

CHESS HORIZONS



MACA Scholastics

Vigorito on Chess

Bobby Fischer
1943-2008

April - June 2008

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The Massachusetts Chess Association is an educational non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote chess in Massachusetts and represent the interest of chess players within the state to the governing body of chess in the United States, **The United States Chess Federation (USCF)**.

As part of its role as a state organization, MACA has programs in place to support the existing chess community as well as promote chess among schools and the general public. Highlights of these programs are:



Providing at least four major tournaments each year:

Massachusetts Open (State Championship)
Massachusetts Game/60 Championship
Greater Boston Open
Harry Nelson Pillsbury Memorial



Running a scholastic program, which consists of a series of tournaments to determine the state's scholastic champions as well as "warm up" tournaments throughout the year. Free boards and sets are provided to schools and clubs through MACA's **Living Memorial Chess Fund (LMCF)**.

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Promotion and development of chess in correctional institutions through our Prison Chess program.

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Ivanov Annotates

Alexander Ivanov

The Bermuda Open took place February 7-11, 2008. Alexander Ivanov won the trophy and the return trip in a blitz play-off against Nick De Firmian (all the games were drawn, but De Firmian was white in the Armageddon game).

White: Ivanov, A (2616)

Black: Ippolito D (2482)

Bermuda Open (5), 10.02.2008 [D34]

1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 c5 3.c4 e6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.d4

For years my wife has been urging me to play the Closed Openings; maybe it's time to follow her advice?

5...Nf6 6.Bg2 Nc6 7.0-0 Be7 8.Nc3 0-0 9.Bg5 cxd4 10.Nxd4 h6 11.Be3 Re8 12.Qa4

More common is 12.Qb3 or 12.Rc1.

12...Bd7 13.Rad1 Na5?!

This is Black's best answer to 12.Qb3, when, after 13.Qc2, the black bishop gets to the active square g4. Here the inclusion of Rd1 and Bd7 favors White, since the black d5-pawn is weak. Better was 13...Nb4 14.Qb3 a5.

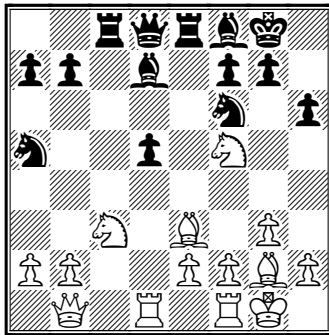
14.Qc2 Rc8 15.Nf5

15.Qb1!? Nc4 16.Nxd5 Nxd5 17.Bxd5 Qb6±.

15...Bf8

After 15...Bb4, White can grab the pawn: 16.Bxd5!?± which, as it turns out, has occurred in several games.

16.Qb1?!



Here again the best was 16.Bxd5!? Nc4± (16...Re5 17.Nxh6+ gxh6 18.Qg6+±; 16...Nxd5 17.Rxd5 Nc4

Blanco-Medina, Isla Guitart 1994 18.Bxa7±) 17.Qb3 (17.Bxc4 Rxc4 18.Qd3 Qc8∞; 17.Bxa7 Qa5 18.Be3 Nxe3 19.Nxe3 Rxe3 20.fxe3 Nxd5 21.Qb3 Rxc3 22.bxc3 Be6∞) 17...Nxd5 18.Rxd5 Re5± Now Black defends the d5-pawn and the position looks balanced.

16...Be6 17.Nd4

17.Bxa7?! b6 18.Nd4 Re7 19.Ncb5 Nc6 20.Nxc6 Rxc6 21.e4 Rc5 22.cxd5 Bg4±.

17...Nc4 18.Bc1 Qb6

18...Bb4!? 19.Ncb5 a6 20.Nxe6 fxe6 21.Nd4 Qe7=.

19.b3 Ne5 20.Bb2 Qa5

20...Bb4 21.Qa1 Qa5 22.Nxe6 Bxc3 (22...fxe6? 23.Nxd5!±) 23.Nf4±.

21.Nxe6

21.Qa1 Bg4!? (21...Bb4 22.Nxe6 Bxc3 23.Nf4±) 22.h3 Bb4!?!∞.

21...fxe6 22.Qa1 Ned7

During the game this looked dubious, since after White's next move the d-file opens and the Nd7 comes under attack from the white Rd1. Still, Fritz shows things are not that simple. During the game I thought 22...Nc6!? was Black's best option. The analysis shows the position is about equal after 23.e3 (23.e4?! d4 24.Ne2 e5 25.f4 Bc5∞) 23...Ba3 24.Bxa3 Qxa3 25.e4 Qb4 (25...Nb4 26.Nb5 Qa6 27.a4±) 26.exd5 Nd4 27.a3 Nf3+! 28.Bxf3 Qxc3 29.Qxc3 Rxc3 30.Kg2 exd5=.

23.e4 Bb4

Forcing the white Nc3 to retreat should give Black sufficient counterplay.

24.Ne2 Qa6

24...dxe4!? 25.a3 (25.Bxe4 Nxe4 26.Rxd7 e5±) 25...Qa6!? (25...Bf8 26.Nc3 (26.b4 Qf5 27.Nc3 Rc4 28.Qb1!?!∞) 26...e3 27.fxe3 Qb6 28.b4 Qxe3+ 29.Kh1∞) 26.axb4 Qxe2 27.Bxf6!?! Nxf6 28.Qxa7=.

25.Nf4 dxe4 26.Bxe4 e5?!

This is a mistake. The position was still equal after 26...Nxe4 27.Rxd7 Bc3! 28.Re1 a) 28.Bxc3 Nxc3 29.Rc1 (29.Re1 e5) 29...Qb5! (29...Qa5 30.Nh5 Qxh5 31.Rxc3±) 30.Rd2 e5 31.Rxc3 exf4=; b) 28.Nh5? Qb5 29.Bxc3 Qxd7 30.Bxg7 Rc5 31.Nf6+ Nxf6 32.Bxf6 e5±; 28...e5 29.Rxe4 Bxb2□ 30.Qxb2 Qc6! 31.Rd5

(31.Rxg7+ Kxg7 32.Nh5+ Kh8 33.Qe2±) 31...exf4 32.Rxe8+ Rxe8=.

27.Bd3

27.Bf5!? Rcd8 (27...Bd6 28.Nd5 Rcd8; 27...exf4 28.Bxd7 Nxd7 29.Rxd7 Re7 30.Rxe7 Bxe7 31.Bxg7 fxg3 32.hxg3±) 28.Nd5 Nxd5 29.Rxd5 Bd6±.

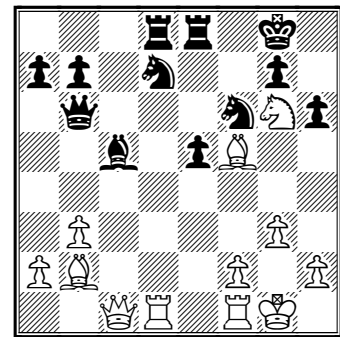
27...Qb6

27...Qa5 28.Ng6 e4 29.Bc4+ Kh7 30.Bf7 Red8 31.Nf4±; 27...b5 28.Bf5 Rcd8 29.Ng6±.

28.Ng6 (28.Bf5!?) 28...Bc5

28...e4 29.Bc4+ Kh7 30.Bf7 Red8 31.Nf4±.

29.Bf5 Rcd8 30.Qc1!±



Threatening 31.Qc4+. If 30.Nxe5? Nxe5 31.Bxe5 Bxf2+! 32.Rxf2 Rxd1+ 33.Qxd1 Rxe5=.

30...Qa6

30...Qb4 31.Ba3!? Qb5 32.Bxc5 Nxc5 33.Rxd8 Rxd8 34.Nxe5±.

31.Bd3 b5 32.a4 Rc8 33.Qd2 (33.Qb1!+−) **33...Qe6 34.Bxb5 Nb6** (34...Qxb3 35.Rfe1!?!±) **35.Nxe5**

35.Bxe8 Rxe8 36.Nxe5 Qh3 37.Qc3+−.

35...Qh3 36.Bxe8 Rxe8 37.Qc3 Ne4 38.Qd3?!⊕

Short on time as usual, I couldn't properly calculate 38.Qf3 Nxf2 (38...Ng5 39.Qc6+−) 39.Rxf2 Rf8 40.Qxf8+ Bxf8 41.Rd8+−. Luckily White is still winning.

38...Nxf2 39.Rxf2 Bxf2+ 40.Kh1□±

40.Kxf2? Qxh2+ 41.Kf3 Qxb2 42.Ng6∞.

40...Qc8 41.Kg2 Bc5 42.a5 Qa8+ 43.Kh3

This wins quicker than 43.Qf3 Qxf3+ 44.Kxf3 Nc8 45.Rd7 Ne7±.

43...Qc8+ 44.g4+− Na8

44...h5 45.axb6 Rxe5 46.Qc4+−.

45.Qc4+ Kh7 46.Rc1 Qb7 47.Qd3+ Kg8 48.Rxc5 Nc7 49.Qf3 Qxf3+ 50.Nxf3 Ne6 51.Re5 g5 52.Kg3 1-0

Underpromotion to a Knight

Derek Meredith

On and off for twenty years, I would occasionally entertain with my favorite chess book, Tim Krabbe's, *Schaak Kuriosa* (Amsterdam, 1974). It is one of few chess books I've owned that I will not write in, nor lend. It contains my favorite chess problem of all time, and features a fascinating discourse on castling that never fails to amuse. It is simply the best reminder I have ever seen that anything is possible in chess.

My enjoyment of the book had always been limited by it having been written in Dutch, more so because some of its concepts are actually very wordy. So imagine my enthusiasm when I saw an *English* version of *Chess Curiosities* on eBay!

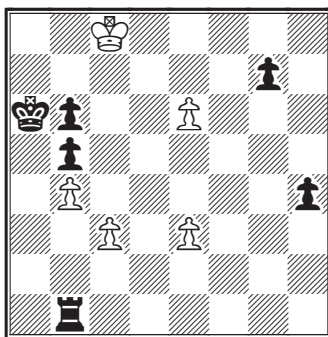
The first time I saw it up for auction I figured I'd secure it for around the original \$20 cover price, given that this was a site where used chess books are typically sold for a fraction of that. I thus lost it, not realizing that the excellence of this book was no secret. The second time I saw it up for bid, I started around \$30 without hesitation, then went to \$40, and lost it in the end to last-minute pirates, who were tugging at over \$50. Perhaps I was in over my head against collectors or something.

A year passed, but it was gone. I would check eBay every single week, but it was nowhere to be found. I tried everywhere and everything. That was me you'd see trolling through every single old or used chess book of tournament vendors, hoping against hope. I was willing to pay double or even triple the cover price for what eluded me.

At Foxwoods 2007 I won only two games, no rating points, and no money. So you wouldn't think it was my best tournament ever, but it was... because somewhere between an old Chess Digest pamphlet and the edge of desperation, I found my thrill. *Chess Curiosities*, Tim Krabbe, London, 1985. Bigger, newer, twice the diagrams, eighty more pages, and in my language. The only writing in

it is where the vendor had penciled in "\$27.50" – oh, please.

For the first time, I was actually able to read my favorite book. The biggest chapter is subtitled "The Story of Under-Promotion," and it's clearly the standard in chess literature on the subject. When I got to page 176 and Diagram 274, I was finally able to read what Krabbe had to say all those years ago about **Babushkin-Postnikov**, Correspondence USSR 1969-70:



"It must have been pure cussedness, born out of White's refusal to resign in good time, that made Black play **1...h3??** 1...Re1, or even better the slalom ...Rb1-c1xc3-e3xe8 would have won easily enough. **2.e7 h2** Now 3.e8=Q h1=Q and ...Qa8+ and/or ...Qb7+ decides quickly. **3.e8=N!**, and draw agreed. Suddenly, there is no way Black can escape the perpetual Nc7xb5-c7-b5 etc. *This is the only knighting on record that was not a check.*" (emphasis mine)

Well, I have some news for Tim Krabbe about the above claim. Granted, I agree with his sentiment that the "trivial" knighting of a pawn, for the heck of it, has no place among his curiosities. (Krabbe maintains a famous website on many different unique chess positions, and has well-established criteria for them.) But there is another such game. I played it!

White: Derek Meredith (2042)

Black: Anatoly Volovich (2474)

U.S. Amateur Team Championship (2), New Jersey, 2/18/06 (Board 1)

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Be7 4.d4 d6

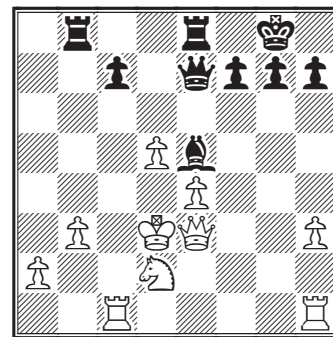
5.Be3 Nf6 6.Nbd2 0-0 7.c3 Re8 8.h3 exd4 9.Nxd4 Nxd4 10.cxd4 d5 11.exd5 Nxd5 12.Qb3 Be6 13.Qxb7?

He who takes the b-pawn with his queen sleeps in the streets (unless you have a room at the Parsippany Hilton). 13.0-0.

13...Rb8 14.Qxa7 Nxe3 15.fxe3 Bh4+ 16.Ke2

I had imagined that my king could be safe in the middle of the board. My opponent now spent a lot of time looking for a knock-out blow, but loses the thread, and I survive long enough to construct a sturdy defensive position.

16...Qg5! 17.Bxe6 Qxg2+ (17...Rxb2!!-+) 18.Kd3 Qg6+ 19.e4 Qxe6 20.d5! Qe7 21.Rac1 Bg3? (21...Rxb2+) 22.Qe3 Be5 23.b3



I am fond of calling this sort of position an "inert" one, where an attacking player's domination of an open board doesn't necessarily yield any decisive gain, because the opponent controls key squares of the opposite color. In such a case, the dominating player may only be capturing empty squares with his initiative, rather than material, or a king.

Recently saw my fellow expert Andres Castaneda draw GM Mark Paragua in a stark example of "inert" play. In that game, it seemed neither side could finish off his attack against a totally exposed enemy king, because a checkmate couldn't be concluded without controlling at least one or two squares of the color that the other guy was dominating.

My position here is much worse, I am only defending. But unless he plays the double-edged ...f5, White can repel Black's advances. White's queen watches over the central dark squares, and threatens queen exchanges. White's knight overprotects e4, and can go to c4. Al-

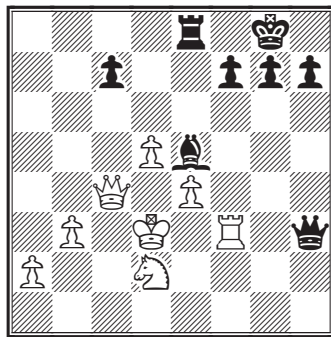


though the white king looks foolish on d3, Black doesn't seem to be able to even give check. This a2-b3-c4-d5-e4-f3 umbrella of control definitely has some "inert" defensive qualities.

23...Qd7 24.Qc5 Bf4 25.Qc6 Qe7 26.Rce1 Rb6 27.Qc3 Rg6 28.Rhg1

I remember thinking, once I had played this move: I'm surviving this. He now goes into a big think and, not seeing any tactical breakthrough, settles for the h-pawn.

28...Be5 29.Qc4 Rxcg1?! 30.Rxcg1 Qh4 31.Rf1!? Qxh3+ 32.Rf3



Black has his material back, but compare this to the last diagram. The light-squared umbrella still holds.

32...Qd7 33.Qc6 Qe7 34.a4 Bd6 35.Re3 Bf4 36.Re2 Rb8 37.Qc3 Be5 38.Qc6 Qb4 39.Qc4 Qa3 40.Rf2! g6 41.Ke2

Having made the time control, I used these last two moves to prepare a tactical sequence I dreamt up.

41...Bd6

After getting pushed around for the last couple of hours, I finally seized a chance to grab the initiative. Objectively, 42.Qc3! is stronger, but in the favorite words of Alex Lenderman, I wanted to "set challenges."

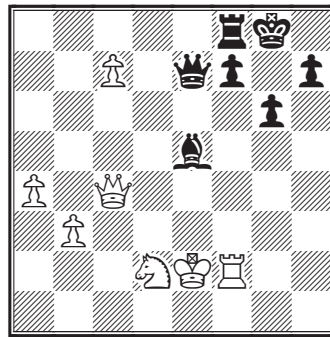
42.e5!? Bxe5

He took a lot of time here, but then whipped off his next few moves quickly. He gets one exclamation point for the uniqueness of his solution, and another for his foresight.

43.d6

This position shows the point of my 40th and 41st moves: the rook helps form a double attack on f7, and ...Qxd6 would not come with check. His rook is now in danger of becoming "overworked" by the pawn promotion threat.

43...Rf8 44.dxc7 Qe7!!



Okay, *so here it is*, now you can see what happened for yourself. A few moves back, Black planned this queen retreat as a complex solution to my threatened promotion: he plans to play the discovered check 45...Bc7+, safely shielding a clean 46...Rxc8 capture from my queen on c4! Clearly, the inspired tactical creativity here is all his, but I'm the one who now got to play...

45.c8N!?

How do you annotate such a move? According to Fritz 8, it *is* the best promotion! The point, of course, is that 45...Bc7+ would now lose to the capture on e7. So this is not a "trivial," unsound or gratuitous knight promotion. I dare say that Babushkin-Postnikov, Correspondence USSR 1969-70, is no longer the lone standard-bearer for meaningful promotion to a knight without check. In fact, I'll even argue that Meredith-Volovich is the purer example.

First of all, an over-the-board game during a national team event may be more credible than a correspondence game. Second, from a pure chess point of view, their position was contrived by gross blunder, whereas our sequence comes about with better play. Third, consider Krabbe's prerequisite emphasis being that a knight's promotion "was not a check." Finally, I doubt that one could disqualify our game on account of our respective ratings.

While the unique checking ability of the knight was indeed a necessary component of the Babushkin sequence, just one move removed from the promotion – a knight check was irrelevant to this game (46 Nxe7 would be check, yes, but that is coincidental, not incidental, to the promotion's viability). So there you have it, my claim to chess history, or at least

to a chess curiosity. But I also have a rules question here.

Very shortly after Volovich played 44...Qe7, I grabbed the white knight from his captured pieces. I confess I was trying to show him up a little bit; I thought I was going to end up a piece ahead with the under-promotion. (As it turned out, he had seen further, so it didn't phase him. But my teammates, who were watching, assumed I was toying with him when I promoted to a knight!) My question is: was I now obligated under the Touch-move rule to place it on the board? **45...Qb7=**

Now we see the deepest point of his resource: this move traps the knight!

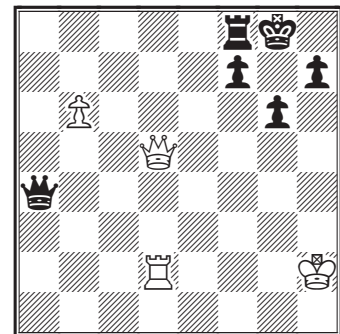
46.Qd5?!

I thought I was being so clever with this move, but the computer indicates 46 a5!, with the point being 46...Rxc8 47 Rxf7! and if 47...Qg2+, then 48 Rf2+ (yes, it's check!).

46...Qxc8 47.b4 Qg4+ 48.Kf1

Remarkably, what's left of my light-square defense is still holding. It looks like Black should be able to win quickly, but it's not so easy.

48...Qd1+ 49.Kg2 Bc3 50.b5 Qg4+ 51.Kh2 Bxd2 52.Rxd2 Qxa4 53.b6



At the expense of my a-pawn, my advanced b-pawn now looms threatening. But I have to be very careful with my king wide open in time pressure. My opponent now tests my ability to find "only" moves in response to his queen checks. **53...Qh4+ 54.Kg2 Qg4+ 55.Kh2 Qf4+ 56.Kg2**

I realized I had to keep my king on the second rank. Other king moves would lose to a black rook penetration to my third rank. 56.Kg1 Re8+; 56.Kh1 Rc8+; 56.Kh3 Re8+.

Continued on page 40

67th with an average rating of 1909. A record total of 1251 players competed in the three-day event. More than a half-dozen other MA teams participated in the championship.

32nd Queen City Open **George Mirijanian**

International master David Vigorito of Lowell, MA, scored 3½-½ to win first place in the 32nd Queen City Open, held February 9-10 in Manchester, NH. FM Braden Bournival of Manchester tallied 3-1 to take second place. Tied for third place with 2½-1½ results were IM Joseph Fang of Nashua, NH; FM John Curdo of Auburn, MA; and Class A contestant John Elmore of Hampton Falls, NH.

Boston Globe chess columnist Harold Dondis of Belmont, MA captured first place in the Under 1900 section with a 3½-½ score. Tied for the runner-up position with 3-1 tallies were Eric Blatt of Vermont and Michael Moore of Newburyport, MA.

Bruce Stone of New Hampshire was the winner in the Under 1600 section with a 3-1 performance, while 32-year-old Florencio Cecenas of Manchester, NH finished first in the Under 1300 section with a perfect 4-0 score.

A one-day event on February 10 was won by Andrew Tichenor of Brookline, MA. A total of 49 players - 39 in the two-day main event and 10 in the one-day tournament - participated. Hal Terrie of Manchester, NH directed for the sponsoring New Hampshire Chess Association, assisted by John Elmore.

Gus Gosselin Grade Championships **George Mirijanian**

March 2, 2008, Natick High School; 102 players, 8 sections; Chief TD: Ken Ballou Asst. TDs: George Mirijanian, Steve Frymer, Donna Alarie

Grades K & 1 section combined

- 1st K: Henry Li of Acton, 3-1
- 2nd K: Justin Wu of Littleton, 3-1
- 3rd K: Isabella Shih of Andover, 2-2
- Medal K: Ben Wiegand of Cambridge, 2-2
- 1st Gr. 1: Anton Barash of Brighton, 4-0

- 2nd Gr. 1: Alex Fauman of Newton, 3-1
- 3rd Gr. 1: Jack Goldsmith of Newton, 2½-1½

Grade 2 section

- 1st: Henry Friedlander of Brookline, 3½-0½
- 2nd: Shuvom Sadhuka of Acton, 3-1
- 3rd: Brandon Wu of Littleton, 3-1
- Medal: Laurie Chen of Concord, 3-1

Grade 3 section

- 1st: Luke Qi of Andover, 3½-0½
- 2nd: Arnav Ghosh of Winchester, 3-1
- 3rd: Sabrina Zhang of Lexington, 3-1

Grade 4 section

- 1st: Siddharth Arun of Medfield, 4-0
- 2nd: Eric Chen of Newton, 3-1
- 3rd: Akash Purohit of Acton, 3-1
- Medal: Jordan Shapiro of Sharon, 3-1

Grade 5 section

- 1st: Adam Yee of Andover, 4-0
- 2nd: Nicholas Zhang of Lexington, 3-1
- 3rd: Mason Liu of Acton, 3-1
- Medal: Varun Palnati of Westford, 3-1

Grade 6 section

- 1st: Michael Wang of Lexington, 3½-0½
- 2nd: David Ter-Ovanesay of Newton, 3-1
- 3rd: Tian Rossi of West Newton, 2½-1½
- Medal: Anthony Zheng of Westford, 2½-1½

Grade 7 section

- 1st: Ashvin Nair of Malden, 4-0
- 2nd: Akshay Saini of Weston, 3-1
- 3rd: Darwin Ding of Lexington, 2½-1½
- Medals: Ryan Saxe of Waban, 2½-1½
- Andrew Robinson of Jamaica Plain, 2½-1½

Grades 8 and 9-12 combined

- 1st 8: Mustafa Buxamusa of Westford, 3½-0½
- 2nd 8: Richard Han of Newton, 2½-1½
- 1st HS: Anirudh Arun of Medfield, 3-1
- 2nd HS: Alexander Kaye of Weston, 3-1
- Medals HS: Elad Shlisselberg of Natick, 2-2, Jaymin Patel of Natick, 2-2

Meredith continued

56...Kg7 57.b7 h6 58.Rc2

Now the "threatened" queen exchange with 58...Qg5+ would be met by 59 Qxg5 hxg5 60 Rc8, winning.

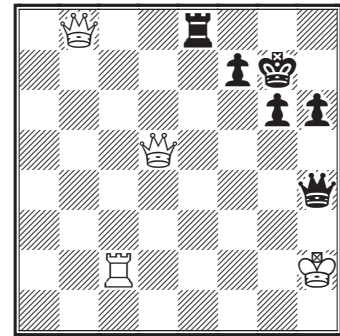
58...Qg4+ 59.Kh2 Re8!

This turns out to be the winning move. Fritz insists anything else is a draw, with Black usually taking a perpetual check.

60.b8Q?

Who can blame a guy for lunging at this mirage, with only a minute left on the clock? I saw that Black has left his king on the open diagonal, and I saw through a haze that I can end this thing.

60...Qh4+



The elaborate trap is sprung: White's king is forced to a light square, so that Black can return the favor. The point is that both of the white queens can only watch helplessly if 61 Kg1 Re1+ 62 Kg2 Qh1+ with a winning skewer.

61.Kg2 Rxb8 62.Qe5+ Kh7 63.Qxb8 Qe4+ 64.Kg3 Qxc2 0-1

It was now 1:15 AM, and I resigned. An act my loyal teammates surely appreciated at the time. It being a team tournament, I had many attentive witnesses to this incredibly rare occurrence. Tim Krabbe, are you paying attention?

Twenty Seconds Chess

In his *Telegraph* column, Malcolm Pein reported on an innovative idea being introduced in the UK, Twenty Seconds chess. He writes, "It promises to be a lot of fun and perhaps somewhat more pressured than conventional speed chess as the clocks will be in what could be described as 'egg timer mode'.

"Both players start with 20 seconds for the entire game. When play commences and White's clock is started his twenty seconds reduces as normal but the time elapsed is added to Black's clock. When White has moved and pressed his clock, Black's clock begins to run down and White's clock increases. If either side runs out of time they lose."