CHESS 27 April, 2024 David Ellis ellisd19@bigpond.com 043979860

 

**Fabiano Caruana vs**

**Ian Nepomniachtchi**

(Candidates 2024, Rd 14)

Black has a surprise

drawing line.

*Caruana (top & Nepo)*

 **‘THE KIDS ARE TAKING OVER’**

 The heading is a pre-season quote by Eagles coach Adam Simpson and would be appropriate to the **Candidates** if expressed in the singular. In Round 12, with three rounds to go in an amazingly exciting Candidates four players, three well-established players and one teenager, were all in with a winning chance and the opportunity to challenge Ding Liren for the world title. Leader **Ian Nepomniachtchi**, winner of the previous two Candidates, drew his game with Nijat Abasov and was joined on 7.5 by **Hikaru Nakamura** and 17 year old **Gukesh Dommaraju** who both won their games while another previous Candidates winner **Fabiano Caruana** also won to be a mere half point behind.

 Round 13 saw **Gukesh** emerge as sole leader after

avenging an earlier loss to Alireza Firouzja. **Nepo**

**vs Nakamura** was drawn and they were joined in

second place by **Caruana** who defeated

Praggnanandhaa.

 Round 14, the final round, had the dream pairing

of **Nakamura vs Gukesh** and **Caruana vs Nepo**.

**Nakamura** was unable to make any headway with

the game finishing with just kings while **Caruana**

with queen and rook against queen and knight *Gukesh*

missed a number of chances to win before conceding a draw after 109 moves (Q + a & b pawns vs Q + b pawn) leaving **Gukesh** the tournament winner.

 **Final scores**: Gukesh 9/14, Nepo (the only unbeaten player), Nakamura, Caruana 8.5, Praggnanandhaa 7, Vidit 6, Firouzja 5, Abasov 3. Abasov failed to win a game, the second player to do so after Anish Giri drew all 14 games in 2016.

**SOLUTION**: 1…Nd2+ 2,Kc2 Qg6+!! 3.Kxd2 Qd6+ and although White can win the dangerous h pawn he cannot escape a perpetual check. Nepo missed this chance but in an endgame with a number of errors by both sides he still managed to draw the game.