Mr. Azamat Abraimov, Consul General of the Republic of Kazakhstan in San Francisco, introduces the special edition of the Chess Cafe covering the World Chess Championship held in Kazakhstan, on April 10. A link to the recording is here, and more pictures are below. Screenshot by Trisha Gorman.

Contents

Recent Tournaments at Mechanics’ Institute – IM Elliott Winslow: Annotated Games from the TNM
The Chess Room, Past and Present – 2023 Falconer Award – The Chess Scuttlebutt
Recent Games from Around the World – IM John Donaldson: 10th Larry Evans Memorial Open
Danny Cao: Chess Room Fairytale, Part Two - Richard Hack: Tales From the Chess Cafe
A New Puzzle in the Library – Seeking Scholastic Chess Coaches – Tony’s Teasers
Upcoming Events – Solutions – Contact Us
Recent Tournaments at Mechanics’ Institute

On April 8, the Mechanics’ Institute hosted its monthly doubleheader of Scholastic Swiss in the morning, and Quads Championship in the afternoon.

The Quads had 53 players participating in 13 sections, and Chawit Asavasaetakul (2162) was the winner of the top quad with 2.5 points.

Complete results for the April Quads can be found [here](#).

The April Scholastic Swiss saw 20 players competing in two sections.

In the 600+ section, Emilio Berkeley (1195) took first place on tiebreaks over Kepler McTiernan (721), Nate Bomze (unr.), and Sebastian Ghousaini (796), all scoring 3 points from 4 rounds. Jillian Stevens (951) scored 2 points and took 5th place on tie-breaks.

Kaiqi McNabb (540) scored a perfect 4-0 to win the u600 section. Clear 2nd was Hubert Wang (583) with 3 points, while 3rd and 4th places with 2.5 points each (in tie-break order) were Blaise Haudenschild (350) and Yulan Wang (344). Fifth place on tie-breaks was Joselyn Marroquin (406) who scored 2 points.

Complete results for the Scholastic Swiss can be found [here](#).

Both Quads and Scholastic Swiss were directed by Local TD Arthur Liou, assisted by Local TD Michael Hsu.

The Spring Tuesday Night Marathon ended on April 18 with a total of 101 players competing in three sections.

There was a four-way tie for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Best under 2200 in the 2000+ section, with Max Hao (2047), FM Conrado Diaz (2262), Archit Dasika (2143), and Christophe Bambou (2058) all scoring 5 points from 7 rounds. Edward Lewis (1974) took the Best under 2000 prize with 3.5 points.

Michael Walder (1954) ran away with 1st place in the 1600-1999 section, scoring an impressive 6.5 points. Tied for 2nd and 3rd places were Kristian Clemens (1857) and James Mahooti (1812), both with 5 points. Tied for Best under 1800 with 4.5 were Yonathan Admassu (1647), Stephen Parsons (1780), and Wilson Wong (1673). Also scoring 4.5 points and taking clear Best under 1600 was Fernando Toledo Guerrero (1597).

Mechanics’ Institute scholastic coach Lee Cooper (1567) took clear 1st place in the Under 1600 section with 6 points, closely followed by John Gay (unr.), John Chan (1500), and Sam Calvert (1364), at 5.5 points each.

Complete results for the Spring Tuesday Night Marathon can be found [here](#).

The Spring Tuesday Night Marathon was directed by Senior Tournament Director Scott Mason, FIDE Arbiter Richard Koepcke, and International Arbiter Judit Sztaray.
On Tuesday, April 25, the Mechanics’ Institute hosted the **Spring Splash Blitz**, right after awarding GM Christopher Woojin Yoo the Falconer Award (see below). With 82 participants headed by GM Yoo and a film crew from KRON covering the action, the Chess Room was buzzing with excitement.

GM Christopher Yoo (2681) dominated the 5-round, double-game Swiss, scoring 9.5 from 10, a full point ahead of IM Ladia Jirasek (2433) and FM Maxim Ventura Bolet (2298) who tied for 2nd and 3rd places.

Siva Srinivasan (1598), David Z. Li (1748), and Zee Chin (1725) tied for Best under 1800 with 7 points apiece, while William Fitzgerald (934) and Henry Alford (627) tied for Best under 1300 with 6 points each.

Complete results for the Spring Splash Blitz can be found [here](#).

The Spring Splash Blitz was co-directed by International Arbiter Judit Sztaray and Senior Tournament Director Scott Mason.

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There was a great turnout on Saturday, May 6, for the **21st Charles Powell Memorial**, with 78 participants competing in four sections.

Sricharan Pullela (2144) and Alex Chin (1925) shared 1st and 2nd places in the 2000+ section with 3-1 scores, while Nitish Nathan (2151), Tony Kukavica (2136), and Ethan Sun (1909) tied for 3rd place with 2.5 points apiece.

The 1600-1999 section also saw a 2-way tie for 1st and 2nd places, with Colin Yi (1702) and Neev Grover (1463) both scoring 3.5 points. Tied for 3rd were Jacob Goldman (1766), Victor Briancon-Marjollet (1755), and James Bao (1687), all scoring 3 points.

Benchly Buccat (1432) scored a perfect 4-0 and took the top prize in the 1200-1599 section. Tied for 2nd and 3rd places with three points each were John Chan (1506), Vivaan Pavuluri (1253), and Max Weshsler (1203).

Mechanics’ Institute chess coach Colin Shober (unr.) took clear 1st in the Under 1200 section with a perfect 4-0 score, a clear point ahead of a six-way tie for 2nd and 3rd between Nagendra Athreya (1009), Viyaan Khurana (902), Emede Tovar Jr. (854), Joel Ramos (326), David Xu (unr.), and Elliot Clark (unr.).

Complete results for the 21st Powell Memorial can be found [here](#).

The 21st Powell Memorial was directed by Local TD Arthur Liou.
The **2023 Summer Tuesday Night Marathon** kicked off on May 2 with 100 players(!) competing in four sections. This seven-round event finishes up on June 13.

Information, standings and results can be found [here](#).

The 2023 Summer Tuesday Night Marathon is being co-directed by Senior Tournament Director **Scott Mason** and International Arbiter **Judit Sztaray**.

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On Sunday, May 7, the Mechanics’ Institute hosted the **17th Annual Steve Brandwein / Ray Schutt / Jay Whitehead Memorial Blitz Tournament**, with a total of 43 players showing up to compete in one Open Section.

![Image of chess players](#)

**Dipro Chakraborty** (2292) took clear 1st place with 10.5 points from 12 games. Only a half point behind with 10 points was IM **Ladia Jirasek**, while 3rd place with 9 points was the surprising **Daniil Kardova**, only rated 1573. **Sivavishnu Srinivasan** (1615) took the best Under 1800 prize with 7 points, and **Stanislav Perumov** (unr.) was best Under 1300.

The 17th Annual Steve Brandwein / Ray Schutt / Jay Whitehead Memorial Tournament was directed by Local TD **Arthur Liou**.

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**IM Elliott Winslow**

A selection of annotated Games from rounds six and seven of the Spring TNM, and rounds one and two of the Summer TNM.
Definitely the most frustrating game I've played to date. Obtained a winning advantage from a nuanced sideline, then suddenly began to play like an ape: blitzing out certain moves, spending a lot of time trying to get other dubious ones to work, not even thinking about the general state of the position and worst of all, falling into a cheap two-bit tactic when I was nearly in the clear. Fortune was definitely on my opponent's side today... 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 The Sicilian Najdorf comes back onto the board. I had already faced this twice and expected to face it again as my opponent has a track record with it, including against Elliott. 6.Bg5 e6 7.f4 h6 8.Bh4 Qb6 This is the so-called Deferred (or Delayed) Poisoned Pawn variation, which was in vogue during the late half of the last decade. In essence, Black spends a tempo to root out the bishop on g5, which changes the dynamics of the position. 9.Nb3 is no longer playable and the variations with 9.f5 also change their tune somewhat due to the loose position of the bishop on h4, so it has become a favorite of Najdorf aficionado Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. However, this move order makes a certain other line more playable... 9.a3 has been played by a number of top level players and remains a top pick for the Delayed PP variation, with good results. The point is that with the bishop on h4, White can quickly knock the queen back with Bf2, which is not possible in the main PP line.

[ 9.Qd2 just transfers back to the PP variation. ] 9...Nbd7 [ 9...Qxb2?? 10.Na4+- just drops the queen. ]

10.Bc4!? Definitely an interesting sideline, which has been tested a top level too! The point of the move is to add pressure onto e6-pawn now that the Bc8 is no longer defending it, thus injecting some tactics against it. 10...Nxe4?+ A mistake from my opponent's end, probably caused by unfamiliarity of this position. However, somehow I had missed this move in my analysis (I probably examined every other "legitimate" move but this one) so it actually threw me off-guard a little and I had to spend a good amount of time calculating trying to refute it.

[ If Black just continues normally: 10...Be7 11.Bf2 Qc7 12.Bxe6! fxe6 13.Nxe6 Qc4 14.Nxg7+± is the point, where the two pawns + loose Black king is enough compensation for the bishop. ]

10...e5 is definitely the main try here, and was played in a high-level Wijk aan Zee game. 11.fxe5 dxe5 12.Nf5 g6 13.Nd5 Nxd5 14.Qxd5 Rh7 15.0-0-0 gxf5 16.exf5 Be7 17.Bxe7 Kxe7 18.Rhf1 Qf6 19.Bb3 Rh8 20.Rf3 Re8 21.Ba4 Rd8 22.Rg3 b5 23.Qxa8 bxa4 24.Rc3 Nb6 25.Qa7+ Rd7 26.Rc7 Kd8 27.Rxd7+ Nxd7 28.Rc3 Qd6 29.Qa8 Nc5 30.Qa7 Nd7 31.Rg3 Ke7 32.Rd3 Qc6 33.Rc3 Qxg2 34.Rxc8 Qh1+ 35.Kd2 Qxh2+ 36.Kc3 Qh3+ 37.Kb4 Qxf5 38.Qc7 e4 39.Qd8+ Kd6 40.Qc7+ Ke7 41.c4 e3 42.Qd8+ Kd6 43.Qc7+ Ke7 44.Qd8+ Kd6 45.Qc7+ ½-½ Adhiban,B (2653)-Nepomniachtchi,I (2767) Tata Steel-A 79th Wijk aan Zee 2017 (10) ] 11.Nxe4 Coming to the correct move in the end. 11.Bxe6 was a move I spent a long time calculating to try to get it to work, but unfortunately after Nxc3 (Though Black had a better response: 11...Be7 12.Bxd7+ Bxd7 13.Bxe7 Nxc3 14.bxc3 Kxe7=; 11...fxe6?? 12.Qh5+ g6 13.Qxg6# ) 12.bxc3 Be7 13.Bxd7+ Bxd7± I just couldn't see a solidly winning continuation. ] [ 11.Nxe6?! was another idea I tried but it didn't work either: Nxc3 12.bxc3 d5= where Black stabilizes. ] 11...d5 (Diagram) 12.Nxe6?!± but unfortunately this move isn't exactly accurate. [ 12.Bxd5! was simpler and more precise. exd5 And now I missed that 13.Qe2! works because of mating tactics. Bb4+ 14.Nc3+ Kf8 15.axb4 Qxd4 16.Rd1 Qxf4 17.Be7+ Kg8 18.Nxd5+- White is prepared to bring the last piece into the game via f1 and has a very dominant control over the whole board. ] 12...dxc4?! countered by another inaccuracy. White's e4-knight is much more active in the resulting position than the c4-bishop would've been. [ 12...dxe4 was more accurate and after 13.Nxf8 Nxf8 14.Qe2 Bf5 15.0-0-0 Ng6 16.Bf2± White has positional advantages, but nothing more. ] 13.Nxf8 Qe3+ 14.Qe2 Qxe2+ 15.Kxe2 Kxf8 16.Rad1 Pinning the knight since the back-rank is very much loose. 16...f6 17.Nd6?± Played way too quickly. If I had to think, I would've realized that it's far more advantageous to bring the shut-out bishop back into the game to control the dark squares. I shouldn't have cared too much about the consolidating 17...b5 because what's
more important in this position is to
grab control and deny space to Black's
pieces while building up my own... the
primary disadvantage Black is
experiencing is his lack of development.
[ 17.Bf2! Controlling the c5- and b6-
squares. b5 18.Nd6 Ke7 19.Rhe1
Rd8 20.Kf1++- and now look at this
position: White's pieces are fully
coordinated to deny Black play. ]

17...Nb6?+-
[ 17...Nc5 was more accurate as it
brings the knight closer to the center.
18.f5 Bd7 19.Nxb7 Re8+ 20.Kf1!
Nxb7 21.Rxd7+- White's pieces aren't
as active. ]

18.f5?± Trying to be way too cute. In
reality, I overestimated the knight's
position on d6 and didn't stop to think
things through. Yes, it may look nicely
positioned right now, but in reality it's
interfering with access to one of the
only open files on the board for a rook
that is ready to spring to the seventh
rank and while the c8-bishop may not be
strong now, it can certainly untangle
itself via ...Bd7-c6.
[ 18.Nxc8 was the correct procedure
and after Rxc8 19.Bf2! This was the
resource I missed for... quite an
astonishing number of moves. Na4
20.Rd7 Nxb2 21.Rxb7 c3 22.Re1+-
White is ready to double up on the
seventh rank while Black is struggling
with finding channels for his rooks. ]

18...Na4?!+- 19.Rhe1?± Again, getting
way too cute with my moves, especially
since I had already thought of a crushing
move.
[ Surprisingly, I thought of the move
19.Rd4 but didn't bother to calculate
that after Nxb2 20.Rb1 c3 21.Ne4!+-
the knight is completely trapped and
will soon be picked up! ]

19...g5?+-
[ 19...Nxb2 20.Kd2? was this weird
idea spinning inside my head, but I
didn't even bother noticing that after
c3+ 21.Kxc3 Nxd1+-+ just wins the
rook with check. ]

20.Bf2 Finally, my opponent forces f2
for me, but the funny thing is that I didn't
even calculate the follow-up for the
bishop, just thinking, "f2 looks better
placed than g3". I swear, I did that last
game, and this game was even worse in
that respect! 20...Bd7
[ 20...Nxb2 was better once again.
And this time I wasn't thinking of that
terrible tactic. 21.Rb1 c3 22.Kf3 Bd7
23.Bd4 Bc6+ 24.Kg3+- ends up just
winning. ]

21.Kd2? And at this point I'm beginning
to wonder whether somebody spiked my
water bottle with hallucinogens.
[ 21.Bd4! doesn't even require an
explanation. And yet I somehow
missed it. ]

21...Nxb2 22.Rb1 c3+ 23.Kxc3 Na4+
24.Kb4 I... don't really understand what I
was trying to achieve here.
[ 24.Kd2 b5 25.Bd4+- is much more
measured. ]

24...b5 25.Bd4 Finally! How I didn't see
this maneuver many moves back is bey-
ond comprehension. 25...Bc6

26.Bxf6
[ 26.Ka5+- was much better,
retreating the king to a safer space. ]

26...Rh7
[ 26...a5+ 27.Kb3 Rh7 28.Re3 Nc5+
29.Kb2+- is still winning for White, but
Black has complicated matters quite a
bit. ]

27.g3 Again, 27...a5 was much better.
27...Rd7

(Diagram)
Same with 27...a5. 28.Ka5! Finally! ♙a5 is a very nice idea to hide the king on a5 since it was very loose on the the b4-square due to threats of ...a5. However, pretty much none of the pieces can harass the king on a5, so it's quite a bit safer there. 28...Kg8

[ 28...Rxd6? 29.Be7++- is the point. The knight wasn't hanging due to this fork. ]

29.Rbd1

[ 29.Be5! was a much more reliable move order since after Rad8 30.Rbd1+- White is ready to push the f-pawn. ]

29...Rb8 30.Be5 b4 31.axb4 Nb6

For some reason, I wasn't even looking at mating threats at this point, even though that's Black's only way back into this game.

[ My tired self was only looking at this tactic: 31...Rxd6 doesn't work because of simplifications. 32.Rxd6 Rb5+ 33.Kxa4 Rxe5+ 34.Rxc6 Rxe1 35.Rxh6+- and White is simply up three pawns in this winning endgame. ]

32.c4??

[ 32.Rd4 Nd5 33.Rxd5 Bxd5 34.c4+- is just winning. ]

My brain had only registered 32...♘d5 as a threat and somehow missed this simple combo. 32...Rxd6! 33.b5??

Simply imploding.

[ White could still save the game with 33.Rc1! With the life saving pin. Nxc4+ 34.Rxc4 Rd5+ 35.Kxa6 Bb5+ 36.Ka7 Bxc4 37.Bxb8 Rxf5± which appears to be a drawn opposite colored bishop endgame, but the presence of the b4-pawn is tricky for Black. In any case, White is not losing here. ]

33...Nxc4+ 34.Kb4 Rxd1

0-1
the Caro Kann defense. Our first encounter was drawish but I pressed the position and lost that game. Here we are yet again, and this time Eddie Ai will not be denied. 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6

5.Ng3

[(ew: mostly you see 5.Nxf6+ when exf6 is still a Big Thing -- continuing something like (5...gxf6 is the famous Bronstein-Larsen line, see another game this round) 6.c3 (6.Bd3 (Gambito!?)) 6...Bd6 7.Bd3 0-0 8.Qc2 Re8+ 9.Ne2 h5!? as in (among thousands of games the last few years) Winslow-Griffith, online TNM 23.6.2020, where Kyron allowed Mate in One on move 14 -- and I overlooked it! (managed to win anyway) -- and also, among those two thousand or so games, a fantastic battle that ended Magnus Carlsen’s 125-game classical chess no-loss streak: 10.Be3 Nd7 11.0-0-0 b5 12.d5 c5 13.Bxb5 Rb8 14.c4 a6 15.Ba4 Re7 16.Ng3 Ne5 17.Ne4 Reb7 18.b3 Rb4 19.Bd2 Rxa4 20.bxa4 Bf5 21.Rde1 h4 22.h3 Ng6 23.Re3 Nf4 24.g4 Bg6 25.Kd1 f5 26.Nxd6 Qxd6 27.gxf5 Bh5+ 28.f3 Qf6 29.Bc3 Qg5 30.Qe4 Qg2 31.Rhe1 Qxa2 32.Qc2 Qxc4 33.Re8+ Kh7 34.Rxb8 Qxd5+ 35.Qd2 Bxf3+ 36.Kc1 Qxf5 37.Re3 Ne2+ 38.Kb2 Nxc3 39.Qxc3 Qf4 40.Qd3+ f5 41.Rf8 Qb4+ 42.Kc1 Be4 43.Qb3 Qd4 44.Qc3 Qd6 45.Rf7 Qg6 46.Rd7 Qg1+ 47.Kb2 c4 48.Rxe4 fx4 49.Rd4 Qf2+ 50.Qd2 c3+ 51.Kxc3 Qg3+ 52.Kb2 Qxh3 53.Rxe4 Qg3 54.Qd4 Qg2+ 55.Kc3 Qf3+ 56.Kb4 Qf8+ 57.Ka5 Qf5+ 58.Kxa6 g5 59.a5 h3 60.Re7+ Kg6 61.Qg7+ Kh5 62.Qh7+ Kg4 63.Re4+ 1-0 Duda,J (2757)-Carlsen,M (2863) Norway Chess 8th Stavanger 2020 (5)]

5...h5 6.h3

[ew: 6.h4 is way the most popular, but how good can *that* be? ]


6...h4 7.N3e2

(Diagram)
Black has been very aggressive. Black has forced the knight to e2, but it will soon re-route to help control the e5 and c5 squares in a couple of moves buying White some time to adjust to the position. 7...Bf5  8.c3  e6  9.Nf3  Ne4  10.Nf4

The knight on f4 will meander to the d3 square controlling c5/e5, Black must break soon or a cramped position will ensue. 10...Be7N


[ew: 13...f6!]

14.Nxe5  Bf6

White has to evaluate the position in terms of the exchange of minor pieces going into the endgame. I am willing to part with my knight on e5 only if I can
trade Black's f5B and gain control of g4 with my queen rather then trade my knight for the Black bishop on e5.


I still control c5/e5. How is Black going to remedy this dark square control?

20.b4 (ew: +- Stockfish 15.1) 20...Rd8 21.Bb2 Rg8 22.c4 Qd6 23.c5 Qc7 24.Rad1 Kf8 25.Re5 Rg6

Black seems to be holding the position. I looked for 20 minutes. At this time I thought is it going to another draw?

What would you play here? Hmm..

26.d5

We have arrived at a puzzle like position, can you create?

30.Nxf7

(Diagram)
32. Bxd4 Over complicating? I had to find a way to get my last piece into the spectrum of possibilities. This very move allowed for the King hunt to occur.

[ew: As played was winning -- but 32.Qf3! ends it right now. ]

32... axb4

[32... Ke8 33. Qc4 Rxd4 34. Rxe7+ Qxe7 35. Rxe7+ Kxe7 36. Qxg8 (ew) ]

33. Qf3 Rgd8 34. Qh5+! (ew: "mate in 13" sez stockie) 34... Kf8 35. Qh8+

[35. Rg6! ew: is the mate :-) ]

36. Bxf6 37. Qxh6+ Kg8 38. Qh5+ Kf7 39. Qh7+ Kg8 40. Qxc7 ew: Now it's "just" totally won.

40... Nxd4 41. Qe7+ Kg8 42. Re5

R5d7 43. Qxg5+ Kf8 44. Qf6+ Kg8 45. Rg5+ Kh7 46. Qg6+ Kh8 47. Rh5+

(Diagram)
Black resigns. Great game, I got lucky on this one. Ed and Eugenio are even 1-1, until next time.

1-0

Horde,Nicolas T
Moisselin,Simon

2023 Spring TNM: 1600-1999 (6.15)
[Nicolas Horde]

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.dxc5 Nc6
Never been a big fan of this variation and this game illustrates why 5.a3! Nxe5 6.Bb5+ Nc6 7.b4 I have given up the entire centre to Black in return for extremely easy and fast development and a permanent danger on the queenside 7...e5 I thought this was already a serious concession, Black is not developed enough to support the center and c6 is covered so e5 is a target. Better moves are e6 or even a5 to challenge my queenside. My next moves are just logical and Black is already in trouble 8.Bb2 d4 9.Nf3 [9.Qe2 Qe7 10.Nf3 Bg4 (10...Bd7 11.0-0) 11.Nbd2 Also possible, White has a lot of good options against e5 f6

12.h3 Be6 13.0-0 ]
9...Bg4 10.h3 Bxf3
[ 10...Bh5? 11.g4 Bg6 12.Nxe5 ]
11.Qxf3 Qf6 12.Qe4 Keeping contact with the c6 knight 12...Qe6 13.0-0 Nf6
14.Qe2 It looks like White has lost a tempo but in reality the knight is misplaced on f6 and would had been better on e7 14...Be7 15.Re1 Nd7
16.f4?! Not the best move for tactical reasons. I would had been better off with the other pawn break c3.

[16.c3! I thought about it for a long time and it's a thematic pawn break. All of White's pieces are extremely active and Black is going to have a hard time finishing development. dxc3 17.Nxc3 0-0 18.Rad1 Rad8 19.Ne4 This is a dream position where White controls the entire board and Black has no plans a6 20.Bc4 Qf5 21.Ng3 Qg5]
16...Bh4! Missed that move, otherwise I would not had played f4
[16...exf4 17.Qxe6 fxe6 18.Bxc6 bxc6 19.Rxe6 This is what I had calculated and this is positionally crushing for White as Black's pawn structure is ruined]
17.Rf1 0-0-0 I thought I was winning at this point and started calculating a bunch of lines to see which plans seemed the strongest.
[17...exf4 18.Qxe6+ fxe6 19.Rxf4 (19.Nd2! e5 20.c3) 19...Bg5 20.Re4 Be3+ 21.Kh2 e5 Simon mentioned this line in our post-mortem, he saw it after castling queenside and thought this was equalizing. SF gives a slight edge for White but in practise I agree that Black has an easier time]
18.Bxc6
[18.Bc4 Qh6 19.b5! Na5 20.c6! bxc6 21.bxc6 Nxc6 I calculated this line and thought that White keeps decent chances as the king is
completely exposed. I am down a pawn but this looks extremely dangerous and promising. However I did not see a clear continuation and decided to not gambit a pawn when my position was already comfortable. SF still gives a nice advantage for White.

18...bxc6 19.Qa6+ Kb8 20.f5! Nbd2 is much stronger but this move is SF’s second choice. This is dangerous as I am letting Black create a passed pawn in the center but on the other hand the main idea is to deviate the queen from the defense of the c6 pawn. [20.Nd2! There's no rush as Black is almost paralyzed and needs to spend time defending their king]

20...Qd5
[20...Qh6 21.f6 I thought this was brilliant as it interferes with c6. If Black takes with either the knight, bishop or pawn, c6 is going to fall and my pawns will keep marching up. However, there’s a simple refutation with Rc8! (21.Bc1!! Bg5 22.Bxg5! Qxg5 23.Qxc6! This is the improvement of the f6 variation that I had calculated. Now the attack plays by itself) 21...gxf6 (21...Rc8!) 22.Qxc6]

21.Nd2 Nf6 22.Nc4 Rd7 This is a critical moment. My idea is to plant a knight on either d6 or a5 and march the pawns up the board. The main issue in the attack is the misplaced b2 bishop. Positional considerations suggests either c3 to open up the kingside or reshuffling the bishop on c1 to free the b file.


23...Rc7 24.c4?? I spent a long time before committing on c4. The idea is to play b5 and open the queenside. The big drawback is that now Black has 2 connected passed pawns in the center of the board (!) so if my attack fails the endgame is lost. I was convinced I had a winning attack after b5 hence I decided to go all in with c4. [24.a4 Adding more pawns to the attack. However most of White's advantage is gone as Black has enough pieces to blockade the queenside]

24...Qd7 25.b5 Qc8 26.Nxc6+)
This is what I calculated when playing c4. However there’s a big flaw that I completely missed and I would not had played c4 if I had seen so kudos to my opponent for playing it (and almost tempo!) 26...Rxc6!! This is when I realized that I am lost. This stops White's attack as I am forced to trade everything.

27.Qxc6 Qxc6 28.bxc6 We enter the endgame with White being up a pawn and the exchange (!). However this is positionally lost for White as the tripled isolated pawns on the c file are not going anywhere and Black has an easy game with the connected passed pawns. At this point I switched gear and try to look for as much activity as possible and infiltrate on the 7th or 8th rank.

29.a4 Kxc6 30.Ba3 Ne4 31.Rfb1 Nc3 32.Rb3! Be7 [32...Nxa4?? 33.Rb5! Nc3 34.Ra5! The idea behind Rb3]

33.Bb4 Rb8 34.Raa3 Ne4 [34...Rx4! 35.Rxb4 Bxc5 36.Rab3 d3+ And the passed pawns are too strong]

35.g4 d3 36.Ba5 Bxc5+ 37.Kf1 Re8 38.Ra1
[38.Ra2! More resilient Ng3+ 39.Kg2 Ne2 40.Rab2 e4 41.Rb8 Nf4+ 42.Kg3 ]

38...Bb6! Very clever 39.Be1

39...Nc5 40.Rb2 e4 41.Bb4 e3 42.a5 e2+ 43.Ke1 Bc7 44.Kf2 Be5 45.Rab1 Bxb2 46.Rxb2 d2 47.Rxd2 e1Q+

A very interesting game. I was borderline winning in the middlegame with a dangerous attack but failed to find the correct plan. After Black successfully defended the attack, the endgame was strategically lost.

0-1

D03

Agdamag,Samuel

Casares,Nick Jr

2023 Spring TNM: 1600-1999 (6.21)

[Winslow,Elliott]


0-1

Le,Thu

Langendorf,Brian Keith

2023 Spring TNM: u1600 (6.41) 11.04.23

[Le,Thu/(Winslow,Elliott)]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 e6 5.Nf3 Be7 6.0-0 0-0 7.Nc3 Nbd7 8.b3 Ne4 9.Qc2

9...Nxc3 10.Qxc3 Nf6 11.Qc2 c5?
Slightly premature, as Black's pieces have not developed enough to support the break

12.Bb2
[12.cxd5 exd5 13.dxc5 ]
[12.dxc5 Bxc5 13.cxd5 Qb6 14.Bb2 ]

12...Qb6 13.cxd5 exd5
[13...Nxd5 Taking with the knight is stronger and Black would be close to equalizing 14.e4 (14.Ne5 cxd4 15.Rfd1 Bc5 16.Rac1 ) 14...Nb4 15.Qe2 ]

14.Ba3 Black can't do ...cxd4 else the bishop hangs. 14...Ne4 15.Nd2
[15.Ne5 This looked like a good move but my knight / bishop wouldn't have any good square to go back to. Decided to play simple chess instead. cxd4 16.Bxe7 Re8 ]

15...Re8?
[15...Nxd2 Black should have taken the knight and avoid losing a pawn. The position is still fairly equal here]
(ew: Not so fast!) 16.Qxd2 Re8
(ew "?!")  ( 16...Be6! 17.dxc5 Bxc5 18.Bxc5 Qxc5 19.Rfd1±  ) 17.Bxc5 Bxc5 18.dxc5 Qxc5 (ew: and here 19.Bxd5± White is up a fairly healthy pawn.)
16.Nxe4 cxd4
[ 16...dxe4 17.Bxc5 Bxc5 18.dxc5 Qg6]
[(ew: Black can't muddy the water much with 16...Bf5 17.Bxc5 Qe6 18.Bxe7 Rxe7 19.Rfc1 White's still up that annoying pawn, should be a win.)]
17.Bxe7 Rxe7 18.Ng5 Qh6 19.Rac1!!
(ew: Thu Le must have been thrilled with this move (the "!!" is hers!) but it's all the same. Still, it's when you start putting moves together like this, what Soltis called "Little Tactics," that your game takes flight.)
[19.Nf3 is just as good, slightly better even, but not as fun. :-) ]
19...Bg4 20.Nf3
20...Rc8? Allows mate in 3.
[20...Rf8 21.Nxd4 Qb6 22.Qd2]
21.Qxc8+ Bxc8 22.Rxc8+ Re8
23.Rxe8#
1-0

Going into the last round it's Dasika with 5-1, Diaz with 4.5-1.5, and Hao, Bambou and Widjaja with 4 (but Widjaja has a last-round half-point bye).

9.Qe2 Nbd7 10.Rd1 This line has a reputation for being solid as a Slavic rock -- which makes it a nice choice with that half-point tournament lead. Still, at some point it's not about the opening, it's about the players. Let's see how it goes... 10...Qc7 11.e4 Bg6 12.e5 Nd5 13.Nxd5 cxd5 14.Bd3 Rfc8 15.Bf4 Bxd3 16.Qxd3 Qc4! Black even has a bit of an initiative.
[16...Qc2?? 17.Qb5+ is worth pointing out -- I didn't see it!]
17.Qe3 Qc2 18.Ne1 Bxe1 19.Rxe1 Rc4 20.Re2 Qf5+
Black is now clearly better -- compare minor pieces, plus control of the c-file (at least for now).
21.b3 Rc7 22.Rc1 Rac8 23.Rxc7 Rxc7 24.h3 h6 25.Re1 Nb8
[25...g5! 26.Bg3 Qc2 borders on won for Black.]
26.g4 Qg6 27.Rc1 Rxc1+ 28.Qxc1 Nc6 29.Be3?!
[29.Qc3 is the best try. But it's hard to handle -- White's earlier pawn advances are coming back to haunt him, in the form of an airy position. And the problem with the bishop isn't going away.]
29...Qd3 30.Qb2 a5 31.Kg2 Nb4
32.Bd2 Qe4+ 33.Kg1 Nd3
[33...Nc2 34.Bc3 Qd3 could run White out of moves.]
34.Qc3 Qe2 35.Be3 Qd1+ 36.Kh2 Qf1 37.Qc8+ Kh7 38.Qc2 Kg6 39.h4 h5 40.gxh5+ Kxh5 41.Qc7

(Diagram)
Kg4?? There are some amazing "active king" games, Timman-Short comes to mind, various others. This is not one of them.

[41...Kg6! 42.h5+! Kh7 43.Qxf7 Ne1! 44.Qg6+ Kh8 45.Qg3 Qd3!±
certainly isn't "even" -- but at least Black isn't self-mating. And Black has counterplay (plus that big pawn on e3...).

42.Qxf7 Qh3+ 43.Kg1+ Qxh4
[No time for 43...Ne1?? -- 44.Qf4+ Kh5 45.Qg5#]
[43...Qf3 44.Qg6+ Kxh4 45.Qxd3+-picks off the knight, and bad or not, that bishop is a lot of extra wood for White.]

44.Qg6+ Kf3 45.Qxd3+- Qg4+ 46.Kf1 Qg2+ 47.Ke1 Qh1+ 48.Qf1
[48.Kd2! is even better, but the difference between +6 and +4 is for the computers to argue; for humans there isn't much difference.]

48...Qh7
[And the "hold out longer" move is 48...Qxf1+ but forget that.]

49.Qe2+ Kg2
[49...Ke4 is a cute mate: 50.f3+ Kf5 51.Qc2# (51.Qd3#)]

50.f3+ Kg3 51.Qf2+ Kh3 52.Qf1+

Kg3 53.Qg1+ Kxf3 54.Qf2+ Kg4 55.Qg2+ Kh5 56.Qh2+ Kg6 57.Qc2+
A defensive triumph by the still improving Hao -- and they both ended up in a four-way tie for 1st (with Diaz, who was content to coast, and Bambou, who squashed your annotator with a "quiet" line against the Pirc (next game)).

1-0

This game is Bambou at his best. His slightly quirky opening had me semi-conscious, and I slipped into a web of loosened pawns and marauding rooks and queen. The final shot is very nice!

1.e4 d6 2.d4 g6 3.Nf3 Bg7 4.Bd3 Nf6 5.0-0 0-0 6.Re1 Nc6 7.c3 e5

8.dxe5
[8.h3]

8...Nxe5
[8...dxe5]

12.Qc2 g5 13.Bg3 Nh5 14.Bf1
[ 14.Bc4!? ]
[ 14.Na3! ]
14...f5 I could feel myself slipping down the rabbit-hole...
[ 14...Be6= ]
15.exf5 Bxf5 16.Qb3+ Kh8 17.Na3 Nxg3 18.hxg3

Qb6?!
[ 18...Qc5= ]
19.Nc4

20.Ne3 Bh7?! 21.Rad1 c6 22.Rd7
[ 22.Qxb7+- ]
22...b5 23.Red1 e4?
[ 23...Rae8 24.R1d6 e4± ]

24.Rxg7!
[ 24.Rxg7 Kxg7 25.Rd7+ Kh8
( 25...Kg6 26.Qe6+ Rf6 27.Qxe4+ )
26.Qe6 Rae8 27.Qxh6 Re7
28.Qxf8+ ]
1-0

Xia,Yusheng 2263
Ivanenko,Anthony Vladimir 2147
2023 Spring TNM: 2000+ (7.4) 18.04.23
[Ivanenko,Tony]

(ew: Tony has been annotating his games for the TNM archive, and does an excellent job! Opening coverage, self-investigation, critical moments, trying to find the right answers to the right questions. So I am happy to include some of his (and others') work here in the Newsletter...) ===== Going into the last round after two tough losses, especially one where a winning position was thrown, is always a tough
12.Qb5+ Bd7 I wasn't too keen on giving up the bishop pair, but other variations proved to be rather bleak.

9.Bb5+ Bd7 I wasn't too keen on giving up the bishop pair, but other variations proved to be rather bleak.

[9...Nd7 10.Nf3 a6 11.Bxd7+ Bxd7 12.Qd2 Bb5= and though White may struggle with development somewhat, Black doesn't have a good method of digging out the d-pawns.]

[Even thought about the cheeky 9...Kf8!? but correctly deduced that it was too slow -- Black has to be quick in development to compensate for the pawn. 10.Nge2 Kg7 (10...a6 somehow ended working for Black in one of the games, but I wouldn't want to repeat his experience. 11.Ba4 Qxb2 12.0-0 b5 13.Bb3 Qa3 14.Ne4 Nd7 15.Rc1 Kg7 16.Rc7 Rd8 17.d6]


10.Bxd7+ Nxd7 11.Nge2 0-0 12.Qd2?! Perhaps it is a bit harsh to judge this as an inaccuracy, but White needs to complete development before contesting Black and the b2-pawn wasn't that important anyway.


12...a6?!= It's written in my contract that I'm obligated to stamp my presence in a game with a head-shaker, so I suppose it's better to get it out earlier rather than later before it bites me in the behind. The idea was to follow up with ...Nd6, but it's too slow and quite frankly unnecessary.
[Much quicker was: 12...Bg7 13.0-0 Nf6 14.Rfe1 Rad8 15.Nf4 Rfe8 when Black is intending to follow up with ...h6 and perhaps ...h5 and is on his way to winning back the d5-pawn. White is not lost, but Black gets a pleasant position to play with. ]

[Even 12...Qd6 was actually playable, the idea being that 13.Nb5? Qxd5! 14.Nc7 Qxg2 15.Rg1 Qxh2 16.Nxa8 Rxa8+ and now White is regretting not castling earlier as the unsafe king + two pawns more than compensates for the exchange. ]

13.0-0 Rfd8

[I was also thinking of 13...Rfe8 with ideas to play ...Rad8, g7, f6 and then maybe even throw ...e7-e5 in there somewhere, but ultimately preferred to play on the queenside. ]

14.Rac1 Qa5!? Electing to press White's pieces and bring the knight in through b6. Perhaps a little dodgy compared to the solid play of g7-f6, but the computer sees nothing wrong with it.

[14...Bg7 15.Rfe1 Nf6 16.Nf4 Rd7= is also fine and perhaps more reliable. ]

15.Qf4 Rac8

[I had also thought of 15...Nb6 but it quickly led to concerns after 16.b4 (I was also concerned about 16.Qc7?! because I somehow missed that after Rd7 17.Qc5 Qxc5 18.dxc5 Nxd5= I'm free to scoop up the pawn with zero repercussions due to 19. cd1 xc3 20.xd7 xe2+ coming with check and then escaping through f4.) 16.Qa3 (My initial thoughts were actually 16.Qxb4? but turns out I missed 17.Rb1 Qd6 18.Qxd6 Rxd6 19.Ne4+ when my knight would be hanging.) 17.d6 Rac8 18.dxe7 Bxe7= and while Black will recover the pawn, White gets a little too loose for my liking, so I rejected this plan. ]

16.a3

[16.d6? runs into Bg5! 17.Qe4 Bxc1 18.dxe7 Re8 19.Rxc1 Qb4 20.Nd5 Rxc1+ 21.Nxc1 Qxb2+ when White simply doesn't have enough active resources to utilize the two passers. ]

[I was actually spending my time calculating 16.b4? but it turns out to be completely fine for Black after Qxb4 17.Rb1 Qa5! 18.Rxb7 Rxc3 19.Nxc3 Qxc3 20.d6 e5= is simplest for Black, shutting down any play White might have generated and taking comfort in the isolani with two minors harassing it. ]

16...Nb6 17.Qf3 Bg5 Moving the bishop away from threats on f6 and preparing ...xd5.

[17...Nxd5?? is obviously no good due to 18.Nxd5 Rxc1 19.Nxf6+ exf6 20.Rxc1+= ]

18.Ra1!? A disgustingly ugly-looking move, but completely effective at shutting down play against the d5-pawn.

[I was almost certain White was forced into 18.Rcd1 Nxd5 19.Ne4 Bh6 20.Nc3 Nxc3 21.bxc3= which is unbelievably comfortable for Black. ]

18...Nc4! However, a change of plans showed that the knight was actually outposted quite well on c4, threatening the b2-pawn and a fork on d2.

[18...Nxd5?? is a mistake once again, this time met by 19.b4! and Black is forced to drop his knight. Nxb4 20.axb4 Qxb4+- ]

19.Qg4 Not really an inaccuracy, but it allows Black to keep up the pressure in the position.

[19.b4 Qb6 20.Rfd1 after which Black has nothing better to do than hunker down with a move like Qf6= ]

19...Bd2
[19...Bh6 is also fine, but I preferred the more active position.]

20.\textit{Rfd1}?! However, this lets Black take a semblance of control over the game.

[20.Qh4 was better and now after Bxc3 21.Nxc3 Nxb2 22.Ne4 Qxd5 23.Qxe7= The king threats force Black to liquidate quickly.]

20...Bxc3 21.bxc3 Qxd5

Black reclaims the pawn and now his active pieces are looking well-placed compared to White's -- not to mention the more solid two pawn islands vs the three White has. 22.h4 I briefly considered whether I should waste any time on the kingside. 22...h5 But ultimately decided that the principled counter worked best, especially since it comes with a tempo. 23.Qg3 Qd6 Offering the trade of queens to simplify the position and take away White's best piece.

[My good friend Stockfish prefers to maintain the tension on the center with 23...Nd6 but after 24.Rd3 Ne4 25.Qe3 Rc7 26.Nf4 Qf5= it is not quite clear to me how Black is supposed to penetrate White's queenside, even if the position does look visually pleasing to the eye.]

24.Qxd6 Rxd6 25.Rdb1 b6 26.a4 e5 Threatening to blow open files for Black's rooks. 27.Ra2 exd4 However, this simplifies into a basic rook + minor endgame, so the draw is on the table at this point.

[In case Black wants to maintain the tension, there's the option of: 27...Kf8 28.Re1 Ke7 29.Ng3 Re6 30.Rae2 exd4 31.Rxe6+ fxe6 32.cxd4 Kd6= And while Black's king may be closer to the center, he doesn't have enough compensation to escape the draw.]

28.cxd4 Kg7 29.g3 Kf6 30.Rc2 Re8

Threatening the fork on a3. 31.Rb3 [31.Rxc4 Rxe2 32.Rcb4 Ree6 33.d5 Rxd5 34.Rxb6 Ra5= is also drawn.]

31...b5!? Crafty little trick to ease Black's job in the position, although far from the only move. 32.axb5 axb5 33.Nc3 [33.Rxb5 runs into Na3 although after 34.Re5! Rxe5 35.dxe5+ Kxe5= the game is dead in the water anyway.]

33...Rxd4 34.Nxb5 Rd1+ 35.Kg2 Ne5 (=) At this point, both opponents could see that continuing in this entirely symmetrical position would just end up beating a dead horse.

[Thankfully I didn't blunder right into 35...Nd2?? intending ...Ree1, which just runs into 36.Rd3!+- after which the knight eventually falls.]

½-½

\textbf{E73}

Chitta,Adithya 1647

Admassu,Yonathan 1647

2023 Spring TNM: 1600-1999 (7.12) [Winslow,Elliott]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 0-0 5.Be2 d6 6.Be3 c5 Maybe better from the long view.

[The main line, certainly in keeping with King's Indian style, is 6...e5 7.d5 and now for some reason Na6 (maybe to get White to play f2-f3) (7...a5) 8.h4 most common, but (Sarana's preferred 8.g4 Nc5 9.f3 h5 10.g5 Nh7 11.h4 could well be even better.) 8...Nc5 9.Qc2 c6 10.h5]

7.d5 e6 8.Nf3 exd5 9.cxd5 b5?! [9...Re8 10.Nd2 a6 11.a4 Nbd7 has done fairly well, typical Benoni.]

10.e5! dxe5 [10...Ng4!? 11.Bg5 gets exciting: Qb6 12.exd6 b4 (12...a6; 12...Re8]
13.Be7 ]

13.Bc6? But this is going to run into big trouble!
[White has scored well here, just retreating the bishop to e3: 13.Be3 Ng4!

A) Stockfish isn't thrilled but Sarana chooses 14.Qd2!? e4 15.Nd4
15...Nxe3 16.fxe3 [16.Qxe3!!] 16...Qb6 17.0-0 Rb8 18.b3 Rf8 19.Rac1 Ne5 20.Nxe4 Ng4 21.Rc6 Qd8 22.Be2 Qxd5 23.Bxg4 Qxe4 24.Bxc8 Bxd4 25.exd4 Qxc6 26.Bg4+ but 1-0 (97) Sarana,A (2668)-Jones,G (2617) PRO League Prelim Chess.com INT rapid 2023 (2.3);


A2) 15...Nxc5+ [13...e4!]
14...Ba6! 15.Bc6 Nd3+ 16.Kd2 Bh6+!
[16...Qb6!?]
17.Kc2 Nxf2? [17...Qb6!]
18.Bxe8 Nxd1 [18...Nxe8!]

B) 14.0-0+ Nxe3 15.fxe3 Rb8±

13...Nxc5+
[13...e4!]
14.Bxa8?!
[14.0-0 e4]
14...Ba6! 15.Bc6 Nd3+ 16.Kd2 Bh6+!
[16...Qb6!?]
17.Kc2 Nxf2?!
[17...Qb6!]
18.Bxe8 Nxd1
[18...Nxe8!]
[28...Qg5!] 0-1

To my mind Black's dark squared bishop is a much more valuable piece than White's knight on c3 plus the doubled c2 and c3 pawns. Instead of 6... Bxc3+ I expected the much more natural sequence 6...bxc6 7.Bd3 0-0 or even 7...d5.

[6...bxc6 7.Bd3 d5] 7.bxc3 bxc6 8.Bd3 0-0 9.Bg5 Re8 10.0-0 d5 11.exd5 cxd5 12.Bxf6 Qxf6 13.Qh5 Re5?! It doesn't seem like the best decision to shield a d5-pawn at the cost of giving up an h7-pawn and significantly weakening the king's safety. A better and less binding continuation would be 13...g6. 14.Qxh7+ Kf8 15.Qh8+ Ke7 16.Rae1 [Less strong is 16.Bb5 c6 17.Bd3 g6 and Black is more or less Ok.] 16...Bb7 17.Rxe5+ Qxe5 18.Qh4+ Kd8 19.Qa4+ Ke8 20.Qe2? Here is where I had tunnel vision again! Having one extra pawn, I was searching exclusively to trade as many pieces as possible; however, despite this logic being correct in general, I had to better consider two specifics of the position: 1) Black's bishop on b7 is not guarded; 2) Black's king is vulnerable. Therefore, 20. Qa4+

was a significantly stronger move and would lead to more material gains for White.


20...Qxe2 21.Bxe2 c5 22.Rb1 Bc6 23.Bb5 I keep following the logic of endless trading, but the Rook ending appeared not so easy to win.

[23.h4!?] 23...Kd7 24.f3 [It was not too late yet to give up the idea of endless trading by playing 24.Be2 Re8 25.Bf3] 24...Bxb5 25.Rxb5 Kc6 Now to play this Rook ending properly both players have to have a strong theoretical knowledge and practical experience in these types of endings. I cannot judge my opponent's skills, but I myself currently cannot be proud of my skills and a deep knowledge of the Rook endings. 26.Rb1 Rh8 27.g3 Now my opponent finds a very interesting maneuver to use weaknesses of my pawn structure on the queenside. Honestly, I overlooked it. 27...Rh6 28.Kg2 [The engine suggests here 28.a4] 28...Kc7 29.Rd1 Ra6 30.Rxd5 Kc6 31.Rd2 Rxa2 Now it was the time for me to start an active play on the kingside. 32.h4 a5 33.g4 Ra3 34.h5 Strongly threatening g5. 34...Rxc3 [Better was 34...f6! preventing immediate g4-g5.] 35.g5! Re3! [Of course not 35...a4? because of 36.h6 Re3 37.Rd8 gxh6 38.gxh6 and Black is unable to prevent White's promotion.]
36.Rd8
[Mistake would be 36.h6? gxh6
37.gxh6 Re6 and White gradually loses the game.]

36...Re7?
[Better is 36...Re2+ 37.Kg3 Re1
with playable position. (ik) White is still solidly better, but lots of work for a win. (ew)]

37.h6? Premature move and mistake!
Now Black could save the game.
[White had to play 37.c4! in order to prevent Black's king option to hide from the White Rook's checks: Kc6 - Kd5(b5) - Kc4 (ew) but! a4! 38.Ra8 Kd6 39.Kg3 White is probably winning regardless]

37...gxh6 38.gxh6 f6 39.Rh8 Kb7??
Terrible tactical blunder!
[To save the game Black had to play 39...Kd5=]
[or 39...Kb5 (ew)]

40.h7 Now the Rook check is unavoidable. The White's h7-pawn promotes. Black resigned.
1-0
22.Nb5  a6  23.Na3  b5

Qg4  27.Re1  Rd5  28.Qc6  Red8
  [ 28...Rh5! ]
29.e4  Rh5  And White comes undone
around his king. 30.Ng2  Bxg2  31.Kxg2
Qh3+  32.Kf3  Qxh2  34.Rg1
Qe2#
0-1

Double Attack! White has to notice...
9.Qc2??  And he didn't.
Bb4  12.Rc1  Qxd2+  13.Qxd2  Bxd2+
14.Kxd2 is adequate compensation in
the two bishops, center, development
(look at that Black bishop!), but Black
has a nice procedure here: e5!=
fixes everything in one move. ]
  [ Similarly 9.Bf4  e5  10.Bg3  Nxc3 ]
9...Nxd5+

1.d4  d5  2.c4  c6  3.Nf3  Nf6  4.Nc3  e6
5.Bg5  Nbd7  6.e3  Qa5  The Cambridge
Springs Variation! Famously rolled out
to meet a young upstart Kasparov by the
resurgent former world champion
Vassily Smyslov in 1982, it is nowhere
near as popular now as so many other
systems Black can choose. But like
Smyslov, it's deeper than it looks.
7.Bd3?!
  [ 7.cxd5 ]
  [ 7.Nd2 ]
10.Nxg5?!
  [ 10.Nd2!? threatens 11.h4 or 11.f4 ]
winning the knight! But it's hard for Black to move now without answering the threat and winning. e5!? for example.


[Diagram]

Qxe1+
[25...Re4 is simpler!]

26.Rxe1 Rc4 27.Rxe8+ Kc7!
[27...Kd7?? 28.Ne5++]

28.Ne5 Rxc2+ 29.Kxc2 Nd7
[29...Bg7 30.Re7+ Kd6 31.Ng6 (31.Rxg7 Kxe5 32.Rxb7 Ke4 33.Rxa7 Kf3 Δ ...f1Q) 31...Bd4 (31...Rg8) 32.Rxb7 Rg8 33.h5 Nd7]

30.Nf7
[30.Ng6 Rg8 31.h5 Nf6! 32.Rxf8 Rxf8 33.Nxf8 Kd6 (33...Nhx5)]

30...Rh7 31.Nd8 Be7
[31...Re7]

32.Ne6+ Kd6 33.Nf4
[33Nd4 Ke5]

33...Bxh4 34.Re6+ Kc7 35.Nd3 Bg5 36.a4 Re7 37.Rxe7 Bxe7 38.Nf4 Nf6 39.f3 Kd6 40.b3 Nd5 41.Ne2 h5 42.Ng3 h4 43.Nxf5+ Ke5 44.Nxh4

Bxh4 45.Kd3 b5 46.axb5 cxb5 0-1

Winslow,Elliott 2193
Suarez,Sebastian 2049
2023 Summer TNM: 2000+ (1.1) 02.05.23
[Winslow,Elliott]


10...Ncb4

[10...Bf6 11.Be4 Nce7 ]

11.Bb1 b6
[11...Nf6]

12.a3
[12.Ne5!]

12...Nc6?!N
[12...Nxc3 13.bxc3 Nd5 14.Qd3 A) 14...Nf6 15.Bg5 (15.Ne5! ); B) 14...g6]

(Diagram)
13. Qd3
13...g6 14.Bh6 Re8 15.Ba2 Bb7

16. Ne4N

b5 33.Bg5 Qf5 34.Kg1 Qe6 35.Bxf6+ Qxf6 36.Qe3 Qe6 37.Bg4 Qd6 ½-½ Le Blancq,S (2270)-Campora,D (2370) Olympiad-28 Thessaloniki 1988 (1)]

16...Rc8N
[ 16...Qd7 17.Rad1 (17.b4)

[ 16...Bf8 17.Bg5 Be7 18.h4± ]

[ 16...Bf6!? ]

17.h4! Nf6?!

18.Neg5!+- Nd5 19.h5
[ 19.Nxe6!? ]
19...Bf6 20.hxg6 hxg6
21. Nxe6! Qd6
   [21...Qd7]
27. Ne5 Qd6 28. Bd2
   [28 Qf3!]
28... Nf5 29. Re4 Kg7 30. Ng4
   [30. g4! Nfe7 31. Bh6+ Kg8 32. Rae1]
30... Rh8

31. Bxd5 Qxd5 32. Nxf6 Kxf6 33. Bc3 Rh5 34. Rae1 Rch8 35. f3 Kg7 36. Kf2 Rh4 37. Re5 Qd6
   (Diagram)

38. Rx f5 gxf5 39. Qxf5 f6

40. Re6 Rf4 41. Rxd6 Rxf5 42. g4! Rb5 43. d5! Rf8 44. f4 Kg6 45. f5+ Kg5 46. Kg3 Rb3 47. Rd7 a5
   (Diagram)
48.Rg7+?
   [ 48.Rh7! and mate on h5! ]
48...Kh6 49.Rg6+ Kh7 50.Kf4 Rb5
51.Bxf6 Rxd5 52.Rg7+ Kh8 53.Rd7+ Rxf6 54.Rxd5 Rc6 55.g5
   [ 55.Kg5! ]
55...Rc7 56.g6 Rc6 57.Kg5 Rc2
58.Rd8+ Kg7 59.f6# 1:56
1-0

A80

Nathan, Nitish Sg 2151
Anderson, Michael Gene 1936
2023 Summer TNM: 2000+ (1.3) 02.05.23
[Winslow, Elliott]

1.d4 f5 2.Bf4 Nf6 3.e3 b6
   [ 3...g6?! 4.h4! ]
   [ 3...d6! (Marin) ]
4.Nd2 Bb7 5.h3 g6 6.Ngf3 Bg7
7.Bc4 e6 8.0-0 0-0 9.Bb3 Nc6 10.c4
d5 17.cxd5 exd5 18.f3 c5 19.dxc5
Bxb2 20.Rb1 Bc3 21.fxe4 dxe4
22.Bd6 Rf5 23.Qe2 Nc8 24.Red1 Qe8
25.Nf1 Bc6 26.Ng3 Nxd6 27.cxd6

Rg5??
   [ 27...Rc5!= 28.d7 (28.Qg4 h5
29.Qh4 Be5 30.Rbc1 Qd8) 28...Qe7!
29.d8Q Rx8 30.Rxd8 Qxd8
31.Nxe4 Bxe4 32.Bxe4 Bg7 ]
28.d7 Black lost on time. The difference is:
Qxe4 (30...Rd8 31.h4 (tempo!)) ]
31.Rbc1! (another tempo!)
A) 31...Rd8 32.Rxc3 Qe7 33.Rc6!
   (33.Rc7; 33.Qd3) 33...Rx7
(or else Rcd6/Qd3 locking down the almost-a-queen on d7) 34.Rxd7
Qxd7 35.Qc2+- A three-way move, threatening Rc7, attacking g6 (so
no 35...Rc5), stopping any ...
Qd1+ counterplay or ...Rxg2+ and ...
Qd2+ perpetual try.;
B) 31...Bf6 32.Rc8 Black's up a
bishop, but White is winning.
Stockfish was finnicky about this,
but it didn't take much jiggling for us
both to be convinced. Kg7 33.Rf1!
(setting up a simple 34.Qf3). Black
keeps on losing a rook for the d7-
pawn. ]

1-0

[12.Bxb6 cxb6 13.e3]


12...Nd4


14...c5 15.b4! Bd7 16.bxc5 Bxb5

17.cxb6?

[17.Qb2! Bc6! 18.cxb6!=]

17...Bxa3! 18.Rb1+ Rc8?!

[18...Bc6]

[18...Ba6]

(Diagram)

19.Qa2?


19...Bb4+ 20.h4?!


20...h6

[20...Qxb6]

[20...Ba6]

21.Rfc1


21...Rc3 22.Rxc3 dxc3 23.g4 Qxb6 24.g5 Qe6 25.Qxe6 fxe6 26.Nd4 Ba4 27.Bxb7 Rfd 28.Nc6 c2 29.Rc1 Rd6 0-1

(Diagram)
8...b6?!N 1.31/32

13.dxc6 Nxc6 14.0-0?! 1.29/36
[Better is 14.Qb5+- 1.74/26 g6 15.0-0 ]

14...Rfe8 1.90/31
[ 14...Rac8± 1.29/36 ]

15.Rac1+- h6 16.c4 Qd7 17.Nf4 Kh8 18.f3? 1.32/33
[ 18...c5+ 3.31/30 ]

18...exf3+ 19.Bxf3 aiming for c5.

19...Nxd4? 4.11/29 20.exd4+- Qxd4+

21.Rf2 Re3 22.Qd1
[ 22.Rd1! ]

22...Qxd1+ 23.Rxd1 Rae8
[ 23...Rxf3 24.Rxf3 Bg4 25.Kf2 ]

24.Re2?? 0.00/39
[White has various winning moves, especially 24.Ng2+- 4.27/30]

24...Rxe2?? 4.27/30
[ 24...g5!= 0.00/39 and the game is equal! 25.Rd5 Bb1= 0.00 (25...gxf4= 0.00)]

25.Nxe2
[Weaker is 25.Bxe2 g5 although 26.Bd3! should still win. ]

25...g5 26.Kf2 No more tricks: White will
26...g4 27.Bd5 Kg7 28.Nd4 Bd7 29.Re1 Rc8 30.Re7 Kf6? 31.Rxd7 1-0

[C42 1581 1865
2023 Summer TNM: 1600-1999 (1.9) [Clemens,Kristian/(Winslow,Elliott)]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nf3 Nxe4 5.Nc3 Nxc3 6.dxc3 Be7 7.Be3 Nc6 8.h3 Dr. Gu is the first to deviate from our previous game, in which he continued 8. Qd2 and got a fine but unbalanced game 8...Be6 9.Qd2 Qd7 10.Ng5 Bf5 11.0-0-0 Bf6 12.Bd3 Ne5? Too fancy- I should have just traded on d3. 13.Bxf5 Qxf5 14.g4! Very energetic- even if this isn't 100% correct, I still like the way White played against my dubious idea Ne5?. 14...Qd7 15.f4 Nc4 16.Qe2 Nxe3 17.Qxe3+ [ 18.Ne4 ] [ 18.Rhe1 ] [ 18.Qf2 ]
18...Qxe7+ 19.Rxe7 h6 20.Nf3 Kf8 [ 20...Kd7 21.Ne5+ Ke8 22.Nd3 The computer line, but I'm not sure what it accomplishes for Black besides losing castling rights. ] 21.Re4 Bf6 22.Rde1 d5 23.R4e3 g5 [ 23...g6 24.g5 hxg5 25.fxg5 and Bg7 allows Re7, while Bd8 allows Re8+ followed by trading rooks and Re8+ again with a nasty pin on the eighth rank. ] 24.fxg5 hxg5 25.Nd4 Rd8 [ 25...Bxd4 26.cxd4 and Black can play for a draw, but this feels like "groveling" and I wanted to play something less bleak. ]
26.Nf5 My plan was Rd7, but that is met by Re8#. Dr. Gu magnanimously called my defense "effortless", but it was far from that. I had to keep a rook off of e7 while keeping control of f6 and f7 and guarding against a battery on the f-file, which actually happened in the game. 26...Kg8 27.Re8+ White played the last 5-7 moves very well, and I think Black is barely hanging on here. Ever since I played 12... Ne5, I was on the back foot and playing with "the courage of despair". 27...Kh7 28.R8e3 After outplaying me by a considerable margin from move 12 to move 28. White offered a draw here. It took a lot of willpower to decline and play on. As Oscar Wilde said, "I can resist everything except temptation". 28...Rd7 29.Ng3 Rhd8 30.Rf3 Kg6 31.Re1 Bh8 32.Nf5 Bf6 33.Ng3 Be5 34.Nf5 Rh8 35.Nd4 a6 Preparing c5, but I also wanted to play a "slow move" to see what White would do next. 36.Rf5? Bf4+ 37.Kd1 Rxe3 38.Ne2 Be3 39.Rf6+ Kg7 40.Nd4 [ 40.Rf1 Rh1+ 41.Rf1 ] 40...Bxd4 41.cxd4 Rg3 42.c3 Rxg4 43.Kc2 Rg2+ 44.Kb3 c6 45.Rf6f Re7 46.a3 Kf8 47.a4 a5 48.c4 Rg3+ 49.Ka2 dxc4 50.Rxa5 Rg2 51.Ka3 Re3+ 52.Kb4 Rxb2+ 53.Kxc4 Rb2+ 54.Kb4 Rg2 55.Raf5 Rg4 56.Kc5 Here the quality of my scoresheet (and my memory) goes downhill rapidly. The rest of the game may not be totally accurate. 56...Rc3+ 57.Kb6 (Actually this is the last move on Clemens's scoresheet.) 57...Rb3+ 58.Kc7 Rb4 59.Rxf7+ and a big time scramble. Black's king slips out of the checks via the f8-e8-e7-e6-d5-c4 (!) highway. 0-1
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Qc2 e6
   [ 4...dxc4  5.Qxc4  Bf5  6.g3  e6
      This is what "theory" dictates as we
      enter a normal Slav position ]
5.g3 Bd6 6.Bg2 0-0 7.Nbd2 Nbd7
8.0-0 e5?! I think this is too early as
White can play against an IQP with an
ideal bishop on g2 to pressure the d5
pawn
   [ 8...Re8 Continuing development ]
9.e4? Too premature as it allows Black
to liquidate everything in the center
   [ 9.cxd5  cxd5  10.dxe5  Nxe5
     11.Nxe5  Bxe5  12.Nf3  Bc7
     And White has achieved an ideal
     position against the IQP ]
9...dxe4! 10.Nxe4
   [ 10.Nxe5  Nxe5  11.dxe5  Bxe5
     edge for Black as White's LSB is
     bitting on granite ]
10...Nxe4?! Loses material by force
Bxg3! 14.hxg3
   [ 14.Rd1  Bd6 My plan ]
14...Qxd4 Black is up a nice pawn and
still has the activity. On the other hand
White has the bishop pair but no clear
target as the a7-b7-c6 pawn formation
is rock solid 15.Be3 Qe5! 16.Bf4 Qh5!
The threat is now Bh3 to exchange the
LSB then Ng5. White just helped me
reposition my vulnerable queen 17.f3?
Preventing any Ng5 but now the king is
extremely weak 17...Be6
   [ 17...Qc5+!  18.Kh2  Nh5! This is what
     21.Qc3  Qd6 ]
18.b3 Qc5+ 19.Qf2 Qxf2+ 20.Kxf2
   [ 20.Rxf2  Nh5 White has a problem
   with the DSB now ]
20...Rfd8 21.Bg5 Rd7
   [ 21...h6  22.Bxf6  Rd2+  23.Kg1  gxf6
     22.Bxf6  gxf6 Making it harder for Black
to use its kingside majority. However all
of White's pawn are on light squares so
the endgame is still winning 23.Rad1
There's no need to rush, I am first fixing
all pawns on light square to remove any
type of counterplay for White. If I
manage to exchange the rooks then the
entire queenside collapses 29.Rb2
Trying to force b4 29...a5! Stopping this
idea 30.f4 b6
   [ 30...Rd3+ I realized after playing b6
     immediately that his intermezzo was
     stronger 31.Kf2  b6 ]
31.Bh3
   [ 31.Bf1  Rd4 And now I infiltrate along
     the e file ]
31...Rd3+ 32.Kf2  Rc3 33.f5 Bh5
34.Rd2  Ke7 Preventing any counterplay
along the d file 35.Kg2  Bf3+ 36.Kf2
Be4 37.Rd1  Rf3+ 38.Ke1  Rxe3
39.Bf1  Bxf5 40.Rd2 Up 3 pawns so
this is completely winning. My plan is to
push the kingside pawns and exchange
material 40...Bg4 41.Kf2  Rf3+ 42.Kg2
Re3 43.Kf2  Re6 44.Kg3  h5
   [ 44...f5 Practically better as Black's
     king can go to the kingside ]
45.Kf4  Re5 46.Bd3  Ke6 47.a3  Re1
48.a4  Rd1 49.Bf5+ A nice "tactic" but
does not work 49...Ke7!
   [ 49...Bxf5  50.Rxd1 And it's equal ]
50.Rf2  Bxf5?! I hesitated before
exchanging the bishops. The problem is
that now all my kingside pawns are weak
and difficult to defend. My idea is to
sacrifice all of them to gain time to
target the c3 pawn.
   [ 50...Rd4+  51.Ke3 ]
51.Kxf5  Rd3 52.Rb2  Re3 53.Kf4  Re5
54.Rd2  h4 55.Rd3  Re1 56.Rh3  Rb1
57.\text{Re3+} \text{Kf8} 58.\text{Kg4} \text{Rh1} 59.\text{Rd3} \text{Ke7} 60.\text{Re3+} \text{Kd6} 61.\text{Kf5} \text{Rg1} 62.\text{Rd3+} \text{Kc6} 63.\text{Rh3} \text{Rg3!} Finally making progress 64.\text{Rxh4} \text{Rxb3} 65.\text{Rh6} \text{Rf3+} 66.\text{Ke4} \text{Rf1} 67.\text{Rh7} \text{Ra1}

[ 67...\text{Rd1!} Much easier 68.\text{Rxf7} \text{Rd4+} 69.\text{Ke3} \text{Rxc4} 70.\text{Rxf6+} \text{Kb7} The same position as in the game except that White's king is cut off ]
68.\text{Rxh4} \text{Rxa4} 69.\text{Rxh6+} \text{Kb7} 70.\text{Rf7+} \text{Ka6} 71.\text{Kd5}

\text{Rb4??} After 3 hours of game, I completely lost lucidity. I did not realize that White has a perpetual idea once the king sneaks on c6. It's critical to free the b4 square for the king

[ 71...\text{Ra3!} 72.\text{Kc6} a4 73.\text{Rf8} \text{Ka5} 74.\text{Ra8+} \text{Kb4} This is why it's so important that b4 is available ]
72.\text{Rf8} a4 73.\text{Kc6} \text{Ka7}

[ 73...\text{Rxc4} This is what I calculated when I played \text{Rb4??} but I completely missed that White mates first...
74.\text{Ra8#} ]
74.\text{Rf7+} \text{Kb8} 75.\text{Rf8+} \text{Ka7} 76.\text{Rf7+}
A frustrating draw for sure. I had everything under control until I lost the thread at the end by entering unnecessary complications.

½-½
47.Rxh5?
[ 47.Kd6! wins -- the h-pawn isn't the main thing, stopping the Philidor Position is. Black needs to be ready with the side-check from the queenside, ideally the a-file but the b-file works in a pinch. And here he's a move short.

A) 47...Ke8 48.e6 Kf8 (48...Rf4 49.Rh8+ Rf8 50.Rxf8+ Kxf8 51.Kd7) 49.e7+
   A1) 49...Kg7 50.e8Q (50.Re6) 50...Kxh6 51.Qh8+ Kg5 52.Qxd4;
   A2) 49...Kf7;

B) 47...Kc8 48.e6 Re4 49.e7 Rxe7 50.Kxe7]
[But! After 47.Rxh5? Black has three moves that work:

A) or 47...Rb4! but slightly less clear;

B) In fact 47...Kc7! also works, as 48.Rh7+ Kc6 49.Rh8 Black is drawing with four moves Rd1 (49...Kc5; 49...Rd2; 49...Kc7) 50.Rc8+ Kb5 51.Kd7 d4 (again, many moves work);

C) 47...Ra4!
   C1) 48.Rh8+ Kc7 49.Ke7= d4?? (49...Ra1; 49...Ra2;

Ra6 In fact, almost anything here) is the famous drawing system noted by Philidor in the 1700s. ]

1-0 ?? Black resigned in a drawn position!
1-0
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.c3 Nf6
I haven't faced a Ponziani OTB so I spent some time thinking through my options. I decided on a counter attack rather than a mainline.


4.Bb5 Nxe4 5.Bxc6N bxc6?!
Black wanted the open b-file for his rook, but taking with the b-pawn creates three pawn islands after Nxe5. Better is dxc6 which leads to only two pawn islands and creates immediate control over the center.

[ 5...dxc6 ]

6.Nxe5 Qe7
[ 6...Qg5!? More threatening 7.Ng4 d5 8.d3 Qxg4 9.Qxg4 Bxg4 10.dxe4 dxe4 Black has won a pawn. ]

[ 6...Ba6!? prevents castling 7.d3 but white can't actually take because after Qe7 the a6 bishop blocks castling again 8.dxe4? Qxe5 ]

7.0-0 Qxe5 8.Re1 Bd6 9.g3 0-0
10.d3 Nxf2! A desperado! Black gives back the knight but takes a pawn for his trouble. White needs to take the knight, as trading queens would be a disaster given White's lack of development.

[ 11.Rxe5? Nxd1 12.Re1 Nxb2 (12...Nxc3?! Black shouldn't help white develop the knight 13.Nxc3) 13.Bxb2 Rb8+- Black is up two pawns, leads in development, and has the bishop pair. ]

11...Qf5+ 12.Qf3 Qxf3+ Black doesn't actually need to trade queens here, but being up a pawn I wanted to simplify.

13.Kxf3 Ba6 14.d4
[ 14.c4!? ]

14...Re8 15.Be1! Black wants the open file and is willing to trade rooks to get it, but White wisely blocks. Down a pawn, white should avoid trades, and the Bishop (as we'll see) does a very good job stabilizing White's center.

15...Rab8
16.b3 Bb7 17.c4 Bb4
[ 17...c5+!? but I didn't like the position after 18.d5 since my dark-square bishop is tied down to c5 and my light-square bishop is blocked, but Bf8? 19.Nc3 d6 20.Bf4 g6∞ Black seems to have stabilized and even won the long diagonal ]

18.Re2 d5 19.a3
[ 19.c5!? Ba6 20.Rb2 otherwise the b-pawn hangs in various lines Bd3 21.a3 Be1∞ and Black's bishops are way offside, though White's going to have trouble developing in the near future ]

19...Bf8 20.c5 Ba6 21.Rb2 g6 22.Nd2 Bg7 23.b4 Bd3 There are two tactics here, one I only saw later and one I analyzed incorrectly.

[ 23...Be2+! 24.Kxe2 Bxd4 I saw this, but got the continuation wrong 25.Rab1? (25.Kd3 Bxb2 26.Ra2 Bg7† Black is up the exchange and has two extra pawns) 25...Bxb2? (25...Rxe3+! don't take the rook, exploit the pin (and then take the rook) 26.Kd1 Bxb2 27.Rxb2 Rxal Black is up the exchange and has 3 extra pawns. ) 26.Rxb2 and I didn't like trading two bishops for a rook and a pawn, but d4† wins the bishop ]

[ 23...Rxe3+! sac the exchange }
24. Kxe3 Re8+ removes the king from defense of the d4 square. 25. Kf3 Bxd4+ and black is not only winning back the exchange, but won a pawn and created a protected passed pawn in the process.

24. g4 Re6 Here Black starts playing without a plan, and starts to lose his grip on the position as White mounts a strong defense. 25. Rb3 Rf6+ 26. Kg3 Be4 27. Bf4!

[ 27. Nxe4!? dxe4 28. Bf4 Re6 29. Bxc7 Rcc8 Black would probably have an easier time given the passed pawn, but White's 4-on-2 is dangerous. ]

27... Re6 28. Bxc7 Rc8 29. Bd6

[ 29. Be5?? Rxe5! 30. dxe5 Bxe5+ 31. Kf2 Bxa1+ Black has won a full rook. ]

29... Bxd4 30. Rf1 Be5+!? Computer seems to hate this. With the passed pawn and the 3-on-2 I like my chances in an end game, so I prefer to simplify. 31. Bxe5 Rxe5 32. Kf4 Rce8 33. Re3 g5+ 34. Kg3 Bg6 35. Rxe5 Rx e5

36. Nb3 White is going to threaten Black's backwards c6 pawn. 36... Bc2 37. Nd4 Ba4 38. Rf6 Kg7? 39. Rf5

[ 39. Rd6! Re3+ 40. Kf2 Black has no more checks and can't defend the c6 pawn. White's pawn advance will be fast and dangerous. ]


47. Na4

[ 47. Kf6 Bxg4 48. Kxf7 h5+ White cannot catch both passed pawns. ]

47... a6 Prevents b5, which would create a passed pawn for White. 48. Kh5 Kd3 49. Kg5 Ke2 Black's King now dominates the knight, forcing it to go backwards if it wants to stop the pawn.

50. Kf4 Bxg4 51. Kxg4 d3 52. Kf3 d2 0-1

D02

Cao, Danny Du Uy 1014

Maheshwari, Anubhav 1332

2023 Summer TNM: 1200-1599 (1.27) [Cao, Danny Du Uy/Winslow, Elliott]

Danny Cao teaches chess for the Mechanics' in San Francisco schools (when he's not teaching trumpet or playing in bands in the Bay Area). I wonder if this game is a high water mark -- he really hits some wild notes here!


8. Bd3 Be7 9. Ne5 cxd4

[ 9...0-0 ]


10. exd4 h6 11. h4 Nxe5 12. dxe5 Nh7 13. Qg4 Bc5

[ 13...0-0-0± ]

14. 0-0 0-0-0 15. b4

[ 15. Qxg7 Rdg8

A) 16. Qxh6 Bf8 ( 16... Nf8 17. Qf6 Rdg8; )

B) 16. Qxf7 Be8 ]

15... f5 16. Qh3

[ 16. Qxg7 Rdg8 17. Qxh6 Bf8 18. Qh5 ]


16... Be7 17. Be3 Qc7 18. Bd4

[ 18. Rfc1 ]

18... g5 19. h5!?

[ 19. hxg5? hxg5! keeps the pawns in motion, favoring Black. ]

[ 19. c4! keeps the momentum going. gxh4 20. cxd5 Ng5 21. Qe3 f4 22. Qxf4 Nh3+!? 23. gxh3 Bg5 ]

19...g4 20. Qe3 Bg5 21. Qe2+- Still pretty good! 21...Be8

22. c4??
[The players go a bit off the rails, but Stockfish seems to as well: it gives as best 22. Nb3! Qf7 23. Nc5 Kb8 and here 24. Nxb7!? (24. Rb3 is a big advantage without going all in) 24... Kxb7 25. Qb2 with a borderline won game. Inexplicable!]

(Diagram)

22... Bxd2?? And back to a won game for White.

[22... Bxh5 23. g3? (Cao) (23. cxd5+-) 23... dxc4! again]
[22... g3 (Cao) 23. f4!-]
[Stockfish 15.1: 22... dxc4!!+- and when SF gives as best 23. Nb3! (but still + (-3.30)) you know to just throw up your hands.]

23. Qxd2+- Now White's action is way ahead and better coordinated than Black's. 23... dxc4 24. Bxc4 Qd7 25. Rfd1 Kb8 26. Qe3 b6

27. Bxb6! A classic crazy imbalance
sacrifice: Black gets two rook and a knight for his queen, but also three pawns...

[ 27.Bb3!? is the "safe" (and clearly quite good) way to go. ]
27...Qxd1+  28.Rxd1  Rxd1+  29.Kh2 axb6  30.Qxb6+

... and as we see, there's more: Black's king is completely uncovered, and White's going to have a lot of passed pawns. Not to mention Black's scattered pieces. 30...Ka8

[ 30...Kc8  31.Bxe6+ and back to c4, +7 on the Computer Richter Scale. ]
31.Ba6

[ 31.Qxe6! is even better -- d5 is a much more dangerous post for White's bishop. ]
31...Rd7  32.Qxe6 Ng5  33.Qxf5

(Diagram)

The prospect of having four, even five extra pawns (most of them passed) was hard to pass up. 33...Ka7  34.Bb5
Less organized (but still excellent) than either of

[ 34.Bc4 ]
[ 34.e6 ]

34...Rf7 (Doesn't really help)  35.Qc8!
Bxb5

[ 35...Re7  36.Qc5+ ]
36.Qxh8  g3+  37.Kxg3 Ne4+  38.Kh2 Nxf2  39.e6!
[ 39.Qxh6??  Ng4+ ]
39...Rf4  40.Kg3  Nd3  41.e7  Re4
42.Qh7  Kb8?
[ 42...Re3+ ]
43.Qxe4
1-0

B52

Widjaja,Luke
Winslow,Elliott
2023 Summer TNM: 2000+ (2.1)  09.05.23
[Winslow,Elliott]

This is my "working" entry in my "EW" database, so I've piled in lots of game references. You can just run past those pages (!) and get to our game, which
has plenty to it as well... 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Bd7

[ 3...Nd7 is "the rage" now for a while. I've played it, but (1) I haven't caught up on theory (2) those lines where Black plays ...g5?!? are just too much for me. I feel like the old guy who hears the music and says "That's not music! There's no melody!" And for me that ...g5 stuff is atonal. ]

4.Bxd7+ Qxd7

[ Nick de Firmian has a lot of games with 4...Nxd7, and I've played it some as well. Black aims to set up a "Hedgehog" without the bishop on b7. Sometimes the queen goes there. Black just stays out of White's way and stays on alert. There is some sort of similarity to Nick's liking Benoni lines with ...Bg4 and ...Bxf3; Black doesn't have quite the downtown traffic problems he might with that piece still on the board. ]

5.c4 g6

[ The below game references were reached every which way: 5...Nc6

A) 6.0-0 g6 7.d4;

B) 6.Nc3 Nf6 ( 6...g6 7.d4Bg7
1-0 Caruana,F (2807)-Kasparov,G
(2812) Saint Louis Rapid 2017 (9) )
7.d4;

C) 6.d4 cxd4 7.Nxd4 Nf6 ( 7...g6
1-0 Mamedov,R (2701)-Gaehwiler,G
(2414) EU-ch 20th Skopje 2019
(11) ) 8.Nc3 g6 9.f3 Bg7 10.Be3
½-½ Akopian,V (2689)-Kasparov,G
(2838) Olympiad-35 Bled 2002 (5.
1) ]

[ 5...Nf6 6.Nc3 g6 7.d4 cxd4
8.Nxd4 ]


9.f3 Over the years this solid line has been played, White has varied in the primary path forward.

[ 9.h3 ]


27. Kg3  Qe5+  28. Kf2  Qe3+
29. Kg3  Nc3  30. Qb7  Qe5+  31. f4
Ne4+  32. Kf3  Nd2+  33. Kg4  Qf5+
34. Kh4  Nxf1  35. g4  Qf6+
0-1 Xiong,J (2687)-So,W (2772)
Speed Chess Chess.com INT blitz 2021 (1.14);
C) 12. Rc1;
D) 12. Qd2;
E) 12. Nb3;
F) 12. Nd5?! Nxd5  13. cxd5 Nxd4
( 13... Bxd4  14. Bxd4 Nxd4
½-½ Anisimov,P (2523)-
Schekachkin,M (2376) Ayvalik
Akasya 2023 (5) ) 14. Bxd4 Bxd4+
15. Qxd4 Rac8 ( 15... Rfc8  16. Rac1
Qb5  17. h4 Qe2  18. Rfe1 Qb5
19. h5 Rc5  20. b4 Rcc8  21. f4
0-1 (38) Remizov,Y (2389)-Khegay,
D (2532) RUS-chT Blitz Sochi 2022
(9.4) ) 16. Rac1 Rc7  17. Qd2 Rfc8
18. a3 ( 18. h3 Qb5  19. Kh2 Qb6
20. Rxc7 Qxc7 0-1 (67) Varitski,l
(2212)-Vulfson,V (2421) Marianske
Lazne IM2 15th 2016 (3) ) 18... Kg7
19. Rfd1 ( 19. Qd4+ Kg8
½-½ Anisimov,P (2523)-
Schekachkin,M (2376) Ayvalik
Akasya 2023 (5) ) 19... h5  20. h4
Qd8  21. Kh2 e5  22. dxe6 Qxh4+
23. Kg1 Rxc1  24. Rxc1 Rxc1+
25. Qxc1 fxe6  26. Qc7+ Kh6
27. Qxd6 Qe1+  28. Kh2 Qh4+
29. Kg1 Qe1+  30. Kh2 Qh4+
31. Kg1 ½-½ Shaposhnikov,E
(2545)-Kokarev,D (2624) RUS-ch
Higher League 69th Kolomna 2016
(3);
G) 12. Nxc6;
15. Na4 Nd7 Again Black is fine,
again the higher rated player won.
16. Rb1 f5  17. exf5 gxf5  18. b4
Qe8  19. Qe2 f4  20. Ba7 Rb7
21. Bf2 Ne5  22. c5 Qg6  23. Rb3
Rf5  24. Kh1 Rg5  25. g3 fxg3
26. Bxg3 Rh5  27. Rg1 Qf5  28. Nb6
Rb8  29. Bxe5 Qxe5  30. Qg2 Rd8
31. f4 Qd4  32. Rg3 1-0 Mamedov,R
(2701)-Gaehwiler,G (2414) EU-ch
20th Skopje 2019 (11) ) 13... Qxc6
14. Nb6 (Fabi and some experts.
(Stocky: 14. Rc1!? some subliminal
plus. Some 2200 draws. ) 14... Nd7
15. Nxd7 Qxd7  16. Rf2 b5  17. c5!
Qa7! 1-0 Caruana,F (2807)-
Kasparov,G (2812) Saint Louis
Rapid 2017 (9) Stockfish makes
Black on the better side of equality.
But Gary went down. It was a rapid
game... ]
[ 11... Rfc8 ]
[ 11... Rac8  12. b3 Rfd8 ½-½ Gelfand,
B (2675)-Shirov,A (2710) Hoogovens
Blitz Wijk aan Zee 1998 (3) ) 12... e6
13. Qd2 ½-½ Keller,P (2253)-Kieslich,
A (2027) GER-chT U20 Borken 2016
(6.1) )
[ 11... e6 ]
12. Qd2
[ 12. Rf2!? ]
12... Rac8?!
[ 12... e6 ]
13. b3  e6  14. Rfd1?! I don't think to use
those colored arrows very often, but in
this position I'll send one across the
board...
[ 14. Rad1 a6 15. Nde2 Qe7  16. Bg5
b5  17. cxb5 axb5  18. Nxb5 d5
21. Nd6 Ra8  22. fxe4 Qxd6  23.Qxd6
Rxd6  24. Rxd6 Nxe4  25.Rd8+ Rxd8
26. Bxd8 Bd4+  27. Kh1 Nf2+
½-½ Seret,J (2350)-Schmidt,W (2505)
Bagneux Librairie Saint Germain 1978
(8) ]
[ 14. Rac1 d5  15. exd5 exd5  16. c5
Re8

(Diagram)
I was working in the press room at the 1990 World Championship in New York, and remember when Kasparov sacked a rook for Karpov's bishop in a Kings Indian that was very similar to this. Gelfand steps away of course...

17.Bf2  a6  (17...Bf8!= SF15.1)
½-½ (74) Gelfand,B (2675)-Shirov,A (2710) Hoogovens Blitz Wijk aan Zee 1998 (3)

14...d5
]

15.Nxc6

It is unlikely that White will be able to advance his pawns on the Q-side any further while his last move already weakened the c4-square, which can be occupied by Black's Knight later.
19...h5  20.Qf2  Bh6  21.Rab1  Nd7  22.g3  Ne5  23.Kg2  Nc4

Black's Knight has reached its destination and will threaten to go further. This is the result of the careless move b3-b4; pawns do not

15...bxc6 16.e5


½-½ (55) Manukian,A (2196)-Deviprasath,S (2290) Titled Tuesday intern op 14th Jun Early Chess.com INT blitz 2022 (6). This is the problem that Black faces. Not just to generate winning chances, but even to avoid getting ground down. In fact here White just has a working plus, and only slipped up later. ]

16...Ne8 17.f4

[ 17.Bg5 f6 18.Bh4 isn't so comfortable either. Qc7 19.Qe3 Qf7 20.Na4 h6 21.f4 fxe5 22.fxe5 g5 ½-½ (51) Mrva,V (2138)-Micek,J (2083) SVK-chT2D 1213 Slovakia 2012 (2.2) ]

17...f6 18.exf6 Nxf6 19.c5?!


½-½ (55) Manukian,A (2196)-Deviprasath,S (2290) Titled Tuesday intern op 14th Jun Early Chess.com INT blitz 2022 (6). This is the problem that Black faces. Not just to generate winning chances, but even to avoid getting ground down. In fact here White just has a working plus, and only slipped up later. ]

[ 16.Bg5 dxe4 17.Qf4 Nd5! ]

½-½ (55) Manukian,A (2196)-Deviprasath,S (2290) Titled Tuesday intern op 14th Jun Early Chess.com INT blitz 2022 (6). This is the problem that Black faces. Not just to generate winning chances, but even to avoid getting ground down. In fact here White just has a working plus, and only slipped up later. ]

[ 16.Bg5 dxe4 17.Qf4 Nd5! ]
I had just concluded that this might be his best, and he played it. The computer took a while to come around as well. 

28...\textit{axb4}?? Not even in the top 15. Let's put it shortly: One a-pawn strong, two a-pawns weak. The front one just gets in the way. I was "concerned" about b4-b5, but should have looked deeper. I think I "forgot" that with his knight on a2, b5 ain't happenin'.

[Best of many is 28...\textit{Nf5} and ...\textit{Re2}. 29.g4 \textit{Re2}! Anyway. 30.gxf5 \textit{Rxf2} 31.Rxf2 gxf5 ...\textit{Qg7+} and ...\textit{Qxa1} is not a threat. 32.bxa5 (there're those a-pawns!) \textit{Kh8} Now it's a threat. White is a mess. Black wins easily. ]

[28...\textit{h5}?!]

29.\textit{Nxb4} \textit{Qxc5} Now it gets mucky.

30.\textit{a5}?!  

[30.Rf1 \textit{Rg5}! 31.g3 \textit{Rf5} 32.Rxf5 \textit{gxf5}+ ]

\hspace{0.3cm} (Diagram)
30...d4?
[I saw 30...Qc3!

A) 31.Qe1 bugged me, but  Qb2!
    threatens mate! 32.Ra2  ( 32.Rf2
    Ng4! ) 32...Nc4+-;

B) 31.Re1  d4! 32.Qa2+  Kh8 ]
    [ 30...g5+- ]

31.Qd2?
[ 31.Qa2+  R5e6  32.Nd3  Qc3  33.a6
    Nd5  34.a7  Ra8  35.Rf3= ]

31...Nd5
[ 31...Qc3!  32.Qxc3!  dxc3  33.Rf2
    Rb5  34.Nc2  Nd5+ ]

32.Nd3

Qd6?
[ 32...Qc3  33.Qxc3  dxc3  34.Rc4  Re3
  35.Nc5!  ( 35.Rd1  Re2  36.Rxc6
    Rd2+ ) 35...Re2= ]

33.Nxe5  Nxf4  34.Qxf4
We just assumed.
[ 34.Nc4 ]
[ 34.Nf3!= ]

34...Rxe5

35.a6?? I so often ignore my opponents
queening on the other side of the board,
but on this occasion I saw a flaw. He
missed it.
29.Rc3 Rc8 30Nb1 Rxc3 31.Nxc3 f5 32.Qb3 g5 33.Qa4 f4 34.Bh5+ Ng6 35.Ne2 fxe3 36.fxe3 Qc6 37.Qd1
Qd6 38.a3 Kg7 39.Qe1 Nh4 40.Bg4 Qc7 41.Qf2 Ng6 42.Qf5 h6 43.Qf2

35.\text{Rf1=} 35.\text{Re1+! 36.Rxe1 Qxf4 37.a7}

Qf8! (well, forced) 38.Rb1 Kg7! 39.Rb8 holding the a-pawn doesn't work either, but we were both pretty short on time so not working things out ...

39...Qe7!
40.Rg8+ Kh6 0-1

Dasika, Archit
Nathan, Nitish Sg
2023 Summer TNM: 2000+ (2.2) 09.05.23

[Winslow, Elliott]

Qxb4? Nitish was holding on so well, but here he falls victim to Dasika's patient pressure.

Qf8! (well, forced) 38.Rb1 Kg7! 39.Rb8 holding the a-pawn doesn't work either, but we were both pretty short on time so not working things out ...

39...Qe7!
40.Rg8+ Kh6 0-1

(Diagram)
Young Yuvraj refused to give an inch, all the way to a 3-vs-3 rook ending with *almost* nothing to play for. But then it got very complicated for both of them...

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.c4 Nb6
5.exd6 exd6 6.Nc3 Nc6 7.Be3 Be7
8.Be2 0-0 9.Nf3 Bg4 10.b3 Re8
11.0-0 Bf6 12.Rc1 Bf5 13.c5 dxc5
14.dxc5 Bxc3 15.Qxd8 Raxd8
16.cxb6 Bb2 17.bxc7 Rc8 18.Rc5
Bxf3 22.Bxf3 Ne5 23.Rb1 Nxf3+
   [ 23...Rxc7!?  24.Rxb2 Nd3  25.h4!= ]
24.Rxf3 Be5

(Diagram)
[39...b5=]
40.Rxa5+

Ke4 41.Kg2 f4 42.f3+ Kd4 43.gxf4 gxf4=

48.Rf7?? Anything else, almost. Rook moves to the left. King up. 0.00.
48...Kxf3+ 49.Rf5 Ke4??= (Any of five lateral rook moves would win) 50.Rf8?? And here the three left-most rook moves draw. 50...f3??

[The only move to win was 50...Kf3! (so this is why you study rook endings!) Black sets up ...Re6 to block checks, maybe with ...h5 and ...Re5 in too.]
51.Re8+ Kd3 52.Rd8+ Ke2

44.Rf5 Rb2+ 45.Kh3 Ke3 46.Kg4 Rg2+ 47.Kh3 Rg6

(Diagram)

53.Rf8?? Here again: head to the side! For some reason in "this" position only
the *two* leftmost rook moves draw (per a tablebase, i.e. perfect information):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
53.Rb8= \\
53.Ra8= \\
53...f2 54.Re8+ Kf1 55.Re7 Kg1 56.Re1+!
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
57.Rxf1+ Kxf1 58.Kh4 Kf2 \\
59.Kh5 Rf6 60.h4 Ke3 61.Kg4 Ke4 \\
62.Kh5 Ke5 63.Kg4 Ke6 64.Kh5 Kf7 \\
65.Kg4 Kg7 66.Kh5 Rf5+ 67.Kg4 Rc5 \\
68.Kf4 Kg6 69.Kg4 Rc4+ 70.Kg3 Kh5 \\
71.Kg2 Kxh4 72.Kh1 Kg3 73.Kg1 Rc1# \\
0-1
\end{array}
\]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.Nc3 c6 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Qc2 g6 7.Bg5 Be7 8.e3

[ 8.e4 is the radical way to go, which led to madness in a previous TNM game: dxe4 9.Bxf6 Bxf6 10.Qxe4+ Kf8 11.0-0-0?! (11.Bc4 is the main move, with about a hundred games,

\[
\begin{array}{c}
57.Rxf1+ Kxf1 58.Kh4 Kf2 \\
59.Kh5 Rf6 60.h4 Ke3 61.Kg4 Ke4 \\
62.Kh5 Ke5 63.Kg4 Ke6 64.Kh5 Kf7 \\
65.Kg4 Kg7 66.Kh5 Rf5+ 67.Kg4 Rc5 \\
68.Kf4 Kg6 69.Kg4 Rc4+ 70.Kg3 Kh5 \\
71.Kg2 Kxh4 72.Kh1 Kg3 73.Kg1 Rc1# \\
0-1
\end{array}
\]

0-0 11.0-0 Nbd7 12.Nd2 Re8 13.h3 Nf8


14.Bxf6 Bxf6 15.b4

(Diagram)
Ne6N


[ 30...Rac7 and it's relatively insignificant. ]

(Diagram)

White has the classic pull from a Minority Attack -- but this just makes it worse. 31.Qf4

Not the best -- White could lean on the kingside a bit, try to open up a second front (standard procedure) -- but Jashith is comfortable in the endgame. 31...Qxf4?

[ 31...Rac7 is a tedious defense, but as played something gives right away. ]

32.Nxf4 Bd6 33.Nxd5 It will take a lot of moves, but White will be taking this one down. 33...Ba3?!
34.Rxc6 Rd8 35.Rc7+ Rd7 36.Rxa7 Rx7 37.Ra1 Bc5 38.Rxa7+ Bxa7 39.Kf1 Kf7 40.Ke2 Ke6 41.Nf4+ Kd6 42.Kd3 Bb8 43.g4 Ke7 44.Ke4 g5 45.Nh5 Kf7 46.Kf5 Bh2 47.Nxf6Bg1 48.Nxh7 Bxf2 49.Nxg5+ Kg7 50.Kf4 Bh4 51.Nf3 Bf6 52.e4 Kf7 53.e5 Be7 54.d5 Bc5 55.g4 Kg6 56.d6 Kf7 57.Ne4 Bxd6 58.g6+ Kg8 59.exd6 Ke8 60.g7 Kd8 61.g8Q Kd7 62.Qe6+ Ke8 63.Qe7# 1-0

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 g6 4.Bxc6 bxc6 5.0-0 Bg7 6.d3 Qb6 7.e5 Nh6 8.Nbd2 Ba6 9.c4 Nb7 10.Re1 0-0 11.Rb1 Rab8 12.Ne4 d5 13.exd6 exd6 14.g4? The move 12...d5 was intended to provoke. This is where things start to go wrong for White, as his King safety will be an issue later on. 14...d5! 15.gxf5 dxe4 16.Rxe4 Rbe8 17.Qe2 Rxe4 18.Qxe4 Bc8! 19.f6 Bxf6 20.b3 Bf5 21.Qe3 Qd8! 22.Ba3 Re8 23.Qd2 Bg4 24.Kg2 Qd7? 24...Bxf3+ 25.Kf3 Qd7 Threatening Qh3, but Black played the wrong move order and allowed White a defense. 25.Ng1! Qf5 26.Re1! Rd8 Somewhere around this move White's clock fell below 5 minutes, but this did not stop him from setting up some clever tactical ideas. 27.Bc1! Qd7 Admitting the mistake of 25...Qf5 and giving the square to the bishop instead. [Don't blunder the game with 27...Rxd3 28.Re8+ Kg7 29.Qh6#] [or your queen with 27...Qxd3 28.Re8+ Rxe8 29.Qxd3 ] 28.a4 Bf5 29.Nf3 White blunders a forced mate, but Black was playing quickly to keep the time pressure on White 29...Bg7 [29...Bh3+ 30.Kh1 Qg4 31.Nh4 Bxh4 32.f3 Qxf3+ 33.Kg1 Bxe1 34.Qe2 Qxe2 35.Bd2 Qg2#] 30.Kg1 Bxd3 Black should have good winning chances here 31.Qf4 Bh6!! A satisfying move to play OTB, because the bishop absolutely cannot be taken. 32.Qg3 [32.Qxh6 Qg4+ 33.Kh1 Qxf3+ 34.Kg1 Qg4+ 35.Kh1 Be4+ A) 36.Rxe4 Qxe4+ (36...Rd1+ 37.Re1 Rxe1#) 37.Kg1 Rd1#; B) 36.f3 Bxf3#] 32...Bxc1 33.Rxc1 The position is still playable but time pressure gets the best of White and Black manages to convert his small advantage. 33...Be4 34.h4 Qf5 35.Ng5 Rd3 36.Qb8+ Kg7 37.Nxe4 Qxe4 38.Qh2 Rxb3 39.h5 Qg4+ 40.Qg2 Qxh5 41.Qxc6 Qg5+ 0-1

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.g3 Bb4+ [4...Bb7 5.Bg2 Be7 (5...Bb4+) 6.0-0 (6.d5?!)] [4...Ba6 5.b3 Bb4+ 6.Bd2 Be7 7.Bg2 Bb7 ] 5.Bd2 Bxd2+ [5...Qe7 ] [5...Be7 ]
6.\text{Nbxd2} \text{Bb7} 7.\text{Qc2} 0-0 8.\text{Bg2} \text{d5} 9.0-0 \text{Nbd7} 10.b4

[Relevant: 10.\text{Rac1} \text{c5} 11.\text{cxd5} \text{Nxd5} 12.\text{Rfd1} \text{Rc8} 13.\text{Qb1} \text{Qe7} 14.\text{e4} \text{N5f6} 15.\text{dxc5} \text{Nxc5} 16.\text{Ne5} \text{Rfd8} 17.\text{b4} \text{Na4} 18.\text{Qb3} \text{b5} 19.\text{Qe3} \text{Rxc1} 20.\text{Rxc1} \text{Qxb4} 21.\text{Nb3} \text{Nb6} 22.\text{Nc5} \text{Ba8} 23.\text{Ned3} \text{Qa3} 24.\text{e5} \text{Nfd5} 25.\text{Qg5} \text{Rf8} 26.\text{Re1} \text{h6} 27.\text{Qg4} \text{Ne7} 28.\text{Bxa8} \text{Rxa8} 29.\text{Qe3} \text{Nf5} 30.\text{Re3} \text{Rfd8} 31.\text{Qe4} \text{Qa3} 32.\text{Kg2} \text{Qd5} 33.\text{Qxd5} \text{Rxd5} 0-1 \text{Degardin,S} (2278)-\text{Sanal,V} (2593) \text{Titled Tuesday intern op 05th Apr Late Chess.com INT blitz 2022 (1)}]

10...\text{dxc4} 11.\text{Nxc4} \text{Qe7} 12.\text{b5N} 12.a3

[Maybe best is 12.\text{Qb2} \text{Rac8} 13.\text{Rfc1} c5 14.\text{dxc5} \text{bxc5} 15.\text{b5} \text{Nb8} 16.\text{a4} \text{Nd5} 17.\text{a5} \text{f6} 18.\text{Ne1} \text{Rfd8} 19.\text{a6} \text{Ba8} 20.\text{b6} \text{axb6} 21.\text{e4} \text{b5} 22.\text{Qxb5} \text{Nc7} 23.\text{Qb6} \text{Nc6} 24.\text{a7} \text{Nd4} 25.\text{Ra2} \text{Ncb5} 26.\text{Qa5} \text{Nb3} 27.\text{Qxb5} \text{Nxc1} 28.\text{Ra1} \text{Ne2+} 29.\text{Kf1} \text{Nd4} \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \text{Skalkotas,N} (2325)-\text{Alexakis,D} (2225) \text{Athens op 1989}]

12...\text{Rfc1?} 17.\text{Rfc1} \text{?} 18.\text{Nc4} \text{a6} 19.\text{bxa6} \text{c5} 20.\text{Rfc1} \text{±} 18...\text{Nxc6} 19.\text{bxc6} \text{a6} 20.\text{e4} \text{Rd8} 21.\text{Rfd1} \text{h6}

(Diagram)
22.d5? exd5 23.Rxd5 Qe7 24.Rcd1
Rxd5 25.Qxd5
  [ 25.exd5= ]
25...Re8 26.f3 g6 27.Qd7 Kf8 28.Qd4
Kg8 29.Qe3 Qe6= 30.Qf4?!
  [ 30.Qxh6 Qxa2+ 31.Rd2 Qe6 32.h4 Qxc6 33.h5= ]
30...Qxc6 31.Rc1?!
  [ 31.Qxh6 Qf6 32.Rd7= ]
31...Qa4 32.Qxc7?!
  [ 32.Qxc7 Qxa2+ 33.Rc2 Qa5 34.h4= ]
32...Qxa2+ 33.Kh3 Qe6+ 34.g4 g5
  [ 34...Kg7 ]
  [ 34...b5 ]
35.Qc1 Qb3= ?
  [ 35...Qf6 36.Kg2 a5 37.Rc6 Re6= ]
36.Kg3?
  [ 36.Rc3= ]
36...Qa4= ?
  [ 36...a5 37.Rb7 a4= ]
37.Rc6 b5??
  [ 37...Kh7 ]
  [ 37...Re6 ]
38.Rxh6! Qd4= 39.Qxg5+ Qg7
40.Qxg7+ Kxg7 41.Rxa6+-

(Diagram)
Nxc3?!
[ 20...Nd6! 21.Nc5 (21.f4 Rfc8+) 22.Nc5 Qa7) 21...Bxe5 22.dxe5 Nf5 Somehow Stockfish has this as better than the game -- I can't see why! ]

21.Rxc3?
[ 21.Ng4! Nb5 22.Nxf6+ gxf6 23.Nc5 Black is better, but it's not as much as in the game. ]

21...Bxe5
[ 21...Rxc3 22.Qxc3 Bxe5+ ]

22.Nc5
[22.Rxc7 Bxc7 23.Rc1+- (winning but just) ]

22...Bf6 23.Kh1?! Qd6
[ 23...Qb5! ]

24.Rac1 Qf4
[24...e5! ]

25Nb3 Rfc8 26.g3 Qd6 27.Kg2 Rxc3 28.Rxc3 Rxc3 29.Qxc3 Qd7+-

(Diagram)

A clear pawn and a target, but there's still winning to do. 30.Kf2 g6 31.Ke3 Kg7
[31...Qa4!? ]
[31...b6!? ]

32.Nc5 Qb5 33.Qd3 Qc6 34.Ke2 Qc7 35.Qc3

h5?? 36.Nxe6+
1-0
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5

The Botvinnik-Carls Defense, which used to give me headaches until I studied up on it. 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.dxc5

Bg4 6.Bb5 Qa5+ 7.Nc3 e6 8.Bxc6+?! This is an inaccuracy, and it takes us out of theory. But it's not a serious mistake.


8...bxc6 9.0-0 Bxc5 10.Bd2 Qc7

11.Re1 Ne7 This knight is heading to g6 to attack my e-pawn. 12.Be3

The engine says this is a blunder, but only because of an eight-move computer variation that collects White's e-pawn. Ignore. 12...Bxf3 13.Qxf3 d4

I'd seen this possibility before making my previous move, and I correctly calculated that White is okay -- the position should be equal after 14.Ne4. 14.Ne4= Perfectly equal, according to the engine. Chalk one up for my evaluation skills. 14...Bb4 15.Bd2


15...Bxd2 16.Nxd2 0-0 17.Rad1

Both of my rooks are centralized, with Black's d-pawn in the crosshairs. 17...Ng6 18.Nc4 Protecting my e-pawn, while dreaming of the outpost on the d6 square. Black's d-pawn is now attacked. 18...f6?? This move looked wrong to me. Indeed it's a serious mistake, and although I didn't punish it with total accuracy, my response is good enough to create major problems for my opponent. 19.exf6

[ 19.Qg4 Rae8 20.exf6 e5 21.fxg7+- This is a messy line, which is why I didn't bother looking this way. The move I played is plenty good enough to give White a big advantage. ]

19...Rx f6 20.Qe4 Targeting Black's e-pawn with check.

[ 20.Qg3 Qxg3 21.hxg3 I looked at this line, but didn't like the complicated position that results. From a practical perspective I think the text move was just as good. ]

20...Raf8 21.Rxd4! I'm proud of this move — the top engine recommendation. I take Black's pawn while ignoring my hanging f-pawn, because eventually I've got Ne3! protecting my c-pawn. 21...Rxf2

22.Qxe6+ Qf7?? The losing move. After the queen trade, Black faces an endgame down a pawn.

[ 22...Kh8 23.Qe4 This is what I was expecting, and I thought it looked a bit better for White. Stockfish gives +0.7 here. ]

23.Qxf7+ Forced, otherwise Black plays Rf1+ with checkmate following.

23...Rxf7 24.Rd8+ Nf8 25.Ne3 Protecting my c-pawn. I knew I was much better here, as my extra pawn should prove decisive.

[ 25.Ne5 R7f4 26.g3 Rf5 27.Nxc6 ]

25...g6 My opponent frees his king to move out of the pin, so that he can bring his knight back into the game. 26.Rc8 R2f6?? At first, I thought my opponent had made a good move to defend his c-pawn. But then I looked for candidate moves and quickly found the death blow. 27.Ng4! Crushing. Black will lose an exchange, because White has now got Nh6+ forking the king and the f7-rook. 27...Rd6 28.Nh6+

1-0
The Chess Club, Past and Present

Former Mechanics’ Institute Chess Room Director IM John Donaldson dropped off a flyer from 1996 extolling the virtues of membership.

If you play chess, you belong at Mechanics’ Institute!

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The Mechanics’ Institute Chessroom

57 Post Street (near the Market/ Montgomery BART and Muni stations) San Francisco
FM Doug Eckert and GM Sam Shankland dropped by the club for a friendly game, under the watchful eye of World Champion Mikhail Tal.

The April Chess Social brought out participants of FIDE Trainer Sophie Adams’ Women’s Class. In the background runs The West Wing episode, “Hartsfield’s Landing” which features many allusions to chess.
The special April 10 edition of our weekly Chess Cafe covered the opening two games of the World Championship match between Ding Liren and Ian Nepomniatchi. Our panel of commentators were FM Paul Whitehead and IM John Donaldson (above), with IM Sal Matera of the Marshall Chess Club (below) joining in from New York. Screenshots by Trisha Gorman.
Mechanics’ Institute CEO Kimberly Scrafano (right) and former Chess Room Director IM John Donaldson (left) present the 2023 Falconer Award to GM Christopher Woojin Yoo (center).

Christopher shows his win over GM Wesley So from the 2022 US Championship.
KRON-TV were on hand to record the event.

Christopher wowed the fans by playing a few blitz games before the Spring Splash Blitz, spotting 25 seconds to 3 minutes without an increment! Here he prepares a “pre-move” against Mechanics’ Institute Scholastic Chess Coach Nate Lalau.
The Mechanics' Institute
Chessroom
57 Post Street, near Market & Montgomery
San Francisco
presents...

The Charles Linklater Memorial Tournament 1996

Second Annual Invitational
In conjunction with the CalChess Mid-Winter Chess Festival

First-Third Rounds: January 13-15
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Sixth and Seventh Rounds: January 27-28, starting at Noon
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Come and watch Northern California’s leading players in action! This seven-round Invitational is the premier round-robin event of 1996 -- and introduces you to the Mechanics' Institute Chessroom -- the oldest chess club in continuous existence in the United States! MI goes back to 1854 and has been visited by World Champions Lasker, Capablanca, Alekhine, Euwe, Smyslov, Tal, Fischer, and countless other Grandmasters. MI sponsored the great PanPacific Grandmaster Tournaments in 1987, 1991, and 1995. We invite you to join MI and be a part of the history of the game.
GM Vinay Bhat gave the pre-TNM lecture on May 2 and showed us his new book, *How I Became a Chess Grandmaster*. The Mechanics’ Institute will host a book-signing for Vinay on June 20th at 6pm, to be followed by the Summer Celebration Blitz Tournament at 7pm.

William Thibault looks on, as Juniper, the youngest person we’ve seen in the club in recent memory, poses for a photo with her father Jonathan Lifflander.
In 1999, Neil Falconer, by then longtime Mechanics' Institute Trustee, established the Falconer Award at the Institute awarding a cash prize to the highest-rated player under Age 18 in Northern California.

Neil Falconer's engagement with Mechanics' Institute spanned nine decades, from his first visit in 1938 as a Berkeley High School student to the end of his life on April 5, 2014, just after celebrating his 91st birthday.

A native Californian, Neil first joined the Institute in 1945 after finishing his service in the U.S. Army and soon after established himself as one of the strongest chess players in California, finishing third in the state championship in 1946. When former World Champion Max Euwe visited the Mechanics' Institute in 1949 Neil was one of those who held him to a draw. That same year, Neil graduated from the Boalt School of Law at UC Berkeley, passed the bar, and started working at the firm where he would later rise to named partner - Steinhart and Falconer. New responsibilities did not slow down Neil's rise as a chess player, and in 1951 he won the California Open title at Santa Cruz.

Joining the Board of Trustees in 1973, Neil immediately became a member of the Chess Committee and also served as Board President, first in 1988 and again from 1993 to 1995. Neil performed his role with distinction and was so successful that the events were able to attract players the caliber of former World Champion Mikhail Tal, the great Viktor Korchnoi, and Womens World champions Zsuzsa Polgar and Xie Jun.

Neil did not confine his role to top-level chess. Ahead of his time, he teamed up with the New York based American Chess Foundation in the 1980s and 1990s to bring chess instruction to under-resourced inner-city schools in San Francisco, Oakland, and Richmond.

In 1999 Neil established the Falconer Award at the Mechanics’ Institute which awards a cash prize to the highest-rated junior player under 18 in Northern California. Grandmasters Vinay Bhat, Sam Shankland, and Daniel Naroditsky are among those who have won the Falconer Award, which has awarded more than $35,000 to support excellence in chess.

This year's Falconer Award was presented to Christopher Woojin Yoo, a 16-year-old American Grandmaster from Northern California. Christopher was the highest-rated player under 18 by his December 2022 rating, with a rating of 2664.

He made waves as the youngest International Master in American history in 2019, before being surpassed by Abhimanyu Mishra. Christopher has competed in a number of distinguished events, such as tying for first at the Memorial Day 2021 CCCSA GM Norm Invitational tournament, winning the Labor Day 2021 CCCSA GM Norm Invitational tournament, tying for third place at the 2021 US Masters and earning his third GM norm with a score of 2604, achieving a live FIDE rating of 2500.2 at the Marshall Chess Club Championship and thus fulfilling the last requirement for the Grandmaster
title, tying for first place at the 2021 Charlotte Open, winning the US Junior Chess Championship, defeating GM Wesley So at the 2022 US Chess Championship, and tying for first at the 2022 US Masters with a rating of 2653 then claiming the 2022 US Masters title after winning a blitz playoff.

Christopher was presented the Falconer Award in a ceremony at Mechanics’ Institute in April. He gave a presentation and game analysis of his 2022 US Chess Championship victory game. Christopher joined the Spring Splash Blitz and handily took first place in the tournament, with much awe and admiration from the packed house of players.

GM Christopher Woojin Yoo joins a long list of now celebrated players:
2000-2002 Vinay Bhat
2003 Michael Pearson
2004 Nicholas Yap
2005-2006 Matthew Ho
2007 Nicholas Yap
2008-2009 Sam Shankland
2010 Steven Zierk
2011-2013 Daniel Naroditsky
2014-2015 Yian Liou
2016-2018 Cameron Wheeler
2019 Andrew Hong
2020 Christopher Woojin Yoo
2021-no award was given out due to closures
2022-Andrew Hong
2023-Christopher Woojin Yoo

GM Christopher Woojin Yoo
The Chess Scuttlebutt

Links to some of the news that make up our world.

A male chess player is caught sneaking into a women’s tournament in Kenya.

Tired of losing? Then play Martin, the world’s worst chess-bot.

Chess might get you into an Ivy League college.

The Washington Post seems surprised to learn that kids are obsessed with chess.

A look inside China’s change of heart about chess.

New York Knicks ace Derrick Rose hypses a chess tournament in Las Vegas.

Carlsen loses at poker while sitting out the World Championship match.

Gukesh D. wins the Menorca Open in Spain on tiebreaks, ahead of Hans Niemann and eight others.

Was Ding Liren’s opening preparation leaked ahead of the World Championship Match?

Women in Latvia lead the way in chess composition.

A certain ex-President of the United States sees himself as a gold chess piece.

Petaluma builds two new chess tables by the waterfront, but you must bring your own pieces.

Yet another mouth-watering recipe for Chess Pie.

Are you a gamer? Resident Evil 2 Remake has a chess puzzle for you. In a sewer.

A comprehensive update on the Carlsen/Niemann affair.

Both Nepo and Ding say cheating at OTB play is well-nigh impossible, as Hans Niemann shows up in Kazakhstan to play in the Astana Open.

Also in Astana is GM Timur Gareyev, wowing everyone with his blindfold prowess.

Chess Cafe habitue WIM Alexey Root, reporting for the USCF on the National Middle School Championship, gave the Mechanics’ Institute a shout-out here and here.

San Francisco based musician Lisa Willis writes about chess and chance.

There is a cheating problem in Go that might sound familiar to chess players.

“I was the King, and she was the Queen”. A couple in Florida start a non-profit promoting chess.

Yet another multi-million dollar lawsuit rocks the chess world, with allegations of racism at Success Academy in NYC.

Are you thirsty in Michigan? Visit the Dearborn Brewing Chess Club.

Chess, plaid shirts, and ripped jeans.

KRON4 visits the Mechanics’ Institute and the Scholastic Championship - article and video here.
Time bandits: thieves set up a chess endgame to steal a Rolex watch.

Learn more about the “hoax chess move” Il Vaticano here.

The Mechanics’ Institute and its Scholastic Chess Program were featured on local radio station KALW.

Chess and alcohol do not mix well, as Magnus Carlsen can testify.

Technology has created a global chess network...

...and it’s teenagers who are leading the surge.

Ouk chaktrang is a version of chess from Cambodia.

FIDE twiddles its thumbs on the Carlsen/Niemann affair.

Chess is huge with children on the island of Corsica.

Chess in space: the International Space Station clobbers Mission Control.

GM Vladimir Kramnik will lead the Iranian national chess team.

Meet Delilah Sadvakassova, the 9-year old chess influencer from Kazakhstan.


FIDE and the city of Chicago will host a Chess for Freedom conference.

A 99-year old chess player from Rhode Island has a tournament named in his honor.

GM Raymond Keene remembers sharing a bathroom with King Charles III.

Vandals target a public “chess bench” in England.

Finally, Ding Liren defeats Ian Nepomniatchi to become the World Chess Champion.

Recent Games

All of the games from the Ding - Nepomniatchi World Championship Match, plus a few more that have recently drawn our attention.
1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.Bf4 Bg7 4.e3 d5 5.Be2 c5 6.c3 Qb6 7.Qb3 0-0 8.0-0 Nc6 9.h3 c4 10.Qc2

10.Qa3 Bf5 11.b3 cxb3 12.axb3 offers White a small advantage.


Black has the bishop pair and more space but as compensation White is very solid. 16.Nf3 Bc7 17.Rd1 Rad8 18.Rd4


18...Qf6 19.Qd1 Be6 20.a4 g5!? 21.a5 h5 22.h4? The text, aimed at gaining g5 for White’s knight, is not the right way to handle the position. The computer solution is

[22.Ne1 Qe5 23.Bxh5 Qh2+ 24.Kf1 Bxh3 25.Bg4 Qh1+ 26.Ke2 Bxg4+

27.Rxg4 Qh5 28.Kd2 while human beings do better with the simpler]

[22.g3 Bxh3? 23.Rxd5, in both cases with equal chances.]

22...g4 23.Ng5?

[23.Ne1 Qxh4 24.g3 Qe7 25.Ng2 although clearly in Black’s favor, offered better chances to resist.]

23...Qe5 24.g3 Bf5

[24...Bc8 followed by ...f6 is a simpler way to capture the knight.]

25.e4 dxe4 26.Bxc4

Bg6

[The solid move and quite understandable. Stockfish 15 prefers 26...e3! but after the seemingly forced liquidation 27.Bxf7+ Kg7 28.Qe1 Rxf7 29.Rxd8 Bxd8 30.Nxf7 exf2+ 31.Qxf2 Kxf7++ 32.Rf1 Kg6 33.Qe1 Qxe1 34.Rxe1 Bxa5 35.Re7 b5 36.Kg2 Bb6 although the Oracle claims Black is winning the human still needs to find the plan.]

27.Rd5 Rxd5 28.Qxd5 Rd8?

[Black had better in 28...Qxd5 29.Bxd5 Re8]

29.Qxb7 Rd2?

[29...e3! 30.Qxa7 exf2+ 31.Qxf2 Qxg3+ 32.Qxg3 Bxg3 is assessed by the Oracle as offering equal]
chances. 

30.Qxa7 Rxb2± 31.Qd4 Qf5 32.a6
[ 32.Re1 was more circumspect. ]
32...e3

33.Rf1?
[ 33.Qxe3 Bb6 34.Qe8+ Kg7 35.Kh1 Qxf2 36.Qe5+ Kg8 37.Qe8+ leads to a draw by perpetual check. ]
33...Bb6
[ 33...e2! 34.Bxe2 (34.Re1 Qb1!) 34...Rxe2 35.Ra1 Re8 36.a7 Ra8 leaves White with insufficient compensation for the missing piece. ]
34.a7 Bxd4 35.a8Q+ Kg7 36.cxd4 Rxf2 37.Qa1 Qc2 38.Bd5? Both sides have navigated the complications of the past few moves very well but now things start to go astray.
[ 38.d5+ Kg8 39.Qa8+ Kg7 40.Qa1+ Kg8= with a draw by perpetual check would have been the logical end to the game. (40...f6? 41.Qa7++) ]
38...Bd3?
[ 38...Rxf1+ was a straight forward win. The variation continues ten moves but it's not hard to find if you know it is there. 39.Qxf1 e2 40.Qe1 Qd1 41.Kf2 Qxd4+ 42.Kxe2 Bd3+ 43.Kd2 Bc4+ 44.Kc2 Qd3+ 45.Kc1 Qa3+ 46.Kd2 Qa5+ 47.Kd1 Qxe1+ ]

48.Kxe1 Bxd5+ is winning as the knight is trapped. ]
39.Rc1 Qd2?
[ 39...e2 40.Rxc2 Rf1+ 41.Kg2 Rxa1 42.Rxe2 Bxe2 43.Bxf7 should be drawn. ]
40.Bh1?
[ 40.Be4 held the balance but was not easy to see. ]
40...e2 41.d5+ Kg6 42.Be4+
Again this was the only way to draw and White does not miss his chance.
42...Bxe4 43.Nxe4

Rg2+?? Black is drawing, but the spectacular text is not the way to do it. The two ways to split the point were
[ 43...Qe3 44.Nxf2 Qxg3+ 45.Kh1 Qf3+ and ]
[ 43...Rf1+ 44.Rxf1 Qe3+ 45.Nf2 (45.Kh2 exf1Q 46.Qxf1 Qxe4 47.Qd1 Qe3 48.d6 Qf2+ ) 45...Qxg3+ 46.Kh1 Qf3+ ]
[ After 43...Rg2+ 44.Kxg2 e1N+ 45.Kf1 Qg2+ 46.Kxe1 Qxe4+ 47.Kd2 Qxd5+ 48.Ke3 Qf3+ 49.Kd4 Qf2+ 50.Kd5 Qf3+ 51.Kd6 Qxg3+ 52.Kd7 Qd3+ 53.Kc7 Qg3+ 54.Kc8 Black has run out of checks. ]
½=½
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7


½-½

**Diagram**

½-½


(Diagram)

37.g5! hxg5 38.Rg4 Ra8 39.Nxg5 Ra1+ 40.Ke2 Qe7+ 41.Ne4 Qe8 42.Kf3 Qa8 43.Qxa8+ Rxa8 44.f6 g6 45.hxg6 fxg6 46.Rxg6 Ra2 47.Kg4 Rxb2 48.Rh6

1-0
1-0

D02

Liren, Ding 2788
Nepomniachtchi, Ian 2795
FIDE World Championship 2023 (6)

5.Nbd2 cxd4 6.exd4 Bf5 7.c3 e6
8.Bb5 Bd6 9.Bxd6 Qxd6 10.0-0 0-0
11.Re1 h6 12.Ne5 Ne7 13.a4 a6
14.Bf1 Nd7 15.Nxd7 Qxd7 16.a5 Qc7
17.Qf3 Rfc8 18.Ra3 Bg6 19.Nb3 Nc6
20.Qg3 Qe7 21.h4 Re8 22.Nc5

(Diagram)

e5!? 23.Rb3 Nxa5 24.Rxe5 Qf6
25.Ra3 Nc4 26.Bxc4 dxc4 27.h5 Bc2
Qxb2 31.Ra5 Kh7 32.Rc5 Qc1+
33.Kh2 f6 34.Qg3 a5 35.Nxc4 a4
36.Ne3 Bb1 37.Rc7 Rg8 38.Nd5 Kh8
39.Ra7 a3 40.Ne7 Rf8 41.d5 a2
42.Qc7 Kh7 43.Ng6 Rg8 44.Qf7!

1-0
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 c5 4.Ngf3
cxd4 5.Nxd4 Nf6 6.exd5 Nxd5 7.N2f3
Be7 8.Bc4 Nc6 9.Nxc6 bxc6 10.0-0
0-0 11.Qe2 Bb7 12.Bd3 Qc7 13.Qe4
Rad8 17.Rae1 g6 18.Bg5 Rd4 19.Qh3
Qc7 20.b3 Nh5 21.f4 Bd6 22.c3
Rd5 28.Rh4 Qd6 29.Qe3 h5 30.g3
Bf6 31.Rc4 h4 32.gxh4 Rd2 33.Re2

Rd5 28.Rh4 Qd6 29.Qe3 h5 30.g3
Bf6 31.Rc4 h4 32.gxh4 Rd2 33.Re2

Rd3? 34.Qxc5 Rd1+ 35.Kg2 Qd3
36.Rf2 Kg7 37.Rcf4 Qxc3
1-0
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4
Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.d3 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.a3
Na5 9.Ba2 c5 10.Nc3 Be6 11.Bg5 0-0
15.Ng5 c4 16.Nxe6 fxe6 17.Ne3 Bh6
18.Rad1 Rb8 19.dxc4 Nxc4 20.Bxc4
bxc4 21.Qxd6 Qxd6 22.Rxd6 Bxe3
23.fxe3 Rxf1+ 24.Kxf1 Rxb2 25.Rxe6
Rxc2 26.Rxa6 Ra2 27.Rc6 Rxa3
28.Rxc4 Rxe3 29.Kf2 Ra3 30.Rc5
Ra2+ 31.Kf3 Ra3+ 32.Kg4 Ra2
33.Kh3 Re2 34.Rxe5 Kf7 35.Kg3 Kf6
36.Re8 Kf7 37.Re5 Kf6 38.Re8 Kf7
39.Re5

(Diagram)

0-0 12.Bxf6 gxf6 13.Ng3 f5 14.h3 Bxf3 15.Qxf3 Ne7 16.Nh5 Kh8 17.g4

1-0
74.Ra6+ Kd7 75.Kf2 Ke7 76.Kg2 Re3
77.Kf2 Rg3 78.Kf1 Rc3 79.Kf2 Re3
80.Kg2 Kd7 81.Kf2 Kc7 82.e6 Kd8
83.Ra7 Ke8 84.Kg2 Rxe6 85.Rxa3
Rg6+ 86.Kf2 Rg4 87.Ra5 Rxh4 88.Kf3
Ke7 89.Rf5 Ke6 90.Rxf4

Rxf4+
½-½

[Diagram]

11.h3 exd4 12.hxg4 dxc3 13.Nxc3
Nxb4 14.a3 Bf6 15.Rc1 Bxc3 16.Rxc3
Nc6 17.Qxd5 Bxg4 18.Ng5 h6 19.Ne4
Rae8 20.e3 Re5 21.Qd2 Rd8 22.Nd6
Rh5 23.Rb1 Ne5 24.e4 b6 25.cxb6
axb6 26Nb5 Rxd2 27.Nxc7 Bh3
28.Bxh3 Rhx3 29.Kg2 Rh5 30.Rb5
Rd1 31.Nd5 Rdh1 32.Ne7+ Kh7
33.Rxe5 R1h2+ 34.Kg1 Rh1+ 35.Kg2

½-½
Nepomniachtchi, Ian 2795
Ding, Liren 2788
FIDE World Championship 2023 (15.2)

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4
Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.d3 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.a4
Bd7 9.h3 0-0 10.Be3 Na5 11.Ba2
17.Bf4 Be6 18.Re1 a5 19.Qf3 Rb7
20.e5 Nd5 21.exd6 Bxd6 22.Bxd6
Qxd6 23.Qe4 Nf4 24.Qe5 Qxe5
25.Rxe5 Bxc4 26.dxc4 Rb4 27.Rc5 d3
28.cxd3 Nxd3 29.Rxc6 Ne5 30.Rc7
Nxc4 31.Nc5 Nxb2 32.Nd7 Re8
33.Rxa5 Nd3 34.Rg5 Rf4 35.f3 h6
36.Rd5 Nb4 37.Rd6 Rf5 38.Rb7 Rd5
Rd4 42.Rxd4 Rxd4 43.Kh2 Kg7
44.Rb2 Rd5 45.Ra2 Rd4 46.Rb2 Rd5
47.Ra2 Rd4

½-½

Ding, Liren
Nepomniachtchi, Ian 2795
FIDE World Championship 2023 (15.3)

1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 e6 4.0-0
Be7 5.c4 0-0 6.b3 c5 7.cxd5 Nxd5
11.Qxd4 Bf6 12.Qd2

Diagram

15.Rad1 Bf6 16.Nc4 Rb8 17.Ne5 Rd8
Bxd7 21.Rxd7 Kf8 22.Bxb7 Rd8
32.Kd3 Be1 33.Ke2

½-½
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4
Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.d3 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.a4
Bd7 9.h3 0-0 10.Be3 Na5 11.Ba2
23.Bd2 Bc7 24.c3 f5 25.Re1 Rd8
26.Ra2 Qg6 27.Qe2 Qd6 28.g3 Rde8
29.Qf3 e4 30.dxe4 Ne5 31.Qg2 Nd3
32.Bxd3 Qxd3 33.exf5 Rxe1+ 34.Bxe1
Qxc4 35.Ra1 Rxf5 36.Bd2 h6 37.Qc6
Rf7 38.Re1 Kh7 39.Be3 Be5 40.Qe8
Bxc3 41.Rc1 Rf6 42.Qd7 Qe2 43.Qd5
Bb4 44.Qe4+ Kg8 45.Qd5+ Kh7
46.Qe4+

(Diagram)
There are FIVE queen promotions in this wonderful game between two of the top juniors in the United States.

White cleverly wins the Exchange and then gives a master-class in winding the game up.

11.e3 Rb8 12.Nf4 Ne6 13.c5! d5
14.Nxe6 Bxe6

18.cxb6 axb6 19.Rc1 Qd6 20.Be2 c5
21.Bb5 c4 22.Qa3 Qxa3 23.bxa3 Nf6
30.Ra4 Kb7 31.Rb1 g6 32.Ra6 Bd7
33.Ra4 Be6 34.Kc2 Bc7 35.Ba6+ Kc6
36.Kd1 Bd8 37.Ke2 Bc7 38.Nb5 Bd8
39.Na7+ Kc7 40.Bb5 Ra8 41.Rbb4
Bd7 42.Bxd7 Kxd7 43.Nb5 Ra5
44.Nc3 Kc6 45.Rxa5 bxa5 46.Rb8
Be7 47.Rb5 Bd8 48.Rc5+ Kd6 49.Rc8
Kd7 50.Ra8 Bb6 51.Na4 Bd8 52.Nc5+
Ke7 53.Ra7+ Ke8 54.Ne6

1-0

The impatient Nepo is outplayed in a good knight vs bad bishop scenario with queens on the board. 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3
IM John Donaldson

10th Larry Evans Memorial Open

The 10th Annual Larry Evans Memorial Open, held April 7-9, attracted 197 players to its new home at the Circus Circus Hotel in Reno. Fran and Jerry Weikel, who have organized and directed tournaments in northern Nevada for over 40 years, once again put on a first-class event that attracted 197 entries including over 30 players representing the Mechanics' Institute.

The open section was won by US Chess Hall of Famer James Tarjan who scored 5-1 (four wins and two half point byes). The veteran Grandmaster from Portland, Oregon defeated 14-year-old Rose Atwell in the last round to take home the $2000 first prize.

The rapidly improving Atwell had a brilliant tournament, defeating Grandmaster Sergey Kudrin and NM Ruiyang Yan as well as drawing Grandmaster Melik Khachiyan enroute to tying for second with Yan and International Master Dmitry Zilberstein.

The latter was involved in one of the more spectacular games of the event. His opponent, a high school student from Reno, is rated 2100 USCF but only 1674(!) FIDE.

Is it any wonder older players' FIDE ratings are dropping?

On a final note, congratulations to long-time Mechanics' Institute member Samuel Agdamag who won the Class C section. Well done, Sam!

( IM John Donaldson annotates the aforementioned Uz vs Ziberstein game in the Recent Games section above.)

____________________________________________________________

Danny Cao

Chess Room Fairytale, Part 2 - relive Part 1 here

True to his name, Headwhite the Dragonmaster had an enormous white head shaped like a lightbulb and a large gaping mouth: perfect for devouring a child in one single bite, and Ralex Obins the Dungeonmaster was a fearsome orc known far and wide for his large mouth and even larger appetite.

"RAAAAAWWWRRRRR! We are grumpy and hungry, hangry and frumpy. We heard you children and now we start munching!!!!"

The monsters leapt, and the children scattered. The child with the highest USCF rating at camp bravely stood firm (become a member or renew your USCF membership today). "Surely there must be something more tasty to you than we innocent children having some innocent fun."

The monsters thought for a moment.

"One tasty treat that we certainly like are dark chocolate chess pieces and marzipan light"
Fortunately for the children (in these olden times) plastic/polycarbons were not yet "a thing" and the chess pieces at the Mechanics' Institute in those days were made by the finest chocolatiers and marzipaniers in San Francisco: wood fired, hardened, and lacquered, so that humans could not bite them but for monsters with large mouths and teeth to match, the pieces would make for delicious munching.

"Silly monsters, don't eat us kids,
there are marzipan pieces and dark chocolate nubs."

The monsters agreed to spare the children and began devouring all the chess pieces in the chess room. The monsters, with their greedy hands and mouths, were a frenzy of munching and crunching, the bone breaking sounds of crackling chess pieces and the flying saliva, a truly disgusting spectacle.

It was clear that no chess piece would be spared and that once finished there would be no chess pieces to use for chess camp, leaving the kids with absolutely nothing to do. For a chess room is not a chess room without chess pieces - and for children, the only thing worse than being eaten by monsters is dying of boredom.

"Surely there must be something more tasty to you monsters than children and chess pieces!!!"  

"One tasty treat that we'd like the mostest,
is sinking our teeth into delicious chess coaches!!!"

The children gleefully exclaimed,

"The coaches, chess coaches. They'll be back soon.  
If you stop eating pieces, we'll catch them for you!!!!"

Headwhite and Ralex Obins had their doubts. "How could you children possibly trap the mighty coaches: Malyssa and Manny?"

"We will assemble into a horde of impenetrable pawn children from which there will be no escape for our dear chess coaches."

Headwhite and Ralex roared:

"Horde of pawn children, catch them you must!!!!  
Or else all pieces and children, we will munch into dust!!!!"

Headwhite and Ralex Obins retreated behind the dungeon door. Their impatient appetites eagerly awaiting either children, pieces, or coaches.

Coaches Malyssa and Manny returned with the barrels of beverages and were immediately rushed by the horde.

"This horde of pawn children, what evil has ensued.  
Fortunately we chess coaches know what to do."

In a flash, the coaches transformed into knights, leaping in L shapes to and fro. At first it was confusing for the horde as they did not know which way(s) to go. But as they learned the knights' movements their senses became sharp, and soon the pawn children had trapped both their marks.
Sensing their imminent capture the coaches transformed into bishops and slid out of trouble along the long diagonals in the chess room. Though much faster than the knights, the children soon realized that one bishop was limited to only dark squares, and the other was limited to light squares, and that thoughtful coordinated placement of their pawn horde would limit and eventually trap the two bishops.

But once again, just before being captured, coaches Malyssa and Manny turned into rooks and slid back and forth, left and right, horizontal and vertical, to and fro. They now were even faster than the bishops and could access any area of the chess room quickly in no more than two moves. But quantity over quality, and numbers over might, the horde clogged all the files and ranks, and the rooks lost all their fight. Just as the coaches were to be trapped, a FLASH and a new dramatic transformation.

Coach Malyssa turned into a queen. By combining the powers and movements of both the rook and bishop, coach Malyssa's transformation into the goddess of the chessboard was complete and the horde of pawn children were astonished as queen Malyssa flew over them out of reach and out the open window onto the scaffolding of the next door McKesson Castle (which had been under construction/renovation for what seemed centuries).

Coach Manny turned into a king of course and roared at the children. "Beware my infinite might!!"

The horde of children laughed, for the rules of chess they knew. The value of the king was great, but as for powers, the king had few.

As King Manny lunged towards the children, he felt a disturbing sensation. As if anvils were stuck to his kingly feet. Gone was the cunning of the knight, gone the speed of the bishop, gone the daring of the rook. He could barely get his feet off the ground, and his lunge towards the children only produced a feeble hop to an adjacent square.

The horde of pawn children surrounded King/coach Manny, checkmated him with ease and dragged him to the dungeon door.

Knocking on the huge imposing door the horde chanted,

    "Eating children and pieces, that isn't nice.
     We offer up Coach Manny, our exchange sacrifice."

The door blew open wide again, and this time the children were able to see the disturbing chaos that existed behind the dungeon door.

To one side: Dragons, Accelerated Dragons, and Hyper-Accelerated Dragons running roughshod out of control everywhere with the so-called Dragonmaster - Headwhite running from chess board to chess board in a hellish simul, facing losing positions versus every dragon in the dungeon.

And to the other side, the dungeon zoo, a giant litter box of shredded papers: old tournament pairings, confusing timesheets, bounced tournament prize checks, and inaccurate event flyers. The area overcrowded with sickly animals: hippopotami, orangutans, hedgehogs, rats, birds, chameleons, lions, mustangs, snakes, elephants, crabs, and more in the most dubious of conditions. Next to them, the so-called Dungeonmaster Ralex Obins was fiddling away on yet another failed spreadsheet.

"Headwhite the Dragonmaster!!! Ralex Obins the Dungeonmaster!!" the children called out.
"Headwhite the dragonmaster??!!" Hissthe dragons. "Headwhite is no dragonmaster! He is the worst chess player at the Mechanics' Institute. We dragons are the true chess masters!"

"Ralex Obins the Dungeonmaster??!!" The animals snickered. "This dungeon is more of a pigsty with garbage and litter piled as high as the seventh rank."

Hearing the dragons and animals speak so indignantly only made Headwhite and Ralex Obins more irritable, and more hungry. They leapt towards the door, ready to make a quick meal of coach Manny.

"There must be something more tasty than children, pieces, and coaches" Coach Manny pleaded.

After consulting for a moment the monsters agreed.

"One thing we would surely like to eat and cook are roomfuls of librarians, periodicals, and books."

Coach Manny and the children were dumbfounded.

"Oh monsters oh monsters, say don't you know: The floors underneath offer so much below. Librarians, periodicals and books on display. For fierce beasts like you, a tasty buffet."

Headwhite and Ralex Obins hung their heads in sadness for they could not access the library floors below as both of their Mechanics’ Institute memberships had been revoked. Headwhite had eaten too many chess books (instead of studying them) and Ralex Obin's renewal notices had gone unheeded and were lost in the litter box that was the dungeon zoo floor.

Coach Manny sympathized with the monsters for he too had had his membership transgressions (794.12 Y959bu v.1 LOST AND PAID; 794.15 P76h LOST AND PAID). But luckily for coach Manny, his membership was currently in good standing (Mechanics’ Institute memberships are readily available and affordable for even the fiercest of monsters), and he quickly pulled out his magical Mechanics' Institute member card and made a proposal: If the monsters would spare the children, pieces, and himself, he would use his member card to allow the monsters to access the the feast in the library floors below.

The monsters, children, and coach Manny agreed that this was a win-win-win for everyone (except the librarians) and the deal was struck. Coach Manny escorted the monsters out of the chess room, and down the spiral staircase to the third floor. With a swipe of the card, Headwhite stormed through the third floor library door.

As Headwhite's rampage began, Coach Manny and Ralex Obins descended to the second floor. With a swipe of the card Ralex Obins stormed into the lower floor. With both floors being breached, there would be no escape for the librarians nor the riches of available reading/feeding materials.

As current Mechanics' Institute members are aware, between the main second and third floors of the Institute library are the "middling floors", filled with a wide variety of nonfiction books, but in those times the middling floors were the domain of sorcerers, wizards, and mystics. Every book in the middling floors told tales of fantasies, spells, and wondrous things both beautiful and terrifying. The middling floors were shrouded in a spell of invisibility, so as to keep its secrets safe from those who might use them for selfish/evil purposes.
It was here on the invisible middling floors that the guardians - the crafty GrandSorcerer Welliott Inslow, the sagely GrandWizard Salburt Tarr, and wise GrandMystic Lonytama - became aware of the chaos on both main floors. They immediately ceased their cataloging and research and headed to location 794.124, the most powerful and sacred bookshelf deep within the invisible floors.

As they shuffled through the powerful spell books, the screams of the librarians and the sounds of books being devoured en masse told them that time was of the essence or all would be lost.

At last, Lonytama found the volume that was needed. He pulled down the sacred tome, "Dilman's Complete Wizardry Course" (794.124 S584 currently available!). The graded table of contents made it easy for him to find the appropriate spell. He called out to his friends and brought the spell book over.

"I've found the spell, a mate in 3: to end this savage gore."
Wizard Salburt smiled and said, "I've cast this 1.b4."

And so the spell began. As Welliott stood above them adding precise spell annotations and analysis, Salburt and Lonytama sat across from one another chanting each line of the 38 step spell, eventually reaching the decisive mate in 3. With their eyes rolling back into their heads and their voices growing louder, "36.g4+ Kh4 37.Bg3+ Nhxg3 38.fxg3# CHECKMATE!"

And just as the mighty king was toppled by the humble pawn so too were Headwhite and Ralex Obins. The simple mate in 3 bringing both monsters to their knees and the sounds of their ferocious roars replaced by a soft "rrribit" and giggles of a teenage girl: Headwhite the frog and princess Ralex Obins.

While the librarians were grateful to the sorcerers for saving them, they did call into question the specific choice of spell. The frog / princess scenario reeked of plagiarism and perhaps outright copyright infringement. Additionally, the administration and staff questioned the usefulness of a frog and a princess in day to day operations.

The spell-casters concurred. A more powerful solution would need to be employed and it would require the help of everyone at the Mechanics’ Institute.

A plan was formulated. The frog and princess were to be placed in the center of the chess room and everyone at the Mechanics’ Institute was to sit at the boards, ready to make their contribution in the casting of a new spell. Welliott, Salburt, and Lonytama made their way back to location 794.124 and pulled down the most powerful spell book on the shelf, the much heralded yet seldom opened Svoretsky’s Wizardry Manual (794.124 D98 currently available!).

The heavy spell book was brought to the chess room and the perfect spell was found. Under the guidance of Welliott, Salburt, and Lonytama, coaches Malyssa and Manny were tasked with the mainline of spell, the children of the chess camp were tasked with the variations of the mainline, and all others (dragons, animals, librarians, administration, and staff) were assigned the sub-variations of the variations of the mainline.

There would be no flash, no puff of smoke, no simple tactic to find. For a spell so great, with so much beauty needed care, patience, and time. And beautiful it was, for after many hours of spell casting, the gradual transformation was complete and in the center of the chess room stood the handsome and dashing Chess Coordinator FIDE Master Paul Whitehead, and the equally handsome and dashing Chess Program Manager Alex Robins.
No longer the chaotic disorganized beast, like a master choreographer, Alex Robins began organizing everyone in the chess room.

“Everyone! Boards in the starting position, and so begins, our simultaneous exhibition”

No longer the blundering chess monster to be made fun of by dragons but a figurative chess monster, Paul Whitehead made his way from board to board with the grace of a belly dancer, moving from table to table, easily dispatching each and every human, animal, and dragon at the Mechanics’ Institute.

With the last checkmate Paul Whitehead roared, “Now I AM the true DRAGONMASTER!”.

And with the last result of the expertly organized simul recorded and tabulated Alex Robins roared, “Now I AM the true DUNGEONMASTER!”

But the taming of the dragons was just the beginning. There was more work to be done. And Chess Coordinator Paul and Chess Program Manager Alex set off to do just that. The dungeon was cleaned up and transformed into two rooms: The chess office and adjoining chess annex, very similar to how it is today. The results of the simul told them that more educational programs for both adults and children would be needed.

The finest chess tournaments, such as the regular Tuesday Night Marathon would be held at the Mechanics’ Institute under the watchful eyes of renowned FIDE Arbiters such as the lasersaber-wielding Jedilorian Sudit Jztaray and formerly Swordsman Zalamantez, their sharp blades, quick intuition, and even quicker reflexes deterring any player from seeking an unfair advantage from portable magic devices, lest they lose a hand, arm, or worse.

A regular chess newsletter was to be published featuring chess news both near and far.

And finally, all the dungeon animals (orangutans, hippopotami, and more) were cured of their dubious conditions and trained to be chess instructors. The happy, healthy, friendly animals were then sent out each weekday to teach chess to children in the schools of San Francisco culminating in a yearly children’s chess event, their teaching hours automatically tracked by the centerpiece of the chess room office, the hovering magical all-knowing CHEXPAY orb.

All are encouraged to visit both the chess room and the library during regular hours and events.

And should you find yourself on the street below, when the Mechanics' Institute is closed, say in the late evening or early morning hours, listen closely. For in the shadows, you may hear the heavy fire-breathing of the dragons, and the ghosts of Headwhite and Ralex Obins howling and groaning as they tilt on 3+0 blitz.

http://www.duuy.net/
www.myspace.com/duuyquintet
dannyduuycao@gmail.com
It’s been an active month for the Chess Cafe, starting with March 27:

Alexey Root made her first trip to Western Europe, presenting some of her Chessable research. She and Doug went to Paris and spent two hours at a place known as "The Blitz Society." Doug won every game. "Pia Cramling was there, Sophia was there, Mikhail Korenman." Korenman worked with Karpov to found the Anatoly Karpov International School of Chess in Lindsborg, Kansas (pop. 3,500). The December 25, 2004 New York Times ran a nice feature on the visit of 15 GMs to Lindsborg at that time; festivities included the first-ever exhibition games between a former women’s world champion (Judith Polgar) and a former men’s champ (Anatoly Karpov).

Paul mentioned an outdoor club in London with 500 members.

It was said that the recidivism rate is lower for prisoners who are chess players.

We played through a recent Aaron Adams game, which was "focused as much at the end as at the beginning." Then Michael Walder-Stephen Parsons from the TNM. "I wanted to get to Giri-Topalov. . . . Black's Nb6 loses to a tactic" that produces a protected pawn at e7 backed by a bishop at b4. We saw Michael Anderson-Brendan Lacounte. There were comments about a club player who never wore shoes. And loud snoring during one of the lectures. We also watched Petrosian-Gennadi and Whitehead-Danny Kopec.

Mechanics’ Institute has 3,000 members, but not all use the chess club. The Marshall C.C. in N.Y. has 1,000. Sophia Rohde: "There's a girl's and women's tournament tomorrow at the Marshall with $800 in prizes." And Trish came up with an answer to a question put by the previous speaker: "The Boy Scouts have a chess badge."

On April 3, Mike Walder said, "Nepo is one of the fiercest attackers I've seen in a long time." Mike Anderson on what we were watching: "Easy chess. Nothing dominant, but very accurate." Charles James updated us on progress in Hans Niemann's case against Chess.com. Sophia: "Hans tied for first in Spain."

On April 10, there was a special program on the 14-game World Championship match that began on April 7. Twice as many people as usual came to hear a trio of masters talk about the match and its first two games: IM John Donaldson, prolific author, U.S. team captain, longtime director and historian of the Mechanics' Institute club, and dedicated world-class chess researcher; IM Sal Matera of the Marshall Chess Club.; and FM Paul Whitehead. Alyssa Stone, Mechanics’ Institute Senior Director of Programs and Community Engagement, made the introductions, beginning with Mr. Azamat Abraimov, Honorary Consul at the Consulate General of Kazakhstan on Montgomery Street in San Francisco. He spoke of how good the game is for kids there, learning how to win and how to lose, and
how well one of the Kazakh girls is doing in a tournament in India. "Nepo looks incredibly relaxed," said John Donaldson. "Ding looks a little star-struck. . . Historically many challengers did not win the Championship on their first try." He noted that Spassky beat Keres, Geller, and Tal in the Candidates matches, but lost to Petrosian. The next time they met three years later, he won. But few players have won the Candidates twice. China, he said, has already had six women's world champions, but chess is not a national sport there, like table tennis, gymnastics, and track and field. Paul Whitehead agreed, saying they have a relatively small pool of players.

The three panelists looked with us at Game 1 of the current match, a Delayed Exchange of the Ruy Lopez. John ribbed, "Paul used to play this." Mike Walder said 11. . . Bg4 was a novelty. On move 14, Nepo moved Nf5. Sal mentioned Anish Giri and others calling for a Nd5 shot. And 16. Qg3. Apparently Ding thought it was weakening. Paul: "A lot of interesting moves beneath this calm surface." By move 27, John said, "Black has no chance to win this anymore." A draw. Paul: "This game was somewhat exciting, but the next one is very exciting."

The friendship between Richard Rapport and Ding Liren was discussed. Sal: "Ding is a very classical player . . . Rapport has a very unusual style." One mentioned being reminded of Karjakin's influence on Nepo last time. In Game 2, the 18th move, . . . f5, breaks open the position. Sal said the game reminded him of Rotlewi vs. Rubinstein. Paul showed how the White king would be mated at e3 or f4 if he let the light diagonal be opened up. At move 25 he said, "This is just bad, horribly bad." John: "A very one-sided game. But Ding has shown great resilience throughout his career. More so than Nepo, who has a kind of tradition of melting down when things don't go his way. Ding's not playing at his normal level so far. That's because Nepomniatchi has a way of getting him into positions where he feels uncomfortable."

When these games start in Astana, it's 5am for Sal, Sophia, and others on the East Coast, and 2am for us on the West Coast. Kazakhstan is so much farther away. One mentioned that in traveling there, if you can stay awake until you arrive at midnight, you'll be very tired and can sleep and feel good for the 9am round.

John: "If Ding loses another game, he may not recover." Sal: "Maybe he needs a boring draw [to gather his forces]." John: "They seem to defend uncomfortable positions effortlessly. It takes a lot to beat them." He also thought Nepo would have lost if he were playing Magnus. "When you're World Champion for a decade, you wind up playing extra matches. Preparation for one now takes six to nine months, compared to [four or five] for Kasparov. Carlsen was playing one every two years."

Randomly heard: John Ward always played the London System, which was called the Pensioner's Opening, then it became the rage. Three of Ward's games are at Chessgames.com. In one he plays an Evans Gambit which he wins in 14 moves. Tisdall said if you could take anything back in this life, it would be engines. Larry Christiansen called the first users of ChessBase "the army of iron butts." Now = can mean easy moves or perfect ones. Sal: "In over-the-board play, you can tell what your opponent is feeling. . . Spassky was so deadpan, I didn't know if he hung a piece or sacced it."
John: "I know of no bad relations between these two opponents." Paul: "The top players seem more collegiate now." John: "They play each other more frequently, and there's more money around."

The official Chess Cafe special event wraps up.

Vinay Bhat has a book out now: How I Became a Chess Grandmaster (Quality Chess paperback, 12 April 2023).

Paul: "Tarjan won Reno."

Aaron mentioned the size of the prize ($2 million) and the split, 60/40. Sophia said they're not playing enough games.

Recently I started thinking a lot about Ingmar Bergman's powerful early film Sawdust and Tinsel (1953, Gycklarnas afton in Swedish), which I only saw once decades ago. Yet now it seems to apply to my chess playing and much more. In it a traveling circus performer meets up with an actor in a dark theater who tells him in the middle of what John Simon calls "his great speech" (which he quotes in its entirety in his 2007 review for Criterion), "You only risk your lives. We risk our pride." This double-edged locution "crystallizes the correspondence of human interaction and humiliation that Bergman would continue to define in his work. . . . Isn't life more precious than vanity? Not to the supercilious artist. . . . And yet this shrewd insight may cloak an error in judgment: life is more essential than art, and its sacrifice greater than that of pride."

At the April 17 Cafe, people talked about the different presentations of the World Championship match on many different channels of the Web.

Sophia: "Speelman at 5am is the most entertaining." Paul Whitehead: "A great player." "Krush has been great." "She's FIDE's official commentator." It's been her throughout, first with Anand and Daniil Dubov. There are also Anish Giri, Peter Svidler, Tania Sachdev, Levy Rozman, Daniel Naroditsky, Jovanka Houska, Kaja Marie Snare, David Howell, Antonio Redic, Fabiano Caruana, et al. Someone said that Nakamura talks too fast, another saw Dubov alone on YouTube, and said he covers a game in half the time that others take. Mike Walder: "Decisive results. (Laughs). We haven't seen that in a World Championship for a while." Four wins in a row by White in rounds 4-7, leaving Nepomniachtchi with a 3-2 lead. Then, after four draws in a row, Ding won the 12th game to tie the match, 6-6, which eventually ended 7-7 with two more draws, setting the stage for the four rapid-play games that decided it on the last day.

"Let's start with Mike's puzzle." "From Gadir. It's very hard." After a while with no draw in sight, he adds: "This is what he does to see if students are using an engine. If they solve it in less than 20 minutes, he knows they probably are. Here it's Black to play and draw. This one took a 2700 player 40 minutes to solve."
Then we covered the 4th, 5th, and 6th games in the World Championship. Paul called the 6th (won by Ding) "the prettiest of all the games" to that point. I've played through it several times and will share its final tactical possibilities with my public school students. Sophie: "In the last two games, the knights are more important than the bishops."

Mike made a whole PGN of knight dominating bishop stuff that he offered to Paul. Paul: "All the Russians and Ukrainians who were playing at the club are gone. Did something similar happen at the Marshall?" Sophie: "I don't think so." Paul: "Are they at each other's' throats?" Sophie: "I don't think so. . . . We have a lot of refugees."

Alexey is writing a Chess Life Online article on the national middle school tournament at Success Academy Midtown West, 439 W. 49th St., New York.

On April 24, Paul loaded all the World Championship games played since the last Cafe. "Ray Freeman sent in a lot of puzzles, and Mike sent in his usual, incredibly difficult ones." Maybe later we can show some of these here. "A bad plan is better than no plan, right?" "Yes."

Today, April 30, the big match was concluded. Media wrap-ups included the following from The Guardian: "The bloody, back-and-forth showdown extended into a rapid tiebreak playoff. . . . The 30-year-old from Zhejiang province, who never once led in the three-week match at the St. Regis Astana Hotel until victory was in hand, boldly played for a win from what looked to be a drawn position in the last of four rapid games. That fighting spirit paid off handsomely when a stunned Nepomniachtchi resigned after 68 moves, making Ding the first Chinese man to become world chess champion." "The Anti-Marshall was the arena for the 18th game. After finding success with the opening in earlier games where he had, in his own words, 'had every chance,' Nepomniachtchi declared his intent to play for a win with the unusual 13.Bb1. . . ."

"Both Caruana and Hess were alert to the fact that Ding's best remaining chance was to play into an ending where the a-pawn could become dangerous, and it seemed that Ding had the same intuitive feeling. "Then, the unexpected happened. With two minutes and 30 seconds left on the clock, Ding played the brilliant 42... Qe2!!, a move that Caruana suggested 'Nepo might have missed.' The move, which left Ding's bishop en prise with a dangerous threat of a king and rook fork, shifted the momentum. . . ."

"Chess has never been more alive than now, and the 2023 FIDE World Championship was an absolute testament to the excitement that chess can provide." More from Chess.com here.

More information about the Chess Cafe, including the link to join in the conversation, can be found here.
A New Puzzle in the Library

Every week or so the Mechanics’ Institute’s Head of Technical Services, Steven Dunlap, puts up a chess puzzle in the library for our members to solve.

This position is taken from Combination Challenge! (1991), by Lou Hayes and John Hall. Black is curiously helpless after 1.Ng5!, threatening both 2.Nf7# and 2.Qxh7+! Qxh7 3.Nf7#.

Seeking Scholastic Chess Coaches

Are you interested in joining the team at Mechanics’ Institute? The Institute is currently seeking Scholastic Chess Instructors for the upcoming school year. Qualified candidates should have a foundational knowledge of chess and should be familiar with or willing to learn chess instructional techniques. Candidates should also have a basic foundation in classroom management and conflict resolution strategies, particularly working with children. This is an in-person position and candidates must be able to commute to schools in San Francisco. If you’re interested follow the link below or reach out to our Chess Program Manager, Alex Robins, at arobins@milibrary.org.

Employment Opportunities | Mechanics’ Institute (milibrary.org)
Tony’s Teasers


The Mechanics’ Institute offers a wide range of chess tournaments, classes, and special events. Our offerings include a monthly Chess Social, free classes for women and Mechanics’ Institute members, an online Chess Café, chess camps for adults and children, and much more.

You can find a list of ongoing and upcoming tournaments here.

Offerings for adults and advanced players can be found here.
Information about scholastic events, camps, and programming can be found [here](#).

Play chess in the oldest club in the United States!
Solutions

Tony's Teasers

1. G. Mott-Smith, 1942. 1.Ra6! Threatens both 2.Qc8# and 2.Qc6#. If 1...Kxa8 2.Qc8#. Or 1...Kxa6 2.Qc6#. Blocking the queen with 1...Bc5 is met by 2.Qh7#!

2. J. Grande, 1972. 1.f6! Threatens 2.Qh5+ and 3.Qh8#. If 1...Kxg6 2.Qg5+ Kh7 3.Qg7#. Or 1...fxg6 2.Qd7+! Kh6 (2...Kg8/h8 3.Qg7#) 3.Qxh3#. Finally, if 1...Kh6 then 2.Ne7! h3 (or 2...Kh7 3.Qh5#) 3.Qg5#.

Contact Us

The Mechanics’ Institute Chess Club is on the 4\textsuperscript{th} floor at 57 Post Street, San Francisco, CA. Our phone number is (415) 393-0110.

We welcome any feedback, articles, or "Letter to the Editor" piece. Submit yours today at chessroom@milibrary.org

With more than 3,000 books and periodicals, The Mechanics’ Institute boasts one of the largest chess book collections in the U.S.

You can now access our newsletter directly from the chess home page! https://www.milibrary.org/chess
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October 6
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Unwind from the week with fellow chess players. We’ll have rousing game replays on the big screen, snacks, and lively conversation. Wine available for purchase in the Meeting Room provided before the CinemaLit program. Stick around for CinemaLit at 6pm!

Questions?
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