

British Rapidplay Report by Danny Gormally

Badacsonyi, Stanley - Gormally, Daniel W

British Rapidplay Championship 2024 lichess.org (5.4),
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You could tell the tournament was very popular because practically every promising junior or young player from these shores was in attendance. If Shreyas is likely to win several British titles at every time control you can think of in the future, Stanley Badacsonyi (known as Stanisbad online) is quite likely to join him, especially at the faster time controls that he excels at. In my opinion Stanley is something of a raw talent who can probably improve even more if he polishes up his positional and strategic play a little (his tactics are already amazing, hence why he is so strong at blitz) and perhaps adds some main line openings to his repertoire. But who am I to give advice, given he beat me in round 5?



29...Qb4?! Perhaps a sign that I was already getting nervous. My original intention had been to play 29...Qf4, but I backed off it because I was vaguely concerned about some Qa3 counterplay for White, even though that probably doesn't work for him. Already I was spending too much time, and that became a critical issue later in the game.

30.Na3?! I had been more concerned about 30.Nd2! Rd8 31.Rb1, because now I won't have the ... Re1 resource that was available in the game.

30...Rd8 Missing a neat win with 30...Nxg6! 31.hxg6 Re1 32.Rg1



32...Rh3!! 33.Qxh3 Re2, but given I missed much simpler wins later, it is hardly likely that I am going to display this level of tactical genius.

31.Rb1 Re1 32.Rg1 Rxc4 33.Rxc4 Nd7 34.Qg3+! Played quickly. He wasn't giving me any time to think!

34...Ka7 35.Nc2 Qxc4 36.Qc7 Qc3+ 37.Kb1 Nb6 Later I regretted not going for a technical ending with 37...a3 38.Nxa3 Qb4+ (I saw the variation 38...Nb6 39.Nb5+! which would have been embarrassing) 39.Kc2 (39.Ka1 Qxd4+→) 39...Qb6



which removed the danger and would have been a decent practical decision, given how short of time I was getting. It's much easier I think to play a lot of moves quickly in a better endgame than it is in a complex middlegame.

38.Rg3! Stanley plays a lot of blitz online, and that is really good training for these kind of sharp scenarios where you are forced to make only moves. I had actually seen this resource earlier and had judged (correctly as it turned out) that I was still doing well.

38...Nf3! 39.Rxf3 Qxf3 40.Qxd8 Qd1+ 40...Nc4 41.Ne3! bugged me.

41.Kb2 Qd2 42.Qg8?



At the time I thought this was a great defence, but apparently Black is winning now.

42...Nd5?? 42...a3+! was what I was lining up when I played ... Nd5, but why wait! 43.Kxa3 (43.Kb3 Nd5 is also winning for Black) 43...Qc3+ 44.Qb3 Nc4+ 45.Ka4 Qa5#.

43.Qf8! Nc3? What I had missed was that 43...a3+ 44.Qxa3+, and the attack is over for Black.

44.Qc5+ 1-0

Han, Yichen - Gormally, Daniel W

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Even though I lost in round 5 I was quite happy with my play in that game overall, I just hadn't taken my chances at the end. After I won in round 6 I was on 4½/6 and feeling quite positive about my chances, even though I was trailing the leaders who were on 5½/6. Having played the British Rapidplay many times before, and other similar events, I have experienced being up there on board 1 or 2 for round after round, and how you gradually feel the pressure. I didn't envy the leaders, and I realized it could be an advantage to be in the chasing pack. So when I was paired against Yichen Han in the final round I thought it was quite ironic because we had been the top two seeds going into the event, both had quite up and down tournaments and here we were on board 1. It reminded me of all these Keith Arkell posts on Facebook about how he'd always find himself on board 1 come what may.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.Bd2 This system seems tame, but has been played by Magnus Carlsen amongst others, and it definitely contains some poison for Black. I would definitely recommend studying it from the white side if you need to find a variation against the Grunfeld.

5...Bg7 6.e4



6...Nb6!? I had studied this recently, and felt that this was the best way to aim for an uncompromising position.

7.Be3 0-0 8.Be2 f5 Somewhat radical as the kingside is weakened, but I already felt I had to mix it up.

He was playing all his moves at speed, and I sensed he would have been very comfortable after 8...Nc6 9.d5 Ne5 10.Bd4 with the intention of playing f4 and exchanging dark-squared Bishops

9.exf5 Bxf5 Maybe on a good day you could play 9...gxf5, but this is probably a step too far for such an important game.

10.Nf3 Nc6 11.0-0 11.Qb3+ Kh8 12.0-0-0 is perhaps the way to play for a big edge, with the quite obvious idea of playing h4-h5 as quickly as possible. Ng5-e6/f7 is another attacking idea for White.

11...Kh8 12.h3 Qd6 13.Qb3 Be6! Now I felt that I had survived the opening, but at the same time I knew that he was a strong player and that he would continue to pose me problems. Yichen is also a big talent, and it is interesting that he discovered chess in a park in the Netherlands when he was fairly young. It rather places the campaign to place chess tables in parks in its proper perspective, because here you have an example of someone who directly benefited from this.

14.Qc2 Bd5 15.Ne4 Nb4 16.Qb1 Qc6 17.Ned2 17.Nc3 Bxf3 18.Bxf3 Rxf3 19.gxf3 Qxf3 20.Qe4 Qxh3 seems to give Black plenty of play; you already have two pawns for the exchange. 21.Qxb7 N4d5=.

17...Qc2 18.a3 Qxb1 19.Raxb1



19...Nc6?! As Sadler pointed out during Twitch commentary on the final round with Natasha Regan, and my opponent mentioned after the game, this is an inconsistent and strange decision. Maybe I was getting tired and confused, because I definitely didn't intend to play this earlier. 11 games in two days is a lot!

19...Nc2 was what I had intended earlier, but now I noticed that the rook was no longer on a1 so he could move the bishop. But if he goes to g5 then d4 hangs, so this chain of thought made no sense at all. 20.Rbc1 Nxe3 21.fxe3 c6 definitely feels more comfortable for Black than what occurred in the game.

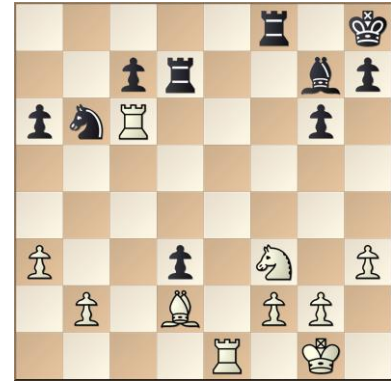
20.Rbc1 Rad8 21.Rfe1 Rd7 22.Bb5 a6 23.Bd3?! Afterwards Yichen mentioned 23.Bxc6 Bxc6 24.Ne5 Bxe5 25.dxe5



as a possible chance, when White will likely continue with Nb3–c5 or Nb3–a5, in both cases placing pressure on the queenside.

23...Bxf3 24.Nxf3 e5? 24...Nxd4 25.Nxd4 Bxd4 26.Bxd4+ Rxd4 27.Rxc7? was a variation that Yichen mentioned to me later where he pointed out that Black was doing well. Nerves, fatigue or just the fact that it was a fast time control meant that I had missed the simple detail that in this line the bishop is now hanging. (27.Bf1 Rd7 and Black can happily grind away) 27...Nd5!→ (27...Rxd3? 28.Rxe7).

25.Bxa6! exd4 26.Bd2 bxa6 27.Rxc6 d3



28.Ne5? As Sadler said on the broadcast, a Mickey Adams would just play 28.b3! here which kills the counterplay, and then calmly sit back and let you worry about all the weak pawns in your position. I was expecting him to play this and was resigned to defeat; and I'm sure Yichen would have gone for this option at a classical time control. However, it would seem that at rapidplay time controls it can become tempting to play more actively and directly.

28...Rd5 29.f4 Nd7! Now the game rather fizzles out, much to my relief.

30.Rxc7 Nxe5 31.fxe5 Rxe5 32.Rxe5 Bxe5 33.Rd7 Bxb2
½–½