



World Chess News

Hra Stolittia Event in Kiev:

When The Absurd Triumphs

by GM Mikhail Golubev

In the last few days instead of looking at the usual ongoing chess competitions I was mainly collecting information about the Hra Stolittia ("The game of century") event, which took place in the Ukrainian capital Kiev on 27 April 2011. I was not present there, alas, as there was no announcement with full details within my reach.

The Ukrainian professor Andriy Slyusarchuk played, blindfolded, against Rybka and scored 1½-½.

ChessBase provided some [details](#) yesterday, referring to Chinese and Vietnamese sources.

I think that it makes sense to provide some information here from the Ukrainian perspective. First of all I must admit that the ChessBase proposal to offer Slyusarchuk piece odds in a game versus Fritz 4 in the ChessBase office was liked in the Ukrainian and Russian chess circles!

The match is discussed by the Ukrainian and Russian players in forums at Chesspro.ru, Crestbook.com, Chessglum.com, Ukraine-chess.go-forum.net, etc. and there is a general view, especially among professionals (I can name GMs Shirov, Khalifman, Shipov for example) that Slyusarchuk's score was a result of ... mystification, to put it mildly.

But a problem is that the event had such wide coverage in the Ukrainian TV and other media (because of the significant sponsorship of a few thousand US Dollars reportedly, and governmental support), which

perhaps exceeded the level of the coverage of the Ukrainian 2010 Olympiad victory, that I suspect that the majority of my compatriots are sure now that a real genius is living amongst us.

All the most important of the country's TV channels reported from the match, with only a little scepticism in some of these reports, while triumphalism was the common tone.

Slyusarchuk does not seem to have serious chess plans. (Even if he briefly has mentioned about the possibility of giving a simul on 150 boards). He has no interest in playing against Vassily Ivanchuk, because, as the professor said, he will win [easily] and then what?

Instead, Slyusarchuk hopes that the state will now invest funds into the creation of the Brain Institute in Ukraine. Which can be headed as one may suspect by Dr. Slyusarchuk himself. So, in a way, the potential award for the winner can be the highest in the history of chess.

The full information about who were the match organisers is not that easy to find, at least to me.

One way or another, preparations for the match (whatever they were) took many months. There was a jury at the match, which included in particular, GMs Baklan and Drozdovskij (both abstained from making any strong statements after the match, so far as I know), and there was anti-cheating control: Slyusarchuk was searched for devices of any kind before play.

So, now it is an immensely difficult task to explain to non-chess-players in Ukraine that something unfair might have taken place. And, for *proving* that the mystification indeed took place, there is possibly no chance at all.

What can help are Slyusarchuk's numerous absurd statements, which show his complete ignorance of chess (quite unforgivable for a guy who has read, as it is claimed, more than 2000 chess books within several months!), and also some silly mistakes that he made when announcing his moves during the match.

An interesting detail is that a short report about the match with links was posted at the Ukrainian federation website, but then removed.

The details of the Slyusarchuk biography are lately actively discussed by editors of the Russian language Wikipedia.

Grandmaster Georgy Timoshenko sent me an article in Russian, which I [posted](#) in my blog, about Slyusarchuk's previous (collapsed!) chess-related attempt in Kiev, when he claimed that he is able to memorise multiple chess positions at almost one hundred of boards or so. The article proves nothing about the Rybka match, but gives a clear impression of who Slyusarchuk is.

I also learned from another person that there were negotiations between Slyusarchuk's team and one of the top Ukrainian grandmasters. Slyusarchuk wanted to play blindfolded, sitting no closer than 5 meters to the board. But this match never took place.

I am not planning to make this article as long as possible, but will show both games below.

The official site of the event, with the livestream record still available, is at: <http://cerebrum.org.ua/promo/gra/>

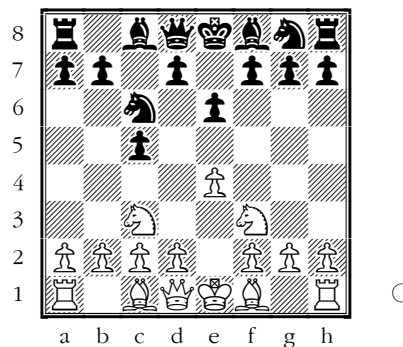
Annotated Games

by GM Mikhail Golubev

Slyusarchuk - COMP Rybka

Hra Stolittia Kiev UKR, 27.04.2011

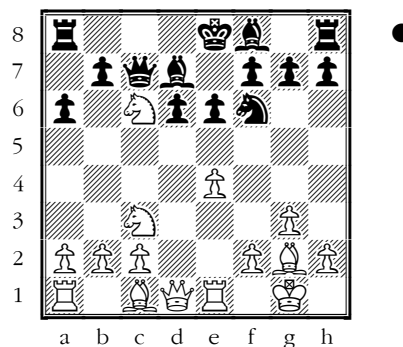
1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 e6 3.♗f3 ♘c6 (D)



4.d4

Here Slyusarchuk tried to announce the 'move' c2-c4 and then quickly corrected himself. This episode was shown in the TV reports.

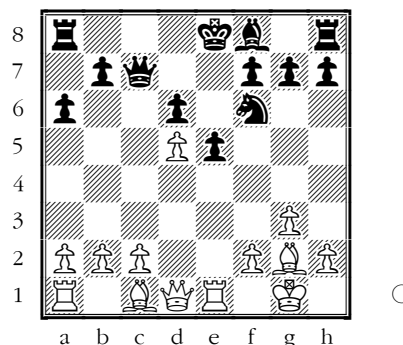
4...cxd4 5.♗xd4 ♖c7 6.g3 a6 7.♗g2 ♗f6 8.0-0 d6 9.♞e1 ♗d7 10.♗xc6 (D)



10...♗xc6

The computer experts share the opinion that preference to 10...bxc6! should normally be given in Rybka's opening book.

11.♗d5 ♗xd5 12.exd5 e5± (D)



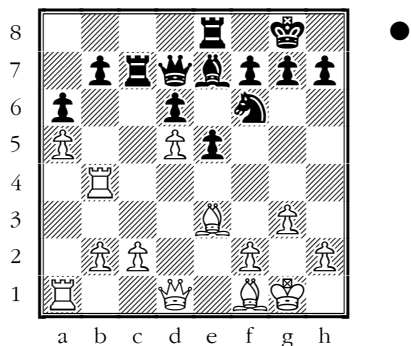
Still the position has sometimes been played by Grandmasters with Black

13.♞e3!N

A novelty, which resembles ♞e1-e3! from the game which Fritz won against Kramnik in 2006, in the Najdorf System. By coincidence, in 2002 I played this position in a blindfold training game (NOT against

Rybka!) and preferred 13.f4 ♖e7 14.fxe5 dxe5 15.d6?! (what to say, Slyusarchuk's novelty is far too complex to find for me). After his 13th move Slyusarchuk said to spectators that he was planning the game 30 moves ahead. It can be seen and heard in the livestream video.

13...♖e7 14.♖c3 ♖d7 15.a4 0-0
16.a5 ♖fc8 17.♖b3 ♖c4 18.♖f1 ♖c7
19.♖e3 ♖e8 20.♖b4 (D)

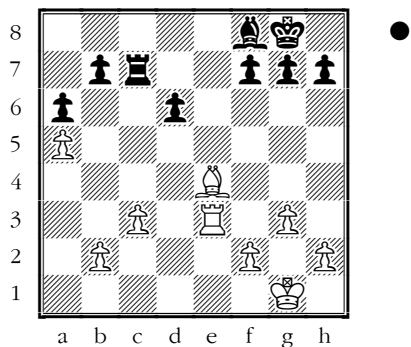


White is manoeuvring.

20...e4

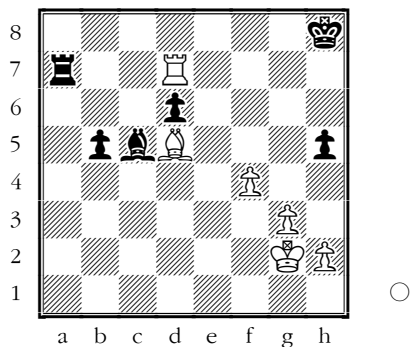
Creating a weakness, which White energetically exploited later.

21.♖g2 ♖f5 22.c3 ♖f8 23.♖b3
♖h5 24.♖e1 ♖xd5 25.♖xd5 ♖xd5
26.♖xe4 ♖xe4 27.♖xe4 ♖xe3
28.♖xe3 (D)



White dominates in the endgame.

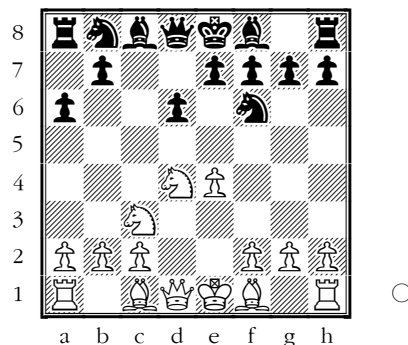
28...g6 29.♖d5 ♖c5 30.c4 ♖xa5
31.♖f3 b6 32.♖xf7+ ♖h8 33.♖xg6
♖g7 34.♖e4 ♖xb2 35.♖f7 h5
36.♖d5 b5 37.cxb5 axb5 38.♖d7
♖a3 39.♖g2 ♖c5 40.f4 ♖a7 (D)



41.♖d8+ ♖g7 42.♖h3 ♖g6 43.♖h4
♖e7 44.♖g8+ ♖f6 45.♖xh5 ♖h7+
46.♖g4 ♖xh2 47.♖f8+ ♖e7
48.♖f7+ ♖e8 49.♖b7 ♖d8 50.♖xb5
♖d2 51.♖e4 ♖d4 52.♖f5 ♖b4
53.♖xb4 ♖xb4 54.♖e6 ♖e8 55.f5
♖d8 56.g4 1-0

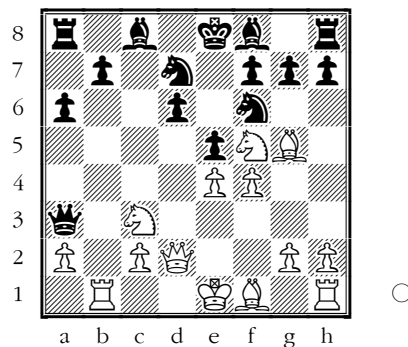
COMP Rybka – Slyusarchuk
Hra Stolittia Kiev UKR, 27.04.2011

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♖xd4
♖f6 5.♖c3 a6 (D)



According to his interview for the mega newspaper 'Fakty i Kommentarii', Slyusarchuk said after the match that already on the 5th move of the second game he understood that he had gone astray and would make a draw at best. (Mama mia! M.G.)

6.♖g5 ♖bd7 7.f4 e5 8.♖f5 ♖b6
9.♖d2 ♖xb2 10.♖b1 ♖a3 (D)

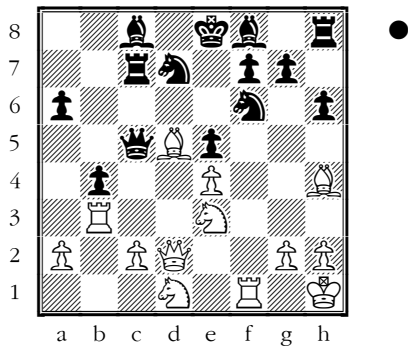


This is an interesting opening line, generally.

11.fxe5N

Rybka (or a weaker one of the Rybkas as some suspect) also has the right to be innovative.

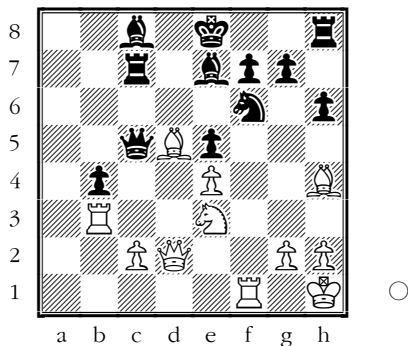
11...dxe5 12.♖c4 ♖a5 13.0-0 ♖c5+
14.♖e3 b5 15.♖d5 ♖a7 16.♖h1
♖c7 17.♖b3 h6 18.♖h4 b4
19.♖cd1 (D)



19...a5

People say that here Slyusarchuk tried to announce the move 19...h5 at first.

20.♘b2 ♕e7 21.♘d3 ♖b6 22.a3 ♘c5 23.♗xc5 ♖xc5 24.axb4 axb4 25.♗g3 ♗d6 26.♗h4 ♗e7 27.♗g3 ♗d6 28.♗h4 ♗e7 (D) ½-½



The top Ukrainian news agency Unian reported that Slyusarchuk who did not see the screen where Rybka announced the threefold repetition and a draw, could not immediately understand why the auditorium suddenly stood up applauding. ...Pity that the Unian reporters could not have gotten the idea what this episode might have meant.

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