

Anand draws 12th round, edges closer to world title

India's Viswanathan Anand played out a quick draw with Russian Peter Svidler and stayed a point ahead of the pack at the end of the 12th round of the World Chess Championships here.

The 36-year-old grandmaster, already world number one in the ratings, is now just two rounds away from being crowned the world champion.

With an aggregate of eight points from 12 rounds, he is a full point clear of his nearest rival, Israel's Boris Gelfand, who at 39 is the oldest player in the field.

Interestingly, while Anand drew his game, the other three games produced results with Gelfand beating Armenian Levon Aronian with black to narrow the gap to the leader to just one point and defending champion Vladimir Kramnik of Russia defeating Peter Leko of Hungary to step into the third slot another half a point behind.

So there are upset possibilities in the final two rounds Friday and Saturday.

Anand and Svidler were engaged in Ruy Lopez closed with neither player managing any noticeable advantage from the opening. After just 22 moves, Anand, playing with black, agreed to a draw and split the point.

Kramnik outplayed Leko in 39 moves from a Catalan opening to move to sole third, while Gelfand, who had black pieces, outclassed Aronian in 40 moves from anti-Meran, which has been seen frequently at these championships.

In another game, Russian Alexander Morozevich beat compatriot Alexander Grischuk.

Anand will again have black pieces when he clashes with Grischuk in 13th round. In the 14th and final round, he plays with white pieces against Leko.

Round 13 pairings: Aronian v Svidler; Gelfand v Kramnik; Grischuk v Anand; Leko v Morozevich.

Standings after Round 12: 1. Anand 8.0; 2. Gelfand 7.0; 3. Kramnik 6.5; 4. Leko, Morozevich and Aronian 5.5; 7. Svidler and Grischuk 5.0

Moves of Anand-Svidler Round 12 game 1.e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. O-O Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 O-O 8. h3 Bb7 9. d3 Re8 10. a4 h6 11. axb5 axb5 12. Rxa8 Bxa8 13. c3 Bf8 14. d4 d6 15. d5 Na5 16. Ba2 c6 17. Na3 Qc7 18. Qe2 cxd5 19. Nxb5 Qd7 20. exd5 Bxd5 21. Bxd5 Nxd5 22. Rd1 Nf6 1/2-1/2

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