

## Gormally at the British Rapidplay Championship

There were positives and negatives at the British Rapidplay championship in Peterborough this year. The positive was the hotel, which is in a nice cosy enclave just off the motorway, and it's a nice hotel that serves very good food. The negative is this enclave makes it difficult to find a shop nearby to get supplies, because the motorway rather cuts the hotel off. On the Sunday the hotel gets very busy and it is difficult to find a seat, and tough to get served at the bar because of the number of people wanting food. I wonder if the tournament expands any more (it is becoming increasingly popular, and Freddy Waldhausen Gordon's win might inspire more players to come down from Scotland) whether it may need to find another venue - which would be a shame, as I have happy memories of this part of the world, especially after my win in the 2024 version. What stood out for me as the performance of the junior players like Freddy and it's a portent of the future that these players may well dominate in the next few years. In round 4 my up to then perfect record was ruined as I lost to Kajus Mikalajunas, himself only a teenager.

**Gormally, Daniel - Mikalajunas, Kajus**

Round 4 (4.3), 14.03.2026

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.Nf3 a6 4.e3 Bg4 5.h3 Bh5 6.Bxc4 Nc6 7.Nbd2 e6 8.0-0 Nf6 9.b3 Bd6 10.Bb2 0-0 11.Be2 Re8 12.Nc4 Bf8 13.Rc1 Nb4 14.a3 Nbd5 15.b4**



I was happy enough with my position out of the opening. It looked like a promising middlegame was in store for White, who has a variety of plans to choose from, and I was up on the clock as well.

**15...b6 16.Nce5 Nd7 17.Nxd7 17.Nc6! Qf6** was better.



**18.g3!!** was something I missed in my calculations, with the plan of pushing e4.

**17...Qxd7 18.g4 Bg6 19.Ne5** I was quite happy with this as well. I'm grabbing the bishop pair; the only issue is that I've weakened my kingside.

**19...Qd8 20.Bf3 Bd6 21.Nxg6 hxg6**



**22.Qb3** 22.e4! is tough to find, as you're letting the knight into a good attacking square. 22...Nf4 23.e5 Bf8 24.Bc6 Nxh3+ 25.Kg2 Nf4+ 26.Kg3 g5.



Now 27.Rh1, and the irony is that White is the one with the dangerous attack here, not Black.

**22...Qh4 23.Kg2 Rad8 24.Rfe1 Nf6 25.Bc6 Rf8!** Setting up counterattacking ideas on the kingside with an eventual ... f5.

**26.Qc2 Nh7!**



Aiming for the g5-square, when Black will attack h3, and also enabling ... f5.

**27.f4 g5 28.Qf2** The black attack was getting too hot, so I decided to get the queens off.

**28...Qxf2+ 29.Kxf2 gxf4 30.e4 Be7**



**31.Kg2** I regretted later not playing 31.Ke2! here, as this would at least have discouraged Black from playing ...e5, as White is now covering the d2-square.

**31...Bh4 32.Rf1 e5! 33.d5** 33.Rfd1 would have been relatively unclear in a practical sense: 33...exd4 34.Bxd4 Ng5 35.Be5! for example, intending to take on f4 or c7, when the position is a bit of a mess.

**33...f6 34.Ba4 Ng5 35.Bc2 c6 36.Bb3 cxd5 37.Bxd5+ Kh8 38.Rc6**



**38...Nxe4!** At this point of the game I resembled a punch-drunk fighter, constantly taking shots.

**39.Bxe4 Rd2+ 40.Kh1 Rxb2 41.Rfc1 Rd2 42.Rc8 Rfd8 43.R1c7 Rd1+ 44.Kg2 R1d2+ 45.Kf1 Rd1+ 46.Kg2 a5**



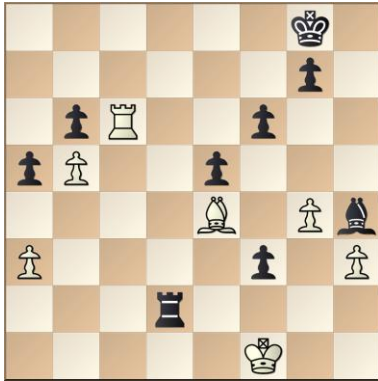
**47.b5 47.Bg6!**, pinning down the Black king, would have given good practical chances. But alas, I was still playing too quickly, and didn't make the most of my chances.

**47...Kg8 48.Rxd8+ Rxd8**



**49.Rc6?** Played much too quickly. 49.Kf3! Kf8 50.Bg6, closing down the black king, was White's chance to resist.; 49.Bg6, with the same idea of entrapping the king, is less convincing: 49...f5!! 50.gxf5? (50.Bxf5 Rd2+ 51.Kf3 Rf2+ 52.Ke4 Re2+ 53.Kd3 Re3+ 54.Kd2 g6 frees the king, and White is in trouble against Black's f- and e-pawn duo.) 50...e4→.

**49...Rd2+ 50.Kf1 f3!→**



Now it is over. I can't take the pawn, so have to go into passive mode.

**51.Rc1 f2 52.Bf3 Rd3 53.Kg2 g6 54.Be2 Rg3+ 55.Kh2 Re3 56.Bf1 Re1 57.Rc8+ Kg7 58.Kg2 e4 59.Rc7+ Kh6 60.Re7 f5 61.gxf5 Bxe7 0-1**

**Sivanandan, Bodhana - Avadhoot Lokesh Bhakti Brahma**

Round 7 (7.27), 15.03.2026

We should get used to seeing Bodhana Sivanandan at the top of the standings in UK tournaments and abroad; she's going to be around for a long time. In the British Rapidplay she scored 8/11, and tied for top female player. Where she really shines is the endgame, and she is never unhappy to get the queens off. Words that come to mind when you think of Bodhana are 'obduracy' and 'tenacity'. Here you can see the influence of her father Siv on her games; he tells her to always fight, and that's why she rarely resigns prematurely. Such an approach toughens you up, and also makes you dangerous when you get a good position, because you have that layer of toughness. She is also very stubborn about not agreeing to early draws and playing seemingly drawish endgames out - and more often than not winning.

**1.e4 Nc6 2.Nc3 d6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.d4 e5 5.dxe5 Nxe5**



**6.Nxe5** I might have simply played 6.Be2 and taken my chances in the middlegame. But Bodhana is built differently, and rarely declines a chance to go into the endgame.

**6...dxe5 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8 8.Bg5 c6 9.Bc4 Ke8 9...Be6 10.0-0-0+ Kc7 11.Bxe6 fxe6**



The question is whether White can create some pressure against the doubled black e-pawns. One idea is 12.f3 Bc5 13.Ne2, with the idea perhaps of c3, Kc2, Nc1, Nd3; if White has enough time to carry this all out she may be able to claim an advantage.

**10.f3 Nd7 11.a3 Nc5 12.Rd1 Be6 13.Bxe6 Nxe6 14.Be3 Bc5 15.Kf2 Bxe3+ 16.Kxe3**



A classic Bodhana endgame. The game is completely equal, but then she wins!

**16...Ke7 17.Ne2!** Covering the d4- and f4-squares so that Black won't use them with his knight.

**17...g6 18.g3 Rad8 19.f4 exf4+ 20.gxf4 Rhe8 20...Rxd1 21.Rxd1 Rd8** was also possible now. Eventually Black carries out this plan and grabs the d-file.

**21.h4 Rxd1 22.Rxd1 Rd8** Now Bodhana wisely decides that the pure knight ending will not offer many chances, so decides to keep the rooks on.

**23.Rh1**



This cedes the d-file to Black, but it is tough for Black to do anything with it as there are no real entry squares for Black's pieces. So White places the rook on h1 and plans to play h5, which gains space and makes progress. If Black responds to this move with ...h5 White can toy with the idea later of playing f5, softening up Black on the kingside.

**23...a5** 23...c5, perhaps intending ... Nd4 (progress!), can be met by 24.Nc3 Nd4 25.Nd5+ Ke6 26.c3!±.

**24.h5 Nc5 25.hxg6 hxg6 26.Nd4**



**26...a4!?** The best way to defend is often to attack: 26...Na4! 27.b4 Nb2=.

**27.Nf3 Nd7 28.Ng5** Hinting at activity with Rh7.

**28...Nf6?** It was unwise to allow e5 with tempo. 28...Nf8!, planning ...Ne6, is fine for Black.

**29.e5 Nh5 30.f5!**

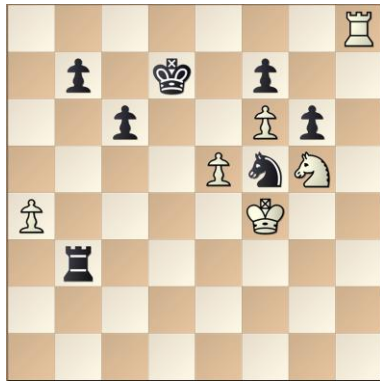


It's amazing how Bodhana has created something out of nothing; White has a serious initiative in the endgame.

**30...Rd5 31.Nf3 Rb5 32.f6+ Ke8 33.Rb1?** 33.Rh4! Rxb2 34.Rxa4+–.

**33...Ng3?** Black could have punished Bodhana's last mistake with 33...Rc5! 34.c3 (34.Kd2 Rd5+)=) 34...Rb5, with some good holding chances.

**34.b3 Nf5+ 35.Kf4 axb3 36.cxb3 Ra5 37.a4 Rc5 38.Rh1 Rc3 39.Rh8+ Kd7 40.Ng5 Rxb3**



**41.e6+ fxe6 42.f7 Rb4+ 43.Ke5 Nd6 44.Rd8+ 1-0**