

Championship Chronicle



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Favorites Dominate on Day One

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The 2009 US Women's Championship got underway on Sunday, October 4.

The random drawing of lots at the opening ceremony ensured that the five higher rated players would each play one of the five lower rated players in the first round and four out of the five capitalized with a win.

IM's Anna Zatonskikh and Rusudan Goletiani were joined by WGM's Camilla Baginskaite and Sabina Foisor in the winner's circle and will head into day two in a cheery mood.

The fifth game of the day was the only peaceful finish as IM Irina Krush was held to a well played draw by WIM Alisa Melekhina.



The participants in the 2009 US Women's Chess Championship. Back row (left to right): Rusudan Goletiani, Alisa Melekhina, Camilla Baginskaite, Anna Zatonskikh and Irina Krush. Front row (left to right): Sabina Foisor, Tatev Abrahamyan, Iryna Zenyuk, Yun Fan and Battsetseg Tsagaan. (Photo Betsy Dynako)

Current Standings:

1-4 Anna Zatonskikh, 1
1-4 Rusudan Goletiani, 1
1-4 Sabina Foisor, 1
1-4 Camilla Baginskaite, 1
5-6 Irina Krush, ½
5-6 Alisa Melekhina, ½
7-10 Tatev Abrahamyan, 0
7-10 Iryna Zenyuk, 0
7-10 Battsetseg Tsagaan, 0
7-10 Yun Fan, 0

Round Two Match-Ups

Round two sees some pretty good match-ups as the players all try to get into that groove and make sure they don't fall back too far.

The pick of the day is probably IM Rusudan Goletiani vs IM Irina Krush. Krush will not want to fall too far behind the leaders having

drawn with the white pieces in round one.

IM Anna Zatonskikh gets her first white pieces against WIM Battsetseg Tsagaan and will possibly see this as a chance to put some early pressure on her main rivals.

The other games see WGM Sabina Foisor vs WFM Tatev Abrahamyan, WIM Alisa Melekhina vs WGM Camilla Baginskaite and Yun Fan vs WIM Iryna Zenyuk.

Foisor, Baginskaite and Melekhina will all be looking to build on their good start on day one.

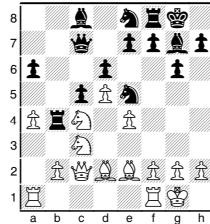


Ben's Best

GM-Elect Ben Finegold Picks His Game of the Day

Baginskaite,Camilla (2356) – Abrahamyan,Tatev (2342)

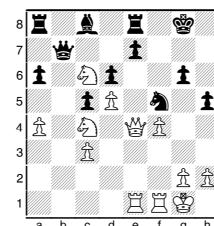
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 Tatev had to decide whether to play the Benko Gambit or King's Indian. I thought the Benko was a good choice. It is usually a good idea to come out swinging! **4.cxb5 a6** **5.b6** This is the specialty of Camilla and her GM husband, Alex Yermolinsky. In fact, this has already been seen 2 years previous in a game between these two players. **5...d6 6.Nc3 g6 7.a4 Qxb6 8.Nf3** Normally, white plays 8.a5. Camilla decides to do without this move, as it allows counterplay via the b5 square, either with Bd7-b5 ideas, or Ne8-c7-b5. [8.a5 Qb4 9.Ra4 Qb7 10.e4 Bg7 11.Bc4 Nbd7 12.f4 0-0 13.Nf3 Ne8 14.0-0 Nc7 15.Qd3 Nf6 16.Bd2 Bd7 17.Raa1 Bb5 18.b3 Rad8 19.f5 Nd7 20.Bf4 Rb8 21.Rab1 Ne8 22.g4 Nef6 23.h3 Bxc4 24.bxc4 Qc7 25.Bd2 Qxa5 26.Nb5 Qd8 27.Na7 Rxb1 28.Rxb1 Qa8 29.Nc6 Re8 30.Ba5 Nb8 31.e5 Nfd7 32.e6 Nxc6 33.exd7 Nxax 34.dxe8Q+ Qxe8 35.Qc2 gx5 36.gxf5 Qd7 ?' 37.Rb8+ Bf8 38.Qc3 1-0 Baginskaite,C (2361)-Abrahamyan,T (2258)/2007 US Women's Ch. 2007] **8...Bg7 9.Nd2 0-0 10.e4 Nbd7 11.Be2 Rb8 12.Nc4 Qc7 13.0-0 Rb4 14.Qc2** Previously, in the game Seirawan-Shirov, white played 14.a5. I like Camilla's move, as it keeps control of b5. White has a little advantage, but black has good counter chances... typical Benoni/Benko. **14...Ne8 15.Bd2 Ne5**



16.Nd1 I was really impressed with this move while Jen and I were commentating live. This shows a high level of understanding of the position. White can later play Ne3 and Nc4, and she keeps an eye on b2, as well as defending c4 and attacking b4. What an all-purpose move! **16...Rb8 17.Na5 f5?** This is Tatev's first error. She thought if white played Nc6, she could always kick out the knight, and/or play e6 and attack the d5 pawn. However, in the game, black gets too passive, and I was certain things had gone wrong if black is forced to play Ra8. Better is 17...Bd7, developing the bishop, and defending c6, when I think the game is dynamically balanced. **18.f4 Nf7 19.Nc6 Ra8 20.Ba5 Qb7 21.Bc3 Nf6** During the live broadcast, I thought this was an excellent move, and that black was about equal. Jen Shahade then showed the right way for white, which is exactly what Camilla played, keeping white's edge. **22.Bf3! fxe4 23.Bxe4 Nxe4** I did not like this move as I was doing live commentary, but, it is probably all right. It is difficult to suggest better alternatives.

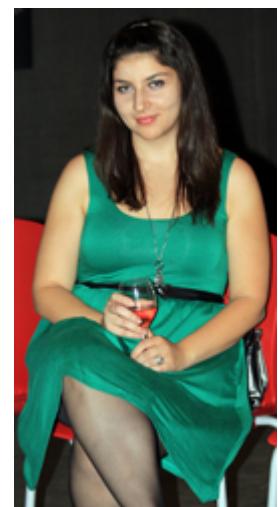
24.Qxe4 Re8 Tatev was planning on playing 24...e6!? but she changed her mind when she saw 25.Ne3 exd5 26.Nxd5!. However, this is still black's best, but, instead of 25...exd5, better is 25...Bd7, and if the feared 26.Na5, then 26...Qc8 holds on.

25.Ne3 Nh6 26.Rae1 Tatev became discouraged when she saw 26...Nf5 27.Nxf5 Bxf5 28.Nxe7+! Kf7? 29.Nxf5! winning. **26...Bxc3 27.bxc3** Black needs to defend grimly, but time trouble, and no confidence in her position led to a quick demise. Black should try 27...Kh8 or 27...Kg7. **27...Nf5? 28.Nc4! 28...h5** This loses quickly, but, black had no good defense to both 29.g4 and 29.Rb1 (followed by 30.Nb6)



29.Nxd6! A quick finish! Tatev did not like the looks of 29..Nxd6 30.Qxg6+ Kf8 31.Qh7 threatening Ne5 and Ng6 mate. A very nice strategical game by Camilla Baginskaite. **1-0**

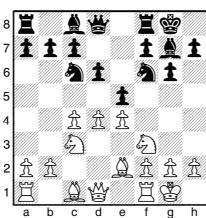
"During the live broadcast, I thought this was an excellent move, and that black was about equal. Jen Shahade then showed the right way for white, which is exactly what Camilla played, keeping white's edge."



WFM Tatev Abrahamyan at the opening ceremony.

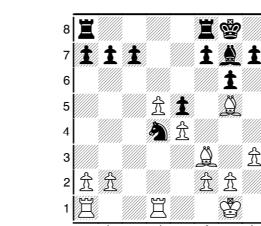
Krush Held by Melekhina

Krush,Irina (2478) – Melekhina,Alisa (2301)
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 Nc6



8.dxe5 [The main line, one that

Krush usually plays and Melekhina has faced previously in this position, is 8.d5 which contains a lot of theory. Krush probably wanted to avoid going into a theoretical debate and get both players thinking for themselves.] **8...dxe5 9.Bg5 Qxd1 10.Rfxd1 Bg4** Removing the defender from the d4-square so that her knight can use it as an outpost. **11.h3 Bxf3 12.Bxf3 Nd4 13.Nd5 Nxd5 14.cxd5**



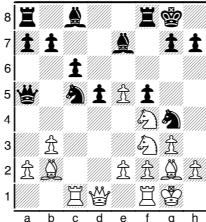
14...f5! Melekhina plays actively, although opening up the position for the two bishops is always a risky idea. **15.Rac1 Rf7 16.Be3**

fxe4 17.Bg4 [17.Bxe4? Ne2+] **17...Nf5 18.Rc3 h5** Stopping any ideas the bishop had of coming into e6. **19.Be2 Bf8** As noted in the commentary room, this bishop potentially belongs on the d6 square to help with the defense of c7. **20.Rc4 Nd6 21.Rc3 Nf5** Melekhina is happy to repeat the position with the black pieces against Krush. **22.Rc4 Nd6 23.Rc3 Nf5** **½-½**

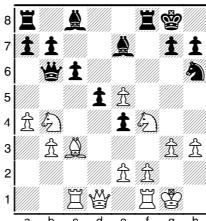
Zatonskikh Plays Dutch to Beat Zenyuk

Zenyuk,Iryna (2281) –
Zatonskikh,Anna (2496)

1.d4 f5 The Dutch Defense from Zatonskikh, which was quite a surprise for everyone except Zenyuk! The last time she played it was in 2005. **2.c4 e6 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 c6 5.Nh3 d6 6.0-0** [6.Nc3 Be7 7.0-0 0-0 8.d5 e5 9.f4 e4 10.Nf2 h5 11.Rb1 c5 12.b3 Na6 13.e3 Bd7 14.Bb2 Qe8 15.Qe2 Qg6 16.Kh1 Kf7 17.Rg1 Rh8 18.a3 Rh6 19.Ba1 Rah8 20.Bf1 h4 21.g4 fxg4 22.Bh3 Nh5 23.Rxg4 Ng3+ 24.hxg3 Bxg4 25.Nxg4 R6h7 26.f5 Qh5 27.Ne5+ dxe5 28.g4 Qh6 29.Nxe4 Re8 30.d6 Bg5 31.Rd1 Rhh8 32.d7 1-0 David,A (2579)–Zatonskikh,A (2435)/Port Erin 2005] **6...Be7 7.b3 0-0 8.Bb2 Qc7 9.Nd2 e5 10.c5 d5 11.dxe5 Ng4?!** [The other option was to play 11...Nfd7 but Zatonskikh has other plans for the d7-square.] **12.Nf3 Nd7 13.Nf4 Nxc5 14.Rc1 Qa5**

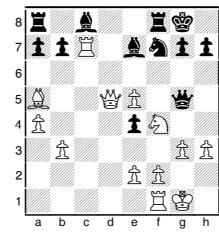


Nh6 17.Nd4 Ne4 18.Bxe4?! [The start of a bad plan to capitalize on Black's out of play queen. The simple 18.Qc2 keeps a very slight edge although the game is still very much alive.] **18...fxe4 19.Nc2 Qa6 20.Nb4 Qb5 21.a4 Qb6**



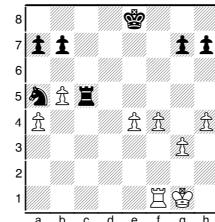
[21...Qc5!? Zatonskikh mentioned in the post-mortem commentary that she had looked at this move but rejected it for some reason. It could have definitely been a tougher move for Zenyuk to meet

given the time trouble she was in. **22.e3**] **22.Nbxd5** Practically a forced move **22...cxd5 23.Qxd5+ Nf7** [After 23...Kh8 Zenyuk said she was looking at 24.Ba5 Qa6 25.Rc7 and thought her position was good. However, after 25...Rxf4! the usual silicon refutation begins, 26.gxf4 Qg6+ 27.Kh2 Bxh3! 28.Kxh3 (28.Rg1 Qh5+ threatening ...Be6+) 28...Qg4+ and it's mate in a few moves, 29.Kh2 Qh4+ 30.Kg2 Ng4 31.Rh1 Qxf2+ 32.Kh3 Qh4+ 33.Kg2 Ne3+ 34.Kg1 Qg3#] **24.Ba5 Qh6 25.Rc7 Qg5**



26.h4? [Played in severe time trouble. **26.e6! Qxd5 27.Nxd5 Bd6 28.exf7+ Rxf7 29.Rxf7 Kxf7 30.Kg2** and White will be doing ok, or possibly even better than ok.] **26...Qxe5 27.Qxe5 Nxe5 28.Rxe7 Nc6 29.Rxe4 Nxa5 30.b4 Nc6 31.b5 Bf5 32.Re3 Na5**

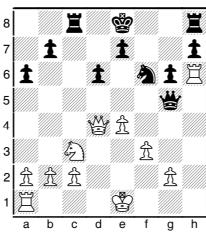
The dust has settled a little bit although both players were still in time trouble, Zenyuk just have seconds to complete each move. Black has a material advantage that should probably be enough. The remaining moves were played very quickly. **33.Nd5 Rf7 34.Ne7+ Kf8 35.Nxf5 Rxf5 36.f4 Rc5 37.Re4 Re8 38.Rxe8+ Kxe8 39.e4**



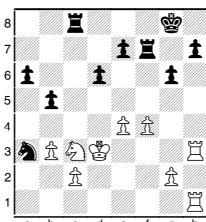
Zenyuk played this move but her flag fell before she could hit the clock. However, the final position is definitely losing as Zatonskikh was about to start picking off pawns. **0-1**

Foisor Drags Out Win Against Fan

Fan,Yun (2201) –
Foisor,Sabina Francesca (2390)
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Bg7 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Bc4 Qa5 8.f3 a6 [8...Qb4 9.Bb3 Nxe4 10.Nxc3 Bxc3+ 11.bxc3 Qxc3+ 12.Ke2 dxc6 13.Bd4 e5 14.Bxc3 Nxc3+ 15.Kf2 Nxd1+ and Black has won the majority of games from this position.] **9.Bb3 d6 10.Qd2 Nxd4** [10...0-0; 10...Bd7] **11.Bxd4 Be6 12.Bxe6 fxe6 13.h4 Rc8 14.h5? e5** [I'm struggling to find sufficient compensation for the pawn after 14...Nxh5 15.Bxg7 Nxg7 16.0-0-0 Qc5] **15.h6 Bxh6 16.Rxh6 exd4 17.Qxd4 Qg5**

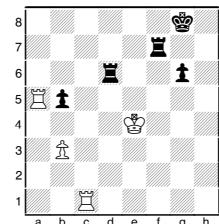


This definitely looks good but white has an easy defense. **18.Qd2 Qg3+ 19.Qf2 Qxf2+ 20.Kxf2 b5 21.a3 0-0 22.Rh3 Ng4+ 23.Ke2 Ne5 24.Rah1 Rf7** Material may be even but the ending definitely favors black thanks to his easier to defend pawns and active knight and c8 rook. **25.f4?!** This move just loses a pawn. **25...Nc4 26.b3 Nxa3 27.Kd3**



27...Nxc2 28.Nd5 a5 29.g4 Nb4+ 30.Kd4 Nxd5 31.Kxd5 Rc5+ 32.Ke6 Rxf4 33.Kxe7 The white king becomes very active, mop-

ping up black pawns wherever he goes. **33...Re5+ 34.Kxd6 Rxe4 35.Rxh7 Rxg4 36.Ra7 Rh4 37.Rc1 Rd4+ 38.Ke6 Rhe4+ 39.Kf6 Rd6+ 40.Kg5 Re5+ 41.Kf4 Rf5+ 42.Ke4 Rf7 43.Rxa5**



Double rook endings are notoriously difficult to calculate and as Ben Finegold said during his commentary, can lead to either side falling into a checkmate! **43...Re7+ 44.Kf4 Rd5 45.Rc6 Rf5+ 46.Kg4 Kh7 47.Raa6 Re4+ 48.Kg3 Rg5+ 49.Kf2 Rf4+ 50.Ke2 Rh4 51.Ra8 Rf5 52.Raa6 Rg4 53.Ke3 Kh6 54.Rab6 Kh5**

55.Re6 Rfg5 56.Kd3 Rg3+ 57.Kc2 Rf5 58.Kb2 g5 The g-pawn starts its march down the board. **59.Ka3 Rd3 60.Re8 Kg4 61.Reb8 Rdd5 62.Kb4 Kf3 63.Rg6 g4 64.Rbg8 Rf4+ 65.Ka5 b4+ 66.Ka4 Rd1 67.Rc6 g3 68.Rc4 Rxc4 69.bxc4 Rb1 70.Rf8+ Ke3 71.Rg8 Kf2 72.c5 b3 73.Rg5 g2 74.Rf5+ Ke3 0-1**

"Double rook endings are notoriously difficult to calculate and as Ben Finegold said during his commentary, can lead to either side falling into a checkmate!"

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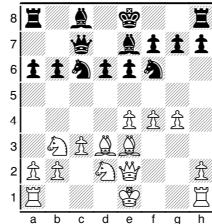
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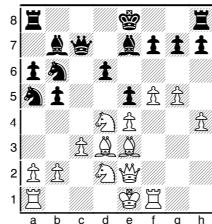
Tsagaan and Goletiani Forget How to Castle

Tsagaan,Battsetseg (2265) – Goletiani,Rusudan (2437) [B42]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.Bd3 Bc5 6.Nb3 Be7 7.Be3 [7.Qg4 is a very popular move here and one that Goletiani has faced recently 7...g6 8.Qe2 d6 9.0-0 Nd7 10.Na3 Ne5 11.Nc4 Nxc4 12.Bxc4 Qc7 13.Bd3 e5 14.f4 Nf6 15.fxe5 dx5 16.Bh6 Ng4 17.Bd2 Be6 18.Rf3 Nf6 19.Qf1 Nh5 20.Be2 Qxc2 21.Rc3 Qxb2 22.Rc7 Nf4 23.Bc4 Bd6 24.Rxb7 Bxc4 25.Qxc4 0-0 26.g3 Nh3+ 27.Kg2 Ng5 28.h4 Ne6 29.Kh3 Rab8 30.Rxb8 Rxb8 31.Bc3 Qc2 32.Nd2 Rb5 33.Qc8+ Bf8 34.Rf1 Rc5 35.Qe8 Nf4+ 36.Rxf4 exf4 37.Bd4 Qd3 38.Bf2 Rc2 0-1 Gaponenko,I (2438)–Goletiani,R (2391)/Ningbo 2009] 7...Qc7 8.N1d2 [Two moves, 8.Nc3 and; 8.0-0 are more popular here although as we'll see, castling doesn't seem to be a part of either player's plans.] 8...d6 9.f4 Nf6 10.Qe2 Nc6 11.c3 b6 12.g4



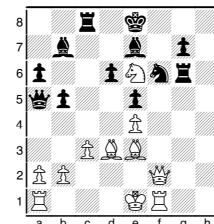
Tsagaan definitely doesn't hide her intentions with this move. 12...Bb7 13.Rf1 Nd7 14.g5 b5 15.h4 Nb6 16.Nd4 Na5 17.f5 e5



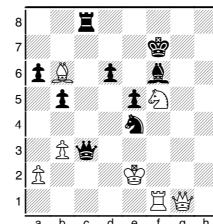
18.N4b3 [An interesting alternative was the piece sacrifice with 18.f6! exd4 19.fxg7 Rg8 20.Bxd4 intending Qh5 or Qf2 ensuring a complicated and messy game, which would suit Tsagaan's style.] 18...Nc6 19.Nf3 Nd7 20.h5 Na5

21.Nxa5 Qxa5 22.g6 hxg6 23.fxg6 fxg6 24.hxg6 Nf6?! Trying to block off the f-file while putting pressure on the e-pawn. However, opening up the white king with 24...b4 or getting the black king to a safer place with 24...O-O-O may have been better. 25.Ng5 Rh6 26.Ne6 Rxg6 27.Qf2 Rc8

gaan was herself critical of this move which gives the black queen the chance to infiltrate the white camp. 29...Qa3 30.Rg1? A decisive mistake but made in severe time pressure. 30...Rxxg1+ 31.Qxg1 Qb2 32.Nxg7+ Kf7 33.Rb1 Qxc3+ 34.Ke2 Bxe4 35.Bxe4 Nxe4 36.Rf1+ Bf6 37.Nf5



28.Bb6 [28.a4! A very hard move to find but it is white's best shot. The simple idea is to remove access to a4 for the black queen so now b4 on the next move will trap her. How does black stop this? 28...Rxc3! A necessary counter shot just to try and stay in the game (28...bxa4? 29.Bb6) 29.Bd2 Bc8 30.Bxc3 b4 and black will at least win a piece back for the rook.] 28...Qa4 29.b3? Tsa-



Can you find the mate in 6? Goletiani did with just one minute left on her clock to reach move 40! 37...Qd2+ 38.Kf3 Qf4+ 39.Kg2 Rg8+ 40.Kh3 Rh8+ 41.Kg2 Qg4+ [41...Qg4+ 42.Ng3 Qxg3#] 0-1

