



THE 2000 VIRGINIA CLOSED tournament, held Labor Day weekend in Charlottesville, finished in a three-way tie for 1st between Daniel Miller, defending state champion Macon Shibut & former (1997) champion Steve Greanias. Each scored 4½-1½. Tie-breaks calculated out in the order listed above and thus Miller, who hails from the Tidewater region, is our new State Champion. Martin Hill scored 5-1 in the under 1800 section for clear 1st place there and with it the title Virginia Amateur Champion.



STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

It was the closest finish to a state championship in some years. "Even the tiebreaks were ridiculously close," TD Mike Atkins wrote in his weekly e-zine *ACC Online*. Indeed, what with the vagaries of tie-break formulae and games still in progress, Miller actually departed for home Monday night believing that his effort had fallen short. But when literally the last move of the tournament had been played, Ruixin Yang's determined defense of a rook and pawn ending versus former champion Rusty Potter proved just enough to tilt the calculations in Miller's favor.

Other prizewinners in the open section were Arthur Traldi (top expert) and Jeremy Hummer (top class A). Both scored 4-2. The amateur group saw a massive tie half a point behind Hill between Ilya Kremenchugskiy (who was also top Senior), Bill Keogh, Barry Quillon, Thomas Fore, Woody Harris, Allan Johnson, Michael Chedester, Andrew Miller, Nelson Lopez (top class C) & Daniel Ludwinski (top scholastic). Jerry Cano was top D. Roy Rhodes won the under 1200 prize on tiebreak over Derek O'Dell & David Drosdof. Whitney Wilson claimed the unrated prize. Ettie Nikolov the top woman.

Mark Johnson, of Barboursville, was elected VCF President at the federation's annual business meeting. In other election results, Roger Mahach retained his seat on the board of directors and Mickey Owens won the seat formerly held by Bill Hoogendonk.

ROAD TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP...

Daniel Miller's Games at the
2000 Virginia Closed

ALLAN RUFTY - DANIEL MILLER
QUEEN'S PAWN

1 d4 d5 2 Bf4 c5 3 Bxb8 Rxb8 4 dxc5 e6 5 Qd4
(White's opening looks dubious.) **Ne7 6 e3 Nc6**
7 Bb5 Qa5+ 8 Nc3 Bd7 9 Qf4 Rc8 10 Bxc6
Bxc6 11 b4 Qa3 12 Nge2 a5 13 b5 Bd7 14 c6
bxc6 15 b6 Qb4 16 Rb1 Qxf4 17 Nxf4 (17 exf4)
Bb4 18 Ne2 Rb8 19 O-O Ke7 (No reason to get
drawn into complications like 19...Rxb6 20 a3 (20
Na4) 20...Bc5 21 Na4 Rxb1 22 Rxb1 Bd6 23
Nc5!?) **20 Rb3 (20 b7!?) 20...Rxb6 21 Rfb1**
Rbb8 22 Na4 Bd6 23 Nb6 e5 24 Nc3 Bf5 25
R1b2 Ke6 26 h3 Rhd8 27 a4 (This gets his knight
in trouble and so leads to a further deterioration
of the position.) **27...Bb4 28 e4 Rxb6 29 exf5+**
Kxf5 30 Ne2 (30 Na2) 30...Rbb8 (The rook has
had an interesting career: Ra8-b8-c8-b8-b6-b8-
b6-b8...) **31 g4+ Ke6 32 Kg2 Bd6 33 f4 f6 34**
f5+ Kd7 35 Rb7+ Bc7 36 Nc1 Kd6 37 Nd3 g6
38 R2b3 Rxb7 39 Rxb7 gxf5 40 gxf5 Rg8+ 41
Kf1 Rg5 42 Nc5 Rxf5+ 43 Ke2 Kxc5 44 Rxc7
Rh5 45 Rf7 f5 0-1



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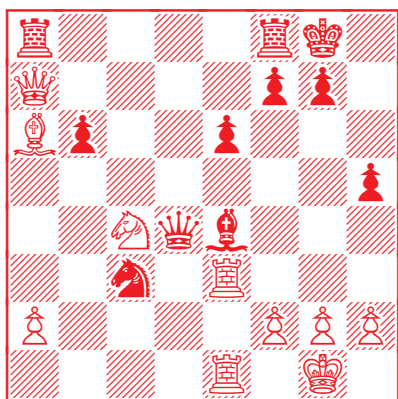
More details as they become available, but for now make
plans to be in **Virginia Beach, March 2-4, 2001**



DANIEL MILLER - ROBERT FISCHER

CARO-KANN

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6
6 Nf3 Bb4 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Qb3 (8 Bd2) O-O 9
Bd3 Qc7 10 Bd2 Nf4 11 Bxf4 Bxc3+ 12 bxc3
Qxf4 13 O-O Nd7 14 Rfe1 Nf6 15 Ne5 b6 16
Re3 Bb7 17 Qc2 Rac8 18 Rae1 h5 19 Qa4 Nd5
(but not 19...Rxc3? 20 Bh7+) 20 Rh3 Nxc3 21
Qd7 (21 Qxa7) 21...Be4 22 Ba6 Qd2 23 Rhe3
Rcd8 24 Qxa7 Qxd4 (Did Black have a simpler
route to a clear advantage by 24...Ra8 25 Qxb6
Nd5 ?) 25 Nc4 (25 Rxc3 is nicely refuted by
25...Qxc3! [25...Qxe5 26 Rce3] 26 Rxe4 Qc1+
27 Bf1 Rd1 28 Qa6 Qb1! threatening both the
rook at e4 and also 29...b5 cutting off the lifeline
to f1) 25...Ra8



26 Qc7? (With 26 Qxb6 Qxb6 27 Nxb6 Rxa6 28
Nc4 [not 28 Rxc3 Rxb6 29 Rxe4 Rb1+] it looks
like White recovers the piece(!), although he's still
a pawn down after 28...Rxa2 29 Rxc3) 26...Rxa6
27 Nd6 Nd5 28 Qb7 Nxe3 29 Qxa6 0-1

CHRIS BUSH - DANIEL MILLER

PETROFF

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 d3 d5 5 exd5
Nxd5 6 Bd2 O-O 7 Be2 Bxc3 8 bxc3 Nc6 9 O-
O Re8 (a reversed Ruy Lopez, Steinitz Defense)
10 Re1 Bg4 11 h3 Bh5 12 g4 Bg6 13 Bf1 Qd6
14 Nh4 Rad8 15 Nxc6 Qxc6 (We will get to see
the champion's versatility: in the first round he had
the bishop pair against knights, now he handles
the other side!) 16 Qf3 Nf6 17 Qg3 h5 18 g5
Nd5 19 Bg2 Nde7 20 Be4 Qd6 21 Qf3 g6 22
Rab1 b6 23 Qg2 Nb8 24 Qh2 Nd7 25 Rf1 Nc5

26 Bh1 Nf5 27 Rbe1 e4 28 Bf4 Qe6 29 Bxc7
Rd7 30 d4 Na4 31 Rxe4 Qxe4 32 Bxe4 Rxe4
33 Be5 Nxc3 34 Qg2 Nh4 35 Qh1 Rd8 36 Kh2
Rc8 37 Bg3 Nf5 38 d5? (a blunder; 38 Re1 was
called for, eg, 38...Rxe1 39 Qxe1 Nxd4 40 Qe7)
38...h4 39 Qf3 hxg3+ 40 fxg3 Re3 41 Qg4 Nxd5
42 c4 Rxc3 43 Qe4 Nde3 44 Rf2 Rxc4 45 Qe8+
Kg7 46 Qe5+ Kh7 47 Qf6 Rxh3+ 0-1

DANIEL MILLER - JUDAH BROWNSTEIN

SICILIAN

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 Qxd5 4 d4 e6 5 Nf3 Nf6
6 Be2 Nc6 7 O-O cxd4 8 cxd4 Be7 9 Nc3 Qd6
10 Nb5 Qd8 11 Bf4 Nd5 12 Bg3 O-O 13 Bc4
a6 14 Bxd5 exd5 15 Nc7 Ra7 16 Qb3 Be6
(16...Bd6 17 Bxd6 Qxd6 18 Qb6 f6 Lautier-
Polgar, Linares 1994) 17 Qb6 Bd6 18 Bxd6
Qxd6 19 Ne5 Qb4 20 Qxb4 Nxb4 21 Nxe6 fxe6
22 a3 (22 Rfc1) 22...Nc6 23 Nxc6 bxc6 24 Rac1
Rc7 25 f4 (The ending is very unpleasant for Black
with his three weaknesses.) 25...Kf7 26 Rc5 Ke7
27 g3 Kd6 28 b4 g6 29 Kg2 Rb7 30 Rfc1 Rc8
31 Kf3 h6 32 R1c2 Rbc7 33 Kg4 Ke7 34 Ra5
Ra8 35 b5! Rb8 36 bxc6 Rb6 37 Rac5 Kd6 38
h4 Rb3 (38...Rbxc6 39 Rxc6+ Rxc6 40 Rxc6+
Kxc6 41 h5 breaks through to win on the kingside)
39 R2c3 Rxc3 (39...Rb2) 40 Rxc3 Ke7 41 h5

VIRGINIA CHESS Newsletter

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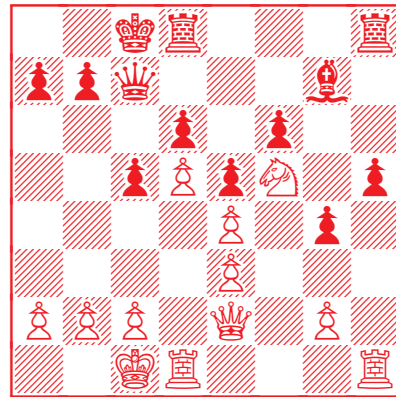
Kf6 42 Rc1 (tempo move - if Black's king backs away then Kh4 followed by g4-g5) **42...gxh5+ 43 Kxh5 Kf5 44 Kxh6 Kg4 45 Kg6 Kxg3 46 Kf6 Kxf4 47 Kxe6 Ke4 48 Kd6 Rc8 49 Rd1 1-0**

DANIEL MILLER - ARTHUR TRALDI

PIRC

1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 g6 4 Be2 c6 5 h4 h5 6 Nh3 Bxh3 7 Rxh3 Qa5 (threatens e4) **8 Bd2 Qb6** (and now d4) **9 Bf4 Qa5** (Traldi, who was leading the tournament at this point, offered a draw .) **10 Bd2 Qc7 11 Bg5 Nbd7 12 Qd2 Bg7 13 O-O-O Ng4 14 Bxg4 hxg4 15 Rhh1 f6 16 Be3 O-O-O 17 Ne2 e5 18 d5 c5 19 Ng3 Nb6 20 h5!** (Allowing ...Nc4 but envisaging a pawn formation where White's knight will be the

dominant piece.) **20...Nc4 21 Qe2 Nxe3 22 fxe3! gxh5 23 Nf5!**

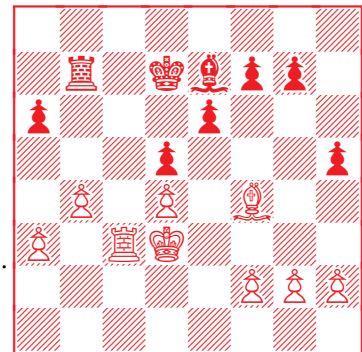


23...Kb8 24 Rh4 Bh6 25 Rdh1 Qf7 26 Ng3 f5 27 Rxh5 f4 28 Qf1! Qf6 29 Nf5 Bg5 30 Kd1?! (30 Rxh8 Rxh8 31 Rxh8+ Qxh8 32 Nxd6 fxe3 33 Kd1 looks safe enough) **30...Rxh5 31 Rxh5 fxe3 32 Qh1** (32 Qe2 Δ Qxg4) **32...g3 33 Rh7 Qg6?** (a collapse, tossing away a decisive tempo.) **34 Rg7 Qf6 35 Qh7 1-0**

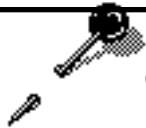
STEVE GREANIAS - DANIEL MILLER

CARO-KANN

1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 cxd5 cxd5 4 exd5 Qxd5 5 Nc3 Qa5 6 d4 Nf6 7 Nf3 e6 8 Bd3 Be7 9 O-O O-O 10 Ne5 Nc6 11 Nxc6 bxc6 12 Be3 Ba6 13 a3 Bxd3 14 Qxd3 Rfd8 15 b4 Qh5 16 Ne4 (For whatever it's worth, Steve originally wrote 16 h3 on his scoresheet but then changed his mind.) **16...Nxe4 17 Qxe4 Qd5 18 Qxd5 cxd5 19 Rfc1 Rdc8 20 Kf1 Kf8 21 Ke2 Ke8 22 Kd3 Kd7 23 Bf4 h5 24 Bd2 Rab8 25 Bf4 Rxc1 26 Rxc1 Rb7 27 Rc3 a6 ½-½**



Black has a much better bishop but White has the queenside majority, which promises an outside passed pawn. Miller decided he risked more than he stood to gain by continuing. Events proved him right!



Check Your Labels!

From the Desk of the Membership Coordinator:

Keeping memberships current is my top priority. At the recent VCF annual meeting in Charlottesville I briefed the board on the state of our membership. Dues paying memberships are down by close to 10% from this time last year. The most significant drop is in the scholastic area; the trend is for juniors to join and then, after a year, not renew. The core membership—those reading this message—continue to renew annually at tournaments. Sometimes memberships lapse and members miss a few issues of *Virginia Chess*. As a non-profit organization we do not have the financial means to contact each member by mail to remind them of a membership about to expire, but your mailing label provides the information you need to make sure you stay current. It looks like this:

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Please make note of your expiration date. At least 30 days beforehand, take the time to renew. If you are online, you can email me and ask to be put on an email notification list. It's private and not shared with anyone. But in any case, do renew. Your membership dues make possible what is, in many peoples' opinion, one of the finest state newsletters available.

Thank You,
 Roger Mahach



Time pressure to produce this issue of *Virginia Chess* as soon after the state championship as possible precludes a more in-depth coverage of the tournament here. However, next issue will feature a full review of the event by Arlington master Steve Mayer. And for now we have this appetizer...

Ending a creative Drought

by Steve Mayer

I PLAYED IN THREE major tournaments in 2000 between May and July. Each was a 9 round "International Open" format and I had the opportunity of playing, among others, two top Grandmasters and two International Masters. Unfortunately, in none of these tournaments did I have a good sporting result. My rating quickly dropped to its floor of 2200 and — distressingly — stayed there. I didn't score even a draw against a higher rated opponent. Worse, I lost and drew with a number of A and B class players, which is hardly the sort of thing that a "USCF Original Life Master" is supposed to do. Finally — and least fun of all — I didn't play a single game that satisfied me creatively, ie, something to show off when chessplayers get together and share games.

This all changed in the third round of the Virginia Closed Championship.

Peter Kurucz moved to the Northern Virginia area about five years ago. I met him shortly thereafter when he generously volunteered help at an after school chess club that I taught on behalf of the US Chess Center. Among the club members were his twin sons and, for a while at least, their little sister. Nonetheless, Peter and I had never so much as skittled or analyzed together before this game. While his rating is momentarily down after a year of poor results, it was not so long ago that Peter was challenging to become a master, with a rating of 2175 or so. His intrinsic ability is certainly that high, so I anticipated a tough fight. I got exactly that and for the first time in nearly a year I played a game where I can say, "Hey check this out!"

PETER KURUCZ - STEVE MAYER
MODERN

1.e4 g6

I used the Pirc/Modern a lot back in the 1980s before I became a convinced Sicilian player. In general, my results were either feast or famine: I'd play a wonderfully conceived strategic masterpiece or suffer a horrible drubbing against someone rated 200 points lower. Some of these losses barely lasted 20 moves.

In fact, it seems even grandmasters experience a similar tendency with this opening! If my somewhat faulty memory serves me correctly, I abandoned the Pirc/Modern after an exciting loss to James Brown in the 1991 Buffalo Open. This was only the third time or so I'd used it since, and it was like running into an old flame on the street and catching up over a cob of joe at Starbucks.

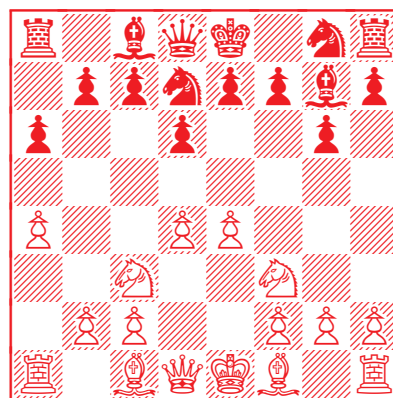
2.d4 Bg7 3.Nf3 d6 4.Nc3 a6!?

There was a time when this was considered avant-garde. Nowadays it's recognized as a playable approach; my database has about 200 games with this position. Another interesting line is 4...c6, while 4...Nf6 leads to a standard (read: less interesting) Pirc Defense.

5.a4!?

This used to be considered mediocre; the mutual a-pawn moves should benefit Black as he may use b4 for a knight while White doesn't have b5.

5...Nd7 ?!/?





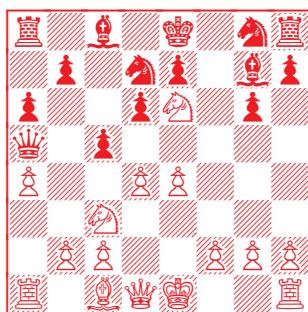
Nunn and McNab's authoritative *The Ultimate Pirc* (1998) doesn't even mention this move. Drawbacks include the fact that the knight won't hop into the weakened b4 square and it's possible to lose control of e6 in radical fashion, as we'll discuss in the next note. *The Ultimate Pirc* gives 5...Bg4 as the main line, while Benjamin, Ivkov and Timman are among the GMs who have played 5...b6, which leads to substantially similar play as our game. However, the superiority of 5...b6 over 5...Nd7 is clear, as Black needn't endure the legitimate concerns about Bf1-c4-f7+ that arise here immediately.

Instead, Atkins - Mayer, Maryland 1986 varied with 5...Nf6 6.h3 0-0 7.Be2 Nc6 8.Be3 Re8! 9.Qd2 e5 10.d5 Nd4! 11.Nxd4 exd4 12.Bxd4 Nxe4 13.Nxe4 Rxe4 14.Bxg7 Kxg7 15.0-0 Qf6 (≤ as Black has the better bishop and his heavy pieces are more active) 16.c3 Bd7 17.b4 Rae8 18.Bd3 R4e5 19.c4 h6 20.b5? Bxh3! 21.gxh3 Qf3 22.Kh2 Rh5 23.Bf5 Rxf5 24.Qb2+ Kh7 25.Ra3 Qf4+ 26.Rg3 Re3 27.Qd2 Rxg3 28.Qxf4 Rxh3+ 29.Kxh3 Rxf4 30.b6 cxb6 31.Rb1 Rxc4 32.Rxb6 Rxa4 33.Rxb7 Kg7 34.Rb6 Rd4 35.Rxd6 Kf8 36.Rxa6 Rxd5 37.Ra7 Re5 38.Kg3 Re7 39.Ra8+ Kg7 40.Ra6 f5 41.Kh4 Re4+ 42.Kg3 g5 0-1. This was a last round game and allowed me to win or tie for 1st in a long-forgotten tournament. Sorry, Mike!

6.Bc4! e6

Both I and theory should probably have paid more attention to 6...c5!?, which leads to really fascinating complications. There are two main moves; the following lines stem from a collaboration between my analysis engine with that of the tactical monster *Fritz 5*:

(a) 7.Bxf7+!? Kxf7
8.Ng5+ Ke8 9.Ne6 Qa5
with the division:



(a1) 10.Nxg7+?! Kf7 11.Nh5 gxh5 12.Qxh5+ Kf8 13.d5 offers White compensation as he can aim for f2-f4 and e4-e5. Still, a piece is a piece and *Fritz* assesses the position as a shade better for Black.

(a2) Far more dangerous is 10.Bd2!? Δ Nd5. For instance, Black is summarily executed after 10...Nf8? 11.Nd5 Qxd2+ 12.Kxd2! (exact and crushing) Nxe6 13.Nb6 Rb8 14.Nxc8 Rxc8 15.Qg4+. Nonetheless, Black appears to have a playable enough game after 10...Bh6! 11.f4! Qb6! (but not 11...Bxf4 12.Nxf4! cxd4 13.Nb5 +-) 12.Nd5 Qa7 13.Ndc7+ Kf7 with another division:

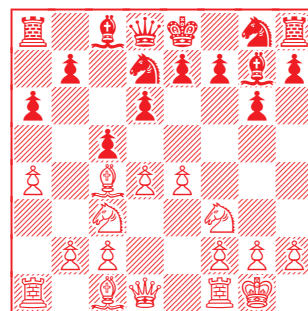
(a21) 14.Nxa8 Kxe6!? (14...Qxa8 15.d5 is similar to the next line) 15.Nc7+ Kf7 16.e5 offers White some advantage at 8 ply— *Fritz*.

(a22) 14.Nd8+ Kf8 15.Nxa8 (15.Nde6+ allows White to take a perpetual check if he wishes, thus rendering 6...c5!? questionable as a winning attempt) 15...Qxa8 16.Ne6+ (Black is fine after 16.c3 b6!) 16...Kf7 17.d5 Ndf6 and *Fritz* prefers Black at a depth of 9 ply. It was Steinitz, I believe, who compared an opponent's knight at e6 to a rusty nail in the knee. But here it may prove a case of an "Overrated Piece" — a concept I discuss in *Bishop vs Knight: The Verdict* (Batsford 1997).

I'll mention that there are also very interesting alternatives to 10 Bd2!?, but they *really* would start to take us far afield, so the reader is urged to analyze them herself as a means of improving her analytical, tactical and defensive abilities.

(b) Recalling that "the threat is stronger than the execution," 7.0-0!? recommends itself, gaining a tempo for the attack inasmuch as Black lacks a safe developing move. Again we face a division:

(b1) 7...Nb6? aims to regain control of e6 but White can wrest it away again with 8.Bxf7+! Kxf7 9.dxc5 Nd7 (9...Bxc3 10.bxc3 Nd7 11.Ng5+ Ke8





12.Ne6 Qa5 13.cxd6 is also crushing) 10.Ng5+ Ke8 11.Ne6 Qa5 12.Nd5 +-

(b2) 7...cxd4 8.Bxf7+! (8.Nxd4 Ngf6 transposes to an acceptable Sicilian Dragon) 8...Kxf7 9.Ng5+ Ke8 10.Ne6 dxc3! (10...Qa5 11.Nd5 produces decisive multiple threats) 11.Nxd8 Kxd8 12.bxc3 Bxc3 13.Ra3 Bg7 ∞

Abstractly, three minor pieces versus a queen is considered favorable for the minor pieces, but this position is such a mess — the queen likes to attack multiple weaknesses — that I'll cop out with the infamous "unclear" and leave it at that! *Fritz* doesn't point out an immediate win for either side and even prefers Black, although not to a large degree.

What I find most intriguing about the position after 6...c5!? is Black's resiliency. A generation ago the move would have been considered losing practically out of hand, but now the man-machine tandem can demonstrate that matters are hardly so cut and dried.

7.0-0 Ne7 8.Re1 (8.a5 looks to me to be superior as 8...b6 9.axb6 yields White the better pawn structure after either recapture. In that case, perhaps 7...b6 is a better move; which further suggests that White should prefer 7.a5... Retrograde analysis can be a wonderful thing!) **8...b6 9.Be3** (There's no point to 9. Bg5 as Black is likely to play ...h6 anyway, to ensure that he retains his king bishop and not castle into a mechanical but dangerous and risk-free attack.) **9...Bb7 10.Qd2 h6!** (White gets a pleasant game free of charge after 10...0-0?! 11.Bh6) **11.b4**

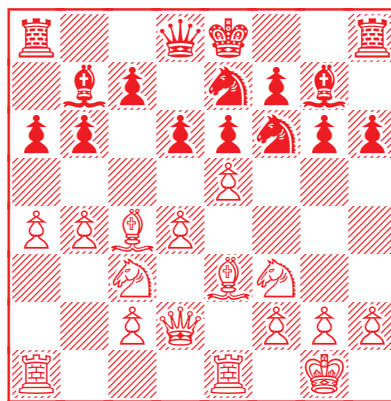
I half expected this move, which is designed to prevent or discourage ...c5. Its drawback is the weakening of the queenside, which will prove quite evident later. Each player has now moved his a-pawn and b-pawn but I think Black benefits more. His moves are part of a development scheme, whereas White spends the two tempi solely as a non-developing method of retaining a central space advantage. Perhaps these tempi could be spent in a more constructive manner. Of

course, that sends White all the way back to move 5, and a completely different type game would be the topic of discussion.

11...Nf6 12.e5

12.Bd3 d5 13.e5?? looks natural but drops a piece after 13...Ne4 14.Bxe4 dxe4 15.Nh4 g5 and the knight has no squares! 13.exd5 is better but 13...Nexd5 14.Nxd5 Nxd5 should be fine for Black as he picks up the bishop pair.

Another approach is 12.d5, when attempting the tactic known as "the fork trick" by 12...Nxe4? loses to 13.Nxe4 exd5 14 Bd4! Better to play 13...Bxa1 14.Rxa1 Nf5 15.Qc3 e5 16.Bc1, but that's a *big* edge for White. He would probably win in the middlegame. However, Black has two sound methods. He can try 12...exd5! 13.exd5 Kf8, with an obscure position; or he has the more standard 12...e5 13.h3 (to prevent 13...Ng4) g5 resembling a so-called "strong point defense" (of e5, that is) in the Ruy Lopez.



12...Nfd5?!

It's sad but true: I completely overlooked 12...Ng4! with definite advantage for Black:

(a) 13.exd6 Qxd6 (also 13...cxd6 14.Be2 Nxe3 is fine, securing Black the bishops and a better pawn structure) 14.Bf4 Qxb4 15.Be2 Bxf3 16.Bxf3 Bxd4 17.Re4 c5 with a comfortably winning position.

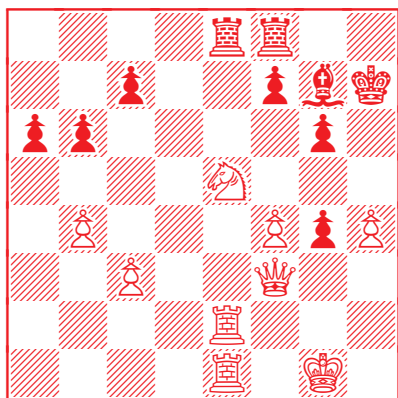
(b) 13.Bd3 Bxf3! 14.gxf3 (14.exd6?? Qxd6 15.gxf3 Qxh2+) 14...dxe5 -+

(c) 13.Bf4 dxe5 14.Nxe5 Nxe5 15.Bxe5 Bxe5



16.Rxe5 Nc6 17.Re4 Nxb4 18.Re2 offers White some compensation. For sure 18...0-0? would be a mistake as 19.Qxh6! Qxd4 —*hanging pieces alert!*— 20.Rxe6! is perpetual check. (But not 20.Bxe6? Qxc3 21.Qxg6+ Qg7 winning.) A superior defense is 18...Qd6 19.Rae1 0-0-0 20.Ne4 Bxe4 21.Rxe4 a5 22.c3 Nd5, when Black has the advantage but a long struggle lies ahead.

13.Nxd5 Nxd5 14.Rad1 Rc8 (Nimzowitsch termed this sort of maneuver a “mysterious rook move”. Black may sneak in ...c5. It’s also useful to have c7 protected in the event that the center files open up and a White rook reaches the 7th rank in the ending.) **15.Bb3** (Suggesting that he’s going to bash through the center with c4 and d5) **Qe7!** (Drawing a bead on b4) **16.c3** (Black’s better after 16.c4 Nxe3 17.Rxe3 0-0) **16...Nxe3 17.Qxe3 0-0 18.d5?** (Pete aims to open the game for his heavy pieces but he apparently overlooked my 22nd move.) **18...exd5 19.Bxd5 Bxd5 20.Rxd5 Qe6! 21.Rd2?** (This is the real mistake. 21 c4 is better, with only a minor disadvantage.) **21...dxe5 22.Nxe5 Qb3! 23.Rde2** (23.Nc6 Kh7 is also ≠) **23...Rce8** (The right rook; Black wishes to keep f7 covered.) **24.Qg3 Qxa4 25.f4** (Now Black enjoys a big edge but I had less than 3 minutes to make the control at move 30 and White does have some practical chances on the kingside.) **25...Qb5** (Bringing the queen back into action on the 4th rank and the a6-f1 diagonal.) **26.Qf3 Kh7 27.h4** (A scary move in time pressure.) **h5 28.g4 hxg4**



Fritz offers 28...f6 29.c4 (29 Nd3? Rxe2 30.Rxe2 hxg4 -+) 29...Qxb4 30.Nxg6! Qxe1+! 31.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 32.Kf2 Rfe8 33.Ne5! fxe5 34.Kxe1 exf4+ 35.Kd1 hxg4 36.Qxg4 Rf8 37.Qh5+ Kg8 38.Qd5+ Rf7 39.Qa8+ Kh7 40.Qxa6 f3 ≠ but there’s simply no way to analyze such a variation in time pressure. In fact, I’m surprised White doesn’t have a simple perpetual check on the light squares somewhere in there!

29.Qxg4 Bxe5 30.Rxe5 Rxe5

Here Pete did something very classy. I had stopped taking score a few moves before and had resorted to using check marks to count moves. Somewhere I had contrived to leave out a pair and was prepared to blitz out my 31st move, which could have serious ramifications in such a complex position. Pete realized what had happened and, without my asking, volunteered “That’s 30.” Thank you!

31.fxe5

Black’s also winning after 31.Rxe5 Qd3 32.h5 Rg8

31...Qd3 32.e6?

White had to find some way to hang tight here. The text just hangs the house.

32...fxe6 33.Qxe6 Qg3+ 34.Kh1 Qxh4+ 35.Kg1 Qg3+ 36.Kh1 Rf4

It looks as though Black mates with the witty 36...Rh8 37.Qf7+ Kh6, threatening 38...Kg5, but White can prolong a losing position with 38.Qe7.

37.Qd7+ Kh6 38. Qd2 Qg5! 39.Qg2 Rh4+ 0-1

I’d say this was an exciting game with many interesting strategical and tactical themes featured, both in the actual and possible play. I hope you had as much fun playing over it as I had playing, analyzing and writing about it.





ROBIN CUNNINGHAM won 1st place at the 2000 Charlottesville Open, held July 8th - 9th in, naturally, Charlottesville.

Cunningham's convincing 5-0 sweep left Neil Markovitz, Daniel Pomerleand, Robert Fischer & Peter Kurusz to split the 2nd/3rd prizes a full point behind. James Hare, Jamarl Thomas, William VanLear & Berry Quillon shared the A & B prizes. Stephen Styers & Manny Presicci were top class C. D was split between Joe Reid & Marshall McDaniel. Ken Knott won the Under 1000 prize. Philip Kidd, Donald Means, & Derek O'Dell topped the class E group. Shane East was top unrated. Andrew Miller, who will represent Virginia at this year's Denker Tournament of State Scholastic Champions, claimed the Scholastic book prize. 2nd place scholastic went to Jack Barrow. Ira Lee Riddle directed.

CHARLOTTESVILLE OPEN



WILLIAM VANLEAR - ROBIN CUNNINGHAM
SEMI TARRASCH

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 c5 4 e3 Nf6 5 Nf3 Nc6 6 Be2 dxc4 7 Bxc4 cxd4 8 exd4 Be7 9 0-0 0-0 10 Re1 b6 11 Bg5 Bb7 12 a3 Nd5 13 Bxe7 Ndxe7 14 Qd3 Na5 15 Ng5 Ng6 16 Nxe6 fxe6 17 Bxe6+ Kh8 18 d5 Nb3 19 Rad1 Nc5 20 Qg3 Qf6 21 b4 Nxe6 22 Rxe6 Qf5 23 Re3 Rad8 24 Rf3 Nf4 25 Qh4 g5 26 Qg3 Bxd5 27 Re3 Nh5 28 Qe5+ Qxe5 29 Rxe5 Bb3 30 Rde1 h6 31 h4 Nf4 32 Re7 Rd3 33 Rc7 Rf7 34 Rc8+ Kg7 35 hxg5 hxg5 36 Re5 Kf6 37 Ree8 Be6 38 Rc6 Rxc3 39 Rxe6+ Nxe6 40 Rxc3 Rc7 41 Rd3 Ke5 42 f3 Nd4 43 Re3+ Kd5 44 a4 a6 45 Re8 b5 46 axb5 axb5 47 Kf2 Rc4 48 Rg8 Ne6 49 g3 Rxb4 50 f4 gxf4 51 gxf4 Rxf4+ 52 Ke3 Rd4 53 Rb8 Kc4 54 Rc8+ Nc5 0-1

DAVID HULVEY - ROBERT FISCHER
CARO-KANN

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Bf5 4 Nc3 e6 5 g4 Bg6 6 Nge2 f6 7 Nf4 fxe5 8 Nxg6 hxg6 9 dxe5 Nd7

10 Bf4 Bc5 11 Bd3 Ne7 12 Qe2 Qb6 13 0-0-0 Bxf2 14 Rdf1 Bd4 15 h4 Bxc3 16 bxc3 Qa5 17 Rh3 Nc5 18 Bg5 Qxa2 19 Rhf3 Qa3+ 20 Kd1 Nxd3 21 Qxd3 0-0-0 22 Rf7 Rd7 23 Rxg7 Re8 24 Rff7 Qc5 25 Be3 Qa3 26 Qd4 b6 27 Bc1 Qa1 28 Qb4 c5 29 Qb5 d4 30 c4 d3 31 Rxe7 dxc2+ 32 Kxc2 Qa2+ 33 Bb2 Rxe7 34 Qc6+ Kd8 35 Rg8+ Re8 36 Rxe8+ Kxe8 37 Qxe6+ Kd8 38 Qf6+ Kc7 39 Qf4 Qa4+ 40 Kc3 Rd4 41 Qf7+ Kb8 42 Bc1 Qb4+ 43 Kc2 Qxc4+ 44 Qxc4 Rxc4+ 45 Kb1 Rxg4 46 Bg5 Rxg5 47 hxg5 Kc7 48 Kc2 Kc6 0-1

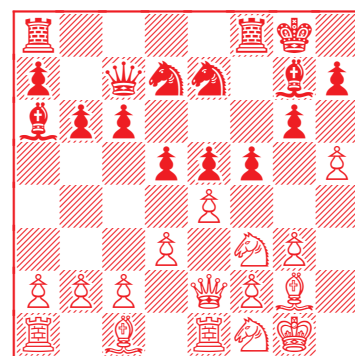
PETER KURUCZ - JOE FARIES
FRENCH

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 Nf6 4 e5 Nfd7 5 Bd3 c5 6 c3 Nc6 7 Ne2 Qb6 8 Nf3 cxd4 9 cxd4 Qb4+ 10 Qd2 Nb6 11 0-0 Qxd2 12 Nxd2 Bd7 13 a3 Be7 14 b4 0-0 15 Bb2 Na4 16 Bc1 Rab8 17 Nb3 b5 18 Rb1 a6 19 Nc5 Nxc5 20 bxc5 Na5 21 f4 Nc4 22 f5 exf5 23 Bxf5 Bc6 24 e6 f6 25 Bd3 a5 26 Bxc4 bxc4

27 Bd2 a4 28 Bb4 Rfe8 29 Rbe1 Rb7 30 g4 Bd8 31 Ng3 Rbe7 32 Nf5 Rxe6 33 Nd6 Rxe1 34 Bxe1 Re3 35 Bb4 g6 36 Nc8 Re6 37 Kf2 Bc7 38 h3 Kg7 39 Nd6 Bxd6 40 cxd6 Kf7 41 Bc5 Re8 42 Rb1 Ke6 43 Rb6 Rc8 44 Ke3 h6 45 Ra6 Bd7 46 Ra7 Rf8 47 Rb7 f5 48 gxf5+ Rxf5 49 Rb8 Rh5 50 Rg8 Rxh3+ 51 Kd2 Kf7 52 Rh8 c3+ 53 Kc1 Bf5 54 Rf8+ Kxf8 55 d7+ Kg7 56 Bf8+ Kh7 57 Kd1 Bxd7 0-1

BILL KEOGH - RUSTY POTTER
CARO-KANN

1 e4 c6 2 d3 d5 3 Nd2 e5 4 Ngf3 Qc7 5 g3 g6 6 Bg2 Bg7 7 0-0 Ne7 8 Re1 0-0 9 Qe2 Nd7 10 Nf1 b6 11 h4 Ba6 12 h5 f5





13 hxg6 fxe4 14 gxh7+ Kh8 15 Ng5 Qd6 16 Bh3 exd3 17 cxd3 Nc5 18 Qh5 Qf6 19 f4 Nxd3 20 Rxe5 Nxe5 21 fxe5 Qf2+ 22 Kh1 Bxf1 23 Bf4 Be2 24 Bg4 Bxg4 25 Qxg4 Qxb2 26 Rg1 Bxe5 27 Qe6 Bxf4 28 Nf7+ Rxf7 29 Qxf7 Bg5 0-1

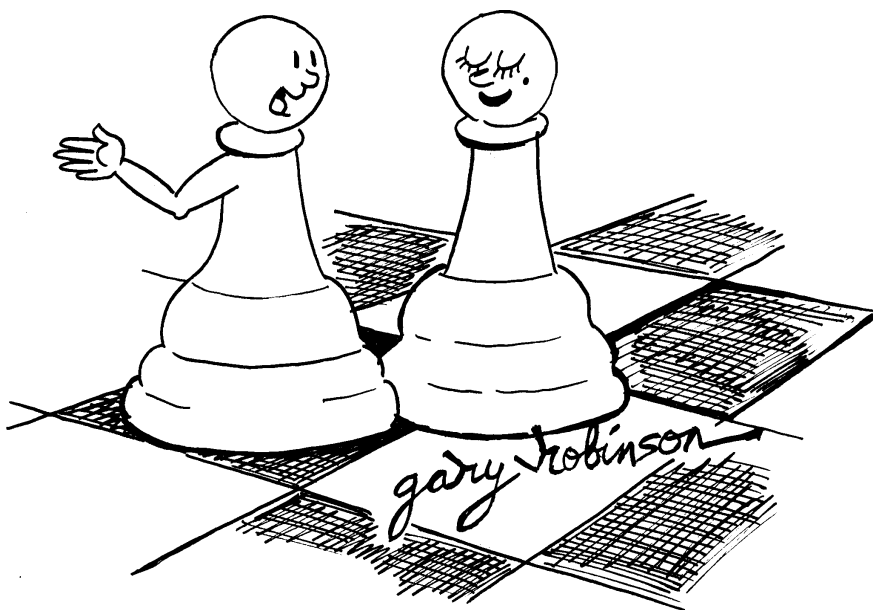
JACK BARROW - JOHN BNINSKI
KINGS GAMBIT

1 e4 e5 2 f4 d6 3 Nf3 exf4 4 Bc4 Nc6 5 d4 g6 6 Bxf4 Qe7 7 0-0 Bg7 8 c3 Nf6 9 Bg5 0-0 10 Nbd2 Re8 11 Bxf6 Bxf6 12 Nb3 Bg4 13 Qd2 Rf8 14 Rae1 Rae8 15 Qf2 Nd8 16 e5 dxe5 17 Nxe5 Bxe5 18 Rxe5 Qd7 19 Nc5 Qc6 20 Bd5 Qb5 21 c4 Qxc5 22 Rxe8 Qd6 23 Bxf7+ Kg7 24 Rxf8 Qxf8 25 Qf6+ Kh6 26 Rf4 Qxf7 27 Qh4+ Bh5 28 Rxf7 Nxf7 29 Qf4+ Kg7 30 Qxc7 Be2 31 c5 Bc4 32 Qxb7 Bxa2 33 Qxa7 Bd5 34 Qd7 Bc4

35 c6 Ba6 36 c7 Kf8 37 c8Q+ Bxc8 38 Qxc8+ Ke7 39 d5 h5 40 Qc7+ Ke8 41 d6 Nd8 42 Qe7mate 1-0

JAMES WOOD - WILLIAM
VANLEAR
CARO-KANN

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Bf5 4 Nf3 e6 5 Be2 c5 6 c3 Nc6 7 0-0 Rc8 8 Be3 h5 9 Nbd2 Nh6 10 h3 cxd4 11 cxd4 Be7 12 Qb3 Rc7 13 Rac1 Bg6 14 Bb5 Nf5 15 Bxc6+ bxc6 16 Rc3 0-0 17 Rfc1 c5 18 dxc5 d4 19 Rd3 Nxe3 20 Rxd4 Nd5 21 c6 Qb8 22 a3 Qxb3 23 Nxb3 Rb8 24 Nfd2 Rb6 25 Ra4 Bg5 26 Rc5 Bxd2 27 Nxd2 Rxb2 28 Nc4 Rb1+ 29 Kh2 Ne7 30 Rb4 Rxb4 31 axb4 Rxc6 32 f3 Rxc5 33 bxc5 Nc6 34 g4 hxg4 35 hxg4 Bd3 36 Nb2 Be2 37 f4 Bxg4 38 Kg3 Be2 39 Kf2 Bb5 40 Ke3 0-1



"I hear that the b-file is rather pretty this time of year..."

16th

Emporia Open

October 7-8

Greensville Ruritan Club
Ruritan Rd (off of Hwy
58 west of Emporia)
Emporia, Virginia 23847

5SS, 40/90, SD/60. EF \$35 if rec'd by 10/8, \$40 at site. Free EF to unrated players (but no unrated prize). Players under age 19 may pay \$6 EF and play for book prizes. \$\$ 250-150-100, X (if no X wins place prize), A, B, C each \$75, D, E each \$50 (class prizes b/5 in class). Reg 9-9:45 am, rds 10-3-8, 9-2.



Significant refreshments provided!

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10 Grand Prix points



MORE THAN seventy-five enthusiastic parents and youngsters gathered to

participate in the 13th Metro Youth Scholastic Chess Tournament on Saturday, August 19. The event was sponsored by the Virginia Scholastic Chess Association and hosted by Lakeside Elementary School. Fifty five children played, twelve won trophies and nine were awarded medals. While it's quite a sight to see so many kids in one big room quietly concentrating on their strategies, it is no less satisfying to see parents and other volunteers pitching in to make it happen.

13TH METRO YOUTH SCHOLASTIC

Chess in the Summertime

by Peter Hopkins



First place in the high schools division went to Gabriel Young, visiting Virginia from Massachusetts, followed by Arjun Barua from J R Tucker High School and Philip Kidd from the Governor's School in Richmond. Hanover County's Joey Schools, Bryan Morgan from Richmond and Nathaniel Fletcher from Chesterfield County led the middle schools division. In the elementary schools division, Luray's Timothy Atkinson finished with a perfect score ahead of Ross Leskin and DeMarcus North, both of Richmond. Timothy's brother Joe was top Primary player with William Erickson and Lee Beauchamp of Henrico county the division's other trophy winners. It was quite a feat for William and Lee as both were competing in their first chess tournament.

The regular scholastic chess season gets underway at Henrico County's G H Moody Middle School on September 16. It is going to be a challenging year for teams from the Richmond metropolitan area as the Governor's School and Swift Creek Elementary School defend their state championship titles and Moody Middle School and Lakeside Elementary School strive to improve on their 2nd place performances in their divisions of the state championships.

Kaissa Chess Club

The first USCF tournament of the Kaissa Chess Club, at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (Boulevard & Grove, Richmond) was conducted on July 15th and proved a success, with 24 participants. Steve Chase won clear 1st place. He was followed by Walid Elgouhary, Jamarl Thomas and Brian Sumner, the latter claiming the class B prize. Other prizewinners were Krishan Sahni (class C), Ibrahim Kurtulus (E), Bobby Burstein (unr) and Jack Barrow (senior). Michael Neal directed with assistance from Bill Barrow.

11th DAVID ZOFCHAK MEMORIAL

November 18-19, 2000

Tidewater Community College, Virginia Beach

(Kempsville Bldg D, cafeteria)

5-SS, rd 1 G/2, rds 2-5 35/90, SD/1. **\$1150** (b/40 adult entries, 1st G, class prizes b/5 per class): 300-150, X (if no X is 1st or 2nd) A, B, C, D/E each 120, unr 100. Rds 10-2:30-7; 9-2:30. 1/2 pt bye avail rds 1-4. Reg 9-9:40 on 11/18. EF \$30 by 11/11, \$40 at site, over 2400 \$20 by 11/11, \$30 at site; over 2200 \$25 by 11/11, \$35 at site, discount deducted from any prize; scholastic (under 19, grade school) \$7 by 11/11, \$10 at site, book prizes only. USCF and VCF membership req'd, available at site. Hotel: Fairfield Inn By Marriott, 4760 Euclid Road, (757) 499-1935, call for rates/res. NS, NC, W. Directions to site: I-64 to SR-44. Take Independence Blvd S exit from SR-44. S Independence to Buckner Dr, turn left. Building D, "Kempsville", in the cafeteria.

Enter: Woodrow Harris, 1105 West End Drive, Emporia, VA 23847, (804)634-2725, fwh@3rddoor.com



Chess History...

BIRD, Henry Edward (1830-1908) and the BIRD OPENING

Henry Bird was an 1 e4 opening player for many years but around 1856 he began using 1 f4. This had been played much earlier by La Bourdonnais and St Amant. However, Bird used the move so consistently that his name became attached to it.



Bird was seldom among the winners in international tournaments. He was aggressive and strove for a win rather than settle for a draw. His opponents had to be wary of him if only because of his imagination. In September of 1866 he lost a match to Wilhelm Steinitz +5 -7 =5. Steinitz may well have been the world's best player at the time, having beaten Adolph Anderssen in a match just a month or so beforehand. In any case, this relatively narrow defeat was Bird's finest achievement in match play.

Here is one of Bird's quicky wins with the opening that bears his name:

HENRY BIRD - O GELBUHS
VIENNA 1873

1 f4 f5 2 e4 fxe4 3 d3 exd3 4 Bxd3 Nf6 5 Nf3 e6 6 Ng5 g6 7 h4 Bh6 8 h5 Bxg5 9 fxe6 Nd5 10 hxg6 Qe7 11 Rxh7 Rxh7 12 gxh7 Qb4+ 13 Kf1 Qh4 14 Bg6+ Ke7 15 Qh5 1-0.

Now is the time for a chess historian to step forward and confirm or deny the following claim from Anne Sunnucks' *Encyclopedia of Chess*. According to Le Lionnais, in his book *Les Prix de Beaute aux Echecs*, the first brilliancy prize ever awarded supposedly went to H E Bird for his game against Mason at New York in 1876. It was not a Bird Opening but nevertheless, here is the game.

HENRY BIRD - JAMES MASON
NEW YORK 1876
FRENCH

Notes by Macon Shibut

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 exd5 exd5 5 Nf3 Bd6 6 Bd3 0-0 7 0-0 h6 8 Re1 Nc6 9 Nb5 Bb4 10 c3 Ba5 11 Na3 Bg4 12 Nc2 Qd7 13 b4 Bb6

14 h3 Bh5 15 Ne3 Rfe8 16 b5 Ne7 17 g4 Bg6 18 Ne5 Qc8 19 a4 c6 20 bxc6 bxc6 21 Ba3 Ne4 22 Qc2 Ng5 23 Bxe7 Rxe7 24 Bxg6 fxe6 25 Qxg6 Nxe3+ 26 Kh2 Nf4 27 Qf5 Ne6 28 Ng2 Qc7 29 a5! Bxa5 30 Rxa5!

30...Rf8 (if 30...Qxa5 31 Ng6 Qc7+ 32 Kg1 and at the very least White will get two knights against a rook) 31 Ra6! Rxf5 32 gxf5 Nd8 33 Nf4 Qc8 34 Nfg6 Re8 (34...Qxa6 35 Nxe7+ Kh7 36 Nd7 looks dangerous; 34...Rc7!?) 35 Nxc6! Qc7+ (if 35...Nxc6 36 Rxe8+ Qxe8 37 Rxc6 the rook is immune and threatens to go to c8) 36 Nce5 Qxc3 37 Re3 Qd2 38 Kg2 Qxd4 39 f6 gxf6 40 Rxf6 Ne6 41 Rg3 Ng5 42 Ng4 Kg7 43 Nf4 Qe4+ 44 Kh2 Nh7 (It's a confusing position but White has everything in hand, eg, 44...Nf3+ 45 Rxf3 Qxf3 46 Nh5+) 45 Nh5+ Kh8 46 Rxh6 Qc2 47 Nh6 Re7 48 Kg2 d4 49 Ne5 Qc8 50 Ng6+ 1-0

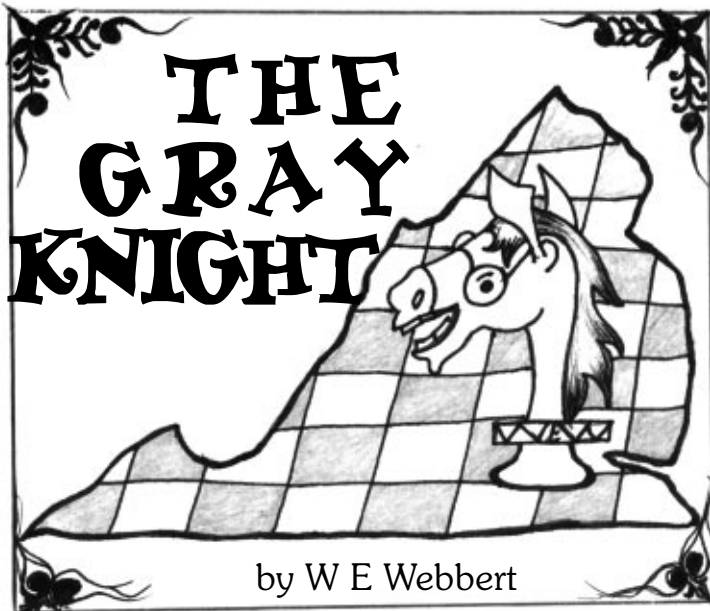
From the match with Steinitz:

HENRY BIRD - WILHELM STEINITZ
LONDON 1866

1 f4 e5 2 fxe5 d6 3 exd6 Bxd6 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 d4 Nc6 6 Bg5 Bg4 7 e3 Qd7 8 Bxf6 gxf6 9 Bb5 0-0-0 10 d5 Qe7 11 Bxc6 Qxe3+



Continued, page 21



This is a column devoted to Chess Playing Seniors. For sake of argument, let's say that's anyone over 55 years of age from this general area (DC-VA-MD) who can play (learn) chess. Please feel free to call me at (703) 591-2106 and inform me of your Senior Chess events, notable performances, memorable games, etc.

Upcoming Senior Chess events: Aside from the Atlantic and Eastern Opens (both held in Washington, DC), which you can read all about in *Chess Life*, the next big event for seniors in this part of the woods is the Matheson Memorial tourney. This tournament, held in memory of 1936 Virginia state champion Colonel Jack Matheson, is the club championship for the Arlington Senior Chess Club

(ASCC). It is divided into two sections with a trophy for each and there is no entry fee. The first through third rounds will be played at the Madison Senior Center on the 13th, 20th and 27th of November, 2000 starting around 10-10:30 am. It will continue into December, but that is another column! For more details contact Mr Ralph Belter at (703) 560-0595 or call me at (703) 591-2106.

Senior Chess Results: The four-round ASCC Gambit Tourney featured the From, Albin, Vienna and Staunton Gambits. With the time control set at game in 60 minutes (a blistering pace for seniors), a few mistakes were inevitable. Also, since no player knew exactly which Gambit would be mandated until they actually sat down for the round, it put the gambit essayers to a real test. The winner was Your Humble Reporter, with a score of 8-0. Mr Ted Mitchell finished second, with a score of 6-2.

Not to be overlooked (in the next column) will be the results of the NOVA Senior Olympics Chess tournament, which takes place in September in Fairfax county. You read all about it in our last column. (Of course you save all of your *Virginia Chess* issues, right?) Also we will include results from the ASCC blitz tournament scheduled for September 11. One may still obtain details on these tournaments by calling me at the number above, or those numbers cited in the previous column.



ASCC President Ralph Belter (right) with Mrs Gayle M Allain, Madison Center Director



Here are a couple of the critical (and hopefully interesting) games from the ASCC Gambit Tourney.

E BROWN - W E WEBBERT

VIENNA

1 e4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 f4 d5 4 fxe5 Nxe4 5 Nf3 Bg4 6 Be2 Bxf3 7 Bxf3 Qh4+ 8 g3 Nxc3 9 hxg3 Qxg3+ 10 Kf1 Bc5 11 Qe2 Nc6 12 Nb5 0-0-0 13 c3 Nxe5 14 d4 Nxf3 15 dxc5 Rhe8 16 Be3 Nd2+ 17 Qxd2 Rxe3 18 Rh2 Rf3+ 19 Rf2 Qh3+ 20 Kg1 Rg3+ 21 Rg2 Rxc2+ 22 Qxg2 Qxg2+ 23 Kxg2 c6 24 Nd6+ Kc7 25 Nxf7 Rf8 26 Nd6 b6 27 Re1 bxc5 28 Ne8+ Kd7 29 Nxc7? Rg8 30 Rg1 Rxc7+ 31 Kf2 Rf7+ 32 Kg3 h5 33 Kh4 Rh7 Time pressure put an end to scorekeeping here but Black won by centralizing the king and pushing pawns. 0-1

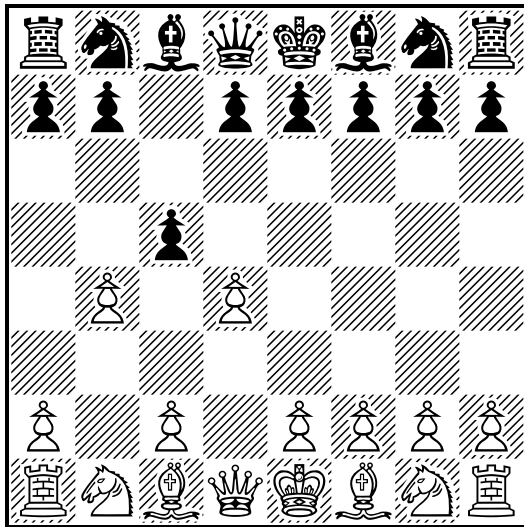
E BROWN - B BRAGDON

DUTCH

1 d4 f5 2 e4 fxe4 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bc4 d6 5 f3 Bf5 6 Be3 d5 7 Bb3 e6 8 Qd2 Nbd7 9 0-0-0 Bb4 10 g4 Bg6 11 h4 h6 12 h5 Bh7 13 g5 hxg5 14 Bxg5 Qe7 15 Qe3 Bxc3 16 Qxc3 Nb6 17 Nh3 0-0-0 18 Nf4 Rd6 19 Rhe1 Rc6 20 Qe3 Nc4 21 Bxc4 Rxc4 22 c3 Bf5 23 Rh1 Qf7 24 Ng6 Rxh5 25 Ne5 Qe8 26 Nxc4 dxc4 27 Bxf6 gxf6 28 fxe4 Bg4 29 Rxh5 Qxh5 30 Re1 f5 31 e5 Bf3 32 d5 Bxd5 33 Qxa7 Qg5+ 34 Kb1 b6 35 Qa4 Qg6 36 Qd1 f4+ 37 Ka1 Qf5 38 Qe2 f3 39 Qf2 Be4 40 a3 Qxe5 41 Qxf3 Bxf3 42 Rxe5 Bd5 43 Kb1 1/2-1/2



Ralp Belter presents prizes to the top two finishers at the ASCC Gambit Tournament, W E Webbert (left) and Ted Mitchell (right)



THE ZILBERMINTS BENONI: 1 d4 c5 2 b4!

by Lev Zilbermints

Part I: ITS ORIGIN AND 2...cxb4 3 a3

THE BENONI DEFENSE is a solid opening with a well-established reputation that attracts players of all classes. It can be equally suitable for positional and tactical play, and has been used by such players as Fischer, Karpov, and other leading grandmasters. The Benoni can be a way to avoid the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit and to chicken out into closed positions. The question for White is, how do you stop that? How to force Black into unfamiliar territory? Sure, there is the Sicilian, 2 e4. But that has been investigated back and forth, so unless you feel like memorizing 30-odd moves worth of grandmaster analysis, don't bother. Taking that into consideration, what is White to do?

On 19 February 1995, while having a break between rounds at the United States Amateur Team East, I invented the Zilbermints Benoni. The very next day, I used it to beat my old antagonist Ralph Neplokh in a blitz match: **1 d4 c5 2 b4! cb4 3 a3 Qa5 4 Qd2 Nc6 5 Bb2 e6 6 ab Bxb4+ 7 c3!** and White won a piece and game.

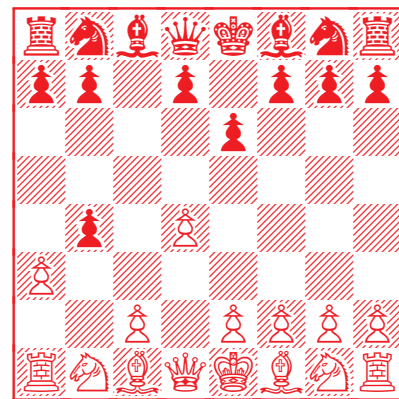
Please note that the main difference between my opening and the Sicilian Defense is the e-pawn. In the Sicilian it is on e4; here it either stays on its original square or goes to e3, protecting f2. This gives the line independent significance. Also, as

the reader will see, it is possible even to gambit the e-pawn, getting piece development and pressure as compensation.

After 1 d4 c5 2 b4! Black has three possible answers. They are A) 2...cxb4 3 a3, which may or may not transpose to the Sicilian Wing Gambit; B) 2...cxd4 3 Nf3 which transposes either into the Zilbermints Benoni or the Smith-Morra Gambit; C) other moves.

A) 2...cxb4 3 a3

A1) 3...e6

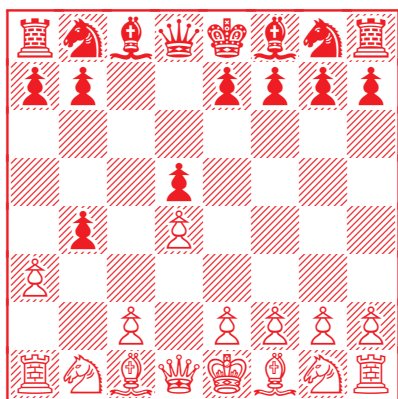


4 ab4 Bxb4 5 c3 Be7 6 Bf4 Nf6 7 e3 d6 8 Bd3 b6 9 Nf3 Bb7 10 0-0 Nbd7 11 Na3 a6 12 Qb3 0-0 13 Nc4 Qc7 14 Bg3 Bd5 15 e4 Nxe4 16



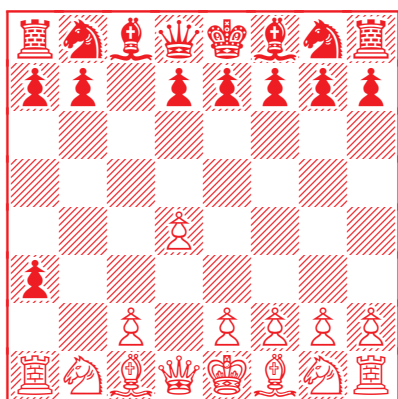
Bxe4 Bxe4 17 Ncd2 Bb7 18 c4 Nf6 19 Rfb1 Nd7 20 h4 Rab8 21 Qd3 Bc6? 22 Rxa6 Qb7 23 Raa1 Ra8 24 Rxa8 25 c5 dc 26 Nc4 and White eventually won, Zilbermints - Cohen, Marshall CC Blitz 1995.

A2) 3...d5



4 ab4 Bf5 5 c3 e6 6 Bf4 Bd6 7 e3 Bxf4 8 ef4 Qc7 9 Qd2 Nf6 10 f3 Nbd7 11 Na3 0-0 Here White blundered with 12 g4?? Nxc4! and lost in 21 moves, Zilbermints - Schwartz, US Amateur Team East 1997. However, 12 Bd3! still keeps the game alive.

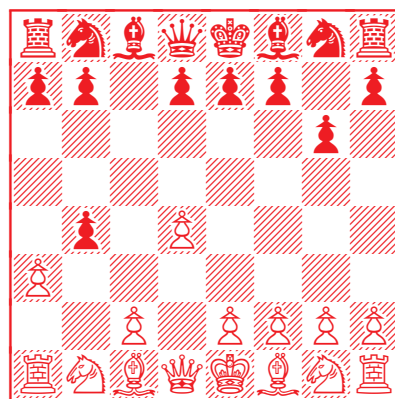
A3) 3...ba3



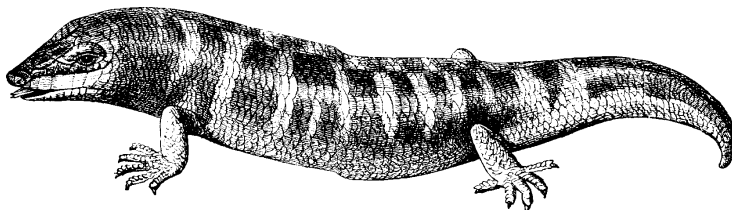
4 g3 This is sort of like a reversed Benko Gambit with the main difference being the d-pawn. 4...e6 5 Bg2 Nf6 6 Nxa3 Qa5+ 7 Bd2 Bb4 8 Nc4 Bxd2+ 9 Nxd2 Qc3 10 e3 Nc6 11 Ne2 Qb2 12 Rb1 Qa3 13 Nc4 Qe7 14 0-0 d5 15 Nd2 0-0 16 c4 b6 17 Nc3 Rd8 18 Qb3 Na5 19 Qa2 Ba6 20 Nb5 Bxb5 21 Rxb5 Rac8 22 c5 Nc4 23 Nxc4 dc4 24 Qxc4 Nd5 25 Bxd5 exd5 26 Qb4 h5 27

cb6 Qxb4 28 Rxb4 ab6 29 Rxb6 Rc2 30 Rfb1 Kh7 31 Kg2 g5 32 Rb7 Kg6 33 R7b5 g4 34 R5b2 Rc4? 35 Ra1 Kf4 36 Rb7 f6 37 Rb6 Rc2 38 Raa6 Rf8 39 Rd6 Rb8 40 Rxf6+ Ke3 41 Ra3 1-0 Zilbermints - D'Lugoff, Marshall CC 1996.

A4) 3...g6



4 ab4 e5 5 c3 Bg7 6 d5 d6 7 Be3 Ne7 8 g3 Bd7 9 Bg2 a6 10 Na3 Nf5 11 Bd2 0-0 12 e4 Ne7 13 Nc4 Bb5 14 Na3 Bd7 15 h4 h5 16 Bh3 f5 17 f3 fxe4 18 fxe4 Qb6 19 Qe2 Bxh3 20 Nxc3 Nd7 21 Nf2 Rf7 22 0-0 R8f8 23 Kg2 Nf6 24 Nc4 Qc7 25 Ne3 Qd7 26 c4 Qc8 27 Rac1 b6 28 c5! bc5 29 bc5 dc5 30 Nc4 Ne8 31 Nd3 Qc7 32 Ba5 Qb8 33 Nxc5 Rxf1 34 Rxf1 Rxf1 35 Qxf1 Qb5 36 Ne6 Nxd5 37 Nxc7 Qxc4?? 35 Qxc4! 1-0, Zilbermints - Labate, Westfield NJ 1998.



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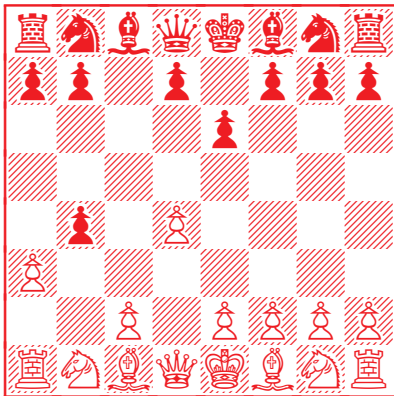
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A5) 3...e6



4 ab Bxb4+ 5 c3 Be7 6 e4 transposes to the Sicilian Wing Gambit. This line, which is regarded as good for White by Thomas Kapitaniak in his 1985 book *Sicilian Defense: Wing Gambits*, can become very dangerous against an unwary opponent. The game Zilbermints - McCarthy, New Jersey Open 1997 continued **6...d6 7 f4 Nf6 8 Bd3 a6 9 Nf3 h6 10 0-0 Nc6 11 h3 d5 12 e5 Ne4 13 Bxe4 dxe4 14 Nd2 Nxd4** (the first of four cheapos by Black) **15 Nxe4! Nf5 16 Qxd8 Bxd8 17 g4 Nh4 18 Nd6+! Kf8 19 Ba3 Kg8 20 Kh2 Bc7 21 Nd2 Ng6 22 Nd2-e4** (White has full compensation plus extra for the pawn.) **22...Bd7 23 Nc5 Bc6 24 Ncb7! Bxb7 25 Nxb7 Nxf4!?** (the second Black cheapo) **26 Bd6! Nd5 27 c4! Ne3 28 Rf3! Nc2 29 Rd1 Bb6 30 c5! Ba7 31 Rdf1 h5** (the third Black cheapo, trying to open up the file before my attack crashes through) **32 g5! Nd4 33 Rxf7 Nf5** (the last cheapo, which is demolished by a sacrifice) **34 R7xf5! ef5 35 Rxf5 g6 36 Rf6 Kg7 37 e6 Bb8 38 Rf7+ Kg8 39 Rf8+ 40 Rf7+ Kg8 41 Kg2! a5 42 Rf8 Kg7 43 Rxh8! Kxh8 44 e7! Ba7 45 Nd8! h4 46 e8/Q Kh7 47 Qf7+ 1-0**

Based on the above games I would say that White gets good compensation in the 2...cxb4 lines. For those of you who like flank openings, the Zilbermints Benoni can transpose into variations of the Smith-Morra Gambit, the Sicilian Wing Gambit, the Orangutan/Sokolsky, the French Wing Gambit, or into independent lines. The reason why I am the only player who uses this line

is because the absolute majority of players, including Sokolsky fans, do not realize the tactical dynamics of this opening.

The games I present here are the only theory on this opening, which is not in most chess books. Eric Schiller in his huge *Unorthodox Chess Openings* (1998) calls it the Nakamura Gambit. This is incorrect. When I contacted Clyde Nakamura of Hawaii by e-mail in December 1998 he had this to say about Schiller's placeholder (as it turned out) name: "Sorry to disappoint you but I could not find any games with moves 1 d4 c5 2 b4. The name Nakamura Gambit is a name invented by Eric Schiller. I have not named any opening after my own name. In Schiller's book on Unorthodox Openings (2nd edition) he has the Nakamura Gambit listed, but this is based on [a Sicilian Wing Gambit game] that I played before at the Hawaii International #4 in a round 2 game against IM Andrianov from Greece. ... I believe your name, "Zilbermints Benoni," should be the name for the opening 1 d4 c5 2 b4 since I had no part in either the invention or the development of this opening." [emphasis added]

So much for Schiller's placeholder name! His analysis is extremely superficial, to say the least: only 2...cxb4 3 e4 g6 3...d5 and now 4 e5 e6 transposes to the Wing Gambit in the French Defense; or 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Bb2 d6 "and I [Schiller] don't see much compensation for White". This is all well and good, but as Nakamura himself notes this analysis is based on the game Nakamura-Andrianov by a different order of moves. Moreover, White does not have to play 3 e4 to begin with! The right move, as I convincingly showed above, is 3 a3!

Some more history: On the assumption that 1 b4 c5 was very similar to my opening I researched thousands of 1 b4 c5 games on an Internet database that has two million-plus games. Sure enough, the computer came up with seven games that transposed into the Zilbermints Benoni. The two games below belong, by classification of analysis, to my "C) 2... OTHER MOVES" section,



which will be covered in Part Three of this article. Because of their historical interest, however, I include them here, out of sequence.

1 b4 c5 2 bxc5 e6 3 d4 b6?! 4 cxb6 Qxb6 (This position can also arise from 1 d4 c5 2 b4! e6 3 bc5 b6?! 4 cxb6 Qxb6) **5 e4 Nf6 6 f3 Nc6 7 Be3 Qb2 8 Nd2 Nxd4 9 Bd3 Bc5 10 Kf2 0-0 11 Nc4 Qb5 12 Rb1 Qa4 13 c3 Qxd1 14 Rxd1 d5 15 Ne5 1-0**, E Olej - B Nemeskal, Hungary 1964.

1 b4 c5 2 bc5 e5 3 d4! exd4 4 Ba3 Bxc5 (Here we once again see a transposition of moves. In this case, however, the proper move order is 1 d4 c5 2 b4 e5!? 3 bxc5 exd4 4 Ba3 Bxc5.) **5 Bxc5 Qa5+ 6 c3 dxc3??** (Schiller, who included this game in *Unorthodox Chess Openings*, notes that after 6...Qxc5 7 cxd4 Qb4+ 8 Qd2 Qxd2+ (8...Nc6!?) 9 Nxd2 Nc6 10 e3 White is just a tiny bit better. I agree with him there.) **7 Qd6 c2+ 8 Nd2! 1-0** Ritter-Tuchtenhagen, correspondence 1988.

In the next issue I will cover **2...cxd4 3 Nf3**, which is by far the most common move. In that line my record stands at +10 -3 =1.

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KRAMNIK: MY LIFE & GAMES

by Vladimir Kramnik & Iakov Damsky

Everyman Chess, London.
Softcover, 270 pages. \$24.95



IN JUST A FEW weeks Vladimir Kramnik will sit down opposite Garry Kasparov for the world chess championship. At least that is the plan — there are no certainties any more where the world chess championship

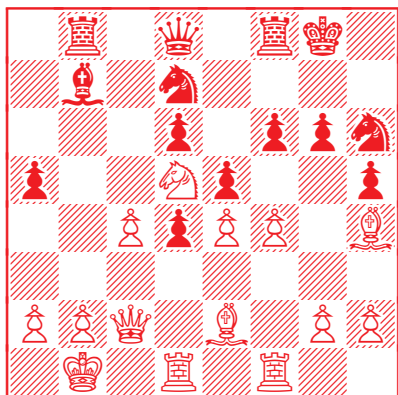
is concerned. It is a good plan, however, for this is the right match at the proper time. Kasparov's tournament results have confirmed his place at the top of the mountain. But if the handful of players who operate on or near that level agree about anything, it is that *match* play is the true and necessary test. Kasparov hasn't defended his title in a match since 1995—the longest such gap since Alekhine. At the same time, Kramnik is the most dangerous opponent available.

In connection with this last point, we do owe Alexis Shirov his minute to vent outrage. Not only is Shirov on the sidelines despite beating Kramnik straight up in a 1998 match that was supposed to appoint Kasparov's challenger, but he didn't even get paid for that effort. Meanwhile Kramnik picked up a nice check for the loser's share of that match and now stands to collect an even bigger payday for (probably) losing again. Even in the badlands that is top-flight chess it's hard to think of anyone in history who's been so thoroughly shafted as Shirov, or anyone so lucky in defeat as Kramnik.

But look at it this way: it will take someone with a surplus of good luck to topple Kasparov. There is also an objective basis for declaring Kramnik the rightful contender. He and Kasparov are virtually even in over a hundred official games. By a mile Kramnik has the best head-to-head record of any prospective challenger against the champion.



Several of Kramnik's wins have been showpieces, the kind of stuff that simply isn't done to Garry Kasparov.



KRAMNIK-KASPAROV
MOSCOW 1994
White to Play

After **24 c5! Bxd5 25 exd5 Nf5** White sacrificed first a piece and then an exchange: **26 fxe5 Nxb4 27 exd6** (Δ c5-c6-c7) **Ne5 28 Rxd4 Nf5** (or 28...Rb4 29 Rxb4 axb4 30 Qe4 Nf5 31 Qxb4 with five connected passed pawns for the piece) **29 Rxf5! gxf5 30 Qxf5 Kg7 31 Bxh5 Rh8 32 Rg4+! Kf8** (32 ... Nxc4 33 Qg6+ Kf8 34 Qf7mate) **33 Qe6 Rb7 34 c6 Rxb2+ 35 Kxb2 Qb6+ 36 Ka3 Qc5+ 37 Ka4 Qc2+ 38 Kb5 Qb2+ 39 Ka6 Qe2+ 40 Kb7 Rh7+ 41 d7 1-0** in view of the variation 41...Qb5+ (at least one source gives the actual game conclusion as 41 ... Nxc6 42 dxc6 1-0 but the version indicated here is from Kramnik's own book) 42 Kc7 Rxd7+ 43 cxd7 Qc5+ 44 Kd8.

In contrast, I'm not aware of Shirov having ever beaten Kasparov, whereas Kasparov has scored heavily against him with about as many wins as draws over thirty-something games. That, rather than any conspiracy or cruel twist of fate, is why we'll not be looking at Kasparov-Shirov in London come October. The world simply cannot recognize Shirov as a credible challenger in light of his dismal record versus the champion.

Running up to the big match, Everyman Publishers has released *Kramnik: My Life & Games* by Vladimir Kramnik & Iakov Damsky.

Crisply produced on what seems like better than normal quality paper, this book is the definitive collection of Kramnik's chess thus far. There are 178 games or game fragments. Fifty four of them are richly annotated by Kramnik. His remarks and reflections are cited in notes to many others.

It is a strangely organized volume. The first half (125 pages) is authored by Damsky and follows the biography-with-games route to a point. The text moves more or less chronologically through Kramnik's career, highlighting various accomplishments, showcasing memorable tournaments and games that are supposed to reveal something about his emerging style or place in the chess hierarchy. But then suddenly we get considerable space given over to a review of Kramnik's exploits in rapid and blindfold chess. (Damsky intimates, unconvincingly, that these games foreshadow the look of chess in the 21st century.) Kramnik's own annotated Selected Games comprise the second half of the book. These are not offered chronologically but, rather, according to loose strategic themes: "Breakthrough", "Attack", "Positional Play", "Complicated Battles", "Victories in the Opening", and "From the Opening into the Endgame". The author admits that filing a particular game into this or that group was often an arbitrary decision. Each game is also outfitted with a trite title ("A smile in the endgame"; "A step towards the truth"; etc) and an introductory paragraph, usually by Damsky.

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I spot checked Kramnik's annotations for a couple of the same games in *New In Chess* magazine and found them to be essential unchanged for the present volume. This not an uncommon practice, although here I don't see even the perfunctory claim that the grandmaster has thoroughly reviewed his original notes and updated them in light of recent discoveries, etc, etc. In short, there's little to indicate that the real work of producing *Kramnik: My Life & Games* wasn't practically all Damsky's, with Kramnik merely cooperating through some interviews and granting permission to bundle his previously published work.

But who cares, so long as they're good games with interesting notes? And these are good. Kramnik does not give us extended prose but his comments are lucid and bring out the essential features of the position. His aim is not so much to teach chess as to explain the decision at hand, and his commentary is more than sufficient to make the concrete analysis comprehensible. I think Kramnik's play resembles a young Capablanca except with modern openings. He does not drown his opponent—or his reader—in a tactical flood of variations. Rather, he builds his game along deceptively simple lines, spies flaws in the opponent's setup that would escape a less discerning eye, and strikes at them with confidence. A few moves go by and suddenly clusters of *petite combinations* flower up all over the board.



If only Damsky's prose were so elegant... There is a quality about it that I've seen often in text translated from Russian: a winking, *I'm-writing-this-but-we-both-know-I-really-mean-that* voice, which may read as grand irony in the original tongue but in English it often comes across as cynical. I do not find it attractive. At the same time Damsky sometimes veers off into mythologizing.

Whether or not Kramnik felt in good form, it had become evident long ago that the chess pieces, which sometimes live their own lives, obey him, as — according to the ancient legend — the animals obeyed Orpheus. Using his invisible magic chess pipe, he forced them to add to their 'rightful' power that additional strength that always accompanies any harmonious concord: be it in art, in life, or in chess. True, sometimes Kramnik simply did not allow his inspiration to overflow, especially if a tournament was accompanied by certain attendant circumstances, and his pleasure from the game of chess itself had to be diluted, or even replaced, by concern about an obligatory good competitive result. This comes easily when you are young, when you are storming purposefully to the next title, the next rating mark, or simply a place under the chess sun. But when the ascent of the high mountain plateau has been achieved, a true artist is, naturally, not averse to winning, but he values more and is more won over by the performance of the mind, and a freshly found idea gives him more pleasure than an extra 'half' in the tournament table. . .

To be fair, Damsky does achieve a kind of objectivity towards his subject. He does not gloss

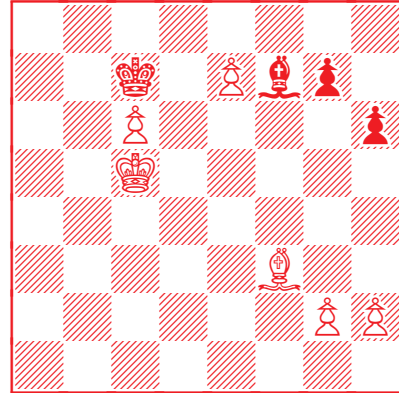


over Kramnik's poor record in match play (losses already to Kamsky, Gelfand and Shirov), for instance. And much is made of Kramnik's pattern of failure in decisive, "big game" situations. Alas, Damsky is not content to observe these frailties; he must explain them. The quest lures him into dubious speculations about Kramnik's inner life. Ultimately Damsky's conclusion amounts to this: Kramnik is such an *artiste* that any disturbance produces a profound crisis, piercing his very soul; we should be impressed that he's able to play at all under such conditions.

Thus, a loss to Anand as well as draws with Gelfand & Ivanchuk ("in overwhelming positions") at Belgrade 1997 are attributed to the fact that Kramnik had *declined to enter* the upcoming FIDE knockout tourney: "Being the sort of person he is, both before this moment and afterwards, Kramnik was thinking more about this extraordinary step than about everyday chess." Likewise, at Las Palmas 1996 Kramnik muffed a problem-like win (later found by FRITZ) and had to settle for a draw versus Topalov, whereupon, "in the words of the blitzkrieg theoretician Field Marshall Alfred Von Schlieffen (who, it must be said, was not a chess player), one has to 'cope with a defeat, even if there was not one'. But this is, oh, so difficult; it interferes with your sleep and your thinking... Most probably this was why he did not take his game with Kasparov to its most logical end, which as regards the tournament battle could have changed so much..."

Come on... world championship contenders have to be made of firmer stuff than this! Most likely Kasparov had *something* to say about what sort of end that game came to... But Damsky goes on and on in this vein. No negative result is permitted to cast a shadow over Kramnik's native talent, yet defeats are a fact of life, so an implausible portrait emerges of a Kramnik who is so delicate, so unstable, that even a stroke of astounding good fortune can derail his game and deprive him of the victory which is otherwise his for certain. From page 99:

Something happened that was talked about in the entire chess world for months on end, and there was not a single magazine that did not give this final position from the match.



VYZHMANAVIN - KRAMNIK
MOSCOW 1994
Black to Play

It had been preceded by two draws in the main, rapid games, and then came a blitz tie-break: 6 minutes for White, 5 minutes for Black, but with the draw in Black's favour. Naturally, in this position there is no hint of this, and Kramnik was already intending to resign, when suddenly his opponent, at that time a very solid grandmaster, offered... a draw! Alexey suddenly imagined that he was playing... Black(!), and hence his decision to go into the final by the safest way! Such a black-out is beyond the bounds of chess, and psychologists too would do best to keep quiet. Someone suggested: perhaps it was Kramnik that the heavens wanted to see in the final.

There, of course, he was unable to play calmly: "I was upset by this incident". In a superior position in the second blitz game he stumbled on easy ground and the first prize went to Anand.



The poor baby... In a curious departure from "tradition", Damsky completely inverts a famous story of Bobby Fischer's boyhood visit to Moscow (page 121). Every account I've ever read has Fischer making a glorious impression on the Soviets, beating all comers at the Central Chess Club until finally Petrosian was urgently summoned to salvage the hosts' pride. Unaccountably (unless it's that Russian irony popping up again), Damsky claims: "Incidentally, both [Rashid Nezhmetdinov] and also other Soviet masters gave a good thrashing to the young USA champion, Bobby Fischer, who was already a grandmaster, on the only occasion when he came to the 'chess Mecca'—Moscow. After this Bobby began training seriously in five-minute chess, and in this he was fully successful..."

To sum up, this could have been a better book but even so it's worthwhile and interesting. Read Damsky's hagiography for fun, with the same skepticism you apply to that communist-era classic *The Soviet School of Chess*. And read Kramnik's annotated games for their sheer beauty. *Kramnik: My Life & Games* is the best available introduction to the chess artistry of a young man who—who knows?—may be world champion by the time our next issue of *Virginia Chess* appears. Unless some inept waiter botches his dinner order, or...

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The Gambiteer, continued from p 11

12 Qe2 Qc1+ 13 Qd1 Rde8+ 14 Bxe8 Rxe8+ 15 Kf2 Qe3+ 16 Kf1 Bxf3 17 gxf3 Bc5 18 Kg2 Rg8+ 0-1

HENRY BIRD - JOSEPH BLACKBURNE
VIENNA 1882

1 f4 d5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 e3 Bf5 4 b3 e6 5 Bb2 Be7 6 Nc3 0-0 7 Bd3 Ne4 8 Bxe4 dxe4 9 Ne5 Nd7 10 Ng4 Bg6 11 Nf2 f5 12 Qe2 Bf6 13 0-0-0 e5 14 g4 exf4 15 gxf5 Bxf5 16 exf4 Re8 17 Rhg1 Nf8 18 Ng4 Kh8 19 Nxf6 gxf6 20 Nd5 Re6 21 Ne3 Ng6 22 Nxf5 Nxf4 23 Qe3 1-0

PERSONAL & GENERAL

from the Editor



Thanks go out to **Merlin Sumner**, of Petersburg, who sent us copies of the *Chicago Sun-Times* and *Chicago Daily News* editions for the day in 1972 when Bobby Fischer won the world championship. The newspapers features extensive coverage including a front-page photographs. The *Sun-Times* main article concludes with a statement by Fischer's that "I won't wait three years to put [the title] on the line. I'll play once, maybe twice a year." We will add this to our archives. The US Chess Center, in Washington DC, has expressed interest in displaying these items in their museum!

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