

# Championship Chronicle



## 2009 US Women's Chess Championship

### Zatonskih Clinches Second Straight Crown

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IM Anna Zatonskih secured her second straight US Women's Championship title with one round to spare after she eventually won in the longest game of the day against WGM Sabina Foisor.

Zatonskih managed to win a pawn with pressure in the middle game and then converted an opposite colored bishop ending, finishing with a neat sacrifice of her bishop.

The win itself would not have been enough if it weren't for IM Irina Krush beating WGM Camilla Baginskaite in their round 8 encounter.

A small inaccuracy from Baginskaite in the opening was enough for Krush to build and maintain a lot of pressure on Baginskaite's position, which she eventually converted into a win on move 31.

Krush and Baginskaite are now in a tie for second place with just one game to play and if the round 9 results are the same for both players then we'll see a tie-break playoff for the other Women's World Championship qualification spot, with Zatonskih taking the other.

WIM Iryna Zenyuk put paid to WIM Alisa Melekhina's norm chances as she beat her in an entertaining, topsy turvy, encounter.

Playing the King's Indian, Melekhina seemed to secure an advantage out of the opening only to allow Zenyuk a chance to exchange her queen for two rooks and a strong attack. Blunders from both players towards the time control meant that any of the three results would still have been

possible with best play but in the end Melekhina made the final mistake and Zenyuk wrapped up the full point.

Yun Fan scored an upset win against IM Rusudan Goletiani. Fan managed to play her way through some inaccuracies from her higher rated opponent and finished the game off in style with some neat tactics.

In Ben Finegold's Game of the Day, WFM Tatev Abrahamyan scored a win with the black pieces against WIM Battsetseg Tsagaan.

Abrahamyan snatched a couple of pawns in the opening and managed to hang on to eventually force Tsagaan to resign when her attack went nowhere and she was faced with a mating attack.

#### Current Standings:

- 1 Anna Zatonskih, 7½
- 2-3 Irina Krush, 5½
- 2-3 Camilla Baginskaite, 5½
- 4 Alisa Melekhina, 4½
- 5 Sabina Foisor, 3½
- 6-7 Tatev Abrahamyan, 3
- 6-7 Iryna Zenyuk, 3
- 8-10 Rusudan Goletiani, 2½
- 8-10 Battsetseg Tsagaan, 2½
- 8-10 Yun Fan, 2½

#### Round 9 Match-Ups

With the Championship decided, all attention turns to the Women's World Championship qualification spots.

Irina Krush has the black pieces against Tatev Abrahamyan, with both players currently on a winning streak.

Camilla Baginskaite will try to recover from her first loss when she has the white pieces against Sabina Foisor.

Alisa Melekhina, still with an outside shot of making it into a tie-break depending on results, has white against Battsetseg Tsagaan.

In the other two games, Anna Zatonskih will look to crown her Championship in style when she has white against Yun Fan, while Rusudan Goletiani will have the white pieces against Iryna Zenyuk with just pride, and some extra prize money, at stake.



## Ben's Best: Tsagaan vs Abrahamyan

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

**Battsetseg, Tsagaan (2265) – Abrahamyan, Tatev (2342)**

**1.e4 e6**

Tatev says "Homes, should I play the French or Sicilian?" She asks everyone she knows, and decides just a few minutes before the game to stick to her beloved French. Probably only GM Kaidanov is more beloved.

**2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Be7 4.e5**

More popular are 4.Ng3 and 4.Bd3. Tsagaan, as usual, plays the most aggressive move.

**4...c5 5.Qg4 g6!?**

Usually, I like Kf8 when my g pawn is attacked. Black may or may not castle, but g6 permanently weakens the dark squares. GMs play both moves, but, 5...Kf8 is more common.

**6.dxc5 Nd7 7.Ng3 Nxc5**

Looking at the games in my database, black has an excellent score in this position. Chris Bird informed us in the commentary room, that Tsagaan thought 46 minutes in this position! She plays a new move, but, black still seems to be doing well.

**8.Qd4!? Bd7 9.Nb3 Rc8**

The game would be about equal if white played the solid 10.c3. Instead, Tsagaan sacrifices a pawn, and gets a strong initiative.

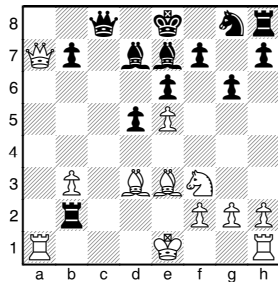
**10.Be3!? Nxb3 11.axb3 Rxc2 12.Qxa7 Qc8!**

An excellent move, protecting b7, and making a nice battery on the c file.

**13.Bd3**

Here I expected 13...Bb4+ so that black can use e7 for her knight. Tatev decides to be greedy and take all she can. Reminds me of the bread at Olive Garden!

**13...Rxb2**



**14.0-0?!**

I could not help myself, and must say this move is an error. White has the edge if she plays an immediate 14.Rc1! The ladies have often not castled, or castled late, in this event, so, it is nice to see that Rybka prefers delaying castling, instead, preferring to attack!

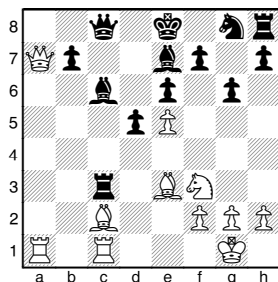
**14...Rxb3**

No more bread for Tatev. Can she stop the onslaught that is sure to come with her king stuck on e8?

**15.Rfc1 Bc6 16.Bc2**

I was quite surprised by this move during the live commentary! But, it actually is quite interesting, as white wants to play Ba4 and destroy black's defenses. Tatev was worried now about her position, but, she was quite happy about having an hour advantage on the clock! Tsagaan had less than 20 minutes to make time control at this point.

**16...Rc3**



**17.Ba4**

**17.Bd4! Rc4 18.Nd2! Rb4**

**19.Bc3** ..and white has the initiative.

**17...Bxa4 18.Qxa4+ Kf8 19.Rxc3 Qxc3 20.Rc1**

**20.Rb1 Kg7 21.Rxb7 Qa3=**

**20...Qb4 21.Qd7**

**21.Qxb4 Bxb4 22.Rb1 Be7**

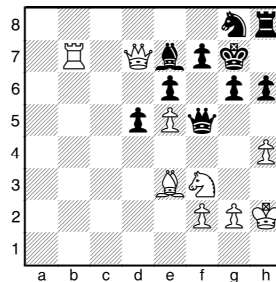
**23.Rxb7 h6=**

**21...Kg7 22.h4 h6!**

Black defends the weak g5 square and gives herself the h7 square to maneuver her pieces.

**23.Rc7 Qb1+! 24.Kh2 Qf5 25.Rxb7**

Now both players were in time trouble, and, both players have played excellently. Now, Tatev gives herself more room, and, somehow, takes over the initiative!



**25...g5! 26.Kg1**

White should sacrifice her e pawn to open up more avenues (a1-h8 diagonal) to the black king. **26.Nd4! Qxe5+ 27.Kg1 Qd6 28.Qe8±**

**26...gxh4 27.Nd4 Qg6 28.Kh2?!!**

**28.Kf1!=**

**28...h3!**

Tatev's one minute battles with a certain GM-elect have paid off. Black now can park her king in the h8 "chair" whilst she swings her rook to the g file via h7, and take over the initiative!

**29.gxh3 Rh7! 30.Rb8?**

White needed to put more pressure on the black pieces

with **30.Nc6**

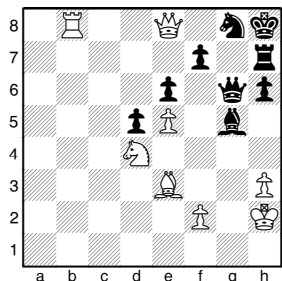
**30...Bg5?**

**30...Kh8!** ..Tatev misses her chance to attack along the g file immediately. The text move allows white to maintain an equal game, but, with both sides having less than 3 minutes, the moves were fast and furious.

**31.Qe8**

**31.Bxg5! hxg5 32.Qe8=**

**31...Kh8!**



**32.Nc6??**

**32.Nxe6!** In the commentary room, we thought this was quite strong for white, but, Rybka, as usual, shows that black has a great position after... **32...Bxe3! 33.fxe3 h5!! 34.h4 Qg4 35.Qxg8+ Qxg8 36.Rxg8+ Kxg8±**

**32...Bxe3 33.Ne7 Bf4+ 34.Kh1 Qe4+ 35.Kg1 Rg7+**

An incredible turnaround! White seemed to be attacking the whole game, but, in mutual time trouble, black is the one who seized the initiative with some imaginative tactics. What was white's error? Maybe she did not realize that castling has not done well this event? One can only \*guess\* that Tatev was awake until 2:30AM doing tactics problems on ICC!

**0-1**

## Fan Scores Upset Victory Over Goletiani

Fan, Yun (2201) – Goletiani, Rusudan (2437)

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.c4 Nf6 6.Nc3 Qc7

Goletiani normally plays 6...Bb4 7.Bd3 Nc6 8.a3 Bc5 9.Nb3 Ba7 10.0-0 d6 11.Kh1 e5 12.Qf3 h6 13.Nd5 Nxd5 14.exd5 Nd4 15.Nxd4 Bxd4 16.Qg3 g5 17.Be3 Bxe3 18.fxe3 0-0 19.Rf2 Qe7 20.Raf1 f6 21.e4 Bd7 22.Qe3 b5 23.cxb5 Bxb5 24.Bxb5 axb5 25.Rc2 Rac8 26.Rc6 Rxc6 27.dxc6 Rc8 28.Qb3+ Kg7 29.Qxb5 Qc7 30.Rc1 Rb8 31.Qe2 Rb6 32.Qc2 Rb5 33.b4 d5 34.Qd3 1-0 Shabalov, A (2593)–Goletiani, R (2332)/Philadelphia 2005

7.a3

Preventing the bishop from pinning the knight.

7...Nc6 8.Be2 Ne5

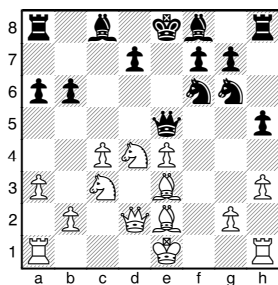
A very rare continuation. Serbian GM Ilan Miladinovic has had good results by trading the knights and

putting his bishop on the e5 square 8...Nxd4 9.Qxd4 Bd6 10.Bg5 Be5 11.Qe3 h6 12.Bh4 b5 13.cxb5 Bxc3+ 14.bxc3 Nxe4 15.Bf3 f5 16.Bxe4 fxe4 17.b6 Qc6 18.0-0 0-0 19.Rfd1 d5 20.c4 dxc4 21.Bg3 Bb7 22.Rd6 Qe8 23.Qd4 Rc8 24.Rd7 Rf7 25.Rxf7 Qxf7 26.Rc1 Kh7 27.Be5 Qe7 28.h3 Qg5 29.Rc2 Rd8 30.Bd6 e3 31.f4 Qg6 0-1 Kovacevic, A (2535)–Miladinovic, I (2607)/Pancevo 2006

9.Be3 h5 10.h3 Ng6 11.Qd2 b6 12.f4 e5?!

The simple 12...Bb7 seems more natural.

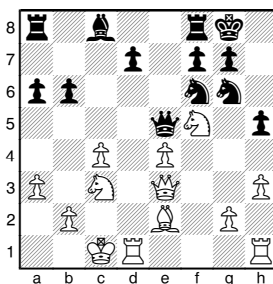
13.fxe5 Qxe5



14.0-0-0! Bc5 15.Nf5

15.b4 Be7 16.Nf3 Qe6 17.e5! Nh7 (17...Nxe5 18.Nxe5! Qxe5 19.Bf4 Qf5 20.Bd3 Qe6 21.Rhe1 Qc6 22.Qe3+-) 18.Nd5 Bd8 19.Bd3+- intending Qc2.

15...Bxe3 16.Qxe3 0-0



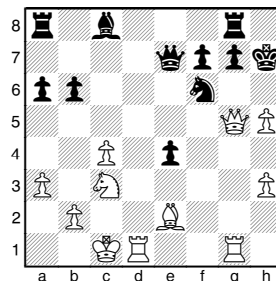
17.g4

17.Nd5! Nxe4 18.Rd4! Qxf5 (18...Nf6 19.Qxe5 Nxe5 20.Nxb6+-) 19.Rxe4+- threatening both Rf1 and Nxb6.

17...Nf4 18.gxh5 d5?!

Better was 18...Nxe2+ 19.Qxe2 d5! 20.cxd5 Bxf5 21.exf5 Qxf5±

19.Ne7+! Qxe7 20.Qxf4 dxe4 21.Rhg1 Kh7 22.Qg5 Rg8



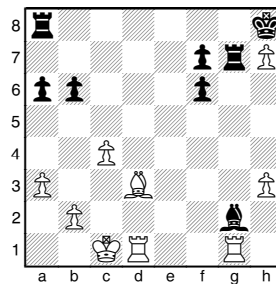
23.Nxe4!

After this white is totally winning.

23...Bb7

23...Nxe4?? 24.Qxe7; 23...Qxe4?? 24.Bd3

24.Nxf6+ Qxf6 25.Bd3+ Kh8 26.Qxf6 gxf6 27.h6 Bg2? 28.h7 Rg7



29.Rxg2!

A simple but very effective tactic.

29...Rxg2 30.Be4 Rc8 31.Bxg2 Rxc4+ 32.Kb1 Kxh7 33.Rd6 b5 34.Rxf6 b4 35.axb4 Kg7 36.Rxf7+ 1-0



Yun Fan and IM Rusudan Goletiani battle in round 8. (Photo Betsy Dynako)

## Zenyuk Wins Topsy Turvy Encounter

Zenyuk,Iryna (2281) –  
Melekhina,Alisa (2301)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3  
Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Bg5 0-0  
6.Qd2 Na6 7.f4

A rare continuation, continuing Zenyuk's current trend for this tournament.

7...c6 8.Bd3

GM Varuzhan Akobian tried 8.Nf3 against Seth Homa at the 2007 Chicago Open 8...Nc7 9.Bh4 d5 10.e5 Ne4 11.Qe3 Nxc3 12.bxc3 f6 13.Bd3 dxc4 14.Bxc4+ Nd5 15.Qd2 Bf5 16.0-0 Kh8 17.a4 Qa5 18.Be1 Bh6 19.g3 Rad8 20.Bd3 fxe5 21.Nxe5 Nf6 22.Rb1 Nd7 23.Bxf5 Rxf5 24.Ng4 Bg7 25.Ne3 Rff8 26.Qc2 c5 27.c4 Qa6 28.d5 Bd4 29.Bf2 Nb6 30.Rfc1 Rd7 31.Ng4 Qxa4 32.Bxd4+ cxd4 33.Qe4 1-0 Akobian,V (2574)–Homa,S/Oak Brook 2007

8...Nc7 9.Nf3 Bg4 10.Bc2  
Ne6

Black is doing ok from the opening as white's pawns may have over-reached a little.

11.0-0 Nd7 12.Qf2

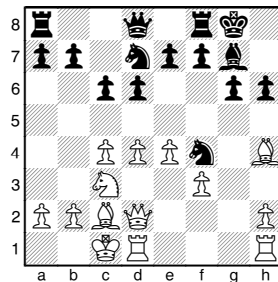
A move like 12.Ne2 would have secured the pawns a little more but I feel Zenyuk had already seen the pawn sacrifice coming and felt it possibly offered more.

12...Bxf3 13.gxf3 h6  
14.Bh4 Nxf4

Melekhina accepts the pawn. White has active pieces and an open g-file

in compensation.

15.Qd2



15...g5

15...Ne6 and black gets some counterplay against the d4 pawn with 16.Ne2 c5

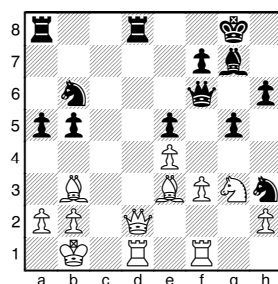
16.Bf2 Nh3 17.Be3 e5

Melekhina thought this was worth putting her knight on the h3 square and rerouting the white bishop from h4 to e3. I'm not so sure.

18.Ne2 b5 19.cxb5 cxb5  
20.Bb3 Nb6 21.Kb1 Qf6  
22.Rhf1 Rfd8 23.Ng3 a5?!

Black's attack comes too slow. It was imperative to cut off the white bishop's scope with 23...Nc4 24.Bxc4 bxc4 25.Nf5 Rab8

24.dxe5 dxe5



25.Nh5!

Black's queen is trying to protect too many pieces.

25...Qg6 26.Qxd8+! Rxd8  
27.Rxd8+ Kh7 28.Ng3 a4  
29.Bxf7 Qxf7 30.Bxb6  
Qf6?!

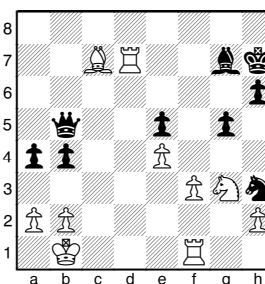
30...Nf4 Black has to bring the wayward knight back into the game although defending this position may prove difficult.

*"In mutual time trouble Melekhina misses her chance to fight back in the game 34...Qd3+! 35.Ka1 Kg6 and Zenyuk would have had to play accurately to secure the draw."*

31.Ba5+- b4 32.Rd7 Qa6  
33.Bc7?!

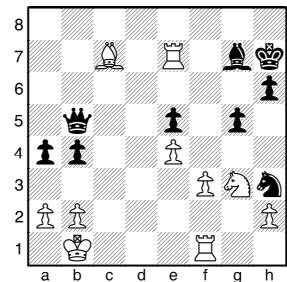
33.Bxb4 was simplest  
33...Qb5 34.Rfd1! Qxb4  
35.Nf5+-

33...Qb5



34.Re7?

Zenyuk throws away any advantage she had in time trouble 34.Rfd1 Nf4 35.Nf5 Nh5 36.Re7 still leaves white with a winning advantage.



34...b3?

In mutual time trouble Melekhina misses her chance to fight back in the game 34...Qd3+! 35.Ka1 Kg6 and Zenyuk would have had to play accurately to secure the draw with 36.Re6+ (36.Bxe5?! Bxe5 37.Rxe5 a3 38.Re6+ Kf7! 39.Rc6 Nf2! 40.Rfc1 axb2+ 41.Kxb2 Nd1+ 42.Rxd1 Qxd1+) 36...Kf7 37.Rd6 Qc2 38.Nf5 a3 39.Rd7+ Kf6 40.Rd6+ Kf7 41.Rd7+=

35.Bxe5+-

After black missed the chance to equal the game, the rest is fairly easy for white and the game is finished off in just a few more moves.

35...bxa2+ 36.Ka1 Kg8  
37.Rxg7+ Kf8 38.Bc3 a3  
39.Rd1 axb2+ 40.Bxb2  
Qb6 41.Nf5 Nf4 42.Ba3+  
Ke8 43.Nd6+ 1-0

## Krush Moves Into Tie For Second After Win Against Baginskaite

Krush,Irina (2478) – Baginskaite,Camilla (2356)

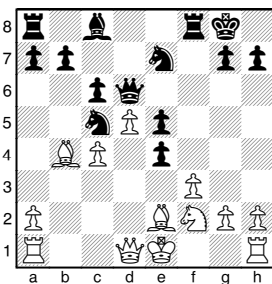
1.d4 d5 2.c4 Nc6 3.cxd5

Krush admitted she wasn't expecting the Chigorin and so plays a solid line that should secure a small advantage.

3...Qxd5 4.e3 e5 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.Bd2 Bxc3 7.bxc3 Nf6 8.f3 0-0 9.e4 Qd6 10.d5 Ne7 11.c4 Nd7 12.Nh3 Nc5 13.Nf2 f5 14.Bb4 c6?!

The commentary room did not like this move. 14...b6 has been played a few times previously and looks better 15.Bd3 fxe4 16.Bxe4 Nf5 17.Bxf5 Bxf5 18.0-0 c6 19.Re1 Rfe8 20.Qd2 Rac8 21.Rac1 h6 22.h3 Kh7 23.Kh1 cxd5 24.cxd5 Qd7 25.Re3 Qb5 26.Kh2 Nd7 27.Ree1 a5 28.Bd6 Rxc1 29.Rxc1 Nf6 30.Rd1 Rd8 31.Bxe5 Rxd5 32.Bd4 Qc4 33.Qe3 Rd6 34.Qf4 Qe6 35.Bxf6 Rxd1 36.Nxd1 Qxf6 37.Qc7 h5 38.Nc3 h4 39.a4 Qg6 40.Nd5 Bd3 41.Qf4 Qg3+ 42.Qxg3 ½-½ Bareev,E (2655)– Conquest,S (2585)/ Budapest 1996

15.Be2 fxe4

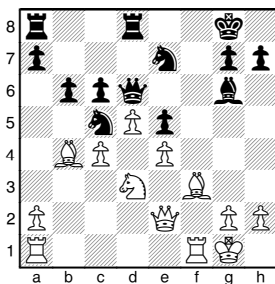


16.0-0! Bf5

16...exf3 17.Bxf3 b6 (17...cxd5 18.Ne4+-) 18.Ne4! Qg6 19.Nxc5 bxc5 20.d6 Nf5 21.Bxc6 Rb8 22.Bxc5+-

17.fxe4 Bg6 18.Nd3 b6 19.Bf3 Rfd8 20.Qe2

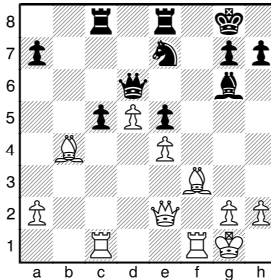
With ideas of Qf2 or Qe3 putting more pressure on c5.



20...cxd5

20...Qc7 would have kept black in the fight longer 21.Nxc5 bxc5 22.Ba3 Nc8 23.Rac1 but white's position is still dominating.

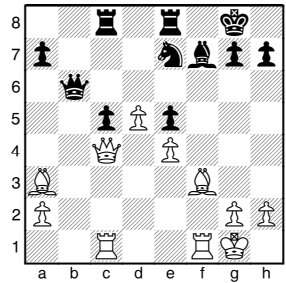
21.cxd5 Rac8 22.Rac1 Re8 23.Nxc5 bxc5



24.Ba3

c5 cannot be protected and will be attacked even further with Qc4, Qe3 or Qf2.

24...Qb6 25.Qc4 Bf7



26.Bg4!

Just about anything wins but this move is the most deadly, threatening both Bxc8 and Rx7.

26...Qg6 27.Bxc8 Nxc8 28.Bxc5 Nb6 29.Bxb6 Qxb6+ 30.Qc5 Qg6 31.Qxa7 1-0



IM Irina Krush and WGM Camilla Baginskaite shake hands before their crucial round 8 game. (Photo Betsy Dynako)

## Zatonskih Wins Again To Secure Title With One To Play

Foisor, Sabina (2390) –  
Zatonskih, Anna (2496)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Be7  
4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bf4 Nf6  
6.Qc2 c5 7.e3?!

Criticized as too passive but Foisor was obviously trying to play carefully against the tournament leader. Both 7.dxc5 ; and 7.Nf3 would have been more active tries.

7...cxd4 8.exd4 Nc6 9.Bb5  
Qb6 10.Nge2 0-0 11.Bxc6  
Qxc6 12.0-0 Be6 13.Rac1  
Rac8

Zatonskih said after the game she would have happily offered a draw around here but with the no draws before 30 moves rule in effect this was not possible.

14.f3 Qd7 15.g4

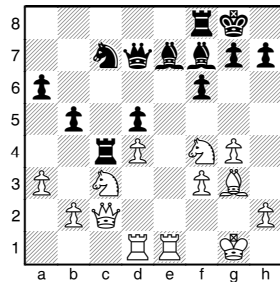
The commentary room definitely did not like this move although Zatonskih thought it was actually ok.

15...b5 16.a3 Ne8 17.Qb3  
a6 18.Bg3 Rc4

No need for complications with 18...Nd6 19.Nxd5 Bd8 20.Rxc8 Nxc8 21.Nef4 Nb6

although black stands much better here.

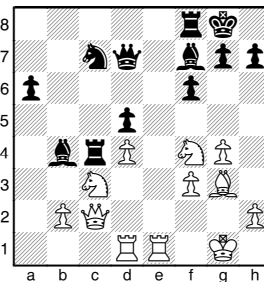
19.Rcd1 f6 20.Rfe1 Bf7  
21.Nf4 Nc7 22.Qc2



22...b4!

Zatonskih decided at this point that although she would have been happy with a draw, she felt she now had to play what she thought was the best move on the board, irrespective of how it complicated the game. She thought playing for a draw with more cautious moves could have presented other problems.

23.axb4 Bxb4



24.Qf5?

24.Nd3 Bg6 25.Qb3 is still better for black but not as bad as the move played.

24...Qxf5 25.gxf5 Nb5

The white pawn will fall.

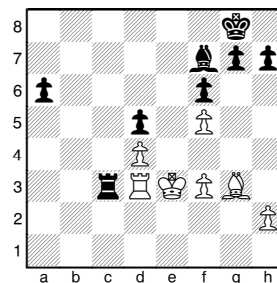
26.Nfe2 Nxc3 27.bxc3  
Bxc3 28.Nxc3 Rxc3

Zatonskih is just a clear pawn up.

29.Kf2 Rfc8 30.Re3 Rxe3

Move 30 comes and goes but there won't be any draw offer from Zatonskih who feels she can play on here without any risk. She had also seen what was happening in the Krush-Baginskaite game and was sure that she already had the Championship sewn up.

31.Kxe3 Rc3+ 32.Rd3



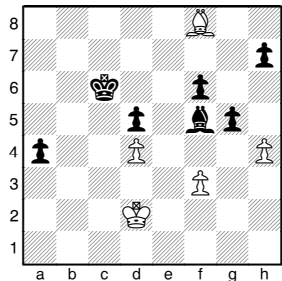
32...Rxd3+ 33.Kxd3

An opposite colored bishop ending has been reached but black still has good winning chances here thanks to white's doubled pawns on f3 and f5.

33...Bh5 34.Ke3 a5  
35.Bd6 Kf7 36.Kf4 Ke8  
37.Ba3 a4 38.Ke3 Kd7  
39.h3 Kd8 40.Bf8 Ke8  
41.Bc5

41.Bxg7?? a3

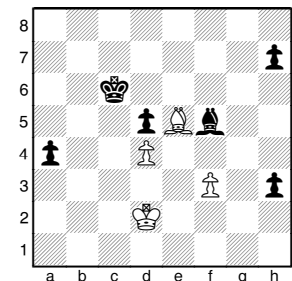
41...Kf7 42.h4 Kg8 43.Kf4  
Be8 44.Ba3 Bb5 45.Ke3  
Kf7 46.Bb4 Bc4 47.Kd2  
Bf1 48.Ke3 Bh3 49.Kf4  
Ke8 50.Ba3 Kd7 51.Bf8  
Kc6 52.Ke3 Bxf5 53.Kd2  
g5



54.Be7?

54.hxg5 fxg5 55.Bh6! and white may still be in with a chance of drawing this.

54...gxh4 55.Bxf6 h3  
56.Be5



56...Be4

56...Be4 57.Kc3 (57.f4 h2;  
57.fxe4 dxe4 58.Ke3 Kd5)  
57...Kb5 58.Bh2 Bxf3  
59.Be5 Bd1 60.Bb8 a3  
61.Be5 a2 62.Kb2 Bb3 and  
the black king will march  
over to the kingside to help  
the h-pawn promote.

0-1



WGM Sabina Foisor and IM Anna Zatonskih face off in round 8. (Photo Betsy Dynako)

**Photo Gallery:**  
**All Photos by Betsy Dynako**



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## Remaining Schedule

- 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

Anna Zatonskih clinched her second consecutive U.S. Women's Chess championship by defeating Sabina Foisor in round eight of the 2009 event at the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis.

With one round remaining, she has acquired a near-perfect 7.5 out of 8 points and will win the record \$15,000 first prize. No other woman has more than 5.5 points so Tuesday's final round will be for posterity, not place.

Zatonskih, of Long Island, N.Y., said she will still try hard. "It doesn't feel right to win the championship and lose the last round," she said.

Zatonskih also earned an automatic qualification to the 2010 U.S. Women's Chess Championship. She said she was nervous today for the first time all tournament, knowing that single bad move and "I could easily spoil everything."

Zatonskih, who has won all of her games with the black pieces, entered a slightly better ending against Foisor. The defending championship pressed ahead and found a stunning coup de grace --

a sacrifice of her bishop, her last major piece, that resembled a famous game played by Grandmaster Alexei Shirov. Jettisoning the bishop created an unstoppable armada of pawns that Foisor, of Baltimore, Md., could not slow down.

The victory comes combined with a loss by Zatonskih's closest competitor. For most of the tournament, Camilla Baginskaite trailed the leader by one point, but she suffered her first loss today at the hands of the resurgent Irina Krush. Krush, of Brooklyn, N.Y., who began with only one win and three draws in her first five games, has won three in a row to pull into a tie with Baginskaite for second place.

Baginskaite, of Sioux Falls, S.D., and Krush have a lot to play for in the final round. Not only is there a lot of prize money still at stake (\$12,000 is the second prize), but the top two finishers in the tournament will qualify for the next Women's World Championship, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey.

Zatonskih has already qualified, but if two or more women are tied for second after tomorrow's round

nine, a fast-paced tiebreaker will be played to decide who is awarded the second spot in the championship.

One woman's world championship qualification hopes all but ended in round eight when Alisa Melekhina, 18, of Philadelphia, Pa., lost her second game in three rounds. She had been undefeated through the first five rounds, despite playing many players who are vastly more experienced. Today she lost to Iryna Zenyuk, of Pittsburgh, Pa., who said she received encouragement from friends in her native Ukraine. They have been staying up until 5 a.m. local time to follow her matches online.

"Yesterday I was so down," Zenyuk said. "People I (train) with said, 'You have to come back, you have to fight.'"

Zenyuk declined to say who her supporters were, leading some to believe she has some very strong chess players on her support team.

Also rebounding today was 19-year-old Yun Fan, of Greencastle, Ind. She played several sacrifices against third-seeded Rusudan

Goletiani, including both of her knights and both of her rooks. Still in college, Fan said she was proud of the game, but did not expect her non-chess playing professors to understand the beauty of her game.

After beginning the tournament will several losses, Fan has won two games out of her last three. Goletiani, of Hartsdale, N.Y., has underperformed all event and said she is just looking to get the tournament over with.

Tatev Abrahamyan, of Glendale, Calif., also showed resiliency in round eight. She won her second game in a row despite a rough beginning to the tournament. Abrahamyan's pieces were bottled up most of the game but she opened a lane and her queen, bishop and rook came flooding in to suddenly checkmate Battsetseg Tsagaan, of Ellicott City, Md.

