



Tradewise Gibraltar Chess Festival 2017

Monday 23 January - Thursday 2 February 2017

Round 10 Report: *Thursday 2 February 2017 - by John Saunders (@JohnChess)*

NAKAMURA ROCKS GIBRALTAR AGAIN

Hikaru Nakamura won a third successive Tradewise Gibraltar victory, his fourth in total, after overcoming Yu Yangyi and David Anton Guijarro in a rapidplay tie-breaker on 2 January. Though only third favourite on current rating, I'm sure he must have been many people's favourite before the event given his phenomenal ability to win open tournaments, and the Tradewise Gibraltar Masters in particular. The rough and tumble of open tournaments doesn't suit every player at the elite level but Hikaru clearly relishes it. His super-confidence in tie-breaks gives him an extra edge, as does his ability to fight for the full point when given the black pieces, and he demonstrated these skills to great effect on the final day.



Winner Hikaru Nakamura, flanked by sponsor James Humphreys (left) and organiser Brian Callaghan

Nakamura did the business in what has become his typical way, via the play-offs. It was a three-way play-off with the pairings in the first instance being determined by the player's TPR (tournament performance rating) in

the tournament proper. David Antón Guijarro had the highest TPR so he had the privilege of sitting out the first play-off which was contested by Nakamura and Yu Yangyi. After two rapid games were drawn, Nakamura scored 2-0 in the blitz games, displaying his usual fast chess pragmatism and canny clock handling. Shortly after Nakamura had despatched Yu Yangyi, he was sitting down against David Antón Guijarro for two more rapid games. The first was drawn after a tense struggle, he gradually gained the upper hand in the second, particularly on the clock, and kept his nerve to win the game and secure sole ownership of the £23,000 first prize.



Nakamura met Antón Guijarro in the tie-break final, winning 1½-½

Talking to him afterwards, Hikaru felt he was "lucky with the tournament pairings" compared to his previous successes, in that he generally missed the "big guys". He mentioned that he missed a shot in the second rapid game against Yu Yangyi (writing this is a hurry, waiting for a plane, I've not had a chance to check this but readers can no doubt do so for themselves with an engine).

HOU YIFAN INCIDENT

As to round ten proper, the first drama occurred after some 25 minutes when women's world champion Hou Yifan arrived late for her game and proceeded to play some utter nonsense with Black, resigning on move 5. The watching audience was stunned and her opponent Lalith Babu himself was bemused at having a point handed to him on a plate. It transpired that she was making a vague protest about the pairings.



Hou Yifan signs the scoresheets after her five-move protest game

I write "vague" since, despite a subsequent video interview made an hour or two later, it's still not entirely clear why she should have resorted to such drastic action. She has made no specific allegation about the pairings other than to say that she was "upset" by them, perhaps because she was paired with seven female players in the course of the tournament. Few people in the world at large (apart from a handful of internet trolls) thinks this is too big of a deal, and the pairings have since been checked and found to be correct by a number of reputable independent officials watching from afar. Hou Yifan has since apologised to chess fans but so far she has failed to do so to the tournament organisers.

"APART FROM THAT, MRS LINCOLN, HOW DID YOU ENJOY THE PLAY?"

The old joke deployed in the sub-title gives me my cue as I'm not proposing to add any more words to what has already written on the subject of Hou Yifan's protest game in round ten of the Tradewise Gibraltar Masters. Of course I do have personal opinions on what occurred but I'm working here as part of the tournament team and don't want to compromise what appears elsewhere on our website. The tournament itself was unaffected by the incident. So let's just enjoy the play.



David Antón Guijarro could make no impression on a resolute Mickey Adams

As things stood overnight, David Antón Guijarro led eight other players by half a point. But he couldn't do better than draw against a resolute Mickey Adams, and thus left the door open to be caught by one or more of the players on 7. Boris Gelfand and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave weren't able to exploit the chance, drawing an accurately played game. But Hikaru Nakamura was able to exploit a pairing against the lowest rated player on 7, Romain Edouard. My thanks to the winner for helping with the annotations of this game.

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R.Edouard (2613) - H.Nakamura (2785)

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Nf3 0-0 5.Bg5 c5 6.Rc1 h6 7.Bh4 cxd4 8.Nxd4 d5 9.e3 e5 A forceful variation for Black in which he gives up a pawn for active play and better development. **10.Nf3 d4 11.exd4 exd4 12.Nxd4 Qb6 13.Nf3** Hikaru told me he hadn't looked at this in this preparation for the game. **13...Rd8 14.Qc2 g5 15.Bg3 Nc6 16.Bd3 g4** Hikaru thought 16...Bg4 might be better here. **17.Nh4 Bf8** Hikaru later agreed with computer engines which suggested 17...Ba5, though referring to it as a "computer move". **18.Qb1 Re8+ 19.Kf1 Be6**



20.h3? Hikaru thought this was turning point in the game. "After the text he is probably just lost." Instead he thought 20.Nf5 gave White the better position. **20...Nh5 21.Ne4** 21.Nf5 is still playable but Black is better after 21...Nb4 22.hxg4 Nxg3+ 23.Nxg3 Nxd3 24.Qxd3 Qxb2, etc. **21...Nxg3+ 22.Nxg3 Rad8 23.hxg4** Edouard, who arrived some 15 minutes for the game, was now down to about 7 minutes left until move 40, to his opponent's 16. **23...Ne5 24.Be2 Bxg4** The computer finds 24...Bxc4! 25.Rxc4 (25.Bxc4 Nxc4 26.Rxc4 Rd2 is even worse) 25...Nxc4 26.Bxc4 Rd2 27.Kg1 Qxf2+ 28.Kh2 Re3 and something has got to give in White's position. **25.Bxg4** 25.f3 was White's last hope but the position still looks shaky. **25...Nxg4 26.Qc2 Bb4**



A rook invasion cannot adequately be met. **27.c5 Qa6+ 28.Kg1 Be1** One of a number of winning moves. It's effectively over. **29.Rh3 Bxf2+ 30.Kh1 Re1+ 31.Rxe1 Bxe1 32.Nf3 Nf2+ 33.Kh2 Nxh3 34.Nxe1 Ng5 35.Qc3 Qg6 0-1**

The other successful player in the second score group was Yu Yangyi who was probably able to exploit Ju Wenjun's state of elation at having wrapped up the £15,000 women's first prize with a round to spare. Here are the closing stages of the game.

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Yu Yangyi (2738) - Ju Wenjun (2583)



26...Rf8 If Black tries 26...Bxd6 White has 27.Rxd5!? cxd5 28.exd6 Qxd6 giving up a pawn but White is going to get a storming attack after 29.b5! and 30.Rc6, when it will be hard to deal with the threats on the long diagonal. **27.Rxd5 exd5 27...cxd5 28.Nc8 Qd8 29.Nxe7+ Qxe7 30.Rc7!** wins for White. **28.Qg4 Qc7 29.Qd4** The threat along the long diagonal is now very hard to counter. **29...Nb6 30.b5 Nc4 31.e6** That is practically game over as Black loses a pawn in preventing mate and White soon engineers a huge pawn on the seventh. **31...f6 32.Nxc4 dxc4 33.Qxc4 c5 34.Rd1 Rd8 35.Rd7 Rxd7 36.exd7+ Kf8 37.Qd5 Qb6 38.a4 1-0**

POSTSCRIPT

Well, that is a wrap as I have a plane to catch. I hope you've enjoyed reading about the tournament from afar as much as I have enjoyed writing it up. Come back and read about next year's tournament. Better still, come to the tournament and see it for yourself. It's fabulous. Signing off, John Saunders

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Photos of round 10 by Sophie Triay: <https://flic.kr/s/aHskR3u6sD>

Photos of the Prizegiving by John Saunders: <https://flic.kr/s/aHskNmxxi8>

Video footage and interviews from today's round are available to embed from our [YouTube Channel](#).

Report Ends

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