


CHESS HORIZONS

**2006 NorthEast
Winter Getaway**



**GM Annotations
by Ivanov,
Christiansen,
& Kosteniuk**

**Harry Nelson
Pillsbury
Historical
Markers**

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Northeast Winter Getaway

George Mirijanian

Grandmaster Larry Christiansen of Cambridge, MA, dominated the field at the NorthEast Chess Winter Getaway tournament, held Jan. 27-29, 2006, at the Radisson Hotel in Marlborough, MA. The 49-year-old Riverside, California native, who has been a GM since 1977, captured first place in an Open section field of 19 players with a score of 4½-½.

Taking second place with a 4-1 tally was GM Nick deFirmian of New York, after a quick draw with Christiansen in the final round. Tied for 3rd-5th place with 3½-1½ results were GM Alexander Ivanov of Newton, MA (who drew deFirmian in the third round but lost a key game to Christiansen in the fourth), GM Sergey Kudrin of Stamford, CT, and IM Igor Foygel of Brookline, MA.

Christiansen notched a crucial win over his fellow Bay State competitor as follows:

White: Larry Christiansen (2633)

Black: Alexander Ivanov (2641)

Nimzo-Indian Defense [E20]

Round 4, Jan. 29, 2006

Notes by Christiansen

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Nf3 c5 5.g3

In his book *Chess: Tactics and Strategy*, author Graham Burgess writes that Kasparov “popularized the idea of playing 4.Nf3 and meeting 4...c5 with 5.g3.



Alexander Ivanov

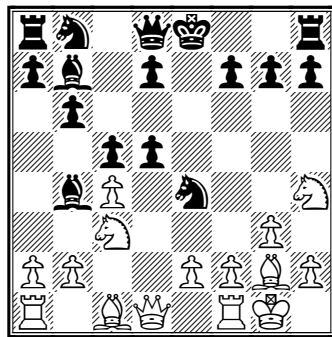


Larry Christiansen

However, this went out of fashion in the late 1980s, since good methods based on central counterplay, were found for Black.” (GM)

5...b6 6.Bg2 Bb7

This position is no stranger to Ivanov, as he has faced it at least twice as Black in previous encounters in Minsk 1985, when he reached it against Alexander Panchenko and Zurab Azmaiparashvili. In both those games, White continued with 7.0-0. But Christiansen here opts for a move that was seen, among others, in Timman-Korchnoi, Tilburg 1985. (GM) **7.d5! exd5 8.Nh4 Ne4 9.0-0**



Timman-Korchnoi continued 9.Bxe4 Bxc3+ 10.bxc3 dxe4 11.Qd6 Qf6 12.Qxf6 gxf6 and Black eventually won after 52 moves. (GM)

9...Nxc3 10.bxc3 Bxc3 11.Rb1

11.Bxd5 Bxd5 12.Qxd5 Bxa1 13.Qe4+ Qe7 14.Qxa8 0-0 15.Qxa7 Qxe2 16.Bf4 Nc6 17.Qxd7 looks roughly equal.

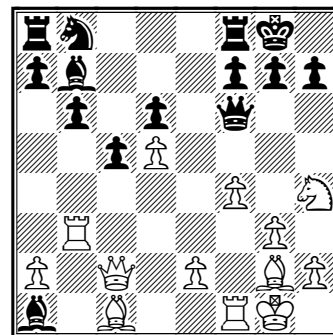
11...Qf6

11...0-0 12.Nf5 Qf6 13.Ne3! gives White a nice game with plenty of compensation for the pawn.

12.Rb3 0-0 13.Qc2 Be5 14.f4 Ba1?

14...Bd4+!? 15.e3 dxc4 16.Bxb7 cxb3 17.Qxb3 Nc6 18.Bxa8 Rxa8 19.exd4 Qxd4+ 20.Be3 Qe4 21.Bf2 is unclear, but probably it is Black’s most reliable option.

15.cxd5 d6?



15...c4! should give Black good play: 16.Qxc4 Rc8 17.Qd3 Ba6 looks promising for Black; White is off-balance.

16.g4!

This assures White a vicious, probably decisive attack no matter the reply. The rook on b3 transfers to the h-file and joins the entire white army in a concentrated assault on Black and possibly his king.

16...Qxh4

The alternative was 16...g6 17.g5 Qe7 18.f5 Nd7 19.f6 Qe8 20.Rh3 and Black lacks a good answer to the pending 21.Nf5.

17.Rh3 Qxh3 18.Bxh3 Bxd5 19.Be3 Bf6 20.Rd1 Bb7 21.g5 Bd8 22.Bf5 g6 23.Be4 Nc6 24.Rxd6?

24.Qa4 should win quickly.

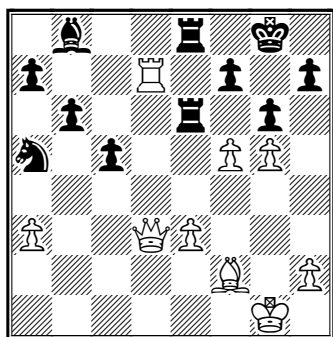
24...Nb4 25.Qb1 Bxe4 26.Qxe4 Bc7 27.Rd7 Rae8 28.Qf3 Bb8 29.a3 Nc6 30.Bf2 Re6 31.e3 Rc8 32.Qd5 Rce8 33.Qd3

Black is tied up while White can calmly strengthen his grip with Kg2, h4-h5, and so forth. The next move shortens the inevitable.

33...Na5 34.f5!

MACA AUCTION OF CHESS BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

2:30-4:30 p.m. Saturday, May 27,
at The Hotel Marlborough,
75 Felton St., Marlborough, MA



34...Re5 35.Bg3 c4

Or 35...Rxe3 36.Qxe3 Rxe3 37.Rd8+ Kg7 38.f6 mate.

36.Qd4 gxf5 37.Bxe5 Bxe5 38.Qd5 Re6 39.Rd8+ Kg7 40.Qa8 Kg6 41.Rg8+ Kh5 42.Qf3+ 1-0

White: Larry Eldridge (1723)

Black: Maxwell Schwartz (1832)

2006 Winter Getaway U2100 Section

Notes by Eldridge & Foygel [IF]

This game was played in the first round. Both Schwartz and I were paired against people who didn't show, but we agreed to the TD's suggestion of playing each other rather than take the free full point. He is a young guy from New Jersey and a student at Hampshire College.

After our draw, we went on to identical 3.0 point scores (2 wins, 1 loss, 1 draw, and 1 half-point bye), and wound up tying for second and third places U1900, getting \$150 each. My notes are not really annotations as much as comments about my thoughts and assessment of the positions.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 Qb6 5.a3

The obvious aim of Black's move order is to trade off the light-squared bishop his biggest problem piece in most lines of the French. I remembered it is sometimes called the Wade Finesse after British IM Robert Wade who specialized in it but I couldn't recall how White is supposed to play against it, so I just decided to make it unpromising for him to carry out his plan.

The move-order is very important in the opening! It is better to play 5.Nf3 first and than after 5...Nc6 6.a3 or if 5...Bd7 then 6.Be2 Bb5 7.c4! is considered better for White. [IF]

5...Bd7 6.b4 cxd4 7.cxd4 Ne7

Tacitly agreeing that he would now lose too much time moving his bishop

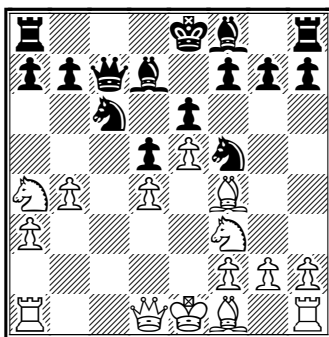
twice, and getting his queen kicked around in the bargain; plus preparing to pressure my d-pawn instead.

Neither player plays accurately. Black misses ...Bb5 here and on the next move, while White did not play 7.Nc3. [IF]

8.Nf3 Nf5 9.Nc3

I didn't want to "bury" my bishop on b2 or offer it up for trade on e3 so I opted to "defend" the d-pawn tactically.

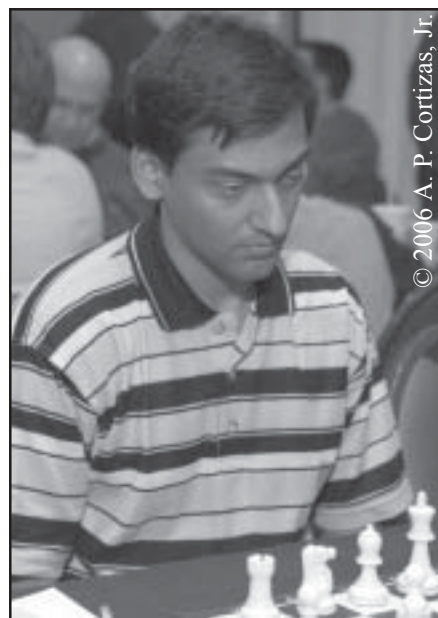
9...Nc6 10.Na4 Qc7 11.Bf4



An interesting idea! I would prefer 11.Bb2 "burying" the bishop. White's main idea in the Advance French is to secure the center (d4) and only then start to attack! [IF]

11...Nc6xd4 12.Nxd4 Nxd4 13.Rc1 Bxa4 14.Qxa4+

Very interesting was 14.Rxc7! Bxd1 15.Kxd1 and White's attack seems very strong (after Be3 and Bb5) even without queens! White may have been following a previously calculated variation, but it is necessary to re-check your calculations



Sathiyarayan Vijayaraghavan

each move. You might find something you missed beforehand! [IF]

14...Qd7 15.b5 Nf5 16.Rc7

A tempting move, but probably not the best. The simple 16.Bd3! keeps the black king in the center, plus allows White to castle and bring another rook into the game. [IF]

16...Qxc7 17.b6+ Qc6 18.Bb5 Nd4 19.Bxc6+ Nxc6

The smoke has cleared and White has a Q for R N and P – about even materially but I thought I had the better chances in this particular position.

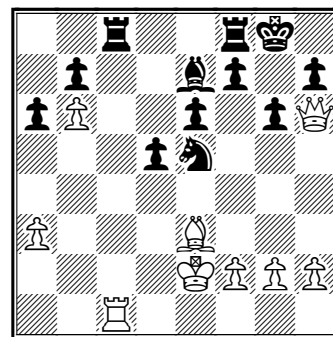
White should have carefully calculated the tactical consequences that began on 11.Bf4 and ended with 18...Nd4!. Is this possible for Class player? As an experienced chess teacher I will tell you "yes." There are 8 moves, but all of them are forcing moves! [IF]

20.Be3 a6 21.Ke2

With a queen against his "small arms fire" I thought my king was safe in the center and better positioned there for end game play so I opted to get my rook into the game this way rather than by castling – a decision I came to regret!

A mistake! Material is practically even and after castling Black should be OK. White should have played 21.0-0 Be7 22.Qg4 g6 23.Bh6 to try to prevent Black from connecting his rooks. [IF]

21...Be7 22.Rc1 Rc8 23.Qg4 g6 24.Qf4 0-0 25.Qh6 Nxe5



The first of several surprises. I had calculated that he couldn't do this without losing material.

After 25...Rfd8, I prefer Black. [IF]

26.Bd4 Bf6 27.Rxc8 Rxc8 28.Qf4

Winning a piece – or so I thought.

28...Rc4

But now I saw that after the bishop trade the knight will be immune because of my misplaced king (Oh if only I had



castled!). Still a queen is a queen as Bobby Fischer liked to say and mine was ready to go marauding behind enemy lines so I was still pretty optimistic.

29.Qxf6 Rxd4 30.Qd8+ Kg7 31.Qb8

Again winning material – or so I thought! My Q was safe from danger on the c-file so when he ran out of checks he'd still have the same problem: a N and P both under fire.

31...Re4+ 32.Kd1 Rd4+ 33.Kc2 Rc4+ 34.Kb3 Nd3!

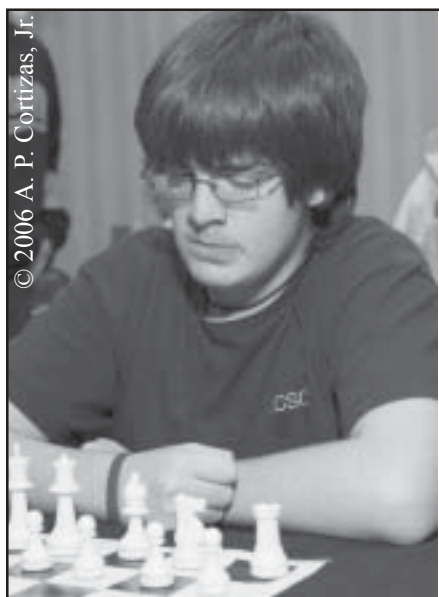
Another surprise I had overlooked, still preventing me from taking the pawn and gaining time to defend it.

35.Ka2 Nc5 36.Qe5+ Kg8 37.Qb8+ Kg7 ½-½

In mutual time pressure we agreed to a draw which at this point I was happy to get as Black's material advantage and center pawns were beginning to look ominous.

Definitely an exciting game! The three most important lessons to be learned are: calculation, calculation and calculation! Try to calculate all forcing moves, for you and your opponent, then double-check your calculations after each move. If Larry had done this, he might have found 14.Rc7! or 16.Bd3! It's even harder to correctly evaluate the resulting positions, as White did not have the better chances after 19...Nc6. As they say, "Chess is 99% calculation!" [IF]

Christopher Williams of Brighton, MA, posted a perfect 5-0 to win the Un-



Chris Williams

der 2100 section, where 27 players competed. Matthew Meredith of CT finished second with a 4-1 tally, while Muharrem Brahimaj of Worcester, MA, Martin Garcia of CT and the peripatetic Robert Feldstein of Brooklyn, NY, tied for 3rd-5th place with scores of 3½-1½.

In the 37-player Under 1700 section, Justin Rios of RI and Sathiyarayan Vijayaraghavan of TX tied for 1st-2nd place with 4½-½ results. Tied for 3rd-4th place with 4-1 tallies were Joshua Haunstrup of Brighton, MA, and Guenson Lotin of Dorchester, MA.

Jason Anshewitz of Weymouth scored 4½-½ to capture first place in the Under 1300 section, where only 8 players competed. Christopher Garos of Brighton, MA, finished second with a 4-1 performance, while Abraham Shemesh of CT took third place with a 3-2 score.

The 91-player event was single-handedly directed by Ken Ballou of Framingham, MA, for the sponsoring NorthEast Chess Association and organizer Severine Wamala of Lowell, MA.

Joshua Haunstrup

The 2006 Northeast Chess Winter Getaway was set to be a remarkable New England event from the start because of the exceptionally strong turnout in the open section. GM's Alexander Ivanov, Larry Christiansen, Nick de Firmian, and Sergey Kudrin battled it out with IM's Joshua Friedel and Igor Foygel as well as with a host of other National Masters, including New England veterans William Kelleher and Paul MacIntyre.

Being a mere mortal myself, it is always a great inspiration to watch the professionals in action and the games did not disappoint. Ivanov opened the bloodletting on Friday night with a brutal win over MacIntyre. Freidel defeated Kudrin on the white side of a chaotic Yugoslav Dragon in which the Connecticut fire breather appeared to pull out all of the stops, including a signature exchange sacrifice, and still lost.

The star of the event, though, was GM Christiansen, who cruised to 4½ points and clear first place, beating Ivanov in a wild 4th round game on Sunday morning that all but clinched his victory in the tournament. De Firmian took second

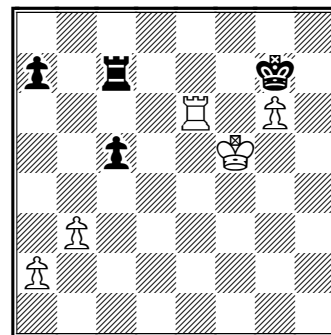


Joshua Haunstrup

prize with 4 points and third place was shared by Ivanov, Kudrin, and Foygel with 3½ each.

Chris Williams took the U2100 field by storm, winning all five of his encounters. He will finally be over 2200 when the next supplement comes out, sparing his overmatched opponents from further defeats. Matthew Meredith of CT took second prize in the section with 4 points and third place was split four ways among Muharrem Brahimaj, Martin Garcia, Robert Feldstein, and Valentin Levin.

I participated in the U1700 section, which had the largest turnout with thirty-seven players. As is too often the case, I stumbled my way out of the gates on Friday night with an uninspired game that I probably should have lost. My opponent, Edward Stromski of New Hampshire, had a provisional rating that was 300 points lower than my own rating (1367 and 1657 respectively), but he turned in a solid performance with the white pieces and was nursing a one pawn advantage before blundering on successive turns.



In this position, Stromski played **45.Rf6**, probably hoping to follow up

with Rf7+ and a relatively simple win. This overlooked the reply **45...c4**, threatening **46...Rc5+**, winning the white rook. It was still possible for White to play **46.Rd6** or **46.Re6**, after which **46...Rc5+** **47.Kf4 cxb3** **48.axb3 Rb5** is about equal. Play instead continued **46.bxc4 Rc5+** **47.Ke6 Rc6+** **48.Kd7 Rxf6** **49.c5** at which point White is quite lost, but I couldn't find the correct continuation for the life of me and played the silly **49...Kxg6**, which quickly concluded the game in a draw. The correct move was either **49...Ra6** or **49...Rf2**, because after the inevitable **Rxc8, Kxc8**, White is unable to stop the advance of the a-pawn. I found this plan some minutes after the game and was still cursing the oversight when I went to bed. Such is the nature of chess sometimes.

After a reasonable win with the white pieces Saturday morning, I had another disappointing draw in the third game when I was unable to convert a structural advantage in the endgame. Rook endings can be incredibly frustrating when you are trying to make progress. I went to bed disgruntled again, but I was refreshed and relaxed on Sunday morning, and turned in one of my more amusing performances of the tournament.

White: Joshua Haunstrup (1657)
Black: Steven Bixby (1481)
Northeast Winter Getaway (4) [B43]

White: Joshua Haunstrup (1657)

Black: Steven Bixby (1481)

Northeast Winter Getaway (4) [B43]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.Nc3 Qc7 6.Bd3 Nc6

I find that the Kan Sicilian is increasingly popular in tournament circles – perhaps its positional nature is attractive. It can be a slippery system to come to grips with, so I had booked up on the variations before this tournament. A lot of good it did me. Bixby had already side-stepped my knowledge here by move 6, offering me a transposition to a line of the Taimanov (7.Be3) that I don't like. Confronted by something unfamiliar, I chose to be conservative and retreated my knight, but in a few moves I was kicking myself, as I felt that **7.Nxc6** (apparently the main line continuation) would have been stronger. (sigh)



Nika Duval

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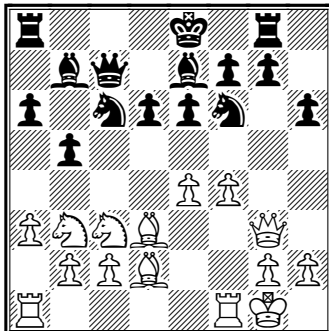
7.Nb3 h6?!

This move just loses some time.

8.a3 Nf6 9.0-0 b5

While this move is often an integral part of Black's counter play in the Kan, here it is a bit risky, since Black has already spent time moving his h-pawn. There is the danger that he will simply fall too far behind in development.

10.f4 d6 11.Qf3 Bb7 12.Bd2 Be7 13.Qg3 Rg8!?



Though it looks kind of crazy, this move is actually not bad and is a continuation I had hoped to avoid. After **13...0-0 14.f5 Kh8 15.fxe6 fxe6** Black's king protection is a little threadbare, though his position is still very solid.

14.f5 g5?

Bixby's best here was undoubtedly **14...Ne5!**, cementing his steed in a dominant outpost in the middle of the board and undermining the coordination of

Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.

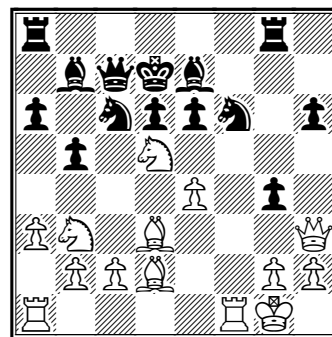
Thomas Edison

White's pieces. The text move seems aggressive instinctively, but it actually just weakens the h6-square, costing Black a pawn.

15.fxe6 fxe6 16.Qh3! Kd7 17.Nd5

This cute cheap shot had not been my original plan after **16.Qh3**, but I realized that snatching on h6 might leave my own monarch feeling a little chilly, and I was eyeing faulty continuations like **17...Nxd5 18.exd5**, which looked very promising. I had seen Bixby's solid reply, but I grew lazy and figured I would calculate the complications when I got there.

17...g4



Yes, and here we were. I initially thought that I could bag the exchange with **18.Nxc7 gxh3 19.Nxa8 Rxc7** **20.Kh1**, but the more I looked at it, the less I liked it. Black's light-squared bishop would be a real nuisance to my king and I would have to defend desperately for some time. It looked uncomfortable. Then I noticed the horrifying follow up move **20...Ng4** and I shelved the whole variation. Perhaps this was a bit hasty, but it still seems like a sound judgment. Fritz offers **21.Nb6+ Kc7 22.Bf4 Kxb6 23.Rf3 Nce5 24.Bxe5 Nxe5 25.Rxh3 Nxd3 26.cxd3 Rxb2** with a good game for Black, who has the two bishops and a pawn for the exchange.

18.Nxf6+ Bxf6 19.Qxh6

Here I was expecting something like **19...Bxb2 20.Rf7+ Ne7 21.Raf1** with a depressingly level position. Instead, Bixby played a howler of a move that was, nevertheless, instinctive.

19...Qb6+? 20.Be3 Rh8

Now, with the piece virtually in hand, I was thrown off by my opponent's accurate continuation and in the confusion

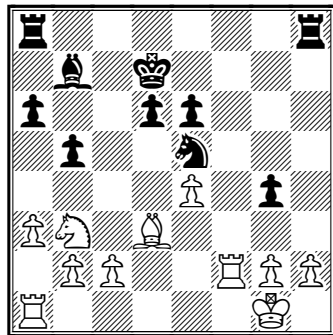


of the moment, I chose the worst of the three candidate moves.

21.Qxf6??

Instead 21.Bxb6 Rxh6 22.Be3 continues to gobble material, and 21.Qf4 is even more decisive.

21...Qxe3+ 22.Qf2 Qxf2 23.Rxf2 Ne5



The dust has settled after our traded blunders and the position again looks remarkably level. I am up a pawn, but the beastly equestrian warrior on e5 is a dominant force and I remember having the sinking feeling that this game was headed toward a prolonged endgame struggle that would probably conclude peacefully.

24.Na5 Kc7 25.Rf6 Bc8 26.Nb3

I was hoping to mess up the coordination of the black pieces by piling up on the e6-square. I knew that if I drifted at all, Bixby would quickly double rooks on the h-file and cause me headaches, as g3 is impossible due to the ugly threat of Nf6+.

26...Nxd3??

Without the support of this knight the black position crumbles to dust in no time. I don't know what motivated this blunder, but it added a certain comical tone to the struggle. After trading gaffs, Black now offers an invitation to a second round of mistakes, but this time I declined.

27.cxd3 e5 28.Rc1+ Kd7 29.Rf7+ Kd8 30.Na5 Be6 31.Nc6+ Ke8 32.Re7+ Kf8 33.Rxe6 Rh7 34.Rf1+ Kg7 35.Rxd6 Rah8 36.Rd7+ Kg6 37.Nxe5+ Kh5 38.Rf5+1-0

Heading into the final round on Sunday evening, I was disappointed to find that I was essentially out of the running for first place in the U1700 section – after all, I am not always so skillful (and lucky!) to go four rounds without a loss.

I still had a clear shot at third prize though, and I was pleased to find that I was paired with Brian J. Smith of Connecticut, against whom I had blown a perfectly good game in the last round of the previous Getaway event. I was to have Black, but nonetheless, it was time for revenge! The game went pretty smoothly, unlike the unevenness of the morning, and I was already nursing a positional advantage when an argument broke out on the board next to us.

It is usually very jarring when people start talking in the midst of a tournament, but this was downright hilarious. Up by a rook, Philip Noll was in the process of converting a win when he apparently accidentally knocked over his king. His opponent, John Twombly, asserted that he had resigned and they proceeded to argue about it.

Even after tournament director Ken Ballou arrived to sort things out, the confusion continued, as it was unclear if Noll had in fact touched his king and was therefore obliged to move it, or if he had just brushed it while moving another piece. The dispute was eventually resolved and play continued on the board next to me while I settled back to converting my own advantage.

After the game though, when Twombly resigned, he remarked to Noll

that past opponents had forced *him* to concede defeat for equivalent flick-of-the-hand mistakes. If only winning were that simple. In a recent encounter with Alexander Paphitis, I watched as my opponent accidentally knocked his king over three separate times – and still I lost the game!

I won my last round game at the Getaway but ultimately only split third place with Guenson Lotin – who had a mysterious bye in the last round that pushed him over the top. We both finished with 4 points. First and second prize in the U1700 section were shared by Justin Rios of Rhode Island and Sathiyarayan Vijayaraghavan of Texas with 4½ points each. Both players put in strong showings, beating Mark Kaprielian and John Terrall respectively in the last round to clinch their prizes.

The U1300 section was won by Jason Anshewitz with 4½ points, while Christopher Garos finished second with 4 points, and Abraham Shemesh took third place with 3.

Feeling invigorated after the round, I searched the Tournament Director table for information about the next upcoming events, only to learn from organizer Severine Wamala that there won't be any further Northeast Chess Getaways until next November. Apparently he's taking a break. I was struck by the feeling that Massachusetts players have really been lucky to have Wamala's tournaments for five years running and I certainly hope there are more to come!

Past Winter Getaway Champions

- 2005: GM Sergey Kudrin, GM Alexander Ivanov
 - 2004: GM Alexander Ivanov
 - 2003: GM Sergey Kudrin
 - 2002: GM Ildar Ibragimov, GM Sergey Kudrin
 - 2001: GM Larry Christiansen, GM Alexander Ivanov, GM Sergey Kudrin
- (Compiled by G. Mirijanian)



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Nicholas Meredith