

□ Anand, Viswanathan

■ Kramnik, Vladimir

WCC Bonn (7)

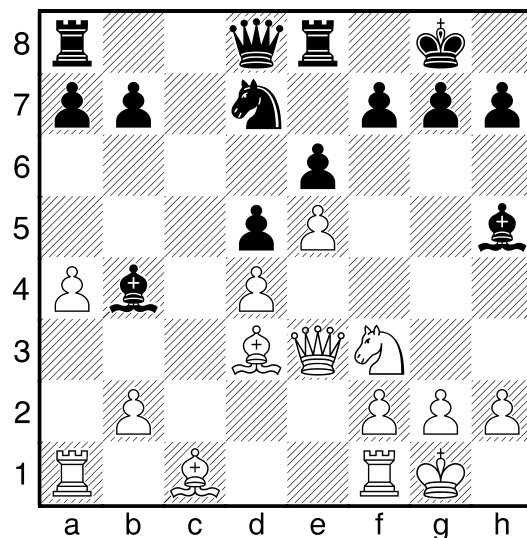
23.10.2008

Upon my arrival in Bonn, I could witness a heated debate about what would be the likely strategy for Kramnik in his next game, this very game that was played today. One argument was that since the match is so short, he was forced to play for all or nothing, even by using a lower reputation opening as the Benoni he used against Leko in the penultimate game of their Brissago match. Another approach was to play for a draw, so as to forget as much as possible the last two games, where he had been defeated.

In the end Kramnik opted to play correct chess and relied on a solid line of the Slav that he knows well. However, nothing seems to work for him so far, Anand was well prepared again, leading the game into an early ending where he was able to put pressure until finally a draw was agreed after Kramnik was forced to find many clever moves to survive.

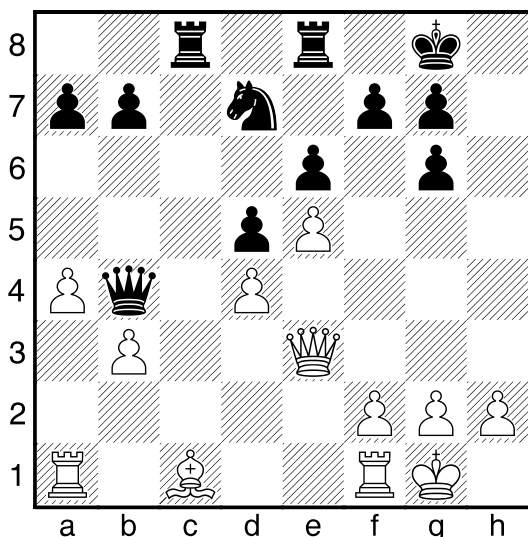
Anand won't have a match ball tomorrow. His 5-2 advantage could lead him to end up the match by Sunday at best. For Kramnik, the game as White tomorrow will prove decisive if he wants to show that things are not over yet. A win by him could bring back to emotion to the match. 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dc4 [4...e6 led Anand to his remarkable wins in games 3 and 5. Understandably, Kramnik chooses a more solid path.] 5.a4 ♕f5 6.e3 e6 7.♕c4 ♕b4 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.♞e2 ♕g6 10.e4 0-0 11.♕d3 ♕h5 12.e5 ♘d5 13.♘d5 cd5 14.♞e3 ♖e8 [In the famous second game of the

Elista match, yes, that one where Topalov missed a simple mate in three to end up losing a few moves later, Kramnik played immediately 14...♕g6 15.♘g5 ♖e8 16.f4 ♕d3 17.♞d3 f5 18.♕e3 ♘f8 19.♙h1 ♖c8 20.g4 with a sharp game; Previously Kramnik had been on the white side of this variation against his long time second and friend Bareev 14...h6 15.♘e1 ♕e1 16.♖e1 ♕g6 17.♕e2 ♖c8 18.♕d2 ♘b8 19.a5 ♞e7 20.♖ec1 ♞d7 21.♕b4 ♖c1 22.♖c1 ♖c8 23.♕d6 ♖c1 24.♞c1 ♘c6 25.♞c5 a6 26.b4 ½-½ Kramnik-Bareev, Bugojno 1999]



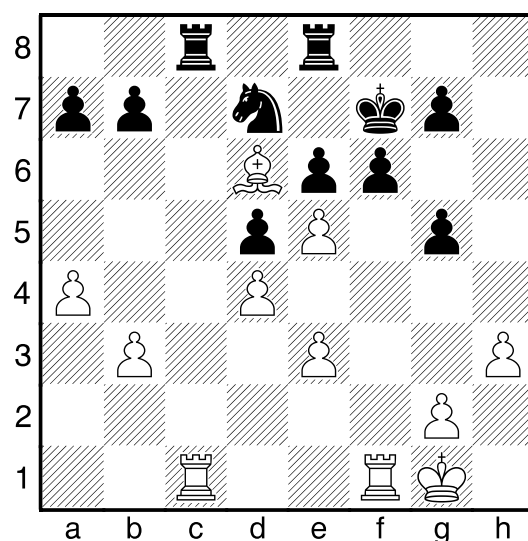
15.♘e1 ♕g6 Again Kramnik deviates from the Elista match material. In one of the tiebreak games he had played [15...♖c8 16.f4 ♕e1 17.♖e1 ♕g6 18.♕f1 ♖c2 which looked good but after 19.b3 ♞a5 20.♕b5 ♖d8 21.♖e2 ♖cc8 22.♕d2 ♞b6 23.♖f2 a6 24.♕f1 ♖c6 25.b4 ♖c2 26.b5 a5 27.♕c3 ♖f2 28.♞f2 ♞a7 29.♞d2 he was forced to play very well to save the game, Topalov-Kramnik, Elista 2006] 16.♕g6 hg6 17.♘d3 ♞b6 The new move, but a logical one that did not take Anand by surprise. Known was [17...♕e7 18.♕d2 ♖c8 19.♖fc1 ♘b8 20.♖c8 ♞c8 21.♖c1

♔d7 22.b3 b6 23.♙b4 ♗b4 24.♘b4
a5 25.♘a2 ♖c8 26.♖c3 ♘c6
½-½ Banusz-Erdos, Budapest 2004]
18.♘b4 ♔b4 19.b3 ♖ac8



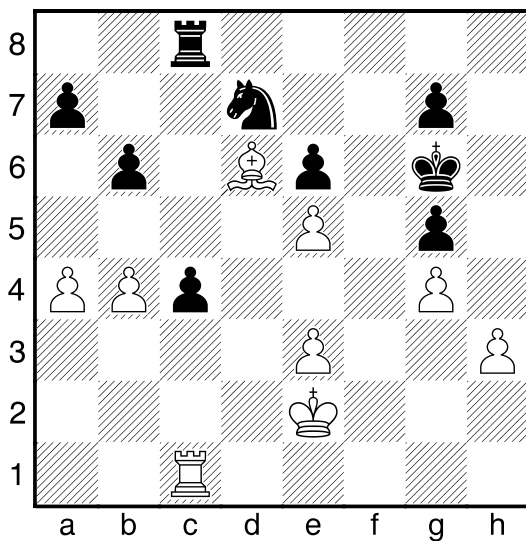
A very important moment in the game. At the press conference Kramnik said that he was expecting Anand to play 20. ♙d2 if he wanted to play for a win, with the idea to attack on the king side. On the contrary, 20. ♙a3 was the solid choice, leading to a drawish position. That was the approach taken by Anand, but the draw still seemed far away. **20. ♙a3 ♔c3 21. ♖ac1 ♔e3** At this point Kramnik offered a draw. Anand delayed his forced recapture for about ten minutes, a time he spent in evaluating the peace proposal, which he decided to reject. **22. fe3 f6** Black is more or less forced to react in this way, but White keeps a small pressure anyway. **23. ♙d6** There are two possibilities in the horizon for White. Number one to play his bishop to c7, allowing him to double his rooks in the c-file. The other to push his pawns in the queen side. **g5 24. h3** After Anand played this logical but slow move, most commentators seemed to predict a drawish outcome of the game. At the

VIP room only GM Bareev, who had just arrived in Bonn, still had doubts about Black's position. ♔f7 [24...fe5 25.de5 b6 26.b4 (26. ♔f2 ♘c5 27. ♙c5 ♖c5 28. ♖c5 bc5 29. ♖c1 ♖c8 is a little better for White, but just too little.) 26...♖c4 27. ♖c4 dc4 We shall see more of a position with this structure later in the game.]



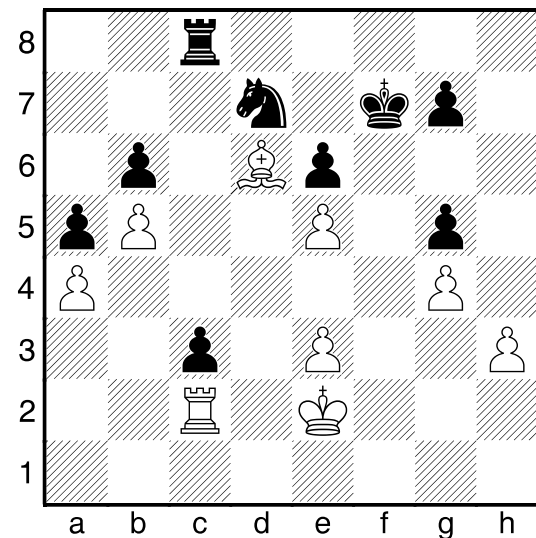
In the press conference Kramnik was critical of the transfer of his king to g6 since he could have played in a similar way to what he did later in the game, saving two tempos. **25. ♔f2 ♔g6 26. ♔e2 fe5** [26...♖h8 Was a move under investigation in the press room with a possible line running 27. ♔d3 g4 28. hg4 ♔g5 29. ♖h1! ♖he8 (29...♖h1 30. ♖c8!) 30. ♖h5 ♔g4 31. ♖ch1 threatening 32. exf6 and 33. ♖1h4#; 26...b6 was also possible.] **27. de5 b6** [Nobody asked about 27...a5 at the press conference. The move is directed to stop b3-b4, so that when Black plays b7-b6 he will gain access to the c5 square with his knight. A possible continuation was 28. ♔d3 (The logical 28. ♙c7 leads nowhere after b6! 29. ♖c3 ♘c5! 30. ♙b6 ♘e4 31. ♖c8 ♖c8 with great play for the pawn) 28...b6

29.♔d4 Just in time to prevent ♘c5 ♖h8!? 30.g4 (30.e4!?) 30...♖c1 31.♖c1 ♖h3 32.♖c7 ♘c5=] **28.b4 ♖c4 29.♖c4 dc4 30.♖c1 30.♔d2** was an interesting possibility here, trying to block the pawn with the king. As we will see later, the ending of ♔ + ♙ against ♔ + ♘ is not a draw as most people thought at this stage of the game. **♖c8 31.g4**



By this moment most people present at the press room evaluated the position as critical for Kramnik. There was no prospect at sight for this 3 pieces while White had a clear plan in mind, to play e3-e4 to transfer the king to d4, winning the weak c4 pawn. It was now when Kramnik showed the precise way to save the game. **a5! 32.b5** The most feared continuation. However, it was possible to play [32.ba5 ba5 33.♖b1 When Black still need to play very well to equalize, since for instance c3 (33...♘c5 34.♙c5 ♖c5 35.♖b5 ♖d5 36.♖b6 ♖e5 37.♖c6 is still a minute better for White) 34.♔d3 ♔f7 (34...c2 35.♖c1 ♘b6 36.♖c2 ♖c2 37.♔c2 ♘a4 38.♙c7 again uncomfortable to Black) 35.♔c2 ♖c4 36.♖b7 ♔e8] **32...c3!**

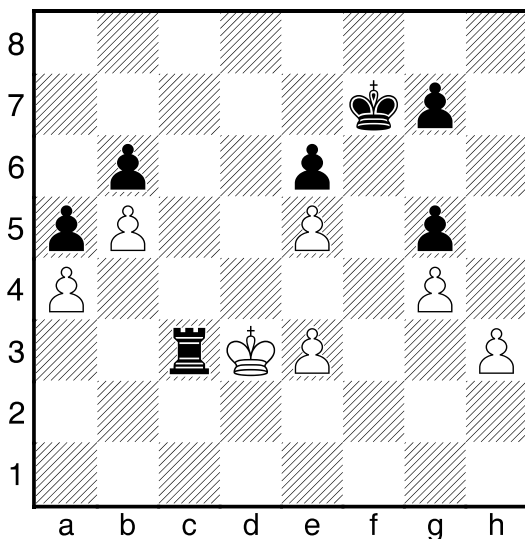
33.♖c2 [33.♔d3 ♘c5 34.♙c5 ♖c5 was similar to how the game continued] **33...♔f7**



34.♔d3 ♘c5! Forcing the draw. [34...♔g6? 35.♖c3 ♖c3 36.♔c3 as this ending was wrongly evaluated as drawn by many grandmasters and commentators around the world. As a matter of fact, taking the king to g3 to support the break on h4 leads nowhere, neither the eventual sacrifice with ♙c7-b6 leads anywhere. However, the current position is completely lost for Black. White has at his disposal a very strong plan which simply wins even after the best defense by Black. The concept starts by pushing the pawn to e4 to bring the bishop to the clever square e3, via a3-c1. From e3 the bishop keeps the black knight tied to the defence of the pawn on b6, while keeping the black king defending his pawn on g5. Since ...♔h6 is not possible because of h3-h4, Black will soon face zugzwang losing the game. During the press conference at the end of the game, both gladiators were questioned by GM Miguel Illescas about

this ending and both of them, quite remarkably, had gone to depths when anticipating this ending, at different stages of the game, in most types of pawn configurations. A fact that speaks highly about their tremendous understanding of the position.] **35.♔c5 ♖c5 36.♗c3 ♗c3** White is a pawn up but his king has no way to penetrate.

All in all it was a well played game by both sides. Today Kramnik is White and the future of the match depends on whether he is able to react or not. Another draw would put Anand at only one point from keeping his title.



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