



SHOGI24.COM

## SHOGI YEARBOOK 2011



*36 commented title match games, 5 games of challenger's tournaments and complete useless statistical informations*

*This yearbook is a free PDF document*

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## Just a few words ...

Dear shogi friends,

this is the first edition of a shogi yearbook. It concentrates on the seven most important tournaments of the male professional shogi players in Japan.

I want to thank explicitly

**Reijer Grimbergen** for the permission of publishing his very informative and exciting 'Shukan Shogi posts' about the title matches which were originally posted on the 'Shogi-L' mailing list and

**Bernhard C. März** for the permission of using his great program 'BCM Games' which created the diagrams of this yearbook.

If you are interested in more commented games of title matches I recommend the following link on Reijer's webpage: <http://www.teu.ac.jp/gamelab/SHOGI/kifumain.html>

This Shogi yearbook treats just a small extract of shogi activities worldwide. You will find reports of two important autumn tournaments in Europe. Don't hesitate to send a report and photos of your shogi tournament to [info@shogi24.com](mailto:info@shogi24.com) , so it can be a part of the shogi yearbook 2012.

But now lean back and enjoy the highlights of the shogi year 2011.

## 60. Osho

### 60. Osho league

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wins	Losses	Rank
1	<a href="#">Habu</a>	x	1	<u>1</u>	1	0	0	0	3	3	3-5.
2	<a href="#">Sato</a>	0	x	1	1	1	1	<u>0</u>	4	2	2.
3	<a href="#">Fukaura</a>	<u>0</u>	0	x	1.	0	1	0	2	4	6.
4	<a href="#">Moriuchi</a>	0	0	0	x	<u>1</u>	0	0	1	5	7.
5	<a href="#">Watanabe</a>	1	0	1	<u>0</u>	x	0	1	3	3	3-5.
6	<a href="#">Miura</a>	1	0	0	1	1	x	0	3	3	3-5.
7	<a href="#">Toyoshima</a>	1	<u>1</u>	1	1	0	1	x	5	1	1.

The Osho title league saw the 20 years old Toyoshima Masayuki as winner. In the last round he had to play against Sato Yasumitsu who shared with him the lead with 4 wins and one loss. So they played a real finale for the opportunity to challenge title holder Kubo.

**2010-11-29**

**Sente: Sato Yasumitsu**

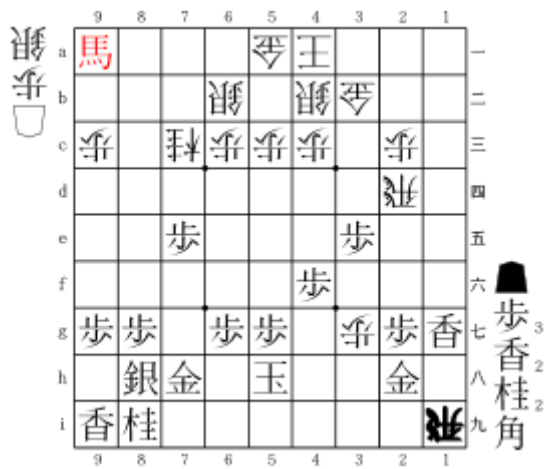
**Gote: Toyoshima Masayuki**

1. P7g-7f
2. P3c-3d
3. P2g-2f
4. P8c-8d
5. P2f-2e
6. P8d-8e
7. G6i-7h
8. G4a-3b
9. P2e-2d
10. P2cx2d
11. R2hx2d
12. P8e-8f
13. P8gx8f
14. R8bx8f
15. K5i-5h
16. R8f-8d
17. P\*8g
18. P\*2c
19. R2d-2f
20. S7a-6b
21. P1g-1f
22. K5a-4a
23. S3i-4h
24. P1c-1d
25. G4i-3h
26. P7c-7d
27. P3g-3f
28. G6a-5a
29. S4h-3g
30. N8a-7c

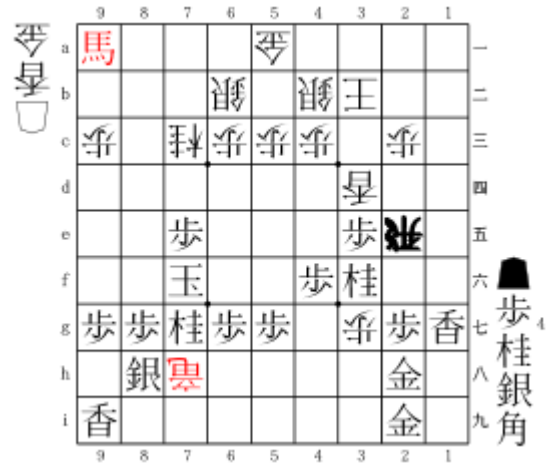


31. S3g-4f
32. P7d-7e
33. R2f-2e
34. P3d-3e
35. R2ex3e
36. B2bx8h+
37. S7ix8h
38. N2a-3c
39. R3ex7e
40. S3a-4b
41. P3f-3e
42. R8d-2d
43. P\*2g
44. B\*6d
45. B\*8b
46. P\*3g
47. S4fx3g
48. P1d-1e
49. B8bx9a+
50. P1ex1f
51. P\*1h

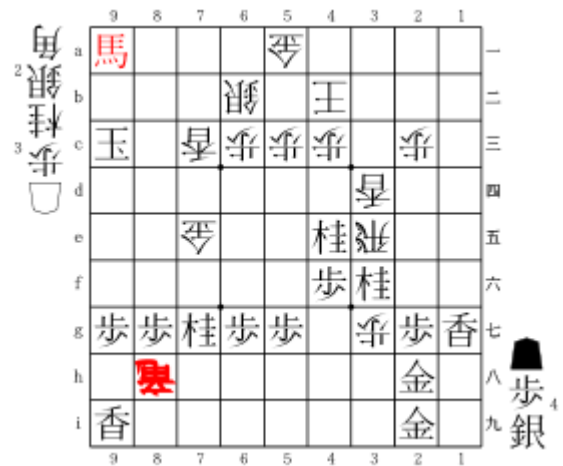
- 52.N3c-2e  
 53.S3g-2h  
 54.P\*3g  
 55.G3h-3i  
 56.P1f-1g+  
 57.P1hx1g  
 58.N2ex1g+  
 59.N2ix1g  
 60.L1ax1g+  
 61.L1ix1g  
 62.N\*3f  
 63.P4g-4f  
 64.N3fx2h+  
 65.G3ix2h  
 66.B6dx7e  
 67.P7fx7e  
 68.R\*1i



- 69.L\*3d  
 70.R1i-3i+  
 71.L3dx3b+  
 72.K4ax3b  
 73.L\*3d  
 74.L\*3c  
 75.G\*2i  
 76.S\*6i  
 77.K5h-6h  
 78.+R3i-4i  
 79.G7h-7i  
 80.+R4i-5h  
 81.K6h-7g  
 82.S6i-7h+  
 83.G7ix7h  
 84.P\*7f  
 85.K7gx7f  
 86.+R5hx7h  
 87.N8i-7g  
 88.L3cx3d  
 89.N\*3f  
 90.R2d-2e

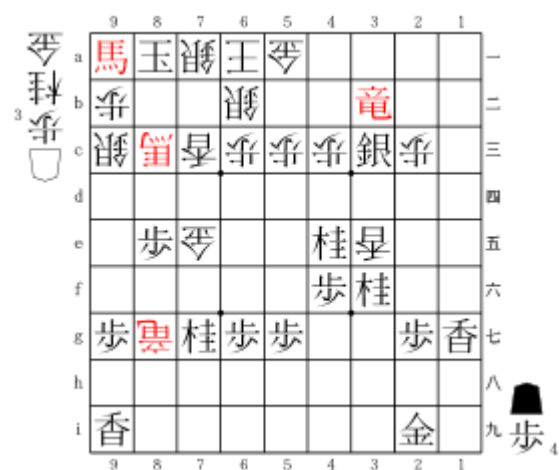


- 91.S\*7d  
 92.R2ex3e  
 93.S7dx7c  
 94.L\*7a  
 95.N\*4e  
 96.L7ax7c  
 97.B\*6e  
 98.G\*6d  
 99.K7f-8e  
 100.G6dx6e  
 101.K8e-8d  
 102.G6ex7e  
 103.P\*3c  
 104.S4bx3c  
 105.N4ex3c+  
 106.K3bx3c  
 107.N\*4e  
 108.K3c-4b  
 109.K8dx9c  
 110.+R7hx8h



- 111.P\*7b  
 112.B\*4g  
 113.G2hx3g  
 114.P\*9b  
 115.K9c-8b  
 116.+R8hx8g  
 117.P\*8e  
 118.S\*9c  
 119.K8b-8a

120. B4g-8c+  
 121. G3g-2f  
 122. S\*8b  
 123. G2fx3e  
 124. L3dx3e  
 125. P7b-7a+  
 126. S8bx7a  
 127. R\*1b  
 128. P\*3b  
 129. S\*3c  
 130. K4b-5b  
 131. R1bx3b+  
 132. K5b-6a  
 133. Resigns





## 60th Osho title match

## Game 1

2011-01-08/09

Sente: Toyoshima Masayuki, Challenger

Gote: Kubo Toshiaki, Osho

1.P2g-2f 00:00:00 00:00:00

For the first time in 18 years, a title match is being played between two players from the Kansai area. Then, it was also for the Osho title. More importantly, it is the first title match for 20-year old challenger Toyoshima. He reached this stage by winning an Osho league with the likes of Habu, Watanabe, Moriuchi and Sato which shows his enormous potential. A first title match is never easy, but it will be highly unlikely that it will be his last. There was some extra pressure on Toyoshima, because the game started with 7 of the former Osho title holders sitting at the side of the board. Because this is the 60th Osho title match, Habu, Moriuchi, Sato, Tanigawa, Minami, Yonenaga, Nakamura and Kato had all come to the venue for some special events.

2.P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3.P7g-7f	00:01:00	00:00:00
4.P5c-5d	00:01:00	00:03:00
5.P2f-2e	00:10:00	00:03:00
6.R8b-5b	00:10:00	00:05:00
7.S3i-4h	00:10:00	00:05:00
8.P5d-5e	00:10:00	00:09:00
9.K5i-6h	00:10:00	00:09:00
10.B2b-3c	00:10:00	00:16:00
11.P3g-3f	00:10:00	00:16:00
12.K5a-6b	00:10:00	00:22:00
13.S4h-3g	00:10:00	00:22:00
14.K6b-7b	00:10:00	00:24:00
15.S3g-4f	00:10:00	00:24:00
16.S3a-3b	00:10:00	00:52:00



It was widely expected that Kubo would play the Gokigen Nakabisha, but 16.S3b is a move that is not often played. After the game, Kubo admitted that he had prepared it for this game. He has played it before and the light formation is well-suited to the style of the Sabaki Artist.

17.K6h-7h	00:29:00	00:52:00
18.K7b-8b	00:29:00	01:25:00
19.S7i-6h	00:46:00	01:25:00
20.S7a-7b	00:46:00	01:30:00
21.P9g-9f	02:00:00	01:30:00
22.P9c-9d	02:00:00	01:36:00
23.R2h-5h!?	02:09:00	01:36:00



This is the move that Toyoshima had prepared. It looks very defensive, only defending against the pawn exchange P5f, but it also threatens S7g followed by S6f and black wins the pawn on the fifth file. White can defend against this, but at a cost and that is where Toyoshima's real intention becomes clear.

24.P6c-6d	02:09:00	01:59:00
25.S6h-7g	02:11:00	01:59:00
26.S7b-6c	02:11:00	02:16:00
27.S7g-6f	02:58:00	02:16:00

28.S6c-5d 02:58:00 02:23:00  
 29.P3f-3e 03:34:00 02:23:00  
 30.P3dx3e 03:34:00 02:30:00  
 31.R5h-3h 03:34:00 02:30:00



White has been forced to move the silver out of the castle formation to save the pawn on 5e. Now black switches the rook back to start a fight at the head of the bishop while the white king is still exposed.

32.P6d-6e 03:34:00 02:59:00  
 33.S6f-7g 03:35:00 02:59:00  
 34.B3c-4b 03:35:00 02:59:00  
 35.G4i-5h 03:38:00 02:59:00  
 36.S3b-3c 03:38:00 03:23:00  
 37.R3hx3e?! 04:16:00 03:23:00



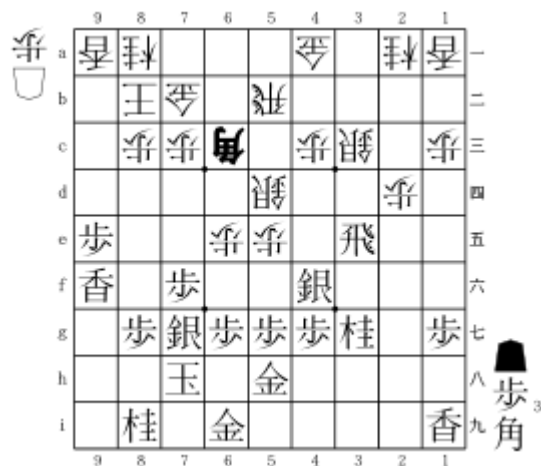
Toyoshima immediately seizes the opportunity to seal the move for the first time in his shogi career. However, probably better is 37.Sx3e, which is unclear after 38.B6d P4f P5f. For example S6h P6f Px5f P\*3d S2f Bx4f S3g Px6g+ Gx6g B6d. Kubo said after the game that he had expected the silver here.

38.G6a-7b 04:16:00 03:43:00  
 39.N2i-3g 04:18:00 03:43:00  
 40.B4b-6d 04:18:00 03:57:00  
 41.P2e-2d?! 04:54:00 03:57:00



Giving up a pawn here is another small but important mistake that gives white the opportunity to grab the advantage. 41.B9g immediately would have been better here.

42.P2cx2d 04:54:00 03:58:00  
 43.B8h-9g 05:17:00 03:58:00  
 44.B6dx9g+ 05:17:00 04:02:00  
 45.L9ix9g 05:17:00 04:02:00  
 46.P9d-9e 05:17:00 04:14:00  
 47.P9fx9e 05:18:00 04:14:00  
 48.P\*9f 05:18:00 04:17:00  
 49.L9gx9f 05:18:00 04:17:00  
 50.B\*6c 05:18:00 04:17:00



Now it becomes clear why 41.P2d was not so good. Because of the extra pawn, white can directly start an edge attack, draw out the lance to 9f and drop the bishop on 6c here and black cannot defend the lance. Toyoshima knows that when you are behind in material, you need to attack because then material becomes less important than king danger.

51.S4f-4e 05:59:00 04:17:00  
 52.B6cx9f 05:59:00 04:58:00  
 53.P\*3d 06:04:00 04:58:00  
 54.S3c-4b 06:04:00 05:17:00



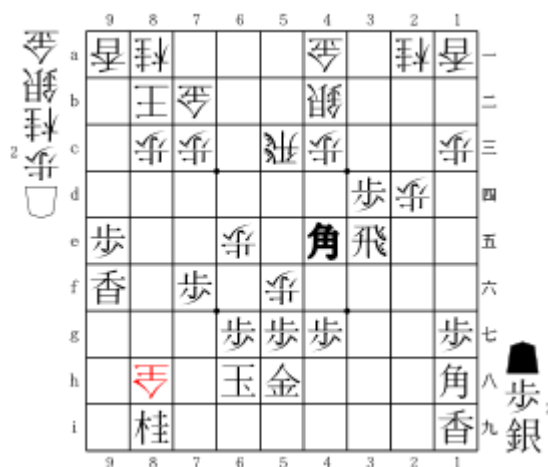
Kubo believes that he has the upper hand, so he plays it quietly. He could also have tried to win immediately with 54.L\*8d. For example, 55.Px3c+ Lx8g+ K6h Sx4e +Px4c P5f +Px5b +Lx7g Nx7g Px5g+ Gx5g P\*5f and it was not immediately clear if this is a mating threat. In the post-mortem analysis the conclusion was that white indeed has a mate so black cannot go for the king with S\*6a. This being said, the variations are long and complicated and because the variations are so sharp, it is very easy to make a mistake that could have grave consequences. Kubo's decision to play 54.S4b is therefore the right one.

55.B\*1h? 06:13:00 05:17:00

Toyoshima was quite pessimistic about his own position here and decides to throw all caution to the wind. However, in reality the position is still close. If black would have played 55.Sx5d Rx5d S\*9g B6c P\*2b here, the white plan is not so easy, while black threatens Px2a+ followed by N\*7e. Kubo had seen all this, but thought that after P\*2b he could play S\*4d R3f R8d which looks like a strong rook switch because the bishop is attacking the rook on 3f, but after R1f it doesn't seem like white is making significant progress.

56.S5dx4e 06:13:00 05:45:00  
 57.N3gx4e 06:13:00 05:45:00  
 58.L\*8d 06:13:00 05:45:00  
 59.S7g-8h 06:26:00 05:45:00  
 60.S\*9h 06:26:00 06:16:00  
 61.K7h-6h 07:09:00 06:16:00  
 62.L8dx8g+ 07:09:00 06:22:00  
 63.G6i-7i 07:30:00 06:22:00  
 64.+L8gx8h 07:30:00 06:36:00  
 65.G7ix8h 07:30:00 06:36:00  
 66.S9h-8g+ 07:30:00 06:36:00  
 67.L\*9g 07:35:00 06:36:00  
 68.+S8gx8h 07:35:00 06:43:00  
 69.L9gx9f 07:35:00 06:43:00

70.P5e-5f 07:35:00 06:48:00  
 71.N4e-5c+ 07:51:00 06:48:00  
 72.R5bx5c 07:51:00 06:49:00  
 73.B\*4e 07:51:00 06:49:00

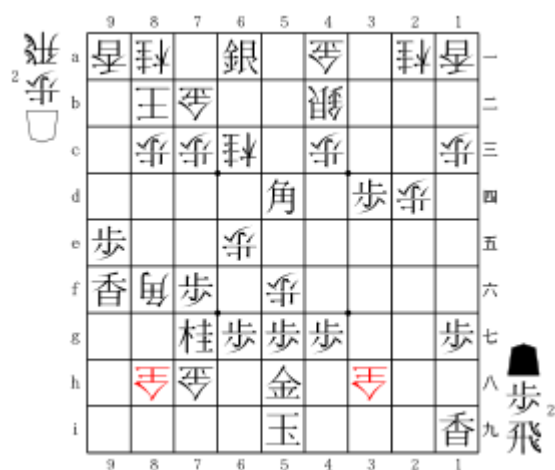


The two bishops look threatening, but Kubo knows how to keep them in check.

74.N\*6c 07:51:00 07:02:00  
 75.S\*5d 07:51:00 07:02:00  
 76.S\*4d 07:51:00 07:05:00

This closes the white position and decides the game. Kubo said after the game that he was sure of victory after playing 74.N\*6c. Toyoshima keeps on struggling a little bit, but in vain.

77.R3e-3h 07:55:00 07:05:00  
 78.S4dx4e 07:55:00 07:07:00  
 79.B1hx4e 07:56:00 07:07:00  
 80.R5cx5d 07:56:00 07:10:00  
 81.B4ex5d 07:56:00 07:10:00  
 82.S\*4i 07:56:00 07:10:00  
 83.S\*6a 07:56:00 07:10:00  
 84.B\*8f 07:56:00 07:11:00  
 85.N8i-7g 07:56:00 07:11:00  
 86.G\*7h 07:56:00 07:11:00  
 87.K6h-5i 07:56:00 07:11:00  
 88.S4ix3h+ 07:56:00 07:11:00  
 Resigns 07:56:00 07:11:00



A classic hisshi position. Even though Toyoshima is known for fighting back strongly from worse position, there is nothing he can do about this, so he resigned. A little baptism for the young challenger but the man who knows a little about suffering in his first title match appearances. Still, after the game Toyoshima didn't give the impression of being rattled. I think he will need to win the second game with the white pieces to keep this match interesting.

**Standing after game 1:**  
**Kubo – Toyoshima 1-0**

## Game 2

2011-01-21/22

Sente: Kubo Toshiaki, Osho

Gote: Toyoshima Masayuki, Challenger

1. P5g-5f 00:00:00 00:00:00

Kubo wastes no time in trying to hide his choice of opening. From the first move, Kubo calls for the Nakabisha opening.

2. P3c-3d 00:00:00 00:03:00  
 3. R2h-5h 00:04:00 00:03:00  
 4. B2b-3c 00:04:00 00:18:00  
 5. P7g-7f 00:06:00 00:18:00  
 6. P4c-4d 00:06:00 00:19:00  
 7. K5i-4h 00:19:00 00:19:00  
 8. R8b-2b 00:19:00 00:22:00

Toyoshima has prepared the Ai-Furibisha for this game. This is considered to be Kubo's specialty, but Toyoshima isn't afraid.

9. K4h-3h 00:28:00 00:22:00  
 10. S3a-4b 00:28:00 00:31:00  
 11. K3h-2h 00:39:00 00:31:00  
 12. P2c-2d 00:39:00 00:39:00  
 13. S7i-6h 00:43:00 00:39:00  
 14. P2d-2e 00:43:00 00:53:00  
 15. S6h-5g 00:47:00 00:53:00  
 16. K5a-6b 00:47:00 01:04:00  
 17. L1i-1h 00:51:00 01:04:00



Kubo moves into the Anaguma, trying to get an edge through the difference in castle formation.

18. G4a-5b 00:51:00 01:24:00  
 19. G4i-3h 00:57:00 01:24:00  
 20. S7a-7b 00:57:00 01:27:00

21. K2h-1i 01:08:00 01:27:00  
 22. K6b-7a 01:08:00 01:28:00  
 23. G6i-5i 01:51:00 01:28:00  
 24. P1c-1d 01:51:00 01:31:00  
 25. S3i-2h 02:04:00 01:31:00  
 26. P1d-1e 02:04:00 01:35:00  
 27. G5i-4i 02:10:00 01:35:00  
 28. P2e-2f 02:10:00 02:28:00  
 29. P2gx2f 02:10:00 02:28:00  
 30. R2bx2f 02:10:00 02:28:00  
 31. P\*2g 02:10:00 02:28:00  
 32. R2f-2b 02:10:00 02:30:00  
 33. P5f-5e 02:22:00 02:30:00  
 34. N2a-1c 02:22:00 03:03:00  
 35. S5g-4f 02:28:00 03:03:00  
 36. N1c-2e 02:28:00 03:04:00  
 37. P3g-3f 03:00:00 03:04:00  
 38. K7a-8b 03:00:00 03:34:00  
 39. P9g-9f 03:17:00 03:34:00  
 40. R2b-2d 03:17:00 03:36:00  
 41. B8h-7g 04:01:00 03:36:00



The sealed move.

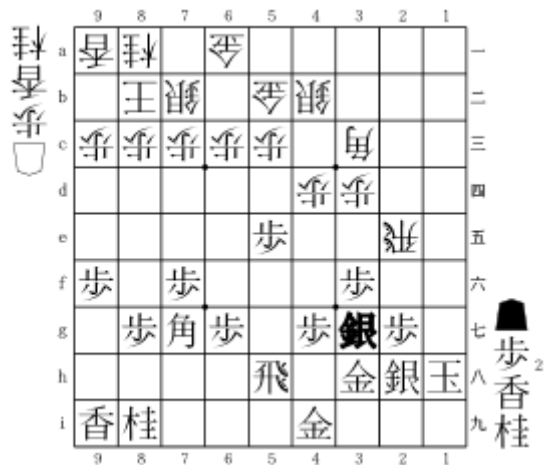
42. P1e-1f 04:01:00 03:45:00  
 43. P1gx1f 04:02:00 03:45:00  
 44. P\*1g 04:02:00 03:45:00

White is attacking strongly and it is possible that Kubo underestimated its strength. This edge attack seems to be a little too straightforward to work at this level, but the young challenger plays it anyway.

45. N2ix1g 04:40:00 03:45:00

The point of the white attack is that the natural 45. Lx1g, which would leave white without pawns, is good for white after 46. P4e Sx4e P3e Px3e R6d P6f R7d.

46.L1ax1f	04:40:00	03:45:00
47.N1gx2e	04:41:00	03:45:00
48.L1fx1h+	04:41:00	03:45:00
49.K1ix1h	04:41:00	03:45:00
50.R2dx2e	04:41:00	03:45:00
51.S4f-3g	04:41:00	03:45:00

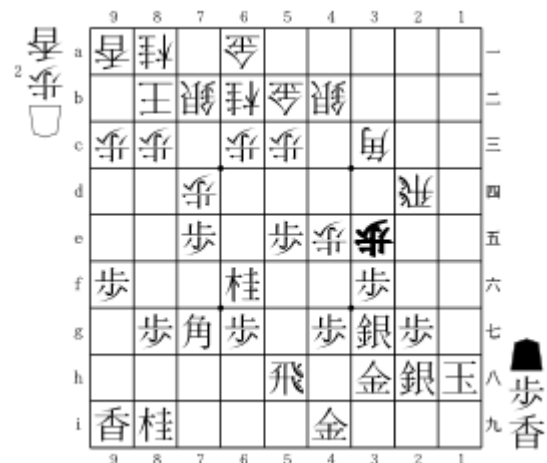


White has exchanged the attacking knight and lance for the defensive knight and lance and there is a gaping hole in front of the black king. However, Kubo doesn't give up that easily and gathers his forces in defense before starting a strong counter attack.

52.P4d-4e	04:41:00	03:53:00
53.P7f-7e	04:48:00	03:53:00

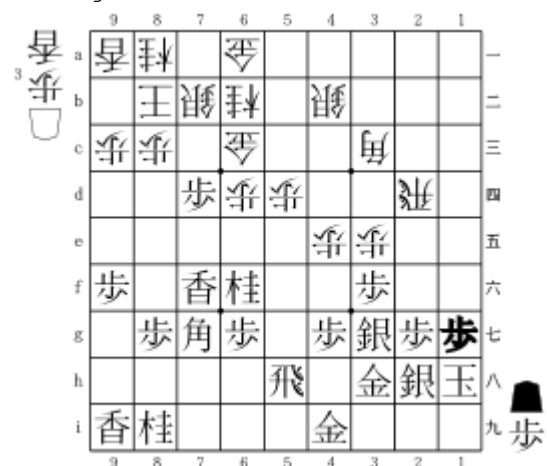
This aims straight at the soft spot of the Mino castle: the square 7c.

54.R2e-2d	04:48:00	04:41:00
55.P7e-7d	05:15:00	04:41:00
56.P7cx7d	05:15:00	04:42:00
57.N*6f	05:33:00	04:42:00
58.N*6b	05:33:00	04:55:00
59.P*7e	06:05:00	04:55:00
60.P3d-3e?	06:05:00	05:47:00



Now the game changes in Kubo's favor. Correct was 60.P\*1f Px7d L\*1a and after B4d next, white has a lot of interesting options as well.

61.P5e-5d	06:26:00	05:47:00
62.P5cx5d	06:26:00	05:50:00
63.P7ex7d	06:29:00	05:50:00
64.P6c-6d	06:29:00	06:04:00
65.L*7f	06:35:00	06:04:00
66.G5b-6c	06:35:00	06:16:00
67.P*1g!	06:41:00	06:16:00



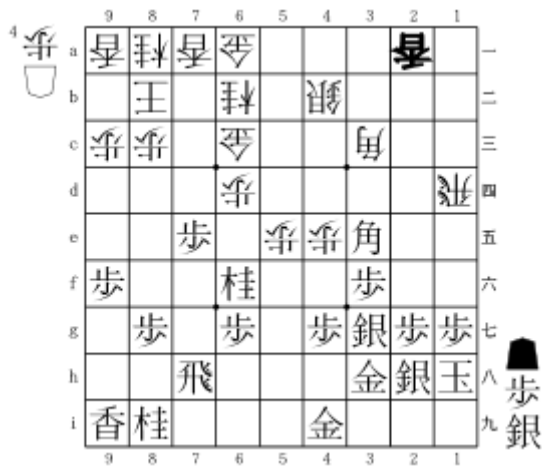
Professionals don't like to drop pawns, but this pawn acts as a helmet for the black king, which is suddenly a lot safer. Kubo has taken the upper hand, but now it is time for Toyoshima to show what he is made of.

68.P5d-5e	06:41:00	06:43:00
69.P7d-7c+	06:56:00	06:43:00
70.S7bx7c	06:56:00	06:43:00
71.L7fx7c+	06:56:00	06:43:00
72.K8bx7c	06:56:00	06:43:00
73.R5h-7h	06:59:00	06:43:00
74.K7c-8b	06:59:00	06:43:00

75. B7g-6h 07:00:00 06:43:00  
 76. L\*7a! 07:00:00 06:43:00

The first of two very good lance drops on the back rank. This lance, close to the white king, slows down the black attack considerably.

77. B6hx3e 07:05:00 06:43:00  
 78. R2d-1d 07:05:00 06:43:00  
 79. P\*7e 07:12:00 06:43:00  
 80. L\*2a! 07:12:00 07:01:00



This second lance drop, close to the black king, can be captured by black, but the price is high.

81. P\*5c 07:28:00 07:01:00  
 82. S4bx5c 07:28:00 07:10:00  
 83. S\*3b 07:29:00 07:10:00

Kubo decides to attack the white attacking formation, but this may not have been the best plan.

84. P\*3d 07:29:00 07:30:00  
 85. B3e-7i 07:35:00 07:30:00  
 86. P6d-6e 07:35:00 07:36:00  
 87. N6f-7d 07:40:00 07:36:00  
 88. N6bx7d 07:40:00 07:36:00  
 89. S3b-4c+ 07:43:00 07:36:00  
 90. B3c-1a 07:43:00 07:36:00  
 91. +S4cx5c 07:43:00 07:36:00  
 92. G6cx5c 07:43:00 07:36:00  
 93. P7ex7d 07:43:00 07:36:00  
 94. P\*7e 07:43:00 07:37:00  
 95. N8i-7g 07:45:00 07:37:00  
 96. G5c-6d 07:45:00 07:39:00  
 97. N\*1c? 07:48:00 07:39:00

Dropping the knight on this unusual square

was met with cries of surprise in the press room. Then, some analysis seemed to indicate that Kubo had found an interesting way to stop the white attack. For example, 98.L2c is met with S\*1b and 98.L2d with N2a+ B4d S\*2c and the white attacking pieces are in disarray. However, Toyoshima has seen all of this and more. Therefore, Kubo should have played the simple 97.N\*7c here. Then 98.Lx7c Px7c+ Nx7c Nx6e Nx6e P6f is good for black or 98.Nx7c Px7c+ Kx7c and only then N\*1c is a lot better than what happened in the game because the white king is in a much more dangerous position.

98. P\*1f! 07:48:00 07:45:00



An important extra move.

99. P1gx1f 07:49:00 07:45:00  
 100. L2a-2d 07:49:00 07:47:00  
 101. P2g-2f 07:50:00 07:47:00

Now 101.N2a+ B4d S\*2c is not good because of P\*1g and after Sx1g Bx1g+ Kx1g N\*2e white breaks through on the edge. It seems that Toyoshima has grabbed the advantage, but again Kubo refuses to go down easily.

102. P5e-5f 07:50:00 07:49:00  
 103. P6g-6f 07:56:00 07:49:00  
 104. N\*5g 07:56:00 07:50:00  
 105. G4i-3i 07:57:00 07:50:00  
 106. R1dx1f 07:57:00 07:50:00  
 107. P\*1g 07:57:00 07:50:00  
 108. R1fx1c 07:57:00 07:50:00  
 109. N7gx6e 07:57:00 07:50:00  
 110. P4e-4f 07:57:00 07:57:00  
 111. P\*5d 07:57:00 07:57:00  
 112. N\*4a 07:57:00 07:57:00



113.P4gx4f	07:58:00	07:57:00
114.G6dx7d	07:58:00	07:57:00
115.B7i-9g	07:58:00	07:57:00
116.P*6d	07:58:00	07:58:00
117.P*7f	07:58:00	07:58:00
118.P6dx6e	07:58:00	07:58:00
119.P7fx7e	07:58:00	07:58:00
120.G7d-6d	07:58:00	07:58:00
121.P6fx6e	07:58:00	07:58:00
122.G6dx6e	07:58:00	07:58:00
123.P7e-7d	07:58:00	07:58:00
124.P*7e	07:58:00	07:58:00
125.P*6f	07:58:00	07:58:00
126.G6e-6d	07:58:00	07:58:00
127.R7hx7e	07:58:00	07:58:00
128.G6dx7e	07:58:00	07:58:00
129.B9gx7e	07:58:00	07:58:00
130.P*1f	07:58:00	07:58:00
131.P1gx1f	07:58:00	07:58:00
132.P*1g	07:58:00	07:58:00
133.S2hx1g	07:58:00	07:58:00
134.B1a-5e	07:58:00	07:58:00
135.B7e-4b+	07:58:00	07:58:00
136.R*7i	07:58:00	07:58:00
137.S*6d	07:58:00	07:58:00
138.B5ex6f	07:58:00	07:58:00
139.P*6i	07:58:00	07:58:00
140.R7ix6i+	07:58:00	07:58:00
141.S6d-7e	07:58:00	07:58:00
142.B6f-5e	07:58:00	07:58:00
143.+B4bx2d	07:58:00	07:58:00
144.N5g-4i+	07:58:00	07:58:00
145.G3ix4i?	07:58:00	07:58:00



Only here the game is being decided. Correct was 145.G3i-2h and after 146.+N3i Gx3i +Rx3i G\*2i the position is still unclear. For example, +R7i +Bx1c +Rx7e N\*6g is good or black.

146.+R6ix4i	07:58:00	07:58:00
147.G*3i	07:58:00	07:58:00

148.G*1i!	07:58:00	07:58:00
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The decisive move. It is possible that Kubo overlooked this move under time pressure.

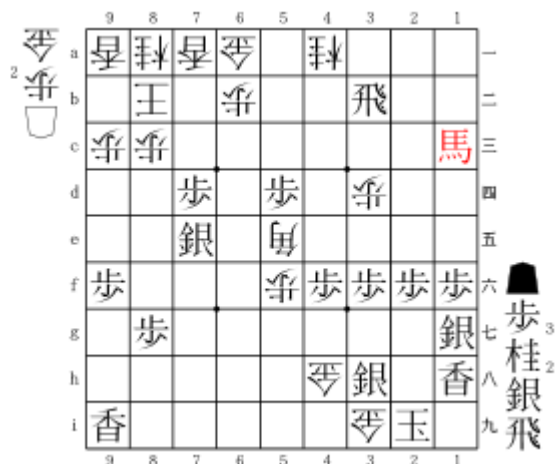
149.K1hx1i	07:59:00	07:58:00
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No choice: 149.K2h is answered by +Rx3i Gx3i S\*1h and the white attack is too strong.

150.N*2g	07:59:00	07:58:00
151.G3hx2g	07:59:00	07:58:00
152.+R4ix3i	07:59:00	07:58:00
153.G*2i	07:59:00	07:58:00
154.S*3h	07:59:00	07:58:00
155.G2ix3i	07:59:00	07:58:00
156.S3hx2g+	07:59:00	07:58:00
157.L*1h	07:59:00	07:58:00

If only 157.G\*2h would work, black would have been alright. However, 158.P\*1h K2i G\*1i K3i G\*2i is very heavy but here it wins for white.

158.+S2gx3g	07:59:00	07:58:00
159.+B2dx1c	07:59:00	07:58:00
160.S*3h	07:59:00	07:58:00
161.R*3b	07:59:00	07:58:00
162.P*6b	07:59:00	07:58:00
163.G3ix3h	07:59:00	07:58:00
164.+S3gx3h	07:59:00	07:58:00
165.S*2i	07:59:00	07:58:00
166.+S3hx2i	07:59:00	07:58:00
167.K1ix2i	07:59:00	07:58:00
168.G*4h	07:59:00	07:58:00
169.S*3i	07:59:00	07:58:00
170.S*3h	07:59:00	07:58:00
171.S3ix3h	07:59:00	07:58:00
172.G*3i	07:59:00	07:58:00
Resigns	07:59:00	07:58:00



No mate after 173.K1i, but there is no defense



after 174.G4h-3h next and black has no attack , so Kubo resigned here. An up and down game that could have gone either way, but Toyoshima's positive play with the white pieces is rewarded. He wins the first title match game of his career and this is very important after being blown away in the first game. The match is even and Toyoshima will feel much better about the rest of the match. Kubo misses a golden opportunity to put his young opponent in a deep psychological hole, but he seemed to be in good spirits after the game nonetheless. In any case, this Osho match has suddenly become much more interesting.

**Standing after game 2:**  
**Kubo – Toyoshima 1-1**

## Game 3

2011-02-09/10

Sente: Toyoshima Masayuki, Challenger

Gote: Kubo Toshiaki, Osho

1. P2g-2f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3. P7g-7f	00:03:00	00:00:00
4. P5c-5d	00:03:00	00:02:00
5. P2f-2e	00:05:00	00:02:00
6. R8b-5b	00:05:00	00:05:00

No surprises in the opening in this Osho match. Kubo plays his favorite opening with white, the Gokigen Nakabisha, like in the first game.

7. S3i-4h	00:06:00	00:05:00
8. P5d-5e	00:06:00	00:12:00
9. K5i-6h	00:07:00	00:12:00
10. B2b-3c	00:07:00	00:15:00
11. P3g-3f	00:09:00	00:15:00
12. K5a-6b	00:09:00	00:21:00
13. S4h-3g	00:10:00	00:21:00
14. K6b-7b	00:10:00	00:32:00
15. S3g-4f	00:11:00	00:32:00

Like in the first game, Toyoshima moves up the left silver early, which is the most popular strategy against the Gokigen Nakabisha at the moment.

16. S3a-3b	00:11:00	00:48:00
17. K6h-7h	00:12:00	00:48:00
18. P5e-5f	00:12:00	00:48:00



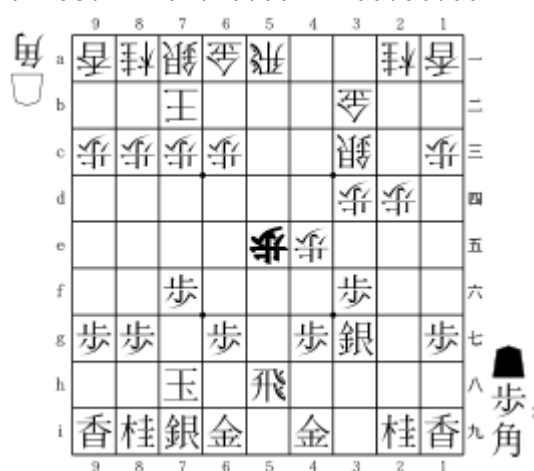
This is different from the first game. There,

Kubo played 18.K8b in this position.

19. B8h×3c+	00:20:00	00:48:00
20. S3b×3c	00:20:00	00:48:00
21. P5g×5f	00:41:00	00:48:00
22. R5b×5f	00:41:00	00:48:00
23. P2e-2d	00:42:00	00:48:00
24. P2c×2d	00:42:00	00:48:00
25. B*6e	00:43:00	00:48:00
26. R5f-5a	00:43:00	00:49:00
27. B6e×4c+	00:43:00	00:49:00
28. P*4e	00:43:00	00:49:00
29. S4f-3g	00:48:00	00:49:00
30. B*3b	00:48:00	00:51:00
31. +B4c×3b	01:10:00	00:51:00
32. G4a×3b	01:10:00	00:51:00
33. R2h-5h	01:10:00	00:51:00

This is still opening theory. In general, exchanging the rooks is good for the Furibisha side, but this is an exception. After 34.Rx5h+ G6ix5h! it is actually the white position that has more holes for a rook drop, so white cannot play the rook exchange here.

34. P\*5e! 01:10:00 00:56:00



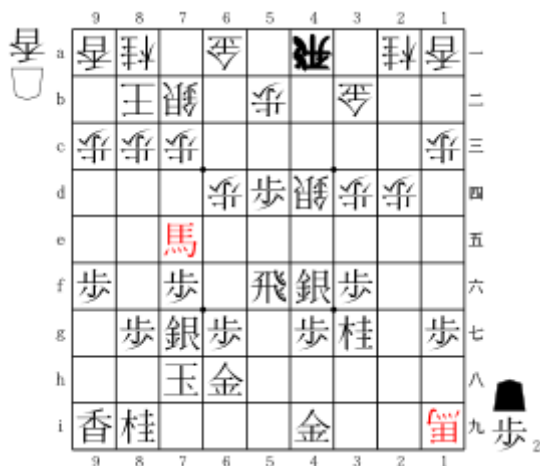
This is the move that Kubo prepared. Here, 34.P\*5f is the most natural looking move and this is what was played in earlier games. However, then white has a serious problem after 35.G6h K8b P\*5b! and after both Rx5b B\*4a R6b Rx5f or Gx5b Rx5f, white loses the important pawn on 5f. The idea behind Kubo's 34.P\*5e is to defend against P\*5b. After all, if black again plays 35.G6h K8b P\*5b then Gx5b is possible because Rx5e fails to B\*4d, so black cannot touch the pawn on 5e.

35. G6i-6h 01:39:00 00:56:00

36.K7b-8b 01:39:00 01:10:00  
 37.S7i-8h 02:51:00 01:10:00

Played after 1 hour and 12 minutes. After the game, Toyoshima explained that he really wanted to play 37.P\*5d here, but that he abandoned this idea because he didn't like 38.G6b Rx5e B\*4d R5i Bx9i+ S8h +B9h B\*7g L\*8d.

38.S7a-7b 02:51:00 01:20:00  
 39.S8h-7g 02:51:00 01:20:00  
 40.P6c-6d 02:51:00 01:55:00  
 41.P9g-9f 03:23:00 01:55:00  
 42.P5e-5f 03:23:00 02:13:00  
 43.P\*5b 03:39:00 02:13:00  
 44.R5ax5b 03:39:00 02:14:00  
 45.B\*4a 03:39:00 02:14:00  
 46.R5b-4b 03:39:00 02:14:00  
 47.B4a-8e+ 03:39:00 02:14:00  
 48.S3c-4d 03:39:00 02:15:00  
 49.R5hx5f 03:53:00 02:15:00  
 50.P4e-4f 03:53:00 02:16:00  
 51.S3gx4f 03:55:00 02:16:00  
 52.B\*2h 03:55:00 02:26:00  
 53.P\*5d 03:56:00 02:26:00  
 54.P\*5b 03:56:00 03:05:00  
 55.N2i-3g 04:07:00 03:05:00  
 56.B2hx1i+ 04:07:00 03:06:00  
 57.+B8e-7e 04:07:00 03:06:00  
 58.R4b-4a 04:07:00 03:27:00



The sealed move. This is a rather complicated position. White has won material by taking the lance on 1i, but black has compensation because his promoted bishop is much better placed than the white one. Neither player felt very confident about its own position, but it is clear that black is the one who has to force the attack, because he cannot give white time to

activate the promoted bishop. If white can succeed in doing that, black will just be down in material.

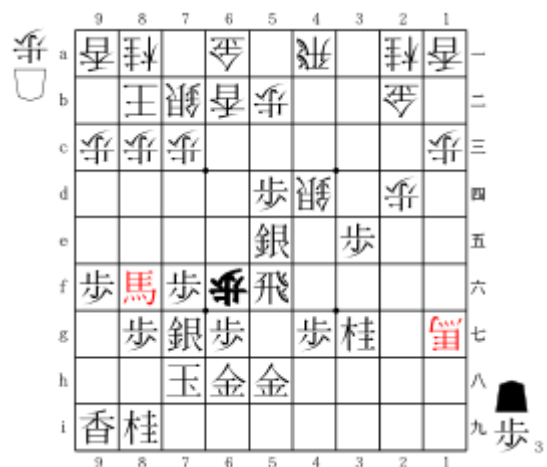
59.+B7ex6d 04:08:00 03:27:00  
 60.P3d-3e! 04:08:00 03:37:00

This gives white a clear plan to develop the bishop and also creates an important weakness on the head of the knight.

61.P3fx3e 04:13:00 03:37:00  
 62.+B1i-1h 04:13:00 03:40:00

White wants to get this bishop to 3e. Black has to move quickly to avoid this.

63.G4i-5h 04:59:00 03:40:00  
 64.+B1hx1g 04:59:00 03:49:00  
 65.P\*2b 05:13:00 03:49:00  
 66.G3bx2b 05:13:00 04:06:00  
 67.S4f-5e 05:13:00 04:06:00  
 68.L\*6b 05:13:00 04:20:00  
 69.+B6d-8f 05:23:00 04:20:00  
 70.P\*6f! 05:23:00 05:02:00

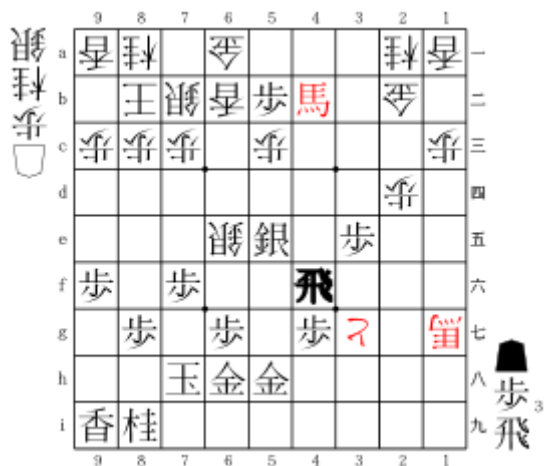


An important pawn sacrifice. 71.Px6f is impossible because it opens the diagonal to the king after which +Bx3e is not only developing the promoted bishop, but also strongly threatening +B3d next.

71.S7gx6f 05:25:00 05:02:00  
 72.S4dx5e 05:25:00 05:06:00  
 73.S6fx5e 05:28:00 05:06:00  
 74.P\*3f 05:28:00 05:28:00

Sacrifices the rook, but Kubo has seen that he gets more than enough in return.

75. S*4b	05:50:00	05:28:00
76. R4ax4b	05:50:00	05:28:00
77. +B8fx4b	05:50:00	05:28:00
78. P3fx3g+	05:50:00	05:28:00
79. P5d-5c+	05:50:00	05:28:00
80. P5bx5c	05:50:00	05:28:00
81. P*5b	05:50:00	05:28:00
82. S*6e	05:50:00	06:00:00
83. R5f-4f?	06:03:00	06:00:00



This cannot be even called a big mistake, but it is a decisive one. Toyoshima should have played 83.P5a+ instead. Of course he had seen this move, but he thought that white could ignore it. However, the post-mortem analysis showed that after 84.Sx5f +Px6a Sx6a R\*4a the white king cannot be properly defended. Therefore, Kubo said that he intended to play 84.G7a, but then 85.R4f is much better than in the game. We will see a little later why that is the case.

84. P*4e	06:03:00	06:01:00
85. R4fx4e	06:03:00	06:01:00
86. +P3g-4h	06:03:00	06:08:00
87. P5b-5a+	06:50:00	06:08:00



Too late, but black didn't have much choice. The alternative 87.Gx4h N\*5f is too strong. After that, it is best to save the king side gold with G7g, but after +B2g R4c+ G3c the inactive gold on 2b enters the fight strongly and white has the better position. In this variation we can see the difference if 83.P5a+ G7a is played before R4f. With the gold on 7a, the pawn on 5b is no longer defended, so G3c can be answered by +Rx5b, resulting in a difficult position after +B6c G5h.

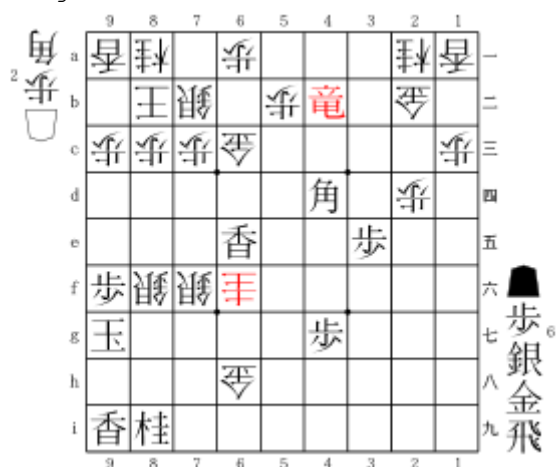
88. +P4hx5h	06:50:00	06:13:00
89. G6hx5h	06:50:00	06:13:00
90. G6a-7a	06:50:00	06:28:00
91. +B4bx5c	06:52:00	06:28:00
92. S6ex7f	06:52:00	06:33:00
93. +P5a-5b	06:53:00	06:33:00
94. P*6a	06:53:00	06:35:00
95. +P5bx6b	07:10:00	06:35:00
96. G7ax6b	07:10:00	06:43:00
97. +B5c-8f	07:10:00	06:43:00
98. P*5g	07:10:00	06:52:00
99. G5hx5g	07:12:00	06:52:00
100. +B1g-3i	07:12:00	06:59:00
101. S5e-6f	07:12:00	06:59:00
102. N*6e	07:12:00	07:11:00
103. +B8fx7f	07:37:00	07:11:00
104. N6ex5g+	07:37:00	07:11:00
105. L*6e	07:37:00	07:11:00
106. G*6h	07:37:00	07:23:00
107. K7h-8h	07:37:00	07:23:00
108. +N5gx6g	07:37:00	07:24:00
109. P*6c	07:37:00	07:24:00
110. G6bx6c	07:37:00	07:34:00
111. R4e-4b+	07:42:00	07:34:00
112. P*5b!	07:42:00	07:37:00



This defensive tesuji decides the game. 113.+Rx5b is answered by 114.G\*6b and the

white defense is very hard to break down.  
However, even if black doesn't take the pawn  
on 5b, the attack is slowed down too much.

113.K8h-9h	07:47:00	07:37:00
114.+B3ix6f	07:47:00	07:40:00
115.+B7fx6f	07:53:00	07:40:00
116.+N6gx6f	07:53:00	07:40:00
117.B*4d	07:56:00	07:40:00
118.G*8h	07:56:00	07:43:00
119.K9h-9g	07:56:00	07:43:00
120.G8hx8g	07:56:00	07:43:00
121.K9gx8g	07:56:00	07:43:00
122.S*7f	07:56:00	07:43:00
123.K8g-9g	07:56:00	07:43:00
124.S*8f	07:56:00	07:43:00
Resigns	07:57:00	07:43:00



Nice mate after 125.Kx8f B\*7e Kx7e +Nx6e  
K8f L\*8d K9g Lx8g+ so Toyoshima resigned  
here. Kubo didn't seem to be rattled by  
dropping the second game to the young  
challenger, because he played a flawless  
game to take the lead in the match again. Now  
the pressure is on Toyoshima to convert with  
the white pieces in game four or face a tough  
1-3 deficit.

**Standing after game 3:**  
**Kubo – Toyoshima 2-1**

## Game 4

2011-02-18/19

Sente: Kubo Toshiaki, Osho

Gote: Toyoshima Masayuki, Challenger

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3. P7f-7e	00:06:00	00:00:00
4. S7a-6b	00:06:00	00:02:00
5. P6g-6f	00:14:00	00:02:00
6. K5a-4b	00:14:00	00:02:00
7. R2h-7h	00:18:00	00:02:00
8. S3a-3b	00:18:00	00:06:00
9. K5i-4h	00:31:00	00:06:00
10. K4b-3a	00:31:00	00:06:00
11. S3i-3h	00:39:00	00:06:00
12. P8c-8d	00:39:00	00:13:00
13. K4h-3i	00:40:00	00:13:00
14. P8d-8e	00:40:00	00:13:00
15. R7h-7f	00:43:00	00:13:00
16. P1c-1d	00:43:00	00:13:00
17. P1g-1f	00:51:00	00:13:00
18. B2b-3c	00:51:00	00:14:00
19. K3i-2h	00:59:00	00:14:00
20. P2c-2d	00:59:00	00:18:00
21. B8h-7g	01:14:00	00:18:00
22. R8b-8d	01:14:00	00:22:00
23. S7i-7h	01:39:00	00:22:00
24. P9c-9d	01:39:00	00:28:00
25. S7h-6g	01:41:00	00:28:00
26. K3a-2b	01:41:00	00:29:00
27. G6i-7h	01:44:00	00:29:00
28. P6c-6d	01:44:00	00:52:00
29. S6g-5f	01:48:00	00:52:00
30. S6b-6c	01:48:00	00:53:00
31. P6f-6e	01:49:00	00:53:00

Kubo has some fond memories of this position, because he also played it against Watanabe in last year's Osho league. He won that game, which was very important for his bid to challenge for the Osho title. Challenger Toyoshima doesn't shy away from this and after the game said that he intended to play the pawn push to 6d all along.

32. G6a-5b 01:49:00 01:23:00



This is Toyoshima's opening preparation. It doesn't look like much, but the white generals are now all nicely connected, so black needs something to compensate for having played the gold to 7h.

33. P6ex6d	02:32:00	01:23:00
34. R8dx6d	02:32:00	01:23:00
35. G7h-7i!	02:33:00	01:23:00

Kubo is not afraid to take some unusual measures. He doesn't want to drop the pawn back on the 6th file and 35. G7i is the only reasonable way to defend against the rook promotion. Still, this move needed some thorough calculation.

36. P5c-5d 02:33:00 02:14:00

It was important to check that 36. Bx7g+ Nx7g B\*6g is not as strong as it looks. Both players agreed that black can then play Sx6g Rx6g+ B\*5h which holds the black position together.

37. B7gx3c+	02:54:00	02:14:00
38. N2ax3c	02:54:00	02:14:00
39. N8i-7g	02:54:00	02:14:00
40. P5d-5e	02:54:00	02:19:00
41. S5f-6e	03:19:00	02:19:00
42. R6d-8d	03:19:00	02:19:00
43. R7f-6f!	03:24:00	02:19:00



Another good move by Kubo. This threatens the unpleasant P\*6d next and at the same time opens a square for the silver to retreat.

44. P\*6d 03:24:00 03:23:00

This is not what Toyoshima intended, but he has no choice.

45. S6e-7f 03:25:00 03:23:00

46. P8e-8f 03:25:00 03:23:00

47. P8gx8f 04:13:00 03:23:00



The sealed move and a huge surprise. Everybody in the press room expected 47.S8e, but Kubo wasn't sure after 48.R8b Rx8f B\*9e R7f Bx7g+ Rx7g Rx8e and white gets two pieces for the bishop.

48. R8dx8f 04:13:00 03:23:00

49. P\*8g 04:13:00 03:23:00

50. R8f-8c 04:13:00 04:09:00

Kubo said that he mostly played 47.Px8f because he thought it was difficult for white to find a good square for the rook to retreat to. He

considered this more than enough compensation for making the silver on 7f less mobile. The rest of the game seems to prove his analysis right, because black slowly but surely gets the better position from here on.

51. G7i-7h 04:18:00 04:09:00

52. P5e-5f 04:18:00 04:29:00

53. P5gx5f 04:19:00 04:29:00

54. B\*5g 04:19:00 04:29:00

55. R6f-6i 04:21:00 04:29:00

56. P7c-7d 04:21:00 04:31:00

57. P7ex7d 04:27:00 04:31:00

58. B5g-8d+ 04:27:00 04:31:00

59. P\*6e 04:32:00 04:31:00

60. P6dx6e 04:32:00 04:34:00

61. B\*4f 04:38:00 04:34:00

62. L9a-9c 04:38:00 04:34:00

63. P8g-8f 04:58:00 04:34:00

64. S6c-5d 04:58:00 05:41:00

65. P8f-8e 05:25:00 05:41:00

66. +B8d-6f 05:25:00 05:51:00

67. R6ix6f 05:44:00 05:51:00

68. P6ex6f 05:44:00 05:51:00

69. B\*7b 05:44:00 05:51:00

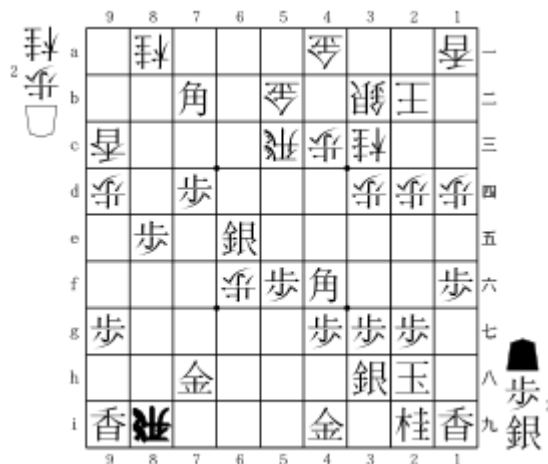
70. R8c-5c 05:44:00 06:05:00

71. N7g-6e 05:45:00 06:05:00

72. S5dx6e 05:45:00 06:26:00

73. S7fx6e 05:56:00 06:26:00

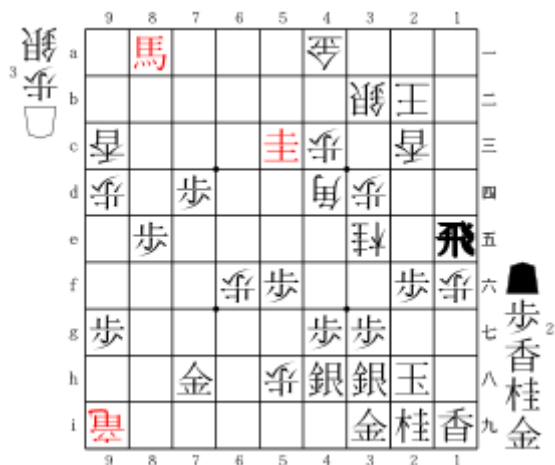
74. R\*8i? 05:56:00 06:26:00



This probably missed the only chance that Toyoshima got in this game. Correct was 74.P\*5g. Kubo thought that white had no good follow-up after 75.Bx5g, but when he was shown the variation 76.R\*6b Bx5d+ Rx5d Sx5d B\*7f P\*6c R8b with the double threat Bx5d and P6g+, Kubo admitted that he was far from confident in his position.



75.S6e-5d	06:19:00	06:26:00
76.P*5h	06:19:00	06:26:00
77.S*4h	06:33:00	06:26:00
78.P1d-1e	06:33:00	07:14:00
79.B4fx2d	06:48:00	07:14:00
80.R8ix9i+	06:48:00	07:19:00
81.S5dx5c+	07:03:00	07:19:00
82.G5bx5c	07:03:00	07:19:00
83.B7bx8a+	07:11:00	07:19:00
84.L*2c	07:11:00	07:20:00
85.B2dx3c+	07:17:00	07:20:00
86.K2bx3c	07:17:00	07:36:00
87.N*4e	07:17:00	07:36:00
88.K3c-2b	07:17:00	07:36:00
89.N4ex5c+	07:17:00	07:36:00
90.N*3e	07:17:00	07:37:00
91.G4i-3i	07:33:00	07:37:00
92.P1ex1f	07:33:00	07:42:00
93.P*1d	07:37:00	07:42:00
94.L1ax1d	07:37:00	07:50:00
95.P*1e	07:38:00	07:50:00
96.L1dx1e	07:38:00	07:50:00
97.R*1d	07:41:00	07:50:00
98.P*2f	07:41:00	07:55:00
99.P2gx2f	07:46:00	07:55:00
100.B*4d	07:46:00	07:55:00
101.R1dx1e?	07:49:00	07:55:00



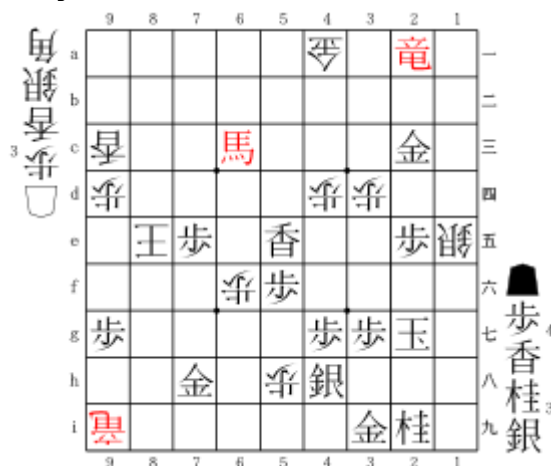
Time for Kubo to make a mistake. Things would have been over quickly if he had played 101.G\*1b K3a +B6c.

102.P*2g	07:49:00	07:55:00
103.S3hx2g	07:49:00	07:55:00
104.B4dx5c	07:49:00	07:55:00
105.R1ex1f	07:50:00	07:55:00
106.K2b-3a	07:50:00	07:55:00
107.R1f-1a+?	07:50:00	07:55:00

Again, black could have won faster here with 107.G\*2b Kx2b R1a+ followed by N\*4e. Kubo

is a little fortunate that his two mistakes are minor and don't change the outcome of the game. Toyoshima gets very close with a nasty double knight attack at the head of the king, but it is not enough to turn the tables.

108.P*2a	07:50:00	07:55:00
109.L1i-1c+	07:52:00	07:55:00
110.B5c-4d	07:52:00	07:55:00
111.G*2b	07:52:00	07:55:00
112.K3a-4b	07:52:00	07:55:00
113.+L1cx2c	07:53:00	07:55:00
114.S3bx2c	07:53:00	07:55:00
115.+R1ax2a	07:53:00	07:55:00
116.N*1e	07:53:00	07:58:00
117.G2bx2c	07:53:00	07:58:00
118.N1ex2g+	07:53:00	07:58:00
119.+B8ax2g	07:53:00	07:58:00
120.N3ex2g+	07:53:00	07:58:00
121.K2hx2g	07:53:00	07:58:00
122.S*2e	07:53:00	07:58:00
123.S*3c	07:54:00	07:58:00
124.K4b-5c	07:54:00	07:58:00
125.S3cx4d=	07:54:00	07:58:00
126.P4cx4d	07:54:00	07:58:00
127.L*5e	07:54:00	07:58:00
128.K5c-6c	07:54:00	07:58:00
129.B*5d	07:55:00	07:58:00
130.K6cx7d	07:55:00	07:58:00
131.P2fx2e	07:55:00	07:58:00
132.S*1e	07:55:00	07:58:00
133.P*7e	07:56:00	07:58:00
134.K7dx8e	07:56:00	07:58:00
135.B5d-6c+	07:57:00	07:58:00
Resigns	07:57:00	07:58:00



Mate after 136.K8f S\*8g etc.; 136.Kx7e S\*7f etc.; 136.K7f L\*7g etc. so Toyoshima resigned here. It is interesting that in all cases the gold on 7h plays a vital role. This bad looking gold has played an important throughout this game.



Kubo wins to take a 3-1 lead and get within one game of defending his Osho title. Tough times for Toyoshima who needs to bounce back in game 5 to avoid that this match ends prematurely.

**Standing after game 4:  
Kubo – Toyoshima 3-1**

## Game 5

2011-03-08/09

Sente: Toyoshima Masayuki, Challenger

Gote: Kubo Toshiaki, Osho

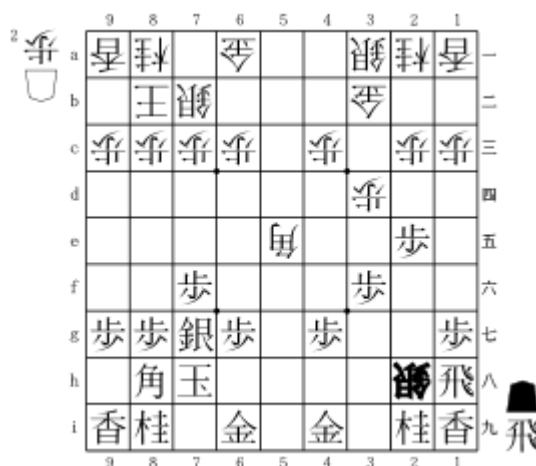
1. P2g-2f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3. P7g-7f	00:01:00	00:00:00
4. P5c-5d	00:01:00	00:04:00
5. P2f-2e	00:03:00	00:04:00
6. R8b-5b	00:03:00	00:06:00
7. S3i-4h	00:05:00	00:06:00
8. P5d-5e	00:05:00	00:11:00
9. K5i-6h	00:06:00	00:11:00
10. B2b-3c	00:06:00	00:15:00
11. P3g-3f	00:07:00	00:15:00
12. K5a-6b	00:07:00	00:32:00
13. S4h-3g	00:08:00	00:32:00
14. K6b-7b	00:08:00	00:39:00
15. S3g-4f	00:09:00	00:39:00
16. K7b-8b	00:09:00	00:58:00
17. K6h-7h	00:10:00	00:58:00
18. S7a-7b	00:10:00	01:03:00
19. S7i-6h	00:11:00	01:03:00
20. G4a-3b	00:11:00	01:09:00
21. S6h-7g	00:37:00	01:09:00
22. P5e-5f	00:37:00	01:28:00
23. P5g-5f	00:38:00	01:28:00
24. R5b-5f	00:38:00	01:28:00
25. P*5e	00:38:00	01:28:00

This blocks the return path of the rook and as a result, white needs to sacrifice a major piece. Of course this is all opening theory and both players will have been confident that their side has good chances.

26. R5f-5e	00:38:00	01:28:00
27. S4f-5e	00:39:00	01:28:00
28. B3c-5e	00:39:00	01:28:00
29. R2h-1h	00:39:00	01:28:00

Only two official games have been played with 29.R1h, but considering that this variation is on the frontier of current opening theory, it is certain that both players have studied it deeply and played it in training games.

30. S*2h	00:39:00	02:41:00
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Interestingly, this position appeared in a recent book published by Toyoshima called "Toyoshima Masayuki no joseki kenkyuu". This book is regarded highly among professionals for its accurate position evaluation. About this position Toyoshima wrote "black cannot be confident". Despite this, he plays this position with black in this win-or-go-home game.

31. P4g-4f!?	00:41:00	02:41:00
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A new move that Toyoshima obviously found after writing his book. Even after the game Toyoshima said that he wasn't sure that this new move actually achieved its goal, but this game seems to indicate that black not necessarily has the worst position here.

32. B5e-4f	00:41:00	02:47:00
33. S7g-6h	00:52:00	02:47:00
34. N2a-3c	00:52:00	02:49:00
35. P3f-3e	02:13:00	02:49:00
36. P3d-3e	02:13:00	03:09:00
37. R*2f	03:14:00	03:09:00
38. S2h-1i+	03:14:00	03:41:00
39. R1h-5h	03:15:00	03:41:00



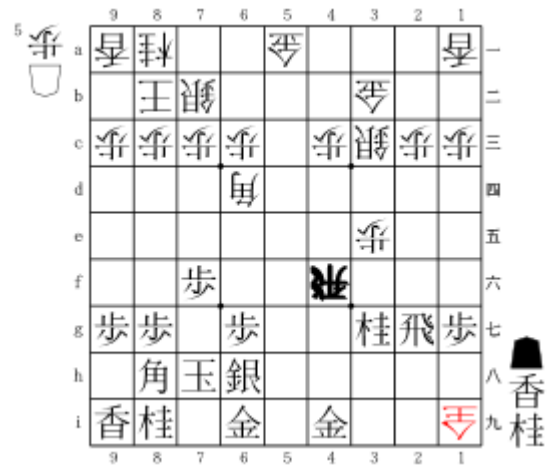
Here the players had a difference of opinion. In the press room, 39.R3h was expected next, after which black can answer 40.B6d with Rx3e. Kubo also thought that this was the move that black would play, but Toyoshima said in the post-mortem analysis that he didn't know what to play after 40.L\*4d. If 39.R5h is answered by 40.L\*4d, black has the forceful 41.Bx4d. Even though white also has the frightening Bx6h+ at any time, with the black rook on 5h the white castle is too weak to give black a bishop in hand.

40. B4f-6d	03:15:00	04:27:00
41. P2e-2d	03:17:00	04:27:00
42. P2cx2d	03:17:00	04:27:00
43. R2fx2d	03:17:00	04:27:00
44. L*5a	03:17:00	04:27:00
45. R5hx5a+	04:24:00	04:27:00

Looks like forcing the issue, but black has little choice here. After

45.P\*5d he is again out of pawns and after 46.S2b there is no good way to attack.

46. G6ax5a	04:24:00	04:27:00
47. P*3d	04:24:00	04:27:00
48. P*2c	04:24:00	04:40:00
49. R2d-2g	04:26:00	04:40:00
50. S3a-4b	04:26:00	04:48:00
51. P3dx3c+	04:53:00	04:48:00
52. S4bx3c	04:53:00	04:52:00
53. N2i-3g	04:54:00	04:52:00
54. R*4f	04:54:00	05:20:00



White is up on material, so Kubo wants to slow down the game. This defends against N4e and N\*5f, trying to take away all the black attack options.

55. G4i-5i	04:56:00	05:20:00
56. G5a-6a	04:56:00	05:24:00
57. B8h-7g	05:07:00	05:24:00
58. R4fx7f	05:07:00	05:56:00
59. L*6f	05:47:00	05:56:00
60. B6d-4b?	05:47:00	06:12:00



Kubo has played the game very well up to this point. The rook on 7f is pinning the bishop, which is very good for white. Furthermore, black is again without pawns. However, 60.B4b is a mistake. Correct was 60.B5e. Of course Kubo had looked at this, but he was worried about 61.N4e S4d R5g, but this can be answered simply with B4f.

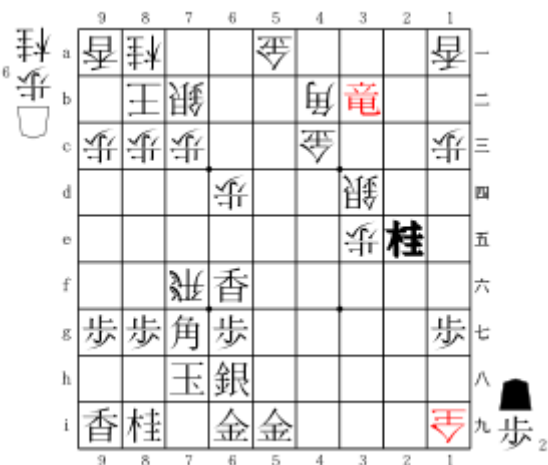
61. N*5e	05:50:00	06:12:00
62. P6c-6d	05:50:00	06:14:00
63. N5ex4c+	05:50:00	06:14:00
64. G3bx4c	05:50:00	06:14:00
65. R2gx2c+	05:50:00	06:14:00

Black has sacrificed additional material, but the promotion of the rook is huge. If white allows the dragon to go to 3b, the bishop on 4b becomes a major liability.

66.S3c-3d 05:50:00 06:26:00  
 67.+R2c-3b 05:52:00 06:26:00  
 68.G6a-5a 05:52:00 06:38:00

Or 68.B5c P\*5d B4d Lx6d P\*6b P\*4e and if the bishop moves Lx6b+ is too strong.

69.N3g-2e! 06:01:00 06:38:00



White has been trying to tough it out, but this knight is too strong. The simple threat is P\*4d Gx4d N3c+, but it is very hard to defend against this.

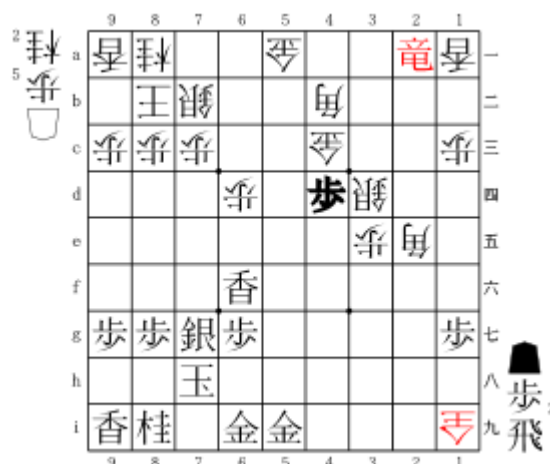
70.R7fx7g+ 06:01:00 07:00:00

Desperate times call for desperate measures. Exchanging this rook for the immobile bishop on 7g must have hurt Kubo a lot.

71.S6hx7g 06:01:00 07:00:00  
 72.B\*1d 06:01:00 07:00:00  
 73.+R3b-2b 06:02:00 07:00:00  
 74.P\*2a 06:02:00 07:05:00  
 75.+R2bx2a 06:05:00 07:05:00  
 76.B1dx2e 06:05:00 07:08:00

White has managed to take the knight on 2e off the board, but the cost is high as the defensive pieces all are very unstable positions.

77.P\*4d? 06:06:00 07:08:00



An important mistake by Toyoshima. He could have decided the game here with 77.R\*2b. For example, 78.P\*4a P\*5b Gx5b +Rx4a and the white defense collapses after G5a Rx4b+ G5ax4b B\*7a.

78.G4c-5c 06:06:00 07:10:00

The difference is that the previous attack no longer works because this gold defends against the pawn drop on 5b.

79.R\*3b 06:19:00 07:10:00  
 80.P\*4a 06:19:00 07:10:00  
 81.P\*2f 06:21:00 07:10:00  
 82.S3d-4c! 06:21:00 07:18:00

Nice move. This silver cannot be taken because after 83.Px4c+ Bx4c black has to give up one of the rooks.

83.R3b-2b+ 06:26:00 07:18:00  
 84.B2ex6i+ 06:26:00 07:18:00  
 85.G5ix6i 06:26:00 07:18:00  
 86.S4cx4d 06:26:00 07:21:00  
 87.+R2bx1a 06:26:00 07:21:00  
 88.P\*5f 06:26:00 07:21:00  
 89.P\*5h 06:28:00 07:21:00  
 90.N\*5e 06:28:00 07:24:00  
 91.+R2ax4a 06:42:00 07:24:00

Toyoshima goes for the all-out attack, but in a few moves regretted this decision. Still, it seems that he didn't have an alternative. For example, 91.G6h is a common professional technique to give the initiative to the opponent, but in this case white has the good continuation of 92.P6e Lx6e P\*6f.

92.G5ax4a	06:42:00	07:24:00
93.+R1ax4a	06:42:00	07:24:00
94.G*5a	06:42:00	07:24:00
95.G*6b	06:43:00	07:24:00
96.R*7a!	06:43:00	07:25:00



Great defense that stopped Toyoshima in his tracks.

97.G6bx5a	07:08:00	07:25:00
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Wrong direction of play, but again Toyoshima had no alternative because 97.Gx7a is met by 98.Gx4a.

98.B4bx5a	07:08:00	07:25:00
99.P*4c	07:08:00	07:25:00
100.P7c-7d	07:08:00	07:30:00
101.P4c-4b+	07:25:00	07:30:00
102.B5a-9e	07:25:00	07:31:00

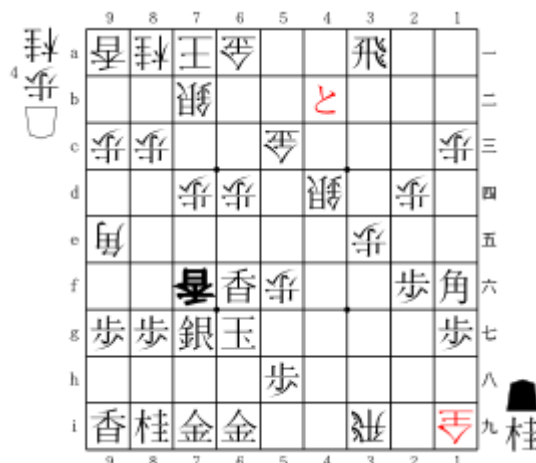
The highlight of Kubo's defensive scheme. The only move for black is 102.+Rx7a, but after 103.Kx7a white is threatening mate with Bx7g+ next, so black has to force his attack.

103.+R4ax7a	07:25:00	07:31:00
104.K8bx7a	07:25:00	07:31:00
105.R*3a	07:25:00	07:31:00
106.G*6a	07:25:00	07:38:00

White has to be careful here. If 106.K8b to keep the mating threat in the position, then after 107.G\*6h the position is actually quite complicated.

107.B*2e	07:25:00	07:38:00
108.P*2d	07:25:00	07:45:00
109.B2e-1f	07:27:00	07:45:00
110.N*7e	07:27:00	07:47:00

111.L*6h	07:28:00	07:47:00
112.R*3i	07:28:00	07:52:00
113.G*7i	07:49:00	07:52:00
114.N5ex6g+	07:49:00	07:52:00
115.L6hx6g	07:49:00	07:52:00
116.N7ex6g+	07:49:00	07:52:00
117.K7hx6g	07:49:00	07:52:00
118.L*7e	07:49:00	07:52:00
119.N*7f	07:53:00	07:52:00
120.L7ex7f?	07:53:00	07:58:00



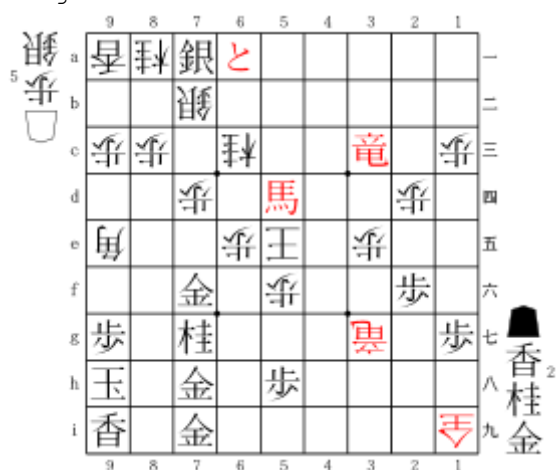
Here Kubo could have cashed in on his valiant defensive effort with 120.R3g+. Again, he had of course seen this, but after 121.K7h Bx7g+ Nx7g Lx7f B\*9e Lx7g+ Bx7g N\*8e he thought that black could play B\*5i. However, the post-mortem analysis showed that white wins after S\*7g K8i +R6g L\*6h +R7f Lx6d +Rx8g and mate. Black has to defend against the mating threat +R7f, but Toyoshima said in the post-mortem analysis that he could see no good way of doing that.

121.K6gx7f	07:55:00	07:58:00
122.R3i-3g+	07:55:00	07:58:00
123.P8g-8f!	07:55:00	07:58:00

This opens an escape route for the black king that swings the game. Black has given himself just enough time to make his attack work.

124.S4d-5e	07:55:00	07:59:00
125.+P4b-5b	07:55:00	07:59:00
126.S5ex6f	07:55:00	07:59:00
127.+P5bx6a	07:56:00	07:59:00
128.K7a-8b	07:56:00	07:59:00
129.K7fx6f	07:56:00	07:59:00
130.G5c-5d	07:56:00	07:59:00
131.S*7a	07:56:00	07:59:00
132.K8b-7c	07:56:00	07:59:00

133.R3a-3c+	07:56:00	07:59:00
134.N*6c	07:56:00	07:59:00
135.K6f-7f	07:56:00	07:59:00
136.P6d-6e	07:56:00	07:59:00
137.K7f-8g	07:56:00	07:59:00
138.L*7e	07:56:00	07:59:00
139.G6i-7h	07:56:00	07:59:00
140.K7c-6d	07:56:00	07:59:00
141.K8g-9h	07:56:00	07:59:00
142.L7ex7g+	07:56:00	07:59:00
143.N8ix7g	07:56:00	07:59:00
144.B9ex8f	07:56:00	07:59:00
145.G*7f	07:57:00	07:59:00
146.B8f-9e	07:57:00	07:59:00
147.B1f-4c+	07:57:00	07:59:00
148.K6d-5e	07:57:00	07:59:00
149.+B4cx5d	07:57:00	07:59:00
Resigns	07:57:00	07:59:00



Mate after 150.Kx5d +R3d P\*4d Gx6e K5c  
G\*4c so Kubo resigned here. Toyoshima  
dodges a bullet in a game that could have  
gone either way, but he is still alive at 2-3  
down in the match. Will Kubo be able to close  
out this match with the black pieces in the sixth  
game or can Toyoshima takes this match the  
full distance?

**Standing after game 5:**  
**Kubo – Toyoshima 3-2**

## Game 6

2011-03-14/15

Sente: Kubo Toshiaki, Osho

Gote: Toyoshima Masayuki, Challenger

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:01:00
3. P7f-7e	00:01:00	00:01:00
4. S7a-6b	00:01:00	00:09:00
5. P6g-6f	00:03:00	00:09:00
6. K5a-4b	00:03:00	00:10:00
7. R2h-7h	00:08:00	00:10:00
8. P6c-6d	00:08:00	00:12:00
9. K5i-4h	00:10:00	00:12:00
10. S6b-6c	00:10:00	00:13:00
11. S3i-3h	00:12:00	00:13:00
12. S3a-3b	00:12:00	00:18:00
13. K4h-3i	00:20:00	00:18:00
14. K4b-3a	00:20:00	00:19:00
15. S7i-6h	00:25:00	00:19:00
16. P1c-1d	00:25:00	00:29:00
17. P1g-1f	00:28:00	00:29:00
18. G6a-5b	00:28:00	00:31:00
19. S6h-6g	00:30:00	00:31:00
20. P8c-8d	00:30:00	00:33:00
21. K3i-2h	00:34:00	00:33:00
22. P2c-2d	00:34:00	00:45:00
23. S6g-5f	00:47:00	00:45:00
24. P8d-8e	00:47:00	00:58:00
25. R7h-7f	00:48:00	00:58:00
26. B2b-3c	00:48:00	00:59:00
27. B8h-7g	00:55:00	00:59:00
28. K3a-2b	00:55:00	01:01:00
29. G6i-5h	01:32:00	01:01:00
30. P5c-5d	01:32:00	01:41:00
31. P6f-6e	01:47:00	01:41:00
32. R8b-8d	01:47:00	02:06:00



This position is very similar to the position in the fourth game. Both players have changed only one move. Kubo has moved the left gold to 5h instead of to 7h and Toyoshima has pushed the pawn to 5d instead of pushing the edge pawn with P9d. These look like small differences, but they lead to a completely different type of middle game. The move 32.R8d is a new move prepared by Toyoshima. There have been a number of official games with the position after 31.P6e, but each continued with 32.Px6e Sx6e R6b and both black and white have won from there. Judging from this game, 32.R8d seems more than a reasonable alternative for 32.Px6e.

33. P4g-4f	02:20:00	02:06:00
34. P6dx6e	02:20:00	03:03:00
35. S5fx6e	02:21:00	03:03:00
36. S6c-6d	02:21:00	03:03:00
37. S6ex6d	03:48:00	03:03:00



Kubo had planned to play 37.Sx5d, but here he saw that after 38.Bx7g+ Nx7g B\*7h P7d Bx8g+ black may have the counter fork B\*6f, but after the exchange of the rook on 8d and 7f, the white promoted bishop on 7f will be attacking the silver on 5d which is good for white. Kubo played 37.Sx6d after 87 painful minutes, but this leads straight to an extremely cramped position.

38. R8dx6d	03:48:00	03:03:00
39. P*6g	03:48:00	03:03:00
40. P5d-5e	03:48:00	04:01:00

Now the black major pieces are all boxed in. The immediate threat is S\*7h which simultaneously attacks 6g, 8g and 8i. There is

only one way to avoid an immediate collapse.

41.R7f-6f	04:24:00	04:01:00
42.P*6e	04:24:00	04:34:00
43.R6f-9f	04:39:00	04:34:00
44.S*7h	04:39:00	04:58:00
45.S*9h	04:55:00	04:58:00

A terrible place to drop the silver, but there was no alternative. Toyoshima has clearly won the opening battle.

46.P9c-9d? 04:55:00 05:29:00



Hard to criticize Toyoshima's reasoning here. With the silver on 9h, he judges that the exchange of rooks is now much more in his favor than a few moves ago. However, here 46.P7d would have been the right choice. For example, 47.P5f Px7e Bx5e Bx5e Px5e B\*8h followed by Bx9i+ is good for white.

47.P4f-4e	05:05:00	05:29:00
48.P6e-6f	05:05:00	05:35:00
49.R9fx6f	05:42:00	05:35:00
50.R6dx6f	05:42:00	05:35:00
51.P6gx6f	05:42:00	05:35:00

Black desperately wants to take this pawn with the bishop, but this is not possible here:

51.Bx6f R\*6i R\*5i Rx6g+! Gx6g Sx6g+ B8h +S6h is good for white.

52.R\*6i 05:42:00 05:55:00

This looks good for white, but actually the position is unclear as the black position is not so easy to break down.

53.G5h-6h? 05:56:00 05:55:00

Better was to play 53.R\*6a immediately. Kubo didn't like to give up material after 54.Sx8i=, but then 55.G6h is a good counter because after 56.R7i+ Sx8i +Rx8i S\*7h the white promoted rook will be lost and black will get the better position.

54.R6i-7i+	05:56:00	05:55:00
55.R*6a	05:56:00	05:55:00
56.P5e-5f?	05:56:00	06:42:00



In the post-mortem analysis Kubo suggested to play 56.P7d immediately here. After 57.Px7d P4d Rx8a+ Px4e +Rx9a P\*7f is very strong because the black attack rolls on after Gx7h +Rx7h B5i P5f and Bx6f next leads to a huge difference in the way the bishops work.

57.P5gx5f	05:56:00	06:42:00
58.P7c-7d	05:56:00	06:42:00
59.P7ex7d	05:57:00	06:42:00
60.P4c-4d	05:57:00	06:42:00
61.R6ax8a+	06:18:00	06:42:00
62.P4dx4e	06:18:00	06:42:00
63.P6f-6e	06:22:00	06:42:00

Now black can exchange bishops and black finally gets the upper hand.

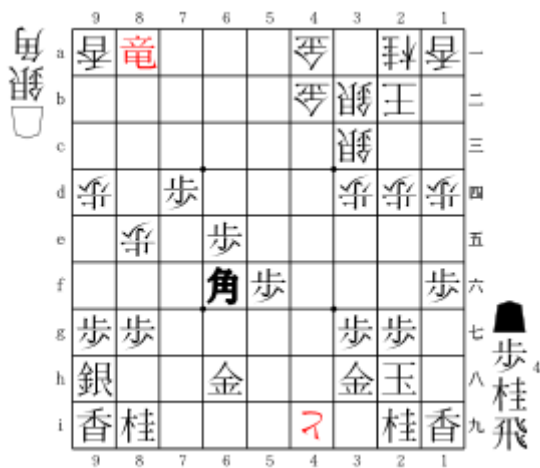
64.P4e-4f	06:22:00	06:44:00
65.G6h-5h	06:46:00	06:44:00
66.S7h-6g+	06:46:00	07:16:00

A last desperate try by Toyoshima, but Kubo stays very calm.

67.G5hx6g	06:48:00	07:16:00
68.P4f-4g+	06:48:00	07:16:00
69.S*4d	06:56:00	07:16:00



70.B3cx4d	06:56:00	07:17:00
71.B7gx4d	06:56:00	07:17:00
72.S*3c	06:56:00	07:17:00
73.B4d-7g	07:12:00	07:17:00
74.P*4h	07:12:00	07:22:00
75.G4i-3i	07:15:00	07:22:00
76.+P4gx3h	07:15:00	07:23:00
77.G3ix3h	07:15:00	07:23:00
78.P4h-4i+	07:15:00	07:23:00
79.B*8h	07:25:00	07:23:00
80.+R7i-7h	07:25:00	07:31:00
81.G6g-6h	07:26:00	07:31:00
82.+R7hx8h	07:26:00	07:31:00
83.B7gx8h	07:26:00	07:31:00
84.G5b-4b	07:26:00	07:31:00
85.B8h-6f	07:42:00	07:31:00



With this bishop working both in attack and defense, Kubo said that here he finally felt that things were going his way.

86.B*7i	07:42:00	07:36:00
87.R*7h	07:43:00	07:36:00
88.B7ix6h+	07:43:00	07:39:00
89.R7hx6h	07:43:00	07:39:00
90.G*4f	07:43:00	07:39:00
91.N*5d	07:44:00	07:39:00

92.G4b-4c	07:44:00	07:40:00
93.P*4b	07:46:00	07:40:00
94.G4a-3a	07:46:00	07:40:00
95.B*6d	07:46:00	07:40:00
96.S*3i	07:46:00	07:43:00
97.G3hx3i	07:48:00	07:43:00
98.+P4ix3i	07:48:00	07:43:00
99.+R8ax3a	07:49:00	07:43:00
100.K2bx3a	07:49:00	07:43:00
101.P4b-4a+	07:49:00	07:43:00
102.K3ax4a	07:49:00	07:43:00
103.G*5a	07:50:00	07:43:00
Resigns	07:50:00	07:43:00



Mate after 104.Kx5a B8d K4a S\*5b Kx5b N6b+ K4a +N5a because the two bishops are working together perfectly. Like last year, Kubo wins game 1, 3, 4 and 6 to defend his Osho title at the same venue he took it from Habu last year. The 20-year old challenger Toyoshima failed in his first title bid, but it seems certain that he will be back on the big stage soon.

**Finale Standing:**  
**Kubo – Toyoshima 4-2**

## Summary

		Kubo	Toyoshima
08./09.01.2011	<a href="#">Toyoshima - Kubo 0-1</a>	1	0
21./22.01.2011	<a href="#">Kubo - Toyoshima 0-1</a>	1	1
09./10.02.2011	<a href="#">Toyoshima - Kubo 0-1</a>	2	1
18./19.02.2011	<a href="#">Kubo - Toyoshima 1-0</a>	3	1
08./09.03.2011	<a href="#">Toyoshima - Kubo 1-0</a>	3	2
14./15.03.2011	<a href="#">Kubo - Toyoshima 1-0</a>	4	2

## 36. Kio

### 36. Kio Challenger's tournament

Quarterfinale	Semifinale	Finale
Itodani - Kubota 0-1	Kubota - Hirose 0-1	<a href="#">Hirose - Watanabe 0-1</a> <a href="#">Hirose - Watanabe 0-1</a>
Hirose - Watanabe 1-0		
'Round of Hope'		
Watanabe - Itodani 1-0	Watanabe - Kubota 1-0	

In the quarterfinale Watanabe lost against Hirose, but he was able to reach the challenger's finale by winning against Itodani and Kubota. In the finale he met again Hirose and here could beat him twice to become the challenger in the 36. Kio title match.

Here are the two decisive games of the challenger's finale.

#### Challenger's finale 1

2010-12-27

**Sente:** Hirose Akihito

**Gote:** Watanabe Akira

1. P7g-7f
2. P8c-8d
3. R2h-6h
4. P3c-3d
5. P6g-6f
6. S7a-6b
7. K5i-4h
8. K5a-4b
9. K4h-3h
10. P5c-5d
11. S7i-7h
12. K4b-3b
13. K3h-2h
14. B2b-3c
15. S7h-6g
16. S6b-5c
17. L1i-1h
18. K3b-2b
19. K2h-1i
20. P8d-8e
21. B8h-7g
22. L1a-1b
23. S6g-5f
24. P4c-4d
25. S3i-2h
26. K2b-1a
27. G4i-3i

28. S3a-2b
29. P4g-4f
30. G6a-5a
31. R6h-4h
32. G4a-3a
33. G6i-5i
34. G5a-4b
35. G5i-4i
36. G4b-3b
37. G4i-3h
38. P7c-7d
39. P6f-6e
40. S5c-4b
41. R4h-4i
42. P8e-8f
43. P8gx8f
44. P4d-4e

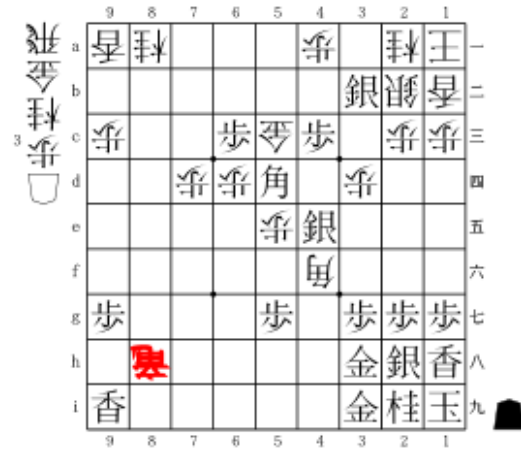


45. P4fx4e
46. B3cx7g+

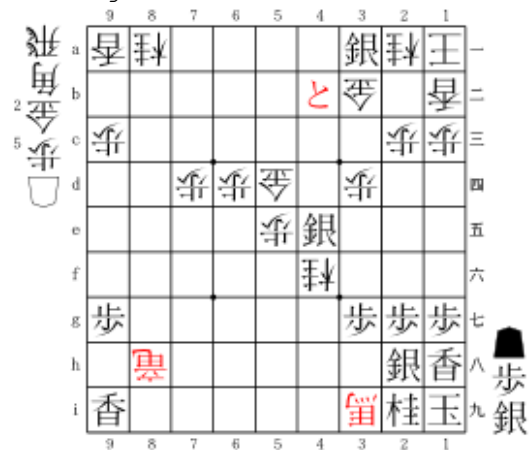
47. N8i×7g  
 48. R8b×8f  
 49. P4e-4d  
 50. B\*6f  
 51. B\*4c  
 52. B6f×7g+  
 53. P6e-6d  
 54. P6c×6d  
 55. P\*6c  
 56. +B7g×7f  
 57. B4c×3b+  
 58. G3a×3b  
 59. R4i-4f  
 60. B\*2d  
 61. G\*4c  
 62. P5d-5e  
 63. G4c×3b  
 64. +B7f×3b  
 65. G\*4c  
 66. G\*3a



67. G4c×3b  
 68. G3a×3b  
 69. B\*5d  
 70. G3b-3a  
 71. P4d-4c+  
 72. B2d×4f  
 73. +P4c×4b  
 74. G3a×4b  
 75. P\*4c  
 76. G4b-5c  
 77. S5f-4e  
 78. P\*4a  
 79. S\*3b  
 80. R8f-8h+



81. P6c-6b+  
 82. B4f×5g+  
 83. +P6b-5b  
 84. G5c×5d  
 85. +P5b×4a  
 86. N\*4f  
 87. G3h-4h  
 88. +B5g×4h  
 89. +P4a-3a  
 90. S2b×3a  
 91. S3b×3a  
 92. G\*3b  
 93. P4c-4b+  
 94. +B4h×3i  
 95. Resigns



## Challenger's finale 2

2011-01-06

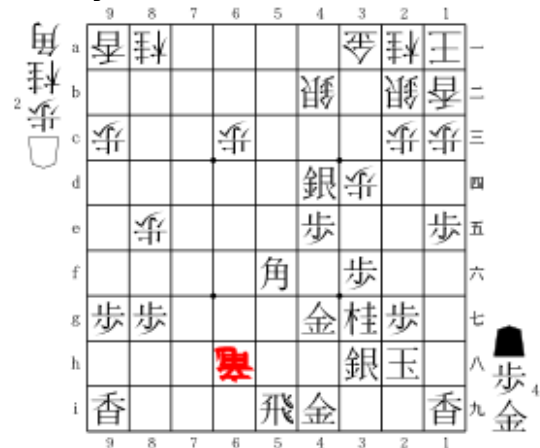
Sente: Hirose Akihito

Gote: Watanabe Akira

1. P7g-7f
2. P8c-8d
3. P5g-5f
4. P8d-8e
5. B8h-7g
6. P5c-5d
7. R2h-5h
8. S7a-6b
9. K5i-4h
10. K5a-4b
11. K4h-3h
12. P3c-3d
13. S7i-6h
14. K4b-3b
15. K3h-2h
16. G6a-5b
17. P1g-1f
18. S6b-5c
19. P1f-1e
20. P4c-4d
21. P5f-5e
22. G5b-4c
23. S3i-3h
24. P5dx5e
25. R5hx5e
26. B2b-3c
27. R5e-5i
28. K3b-2b
29. S6h-5g
30. G4a-3b
31. S5g-5f
32. P\*5d
33. P4g-4f
34. L1a-1b
35. P3g-3f
36. K2b-1a
37. N2i-3g
38. S3a-2b
39. G6i-5h
40. P7c-7d
41. G5h-4g
42. R8b-7b
43. P4f-4e
44. P7d-7e
45. P\*5e
46. P7ex7f

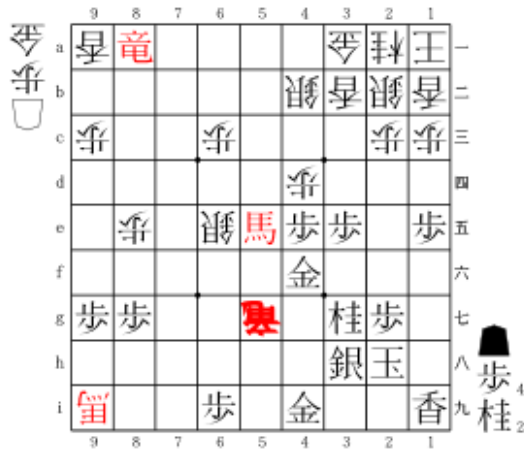


47. B7g-6f
48. B3c-2d
49. P5ex5d
50. G4cx5d
51. S5f-5e
52. G5d-6e
53. S5ex4d
54. S5c-4b
55. B6f-5g
56. B2dx5g+
57. R5ix5g
58. P7f-7g+
59. N8ix7g
60. P\*5f
61. R5g-5i
62. R7bx7g+
63. B\*5d
64. G3b-3a
65. B5dx6e
66. +R7gx6g
67. B6ex5f
68. +R6g-6h

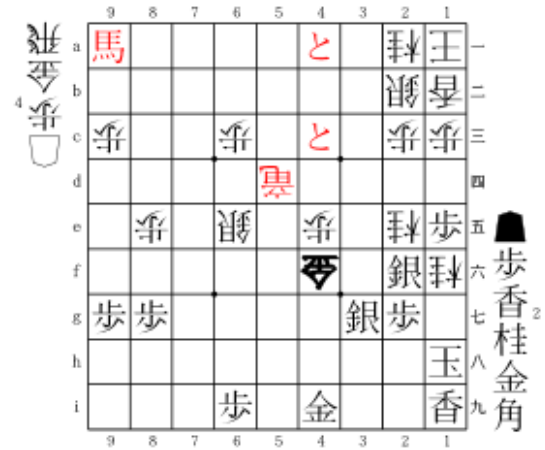


69. P\*6i
70. +R6hx5i
71. G4ix5i
72. P\*4c
73. R\*7a
74. P4cx4d
75. R7ax8a+
76. B\*6f

77. G5i-4i  
 78. N\*5e  
 79. B5f-8c+  
 80. B6f×9i+  
 81. G4g-5g  
 82. P3d-3e  
 83. G\*4f  
 84. L\*3b  
 85. P3fx3e  
 86. R\*7g  
 87. +B8c-5f  
 88. S\*6e  
 89. +B5fx5e  
 90. R7gx5g+



91. +B5ex9a  
 92. P4dx4e  
 93. G4f-4g  
 94. +R5g-5d  
 95. P\*4c  
 96. S4bx4c  
 97. P\*4b  
 98. P\*7a  
 99. +R8ax7a  
 100. +B9i-4d  
 101. +R7ax3a  
 102. S2bx3a  
 103. P4b-4a+  
 104. S3a-2b  
 105. N\*3f  
 106. +B4dx3e  
 107. P\*3c  
 108. L3bx3c  
 109. P\*4d  
 110. +B3ex3f  
 111. G4gx3f  
 112. L3cx3f  
 113. P4dx4c+  
 114. L3fx3g+  
 115. S3hx3g  
 116. N\*1f  
 117. K2h-1h  
 118. N\*2e  
 119. S\*2f  
 120. G\*4f



121. S2fx2e  
 122. G4fx3g  
 123. +B9ax3g  
 124. S\*2h  
 125. +B3gx2h  
 126. N1fx2h+  
 127. K1hx2h  
 128. R\*4g  
 129. G\*4h  
 130. G\*3g  
 131. G4hx3g  
 132. R4gx3g+  
 133. K2hx3g  
 134. B\*4f  
 135. K3g-2f  
 136. G\*3e  
 137. K2f-1g  
 138. G3ex2e  
 139. N\*2h  
 140. +R5d-5g  
 141. G\*3h  
 142. S\*3g  
 143. B\*3i  
 144. B4f-3e  
 145. K1g-1h  
 146. S3gx3h  
 147. G4ix3h  
 148. G\*1g  
 149. K1h-2i  
 150. P\*3g  
 151. Resigns



## 36. Kio title match

### Game 1

2011-02-06

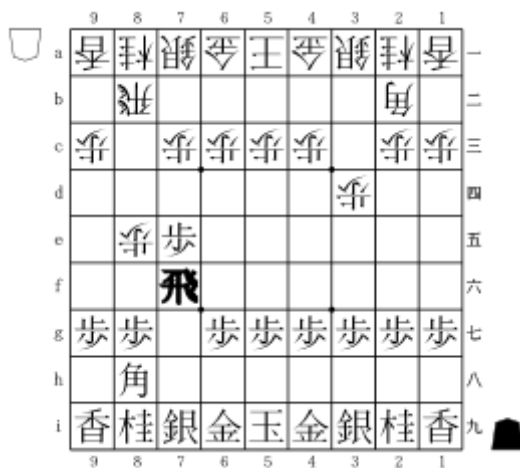
Sente: Kubo Toshiaki, Kio

Gote: Watanabe Akira, Challenger

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:01:00
3. P7f-7e	00:02:00	00:01:00

The Furigoma resulted in four pawns, so Kio Kubo started this first game with the black pieces. It has been 3 years and 7 months since Watanabe was the challenger in a title match, which is quite a long time considering the iron grip he has on the Ryu-O title. Kubo starts the match with the Quick Ishida opening, which is his specialty.

4. P8c-8d	00:02:00	00:04:00
5. R2h-7h	00:02:00	00:04:00
6. P8d-8e	00:02:00	00:04:00
7. R7h-7f	00:03:00	00:04:00



This looks very risky, because white can make a promoted bishop after 8.Bx8h+ Sx8h B\*4e, but Sugai has been playing it with quite a lot of success lately, so this is definitely not easy.

8. B2b-x8h+	00:03:00	00:09:00
9. S7i-x8h	00:03:00	00:09:00
10. S3a-2b	00:03:00	00:09:00

Watanabe decides to stay out away from Kubo's opening preparation and opts for a

slightly less sharp opening. Only slightly, because Kubo isn't in the mood for a slow build-up.

11. N8i-7g	00:03:00	00:09:00
12. S2b-3c	00:03:00	00:12:00
13. P7e-7d	00:06:00	00:12:00

This pawn sacrifice opens the diagonal to the rook, which becomes the main theme of the game.

14. P7cx7d	00:06:00	00:12:00
15. B*4f	00:06:00	00:12:00
16. B*6d	00:06:00	00:18:00
17. B4fx6d	00:18:00	00:18:00
18. P6cx6d	00:18:00	00:18:00
19. B*6c	00:28:00	00:18:00
20. B*5b	00:28:00	00:26:00
21. B6c-4e+	00:34:00	00:26:00
22. S7a-6b	00:34:00	00:29:00
23. +B4e-4f	00:39:00	00:29:00
24. S6b-7c	00:39:00	00:30:00
25. P6g-6f	00:39:00	00:30:00
26. B5b-6c	00:39:00	00:50:00
27. S3i-3h	00:54:00	00:50:00
28. B6c-5d	00:54:00	01:12:00
29. P6f-6e	00:58:00	01:12:00
30. P6dx6e	00:58:00	01:12:00
31. R7f-5f	01:09:00	01:12:00



Black has a promoted bishop and this rook is strongly threatening Rx5d Px5d Nx6e. Because white cannot defend with 32.R6b because of 33.Nx8e S6d Rx5d Px5d B\*9e which is good for black, the general opinion in the press room was that Kubo had the better position here. However, Watanabe doesn't succumb that easily.

32.S3c-4d! 01:09:00 01:14:00

Strong move. The reason will become clear a little later.

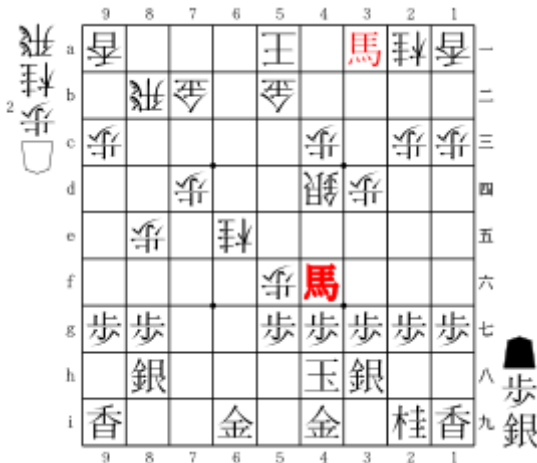
33.R5fx5d 01:34:00 01:14:00  
 34.P5cx5d 01:34:00 01:14:00  
 35.N7gx6e 01:34:00 01:14:00  
 36.P5d-5e 01:34:00 01:16:00

This is the point of 32.S4d. With 36.P5e white closes the important bishop diagonal and at the same time puts pressure on the black king, which is still in the center of the board.

37.+B4f-3f 01:40:00 01:16:00  
 38.G4a-5b 01:40:00 01:24:00  
 39.N6ex7c+ 01:53:00 01:24:00  
 40.N8ax7c 01:53:00 01:24:00  
 41.B\*6d 01:55:00 01:24:00  
 42.G6a-7b 01:55:00 01:34:00  
 43.B6d-3a+ 02:09:00 01:34:00  
 44.N7c-6e 02:09:00 01:59:00  
 45.K5i-4h 02:25:00 01:59:00  
 46.P5e-5f 02:25:00 02:02:00

Watanabe felt that if the game would turn into a long battle, black would have the advantage with the two promoted bishops. However, Kubo's reply was a surprise.

47.+B3f-4f! 02:39:00 02:02:00



Actually, Kubo wasn't too happy about his own position here as well, because he didn't see how he could attack the white king. 47.+B4f allows a free promoted pawn on 5g, but Kubo thought he had no choice but to try something out of the ordinary. If black simply answers with 47.Px5f, then 48.N5g= forks the two

golds.

48.P5fx5g+ 02:39:00 02:32:00  
 49.K4h-3i 02:39:00 02:32:00

The point of 47.+B4f is that black has used the check to put the king in the castle. At the same time, the promoted bishop is back on the diagonal of the rook, which is very unpleasant for white.

50.P\*5e 02:39:00 02:32:00  
 51.P\*5c 03:03:00 02:32:00  
 52.G5bx5c? 03:03:00 02:54:00



Watanabe is getting too pre-occupied with keeping the long diagonal closed. As Kubo pointed out in the post-mortem analysis, 52.Sx5c was the correct move here. For example, 53.+Bx5e P\*6d P\*5d S4b +Bx2a N\*3e and white has the strong threat of +Px4g followed by N5g=. Watanabe agreed that he should have played it that way, but he also said that he didn't see N\*3e, which is why he saw no merit in this variation.

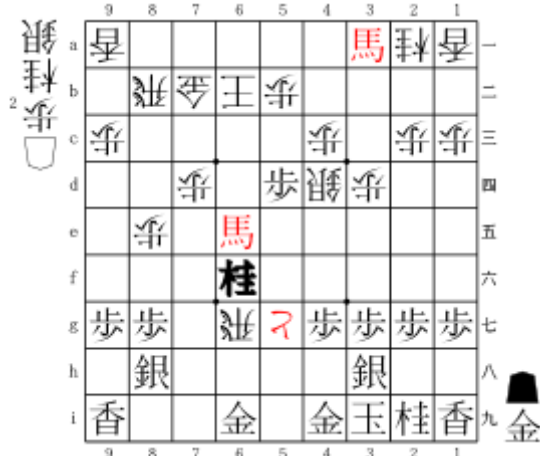
53.S\*4b 03:07:00 02:54:00  
 54.K5a-6b 03:07:00 02:54:00  
 55.S4bx5c= 03:08:00 02:54:00  
 56.S4dx5c 03:08:00 02:54:00  
 57.+B4fx5e 03:09:00 02:54:00  
 58.P\*5b 03:09:00 02:54:00  
 59.P\*5d 03:20:00 02:54:00  
 60.S5c-4d 03:20:00 02:56:00  
 61.+B5ex6e 03:21:00 02:56:00  
 62.R\*6g 03:21:00 03:04:00

This fork on king and horse looks very good, because when the promoted bishop moves, white suddenly has a very dangerous looking



attack against the black king after Rx6i+.  
However, Kubo has the perfect counter.

63.N\*6f!      03:26:00      03:04:00



Indirectly defends the promoted bishop and threatens the fork on king and rook with Nx7d next, so white has no time to pick up the gold on 6i.

64.+P5g-4h	03:26:00	03:13:00
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After 64.K7a G6i-5h white has no chance to build an attack.

65.K3ix4h	03:27:00	03:13:00
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66.S*5g	03:27:00	03:15:00
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67.K4h-3i	03:27:00	03:15:00
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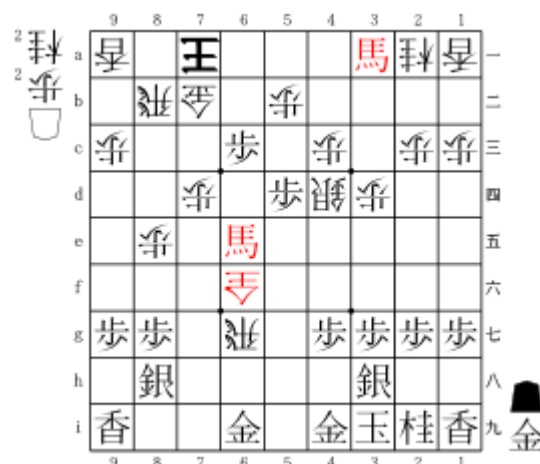
68.S5gx6f+ 03:27:00 03:15:00

Watanabe has cleverly removed the knight on 6f and again is threatening the promoted bishop and the gold on 6i.

69.P*6c!	03:35:00	03:15:00
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Again the perfect reply.

70.K6b-7a	03:35:00	03:26:00
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After 70.Gx6c +B6e-6d Gx6d +Bx6d white has no defense, but 70.K7a is also not good enough for white.

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71.+B6ex7d    03:38:00    03:26:00
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72.P*7c	03:38:00	03:26:00
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73.G*6b	03:39:00	03:26:00
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74.G7bx6b	03:39:00	03:27:00
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75.P6cx6b+	03:39:00	03:27:00
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76.R8bx6b	03:39:00	03:27:00
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77.P*6C	03:44:00	03:27:00
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78.P7cx7d	03:44:00	03:27:00
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79.P6cx6b+	03:44:00	03:27:00
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80.K7ax6b	03:44:00	03:27:00
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81.+B3a-6d 03:45:00 03:27:00

82.G*7b	03:45:00	03:34:00
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83.G6i-5h	03:46:00	03:34:00
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84.R6g-6i+ 03:46:00 03:34:00
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85.R*8a	03:47:00	03:34:00
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86.P*6a	03:47:00	03:35:00
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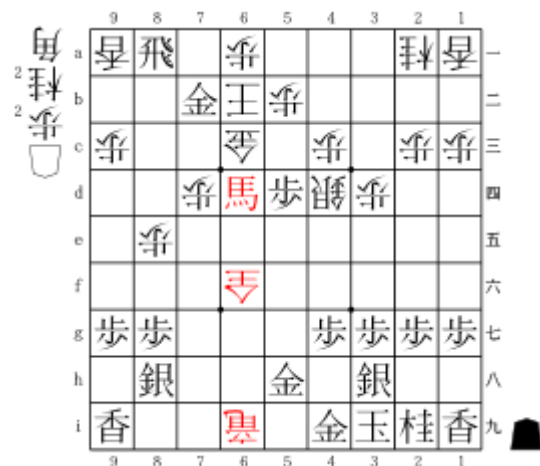
87.G*8b	03:47:00	03:35:00
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88.G7b-6c      03:47:00      03:36:00

89.G8b-7b	03:47:00	03:36:00
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Resigns	03:47:00	03:36:00
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6. 



A simple mate after 90.Kx7b R8b+ or 90.K5a

Rx6a+, so Watanabe resigned here. A very impressive start by Kubo in this match. Watanabe just finished off Habu in the Ryu-O and he must have been very confident at the start of this match. A win in the first game would have gone a long way to forgetting the abysmal record he has against Kubo . Instead, Kubo played an almost flawless game, already putting a lot of pressure on Watanabe to win with the black pieces in game 2.

**Standing after game 1**

**Kubo – Watanabe 1-0**

## Game 2

2011-02-26

Sente: Watanabe Akira, Challenger

Gote: Kubo Toshiaki, Kio

1. P2g-2f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3. P7g-7f	00:01:00	00:00:00
4. P5c-5d	00:01:00	00:01:00
5. P2f-2e	00:05:00	00:01:00
6. R8b-5b	00:05:00	00:03:00
7. G4i-5h	00:09:00	00:03:00

With this move, Watanabe invites Kubo to an all-out slugfest. Kubo can decline the invitation by playing the quiet 8.K6b here, but then black can exchange the pawns on the second file for free and there are very few professionals who like to make that concession.

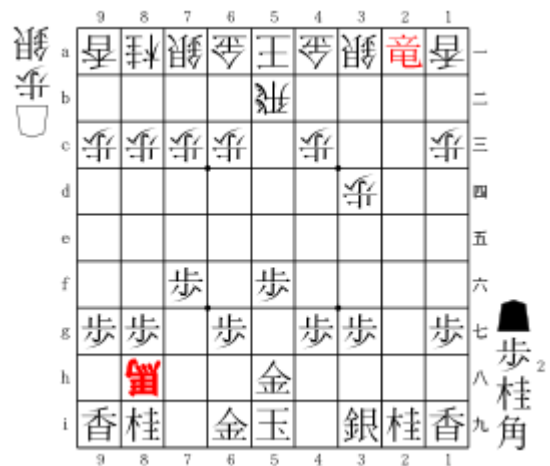
8. P5d-5e 00:09:00 00:20:00



Kubo accepts the invitation, albeit reluctantly because he spent 17 minutes on this move. According to Yamasaki, taking his time here was psychologically not a very smart thing to do, because it gave the impression that Kubo didn't really want to play this opening variation.

9. P2e-2d	00:11:00	00:20:00
10. P2cx2d	00:11:00	00:24:00
11. R2hx2d	00:11:00	00:24:00
12. P5e-5f	00:11:00	00:24:00
13. P5gx5f	00:11:00	00:24:00
14. B2bx8h+	00:11:00	00:34:00
15. S7ix8h	00:11:00	00:34:00
16. B*3c	00:11:00	00:37:00
17. R2dx2a+	00:16:00	00:37:00

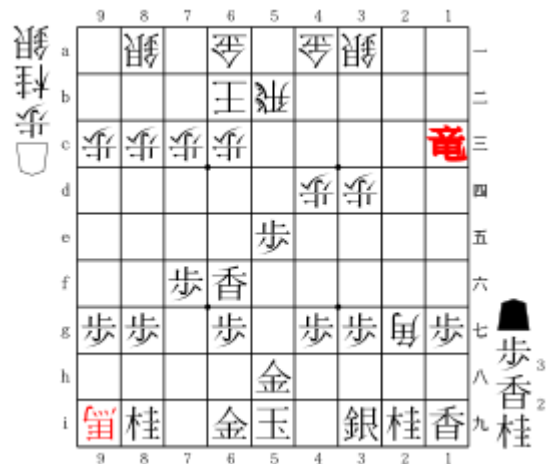
18. B3cx8h+ 00:16:00 00:38:00



Only 18 moves played and the board is on fire. Of course, this is all still opening theory.

19. N*5e	00:16:00	00:38:00
20. K5a-6b	00:16:00	00:38:00
21. +R2ax1a	00:16:00	00:38:00
22. +B8hx9i	00:16:00	00:42:00
23. B*3c	00:18:00	00:42:00
24. S*4d	00:18:00	01:00:00
25. B3cx4d+	00:18:00	01:00:00
26. P4cx4d	00:18:00	01:00:00
27. L*6f	00:18:00	01:00:00
28. S7a-7b	00:18:00	01:00:00
29. S*8b	00:19:00	01:00:00
30. B*2g	00:19:00	01:11:00
31. S8bx9a+	00:21:00	01:11:00
32. L*5c	00:21:00	01:11:00
33. +S9ax8a	00:22:00	01:11:00
34. L5cx5e	00:22:00	01:11:00
35. P5fx5e	00:22:00	01:11:00
36. S7bx8a	00:22:00	01:11:00
37. +R1ax1c!?	00:23:00	

01:11:00



This is the move that Watanabe prepared.

Previous games with this position continued mostly with 37.L\*6e after white has the choice between defending with 38.N\*5a or starting a counter attack with 38.+Bx6f Px6f L\*5f. Watanabe said in the post-mortem analysis that he had studied 37.+Rx1c, but that he couldn't see through all the complications and therefore wanted to try it in an official game. The move 37.+Rx1c is a lighter attack than L\*6e and it also keeps the lance in hand. On the other hand, because the black threat is not so strong than it would be after 37.L\*6e, white has a number of possible moves here.

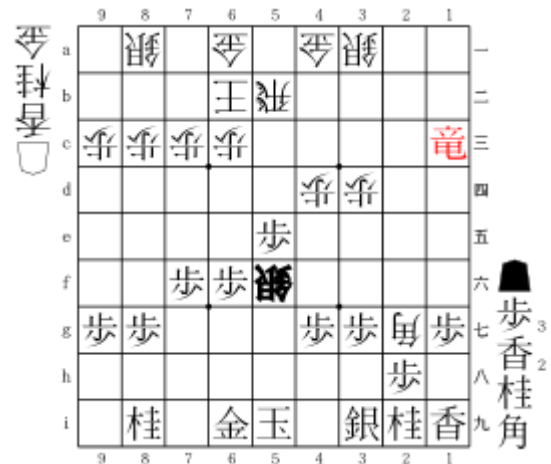
38.+B9ix6f?! 00:23:00  
01:44:00

Hard to judge if this move is a mistake or not. There are a number of alternatives like 38.S2b, 38.+Bx8i and 38.Rx5e and they all lead to very difficult positions. Kubo said after the game that he would have liked to think about three days about his move here. In any case, after 38.+Bx6f it seems that black gets the upper hand which is almost certainly decisive in a sharp endgame position like this. An interesting observation by Yamasaki was that Watanabe probably also played 37.Rx1c+ to confuse Kubo with the number of possible replies, which is a little out of character for Watanabe, who is known for his strong attacking play.

39.P6gx6f	00:23:00	01:44:00
40.L*5f	00:23:00	01:44:00
41.L*5g	00:25:00	01:44:00
42.L5fx5g+	00:25:00	01:53:00
43.G5hx5g	00:25:00	01:53:00
44.P*5f	00:25:00	02:13:00
45.G5gx5f	00:27:00	02:13:00
46.S*6g	00:27:00	02:23:00

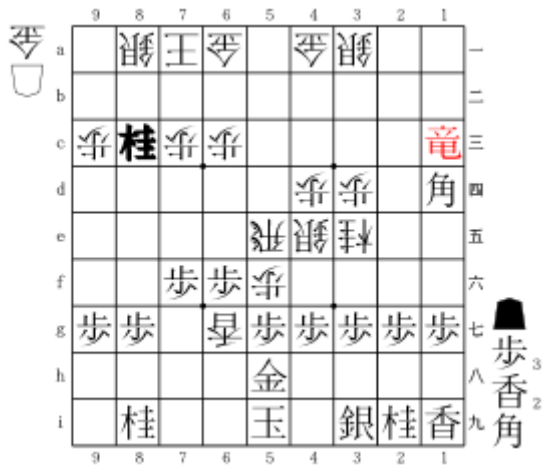
A change of plan. Kubo had initially planned 46.N\*6d, but here he saw that 47.G6e Nx7f B\*6g! is good for black. The bishop drop is not an easy move to play, giving up an important piece in hand for what looks like a defense-only move. However, if black can remove the knight from 7f, the black king will be completely safe. Also, white has removed the 7th file pawn from the board, so black now has the strong option of P\*7d at any time.

47.P\*2h 00:37:00 02:23:00  
48.S6gx5f=? 00:37:00 02:53:00



After this, the game ends quickly. The idea was to defend against L\*6e, but with the silver on 5f, the move Rx5e, which is what white is hoping for, is not effective because black can strongly answer this with B\*4f. Kubo's best fighting chance was 48.S2b to chase the promoted rook away. For example, 49.+R2d Sx5f+ Px2g L\*6g G5h G\*5g was a variation that was played in the post-mortem analysis. White threatens Sx4g+ next, after which the black king cannot be defended. If black defends with L\*4h then Gx5h Kx5h N\*5g and Watanabe said he thought that black could survive the white attack, but that it was a lot more dangerous than he originally thought.

49.P2hx2g	00:37:00	02:53:00
50.L*6g	00:37:00	03:16:00
51.G6i-5h	00:56:00	03:16:00
52.N*3e	00:56:00	03:20:00
53.B*3f	01:10:00	03:20:00
54.K6b-7a	01:10:00	03:20:00
55.N*7e	01:24:00	03:20:00
56.S5f-4e	01:24:00	03:41:00
57.B3f-1d	01:49:00	03:41:00
58.R5bx5e	01:49:00	03:43:00
59.P*5g	01:49:00	03:43:00
60.P*5f	01:49:00	03:51:00
61.N7ex8c=!	02:03:00	03:51:00



The time difference in this game is huge. Kubo has only 9 minutes left, while Watanabe has almost two hours. Watanabe took 14 minutes to make sure that the endgame is winning.

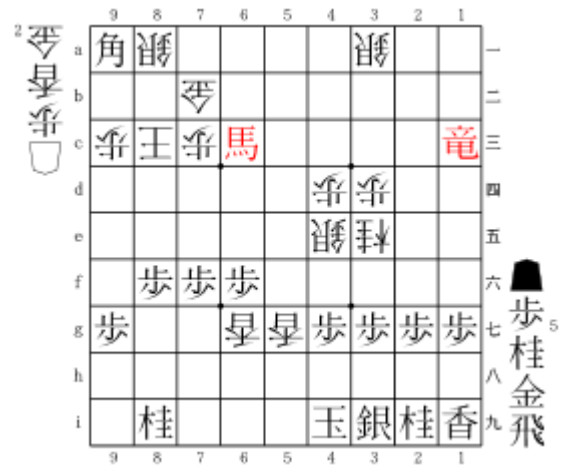
62. K7a-8b	02:03:00	03:51:00
63. B*9a	02:05:00	03:51:00
64. K8b×8c	02:05:00	03:51:00
65. L*8f	02:05:00	03:51:00
66. N*8e	02:05:00	03:54:00
67. B1d×4a+	02:19:00	03:54:00

This threatens mate after Bx7c+ next, and white has no good defense.

68. G6a-7b	02:19:00	03:55:00
69. L8fx8e	02:19:00	03:55:00
70. R5ex8e	02:19:00	03:55:00
71. L*8f	02:19:00	03:55:00

Wins the rook and the game.

72. R8ex8f	02:19:00	03:56:00
73. P8gx8f	02:19:00	03:56:00
74. P5fx5g+	02:19:00	03:56:00
75. G5hx5g	02:20:00	03:56:00
76. L*5d	02:20:00	03:57:00
77. +B4ax6c	02:24:00	03:57:00
78. L5dx5g=	02:24:00	03:57:00
79. K5i-4i	02:24:00	03:57:00
Resigns	02:24:00	03:59:00



If white takes the bishop with 80. Gx6c, he is threatening mate with G\*5h, but then 81. R\*8b Sx8b N\*7e K7d +Rx6c followed by G\*8e is mate and after two minutes of thought, Kubo resigned. Watanabe was surprised how well his new move had worked and he won this game with hardly breaking a sweat. Kubo was unhappy that he was unable to put up a fight, but it is unlikely that he will be trapped like this again. We are all square at 1-1 and Kubo has the black pieces in the third game.

#### Standing after game 2 Kubo – Watanabe 1-1

## Game 3

2011-03-06

Sente: Kubo Toshiaki, Kio

Gote: Watanabe Akira, Challenger

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P8c-8d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3. P5g-5f	00:01:00	00:00:00
4. P8d-8e	00:01:00	00:01:00
5. B8h-7g	00:01:00	00:01:00
6. P5c-5d	00:01:00	00:01:00
7. R2h-5h	00:01:00	00:01:00

The Gokigen Nakabisha, which usually leads to a sharp game, often skipping the middle game and going straight from the opening to the endgame. However, in this game both players go for a much slower build-up, in sharp contrast with the first two games of this match.

8. S7a-6b	00:01:00	00:02:00
9. K5i-4h	00:01:00	00:02:00
10. K5a-4b	00:01:00	00:02:00
11. K4h-3h	00:01:00	00:02:00
12. P3c-3d	00:01:00	00:02:00
13. S7i-6h	00:01:00	00:02:00
14. K4b-3b	00:01:00	00:04:00
15. K3h-2h	00:01:00	00:04:00
16. G6a-5b	00:01:00	00:04:00
17. P1g-1f	00:01:00	00:04:00
18. S6b-5c	00:01:00	00:05:00
19. P1f-1e	00:01:00	00:05:00
20. P4c-4d	00:01:00	00:08:00
21. L1i-1h	00:01:00	00:08:00
22. G5b-4c	00:01:00	00:08:00
23. K2h-1i	00:01:00	00:08:00
24. B2b-3c	00:01:00	00:10:00
25. S3i-2h	00:03:00	00:10:00
26. K3b-2b	00:03:00	00:10:00
27. G4i-3i	00:04:00	00:10:00
28. S3a-3b	00:04:00	00:14:00
29. S6h-5g	00:23:00	00:14:00
30. P2c-2d	00:23:00	00:14:00
31. P2g-2f	00:23:00	00:14:00
32. S3b-2c	00:23:00	00:34:00
33. S2h-2g	00:23:00	00:34:00



Kubo is playing an interesting castle strategy in this game. First pushing the edge pawn and then moving into the Anaguma looks like a strange combination, and moving up this silver next further seems to weaken the king formation. Although Watanabe likes to play the Anaguma himself, he decided to play a Ginkanmuri formation to attack the high Anaguma.

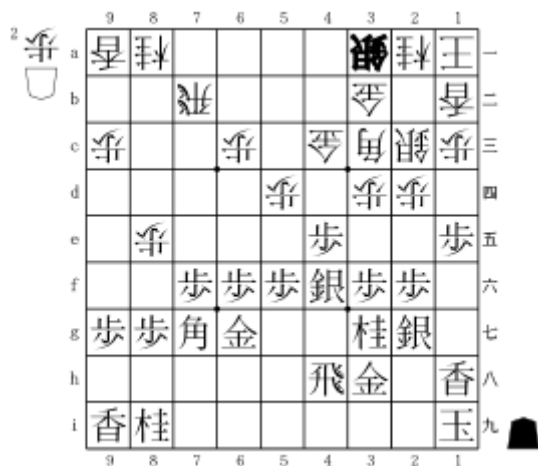
34. G4a-3b	00:23:00	00:34:00
35. G3i-2h	00:28:00	00:34:00
36. P4d-4e	00:28:00	00:35:00
37. P6g-6f	00:29:00	00:35:00
38. P7c-7d	00:29:00	00:38:00
39. P3g-3f	00:30:00	00:38:00
40. P7d-7e	00:30:00	00:57:00
41. P7fx7e	00:31:00	00:57:00
42. R8b-7b	00:31:00	00:57:00
43. N2i-3g	00:50:00	00:57:00



It is hard to judge this move. From an Anaguma point of view, moving up this knight is a cardinal sin and is described as "having the bear take off his underwear". Without the knight protecting the side, the king is very

exposed. The reason for 43.N3g is that it indirectly defends the pawn on 7e, because 44.Rx7e is answered by 45.P\*7f Rx7f Nx4e. Watanabe must have been licking his chops here, but strangely enough Kubo seems to be getting away with this experiment, although after the game he admitted that he had no confidence in his position here.

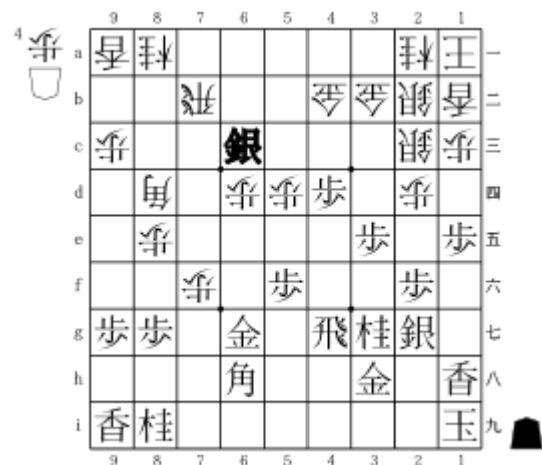
44.S5c-4d	00:50:00	01:08:00
45.P4g-4f	01:25:00	01:08:00
46.P4ex4f	01:25:00	01:08:00
47.S5gx4f	01:30:00	01:08:00
48.R7bx7e	01:30:00	01:09:00
49.P*4e	01:30:00	01:09:00
50.S4d-5c	01:30:00	01:09:00
51.G6i-7h	01:34:00	01:09:00
52.L1a-1b	01:34:00	01:21:00
53.G7h-6g	01:35:00	01:21:00
54.K2b-1a	01:35:00	01:21:00
55.P*7f	01:36:00	01:21:00
56.R7e-7b	01:36:00	01:21:00
57.R5h-4h	01:53:00	01:21:00
58.S5c-4b	01:53:00	01:27:00
59.G2h-3h	01:56:00	01:27:00
60.S4b-3a	01:56:00	01:27:00



This is vintage Watanabe. His opponent has a position where very careful play is required. Instead of attacking, Watanabe keeps the pressure up by transforming his own position into an Anaguma. Ideally, the opponent can only watch helplessly while Watanabe builds an impenetrable position before going for the kill, but Kubo finds a way to do something positive while Watanabe rearranges his pieces.

61.P3f-3e	01:56:00	01:27:00
62.S3a-2b	01:56:00	01:29:00
63.P3ex3d	02:06:00	01:29:00

64.S2cx3d	02:06:00	01:29:00
65.P*3f	02:06:00	01:29:00
66.B3c-5a	02:06:00	01:39:00
67.P6f-6e	02:10:00	01:39:00
68.P*7e	02:10:00	02:01:00
69.P6e-6d	02:25:00	02:01:00
70.P6cx6d	02:25:00	02:07:00
71.P4e-4d	02:32:00	02:07:00
72.G4c-4b	02:32:00	02:07:00
73.S4f-4e	02:37:00	02:07:00
74.S3dx4e	02:37:00	02:07:00
75.R4hx4e	02:37:00	02:07:00
76.S*3d	02:37:00	02:08:00
77.R4e-4g	02:39:00	02:08:00
78.P7ex7f	02:39:00	02:13:00
79.B7g-6h	02:39:00	02:13:00
80.B5a-8d	02:39:00	02:16:00
81.P3f-3e	02:53:00	02:16:00
82.S3d-2c	02:53:00	02:16:00
83.S*6c!	03:08:00	02:16:00



Strong move. A lot of players would not be able to resist the temptation of 83.S\*4c, but after 84.G4bx4c Px4c+ S\*5h is a strong counter. For example, Rx4e Sx6g= +Px3b Sx3b and the white position stays pretty solid.

84.R7b-8b	03:08:00	02:16:00
85.S6cx5d+	03:14:00	02:16:00
86.P*5c	03:14:00	02:16:00
87.+S5dx6d	03:15:00	02:16:00
88.R8b-6b	03:15:00	02:26:00
89.P*6c	03:15:00	02:26:00
90.R6b-7b	03:15:00	02:26:00
91.P*7d	03:17:00	02:26:00

This is the position that Kubo was aiming for when he played 83.S\*6c. He has managed to contain white's major pieces, thereby taking away most of Watanabe's attacking options. Watanabe has been called "Little Oyama"



when he was in the Shoreikai , but here Kubo shows how to play in the style of the greatest defender that ever played the game.

92.G4b-3c	03:17:00	02:56:00
93.+S6dx5c	03:18:00	02:56:00
94.P*4b	03:18:00	02:56:00
95.B6h-4f	03:21:00	02:56:00
96.R7bx7d	03:21:00	03:03:00
97.P6c-6b+	03:21:00	03:03:00
98.P7f-7g+	03:21:00	03:04:00
99.G6gx7g	03:23:00	03:04:00
100.P*5g	03:23:00	03:07:00
101.+P6b-5b	03:28:00	03:07:00
102.P5g-5h+	03:28:00	03:07:00
103.P3e-3d	03:32:00	03:07:00
104.S2cx3d	03:32:00	03:15:00
105.+P5bx4b	03:32:00	03:15:00
106.G3bx4b	03:32:00	03:15:00
107.+S5cx4b	03:32:00	03:15:00
108.R7dx4d	03:32:00	03:16:00



Counting on the difference in king position, Watanabe has decided to invest a full gold to get his pieces working again. It seems like an overplay, but with the limited thinking time of the Kio match, it may have been his best chance.

109.G*3b	03:32:00	03:16:00
110.P*3a	03:32:00	03:18:00
111.+S4bx3a	03:37:00	03:18:00
112.S2bx3a	03:37:00	03:18:00
113.G3bx3a	03:37:00	03:18:00
114.S*2b	03:37:00	03:18:00
115.S*3b	03:40:00	03:18:00
116.S2bx3a	03:40:00	03:19:00
117.S3bx3a+	03:40:00	03:19:00
118.G*2b	03:40:00	03:38:00



Hard to criticize this move, because there wasn't a good alternative. White really wants to play 118.+P5g here, but black can answer this with 119.S\*3b G\*2b B5e! and +Px4g Bx4d G3cx3b +Sx3b and even with the extra silver white has no mate because the black king can escape through the chimney of the first file. Still, after 118.G\*2b Kubo gets a very clear advantage.

119.P*4e	03:42:00	03:38:00
120.R4d-5d	03:42:00	03:39:00
121.S*4d	03:42:00	03:39:00
122.P*3b	03:42:00	03:41:00
123.S4dx3c+	03:43:00	03:41:00
124.P3bx3c	03:43:00	03:43:00
125.G*3b	03:43:00	03:43:00
126.S*2c	03:43:00	03:43:00
127.G3bx2b	03:45:00	03:43:00
128.K1ax2b	03:45:00	03:43:00
129.G*4d?	03:48:00	03:43:00

A mistake that makes the game very close. Correct was 129.P\*3e first to build up some extra pressure at the head of the king.

130.R5dx5f	03:48:00	03:43:00
131.G7g-6g	03:51:00	03:43:00
132.R5f-5a	03:51:00	03:44:00



Here Watanabe could have put all his eggs in one basket with 132.+P4h. It just doesn't work after 133.Gx5f +Px3h Sx3h B3i+ R\*8b K1a N2e! is a mating threat that defends against a mating threat. With 132.R5a Watanabe picks a slower death, but a more certain one. Kubo needs some accurate play, but he doesn't give Watanabe another chance.

133.+S3ax2a	03:51:00	03:44:00
134.K2bx2a	03:51:00	03:44:00
135.P*5b	03:51:00	03:44:00
136.R5ax5b	03:51:00	03:44:00
137.P*5c	03:51:00	03:44:00
138.R5b-7b	03:51:00	03:45:00

With this rook out of the way, Kubo can start his decisive attack.

139.G4dx3c	03:51:00	03:45:00
140.P*3b	03:51:00	03:49:00
141.G3cx2c	03:51:00	03:49:00
142.S3dx2c	03:51:00	03:49:00
143.N*3e	03:51:00	03:49:00
144.S*3d	03:51:00	03:53:00
145.N3ex2c+	03:51:00	03:53:00
146.S3dx2c	03:51:00	03:53:00
147.P*7e!	03:51:00	03:53:00



This the decisive move. White has the option of blocking the rook, blocking the bishop or blocking both.

148.B8dx7e 03:51:00 03:53:00

Watanabe decides to block the bishop, but without the threat of promoting the rook, his attack is slowed down decisively. However, after 148.Rx7e P2e it also seems that black is winning.

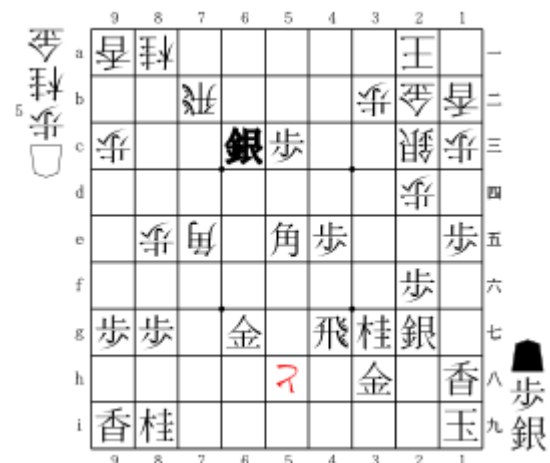
149.B4f-5e 03:53:00 03:53:00

This bishop has been dormant, but now enters the attack.

150.G\*2b 03:53:00 03:54:00

The cheap alternative 150.P3c fails to 151.P\*3d G\*3i Gx3i Bx3i+ G\*2i N\*3e Gx3i Nx2g= K2h because Nx3i+ is not a mating threat and can be simply answered with Px3c+ and black wins.

151.S\*6c! 03:54:00 03:54:00



Another good move by Kubo. White cannot afford to give up the rook and this rook also must stay on the second rank to defend, so Watanabe has no choice but to move it into a completely harmless position as far as attacking is concerned.

152.R7b-9b 03:54:00 03:54:00  
153.G6g-6f 03:55:00 03:54:00

This makes the black king completely safe. Black wins.

154.G\*5g 03:55:00 03:59:00  
155.R4gx5g 03:57:00 03:59:00  
156.B7ex6f 03:57:00 03:59:00  
157.R5gx5h 03:57:00 03:59:00  
158.P\*5g 03:57:00 03:59:00  
159.B5ex6f 03:57:00 03:59:00  
160.P5gx5h+ 03:57:00 03:59:00  
161.P\*3i 03:57:00 03:59:00  
162.R\*6i 03:57:00 03:59:00  
163.B\*5e 03:58:00 03:59:00  
164.P3b-3c 03:58:00 03:59:00  
165.B5ex3c+ 03:58:00 03:59:00  
166.G\*3b 03:58:00 03:59:00  
167.S\*4b 03:58:00 03:59:00  
168.R9bx4b 03:58:00 03:59:00  
169.P5c-5b+ 03:58:00 03:59:00  
170.G2bx3c 03:58:00 03:59:00  
171.B6fx3c+ 03:58:00 03:59:00  
172.G3bx3c 03:58:00 03:59:00  
173.+P5bx4b 03:59:00 03:59:00  
174.P\*3a 03:59:00 03:59:00  
175.R\*5a 03:59:00 03:59:00  
176.S\*2b 03:59:00 03:59:00  
177.G\*1a 03:59:00 03:59:00  
Resigns 03:59:00 03:59:00



Hisshi after 178.Kx1a +Px3a and white has no

mate, so Watanabe resigned here. A tough game to lose for Watanabe, as he must have felt pretty good in the middle game considering Kubo's unusual castling formation. Still, Kubo played very well from a position that seemed to lack the right balance and in the end won quite convincingly as there didn't seem to have been a position where Watanabe had the advantage. This puts Kubo on the brink of defending his Kio title, but Watanabe can try to take this match the full distance by winning game 4 with the black pieces.

### Standing after game 3 Kubo – Watanabe 2-1

## Game 4

2011-03-18

Sente: Watanabe Akira, Challenger

Gote: Kubo Toshiaki, Kio

1. P2g-2f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
4. P5c-5d	00:00:00	00:01:00
5. P2f-2e	00:00:00	00:01:00
6. R8b-5b	00:00:00	00:01:00
7. S3i-4h	00:00:00	00:01:00
8. P5d-5e	00:00:00	00:01:00
9. K5i-6h	00:00:00	00:01:00
10. B2b-3c	00:00:00	00:01:00
11. P3g-3f	00:00:00	00:01:00
12. K5a-6b	00:00:00	00:14:00
13. S4h-3g	00:00:00	00:14:00
14. K6b-7b	00:00:00	00:14:00
15. S3g-4f	00:00:00	00:14:00



In reply to Kubo's Gokigen Nakabisha, Watanabe plays the ultra quick right silver attack. Nowadays the most popular way of play for black in this opening.

16. K7b-8b	00:00:00	00:14:00
17. K6h-7h	00:00:00	00:14:00
18. S7a-7b	00:00:00	00:14:00
19. S7i-6h	00:00:00	00:14:00
20. G4a-3b	00:00:00	00:14:00
21. S6h-7g	00:00:00	00:14:00
22. P5e-5f	00:00:00	00:14:00
23. P5g×5f	00:00:00	00:14:00
24. R5b×5f	00:00:00	00:14:00
25. S7g-6f	00:00:00	00:14:00
26. R5f-5a	00:00:00	00:14:00
27. S4f-5e	00:00:00	00:14:00

28. P*5d	00:00:00	00:18:00
29. S5e-4f	00:00:00	00:18:00
30. P6c-6d	00:00:00	00:24:00
31. B8h-7g	00:01:00	00:24:00



This is Watanabe's new idea. The bishop is vulnerable at the head and there is always the risk of attack through a knight on 6e or 8e. Watanabe has judged that it is more important that he can take with the knight in case of a bishop exchange on 7g, which leaves the king much better protected.

32. P7c-7d	00:01:00	00:39:00
33. S4f-4e	00:05:00	00:39:00
34. N8a-7c	00:05:00	00:56:00
35. S4ex3d	00:05:00	00:56:00
36. B3c-4b	00:05:00	00:56:00
37. G6i-6h	00:25:00	00:56:00
38. S3a-2b	00:25:00	01:01:00
39. G4i-5h	00:28:00	01:01:00
40. S7b-6c	00:28:00	01:02:00

Black has won a pawn, but the balance between the two silvers is bad and it seems hard to improve their position. Watanabe finds a way...

41. S6f-5g!	00:51:00	01:02:00
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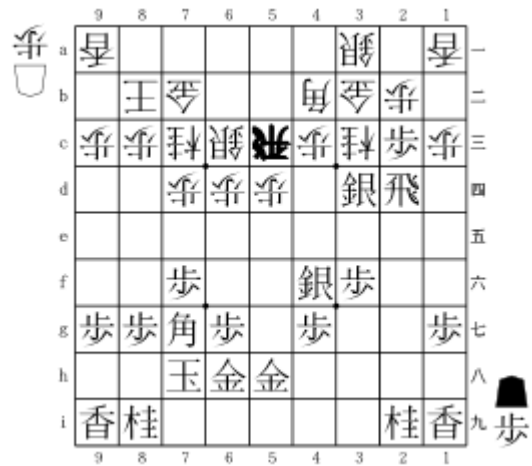


Not an easy move to find, as the knight fork N6e seems to prevent this. However, after 42.N6e Bx2b+! Gx2b Sx4c+ black gets an overwhelming position despite being down in material. The bad position of the bishop on 4b and the gold on 2b more than makes up for the bishop sacrifice.

42.N2a-3c 00:51:00 01:12:00  
43.S5g-4f 00:55:00 01:12:00

Now the two silvers work together well and black has also managed to open the bishop diagonal. Black has a clear advantage here, but Kubo is famous for his resilience in worse positions.

44.G6a-7b 00:55:00 01:12:00  
45.P2e-2d 00:58:00 01:12:00  
46.P2cx2d 00:58:00 01:12:00  
47.P\*2c 00:58:00 01:12:00  
48.S2b-3a 00:58:00 01:12:00  
49.R2hx2d 00:58:00 01:12:00  
50.P\*2a 00:58:00 01:15:00  
51.P2c-2b+ 01:18:00 01:15:00  
52.P2ax2b 01:18:00 01:34:00  
53.P\*2c 01:18:00 01:34:00  
54.R5a-5c! 01:18:00 01:42:00



As is his style, Kubo does whatever it takes to fight back. This defends against Px2b+ Sx2b Sx4c+, but on 5c the rook seems to be in a very awkward spot. The glaring threat is a later Sx3c+ followed by N4e, but if black tries to put this in the position immediately with 55.N3g, then 56.P5e! is a very good counter. For example, 57.Px2b+ Sx2b Sx3c= can be answered with Bx3c because the bishop diagonal is now closed. Also, 57.Bx5e Rx5e Sx5e N4e or 57.Sx5e N6e B6f P\*5f is not bad for black.

55.P2cx2b+ 01:37:00 01:42:00  
56.S3ax2b 01:37:00 01:44:00  
57.S3dx3c= 01:37:00 01:44:00  
58.S2bx3c 01:37:00 01:46:00  
59.R2d-2a+ 01:37:00 01:46:00  
60.G3b-2b 01:37:00 01:48:00  
61.+R2ax1a 01:42:00 01:48:00  
62.R5c-5a! 01:42:00 01:48:00



The second point of 54.R5c. Now white can force the exchange of rooks which swings the balance in white's favor.

63.+R1ax5a	01:55:00	01:48:00
64.B4bx5a	01:55:00	01:48:00
65.N*4e	02:00:00	01:48:00
66.N7c-6e	02:00:00	02:16:00
67.N4e-5c+	02:05:00	02:16:00
68.N6ex7g+	02:05:00	02:30:00
69.N8ix7g	02:05:00	02:30:00
70.B5a-9e	02:05:00	02:38:00
71.N*8f	02:37:00	02:38:00
72.B*4d	02:37:00	02:57:00
73.+N5cx6c	02:45:00	02:57:00
74.G7bx6c	02:45:00	02:57:00
75.S*5b	02:46:00	02:57:00
76.G6c-5c?	02:46:00	03:17:00



A mistake. Correct would have been 76.G6b. This looks bad because of the fork 77.Nx7d, but after 78.K7c Nx6b+ B4dx7g+ Gx7g Bx7g+ Kx7g N\*6e the black king is mated.

77.S5b-6a+!	03:03:00	03:17:00
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Here Kubo had counted on 77.S6a= after which he thought he could stop the attack with 78.K7a. However, 77.S6a+ is much stronger because of the devastating bishop drop on 7a if white gives up a bishop. But then again, without giving up a bishop there is no way to attack the black king.

78.S*7b	03:03:00	03:37:00
79.N8fx7d	03:11:00	03:37:00
80.K8b-7c	03:11:00	03:37:00
81.+S6a-6b	03:11:00	03:37:00

The net around the white king is closing. Black wins and we are going to see a fifth and decisive game. At least, that is what everyone thought, including both players.

82.G5c-6c	03:11:00	03:50:00
83.+S6bx7b	03:25:00	03:50:00
84.K7cx7b	03:25:00	03:50:00
85.R*8b	03:28:00	03:50:00
86.K7b-7c	03:28:00	03:50:00
87.L*8f	03:28:00	03:50:00
88.B9ex8f	03:28:00	03:58:00
89.P8gx8f	03:29:00	03:58:00
90.G6cx7d	03:29:00	03:58:00
91.R8b-5b+	03:29:00	03:58:00
92.N*9e	03:29:00	03:58:00
93.P7f-7e	03:50:00	03:58:00
94.S*8g	03:50:00	03:58:00
95.K7h-6i	03:50:00	03:58:00
96.R*8i	03:50:00	03:58:00
97.S*7i	03:50:00	03:58:00
98.G7dx7e	03:50:00	03:58:00
99.B*8b?	03:51:00	03:58:00

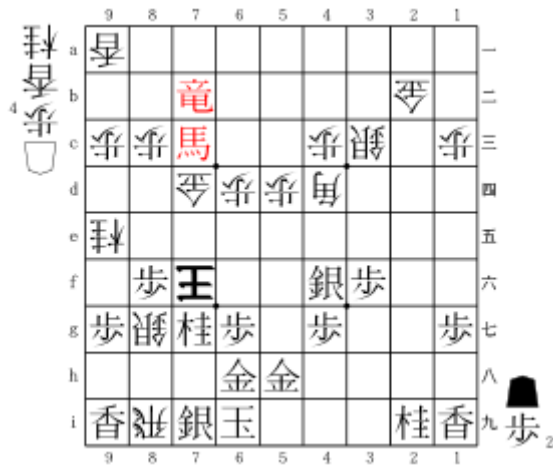


A first mistake based on a huge oversight by Watanabe. Easy would have been 99.B\*5a N\*6b P\*5c and the decisive +Rx6b next cannot be defended.

100.K7c-8d	03:51:00	03:58:00
101.+R5b-7b?	03:52:00	
	03:58:00	

This is the final mistake. If Watanabe would have seen his error here, he could still have recovered by playing 101.+R6c here. Then 102.N\*8a Bx6d+ L\*6b is not good enough because of +Bx7e Kx7e G\*8e and mate.

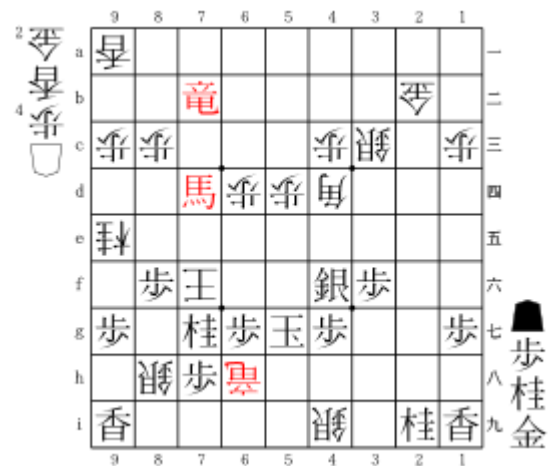
102.G7e-7d	03:52:00	03:58:00
103.P*7e	03:52:00	03:58:00
104.K8dx7e	03:52:00	03:58:00
105.B8b-7c+	03:52:00	03:58:00
106.K7e-7f!	03:52:00	03:58:00



For some reason, Watanabe thought that white had to play 106.Kx8f here, after which 107.+Bx9e Kx9e +Rx7d is winning for black. However, after 106.K7f there is no mate against the white king, which now helps in attack, creating the mating threat Rx7i+ Kx7i S\*7h Gx7h Sx7h+ Kx7h Bx7g+ etc. Kubo was a relieved man here, admitting that he felt he was losing until he found 106.K7f.

107.G5h-5i	03:59:00	03:58:00
108.N*5f	03:59:00	03:58:00
109.P*7h	03:59:00	03:58:00
110.N5fx6h+	03:59:00	03:58:00
111.G5ix6h	03:59:00	03:58:00
112.S8g-8h=	03:59:00	03:58:00
113.+B7cx7d	03:59:00	03:58:00
114.R8ix7i+	03:59:00	03:58:00
115.K6i-5h	03:59:00	03:58:00

116.S*4i	03:59:00	03:58:00
117.K5h-5g	03:59:00	03:58:00
118.+R7ix6h	03:59:00	03:58:00
Resigns	03:59:00	03:58:00



Simple mate after 118.K5f +Rx6g K4e G\*3d Kx5d G\*5c, so Watanabe resigns here. Not a perfect game, but a very interesting game where the knights played a very important role. Watanabe will have been disappointed that he left something on the table in this title match. On the other hand, Kubo will have been delighted with defending both of his crowns in the same week.

### Finale standing Kubo – Watanabe 3-1



## Summary

		Kubo	Watanabe
06.02.2011	<a href="#">Kubo - Watanabe 1-0</a>	1	0
26.02.2011	<a href="#">Watanabe - Kubo 1-0</a>	1	1
06.03.2011	<a href="#">Kubo - Watanabe 1-0</a>	2	1
18.03.2011	<a href="#">Watanabe - Kubo 0-1</a>	3	1

## 69th Meijin

### 69th Meijin A-Class

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Wins	Losses	Rank
1	<a href="#">Miura</a>	x	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	4	5	5.-8.
2	<a href="#">Takahashi</a>	1	x	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	5	4	3.-4.
3	<a href="#">Moriuchi</a>	1	1	x	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	7	2	1.
4	<a href="#">Maruyama</a>	0	0	0	x	0	1	1	0	1	1	4	5	5.-8.
5	<a href="#">Kimura</a>	0	1	0	1	x	0	0	0	0	1	3	6	9.-10.
6	<a href="#">Tanigawa</a>	1	0	0	0	1	x	0	1	0	1	4	5	5.-8.
7	<a href="#">Goda</a>	0	0	1	0	1	1	x	1	1	0	5	4	3.-4.
8	<a href="#">Fujii</a>	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	x	0	0	3	6	9.-10.
9	<a href="#">Watanabe</a>	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	x	1	6	3	2.
10	<a href="#">Kubo</a>	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	x	4	5	5.-8.

Before the last round Moriuchi and Watanabe shared the lead of the A-Class with 6 wins and 2 losses. But while Moriuchi beat Kubo, Watanabe lost his game against Maruyama. So Moriuchi was the winner of the A-Class tournament with a score of 7-2.

### 69th Meijin title match

#### Game 1

2011-04-07/08

**Sente:** Moriuchi Toshiyuki, Challenger

**Gote:** Habu Yoshiharu, Meijin

1. P7g-7f 00:00:00 00:00:00

It has been 25 years since two Lifetime Meijins played for the title. This is the sixth time that Habu and Moriuchi meet in the Meijin match. They play their 102nd official game, so they know each other's game very well. One interesting statistic that gave some weight to the furigoma: black has a 64% winning percentage in their mutual games. Actually, the first pawn toss resulted in two pawns, two tokens and a piece on its side, so the furigoma had to be done again. This time it were four tokens, so challenger Moriuchi starts this match

with the black pieces.

2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3. P2g-2f	00:00:00	00:00:00
4. P8c-8d	00:00:00	00:04:00
5. P2f-2e	00:00:00	00:04:00
6. P8d-8e	00:00:00	00:07:00
7. G6i-7h	00:00:00	00:07:00
8. G4a-3b	00:00:00	00:11:00
9. P2e-2d	00:03:00	00:11:00
10. P2cx2d	00:03:00	00:12:00
11. R2hx2d	00:03:00	00:12:00
12. P8e-8f	00:03:00	00:20:00
13. P8gx8f	00:04:00	00:20:00
14. R8bx8f	00:04:00	00:20:00
15. R2dx3d	00:04:00	00:20:00
16. B2b-3c	00:04:00	00:22:00
17. R3d-3f	00:04:00	00:22:00
18. S3a-2b	00:04:00	00:27:00
19. R3f-2f	00:29:00	00:27:00
20. K5a-5b	00:29:00	00:40:00
21. P*8g	00:34:00	00:40:00
22. R8f-8e	00:34:00	00:46:00
23. S3i-4h	00:38:00	00:46:00
24. P7c-7d	00:38:00	01:12:00
25. G4i-3h	00:40:00	01:12:00

26.G6a-5a	00:40:00	01:17:00
27.K5i-5h	00:45:00	01:17:00
28.S7a-6b	00:45:00	01:21:00
29.P1g-1f	00:47:00	01:21:00
30.N8a-7c	00:47:00	01:29:00
31.P1f-1e	00:47:00	01:29:00
32.S2b-2c	00:47:00	01:33:00



The combination of K5b and S2c is currently a very popular opening strategy. The reason for playing the king to 5b instead of 4a is to make it less attractive for black to attack along the third file. The reason for 32.S2c is to take away a later P\*1b Lx1b B\*2a.

33.B8h×3c+	01:27:00	01:33:00
34.N2ax3c	01:27:00	01:34:00
35.S7i-8h	01:27:00	01:34:00
36.P9c-9d	01:27:00	01:56:00
37.R2f-2h	01:50:00	01:56:00
38.P*2d	01:50:00	02:41:00
39.S8h-7g	02:30:00	02:41:00
40.R8e-8d	02:30:00	02:58:00
41.P3g-3f	03:56:00	02:58:00
42.P7d-7e	03:56:00	04:11:00

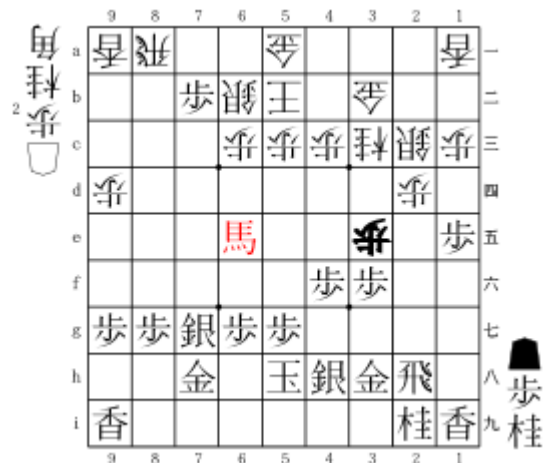


The sealed move.

43.P4g-4f	04:00:00	04:11:00
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Black cannot take the pawn on 7e because after 43.Px7e B\*5e B\*4f Bx7g+ Nx7g P\*7f gives white both the silver and the knight for the bishop, which is good for white. Please note that white played 40.R8d to be able to play this bishop sacrifice. If the rook still had been on 8e, then Nx7g would attack the rook and the bishop sacrifice would fail. 43.P4f allows white the attack on head of the knight on 7g, but in return black can promote the bishop, which is a serious problem for white.

44.N7c-8e	04:00:00	05:23:00
45.S7g-6f	04:34:00	05:23:00
46.P7ex7f	04:34:00	05:25:00
47.P*7d	04:36:00	05:25:00
48.R8dx7d	04:36:00	05:52:00
49.B*8c	04:39:00	05:52:00
50.R7d-7a	04:39:00	05:53:00
51.P*7b	05:37:00	05:53:00
52.R7a-8a	05:37:00	05:54:00
53.B8c-6e+	05:37:00	05:54:00
54.P7f-7g+	05:37:00	06:10:00
55.N8ix7g	05:37:00	06:10:00
56.N8ex7g+	05:37:00	06:10:00
57.S6fx7g	05:37:00	06:10:00
58.P*3e?	05:37:00	06:10:00



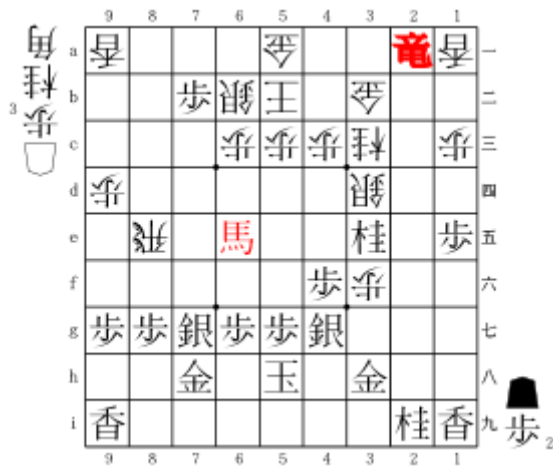
In the press room, 58.B\*5d was analyzed here. Exchanging the bishops is not an option for black, because he has sacrificed a couple of pawns to promote the bishop. If 58.+B5e then 59.R8e +Bx9a Bx8g+ is good for white. However, in the post-mortem analysis both players pointed out that after 58.P7a+ Sx7a +B5e R8e +Bx9a Bx8g+ P\*8f +Bx7h Px8e +Bx7g R\*7c is a strong fork and it is difficult for

white to attack the black king. This being said, 58.P\*3e leads to a clear black advantage and Ryu-O Watanabe wasn't so sure that 58.P7a+ Rx7a was so bad for white, because white gets four pawns as compensation for the promoted bishop. Despite the fact that the players agreed that B\*5d wasn't satisfactory for white, it seems clear that it was better than what happened in the game.

59.S4h-4g	05:54:00	06:10:00
60.P3ex3f	05:54:00	06:21:00
61.N*3e	06:09:00	06:21:00
62.S2c-3d	06:09:00	06:43:00
63.R2hx2d	06:55:00	06:43:00
64.R8a-8e	06:55:00	06:59:00

Again, in the press room 64.B\*1b was viewed as a desperate attempt to hold the white position together, but after 65.Nx4c+ Sx4c P\*3d R8e Px3c+ Rx6e +Px4c Gx4c R2b+ black still has a big advantage.

65.R2d-2a+! 07:15:00 06:59:00



Black ignores the attack on the bishop and sets up an attack at both side of the white king.

66.R8ex6e	07:15:00	07:43:00
67.+R2ax3b	07:16:00	07:43:00
68.N*4b	07:16:00	07:44:00
69.+R3bx3c	07:34:00	07:44:00
70.R6ex3e	07:34:00	07:46:00
71.N*7d	07:39:00	07:46:00
72.S6b-7c	07:39:00	07:49:00
73.P7b-7a+	07:48:00	07:49:00

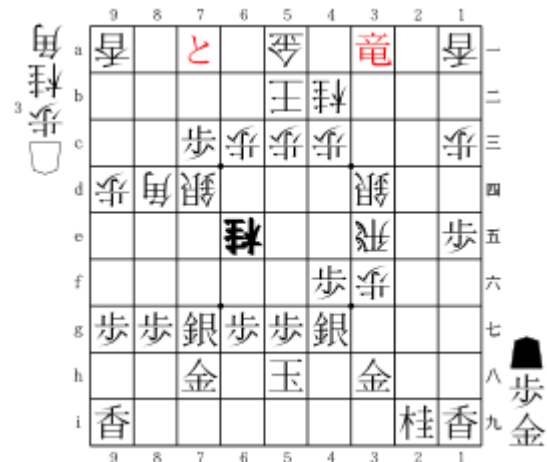
With the promoted rook on the one side and the promoted pawn on the other side, the white king is squeezed. The

game has already been decided.

74.S7cx7d	07:48:00	07:52:00
75.+R3c-3a	08:00:00	07:52:00
76.B*8d	08:00:00	08:04:00
77.P*7c	08:33:00	08:04:00

Threatens to create a second promoted pawn.

78.N\*6e 08:33:00 08:15:00



Here 78.R2e seems to be an alternative, because 79.G\*3b can be answered by P6d, which is not so clear. However, if black plays 79.+P7b instead, then P6d P\*2g is a cool-headed move and Habu admitted that it was hard to find a good move for white. In the end, a lot of different variations were explored, but none of them led to a better position for white. Habu commented after the game that probably his opening strategy was flawed and needed a little more effort.

79.S7g-6f	08:34:00	08:15:00
80.R3e-2e	08:34:00	08:16:00
81.G*3b!	08:40:00	08:16:00

Vulgar move, but white has no defense.

82.P5c-5d	08:40:00	08:32:00
83.+P7a-7b	08:43:00	08:32:00

Threatens simple mate with +Rx5a Kx5a G\*6b.

84.B*5c	08:43:00	08:43:00
85.P*2g	08:45:00	08:43:00
86.R2e-3e	08:45:00	08:44:00
87.S6fx6e	08:54:00	08:44:00
88.R3ex6e	08:54:00	08:51:00
89.N*4e	08:54:00	08:51:00

90.S3dx4e	08:54:00	08:51:00
91.P4fx4e	08:54:00	08:51:00
92.B5c-3e	08:54:00	08:51:00
93.G3bx4b	08:55:00	08:51:00
94.G5ax4b	08:55:00	08:51:00
95.+R3a-6a	08:55:00	08:51:00
Resigns	08:55:00	08:51:00



Mate after 96.K5c +R6b K6d N\*7f K7f S\*8f K7f G7g so Habu resigned here. A rather one-sided game and a great start for Moriuchi. But then again, the winning percentage for black doesn't lie, so it will be more important to see how Moriuchi does with the white pieces in the second game. This Meijin match has only just begun.

**Standing after game 1**  
**Habu - Moriuchi 0-1**

## Game 2

2011-04-20/21

Sente: Habu Yoshiharu, Meijin

Gote: Moriuchi Toshiyuki, Challenger

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P8c-8d	00:00:00	00:01:00
3. S7i-6h	00:04:00	00:01:00
4. P3c-3d	00:04:00	00:01:00
5. P6g-6f	00:05:00	00:01:00
6. S7a-6b	00:05:00	00:02:00
7. P5g-5f	00:08:00	00:02:00
8. P5c-5d	00:08:00	00:02:00
9. S3i-4h	00:15:00	00:02:00
10. S3a-4b	00:15:00	00:06:00
11. G4i-5h	00:19:00	00:06:00
12. G4a-3b	00:19:00	00:08:00
13. G5h-6g	00:29:00	00:08:00
14. K5a-4a	00:29:00	00:19:00
15. P2g-2f	00:32:00	00:19:00



After a Yokofudori in the first game, this game seems to start as a slow paced Yagura. The most popular strategy for black is to leave the rook pawn on 2g as long as possible, but Habu moves the rook pawn to 2f quickly here. He combines this with leaving the gold on 6i, keeping the option of moving into the castle quickly with K6h-K7h. This is the type of strategy that Fujii likes.

16. P7c-7d	00:32:00	00:27:00
17. S6h-7g	00:35:00	00:27:00
18. G6a-5b	00:35:00	00:37:00
19. B8h-7i	00:42:00	00:37:00
20. S4b-3c	00:42:00	00:51:00
21. P3g-3f	00:51:00	00:51:00
22. B2b-3a	00:51:00	00:52:00
23. S4h-3g	01:10:00	00:52:00

24. P8d-8e 01:10:00 01:00:00

Tries to force the gold to 7h after which the game will develop into one of the most classic Yagura formations.

25. S3g-4f?! 02:30:00 01:00:00



Habu has other ideas. With 25.S4f he is aiming at a quick attack through the center. When the fighting is concentrated in the middle of the board, pushing the pawn to 8e might become a vital loss of tempo. However, not defending the 8th file seems risky here and starting the fight with a sitting king is not something to be recommended. Now we suddenly get into a wild middle game fight that moves quickly into the endgame.

26. P4c-4d	02:30:00	01:06:00
27. P5f-5e	02:44:00	01:06:00
28. S6b-5c	02:44:00	01:18:00
29. R2h-5h	02:49:00	01:18:00
30. P5dx5e	02:49:00	02:14:00
31. S4fx5e	02:49:00	02:14:00
32. P*5d	02:49:00	02:24:00
33. S5ex5d	03:02:00	02:24:00
34. S5cx5d	03:02:00	02:30:00
35. R5hx5d	03:03:00	02:30:00

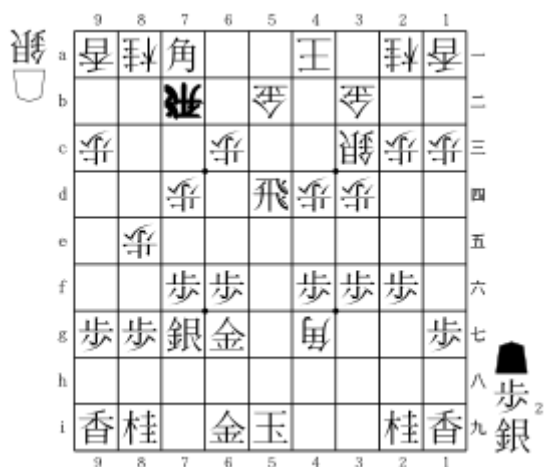
Black has won a pawn, but white has a strong counter attack.

36. B3a-6d	03:03:00	02:31:00
37. B7i-4f	03:04:00	02:31:00
38. B6dx4f	03:04:00	03:05:00
39. P4gx4f	03:06:00	03:05:00
40. B*4g	03:06:00	03:06:00

This creates a promoted bishop. Black has to

act quickly or the strong bishop will decide the game.

41. B\*7a 04:39:00 03:06:00  
42. R8b-7b 04:39:00 03:27:00

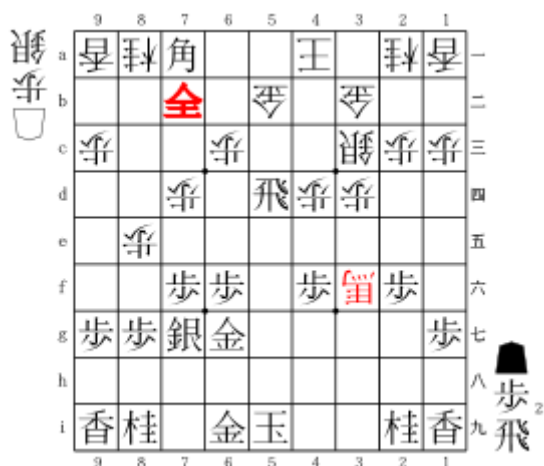


The sealed move.

43. S\*6a 04:45:00 03:27:00  
44. B4g×3f+ 04:45:00 04:06:00

It is still very early on the second day, but this is already the decisive position of this game.

45. S6ax7b+? 05:42:00 04:06:00



Not the right move. The obvious alternative 45. Rx5b+ is also not good after 46. Rx5b Sx5b+ Kx5b and with the rook in hand the sitting king is impossible to defend. For example, P\*5h R\*3i K6h +Bx4f K7h S\*6b R\*7b S\*6a the black attack is stopped. Correct was to pull back the rook once with 45. R5g. For example, 46. Rx7a 47. Rx5b+ 48. K3a and if black now rushes with 49. +R6b then 50. P\*4e is the perfect answer because +Rx7a can be answered with the fork +Bx2f and if white can

play Px4f next, the king on 5i cannot be defended. However, if black chases away the bishop first with 49. P\*3g +B4g G5h! +Bx2i +R6b and with the promoted bishop out of play on 2i, black suddenly has good fighting chances. After the game, Habu admitted that this was his only chance of the game.

46. +B3fx5d 05:42:00 04:08:00  
47. +S7b-6b 05:42:00 04:08:00  
48. G5b-5c! 05:42:00 05:10:00

Not the best shape, but the right move here. If 48. G3b-4b, then 49. +Sx5b Gx5b P\*5c Gx5c R\*8b S\*4b Rx8a+ K3b N\*2e is unclear.

49. R\*5a 06:27:00 05:10:00

It seems like 49. R\*6a is better because it keeps the option of R6a+, but after 50. K4b B8b+ R\*3a and after Rx3a+ Kx3a the king escapes into the castle and after +Bx9a Rx6a +Sx6a the promoted silver is a major liability.

50. K4a-4b 06:27:00 05:10:00  
51. B7a-8b+ 06:27:00 05:10:00  
52. R\*2h 06:27:00 05:47:00

Again the correct move. If white defends with 52. R\*3a here like in the variation above, then 53. +Bx9a Rx5a +Sx5a is a mating threat and Kx5a is answered by L\*5h which works both in attack and defense. 52. R\*2h is a strong counter attack aiming straight at the sitting king.

53. R5ax8a+ 06:34:00 05:47:00

It is still around three o'clock in the afternoon, but the mood in the press room was that the game was almost over. So much so, that people were talking about the possibility that the record for the shortest Meijin match game ever could be broken here. White is clearly winning, but must be careful not to allow things like 54. +R5a K4c N\*5e here. Moriuchi finds a pretty way to finish this game quickly.

54. +B5d-3f 06:34:00 06:34:00  
55. P\*5h 07:06:00 06:34:00  
56. S\*7h! 07:06:00 06:34:00

Nice silver drop. Black cannot take this silver



with 57.Gx7h because of 58.+Bx5h and 57.K6h fails to 58.Sx6i+.

57.G6g-5g 07:12:00 06:34:00



Black can try to chase the white king here, but after 57.+R5a K4c N\*5e K5d +Rx5c Kx5c +Sx6c +Bx6c Nx6c+ Kx6c black can still not take the silver on 7h because Gx7h S\*4h K6h R\*6i Kx6i Rx2i+ and mate. This deep variation is the real reason the silver drop on 7h was so strong. 57.G5g drags the game beyond the 63 move mark, but the outcome is not in doubt.

58.R2hx2i+ 07:12:00 06:37:00  
 59.N\*4i 07:12:00 06:37:00  
 60.S7hx6i+ 07:12:00 06:45:00  
 61.K5ix6i 07:12:00 06:45:00  
 62.+R2ix4i 07:12:00 06:45:00  
 63.K6i-7h 07:12:00 06:45:00  
 64.N\*4a 07:12:00 06:50:00  
 65.+S6b-5a 07:16:00 06:50:00  
 66.K4b-3a 07:16:00 06:58:00  
 67.+S5ax4a 07:17:00 06:58:00  
 68.K3a-2b 07:17:00 07:02:00  
 Resigns 07:17:00 07:02:00



The white king has escaped into the Yagura castle and the only reasonable attacking move 68.+R7b is answered by 69.P\*5b and black has nothing to follow up. On the other hand, white has devastating moves like +Bx5h or P\*5f so the black king cannot be properly defended, so Habu resigned here. A one-sided game in a one-sided match so far. Moriuchi is controlling everything and Habu needs to do something quickly or he will be without a Meijin title in a flash. Taking this game with the white pieces is especially important, because the winning percentage with black is so high between these two players. Habu therefore already faces the huge task of winning with white as well in game three to avoid a nearly decisive 3-0 deficit.

### Standing after game 2 Habu - Moriuchi 0-2

## Game 3

2011-05-06/07

Sente: Moriuchi Toshiyuki, Challenger

Gote: Habu Yoshiharu, Meijin

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:01:00
3. P2g-2f	00:02:00	00:01:00
4. P5c-5d	00:02:00	00:03:00

In the first game Habu played 4.P8d here and the game developed into one of the latest Yokofudori variations. Habu plays more or less anything, and this time he gives the Nakabisha a try, also a very popular opening.

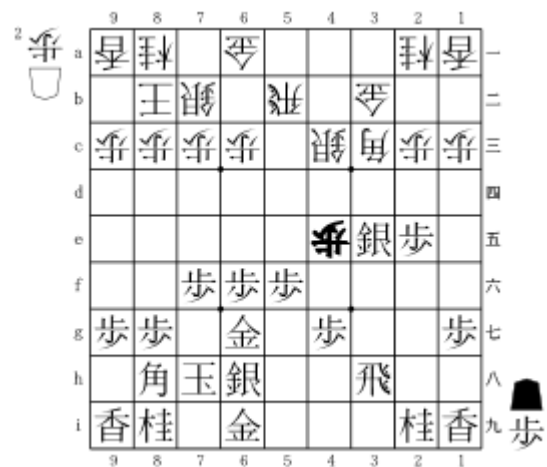
5. P2f-2e	00:08:00	00:03:00
6. R8b-5b	00:08:00	00:05:00
7. S3i-4h	00:08:00	00:05:00
8. P5d-5e	00:08:00	00:09:00
9. K5i-6h	00:11:00	00:09:00
10. B2b-3c	00:11:00	00:11:00
11. P3g-3f	00:18:00	00:11:00
12. K5a-6b	00:18:00	00:51:00
13. S4h-3g	00:19:00	00:51:00
14. K6b-7b	00:19:00	00:57:00
15. S3g-4f	00:19:00	00:57:00



Moriuchi doesn't shy away from the latest fashion and plays the ultra-quick attack S3g-4f with the king still on 6h.

16. K7b-8b	00:19:00	01:12:00
17. K6h-7h	00:49:00	01:12:00
18. S7a-7b	00:49:00	01:27:00
19. S7i-6h	01:11:00	01:27:00
20. G4a-3b	01:11:00	02:10:00
21. G4i-5h	01:12:00	02:10:00

22. S3a-4b	01:12:00	02:18:00
23. P6g-6f	01:15:00	02:18:00
24. P4c-4d	01:15:00	02:32:00
25. P3f-3e	02:30:00	02:32:00
26. S4b-4c	02:30:00	02:38:00
27. R2h-3h	02:31:00	02:38:00
28. P3dx3e	02:31:00	03:08:00
29. S4fx3e	02:31:00	03:08:00
30. P5e-5f	02:31:00	03:37:00
31. P5gx5f	02:41:00	03:37:00
32. R5bx5f	02:41:00	03:41:00
33. G5h-6g	02:44:00	03:41:00
34. R5f-5b	02:44:00	04:14:00
35. P*5f	03:20:00	04:14:00
36. P4d-4e	03:20:00	04:55:00



The sealed move.

37. R3h-3f	04:04:00	04:55:00
38. P*3d	04:04:00	05:37:00
39. S3ex3d	04:06:00	05:37:00
40. S4cx3d	04:06:00	05:37:00
41. R3fx3d	04:06:00	05:37:00
42. R5b-4b	04:06:00	05:37:00
43. G6g-5g	04:24:00	05:37:00
44. P4e-4f	04:24:00	05:46:00
45. P4gx4f	04:38:00	05:46:00
46. P*4e	04:38:00	05:47:00
47. P9g-9f	04:55:00	05:47:00
48. P4ex4f	04:55:00	06:11:00
49. B8h-9g!	04:55:00	06:11:00



Very positive way of playing by Moriuchi. The obvious defense here is 49.P\*4h, but Moriuchi commented after the game that he didn't really want to drop a pawn here. The rest of this game shows that he was correct about his feeling that B9g was the right move here.

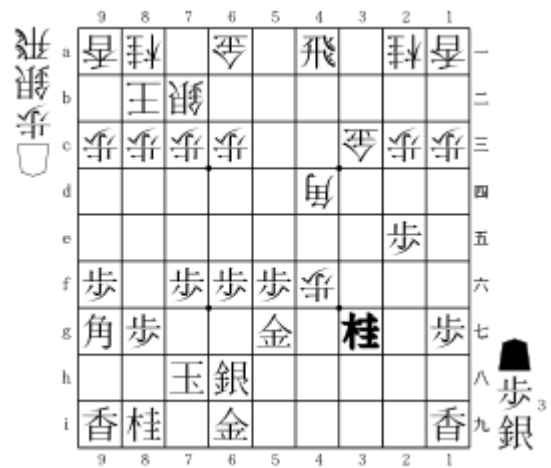
50.R4b-4d?! 04:55:00 06:51:00

Habu thought for 40 minutes before playing this move, but it is questionable if this was the right way to play here. Of course, white wants to play 50.P4g+ here, but after Bx4b+ Gx4b Gx4g Bx6f the problem is that because white has removed the pawn on the 6th file, black give a huge boost to a future attack because a pawn drop on 6b is now possible. Habu didn't like that and decided to play 50.R4d instead, but this gives black the opportunity to drop the rook in the enemy camp first. It seems that white is already in trouble here.

51.R3dx4d 05:06:00 06:51:00  
 52.B3cx4d 05:06:00 06:51:00  
 53.R\*4a 05:07:00 06:51:00  
 54.G3b-3c! 05:07:00 06:54:00

Actually a very good way to fight back. It is clear that white would be better off with the gold on 5b than on 3b, but the incomplete Mino castle is not as weak as it seems. After 54.G3c, it is not so easy to find a good way to continue for black.

55.N2i-3g! 07:14:00 06:54:00



Played after 2 hours and 7 minutes, which is an illustration of the difficulties that Habu has put into the position. In the press room 55.P\*3d Gx3d B4b+ was analyzed deeply, but no position was found that was clearly better for black. Moriuchi himself admitted after the game that he suddenly had no idea how to continue in this position. Often thinking for a long time is counter-productive, leading to bad decisions, but this is an exception. The two hours were well spent, because Moriuchi probably found the only way to keep the pressure on Habu. White cannot allow this knight to enter the attack, so Habu is forced to attack.

56.R\*4h? 07:14:00 07:14:00

This is probably the wrong square to drop the rook. Better is either 56.R\*2g S\*5e P4g+ Gx4g B7a Rx2a+ P\*3f Gx3f R2h+ or 56.R\*4i S\*5h Rx1i+ N4e G3d N5c+ although black seems to be better in both cases. Still, Habu admitted that especially 56.R\*2g was probably better than 56.R\*4h.

57.S\*5h! 07:19:00 07:14:00

Strong defense. Now the problem with 56.R\*4h becomes clear. The obvious move here is 58.S\*3f, threatening P\*4g next. However, with the rook on 4h, even if white promotes the pawn on 4g, black can answer +Px5g next with Sx5g or +Px5h next with G5g-5h. In both cases the rook on 4h is attacked and has to move. This all just gives black too much time to attack.

58.P\*5b 07:19:00 07:51:00

59. P*4c	07:55:00	07:51:00
60. R4h-2h+	07:55:00	08:14:00
61. P4c-4b+	07:56:00	08:14:00
62. S*4h	07:56:00	08:14:00



Looks bad and in the press room 62.N\*4f was analyzed here. If black responds with the natural 63.S5-h6g then 64.Bx5e Px5e G\*5h suddenly gives white a strong attack. However, after 63.S4g it seems white cannot make the attack work. For example, 64.Bx5e Px5e G\*5h +Px5b Gx6i Kx6i G\*5h K7h Gx6h K7g G7h K6g and the black king escapes.

63. G5g×4f	08:02:00	08:14:00
64. S4h×3g=	08:02:00	08:15:00
65. G4f-5e	08:04:00	08:15:00
66. S3g-4h+	08:04:00	08:17:00
67. S5h-6g	08:10:00	08:17:00
68. B4d-2f	08:10:00	08:20:00
69. +P4b-5a	08:12:00	08:20:00
70. G6a-7a	08:12:00	08:20:00
71. +P5ax5b	08:16:00	08:20:00
72. N*6a	08:16:00	08:21:00
73. R4a-4f+!	08:26:00	08:21:00



The decisive move. This forces the white

bishop from the all-important diagonal 7a-1g. There it not only defends the gold on 7a, but also the vital drop squares on 6b and 5c.

74. B2f-3g+	08:26:00	08:25:00
75. +R4f-4b	08:31:00	08:25:00
76. +B3g-2f	08:31:00	08:25:00

White has no choice but to move back the promoted bishop to the vital diagonal, but the difference between an unpromoted rook on 4a or a promoted one on 4b is too big.

77. P*4i	08:37:00	08:25:00
78. +S4h-5i	08:37:00	08:29:00
79. G6ix5i	08:42:00	08:29:00
80. +B2fx5i	08:42:00	08:29:00
81. P4i-4h	08:42:00	08:29:00
82. +B5ix6h	08:42:00	08:44:00
83. K7hx6h	08:42:00	08:44:00
84. G3c-3b	08:42:00	08:44:00
85. +R4bx3b	08:45:00	08:44:00
86. +R2hx4h	08:45:00	08:46:00
87. K6h-7g	08:45:00	08:46:00
88. G*5g	08:45:00	08:59:00
89. S*6b	08:54:00	08:59:00
90. G5gx6g	08:54:00	08:59:00
91. K7gx6g	08:54:00	08:59:00
Resigns	08:54:00	08:59:00



No mate against the black king, but a simple mating threat against the white king after Sx7a= next. There is no defense: for example, 92.Gx6b is also mate after 93.B\*7a Kx7a +Px6b etc. Therefore Habu resigned here.

Another great win for Moriuchi who now is one win away from regaining the Meijin title he lost to Habu in 2008. Winning four games in a row is not as impossible as it was a few years ago, but considering that Habu is being outplayed

by Moriuchi in the match so far, a comeback seems unlikely.

**Standing after game 3**

**Habu - Moriuchi 0-3**

## Game 4

2011-05-17/18

Sente: Habu Yoshiharu, Meijin

Gote: Moriuchi Toshiyuki, Challenger

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P8c-8d	00:00:00	00:01:00
3. S7i-6h	00:06:00	00:01:00
4. P3c-3d	00:06:00	00:01:00
5. P6g-6f	00:07:00	00:01:00
6. S7a-6b	00:07:00	00:02:00
7. P5g-5f	00:08:00	00:02:00
8. P5c-5d	00:08:00	00:04:00
9. S3i-4h	00:11:00	00:04:00
10. S3a-4b	00:11:00	00:06:00
11. G4i-5h	00:15:00	00:06:00
12. G4a-3b	00:15:00	00:12:00
13. G6i-7h	00:24:00	00:12:00
14. K5a-4a	00:24:00	00:15:00
15. K5i-6i	00:25:00	00:15:00
16. G6a-5b	00:25:00	00:16:00
17. S6h-7g	00:34:00	00:16:00
18. S4b-3c	00:34:00	00:16:00
19. B8h-7i	00:36:00	00:16:00
20. B2b-3a	00:36:00	00:16:00
21. P3g-3f	00:46:00	00:16:00
22. P4c-4d	00:46:00	00:19:00
23. G5h-6g	00:51:00	00:19:00
24. P7c-7d	00:51:00	00:19:00
25. S4h-3g	00:53:00	00:19:00
26. B3a-6d	00:53:00	00:22:00
27. B7i-6h	00:55:00	00:22:00
28. G5b-4c	00:55:00	00:27:00
29. K6i-7i	00:57:00	00:27:00
30. K4a-3a	00:57:00	00:34:00
31. K7i-8h	01:02:00	00:34:00
32. K3a-2b	01:02:00	00:37:00
33. S3g-4f	01:05:00	00:37:00
34. S6b-5c	01:05:00	00:40:00
35. N2i-3g	01:06:00	00:40:00
36. P9c-9d	01:06:00	00:41:00
37. P1g-1f	01:10:00	00:41:00
38. P1c-1d	01:10:00	00:41:00
39. P2g-2f	01:11:00	00:41:00
40. S3c-2d	01:11:00	00:41:00
41. R2h-3h	01:13:00	00:41:00
42. B6d-7c	01:13:00	00:51:00
43. L1i-1h	01:15:00	00:51:00
44. P8d-8e	01:15:00	00:51:00
45. L9i-9h	01:28:00	00:51:00
46. S5c-4b	01:28:00	00:58:00

47. K8h-9i 01:30:00 00:58:00



A Yagura opening like in the second game, but the type of position is completely different. In the second game Habu played a quick attack, but in this game we have a classic Yagura with both sides developing all their pieces before the actual fighting starts. Of course, Habu and Moriuchi have played this type of position against each other many times in the past.

47. K9i moves the black king into an Anaguma formation, a well-known strategy here.

Actually, Moriuchi has a lot of experience against this strategy. In this game he played 44. P8e, not only allowing but actually inviting the Anaguma. However, he was also the first player to play P9e instead of P8e to make it less attractive for black to move into the Anaguma because of the attack N9c followed by N8e. Neither strategy is bad for white, but white cannot allow black to move into the Anaguma castle for free, because the difference in castle strength would be an advantage for black.

48. B7c-6d 01:30:00 01:00:00

This is also opening theory, but a very important move. After this, black cannot play 49. S8h because white can exchange the rook pawn for free with 50. P8f.

49. P6f-6e 02:31:00 01:00:00

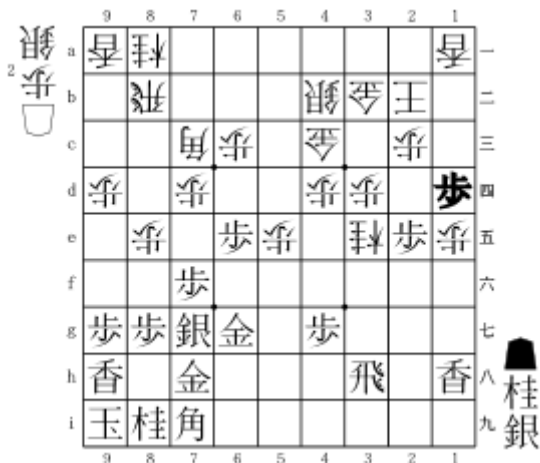
50. B6d-7c 02:31:00 01:00:00

Black has chased the bishop back to 7c, but still cannot play 51. S8h here because of 52. B9e G6g-7g N7c and Nx6e next is hard to defend.

51.N3g-2e 02:31:00 01:00:00

Black has no option but to start the fighting with an Anaguma castle that is only half finished.

52.N2a-3c 02:31:00 01:08:00  
 53.P1f-1e 02:32:00 01:08:00  
 54.P1dx1e 02:32:00 01:11:00  
 55.P3f-3e 02:32:00 01:11:00  
 56.P3dx3e 02:32:00 01:12:00  
 57.P5f-5e 02:33:00 01:12:00  
 58.P5dx5e 02:33:00 01:14:00  
 59.S4fx3e 02:38:00 01:14:00  
 60.S2dx3e 02:38:00 01:15:00  
 61.B6hx3e 02:38:00 01:15:00  
 62.P\*3d 02:38:00 02:36:00  
 63.B3e-7i 03:44:00 02:36:00  
 64.N3cx2e 03:44:00 02:37:00  
 65.P2fx2e 03:44:00 02:37:00  
 66.N\*3e 03:44:00 02:37:00  
 67.P\*1d 05:07:00 02:37:00



The sealed move. After one day of play Habu has used 5 hours and 7 minutes and Moriuchi only 2 hours and 37 minutes. Not unprecedented, but quite a big difference.

68.N3ex4g+ 05:07:00 03:32:00

Still in known territory, especially for Moriuchi, who played this in the final of the Ginga tournament against Watanabe on September 13th, 2007. He lost that game, but has an improvement prepared.

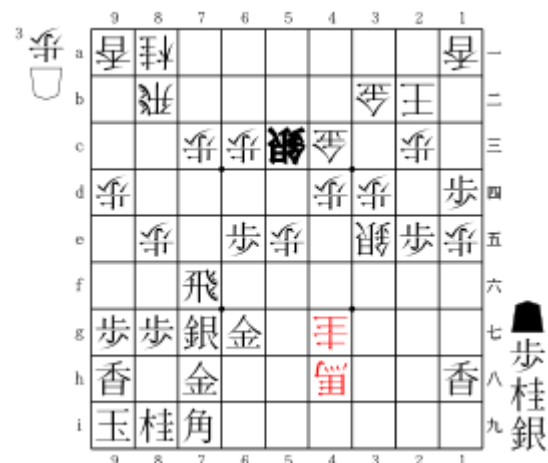
69.R3h-3f 05:45:00 03:32:00  
 70.S\*3e 05:45:00 03:40:00  
 71.R3f-6f 05:46:00 03:40:00  
 72.B7c-8d! 05:46:00 03:42:00

This is Moriuchi's new move and the general opinion in the press room and in the post-mortem analysis was that it is a good move, giving white more than enough play in this position. Habu admitted that the promoted knight on 4g is a nuisance and that he was not happy about his position here.

73.P7f-7e 05:46:00 03:42:00

Black cannot simply give white the rook, but the space of the rook is limited and this pawn sacrifice is necessary to give the rook more breathing space.

74.B8dx7e 05:46:00 03:45:00  
 75.R6f-7f 05:46:00 03:45:00  
 76.B7e-4h+ 05:46:00 03:53:00  
 77.R7fx7d 05:46:00 03:53:00  
 78.P\*7c 05:46:00 03:53:00  
 79.R7d-7f 05:46:00 03:53:00  
 80.S4b-5c? 05:46:00 04:01:00



Moriuchi played well up until here, but this is a mistake. Correct was 80.Lx1d. Both Moriuchi and Habu thought that after 81.P6d Px6d P\*7d black would be better because of Px7d Rx7d P\*7c Rx6d, but they both overlooked that after P\*7d, white can play the strong R8d! because Px7c+ can be answered with P\*7e and white has a good position. The post-mortem analysis resulted in the following variation: R8d N\*2g Px7d Nx3e Px3e Bx3e P7e R3f P\*3d S\*1c K3a B7i and both players agreed that the position is very hard to judge. However, as Moriuchi pointed out, the line played in the game leads to a bad position for white, so he should have tried 80.Lx1d here.



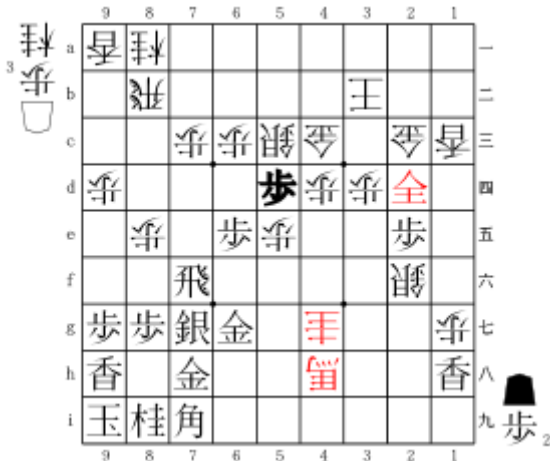
81.N*2g	06:19:00	04:01:00
82.S3e-2f	06:19:00	04:42:00
83.N2gx1e	06:53:00	04:42:00
84.P*1g?	06:53:00	05:09:00

This seems a bit too risky. White seems to be in trouble, but things would not have been so clear if Moriuchi had played 84.P3e. For example, 85.P2d Px2d P\*2c K3c P1c+ Lx1c S\*2b Gx2b Px2b+ Lx1e and the king has a lot of support for an escape up the board. Best for black then seems P\*2g Sx1g+ Lx1e +Bx1e Bx3e and it is hard for the defending side as well, but Habu didn't think the attack had enough power.

85.S*1c	07:02:00	05:09:00
86.K2b-3a	07:02:00	05:36:00
87.N1ex2c+	07:02:00	05:36:00
88.G3bx2c	07:02:00	05:36:00
89.S1c-2d+	07:02:00	05:36:00

With the king unable to escape up the board, the black attack is much easier now.

90.K3a-3b	07:02:00	06:12:00
91.P1d-1c+	07:54:00	06:12:00
92.L1ax1c	07:54:00	06:13:00
93.P*5d!	07:55:00	06:13:00



Very strong move, although Habu admitted after the game that he didn't play it for the right reason. The point of 93.P\*5d is that after 94.Sx5d P\*7d Px7d P\*3c G4cx3c +Sx3c Kx3c Rx7d P\*7c black has the strong B2d!. Habu said that he hadn't been aiming for this variation at all, but just figured he could play Bx1c+ at some point. The strength of B2d is that K2b is answered by Rx5d Gx5d G\*3c, K2c by Rx5d Gx5d B5a+ and K3b by Rx5d Gx5d

G\*3c K4a G4c and white cannot defend in any of the resulting positions. Of course, if play would have continued with 94.Sx5d, it is quite likely that Habu would have found these variations.

94.S5c-4b	07:55:00	06:52:00
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White played up this silver from 4b, so to be forced to retreat it again is very painful. However, there was no alternative.

95.P6e-6d	08:01:00	06:52:00
96.G4cx5d	08:01:00	07:59:00

Or 96.Px6d P\*7d Px7d Rx7d and this time the rook switch to 6d works perfectly.

97.P6dx6c+	08:02:00	07:59:00
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Only here Habu finally had the feeling that he got the upper hand in this game.

98.P*6h	08:02:00	07:59:00
99.B7ix6h	08:10:00	07:59:00
100.P3d-3e	08:10:00	08:00:00
101.+S2dx2c	08:30:00	08:00:00
102.K3bx2c	08:30:00	08:00:00
103.R7fx2f	08:30:00	08:00:00
104.+B4hx2f	08:30:00	08:01:00
105.G*2d	08:30:00	08:01:00
106.K2c-3b	08:30:00	08:01:00
107.P*4c	08:30:00	08:01:00
108.S4b-3c	08:30:00	08:14:00
109.S*3d	08:30:00	08:14:00
110.S3cx3d	08:30:00	08:14:00
111.G2dx3d	08:30:00	08:14:00
112.R*3c	08:30:00	08:14:00
113.G3dx3c	08:32:00	08:14:00
114.K3bx3c	08:32:00	08:14:00



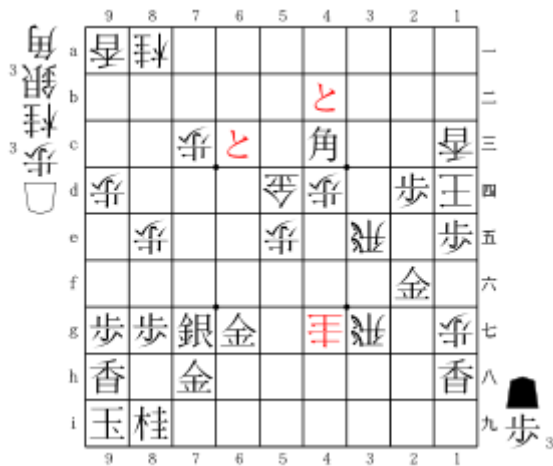
115.R\*2d 08:32:00 08:14:00

match is over and Moriuchi takes his Meijin crown.

There may have been a more beautiful way to finish this game, but in this game Habu opts for a no-nonsense finish. A wise decision under any circumstances, but especially considering that he is 3-0 down in the match.

#### Standing after game 4 Habu - Moriuchi 1-3

116.G\*3d 08:32:00 08:26:00  
 117.S\*4b 08:35:00 08:26:00  
 118.R8bx4b 08:35:00 08:26:00  
 119.P4cx4b+ 08:35:00 08:26:00  
 120.G3dx2d 08:35:00 08:26:00  
 121.R\*3b 08:35:00 08:26:00  
 122.K3c-2c 08:35:00 08:26:00  
 123.P2ex2d 08:35:00 08:26:00  
 124.K2c-1d 08:35:00 08:37:00  
 125.R3bx3e+ 08:37:00 08:37:00  
 126.+B2fx3e 08:37:00 08:38:00  
 127.B6hx3e 08:37:00 08:38:00  
 128.R\*3f 08:37:00 08:38:00  
 129.B\*4c 08:38:00 08:38:00  
 130.R3fx3e 08:38:00 08:41:00  
 131.G\*2f 08:38:00 08:41:00  
 132.R\*3g 08:38:00 08:54:00  
 133.P\*1e 08:42:00 08:54:00  
 Resigns 08:42:00 08:57:00



Moriuchi took three minutes to resign here. It is not mate, but after 134.Rx1e P\*1f R1e-3e Bx5d+ black takes a gold with tempo because this is a mating threat. Also, 134.Kx2d P\*2e forces the white king back where it is doomed. On the other hand, the black king is still safely tucked away in the Anaguma and there is no way to threaten mate against it. Habu gets one back, but it is only like holding serve when behind. He still needs to beat Moriuchi with the white pieces in this match. The next game is his last opportunity to do it. If he fails, the

## Game 5

2011-05-31 and 2001-06-01

Sente: Moriuchi Toshiyuki, Challenger

Gote: Habu Yoshiharu, Meijin

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:01:00
3. P2g-2f	00:02:00	00:01:00
4. P8c-8d	00:02:00	00:03:00
5. P2f-2e	00:03:00	00:03:00
6. P8d-8e	00:03:00	00:05:00
7. G6i-7h	00:04:00	00:05:00
8. G4a-3b	00:04:00	00:08:00
9. P2e-2d	00:04:00	00:08:00
10. P2cx2d	00:04:00	00:09:00
11. R2hx2d	00:04:00	00:09:00
12. P8e-8f	00:04:00	00:14:00
13. P8gx8f	00:04:00	00:14:00
14. R8bx8f	00:04:00	00:15:00



With his back to the wall and playing the white pieces where black has dominated the head-to-head between these two players, Habu's choice of opening was the topic of some serious debate. Playing the Gokigen Nakabashi was a viable option, but in the end Habu opts to play the Yokofudori. Habu is an Ibisha player by nature, so it comes as no surprise that when he is in a fix, he picks the type of position he is familiar with most.

15. R2dx3d	00:04:00	00:15:00
16. B2b-3c	00:04:00	00:18:00
17. R3d-3f	00:05:00	00:18:00
18. S3a-2b	00:05:00	00:19:00
19. K5i-5h	00:12:00	00:19:00
20. K5a-4a	00:12:00	00:21:00
21. G4i-3h	00:18:00	00:21:00

22. R8f-8d	00:18:00	00:31:00
23. P*8g	00:35:00	00:31:00
24. R8d-2d	00:35:00	00:37:00
25. S3i-2h	00:35:00	00:37:00
26. G6a-5a	00:35:00	00:38:00
27. P7f-7e	00:40:00	00:38:00
28. R2d-8d	00:40:00	00:42:00
29. R3f-8f	00:41:00	00:42:00
30. P*8e	00:41:00	00:49:00
31. R8f-5f	00:45:00	00:49:00
32. S7a-6b	00:45:00	01:04:00
33. P3g-3f	00:59:00	01:04:00
34. P5c-5d	00:59:00	01:17:00
35. P3f-3e	01:04:00	01:17:00
36. B3c-4b	01:04:00	01:32:00
37. R5f-2f	01:49:00	01:32:00
38. P*2c	01:49:00	01:47:00
39. R2f-7f	01:50:00	01:47:00
40. S2b-3c	01:50:00	02:30:00
41. N2i-3g	03:10:00	02:30:00
42. S3c-4d	03:10:00	03:10:00
43. P4g-4f	03:35:00	03:10:00
44. P5d-5e	03:35:00	03:52:00
45. P4f-4e?!	04:13:00	03:52:00



The sealed move, but probably not a good one. Hard to see, but probably better was 45.S2g because after 46.Sx3e P4e R5d S6h S5c S3f Sx3f Rx3f S6d P4d Rx4d S4e R2d P2e R1d P1f it is not easy to save the white rook.

46. S4dx3e	04:13:00	03:58:00
47. P*3f	04:16:00	03:58:00
48. S3e-2f	04:16:00	04:01:00
49. P*2g	04:35:00	04:01:00
50. S2fx3g+	04:35:00	04:58:00
51. S2hx3g	04:35:00	04:58:00
52. S6b-5c	04:35:00	05:04:00

Black has won material and the extra general

can be very effectively to thicken the defense. Moriuchi said after the game that he initially thought that the material advantage gave black the edge in this position, but here he realized that forcing the pawn drop on 2g might have given white more than enough compensation. Indeed, the Yokofudori side doesn't want to use the second file pawn on 2g, but instead use it in attack.

53.B8hx5e	05:33:00	05:04:00
54.N2a-3c	05:33:00	06:05:00
55.P7e-7d	05:43:00	06:05:00
56.P*5f	05:43:00	06:06:00
57.R7fx5f	06:02:00	06:06:00
58.R8dx7d	06:02:00	06:16:00
59.S*6e	06:06:00	06:16:00
60.R7d-1d	06:06:00	06:22:00
61.S3g-4f?! 06:14:00	06:22:00	



Again, it is hard to criticize this move, because it is the most natural way for black to develop his pieces. Better was 61.P\*7d and after 62.P6d Px7c+ Nx7c S7d P\*7b R7f the black pieces are much more active than in the game. For a professional player this is a hard variation to play for black, because black forces the sleeping knight on 8a into action, which under normal circumstances is something that should be avoided. However, it is clearly better for black than what happened in the game, so Moriuchi should have swallowed his pride and play this.

62.P6c-6d	06:14:00	06:27:00
63.S6e-7f	06:14:00	06:27:00
64.S5c-5d	06:14:00	06:27:00
65.B5e-8h	06:26:00	06:27:00
66.P*5e	06:26:00	06:37:00
67.B8hx5e	06:32:00	06:37:00

Black wants to take with the silver, but after 67.Sx5e Sx4e R6f N\*7d the black rook dies.

68.S5dx5e	06:32:00	06:59:00
69.R5fx5e	06:38:00	06:59:00
70.B*7d	06:38:00	07:00:00
71.P5g-5f	06:52:00	07:00:00
72.G5a-5b!	06:52:00	07:33:00

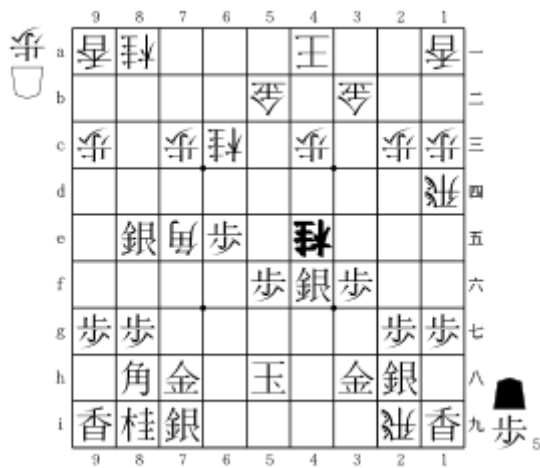


For Kubo, who was one of the referees for this game, this was the highlight of Habu's play. White wants to go for the black rook with N\*6c, but if white plays this immediately then 72.N\*6c Rx8e Bx8e Sx8e P6e B\*7b and black gets a chance to fight back. 72.G5b prepares for N\*6c, making sure that the knight on 6c is protected so that the previous variation is harmless. The difficulty of 72.G5b is that Habu had to make sure that black has no way to improve his position before white plays N\*6c.

73.P6g-6f	07:43:00	07:33:00
74.N*6c	07:43:00	07:39:00
75.R5ex8e	07:45:00	07:39:00
76.B7dx8e	07:45:00	07:40:00
77.S7fx8e	07:45:00	07:40:00
78.P6d-6e	07:45:00	08:00:00
79.P6fx6e	07:50:00	08:00:00
80.B4b-7e	07:50:00	08:03:00

With this bishop joining in the attack, the white position is winning.

81.B*8h	08:06:00	08:03:00
82.R*2i	08:06:00	08:16:00
83.S*2h	08:11:00	08:16:00
84.N3cx4e!	08:11:00	08:17:00



Very strong knight sacrifice. Black has no choice but to accept it.

85. S4f×4e 08:20:00 08:17:00  
86. P\*5g! 08:20:00 08:21:00

The point of 84. Nx4e. The black king has no good square to run to.

87. K5h-4g 08:26:00 08:21:00

Here 87. K4h is answered by R6i+ and 87. K6h with R4i+ and black has no defence.

88. R2i-4i+ 08:26:00 08:26:00  
89. G3h-4h 08:26:00 08:26:00  
90. P5g-5h+! 08:26:00 08:26:00



The final blow. Of course there was no way that white would move the promoted rook from 4i here: 89. +R2i S3g and black is actually given a chance to run to the 7th file where a number of friendly pieces are waiting. It would then be quite hard to win for white.

91. G4h×4i 08:44:00 08:26:00

92. B7e-5g+ 08:44:00 08:28:00  
93. K4g-3h 08:44:00 08:28:00  
94. +P5h×4i 08:44:00 08:28:00

The game is over. Black has no way to make a mating threat.

95. R\*7a 08:44:00 08:28:00  
96. K4a-4b 08:44:00 08:34:00  
97. N\*3d 08:50:00 08:34:00  
98. K4b-5c 08:50:00 08:36:00  
99. R7ax1a+ 08:54:00 08:36:00  
100. +P4i-4h 08:54:00 08:38:00  
101. K3h-2i 08:54:00 08:38:00  
102. G\*3h 08:54:00 08:38:00  
103. K2i-1h 08:54:00 08:38:00  
104. G3h×2h 08:54:00 08:38:00  
105. K1h×2h 08:54:00 08:38:00  
106. +B5g-4f 08:54:00 08:38:00  
Resigns 08:56:00 08:38:00



Mate after 106. K1h +Bx1i and hisshi after 106. G\*3g S\*3i K1h +Bx3g. Black then can try L\*5d K6b Lx5b+ Kx5b but there is no mate. Moriuchi took two minutes to confirm this and then resigned. A flawless win for Habu, but a little bit tough on Moriuchi because there seemed to be no obvious mistake he made. With Habu taking two games in a row and the match back at 3-2, the momentum suddenly seems to have shifted. Furthermore, Habu has the black pieces in game 6. Moriuchi has to remember that he is still ahead in the match and regroup to try and win that single game that he needs.

**Standing after game 5**  
**Habu - Moriuchi 2-3**

## Game 6

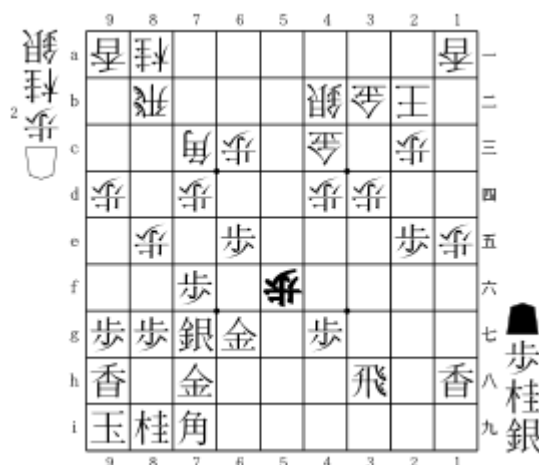
2011-06-07/08

Sente: Habu Yoshiharu, Meijin

Gote: Moriuchi Toshiyuki, Challenger

1.P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2.P8c-8d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3.S7i-6h	00:02:00	00:00:00
4.P3c-3d	00:02:00	00:00:00
5.P6g-6f	00:03:00	00:00:00
6.S7a-6b	00:03:00	00:00:00
7.P5g-5f	00:10:00	00:00:00
8.P5c-5d	00:10:00	00:01:00
9.S3i-4h	00:13:00	00:01:00
10.S3a-4b	00:13:00	00:02:00
11.G4i-5h	00:16:00	00:02:00
12.G4a-3b	00:16:00	00:03:00
13.G6i-7h	00:19:00	00:03:00
14.K5a-4a	00:19:00	00:10:00
15.K5i-6i	00:21:00	00:10:00
16.G6a-5b	00:21:00	00:11:00
17.S6h-7g	00:24:00	00:11:00
18.S4b-3c	00:24:00	00:13:00
19.B8h-7i	00:26:00	00:13:00
20.B2b-3a	00:26:00	00:13:00
21.P3g-3f	00:38:00	00:13:00
22.P4c-4d	00:38:00	00:13:00
23.G5h-6g	00:48:00	00:13:00
24.P7c-7d	00:48:00	00:13:00
25.S4h-3g	00:59:00	00:13:00
26.B3a-6d	00:59:00	00:14:00
27.B7i-6h	01:08:00	00:14:00
28.G5b-4c	01:08:00	00:14:00
29.K6i-7i	01:09:00	00:14:00
30.K4a-3a	01:09:00	00:15:00
31.K7i-8h	01:10:00	00:15:00
32.K3a-2b	01:10:00	00:16:00
33.S3g-4f	01:14:00	00:16:00
34.S6b-5c	01:14:00	00:16:00
35.N2i-3g	01:15:00	00:16:00
36.P9c-9d	01:15:00	00:16:00
37.P1g-1f	01:18:00	00:16:00
38.P1c-1d	01:18:00	00:16:00
39.P2g-2f	01:19:00	00:16:00
40.S3c-2d	01:19:00	00:21:00
41.R2h-3h	01:20:00	00:21:00
42.B6d-7c	01:20:00	00:23:00
43.L1i-1h	01:24:00	00:23:00
44.P8d-8e	01:24:00	00:24:00
45.L9i-9h	01:54:00	00:24:00
46.S5c-4b	01:54:00	00:24:00

47.K8h-9i	01:56:00	00:24:00
48.B7c-6d	01:56:00	00:24:00
49.P6f-6e	02:45:00	00:24:00
50.B6d-7c	02:45:00	00:26:00
51.N3g-2e	02:45:00	00:26:00
52.N2a-3c	02:45:00	00:28:00
53.P1f-1e	02:49:00	00:28:00
54.P1dx1e	02:49:00	00:29:00
55.P3f-3e	02:50:00	00:29:00
56.P3dx3e	02:50:00	00:29:00
57.P5f-5e	02:51:00	00:29:00
58.P5dx5e	02:51:00	00:30:00
59.S4fx3e	02:51:00	00:30:00
60.S2dx3e	02:51:00	00:30:00
61.B6hx3e	02:51:00	00:30:00
62.P*3d	02:51:00	00:30:00
63.B3e-7i	02:51:00	00:30:00
64.N3cx2e	02:51:00	00:30:00
65.P2fx2e	02:52:00	00:30:00
66.P5e-5f	02:52:00	00:30:00



This sixth game of the Meijin match will decide whether Moriuchi will become Meijin again or if Habu can take this match to the final game. Despite its importance, both players play at a blistering speed, especially for a game that is supposed to be played over two days. It is still early in the afternoon of the first day and already 66 moves have been played. Even more interesting is that even though the move order has been slightly different, the position here is exactly the same as game 4. There Moriuchi played 66.N\*3e and after 67.P\*1d Nx4g+ R3f S\*3e R6f B8d Moriuchi lost the game but most people believed that his plan of chasing the rook and then moving out the bishop was very good. Despite this, Moriuchi is the one who changes the moves with 66.P5f. His explanation: "In game 4 I had a hard time deciding between N\*3e and P5f, so I decided

to play P5f if I would have been led to the same position again."

67.L1hx1e	04:15:00	00:30:00
68.L1ax1e	04:15:00	00:31:00
69.N*1d	04:15:00	00:31:00
70.K2b-1b	04:15:00	00:32:00
71.P*1c	04:22:00	00:32:00
72.K1b-2a	04:22:00	00:32:00
73.P2e-2d	04:26:00	00:32:00
74.P2cx2d	04:26:00	01:05:00
75.B7ix2d	04:28:00	01:05:00
76.S*2c	04:28:00	03:22:00



The sealed move and the first time Moriuchi took a long hard think in this game. He took more than two hours to seal this move. In the press room 76.P8f was analyzed. If black has to take this pawn, then the hole on 8g becomes a target for all the pieces that white has in hand, but it looks like black can ignore the pawn push with 77.Bx1e. For example, 78.Px8g+ Gx8g and because Rx8g+ fails to L\*8h, white has to try something like N\*9e, but then P\*8c Nx8g= K8h Rx8c P\*2c is good for black. The black king looks to be in a dangerous spot, but with the opponent knight on its head, it is actually quite hard to get to.

77.P1c-1b+	04:33:00	03:22:00
78.S2cx1b	04:33:00	03:23:00

This is forced because 78.Kx1b is too dangerous after 79.S\*1c K2a Bx4b+ Rx4b S\*2b Gx2b Nx2b+ Rx2b Sx2b+ Kx2b R\*4a and there is no good defense.

79.B2dx1e	04:38:00	03:23:00
80.P8e-8f	04:38:00	04:36:00
81.P8gx8f	05:16:00	04:36:00

82.P*1c	05:16:00	04:42:00
83.L*2f	06:28:00	04:42:00
84.P*2d	06:28:00	05:28:00
85.P*2c	06:39:00	05:28:00
86.S1bx2c	06:39:00	05:42:00
87.L2fx2d	06:39:00	05:42:00
88.P1cx1d	06:39:00	05:43:00
89.L2dx2c+	06:39:00	05:43:00
90.P1dx1e	06:39:00	05:45:00
91.S*1b	06:41:00	05:45:00
92.K2a-3a	06:41:00	05:45:00
93.P6e-6d!	06:41:00	05:45:00



An interesting plan to bring the defending gold into an attacking position.

94.B7cx6d	06:41:00	05:50:00
95.G6gx5f	06:41:00	05:50:00
96.N*9e	06:41:00	06:19:00
97.G5f-6e!	07:04:00	06:19:00

Habu is very consistent here and ignores the double knight attack. He could have turned to defense here with 97.P9f, but after 98.N\*8g K8h B\*9i K9g N7c P7e the position is not so clear.

98.N*8g	07:04:00	07:00:00
99.G7hx8g	07:04:00	07:00:00
100.N9ex8g=	07:04:00	07:00:00
101.K9i-8h	07:04:00	07:00:00
102.G*6g	07:04:00	07:09:00





The start of some fireworks. This is mating threat after B\*9i Kx8g Bx7g+ Nx7g Rx8f etc.

103.G6ex6d! 07:17:00 07:09:00

This defends against the mating threat and creates a mating threat after +Lx3b followed by B\*1d.

104.G3bx2c! 07:17:00 07:11:00

And again defending against the mating threat with a mating threat because white wins after 105.Sx2c+ B\*9i K8g Bx7g+ Nx7g Rx8f etc.

105.S\*6h 07:33:00 07:11:00

Habu is the first player to be forced to play a defense only move, which usually is not a good sign...

106.B\*9i 07:33:00 07:55:00  
 107.K8hx8g 07:34:00 07:55:00  
 108.B9ix7g+ 07:34:00 07:55:00  
 109.S6hx7g 07:34:00 07:55:00  
 110.L\*8c? 07:34:00 07:55:00



Moriuchi was so close to the Meijin title here. If only he would have dropped the lance on 8d instead of 8c. The reason why this is important will become clear soon.

111.N\*7h! 08:03:00 07:55:00

Strong defensive move. The devilish move 111.N\*9e was an alternative here .

112.S\*6i 08:03:00 08:23:00  
 113.G6dx7d 08:05:00 08:23:00  
 114.G2c-2b 08:05:00 08:33:00

Black no longer has a mating threat, so is forced back to defense.

115.G7dx8c 08:13:00 08:33:00  
 116.R8bx8c 08:13:00 08:34:00  
 117.B\*5f 08:13:00 08:34:00



This bishop fork in the difference between dropping a silver on 8c and 8d. If the gold on 7d takes the lance on 8d instead of 8c, this bishop drop on 5f is no longer possible. For example, 115.Gx8d Gx1b L\*8c R5b seems bad for black.

118.S6ix7h= 08:13:00 08:47:00  
 119.R3hx7h 08:13:00 08:47:00  
 120.N\*9e 08:13:00 08:47:00  
 121.K8g-9f 08:13:00 08:47:00  
 122.R8c-8b 08:13:00 08:47:00  
 123.B5fx6g 08:21:00 08:47:00  
 124.G2bx1b 08:21:00 08:47:00  
 125.L\*8h 08:21:00 08:47:00  
 126.P\*2d 08:21:00 08:51:00  
 127.P\*1c 08:24:00 08:51:00  
 128.G1bx1c 08:24:00 08:51:00

129.P*1d	08:24:00	08:51:00
130.G1c-2c	08:24:00	08:51:00
131.P*3b	08:32:00	08:51:00
132.K3ax3b	08:32:00	08:51:00
133.S*1b	08:32:00	08:51:00
134.G2c-2b	08:32:00	08:52:00
135.G*2c	08:33:00	08:52:00
136.G2bx2c	08:33:00	08:52:00
137.S1bx2c+	08:33:00	08:52:00
138.K3bx2c	08:33:00	08:56:00
139.B*4a	08:33:00	08:56:00
Resigns	08:33:00	08:56:00



Now 140.L\*3b is answered by 141.N\*3e Kx1d Bx3b+ K2e L\*2h and mate. If the king moves back then black can make a hisshi after 141.G\*2c. White has no mate, so Moriuchi resigned here. Habu has managed to draw the match even at 3-3 after being 3-0 down. He now has a chance to become the first player in Meijin history to make a comeback after losing the first three game. Still, Moriuchi still has one more chance to take the Meijin title from him. An exciting final game awaits.

**Standing after game 6**  
**Habu - Moriuchi 3-3**



## Game 7

2011-06-21/22

Sente: Moriuchi Toshiyuki, Challenger

Gote: Habu Yoshiharu, Meijin

1. P7g-7f 00:00:00 00:00:00

The furigoma for this final game resulted in three tokins, giving challenger Moriuchi the black pieces. A small moral victory, as black has a significant winning rate in the head-to-head between these players.

2. P3c-3d 00:00:00 00:00:00

3. P2g-2f 00:02:00 00:00:00

4. P8c-8d 00:02:00 00:04:00

5. P2f-2e 00:03:00 00:04:00

6. P8d-8e 00:03:00 00:05:00

7. G6i-7h 00:03:00 00:05:00

8. G4a-3b 00:03:00 00:08:00

For the third time in this match the Yokofudori opening. Habu said after the game that he had planned to play this if he ended up with the white pieces.

9. P2e-2d 00:05:00 00:08:00

10. P2cx2d 00:05:00 00:08:00

11. R2hx2d 00:05:00 00:08:00

12. P8e-8f 00:05:00 00:14:00

13. P8gx8f 00:05:00 00:14:00

14. R8bx8f 00:05:00 00:14:00

15. R2dx3d 00:05:00 00:14:00

16. B2b-3c 00:05:00 00:19:00

17. R3d-3f 00:06:00 00:19:00

18. S3a-2b 00:06:00 00:23:00

19. P\*8g 00:09:00 00:23:00

20. R8f-8e 00:09:00 00:28:00

21. R3f-2f 00:09:00 00:28:00

22. K5a-4a 00:09:00 00:39:00

Moving the king to 5b is the more popular way of playing nowadays, but Habu prefers to move the king to 4a.

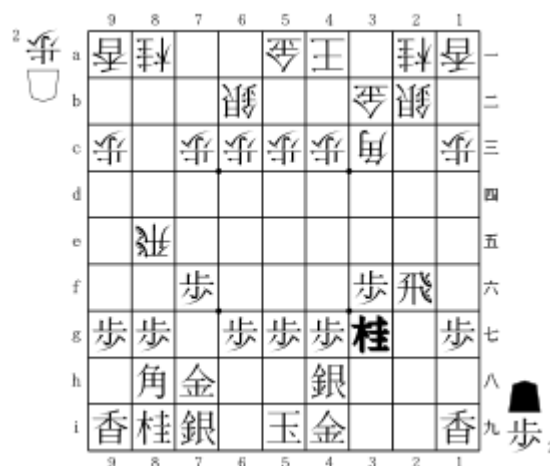
23. S3i-4h 00:18:00 00:39:00

24. S7a-6b 00:18:00 00:47:00

25. P3g-3f 00:20:00 00:47:00

26. G6a-5a 00:20:00 01:02:00

27. N2i-3g 00:22:00 01:02:00



Moriuchi can also opt for a more positional Yokofudori by moving the king to 5h, but instead chooses the super quick New Yamasaki Style variation. This leads the game into very sharp positions, but as Takahashi explains, these type of violent positions are good to play when there is a lot of pressure as there is on Moriuchi in this game. After all, in sharp positions there is no choice but to go all in, so there is no time to think about long strategic decisions, feeling the pressure mounting all the time, often leading to a mistake.

28. P\*8f 00:22:00 01:51:00

29. P8gx8f 00:26:00 01:51:00

30. R8ex8f 00:26:00 01:52:00

31. P3f-3e 00:26:00 01:52:00

32. R8f-8e 00:26:00 01:54:00

33. N8i-7g 00:29:00 01:54:00

34. R8ex3e 00:29:00 02:46:00

35. R2f-2e 00:37:00 02:46:00

36. R3e-3d 00:37:00 02:48:00

37. N3g-4e 00:39:00 02:48:00

38. B3c-4b 00:39:00 03:00:00

39. P\*2d 01:07:00 03:00:00

40. P\*8g 01:07:00 03:03:00

41. G7hx8g 01:08:00 03:03:00

42. P\*2c 01:08:00 03:03:00

43. P2dx2c+ 01:25:00 03:03:00

44. G3bx2c 01:25:00 03:04:00

45. N7g-6e 01:49:00 03:04:00

46. P\*2d 01:49:00 03:06:00

47. R2e-2f 01:59:00 03:06:00

48. P\*3f 01:59:00 03:17:00

This is a new move. Before this, 48.N3c was played here, but after 49.R4f Habu said that he had no confidence in the white position. The

pawn drop on 3f blocks the path of the rook to 4f and was a move that Habu had prepared at home.

49. P\*3h 02:34:00 03:17:00  
 50. P6c-6d 02:34:00 03:28:00  
 51. N6ex5c+ 04:33:00 03:28:00



The sealed move and played after almost two hours of thought. In the press room, 51.P\*8b was expected, but after 52.Px6e Px8a+ N3c N\*1e G1d there is no good way to continue for black.

52. S6bx5c 04:33:00 05:04:00  
 53. N4ex5c+ 04:34:00 05:04:00  
 54. B4bx5c 04:34:00 05:04:00  
 55. S\*4e 04:34:00 05:04:00  
 56. R3d-3e 04:34:00 05:10:00

No choice. White cannot afford to exchange the rooks here, because his position is much weaker against rook drops. Also, 56.R3b Rx3f Rx3f Sx3f is followed by R\*8b next and good for black.

57. S4e-5d 04:43:00 05:10:00  
 58. B5c-7a? 04:43:00 05:11:00



Immediately after the game, Habu suggested 58.B6b here. This just seems to invite 59.S6c+, but after 60.B7a the black rook is also in danger, so black has to move quickly. For example, 61.Bx2b+ Gx2b Rx2d is answered by B4d, which is unclear after Rx4d Px4d Bx2d R3c Bx3c+ Gx3c R\*7a N\*6a because white also has a good square for a rook drop on 8i.

59. P\*8b 06:35:00 05:11:00  
 60. R3e-8e 06:35:00 05:46:00  
 61. R2fx3f 06:36:00 05:46:00  
 62. N\*4d 06:36:00 05:47:00  
 63. R3f-4f 06:51:00 05:47:00  
 64. R8ex8b 06:51:00 05:58:00



The obvious 64.Rx8g+ is answered by 65.Px8a+ and it is hard to find a good attack against the black king, while black simply threatens +Px7a followed by Sx4c+. Habu added that the biggest problem is that black can play S3g at any time after which the black king has a lot of space to run.

65. P\*8c 07:34:00 05:58:00

66.R8bx8c	07:34:00	05:59:00
67.P*8d	07:34:00	05:59:00
68.R8cx8d	07:34:00	06:29:00
69.P*8e	07:34:00	06:29:00
70.R8dx8e	07:34:00	06:30:00
71.P*8f	07:34:00	06:30:00
72.R8e-2e	07:34:00	06:32:00
73.S5dx4c+	07:34:00	06:32:00
74.P*4e	07:34:00	06:41:00
75.B8hx4d!	07:34:00	06:41:00



Habu's reaction to this move in the post-mortem analysis seems to suggest that he overlooked it or underestimated it at the very least. The normal 75.R6f is answered by 76.N\*9e G7g P\*8g and the black bishop becomes a target. Sacrificing the bishop before it becomes a target for attack is very good here.

76.B7ax4d	07:34:00	06:48:00
77.R4f-5f	07:34:00	06:48:00

This is a mating threat.

78.P*5e	07:34:00	07:32:00
79.R5f-3f	08:07:00	07:32:00

This is again a mating threat.

80.P*3e	08:07:00	07:45:00
81.R3f-1f!	08:07:00	07:45:00



Again, the obvious 81.R6f is not good because of 82.P6e Rx6e B\*5d. However, 81.R1f works perfectly because black now both threatens +Sx4d and P\*2f.

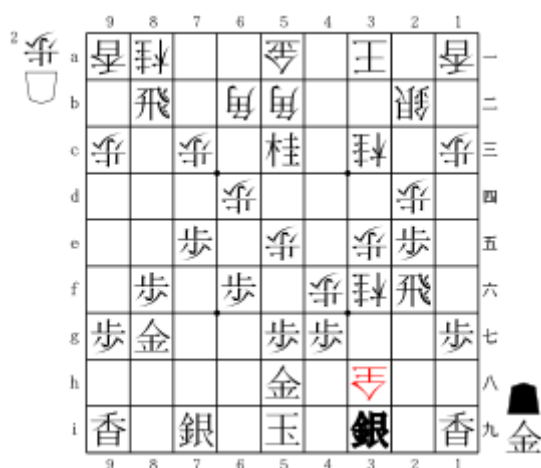
82.B4d-6b	08:07:00	08:11:00
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White wants to play 82.R2i+ +Sx4d +Rx1i and now +S4c is answered by G3c, but after B\*5d L\*4b +S5c the black promoted silver is too strong. Moving the bishop away to 6b is a defense only move, indicating the black has the advantage here.

83.P*2f	08:09:00	08:11:00
84.B*6e	08:09:00	08:12:00
85.N*5c	08:13:00	08:12:00
86.K4a-3a	08:13:00	08:13:00
87.+S4c-4d	08:13:00	08:13:00
88.P4e-4f	08:13:00	08:17:00
89.P6g-6f	08:20:00	08:17:00
90.B6e-7d	08:20:00	08:18:00
91.P7f-7e	08:24:00	08:18:00
92.B7d-5b	08:24:00	08:18:00
93.P2fx2e	08:24:00	08:18:00
94.G2c-3c	08:24:00	08:18:00
95.+S4dx3c	08:27:00	08:18:00
96.N2ax3c	08:27:00	08:20:00
97.G4i-5h	08:28:00	08:20:00
98.N*3f	08:28:00	08:25:00
99.R*8b	08:30:00	08:25:00
100.S*2g	08:30:00	08:36:00
101.R1f-2f	08:49:00	08:36:00
102.S2gx3h+	08:49:00	08:39:00

Or 102.Nx4h+ Gx4h +S3f N\*4d B4c G\*4a and black wins.

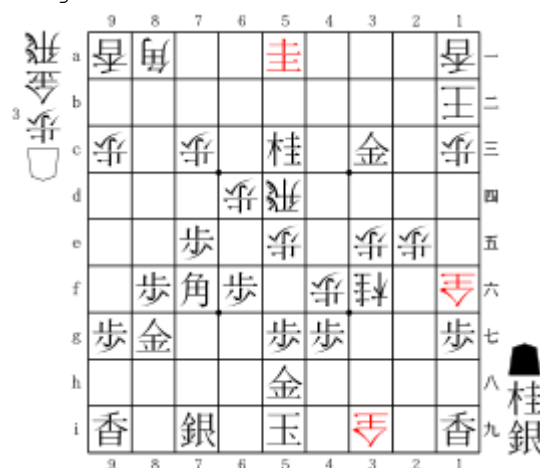
103.S4h-3i!	08:50:00	08:39:00
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This nice defensive silver tesuji give Moriuchi the Meijin title. White has to capture this silver, but this slows down the attack too much.

104.P2dx2e	08:50:00	08:41:00
105.R2f-1f	08:55:00	08:41:00
106.+S3hx3i	08:55:00	08:46:00
107.R8bx8a+	08:55:00	08:46:00
108.S*2g	08:55:00	08:56:00
109.N*5d	08:57:00	08:56:00
110.B5b-6c	08:57:00	08:56:00
111.N5dx6b+	08:57:00	08:56:00
112.B6cx8a	08:57:00	08:56:00
113.B*7f	08:57:00	08:56:00
114.R*5d	08:57:00	08:56:00
115.+N6bx5a	08:57:00	08:56:00
116.S2gx1f+	08:57:00	08:56:00
117.G*4c	08:57:00	08:56:00
118.K3a-2a	08:57:00	08:56:00
119.G*3b	08:57:00	08:56:00
120.K2a-1b	08:57:00	08:56:00
121.G4cx3c	08:57:00	08:56:00
122.S2bx3c	08:57:00	08:56:00

123.G3bx3c 08:57:00 08:56:00  
Resigns 08:57:00 08:57:00



The easy mating threat is S\*2c and because black can take the rook on 5d at any time, there is no proper defense. White can try one more check with 124.R\*4i, but there is no follow-up after 125.K6i. Habu took one minute to compose himself before resigning his Meijin title to Moriuchi. He fought hard to get back from 3-0 down, but it was not enough as Moriuchi takes his sixth Meijin title. Moriuchi and Habu have a stronghold on the Meijin title with either of them winning the title in the last ten years. In Meijin title matches their head-to-head is 3-3 and their overall title match tally against each other is dead even at 6-6. The childhood rivals don't give each other an inch and this rivalry is set to continue for a while.

**Finale standing:**  
**Habu - Moriuchi 3-4**

## Summary

		Habu	Moriuchi
07./08.04.2011	<a href="#">Moriuchi - Habu 1-0</a>	0	1
20./21.04.2011	<a href="#">Habu - Moriuchi 0-1</a>	0	2
06./07.05.2011	<a href="#">Moriuchi - Habu 1-0</a>	0	3
17./18.05.2011	<a href="#">Habu - Moriuchi 1-0</a>	1	3
31.05./01.06.2011	<a href="#">Moriuchi - Habu 0-1</a>	2	3
07./08.06.2011	<a href="#">Habu - Moriuchi 1-0</a>	3	3
21./22.06.2011	<a href="#">Moriuchi - Habu 1-0</a>	3	4

## 82. Kisei

### 82. Kisei challenger's tournament

Quarter-final	semifinal	finale
Watanabe - A.Sato 0-1	A. Sato - Goda 1-0	<a href="#">A. Sato - Fukaura 0-1</a>
Namekata - Goda 0-1		
Y. Sato - Inaba 1-0	Fukaura - Y. Sato 1-0	
Yashiki - Fukaura 0-1		

23 year old Sato Amahiko suprisingly was in the finale of the Kisei challengers tournament after beating tough 9. Dan players. His opponent in the finale was Fukaura who hoped to get another chance of playing in the Kisei title match after losing the year before against Habu.

#### Challenger's finale

**2011-04-28**

**Sente: Sato Amahiko**

**Gote: Fukaura Koichi**

1. P2g-2f
2. P3c-3d
3. P7g-7f
4. B2b-3c
5. B8hx3c+
6. N2ax3c
7. K5i-6h
8. G4a-3b
9. P2f-2e
10. R8b-5b
11. S7i-7h
12. K5a-6b
13. P9g-9f
14. P9c-9d
15. G4i-5h
16. K6b-7b
17. P6g-6f
18. R5b-5a
19. S7h-6g
20. S3a-4b
21. G6i-7h
22. K7b-8b
23. P7f-7e
24. S7a-7b
25. K6h-7i
26. P5c-5d
27. K7i-8h
28. S4b-5c
29. S3i-4h
30. S5c-6d
31. S6g-7f
32. B\*5c
33. B\*8f
34. P8c-8d
35. N8i-7g

36. S6d-5e

37. P6f-6e

38. S5e-6f



39. P4g-4f

40. S7b-8c

41. S4h-4g

42. G6a-7b

43. S4g-5f

44. B5c-4d

45. K8h-8i

46. P1c-1d

47. P1g-1f

48. P5d-5e

49. S5f-6g

50. S6fx6g+

51. G7hx6g

52. B4d-3e

53. G5h-4g

54. P4c-4d

55. P7e-7d

56. S8cx7d

57. S\*4b

58. R5a-2a

59. S4bx3c+

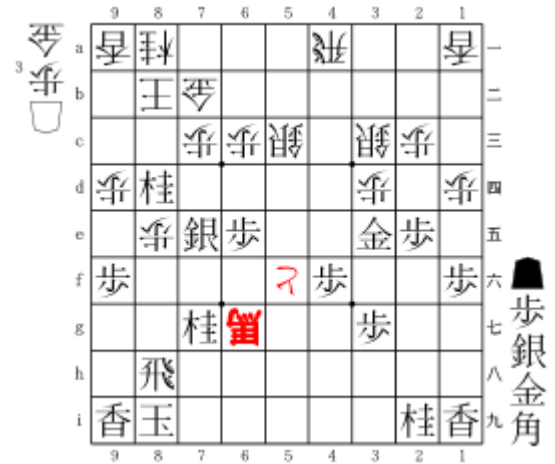
60. G3bx3c

61. B8f-4b+

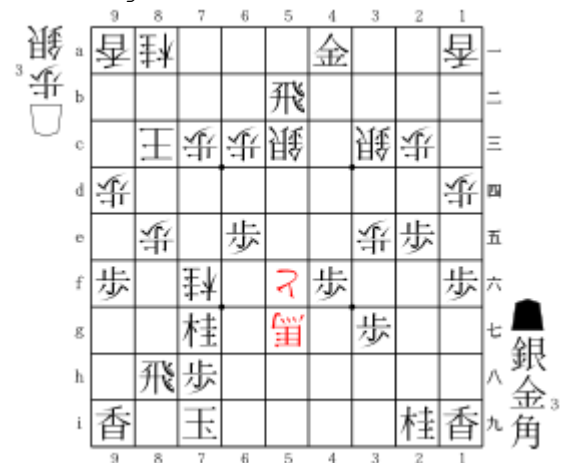
62. S\*3b



- 63. P8g-8f
- 64. P4d-4e
- 65. P8f-8e
- 66. P8dx8e
- 67. R2h-8h
- 68. S\*5c
- 69. +B4bx3c
- 70. S3bx3c
- 71. G4g-3f
- 72. B\*4i
- 73. G3fx4e
- 74. R2a-4a
- 75. N\*8d
- 76. P5e-5f
- 77. G4ex3e
- 78. P5fx5g+
- 79. G6g-6f
- 80. +P5g-5f
- 81. G6f-7e
- 82. S7dx7e
- 83. S7fx7e
- 84. B4i-6g+



- 85. P\*7h
- 86. G\*7i
- 87. K8ix7i
- 88. +B6g-5g
- 89. K7i-8i
- 90. +B5gx7e
- 91. N8dx7b+
- 92. K8bx7b
- 93. G\*5b
- 94. N\*7f
- 95. S\*7i
- 96. P3dx3e
- 97. G5bx4a
- 98. G\*6i
- 99. R\*5b
- 100. K7b-8c
- 101. R8h-8g
- 102. G6ix7i
- 103. K8ix7i
- 104. S\*8h
- 105. R8gx8h
- 106. +B7e-5g
- 107. Resigns



## 81. Kisei title match

### Game 1

2011-06-11

**Sente:** Fukaura Koichi, Challenger

**Gote:** Habu Yoshiharu, Kisei

1.P2g-2f 00:00:00 00:00:00

The furigoma for this game resulted in four tokens, so challenger Fukaura gets to start with the black pieces. He is looking for a good start to this match, because he was whitewashed in the Kisei last year. Fukaura's first move is 1.P2f, an invitation to play the Aigakari opening.

2.P3c-3d 00:00:00 00:00:00

Although Habu and Fukaura have played the Aigakari opening in title matches before, Habu indicates that he is not interested and prefers to play a Yokofudori instead.

3.P7g-7f 00:00:00 00:00:00

4.P8c-8d 00:00:00 00:01:00

5.P6g-6f 00:01:00 00:01:00

Now it is Fukaura's turn to decline the invitation. Instead of the Yokofudori, the game now becomes a Yagura opening.

6.S3a-4b 00:01:00 00:03:00

Interesting choice by Habu. Most professionals would have played 6.P8e here, because the reply 7.B7g is forced and after that it is much harder for black to move into the Yagura castle formation. Instead, Habu opts to play a more classic type of Yagura opening.

7.S7i-6h 00:01:00 00:03:00

8.S7a-6b 00:01:00 00:03:00

9.P5g-5f 00:02:00 00:03:00

10.P5c-5d 00:02:00 00:04:00

11.S3i-4h 00:03:00 00:04:00

12.G4a-3b 00:03:00 00:05:00

13.G4i-5h 00:03:00 00:05:00

14.K5a-4a 00:03:00 00:09:00

15.G5h-6g 00:03:00 00:09:00

16.P7c-7d 00:03:00 00:10:00

17.S6h-7g 00:18:00 00:10:00

18.S4b-3c 00:18:00 00:19:00

19.B8h-7i 00:20:00 00:19:00

20.B2b-3a 00:20:00 00:20:00

21.P3g-3f 00:20:00 00:20:00

22.S6b-7c 00:20:00 00:21:00

23.S4h-3g 00:45:00 00:21:00



Fukaura has been threatening to move into the Yagura without playing the bishop to 6h which would give him an extra move. Habu is careful not to allow that. If black plays 24.K6h here, then 25.P7e is a strong attack. Normally, this can be answered with B4f and the pinned silver on 7c becomes a major liability. However, here the king on 6h is blocking the bishop, so there is no counter to P7e for black.

24.S7c-6d 00:45:00 00:34:00

25.G6i-7h 00:51:00 00:34:00

26.R8b-5b 00:51:00 01:04:00

27.K5i-6i 00:52:00 01:04:00

28.N8a-7c 00:52:00 01:06:00

29.S3g-4f 01:01:00 01:06:00

30.S3c-4d 01:01:00 01:09:00

31.P2f-2e 01:36:00 01:09:00

The alternative is 31.N3g and after 32.P5e R5h Px5f Gx5f black has the strong future N4e. On the other hand, white can play P\*5e and it is not so easy to see how black should respond to that.

32.P5d-5e 01:36:00 01:42:00

33.P5fx5e 01:37:00 01:42:00

34.S6dx5e 01:37:00 01:42:00

35.S4fx5e 01:37:00 01:42:00

36.S4dx5e 01:37:00 01:42:00

37.P2e-2d 01:37:00 01:42:00

38.P2cx2d 01:37:00 01:42:00



39.B7ix2d	01:37:00	01:42:00
40.P*2c	01:37:00	01:42:00
41.B2d-1e	01:37:00	01:42:00
42.S5e-5f	01:37:00	01:43:00
43.G6gx5f	02:04:00	01:43:00
44.R5bx5f	02:04:00	01:43:00
45.B1e-3g	02:04:00	01:43:00
46.S*3i?!	02:04:00	02:12:00

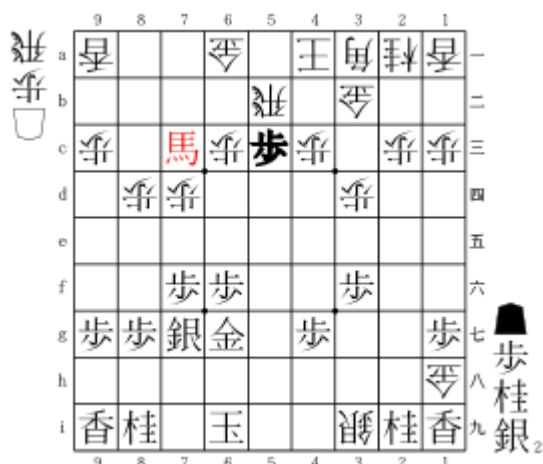


A move with a strong impact, but probably not the best here. The post-mortem analysis showed that white should have played 46.B6d here. Then 47.Bx6d P\*6d B\*6c K3a S\*4a B\*3i is unclear. Habu felt that strong action was necessary because he felt that the natural 46.N8e S6h Rx3f was too weak.

47.R2h-1h	02:51:00	02:12:00
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Better than 47.R3h G\*2g R3i Gx3g Rx3g B\*2h which is good for white because he is attacking while removing the threat to the knight on 7c. With 47.R1h, black moves the rook to a position where it is defended by the lance, which gives him time to take the knight on 7c and go for a material advantage.

48.G*2g	02:51:00	02:25:00
49.G7h-6g	02:51:00	02:25:00
50.R5f-5b	02:51:00	02:25:00
51.B3gx7c+	02:59:00	02:25:00
52.G2gx1h	02:59:00	02:25:00
53.P*5c	03:06:00	02:25:00



It is not so easy to see why 53.P\*5d isn't better here. After all, with P\*5c, black allows the white bishop to come into play and attack via square 2f. Actually, 53.P\*5d was suggested by one of the shogi fans who followed the game on big board and the professionals explaining the game had a hard time answering the question. Finally, they came up with the following variation: 53.Gx1i N\*5c Bx5c Px5c+ Rx5c P\*5d Rx5d +Bx6c L\*5b which seems good for white.

54.B3ax5c	03:06:00	02:29:00
55.P*5d	03:06:00	02:29:00
56.B5c-2f	03:06:00	02:38:00
57.L1ix1h	03:06:00	02:38:00
58.G6a-6b	03:06:00	02:46:00
59.+B7cx9a	03:10:00	02:46:00
60.R5bx5d	03:10:00	02:48:00
61.L*5f	03:13:00	02:48:00
62.R5d-4d	03:13:00	03:04:00
63.P4g-4f	03:19:00	03:04:00
64.P*5g	03:19:00	03:09:00
65.G*6h?	03:27:00	03:09:00



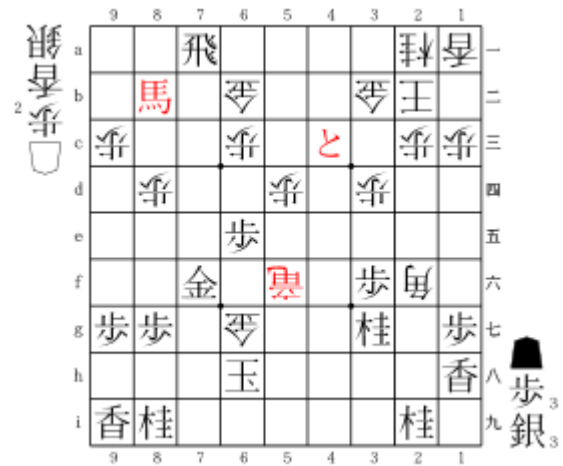
This is a serious mistake. There were several alternative that were better here. The most

obvious one is 65.S\*5e which in the post-mortem analysis lead to an unclear position. Even better seems 65.+B5e, because after 66.P5h+ K7h R\*4h +Bx4d Px4d R\*5a K4b N\*2e there is no mate for black, much to Habu's surprise: +P5g K7i B\*8h Sx8h R4i+ B\*6i! and black wins.

66.R*5i	03:27:00	03:21:00
67.K6i-7h	03:27:00	03:21:00
68.P5g-5h+	03:27:00	03:21:00
69.N*3g	03:38:00	03:21:00
70.K4a-3a	03:38:00	03:23:00
71.P6f-6e	03:42:00	03:23:00
72.P7d-7e	03:42:00	03:26:00
73.+B9a-5e	03:45:00	03:26:00
74.P*5d	03:45:00	03:30:00
75.+B5e-8b	03:50:00	03:30:00
76.P7ex7f	03:50:00	03:30:00
77.G6gx7f	03:50:00	03:30:00
78.S3i-4h=	03:50:00	03:33:00
79.P4f-4e	03:51:00	03:33:00
80.S4h-5g+	03:51:00	03:33:00

Leaving the gold on 6h and taking the time to bring the dormant silver on 3i into play is a great way to play the endgame. With this silver maneuver Habu decides this first game in his favor.

81.P4ex4d	03:55:00	03:33:00
82.+P5hx6h	03:55:00	03:36:00
83.S7gx6h	03:55:00	03:36:00
84.+S5gx6h	03:55:00	03:36:00
85.K7hx6h	03:57:00	03:36:00
86.R5ix5f+	03:57:00	03:36:00
87.R*7a	03:57:00	03:36:00
88.K3a-2b	03:57:00	03:36:00
89.P4dx4c+	03:57:00	03:36:00
90.G*6g	03:57:00	03:36:00
Resigns	03:57:00	03:36:00



Mate after 91.K7i +R5i K8h +R6h so Fukaura resigned here. Not the start he would have liked. He had his chances in this game, but dropping a game with black means that all the pressure is now on him to win game 2 with the white pieces to avoid a 0-2 hole.

#### Standing after game 1 Habu – Fukaura 1-0

## 2011-06-25

**Gote: Fukaura Koichi, Challenger**

1.P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2.P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3.P2g-2f	00:01:00	00:00:00
4.G4a-3b	00:01:00	00:01:00
5.P2f-2e	00:02:00	00:01:00
6.P8c-8d	00:02:00	00:01:00
7.G6i-7h	00:03:00	00:01:00
8.B2bx8h+	00:03:00	00:01:00
9.S7ix8h	00:03:00	00:01:00
10.S3a-2b	00:03:00	00:01:00
11.S3i-3h	00:04:00	00:01:00
12.S2b-3c	00:04:00	00:01:00
13.K5i-6h	00:04:00	00:01:00
14.S7a-6b	00:04:00	00:02:00
15.S8h-7g	00:05:00	00:02:00
16.P6c-6d	00:05:00	00:04:00
17.S3h-2g	00:11:00	00:04:00
18.S6b-6c	00:11:00	00:04:00
19.S2g-2f	00:11:00	00:04:00
20.P1c-1d	00:11:00	00:04:00
21.P3g-3f	00:11:00	00:04:00
22.P4c-4d	00:11:00	00:05:00
23.P3f-3e	00:12:00	00:05:00
24.G6a-5b	00:12:00	00:05:00
25.K6h-7i	00:14:00	00:05:00
26.P6d-6e	00:14:00	00:18:00
27.P3ex3d	00:16:00	00:18:00
28.S3cx3d	00:16:00	00:19:00
29.G4i-5h	00:17:00	00:19:00
30.P9c-9d	00:17:00	00:48:00
31.P9g-9f	00:20:00	00:48:00
32.S6c-5d	00:20:00	00:54:00
33.P5g-5f	00:33:00	00:54:00
34.R8b-6b	00:33:00	01:15:00
35.P1g-1f	00:43:00	01:15:00
36.N8a-9c	00:43:00	01:33:00
37.S7g-6h	01:26:00	01:33:00
38.P6e-6f	01:26:00	02:10:00
39.P6gx6f	01:32:00	02:10:00
40.B*3i	01:32:00	02:10:00
41.R2h-3h	01:32:00	02:10:00
42.B3ix6f+	01:32:00	02:10:00
43.R3hx3d	01:32:00	02:10:00
44.P*3c	01:32:00	02:10:00
45.R3d-3h	01:33:00	02:10:00
46.+B6fx9i	01:33:00	02:10:00
47.B*7q	01:34:00	02:10:00

[illegible]

49.G7h-8h 02:04:00 02:22:00

50.+B9h-9i	02:04:00	02:22:00
51.G8h-7h	02:04:00	02:22:00
52.+B9i-9h	02:04:00	02:22:00
53.G7h-8h	02:04:00	02:22:00
54.+B9h-9i	02:04:00	02:22:00
55.G8h-7h	02:04:00	02:22:00
56.+B9i-9h	02:04:00	02:22:00
57.G7h-8h	02:04:00	02:22:00
58.+B9h-9i	02:04:00	02:22:00
59.G8h-7h	02:04:00	02:22:00
Sennichite	02:04:00	02:22:00



Four times the same position, so this game is sennichite. After a one hour break, the game is replayed with reversed colors.

## Game 2 - replay

2011-06-25

Sente: Fukaura Koichi, Challenger

Gote: Habu Yoshiharu, Kisei

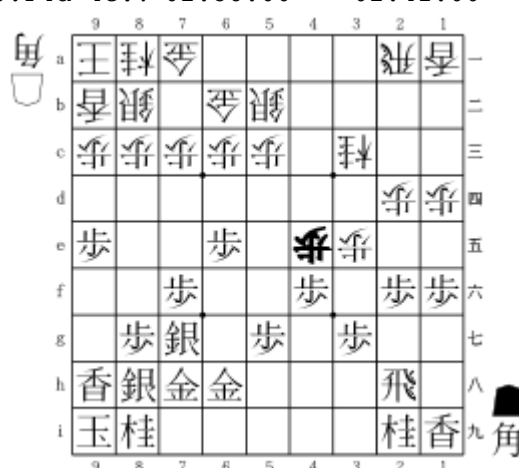
1. P2g-2f	02:22:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	02:22:00	02:04:00
3. P7g-7f	02:22:00	02:04:00
4. R8b-4b	02:22:00	02:04:00
5. S3i-4h	02:22:00	02:04:00
6. K5a-6b	02:22:00	02:04:00
7. K5i-6h	02:22:00	02:04:00
8. B2bx8h+	02:22:00	02:04:00



Habu rarely plays this strategy, so this was probably meant to surprise Fukaura, adding a little pressure to the limited time available due to the replay of the sennichite game.

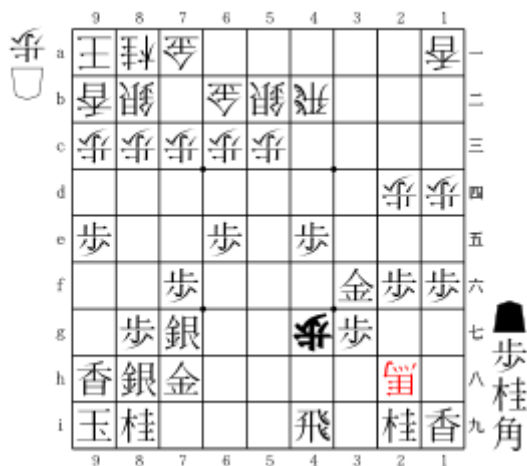
9. S7ix8h	02:22:00	02:04:00
10. K6b-7b	02:22:00	02:04:00
11. K6h-7h	02:22:00	02:04:00
12. S3a-2b	02:22:00	02:04:00
13. P9g-9f	02:22:00	02:04:00
14. K7b-8b	02:22:00	02:04:00
15. P9f-9e	02:22:00	02:04:00
16. S2b-3c	02:22:00	02:04:00
17. S8h-7g	02:22:00	02:04:00
18. L9a-9b	02:22:00	02:05:00
19. G4i-5h	02:27:00	02:05:00
20. K8b-9a	02:27:00	02:07:00
21. P4g-4f	02:27:00	02:07:00
22. S7a-8b	02:27:00	02:11:00
23. S4h-4g	02:27:00	02:11:00
24. R4b-2b	02:27:00	02:11:00
25. K7h-8h	02:34:00	02:11:00
26. P2c-2d	02:34:00	02:12:00
27. G6i-7h	02:34:00	02:12:00

28. G4a-5b	02:34:00	02:12:00
29. S4g-5f	02:35:00	02:12:00
30. P3d-3e	02:35:00	02:14:00
31. G5h-6h	02:35:00	02:14:00
32. G5b-6b	02:35:00	02:22:00
33. L9i-9h	02:40:00	02:22:00
34. S3c-3d	02:40:00	02:24:00
35. K8h-9i	02:40:00	02:24:00
36. N2a-3c	02:40:00	02:24:00
37. S7g-8h	02:40:00	02:24:00
38. P4c-4d	02:40:00	02:24:00
39. P6g-6f	02:41:00	02:24:00
40. S3d-4c	02:41:00	02:28:00
41. P1g-1f	02:44:00	02:28:00
42. P1c-1d	02:44:00	02:29:00
43. P6f-6e	02:44:00	02:29:00
44. R2b-2a	02:44:00	02:30:00
45. S5f-6g	02:50:00	02:30:00
46. G6a-7a	02:50:00	02:35:00
47. S6g-6f	02:50:00	02:35:00
48. S4c-5b	02:50:00	02:36:00
49. S6f-7g	02:58:00	02:36:00
50. P4d-4e?!	02:58:00	02:41:00



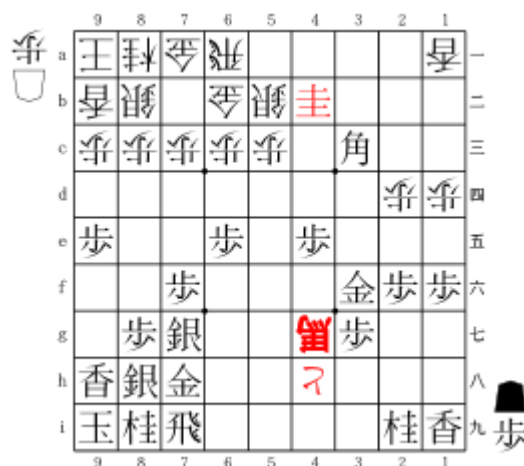
For a long time, it seemed like this game might also end in sennichite as it is difficult for both sides to open the game. However, Habu isn't known for playing sennichite games often and it was felt that even though he has the white pieces, he would take every reasonable opportunity to open the game. He does that here, but it is hard to say that 50.P4e is the right move here. At first sight, it looks like a complete overplay. As we will see, white actually has some way to keep the attack going. Still, arbiter Akutsu thought that because black has pushed the edge pawn to 9e, opening up the game here was a little too dangerous and after the game Habu admitted as much.

51. P4fx4e	02:59:00	02:41:00
52. N3cx4e	02:59:00	02:41:00
53. R2h-4h	03:00:00	02:41:00
54. N4ex5g+	03:00:00	02:42:00
55. G6hx5g	03:00:00	02:42:00
56. B*3i	03:00:00	02:42:00
57. R4h-4g	03:01:00	02:42:00
58. P*4f	03:01:00	02:42:00
59. G5gx4f	03:01:00	02:42:00
60. B3i-2h+	03:01:00	02:42:00
61. R4g-4i	03:01:00	02:42:00
62. R2a-4a	03:01:00	02:47:00
63. P*4b	03:02:00	02:47:00
64. R4ax4b	03:02:00	02:47:00
65. P*4e	03:02:00	02:47:00
66. P3e-3f	03:02:00	02:56:00
67. G4fx3f	03:04:00	02:56:00
68. P*4g	03:04:00	02:56:00



White has promoted the bishop and put the gold in a bad spot on 3f at no loss of material. It seems like he is doing well, but black can now counter this with a bishop promotion of his own and the position is unclear.

69. B*3c	03:06:00	02:56:00
70. R4b-4a	03:06:00	03:00:00
71. N*4d	03:06:00	03:00:00
72. +B2h-3h	03:06:00	03:03:00
73. R4i-7i	03:07:00	03:03:00
74. P4g-4h+	03:07:00	03:08:00
75. N4d-3b+	03:11:00	03:08:00
76. R4a-6a	03:11:00	03:08:00
77. +N3b-4b	03:11:00	03:08:00
78. +B3h-4g?	03:11:00	03:09:00



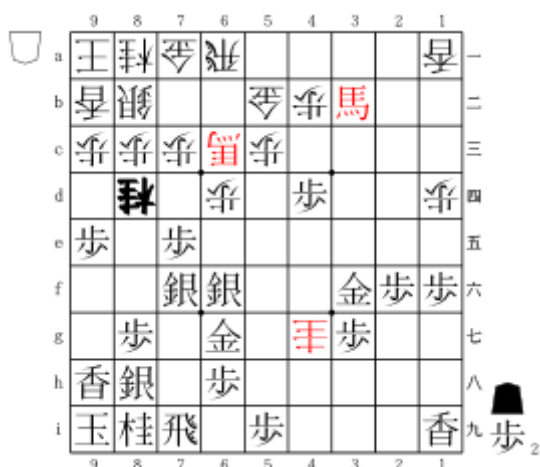
A mistake that gives black the upper hand. Correct would have been 78. +P5h P\*5i +P5g and the token is closer to the black king, which is important in a game where neither player has enough firepower to start a devastating attack. Also, the square 5f is now perfect for the promoted bishop.

79. P*5i	03:11:00	03:09:00
80. +B4gx2i	03:11:00	03:09:00
81. B3c-6f+	03:15:00	03:09:00
82. S5b-4a	03:15:00	03:13:00
83. +N4bx4a	03:15:00	03:13:00
84. R6ax4a	03:15:00	03:13:00
85. +B6fx4h	03:15:00	03:13:00

Fukaura has picked off the black token and now is a silver for a knight up. A clear advantage, which is only slightly affected by the bad gold on 3f. The problem is that none of the black pieces is anywhere close to the white king, which makes winning from here will take a lot of work.

86. +B2i-5f	03:15:00	03:14:00
87. S*6g	03:17:00	03:14:00
88. +B5fx6e	03:17:00	03:16:00
89. +B4h-5g	03:17:00	03:16:00
90. +B6e-3h	03:17:00	03:17:00
91. +B5gx2d	03:20:00	03:17:00
92. N*5e	03:20:00	03:20:00
93. S6g-6f	03:20:00	03:20:00
94. +B3h-5f	03:20:00	03:20:00
95. P*6h	03:21:00	03:20:00
96. N5e-4g+	03:21:00	03:24:00
97. G7h-6g	03:22:00	03:24:00
98. +B5f-7d	03:22:00	03:24:00
99. +B2d-2c	03:22:00	03:24:00
100. R4a-3a	03:22:00	03:24:00

101.+B2c-2b 03:22:00 03:24:00  
 102.R3a-6a 03:22:00 03:24:00  
 103.P4e-4d 03:22:00 03:24:00  
 104.P\*4b 03:22:00 03:24:00  
 105.+B2b-3b 03:22:00 03:24:00  
 106.P6c-6d 03:22:00 03:24:00  
 107.+B3b-4b 03:22:00 03:24:00  
 108.G6b-5b 03:22:00 03:24:00  
 109.+B4b-3b 03:25:00 03:24:00  
 110.P\*4b 03:25:00 03:24:00  
 111.P7f-7e 03:27:00 03:24:00  
 112.+B7d-6c 03:27:00 03:24:00  
 113.S7g-7f 03:27:00 03:24:00  
 114.N\*8d 03:27:00 03:26:00



It seems like black is putting a lot of pressure on the white position, but Habu finds a way to fight back. Taking the silver on 7f and using this to fuel an attack on the 6th file is keeping the game close. We have already played 114 moves in this replay of game 2, but the end is nowhere near. Akutsu actually expected the game to take more than 200 moves to finish.

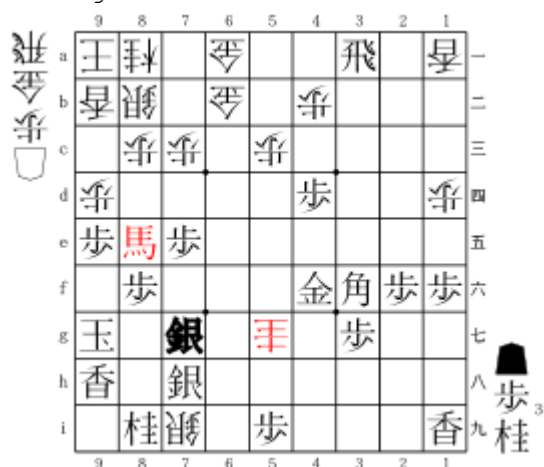
115.S6f-7g 03:27:00 03:26:00  
 116.N8dx7f 03:27:00 03:31:00  
 117.S7gx7f 03:29:00 03:31:00  
 118.S\*6e 03:29:00 03:32:00  
 119.P8g-8f 03:32:00 03:32:00  
 120.S6ex7f 03:32:00 03:34:00  
 121.R7ix7f 03:36:00 03:34:00  
 122.P6d-6e 03:36:00 03:34:00  
 123.S\*8g 03:36:00 03:34:00  
 124.S\*6f 03:36:00 03:36:00  
 125.G6gx6f 03:41:00 03:36:00  
 126.P6ex6f 03:41:00 03:36:00  
 127.R7fx6f 03:41:00 03:36:00  
 128.+N4g-5g 03:41:00 03:36:00  
 129.+B3b-7f 03:41:00 03:36:00  
 130.+B6c-6d 03:41:00 03:39:00  
 131.+B7f-8e 03:45:00 03:39:00

132.+B6d-5e 03:45:00 03:40:00  
 133.R6fx6a+ 03:45:00 03:40:00  
 134.G7ax6a 03:45:00 03:40:00  
 135.G3f-4f! 03:46:00 03:40:00



Good move. Not only bringing the eye sore gold on 3f into play, but even more importantly opening 3f for a bishop that will be pointing straight into the white position.

136.+B5ex8h 03:46:00 03:42:00  
 137.K9ix8h 03:46:00 03:42:00  
 138.R\*6i 03:46:00 03:42:00  
 139.B\*3f 03:52:00 03:42:00  
 140.R6ix6h+ 03:52:00 03:48:00  
 141.R\*7h 03:52:00 03:48:00  
 142.S\*7i 03:52:00 03:54:00  
 143.K8h-9g 03:52:00 03:54:00  
 144.+R6hx7h 03:52:00 03:54:00  
 145.S8gx7h 03:52:00 03:54:00  
 146.P9c-9d 03:52:00 03:54:00  
 147.R\*3a 03:58:00 03:54:00  
 148.G5b-6b 03:58:00 03:54:00  
 149.S\*7g 03:58:00 03:54:00



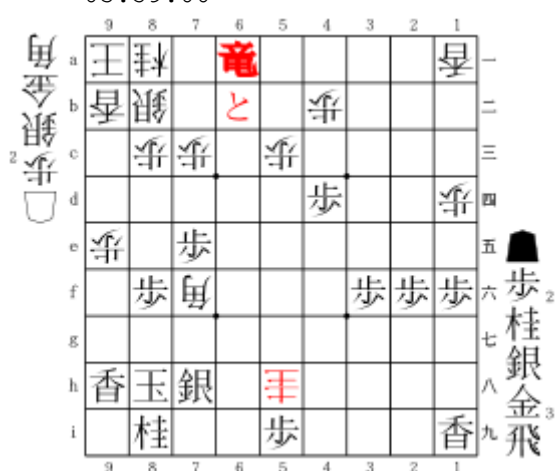
This move shows a lot of restraint. Especially under time pressure most players would have



played N\*6d here, which is a mating threat. Fukaura decides that it is not strong enough and that he needs to strengthen his defense to win.

150.R*4h	03:58:00	03:59:00
151.N*5h	03:58:00	03:59:00
152.P9dx9e	03:58:00	03:59:00
153.K9g-8g	03:58:00	03:59:00
154.+N5gx5h	03:58:00	03:59:00
155.P*6c	03:58:00	03:59:00
156.G*8h	03:58:00	03:59:00
157.S7gx8h	03:58:00	03:59:00
158.S7ix8h+	03:58:00	03:59:00
159.K8gx8h	03:58:00	03:59:00
160.S*7i	03:58:00	03:59:00
161.K8h-8g	03:58:00	03:59:00
162.R4hx4f+	03:58:00	03:59:00
163.S*7g	03:58:00	03:59:00
164.+R4fx3f	03:58:00	03:59:00
165.P3gx3f	03:58:00	03:59:00
166.B*5d	03:58:00	03:59:00
167.G*7f	03:58:00	03:59:00
168.N*6d	03:58:00	03:59:00
169.P6cx6b+	03:59:00	03:59:00
170.G*8h	03:59:00	03:59:00
171.S7gx8h	03:59:00	03:59:00
172.S7ix8h+	03:59:00	03:59:00
173.K8gx8h	03:59:00	03:59:00
174.N6dx7f	03:59:00	03:59:00
175.+B8ex7f	03:59:00	03:59:00
176.B5dx7f	03:59:00	03:59:00
177.R3ax6a+?	03:59:00	

03:59:00



In byoyomi and after 177 moves, Fukaura makes the mistake that will cost him the game. He could have won if he had played 177.G\*7b here. This is threatening mate with Gx8a next and black can also take the silver on 8b next, so there is no proper defense. Important is that

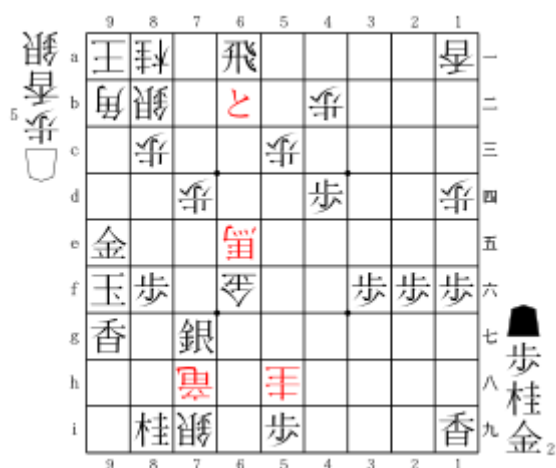
178.Gx7b Rx8a+ Kx8a R\*6a leads to mate. On the other hand, the black king cannot be mated: 178.S\*7i K7g B\*9i Kx7f G\*6f K8e P8d Kx8d S9c Kx9e S9d K8d and there is only mate with a pawn drop. Kind of amazing that such a long battle could have been decided by such a tiny margin.

178.S*7i	03:59:00	03:59:00
179.K8h-7g	03:59:00	03:59:00
180.B7f-5d	03:59:00	03:59:00

This defends against the mating threat Rx8a+ and threatens mate at the same time.

181.N*6e	03:59:00	03:59:00
182.B*9i	03:59:00	03:59:00
183.K7g-7f	03:59:00	03:59:00
184.B9i-5e+	03:59:00	03:59:00
185.+R6ax8a	03:59:00	03:59:00
186.B5dx8a	03:59:00	03:59:00
187.P*6f	03:59:00	03:59:00
188.P7c-7d	03:59:00	03:59:00
189.G*8e	03:59:00	03:59:00
190.G*6d	03:59:00	03:59:00
191.S*7g	03:59:00	03:59:00
192.G6dx7e	03:59:00	03:59:00
193.K7f-8g	03:59:00	03:59:00
194.G7ex6f	03:59:00	03:59:00
195.L9hx9e	03:59:00	03:59:00
196.+B5ex6e	03:59:00	03:59:00
197.K8g-9f	03:59:00	03:59:00
198.L9bx9e	03:59:00	03:59:00
199.G8ex9e	03:59:00	03:59:00
200.R*9h	03:59:00	03:59:00
201.L*9g	03:59:00	03:59:00
202.R9hx7h+	03:59:00	03:59:00
203.P*9b	03:59:00	03:59:00
204.B8ax9b	03:59:00	03:59:00
205.R*6a	03:59:00	03:59:00
206.N*8a	03:59:00	03:59:00
Resigns	03:59:00	03:59:00





The black king will be mated after +R8g but there is no proper defense. Also, there is clearly no mate against the white king, so Fukaura resigned here. Tough for Fukaura to go 2-0 down after playing so well for so long. Still, Habu always managed to keep the game close enough that one slight mistake could turn the tables in his favor. Great effort by both players, but Fukaura now needs to win game three to avoid being swept two years in a row by Habu.

**Standing after game 2**  
**Habu – Fukaura 2-0**

## Game 3

2011-07-02

Sente: Fukaura Koichi, Challenger

Gote: Habu Yoshiharu, Kisei

1. P2g-2f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P8c-8d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3. P7g-7f	00:02:00	00:00:00
4. G4a-3b	00:02:00	00:01:00
5. G6i-7h	00:02:00	00:01:00
6. P8d-8e	00:02:00	00:03:00
7. B8h-7g	00:02:00	00:03:00
8. P3c-3d	00:02:00	00:03:00
9. S7i-8h	00:02:00	00:03:00
10. B2bx7g+	00:02:00	00:03:00
11. S8hx7g	00:02:00	00:03:00
12. S3a-4b	00:02:00	00:03:00
13. S3i-3h	00:02:00	00:03:00
14. S7a-7b	00:02:00	00:04:00
15. P4g-4f	00:02:00	00:04:00
16. P6c-6d	00:02:00	00:06:00
17. S3h-4g	00:02:00	00:06:00
18. S7b-6c	00:02:00	00:07:00
19. K5i-6h	00:02:00	00:07:00
20. P1c-1d	00:02:00	00:08:00
21. P1g-1f	00:02:00	00:08:00
22. S6c-5d	00:02:00	00:08:00
23. S4g-5f	00:02:00	00:08:00
24. S4b-3c	00:02:00	00:08:00



The classic Kakugawari Koshikakegin opening. Playing this silver to 3c before the black pawn is pushed to 2e is unusual, because it invites the attack R4h-N3g-N2e-P4e, which was considered difficult for white. However, some new ideas have opened the discussion again as we will see in this game.

25. G4i-5h	00:04:00	00:08:00
26. K5a-4b	00:04:00	00:09:00
27. P9g-9f	00:04:00	00:09:00
28. P9c-9d	00:04:00	00:10:00
29. K6h-7i	00:04:00	00:10:00
30. G6a-5b	00:04:00	00:11:00
31. P3g-3f	00:05:00	00:11:00
32. K4b-3a	00:05:00	00:17:00
33. N2i-3g	00:06:00	00:17:00
34. P4c-4d	00:06:00	00:17:00
35. P6g-6f	00:08:00	00:17:00
36. P7c-7d	00:08:00	00:17:00
37. R2h-4h	00:09:00	00:17:00
38. G5b-4b	00:09:00	00:18:00
39. K7i-8h	00:09:00	00:18:00
40. K3a-2b	00:09:00	00:18:00
41. N3g-2e	00:15:00	00:18:00
42. S3c-2d	00:15:00	00:19:00
43. B*2h	00:15:00	00:19:00
44. P7d-7e	00:15:00	00:32:00
45. P4f-4e	00:20:00	00:32:00
46. P7ex7f	00:20:00	00:37:00
47. S7gx7f	00:20:00	00:37:00
48. P4dx4e	00:20:00	00:37:00
49. B2hx6d	00:22:00	00:37:00
50. P*7c	00:22:00	00:37:00
51. P*7d	00:23:00	00:37:00
52. R8b-6b	00:23:00	00:41:00
53. B6d-3g	00:25:00	00:41:00
54. R6bx6f	00:25:00	00:42:00
55. G5h-6g	00:25:00	00:42:00
56. B*4d	00:25:00	00:43:00
57. N8i-7g	00:43:00	00:43:00
58. R6fx6g+	00:43:00	00:58:00



White has invited the aforementioned attack and black has taken up the challenge. However, we are still in known territory. There have been two games with this position, Murayama-Goda and Kitajima-lizuka. Both of these games continued 59. S7fx6g P\*6f S5h

G\*4f Bx4f Px4f Rx4f resulting in a very sharp semeai.

59.S5fx6g 00:43:00 00:58:00

Fukaura takes with the other silver, which is a new idea. A small surprise, because Iizuka admitted that even though he won his game against Kitajima, he had been lucky because black had the better position. This would indicate that 59.S5fx6g is better for black, but Habu undoubtedly will have prepared something and Fukaura changes the moves before he finds out what Habu has cooked up.

60.P\*6f 00:43:00 00:59:00

61.S6g-5h 00:48:00 00:59:00

62.G\*4f 00:48:00 01:11:00

63.B3g-2h 00:57:00 01:11:00

This is the difference with 59.S7fx6g. The gold on 4f is in front of his own pawn, which is bad shape. If black retreats the bishop with the silver still on 5f, white can simply take the silver with the gold. However, in the current position there is no silver on 5f, so Fukaura plays to exploit the bad gold on 4f.

64.P7cx7d! 00:57:00 01:24:00



The drawback of taking with the silver on 5f instead of with the silver on 7f. Without a silver on 7f, taking the pawn on 7d would not be attractive, because it would take three moves for this pawn to enter the attack. However, here the silver on 7f becomes a target, so this is now much quicker. In the press room 64.Px7d was praised and white was considered to have the better position, but in the post-mortem analysis Habu admitted that

he was far from confident about his position here.

65.R\*7a 01:13:00 01:24:00

Taking the sting out of the attack on the 7th file, but at the cost of committing the rook.

66.P7d-7e 01:13:00 01:25:00

67.R7ax7e+ 01:13:00 01:25:00

68.B4dx2f 01:13:00 01:25:00

69.R4h-4i 01:15:00 01:25:00

70.S2dx2e 01:15:00 01:25:00

Habu picks up a knight and now has a gold and a knight for the rook. Fukaura now further sharpens up the position.

71.B2hx4f 01:29:00 01:25:00

72.P4ex4f 01:29:00 01:34:00

73.+R7ex2e 01:34:00 01:34:00



A bishop for two generals, so black is now a silver against a knight up.

74.B2f-3g+ 01:34:00 01:41:00

75.P\*2d 01:39:00 01:41:00

76.P2cx2d 01:39:00 01:43:00

The head of the king is now an important weakness and black seems to get the advantage here, but Habu is not letting up.

77.+R2ex8e 01:39:00 01:43:00

78.N8a-7c 01:39:00 02:28:00

79.+R8e-8a 01:47:00 02:28:00

80.P\*7e 01:47:00 02:29:00

A natural but strong attack on the 7th file. We are entering a very sharp endgame that seems



held by Oyama. With challenging for the Oi and a defense of his Oza title coming up, he could break this record in the next couple of months.

**Finale standing:**  
**Habu – Fukaura 3-0**

## Summary

		Habu	Fukaura
11.06.2011	<a href="#">Fukaura - Habu 0-1</a>	1	0
25.06.2011	<a href="#">Habu - Fukaura Sennichite</a> <a href="#">Fukaura - Habu 0-1</a>	2	0
02.07.2011	<a href="#">Fukaura - Habu 0-1</a>	3	0

## 52. Oi

### 52. Oi challenger league

#### Red group

		1	2	3	4	5	6	Wins	Losses	Rank
1	Fukaura	x	0	1	0	0	0	1	4	5.-6.
2	Tobe	1	x	1	1	0	0	3	2	2.-4.
3	Tanigawa	0	0	x	0	0	1	1	4	5.-6.
4	Fujii	1	0	.	x	1	1	4	1	1.
5	Toyoshima	1	1	1	0	x	0	3	2	2.-4.
6	Toyama	1	1	0	0	1	x	3	2	2.-4.

#### White group

		1	2	3	4	5	6	Wins	Losses	Rank
1	Habu	x	0	1	1	1	1	4	1	1.-2.
2	Sato	1	x	0	1	0	1	3	2	3.
3	Miura	0	1	x	1	0	0	2	3	4.
4	Kubota	0	0	0	x	0	1	1	4	5.-6.
5	Murayama	0	1	1	1	x	1	4	1	1.-2.
6	Yoshida	0	0	1	0	0	x	1	4	5.-6.

**Playoff:** [Murayama - Habu 0-1](#)

**Finale:** [Habu - Fujii 1-0](#)

While Fujii could win the red group of the challenger league, in the white group Habu and Murayama shared the lead. But Habu could win his playoff and also the finale against Fujii. So at last he became the challenger of the young title holder Hirose.



## Challenger's Finale

2011-06-13

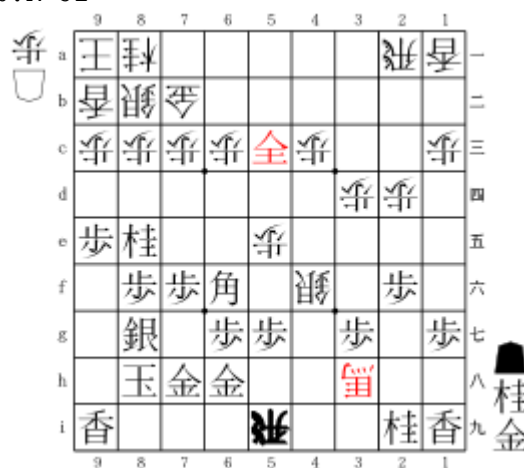
Sente: Habu Yoshiharu

Gote: Fujii Takeshi

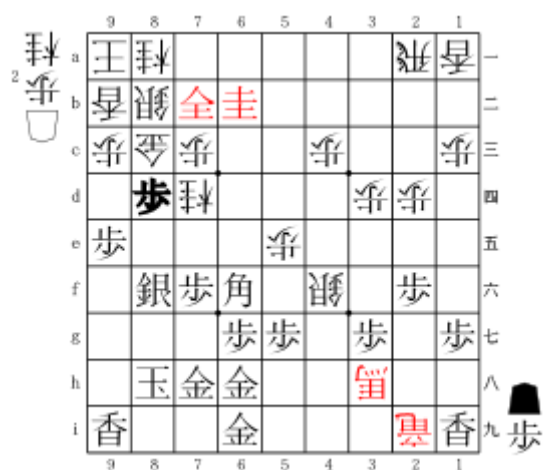
1. P7g-7f
2. P3c-3d
3. P2g-2f
4. R8b-4b
5. S3i-4h
6. K5a-6b
7. K5i-6h
8. B2bx8h+
9. S7ix8h
10. K6b-7b
11. K6h-7h
12. S3a-2b
13. P9g-9f
14. K7b-8b
15. P9f-9e
16. S2b-3c
17. G4i-5h
18. G6a-7b
19. P8g-8f
20. L9a-9b
21. S8h-8g
22. K8b-9a
23. K7h-8h
24. P2c-2d
25. G6i-7h
26. R4b-2b
27. P4g-4f
28. S3c-4d
29. S4h-4g
30. G4a-5b
31. S4g-5f
32. N2a-3c
33. G5h-6h
34. S7a-8b
35. B\*6f
36. R2b-2a
37. R2h-4h
38. B\*2g
39. P4f-4e
40. N3cx4e



41. N8i-7g
42. P5c-5d
43. N7g-8e
44. S4d-5e
45. S5fx5e
46. P5dx5e
47. R4h-4f
48. G5b-5c
49. S\*3f
50. B2g-3h+
51. S3fx4e
52. S\*3e
53. S4e-5d
54. S3ex4f
55. S5dx5c+
56. R\*5i

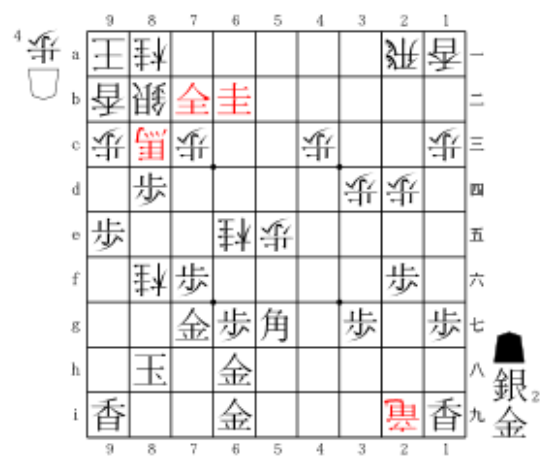


57. N\*5d
58. P8c-8d
59. N5d-6b+
60. G7b-8c
61. +S5cx6c
62. P8dx8e
63. +S6c-7b
64. P8ex8f
65. S8gx8f
66. N\*7d
67. G\*6i
68. R5ix2i+
69. P\*8d



- 70.N7dx8f  
 71.P8dx8c+  
 72.+B3hx8c  
 73.G7h-8g  
 74.S4fx5g  
 75.B6fx5g  
 76.N\*6e

- 77.P\*8d  
 78.S\*7g  
 79.G8gx7g  
 80.Resigns



## 52. Oi title match

### Game 1

2011-07-12/13

**Sente:** Habu Yoshiharu, Challenger

**Gote:** Hirose Akihito, Oi

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:01:00
3. P6g-6f	00:04:00	00:01:00

The furigoma resulted in three tokins, giving challenger Habu the black pieces for this first game. Before the match, it was expected that Hirose would play the Furibisha Anaguma almost every game and that it was up to Habu to show what he had prepared against Hirose's favorite opening. In the first game, he plays to avoid the Furibisha Anaguma by closing the bishop diagonal with 3.P6f. This is an invitation to play the Ai-Furibisha opening and Hirose accepts.

4. R8b-3b	00:04:00	00:06:00
5. B8h-7g	00:09:00	00:06:00
6. K5a-6b	00:09:00	00:10:00
7. S7i-7h	00:14:00	00:10:00
8. P3d-3e	00:14:00	00:15:00
9. S7h-6g	00:18:00	00:15:00
10. P3e-3f	00:18:00	00:29:00
11. P3gx3f	00:22:00	00:29:00
12. R3bx3f	00:22:00	00:29:00
13. R2h-8h	00:35:00	00:29:00
14. S3a-4b	00:35:00	00:38:00
15. P8g-8f	01:03:00	00:38:00
16. S7a-7b	01:03:00	01:00:00
17. P8f-8e	01:18:00	01:00:00
18. K6b-7a	01:18:00	01:00:00
19. S3i-2h	01:19:00	01:00:00
20. R3f-3d	01:19:00	01:30:00

So far, the game has followed the game between Hashimoto and Habu in the Ryu-O tournament that was played 6 days before. Not a good memory for Habu, who lost this game, thereby ending his bid for the Ryu-O title prematurely.

21. P*3g	01:51:00	01:30:00
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Dropping this pawn is a hard move to play for a professional player, but here it seems that black has no choice. For example, if black aims for the Yagura formation with 21.G6i-5h G4a-5b P4f S3c G4g S4d P6e B3c S3g then the counter P6d Px6d S5e leads to a good position for white. However, after 21.P\*3g the game develops into a high Mino castle for white against the Kinmuso for black, which is considered to be good for white.

22. G4a-5b	01:51:00	01:49:00
23. K5i-4h	01:52:00	01:49:00
24. P2c-2d	01:52:00	01:51:00
25. P9g-9f	02:12:00	01:51:00
26. P2d-2e	02:12:00	02:03:00
27. K4h-3h	02:13:00	02:03:00
28. S4b-3c	02:13:00	02:15:00
29. G4i-4h	02:21:00	02:15:00
30. S3c-2d	02:21:00	02:40:00
31. G6i-5h	02:59:00	02:40:00
32. S2d-3e	02:59:00	02:43:00
33. P7f-7e	03:00:00	02:43:00
34. R3d-2d	03:00:00	02:55:00
35. B7g-6h	03:11:00	02:55:00
36. P1c-1d	03:11:00	03:16:00
37. P5g-5f	03:30:00	03:16:00
38. R2d-3d	03:30:00	03:19:00
39. P7e-7d	03:32:00	03:19:00
40. P7cx7d	03:32:00	03:41:00
41. P8e-8d	03:32:00	03:41:00
42. P8cx8d	03:32:00	03:43:00
43. R8hx8d	03:33:00	03:43:00
44. P*8c	03:33:00	03:43:00
45. R8d-8e	03:50:00	03:43:00
46. B2b-1c	03:50:00	03:48:00
47. N8i-7g	03:50:00	03:48:00
48. P6c-6d	03:50:00	04:10:00
49. P*8d	04:01:00	04:10:00
50. P8cx8d	04:01:00	04:11:00

51.R8ex8d	04:01:00	04:11:00
52.P*8c	04:01:00	04:23:00
53.R8dx7d	04:01:00	04:23:00
54.G5b-6c	04:01:00	04:23:00
55.R7d-7f	04:25:00	04:23:00
56.P*7d	04:25:00	04:25:00
57.P6f-6e	04:29:00	04:25:00

Habu starts the attack, more or less because he has no other option.

58.P2e-2f?! 04:29:00 05:13:00



Hirose immediately plays a counter attack, but this should not have worked. However, it is not easy to see what he should have played instead. Developing the knight with 58.N3c would give him an ideal attacking formation with rook, bishop, silver and knight, but after 59.P5e things are not so clear because the sideways working of the rook is very strong.

59.P2gx2f	04:30:00	05:13:00
60.P*3f	04:30:00	05:13:00
61.P3gx3f	04:36:00	05:13:00
62.S3ex3f	04:36:00	05:13:00
63.B6hx1c+	04:37:00	05:13:00
64.P*3g	04:37:00	05:14:00
65.S2hx3g	04:50:00	05:14:00
66.S3fx3g+	04:50:00	05:15:00
67.G4hx3g	04:55:00	05:15:00
68.N2ax1c	04:55:00	05:17:00
69.P*3e	05:34:00	05:17:00
70.R3d-4d	05:34:00	05:38:00
71.R7f-8f	05:41:00	05:38:00
72.P6dx6e	05:41:00	06:00:00
73.S*5e	05:43:00	06:00:00
74.R4d-2d	05:43:00	06:01:00
75.P*6d	05:58:00	06:01:00
76.G6c-6b	05:58:00	06:01:00
77.N7gx6e	06:20:00	06:01:00

78.P*3f	06:20:00	06:08:00
79.G3gx3f?	06:30:00	06:08:00



Habu was quite happy with his position here, having a whole stack of pawns in hand to use for attack. Taking the pawn with 78.Gx3f is a bad mistake, uncharacteristic of Habu. Correct was 79.G2g and even the strong looking 80.S\*5g can be met with 81.Nx5c+ Sx5h= Sx5h B\*7e R8i and it seems like black can keep his position together.

80.S\*4i 06:30:00 06:09:00

Habu admitted after the game that he had seriously underestimated the strength of this silver drop.

81.K3hx4i	06:38:00	06:09:00
82.B*2g	06:38:00	06:09:00
83.S*3h	06:43:00	06:09:00
84.B2gx3f+	06:43:00	06:09:00

White has made a very strong promoted bishop and Hirose felt that he suddenly had a position that would not be losing quickly, giving him time to set up his own attack.

85.P\*7c? 06:49:00 06:09:00

After the game, the conclusion of the post-mortem analysis was that 85.Nx5c+ Gx5c B\*4b would still have been unclear.

86.N8ax7c	06:49:00	06:20:00
87.N6ex7c+	06:49:00	06:20:00
88.S7bx7c	06:49:00	06:21:00
89.N*9e	07:06:00	06:21:00
90.P8c-8d	07:06:00	06:40:00
91.N9e-8c+	07:06:00	06:40:00

92.+B3fx2f 07:06:00 06:41:00  
 93.P\*2e 07:25:00 06:41:00



Habu is opening his bag of tricks. The white king is still quite safe, being far away from the black attacking pieces, while the black king is already in a lot of danger because of the strength of the promoted bishop. However, Hirose said that after 93.P\*2e he suddenly didn't know how to continue because taking this pawn with either the bishop or the rook would importantly change the position of this piece, with consequences that are difficult to foresee.

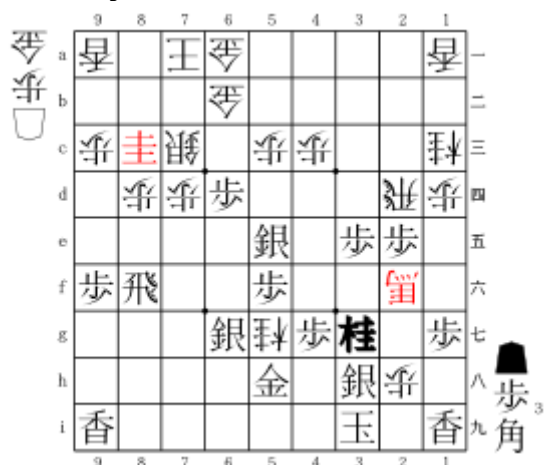
94.N\*5g! 07:25:00 07:13:00

Hirose takes one long think to find a solution.

95.K4i-3i 07:25:00 07:13:00  
 96.P\*2h! 07:25:00 07:13:00

This one-two punch of 94.N\*5g and 96.P\*2h decides the game in white's favor.

97.N2i-3g 07:40:00 07:13:00



Or 97.Px2d Px2i+ Kx2i N\*3f and white wins. It is important that white still has a pawn in hand so that B\*8b Sx8b +Nx8b Kx8b Rx8d can be answered by P\*8c. Also, 97.Kx2h is answered by the painful drop 98.P\*3g and after either 99.Nx3g Nx2e Nx2e P\*2g or 99.Sx3g G\*2g K3i Gx3g white wins.

98.N1cx2e 07:40:00 07:14:00  
 99.K3i-4h 07:40:00 07:14:00  
 100.N2ex3g+ 07:40:00 07:14:00  
 101.K4hx5g 07:41:00 07:14:00

No choice. 101.Sx3g is answered by N4i+.

102.N\*6e 07:41:00 07:14:00  
 103.K5g-6h 07:41:00 07:14:00  
 104.+N3gx3h 07:41:00 07:14:00  
 105.S6g-6f 07:44:00 07:14:00  
 106.+N3h-4h 07:44:00 07:24:00  
 107.N\*6c 07:45:00 07:24:00  
 108.G6bx6c 07:45:00 07:28:00  
 109.P\*7b 07:51:00 07:28:00  
 110.K7a-8a 07:51:00 07:29:00  
 111.G5h-6g 07:51:00 07:29:00  
 112.+N4h-5h 07:51:00 07:48:00  
 113.K6h-7i 07:52:00 07:48:00  
 114.+B2f-5i 07:52:00 07:48:00  
 115.P\*8b 07:53:00 07:48:00  
 116.S7cx8b 07:53:00 07:48:00  
 117.+N8cx8b 07:53:00 07:48:00  
 118.K8ax8b 07:53:00 07:48:00  
 119.R8fx8d 07:53:00 07:48:00

Habu sets a final trap.

120.N\*8c! 07:53:00 07:51:00



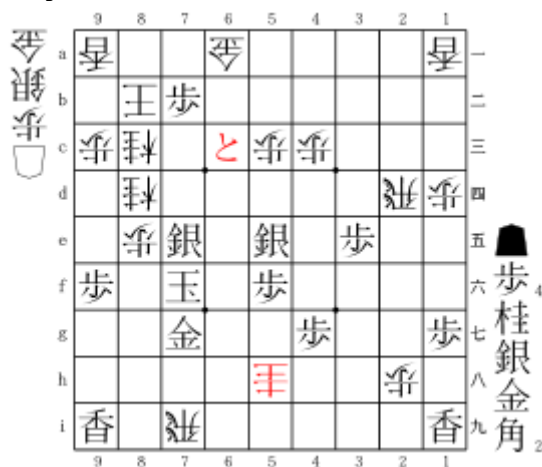
Hirose not only avoids the trap, but finds the shortest path to victory. Dropping a knight here

is a hard move to play, because it doesn't attack the rook on 8d and therefore seems a move without any punch. However, 120.P\*8c would have been a blunder because after 121.Px6c+ there is no mate against the black king. Therefore, in the press room 120.S\*8c was expected, which seems to win after 121.Px6c+ Sx8d B\*6d N\*7c. Sugimoto was very impressed by 120.N\*8c, because it covers the important square 7e and is therefore a mating threat. Quite a long and difficult mate, so there was quite a lot of pressure on Hirose to get it exactly right, but he didn't hesitate.

121.P6dx6c+ 07:54:00 07:51:00

Habu may have seen that he is being mated next, but he has no choice anyway.

122.+B5i-6i 07:54:00 07:51:00  
 123.K7i-8h 07:54:00 07:51:00  
 124.S\*8g 07:54:00 07:51:00  
 125.R8dx8g 07:54:00 07:51:00  
 126.+B6ix8g 07:54:00 07:51:00  
 127.K8hx8g 07:54:00 07:51:00  
 128.P\*8f 07:54:00 07:51:00  
 129.K8gx8f 07:57:00 07:51:00  
 130.P\*8e 07:57:00 07:51:00  
 131.K8f-7f 07:59:00 07:51:00  
 132.R\*7i 07:59:00 07:51:00  
 133.S\*7g 07:59:00 07:51:00  
 134.P7d-7e 07:59:00 07:54:00  
 135.S6fx7e 07:59:00 07:54:00  
 136.N6ex7g+ 07:59:00 07:54:00  
 137.G6gx7g 07:59:00 07:54:00  
 138.N\*8d 07:59:00 07:54:00  
 Resigns 07:59:00 07:54:00



Mate after 139.Sx8d G\*8f etc. or 139.Kx8e S\*7f etc. The two rooks are working very well

together to make this mate possible. A great start for Hirose, who wins his first title match game against Habu with the white pieces. Game two will decide how big this win was, because Hirose actually is one of the few professionals doing better with the white pieces than with the black pieces.

### Standing after game 1 Hirose - Habu 1-0

## Game 2

2011-07-26/27

Sente: Hirose Akihito, Oi

Gote: Habu Yoshiharu, Challenger

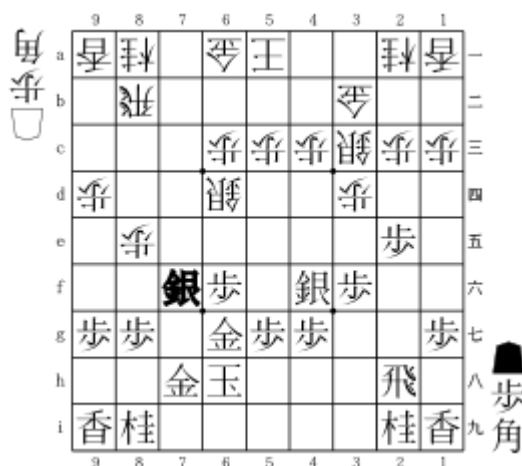
1. P7g-7f	00:01:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:01:00	00:00:00
3. P2g-2f	00:03:00	00:00:00

Hirose's stellar record with playing the Anaguma in the Furibisha opening has landed him the nickname "Furbisha Anaguma Prince", but here he willingly steers away from that, playing Ibisha instead. His win in the opening game of this match may have given him the psychological boost to show Habu that he is not a one trick pony.

4. G4a-3b	00:03:00	00:05:00
5. G6i-7h	00:07:00	00:05:00
6. P8c-8d	00:07:00	00:11:00
7. P2f-2e	00:08:00	00:11:00
8. B2bx8h+	00:08:00	00:14:00

Habu responds by selecting the Kakugawari with tempo loss.

9. S7ix8h	00:08:00	00:14:00
10. S3a-2b	00:08:00	00:14:00
11. S3i-3h	00:16:00	00:14:00
12. S2b-3c	00:16:00	00:18:00
13. K5i-6h	00:20:00	00:18:00
14. S7a-7b	00:20:00	00:21:00
15. S8h-7g	00:25:00	00:21:00
16. P7c-7d	00:25:00	00:42:00
17. G4i-5h	00:47:00	00:42:00
18. P9c-9d	00:47:00	00:49:00
19. P3g-3f	01:08:00	00:49:00
20. S7b-7c	01:08:00	01:01:00
21. S3h-3g	01:39:00	01:01:00
22. S7c-6d	01:39:00	01:16:00
23. S3g-4f	01:46:00	01:16:00
24. P8d-8e	01:46:00	01:36:00
25. P6g-6f	02:15:00	01:36:00
26. P7d-7e	02:15:00	01:38:00
27. G5h-6g	02:39:00	01:38:00
28. P7ex7f	02:39:00	02:00:00
29. S7gx7f	02:40:00	02:00:00



Habu actually has experience with this position playing it from the black side. It appeared in the final of the NHK television tournament against Itodani. Even though Habu won that game, Habu thought that the white attack was sound and that he could improve the white play.

30. P*7e	02:40:00	02:00:00
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In the NHK final, it followed 30. P8f Px8f Rx8f P\*8g R8b P6e S7c P\*7e and black got a very solid position after P4d N7g R4b K7i G6b S5e P5d S6f. According to Habu, 30. P\*7e is the right way to play, because it is the only way to justify the early white attack.

31. S7f-6e	02:42:00	02:00:00
32. P8e-8f	02:42:00	02:26:00
33. P8gx8f	02:43:00	02:26:00
34. R8bx8f	02:43:00	02:26:00
35. P*8g	02:45:00	02:26:00
36. R8f-8d	02:45:00	02:26:00
37. S6e-5f	03:08:00	02:26:00
38. S6d-7c	03:08:00	02:49:00
39. P6f-6e	03:30:00	02:49:00
40. G6a-6b	03:30:00	03:06:00
41. B*6f!	03:39:00	03:06:00



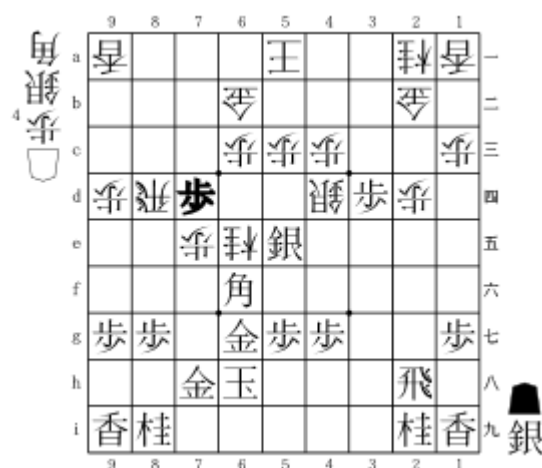


Hirose shows that he really has the flexibility needed to be a top player these days. This move was a surprise for the people in the press room. Considering that Hirose likes his king to be safe, it was expected that he would play 41.S4f-5e S7d S6f here which leads to a solid king formation. Instead, Hirose plays 41.B\*6f, which is a very positive attack on the long diagonal, aiming to play P3e next. On the flip side, this bishop can become a target for attack, so this move needed precise judgment. After B\*6f, Habu is forced to sit back and defend for a while.

42.S7c-7d	03:39:00	04:03:00
43.P3f-3e	04:39:00	04:03:00
44.N8a-7c	04:39:00	04:16:00
45.P3ex3d	04:45:00	04:16:00
46.S3c-4d	04:45:00	04:16:00
47.P2e-2d	05:17:00	04:16:00
48.P2cx2d	05:17:00	04:16:00
49.P*2b	05:18:00	04:16:00
50.G3bx2b?	05:18:00	04:39:00

After the game, Habu pointed out that this was an important mistake. Correct would have been 50.P\*8h. It seems a bit awkward to play this pawn sacrifice here, but it is the only time white gets a chance to play it, so it should have been played here. It forces an important weakness in the black castle, which might have been the difference between winning and losing.

51.S4f-5e	05:41:00	04:39:00
52.S7dx6e	05:41:00	05:25:00
53.S5fx6e	05:44:00	05:25:00
54.N7cx6e	05:44:00	05:25:00
55.P*7d!	05:46:00	05:25:00



Habu had underestimated the power of this pawn drop. If white ignores it, black can simply play S\*7c or weaken the center with Sx4d Px4d P7c+ Gx7c followed by Bx7e. Habu openly admitted in the post-mortem analysis that he realized that he was in serious trouble here, as he seemed doomed to a long defensive struggle. Hirose said that he knew that he had a big advantage here, but that he was surprised at how close the endgame became.

56.R8dx7d	05:46:00	06:30:00
57.S5ex4d	05:47:00	06:30:00
58.P4cx4d	05:47:00	06:30:00
59.S*5f	05:49:00	06:30:00
60.S*5d	05:49:00	06:33:00
61.B6fx4d	06:10:00	06:33:00
62.P*3c	06:10:00	06:34:00
63.P3dx3c+	06:12:00	06:34:00
64.G2bx3c	06:12:00	06:35:00
65.B4dx3c+	06:13:00	06:35:00
66.N2ax3c	06:13:00	06:35:00
67.R2hx2d	06:13:00	06:35:00
68.P7e-7f	06:13:00	06:41:00
69.S5fx6e	06:57:00	06:41:00
70.S5dx6e	06:57:00	06:41:00
71.R2d-2a+	06:58:00	06:41:00
72.P*4a	06:58:00	06:41:00
73.N*4c	07:02:00	06:41:00
74.K5a-4b	07:02:00	06:43:00
75.S*3b	07:04:00	06:43:00
76.N3c-4e	07:04:00	06:44:00
77.N4c-5a+	07:04:00	06:44:00
78.K4b-3c	07:04:00	06:45:00
79.P*3e	07:17:00	06:45:00
80.S*7g!	07:17:00	06:54:00



Finally, Habu gets a chance to start some kind of counter attack. However, the white king is in grave danger because of the mating threat G\*4c and because K4d can be answered by +R2d. It seems like the end of the game is near, but it is actually only beginning.

81.K6h-5i	07:17:00	06:54:00
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No choice. 81.Nx7g Px7g+ G7hx7g Rx7g+ leads to a long mate.

82.B*1e	07:17:00	06:55:00
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The real point of 80.S\*7g. Because this bishop now covers square 2d, the black promoted rook can no longer move here to finish off the white king.

83.P*2f	07:18:00	06:55:00
84.K3c-4d	07:18:00	06:55:00
85.+R2a-2e	07:24:00	06:55:00
86.P*3c	07:24:00	07:02:00
87.N8ix7g	07:30:00	07:02:00
88.P7fx7g+	07:30:00	07:02:00
89.S*4f	07:30:00	07:02:00
90.S*5h	07:30:00	07:24:00
91.K5i-4h?	07:31:00	07:24:00

Now black gets into some real trouble. Correct was 91.Kx5h +Px6g Gx6g R7h+ G\*6h and because this gold attacks the white promoted rook black wins.

92.N*5e	07:31:00	07:25:00
93.S4fx4e	07:34:00	07:25:00
94.K4dx4e	07:34:00	07:26:00
95.P3e-3d	07:34:00	07:26:00
96.K4e-5d	07:34:00	07:31:00
97.G*4e	07:40:00	07:31:00

98.K5d-6d	07:40:00	07:31:00
99.G4ex5e	07:41:00	07:31:00
100.K6d-7c	07:41:00	07:31:00
101.G5ex6e	07:41:00	07:31:00
102.B*5i?	07:41:00	07:31:00

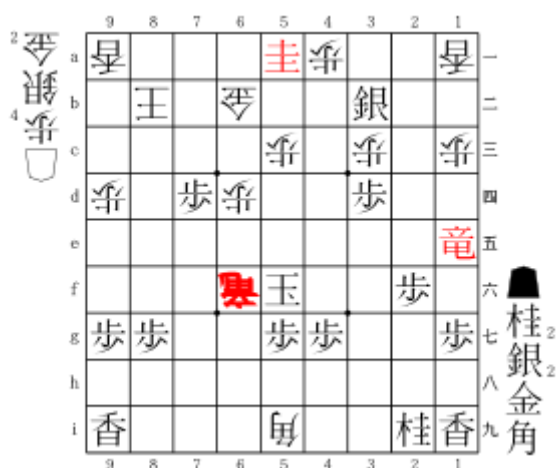


Habu fails to take his opportunity to win the game. Here 102.R4d Kx5h +Px7h would have been very interesting for white. Both players thought that that white king would be mated after P\*7d or N\*8e , but the post-mortem analysis showed that there is no mate here. 103.N\*8e K8b S\*7c looks very dangerous, but the white king can escape to the 6th and 5th file and black is unable to catch it.

103.K4hx5h	07:42:00	07:31:00
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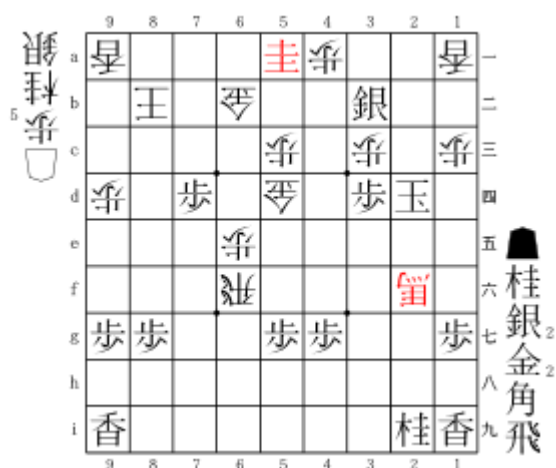
Hirose originally intended to play 103.K3i here, but realized just in time that 104.R4d is then a mating threat. Because he was forced into this change of plan, Hirose thought here that he had lost the game.

104.+P7gx6g	07:42:00	07:32:00
105.K5hx6g	07:42:00	07:32:00
106.R7dx7h+	07:42:00	07:41:00
107.K6g-5f	07:42:00	07:41:00
108.+R7h-7f	07:42:00	07:53:00
109.P*6f	07:42:00	07:53:00
110.G*6d	07:42:00	07:54:00
111.P*7d	07:47:00	07:54:00
112.K7c-8b	07:47:00	07:54:00
113.G6ex6d	07:50:00	07:54:00
114.P6cx6d	07:50:00	07:54:00
115.+R2ex1e	07:56:00	07:54:00
116.+R7fx6f	07:56:00	07:59:00



Habu goes for a mate that isn't there. Things still would have been very complicated had he played 116.S\*5d here. There is no way to mate the white king because S\*7c Gx7c Px7c+ +Rx7c but there is seems to be no good way to defend against the white mating threat with a mating threat. This position was analyzed for a long time during and after the game, but no definite conclusion could be reached. In any case, there were a lot more variations that lead to a white win than there were variations leading to a black win.

117.K5f×6f	07:56:00	07:59:00
118.G*6e	07:56:00	07:59:00
119.+R1ex6e	07:56:00	07:59:00
120.P6dx6e	07:56:00	07:59:00
121.K6f-5f	07:56:00	07:59:00
122.R*7f	07:56:00	07:59:00
123.N*6f	07:56:00	07:59:00
124.R7fx6f	07:56:00	07:59:00
125.K5f-4e	07:56:00	07:59:00
126.G*5d	07:56:00	07:59:00
127.K4e-3e	07:56:00	07:59:00
128.B5ix2f+	07:56:00	07:59:00
129.K3e-2d	07:56:00	07:59:00
Resigns	07:56:00	07:59:00



No mate against the black king and black threatens mate after R\*8d S\*8c B\*7a Kx7a G\*8a etc. Even if white defends against this mating threat, black has a pile of pieces in hand, so no defense will work. Therefore Habu resigned here, giving Hirose a rather unexpected 2-0 lead in the match. Hirose played very positively, gaining the early lead, but Habu made some uncharacteristic mistakes in the endgame that cost him the game. He now needs to convert with the black pieces in the next game to avoid digging him a 3-0 hole in a best-of-seven match for the second time this year.

**Standing after game 2**  
**Hirose - Habu 2-0**

## Game 3

2011-08-02/03

Sente: Habu Yoshiharu, Challenger

Gote: Hirose Akihito, Oi

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:01:00
3. P2g-2f	00:02:00	00:01:00
4. P5c-5d	00:02:00	00:04:00
5. P2f-2e	00:08:00	00:04:00
6. R8b-5b	00:08:00	00:06:00
7. S3i-4h	00:10:00	00:06:00
8. P5d-5e	00:10:00	00:08:00
9. K5i-6h	00:12:00	00:08:00
10. B2b-3c	00:12:00	00:09:00
11. P3g-3f	00:13:00	00:09:00
12. K5a-6b	00:13:00	00:14:00
13. S4h-3g	00:15:00	00:14:00
14. K6b-7b	00:15:00	00:16:00
15. K6h-7h	00:17:00	00:16:00
16. S3a-4b	00:17:00	00:23:00
17. S7i-6h	00:40:00	00:23:00
18. S4b-5c	00:40:00	00:34:00
19. S3g-4f	00:44:00	00:34:00
20. S5c-4d	00:44:00	00:39:00
21. S6h-7g	00:47:00	00:39:00
22. K7b-8b	00:47:00	00:46:00
23. S7g-6f	00:49:00	00:46:00
24. L9a-9b	00:49:00	01:02:00
25. G4i-5h	01:10:00	01:02:00
26. K8b-9a	01:10:00	01:03:00
27. N2i-3g	01:20:00	01:03:00
28. S7a-8b	01:20:00	01:18:00
29. P9g-9f	01:33:00	01:18:00
30. L1a-1b	01:33:00	01:49:00
31. P1g-1f	01:47:00	01:49:00
32. R5b-5a	01:47:00	02:08:00
33. R2h-2i	02:02:00	02:08:00
34. G4a-3b	02:02:00	02:50:00
35. P9f-9e	02:16:00	02:50:00
36. P1c-1d	02:16:00	02:53:00



In response to Hirose's Gokigen Nakabisha, Habu has played to very popular S3g attack. One of the aims of this strategy is to start a quick attack and set the board on fire early, but Habu instead chooses a more quiet approach, developing his left silver as well. In reply, Hirose takes out his favorite weapon, the Furibisha Anaguma. However, this time he plays it with the Nakabisha, which is different from his normal Shikenbisha Anaguma. The difference is that with the Nakabisha, white has to play the gold to 3b to defend. This gold cannot be part of the Anaguma, which is a weak point.

37. G5h-6h 02:26:00 02:53:00

White cannot do anything but wait for black to start the attack, but Habu shows that he is no hurry to open the position. Still, after the game he admitted that he was not so happy with this strategy, because he thought that 3h was an important weakness and that a later silver or bishop drop there could be a problem.

38. G6a-7b	02:26:00	02:59:00
39. B8h-7g	02:31:00	02:59:00
40. P7c-7d	02:31:00	03:16:00
41. K7h-8h	03:38:00	03:16:00

Habu takes his time to improve his castle. The alternative was 41.B8f and the position after 42.B4b Bx4b+ Gx4b G6i-5h seems playable for both sides.

42. B3c-4b 03:38:00 04:05:00

It seems like white just gives up the important pawn on 5e here, but after 42.S6fx5e Sx5e

Sx5e P7e the white counter attack is very dangerous.

43.G6i-7h 03:51:00 04:05:00

44.S4d-5c!? 03:51:00 04:11:00



Hashimoto commented the game for the audience at the venue and said that he would never think about playing this move. Hirose voluntarily gives up the precious vanguard pawn on 5e to rearrange his pieces.

45.S6fx5e 04:21:00 04:11:00

46.P4c-4d 04:21:00 04:20:00

47.L9i-9h 04:34:00 04:20:00

48.G3b-4c 04:34:00 04:42:00

49.K8h-9i 04:44:00 04:42:00

50.S5c-6b 04:44:00 04:46:00

51.G7h-8h 04:57:00 04:46:00

52.S6b-7a 04:57:00 04:50:00

For the pawn, the white silver had moved back to strengthen the Anaguma and the left gold has moved towards the center from its passive position on 3b. It is very hard to say if this is enough compensation for giving up the pawn on 5e, but Hirose was widely applauded for his flexible strategic thinking.

53.G6h-7h 05:18:00 04:50:00

54.P7d-7e 05:18:00 04:59:00

55.P7fx7e 05:18:00 04:59:00

56.P3d-3e 05:18:00 04:59:00

57.P3fx3e 05:19:00 04:59:00

58.B4bx7e 05:19:00 05:00:00

59.R2i-2f 05:20:00 05:00:00

Another credit to Hirose's play is that even though the press room believed that black had the advantage here, Habu himself was not

happy at all, considering his position too heavy and the two silvers that are defending each other a serious liability.

60.N2a-3c? 05:20:00 05:28:00

It is unfortunate that this natural development of a passive knight turns out to be an important mistake. In the post-mortem analysis 60.P4e was analyzed and that seemed to have been better after 61.Nx4e P\*4d Sx4d G5d where the black pieces continue to be in each other's way and the white gold moves even further into the center.

61.P\*7f 05:37:00 05:28:00

62.B7e-8d 05:37:00 05:33:00

63.S5ex4d 05:37:00 05:33:00

64.P\*4e 05:37:00 05:40:00

65.S4dx4c= 05:37:00 05:40:00

66.P4ex4f 05:37:00 05:40:00

67.G\*5b 05:37:00 05:40:00

68.P4fx4g+ 05:37:00 06:00:00



Up until this point the moves are forced. Habu worried about 68.Rx5b here, but after 69.Sx5b= Px4g+ Bx3c+ S\*6i N\*7d the post-mortem analysis showed that black wins the semeai.

69.G5bx5a 05:48:00 06:00:00

70.B8dx5a 05:48:00 06:00:00

71.R\*1a 05:50:00 06:00:00

72.B5a-7c 05:50:00 06:04:00

73.R1ax1b+ 05:51:00 06:04:00

74.B7cx3g+ 05:51:00 06:07:00

Attacks the black rook and this promoted bishop also works very strongly in defense. It seems like black has a lot of work to do.



White has nothing else but 118.G\*7b, but then 119.Sx8b+ Gx8b S\*7a there is no defense. The black king clearly cannot be mated, so Hirose resigned here. Habu must have felt a little relieved, because not only does he avoid a 3-0 hole, it is also the first time he has ever beaten Hirose in an official game. He had lost all of their four previous encounters. Can he even the match with the white pieces in game four?

**Standing after game 3**

**Hirose - Habu 2-1**



## Game 4

2011-08-09/10

Sente: Hirose Akihito, Oi

Gote: Habu Yoshiharu, Challenger

1. P7g-7f	00:01:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:01:00	00:01:00
3. P2g-2f	00:03:00	00:01:00
4. P8c-8d	00:03:00	00:03:00
5. P2f-2e	00:05:00	00:03:00
6. P8d-8e	00:05:00	00:04:00
7. G6i-7h	00:06:00	00:04:00
8. G4a-3b	00:06:00	00:05:00
9. P2e-2d	00:09:00	00:05:00
10. P2cx2d	00:09:00	00:07:00
11. R2hx2d	00:09:00	00:07:00
12. P8e-8f	00:09:00	00:09:00
13. P8gx8f	00:09:00	00:09:00
14. R8bx8f	00:09:00	00:10:00
15. R2dx3d	00:11:00	00:10:00
16. B2b-3c	00:11:00	00:12:00
17. K5i-5h	00:18:00	00:12:00
18. S3a-2b	00:18:00	00:29:00
19. R3d-3f	00:22:00	00:29:00
20. K5a-4a	00:22:00	00:32:00
21. P*8g	00:40:00	00:32:00
22. R8f-8e	00:40:00	00:35:00

Like in game 2, Hirose pushes the pawn in front of the rook on the third move, indicating that he wants to play Ibisha. Habu selects the R8e-Yokofudori with the creator of this opening Chuza watching in the press room. Chuza said that he thought the R8e-Yokofudori was a possibility, because Habu had played it on July 30th against Miura in the A Junisen as well, but he was still surprised when his creation actually appeared on the board.

23. R3f-2f	00:41:00	00:35:00
24. S7a-6b	00:41:00	00:38:00
25. G4i-3h	00:45:00	00:38:00
26. G6a-5a	00:45:00	00:43:00
27. P3g-3f	01:05:00	00:43:00
28. P*2e	01:05:00	01:04:00



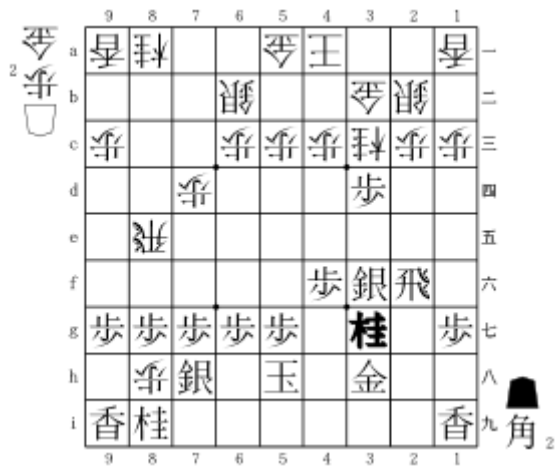
It may have been that Hirose counted on Habu playing 28.P7d here. Then it follows 29.N3g N7c S4h P\*2e R2i and black will switch the rook to the left on the bottom file. This is what Habu played in the third game of last year's Ryu-O match against Watanabe. There have been twelve games played like this and the result is split: 6-6. However, recently the black side has won 4 in a row, so maybe Hirose hoped to lure Habu into this type of position. Instead, Habu changes his earlier play with 28.P\*2e instead. This is not a new move and we are not in unknown territory yet. Not by long shot...

29. R2f-2h	01:09:00	01:04:00
30. P7c-7d	01:09:00	01:05:00
31. S3i-4h	01:27:00	01:05:00
32. P*8f	01:27:00	01:17:00
33. P8gx8f	01:30:00	01:17:00
34. R8ex8f	01:30:00	01:17:00
35. P4g-4f	01:39:00	01:17:00
36. R8fx7f	01:39:00	01:39:00
37. B8hx3c+	01:46:00	01:39:00
38. N2ax3c	01:46:00	01:39:00
39. S4h-4g	01:50:00	01:39:00
40. P2e-2f	01:50:00	01:50:00
41. P*8h	02:29:00	01:50:00
42. R7f-7e	02:29:00	02:27:00
43. R2hx2f	02:46:00	02:27:00
44. B*4d	02:46:00	02:39:00
45. P3f-3e	02:47:00	02:39:00
46. B4dx8h+	02:47:00	02:47:00
47. P*7f	02:48:00	02:47:00
48. R7ex7f	02:48:00	02:58:00
49. P*7g	02:50:00	02:58:00
50. +B8hx7h	02:50:00	02:59:00
51. S7ix7h	02:51:00	02:59:00
52. R7f-8f	02:51:00	02:59:00

53.P*8g	02:59:00	02:59:00
54.R8f-8e	02:59:00	03:00:00

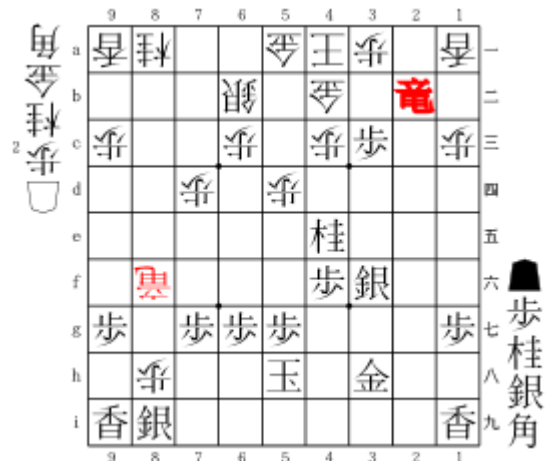
Looks pretty wild, but this position still has been played before. Despite the loss of material, the white pieces are working well, so the general opinion was that white can put up a good fight here.

55.S4g-3f	03:31:00	03:00:00
56.P*8h	03:31:00	03:16:00
57.P3e-3d	03:48:00	03:16:00
58.P*2c	03:48:00	03:20:00
59.N2i-3g	04:10:00	03:20:00



The sealed move.

60.P8hx8i+	04:10:00	03:46:00
61.S7hx8i	04:11:00	03:46:00
62.R8ex8g+	04:11:00	03:47:00
63.R2f-2i	04:13:00	03:47:00
64.P*8h	04:13:00	04:06:00
65.B*9h	04:20:00	04:06:00
66.+R8g-8f	04:20:00	04:20:00
67.P3dx3c+	04:46:00	04:20:00
68.S2bx3c	04:46:00	04:23:00
69.N3g-4e	04:48:00	04:23:00
70.N*5d	04:48:00	04:59:00
71.B9hx5d	05:03:00	04:59:00
72.P5cx5d	05:03:00	05:01:00
73.N4ex3c+	05:03:00	05:01:00
74.G3bx3c	05:03:00	05:03:00
75.N*4e	05:05:00	05:03:00
76.G3c-3b	05:05:00	05:05:00
77.P*3c	05:07:00	05:05:00
78.G3b-4b	05:07:00	05:05:00
79.R2ix2c+	05:12:00	05:05:00
80.P*3a	05:12:00	05:34:00
81.+R2c-2b	06:08:00	05:34:00



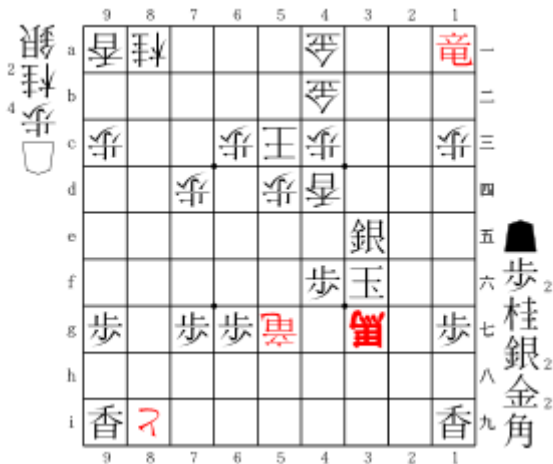
Hirose took 56 minutes for this move and in the end decides that he cannot stray from the known path here. Despite the consensus that white has good chances, the position is complex and needs thorough calculation. For example, 81.N\*3d is a move black wants to play and after 82.Px8i+ Nx4b+ Gx4b G\*3b K5b Gx4b K6a G5b Kx5b S\*5c Sx5c Nx5c+ Kx5c S\*4d white has to be careful because Px4d P3b+ white must drop something on 4c and then black can pick up the rook with B\*4b followed by Bx8f+. The correct answer to S\*4d is K5b and the black attack is not decisive. For example, +R2b N\*4b G\*5c K6a G6b Kx6b B\*5c K7c Bx8f+ and even though black has again captured the white rook, too much material was given up and white can win with S\*6i Kx6i B\*4i and there is no defense.

82.P8hx8i+	06:08:00	06:01:00
83.+R2bx3a	06:18:00	06:01:00
84.K4a-5b	06:18:00	06:01:00
85.P3c-3b+	06:28:00	06:01:00
86.+R8f-8h	06:28:00	06:02:00
87.N*6h	06:38:00	06:02:00
88.G*4a	06:38:00	06:22:00
89.+P3bx4b	06:47:00	06:22:00
90.G5ax4b	06:47:00	06:22:00
91.+R3ax1a	06:47:00	06:22:00
92.B*6i	06:47:00	06:49:00
93.K5hx6i	06:48:00	06:49:00
94.S*4i	06:48:00	06:49:00
95.L*5c	06:50:00	06:49:00
96.S6bx5c	06:50:00	06:50:00

Finally, a new move. The game between Hatakeyama Mamoru and Inoue. Played last August in the B1 Junisen continued with 96.K6a and even though white won that game,

the conclusion of the post-mortem analysis was that 96.Sx5c was even better. Habu new this, but still thought the position was quite complicated.

97.N4ex5c+	07:06:00	06:50:00
98.K5bx5c	07:06:00	06:50:00
99.B*2f	07:08:00	06:50:00
100.L*4d	07:08:00	06:53:00
101.K6i-5i	07:08:00	06:53:00
102.S4ix3h+	07:08:00	06:54:00
103.S3f-3e	07:11:00	06:54:00
104.G*4h	07:11:00	07:21:00
105.B2fx4h	07:11:00	07:21:00
106.+S3hx4h	07:11:00	07:21:00
107.K5ix4h	07:11:00	07:21:00
108.+R8hx6h	07:11:00	07:21:00
109.K4h-3g	07:26:00	07:21:00
110.B*5i	07:26:00	07:21:00
111.K3g-2g	07:26:00	07:21:00
112.N*2c	07:26:00	07:21:00
113.S*2d	07:51:00	07:21:00
114.N2cx3e	07:51:00	07:36:00
115.S2dx3e	07:51:00	07:36:00
116.+R6hx5g	07:51:00	07:38:00
117.K2g-3f	07:51:00	07:38:00
118.B5i-3g+	07:51:00	07:39:00



Hard to question this move, because it is safely winning, but in the press room the computer announced mate in this position. However, the top professionals Morishita, Fukauara, Akutsu and Sato Shinichi couldn't find the mate. The problem is the position after 118.+R3g K2e +R2g P\*2f Bx2f+ Sx2f S\*3f K3e P\*3d Kx3d P\*3c. Now K2c +Rx2f P\*2d G4b-3b K1b S\*2c is easy, but no-one could figure out how to mate the king after K3e. In the end, the help of the computer was again needed to show the mate that even surprised both Hirose and

Habu. The point is that after K3e N\*2c K2d +Rx2f Kx1c, black plays S\*2d!. This move is very hard to find for a human player, because it chases the king up the board, which is something that normally should be avoided. After S\*2d K1b +R1e K2a G3a Kx3a +Rx1a and if black drops something on 2a, the R\*4a is mate. It is unlikely that Habu put much thought in finding a mate in this position, because he took only one minute to play 118.B3g+.

119.K3f-2e	07:51:00	07:39:00
120.S*2c	07:51:00	07:39:00
121.P*3c	07:58:00	07:39:00
122.P*2d	07:58:00	07:44:00
123.S3ex2d	07:58:00	07:44:00
124.+B3g-4g	07:58:00	07:45:00
125.N*3f	07:58:00	07:45:00
126.+R5gx4f	07:58:00	07:46:00
127.G*3e	07:58:00	07:46:00
128.S2c-1d	07:58:00	07:47:00
Resigns	07:58:00	07:47:00



Mate after 129.K3d +B5f or 129.K2f +R3g K1f +B3h. There is no mate after 129.K1f, but then 130.+Bx3f is hisshi, so Hirose resigned here. It is a little bit of a mystery what Hirose was thinking when he followed a line that was considered bad for black for such a long time. He said after the game that he knew the theory, but that he thought black had a chance. However, there wasn't any point in the game where he played something to back up this opinion. Habu wins two in a row and the fifth game now becomes very important, as this match is now down to a best-of-three.

**Standing after game 4**  
**Hirose - Habu 2-2**

## Game 5

2011-08-23/24

Sente: Habu Yoshiharu, Challenger

Gote: Hirose Akihito, Oi

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:01:00
3. P2g-2f	00:02:00	00:01:00
4. P4c-4d	00:02:00	00:05:00
5. P2f-2e	00:06:00	00:05:00
6. B2b-3c	00:06:00	00:05:00
7. S3i-4h	00:07:00	00:05:00
8. R8b-4b	00:07:00	00:07:00
9. K5i-6h	00:11:00	00:07:00
10. K5a-6b	00:11:00	00:08:00
11. K6h-7h	00:14:00	00:08:00
12. K6b-7b	00:14:00	00:09:00
13. P5g-5f	00:19:00	00:09:00
14. S3a-3b	00:19:00	00:11:00
15. B8h-7g	00:23:00	00:11:00
16. S3b-4c	00:23:00	00:13:00
17. S4h-5g	00:25:00	00:13:00
18. K7b-8b	00:25:00	00:16:00
19. K7h-8h	00:31:00	00:16:00
20. S4c-5d	00:31:00	00:19:00
21. S5g-6f	00:39:00	00:19:00
22. P6c-6d	00:39:00	00:24:00
23. G6i-7h	00:39:00	00:24:00
24. L9a-9b	00:39:00	00:37:00

Finally, "The Furiana Prince" plays the Furibisha Anaguma where he got his nickname from. Until now, he chose to fight Habu in the Ibisha opening, giving this match a completely different flavor from the one he played against Fukaura last year.

25. L9i-9h 00:44:00 00:37:00



Habu answers with an Anaguma of his own. The double Anaguma opening is prone to ending in sennichite, which happened twice in the match last year. Actually, the fifth game of last year's match was played at the same venue and ended in sennichite. The replay also was a long fight and the game ended at one o'clock in the morning, actually making it a three day game. It is unclear if Hirose felt that this was a burden on the hotel staff, but he promised before the game that he would not allow it to end in sennichite this time.

26. K8b-9a	00:44:00	00:39:00
27. K8h-9i	00:45:00	00:39:00
28. S7a-8b	00:45:00	00:41:00
29. S7i-8h	00:49:00	00:41:00
30. G4a-5b	00:49:00	00:44:00
31. G4i-5i	01:07:00	00:44:00
32. P4d-4e	01:07:00	00:49:00
33. B7g-6h	01:08:00	00:49:00
34. G5b-6b	01:08:00	00:53:00
35. G5i-6i	01:10:00	00:53:00
36. P6d-6e	01:10:00	00:57:00
37. S6f-7g	01:13:00	00:57:00
38. S5d-6c	01:13:00	01:02:00
39. G6i-7i	01:16:00	01:02:00
40. P5c-5d	01:16:00	01:05:00
41. P1g-1f	01:17:00	01:05:00



This move is new. Until now, 41.P3f had been the main line. Hirose had experience with this position, because he played it against Watanabe in last year's Kio tournament. This game continued 42.P5e P2d Px2d P3e and Hirose won. The problem of 41.P3f is that it opens the diagonal to the rook, helping white to activate the bishop. Habu avoids this by playing the waiting move 41.P1f.

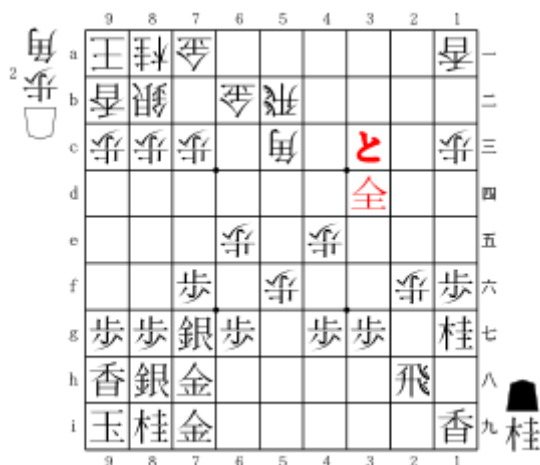
42.G6a-7a	01:17:00	01:25:00
43.P2e-2d	01:52:00	01:25:00
44.P2cx2d	01:52:00	01:27:00
45.B6hx2d	01:52:00	01:27:00
46.R4b-2b	01:52:00	01:56:00
47.P*2e	01:52:00	01:56:00
48.B3c-4d	01:52:00	01:58:00
49.B2d-5a+	02:00:00	01:58:00
50.N2a-3c	02:00:00	01:59:00
51.N2i-1g	02:01:00	01:59:00
52.S6c-5b	02:01:00	02:35:00
53.P5f-5e	02:34:00	02:35:00
54.P5dx5e	02:34:00	03:02:00
55.P2e-2d	02:36:00	03:02:00
56.P*2f	02:36:00	03:12:00
57.+B5ax5b	02:46:00	03:12:00
58.R2bx5b	02:46:00	03:22:00
59.S*4c	02:47:00	03:22:00
60.R5b-5a	02:47:00	03:25:00
61.S4cx3d+	02:47:00	03:25:00
62.B4d-5c	02:47:00	03:27:00
63.P2d-2c+	03:06:00	03:27:00
64.P5e-5f?	03:06:00	03:41:00

The white plan is to activate the major pieces with P5f and B6d, but it is not so clear in which order these moves should be played. It turns out that Hirose should have played 64.B6d here. The reason for this will become clear later.

65.P*5b	03:12:00	03:41:00
66.R5ax5b!	03:12:00	03:49:00

Strong reply. The obvious problem of this move is +S4c, and in the press room moves like 66.Gx5b and 66.R6a were analyzed. With 66.Rx5b, Hirose dares Habu to play 67.+Sx4c.

67.+P2cx3c?	03:47:00	03:49:00
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The sealed move and an important mistake. There were some interesting psychological battles going on here. Black has the choice between 67.+Px3c and 67.+S4c, but Hirose forcefully played 66.Rx5b, which makes Habu second guess the strength of the obvious 67.+S4c. The other thing was the strange statistic that so far in this match, whoever sealed the move, lost the game. In the press room there was speculation that the players would avoid sealing the move, playing a move quickly before the time control. This did not happen and Habu sealed 67.+Px3c, just 9 minutes after the six o'clock time control. After the correct 67.+S4c it follows 68.R5a +Sx5c Rx5c B\*3e R5d +Px3c and black has good fighting chances. Hirose could have avoided this variation by playing 64.B6d instead of 64.P5f and this is the reason that 64.P5f was a bad move. After 67.+Px3c, the silver on 3d becomes an idle piece, which is an important problem for black.

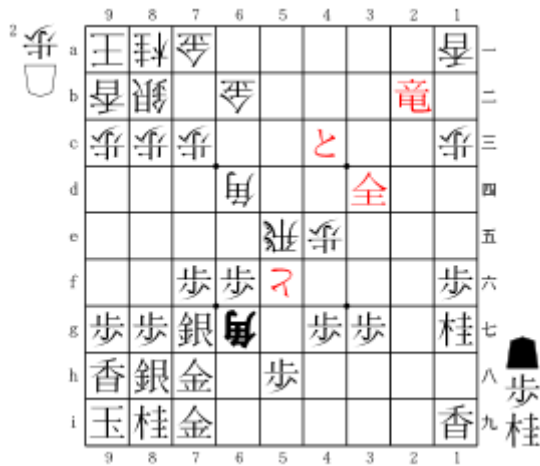
68.B5c-6d	03:47:00	04:03:00
69.+P3c-4c	04:01:00	04:03:00
70.R5b-5e	04:01:00	04:05:00
71.R2hx2f	04:02:00	04:05:00
72.P5f-5g+	04:02:00	04:07:00
73.P*5h!	04:20:00	04:07:00

Habu fights back strongly. In the press rooms there were visions of sennichite after 74.P\*5f Px5g Px5g+ P\*5h etc. If not sennichite, then 74.Px5h is answered by N\*5f.

74.+P5g-5f!	04:20:00	04:29:00
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Hirose keeps his promise of not playing sennichite. In the press room it was thought that he didn't have much choice but to go for sennichite, as it looks very painful to have to move this token backwards. However, Hirose has looked deeper.

75.R2f-2b+	04:38:00	04:29:00
76.P6e-6f	04:38:00	04:42:00
77.P6gx6f	04:39:00	04:42:00
78.B*6g!	04:39:00	04:42:00

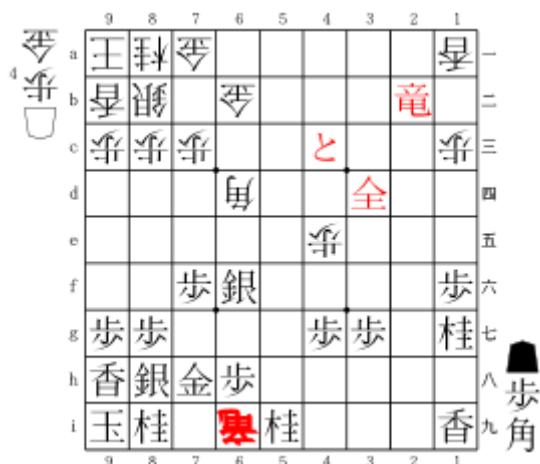


This is the type of move that requires a lot of Anaguma experience. Because of this move, moving back the token with 75.+P5f is not slowing down the attack. For example, 79.G7h-6h P\*5g is adding more firepower to the attack. If black doesn't defend, then Bx7h+ Gx7h G\*6g is too strong.

79.N\*5i 04:43:00 04:42:00

Habu tries to keep the position together, but dropping this knight is painful because this is the knight that he was ahead. Professionals are very much aware of material difference, even in the endgame, and both Habu and Hirose said after the game that white had the upper hand now, because the black material advantage was nullified here.

80.B6gx7h+ 04:43:00 05:03:00  
 81.G7ix7h 04:43:00 05:03:00  
 82.+P5fx6f 04:43:00 05:03:00  
 83.S7gx6f 04:55:00 05:03:00  
 84.R5ex5h+ 04:55:00 05:04:00  
 85.P\*6h 04:55:00 05:04:00  
 86.+R5h-6i! 04:55:00 05:26:00



Looks strange, because it invites black to move the gold back with tempo to 7i, where it is defended. Hirose again shows his extraordinary intuition in Anaguma positions, as we will see. The obvious 86.+Rx5i is not clear after 87.B\*4d P\*6a +Rx1a and in the press room 86.Bx3g+ followed by +Bx5i was analyzed, which also is not clear.

87.G7h-7i 05:28:00 05:26:00

The obvious reply, but it was important that 86.R6i also dealt with 87.+P5b. If then 88.Gx5b +Rx5b +Rx7h B\*6g is not good for white, but 88.G6b-7b G7i +Rx5i +Rx1i +Rx5b takes the vital token.

88.+R6ix5i 05:28:00 05:28:00  
 89.B\*4d 05:28:00 05:28:00  
 90.P\*6a 05:28:00 05:46:00  
 91.+R2bx1a 05:37:00 05:46:00  
 92.N\*9e! 05:37:00 05:51:00

The second point of 86.R6i. By inviting the gold back to 7i, the main weakness of the Anaguma, square 8g, is exposed. Hirose attacks it quickly, and it is very hard to defend.

93.G7i-7h 05:49:00 05:51:00  
 94.+R5ix1i 05:49:00 06:01:00  
 95.+P4c-5b? 06:06:00 06:01:00



Habu throws the towel quickly and after the game said that he regretted that. He could have made it a lot harder for Hirose had he played 95.+R5a here. This threatens to shut out the white rook with P\*5i next, so the obvious reply is 96.+R6i but after 97.L\*7i L\*8d +R5g black threatens P8f next and there



doesn't seem to be an easy way to continue the white attack. Therefore, white has to allow P\*5i by playing 96.L\*8d, but then the position is not completely clear after 97.P\*5i P\*5e Sx5e Nx8g= Sx8g Lx8g+ Gx8g S\*8f G8h Bx5e +Rx5e S\*8g N\*7i.

96.L*8d	06:06:00	06:27:00
97.+P5bx6b	06:22:00	06:27:00
98.N9ex8g=	06:22:00	06:32:00
99.S8hx8g	06:22:00	06:32:00
100.G*7i	06:22:00	06:32:00
Resigns	06:24:00	06:32:00



As Habu explained: I can only play something like 101.K8h, but then 102.Lx8g+ Gx8g +R6i G7g Gx8i K8g G\*8h leads to mate. Again Hirose delivers with the white pieces after playing a very strong game and he is now one win away from successfully defending his Oi title. Can Habu force another game seven?

### Standing after game 5 Hirose - Habu 3-2



## Game 6

2011-08-29/30

Sente: Hirose Akihito, Oi

Gote: Habu Yoshiharu, Challenger

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:01:00
3. R2h-6h	00:04:00	00:01:00
4. P3d-3e	00:04:00	00:12:00
5. B8hx2b+	00:15:00	00:12:00
6. S3ax2b	00:15:00	00:13:00
7. S7i-8h	00:16:00	00:13:00
8. R8b-3b	00:16:00	00:32:00

Habu has to win this game to keep his hopes of taking the Oi title from Hirose alive. Instead of meeting his opponent head on by allowing the Furibisha Anaguma, Habu chooses the Aifuribisha opening.

9. B*6e	00:55:00	00:32:00
10. B*5d	00:55:00	00:35:00
11. B6ex5d	00:56:00	00:35:00
12. P5cx5d	00:56:00	00:35:00

It looks like black has not achieved much with the bishop drop, but by forcing the pawn from 5c to 5d, there is now an important hole on 5c for a bishop drop and white needs to be very careful when developing his pieces.

13. S8h-7g	00:57:00	00:35:00
14. G6a-7b	00:57:00	01:20:00
15. G4i-4h	01:10:00	01:20:00
16. S7a-6b	01:10:00	01:47:00
17. K5i-4i	01:17:00	01:47:00
18. B*6d?!	01:17:00	02:20:00

This only aims at an attack on the 3rd file and is probably too simple a plan. Black has multiple ways to counter it and the way Hirose plays it is especially effective.

19. P6g-6f	02:06:00	02:20:00
20. P7c-7d	02:06:00	03:03:00
21. P6f-6e	02:10:00	03:03:00
22. B6d-8b	02:10:00	03:05:00
23. G6i-5h	02:24:00	03:05:00
24. P3e-3f	02:24:00	03:36:00
25. S3i-2h	02:26:00	03:36:00

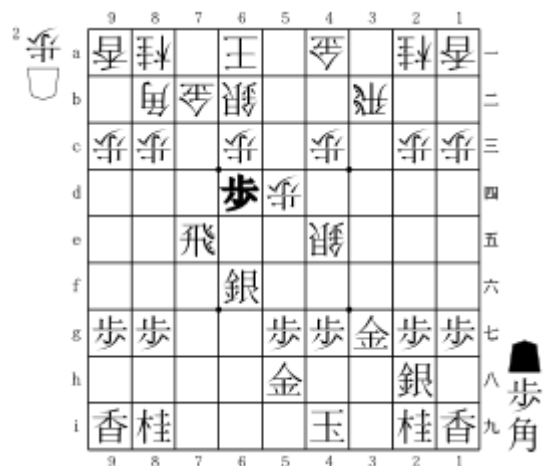


A surprise. More natural seems 25. P4f Bx4f G5h-4g, a textbook example of the proverb "Defend against major pieces by drawing them closer". However, Hirose is aiming for something higher.

26. P3fx3g+	02:26:00	04:13:00
27. G4hx3g	02:28:00	04:13:00

Looks like bad shape, but white has no immediate way to take advantage because of the bishop fork B\*1e if white takes on 3g.

28. S2b-3c	02:28:00	04:24:00
29. P7f-7e	02:51:00	04:24:00
30. P7dx7e	02:51:00	04:50:00
31. S7g-6f	02:58:00	04:50:00
32. S3c-3d	02:58:00	04:51:00
33. R6h-7h	03:19:00	04:51:00
34. K5a-6a	03:19:00	05:07:00
35. R7hx7e	03:29:00	05:07:00
36. S3d-4e	03:29:00	05:13:00
37. P6e-6d!	04:08:00	05:13:00



This has become a fight of the bishop on the board versus the bishop in hand. The

advantage of having the bishop in hand is bigger than it looks. White can not give black the time to repair the bad shape, he needs to be careful to avoid a bishop drop and also needs to find something to do for the bishop which is not very effective on this diagonal. This is only getting worse now that the diagonal is being closed by Hirose, attacking the silver on 3e at the same time.

38.N2a-3c?! 04:08:00 05:39:00

Turns a bad position in a dire one. Better was 38.S3f S6e Sx3g+ Sx3g G5c to try and get rid of the pawn on 6d and give the bishop more space to operate in.

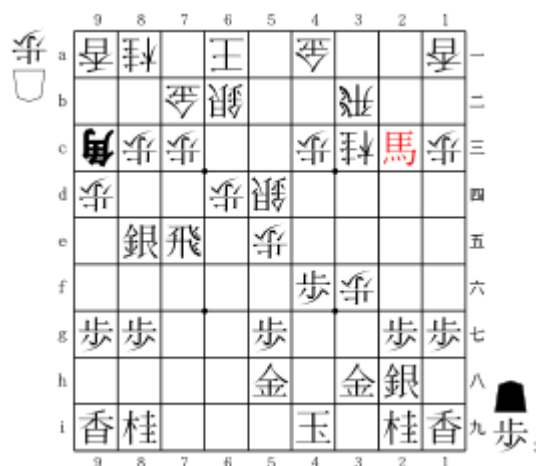
39.S6f-6e	04:37:00	05:39:00
40.P*3f	04:37:00	05:43:00
41.G3g-3h	04:40:00	05:43:00
42.P6cx6d	04:40:00	06:20:00
43.S6e-7d	05:11:00	06:20:00
44.P*7c	05:11:00	06:30:00
45.S7d-8e	05:11:00	06:30:00

The white bishop is crying in his little box. The position looks so bad for white that some of the reporters in the press room were already starting preparations for the end of the game, getting ready to interview Hirose after his first title defense.

46.P5d-5e	05:11:00	06:30:00
47.P4g-4f	05:24:00	06:30:00
48.S4e-5d	05:24:00	06:32:00
49.B*7h?	05:31:00	06:32:00

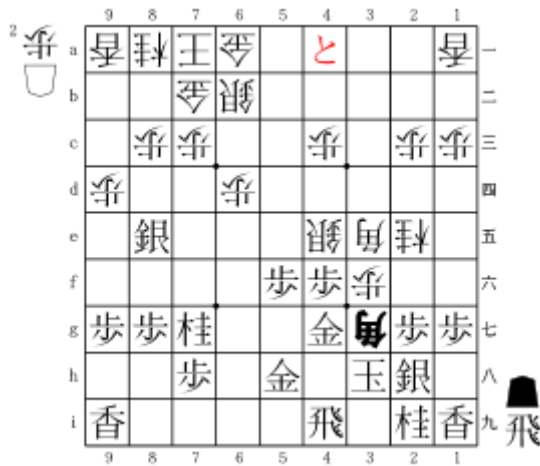
This looks good, as white cannot prevent the promotion of the bishop. Correct was 49.P2f followed by P\*3d which wins the knight on 3c while keeping the bishop in hand.

50.P9c-9d!	05:31:00	06:33:00
51.B7hx2c+	05:33:00	06:33:00
52.B8b-9c	05:33:00	06:33:00



Suddenly the white bishop has been given new life. On the other hand, the promoted bishop on 2c is much less effective than expected. Habu is slowly turning the tables from here.

53.R7e-7i	05:34:00	06:33:00
54.B9c-6f	05:34:00	06:34:00
55.N8i-7g	05:44:00	06:34:00
56.P5e-5f	05:44:00	06:34:00
57.P5gx5f	05:53:00	06:34:00
58.N3c-2e	05:53:00	06:39:00
59.P*3d	06:01:00	06:39:00
60.K6a-7a	06:01:00	06:52:00
61.G3h-4h	06:04:00	06:52:00
62.R3b-3a	06:04:00	06:57:00
63.P3d-3c+	06:21:00	06:57:00
64.B6fx3c	06:21:00	07:01:00
65.K4i-3h	06:28:00	07:01:00
66.P*2b	06:28:00	07:06:00
67.P*3b	06:28:00	07:06:00
68.P2bx2c	06:28:00	07:09:00
69.P3bx3a+	06:28:00	07:09:00
70.G4a-5a	06:28:00	07:15:00
71.P*7h	06:30:00	07:15:00
72.B3c-2d	06:30:00	07:15:00
73.+P3a-4a	06:37:00	07:15:00
74.G5a-6a	06:37:00	07:19:00
75.P*3e	06:41:00	07:19:00
76.B2dx3e	06:41:00	07:20:00
77.G4h-4g	06:41:00	07:20:00
78.S5d-4e	06:41:00	07:24:00
79.R7i-4i	06:41:00	07:24:00
80.B*3g?	06:41:00	07:33:00



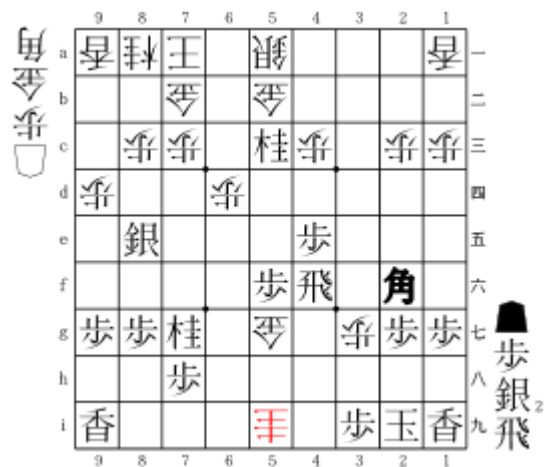
Habu has done some brilliant maneuvering, combining attack with moving the king to a safe place. The biggest difference is how he has used the bishop that looked to be doomed. It did a lot of work, moving from 8b to 3e, stopping at 9c, 6f, 3c and 2d along the way. Still, 80.B\*3g is overly optimistic. The simple 80.P3g+ was best, and after 81.Nx3g Nx3g+ Sx3g P\*3f Sx3f Sx3f Gx3f B2d white seems to take a step back. However, because the black pieces are all over the place and white has enough pieces in hand, it is not easy for black to find good moves. For example, R\*3a is answered by N\*6f which is an unexpectedly severe attack.

81.P4fx4e	06:58:00	07:33:00
82.P*5g	06:58:00	07:33:00
83.G5h-4h	07:02:00	07:33:00
84.B3gx2h+	07:02:00	07:34:00
85.K3hx2h	07:02:00	07:34:00
86.S*3g	07:02:00	07:34:00

Habu is going all in and manages to weaken the black king position, but is left with too few pieces to place the final blow. After the game Hirose said that he felt like he could win the game from here.

87.N2ix3g	07:15:00	07:34:00
88.P3fx3g+	07:15:00	07:34:00
89.G4gx3g	07:15:00	07:34:00
90.N2ex3g+	07:15:00	07:37:00
91.K2hx3g	07:15:00	07:37:00
92.G*4f	07:15:00	07:39:00
93.K3g-3h	07:15:00	07:39:00
94.P5g-5h+	07:15:00	07:39:00
95.G4hx5h	07:15:00	07:39:00
96.P*3g	07:15:00	07:39:00

97.K3h-2i	07:21:00	07:39:00
98.G4f-5g	07:21:00	07:39:00
99.G5h-5i	07:34:00	07:39:00
100.N*4f	07:34:00	07:39:00
101.P*3i	07:35:00	07:39:00
102.N4f-5h+	07:35:00	07:39:00
103.+P4a-5a	07:35:00	07:39:00
104.S6bx5a	07:35:00	07:43:00
105.B*4f	07:36:00	07:43:00
106.B3ex4f	07:36:00	07:44:00
107.R4ix4f	07:36:00	07:44:00
108.+N5hx5i	07:36:00	07:44:00
109.N*5c	07:45:00	07:44:00
110.G6a-5b	07:45:00	07:47:00
111.B*2f?	07:50:00	07:47:00



If Hirose fails to defend his Oi title, this is going to be the move that will haunt him. For the second time he drops a bishop at a distance and for the second time it is the wrong move. If he would have played 111.B\*7e here, he probably would have won the game and the match. For example, 112.Gx5f Rx5f B\*4g K1h Bx5f+ and it looks like the black king is difficult to defend. However, then R\*6a K8b S\*9c leads to mate and black wins. Also, 112.N5h+ R\*6a K8b Sx9d! is a mating threat which cannot be defended by Lx9d because of S\*9c and mate again.

112.G5gx5f	07:50:00	07:52:00
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Devastating. 113.Rx4f fails to B\*4g and now black has no mating threat to counter.

113.R4f-4h	07:51:00	07:52:00
114.B*5g	07:51:00	07:52:00

The white attack gains decisive power and black has no fast attack.

115.N5c-6a+	07:56:00	07:52:00
116.K7ax6a	07:56:00	07:52:00
117.P*5c	07:56:00	07:52:00
118.B5gx4h+	07:56:00	07:54:00
119.P5cx5b+	07:56:00	07:54:00
120.S5ax5b	07:56:00	07:54:00
121.R*3a	07:56:00	07:54:00
122.N*4a	07:56:00	07:54:00
Resigns	07:58:00	07:54:00



The white king cannot be mated and if black turns to defense with 123.Rx3g+ then +Bx3g Bx3g G4g wins. Also, 123.Bx3g +Bx3g Rx3g+ B\*5e is too strong. Undoubtedly with a lot of regrets, Hirose resigned here. Habu wins an up and down game to take this Oi match a decisive seventh game. One would give the psychological edge to Habu here, as well as the vast difference in title match experience. Still, he lost the seventh game of the Meijin match recently, so Hirose should not abandon all hope.

### Standing after game 6 Hirose - Habu 3-3

## Game 7

2011-09-12/13

Sente: Hirose Akihito, Oi

Gote: Habu Yoshiharu, Challenger

1. P7g-7f 00:01:00 00:00:00

This is the final game of this match, so furigoma had to decide who starts. The result was two pawns, one token and two pawns that landed on their side, giving Hirose the black pieces. Considering that black only won two of the six games in this match, it seems unlikely that Hirose was excited about the result.

2. P3c-3d	00:01:00	00:00:00
3. R2h-6h	00:06:00	00:00:00
4. P8c-8d	00:06:00	00:03:00
5. P6g-6f	00:08:00	00:03:00
6. S7a-6b	00:08:00	00:05:00
7. K5i-4h	00:10:00	00:05:00
8. P5c-5d	00:10:00	00:07:00
9. K4h-3h	00:12:00	00:07:00
10. K5a-4b	00:12:00	00:13:00
11. S7i-7h	00:15:00	00:13:00
12. K4b-3b	00:15:00	00:17:00
13. K3h-2h	00:20:00	00:17:00
14. S6b-5c	00:20:00	00:22:00
15. L1i-1h	00:28:00	00:22:00

Hirose plays his favorite opening, the Furibisha Anaguma.

16. B2b-3c	00:28:00	00:34:00
17. S7h-6g	00:33:00	00:34:00
18. P8d-8e	00:33:00	00:40:00
19. B8h-7g	00:33:00	00:40:00
20. G6a-5b	00:33:00	00:40:00
21. K2h-1i	00:37:00	00:40:00
22. K3b-2b	00:37:00	00:43:00
23. S3i-2h	00:41:00	00:43:00
24. G5b-4b	00:41:00	00:51:00
25. G4i-3i	01:05:00	00:51:00
26. L1a-1b	01:05:00	01:04:00

Habu answers by playing the Anaguma himself, just like in the fifth game that he lost convincingly.

27. S6g-5f	01:27:00	01:04:00
28. P4c-4d	01:27:00	01:09:00

This is different from the fifth game. Habu closes the bishop diagonal, which is a bit more defensive.

29. P4g-4f	01:42:00	01:09:00
30. K2b-1a	01:42:00	01:10:00
31. R6h-4h	02:06:00	01:10:00

Hirose doesn't waste any time trying to take advantage of the pawn on 4d, building up an attacking formation to break through on the 4th file. The story of this game will be all about the battle for controlling this file.

32. S3a-2b	02:06:00	01:13:00
33. G6i-5i	02:09:00	01:13:00
34. G4a-3a	02:09:00	01:35:00
35. G5i-4i	02:14:00	01:35:00
36. G4b-3b	02:14:00	01:46:00
37. P3g-3f	02:30:00	01:46:00
38. P7c-7d	02:30:00	03:11:00
39. P6f-6e	03:25:00	03:11:00
40. S5c-4b	03:25:00	04:14:00



The sealed move. There are not many waiting moves left, so the fighting will start soon.

41. P4f-4e!?	03:52:00	04:14:00
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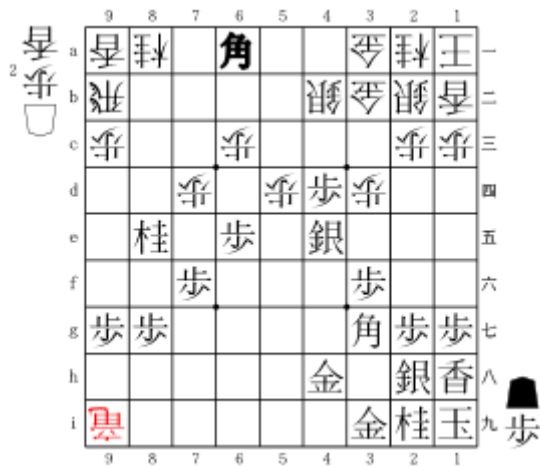
If Hirose would have played 41.G4i-3h here, the position would have been exactly the same as the game he played with black against Oikawa. There it followed 42.P7e Px7e P8f Px8f P4e Px4e Bx7g+ Nx7g Rx8f P4d B\*5i and white got the better position and won the game. Taking the initiative with 41.P4e was probably prepared by Hirose, but it is also possible that he wanted to throw a curve ball to make Habu use time again, rendering the two

and a half hours Habu spent on P7d and S4b useless.

42. P4dx4e 03:52:00 05:10:00

Indeed, Habu takes almost an hour for this reply, indicating that he had not been expecting 41.P4e.

43. S5fx4e 04:14:00 05:10:00  
 44. B3cx7g+ 04:14:00 05:25:00  
 45. N8ix7g 04:14:00 05:25:00  
 46. B\*6f 04:14:00 05:26:00  
 47. B\*3g 05:03:00 05:26:00  
 48. R8b-9b 05:03:00 06:04:00  
 49. N7gx8e 05:22:00 06:04:00  
 50. B6fx5g+ 05:22:00 06:05:00  
 51. G4i-5h 05:24:00 06:05:00  
 52. +B5gx4h 05:24:00 06:18:00  
 53. G5hx4h 05:24:00 06:18:00  
 54. R\*6i 05:24:00 06:18:00  
 55. P\*4d 05:41:00 06:18:00  
 56. R6ix9i+ 05:41:00 06:46:00  
 57. B\*6a 05:43:00 06:46:00



Despite his positive play, the results have not been very convincing for Hirose. White has promoted the rook and picked up a lance. 57.B\*6a is an attempt to start a counter attack on the 4th file.

58. L\*4a! 05:43:00 06:48:00

This is a very strong lance drop. It looks like a defense-only move, but this lance is going to take over the 4th file.

59. B6ax3d+ 06:11:00 06:48:00

In the press room 59.G4h-3h was analyzed,

which is probably the last chance for black to complete his Anaguma castle. However, after 60.+R6i N7c+ Nx7c Bx7c+ N\*5g the white attack looks very strong.

60. S4b-3c 06:11:00 06:52:00  
 61. +B3d-3e 06:11:00 06:52:00  
 62. R9b-4b! 06:11:00 06:56:00

This rook was a liability of the white position, but Habu has found a way to use it in attack, combining it with the lance to start a strong counter attack on the 4th file.

63. +B3e-2f 06:33:00 06:56:00



It is painful for black that he cannot play 63.Bx9a+. However, then white can play 64.Sx4d and after 65.Sx4d Rx4d P\*4f P\*4g Gx4g P\*4e the white attack is in full force and black cannot hold the position. For example, after Px4e Rx4e +Bx4e Lx4e P\*4f the diagonal of the promoted bishop on 9a is blocked, so white can attack with P\*3h Gx3h B\*4i. Hirose's 63.+B2f takes the promoted bishop out of harm's way, but must have been quite painful to play.

64. P\*4f 06:33:00 07:09:00  
 65. B3gx4f 06:35:00 07:09:00  
 66. S3cx4d 06:35:00 07:18:00  
 67. P\*4c 06:35:00 07:18:00  
 68. R4bx4c 06:35:00 07:18:00  
 69. S4ex5d 06:36:00 07:18:00  
 70. P\*4g 06:36:00 07:18:00  
 71. G4h-3h 06:37:00 07:18:00  
 72. S4d-3c 06:37:00 07:18:00  
 73. S5dx4c+ 07:09:00 07:18:00  
 74. L4ax4c 07:09:00 07:18:00  
 75. B4fx9a+ 07:09:00 07:18:00

76.S\*4h 07:09:00 07:32:00

White has won the battle for the 4th file and now clearly has the upper hand.

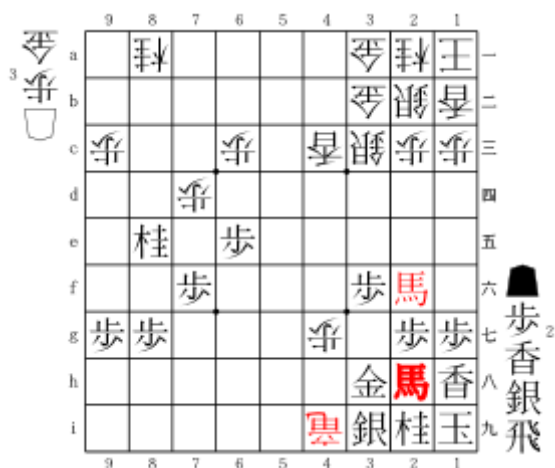
77.P\*4i 07:10:00 07:32:00

78.S4hx3i+ 07:10:00 07:35:00

79.S2hx3i 07:10:00 07:35:00

80.+R9ix4i 07:10:00 07:35:00

81.+B9a-2h 07:10:00 07:35:00



All hands on deck. Hirose desperately tries to keep his position together. He is not ready to give up his Oi title yet.

82.P\*5g! 07:10:00 07:38:00

This is the type of token attack that is often seen against the Anaguma. It looks to be far away from the king, but will be in time to help the attack.

83.P\*5i 07:17:00 07:38:00

Necessary, but only a temporary defense.

84.G\*4h 07:17:00 07:39:00

85.P\*4f 07:24:00 07:39:00

86.L4cx4f 07:24:00 07:44:00

87.S\*3g 07:25:00 07:44:00

No choice, but now the pawn on 5i is no longer defended.

88.+R4ix5i 07:25:00 07:45:00

89.S3ix4h 07:26:00 07:45:00

The lance on 4f, which has given black so much grief, still cannot be taken. 89.Sx4f P5h+ and the white attack cannot be stopped.

90.P4gx4h+ 07:26:00 07:45:00

91.S3gx4h 07:26:00 07:45:00

92.L4fx4h+ 07:26:00 07:45:00

93.+B2fx4h 07:26:00 07:45:00

94.+R5ix4h 07:26:00 07:45:00

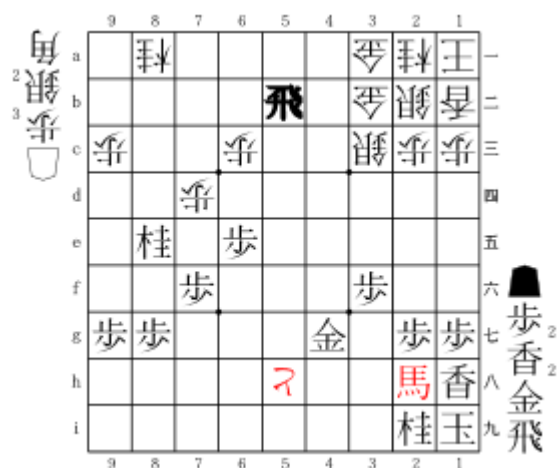
95.G3hx4h 07:26:00 07:45:00

96.P\*4g 07:26:00 07:45:00

97.G4hx4g 07:26:00 07:45:00

98.P5g-5h+ 07:26:00 07:45:00

99.R\*5b 07:27:00 07:45:00



Black has managed to remove all the pieces on the 4th file and seems ready to start a counter attack. Defense was futile, because 99.P\*5i is answered by 100.P\*4f and 101.Gx4f is followed by +P4h and 101.+Bx4f by +P4i or P\*3h and white wins.

100.S\*4i! 07:27:00 07:45:00

This snuffs out all black hope. It is not easy to see that this is good, because this silver is not attacking anything, but black has no way to defend.

101.R\*5a 07:44:00 07:45:00

102.P\*4f 07:44:00 07:46:00

103.+B2hx4f 07:44:00 07:46:00

104.P\*3h 07:44:00 07:46:00

105.L\*3e 07:56:00 07:46:00

106.P3h-3i+ 07:56:00 07:48:00

107.L3ex3c+ 07:58:00 07:48:00

108.S2bx3c 07:58:00 07:49:00

109.G\*2h 07:59:00 07:49:00

110.S\*3h 07:59:00 07:49:00

111.L\*2f 07:59:00 07:49:00

112.+P3ix2i 07:59:00 07:52:00

113.G2hx2i 07:59:00 07:52:00

114.S3hx2i+ 07:59:00 07:52:00



115.K1ix2i 07:59:00 07:52:00

116.B\*8d 07:59:00 07:52:00

Resigns 07:59:00 07:52:00



The immediate threat is B3i+ Kx3i G\*3h mate.

If black closes the bishop line then G\*3h followed by Bx5a picks up the rook while threatening mate. Black has no defense, so

Hirose resigned here. A tough match for Habu, coming back from 2-0 and 3-2 down, but he manages to pull it out and win his 13th Oi title. This gives him a total of 80 major titles for his career, which is the same number as the great Oyama. Of course, in Oyama's prime there were fewer title to play for, so it is hard to compare them, but winning 80 major titles is a remarkable achievement. On the other hand, Hirose will be quite disappointed losing his Oi title. He had several chances to decide this match in his favor and will especially rue the missed opportunities he had in the sixth game. Still, being young and extremely talented, it seems likely that he will get another shot at winning titles, maybe even against Habu.

**Finale standing**  
**Hirose - Habu 3-4**



## Summary

		Hirose	Habu
12./13.07.2011	<a href="#">Habu - Hirose 0-1</a>	1	0
26./27.07.2011	<a href="#">Hirose - Habu 1-0</a>	2	0
02./03.08.2011	<a href="#">Habu - Hirose 1-0</a>	2	1
09./10.08.2011	<a href="#">Hirose - Habu 0-1</a>	2	2
23./24.08.2011	<a href="#">Habu - Hirose 0-1</a>	3	2
29./30.08.2011	<a href="#">Hirose - Habu 0-1</a>	3	3
12./13.09.2011	<a href="#">Hirose - Habu 0-1</a>	3	4

## 59. Oza

### 59. Oza Challenger's tournament

Quarterfinale	Semifinale	Finale
Maruyama - Fukaura 1-0	Maruyama - Kubo 0-1	<a href="#">Watanabe - Kubo 1-0</a>
Kubo - Sasaki 1-0		
Miura - Yashiki 0-1	<a href="#">Yashiki - Watanabe 0-1</a>	
Watanabe - Yamasaki 1-0		

The challenger's finale sees again a fight between the rivals Watanabe and Kubo. And the winner should get the opportunity to challenge Habu in the Oza title match.

### Challenger's finale

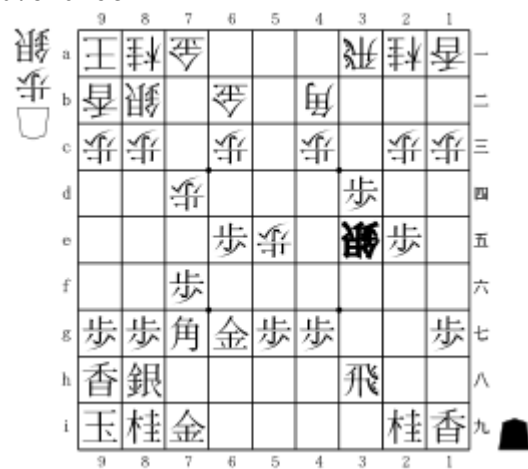
**2011-07-27**

**Sente: Watanabe Akira**

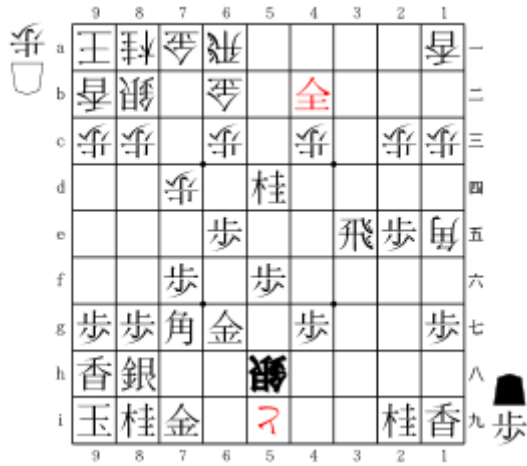
**Gote: Kubo Toshiaki**

1. P2g-2f  
2. P3c-3d  
3. P7g-7f  
4. P5c-5d  
5. P2f-2e  
6. R8b-5b  
7. S3i-4h  
8. P5d-5e  
9. K5i-6h  
10. B2b-3c  
11. P3g-3f  
12. S3a-4b  
13. S4h-3g  
14. S4b-5c  
15. S3g-4f  
16. S5c-4d  
17. G4i-5h  
18. K5a-6b  
19. K6h-7h  
20. K6b-7b  
21. P6g-6f  
22. K7b-8b  
23. G5h-6g  
24. L9a-9b  
25. B8h-7g  
26. K8b-9a  
27. K7h-8h  
28. S7a-8b  
29. L9i-9h  
30. G6a-7a  
31. K8h-9i  
32. B3c-4b  
33. S7i-8h  
34. G4a-5a  
35. G6i-7i

36. G5a-6b  
37. R2h-3h  
38. R5b-5a  
39. P6f-6e  
40. P7c-7d  
41. P3f-3e  
42. P3dx3e  
43. S4fx3e  
44. R5a-3a  
45. P\*3d  
46. S4dx3e

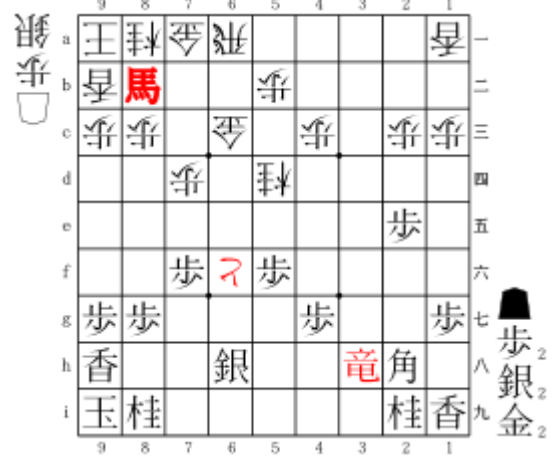


47. R3hx3e  
48. B4b-1e  
49. S\*2b  
50. R3a-6a  
51. P3d-3c+  
52. N2ax3c  
53. S2bx3c  
54. P5e-5f  
55. P5gx5f  
56. P\*5h  
57. N\*5d  
58. P5h-5i+  
59. S3c-4b+  
60. S\*5h

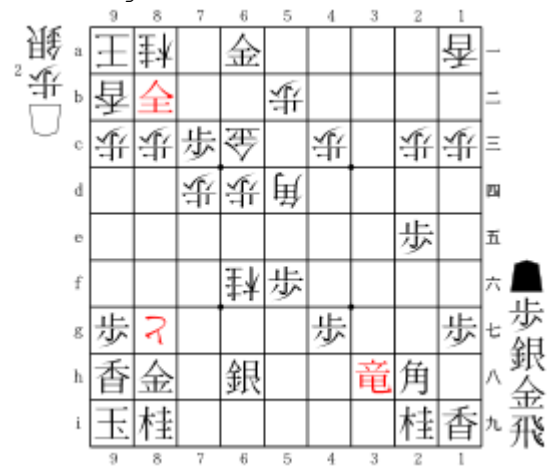


61. G6g-6h
62. B1ex4b
63. N5dx4b+
64. S\*6g
65. R3e-3b+
66. S6gx6h
67. G7ix6h
68. G\*6g
69. +N4b-5b
70. G6bx5b
71. +R3bx5b
72. G6gx6h
73. B7gx6h
74. G\*6b
75. +R5b-3b
76. +P5i-6i
77. B6h-4f
78. S5h-6g+
79. B\*5e
80. N\*5d
81. B4f-2h
82. P\*5b
83. +R3b-3h
84. +P6i-6h
85. G\*7g
86. P6c-6d
87. P6ex6d
88. +S6gx7g
89. S8hx7g
90. +P6h-6g
91. S\*6h
92. G\*6f
93. S7gx6f
94. +P6gx6f

95. P6d-6c+
96. G6bx6c
97. B5ex8b+



98. G7ax8b
99. G\*7b
100. P\*6d
101. G7bx6a
102. +P6fx7f
103. G\*8h
104. N5d-6f
105. S\*7a
106. B\*5d
107. P\*7c
108. +P7fx8g
109. S7ax8b+
110. Resigns



## 59. Oza title match

### Game 1

2011-09-07

Sente: Watanabe Akira, Challenger

Gote: Habu Yoshiharu, Oza

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P8c-8d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3. G6i-7h	00:02:00	00:00:00
4. G4a-3b	00:02:00	00:01:00
5. P2g-2f	00:03:00	00:01:00
6. P8d-8e	00:03:00	00:02:00
7. B8h-7g	00:03:00	00:02:00
8. P3c-3d	00:03:00	00:02:00
9. S7i-8h	00:03:00	00:02:00
10. B2bx7g+	00:03:00	00:02:00
11. S8hx7g	00:03:00	00:02:00
12. S3a-4b	00:03:00	00:02:00
13. S3i-3h	00:04:00	00:02:00
14. S7a-7b	00:04:00	00:02:00
15. P9g-9f	00:04:00	00:02:00
16. P9c-9d	00:04:00	00:02:00
17. P4g-4f	00:04:00	00:02:00
18. P6c-6d	00:04:00	00:02:00
19. S3h-4g	00:04:00	00:02:00
20. S7b-6c	00:04:00	00:02:00
21. K5i-6h	00:04:00	00:02:00
22. P1c-1d	00:04:00	00:02:00
23. P1g-1f	00:04:00	00:02:00
24. S6c-5d	00:04:00	00:02:00
25. G4i-5h	00:05:00	00:02:00
26. G6a-5b	00:05:00	00:02:00
27. P3g-3f	00:05:00	00:02:00
28. K5a-4a	00:05:00	00:02:00
29. S4g-5f	00:05:00	00:02:00
30. P4c-4d	00:05:00	00:02:00
31. K6h-7i	00:05:00	00:02:00
32. K4a-3a	00:05:00	00:02:00
33. N2i-3g	00:06:00	00:02:00
34. P7c-7d	00:06:00	00:03:00
35. P6g-6f	00:06:00	00:03:00
36. S4b-3c	00:06:00	00:03:00
37. R2h-4h	00:08:00	00:03:00
38. G5b-4b	00:08:00	00:04:00
39. K7i-8h	00:08:00	00:04:00
40. K3a-2b	00:08:00	00:04:00
41. N3g-2e	00:13:00	00:04:00

42. S3c-2d	00:13:00	00:05:00
43. B*2h	00:13:00	00:05:00
44. P7d-7e	00:13:00	00:07:00
45. P4f-4e	00:15:00	00:07:00
46. P7ex7f	00:15:00	00:09:00
47. S7gx7f	00:15:00	00:09:00
48. P4dx4e	00:15:00	00:09:00
49. B2hx6d	00:16:00	00:09:00
50. P*7c	00:16:00	00:09:00
51. P*7d	00:17:00	00:09:00
52. R8b-6b	00:17:00	00:10:00
53. B6d-3g	00:19:00	00:10:00
54. R6bx6f	00:19:00	00:11:00
55. G5h-6g	00:19:00	00:11:00
56. B*4d	00:19:00	00:15:00
57. N8i-7g	00:21:00	00:15:00
58. R6fx6g+	00:21:00	00:17:00
59. S5fx6g	00:53:00	00:17:00
60. P*6f	00:53:00	00:23:00
61. S6g-5h	00:56:00	00:23:00
62. G*4f	00:56:00	00:31:00
63. B3g-2h	01:01:00	00:31:00
64. P7cx7d	01:01:00	00:32:00
65. R*7a	01:03:00	00:32:00

There is quite a lot at stake in this match. Habu is aiming for his 20th consecutive Oza title while Watanabe is looking to finally add an extra crown to the Ryu-O title he has held for so long. Despite this, the game has proceeded at a very high pace, following known opening lines. This position is exactly the same as the third game of the Kisei match between Fukaura and Habu that was played last July .

66. N8a-9c 01:03:00 00:33:00



Habu won the game against Fukaura, but

decides to try to improve upon his own play. In the third game of the Kisei match Habu played 66.P7e and after 67.Rx7e+ Bx2f R4i Sx2e Bx4f Px4f +Rx2e B3g+ the position became very sharp. The idea behind 66.N9c is simply to develop the knight, adding extra force to the attack.

67.P3f-3e! 01:51:00 00:33:00

After thinking for 48 minutes, Watanabe finds the perfect reply. Sacrificing this pawn to open attacking lines is a well-known tesuji. Furthermore, black defends against Bx2f followed by taking the knight on 2e with the silver for free.

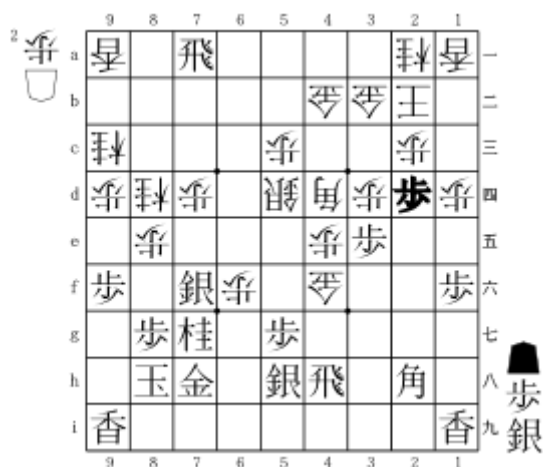
68.S2dx2e 01:51:00 01:34:00

Habu took more than an hour for this move, indicating that he underestimated the power of 67.P3e.

69.P2fx2e 01:51:00 01:34:00

70.N\*8d 01:51:00 01:34:00

71.P2e-2d! 02:10:00 01:34:00



This might have been the move that Habu overlooked. Watanabe seems to be giving up a full silver and puts his king in an awkward position. However, the attack at the head of the white king is more than enough compensation.

72.N8dx7f 02:10:00 01:35:00

73.K8h-9h 02:10:00 01:35:00

74.P2cx2d 02:10:00 01:44:00

75.P\*2c 02:21:00 01:44:00

76.K2bx2c 02:21:00 02:17:00

77.R7ax2a+ 02:22:00 02:17:00

78.S\*2b 02:22:00 02:19:00

79.+R2ax9a! 02:38:00 02:19:00



This promoted rook has to move or it will get lost after G3a next. However, in the press room 79.+R6a was considered to be right move because 79.+Rx9a exposes black to the attack 80.B5a +Rx9c G3g which is good for white. Watanabe has looked deeper. When he was asked about 79.+R6a after the game, Watanabe said that he didn't like to allow the edge attack 80.P9e in that case.

80.B4d-5e 02:38:00 02:27:00

81.+R9a-9b! 02:58:00 02:27:00

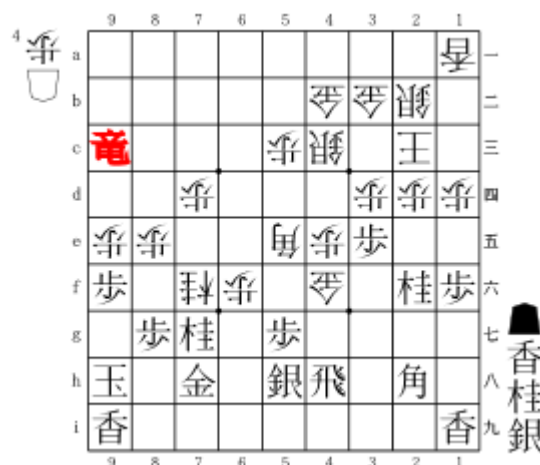
Taking the knight on 9c is the reflex move, but this is much better. If white now plays 82.G3g then 83.L\*4d is very strong. With some fine play, Watanabe has taken the advantage, but Habu fights back.

82.P9d-9e 02:58:00 02:52:00

83.N\*2f 03:28:00 02:52:00

84.S5d-4c 03:28:00 03:47:00

85.+R9bx9c? 03:46:00 03:47:00



Finally takes the knight, but this is still a

mistake that makes the game very close.  
Correct was 85.L\*3i. For example, 86.B4d  
Nx3d Sx3d Px3d and the material advantage  
that black holds much more weight than in the  
game.

86.B5e-4d	03:46:00	03:47:00
87.R4h-3h	03:59:00	03:47:00
88.B4dx3e	03:59:00	03:51:00
89.R3hx3e	04:13:00	03:51:00
90.P3dx3e	04:13:00	03:51:00
91.B2hx4f	04:13:00	03:51:00
92.R*4h	04:13:00	03:54:00
93.S*4g	04:14:00	03:54:00
94.P6f-6g+	04:14:00	04:10:00
95.S5hx6g	04:14:00	04:10:00
96.R4hx7h+?	04:14:00	04:12:00

Realizing that this probably wasn't enough,  
Habu sees nothing else but to put all his eggs  
in one basket. He could have made it much  
more interesting if he had played 96.Rx4g+  
B5e +R4h here. This was analyzed for a long  
time after the game, but no conclusion could  
be reached.

97.S6gx7h	04:14:00	04:12:00
98.P4ex4f	04:14:00	04:12:00

This is a mating threat, but Watanabe has the  
perfect reply.

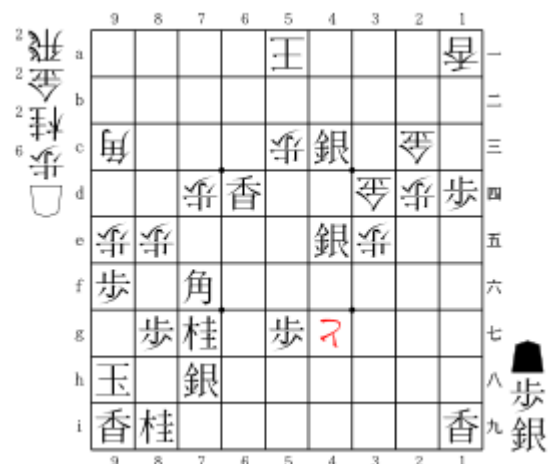
99.B\*6g! 04:14:00 04:12:00



This fork removes the knight, making the black  
king safe. Black wins.

100.K2c-1c	04:14:00	04:12:00
101.B6gx7f	04:14:00	04:12:00
102.P4fx4g+	04:14:00	04:14:00
103.P1f-1e	04:41:00	04:14:00

104.B*7e	04:41:00	04:14:00
105.P1ex1d	04:41:00	04:14:00
106.K1c-2c	04:41:00	04:14:00
107.N*8i	04:41:00	04:14:00
108.B7ex9c	04:41:00	04:19:00
109.N*1e	04:43:00	04:19:00
110.K2c-3c	04:43:00	04:29:00
111.G*4e	04:43:00	04:29:00
112.G*4d	04:43:00	04:29:00
113.P*3d	04:43:00	04:29:00
114.S4cx3d	04:43:00	04:29:00
115.G4ex3d	04:43:00	04:29:00
116.G4dx3d	04:43:00	04:29:00
117.S*4e	04:43:00	04:29:00
118.G4b-4c	04:43:00	04:29:00
119.N2fx3d	04:47:00	04:29:00
120.G4cx3d	04:47:00	04:29:00
121.R*5b	04:56:00	04:29:00
122.S*4b	04:56:00	04:35:00
123.G*2c	04:58:00	04:35:00
124.S2bx2c	04:58:00	04:36:00
125.N1ex2c+	04:58:00	04:36:00
126.G3bx2c	04:58:00	04:36:00
127.R5bx4b+	04:58:00	04:36:00
128.K3cx4b	04:58:00	04:36:00
129.S*4c	04:58:00	04:36:00
130.K4b-5a	04:58:00	04:36:00
131.L*6d	04:58:00	04:36:00
Resigns	04:58:00	04:36:00



There is a simple mating threat against the  
white king, but no proper defense. Also, with  
rook, gold and knight there is no way to attack  
the black king, so Habu resigned here. A great  
start for Watanabe, who played a very good  
game, ending Habu's winning streak of 19  
consecutive Oza title match games. Can he  
end Habu's Oza title streak as well?

**Standing after game 1**  
**Habu – Watanabe 0-1**

## Game 2

2011-09-20

Sente: Watanabe Akira, Challenger

Gote: Habu Yoshiharu, Challenger

1. P2g-2f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P8c-8d	00:00:00	00:01:00
3. P2f-2e	00:03:00	00:01:00
4. P8d-8e	00:03:00	00:01:00
5. G6i-7h	00:04:00	00:01:00
6. G4a-3b	00:04:00	00:01:00
7. P2e-2d	00:07:00	00:01:00
8. P2cx2d	00:07:00	00:01:00
9. R2hx2d	00:07:00	00:01:00
10. P*2c	00:07:00	00:01:00
11. R2d-2f	00:07:00	00:01:00

For this second game, Habu has selected the Aigakari opening. After the game, candid as always, Watanabe admitted that this was a big surprise and that he was almost completely unprepared for this opening.

12. S7a-7b	00:07:00	00:04:00
13. S3i-3h	00:12:00	00:04:00
14. P6c-6d	00:12:00	00:06:00
15. P7g-7f	00:17:00	00:06:00
16. P8e-8f	00:17:00	00:09:00
17. P8gx8f	00:17:00	00:09:00
18. R8bx8f	00:17:00	00:09:00
19. P*8g	00:18:00	00:09:00
20. R8f-8b	00:18:00	00:10:00
21. K5i-5h	00:21:00	00:10:00
22. S7b-6c	00:21:00	00:14:00
23. P3g-3f	00:25:00	00:14:00
24. P3c-3d	00:25:00	00:14:00
25. P3f-3e	00:28:00	00:14:00
26. P3dx3e	00:28:00	00:16:00
27. S3h-3g	00:32:00	00:16:00
28. B2bx8h+	00:32:00	00:27:00
29. S7ix8h	00:33:00	00:27:00
30. S3a-2b	00:33:00	00:27:00
31. P*3d	00:41:00	00:27:00
32. G6a-5b	00:41:00	00:31:00
33. S3g-4f	00:47:00	00:31:00
34. S6c-5d	00:47:00	00:35:00
35. G4i-3h	00:55:00	00:35:00
36. P4c-4d	00:55:00	00:38:00
37. P7f-7e	01:03:00	00:38:00
38. K5a-4b	01:03:00	00:42:00
39. N8i-7g	01:13:00	00:42:00
40. P1c-1d	01:13:00	01:06:00



In the Nakagawa Style of this opening, the pawns on the first file are not pushed. However, at some point white has no choice but to play P1d. Watanabe plays it here, admitting that it maybe a little passive, but he didn't like having to worry about a bishop drop on 1e at some point. Black uses the extra tempo gained by avoiding P1f to strengthen his attacking position.

41. S4fx3e	01:45:00	01:06:00
42. S5d-4c	01:45:00	01:06:00
43. N2i-3g!?	01:48:00	01:06:00



An aggressive knight sacrifice, but it is unclear if it is good. If it turns out that 43.N3g is not good, black can also try 43.P8f here. Watanabe had planned to answer this with 44.P\*3c Px3c+ Sx3c P8e P1e R8f B\*6c! and now white can answer P8d with P\*8e and also threatens P1f Px1f P\*1h. According to Watanabe, this position is playable for both sides.

44. B*5d	01:48:00	01:32:00
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White has no choice but to go for the knight, because the black attacking formation with two knights on 7g and 3g is getting too strong.



However, the bishop on 5d is going to be a target. Combined with not having the bishop in hand anymore, black probably has enough compensation for the knight.

45.R2f-6f	02:03:00	01:32:00
46.P2c-2d	02:03:00	01:54:00
47.R6fx6d	02:32:00	01:54:00
48.P*6c	02:32:00	01:56:00
49.R6d-6f	02:32:00	01:56:00
50.P*3f	02:32:00	01:56:00
51.P5g-5f	02:35:00	01:56:00
52.P3fx3g+	02:35:00	02:11:00
53.G3hx3g	02:35:00	02:11:00

Surprisingly, Watanabe said after the game that he was quite happy with his position here, being a knight up. He added that the problem was something he played after that, but in the post-mortem analysis it did not become clear what his mistake was.

54.P6c-6d	02:35:00	02:24:00
55.R6fx6d	02:36:00	02:24:00
56.B5d-6c	02:36:00	02:24:00
57.G3g-3h	02:42:00	02:24:00
58.S2b-2c	02:42:00	02:26:00
59.P*2b	02:49:00	02:26:00
60.G3bx2b	02:49:00	02:27:00
61.N7g-6e	02:50:00	02:27:00
62.R8b-6b	02:50:00	03:21:00

This move carries a nasty threat. For example, 63.Sx4d is a blunder because of 64.N\*6f Px6f B8e and black loses.

63.P7e-7d 03:01:00 03:21:00



This is the light way to respond, closing the diagonal of the bishop and thus defending against B8e. In the press room the more aggressive 63.Nx7c+ was analyzed. The point is that because this knight no longer blocks the rook, this rook now defends the square 6f, so the knight drop on 6f is no longer possible. For

example, 64.Nx7c P\*7d and now B2g+ looks very strong, but after Rx6b+ Gx6b Gx2g N6e P7c+ R\*3h B\*4h G5b R\*6a black has the better position. In the post-mortem analysis both players were lukewarm to the suggestion. Watanabe said that sacrificing two knights is not something black wants to do, but that the variation above showed that it might be playable. Habu just said that 63.P7d was the natural move to play in this position. Hard to disagree here, because also after P7d black gets the advantage.

64.P7cx7d	03:01:00	03:29:00
65.B*8d	03:16:00	03:29:00
66.P*6a	03:16:00	03:39:00
67.N6e-7c+	03:43:00	03:39:00
68.N8ax7c	03:43:00	03:39:00
69.B8dx7c+	03:43:00	03:39:00
70.B6c-5d	03:43:00	03:40:00
71.+B7cx6b	03:51:00	03:40:00
72.P6ax6b	03:51:00	03:41:00
73.N*3c	03:55:00	03:41:00



A surprise to the professionals in the press room. This knight drop allows the white wall gold to get back into play, so this is a usually a move that a professional would try to avoid. Therefore, in the press room moves like N\*5e and R\*6a were analyzed. However, both players agreed that N\*3c was black's best move and Watanabe wasn't at all surprised by it.

74.N2ax3c	03:55:00	03:48:00
75.P3dx3c+	03:55:00	03:48:00
76.G2bx3c	03:55:00	03:48:00
77.R*2a	03:58:00	03:48:00

This is the point of 73.N\*3c. Opening space for a rook drop here is very strong.

78.N*4a	03:58:00	04:00:00
79.R6dx5d?	04:20:00	04:00:00



Based on a miscalculation. This time the press room got it right as there was general surprise after this rook sacrifice was played. The position was thoroughly analyzed, but no winning variation for black was found. Here Habu should have played 79.Rx1a+ and after 80.P\*3g G2h! he can keep his advantage. For example, G6c R6f B\*3i N\*4f and Watanabe said that white has no chance here.

80.P5cx5d	04:20:00	04:20:00
81.B*3a	04:21:00	04:20:00
82.K4b-5a	04:21:00	04:20:00
83.N*5c	04:21:00	04:20:00

It seems like this was the move that Habu had high hopes for.

84.S2c-3b!	04:21:00	04:29:00
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A strong defense against the checking threat. Black's attack now fizzles out and white takes over.

85.N5cx4a+	04:21:00	04:29:00
86.S3bx4a	04:21:00	04:29:00
87.N*5c	04:22:00	04:29:00
88.S4a-3b	04:22:00	04:29:00
89.R2ax1a+	04:28:00	04:29:00
90.N*2a	04:28:00	04:29:00
91.P*3d	04:38:00	04:29:00
92.G3c-2c	04:38:00	04:30:00
93.+R1a-1b	04:39:00	04:30:00
94.P6b-6c!	04:39:00	04:41:00



Opening an escape route for the king is the decisive move. It looks very risky, because 95.+Rx2c threatens mate in one move on 6a, but after 96.N\*6f Px6f B\*9e white defends the square 6a with check and can take the rook on 2c next.

95.S3ex4d	04:45:00	04:41:00
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Habu decides to try and keep some pressure on the white king, but it is not enough.

96.N*4e	04:45:00	04:42:00
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Painful drop. The silver drop on 5g cannot be properly defended.

97.P3d-3c+	04:50:00	04:42:00
98.N2ax3c	04:50:00	04:48:00
99.S4dx4c=	04:55:00	04:48:00
100.S3bx4c	04:55:00	04:48:00
101.+R1bx2c	04:55:00	04:48:00
102.K5a-6b	04:55:00	04:58:00
103.P*7c	04:56:00	04:58:00
104.S*5g	04:56:00	04:59:00
105.K5h-5i	04:56:00	04:59:00
106.B*9e	04:56:00	04:59:00
Resigns	04:57:00	04:59:00



If 107.K6i or 107.K4i then R\*5i is mate. Best is 107.L\*7g, but after 108.Bx7g+ Gx7g R\*5h K4i N\*3g K3i R5i+ K2h +R2i it is also mate, so Habu resigned here. Habu dropped a big game here after putting a lot of pressure on Watanabe early. He is now in a 2-0 hole and suddenly he is in a lot of danger to lose the Oza title he has held for 19 consecutive years. Can he fight back in game 3?

**Standing after game 2**  
**Habu – Watanabe 0-2**

## Game 3

2011-09-27

Sente: Watanabe Akira, Challenger

Gote: Habu Yoshiharu, Oza

1.P7g-7f 00:00:00 00:00:00

Habu has won 19 consecutive Oza titles and won the last six Oza matches in straight games, but he must win this game to stay in the match. The last time that he was in this a must-win situation in the Oza match was eight years ago. His opponent then: Watanabe.

2.P3c-3d 00:00:00 00:00:00  
 3.P2g-2f 00:01:00 00:00:00  
 4.P8c-8d 00:01:00 00:01:00  
 5.P2f-2e 00:01:00 00:01:00  
 6.P8d-8e 00:01:00 00:04:00  
 7.G6i-7h 00:02:00 00:04:00  
 8.G4a-3b 00:02:00 00:05:00  
 9.P2e-2d 00:03:00 00:05:00  
 10.P2cx2d 00:03:00 00:06:00  
 11.R2hx2d 00:03:00 00:06:00  
 12.P8e-8f 00:03:00 00:08:00  
 13.P8gx8f 00:04:00 00:08:00  
 14.R8bx8f 00:04:00 00:08:00  
 15.R2dx3d 00:06:00 00:08:00  
 16.B2b-3c 00:06:00 00:09:00  
 17.R3d-3f 00:07:00 00:09:00  
 18.R8f-8d 00:07:00 00:10:00  
 19.R3f-2f 00:09:00 00:10:00  
 20.S3a-2b 00:09:00 00:10:00  
 21.P\*8g 00:10:00 00:10:00  
 22.K5a-5b 00:10:00 00:11:00  
 23.K5i-5h 00:12:00 00:11:00  
 24.P7c-7d 00:12:00 00:15:00  
 25.G4i-3h 00:19:00 00:15:00  
 26.S7a-6b 00:19:00 00:17:00  
 27.S3i-4h 00:21:00 00:17:00  
 28.G6a-5a 00:21:00 00:19:00  
 29.P3g-3f 00:35:00 00:19:00



This move decides how the opening will play out. No slow build-ups, after this move both players force themselves into a sharp fight.

30.P\*8f 00:35:00 01:03:00

"Allowing P3e would be a strategic defeat" (Habu).

31.P8gx8f 00:36:00 01:03:00

32.R8dx8f 00:36:00 01:03:00

Threatens to take the side pawn on 7f.

33.P3f-3e 00:37:00 01:03:00

Defends the side pawn, but this leaves white with another attack.

34.R8f-8e?! 00:37:00 01:08:00



Unclear if this was a real mistake. The obvious attack here is 34.Rx8h+ Sx8h B\*5e which sets the board on fire. Habu tries to make this

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Watanabe said after the game that he should have played 65.P\*3f instead. For example, 66.P\*2f Sx2f N\*5f B6f +R4i K3g and it is not easy to catch the black king.

66.N\*3e! 03:53:00 03:59:00

Watanabe had underestimated this knight drop. He expected white to move the rook, after which P\*3f would have lead to a perfectly safe king position. After N\*3e, the position becomes very sharp again, something Watanabe was hoping to avoid.

67.K4g-5h 04:09:00 03:59:00  
 68.R5ex5f 04:09:00 04:00:00  
 69.G6h-5g 04:09:00 04:00:00  
 70.R5f-5d 04:09:00 04:09:00  
 71.N\*6f 04:22:00 04:09:00  
 72.R5d-3d 04:22:00 04:18:00  
 73.B\*5f 04:24:00 04:18:00  
 74.N3ex2g+ 04:24:00 04:34:00  
 75.G3hx2g 04:24:00 04:34:00  
 76.S\*6i? 04:24:00 04:42:00



This is a mistake. Correct was 76.S\*4i K6h S3h+ B5i R2d which removes the threats to both rooks while keeping the attack going. However, even in that case Watanabe showed great resilience in the post-mortem analysis and no clear path to victory for white was found.

77.K5h-6h 04:24:00 04:42:00

78.+R2i-4i? 04:24:00 04:48:00

In the press room 78.R3i+ 79.Bx3i 80.+Rx3i was analyzed. This is not a mating threat, but moves like B\*5i are very strong, so the general opinion was that this position would be very hard to defend for black. In the post-mortem analysis the following variations appeared: 81.+Px6b Gx6b R\*8a G3a N\*3d (threatens mate after S\*4a Gx4a Rx4a+ Kx4a G\*4b) B\*5a K7i B1e+ (attack and defense, because this bishop covers the mating square 4b) G\*2f (this gold cannot be taken because of the previous mate) +B5a and white still has a lot to play for.

79.+P7bx6b 04:44:00 04:48:00

80.G5ax6b 04:44:00 04:48:00

81.B5fx3d 04:44:00 04:48:00

82.+R4ix4h 04:44:00 04:49:00

83.K6hx6i 04:44:00 04:49:00

84.B\*1d! 04:44:00 04:51:00

This bishop looks out of place, but it defends against the mating threat N\*4d K4b Nx3b+ Kx3b S\*2c etc.

85.P\*2e 04:48:00 04:51:00

86.P8g-8h+ 04:48:00 04:51:00

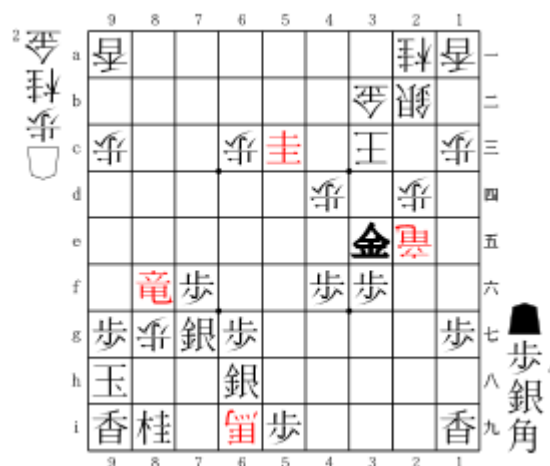
87.G5g-5h 04:52:00 04:51:00

88.+P8h-7h? 04:52:00 04:51:00



Habu is going all in, but 88.+R3i was probably better. For example, 89.P\*5i +Rx3d Sx8h +Rx2e N\*2f and because the white attack has lost some steam, it is not an easy variation to play. However, both players agreed that this position is far from clear.

89.K6ix7h 04:52:00 04:51:00  
 90.+R4hx5h 04:52:00 04:51:00  
 91.S\*6h 04:52:00 04:51:00  
 92.P\*8f 04:52:00 04:54:00  
 93.N\*4d 04:53:00 04:54:00  
 94.K5b-4b 04:53:00 04:54:00  
 95.R\*8b 04:53:00 04:54:00  
 96.P8f-8g+ 04:53:00 04:55:00  
 97.R8bx8g+ 04:54:00 04:55:00  
 98.P4cx4d 04:54:00 04:57:00  
 99.+R8g-8b 04:54:00 04:57:00  
 100.G\*5a 04:54:00 04:57:00  
 101.N6fx7d 04:57:00 04:57:00  
 102.G6b-5b 04:57:00 04:57:00  
 103.P\*5i 04:59:00 04:57:00  
 104.+R5h-3h 04:59:00 04:57:00  
 105.B3dx5b+ 04:59:00 04:57:00  
 106.G5ax5b 04:59:00 04:57:00  
 107.N7d-6b+ 04:59:00 04:57:00  
 108.B1dx2e 04:59:00 04:57:00  
 109.+N6bx5b 04:59:00 04:57:00  
 110.K4b-3c 04:59:00 04:57:00  
 111.P\*3f 04:59:00 04:57:00  
 112.P\*8f 04:59:00 04:57:00  
 113.G\*3e 04:59:00 04:57:00  
 114.B\*8g 04:59:00 04:58:00  
 115.K7h-8h 04:59:00 04:58:00  
 116.+R3hx2g 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 117.+R8bx8f 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 118.B8g-6i+ 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 119.+N5bx5c 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 120.P\*8g 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 121.K8h-9h 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 122.P\*2d 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 123.G3ex2e 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 124.+R2gx2e 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 125.G\*3e 04:59:00 04:59:00



This required a lot of guts, because it is not a mating threat and the white attack still looks quite dangerous. Watanabe admitted after the game that he wasn't really sure that this was good and that maybe the tables could have been turned here. Still, no good way was found for white to give the attack decisive strength.

126.G\*7h 04:59:00 04:59:00

Habu is giving it everything he's got. This is another mating threat.

127.+R8fx8g 04:59:00 04:59:00

Watanabe, renowned for his attacking skills, brings the game home with some stingy defense.

128.G7hx6h 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 129.S7gx6h 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 130.+B6ix8g 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 131.K9hx8g 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 132.R\*8e 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 133.P\*8f 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 134.N\*9e 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 135.K8g-7h 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 136.S\*8g 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 137.K7h-6i 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 138.R8ex3e 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 139.P3fx3e 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 140.+R2ex3e 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 141.B\*5f 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 142.P\*5e 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 143.G\*4c 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 144.G3bx4c 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 145.+N5cx4c 04:59:00 04:59:00  
 146.K3cx4c 04:59:00 04:59:00

147.S\*5d 04:59:00 04:59:00

Resigns 04:59:00 04:59:00



Finally, Habu succumbs. After 148.Kx5d R\*5b K4c (G\*5c B\*6e K6d G\*7d) G\*5c K3c R4b+ it is mate. And just like that, Habu's 19-year reign as Oza has come to an end. Watanabe finally adds a second crown to the Ryu-O title he has held for so long. Watanabe has been so dominant in this Oza match that one cannot help but feel that we witnessed the moment of passing the torch, going from the Habu-era to the Watanabe-era.

**Final standing**  
**Habu – Watanabe 0-3**

## Summary

		Habu	Watanabe
2011-09-07	<a href="#">Watanabe - Habu 1-0</a>	0	1
2011-09-20	<a href="#">Habu - Watanabe 0-1</a>	0	2
2011-09-27	<a href="#">Watanabe - Habu 1-0</a>	0	3



## 24. Ryu-O

### 24. Ryu-O Challenger's tournament

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Semifinale	Finale (Best of 3)
Maruyama					<a href="#">Maruyama - Fukaura 1-0</a>	<a href="#">Kubo - Maruyama 1-0</a> <a href="#">Maruyama - Kubo 1-0</a>
Fukaura				<a href="#">Fukaura - Sato Y. 1-0</a>		
Sato Y.			<a href="#">Nagase - Sato Y. 0-1</a>			
Sato S.		<a href="#">Sato S. - Nagase 0-1</a>				
Inaba	<a href="#">Inaba - Nagase 0-1</a>					
Nagase						
Habu	<a href="#">Habu - Hashimoto 1-0</a>				<a href="#">Hashimoto - Kubo 0-1</a>	<a href="#">Kubo - Maruyama 0-1</a>
Hashimoto						
Yamasaki	<a href="#">Yamasaki - Sato A. 1-0</a>			<a href="#">Yamasaki - Kubo 0-1</a>		
Sato A.						
Kubo						

Kubo had again a good possibility to play in another title match. In the Ryu-O's Challenger's Best-of-3 finale he won the first game but his opponent Maruyama could win game 2 and 3 and became the challenger of Watanabe.

## 24th Ryu-O title match

### Game 1

2011-10-13/14

**Sente:** Watanabe Akira, Ryu-O

**Gote:** Maruyama Tadahisa, Challenger

1.P7g-7f 00:00:00 00:00:00

The furigoma resulted in three pawns, giving Watanabe the black pieces. In a pre-match interview with Shukan Shogi, Watanabe said that because during a title match you get to play with both sides, he wasn't too concerned about being black or white in the first game, but still felt that starting with the black pieces would give him a small emotional lift. For challenger Maruyama this first game is very important. Despite winning the preliminary group of the Ryu-O four times, this is the first time he has come out of the knock-out stage to challenge for the title. He is clearly a great player, winning the Meijin title twice (in 2000 and 2001), but at 41 he may be passed his prime and Watanabe has been showing some outstanding form lately, for example by crushing Habu in the Oza match.

2.P3c-3d 00:00:00 00:00:00  
 3.P2g-2f 00:01:00 00:00:00  
 4.P8c-8d 00:01:00 00:00:00  
 5.P2f-2e 00:01:00 00:00:00  
 6.G4a-3b 00:01:00 00:00:00  
 7.G6i-7h 00:01:00 00:00:00  
 8.B2bx8h+ 00:01:00 00:00:00



Maruyama selects the Kakugawari with tempo

loss for this first game. This season this opening has already been played 51 times in official games, with black leading 28 to 22 (one sennichite). Maruyama played it himself in August in the Kio tournament against Yamasaki and lost. However, this opening is still very much in flux. Last season, white was winning more games (47 wins against 32 for black), but the year before black won 55-48. Watanabe seems to have a lot of success with black against this opening, winning 17 times and losing only 9 games.

9.S7ix8h 00:01:00 00:00:00  
 10.S3a-2b 00:01:00 00:00:00  
 11.S3i-3h 00:02:00 00:00:00  
 12.S2b-3c 00:02:00 00:00:00  
 13.K5i-6h 00:03:00 00:00:00  
 14.S7a-7b 00:03:00 00:01:00  
 15.S8h-7g 00:04:00 00:01:00  
 16.P6c-6d 00:04:00 00:01:00  
 17.S3h-2g 00:06:00 00:01:00  
 18.S7b-6c 00:06:00 00:02:00  
 19.S2g-2f 00:07:00 00:02:00

Moving the silver to 3f is also a main line, but Watanabe opts for the more conventional begin. When asked after the game about this choice, he said: "The S3f strategy often leads to sharper variations and that you need to know it very well to play it. After the begin, it is possible to put the king in a safe position like in the game and it is impossible to just win by opening preparation. So really, just avoiding risk."

20.P1c-1d 00:07:00 00:03:00  
 21.P3g-3f 00:08:00 00:03:00  
 22.P4c-4d 00:08:00 00:04:00  
 23.P3f-3e 00:10:00 00:04:00  
 24.S6c-5d 00:10:00 00:05:00  
 25.P3ex3d 00:12:00 00:05:00  
 26.S3cx3d 00:12:00 00:06:00  
 27.K6h-7i 00:12:00 00:06:00  
 28.N2a-3c 00:12:00 00:07:00



This is the new move that Maruyama prepared. The black plan is to move the silver back to 3g and exchange the pawns on the second file, but 28.N3c prevents this because the pawn on 2e can be taken. From this game it is hard to draw any conclusion about the strength of 28.N3c, but it will be studied along with the alternatives P4e, P6e, S5d-4e and G5b.

29.G4i-5h 00:43:00 00:07:00

30.P9c-9d 00:43:00 00:14:00

31.P5g-5f 00:48:00 00:14:00

32.S5d-4e 00:48:00 01:07:00

33.P5f-5e 00:57:00 01:07:00

34.P8d-8e 00:57:00 01:24:00



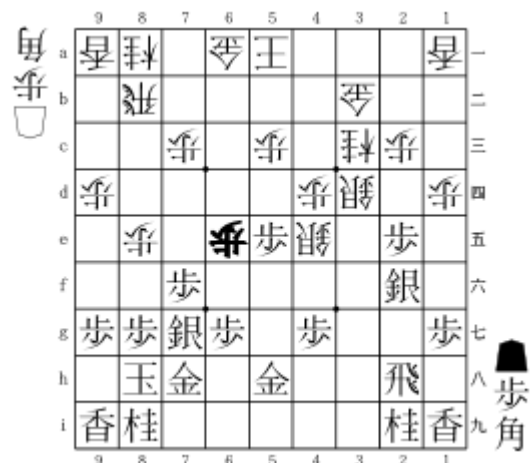
This move looks strange, because the most important reason for playing the Kakugawari with tempo loss is to keep the pawn back on 8d, playing the knight to 8e instead. However, Maruyama want to make a promoted bishop with B\*3i followed by B8d+.

35.K7i-8h 01:10:00 01:24:00

Watanabe ignores the white threat of making a

promoted bishop. If he wanted to defend against it, 35.P6f seems to be the only way, but after 36.P9e black actually has some trouble finding a good move. For example, 37.G5h-6g is answered by S3f and Sx4g+ is hard to defend against. Also, 37.K8h is answered by 38.P8f and because Sx8f is answered by B\*3i, black has to take with the pawn, but after Px8f P\*8e Px8e N9c white has a nice attacking rhythm going.

36.P6d-6e? 01:10:00 02:30:00



A big mistake. Maruyama labeled it the losing move, even though we are still not even close to sealing the move on the first day. Maruyama seemed to have been a little psyched out by Watanabe's bold ignoring of the bishop promotion threat. He said after the game that suddenly the black king formation looked so solid that he decided against the bishop promotion. However, 36.P6e is based on a huge miscalculation. White opens 6d for a bishop drop, which would be very strong, but the hole is too big and black uses it first. Correct was 36.B\*3i, which of course was expected by Watanabe, who counted on the power 37.R3h B8d+ P5d Px5d B\*5c. However, after +B7d Bx4d+ P\*3f he admitted that the position doesn't look so good for black. For example, S3e G4c Sx3d Sx3d +B6f S\*4i is a very painful drop.

37.P4g-4f 01:46:00 02:30:00

38.S4ex4f 01:46:00 02:33:00

Here Maruyama seemed to realize his mistake, as his hand clearly hesitated when he played this move. However, it is too late.



Maruyama needs to win game 2 with the black pieces, or he may prove to be just a small bump in the road for Watanabe on his way to his eight consecutive Ryu-O title.

**Standing after game 1**  
**Watanabe – Maruyama 1-0**

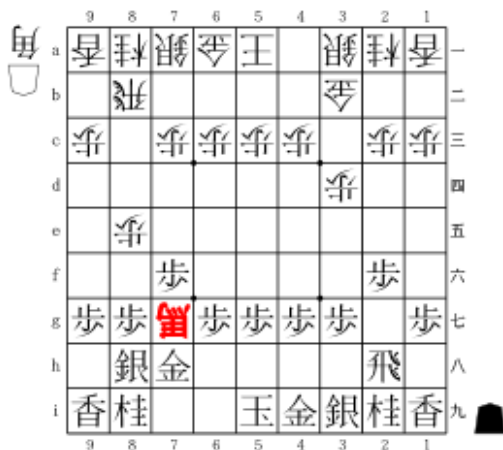
## Game 2

2011-10-25/26

Sente: Maruyama Tadahisa, Challenger

Gote: Watanabe Akira, Ryu-O

1.P2g-2f 00:00:00 00:00:00  
 2.P8c-8d 00:00:00 00:00:00  
 3.P7g-7f 00:00:00 00:00:00  
 4.G4a-3b 00:00:00 00:00:00  
 5.G6i-7h 00:00:00 00:00:00  
 6.P8d-8e 00:00:00 00:00:00  
 7.B8h-7g 00:00:00 00:00:00  
 8.P3c-3d 00:00:00 00:00:00  
 9.S7i-8h 00:00:00 00:00:00  
 10.B2b×7g+ 00:00:00 00:01:00



This may be inspired by the total victory in the first game, or prepared before the match, but Watanabe wastes no time to attack Maruyama's favorite opening: the classic Kakugawari. Winning in Maruyama's comfort zone after annihilating him in game 1 would be such a psychological blow that it will be hard to imagine Maruyama recovering from that.

11.S8h×7g 00:00:00 00:01:00  
 12.S3a-4b 00:00:00 00:01:00  
 13.P9g-9f 00:01:00 00:01:00  
 14.P9c-9d 00:01:00 00:02:00  
 15.S3i-3h 00:01:00 00:02:00  
 16.S7a-7b 00:01:00 00:02:00  
 17.P4g-4f 00:01:00 00:02:00  
 18.P6c-6d 00:01:00 00:02:00  
 19.S3h-4g 00:01:00 00:02:00  
 20.S7b-6c 00:01:00 00:02:00  
 21.K5i-6h 00:01:00 00:02:00  
 22.S4b-3c 00:01:00 00:03:00

23.G4i-5h 00:04:00 00:03:00  
 24.S6c-5d 00:04:00 00:05:00  
 25.S4g-5f 00:05:00 00:05:00  
 26.P6d-6e 00:05:00 00:09:00  
 27.P1g-1f 00:07:00 00:09:00  
 28.P1c-1d 00:07:00 00:09:00  
 29.P3g-3f 00:08:00 00:09:00  
 30.K5a-4b 00:08:00 00:09:00  
 31.K6h-7i 00:09:00 00:09:00  
 32.G6a-5b 00:09:00 00:10:00  
 33.N2i-3g 00:11:00 00:10:00  
 34.K4b-3a 00:11:00 00:11:00



It is not that Watanabe only plays the Kakugawari against Maruyama. Up until here, the position is identical to the sixth game of last year's Ryu-O match. Watanabe won that game to end the match. Actually, even though most professional players do not like the white position because it often leads to a passive waiting game, Watanabe plays it quite often in big games and with a lot of success.

35.R2h-4h 00:16:00 00:11:00  
 36.G5b-4b 00:16:00 01:16:00  
 37.K7i-8h 00:41:00 01:16:00  
 38.K3a-2b 00:41:00 01:16:00  
 39.G5h-4g 00:48:00 01:16:00  
 40.P4c-4d 00:48:00 01:19:00  
 41.P2f-2e 00:52:00 01:19:00  
 42.L1a-1b 00:52:00 02:12:00

Going for the Anaguma looks like a typical Watanabe plan, but the position is actually quite complex. White is running out of useful moves here. For example, 42.G4b-4c is answered by 43.R2h and even though both players now have an optimal position, it is white to play, which means that white has no choice but to weaken his position here. Zugzwang doesn't often happen in shogi, but

this position is an example.

43.P4f-4e 01:29:00 02:12:00

Black has to start the fight now before white gets the chance to play K1a followed by S2b.

44.P4dx4e 01:29:00 02:26:00

45.N3gx4e 01:55:00 02:26:00

46.S3c-4d 01:55:00 02:26:00

Black has forced the silver away from the Anaguma, so this castle formation is now hard to play for white.

47.P\*4f 01:56:00 02:26:00

48.B\*6d 01:56:00 02:32:00



Watanabe is the first to drop the bishop. He felt that he had no choice, because black threatens R2h followed by exchanging the pawn on the 2nd file. After 48.B\*6d, the same plan of course fails: 49.R2h S4dx4e Sx4e Sx4e.

49.L1i-1g 01:58:00 02:32:00

Threatens to move the rook behind the lance, making the drop on 6d ineffective.

50.N2a-3c 01:58:00 03:03:00

Not played from a position of strength. Watanabe thought he was in trouble here because he had to play this knight. Still, it is not easy for black to get the advantage here.

51.P1f-1e 03:11:00 03:03:00

52.N3cx2e 03:11:00 03:09:00

53.P3f-3e 03:24:00 03:09:00

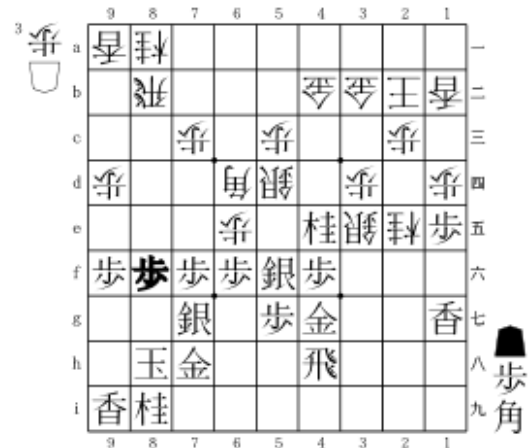
54.S4dx3e 03:24:00 04:03:00

Not good is 54.Nx1g+ because after 55.Px3d the pawn on 3d is a huge attacking base and black also threatens the fork B\*2f next.

55.P6g-6f 04:12:00 04:03:00

56.P8e-8f 04:12:00 04:06:00

57.P8gx8f 04:14:00 04:06:00



After the game, Watanabe said that he was worried about 58.Px6e here. Maruyama dismissed it as too dangerous, but analysis showed that it is a vital alternative. For example, 59.Px8g+ Gx8g P\*8f G9g Sx4e Px6d Sx5f Gx5f S\*8g K7i N\*8e P\*8c Rx8c P\*8d Nx7g+ Nx7g and it seems that white has nothing else but to escape with sennichite: N3g+ R1h +N2g R4h etc.

58.P6ex6f 04:14:00 04:06:00

59.R4h-6h 04:14:00 04:06:00

60.N2ex1g+ 04:14:00 04:13:00

White is a lance up, which means that black has to act quickly to avoid getting the inferior position.

61.R6hx6f 04:51:00 04:13:00

It seems like 61.P\*6e is an alternative here, but after 62.Bx8f Sx8f Rx8f black has no pawns in hand. Also, 61.P\*3c can be answered with 62.G3b-4c which defends 5c and 63.Rx6f is then simply answered with 64.P\*6c and it is hard to continue the attack for black.

62.P\*6e 04:51:00 04:50:00

63.S5fx6e 04:56:00 04:50:00

64.B6d-5e 04:56:00 04:50:00

65.P\*3c 05:11:00 04:50:00

66.G3b-3a 05:11:00 04:58:00



Now 66.G3b-4c can be answered by 67.Sx5d  
Bx6f Sx4c= which is good for black.

67.S6ex5d 05:23:00 04:58:00

68.P\*8g 05:23:00 05:00:00



Perfectly timed. If white takes the rook first, this doesn't work: 68.Bx6f Sx6f P\*8g is answered by K7g and the black king is much harder to get to as we will see a little later.

69.K8hx8q 05:24:00 05:00:00

```
70.B5ex6f 05:24:00 05:00:00
```

```
71.S7gx6f 05:25:00 05:00:00
```

```
72.R*6i 05:25:00 05:00:00
```

The point. Forcing the king to 8g makes this fork possible.

```
73.N4ex5c+ 05:50:00 05:00:00
```

This is not a mating threat, so Watanabe said that this was winning for white, but he also said that he still considered the position to be quite complicated.

```
74.R6ix8i+ 05:50:00 06:01:00
```

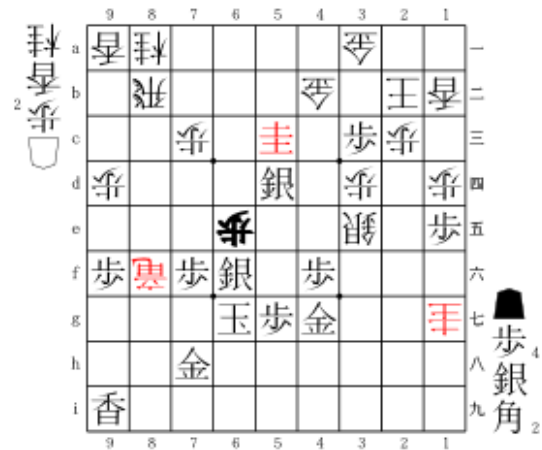
75.K8g-7g 05:50:00 06:01:00

```
76.+R8ix8f 05:50:00 06:01:00
```

77.K7g-6g 06:02:00 06:01:00

Tough decision to make. It seems like 77.K6h is a viable alternative, but trying to escape back down the board is often bad, so a hard move to play.

```
78.P*6e 06:02:00 06:01:00
```



A painful drop, but not as painful as Maruyama makes it for himself.

```
79.S5dx6e 06:38:00 06:01:00
```

It is very hard to predict what you're opponent is thinking, but Maruyama's best chance would probably have been 79.S5e because Watanabe thought that he had nothing else but 80.+R8g. However, then 81.Gx8g Rx8g+ S\*7g leads to an unclear position because the obvious L\*6f can be answered by K5f and N\*8e by +Nx4b. However, Maruyama saw that instead of 80.+Rx8g, white can play 80.N\*6d! and after 81.Sx6d +R8g N\*7g P6f Kx6f +Rx7h white has the superior position.

80.G4bx5c 06:38:00 06:02:00

81.S\*3b 06:39:00 06:02:00

82.G3ax3b 06:39:00 06:19:00

83.P3cx3b+ 06:39:00 06:19:00

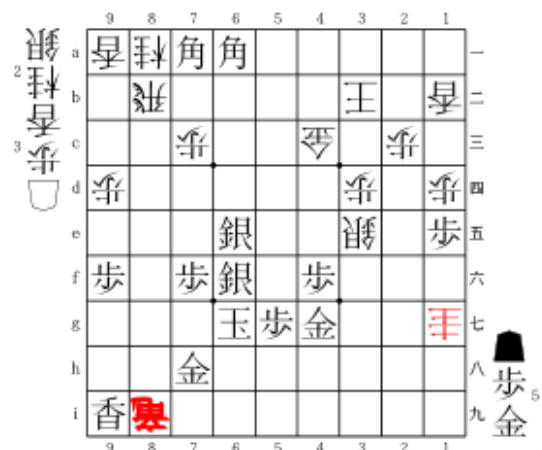
84.K2bx3b 06:39:00 06:19:00

85.B\*7a 06:40:00 06:19:00

86.G5c-4c 06:40:00 06:28:00

87.B\*6a 07:23:00 06:28:00

88.+R8f-8i! 07:23:00 06:51:00



This is the type of difficult to find but strong

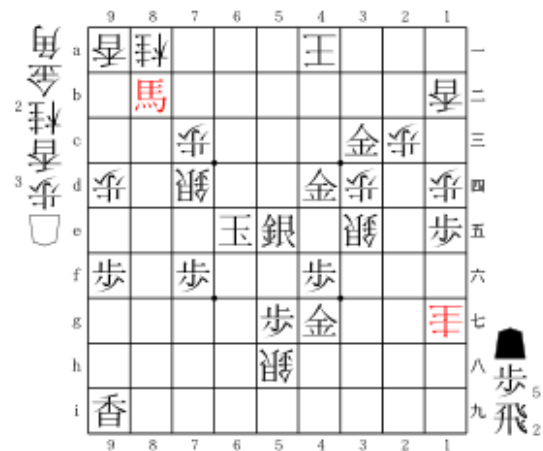
move that set Watanabe apart from most other professional players. Black is threatening Bx4c+ and it seems normal to defend with 88.P\*4b or P\*5b here. However, after 88.P\*5b P\*8c R9b G\*8g the black position is harder to break down than it seems. White is still better, but black at least have some fighting chances. If defense is not sufficient, then attacking moves like 88.P\*6d seem much more effective than 88.+R8i. After all, this rook move looks like it will be just a waste of time after Bx8b+ +Rx8b. Furthermore, after 88.+R8i the white king seems to be in a lot of danger. Watanabe has judged correctly that he can keep the rook on 8i long enough to attack the black king and that the white king is still safe enough. As a result, a game that was judged in the press room as being a long endgame struggle, suddenly is decided in Watanabe's favor.

89.S6f-5e 07:43:00 06:51:00  
90.S\*5h 07:43:00 07:12:00

The decisive move.

91.K6g-6f 07:45:00 07:12:00  
92.+R8ix7h 07:45:00 07:12:00  
93.B6ax4c+ 07:59:00 07:12:00  
94.K3bx4c 07:59:00 07:12:00  
95.G\*4d 07:59:00 07:12:00  
96.K4c-3b 07:59:00 07:13:00  
97.G\*3c 07:59:00 07:13:00  
98.K3b-4a 07:59:00 07:13:00  
99.B7ax8b+ 07:59:00 07:13:00  
100.+R7h-6g 07:59:00 07:13:00

101.K6f-7e 07:59:00 07:13:00  
102.+R6gx6e 07:59:00 07:13:00  
103.K7ex6e 07:59:00 07:13:00  
104.S\*7d 07:59:00 07:13:00  
Resigns 07:59:00 07:13:00



Mate after 105.K5d B\*6e K4e Sx4d Sx4d G\*5d Kx3d G\*2d K4c N\*5a or 105.K6f B\*8h etc., so Maruyama resigned here. Watanabe got what he wanted by beating Maruyama in the Kakugawari. However, the psychological damage might not be so big, because Maruyama made no obvious mistakes in this game. Still, he is 2-0 down, his opening preparation with black and white is shattered and he needs to win the third game with the white pieces against a Ryu-O title holder who is brimming with confidence. Quite a mountain to climb.

**Standing after game 2**  
**Watanabe – Maruyama 2-0**

## Game 3

2011-11-08/09

Sente: Watanabe Akira, Ryu-O

Gote: Maruyama Tadahisa, Challenger

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3. P2g-2f	00:01:00	00:00:00
4. B2bx8h+	00:01:00	00:00:00
5. S7ix8h	00:01:00	00:00:00
6. S3a-2b	00:01:00	00:00:00
7. S3i-3h	00:12:00	00:00:00
8. S7a-7b	00:12:00	00:05:00
9. P3g-3f	00:22:00	00:05:00
10. P6c-6d	00:22:00	00:07:00
11. P2f-2e	00:22:00	00:07:00
12. S2b-3c	00:22:00	00:15:00
13. S3h-3g	00:26:00	00:15:00
14. P4c-4d	00:26:00	01:39:00



Like in the first game, Maruyama plays the Kakugawari with tempo loss. In that game he played P8d and G3b early, which is the more safe way to play. That type of position can also be reached from the Yokofudori and doesn't make much use of the ideas behind the Kakuwari with tempo loss. In this game, Maruyama tries the more risky strategy of postponing P8d and G3b. White must be very careful in this opening, because a small mistake in the move order can spell disaster. For example, if white plays 14.S6c here, then 15.P3e Px3e B\*4e is very good for black. White is a move behind, which means that his position may not be ready to withstand a quick attack. Black has it easier and on this morning of the first day of play, Maruyama used more than two hours more than Watanabe. The move 14.P4d was played after one hour and 24 minutes.

15. K5i-6h	00:32:00	01:39:00
16. S7b-6c	00:32:00	01:42:00
17. K6h-7h	00:32:00	01:42:00
18. S6c-5d	00:32:00	02:15:00
19. S8h-7g	00:37:00	02:15:00
20. G4a-3b	00:37:00	02:22:00

Finally, white moves up this gold. Because white has managed to play P4d and S5d early, there is no risk anymore to be overrun by the S4f attack, because S4f can be answered by P4e. Also, sacrificing the pawn first with P3e is less effective because white can pull back the silver with S4c. This Silver Yagura formation is quite strong. White can be happy with the position reached in the opening, but there are still dangers lurking.

21. P5g-5f	00:41:00	02:22:00
22. G6a-5b	00:41:00	02:42:00
23. S3g-4f	00:44:00	02:42:00
24. K5a-4b	00:44:00	02:53:00
25. P3f-3e	00:52:00	02:53:00
26. S5d-4c	00:52:00	02:56:00
27. P3ex3d	00:59:00	02:56:00
28. S4cx3d	00:59:00	02:57:00
29. P*3f	00:59:00	02:57:00
30. P7c-7d	00:59:00	02:58:00
31. G6i-6h	01:16:00	02:58:00
32. N8a-7c	01:16:00	02:58:00
33. S4f-3e	01:26:00	02:58:00
34. S3dx3e	01:26:00	02:59:00
35. P3fx3e	01:26:00	02:59:00
36. P8c-8d	01:26:00	03:01:00
37. P9g-9f	01:46:00	03:01:00
38. P8d-8e	01:46:00	03:47:00
39. P5f-5e	02:36:00	03:47:00
40. K4b-3a?!	02:36:00	04:03:00



Putting the king into a safer spot is tempting, but not the right move here. White should have played 40.P9d instead. If then 41.P5d Px5d P3d Sx3d B\*7a R8a Bx4d+ G5b-4c and now black cannot take the lance with +Bx1a because after N3c the sideways working of the

rook makes sure that black loses the promoted bishop. Also, the king on 4b is much further away from the promoted bishop.

41. P5e-5d	02:57:00	04:03:00
42. P5cx5d	02:57:00	04:03:00
43. P3e-3d	02:58:00	04:03:00
44. S3cx3d	02:58:00	04:16:00
45. B*7a	02:58:00	04:16:00

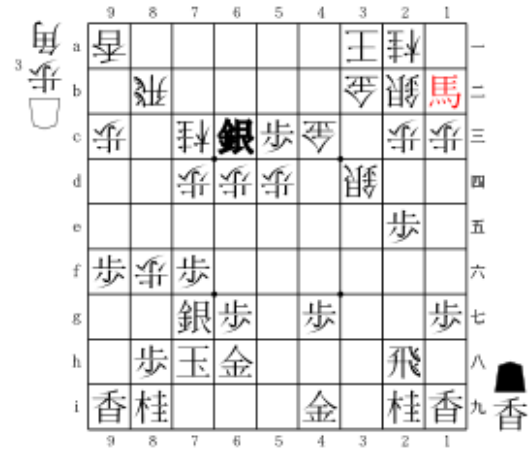
Black gets a promoted bishop and a lance to boot. It is a testament to Maruyama's judgment that he thought that this would make things the hardest for black.

46. R8b-8a	02:58:00	04:21:00
47. B7ax4d+	03:00:00	04:21:00
48. G5b-4c!	03:00:00	04:21:00



The only way to keep up the fight. White can prevent the loss of the lance with 48.P\*3c, but then 49.+Bx5d attacks the white rook. If white prevents this by moving the rook to 8c instead of 8a then 46.R8c B4d+ P\*3c +Bx5d is not attacking the rook, but white has little counter play because N6e fails to +Bx6d which is a fork on king and knight. However, white has no time to waste, because black threatens +B7b next.

49. +B4dx1a	03:12:00	04:21:00
50. P8e-8f	03:12:00	04:21:00
51. P8gx8f	03:13:00	04:21:00
52. P*8e	03:13:00	04:21:00
53. P*5c	03:50:00	04:21:00
54. P8ex8f	03:50:00	04:29:00
55. P*8h	03:51:00	04:29:00
56. S*2b	03:51:00	04:34:00
57. +B1a-1b	03:51:00	04:34:00
58. R8a-8b	03:51:00	04:34:00
59. S*6c!	04:20:00	04:34:00

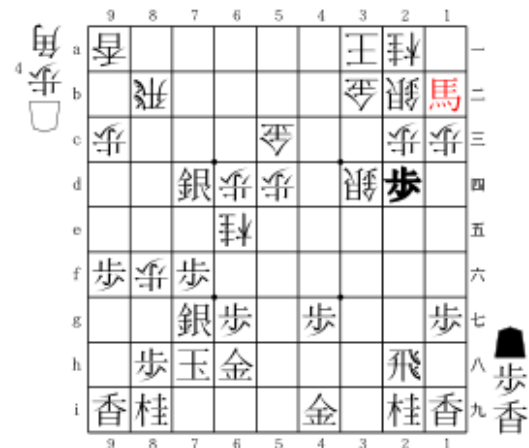


This threatens to make a token, but also controls the white counter attack as will become clear later. In the post-mortem analysis Watanabe said that he felt very good about his position here.

60. G4cx5c	04:20:00	05:57:00
61. S6cx7d=	04:23:00	05:57:00

This silver is defending the vital squares 8e and 6e, which should have given black a big advantage. However, Watanabe suddenly loses his way a little.

62. N7c-6e	04:23:00	05:57:00
63. P2e-2d?	04:31:00	05:57:00



Correct was 63.Sx6e Px6e and only then P2d. For example, B\*5e N\*4f P\*4e Nx3d Bx2h+ P\*3c Nx3c S\*2a is good for black. The reason Watanabe wanted to keep the silver on 7d is to attack the rook on 8b. This is not a bad plan, and Watanabe is still in the driver's seat.

64. B*5e	04:31:00	06:02:00
65. L*4f	04:51:00	06:02:00
66. N6ex7g+	04:51:00	06:08:00
67. N8ix7g	04:51:00	06:08:00
68. P*4e	04:51:00	06:10:00
69. P*5f	04:55:00	06:10:00

70. B5e-3c 04:55:00 06:13:00  
 71. L4fx4e? 05:26:00 06:13:00



This was the time to put pressure on the white rook with 71.S7c+. Watanabe didn't like this because he thought that 72.R4b would just put the rook in a better position, but then 73.N\*2f! is a very strong knight drop. For example, 74.S2e is answered by 75.N3g and 74.S\*2e Nx3d Sx3d Lx4e Rx4e S\*4f followed by P\*3e is also good for black.

72. S\*8g 05:26:00 07:07:00  
 73. K7h-6i 05:32:00 07:07:00  
 74. S3dx4e 05:32:00 07:09:00  
 75. P2dx2c+ 05:32:00 07:09:00  
 76. S2bx2c 05:32:00 07:10:00  
 77. R2hx2c+ 05:33:00 07:10:00  
 78. G3bx2c 05:33:00 07:18:00  
 79. +B1bx2c 05:33:00 07:18:00



Black has destroyed the white castle and gained material while doing it, so it is not hard to see why Watanabe liked this variation. However, the rook on 8b is strong in defense and Watanabe never gets another chance to attack it with S7c+. In the end, the silver on 7d is still there, while white managed to exchange the knight for the important silver on 7g. "If I keep the silver on 7d, I must attack the rook with S7c+", said Watanabe after the game,

admitting that he failed to execute either plan he had with the silver on 7d.

80. R\*8i! 05:33:00 07:19:00

Well timed check.

81. K6i-5h 06:44:00 07:19:00

Dangerous but black has no choice. If 81.G\*7i then the mating threat G\*4a is gone, so white can simply play Rx9i+.

82. L\*4a! 06:44:00 07:19:00

So far in this match, Maruyama wasn't given much chance to show why he was a Meijin title holder a few years back, but this endgame he plays flawlessly. This lance works great in both attack and defense. There is also another reason why this lance drop is good, which we will see next.

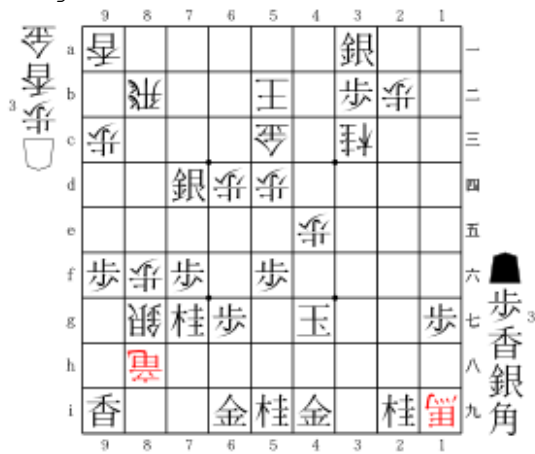
83. +B2cx3c 07:18:00 07:19:00  
 84. N2ax3c 07:18:00 07:19:00  
 85. B\*3e 07:18:00 07:19:00  
 86. L4a-4d! 07:18:00 07:26:00



Defending against Bx5c+ while keeping the attacking options along the fourth file alive. After the game Maruyama said that here he felt confident that he was winning.

87. B3ex1c+ 07:33:00 07:26:00  
 88. P\*2b 07:33:00 07:30:00  
 89. P\*3b 07:34:00 07:30:00  
 90. K3a-4b 07:34:00 07:36:00  
 91. S\*3a 07:35:00 07:36:00  
 92. K4b-5b 07:35:00 07:40:00  
 93. +B1c-2d 07:36:00 07:40:00  
 94. P\*4f 07:36:00 07:42:00  
 95. N\*5i 07:36:00 07:42:00  
 96. R8ix8h+ 07:36:00 07:43:00  
 97. G\*6i 07:43:00 07:43:00

98. P4fx4g+	07:43:00	07:44:00
99. K5hx4g	07:44:00	07:44:00
100. B*3f	07:44:00	07:45:00
101. K4g-5g	07:44:00	07:45:00
102. S4e-4f	07:44:00	07:54:00
103. +B2dx4f	07:49:00	07:54:00
104. L4dx4f	07:49:00	07:54:00
105. K5gx4f	07:49:00	07:54:00
106. B3fx6i+	07:49:00	07:54:00
107. G6hx6i	07:49:00	07:54:00
108. P*4e	07:49:00	07:54:00
109. K4f-3g	07:54:00	07:54:00
110. B*4f	07:54:00	07:54:00
111. K3g-4g	07:55:00	07:54:00
112. B4fx1i+	07:55:00	07:54:00
Resigns	07:56:00	07:54:00



The simple threat is G\*4f mate and there is not much else to defend against this than 113.L\*6h. However, then 114.+Bx2i is winning after 115.S\*3h G\*4f or 115.K5g G\*4f or 115.K5h +Bx5f. Black has no defense and cannot mate the white king, so Watanabe resigned here. Watanabe will not be happy about losing this game, giving hope to an opponent he almost had on his knees. Maruyama showed that he can be a very dangerous opponent when given the chance. The fourth game will be big, because a win for Watanabe will almost certainly mean that the match is over, but a win for Maruyama could completely turn this match around.

**Standing after game 3**  
**Watanabe – Maruyama 2-1**



## Game 4

2011-11-24/25

Sente: Maruyama Tadahisa, Challenger

Gote: Watanabe Akira, Ryu-O

1. P7g-7f	00:01:00	00:00:00
2. P8c-8d	00:01:00	00:01:00
3. P2g-2f	00:01:00	00:01:00
4. G4a-3b	00:01:00	00:01:00
5. G6i-7h	00:01:00	00:01:00
6. P8d-8e	00:01:00	00:02:00
7. B8h-7g	00:01:00	00:02:00
8. P3c-3d	00:01:00	00:02:00
9. S7i-8h	00:01:00	00:02:00
10. B2bx7g+	00:01:00	00:02:00
11. S8hx7g	00:01:00	00:02:00
12. S3a-4b	00:01:00	00:02:00
13. P9g-9f	00:01:00	00:02:00
14. P9c-9d	00:01:00	00:02:00
15. S3i-3h	00:01:00	00:02:00
16. S7a-7b	00:01:00	00:02:00
17. P4g-4f	00:01:00	00:02:00
18. P6c-6d	00:01:00	00:02:00
19. S3h-4g	00:02:00	00:02:00
20. S7b-6c	00:02:00	00:02:00
21. K5i-6h	00:03:00	00:02:00
22. S4b-3c	00:03:00	00:03:00
23. P1g-1f	00:07:00	00:03:00
24. P1c-1d	00:07:00	00:03:00
25. G4i-5h	00:10:00	00:03:00
26. S6c-5d	00:10:00	00:04:00
27. P3g-3f	00:12:00	00:04:00
28. K5a-4b	00:12:00	00:06:00
29. S4g-5f	00:13:00	00:06:00
30. P6d-6e	00:13:00	00:07:00
31. K6h-7i	00:14:00	00:07:00
32. G6a-5b	00:14:00	00:07:00
33. N2i-3g	00:15:00	00:07:00
34. K4b-3a	00:15:00	00:07:00



Maruyama is considered to be the leading expert in the Kakugawari opening and in general the black has a good winning rate in this opening. However, for the second time in

this match, Watanabe meets Maruyama's favorite opening head on. Still, Watanabe has not prepared this especially for this match. He seems to like this position, because after winning the sixth game of the Ryu-O match against Habu last year (thereby closing out the match) he has played this position 6 times and lost only once, on June 12th against Murayama in the Daiwa Cup. Watanabe keeps changing the perception that this opening is hard to play with white.

35. G5h-4g	00:19:00	00:07:00
36. P4c-4d	00:19:00	00:07:00
37. P2f-2e	00:20:00	00:07:00
38. G5b-4c	00:20:00	00:07:00
39. K7i-8h	00:21:00	00:07:00
40. K3a-2b	00:21:00	00:08:00
41. G4g-4h	00:22:00	00:08:00
42. G4c-4b	00:22:00	00:11:00
43. R2h-2i	00:23:00	00:11:00
44. G4b-4c	00:23:00	00:13:00
45. R2i-6i	00:45:00	00:13:00
46. R8b-6b	00:45:00	00:14:00



One of the reasons that this opening is considered good for black is that there is a risk that white runs out of moves. This position is an example. White's pieces are positioned perfectly so if it was white's turn here, it would be difficult to find a good move. However, it is black to move. Maruyama finds a cunning plan...

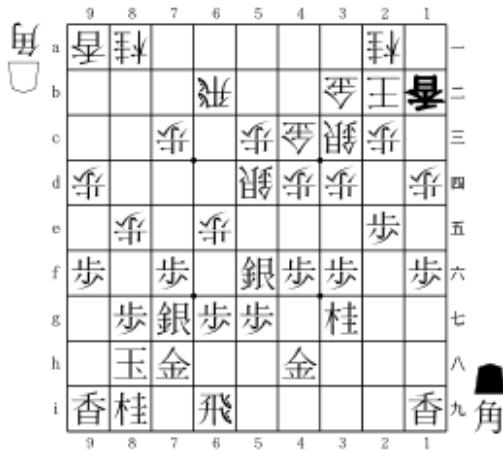
47. R6i-5i	00:46:00	00:14:00
48. R6b-9b	00:46:00	00:46:00
49. S5f-4g	01:35:00	00:46:00
50. R9b-8b	01:35:00	01:00:00
51. R5i-6i	01:35:00	01:00:00
52. R8b-6b	01:35:00	01:25:00
53. S4g-5f	01:40:00	01:25:00

Now we are in the same position as earlier, but this time it is white to move. After the game



Watanabe admitted that his opening plan of waiting for the black attack with the perfect position to defend had failed.

54.L1a-1b 01:40:00 01:26:00



This move invites the black attack because the lance on 1b is a weakness if black doesn't allow white to move into the anaguma.

Interestingly, despite not being the move of choice, it turns out that moving into the anaguma works quite well here, forcing black into an attack that is not strong enough.

55.R6i-2i 03:21:00 01:26:00  
 56.R6b-8b 03:21:00 01:26:00  
 57.L1i-1h 03:21:00 01:26:00  
 58.G4c-4b 03:21:00 02:05:00  
 59.P4f-4e 03:22:00 02:05:00  
 60.G4b-4c 03:22:00 02:05:00  
 61.P4ex4d 03:23:00 02:05:00  
 62.G4cx4d 03:23:00 02:05:00  
 63.R2i-2h 03:29:00 02:05:00  
 64.G4d-4c 03:29:00 02:11:00  
 65.G4h-5h 03:39:00 02:11:00  
 66.G4c-4b 03:39:00 02:26:00  
 67.R2h-4h 03:44:00 02:26:00  
 68.K2b-1a 03:44:00 02:50:00  
 69.N3g-4e 04:40:00 02:50:00



The sealed move. After the game Maruyama said that he felt he was already in trouble here.

70.S3c-4d 04:40:00 02:52:00  
 71.P1f-1e 05:13:00 02:52:00  
 72.P1dx1e 05:13:00 03:04:00  
 73.B\*2f 05:30:00 03:04:00  
 74.P\*4c 05:30:00 03:12:00  
 75.P\*1d 05:30:00 03:12:00  
 76.L1bx1d 05:30:00 04:13:00  
 77.L1hx1e 05:30:00 04:13:00  
 78.P\*1c 05:30:00 04:13:00  
 79.L1ex1d 05:30:00 04:13:00  
 80.P1cx1d 05:30:00 04:13:00  
 81.L\*5e 05:30:00 04:13:00  
 82.S4dx4e 05:30:00 04:55:00  
 83.S5fx4e 05:30:00 04:55:00  
 84.S5dx5e 05:30:00 04:55:00  
 85.S4ex3d 05:42:00 04:55:00  
 86.P\*3c 05:42:00 05:15:00  
 87.S3dx2c= 06:08:00 05:15:00  
 88.G3bx2c 06:08:00 05:16:00  
 89.B2f-3g 06:08:00 05:16:00  
 90.P5c-5d 06:08:00 05:58:00  
 91.R4h-2h 06:26:00 05:58:00  
 92.S\*1c 06:26:00 06:00:00  
 93.S\*2d 06:31:00 06:00:00  
 94.G4b-3b 06:31:00 06:01:00  
 95.S2dx2c+ 06:42:00 06:01:00  
 96.G3bx2c 06:42:00 06:01:00  
 97.P\*4b 06:42:00 06:01:00



Black has given up material and it seems that the attack is not strong enough. Despite this, Watanabe said that he never was sure about who was better. The pawn drop on 4b is a move that tests the character. It is not immediately threatening, so white has the option to defend against the pawn promotion or counter attack.

98.P8e-8f 06:42:00 06:44:00

Watanabe chooses to attack.

99.P8gx8f 06:46:00 06:44:00  
 100.L\*8c 06:46:00 06:47:00  
 101.B3gx5e 07:17:00 06:47:00

102.L\*8d! 07:17:00 07:01:00

Watanabe not only opts for attack, he ignores a full bishop to set up his attack as quickly as possible. This triple rocket on the 8th file is very dangerous.

103.S\*3b? 07:34:00 07:01:00



Now we are suddenly in a straight up endgame race. Watanabe was surprised how sudden the game had picked up pace. It turns out that this is hard to win for black, so Maruyama should have played 103.S\*7e instead. For example, 104.Px5e Sx8d Lx8d L\*2d S\*1b Lx2c+ Sx2c G\*2d S\*1b Gx2c Sx2c S\*2d and it seems like the game will end in sennichite. Maruyama said that a sennichite ending of a game he felt he was losing would have been a great result, but he was afraid that white had ways to avoid this sennichite variation. Watanabe responded that he wasn't sure how he could avoid sennichite here.

104.S\*1b 07:34:00 07:10:00  
 105.P2e-2d 07:40:00 07:10:00  
 106.L8dx8f 07:40:00 07:15:00  
 107.S7gx8f 07:45:00 07:15:00  
 108.L8cx8f 07:45:00 07:15:00  
 109.P\*8g 07:45:00 07:15:00  
 110.L8fx8g+ 07:45:00 07:23:00  
 111.G7hx8g 07:45:00 07:23:00  
 112.R8bx8g+ 07:45:00 07:23:00  
 113.K8hx8g 07:45:00 07:23:00  
 114.B\*6i 07:45:00 07:23:00  
 115.L\*7h 07:46:00 07:23:00  
 116.P\*8f 07:46:00 07:23:00  
 117.K8gx8f 07:46:00 07:23:00  
 118.B6ix7h+ 07:46:00 07:27:00

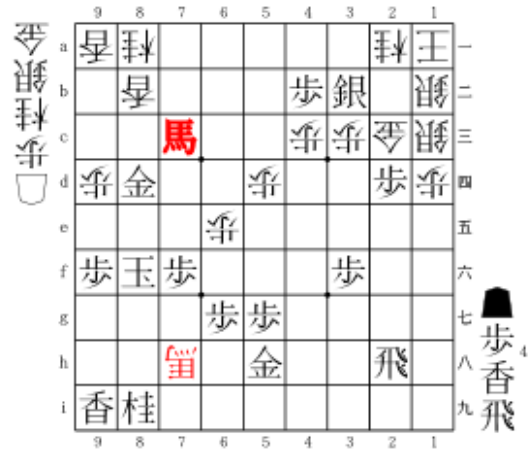


This threatens mate (P\*8e Kx8e S\*7d) and Watanabe had played the last few moves very quickly. In the press room it was expected that the game would soon be over. However, Maruyama's shows that this game is not over yet.

119.G\*8d 07:48:00 07:27:00

120.L\*8b 07:48:00 07:38:00

121.B5ex7c+! 07:50:00 07:38:00



A strong bishop sacrifice that opens up an escape route up the board for the black king. Watanabe had underestimated this move. He is fortunate (and Maruyama is unfortunate) that white still seems to have the advantage. Actually, in the press room it was believed that black could win here with 121.K7e, but the post-mortem analysis showed that after 122.Px5e Sx2a+ Sx2a P\*1b Sx1b R\*6a N\*5a white wins (Px2c+ leads to mate after B\*8f Kx6e S\*5d Kx5d G\*4d etc.).

122.N8ax7c 07:50:00 07:42:00

If only this would not have been a mating threat. Too bad for black, it is a mating threat after B\*6d next.

123.S3bx2a+ 07:50:00 07:42:00  
 124.S1bx2a 07:50:00 07:48:00  
 125.P\*1b 07:50:00 07:48:00  
 126.S2ax1b 07:50:00 07:48:00  
 127.R\*6a 07:50:00 07:48:00

This defends against the mating threat B\*6d.

128.N\*5a! 07:50:00 07:49:00

If black takes this knight, the mating threat of B\*6d is again possible.

129.P2dx2c+? 07:50:00 07:49:00



The final mistake. The best chance for black was 129.Rx5a+ P\*2a K7e Sx2d and there is still a long fight ahead. However, as Watanabe pointed out, white is up on material so despite being a long battle, it still seems that white has the upper hand.

130.B\*5c 07:50:00 07:50:00

Watanabe has found a perfectly fitting mate.

131.N\*6d 07:59:00 07:50:00  
 132.L8bx8d 07:59:00 07:50:00

133.K8f-7e 07:59:00 07:50:00  
 134.P\*7d 07:59:00 07:50:00  
 135.K7ex7d 07:59:00 07:50:00  
 136.S\*8c 07:59:00 07:51:00  
 137.K7dx7c 07:59:00 07:51:00  
 138.S\*8b 07:59:00 07:51:00  
 Resigns 07:59:00 07:51:00



After 138.Kx8b G\*9b and both K8a and K7c are answered with G\*8b. Because of the bishop on 5c (defending 6b and 7a) and the knight on 5c (defending 6c) white has just enough pieces to mate the black king. Maruyama loses for the second time in his favorite opening and one cannot help but feel that it will only be a matter of time before Watanabe clinches his 9th consecutive Ryu-O title. Considering the dominance of Watanabe in the first four games, it seems unlikely that Maruyama can stage a famous comeback.

**Standing after game 4**  
**Watanabe – Maruyama 3-1**

## Game 5

2011-12-01/02

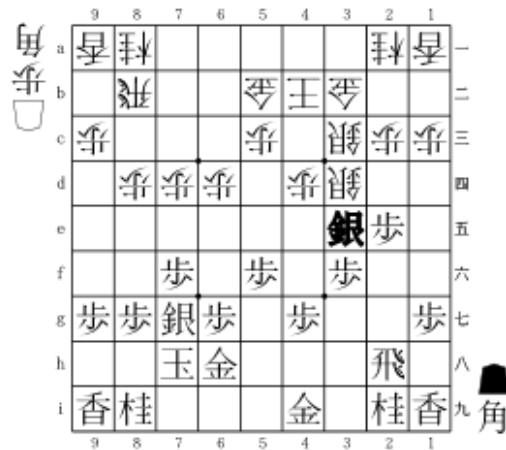
Sente: Watanabe Akira, Ryu-O

Gote: Maruyama Tadahisa, Challenger

1. P7g-7f	00:00:00	00:00:00
2. P3c-3d	00:00:00	00:00:00
3. P2g-2f	00:01:00	00:00:00
4. B2bx8h+	00:01:00	00:00:00
5. S7ix8h	00:01:00	00:00:00
6. S3a-2b	00:01:00	00:00:00

Another Kakugawari opening. Maruyama is a specialist in the Kakugawari, but Watanabe doesn't mind to play it against the best: "The Kakugawari with tempo loss leads to unknown positions so each player is on his own and the Kakugawari with white is easy to prepare".

7. S3i-3h	00:05:00	00:00:00
8. S7a-7b	00:05:00	00:01:00
9. P3g-3f	00:07:00	00:01:00
10. P6c-6d	00:07:00	00:01:00
11. P2f-2e	00:07:00	00:01:00
12. S2b-3c	00:07:00	00:01:00
13. S3h-3g	00:07:00	00:01:00
14. P4c-4d	00:07:00	00:01:00
15. K5i-6h	00:09:00	00:01:00
16. S7b-6c	00:09:00	00:01:00
17. K6h-7h	00:10:00	00:01:00
18. S6c-5d	00:10:00	00:02:00
19. S8h-7g	00:11:00	00:02:00
20. G6a-5b	00:11:00	00:08:00
21. P5g-5f	00:13:00	00:08:00
22. G4a-3b	00:13:00	00:13:00
23. S3g-4f	00:13:00	00:13:00
24. K5a-4b	00:13:00	00:13:00
25. P3f-3e	00:15:00	00:13:00
26. S5d-4c	00:15:00	00:14:00
27. P3ex3d	00:15:00	00:14:00
28. S4cx3d	00:15:00	00:15:00
29. P*3f	00:15:00	00:15:00
30. P7c-7d	00:15:00	00:16:00
31. G6i-6h	00:17:00	00:16:00
32. P8c-8d	00:17:00	00:33:00
33. S4f-3e	00:24:00	00:33:00



This position is very similar to the one that appeared in the third game, but there is a major difference. In the third game, Maruyama's knight was on 7c and the rook pawn still on 8c. This is a more attack-oriented position, because the knight can easily move into an attacking formation on 6e or 8e. However, if white is forced on the defense, the head of the knight is an important weakness. Maruyama won the third game with the attack minded formation, but after the opening the white position was considered worse, so he changes to a more defensive position in this game.

34. S3d-4c	00:24:00	00:33:00
35. N2i-3g	00:58:00	00:33:00
36. K4b-3a	00:58:00	01:44:00
37. P1g-1f	01:40:00	01:44:00
38. P8d-8e	01:40:00	02:09:00
39. P2e-2d	01:42:00	02:09:00
40. P2cx2d	01:42:00	02:10:00
41. S3ex2d	01:42:00	02:10:00
42. S3cx2d	01:42:00	02:11:00
43. R2hx2d	01:42:00	02:11:00
44. P*2c	01:42:00	02:15:00
45. R2d-2h	01:44:00	02:15:00
46. P8e-8f	01:44:00	03:03:00
47. S7gx8f	02:18:00	03:03:00
48. S*6e	02:18:00	03:06:00
49. B*4f	02:34:00	03:06:00
50. B*7c	02:34:00	03:59:00



A surprise to the press room, but it seems like Maruyama had little choice. After 50.N7c Bx6d G6c B4f the white position is unstable. Also, 50.Sx7f P\*7g S6e Bx6d B\*7c Bx7c+ Nx7c S\*6d and white has no good moves to defend.

51.S8f-7g 02:56:00 03:59:00  
52.P4d-4e 02:56:00 04:09:00  
53.B4f-5e! 03:23:00 04:09:00



The sealed move and a major surprise because black is going to lose this bishop and it is unclear if he can get enough compensation. This is easier to play when you are 3-1 ahead in a match, but Watanabe's courage and confidence is remarkable, as it was impossible to calculate that his attack would be powerful enough to compensate for the bishop.

54.P\*3c 03:23:00 04:12:00  
55.P\*2d 03:23:00 04:12:00  
56.P2cx2d 03:23:00 04:13:00  
57.R2hx2d 03:23:00 04:13:00  
58.P5c-5d 03:23:00 04:22:00  
59.P\*2c! 03:24:00 04:22:00



This is the vital move that keeps the black attack going. After 59.P\*2b P\*2c Px2a+ Kx2a black has nothing. Watanabe had seen this when he sealed 53.B5e, but he underestimated Maruyama's defensive skills.

60.P5dx5e 03:24:00 05:43:00  
61.S\*2b 03:24:00 05:43:00  
62.K3a-4a 03:24:00 05:44:00  
63.S2bx1a= 03:26:00 05:44:00  
64.P7d-7e 03:26:00 05:59:00  
65.P2c-2b+ 03:31:00 05:59:00  
66.P7ex7f 03:31:00 05:59:00  
67.S7g-8f 03:35:00 05:59:00  
68.P\*2c! 03:35:00 06:17:00



A very good defensive move that keeps the game very close. In the press room, some followers wondered if this game might end before noon on the second day (which would have been unprecedented) because the black attack looked so strong, but after 68.P\*2c nobody was sure anymore. Watanabe also admitted that he was surprised by how close the game had gotten.

69.+P2bx2c 03:39:00 06:17:00  
70.G3b-4b 03:39:00 06:20:00  
71.+P2c-1b 03:46:00 06:20:00

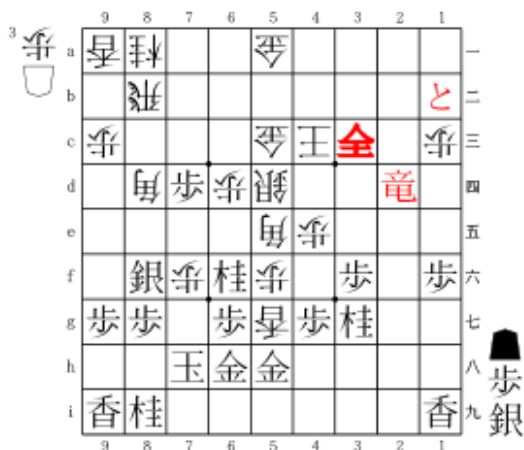
An alternative seems 71.+Px1c, but the post-mortem analysis showed that 72.P\*2c Rx2c+ S3b +R1b Nx1c is also unclear.

72.G5b-5a! 03:46:00 06:39:00



This move is just as important to Maruyama's defense as 68.P\*2c. The white king finds a rather safe haven in the middle of the board. The question is: will Watanabe be in time before he gets overrun by the counter attack?

73.R2dx2a+ 04:21:00 06:39:00  
 74.K4a-5b 04:21:00 06:39:00  
 75.G4i-5h 04:21:00 06:39:00  
 76.P5ex5f 04:21:00 07:00:00  
 77.L\*5e 04:42:00 07:00:00  
 78.S4c-5d 04:42:00 07:00:00  
 79.L5ex5d 04:46:00 07:00:00  
 80.S6ex5d 04:46:00 07:00:00  
 81.P\*5c 04:46:00 07:00:00  
 82.K5b-4c 04:46:00 07:10:00  
 83.+R2a-2d 04:51:00 07:10:00  
 84.B\*5e 04:51:00 07:46:00  
 85.N\*6f 04:52:00 07:46:00  
 86.G4bx5c 04:52:00 07:46:00  
 87.S1a-2b= 04:54:00 07:46:00  
 88.L\*5g 04:54:00 07:47:00  
 89.P\*7d 05:06:00 07:47:00  
 90.B7c-8d 05:06:00 07:49:00  
 91.S2bx3c+?! 05:08:00 07:49:00

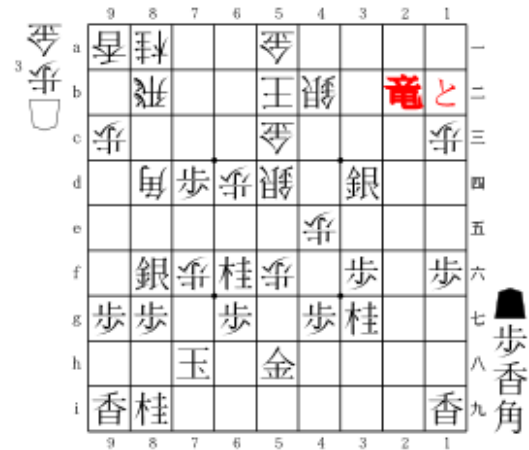


Very positive play as is his style, but Watanabe should probably have been a little more patient here and play 91.G4h instead.

92.B5ex3c 05:08:00 07:49:00  
 93.S\*3d 05:08:00 07:49:00  
 94.K4c-5b 05:08:00 07:49:00  
 95.+R2dx3c 05:10:00 07:49:00  
 96.L5gx5h+ 05:10:00 07:50:00  
 97.G6hx5h 05:10:00 07:50:00  
 98.S\*4b 05:10:00 07:55:00

At this point, Watanabe had a huge advantage in time. He still had 2 hours and 50 minutes left, while Maruyama was down to his last five minutes. This is important, because Watanabe realizes that the situation is more complicated than he thought and uses a lot of time for his next moves to try and find a win.

99.+R3c-2b 05:49:00 07:55:00



Played after 39 minutes.

100.P\*8e 05:49:00 07:55:00  
 101.B\*7a 06:17:00 07:55:00

Played after 28 minutes.

102.R8b-8c? 06:17:00 07:56:00

Watanabe was worried about 102.Px8f, which is better than 102.R8c. For example, 103.Bx8b+ Px8g+ Kx8g P\*8f Kx8f and the black king is also exposed. Not only Watanabe, but also the press room had analyzed this position extensively, but nobody could reach a conclusion. However, in general more variations led to a win for black, so Watanabe decided that this was his best option, especially considering that Maruyama was running out of time. It all pays off, because



there is a nice way to win for black after 102.R8c.

103.L\*4d! 06:42:00 07:56:00



Not so easy, but this is a mating threat. For example, 104.Px8f Lx4b+ Gx4b +Rx4b Kx4b Nx5d Gx5d S\*4c Rx4c Sx4c+ Kx4c S\*4d Gx4d R\*6c K3b +P2b and the passive token on 1b helps to mate the white king. Because of this mating threat, Watanabe was convinced that he had a won position here. Watanabe took 25 minutes for this move, but by taking a long time for three moves in a row he finally found a way to win so not only his attacking skills, but also his time management is shining in this game.

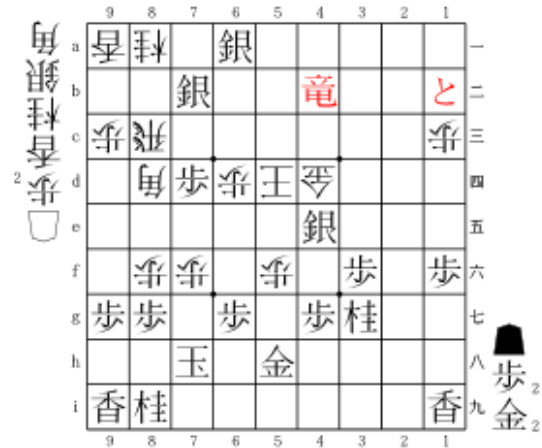
104.G5cx4d 06:42:00 07:59:00  
105.B7ax4d+ 06:42:00 07:59:00

Now there are no more worries that the white king escapes up the board.

106.G\*5c 06:42:00 07:59:00  
107.N6fx5d 06:57:00 07:59:00  
108.G5cx4d 06:57:00 07:59:00  
109.N5dx4b+ 06:57:00 07:59:00  
110.G5ax4b 06:57:00 07:59:00  
111.S\*7b 06:58:00 07:59:00  
112.P8ex8f 06:58:00 07:59:00  
113.S\*6a 06:58:00 07:59:00  
114.K5b-5c 06:58:00 07:59:00  
115.+R2bx4b 06:58:00 07:59:00  
116.K5c-5d 06:58:00 07:59:00

No choice. After 116.Kx4b G\*5b K3b G\*2b the token on 1b against plays a vital role in mating the white king.

117.S3dx4e 06:59:00 07:59:00  
Resigns 06:59:00 07:59:00



Simple mate after 118.Gx4e +Rx4e and also 118.K6e Sx5f Kx5f P\*5g Bx5g+ Gx5g Kx5g B\*6f K5h G\*4h leads to mate. Maruyama resigned here which ends his bid for the Ryu-O title. To be honest, this was a very one-sided match. Even the game Maruyama won could easily have been won by Watanabe as well. Watanabe wins his eight consecutive Ryu-O title and the way he did it makes you wonder who is going to take it away from him. He seems to be getting stronger every year, widening the gap between him and his rivals.

**Finale standing**  
**Watanabe – Maruyama 4-1**



## Summary

		Watanabe	Maruyama
2011-10-13/14	<a href="#">Watanabe - Maruyama 1-0</a>	1	0
2011-10-25/26	<a href="#">Maruyama - Watanabe 0-1</a>	2	0
2011-11-08/09	<a href="#">Watanabe - Maruyama 0-1</a>	2	1
2011-11-24/25	<a href="#">Maruyama - Watanabe 0-1</a>	3	1
2011-12-01/02	<a href="#">Watanabe - Maruyama 1-0</a>	4	1

## Amateur tournaments

### ESC / WOSC in Ludwigshafen / Germany

82 participants from 14 countries were competing from 14th of July to 17th of July in Ludwigshafen/Germany to crown the European champion and the winner of the World Open Shogi Championship.

A perfect organisation and varied events and social programs (with or without shogi) made this tournament for many players to a highlight in 2011.

European champion became Jean Fortin (France) for the third time in a row. He could beat Boris Mirnik (Germany) in the finale. Thomas Leiter (Germany) could reach the 3<sup>rd</sup> place, the 4<sup>th</sup> place went to Marc Theeuwes (Netherlands).



*View into the tournament hall*

The World Open Shogi Championship was dominated by Japanese players.

Here is the ranking:

1. Makoto Kawato (Japan)
2. Kimio Takahashi (Japan)
3. Yasuhiko Utsunomiya (Japan)
4. Thomas Leiter (Germany)

Beside these two main tournaments there have been some special tournaments (rapid shogi, young players open, starters cup) which attracted many participants.

The tournaments have been supported by four professional players.

Ladies 1. Dan Madoko KITAO and 6. Dan Katakami DAISUKE (on Thursday)

and 6. Dan Hiroharu SETO and 6. Dan Shohei TAKADA (during the whole tournaments) played handicap games, analyzed games and gave many hints to all interested shogi players.



*Analysis and discussions after the games*

You can find the complete coverage of the ESC / WOSC 2011 with results, lots of links and many photos on <http://www.shogi2011.eu> .

## International Shogi Forum in Rueil Malmaison / France

For the first time the International Shogi Forum took place outside Japan. The French Shogi Association was host of this event, which only takes place every three years. In Rueil Malmaison near Paris more than 80 players came together to play from 27th to 30th of October in different tournaments.

Here are the results:

ISF-tournament

1. Jean Fortin (France)
2. László Abuczki (Hungary)
3. Eric Cheymol (France)

Open tournament

1. Roberto Toshio Takashima (Brasil)
2. Adrien Levacic (France)
3. Yatsuhiko Utsunomiya (Japan)



*Amateur shogi players at work*

Some other tournaments have been organised (e.g. Dobutsu Shogi tournament), so that every Shogi enthusiast could indulge his passion.

One highlight surely has been the visit of shogi professionals.

Here is the impressive list:

MORIUCHI Toshiyuki (Meijin)

HABU Yoshiharu (Oi, Kisei)

AONO Teruichi (9. Dan)

HATEKEYAMA Naruyuki (7. Dan)

MASUDA Yuji (6. Dan)

INA Yusuke (6. Dan)

KITAO Madoka (Female 1. Dan)



*MORIUCHI Toshiyuki and HABU Yoshiharu at work  
(Merci à Fabien Osmont pour les photos)*

Beside handicap games Habu and Moriuchi played chess against French Grandmaster Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and furthermore Moriuchi played simultaneous shogi games against chess professionals Almira Skripchenko, Anish Giri and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave.

An impressive presentation of their abilities were shown by professional players Ina and Masuda who played a 'blind shogi game'.

You can find complete results, photos, links and notations of chess and shogi games here:

<http://isf.shogi.fr>

## Statistics

Here are a few statistical facts about the games of the title matches in 2011.

Sente wins	17 games	47,2 %
Gote wins	18 games	50,0 %
Sennichite	1 game	2,8 %

Opening	Sente wins	Gote wins	Sennichite
Double Static Rook	9	9	1
Static Rook - Ranging Rook	4	5	
Ranging Rook – Static Rook	4	1	
Double Ranging Rook		3	

## Last but not least ...

... some facts, figures and complete useless statistical informations, collected in our

## Shogi Charts

36 games, 4234 moves, thousands of questions.

Here are the answers...

## Top 10 Winning percentage ...

lists the players with the best quotient of wins to losses up to the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2011.

Position	Name	# of games	# of wins	# of losses	Winning percentage %
1	Goda	12	9	3	75,00
2	Watanabe	32	22	10	68,75
3	Sato A	3	2	1	66,67
	Itodani	3	2	1	66,67
5	Habu	39	24	14	63,16
6	Fujii	8	5	3	62,50
7	Sato Y	20	12	8	60,00
	Toyama	5	3	2	60,00
8	Toyoshima	18	10	8	55,56
10	Yashiki	8	4	4	50,00
	Tanigawa	12	6	6	50,00
	Murayama	4	2	2	50,00
	Tobe	4	2	2	50,00



**Top 10 shogi24.com-rating ...**

lists the players with the best rating up to the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2011 (published on [www.shogi24.com](http://www.shogi24.com))

Position	Name	# of games	Rating
1	Watanabe	32	2066
2	Habu	39	2047
3	Goda	12	2044
4	Sato Y	20	2026
5	Fujii	8	2016
6	Toyoshima	18	2015
7	Sato A	3	2011
8	Toyama	5	2009
	Itodani	3	2009
10	Yashiki	8	2005

**Top 11 moves ...**

lists the most loved moves of the professionals in the title match games

Position	Move	# of games
1	P3c-3d	36
	P7g-7f	36
3	P2g-2f	30
4	P3g-3f	28
5	P8c-8d	25
6	G4a-3b	24
7	P7c-7d	23
8	G6i-7h	22
	P2f-2e	22
	P6c-6d	22
	P8d-8e	22



**Top 14 used pieces ...**

lists the most moved and dropped pieces

Position	Piece	# of moves
1	P Pawn	1186
2	S Silver	738
3	G Gold	469
4	R Rook	446
5	B Bishop	389
6	K King	371
7	N Knight	267
8	L Lance	110
9	+B Horse	96
10	+R Dragon	82
11	+P Token	36
12	+S promoted Silver	23
13	+N promoted Knight	16
14	+L promoted Lance	2

**Top 7 dropped pieces...**

lists the most dropped pieces

Position	Piece	# of drops
1	P Pawn	324
2	S Silver	134
3	B Bishop	112
4	N Knight	98
5	G Gold	76
6	R Rook	59
7	L Lance	47

**Top 6 promoted pieces ...**

lists the most promoted pieces

Position	Piece	# of promotions
1	B Bishop	61
2	P Pawn	54
3	R Rook	43
4	N Knight	36
5	S Silver	33
6	L Lance	9