

2016 WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 2

CARLSEN VS KARJAKIN

WHO WILL WIN THE 2016 WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP?

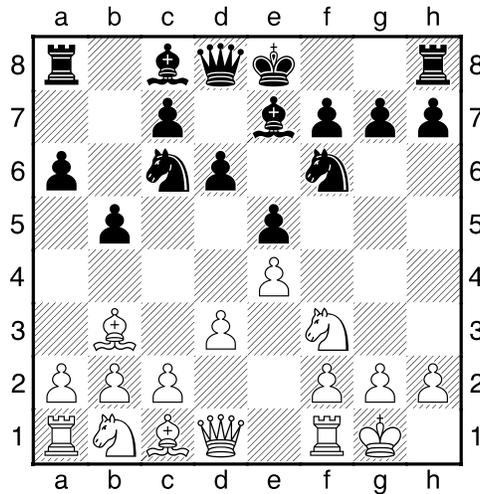
By: Amon Simutowe

ROUND 2

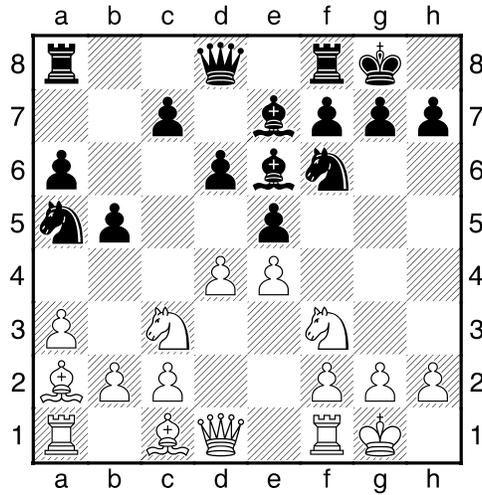
In round 2, Carlsen played with relatively more energy. While the game was equal most of the time, his position was easier to play. I thought Karjakin would try hard to obtain a slight advantage during the game because he played with white pieces. But from the way he played, it seems that he is not fully settled in this match perhaps because this is his first world chess championship final. By the 13th move, I wondered whether Karjakin was in his preparation and if so, whether his aim today was simply to draw as he settles down into the match.

Carlsen Vs Karjakin Vs Carlsen

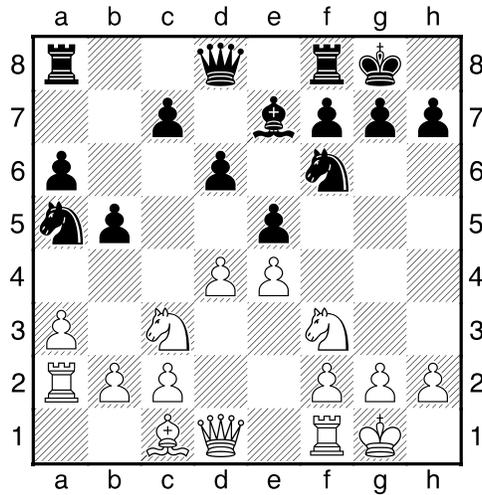
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.d3 b5 7.Bb3 d6 This is a fairly common line



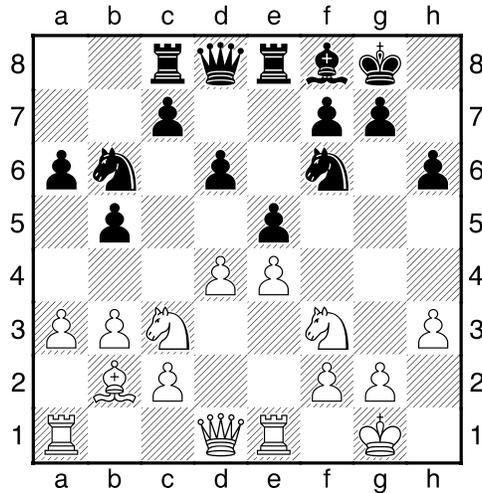
8.a3 0-0 9.Nc3 Na5 10.Ba2 Be6 11.d4 A fairly rare line. Karjakin was likely putting a premium on playing a rare line perhaps to take Carlsen out of preparation and increase the reaction time of Carlsen by making him think on his own. But this position does not look like something Carlsen should really worry about



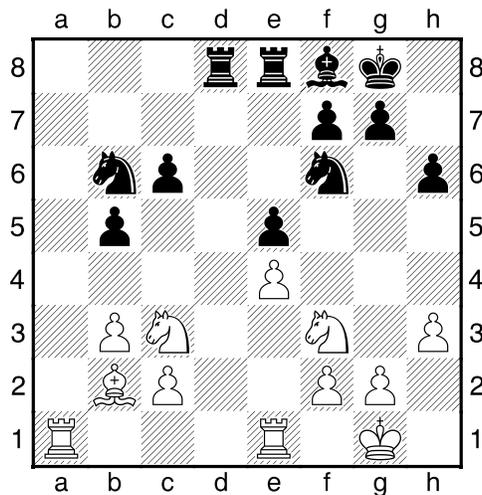
11...Bxa2 12.Rxa2 I frankly doubted this is what Karjakin had prepared unless he didn't want to take noticeable risks



Re8 Carlsen's position looks very comfortable to me. **13.Ra1 Nc4 14.Re1 Rc8 15.h3 h6 16.b3 Nb6 17.Bb2 Bf8**

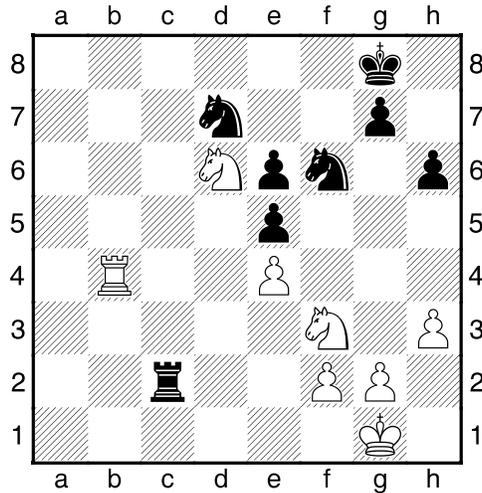


This is a standard continuation in this type of a positional structure. The drill is straight forward. Carlsen has to make sure the Bishop on the b2-square will be as ineffective as possible while increasing his mobility of pieces. Carlsen has a little more space which is already a good achievement and it seems Karjakin has to find something on the queenside **18.dxe5 dxe5 19.a4** Karjakin is following the general chess principle – play on the side of the board where you are relatively strong. **19...c6 20.Qxd8 Rcx d8 21.axb5 axb5** Karjakin has the a-file and this gives him some room to try some attacks but it is fairly easy for Carlsen to address the attacks Karjakin may launch on the queenside



22.Ne2 Karjakin decides to do nothing with the a-file at least for now **Bb4 23.Bc3** Perhaps Carlsen was hoping for [23.c3 Bc5 Giving black a slight advantage] **23...Bxc3 24.Nxc3 Nbd7 25.Ra6 Rc8 26.b4 Re6** perhaps not the best continuation and a number of analysts thought so. [26...c5 27.bxc5 (27.Nxb5 cxb4 28.Nd6 Re6 29.Nxc8 Rxa6 would have been quite difficult to play for white) 27...Rxc5 slightly better for black]

27.Rb1 The game is generally equal but I felt that Karjakin had to play more accurately. **127...c5**
28.Rxe6 fxe6 29.Nxb5 cxb4 30.Rxb4 Rxc2 Carlsen's Rook is more active but the game should
 generally draw **31.Nd6**



1/2-1/2 Draw

While I concluded Carlsen's position was easier to play, I still think it was a good day for Karjakin because he didn't lose the game. In my opinion, if he had lost, I would have concluded this match an uphill battle for him. If he can play well the next two games, I will consider him fully settled and he would have a decent chance in this match but Carlsen remains the favorite.