

CHESS

by Alan Dommett

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DIAGRAM 1

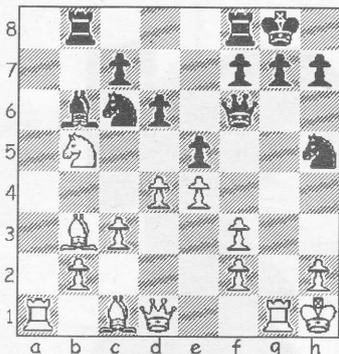
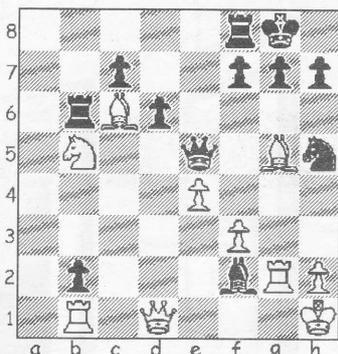


DIAGRAM 2



WIMBORNE A's fading hopes of title success in Division 1 of the Bournemouth League are still flickering following the first of two clashes with reigning champions Southbourne A.

The contest is still in the balance, the result hinging on the eventual outcome of a second board adjournment, with the remaining three games ending in close-fought draws that only served to reflect the fine margins always associated with this match.

An early draw on bottom board between Miles Cowling and Graham White added to the tension whilst on top Allan Pleasants kept Martin Simons at bay despite being a shade worse for much of the game.

Ian Clark took the initiative against Len Laker's Sicilian only to miss a winning line just before the time control which left Phil Taylor-Bowd and Walter Braun locked in battle with hardly a piece removed at adjournment! Needless to say, victory for either player will be crucial and have a significant effect on the title race.

The following game is taken from the current Wijk aan Zee tournament and features the demolition of Alexei Shirov's favourite Ruy Lopez line by an opponent whose preparation is used to maximum effect.

Smeets, J - Shirov, A

Wijk aan Zee (1), 2011

Ruy Lopez: Moeller Defence (C70)

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 b5 6.Bb3 Bc5 Black can defer this move and commit his queen's bishop with 6...Bb7 (Archangelsk Defence), but here the c8/h2 diagonal will be utilised instead. 7.a4 Rb8 8.c3 In Leko-Shirov (Tilburg, 1997) White opted for early

exchanges and after 8.axb5 axb5 9.Nxe5 Nxe5 10.d4 Bxd4 11.Qxd4 d6 12.f4 Nc6 13.Qd3 0-0 the play petered out to a draw in 26 moves. 8...d6 9.d4 Bb6 10.axb5 axb5 11.Na3 0-0 The b-pawn is jettisoned for the opportunity to open up White's king-side. 12.Nxb5 Bg4 13.Re1 Bxf3 14.gxf3 Protecting the d-pawn at the expense of doubled pawns, whereas 14.Qxf3 exd4 15.cxd4 Bxd4 would have led to equality. 14...Nh5 15.Kh1 Qf6 16.Rg1 (Diag 1) exd4 Black deviates from Svidler-Shirov (Linares, 19980) when he posted his knight at f4, but got into trouble after 17.Be3 Ne6 18.Be6 fxe6 19.Rg3, eventually losing in 37 moves. 17.Bg5!? Qe5 18.Bd5 dxc3 The only playable move, yet the continuation still follows theory for a few moves longer. 19.Bxc6 cxb6 20.Rb1 Bxf2 21.Rg2 Rb6 (Diag 2) 22.Bd7! Indeed, right up until White plays this stunning novelty, no doubt confident that his opponent was always heading for the security of this line, as he did in Ivanchuk-Shirov (Wijk-aan-Zee, 2010) when the game continued 22.Qd5 Bc5 23.Rbxb2 Rxc6 24.Qxc6 Ng3+ 25.hxg3 Qxg5 26.Rb1 Qh5+ 27.Rh2 Qxf3+ 28.Rg2 Qh5+ and Black took the perpetual. 22...Bc5 23.Na7 Ra8?? 24.Nc6! Immediate reward for White, with 23...f6 24.Bd2 d5 appearing to be the only viable response and, as 24...Qc3 25.Ne7+ Kh8 26.Nd5 wins the exchange, Black gives it up anyway....24...Rxc6 25.Bxc6 ...before accepting the hopelessness of his position and resigning.

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