

□ **Kramnik, Vladimir**

■ **Anand, Viswanathan**

WCC Bonn (8)

24.10.2008

For the first time during this match Kramnik enjoyed a small, no risk advantage throughout the game. The bad news is that in a must win situation, he could not even come close to converting that slight plus into victory, so the match is now over.

With only 4 games to go, Anand needs only one win or two draws. One point is just enough to keep his title. The next game, scheduled for Sunday could be that final day, although most of us wish the match to extend till the very end to keep enjoying the excellent chess atmosphere here in the city of Bonn.

1.d4 **f6** Anand plays professionally.

Even though he has been in command in the theoretical battle so far, he does not underestimate his opponent and thus avoids a last minute resource after three successful games choosing the Slav.

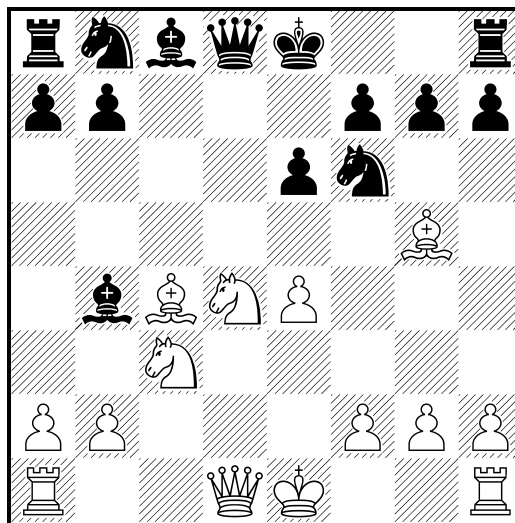
2.c4 **e6** Here we are, just one move away from the Nimzo, Queen's Indian or the Catalan, an all time favorite of Kramnik. **3.f3** But no Catalan this time, he wants Anand to enter one of those super long lines of the Queen's Indian where he might have a special preparation for this occasion. **d5**

But not again, Anand returns to the world of symmetrical openings! **4.c3**

Anand can now play 4...c6, transposing to games 3 and 5, full of unforgettable memories for him. Yet he has made up his mind in another direction, just to avoid miracles. **dx4** This should have come as no surprise at all for Kramnik,

D39

since Anand had played the same line 3 times against him in the past. **5.e4** **b4** **6.g5** **c5** There are over one thousand games with this position in the mega base. In some 300 of them White has gone for the sharp 7.e5. Kramnik follows the main line **7.xc4** **cx4** **8.xd4**



a5 Anand plays the main move, supported by over 500 games by players of all level. However, he had never gone for this principal move against Kramnik. First he tried two times the unpopular 8...**d7** and then one time 8...**xc3+**

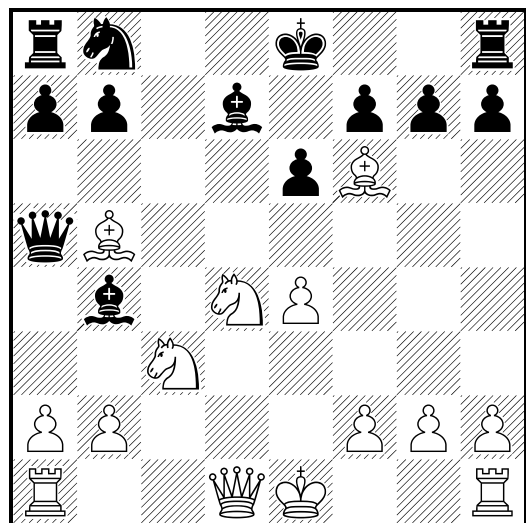
[8...**d7** 9.0-0 **c6** 10.**c1** 0-0 (10...**h6** 11.**f4** 0-0 12.**e5** **b8** 13.**g3** **xe5** 14.**e1** **d6** 15.**db5** **xc4** 16.**xd6** **xd6** 17.**xd6±** Kramnik-Anand, Dos Hermanas 1997) 11.**b3** **e5** 12.**e2** **c6** 13.**f3** **b8** 14.**a3** ½-½ Kramnik-Anand, Linares 1997]

[8...**xc3+** 9.**bx3** **a5** 10.**b5+** **d7** 11.**xf6** **gx6** 12.**xd7+** **xd7** 13.0-0 **a6** 14.**b1** **c7** 15.**g4** **h5** 16.**h3** **e7** 17.**f4** **h4** 18.**f3** **ac8** 19.**e5** **xc3** 20.**exf6+** **xf6** 21.**xc3** **xc3** ½-½ Kramnik-Anand, Dortmund 2003]

9.♙b5+ Faced with this position for the second time in his career, Kramnik goes for this well known check. Previously he had tried

[9.♙d2 ♖c5 10.♙b5+ ♘d7 11.♞b3 ♗e7 12.♙d3 ♞c6 13.0-0 0-0 14.a3 ♙d6 15.♙g5 h6 16.♙h4 ♙f4 17.♞e2±
Kramnik,-Lautier, Monte Carlo 1998]

9...♙d7 10.♙xf6



♙xb5 A novelty. It's quite remarkable to find a new move at such an early stage in a well known theoretical position, where hundreds of games have been played!

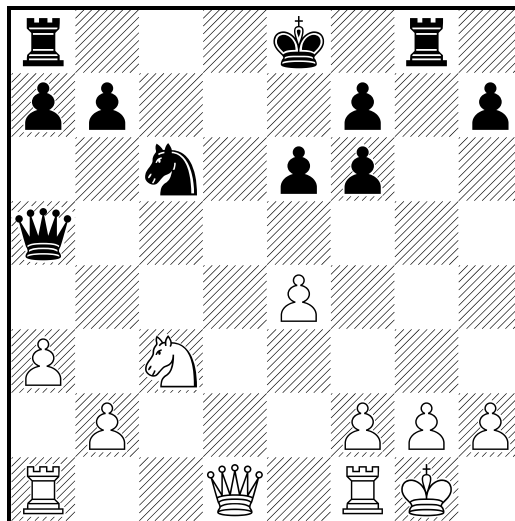
[Instead 10...♙xc3+ 11.bxc3 gxf6 would have transposed into their Dortmund game five years ago.]

11.♞dxb5 The most logical

[11.♞b3 was also a move, but for sure Anand was well prepared.]

11...gxf6 12.0-0 A position very similar to this, with the knights on b5-d4 instead of b5-c3 has been reached a few times at the high level. **♞c6** At the press conference Kramnik admitted that he assessed this position as equal, although this time his opponent's novelty

had not been dramatical, since he could leave the opening keeping a solid position. **13.a3 ♙xc3 14.♞xc3 ♖g8**



Kramnik considered this move inaccurate, allowing him to get a slight edge. He was expecting 14...♖d8 with equality **15.f4 ♖d8**

[15...♗b6+ 16.♖f2 (16.♙h1? ♗xb2) 16...♖d8 17.♗e1 just transposes to the game]

16.♗e1 A move that would have looked poor had Black played 14...♖d8, among others because of 15...♞d4 ♗b6+

17.♖f2 Now 17...♞d4 would be simply met by 18.♙h1

[17.♗f2?? ♖d2!-+]

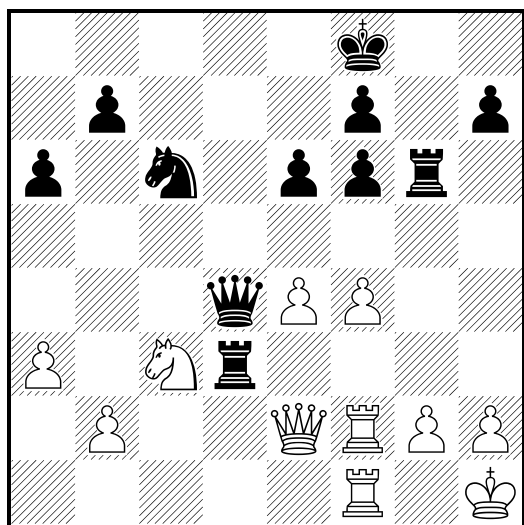
17...♖d3 A move that nobody was expecting. As a matter of fact, there were several questions about it addressed to Anand at the postgame press conference. **18.♗e2 ♗d4 19.♖e1** 19.♞b5 was also possible but not promising anything special to White. **a6** A key moment, where White could try the knight sacrifice in d5. Many people were analyzing that move at the press room. **20.♙h1**

[20.♘d5!? White is threatening 21. ♘xf6+ so Black has nothing but to accept the sacrifice exd5 21.exd5+ and return the knight immediately. The question is where should the king go? ♔f8 (21...♔d7 22.dxc6+ ♔xc6 keeps intact the pawn structure on the queen side but in return leaves the king exposed in the open field.) 22.dxc6 bxc6 In this version Black has a safer king but a horrible pawn structure. However, there are many open lines and the black heavy pieces are working very well.]

20...♔f8 Closing the door forever to the jump of the knight to d5. 21.♖ef1

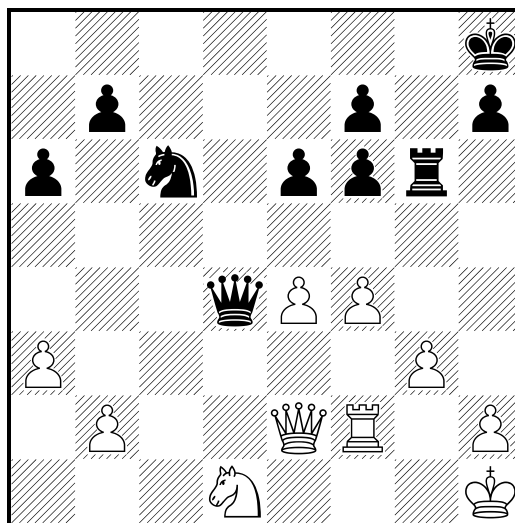
[21.♘a2 ♔d8 22.♘c1 ♖d7 forced the black pieces to retreat but only temporarily]

21...♖g6!



Kramnik spoke highly about Anand's defensive resources in this game and he explicitly mentioned this move ♖g6 22.g3 ♔g7 When all indicated that Kramnik was ready to start up an attack against the Black king, he suddenly changes plans and goes for 23.♖d1!?

that is certainly interesting as we will soon see. ♖xd1+ 24.♘xd1 The point of this exchange is that the Black rook on g6 is far from defending the central files. A moment that White may use to control most strategical squares. ♔h8 The king gives way to the rook so that it can return to the center.



25.♘c3?! Yes, the knight returns to his natural square but by doing so immediately, Kramnik allows Anand to return with his rook to the d-file This might very well be another critical moment in this game, as White has two decent alternatives to improve the position of his pieces.

[25.♖f3 ♖g8 26.♖d3 ♔c4 27.b3 ♔c5 28.♔b2 ♔g7 29.♘e3 ♖d8 30.♖xd8 ♘xd8 31.♘g4 ♔e7 is not much, but Black is not equal.]

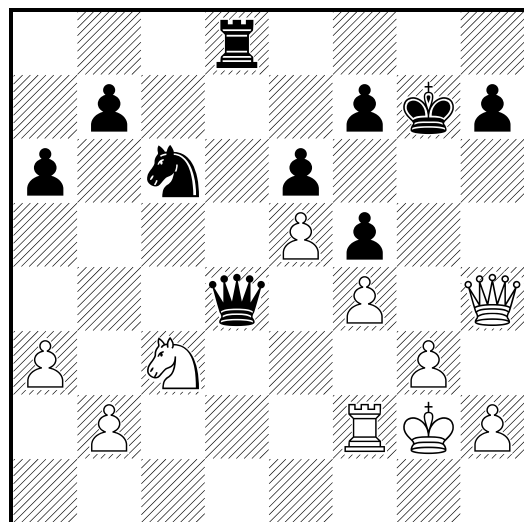
[25.♔c2 ♖g8 26.♖d2 ♔b6 27.♔c3 ♔g7 28.♘e3 A similar continuation, favored by Seirawan, where White gets a little pressure]

25...♖g8 Now Black is in time to return to the d-file keeping his central domination,

so White is forced to play all his cards in the king side **26.♔g2 ♖d8 27.♚h5**
 For the first time in the game, a real threat! ♔g7 White now repeat moves to get closer to the time control at move 40
28.♚g4+ ♔h8 29.♚h5 ♔g7 30.♚g4+ ♔h8 31.♚h4 ♔g7 32.e5

[32.f5 ♚e5 looks OK for Black.]
32...f5! After this cool move White has many checks but nothing else.

[It was probably possible to play
 32...fxe5 33.♚g5+ ♔h8 34.f5 ♚c4
 but obviously here there is danger around the Black king.]



33.♚f6+ ♔g8 34.♚g5+

[34.h4? ♚e3]

34...♔h8 35.♚f6+ ♔g8 36.♖e2

Once more Kramnik avoids the repetition but despite the apparent danger, Black has nothing to fear here. ♚c4! **37.♚g5+**

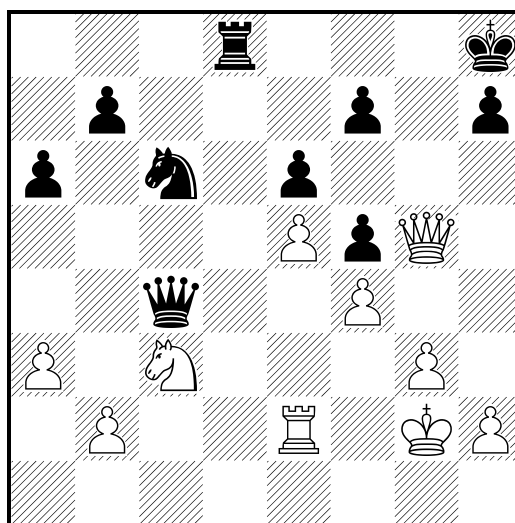
[37.♔h3 ♖d3]

37...♔h8 38.♚f6+ ♔g8 39.♚g5+ ♔h8

Draw agreed. At the press conference Kramnik had to answer a few questions about why he did not continue playing.

There was no way to keep playing anymore, let's see the variations:

[39...♔h8 40.♔h3 the move everybody wanted to play ♖d3! threatening 41...♖xc3 41.♖g2
 White wants to break with g2-g4 of maybe even to march with the king towards h6 ♚d4! The queen is ready to return to d8 to neutralize all threats, for instance 42.♔h4? ♖d2!]



1/2-1/2