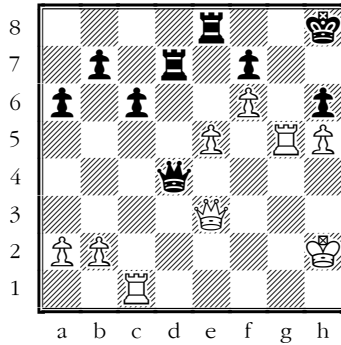


Test Yourself!

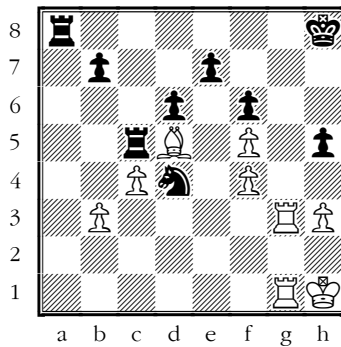


World Chess News

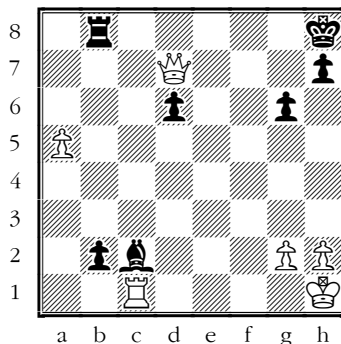
P. Iinuma – S. Leaver
Ch of Japan (1), May 2009



Kojima – Noguchi
Ch of Japan (6), May 2009



S. Kuwata – R. Nakamura
Ch of Japan (7), May 2009



Navara vs. Ivanchuk

An eight-game rapid match between David Navara (CZE, 2654) and Vassily Ivanchuk (UKR, 2746) is taking place from May 27th to 31st 2009 in Prague. It is part of the ČEZ Chess Trophy Festival. Two games per day are played on May 27, May 28, May 30 and May 31, with a free day on May 29, when there will be a simul by GM Lubomir Kavalek.



Day 1 results:

Navara–Ivanchuk ½–½
Ivanchuk – Navara 1–0

[Official website](#)

Chess in Japan

by GM Alex Baburin

I am currently visiting Japan and here I would like to share some impressions about this country and its chess culture. Japan won't be the first country which springs to mind when you think about chess – indeed our ('western') chess isn't very popular there yet, living in a long shadow of Shogi (Japanese chess) and Go. Still, like any other big country, Japan has several chess clubs and a number of reasonably strong players. It regularly sends both main and ladies' team to Chess Olympiads. Japan's top-10 active players list looks like this:

| | | |
|--------------------|------|------|
| 1. FM Watanabe | 1972 | 2333 |
| 2. Uesugi Shinsaku | 1991 | 2288 |
| 3. Kojima | 1988 | 2277 |
| 4. Bibby | 1974 | 2262 |
| 5. Baba | 1984 | 2229 |
| 6. Matsuo | 1975 | 2228 |
| 7. Nanjo | 1988 | 2207 |
| 8. Gonda | 1950 | 2146 |
| 9. Sano | 1985 | 2140 |
| 10. Manabe | 1966 | 2123 |

If you add 'inactive' players, the top-5 list will look like this:

| | | |
|----------------|------|------|
| 1. FM Habu | 1970 | 2404 |
| 2. FM Schmidt | 1954 | 2340 |
| 3. FM Watanabe | 1972 | 2333 |
| 4. Moriuchi | 1970 | 2321 |
| 5. IM Ramos | 1960 | 2306 |

The first player on this second list is considered to be a Shogi genius. On a few occasions when he played chess, he showed a very impressive talent in our game too. No. 1 active player, FM Akira Watanabe is an experienced player, who competed in several World Junior championships and three Olympiads (in Moscow, Yerevan and Istanbul). He has been a *Chess Today* reader for a very long time. But he is not the only CT reader in Japan – usually I have 2-3 subscribers from that country at any given time.

Last December IM Sam Collins, who contributes regularly to *Chess Today*, got a job in Tokyo. At the Chess Olympiad in Dresden he invited other members of the Irish squad to visit him in Japan and at some point in early 2009 I decided to take him up on that offer. When Akira heard about the planned visit, he contacted me and after a few e-mails the plan began to shape up. Akira has been immensely helpful in both organising my visit to Japan and helping me to get most out of the trip while here.

My first acquaintance with Japan's chess players was last December in Dresden, where I played against Shinya Kojima on board 1 in the match between our countries. I annotated that interesting game in CT-2953. Before my trip to Japan I got from Sam Collins a database with many games from the chess championship of Japan, which took place in early May. Sam won that tournament with 9/11. Kojima was second and Watanabe came third. Interestingly, that was Japan's chess championship of 2010 – Of course, I heard that Japan was ahead of the world in many areas, but it's scary to think that the gap is so big!
☺

Anyhow, when I saw those game the coach in me immediately woke up and started noticing some instructive mistakes, which many players committed there. You can see some fruits of my labour in this issue and one of the next issues of *Chess Today*. We will provide those games in our database tomorrow.

It seems to me that Japanese players are basically underrated – with more international experience and they will eventually catch up on that, of course. They are dangerous players, particularly when attacking. You can find an example of that in our Annotated Game section today.

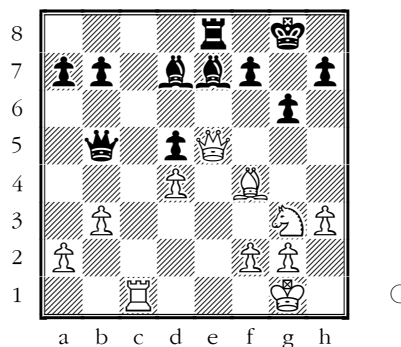
Their main weaknesses are:

- Unsteady play – a series of good moves is often followed by a gross mistake or a series of poor moves
- Poor endgame technique
- Frequent blunders

Here are two examples of typically unsteady play:

S. Kuwata – S. Collins (2429)

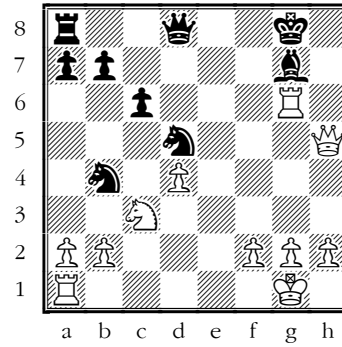
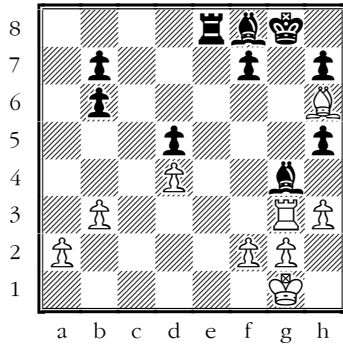
Ch of Japan (1), May 2009



The bishop pair might prove to be an asset later, so White's next decision is absolutely justified:

29. ♖h5! ♗xh5 30. ♕h6 ♕f8
31. ♖g5+ ♖h8 32. ♗f6+ ♖g8
33. ♖c3

It was more practical to fix a draw after 33. ♗g5+ ♖h8 34. ♗f6+ ♖g8.
33... ♗b6 34. ♖g3+ ♕g4 35. ♗xb6
axb6 (D)

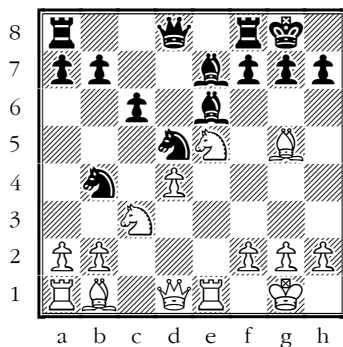


36. Qf4? This is a serious error of judgement. White would be fine after 36. Qxf8 Qxf8 37. hxg4 hxg4 38. Rxc4 Rxc4 39. Qh2 Rxe2 40. Rg5.

36... Re4 37. Qe5?! f6! 38. Qc7 Rxe7 0-1. Maybe White ran out of time here, as otherwise it's hard to explain the result - after 39. Qb8 the game could go on.

K. Sugimoto (2045) - D. Kurihara
Ch of Japan (3), May 2009

1. c4 e6 2. e4 d5 3. exd5 exd5 4. cxd5 Qf6 5. Qc3 Qxd5 6. Qc4 Qb6 7. Qb3 Qe7 8. Qf3 0-0 9. 0-0 Qd8 10. d4 c6 11. Qc2 Qf6 12. Qg5 Qbd5 13. Qe5 Qe6 14. Re1 Qb4 15. Qb1 Qfd5 (D)



In a typical IQP position White has succeeded in building up a strong attack.

16. Qh5 g6??

16...h6? 17. Qxh6 is also bad for Black. 16...f5 was the lesser evil - 17. Qxd5 Qxd5 18. Qf3 Qf7 19. Qh3↑.

17. Qxg6! fxc6 18. Qxc6 Rf7 18...hxg6 19. Qxc6+ Qh8 20. Rxe6+-, 19. Rxe6 hxg6 20. Rxc6+ Rg7 21. Qh6

Here 21. Rf6! would win on the spot.

21... Qf6 22. Qxc7

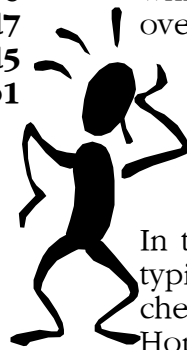
Better was 22. Qe4!

22... Qxc7 (D)

23. Qg4

It was easier to win after 23. Qe4+-, **23... Qe7 24. Qxd5 Qxd5 25. Rxe6 Qf7 26. Qg6? Qxc6 27. Rxc6 Qf7 28. Rg4 Re8 29. Qf1 Qb4 30. g3 Qc2 31. d5?? Qxa1 0-1.**

I think that it would be better to examine the two other main weaknesses of (most) Japanese players in our regular columns. You can expect to see my 'Endgame Kaleidoscope' in the next CT issue, while today let's consider gross tactical oversights.



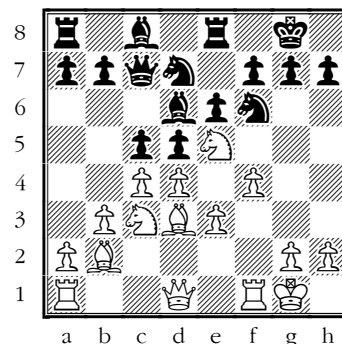
Beware: Blunder

by GM Alex Baburin

In this column I'd like to show a few typical error committed in the last chess championship of Japan. Hopefully everyone can learn from them and will avoid similar misfortune in his or her own games!

S. Kojima - T. Tanaka
Ch of Japan (2), May 2009

1. Qf3 d5 2. d4 Qf6 3. c4 c6 4. e3 e6 5. b3 Qd6 6. Qb2 0-0 7. Qd3 Qbd7 8. 0-0 Re8?! 9. Qe5 Qc7?! 10. f4 c5 11. Qc3 (D)



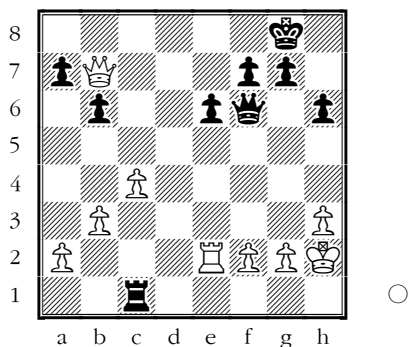
Here Black had to play 11...a6 12.cxd5 exd5 13.♖c1↑. Instead he erred badly and the game was over soon:

11...b6?? 12.♗b5 1-0.

Probably I would not have resigned here, as White would still have work to do after 12...♖b8 13.♗c6 ♖b7 14.♗xd6 ♖xc6 15.♗xe8 ♗xe8.

T. Fukuda - H. Manabe (2123)

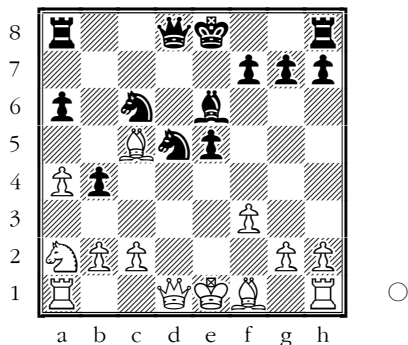
Ch of Japan (2), May 2009



White should be OK after 33.♖a8+ ♗h7 34.♖e4+ g6 35.♗d2. Instead he played the incredible **33.♖xa7?? ♖f4+! 34.g3 ♖f3 0-1.**

S. Kishi - R. Nanjyo (2207)

Ch of Japan (2), May 2009

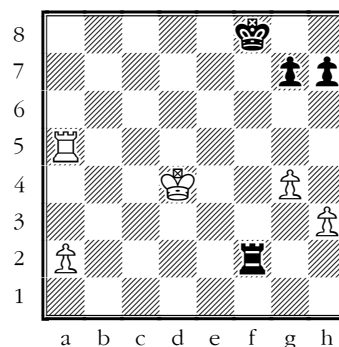


Black is doing fine, but White's next move must have come as a great (and a very pleasant!) surprise to him:

15.♗c4?? ♖h4+ 16.♗f2 ♖xc4 17.g3 ♗d4 18.b3 ♖xc2 19.♗xd4 ♖xd1+ 20.♗xd1 exd4 21.♗xd4 a5 22.♖f2 ♗c8 23.♗d2 0-0 24.♗c1 ♗c3 25.♗e1 ♗fd8 26.♗b2 ♗d1+ 0-1.

S. Kishi - K. Sugimoto (2045)

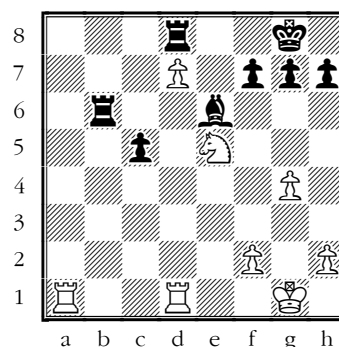
Ch of Japan (1), May 2009



Here Black should be able to draw after 42...♗h2, for example, 43.♗a3 ♖g8!? (preventing 44.♗f3+ and 45.a3). Instead he went down quickly: **42...♗f3?? 43.♗f5+ ♗xf5 44.gxf5 1-0.**

T. Kurihara - A. Kobayashi

Ch of Japan (4), May 2009



The d7-pawn can become a liability after 26...♖f8, but Black allowed it to show its great potential: **26...f6?? 27.♗a8! 1-0.**

What is the main lesson one can learn from these examples? Stay alert and check every move – your opponent isn't a dummy and has threats too!

Annotated Game

by GM Alex Baburin

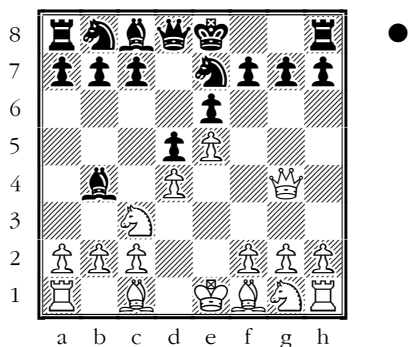
K. Yamada - A. Drakakis

Ch of Japan (4), May 2009

The French Defence - [C16]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♗b4 4.e5 ♗e7 Usually Black plays 4...c5 here, but this move is OK too.
5.♖g4 (D)

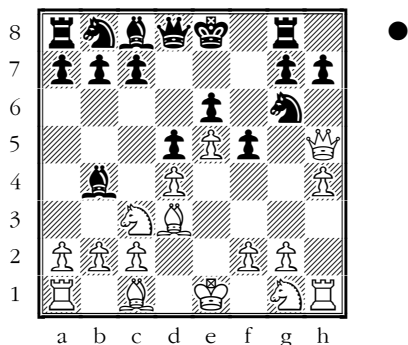
5.a3 is much more common, but the text move is popular as well.



5...Bg8? When I see such moves, the phrase "you can't be serious!" immediately springs to mind!

A normal move here is 5...c5, for example
 6.d3 b6 7.a3 xc3+ 8.bxc3 a5 9.d2 0-0 10.d3 f5 11.exf6 xf6 12.h5 f5 13.c4 a4 14.g4 dxc4 15.e4 cxd4 16.xd4 cxd4 17.gxf5 exf5 18.d5+ e6 19.xb7 f7 20.h4 e8+ 21.d1 d3+ Friedel - Shulman, Las Vegas 2003, or 6.xg7 g8 7.xh7 cxd4 8.a3 a5 9.f3? dxc3 10.b3 b6 11.g5 xe5+- Manik-Jussupow, Warsaw 2005.

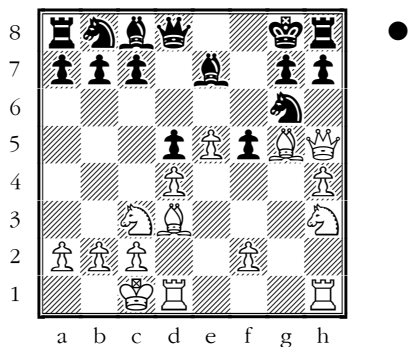
6.d3 g6 7.h4! f5 8.h5 (D)



8...Bf7?! 8...Bh8 9.dge2+
9.dh3 Maybe 9.d3 was more precise, keeping an eye on the centre - 9...h6 10.g4+-.

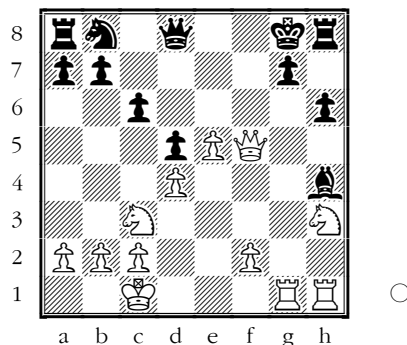
9...e7 10.g5! Bh8 11.g4!
 White blows the position wide open while Black's queenside is still frozen.

11...g8 12.gxf5 exf5 13.0-0-0 (D)



White has developed all his pieces, while Black has just two chessmen out - and he has moved his king to g8! It's not surprising then that Black is already lost here.

13...e6 14.f3 xh4 15.xh4 xh4 16.xf5 xf5 17.xf5 c6 18.dg1 h6 (D)

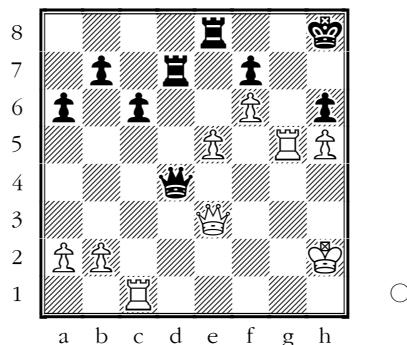


19.xe6+ Even more energetic was 19.xg7+ xg7 20.g1+ g5+ 21.xg5+-.

19...f8 20.g4 g5 21.f4 h5 22.hxh4 gxf4 23.xh5 1-0.

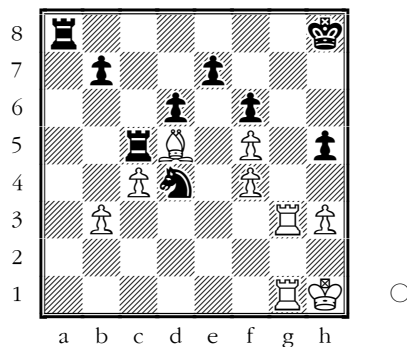
Solutions to our Quiz:

P. Iinuma - S. Leaver
 Ch of Japan (1), May 2009



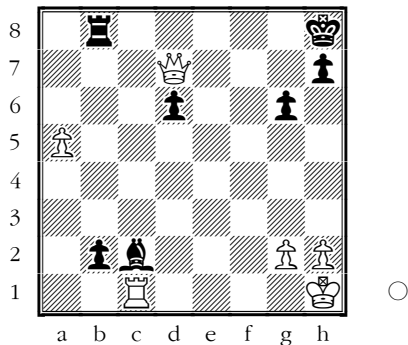
39.Bg8+! 1-0.

Kojima - Noguchi
 Ch of Japan (6), May 2009



33.♖g6! ♖h7 34.♖g7+ ♖h8
 35.♗g8! ♖xg8 36.♖xg8+ ♖h7
 37.♖8g7+ ♖h8 38.♖xe7 b5 39.♖a1
 ♖c8 40.cxb5 ♗xb5 41.♖ae1 ♗d4
 42.♖e8+ ♖xe8 43.♖xe8+ ♖g7
 44.b4 ♖f7 45.♖e1 ♗xf5 46.b5 ♗d4
 47.b6 ♗c6 48.b7 d5 49.♖c1 ♗b8
 50.♖c8 ♗a6 51.♖a8 1-0.

S. Kuwata – R. Nakamura
 Ch of Japan (7), May 2009



Here White could get great winning chances after 36.♖b1! ♗xb1 37.♗xd6 ♖e8 38.♗d4+ ♖g8 39.♖g1 ♗e4 40.♗xb2. Instead of that he played 36.♖g1? and was very lucky to survive after

36...b1♖ 37.♗xd6 ♖b2 38.♖f1 ♗f5
 39.a6 ♖b6 40.♗e5+ ♖g8 41.h4 ♖f8
 42.♗d5+ ♖g7 43.♖a1 ♖b2 44.♖e1
 ♖f7 45.♗c5 ♗e4 46.♖g5 ♗a8?
 47.h5! ♖xg2+ 48.♗xg2 ♗xg2+
 49.♖xg2 gxf5 50.♖b1 ♖g6 51.♖a1
 ♖a7 52.♖f3 ♖f6 53.♖a5 ♖e7
 54.♖xh5 ♖xa6 55.♖xh7+ 1/2-1/2.

Contact information. Have some comments about Chess Today? [E-mail us](mailto:ababurin@iol.ie) – we appreciate your feedback! **Chess Today** is published by Alexander Baburin, 3 Eagle Hill, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Ireland. Tel: (353-1) 278-2276. Fax: (353-1) 283-6839. E-mail: ababurin@iol.ie Website: <http://www.chesstoday.net>

Editors: GMs Baburin, Scherbakov and Golubev, IMs Barskij and Notkin. Technical editors: Graham Brown and Ralph Marconi.

Chess Today is copyright 2000–2008 by Alexander Baburin and protected intellectual property under the International Copyright convention. Subscribers are allowed to non-commercially distribute copies of Chess Today at their chess club, chess tournaments and via e-mail (on an occasional basis). Any other use and distribution (reproduction, via print, electronic format, or in any form whatsoever), as well as posting on the Web, is strictly prohibited without express written permission.