

2023 WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

JULY 12, 2023 ■ ROUND 06

BY **JJ LANG** ■ ANNOTATIONS BY **IM NAZI PAIKIDZE**



Ju Wenjun

Round Score

$1\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$

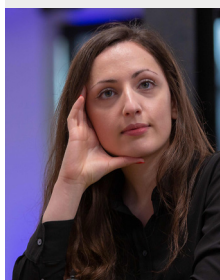
Match Score

$2\frac{1}{2} - 3\frac{1}{2}$



Lei Tingjie

NAZI PAIKIDZE



IM Nazi Paikidze is a Russian-born Georgian-American chess player currently residing in the Las Vegas area. She has won two U.S. Women's Championships, the

first in 2016 with an impressive $8\frac{1}{2}/11$ score in her second appearance and the second in 2018 with a tiebreak victory over WIM Annie Wang. Paikidze won a number of individual and team medals in her youth, and, at the age of 16, was ranked 35 in the world of FIDE's list of top women by rating. In 2013, she switched her federation to the U.S.

It's time to pack our bags and head to Chongqing! It's not a long flight, with the two cities only a little over 1,000 miles apart, but the thought of having to pack up and move in the middle of a match sounds exhausting. Or, maybe, a change in scenery will be welcome after nine days of tense, evenly matched chess in Shanghai.

The challenger, GM Lei Tingjie, was able to protect her one-point lead in the match and take her $3\frac{1}{2}-2\frac{1}{2}$ advantage back to her hometown after holding GM Ju Wenjun to a draw in the final game of the Shanghai portion of the match.

The defending champion opted for an early exchange on the d5-square in her third straight Queen's Gambit with the white pieces. Perhaps she did not have anything prepared against Lei's Vienna from game four, or perhaps she did not want to face an even sharper variation with an early ... Bf8-b4.

It is unlikely Ju will stick with the Ex-

change Queen's Gambit Declined, however, given her deficit in the match. More likely, she is planning to take the two-day break to do some homework on the sharper variations, and she wanted to just "stop the bleeding" immediately after her first loss.

Is there such a thing as home field advantage in a chess match? If so, Lei should be happy after "breaking serve" in Shanghai. While the players still seem equally matched, Ju has rarely gotten the upper hand against her friend and fiercest challenger yet.

Today's game was no exception. Lei did not take any risks with the black pieces, and yet she still found herself with a few chances to push in this game.

Both players should also be praised for the accuracy of their play. Compared to the very nervous play between Ding and Nepomniachtchi in April, both Ju and Lei are keeping their cool with respect to the match stakes and the clock.



QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, TARRASCH DEFENSE (A40)

GM Ju Wenjun (2564)

GM Lei Tingjie (2554)

2023 FIDE World Chess Championship
Shanghai (6), 07.12.2023

Annotations by IM Nazi Paikidze

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. cxd5

White prevents Black from playing an eventual ... d5xc4. This early exchange avoids the Vienna Variation that we saw in round four of the match.

3. ... exd5 4. Nc3 c5

The Tarrasch Defense has been gaining popularity recently amongst the top players in the world.

5. Nf3 Nc6 6. dxc5

The move 6. g3 is still considered the main line, with thousands of games in the database after 6. ... Nf6 7. Bg2 Be7 8. 0-0 0-0.

6. ... d4



The most principled response for Black.

7. Na4 Bxc5

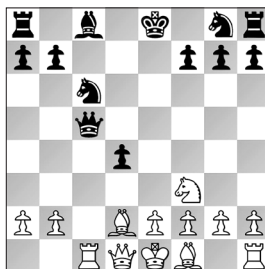
The quickest way to get the pawn back!

8. Nxc5 Qa5+ 9. Bd2

Another interesting option for White is 9. Qd2. In a previous game, play continued 9. ... Qxc5 10. a3 Nge7 11. b4 Qb6 12. Bb2 0-0 13. Bxd4 Nxd4 14. Qxd4 Nc6 15. Qb2 a5 16. b5 a4 17. e3 with a draw in So - Artemiev, Chess24. com, 2021.

9. ... Qxc5 10. e3!?

Played by Magnus Carlsen a few times in blitz. The more common move here is 10. Rc1.



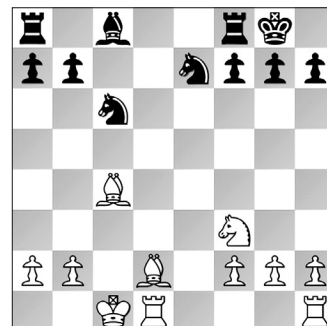
POSITION AFTER 10. Rc1

After 10. ... Qb6 11. e3, there are hundreds of games in the database. White is slightly preferable.

10. ... dxe3 11. Bxe3 Qb4+ 12. Qd2 Qxd2+ 13. Bxd2

Also playable is 13. Nxd2 Nge7 14. Bc4 0-0 15. 0-0, but Black equalizes comfortably.

13. ... Nge7 14. Bc4 0-0 15. 0-0-0!?



White creates some intrigue in this equal endgame.

15. ... a6

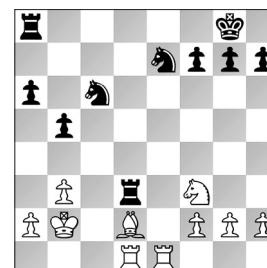
Preparing ... b7-b5 to kick White's bishop from a good diagonal.

16. b3

A prophylactic move, creating some room for White's king to hide on b2.

16. ... Bf5 17. Kb2 b5 18. Be2 Rfd8 19. Rhe1 Rac8

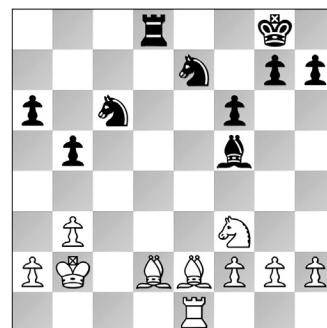
A more interesting try was 19. ... Bd3!? 20. Bxd3 Rxd3.



POSITION AFTER 20. ... Rxd3

This is an interesting trade for Black, but Lei possibly didn't want to commit to a two-knights versus knight-and-bishop endgame just yet.

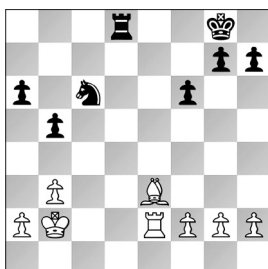
20. Bg5 f6 21. Rxd8+ Rxd8 22. Bd2





This move is a bit surprising, the retreat to the e3-square looked more natural:

For instance, after 22. Be3 if 22. ... Bd3 (or 22. ... Nd5 23. Rd1 Nxe3?! 24. Rxd8+ Nxd8 25. fxe3 with better chances for White) 23. Nd4! Bxe2 (or 23. ... Nxd4?! 24. Bxd3 with a welcome bishop pair against knight pair endgame) 24. Nxc6 Nxc6 25. Rxe2.



POSITION AFTER 25. Rxe2

This is still an objectively equal endgame, but the bishop is slightly better than the knight in this open position.

22. ... Bd3 23. Bd1

Avoiding trades at all costs.

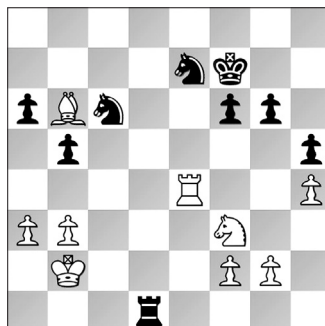
23. ... Kf7

Since White's last two moves were passive, Black could try the aggressive continuation with 23. ... g5! 24. h3 Kf7 and follow it up with ... h7-h5.

24. h4!

Stopping ... g7-g5!

24. ... h5 25. a3 g6 26. Be3 Be4 27. Bb6 Rd7 28. Rxe4 Rxd1



White managed to exchange a knight for a bishop, but it didn't increase White's winning chances. Black is very solid with the two knights and an active rook.

29. Bc5 Rd5 30. Bxe7 Nxe7

Total equality.

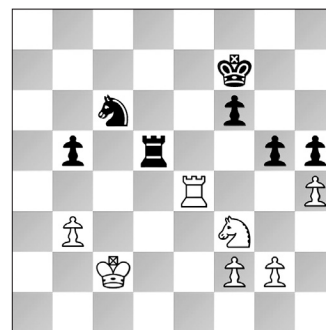
31. a4 Nc6

Even taking on a4 with 31. ... bxa4 would keep the endgame equal after 32. Rxa4 a5.

32. axb5 axb5 33. Kc2 g5

(see diagram top of next column)

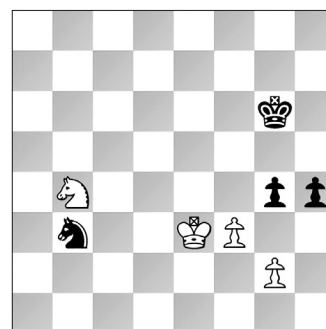
Pushing your pawns too far in the endgame can be weakening, but with the rook on d5 controlling the fifth rank, Black has no reason to be afraid.



34. hxg5 fxg5 35. Nd2 Re5

Simplifying the position even more.

36. Rxe5 Nxe5 37. Ne4 Kg6 38. Kd2 Nc6 39. Ke3 h4 40. f3 Na5 41. Nc3 b4 42. Nd5 Nxb3 43. Nxb4 g4



Trading the last remaining pawns and forcing a draw.

44. fxg4 Kg5 45. Nd3 Kxg4 46. Ne5+ Kg3 47. Ng6 Kxg2 48. Nxh4+

Draw agreed. Both players played a very solid game, Black equalized easily in the opening and a draw was the logical outcome. I am looking forward to more exciting games in the second half of the match! ♡

Match Recap

2023 WOMEN'S WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

	White	Result	Moves	ECO	Summary
1	Lei - Ju	½-½	50	C67	White's gambit in the Berlin gives Lei chances, Ju holds on.
2	Ju - Lei	½-½	40	B32	Black gains edge out of the opening, Ju holds on once again.
3	Lei - Ju	½-½	49	C65	Ju again surprised in opening, holds her own and pushes for first time.
4	Ju - Lei	½-½	63	D37	Another Lei opening surprise leads to steady equality.
5	Lei - Ju	1-0	65	C54	Lei breaks through after forcing Ju into a difficult position.
6	Ju - Lei	½-½	48	A40	Ju's safe Exchange Queen's Gambit Declined sends match to Chongqing!