the d-pawn
 at the moment). Topalov has also some
 experience in this line: 8.Rb1 a5 9.d3 Be6
 10.Be3 0-0 11.Bxb6 cxb6 12.e3 b5 13.Nxb5
 Bxa2 14.Rc1 a4 15.Nc3 Bb3 16.Qe2 Be6
 17.Ra1 a3 18.bxa3 Rxa3 19.Rxa3 Bxa3
 20.Nb5 Be7 21.d4 Bg4 22.h3 Bxf3 23.Bxf3
 exd4 24.exd4 Bf6 25.Rd1 Qb6 26.Qc4 Rd8
 27.Kg2 Nxd4 28.Nxd4 Rxd4 ½-½
 Aronian,L-Topalov,V Wijk aan Zee 2007
 and 8.b3 0-0 9.Bb2 Bg4 10.Rc1 Qd7 11.d3
 Rad8 12.Ne4 f6 13.Qc2 Kh8 14.a3 a5
 15.Rfd1 Qe6 16.Re1 Qf7 17.Nfd2 Nd7
 18.Qc4 Be6 19.Qb5 f5 20.Qxb7 fxe4
 21.Qxc6 Bd5 22.Qxc7 Bg5 23.Nxe4 Bxc1
 24.Qxc1 Bxe4 25.Bxe4 Qxf2+ 26.Kh1 Nc5
 27.Bxe5 Nxe4 28.dxe4 Rfe8 29.Rf1 Qxe2
 30.Bxg7+ Kxg7 ½-½ Bareev,E-Topalov,V
 Monte Carlo 2002.

8...0-0 9.b4 Be6 10.d3

10.Rb1 f6 11.d3 Nd4 12.Nd2 c6 13.Bb2 Rf7

14.e3 Nf5 15.Qc2 Bf8 oo Bareev,E-
 Topalov,V Dortmund 2002. Now 10.b5 Nd4
 11.Nxe5? fails to 11...Bb3 -+.

10...f6 11.Ne4 (D)



A common idea, trying to place his knight
 on c5. Previously we have seen (among
 others) 11.Bb2. A sample 11...a5 12.b5 Nd4
 13.Nd2 c6 14.bxc6 Nxc6 15.Nb5 a4 16.Rc1
 Ra5 17.Nc3 Rf7 oo was played in Bacrot,E-
 Topalov,V Dubai 2002.

11...Qe8!?

That's a novelty which took Topalov around
 15 minutes thinking, so it doesn't seem to be
 pre-home preparation. Black want to place a
 rook on the d-file and keep the options of
 ...Qf7 or ...Qh5. Previously 11...Qd7 12.Bb2
 a6 13.Qc2 Bh3 14.Nc5 Bxc5 15.Bxh3 Qxh3
 16.Qb3+ Kh8 17.bxc5 Nd7 18.d4 Rab8
 19.dxe5 Ndx5 20.Nxe5 fxe5 21.Rad1 +=
 Miles,A-Timman,J Tilburg 1984 or 11...a5
 12.Nc5 Bxc5 13.bxc5 Nd5 14.Qc2 a4
 15.Rb1 Ra7 16.Bb2 Nde7 17.e3 Ba2
 18.Rbc1 Bd5 19.Qe2 Qd7 oo Miezis,N-
 Danin,A Utrecht 2009 has been played. Now
 it was Anand's turn to give some thought on
 his next moves/plan.

12.Nc5

Anand decided to take the bishop-pair and
 then try for e4, followed by d4 which will
 give him the advantage.

12...Bxc5 13.bxc5

The c5-pawn might become weak, more or
 less, but the open game for the bishop-pair
 would compensate for that. Now, except for

the above mentioned advance in the centre (or some slight pressure on the black b-pawn on the open b-file) there don't seem to be any other worthy plan for White.

13...Nd5 14.Bb2

White may continue with 14.Bd2 and Rb1 next, but after ...Rb8 he has to find something more consistent to bother his opponent, so he sticks to his 'central plan'.

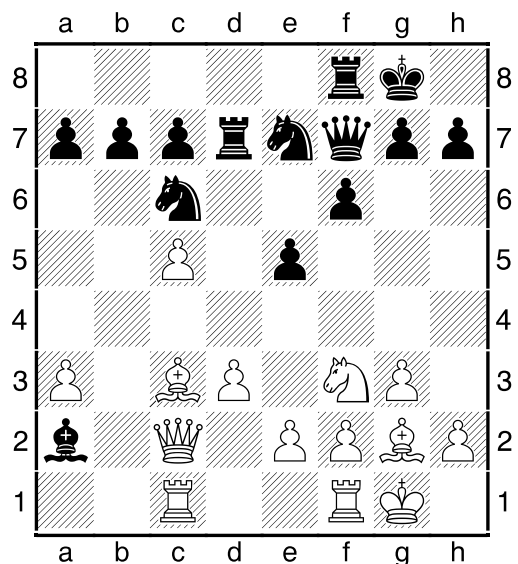
14...Rd8 15.Qc2 Nde7

It is important the d4-square to be fully controlled.

16.Rab1 Ba2 17.Rbc1

The rook is obviously only marginally better on c1 than on a1, but the equilibrium is not disturbed, as neither player can't undertake a direct action.

17...Qf7 18.Bc3 Rd7! (D)



A good, flexible move. Black can double rooks on the d-file (planning ...Nf5-d4) or just protect his b-pawn with the other rook. It is clear that he has no opening problems but of course a fierce battle is on the cards.

19.Qb2 Rb8

19...b6 weakens the long diagonal, though this may be only a dogmatic opinion.

20.Rfd1 Be6 21.Rd2

Anand has decided not to create himself any unnecessary weakness. Now in case of 21.e4 (idea d4) Black can reply 21...Bg4 and then possibly ...Bxf3 and ...Nd4.

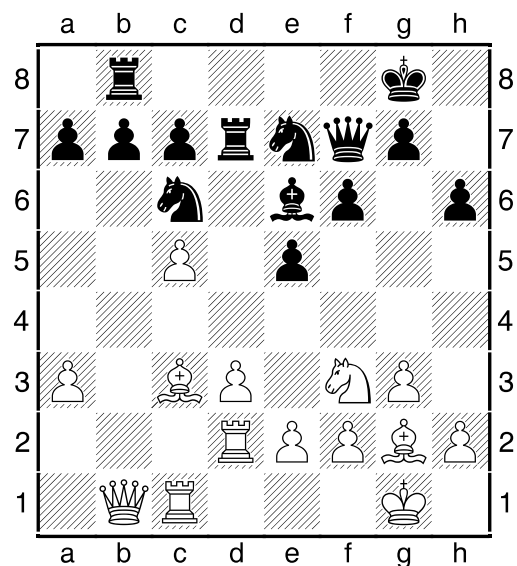
21...h6

A move without purpose - probably Black cannot find a worthy plan. Maybe Black

wants to continue with 21...Nf5? as this now is not possible due to 22.Ng5 fxg5 23.Bxc6 +/-.

22.Qb1! (D)

With the idea Rb2, pressing b7.



22...Nd5

22...Nd4? would be just a blunder: 23.Bxd4 exd4 24.c6! +/- and again 22...Nf5?! 23.Ng5 (23.Rb2 b6) 23...hxg5 24.Bxc6 Re7 25.e3! favours White.

23.Rb2 b6

Sooner or later Black will have to play this, but now White will have some pressure on the queenside - his pieces are ready for it. After 23...Nxc3?! 24.Rxc3 Black cannot defend his b7-pawn.

24.cxb6 cxb6?!

Topalov doesn't want to allow any pressure on his c-pawn after the other option with 24...axb6 but after 25.Rbc2 (25.Bd2!? Nde7 [25...Nce7? 26.e4] 26.Rbc2 Rd6 27.Bb4 Nxb4 28.axb4 c6 =) 25...Nxc3 26.Rxc3 Na5 (26...Nd4 27.Nxd4 exd4 28.Rc6 +=) 27.Nd2 Rbd8 it looks fine for Black.

25.Bd2

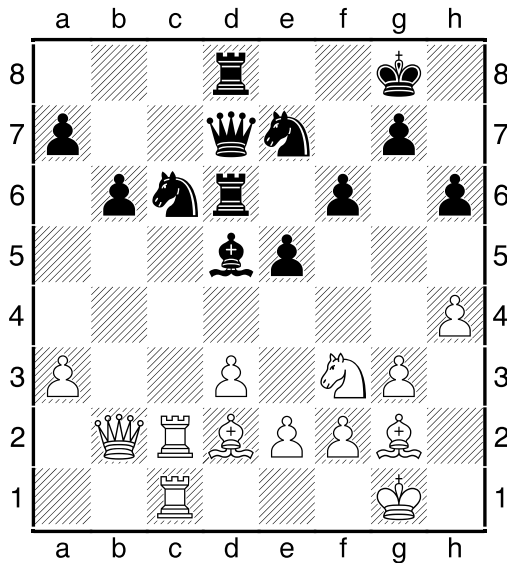
Now White seems to have gained a tiny but very pleasant advantage. His bishop-pair, the open c-file and generally the battlefield on the queenside, suits him.

25...Rd6 26.Rbc2 Qd7 27.h4

With the idea h5 and a future Nh4, achieving full control over the light squares on the kingside. On the other hand it is also discouraging Black's ...g5-g4 idea, which

could gain square d4 for his knight. White could also think of 27.Bb4 Ncxb4 28.axb4 += or simply 27.Qb2 +=, but he just wants to see what Black can plan...

27...Rd8 28.Qb5 Nde7 29.Qb2 Bd5 (D)



30.Bb4

White has to take some action.

30...Nxb4 31.axb4 Rc6!

A good move which stops Rc7 and reducing the power of the white rooks along the c-file.

32.b5 Rxc2 33.Rxc2 Be6

33...Rc8 is also fine: 34.Rxc8+ Nxc8 35.Qb4 Be6 (35...Nd6? 36.Nxe5 fxe5 37.Bxd5+ +-) 36.d4 e4 37.Nd2 f5 38.e3 =. The text move is more ambitious, but not necessarily better than 33...Rc8. The pawn on b5 prevents ...a5 and takes away the c6-square from Black. But of course it may prove weak in the long-run.

34.d4!?

Finally White achieved his opening aim but this move he could have played it from the very start!

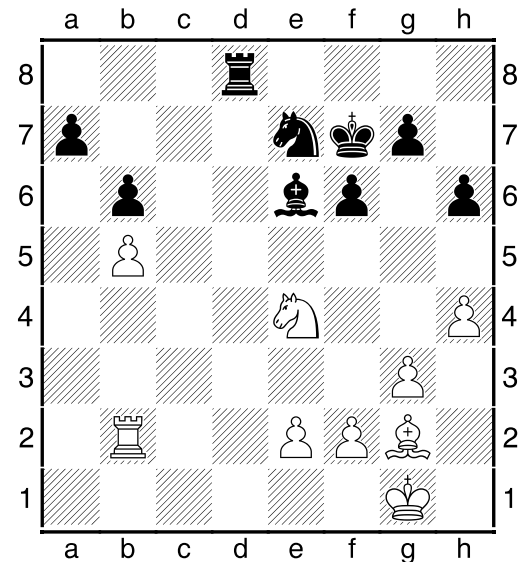
34...e4

If 34...exd4 White recovers the pawn thanks to 35.Rd2 Nf5 36.e4!.

35.Nd2 Qxd4

Simplest. 35...f5 36.e3 Rc8 = or 35...e3 36.fxe3 Nf5 oo/= were worthy alternatives by the way. It is understandable that both opponents don't feel like taking unnecessary risks with only two games remaining for the title of the FIDE World Champion...

36.Nxe4 Qxb2 37.Rxb2 Kf7 (D)



The arising endgame is about equal.

38.e3 g5

So this was the 'idea' behind ...Kf7; Topalov wants to improve his pawn structure and perhaps have another front for the later stage. Now he should decide how to arrange the pieces - where should his rook be placed, which piece goes to d5, etc.

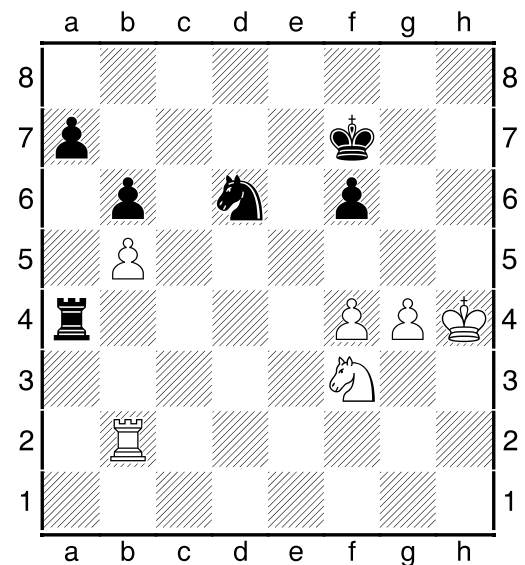
39.hxg5 hxg5 40.f4 gxf4 41.exf4

41.gxf4?! Nf5 42.Kf2 Rd3 43.Re2 Bd5 += was a bit annoying.

41...Rd4 42.Kf2 Nf5 43.Bf3 Bd5 44.Nd2 Bxf3 45.Nxf3 Ra4

On 45...Rd5 planning ...Nd6, White always can replay 46.Ra2.

46.g4 Nd6 47.Kg3 Ne4+ 48.Kh4 Nd6 (D)

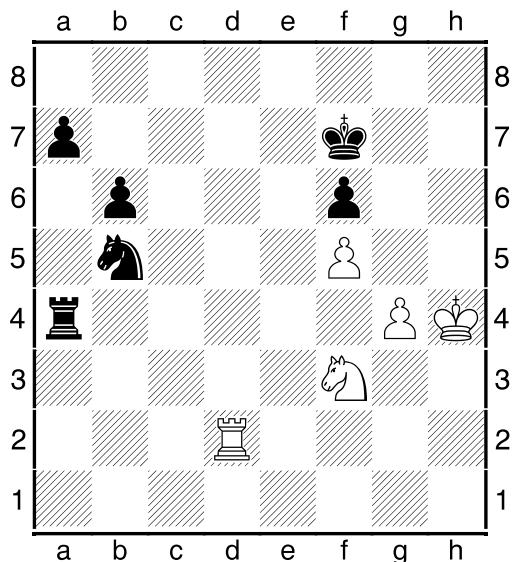


49.Rd2?

A big surprise by Anand who left both his

b5- and f4-pawns hanging, in order to break down to the 7th rank; his attacking resources are very limited, but the counterplay maybe 'secures' the draw. On the natural 49.Kg3 I think that Topalov would agree to a draw with 49...Ne4+.

49...Nxb5 50.f5 (D)



50...Re4?

Immediately returning the favour! As a first choice 50...Nc3?! looked more dangerous for White. But after 51.Kh5! (51.Rd7+?! Ke8 52.Rb7 Nd5 -/+) 51...Rf4 52.Nh4 Ne4 53.Rd7+ Ke8 54.Rxa7 Ng3+ 55.Kg6 Rxg4+ 56.Kxf6 Rxh4 57.Ke6 he will clinch the draw. Critical was 50...Rf4! 51.Rd7+ (51.Kg3 Rb4!) 51...Ke8 52.Rd3 a5 53.Kh5 (or 53.Rb3 Rb4 54.Re3+ Kf7 55.Kh5 a4 56.g5 Rb3!) 53...a4 -/+ and it is not clear whether White will survive. In other words, Anand would have had some problems...

51.Kh5!

Now White's active pieces should offer enough compensation to keep the balance.

51...Re3 52.Nh4 Nc3 53.Rd7+ Re7 54.Rd3 Ne4 55.Ng6 Nc5

After 55...Rc7 56.Kh6 White would be very active and would even threaten Rd8-f8 mate!

56.Ra3?!

Anand misses 56.Nxe7 Nxd3 57.Nc8 when it is an immediate draw.

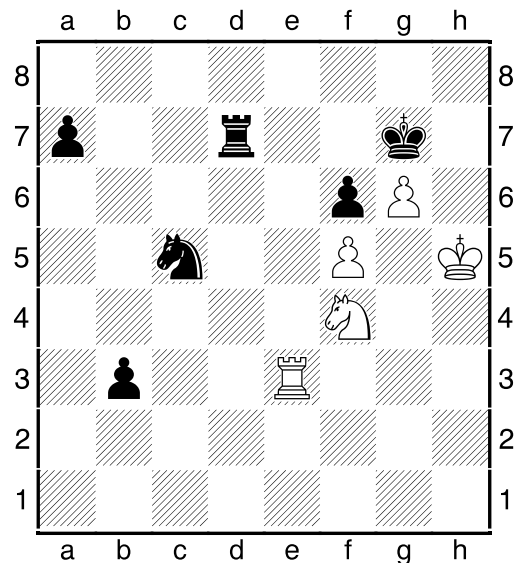
56...Rd7 57.Re3!

The rook should be active; on a3 it was just defending.

57...Kg7 58.g5 b5 59.Nf4 b4

Risky, but 59...fxg5 60.Kxg5 b4 61.f6+ Kf7 62.Kf5 b3 63.Ng6 gives White enough counterplay for the draw.

60.g6 b3 (D)



Black should try to push his pawn as quicker as it is possible, otherwise it might be White in the driver's seat, due to his strong g6-pawn.

61.Rc3!

61.Re8 b2 62.Rb8 Rd2 63.Kg4 is also equal, but the text move contains a nice trap while doesn't change the evaluation.

61...Rd4!

Black should not be careless and sidestep 61...b2? 62.Rxc5 b1Q 63.Ne6+ Kg8 64.Rc8+ Rd8 65.Rxd8 # and also avoid the 'suffering'; 61...Rc7?! 62.Rxb3! Nxb3 63.Ne6+ Kg8 64.Nxc7 +=.

62.Rxc5

62.Ne6+ Nxe6 63.Rc7+! Nxc7 stalemate (!) is a nice way to draw!

62...Rxf4 63.Rc7+

Or 63.Rb5 Rf3 64.Rb7+ =.

63...Kg8 64.Rb7

64.Rg7+ Kxg7 stalemate, was also cute!

64...Rf3

64...Rxf5+?? 65.Kh6+- was what Anand was hoping for!

65.Rb8+ Kg7

1/2-1/2

Clocks: W: 2.51' - B: 2.52'

□ Topalov, Veselin

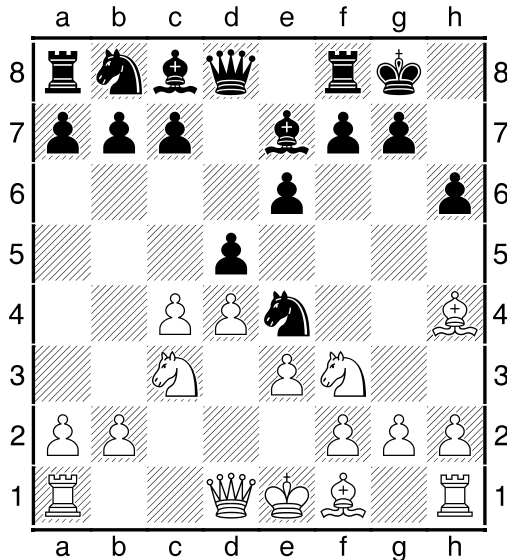
■ Anand, Viswanathan

D56 Sofia 11.05.2010 – Game 12

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6

A bit of surprise by Anand but also a welcome change of the 'Slav & Grunfeld Defences'.

3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 Be7 5.Bg5 h6 6.Bh4 0–0
7.e3 Ne4 (D)



The 'Lasker Variation' of the 'Queen's Gambit Declined'. A solid approach but mostly a drawing weapon; a clear sign that Anand is concerned in driving the match to the tie-breaks. Well, this is not a bad strategy as he is quite famous as an excellent player (also) in limited time-controls.

8.Bxe7 Qxe7 9.Rc1 Nxc3 10.Rxc3 c6
11.Be2 dxc4 12.Bxc4 Nd7 13.0–0

If White wishes to avoid Black's next move, then here is the time to play 13.Bb3 when Black will have to go for 13...e5. I have published a fully detailed survey on the 'Lasker Variation' in *NIC Yearbook 90*, where I am analysing all these interesting and rather popular variations.

13...b6

13...e5 14.Bb3 Rd8 (14...exd4 15.exd4 Nf6 16.Re1 Qd6 17.Ne5 Nd5 18.Rg3 += was the famous 8th game of the FIDE-Wch Candidates match Karpov, A-Jussupow, A London 1989, which clinched the match 4½:3½ for A.Karpov - yes, he won this last game!) 15.Re1 exd4 16.exd4 Qd6 was played in Topalov, V-Carlsen, M Sofia 2009.

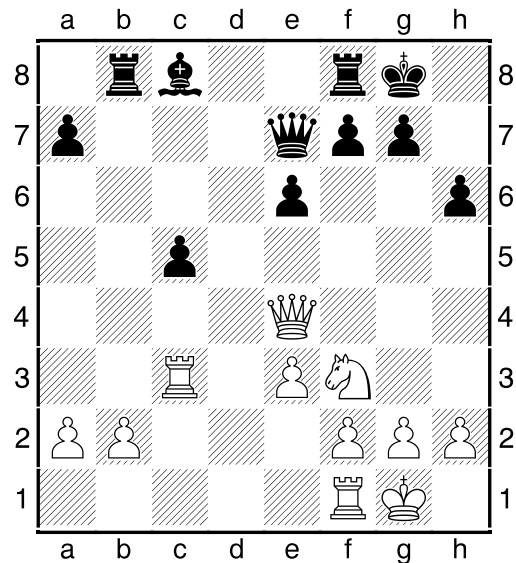
14.Bd3 c5 15.Be4 Rb8 16.Qc2

Best. White cannot get more than a draw after 16.Qa4?! when the stem game went 16...Nf6! 17.Bc6 cxd4 18.exd4 a6 19.Ne5 Bb7 20.Rfc1 Nd5 21.Bxd5 Bxd5 22.Qxa6 Ra8 23.Qxb6 Qg5 24.g3 Rxa2 25.Nd7 Qd2 26.Nxf8 (26.Rc8 Rxb2 27.Rxf8+ Kh7 28.Rh8+ Kxh8?? (28...Kg6! oo) 29.Rc8+ Kh7 30.Nf8+ Kg8 31.Nxe6+ Kh7 32.Nf8+ Kg8 33.Ng6+ Kh7 34.Rh8 # 1–0 Grivas, E-Krivososov, O Internet ICC 2008) 26...Rxb2 27.Qxb2 Qxb2 28.Rc8 Bb7 29.Nxe6+ Bxc8 30.Rxc8+ Kh7 31.Nf8+ ½–½ Zvjaginsev, V-Bologan, V Poikovsky 2003.

16...Nf6!

This is the latest word in fashion and probably the best move for Black. 16...a5 17.Rd1 Ba6 18.Bc6 cxd4 19.Nxd4 Nc5 20.a3 += was L'Ami, E-Jussupow, A Amsterdam 2008.

17.dxc5 Nxe4 18.Qxe4 bxc5 (D)



White has the better pawn structure and Black a good bishop and counterplay on the queenside. But generally White is very safe and can play for two results in principle.

19.Qc2

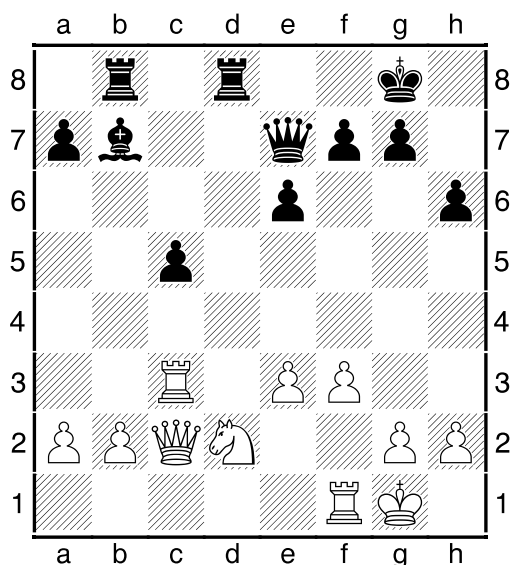
This is a novelty. In my above mentioned survey 19.b3 is analysed, when Black can continue with 19...Bb7 20.Qe5! (the white queen is optimally placed in the centre. This is an improvement over 20.Qf4 Bxf3 21.Qxf3 Rfd8 22.Rfc1 Rd2 23.R1c2 Rbd8 24.g3 Rxc2 25.Rxc2 Rd5 26.Kg2 Qd6 27.h4 a6 28.Rc4 Rd2 29.Ra4 Qd3 30.h5 f6 31.g4

Kh7 ½–½ Kulaots,K-Grabarczyk,M Borup 2008) 20...Bxf3 21.gxf3 Rbc8 22.Rd1 ½–½ Olsen,H-Grabarczyk,M Klaksvik 2008. White stands slightly better due to the weak black c-pawn and his d-file control and he should continue the battle with minimal risk.

19...Bb7 20.Nd2

The careless 20.Rxc5? Bxf3 21.gxf3 Rxb2 22.Qxb2 Qxc5 can only be good for Black. Also not good is 20.Ne5? Bxg2! (20...Qg5? 21.f4 +/-) 21.Kxg2 Qg5+ -/+.

20...Rfd8 21.f3 (D)



White wants to take full control of the d5 square (by an eventual e4) and block the h1-a8 diagonal of the black bishop, and then start pressing the weak c-pawn. It's clear that White has a tiny but quite secure advantage - Black has to be on the alert in order to keep this tiny advantage in bay.

21...Ba6

Another option for Black was 21...Qg5 22.Rc1 (22.Rf2!?) 22...Rbc8 23.Nc4 Bd5 24.Qe2 +=.

22.Rf2?!

Topalov wishes to protect his second rank, but probably the rook is not living its brightest days on f2. The alternative was 22.Rc1 Rd5 23.e4 Rh5 24.Nc4 +=.

22...Rd7!

Black doesn't need to protect his c-pawn directly - doubling on the d-file is a priority.

23.g3

Black can pose White some problems after 23.Nb3 Rbd8 24.Rd2 Qh4! although the

balance can be kept by precise play: 25.Qc1 (25.Rxd7?? Qe1#) 25...c4 26.Rxd7 Rxd7 27.Nc5 Rd5! 28.Ne4 (28.Nxa6? Qd8! -+) 28...Qd8 29.Nf2 Qb6 =.

23...Rbd8 24.Kg2

White has to move his king from his first rank, as 24.Nb3? loses to 24...Bd3 25.Qc1 Be4 26.Nd2 Bxf3!.

24...Bd3 25.Qc1 Ba6

A silent draw proposal. Black could think of 25...e5!? 26.Rxc5 Bf5 oo/= or even 25...h5 oo.

26.Ra3

Topalov doesn't agree and tries his chances, or either he didn't want to give Black the opportunity to go for the above mentioned unclear lines after 26.Qc2 Bd3. But I think he should accept the 'draw offer', as he has no advantage left anymore.

26...Bb7 27.Nb3

It looks like White's pieces and especially his rooks are uncoordinated. More harmonious is 27.Nc4 Rd1 28.Qc2 Bc6 29.e4. Of course 27.Rxa7? (here or later) 27...Bxf3+ -+ is out of the question.

27...Rc7

Again Anand could think of 27...c4 28.Qxc4 Rc8 29.Qa4 e5 oo/=, but he prefers to play it safe.

28.Na5

Exchanging a pair of rook with 28.Rd2 is not a bad idea, although White is losing a defending piece of his king.

28...Ba8

Anand decided to stay on the long diagonal and moved his bishop to a8. He wanted to keep his bishop on this diagonal in order to have the move ...f5 if White plays e4. White always has to keep in his mind this dangerous bishop who is looking directly at the white monarch. 28...Ba6 29.Nc4 Bb5 was also possible.

29.Nc4 e5 30.e4

Too provocative and optimistic. Why not 30.Rc3 e4 31.f4 oo.

30...f5! 31.exf5? (D)

A critical mistake. White had to go for 31.Nd2 fxe4 32.Nxe4 Bxe4 33.fxe4 Rd4 when Black has some initiative but White should keep the position without too much

won for Black.

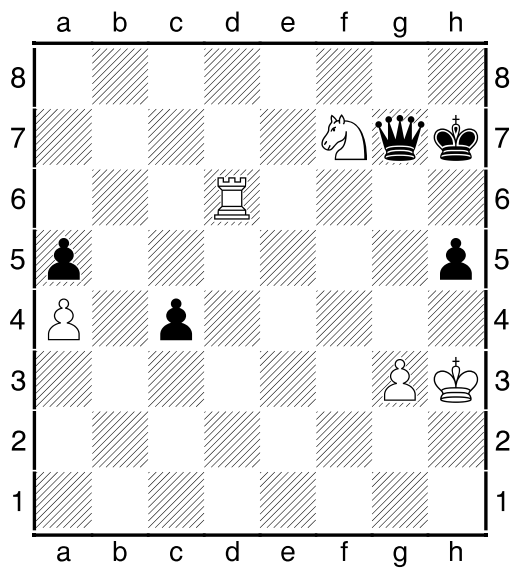
47...Qe2+

Of course Black is winning but some accuracy is in need, e.g. to avoid an ending queen and a-pawn vs rook and a- and g pawns, which might be drawish - there is an old study by J.Timman.

48.Kh3 c4 49.a4 a5 50.Rf6 Kg8 51.Nh6+ Kg7 52.Rb6 Qe4!

Centralization of the queen underlines White's problem in this ending. Black will win White's b-pawn without losing any of his - zugzwang will help in this direction.

53.Kh2 Kh7 54.Rd6 Qe5 55.Nf7 Qxb2+ 56.Kh3 Qg7 (D)



And Topalov resigned rewarding the title to Anand! This was the first win by black pieces in the last game! It allowed Anand to retain his World Champion title, winning the match with the minimum score of 6½:5½.

0-1

Clocks: W: 2.16' - B: 2.17'



N	N/S	T/C/R	Games	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	S		
1	Topalov Veselin	GM BUL 2805	Result	1	0	½	0	½	½	½	1	½	½	½	0	5½		
			Colour		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	6/6
			Moves	30	42	46	31	44	58	57	56	82	60	65	56	627		
			Time	40	121	113	111	127	136	130	120	196	169	172	137	1572		
2	Anand Vishy	GM IND 2787	Result	0	1	½	1	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	1	6½		
			Colour	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	6/6	
			Moves	29	43	45	32	43	58	58	55	83	59	65	56	626		
			Time	83	112	108	99	116	125	154	168	206	134	171	136	1612		

GM & FST & IA & IO Efstratios Grivas

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Anand**

India