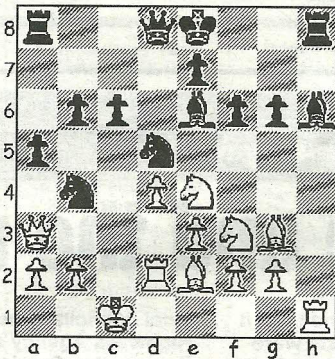


CHESS

by Alan Dommett

DIAGRAM 1



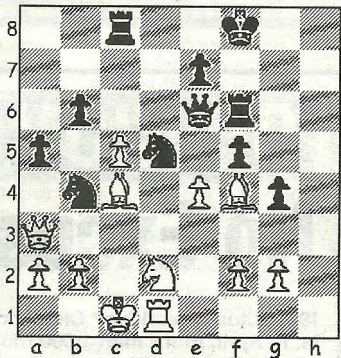
The FIDE Candidates tournament is currently taking place in Kazan, Russia and eight players have been competing to produce one world championship candidate to face reigning champion Viswanathan Anand. The event reached a semi-final stage in which the Russian former champion Vladimir Kramnik took on fellow compatriot Alexander Grischuk, while Gata Kamsky (USA) and Boris Gelfand (Israel) battled for the other final place.

An early series of draws indicated that both matches would be cagey affairs and this proved to be the case as the standard and rapid games in both matches failed to produce outright winners. It took the blitz games to separate the contestants with Grischuk's remarkable calmness under pressure and Gelfand's superior blitz play winning the day in their respective matches.

The following game is taken from the quarter-finals and Kamsky, after later missing a golden opportunity to go through to the final with a critical oversight at the rapidplay stage of his semi-final, shows his ability and preference for the standard form of play.

Topalov, Veselin - Kamsky, G
WCh Candidates Kazan, 2011
Grunfeld Defence (D90)
1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5
Nxd5 5.Qb3 In the main line the queen
is developed with check and, after

DIAGRAM 2



5...Bd7 6.Qh4, the opening takes on an entirely different look. 5...Nb6 6.d4 Bg7 7.Bf4 Be6 8.Qa3 In Reshevsky-Benko (Chicago, 1974) White opted for the natural 8.Qc2, but, after 8...Nc6 9.e3 0-0 10.Be2 Nb4 11.Qd1 c5 12.0-0 Rc8 a quick draw was agreed. 8...Nc6 9.0-0-0?! A very risky novelty when 9.e3, as in Ivanchuk-Kamsky (Jermuk, 2009), is the more pragmatic response. 9...Nd5 10.Bg3 Bh6+ 11.e3 After 11.Kb1? Bf5+ 12.e4 Nxc3+ 13.Qxc3, the e-pawn is lost. 11...a5 12.h4 Ncb4 13.h5 White opens the h-file for his rook, but Black's continual build-up of pressure will soon make him alter his plans. 13...c6 14.hxg6 hxg6 15.Rd2?! f6 Preventing 16.Ng5 before...16.Ne4?! b6!?!...restricting White's other knight. 17.Be2 (Diag 1) Qc8! An excellent dual purpose move that defends the bishop and threatens a timely push of the c-pawn to open the file. 18.Rh4 Kf7 19.Rd1 g5 20.Rh2 g4 White is being forced to retreat right across the board and the next passage of play sees Black take total control. 21.Nfd2 c5 22.dxc5 f5 23.Rxh6 Giving up the exchange, but it hardly stems the tide. 23...Rxh6 24.Ng5+ Kf8 25.Nxe6+ Qxe6 26.Bc4 Rc8 27.Bf4 Rf6 28.e4? (Diag 2) A final bid for some freedom that Black can ignore because the following pin on the bishop sets up a winning combination. 28...Rxc5! 29.exd5 Qxd5 30.b3 Qd4 31.Be3 Qc3+ and White resigned rather than face 32.Kb1 Qc2+ 33.Ka1 and the resultant loss of his rook.

● Any enquiries regarding the Chess column should be addressed to Alan Dommett via a.j.dommett@btinternet.com