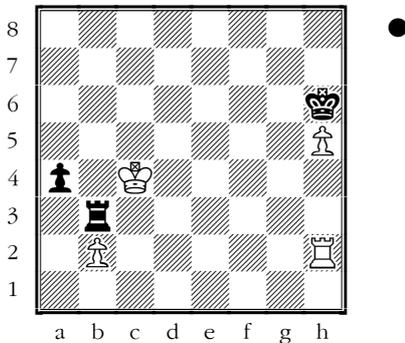


Test Yourself!

Kurnosov (2658) – B. Lalic (2508)
4NCL (11), Staverton Park, 04.05.2009



Black to play and draw
(see the answer later in this issue)



Chess Reviews

by GM Hedinn
Steingrímsson

ChessVibes Openings was launched in the beginning of 2009. It has some similarities with *Chess Today*, that it is sent via email and every issue is both in .pgn and .pdf format. The difference is that ChessVibes Openings comes out weekly and focuses on discussing the previous weeks important theoretical opening novelties. It's written by IM Merjin van Delft and IM Robert Ris, both from the Netherlands.

From the website of the publisher (www.chessvibes.com):

"The PDF consists of three pages (A4 size) with the following contents:

- **What's hot?** A round-up of this week's important opening developments, with statistics about the frequency and score of the week's most important opening novelty (page 1)
- **What's not?** Which openings are not recommended at the moment, according to the top players? And why not? (page 1)

- **Game of the week** – each week you'll find the theoretically most important game analysed by our two IMs, with a detailed survey of the opening phase. (page 2)
- **This week's harvest** – four more new important opening ideas from this week (page 3) revealed and described.
- **Opening expert** – every week an opening expert is covered. Examples from the first two issues: Teimour Radjabov (King's Indian with Black), Alexey Dreev (White: Nimzo-Indian; Black: Caro-Kann and Slav). (page 3)"

What I like about *ChessVibes Openings* is their focus on the trend and discoveries that are revealed in super tournaments and by very strong players. It makes sense for all tournament chess players and opening theoreticians to follow these developments and getting an overview from ChessVibes Openings definitely saves time.

Looking at the first 13 issues one notices a certain trend in the openings covered, with preference to specially sharp, aggressive and theoretical openings. The popular anti-Moscow variation is, for example, covered quite often and in this issue the game of the week is indeed Kramnik – Leko from the last round of the Melody Amber tournament where Kramnik introduced an important opening novelty on move 18 in one of the critical lines of the anti-Moscow. I find it positive that there is consistency in the openings covered so that the readers will with time have a certain repertoire available based on different theoretical articles from ChessVibes about e.g. the anti-Moscow Variation.

Apart from the game of the week, which is quite reasonably analysed, ChessVibes openings consists mainly of games with almost no annotation where interesting opening ideas were played. It is left to the reader to

do the analytical work. These hints at which games are important is no doubt useful. Nowadays the amount of information in all fields is very large and if one can sort out what is really important that obviously saves time. I would, however, prefer that these games would contain a bit more analysis than they do and that the authors would try to answer a question like whether the opening novelty was not really good, but worked for example because of its surprise value in the first game it was played or whether it is a real theoretical improvement that will also work in the games of the readers, even if the surprise value is no longer there or much less.

Conclusion: Generally I find *ChessVibes Openings* quite interesting. Analysis of the week's game is quite impressive and enthusiastic. For those that really want to find out how to get a better position out of the opening and are willing to enter complications and do some homework in order to succeed, *ChessVibes openings* can be recommended. Since issue 15 *Chessvibes Openings* has improved. It is now 4 pages. The first two pages are like before, but there is more explanation of the weeks harvest, that is four important opening ideas, on page 3 and. There is also more analysis in the 'opening expert of the week' on page 4.

Snapshots From the 4NCL

by GM Alex Baburin

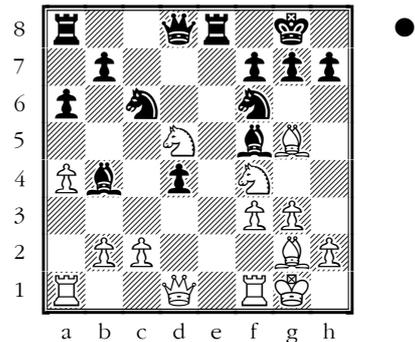
Today I'd like to show the most interesting fragments from the final 4NCL weekend. I do not intend to provide any deep analysis – just a few hints. So, get yourself 40–60 minutes of free time, a cup of tea or coffee and enjoy chess!

Ruston (2092) – J. Rogers (2337)

4NCL (9), Staverton Park, 02.05.2009

1.e4 c5 2.♟c3 e6 3.g3 a6 4.a4 d5
5.exd5 exd5 6.♞g2 ♟f6 7.d4 cxd4
8.♞xd4 ♟c6 9.♞d1 ♞b4 10.♟ge2

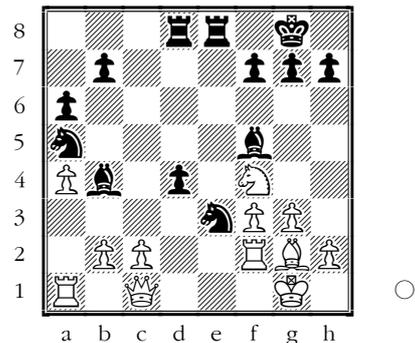
0-0 11.0-0 ♜e8 12.♞g5 ♞g4 13.f3
♞f5 14.♟f4 d4 15.♟cd5 (D)



Black stands well, but I guess that not many players would choose what he played:

15...♟xd5!? This daring queen sacrifice has a great psychological value, as White might think that he is better in a position where he is probably worse!

16.♞xd8 ♟e3 17.♞c1 ♜axd8!
18.♞f2 ♟a5 (D)

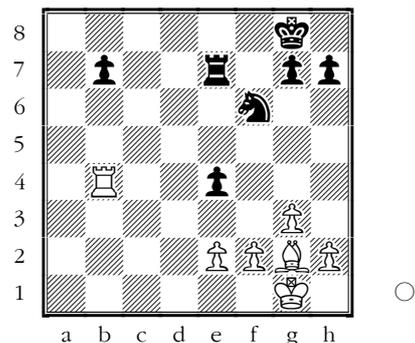


19.♟h5?? White had to choose between something like 19.♞f1 ♟xc2 20.♞xc2 ♟b3 21.♞d1 ♞xc2 22.♞xc2 ♟xa1 23.♞c4 and 19.♟d3.

19...d3!-+ 20.cxd3 ♟b3 21.♞b1
♟xa1 22.♞xa1 ♜xd3 0-1.

McNab (2473) – Briscoe (2268)

4NCL (9), Staverton Park, 02.05.2009

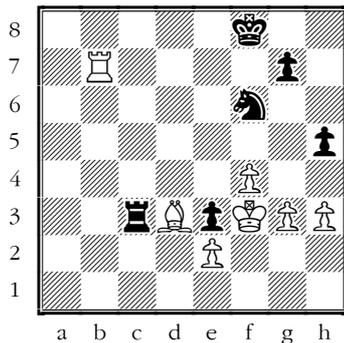


White is better as he has two pawn islands against Black's four.

28.f3! White is happy to exchange one of Black's weak pawns as long as he gets to win the other.

28...e3? Horrible move! Nobody likes being a pawn down, but the ending after 28...exf3 29.♙xf3 ♖f7 30.♖f2 g6 31.♙xb7 ♜g4+ 32.♖g2 ♜e5 would offer Black much better chances to survive than the line he chose in the game.

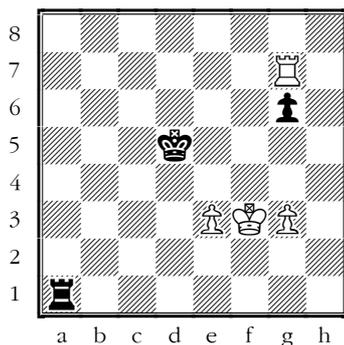
29.f4! ♜c7 30.♙xb7 ♜c3 31.♖g2 ♖f7 32.♖f3 h5 33.h3 ♖g6 34.♙e4+ ♖f7 35.♞b7+ ♖f8 36.♙d3+- (D)



Black has lost the b-pawn and is about to lose the e-pawn as well.

36...♜c1 37.♞b1 ♜xb1 38.♙xb1 ♖e7 39.♖xe3 ♖e6 40.♖d4 ♖d6 41.e4 1-0.

Kurnosov (2658) - Turner (2511)
4NCL (9), Staverton Park, 02.05.2009

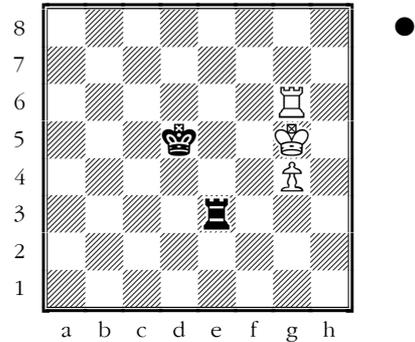


Black is lost, but he can still create some technical problems for White.

48...♞a6?

Correct was 48...♖e5! 49.♞xg6 ♖f5 - despite two extra pawns it's not so easy for White to win this position as the black king is active.

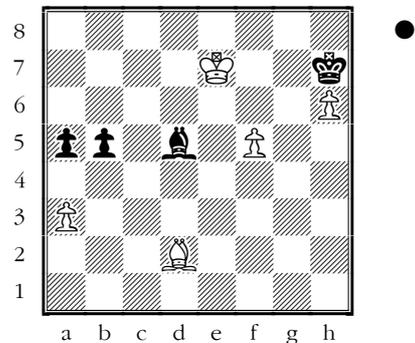
49.♖f4 ♜f6+ 50.♖g5 ♜f3 51.g4 ♜xe3 52.♞xg6 (D)



Any good player should win this ending with his eyes closed, so GM Turner clearly made a wrong practical decision on move 48!

52...♞e8 53.♞a6 ♖e5 54.♖h6 1-0.

Emms (2487) - Gallagher (2462)
4NCL (10), Staverton Park, 03.05.2009

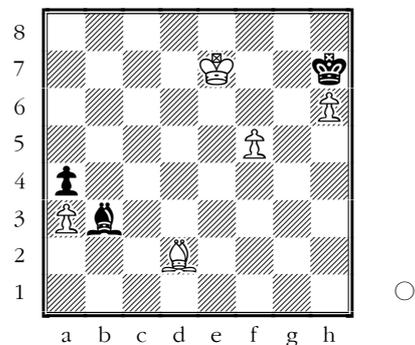


The opposite squared bishops should help Black draw this ending, but he needs to find the best defence.

47...b4!

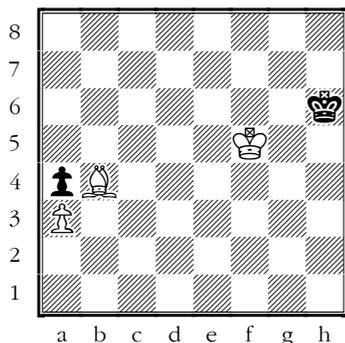
That was clearly better than 47...♙c4? 48.f6 ♖g6 49.♙xa5 ♖xh6 50.f7 ♙xf7 51.♖xf7 or 47...a4? 48.f6 ♖g6 49.h7 ♖xh7 50.f7 ♙xf7 51.♖xf7 ♖h8 52.♙c3+ ♖h7 53.♙g7 b4 54.axb4+-.

48.♙xb4! a4! 49.♙d2 ♙b3 (D)



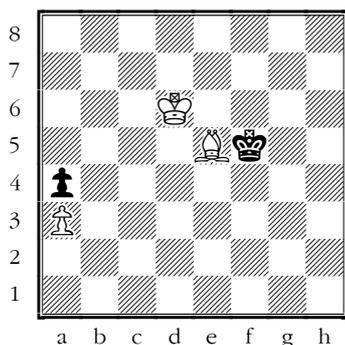
Black has got rid of the b-pawn, which here is a good thing for him!
50.♖f6 Or 50.f6 ♖g6 51.h7 ♖xh7

52.f7 ♖xf7 53.♖xf7 ♖h8=.
50...♗c2 51.♖g5 ♗b1 52.♗b4
♗xf5 53.♖xf5 ♖xh6 (D)



This position is drawn - by the time White takes on a4, the black king will make it to a8.

54.♖f6 ♖h7 55.♖f7 ♖h8 56.♖f8
♖h7 57.♗c3 ♖g6 58.♖e7 ♖f5
59.♖d6 ♖g6 60.♖e7 ♖h7 61.♗e5
♖g6 62.♗g3 ♖g7 63.♗e5+ ♖g6
64.♖e6 ♖g5 65.♖f7 ♖h6 66.♖g8
♖g6 67.♗g7 ♖f5 68.♖f7 ♖g5
69.♗e5 ♖h6 70.♖g8 ♖g6 71.♗g7
♖f5 72.♖f7 ♖g5 73.♗f8 ♖f5
74.♗e7 ♖e5 75.♖e8 ♖e6 76.♗h4
♖d6 77.♖d8 ♖e6 78.♗g3 ♖f7
79.♖d7 ♖f6 80.♖d6 ♖f7 81.♗h4
♖f8 82.♖c6 ♖e8 83.♗g5 ♖f7
84.♗h4 ♖e8 85.♖d6 ♖f7 86.♖d7
♖f8 87.♗g5 ♖f7 88.♗e7 ♖g6
89.♖e6 ♖g7 90.♗d6 ♖g8 91.♖e7
♖g7 92.♗g3 ♖g6 93.♗e5 ♖f5
94.♖d6 (D)



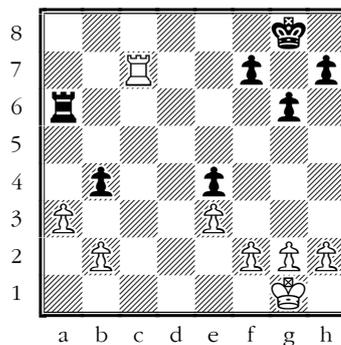
94...♖g6

Typically in such endings Black should not try to get his king "active" - after 94...♖e4?? 95.♖e6! he is lost! The game might continue: 95...♖f3 96.♖f5 ♖e3 97.♗b2 ♖d3 98.♖e5 ♖e3 (98...♖c4 99.♖d6 ♖b5 100.♗d4 ♖c4 101.♗a7 ♖b5 102.♖c7 ♖a6 103.♗b6 ♖b5 104.♖b7 ♖c4 105.♖c6 ♖b3 106.♗c5 ♖c4 107.♗d6 ♖d4 108.♖b5 ♖d5 109.♗g3+-) 99.♗c1+ ♖f3

100.♖f5! ♖g3 101.♗g5 ♖f3 102.♗f4 ♖g2 103.♖g4! ♖f2 104.♗h6 ♖e2 105.♖f4 ♖d3 106.♖e5 ♖c4 107.♗e3 ♖d3 108.♗g1 ♖c4 109.♖d6 ♖b5 110.♖c7+-.

95.♖c5 ♖f5 96.♖d5 ♖g6 97.♖c4
♖f5 98.♗h2 ♖e6 99.♖b5 ♖d7
100.♖xa4 ♖c6 1/2-1/2.

Hebden (2510) - Barrett (2200)
 4NCL (10), Staverton Park, 03.05.2009



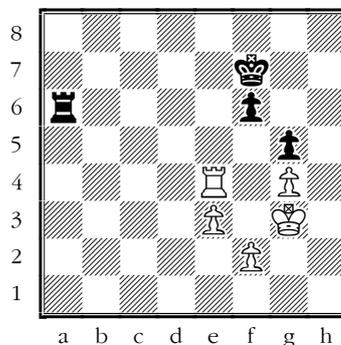
Black is about to destroy all pawns on the queenside, so what is White's best practical chance here?

26.g4! This is a very typical move - White isolates the e4-pawn from the rest.

26...bxa3 27.bxa3 ♖xa3 28.♖g2 White could win a pawn with 28.♖c4 but he probably did not fancy his winning chances after 28...f5 29.gxf5 gxf5 30.♖c5 f4 31.♖g5+ ♖h8 32.exf4 e3 33.fxe3 ♖xe3 34.♖g2 h6.

28...♖a5 29.♖e7 h5! Good idea - exchanging pawns usually makes defence easier.

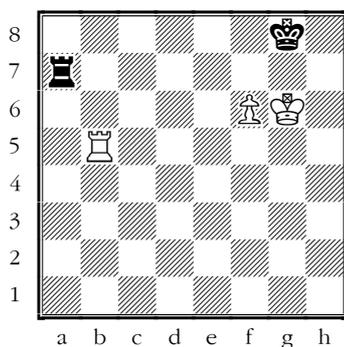
30.h3 hxg4 31.hxg4 ♖a4 32.♖g3
♖f8 33.♖d7 ♖a6 34.♖d5 f6 35.♖d4
♖f7 36.♖xe4 g5 (D)



White has won a pawn, but should not win this ending.

37.♖d4 ♖a7 38.♖d5 ♖b7 39.♖f3
♖e7 40.♖e2 ♖a7 41.♖d3 ♖a2 42.f3

♖a3+ 43.♙e4 ♘e6 44.♖c5 ♖a4+
 45.♙d3 ♖a6 46.♙d4 ♖d6+ 47.♙e4
 ♖a6 48.f4 ♖a4+ 49.♙f3 gxf4
 50.exf4 ♖a3+ 51.♙f2 ♖b3 52.♙g2
 ♖a3 53.♖h5 ♖a2+ 54.♙g3 ♖a3+
 55.♙h4 ♖a1 56.♖b5 ♖h1+ 57.♙g3
 ♖g1+ 58.♙h3 ♖h1+ 59.♙g2 ♖a1
 60.♖b6+ ♙f7 61.♙g3 ♖g1+ 62.♙f3
 ♖a1 63.f5 ♖f1+ 64.♙g2 ♖a1
 65.♖b7+ ♙f8 66.♖h7 ♖a3 67.♖h3
 ♖a4 68.♙g3 ♙g7 69.♖h1 ♖b4
 70.♖a1 ♖b7 71.♙h4 ♖c7 72.♙h5
 ♖b7 73.♖a6 ♖c7 74.♖d6 ♖a7
 75.♖d4 ♖b7 76.♙h4 ♖a7 77.♙g3
 ♖b7 78.♙f4 ♖e7 79.♖d6 ♙f7 80.g5
 fxf5+ 81.♙xf5 ♖a7 82.♖h6 ♙g7
 83.f6+ ♙g8 84.♙g6 ♖b7 85.♖h5
 ♖a7 86.♖b5 (D)



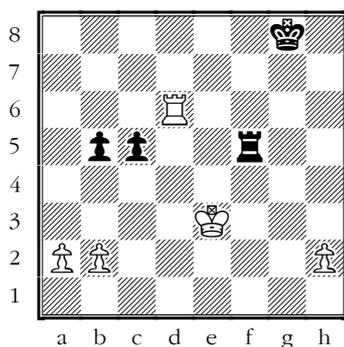
86...♖a8??

One must know a simple and yet effective trick here - 86...♖g7+!

87.♖b7 1-0.

Kurnosov (2658) - B. Lalic (2508)

4NCL (11), Staverton Park, 04.05.2009



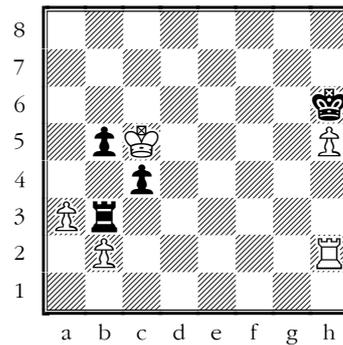
After some intense fighting earlier in the game, White emerged a pawn up, with good winning chances.

39.a3?! I don't like this move, as it creates a hole on b3.

39...♖h5 40.♖d2 ♙f7 41.♙f4 ♖h3 42.♙e5 c4 43.♙d4 ♙g6!

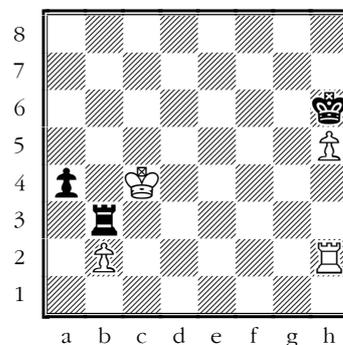
After 43...♖b3?! 44.♖g2! the black king

will be cut off from the enemy passer. 44.♙c5 ♖b3 45.h4 ♙h5 46.♖h2 ♙g6 47.h5+ ♙h6 (D)



Black has built a fortress. After a while White tried his last chance - a3-a4 idea:

48.♙d4 ♖d3+ 49.♙e4 ♖b3 50.♙d4 ♖d3+ 51.♙c5 ♖b3 52.a4 bxa4 53.♙xc4 (D)



A draw in this game would practically secure our team an overall victory in the league. I was sitting next to Bogdan (who had about 20 minutes to reach move 60) and I was worried that his eyes were focused on the queenside - he never looked at his king!

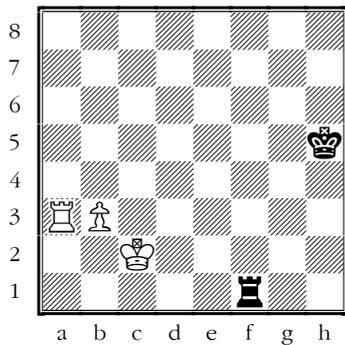
53...♖b8??

Black could draw with ease after 53...♙g7! 54.h6+ (54.♖e2 ♙h6 55.♖e6+ ♙h7!= (Black can also draw after 55...♙xh5 56.♖e5+ ♙g6 57.♖b5 ♖f3 but then he has to be careful, so 55...♙xh5 isn't a good practical decision. 58.♙b4 ♖f4+ 59.♙a3 ♙f6 60.♖b4 ♖f2 61.♖xa4 ♙e6 62.♖d4 ♖f8!) 56.♖e2 ♙h6 57.♖h2 ♙g7) 54...♙h7=.

54.♙c3 ♖b3+ 55.♙c2 ♖g3

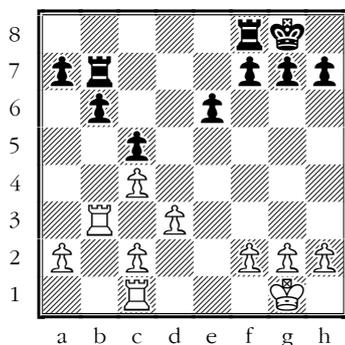
55...♖b4 56.♖h3 ♖f4 57.♙b1 ♖b4 58.♙a2 ♖e4 59.♙a3 ♖f4 60.♖g3 ♙xh5 61.♖g8 ♖f2 62.♖a8 ♙g6 63.♖xa4 ♙f5 64.♖d4 ♙e5 65.♖d8!+-.

56.♖h1 ♖f3 57.♖h4 a3 58.b3 ♖f1 59.♖a4 ♙xh5 60.♖xa3 (D)



60...♖g6 61.b4 ♜f2+ 62.♖b3 ♜f7
63.♖a4 ♜e7 64.♞d3 ♞a2+ 65.♖b5
♞a8 66.♖c6 1-0.

McShane (2596) - Gordon (2540)
4NCL (11), Staverton Park, 04.05.2009



How many players, having the white pieces, would agree to a draw here? I guess, most! Yet, GM Luke McShane correctly decided to play on. His plan is simple: to arrange a2-a4-a5xb6, thus creating a weakness on b6. Then he will tie up the enemy rooks to it and either open a second front on the kingside or arrange c2-c3 and d3-d4.
21.a4 ♞fb8 22.♖f1 ♖f8 23.a5 Maybe White rushed a bit with this move - 23.♖e2!?

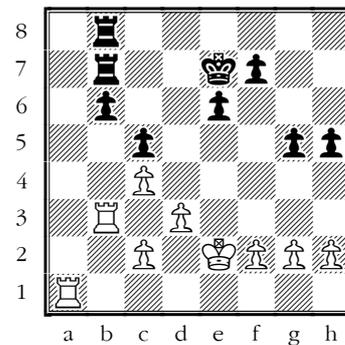
23...♖e7

After 23...bxa5?! 24.♞a3! ♞b1 25.♞xb1 ♞xb1+ 26.♖e2 ♞c1 27.♞xa5 (27.♖d2 ♞g1 28.g3 ♞g2 29.♖e3 ♞xh2 30.♞xa5) 27...♞xc2+ 28.♖e3 White is better despite being (temporarily) a pawn down. But 23...b5!? was worth considering, for example 24.♞cb1 b4 25.♖e2 (25.c3? bxc3! 26.♞xb7 ♞xb7 27.♞xb7 c2+) 25...e5 26.c3 ♖e7 27.cxb4 ♞xb4 28.♞xb4 cxb4.

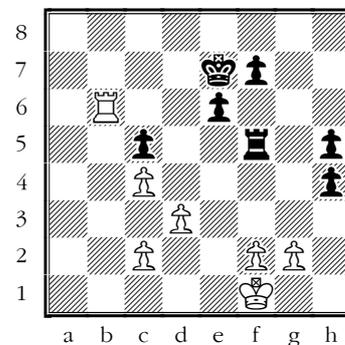
24.axb6 axb6 25.♞a1 g5

Maybe a more defensive setup - 25...h5 and ...g7-g6, was more appropriate.

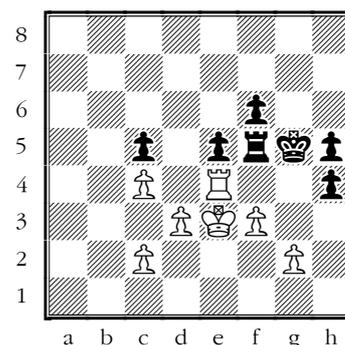
26.♖e2 h5?! (D)



27.h4! Black clearly missed this idea - he then realised that he had helped his opponent to open a second front!
27...gxh4 28.♞h1 ♞g8 29.♖f3 ♞g4 30.♞hb1 ♞g5 31.♞xb6 ♞f5+ 32.♖e2 ♞xb6 33.♞xb6 ♞g5 34.♖f1 ♞f5 (D)

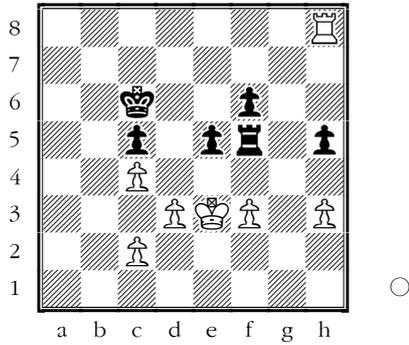


35.♞b1! ♖d6 36.♞e1 ♞f4 37.♞e3 ♞g4 38.♞h3 ♖e5 39.f3 ♞f4 40.♖e2 ♖f6 41.♞h1 ♖g5 42.♖f2 ♞f5 43.♞e1 ♖f4 44.♞e4+ ♖g5 45.♖e3 e5 46.♖e2 f6 47.♖e3 (D)

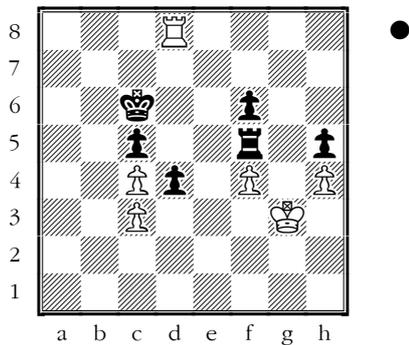


Black is in zugzwang and must give up a pawn.

47...h3 48.gxh3 ♖g6 49.♖f2 ♖f7 50.♞e1 ♖e6 51.♞a1 ♖d6 52.♞a6+ ♖c7 53.♞a7+ ♖d6 54.♞f7 ♞f4 55.♞h7 ♞f5 56.♞h8 ♖d7 57.♞h7+ ♖d6 58.♞h6 ♖d7 59.♖e3 ♖d6 60.♞h8 ♖c6 (D)



61.♖c8+ ♔d6 62.♗f2 ♜f4 63.♗g3
 ♜f5 64.h4 ♜f4 65.c3 ♜f5 66.♞d8+
 ♗c6 67.d4 exd4?? Black had to play
 67...cxd4 68.cxd4 ♜f4.
68.f4!! (D)



The poor black rook is finally trapped!
1-0.

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