

California CHESS Journal



Another Year of the CalChess State Scholastic Championship Survived

More than 900 players — plus worried parents, bored siblings, good and bad coaches, and a harried tournament staff — survived the 35th CalChess State Scholastic Chess Championship held April 16–18 in Santa Clara.

According to organizer Salman Azhar, 900+ players represented an increase in attendance of about 100, following a few years of decline which followed the national economy, he said.

“Two main things affect attendance,” said Azhar, “how much the coaches encourage them to play in afterschool classes and in private lessons, and how much the parents are motivated. It’s a huge investment for parents.”

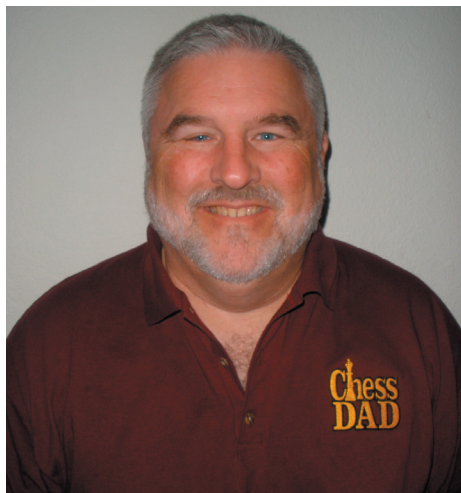
The tournament was back in the Santa Clara Convention Center after five years at other venues. “It’s a much better fit,” said Azhar. “It’s centrally located, with free parking and a

hotel next door.” Azhar, who is committed to running the tournament through 2012 said his intent is to keep the state champion at the Santa Clara site.

CalChess president Tom Langland served as chief director for the first time, after longtime chief John McCumiskey had already committed his Sunday. “Tom did a very good job on the floor and on the computers,” said Azhar.

Continued on Page 5

CalChess President's Message



Welcome to the rebirth of the *California Chess Journal*, the official magazine of CalChess. The award-winning Frisco Del Rosario has returned as editor and we look forward to working with him for future issues. To help support this effort, CalChess membership (\$5.00) will now be required at any state championship event.

While the Bay Area has always been a hotbed of chess activities, recently we have seen the resurgence of larger prize fund tournaments including several \$10,000+ tournaments organized by Salman Azhar and even a \$40,000 tournament by Bill Goichberg! I hope you will keep on supporting these tournaments so they can endure! Our local talented scholastic players continue to achieve remarkable results in national events. At the National Elementary Championship, Daniel Liu was the K-6 co-champion, and Allen Beilen received the top prize in the K-5 section. Joanna Liu helped Weibel Elementary reel in the team co-championship in the K-3 division, and also won the under-8 division in the USCF All-Girls Nationals. Steven Zierk will be playing in the US Junior Invitational and Yian Liou will participate in the US Cadet Championship.

On the adult front, three local players were invited to play in the US Championship: Sam Shankland, Jesse Kraai and Vinay Bhat. The Mechanics Institute is gearing up to host an invitational norm tournament. I hope to see many of you at the US Open in Irvine while CalChess works to bring similar USCF National events to the Bay Area. The entire CalChess board is very interested in hearing from chess players as to how we can improve our chess community, while Ruth Haring is a member of the USCF Executive Board and your input can make changes happen!

California CHESS Journal

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Zierk Wins N. California Qualifier to Denker Tourney of HS Champions

Los Gatos High School junior Steven Zierk scored 6-0 at the N. California regional tournament held March 19–21 in San Jose. Zierk earned the right to represent CalChess in the Denker Tournament of High School Champions at the US Open in August. Zierk, a USCF senior master, finished a full point ahead of second place in the 51-player field.

Qualification for the Denker is traditionally tied to the state 9-12 championship, but this year the CalChess event conflicted with the national high school tournament.

White: Evan Sandberg (2193)
Black: Steven Zierk (2420)
French Winawer
Notes by SM Steven Zierk

1. **e4 e6**
2. **d4 d5**
3. **Nc3 Bb4**
4. **e5 c5**
5. **a3 Bxc3+**
6. **bxc3 Qa5!?**

An unorthodox line which has proven successful for me in past games.

7. **Bd2 Qa4**
8. **Qb1 c4**
9. **h4**

Since Black has the better pawn structure on the queenside, White's normal plan is to expand on the kingside with his own pawns.

9. ... **Nc6**
10. **g3?!**

This is too slow. White wants to play h5 as soon as possible, and only then g3 and Bh3.

10. ... **Bd7**
11. **Bh3 O-O-O**
12. **Ne2**

h5 now was still better.

12. ... **f6**
13. **f4 Nge7**
14. **O-O?!**

Perhaps g4 was better, to prevent black from closing the kingside too much.

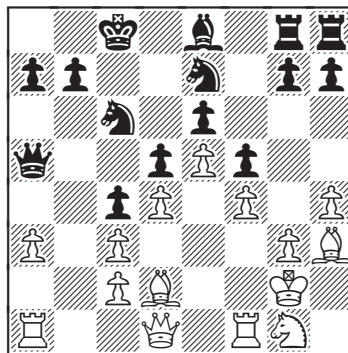
14. ... **f5**
15. **Kg2**

With the idea of Ng1-f3 and perhaps g5.

15. ... **Qa5**

Now 16. Ng1? Would be answered with ...Nxd4 winning a pawn, so Black prepares his queen transfer to the queenside with tempo.

16. **Qd1 Rdg8**
17. **Ng1 Be8**



18. **g4**

Playing for some activity. 18. Nf3?! Would be bad in view of ...Bh5 when black's knights are far superior in the closed position.

18. ... **Bg6**

Black does not want to give white activity with 18... fxg4? 19. Bxg4 Bd7 (else f5 and white's pieces break loose) 20. f5! (anyway!) exf5 21. Bf3 and White has decent chances due to his protected passer on e5 and open space for his pieces, e.g. consider Ne2-f4 and Rg1. If Black plays ...h6 to prepare ...g5, then h5! prevents getting connected passed pawns, or if ...g6 to prepare ...h6, then Bg5 or Bh6 both suffice. In both this note

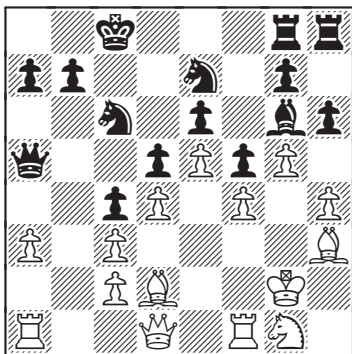
Senior Master Annotates

and the next, the active position is shown to be more important than the pawn deficit.

19. g5?!

These past couple moves have been the key moves of the game, and white is fatally selling himself short on the kingside. He needed to try for counterplay with 19. h5!? fxg4 20. hxg6 gxh3+ 21. Nxh3. Then after 21...hxg6 22. Qg4 plus 23. Ng5, or 21...Nxg6 22. f5, White has activity.

19. ... h6



Black ensures an open h-file on the kingside, because he can control it.

20. Qe1?!

20. h5 was the last chance for activity. 20...hxg5! 21. hxg6 g4 22. Bxg4 hxg4 23. Qxg4 Nf5 and Black is better but White still has play. The game continuation leaves him with nothing at all. Although it seems as though White is making a lot of inaccuracies, this is misleading; moves 10, 19, and 20 all stem from a failure to play h5, the key kingside move for White in this line.

20. ... hxg5

The key moves of the game (14–20) are over and Black has come out on top. White has little activity, while Black prepares for the decisive invasion by making threats on both sides.

21. hxg5 Rh7?!

Black should play ...Qa4, to prevent some white activity on the a3-f8 diagonal via f4.

22. Nf3?!

White fails to play a4. Both sides repeat this mistake for the next several moves.

22. ... Rgh8

23. Rh1 Bh5

24. Nh4 g6

25. Be3 Qa4!

At last. Now White's position is hopeless — he has no counterplay on the queenside due to his immobile pawn structure, while Black decides when the h-file will open. All White can do is wait.

26. Ra2 Kc7

27. Bf2 Nc8

28. Kg1 Nb6

29. Bg2 a5

30. Qb1 Na7

31. Be1 Qc6

32. Nf3 Na4

33. Bd2 Nb5

34. Qe1 Kb6

35. Ra1 Ka6

36. Kf2 b6

37. Ra2 Qe8

38. Ra1 Qe7

39. Ra2 Bxf3

Now that Black's position has been strengthened to the ut-

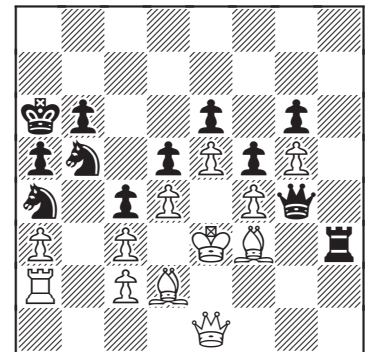
most, the decisive blow is struck and the invasion begins.

40. Rxh7 Qxh7

41. Kxf3 Qh5+

42. Ke3 Qg4

43. Bf3 Rh3



44. Qf1 Qg3?

A serious oversight. Black was so preoccupied with preventing any white activity he completely missed 44... Rxf3+! 45. Qxf3 Qg1+ and 46... Qb1.

45. Be1 Qh2

46. Qf2 Naxc3?!

Trying to prevent counterplay prevented Black from seeing a nice win: 46...Rxf3+! 47. Kxf3 (47. Qxf3 Nbx3 48. Bxc3 Nxc3 49. Ra1 Qxc2 and White's pieces are stuck — the queen due to ...Qe2 and ...Qe4, the rook due to ...Nd1. White can only play Ra1-g1-h1 as Black carries out ...b4-b3-b2-b1Q) 47... Qh1+ 48. Ke3 Naxc3 49. Ra1 Nxa3!! and White is helpless (the main threat is ...Qe4+ Kd2 Qxc2+ Ke3 Qd3#). For instance, 50. Rxa3 Nd1+ or 50. Bxc3 Qe4+ 51. Kd2 Qxc2+ followed by ...Qxc3+ and ...Qxa1. Still, the game continuation is decisive.

State Scholastic Championship Games

47. **Bxc3 Nxc3**
48. **Qxh2 Rxh2**
49. **Ra1 b5**

...Rxc2 also won, but Black is sticking to his plan of preventing any white activity following Rh1.

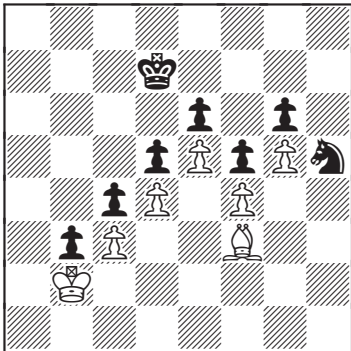
50. **Rh1 Rxh1**
51. **Bxh1 b4**
52. **axb4 axb4**
53. **Kd2 Kb6**
54. **Bf3**

With White's first strong threat: Bh5.

54. ... **Ne4+**
55. **Kc1 Ng3**
56. **c3 b3**

White's pieces are caged and tied down, and it only remains to find the *coup de grâce*.

57. **Kb1 Kc7**
58. **Kc1 Kd7**
59. **Kb2 Nh5!**
0-1



After 60. Bxh5 gxh5, Black can stop White's g-pawn while his h-pawn promotes, or if 60. Be2 Nxf4 61. Bf1, Black can win the bishop for the f-pawn, play ...Nh5-g3-e4 when any trade is hopeless, or even play the lengthy maneuver ...Nh5-g7-e8-c7-a6-b8-c6-d8-f7-xg5. Black's kingside pawns will then win the game of their own accord.

Continued from Page 1

Annotations that follow by Frisco Del Rosario.

Paul Richter scored 5-1 to share the title of state champion in the 9-12 Varsity section.

White: Daniel Liu (2036)
Black: Paul Richter (1798)
Sicilian Dragon

1. **e4 c5**
2. **Nf3 d6**

2. c3 and 2. b4 can be recommended as simpler moves that aim for 3. d4.

2. ... **d6**
3. **d4**

One of the reasons I want to retire from chess teaching and writing is that it's depressing to watch players recite these moves with little or no understanding of them.

3. ... **cxd4**
4. **Nxd4**

White gained a little bit of time because his recapture brought a piece forward (4. Qxd4 gains even more time). Black lost a little bit of space because his advanced pawn disappeared. White's slight advantages in time and space are useful to masters.

4. ... **Nf6**
5. **Nc3 a6**

Chessplayers are slaves to fashion and marketing. I believe that the Dragon move 5...g6 is

more popular than the Najdorf 5...a6 or the Scheveningen 5...e6 because "dragon" is an evocative word, while people can't pronounce "Najdorf" or "Scheveningen".

6. Be2

White has tried about 20 different moves here. 6. Bg5 was most popular through the '60s. Then Karpov made 6. Be2 fashionable in the '70s. In the '80s, the British grandmasters caused 6. Be3 to surge in popularity. Weak players all around the world embrace the trends, then blunder as soon as they have to think of a move on their own.

6. ... e5

Black equalizes the center space, at the cost of making d5 and d6 weak squares. If Black can comfortably achieve the advance ...d5, that move will correct his serious pawn weakness while taking advantage in the center.

7. Nb3

Preferred to 7. Nf3 for a number of reasons: one, the f-pawn is free to advance to f4; two, the b3-knight helps White clamp down on the queenside with a4-a5; three, it's less likely that Black can bother the e4-pawn with ...Nbd7-c5; four, the knight screens the b2-pawn from an attack by ...Qb6.

7. ... **Be7**
8. **0-0 Be6**

Best Games from the State Scholastic

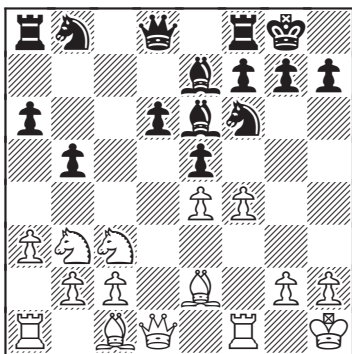


9-12 Varsity co-champion Paul Richter. Shorman photo

- 9. Kh1 b5**
10. a3

In the same position, grand-master Slobodjan played 10. a4, which threatens something, and even provokes ...b4, while White in this game made a passive move to prevent ...b4 (Slobodjan-Gutman, German ch 1997).

- 10. ... O-O**
11. f4



- 11. ... Qc7**

One of Black's chief positional ideas here is to knock out the white f4-pawn, then posting a knight on e5 (sometimes Black takes the risk ...h6 plus ...g5 to make that outpost). 11...Nbd7 is consistent with that theme.

- 12. Be3**

Suppose White tried to exploit Black's imprecise move order with 12. fxe5. Then 12...dxe5 13. Qe1 Nbd7 14. Qg3 Kh8, and the pin on the e5-pawn enables White to maneuver 15. Nd4 plus Nf5.

- 12. ... Nbd7**
13. Qe1 Bc4

Disrupts White's plan to play 14. Qg3 because 14...Bxe2 15. Nxe2 loses the e4-pawn.

- 14. Bd3**

14. Rd1 Rac8 15. Nd2 Bxe2 16. Qxe2 is equal.

- 14. ... d5**

Now the standard positional motif 14...exf4 15. Bxf4 Nxe5 threatens to win a pawn.

- 15. exd5 Bxd5**

15...Nxd5 16. Bxc4 Nxe3 17. Qxe3 bxc4 18. Nd5 Qd6 19. Nxe7+ Qxe7 20. Na5 looks like an uneasy equality, where both sides have something to like on the queenside. White's pawns are together, but the b2-pawn is backward on an open file, and restrained by the c4-pawn.

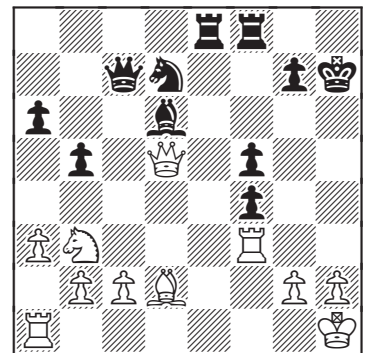
- 16. Nxd5 Nxd5**
17. Bd2

The higher-rated player might have avoided 17. Rd1 Nxe3 18. Qxe3 because an attack for White is not evident, and if the game moved into an ending, the opposite-colored bishops tend to make it most difficult for anyone to win.

- 17. ... Bd6**
18. Bxh7+ Kxh7
19. Qe4+ f5

19...Kg8 20. Qxd5 Nf6 21. Qd3 e4 is a pawn sacrifice that ought to be considered. Black might regain his pawn on c2 or f4, while he has gained a passed pawn, and White's pieces are disorganized. 19...f5 does not give up a pawn, but it is a riskier move for reasons of king safety.

- 20. Qxd5 exf4**
21. Rf3 Rae8



- 22. Rc3**

22. Ba5 includes the benefit that a future Rd1 will cooperate with the queen on the d-file. White is doing well with 22. Ba5 Qb8 (22...Nb6 23. Rh3+ Kg6 24. Qd4 is even better) 23. Rd1 Rf6.

- 22. ... Qb8**
23. Rh3+ Kg6

Given the exposure of the black king, it ought to be a promising position for White, but the b3-knight and a1-rook are out of play. 24. Nd4 is sensible, while 24. Bb4 Bxb4 25. axb4 looks to improve the rook (26. Rxa6 is not a threat for the vulnerable back rank.)

24. Bxf4

It's hard to like this move, which doesn't improve White's inactive pieces, unblocks the black bishop, and dissipates White's pressure on the d-file. White was probably thinking that he was coercing an exchange before emerging with an extra pawn.

- 24. ... Bxf4**
25. Qxd7 Qe5

The first of two strong major piece moves. Black's lead in mobility means that White's king is less secure than Black's.

- 26. Rf1 Rh8**
27. Rxh8 Rxh8
28. Qc6+ Kg5
29. h3 Qe2

Threatening 30...Rxh3+!

30. Rg1

30. Qf3 Rxh3+! shows the white queen is overworked.

30. ... Bg3

By blocking the g-file, Black solves the problem of gxh3 discovering a check.

- 31. Ra1 Rxh3+**
32. Kg1 Qf2#
0-1

Colin Chow scored 5-1 to share the 4-6 Varsity championship.

White: Joshua Cao (1797)
 Black: Colin Chow (1787)
 Benoni Defense

- 1. d4 Nf6**
2. c4 c5
3. d5

3. e3 and 3. Nf3 are reasonable, but less ambitious.

3. ... d6

Black will play ...d6 in every flavor of Benoni, eventually. At the moment, it's more challenging to play 3...b5 or 3...e6, which force White to make some decisions.

- 4. Nc3 g6**
5. e4 Bg7
6. Nf3

White's long-term chances usually rest with the advances f2-f4 plus e4-e5, so some prefer 6. Bd3 plus 7. Nge2, leaving the f-pawn unblocked.

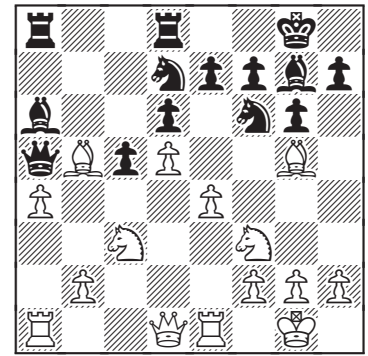
- 6. ... Qa5**
7. Bd3 b5
8. cxb5 a6
9. O-O O-O
10. Re1

White ensures that if his queenside minors get involved in a skirmish on b5, his e4-pawn is guarded. 10. a4 and 10. Bd2 could be better moves — anticipating a fight on b5, while discovered attacks appear on the horizon.

- 10. ... axb5**
11. Bxb5 Ba6
12. a4 Nbd7
13. Bg5

That bishop probably belongs on d2, threatening a discovery, and if White finds it useful to challenge the g7-bishop, then Bd2-c3 is made possible.

13. ... Rfd8



14. Bxd7

14 Qc2 is an appropriate move, while 14. Bxd7 feels wrong. For starters, the bishop is a more valuable piece. Second, in these Benko/Benoni-type positions, d3 and c4 are dream squares for black pieces — Bxd7 takes one of the defenders of those squares off the board. Third, Black gains a bit of time with his rook, which can swing next to b7 to bear on the backward pawn.

14. ... Rxd7

Black would have preferred to retake with ...Nxd7 (on the way to e5), but his knight is pinned.

15. e5 Ne8

15...Ng4 is much more in tune with the spirit of the opening. In the Benoni/Benko structures, e5 is an ideal square for a black knight, from which the knight can jump to attack on d3 or c4.

- 16. e6 fxe6**
17. Rxe6 Nf6

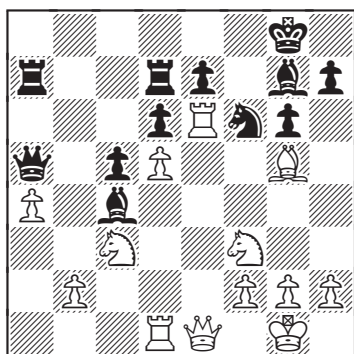
The counterattack 17. ... Rb8 is indicated, and then 18. Bxe7 Rxb2, when Black would very much like to have his knight on g4 instead of e8.

State Scholastic Games, Continued



4-6 Varsity co-champion Colin Chow.
Photo courtesy of Chow family

18. Qe1 Raa7
19. Rd1 Bc4



20. h3

20. Nd2 forces the bishop back to a6 because 20...Bxd5 21. Bxf6! Bxe6 22. Qxe6+ Kf8 23. Bxg7+ Kxg7 24. Nf3 or 24. Nc4, and the holes show in Black's position.

20. ... Rab7

21. Rd2

Again 21. Nd2 to chase the bishop back, and then 21...Ba6 22. Qe3 Rxb2 23. Rxf6! is a painful surprise for Black.

21. ... h6?

22. Bh4?

22. Bxf6 plus 23. Qe4 forking, and White pulls further ahead.

22. ... Kh7

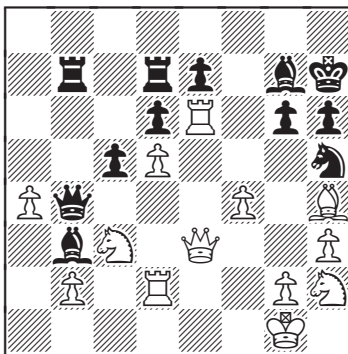
23. Qe3 Bb3

24. Nh2

A more direct way is 24. Bxf6 Bxf6 25. Ne4, ignoring Black's threat. Then if 25...Bxa4 26. Qf4, and White will break through. White's central blockade on d5 and e6 has sealed off every Black piece but the f6-bishop.

24. ... Qb4

25. f4 Nh5



26. Bxe7

The drawback to "winning" the e7-pawn is that the black rooks that were trapped behind it are suddenly free to move on the rank. An unclear position arises from 26. Re4 Bd4 27. Rdx4 cxd4 28. Rxd4 Qa5.

26. ... Bd4

Black emerges from a long scuffle with a winning position.

27. Rxd4 Qxd4

28. Bh4 Nxf4

29. Qxd4 cxd4

30. Ne4 Bxd5

31. Nf6+ Kg7

32. Re1 Rf7

33. Ne8+ Kf8

34. Nxd6 Rxb2

35. Nxf7 Rvg2+

36. Kf1 Bc4+

37. Re2 Bxe2+

38. Ke1 Kxf7

0-1

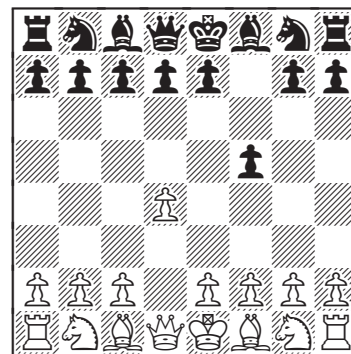
Neel Apte was also one of the 4-6 Varsity champions.

White: Neel Apte (1804)

Black: Richard Yi (1727)

Dutch Defense

1. d4 f5



2. c4

Kids today — who ought to be fearless — play like stodgy old men. The trouble is that they are trying to play "good chess" when they lack the technique and experience to play good chess — there's one old coach who wants his students to "play bad chess well".

There's a huge difference between "playing good chess" and "playing bad chess well". 2. c4 is a good move that tends to lead to dull positions. 2. e4 is a "bad" move — it loses a pawn, oh no — which forces White to play well to make up for it.

2. e4 is such a "good bad move" that Capablanca recommended it as the best move in the 1913 Havana tournament book. Two of Capablanca's most outstanding games were both played against the Dutch Defense — the enterprising 2. e4 vs. Masyutin at Kiev 1914, and the "good" 2. Nf3 plus 3. c4 vs. Tartakover at New York 1924.

I venture that if the student played through both of those masterpieces while guessing Capablanca's moves that the student would guess a higher percentage of moves correctly in the Masyutin game, and suggest that students take that as a hint.

2. ... Nf6
3. Nc3 g6

Consider this typical King's Indian, where Black expends some effort in achieving the ...f7-f5 advance: 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Nf3 O-O 6. Be2 e5 7. O-O Nc6 8. d5 Ne7 9. b4 Nh5 10. c5 f5. In the Leningrad Dutch, Black gets ...f5 in at move 1 — that would suggest that the Leningrad is pretty good, except that White gets the chance to play 2. e4!.

4. g3 Bg7
5. Bg2 d6
6. f4

Another way to restrain ...e5 is 6. d5. Then after 6...e5 7. dxe6

Nc6, White might aim at the weak white squares with 8. Nh3 followed by Ng5 or Nf4.

6. ... O-O
7. Nf3 Qe8

Playing ...Qe8 in preparation of ...e7-e5 is a standard maneuver in every flavor of the Dutch, but it makes less sense in the Leningrad setup because the g6-pawn blocks the queen's way to g6 or h5. ...c6, ...Qc7, ...Nbd7, ...e5 is desirable, but if White pokes at the white squares with moves like Qb3 and Ng5, then Black might go ...c6, ...Na6, ...Nc7, and then ...Qe8 fits.

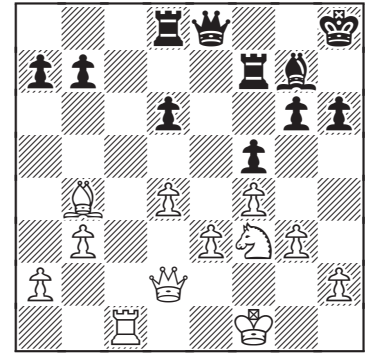
8. O-O Nbd7
9. Nb5 Qd8
10. Ng5 Nb6
11. c5 Nbd5
12. cxd6 exd6

12. ... cxd6 13. Qb3 e6 keeps the b3-g8 diagonal closed and the d5-knight unpinned, therefore.

13. Qb3 c6
14. Nc3 Kh8
15. Nxd5 cxd5
16. Bxd5 Nxd5
17. Qxd5 Qf6
18. e3 Rb8
19. Bd2 h6
20. Nf3 Be6

For some reason, the players agreed in thinking that Black shouldn't play 21. Qxd6.

21. Qb5 Qf7
22. b3 Bd5
23. Bb4 Rbd8
24. Rac1 Bc6
25. Qc4 Qe8
26. Qd3? Bb5
27. Qd2 Bxf1
28. Kxf1 Rf7



29. Kf2 Rfd7

Black squanders most of his resources to guard one silly pawn, when his goal should be to activate his pieces. If Black finds himself playing ...d5, then the hole on e5 is the cost of doing Dutch business. For instance, 29. ... d5 prepares ...Rf6 plus ...Rc6. Then 30. Ne5 Bxe5 31. dxe5 Rc8 32. Rxc8 Qxc8 33. Qxd5 Rd7 is probably heading for a draw.

30. Qc2 Re7
31. Qd2 Red7
32. Qc2 Bf8?
33. d5

Black has bunched two rooks and one bishop behind the immobile pawn, while White can go about Nd4-e6.

33. ... Kh7
34. Nd4 Bg7
35. Ne6 Rb8
36. Qc4 b5
37. Qc2

Despite White's material disadvantage, his piece activity probably gives him the advantage after 37. Qc6 Rb6 38. Qc8 Rb8 39. Qxe8 Rxe8 40. Rc6.

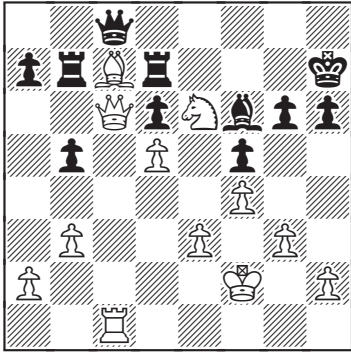
37. ... Rb6

When Steinitz said a knight on K6 is like a bone in the

Longest Weekend of the Chess Year

throat, he was talking about positions like this. Black can't contest the c-file with ...Rd8-c8 or ...Rb7-c7 because of that e6-knight.

38. **Ba5 Rbb7**
 39. **Qc6 Bf6**
 40. **Bc7! Qc8**



41. Nf8+

An inexact move order. 41. Qxd7+ Qxd7 42. Nf8+ wins a whole rook.

41. ... **Qxf8**
 42. **Qxd7+ Be7**

Black clings to that dumb pawn as if it were keeping him afloat and not dragging him down. Maybe there is some fight in 42. ... Bg7 43. Qe6 (43. Qc6 Qf6 44. Rc2 Rxc7 45. Qxc7 Qa1) 43. ... Qf6 44. Qxf6 Bxf6 45. Bxd6 Kg8.

43. **Qc6 Qc8**
 44. **Bxd6 Qd7**
 45. **Bxe7 Qxe7**
 46. **d6 Qg7**
 47. **Qxb7 1-0**

Leyton Ho tied for first place in the K-3 Varsity championship.

White: Leyton Ho (1428)
 Black: Josiah Stearman (1376)
 Sicilian Accelerated Dragon

1. **e4 c5**

It is not the students to blame for such widespread cluelessness, it's the chess teachers who are peddling snake oil. Most chess teachers do not understand the basis for one's chess aptitude, which is pattern recognition: a player's ability to view a tactic or a structure, store it in memory, and recognize the same type of position when it arises again.

A chessplayer who understands that the biggest part of chess ability is pattern recognition will logically expose himself to as many patterns as he can. A competent chess teacher will drill the importance of pattern recognition into his students, but many chess teachers collect lesson fees for giving the children shiny objects — like a few moves from an openings manual.

2. **Nf3 Nc6**
 3. **d4 cxd4**
 4. **Nxd4 g6**

In this accelerated form of Dragon, Black aims to achieve the equalizing ...d5 advance in one step instead of two.

5. **Be3 Bg7**
 6. **Nc3 Nf6**
 7. **f3 O-O**
 8. **Bc4 a6**

Black might have stolen a pawn with 8...Qb6, threatening ...Qxb2 or ...Nxe4.

9. **h4**

Better is 9. Qd2.

9. ... **h5**
 10. **Be2**

Unnecessary as a preparation for g2-g4. Black would not reply ...h5xg4 because that would enable White's h4-h5 advance.

10. ... **d5**

Good move.

11. **Nxc6**

Black was threatening 12... dxe4 13. fxe4 Nxe4.

11. ... **bx c6**
 12. **e5 Nd7**
 13. **f4 Rb8**
 14. **Rb1**

A waste of a rook. 14. Na4 enables the rook free to play actively. So does 14. b3, but White might have fretted about 14...Qa5.

14. ... **Nb6**
 15. **b3**

White felt more sure of b3 after Black blocked his queen's line to a5.

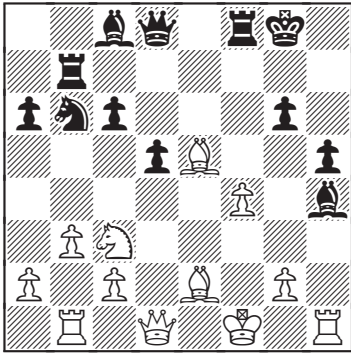
15. ... **f6**

A double-edged move. Black wins control of the center, but undoes his king shelter.

16. **exf6**

Had White moved a piece to d4 to guard e5, then Black would play 16...fxe5 plus 17... Qc7.

16. ... **Bxf6**
 17. **Bd4 e5**
 18. **Bxe5 Bxh4+**
 19. **Kf1 Rb7**



20. Bxh5 Qg5

Black can accept the piece sacrifice, but his king position hangs by a thread: 20. ... gxh5 21. Qxh5 Bf6.

21. Bxg6

White would've done better by breaking the pin on the f-file by 21. Bf3 or 21. Qf3, but it's easy to say that while sitting in a coffeeshop with no chess clock ticking.

21. ... Qg3

Black loses time and material with this move. The position is still wildly unclear after 21. ... Qxe5 22. Rxh4 Qxc3 23. Qh5 Qg7.

22. Qf3 Qxg6

23. Rxh4 Kf7

A curious aspect of this move is that it blocks both of Black's rooks. 23...Rh7 is a better move.

24. Qh5

White should consider his king to be much safer than Black's, and leave the queens on the board for the attack. White is winning after 24. f5 or 24. Re1.

24. ... Qxh5

25. Rxh5 Ke8

26. Re1 Kd8

26...Re7 is a more active move. White can effect the swap of a rook with 27. Bd6, but it's hard to judge whether to simplify or complicate in an endgame with opposite-colored bishops. Those are always difficult.

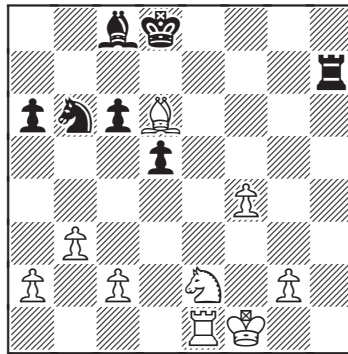
27. Bd6 Rff7

27. ... Rg8 gives both black rooks the most scope, while restraining the white g-pawn.

28. Ne2 Rh7

Black's pieces are so tangled that 28...Rh7 seems to be directed at exchanging in order to give himself some room to wiggle.

29. Rxx7 Rxx7



30. Nd4 Kd7

30...Bd7 plus 31...Nc8 is a better way to unravel the black mess.

31. Bc5 Na8

31...Kc7 must be preferable.

32. Re6 Bb7

At move 28, Black's task was unangling his pieces. That problem was worsened after White cornered his knight and placed his bishop behind three pawns.

33. Rd6+ Kc7

34. Ne6+ Kb8

35. Rd8+ Bc8



1-3 Varsity co-champion Leyton Ho.

Photo courtesy of Ho family

36. Bd6+ Nc7

36...Kb7 37. Nc5 wins.

37. Nxc7 Rxc7

White can't be stopped from reducing to a pure pawn endgame, the simplest type of ending.

38. Ke2 Kb7

39. Bxc7 Kxc7

40. Rxc8+ Kxc8

41. f5 Kd8

42. g4 Ke7

43. g5 Kf7

44. g6+ Kf6

45. Kd3 c5

46. c4 d4

47. b4 cxb4

48. Kxd4 a5

49. Kc5 a4

50. Kxb4 a3

51. c5 1-0

Armaan Kalyanpur shared 1st place in the 4-5 Varsity championship.

Organizer Pleased to Bring State Championship Back to Santa Clara

White: Udit Iyengar (1691)
 Black: Armaan Kalyanpur (1514)
 Four Knights Game

1. e4 e5
 2. Bc4 Nf6
 3. Nf3

Good move. Maybe White has spent some time with NM Eric Schiller, who advises 3...Nxe4 4. Nc3! with great practical chances.

3. ... Nc6
 4. Nc3

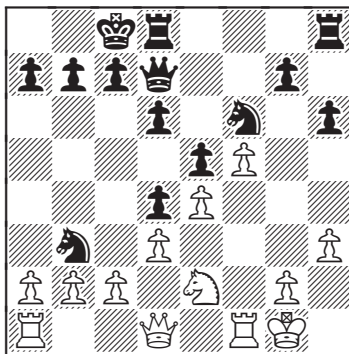
4. d4 and 4. Ng5 are both preferable, because they are attacking moves. White might have played 4. Nc3 in the hopes of 4...Nxe4 5. O-O! (5. Nxe4 d5 is equal), but sometimes opponents aren't smart enough to fall for a good trick.

4. ... Bc5

A most lifeless position. Black should play 4...Nxe4, aiming for equality after 5. Nxe4 d5. But if White played 5. O-O! instead, then Black should head into 5...Nxc3 6. dxc3, and rely on his tactical sense to see him through. This is why it's vital to be better at tactics than the opponents — the better attacker player is also a better defender.

5. O-O d6
 6. h3 Be6
 7. Bb3 Qd7
 8. Ng5 h6
 9. Nxe6 fxe6
 10. d3 O-O-O
 11. Be3 Bd4
 12. Bxd4 exd4

13. Ne2 e5
 14. f4 Na5
 15. f5 Nxb3



16. axb3

The players created an unbalanced position, which — starting with that limp position at move 5 — is an accomplishment.

16. ... a6
 17. Ng3 d5
 18. Re1 dxe4
 19. dxe4 h5

The logical followup would have been 19...d3, undermining White's queenside pawn formation, and making space for Black to encroach on the d-file.

20. Qd3

White saw the value in Black's ...d4-d3 advance, so shut it off.

20. ... h4
 21. Nf1 Nh5
 22. Ra5 Qe7
 23. Qf3 Nf4

Putting ...d4-d3 back in the picture.

24. Rd1 Qd6
 25. Nd2

At moves 19 and 24, White showed his awareness of ...d4-d3, so it's hard to explain what he might have been thinking here.

25. ... d3
 26. Nc4 Qd4+
 27. Kh1

It was necessary to play 27. Kh2 so ...c2-c1 wouldn't come with check.

27. ... dxc2
 28. Rf1 Qd1
 29. Ra1

The only move.

29. ... Qxf3
 30. gxf3 Ne2
 31. Rfe1 c1=Q
 32. Raxc1 Nxc1
 33. Rxc1 Rhe8

Black is threatening to invade with ...Rd3. The weakness in White's pawn formations further shows the strength of 26...d3.

34. Nb6+

White's best chance was probably 34. Rg1. In any endgame with rooks, get an attacking rook.

34. ... Kb8
 35. Nd5 c6
 36. Nc3 Rd2
 37. Rg1

White's a move behind where he would've been with 34. Rg1. Black is already in.

37. ... Rxb2
 38. Rxc7 Rxb3
 39. Na4 Rd8

Very good. Black sees that playing for mate will get the white rook off the board, at least.

- 40. Nc5 Rb1+
- 41. Rg1 Rdd1
- 42. Rxd1 Rxd1+
- 43. Kg2 Kc8
- 44. f4

White's best chance is to bring his e-pawn into the mix.

- 44. ... exf4
- 45. f6 f3+

45. ... Kd8 46. Nxb7+ Ke8 47. Kf3 Kf7 48. e5 Rd5 49. Kxf4 Ke6 50. Nd6 Rxd6 51. exd6 Kxf6 --.

- 46. Kf2 Kd8
- 47. Nxb7+ Ke8
- 48. Nc5 Kf7
- 49. Nxa6 Kxf6
- 50. Kxf3 Rg1
- 51. Nb4 c5
- 52. Nd5+ Ke5
- 53. Ne7 Rg3+
- 54. Kf2 Kxe4
- 55. Nc6 Rxh3
- 56. Kg2 Rg3+
- 57. Kh2 c4
- 58. Nb4 c3
- 59. Nc2 Kd3
- 60. Nb4+ Kd2
- 0-1



4-5 Varsity co-champion Armaan Kalyanpur.

Shorman photo

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- 17 Suneet Bhandari
- 18 David Harler
- 19 Gunnar Black
- 20 Benjamin Wang
- 21 Ryan Chiang
- 22 Jed Faalam
- 23 Benjamin Gu Chen
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- 20 Gia Peterson

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- 24 Max Pflaging
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- 49 Allen Zichi Yan
- 50 William Fitzgerald
- 51 Alex W Wan
- 52 Sophia Alexandra Atwell
- 53 Jeffrey Liu
- 54 Ansh Gandhi
- 55 Armaan Gulati
- 56 Vandya Goel
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- 58 Jayani Peterson
- 59 Ryan Sheng

Unusual Queen Smothering

Continued from Page 17

Familiar! After 6. Qf3 Nxc2+, Black won at move 29. OK, what is the briefest, sensible way to demonstrate this tactic?.

There's a clue — another recognizable pattern — in 4. fxe5 Ng4. A sharp opening is Lisitsin's gambit against the Dutch Defense:

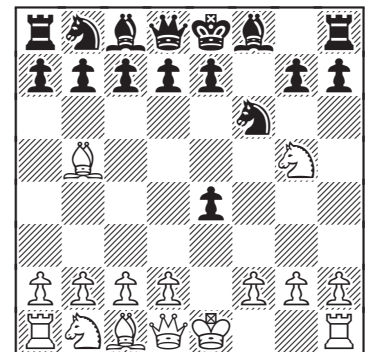
- 1. Nf3 f5
- 2. e4 fxe4
- 3. Ng5

Same movement as in the Labahn-Kaminski game.

- 3. ... Nf6

In every game, White plays 4. d3 to attack the e4-pawn, and if 4...exd3, then 5. Bxd3 aims at the sensitive white squares around the black king. No one has ever played:

- 4. Bb5



Threatening 5. Ne6!.

Unusual Queen Smothering

It is critical to buy in to the idea that pattern recognition — the ability to memorize a pattern, then to recognize it at the board — is the biggest part of one's chess ability.

Learning a pattern in its barest form makes it easier to find in harder positions. For instance, learning this one first — 1. e4 g5 2. d4 f6 3. Qh5# — helps in understanding the operation 1. d4 f5 2. h3 Nf6 3. g4 fxg4 4. hxg4 Nxc4 5. Qd3 Nf6 6. Rxh7 1-0.

White: A.N. Other
Black: Mark Pifer
Falkbeer Countergambit

1. e4 e5
2. f4

White is not really threatening 3. fxg5 because 3...Qh4+ is trouble. By recognizing an unreal threat, Black is at liberty to play mostly as he likes, and it's a good idea to put two pawns in the center.

2. ... d5
3. exd5

The generally accepted move, but 3. Nf3 is an active piece move. An attacking piece move can almost always be preferred to a pawn move, especially a pawn move that doesn't help one's development.

3. ... e4

Marshall and Nimzovich dared 3...c6. After 4. dxc6, East

Bay master Pickler went further with 4...Bc5, offering a Danish Gambit as Black.

4. g3

If White is going to spend time on another pawn move, it should be 4. d3 to knock down the cramping pawn on e4.

4. ... Nf6
5. Nc3 Bb4

White is a move behind the sequence 1. e4 e5 2. f4 d5 3. exd5 e4 4. Nc3 Nf6 5. d3 Bb4, where 6. Bd2 meets the excellent line-opening sacrifice 6...e3! In the position at hand, Black would be delighted by 6. d3 0-0 7. Bd2 e3!.

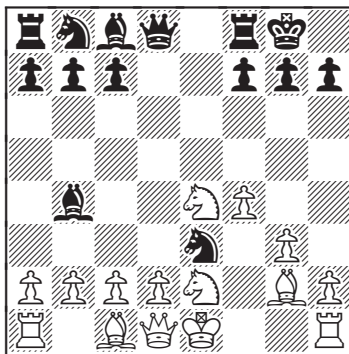
6. Bg2 0-0
7. Nge2

Capturing on e4 would lose a piece.

7. ... Nxd5

Now 7. Bxe4 is an equal game.

8. Nxe4? Ne3!
0-1



That's not a trick one sees every day.

Bad Wildbad 1990
White: Lothar Vogt (2505)
Black: E. Bricard (2385)
Ruy Lopez Vinogradov

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5

4. Bxc6 is not yet a mature threat because 4...dxc6 5. Nxe5 Qd4 regains the pawn while keeping the bishop pair. (The Ruy Lopez is a strong opening partly because Bxc6 eventually grows into a real threat.)

3. ... Qe7

3...Qe7 is a strikingly weird move because the queen was already defending the e5-pawn, albeit indirectly.

4. 0-0 Nd8

The thinking behind 3...Qe7 and 4...Nd8 is that Black avoided Bxc6, doubling his pawns, and he might build a sturdy fort with ...c6 plus ...d6. The idea appealed to IMs L. Day, D. Suttles, and K. Shirazi, all of whom liked to blaze odd opening trails.

5. d4 f6

Just when you think there is nothing new under the sun, Bricard uncorked a novelty in the Vinogradov Lopez.

6. Nc3 Nf7
7. Be3

Vogt kept getting his pieces out, which works against most offbeat openings.

7. ... g6
8. dxe5

With advantages in development and king safety, White opens the position.

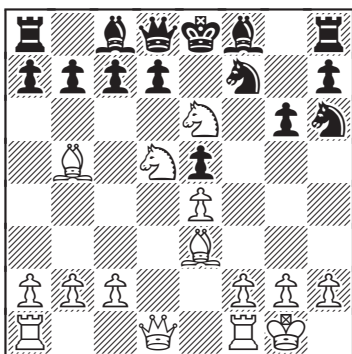
8. ... fxe5
9. Nd5 Qd8
10. Ng5!

One possibility is 11. Nxf7 Kxf7 12. f4 with an attack.

10. ... Ngh6?

White is also ahead after 10. ... Nxg5 11. Bxg5 Qxg5 12. Nxc7+.

11. Ne6! 1-0



Bath 1963

White: D.G. Levens

Black: Andrew Thomas

Ruy Lopez Cordel

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5 Bc5

Schliemann's move 3...f5 will always have followers, but it is logical to delay ...f5 until White plays c3, after which White can't answer ...f5 with the sound development Nc3. Capablanca interpolated 3...a6 4. Ba4 d6 and then 5. c3 f5. In the Cordel variation, Black develops his bishop actively before ...f5.

4. c3

4. c3 is more strongly indicated than usual because the bishop on c5 makes a target for White's d2-d4 advance.

4. ... f5

Among California masters, the Cordel line was played by D. Herscovici and A. Kobernat.

5. d4 exd4

5...fxe4 is better because Black captures into the center, whereas 5...exd4 enables White to capture into the center. G. Lee-D. Herscovici, LERA Memorial Day 1993 continued 5. ... fxe4 6. Bxc6 dxc6 7. Nxe5 Bd6, a configuration very much like the Queen Pawn Countergambit 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 d5 3. Nxe5 Bd6 4. d4 dxe4.

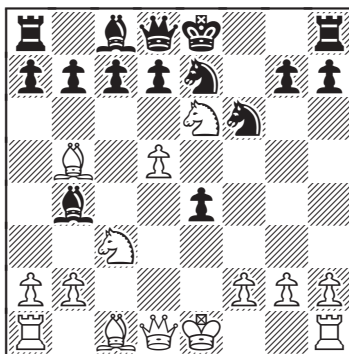
6. cxd4 Bb4+
7. Nc3

7. Bd2 has more bite because it threatens to capture on b4.

7. ... fxe4
8. Ng5 Nf6

Black's strategy was to gain center control by wiping out the e4-pawn. He must proceed logically with 8...d5.

9. d5 Ne7?
10. Ne6! 1-0



Perhaps Pifer's Falkbeer miniature is the only instance of this pattern trapping a white queen, but Black won here also:

Berlin 1990

White: Wolfgang Labahn

Black: Marcin Kaminski (2315)

Sokolsky Opening

1. b4

When Capablanca played 1. b4, the greatest player of his time lost in 13 moves. It isn't as logical as, say, 1. b3. The first goal of the opening is to control the center, and 1. f4 2. Nf3 3. b3 4. Bb2 is a good shot at the black squares. But when White plays 1. b4, he has to cope right away with threatening moves like 1...e5 or even 1...a5.

1. ... e5
2. Bb2

1. b4 holds some strange fascination for players rated 1400. Some of them will play 2. a3, and then Black has the better of it after 2...d5. The attacking developing move 2. Bb2 is much better.

2. ... Bxb4

Black is willing to swap his center pawn for the wing pawn because after 3. Bxe5 Nf6, Black can gain some time with ...Nc6 or ...Nbd7.

3. f4 Nf6

White hinted at 3. ... exf4 4. Bxg7 Qh4+ 5. g3 fxg3 6. Bg2 gxh2+ 7. Kf1 hxg1=Q+ 8. Kxg1 Qg5 9. Bxh8, where White has active pieces.

4. fxe5 Ng4
5. e4 Ne3

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Second to Keres at Margate 1939

By Frisco Del Rosario

Capablanca's games at age 13 have been my models since I was a kid, but his most powerful games from the 1920s seemed beyond my grasp. The games he played at the end of his career had no effect on me at all.

My old teacher said I might change my mind about the late period, but I disagreed. The music and movies I liked when I was a teenager are still my favorite — why wouldn't I prefer the same chess games?

While I was writing *Capablanca: A Primer of Checkmate*, I reviewed Capa's late games just to be thorough. I glanced at Capablanca-Mikenas, Buenos Aires olympiad 1939, on a Monday. For some reason, I thought on Tuesday that I should look again.

In Capablanca's last years, the fire of a young master's combinations is gone. His avoidance of complications — which his detractors always hated — seemed to be more important than ever, because a difficult chess game would get in the way of a good nap.

At Margate 1939 — his final grandmaster round-robin — Capablanca finished 2nd behind 23-year-old Paul Keres. Keres was probably the strongest player in the world at that time. The year before, Keres won the AVRO tournament, which

should have given him a shot at a match with world champion Alekhine, but World War II was breaking out. The Soviets occupied Keres' homeland Estonia, disrupting match negotiations.

In tournament play, Keres beat every world champion from Capablanca to Fischer (with two draws against Karpov), but he never got to play for the world title.

Margate 1939

White: J.R. Capablanca

Black: R. Wheatcroft

Sicilian Defense

1. e4

Given these three primary positional concerns — center control, development, king safety — 1. e4 and 1. d4 do about the same for center control and development, but 1. e4 enables White to castle one move earlier.

1. ... c5

Whether Black plays symmetrically with 1...e5 or unbalances the game with 1...c5, White can sooner or later gain a space advantage with d2-d4. When Black can play ...c5xd4, he's swapping a less valuable pawn — the disadvantage is that 1...c5 does less for Black's development.

2. Ne2

Philidor wrote in the 1750s that we shouldn't block the

bishop pawns because they're so useful for center control. On 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4, White gains space and time, and has unblocked the f-pawn, but at the cost of giving up center pawn for wing pawn. 2. Ne2 leaves the f-pawn free, while preserving the option of 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4. Mostly unhelpfully, Capablanca said 2. Ne2 was the best move against the Sicilian, but also said it wasn't important for us to know why.

2. ... d6

Black's desired move in the Sicilian is usually ...d5, but 2...d5 3. exd5 Nf6 4. d4 enables White a quicker development in a suddenly-open position (Keres-Opocensky, Prague 1943).

3. g3

White's offbeat 2. Ne2 meant the Moscow Variation — 3. Bb5+ — is impossible, but that's all that was lost.

3. ... Nc6

Black's units cooperate on the dark squares, but his kingside development lags, which results in poorer king safety.

4. Bg2

Naturally.

4. ... g6

The white king bishop was hemmed in by the e2-knight, so it developed by fianchetto. The

black king bishop is blocked by three pawns, so it also fianchettoes, in order to develop “outside the pawn chain”.

5. c3

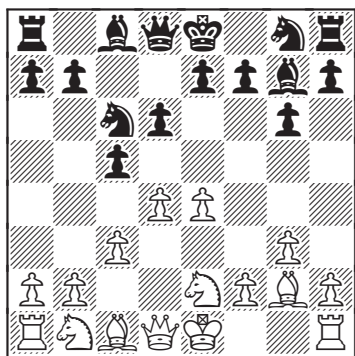
In event of d2-d4 c5xd4, White can recapture with a pawn. In the same spirit, 2. c3 is a good move against the Sicilian, but there White is undeveloped.

5. ... Bg7

It’s a little strange that even though all of Black’s moves were designed to grab the central black squares, White has no difficulty achieving d2-d4.

6. d4

For getting two pawns into the center, the great chess teacher Purdy would say White has a leg up—in other words, advantage.



6. ... e5

A game from the 2007 Minnesota state championship began 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d3 g6 4. g3 Bg7 5. Bg2 e5 6. Nbd2 Nge7 7. O-O O-O 8. c3 d6. The annotator wrote: “Arguably, the Botvinnik Triangle responds well to the King’s Indian Attack”. In the Minnesota game, White didn’t play as actively

with his d-pawn. From d4, White can swap pawns, which shows Black’s weakness on the d-file .

7. dxc5

On 7. dxc5, Black is not restricted to one recapture. Perhaps White saw some annoyance in 7...Nxe5 followed by ...Bg4.

7. ... dxc5

Otherwise Black is a pawn down — maybe even two — for nothing.

8. O-O

The simplest developing move. If 8...Qxd1, then 9. Rxd1 gains time. The side who wins a materially-equal exchange is the side whose pieces develop as result of the recapture.

8. ... Be6

Black has the same notion — 9. Qxd8 Rxd8 gains a move — but he’s still neglecting the kingside.

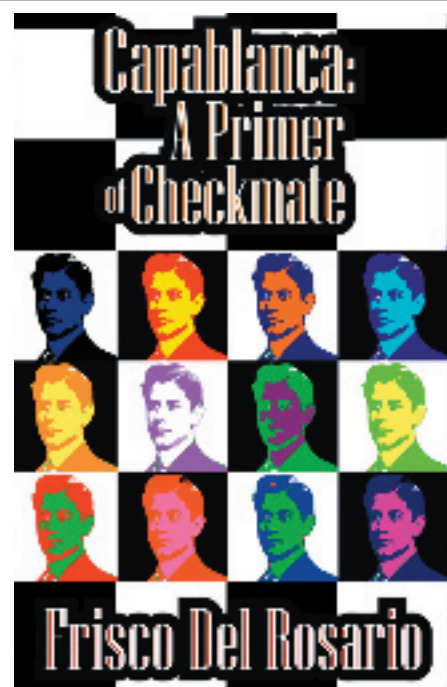
9. Be3

Whenever possible, make a good developing move

“Frisco Del Rosario describes and explains the great games of Capablanca in a very entertaining style.” – GM Peter Biyiasas

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In this groundbreaking work, chess coach and author Frisco Del Rosario shines a long-overdue light on a neglected aspect of Capablanca’s record: the attack against the enemy king. He illustrates how Capablanca used positional concepts to build up irresistible king hunts, embodying the principles of good play advocated by the unrivaled teacher, C.J.S. Purdy. The author also identifies an overlooked checkmate pattern – Capablanca’s Mate – that aspiring attackers can add to the standard catalogue in Renaud and Kahn’s *The Art of the Checkmate*.



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Not the Seeds of Another Capa Book

which threatens something. Grandmaster Fine wrote that in regard to the opening, but it applies to the whole game.

9. ... Qxd1

Black didn't like the looks of 9...b6 (9...Qb6 loses a pawn) 10. Qa4 Ne7 11. Rd1 Qc7 12. Na3 O-O 13. Nb5, but in spite of the pressure Black feels on the d-file, the position is mostly equal.

10. Rxd1

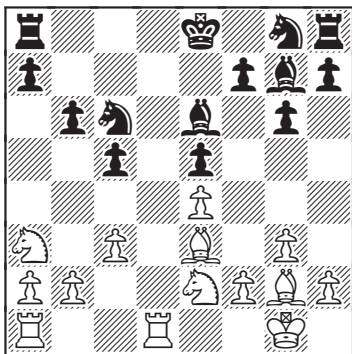
White has gained time.

10. ... b6

10...Bf8 is a rotten move. 10...c4 looks very bad, but White cannot immediately demonstrate that Black has overextended.

11. Na3

After 11. Nd2, there are no threats in sight, but there is some potential in 11. Na3 plus Nb5.



11. ... Rd8

If 11...a6, then 12. Rd6, and Black falls further behind in piece activity.

12. Nb5

White goes where the threats are. There's no hurry to move

the a1-rook — Black might play ...Rxd1+, and the queen rook activates for free.

12. ... Bc4

12...Rd7 was the best move.

Then 13. Rxd7 Kxd7 14. Rd1+ Kc8, and White's still searching for something concrete. Instead, Black was attracted to the bishop fork.

13. Nc7+

The neat aspect of White's centralizing maneuver is that it enables him to double his rooks.

13. ... Ke7

13...Kf8 keeps the black rooks disconnected longer.

14. Nd5+

The first real evidence of the weak squares left in the wake of Botvinnik's pawn triangle.

14. ... Ke6

Not 14...Bxd5, for 15. exd5 gives White a passed pawn while extending the range of White's suddenly-unopposed light bishop. If Black could complete his development in comfort, he might be pleased with his king activity.

15. Rd2

15. Bf3 isn't as mindful of the queen rook.

15. ... Nge7

15...Bxe2 doesn't disrupt White's development: 16. Rxe2 Nge7 17. Rd1. Terrible is 15...Nf6?? 16. Bh3+.

16. Nc7+

More precise than 16. Rad1. Black can answer 16...f5, under-

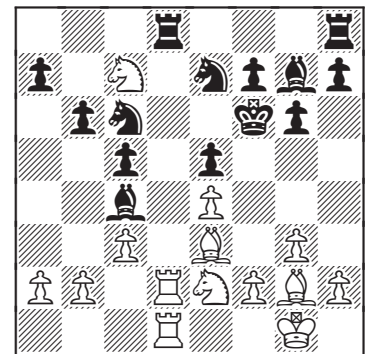
mining the knight, and the black king has a better flight square with 17. Nc7+ Kf7.

16. ... Kf6

The only move.

17. Rad1

Threatens to move in strongly with 18. Rd6+.



17. ... Rxd2

17...Bxe2?? 18. Rd6+ Rxd6 19. Rxd6 is mate.

18. Rxd2

18. Bxd2 is a horrible blunder.

18. ... Rd8

18...Bxe2 19. Rd6# was still in the air. With 18...Rd8, Black thinks he has finally completed his development, and he even threatens to win a piece by 19...Rxd2 plus 20...Bxe2.

19. Rxd8

Removing the guard.

19. ... Nxd8

Resigning was acceptable.

20. Ne8+

A surprising fork.

1-0