

Chess Jon Speelman

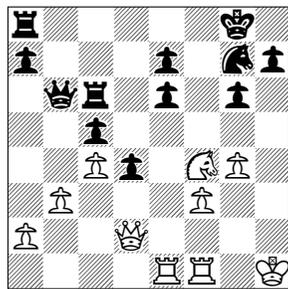
This year has to belong to Magnus Carlsen, who, in a couple of days when the January list comes out, will officially ascend to the highest rating ever known to man: 2861.

A win by him therefore seems appropriate and preferably something pyrotechnic.

Carlsen's style has become so technical recently, though, that I had to spend some time finding one.

Not that the games are dull: it's fantastic how he grinds away to victory against the world's very best. But they do have something of the healthy air of the fjord, albeit with his opponents as the lemmings.

Not this sparkling finish against the world champion, which featured one of the very best moves of the year.



Magnus Carlsen (to play) vs Viswanathan Anand

It comes from the Grand Slam final in October, with the first half in Sao Paulo

and the second in the tournament's original home of Bilbao in Spain.

Carlsen was first equal with Fabiano Caruana on 17/30 (6.5/10 in normal money) and won the subsequent blitz play-off to take the title.

The other scores were Aronian 11 (4.5), Sergey Karjakin 10 (4.5), Anand 9 (4.5) and Vallejo 6 (3). So as you can see, Anand certainly wasn't in his best form as this defeat in the penultimate round underlined.

White obviously has good positional compensation for the pawn and it looks as though he will put his knight on d3 and then exert pressure with moves like Re5 hitting c5 and preparing to double rooks to try to tie the knight down to the e pawn.

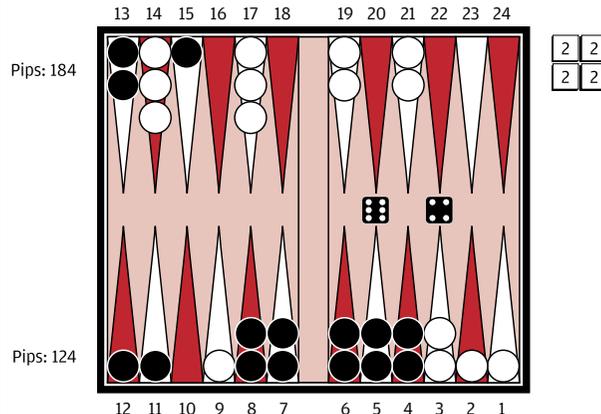
But Carlsen found a hugely more incisive solution with the fantastic 25.Nh3!! making way for the queen to go to h6 before the knight returns.

The game ended very quickly with 25...Ne8 26.Qh6 Nf6 27.Ng5 d3 28.Re5 Kh8 29.Rd1 Qa6 30.a4 1-0.

Carlsen's ability to get his opponents to buckle even a player as great as Anand has been essential to his ascent this year and 27...d3 was panicky and soon proved hopeless - since at the end, the d pawn will drop off and Black will be completely busted.

Instead, 27...Qa6 28.Re5 Qc8 was a much better defence, though after 29.Rf1 White has hefty pressure anyway.

Backgammon Chris Bray



The Library Chouette

The usual suspects had assembled at Harbinger Hall for the New Year festivities. Meanwhile, there was time to kill so naturally there was only one solution: a chouette in the library.

The team had doubled the box, the Tempestuous Turk, quite early on and things were looking good for black when the captain, Cautious Cuthbert, rolled 64.

"At last, an easy play," said CC. "I shall play the clearly correct 15/9*, 13/9, making the full prime. Any objections?"

"I'm not sure we want to improve TT's timing," said Quentin Quickcube. "For once I'd like to make a quiet play, 15/11, 12/6, and not put TT on the bar."

"That looks very reasonable," said the Dowager Duchess. "I'm not sure we need the full prime. If Barry Bigplay were

here he would want us to play something like 12/2* but that is wholly unnecessary. What do you think, EE?"

"I think you nearly hit on the right play by mistake, my dear DD," replied the Enigmatic Englishman. "TT's timing is excellent so we can reject both CC and QQ's moves. The key is to try to prevent TT making a second anchor if at all possible, so that he cannot play a back game.

"Once you understand that then the right move becomes obvious. It is 13/9*, 8/2*, with the objective of blitzing TT. That play will win a lot of gammons."

"Are you absolutely sure?" asked CC. "The play looks very loose to me."

"Good backgammon is all about taking measured risks and this case is a prime example, if you'll excuse the pun."

Bridge Maureen Hiron

Sometimes it's necessary to make an assumption as to the lie of the cards in the defenders' hands. It could be the bidding - or lack of it - that provides the clue - but having made the assumption, work out what follows on from that.

East opened One Heart over which South made a take-out double. West passed and North bid Two Clubs, knowing that he had something in reserve. East bid Two Hearts; Two Spades from South and North jumped to Four Spades.

West led the eight of hearts. East won with the jack, cashed the queen and continued with the king. Declarer rose with the king of trumps, having decided that West held the spade queen, and continued with the jack of spades, which

held. A low spade to the eight brought the news that there was a trump loser, and now South had to hope that East held king doubleton in clubs or the bare king. It wasn't to be and South's game failed.

By mentally assigning the spade queen to West, it follows from the bidding that East has the club king.

So, at trick three, declarer does best to discard his low club from hand. Even if East continues with yet another heart, it can be ruffed in hand; it does West no good to overruff. Then table the spade jack.

A spade to the eight is followed by the trump ace. Re-entering hand with a club to the queen - as good as any - the spade king draws the last trump.

Game all; dealer East

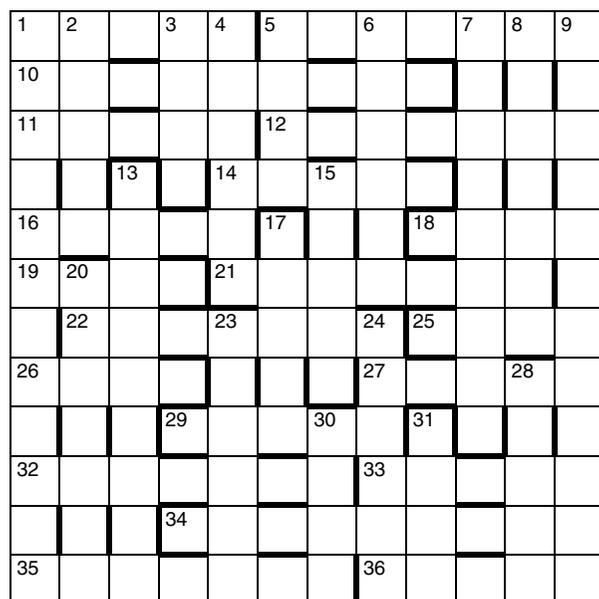
West		North		East	
♠ Q754	♠ A86	♠ A86	♠ 3	♠ A K Q J 6 2	
♥ 85	♥ 973	♥ 973	♥ K72	♥ 83	
♦ 10 9 6 5 4	♦ K72	♦ K72	♦ J852	♦ 83	
♣ 93	♣ J852	♣ J852	♣ K J 10 9 2	♣ K10 6 4	
			♠ 10 4		
			♥ A Q J		
			♦ A Q 7		

QUIZ ANSWERS (see page x)

1	7
2	8
3	9
4	10
5	
6	

GET THE PICTURE ANSWERS (see page opposite) This week's theme: ?????????????? From top left: ??????????????

Inquisitor 1262 by eXternal



A bottle of champagne will go to the first three correct entries opened on 9 January. Please send your entry to Inquisitor 1262, The Independent Magazine, 2 Derry Street, London W8 5HF. The solution and winners will be published in three weeks. Solvers may e-mail queries and comments to nimrodl@jetdoc.co.uk at any time.

WARM INSIDE

In each clue, wordplay leads to the answer with an extra letter which is not to be entered in the grid. The redundant letters in clue order spell out a quote and the name of the person who said it. Solvers should highlight this person and other members of his group in the completed grid.

Across

- 1 Fold organisation of lot made redundant from political environment (5)
- 5 Mature guards lacking quick reply (7)
- 10 Man in Cape Town's piping backfired, nothing services minor buildings (9)
- 11 Turning covers halfway back, dog is to be found (5)
- 12 Stag's mate finds place with bars including grand waterfront accommodation (7)
- 14 Join the extravagant set for eating (5)
- 16 Book club for dance (5)
- 18 Chop in the morning? Excuse me! (4)
- 19 American Indians that man's seen in Pennsylvania (4)
- 21 It's great with nuts, south Asian cheese, north duplicated (7)

- 22 Outside races brought back with prestige (7)
 - 25 Denials irrelevant, utter backtracking (4)
 - 26 King gets to choose a list of duties (4)
 - 27 Knight cheeky and nimble (5)
 - 29 Block animal drinking beer (5)
 - 32 Forbidden local network gets right to be organised systematically (7)
 - 33 Peppered throughout, crucial in that Indian side dish (5)
 - 34 Butler set off from county, having caught brief moment with priest (9)
 - 35 Judge writes down increases (7)
 - 36 Repulse me with weird old comic (5)
- Down**
- 1 Unanimated idiot prospers, amazingly (12)
 - 2 Italian saint ultimately turned spies (5)
 - 3 Associate cream bun with mass (4)
 - 4 Vessels in past crashes (6)
 - 5 Violent game to end in Glasgow (4)
 - 6 Setter's muscle tone (6)
 - 7 Ugly old woman intercepting hapless

- 8 Georgia's double in party clothes (7)
- 9 Broke years on, merely dependent on charity (12)
- 13 Steadfast Scottish bloke shortly to join university board (9)
- 15 Carry out model underneath capsized boat (5)
- 17 Southern lighthouse is unused (5)
- 20 Cut off unkempt toenails (7)
- 23 Rival protects trade for wheel part (6)
- 24 Involved in government remedial course (6)
- 28 Sport's lesson, row safe (5)
- 30 Maiden enthralled by sailor's outfits (4)
- 31 Cheat hiding left hand ointment (4)

Solution to Inquisitor 1259 Clashes by Xanthippe



Neither of each pair of clashing letters was to be entered in the grid. Instead, to allow all grid entries to be real words, solvers needed to look for A THIRD WAY, also describing, 37 STREET, following ROAD and PASSAGE in the completed grid.

Winners Xxxxxxx