

Spring 2019

Chess Horizons





88th Massachusetts Open (State Championship)

May 25-27 or 26-27, 2016

Westford, Massachusetts

\$8,200 in Projected Prizes, \$6,150 Guaranteed

Where: Westford Regency Inn & Conference Center, 219 Littleton Road, Westford, MA 978-692-8200.
Hotel rate \$139 per night, **reserve by 4/26**.

What: 6-round Swiss, 4 sect: Championship (open to players rated 1800 & above), U2100, U1800, U1500.

Time Control: 40/100, SD/60, d5. 2-day rds 1-3 are G/45, d5. **No 2-day Championship section schedule.**

Registration: 3-day: Sat. 5/28 from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. 2-day: Sun. 5/29 from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

Rounds: 3-day: Sat. and Sun 10:30 and 5:00, Mon. 10:00 and 4:00. **Annual meeting Mon. 9:30 a.m.**
2-day (U2100 to U1500 only): Sun. 10:30, 1:00. 3:00 and 5:00, Mon. 10:00 and 4:00.

Entry Fee: \$55 for 3-day, \$54 for 2-day if mailed by **5/20** or online (PayPal) at www.masschess.org by **5/23**,
\$70 at site. GMs and IMs free. \$25 discount to players in the U1500 section rated under 1000/Unr.

Unrated: Unrated prize limits: \$100 in U1500, \$150 in U1800, \$200 in U2100, can't win title.

Byes: Half point byes are available in any round, limit 2, rounds 4-6 must commit before round 2.

Prizes: Prizes are 75% guaranteed based on 120 fully paid entries (\$25 off entries count half).
Championship section prizes are 100% guaranteed. The Championship section is FIDE rated.

Championship:	\$3000-1500-750	U2300: \$500	120 Grand Prix Points
Under 2100:	\$450-200	U1950: \$200	
Under 1800:	\$400-200	U1650: \$200	
Under 1500:	\$350-150	U1350: \$150	U1200: \$150

- USCF membership required for all players, plus state membership for Mass residents: MACA \$12 adult, \$6 under 18; add \$8 (optional) for a subscription to *Chess Horizons*)

Questions: Bob Messenger. Phone (603) 891-2484 or send email to info@masschess.org. Day of the tournament phone (603) 557-1732.

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88th Massachusetts Open, May 25-27 or 26-27, 2019

Name: _____ USCF # _____ Exp: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____ Rating: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email Address: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Need USCF membership? Yes / No Enclosed for USCF is \$ _____

Need MACA membership? Yes / No Enclosed for MACA is \$ _____

3-day or 2-day schedule? 3-day / 2-day Entry Fee \$ _____ for the _____ section

Total Enclosed: \$ _____ (please specify section)

Mail checks, payable to MACA, to: Bob Messenger, 4 Hamlett Dr. Apt. 12, Nashua, NH 03062-4641



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Chess Horizons

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Cover photo: NM Nithin Kavi

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otherwise specified*



Note from the Editor

Nathan Smolensky

Dear Readers,

As some of you may have read in the previous edition, this printed run of a *Chess Horizons* will soon be at an end. Following this issue, only one more – our 50th Anniversary Spectacular – remains, and we hope that we've saved some of the best for last. Newly crowned New England IMs, the return of a Cambridge chess institution, and a spectacular game by GM Alexander Ivanov are just some of the goodies waiting to be devoured in this 48-page tome.

I wish I could say that the emotions of parting with CH were at the root of this egregious delay, but I have no such excuse. It took far too long, so without any further ado, I give you the penultimate *Chess Horizons*. Enjoy.

- Nathan Smolensky, Editor

Annotation / Player Title Key

! – Strong move !! – Brilliant move

? – Weak move ?? – Blunder

!? – Interesting move ?! – Dubious move

± (♣) – White (Black) is slightly better

± (♣) – White (Black) is significantly better

+ - (-+) – White (Black) is winning

∞ - Unclear

⊙ - Zugzwang

□ – Only move

⊕ - Time trouble

NM – National Master, any player over 2200 USCF

FM – FIDE Master. 2300+ FIDE.

SM – Senior Master. 2400+ USCF.

IM – International Master. Norm-based FIDE title.

GM – Grandmaster. Norm-based FIDE title.

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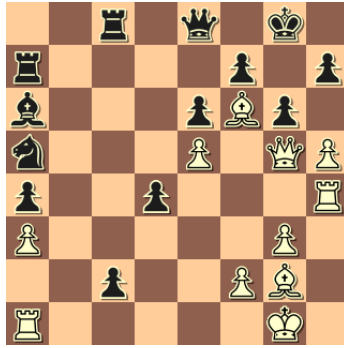


The Challenge Page

Nathan Smolensky

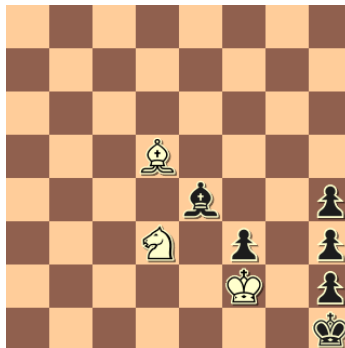
Find the best move! Solutions on p. 46

1.



White to move and win

2.



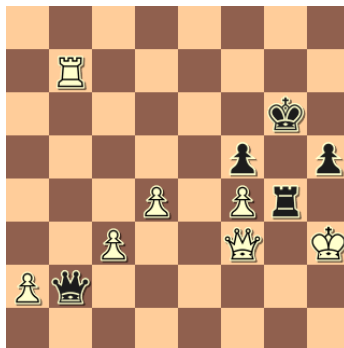
White to move and win

3.



White to mate in 3

4.



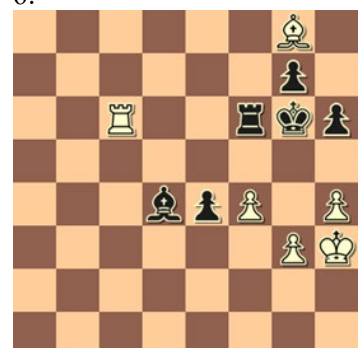
Black to move and win

5.



Black to move and win

6.



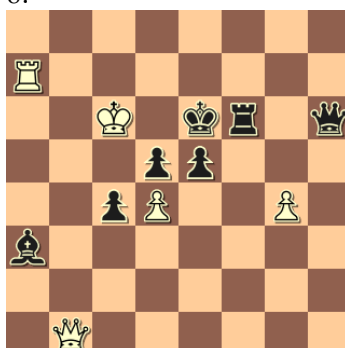
White to move and win

7.



Black to move and win

8.



White to mate in 2

9.



White to move and draw



The Postal Hub

A Place for Those in Search of Correspondence Play

As demand has increased, the time has come to take this popular new Chess Horizons to the next level. If you are currently featured on the Postal Hub, or if you would like to be, please send a sentence or two describing yourself as a player to P.O. Box 381396, Cambridge, MA, 02138.

You can include the following:

- Your approximate strength (either your own estimation, or if you have a USCF tournament record)

- Your experience / how long you have been playing

- How frequently you intend to play

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Cambridge IM Norm Invitational The Summer of Norm

IM Hans Niemann

I started out the summer of 2018 with three average tournaments, but I realized exactly what I needed to do and change. I attended a US Chess School camp where Sam Shankland gave a lecture that gave me the motivation to work hard. I can credit my recent success to Sam Shankland's DVDs, which transformed my mindset, focus, and ability to calculate in complicated positions.

My streak of amazing tournaments began at the US Masters, a well-organized tournament with conditions unparalleled by other events. I started the tournament with 4/5 against 5 very strong GMs. I ended the tournament with two draws and two losses in my last four games, but my performance was sufficient for both a GM norm and an IM norm after playing GMs in all 9 rounds.

My next tournament was the Cambridge Summer IM Norm Invitational, held at the Boylston Chess Club. I saw this tournament online a few weeks before it started, and I emailed the organizer. Fortunately, there was a last minute drop out so I was lucky to play in such a great tournament.

I started the tournament with a positional masterpiece, utilizing a better pawn structure and superior pieces to prevail against my opponent's discombobulated pieces.

FM Hans Niemann (2329)

IM Yaacov Norowitz (2409)

**Cambridge Summer Norm Invitational (1)
08.23.2018**

Caro-Kann [B11]

**1. e4 c6 2. Nc3 d5 3. Nf3 dxe4 4. Nxe4 Nf6
5. Qe2**

Qe2 is a move that has recently gained in popularity. One might get lucky if their opponent plays Nbd7. Otherwise the move challenges black to find good moves.

5... Bg4 6. Nxf6+ gxf6 7. h3 Bxf3

The main line is Bh5; Bxf3 gives me a comfortable position with the bishop pair.

8. Qxf3 Qd5 9. Qb3



Qb3 is a multi-faceted move: it makes ideas of Bc4 possible, it threatens b7, and a queen trade is extremely desirable for white.

**9... Qxb3 10. axb3 Nd7 11. b4 a6 12. b5 cxb5
13. Bxb5 O-O-O**

The computer did not like my move b5, nor does it like my next move Bxd7. My idea was to trade off a doubled pawn for black's c pawn, leaving me a perfect pawn structure. I think that the knight on d7 will eventually be a better piece than my bishop. As an additional factor, my opponent is known for his dynamic play, which incentivized me to play into a boring endgame where two results are possible.

14. Bxd7+ Kxd7

My opponent decides that his king should go on a journey to d5. We shall see how that goes.

15. d3 Rg8 16. g3 Rc8 17. Kd1

If I had played c3, then then I might regret the pawn on c3 later. I would prefer to keep all of my options open.

**17... e5 18. Ra4 Bc5 19. Rf1 h5 20. Rh4 Rh8
21. c3**

Interestingly, after 21. f4 e4 22. dxe4 f5 23. exf5 Be7, my rook is trapped on h4, and I am losing. There are still tactical tricks in apparently boring positions.

21... Ke6 22. Re4

I played Re4 after realizing that Rh4 was a mistake. I have ideas of f4 to blow up the



position, but the move never seemed to work tactically.

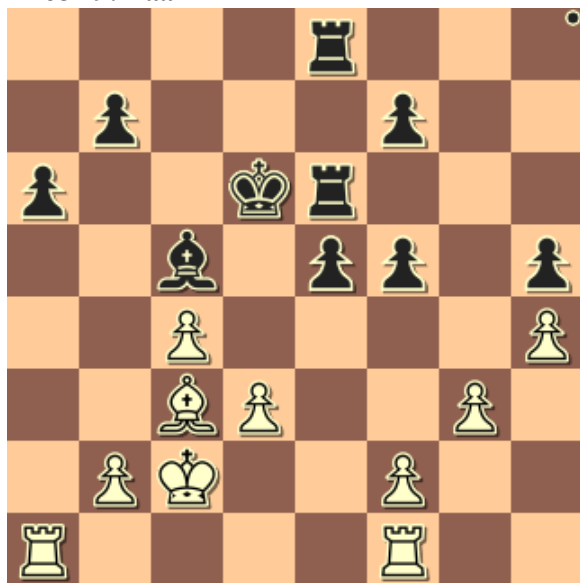
22... Rcg8 23. h4 Kd5 24. Kc2

Black is getting aggressive. However, I will eventually push back his pieces and have a comfortable initiative.

24... f5

I really do not like the move f5. It creates more weaknesses, specifically e5 and f5. Black needs to sit there and do nothing. Psychologically, it is very difficult to do, but it is necessary if you do not want to lose.

25. Ra4 Re8 26. Bd2 Re6 27. c4+ Kd6 28. Bc3 Rhe8 29. Raal



The move Ra1 looks somewhat counterintuitive, but white can now put additional pressure on the e5 pawn. These types of moves often confuse an opponent because they do not know what your plan is.

29... Kc6 30. Ra5

I am starting to make progress. If the bishop moves, then the rook will go to d5. If the rook is on d5 then ideas of f4 become extremely strong.

30... f6

It must be emphasized just how passive black's position is. The two rooks on the e-file are doing absolutely nothing. While the computer may say that the position is equal, I strongly disagree. A human opponent will suffer in this position for hours and hours. Sooner or later a mistake is bound to occur.

31. b4 Bf8 32. Rd5

Ideas of f4 are imminent. To highlight my options and black's passivity, I could even bring my other rook to b1 and then play b5.

32... b5 33. Kb3

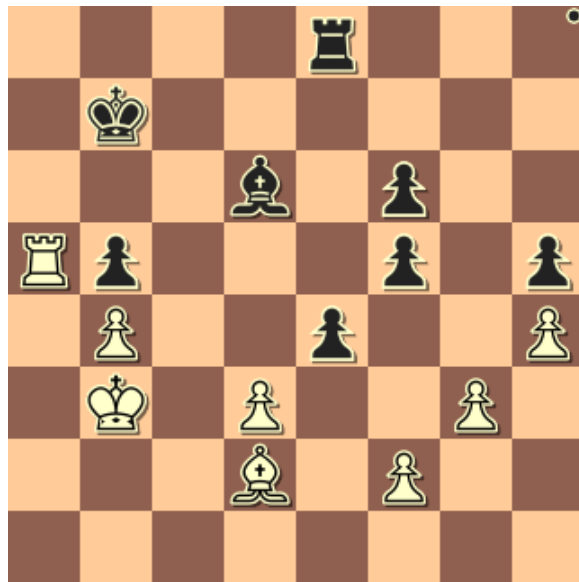
I have absolutely no idea why I played Kb3.

Instead, Ra1 would have won the game easily by rounding up the a6 pawn. I suppose that this was a simple mistake after a long game.

33... Rd6 34. Rxd6+ Bxd6

After this sequence, Stockfish's evaluation dropped from 2.2 to 0.31. However, I still think that I have very good practical chances to push for a win.

35. Ra1 Kb7 36. Bd2 e4 37. cxb5 axb5 38. Ra5



Surprisingly, black can now equalize with Re5. I am sure that my opponent stopped looking at this line after seeing Bf4, but then the rejoinder Bc7 forces a draw.

38... Re5! 39. Bf4 Bc7 40. Bxe5 Bxa5 41. Bxf6 Bb6 42. d4 Kc6 43. Kc3 Kd5 and there is no way for white to break through.

38... exd3 39. Rxb5+ Kc6 40. Rxf5 Re2

Now b5! would win very cleanly. This was my second mistake of the game. Fortunately, the game continuation still gives a winning position.

41. Kc3 Bxb4+ 42. Kxb4 Rxd2 43. Kc3 Rd1 44. Rxf6+ Kd5 45. Rf3 Ke4 46. Re3+ Kf5 47. Rxd3 Ra1 48. Rd5+ Kg6 49. Kd3 Re1 50. Rd4 Kf5 51. Rf4+ Ke5 52. Rf8 Kd6 53. Rf5



1-0

I am moderately happy with how I played: this was a nice positional game, where I displayed practical thinking. Going into this type of endgame was a psychological decision that paid off.

After this game, I also won my next three games to reach a score of 4/4. However, I then drew and lost the next two in a row. Going into the last day, my score was 4.5/7, and I needed to score 1.5 points against the two highest rated players in the field to score my final IM norm.

On the final morning, I had white against Grandmaster Alexander Ivanov in a must-win situation. I sacrificed a pawn and a piece to reach a double-edged position. I managed to calculate through all of the complications to find the best moves and win!

FM Hans Niemann (2329)

GM Alexander Ivanov (2454)

Cambridge Summer Norm Invitational (8)

08.27.2018

Queen's Indian [E17]

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 b6 4. g3 Bb7 5. Bg2 Be7 6. O-O O-O



I have played this position many times, and I normally play Nc3 and get a very positional game. Due to the tournament situation, I had no intentions of getting such a lifeless position and

drawing. I had looked at some of the published games between Alpha Zero and Stockfish, and I had seen that the move d5 scores very well.

7. d5 exd5 8. Nh4 c6 9. cxd5 Nxd5 10. Nf5 Nc7 11. e4 Ne8

Ne8 with the idea of d6 is very passive. Even if d6 is played, white's pieces are on much better squares. Black's bishop on b7 and knight on e8 are both terrible. The rook on a8 can only dream of being developed to a open file, and the queen on d8 will stay there for a very long time.

12. e5

Clamping down on the d6 square.

12... d6 13. exd6 Nxd6 14. Nxe7+ Qxe7 15. Bf4



This may not look like a mistake, but it is a giant one. It was very important to play Re1 first. The text allows black's rook to go to d8 and then the queen can retreat to f8 instead of f6.

15... Rd8 16. Re1 Nf5?

After Qf8 white still has an advantage, but black can start to untangle.

17. Nd2 Qf8 18. Qh5 Nd4 19. Ne4

All of my pieces are taking aim at the black king. White's attack is becoming menacing and black's clock is ticking down. Alexander Ivanov is notorious for getting into time pressure game after game. The invention of delay was very helpful to Ivanov. Ivanov would often flag back in the days of analog clocks.

19... Ne6



In a must win situation, I decided to risk it all with a piece sacrifice. I trusted in my calculation ability to lead me into victory. I had initially calculated far enough to see a winning position, but as the game progressed, I lost my confidence.



20. Nf6+ gxf6 21. Be4 h6 22. Bxh6 Ng7 23. Qh4 Nd7 24. Bg5 f5

At this point, I can play Be7 and win black's queen for three minor pieces. The computer likes this continuation, however I think that it gives unnecessary chances to my opponent. Additionally, my opponent is now in severe time pressure while I still have plenty of time to think. I made the practical choice to keep all of the tension in the position.

25. Bc2 Qc5 26. Bxd8 Qxc2 27. Qg5 f6?



Black's last chance was to play f4. In time pressure, however, this move is nearly impossible to find and play. Optically it looks like black is simply mated. After f6 the game sequence is completely forced.

28. Re8+ Kh7 29. Qh4+ Kg6 30. Rh8 Rxd8 31. Qh7+ Kf7 32. Rxd8 Ne5 33. Rg8 Qe4 34. Qxg7+ Ke6 35. Re8+

The game is over. White can repel black's threats on the light squares very easily.

1-0

In the last round, I played roughly 20 moves of preparation to reach a drawn endgame. My opponent agreed to a draw, giving me a score of 6 out of 9, exactly what I needed to become an IM. After a summer of non-stop chess, I was exhausted, and the magnitude of my accomplishment did not set in until several weeks later. I cannot thank the organizers of the tournament enough.



My “journey” to IM has been very painful, yet extremely rewarding. I have been aiming for IM norms since I was 12, but I never achieved any success until my work ethic, mindset, and attitude dramatically changed. I achieved my first IM norm in 2016 in the U18 section of the North American Youth Championship in Canada. After a disappointing summer in 2017, I was left completely unmotivated to play, study, or even think about chess. I barely played chess until the next summer, because I was focusing on school and on the brink of quitting chess completely. Then, of course, the summer of 2018 happened, and everything changed.

Since becoming an IM, I have played a GM norm invitational in St. Louis where I was close to a GM norm. I also earned a bronze medal at the U16 Olympiad in Konya, Turkey where I scored 7.5/9 with a performance rating of 2598. My live rating was within 30 points of 2500, the rating necessary to become a GM. I am now on a quest to GM, and I hope that I can come back to Boston to score my final GM norm. I am also hopeful that I can return to the intellectual hub of Cambridge to attend college.

Boylston Chess Club

<https://boylstonchess.org>

40 Norris St, Suite B101
Cambridge, MA 02140

(617) 714-3022

G/60 4SS on Saturdays
Slow chess every Thursday night

Many other events – FIDE Rated
tournaments, Blitz, Camps and Clinics,
Lectures, and more!

See website for
full schedule and more details





Return of the Square

Nathan Smolensky

There was no guarantee things would work out well. When Manhattan's Washington Square park underwent changes some years ago, the disruption was too much to overcome. The hustlers moved to Union Square, some of the casual players moved to Bryant Park, and the old scene disappeared.

In Harvard Square, fortunately, the players didn't have very far to go when the iconic Au Bon Pain, and Harvard's Holyoke Center, closed in 2015. The tables behind the subway station, on the island at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Brattle Street, held the players during the warmer months. During the winter, the Garage – a mini-mall a short way down JFK Street with some common table space – was enough to hold the diehards. So the players made do playing in the new spaces, and they waited. And they waited.

Finally, in the late summer of 2018, the gate around construction came down, and the new Smith Campus Center opened where the old Holyoke once stood. The building was clean and modern, the seating was comfortable, the café served good food, and the bathroom was open to the public. The worst fears of the chess community, forged over years of waiting for the new space, were assuaged.

One month later, after the flock of Harvard students had arrived for the fall semester, the outdoor area was finally completed and opened, and the new chess tables arrived. It was time to celebrate.

Lara Adams, the director of Common Spaces, and Bryan Hu, the president of the Harvard University Chess Club, set to work with yours truly to begin planning events. An open play night, for students and the casually interested, seemed logical. A simul, held by local GM Larry Christiansen, was a no-brainer. But we needed tournaments. And I had just the idea.



As it so happened, one of the longtime legends of the Harvard Square chess scene, the inimitable William Collins, had just turned 64 – a major milestone for a chess player. Holding a tournament in his honor seemed like the perfect way to commemorate, and so the Collins Cup was born.

We would hold two tournaments of five-minute chess. One, held on Sunday, September 23rd, would be the Collins Cup Championship, an invitation-only masters' tournament for Harvard Square's finest. But before that, we wanted to make sure everyone had the chance to qualify, so we held the Collins Cup Qualifier, a first-come first-served 40-person open event.

The format for the CCQ was rather novel, and I would highly recommend it to any interested organizers with large blitz events on their horizons. What we did was cap the event at a nice even number, break it randomly into groups of 10, assign everyone a number within their group, and provide them with pairings based on their number and the USCF's Round Robin Tables (that is, the player assigned #1 within a group would start with white against #10 in the first round, then have black against #9, and so forth). After nine rounds, prizes would be awarded to the top two finishers in



each group, and the group winners would face off in an elimination playoff.

The format worked out very well. The event capped, bringing out the Square's most avid players, some of whom had nary played a tournament before in their lives, as well as a number of students at the college. The field included no fewer than three masters and eight experts, with five of these top players unluckily being tossed into the same group. The games were thrilling, and after a tense playoff, Joe Perl emerged victorious. For his troubles, he would get another 15 games of fun the next day.

Joe Perl, sadly, ended up tying for last in the Collins Cup, but it would be nothing to be ashamed of. The field was packed, with an average rating comfortably over 2300, and included some of the finest players in the state.



Joe Perl (black) vs IM David Vigorito

The field featured three International Masters – David Vigorito, Harvard's Richard Wang, and Alexander Katz, the tournament's top seed at over 2500 USCF. Also in attendance were superstar Carissa Yip, rated over 2400, reigning Massachusetts co-champion NM Michael Isakov, and FM William Kelleher, one of the legends of Massachusetts chess.

As it so happened, none of these big names ended up winning. The champion, when all was said and done, was FM Varun Krishnan, a member of the Harvard Chess Club. The club's members made quite the impression, with president (and NM) Bryan Hu finishing 3rd and IM Richard Wang tying for 4th.



FM Bill Kelleher (white) takes on FM Varun Krishnan

At the day's end, the standings were as follows:

Name	Score
VARUN KRISHNAN	12.5
ALEXANDER KATZ	11.5
BRYAN HU	10
RICHARD WANG	9.5
ABYELARDO CADAVID	9.5
MICHAEL ISAKOV	9
DAVID VIGORITO	8
FARZAD ABDI	8
VADIM MARTIROSOV	7
CARISSA YIP	6
DEEPLYAMAN DATTA	6
ILYA KRASIK	6
WILLIAM COLLINS	5.5
WILLIAM KELLEHER	4.5
QUIMET FONT	3.5
JOSEPH PERL	3.5



IM Richard Wang (black) vs. FM Abyelardo Cadavid

One of the surprises of the tournament, at least to the casual observer, was FM Abyelardo Cadavid, who shared 4th. Cadavid had not played in tournaments in many years, but his prowess and finesse did not show it. This was the nature



of the tournament – that it acted as something of a horn to summon the best local players.



*IM David Vigorito (white) takes on NM Vadim Martirosov.
Background: Quimet Font*

The tournament area was roped off, and beyond the playing area a large mass of people stood consistently, intently watching the games, shuffling for prime position. A few snapped pictures, and some took videos. Even the local NBC affiliate was there, interviewing Yip and Collins while capturing footage of the newly opened space.



The games were wild and the finishes were tight. Players played masterfully – they were masters, after all – and fought hard for wins. When it was all said and done, prizes were awarded, players chatted, and the last remnants of Summer warmth were savored by the gathered crowd.

In the months since, weather has cooled, and play has shifted to the inside of the Campus Center. But another Collins Cup Qualifier awaits in April, followed by one in June and one in September before the championship's second

iteration. The next chapter of Harvard Square's illustrious chess history is underway, and it promises to be a fun one.

Photos Courtesy Steve Stepak



**Newton
Brighton
Lexington
Norwood**

**Weekends & After School Classes
Summer Camps
Sunday Games
Rated Tournaments**

**Registration is now open for
Fall Semester in these levels:**

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ADVANCED BEGINNERS:

INTERMEDIATE:

Summer Camp dates:

June 24 - 28

July 8 - 12

July 22 - 26

August 5 - 9

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2018 K-12 National Championships Turning it up to 11th

NM Nithin Kavi

I had not gone to the national grade championship since 7th grade, so I was eager to play this year as a junior in high school. Unfortunately, just before the tournament, I lost several games against lower rated players and my rating dropped to 2172, the lowest it has ever been since I made master in 2016. Despite being second seed in my section, I entered the competition with extremely low expectations, ideally hoping to just get a respectable score and not lose too many rating points. I did not have the slightest idea of what was about to happen.

After a relatively easy game in round 1, I blundered in round 2 and nearly lost. However, in serious time pressure, my opponent played Rg1 while I had a queen on b6, forcing his immediate resignation after I captured it. I had been extremely lucky, and with my recent tournament performance, I was convinced it would not last for the remaining 5 games. But after the close call in round 2, I began to play better, beginning with a comfortable round 3 victory. I ground out a rook endgame in round 4 against Sam Schenk, making me the only person in my section to have a score of 4-0. My only loss of the tournament was round 5, where I was outplayed by the top seed in my section, FM Aravind Kumar. Despite this, I knew that I could still place in the top ten if I played well on the last day. In round six, I had my toughest victory of the tournament against Sophie Morris-Suzuki, putting me at 5/6. In the last round, three people including me were tied at 5 points, while my opponent Victor Chen was leading the tournament with 5.5/6. Remarkably, the other two people with 5/6 drew, ensuring that my last round victory guaranteed me clear first.

I have included my wins in rounds 4, 6, and 7 with full annotations, which were my favorite games of the tournament. There were also my three hardest games of the tournament, as they

were all strong opponents who ended up finished in the top ten.

Sam Schenk (2105)

Nithin Kavi (2172)

2018 K-12 National Championships (4)

12.15.2018

Sicilian, Venice Attack [B55]

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. f3

No one has ever played this against me before. I had always seen the normal 5. Nc3

5. e5 6. Nb3 d5



Objectively, this move is supposed to equalize, but during the game I knew that it was very hard to win with Black.

6... Be7 was played by Karjakin in the final game of the 2016 World Championship match in an attempt to win, but after Carlsen played 7. c4, he achieved a very strong positional bind and went on to win. Figuring that my opponent may have gone over the Carlsen-Karjakin game, I avoided this line.

7. Bg5 Be6 8. Bxf6 gxf6

This was the extent of the theory which I knew in this line.

9. exd5 Bxd5!?

This seemed fine too. 9. Qxd5 turns out to be more common.



10. c4 Be6 11. Qxd8+ Kxd8 12. Nc3 Nd7

Defending my weak pawn on f6 and blocking the d-file.

12... Bb4, seeking to double White's pawns, is well met by the strong 13. 0-0-0+! followed by Nd5.

13. Rd1?!

After this I'm at least equal. 13. 0-0-0 is better, when White doesn't get into a pin.

13. a3 is possible too.

13... Bb4! 14. Be2 Rc8 15. Nd2 Bxc3

16. bxc3 Ke7

Now White's c-pawns cripple his position. His minor pieces are extremely passive.

17. Kf2 Rc6 18. Rb1 Nb6!?

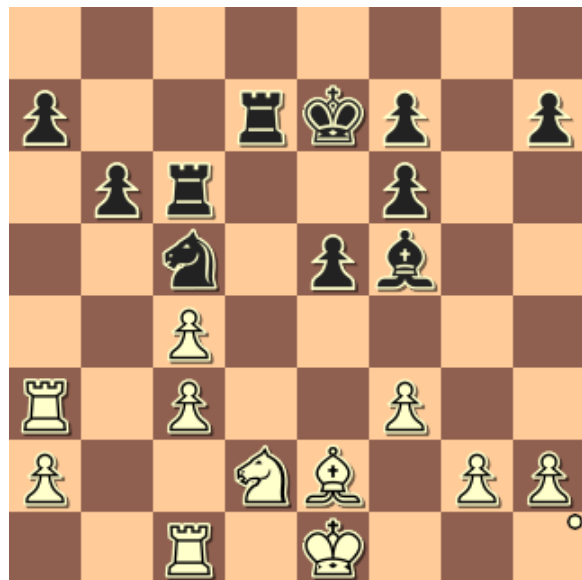
This was one possibility. I pressure c4 but my knight is also pinned to my b-pawn for the time being.

18. b6 and 18. Nc5 were also possible.

19. Rb2 Rd8 20. Rbh1 Rd7 21. Ke1 Bf5

This makes it difficult for White to hold on.

22. Rc1 Na4 23. Rb3 Nc5 24. Ra3 b6



Now White jettisons his c4- pawn in an attempt to liquidate into a drawn pawn-down ending.

25. Nf1 Nd3+!?

Even though I win a pawn, this gives White good drawing chances.

25. a5, just increasing the pressure on White's position, is quite logical.

26. Bxd3 Bxd3 27. Rd1 Rxc4 28. Ne3 Rc8

29. c4 Bxc4 30. Rxd7+ Kxd7 31. Rxa7+ Ke6

Objectively here White should probably hold a draw, especially with my doubled f-pawns.

32. Rb7 b5 33. Rb6+ Kd7

33. Ke7 runs into 34. Nf5+, when my f-pawn falls anyway and White has Nd6 ideas.

34. Nxc4 bxc4 35. Rxf6 Ke7 36. Ra6

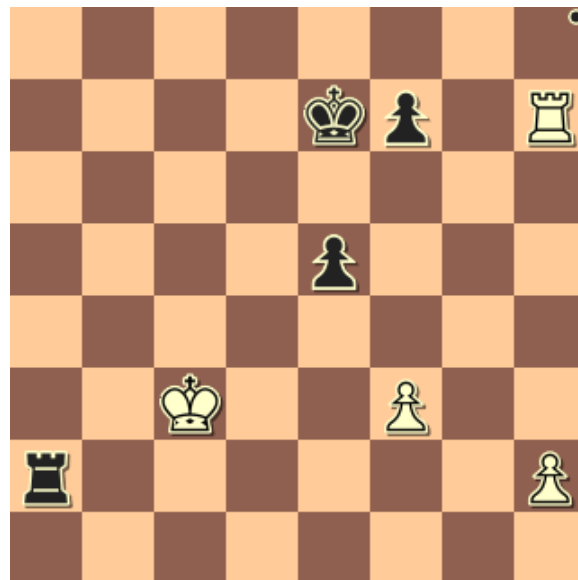
Forced. 36. Rh6 Ra8 37. Rxh7 Rxa2 and I'm doing well.

36... c3

This allows me to split up White's kingside pawns.

37. Kd1 Rd8+ 38. Kc2 Rd2+ 39. Kxc3 Rxc2

40. Rh6 Rxa2 41. Rxh7??



Now White is probably lost. 41. Kd3! followed by Rxh7 should draw.

41... Ra3+ 42. Kc4 Rxf3 43. Kd5 Kf6 44. Rh8 Rd3+ 45. Ke4 Rd4+ 46. Ke3 Kg7 47. Rh5 f6

Now the connected passers are very effective.

48. h4 Rd8 49. Rf5 Kg6 50. Rf1 Rd4 51. Rg1+ Kf7 52. Rh1 Rf4 53. h5 Kg7 54. h6+ Kh7

55. Rh5 Rg4 56. Rf5 Rg6+

Once White's h-pawn falls, the game is easy with the connected passers.

57. Ke4 Rxh6 58. Rf1 Kg6 59. Rg1+ Kf7

60. Ra1 Rh4+ 61. Ke3 Ke6 62. Ra8 Rh3+ 63.

Ke2 Kf5 64. Rf8 e4 65. Kf2 Rf3+

White resigned.

0-1



Sophie Morris-Suzuki (2113)

Nithin Kavi (2172)

2018 K-12 National Championships (6)

12.16.2018

King's Indian, Samisch [E84]

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6

5. f3 0-0 6. Nge2 Nc6 7. Be3 Rb8

8. Qd2 a6 9. Rc1 Bd7 10. Nd1 b5

11. c5 e6 12. Nf2 b4 13. Ng3 a5

14. Ba6 Re8 15. 0-0 Ne7

Reorganizing my pieces on the queenside

16. Qe2 Bc6 17. Rfd1 Qd7 18. Bg5 h6

19. Bxf6?!



This made very little sense to me. White has more space. With this move she trades a pair of pieces and gives me the Bishop pair.

19. Be3 back is probably best.

19. Bxf6 20. Qe3 Bg7

20. h5 21. Be2 Bg7 was also possible.

21. Ng4 Kh7 22. Nf2!?

Prophylactically anticipating h5 and admitting that Ng4 was not correct.

22. Qf4 f5 is also possible.

22. Red8 23. cxd6 cxd6 24. Bf1 h5 25. Ne2

Qa7



Now White starts to miss her dark Bishop. Her pawn on d4 is very weak.

26. Qf4 Kg8 27. g4 Bb5 28. gxh5 Bxe2 29.

Bxe2 Bxd4 30. Rxd4! Qxd4

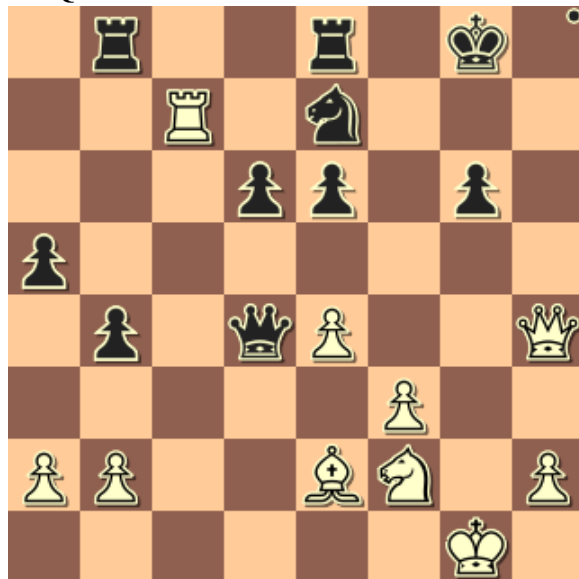
The exchange sacrifice is sound, but it requires precise follow up.

31. Rc7 Re8 32. hxxg6 fxxg6

Now I had 24 minutes while White had 2.

32. Qg7 33. Ng4 Qxg6 34. Qxd6 and White appears to be okay.

33. Qh4?!





White begins to falter. 33. Bc4! is strong, with the idea that d5 is met by 34. Rxe7!

33. Qh8 34. Qg4 Qf6 35. Bc4 d5

36. exd5 exd5 37. Ne4 Qb6+-+

An easy move to miss in time pressure, but one which permanently destroys any chances White may have had.

38. Rc5 Rbc8 39. Kg2 Rxc5 40. Nxc5 dxc4

40. Qxc5 was probably even simpler.

41. Qxc4+ Kg7 42. Qd4+

42. Ne6+ Kf6 and White has nothing.

42. Qf6 43. Ne6+ Kf7 44. Nd8+ Rxd8

45. Qxd8 Qxb2+ 46. Kh3 Qf6 47. Qxa5

Qxf3+

Mating by force

48. Kh4 Nf5+ 49. Kg5 Qe3+ 50. Kg4 Nh6+

51. Kh4 Qf4+ 52. Kh3 Qg4#

0-1

Sam Schenk (2105)

Nithin Kavi (2172)

2018 K-12 National Championships (4)

12.15.2018

Sicilian, Venice Attack [B55]

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5.

Nc3 a6 6. h3 e5 7. Nde2 h5 8. g3 Be7



White's opening may look tame to someone who is unfamiliar with it, but it has some bite if Black is not careful. With 5 points compared to my

opponent's 5. 5, I had to play for a win with Black here to have a chance at first place, which I knew would be challenging given his solid opening choice.

9. Bg2 Nbd7 10. 0-0 0-0 11. Be3 b5 12. Nd5

This is logical.

12. a4 b4 13. Nd5 Nxd5 14. Qxd5 Rb8 is also possible, after which Black is fine as well.

12... Bb7 13. Nec3 Rc8 14. f4!?

This might be premature. 14. a4 is very logical.

14... Nxd5 15. Nxd5 h4 16. f5?!

White's pawns restrict his light bishop.

16. g4 is probably necessary, but White has no reason to push his f- pawn. After Bxd5 17. exd5 Nb6 my position is comfortable, as I have traded pieces and White's bishop pair is not particularly effective given his dismal bishop on g2.

16... Bxd5 17. exd5 Bg5

Just trading dark bishops into a good Knight vs. bad bishop scenario.

I figured 17... hxg3 was strong, but I thought it would be easier to win with the positional advantage.

18. Bxg5 Qxg5 19. g4 Nb6 20. Qe2 Rc5



Now White gets thrown onto the defensive.

21. Rfd1 Rfc8 22. Be4 22. c3 would have been a more solid choice, but Black clearly still retains the initiative. He can continue to press White with a5.

22... Nc4 23. Rab1 Qf4



Applying pressure on White and tempting him into making the mistake which he played.

23... Ne3 24. Rd2 Rc4 was even stronger.

23... Qe3+ 24. Qxe3 Nxe3 25. Rd2

Nxc2 wins a pawn and is probably winning, but I wasn't ready to trade pieces yet.

24. Rd3?

Just dropping the b-pawn.

24. b4 R5c7 25. Rb3 is the lesser of two evils, but Black is clearly preferable here.

24... Nxb2-+

The extra pawn is not particularly important here; rather, the weakening of the c3 square kills White.

25. Rf3 Qg5 26. f6 g6 27. Rbf1 Na4 28. Qf2 Nc3 29. Bf5!



Definitely a good practical try.

29. Bd3 e4 just wins a piece, while 29. Re1 Nxe4 30. Rxe4 Rxc2 and White's position collapses.

29... R8c7!

White has no threats.

The point is 29... gxf5 30. Rxf5 Qh6 31. Rh5! is strong, with the idea of Qg6?? 32. Qxh4 and I can resign.

30. Be6 Ne4!

I have no reason to calculate 30... fxe6

31. Qe1 Nd2 32. Rf5!?

This simply does not work, but White is lost anyway.

32... gxf5 33. Rxf5 Qxf5

White resigned. If he recaptures the queen I have ... Nf3+, easily winning with two rooks versus White's lone bishop.

0-1

Winning the grade 11 national championship was a challenging experience, but a terrific one. Even though I will soon be finished with scholastic tournaments as I get ready to head off to college in a couple of years, I plan to continue playing chess when I can. After competing in tournaments for the last decade, I have developed a love of the game that I believe will stay with me for throughout my life.



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Cambridge IM Norm Invitational Ivanov - Wang

GM Alexander Ivanov

Editor's note: this was the game that decided the Cambridge IM Norm Invitational, hosted by the Boylston Chess Club in late August.

GM Alexander Ivanov (2544)

FM Qibiao Wang (2406)

Cambridge IM Norm Invitational (9)

08.27.2018

Petrov [C42]

**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nxe5 d6 4. Nf3 Nxe4
5. d4 d5 6. Bd3 Bd6 7. O-O O-O 8. Re1**

More common is the immediate 8. c4 c6 9. Re1 (Other popular lines are 9. Nc3 Nxc3 10. bxc3 dxc4 11. Bxc4 Bf5, 9. Qc2, and 9. cxd5 cxd5 10. Nc3 Nxc3 11. bxc3 Bg4) and here sometimes Black sacs the pawn with 9... Bg4 9... Bf5 transposes to the game

8... Bf5

8... Re8 9. Nc3!?

9. c4

Here 9. Nc3 is also an option: 9... Nxc3 10. bxc3 Bxd3 11. Qxd3 Nd7 12. Rb1 Nb6 13. Ng5 g6 14. Qh3 h5 15. g4 Qd7 16. gxh5 Rae8 17. Be3 Qxh3 18. Nxb3 g5 19. Bf4 Kg7 20. Rxe8 Rxe8 21. Bxd6 cxd6 22. Nf4 Kh6 23. Kg2 Kg5 24. Kf3 Rc8 25. Rb3 Rc4 26. Ra3 h4 27. h3 f5 28. Ne6+ Kf6 29. Nf4 Kg5 30. Ne6+ 1/2-1/2 (30) Carlsen, M (2698) -Shirov, A (2720), Moscow, 2006

9... c6 10. Qb3 Na6

Another popular move in this position which leads to a forced play is 10... Qd7 11. Nc3 Nxc3 12. Bxf5 Qxf5 13. Qxb7 Qd7 14. Qxd7 Nxd7 15. c5 Bxh2+ 16. Nxb2 Ne4 17. f3 Ng3 18. Bf4 Nf5 19. Rad1 Rfe8 20. Rxe8+ Rxe8 21. g4 Ne7 22. Rd3 Nf8 23. Rb3 Ne6 24. Be3 Ng6 25. Kf2 Ngf4 26. Rb7 Kf8 27. Nf1 Re7 28. Rb8+ Re8 29. Rb7 Re7 30. Rb8+ Re8 31. Rxe8+ Kxe8 32. Bxf4 Nxf4 33. Ke3 Ng2+ 34. Kf2 Nf4 35. Ke3 Ng2+ 36.

Kf2 Nf4 1/2-1/2 (36) Vachier Lagrave, M (2789) - Caruana, F (2799), London, 2017

11. Nc3

11.cxd5 cxd5 (11... Nec5 12. dxc5 Nxc5 13. Bxf5 Nxb3 14. axb3 cxd5) 12. Nc3 and now Black can sac the d5 Pawn with Nb4 (12... Be6) 13. Bxe4 dxe4 14. Nxe4 (14. Bg5 !?) 14... Be6 15. Qd1 Rc8 16. Bg5 Qd7 17. Re2 f6 18. Nxd6 Qxd6 19. Bf4 Qd7 20. a3 Nc6 21. Rc1 Bd5 22. Rd2 Rfe8 23. h3 Bxf3 24. gxf3 Qxh3 25. d5 Ne5 26. Rxc8 Qxc8 27. d6 Qd7 28. Kg2 Ng6 29. Bg3 Nf8 30. Rc2 Ne6 31. Qd5 Kf8 ?! (31... Kh8 32. Qf5 Qf7±) 32. Qf5± Rc8 33. Rc7 Rxc7 34. dxc7 h6 35. Qc2 Qc8 36. Qd3 Kf7 37. Qd5 g5 38. a4 h5 39. b4 h4 40. Bd6 b6 41. a5 bxa5 42. bxa5 a6 43. Qb3 Ke8 44. Qa4+ Kf7 45. Qc4 Ke8 46. Qc6+ Kf7 47. Kh2 Nd4 48. Qd5+ Ne6 49. Qf5 Qd7 50. Kg1 Qc8 51. Be5 Ke7 52. Qh7+ Ke8 53. Bd6 1-0 (53) Karjakin, S (2773) - Smirnov, A (2508), Tbilisi, 2017

11... Nec5 !?



I knew about this combination before the game so I wasn't surprised with Black's 11th move.

11... dxc4 looked best at the board. Indeed Black equalised in the following game: 12. Bxc4 Nxc3 13. bxc3 b5 14. Bf1 Re8 15. Bg5 Qc8 16. Bh4 Nc7 17. Bg3 Qd7 18. c4 bxc4 19. Rxe8+ Rxe8 20. Bxc4 Be6 21. Rc1 Nd5 22. Qa4 1/2-1/2 (22) Najer, E (2707)-Caruana, F (2807), Tbilisi 2017

**12. dxc5 Nxc5 13. Bxf5 Nxb3 14. axb3**

During the preparation I looked in Karpov and Kalinichenko's book on the Petroff where this position is assessed in White's favor. However, the computer check after the game doesn't confirm this human conclusion, saying instead that the position is equal. Generally speaking, Black has the material advantage and on a less crowded board (let's say the same position without rooks) the queen could penetrate White's defenses. As it is, the queen's room for maneuver is limited, and White's light pieces can organize an attack using the power of cooperation.

14... dxc4

14... d4 !? 15. Nxd4 Bxh2+ 16. Kxh2 Qxd4 17. Kg1 is equal, according to Stockfish.

15. bxc4 Bb4

15... h6 !? 16. Be3 Bb4 17. Bc2!?∞

16. Bg5 Qc7

An earlier game, after which the whole 11... Nc5 line was assessed in White's favor, continued 16... Qb6 17. Be3 Qc7 18. g3 Rfe8 19. Kg2 h6 20. Re2 Bxc3 21. bxc3 a5 22. c5 a4 23. Ra3 Qa5 24. Bd3 Kf8 25. Bd4 Rxe2 26. Bxe2 Re8 27. Bd3 Re7? (27... f6!? 28. Bc2 b5! 29. cxb6 c5 30. Rxa4 Qxb6 31. Be3 Rxe3! 32. fxe3 Qb2=) 28. Bc2 Qd8 29. Rxa4 Qd7 30. Bb3 Qe8 31. Ra1 Re2 32. Bc4 Re7 33. Rb1 Qb8 34. h3 Qe8 35. Rd1 Qb8 36. Nh4 Qc8 37. Rd3 Re4 38. Rf3 f6 39. Nf5 Qd7 40. Nd6 Re1 41. Bxf6 gxf6 42. Rxf6+ Ke7 43. Rf7+ 1-0 (43) Khalifman, A (2505) - Rozentalis, E (2520), Vilnius 1988. Of course, modern computers see much more than humans, especially in such unbalanced positions.

17. Red1 h6 18. Be3

In advance, I was planning the natural 18. Rd7, but then the ending after Qxd7 19. Bxd7 hgx5 started looking unclear (19... Bxc3 20. Be7!±) 20. Nxc5 Rfd8 21. Bf5 Rd2= - Stockfish "says" it's drawish.

18... Rfd8 19. Rdc1 Bxc3 20. bxc3

The careless 20. Rxc3?? loses on the spot to Qa5!-+

20... c5 21. Be4 a5 22. g3 g5! 23. Nd2?!

23. Rcb1 Rab8 24. Bd5 b5 (24... Kg7 25. h4 (25. Rb5 b6=) 25... f6 26. Rb5 b6 27. Kg2 is equal according to Stockfish, but to me White's position looks better.) 25. h4 bxc4 26. Rd1 Rd7 27. Bxc4 Rxd1+ 28. Rxd1 Re8! 29. Rd3∞)

23... Rab8 24. Bd5

24. Nb1?! b6 25. Na3 Qe5 26. Bd5 (26. Bc6 f5!±) h5!?∞ (26... Rxd5 27. cxd5 Qxd5=)

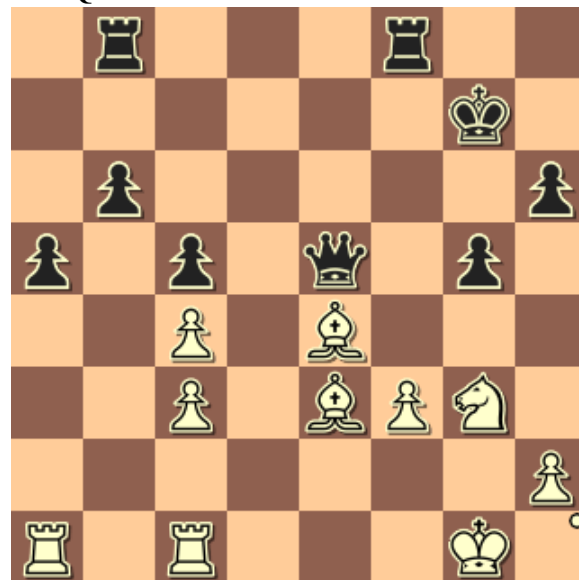
24... Kg7 25. Ne4 b6 26. g4 Qd7 27. f3

27. h3?!± f5 28. gxf5 Qxf5 29. Kg2 Rxd5!?

30. Ng3 Qe6 31. cxd5 Qxd5+ ±

27... f5 28. gxf5 Qxf5 29. Ng3

29. Rf1!? Rf8 30. Bf2!? Qxf3 31. Bd4+ cxd4 32. Rxf3 Rxf3 33. cxd4 Rd3 34. Ng3 Rf8=

29... Qe5 30. Be4 Rf8

Here it made sense for Black to remove the king from possible Knight checks with 30... Kh8

31. Bf2 Rbd8 ?!

31... Kh8 !?∞

32. Rab1 Qe6

32... Rd6? 33. Nh5+ Kh8 34. Bg3±)

33. Bd5 Qg6

33... Rxd5 34. cxd5 Qxd5 35. Rxb6 Qxf3 36. Bxc5±

34. Re1 Rde8 35. Be4 Qe6 36. Bd5 Qg6**37. Be4 Qe6 38. Bd3 Qd7 39. Rxe8 Rxe8**

39... Qxd3 40. Re7+ Rf7 (40... Kg8 41. Rxb6) 41. Rxf7+ (41. Rbe1) 41... Kxf7 42. Rxb6 is equal according to Stockfish.

40. Bf5 Qc6 41. Be4 Qe6

41... Rxe4 !? 42. fxe4 a4∞

**42. Nf5+ Kh8 43. Ne3 g4!**

A strong move which stops 44.Nd5

44. Bf5?

White is playing for a win, which is risky.

Far safer is 44. Nxg4 Rg8 45. Bd5 Qg6 attacking Rb1 46. Be4 (46. Re1? Re8!-+)

46... Qe6=

44... Qf6 45. fxe4 Rg8?

It's not easy to properly calculate the following computer lines,

but removing the Rook from the open file doesn't look convincing, although it

stops 46.Nd5 due to Qf5: 45... Qxc3! 46. Nd5 Qxc4 47. Nxb6 (47. Nf6 Re2 48. Rxb6 Qc1+ 49. Kg2 Qf4!-+ and the b8 square is covered by the Queen) 47... Qf4! 48. Rd1 h5! 49. Bxc5 hxe4 50. Rf1 Qd2+ and White can't coordinate his pieces

46. Kf1 Qxc3

46... Qe5 47. Rxb6 Qxh2=

47. Rxb6

At last my pieces start creating threats together.

47... a4?

The following is a superhuman computer escape: 47... Re8! 48. Rxh6+ Kg7 (48... Kg8 49. Be6+ Kf8 50. g5!? a4 51. Rf6+ Qxf6 52. gxf6 Rxe6±) 49. Rh7+ Kg8 50. Rh3 (no better way to protect Ne3) Qc1+ 51. Kg2 a4= 52. Nd5 Re2 !? 53. Nc3 Rd2 54. Nxa4 Rxf2+ 55. Kxf2 Qd2+ 56. Kf3 Qd1+ 57. Kf4 Qd4+ !?=)

48. Rxh6+ Kg7 49. Rh7+ Kf8 50. Ra7

Black's problem is his Rook is on the wrong side of the King

50... a3 51. Be4?

51. h4 !? Qb3 (51... Qb2 52. Nd5+-; 51... Qa1+ 52. Kg2 a2 53. Nc2! Qe5 54. Kf1!+-) 52. Be2! (52. h5 a2=) 52... Qc3 53. Be4 Rxe4 54. Nxg4 Qxc4+ 55. Kg1 Qxe4 56. Bxc5+-)

51... Qc1+ 52. Kg2 Qb2 53. h3 Rg7?

53... Rg5!∞

54. Ra8+ Kf7 55. Nc2+- Rg5

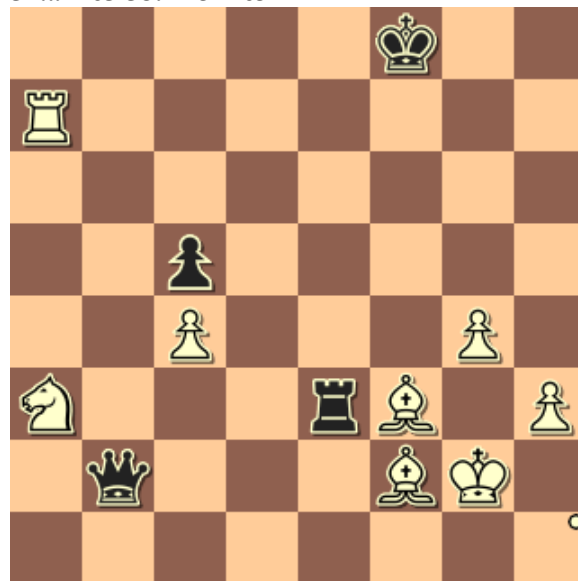
55... a2 56. Bxc5+-

56. Ra7+

56. Rxa3 !? Re5 57. Ra7+ Kg8 58. Bd3+-

56... Kf8 57. Nxa3

Much simpler is 57. Rxa3 Re5 58. Rf3+ Kg8 59. Bd3+-

57... Re5 58. Bf3 Re3

I simply missed this move in the time trouble. Luckily White finds the way to bring the Knight back into play just in time to help the Bishops.

59. Nb5 Rd3

59... Rxf3 60. Kxf3 Qb3+ 61. Be3! Qxc4 62. Nd6+-

60. Nc7!+- Rd2

60... Rxf3 61. Ne6+ !? Ke8 62. Ng7+! Kf8 63. Kxf3 Qb3+ 64. Be3 Qxc4 65. Nf5+-

61. Ne6+ Kg8

61... Ke8 62. Bc6+-

62. Ra8+ Kf7 63. Ng5+ Kg6 64. Ne4

Now it's over.

64... Rc2 65. h4 Rxc4 66. h5+ Kg7 67. Ra7+ Kf8 68. h6 Qe5 69. h7 Rxe4 70. Ra8+

1-0



2018 U.S. Girls Junior Championship Triumphant at Last

FM Carissa Yip

The US Junior Girls Closed Championship first started in 2014, and I've played in it ever since. Though I'm always one of the favorites, I've never come close to winning. In fact, in 2017, I was the top seed but failed miserably with one of the worst tournament performances in my life. Thus, going into the 2018 Championship, I couldn't say that I wasn't excited to redeem myself from my showing the previous year.

In the first round, I was paired against Rochelle Wu, a national master from California. The game turned out to be one of my favorites from the tournament.

NM Rochelle Wu (2252)

FM Carissa Yip (2381)

US Junior Girls' Championship (1)

07.12.2018

Grunfeld [D91]

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. Nf3 Bg7 5. Bg5 Ne4 6. cxd5 Nxc5 7. Nxc5 e6 8. Nf3 exd5= 9. b4 O-O 10. e3 Be6 11. Qb3?! Nd7 12. a4?! Rc8

Threatening c5

13. Bd3??

The bishop on d3 is awkwardly placed in lines after c5: for one, c4 is a threat, and there's an annoying fork after Nxc5

13. Be2 c5 lacks the same effect compared to the main line



13... c5 14. Qa3

14. bxc5 Nxc5 15. dxc5 15. Qc2 Qa5 16. Rc1 (16. Ra3 Nxd3+ 17. Qxd3 Qb4) Nxa4

14. bxc5 Nxc5 dxc5 d4 16. Bc4 Bxc4 17. Qxc4 dxc3 18. Nd4 Qg5

14. Qb2 Qb6

14. Be2 is best, but obviously counterintuitive.

14... cxd4 15. Nxd4 Bxd4 16. exd4 Qg5

This is already winning for Black - White can't get her king to safety without losing material.

17. g3



17. O-O Bh3

17... Bh3

Preventing O-O



18. Ne2 Rfe8 19. Qb2 Qg4 20. Rg1 Re7 21. Rd1 Rce8 22. Rd2 Nb6

Bringing the final piece into the game and threatening Nc4, which rids White of one of the knight's defenders

23. Qb3 Qf3 24. a5? Rxe2+



0-1

NM Maggie Fang (2333)

FM Carissa Yip (2381)

US Junior Girls' Championship (8)

07.20.2018

Reti Opening [A05]

After the first round, it was mostly smooth sailing, and going into the eighth round, I was half a point ahead of the rest of the field. Waiting for me was Maggie Feng, a player who had a plus score against me. I believed her to be my biggest obstacle to the title, and the result of the matchup could make or break my tournament.

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. g3 b5

Taking advantage of g3; it's much less attractive for White to play e4 to attack the b5 pawn now. Black is more or less playing an accelerated Queen's Indian, but with extra queenside

space where White is unable to get in c4 without compromising her structure.

3. Bg2 Bb7 4. O-O



4. Na3!

I believe this is the best against the b5 line. The idea is that after b4, White's knight can go to c4, and if Black plays a6, then after c4 b4 Nc2 White can maneuver d4, e.g. 4... a6 (4... b4 5. Nc4 d5 6. Nce5) 5. c4 b4 6. Nc2 e6 7. d4 White retains a solid slight advantage. The pawn on b4 is slightly misplaced; easy to attack and exploit.

4... e6 5. d3 Be7 6. e4 d6 7. Na3



This isn't as good with the addition of e4, offering an inferior a version of the immediate



Na3. After a6 c4 b4 Nc2, d4 isn't a possibility for White anymore since the e4 pawn would be hanging.

7... a6 8. c4 b4 9. Nc2

Interesting is 9. Qa4+ The idea is that at the end of all the forced moves, White has d4 to exploit the pin that is on the Black king: 9... Nc6 10. Nc2 a5 11. d4∞

9... a5 10. Nd2 e5 11. f4 Nbd7 12. Nf3 O-O 13. Kh1 Re8 14. Be3 Bf8 15. Qd2 c6

Preparing d5 in the nick of time

16. Rael Qc7 17. Bg1 Rad8 18. Re2 Ba6



I was also considering 18... Nh5, but for some reason couldn't find a proper continuation after 19. Nh4. What I didn't calculate, as it turned out, was the most obvious move, after which I'm sure I'm better: 19... d5! After 20. fxe5 Nxe5, all of White's pieces are awkwardly placed, including the central pawns. 21. exd5 cxd5 22. c5 Ba6 23. d4 Nc4 24. Qe1 Qc6 25. Rxe8 Rxe8 26. Qd1 Nf6 still leaves the game about equal, but I definitely prefer Black.

19. b3 d5?!

Too soon; there's no reason for this to be played right away. White can't do much, so I should've just slowly improved my position waiting for the right time to break

20. exd5 cxd5 21. fxe5 dxc4 22. bxc4

22. exf6 Rxe2 23. Qxe2 cxd3-+

22... Nxe5 23. Nxe5 Rxe5 24. Bd4 Rh5?

The positions after Rxe2 would be technically equal, but uncomfortable. After Rh5, Black creates an interesting balance between a weak king/bad pawn structure and active pieces:

24... Rxe2= 25. Qxe2 Re8 26. Qf2 Re6

25. Bxf6± gxf6 26. Qe3??



This loses material and blows everything. The e3 square should've been used for the knight instead to go to the superior square on d5, a la 26. Ne3! ± Bh6 27. Rxf6 Bxc4∞

26... Re5!± 27. Qf3?

It's already a bad position for White, but this worsens things significantly

27... Rxd3!-+ 28. Qg4+

28. Qxd3 Bxc4 29. Qd2 Rxe2-+

28... Rg5 29. Qe4?

29. Qf4 is better than what was played, but still should be losing for White after 29... Qxf4 30. gxf4 Rg6 31. Ne3 Rd4



29... Qxc4 30. Rfe1 Qxe4 31. Bxe4 Rc3
 32. Rd2 Re5 33. Bg2 Rxc2 34. Rxe5
 34. Rxc2 Rxe1+
 34... Rc1+ 35. Bf1 fxe5 36. Kg2 Bxf1+ 37. Kf2
 Bc4

0-1

That game more or less secured first place, as I ended up being a full point ahead of the competition with one round to go. After a draw in the last round, I became the 2018 US Junior Girls' Champion.



Yip with GM Awonder Liang, who won the U.S. Junior Chess Championship. Photo credit: Chess News



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Cambridge IM Norm Invitational Deviating from the Norm

FM Jacob Chudnovsky

In August of 2018, I received an exciting e-mail from Andrew Hoy, president of the Boylston Chess Club. Andrew was inviting me to participate in the BCC's first round-robin IM norm event. I had heard discussions of such an event for at least two years, and earlier this year, the concept finally came to fruition. Although I am much older than most chess players working on their IM and GM norms, I have been experiencing a second chess youth since 2016 and thought I'd give it a shot.

The event consisted of 10 players in single round-robin format. The invitees included one GM (Alexander Ivanov), two IMs (Denys Shmelov and Yaacov Norowitz), and seven FMs vying for an IM norm. FM Carissa Yip was also eligible for a WGM norm. The required score for an IM norm was 6/9; for a WGM norm, 5.5/9. The time control was a generous 90 minutes / game, with a 30-second increment starting from move 1. The increment made a huge difference, allowing time to think on every move and making a loss on time extremely unlikely. The increment also made it both possible and required to record every move, even with less than 5 minutes remaining on the clock. This was a FIDE rule implemented for the event, along with others such as a zero-tolerance policy for use of cell phones. I didn't find the rules burdensome at all. In fact, the cell phone policy was very nice. Although >99% of chess players don't use cell phones to cheat, it's always disruptive when someone's phone goes off during a round.

The tournament was won by GM Ivanov, who finished in clear first with a score of 6.5/9. IM Shmelov and FM Hans Niemann split second-third places with 6/9. This meant FM Niemann achieved an IM norm. As it happened, it was the third and final norm he needed for the title. Congrats to GM Ivanov and IM-elect Niemann!

As for myself, I finished in fourth place with 5.5/9, just half a point short of the score needed for an IM norm. No one else achieved a norm either, with Carissa, unfortunately, falling short of the score needed for either an IM or a WGM norm. Everyone, however, showed up for fighting chess every round. Not a single player drew more than half of his or her games, with only one player drawing as many as four and multiple participants only drawing one. Every single player, including Ivanov, was nicked for at least one loss. Kings were slain. Queens were dethroned. Knights were beheaded. Bishops were excommunicated. Pawns were... uh... pwned. (Sorry. I had to.)

My tournament was an up-and-down affair, in particularly extreme form. In the first round, I won convincingly against Carissa Yip, using a neat tactic to open up her king's position in a Najdorf Sicilian.

FM Jacob Chudnovsky (2447)

FM Carissa Yip (2407)

**Cambridge Summer Norm Invitational (1)
08.23.2018**



Black's setup with Qd8-b6-b7 is one of the main lines in the Fischer-Sozin (6. Bc4) variation of the Najdorf, but I've always found it suspect. Note Black's pile of pieces on the queenside, the



fact that the a8 rook and c8 bishop are not only undeveloped but *can't* be developed any time soon, and the lack of protection around Black's king. The time has come for a decisive attack.

20. e5! dxe5 21. Qh3! g6

Or 21... h6 22. fxe5 and 23. Bxh6, with similarly grim consequences.

22. Nxe6!

A piece sacrifice to destroy the cover around Black's king.

22... exf4

Black attempts to hold on by sacrificing an exchange. The main line would run 22... fxe6 (22... Ndb8 *doesn't* work on account of 23. Qh6) 23. Bxg6 Ndb8 24. fxe5 Nxe5 25. Rxf6 Rxf6 26. Rd8+ Kg7 27. Qxh7#. Black can defend a little more stubbornly at various points in this line, but White always emerges with a material plus and a continuing attack.

23. Nxf8 Nxf8 24. Qf3 fxe3

Otherwise White simply collects the pawn on f4 and emerges ahead by an exchange.

25. Qxf6+ Kg8 26. Rb1 Qa7?!

26... Qc7 would have held on a bit longer, but Black is clearly lost after 27. Nb6.

27. Qxc6 e2+ 28. Rf2 Rb8 29. Re1

Black resigned.

1-0

However, after this auspicious start, I proceeded to "castle queenside" in rounds 2-4. I know I had lost three games in a row previously, at some point in the past, but I can't recall when. My losses were to the players who ended up finishing in first to third places, in that order. In all these games, I kept committing the same sins: superficial opening preparation, poor positional understanding, misevaluation of middlegame structures, and inability to defend worse positions.

GM Alexander Ivanov (2544)

FM Jacob Chudnovsky (2447)

Cambridge Summer Norm Invitational (2)

08.23.2018



12... b4

GM Ivanov and I previously contested this position at the 2016 New England Masters. In that game I played 12... c4. While I did end up winning that game, the move is somewhat speculative and not entirely sound. Furthermore, Alexander repeated the opening from our previous game quickly and confidently, which told me that he had prepared an improvement. In any case, 12... b4 is the main line.

13. Ne3 Bc8 14. Nfd2!?

White comes up with an interesting plan to avoid exchanging the a2 bishop and gain control over the light squares.

14... Be6 15. Ndc4 Nxc4?!

The first positional inaccuracy, this one relatively small. Better was 15... Nc6, the point being that 16. a5? Nxa5 is actually fine for Black (17. Nxa5 Qxa5 pins the a2 bishop). Without 16. a5, White's two knights get in each other's way, and he will find it hard to improve his position. Black will play ...a6-a5 himself.

16. Nxc4 Re8?

The second positional mistake, this one much more significant. 16... a5 was necessary.



Facing off against Ivanov

17. a5! Bf8?

The third positional mistake, this one decisive. Black had to play 17... h6 or 17... Nd7 to preserve the remaining knight. Instead, I pursued my own plan without paying attention to my opponent's one.

18. Nb6! Ra7 19. Bg5!

And suddenly, positionally speaking, the game is over. White will now exchange the g5 bishop for Black's knight, gain total control over the light squares, invade on the queenside, and attack Black's weaknesses. And there is nothing Black can do about it. Black's two bishops are irrelevant, as the f8 bishop is the most useless piece on the board.

19... h6 20. Bxf6 Qxf6 21. c3 bxc3 22. bxc3 Qg6 23. Bd5!

And 12 moves later, Black resigned, without ever getting any real counterplay.

1-0

After this loss in round 2, I lost similarly one-sided games to Denys Shmelov and Hans Niemann in rounds 3 and 4, respectively. I was out-prepared in the opening and outplayed in the middlegame, failing to put up significant resistance in either attempt.

FM Hans Niemann (2473)

FM Jacob Chudnovsky (2447)

**Cambridge Summer Norm Invitational (4)
08.24.2018**



Against my Gruenfeld, Hans had prepared a line popularized by GM Yu Yangyi. Being unfamiliar with it, I reacted sub-optimally, allowing White to gain some advantage.

16... Rd7?!

A dubious plan. 16... Rac8 was simplest and best.

17. Rc3!

Excellent positional move, preparing a battery on the c-file.

17... f5?

Aiming to gain control of the d5 square and the light-squared long diagonal, but this is refuted tactically.

18. e5 Qf8 19. Qc2! Ne7?!

Strictly speaking, 20... Na5 would have been better, but that defeats the whole point of playing 18... f5, and Black's position would have still been very poor. Now, if Black could only get one more move, he'd be doing great. Unfortunately...

20. Bb5! Be4 21. Bxd7! Bxc2 22. Bxe6+ Kh8 23. Rxc2

After the positional queen sacrifice, material is, technically, equal, but with two passed pawns in the center and complete control of the board, White is winning. **Black resigned** 10 moves later.

1-0



Thus, I found myself sitting on 1/4. I was not demoralized but very frustrated and feeling like I had wasted this unique opportunity to gain a norm. Mathematically, I could still reach 6/9. Indeed, after handing me my third loss in a row, Hans graciously predicted that I would win my remaining 5 games. I responded to this appropriately with a hearty laugh – or as hearty as one can muster when sitting on 1/4 after three losses in a row.

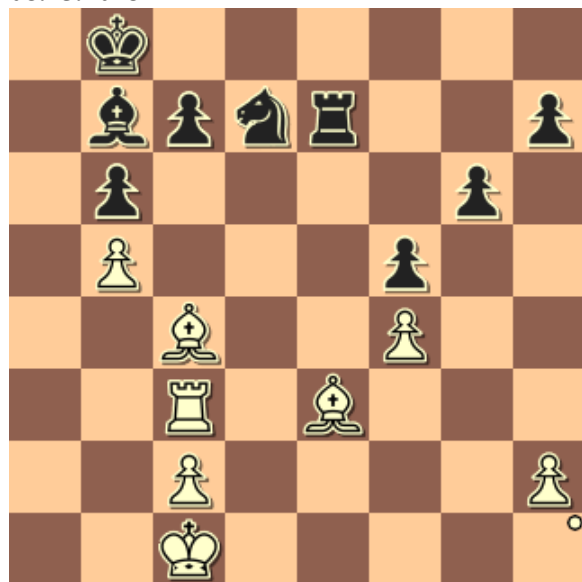
In round 5, facing FM Qibiao Wang with white, I was determined to do whatever was needed to win. “Giving it my all”, as the cliché goes, had clearly proven insufficient, so I had to give more than that. (It’s not supposed to make sense, don’t worry about it. It’s a pep talk.) Unfortunately, in a slightly better position in a Petroff, I missed a tactic that led to the loss of a pawn. I got some initiative in compensation, which Qibiao proceeded to neutralize. I was now facing the prospect of upgrading my queenside castling to an Audi. I bailed out into a pawn-down endgame.

FM Jacob Chudnovsky (2447)

FM Qibiao Wang (2403)

Cambridge Summer Norm Invitational (5)

08.25.2018



In compensation for the pawn, White has the two bishops. The superiority of the unopposed dark-square bishop over Black’s knight is

especially clear. The engine gives Black a roughly 0.8-pawn advantage. It is reasonable that White has enough compensation for a draw. It is *not* reasonable, by any objective chess metrics, that White should be able to win. But there is more to chess than objective chess metrics.

32. Rd3

Grabbing the open file and emphasizing the vulnerability of the d7 knight.

32... Be4 33. Rd2 c5?!

This is the exact moment my tournament turned around. After I had played 33. Rd2, my opponent looked surprised for a moment, which told me that perhaps he had thought this move is not playable and only now saw that 33... Bxc2? loses: 34. Kxc2 Rxe3 35. Rxd7. 33... c5 is designed to prevent 34. Bd4, but it weakens the b6 pawn. Moreover, the e3 bishop can be activated via a different route.

34. Bf2!

Suddenly, Black’s rook *and* knight are vulnerable. Obviously, Black is still at least equal.

34... Kc7 35. Bh4 Re8 36. Bf7

Look at those bishops go!

36... Rf8 37. Be6 Nf6 38. Bg5!

The exclamation mark is purely for psychological reasons. White could have now taken a draw by repetition: 38. Bxf6 Rxf6 39. Rd7+ Kc8 40. Rd6+ Kc7 41. Rd7+. But at this point, I wanted more. Not because the position warranted it, but because I sensed the change in momentum. Starting with 33... c5, my opponent was slipping into progressively worse time trouble and showing increasing visible signs of nervousness. The position is roughly equal. Black is a bit tangled and can’t do much to improve his position, but neither, quite frankly, can White. In fact, 38. Bg5 doesn’t do much of anything, chess-wise. But it does something mentally. It tells my opponent that I’m declining the draw and pressing for a win, despite being a pawn down. I could feel myself regaining control of the game and of my tournament.

38... Bf3 39. c4 Bb7 40. Kb2 Bc8 41. Bxc8 Kxc8



Engine: “Inaccurate. Best was 41... Ne4!! 42. Rd7+ Kxc8 43. Rxh7 Nxg5 44. fxg5 f4 with a slight advantage for Black.” Me: “Seriously, dude? You need to lower your expectations of us puny humans.”

42. Rd6 Nd7 43. Re6! Rf7 44. Rc6+ Kb7 45. Bd8

White has taken maximum advantage of the opponent’s inaccuracies to improve his position. He has lured the black rook off the 8th rank to enable 45. Bd8, and now Black’s knight is stuck defending the b6 pawn, his rook can only shuffle back and forth between f7 and g7, and his king, likewise, can only shuffle between b7 and a7. However, if Black does just that, the position is still drawn. 46. Rc7+ is not an actual threat, and White has no way to make further progress. But it’s not easy to sit and do nothing, especially in time pressure and under stress. Defending against the phantom threat of 46. Rc7+, my opponent made an impulsive decision.

45... Nb8? 46. Rxb6+

Finally, for the first time in the game, White has an advantage.

The rest of the game was played in time pressure, particularly severe in my opponent’s case. I will spare the readers the long and error-filled remainder of the game. Nearly 30 moves later, I finally clawed my way to victory. **Black resigned** on move 73.

1-0

With this win, gained less through skill than through sheer stubbornness, I stopped the hemorrhage of points. The next round, I regained some actual chess-playing ability.

FM Nathan Solon

FM Jacob Chudnovsky

**Cambridge Summer Norm Invitational (6)
08.25.2018**



This was my favorite game of the tournament. From an anti-Grunfeld line that Nathan had prepared for the tournament and that somewhat resembles the Russian variation of the Grunfeld, we have reached a sharp and unbalanced position. This is the type of game I’m comfortable with and (IMHO) Nathan is uncomfortable with. Nathan is mainly a positional player who enjoys clean positions with an initiative that he can press. I, on the other hand, thrive in chaos and insanity. (Insert cartoon villain laugh here.)

For now, Black’s Grunfeld bishop has been blocked by a wall of pawns. But fear not, he will have his say in the game. In fact, he will offer his life for the glory of his king not once, not twice, but three times!

19... g5

Opening up the g file for the rook and the e8-h5 diagonal for the queen, and starting to chip away at the pawns blocking the g7 bishop.

20. Qg2?! Ra6!

The rook quickly swings over to the kingside, and White’s move ends up being a waste of a tempo. After the game, Nathan said he saw 20... Ra6 but then forgot about it. If White now tries to block the rook with 21. e6, he releases the bishop and runs into 21... a3!

21. Kh1 Rg6 22. Qe2

There is the waste of a tempo.

22... Kh8 23. Qb5!



Although Black is working on building a kingside initiative, White has his trumps too, including a better pawn structure and dominance on the queenside. This move maximizes White's counterplay. If Black allows the exchange of queens, the endgame will be winning for White. Thus, Black is forced to sacrifice pretty much the entire queenside and go all-in on the kingside attack.

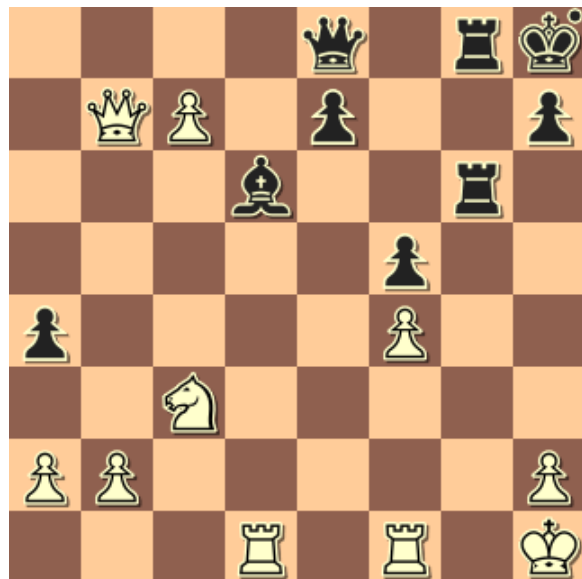
23... c6 24. Qxb7 gxf4 25. exf4 Rg8 26. dxc6

This is starting to look grim for Black, but...

26... Bxe5!

Bishop sacrifice number one. 27. fxe5? Rg2! ends the game, as the threats of 28... Qg6, 28... Qh5, and 28... Rxh2+ leave White powerless to prevent mate.

27. c7! Bd6!?



Having seen the position around the point, some people asked me later how I could have won this game, as it looked like I was losing. Indeed, the c-pawn is near promotion, White was threatening 28. Rd8, and it's not entirely clear how Black continues the attack. However, as we will see, the c-pawn is vulnerable as well, and Black's attack will gain tremendous strength as soon as the queen joins. The engine, in fact, confirms that this is far from winning for White, although White can achieve a roughly 1-pawn advantage with best play.

At this point, Black had an interesting option leading to a draw: 27... Bxc7!? 28. Qxc7 Qa8+

29. Nd5 (29. Rd5? e6 30. Qe5+ R8g7 -/+) e6 30. Qe5+ R8g7, and White will reach a pawn-up rook endgame that he can't win, e.g. 31. Rg1 Qxd5+! 32. Qxd5 exd5 33. Rxg6 hxg6 34. Rxd5 Rb7 =. Instead, 27... Bd6 stops 28. Rd8 and maintains the tension.

28. Rg1?

A tactical blunder borne out of an understandable desire to fight for the g-file and protect the king. Instead, the engine suggests the fearless 28. Nb5! continuing to press on the queenside. After 28... Bc5 29. Nd4 (29. Rd8?? Rg1+), various tactical shenanigans lead to a small advantage for White. But 28. Nb5 is not an easy move for a human to play. In general, this is the type of position that's easy for a computer to play accurately but scary and confusing for a human.

28... Bxc7!

Bishop sacrifice number two. The bishop is immune (29. Qxc7 Qa8+). This means White has lost his main trump, and Black now has a free attack against White's king and pressure against the weak f4 pawn. It took one mistake from White for Black to get a winning advantage.

29. Rxg6 Qxg6 30. Ne2??

30. Qf3 would have held on longer, but after 30... Bxf4 Black is still winning.

30... Qg4 31. Re1

Or 31. Rg1 Qxe2 32. Rxg8+ Kxg8 33. Qxc7 Qf1#.

31... Ba5 32. Nc3 Bb6!

Bishop sacrifice number three! Again, the bishop is immune (33. Qxb6 Qg2#), and there is only one defense against 33... Qg1+.

33. Ne2 Bf2

In the end, the Gruenfeld bishop not only survives but gets to deal the final blow. **White resigned.**

No one puts Bishop in the corner!

0-1



In round 7, facing IM Yaacov Norowitz with white, I played my first and only good positional game of the tournament. It was also the only game where my opening preparation actually paid off. I obtained a very comfortable position against Yaacov's favorite line in the Caro-Kann, and after he went for the wrong pawn lever, I was able to saddle him with weak pawns and holes along the dark squares. I continued building up pressure and tying his pieces to defense of the weaknesses. Eventually, rather than continue sitting passively and awaiting his fate, he lashed out with a rook sacrifice, which was reasonably straightforward to refute. My opponent was gracious in defeat, saying he had enjoyed the game more than some wins. In round 8, I won again, this time on the white side of another sharp Najdorf, against FM Nicholas Vettese.

Thus, I had won four games in a row and gone from 1/4 to 5/8. Suddenly, the idea of an IM norm was no longer ridiculous. After round 8, Hans reminded me, "I told you you'd win the next five games." Unfortunately, his prediction didn't come true. I was unable to win in the last round with black against FM Eugene Hua. Eugene had had a very rough first half of the tournament and put playing solidly above everything else in the second half, to avoid losing any more games. He exchanged queens early on in our game and played conservatively throughout, and I never got any real winning chances. Winning five games in a row proved a bit too much for me. With my only draw coming in the last round, I just barely missed the norm.



The field. Clockwise, from left: IM Yaacov Norowitz (observing), IM Denys Shmelov, FM Nathan Solon, GM Alexander Ivanov, FM Carissa Yip, FM Nicholas Vettese, FM Hans Niemann, FM Qibiao Wang
The Final Standings

Name Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tot
GM A. Ivanov (USA) 2544	X	½	0	1	½	½	1	1	1	1	6.5
IM D. Shmelov (UKR) 2555	½	X	½	1	½	1	0	½	1	1	6.0
FM H. Niemann (USA) 2473	1	½	X	1	1	0	1	0	½	1	6.0
FM J. Chudnovsky (USA) 2447	0	0	0	X	1	1	1	½	1	1	5.5
IM Y. Norowitz (USA) 2485	½	½	0	0	X	1	½	1	1	½	5.0
FM C. Yip (USA) 2407	½	0	1	0	0	X	0	1	1	1	4.5
FM N. Solon (USA) 2392	0	1	0	0	½	1	X	½	0	½	3.5
FM E. Hua (CAN) 2311	0	½	1	½	0	0	½	X	0	1	3.5
FM N. Vettese (CAN) 2181	0	0	½	0	0	0	1	1	X	1	3.5
FM Q. Wang (CHN) 2403	0	0	0	0	½	0	½	0	0	X	1.0

Although I did not achieve an IM norm, the tournament was a reasonable success for me. I performed above my expected score and raised my rating to the highest it has ever been. I greatly enjoyed playing in this format – a round robin, with a long time control, with strong opponents in every round. I want to thank the organizers and Bob Messenger, the chief TD, for an excellently run event, and I hope the BCC holds more such norm invitationals. With better opening preparation and improvements to my positional play in the middlegame, I could potentially make my next shot at a norm more successful.



2018 World Chess Championship **Caruana, Wayward Son**

FM Christopher Chase

The 2018 World Championship match is over. American challenger Fabiano “Fabi” Caruana has sadly (at least for Americans) been defeated, losing rather decisively in the rapids tie-break after a rather tedious if tension-filled 12 classical draws. Magnus Carlsen is once again world champ, defending the title he first claimed in 2013 when he bested Vishy Anand in India. This is his third successful defense, following 2014 (in a rematch against Anand) and 2016 (against Russian Sergey Karjakin). Fabiano was the first American to contend for the title since Gata Kamsky played Karpov in the 1996 FIDE finals, or since Bobby Fischer if we’re excluding non-Classical titles.

The match was hotly anticipated and talked about since Caruana won the 2018 Candidates in the Berlin. And though it would have been nice to have an American champion, it was not to be.

Held in the “Post Modern Bat Cave” like Kühlhaus Hall in Berlin, the 2018 Candidates was a strange affair, with the door blown wide open by the collapse of my pre-tournamen Levon Aronian’s complete collapse. The basketball loving and Boston Celtic supporter Aronian, finished dead last with a shocking 6 loses. His Caruana’s triumph was by mere point over Karjakin and Mamedyarov but a win is a win and with his win the U. S. Chess scene was all a buzz, especially the St. Louis CC (www.SaintLouisChessClub.org), Fabiano’s base of operations. It was even suggested that the Club would actually host the match when the World Chess was slow with the details of the championship match in London. This would be a dream come true for American Chess as I am sure the St. Louis CC would spare no expense promoting the match and chess in America but alas, it was not to be. Agon finally raised its for-profit head and the match was headed to a small, seldom used hall in London (The College, Southampton Row) with no great promotional

effort for chess. John Saunders wrote a blog posting of the numerous short comings of the site. One major shortcoming of the whole organization was the unannounced policy of only allowing spectators 30 minutes in the auditorium for their £60+ (\$79) ticket.

Going into the match, I considered Carlsen as at least a 2 to 1 favorite given his big match experience, his greater endgame skill and his far greater rating in rapids and blitz, the tie-breakers. But every dog has their day, so maybe, just maybe, Caruana could pull an upset, and it wasn’t as if Carlsen’s recent play was so impeccable. It seems to me he lost his lust for chess he had in the past. He said as much in a press conference when he said named himself, “three or four years ago,” as his favorite player! And this was from someone who just turned 28 a few days after the match. For a benchmark, Fischer won the title at 28, Spassky and Petrosian at 32.

The first game’s celebrity first mover was the actor, and a personal favorite of mine, Woody Harrelson. Though 1.e4 was requested by Caruana, Woody played 1.d4 and Fabiano nearly had a heart attack. He asked if he had to live with the move in a rather quiet, concerned voice and the answer was “No” he got his 1.e4 but his nerves revealed themselves then and in the game. It seems that 1...c5 surprised him somewhat, particularly 2...Nc6. He fell back on his tried and true Rossolimo Attack. He brought nothing new and in fact he played just routine moves, attractive but pointless and got a poor opening and a lost position soon thereafter, not to mention terrible time pressure. Carlsen was playing quickly and with much confidence. Meanwhile, Caruana was the opposite, moving slowly and nervously in a worsening position. Not only did the position become lost, he was also playing on the increment for the last 10 moves or so. He needed a miracle to avoid a disastrous first game loss and a miracle he got. Carlsen decided, or so it seemed to me, that the position would win itself and just played without thought, hoping for that time pressure blunder. When it didn’t come by the first time control,



Carlsen had to try to squeeze a win out of a slightly better endgame in the second, which he wasn't up to. The draw saved Caruana from disaster and I thought it would let him relax a bit – if he didn't lose that position, what position could he lose?

This was the closest Carlsen would get to a win - that is until the 12th and final classical game, but we'll get to that later. Carlsen tried 2 d4s, 3 c4s and 3 e4s all without much success. Caruana stuck with 1.e4 throughout but with very little success other than in game 8 and maybe in the 10th. Against 1.d4, Caruana came well prepared against Carlsen's QGD with 7.Bf4, even the second time around Carlsen he achieved nothing. Against 1.c4 Caruana had a nice little system with 4...d5 and 6...Bc5 that Carlsen couldn't dent. Against 1.e4 Fabiano used his Petroff to much success and again, Carlsen had nothing really to offer against it. In fact, he nearly lost to the Petroff's in game 6 when he tried a silly but cute line that Caruana was well prepared for, got bored, was worse and then allowed a mate in 36 but more on that later. On the other side of the coin, Caruana kept to his Rossolimo gaining almost next to nothing other than in game 3 where White had a chance at some point for an initiative but a careless move order lost that possibility. In fact, there was much puzzlement by the press and all those twitter/comments on the match why White was doing so badly. Only when Caruana allowed Carlsen's Sveshnikov Variation (or the Chelyabinsk Variation as declared by Gennadi Timoshchenko in his brand new book "Sicilian Defense: The Chelyabinsk Variation" 2018, Russell Enterprises) using the seldom 7.Nd5 did White achieve something.

Match highlights revolve around games 6, 8 and 12, so let's dive in.

GM Magnus Carlsen (2835)

GM Fabiao Caruana (2832)

FIDE World Championship 2018 (6)

11.16.2018

Petrov [C42]

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nxe5 d6 4. Nd3

As mentioned, Carlsen tried a crazy line, 4.Nd3, against the Petroff's with some hope, I guess, of catching Caruana but the line is well known, at least according to Alexander Grischuk, whose commentary along with Peter Svidler, Sopiko Guramishvili, and Anish Giri (Guramashvili's husband) I was watching on Chess24.com.

4... Nxe4 5. Qe2 Qe7 6. Nf4 Nc6 7. Nd5 Nd4



8. Qc4 is seemingly winning, but Black is saved by the very cute mate 8... Nc3+ 9. Nxe7 Nxc2#. Without that possibility, there is nothing else for White to do but enter a rather stale and equal queenless middlegame.

8. Nxe7 Nxe2 9. Nd5 Nd4 10. Na3 Ne6

Svidler commented that this was one of the strangest openings he had seen in a while, given 15 knight moves, with 10 in a row, all by move 10! It was one of those types of positions that Carlsen used to excel at, but not today.

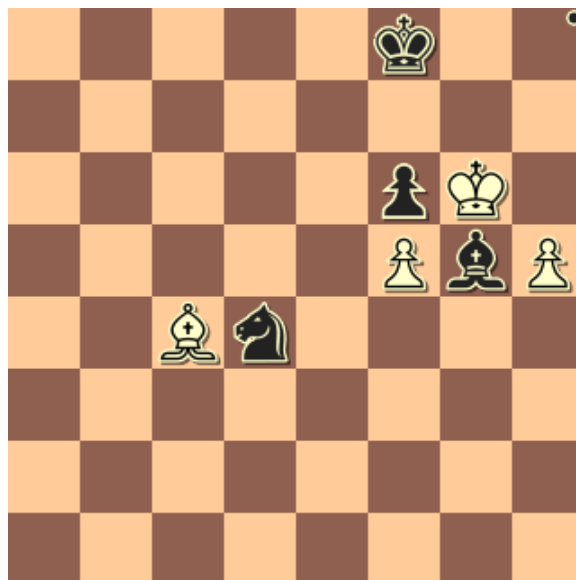
11. f3 N4c5 12. d4 Nd7 13. c3 c6 14. Nf4 Nb6 15. Bd3 d5 16. Nc2 Bd6 17. Nxe6 Bxe6 18. Kf2 h5 19. h4 Nc8 20. Ne3 Ne7 21. g3 c5



In his apparent boredom, the reigning champion here has let Caruana seize the initiative. What follows is a worsening position in which White is forced to sacrifice a piece for a few pawns in an attempt to hold a fortress (which of course, Carlsen denied the existence of at the last world championship match in 2016).

22. Bc2 O-O 23. Rd1 Rfd8 24. Ng2 cxd4 25. cxd4 Rac8 26. Bb3 Nc6 27. Bf4 Na5 28. Rdc1 Bb4 29. Bd1 Nc4 30. b3 Na3 31. Rxc8 Rxc8 32. Rc1 Nb5 33. Rxc8+ Bxc8 34. Ne3 Nc3 35. Bc2 Ba3 36. Bb8 a6 37. f4 Bd7 38. f5 Bc6 39. Bd1 Bb2 40. Bxh5 Ne4+ 41. Kg2 Bxd4 42. Bf4 Bc5 43. Bf3 Nd2 44. Bxd5 Bxe3 45. Bxc6 Bxf4 46. Bxb7 Bd6 47. Bxa6 Ne4 48. g4 Ba3 49. Bc4 Kf8 50. g5 Nc3 51. b4 Bxb4 52. Kf3 Na4 53. Bb5 Nc5 54. a4 f6 55. Kg4 Ne4 56. Kh5 Be1 57. Bd3 Nd6 58. a5 Bxa5 59. gxf6 gxf6 60. Kg6 Bd8 61. Kh7 Nf7 62. Bc4 Ne5 63. Bd5 Ba5 64. h5 Bd2 65. Ba2 Nf3 66. Bd5 Nd4 67. Kg6 Bg5 68. Bc4

Most human experts on site thought White had good chances for a draw and so it seemed the game was heading to a draw. Caruana himself seemed to have given up any real effort to win, but during the game the Norwegian supercomputer Sesse found that Black missed a mate in 38 moves. It is beyond human abilities but very cute, and it arrives (or would have arrived) here.



The idea Sesse finds is that White is in a bizarre Zugzwang after 68... Bh4. An advance of the h-pawn loses it, the king is tied down to the f-pawn, and the white bishop can only hold off so many knight maneuvers at once.

(68... Bh4!! 69. Bd5 Ne2 70. Bf3 Ng1!! 71. Bg4 Kg8! 72. Kh6 Bg3 73. Kg6 Be5 74. Kh6 Bf4+ 75. Kg6 Bg5 76. h6 Kh8! 77. h7 Bh4 78. Kh6 Be1 79. Kg6 Bc3 80. Kh6 Bd2+ 81. Kg6 Bg5 82. Bh5 Nh3 83. Bg4 Nf4+ 84. Kf7 Kxh7 85. Bd1 Kh6 86. Kf8 Nd5 87. Kg8 Ne7+ 88. Kh8 Nxf5 89. Kg8 Nd6 90. Bc2 f5 91. Bd1 f4 92. Bf3 Kg6 93. Bd5 Bh6 94. Bf7+ Kf6 95. Bd5 Nb5 96. Bc4 Na3 97. Bb3 Nb1 98. Bc2 Nd2 99. Bd1 f3 100. Kh7 f2 101. Be2 Bg7 102. Bd3 fl=Q 103. Bxf1 Nxf1 104. Kg8 Ne3 105. Kh7 Ng4 106. Kg8 Bh6 107. Kh8 Kg6 108. Kg8 Nf6+ 109. Kh8 Bg7# 0-1) 68... Nf3 69. Kh7 Ne5 70. Bb3 Ng4 71. Bc4 Ne3 72. Bd3 Ng4 73. Bc4 Nh6 74. Kg6 Ke7 75. Bb3 Kd6 76. Bc2 Ke5 77. Bd3 Kf4 78. Bc2 Ng4 79. Bb3 Ne3 80. h6 Bxh6

GM Fabiano Caruana (2832)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2835)

FIDE World Championship 2018 (8)

11.19.2018

Sicilian [B33]



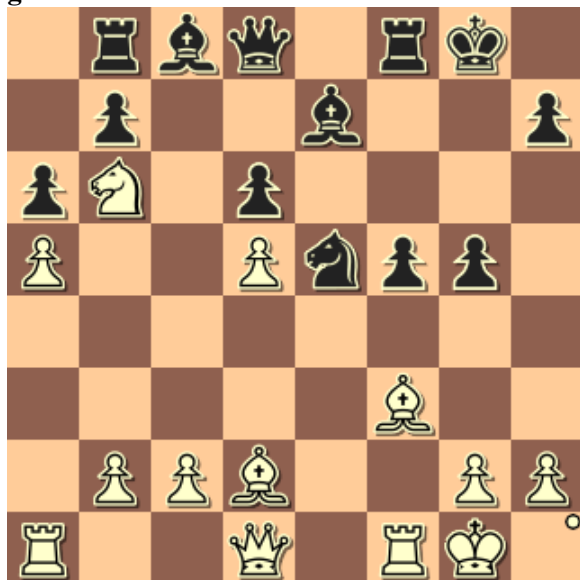
Game 8 sees Caruana giving up on the Rossolimo and allowing Carlsen's Sveshnikov, to no one's surprise and it was his best chance to win a game and the title.

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 e5 6. Ndb5 d6 7. Nd5



Fabiano comes prepared. Chessgames.com shows over 5,000 games with 7. Bg5, but under 500 with the game move.

7... Nxd5 8. exd5 Nb8 9. a4 Be7 10. Be2 O-O 11. O-O Nd7 12. Bd2 f5 13. a5 a6 14. Na3 e4 15. Nc4 Ne5 16. Nb6 Rb8 17. f4 exf3 18. Bxf3 g5?



Svidler speculated this was losing by force. It's a strange move when either 18...Nd7 or 18...f4 are fine. Why expose your king so?

19. c4 f4 20. Bc3 Bf5

Sesse evaluates this position as +1.92 for White – that is, clearly and completely winning.

Caruana finds the best move to capitalize, but only after 32 minutes of thought; a terrible waste of time and one that illustrates his overly cautious approach in the match.

21. c5 Nxf3+ 22. Qxf3 dxc5 23. Rad1 Bd6



24. h3?

Caruana, in what was essentially a winning a position played a move heard around the world, 24.h3? over the winning 24.Qh5. Sigh. 24...Qe8 was Carlsen's almost immediate response, the advantage was more or less lost. Not to be overly critical but the Chess24 team (Svidler, Grischuk, and Giri), not using computers, looked only at the direct Qh5, with all its attacking ideas, and did not even consider h3.

24... Qe8 25. Nc4 Qg6 26. Nxd6 Qxd6 27. h4 gxh4 28. Qxf4 Qxf4 29. Rxf4 h5 30. Re1 Bg4 31. Rf6 Rxf6 32. Bxf6 Kf7 33. Bxh4 Re8 34. Rf1+ Kg8 35. Rf6 Re2 36. Rg6+ Kf8 37. d6 Rd2 38. Rg5



GM Fabiano Caruana (2832)
 GM Magnus Carlsen (2835)
 FIDE World Championship 2018 (12)
 11.16.2018
 Sicilian [B33]

Game 12 will be talked about for a long time and, I believe, it is a big hit to Carlsen's reputation and legacy.

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6
 5. Nc3 e5 6. Ndb5 d6 7. Nd5 Nxd5 8. exd5 Ne7
 9. c4 Ng6 10. Qa4 Bd7 11. Qb4 Bf5 12. h4 h5



It's another 7. Nd5 Scheveningen, but this time Carlsen's team out-prepared Fabi's. 12... h5 is not mentioned in the Timoshenko book on the matter, which only considers 12...a6.

13. Qa4 Bd7 14. Qb4 Bf5 15. Be3

Fabiano here does turn down a tacit draw offer, much to his credit. After this point, though, he begins to drift on the board and again on the clock.

15... a6 16. Nc3 Qc7 17. g3 Be7 18. f3 Nf8 19. Ne4 Nd7 20. Bd3 O-O 21. Rh2

This move and Caruana's next may have been a little too clever.

22... Rac8 22. O-O-O Bg6 23. Rc2 f5 24. Nf2 Nc5 25. f4

... And this may have been close to losing, but Carlsen shows an absolute unwillingness to calculate by rejecting 25... exf4. It seemed he had made up his mind to go for tie-breaks.

a5 26. Qd2 e4 27. Be2 Be8 28. Kb1 Bf6 29. Re1 a4 30. Qb4 g6 31. Rd1 Ra8



Things somehow get even stranger in the match, as Carlsen offers a draw here. Giri and Grischuk were amazed, both offering that they had never heard Carlsen speak those words before. Caruana thought a little bit and accepted. The position at the end was still better for Black but Carlsen was not in the mood, it seems, to play on.

1/2-1/2

The tie-break was held the next day and it started with Carlsen as White. For some reason, Caruana took great liberties as Black in an English. Particularly egregious was a notion of a c6-a6-b5 structure which did nothing more than give White a large advantage. The challenger, to his credit, fought on valiantly and actually could have drawn the game with 37...Ra2+! leading to a clever draw but he missed it, and that was the end. The 2nd and 3rd games were just formalities or so it seemed, with Carlsen winning easily.



In conclusion, I found the quality of play rather poor, with many missed opportunities. The pressure seemed to be the reason, along with bad form, understandable for Caruana but not for Carlsen. Caruana out-prepared Carlsen for the most part but once out of preparation, Fabiano seemed to use too much time in positions he should have had a better understanding of. His clock management overall was terrible. I think that he didn't appreciate the need to take chances, not the "I've lost my mind" type of chances, but logical ones when the opportunity presented itself. And in such a short match, against a player like Carlsen, who really would like nothing more to get to the rapid/blitz games, it became even more imperative to win the match in the first 12. Going forward, Caruana should have another shot at the title, but he will need to get a little bit tougher and more comfortable with the spotlight. As for Carlsen, he is truly gifted but I think that he no longer really loves the game and the immense stress it can put you under. It is clear he likes all the perks of being the champ, but it is less clear if he likes doing what it takes to stay at the top. Though, I must see that I don't see his next challenger clearly on the horizon, other than Fabiano, but two years is a long time.

As an addendum, there was much talk during and after the match about whether there was a need to change the format due to, essentially, the number of draws. There should have been more talk about how essentially unfair the tie-breakers are – rapids and blitz to determine the classical World Champ. In any case, there was much talk about different formats, number of games, time controls, etc.. I would suggest the following: a minimum of 18 games if not 24, longer the better. A drawn match goes to the champ, using the assumption that the challengers should have to beat the champ to take the title. Now the time control should be something 40/2, 20/1, SD30 with no increments and only a delay of 5 seconds in the SD control. This should add a certain amount of excitement at the controls. I am not sure where the European standard of 30 second increments comes from, but it certainly

takes away from the historic time scrambles I've seen over the years. I think that all changes will sadly be viewed through the lens of Agon, the for-profit entity that FIDE has given complete control of the World Championship cycle and this has proven to be very disappointing as I am sure that all changes will be seen through the lens of profit making. So, I would encourage the new FIDE administration to remove Agon and resume control of the WC cycle with the prime goal of promoting chess, featuring good locations and lots and lots of public outreach, especially in Western cities.



Fabiano Caruana has come a long way since he stopped by the 2002 Eastern Class Championships in Sturbridge, aged 9 and already near master.

Born in Miami, the now- Super GM spent his early years in Brooklyn before moving abroad to Europe at the age of 12. The Italian-American played under the Italian flag from 2005 until 2015, when he returned stateside to add to the historic current crop of top U.S. players.

Though his first championship outing was unsuccessful, we wish Fabi the best as he represents the U.S. in the uppermost echelons of GM play!



I Did Everything but Play Well: A Chess Journey

Nathan Smolensky

One month from the writing of this piece, the 2019 MACA elections will be held, and for the first time since 2012, my name will not be on the ballot for president. After nearly eight years organizing, directing, teaching, and writing about chess, the time has come for me to take something of a break.

But to do so without having first written a sensible, sentimental, self-indulgent essay filled with non-sequiturs would be a terrible wasted opportunity, particularly given my intimate relationship with the editor of this publication. And so, without any further ado, I give you my story, one of the stranger chess sagas you are likely to come across.

The Kid

I learned chess around the age of five from my grandmother, who in turn had learned it in a Soviet youth camp in the late 1940's. Though I did not grasp everything from her early lessons, I was imbued with a love of the game and a great sense of wonder about it, and it became a favorite pastime every time I saw her. She never let me win, and it was not until I was 11 or 12 that I claimed my first well-earned victory against her.

But for all the fondness of chess as entertainment that she gave me, she showed little affinity for it as a serious endeavor, and this became my mentality as well. Though I had brief flirtations with scholastic tournament play in middle and high school, I saw the idea of putting serious study into chess, or any other game, for that matter, as rather silly. I would play with my friends, play in the afterschool clubs, have some fun with it, and that was that.

The Student

College came, and I barely looked at a chess board. However, a confluence of events and trends would sow the seeds for my later chess involvement, little to my awareness at the time.

First, I changed my tune about studying, thanks to another love of mine, the game of Scrabble. After some friends got me hooked on online speed games (a familiar drug to many in the chess community), the thrill of victory and the prospect of dominating old rivals and competing at high levels became too much to resist putting the work in. I started studying lists of words. And I won some games. And then I won some more games. And it felt good.

Second, I developed a fascination with tournaments in general, their organization and their structure. This began as a venture into learning about the business of sports, and in fact led me to write a senior thesis about the college football playoff system at the time, the nature of fairness as it was perceived therein, and my opinions on what to do about it (opinions which I still hold to this day, but will generously spare the reader). On a more practical level, I began organizing and refereeing tournaments for party games and casual entertainments when friends would gather, and it gave me great joy to so contribute to my peers' fun.

And third, I became more and more involved with my community, and volunteer efforts in its interest. This began by some coincidence – I was not planning to go to college locally, but the best school by far that would have me (Boston College for those curious – go Eagles) happened to be right at my doorstep, and suddenly I found myself with the opportunity to indulge in my old schoolboy activities in a new capacity. I helped coach my old math team. I offered my services as a teaching assistant in a Latin class. In my senior year, I hosted a computer workshop for elderly Russian speakers in Mission Hill. To each experience, I said 'why not,' and from each I derived a sense of worth and fulfillment that I had not previously thought to seek, and a deeper



understanding of what I wanted to do with my life, and what kind of person I wanted to be.

The Club

Coming out of college, I intended to pursue a startup (spoiler alert: it failed) and take some time exploring before settling down for work. With my newfound ‘why not’ mentality and a sudden hunger for community involvement, I looked to the nearby Boylston Chess Club for a fun opportunity.

While I hadn’t gone to tournaments much in my school years, I did know a few people – old family friends – who frequently did, and they gave me the gateway I needed.

My original vision was to help with marketing (my field of study at BC) or organize some sort of scholastic league, but I quickly found that my most practical and immediate use was as a Tournament Director, so direct tournaments I did.

At the same time, I started to look for opportunities to make at least some money in this exploratory phase of my life, and I found some with teaching. First running afterschool chess programs at my old elementary school, then with a few private students. My level of chess understanding was deeply amateurish at the time, but it was enough to speak to rank beginners. More importantly, my love of the game, even after years away, remained, and I do believe that at least some part of it shone through, particularly after I began to see more of what wonder the game could bring to others.

The Player

One can only hang around chess for so long before the playing bug bites, and bite me it did, quite viciously, in late 2011.

Initially, I justified jumping into the player’s seat at tournaments as a formality – the next TD certification demanded 25 rated games played, and I had not accumulated that in my rather sporadic scholastic career. But that requirement

was met quickly, and by the time it was it had become clear to me, and to others, that I just plain wanted to play.

My early games following my return were ignominious, living fully down to the rating that still lingered from my scholastic years. But I started to work at it, started to study from databases and a few books, and to improve. I found my style, found the openings I liked (1. Nf3 as White, a variety of solid if unambitious defenses as Black), and began to find myself as a chess player.

I went to weekend tournaments. In one early endeavor before my fighting spirit was wearied (more on that later), I endured a first-game marathon loss in which I almost reached a desperado at 1:00 in the morning, then went on to win my next three and almost come back to win the section before having to settle for a draw in the final round. I wanted to compete, and to learn more, and to reach new heights.

By the end of 2012, once the worries of a Mayan Apocalypse putting an abrupt halt to my chess career had subsided, I found myself rated around 1850, up from 1400 when the year began. I was enthusiastic about my play and excited about reaching higher heights.

But the breakthroughs eluded me, and the near misses and wasted opportunities began to pile up. A bout of time trouble here, a confused opening there, an unsound sacrifice somewhere there didn’t need to be. The stress of playing began to outweigh the fun of it, particularly with the longer controls, and the thrill seemed to be fading.

Meanwhile, I was getting busy. The Boylston Club had elected me its president in October of 2012, and I was more active than ever directing events there. My year plus of un- and underemployment following college had ended, and I started a job doing marketing for a stock market analytics vendor in the early Spring of 2013. But I would have one more title, and one more responsibility, on my plate before the halfway mark of 2013, and it would be the turning point of my playing career.



The President

Memorial Day Weekend of 2013 was something special. Though I only mustered 3/6 in the Mass Open, I did so while playing up a section, and the performance was enough for my first 2000 rating. But the more important calculations to me came on the Sunday of the event, when ballots were totaled and my new position of MACA President became official.

I had only been on the Board for a year by that point, but I made no secret of my ambitions or my interest in being more involved with more of MACA's activities. I had ideas for scholastics, ideas for education, ideas for how the meeting and the elections should be run. I also had my boyish good looks and charm, and a desire to interface with players and parents on the organization's behalf.

Little actually changed in the organization during my first term, but the cogwheels did begin to turn. The idea of the Spiegel Cup Series, a way to better involve local clubs by creating something of a Grand Prix with the prize of a Wild Card entry into the scholastic championship, passed through the scholastic committee and the board before the summer of 2014, and came into effect during the schoolyear that followed. I did my best to attend tournaments, scholastic and otherwise, and started to make myself known to more in the community.

This era also marked the death, or at least the hibernation, of my tournament pursuits. I wanted to play more, at first, but I had little time or energy left to. When I did play, it became a matter of finally having the desired result, not of spending time enjoying the game, and my passion for playing faded.

The end came at the Foxwoods Open in early 2014. For what I thought would be my first nine round tournament, I took a day off from work, prepared as much as I could, slept well, and ate healthily. In the first round, playing 150 points up, I found myself in one of my favorite opening

lines, up an exchange, and in a comfortable position.

Then, I started to think ahead. Not my one move, not my three moves, not by ten, but beyond the game itself. I found myself daydreaming during the game, and I could not hold back from doing so, could not firmly refocus on the game as I needed. Time trouble came and piled on, and mistakes followed. By what seemed the narrowest of margins, I lost the excruciating game, and neither my tournament nor my weekend would recover.

I played two more games in the event, earning half a point from two. My positions were fine, my opportunities were promising, but driving myself to rack my brain for four to five hours, knowing how easily all my work could go to waste, was impossible.

I withdrew from the tournament. I played some blitz with my hotel roommate and his friends, failing to win once (to be fair, they were titled players, and I was rather dejected). I played some poker and lost.

Monday came, and I had to get back to work. I thought of what shape I would have been in to come back after nine long rounds of play. I looked at my bank account, at how much I had spent and lost for hotel and entry fee and food and whatnot, all so I could spend the weekend stressing out instead of resting.

The sport of tournament chess is a cruel mistress, and I made my mind up to leave her then.

The Editor

One of the primary crises of my first term, which some of you readers may recall, was the state of limbo in which this publication had found itself. Our overworked treasurer had been taking on the mantle of editorship in addition to his other work, and it had proven to be too much by virtue of a long publication hiatus. His replacement, an eager volunteer who joined the MACA board a year before I did, also found himself mired in other commitments, and we quickly found ourselves again without an editor.



The notion that I should take the reins of *Chess Horizons* myself in addition to my presidential duties and become the first MACA Preditor (President + Editor, for those unfamiliar with the term) in decades was one driven partially by my intellectual curiosity, and partially my colossal hubris.

I did genuinely want to add my touch to the magazine, that distinct, exotic, spicy flavor of writery and wordsmithing that I had worked many years to craft. The creation of compelling prose was a process that had fascinated me since my early school days, and it was often joked in my family that I wrote more than I read (which may sadly be true for chess materials). I was also something of a grammar snob, a tendency which I attributed to my high school Latin teacher, who would calmly explain to her class that the proper action to take when someone yells 'I will drown' (forgoing the proper 'shall') is to allow them to drown.

This would also not be my first editing experience. In perhaps the most bizarre of my chess adventures, I worked briefly as a manager of sorts for a semi-professional friend and chess player in mid-to-late 2012. As it happened, he was writing an opening book at this time, and I served as an additional pair of eyes to ensure that the prose was prim and proper.

Of course, all this justification was superfluous when no there was no one else willing to do the work. All I needed was my trusty 'why not' mentality, and the job was mine.

I realized quickly that the process of *Chess Horizons*' publication carried several potential bottlenecks. With so many of the key contributors operating either on a volunteer basis or for some small, nominal fee, timeliness was a tall order, and even a complete non-arrival of several promised contributions needed to be budgeted for with every issue. I worked to address this problem by taking more in-house, from the layout and formatting (I put everything into Microsoft Word, using an Adobe Acrobat add-on to get them print-ready, for those curious) to the problem sets, to news, to the 1-2

articles I try to put together myself for each issue. With all this, I hoped I could streamline the process and get *Chess Horizons* out on a timely and regular basis.

That was five years ago. Since then, as you all know, I've produced no fewer than three issues of *Chess Horizons*. I exaggerate, of course, but I am also aware of the realities afoot. Through significant fault of my own, my dream of having a consistent quarterly issue never did come true. Whether it was my limited ability to dedicate the time needed for a complete manuscript edit, or some article I had been counting on not coming in time, it became hard enough to put out the semiannual doubles. With this latest issue, even that standard has eluded me.

But I am also proud of a great deal of the work that has been produced in this journal during my tenure. From the human interest and player interviews to in-depth Grandmaster analysis, I'd say we've done quite alright for a local newsletter.

Chess Horizons' audience is also more dedicated than the average local newsletter's, it should be added, and particularly in its largest readership segment. For those not aware, the magazine is circulated heavily throughout the U.S. Correctional system, thanks largely to the efforts of MACA's own Steven Frymer. There, chess can do some of its greatest work, and I have been honored to contribute.

Unfortunately, the interests and demands of our prison readership and our tournament player readership are not wholly congruous, and continuing to try to serve both simultaneously is not a sustainable undertaking. As such, it was decided in late 2018 that the current print run would end, replaced by a smaller newsletter specific to our prison readers and an online blog with local news and player commentary for our tournament crowd.

This, the Spring 2019 Double Issue, is scheduled to be our penultimate. Only one – the 50th Anniversary special, remains, and I intend to oversee it, though my tenure as MACA



Preditor will be over by then, and I won't have such monumental autobiographical writing by myself to lean on for content.

The Dreamer

Taking on the role of *Chess Horizons* editor certainly expanded my chess-related workload, but it did not leave me wholly sated with my chess accomplishment. I was not content to just keep the ship afloat – I wanted to set course for new seas, and from this desire sprouted the notion of MEETTI.

MEETTI was the Massachusetts Early Education Teaching Training Initiative, the internal project name for what would later become Chess for Early Educators. It would be the most ambitious undertaking of my tenure, and of my professional career thereto.

Was it a success? To that question, I cannot shrug emphatically enough. There were such great successes and failures therein, that to call it a mixed bag would be an understatement. It was more than a mixed bag - it was the mixedest bag.

The idea of getting more educational programming going within our chess offerings was not a particularly novel one, and not unique to our state. But we realized quickly that the kinds of chess programs that had found success in New York City and elsewhere would be difficult to emulate across Massachusetts, so we got creative.

Working together with several members of the MACA board, including my Vice President, I realized that our base of qualified chess instructors was not large enough, and the audience of potentially interested schools not centralized enough, for us to try to copy what Chess in the Schools did, which was simply to send teachers around to run curricular classes.

Adding to the difficulty of our problem was the fact that red tape is particularly abundant within the Massachusetts school system, more in recent years than ever before. Beginning as early as 1st Grade, schedules were tightly regimented, with students required to spend X minutes each

day learning math, Y minutes learning English, and so forth. As we were set on building a curricular program – afterschool activities, we determined, were an opt-in, limiting their ability to bring chess to anyone not already intent on seeking it out – it became clear that the only amenability would be at the Kindergarten level, or perhaps even younger.

But constraints breed creative solutions, and so we found ours. Using basic learning materials and some supplementary text, we would give regular K-3 schoolteachers the tools they needed to introduce their classes to the game of chess at a rudimentary level. The focus on early grades meant that there was a lessened demand on prior chess knowledge – again, the goal was simply to show students what chess was – and, at the same time, gave us the most flexibility with regard to incorporating new elements into the school day.

I started making calls. I sent emails. When we realized that teachers didn't have the authority to implement such things in most public schools, we reached out to administrators. We finally made headway with a superintendent's office, only to see the principal to whom the directive of starting a program was passed down regard it as a low priority and wholly ignore it.

At the same time, we wrote and rewrote and rewrote our curriculum. At first, we thought to use a known textbook as our basis. Then, we abandoned that idea, opting instead to write our own walkthrough of the basic rules of chess, and how to teach them.

By 2017, finally, it seemed we had broken through. Reaching out largely to principals, we lined up a handful of pilot programs at the Kindergarten and 1st Grade level (plus an unexpected Pre-K implementation) and I went about visiting to ensure they started up smoothly. Administrators were friendly, teachers were enthusiastic, and hopes were high.

But things stuttered. We didn't hear from the programs for significant periods of time, buried as they were among the hectic overload of school programming. The administrators, too, were swamped, and gave us little opportunity to



water the seeds we had planted. Though we had seized upon hope and promise, we struggled and ultimately failed to find momentum.

Looking back upon what factors limited the success of CfEE, I would be remiss not to include myself among them. Not only for my limited time, which became more of a bottleneck in the last year as I changed jobs, but also for my lack of experience and clout. The truth was, and is, that I could not be the ambassador of chess that I felt the program needed, and in fact I had not even shown myself capable of recruiting someone who could be.

I have not given up on the program, but I do believe it will need new leadership to thrive. There is tremendous potential in building an educational program not dependent upon specialized instructors, not only for the sake of chess but for the sake of education. I hope dearly that more will see that in the years to come.

The Hustlee

While busying myself with running school programs and correcting Grandmasters' grammar, as well as trying to make money for myself in other fields, I had not altogether cured myself of the playing bug. My lack of enthusiasm for tournament play did not extend to casual games, and I found myself feeling the need for speed.

Some of this was satisfied by online play, but fortunately I have not fallen too deep into that particular rabbit hole. While I will occasionally engage in a few rounds of Chess.com bullet, I find it lacking in any real social element, and I don't care to spend extra hours staring at screens when I do so much of that for my job.

No, the vast majority of my chess play in recent years has come on the streets, most in Cambridge's Harvard Square. Some of the games there are for low stakes against the area hustlers, some with friends.

In speed games, I find the pressure lifted. I find myself diverted by necessity from my

daydreaming ways. I find myself again able to embrace the wonder and the fun of chess, and I find myself able to afford an enterprising risk or two. It's nice.

I have a certain respect for those who can view a weekend of toiling at a board deep in thought as relaxation, but I share no such ability. The greatest reprieve from my usual week is to be outside, in the fresh air, able to talk with friends. This is not what tournament chess has ever given me, but it is what I find in the Cambridge chess grounds, at least when the New England weather allows.

More recently, I've also been able to do more chess organization within the speed realm, running a few blitz tournaments in Harvard Square last September (which you can read about elsewhere in this issue). Blitz is a wonderful escape, and it's a great feeling to help others find it.

The End, for Now

So stands my chess adventure. I've refereed, I've organized, I've taught students and teachers, I've written and edited, I've politicked and promoted. I've done just about everything except play well.

Will I return to run for MACA president one day in the future? It's possible. Will I continue to edit *Chess Horizons* as it moves to a new format? Maybe. Will I return to the tournament scene and become a great master? Who knows? If there's one thing chess has taught me, it's that things rarely work out as planned – especially when I'm the one doing the planning.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your part in my journey. That I have brought entertainment to some, that I have aided in a pursuit that I know can do so much to invigorate the mind, is a great joy. It has been a great privilege and honor to do the work I have with MACA and *Chess Horizons*, and I hope that your own chess adventures bring you so much fulfillment and fun.



Solutions (Problems on p. 5)

1. **1. Qh6 Qf8 2. Qxh7+! Kxh7**
3. hxc6+ Kxc6 (3... Kg8 4. Rh8#)
4. Be4#
2. **1. Ba8! Bxa8 (1... Bxd3 2. Bxf3#)**
2. Kf1
 And **3. Nf2#** is unstoppable
3. **1. Rc7+ Kb6 2. Qa5+! Kxa5**
3. Rc5#
4. **1... Rh4+! 2. Kxh4 Qh2+**
3. Qh3 Qxf4+ 4. Qg4+ Qxg4#
5. **1... Qg1+! 2. Rxg1 Nf2+**
3. Kg2 Bh3#
6. **1. h5+ Kxh5 (1... Kf5 2. Bh7#)**
2. Bf7+! Rxf7 3. g4#
7. **1... Qf1+ 2. Bg1 Qf3+!**
3. Bxf3 Bxf3#
8. **1. Qe4! dxe4 2. d5#**
 Any other first move by Black is met
 with either 2. Qxd5# or 2. Qxe5#
9. **1. Rf8+ Ka7 2. Ra8+ Kxa8**
3. Qf8+ Ka7 4. Qc5+! Ka8 (Kb8)
 (4... Qxc5 is stalemate)
 (4... b6 5. Qxc7+ Ka8 6. Qc8+ Ka7
 7. Qc7+ Ka8 8. Qc8+ Ka7 9. Qc7)
5. Qf8+ Ka7 6. Qc5+ Ka8 (Kb8)
7. Qf8+ Ka7 8. Qc5+
 $\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}$

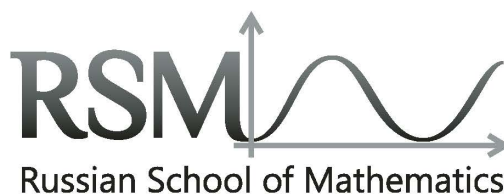
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Places to Play

This is a partial overview of active clubs in and around Massachusetts. Most time controls listed feature five second delay. Registration may end as early as 15 minutes prior to event start. For full details and club calendars, please visit club site or www.masschess.org. To add a listing for your club in future issues, please contact info@masschess.org.

MetroWest Chess Club – Natick Community Center, 117 E. Central St.

(Rt. 135) Natick, MA

Regular Events Tuesdays, 6:00 P.M. – 10:00 P.M., G/60 (1 rd / wk)

www.MetroWestChess.org

(781) 790 - 1033

Boylston Chess Club – 40 Norris St., Cambridge, MA, Suite B101

Regular Events:

Thursdays, 7:00 P.M. – 10:30 P.M., 40/90 SD/20 (1 rd / wk)

Saturdays, 10:00 A.M. – 7:00 P.M., G/60

www.BoylstonChess.orgboylstonchess@gmail.com**Waltham Chess Club** – 404 Wyman St., Waltham, MA

Regular Events Fridays, 7:00 P.M. – 12:00 A.M., Various Controls:

G/5, G/10, G/20, G/30

www.WalthamChessClub.org

(781) 790 - 1033

Wachusett Chess Club – C159, McKay Campus School,

Fitchburg State Univ., Fitchburg, MA

Regular Events Wednesdays, 7:00 P.M. – 11:00 P.M., G/100 (1 rd / wk)

www.WachusettChess.org

(978) 345 - 5011

Southeast Mass Chess Club – 16 E. Bacon St., Plainville, MA

Regular Events Wednesdays, 7:30 P.M. – 11:30 P.M., 40/90, SD/20 (1 rd / wk)

www.southeastmasschess.org

(508) 339 - 6850

Billerica Chess Club – 25 Concord Rd., Billerica, MA

Regular Events Fridays, 7:30 P.M. – 11:00 P.M., G/90 (1 rd / wk)

For further information, contact arthur978@comcast.net**Chess Master Connections** – 201 Wayland Sq., Providence, RI

Regular Events Sundays, 10:00 A.M. – 3:30 P.M., G/30

www.ChessMasterConnections.org

(401) 497 - 8366

Andover Chess Club – 360 South Main St., Andover, MA

Casual Events Fridays, 7:00 P.M.

For further information, contact andoverchessclub@gmail.com

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