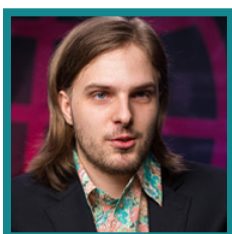


2022 CANDIDATES TOURNAMENT

JUNE 21, 2022 ■ ROUND 04



1/2 - 1/2

Richard Rapport

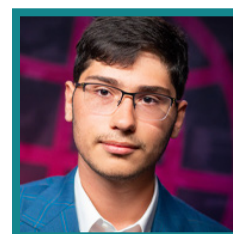


Hikaru Nakamura



Ian Nepomniachtchi

1 - 0

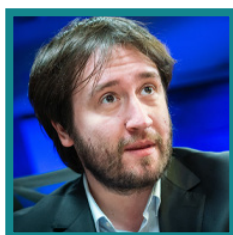


Alireza Firouzja



1/2 - 1/2

Jan-Krzysztof Duda

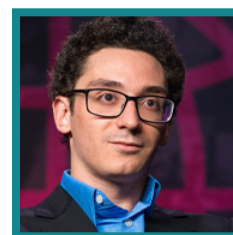


Teimour Radjabov



Ding Liren

1/2 - 1/2



Fabiano Caruana

Current Standings

2022 FIDE CANDIDATES

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1	Ian Nepomniachtchi	2766	*	1/2				1	1/2	1	3/4
2	Fabiano Caruana	2783	1/2	*	1/2		1	1/2			2 1/2/4
3	Jan-Krzysztof Duda	2750		1/2	*	1/2		1/2	1/2		2/4
4	Richard Rapport	2764			1/2	*	1/2	1/2		1/2	2/4
5	Hikaru Nakamura	2760		0		1/2	*		1	1/2	2/4
6	Ding Liren	2806	0	1/2	1/2	1/2		*			1 1/2/4
7	Teimour Radjabov	2753	1/2		1/2		0		*	1/2	1 1/2/4
8	Alireza Firouzja	2793	0			1/2	1/2		1/2	*	1 1/2/4



RUY LOPEZ, BERLIN VARIATION (C65)

GM Richard Rapport (2764)
GM Hikaru Nakamura (2760)
FIDE Candidates Tournament (4.1),
06.21.2022
Annotations by GM Jacob Aagaard

Sometimes chess is not interesting. Nakamura has 2/4, having played three of his seven black games already. For fans of the veteran American, this is pleasant.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6

Kramnik has caused great damage to modern chess by introducing the Berlin Wall Defense on top level.

4. d3 Bc5 5. Bxc6 dxc6 6. 0-0 Bd6 7. Bg5 h6 8. Bh4 g5 9. Bg3 Be6 10. Qd2

Rapport spent some time here, but did not manage to come up with anything enterprising. It is possible that he simply tried to remember his analysis.

10. ... Nd7 11. d4 f6 12. Qc3 exd4 13. Nxd4 Qe7 14. Bxd6 Qxd6 15. Nxe6 Qxe6 16. Qb3 Nc5 17. Qxe6+ Nxe6 18. Rd1



Up to this point, there is a lot of computer suggestions. Black is incredibly solid and the game never fully got going.

18. ... Ke7 19. Nd2 h5 20. Nc4 g4 21. Rd2 Rad8 22. Rad1 Rxd2 23. Rxd2 Ng5 24. Na5 h4 25. Rd3 c5 26. h3 gxh3 27. gxh3 b6 28. Nc6+ Ke6 29. Nxa7 Ra8 30. Nb5 Rxa2 31. Nxc7+ Ke5 32. Nd5 Ra1+ 33. Kg2 Ne6 34. c4 Re1 35. Re3 Rxe3 36. fxe3 Kxe4 37. Nxf6+ Kxe3 38. Nd5+ Kd3 39. Kf3 Kxc4 40. Nxb6+ Kb3 41. Nd7 Ng5+ 42. Kg4 Nxh3 43. Nxc5+ Kxb2 44. Kxh4 Nf4, draw.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B90)

GM Ian Nepomniachtchi (2766)
GM Alireza Firouzja (2793)
FIDE Candidates Tournament (4.2),
06.21.2022
Annotations by GM Jacob Aagaard

This is by far the worst game of the tournament so far. Nepomniachtchi seems to have been surprised by Firouzja's preparation and decides not to go into the critical line to see what was in wait for him - which is an acceptable approach if you want to run with average risks. Firouzja thus equalized, but then...

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. f3 e5 7. Nb3 Be6 8. Be3 Be7 9. Qd2 0-0 10. 0-0-0 Nbd7 11. g4 b5 12. g5 b4 13. Ne2 Ne8 14. f4 a5 15. f5



An important theoretical position.

15. ... Bc4!?

The newest trend. Black used to play 15. ... Bxb3 or 15. ... a4, but recently these options have fallen out of favor. An example of the latter is: 16. fxe6 axb3 17. cxb3 fxe6 18. Bh3 Nc7 19. Kb1 d5 20. exd5 exd5 21. Bg2 Ra5 22. a4+- and White was winning straight out of the opening in Shankland - Duda, Prague 2021.

16. Kb1

16. Ng3! Bxf1 17. Rhxf1 a4 18. Na1 is the big main line.



16. ... a4 17. Nbc1 d5 18. f6!?

With exception of a correspondence game that was quickly abandoned, this is a new direction.

A lot of games have been played with 18. exd5 Nd6 (18. ... f6!? has also been played) 19. f6 gxf6 20. gxf6 Nxf6 21. Bh6 Kh8! with unclear game. Black is no worse and would have the advantage, if White gives up his strong bishop for the inactive rook.

18. ... gxf6 19. gxf6

19. Ng3!? is perhaps a bit sharper, but after 19. ... Nd6 Black appears to be OK. The critical line could be 20. Nf5 Nxf5 21. exf5 Bxf1 22. Qxd5! and White is at least asking a few questions.

19. ... Ndx6 20. Ng3



20. ... Bxf1?

It is hard to explain this move as being played by a top player. If it was a 2000 rated player playing this, I would explain about tension and that releasing it usually comes at a cost. Here Black exchanges an active piece and helps White develop the inactive rook on h1.

It is a basic positional mistake, most likely played with an idea that somehow did not work and was abandoned. Until Firouzja tells someone what it was, we will be forever in the dark.

20. ... Kh8! is the principled move, securing the king and keeping the tension. Possible now is 21. Bxc4 dxc4 22. Qxd8 Rxd8 23. Nf5, where Black has many satisfying options.;

Also possible was 20. ... Qc7!? with an unclear game, if Black wanted to avoid the exchange of queens.

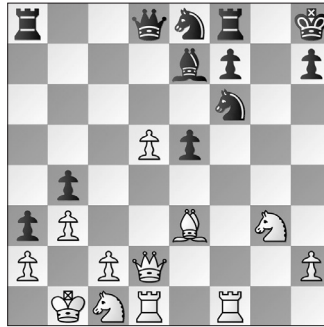
21. Rhx1 a3 22. b3± Kh8

After 22. ... d4 23. Bh6 Kh8, the main problem for Black is not so much the loss of the exchange, but that 24. Nd3! exposes the weakness of the e-pawn. After 24. ... Qc7 25.

Bxf8 Bxf8 26. Qg5 White will win the pawn and nullify any compensation.

It is critical that 22. ... dxe4? 23. Qxd8 Rxd8 loses on the spot to 24. Nf5!.

23. exd5



Black's position is already unpleasant and it is hard to distinguish between various bad lines. What makes a line really, really, bad, especially when compared to being lost? It is not always apparent and here Firouzja swam like an axe. (I'm guessing this means he sank quickly! ~ed.)

23. ... Nd6?!

The wish to activate the pieces is understandable, but this is just poor.

23. ... Rg8 was a bit better. After 24. Bg5 Nd6 25. Bxf6+ Bxf6 26. Qxb4±, Black at least has removed the strong white bishop.

23. ... Qc7!? was probably best. After 24. Rxf6! Bxf6 25. d6 Qc6 26. Qxb4 Bg7 27. Qc5± Black is much worse, but at least he is an

exchange up and can hope for a mistake from his opponent down the road.

24. Qxb4!

With this pawn gone, so is Black's position. Long term White has three fantastic passed pawns and decent control.

24. ... Rc8 25. Bb6!

A nice intermediate move.

25. ... Qd7 26. Qe1 Rb8 27. Ba5 Nc4



28. d6!?

White has so many wins, e.g., the double attack combination 28. Rxf6 Bxf6 29. Qf1.

28. ... Bd8 29. Bc3 Qe6 30. Nd3 Nd5 31. Nf4

Removing one of two active Black pieces.

31. ... Nxf4 32. Rxf4 f6 33. Qe2 Nb2 34. Rdf1 Re8 35. Rh4 f5

Showtime!



PHOTO: TTK CTRL + SHIFT CLICK TO UNLOCK BOX

36. Rxh7+! Kxh7 37. Qh5+ Kg8 38. Nxf5 Bf6 39. Rg1+, Black resigned.

RUY LOPEZ, BERLIN VARIATION (C65)

GM Jan-Krzysztof Duda (2750)
GM Teimour Radjabov (2753)
FIDE Candidates Tournament (4.3),
06.21.2022
Annotations by GM Jacob Aagaard

Duda found a little move order idea in the Berlin, and soon he was a little better. But some sort of oversight happened for the young Polish grandmaster on move 17 and it was all gone. Beating Radjabov with the white pieces is essential if you want to succeed in this tournament.

Duda did not show much quality today, nor previously in the tournament at all thus far. It reminds me of Gelfand explaining that Aronian did poorly in the 2007 World Championship tournament in Mexico because he had thought it was simply another tournament, leaving him emotionally and mentally unprepared for the event.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. d3 Bc5 5. Bg5 h6 6. Bh4 d6 7. Nc3

Radjabov seemed to have been caught a little off-guard and decided to play passively and accept a slightly worse position.

7. ... Bd7!? 8. Na4N

Technically this is a novelty. But it is also the move that makes the most sense.

8. ... Bb4+ 9. c3 Ba5 10. b4 Bb6 11. 0-0 Ne7 12. Bxf6 gxf6 13. Bxd7+

13. Nxb6 axb6 14. a4± was another try.

13. ... Qxd7 14. Nh4 Rg8 15. Kh1 0-0-0

This is slightly premature. 15. ... f5!?± made more sense.

16. Nxb6+ axb6



17. Qf3?!

After a successful opening, Duda makes a mistake and loses the chance to apply pressure. Two options present themselves. (a) 17. a4 f5 18. exf5 Nxf5 19. Nxf5 Qxf5 20. f3!?±, and (b) 17. c4!? f5 18. f3!±. Obviously Black's position is defensible, but at least he will have to play some defensive moves.

17. ... f5! =

Duda had missed something here and thought for a while. But there is nothing left to live for.

18. exf5 Rg5 19. a4 Nxf5 20. Nxf5 Qxf5 21. Qe3 Rdg8 22. Rg1 Qf4 23. Qxf4 exf4 24. Rae1 Re5 25. d4 Ree8 26. g3 Rxe1 27. Rxe1 fxg3 28. hxg3 Kd7 29. Kg2 Ra8 30. Rh1 Rxa4 31. Rxh6 c5 32. dxc5 bxc5 33. bxc5 dxc5 34. Rf6 Ke7 35. Rb6 Ra3 36. Rxb7+ Kf6 37. Kf3 Rxc3+ 38. Ke4 Rc4+ 39. Ke3 Rc3+ 40. Ke4 Rc4+ 41. Ke3, draw.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, RAGOZIN VARIATION (D38)

GM Ding Liren (2806)
GM Fabiano Caruana (2783)
FIDE Candidates Tournament (4.4),
06.21.2022
Annotations by GM Jacob Aagaard

Caruana surprised Ding in the opening with a small novelty. Ding replied with his

usual classical strengths and got a small advantage. But it was not enough to ever bring Black close to defeat. A good solid game for Fabiano.

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. Nc3 Bb4 5. Qa4+

This line has been topical for a while now. I always felt it looked a bit harmless.

5. ... Nc6 6. e3 0-0 7. Qc2



This is supposed to be the key move. 7. Bd2 dxc4 8. Bxc4 Bd6 and 9. ... e6-e5 is well-regarded for Black.

7. ... Na5!?

So rare it is almost a novelty. 7. ... Re8 has been the main line up till now.

8. c5 b6 9. Bd2

9. a3!? is likely more critical. The line goes: 9. ... Bxc3+ 10. Qxc3 Ne4 (10. ... e5!?) 11.

Qc2 bxc5 12. b4!? cxb4 13. axb4 Nb7 14. Bd3 Bd7 15. Ne5 h6 and Black looks more or less fine.

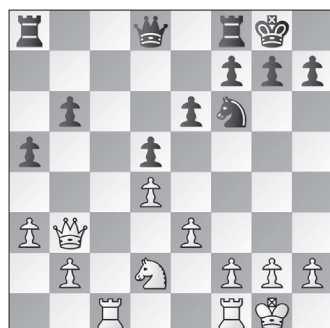
9. ... Nc4N

An improvement over 9. ... bxc5 10. a3 Bxc3 11. Bxc3 Nc6 12. dxc5± Santos Ruiz – Bluebaum, Internet 2019.

10. a3 Nxd2 11. Nxd2 Bxc3 12. Qxc3 a5 13. Rc1 Ba6 14. cxb6 cxb6 15. Bxa6 Rxa6 16. 0-0 Ra8

Black has not fully equalized, but Caruana must have decided that the limited amount of material would make the tiny amount of suffering worthwhile.

17. Qb3



17. ... Rc8?!

A slightly risky and unnecessary pawn sacrifice. 17. ... Qd7! 18. Rc3 Rfc8 would have been solid.

18. Rxc8 Qxc8 19. Qxb6 a4± 20. Qb4 Qc2 21. b3

The exchange of the a-pawn feels as if it helps Black. It is far more difficult to imagine a scenario where White wins now.

The alternative 21. Nb1 h5 22. Nc3 h4 23. h3 Ra8 would give Black sufficient compensation. He would still be the one to hold.

21. ... axb3 22. Nxb3 Ne4 23. a4 Qc4!

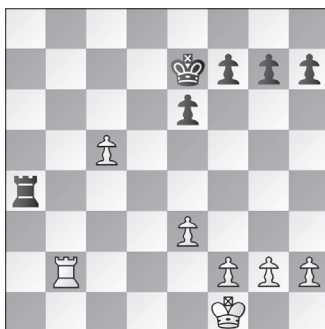
Simplifying to a rook ending; one of the most drawable endings.

24. Qxc4 dxc4 25. Nc5

25. f3 cxb3 26. fxe4 Ra8 27. Rb1 Rxa4 28. Rxb3 h5± should also end in a draw.

25. ... Nxc5 26. dxc5 Ra8 27. Rb1 Kf8 28. Rb4 c3 29. Rc4 Ke7 30. Kf1 c2 31. Rxc2 Rxa4 32. Rb2

Ding Liren has to push, out of principle, even if the pawn offers little winning chances.



32. ... Ra7 33. Ke2 Kd7

The king comes over to cover the passed pawn.



Simplifying to a rook ending; one of the most drawable endings..."

34. Rb8 Rc7 35. Rh8 Ke7 36. Rxh7 g6 37. h4 Rxc5 38. Rh8 f5 39. Rh7+ Kf6 40. Kf3 Rc4 41. g3 Ra4 42. Rd7 g5

The draw is secured. White cannot create a passed pawn without exchanging all the other pawns.

43. hxg5+ Kxg5 44. Rd4 Ra3 45. g4 fxg4+ 46. Rxg4+ Kf6 47. Rf4+ Ke7 48. Kg4 Ra5 49. Rb4 Kf6 50. f4 Ra1 51. e4 Rg1+ 52. Kf3 Rf1+ 53. Ke3 Re1+ 54. Kf2 Ra1 55. Rb6 Kf7 56. Kf3 Ra3+ 57. Kg4 Ra1 58. f5 Rg1+ 59. Kf4 Rf1+ 60. Ke5 exf5 61. Rb7+ Kg6 62. Rb6+ Kf7 63. Rb7+ Kg6 64. Rb6+, draw.

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The Spanish twitter phenomenon Rey Inigma visited the hall today.

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