

2016 WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 9

By: Amon Simutowe

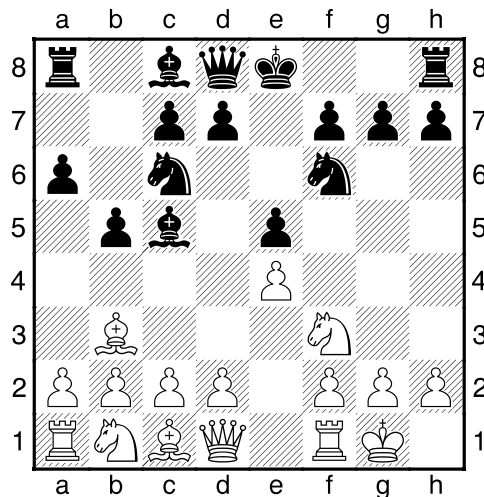
ROUND 9

For the second time, Karjakin got an advantage with white pieces but unlike the first time, he had a real chance of winning. The middle game was awkward for a few moves but Karjakin turned it around. Carlsen had a better pawn structure for some time in return for being a pawn down. Karjakin took an but it was not enough for a win and the game ended in a draw. As I predicted, Karjakin has increasingly shown confidence but it still remains a question whether he will match to the title.

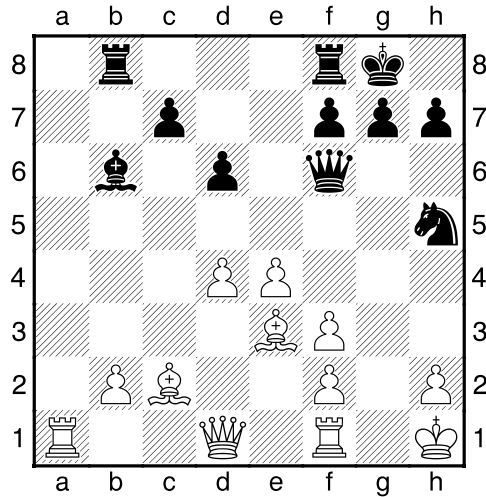
While Karjakin has been amazing I think the match will likely end in a tiebreak. I doubt Carlsen will fail to tap into his superpowers and win at least one game to tie the match in the last four since his title is at stake. If Karjakin wins the match without the tiebreaks, it will be one of the most convincing world championship victories. Making the world champion fail to recover in four games will be more than remarkable. In the meantime, chess fans can enjoy an amazing last four games.

Karjakin Vs Carlsen

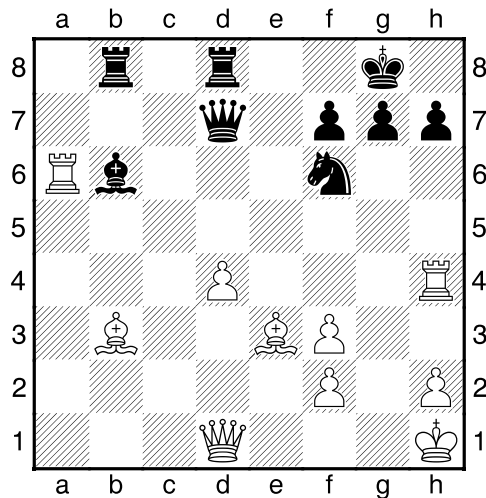
1.e4 Sergey switched back to e4 **1...e5** **2.Nf3** **Nc6** **3.Bb5** **a6** **4.Ba4** **Nf6** **5.0-0** **b5** **6.Bb3** **Bc5** By playing this move, Carlsen likely took Karjakin in the variation he prepared. This may suggest Carlsen thought surprising Karjakin was very important. I almost used this variation in 2001 in the Bad Woerishofen tournament in Germany.



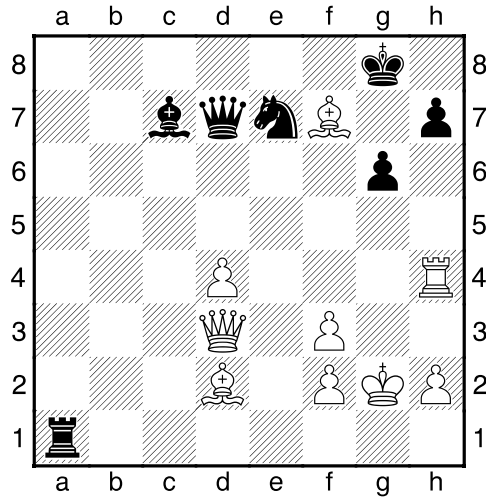
7.a4 **Rb8** **8.c3** **d6** **9.d4** **Bb6** **10.axb5** **axb5** **11.Na3** **0-0** **12.Nxb5** **Bg4** **13.Bc2** **exd4** **14.Nbxd4** **Nxd4** **15.cxd4** **Bxf3** **16.gxf3** **Nh5** **17.Kh1** **Qf6** This is all theory. I remember I was personally turned off because most theoretical lines go beyond move 20 in this variation. I imagine Carlsen's may have prepared something special **18.Be3**



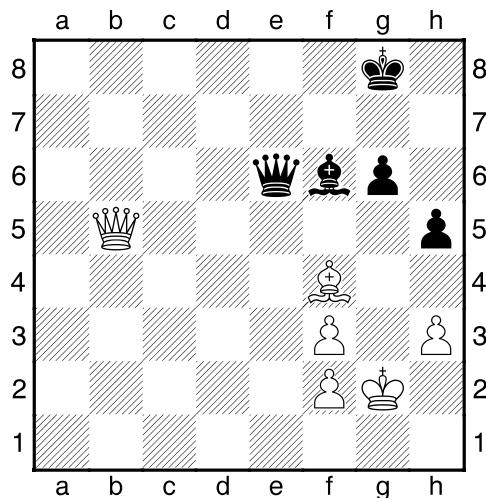
c5 19.e5 [19.dxc5 Bxc5 leads to several weak squares for white] **19...Qe6** [19...dxe5 20.dxc5 should slightly favor white in the long term] **20.exd6** [20.dxc5 Bxc5 is not very comfortable for white] **20...c4** I prefer this move to [20...cxd4] **21.b3** Karjakin had to be decisive and not find himself defending the b2-square at some point **21...cxb3 22.Bxb3 Qxd6 23.Ra6** preventing Carlsen from playing Bc7 to threaten checkmate on the h2-square **Rfd8 24.Rg1 Qd7 25.Rg4 Nf6 26.Rh4** This move reminded me of why Karjakin has surpassed expectations in this match. I don't think even Carlsen thought Karjakin would play this move



26...Qb5 27.Ra1 g6 [27...Bxd4 28.Rxd4 Rxd4 29.Bxf7+ Kxf7 30.Qxd4 is slightly better for white] **28.Rb1 Qd7 29.Qd3 Nd5 30.Rg1 Bc7 31.Bg5 Re8 32.Qc4 Rb5** (32..Nb6 33.Qxf7+ Kxf7 34 Rxb7+ taking the Bishop on the next move with a significant advantage for white) **33.Qc2** (33. Ba4 leads to complicated lines after 33..Qf5 34.Qf1 Rb1 35. Qxb1 Qxf3+ 36 Rg2 Nc3) **Ra8** [33...Nb4 34.Qxg6+ hxg6 35.Bf6 followed by Rh8# checkmate] **34.Bc4 Rba5 35.Bd2 Ra4 36.Qd3 Ra1 37.Rxa1 Rxa1+ 38.Kg2 Ne7 39.Bxf7+**



[39.Qb3 was the alternative and a number of lines favored Karjakin - for instance 39...Nf5 40.Bxf7+ Kg7 41.Rh3 Qe7 42. Bg8 Nh4+ 43. Rxh4 Qxh4 44.Qf7+ followed by Qxc7 was generally complicated but much easier to play for white (40...Qxf7 41.Qxf7+ Kxf7 42.Rxh7+ Ng7 43.Bh6)] Carlsen indicated that he could have played (42...Ke6 43.Rxc7 Nxd4) but Karjakin should be able to win this **39...Kxf7 40.Qc4+ Kg7 41.d5 Nf5 42.Bc3+ Kf8 43.Bxa1 Nxb4+ 44.Qxh4 Qxd5 45.Qf6+ Qf7 46.Qd4 Ke8 47.Qe4+ Qe7 48.Qd5 Bd8 49.Kf1 Qf7 50.Qe4+ Qe7 51.Be5 Qe6 52.Kg2 Be7 53.Qa8+ Kf7 54.Qh8 h5 55.Qg7+ Ke8 56.Bf4 Qf7 57.Qh8+ Qf8 58.Qd4 Qf5 59.Qc4 Kd7 60.Bd2 Qe6 61.Qa4+ Qc6 62.Qa7+ Qc7 63.Qa2 Qd6 64.Be3 Qe6 65.Qa7+ Ke8 66.Bc5 Bd8 67.h3 Qd5 68.Be3 Be7 69.Qb8+ Kf7 70.Qh8 Qe6 71.Bf4 Qf6 72.Qb8 Qe6 73.Qb7 Kg8 74.Qb5 Bf6**



1/2 – 1/2 Draw

Apart from the game he won, this was Karjakin's best game in this match. This should be a reason for great concern in Carlsen's team. The question is if Carlsen will make a comeback.

Otherwise Karjakin will pull off a very convincing victory. Whatever the case, the rest of the match should be exciting.