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D'ECHECS

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DE XADREZ

国际象棋通报

دليل الشطرنج



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### YOUTHFUL PODIUM IN WIJK AAN ZEE

The coastal Dutch village of Wijk aan Zee hosted the 87<sup>th</sup> edition of Tata Steel chess festival 2025, from January 17<sup>th</sup> to February 2<sup>nd</sup>, in its traditional lodge of De Moriaan, under the auspices of the regional steel industry.

All early editions of the tournament since 1938 until 1967 were accommodated in the nearby mother city of Beverwijk with just a single break during the entire history of the event - in 1945 - owing to the end of the Second World War. In 1968 “The Wimbledon of chess” moved to Wijk aan Zee where all other editions ever since have taken place. The record number of victories in the crown group of the festival, the Masters, still belongs to Magnus Carlsen - 8 in total including one shared, ahead of Vishy Anand - 5 (3 shared), Max Euwe - 4 (1 shared), Levon Aronian - 4 (2 shared), Victor Korchnoi and Lajos Portisch - 4 each.

The Masters was this year a category 20 event with 14 top grandmasters of an average rating 2726. The participants’ lineup included 5 players from the world’s top ten: Fabiano Caruana (USA), Indians Arjun Erigaisi, Gukesh Dommaraju (The fresh World Champion), Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzbekistan) and Chinese Wei Yi (winner of 2024 edition).

The host country was represented by its 3 leading active players: Anish Giri (3 times winner of the Masters), Jorden van Foreest (winner of 2021 edition) and Max Warmerdam-the reigning Dutch champion.

#### E 04

#### GUKESH DOMMARAJU 2777 -

#### Anish GIRI 2731

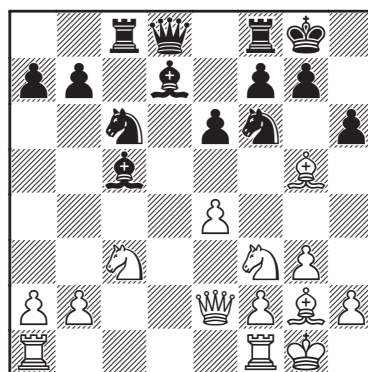
*Wijk aan Zee 2025*

The opening round already matched the new world champion with the Dutchman No. 1

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.g3 d5 3.♙g2 c5 4.0-0 ♘c6  
5.d4 e6 6.c4 dc4 7.♚a4 ♙d7 8.dc5

[8.♚c4 allows 8...b5! 9.♚c3 cd4 10.♘d4  
♘d4 11.♚d4 ♖c8 12.♘d2 ♙c5 13.♚d3  
0-0= with equality.

8...♙c5 9.♚c4 ♙e7 10.♘c3 0-0 11.e4  
♖c8 12.♚e2 ♙c5 13.♙g5 h6



**14. ♕h4!?** Looking for complications.

[The solid alternative was 14. ♕f4 ♖a5 15. ♖ad1 ♖fd8 16. a3 ♕b6 17. h3 ♕e8= with a level game.]

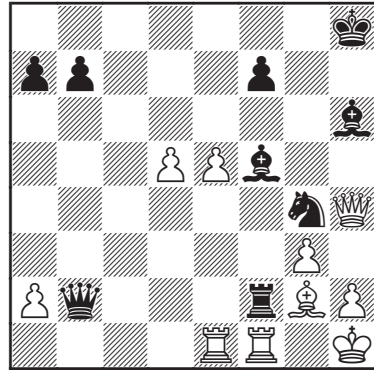
**14...g5 15. ♖g5 hg5 16. ♕g5 e5 17. ♖d2 ♕e7 18. ♕h6 ♖h7 19. ♕f8 ♕f8 20. f4 ♕e6 21. ♖d5 ♖b4 22. fe5 ♖g4**

[Black is fine also after 22...♖fd5 23. ed5 ♖d5 24. ♖h1 ♖b4]

**23. ♖ad1 ♖h8 24. ♖h1 ♖c2 25. ♖f4 ♖d5 26. ♖f3 ♖b6 27. ed5 ♖f2 28. ♖c3 ♕b4 29. ♖c1 ♕f5 30. ♖g5 ♕f8 31. ♖h4?**

[Correct was 31. ♖h5 ♕h6 32. ♖de1 ♖b2 33. ♖f2 ♖f2 34. ♖g1 ♖g4 35. ♖f5 ♖b6 36. ♖h1 ♖f2 37. ♖g1 ♖g4 with perpetual check.]

**31...♕h6 32. ♖de1 ♖b2**



**33. h3??**

[Correct was 33. ♖f2 ♖f2 34. ♖g1 ♖g4 35. ♖f1! with equality.]

**33...♕e4! 34. ♖f2 ♖f2 35. ♖g1**

[Naturally not 35. ♖h2 ♖g4 mating.]



Tata Steel Masters 2025

Photo: Yurriaan Hoefsmit / Maria Emelianova

# PRAGUE INTERNATIONAL CHESS FESTIVAL 2025

by IM Yochanan Afek

## INDIAN DOMINANCE IN PRAGUE

The seventh edition of the Prague International Chess Festival (PICF) was held on February 26<sup>th</sup> - March 5<sup>th</sup> at its traditional home, hotel Don Giovanni. Starting in 2019 the chess festival aimed to “allow top Czech players, national team pretenders and aspiring juniors a chance to face the world’s top players on home soil”.

In just a few years it has become a major chess gathering for all levels and ages. 853 participants from 53 countries competed this year in 20 different events, skillfully organized by Nový Bor chess club (Novoborský šachový klub) under the leadership of the indefatigable director Petr Boleslav and chief arbiter Pavel Votruba.

The festival’s crown event, the Masters, was a category 19 grandmasters tournament won by the Indian Aravindh Chithambaram Veerappan on 6/9 points, a full point ahead of Anish Giri (Netherlands), Wei Yi (China) and Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa (India) 5 points each.

The 25 year old winner was the only participant in the Masters to emerge unbeaten. He was twice (in 2018 and 2019) the Indian champion and last November won the Chennai GMs on tie break ahead of Levon Aronian and Erigaisi Arjun. His most brilliant and significant victory in Prague was scored in round 7.

### Yochanan Afek

- **Country:** Israel
- **Born:** 1952
- **Rating:** 2212
- **Peak rating:** 2430
- **Title:** International Master since 1993



### D 35

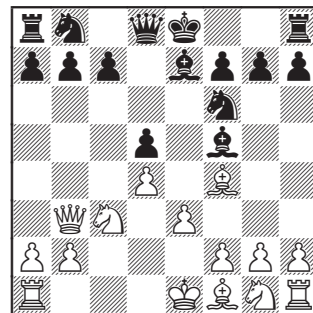
#### Anish GIRI 2728 - Chithambaram VR ARAVINDH 2729

Praha 2025

The following game won the festival's best game award named after the famous Czech-American GM Lubomir Kaválek (1943 - 2021) whom we still were honoured and pleased to meet in an earlier edition of the young Prague festival.

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♟e7 4.cd5 ed5 5. ♟f4 ♘f6 6.e3 ♟f5 7.♘f3**

[Whereas 7.♖b3



7...♘c6! 8.♖b7 ♘b4 9.♟b5 ♖f8↔ allows Black sufficient counter-play.]

**7...c6 8.♘h4 ♟g4 9.♖c2 ♘bd7 10.h3 ♟e6 11.♘f3 ♘e4 12.♟d3**



Chithambaram VR Aravindh - Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu

Photo by: Petr Vrabec

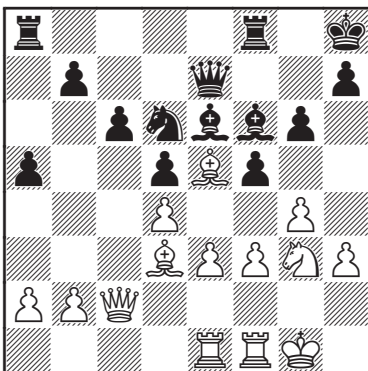
[Declining, once again, the offered pawn with the counter play following 12.♖e4 de4 13.♖e4 ♖a5 14.♗d2 ♗f6 15.♖c2 ♗d5 16.♙e5 ♗b4 17.♖d1 ♙f5]

12...f5 13.♙h2 0-0 14.0-0 ♗h8 15.♗e2 a5 16.♗e5

[Alternatively White can start a queenside minority attack by 16.♖fb1 ♖e8 17.a3± followed by the advance of the "b" pawn.]

16...♗e5 17.♙e5 ♙f6 18.f3 ♗d6 19.g4!? ♖e7 20.♗g3 g6 21.♖ae1?

[Exchanging the dark squared bishop weakens White's kingside thus 21.♙f4 should be preferred.]



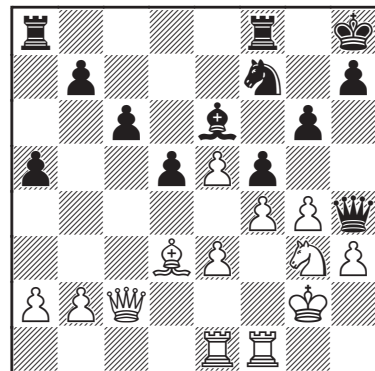
21...♙e5! 22.de5 ♗f7 23.f4

[23.gf5? Is met by 23...♖h4 24.fe6 ♗g5 25.f4 ♖g3 26.♖g2 ♗f3! - winning material.]

23...♖h4

[Stronger is 23...fg4 24.hg4 ♙g4 25.♖h2 ♖g8+ where White has no sufficient compensation for his missing pawn.]

24.♗g2



24...♗g5!! The stunning highlight of the entire game!

25.♖h1

[Not 25.fg5? fg4 26.♖f6 ♖h3 27.♗f2 ♖h2

# FISCHER RANDOM CHESS

by FM Ivan Martić

## The Rise of Fischer Random Chess

Fischer Random, also known as Chess 960 or Freestyle Chess, is a dynamic and increasingly popular chess variant. It introduces a fresh perspective to the game by randomizing the starting positions of the pieces while maintaining the fundamental rules of classical chess. This innovation eliminates the reliance on deep opening preparation and encourages pure creativity and strategic prowess.

The legendary 11<sup>th</sup> World Chess Champion, Bobby Fischer, invented this modern format, believing it addressed several critical issues in traditional chess:

- **Elimination of Opening Memorization:** One of the biggest challenges in classical chess is the immense body of opening theory. Players often spend years mastering complex opening variations. In Fischer Random, this preparation becomes unnecessary, allowing players to focus purely on their ability to calculate and make strategic decisions over the board.
- **Encouraging Creativity:** Since opening theory is irrelevant, players must rely on their natural talent, deep understanding of the game, and intuition to navigate the middlegame. This restores an essential aspect of chess - unpredictability and ingenuity.

Fischer himself passionately advocated for the format: “The new, modern chess engines have changed the game of chess dramatically. Fischer Random is much better than the old chess; it is basically the same as traditional chess, except you get rid of the theory, and it is very easy to remember the rules. You can learn Fischer Random in practically 10 seconds! You have the same pieces, the same board - all you need is an electronic shuffler, and in one second, you have the starting position.”

Alternatively, players or chess arbiters can manually arrange the pieces according to the randomized setup.

## Literature and Resources on Fischer Random Chess

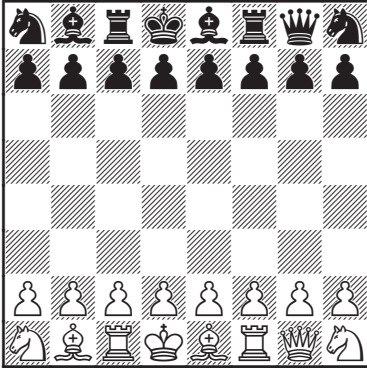
Despite its growing popularity, literature on Fischer Random Chess remains scarce. Two notable works provide valuable insights into this variant:

GM Svetozar Gligorić's "Shall We Play Fischer Random Chess?" (2002): A pioneering work that delves into the intricacies of this format and its implications for the chess world.

GM Wesley So's Chessable Course "The Ascent – Wesley So's Fischer Random Strategies and Tactics" (2021): A comprehensive resource by the first-ever Fischer Random World Champion, offering expert insights and practical guidance.

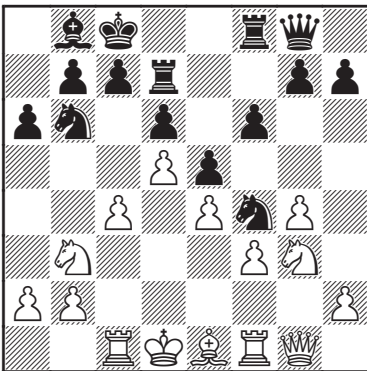
**Vincent KEYMER 2731 - Magnus  
CARLSEN 2833**

Weissenhaus (m/1) 2025


**1.g4!?**

[1.f3!? f5 2.c4 ♟b6 3.c5! ♞d5 4.♞g3 f4 5. ♟e4 c6 6.♞d4 ♞e6 (Fabiano Caruana 2803 - Javokhir Sindarov 2700, Weissenhaus (m/2) 2025) 7.♞g7! ♞g8 8.♞h7 ♟e5 9.0-0-0 ♞g2 10.d4 ♟g6 11.♞h4±]

1...♞g6 2.♟b3 e5 3.♞g3 f6 4.c4 0-0-0 5.d4 ♟b6 6.d5 d6 7.♟f5! ♟d7 8.f3 a6 9.e4± ♟f4 10.♟d7 ♞d7


**11.♟c2!?** ♟a7?!

[11...♟c4! 12.♟b1 ♟h3 13.♞g2 ♟f4 14. ♞g1 ♟h3=]

12.♟d2! ♟b8 13.♟e3 ♟h3 14.♞g2 ♟f4 15.♞f2 h5 16.♞fd1

[16.gh5 ♞h7 17.♟a5! ♟c8 18.♟a7 ♟a7 19.♞e3±]

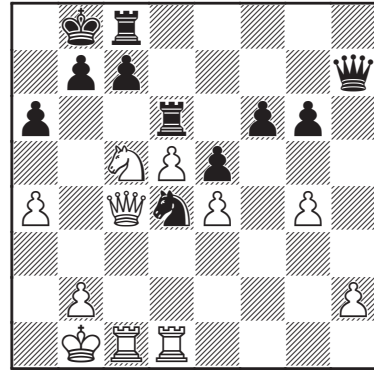
**16...hg4 17.fg4 ♟c8**

[17...♟h3 18.♞f1 ♞h7 19.♟b1±]

18.c5 dc5 19.♟c5 g6 20.♟a7 ♟a7 21. ♟b1 ♞h7 22.♟c5 ♞d6 23.♟e2!?

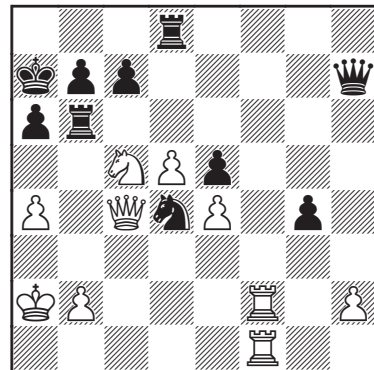
[23.♟f1! f5 24.♟d2 fe4 25.♟de4±]

23...♟e2 24.♞e2 ♟b5 25.♞c4 ♞c8 26.a4 ♟d4


**27.g5! ♞cd8**

[27...fg5 28.♞d4 ed4 29.e5 ♟a8 30. ♞d4☞]

28.gf6 ♞f6 29.♞f1 ♟b6 30.♞f2 g5 31.♟a2 ♟a7 32.♞cf1! g4


**33.♞c3⊕**

[33.♞f7! ♞h2 34.♞f2 ♞h6 (34...♞h1 35. ♞c7 g3 36.♞b7! ♞b7 37.♞a6 ♟b8 38. ♞b7#) 35.♞c7 g3 36.♞ff7 ♞b8 37.♟d7 g2 38.♟b6 ♞b6 (38...g1♞ 39.a5 ♞g8 40.♞c5 ♟b5 41.♞h7 ♞gh7 42.♞h7 ♞h7 43.♟c8 ♟a8 44.♞a7 ♟a7 45.♟b6#) 39. ♞g7+-]

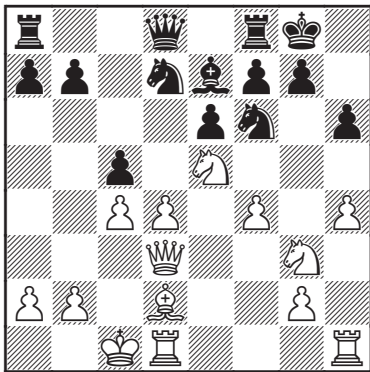


40. !N

**Klemynt SYCHEV 2542 - Vitaliy BERNADSKIY 2531**

Tashkent II 2025

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 de4 4.♗e4 ♕f5 5. ♗g3 ♕g6 6.h4 h6 7.♗f3 e6 8.♗e5 ♕h7 9.♕d3 ♕d3 10.♖d3 ♗f6 11.♕d2 ♕e7 12.0-0-0 ♗bd7 13.f4 0-0 14.c4 c5?! [14...b5! a) 15.c5 ♗e5 16.fe5 a1) 16...♗d5 17.♖e2 (17.♗e4 f5 18.♗d6 h5! 19.♗b1±) 17...b4 18.♗h5±; a2) 16...♗g4! 17.♕e1 ♖d5 18.♖e4 ♖e4 19.♗e4 f6 20.ef6 gf6 21.♖d2 ♗f7 22.♕g3 ♗e3 23.♕f4 ♗d5 24.♖f1 (24.♕h6? ♖h8+) 24...♖g8±; b) 15.♗c6 bc4 16.♖f3 ♖e8 17.♗he1 ♗b6 18.♗f5 ♗fd5 19.♗fe7 ♗e7 20.♗e7 ♖e7 21.d5 ♗a4! 22.de6 (22.♕c3 ♗c3 23.♖c3 ♖h4 24.g3 ♖g4 25.de6 fe6 26.♖d6 ♖ae8∞) 22...c3 23.ef7 ♖f7 24.♕c3 ♗c3 25.bc3 ♖a2 26.♖d5 ♖d5 27.♖d5 ♖f4=; 14...♖c7 - 89/73]



15.d5! N [15.♕c3] 15...ed5 16.♗f5! d4 [16...♗e4 17.♖d5 ♗df6 18.♖b7 ♕d6 19.♕e3+-; 16...♗e5 17.fe5 ♗g4 18.♖g3 h5 19.cd5+-; 16...dc4 17.♖g3+-] 17.♖g3 ♗h5 18.♖f3 [18.♗h6 ♗h7 19.♖d3 g6 (19...♗h6 20.♗g4#) 20.g4 (20.♗ef7+-) 20...♗e5 21.fe5+-] 18...g6 19.♗h6 ♗g7 20.♗ef7! ♖f7 21.♗f7 ♗f7 22.f5 ♗hf6 23.fg6 ♗g6 24.g4+- ♗g7 25.g5 ♗g8 26.h5 ♗h8 27.g6 ♖f8 28.♖b7 [28.♖d5 ♗df6 29.♖e6] 28...♗e5 29.♖e4 ♕f6 30.h6 ♗g6 31.♖g6 ♗e7 32.♖d3

1 : 0

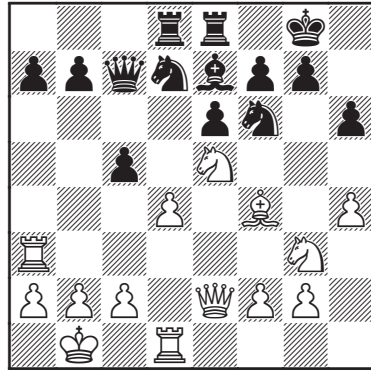
Goran Arsović

B 19 41.

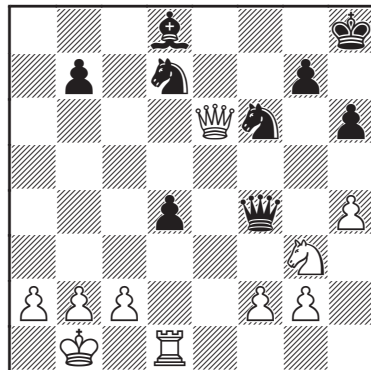
**Yair PARKHOV 2508 - Eytan ROZEN 2504**

Israel (ch) 2025

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 de4 4.♗e4 ♕f5 5.♗g3 ♕g6 6.h4 h6 7.♗f3 ♗d7 8.♕d3 ♕d3 9.♖d3 e6 10.♕f4 ♗gf6 11.0-0-0 ♕e7 12.♖e2 0-0 13.♗e5 ♖a5 14.♗b1 ♖ad8 15.♖d3 ♖fe8 [15...♖b5 - 155/40] 16.♖hd1 c5 17.♖a3 ♖c7

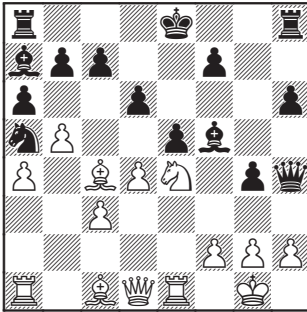


18.♗f7!? ♖f4 19.♗d8 ♕d8 20.♖a7 ♖b8 21.♖a4 ♖f4 22.♖a7 ♖b8 23.♖a3 N [23.♖a4] 23...♗h8? [23...cd4 24.♖d4 ♕e7! 25.♖f3 (25.♖e6? ♗h8+; 25.♖ad3 ♗c5 26.♖d1 ♖c7∞) 25...♗h8 26.a3 ♗c5 27.♖e3 ♖d8∞] 24.♖e3 cd4 [24...♖f4 25.♖e6 ♖e6 26.♖e6 ♖f2 27.♗h5!±] 25.♖e6 ♖e6 26.♖e6 ♖f4 [26...♕b6 27.♗e4 ♗e4 28.♖e4 ♗f6 29.♖e6±]



27.♗h5! ♖h4 [27...♖c7 28.♖d4 ♗f8 29.

25. ♖b2 0-0-0 26. ♖ac1 ♘b8 27. ♕g7 ♖f7  
28. ♖c3±) 21... ♖e7 22. d5 ♕g3 23. hg3  
cd5 24. ♖d5 ♕e6 25. ♖a5 ♖f6 26. ♕f4  
♖d8 27. ♖ad1 ♘f7 28. ♕c7±] **14. ♖g3 N**  
[14. b5! ♘a5 (14... ♘e7 15. g3! ♖h3 16. ♘f6  
♘f8 17. ♕f1+-)



a) 15. ♕d3 ♕e4 (15... 0-0-0 16. ♘d6 ♖d6  
17. ♕f5 ♘b8 18. ♖e5 ♖f6 19. ♕f4 ♖hd8 20.  
♖g4+-) 16. ♕e4 ♖d8 17. ♕d5±; b) 15. ♕d5!  
15... 0-0-0 16. ba6 c6 17. ♘g3 ♕h7 18.  
♕e4± ♕e4 19. ♖e4 ♘b8 20. ♖g4 ♖f6 21.  
♖b1+-] **14... ♕g6 15. b5 ♘e7** [15... ♘a5 16.  
♕d5±] **16. de5 de5 17. ba6 ba6 18. ♖e2**  
**0-0 19. ♖e5** [△ 19. ♖a2 ♘c8 20. ♕d5 ♖b8  
21. ♖a6±] **19... ♖fe8** [△ 19... ♘f5 20. ♕a3  
♘d6 21. ♕d6 cd6 22. ♖d6 ♘h7 23. ♕a6  
♖fd8 24. ♖f4 ♕f2 25. ♖f2 ♖a6 26. c4±]  
**20. ♕a3** [20. ♕e3!? ♕e3 21. ♖e3 ♖g5  
22. ♖g5 hg5 23. ♘e4 ♘f8 24. ♘f6 ♖ed8  
25. ♖e5±] **20... ♘c6 21. ♖f4** [21. ♖c7?  
♖f6∞] **21... ♖g5?** [21... ♘a5 22. ♕a6 ♖g5  
23. ♖g5 hg5 24. ♕e2 ♘b3 25. ♕b5 ♖e1  
26. ♖e1 ♕c5 27. ♕c5 ♘c5 28. ♖e8 ♖e8  
29. ♕e8 ♕c2 30. a5 ♕d3 31. ♕c6 ♘b3  
32. ♕d7 ♘a5 33. ♕g4±] **22. ♖g5 hg5 23.**  
**♕d5+- 1 : 0** *Valentin Stoica*

**119. !N**

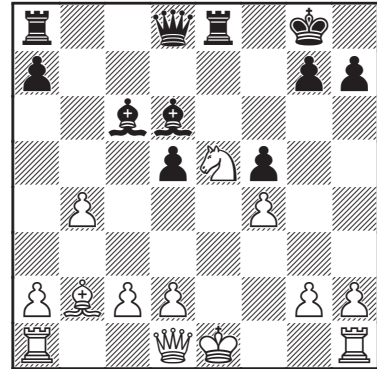
**C 58**

**Leon Luke MENDONCA 2639 -  
Vincent KEYMER 2733**

Wijk aan Zee 2025

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♕c4 ♘f6 4. ♘g5 d5  
5. ed5 ♘a5 6. ♕b5 c6 7. dc6 bc6 8. ♕d3  
♘d5 9. ♘f3 ♕d6 10. ♘c3 f5 [10... 0-0 -  
143/109] 11. ♘d5 cd5 12. b4 ♘c6 13. ♕b5  
♕b7 14. ♕b2 0-0 15. ♕c6 ♕c6 16. ♘e5  
[16. ♕e5 ♖e8 17. d4 ♕b5 18. c3 ♖c7 19.

♘d2! a5∞] **16... ♖e8 17. f4** [17. d4 ♕b4 18.  
c3 ♕d6 19. 0-0 ♕e5 20. de5 ♖e5=]



**17... d4! N** [17... ♖b6] **18. 0-0** [18. ♕d4??  
♕e5 19. ♕e5 ♖e5! 20. fe5 ♖h4 21. ♘f1  
♖f4 22. ♘g1 ♖e4+-] **18... ♕e5 19. fe5 ♖e5**  
**20. c4 ♖h4 21. b5 ♕b7 22. ♖f2** [22. ♖e1!  
♖ae8 23. ♖e5 ♖e5 24. c5! ♖c5 25. ♖e2 h5  
26. ♖c1 ♖c1 27. ♕c1=] **22... ♖ae8** [22... f4!  
23. ♕a3! (23. ♕d4? ♖h5 24. h3 f3+-) a) 23...  
♖e6 24. ♖b3 ♕g2! (24... ♖d8) 25. ♕e7!  
♖e7 26. ♘g2 ♖f8↑; b) 23... ♕g2!? 24. ♖g2  
(24. ♘g2? ♖g5+-) 24... ♖ae8 25. ♖f2 ♖g5  
26. ♖g2 ♖ge5 27. ♖f2=] **23. ♖f1 ♖5e6?**  
[23... ♖8e6!] **24. c5!± ♕e4 25. ♖c4 d3**  
**26. ♖f5 ♖g4 27. ♖f2 h5 28. h3?!** [28.  
♕e5! ♘h7 29. ♕g3 h4 30. ♖f4 ♖e2 31.  
♕f2 (31. ♖h4? ♖h6↔) 31... ♖d2 (31...  
g5 32. ♖e1! ♖e1 33. ♕e1 g4 34. ♕h4+-)  
32. ♖h4 ♘g6 33. ♖f1+-] **28... ♖g3 29. c6**  
**♘h7 30. ♖c5 ♖g6 31. ♖c1??** [31. ♖h5  
♘g8 32. ♕d4! ♖e7! (32... ♕g2? 33. ♖g6!  
♖g6 34. ♖g2+-) 33. c7! (33. ♖c1 ♖f7! 34.  
♖e5 ♖f2 35. ♕f2 ♖g2 36. ♘h1 ♕f3=) 33...  
♖c7 34. ♖e1 ♖f7 35. ♖e4 ♖f2 36. ♖e8 ♘f7  
37. ♖d5 ♘e8 38. ♕f2 ♖g5! 39. ♖g5 ♖g5  
40. a4 ♘d7 41. ♕a7 ♖e5 42. ♘f1 ♘c7  
43. ♕e3 ♖e4 44. a5 ♖b4 45. b6± ♘c6] **31...**  
**♖h3 0 : 1** *Miloš Perunović*

**120. \***

**C 65**

**Ediz GÜREL 2624 -  
Erwin L'AMI 2614**

Wijk aan Zee II 2025

1. e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♕b5 ♘f6 4. d3 d6  
5. d4!? ed4 [5... ♕d7 - 111/(145)] 6. ♘d4