

Women's World Chess Championship Match

Taizhou 2013



Compiled By Scorpionchess



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Women's World Chess Championship Match 2013 between the current World Champion Anna Ushenina of Ukraine and her challenger, Hou Yifan of China (former World Champion 2010-2012), is being played from September 11th to 27 in the Taizhou Hotel (Taizhou, China).



The Chunlan Hotel in Taizhou, China





The time control of the Championship is 90 minutes for the first 40 moves, followed by 30 minutes for the rest of the game, with an increment of 30 seconds per move starting from move one. The winner of the ten-game match is the first player to reach 5.5 points or more. If the scores are level after the regular ten games, four tie-break games will be played, with 25 minutes for each player and an increment of ten seconds after each move. If the scores are level after the four rapid games, then, after a new drawing of colours, a match of two games will be played with a time control of five minutes plus three seconds' increment after each move. In case of a level score, another two-game match will be played to determine a winner. If there is still no winner after five such matches (i.e. after ten games), one sudden-death game will be played. This involves a drawing of lots, the winner being able to choose the colour. The player with the white pieces receives five minutes, the player with the black pieces four minutes, with an increment of three seconds per move from move 61 on. In case of a draw, the player with the black pieces is declared the winner. The prize fund for this match is 200,000 Euros and will be split between the players as follows: 60% for the winner and 40% to the loser if the match ends within the ten regular games. In case the winner is decided by tie-break games, she will receive 55% and loser 45%.

Players



World Champion

Grand Master Anna Ushenina

(Ukraine) -ELO 2500 Age:28



Challenger - Ex World Champion

Grand Master Hou Yifan

(China) - ELO 2609 Age 19

Women's World Chess Champion Anna Ushenina



Anna Ushenina (born 30 August 1985) is a Ukrainian chess player and the Women's World Chess Champion since November 2012.

Current rating: 2500

Ushenina lives in Kharkiv (Ukraine), where she was born. Determined that young Ushenina would develop intellectual and creative talents, her mother introduced her to chess at the age of seven, along with painting and music.

Tournament successes at Kiev in 2001 and Odessa in 2003, earned her the WGM title, awarded in 2003. Her Olympiad performance and subsequent results in Pardubice and Abu Dhabi (both 2006) then qualified her for the IM title, awarded in January 2007. She got the title of grandmaster as Women's World Champion in 2012.

At the national Ukrainian Women's Championship, her progress and achievements have been noteworthy. She became the champion of Ukraine at Alushta in 2005, and almost repeated the success at Odessa in 2006, finishing second.

In the 'A2' section of the prestigious Aeroflot Open in Moscow 2007, she scored 5 points from the first 7 rounds, defeating three grandmasters for a part performance rating of 2672. At the Women's European Individual Chess Championship, held 2008 in Plovdiv, she took the bronze medal.

Team competitions:

For Ushenina, her earliest major medal-winning performance occurred in Balatonlelle, at the European Team Championship for Girls (under 18) in 2002, where she took team gold and individual silver on board 1. On another occasion at the 2007 Women's World Team Chess Championship in Yekaterinburg, she helped Ukraine to get a bronze medal and added an individual bronze to her tally. She has also played twice at the European Team Chess Championship, in 2005 and 2007. The team finished outside of the medal places each time, but for her personal performance, Ushenina took individual gold at the latter event, held in Heraklion. In 2011 she won Individual Gold for board 3 at the European Women's Team Championship.

Her many successes in team chess reached an early pinnacle in 2006. At the Turin Women's Olympiad she was a part of the victorious Ukrainian team and in 2008, at the Dresden Olympiad, Ukraine's ladies took home the team silver medals, after failing to oust the powerful Georgian team from the top spot. At Istanbul Olympiad in 2012 Ukrainian team took bronze medals and in 2013 Ukrainian girls won golden medals in World women team championship in Astana.

World Champion Title:

In the final of the Women's World Chess Championship 2012 in Khanty-Mansiysk she achieved a tiebreak victory over Antoaneta Stefanova to become the 14th Women's World Chess Champion. She is Ukraine's first women's world chess champion.

Anna was one of four female participants in the 128-player the FIDE World Cup in Tromsø (August, 2013). Anna managed to make a draw in classics against top Grand Master Peter Svidler (lost the first game and won the second) but lost in rapid.

Anna Ushenina will defend her title against Hou Yifan in the Women's World Chess Championship (Taizhou, China, 2013).

Challenger Hou Yifan



Hou Yifan (born February 27, 1994, in Xinghua, Taizhou, Jiangsu, China) is Chinese chess player, a former Women's World Champion.

Current rating: 2609

Hou Yifan started playing chess regularly at the age of 6, but was already fascinated with the game when she was 3 years old. Hou's father, Hou Xuejian, a magistrate, often took his young daughter to a bookstore after dinner. He noticed that the little girl liked to stare at glass chess pieces behind the window. He later bought his daughter her first chess set. The 3-year-old was able to beat her father and grandmother after a few weeks. In 1999, her father engaged a chess mentor, IM Tong Yuanming, for his 5-year-old daughter. Tong later said that Hou was an unusual talent, showing "strong confidence, distinguished memory, calculating ability and fast reaction." The young girl's talent impressed many people.

She was admitted to the National Chess Center, an academy for young talented players from all over the country,[9] in Beijing when she was 10, with leading Chinese grandmasters Ye Jiangchuan and Yu Shaoteng as her trainers. In order to better support her chess career, her family relocated to Beijing in 2003.

At the age of 12, she became the youngest ever player to participate at the FIDE Women's World Championship (Yekaterinburg 2006) and at the Chess Olympiad (Torino 2006). In June 2007, she became China's youngest ever National Women's Champion.

She achieved the titles of Woman FIDE Master in January 2004, Woman Grandmaster in January 2007, and International Master in September 2008 by reaching the final of the Women's World Championship.

In August 2008 she had already qualified for the Grandmaster title by achieving her 3rd GM norm and became the youngest ever female player to qualify for the title of Grandmaster.

In 2010, she became the youngest World Chess Champion in history (men's and women's!)

by winning the Women's World Championship in Hatay, Turkey at the age of 16. Hou became a winner of Women Grand Prix 2010-2011 and defended her world champion title in the Women's World Chess Championship Match against Koneru Humpy in Tirana (Albania) in November 2011.

In November 2012 she was surprisingly knocked out in the second round of the Women's World Chess Championship 2012. As the winner of FIDE Women's Grand Prix 2011–2012 she has earned the right to challenge the new champion in the Women's World Chess Championship 2013.

In August, she took part in the Chess World Cup 2013 in Tromsø, Norway. She was one of four female participants in the 128-player single-elimination tournament. Her opponent for the first round was Alexei Shirov. After two draws in the classical portion of the match, they proceeded to tie breaks. Hou won the first rapid game with white and loss the second as black. In the next tiebreaker set she lost both games resulting in her elimination.

Team competitions:

Hou Yifan contributed in success of the Chinese national women's team which became three-time winner of the World Women Team Championships in 2007, 2009, 2011

At the 1st World Women's Team Chess Championship in Yekaterinburg (Russia) in 2007, Hou was part of the winning China national team that also included Zhao Xue, Ruan Lufei, Shen Yang, and Huang Qian. Hou Yifan played on board two in every round and scored $7\frac{1}{2}/9$ (+7 =1 -1), winning the gold medal for that board. Her performance rating was 2559.

In December 2011, Hou played for China in the Women's World Chess Team Championship in Mardin, Turkey 2011. China became clear winner three points ahead of Russia.

At the 40th Chess Olympiad held in Istanbul, Turkey from August 27 to September 10, 2012, Hou Yifan led the Chinese women's chess team to a second place, silver medal finish. She, herself, won the gold medal for individual performance on board 1 with a 2645 TPR, 6.5/9 score (+4, =5). During the competition she was also presented with the Caissa Cup, which honors the female player with the best chess results during the year.

In January 2011, Hou Yifan was recognized as the best Sportsperson of the Year in China involved in a non-Olympic sport.

Opening ceremony



The opening ceremony and drawing of colours was held in the playing venue on September 10th. Xiao Min, the vice-president of Chinese Olympic Committee and Assistant Director of National Sports Bureau, declared the Women's World Championship Match open.



The Women's World Champion from Ukraine and her Chinese challenger





Big guns: Ushenina seconds Alexander Khalifman and Anton Korobov

At the technical meeting the players were informed about the time control, the "zero tolerance" rule (they must be seated at the board when the starting gong is sounded) and the absence of any restrictions concerning draw offers.



At the table Appeals Committee Chairman Jorge Vega, FIDE Supervisor Ali Nihat Yazici, Chief Arbiter Panagiotis Nikolopoulos, deputy arbiter Carol Jarecki and FIDE official David Jarett.

Schedule

10th September	Opening Ceremony
11th September	Game 1
12th September	Game 2
13th September	Rest day
14th September	Game 3
15th September	Game 4
16th September	Rest day
17th September	Game 5
18th September	Game 6
19th September	Rest day

20th September	Game7
21st September	Game 8
22nd September	Rest day
23rd September	Game 9
24th September	Rest day
25th September	Game 10
26th September	Rest day
27th September	Tiebreak Games
28th September	Closing Ceremony

Players	Rtng	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total	Perf.	+/-
Anna Ushenina	2500	0	½	0	½	½	0	0	1.5	2384	-9
Hou Yifan	2609	1	½	1	½	½	1	1	5.5	2725	+9

Rank after round 10

Rank	SNo.	Name	Rtg	FED	Pts.
1	2	Hou Yifan GM	2609	CHN	5½
2	1	Ushenina Anna GM	2500	UKR	1½

Game analysis by :



Tatev Abrahamyan

Born in 1988 in Yerevan, Armenia, the Women's Grandmaster now lives in Glendale, California and is one of the strongest players in the American women's olympic team.

After graduating in 2011 from California State University, Long Beach with a double major in psychology and political science, Tatev focused on becoming a full time chess professional. She recently scored her second IM norm and is already qualified for the next Women's World Championship



Tania Sachdev

She was introduced to the game by her mother Anju. Her parents provided her with professional training. Sachdev became the eighth Indian Woman Grandmaster. She achieved her first international title when she was just eight. In 2008 she topped the Asian Chess Championship with $6\frac{1}{2}$ points out of nine rounds.

As a child, Tania Sachdev won multiple events. Her career successes are U12 Indian champion, Asian U14 Junior and Senior Champion, and bronze medal winner at the World U12 Championship.



IM Elisabeth Pähtz

was trained in chess from early childhood by her father, GM Thomas Pätz. At the age of nine she won her first German championship in the under-11 age group. In 1999 she became German Women's Champion. She served as one of four advisors on the World team in the 1999 Kasparov versus The World chess match. In 2002 Elisabeth became the Youth World Champion of the Under-18 age group, and in 2004 the Junior World Champion of the Under-20 age group. Elisabeth attended the Sport High School Dresden until 2004 and is among the strongest native German chess players. She plays for the Dresdner Sport Club 1898 and other associations. She holds the FIDE titles of International Master (IM) and Woman Grandmaster (WGM).

Taizhou 01: Hou Yifan strikes first

Round 1 on 2013/09/11 at 15.00

SNo.		Name	Rtg	Res.		Name	Rtg	SNo.
1	GM	Ushenina, Anna	2500	0-1	GM	Hou, Yifan	2609	

9/11/2013 – The clock in the first game of FIDE World Women's Chess Championship Match has started at 3 PM on the 11th of September. The first move 1. d4 of Anna Ushenina was done by FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov and the replying 1...Nf6 of Hou Yifan was made by director of Taizhou sports bureau Ge Zhihui. Anna Ushenina managed to get pleasant advantage with white pieces in the first game of the Women's world championship match but spent too much time in the opening and didn't find the precise way to make more troubles for her opponent. The position was about equal when Women's world champion lost the track and let her opponent to get a dangerous contra play on the king's side. Hou Yifan moved her knight from unfortunate square b7 to g5 to help in decisive attack on the White's king. The first game has finished after 41 moves.



Anna played very creatively, sacrificed a pawn on a3, managed to put her knight on f5 and almost paralyzed her opponent. One of the critical moments happened on the 26th move when World champion surprisingly changed her good knight on f5 for Black's passive bishop on e7.



After 26.Nb5 instead of 26.Ne7 White could have won a pawn back and get better position. Anna called her move 26. Ne7 – the decisive mistake of the game. Hou Yifan saw Nb5 but pointed out she didn't have any other choice but had to play 25...Be6.



After 36...Ng5 all Black pieces placed perfectly to attack the king of the opponent.

Despite the strong opening that Anna Ushenina used in this game she was unable to convert it into victory. After some inaccuracies the Ukrainian found herself giving away the advantage, but more importantly soon afterwards she underestimated Black's threats on the kingside and was in the receiving end of a swift mating attack.

□ Ushenina, Anna

■ Hou Yifan

Taizhou WWCC (1)

[Abrahamyan, Tatev]

E39

2500

2609

11.09.2013

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♙c3 ♜b4 4.♙c2

Anna plays a lot of moves in this position, but e3 seems to be her favorite one as she has the most games in it **0-0 5.♙f3**

the second most common move, but surprisingly Hou Yifan has no games against in the database. Perhaps that's the reason Anna went for this line **c5 6.dxc5**

♙a6 7.g3 ♙xc5 8.♞g2 b6

[I prefer the more common 8...♙ce4

9.0-0 ♙xc3 10.bxc3 ♞e7 11.e4 d6

giving white double pawns on the open c file]

9.0-0 ♞b7 10.♙b5 ♞e4 11.♙d1 ♙b7

stopping Nd6

[11...a6 this has been tried twice by

Tatiana Kosintseva 12.♙d6 ♞c6 13.♞f4

♙ce4 14.♙xe4 ♞xe4 15.♞d6 ♞xd6

16.♙xd6 ♙b8 17.♙fd1 ♙b7 and black

should be fine]

12.a3 ♞e7 13.♞f4 d6 a new move in an

already rare line. It seems that black

doesn't like committing the pawn to d6

early since it's probably easier to defend on d7 with a move like Bc6 and it gives the

b7 knight more flexibility to move **14.♙c1**

h6 15.b4 a6 16.♙c3 ♞c6 17.♙b3

White's position is easier to play: she has

more space, black's weaknesses on b6

and d6 can become targets and it's not

very clear where the b7 knight is going **♙c8**

18.♙fd1 ♙e8 19.♙b1

[19.♞e3 looks annoying for black]

19...e5 permanently weakening d5 **20.♞d2**

b5 21.cxb5 axb5 22.e4 ♙a8 23.♙h4

ignoring the pawn on a3 and trying to

launch a king side attack. Of course, f5 is a

good post for the knight making any

sacrifice on h6 deadly, but White will need

to rearrange her pieces to transport the

queen to the kingside, which will allow

black to transfer her pieces as well

[a simple move like 23.♙b3 is just nice

for White ♙xe4?! 24.♙xe4 ♞xe4

25.♙e1 d5 26.♙xe5 looks great for her]

23...♙xa3 24.♙f5 ♞d7 25.♞e3

[25.♙xb5?! ♞xb5 26.♙c7 ♞d8 27.♙xb7

♞d3 28.♙c1 ♙a4 29.♙xd6 ♙a2

gives black a lot of piece activity and

initiate for the pawn]

25...♞e6 26.♙xe7+

[26.♙xb5 ♙xb5 27.♙xe7+ ♙h8 28.♞f1

followed by Nc6 and pushing the pawn

would have now secured White's

advantage.]

26...♙xe7 27.♙d5 ♙xd5 28.exd5

I don't really understand White's last few

moves. Not only did she exchange her

much better knight for the e7 bishop, but

she also got rid of both the d5 and d6

weaknesses with Nd5, justifying the

exchange on e7 for Black even more. The

knight on b7 is still terrible and White has

more space, but I would have preferred

keeping things more fluid in the center.

Let's not forget that Black is also up a

healthy pawn. **♞g4 29.♙d2 f5 30.♙dc2**

f4 31.♙c7 ♙f6 32.♞b6 ♙d8

[32...♙c5! a liberating move, solving the

main problem in black's position.

Impossible is 33.bxc5 fxg3 34.cxd6

gxf2+ with a crushing attack]

33.♙b2 ♙d3 34.♙c2 ♞f5 35.♙a2

White self-destructed and doesn't know

what to do anymore, which is quite

understandable because Black's Nf7-g5-h3

plan seems unstoppable. **♙f7 36.♞f1**

♙g5 37.♙a7

[37.♞xd3 ♞xd3 grabbing the exchange

loses since after the simple recapture

White's king is too vulnerable]

37...fxg3 38.hxg3 ♙f3+ now it's just over

39.♙h1 ♙g6 40.♞xd3 ♙h5+ 41.♙g2

♞h3+

0-1

Taizhou 02: Draw after 33 moves

Round 2 on 2013/09/12 at 15.00

SNo.	Name	Rtg	Res.	Name	Rtg	SNo.
2	GM Hou, Yifan	2609	1/2-1/2	GM Ushenina, Anna	2500	



9/12/2013 – The second game of the Women's World championship match finished in a draw after 33 moves and 2,5 hours of play. Hou Yifan had white pieces and decided to play somewhat new in compared to previous games against Anna Ushenina's Sicilian. Soon Sveshnikov variation appeared on the board and the challenger didn't manage to get any edge out of the opening. After many exchanges the game was converted into the drawish ending. After 2 games the score is 1, 5:0,5 in favor of Hou Yifan. On the 13th of September the players have a rest day.

 Hou Yifan
 Ushenina
 [Abrahamyan, Tatev]

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♟xd4 ♘f6 So far this year Ushenina has been playing the Najdorf almost exclusively, but it's understandable why she would opt out for a quieter line after a tough loss. **5.♟c3 e5 6.♟db5 d6 7.♟g5 a6 8.♟a3 b5 9.♟d5** the quieter move. Bf6 is a whole other huge theoretical line **♟e7 10.♟xf6 ♟xf6 11.c3**

[Lately 11.c4 has become the newest trend in this line. So after something like b4 12.♟c2 a5 13.g3 0-0 14.♟g2 ♟g5 15.0-0 we arrive at a typical position for this move, where White has even more control of the d5 square but gives up the d4 square somewhat]

11...♟g5 12.♟c2 ♟e7 not the most popular move, but tried both by Carlsen and Radjabov. The other main options are:

[12...0-0 13.a4 bxa4 14.♟xa4 a5 15.♟c4 ♟b8 16.♟a2 ♟h8 17.♟ce3 g6 18.h4 ♟xh4 19.g3 ♟g5 20.f4

happened in the famous Kramnik-Van Wely game from Wijk Aan Zee in 2005 where White managed to launch a powerful king side attack and swing over his a2 rook]

[12...♟b8 13.a4 bxa4 14.♟cb4 ♟xb4 15.♟xb4 ♟d7 16.♟xa6 with a playable position for both sides.]

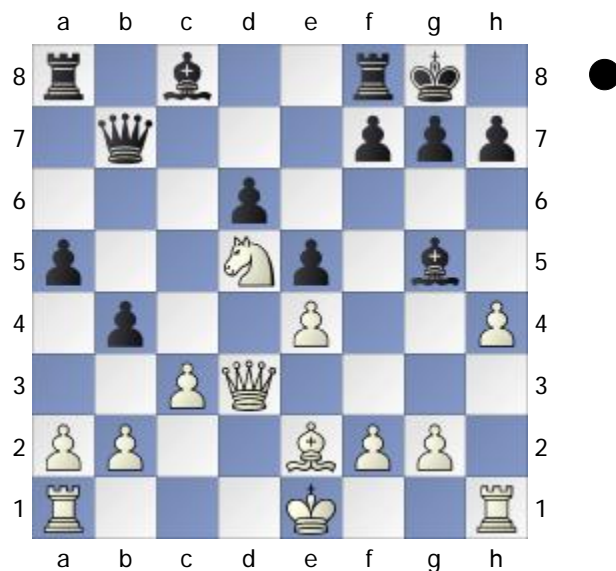
13.♟cb4 0-0 14.♟e2

[14.a4 bxa4 15.♟xa4 a5 16.♟xe7+ ♟xe7 17.♟d5 ♟b7 and even with the nice knight on d5 and a1 of Black weak pawns, due to White's underdevelopment, Black gets enough counterplay by quickly attacking White's queen side 18.♟a2 ♟e6 19.♟c4 ♟fc8]

14...a5 15.♟xe7+ ♟xe7 16.♟d5 ♟b7

this is a great square for the queen: keeping an eye on the d5 knight, discouraging the a4 pawn push and supporting the b4 push for Black **17.♟d3 b4 18.h4** Diagram

(Diagram)

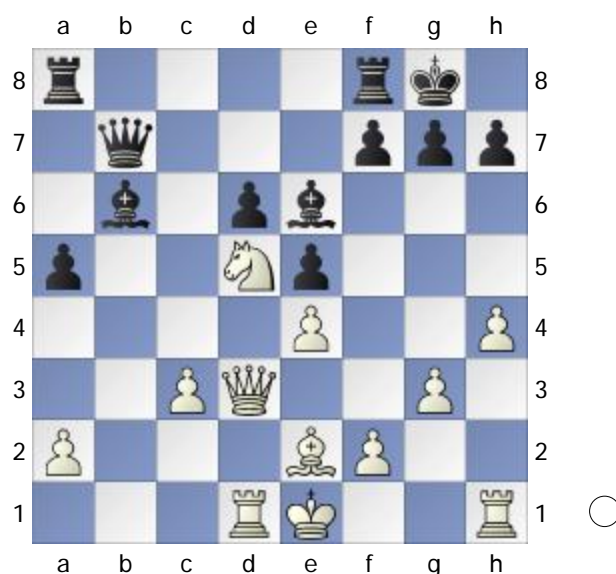


usually h4 played in type of positions where the black Bishop is forced to go to h6 and is out of the game. Here, it doesn't make as much sense since the bishop can swing over to b6 **♟d8 19.g3 ♟e6 20.♟d1 bxc3 21.bxc3 ♟b6** Diagram

[here, I already prefer Black's position.

The c3 weakness counters the d6 weakness, and after the d8 Bishop goes to b6, Black can start thinking about f5.

21...♟c8 is a better try to keep the game going]



22.♟xb6 Good decision. Otherwise, White can end up in a very unpleasant position **♟xb6 23.♟xd6 ♟xd6 24.♟xd6 ♟xa2 25.♟d2 ♟fb8 26.♟a1 ♟b2+ 27.♟e3 ♟c8 28.c4 ♟f8 29.♟d2 ♟xd2 30.♟xd2 ♟xc4**

31. | **xa5** ♗xe2 32. ♖xe2 | **c2+** 33. ♖e3

f6 So far, we've been seeing Ushenina getting better positions out of the opening but not being able to utilize them. If this trend continues, she's very likely to even out the score of the match very soon. The day after tomorrow will be another exciting game as she has the White pieces.

1/2-1/2

Taizhou 03: Hou Yifan increases her lead

SNo.		Name	Rtg	Res.		Name	Rtg	SNo.
1	GM	Ushenina, Anna	2500	0-1	GM	Hou, Yifan	2609	



9/14/2013 – Hou Yifan won the third game of the Women's World Championship Match and is now two points ahead of Anna Ushenina. Although both opponents seemed well-prepared in the sharp line of Nimzo-Indian, Black's 15...Rc8 forced World Champion to sink into deep thought. After 40 minutes Anna came out with dubious decision which turned out to be the start of her troubles. Hou Yifan didn't miss her chance to fight for initiative, made few very precise decisions and after 24 moves the game was over.

Ushenina,A

Hou Yifan

WCh Women 2013 (3)

E32

2500

2609

14.09.2013

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♖c3 ♗b4 4.♟c2
0-0 5.e4 d5 6.e5 ♖e4 7.♗d3 c5 8.♖f3
cxd4 9.♖xd4 ♖d7 10.♗f4 ♖dc5

This is also a good way of playing the variation.

[This variation became somewhat popular in the early 2000s. The idea to establish a strong pawn center is always a key feature of the Nimzo-Indian, but it has been seen that Black can break it pretty quickly, at least in this case. The remaining question then becomes how well White can retain his remaining center, specifically his e5 pawn.

10...♟b6 11.♖b3 ♟c7 12.0-0 ♖xe5
13.♗xe4 dxe4 14.♟xe4 ♗xc3 15.bxc3
f6 16.♟fe1 ♟xc4 17.♗xe5 ♟xe4

18.♟xe4 fxe5 19.♟xe5 This endgame is not as unpleasant as it looks at first for Black and ended in a draw in Anand-Kramnik, Moscow 2013]

11.0-0 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♗d7

[12...♖xd3 13.♟xd3 b6 14.cxd5 exd5
15.♟ad1 ♟d7 gave Black a very good position in Holt-Onischuk, US Championship 2013]

13.♗e2 ♖a4 14.cxd5 exd5 15.c4 ♟c8

Strangely Ushenina sank into thought here, despite the fact that this position has been played before. 16.♟b3 dxc4!?

For the first time it is Hou Yifan that uncorks an idea that is good and new.

[Previously Alekseev had proven that immediately placing the knight on c3 also gave equality. 16...♖ac3 17.cxd5 ♗a4
18.♟xb7 ♟c7 19.♟a6 ♟xd5 20.♗e3
♟xe5 And only Black can be better, although the game was eventually drawn. Gundavaa,B-Alekseev, E Kazan 2013:1/2 (46)-1/2 (67)]

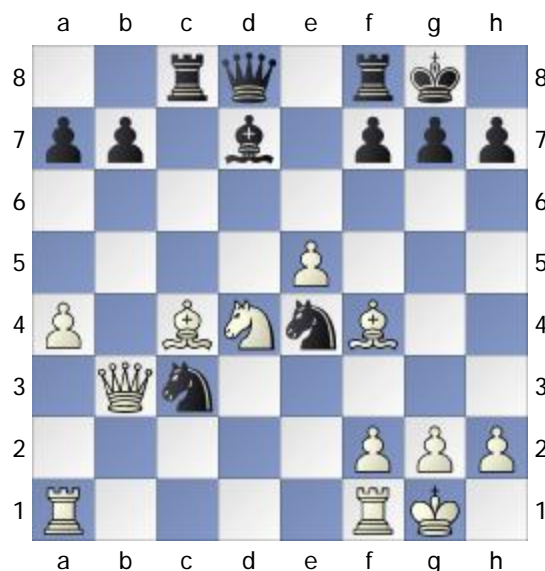
17.♗xc4? A mistake already

[17.♟xb7 ♖ac5 18.♟b2 (18.♟xa7? is too greedy, the queen runs out of squares. ♟a8!-+) 18...♖d3 19.♗xd3
cxd3 looks more pleasant for Black in my opinion.]

17...♖ac3! White is surprisingly helpless against the threat of ♖a4, either distracting the queen from the defense of the bishop on c4 or taking the knight on d4. 18.a4

Diagram

[18.♗xf7+ ♟xf7 19.e6 "I need to check this line with my computer to have a final conclusion," said World Champion. ♗xe6
20.♖xe6 ♟f6 is clearly better for Black, according to the engines. Mainly White has a big issue to solve in how clumsy her pieces are compared to the powerful knights that dominate the board.]



18...♗xa4! 19.♟xa4 ♖xa4 20.♖f5

[After 20.♟xa4 ♖c3! two white pieces are hanging, and one of them will fall:
(20...♟xd4 21.♗xf7+-) 21.♟b4
(21.♟xa7 ♟xc4) 21...♟xd4 22.♗xf7+
♟xf7 23.♟xd4 ♖e2+ and it's curtains for White.]

20...♖ac3 White simply doesn't have enough compensation for the material she has lost. 21.e6?! Active, but immediately losing. ♟xc4! The Chinese calculates accurately, and now it's all over. 22.♟xc4 b5 23.♟b3

[23.e7 bxc4 24.exd8 ♖e2+ 25.♟h1
♟xd8 and the c-pawn will march to victory.]

23...♟d3 Setting up a deadly discovered attack with ♖e2+. White is helpless.

24.♟xf7+ ♟xf7 Losing with the White pieces after 24 moves with the amount of seconds Ushenina has brought is a tough

blow for her. She will have to start seeking victories with both colors to catch up with the challenger.

0-1

Taizhou 04: draw in 31, Hou leads by two points



SNo.		Name	Rtg	Res.		Name	Rtg	SNo.
1	GM	Hou, Yifan	2609	½-½	GM	Ushenina, Anna	2500	

The fourth game of the Women's World Championship Match finished in a draw. Sicilian, Keres Attack appeared in the game and already after 14 moves the queens were traded. Former World Champion could have tried to create more problems for her opponent to solve but preferred playing without risk and the game finished in a draw after three-time repetition. Every draw brings the challenger closer to her goal, while the World Champion needs to start seeking victories to catch up with Hou Yifan.

After 4 games Hou Yifan is leading with 3 points. Anna Ushenina has 1 point.

On the 16th of September the players have a rest day. The match will continue on the 17th of September. Hou Yifan will have white pieces again. The measure of changing the colors after the fourth game has a goal to prevent the same player to have white pieces after each of the rest days throughout the match because this might give her an advantage in preparation.



 **Hou Yifan**
 **Ushenina**
[Abrahamyan, Tatev]

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♟xd4
♟f6 5.♟c3 a6 now that Hou Yifan has
 increased her lead by 2 points, Ushenina
 must feel even more pressure to try to win
 with either color. She's been playing the
 Najdorf with great success for the past
 couple of years **6.♟e3 e6 7.g4**
 Hou Yifan has tried different set up here,
 but this would be a first **h6 8.♞f3**

[more common is 8.♟g2 ♟c6 9.h3 ♟e5
 10.♞e2 g5 11.0-0-0 ♟d7 12.f4 gxf4
 13.♟xf4 with complicated, crazy position]
8...♞c7 another rare line not tried by strong
 players very often

[8...♟bd7 now White can't play h4 right
 away due to the Ne5 threat 9.♞h3 e5
 10.♟f5 g6 11.g5 gxf5 12.exf5
 old line that hasn't been played in years]

9.h4 h5 Diagram

[the first new move. 9...♟bd7
 has been tried once and I like it better
 because after g5 Ng4 is still an idea,
 and Black will now have another Knight
 on e5 and more development 10.g5 ♟e5
 11.♞e2 hxg5 12.♟xg5 ♟d7 (12...b5
 securing the c4 square for the knight
 might be more accurate) 13.f4 ♟c6
 Ceschia, I (2257)-Bruno, F (2459)/Forni di
 Sopra op 1st 2011 (3)/1-0]

(Diagram)

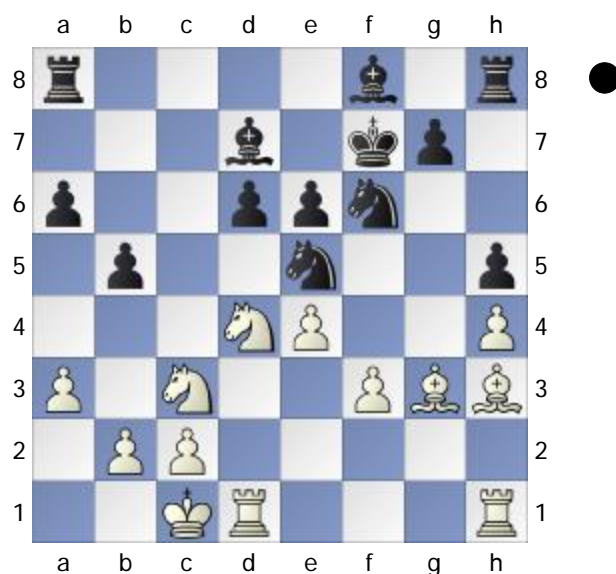
10.g5 ♟g4 11.♟h3 ♟d7 12.g6 ♟de5

so now Black has reached a similar
 position she could have reached with
 earlier Nbd7, but now with a weakness on
 e6 **13.gxf7+ ♞xf7 14.♞xf7+ ♞xf7**

[14...♟xf7 would be more accurate
 discouraging Bg5 and allowing Black to
 transfer the dark square bishop to f6,
 where it will attack more targets
 15.♞e2 ♟e7 and it's not so easy for
 White to take advantage for Black's weak
 pawns, since h4 is a major weakness as
 well]



15.♟g5 ♟d7 16.f3 ♟f6 17.0-0-0 ♟h7
18.♟f4 ♟f6 Black doesn't seem to have a
 good plan here and is just shuffling around,
 whereas White is rearranging her pieces
 and putting them on good squares. Next,
 the c3 knight will head to f4. It's hard to
 suggest any great improvements for Black.
 She needs to see what White is doing and
 react to that **19.♟g3 b5 20.a3?** Diagram
 [strange decision. White's idea is to play
 20.♟ce2 anyways, so why waste time
 with a3? ♟c4 doesn't make sense here
 due to simple 21.b3 ♟b6 22.e5]

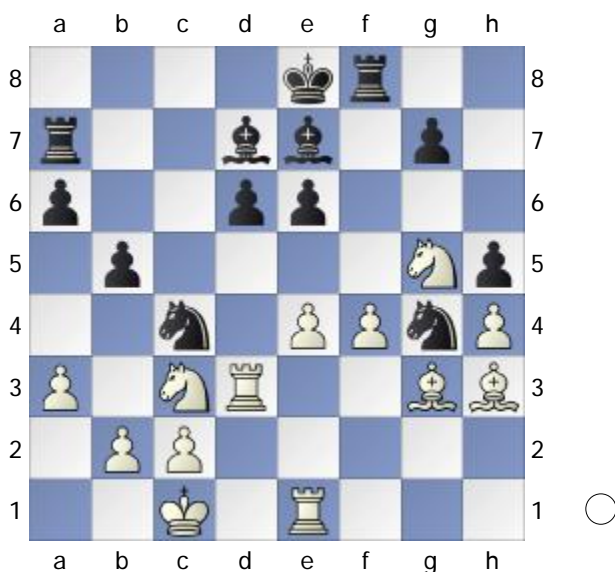


20...♟c4 21.f4

[21.♟ce2 ♟c8 and due to the a3 pawn
 push, playing b3 becomes impossible,
 giving back enough time to untangle]
21...♟g4 22.♟f3 ♟a7 unnecessary

[simple 22...¥e7 would suffice]

23. ♖d3 ¥e7 24. ♘g5+ ♕e8 25. ♗e1 ♜f8
Diagram



26. ♘d1 White has given away all of her advantage. All of Black's pieces are well placed now ♜b7 27. ♗e2 g6 28. ♘h7 ♜f7 29. ♘g5 ♜f8 30. ♘h7 ♜f7 31. ♘g5 ♜f8
Given the pressure that Ushenina must feel to win games and the fact that Hou Yifan has won both games with Black, the next round is going to be an exciting and bloody one
1/2-1/2

Taizhou 05: draw in 61, Ushenina under pressure

SNo.	Name	Rtg	Res.	Name	Rtg	SNo.
2	GM Hou, Yifan	2609	1/2-1/2	GM Ushenina, Anna	2500	

The fifth game of the Women's World Championship Match also finished in a draw. According to regulations and drawing of colors, Hou Yifan had white pieces for the second time in a row. Once again Keres Attack appeared on the board and both teams seemed ready for theoretical battle. It was Anna Ushenina who chose another line compare to the previous game, nevertheless, as in the fourth round, the game was transferred to the ending quite quickly. Anna Ushenina managed to get quite promising position but missed her chance to fight for advantage after 21...Rh4. Hou Yifan was defending precisely and didn't give another chance to her opponent. Hou Yifan has 3,5 points and Anna Ushenina 1,5 points after five games.



Hou Yifan has just deviated from the previous game and played 8.h4,
leaving Anna Ushenina pondering

□ Hou,Yifan
 ■ Ushenina,Anna

Taizhao Women's World Championship (5.1)
 [Sachdev,Tania]

Going into game five Hou Yifan gets white again. The reason for breaking color every four games is to prevent the same player getting white after every rest day. **1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♟xd4 ♟f6 5.♟c3 a6** Ushenina employs her preferred Najdorf. She has a lot of experience in the line and a good feel for it. Besides it is one of the more daredevil lines for Black, a need of the hour for Anna. **6.♟e3 e6 7.g4 h6 8.h4**

[In game four Yifan tried 8.♟f3 ♟c7 9.h4 h5!?N Black got a comfortable game and it ended in a draw without much trouble]

8... ♟c6

[8...h5 The interesting idea of countering White's h4 with h5 works better when White's queen is committed on the f3 square, as in the previous game. Here it doesn't work as well as White can deploy pieces better. 9.g5 ♟g4 10.♟d2 ♟c6 11.♟xc6 bxc6 12.♟f4 ♟b6 13.0-0-0 ♟xf2 (13...♟xf2?? 14.♟e3+-) 14.♟xd6 ♟xd2+ 15.♟xd2 ♟xd6 16.♟xd6 With a nice endgame for white]

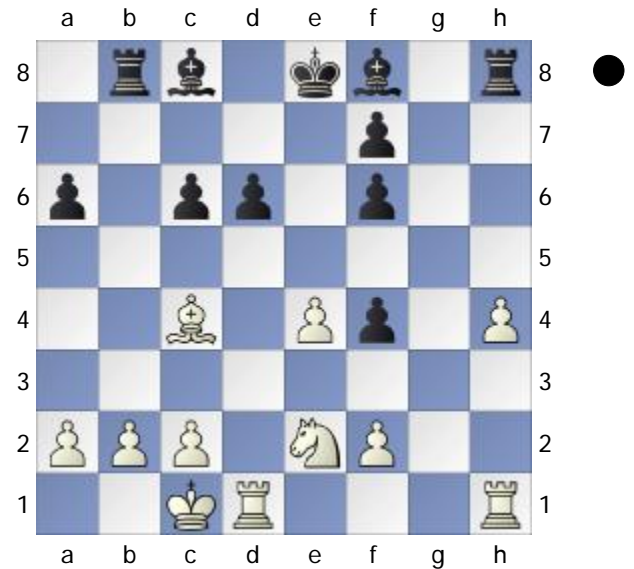
9.♟xc6 bxc6 10.♟f3 h5 11.gxh5

[11.g5?! ♟g4 12.0-0-0 ♟b8 and Black will generate play on the queenside, while it's more difficult for White to do her bit against the black king.]

11... ♟xh5 12.0-0-0 ♟b8 A gentle reminder to be slightly worried. **13.♟c4 ♟f6 14.♟g2 ♟f4 15.♟g5 e5! 16.♟xf6 gxf6 17.♟xf4 exf4** Three islands including tripled pawns (Jonathan Rowson called it a train without an engine)! Black clearly doesn't have the most gorgeous pawn structure. However the bishop pair, the open files and Whites weak h-pawn can balance it out, if Black creates quick counterplay. So it was crucial for Ushenina to play actively to neutralize the structural disadvantage. And...she does it well!

18.♟e2 Diagram

♟b4 19.♟d3 f5!? A nice break 20.exf5



[20.c3 Not sure what Anna had in mind for c3 but it possibly could have been

A) 20... ♟a4 Possible but not delightful after 21.♟d4 ♟xa2 22.♟c2

Avoiding rook exchange so as to create attacking possibilities on black's king fxe4 (22...♟d7 23.♟xf5²) 23.♟xe4 c5 24.♟d5 Looks dangerous for black ;

B) 20... ♟xe4!? 21.♟xe4 fxe4 22.♟de1 d5 23.f3 ♟d6© The strong central pawns and double bishop is enough compensation. Enough to intimidate Hou Yifan too.]

20...f3 21.♟c3 Diagram

[Computer suggestion 21.♟g1

Also leads to a comfortable position for black ♟h6+ 22.♟b1 ♟g7 23.b3 ♟bxh4 24.♟xh4 ♟xh4 25.♟xf3 ♟f4

Though holdable but black's dark squared bishop won't make life easy for white]

(Diagram)

21... ♟h6+?!

[21... ♟bxh4! This was Ushenina's chance! Keep it simple. The natural capture gives black to fight for some real advantage. 22.♟xh4 (22.♟he1+ ♟d8 23.♟e4 ♟h2³) 22... ♟xh4 23.♟e1+ ♟d8 24.♟e4 d5 25.♟d2 ♟h3 26.c3 ♟c5 27.♟f1 ♟e7³ And if nothing else, black will trouble white for a long time.]

Taizhou 06: Hou Yifan wins, leads by three points

Round 6



SNo.		Name	Rtg	Res.		Name	Rtg	SNo.
1	GM	Ushenina, Anna	2500	0-1	GM	Hou, Yifan	2609	

Women's World Champion Anna Ushenina lost the third game with white pieces and let her opponent to increase the lead in the Women's World Championship Match by 3 points. The position became very complex after the opening and as in the previous games Anna had time troubles before the first time control. Hou Yifan masterfully used her chance and went for a sharp continuation. Anna started to make mistakes and her position became lost. World Champion made the 40th move on the board but lost on time.



Reigning women's world champion Anna Ushenina, whose mood is wonderfully captured in the following series by *Anastasiya Karlovich* – pictures that require no captions.



 **Ushenina**
 **Hou Yifan**
[Abrahamyan, Tatev]

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♙f3 deviating from Nimzo, which has brought nothing but trouble to Ushenina **b6 4.g3 ♜b7** this would be the first time Hou Yifan has tried this move. Usually she goes for the more popular 4...Ba6. Seems like surprising the opponent early on is the theme of the match. **5.♞g2 ♞e7 6.♙c3 0-0 7.♙c2 c5 8.d5 exd5 9.♙h4**

[9.♙g5 h6 10.♙xd5 (10.h4 has been tried by Grischuk and Ponomarev, but doesn't lead to much after ♙a6 11.♙xd5 ♞xd5 12.cxd5 ♞d6 and it's not easy for White to castle) 10...♞xd5 11.cxd5 hxg5 12.d6 ♙c6 13.dxe7 ♙xe7 14.♞xg5 d5 with a playable position for both sides]

9...♙c6

[9...b5 has been tried several times 10.cxd5 b4 11.♙f5 d6 (11...bxc3?! 12.♙xe7+ ♙xe7 13.d6) 12.♙e4 ♙xd5 13.0-0 and White has good compensation for the pawn since the d6 pawn is a huge weakness and it's hard for Black to untangle]

10.cxd5 ♙d4 11.♙d1 ♙e8 12.♙f3 ♙xf3+ 13.♞xf3 d6 14.0-0 ♙c7 15.a4 a6 all of this has been played before and it looks like that White didn't achieve anything out of the opening **16.♙b1**

[16.♙b3 going after the b6 pawn can lead to trouble ♙d7 17.♙xb6 ♙ab8 18.♙a5 ♞d8 and the white queen can't be very comfortable]

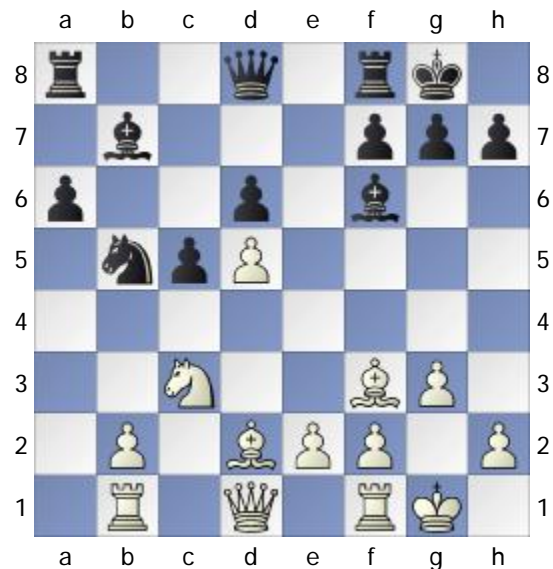
16...♞f6 now we have a Benoni like position where Black is going to get in b5 and the d6 weakness is not easy to target **17.♞d2** a little too passive, but Ushenina is probably hoping to get in b4 somehow

[17.♞f4 is a better square of the bishop]

17...b5 18.axb5 ♙xb5?! Diagram

[I don't see what's wrong with the simple 18...axb5 this looks like a dream Benoni position with the open a-file and no threats to Black's position 19.b4 c4³ and now it's hard for white to take

advantage of the weakness of the c6 square, since it's not clear how the Knight will reach d4. Black has the simple idea of Qd7, Ra3 and doubling the rooks on the a file.]



19.♞g2 ♞c8 20.♙e4 ♙e8 21.♙xf6+

no need to rush with this capture. The Bishop is not going anywhere. White can better prepare with

[21.♙e1 first]

21...♙xf6 22.e4 a5 23.♙a1 ♞d7

it's still easier to play with Black. If White's b pawn gets traded with the a pawn, the c pawn will become a strong passed pawn. White's Bishop pair is irrelevant in this position since the g2 Bishop is locked in by her own pawns **24.♙a2** Anna doesn't want to allow the trade so easily

[24.♙xa5 ♙xb2]

24...a4 25.♙e1 h6 26.♞e3 a3 27.♙d2

[27.bxa3?? ♙c3]

27...axb2 28.♙xb2 ♙c3 29.f3 ♙a3

30.♞f2 ♙b5 31.♙eb1

[1 31.f4 now the g2 Bishop can move]

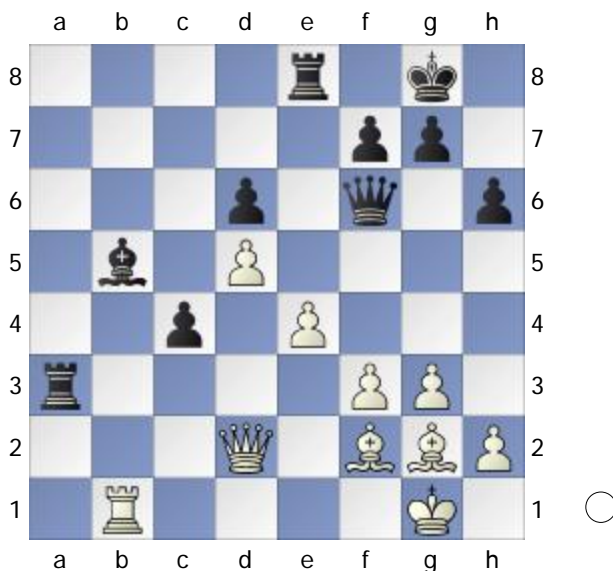
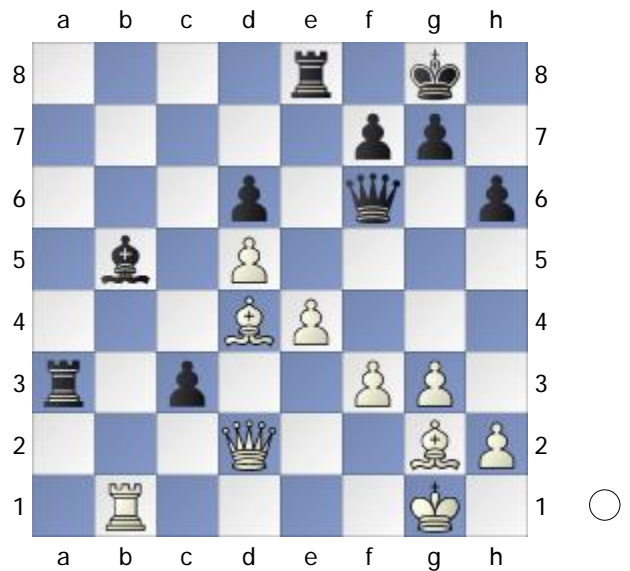
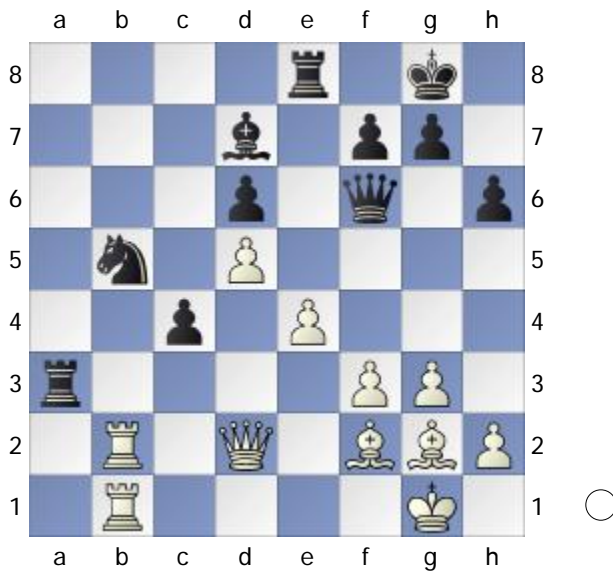
31...c4 Diagram

(Diagram)

32.♙xb5 ♞xb5 Diagram

(Diagram)

33.♞d4?? going for activity, but alas missing the Black's move



board but lost on time. Hou Yifan wins with black for the third time. One more win will clinch her the title with 3 rounds to go! It will be interesting to see what Ushenina is going to try next

0-1

[33.£b4 ¦a2 34.£xb5 ¦xe4 35.¦f1 ¦ee2 36.£xc4 £b2 37.£c8+ ¢h7 38.£f5+ and everything holds together tactically]

[33.¦xb5??? ¦a1+ 34.¥f1 £xf3 and the combination of the strong c4 pawn, White's vulnerable King and the weakness of White's pawns is going to be devastating]

33...c3-+ Diagram

(Diagram)

34.£f2 £g5 35.f4

[35.¦xb5 £c1+ 36.¥f1 £d1 and the c pawn runs]

35...£g4 36.¦e1 ¦ea8 37.h3 £c8 38.e5

¦a1 39.exd6 c2 40.¥xa1 The World Champion made her 40th move on the

Taizhou 07: Hou Yifan wins the 7th game and the Match!

Round 7

SNo.	Name	Rtg	Res.	Name	Rtg	SNo.
2	GM Hou, Yifan	2609	1-0	GM Ushenina, Anna	2500	

The 7th game of the Women's World Championship Match finished in favor of Hou Yifan (China). Hou Yifan wins the World championship match against Anna Ushenina (Ukraine) with 5.5 – 1.5 score and becomes the World Champion.

Anna Ushenina employed a bizarre variation of the Najdorf, in hopes of taking Hou Yifan out of her preparation. Despite the early games giving the Ukrainian player everything she wanted from the opening, it became clear game by game that these opening advantages did not exist anymore and Ushenina started suffering in the Keres Attack of the Sicilian. Trying to avoid that she played 6...Nbd7. Yifan followed the game Ponomarev-Topalov, Thessaloniki 2013 and obtained a pleasant edge. Black's crippled pawns were simply not compensated. With precise play the Challenger was able to wrap up the game and the championship in forty moves.

The match was to consist of 10 games but Hou Yifan got the decisive 5.5 points already after 7 games. In the last, seventh round, Anna Ushenina needed to make a draw or win to stay in the match, but the Chinese player got stable advantage after the opening and was accurate to not to give chances for her opponent.



Hou Yifan

Ushenina,A
 WCh Women 2013 (7) 20.09.2013
[Paehtz, Elisabeth]

B90

2609

2500

When comparing the latest World Cup in Tromso where White scored the usual statistic- This match went from the very beginning for black dominance. The seventh game of the championship was not only the last and decisive one, but also the very first White victory. **1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♟xd4 ♟f6 5.♟c3 a6 6.♟e3 ♟bd7** After two successful Naidorfs with 6...e6, Anna tried the rather uncommon knight move 6...Nbd7. From the psychological point of view, however, I think it was her only chance, as repeating the old games would have probably resulted in an encounter with Chinese preparation and add even more confidence to her superior opponent.

[6...e6]

[6...e5]

[or 6...♟g4 are the usual responses.]

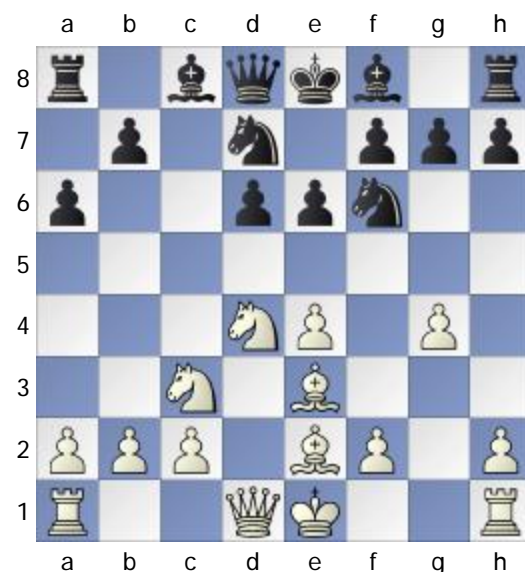
7.♟e2 e6 8.g4 Diagram

[8.0-0?! then Black would achieve an excellent position after b5 9.a3 and ♟b7 - a dream set up for any Sicilian player!]

[8.f4!? would have been chosen by experienced Scheveningen players, because now after b5 9.♟f3 White would try to take advantage of the open diagonal. I bet this was what the Ukrainian Team had prepared, a complicated tactical position where Hou could easily go astray. For example ♟b7 (9...b4?! 10.♟c6 ♟c7 11.♟xb4 ♟b8 12.♟d3 ♟xb2 13.♟d2²)

A) 10.a3!? This game, by the way, reveals which of her two coaches was responsible for this line. ♟c7 (10...♟c8 11.0-0 ♟xc3 12.bxc3 ♟xe4 Again a typical Sicilian motive; however here I prefer White, as the pawn structure a6-b5 will become a problem for Black sooner or later.) 11.♟e2 e5 12.♟f5 g6 13.fxe5 dxe5 14.♟h6 ♟c5 15.g4 ♟xe3 16.♟xe3 ♟b6 17.♟e2 ♟fd7 18.♟f1 ♟f8 19.g5 ♟c5 20.♟xc5

♟xc5 21.♟g4 ♟bd7 22.0-0 0-0-0
 23.b4 ♟xe4 24.♟xe4 ♟xe4 25.c4
 ♟c6 26.♟d6 ♟c7 27.c5 e4 28.♟f6
 ♟e5 29.♟xd8 ♟xd8 30.♟g4 ♟f3
 31.♟xf3 exf3 32.♟e5 ♟e4 33.♟xf3
 ♟d5 34.h4 ♟c6 35.♟f2 a5 36.♟e1
 ♟f5 37.♟d2 ♟e4 38.♟c2 ♟xd2
 39.♟xd2 ♟d5 40.♟c3 f5 41.gxf6
 ♟e6 42.bxa5 ♟xf6 43.♟d4 ♟a8
 44.♟b4 ♟e6 45.♟d3 h5 46.♟e5 g5
 47.hxg5 h4 48.g6 ♟f6 49.c6 h3
 50.c7 ♟b7 51.♟g4+ ♟xg6 52.♟c5
 ♟f5 53.♟b6 1-0 Kononenko,D-
 Korobov,A/Poltava UKR 2009 ;
B) 10.e5 ♟xf3 and here the main line
 goes for 11.♟xf3?! which looks
 tempting indeed, but gets White in
 trouble after (11.♟xf3 dxe5 12.fxe5
 ♟g4 13.♟d4 ♟c7 14.♟e2 ♟c5÷)
 11...dxe5 12.♟c6 ♟c7 13.♟xe5 and
 ♟c8³ where Black will be able to prove
 a small advantage in the long run, due
 to the rather weak c-file of White.]



A very interesting choice if we skip her obvious g4 preferences in the previous games. The position will remind a lot of players of the popular Scheveningen System, however with the difference that the knight is placed on d7 instead of c6. The idea behind her move is that if White plays carelessly with **8...h6 9.f4** [For some players 9.h4 may look more logical than the text move. However it does not lead to much after b5 10.♟f3

♠e5 11.g5 ♠fd7³]

9...g5 A move which every Najdorf player should know. The idea is very simple: Black fights for control of the important central square e5.

[9...g6!?]

[9...b5?! seems way too risky in my opinion. 10.g5 hxg5 11.fxg5 b4 12.gxf6 bxc3 13.♠xe6 ♠xf6 (13...fxe6 14.♠h5+ with mate.) 14.♠c7+ ♠d8 15.♠xa8 ♠h4+ 16.♠f2 ♠xe4 17.0-0²]

10.f5 ♠e5 11.h3!? Quite a cautious choice for Yifan's style.

[Maybe with a score of 0-0 the usually attacking Chinese girl would have gone for the more aggressive 11.fxe6!? fxe6 12.♠f3 ♠exg4 13.♠d4 ♠c7 14.h3 ♠e5 15.♠xe5 dxe5 16.♠h5+ ♠e7 17.♠e3!?² ?!]

11...b5 12.a3 ♠e7 13.fxe6 fxe6 14.♠f3 ♠fd7 This move has not been played before, though I think it looks quite logical to keep the control of the square e5.

[14...♠b7 15.♠xe5 dxe5 16.♠d3 ♠c7 17.h4 ♠c5 18.♠e2 ♠xe3 19.♠xe3 ♠xg4 20.♠g3 h5 21.0-0-0 0-0-0 22.hxg5 ♠g7 23.♠h4 ♠dg8 24.♠e2 ♠xg5+ 25.♠xg5 ♠xg5 26.♠h4 ♠f6 27.♠f1 ♠h6 28.b4 ♠g2 29.♠f3 ♠g3 30.a4 ♠c6 31.axb5 axb5 32.♠e2 ♠g5 33.♠d2 ♠h7 34.♠g1 ♠xg1 35.♠xg1 ♠d8 36.♠e3 ♠e8 37.♠e2 ♠a7 38.♠f3 ♠g4+ 39.♠d2 ♠e7 40.♠e1 ♠f6 41.♠d3 ♠d6 42.♠c5 ♠a1 43.♠h3 ♠b1 44.c3 ♠g1 45.♠b7+ ♠e7 46.♠c5 ♠g2 47.♠e1 ♠g5 48.♠f2 ♠c6 49.♠g3 ♠xg3 50.♠xg3 ♠e8 51.♠h4 ♠c6 52.♠f3 ♠d6 53.♠g5 ♠e7 54.♠h4 ♠d6 55.♠g5 ♠e7 56.♠h4 ♠d6 1/2-1/2 (56)

Ponomarev, R (2742)-Topalov, V (2793)
Thessaloniki 2013]

15.♠d2

[15.♠xe5 ♠xe5 16.♠d2 would have been more precise.]

15...♠xf3+ 16.♠xf3 Black has a better option than ♠e5?!

[16...♠g7! 17.0-0-0 ♠e5=]

17.♠e2 ♠g7 18.0-0-0 ♠f7 If Black must retreat her knight back to f7 one will easily understand that something has gone terribly wrong. I think this is the moment

where Anna lost control of the game.

[18...♠g6!? Of course psychologically it is hard to sacrifice a pawn, but still it gives much better chances as the queens will be exchanged and Black's king is no longer in the dilemma of where and how to castle. 19.♠xd6 ♠xd6 20.♠xd6 ♠e5 21.♠d2 0-0²]

19.♠d4 ♠e5 20.♠xe5 dxe5 21.h4!

An excellent moment to open the position.

gxh4 22.♠e1 ♠a7 This move made me smile because those of you who checked Anna's games must have realized that this move gets special attention from her.

[22...♠b7!? 23.♠xh4 ♠d8 24.♠d3 0-0 25.♠h5,]

[22...0-0!? 23.♠xh4 ♠b7²]

23.♠xh4 ♠d7 24.♠h5

[Some of you may have considered 24.♠d3 keeping both rooks on the board in order to concentrate White's power on the kingside later on. It has some logic of course, but practically speaking White was right to neglect that option as after b4 25.axb4 ♠xb4 White faces unnecessary disturbances on the b and c-file.]

24...♠g8 25.♠b1 ♠c5 26.♠h3

A clever move which poses the indirect threat of Rc3. A clever move which puts the thread of the indirect "Rc3". ♠b6

27.♠h4

[Also interesting would have been

27.♠xd7!? ♠xd7 28.♠f3 ♠g5 29.♠f6±]

27...♠xd1+ 28.♠xd1

[28.♠xd1 a5]

28...♠b7 29.♠c3

[29.♠c3 gets my preferences as White's pieces are in harmony again.]

29...♠d8

[The best chance for Anna was perhaps

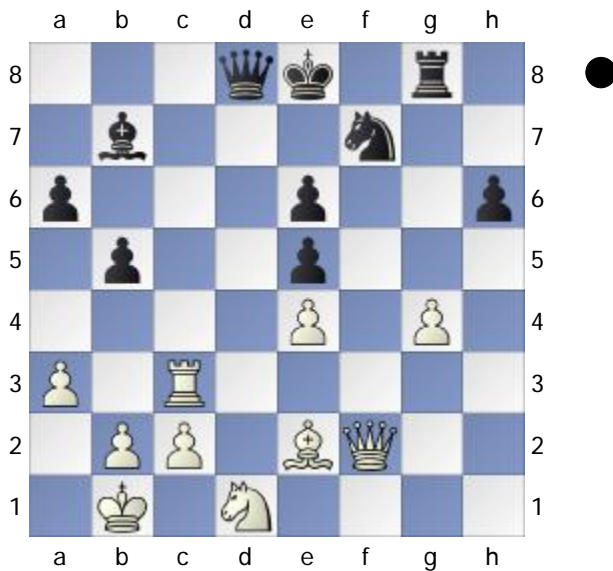
29...♠xe4 30.♠c8+ ♠d8 31.♠xh6 ♠d7 32.♠c3 ♠g6]

30.♠f2 Diagram

(Diagram)

♠d4? The decisive mistake. Black should never give up the control of f6-square.

[Black missed a good opportunity with



30... ♖g5 for example 31. ♗d3 ♜c7
 32. ♜f6 ♝xe4 33. ♗c3 ♜g7 34. ♜f2²
 (34. ♗c8+? would give away the
 advantage ♜d7³)]

31. ♜f6± Attacking e6 and threatening Rc7.
♜d6

[31... ♜d7!? 32. ♖f2 ♜f8 33. ♗f3 ♜e8±]

32. ♖f2 Bringing the last piece into the
 battle. ♜f8 **33. ♗f3 ♗g7**

[Now 33... ♜e8 does not work as the
 queen is not on d7.]

34. ♜xh6 ♜g8 35. ♜f6 ♝c6 36. ♗d3 ♜c5

37. ♗g5 ♖xg5 38. ♖g4

[38. ♗d8+ ♜h7 39. ♖g4+-]

38... ♖f7

[38... ♜e7 39. ♗d8+ ♝e8 40. ♗a8+-]

39. ♜xe6 ♜g1+ 40. ♗d1

1-0

Interview with Women's World Champion



Hou Yifan: “this match was not as easy as people might think.”

The interview taken by Anastasiya Karlovich on the next day after the decisive 7th game of the Women’s World Championship Match. 19 year old World Champion Hou Yifan talks about her preparation, her opponent Anna Ushenina, the match and her attitude on chess and life.

When I saw you in Beijing in July during Grand Prix tournament it seemed you were not really busy with preparation for the Match. Was it just my impression?

Actually I started my preparation few days after I came back from Tromso. In total it lasted less than one month. The only difference in my preparation was that I knew my opponent and it was a bit more specific. We didn’t have much time, so we worked on some basic things, some openings.

There is an opinion you don’t really try to outplay your opponent in opening. Do you try to prove you are better in middle game and endgame, same way as Magnus Carlsen does?

Carlsen is famous for being very powerful and much stronger than most of the players in the world in the middle game and endgame. I’m not such a high level player. I believe openings are important but for me it’s also not the most important part of the game, it’s only the first stage and then we have two more.

What do you think about your opponent?

I think she is a strong player. We’ve played several games in the past but for few years we didn’t play at all. I thought if she managed to win the World Championship in knockout it means she is a fighter, she cannot be weak.

After few years break you had a chance to play against Anna during Women Grand Prix in Geneva and you lost that game. What did you feel after? Did you make any conclusions?

At that tournament I lost not only against her, I also lost to some other players. The most important thing was my bad performance, I was not in a good shape and played just terrible. This game didn’t change my attitude to match, in any case I was going to prepare seriously as I try to do before any official event. Anybody who plays not only for fun should pay attention to preparation.

How can you explain your results during the last year? Was it in some way connected with the forthcoming match?

I was not in a good shape for a long period. I don't really know the reason but I thought it was normal in sense that in one moment it was supposed to happen. You cannot always play good and show great results. It also could happen here but what can you do about it, except trying to do your best to get ready for the tournament. I cannot also say that I put too much attention to the match and I didn't care about other tournaments. No, my results were not connected with the match. In 2011 I showed good results before the match with Koneru, so I think I just had a bad period.

Did your results during the last year influence your self-belief?

I'm not the person who cares so much about the results, even I take chess seriously.

Was this period connected with changes in your life? As I know, you started to study in the university.

Yes, I cannot take so much attention to chess as I did before because I have to study as normal student. The only advantage I have is an opportunity not to attend lessons when I participate in the tournaments but I still have to study myself if I miss something. Also it depends on professors, if the person is quite strict and pedantic so I cannot miss a lot.

What did it mean for you to play in Taizhou? What do you think about conditions? Is it important to play on "your field" as in football?

In fact, Taizhou is not my native city. I was born in Xinghua, it's one hour by car from here. Xinghua has at least 1 million inhabitants and many of my relatives still live there. South of China is not so polluted; there is a fresh air here, better food, vegetables. Of course, while playing here I didn't need to change my schedule due to time difference and food was ok for me but in general I think the organization was more or less the same as for any other chess event.

What was your reaction when you learnt that Korobov and Khalifman were going to help Anna Ushenina during the match?

At first when I saw her team I said as many other people did: "Wow! Her team is so strong and so powerful!" I thought at that moment: "Maybe I should be more serious about it? Maybe I should do something different?" (smiles) But then after Tromso I just decided to hire a second by myself to help me preparing.

Did you expect the match to finish so quickly?

Well, I was expecting any situation. I expected it would be difficult, or I would have some difficult moments.

Can you tell which difficult moments did you face during the match?

The first game was very complicated and the fifth game also.

You believed Ushenina's team was strong. Why did you repeat Keres Attack in the 5th game? Wasn't it a bit risky?

It was just reasonable, so I repeated. How can you know that some other surprises are not waiting for you in other variations, other openings? (smiles)

How did it happen that Anna lost three games with white pieces? Do you think it was because of wrong opening choices?

In first two games there was Nimzo-Indian, my main weapon with Black. She didn't lose those games because of openings. It happened later. I can only say that in the third game there was an obvious mistake made by her.

Are you satisfied with the level of play you showed here?

It's ok for me but not perfect. I didn't make big mistakes, I didn't blunder but I also didn't play precisely sometimes. I had worse positions in the games I've mentioned and I think it was because of my inaccurate play.

You had already won two matches – one in Tirana against Humpy Koneru and another one just one day ago. How can you compare them?

I felt happy 2 years ago and I feel happy today because in general I'm glad to win such important tournaments. The match in Tirana was more difficult for me. Last time the first half of the match I had worse and difficult positions and I tried hard to fight back. This time it was more one-sided. At the same time this match was not as easy as people might think, judging only from the outcome. In Tirana I faced more problems in the openings comparing to this match but it's hard to say if I was better prepared in the openings for this match or not.

You had health problems in Tirana. Have you ever had that unknown pain in stomach again?

Sometimes I get sick during the tournaments. During this match I felt ok, but I had problems just few days before the start and had to take some medicines for 4-5 days.

Who was helping you this time?

I didn't have a team this time and as I mentioned before that I only hired a second short time before the match started. Also you may know that GM Ye Jiangchuan is our Chinese team's chief coach, so when he had time he also helped me a bit but most of the time he had many other jobs to do besides preparing. That's why finally I decided to hire a second by myself. And a lot of friends all around the World were helping me whether with advises in chess or just support. They were cheering me up and I feel very grateful. I really appreciate their help!

How do you mentally prepare yourself for the games and for the match?

Of course, I considered this match as a very important event but it's not the most important thing in my life. For me it's more important to be healthy, to be happy person in my daily life. I will try to explain you another way. Health and happiness means number "1" for me. Achievements, victories are "zeros". So I would add those zeros to number "1". The total number of my day can be 10, 1000, 10000 but without number "1" it's nothing. I think my

attitude helped me to enjoy the match and feel good. I try not to make a tragedy if I lose a game. Until the match is not over I would just focus on following games. In general when you win it doesn't mean something crazy, if you lose it's not the end of the world.

But what if you lose this match?

Yes, I thought about it before the match and for me both cases were acceptable.

I know many people contributed to organize this match, I appreciate the help of the government and the organizers, but still all results were possible. I was just trying to do my best and to be optimistic.

What does this title means for you? How is it important for you to get it back after nine and half months?

I'm happy to get the title of the Women's World Champion back. Last year my results were not so good and I hope it's a signal that I started to recover.

Do you feel you are the strongest player among women?

No, I don't. There is no obvious difference in level between me and other players. There are many strong players who have rating over 2500 and with some of them I have a plus, with others balanced results. At the same time I don't have an opponent among women I have difficulties to play against.

Does it bother you that you can lose your title in the next World Championship with knockout system like it happened to you in Khanty-Mansiysk?

I have no idea if I'm going to play there or not, I don't have clear schedule for the next year. You may know that I didn't really want to participate in the World Championship but had to go to play because of other reasons in the end. I don't have clear idea which system should be used in women's chess but we can compare it with the system in men's chess. I believe the organization of whole cycle in men chess is more reasonable, fairer. I would be glad if FIDE makes the same system for women chess.

You are young, beautiful and the World Champion! How can you describe your life at the moment?

It's still long way to go and I have many years ahead to do almost everything I want. It's time to observe the new things in chess, in studies, in other parts of life. I just want to expend my life. Life is wonderful!

The closing ceremony

At the age of 12 this extraordinary Chinese chess talent became the youngest player ever to participate in a FIDE Women's World Championship. At 16 she actually won the title, defended it once and then lost it in a knockout tournament, regaining it again last week. "It's time to look for new things in chess, in studies, in other parts of life,"



