

Round 7



FIDE International Arbiter Andy Howie receives his special prize for surviving 'manflu' and laryngitis

Bremner, Adam	0-1	Michielsen, Joost
Berry, Neil	1/2-1/2	Green, Andrew
Kilpatrick, Callum	1-0	Steil-Antoni, Fiona
MacQueen, Calum	1/2-1/2	McNab, Colin
Hamitevici, Vladimir	1-0	Burnett, Andrew

The leaders were due to face the tail-enders in this round. So far no-one had managed to take even half-a-point from Joost. Adam played the Exchange Variation of the Slav Defence, as draw-ish as it gets you'd think, but Joost found some clever ways to tip the balance in his favour and continue his incredible run.

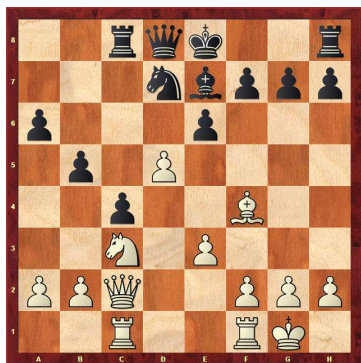
Callum Kilpatrick brought home the full point also to keep up the chase for 1st place and his final IM norm, although Fiona could well have held the ending. I mis-assessed the opening, fought back quite well but then *really* mis-assessed the endgame. Too many miss-es!

With the other games being steady and unremarkable draws, the tournament was now a 2-horse race and the finishing post was in sight.

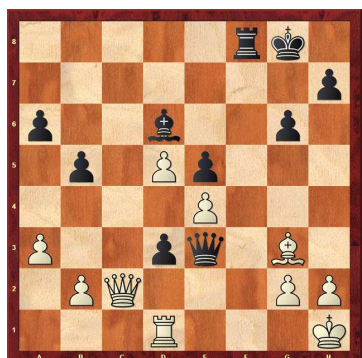
(31) Bremner,Adam (2189) – Michiel–sen,Joost (2343) [D10]

Winter Chess Festival -Premier (7.1), 03.01.2014

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.cxd5!? As black I dread facing this move. Not only is it difficult to disturb the peace should white play conservatively, but most of the sharper options come from white's side! 3...cxd5 4.♟f4 ♘c6 5.e3 ♘f6 6.♘c3 ♟g4!? [6...a6 is more usual but the text move has been played by both Kramnik and Shirov in the past.] 7.♟b3 ♘a5 8.♟a4+ ♟d7 9.♟b5 e6 [RR 9...♘c6 10.♘f3 a6 11.♟xc6 ♟xc6 12.♟b3 e6 13.♘e5] 10.♟xd7+ ♘xd7 11.♘f3 [RR 11.♘b5?! looks premature after 11...♟c8 12.♘xa7 ♟c4 13.♟b5 ♟b4] 11...a6 12.♟c1 ♘c4N 13.♟c2 ♟c8 14.♘d2 b5 15.♘xc4 dxc4?! This move doesn't look correct to me at all!? [15...bxc4 follows the rule of capturing towards the centre, but ; 15...♟xc4 looks best and black should have no problems at all. 16.a3 b4 17.axb4 ♟xb4 18.0-0 0-0 19.♟d3 ♟a5 and Rfc8] 16.0-0 ♟e7 17.d5!?



The problem with black's choice of recapture on c4 is that it allows white a lot of leeway in the centre. If he were better developed this might not be a big issue as he will be able to make some inroads on the q-side, but he can't do that just yet. That being said, there is no clear way for white to cause serious problems – perhaps Joost simply wanted to play an unbalanced position with winning chances instead of a dour symmetrical struggle? Or perhaps Joost is simply more knowledgeable than me and his choice was correct all along! 17...e5 18.♟g3 0-0 19.♟cd1 ♟d6 20.e4!? ♘c5 21.a3 ♘d3 The complete blocking of the centre hasn't favoured white here and black has a certain initiative. 22.♘a2 g6 [It was also possible to play 22...f5!? immediately 23.exf5 ♟c5 24.♘c1 e4 and now I like black's position as every piece will find a role to play.] 23.♘c1 f5 24.f3 fxe4 [24...♟b6+ should transpose, but white must avoid 25.♟f2? when 25...♘xf2 26.♟xf2 ♟c5 pins and wins] 25.fxe4 ♟b6+ 26.♘h1 ♟e3 27.♟xf8+ ♟xf8 28.♘xd3 cxd3 and now white's back-rank weakness will lose him the game.

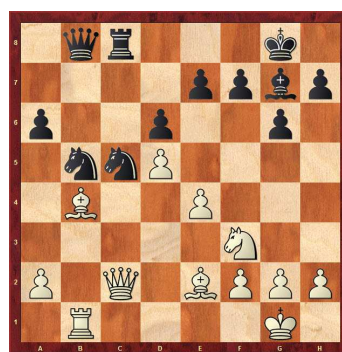


29.♟c6 d2 30.h4 [If 30.♟xd6 then 30...♟e1+ 31.♟xe1 (or 31.♟xe1 ♟f1#) 31...dxe1♟+ 32.♟xe1 ♟f1#] 30...♟xg3 31.♟xd6 ♟xh4+ 32.♟g1 ♟e1+ 33.♟h2 ♟xd1 34.♟e6+ ♟g7 35.♟e7+ ♟f7 36.♟xe5+ ♟h6 and with no perpetual available white resigned. An interesting game and worthy of study. The Michielsen Express rolls on! 0-1

(32) Berry,Neil (2242) – Green,Andrew (2148) [A57]

Winter Chess Festival -Premier (7.2), 03.01.2014

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.♟c2 Not the most common choice here but a sensible side-line. 4...bxc4 5.e4 d6 6.♟xc4 g6 7.♘f3 ♟g7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘c3 ♟a6 10.♘b5 ♘e8 11.♟d2N ♘c7 12.♟a5 ♟xb5 13.♟xb5 ♟c8 14.♟e2 ♘d7 15.♟ab1 ♟b8 16.b4 a6 17.bxc5 ♘xc5 18.♟xb8 ♟xb8 19.♟b1 ♘b5 20.♟b4 [20.a4 ♘a3 is nothing for black to worry about] 20...♟c8



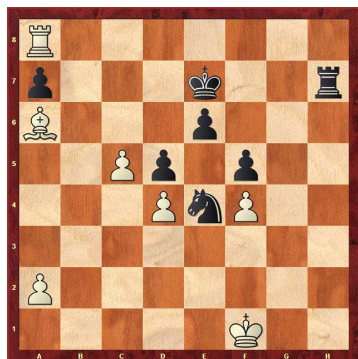
21.♟xb5 [21.a4 Now this move is more interesting 21...♘xa4 22.♟xa4 ♘c3 23.♟xc3 ♟xb1+ 24.♟e1 but it looks very awkward for white and I'm not surprised that Neil avoided it.] 21...♟xb5 22.♟e1 ♟d7 23.h3 ♟c7 24.♘d2 ♟b8 and black has managed to exchange off the most important pieces to achieve equality. Not the most exciting of games but still a useful example of solid chess from both players. ½-½

(33) Kilpatrick,Callum (2350) – Steil–Antoni,Fiona (2190) [B11]

Winter Chess Festival -Premier (7.3), 03.01.2014

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♘f3 ♟g4 4.h3 ♟xf3 5.♟xf3 e6 6.♟e2 ♘f6 7.0-0 ♟c5N 8...♘xe4 9.♟xe4 ♘d7 10.d4 ♘f6 11.♟e3 ♟d6 12.c4 0-0 13.b3 ♟e7 14.a3 e5 15.♟b2 ♟fe8 16.dxe5 ♟xe5 17.♟xe5 ♟xe5 18.♟xe5 ♟xe5 19.♟f3 ♘f8 20.♟f1 ♟ae8 21.b4 ♘e7 22.♘f1 ♟d8 23.c5 Short,N (2676)–Anand,V (2794)/Merida 2001, ½-½) 8.d3 0-0 9.♟g3 ♘bd7 10.♘a4 ♟d4 11.c3 ♟e5 12.f4 ♟c7 13.e5 b5! A well-timed counterpunch. Retreating the knight to e8 would have been too compliant. 14.exf6 ♟xf6 15.♟d1 ♟ac8 [15...♟ab8!? was interesting, with a couple of little tactical points 16.d4 (16.♟e3 bxa4 17.♟xa4 ♟xb2) 16...bxa4 17.♟xa4 ♘b6 18.♟xc6 e5] 16.♟e3 bxa4 17.♟xa4 ♟b6 18.d4 ♟g6 19.♟f2 [19.♟xg6 hxg6 20.b4 was a solid alternative to the text move.] 19...f5! The start of a good plan. 20.c4 ♘f6 21.c5 ♘e4 22.♟e2 ♟a5 [22...♘g3!? looks obvious but Black shouldn't give up the beautifully positioned knight unless she gains something real in return. 23.♟a6 ♘xf1 24.♟xf1 ♟c7 25.♟xc6 leaves black's pieces very restricted.] 23.♟a6 ♟d2 24.♟xd2 ♘xd2 25.♟f1 ♘e4 26.♟d3 ♟e8 27.b4 [27.♟xa7?? ♟a8

winning the bishop should be avoided!] 27...♖d7 28.b5 cxb5 29.♖xb5 ♖xb5 30.♙xb5 ♖c7 31.♙a6 ♖f7 32.♖b1 ♖e8 33.♙a3 ♖ee7 34.h4 g6 35.♖b8 White has managed to maintain a slight advantage, but progress won't be easy. 35...h6 36.♖ab3 g5 37.hxg5 hxg5 38.g3 gxf4 39.gxf4 ♖f6 40.♖f8+ ♖f7 41.♖xf7+ ♖xf7 42.♖b8 ♖g7+ 43.♖f1 ♖h7 44.♖f8+ ♖e7 45.♖a8



♖f6?! [I don't think black's position is defensible by normal means, so Fiona ought to have 'gone active' with 45...♖h2! as after 46.♖xa7+ ♖f6 47.c6?! she has 47...♖d2+ 48.♖e1 ♖f3+ when 49.♖f1 (49.♖d1? this even loses! The rook and knight combine very well together. 49...♖h1+ 50.♖c2 ♖xd4+) 49...♖d2+ 50.♖g1 ♖f3+ repeats] 46.c6 ♖c7 47.♙b7 ♖d6 48.♖xa7 ♖b5 49.♖a4 ♖e7 50.♖b4 ♖a7 51.♖b6 ♖d6 52.a4 ♖xc6 53.♖e2 ♖xb7 forced because [53...♖d7 54.♙xc6+ ♖xc6 55.♖xc6 ♖xc6 56.♖d2 ♖b6 57.♖c3 ♖a5 58.♖b3 ♖a6 59.♖b4 ♖b6 60.a5+ ♖a6 61.♖c5 wins easily] 54.♖xb7 ♖xd4+ 55.♖d3 ♖c6 56.♖b6 ♖c7 57.♖b5 [57.a5 transposes to the game after a few repetitions first 57...♖xa5 58.♖xe6 ♖c6] 57...♖a7 58.♖b1 ♖c6 59.♖b2 ♖d6 60.♖b6 ♖c7 61.a5 ♖xa5 62.♖xe6 ♖c6 63.♖f6 ♖d7 64.♖c3 ♖c7 65.♖d3 ♖b6 [65...♖d7 66.♖e3] 66.♖xf5 ♖c5 67.♖f8 ♖b4+ 68.♖e3 ♖c2+ 69.♖d2 ♖d4 70.♖d3 ♖c6 71.♖f6 ♖b4+ 72.♖e3 d4+ [72...♖c2+ looks like it will repeat, but Callum has simply been gaining time on the clock by occasionally repeating moves, a common tactic when using increments. 73.♖d2 ♖d4 74.f5] 73.♖e4 d3 74.♖f8 ♖c4 75.♖d8 ♖c3 76.f5 d2 77.f6 ♖a6 78.f7 ♖c5+ 79.♖e3 and black resigned as her d-pawn is lost and the f-pawn will queen shortly. 1-0

(34) MacQueen, Calum (2240) – McNab, Colin (2457) [A41]

Winter Chess Festival -Premier (7.4), 03.01.2014

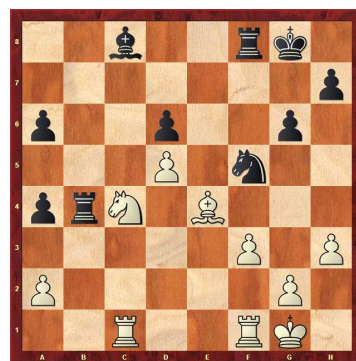
1.d4 d6 2.♖f3 g6 3.c4 ♙g7 4.e4 e5 5.♙g5 ♖e7 6.♖c3 h6 7.♙e3 ♖d7 8.dxe5N ♖xe5 9.♖xe5 dxe5 10.♖d5 [10.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 11.0-0-0 ♙d7 12.c5 doesn't really promise white much after 12...f5] 10...c6 11.♖xe7 ♖xe7 12.♖d2 0-0 13.0-0-0 ♙e6 14.♙e2 ♖fd8 15.♖c2 b5 16.♖b1 a6 17.h3 ♖h7 18.♖xd8 ♖xd8 19.♖d1 h5 20.♖xd8 ♖xd8 21.♖d2 ♖c7 [21...♖xd2 22.♙xd2 bxc4 23.♖c2 and the extra pawn doesn't mean anything in real terms and will quite likely drop off in the long run.] 22.♖c3 ♖b7 23.f3 b4 24.♖d2 ♖e7 25.♖c2 ♙f8 26.b3 ♖c7 27.g4 hxg4 28.hxg4 ♙e7 29.♙d1 ♖g8 30.♖b1 ♖b8 31.♖h2 ♖d8 32.♖d2 When the queens come off white will only have to display a minimum of caution to avoid being worse but black can't make any real progress if he leaves them on. 32...♖xd2 33.♙xd2 ♙c5 34.♖c2 ♖g7 35.♖d3

♖f6 36.♙e2 a5 37.♙c1 ♖e7 38.♙h6 f6 39.♙d2 ♖d7 40.♙e1 f5 41.♙g3 fxg4 42.fxg4 ♙d4 43.♙h4 ♙b6 A game in which the balance was never really disturbed. Colin has probably won dozens of these endgames, but against a strong opponent who doesn't make a mistake it was never likely to happen here. ½-½

(35) Hamitevici, Vladimir (2508) – Burnett, Andrew (2209) [B53]

Winter Chess Festival -Premier (7.5), 03.01.2014

1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.♖f3 A tricky move—order to avoid my Dragon Variation! 3...d6 [3...♖c6 avoids the queen recapture on d4 but allows 4.♖xd4 g6 5.c4 when I am playing the Accelerated Dragon, not my usual choice.] 4.♖xd4 a6 5.h3 ♖c6 6.♖e3 g6 7.c4 ♙h6?! I thought my plan here was quite clever – in general black would like a queen-less middlegame – but it turns out that my knights aren't well-enough placed in the resulting position. 8.♖c3 ♖a5 9.♖xa5 ♖xa5 10.♙h6 ♖xh6 Knights on the rim are dim of course, but I didn't think this was a problem as nothing much looked to be happening and I would have time to re-route them. However... 11.♖c3 I now realised that white could build up a quick initiative with b4 and Nd5. 11...b6?! [11...f5 12.♖d5 is awkward; 11...♙e6 12.♖d5 ♙xd5 13.cxd5 would just defeat the whole purpose of my opening plan. White's bishop is no longer weak in any way and my knights are too far removed from play. At least one of them ought to be on d7!] 12.♖d5 [12.b4! would have been the more accurate move order as Vlad pointed out after the game.] 12...♖b8 13.b4 e6 Now the position is less clearly in white's favour. He should be better, but black will have counter-chances. 14.bxa5 exd5 15.cxd5 0-0 16.♙d3 f5 17.♖d2 fxe4 18.♙xe4 bxa5 19.0-0 ♖b4 White has probably been a little lack-a-daisical over the last few moves, but now he started to concentrate! 20.f3 a4 21.♖ac1 ♖f5 22.♖c4



♖xc4? This move is just embarrassingly bad at this level of chess for reasons which will become clear soon. [22...♙d7 23.a3 ♖b5 and black is still hanging in there.] 23.♖xc4 ♖e3 24.♖xa4 ♙d7 25.♖b4 ♖xf1 26.♖xf1 ♙b5+ 27.♖f2 ♖c8 28.a4 ♖c4 29.♖xc4 ♙xc4 30.a5! Of course! In my initial calculations it was ME who got to play ...a5! when the position is just drawn. 30...♖g7 31.♖e3 ♖f6 32.f4 g5 33.♖d4 ♙f1 34.fxg5+ ♖xg5 35.♙xh7 ♙xg2 36.♙d3 with the a-pawn going the game is over. 1-0