

# *Two victories at the beginning of the Candidates for the Crown of Chess*



Photo: FIDE

Havana, June 18 (RHC)-- Two wins and a couple of draws marked the beginning of the Candidates for the World Chess Crown Tournament, the most awaited event of the year by the followers of the Science Game and which had in its opening a moment dedicated to Cuban Jose Raul Capablanca.

In the Palacio de la Santoña in Madrid, the Russian Ian Nepomniatchi and the American Fabiano Caruana sailed with better luck this Friday, the latter facing his compatriot Hikaru Nakamura in response to an obligatory "draw" to avoid clashes between players from the same country in decisive rounds.

This was the 46th encounter between the two at classical pace and, according to the specialists of the International Chess Federation (Fide), in all the most recent encounters the victory corresponded to

Caruana. On this occasion, it was not the exception and the four times assistant to candidate tournaments won.

The most recent challenger of the current universal monarch Magnus Carlsen, Nepomniatchi, who took advantage of the poor form shown by the Chinese Liren Ding and triumphed despite carrying black pieces, also opened his way through the wide door.

According to the chronicle of Leontxo García, in El País, the COVID-19 pandemic has "taken" out of his usual form the Asian, who arrived in the Spanish capital just three days before the start of the event and clearly destabilized by the recent periods of confinement in his country.

With the signing of peace - though not without struggle - the Polish Jan-Krzysztof Duda shook hands with the Hungarian Richard Rapport, and the Azeri Teimour Radjabov with the French-Iranian Alireza Firouzja.

The latter two engaged in a generational duel, 35 years against 18, more than six hours of combat with sacrifices included, but in the end there was no winner and for some specialists it was the most interesting game of the day.

The premiere of one of the music videos dedicated to chess by the Chilean singer Juga was part of the opening of the competition, and the South American herself later paid tribute to the brilliant Cuban Jose Raul Capablanca, the third world champion in history and one of her recurrent sources of inspiration.

The tournament will continue this Saturday with the matches between Rapport-Firouzja, Nakamura-Radjabov, Nepomniachtchi-Caruana and Duda-Ding.

The competition, scheduled for a double round-robin, will last until July 4 and will produce Carlsen's challenger for the match scheduled for early 2023.

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