

# **CHESS EVOLUTION**

*November 2011*

By

**Arkadij Naiditsch**



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# Contributors

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**Etienne Bacrot:** France, 28 years old, GM 2714, number 29 in the world. Became GM at the age of 14, a record at the time. Six times French Champion starting from 1999.

Winner of many international events including: 2005: 1st place in Poikovsky, 3rd in Dortmund and 3rd of the World Cup in Khanty-Mansiysk. 2009: 1st in Aeroflot Open, second in Montreal and Antwerp. 2010: First equal in Gibraltar, 3rd in Nanjing and winner of Geneva Open. 2011: First equal in Basel, Geneva (rapid) and Rabat (blitz).



**Yannick Gozzoli:** France, 28 years old, GM 2549.

For the last few years Yannick was an extremely high-rated IM, and he recently completed the requirements for the Grandmaster title.

**Sebastien Maze:** France, 26 years old, GM 2577

Winner of 2008 Rabat blitz tournament, 1st equal in Marseille 2009 and Menton 2009.

Member of the French team in the Olympiad in Dresden 2008.

Was the second of Etienne Bacrot in FIDE Grand Prix Elista 2008, Dortmund 2009 and Nanjing 2010.



**Kamil Miton:** Poland, 27 years old, GM 2622.

World Junior U12 Champion in 1996. No 2 at the World Junior Champion (U 20).

Twice the winner (2002 and 2005) of one of the world's biggest tournaments, the World Open in Philadelphia, USA.

**Arkadij Naiditsch:** Germany, 26 years old, GM 2712, number 31 in the world. Became International Master at the age of 13, Grandmaster at 15.

Winner of 2005 Super-tournament in Dortmund and since 2006 the top-rated German player. In 2007 was German Champion and won the Baku Open. In 2010 Arkadij won a match against Efimenko in Mukachevo and was 1st equal in the European Rapid Championship in Warsaw.



**Borki Predojevic:** Bosnia and Herzegovina, 24 years old, GM 2642. Gained the GM title at the Calvia Olympiad in 2004 when he was 17. Best Elo was 2654 in September 2009. Joined the top 100 in 2007; highest place so far was 68th on the October 2007 list.

Winner of several international open tournaments including: Open Metalis in Bizovac, Croatia in 2006, Zagreb Open, Croatia in 2007, Hit Open in Nova Gorica, Slovenia in 2008, Acropolis Open in Greece 2009. in 2008, Acropolis Open in Greece 2009.

**Paco Vallejo Pons:** Spain, 29 years old, GM 2705, number 40 in the world.

Former child prodigy who became a grandmaster aged 16 and won the under-18 World Youth Championship in the year 2000. Has been competing at the highest levels for many years.



**Ivan Sokolov:** 43 years old, GM 2646 . Best world ranking on the FIDE list of 12th (several times).

Winner of many top GM events of which the most important are: Hastings, Sarajevo, Selfoss, Reykjavik, Hoogeveen, Lost Boys, Staunton Memorial. Yugoslav Champion in 1988 and Dutch Champion in 1995 and 1998. Won team gold with the Dutch team at the 2005 European Championship in Gothenburg.



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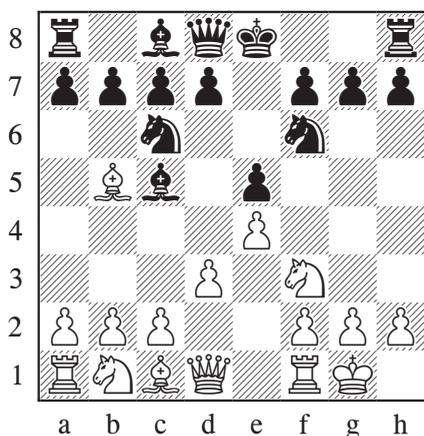
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**GAME 17**▷ **T. Radjabov (2752)**▶ **R. Ponomariov (2758)**European Club Cup, Rogaska Slatina  
30.09.2011 [C65]

Annotated by Borki Predojevic

In the following game we will see one of White's most popular side lines against the Berlin Defence. 4.d3 has recently been played by many top-level grandmasters and it seems that White has chances to fight for the advantage in this line. Ponomariov, who has had a few games in this line, chose his favourite set-up with 4...♙c5 and after that 7...h6 and 8...♙b6. Radjabov was well prepared and by playing the precise moves 10.d4! and 11.♙d3 he secured a promising position with White. After the premature reaction 13...c5?! Ponomariov was slightly worse. Radjabov then played a very good technical game. It should be mentioned that Ponomariov played a few imprecise moves (probably he was exhausted after his long fights in the World Cup) which helped Radjabov to convert his advantage into a fairly easy win.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♗f6 4.d3 ♙c5  
5.0-0



An interesting move order. White has

usually preferred 5.c3 which stops Black's idea of ...♗d4. However, Black gains other options against 5.c3. For example, he can play 5...0-0 6.0-0 (6.♙xc6 bxc6 7.♗xe5 d5 is another very sharp line) 6...♙e8!? omitting the move ...d7-d6 for the moment, and perhaps later he will achieve ...d7-d5 in one move.

**5...d6**

A logical decision from Ponomariov. Recently in the World Cup he did not have any problems in holding this set-up with the black pieces.

Another popular line is 5...♗d4 6.♗xd4 ♙xd4 with a complicated game. It is worth mentioning that Ponomariov has played against this line with the white pieces.

Note that 5...0-0? is bad, as after 6.♙xc6 bxc6 7.♗xe5± White simply wins a pawn.

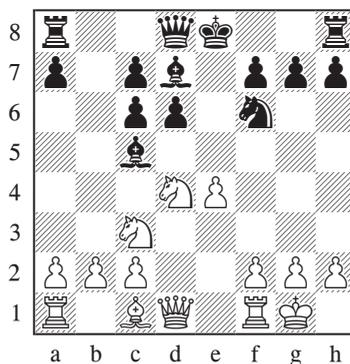
**6.c3**

A few rounds earlier I had the same position against Movsesian, and here he decided to play a rare move:

6.d4!?

The game continued:

6...exd4 7.♗xd4 ♙d7 8.♙xc6 bxc6 9.♗c3



I played "safe" with:

9...h6

During the game I had the feeling that

9...0-0 10.♔g5 h6 11.♕h4 is better for White, since I cannot bring back my bishop to e7 to defend the kingside; maybe this was not a good evaluation. After 11...♞e8 12.♞e1 ♞b8 13.♘b3 ♕b6 14.h3 ♞e6!↗ Black will play ...♞e7 or ...♞e8 with a good game.

Movsesian answered with the direct:

10.♔f4 0-0 11.e5 dxe5 12.♕xe5 ♞e8 13.♘f3

But after:

13...♔f5 14.♞xd8 ♞axd8 15.♕xc7 ♞d7 16.♔g3 ♕xc2 17.♞fc1 ♕e4!↗

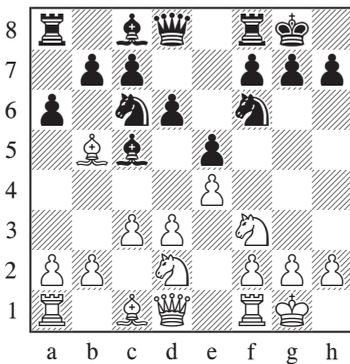
I did not have any real problems in holding equality in Movsesian – Predojevic, Rogaska Slatina 2011.

**6...0-0 7.♘bd2 h6**

This is always a useful move for Black; it also delays making a decision about which set-up Black will choose.

The favourite line of GM Arman Pashikian is: 7...a6

Ponomariov has also played this line.



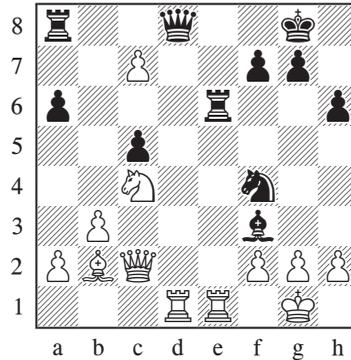
Now there are two lines to consider: A) 8.♕xc6 and B) 8.♕a4.

A) 8.♕xc6 bxc6 9.d4 exd4 10.cxd4 ♕b6

This does not look dangerous for Black. Ponomariov has had this position with the black pieces twice and these games are good examples of how to play this set-up as Black.

11.♞c2 ♞e8 12.♞e1 ♕d7 13.b3 c5! 14.♕b2

On 14.d5 Black has 14...c6 15.dxc6 ♕xc6 16.♕b2 ♕a5! 17.♞ad1 h6 18.♞e3 ♞e6↗. Ivanchuk continued: 19.♘c4 ♕c7 20.e5 ♘d5 21.♞e1 ♘f4 And here he blundered: 22.♞f5? (Best was 22.exd6 ♕xf3 23.dxc7:



23...♘h3†! 24.♘f1 ♕xg2† 25.♕xg2 ♞g5†=

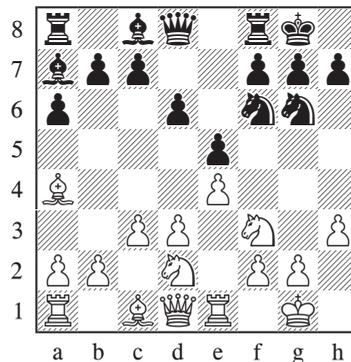
This leads to a draw by perpetual check.) After the simple 22...♕xf3 23.gxf3 ♞h4 24.♞e4 dxe5 25.♞d7 ♞g6† 26.♘f1 ♞g2 White resigned in Ivanchuk – Ponomariov, Russia 2011.

14...cxd4 15.♕xd4 ♕xd4 16.♘xd4 a5= 17.♞ad1 ♞b8 18.♘4f3

½-½ Areshchenko – Ponomariov, Ukraine (ch) 2011.

B) White's best answer is:

8.♕a4 ♕a7 9.h3 ♘e7 10.♞e1 ♘g6



11.♘f1

A typical manoeuvre.

White has also tried a more direct approach with 11.d4, but this premature reaction in the centre gives Black the opportunity to play actively: 11...b5 12.♙c2 (12.♙b3 c5⇒) 12...c5 13.♘f1 cxd4 14.cxd4 exd4 15.♘xd4 ♙b7⇒ Black had no problems in Efimenko – Pashikian, Rogaska Slatina 2011.

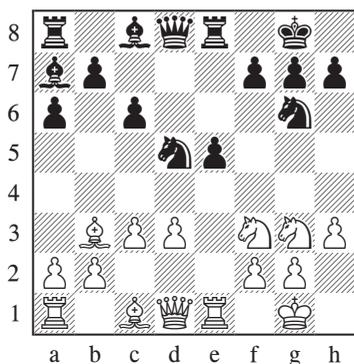
11...c6

Now the idea with 11...b5 is not so effective as before, as White can keep a stable centre since he has not pushed d3-d4. For example, 12.♙b3 ♙b7 13.♘g3 h6 14.♘h2!∞/± with the typical plan of ♘g4 and ♖f3. The position remains complicated and unclear, but I prefer White.

12.♘g3 d5

12...♖e8 13.d4 h6 14.♙c2 leads to a similar type of position as in the main game.

13.exd5 ♘xd5 14.♙b3 ♖e8



15.♙g5

15.d4! exd4 16.♖xe8† ♖xe8 17.♙xd5 cxd5 18.♘xd4±/= was another idea for White. In my opinion this was the right way to fight for the advantage.

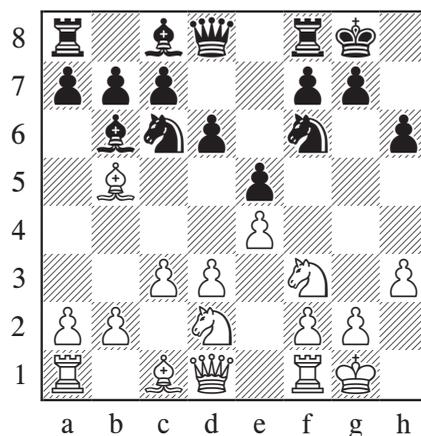
15...f6 16.♙c3 ♙c3 17.fxe3 ♙e6 18.♖d2 ♖c7 19.♖ad1 ♖ad8=

Radjabov – Kramnik, Kazan (m/9) 2011.

### 8.h3 ♙b6

The main idea of the set-up with ...♙b6 is to avoid losing time with ...a6 and ...♙a7; Black prepares ...♘e7 and ...c6. As we shall see,

White has to play precise moves here to fight for the advantage.



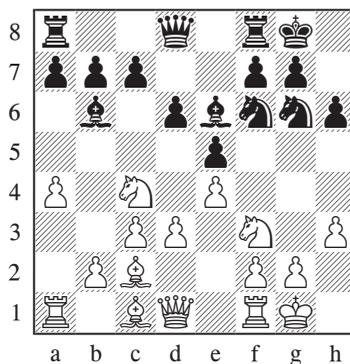
9.♖e1

Another plan is:

9.♘c4

I do not find this idea dangerous for Black and again it is enough to follow Ponomariov's games to gain equality.

9...♘e7 10.♙a4 ♘g6 11.♙c2 ♙e6 12.a4



12...c6!

In a few games Black tried 12...♙xc4 13.dxc4 a5, but this is in White's favour since after 14.g3± and next ♘g2, Black lacks real counterplay while White slowly improves his position.

13.♘xb6

The only logical move, as otherwise Black would play ...♙c7.

13...axb6

Black's main idea is to push ...d5 or ...b5, and it seems that White cannot avoid this.

14.♙e3

14.♞e1 b5 15.♙e3 bxa4 16.♙xa4 ♖c7 17.♙c2 c5= and next ...d5 looks nice for Black.

14.♙d2 d5 15.exd5 ♙xd5=

14...d5! 15.d4

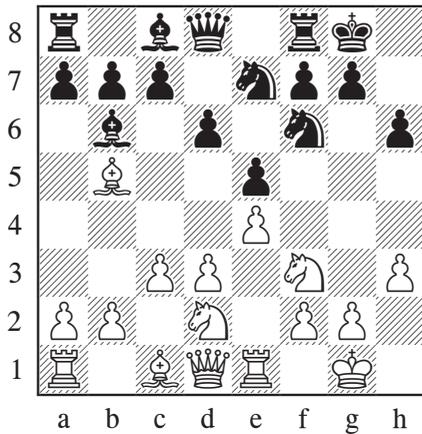
15.exd5 ♙xd5 16.♞e1 ♞e8↗

15...exd4 16.♘xd4 ♙d7 17.exd5 ♘xd5

18.♙d2 ♞f6 19.♞f3 ♘df4 20.♙xf4

Black had no problems and a draw was agreed in Svidler – Ponomarev, World Cup (m/1) 2011.

9...♘e7

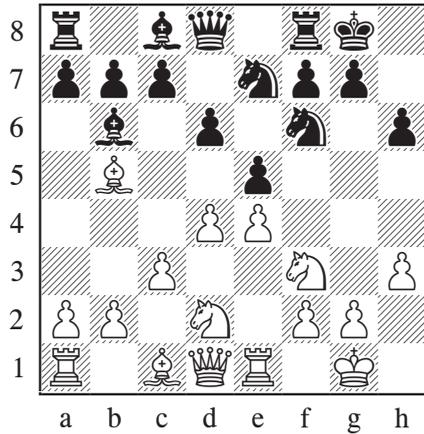


10.d4!

The best reaction. With his last two moves Black prepared ...c6, but the main drawback of this plan is that Black lost control over the d4-square. This gives White the opportunity to push d3-d4, which immediately frees a square for White's light-squared bishop on the c2-h7 diagonal. Otherwise White would lose more time with the manoeuvre ♙a4-c2.

After 10.♘f1 c6 11.♙a4 ♘g6 12.♘g3 ♞e8 Black will quickly play ...d5. Here we can see a better version of the position reached

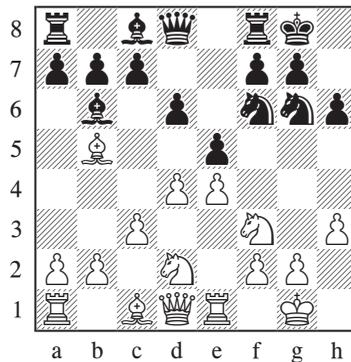
in the game Radjabov – Kramnik, Kazan (m/9) 2011, which was given in the line after 7...a6. 13.♘h2 d5! 14.♞f3 ♘h4 15.♞e2 ♙e6 16.♙c2 ♞d7 is good for Black, E. Berg – P. H. Nielsen, Oslo 2009.



10...c6

Black could try to save the move ...c6 for later and choose instead:

10...♘g6



We shall consider two replies: A) 11.♘f1 and B) 11.♙d3.

A) 11.♘f1

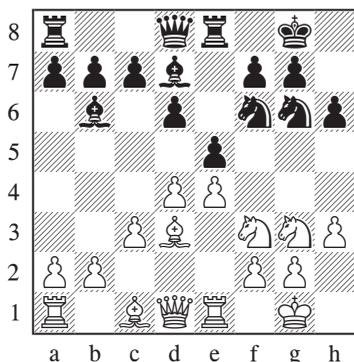
The normal move allows Black's idea with: 11...♙d7!?

11...c6 12.♙d3 leads to the same position as in the game.

12.♙d3

12.♙xd7 ♖xd7 13.♘g3 ♜fe8= is a good version for Black. He has exchanged bishops and so has more space. Later the break with ...d5 will be inevitable.

12...♞e8 13.♘g3



Black has a choice:

13...c5!?

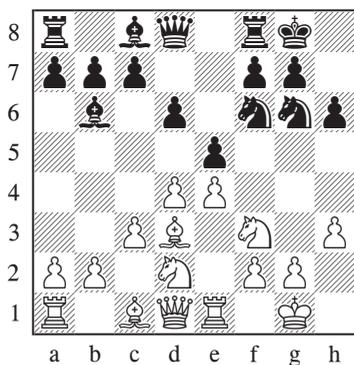
Black is a tempo up compared to the position in the game.

Another idea for Black is 13...♙c6!?. With this move Black fights to prevent the move ♙e3. Still after 14.a4 a6 15.♞c2± White keeps a small advantage.

13...exd4 14.cxd4 c5 is bad in view of 15.e5! dxe5 16.dxe5 ♘h7 17.♙xg6 fxg6 18.♘e4 ♙c6 19.♘d6↑±.

B) 11.♙d3

This is the best answer.



11...♙e6

11...c6 12.♘f1 transposes to the game.

On 11...♙d7 White can play 12.♘c4! with ideas of creating pressure on the queenside and on the b6-bishop. For example, 12...♞e7 13.♞b3↑ planning a2-a4.

12.♘f1

On 12.♘c4 Black can reply: 12...♙xc4 13.♙xc4 exd4 14.cxd4 (14.♘xd4 ♞e8± puts the e4-pawn under pressure) 14...d5!? 15.exd5 ♘xd5 16.♙d2 c6 17.♞b3±/= This position looks slightly better for White.

12...♞e8 13.♘g3 c5

13...c6± would lead to a similar position as in the game, so there is no need to explain White's plans again.

14.♙e3

14.♙b5 ♞f8 15.dxe5 dxe5 16.♞a4 ♞c7 17.♙c4± is another option.

14.d5 ♙d7 15.♙e3 also looks better for White.

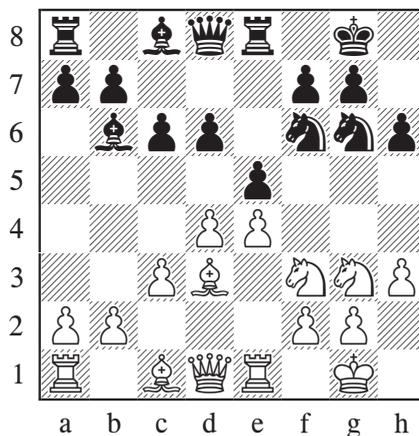
14...cxd4 15.cxd4 ♞c8 16.♞d2 a6 17.a3±

White is slightly better.

11.♙d3

Of course. Retreating with 11.♙a4 would not make sense now.

11...♘g6 12.♘f1 ♞e8 13.♘g3±



This position reminds me of typical set-ups in the Giuoco Piano. I have had a lot of games

like this with the white pieces, so I usually prefer White here. If White manages to play d4 and keep the centre stable, then the long-term advantage should be on his side (a similar assessment would apply to Black if instead he had achieved ...d5 before White was ready with d4). According to this “rule” White’s position should be slightly better here.

13...♙d7N

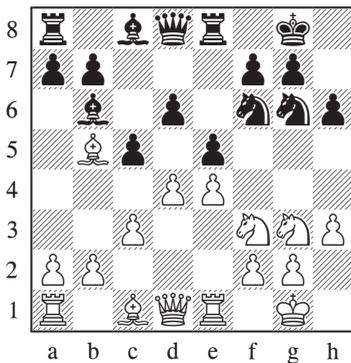
Officially this is a novelty.

Before Black had tried:

13...c5

White reacted with:

14.♙b5



14...♖f8

14...♙d7 15.♙xd7 ♖xd7 16.dxe5 ♘xe5 (16...dxe5 17.♖xd7 ♘xd7 18.a4± gives White a typical slight advantage) 17.♘xe5 ♗xe5 18.♙f4 ♗e6 19.c4 White is better. If Black doesn't do anything concrete then his position will be much worse as his pawn structure is bad. After the forced: 19...♗ae8 20.f3 d5 (20...♙a5 21.♙d2±) 21.cxd5 ♘xd5 Black has executed his central break, but even so after 22.♗e2 ♘f6 23.♘f5± White's position looks better.

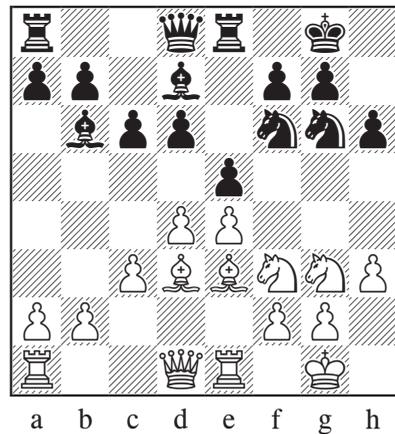
15.♙e3

It is obvious that White has some advantage and after a few imprecise moves Black was much worse:

15...a6 16.♙c4 ♙a7?! 17.a4 cxd4 18.cxd4 ♘xe4?! 19.♘xe4 d5 20.♙xd5 ♖xd5 21.dxe5 ♖xe4 22.♙xa7 ♖b4 23.♖d4 ♖xd4 24.♙xd4 ♙e6 25.♙c3

White kept his extra pawn and won the game in Palac – De Graaf, Aix-les-Bains 2011.

14.♙e3



14...c5?!

A premature decision.

Better is:

14...♖c7

When Black prepares a possible break with ...d5. Also, if Black wants to play the same idea as in the game, ...c5, then it is better to develop his pieces first and then to try the break. White can continue with:

15.♖c2

15.♖d2 is unnatural: 15...♗ad8 16.♗ad1 c5!± Black has a better version than in the game.

15.a4!?

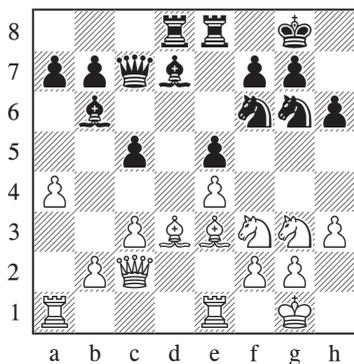
15...♗ad8 16.a4

16.♗ad1 would allow 16...c5, whereas now after:

16...c5

16...a6 17.b3±

17.dxe5 dxe5



White has the nice reply:

18.♙c4

18.♘d2 ♘f4 19.♙f1 a6 20.♘c4 ♙a7 21.a5∞ is an alternative. White has play on the queenside, but all the pieces are still on the board.

18...♙e6 19.♘d2!

White should be better.

19...♘f4

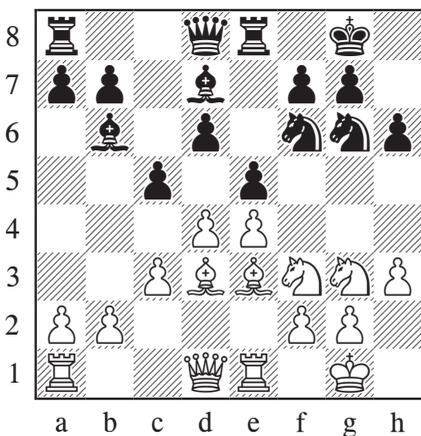
19...♞xd2 20.♙xd2 ♙xc4 is met by: 21.a5! ♙xa5 22.♞a4 ♞d8 (22...♙xc3 23.♙xc3 ♙d3 24.♞xa7 ♘f4 25.f3 g6 26.♙h2± should lead to an advantage for White) 23.♙e3 ♙xc3 24.bxc3 ♙a6 25.♞a5 ♞c8 26.♞ed1 ♘e7 27.f3± White is better.

20.♙xe6

20.b3±

20...♞xe6 21.♘c4 ♞c6 22.♞ad1 ♞xd1 23.♞xd1±

White is slightly better, but it is questionable if he can convert it into a win.



15.dxe5 dxe5

15...♘xe5 16.♘xe5 dxe5 17.♙c4 ♙e6 18.♞b3±

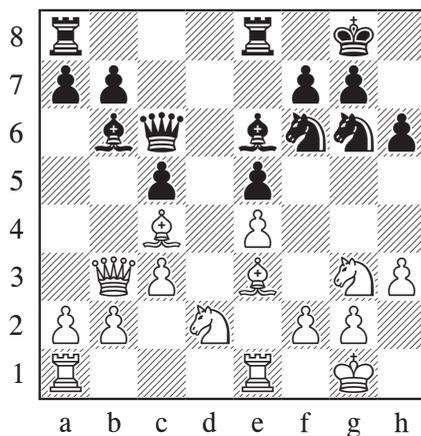
16.♙c4±

White is better thanks to his control of the light squares. It is also important to note that the bishop is badly placed on b6. The opening battle has finished in White's favour.

16...♙e6

The computer suggests 16...♞c7± as best, but this would lead to a similar position as after 14...♞c7, which we have already examined.

17.♞b3 ♞c7 18.♘d2 ♞c6



19.a4! ♞ad8

After the active 19...♘f4 White can play the simple 20.♞ed1± with the same idea as in the game: ♞b5.

20.♞b5!

The last two moves are typical, but it is still very nice to see how Radjabov plays "easy" moves and improves his position.

20...♞xb5

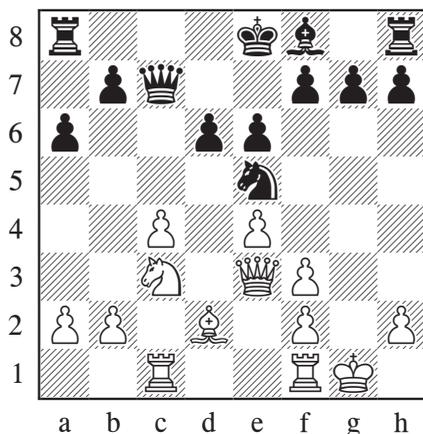
20...♙d7 21.♞xc6 ♙xc6 22.f3 ♘f4 23.♘b3± looks very bad for Black.

# 24 Puzzles

by GM Jacob Aagaard

This is my second puzzle selection for *Chess Evolution* and this time it is a bit different from the previous version. Last time I had 12 easy to understand – play and win – puzzles. This time I have gone for a slightly different approach. The 24 positions I have chosen were selected from a list of 53 games supplied to me by Arkadij Naiditsch. Of these some were not really working as puzzles for various reasons, not least of all that the outcome was very uncertain once you analysed deeper! An example is the following:

Stojanovic – Kasimdzhanov, European Team Championship, 27.09.2011



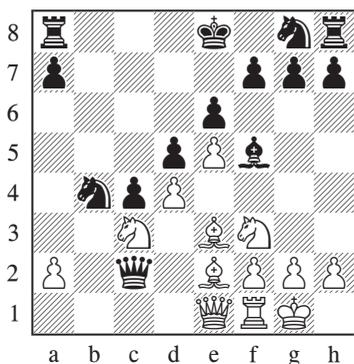
15.f4! ♖xc4?! 15...♗g4 16.♞g3 ♗f6 17.f5! is however also better for White. 16.♞e2 ♗xd2 17.♗d5 ♞d8 18.♗c7† ♗d7 19.♗xa8 ♗xf1 20.♞c7† ♞xc7 21.♗xc7 ♗xc7 22.♗xf1± ♗e7 23.♞h5 g6 24.♞a5† ♗d7 25.♞b4 ♞b8 26.♞a4† ♗c7 27.♞d4 ♞g8 28.a4 h5 29.b4 h4 30.b5 axb5 31.axb5 ♞c8 32.b6† ♗d7 33.♞a4† ♞c6 34.♞a7 ♞c1† 35.♗g2 ♗c6 36.♞a4† ♗xb6 37.♞e8 ♗f6 38.♞xf7 ♗d4 39.♞xe6 ♗c5 40.f5 gxf5 41.exf5 ♞c3 42.h3 ♞a3 43.f6 ♞a8 44.f7 1–0

However the problem is that if Black plays 17...♞a5 18.♗c7† ♗e7 19.♗xa8 ♗xf1 20.♞c7† ♗f6 21.b4! ♞b5 22.e5† dxe5 23.fxe5† ♗g5 24.f4† ♗h6 25.♞g4 f6 26.♞c3, it looks bad, but things are not so clear:

# A Chess Evolution Adventure

by GM Etienne Bacrot

Having inspected the content carefully as the editor of the first two issues of your favourite periodical, I can honestly say that the chess work our team made was really useful in the study of the opening. We have all benefited from the work we have done, but this does not exclude the possibilities of some mistakes, which can later be spotted by really strong players. The worst one is probably the fact that I missed **13.♔d1!**, recently played in this position in Karjakin – Laznicka, Poikovsky 2011:



See game 7 for more detail. Please forgive us; chess is a complicated game!

Although we were very happy with the content, we had to react to the sales and the feedback from the readers. The project had to change or die. With the introduction of words in the annotations I decided to retreat and become a mere external help to *Chess Evolution*. I was very pleased to read the September issue with many interesting comments from the expanding team of grandmasters and the higher production level. I hope you were too.

## Life, Puzzles & Endgames

From generalities to specifics. Let me share a few words about my past year. After showing strong play against the absolute top in October 2010 in Nanjing, I was hoping for further invitations, but had to accept that they never came. Thus I took the “clever” decision to play some opens – in Basel, Geneva and Neckar, all tournaments with double rounds – for which I was rewarded with a rating loss of 27 points throughout the year. A special mention goes to Neckar Open where I donated 20 rating points to the general well-being of my opponents.

While editing the May issue I also had the chance to be a part of Grischuk’s team for the Candidates tournament and thus spend a month working on his preparation to face some of the top theoreticians in the world, Aronian, Kramnik and Gelfand. The latter of course ended up defeating Grischuk in the final and earning a match with Anand for the World Championship. This was very hard work, but at the same time a wonderful experience.

Back in France I delayed getting the necessary rest to first help Marseille to be French Club Champion.

After a small training session it was time for a new season with lots of challenging opponents. I performed above even my own expectations at the French Individual Championship, winning a nice game against Romain Edouard on the way (see game 22, page 167 of *Chess Evolution Sep 2011*), but missed a big opportunity in my game against Fressinet:

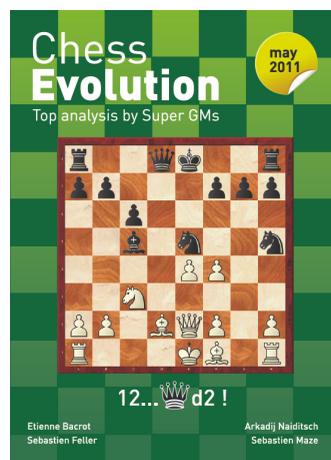
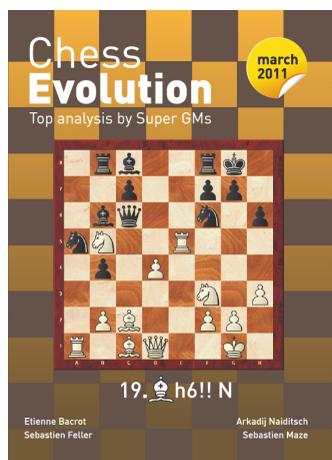
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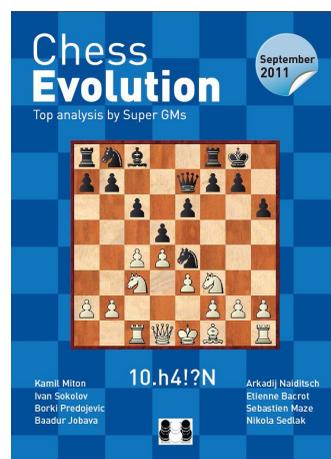
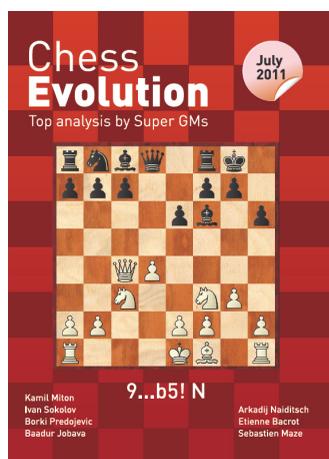
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