

**Subject:** Australia play Ukraine in Chess Olympiad

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Australia play Ukraine in Chess Olympiad

by Paul Power, Australian Chess Federation, from Budapest

The Australian Open team met #15 seed Ukraine today in the Chess Olympiad, Budapest.

The Olympiad, featuring almost 200 countries, also celebrates the 100th anniversary of the world chess peak body FIDE (Fédération Internationale des Échecs).

The Ukrainian team features legendary players Andrei Volokitin, Vasyl Ivanchuk, Ruslan Ponomariov, Anton Korobov, and Volodymyr Onyshchuk.

The contest began with Ukraine higher ranked on all four boards.

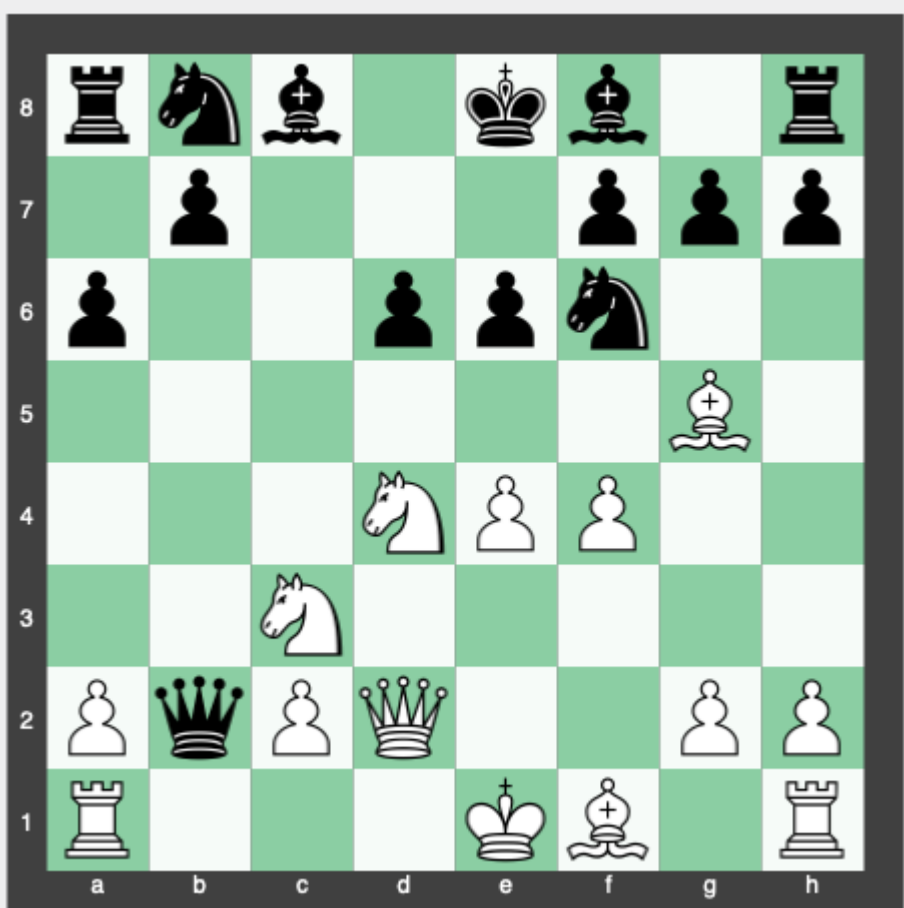


Kuybokarov drew with Volokitin, Cheng defeated Ivanchuk, Ponomariov defeated Zhao and Korobov defeated Smerdon - (1.5-2.5)

Australia's Women's team was paired with Nicaragua's.

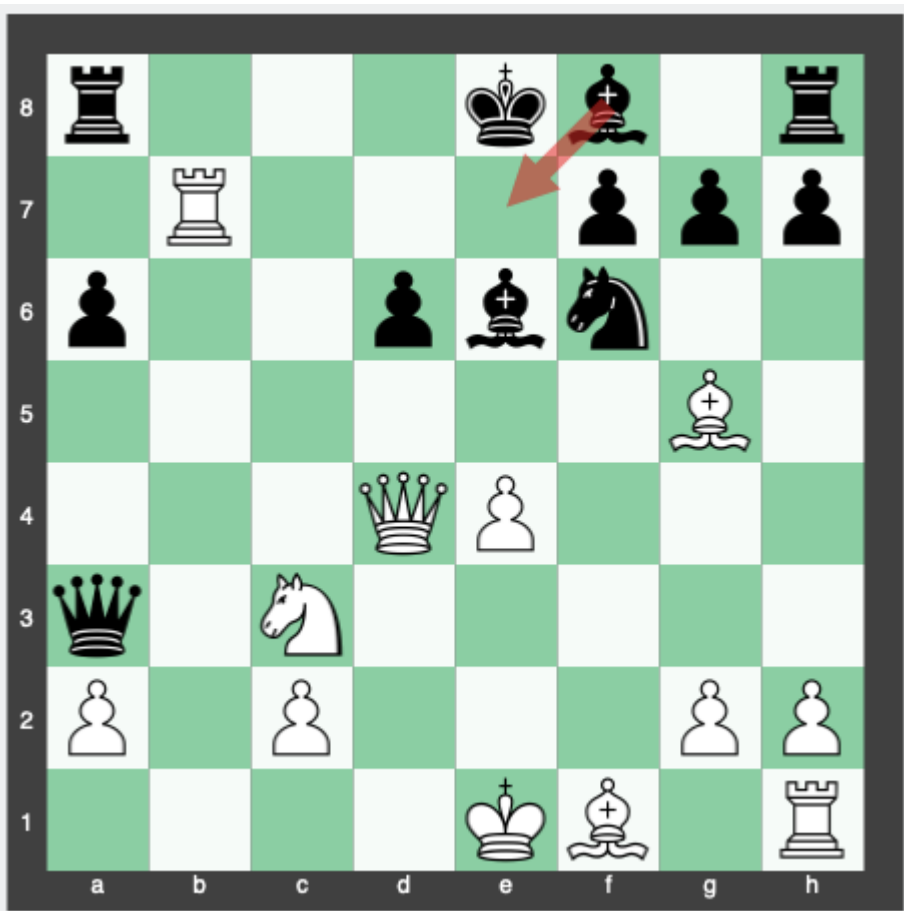
Ryjanova defeated Ortiz, Nguyen defeated Cabezas Calero, Zhiyuan Shen defeated Munoz Cortez and Vincent defeated Alvarez Gutierrez - (4-0)

Kuybokarov (White) on board 1 faced a Sicilian Najdorf Defence from Volokitin, with Kuybokarov varying from round 2 with 6. Bg5, instead of 6. h3, arriving at the "Poisoned Pawn" position, famously featured in the Fischer-Spassky World Championship, 1972, Game 11.



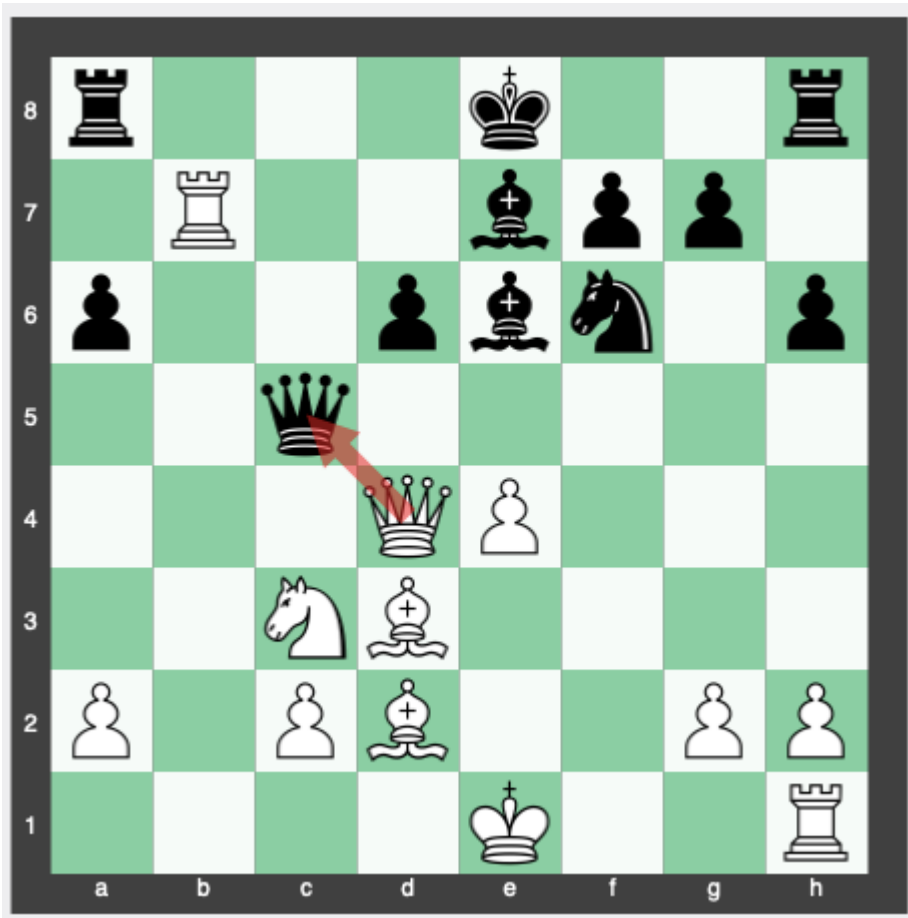
where Spassky continued 9. Nb3; Volokitin chose 9. Rb1

Arriving at the same position, after 13... Be7 as Kuybokarov-Brkic, June 2024,

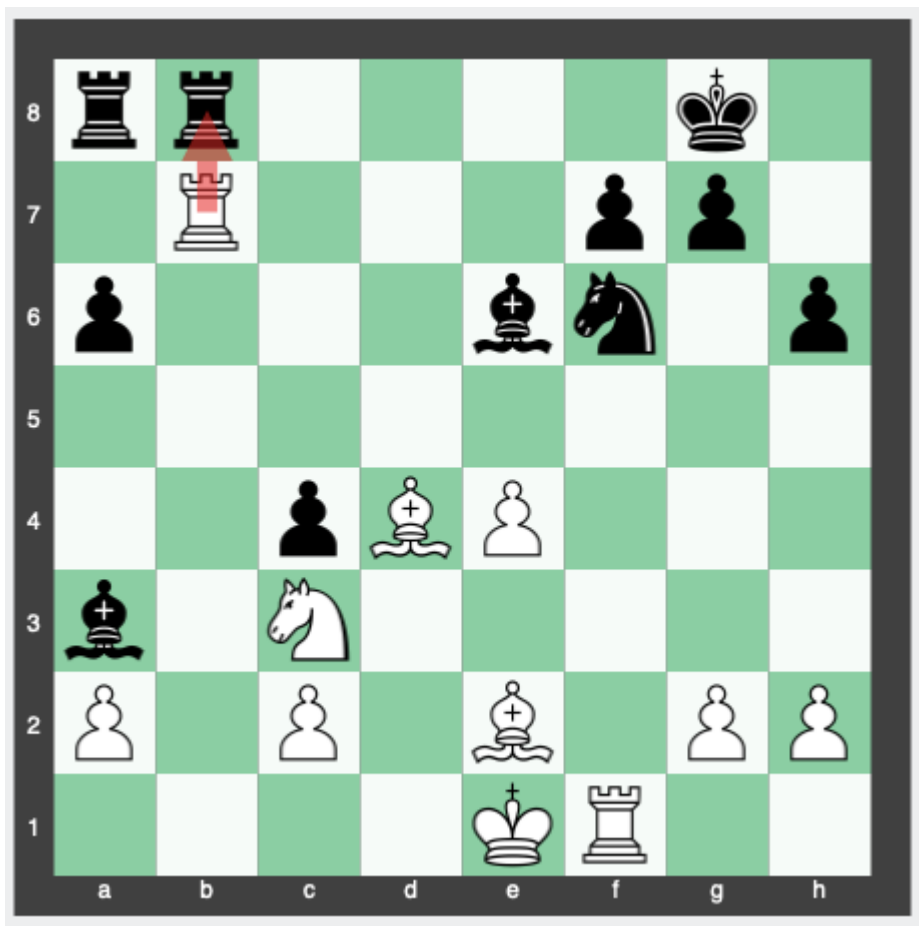


where Kuybokarov chose 14. Bc4; today 14. Bd3

There followed the exchange of Queens on 16. Qxc5



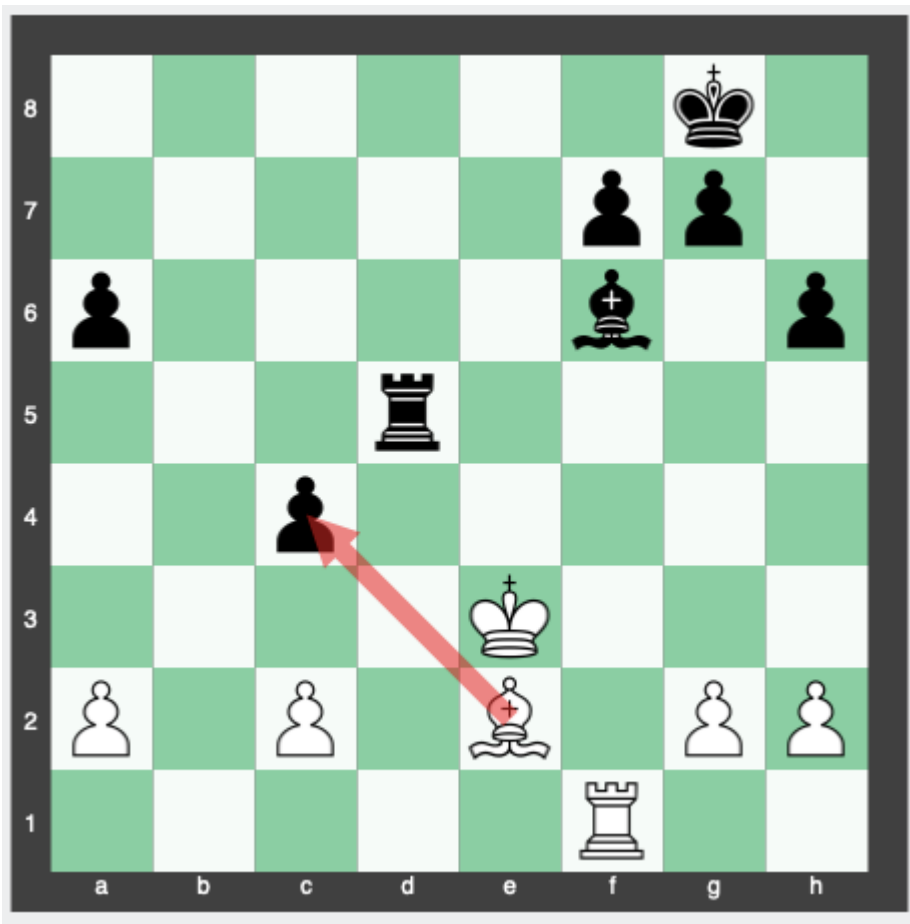
An exchange of Rooks on 21. Rxb8+



all the while maintaining an equal balance.

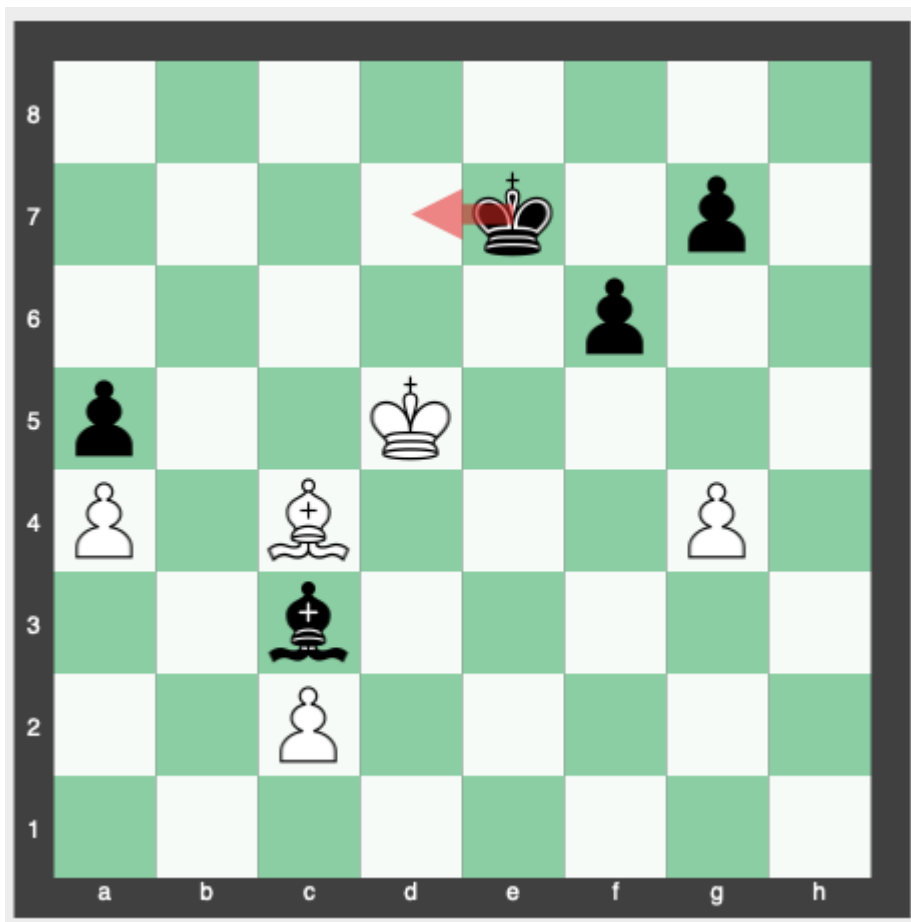
There followed further exchanges

21... Rxb8 22. Kd2 Rd8 23. Ke3 Be7 24. Bxf6 Bxf6 25. Nd5 Bxd5 26. exd5 Rxd5 27. Bxc4



entering an opposite coloured Bishops ending with a pair of Rooks.

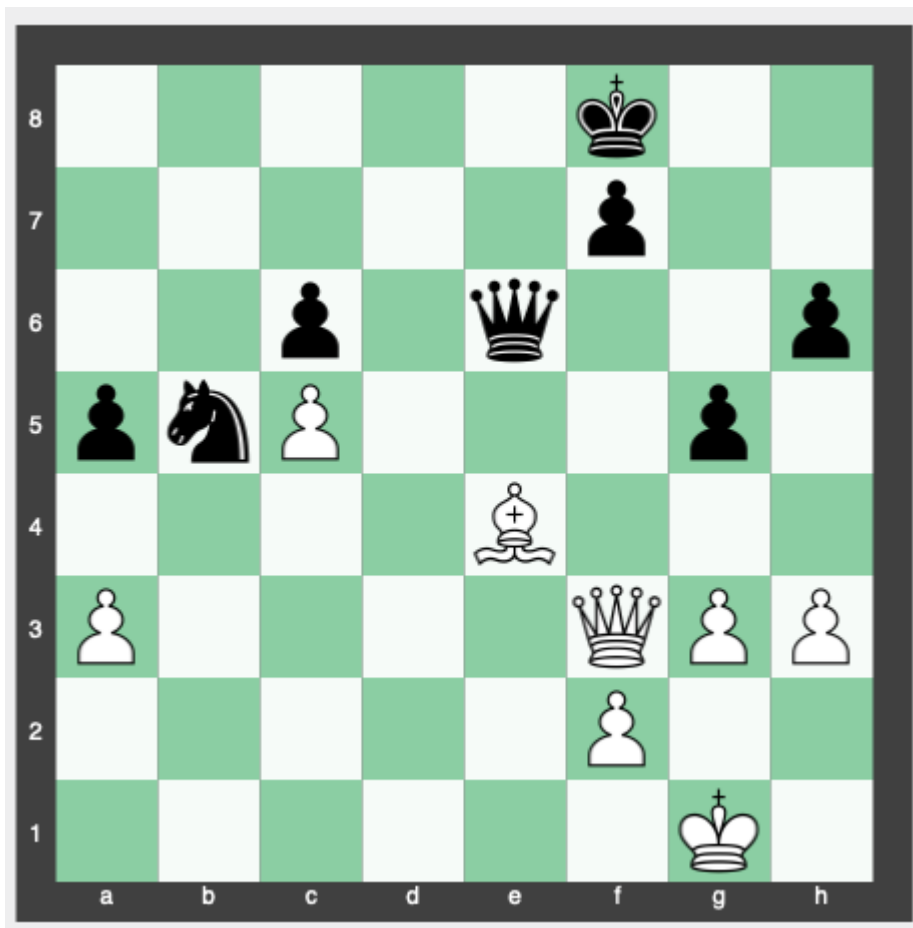
Precise play by both sides ensured a draw at 43... Kd7



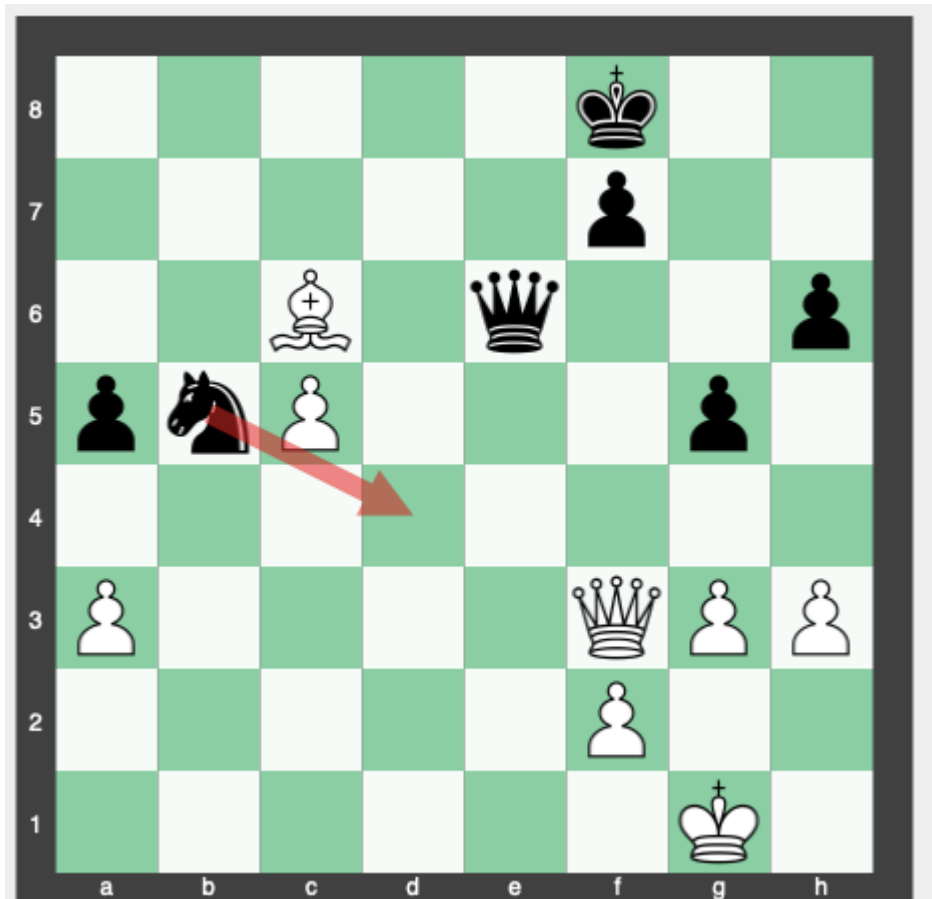
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Meanwhile, on board 2, Ivanchuk (White) against Bobby Cheng blundered in an equal position.

After 38... Nb5



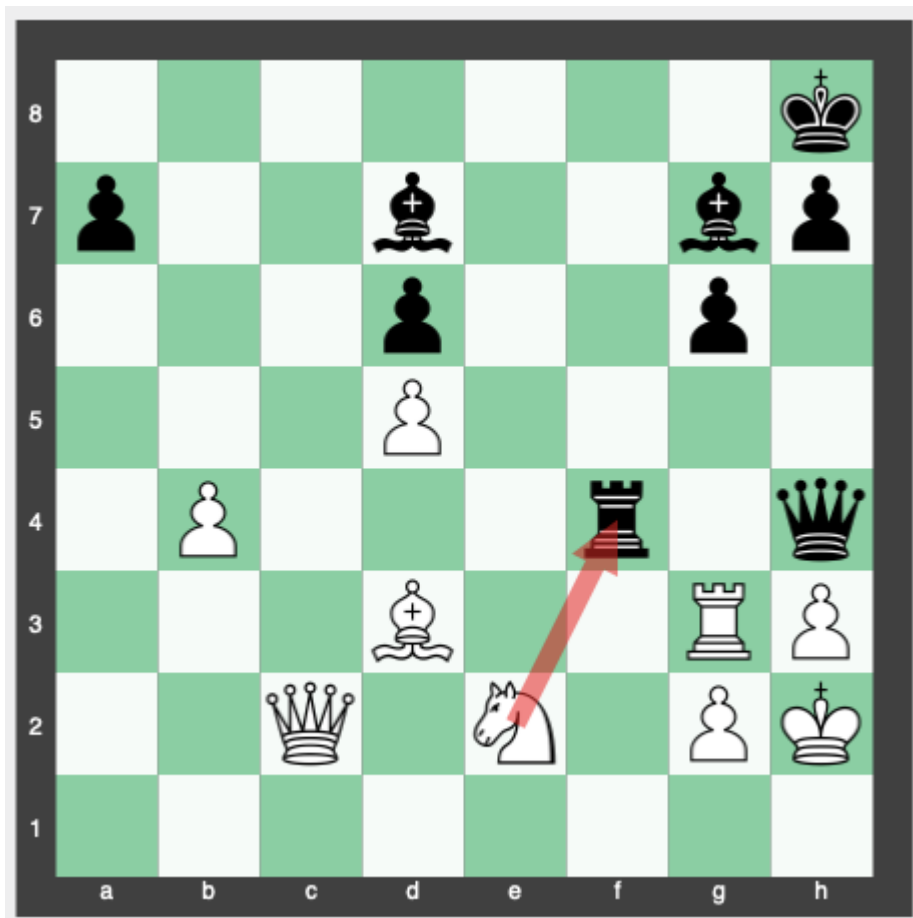
The pawn on c6 is really poisoned, but Ivanchuk played 39. Bxc6  
There followed 39... Nd4



attacking White's Queen and with a double attack on White's Bishop.

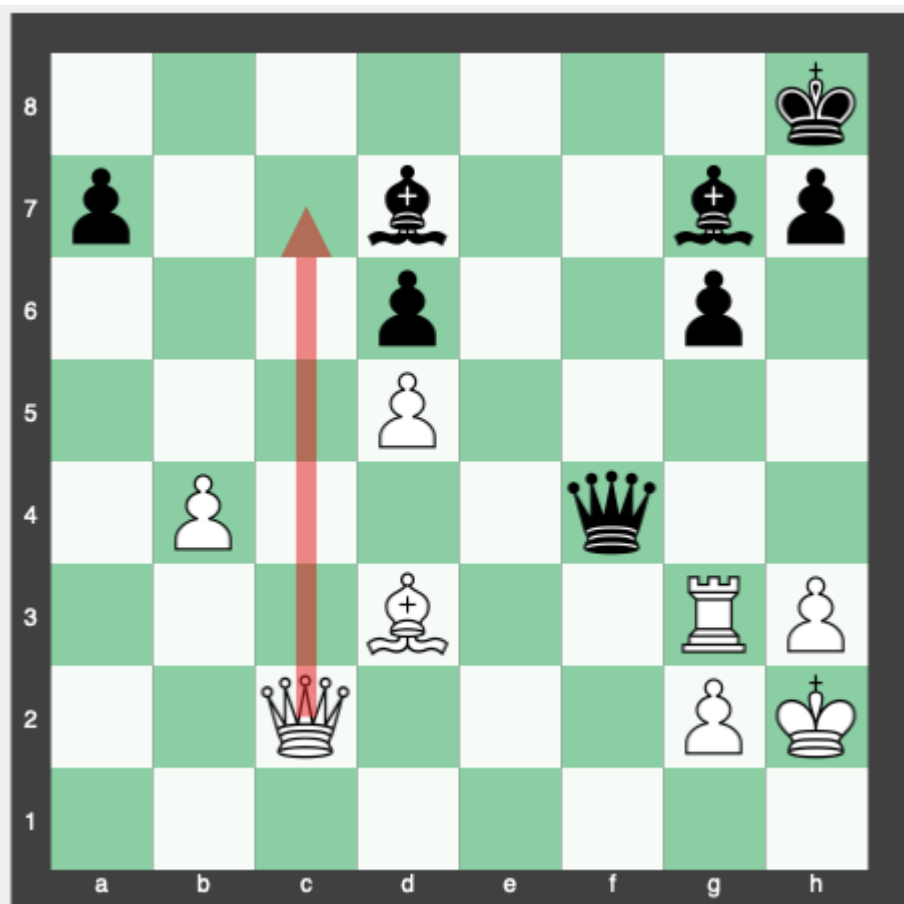
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On board 4, Smerdon (Black) apparently miscalculated, on move 30



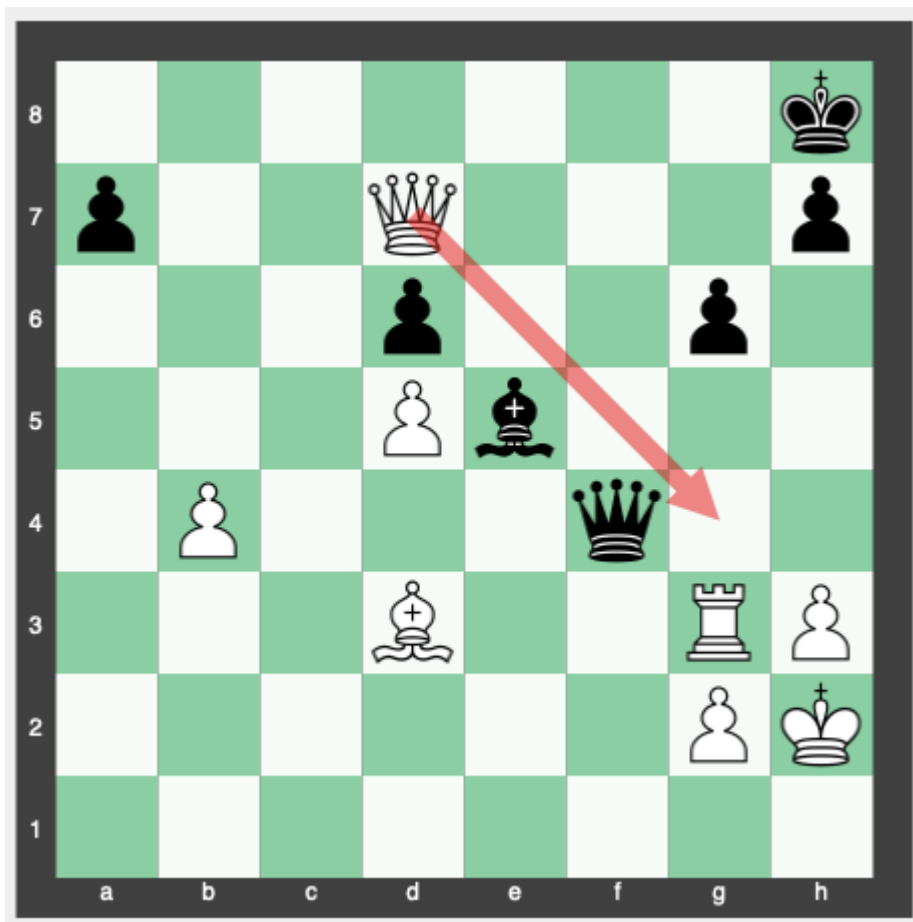
There followed 31. Nxf4 Qxf4 32. Qc7





And the light Bishop cannot be saved due to the Checkmate threat on the back rank.

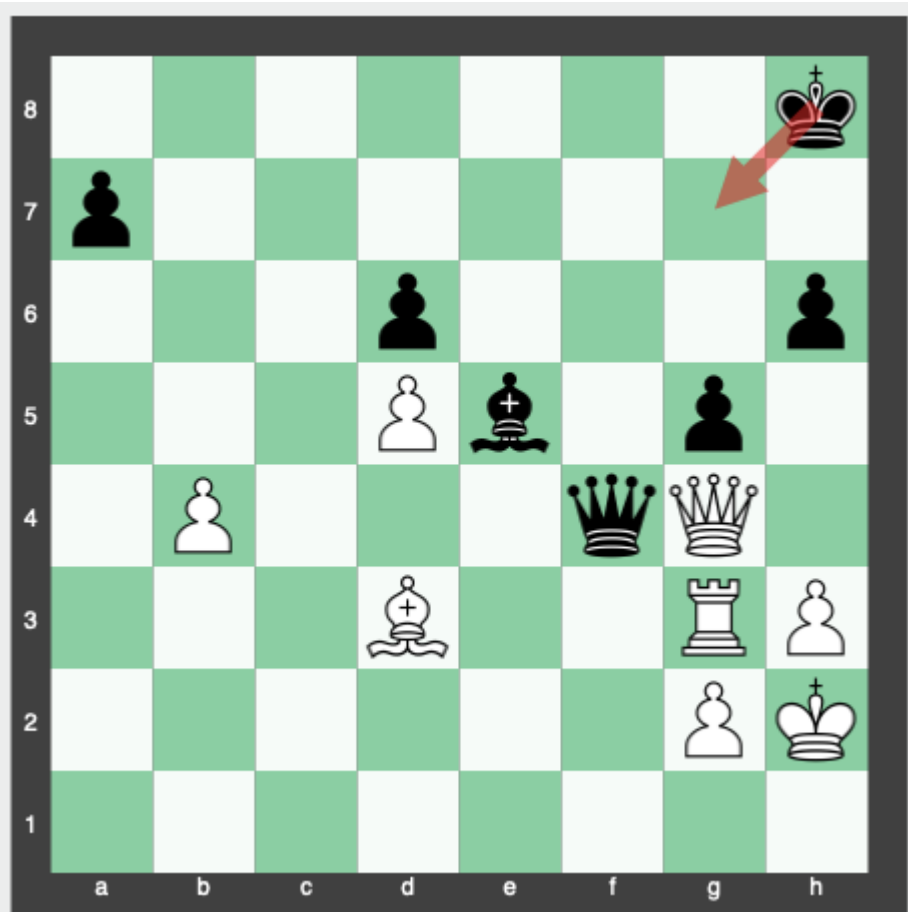
And White's Queen returns to save the Rook on g3 after 32... Be5 33. Qd8+ Kg7 34. Qxd7+ Kh8 35. Qg4



Black now appeared to be lost, but after 37. Bd3, a Smerdon-esque position arose.

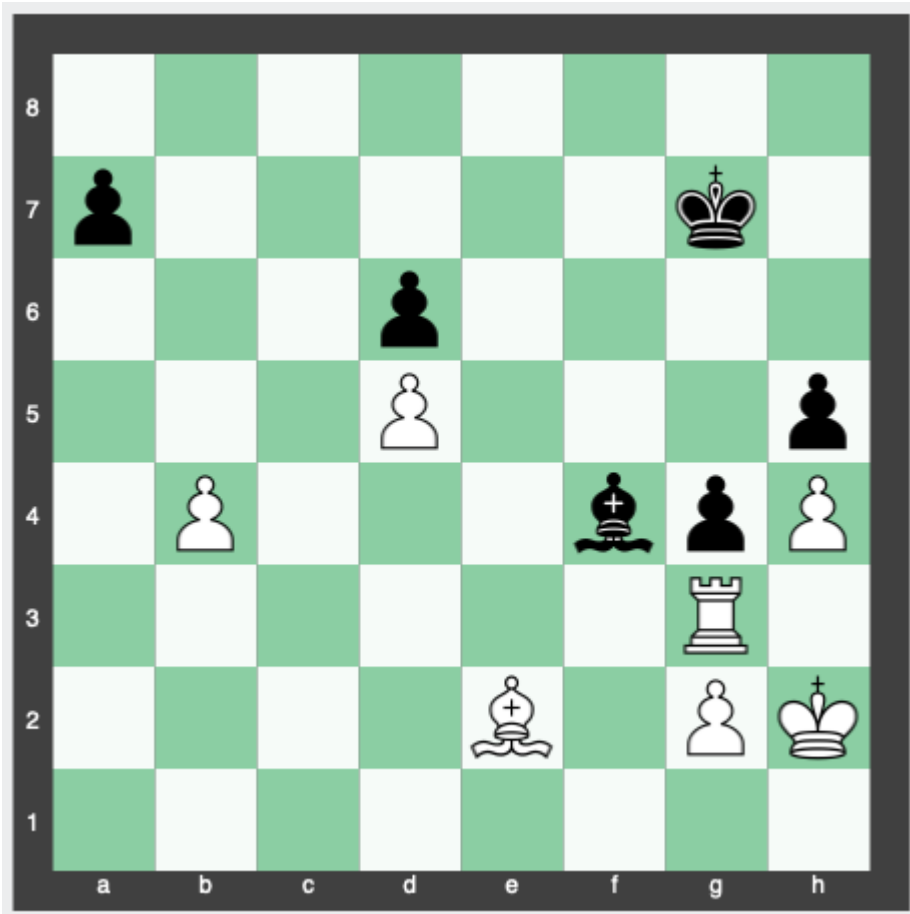
On 37. Bd3, no longer is White's Queen protected by the Bishop; so the freeing manoeuvre h4 is not possible.

For after 37... Kg7,

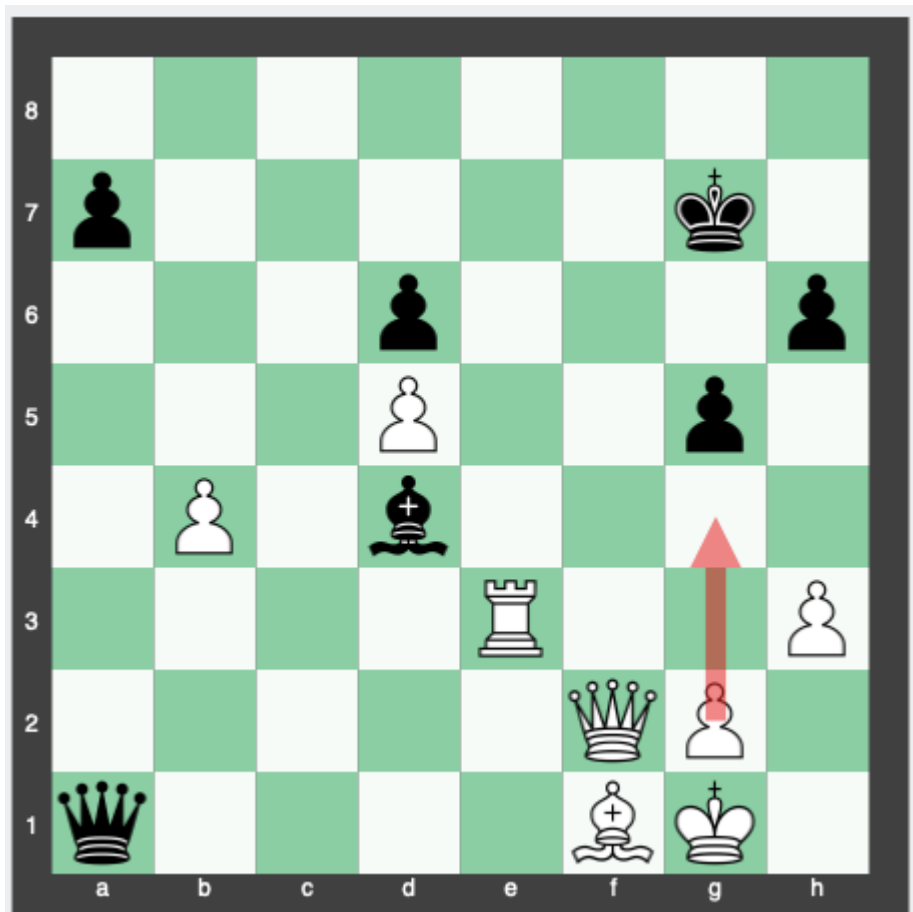


Black threatens h5, (with the King on g7, there is no Qxh5+), White is forced to trade Queens; White's Rook and King are immobilised by Black's Bishop and White can make no headway.

For example, 37... Kg7 38. Be2 h5 39. Qxf4 Bxf4 40. h4 g4



But, instead, Black played 37... Qe3; there followed 38. Qf3 Qf4 39. Kg1 Qd4+ 40. Qf2 Qa1+ 41. Bf1 Bd4 42. Re3 Kg7 43. g4



1-0

On board 3, Zhao ended up losing a difficult Rook and pawn ending.

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