

NEW ENGLANDER

Chess Club Update – April 2010

Chairman's Chatter

A Special Issue? Yes! This newsletter aims to be the curtain-raiser for the World Championship match.

Paul Hanks

Website to Watch

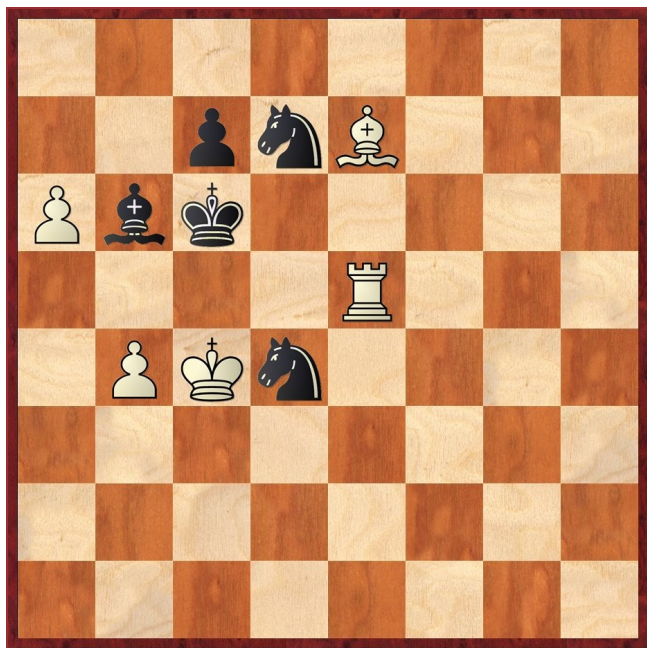
The Anand v Topalov clash takes place in Sofia between 23rd April and 12th May. The bespoke website is www.anand-topalov.com.

Diary Dates

April is the time for the final push. In addition to our last matches, we must finish the club championship. There have been a large number of postponements in the harsher weather but now no excuses!

Puzzle Problem

White to play and mate in 2.



Last Month's solution

Position: 4k2r/8/4K1N1/b7/R5Q1/8/8/8

1 Qb4 Bxb4 2 Ra8# [1 ... Kd8 2 Qb8#; 1 ... Rh7 2 Qf8#; 1 ... Bd8 2 Qb5#; 1 ... other 2 Qe7#]

Result Round-up

Cambridgeshire County Chess Leagues

Spalding	2	New England B	2
D Carew	½	R Jones	½
J Smith	1	D Lane	0
R Coates	½	A Brookbanks	½
J Pulford	0	M Tarabad	1

Cambridgeshire "550" Competition

Warboys N	1½	New England 2	2½
J Beck	0	F Bowers	1
Default	0	P Turp	1
M Onyons	½	N Wedley	½
K Harbour	1	H Currie	0

Warboys N	2½	New England 1	1½
B Duff	½	P Hanks	½
P Clough	1	C J Russell	0
M Onyons	0	A Brookbanks	1
K Harbour	1	M Tarabad	0

New England 2	2½	Octavia Hill	1½
F Bowers	½	C Collins	½
P Turp	1	C Donald	0
D Lane	1	M Tucker	0
S Walker	0	J Batten	1

Club Championship : at 10/03/10

Division One	CR	FB	PT	RJ	PH	MD	Total
C Ross	X	1	1	0	1	2	1 1 1 P 8 / 9
F Bowers	0	0	X	P	P	½ ½	P 1 / 4
P Turp	0	1	P	X	1	0	P P 2 / 4
R Jones	0	P	P	0	X	0	P P 0 / 5
P Hanks	0	0	½ ½	1	2	X	P P 4 / 7
M Dunkley	P	0	P	P	P	P	P P X 0 / 1

Division Two	D L	C R	S W	A B	N W	J A	H C	M T	K T	D S	Total
D Lane	X	0	1	1	1	½	P	1	P	0	4½/7
C Russell	1	X	1	P	½	0	1	P		P	3½/5
S Walker	0	0	X	½	0		1	1	1	0	3½/8
A Brookbanks	0	P	½	X	1	P	½	1	1	1	5 / 7
N Wedley	0	½	1	0	X	1	P	0	½	1	4 / 8
J Alster	½	1		P	0	X	1	P		P	2½/4
H Currie	P	0	0	½	P	0	X	0	0		½ / 6
M Tarabad	0	P	0	0	1	P	1	X	1	1	4 / 7
K Talnikar	P		0	0	½		1	0	X	P	1½/5
D Sivell	1	P	1	0	0	P		0	P	X	2 / 5

* = game played in league match to count in both competitions

Match of the Month

You must have heard the expression "Mad March" in relation either to brown hares or Masefield's dirty British coaster. For the imaginative game below from the Team 550 competition, Francis obviously cast a keen eye on the calendar.

F Bowers v J Beck

New England 2 v Warboys N, 03.03.10

1 e4 g5

First, his opponent plays an offbeat opening verging on the dubious.

2 Bc4 d6
3 Bxf7+

So, he decides to join in the fun!

3 ... Kxf7
4 Qh5+ Ke6

The king must choose his escape route straight away. If 4 ... Kg7, the alternative to a perpetual check is 5 Qxg5+ Kf7 6 Qh5+ Kf6 (6 ... Ke6 7 Qf5#). But how do you proceed? Fritz also thinks it's the silly season and suggests none other than 7 a4 so that the rook can join the attack along the third rank.

5 Nf3 Nf6
6 Nxg5+ Kd7

The only reply to avoid checkmate e.g. 6 ... Ke5 7 d4+ Kxd4 8 Nf3+ Kc4 (8 ... Kxe4 9 Nc3#) 9 Na3+ Kb4 10 Qb5#.

7 Qf7 Qe8

The last real chance of successful defence was to give the king some space with 7 ... c5 or 7 ... c6.

8 Qe6+ Kc6

The d8 square becomes taboo for much of the remainder of the game by virtue of the threat 8 ... Kd8 9 Nf7+.

9 Qc4+ Kd7

9 ... Kb6 looks inferior but White has to work hard to prove it. More attacking lines can be opened with 10 Nc3 c6 11 e5 dxe5 12 d4 but 11 ... d5 and 11 ... Nd5 come into consideration.

10 e5

10 Qe6+ could lead to a draw by repetition but let's keep the party going!

10 ... d5

Not 10 ... dxe5 11 Qe6+ Kd8 12 Nf7+ and the knight has no decent squares 10 ... Ng8/h5 11 e6+ Kd8 12 Nf7+.

11 Qa4+ b5

At first, this choice looks like a rush of blood to the brain but Black is battling for the tempo that will allow him to keep his piece. 11 ... c6 should have been expected when it would be logical to recover the material with 12 exf6 except for 12 ... exf6+.

So 11 ... c6 12 e6+

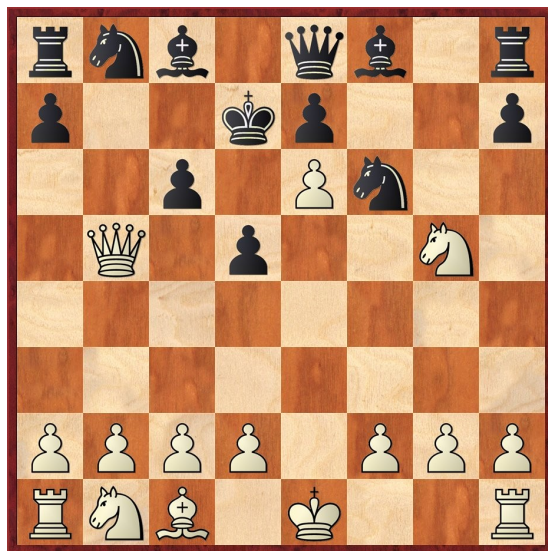
a) 12 ... Kd6 13 d3 Nh5 (13 ... Bxe6 14 Qb4+ when Black is torn between holding e6 and b7) 14 Bf4+

Nxf4 15 Qxf4+ Kc5 16 b4+ Kb6 (16 ... Kb5 17 Nc3+ Ka6 18 b5+ cxb5 19 a4 with a massive attack) 17 Qd4+ and the loose rook on h8 falls.

b) 12 ... Kc7 13 Qf4+ Kb6 14 Qb4+ is a perpetual check. Can you do better?

Sadly, 11 ... Kd8 leads to exchanges with 12 Qxe8+ Kxe8 13 exf6 exf6 14 Nf3 when the rabid attacker has a material advantage but lacks development!

12 Qxb5+ c6
13 e6+



13 ... Kc7

Again, 13 ... Kd8 is impossible - now due to 14 Qa5#. After 13 ... Kd6, you need to be clairvoyant to see the quiet move 14 Qb3. White has many threats and it is just a matter of seeing through the fog of war.

14 ... Na6 15 Qg3+ Kc5 16 d4+ Kb6 17 Qb3+ Kc7 18 Bf4+ Kd8 19 Nf7+

14 ... Bxe6 15 d4

a) 15 ... Bc8 16 Bf4+ Kd7 17 Bxb8

b) 15 ... Bf7 16 Bf4+ Kd7 17 Qb7+

c) 15 ... Nh5 16 Qb4+ c5 (16 ... Kd7 17 Qb7+; 16 ... Kc7 17 Nxe6+) 17 dxc5+ Ke5 18 Qc3+ d4 (18 ... Kf5 19 g4+ Kxg4 20 Qh3#) 19 Nf3+ Kd5 20 Qxd4+ Kc6 21 Qa4+

14 Qa5+ Kb7

14 ... Kd6 would be foolhardy. 15 d4 Nh5 16 c4 Bxe6 17 Qb4+ c5 18 Qxc5+ Kd7 19 Qb5+ Kd8 (19 ... Nc6 20 Qb7+ Kd6 (20 ... Kd8 21 Nxe6#) 21 c5#) 20 Nxe6+

15 Nf7 Bg7

There is no time to save the rook due to 15 ... Rg8 16 Nd8+.

16 Qb4+ Kc7

If your head is spinning, you may be happy with the prosaic 16 ... Ka6 17 Nxh8.

17 d3 Bxe6 18 Bf4+ Kc8 19 Nxh8 Bxh8 20 Nc3 Nbd7 21 Qa5 Qd8

A more solid defence would be 21 ... Nb6 but what month is it?

22 Qa6#

Serious Study

In February 2009, Veselin Topalov defeated Gata Kamsky 4½ - 2½ in a match entitled the "World Chess Challenge". This determined that the winner would challenge Vishy Anand for the world title originally later the same year. In line with its recent history, however, FIDE indulged in fluid competition arrangements and it took time to settle on Sofia as a venue between 21st April and 12th May.

I thought it might be interesting to put ourselves in the position of a second to each contender and decide how to prepare for the match. Firstly, both sides can look at the history of clashes between the two players. Generally, Vishy has the better record but the tables were turned in their most recent classical encounter.

V Topalov (2777) v V Anand (2798)

Grand Slam Final Round 4, Bilbao, 2008

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Ba6 5 Qc2 Bb7 6 Bg2 c5 7 d5 exd5 8 cxd5 Nxd5 9 0-0 Be7 10 Rd1 Qc8 11 a3 Nf6 12 Bg5 d5 13 Bxf6 Bxf6 14 Nc3 Bxc3 15 bxc3 Na6 16 Nh4 g6 17 Bxd5 Bxd5 18 Rxd5 0-0 19 Rad1 Nc7 20 Rd7 Ne6 21 Qe4 Qe8 22 Nf3 c4 23 Qh4 Nc5 24 Re7 Rd8 25 Rf1 1-0

The tables below show the published games over the past ten years.

Anand as White

Opening	Win	Draw	Loss	%
Ruy Lopez, 4... Nxe4	2	-	-	100
Ruy Lopez, 6... Bc5	1	3	-	63
Sicilian, Najdorf 6 Be3	6	7	1	68
Sicilian, Najdorf 6 Be2	-	2	-	50
Sicilian, 5... e5	2	-	1	67
Sicilian, 3 Bb5	1	1	1	50
Caro Kann, Classical	-	2	-	50
Others	2	3	-	70
Overall	14	18	3	66

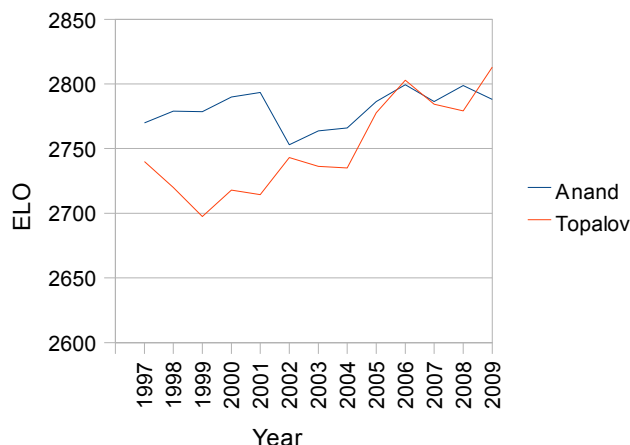
Topalov as White

Opening	Win	Draw	Loss	%
Ruy Lopez, 6...Bc5	-	3	-	50
Ruy Lopez, 6...Be7	-	4	1	40
Petroff	-	2	1	33
Sicilian, Najdorf	2	-	1	67
Sicilian, 5... Qc7	1	1	1	50
Caro Kann	1	2	1	50
French	-	3	-	50
Queen Gambit Accepted	-	3	-	50
Queen's Indian	5	2	-	86
Others	-	5	2	36
Overall	9	25	7	52

Website : www.newenglandchess.org.uk

This history reflects that for most of this period, Anand had been the more successful player but since 2005 when Kasparov retired, Topalov has emerged as a serious contender for the No 1 ranking. In the past months, though, both have been eclipsed by Carlsen's rapid rise.

ELO rating history



Playing against Anand

Evgeny Bareev obviously drew the short straw. After the Anand v Kramnik match, the contestants annotated their victories in *New in Chess* magazine and Bareev was left to comment on the draws. In order to breathe life into his efforts, he prefaced his analysis with his view of the strengths and weaknesses of each player. Anand, he said, was excellent at calculating variations, rarely suffered from time trouble and had a broad opening repertoire. However, he occasionally let second-best moves slip into positional struggles and could become tense when kept under pressure. Anand is most vulnerable against an opponent who can avoid tactical blunders and resolutely maintains an initiative – Topalov in very good form, he concludes.

Anand's excellent results with the Ruy Lopez and the Najdorf suggest he will be happy to open 1 e4. Kramnik could have resorted to the drawish Petroff's Defence but apart from a light-hearted blindfold game, Topalov has no recent track record with this opening. So we can expect king's pawn games and Topalov will need to improve on their past encounters :-

V Anand (2795) v V Topalov (2700)

Tilburg 1998

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be3

6 f3 is a popular alternative. Sometimes the position simplified 6 ... e6 7 Be3 b5 8 Qd2 b4 9 Na4 Nbd7 10 c4 bxc3 11 Nxc3 Bb7 12 Be2 d5 13 exd5 Nxd5 14 Nxd5 Bxd5 [Sofia 2006] but earlier, White had won in 41 moves by keeping pieces on the board for a kingside pawn storm with 6 ... b5 7 a4 b4 8 Nd5 Nxd5 9 exd5 g6 10 Be3 Bb7 11 Bc4 Qc7 12 Bb3 Nd7 13 Qd2 Nf6 14 Ne2 a5 15 0-0-0 Rc8 16 Nd4 Bg7 [Wijk aan Zee 1999]

6...e6

Two games have continued 6 ... Ng4 7 Bg5 h6 8 Bh4 g5 9 Bg3 Bg7. The quieter version again led to success for Anand in 78 moves though only after some inaccurate play 10 Bc4 Nc6 11 Nxc6 bxc6 12 h4 Qb6 13 Bb3 Bd7 14 hxg5 0-0-0 15 Qd2 hxg5 16 Rxh8 Rxh8 17 0-0-0 Ne5 18 f3 [Linares 1998]. Early tactics look superficially promising for White but only resulted in a draw after 51 moves 10 Be2 h5 11 Bxg4 hxg4 12 Nd5 Nc6 13 Nf5 Bxf5 14 exf5 Bxb2 15 Rb1 Qa5+ 16 Qd2 Bd4 17 Qxa5 Nxa5 18 Nc7+ Kd7 19 Nxa8 Rxa8 [Dortmund 1999].

White has shown a slight advantage against 6 ... e5 in the head-to-head games. The most promising line has been 7 Nb3 (7 Nf3 Be7 was drawn in 25 moves [Linares 2007] and later, Anand played this variation as Black!) 7 ... Be6 8 f3 h5 (8 ... Nbd7 9 g4 led to a promising attack but Black's resource were adequate [Bastia 2003] drawn in 29 moves) 9 Nd5 Bxd5 10 exd5 Nbd7 11 Qd2 g6 12 0-0-0 Nb6 13 Qa5 Bh6 [Wijk aan Zee 2008] and White won after 40 moves. Only a level game followed 8 Qd2 Nbd7 9 f3 b5 10 a4 b4 11 Nd5 Bxd5 12 exd5 Nb6 13 Bxb6 Qxb6 [Bastia 2003].

7 f3 b5 8 g4 h6 9 Qd2 Nbd7

An interesting material imbalance arose after 9 ... b4 10 Na4 Nbd7 11 0-0-0 Ne5 12 b3 Bd7 (12 ... d5 simplified by 13 Bf4 Bd6 14 Bxe5 Bxe5 15 Nc6 Qc7 16 Nxe5 Qxe5 17 Qxb4 dxe4 18 Nb6 Rb8 19 Kb1 Qc7 20 Qa4+ Kf8 21 Nxc8 Rxc8 22 Qc4 [Linares 2005] though White won in 59 moves through an endgame error) 13 Nb2 d5 14 Bf4 Nxf3 15 Nxf3 Nxe4 16 Qd4 f6 17 Bd3 Bc5 18 Bxe4 Bxd4 19 Bg6+ Kf8 20 Rxd4 [Sofia 2005]. It was drawn in 60 moves though Anand tried to prove a win for White in post-mortem analysis.

10 0-0-0 Bb7 11 h4 b4 12 Nb1 d5 13 Bh3 Ne5 14 g5 Nfd7 15 Qe2 dxe4 16 f4



16 ... Nd3+ 17 cxd3 exd3 18 Qxd3 Nc5 19 Qc2 Be4 20 Nxe6 fxe6 21 Rxd8+ Rxd8 22 Bxc5 Bxc2 23 Bxf8

Kxf8 24 Kxc2. The fireworks have fizzled and the game was drawn in 46 moves.

There have recently been some good results for Black in the English Attack. Leading the charge has been Sergey Karjakin and Topalov should probably consider trying emulating the following game in which Black gets good chances without risking too much.

P Svidler (2728) v S Karjakin (2678)
Wijk aan Zee, 2007

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be3 e5 7 Nb3 Be6 8 Qd2 Nbd7 9 0-0-0 Be7

Anand played this way against Ivanchuk at Linares 2007. Here he tried 10 h3 but gained no advantage.

10 f3 b5 11 g4 b4 12 Nd5 Bxd5 13 exd5 Nb6 14 Na5 Nbx5 15 Nc6 Qc7 16 Nxb4 Nxb4 17 Qxb4 0-0 18 g5 Rfc8 19 Qa4

Black claims at least a slight edge in 19 Bd3 Rab8 20 Qh4 (20 Qc3 Qxc3 21 bxc3 Nd5 22 Bxh7+ Kxh7 23 Rxd5 Rxc3) 20 ... Rxb2 21 Qc4 (21 Kxb2 Qc3+ 22 Kb1 d5) 21 ... Qb7 22 Qxc8+ Qxc8 23 gxf6 Bxf6 24 Kxb2 e4+ 25 Kc1 exd3 26 Rxd3 Qf5. White's best try is 19 Qc4 Qxc4 20 Bxc4 Rxc4 21 gxf6 Bxf6 22 Rxd6 Kf8 when the evaluation is equal.



19 ... Rab8 20 Bd3

Quick wins follow 20 Qc4 Qb7 and 20 gxf6 Rb4. The "only" move 20 Bc4 leaves Black in rude health - 20 ... Qxc4 21 Qxc4 Rxc4 22 gxf6 Bxf6 23 Rxd6 e4 24 c3 Ra4 25 a3 exf3 26 Rf1 Be5 27 Rd7 Bxh2 28 Rxf3 f6

20 ... Nd7

Interestingly, Karjakin thinks Black now has a winning position (presumably after consulting his software) but Fritz does not see it as that clear-cut.

21 Qe4 g6 22 Bxa6

We have already seen variations similar to 22 h4 Rxb2 23 Kxb2 Qc3+ 24 Kc1 d5

22 ... Rb4 23 Qd3

Black is supposed to have a substantial plus after 23 c4 Qc6 24 Bxc8 Rxc4+ 25 Kb1 Rxe4 26 Bxd7 Qxd7 27 fxe4 Qa4 but I am sceptical.

23 ... Rcb8 24 b3 Nc5 25 Bxc5 Qxc5 26 Qd5 Qa7 27 Bc4 Bxg5+

27 ... Rc8 is reported to be stronger.

28 Kb2 Ra4 29 a3 Ra5 30 Qe4 Be3 31 c3 Rxa3 32 Ra1 Ra8 0-1

I would have played on. 33 Qb1 Rxa1 34 Qxa1 Bc1+ 35 Rxc1 Qf2+ 36 Rc2 Qxc2+ 37 Kxc2 Rxa1 is convincing but 33 Qxa8+ Qxa8 34 Rxa3 Qxf3 35 Rf1 Qg2+ 36 Kb1 d5 leaves Black dangerous chances which could have been played out.

How can Anand avoid being drawn into these complications? The fly in the ointment is that Anand likes the foray Nc3-d5 which forces exchanges of minor pieces. In the game below, he had to play against this strategy and although Anand eventually won, there was no an early advantage.

P Leko (2753) v V Anand (2799)
Morelia/Linares 2008

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be3 e5 7 Nb3 Be6 8 Qd2 Nbd7 9 f3 b5 10 0-0-0 Be7 11 Nd5 Bxd5 12 exd5 Nb6 13 Bxb6 Qxb6 14 Na5 Rc8 15 Nc6 Nxd5 16 Nxe7 Nxe7 17 Qxd6 Qxd6 18 Rxd6=

Topalov will need to find an antidote in order to guide the game down more tactical pathways with mutual flank attacks. He may take heart from the following game.

Zhigalko (2556) v Bologan (2663)
Moscow 2008

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Be3 e5 7 Nb3 Be6 8 f3 Nbd7 9 Qd2 Qc7 10 g4 h6 11 0-0-0 b5 12 Kb1 Nb6 13 h4 b4 14 Bxb6 Qxb6 15 Nd5 Bxd5 16 exd5 g6 17 Bd3 Bg7 18 h5 g5 19 Be4 0-0 20 c4 bxc3 21 Qxc3 a5 22 Rc1 a4 23 Nd2 Rfb8 24 Nc4 Qa6 25 Rc2 Nd7 26 Rhc1 Bf8 27 Bd3 Nc5 28 Be2 a3 and Black went on to win after blunders in time trouble by both sides.

But what is Plan B? Suppose Topalov suffered a terrible reverse and needed to change the style of the game completely. I do not see an obvious fallback and this may be a significant factor during the match. Topalov has played the Caro Kann occasionally but so has Anand and the same is true for some lines of the Ruy Lopez. In fact, Topalov's efforts in these openings have only been moderately successful and his safety net could prove to be anything but.

V Anand (2770) v V Topalov (2740)
Wijk aan Zee, 1998

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 b5 6 Bb3 Bc5 7 a4 Rb8 8 c3 d6 9 d4 Bb6 10 axb5 axb5 11 h3 0-0 12 Re1 Re8 13 Na3 b4 14 Nc4 bxc3 15 bxc3 exd4 16 Nxb6 Rxb6 17 cxd4 Nxe4 18 Bxf7+ Kxf7 19 Rxe4 Rxe4 20 Ng5+ Kg8 21 Nxe4 Bf5 22 Ng5 Ne7 23 g4 Bg6 24 Ne6 Qc8 25 d5 Bf7 26 Nxf7 Kxf7 27 Qd4+ Kf8

27 ... Kg6 28 Qe4+ Kf6 29 Bh6 Nf5 30 gxf5 Qxf5 31 Qh4+ Kg6 (31 ... Ke5 32 Rd1 Bxd5 33 Qe7+) 32 Kh2

28 Bh6+ Ke8 29 Re1 1-0

29 ... Kd7 30 Rxe7+ Kxe7 31 Qe4+ Be6 [31 ... Kf6 32 g5#; 31 ... Kd7 32 Qf5+] 32 Qxh7+ Bf7 33 Qe4+ Be6 34 Bg5+ Kf8 35 dxe6

Playing against Topalov

Topalov's trump card is 1 d4. It has featured increasingly in his repertoire since 2005 and his best percentage score is against Anand's Queen's Indian Defence. As Black, Anand's style is to play solidly (over 60% draws) and he wins only half as many games as Topalov.

Whereas Topalov's choice of opening is dictated by his experience, Anand's will be determined by his match strategy. He can realistically hope to win with White and only has to stonewall with Black. I expect he will prepare at least two openings – a conservative line and an attacking option. But against, 1 d4, that is easier said than done!

In the match with Kramnik, Anand used the Meran variation of the Queen's Gambit to great effect but that no longer holds surprise value. Moreover, Topalov has shown deep knowledge of some of the related variations.

V Topalov (2780) v V Kramnik (2799)
Wijk aan Zee, 2008

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 dxc4 7 e4 g5 8 Bg3 b5 9 Be2 Bb7 10 0-0 Nbd7 11 Ne5 Bg7



12 Nxf7 Kxf7 13 e5 Nd5 14 Ne4 Ke7 15 Nd6 Qb6

Meeting a novelty like this over the board is very difficult. The recommendation to refute the concept is 15 ... Rb8 16 Bg4 c5 17 f4 Ne3 18 fg5 Rf8.

16 Bg4 Raf8 17 Qc2 Qxd4 18 Qg6 Qxg4 19 Qxg7+ Kd8 20 Nxb7+ Kc8 21 a4 b4 22 Rac1 c3 23 bxc3 b3 24 c4 Rfg8 25 Nd6+ Kc7 26 Qf7 Rf8 27 cxd5 Rxf7 28 Rxc6+ Kb8 29 Nxf7 Re8 30 Nd6 Rh8 31 Rc4 Qe2

2 Topalov's performance with Black will depend critically on whether he and his support team can unearth a theoretical novelty in the Sicilian. If they do and snatch an early lead, we could be treated to some feisty tactics.

3 Topalov will open 1 d4 and adopt Catalan-type formations with a kingside fianchetto. There has been an immense amount of activity in this opening in recent years. Most games have been long and drawn - Anand will be happy with that.

4 Anand will prove to be too strong with White both in terms of preparation against Topalov's openings and in the middlegame tactics.

5 Anand to win $6\frac{1}{2}$ - $4\frac{1}{2}$.

6 Many of my thoughts were contradicted in the Anand v Kramnik match so expect the unexpected!

Hopefully, this review will throw some light on the shadow boxing that precedes the actual match and the opening options that may appear.