

TCEC Season 23 SuperFinal: Leela Chess Zero vs Stockfish

GM Matthew Sadler

The TCEC Season 23 SuperFinal was once again a contest between Stockfish and Leela Chess Zero. Division P witnessed a nail-biting struggle for the dubious privilege of facing the champion of the last 5 SuperFinals; it was only decided in game 222 of 224 when Stockfish defeated Komodo Dragon for a fourth game pair win out of four(!) to leave Leela ahead on tie-break!

The SuperFinal was as entertaining as ever and featured 21 game pair wins—unfortunately 19 of these were Stockfish's! Stockfish gained its 6th consecutive SuperFinal title with 12 games to spare, winning in the end by 58.5–41.5 (+27, -10, =63). Congratulations to both teams of developers for some thrilling chess!

The subsidiary battle between the bookmakers was much closer and ended 11–10 in Jeroen's favor, only being decided in the very last game when Stockfish ground down Leela in a Czech Benoni! Matthew's consolation prize was to reach the peak of top SuperFinal chatter by some margin, leaving a former champion exhausted in his wake in 16th place.

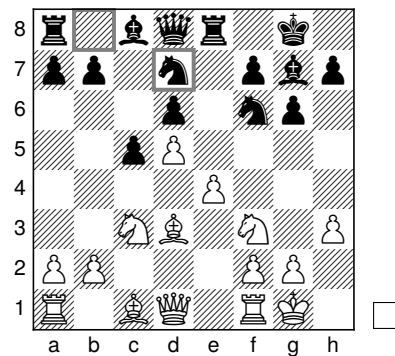
Many thanks as always to kanchess and AntonMihailov for all the organization, to noobpwnftw for the fantastic hardware, and to Aloril42 and kkeronen62 for keeping the engines purring at maximum efficiency all through the SuperFinal!

Games 1–2 Modern Benoni (A61)

Book moves (Matthew): **1. d4** ♘f6 **2. c4** e6 **3. ♘f3** c5 **4. d5** d6 **5. ♘c3** e×d5 **6. c×d5** g6 **7. h3** ♗g7 **8. e4**

Edited by S. Kiminki (2nd Dec 2022)

O-O 9. ♗d3 ♖e8 **10. O-O** ♞bd7



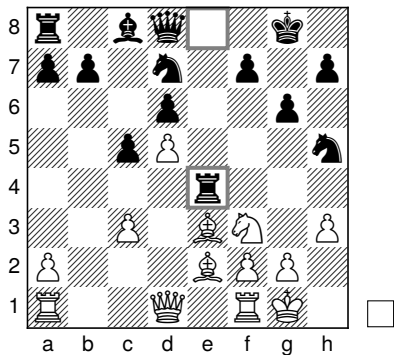
Book exit

The Season 23 SuperFinal started with one of the most biased openings, assessed by the Leela net we used to prepare the book as +0.56.

At first glance, this evaluation seems a little odd: it looks like a standard Modern Benoni where both sides have developed normally. However, thanks to the opening book, Black has missed the opportunity of creating counterplay against e4 with 9... b5 allowing White to consolidate. The general rule of the Modern Benoni is that if the e4-pawn is safe and White has developed normally, then White is clearly better.

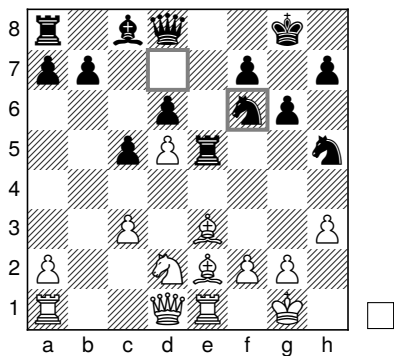
LCZero—Stockfish 1–0

Stockfish decided to show that the e4-pawn wasn't safe here, either, but took the exceptionally risky (human translation: positionally abominable) course of swapping off the dark-squared bishop for White's knight with **12... ♗×c3** to win the e4-pawn.



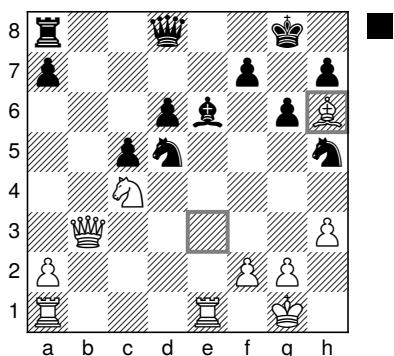
LCZero—Stockfish after 13... ♖e8xe4

Its planned follow-up was to sacrifice the exchange for White's dark-squared bishop and try entrenchment on squares like e5, but it looked anything but convincing. Stockfish in fact spent nearly 23 minutes on its 15th move before settling on 15... ♗df6,



LCZero—Stockfish after 15... ♗df6

but the more or less forcing continuation that ensued was clearly winning for White,

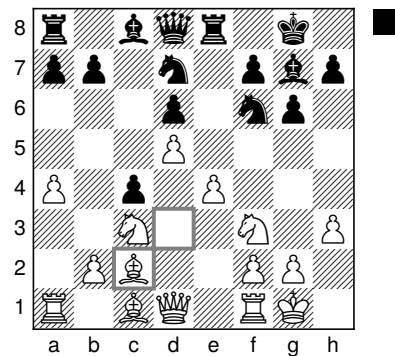


LCZero—Stockfish after 21. ♕e3-h6

and Leela converted very efficiently.

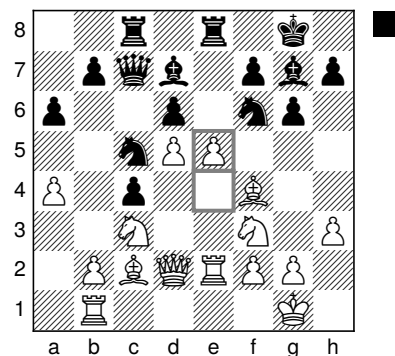
Stockfish—LCZero 1-0

The reverse was greeted with much anticipation by Leela fans mindful that Stockfish had preferred 11. a4 in its PV instead of Leela's seemingly very strong 11. ♕e3. Indeed, 11. a4 was played



Stockfish—LCZero after 12. ♕d3-c2

but still seemed fairly strong! By move 16, Stockfish was over +2 and Leela was at 0.64. A central break with 18. e5



Stockfish—LCZero after 18. e4-e5

forced an exchange sacrifice from Leela after which the writing was on the wall.

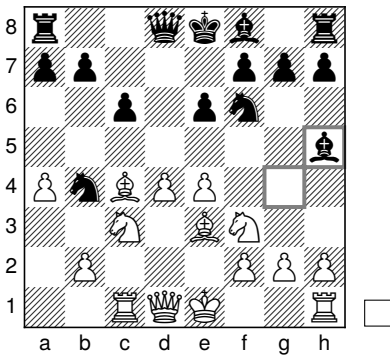
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+1 =0 -1)	1 (+1)	0
Stockfish	1 (+1 =0 -1)	1 (+1)	0
Pair result	Reverse kill		
Book score	Matthew-Jeroen 0-0		

Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=1&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=2&season=23>

Games 3–4 Slav, Smyslov variation (D16)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♘f3 ♘f6 4. ♗c3 dxc4 5. a4 ♗a6 6. e4 ♘g4 7. ♙xc4 e6 8. ♙e3 ♗b4 9. ♖c1 ♙h5

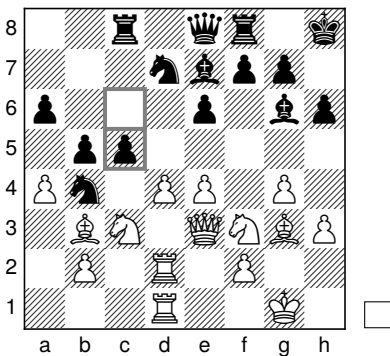


Book exit

Stockfish took an early lead after a 1.5–0.5 victory in the second game pair. The opening position was taken from a game analysed in depth in *Silicon Road*¹!

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

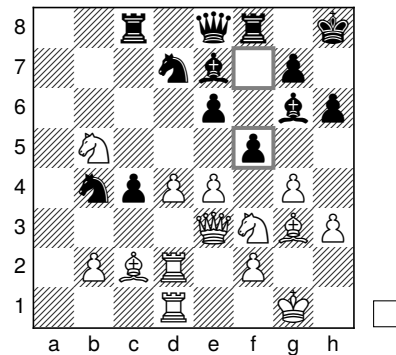
Stockfish defended the black side amazingly. The sacrificial pawn break 20... c5 looked impossible,



LCZero—Stockfish after 20... c6–c5

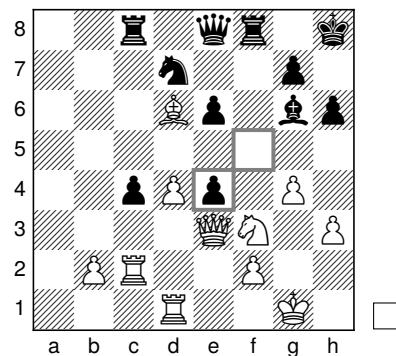
but the key point 23... f5

¹Sadler, Matthew. *The Silicon Road to Chess Improvement: Chess Engine Training Methods, Opening Strategies & Middlegame Techniques*. New In Chess, 2022.



LCZero—Stockfish after 23... f7–f5

makes everything work by a miracle!

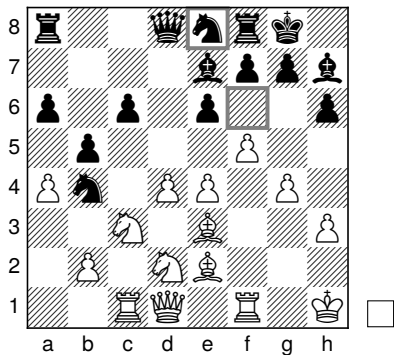


LCZero—Stockfish after 26... f5xe4

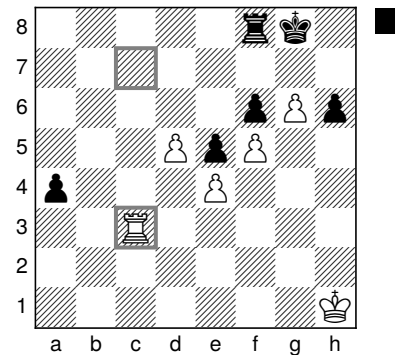
26... fxe4 was the tactical point you had to spot at the start! The zwischenzug 27. ♙xf8 exf3! wins material for Black!

Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

In the reverse, Leela also defended well and found a neat regrouping, which I hadn't spotted in *Silicon Road*: 17... ♗e8 intends ... ♗d6 followed by ... ♖h8, ... ♙g8, and ... f6 achieving some sort of harmony.

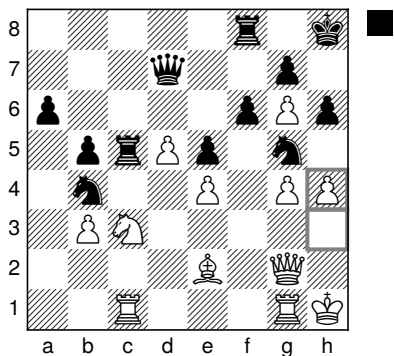


Stockfish—LCZero after 17... ♖f6-e8



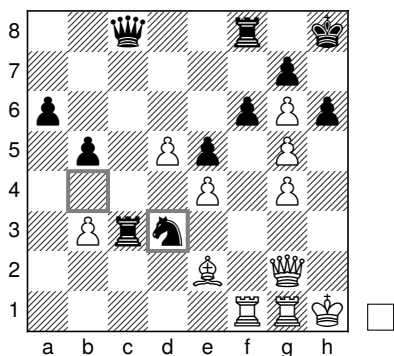
Stockfish—LCZero after 44. ♖c7xc3

However, Leela got its kingside into a tangle and you could imagine Stockfish's eyes gleaming with pleasure at the sight!



Stockfish—LCZero after 30. h3-h4

Leela had some tactics planned



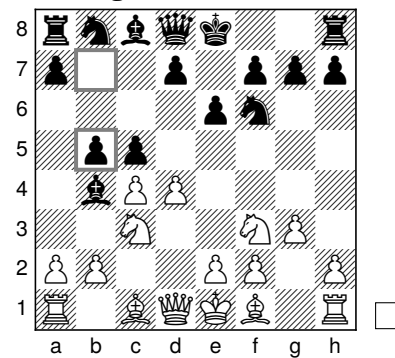
Stockfish—LCZero after 32... ♖b4-d3

but had mis-assessed the resulting position somewhat. We got equal pawns in a rook and pawn ending, but not an equal position!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0=1-1)	1.5 (+1)	0
Stockfish	1.5 (+1=1-0)	2.5 (+2)	1
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 0–1		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=3&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=4&season=23			

Games 5–6 Nimzo-Indian, Vitolins gambit (E21)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♖c3 ♗b4 4. ♖f3 c5 5. g3 b5



Book exit

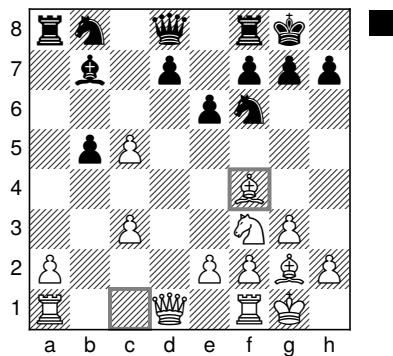
Up next, a crazy gambit idea in the Nimzo-Indian from Vitolins, taken from the book *The Livonian Knight: Selected Games of Alvis Vitolins*².

²Lanka, Zigurds et al. *The Livonian Knight: Selected Games of Alvis Vitolins*. Elk and Ruby Publishing House, 2021.

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

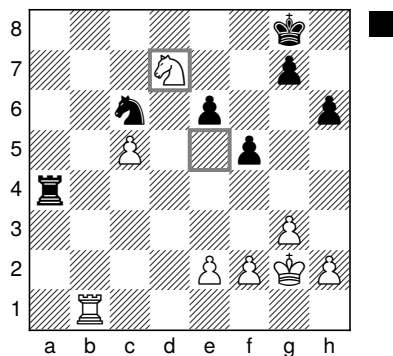
It's intriguing how little an early pawn loss matters to engines when there are open lines and diagonals. The two draws in Basman's Gambit 1. e4 e6 2. d4 a6 3. c4 b5!? a couple of seasons ago are a case in point.³

Leela chose not to hold the Benko pawn on b5, looking to exploit the dark squares instead.



LCZero—Stockfish after 11. ♗c1-f4

Although Leela reached a pawn-up rook and knight endgame, Stockfish's relaxed evaluation didn't inspire confidence in White's conversion chances



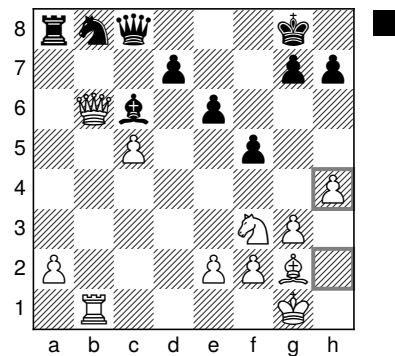
LCZero—Stockfish after 27. ♖e5xd7

and the game was indeed drawn... eventually, after Leela had teased the assembled viewers with a 23-minute think!

³<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=17&season=21>

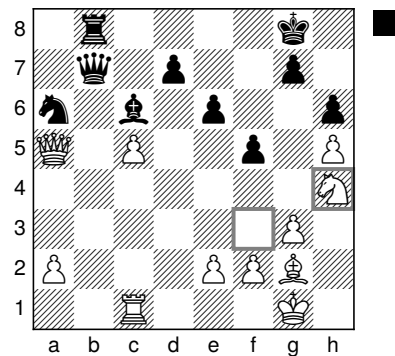
Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

As White, Stockfish copied Leela's approach exactly until move 19,



Stockfish—LCZero after 19. h2-h4

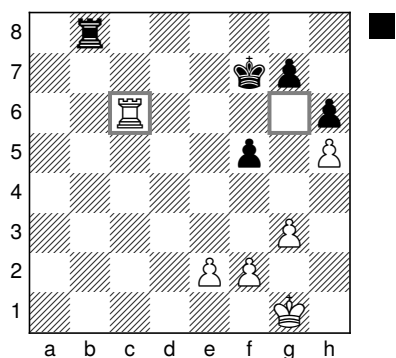
which was a bit of a downer! Move 23



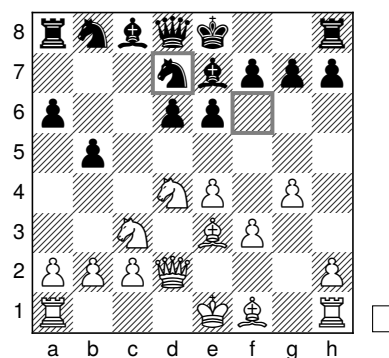
Stockfish—LCZero after 23. ♖f3-h4

brought a Stockfish boom⁴ (to 2.01 before settling back to 1.66), which made chatters wonder whether another Stockfish win from nowhere was about to take place! Essentially, Stockfish seemed to be having a serious difference on whether a rook and 4 pawns vs a rook and 3 pawns ending was a draw or a win for White.

⁴In TCEC lingo, a *boom* is understood as *engine evaluation explosion away from 0.00*, its opposite being a *moob* meaning *evaluation implosion back in the general direction of 0.00*.



Stockfish—LCZero after 35. ♖g6×c6



Book exit

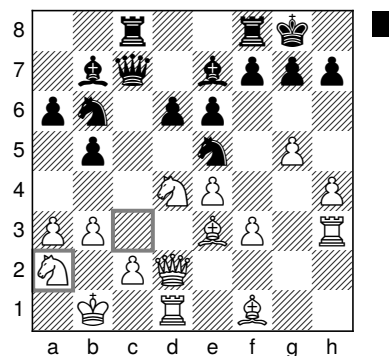
It wasn't the best 4v3 endgame I'd ever seen, as White could force an exchange of the f-pawn for its g-pawn to secure a protected passed e-pawn, but that was still unlikely to be winning without poor play from Black. In fact soon after, Stockfish had to hang its fishy head in shame as it moobed down to a 1.17 evaluation!

Jeroen was very happy about finding a sharp Open Sicilian that was neither too drawish nor too busted!

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

Leela played in a quite complicated fashion with restraining moves on both sides of the board: 12. a3, 15. b3, 16. ♖h3, and 17. ♘a2.

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	2.5 (+1)	0
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	3.5 (+2)	1
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 0–1		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=5&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=6&season=23			

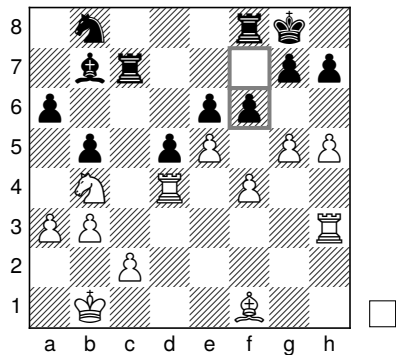


LCZero—Stockfish after 17. ♘c3–a2

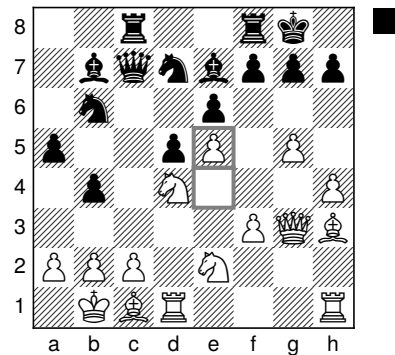
Games 7–8 Sicilian, Najdorf 6. Be3 (E90)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 c×d4 4. ♘×d4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 a6 6. ♗e3 e6 7. f3 ♗e7 8. ♖d2 b5 9. g4 ♘fd7

But when Stockfish's counterplay came with 17... d5, Leela proved to be perfectly placed to absorb it! The game moved into a French-style endgame where Leela's enthusiasm rose (0.62 at move 27) as Stockfish's fell (0.79 at the same move!) Unfortunately, after 27... f6



LCZero—Stockfish after 27... f7–f6

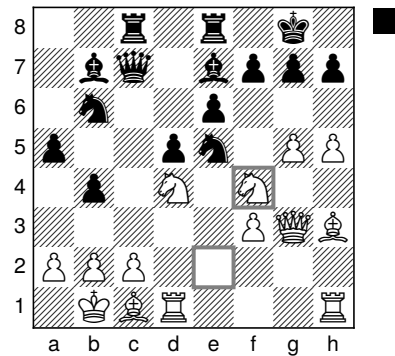


Stockfish—LCZero after 19. e4–e5

Leela’s evaluation fell like a stone to 0.49, and even though the resulting Black position wasn’t a dream for a human player, Stockfish had little trouble holding a draw!

followed by 19... ♖×e5 20. h5 ♜fe8 21. ♖f4

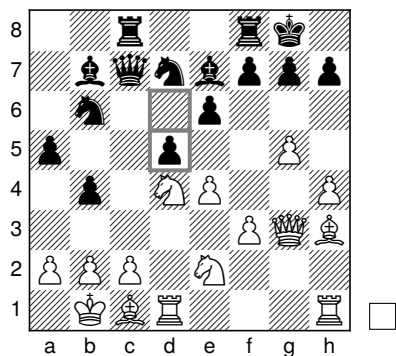
Stockfish—LCZero 1–0



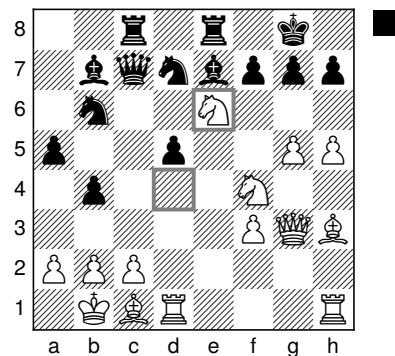
Stockfish—LCZero after 21. ♖e2–f4

Leela fans quailed at the prospect of the black side of an Open Sicilian against Stockfish... and they weren’t wrong. Things started reasonably, and when Leela broke with 18... d5, Black’s counterplay seemed to be proceeding smoothly.

put a planet-size spanner in those works. A couple of moves ago, White’s attack seemed ages away; now you couldn’t see how to stop ♖f×e6/♖d×e6 or g6. And 22. ♖d×e6 it was



Stockfish—LCZero after 18... d6–d5

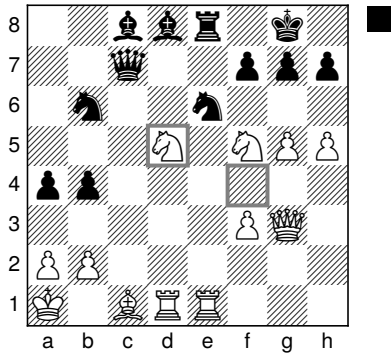


Stockfish—LCZero after 22. ♖d4×e6

However, the awesome pawn sacrifice 19. e5!!

not caring about Black’s counterplay with 22... ♜×c2+! A regrouping and some Rubinstein-style ♜×h7+ followed by g6 and h6 was in the

air. Leela gave up the exchange, but the carnage continued.



Stockfish—LCZero after 29. ♖f4×d5

Stockfish had picked up its second game pair win, and my colleague Jeroen had picked up his second bookmaker's win!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0=1 -1)	3 (+1)	0
Stockfish	1.5 (+1=1 -0)	5 (+3)	2

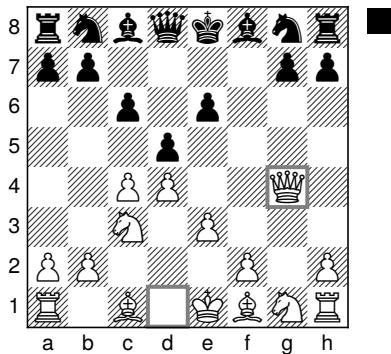
Pair result Decisive pair
Book score Matthew–Jeroen 0–2

Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=7&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=8&season=23>

Games 9–10 Semi-Slav Triangle (D31)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♘c3 c6 4. e3 f5 5. g4 f×g4 6. ♙×g4

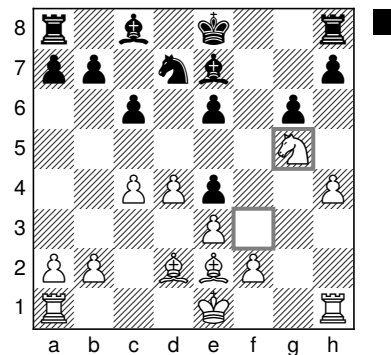


Book exit

The next game was a Semi-Slav Triangle in honour of grizzled veteran TCEC chatter mrbdz who is both Leela's greatest fan and a Semi-Slav aficionado⁵. But fittingly, it was a rather dodgy one! This line was fairly popular in my time as a professional!

LCZero—Stockfish 1–0

Stockfish actually defended rather poorly, rushing to exchange queens but weakening Black's structure, which gave Leela a comfortable edge without tactics to trouble it!

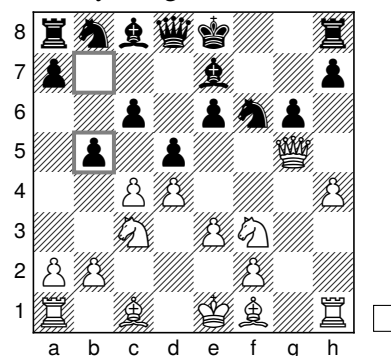


LCZero—Stockfish after 14. ♖f3–g5

A sharp little 3-move tactic and Leela had picked up a pawn and the game soon followed.

Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

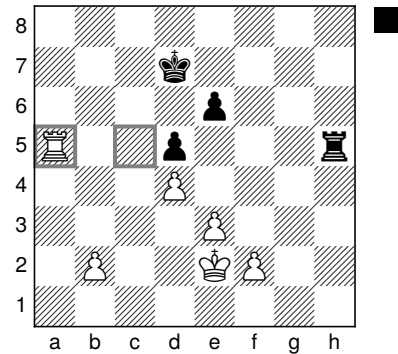
In the reverse Leela defended much more aggressively with an early pawn sacrifice, which had led to some draws in my test games.



Stockfish—LCZero after 9... b7–b5

⁵The accuracy of the second half of the claim is unclear. (Ed.)

Unfortunately, though Leela may have got the style points, its wasn't a better end result in the end, Stockfish winning a rook ending two pawns up.



Stockfish—LCZero after 49. ♖c5×a5

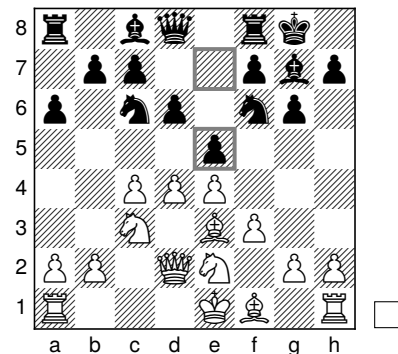
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+1 =0 -1)	4 (+2)	0
Stockfish	1 (+1 =0 -1)	6 (+4)	2
Pair result	Reverse kill		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 0–2		

Game links:

- <https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=9&season=23>
- <https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=10&season=23>

Games 11–12 Sämisch King's Indian (E83)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 O-O 6. ♗e3 ♘c6 7. ♘ge2 a6 8. ♖d2 e5

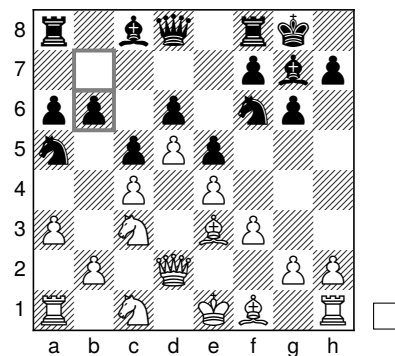


Book exit

An old-fashioned strategical King's Indian up next—normally a good opening for Leela!

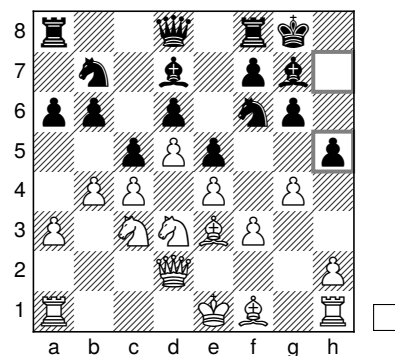
LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

Stockfish played 9... ♖a5 and blocked the centre with 10... c5, which felt a bit like Petrosian–Gufeld games from the 1960s which never ended well for Black!



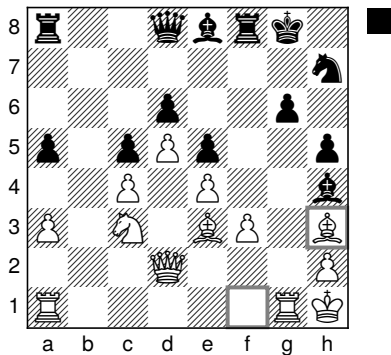
LCZero—Stockfish after 11... b7–b6

Leela expanded on the kingside and Stockfish hit back with 14... h5—always associated with the great King's Indian player Gligorić—to avoid getting completely squeezed on the kingside.

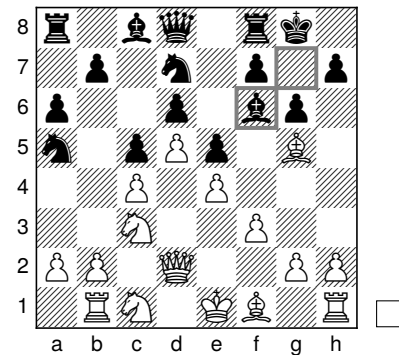


LCZero—Stockfish after 14... h7–h5

Leela aimed for a pawn sacrifice full of optimism,



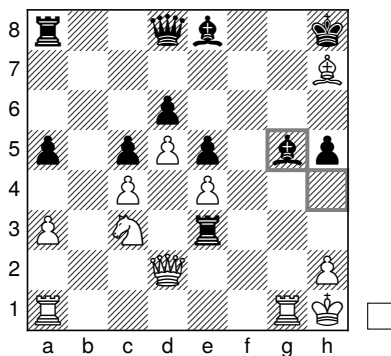
LCZero—Stockfish after 23. ♞f1–h3



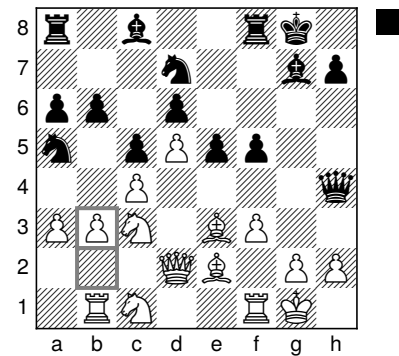
Stockfish—LCZero after 14... ♗g7–f6

but a move later, gloom started to set in as Leela spotted the precise tactics Stockfish was envisaging to neutralise White's initiative.

It was all a big joke! After throwing in a few ♗g5–h6 repetitions, Stockfish put the bishop back to e3 and carried on playing! Doh!



LCZero—Stockfish after 26... ♞h4–g5



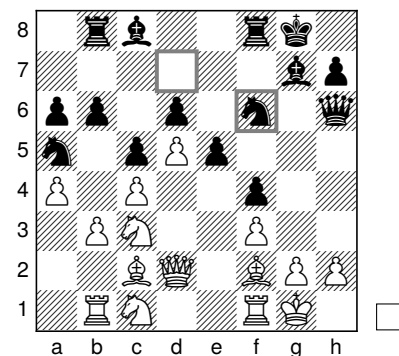
Stockfish—LCZero after 20. b2–b3

Again it felt very old-fashioned, like a 1950s King's Indian tussle between Petrosian and Gligorić!

Stockfish held the draw without any problems. Time for the reverse...

Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

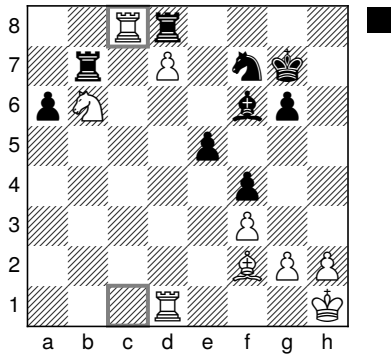
... and Leela chose the same plan with Black as Stockfish! Stockfish seemed to play for the exchange of the dark-squared bishops, which wasn't on my bucket list for these structures.



Stockfish—LCZero after 24... ♞d7–f6

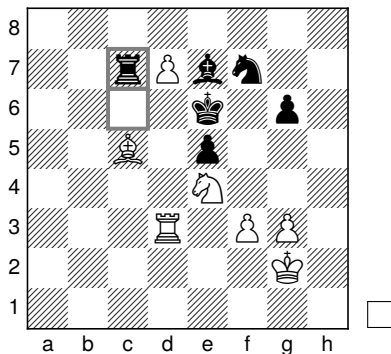
Stockfish didn't really get anywhere, though it looked dangerous to the human eye! A big passed

d-pawn surged through the board, but Black had it firmly barricaded.



Stockfish—LCZero after 43. ♖c1-c8

In the end, Leela was able to surround the advanced d-pawn and destroy it,



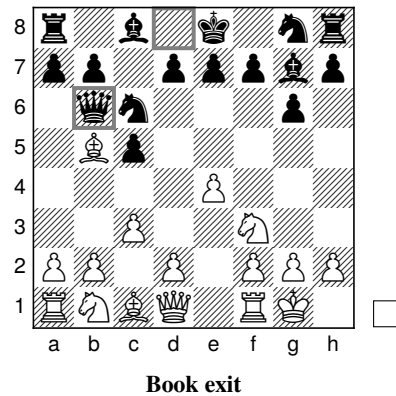
Stockfish—LCZero after 56... ♖c6-c7

securing a solid drawn game pair.

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	5 (+2)	0
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	7 (+4)	2
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 0–2		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=11&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=12&season=23			

Games 13–14 Sicilian Rossolimo (B31)

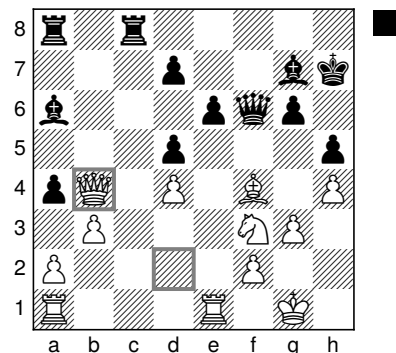
Book moves (Matthew): 1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♘c6 3. ♘b5 g6 4. O-O ♘g7 5. c3 ♖b6



We started off with a normal-looking Rossolimo with a very bad evaluation: 0.58 by Leela, 1.64 by Stockfish!

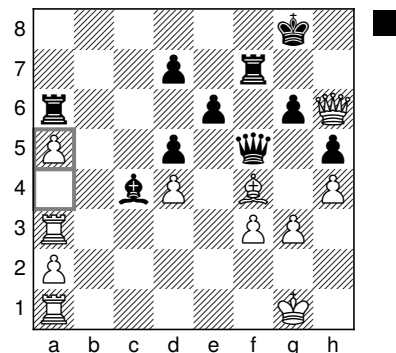
LCZero—Stockfish 1–0

The game seemed to be proceeding fairly normally until Stockfish panicked after Leela’s 24. ♖b4.



LCZero—Stockfish after 24. ♖d2-b4

Stockfish suddenly went for an opposite-coloured bishop position that it hated!



LCZero—Stockfish after 34. a4-a5

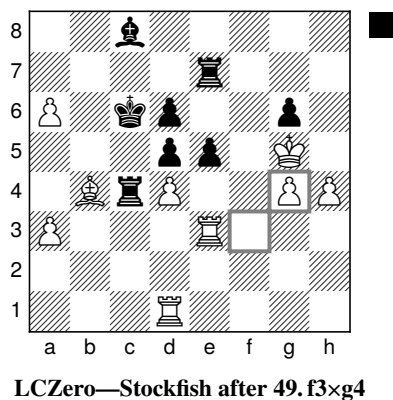
This confused a well-known Internet personality:⁶

Sami Kiminki
@skiminki
Replying to @gmmnds

TBH, this game was a bit of alien chess to me. It's not immediately obvious to me that this is so much better for white and not fading into an OCB draw... Although I'm sure all of this is part of the standard GM training program!

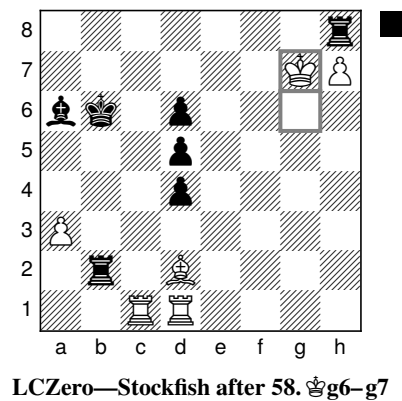
Nov 2, 2022
<https://twitter.com/skiminki/status/1587876575130918914>

Leela is excellent in superior opposite-coloured bishop positions with major pieces (a feature of NNs in general as we saw with AlphaZero) and used its control of the dark squares to invade with its king.



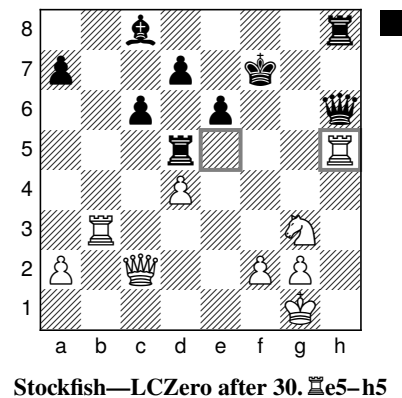
The king was a total star and shepherded the h-pawn home for a Leela win!

⁶Based on the Twitter replies, possibly not the only one struggling to evaluate the position correctly. (Ed.)

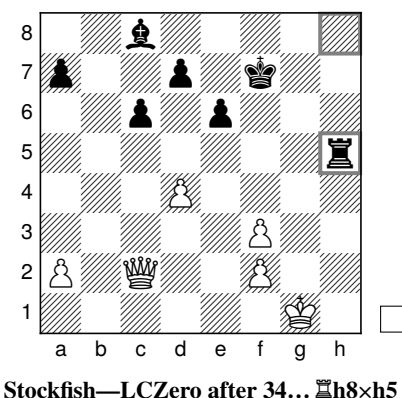


Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

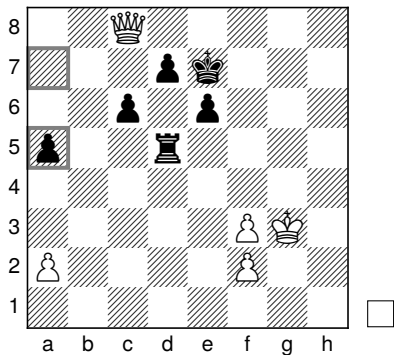
Could Stockfish strike back? Quietly confident doesn't describe it! When Stockfish uncorked 30. ♖h5, its evaluations were heading for the stars!



Leela is the queen of fortresses, however, and didn't worry about sacrificing the queen



or even losing the bishop later!



Stockfish—LCZero after 40... a7-a5

The game was drawn in 229 moves giving Leela (and me!) the first decisive game pair victory!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1.5 (+1 =1 -0)	6.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	0.5 (+0 =1 -1)	7.5 (+4)	2

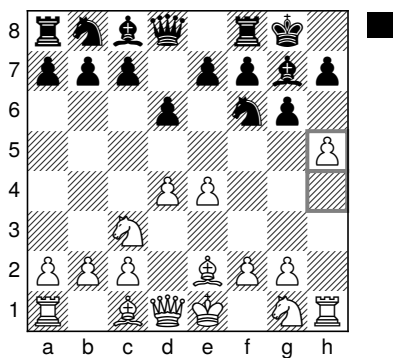
Pair result Decisive pair
Book score Matthew–Jeroen 1–2

Game links:

- <https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=13&season=23>
- <https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=14&season=23>

Games 15–16 Pirc (B07)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♘f6 3. ♗c3 g6 4. ♖e2 ♕g7 5. h4 O-O 6. h5



Book exit

The next opening was Jeroen’s and featured a GM Simon Williams⁷ / IM Richard Palliser⁸

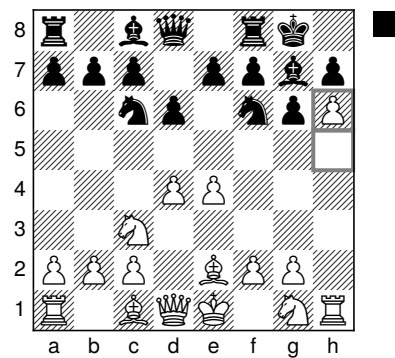
⁷https://twitter.com/ginger_gm

⁸<https://twitter.com/richardpalliser>

♖e2+Harry system against the Pirc!

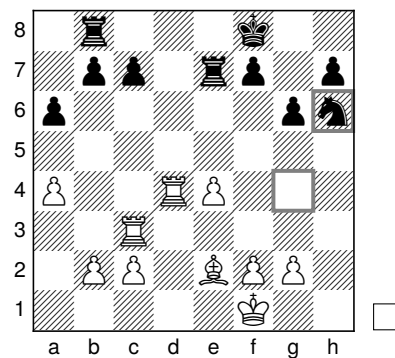
LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

Leela went for the refined approach, putting a rook’s pawn on the 6th!



LCZero—Stockfish after 7. h5-h6

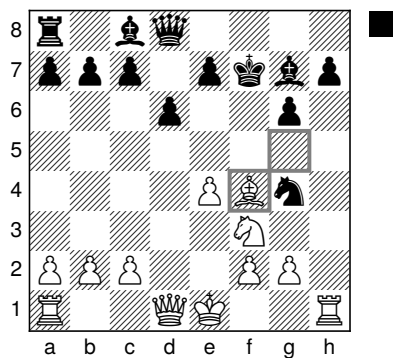
Leela won a centre pawn for the rook’s pawn and reached a better endgame but achieved precisely nothing against the obdurate Fish.



LCZero—Stockfish after 24... ♗g4xh6

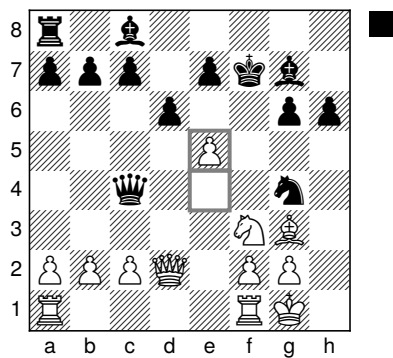
Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

The reverse was a bit more gung-ho, as Stockfish opened the h-file and soon won the exchange.



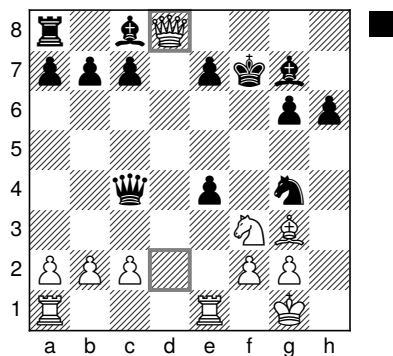
Stockfish—LCZero after 14. ♖g5×f4

It didn't look so bad at one stage, but an extra pawn sacrifice



Stockfish—LCZero after 19. e4–e5

and penetration to the 8th rank



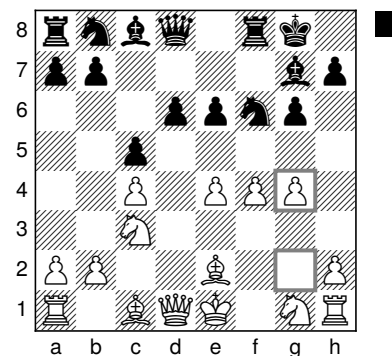
Stockfish—LCZero after 21. ♖d2–d8

sealed Leela's fate despite long resistance.

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0 =1 -1)	7 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1.5 (+1 =1 -0)	9 (+5)	3
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 1–3		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=15&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=16&season=23			

Games 17–18 King's Indian (E76/E77)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6 5. f4 c5 6. d5 O-O 7. ♗e2 e6 8. d×e6 f×e6 9. g4



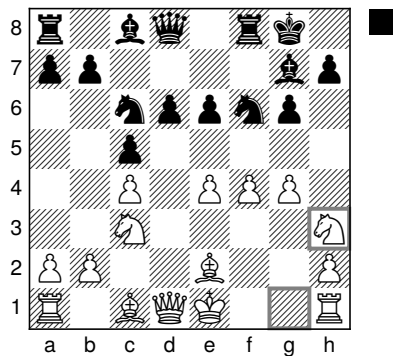
Book exit

A kamikaze anti-KID next for the engines!

LCZero—Stockfish 0–1

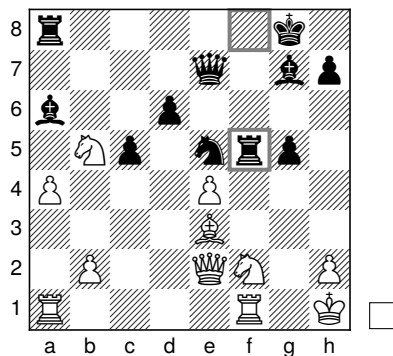
I tried a couple of these in this SuperFinal. They were both anti-King's Indian systems that I'd thought up but never got to try out! I came across them—and a few others—in Gawain Jones' books on the King's Indian and thought they made ideal black-biased openings. Essentially, the best way—in my opinion—to get a natural black-biased opening is to follow an opening where White's concept is tempting but wrong, and then exit at the crucial moment where White either has to hit the brakes or keep on going regardless!

Whatever, Leela was not going to be thanking a certain GM for this book choice! Leela hit the brakes with **10. ♘h3**,



LCZero—Stockfish after 10. ♘g1-h3

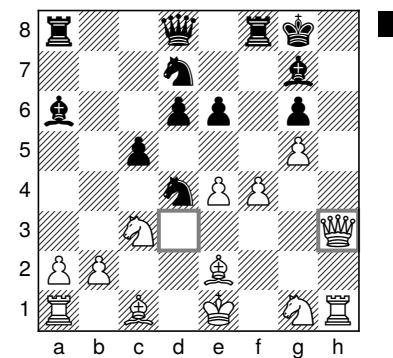
but it just left White with weaknesses and no counterplay to show for it! Stockfish did a clinical job of dismantling White's position.



LCZero—Stockfish after 21... ♜f8xf5

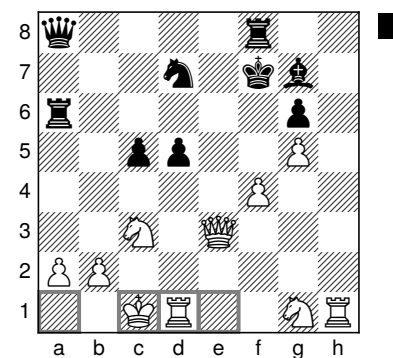
Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

Stockfish did kamikaze much better than Leela! The White position was still full of holes, but at least Leela had to attend to its king too!



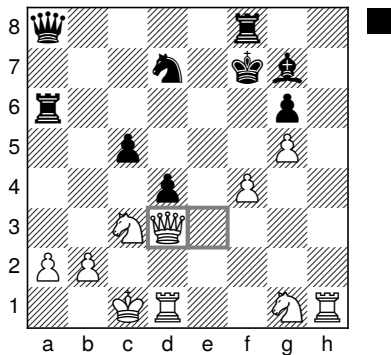
Stockfish—LCZero after 17. ♖d3-h3

What do you do when a dark-squared bishop is raking along the h8-a1 diagonal, the a- and b-files are open, the queen and rook are targeting a2, and c- and d-pawns are ready to rush forwards? Castle queenside!

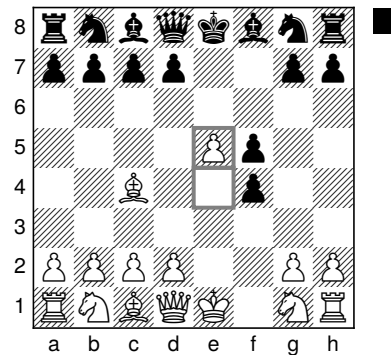


Stockfish—LCZero after 24. O-O-O

Amazingly this was the start of the equalisation process. Quite amazing that **24... d4** forking queen and knight and opening the line of the queen against the Rh1 didn't win anything, but **25. ♖d3**—hitting the rook on a6 in return—avoided immediate disaster.



Stockfish—LCZero after 25. ♖e3-d3



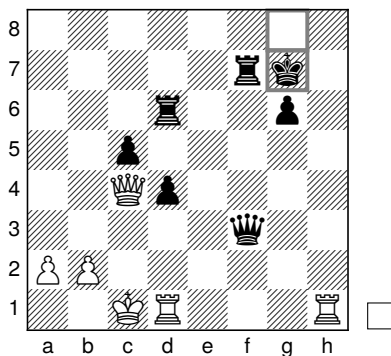
Book exit

Leela tried to clear defensive pieces from the black king, but all it did was lead to a series of exchanges and a draw a few moves later.

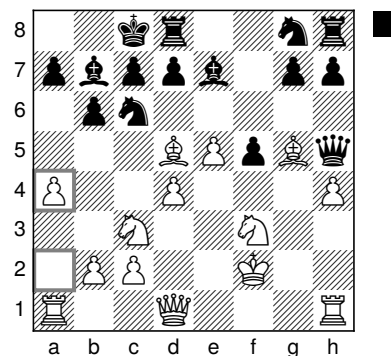
Anyone for a King's Gambit?

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

The game was quite wild, Leela playing on both sides of the board with an open king,



Stockfish—LCZero after 31... ♔g8xg7



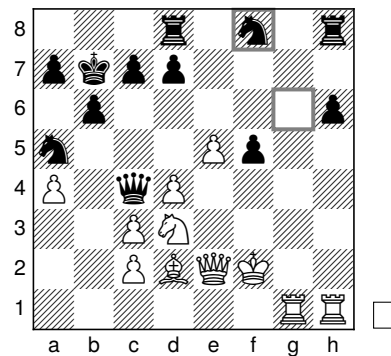
LCZero—Stockfish after 14. a2-a4

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0=1 -1)	7.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1.5 (+1=1 -0)	10.5 (+6)	4
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 2–3		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=17&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=18&season=23			

and Stockfish leaving pawn weaknesses as it struggled to break free of the bind Leela imposed.

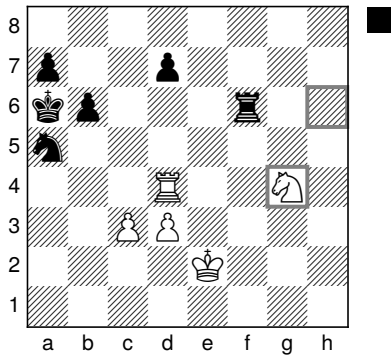
Games 19–20 King's Gambit (C33)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. e4 e5 2. f4 exf4 3. ♔c4 f5 4. e5



LCZero—Stockfish after 26... ♖g6-f8

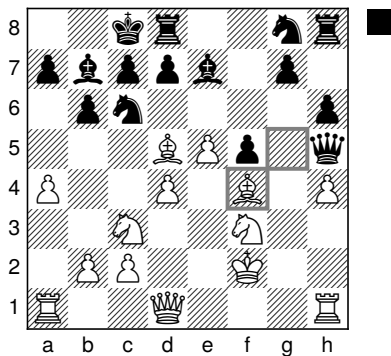
Eventually, Leela reached the safe harbour that is the dream of every King's Gambit player: a worse but holdable ending!



LCZero—Stockfish after 46. ♖h6-g4

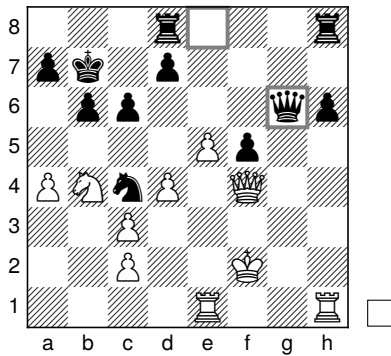
Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

The reverse was very similar: space gaining from Stockfish as White,



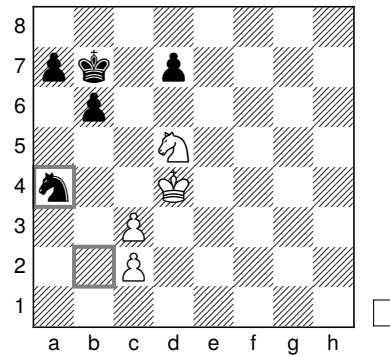
Stockfish—LCZero after 15. ♕g5-f4

and Leela leaving behind loose pawns on the king-side in the struggle to break free.



Stockfish—LCZero after 26... ♖e8×g6

Stockfish, too, managed to reach the blessed state of a slightly worse endgame and held!



Stockfish—LCZero after 41... ♖b2×a4

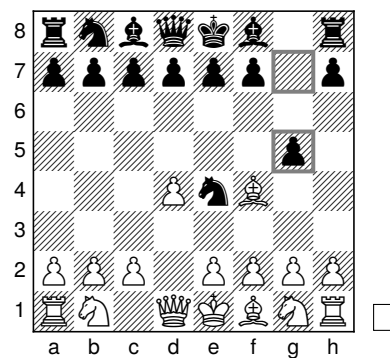
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	8.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	11.5 (+6)	4

Pair result Double draw
Book score Matthew–Jeroen 2–3

Game links:
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=19&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=20&season=23>

Games 21–22 Trompovsky (A45)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. d4 ♖f6 2. ♕g5 ♖e4 3. ♕f4 g5



Book exit

Next up: A Tromp! One of those opening exits where despite the Basman-like 3... g5, Leela's evaluation was quite modest... but I thought there was more in it!

One Grob fan was definitely sold!

Martyn Hamer
 @MerryHatMan
 Replying to @gmmnds

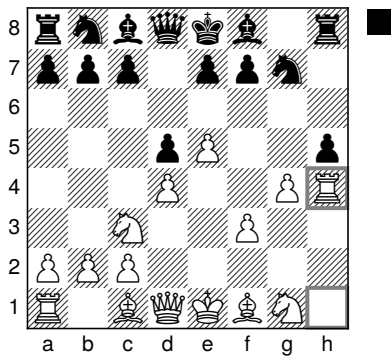


I think I've just got a new weapon against the Tromp 😊

Nov 3, 2022
<https://twitter.com/MerryHatMan/status/1588109077229477889>

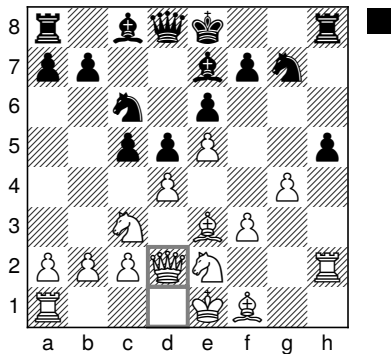
LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

Fishy got a little nervous—maybe not too unexpectedly for me—and Leela got interested! Eleven moves in, Leela's evaluation was at 0.49 and Stockfish's at 1.67!



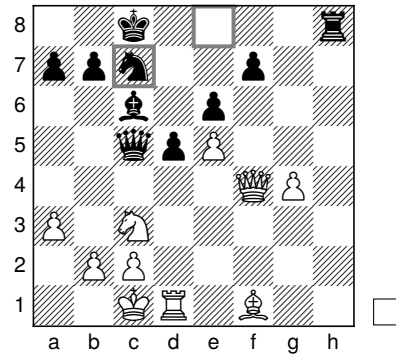
LCZero—Stockfish after 11. ♖h1×h4

We got something that looked like an Advance Caro-Kann now with a mysteriously bad knight on g7! It even had something of Magnus Carlsen's Rat (1. e4 g6 2. d4 ♘f6 3. e5 ♘h5).



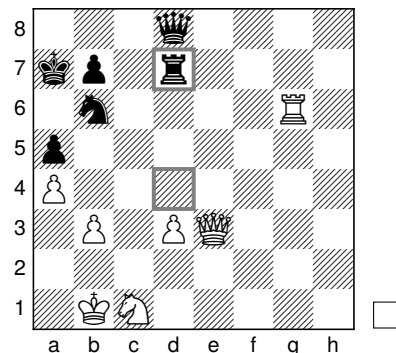
LCZero—Stockfish after 15. ♖d1–d2

However, Stockfish summoned its inner horse and got that g7-knight moving.



LCZero—Stockfish after 24... ♘e8–c7

In fact by move 45, the knight had made a journey totalling 11 moves: f6-e4-f6-h5-g7-e8-c7-a8-b6-a4-b6!

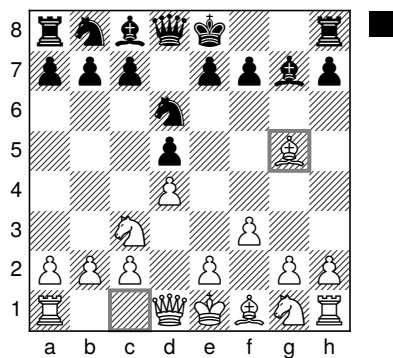


LCZero—Stockfish after 45... ♖d4–d7

A mere extra pawn was not enough, and Stockfish secured the draw.

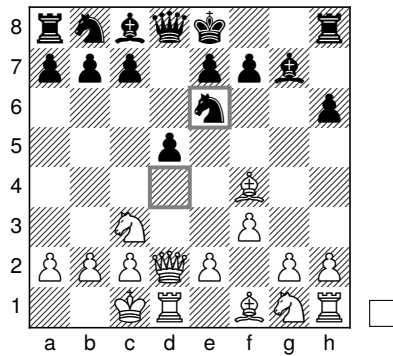
Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

The reverse was also very interesting: Leela just offered the g5-pawn, Basman-style!



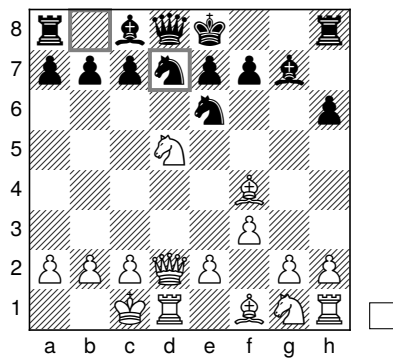
Stockfish—LCZero after 7. ♖c1×g5

The black king's knight was once again put through its paces: g8-f6-e4-d6-f5-d4-e6 in the first 10 moves!



Stockfish—LCZero after 10... ♞d4-e6

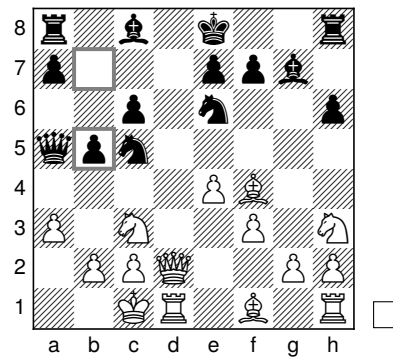
The position on move 11 looked impressive for White with an extra pawn to boot,



Stockfish—LCZero after 11... ♞b8-d7

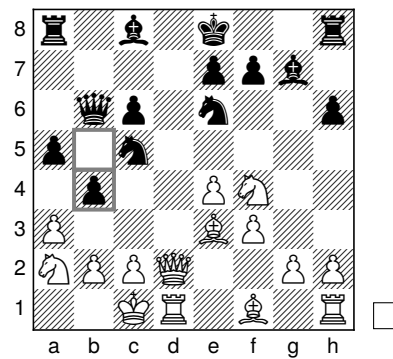
but Black's umbrella—a term coined by the creative Canadian GM Duncan Suttles—was still to unfold! The white knight was driven back with ...c6,

and Black's position deployed harmoniously with ...♖a5, ...♞dc5, and ...b5!



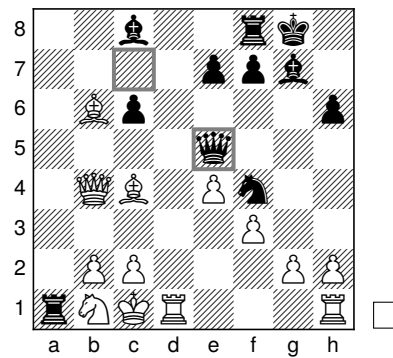
Stockfish—LCZero after 15... b7-b5

Leela continued to throw caution to the winds with a second pawn sacrifice!



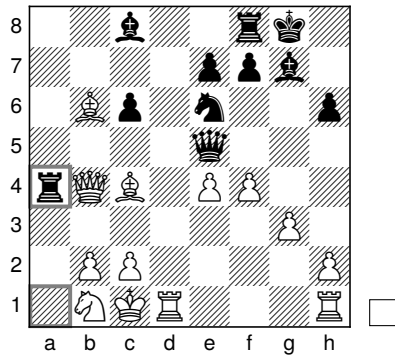
Stockfish—LCZero after 18... b5-b4

Stockfish's evaluation was varying wildly. It clearly liked taking pawns, but Black's counterplay was also quite worrying. Leela's evaluation was smooth and serene, filling the hearts of Leela fans with tranquil joy.



Stockfish—LCZero after 25... ♖c7-e5

The tactics continued, and 27... ♖a4!! was a lovely intermediate move



Stockfish—LCZero after 27... ♖a4

after which Leela held a comfortable draw after a zany Basman-style opening!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	9.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	12.5 (+6)	4

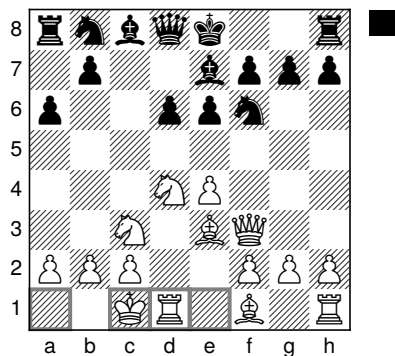
Pair result Double draw
Book score Matthew—Jeroen 2–3

Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=21&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=22&season=23>

Games 23–24 Scheveningen Sicilian (B80)

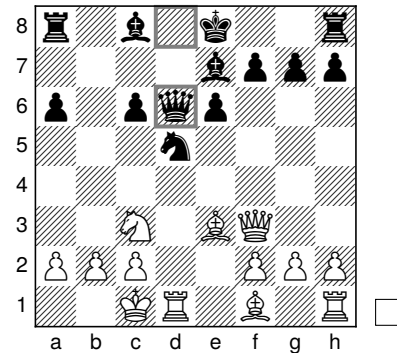
Book moves (Jeroen): 1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 ♗f6 5. ♗c3 d6 6. ♕e3 ♕e7 7. ♖f3 a6 8. O-O-O



Book exit

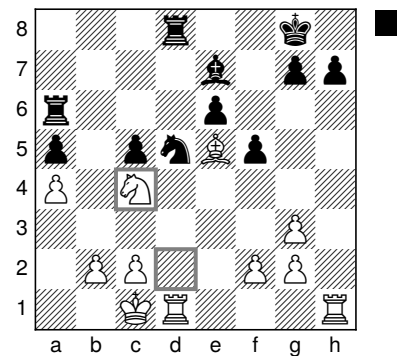
A ropey Scheveningen next from Jeroen!

Stockfish at once offered Leela the chance to convert its dynamic advantage into a static one and Leela typically accepted it!



LCZero—Stockfish after 11... ♖d8x6

A long endgame with weak pawns for Black ensued in which Leela was very optimistic

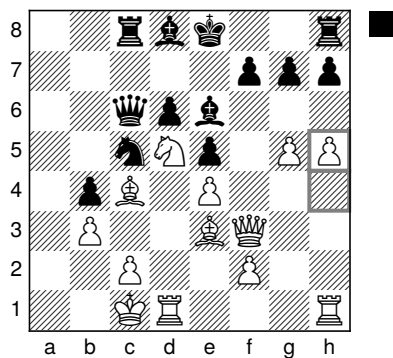


LCZero—Stockfish after 21... ♗d2-c4

but made very little progress.

Stockfish—LCZero 1-0

The reverse was not likely to be good for Leela and, indeed, turned out that way! Stockfish built up a +2 advantage quickly



Stockfish—LCZero after 22. h4–h5

and coasted to a win!

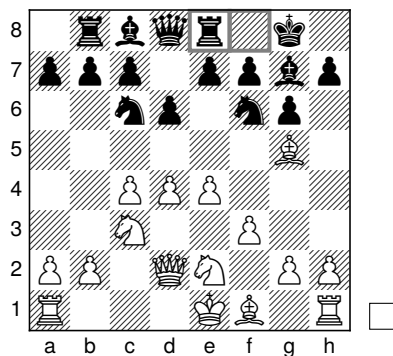
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0 =1 -1)	10 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1.5 (+1 =1 -0)	14 (+7)	5
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 2–4		

Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=23&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=24&season=23>

Games 25–26 Sämisch King’s Indian (E81)

Book moves (Matthew): **1. d4** ♖f6 **2. c4** g6 **3. ♗c3** ♙g7 **4. e4** d6 **5. f3** O-O **6. ♙g5** ♗c6 **7. ♗ge2** ♜b8 **8. ♝d2** ♞e8



Book exit

The next **6. ♙g5** King’s Indian Sämisch was one of my self-indulgences, as it brings back all sorts of childhood memories.

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

Many years ago, I found a pamphlet by the American IM John Watson about the Panno system (... ♗c6) against the Sämisch in the then excellent chess section of the London Foyles bookstore. It’s now lost somewhere in my parents’ attic, but I still vividly remember the content.

The amazing thing about this little book was the number of possible move orders for Black that Watson considered from the 7th move onwards. The normal 7... a6 and 8... ♜b8 was of course considered, but there was so much more!

7... a6 and 8... ♙d7 (much loved by English King’s Indian players like Nunn, Watson, and Piggott) was covered as well as 7... ♞e8 and this game’s **7... ♜b8 8. ♝d2 ♞e8**.

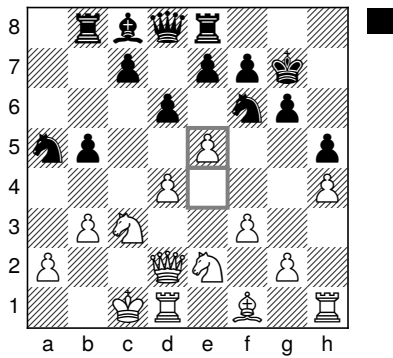
The gorgeous thing about analysing these lines with an engine is that you see that these unusual move orders are not much worse than the main lines known for 40–50 years. In fact... they are not worse at all!

This line has become kind of a theme for me in the SuFi book. Season 21 featured 7... a6 and 8... ♙d7 and turned out pretty spectacular (1.5–0.5 to Stockfish).⁹ Season 22 featured 7... a6 and 8... ♞e8 and ended in 2 draws though Stockfish came very close to winning.¹⁰

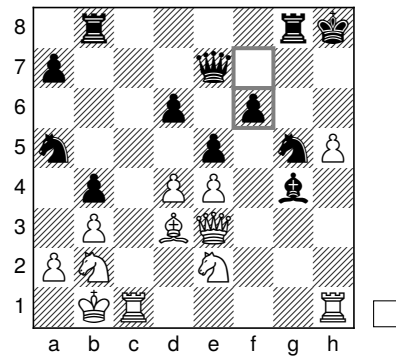
This Season, we got the most exotic yet: **7... ♜b8** and **8... ♞e8**. Leela castled queenside but on the 15th move, instead of attacking with 15. g4 (which was my analysis for the white side), chose to swap queens with **15. e5**.

⁹<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=65&season=21> and <https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=66&season=21>

¹⁰<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=77&season=22> and <https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=78&season=22>



LCZero—Stockfish after 15. e4–e5



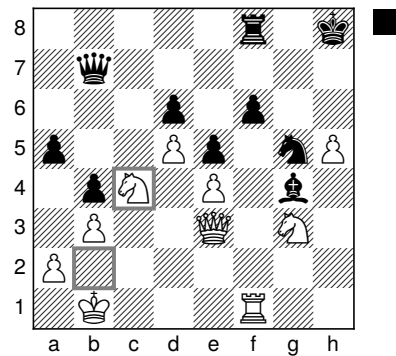
Stockfish—LCZero after 28... f7–f6

The resulting position was pleasant for White due to Black's weak pawns and dark squares, but it was never going to seriously trouble Stockfish...and it didn't!

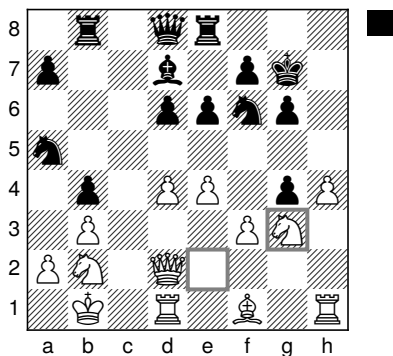
Stockfish switched to a positional approach, and it looked disgusting for Black to me,

Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

Stockfish's game as White was much more exciting! Stockfish sacrificed two pawns on the kingside with 19. ♖g3.

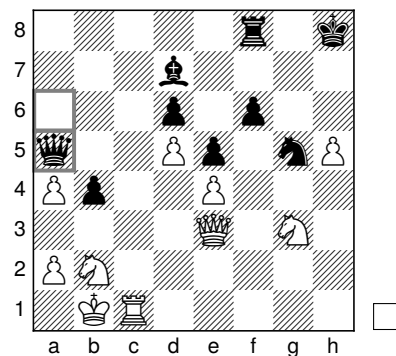


Stockfish—LCZero after 35. ♖b2–c4



Stockfish—LCZero after 19. ♖e2–g3

but Leela's queenside counterplay with 35... a4 seemed to do the biz.



Stockfish—LCZero after 38... ♖a6–a5

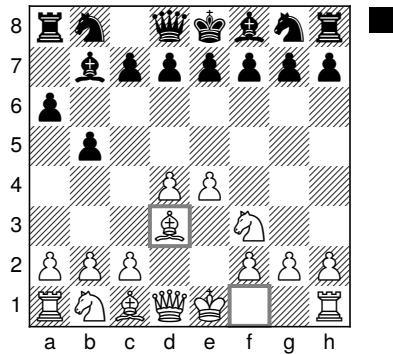
Leela's defence was to give up the g-pawn in front of its king (20... g5 21. ♖×g5+ with check!) to keep the h-file closed. Stockfish's evaluation continued to rise (up to 1.45), and it looked as if Leela might be outplayed. But Leela's defensive structure ...e5 and ...f6 seemed to dampen Stockfish's enthusiasm and restore Leela's calm.

The game ended peaceably with both kings too open for any side to be able to attempt anything.

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	11 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	15 (+7)	5
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 2–4		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=25&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=26&season=23			

Games 27–28 St. George (B00)

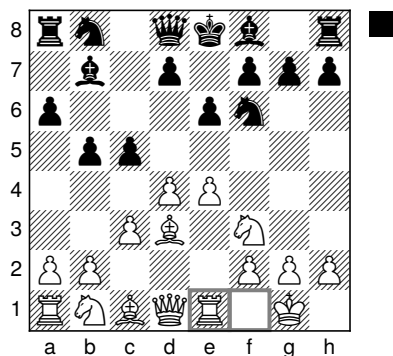
Book moves (Jeroen): 1. e4 a6 2. d4 b5 3. ♘f3 ♙b7 4. ♙d3



Book exit

The next opening was my colleague Jeroen's tribute to Basman with a St. George!

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

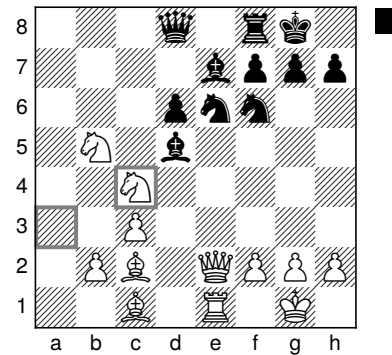


LCZero—Stockfish after 7. ♙f1–e1

Mike tried many things: 7... ♖b6, 7... h6, and 7... ♙e7 in this position, but it was generally a bit

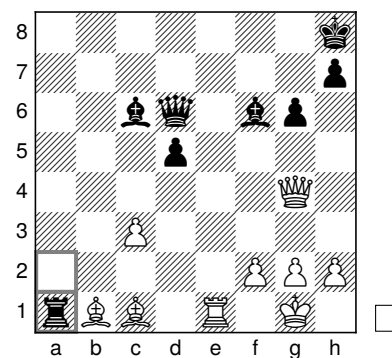
grim to be honest! (Though he won some fine victories too.) The engines prefer 7... d6.

Stockfish sacrificed its queenside to get castled,



LCZero—Stockfish after 18. ♙a3×c4

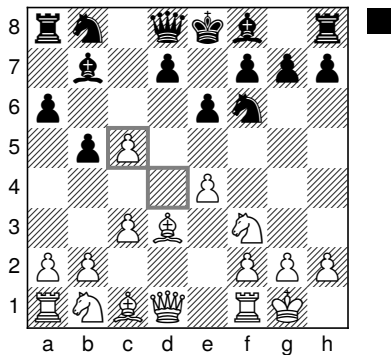
and it looked like a clear pawn for zero compensation to me! However, Stockfish did pretty well as always to steer the position to one where the extra pawn no longer mattered!



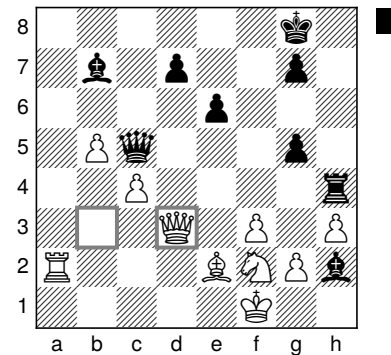
LCZero—Stockfish after 31... ♙a2–a1

Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

The reverse deviated when Stockfish took on c5 on move 7,

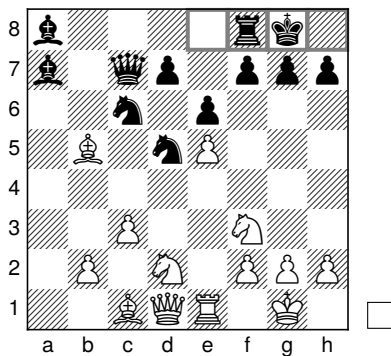


Stockfish—LCZero after 7. d4xc5



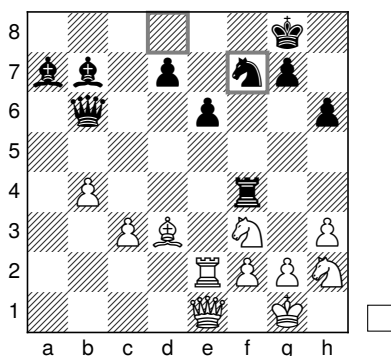
Stockfish—LCZero after 41. ♖b3-d3

both engines foreseeing an alternative method of Black being a pawn down!



Stockfish—LCZero after 14... O-O

I'm pretty sure that Basman would have approved of Leela's treatment of the St. George, as those lurking bishops in the corner definitely had potential!



Stockfish—LCZero after 27... ♘d8-f7

All the activity and open diagonals for the pawn gave Leela more than enough to easily hold the draw!

It means that in two SuperFinals, Basman's openings have led to four draws! Games 17–18 was the thrilling game pair in the Season 21 SuperFinal!¹¹

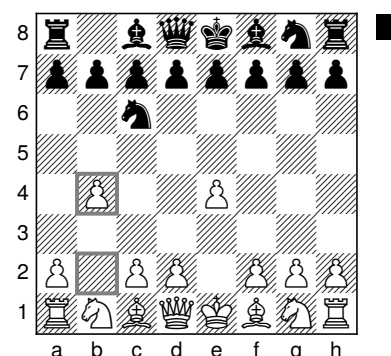
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	12 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	16 (+7)	5
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 2–4		

Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=27&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=28&season=23>

Games 29–30 Ginger Palliser Gambit (B00)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. e4 ♘c6 2. b4



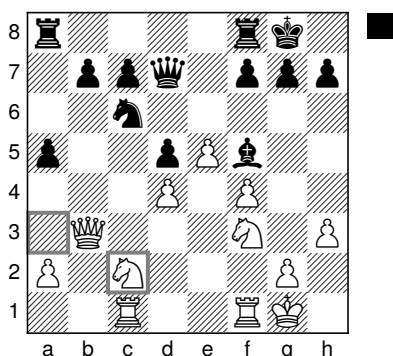
Book exit

¹¹<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=17&season=21> and <https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=18&season=21>

This line was the brainchild of GM Williams and IM Palliser in their excellent *Grandmaster Gambits* book¹².

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

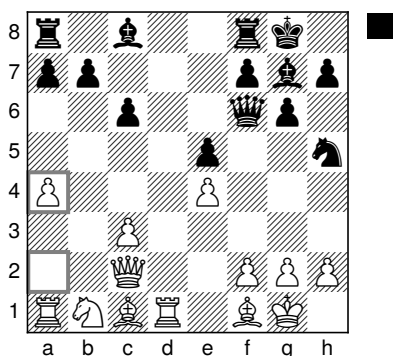
I'm proposing to call it the *Ginger Palliser Gambit!* How much is a clear extra b-pawn worth? Leela seemed to think not so much! Oddly after a series of exchanges (normally better for the side with the extra pawn), Leela was already making other plans for the evening!



LCZero—Stockfish after 17. ♖a3-c2

Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

Leela made a better go of the reverse, and Stockfish's play can only be characterised as very odd!

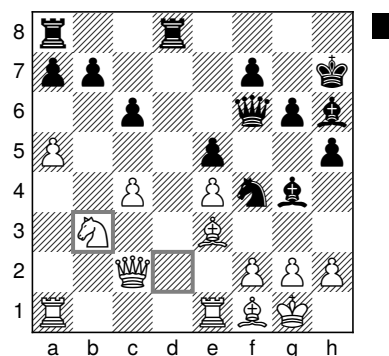


Stockfish—LCZero after 15. a2-a4

5. ♖d3—11. ♖c4—13. ♖b5+—14. ♖f1 was one particularly strange episode—you can't help

¹²Palliser, Richard and Williams, Simon. *Grandmaster Gambits: 1 e4*. Everyman Chess, 2021.

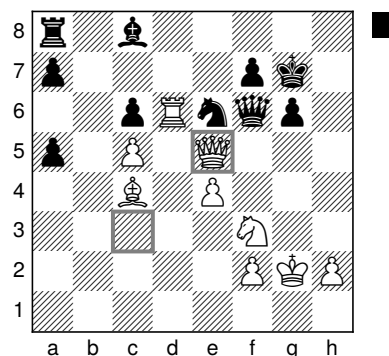
feeling that this waste of time is not optimal! Stockfish settled into defending the resulting position and did the normal good stuff to hold—Leela in particular struggled to find any plan to complete its queenside development. In particular, the sequence 20... ♖h6 21. ♖b3



Stockfish—LCZero after 21. ♖d2-b3

and now 21... ♖c8 was quite striking!

In the end, Leela didn't really manage to do anything with its pieces, and when exchanges started to arrive, a draw was inevitable!



Stockfish—LCZero after 34. ♖c3xe5

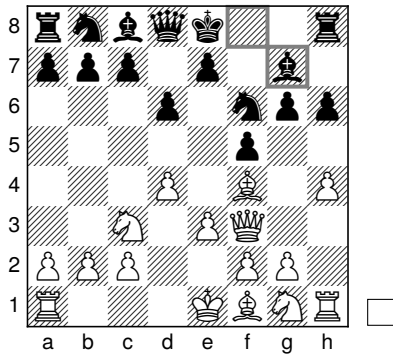
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0 =2 -0)	13 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0 =2 -0)	17 (+7)	5
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 2–4		
Game links:	https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=29&season=23 https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=30&season=23		

Games 31–32 Dutch (A80)


LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

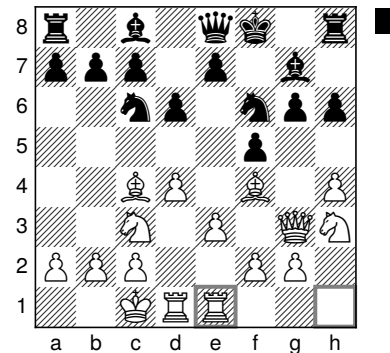
Book moves (Jeroen): 1. d4 f5 2. ♘f4 ♗f6 3. e3 g6 4. h4 h6 5. ♖c3 d6 6. ♔f3 ♙g7

To human eyes, it started off badly and got worse: after 11 moves, Black had spent two moves defending g6 (7... ♖f7, 8... ♔e8) and two moves with its king (7... ♖f7, 10... ♖f8).

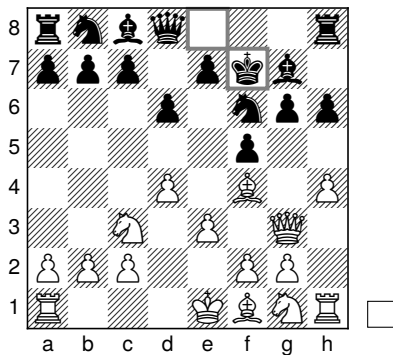


Book exit

After a night's sleep and a rather sedately middle-aged parkrun , it was time to review the night's action! Despite plenty of interesting games, we've hit a run of draws, so surely a dodgy Dutch worthy of @ChessProblem himself would solve it?

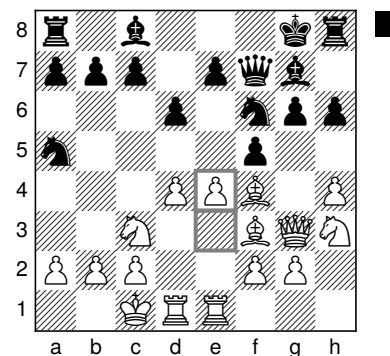


LCZero—Stockfish after 11. ♖h1–e1




LCZero—Stockfish after 7... ♖e8–f7

Bizarrely enough, Stockfish's evaluation continued to fall, and when Leela achieved the e4-break, it was barely enough to elicit a weary shrug of the elegant Fish's shoulders.



LCZero—Stockfish after 14. e3–e4

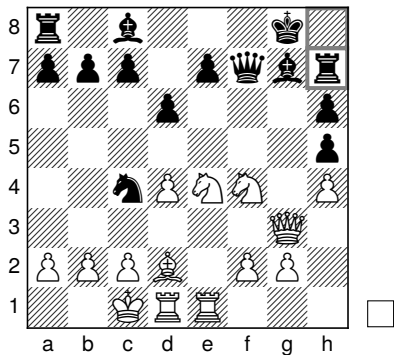
MrDodgy is plotting
 @ChessProblem
 Replying to @gmmnds



still theory

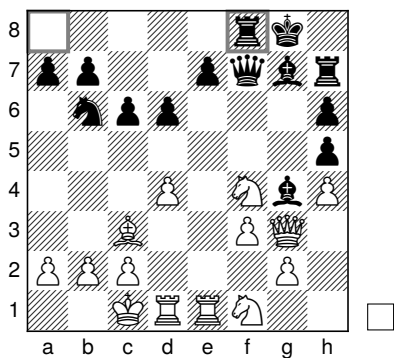
Nov 5, 2022
<https://twitter.com/ChessProblem/status/1588867835459440641>

To my eyes, Stockfish was being forced into more and more concessions to keep afloat,



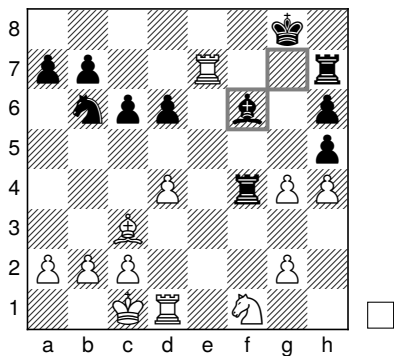
LCZero—Stockfish after 18... ♖h8-h7

but somehow Leela had got as far as it could, and there was no clear way to make any progress. The counter 22... ♜f8 activated all of Black's pieces.



LCZero—Stockfish after 22... ♜a8-f8

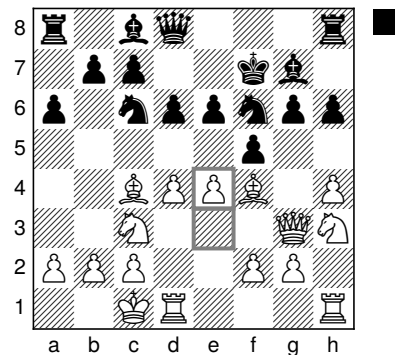
To add insult to injury, the rubbish rook on h7 turned out to be perfectly-placed to cover the 7th rank when the endgame started!



LCZero—Stockfish after 25... ♘g7-f6

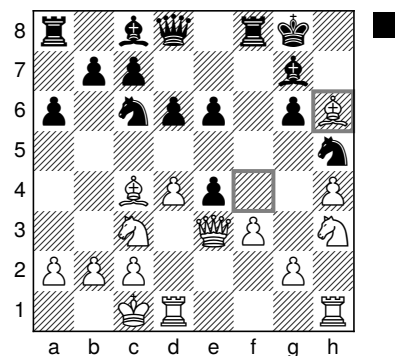
Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

So it was time for the reverse. Stockfish achieved e4 even quicker and seemed mighty pleased with itself. It was Leela's turn to yawn and recall the words of David Janowski: "He plays like such an idiot, I cannot concentrate!"



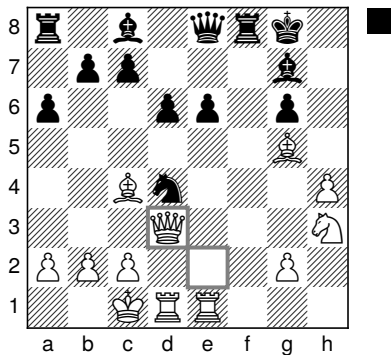
Stockfish—LCZero after 11. e3-e4

To this idiot, however, it looked mighty dangerous! Leela shimmied its king back to the kingside but lost the h6-pawn on the way!

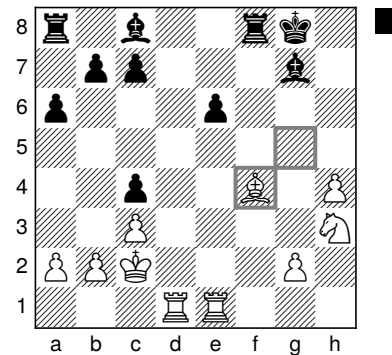


Stockfish—LCZero after 15. ♘f4xh6

A tactical flurry ensued, and when the smoke cleared, I couldn't understand why Black's king simply wasn't going to be toast in a couple of moves!



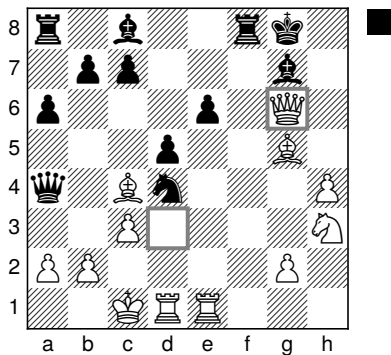
Stockfish—LCZero after 21. ♔e2–d3



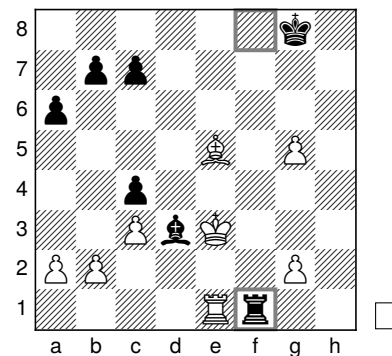
Stockfish—LCZero after 26. ♖g5–f4

However, Leela had discovered a concrete plan of counterattack—which it must have seen many moves before. The key point was that when White goes for the kingside,

but Leela resolutely aimed for the safe haven of opposite-coloured bishops and judged the exchange of rooks perfectly.



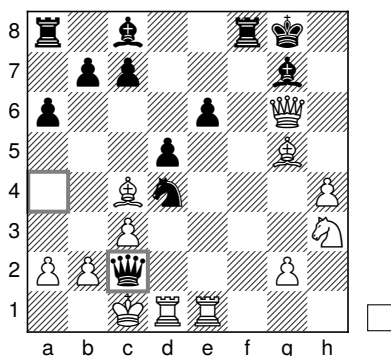
Stockfish—LCZero after 23. ♔d3×g6



Stockfish—LCZero after 34... ♜f8–f1

Leela could swap off the queens.

Two exciting and somewhat surprising draws!



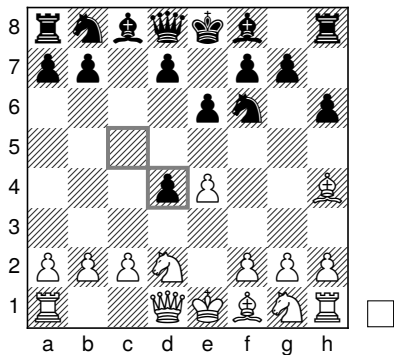
Stockfish—LCZero after 23... ♔a4–c2+

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	14 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	18 (+7)	5
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 2–4		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=31&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=32&season=23			

Games 33–34 Trompovsky (A45)

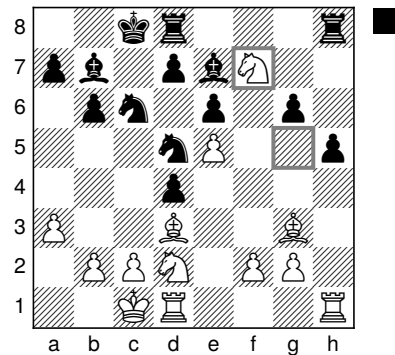
Book moves (Matthew): 1. d4 ♘f6 2. ♖g5 e6 3. ♘d2 h6 4. ♖h4 c5 5. e4 cxd4

The resulting positions still looked a bit tricky,



Book exit

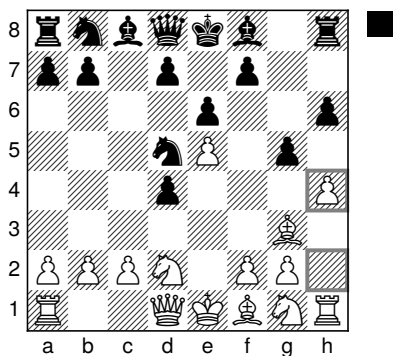
The next opening was another one of my lower-exit openings. I had some hopes for this one, though, as the Black positions looked very holey.



LCZero—Stockfish after 18. ♘g5–f7

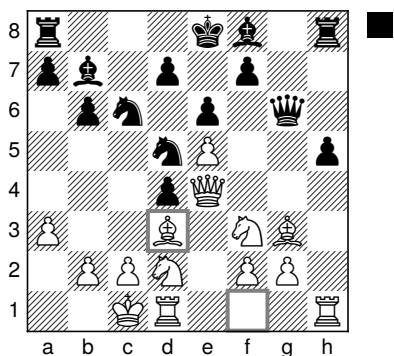
Stockfish gave the exchange and then started advancing its kingside pawns.

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5



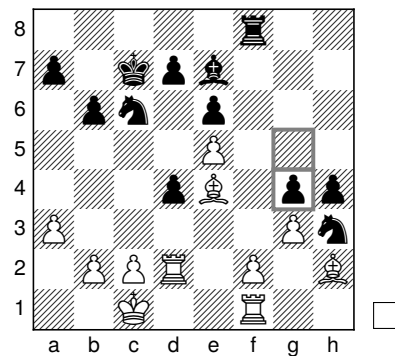
LCZero—Stockfish after 8. h2–h4

Leela was very optimistic by move 15 (with evaluation of 0.47),



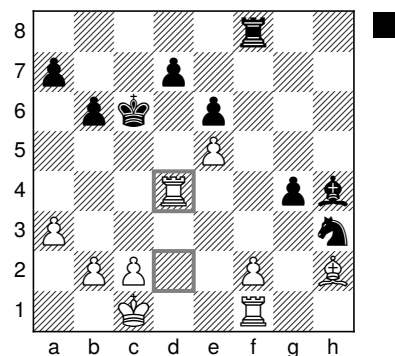
LCZero—Stockfish after 15. ♕f1–d3

but Stockfish was relaxed and on its next move offered an exchange sacrifice, which didn't seem amazingly impressive to me at first glance.



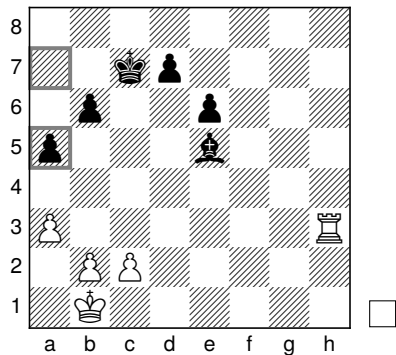
LCZero—Stockfish after 27... g5–g4

The counterplay came to a head, and Leela decided to clear pawns and pieces from the board starting with 28. ♕×c6 and 30. ♖×d4.



LCZero—Stockfish after 30. ♖d2×d4

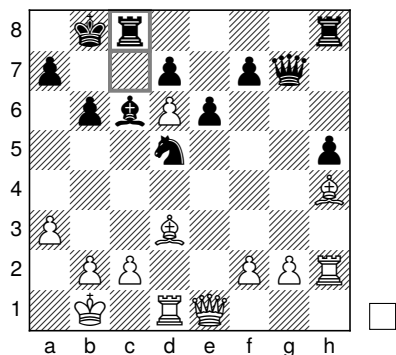
After a series of tactics, we ended up in this end-game, which Stockfish held easily.



LCZero—Stockfish after 37... a7–a5

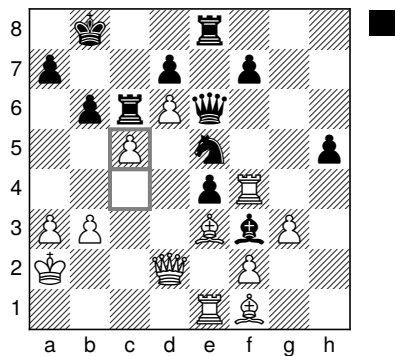
Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

In the reverse. If I was White, I would assume I had a big advantage—2 bishops, dark squares, weak Black pawn on h5, slightly restricted black queen—but the engines were not so impressed!



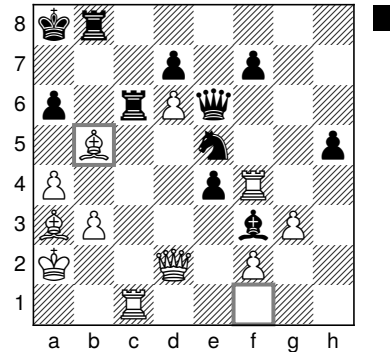
Stockfish—LCZero after 24... ♖c7–c8

The game got messy... deeply messy... but also engine 0.00 messy!



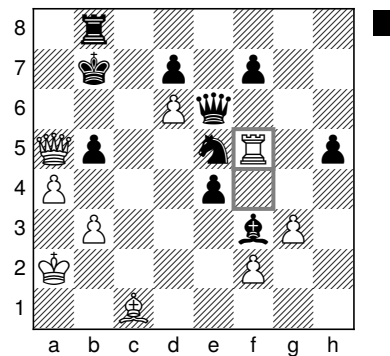
Stockfish—LCZero after 38. c4–c5

The tactics started with 43. ♖b5!!



Stockfish—LCZero after 43. ♖f1–b5

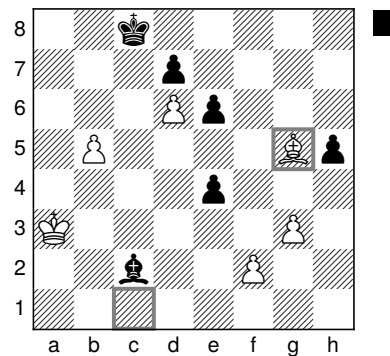
and 46. ♖f5!! was the key point.



Stockfish—LCZero after 46. ♖f4–f5

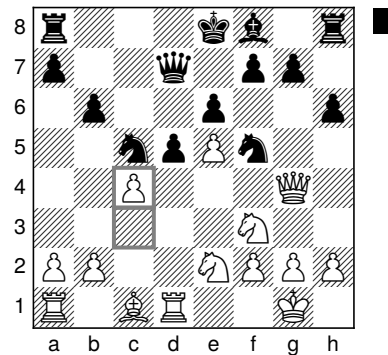
46... ♖×f5 47. ♖×b5+ ♔c8 48. ♖c5+ ♔b7 49. ♖e3! and the knight on e5 can't help Black defend the queenside, as it is now pinned to the queen on f5!

The position resolved to an opposite-coloured bishop ending and another draw!



Stockfish—LCZero after 52. ♖c1–g5

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	15 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	19 (+7)	5
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 2–4		
Game links:			
	https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=33&season=23		
	https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=34&season=23		

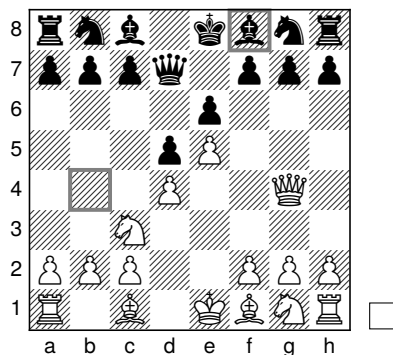


LCZero—Stockfish after 15. c3–c4

and that was a sign for Stockfish’s evaluation to drop! The game got pretty spicy as **20. h4 g5!** hit, and it was turning into an atypical slow French!

Games 35–36 French Winawer (C16)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♘c3 ♟b4 4. e5 ♚d7 5. ♚g4 ♟f8

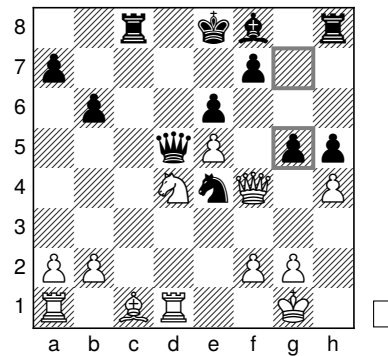


Book exit

A dodgy Winawer next! In the good old days, this was a fairly sure Leela win... not quite the same, though, nowadays!

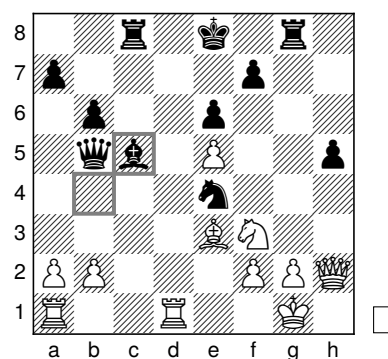
LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

After a period of manoeuvring, it started to get very sharp,



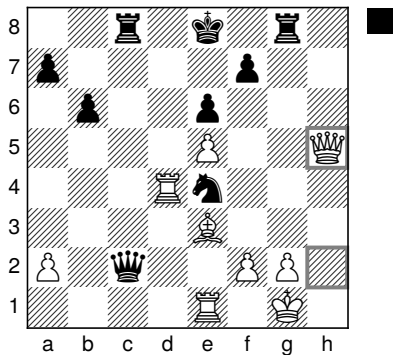
LCZero—Stockfish after 20... g7–g5

Black’s manic activity continued!



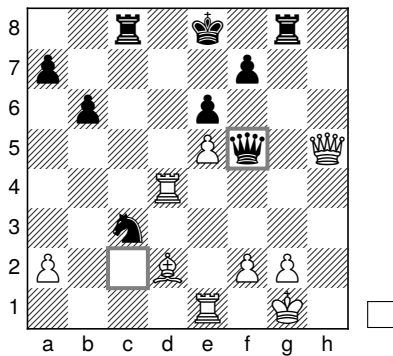
LCZero—Stockfish after 26... ♟b4–c5

However, Leela played well and suddenly Black’s position looked very risky, as White managed to push the black pieces away from attacking the white kingside.



LCZero—Stockfish after 30. ♕h2×h5

However, Stockfish organised 31... ♖f5 to stop any ambitions White might have with a queen exchange

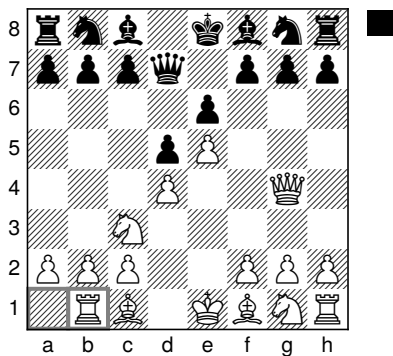


LCZero—Stockfish after 31... ♖c2–f5

after which Leela had little chance for the win.

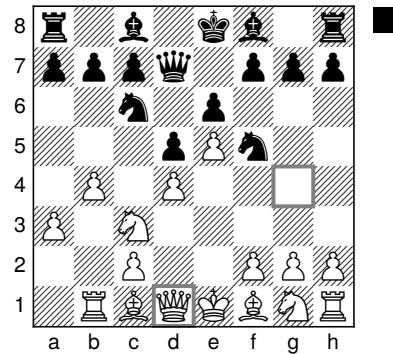
Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

In the reverse Stockfish came out with a real surprise: 6. ♖b1!? Never seen that one before!



Stockfish—LCZero after 6. ♖a1–b1

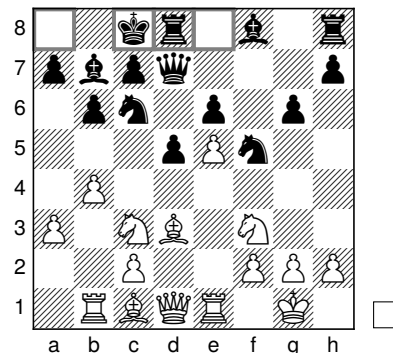
The concept kept on getting weirder / more interesting with 9. ♕d1!?



Stockfish—LCZero after 9. ♕g4–d1

9... ♘c×d4 10. g4! and 9... ♗f×d4 10. b5! is the tactical justification.

By move 14 a really unbalanced position had arisen.

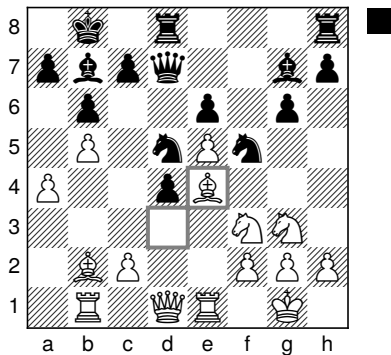


Stockfish—LCZero after 14... O-O-O

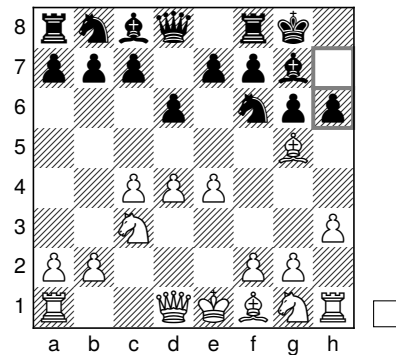
It was vaguely reminiscent of a famous French from the last true Sufi—the TCEC Season 17 SuFi where Leela performed the unlikely feat of a double kill¹³!

However, the miracle of Season 17 was not to be repeated! Stockfish took control and that active move 16... d4 was just going to cost a pawn!

¹³<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=95&season=17>

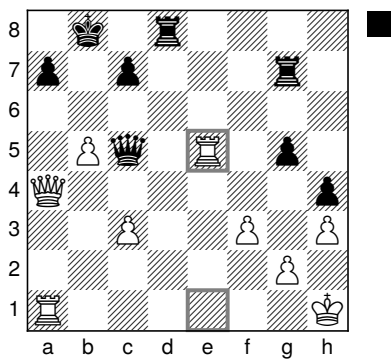


Stockfish—LCZero after 20. ♔d3–e4



Book exit

A rook sacrifice with 46. ♖e5!



Stockfish—LCZero after 46. ♖e1–e5

was a nice echo of 46. ♖f5!! a few games earlier¹⁴, and this one was even winning!

The opening was a Makogonov KID with the dubious 6... h6 to finish.

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

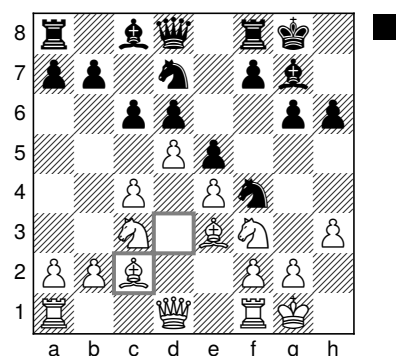
Why is 6... h6 dubious? White will gain a free and useful tempo with ♖d2, and after ...♗h7, a later ...e5 and ...f5 is risky because the black king is on the b1-h7 diagonal.

Leela chose a very quiet plan of development with 9. ♘f3 and combined that (unusually) with 8. ♔d3 and 12. ♔c2. It didn't look too impressive from the start

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0 =1 -1)	15.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1.5 (+1 =1 -0)	20.5 (+8)	6
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 2–5		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=35&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=36&season=23			

Games 37–38 Makogonov King's Indian (E71)

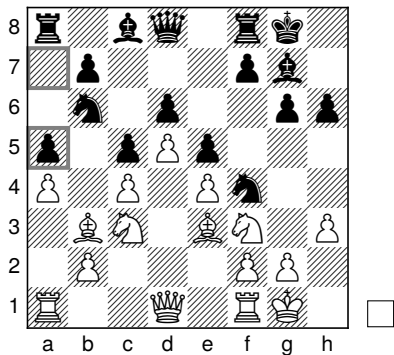
Book moves (Matthew): 1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 ♔g7 4. e4 d6 5. h3 O-O 6. ♔g5 h6



LCZero—Stockfish after 12. ♔d3–c2

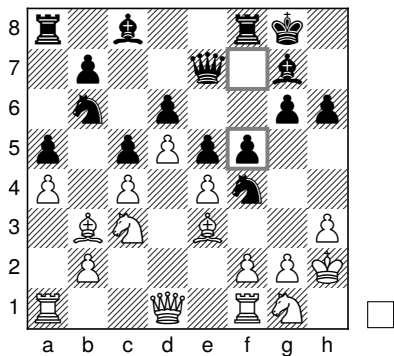
and it didn't look so great, either, after Stockfish's next moves. Look at that bishop on b3!

¹⁴See Game 34.



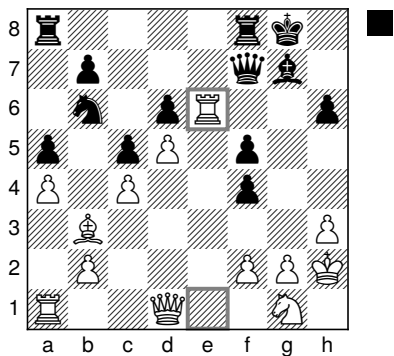
LCZero—Stockfish after 14... a7-a5

However, Leela’s evaluation was higher, and when the queenside gets blocked, it’s all a question about what White can do on the kingside. Leela planned to eject the knight on f4 with g3 and Stockfish struck back with **16... f5**.



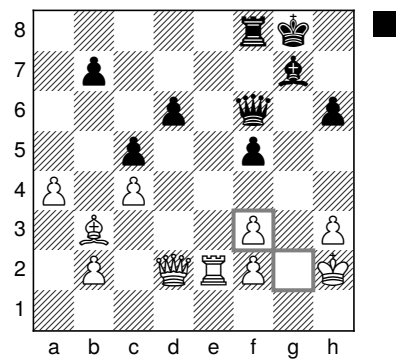
LCZero—Stockfish after 16... f7-f5

Leela manufactured some exchanges, and all of a sudden, you wondered about Black’s play. Give White a few moves and we can target either f4 (♖f3 , ♜e2) or f5 (♙c2 , ♞f3-h4).



LCZero—Stockfish after 22. ♙e1-e6

However, Stockfish is pretty much the king of concrete and liquidated the position, wrecking White’s kingside structure along the way. White had an extra pawn but not a great one!

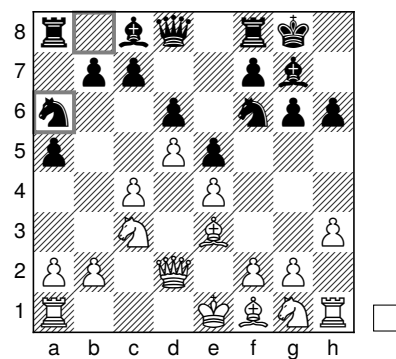


LCZero—Stockfish after 30. g2xf3

It might still have been awkward if White had managed to get the bishop active on, *e.g.*, d5, but that never proved possible, and Stockfish held the draw comfortably.

Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

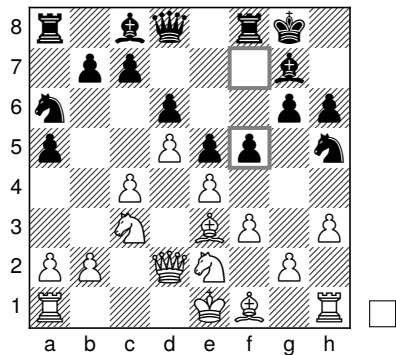
The reverse started off with a nice little trap:



Stockfish—LCZero after 9... ♖b8-a6

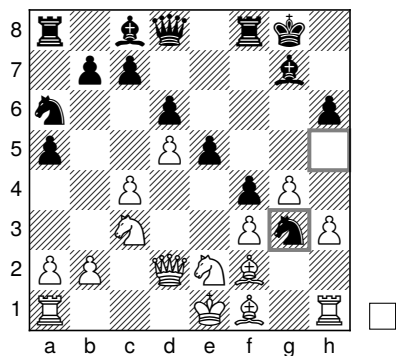
10. ♙xg6 is met by 10... ♜xe4 11. ♜xe4 ♖h4! winning the piece back!

Stockfish played the unusual **10.f3** (you don’t normally play both h3 *and* f3), and Leela reacted quickly with an immediate **11... f5**. The first crisis was already upon us on move 11.



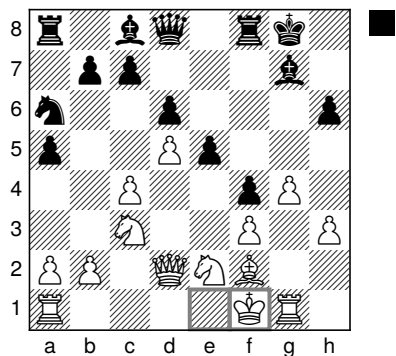
Stockfish—LCZero after 11... f7-f5

Leela found an unusual reply to Stockfish's typical g4 break. You normally only think about ... ♘f4. Leela, however, played 13... f4 14. ♙f2 ♘g3



Stockfish—LCZero after 14... ♘h5-g3

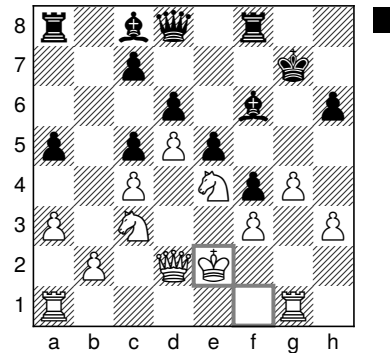
gaining the bishop pair after 15. ♖g1 ♘xf1.



Stockfish—LCZero after 16. ♙e1xf1

To be honest, this looked pretty promising for White to me with chances to expand on both wings

via a3, b4 and h4, g5. However, Stockfish disappointingly went for a rock solid queenside structure... and then its evaluation looked disappointed when it did!



Stockfish—LCZero after 21. ♙f1-e2

The game continued for quite some time, but this basic structure was never broken!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	16.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	21.5 (+8)	6
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew-Jeroen 2-5		

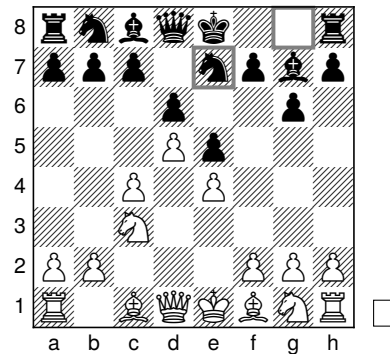
Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=37&season=23>

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=38&season=23>

Games 39-40 Modern (A42)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. d4 g6 2. c4 ♙g7 3. e4 d6 4. ♘c3 e5 5. d5 ♘e7

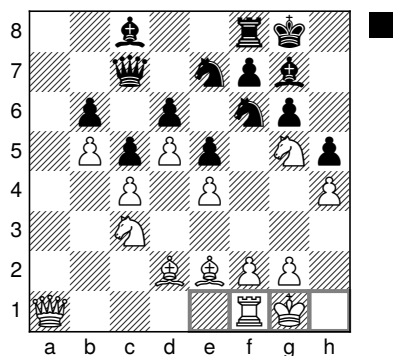


Book exit

The next game was a Modern, which led to another King's Indian structure. In the good old days, having a bad King's Indian position was bound to create some decisive games, but the engines have got tougher!

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

Leela's 0.58 (out of the book exit) is pretty "oomph" on its evaluation scale, but Stockfish's 1.11 is pretty "meh" on its evaluation scale... But in such positions so far this SuFi, meh has beaten oomph!

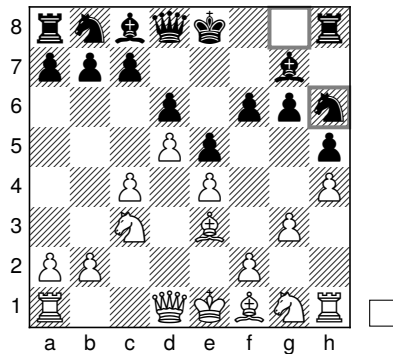


LCZero—Stockfish after 16... O-O

Leela kept on getting excited, but the fish was still swimming contentedly around in circles, and White never really got anywhere.

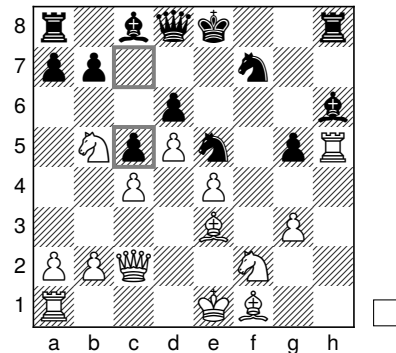
Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

In the reverse, Leela showed what it thought of Jeroen's opening by rerouting the e7-knight at once to h6!



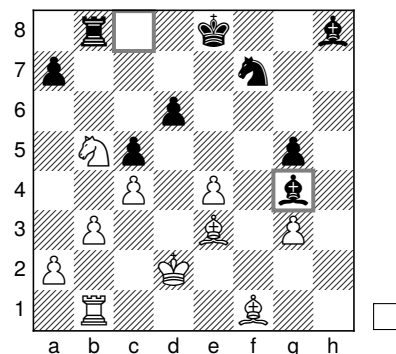
Stockfish—LCZero after 9... ♖g8-h6

Leela's play looked Basmanic again, as it sacrificed a pawn on the kingside to get a firm outpost on e5 for its pieces.



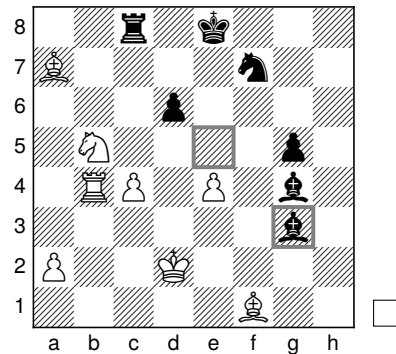
Stockfish—LCZero after 18... c7-c5

When the queens came off, Leela continued the tried and trusted engine technique of exchanging pieces in a position a pawn down!



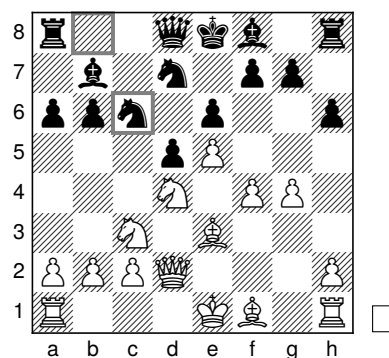
Stockfish—LCZero after 27... ♖c8xg3

More pawns got exchanged and the drawzone was not far away!



Stockfish—LCZero after 31... ♖e5xg3

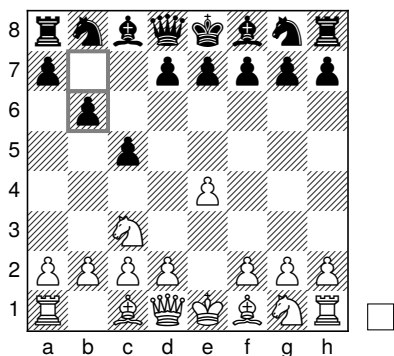
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	17.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	22.5 (+8)	6
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 2–5		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=39&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=40&season=23			



LCZero—Stockfish after 11... ♖b8–c6

Games 41–42 Sicilian (B23)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. e4 c5 2. ♘c3 b6



Book exit

The next opening led to some fraught games in my test set.

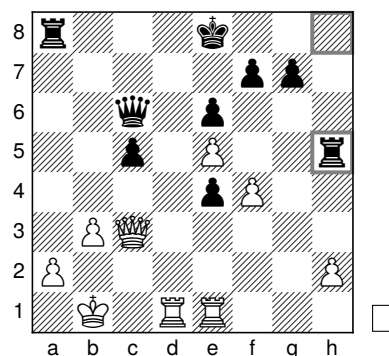
LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

Concrete as they are, engines were happy to play ...a6 and ...b5 and enter an Open Sicilian a tempo down, which obviously increases the risk.

Stockfish allowed Leela to gain kingside space with 8. g4 and headed for a pretty poor French Steinitz-style structure with a quick 9... d5.

It looked a little like a line of the French I had experimented but with a few moves less development.

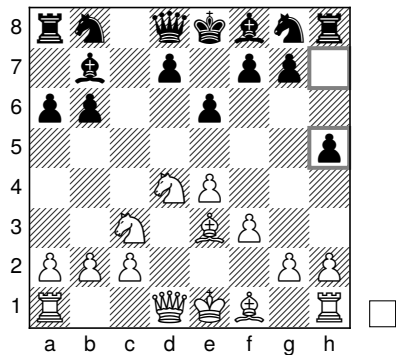
Leela's evaluation rose but soon flattened out after a series of exchanges that led to a pure major piece endgame. I would have felt nervous as Black with my king stuck in the centre, but Stockfish's 0.21 evaluation showed the depth of its concern!



LCZero—Stockfish after 26... ♖h8×h5

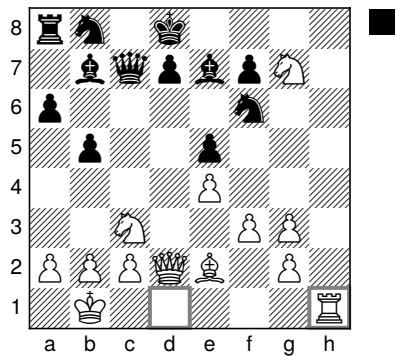
Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

The reverse was pretty thrilling! Leela played 7... h5 (what else?) to prevent kingside expansion with g4.



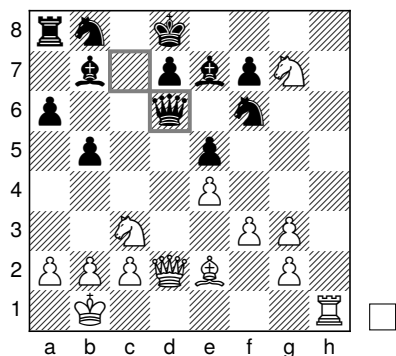
Stockfish—LCZero after 7... h7-h5

The game followed one of my test games (Stockfish against Dragon) up to move 17, Stockfish sacrificing a piece early for a massive initiative.



Stockfish—LCZero after 17. ♖d1xh1

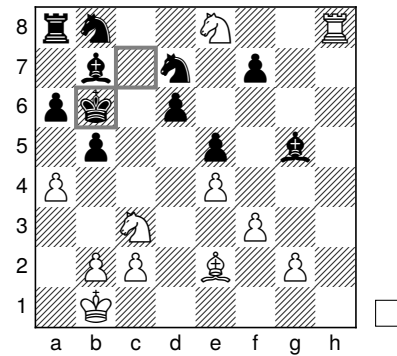
Dragon had played 17... ♙c5 (also Stockfish's recommendation) and barely survived. Leela twiddled with her hair and played 17... ♙d6 giving a very modest 0.20 evaluation.



Stockfish—LCZero after 17... ♙c7-d6

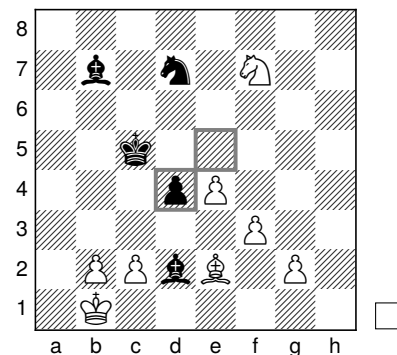
Stockfish's evaluation rocketed but then subsided severely as it searched deeper. Some of the lines

looked impossible for Black, but Leela had assessed them all well.



Stockfish—LCZero after 24... ♙c7-b6

Stockfish grabbed a raft of pawns but not enough to overwhelm Leela's extra piece.



Stockfish—LCZero after 32... e5xd4

After a series of mysterious long thinks from Leela, the game ended in a draw!

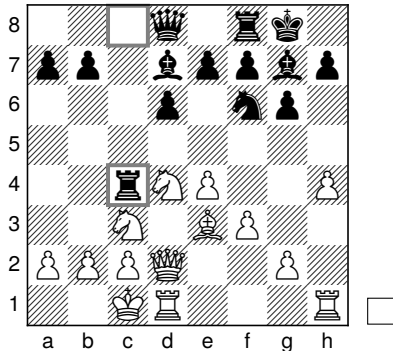
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0 =2 -0)	18.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0 =2 -0)	23.5 (+8)	6
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew-Jeroen 2-5		

Game links:

- <https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=41&season=23>
- <https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=42&season=23>

Games 43–44 Sicilian Dragon (B78)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 c×d4 4. ♘×d4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 g6 6. ♗e3 ♗g7 7. f3 O-O 8. ♖d2 ♘c6 9. ♗c4 ♗d7 10. O-O-O ♖c8 11. ♗b3 ♘e5 12. h4 ♘c4 13. ♗×c4 ♖×c4

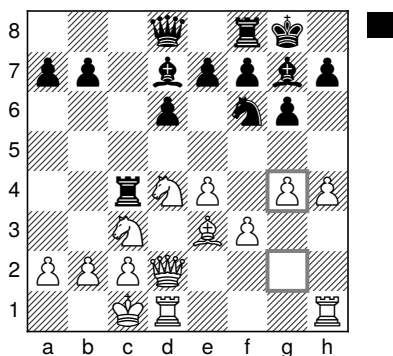


Book exit

Jeroen has produced some good Dragons in past SuperFinals, and he came up with another nice one for Season 23.

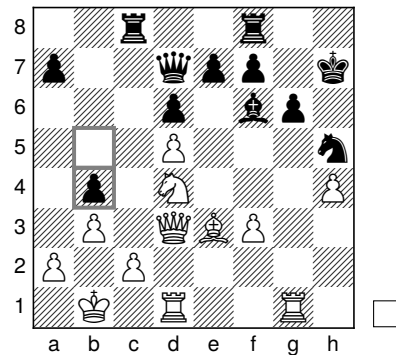
LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

14. h5 felt natural and Fischer-esque (“h5, sac, sac, and mate”), but neither engine wanted it in the end preferring 14. g4.



LCZero—Stockfish after 14. g2–g4

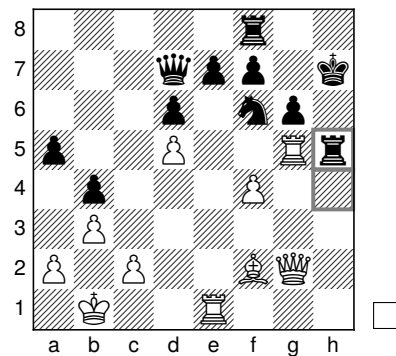
Both games followed the same course up til move 24,



LCZero—Stockfish after 23... b5–b4

and it looked very unpleasant for Black. Amazingly, Stockfish and Leela defended it successfully in completely different ways!

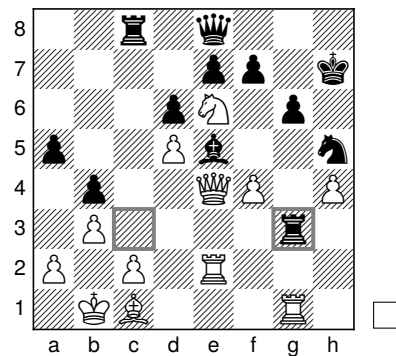
Stockfish gave up the dark-squared bishop for the knight and happily proved that dark squares are overrated.



LCZero—Stockfish after 30... ♖h4–h5

Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

Leela let the knight jump into e6 and proved that knights on e6 are overrated!



Stockfish—LCZero after 29... ♖c3–g3

Amazingly, two draws!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	19.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	24.5 (+8)	6

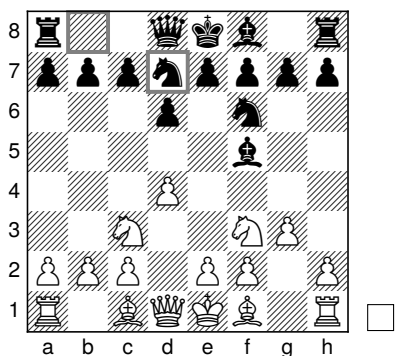
Pair result Double draw
Book score Matthew–Jeroen 2–5

Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=43&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=44&season=23>

Games 45–46 Irregular (A46)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. d4 ♘f6 2. ♘f3 d6
 3. ♘c3 ♙f5 4. g3 ♘bd7

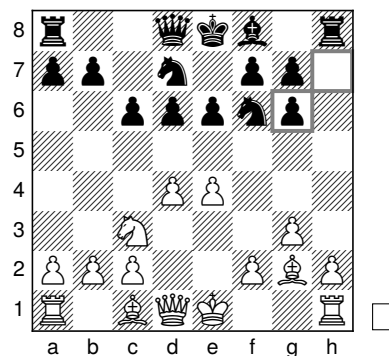


Book exit

These irregular Black openings with ...d6 and ...♙g4 / ...♙f5 were played in various move orders by creative British players such as Speelman and Hodgson.

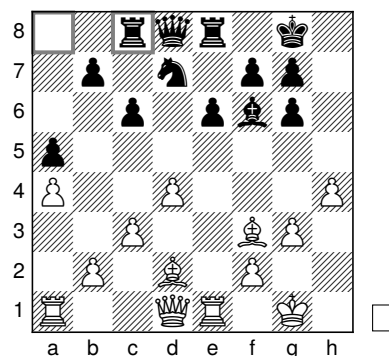
LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

Leela’s exit was quite low, but the likely resulting positions seemed quite promising (strong centre + two bishops).



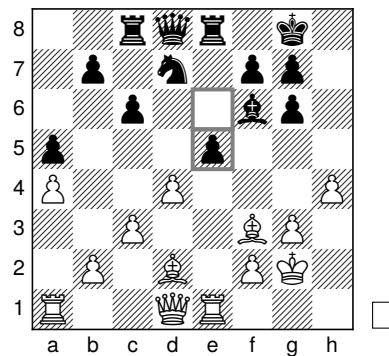
LCZero—Stockfish after 8... h7×g6

Leela went for a quite positional approach, and its evaluation rose to something quite hopeful (0.53). Stockfish’s evaluation also started to rise to worrying levels (1.55).



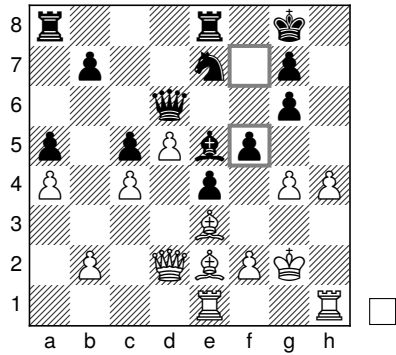
LCZero—Stockfish after 17... ♖a8–c8

Attracted by a rook’s pawn push like a moth to the flame, Leela played 18. ♙g2 preparing ♖h1. Stockfish reacted classically with a central break, and Stockfish’s evaluation started to fall!



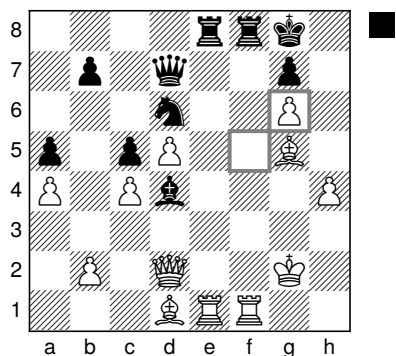
LCZero—Stockfish after 18... e6–e5

Leela's position looked perfectly set up for a long painful squeeze, but Stockfish surprisingly started counterplay on the king's wing... where Leela was set to attack!



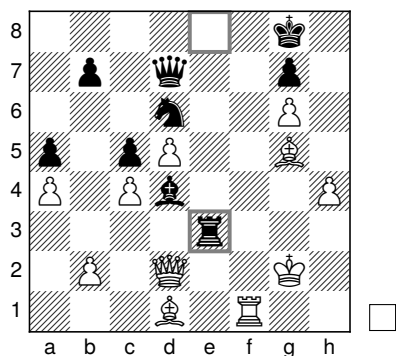
LCZero—Stockfish after 27... f7-f5

A double pawn sacrifice freed Stockfish's position,



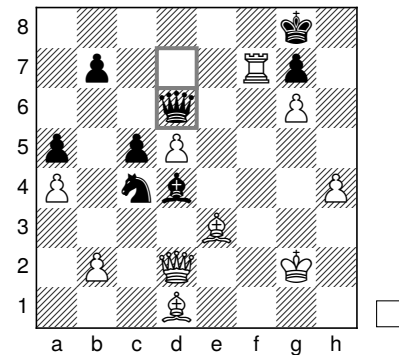
LCZero—Stockfish after 35. f5xg6

and a gorgeous sham rook sacrifice sealed the draw!



LCZero—Stockfish after 36... ♖e8-e3

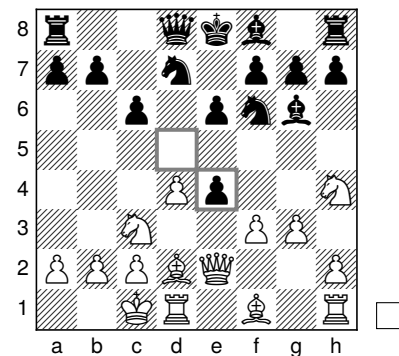
38... ♖d6 was the gorgeous point:



LCZero—Stockfish after 38... ♖d7-d6

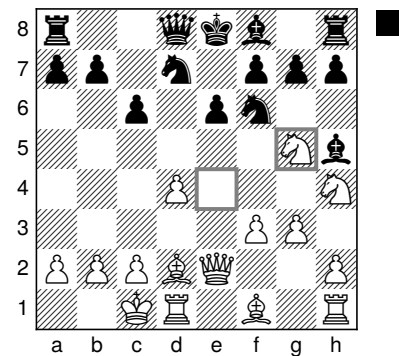
Stockfish—LCZero 1-0

The reverse started very aggressively with Stockfish castling queenside and Leela incautiously opening the centre.



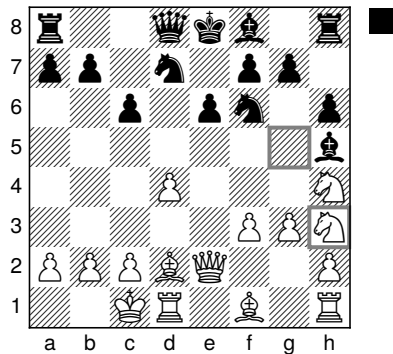
Stockfish—LCZero after 10... d5xe4

Stockfish handled its knights like Tal, and it looked certain that a knight sac on e6 was imminent!



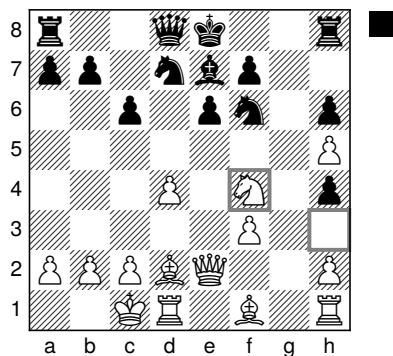
Stockfish—LCZero after 12. ♘e4-g5

However, after **12... h6**, Stockfish meekly dropped its knight back to h3!



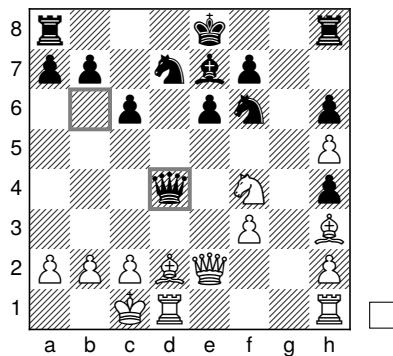
Stockfish—LCZero after 13. ♖g5-h3

Black's light-squared bishop, however, was in some trouble and threatened with g4! The exchange of light-squared bishop for knight and the return of the white "Tal" knight to f4 looked profoundly worrying for Black, but Leela was fairly unconcerned.



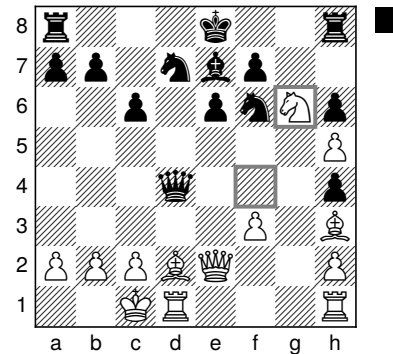
Stockfish—LCZero after 16. ♖h3-f4

The d4-pawn looked like the proverbial hot potato, but Leela grabbed it with both hands!



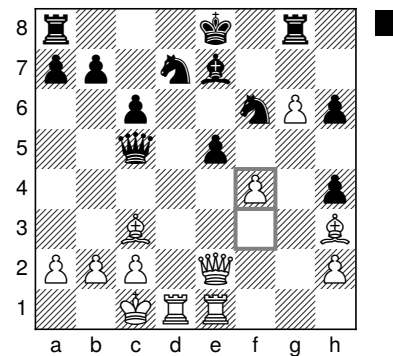
Stockfish—LCZero after 17... ♖b6xd4

The reply was brutal!

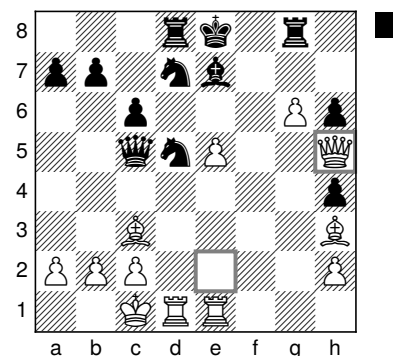


Stockfish—LCZero after 18. ♖f4-g6

Beautiful play followed from Stockfish, ripping open the Black position.

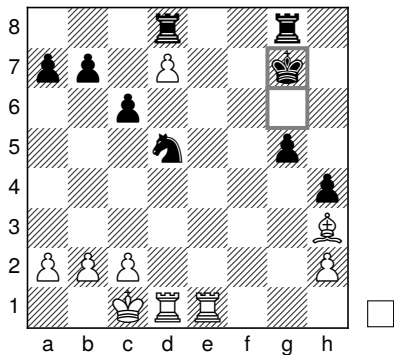


Stockfish—LCZero after 22. f3-f4

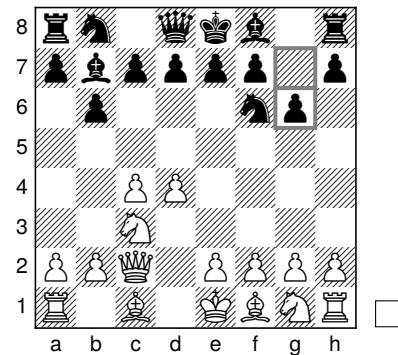


Stockfish—LCZero after 24. ♖e2-h5

Leela put up an astonishing resistance to reach an endgame with equal material



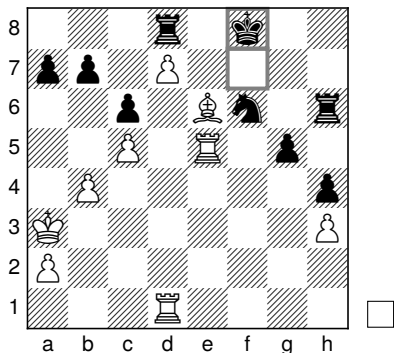
Stockfish—LCZero after 30... ♖g6xg7



Book exit

but, unfortunately, one that Stockfish was assessing at +8!! The conversion was smooth.

A Queen's Indian game is normally one where you plan in a restorative rest after a long hard night.

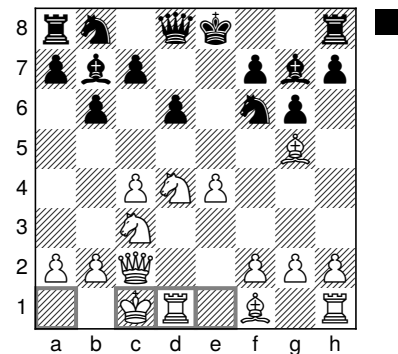


Stockfish—LCZero after 54... ♖f7-f8

A first win in the bookmaker's competition for what felt like years, though Jeroen kept a clear lead with 5 decisive pairs to 3!

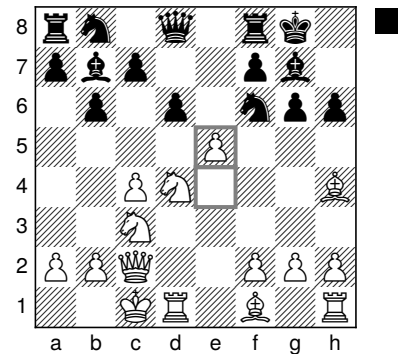
LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

However, Jeroen had cooked up an accelerated Queen's Indian. So accelerated that it exploded right from the off with Leela castling on move 9



LCZero—Stockfish after 9. O-O-O

and blowing open the centre on move 11!



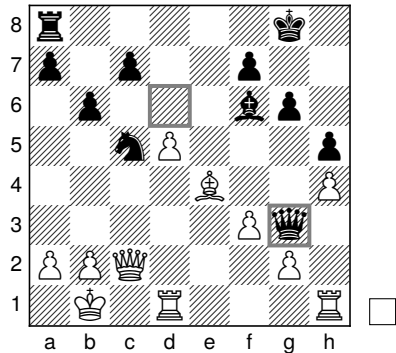
LCZero—Stockfish after 11. e4-e5

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0 =1 -1)	20 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1.5 (+1 =1 -0)	26 (+9)	7
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 3–5		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=45&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=46&season=23			

Games 47–48 Accelerated Queen's Indian (A50)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 b6 3. ♘c3 ♗b7 4. ♖c2 g6

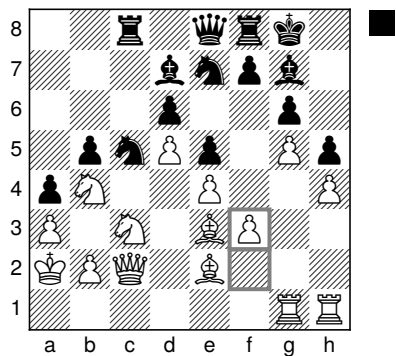
However, Stockfish wriggled out by sacrificing the exchange and entrenching itself on the dark squares—not too dissimilar to the course of game 99!—to hold another tough opening.



LCZero—Stockfish after 21... ♖d6–g3

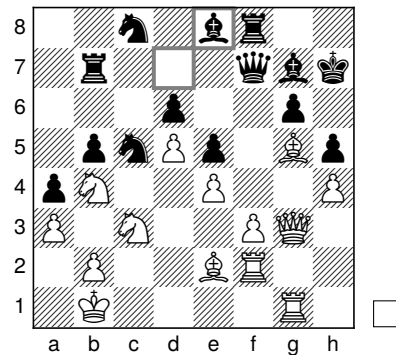
Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

The reverse was a tough old fight.



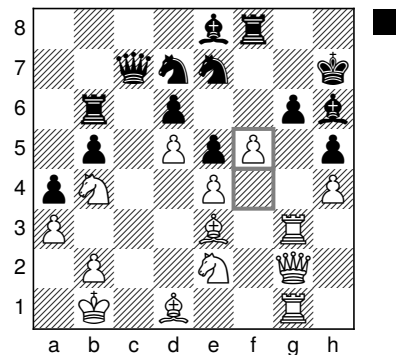
Stockfish—LCZero after 23. f2–f3

Experienced TCEC watchers were expecting 100 moves of shuffling and then a crazy blitz finish. The shuffling continued and the evaluations continued to rise.



Stockfish—LCZero after 39... ♗d7–e8

At some stage, though, we skipped the blitzing phase and headed straight to the demolition part!

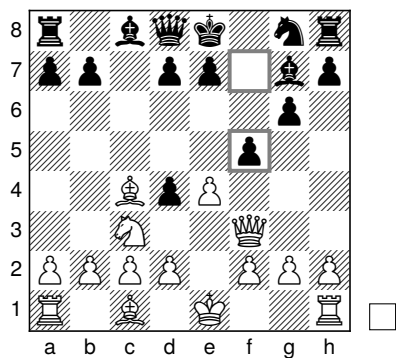


Stockfish—LCZero after 50. f4–f5

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0=1-1)	20.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1.5 (+1=1-0)	27.5 (+10)	8
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 3–6		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=47&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=48&season=23			

Games 49–50 Sicilian Rossolimo (A50)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. e4 c5 2. ♘c3 ♘c6 3. ♗b5 ♘d4 4. ♘f3 g6 5. ♗c4 ♗g7 6. ♘×d4 c×d4 7. ♖f3 f5



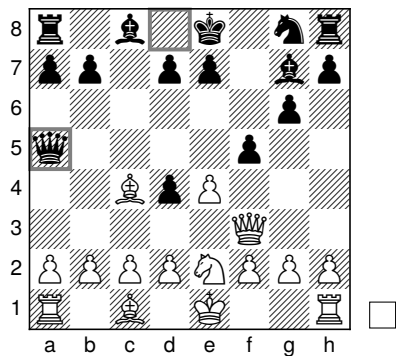
Book exit

We started the night with a rather confusing Ros-solimo Sicilian.

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

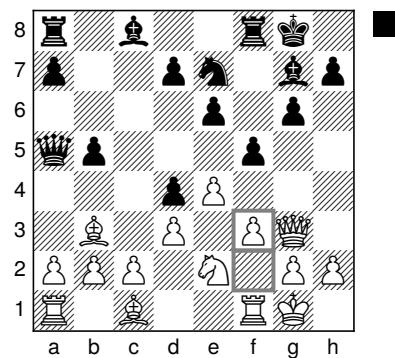
Allowing the intermezzo 7. ♖f3 hitting f7 is supposed to be a mistake, but the engines had fairly different opinions about how to play the position.

Stockfish’s plan was a little odd. It felt as if Stockfish was keen to get White to castle to avoid the danger of being hit by a quick h4-h5. 8... ♖a5 pins the d2-pawn and thus makes it impossible for White to support the e4-pawn with d3.



LCZero—Stockfish after 8... ♖d8-a5

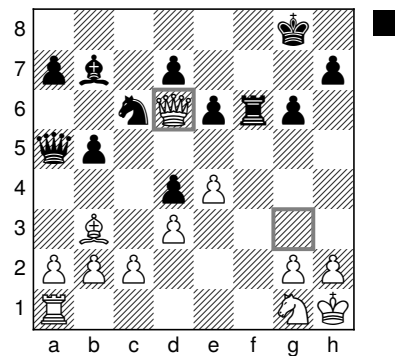
The key moment came at move 13. Leela had been expecting Stockfish to play ...f×e4 at several moments. When Stockfish delayed, Leela played 13. f3 (to recapture on e4 with the f-pawn) and was extremely happy with itself.



LCZero—Stockfish after 13. f2–f3

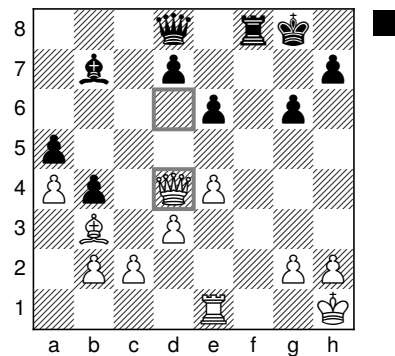
That seemed to wake Stockfish up because its evaluation rocketed up to a worrying 1.57, and it spent more than 14 minutes on its 13th move—an eternity for these monsters.

Leela proceeded methodically, exchanging a pair of rooks and Black’s dark-squared bishop, leaving the d4-pawn extremely vulnerable.



LCZero—Stockfish after 21. ♖g3×d6

And indeed, Leela managed to pick up the d4-pawn to stand a clear pawn up.

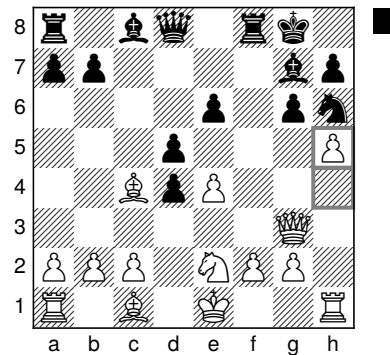


LCZero—Stockfish after 26. ♖d6×d4

And this was the odd part! Once the pawn had dropped... so did Stockfish's assessment of White's chances!

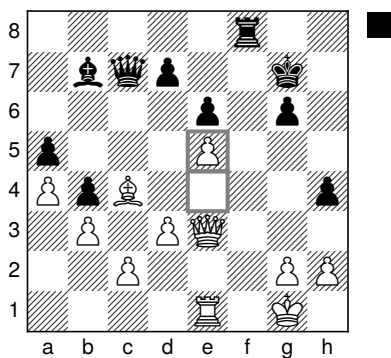
It has often been said that the moment after winning material is the most dangerous because the opponent's pieces—that were defending the material—are freed from drudgery and suddenly become active... and this was a prime example!

Leela tried many to make progress, but playing e5 never felt as if it was going to be the way.



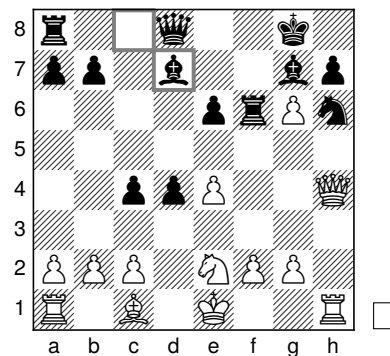
Stockfish—LCZero after 13. h4–h5

However, it really was such a game where the closer you get to your goal, the worse it seems! Stockfish's evaluation got progressively more depressed as the tactics exploded.



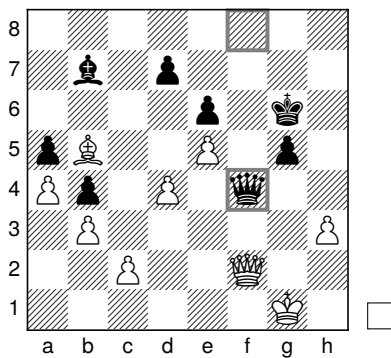
LCZero—Stockfish after 32. e4–e5

Bizarrely enough, despite being a pawn down, Stockfish was supremely unconcerned about exchanging off the major pieces!



Stockfish—LCZero after 15... ♗c8–d7

Leela bailed out to a worse endgame

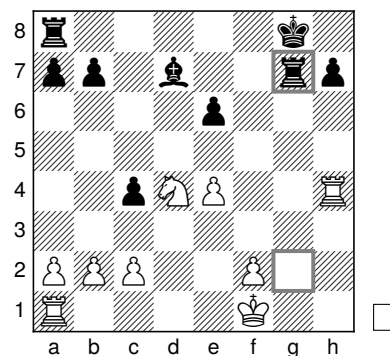


LCZero—Stockfish after 43... ♖f8–f4

The game soon ended in a draw.

Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

The reverse was short and sharp. Stockfish's exit evaluation was pretty impressive (1.47), and it did indeed get its h4-h5 thrust going!



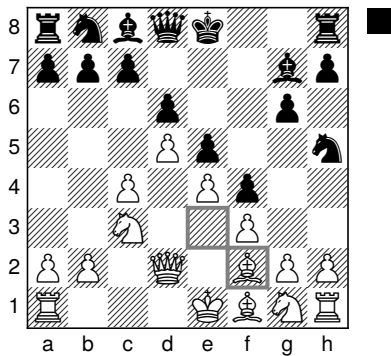
Stockfish—LCZero after 20... ♖g2–g7

but held it consummately—as engines do! Two absorbing draws!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	21.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	28.5 (+10)	8
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 3–6		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=49&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=50&season=23			

Games 51–52 King’s Indian Sämisch (E80)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 ♙g7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 e5 6. d5 ♗h5 7. ♙e3 f5 8. ♖d2 f4 9. ♙f2

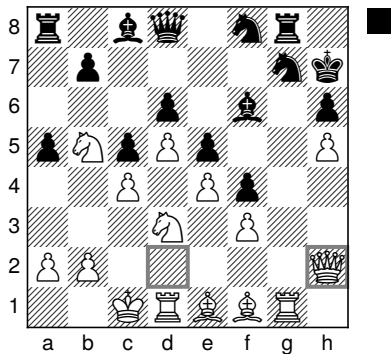


Book exit

A blocked King’s Indian Sämisch.

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

It seemed to me that White had wonderful chances to break through on either wing, but somehow Leela never got it together.



LCZero—Stockfish after 21. ♖d2–h2

I wrote on Twitter at the time: “Leela’s eval stays high so we expect the typical break b4! (probably with Bf2) will come at some stage followed by a breakthrough on the queenside with ...ab, a5. Seems quite promising but we may have to wait sometime before Leela punts it!”

However, as Twitter fans pointed out...

Why must I taunt MrDodgy

@wmiltti

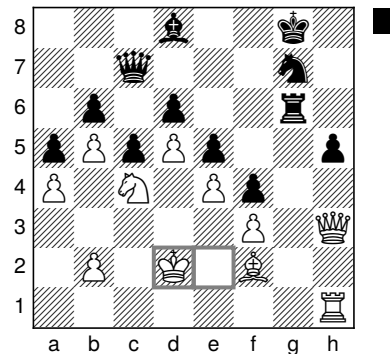
Replying to @gmmds



It’s still on b2...

Nov 8, 2022

<https://twitter.com/wmiltti/status/1589906819954053120>



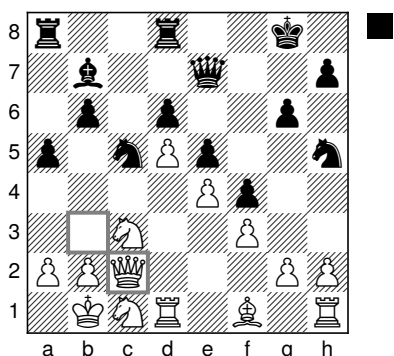
LCZero—Stockfish after 51. ♖e2–d2

And indeed, Leela got nowhere in the rest of the game. This felt like something of a missed chance for Leela.

Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

The reverse became sharp very quickly. Black got the dark-squared bishops off, but White was very quick with queenside play—maybe too quick?

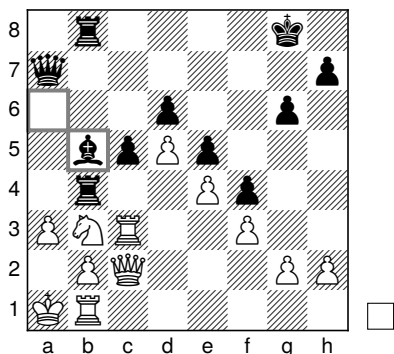
As the game proceeded,



Stockfish—LCZero after 22. ♖b3-c2

it felt like Black would block White entry channels quite easily (...a5 and ...♘c5). Using tactics to play c5 quickly as Stockfish did felt cool, but the downside was being forced to play c×d6 early: it gave Black better chances of organising the defensive pieces.

Leela defended well, and a Benko-style sacrifice of the a-pawn gave some pretty nice counterplay!



Stockfish—LCZero after 45... ♗a6-b5

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2 -0)	22.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0=2 -0)	29.5 (+10)	8

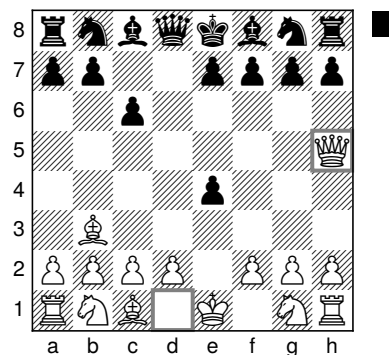
Pair result Double draw
Book score Matthew–Jeroen 3–6

Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=51&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=52&season=23>

Games 53–54 Caro-Kann Hillbilly (B10)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. e4 c6 2. ♘c4 d5 3. ♘b3 d×e4 4. ♖h5

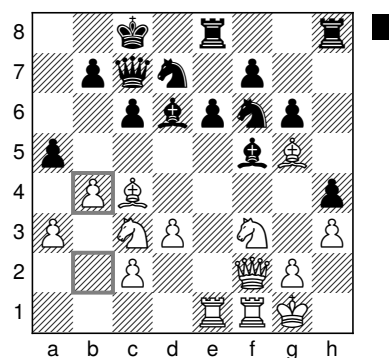


Book exit

The excellent *Grandmaster Gambits*¹⁵ continued to provide inspiration for the SuFi! We had a Hillbilly on the board!

LCZero—Stockfish 0–1

Stockfish rubbed its fins with glee, but to a human player it looked *raaaaaather* messy,

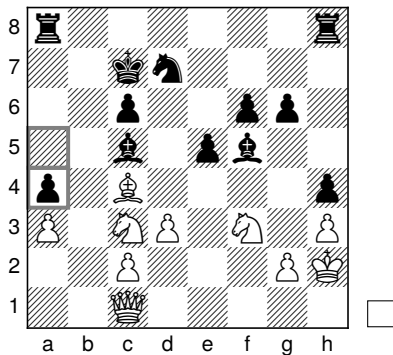


LCZero—Stockfish after 17. b2-b4

as **17. b4** started some queenside counterplay!

However, Stockfish neutralised all Leela's play by going for a two rooks vs queen position

¹⁵Palliser, Richard and Williams, Simon. *Grandmaster Gambits: 1 e4*. Everyman Chess, 2021.

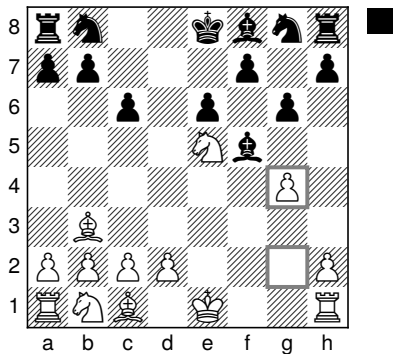


LCZero—Stockfish after 28... a5-a4

and mopped up very efficiently.

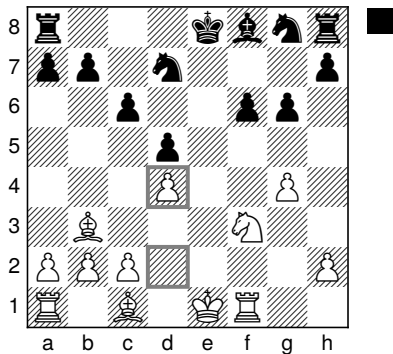
Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

In the reverse, Stockfish took the not very fun approach to defence of exchanging queens and hoping to hang on forever.



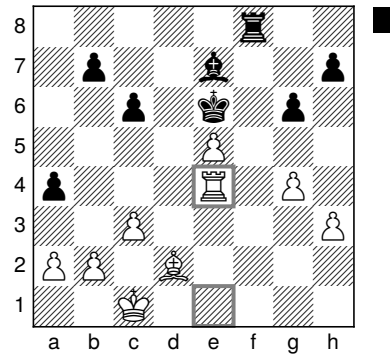
Stockfish—LCZero after 10. g2-g4

It looked like a clear pawn to me,



Stockfish—LCZero after 15. d2-d4

but Leela was unable to make any progress, and by move 30, Leela had returned two pawns in a fruitless attempt to make some progress.



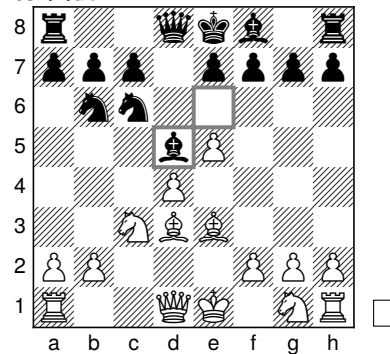
Stockfish—LCZero after 30. ♖e1×e4

However, it was all in vain: Stockfish held on easily for another pair win.

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0 =1 -1)	23 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1.5 (+1 =1 -0)	31 (+11)	9
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 4–6		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=53&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=54&season=23			

Games 55–56 Queen’s Gambit Accepted (D20)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. d4 d5 2. c4 d×c4 3. e4 ♘f6 4. e5 ♘d5 5. ♙×c4 ♘b6 6. ♙d3 ♘c6 7. ♙e3 ♙e6 8. ♘c3 ♙d5



Book exit

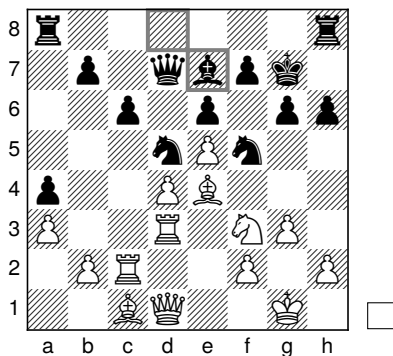
The opening of the night was a slightly sub-optimal Queens' Gambit Accepted 3. e4.

and the draw was inevitable. Strangely disappointing there from Leela.

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

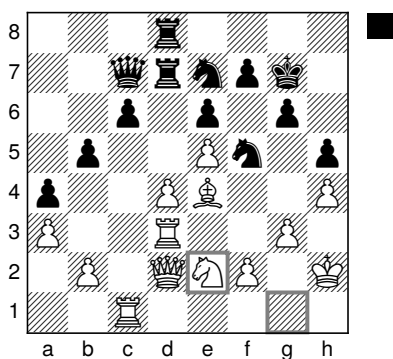
When I saw Jeroen had included this, I got vibes of an old game of mine from the Isle of Man.¹⁶

In some ways you'd think that exchanging off the "bad" light-squared bishop would relieve Black's position, but I learnt during my game against Shaw that Black's position was simply devoid of counter-play. So, it was going to be a hard slog on the black side for both engines!



LCZero—Stockfish after 38... ♔d8–e7

However, oddly, for Leela that was as good as life got, and it ended up shuffling purposelessly and gradually dropping evaluation points. By move 65, we were down to just +0.17

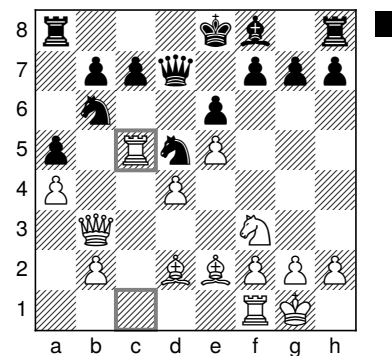


LCZero—Stockfish after 65. ♖g1–e2

¹⁶Matthew Sadler vs John Shaw, Isle of Man Open (1994), rd 5, 1–0. <https://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=2283157>

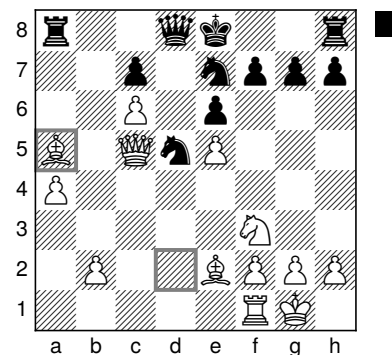
Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

The reverse was way more exciting! Stockfish blew the game wide open with an exchange sacrifice!



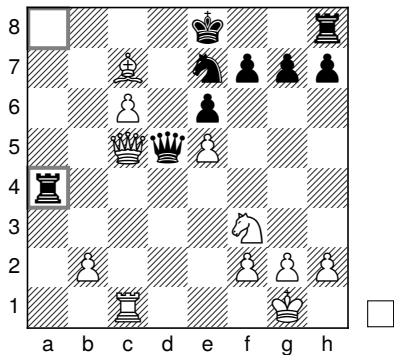
Stockfish—LCZero after 18. ♖c1–c5

Stockfish fans cheered and whooped as the evaluation rose to 1.95.



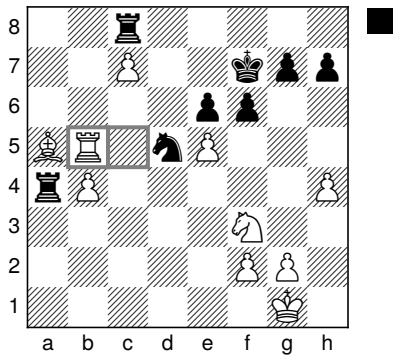
Stockfish—LCZero after 24. ♔d2×a5

However, White's pieces were a little awkward, and Leela exploited this to free its position with exchanges.



Stockfish—LCZero after 28... ♖a8×a4

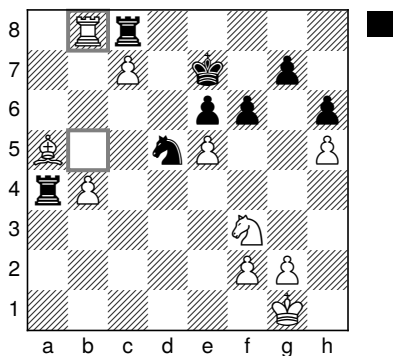
Stockfish's evaluation rose still further (above +3),



Stockfish—LCZero after 34. ♜c5-b5

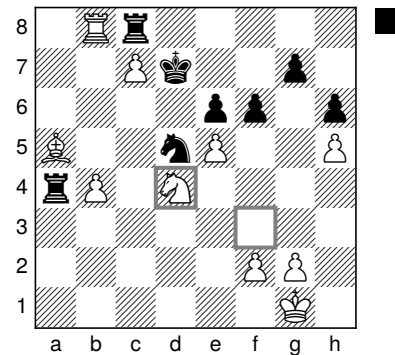
but the end lines Leela was calculating didn't seem completely hopeless (for example RN+3 vs RN+2 with broken pawns), though obviously fraught.

Stockfish's evaluation reached over +4, trivially winning,



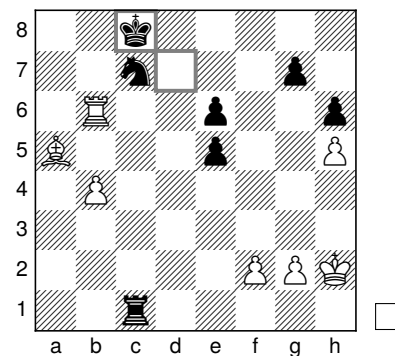
Stockfish—LCZero after 36. ♜b5-b8

and you knew Fishy was already planning its next scuba-diving vacation. One more step was made to the ending... and Stockfish's evaluation collapsed!



Stockfish—LCZero after 37. ♕f3-d4

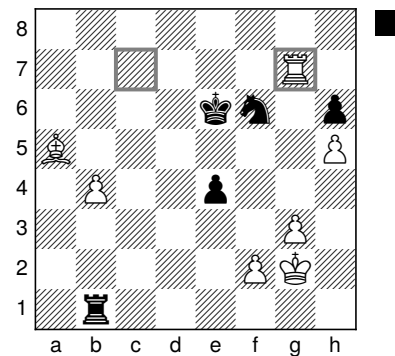
A few steps more and Stockfish only saw a clear advantage but nothing winning.



Stockfish—LCZero after 43... ♗d7×c8

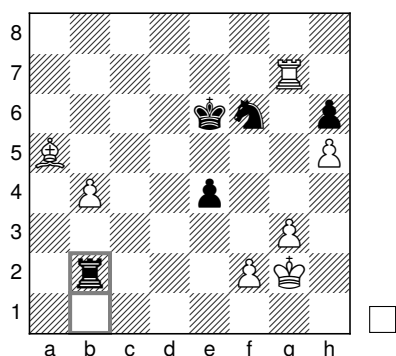
Leela was concerned but far from depressed. In fact, they were both looking at exactly the same line but assessing it differently.

The key point of the ending is quite intricate, and Leela does these sorts of endings very well. Leela would need to lose the e-pawn to activate the knight, and the kingside g7-pawn was also an easy prey.



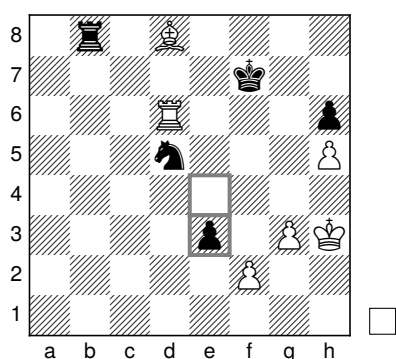
Stockfish—LCZero after 55. ♜c7×g7

However, a rook on the b-file ties down the bishop and attacks the f2 pawn: White must watch out for both ...e3 and stop ...♗g4.



Stockfish—LCZero after 55... ♖b1-b2

Amazingly, at a massive distance Leela had assessed properly that it could lose two pawns in an endgame and still hold with activity. Leela finished with a nice trick to assure liquidation,



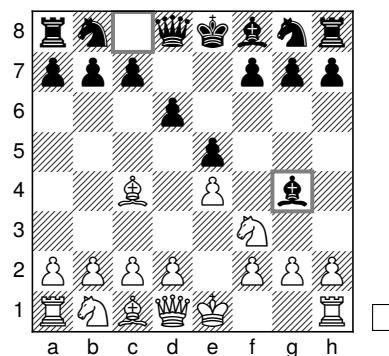
Stockfish—LCZero after 62... e4-e3

as 63. ♖×d5 ♖×d8 64. ♖×d8 allows 64... e2!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2 -0)	24 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0=2 -0)	32 (+11)	9
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 4–6		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=55&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=56&season=23			

Games 57–58 Philidor (C41)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 d6 3. ♗c4 ♗g4

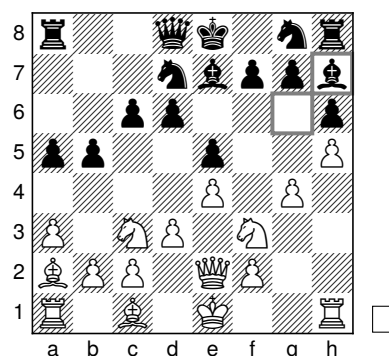


Book exit

A ropey Philidor for the engines to defend!

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

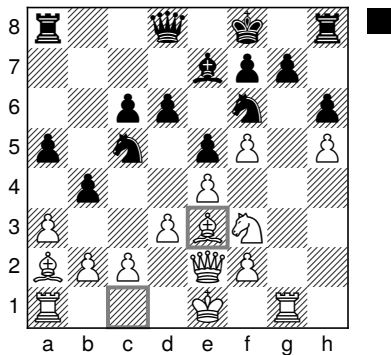
The downside to playing the bishop to g4 so early is that it can get shut out of the game. And indeed,



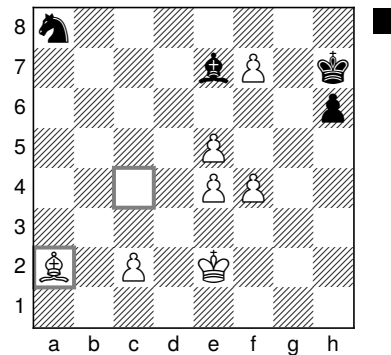
LCZero—Stockfish after 12... ♗g6-h7

the bishop on h7 was looking a little sad... I was wondering whether we were going to see something similar to the classic 1922 game between Capablanca and Bogolyubov.¹⁷

¹⁷Jose Raul Capablanca vs Efim Bogoljubov, London (1922), rd 6, 1–0. <https://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1030695>



LCZero—Stockfish after 18. ♖c1–e3



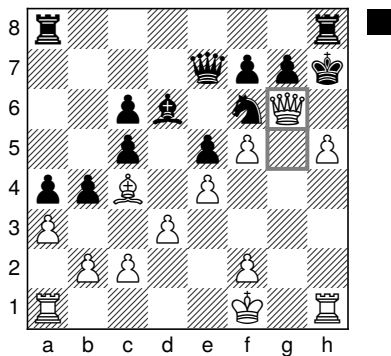
Stockfish's PV after 42. ♖c4×a2 (variation)

I had marked this one down as a possible Leela pair win, and Leela continued to play strongly and evaluations continued to rise.

Stockfish was under pressure, but Leela's evaluation was somehow flatlining. Stockfish's PV (primary variation) for White's 22nd move caused a bit of a stir!

21... ♖d6 22. ♖c4 ♔g8 23. ♖d2 ♔h7
24. ♜g5+ h×g5 25. ♖×g5 ♖e7 26. ♖g6+

This was about where the main line ends. Also quite cool (+0.97 apparently!)



Stockfish's PV after 26. ♖g5–g6+ (variation)

26... ♔g8 27. h6 ♜e8 28. ♔e2 ♖f6 29. a×b4
c×b4 30. ♖ag1 ♖×g6 31. f×g6 ♖×h6 32. ♖×h6
g×h6 33. g×f7+ ♔h7 34. d4 ♜c7 35. ♖g8 ♖e7
36. d×e5 a3 37. b×a3 b×a3 38. ♖a2 c5 39. f4 c4
40. ♖×c4 a2 41. ♖×a8 ♜×a8 42. ♖×a2

Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

The reverse led to a disagreement in assessment!

Why must I lose to this idiot?
@wmiltti
Replying to @gmmds

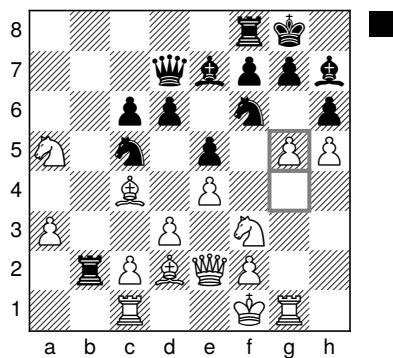
Yeah I'd definitely aim for that position and think "I'm probably about +1 here"...

Nov 9, 2022
<https://twitter.com/wmiltti/status/1590304179976904711>

Matthew Sadler
@gmmds
Replying to @wmiltti

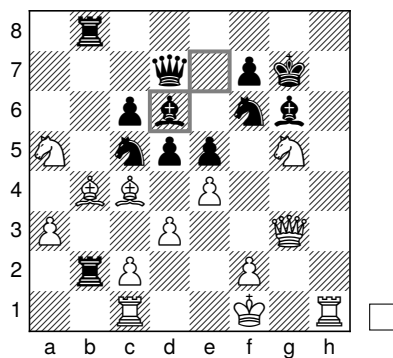
Check this man for beads! 🤔🤔

Nov 9, 2022
<https://twitter.com/gmmds/status/1590304368624304129>



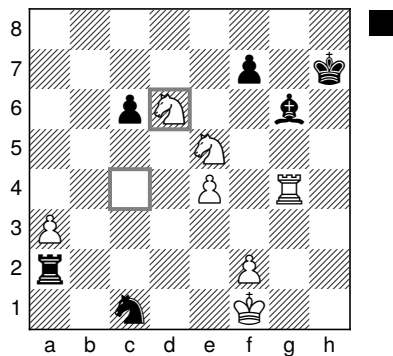
Stockfish—LCZero after 23. g4–g5

It looked scary for Black, though! Stockfish’s evaluation was bouncing up and down between elation and slight disappointment! It was obviously a difficult position!



Stockfish—LCZero after 30... ♕e7–d6

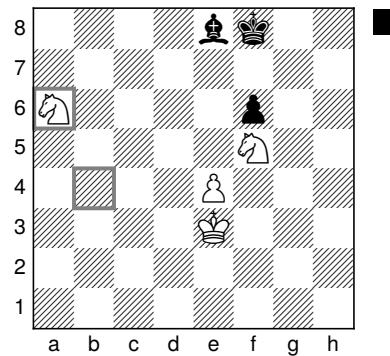
The smoke cleared, and we had rook and two knights (R2N) vs rook, bishop, knight (RBN) with an extra pawn for Stockfish.



Stockfish—LCZero after 42. ♖c4–d6

Interesting endgame, though White was odds on to win. The only doubt was the drawing margin with two knights vs king!

In the end, it didn’t come that far, though the slight difference of opinion about the game’s evaluation continued deep into the endgame



Stockfish—LCZero after 55. ♖b4×a6

with Stockfish showing 151.54 and Leela showing 0.9!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0=1 -1)	24.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1.5 (+1=1 -0)	33.5 (+12)	10

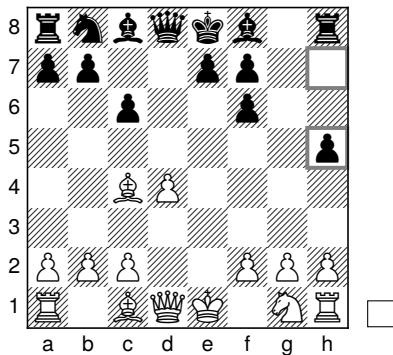
Pair result Decisive pair
Book score Matthew–Jeroen 5–6

Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=57&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=58&season=23>

Games 59–60 Larsen Caro-Kann (B16)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. ♖c3 d×e4 4. ♖×e4 ♖f6 5. ♖×f6+ g×f6 6. ♕c4 h5

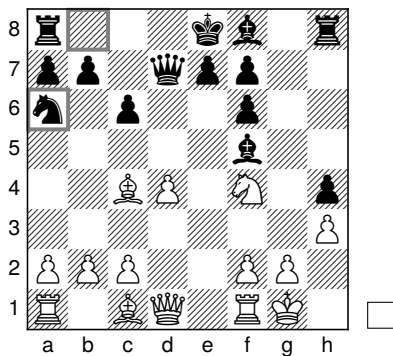


Book exit

Jeroen wheeled out a Larsen-style Caro-Kann as the next challenge!

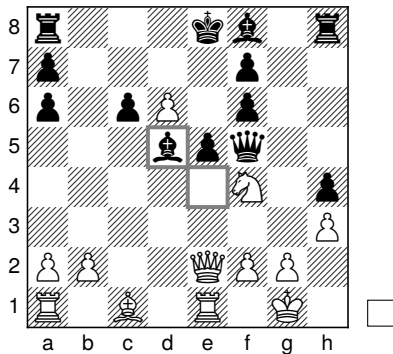
LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

After 10... ♖a6 black's play was a bit, umm..., fishy?



LCZero—Stockfish after 10... ♖b8–a6

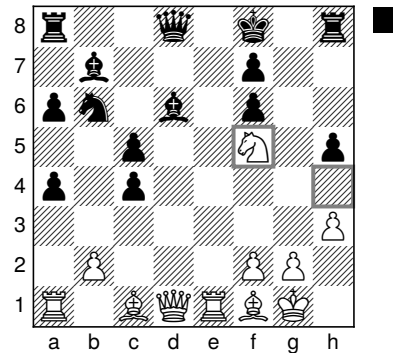
Stockfish shattered its pawn structure, grabbed a pawn, moved its queen in the opening—and was *en route* to equalising!



LCZero—Stockfish after 16... ♕e4–d5

Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

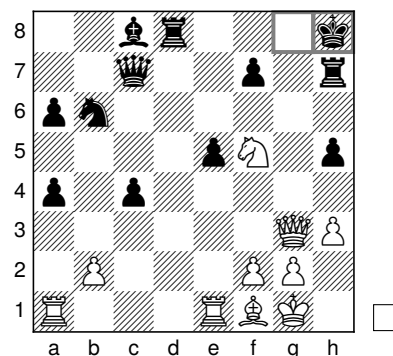
In the reverse, Stockfish played very aggressively and sacrificed three pawns after Leela had picked up three sets of isolated doubled pawns!



Stockfish—LCZero after 19... ♖h4–f5

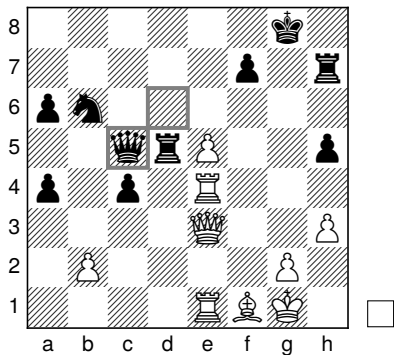
Oddly enough, Stockfish's earlier strong optimism had evaporated as it played the sacrifices!

Sometimes not castling can prove a bonus, as you suddenly discover a rook in the corner to help out with your weaknesses! 27... ♖h7 and 28... ♔h8 was a nice way of keeping the king safe (anagouma Shogi-style).

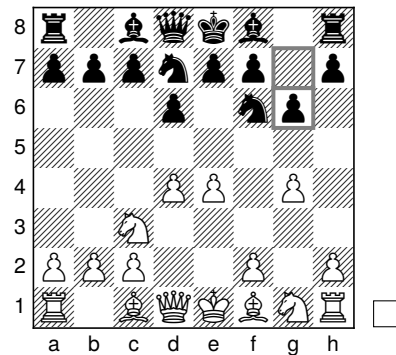


Stockfish—LCZero after 28... ♔g8–h8

Stockfish started to pick off weakies, but Leela managed to exchange off queens. That was, however, just the start of fresh adventures!

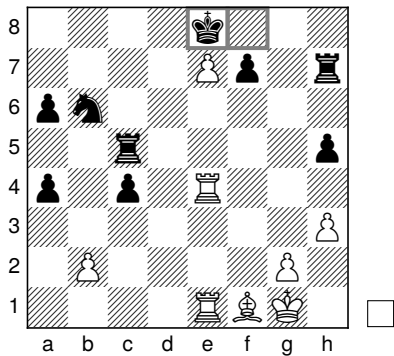


Stockfish—LCZero after 37... ♖d6-c5



Book exit

A push of the e-pawn to e7 did not look Leela-friendly!



Stockfish—LCZero after 40... ♖f8-e8

Next up was a sharp reply to a risky Lion move order with the last book move (4... g6) being slightly suboptimal!

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5-0.5

Leela got optimistic very quickly, controlling space on both sides of the board.

However, there was no way through, pawns got exchanged, and the game ended in a draw!

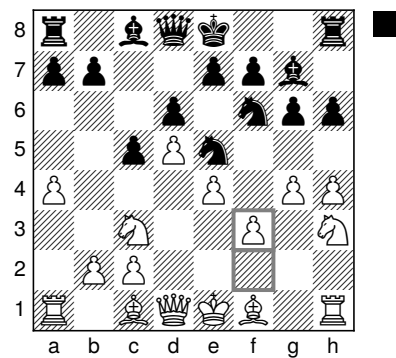
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	25.5 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	34.5 (+12)	10
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew-Jeroen 5-6		

Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=59&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=60&season=23>

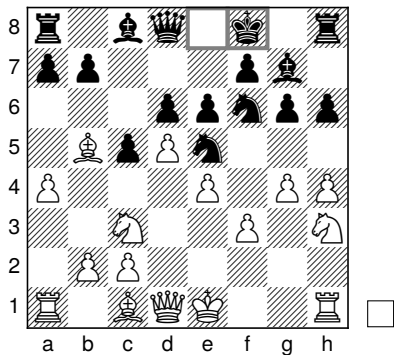
Games 61-62 Risky Lion (B07)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♖f6 3. ♘c3 ♜bd7 4. g4 g6



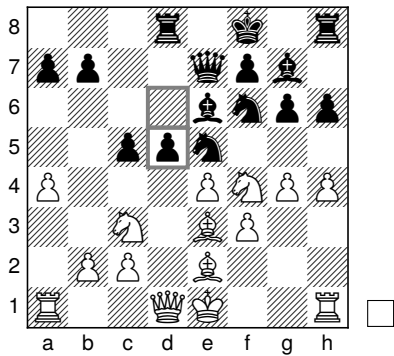
LCZero—Stockfish after 9. f2-f3

Stockfish continued the trend of artificial castling, breaking early and riskily with 9... e6. We've often seen it: engines nowadays never wait to be squashed. You'll have a breakout to contend with whatever happens!



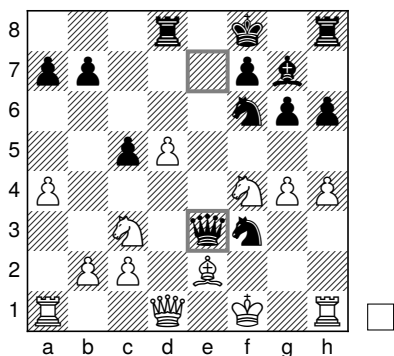
LCZero—Stockfish after 10... ♖e8–f8

The full breakout came a couple of moves later based on the loose bishop on e3.



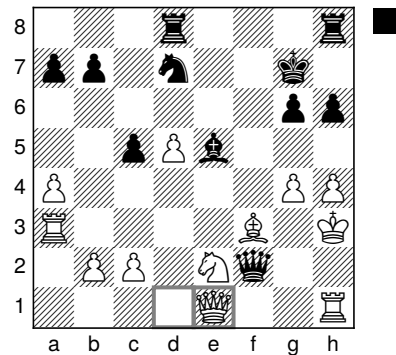
LCZero—Stockfish after 14... d6–d5

Loose bishop on e3—told ya!



LCZero—Stockfish after 17... ♗e7×e3

As the tactics continued, it was Leela's king that suddenly came under attack, and Leela had to resort to some cool defensive moves (20. ♖a3, thank god for 8. a4!) and an exchange of queens.

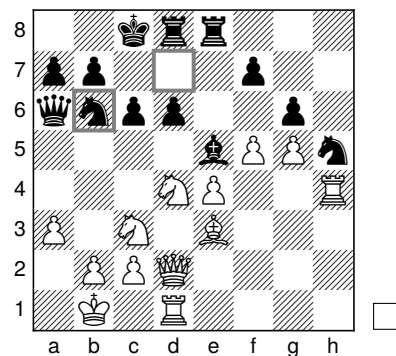


LCZero—Stockfish after 24. ♖d1–e1

An opposite-coloured bishop ending ensued. Stockfish wasn't too thrilled—and we have seen it win some stunning OCB endings vs Leela in the past—but managed to hold the draw after 72 moves.

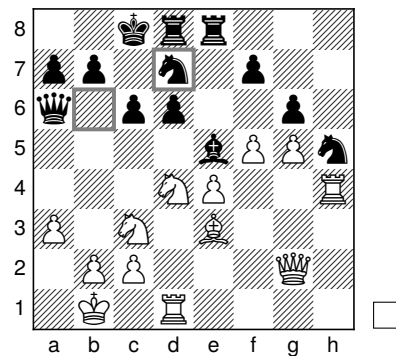
Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

The reverse was another sad story for Leela fans. Leela's planned tactical breakout starting with 26... ♖b6



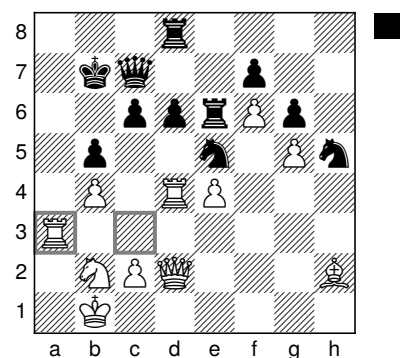
Stockfish—LCZero after 26... ♖d7–b6

had to be aborted with a screeching halt



Stockfish—LCZero after 27... ♖b6–d7

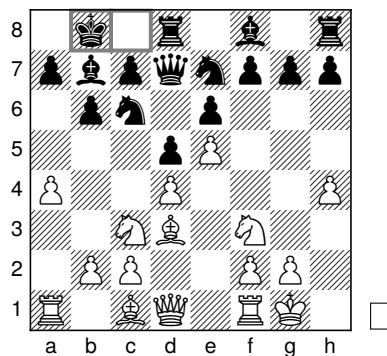
leaving Stockfish in complete control. It took a long time, but the result was never in doubt.



Stockfish—LCZero after 62. ♖c3-a3

LCZero—Stockfish 1-0

Stockfish channeled its inner Petrosian and Bronstein!



LCZero—Stockfish after 9... ♖c8-b8

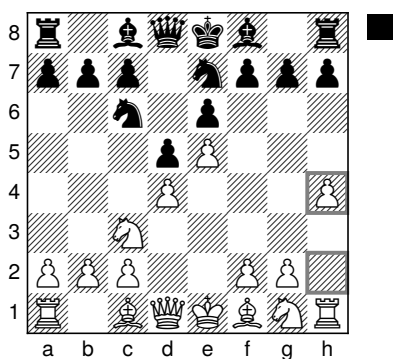
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0=1 -1)	26 (+3)	1
Stockfish	1.5 (+1=1 -0)	36 (+13)	11
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 6–6		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=61&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=62&season=23			

Both great players famous for ...b6, ...♗b7, ...♞d7, ...O-O-O in the French but with (whisper it quietly) not such amazing results. Some nice games when it worked though!¹⁸

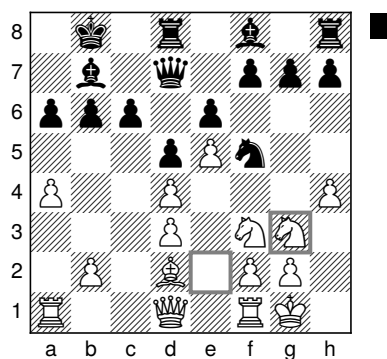
Looks like Leela decided that doubled pawns were how to fight Stockfish!

Games 63–64 French 3... Nc6 (C10)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♘c3 ♘c6 4. e5 ♘ge7 5. h4



Book exit

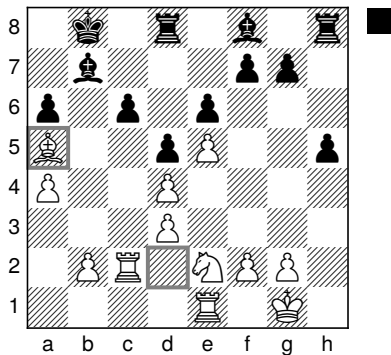


LCZero—Stockfish after 15. ♘e2-g3

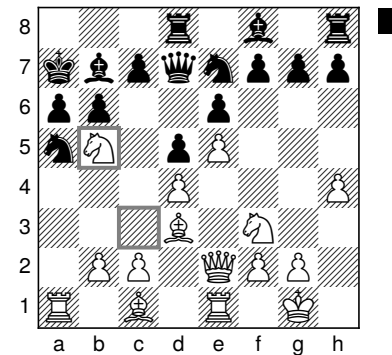
I'm never 100% sure about this doubled d-pawn structure (you see it a lot in the Advance Caro-Kann), so I was looking forward to seeing how this one goes! And it went very well! Leela got an old-style bind on Stockfish's position

This slow French turned out to be a double smash!

¹⁸E.g., Fridrik Olafsson vs Tigran V Petrosian, Bled (1961), rd 11, 0-1. <https://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1106504>



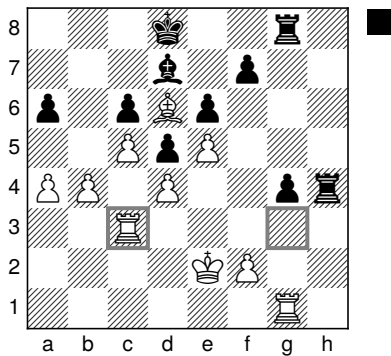
LCZero—Stockfish after 24. ♗d2–a5



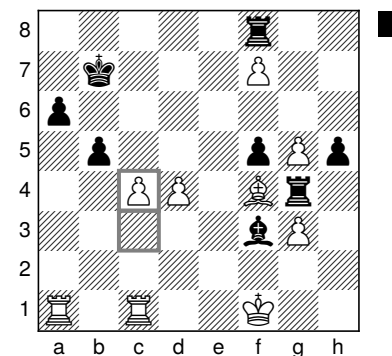
Stockfish—LCZero after 13. ♞c3–b5+

and squeezed in a opposite-coloured bishop position until everything broke!

Stockfish was very optimistic, Leela still not over-concerned, but Stockfish's evaluation reached the stratosphere!



LCZero—Stockfish after 41. ♖g3–c3

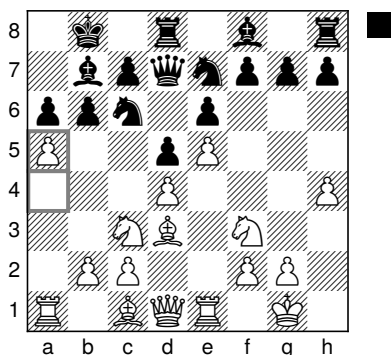


Stockfish—LCZero after 38. c3–c4

Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

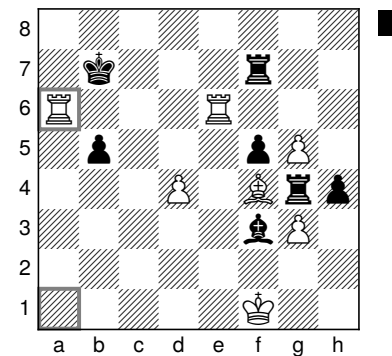
In the reverse, Stockfish threw a cheeky rook's pawn forward!

Would you assess this as +9.3 for White? The reason was nothing to do with the rook on g4 being trapped—it can be freed with ...h4 and can't even be attacked! It's all due to the vulnerability of the black king, which is exploited by 43. ♖aa6!!



Stockfish—LCZero after 11. a4–a5

Followed by a sham knight sacrifice.



Stockfish—LCZero after 43. ♖a1–a6

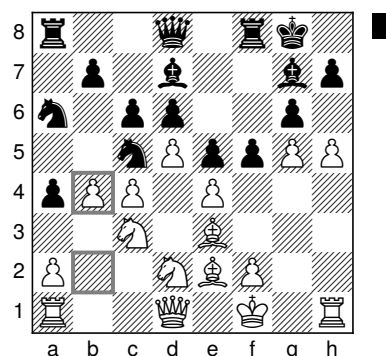
Even then the finish was exceedingly complex, but Stockfish made no mistake (of course!) Game pair saved!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+1 =0 -1)	27 (+4)	1
Stockfish	1 (+1 =0 -1)	37 (+14)	11

Pair result Reverse kill
Book score Matthew–Jeroen 6–6

Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=63&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=64&season=23>

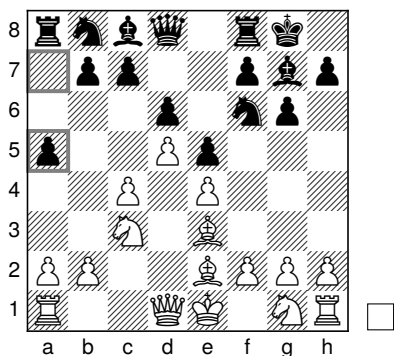


LCZero—Stockfish after 15. b2–b4

The game followed a previous Leela-Stockfish game¹⁹ until move 18 when Stockfish decided not to sacrifice a piece with 18... ♔×g5 and instead re-treated the knight to a6.

Games 65–66 King’s Indian (E73)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6 5. ♗e2 O-O 6. ♗e3 e5 7. d5 a5

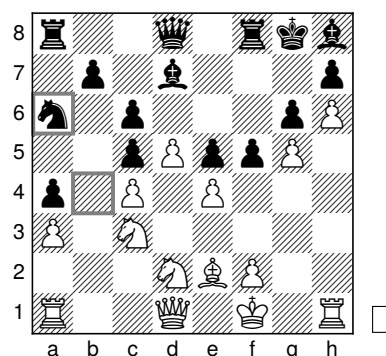


Book exit

It was a night to remember for Leela fans... but not in a good way!

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

Using the dark arts of bookmaking, Stockfish had been enticed into falling into the same positional trap it had fallen into 3 seasons ago! **15. b4!!**

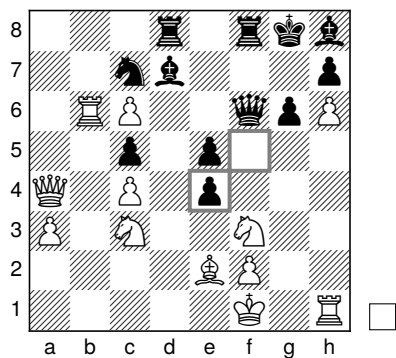


LCZero—Stockfish after 18... ♘b4–a6

When I analysed this position in *Silicon Road*, I liked ideas like 19. ♖g1 keeping hold of the g5-pawn and burying the h8-bishop forever. I’d noticed Leela’s recommendation of grabbing the b7-pawn and jettisoning the g5-pawn, and noted it was more complicated...

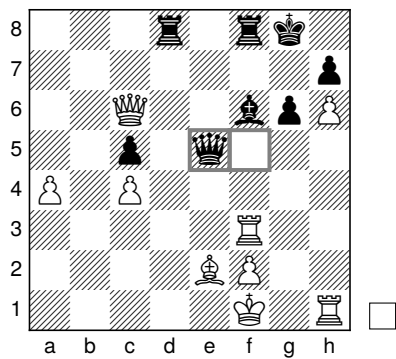
And complicated is where the Fish gets motor-ing. To the dismay/astonishment/anger/resignation (yes, we went through all the stages! 🙄) of the Leela fans, evaluations started to drop.

¹⁹<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=52&season=20>



LCZero—Stockfish after 25... f5xe4

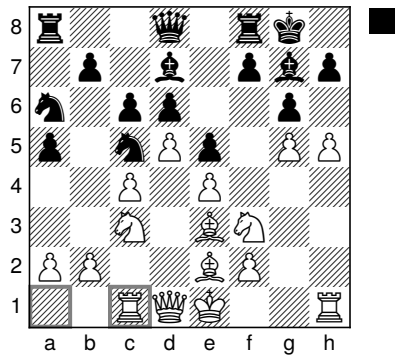
By the time the tactics were finished, we had reached an opposite-colour bishop middlegame that Stockfish had no problems holding!



LCZero—Stockfish after 34... ♖f5-e5

Stockfish—LCZero 1-0

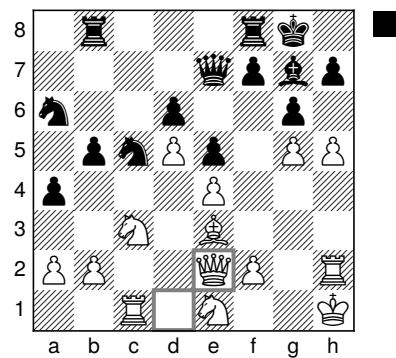
And now the reverse. Surely Leela wouldn't lose a game pair which had been won 3 seasons ago? Well... the game followed the previous one until move 13 where Stockfish played the also very sensible 13. ♖a1-c1.



Stockfish—LCZero after 13. ♖a1-c1

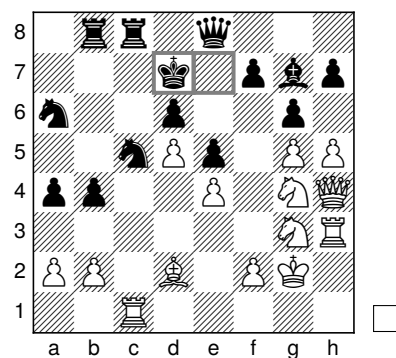
Leela got its queenside play going nicely while Stockfish did another Shogi-style anagouma casting with its king behind its rook!

Leela punted the exchange of light-squared bishops, which is not usually a great idea for Black in the King's Indian... and Stockfish's evaluation jumped!



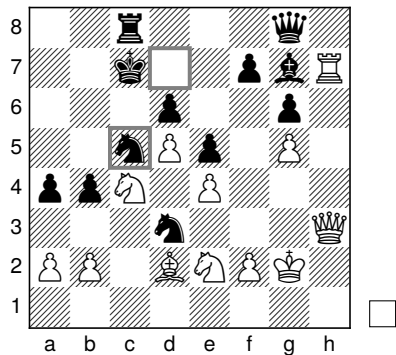
Stockfish—LCZero after 20. ♖d1xe2

Criticise the Fish all you like, no one could ever claim that it doesn't know how to build a kingside attack. And build it did!



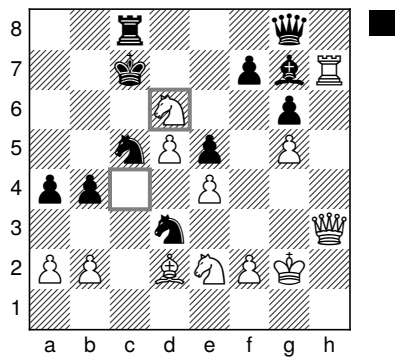
Stockfish—LCZero after 30... ♔e7-d7

Blows started to rain down on Leela's position from both sides of the board. It was a dizzying ride!



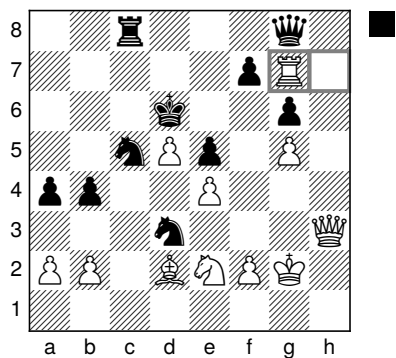
Stockfish—LCZero after 41... ♖d7–c5

Finally the pressure became too great and Leela had to allow a simple yet pleasing tactical blow



Stockfish—LCZero after 42. ♖c4×d6

and then:



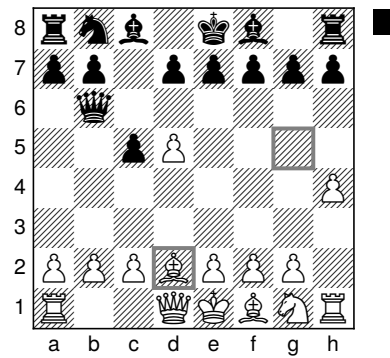
Stockfish—LCZero after 43. ♖h7×g7

A winning game pair for me but somehow the opposite of what I had imagined!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0=1-1)	27.5 (+4)	1
Stockfish	1.5 (+1=1-0)	38.5 (+15)	12
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 7–6		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=65&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=66&season=23			

Games 67–68 Trompovsky (A45)

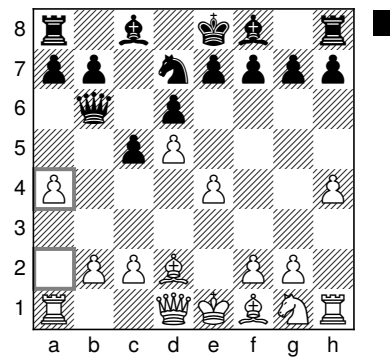
Book moves (Jeroen): 1. d4 ♖f6 2. ♗g5 ♘e4 3. h4 c5 4. d5 ♖b6 5. ♘d2 ♘×d2 6. ♗×d2



Book exit

LCZero—Stockfish 1–0

The opening was a Julian Hodgson Trompovsky (with 3. h4) in which the b2-pawn was dangled in front of a Fishy nose.

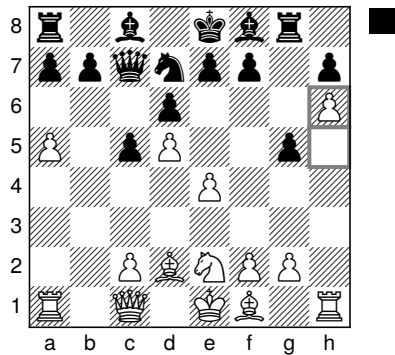


LCZero—Stockfish after 8. a2–a4

Stockfish couldn't resist for too long (8... ♖×b2 surprising Jeroen because it had never done that in his test games) and was soon under attack from both rook's pawns!

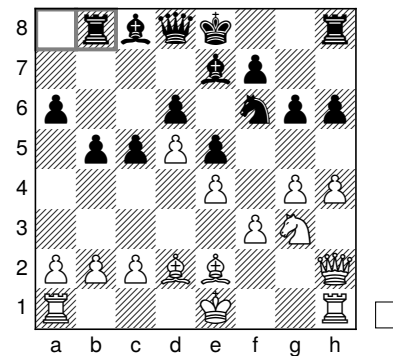
Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

Stockfish needed to win the reverse to equalise the mini-match! Even though it avoided Leela's 8. a4, 8. ♕c3 also looked pretty useful for White!

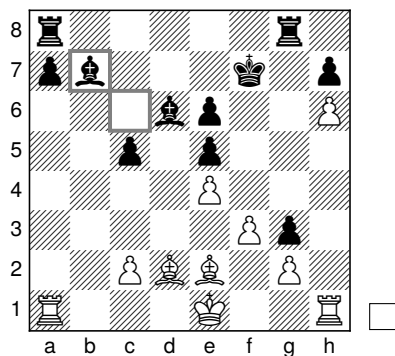


LCZero—Stockfish after 13. h5–h6

Leela played very nicely, and Stockfish accumulated pawn weaknesses as it struggled to develop.



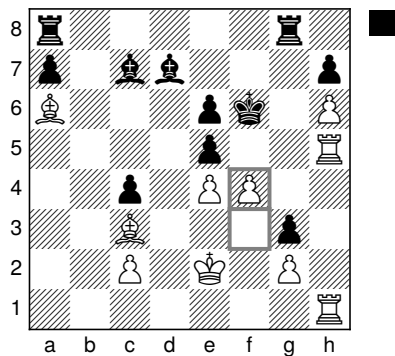
Stockfish—LCZero after 16... ♖a8–b8



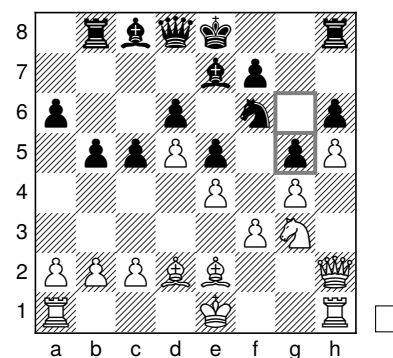
LCZero—Stockfish after 24... ♕c6×b7

Eventually, something had to give, and Leela finished things off very smoothly.

The moment was move 17 where Stockfish took the unprovoked decision to allow the sealing of the kingside with 17. h5 g5.



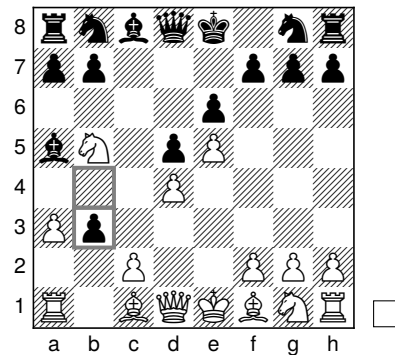
LCZero—Stockfish after 36. f3–f4



Stockfish—LCZero after 17... g6–g5

It looked pretty unlikely that Stockfish could open a queenside invasion channel large enough to cause real damage, and that proved indeed the case. It took 256 moves to prove it, but hey, that's why we watch engine chess right?

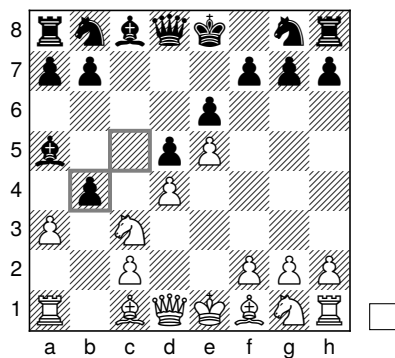
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1.5 (+1 =1 -0)	29 (+5)	2
Stockfish	0.5 (+0 =1 -1)	39 (+15)	12
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 7–7		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=67&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=68&season=23			



LCZero—Stockfish after 7... b4–b3+

Games 69–70 French Winawer (C17)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♘c3 ♙b4 4. e5 c5 5. a3 ♙a5 6. b4 c×b4



Book exit

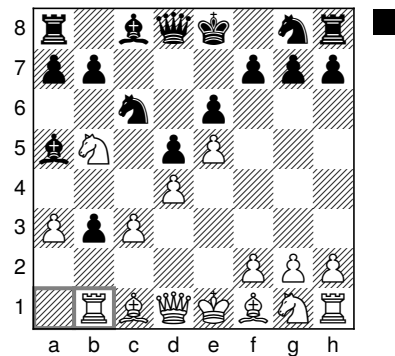
The evening started with a dodgy version of a French Winawer.

This line was first played in 1933; a few of the first games (*e.g.*, Rabinovich-Tolush 1939) went 6... c×b4, but thereafter only 6... c×d4 was played. Humans picked up very quickly on the critical/best line! But the engines get the worse one!

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

After 7. ♘b5, Black had a number of choices at its disposal: 7... ♘c6 (the main ICCF move and a Stockfish favourite for some time). Eventually, however, 7... b3+ was played.

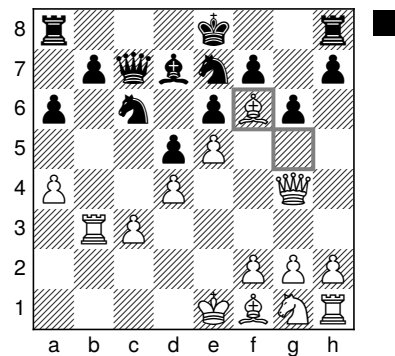
We saw both 8. ♙d2 and 8. c3 in the engines' lines, but Leela went for an unusual combination: 8. c3 ♘c6 9. ♗b1!?



LCZero—Stockfish after 9. ♗a1–b1

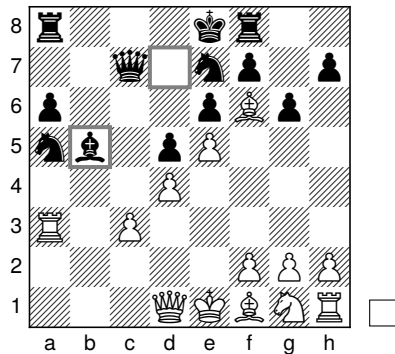
The idea was to recapture on b3 with the rook and to still have ♗g4 hitting the g7-square weakened by the absence of the dark-squared bishop.

Leela's evaluation grew, and the position did indeed look promising as Leela probed Black's king-side dark squares.



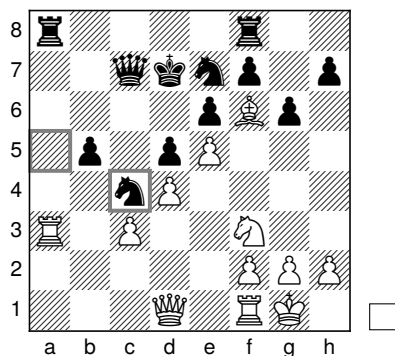
LCZero—Stockfish after 15. ♙g5–f6

However, Leela's development was lagging, and its queenside was also a little bit weak. Stockfish used that to develop and exchange its light-squared bishop.



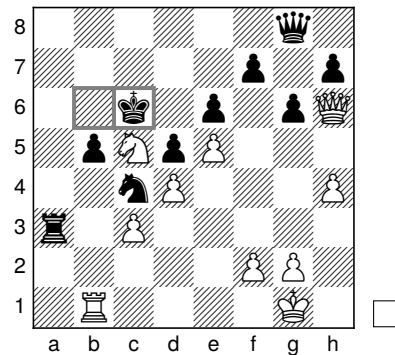
LCZero—Stockfish after 18... ♖d7×b5

It basically looked as if Black had moved everything away from the kingside, so the weak dark squares didn't matter!



LCZero—Stockfish after 21... ♘a5-c4

We reached a static position which looked promising to me but where there wasn't actually a good way to activate the white rook. Without that, White didn't have the firepower to trouble Black's solid structure despite the passive black queen.

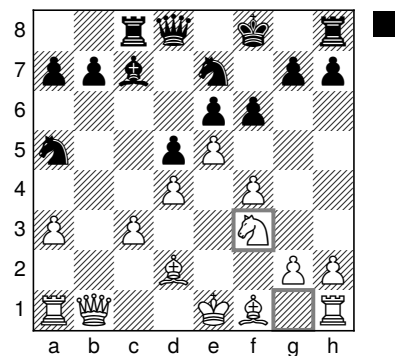


LCZero—Stockfish after 36... ♗b6-c6

The game was drawn in 93 moves.

Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

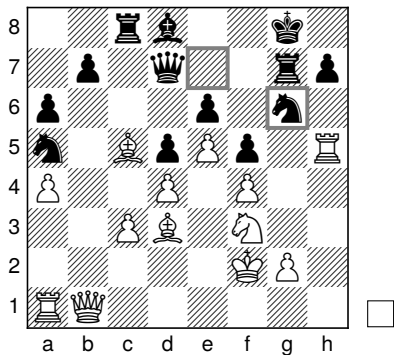
The reverse was also very interesting. Stockfish went for a more traditional approach, recapturing the b3-pawn with the queen and grabbing the bishop pair.



Stockfish—LCZero after 15... ♘g1-f3

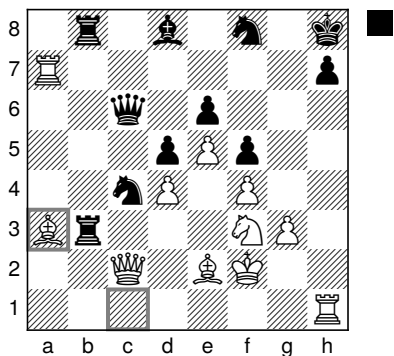
The key points were whether Stockfish would manage to open a fresh attack channel on the kingside and whether Leela would manage to repair the disruption caused by the opening.

I was a bit surprised that Leela didn't play ...h5 itself, but it seemed perfectly happy to take on h5 and sit and wait. And wait it did for many moves!



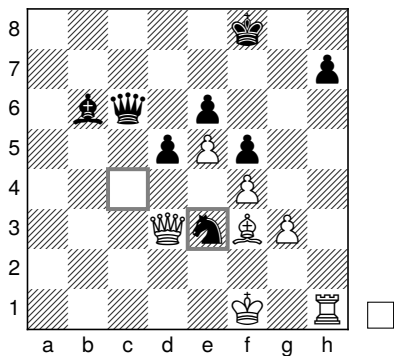
Stockfish—LCZero after 24... ♖e7-g6

More often than not, though, the engines find a way to create something and that seemed to be happening around move 113(!), as **113. ♕a3** hit the knight on f8 after which h7 is vulnerable.



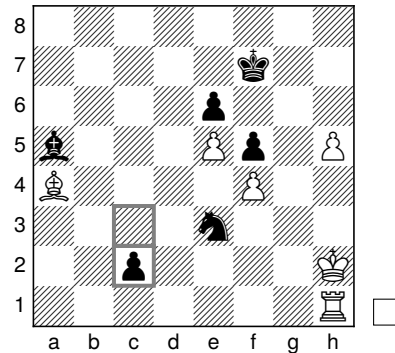
Stockfish—LCZero after 113. ♕c1-a3

However, an exchange sacrifice (**113... ♖xf3+**) and a cold-blooded king move (**116... ♔g8**) seemed to deal with the danger. White's king was also suddenly looking a touch airy...



Stockfish—LCZero after 120... ♖c4-e3+

Exchanges followed. It wasn't clear to a human that Black was definitely drawing this, but to an engine on 12-second increments, it's like shelling peas!



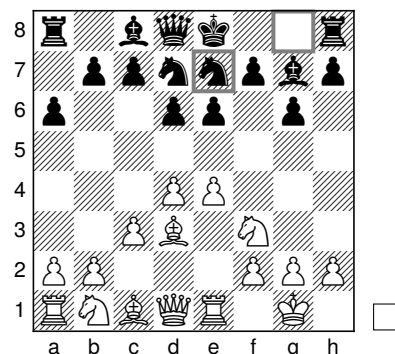
Stockfish—LCZero after 129... c3-c2

Two draws in the French Winawer!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	30 (+5)	2
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	40 (+15)	12
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew-Jeroen 7-7		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=69&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=70&season=23			

Games 71-72 Modern (B06)

Book moves (Jeroen): **1. d4 g6 2. e4 ♕g7 3. ♖f3 d6 4. ♕d3 a6 5. O-O ♖d7 6. c3 e6 7. ♖e1 ♖e7**

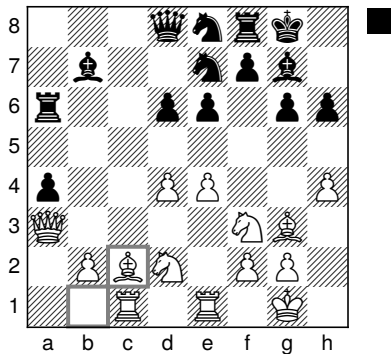


Book exit

Next up was a Hippo!

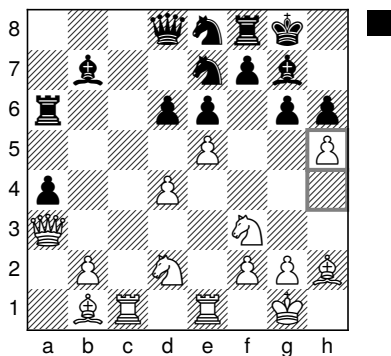
LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

Stockfish traded c-pawns and went for the Maginot line approach! Leela used the rook's pawns to tease out some more weaknesses.



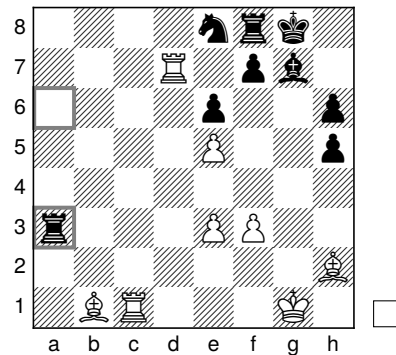
LCZero—Stockfish after 29. ♗b1–c2

The game meandered on somewhat: Leela seemed unsure how to make any progress, and Stockfish was happily swimming around in circles in its little pond. However, at some stage Leela took the plunge and launched itself!



LCZero—Stockfish after 33. h4–h5

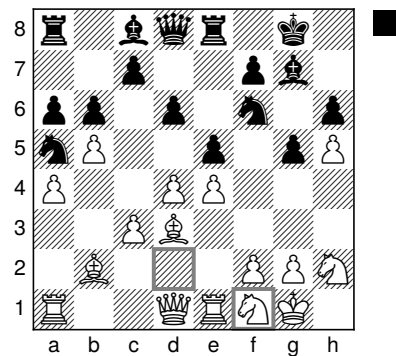
However, the Stockfish liquidating technique once again proved very effective, and a draw was soon the result.



LCZero—Stockfish after 42... ♖a6×a3

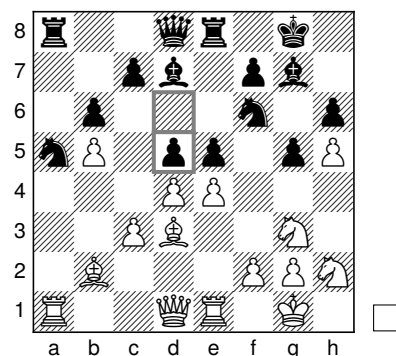
Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

The reverse was a bit of brutal Stockfish magic! A quick rook's pawn march softened up Leela's king-side light squares, and the knights gravitated towards them.



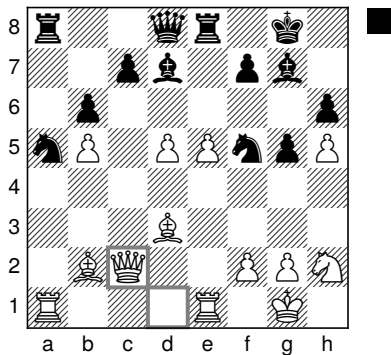
Stockfish—LCZero after 17. ♖d2–f1

Leela decided that the moment was ripe for the breakout!



Stockfish—LCZero after 19... d6–d5

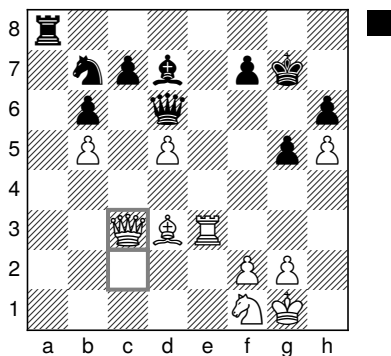
But Stockfish said: "No!"



Stockfish—LCZero after 23. ♖d1-c2

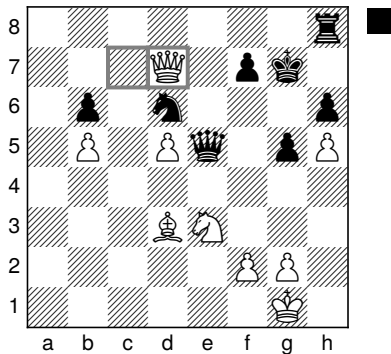
A knight does not simply enter the lair of Stockfish's position! Fearing 23... ♘e7 24. e6! (for good reason), Leela offered the knight back with 23... ♘d6.

There was once again a massive difference in opinion. With an offside knight, weak c7-pawn, and exposed king, I felt Leela's 0.34 was on the insouciant side, but I couldn't really relate to Stockfish's 5.13(!), either!



Stockfish—LCZero after 29. ♖c2-c3+

The key point was quite amazing:



Stockfish—LCZero after 33. ♖c7xd7

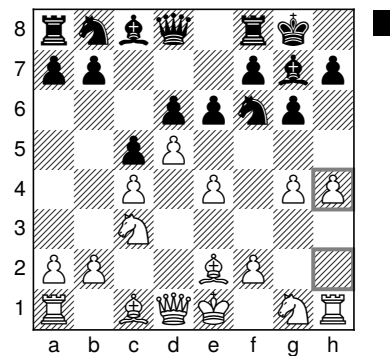
In this position after Stockfish sacrificed the exchange, Black has no good way to stop ♖x d6 followed by ♘f5+! White is simply winning a knight, and there is nothing Leela can do about it.

The conversion was trivial for Stockfish, and it picked up another game pair win (leading 13–2), and Jeroen edged back ahead 8–7 in the book-makers' competition!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0 =1 -1)	30.5 (+5)	2
Stockfish	1.5 (+1 =1 -0)	41.5 (+16)	13
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 7–8		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=71&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=72&season=23			

Games 73–74 King's Indian (E73)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6 5. ♗e2 O-O 6. g4 c5 7. d5 e6 8. h4



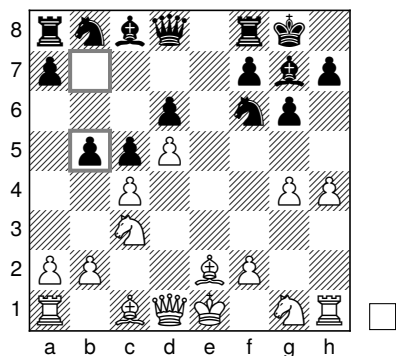
Book exit

This opening was originally one of my abandoned anti-KID hacks a long time ago, and I recently came across it in one of GM Gawain Jones's excellent books on that opening.

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

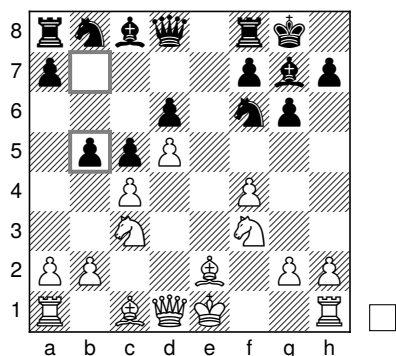
We had a bit of a rollercoaster ride, as Stockfish's evaluation jumped to -1.71 and then plunged down

to -0.57 multiple times within the same move!
Stockfish started with a Tal-style pawn sacrifice!



LCZero—Stockfish after 9... b7-b5

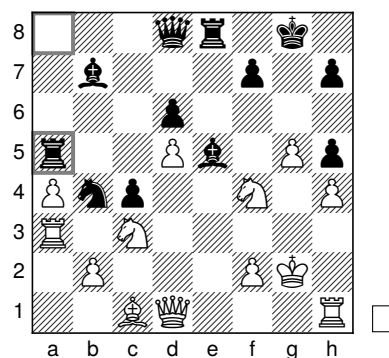
I use the phrase Tal-style advisedly, as it reminded me very much of his 1964 game against Thorbergsson.²⁰



Thorbergsson—Tal after 9... b7-b5 (Reykjavik, 1964), rd 10

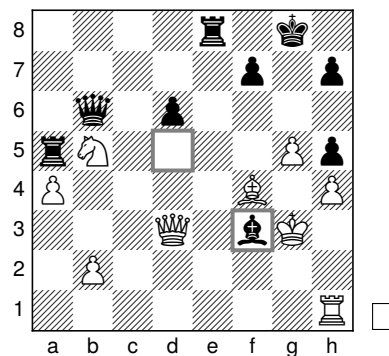
To be honest, it looked dead scary for White, but Leela was very calm while Stockfish was alternately claiming a win and then sinking into the depths of despair.

²⁰Freysteinn Thorbergsson vs Mikhail Tal. Reykjavik (1964), rd 10. <https://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1139701>



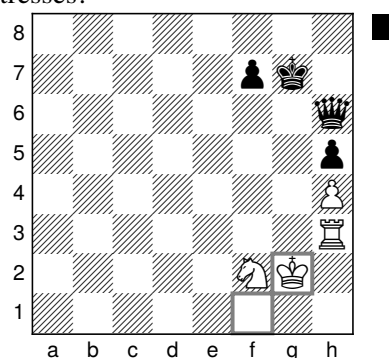
LCZero—Stockfish after 20... ♖a8-a5

Leela sidestepped a possible mine, abandoning its favoured move for many minutes in the end for Stockfish's, and the position—though still terrifying—



LCZero—Stockfish after 26... ♗d5xf3

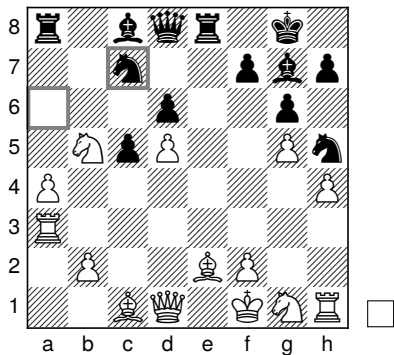
ended in a draw when Leela set up one of its trademark fortresses!



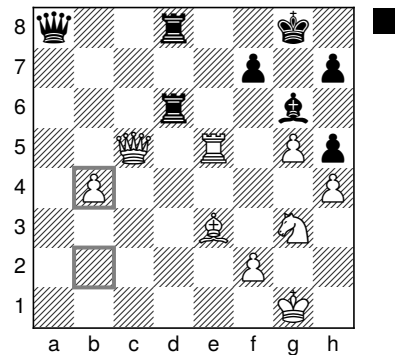
LCZero—Stockfish after 41. ♕f1-g2

Stockfish—LCZero 0.5-0.5

In the reverse, Leela went for 15... ♖c7 rather than Stockfish's 15... ♖b4.

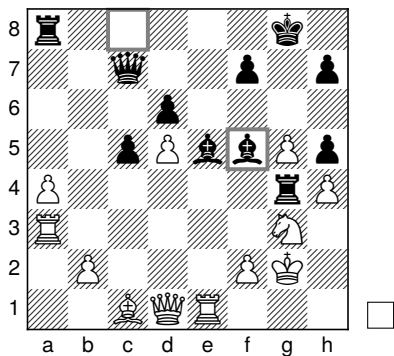


Stockfish—LCZero after 15... ♖a6-c7



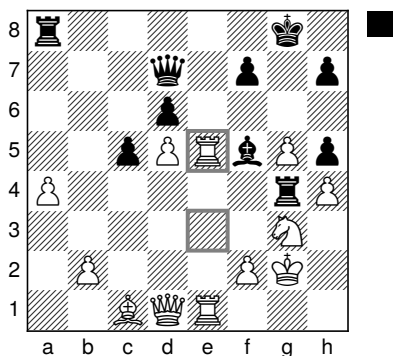
Stockfish—LCZero after 30. b2-b4

Things seemed to be going Leela's way,



Stockfish—LCZero after 21... ♖c8-f5

but an exchange sacrifice on move 23 stabilised matters for Stockfish.



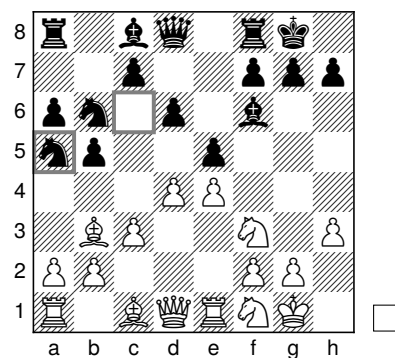
Stockfish—LCZero after 23. ♖e3xe5

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	31.5 (+5)	2
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	42.5 (+16)	13
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 7–8		

Game links:
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=73&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=74&season=23>

Games 75–76 Ruy Lopez (C92)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♘c6 3. ♖b5 a6 4. ♖a4 ♘f6 5. O-O ♖e7 6. ♖e1 b5 7. ♖b3 d6 8. c3 O-O 9. h3 ♘d7 10. d4 ♘b6 11. ♘bd2 ♖f6 12. ♘f1 ♘a5



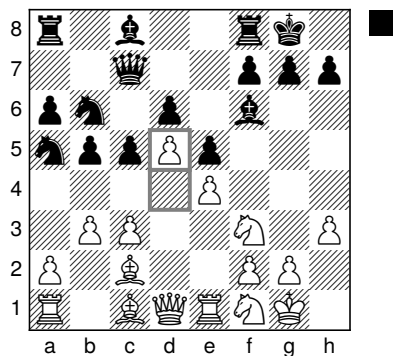
Book exit

It was a pretty wild night. Jeroen had chosen a slightly misplayed Ruy Lopez for the engines to fight out. Black has somehow mixed a few plans: ...♖f6, ...♘d7–b6, and ...♘a5.

It was strangely hard to find mating threats against the white king with the knight on g3!

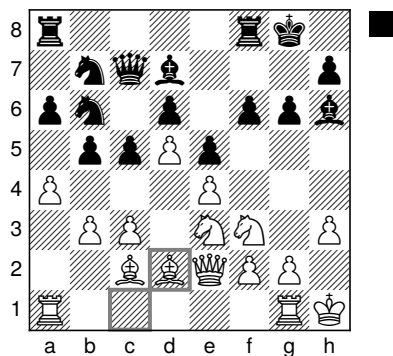
LCZero—Stockfish 1–0

Leela always closes the centre quickly (Karpov-style) in these positions, and this was no exception. **15. d5** stops the knight on a5 from coming back to play via c6.



LCZero—Stockfish after 15. d4–d5

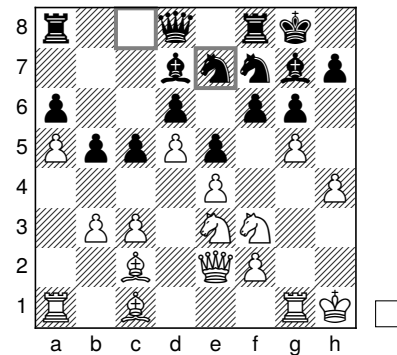
With the centre closed, Leela started playing on both wings, first teasing the b5-pawn and then preparing kingside expansion with **19. ♖h1** and **20. ♜g1**.



LCZero—Stockfish after 21. ♙c1–d2

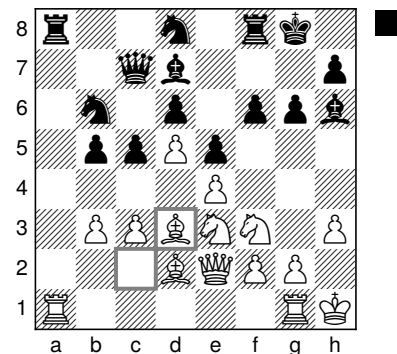
Leela was gladdening the heart of every grizzled Chigorin enthusiast by recommending Rubinstein's ...♟f7, ...♞e7 regrouping as the best defence.²¹

²¹Leela's PV moves: 20... ♟d8 21. g4 ♟f7 22. h4 ♞d8 23. a5 ♞c8 24. g5 ♞e7



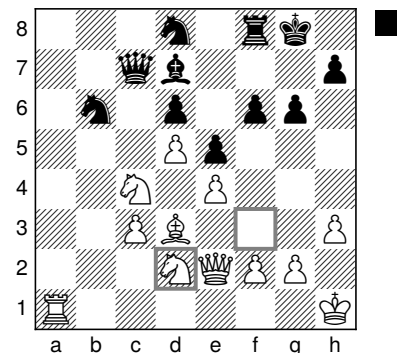
Leela's PV after 24... ♞c8–e7 (variation)

However, Stockfish went for something a little odder, playing **20... ♙h6**. Leela jumped at the opportunity to pinpoint the queenside defect in Black's position: the pawn on b5.



LCZero—Stockfish after 23. ♙c2–d3

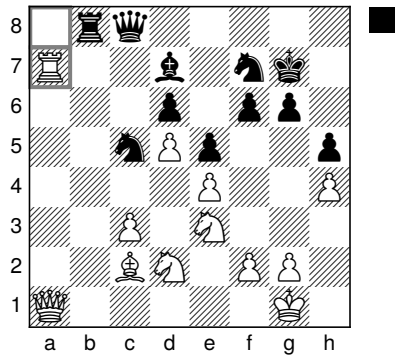
Stockfish's plan was to give up a pawn to free its position and then hang on in entrenched positions.



LCZero—Stockfish after 27. ♟f3xd2

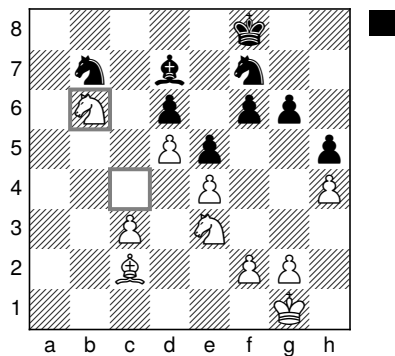
We have seen Stockfish survive such positions after 180 moves of grim defending, so I wondered

whether Leela would regret cashing in on its advantage so quickly. However, Leela's evaluation continued to rise smoothly.



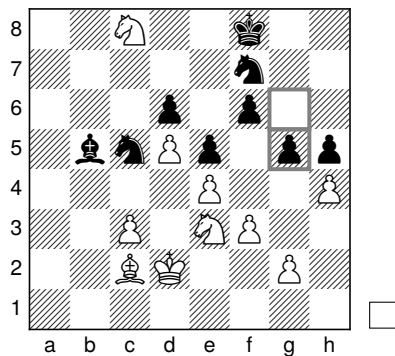
LCZero—Stockfish after 36. ♖a8–a7

The queens came off, and Leela's evaluation continued to rise... as did Stockfish's!



LCZero—Stockfish after 41. ♖c4–b6

Even engines suffer from despair! Stockfish broke out with 46... g5,



LCZero—Stockfish after 46... g6–g5

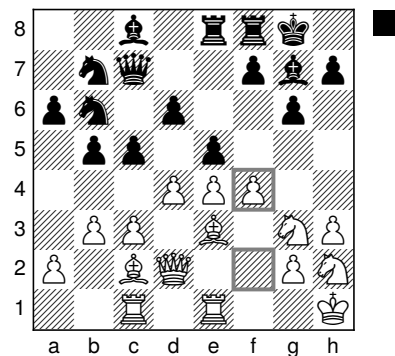
and Leela's evaluation jumped to 2.06!

Leela made no mistakes with the conversion, squeezing Black's pieces to the sides of the board and picking up loose pawns! 1–0... could Leela hold the reverse?

One of the beautiful things about Leela–Stockfish matchups is how fundamentally different the engines are. It's quite heart-warming to see two 3600-Elo engines taking totally different paths in a complex position!

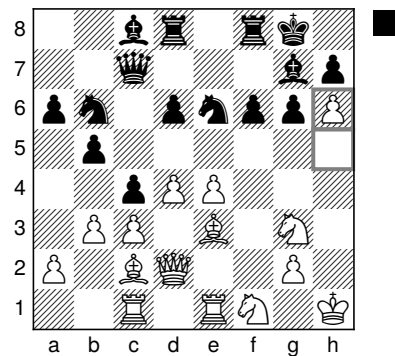
Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

Stockfish's approach was totally different: keep the centre fluid and then ramp up the pressure some more with f4.



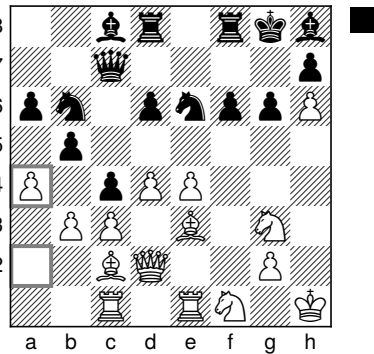
Stockfish—LCZero after 21. f2–f4

There was even an echo of AlphaZero with a march of the rook's pawn to h6 to squeeze the black king further!



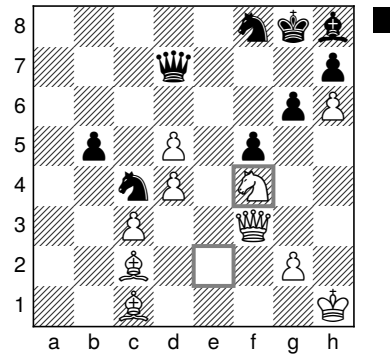
Stockfish—LCZero after 27. h5–h6

Stockfish also showed its fantastic strategic side by playing over the whole board: now a queen-side thrust with a4!



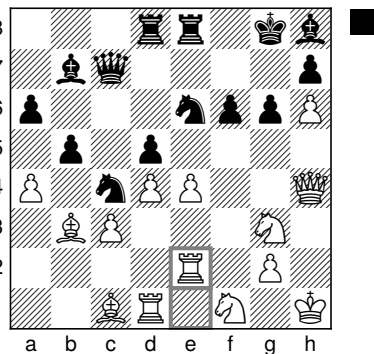
Stockfish—LCZero after 28. a2–a4

Leela avoided losing anything at once, but the pressure was growing unbearable. Eventually, Leela jettisoned the d5-pawn to swap off the rooks,



Stockfish—LCZero after 50. ♖e2–f4

The game still balanced on a knife-edge, however, but then Stockfish started to get a sniff of some kingside play. First, the flexible 37. ♖e2.

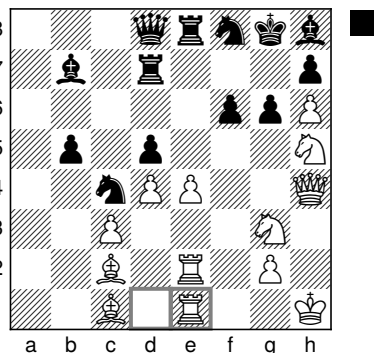


Stockfish—LCZero after 37. ♖e1–e2

but it didn't lead to much reduction in pressure! Stockfish won easily to equalise the game pair!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+1 =0 -1)	32.5 (+6)	2
Stockfish	1 (+1 =0 -1)	43.5 (+17)	13
Pair result		Reverse kill	
Book score		Matthew–Jeroen 7–8	
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=75&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=76&season=23			

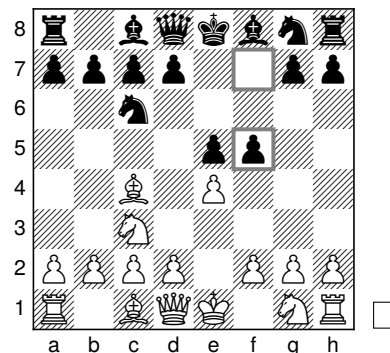
Then, BOOM!!



Stockfish—LCZero after 42. ♔d1–e1

Games 77–78 Vienna (C25)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. e4 e5 2. ♘c3 ♘c6 3. ♗c4 f5

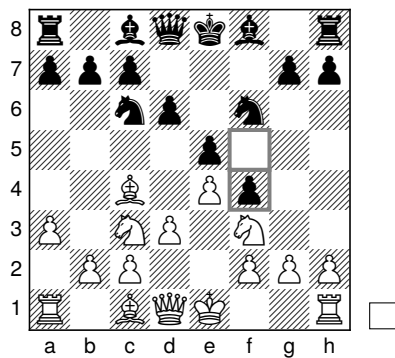


Book exit

Next up was my opening, taken from Jonathan Tait's very nice book *A Disreputable Opening Repertoire*²². A King's Gambit a tempo down, what could possibly go wrong?

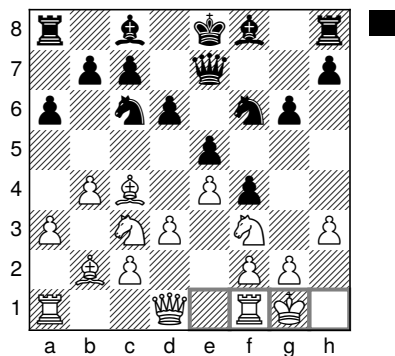
LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

A lot of my test games in this line had been reverse kills (White wins both) but very thrilling and tense ones! Stockfish went for a plan I'd seen before, closing the centre quickly.



LCZero—Stockfish after 6... f5–f4

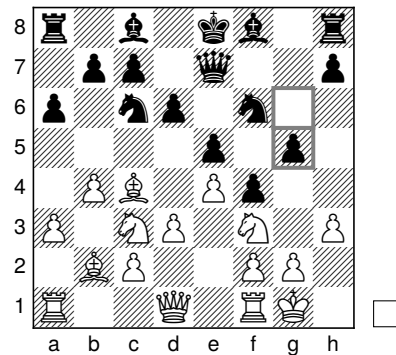
Unfortunately for Leela, it spotted something tactical that looked *reeaaaaaally* good, even Stockfish agreed at first. So Leela castled kingside...



LCZero—Stockfish after 10. O–O

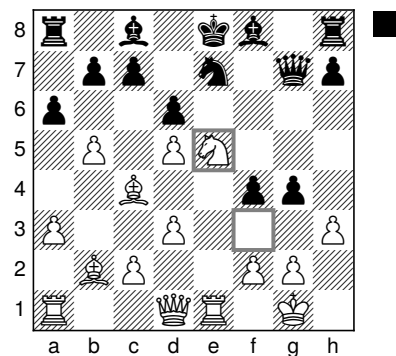
...and Stockfish—somewhat in desperation—pushed 10... g5.

²²Tait, Jonathan. *A Disreputable Opening Repertoire*. Everyman Chess, 2022.



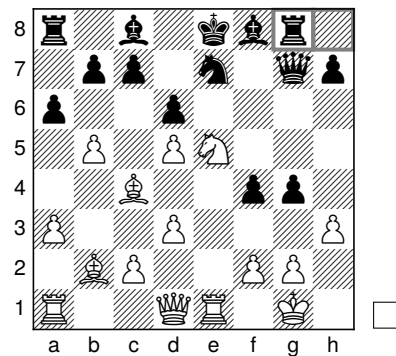
LCZero—Stockfish after 10... g6–g5

Only now as both engines followed their identical main lines, the penny dropped with a sickening thud, as my English teacher was wont to say. The evaluations of both engines collapsed. What had they missed? Both had seen from way back that Black should meet the apparently destructively decisive 15. ♖×e5



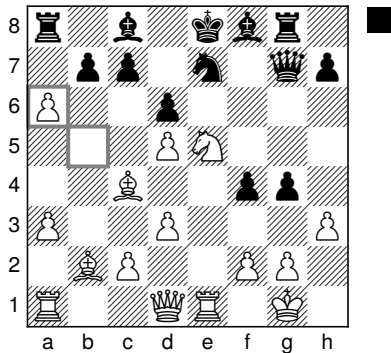
LCZero—Stockfish after 15. ♖f3×e5

with 15... ♕g8!! (The queen pins the knight on e5 to the bishop on b2!)



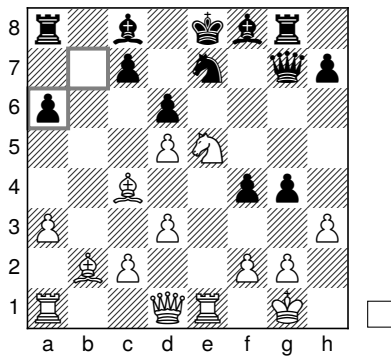
LCZero—Stockfish after 15... ♕h8–g8

What Leela had missed was that after **16. bxa6**,



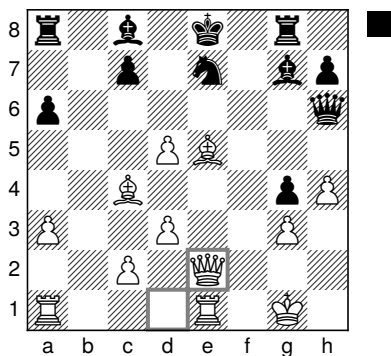
LCZero—Stockfish after 16. b5xa6

Black can calmly reply **16... bxa6**



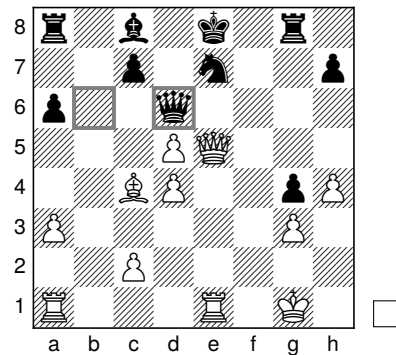
LCZero—Stockfish after 16... b7xa6

and leave the situation as it is for a move longer! The game looked like a 19th-century King's Gambit—an Allgaeir or something!



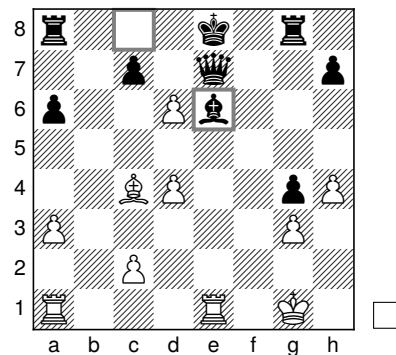
LCZero—Stockfish after 21. ♖d1-e2

Unfortunately for Leela, the conclusion was less romantic, as Stockfish found a clean path to the draw. **23... ♖d6** allowed a little tactic,



LCZero—Stockfish after 23... ♖b6-d6

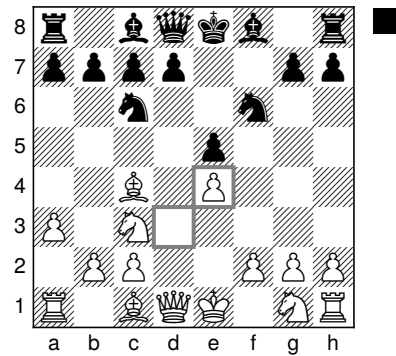
and you thought Leela might emerge at least with some ending advantage. But after Stockfish's clever **25... ♙e6**, liquidation and a draw set in.



LCZero—Stockfish after 25... ♙e6

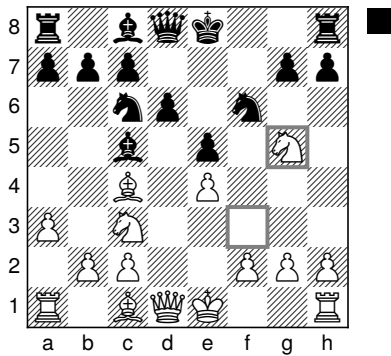
Stockfish—LCZero 1-0

How would the reverse go? Well, it proved to be a total disaster for Leela. Leela deviated already with **5... fxe4**.



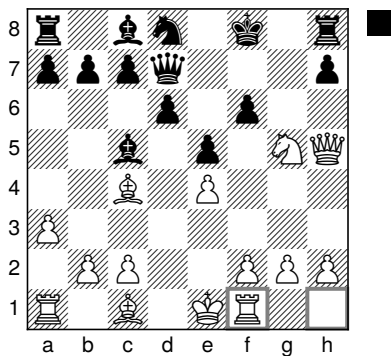
Stockfish—LCZero after 6. d3xe4

This led to a Schliemann tempo down for Black (as White has played ♖c4 directly, not ♖b5–c4). I thought Black might have to face a bind, but Stockfish clearly had plans for the day and went for the jugular at once with 8. ♗g5!



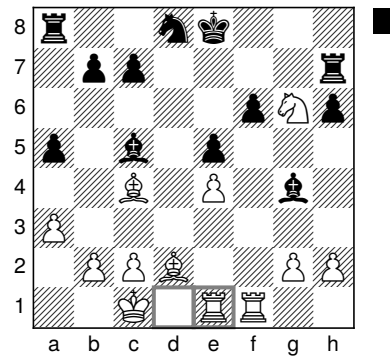
Stockfish—LCZero after 8. ♗f3–g5

It was time to be hyper-precise, but Leela's 8... ♖d7 showed it had missed a crucial detail: Stockfish's 12. ♖f1!!



Stockfish—LCZero after 12. ♖h1–f1

Taking the knight was too dangerous (♗xg5 and f4 is coming), but so was not taking it! Leela managed to exchange the queens



Stockfish—LCZero after 21. ♖d1–e1

but didn't manage to avoid the pain of defeat!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0=1-1)	33 (+6)	2
Stockfish	1.5 (+1=1-0)	45 (+18)	14

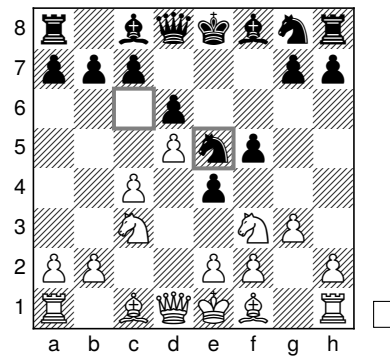
Pair result Decisive pair
Book score Matthew–Jeroen 8–8

Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=77&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=78&season=23>

Games 79–80 English (A27)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. c4 e5 2. ♖c3 ♗c6 3. ♗f3 f5 4. g3 d6 5. d4 e4 6. d5 ♗e5



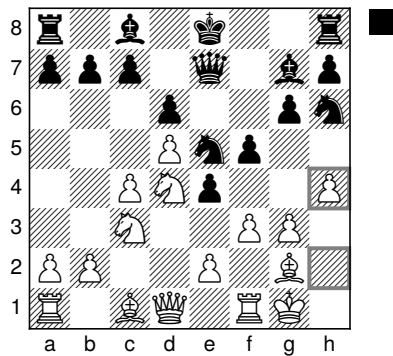
Book exit

This featured a dodgy English!

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

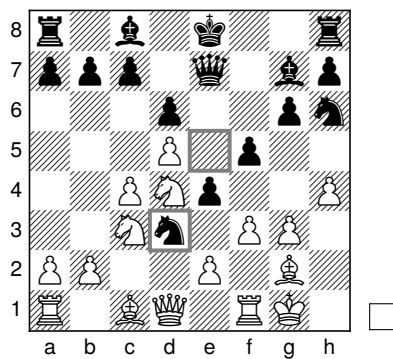
With an evaluation of 0.60, Leela was extremely confident, and Stockfish's evaluation even peaked

at 2.03! Funnily enough, though, despite Leela playing Stockfish's moves, Stockfish's evaluation started to fall.



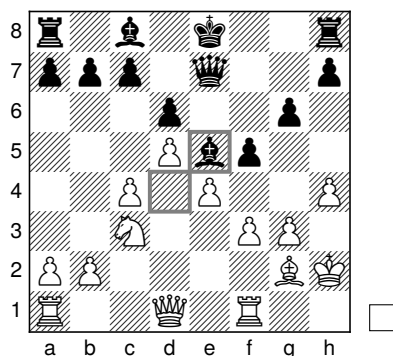
LCZero—Stockfish after 11...h2-h4

It was due to this move 11... ♖d3!!



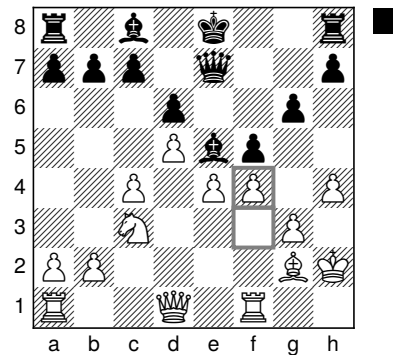
LCZero—Stockfish after 11... ♖e5-d3

You're surprised it doesn't lose more than a pawn to be honest! However, Stockfish's idea was quite deep. After 15... ♗e5,



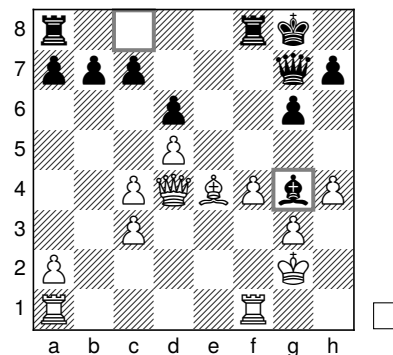
LCZero—Stockfish after 15... ♗d4-e5

Black is threatening 16... ♔xh4+, and after 16. f4



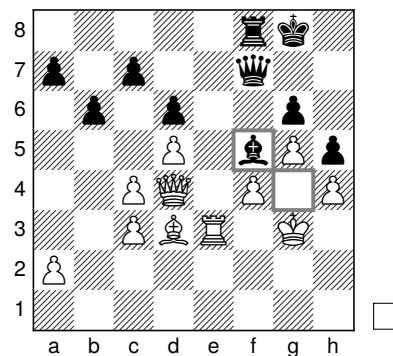
LCZero—Stockfish after 16. f3-f4

Stockfish intended to play a position a pawn down but with a broken White queenside structure.



LCZero—Stockfish after 20... ♗c8-g4

And that was that! Leela struggled to create anything at all from this position, and Stockfish just played 23... b6 and waited! A well-timed 32... h5 after 30. g4 also removed any chances White might have to break on the kingside!

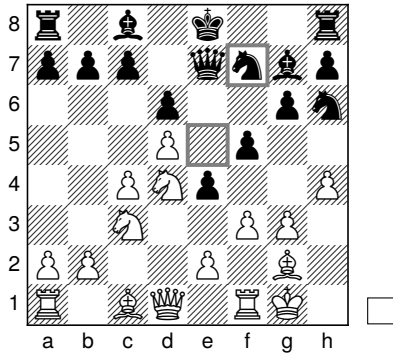


LCZero—Stockfish after 34... ♗g4-f5

The game ended in a draw!

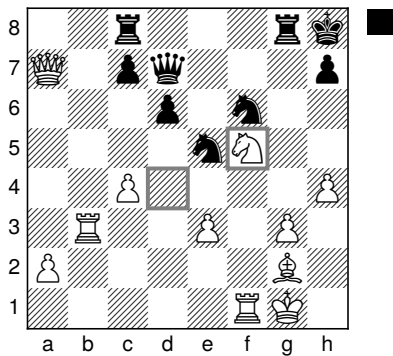
Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

The reverse was a bit painful! Leela played 11... ♖ef7



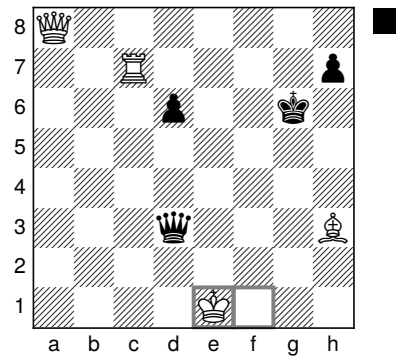
Stockfish—LCZero after 11... ♖e5–f7

instead of Stockfish's 11... ♖d3 and was soon having problems holding its e4-pawn and its light squares. Stockfish carried on plundering material left right and centre.



Stockfish—LCZero after 32. ♖d4×f5

The end was slightly bizarre, as Stockfish announced mate in 49 while Leela was still glitching at 1.13.



Stockfish—LCZero after 61. ♖f1–e1

But a couple of moves later, Leela had seen the truth!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0=1 -1)	33.5 (+6)	2
Stockfish	1.5 (+1=1 -0)	46.5 (+19)	15

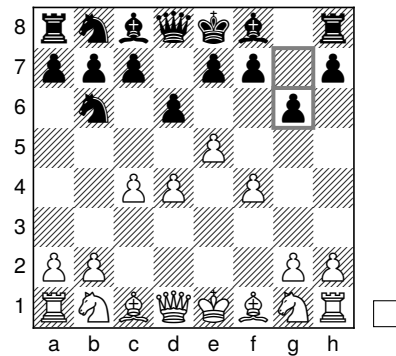
Pair result Decisive pair
Book score Matthew–Jeroen 8–9

Game links:

- <https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=79&season=23>
- <https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=80&season=23>

Games 81–82 Alekhine (B03)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. e4 ♖f6 2. e5 ♖d5 3. d4 d6 4. c4 ♖b6 5. f4 g6

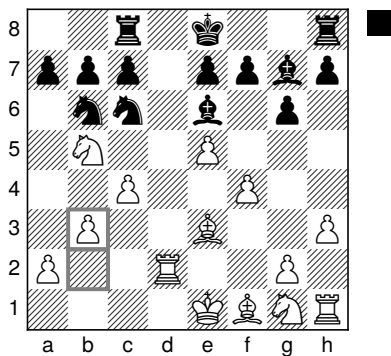


Book exit

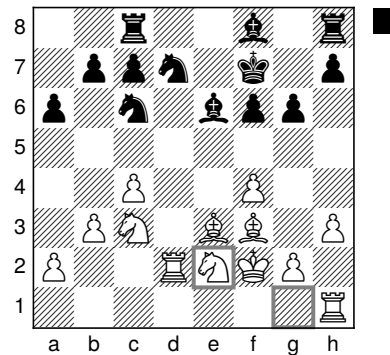
Games 81 and 82 were 5... g6 in the Alekhine against the Four Pawns attack.

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

I got interested in this line after a game as White in a Dutch rapid event. If it (half-)worked, it would be a lovely way to avoid the depressing main lines! Stockfish took the equally depressing decision to head for a worse endgame.



LCZero—Stockfish after 13. b2–b3



LCZero—Stockfish after 19. ♔g1–e2


Leela reshuffled its pieces multiple times. But although it still didn't look fun for Black, Stockfish was not losing any sleep! The game ended in a draw on move 84.

Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5

I was expecting more fireworks with Stockfish as White, and indeed, Leela really channeled its inner hypermodernist with some very provocative play to draw forward the white centre.

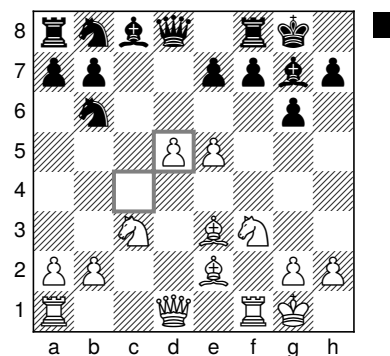
Not everyone is a fan of the Alekhine!

Christof Sielecki
 @ChessExplained
 Replying to @gmmnds



I have been toying with the idea of an Alekhine's Defence course for years, but it's just so depressing - in about all lines, really 😞

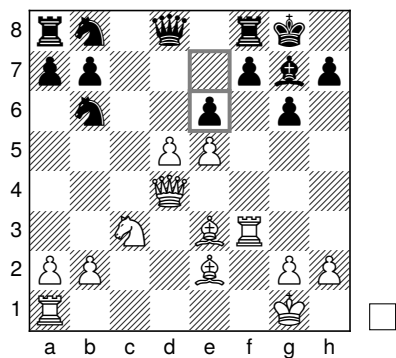
Nov 14, 2022
<https://twitter.com/ChessExplained/status/1592078811218468864>



Stockfish—LCZero after 13. c4×d5

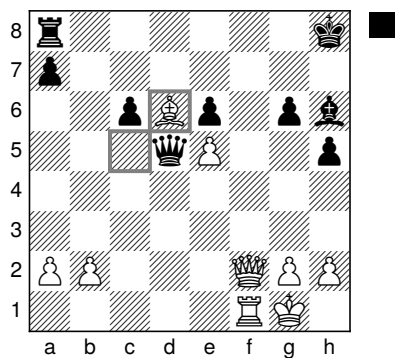
It looked like unpleasant pressure, but the Fish thrives on unpleasant defence!

Well, the first task of drawing forward White's centre had definitely been achieved. Now to undermine it...



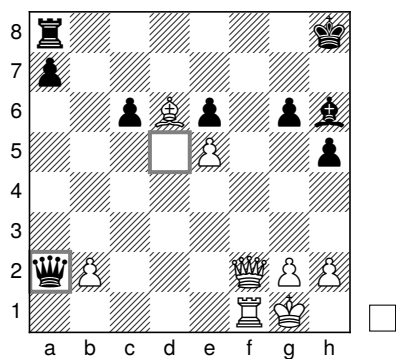
Stockfish—LCZero after 15... e7-e6

And Leela started. This looked weakening! Stockfish evaluation was still very high but Leela's started to drop... Some of Stockfish's evaluation had disappeared, but it was still clearly on top.



Stockfish—LCZero after 28... c5-d6

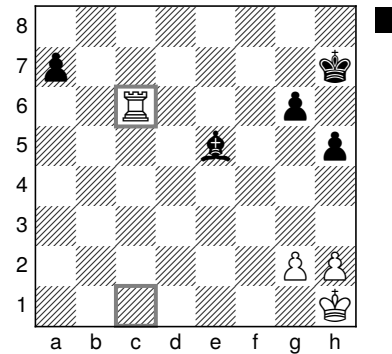
However, Leela went for a risky pawn grab and seemed to think equality was in reach!



Stockfish—LCZero after 28... d5xa2

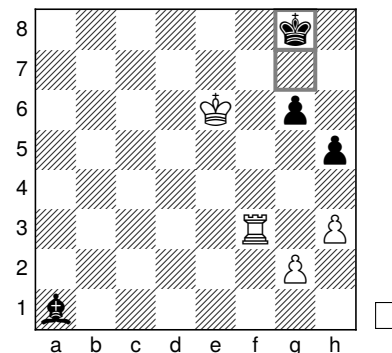
Leela was looking at all sorts of exchange sacrifices, which it considered dead equal. Why so

equal? Leela (from long afar) was assessing these endings as equal,



Stockfish—LCZero after 39... c1xc6

which humans certainly know to be true, too. I drew this ending aged around 12 against an English IM, so it's been in my head for a long time! Stockfish, however, was not so cultured. This is the best White gets:



Stockfish—LCZero after 88... g7-g8

The dark-squared bishop stays on the a1-h8 diagonal, and the white king never gets to attack the kingside pawns! Stockfish carried on fruitlessly for 145 moves before agreeing a draw!

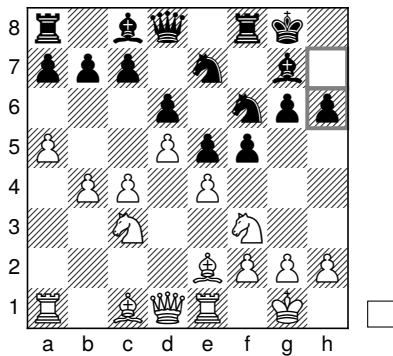
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0 =2 -0)	34.5 (+6)	2
Stockfish	1 (+0 =2 -0)	47.5 (+19)	15
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew-Jeroen 8-9		

Game links:

- <https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=81&season=23>
- <https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=82&season=23>

Games 83–84 King’s Indian Bayonet (E97)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 ♙g7 4. e4 d6 5. ♖f3 O-O 6. ♙e2 e5 7. O-O ♗c6 8. d5 ♗e7 9. b4 ♗h5 10. ♚e1 f5 11. a4 ♗f6 12. a5 h6

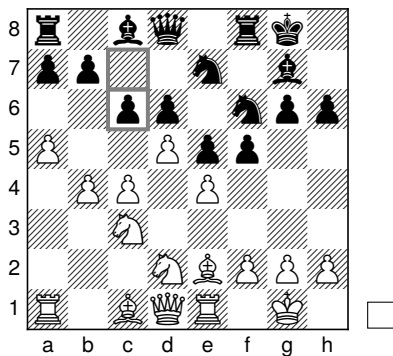


Book exit

The next game was a Bayonet King’s Indian.

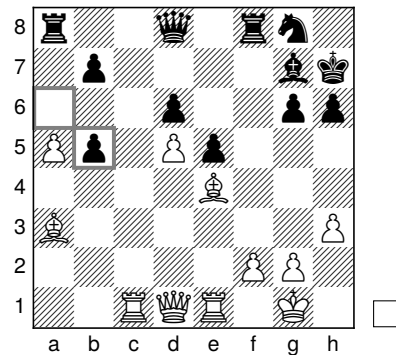
LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

These always used to be painful for Stockfish in the good old days but not anymore. Stockfish’s restrained 13... c6 approach



LCZero—Stockfish after 13... c7–c6

gave it a stable, slightly worse position,

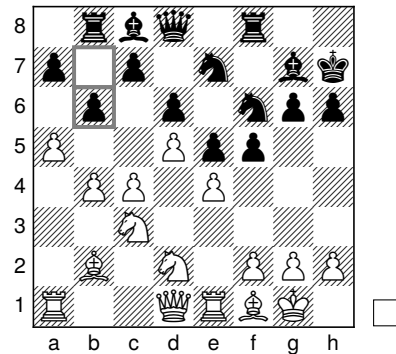


LCZero—Stockfish after 22... a6×b5

which it had no trouble defending.

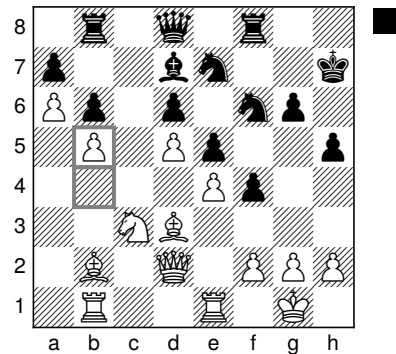
Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

Leela’s task was to hold as Black as well. Leela’s play (13... ♗h7, 14... ♚b8, and 15... b6) was a bit odd.



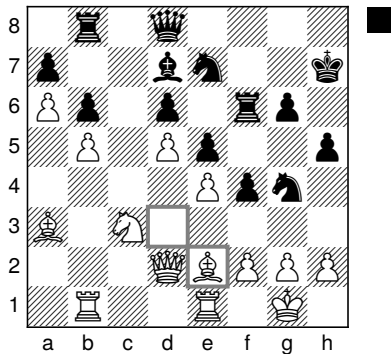
Stockfish—LCZero after 15... b7–b6

The big question was: would Stockfish play c6 (as it often likes to do in the Mar del Plata) or cxd6? It was 22. cxd6, and Stockfish’s original intention was to follow up 23. b5



Stockfish—LCZero after 23. b4–b5

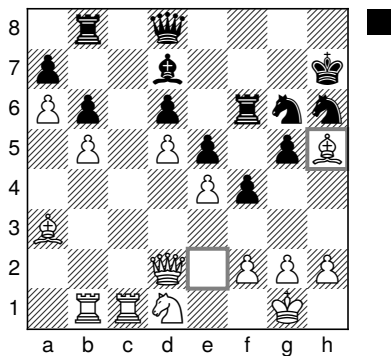
with ♖a2–b4–c6. I wasn't 100% sure that there would be a breakthrough if Black captured on c6 unless g3 could follow very quickly. After some thought, Stockfish went **24. ♕a3** and **25. ♕e2**



Stockfish—LCZero after 25. ♕d3–e2

and its eval boomed! I'm still confused why! One part was discovering ♖d1–b2–c4. Another part was invasion prospects on the c-file. Yet a key part seemed to also be grabbing a pawn on h5.

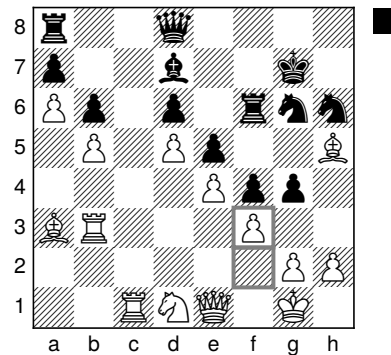
Black's natural plan to get counterplay going was to regroup with ...♖h6 intending ...g4, which was where grabbing the h5-pawn came in.



Stockfish—LCZero after 28. ♕e2xh5

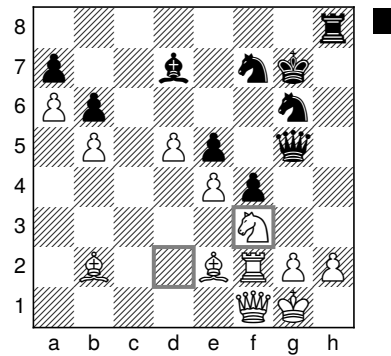
It just seemed to open the h-file for Black to me (and Leela!), but Stockfish was +3.62 adamant!

Somehow, Leela didn't manage to get its pieces right. White played f3 to free its bishop, and Black's position was collapsing!



Stockfish—LCZero after 32. f2–f3

Black did manage to create a bit of counterplay (it's a King's Indian after all!), but Stockfish just curled up in a ball.



Stockfish—LCZero after 46. ♖d2–f3

After that with two extra pawns and a big target on e5, it was just shelling peas for the Fish!

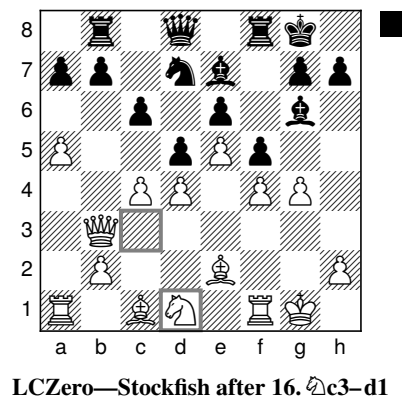
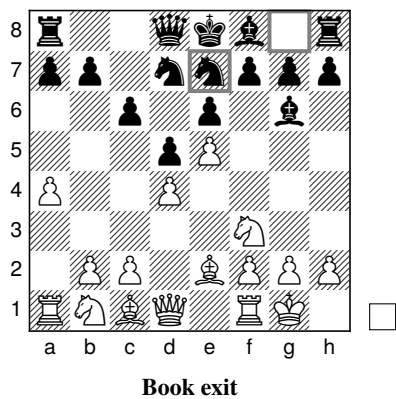
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0=1-1)	35 (+6)	2
Stockfish	1.5 (+1=1-0)	49 (+20)	16
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 8–10		

Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=83&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=84&season=23>

Games 85–86 Caro-Kann Advance (B12)

Book moves (Matthew): **1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 ♕f5 4. ♖f3 e6 5. ♕e2 ♖d7 6. O-O ♗g6 7. a4 ♖e7**



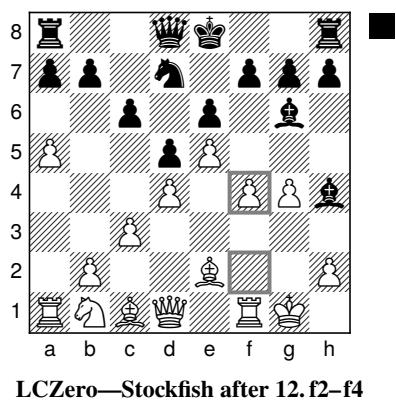
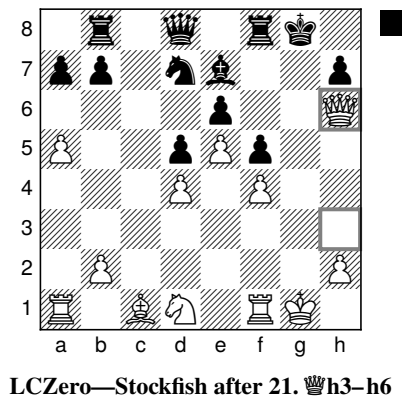
Games 85–86 were an Advance Caro-Kann.

transferring to e3 was a beautiful Leela idea. Leela’s point was **21. ♖h6!**

LCZero—Stockfish 1-0

I had a sneaking suspicion that Leela would do well in this line, and that was confirmed in Leela’s White game, as Stockfish was smashed to all corners of the park!

Stockfish developed incautiously and got hit by a very typical idea in this line: g4 followed by an exchange of knights and then f4!



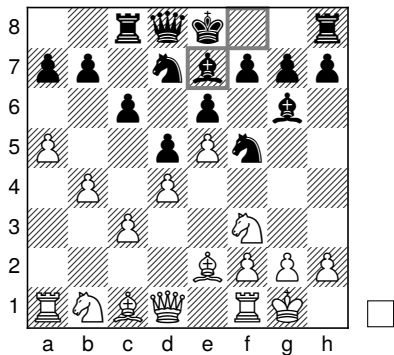
when e6 cannot be defended (all hail **8. a5!**—which I’m sure Alekhine would have claimed as prescience!) A Stockfish developer suggested music to accompany the final sad moments of Stockfish’s demise as it lost all its pawns 😞: Chaconne from Johann Sebastian Bach’s Partita for Violin no. 2 in D minor performed by Hilary Hahn.²³

Stockfish—LCZero 1-0

Could Leela hold the reverse? In general, Leela plays such Black positions better. But well enough to hold an angry Fish? Leela’s opening move order was subtle, waiting with ... ♗e7 until White had played **10. b4**.

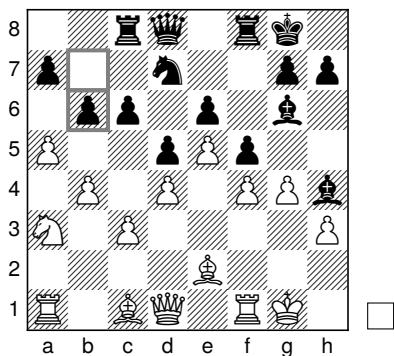
Leela piled on the pain, and Stockfish kept on getting hit by moves it didn’t expect. **16. ♖d1**

²³<https://youtu.be/ngjEVKxQCWs>



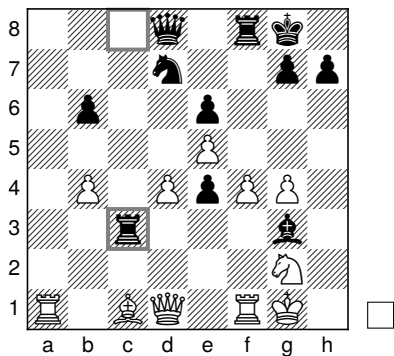
Stockfish—LCZero after 10... ♟f8-e7

The point is that it's harder for White to create central and queenside pressure with ♖b3 and c4 when White has already played b4. Stockfish got a bind but not an immediate assault.



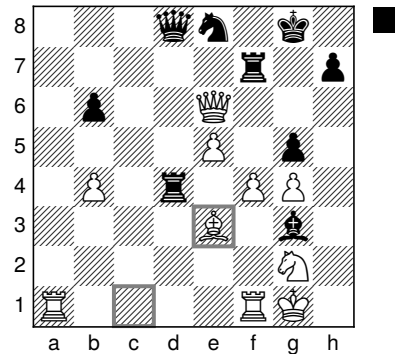
Stockfish—LCZero after 15... b7-b6

Stockfish's kingside assault started, but so did Leela's counterplay with 15... b6 and 17... c5, breaking the bind and activating the rook on c8! The game was in the balance.



Stockfish—LCZero after 23... ♖c8-c3

Somewhere it all went wrong! Leela's tactical trickery was manhandled by ♙ [Stockfish], and Leela's position turned into a train wreck!



Stockfish—LCZero after 30. ♙c1-e3

An exchange was won, queens were exchanged, and Stockfish mopped up to equalise the game pair, costing me a game pair win, and leaving Jeroen 10–8 ahead in the bookmakers' competition!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+1 =0 -1)	36 (+7)	2
Stockfish	1 (+1 =0 -1)	50 (+21)	16

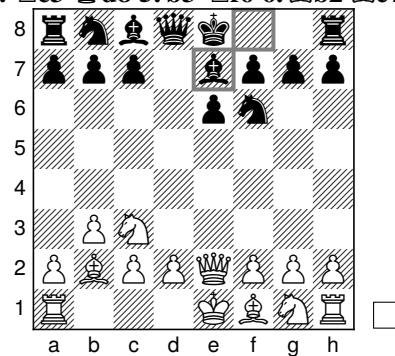
Pair result Reverse kill
Book score Matthew–Jeroen 8–10

Game links:

<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=85&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=86&season=23>

Games 87–88 French (C00)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. e4 e6 2. ♖e2 d5 3. exd5 ♙×d5 4. ♘c3 ♖d8 5. b3 ♘f6 6. ♙b2 ♙e7

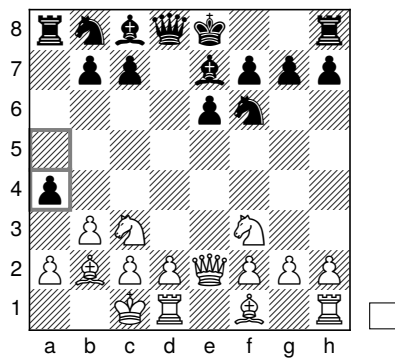


Book exit

We moved on to *reeeeeeaaally* dodgy offbeat 2. ♖e2 French in games 87–88.

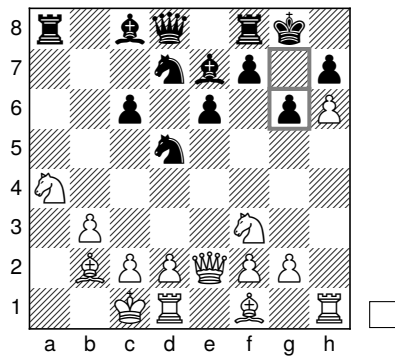
LCZero—Stockfish 1–0

Stockfish took the immediate sirens blaring approach and sacrificed the rook’s pawn to start immediate counterplay.



LCZero—Stockfish after 8... a5–a4

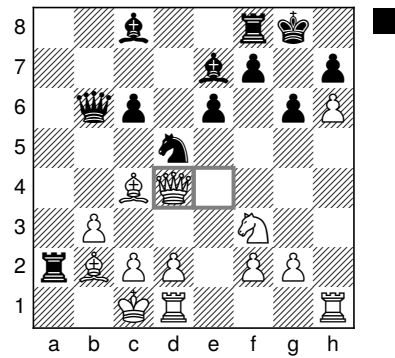
Stockfish got a rook’s pawn in the gums on the other side but seemed to have decent Mortazavi²⁴ chances on the queen’s wing.



LCZero—Stockfish after 15... g7–g6

However, Leela used a mating threat on g7/h8 to exchange queens,

²⁴Referring to IM Ali Mortazavi (*Ed.*)

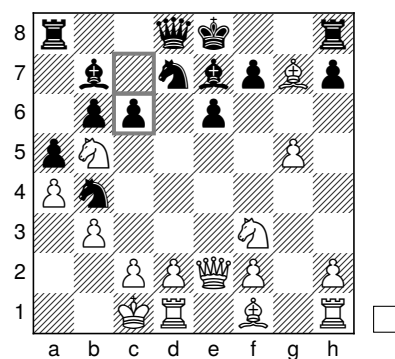


LCZero—Stockfish after 19. ♖e4–d4

and after that, an extra pawn and weaknesses were too much for Stockfish to save.

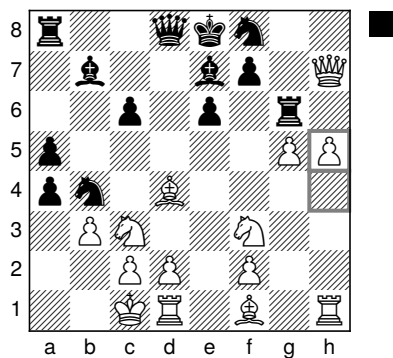
Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

The reverse was absolutely bananas with some heavy tactical hitting! Leela took a similar desperate approach and sacrificed a pawn to get queenside play going and then offered an exchange.

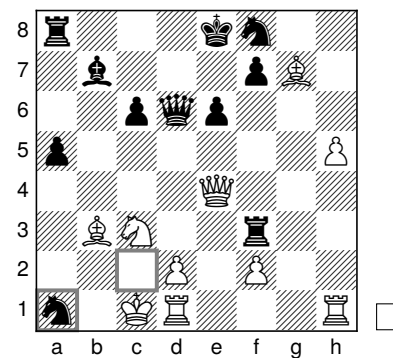


Stockfish—LCZero after 13... c7–c6

At a quick glance, everything is too bewildering! Stockfish offered a queen sacrifice:

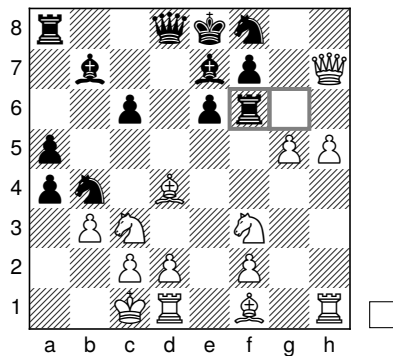


Stockfish—LCZero after 19. h4–h5



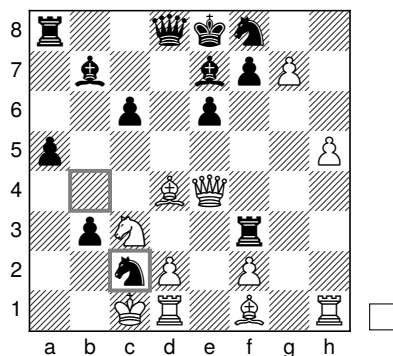
Stockfish—LCZero after 26... ♖c2–a1

Then Leela offered its rook in a different way:



Stockfish—LCZero after 19... ♖g6–f6

Leela was hitting wildly and gnawing away at White's king protection on the queenside while Stockfish was queening its g-pawn!



Stockfish—LCZero after 22... ♖b4xc2

After 26... ♖a1, the rook on f3 had been hanging since move 20!

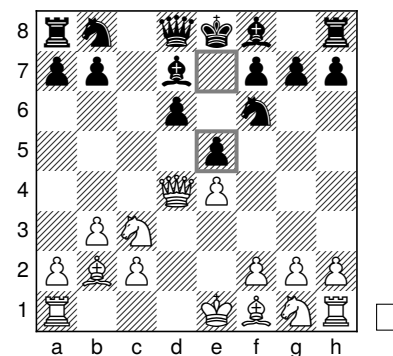
It was all very much in Stockfish's favour, however! This win sealed Stockfish's victory in the match with 12 games to spare!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+1 =0 -1)	37 (+8)	2
Stockfish	1 (+1 =0 -1)	51 (+22)	16
Pair result	Reverse kill		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 8–10		

Game links:
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=87&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=88&season=23>

Games 89–90 Magnus Sicilian (B23)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. e4 c5 2. ♖c3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 ♘d7 5. b3 ♖f6 6. ♘b2 e5

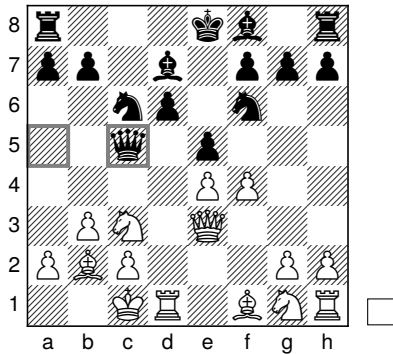


Book exit

We started the evening with a Magnus Sicilian.

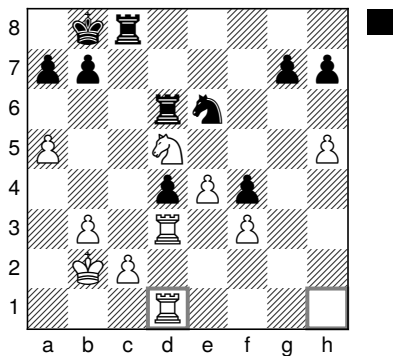
LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

Stockfish decided it had seen enough and engaged “hold rubbish ending mode”.



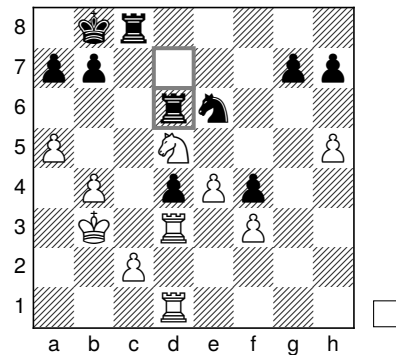
LCZero—Stockfish after 9... ♔a5-c5

The resulting endgame was indeed not pleasant, but Leela’s evaluation flatlined at a high level but without progress.



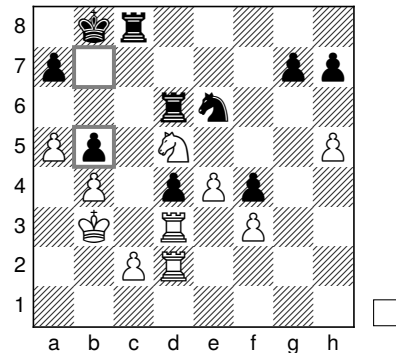
LCZero—Stockfish after 27... ♖h1-d1

The well-known TCEC shuffle mode was engaged! Oddly, just at the moment Stockfish’s evaluation jumped to a high value (1.83 is pretty serious),



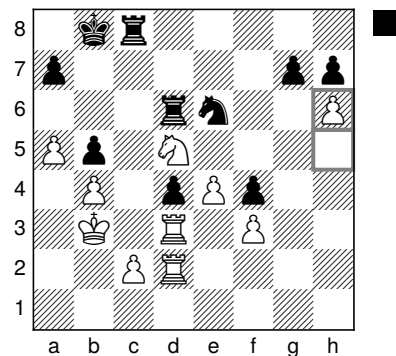
LCZero—Stockfish after 35... ♖d7-d6

the next move brought a burst of optimism!



LCZero—Stockfish after 36... b7-b5

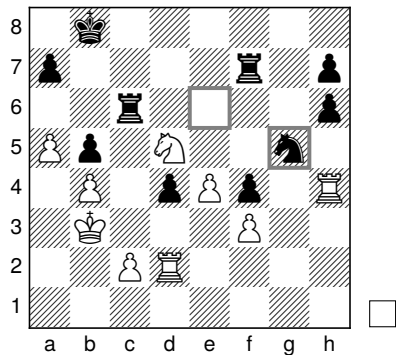
And after Leela’s next (logical-looking) push 37. h6,



LCZero—Stockfish after 37. h5-h6

Stockfish was even happier!

It looked ugly, but somehow Black had organised itself such that White could not win Black’s weaknesses without exposing its own!

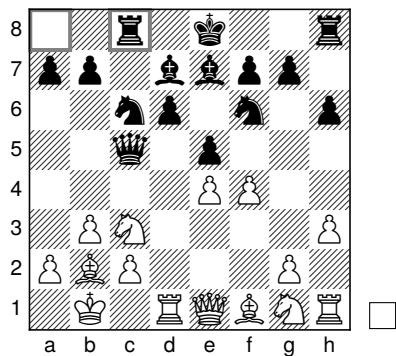


LCZero—Stockfish after 41... ♖e6–g5

Leela tried, but Black's odd pawn structure seemed tailor-made to hold Black's position together! The game ended in a draw in 68 moves.

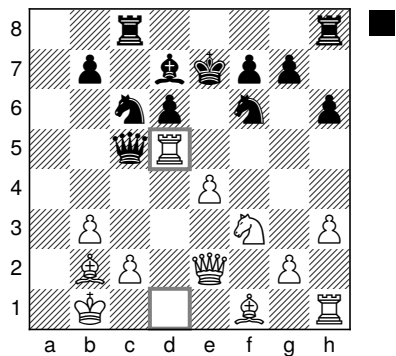
Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

In game 90, Leela took a different approach and tried to rumble in the middlegame.



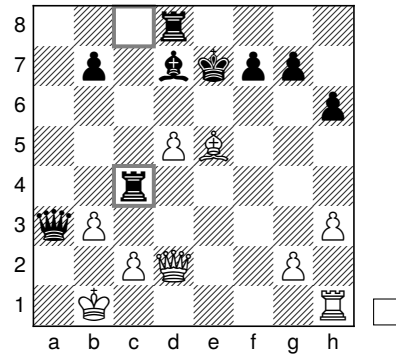
Stockfish—LCZero after 12... ♖a8–c8

It did not go well.



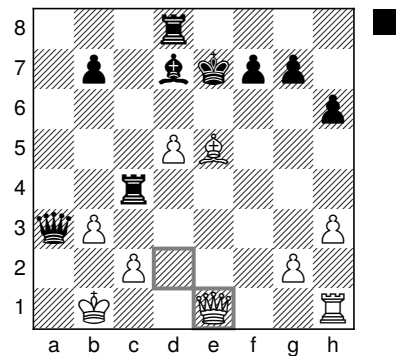
Stockfish—LCZero after 20. ♖d1–d5

However, Stockfish's winning technique was quite astonishing. Leela defended superbly, looking to head for an opposite-coloured bishop (OCB) position.



Stockfish—LCZero after 26... ♖c8×c4

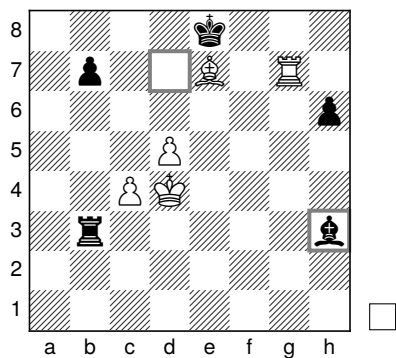
However, Stockfish had seen 27. ♖e1!!



Stockfish—LCZero after 27. ♖d2–e1

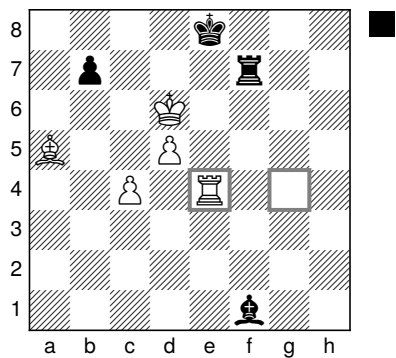
The key point was 27... ♖f8 28. ♖g3!! when 28... ♗f5 29. ♗×g7+ ♖e8 30. ♖e5+ ♖e7 31. ♖×f5 is winning for White.

The key point is that White manages to keep an extra pawn in an OCB ending but with undamaged pawns. Still, conversion didn't look like a walk in the park. I mean, I understand that White has great chances with such active pieces but +8!?!?



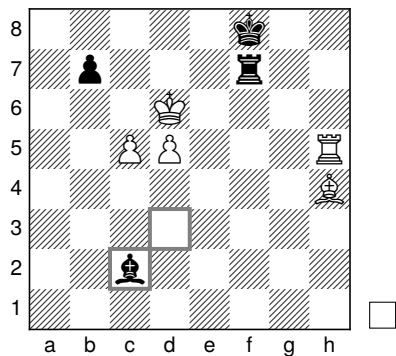
Stockfish—LCZero after 38... ♔d7xh3

Stockfish's plan was easy to understand—the black king must be chased from in front of the d-pawn—but the execution was peerless. (Leela didn't think White could force it.) This was the culmination:



Stockfish—LCZero after 59... ♖g4-e4+

Note the light-squared bishop had been nudged earlier from d3 to f1 so that 59... ♖e4+ was possible! This organisation of the pieces on the h-file was also very elegant!



Stockfish—LCZero after 65... ♔d3-c2

Leela soon gave up after leaving us with Stockfish leading 52.5–37.5 (+23 -8 =59) with 10 games to go. In the bookmakers' competition I pulled one back to trail 10–9!

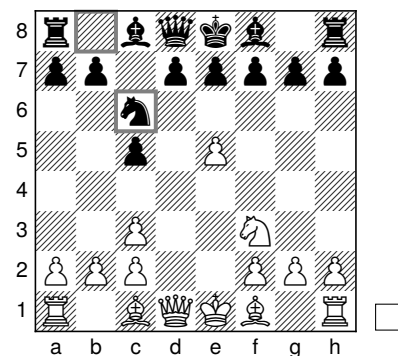
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0 =1 -1)	37.5 (+8)	2
Stockfish	1.5 (+1 =1 -0)	52.5 (+23)	17

Pair result Decisive pair
Book score Matthew–Jeroen 9–10

Game links:
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=89&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=90&season=23>

Games 91–92 Nimzowitsch Sicilian (B29)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. e4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♗f6 3. e5 ♗d5 4. ♗c3 ♗xc3 5. dxc3 ♗c6

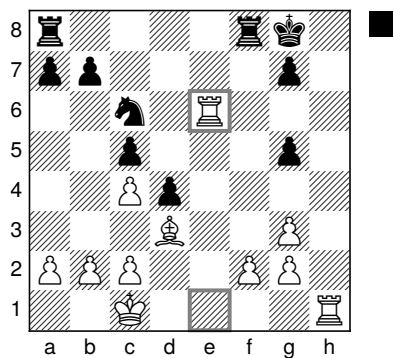


Book exit

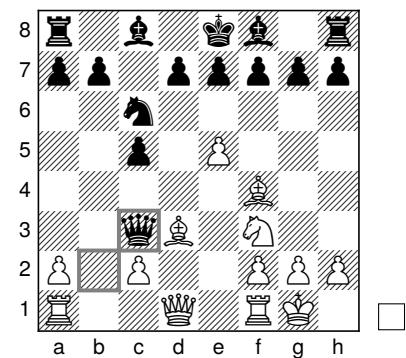
Games 91–92 featured a pair of dodgy Nimzowitsch Sicilians, and both Leela and Stockfish enjoyed pummeling their opponents in their own respective styles.

LCZero—Stockfish 1–0

Leela accumulated pawn weaknesses as Stockfish struggled to develop active play. There was one funny moment in this period



LCZero—Stockfish after 18. ♖e1xe6

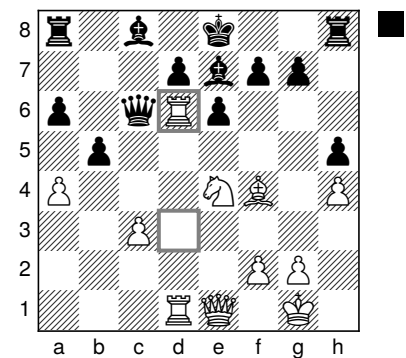


Stockfish—LCZero after 8... ♖b2xc3

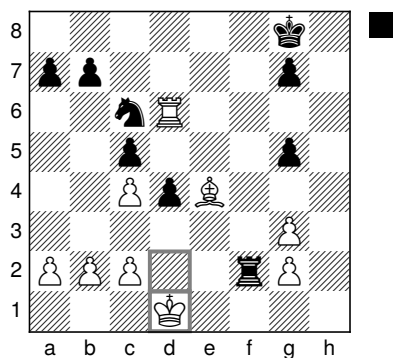
when Leela started considering 18. ♖e1xe6: Leela's evaluation rose from 0.83 to 1.05, then dropped back to 0.83, then exploded up to 1.87, which for Leela is stratospheric! A Leela developer wailed that it was mathematically impossible for Leela's evaluation to fluctuate as much and feared a bug or a crash!

But Stockfish's explosion in evaluation showed that Leela had simply evaluated the resulting end-game perfectly!

and Stockfish started hitting!



Stockfish—LCZero after 23. ♖d3-d6



LCZero—Stockfish after 23. ♖d2-d1

Leela finished off the game with fluent technique to give its fans hope that a third game pair win was on the cards!

It fell apart very quickly, allowing Fish to keep its 17–2(!) game pair advantage!

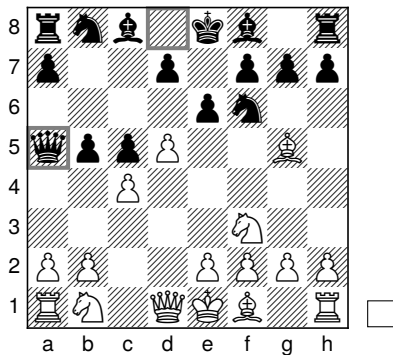
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+1 =0 -1)	38.5 (+9)	2
Stockfish	1 (+1 =0 -1)	53.5 (+24)	17
Pair result	Reverse kill		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 9–10		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=91&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=92&season=23			

Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

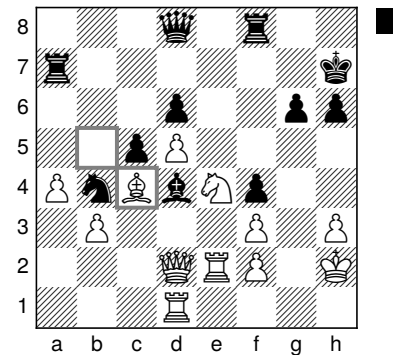
But it was not to be. Leela went for the quick double pawn grab approach

Games 93–94 Blumenfeld Gambit (E10)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e6 4. ♘f3 b5 5. ♗g5 ♖a5+



Book exit



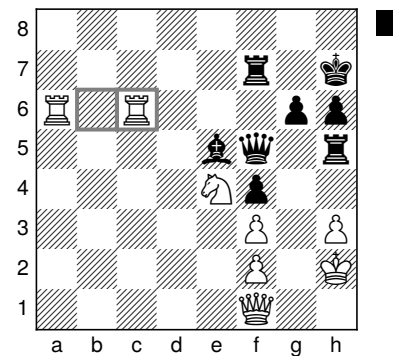
LCZero—Stockfish after 26. ♖b5–c4

Games 93 and 94 are a line of the Blumenfeld Gambit that—if I recall correctly—I had in 1988 vs Stephen Fry at a London Charity simul!

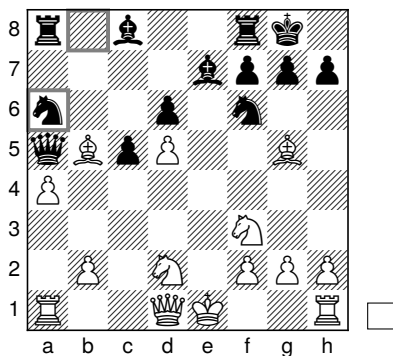
It was looking pretty clear, but we have ended up in this position which again defies my ability to grasp a 9.71(!) evaluation at a glance. There are problems defending g6 and tactics to chase away the black pieces. Still...!

LCZero—Stockfish 1–0

The opening is not super nowadays, but I didn't think it would be a trivial win, as engines are astonishingly good at defending pawn-down positions with open lines for active pieces.



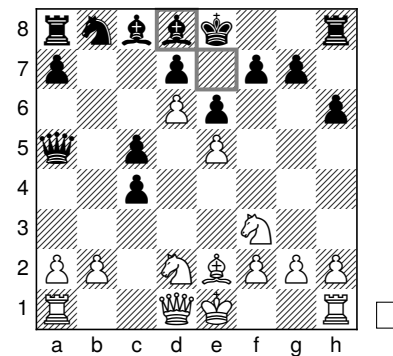
LCZero—Stockfish after 46. ♜b6–c6



LCZero—Stockfish after 12... ♜b8–a6

Stockfish—LCZero 1–0

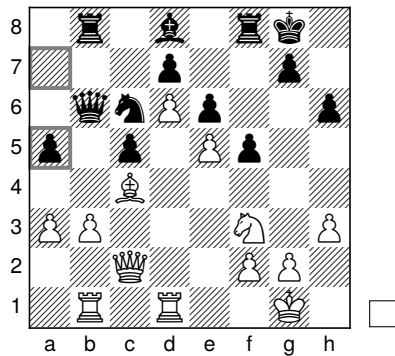
In the reverse, Leela played a little hypermodern, drawing the White central pawns on.



Stockfish—LCZero after 11... ♗e7–d8

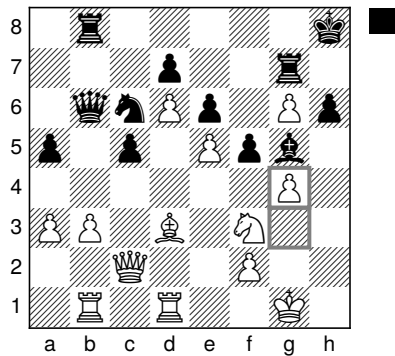
However, Leela did a sterling job of keeping control of any sources of counterplay and gradually squeezed Stockfish out of the pond!

It didn't look super, but judging from the evaluations, it seemed that Leela might hold and get a third game pair win.



Stockfish—LCZero after 21... a7-a5

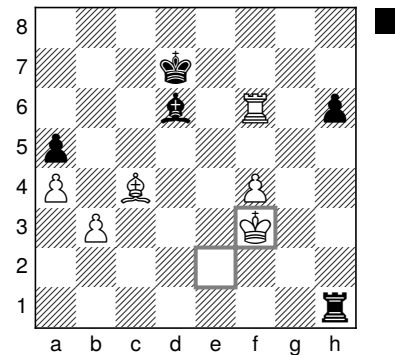
Then Stockfish got motoring, and Leela started to creak!



Stockfish—LCZero after 31. g3-g4

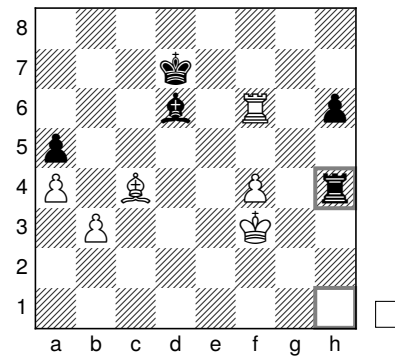
The odd thing, though, was that Stockfish's and Leela's main lines coincided exactly, and it was leading to this endgame. I had in my head that it should be a draw with Black's king so well-placed.

The game followed this path and reached the crucial position:



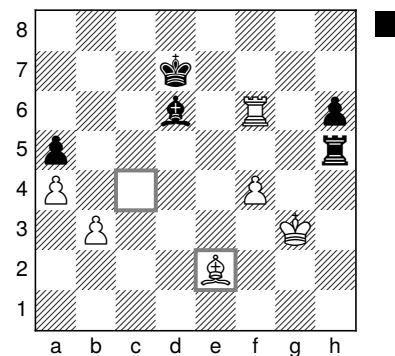
Stockfish—LCZero after 51. ♖e2-f3

I don't yet understand completely why it works, but Stockfish was adamant that 51... ♖h5 was the only move to hold. Leela considered all continuations roughly equivalent—and leading to the same path—and played 51... ♖h4.



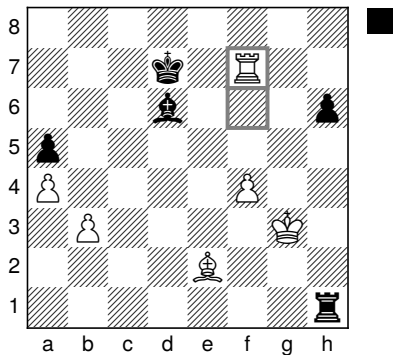
Stockfish—LCZero after 51... ♖h1-h4

The reply was an evil sequence from Stockfish culminating with 53. ♕e2!!

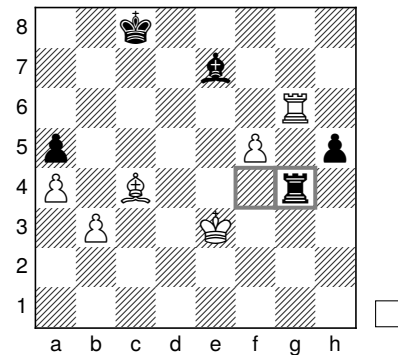


Stockfish—LCZero after 53. ♕c4-e2

and then 54. ♖f7+.



Stockfish—LCZero after 54. ♖f6–f7+

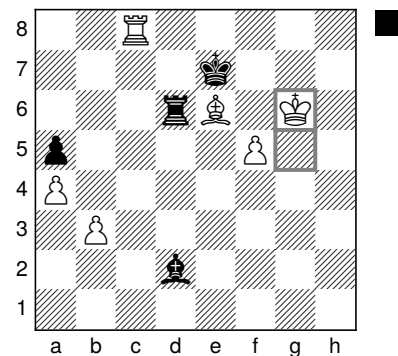


Stockfish—LCZero after 78... ♖f4–g4

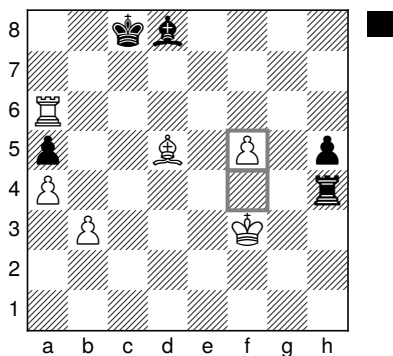
54... ♖e6 allows 55. ♔c4+ mate and 54... ♖c6 allows 55. ♔f3+, so the black king is forced to go to the back rank. This gives White's king enormous freedom to advance through the centre, which Stockfish now considered winning!

The winning method was staggeringly complex. With a series of subtle manoeuvres, Stockfish managed to break the ♔c7/♖h4 defensive structure and push the f-pawn safely.

However, Stockfish got hold of Black's h-pawn and started advancing, and the writing was on the wall.



Stockfish—LCZero after 92. ♖g5–g6



Stockfish—LCZero after 74. f4–f5

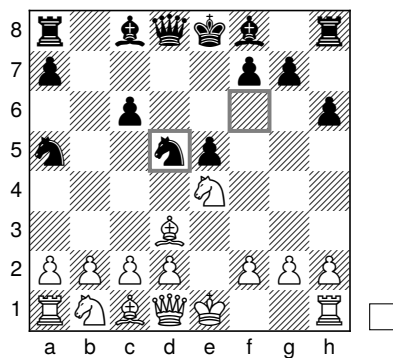
It was all complicated by the fact that Leela could offer the exchange of rooks at many moments.

I was so close to drawing level in the book-makers' competition! Close but no cigar!

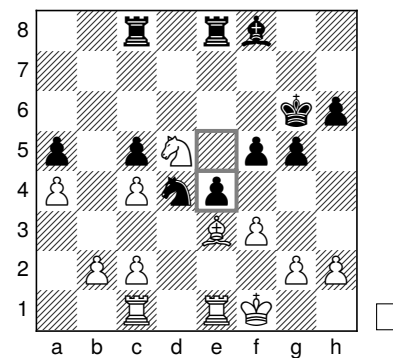
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+1 =0 -1)	39.5 (+10)	2
Stockfish	1 (+1 =0 -1)	54.5 (+25)	17
Pair result	Reverse kill		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 9–10		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=93&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=94&season=23			

Games 95–96 Two Knights Defence (C58)

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♘c6 3. ♔c4 ♘f6 4. ♘g5 d5 5. exd5 ♘a5 6. ♔b5+ c6 7. dxc6 bxc6 8. ♔d3 h6 9. ♘e4 ♘d5



Book exit



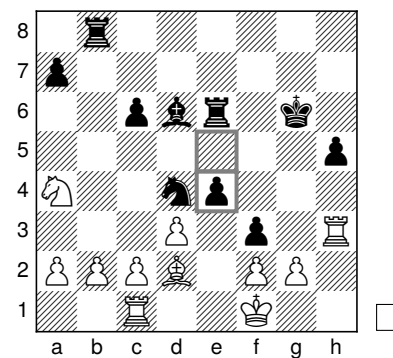
LCZero—Stockfish after 29... e5-e4

Games 95 and 96 were slightly misplayed Two Knights Defences that followed very similar courses.

**LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5 /
Stockfish—LCZero 0.5–0.5**

Both Leela and Stockfish looked at their position a pawn down with a broken queenside structure, and offered the exchange of queens.

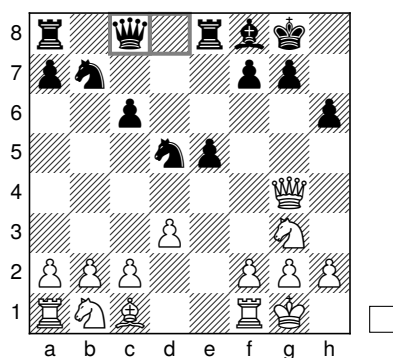
was Stockfish and



Stockfish—LCZero after 33... e5-e4

was Leela!

slightlyconfused.com tbh!



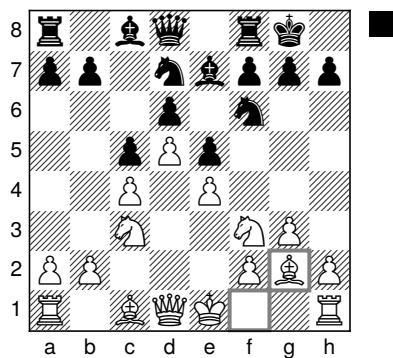
LCZero—Stockfish after 15... ♖d8xc8

They then proceeded to draw the games without the slightest trouble!

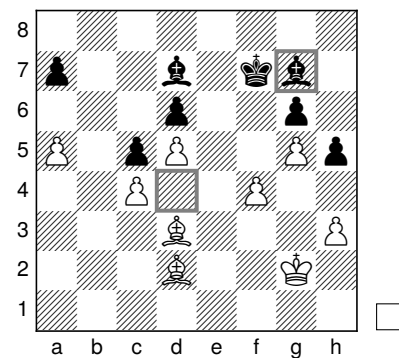
Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	1 (+0=2-0)	40.5 (+10)	2
Stockfish	1 (+0=2-0)	55.5 (+25)	17
Pair result	Double draw		
Book score	Matthew–Jeroen 9–10		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=95&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=96&season=23			

Games 97–98 Czech Benoni (A56)

Book moves (Matthew): 1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e5 4. ♘c3 d6 5. e4 ♗e7 6. ♘f3 ♘bd7 7. g3 O-O 8. ♗g2



Book exit



LCZero—Stockfish after 48... ♕d4-g7

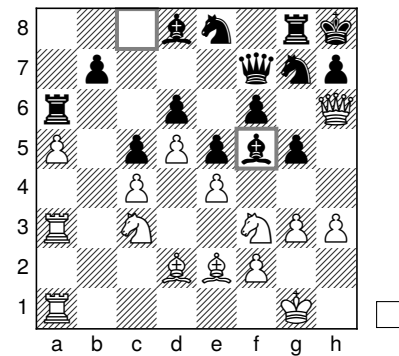
Stockfish—LCZero 1-0

My last chance to draw level in the bookmakers' competition was a Czech Benoni in games 97 and 98! Traditionally, a fertile hunting ground for Leela.

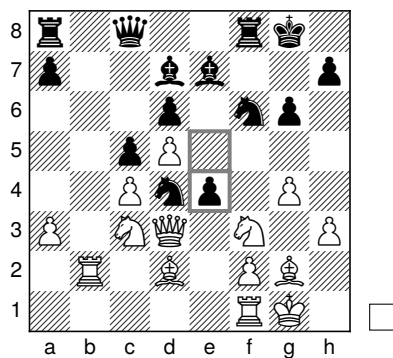
The reverse showed the typical way in which Stockfish plays these positions: shuffle mysteriously while its eval goes up and then win. It did help to be a calculating monster to see that the queen on h6 was not getting trapped!

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5-0.5

This time it wasn't to be... Another pawn sacrifice by Stockfish for active pieces,



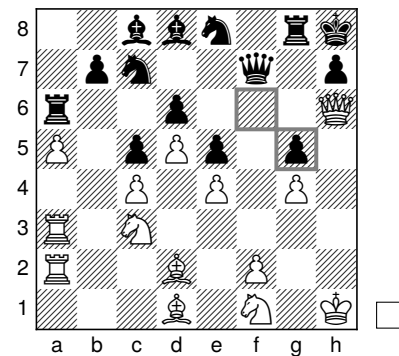
Stockfish—LCZero after 43... ♖c8-f5



LCZero—Stockfish after 21... e5-e4

A few sudden changes of structure

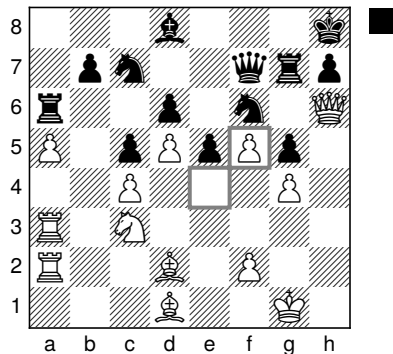
and the evaluations started to flatline. Leela strained mightily, but even this endgame turned out to be drawn.



Stockfish—LCZero after 51... f6xg5

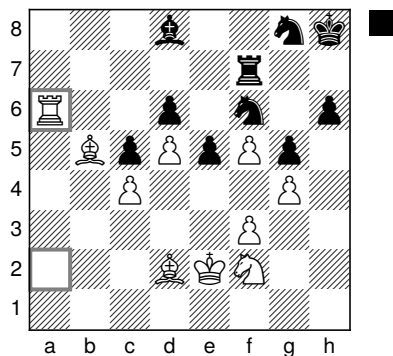
pped Stockfish's evaluation another few notches.

Games 99–100 King's Indian (E61)



Stockfish—LCZero after 55. e4xf5

And after a breakthrough on the a-file,



Stockfish—LCZero after 68. Ra2xa6

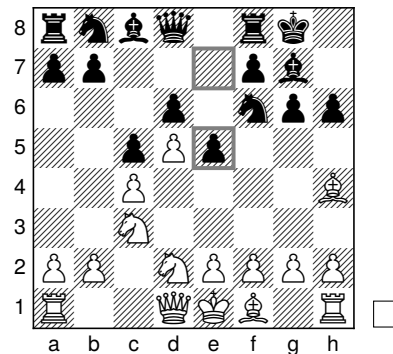
it was curtains for Leela! 57–41 to Stockfish, and vastly more importantly, 10–10 in the bookmakers' competition! It would all hinge on the last game pair!

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0 =1 -1)	41 (+10)	2
Stockfish	1.5 (+1 =1 -0)	57 (+26)	18

Pair result Decisive pair
Book score Matthew–Jeroen 10–10

Game links:
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=97&season=23>
<https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=98&season=23>

Book moves (Jeroen): 1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 ♙g7 4. ♘f3 O-O 5. ♙g5 c5 6. d5 h6 7. ♙h4 d6 8. ♘d2 e5

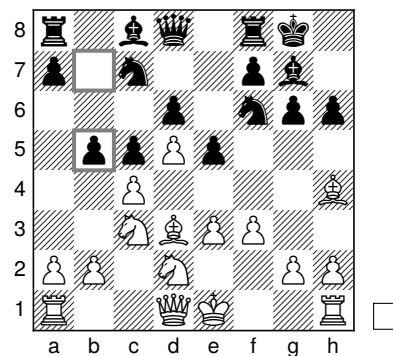


Book exit

The last game pair was based on the game Dubov–Firouzja.²⁵

LCZero—Stockfish 0.5–0.5

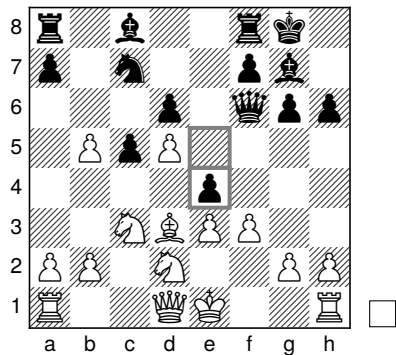
Stockfish being not a happy little fish decided to switch to bad Benko mode!



LCZero—Stockfish after 11... b7-b5

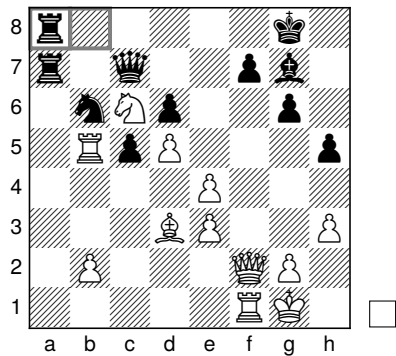
And then offered another one!

²⁵Daniil Dubov vs Alireza Firouzja, FTX Crypto Cup (2021) (rapid), rd 11. 0–1. <https://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=2049589>



LCZero—Stockfish after 13... e5-e4

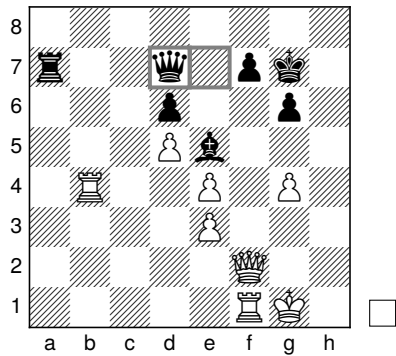
Leela kept the pressure well, and then Stockfish offered Leela an extra exchange:



LCZero—Stockfish after 29... ♖b8-a8

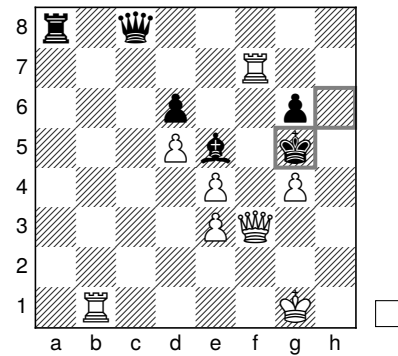
Both kibitzer Dragon and a different version of Leela were screaming to play 30. e5 rather than take the exchange... but this Leela couldn't resist!

We reached the following position. White is the exchange and a pawn up, but Black is very well-entrenched!



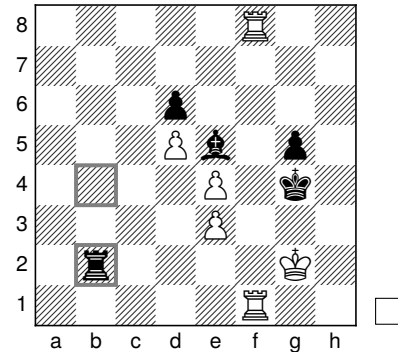
LCZero—Stockfish after 37... ♖e7xd7

I was expecting Stockfish to stay still and wait forever, but Stockfish went all spicy with 41... ♔g5!



LCZero—Stockfish after 41... ♔g5

Leela took a long time to believe it, but the draw was inevitable!

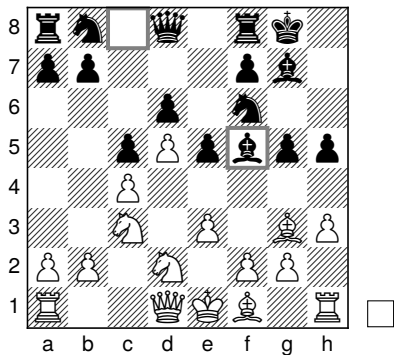


LCZero—Stockfish after 53... ♖b4-b2+

So now Leela had to hold the Black side of the Czech Benoni to produce a tie in the bookmakers' championship. The omens were not good!

Stockfish—LCZero 1-0

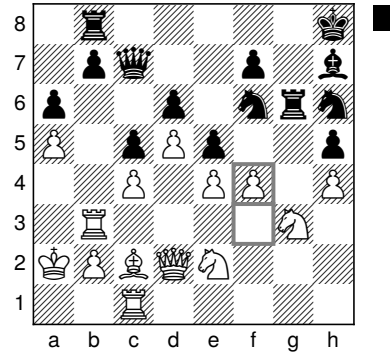
Leela played a strange idea gaining space quickly on the kingside with 9... g5 and 10... h5.



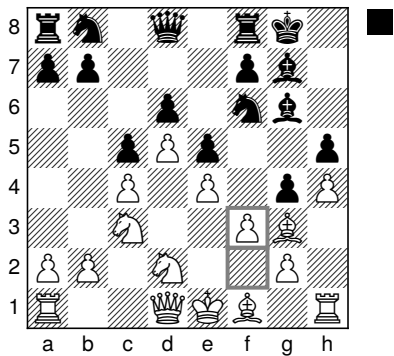
Stockfish—LCZero after 11... ♗c8-f5

Stockfish considered locking the kingside briefly but then chose a much better pawn structure option.

Eventually, Stockfish's evaluation had risen so much that it was time to strike out with 58. f4!

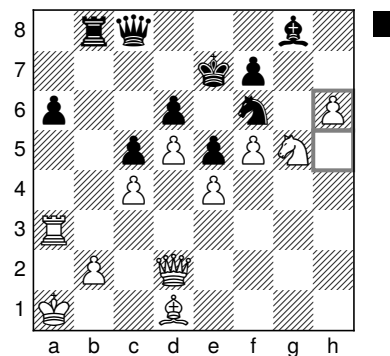


Stockfish—LCZero after 58. f3-f4



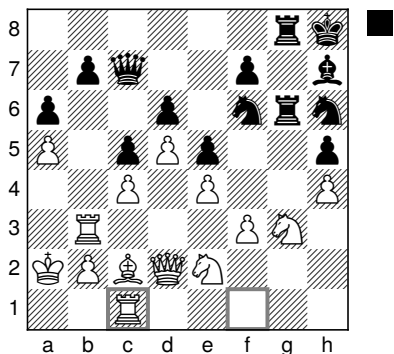
Stockfish—LCZero after 14. f2-f3

The rest was a massacre!



Stockfish—LCZero after 79. h5-h6

We now entered a phase typical of how Stockfish plays such positions. Nothing amazing apart from a couple of exchanges seemed to happen for many moves, but Stockfish's evaluation rose inexorably!



Stockfish—LCZero after 57. ♖f1-c1

Engine	Pair score	Current score	Pair wins
LCZero	0.5 (+0=1 -1)	41.5 (+10)	2
Stockfish	1.5 (+1=1 -0)	58.5 (+27)	19
Pair result	Decisive pair		
Book score	Matthew-Jeroen 10-11		
Game links:			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=99&season=23			
https://tcec-chess.com/#div=sf&game=100&season=23			

Match Summary

Pair	Result	Book by	Score MS-JN	Game	Match	Result	W eval	B eval	Wins MS-JN
1	Reverse kill	Matthew	0-0	1	Lc0-SF	1-0	0.60	1.73	1-0
				2	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.42	0.56	2-0
2	Decisive	Jeroen	0-1	3	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.45	1.54	2-0
				4	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.57	0.43	2-1
3	Double draw	Matthew	0-1	5	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.60	1.43	2-1
				6	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.53	0.57	2-1
4	Decisive	Jeroen	0-2	7	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.43	1.61	2-1
				8	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.46	0.47	2-2
5	Reverse kill	Matthew	0-2	9	Lc0-SF	1-0	0.65	1.60	3-2
				10	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.87	0.63	4-2
6	Double draw	Jeroen	0-2	11	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.50	1.40	4-2
				12	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.40	0.48	4-2
7	Decisive	Matthew	1-2	13	Lc0-SF	1-0	0.58	1.45	5-2
				14	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.64	0.57	5-2
8	Decisive	Jeroen	1-3	15	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.49	1.38	5-2
				16	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.50	0.49	5-3
9	Decisive	Matthew	2-3	17	Lc0-SF	0-1	-0.61	-1.83	6-3
				18	SF-Lc0	½-½	-1.66	-0.64	6-3
10	Double draw	Jeroen	2-3	19	Lc0-SF	½-½	-0.49	-1.62	6-3
				20	SF-Lc0	½-½	-1.45	-0.48	6-3
11	Double draw	Matthew	2-3	21	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.32	1.05	6-3
				22	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.02	0.34	6-3
12	Decisive	Jeroen	2-4	23	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.70	1.72	6-3
				24	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.78	0.63	6-4
13	Double draw	Matthew	2-4	25	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.36	1.00	6-4
				26	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.09	0.36	6-4
14	Double draw	Jeroen	2-4	27	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.50	1.57	6-4
				28	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.62	0.52	6-4
15	Double draw	Matthew	2-4	29	Lc0-SF	½-½	-0.33	-1.11	6-4
				30	SF-Lc0	½-½	-0.93	-0.33	6-4
16	Double draw	Jeroen	2-4	31	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.46	1.54	6-4
				32	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.28	0.47	6-4
17	Double draw	Matthew	2-4	33	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.36	0.99	6-4
				34	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.04	0.35	6-4
18	Decisive	Jeroen	2-5	35	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.44	1.50	6-4
				36	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.56	0.44	6-5
19	Double draw	Matthew	2-5	37	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.36	1.13	6-5
				38	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.38	0.35	6-5

TCEC Season 23 SuperFinal: Leela Chess Zero vs Stockfish

Pair	Result	Book by	Score MS-JN	Game	Match	Result	W eval	B eval	Wins MS-JN
20	Double draw	Jeroen	2-5	39	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.50	1.59	6-5
				40	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.70	0.50	6-5
21	Double draw	Matthew	2-5	41	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.37	1.18	6-5
				42	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.25	0.36	6-5
22	Double draw	Jeroen	2-5	43	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.49	1.39	6-5
				44	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.60	0.47	6-5
23	Decisive	Matthew	3-5	45	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.39	1.34	6-5
				46	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.24	0.40	7-5
24	Decisive	Jeroen	3-6	47	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.48	1.66	7-5
				48	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.53	0.47	7-6
25	Double draw	Matthew	3-6	49	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.38	1.12	7-6
				50	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.47	0.36	7-6
26	Double draw	Jeroen	3-6	51	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.50	1.47	7-6
				52	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.45	0.49	7-6
27	Decisive	Matthew	4-6	53	Lc0-SF	0-1	-0.47	-1.26	8-6
				54	SF-Lc0	½-½	-1.40	-0.48	8-6
28	Double draw	Jeroen	4-6	55	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.55	1.65	8-6
				56	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.71	0.54	8-6
29	Decisive	Matthew	5-6	57	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.43	1.35	8-6
				58	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.21	0.42	9-6
30	Double draw	Jeroen	5-6	59	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.50	1.47	9-6
				60	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.54	0.50	9-6
31	Decisive	Matthew	6-6	61	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.47	1.27	9-6
				62	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.51	0.47	10-6
32	Reverse kill	Jeroen	6-6	63	Lc0-SF	1-0	0.51	1.64	10-7
				64	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.50	0.49	10-8
33	Decisive	Matthew	7-6	65	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.43	1.38	10-8
				66	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.25	0.42	11-8
34	Decisive	Jeroen	7-7	67	Lc0-SF	1-0	0.53	1.42	11-9
				68	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.66	0.51	11-9
35	Double draw	Matthew	7-7	69	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.44	1.35	11-9
				70	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.52	0.43	11-9
36	Decisive	Jeroen	7-8	71	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.52	1.58	11-9
				72	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.59	0.46	11-10
37	Double draw	Matthew	7-8	73	Lc0-SF	½-½	-0.34	-1.04	11-10
				74	SF-Lc0	½-½	-1.37	-0.35	11-10
38	Reverse kill	Jeroen	7-8	75	Lc0-SF	1-0	0.52	1.40	11-11
				76	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.73	0.50	11-12
39	Decisive	Matthew	8-8	77	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.49	1.56	11-12
				78	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.18	0.46	12-12
40	Decisive	Jeroen	8-9	79	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.60	1.72	12-12
				80	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.66	0.60	12-13

TCEC Season 23 SuperFinal: Leela Chess Zero vs Stockfish

Pair	Result	Book by	Score MS-JN	Game	Match	Result	W eval	B eval	Wins MS-JN
41	Double draw	Matthew	8-9	81	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.52	1.45	12-13
				82	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.64	0.51	12-13
42	Decisive	Jeroen	8-10	83	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.52	1.63	12-13
				84	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.72	0.54	12-14
43	Reverse kill	Matthew	8-10	85	Lc0-SF	1-0	0.55	1.76	13-14
				86	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.39	0.54	14-14
44	Reverse kill	Jeroen	8-10	87	Lc0-SF	1-0	0.61	1.80	14-15
				88	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.79	0.59	14-16
45	Decisive	Matthew	9-10	89	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.58	1.55	14-16
				90	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.59	0.59	15-16
46	Reverse kill	Jeroen	9-10	91	Lc0-SF	1-0	0.59	1.79	15-17
				92	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.69	0.60	15-18
47	Reverse kill	Matthew	9-10	93	Lc0-SF	1-0	0.56	1.73	16-18
				94	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.67	0.54	17-18
48	Double draw	Jeroen	9-10	95	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.55	1.60	17-18
				96	SF-Lc0	½-½	1.54	0.55	17-18
49	Decisive	Matthew	10-10	97	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.57	1.77	17-18
				98	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.69	0.56	18-18
50	Decisive	Jeroen	10-11	99	Lc0-SF	½-½	0.58	1.72	18-18
				100	SF-Lc0	1-0	1.70	0.57	18-19

Openings

Pair	ECO	Opening	Book moves
1	A61	Benoni defence	1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♗f3 c5 4. d5 d6 5. ♗c3 exd5 6. cxd5 g6 7. h3 ♙g7 8. e4 O-O 9. ♙d3 ♖e8 10. O-O ♗bd7
2	D16	QGD Slav, Smyslov variation	1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♗f3 ♗f6 4. ♗c3 dxc4 5. a4 ♗a6 6. e4 ♙g4 7. ♙xc4 e6 8. ♙e3 ♗b4 9. ♖c1 ♙h5
3	E21	Nimzo-Indian, three knights variation	1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♗c3 ♙b4 4. ♗f3 c5 5. g3 b5
4	B90	Sicilian, Najdorf, Byrne (English) attack	1. e4 c5 2. ♗f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 ♗f6 5. ♗c3 a6 6. ♙e3 e6 7. f3 ♙e7 8. ♖d2 b5 9. g4 ♗fd7
5	D31	QGD, semi-Slav	1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♗c3 c6 4. e3 f5 5. g4 fxg4 6. ♖xg4
6	E83	King's Indian, Saemisch, Panno formation	1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 ♙g7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 O-O 6. ♙e3 ♗c6 7. ♗ge2 a6 8. ♖d2 e5
7	B31	Sicilian, Nimzovich-Rossolimo attack (with ...g6, without ...d6)	1. e4 c5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3. ♙b5 g6 4. O-O ♙g7 5. c3 ♖b6
8	B07	Pirc, bayonet (Mariotti) attack	1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♗f6 3. ♗c3 g6 4. ♙e2 ♙g7 5. h4 O-O 6. h5
9	E76 / E77	King's Indian, Four pawns attack / King's Indian, Six pawns attack	1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 ♙g7 4. e4 d6 5. f4 c5 6. d5 O-O 7. ♙e2 e6 8. dxe6 fxe6 9. g4
10	C33	KGA, bishop's gambit, Lopez-Gianutio counter-gambit	1. e4 e5 2. f4 exf4 3. ♙c4 f5 4. e5
11	A45	Trompovsky attack (Ruth, Opovcensky opening)	1. d4 ♗f6 2. ♙g5 ♗e4 3. ♙f4 g5
12	B80	Sicilian, Scheveningen variation	1. e4 c5 2. ♗f3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 ♗f6 5. ♗c3 d6 6. ♙e3 ♙e7 7. ♖f3 a6 8. O-O-O
13	E81	King's Indian, Saemisch, 5...O-O	1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 ♙g7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 O-O 6. ♙g5 ♗c6 7. ♗ge2 ♖b8 8. ♖d2 ♖e8
14	B00	St. George (Baker) defence	1. e4 a6 2. d4 b5 3. ♗f3 ♙b7 4. ♙d3
15	B00	KP, Nimzovich defence	1. e4 ♗c6 2. b4
16	A80	Dutch	1. d4 f5 2. ♙f4 ♗f6 3. e3 g6 4. h4 h6 5. ♗c3 d6 6. ♖f3 ♙g7
17	A45	Trompovsky attack (Ruth, Opovcensky opening)	1. d4 ♗f6 2. ♙g5 e6 3. ♗d2 h6 4. ♙h4 c5 5. e4 cxd4
18	C16	French, Winawer, Petrosian variation	1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♗c3 ♙b4 4. e5 ♖d7 5. ♖g4 ♙f8
19	E71	King's Indian, Makagonov system (5.h3)	1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 ♙g7 4. e4 d6 5. h3 O-O 6. ♙g5 h6
20	A42	Modern defence, Averbakh system	1. d4 g6 2. c4 ♙g7 3. e4 d6 4. ♗c3 e5 5. d5 ♗e7
21	B23	Sicilian, closed	1. e4 c5 2. ♗c3 b6

TCEC Season 23 SuperFinal: Leela Chess Zero vs Stockfish

Pair	ECO	Opening	Book moves
22	B78	Sicilian, dragon, Yugoslav attack, 10.O-O-O	1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 ♗f6 5. ♖c3 g6 6. ♙e3 ♗g7 7. f3 O-O 8. ♖d2 ♗c6 9. ♙c4 ♗d7 10. O-O-O ♖c8 11. ♙b3 ♗e5 12. h4 ♗c4 13. ♙xc4 ♖xc4
23	A46	Queen's pawn game	1. d4 ♗f6 2. ♗f3 d6 3. ♗c3 ♙f5 4. g3 ♗bd7
24	A50	Queen's Indian accelerated	1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 b6 3. ♗c3 ♙b7 4. ♖c2 g6
25	B23	Sicilian, closed, 2...Nc6	1. e4 c5 2. ♗c3 ♗c6 3. ♙b5 ♗d4 4. ♗f3 g6 5. ♙c4 ♗g7 6. ♗xd4 cxd4 7. ♖f3 f5
26	E80	King's Indian, Saemisch variation	1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 e5 6. d5 ♗h5 7. ♙e3 f5 8. ♖d2 f4 9. ♙f2
27	B10	Caro-Kann, Hillbilly attack	1. e4 c6 2. ♙c4 d5 3. ♙b3 dxe4 4. ♖h5
28	D20	QGA, 3.e4	1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. e4 ♗f6 4. e5 ♗d5 5. ♙xc4 ♗b6 6. ♙d3 ♗c6 7. ♙e3 ♙e6 8. ♗c3 ♙d5
29	C41	Philidor's defence	1. e4 e5 2. ♗f3 d6 3. ♙c4 ♙g4
30	B16	Caro-Kann, Bronstein-Larsen variation	1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. ♗c3 dxe4 4. ♗xe4 ♗f6 5. ♗xf6+ gxf6 6. ♙c4 h5
31	B07	Pirc defence	1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♗f6 3. ♗c3 ♗bd7 4. g4 g6
32	C10	French, Paulsen variation	1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♗c3 ♗c6 4. e5 ♗ge7 5. h4
33	E73	King's Indian, Semi-Averbakh system	1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6 5. ♙e2 O-O 6. ♙e3 e5 7. d5 a5
34	A45	Trompovsky attack (Ruth, Opovcensky opening)	1. d4 ♗f6 2. ♙g5 ♗e4 3. h4 c5 4. d5 ♖b6 5. ♗d2 ♗xd2 6. ♙xd2
35	C17	French, Winawer, advance, 5.a3	1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. ♗c3 ♙b4 4. e5 c5 5. a3 ♙a5 6. b4 cxb4
36	B06	Robatsch (modern) defence	1. d4 g6 2. e4 ♗g7 3. ♗f3 d6 4. ♙d3 a6 5. O-O ♗d7 6. c3 e6 7. ♖e1 ♗e7
37	E73	King's Indian, 5.Be2	1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6 5. ♙e2 O-O 6. g4 c5 7. d5 e6 8. h4
38	C92	Ruy Lopez, closed, Ragozin-Petrosian ('Keres') variation	1. e4 e5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3. ♙b5 a6 4. ♙a4 ♗f6 5. O-O ♙e7 6. ♖e1 b5 7. ♙b3 d6 8. c3 O-O 9. h3 ♗d7 10. d4 ♗b6 11. ♗bd2 ♙f6 12. ♗f1 ♗a5
39	C25	Vienna game, Max Lange defence	1. e4 e5 2. ♗c3 ♗c6 3. ♙c4 f5
40	A27	English, three knights system	1. c4 e5 2. ♗c3 ♗c6 3. ♗f3 f5 4. g3 d6 5. d4 e4 6. d5 ♗e5
41	B03	Alekhine's defence, four pawns attack, fianchetto variation	1. e4 ♗f6 2. e5 ♗d5 3. d4 d6 4. c4 ♗b6 5. f4 g6
42	E97	King's Indian, orthodox, Aronin-Taimanov, bayonet attack	1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 ♗g7 4. e4 d6 5. ♗f3 O-O 6. ♙e2 e5 7. O-O ♗c6 8. d5 ♗e7 9. b4 ♗h5 10. ♖e1 f5 11. a4 ♗f6 12. a5 h6
43	B12	Caro-Kann, advance variation	1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 ♙f5 4. ♗f3 e6 5. ♙e2 ♗d7 6. O-O ♙g6 7. a4 ♗e7

TCEC Season 23 SuperFinal: Leela Chess Zero vs Stockfish

Pair	ECO	Opening	Book moves
44	C00	French, Chigorin variation	1. e4 e6 2. ♖e2 d5 3. exd5 ♖xd5 4. ♘c3 ♖d8 5. b3 ♗f6 6. ♙b2 ♙e7
45	B23	Sicilian, closed	1. e4 c5 2. ♗c3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♖xd4 ♙d7 5. b3 ♗f6 6. ♙b2 e5
46	B29	Sicilian, Nimzovich-Rubinstein variation	1. e4 c5 2. ♗f3 ♗f6 3. e5 ♗d5 4. ♗c3 ♗xc3 5. dxc3 ♗c6
47	E10	Blumenfeld counter-gambit, Dus-Chotimursky variation	1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e6 4. ♗f3 b5 5. ♙g5 ♖a5+
48	C58	Two knights defence	1. e4 e5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3. ♙c4 ♗f6 4. ♗g5 d5 5. exd5 ♗a5 6. ♙b5+ c6 7. dxc6 bxc6 8. ♙d3 h6 9. ♗e4 ♗d5
49	A56	Czech Benoni defence	1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e5 4. ♗c3 d6 5. e4 ♙e7 6. ♗f3 ♗bd7 7. g3 O-O 8. ♙g2
50	E61	King's Indian defence, 3.Nc3	1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 ♙g7 4. ♗f3 O-O 5. ♙g5 c5 6. d5 h6 7. ♙h4 d6 8. ♗d2 e5