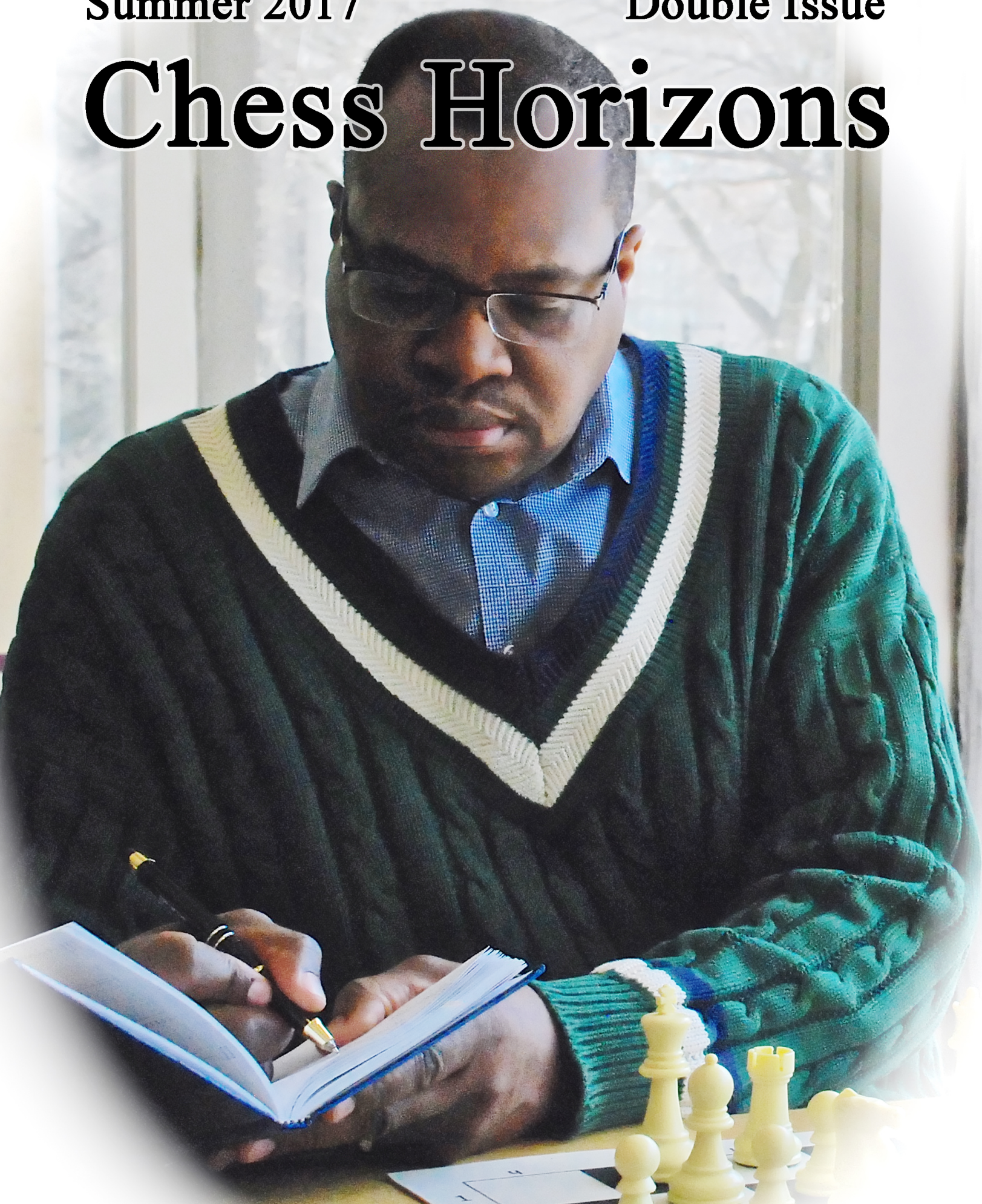


Summer 2017

Double Issue

Chess Horizons



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77th New England Open

September 2 – 4, 2017



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Championship Section (rated 1800+) – 3-day only – **FIDE Rated**

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U1800 Section – 3-day or 2-day

U1600 Section – 3-day or 2-day

Round Times:

3-day section – Saturday 11 AM & 5 PM, Sunday 11 AM & 5 PM, Monday 10 AM & 3:15 PM

2-day section – Sunday 10:30 AM, 12:30 PM, 2:30 PM, & 5 PM; Monday 10 AM & 3:15 PM

Byes: Limit 2 byes, rounds 1-5 in Championship Section, rounds 1-6 in U2000 to U1600 sections. Players must commit to byes in rounds 4-6 before round 2.

Entry Fee:

3-day section - \$75 online by 11:59 PM on 8/31, \$85 onsite

2-day section - \$74 online by 11:59 PM on 8/31, \$85 onsite

Onsite Registration: 3-day – Saturday 9/2 from 8:30 to 9:30 AM; 2-day – Sunday 9/3 from 8:30 to 9:30 AM

Other Information:

- There is no 2-day schedule for the Championship Section.
- The Championship Section is FIDE rated and uses FIDE rules.
- Free entry to GMs and IMs.
- New England champion title to highest-scoring New England resident or student in each section.
- Unrated prize limits: \$200 in U2000, \$150 in U1800, \$100 in U1600, cannot win title except in the Championship Section.
- Official September USCF ratings will be used. Unofficial ratings are usually used if otherwise unrated.
- Please bring board, set, and clock. No equipment will be provided.

Register online at www.senecachess.org. For more info, contact Frank Vogel, frankvogel3@verizon.net, phone (401) 837-1302.



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Chess Horizons

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86th Mass Open Champion
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Note from the Editor

Nathan Smolensky

Dear Readers,

Sometimes, one has to admit that they need a little help, and now is one of those times for me.

I love *Chess Horizons*. I love creating content, bringing together writing and analysis from the greatest minds in Massachusetts chess, and delivering it all to you wonderful readers. But I cannot do it alone.

I'm currently looking for an Assistant Editor, and any other support for this magazine would be greatly encouraged. As my life becomes more and more consumed with the other work I do, I want to ensure that you, the readers, do not miss out on the content that we have promised you as a result.

So please, if you think you might be interested in helping out, email me or send me a letter (addresses in sidebar). In the meantime, enjoy.

- Nathan Smolensky, Editor

Annotation 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

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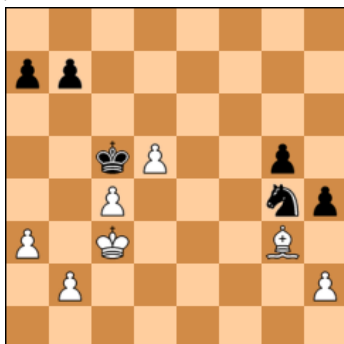
The Challenge Page

Nathan Smolensky

Find the best move! Solutions on p. 46

Due to the inclusion of a sample of David Couture's Progressive Tactics in this issue (p. 12), the Challenge Page for this issue has tilted towards more difficult problems than usual. Are you up to the task?

1.



White to move and win

2.



White to move

3.



Black to move

4.



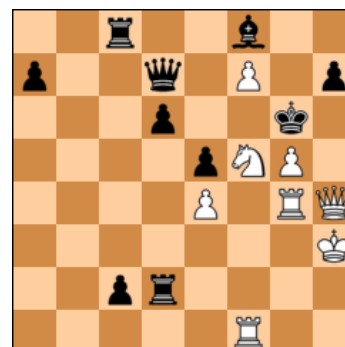
White to move and win

5.



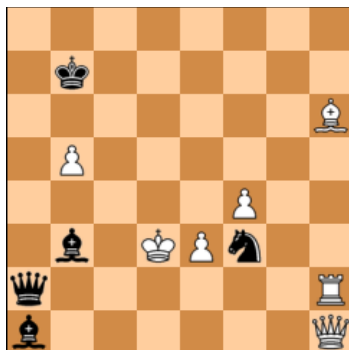
Black to move and win

6.



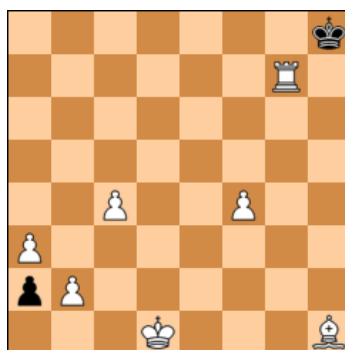
White to move and win

7.



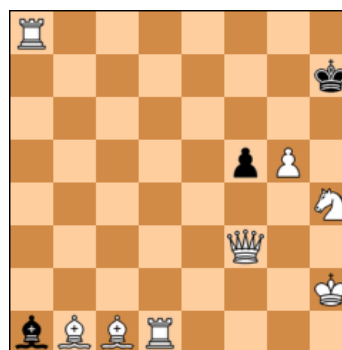
Black to move and win

8.



White to move

9.



White to mate in 1



A Unique Volunteer to MACA: Barry Spiegel Remembered

Stephen Dann

Of all the volunteers I've worked with in my 48 years organizing chess and being in professional communications, Barry S. Spiegel, who died 25 years ago June 26, has to be one of the most inspirational.

Though physically handicapped and disfigured from birth with profound cerebral palsy, Barry served MACA 20 years doing all kinds of support work that literally makes or breaks any hobby, sporting or educational nonprofit--MACA being a bit of all three.

Barry never said no to any challenge to promote chess in Central MA, or, anywhere in New England or beyond. He hosted Chess Horizons mailing sessions (when we mailed out thousands of 48 to 84-page issues six times per year--back breaking work as long-time CH editor and mentor George Mirjani can tell you) at his Worcester home.

Despite his handicap, Barry found time to compete, become an active certified TD, attend monthly board of directors meetings of MACA, and, become an assistant BSA scoutmaster. He even had a day job--merchandising clerk for one of Worcester's largest department stores - and a local snow removal and landscaping business!

It was so very sad when Barry was diagnosed with a non-malignant inoperable tumor his last year of life. Perhaps his legacy will be that he inspired Gilbert Gus Gosselin to create MACA's Living Memorial Chess Fund, where some of the largest contributions have come from the Central MA area.

His legacy will also live on, of course, through the scholastic championship that now bears his name. It was only four days after his passing that we were holding our June board meeting that year, and seemingly all of us on MACA decided at once that it would be good to truly honor the man.

News in Brief

Nathan Smolensky

Congratulations, **Samuel Sevia**! The Holden, MA resident won the Continental Chess Championship, held June 9th – 19th in Medellin, Colombia. In doing so, the sixteen-year-old became the youngest winner of that event in history, and qualified himself for the next FIDE World Cup.

The 86th Annual Massachusetts Open was held on Memorial Day weekend, May 27th – 29th, in Marlboro. 259 players participated in the event. The winners, in the adult sections, were as follows:

Championship – **Lawyer Times**

Under 2100 – **Ilya Figelman**

Under 1800 – **Joseph Bennett**

Under 1500 – **Ranjan Dey**

Surprisingly, each of these players won their section outright, a rare occurrence in a large, six-round Swiss tournament.

You can learn more about the pivotal final-round game which earned Mr. Times the state title on p. 9.

Meanwhile, in the world of scholastic chess, the Barry S. Spiegel Cup was held on March 19th in Marlboro, determining the state champions in each scholastic section:

High School – **Andrew Liu**

14 & Under – **Brandon Wu**

11 & Under – **Dustin Lian, David Zhou**

8 & Under – **Alexander Meng,
Victor Feng, Kelsey Liu**

And of course, Mr. Liu would proceed to claim a share of the High School National Championship, capping off a stellar scholastic career. You can read more about his achievement on p. 25.



Interview

Bob Messenger

Recently, MACA Treasurer and TD extraordinaire Robert Messenger earned his National Tournament Director certification, giving him the highest level of certification a USCF director can have. I sat down with Bob to ask him a few questions about his journey to the NTD title.

Nathan Smolensky: How and when did you decide to become a TD? Do you remember the first tournament you directed?

Robert Messenger: Around 1990 Stephen Dann was looking for someone to help him direct small tournaments in the Worcester area, and I volunteered. This was just before US Chess started putting tournament records online, so I'm not sure of the name of the first tournament I directed. It might have been one of the Chess Horizons G/64 events.

NS: When did you decide to direct more seriously, to pursue high-level certifications?

RM: I started organizing and directing my own tournaments in 1991, with tournaments in Nashua and Framingham. I also directed MACA tournaments, such as the Fall Foliage Festival in Andover. In 1992, I became MACA's Tournament Coordinator, and gradually stopped organizing my own tournaments because I was so busy with MACA. I became a Senior TD fairly quickly. Associate National TD and National TD were more difficult because of specific requirements, such as directing round robin and national tournaments, and I was in no particular hurry to get those titles because Senior TD was all I needed to direct MACA tournaments. It was only when I became involved at a national level that I made the effort to earn the ANTD and NTD titles.

NS: How has your frequent TD-ing affected your own chess playing? Do you try to play online / in more informal arenas?

RM: I'm sure I'd be a stronger chess player if I spent my time studying and playing in tournaments instead of organizing and directing them. I was over 2000 in the 1980s, and I'm

rated about 1800 now. Of course, getting older also has a lot to do with it. I don't play online. I used to play at the Westford Chess Club, but the club is no longer in existence. Nowadays I play in a couple of tournaments a year, usually the Queen City Tornado and the New Hampshire Amateur Championship.

NS: Do you have any favorite events, or favorite types of events, to direct? Why?

RM: I've directed at the World Open every year since 1993, except for 2000 when I played in it. It's a lot of work and there's a lot of tension with so much prize money at stake, but it's great seeing so many players gathered to play chess.

At a local level there's the Massachusetts Open, as well as CCA tournaments like the Eastern Class Championship and Continental Open

NS: In your years of being a TD, what was the toughest ruling you ever had to make?

RM: One tough ruling was a game between two kids at a scholastic tournament. Each of them insisted that he won, neither one had a game score, and they had completely different versions of the final position. I ruled it as a draw, but later on the father of one of the kids told me that his son had confessed to him that he'd lost the game.

NS: What does the National TD title mean to you? How will it affect your directing moving forward?

RM: To some extent it doesn't really change anything, because I'll be directing the same kinds of tournaments before and at the level of responsibility. It could possibly lead to new opportunities directing national tournaments.

NS: Do you have any advice to give to players thinking about becoming TDs? To Club and Local TDs thinking about going for higher certifications?

RM: MACA is always looking for people to help direct our tournaments. It's a good way to gain experience and earn the credits you need to advance to Local TD and Senior TD, as well as the Category B credits needed for higher levels. And it's an opportunity to really give back to the chess community.



Catching Up with GM Ivanov

Nathan Smolensky

GM Alexander Ivanov has been keeping busy as usual. Though it has been a whole two years now since he won the Mass Open title, he's racked up his fair share of tournament wins elsewhere, claiming the 2016 Hartford Open, the 2016 Reno Western States Open (in which he scored a minor upset over Aleksandr Lenderman), Boylston Chess Foundation Fall FIDE Festival, and the 2017 Land of the Sky tournament in North Carolina in the past year.

In February, seeing as it had been almost twenty years since *Chess Horizons* did an in-depth interview with the state's top dog, I decided it was time for a sit-down. Off I went to his Newton home, to see what was on the grandmaster's mind.

Turns out? A whole lot of politics. As Ivanov was preparing for a trip to Russia to check out the Aeroflot tournament, he expressed his concern about Russia's current leadership, how it reminded him of the authoritarian days of Soviet yore, and how he was beginning to worry that it might become harder to visit once again.

It is incredible how much of this man's journey was shaped by the political climate around him. Born in Omsk, in southwestern Siberia, in 1956, he excelled in chess from an early age, but took his college studies in economics – specifically, demography – very seriously. It was only after seeing how deeply politicized economic research was under Socialist rule that it became clear to Ivanov that he would pursue a career as a sportsman.

In 1983, his dissatisfaction with the Soviet Union turned to fear as his brother-in-law was put in prison for political dissidence. Ivanov and his wife, WIM Esther Epstein, applied to immigrate almost immediately, but were forced to wait five long years. "I wasn't sure if we were ever going to be let out," Ivanov recalled. "It was a scary time."

He finally did come stateside, in 1988, and quickly made his name known in the

Massachusetts chess community. But perhaps his greatest tournament result came in 1992 in his native land, when Ivanov made his first visit since immigration and saw post-Soviet Russia for the first time. There, in a tournament that featured 51 grandmasters including Anatoly Karpov, Ivanov, spectacularly, tied for first. It wasn't a coincidence.

"I was energized," he recalls, "it was a very positive feeling. I wasn't sure if I was ever going to be able to visit, to see my family again. When I left [in 1988], I thought I was saying goodbye forever."

Since then, Ivanov has visited Russia a number of times, and has taken the opportunities to play in a multitude of Russian tournaments. Of course, he gets to play plenty of chess back home.

It doesn't get any easier to be the dominant force that he has been. Winning with black, he points out, is a difficult necessity of life as a GM in local tournaments, and he has had his fair share of misses and backfires. "Every good player in this state," Ivanov notes, "has beaten me at least once. I may have winning records against all of them, but still."

I asked if Ivanov ever plans to retire. "When it stops being fun for me," the GM answered, "I will stop playing."

It could be a while.

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86th Mass Open

Setting the Stage

NM Lawyer Times

Dave Vigorito, one of last year's Massachusetts State co-chess champions, asked me to walk with him to get the champ's trophy out of his car. It had started to rain. Little did I know that 6 hours later I would be walking the same trophy back to my own car. But this time it would be all mine, and all shine.

The night before, I had played Dave and managed to win as he overlooked a pinned bishop. He was so dismayed that he contemplated not coming back the next day. So I said, "you have to come back and bring my trophy with you." I was half joking – I say half because I always think positively about the possibility of winning any tournament I'm in.

After a draw with Andrew Liu in round 5 on board 1, Dave says you-know-who is waiting for you. He was speaking of the great Alexander Ivanov. I quietly said "I'm waiting for him too." I believe it is important to never let your opponent get a psychological edge on you. And I wasn't going to let him get one on me.

NM Lawyer Times (2251)

GM Alexander Ivanov (2574)

86th Mass Open (6)

05.29.2017

Colle System [A46]

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 d6 3. g3 c5

Only GM Ivanov plays like this. I've noticed that he likes to get out of theory early and play potentially inferior moves against lower rated players (Practically all of us here in MA!) only to out play them later after slight miscues on their part. For example, in Round 5 he played a similarly early c5 against Chris Chase and quickly got a superior position on Board 2.

4. dxc5 Qa5+ 5. c3

A safe move. 5. Nc3 is also fine, but I saw a ghost and thought 5... Ne4 had merit. It does not: 6. cxd6 Nxc3 7. Qd2, but it's common for New Englanders to see ghosts because we are all slightly afraid of Ivanov's ability.

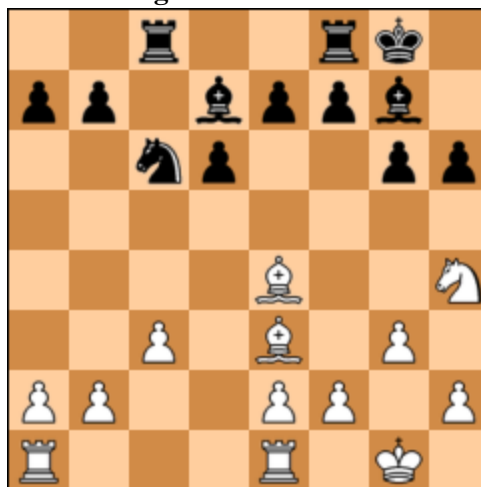
5... Qxc5 6. Bg2 g6 7. O-O Bg7 8. Nbd2 O-O 9. Qa4 Qh5 10. Qh4 Qxh4 11. Nxh4

Stage 1 of 5 complete: get queens off the board!

11... Nc6 12. Re1 Bd7 13. Ne4 Nxe4 14. Bxe4

Stage 2 of 5 complete: A minor piece off the board and still an even game.

14... Rac8 15. Bg5 h6 16. Be3



Look at those bishops. I know they're not really doing anything but it's a rare moment to have them on e4 and e3. Ivanov was using a lot of time at this point in the game, so I was spending mine doing some of the things I tell my beginner students to do. I was counting the squares I was controlling on his side of the board vs squares he was controlling on mine. What else can one do as the GM stares at ceiling tiles or shuts his eyes completely in his opened hands? We do what we must to stay focused and positive.

16... e6 17. Rad1 d5 18. Bb1 Rfd8 19. Nf3 b6 20. Nd4 Na5 21. Nb3 Ba4 22. Bc2 Nc4

I knew this square was going to be occupied by the knight long ago. The question is, could I survive it? Stage 3 was upon me.

23. Bc1 Nd6 24. Nd4 Bxc2 25. Nxc2 b5 26. Rd3 a5 27. a3 Nc4 28. Kg2 g5 29. Nd4 Nd6 30. Nc2 Bf6 31. Red1 Nc4 32. Re1 Kg7 33. f3 Kg6 34. Nd4 Nd6



Asking him to prove it with every move. Ironically this was his chance to prove it with 34...e5 35. Nb3 d4 36. cxd4 a4 37. Nd2 exd4 38. Ne4 Ne5 39. Rd2 Be7 with the idea of 40...b4 for a clear positional edge. But not even Ivanov can see all this with only 2 minutes left or so on his clock. So he instead tries to hold tight so he can get another hour in the final time control so he can spend 20 minutes finding the perfect move.

35 Nb3 Nc4

Is anyone counting? The knight is back to c4 for a fourth time and still no real progress.

36. Nd4 b4

He finally bites. He does not want to repeat the position and now he is truly running out of time. The rocking back and forth is in full effect. He misses e5 again.

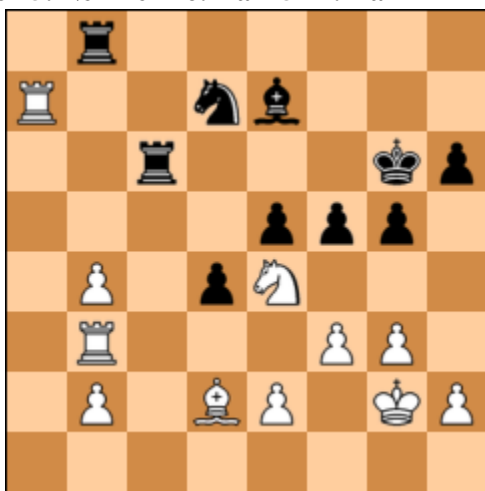
37. axb4 axb4 38. cxb4 Ne5 39. Rb3 Rc4

40. Be3 Nd7

He makes the first time control with 4 seconds left (An eternity for Ivanov). But I just passed Stage 4: survive the first time control with a decent position.

Engines say we are completely equal, but I'm winning the psychological battle. He has all the pressure to prove something.

41. Rd1 e5 42. Nb5 d4 43. Bd2 Rb8 44. Nd6 Rc6 45. Ne4 Be7 46. Ra1 f5 47. Ra7



My first real active move in a while. It felt good.

47... Nf6 48. Nxf6

I offered a draw here. Farzad Abdi had won against Andrew Liu on Board 2. It would be a four-way tie with 4.5 points for first place if Ivanov accepted (the three of us plus Carissa Yip). The position is basically equal. But Ivanov, resolutely, said 'No!'

I wonder if he knew the score - I'll explain later.

48... Bxf6 49. Ra1 Rc2 50. Rd1 e4 51. Kf1 Rb5 52. Be1 g4 53. f4

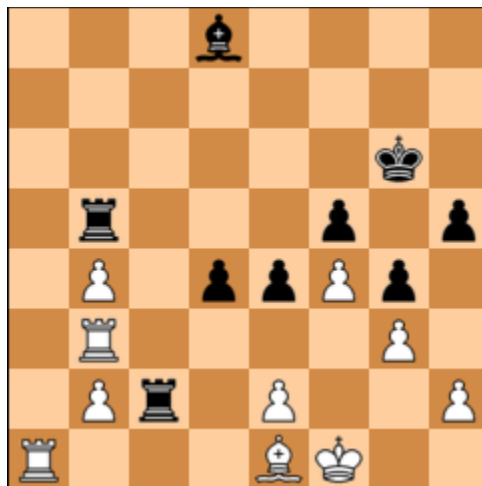
Just willing to dance for as long as it takes.

53... h5 54. Ra1

Possibilities for activity are opening up again.

His king is looking airy too.

54... Bd8



Heading to b6, but I see a winning combination at this point.

55. Rba3 Bb6 56. Ra6

Threatening Ra5 winning.

56... Kf7

Avoiding the suicidal pin but inviting another annoying maneuver.

57. Ra8 d3 58. exd3 e3 59. Rb8 Rxb2

His final mistake. He had to play 59... e2, where a draw is likely after 60. Kg2 Rxb4 61. Rb7+ Ke6 62. Ra8 R4xb2 63. Rab8 and after Rc6 or Bd4 I have perpetual checks with Re8+. But he was already in the must-win mindset that all of us can relate to. Now the quiet and calm 60. Kg1 that even my new eight-year-old phenom student saw wins. Stage 5 is set: outplay him in his final



time pressure. He had just a couple of minutes left and I was still in my first time control.

60... Rxb2 61. Rb7+ Ke6 62. Ra6 Kd5 63. Rxb6 Rxb6 64. Rxb6 h4 65. gxh4 Rb1 66. Kf1 g3 67. Rg6 g2+ 68. Rxd2 Kd4 69. h5 Kxd3 70. h6

Black resigns.

1-0

Ivanov shook my hand and summarily walked out of the mostly empty room. It appeared we were the last game to finish in any section. I will admit that I raised my hands like Muhammad Ali in victory. Then Ivanov came back into the room where I was still sitting and said almost in disbelief, "Did you win [the tournament] outright?" I said yes and he congratulated me officially. This is why I said I didn't know if he really knew the score earlier when I offered the draw. I now have 4 wins against Ivanov in the last year and a half: 2 in FIDE tournaments and 2 in rated blitz games. He's still Ivanov, of course, so I know I should keep my distance from him for a while.

I have tried to compare this victory to my other chess highlights, and I've had quite a few favorite moments including team national championships and individual, local, and national victories. But it is clear as I look at the great names on this Trophy that this is the best victory to date for me. I want to thank the many who have supported me before, during, and after this great victory. As I tell students at my Future Chess Masters Academy, a huge part of chess is psychology.

Bobby Fischer once said "All that matters on the chessboard is good moves." But when you are playing someone as great as GM Ivanov we must also keep in mind Alexander Alekhine's quote, "Psychology is the most important factor in chess."

Going into that last round, I knew what I needed to do, and I knew that I could do it. I set the stage for a victory, and I won.

About the Champ



Lawyer Times learned the game of chess at the age of six from his then ten-year-old brother, Kent. In a quest to best his older brother, young Lawyer started reading every chess book he could find – soon, he was consistently beating not only Kent, but also any schoolteacher who dared face him. By 1982, he was a key member of a team that won the High School National Championship. By the time of his graduation two years later, the young Lawyer had reached expert.

After roughly a decade away from the game, Times returned in 1994 and quickly ascended to National Master upon winning the Mass Open's U2200 section. Since then, the Massachusetts chess stalwart has amassed a slew of titles: 2006 U.S. Amateur Team East Champions (alongside Charles Riordan, Alex Cherniack, and Charlie Mays), 2012 Boylston Chess Club champion, the leader in MVP point for the USCL's New England Nor'Easters from 2013-2015, and, most recently, state champion.

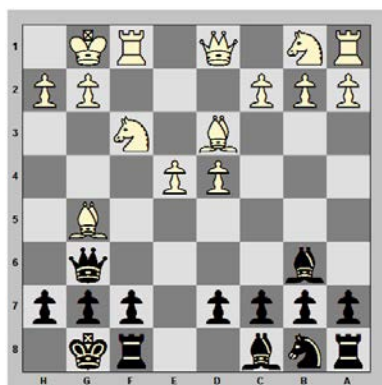
Born in Columbus, Georgia, but raised in Roxbury, the longtime Boston resident has worked for the U.S. Postal Service for 32 years, and is now making the transition to coaching students full-time. His website, FutureChessMasters.com, is dedicated to "helping youths become better decision makers, on and off the chessboard."

Photo credit: Steve Stepak

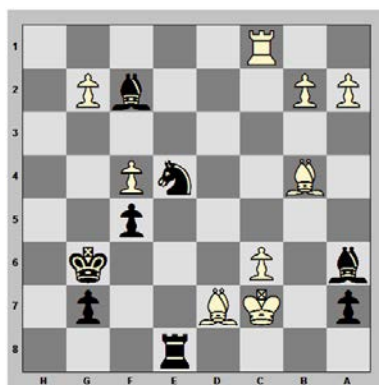
*Sneak Peek!***Progressive Tactics: 1002 Progressively Challenging Chess Tactics**

Dave Couture

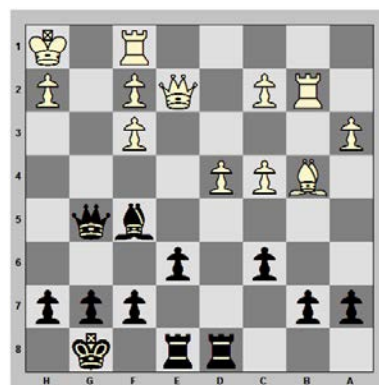
Recently, I produced a book of tactics taken from my games which is now available on Amazon in both paperback and Kindle format. The book is rated at 4.5-stars on Amazon. If you're currently rated below 2000 and looking for a sure-fire way to raise your rating, this is the book to get! Here's a sampling featuring tactics of varying levels of difficulty. Solutions are on p. 45.



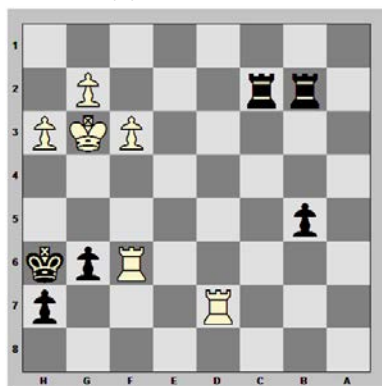
(1) Black to move



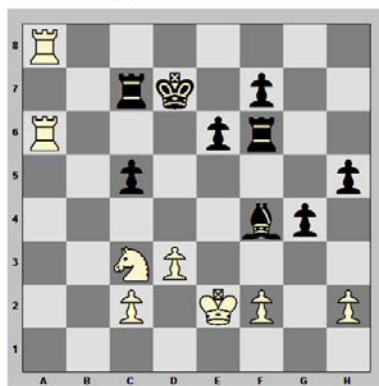
(2) Black to move



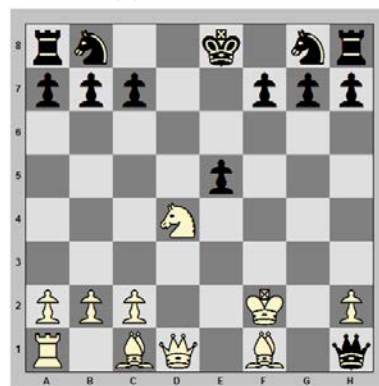
(3) Black to move



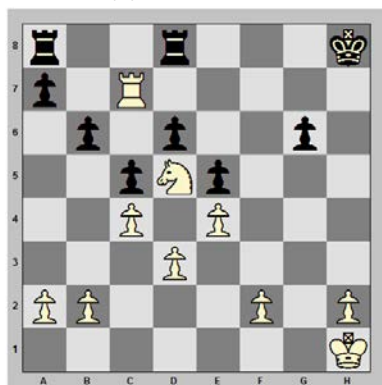
(4) Black to move



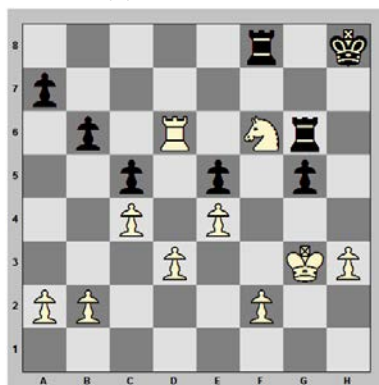
(5) White to move



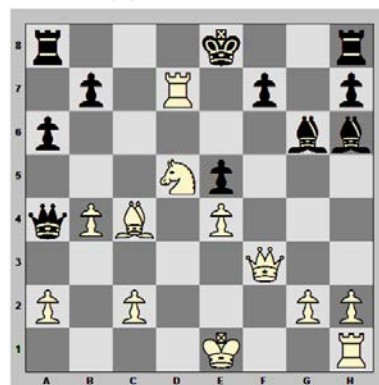
(6) White to move



(7) White to move



(8) White to move



(9) White to move



The Art of Art: Remembering Bisguier

GM Larry Christiansen

GM Arthur Bisguier, a Bronx native but a mainstay of the Metro West chess club in recent years, passed away on April 5th in Framingham at the age of 87.



Photo credit: Tony Cortizas

I first encountered Arthur Bisguier when browsing through vintage copies of Chess Review Magazine that I checked out from the Riverside Public Library back in the 1960s. He was often featured battling his rivals, the Byrne brothers and Larry Evans in those 1945-46 magazines, and I came to appreciate his enterprising style and tenacity.

I got to know the real Art Bisguier at the site of his greatest chess triumph, Lone Pine 1973. He played very confidently and aggressively in that event. In the last round, leading by a half point, he faced the red-hot Walter Browne with the Black pieces. Virtually everyone in the tournament was rooting for Art to hold off Browne, but feared youth would overcome experience. But Art held on, and claimed clear first place. He gave a very gracious, classy remarks at the prize ceremony.

Art was a very warm, agreeable man who got along with practically everybody, which is pretty hard to do in the chess world. And he had some very unique traits. He might start with a calm, poker face but he often lost his self-

consciousness at the board and it was very obvious when he was doing well in a game or having trouble. The Bisguier slump signaled a rough position. Holding a superior position, his demeanor would become intense, though he never slammed pieces, or fidgeted or disturbed his opponents in any way. He would slyly, delicately make a move that had a tactical punch behind it.

I remember in the US Championship 1980, many of the players organized bridge games in the evening after play. Everyone soon discovered that Art was by far the best bridge player in the field, an undoubtedly strong master-level player in that difficult card game. Meanwhile, he somehow managed to draw every game in that 11-round event in Greenville, a result that led to endless ribbing from his colleagues.



*Bisguier c. 1981
Photo credit: U.S. Chess*

Art was a fundamentally sound player. He answered 1. e4 with 1...e5 and 1. d4 with d5. It turns out that he was something of a pioneer in chess theory, or at least ahead of his time. Bisguier was successfully playing the Berlin Wall line: 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. 0-0 Nxe4 5. d4 Nd6 6. Bxc6 dxc6 way back in the 1960s and 1970s well before the dreaded variation became a mainstay in elite events.

Art's greatest contribution to the game was his amiable, generous nature that made him a favorite among players of all strengths and ages. Let's look at two of his best efforts and some top notch Bisguier tactics.



First, a showcase of Bisguier's classical training in the strong Manhattan area chess precinct:

Donald Byrne
Arthur Bisguier
New York, 1948
Queen's Gambit Declined [D35]

1. Nf3 d5

Bisguier always preferred classical defenses. He answered 1 e4 with 1...e5 and 1 d4 with 1...d5.

2. d4 Nf6 3. c4 e6 4. Nc3 Nbd7 5. cxd5 exd5 6. Bf4 c6 7. e3 Be7

A solid alternative is 7... Nb6 planning 8... Bd6.

8. Bd3

h3 is more accurate.

8... Nf8 9. h3 Ng6 10. Bh2 O-O 11. Qc2 Re8 12. Ne5

This type of formation is often seen in our current era. Bisguier at his young age, demonstrates his strong grasp of fundamentals and also understanding of this type of formation.

12... Bd6 13. f4 c5!

Bisguier acts to subvert White's center and the support of the outposted knight.

14. O-O a6

14...c4 was an excellent alternative, putting the "question" to the bishop. Likely Byrne would have answered with 15. Be2 followed by Bf3 as in the game.

15. Kh1 c4 16. Be2

16. Bxg6 hxg6 17. g4 Bb4! gives Black firm control over the e4 square and a fine future outpost for his knight.

16... b5 17. Bf3



The primitive 17. g4 is easily handled by ... b4.

17... Nh4!?

Bisguier initiates an aggressive, sacrificial sequence to put Byrne on the defensive.

Safe and sound was 17... Bb7 with a roughly equal position.

18. Nxd5

18 Bxd5? Nxd5 19 Nxd5 Bxe5 wins for Black.

18... Bxe5 19. Nxf6+ Bxf6 20. Bxa8 Bxh3

Better than 20... Rxe3 21. Be4 Qxd4 22. Rae1, which would leave Black lacking sufficient compensation for the Exchange sacrifice.

21. Bc6 Qc8! 22. Bxe8

22. Bd5 Qd7!

22... Bxg2+ 23. Kg1



23... Qg4?

White is very hard-pressed after 23... Qxe8! 24. Rf2 Be4 25. Qe2 Nf5, planning ... Bh4 followed by ...f6! threatening a devastating check on g6.

24. Bd7!

This keeps White in the game, and was probably overlooked by Bisguier.

24... Qxd7 25. f5!

Byrne closes down the c8-h3 diagonal so Bisguier now operates on the long diagonal.

25... Ba8! 26. Bg3 Qc6! 27. d5

27. Kh2? Nf3+ 28. Kh3 and 28... Be7!, threatening ... Qh6+, is crushing.

27... Qxd5 28. e4

Once again, the only move.

28... Qd4+ 29. Kh2

29 Rf2 Qe3!, and Black has a decisive attack.

29... Bxe4 30. Rae1!

Byrne stubbornly staves off disaster with a creative, active defense.



30... Bc6 31. Rf4

31. Qe2! was an excellent alternative.

31... Qd8



31... Qxf4 fails to 32. Bxf4 Nf3+ 33. Kg3 Bh4+ 34. Kg4 Nxe1 35. Qd2.

32. Qf2?

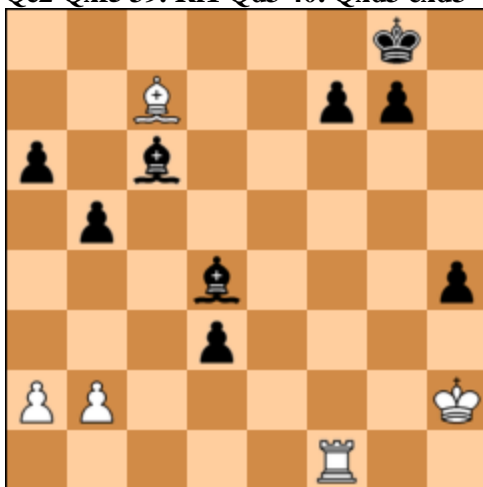
Byrne finally falters after an outstanding defensive sequence. Correct was 32. Rd1! Qe7 33. Qd2! and the nod must go to White. Also favoring White is 32. Rd1 Qe7 33. Qd2! Ng2 34. Rf2, when Black has nothing better than 34...Nh4.

32... Ng2! 33. Rfe4 Nxe1 34. Rxe1

Black has three pawns for the exchange, virulent bishops dominating the board, and a very safe king.

34... h5 35. Qe2 Qd5 36. Qf2 h4 37. Bc7 Bd4

38. Qe2 Qxf5 39. Rf1 Qd3 40. Qxd3 cxd3



White has no chance against so many pawns.

0-1

Arthur Bisguier

Samuel Reshevsky

Rosenwald 1954/55

12.28.1954

King's Indian [E70]

This game shows Bisguier near his peak. He outplays Reshevsky - top 10 in the world for many years - strategically and tactically.

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Bg5 h6 6. Bh4 O-O

Modern theory promotes 6...c5 as the strongest answer to this line. Then, 7. dxc5 might deserve some fresh attention instead of 7. d5 Qa5, which clearly gives Black good play. **7. f4**



Bisguier employed this type of formation several times in his long career. In 1973, he used a similar setup in a key win in a Pirc over James Tarjan at Lone Pine. That victory helped propel Bisguier to first place in the prestigious event: 1. e4 Nf6 2. Nc3 d6 3. d4 g6 4. Bg5 c6 5. f4 Bg7 6. Nf3 O-O 7. Qd2 b5 8. Bd3 Nbd7 9. e5 b4 10. Ne2 dxe5 11. fxe5 Nd5 12. Bh6 f5? 13. h4! e6 14. h5 Qe7 15. hxg6 hxg6 16. Bxg7 Qxg7 17. Ng5 Re8 18. Rh7 Qf8 19. O-O-O Re7 20. Rdh1 Rxh7 21. Rxh7 1-0

7... c5 8. d5 a6 9. Nf3 b5 10. Bd3 b4?

This closes lines on the queenside and drives the Knight over to the future battlefield, the kingside. 10... bxc4 11 Bxc4 Bg4 should give Black good play.



**11. Ne2 Bg4 12. O-O Nbd7 13. Qd2 Qc7
14. Rael**

Bisguier masses his forces for the big push.

14... Rae8

If Black expands on the queenside, with say, 14... a5, a likely continuation would be 15. h3 Bxf3 16. Rxf3 a4 17. Kh1 planning Bg3 and e4-e5.

15. h3 Bxf3 16. Rxf3 e6 17. dxe6! Rxe6 18. Ng3 Nh7 19. Nf1!

Bisguier maneuvers the knight to the prime e3 square where it pretty much does everything.

19... Ndf6

Reshevsky recognizes that allowing Ne3 is game-over, so he takes action to prevent it. Unfortunately, his kingside is now ripped open.

20. f5 Re7 21. fxg6 fxg6 22. e5! Rxe5 23. Rxe5 dxe5 24. Bxg6±

White now owns the light squares. Black is saddled with a vulnerable kingside and weak pawns on c5, e5 and h6. Reshevsky tries to fight back.

24... e4 25. Rg3

Somewhat more effective here is 25. Rf5 which prevents ...Qe5 and pressures the c5 pawn.

25... Qe5!

When in doubt, centralize. Reshevsky quickly seizes his chance, only to fall victim to a cunning Bisguier tactical sequence.

26. Ne3 Qf4?



The losing move. Black should have taken his king off the g-file with 26... Kh8.

27. Qe1!

Black had to try 27... Rd8 here (and not 27... Qxh4? 28. Bxh7+ Kxh7 29. Rxd7+ although White has a huge plus after 28. Nf5 Ng5 29. Re3 Qe5 30. b3.

27... Ng5?



28. Rxd7! hxd7 29. Bg3

The queen is trapped! But Reshevsky, as he so often did, plays on to the bitter end.

29... Nh5 30. Bxf4 Nxf4 31. Bf5

A bit simpler was 31. Bxe4 Re8 32. Nf5 with an easy win. Black cannot exploit the pin.

31... Bd4 32. Bg4 Nd3 33. Qe2 Rf2 34. Qxf2

White happily yields some extra material in return for an easily won endgame.

34... Nxf2 35. Kxf2 Bxb2 36. Bf5 a5 37. Bxe4 a4 38. Bc2 b3 39. axb3 a3 40. Bb1 Kf7 41. Kf3 Ke6 42. Ke4 Be5 43. Nc2 Bb2 44. b4

1-0



Bisguier at the 1964 U.S. Open in Boston.

Background: Robert Byrne

Photo: Beth Cassidy



Bisguier's Big Finishes

GM Larry Christiansen

1. Bisguier – Shaw, 1949



27. Rxe6+! Kxe6 28. Qg4+

2. Bisguier – Reshevsky, 1954



27. Qe1! Ng5? (27... Qxh4
28. Bxh7+ Kxh7 29. Rxg7+)
(27... Rd8 28. Nf5 Rd7 29. Qf1)
28. Rxg5 hxg5 29. Bg3 +-

3. Bisguier – Kudrin, 1985



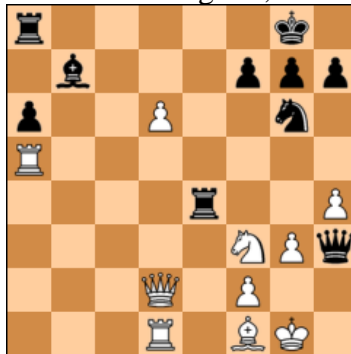
27. Bxf5! exf5 31. e6

4. Bisguier – Ludwig, 1948



43. Rg7 Rxg7 44. hxg7 Rxh1+
45. Kc2 Rg1 46. Ng3 Bg5
47. Ne2 (Nd3! is quicker) Bh6
48. Nxf7 Bxf7 49. Nxf7+-

5. Martz - Bisguier, 1973



23. Nxf4! 24. Bxf3? (24. Qd3
Nxf3+ 25. Qxf3 Qd7)
24... Nxf3+ 25. Kf1 Nxd2+
26. Rxd2 Rc4 27. d7 Rd8+

6. Robatsch - Bisguier, 1949



37... Nh3! 38. Be2 Qg1+
39. Rxg1 Nf2#

7. Bisguier – Adams, 1950



20. Nd2! Nxd2? (20... Nfd6
21. Bxd6 Nxd6 22. c4 Qf5
23. Qc3±) 21. Qa6!!+-

8. Bisguier – Karklins, 1974



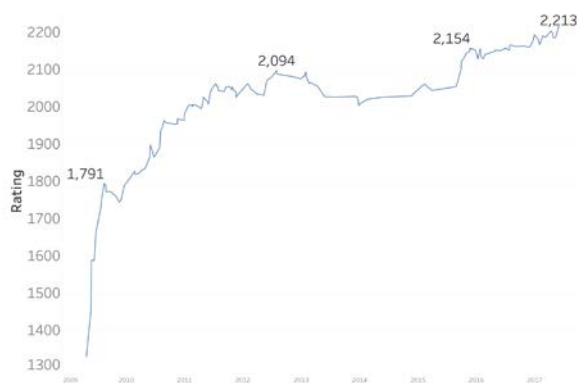
26. dxc7! Nxh3+
27. Qxh3 Qxh3 28. Bc4+



My Road to Master: Part I

NM Robert J. King

I am not the most naturally gifted chess player. This game does not come as easy to me as it does players like the gang of gifted youngsters I'm forced to play in every tournament. When I was their age, I was rated around 1000 and showed little chess understanding. I had played only in a few tournaments as a kid and didn't start playing chess seriously until 2009 when I was 25, yet somehow I was able to work hard and achieve a 2200 rating.



In my first year of playing, I was able to reach 1791 but it took a few more until I was able to break into the 2000's. It wasn't until 2015 that I was able to cross the 2100 barrier, and I achieved master in 2017. Not exactly a meteoric rise! So, how'd I get where I am now?

This is the first of several planned articles for Chess Horizons and in them I plan to:

- Highlight the things that I have learned over the years by highlighting some good and bad games that I have played.
- Give insight into my study habits and exactly what I did to improve.
- Provide an analytical overview of the USCF rating system and explain what it really means to be a master.

In this article, I'd like to show you a few of my most recent wins and will provide a baseline to compare my previous games against. They are

both from the 2017 US Amateur Team East tournament in Parsippany, NJ. The first game is against a local long-time master Lawyer Times, winner of the 2017 Mass Open! The second game comes the last round of the tournament where a win would give me a perfect 6-0 on board 2 and a free clock!

Robert J. King (2165)

NM Lawyer Times (2248)

US Amateur Team East (2)

02.18.2017

Benko Gambit [A57]

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 b5

Lawyer and I are very familiar opponents. Lifetime, we have played 10 games with 2 wins, 3 draws, 5 losses in Regular rated games and many quick and blitz games. Lawyer regularly plays the Benoni against me, but in an attempt to catch me off guard he decided to mix things up with a Benko. Luckily, I had expected this and had prepared this line in advance.

4. cxb5 a6 5. f3 axb5 6. e4 Qa5+ 7. Bd2 b4 8. Na3 d6 9. Nc4 Qc7 10. a3 bxa3 11. Rxa3 Rxa3 12. bxa3 g6



Everything up to here has been normal theory. Now White is faced with a question on



development. To me, it is not immediately obvious where the bishop belongs. On d3 it would fortify e4 and prepare a future f4 but it could also become a target for an inevitable Nc5 or Ne5 or even a well-timed c4. On e2, it would control the important squares on the queenside and allow White to proceed with operations there. The knight has fewer options and it clearly belongs on the queenside because that is where the action is. Therefore, the following sequence is the most logical path forward:

13. Ne2 Bg7 14. Nc3 Nbd7 15. Nb5

3 moves in a row with the same piece, usually an opening sin! This allows White to gain more control of the queenside and take the initiative.

15... Qb8 16. Be2 0-0

16... Qxb5?? 17. Nxd6+

17. a4 Nb6 18. Nxb6

Played after a decent amount of thought. Usually when your opponent has less space, you don't want to trade pieces. I debated playing Nca3 and then kicking the knight with a5 but I felt that Black would be able to play Ba6, Nfd7, etc... very quickly and I didn't want to allow Black to have things so easily. I decided that trading and pushing a5 allowed me to grab the initiative.

18... Qxb6 19. a5 Qb8 20. 0-0 Nd7 21. Bc3?!

This is a mistake as it allows Black to quickly develop his pieces and take over the initiative. Black does not take proper advantage of the situation, but the computers evaluation has begun to tilt in his favor.

21. Qa4 Ba6 22. Rb1 Ne5 23. Na3 Qc8 24. Bxa6 Qxa6 25. Qb5 would have been a much better choice for White.

21... Bxc3 22. Nxc3 Qa7 23. Qa1 Ba6?!

23... c4+! 24. Kh1 Ba6 25. Rb1 Rb8 26. Rxb8+ Qxb8+ and Black will now play Nc5-d3, Qb4, and start making threats. The pawn on c4 seems strong and the White pawn on a5 is weak.

24. Nb5 Qb8 25. Rb1 Qd8 26. Bf1! Nb8 27. Na7?!

According to the computer, this is the wrong idea. I wanted to trade the knight on c6 and exchange bishops to weaken Black's grip on the

light squares. However, Black can trade Bishops and establish the knight on b4 and White's position is barely better, if at all.

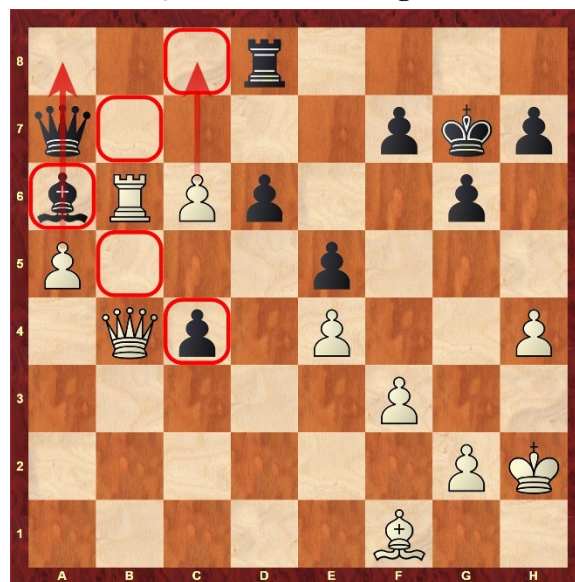
27... c4?

27... Bxf1 28. Kxf1 Qd7 29. Nb5 (29. Rxb8!? - I considered this idea during the game and White seems to have good compensation here, but maybe not more. 29... Rxb8 30. Nc6 Ra8 31. a6 Qc7 32. a7 Qb7∞) 29... Na6 30. Na3 Nb4 31. Nc4=

28. Nc6 Nxc6 29. dxc6 Qc7 30. Rb6 Ra8 31. Qc3 Qa7 32. h4!?

This move was perhaps too ambitious. Better would have been 32. g3 where the King will be safe and there are no perpetual checks in play. The text is still good, but provides Black the opportunity for counterplay.

32... e5 33. Qb4 Rd8 34. Kh2 Kg7



When looking at this position, it is important to understand what is holding Black's position together. White has two extremely strong pawns that want to advance and Black has a weak pawn on c4. All of this is held together because of Black's control on the light squares. How does White make progress?

35. Rxa6!!

This exchange sacrifice shatters Black's control of the light squares and now the White pawns



are unstoppable. There may have been other, more solid ways to win but this should get the job done quickly.

35... Qxa6 36. Qb6 Qc8 37. Bxc4 Re8 38. Qb7 Qd8 39. g3?!

This seems to be a passive move, and it is, but it didn't seem necessary to take risks when White's position seems winning.

39. Qxf7+ Kh8 40. Kg3!+- is a move that I never even considered.

39... Re7 40. Qb6 Rc7 41. Ba6

Threatening Bb7, a6, a7, ...

41... d5 42. exd5 Qd6 43. Bf1 Re7 44. Qb3 Qc5

45. Qb5 Qf2+ 46. Bg2 e4 47. d6! Re6

47... exf3 48. Qf1 Re2 49. Qxf2 Rxf2 50. d7

Rxg2+ 51. Kh3 Rd2 52. c7+-

48. fxe4 Rxe4 49. Qf1 Qc2 50. d7 Rd4 51. Qa1

1-0

Fritz Gaspard (2079)

Robert J. King (2165)

US Amateur Team East (6)

02.20.2017

Grunfeld [D89]

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5 5. e4 Nxc3 6. bxc3 Bg7 7. Bc4 c5 8. Ne2 0-0 9. Be3 Nc6 10. 0-0 Bg4 11. f3 Na5 12. Bd3 cxd4 13. cxd4 Be6 14. d5 Bxa1 15. Qxa1 f6 16. Qd4

This is a cool move that allows the queen to swing back into action. I learned of this move when studying the games between Topalov and Shirov in 2007 and 2008 and thought it gave White good attacking chances.

The idea is that White will place their bishop on h6, Queen on f2 and play for a quick f4-f5 and try and mate the Black king.

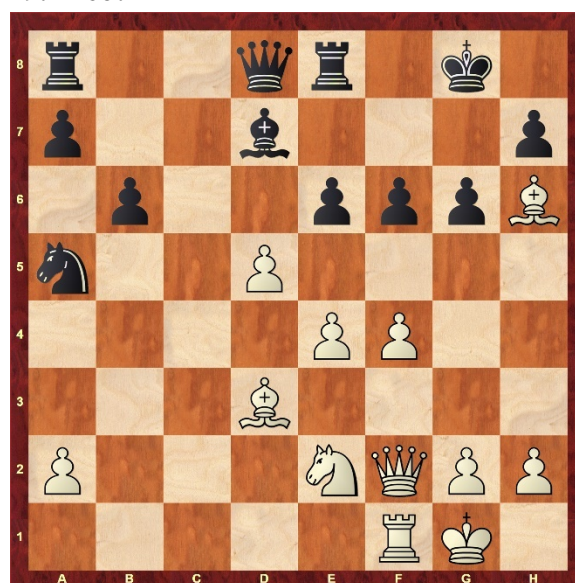
16... Bd7 17. Bh6?!

This is actually a mistake. It turns out that this move is fine in the Bf7 lines but against Bd7, Black has the extra option of Rf7 which is a good move.

17... Re8 18. Qf2?! b6?

I give this a question mark because it deprives Black of their most important defensive resource with ... Qb6. The idea of b6 is to play Nb7-Nd6 and to allow Rc8 and not worry about the a7 pawn hanging. However, this plan seems slow and allows White to start creating play already. 18... Qb6 19. Be3 Qb4 (19... Qb2 20. Qg3 Rac8 21. f4) 20. f4 Qa3 21. Bb1 Rac8 White has compensation but maybe not enough. Black seems to be holding in this line as the Queen on a3 is defending d6, taking the sting out of f5 ideas.

19. f4 e6?



20. d6?

Returning the favor as White was completely crushing - f5 was easily winning:

20. f5! exf5 (20... exd5 21. fxg6 dxe4 22. gxh7+ Kh8 23. Qg3+-; 20... e5 21. Qg3 Qe7 22.

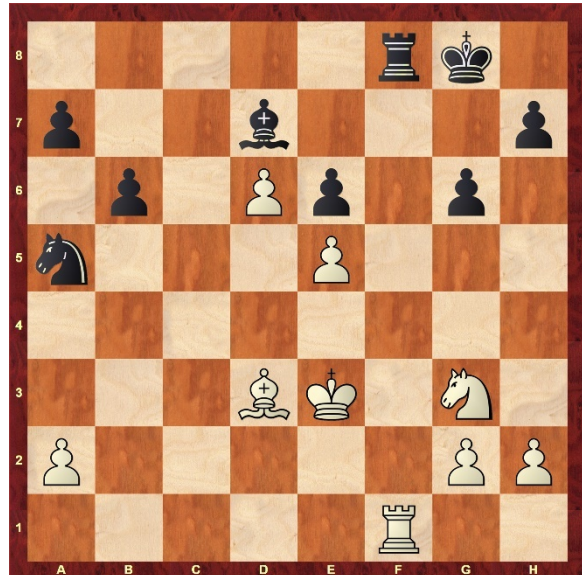
fxg6+-) 21. exf5 g5 22. Bxg5 fxg5 23. f6+-

20... Rc8 21. e5 Rf8!? 22. Bxf8 Qxf8 23. Ng3 fxe5 24. fxe5

Now we enter an endgame where the question will be whether the white pawns are strong or weak.



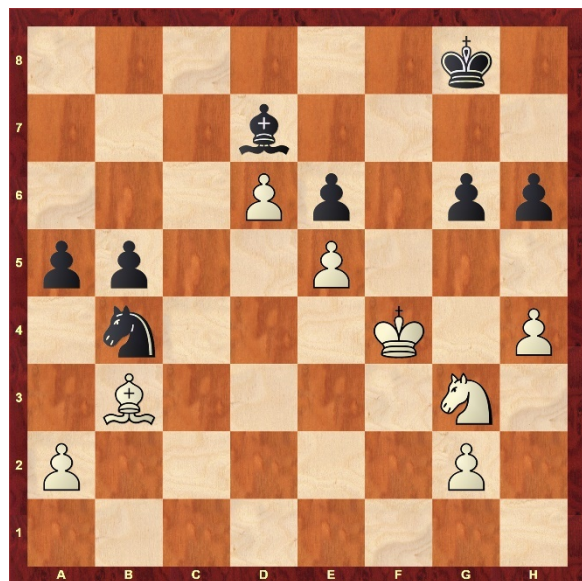
24... Qxf2+ 25. Kxf2 Rf8+ 26. Ke3



26... Rxf1?

Over the board, I thought this was a mistake. Black needed to control the f4 square to force White to choose which piece goes to e4. White is still better, but it is certainly harder to prove. 26... Nc6 27. Rc1! (27. Rxf8+ Kxf8 28. Kf4 this is the game position but Black has the King on f8, a VERY important point) 27... Nxe5 28. Rc7 Rf7 29. Ne4 h6 30. Rxa7

27. Bxf1 Nc6 28. Kf4 h6 29. h4 Nb4 30. Bc4 b5 31. Bb3 a5



32. Ne4!!

Giving up the e5 pawn to march the King to the queenside and make a queen with the d pawn. I needed to be absolutely sure that this worked before making this move or else White may find themselves much worse. I think I had spent about 20-30 minutes on this move up until I saw the Ba4 resource.

32... Nd3+ 33. Ke3 Nxe5 34. Kd4 Nc6+ 35. Kc5 Kf7 36. Kxb5 Nd4+ 37. Kxa5 Bc6 38. Nc5 Bxg2 39. Kb6 g5 40. hxc5 hxc5 41. Ba4!

Cutting off the c6 square and now there is no way to stop White from getting a queen.

1-0

I hope you enjoyed these games and found something educational in them. In the next issue of Chess Horizons, I will provide some example games from when I was rated 1900- 2000 and illustrate the things that I've learned to make me a stronger chess player.

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2017 Boston Chess Congress **Head of the Class**

Paul Arond

“The art of living,” according to Marcus Aurelius, Stoic and last of the ‘Five Good Emperors’ of Rome, “is more like wrestling than dancing.” The same could be said for chess, among other sports. The game is a struggle and victory does not always go to the mightiest, or swiftest or strongest. Sometimes it goes to the player who persists and prolongs the fight.

Stoicism may not be for everyone, but it’s probably a good philosophy for chessplayers, Garry Kasparov famously excepted. For the uninitiated, it has been broadly described (in Wikipedia) as “a path to happiness for humans found in accepting that which we have been given in life, not allowing ourselves to be controlled by desire for pleasure or fear of pain, using our minds to understand the world around us, and working together and treating others in a fair and just manner.” In the chess context, remaining objective in the face of fortune or adversity is pertinent, and something I apparently achieved at the 5th Annual Boston Chess Congress (a rare moment in my chess career).

Through no fault of my own, I managed to win the U1900 section with a 5-0 result. I mean to say that I was not only the beneficiary of mistakes by my opponents at critical moments, but also the recipient of favorable pairings (in a strictly ‘theoretical’ sense) throughout the tournament. Let me be clear, I am not alleging or even suggesting any chicanery or irregularities. It’s just the nature of the Swiss system. The average rating of my opponents was 1750, and I played just two of the top 12 rated players in the section going into the event. This speaks to the deeply competitive nature of class warfare in the trenches. Also, playahs gotta win their games, avoid upsets and 1/2-point slippage.

It was also good fortune, most likely, that I faced only one player too young to meet for a post-game beer in the hotel’s bar. Persons of a

certain vintage can only hope to minimize the bleeding as “rating donors” to a new generation of young chess ‘vampires’. In the 2015 New England Open, my six opponents were between nine- and eleven-years-old, a murderer’s row of young Massachusetts chess talent from A to Z – that would be from Alan Song to Derek Chubo Zhao, with Danila Poliannikov, Derek Jin, and Suraj Ramanathan in between. I was lucky to escape then with an even score, but these lads have since moved up the food chain. Somehow, I largely avoided the newest wave of rising stars at the Congress.

That said, I do not want to diminish my result. It was sweet payback for years of pain, suffering, and being a patzer in a valley of lackluster play, blunders, and defeats snatched from the jaws of victory (including resigning in a winning position once, it happens). It was only a year-and-a-half prior that I achieved the unceremonious result of 0.5/5 plus an additional 0/1 in a side game at the Massachusetts Open. Such is the tournament life of a class player.

At the Congress, my score could just as easily have been 2.5/5, as my games were up-and-down affairs in which I made the next-to-last mistake. My round three game was dead drawn, but my opponent was determined to play for a win, and lost. In the fourth round, my young opponent overlooked a clever move that would have put him up the exchange in a rook versus knight endgame. In round one I had 38 seconds on my clock for the last 12 moves of the time control, playing on the 10-second delay, and survived. But then, isn’t survival what it’s all about?

For the last few years, I have had an ongoing bet with a friend of mine in Seattle, Neal Bonrud, regarding who would be the first to achieve a 1900 rating (Neal was also instrumental in helping me prepare this article). Our ratings have bounced around like ping pong balls in a state lottery but the 1900 barrier has proved mysteriously impenetrable. As a result of my 5-0 score at the Congress, I attained a USCF rating of 1899. Ah, how cruel the gods can be, and Arpad Elo’s rating system to boot.



It seems appropriate here to interject an admonishment attributed to Professor Elo that seems too often lost in the competitive shuffle. “[The Elo rating system] is a measuring tool, not a device of reward or punishment. It is a means to compare performances, assess relative strength, not a carrot waved before a rabbit, or a piece of candy given to a child for good behavior.” Spoken in the great Stoic tradition!

Well, so close (to 1900) and yet so far. Experience teaches it's best to take these things in stride. To quote Hunter S. Thompson on his gambling fortunes, “bragging when you get lucky and win a few games will plunge you into gloom and unacceptable beatings very soon. It happens every time.” Indeed, a week after the big win I followed up my 5-0 score with an 0-3 result at the Portsmouth Open, though, from an objective point of view, I may have played better. That's entropy. Look it up.

The following game is my first-round time scramble escape mentioned earlier. Spoiler alert: it ain't pretty, but is representative of the helter skelter nature of my path to perfection. An hour before the start of the tournament I was sitting in one of the meeting rooms overlooking Boston Harbor pondering the universe and my opening repertoire, flipping through multiple variations of the French Defense. Despite dozens if not hundreds of hours studying the opening, the futility of it all dawned upon me and I resolved to just “play chess.” That may have been my best move of the tournament. As luck would have it, I had the black pieces in the first round and my opponent played 1.e4. When he played the Exchange Variation on move 3, I was already, practically speaking, out of book. What ensued, like most of my games, was a comedy of errors if not a tragicomedy.

Brian Hurst (1651)

Paul Arond (1797)

5th Boston Chess Congress, U1900 (1)

1.22.17

French Defense, Exchange Variation [C01]

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. exd5 exd5 4. Bd3 Nc6
5. c3 Nf6 6. Bg5 Be7 7. Qc2 h6= 8. Bh4 O-O
9. Nd2 Be6 10. f3 Nh5= 11. Bxe7 Qxe7 12. Ne2
Rfe8 13. O-O-O Qd6 14. g3 a6 15. f4 Bg4+
16. Rde1 b5 17. Nb3



17... b4

White has made some weakening pawn moves on the kingside which I failed to take proper advantage of. b4 is not a bad move, but the better Re3 would have locked down the e-file. The game might have continued 17... Re3! 18. Rhf1 Rae8 19. Kb1 Nf6 20. Rf2 Ne4 21. Bxe4 R8xe4 22. Nc5 Re8 -+ 23. Nb3 Qe7 24. Nbc1 b4 -+, and black has a winning advantage.

18. Rhf1 bxc3 19. Nxc3+ Nb4 20. Qd2 Nxd3+ 21. Qxd3= Nf6 22. Re5 g6 23. Rfe1 Bf5 24. Qf3 c6 25. Nc5 Ne4?

Black needs to cede the e-file and look for greener pastures on the b-file. This move should lose material.

26. N3a4?

26. g4! Bd7 (26... Rxe5 27. fxe5 +-)
27. N3xe4 dxe4 28. Qxe4 Rxe5 29. fxe5 Qe7
30. Qf4 g5 31. Qe4 and White is in the driver's seat.

26... Rxe5 27. fxe5 Qc7 28. Qf4? Qa5+

29. Rxe4?

White's rook was hanging, but this was an unnecessary sacrifice. 29. Rf1 Qb4 30. Nxe4 dxe4 31. Nc3 Qxd4+

29... Bxe4?

Let the time scramble begin.



29... dxe4 30. Nc3 Qb4 31. N5xe4 Rb8 32. Nf6+ Kg7 → 33. Qf2 Rd8 34. d5 cxd5 35. Nfxd5 Qc4 36. Ne3 Qe6 37. Nxf5+ gxf5 38. Qf4 Re8 and Black is ahead with work to do.

30. Nc3 Qd8 31. Qxh6 Qf8 32. Qf4 Kh7 33. Nd7

Better was 33. N3xe4 dxe4 34. Nxe4 Qe7 35. Kc2±

33... Qh6± 34. Nf6+ Kg7



A series of tactical oversights ensues. Blame it on time pressure!

35. Nfxe4?

35. Qxh6+ Kxh6 36. Ncxe4 dxe4 37. Nxe4 g5±

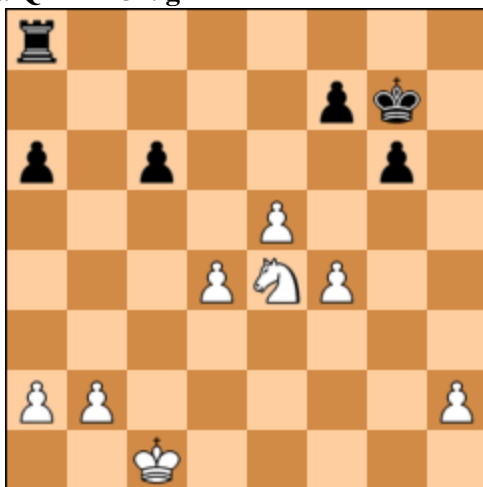
35... dxe4?

35... Qxf4+! 36. gxf4 dxe4 37. Nxe4 Rh8±

36. Nxe4?

36. Qxh6+ Kxh6 37. Nxe4±

36... Qxf4+± 37. gxf4



Of course, Rh8 is just as good. The superiority of rook over knight seals the deal.

37... Rd8 38. Nd6 Kf8

38... Rh8!

39. Kc2 Ke7 40. Kc3 f6 41. Ne4 fxe5 42. dxe5 Rh8 43. Kd3 Rxh2 → 44. Nd2 Ke6 45. b4 Kd5 46. Ke3 Rh1 47. a4 Ra1 48. a5 Ra4 49. Nf3 Rxb4 50. e6

50. Nh4 g5

50... Re4+ 51. Kd3 Rxe6 52. Nd2 c5 53. Nc4 Rf6 54. Ne3+ Kc6 55. Ke4 Re6+56. Kd3 Rxe3+!

A hard-fought struggle.

0-1

On Saturday of that weekend there was a near blizzard that blanketed the Harbor with fog. Waiting for the snow to stop, I drove home at midnight and the customary 30-minute commute turned into 75 minutes. My car could only do 40-mph with the wet snow packed in the wheel wells. Overnight, it was downright chilly and on Sunday morning, as I prepared for the final ascent, I couldn't get my car close to starting. Fortunately, my mother's car was available, but the drive to the hotel was still a carnival ride. Wet, dirty snow splattered on the windshield and froze on contact, leaving about two inches of visibility at the very bottom of the window as I weaved my way down Rt. 93 and through the Callahan Tunnel. After that harrowing experience, the remaining games didn't seem nearly as forbidding.

And neither should yours! In the face of adversity, fellow chess proles, carry on and rise up - you have nothing to lose but your pawns. Stay classy, if not stoic, and may the force be with you!



Triumph at Supnationals

NM Andrew Liu

NM Andrew Liu (2324)
Saithanusri Avirneni (1954)
Supnationals VI (3)
05.12.2017
Nimzo-Indian [E20]

In this tournament I was very lucky to be able to use my absolute favorite opening as white, the f3 Nimzo Indian, no less than three times. I worked on it especially hard for this tournament, and was able to use large amounts of my preparation.

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. f3 Bxc3+?!

A bit premature without White having played a3. The main options are 4., d5, c5, and 0-0

5. bxc3 c5 6. e4 d6 7. Bd3 Nc6 8. Ne2 b6

Black has a very typical plan of rounding up the c4 pawn with Na5 and Ba6, but I always liked White's chances for a direct attack.

9. O-O O-O 10. Bg5 e5?

This allows White to play f4 with the pin still on the knight on f6. 10. h6 was essential

11. d5 Na5 12. f4 h6

12... exf4 13. Rxf4 is hopeless, as White will take on f6 with either piece and play Ng3 +.

13. fxe5 hxg5 14. exf6 g6?!



15. e5!

A nice sacrifice to clog the e5 square.

15. Qd2

I thought she would have Re8 16. Qxg5 Re5 but even here, after 17. Rf5!, White is winning.

15... dxe5 16. Qd2 Kh7 17. Qxg5 Rh8

18. Nf4!

White has too many attackers.

18... exf4 19. Rxf4 Qf8 20. Bxg6+

1-0

NM Andrew Liu (2324)
IM Praveen Balakrishnan (2480)
Supnationals VI (5)
05.13.2017
Nimzo-Indian [E20]

This was a critical fifth round encounter against a very talented IM. The winner would have a chance at first.

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. f3 c5 5. d5 b5 6. e4 O-O

My opponent chooses one of the sharpest lines, but also one where I had a very dangerous novelty prepared.

7. e5 Ne8 8. f4 d6 9. Nf3 exd5 10. cxd5 Nc7



Black is trying to collapse White's extended center, while White is trying to use the extra space and center as momentum against the black king.

11. a4!

I had actually found this idea as a novelty, but it was recently tried by Mamedyarov against Hou



Yifan. The idea is to pressure the queenside and draw the black bishop to b7 so it cannot come to f5 to defend after a greek-gift bishop sac on h7.

11... Bb7 12. Bd3 g6

12... Nxd5 13. Bxh7+ Kxh7 14. Ng5+ Kg8 15.

Qh5 Qxg5 16. fxg5 Nxc3 17. O-O is very unclear, but also dangerous for Black.

13. O-O c4 14. Be4 Nd7 15. f5!



I prepared this move especially. White is willing to sacrifice some of his center to go all in on the black king.

15... Bc5+

15... Bxc3 16. bxc3 dxe5 17. Bg5 f6 18. Bh6 g5 19. Bxf8 Qxf8 20. Nd2 Qc5+ 21. Kh1 Nxd5 22. axb5 Nxc3 23. Qc2 Nxe4 24. Nxe4 += was the main line of my preparation.

15... dxe5 16. d6! Is a tactic that wins a piece.

16. Kh1 b4 17. Nb5 Nxb5 18. axb5 dxe5

19. Bh6

19. Qc2! threatening ideas of Bxg6, is much more venomous.

19... Nf6

The situation had become critical. I didn't know how to feel. The lines I was calculating were pointing to an advantage, but it's the type of position that can be lost in one slip.

20. Ng5 Be3

It seems like White's pieces are collapsing here, but I was ready to enter the tactical jungle.



21. fxg6 hxg6

21... Nxe4 22. gxf7+ Kh8 23. Bg7+ Kxg7

24. Ne6+

22. Qf3

The battery on the f-file saves White from losing material.

22... Nxe4 23. Bxf8 Nxe5 24. Qxe3 Kxf8 25. h4



This was the move I was banking on, as I thought that Nh7 was not possible.

25... Bxd5?

Now White is better.

I thought White was just winning with 25... Nh7

26. Qh6+ Kg8 27. Rxf7 Kxf7 28. Qxh7+ Ke8

29. Qxb7 (29. Qxg6+ Kd7 30. Rf1 Qxh4+

31. Kg1 Qd4+ -+), but the key point is that Black has Qxh4+, securing a perpetual.

25... Kg7 was also fine: 26. hxg5 Qxd5 27. Qf3 Rh8+ 28. Kg1 Qd4+ 29. Qf2 Bd5



26. hxc5 Qd7 27. Kg1 Qe7 28. Rfd1
Black's pieces are just not coordinated enough.
28... Be6 29. Qxe5 Kg8 30. b6 a6 31. Rd4 Qf8
32. Rh4 Qg7 33. b7 Rf8 34. b8=Q

1-0

NM Andrew Liu (2324)
FM Christopher Wu (2432)
Supernationals VI (7)
05.13.2017
Nimzo-Indian [E20]

This was the crucial final round. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the pairings. My opponent, Chris Wu, was my greatest rival and friend at these nationals. We'd been playing each other at these tournaments since we were little kids.

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. f3

We couldn't help but share a laugh during the game after 4. f3. Most of our games have been played in this variation, and have been huge battles. When Chris went for it again I knew he would have something new in his pocket. And so, in the last round at our last Nationals, it would be in this variation where we'd have a final fight. I honestly could not have thought of a more fitting last round to conclude my scholastic chess journey.

4... c5 5. d5 O-O 6. e4 d6 7. Nge2 a6!?



Chris chooses an extremely modern try, introduced by Aronian against Wesley So. However, I also had a new move prepared here.

8. g4!?

This ambitious move was introduced in a recent correspondence game. The idea is that a6 is a bit slow in preparing b5, and so White can directly expand towards Black's king.

8. a4 Ba5! was the beautiful idea of Aronian. Now, b5 is possible, e.g. 9. Ng3 b5 10. cxb5. axb5 11. axb5 Bxc3+)

8. Ng3 b5 9. Bf4! Was my main variation prepared, and is more solid.

8... b5

8... exd5 9. cxd5 b5 10. Ng3 was what I had in mind. White leaves the rook on h1, and plays Kf2-g2, and h4 with some attack spearheaded by the g4 pawn.

9. Ng3 bxc4 10. Bxc4 exd5 11. Bxd5 Nxd5

12. Qxd5 Ra7

This is smart play. g4 is a bit slow in itself, and Black is trying to quickly mobilize before the attack can be fully coordinated.

13. Bg5 Qb6 14. O-O Be6 15. Qd2 Nc6?



Amazingly, this move loses. I remember seeing my next move and feeling utter disbelief as I calculated. The variations seemed to be working out. Things were shaping up for this to be one of the luckiest tournaments I ever had.

15... f6, leaving the game unclear, was essential.

16. Bf6!



Out of the blue the dark squares around black's king fall into critical condition. White has threats of Qg5 and Nh5, and the point of starting with the bizarre Bf6 is that it plugs the f7 pawn from moving and allowing the rook on a7 to defend.

16... Ne5

This move prevents mate, but the dark squares around Black's king still collapse.

16... gxf6 17. Qh6 and amazingly Black has no way to stop Nh5 with mate or severe material loss: 17... c4+ 18. Kh1 Qc5 19. Nh5 Qg5 20. Nxf6+ Qxf6 21. Qxf6

17. Nh5 Rfa8 18. Bxg7 f6 19. Qh6 Ng6 20. Nxf6+ Kf7 21. Qxh7 Nf8 22. Bxf8+ Kxf8 23. Qh6+ Kf7 24. Nh7 Bc4 25. Rfd1 Bxc3 26. bxc3 Ke7 27. Qf6+ Kd7 28. e5 Bd3 29. Rxd3 c4+ 30. Rd4

This final, sentimental game against a great rival and a great friend was the end to my last nationals. I actually ran up to Chris in the hall after, and we shook and said our final goodbyes. I remember just sitting down on a set of stairs after. It was the happiest I had ever felt after a tournament, but there was no doubt of the bittersweet note it carried.

1-0

I'm now at the end of my scholastic chess career, and it's a very nostalgic time. Chess is so many things - there are moments when it is just inexplicably beautiful. There are moments when I discover some wonderful novelty or endgame study, and a knot of excitement just catches in my chest, and it quite literally feels like nothing else in the world could bother me at that instant. Scholastic chess is especially magical—chess is very wholesome for a kid. It can be that video game with infinite levels and hidden Easter eggs in the wildest of places, and yet as you get older, it also becomes so much more: your openings and style of play suddenly give you an identity to be proud of, and opponents can become

lifelong friends in the blink of an eye. The moments I will remember from nationals are not of individual games, but of moments like walking around the hotel plaza at night with Chris, excitedly talking about the intricacies of the game we just played. For me, chess will always be that one thing that can inspire an insatiable hunger to discover - and yet at the same exact time, still give tremendous warmth and fulfillment.

Now, as I get ready to head off to college, I can say with certainty that I will never quit chess - it truly is something I can never get bored of, no matter how hard I go at it. A big next step would be to pursue the IM title, and I plan to keep playing in tournaments as long as I have the time, and searching for new novelties or endgame studies is still one of my favorite hobbies. The Massachusetts Chess community that I grew up with will always have a special place in my heart, and I hope to never stop being a part of it.



Andrew (right) stands with his trophy for T-1st in the K-12, while fellow Mass players NM Carissa Yip (T-7th in the K-9 section, left) and young Maya Figelman (T-12th in the K-1) stand alongside.

Photo credit: Ilya Figelman

Supernationals VI was the largest rated tournament ever, with 5,577 players across all sections.



Top 10 Openings to Spice Up Your Chess!

Nathan Smolensky

The miracle of chess lies in its endless wonder, in the boundless possibilities and variations that spring from such seemingly limited stipulations. And when we are robbed of that infinity, when we find ourselves repeating the same dull situations over and over, we are robbed of so much of the beauty and wonder of chess that it can simply stop being fun. Sure, we may get to exercise our technique, harness our skills in memorization, and enjoy the thrill of victory just as much (if not more), but boring chess just isn't the same.

Luckily, those who want exciting games of chess may force the matter in the first few moves of a match, even against opponents who prefer peace and predictability.

The following is a list of ten ways to ensure that each game is wild and exciting, and to avoid the dull brand of chess which threatens to rob us of our love for the game. The list is biased towards openings where success is not reliant on heavy knowledge of theory, and this list will include several lines that are rather unsound, and that would be ill-suited to players seeking only to win more.

But chess isn't all about wins and losses. It's about the beauty and wonder of the game. So let's get to it:

10. Danish Gambit (1. e4 e5 2. d4 exd4 3. c3!?)

The Scholar's Sacrifice

The Danish Gambit is included on this list with one primary application in mind: to utilize against weaker players, particularly novice players, to illustrate the power of the pawn sacrifice, and reliably create lively, flowing attacking affairs. To this end, I most strongly recommend the variation popularized by the

19th-century Swedish player Hans Lindehn, in which, following Black's acceptance of the gambit with 3... dxc3, a second pawn is sacrificed with 4. Bc4!? This can lead to a great deal of fun for White, as in the trap line 1. e4 e5 2. d4 exd4 3. c3 dxc3 4. Bc4 cxb2 5. Bxb2 Qg5 6. Nf3 Qxg2 7. Rg1 Bb4+ 8. Ke2 Qh3 9. Bxf7+ Kd8 (9... Kxf7?? 10. Ng5+) 10. Bxg7 Ne7.



Find the killer move! Answer: p.37

The Danish Opening, intuitive as its moves are, is among the older gambits on this list, originating from Lindehn, who practiced it as early as the 1850's, and the Danish master Martin Severin From, its namesake, who also lent his name to From's Gambit against the Bird (1. f4 e5). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it was put into use by the finest attacking players in the world, from Frank Marshall to Alexander Alekhine.

Its popularity diminished after defenses were developed and improved, many involving the return of sacrificed pawns through maneuvers such as the early d5 for Black, which produce equal or favorable positions for the defender without too much tactical trouble.

But to the novice, these defensive resources are often unknown, making the Danish an excellent option to teach them a lesson, and to inspire them through the beauty of attacking chess, that they may one day take it on themselves.



9. Latvian Gambit (1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 f5!?)

Chess, Riga Style

In Paul van der Sterren's 2009 encyclopedia *Fundamental Chess Openings*, he writes of this aperture:

"What is required to play the Latvian Gambit with any degree of success is a sharp eye for tactics and a mental attitude of total contempt for whatever theory has to say about it."

Suffice it to say, it's not for the faint of heart. Among the common third moves for White, Nxe4, Bc4, d4, Nc3, and exf5, there are piece sacrifices for White and Black, King's Gambit positions with reversed colors, speedy checkmates, and at least one bizarre, heavily analyzed line that ends in a repetition: 3. Bc4 fxe4 4. Nxe5 Qg5 5. d4 Qxg2 6. Qh5+ g6 7. Bf7+ Kd8 8. Bxg6 Qxh1+



9. Ke2 Qxc1 10. Nf7+ Ke8 11. Nxh8+ hxc6 12. Qxg6+ Kd8 13. Nf7+ Ke7 14. Nc3! The prospect of a nice, quiet, friendly game of chess, however, is nowhere to be found.

The opening takes its name from several Latvian masters who wrote heavy analysis on it in the early 20th century, and is rather fitting that the wild, dubious-but-effective opening is forever linked to a chess culture known for its wild gambiteers, whose greatest flagbearer, Mikhail Tal, was the very epitome of the attacking chess.

8. Four Knights Game, Halloween Defence (1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. g3 Nxe4!?)

Huh?

Full disclosure: I played e5 exclusively against 1. e4 for years, never missing an opportunity to play into this line. In those years, I managed to deploy this secret weapon exactly once... in a blitz game.

In other words, it isn't going to come up often – 4. g3, though championed by Russian GM Igor Glek, remains an exceedingly rare line within the Four Knights. But the impact of knowing an opening, and even knowing *of* an opening, can go far beyond the games in which it is played.

This obscure variation gets the nod over its slightly less obscure cousin, the Halloween Attack (1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Nxe5?!), by virtue of one line: 4... Nxe5 5. d4 Nc6 6. d5 Bb4! 7. dxc6 Nxe4 8. Qd4 Qe7. Not only does give Black a strong advantage according to the computer, but it completely sucks the fun out of the game for White, making it the sort of refutation that should deny a place on this list.

But chess is a funny thing, and that beautiful refutation doesn't work in reverse after g3 (5. Nxe4 d5 6. Nc3 d4 7. Bb5 dxc3 8. Nxe5 Qd5 9. Qe2?? and the rook hangs), nor does the mirror equivalent of 5... Ng6, another well-known foil to the Halloween Attack, as the pawn on g3 now blocks the way. With these pesky countermeasures out of the way, White is forced to either give back the knight (typically through 5. Nxe4 d5 6. Nc3 d4 7. Ne4 f5 8. Neg5 e4, as in two games between GMs Ilya Smirin and Bartholomiej Maciejka in 2004, both of which ended in draws), or bear the full brunt of the assault: 7. Nb1 e4 8. Ng1 d3.



In chess, even torture can be beautiful

What comes next is a cavalcade of tactical threats (the crushing ... Nb4 and ... Nd4 need to be dealt with right away) and suffocating positional advantages (9. c3, the best answer to the present threats, further impairs White's ability to develop). The gambit is more than just tricky – it's actually quite sound, offering Black very serious compensation for the missing piece.

But again, don't expect to play it in many games. Instead, just look at the line with a computer, or play some solitaire games with it – better yet, find a friend willing to agree to play games from this starting position. Do make sure to switch off colors, though – it's going to be much more fun for Black.

By the time you finish, you will have seen themes and motifs of sacrificial chess play out in their most extreme, most beautiful forms. You will see ideas in action that can ignite, or perhaps reignite, the wonder of the infinite possibility that chess brings, of the wild frenzies that can come from the seemingly peaceful game.

If you should find the time to study an opening that you're not likely ever to play, let this be that opening.

7. The Grob

(1. g4?!)

Yes, the Tactical One

Sometimes, one move is just too long to wait to stay in theory. For those who want to throw the game into the throes of chaos from move one, there's Grob's Attack, or simply the Grob.

Though it takes its name from Swiss IM Henri Grob, the opening's most famous practitioner might be the notorious Claude Bloodgood (1937-2001), the convicted murderer who reached a USCF rating of 2702 from behind bars, in no small part due to flaws in the rating system. His 1976 book, *The Tactical Grob*, argued in favor of the opening as a practical way to exploit overconfidence and tactical shortcomings in an opponent.

The most common response, and the one White most likes to see (a fortunate coincidence) is 1... d5. Though intuitive, it can lead to some significant complications: after 2. Bg2, if Black should accept the pawn sacrifice with 2... Bxg4, 3. c4 provides a critical challenge to the center, and some strong play for the resourceful tactician. More than just enable chaotic play, the opening can actually force it, with the confluence of g4 and c4 pushing making castling for White inopportune – the only defense available is a strong offense.

Other first moves for Black, such as the quieter 1... d6, can deny White some of these shenanigans, making the Grob a risky ploy against both generally experienced opponents and those who have had a few chances to play against it. And the weaknesses that it creates for White are very real in any line, hence its annotation as a dubious move.

But the Grob is not a way to win tournaments. No, it is a way to make statements. Deploy it in the first game of a blitz match, or as a surprise weapon against a familiar opponent. The message, from move one, will be loud and clear:

You aren't scared.



6. Albin Countergambit

(1. d4 d5 2. c4 e5!?)

That's Not a Gambit, This is a Gambit!

"The Queen's Gambit." In the world of chess nomenclature, there is no more laughable farce of a name than this. What should promise action and excitement is instead a recipe for solid, positional, predictable play by the most lily-livered of chess practitioners. And it deserves a firm rebuttal. Fortunately, there's the Albin.

After the typical 3. dxe5 d4, Black is down a pawn. This is not a temporary sacrifice, or a pseudo-sacrifice. It's a real sacrifice, and the d4 pawn that Black receives in exchange is a real threat. Though not enough to appease most analysis engines, it's also not something to be overlooked, and in fact the natural but overeager 4. e3? can lead into what is known as the Lasker Trap: 4... Bb4+ 5. Bd2 dxe3 and now 6. Bxb4?? loses:



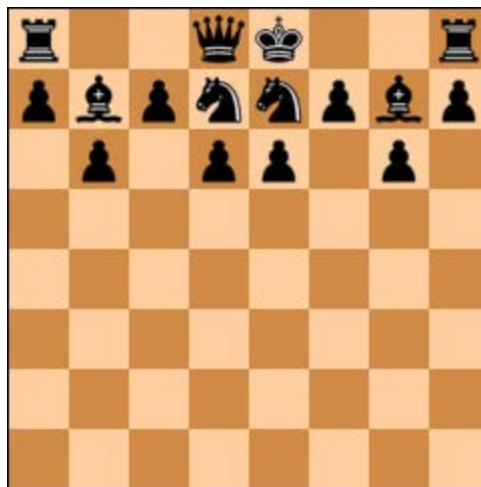
Can you find the devious trap? Answer: p. 37

Less trapping lines will still involve serious tactical considerations, opposite-side castling, and a general dynamism that is difficult to find in most of the so-called "Queen's Gambit."

In fact, the name 'Countergambit' is almost an offense to the Albin – there is no real gambit to counter. What is being countered is a positional opening posing as a gambit. To meet it with a true gambit is simply chess justice.

5. Hippopotamus Defence

Let's See What Happens



This inclusion may come as a surprise to some – at its face, the Hippo appears to be the very pinnacle of passivity. And it is, in a way, but it can also ensure that exciting things will happen, and that is where the fun begins.

What technically defines a Hippopotamus (in chess – it is clearer in life) can be a bit confusing, though most Hippo players don't care for theory semantics. Generally, though, the title of Hippopotamus Defence can be applied to any system for Black that revolves around early development of pawns to the third rank (and never the fourth) and pieces to the second rank (and never the third).

These strange but somewhat intuitive systems were ridiculed by the chess establishment before they even had a name. In his 1953 book *The Complete Chess Course*, Fred Reinfeld pointed to a typical Hippo structure and noted that "any expert player would dismiss Black's position as lost." But, only a decade later, practitioners of this oft-mocked opening began to pop up in chess' upper echelons, beginning with the Hippo's greatest champion, Slovak IM Maximillian Ujtelky.

Ujtelky showed the Hippo for what it was: a tool for provocation, an infuriatingly solid set of structures which implore White to burst forward



with a wild attack. If Black, in turn, is alert and resourceful, that attack may be White's undoing.

In perhaps the Hippo's finest moment, the Slovak IM eggs on Rashid Nezhmetdinov, one of the greatest attacking players of the era (or any era, actually – his game against Lev Polugaevsky from Sochi 1958 is one of the most beautiful tactical displays ever) – into three pawn sacrifices (on moves 26, 36, and 41) and two piece sacrifices (a knight on move 45 and a bishop two moves later). It takes tenacious defense, but somehow it is Black who comes out on top after 75 moves.

IM Rashid Nezhmetdinov
IM Maximillian Ujtely
Chigorin Memorial, 1964

1. e4 g6 2. d4 Bg7 3. Nc3 d6 4. Bc4 e6 5. Nf3
 Ne7 6. h4 h6 7. Bf4 a6 8. Qe2 Nd7 9. a4 b6
 10. Rd1 Bb7 11. Kf1 Nf8 12. Kg1 Qc8 13. Bb3
 Qd7 14. Rh3 Rd8 15. Bc4 Qc8 16. Bb3 f6
 17. Re1 Kf7 18. Bc1 c6



No, seriously

19. Nd2 d5 20. a5 b5 21. Nf3 Qc7 22. Bd2 Bc8
 23. Na2 Nh7 24. Nb4 Rhe8 25. Nd3 Nf8
 26. Bf4 Qxa5 27. e5 f5 28. Bd2 Qb6 29. Ra1
 Nh7 30. Ba5 Qa7 31. Bxd8 Rxd8 32. Qd2 Bb7
 33. Qa5 Ra8 34. Nc5 Bc8 35. c3 Nf8 36. Ne1
 Bxe5 37. dxe5 Qxc5 38. Nd3 Qa7 39. Bc2 c5
 40. b4 Nc6 41. Qa3 c4 42. Nc5 Nxe5 43. Qc1
 h5 44. Rg3 Ned7 45. Nxe6 Nxe6 46. Qh6 Ndf8
 47. Bxf5 gxf5 48. Re1 Bd7 49. Qxh5+ Ke7

50. Qxf5 Kd6 51. h5 a5 52. Qe5+ Kc6 53. Rd1
 Nc7 54. Ra1 Qb8 55. bxa5 b4 56. cxb4 Qxb4
 57. Rf3 Nce6 58. a6 Qc5 59. Qe1 Nd4 60. Rf6+
 Nfe6 61. Ra5 Qb6 62. h6 Kd6 63. h7 c3
 64. Ra1 c2 65. Rg6 Rh8 66. a7 Qb2 67. Rh6
 Ne2+ 68. Kh2 c1=Q 69. Rxc1 Nxc1 70. Qa5
 Bc6 71. Qa6 Qe5+ 72. g3 Nb3 73. f4 Qb2+
 74. Kh3 Nc5 75. a8=Q



0-1

Ujtely would also use this system, in the very same tournament, against strong GM Boris Spassky. He did not win that encounter, but he did make enough of an impression that Spassky took the opening on himself in the 1966 World Championship match, utilizing it to draw the 12th and 16th games against incumbent champion Tigran Petrosian en route to winning the title.

Since then, the Hippopotamus has been employed by a number of respected Grandmasters, and has become a favorite of the amateur looking to rebel against mainstream theory. Computers are not kind to it, but it is also not kind to computers, and was a favorite tool used by human players to exploit their weaknesses until very recent years.

Is it quite so glamorous as leading the attack yourself? Perhaps not. But having to defend against a wide variety of attacking possibilities is far, far from boring.



4. King's Gambit (1. e4 e5 2. f4)

The Giving Spirit

Easily the best-known opening on this list, the King's Gambit is *the* classical example of high-risk, high-reward attacking chess. It is one of the oldest-known openings in chess, and was one of the most popular in play at every level until the late 19th and early 20th century, when prominent theorists began to besmirch its reputation. But among amateurs and adventurers, the King's Gambit retains its renown as a home to some of the wildest chess imaginable.

Most gambits would be content to sacrifice a pawn for some positional compensation or tactical potential. Not the King's. Not only does it create significant kingside weakness in addition to the lost pawn, but a worthy King's Gambiteer is also willing to give a piece, or more, to the cause.

Perhaps the sharpest line of the aperture continues 2... exf4 3. Nf3 g5 4. Bc4 g4 5. O-O!? – we've now entered the Muzio Gambit – 5... gxf3 6. Qxf3 Qf6 7. e5 Qxe5 8. Bxf2+!?, and now we have what is called the Double Muzio.



Really, what gambits have “double” anything?

Just look at this gem from Latvian GM Alexey Shirov:

Alexey Shirov
Jerzy Lapinski
Daugavpils (1990)

1. e4 e5 2. f4 exf4 3. Nf3 g5 4. Bc4 g4 5. O-O gxf3 6. Qxf3 Qf6 7. e5 Qxe5 8. Bxf7+ Kxf7 9. d4 Qxd4+ 10. Be3 Qf6 11. Bxf4 Ke8 12. Nc3 Nc6 13. Nd5 Qg6 14. Rae1 Be7 15. Bd6



15... Kd8 16. Qf8+ Bxf8 17. Bxc7# 1-0

There are ways for Black to avoid these particular complications, of course. But even the strongest lines for Black encounter tactical difficulties, and set up fun games for the eager attacker. Unless...

3. King's Gambit Declined, Nimzowitsch Countergambit (1. e4 e5 2. f4 d5 3. exd5 c6!?)

Steal the Thunder, Ride the Lightning

An evolution of the Falkbeer Countergambit (1. e4 e5 2. f4 d5), which originated in the 19th century with the Albin-esque continuation 3... e4, the new and improved version made its debut in 1905:

Richard Teichmann
Frank Marshall
Ostende 1905



1. e4 e5 2. f4 d5 3. exd5 c6 4. Nc3 cxd5 5. fxe5 d4 6. Ne4 Nc6 7. Nf3 Qd5 8. Nf2 Bf5 9. Bd3 Bg6 10. O-O O-O-O 11. Qe2 Bc5 12. a3 Nh6 13. b4 Bb6 14. Bc4 d3



15. cxd3 Nd4 16. Nxd4 Qxd4 17. Ra2 Ng4 18. Bb2 Qf4 19. g3 Bxf2+ 20. Kg2 Qg5 21. h4 Qf5 22. Bc3 b5 23. Bxb5 Qe6 24. Qf3 Bb6 25. Bc4 Qd7 26. e6 Qb7 27. Qxb7+ Kxb7 28. exf7 Nf6 29. Re1 Rd7 30. Be6 Rxd3 31. Bxf6 gxf6 32. Rc2 Rf8 33. Bc8+ Kb8 34. Bf5 Bxf5

0-1

Though it isn't the most chaotic opening on this list, the Nimzowitsch Countergambit (named after the great Aron Nimzowitsch, who formalized theory and popularized it a year after Marshall introduced it) earns its high rank by virtue of its psychological impact: to not only decline a gambit, but to offer a true gambit in its face, and become the gambiteer, is to grant the opponent the greatest deflation and indignity that an enterprising attacker can face. Don't just grab the bull by the horns. Charge the bull. Become the bull.

It is with this fearless spirit that one can see the true light of attacking chess: the thrill of making the opponent sweat and struggle as they attempt to hold their position intact. The thrill can be found in more ways than it may initially seem, and the Nimzowitsch Countergambit is emblematic of that.

2. Cochrane Gambit

(1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nxe5 d6 4. Nxf7!?)

Break Down Those Walls!

It pains me to admit this as I write this article, but I played the Petrov Defence religiously for many years – partially because I liked to frustrate my opponents and get them out of their comfort zones (and those playing e4 tended to be more tactical players), partially because I enjoyed positional chess and thought I was better suited towards that than towards trying to out-calculate my opponents, and partially because I was a rebel.

In any case, throughout all those years, I always hid something beneath my quiet, passive-chess loving exterior: a deep fear of the Cochrane Gambit. It was, and is, everything the Petrov hates, everything the Petrov wants to avoid. Even worse than that, it has legitimate merit: in exchange for the lost knight, White has a mighty pawn center, and faces a badly exposed black king.

It is, in some ways, the perfect gambit for this list: being a subversion of the Petrov, it is infinitely more interesting than the alternative lines, it flies in the face of the kind of game the opponent wants to play, and it doesn't demand a tremendous amount of theory knowledge – the main lines of attack are fairly straightforward, and the tactical potency is not reliant on some set of traps that need to be memorized.

Sadly, many players hesitate to employ the Cochrane for the simple reason that it features an early piece sacrifice. They do not realize that it is actually far more sound, and much more fun, than many well-known gambits that cede only a pawn. And perhaps they do not know that it has been respected and tested enough to see play at the very highest levels, against the best Petrov players in the world:



Veselin Topalov
Vladimir Kramnik
Linares, 1999

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nxe5 d6 4. Nxf7 Kxf7 5.
Nc3 c5 6. Bc4+ Be6 7. Bxe6+ Kxe6 8. d4



8... Kf7 9. dxc5 Nc6 10. Qe2 Qd7 11. Be3 dxc5
12. f4 Re8 13. e5 Ng4 14. Rd1 Qf5 15. O-O h5
16. Bc1 Nd4 17. Qc4+ Kg6 18. h3 Nh6 19. Nb5
a6 20. Nxd4 cxd4 21. Qxd4 Rc8 22. Qb6+ Kh7
23. Qxb7 Rxc2 24. Be3 Qg6 25. Rc1 Rxc1 26.
Rxc1 Nf5 27. Bf2 h4 28. Rc7 Ng3 29. Kh2
Nf1+ 30. Kg1 Qb1 31. Bxh4 Bc5+

½ - ½

And yes, the game ended in a draw – the final position offers nothing more than a repetition. But it took the full defensive prowess of a world champion to get there.

When selecting an opening, one must look beyond its computer evaluation and what top theorists are saying. One must understand what sort of player it suits, what sort of style it fits. And the Cochrane is excellently suited towards the enterprising tacticians who are most apt to play e4 anyway, and very poorly suited to the sort of symmetry-minded cowards who are apt to favor the Petrov.

So don't give in! Use the opening as an opportunity to make each game the kind of game you want to be playing.

Preferably, one with lots of pieces flying around.

1. Sicilian, Scheveningen, Perenyi Attack

(1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 a6 6. Be3 e6 7. g4!?)

The Purest High

Throughout this list, I have advocated for openings that require little in the way of formal book study to employ effectively, and that are not reliant on the opponent allowing a particular line. But when one does take the time out and put the energy in to studying chess theory, the rewards can be tremendous, even when the goal is simply to find enjoyable games.

The Open Sicilian may be popular, but it is not simple. The Sicilian Dragon, Najdorf, Kan, and Sveshnikov are all deep, complex lines which need to be studied to be able to properly contend, and that is far from a complete list.

For the attacking player, however, it should be noted that all the rich history and analysis do not preclude the opening from being fun and exciting. And nowhere is that more evident than in the Perenyi Attack (also called the Hungarian Attack), an aggressive line against the popular Scheveningen defense.

Part of the English attack, one of the most studied lines of the Sicilian, the Perenyi is far less understood than the main line English offered by 7. f3. It is a chaotic, wild line, filled with sacrifices and intricate tactical threats. It is a cousin of the Keres Attack in the Scheveningen (1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 e6 6. g4), but the differences are essential, born of the stubborn, determined attacking spirit that this list is meant to honor.

The use of the Najdorf move order, a6 before e6, which has risen in popularity at top levels of play and down the line in recent decades, is to a large extent a countermeasure against g4, an important attacking move that must wait for the light-squared bishop to become blocked. With the pawn on a6 already established, now Black has the move 7... e5 to threaten the g-pawn and the knight on d4, without fear of the knight



moving to b5. But White, in turn, has had an extra turn to develop, and has established a bishop on e3 as a result. And so White forges on without the Nb5 option, into the throes of madness.

The line is actually seen most often at the very uppermost echelons of the Grandmaster world, and the following example game comes from one of the greatest tacticians of the modern era, playing against a Super-GM only a few years away from ascending to World Champion:

Judit Polgar
Vishwanathan Anand
Dos Hermanas, 1999

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Be3 e6 7. g4 e5 8. Nf5 g6 9. g5 gxf5 10. exf5 d5 11. Qf3 d4 12. O-O-O



Something strange is happening here...

12... Nbd7 13. Bd2 dxc3 14. Bxc3 Bg7 15. Rg1 O-O 16. gxf6 Qxf6 17. Qe3 Kh8 18. f4 Qb6 19. Qg3 Qh6 20. Rd6 f6 21. Bd2 e4 22. Bc4 b5 23. Be6 Ra7 24. Rc6 a5 25. Be3 Rb7 26. Bd5 Rb8 27. Rc7 b4 28. b3 Rb5



29. Bc6 Rxf5 30. Rxc8 Rxc8 31. Bxd7 Rcc5 32. Bxf5 Rxf5 33. Rd1 Kg8 34. Qg2

1-0

The Perenyi is tactical nirvana, a place where every piece left on the board is either attacking, being attacked, or both, for much of the middlegame. But to even have the opportunity to go into it requires a strong understanding of theory and principles in the opening.

Unlike most of the lines on this list, the Perenyi is not something one can just pick up and play. For most of us, myself included, it is something to aspire to, and to be inspired by. It holds all the wonder of attacking chess, all that promise of infinite possibility which makes chess so beautiful.

So go, make the chess you play as beautiful as it can be. Use some of the openings on this list, learn from the others. And whatever you do, do not let chess become boring.

Chess should never be boring.

Answers

From the Danish Gambit, p. 29: **11. Ng5!**, and if Black doesn't give up the queen, Ne6 is mate.

From the Albin, p. 32: **6. exf2! Ke2**
7. fxg1=N+!., and now there is no way to interpose against Bg4+!



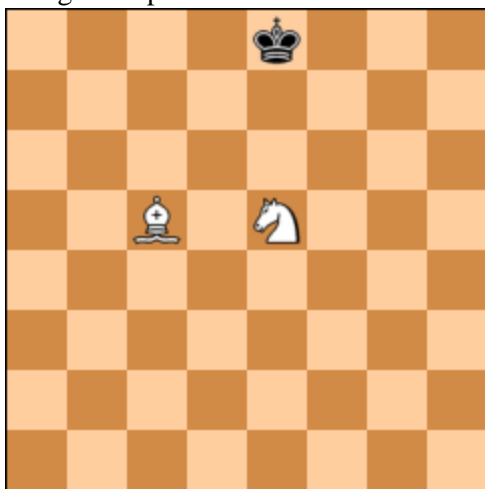
Hidden Depths

FM Jacob Chudnovsky

Hello and welcome to the new installment of “Hidden Depths,” now fortified with more vitamins and games by people other than myself. In this issue, we will continue the theme of endgame study. The last article focused on heavy piece endgames, and this time we’ll focus on minor pieces, particularly on collaboration between knights and bishops.

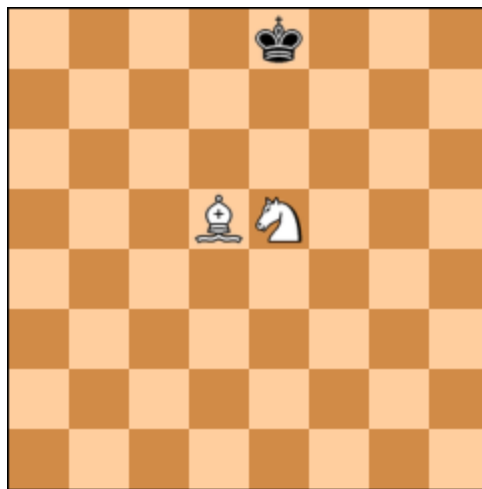
To start with, I offer you a general guideline for correct positioning of a bishop and knight in the endgame. As with any chess “rule”, this is intended as a suggestion to help direct your thinking but is not meant to be rigid. You have to evaluate it in the context of your particular position and calculate specific variations.

With that in mind, let’s examine the following three positions:

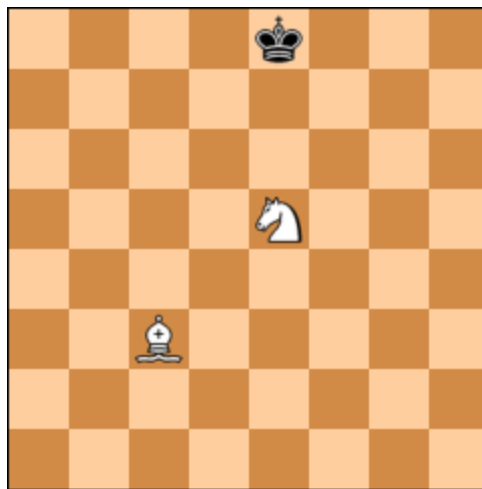


In the first diagram, White’s bishop and knight are on squares of the same color and thereby exert complementary attacks on Black and White squares. Working together, they cover a significant portion of the board. As the cliché says, chess is a game of war. Here, we see the military tactic of covering fire being executed expertly by the bishop and knight. To escape from the back rank and make his way towards the center, the Black king that we have imagined on e8 would have to run all the way to a6. Furthermore, it would only take one move for the bishop to defend the knight, and vice

versa. The setup would be similarly effective with the bishop on b4 or d6. Incidentally, if this highly synergistic positioning of the two pieces looks familiar, that’s because it’s used repeatedly when giving checkmate with K+B+N vs. K.



In contrast, in the second diagram the bishop and knight are on squares of opposite color, which results in coverage of mostly the same squares by the two pieces and complete lack of coverage of Black squares. Furthermore, the knight can’t defend the bishop in one move, and the bishop can’t defend the knight at all. Here, it would take the Black king only two moves to hop from e8 to d6 – and when he got there, he would attack both pieces, with neither one being able to save the other.



Finally, in the third diagram the bishop and knight are positioned more effectively than in the second but much less so than in the first.



Although they are on squares of the same color and exert some amount of complementary coverage, this type of setup with the two pieces separated by two squares diagonally produces no real “covering fire” zone. Additionally, though the bishop defends the knight, it would take the knight a whopping three moves to protect the bishop.

Thus, we can postulate that, in the endgame, the knight and bishop work best together when positioned on squares of the same color in a way similar to that shown in the first diagram or the variants of it described above. Certainly, the bishop and knight will find themselves on squares of opposite colors, and possibly even next to each other as in the second diagram, when performing specific tactical operations, but this is not an effective long-term setup.

Also, I emphasize that this is applicable mainly in the endgame. In the opening and middlegame, the knight and bishop are placed on squares of opposite color, including next to each other, all the time, often as a way to gang up on the same square for attack or defense (e. g. White will often play the knight to g5 to attack the f7 or h7 square in front of Black’s king together with the bishop on c4 or d3, respectively). This works because other pieces cover the squares missed by the bishop-knight tandem. However, in the endgame, with fewer pieces on the board, this luxury can no longer be afforded, and every piece must earn its keep by covering as many squares as possible.

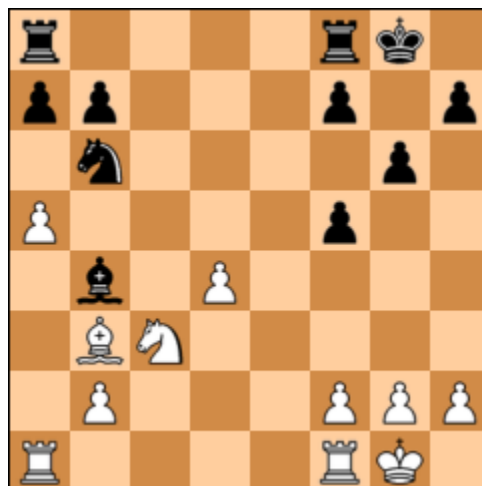
Now let’s examine how this plays out in practical games.

Nicholas Sterling

Kaifan Wang

MA Winter Team Challenge

1.22.17



With his knight attacked, Black has a choice of three moves. 18... Bxc3 can be eliminated immediately, as after 19. bxc3, White is effectively a pawn ahead (Black has a useless majority on the kingside), the isolated pawn has been connected, and White’s bishop is superior to Black’s knight – in summary, White is strategically winning. Thus, the dilemma is whether to retreat the b6 knight to d7 or c8.

18... Nd7?

Black plays the more intuitive move.

Unfortunately for him, it’s also the losing move. As we will see shortly, Black is going to be forced into an ineffective B+N setup such as those seen on diagrams 2-3. The pieces will not be able to protect each other and will get in each other’s way, leading to forced loss of material. Of course, if Black could make a follow-up knight move, from d7 to f6, he would reach the ideal “diagram 1” B+N setup (with the bishop potentially retreating to d6). However, he will not get a chance to do this.

On the other hand, 18... Nc8, while seemingly more passive, would put the knight on a protected square, cover the crucial d6 and e7 squares, and prepare a repositioning of the pieces into an effective setup. The game would likely continue 19. Nd5 Be7! 20. Rfe1 (after 20. Nxe7+ Nxe7, Black has a worse but probably defensible position, as the d-pawn is isolated) Bd8! With 21... Nd6 coming next, Black achieves an effective B+N setup, protecting the invasion points on the c and e files and the



vulnerable b7 and f7 pawns. Black's position will be very hard to crack.

By the way, when reading the variation above, you may have wondered why Black wouldn't play 19... Bd6. The reason is this move doesn't protect f6, and this leads to Black's downfall in a spectacular way: 20. a6! bxa6 21. Nf6+ Kg7 22. Nd7 Rd8 23. Bd5! Check it out – the White bishop and knight have checkmated the a8 rook! This is only the first of several picturesque examples we will see of the cooperation between White's minor pieces.

19. Nd5 Bd6 20. Ba4!

Now we see the problem with 18...Nd7, which White is exploiting perfectly. Positioned in a variant of the ideal "diagram 1" setup, the White bishop and knight have nearly trapped the Black knight. The bishop attacks it, while the knight prevents it from fleeing to f6. Due to the same hole at f6, Black can't defend the knight:

20... Ra(f)d8 21. Bxd7 Rxd7 22. Nf6+ +-. Thus, Black must subject himself to the following indignity:

20... Nb8 21. Rac1?

With this inaccuracy, White throws away much of the advantage. The time to strike was now:

22. Nf6+ Kh8 23. Ne8!



Join me as we gaze in wonder at the stark contrast between White's and Black's minor pieces. White's bishop and knight work in synergy, with the former providing protection and the latter attacking the black bishop and preparing, once that bishop has been kicked off the h2-b8 diagonal, to go to c7 and collect the a8

rook. The black minor piece pair, on the other hand, has ended up in a particularly sad version of the poor "diagram 3" setup. The bishop has been hung out to dry by the rest of the Black army, and the knight is worse than useless: it is unable to protect the bishop but does manage to take away the bishop's escape square at b8, trap the rook at a8, and cut communication between the two black rooks so that the White knight is able to invade at e8 and the black bishop cannot be defended by a rook from d8. You might think the black knight is being paid off by White.

From here play might continue 23... Bf4 24. g3 Nc6 (24... Bg5 25. Nc7) 25. gxf4 Rf(a)xe8 26. d5 +-.

Meanwhile, in the actual game White has given Black a reprieve.

21... Rd8

This defends against the immediate threats, but even better was 21... Na6, reconnecting the rooks and making the knight useful. After this move, the game is nearly equal, as Black aims to play ... Nb4 to exchange White's proud knight or force it away from d5 and ... Rfd8 to start bothering the d4 pawn.

22. Nf6+?!

Better late than never? Unfortunately, in this case, not really. The simple 22. Nc7 was superior. After the forced 22... Bxc7 23. Rxc7, the best defense for Black would have been 23... Na6! (not 23... Rxd4 24. Rc8+!) 24. Rxb7 Rxd4 25. Bb3 (Black cannot defend f7) Nc5 26. Bxf7+ Kf8 27. Rb5 (27. Rc7 Na6 28. Rb7 Nc5 repeats moves), and White retains an extra pawn, although with all his pieces actively in the game, Black can keep defending.

The move played aims to create the same dominant position as discussed above in the note to White's 21st move, but the black rook's improved position on d8 makes a big difference.

22... Kg7?

This move gifts White a tempo to achieve his plan and thereby loses the game. Better was 22... Kf8 (Black has to see 23. Nxf7+? Kg7 24. Ng5 Bf4+), but best was the simple 22... Kh8! The point is that after 23. Ne8 (this is no longer the best move, but after something like



23. Rfe1 Na6, it's clear that Black has equalized), the Black rooks are one move away from being connected, and Black can gain a tempo by using the White rook's position on c1. Thus, 23... Bf4! (a) 24. Nc7? Rc8! (not 24... Bxc1? 25. Rxc1 Rc8 26. Rc3!±) 25. Nxa8 Bxc1± (all three of White's queenside pawns are vulnerable, and he will have to give up material to save the knight); (b) 24. Rc4 Nc6!±. In this position, note how the power balance between the white and black minor pieces has shifted. Truly, is anything as fleeting as glory in this cruel world? Now the black bishop takes away the white knight's escape square at c7 instead of the other way around, and the black knight cuts off the white knight from being defended by the bishop. (This is an interesting exception to the rule, discussed at the beginning of the article, that a bishop and knight must be on squares of the same color to cover a complementary set of black and white squares. Here Black's knight exerts control over the a4-e8 diagonal by physically blocking it.) White's best option here is to exchange all minor pieces at the cost of a pawn: 25. d5! Rxd5 26. Bxc6 bxc6 27. Nf6 Rd6 28. Rxf4 Rxf6. Black is a pawn ahead, but White has reasonable chances to draw the game. A major takeaway from the above analysis is this: It's important to keep positional principles in mind; however, considering the specifics of the position and calculating variations is even more important. Furthermore, finding opportunities to gain tempi and to make the opponent lose tempi is crucial to gaining the upper hand, especially in the endgame. On that note...

23. Ne8+

After Black's mistake, this move comes with a check, and the Black bishop cannot escape from exchange. White now gains a decisive advantage and converts it efficiently.

23... Kf8?!

A further inaccuracy that hastens Black's demise. However, after the more resilient 23... Kh6 24. Nxd6 Rxd6 25. Rc8! White would still have a winning position.

24. Nxd6 Rxd6 25. Rc8+! Kg7 26. Rd1

White is now effectively ahead by a piece and a pawn. The rest of the game is a mop-up operation and requires no commentary.

26... Ra6 27. b4 Rd6 28. d5 b6 29. a6 Kf6 30. f4 Ke7 31. Re1+ Kf6 32. Ree8 Rxd5 33. Bc6 Nxc6 34. Rxc6+ Kg7 35. Rxa8 Rd4 36. Rxa7 Rxb4 37. Rb7.

Black resigned.

1-0

In this game, we saw several illustrations of the principles of bishop-knight cooperation discussed at the beginning, as well as additional elements that affect the minor piece interplay, particular the dynamic aspect of tempi.

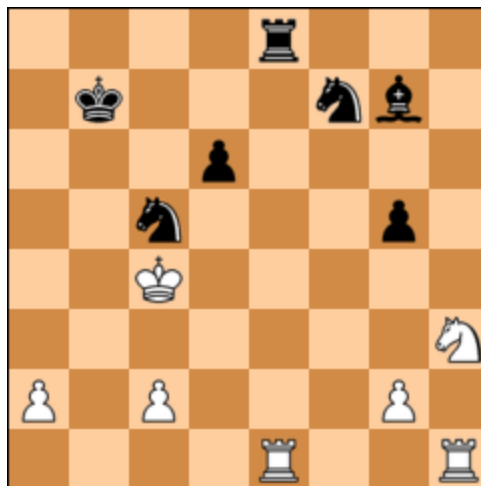
Next we will take a look at a game segment that shows an even more exciting illustration of B+N synergy and offered an opportunity for a beautiful combination.

GM Susan Polgar

Carl Stutz

Brandeis 9-board simul

2.1.17



Earlier in the game, Black used a clever combination to win two pieces for a rook and pawn, and he now finds himself with a significant advantage. Note the synergy between the g7 bishop and the c5 knight. Positioned in a variant of the “diagram 1” setup, the bishop and knight control most of the squares around White's king. We'll get back to that shortly...



White has just offered a trade of rooks, and Black must decide whether to accept it.

36... Be5!

Excellent choice. While not the engine's top choice (the mighty sea monster prefers 36... Ne5+ with complicated tactics), this is a perfectly fine human move. It maintains control over the center by Black's minor pieces, and most importantly, it declines the rook trade. Two minor pieces fighting against a rook are most effective when supported by other pieces. Here, it's immediately apparent that after 36... Rxe1? 37. Rxe1, White's king would have been able to breathe easier. After 37... Kc6 (otherwise 38. Kd5) 38. Rf1! (better than 38. Re7?! Ne5+ 39. Kb4 Bf6) Ne5+ 39. Kb4, Black has a slight advantage at most. In contrast, the move played keeps the white king trapped in a very dangerous situation.

37. Rhf1?

A significant mistake that should have doomed the White king to a fast and violent demise. White absolutely had to play 37. Kd5; d5 is the only escape square for the king, and he had to start running away immediately. To be clear, Black maintains a large advantage, but White is still in the game. In contrast, 37. Rhf1? allows a unique and pretty tactic...

37... Re7?

...which, unfortunately, Black misses. He had the opportunity to finish off his famous GM opponent in style: 37... Kc6!! The irrelevant f7 knight is sacrificed, as the Black king personally cuts off his adversary's escape. Although it may be hard to believe at first, the white king is caught in a mating net, right in the middle of the board. Black threatens both 38... d5+ 39. Kb4 Rb8+ and 38... Ra8 followed by 39... Ra4#. White can choose between (a) 38. Rxf7 d5+ 39. Kb4 Rb8+ 40. Ka3(a5) Bb2(c3)#, (b) 38. Rd1 Ra8 +, and (c) Rxe5 Nxe5+ + (the last line prevents checkmate but leaves White down a piece).

This combination shows that a small number of pieces is enough to mount a deadly attack if they work in optimal synergy.

38. Kd5!

Of course. GM Polgar does not miss the second chance to get the king out of the mating net. Nonetheless, White is not out of the woods by a long stretch...

38... Kc7?!

A second inaccuracy. We will get into specific lines shortly, but this calls for a brief discussion of psychology. With his last two moves, Black has switched from an aggressive mindset to a defensive one. It was probably due in part to White's active play, and may also have been influenced by feeling intimidated by GM Polgar. This type of phenomenon – focusing on defending against the opponent's threats and neglecting to carry out one's own, especially against a higher-rated opponent – is fairly common among chess players, at all levels. However, the urge to cower in defense must be resisted. It's crucial to play aggressively (soundly, but aggressively), including and especially against a strong opponent.

Now, as promised, let's look at specific lines and ideas. Although no longer in a mating net, it's notable that the white king has only one escape square – back to c4. Furthermore, even if the c5 knight were not covering e4, the e-file would be mined due to discovered checks. These observations lead us to the best move:

38... Na4! The threat is 39... Nb6+ 40. Ke4 Bc3(g3)+ +, and White has two ways to defend: The first is an attempt to save the e1 rook: 39. Rb1+ Kc7 (not 39... Nb6+ 40. Ke4, and Black has no useful discovered checks) 40. Rb3. White has removed the rook from being lost to either discovered checks or a fork (40... Nc3+ was threatened). However, the White king is still in danger, and Black has too many threats and will fork one of the rooks sooner or later. For example, 40... Nc3+! 41. Kc4 Ne4! White has no satisfactory defense against the threat of 42... Nd2+; perhaps the most amusing line is 42. Rd3 Kc6 (threatening 43... d5+ 44. Rxd5 Nfd6+) 43. Rd5 Nc5! The knight has made a full circle and returned to c5, and the white king is shocked to discover himself right back in the mating net from which he thought he had



escaped. White will have to suffer material losses to prevent 44... Ra7 and 45... Ra4#. The second is a try to have the king run away from danger: 39. Kc4 Kc6 (threatening 40... Nb2+! with mate to follow) 40. Kd3. White has escaped the immediate threats. However, after 40... Nb2+ 41. Kd2 Nc4+ 42. Kd3 (43. Kd1 Rb7 with follow-up ideas such as 44... Bd4 to threaten 45... Ne3+ isn't particularly better) d5, she will not last much longer. Black will activate the rook via a7 and potentially move the bishop from e5, followed by bringing the remaining piece, the f7 knight, into the attack. White will not be able to stop all the looming threats and will soon lose material. The variations above may look complex and not entirely conclusive. However, the main point is that Black remains in the driver's seat the whole time, and the way he does this is through a combination of attack and positional control. Black's pieces, especially the bishop and knight, work together to limit the breathing space around the White king as well as to generate continuous threats. Even if the end is not apparent immediately, White's position is guaranteed to crack in the near future under this level of pressure.

39. Rf5?! g4?!

An exchange of inaccuracies. White should have worked on improving her worst piece, the h3 knight. After 39. Nf2, with further deployment to d3 or g4 as needed, White is close to achieving equality. Instead, 39. Rf5?! generated a threat that Black should have ignored: as before, the best move is 39... Na4! Black's threats take precedence over White's. 40. Nxc5 loses immediately to 40... Nb6+ 41. Ke4 Nxc5+ 42. Rxc5 Bc3+ (or 42... Bg3+, or 42... Bf6+, as preferred), and after the relatively best 40. Kc4 Kc6, White will lose even faster than in the lines discussed in the notes to 38... Kc7, as the two white rooks are not protecting each other. However, instead of attacking, Black has continued to play defensively and react to White's threats. 39... g4 not only misses another chance for a winning attack but lets the White knight into the game.

40. Nf4= Nd7

Black finds the right idea, but at this point it comes too late.

41. Ne6+!?

The engine considers this move an inaccuracy, but I disagree. At this point, White could have forced a draw by repetition: 41. Ng6 Nb6+ 42. Ke4 Rd7 43. Nf8 Re7 44. Ng6. However, instead she went for more. Although, according to the computer, this leaves Black with a small advantage, it makes perfect sense in a practical game against a human opponent, especially one who has been playing passively for the last several moves.

41... Kc8

Certainly not 41... Kb7?? 42. Rxf7! +-; 41... Kb6 42. Rb1+ also seems dangerous.

42. Ref1 Nb6+!

The exclamation mark is for the psychological value of the move more than its objective strength. This marks a turning point in the game. Up to now, Black has been playing reactively and has been pushed further and further back. He could have continued in the same style with 42... Nh6, which is technically not worse than 42... Nb6+. However, playing in this way, I believe he would have been defeated. Instead, at this point he was able to change his mindset and start counterattacking, not just defending. Kudos for the courage.

43. Kc6 Rxe6 44. Rxf7 d5+!

Although forced, this resource had to be foreseen when playing 42... Nb6+.

45. Kc5 Bc7

Black has stopped White's aggression and prepares to start pushing White back with 46... Kb7, 47... Rc6+, etc. However, White should still be able to hold the draw.

46. Rg7 g3? 47. Rf8+?

Another exchange of inaccuracies. Black had to play 46... Kb7! right away. After 47. Rxc4 (47. Rff7 Rc6+ is the point of 46... Kb7 and leads to a position almost identical to the game) Rc6+ 48. Kb5 Rxc2, Black has retained a small advantage, particularly since White will not be able to hang on to the a-pawn. For example, 49. a4 Nc4 (with threats of both 50... Ne3 and



50... Rb2+ 51. Kc5 Bb6+ 52. Kxd5 Ne3+)
50. Rg7 Nd6+ 51. Kb4 Rc4+ 52. Kb3 Ne4!
threatening both 53... Nd2+ and 53... Nc5+.
The best idea for White after 48... Rxc2 might
be to bail out into a R+B vs. R ending: 49. Rg7
Rxa2 50. Rc1 Nc4 51. Rxc4. This ending is
drawn with best play, but Black would retain
chances to win if White were to err in the
defense.

In contrast, 46... g3? hands the advantage to
White. Correct here would have been 47. Rff7!
Black now cannot prevent back rank mate and
hold on to all his material at the same time. His
options include 47... Bd8 48. Rxc3 and
47... Na8 48. Kxd5. According to the
emotionless computer, White's advantage is
minimal, and it finds ways for Black to stay
afloat, using long lines that we will not examine.
However, for a human playing Black, this
position is difficult to defend, and for a human
playing against a famous and highly rated
opponent, under the psychological handicap of
having given away an advantage and now
having to defend a tough position, all the more
so. I have little doubt that GM Polgar would
have converted this position to a full point.
Instead, 47. Rf8+? gives Black a crucial extra
tempo and essentially transposes the game to the
46... Kb7 analysis line with a small advantage
for Black.

**47... Kb7 48. Rff7 Rc6+ 49. Kd4 Rxc2 50.
Rxc3 Rxa2 51. Rgg7**

Here, as in the analysis above, White could have
gone for 51. Rc3 Ra4+ 52. Kc5 (not 52. Kd3
Nc4 $\bar{7}$) Ra5+ 53. Kb4(d4) Nc4 54. Rxc4,
planning to hold the R vs. R+B endgame.

51... Rc2 52. g4 Rc4+ 53. Kd3 Nc8

Black has squeezed everything possible from his
small advantage, but White's position is too
solid to crack. Here, for example, the ambitious
53... Na4 could be met with 54. Ke3! stopping
54... Nc5, and it's not clear how Black can
make progress. However, this would have been
slightly better than the game continuation, as
Black would be guaranteed to be in no danger.

54. g5 Nd6 55. Rd7 Ne4?!

The game still had not left the realm of equality,
and at this point Black should have steered it to
a draw with 55...Kb6 56. g6 Ne8, aiming to give
up a piece for the g-pawn and reach a drawn
exchange-down position, e. g. 57. Rge7
(57. Rgf7 Rg4 =) Kc6 58. g7 Rg4 59. Rxe8
Kxd7 60. g8=Q Rxc8 61. Rxc8 =. The move
played gives up a pawn for no compensation,
although Black should still be able to hold.

56. g6??

Shockingly, the game is decided by a blunder
from the GM. The obvious 56. Rxd5 was, of
course, best, and after 56... Ra4 57. g6, White
would try to use the passed pawn to get more
than an exchange-up position with no pawns.
Instead, this fascinating battle reaches a
somewhat disappointing conclusion, as White
hangs a piece.

56... Nc5+ 57. Ke3 Nxd7 58. Rxd7 Kc6.

Black converted the extra piece with no further
twists. White resigned 18 moves later.

0-1

Although this game was far from perfect, it
was full of fighting play and interesting tactics.
Carl Stutz deserves praise for staying in the
game, not letting his position be overrun by the
active play of GM Polgar, and eventually
defeating the famous grandmaster.

In this installment of Hidden Depths, we
have discussed positional and tactical aspects of
minor piece play and way in which it is
influenced by other pieces present on the board.
We have also touched on chess psychology,
particularly offensive vs. defensive play.

Game submissions for future issues of this
column are welcomed and encouraged.



Solutions to *Progressive Tactics*

Dave Couture

(1) **9...Bxd4+ 10.Nxd4 Qxg5**. Black is able to pick up the pawn because the knight is overworked. It is guarding both the d-pawn and the bishop. Any time you see a piece that is doing more than one defensive job, look for ways to make it give up one of its “jobs” – in this case the defense of the bishop. (DC-Francis Scanlon)

(2) **40...Bb6#**. If you found this – congratulations! You found a move that was missed by a Massachusetts State Champion and U. S. Championship contender! **40...Ra8** was actually played and he still went on to checkmate me 2 moves later. (DC-Alan Bennett)

(3) **21...Bh3** (threatening **Qg2#**) **22. Rg1 Bg2+ 23. Rxd2 Qc1+** followed by **24...Qxb2** wins the exchange. (Moto Hora-DC)

(4) **40...Kg5** threatening **41...Rxd2#**. White has to throw away a rook to stop the mate. For example: **41. Rxd2 h4+** stops the mate, but now white is down a rook. (DC-Wayne Steadman)

(5) **36.Nd5** forking the 2 rooks. If black plays **36...exd5** then **37. Rxf6**. (Ray Fortier-DC)

(6) **12. Bb5+** uncovering an attack on the black queen. White goes from a lost position to a won position. (Andy Kiser-DC)

(7) **36. Nf6** and now **Rh7#** can't be stopped (if **36...Rd7 37. Rxd7** and **38. Rh7#**). (Wayne Steadman-DC)

(8) **42.Ne8!** Looking at the original position, it looks like the knight is lost, but white has this hidden resource which simultaneously guards his own rook and discovers an attack on the black rook on g6. Now black has nothing better than to swap rooks with **Rxd6** and head into a very interesting endgame. (Wayne Steadman-DC)

(9) **21. Qxf7+ Bxf7 22. Nf6+ Kf8 23. Rxf7#** (George Mirijanian-DC)



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Solutions (Problems on p. 5)

1. 1. Bc7! a5 2. b4+ axb4 3. axb4#
2. 1. Rg8+! Rxc8 2. Bf6+ Kd7
3. Bxf5#
3. 1. Rc5! Rxc5 (1... dxc5 2. Qd1#)
2. Qxb7
4. 1. Ne7+ Kh8 2. Qxh7+! Kxh7
3. Rh1#
5. 1... Qf2!! 2. Ng3 (2. Rxf2 Re1+)
Qe1+ 3. Rxe1 Rxe1+ 4. Nf1 Rxf1#
6. 1. Qxh7+! Kxh7 2. g6+ Kh8
3. Rh4+ Bh6 4. Rxh6#
7. 1... Bc4+! 2. Ke4 Bd5+ 3. Kf5
(3. Kd3 Qc4#) Be6+ 4. Kg6 Bf7+
5. Kh7 Bg8+ 6. Qf7#
8. 1. Rh7+!!
1... Kxh7 2. Be4+ Kg7 3. Kc1!!
a1=Q+ 4. Bb1 +-
1... Kg8 2. Bd5+ Kf8 3. Rh1!
a1=Q+ 4. Kc2 Qa2 and 5. Rd1 and
6. c5!, winning the queen, are
coming.
9. 1. gxf6#!, e.p.

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(Rt. 135) Natick, MA

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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

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www.southeastmasschess.org

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