

# Championship Chronicle



## 2009 US Women's Chess Championship

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## Zatonskih Wins Another As All Games Decisive Again

It appears there is no stopping IM Anna Zatonskih as she won again, this time with the black pieces against 3rd seed, IM Rusudan Goletiani.

Zatonskih had never beaten Goletiani previously but she set the record straight with a devastating sacrificial attack on the white king, which eventually led to Goletiani resigning when her queen was trapped.

This win leaves Zatonskih still one point ahead of the field with just two games to play.

WGM Camilla Baginskaite is doing her best to stay within reach of Zatonskih as she won again, this time against WIM Battsetseg Tsagaan.

Baginskaite and Tsagaan played a complicated opening and play was fairly balanced until Tsagaan blundered heading towards the time control.

IM Irina Krush scored a routine victory over WGM Sabina Foisor after Foisor blundered a piece on move 15.

The game actually ended up being the longest game of the day as Foisor battled on in a hopeless position and was eventually ended when Krush was about to force mate.

WIM Alisa Melekhina joined Krush in joint 3rd-4th place with a win against Yun Fan.

Melekhina played a tricky line in the Caro-Kann, hoping that Fan

wasn't too acquainted with it, which turned out to be true.

However, Fan battled back in the position after Melekhina missed the quick kill but then managed to let it all slip when faced with a tough defensive position, forcing a quick collapse and eventual defeat.

WFM Tatev Abrahamyan made sure that everyone won at least one game in the tournament as she beat WIM Iryna Zenyuk in an entertaining Sicilian Dragon that involved opposite side castling and mutual attacks on the opponent's king.

In the end Abrahamyan's attack broke through first and she wrapped up the full point with some nice tactics.

### Current Standings:

- 1 Anna Zatonskih, 6½
- 2 Camilla Baginskaite, 5½
- 3-4 Irina Krush, 4½
- 3-4 Alisa Melekhina, 4½
- 5 Sabina Foisor, 3½
- 6-7 Rusudan Goletiani, 2½
- 6-7 Battsetseg Tsagaan, 2½
- 8-9 Tatev Abrahamyan, 2
- 8-9 Iryna Zenyuk, 2
- 9 Yun Fan, 1½

### Round 8 Match-Ups

Anna Zatonskih will have a chance to wrap up the Championship as she has the black pieces against Sabina Foisor. A win in this game will at guarantee her at least a share of 1st place and entry into any necessary tie-breaks.

Camilla Baginskaite will be hoping

to keep the pressure on Zatonskih but she will have a tough test, having the black pieces against the surging Irina Krush, who herself will be looking to make ground in the World Championship qualification race.

Alisa Melekhina will have the black

pieces against Iryna Zenyuk, also looking to stay within striking distance and also looking to help her norm chances.

In the other two games, Yun Fan will play Rusudan Goletiani while Battsetseg Tsagaan will play Tatev Abrahamyan.



## Ben's Best: Goletiani vs Zatonskih

### GM-Elect Ben Finegold Picks His Game of the Day

Goletiani, Rusudan (2437) – Zatonskih, Anna (2492)

1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.g3 Nc6 4.Bg2 e5 5.d3 Nf6 6.0-0

A sort of Reverse Benoni. The fact that black has not played c5 early, means that she can maneuver her knight to that square.

6...Nd7 7.e3

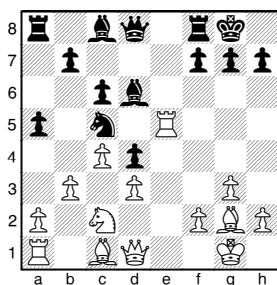
This is the most common move in the position. White wants to open up the center whilst black has yet to castle.

7...Be7 8.exd4 exd4 9.Re1 0-0 10.Na3

I expected this move when doing live commentary, but, white also plays 10.Nbd2 in this position. I thought the text move made more sense, and white can play Nc3 later, attacking d4, preparing b4, and the Qd1 protects the d3 pawn, unlike when white plays the knight to d2.

10...Nc5 11.Ne5 Nxe5 12.Rxe5 c6 13.Nc2 a5 14.b3 Bd6

Surprisingly, this has all been played before! White played 15.Re1 in the game Barle-Mikhalchisin, 1995, which black eventually won. Here, I suggested 15.Rh5 in the commentary room, but, I thought it was more of a "fun, blitz move" than a serious move. Imagine my surprise when that is exactly what Rusa played! After the game, Zatonskih said she thought 15.Rh5 was fine.



15.Rh5!? Ne6

This is what I expected during the live commentary. Rybka prefers 15...g6.

16.Bb2 Be7 17.Re5 Bf6 18.Re1

After a little detour, the rook finds a reasonable home on e1. Zatonskih has done well to protect her d4 pawn, and now, she completes development with simple moves.

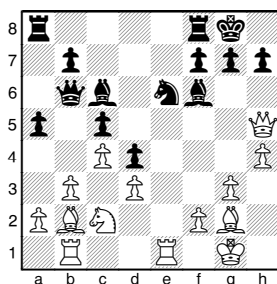
18...Qb6 19.Rb1 Bd7

I thought the position was about equal, and Zatonskih agreed. Now, Rusa plays a move I did not like, but, she thought it was ok, but that her later 24.f4? was to blame. I dislike moving the pawns in front of white's king, as it seems to weaken her king more than it does to put pressure on black's king.

20.h4!? C5

Anna solidifies her d4 pawn, and at the same time attempts to trade off the strong Bg2.

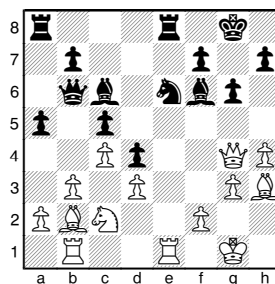
21.Qh5 Bc6



22.Bh3?

Jen did not like this move. She thought giving away the a8-h1 diagonal was more important than the pressure white gets with Bh3. I agree.

22...g6 23.Qg4 Rfe8

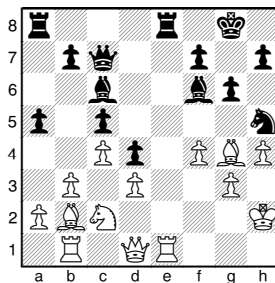


24.f4?

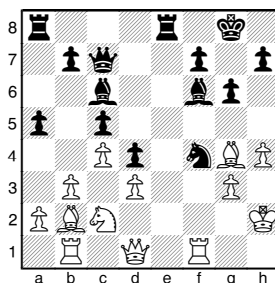
This is the losing move. Now white has too many weaknesses around her king. Anna's play hereafter is aggressive and accurate.

24...Ng7 25.Qd1 Nh5 26.Kh2 Qc7 27.Bg4?

Losing quickly. A spectator in the live audience suggested 27.Qg4! which allows white to still play on. Now Anna executes a brutal sacrificial mating attack.



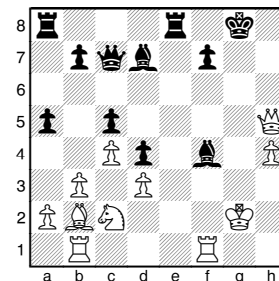
27...Nxf4! 28.Rf1  
28.gxf4 Qxf4+ 29.Kh3 Qf2-+



28...Be5! 29.gxf4 Bxf4+ 30.Kh3

30.Kg1 Bh2+ 31.Kf2 Qg3#;  
30.Rxf4 Qxf4+ 31.Kh3 h5-+

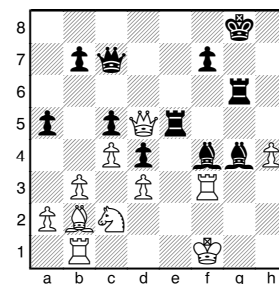
30...h5! 31.Bxh5 gxh5  
32.Qxh5 Bd7+! 33.Kg2



33...Ra6!

Normally, I do not give exclamation points to so many moves, but, in this game, Anna played so many powerful/best moves, it is easy to see why she has 6.5-0.5!

34.Rf3 Rg6+ 35.Kf1 Bg4 36.Qd5 Re5



An incredible final position.  
0-1



IM Anna Zatonskih playing blindfold again? (Photo Betsy Dynako)

## Baginskaite Keeps The Pace By Beating Tsagaan

Baginskaite,Camilla (2356) – Battsetseg,Tsagaan (2265)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nf3 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 d6 6.Nc3 Nbd7 7.0-0 e5 8.e4 exd4 9.Nxd4 Re8 10.h3 a6 11.Be3 Rb8

Tsagaan tries something different from her earlier game against Zatoniskih 11...c6 12.Qc2 h5 13.Rad1 Qe7 14.Rfe1 h4 15.g4 Ne5 16.Qe2 c5 17.Nc2 Be6 18.Na3 Nfxg4 19.hxg4 h3 20.Bxh3 Qh4 21.Kg2 Nxc4 22.Rh1 Bxc3 23.bxc3 Nxe3+ 24.Qxe3 Bxh3+ 25.Qxh3 Qxe4+ 26.Qf3 Qe5 27.Rd5 Qg7 28.Nc2 Re6 29.Rd3 Rae8 30.Ne3 f5 31.Rb1 R8e7 32.Nd5 Re8 33.Rxb7 1-0 Zatoniskih,A (2492)–Tsagaan,B (2265)/St Louis 2009

12.a4

Baginskaite has also seen this position in a prior game, albeit nearly 20 years ago 12.Qc2 c5 13.Nde2 b5 14.Rad1 b4 15.Nd5 Nxd5 16.Rxd5 Qe7 17.Rfd1 Rb6 18.R5d2 Bb7

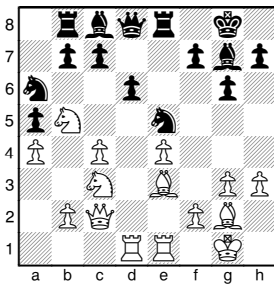
19.Nf4 Nf6 20.f3 g5 21.Nd3 Nd7 22.Nf2 f5 23.Re2 fxe4 24.Nxe4 Bxe4 25.fxe4 Be5 ½-½ Baginskaite,C (2300)–Domkute,R (2225)/Moscow 1990

12...Nc5 13.Qc2 a5 14.Rad1 Nfd7 15.Ndb5 Na6

A normal idea in this position to transfer the knight into the b4 square that is now available since white played an earlier a4.

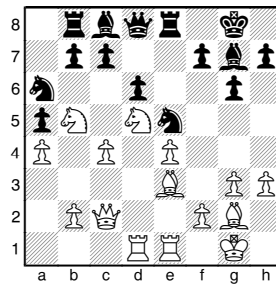
16.Rfe1 Ne5

16...Nb4 17.Qe2 b6 18.Nd5 Nxd5 19.exd5 Ba6 20.Nd4 Bb7 is ok for black.



17.Nd5

17.c5!? Nc4 18.Bf4 Nxc5 19.Nd5 Nxb2 20.Ndxc7 Nxd1 21.Rxd1 Bd7 22.Bxd6! (22.Nxe8? Bxb5) 22...b6 23.Nxe8 Qxe8 24.Bxb8+–



17...Be6

17...c6 is of course the biggest test of Baginskaite's 17th move. 18.Bb6 Qd7 19.f4 an idea suggested by Ben Finegold during the commentary although his evaluation of the position was "messy" (19.Ba7 cxd5 20.Bxb8 Nxb8 21.exd5 is maybe slightly better for white.) 19...cxb5 20.fxe5 bxc4 21.exd6 Qxd6 22.Qf2∞

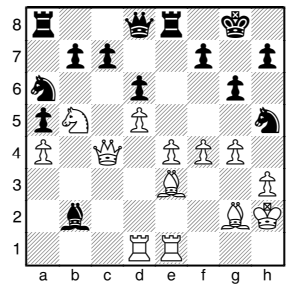
18.Nd4 Bxd5 19.cxd5 Nb4 20.Qe2 Nd7 21.Nb5 Nf6 22.Qc4 Rc8 23.Na7 Ra8 24.Nb5 Rc8 25.Na7 Ra8 26.f4

Baginskaite is the one to vary from repeating today after her encounter with Zenyuk yesterday.

26...Nh5 27.Kh2 Bxb2 28.Nb5 Na6

28...Rc8 29.g4 Ng7 30.Re2 Bf6 31.g5 Be7 32.Bf3∞

29.g4



29...c6?

29...Ng7 was the only reasonable defense but even here white has compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

30.dxc6 bxc6 31.Nxd6

31.Nxd6 Re6 32.Nxf7 Qe7 33.Rd8+ Rxd8 34.Nxd8 Ng7 35.Nxe6 Nxe6 36.Qxa6+–

1-0

*"18.Bb6 Qd7 19.f4 an idea suggested by Ben Finegold during the commentary although his evaluation of the position was messy"*



WIM Battsetseg Tsagaan waits for WGM Camilla Baginskaite to move in their round 7 game. (Photo Betsy Dynako)

## Melekhina Beats Fan With Off-Beat Caro-Kann

Melekhina, Alisa (2301) –  
Fan, Yun (2201) [B18]

1.e4 c6

The Caro-Kann, an interesting choice by Fan. Melekhina had prepared for the Sicilian Defense but she wouldn't tell me what she was going to play against it!

2.d4 d5 3.Nc3

Melekhina avoids the exchange variation that she usually plays. She also mentioned she noticed that Fan plays the exchange variation against the Caro-Kann and so she wanted to get both players into unfamiliar territory.

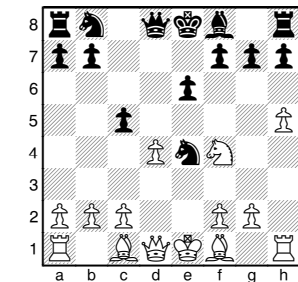
3...dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5 5.Ng3 Bg6 6.Nh3

An interesting variation that Melekhina said she had studied just a few weeks prior to the event. Fan went into a deep think here, possibly unfamiliar with the line.

6...Nf6 7.Nf4 e6

When in doubt, copy the current World Champion! 7...e5 8.Nxg6 hxg6 9.dxe5 Qa5+ 10.Bd2 Qxe5+ 11.Qe2 Qxe2+ 12.Bxe2 Nbd7 13.0-0 0-0-0 14.Rad1 Nb6 15.Bc1 Bd6 16.Rfe1 Kc7 17.h3 Rhe8 18.Bd3 ½-½ Radjabov, T (2735)–Anand, V (2799)/Morelia/Linares 2008

8.h4 c5 9.h5 Be4 10.Nxe4 Nxe4



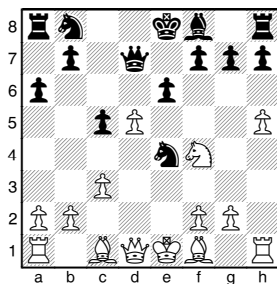
11.d5! A6

11...Nc6 12.f3 (12.dxc6 Qxd1+ 13.Kxd1 Nxf2+) 12...Qa5+ 13.c3 both knights are attacked forcing black to sacrifice one of them with 13...Nxc3 14.bxc3 Qxc3+ 15.Bd2 Qe5+ 16.Kf2 exd5±

12.c3

Played to prevent the ...Qa5+ but it is not as good as 12.Bd3! Ng5 (12...exd5 13.Nxd5!+; inserting 12...Qa5+ 13.c3 doesn't help either.) 13.dxe6 Nxe6 14.Nxe6 fxe6 15.Qg4+–

12...Qd7



13.Be3

This move doesn't blunder away all of white's advantage but it's not anywhere near as good as 13.h6! clearing the h5 square for the queen 13...g6

14.Qe2+– threatening to play f3 14...Ng5 15.Qe5

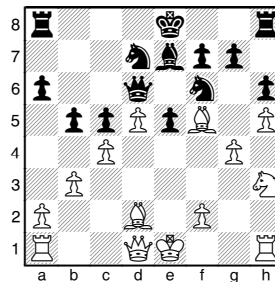
13...e5!

Fan finds the toughest defense.

14.Nh3 Be7 15.Bd3 Nf6 16.c4 h6

Fan has fought back well and white has it all to do again.

17.Bd2 Qd6 18.Bf5 Nbd7 19.g4 b5 20.b3

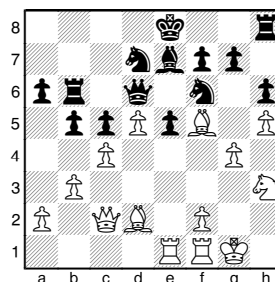


20...Nb6

20...e4!? would have been a tough move to play, giving white access to the f4 square 21.Bf4 Ne5 22.Qe2 0-0 23.Bxe4 Nxe4 24.Qxe4 Bf6 25.0-0 Rfe8±

21.Qc2 Rb8 22.0-0 Nbd7 23.Rae1 Rb6?!

23...0-0 24.g5 hxg5 25.Nxg5 Rb6 26.Bh3±



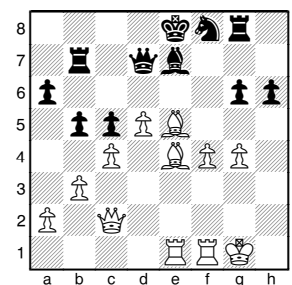
24.f4! e4 25.Nf2

The e-pawn will be rounded up.

25...Nf8?

Black's defensive task was already very difficult but this move just makes this worse. Instead 25...bxc4 26.bxc4 0-0 makes white work a lot harder.

26.Nxe4+– Nxe4 27.Bxe4 g6 28.hxg6 fxg6 29.Ba5 Rb7 30.Bc3 Rg8 31.Be5 Qd7



32.d6 Bh4 33.Bxb7 Bxe1 34.Rxe1 Qxg4+ 35.Qg2 1-0



## Foisor Blunders Piece In Opening Giving Krush Easy Win

Krush,Irina (2478) –  
Foisor,Sabina (2390) [D17]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6  
4.Nc3 dxc4 5.a4 Bf5  
6.Ne5 e6 7.f3 Nbd7

7...Bb4 is the main move here as demonstrated by a young Nakamura 8.e4 Bxe4 9.fxe4 Nxe4 10.Bd2 Qxd4 11.Nxe4 Qxe4+ 12.Qe2 Bxd2+ 13.Kxd2 Qd5+ 14.Kc2 Na6 15.Nxc4 0-0-0 16.Qe5 f6 17.Qe3 Nb4+ 18.Kb3 c5 19.Rc1 Nc6 20.Ka3 Nd4 21.Bd3 Kb8 22.Be4 Qd7 23.Rhd1 Qc7 24.g4 g6 25.Rd2 f5 26.Bg2 e5 27.Rf2 e4 28.gxf5 gxf5 29.Ka2 a6 30.a5 Qc6 31.Qa3 f4 32.Rxf4 Ne2 33.Rcf1 Nxf4 34.Rxf4 Rd4 35.Qg3 Ka7 36.Nb6 Rb4 37.Rf7 Qe6+ 0-1 Krush,I (2411)– Nakamura,H (2452)/New York 2001

8.e4 Bg6 9.Nxc4 Be7  
10.Be2 0-0 11.0-0 Nb6  
12.Ne5

White has a small edge with a lead in development and a big center but black's

position should be playable.

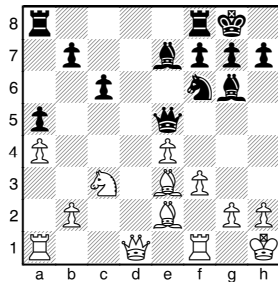
12...a5 13.Be3 Nbd7  
14.Nd3 Qb8 15.Kh1

Played to prevent 15...e5 but

15...e5?

just loses a piece with little compensation.

16.dxe5 Nxe5 17.Nxe5  
Qxe5



18.f4

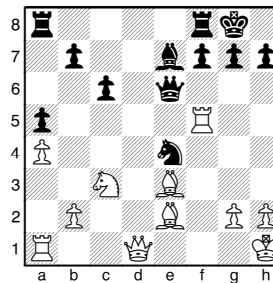
The bishop gets trapped.

18...Qe6

18...Qc7 19.e5 Rad8  
20.Qc1 protecting the e3

bishop to avoid any tactics  
20...Nd5 21.Nxd5 Rxd5  
22.f5+-

19.f5 Bxf5 20.Rxf5 Nxe4



21.Rf3!

Black does have two pawns for the piece but they are not sufficient compensation in this particular position. The remainder of the game was simply technique from Krush.

*"Black does have two pawns for the piece but they are not sufficient compensation in this particular position."*

21...Nxc3 22.bxc3 Bf6  
23.Qc2 b5 24.axb5 cxb5  
25.Bxb5 Rfc8 26.Bd2 Rc5  
27.Bd3 Rh5 28.Rf5 Rh4  
29.Rfxa5

All black's "extra" pawns have disappeared and she could easily resign here.

29...Rd8 30.Be1 Rh6  
31.Bf1 Qc6 32.Ra6 Qb7  
33.Qe2 Qc7 34.h3 g5  
35.Qf3 Kg7 36.Rb1 Qe5  
37.Rbb6 Rg6 38.Bg3 Qe7  
39.Qf5 Rd1 40.Kh2 Bxc3

Both players reach the time control, which was black's only hope of getting something out of this game.

41.Rxg6+ fxc6 42.Qf3 Rc1  
43.Rc6 g4 44.Qd3 Qb4  
45.Rc7+ Kf6 46.Qd8+ Ke6  
47.Qd7+ Kf6 48.Qf7+



IM Irina Krush concentrates on the board during her game against WGM Sabina Foisor. (Photo Betsy Dynako)

## Abrahamyan Beats Zenyuk In Chinese Dragon Battle

Abrahamyan, Tatev (2334) –  
Zenyuk, Iryna (2281) [B77]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4  
4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Be3  
Bg7 7.f3 Nc6 8.Bc4 0-0  
9.Bb3 Bd7 10.Qd2

10.h4 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 b5 12.h5  
e5 13.Be3 Nxb5 14.Qxd6 Be6  
15.Qxd8 Rfxd8 16.Nxb5 Bxb3  
17.axb3 a6 18.Nc3 f5 19.Bg5  
Rd4 20.Kf2 f4 21.Rhd1 Rc8  
22.Ke1 Rc6 23.Rd2 Bf8  
24.Nd5 Rxd2 25.Kxd2 Kf7  
26.Kd3 Ng7 27.b4 Ne6  
28.Bh4 h5 29.Bf2 g5 30.c4 g4  
31.fxg4 hxg4 32.c5 g3 33.Bg1  
Ng5 34.Nb6 Rh6 35.Rxa6 f3  
36.gxf3 Rh1 37.Be3 g2  
38.Ra7+ Ke8 39.c6 Ne6 40.c7  
Nxc7 41.Rxc7 Bh6 42.Bc5  
Rc1 43.Re7+ Kd8 44.Rd7+  
Ke8 45.Bf2 Rd1+ 46.Ke2  
Rxd7 47.Nxd7 Kxd7 48.Bc5  
Bc1 49.b3 Bg5 50.Kf2 1-0  
Abrahamyan, T (2258) –  
Battsetseg, T (2234)/2007 US  
Women's Ch.

10...Rb8

The Chinese Variation of the  
Sicilian Dragon.

11.h4

11.0-0-0 is the most popular  
move here although GM Mag-  
nus Carlsen recently showed  
how to play against this  
11...Na5 12.Bh6 Bxh6  
13.Qxh6 b5 14.g4 Nxb3+  
15.Nxb3 b4 16.Nd5 Nxd5  
17.exd5 Rb6 18.Rhe1 e5  
19.dxe6 fxe6 20.Re3 Rf7  
21.Nd2 d5 22.Nb3 Qc7  
23.Kb1 Rb8 24.Rde1 Rc8  
25.R1e2 Qb6 26.h4 d4  
27.Re5 d3 28.cxd3 Rxf3 29.d4  
Bb5 30.R2e3 Bd3+ 31.Ka1  
Qxd4 32.Rxe6 Rf1+ 33.Re1  
Qxg4 34.Rxf1 Qxe6 35.Nc5  
Qe2 36.Rc1 Bf5 37.Qf4 a5  
38.h5 Qe7 39.Qc4+ Be6  
40.Qc2 Qg5 41.hxg6 hxg6  
42.a3 bxa3 43.Qc3 axb2+  
44.Kxb2 Qd5 45.Rc2 a4  
46.Ka1 a3 47.Qe3 Bf7 48.Qc3  
g5 49.Qe3 Re8 50.Qc3 Re2  
51.Nb3 Rxc2 52.Qxc2 Qe5+  
53.Kb1 Kg7 54.Qd2 Bxb3 0-1

Dominguez Perez, L (2717) –  
Carlsen, M (2776)/Linares  
2009

11...h5 12.g4!? Na5

Computers will like to take on  
g4 but this pawn capture is not  
usually played by Dragon  
players.

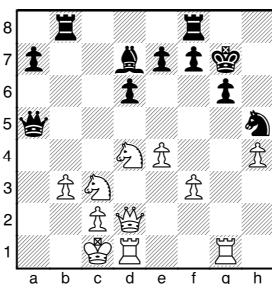
13.0-0-0 b5

Opposite side castling and  
attacks, such is life in the  
Dragon.

14.Bh6 Nc4 15.Bxc4 bxc4  
16.Bxg7 Kxg7 17.gxh5

Once again the computers like  
17.g5 Ne8 18.Nd5± but clos-  
ing up the kingside just is not  
going to happen.

17...Nxh5 18.Rhg1 Qb6  
19.b3 cxb3 20.axb3 Qa5

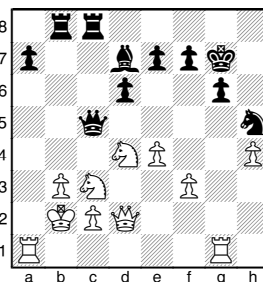


21.Kb2

21.Rg5 was suggested by the  
commentary team 21...Qa1+  
(21...Qa3+ is best 22.Kb1 f6!  
23.Rg2 Kh7 24.Rdg1 Rg8)  
22.Nb1 and there is no suit-  
able response to the threats of  
Rxb5 and Ra5 trapping the  
queen 22...Qa6 23.Rxb5 gxb5  
24.Qg5+ Kh7 25.Qxb5+ Kg7  
26.Rg1+ Kf6 27.Qg5#

21...Rfc8 22.Ra1 Qc5

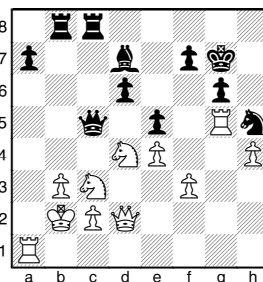
*"Opposite side  
castling and  
attacks, such is life  
in the Dragon."*



23.Rg5

23.Nd5! e5 24.Nf5+ Bxf5  
25.exf5 Rb7 26.Rg5 Nf6  
27.Nxf6 Kxf6 28.fxg6+-

23...e5



24.Nde2

24.Nf5+!? Bxf5 25.exf5 Rb4  
26.Ne4 Rd4 (26...Qd4+?  
27.Qxd4 Rxd4 28.Rxa7+-)  
27.Qc1! Qc7 28.fxg6 Nf4  
(28...fxg6 29.Rxg6+!) 29.gxf7+  
Kxf7 30.Rg4±

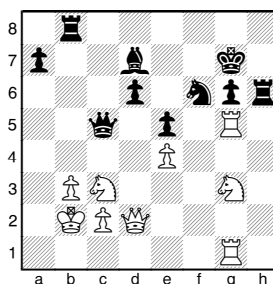
24...Rh8 25.f4 Nf6 26.f5

26.fxe5 dxe5 27.h5!?

26...Rxb4 27.Rag1 Rh6

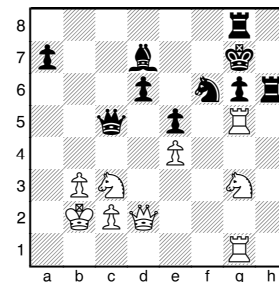
27...Be8!? is an interesting  
defense.

28.fxg6 fxg6 29.Ng3



29...Rg8

29...Ng4!? and the rook on g1  
will be unprotected after any  
knight checks 30.Qe1 Ne3  
31.Nf5+ (31.Nh5+ Kf7 32.Rf1+  
Ke8! (32...Nxf1? 33.Qxf1+  
Ke8 34.Nf6+ Kd8 35.Nfd5+-)  
33.Nf6+ Kd8 34.Nfd5 Nc4+!  
35.Kc1 Rh2 36.b4 Rxb4!-+)  
31...Bxf5 32.exf5 Rc8  
33.Rxg6+ Rxg6 34.Rxg6+ Kf7  
35.Rf6+ Ke8 36.Re6+ Kd7  
and white is forced to go into a  
bad ending with 37.Rxd6+  
(37.Rh6 Qxc3+ 38.Qxc3  
Nd1+) 37...Qxd6 38.Qxe3

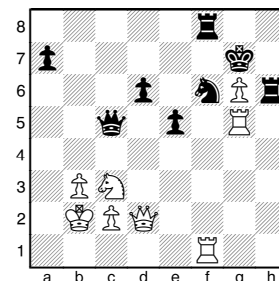


30.Nf5+! Bxf5 31.exf5 Kh7  
32.fxg6+ Kg7

32...Rgxg6 33.Qd3!+-

33.Rf1 Rf8

Black's position is already  
critical 33...Qc6 34.Qd3!+-;  
33...Qd4 34.Qg2!+-



34.Rxf6! Rxf6 35.Ne4 Qc8  
36.Nxf6 Qd8

36...Kxf6 37.Rg2+- threaten-  
ing both d6 and h6.(37.g7?  
Rg6 38.Rxg6+ Kxg6  
39.Qxd6+ Kxg7 40.Qxe5+ and  
the game continues with some  
hope for black.)

37.Nh5+ 1-0



# Photo Gallery: All Photos by Betsy Dynako



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## Remaining Schedule

- Round 8, Monday, October 12, 12:00 pm
- Round 9, Tuesday, October 13, 10:00 am
- Tie-Break (if necessary), Tuesday, October 13, 5:00 pm
- Closing Ceremony, Tuesday, October 13, 7:00 pm
- A Game of Chance, 2009 US Women's Champion vs Special Guest Kemper Art Museum, Wednesday, October 14, 6:00 pm

## FM Mike Klein's Daily Wrap-Up

Top-seeded Anna Zatonskih moved one step closer to winning the 2009 U.S. Women's Chess Championship by defeating third-seeded Rusudan Goletiani, of Hartsdale, N.Y., in round seven. The nine-round tournament is being held at the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis.

Zatonskih, of Long Island, N.Y., remains one point ahead of her nearest rival, Camilla Baginskaite of Sioux Falls, S.D., who kept pace by winning her game.

Zatonskih is trying to win the tournament by leading wire to wire. She has six wins and one draw and if she is able to win her final two games she will equal the lofty winning score of 8.5 out of 9, turned in by Irina Krush in 1998. Zatonskih has already beaten Krush, her closest rival, in round three. "I was expecting seven (wins) out of seven (games)!" Zatonskih joked after the game.

In today's game, Zatonskih lined

up her pieces against Goletiani's king and broke through with a well-time piece sacrifice. Her position became so dominant that she had many paths to victory. "In the beginning, I was happy with a draw," she said. "I have a very bad score with Goletiani."

Prior to today's game, Goletiani had never lost to Zatonskih. The two have played as teammates several times, representing the U.S. in various international team tournaments.

Baginskaite kept the margin at one point by using the Fianchetto Variation of the King's Indian Defense to beat Battsetseg Tsagaan, of Ellicott City, Md. The opening is known to stifle the opponent and create a calm game, exactly the opposite of Tsagaan's preferred style. Zatonskih also used the same opening to beat Tsagaan earlier in the tournament.

Baginskaite does not play competitively much any more but has

hinted that a return to regular competition may be on the horizon. She has two rounds left to try to catch Zatonskih, but she will need some help from the rest of the field. Even if she finishes in second, she will earn a spot, along with Zatonskih, to the next Women's World Chess Championship, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey.

"I'm not chasing Anna so much any more," she said. "It is out of my hands. Realistically it will be difficult to catch her."

Members of the live audience predicted Zatonskih has upwards of a 90 percent chance to win the tournament.

Second-seeded Krush, of Brooklyn, N.Y., won her second game in a row to rebound after a mediocre start to the tournament. In the longest game of the day, she plucked an extra bishop from Sabina Foisor, of Baltimore, Md., and converted the point.

The win keeps Krush tied for third place with 18-year-old Alisa Melekhina, of Philadelphia, Pa., who surprised Yun Fan by moving a knight to the edge of the board on the sixth move. The obscure opening idea confused Fan, of Greencastle, Ind., and Melekhina won without having to make the kind of dramatic comeback that she has relied on so far in the tournament.

Tatev Abrahamyan, of Glendale, Calif., also defeated Iryna Zenyuk, of Pittsburgh, Pa. Both women had lost in round six.

Round seven was the second in a row to feature all decisive games. Draws are usually plentiful in top-level chess.

"Of all the round-robins I've seen, this has had the most fighting chess," said grandmaster commentator Ben Finegold.

