

Arkadij Naiditsch
Csaba Balogh

Most interesting draws of 2012–2015



Chess
Evolution

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Most interesting draws of 2012–2015
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KEY TO SYMBOLS

=	Equality or equal chances
±	White has a slight advantage
∓	Black has a slight advantage
±	White is better
∓	Black is better
+-	White has a decisive advantage
-+	Black has a decisive advantage
∞	unclear
∞̄	with compensation
↔	with counterplay
↑	with initiative
→	with an attack
Δ	with the idea
□	only move
N	novelty
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
+	check
#	mate

INTRODUCTION

Useful information for our valued readers.

- »» The book contains the 50 most interesting draws from 2012 to 2015.
- »» The games were selected and analyzed by the authors GM Arkadij Naiditsch and GM Csaba Balogh.
- »» Most of the games are taken from the highest-level tournaments, such as Wijk aan Zee, FIDE Grand Prix series, Olympiads etc.
- »» Most of the games are played by top Grandmasters: Carlsen, Anand, Kramnik, Aronian, Caruana and many, many more of the world's best chess-players.
- »» The games are sorted in chronological order, from 2012 through to 2015.

EDITORIAL PREFACE

We are proud to present our second book in a series of 5 — “Most interesting draws of 2012–2015”.

It was very interesting work trying to select and analyse the 50 most interesting draws from the past 4 years: the choice was so wide! We were aiming to find the most exciting, spectacular and, of course, useful attacking ideas which might also occur in our own practical games.

The main idea behind this book stands out clearly: We try to reduce the importance of opening theory, and rather get inside the workings of the best chess-playing brains on the planet in an attempt to explain the most complex attacking ideas in a simple and understandable way to any chess lover.

Another very important point of the book which we are proud of is, we have not used much ‘engine’ assistance during our commentary on the games. We try to see the game the way we would do in a practical game, which makes the commentaries very special — which in practice puts the reader fully in the shoes of the world-class players; this is exactly the best way to improve our own chess level.

Sadly, nowadays, we have more-and-more computer analyses and we can hear chess amateurs judging the play even of Carlsen. Yes, you can find tactical mistakes with an engine at home — but the question is, can you do the same during your practical game over the board?! Chess is a game where everyone is making mistakes — and this is what it is all about in the current book!

We would advise all our readers to take out a real chessboard and enjoy these beautiful masterpieces. This is how we learned to play chess and this is why we still enjoy every wonderful game, even after almost 20 years of being professional chess players!

Yours,

Arkadij Naiditsch & Csaba Balogh

■ GAME 1

▷ A. Naumann (2546)

▶ R. Rapport (2547)

Schachbundesliga 2011/2012 (11)

26.02.2012, [E62]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

After checking through numerous games, Arkadij and I agreed without any doubts that the following game was the best of the week. The White player, Alexander Naumann, is a solid GM from Germany while Black is the 2nd youngest grandmaster in the world, Richard Rapport! At the time he was Hungary's top prodigy, and only 16 years old. In a very complicated and difficult middlegame, both players found the strongest moves and the game finished with a spectacular perpetual check. Let's get it on!

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘f3 ♕g7 4.g3
o-o 5.♕g2 d6 6.o-o ♘c6 7.♗c3

The starting position of the King's Indian Defence, 4.g3 system. Black has many different setups, of which the main move is 7...a6, with the same idea as the text move- preparing for queenside action with b5.

7...♖b8 8.h3

After preventing ♕g4, White wants to occupy the center with e4. 8.e4 ♕g4

8...♕f5

A very rare move! According to my database, it has been tried only 9 times before. The idea is simply to

stop e4. The main move is 8...a6 9.e4 b5 with very long theoretical lines, and hundreds of games.

9.d5 ♗a5 10.♗d2

A logical reaction by White. He sends the knight to the edge of the board, where in general it is poorly placed, and at the same time he wants to push e4 with tempo.

10...c5!

Black prepares for a counterattack on the queenside with a6 and b5 and tries to find a role for his knight on a5.

11.e4 ♕d7 12.♚c2 a6 13.b3!

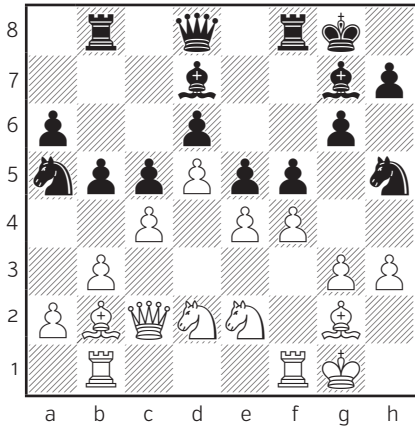
For White it is necessary to hold the c4 pawn. If Black could force him to take on b5, then he would achieve a big advantage. However, if White manages to keep his structure intact, then the a5 knight will be out of the game forever.

13...b5 14.♖b1 ♗h5 15.♕b2 e5!

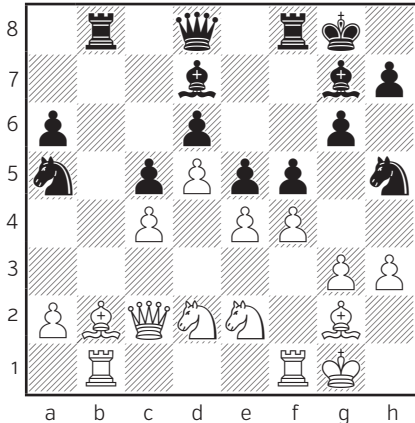
After White successfully stabilizes the queenside pawn structure, Black is forced to find another plan. Rapport finds an excellent way to do this, he organizes play on the kingside.

16.♗e2 f5! 17.f4!

The tension has grown to the maximum! All the pawns and pieces are prepared for battle, so it is time for immediate action!



17...bxc4 18.bxc4



18...Bxb2!!

A fantastic, intuitive exchange sacrifice by Rapport! He wants to clarify the situation and opens up the center for his bishops, in order to launch a mating attack. The value of the King's Indian bishop on g7 will be much higher than the rook on b2.

19. Bxb2 exf4 20.gxf4 fxe4 21. Nxe4 Qh4!?

Black could have restored material equality- 21... Qxb2 22. Qxb2 would

lead to more or less balanced position in both lines 22... Qe7 (22... Nxc4 23. Qc3 Nb6 24. Nxd6) 23. Qc3 — but he prefers to save his bishop for the attack!

22. Bbb1

Naumann tries to save his exchange advantage for the future, but in doing so he hands an important tempo to his opponent.

22... Qxh3 23. Qxh3 Qxh3

Only the a5 knight seems to be out of the game but it has a very important role to play, preventing White from playing Bb3 bringing an important defender towards his king.

24. Rf2!

The only move! White tries to protect the king.

24... Qe3!?

A very talented and resourceful idea. He had to foresee his 26th move, and also the consequences of it.

25. Qg2

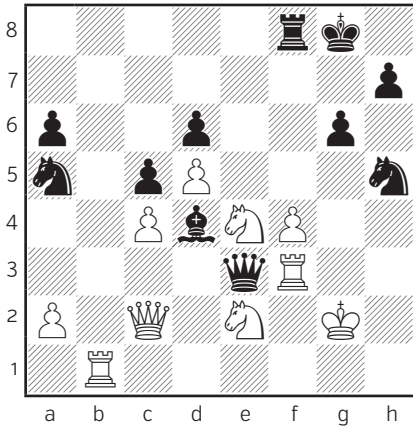
White threatens to trap the queen with Bf3, however Rapport had this idea in mind.

25... Qd4!

25... Nxf4+? 26. Nxf4 Bxf4 27. Bb8+ suddenly Black's king would be in danger

26. Rf3

It seems as though Black could resign here, but...

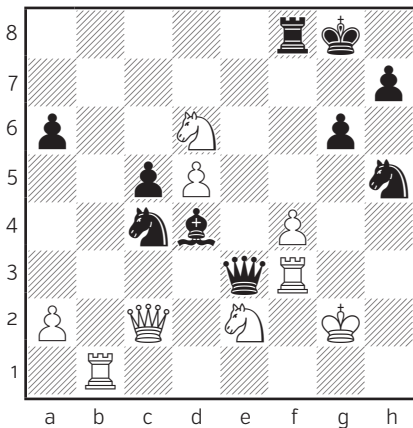


26... ♘xc4!!

Lightning from a clear sky! White cannot accept any of the hanging pieces because he would lose more material. However, he also comes up with a brilliant counter-idea!

27. ♗xd6!!

Naumann tries to lure the knight away, after which the queen could be taken. Meanwhile, he threatens to take on c4 with both pieces, since e4 is not hanging anymore. So, Black needs to act urgently!



27. ♕xc4? ♕xe4--+

27. ♖xe3?? ♗xe3+-+

27... ♖xf4!!

Amazing! Another sacrifice!! Let's count: from White's point of view, his rook and knight are hanging, while on the other side queen, rook, and knight are in the air.

28. ♗xf4!

White chooses to take the correct piece!

28... ♗xf4+ 29. ♖xf4 ♕xf4 30. ♗xc4 ♕g4+!

And after plenty of only moves by both sides, White ends up with an extra rook, but Black can give perpetual check with the co-operation of his remaining pieces.

31. ♖h2

31. ♖f1 White cannot escape this way
31... ♕g1+ 32. ♖e2 ♕f2+ 33. ♖d1 ♕f1+
34. ♖d2 ♕f2+ 35. ♖c1 (35. ♖d3 ♕f5±)
35... ♕e1+ 36. ♕d1 ♕c3+ 37. ♕c2=

31... ♕h4+ 32. ♖g2 ♕g4+ 33. ♖h2 ♕h4+ 34. ♖g2 ♕g4+

Draw! A very exciting game, where both players deserved to get the full point: unfortunately impossible so they had to share it. My experience shows that in games likes this, strangely, when all the pieces are hanging there is a very high percentage for draws. But in any case a fantastic game, truly deserving to win the title game of the month!

1/2

■ GAME 2

▷ A. Volokitin (2695)

▶ B. Jobava (2704)

1. Bundesliga 2011/2012 (4)

01.03.2012, [B12]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

This game was played between two great fighters, the Ukrainian GM Andrei Volokitin, and the Georgian GM Baadur Jobava. Both players like tactical struggles, so we could expect a very sharp duel. Straight out of the opening the game entered into unreal complications, where both players could use their abilities! After a very impressive battle, the position was simplified to a drawish endgame. Let's see the details from this exciting encounter.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♟f5 4.♞f3 e6
5.♟e2

Lately the most popular setup against the Caro-Kann Defence, both players are considered to be big experts in this variation.

5...c5 6.♟e3 cxd4 7.♞xd4 ♞e7
8.♞d2 ♞bc6 9.♞2f3 ♟e4 10.o-o

Up to this point there are plenty of games in the database, but here Black tries a really fresh idea, which has been played only once before.

10...♞d7!?

Black's problem is his king, which is stuck in the center. White wants to play c4 now, or in the near future, to open up the position. In general, the

complications favour him. Therefore, Black's plan is to prepare for the fight in the center and bring his rook to d8, which could be very useful.

11.c4

Volokitin plays in his style, and enters the complications. It would also be interesting to see Jobava's improvement on a previous game, where Bologan played in positional fashion and easily outplayed his opponent. 11.♞c1 ♞d8 12.c3 ♟xf3 (12...♞g6 could hardly be Jobava's idea, since after 13.♞g5 ♞gxe5 14.f4 ♞g6 15.♞xe4 dxe4 16.f5 exf5 17.♞xf5 White gets very strong compensation for the sacrificed pawn.) 13.♞xf3 ♞g6 14.♞b3 ♞gxe5 15.♞xe5 ♞xe5 16.♟xa7 and White was slightly better, thanks to the pair of bishops in Bologan-Krush, Gibraltar 2012.

11...♞d8 12.♞b5!

White finds the most challenging move! He has to act urgently, before Black finishes development, so creates the double threat of ♞d6 and ♞xa7.

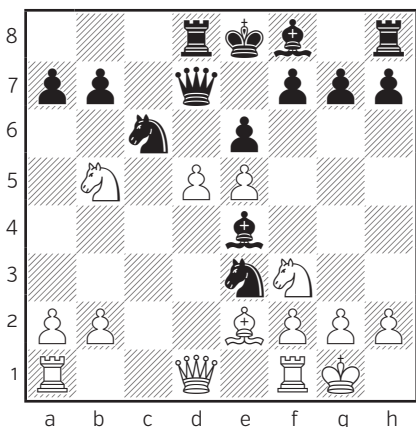
12...♞f5

Jobava gives up a pawn for activity! Passive defence with 12...♞c8 would lead to a nice advantage for White after 13.♞g5! a6 14.♞xe4 dxe4 (14...axb5 15.cxd5 ♞xd5 16.♞c2 ♞xe5 17.♞ad1± and ♞c5 is coming the next move, when Black will be punished for being undeveloped.) 15.♞c3 ♞xe5 16.♞xe4.

13.cxd5!

The immediate 13. ♖xa7 would lead to very strong compensation for Black after 13... ♘xa7 14. ♗xa7 ♙c5 15. ♗b5 0-0.

13... ♗xe3

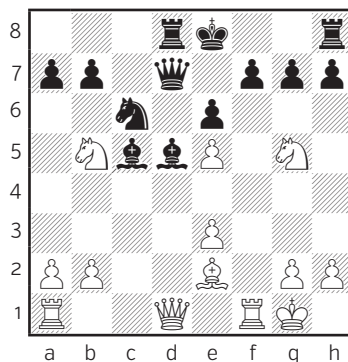


However, on 13... ♙xd5 White can already take the pawn with 14. ♙xa7 since after 14... ♗xa7 15. ♗xa7 he has the highly unpleasant threat of ♙b5!

14.dxc6!?

After long calculation, Volokition chooses the most concrete approach. However, I think it was better to play the simple 14.fxe3! to open the f-file for the rook, and launch an attack against the f7 square 14... ♙xd5 15. ♗g5! ♗xe3

(15... ♙c5

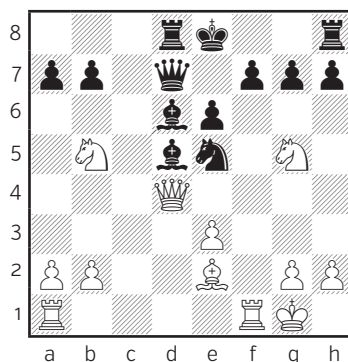


16. ♖c1! defends and attacks in the same time!

(on 16. ♗xf7 Black has a nice response with 16... ♙xe3+ 17. ♗h1 ♖xf7! 18. ♖xf7 ♙xg2+ 19. ♗xg2 ♖xd1 20. ♖xd1 ♗xf7 21. ♖d7+ ♗g6=)

16... ♙e7 17. ♗xf7 0-0 18. ♗xd8 ♖xd8 19. ♗c3±

16. ♖d4! Black's position is falling apart and the main line is beautiful! 16... ♙d6

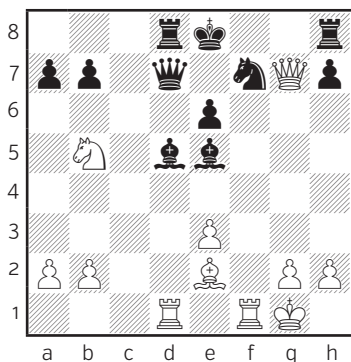


(16... ♗c6 17. ♖c3±; 16...f6 17. ♙h5+! g6 18. ♖xf6!+-)

17. ♖ad1! a very difficult move to find, but the idea is simple; White wants to push e4 and win a piece. 17... ♟b8

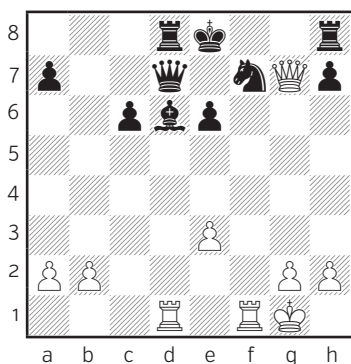
(17... 0-0 18. ♘xd6 ♖xd6 19. e4±)

18. ♘xf7!! ♘xf7 19. ♖xg7 ♟e5



(19... ♜f8 20. ♟h5+-)

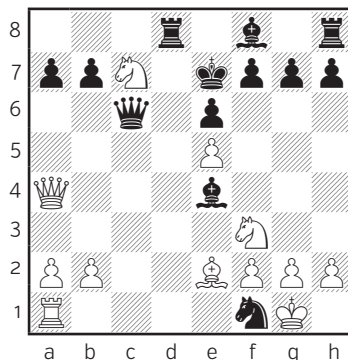
20. ♘d6+!! A fantastic sacrifice! The kamikadze knight! 20... ♟xd6 21. ♟b5!! ♟c6 22. ♟xc6 bxc6



23. ♜xd6!! as in 'giveaway chess'. :) 23... ♘xd6 24. ♖xh8+ ♔e7 25. ♖f6+ ♔e8 26. ♖f8#

14... ♖xd1!

14... ♖xc6 would be a mistake because of 15. ♖a4! ♘xf1 16. ♘c7+! ♔e7



(16... ♔d7 17. ♟b5+-)

17. ♟b5! ♖c5

(17... ♖xc7 18. ♖b4+-)

18. ♜c1! ♖xc1 19. ♖b4+-

15. ♜fxd1 ♘xd1 16. c7!

This was the point of the 14th move!

16... ♘xb2!?

Jobava prefers to give up the rook and save his knight, in order to get rid of the dangerous c7 pawn. 16... ♜c8 17. ♜xd1 ♟d5 18. ♘d6+ ♟xd6 19. exd6 ♔d7 20. ♘e5+ ♔xd6 21. ♘xf7+ ♔xc7 22. ♘xh8 ♜xh8= would lead to equality.

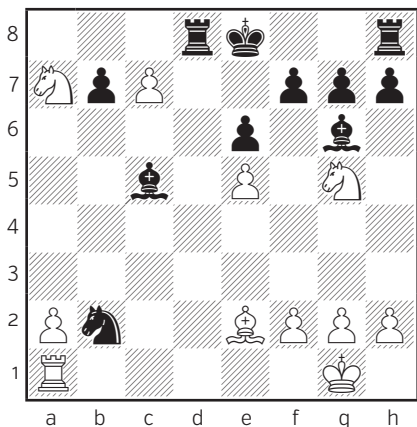
17. ♘g5!?

over the next few moves, White simply ignores the rook. 17. ♘xa7 ♟xf3 18. ♟xf3 ♟c5 19. cxd8 ♖+ ♔xd8=

17... ♟g6 18. ♘xa7!?

Volokitin sets an amazing trap, but Black finds the only moves to survive!

18... ♖c5!



19. ♖c1!

This is the point, and seems like White is winning, but Jobava finds a very nice way to survive.

19... ♘a4!

The only move! 19... ♖xa7 20.c8 ♔!± instead of taking the rook, he promotes to a queen, and so h8 is also falling.

20.cxd8 ♔+

Finally, he took it! 20. ♖b5+ ♔e7 21.cxd8 ♔+ ♖xd8 22. ♖xa4 ♖xa7

20... ♔xd8 21. ♘b5 b6

The position has simplified and resulted in an even situation.

22.h4

Volokitin doesn't give up the fight for the advantage and finds a very nice trick. However, Jobava does not

fall for it and finds the best defence yet again!

22...h6!

22...h5 23. ♖d1! ♘b2 24. ♖c2! this is the idea of his 22nd move. 24... ♔e7 25. ♖xg6 and Black cannot take back with the h-pawn. 25...fxg6 26. ♖c3↑ White could still hope for some initiative.

23.h5! ♖xh5 24. ♘xe6+ fxe6 25. ♖xh5 ♔e7 26. ♖c4 ♘b2 27. ♖f4 ♖f8 28. ♖xf8 ♔xf8

and after plenty of precise moves by both sides, the position became a dead draw. The fight continued, but the rest is not interesting because of the opposite-colored bishops.

29. ♖e2 ♔e7 30.g3 g5 31. ♔g2 h5 32. ♘c3 h4 33. ♘e4 hxg3 34.fxg3 ♖d4 35. ♘xg5 ♖xe5 36. ♖g4 ♘a4 37. ♖xe6 ♔f6 38. ♖b3 ♔xg5 39. ♖xa4 ♖d4

Draw agreed! A very interesting game, full of beautiful ideas! Both players deserve congratulations!

1/2

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Csaba Balogh

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Aronian vs Anand
16...  de5!!



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Kramnik vs Tomashevsky

73. ♖xd5!!



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Carlsen vs Li Chao

24.d5!!



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Carlsen vs Anand
25. ♘h3!!



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