



Letters to the Editor

by GM Alex Baburin

One of our most active readers is GM Andras Adorjan from Hungary. The choice of Petroff Defence by Michael Adams in game 2 of his match vs. Kasimdzhanov prompted his sharp reaction:

"Dear Alex,

Who cares about quality in chess now?

1. You play Black and your second (!) move forces the opponent to have a slight, but lasting advantage. If you survive, you repeat it – in fact you play it again even if you deservedly lose! This mentality today represented at the highest level in chess is a shame, primitive and does not even pay off (see Kasimdzhanov–Adams, game 2.) To play the Petroff, Bogo–Indian and things like that *regularly* is a sure sign of being too lazy to learn any of the active and dynamic – decent – openings for Black. There are a hell of a lot of them! Play the Caro–Kann, for instance: that is solid, but **not timid!** And you can even win without the opponent blundering a rook or something.

2. People play complicated variations like the Gruenfeld without having a clear idea of what is it all about – see Dutch Championship CT–1339. It does not take a genius to study the material that is in every database and **memorise**. You can even analyse if you don't find it too tiring. Or take a book on the subject! You don't need the excellent ones – even mine would do... After all I played and analysed it for almost 40 years...

How is that, chess friends? Quality and creativity does **not** matter anymore? What would poor Misha Tal say seeing this 'professionalism'? Or another (living!) true artist David Bronstein?"

I must disagree with Andras here. He knows much better than me that match play is different from tournament play – every point you

lose goes straight to your opponent. Most players strive for solid openings in such situations and this is exactly what Michael Adams did. OK, it did not work for him this time, but there isn't much wrong with the concept. Anand, Kramnik, Shirov, Morozevich and many others play the Petroff, so there must be something good about this opening! And if we look at chess history, Capablanca and Alekhine often chose super–solid lines, like the Orthodox variation of the GGD. Tastes differ!

Player's Profile: Rustam Kasimdzhanov

25–year old Rustam Kasimdzhanov from Uzbekistan is certainly the main hero of the FIDE World Championship in Libya. On his way to the final he knocked out such great players as Ivanchuk, Grischuk and Topalov.

Yet, most chess fans know little about him. Our reader Stephen Dunning suggested: "Please give us some background about Rustam Kasimdzhanov, the FIDE WCC finalist."

Today I would like to do exactly that – before the FIDE World Championship in Moscow in 2001 KasparovChess correspondent **Mark Glukhovsky** made an interesting interview with Rustam Kasimdzhanov. I translated parts of that interview for Chess Today readers. The whole interview is available in Russian [online](#). Please bear in mind that the interview was taken almost 3 years ago.

– *Rustam, who was your 'main' coach?*
– Pinchuk. We parted in 1997, after that I worked with several players, but among them only GM Alexei Kuzmin was a professional coach. It was very pleasant cooperation, but it was so hectic that I can't call it real training. That's it. Now I don't have a coach.

– *Is Uzbekistan not interested in supporting its leading players?*

- Have you ever seen a report from a chess tournament in Uzbekistan? You know why not? Because there are no tournaments there! What kind of chess life in Uzbekistan we can talk then.

- *Why do you stay there then?*

- I was born there. I am citizen of Uzbekistan. It's not easy to change the country where your parents live, where people speak your native language. At least it's not easy for me. Particularly as I got married 4 months ago.

- *What country do you like most?*

- Netherlands and Belgium. Not Spain - I don't like the heat.

- *How do you communicate with people in Europe?*

- Well, my English is almost as good as my Russian. I speak French reasonably well. My German is rudimental - I am a lazy guy.

- *Your favourite game?*

- In my first Bundesliga season I won a nice game vs. Jacob Heissler. But such games have become a rarity now - stronger opponents don't allow such play. On higher level one should show good opening preparation and polished endgame technique. But for me it's typical to get a winning position and then relax - the game has lost interest for me and I immediately make some weak moves.

- *You are No. 11 in the FIDE rating list. How did you achieve that?*

- I played two seasons in Bundesliga with almost 100% result. Then I played a strange match vs. GM Jonkman. Did you know that I played that match? No? But I played and won 5-1, gaining some points. Then I made +5 in Groningen and played in the Belgium league. Then I played in the zonal tournament in Uzbekistan.

- This doesn't sound too impressive? Was that really enough?

- Maybe my main strength is the ability is to beat players rated 2400-2450 - I score close to 100% against them. I don't have the same confidence against stronger players. I must be the only player rated over 2700 who has not won a single game vs. 2700+ player! When I played against Kasparov in Batumi, my hands were shaking, I remember that. I did prepare for that game, but when it started I played like a child.

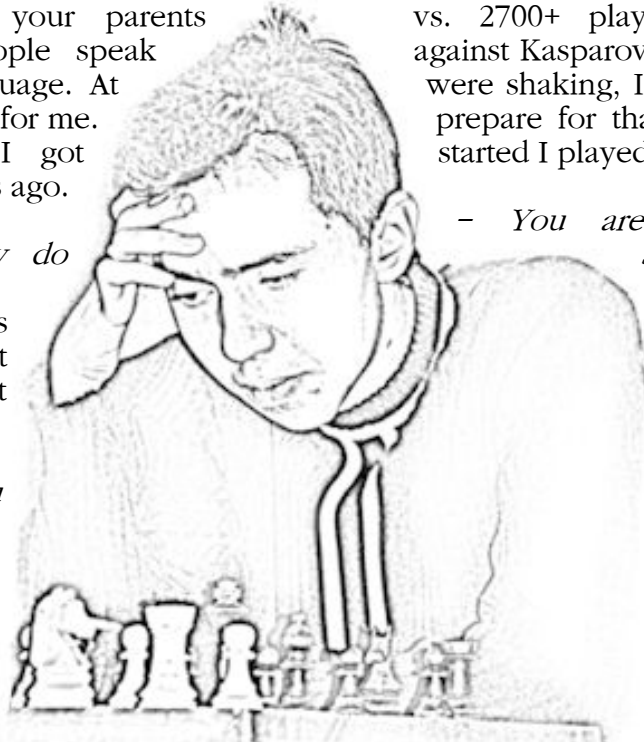
- *You are young and very successful, you should be very exited about your future.*

- I am not. I am very sceptical about it. Previously I thought that if I reach 2650, everything would be fine - with several closed tournaments a year, etc. Now I don't think so. I only have an

invitation to Wijk aan Zee and that's all. I am not sure chess players will be needed in a few years time at all. Nobody wants to organise a normal match between Europe and Asia. Only in rapid chess - the organisers are saving on chess - you play for 3 days and good bye! Chess is suitable for knockout format. Historically in chess those succeeded who could show superior play for many rounds (say 13) - and that was right!

- *You are not the only one who thinks this way.*

- Sure. Leko can't play well in knockouts, Ivanchuk gets knockout early. Even when we played with 2 hours for 40 moves, 1 hour for 20 moves and half an hour for the rest of the game, I did not like that format. But now with this crazy control it all looks like roulette! I am not a very deep player, but even I can see how the quality of play is getting lost with this control.



- Perhaps more confident players will get an advantage with faster time control.

- More likely it would be those who base their decisions on intuition. Like Mickey Adams – who does not try to dig too deep, but just plays – and plays very well.

- But with faster time control chess will be on TV...

- And who will watch? Chess is not a spectator sport. Of course, if we play with 2 minutes per game, that will be of interest for player of any qualification. Maybe this is the goal? As Oleg Romanishin rightly remarked, if one would cancel all traffic rules and switch off all traffic lights, watching city traffic on TV would be also awfully interesting!

But Kasparov, Kramnik and Gelfand, as well as many others have already spoken against this time control – no effect...

- Maybe the Internet will save chess?

- Maybe. But I've decided that I would not play online – instead of thinking over the position, you end up thinking whether you play vs. computer – absurd.

- How would you describe chess quickly and in just five words?

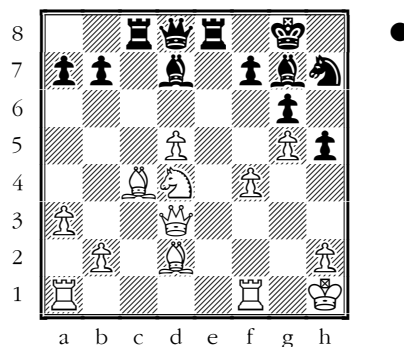
- Fight, test, pain, suffering and patience.

I would like to show with my brief comments that game which Rustam mentioned in the interview:

J. Heissler – Kasimdzhanov

Bundesliga 1998/1999 Germany
(10.6), 20.02.1999

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♘g7 3.c3 d6 4.♟f3
♟f6 5.♟bd2 0-0 6.♘d3 c5 7.0-0
cxd4 8.cxd4 ♟c6 9.a3 ♟e8 10.d5
♟e5 11.♘e2 e6 12.dxe6 ♘xe6
13.♟d4 ♘d7 14.♟c4 ♟xc4
15.♘xc4 ♟f6 16.f3 d5 17.exd5 ♞e8
18.♟h1 ♟h5 19.g4 ♟f6 20.♟d3
♞c8 21.♘d2 h5 22.g5 ♟h7 23.f4
(D)

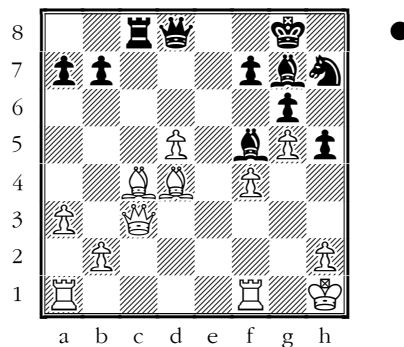


White's position might appear safe, but his king is exposed and his a1-rook is not in the game. Kasimdzhanov destroys White's defence with a series of great moves:

23...♞e4!! 24.♘c3

Or 24.♟xe4 ♞xc4 25.♘c3 ♟f5 26.♟e3
♘xd4 27.♘xd4 ♟xd5+ 28.♟g1 ♞xd4,
winning.

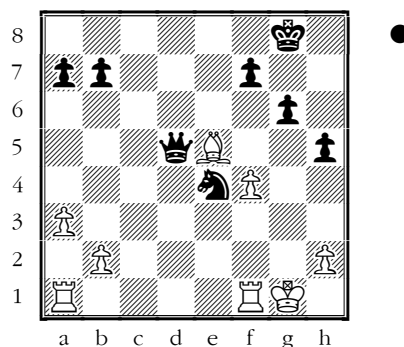
**24...♞xd4! 25.♘xd4 ♟f5 26.♟c3
(D)**



26...♟xg5!

Another blow – the sleepy knight joins the attack!

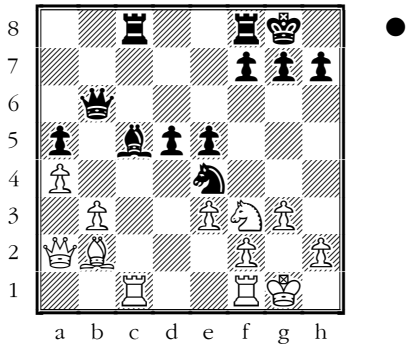
27.♘xg7 [Or 27.fxg5 ♘e4+ 28.♟g1
♟xg5+ 29.♟f2 ♞xc4! 30.♟xc4 ♟d2+
with checkmate to follow.] **27...♞xc4** [
More accurate was 27...♘e4+! 28.♟g1
♞xc4! 29.♟e3 (29.♟xc4 ♟h3#)
29...♟b6! 30.♞fe1 ♟f3+] **28.♟xc4**
♘e4+ 29.♟xe4 ♟xe4 30.♘e5
♟xd5 31.♟g1 (D)



31...♖g5!-+ 32.fxg5 ♖xe5 33.♖f2
 ♖xg5+ 34.♖h1 h4 35.♖af1 h3
 36.♖d1 ♖e3 37.♖df1 ♖e4+ 38.♖g1
 g5 39.♖c1 ♖g7 40.♖c7 ♖g4+ 0-1

Solution to our quiz:

Hoang Thanh Son – Kasimdzhanov
 Asia-ch Boys Macau, 1996



26...♖xe3! 27.fxe3 ♖xe3+ 28.♖h1
 ♖f2+ 29.♖g2 ♖d3 30.♖xc8 ♖e2+
 0-1

Contact information. Have some comments about Chess Today? [E-mail us](mailto:ababurin@iol.ie) – we appreciate your feedback!

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Quote:

Both players will be aware that a better opportunity to become world champion is unlikely to present itself. Nerves are thus sure to play an immense role in what promises to be a gripping and tightly-contested finale.

Nigel Short

Chess Tomorrow?!

by Graham Brown

I was looking around the web for a quote to put at the end of today's issue when I went to the <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/> On typing chess in the search box I got the following results



And what worries me is that the date on the top article by Nigel Short is Sunday 11th July 2004. This is impressive stuff. Maybe the online telegraph is featuring articles before they hit the newsstands. I will have to buy the Sunday Telegraph now to check this out.

It seems that Chess Today may have some fierce competition from ... Chess Tomorrow!?