

VIRGINIA CHESS Rewsletter

2004 - Issue #5

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Emporia Open

Over the weekend of October 9-10, Woody Harris hosted the Emporia Open for the 20th time! The field was slightly stronger this year, with a couple masters and several experts. Former state champion Macon Shibut won first place with 4½-½. He granted a last round draw from a pawn-ahead position once the result on the other top board was clear, assuring that he would finish alone at the top. Four players tied for second at 4-1 (Shibut having played three of them): Alabama state champion Gerald Larson, North Carolinian Chris Mabe, and up-and-coming youngsters Adithya Balasubramanian & Ettie Nikolova. Danny Derby was top class A. Sanda Costescu, Marvin Wilson, Herbert Edwards, Broderick Bello & Richard White all finished in a logjam for top B. Ryan Rust won the C prize. David Hydorn & Phillip Whittington shared top D. Tom Hoffmann was top E.

Emporia is always one of the state's most pleasant events, with significant complimentary homemade food treats and a beautiful pastoral setting. Just five more years and it will qualify as a USCF Heritage Event!

Macon Shibut - Chris Mabe French

Notes by Macon Shibut

(This game was played in the penultimate round when my opponent and I possessed two of the three remaining perfect scores. I'd had a long game the night before, so I was concerned that I would feel tired or have a hard time 'getting the engine started' on Sunday morning. In part these fears proved wellfounded, but sometimes it works out that you play well despite yourself. Before the round I took a walk in the fresh Emporia country air, considering how to approach the game. My opponent was one of my highest-rated rivals, so I expected a fierce fight. I had never played him before. I recalled noticing that

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he'd used the Winawer variation of the French Defense (1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4) in one of his earlier Black games this tournament. French players tend to be creatures of habit, so I thought it likely that I could get that position if I wanted it. And in fact, I was holding an interesting anti-Winawer idea 'in my back pocket,' so to speak, so I considered going this way. But in the end I was swayed by pleasant memories from the 2000 Emporia Open, when I took a similar stroll through the same pasture behind the Greensville Ruritan Club tournament site, in exactly the same situation: about to face my most dangerous rival and another French Defense player on board 1, second-to-last round. In that instance my opponent had been South Carolina master Klaus Pohl and I'd elected to sidestep his French, so the game began 1 Nf3 Nf6 2 d4 g6 3 Bf4 Bg7 4 e3, the London System, and I won in surprisingly easy fashion. Well, if it worked before...) 1 d4 (We see that I had already made my first 'mistake' since my memory of the earlier game was faulty and I didn't recall beginning with the knight move!) 1...e6 (Ah! Of course Black is not averse to transposing to the French. But against this particular move order I was not certain that I could get my desired London since if now 2 Nf3 c5... "Well," I thought, "I'd considered attacking the French



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anyway. Maybe it was just meant to be...") 2 e4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 (Oh, no! I certainly would have done things differently if I'd known he was going to play this, since I have little experience with this variation and no particular ideas about how to attack it. Oh. well: to use one of GM Patrick Wolff's favorite phrases, we'll just to play the position.) 4 Bg5 Bb4 5 e5 h6 6 Bd2 Bxc3 7 bxc3 Ne4 8 Qg4 g6 (I'm kinda glad he didn't play 8... Kf8, which has the stamp of a French purist.) 9 Bd3 Nxd2 10 Kxd2 c5 11 h4 (I assumed 11 Nf3 was the main line, but under the circumstances that seemed a mark against it.) 11....Nc6 12 h5 g5 (12...Qg5+ 13 Qxg5 hxg5 and unfortunately 14 hxg6 doesn't work: 14...Rxh1 15 g7 Ne7. But I figured just 14 g4 looks okay for White.)



A critical moment seemed at hand, and unfortunately so inasmuch as my opponent had used basically no time for thinking yet, so I figured it was still a position he'd studied. The move I wanted to play from the first was 13 f4. Clearly things can get very sharp after that, so I tried to make myself calculate some variations. But it was hard; Black always has a choice between capturing something in the center or running out with his queen to a5... I could feel the effects of fatgue too ---not so much in the accuracy of calculations, but undermining my willpower to push them all the way to a definite conclusion. In the end, the real reason I chose to go ahead with 13 f4 was more general: I simply couldn't find a plan after the quieter alternative 13 Nf3. If White doesn't challenge the g5 pawn, what does he do? But 13 Nf3 blocks the fpawn, whereas keeping it free with 13 Ne2?? runs into 13...c4. There was only one line that I managed to work out in detail, but happily, it turned out to be exactly the line that appeared in the game! That's getting ahead of ourselves, however...

37th Annual

VIRGINIA OPEN January 28-30, 2005 Holiday Inn Express-Springfield 6401 Brandon Ave, Springfield, VA 22150

Conveniently located at the junction of I-95, I-495 & I-395

5-SS, rd1 G/2, rds 2-5 40/2 SD/1. \$\$3400 (top 4 in Open section guaranteed, rest b/110 entries). In two sections: *Open:* \$600-400-300-250, top X, A each \$180, plus plaque to overall winner. Amateur (under 1900): \$400-200-150, top B, C, D, U1200 each \$160, top U \$100, plus plaque to overall winner. Both: EF \$50 if rec'd by 1/21, \$60 at site. \$30 VCF membership required (OSA) \$10 Adults, \$5 U19. Re-entry allowed from rd 1 only into rd 2 with ½ pt. Reg Friday 1/28 5:30pm-7:45pm, rds 8, 10-4:30, 9-3:30. One irreversible ¹/₂-pt bye allowed, must be declared before rd 1. NS, NC, W, FIDE Hotel special chess rate of \$69, 703-644-5555 ask for "Sales Department" and reserve before 1/14th! Special Scholastic Entry (advance entry only, not allowed at-site): 5 verified scholastic entries from the same school in same envelope, pay for only 4 entries! Send 10, pay for 8! Only applies to entries, not memberships, and count 80% towards b/prizes. Trophies to 1st - 2nd - 3rd Scholastic teams. (Top 4 individual scores count across both sections - teams must advance register, no team entries accepted at site.). Enter: Make checks payable to "Virginia Chess" and mail to Michael Atkins, PO Box 6139, Alexandria VA 22306. Info online http://vachess.org/ vaopen2005.htm or email matkins2@cox.net but no phone or internet entries, just inquiries.

30 Grand Prix points

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13 f4 cxd4 (13...Qa5 would have been a different game) 14 cxd4 Nxd4? (A mistake in both a practical and objective sense; White had no choice but to have something ready in reply to this obvious capture, whereas it was less clear where the game would go after 14...Qa5+. But Black was still moving quickly. Over the board I was filled with doubts, fearing that I had miscalculated something in a position that might be still in theory. In fact, I learned afterwards that the position was known to my opponent, but the result is an object lesson in the

old saying, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." Mabe explained that just a few days beforehand he'd seen a game where Black played something else at this point, and he had wondered, "Why doesn't Black just take that d-pawn?" And now fate had presented him a chance to find out!) 15 fxg5 Qxg5+ 16 Qxg5 hxg5 17 Nf3! Nxf3+ (The knight and g5 are both attacked. If 17...Nc6 I intended 18 g4 planning next Rae1 to defend e5, and then Nxg5) 18 gxf3 Ke7 (Preparing to defend g5 by ... f6, but I had noticed a very beautiful refutation. Black ought to settle



The Emporia Open features free food, good competition, and the largest skittles area in North America

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for mere development, 18... Bd7 19 Rag1 0-0-0 20 Rxg5 in which case White has an obvious plus with the passed h-pawn and superior bishop.) **19 Rag1 f6?** (Following his bad plan opens the 7th rank, which makes things worse. The best defense was just 19... Bd7 20 Rxg5±) **20 f4!!**



Absolutely thematic, yet somehow hard to see at first — indeed, my opponent never saw what was coming until I'd played it. Now he sank into a long thought but it's too late. White either recovers the pawn or his pieces pour into Black's undeveloped position in a variation like 20...gxf4 21 Rg7+ Kf8 22 exf6 e5 23 Bg6.

20...g4 (A forlorn move, giving back the pawn for nothing more than keeping the position a bit closed for a few moves. If 20...

fxe5 I would have answered simply 21 fxe5 Δ Rxg5) **21 Rxg4** f5 22 Rg7+ Kd8



Time for me to think again, and it was one of those happy positions where everything just falls into place. The only problem choosing among promising continuations is not to mess up by being 'too brilliant.' Obviously Black intends ... Bd7 next, so the first move I examined was 23 Bb5!? and the combination follows very easily: 23...a6 24 h6! axb5 25 h7 Bd7 26 Rg8+ Kc7 27 Rxa8 Rxa8 28 h8Q Rxh8 29 Rxh8 with an exchange-ahead ending. But... might Black defend it by hunkering down in a blockade? Well, it's nice to have such a possibility in hand and forced, but it did seem to be letting Black off easy to win just an exchange, so I kept looking.

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23 h6! Bd7 24 h7 Kc7 (This much was easy, but it was not until I appreciated the strength of the next move that my decision on my 23rd turn became clear. In particular, I had been distracted at first by the possibilities 25 Bb5 and 25 Bxf5 exf5 26 e6, neither of which accomplish anything after ...Rad8) 25 Rh6! (However, Black has no good defense after this. At the very least the e-pawn drops for nothing.) 25...Rae8 26 Bb5 Rd8 27 Rxe6 Kc8 28 Bxd7+ (To be honest, my original intention was to continue in tactical style, 28 Ree7 Bxb5 29 Rc7+ Kb8 30 Rxb7+ Ka8 {if 30...Kc8 31 Rgc7#} 31 Rxa7+ Kb8 32 Rab7+ Ka8 33 Rxb5 etc. Once we got to this point I noticed that the simple text move is even stronger.) **28...Rxd7 29 Ree7 1-0** as after 29...Rxe7 30 Rxe7 there's nothing to be done about R-g7-g8+

12-year old Adithya Balasubramanian made a strong impression at Emporia. His current rating of 2009 places him sixth among players his age in the United States. His win over veteran South Carolina master Matthew Noble demonstrated resourceful and good fighting spirit.

MATTHEW NOBLE - ADITHYA BALASUBRAMANIAN English

1 c4 g6 2 Nc3 Bg7 3 Nf3 d6 4 g3 e5 5 d4 exd4 6 Nxd4 Nc6 7 Nc2 Be6 8 Ne3 Nge7 9 Bg2 0-0 10 0-0 Rb8 11 Ned5 Ne5 12 Qa4 c6 13 Nxe7+ Qxe7 14 Qxa7 Nxc4 15 Qa4? (15 Bxc6) 15...b5 16 Qc2 Qd7 17 Rb1 Bf5 18 e4 Bh3 19 b3 Ne5 20 Bb2 h5 21 Ne2 h4 22 Bxe5 Bxg2 23 Kxg2 dxe5 24 Rbd1 Qe6 25 Rd3 Rbd8 26 Rfd1 h3+ 27 Kg1 Qf6 28 f3 Bh6 29 Kf2 Rxd3 30 Qxd3 Qe7 31 Qd6 Qa7+ 32 Ke1 Qxa2 33 Qxc6 Qxb3 34 Qc3 Qe6 35 Rd5 Rc8 36 Qxe5 Qa6 37 Qb2 Qa5+ 38 Kf1 Bg7 (38... Qa4! hangs onto the b-pawn since 39 Rxb5 Qd1+, or 39 Qxb5 Qa1+, in either case followed by 40 Kf2 Qh1) 39 Rxb5 Qa7 40 Qb1 Qe3 41 Rb3 Bc3 42 Qe1? (Panicking at the prospect of ...Qxf3+, but 42 Rxc3 Rxc3 43 Nxc3 Qxf3+ 44 Ke1 Qxc3+ 45 Ke2 wasn't so bad) 42...Qxf3+ 43 Qf2 Qh1+ 44 Qg1 Qxe4 45 Rxc3 Rxc3 46 Nxc3 Qf3+ 47 Qf2 Qxc3 48 Qe2 Kg7 49 Kf2 Qd4+ 50 Kf1 Qa1+ 51 Kf2 Qd4+ 52 Kf1 Qd5 53 Qb2+ Kh7 54 Qf2 Qd1+ 55 Qe1 Qxe1+ 56 Kxe1 f5 57 Kf2 g5 58 Ke3 Kg6 59 Kf3 Kf6 60 Ke2 Ke6 0-1

RICHARD WHITE - GUY JACKSON KINGS INDIAN Notes by Richard White

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 Nge2 Nc6 (The ...Nc6 variation of the Kings Indian Defense allows for some attacking chances for both White and Black.) 7 Bg5 a6 8 Qd2 Rb8 9 Bh6 (A small error eliminating pressure on Nf6) 9...e5 10 h4 b5 (10...exd4) 11 h5 Nxh5 12 Bxg7 Kxg7 (12...Nxg7 13 Qh6) 13 g4 Nf6? 14 Qh6+ Kg8 15 Nd5 Re8 16 g5 Nxd5 (16...Nh5 17 Rxh5 gxh5 18 Nf6+ -ed) **17 cxd5** Nxd4 18 Nxd4 exd4 19 Qxh7+ Kf8 20 Qh8+ Ke7 21 Qf6+ 1-0 (21... Kd7 22 Bh3+ 1-0 leads to mate in three)

Ryan Rust - Saninder Singh Caro-Kann

1 e4 c6 2 Nf3 d5 3 Nc3 dxe4 4 Nxe4 Nd7 5 d4 h6 6 Bd3 Ngf6 7 h3 Nxe4 8 Bxe4 Nf6 9 Bd3 e6 10 c3 Bd6 11 Bd2 a6 12 a4 Bd7 13 0-0 Qc7 14 Re1 Bf4 15 Ne5 Bxd2 16 Qxd2 0-0 17 g4 Be8 18 h4 Nd7 19 g5 Nxe5 20 Rxe5 hxg5 21 Rxg5 f6 22 Rg2 Qa5 23 Qh6 Rf7 24 Qh7+ Kf8 25 Qh8+ Ke7 26 Bg6 1-0





Dr Sanda Costescu won the gold medal in the chess section of the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics, contested Sept 21-22 in Arlington. Ed McLaughlin was the silver medalist and Helmut Gramberg took the bronze on tiebreak. Don Millican served as tournament director. As a side note, Sanda also won the gold medal in the event's Backgammon section!

Helmut Gramberg – Sanda Costescu Queen's Pawn

1 d4 h6 2 c4 g5 3 e4 d6 4 Be2 Bg7 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Be3 a6 7 d5 Ne5 8 Bd4 c5 9 dxc6 bxc6 10 Nf3 Qa5 11 Nxe5 dxe5 12 Be3 Nf6 13 0-0 Be6 14 f3 0-0 15 Qa4 Qc7 16 Rfd1 Rfb8 17 Rd2 a5 18 Rad1 g4 19 a3 gxf3 20 gxf3 Nh5 21 Qc2 Nf4 22 Bxf4 exf4 23 Na4 Qa7+ 24 Kh1 Kh8 25 Bf1 Rg8 26 Rg2 Rab8 27 Qf2 Qxf2 28 Rxf2 Rb3 29 Rd3? Bxc4 30 Rd7 Bxf1 31 Rxf1 Bf6 32 Rc7 Bd4 33 Rxc6 Rxf3 34 Rxh6+ Kg7 35 Rxf3 Kxh6 36 h3 Kg5 37 Kg2 Kf6+ 38 Kf1 Ke5 0-1

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Kingstowne Fall Festival

Edgar De Castro scored $3\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ to finish clear first at the second annual Kingstowne Fall Festival, held Oct 2-3 in Alexandria. IM Oladapo Adu, Andrew Samuelson & Matt Grinberg tied for $2^{nd}-4^{th}$. Bora Yagiz & Daniel Clancy shared the top under 2000 prize. Manoj Sapre & Krishna Bindumadhavan were top under 1600.

In the Amateur section, Aryan Khojandi's 4¹/₂-¹/₂ topped the field. Glenn Flodstrom was runner up. Curtis Davis won the under 1600 prize while David Becker won top under 1200. Byron O'Neal was the top unrated.

Oladapo Adu - Edgar De Costa Kings Indian Attack

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d3 Nf6 4 g3 d5 5 Nbd2 Bg4 6 Bg2 dxe4 7 dxe4 Nd4 8 c3 Nxf3+ 9 Bxf3 Od7 10 e5 Bxf3 11 Oxf3 Nd5 12 Ne4 Qc6 13 O-O Nc7 14 Be3 Ne6 15 b4 c4 16 Rfd1 g6 17 Rd5 Bg7 18 Bc5 Nc7 19 Rd6 Qa4 20 Rad1 O-O 21 Rd7 Bxe5 22 Bxe7 Oc6 23 Bxf8 Rxf8 24 Re7 Ne6 25 Nf6+ Bxf6 26 Qxf6 Qe4 27 Rdd7 (White's play has been great up to now. Here, however, he becomes incautious.) Qe1+ 28 Kg2 Qe4+ 29 Kh3 (Obviously it was never White's intention to just allow a draw, but...) g5 (see diagram) 30 Rxf7 Nf4+! (Suddenly White notices to his horror that 31 gxf4? Qf3 is mate.) 31 Qxf4 gxf4 32 Rg7+ Kh8 33 Rge7 Qf5+ 34 g4 Qg6 35 f3 Qh6+ 36 Kg2 Qg6 37 a4 Qb1 38 g5 Qc2+ 39 Kh3 Qg6 40 Kg4 Rg8 41 h4 Rb8 42 b5 Re8 43 h5 Rxe7 44 Rxe7 0-1



Oladapo Adu - Daniel Clancy Kings Indian Attack

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 g3 e6 4 d3 d5 5 Nbd2 Nf6 6 Bg2 Be7 7 O-O O-O 8 Re1 b5 9 e5 Nd7 10 h4 Qb6 11 Nf1 c4 12 d4 b4 13 N1h2 Rb8 14 Be3 b3 15 axb3 cxb3 16 c3 Na5 17 Bf1 Ba6 18 Bxa6 Qxa6 19 Ng5 Qb6 20 Qh5 h6 21 Ng4 hxg5 22 hxg5 Rfc8 23 Kg2 Nf8 24 Nf6+ Bxf6 25 gxf6 1-0

Virginia Chess Rewsletter



by Emily Rhodes

Who are the kids to watch out for? Virginia is home to 25 youngsters in the USCF's Top 100 lists for their respective age groups. The complete list appeared in the previous issue of



Virginia Chess and I began profiling selected individuals there. The second young player that I have selected for a player profile is **Jack Barrow**.

Jack, who recently turned 16, was rated twenty-ninth in the nation among 15-year-olds, with a USCF rating of around 1900. He is a 10th grader at Clover Hill High School in Chesterfield County, where he also participates in the Latin Club. Clover Hill has recently started a chess club but does not have an organized team yet.

Jack taught himself how to play chess on the computer (with a little help from his dad, Bill Barrow) at the age of 8. He steadily improved with instruction from Peter Hopkins, and with diligent hard work, and practice, practice, practice. For the past five year he has also been studying Tae Kwan Do. Jack studies chess 1-3 hours per day depending on the amount

of homework he has. His current coach, three-time state champion Russell Potter, must be pleased to hear this!

Although Jack began by playing in all the scholastic tournaments, he now prefers playing in adult events. He won the Amateur section of the state championship in 2002. He rarely competes in scholastic tournaments anymore. Jack prefers to play the Ruy Lopez as White, and Sicilian as Black.

Jack gives his dad a lot of credit for his success. "My real coach is my dad, who arranges for my lessons,



Jack Barrow

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books, training and tournaments," he says. His father takes him to many tournaments, the farthest being the SuperNationals in Kansas City. Jack's advice for other scholastic players is to "have fun and enjoy chess."

Correction to last issue's Scholar's Mate: The list of Virginia players in the top 100 for their age groups omitted the name of Adithya Balasubramanian, who is all the way up to #6 among 12-year-olds!

Upcoming scholastic events:

Oct. 2:	C. D. Hylton Scholastic IX, Prince William County 14051 Spriggs Road, Woodbridge, VA 22193
Oct. 9:	Prince George Scholastic VIII, Prince George County 11455 Prince George Drive, Disputanta, VA 23842
TBA:	Luray Scholastic VIII, Page County 555 First Street, Luray, VA 22835
TBA:	Culpeper Scholastic XI Culpeper County Culpeper Middle School, Culpeper, VA
Oct. 23:	Chancellor Fall Scholastic, Spotsylvania County 6300 Harrison Road, Fredericksburg, VA 22407
Oct. 23 :	2004 Harvest Swiss Fallon Park Elementary, Roanoke, VA
Nov. 13:	Swift Creek K-8 VI, Chesterfield County 3700 Old Hundred Road South, Midlothian, VA 23112
Nov. 13:	Star City Challenge Fallon Park Elementary, Roanoke, VA
Nov. 20:	Staunton Scholastic Shelburne Middle School, Staunton, VA
Dec. 4:	Lakeside K-5 V, Henrico County 6700 Cedarcroft Street Richmond VA 23228
Dec. 4: TBA:	Riverbend Scholastic Hopewell XXI, Hopewell 400 South Mesa Drive, Hopewell, VA 23860

ANDREW DOWNEY

Andrew F Downey, a chess player who lived in Arlington and Fairfax from 1957 until 1984, died August 27 at his home in Atanta. He was 78 years old. Survivors include his wife of 28 years, Marian Ford Downey of Atlanta; a son from his first marriage, Scott Downey of Springfield; two stepchildren, Steve Worsham of Anderson, SC, and Cynthia Cosby of Atlanta; a brother; and eight step grandchildren.

The Qvent Horizon

by Richard Runke

B ECAUSE OF the earth's curvature, a ship's captain is blind beyond the horizon and naval commanders know an enemy could be hidden just over the horizon. Chess playing programs have features allowing a dangerous enemy move to hide just beyond the program's horizon. This is sometime called an event horizon. One form of event horizon is caused by search depth. All chess playing programs, like the human player, must act within the limits of units of time in which they must reach a conclusion about the next move. Whether Fritz8, Shredder8, or Chess Master 10, our programs must operate within limitations to the number of plies (moves) examined and, thus, they have ply depth event horizons. Beyond the horizon, the computer is as blind as the naval commander.



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There are other forms of event horizon. At the first move of a game, our programs spend almost no time considering the plies following 1 a2-a3. The programmer has placed in the program a pruning (limiting) of the nature of moves considered when several plies out or under given circumstances. The program has been designed to ignore 'illogical' moves. This, then, is a pruning event horizon. However, there are times when the correct move is violently illogical and is not seen by our computer program because the pruning

feature prevents it. Let's look at a problem *(diagram, right)*:

Set up the position on your computer and follow these steps. (The description that follows is for Fritz8 and Shredder8 running within ChessBase 8; adapt the steps to something equivalent for other software.)

First, save the starting position. Commence Fritz8. It will find several mates in four moves but

miss the mate in three. Now play White's first move, 1 Bh8. Even given this hint, Fritz8 will return a 'bad' defense, 1...a2. Only after





Mate in 3

you enter 2 Rf6 will it 'see' the point and return the path to mate (2...Kxb2 3 Rf1#)

The second diagram shows the position after Black's 24th move in the 8th game of the recently completed Kramnik - Leko world championship match. Kramnik examined this position in his pregame preparation and apparently used a computer to verify his impression that White's passed

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pawn (after 25 bxa6) gives White the edge. From the diagram Fritz8 returns 25 bxa6 Bb8 26 Kf2 Bd3 27 a7 Bxa7. When we push ahead one ply by executing 25 bxa6 we get minor changes in the computer's analysis but its general expectation remains the same: White seems to have the advantage. The computer doesn't see what Leko must have seen by now.

Only after we provide the move that Leko in fact played, 25...Qd3, does Fritz8's horizon suddenly broaden to encompass the eventual game continuation. All at once the evaluation shifts to recognize that Black stands better. (25 bxa6 Qd3 26 Kf2 Bxf3 27 Nxf3 Ne4+ 28 Ke1 Nxc3 29 bxc3 Qxc3+ 30 Kf2 Qxa1 31 a7 h6 32 h4 g4 0-1)

You can replicate the example using Shredder8, a program less materialistic than Fritz8. The results are essentially the same, except Shredder discovers the truth one ply quicker. Your computer, your program, your settings may produce different results. Explore them.

These exercise do not mean that there is a flaw in Fritz8 or Shredder8. On the contrary, the programs correctly see all the possibilities arising within their designed event horizons. Use them properly and computers can verify our analysis — but they do not replace our own "blood, sweat and tears." Arlington Open December 4-5, 2004 George Mason University Professional Center (*aka* the Old Law School) 3401 N Fairfax Dr, Arlington Virginia (Across from Virginia Square Metro Stop)

5-SS, rds 1-3 G/100, rds 4-5 30/90 SD/1. One Section, FIDE Rated. \$\$2000 b/70. top 3 (G): \$500-300-200 top X, A, B, C, D each \$150, under 1200 \$100, Unr \$100, Upset \$50. EF \$45 if rec'd by 11/24, \$55 at site. \$5 discount to GMU students with valid ID. Reg 9-9:45, rds 10-2-6:30, 10-3:30. One irrevocable ¹/₂-pt bye avail, must declare before rd 1. Enter: Michael Atkins, PO Box 6139 Alexandria VA 22306, make checks payable to Michael Atkins. Info available online, http://members.cox. net/arlingtonchessclub/ arlopen.htm, or by email, matkins2@cox.net.

20 Grand Prix points

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Something for Qvery Man from Qveryman

by Macon Shibut

ELCOME TO the Guide to Great (and not-so-great!) Books edition of *Virginia Chess Newsletter*, just in time to help you make out your Christmas wish lists. An avalanche of new titles has arrived from the publishing line Everyman Chess, leaving the Editor to wrestle with the problem of how to do justice to them all. It would be humanly impossible to actually *read* all of these books in a timely enough manner, at least not with the level of attention they deserve. So how to be fair to the books and their authors, and at the same time helpful to *Virginia Chess* readers seeking guidance about what books to buy? My solution has been to aim for a 'New and Noted' approach –not so judgmental as a traditional book review, but a description (with some commentary) of *what* each book appears to offer.

First a word about the publisher. Everyman is one of the most prolific sources of chess books today. Of course the flagship of their line is Garry Kasparov's *Predecessors* series, of which the first two volumes are out (see *Virginia Chess* #2003/4 and 2004/1) and the third and fourth are imminent. Hopefully I will be able give a report on one or both of them next issue. In any case, there is a huge Everyman catalog by a stable of fine authors (mostly British) touching upon almost every aspect of chess: openings books; middlegames books; endgame books;

the game collections of notable players; general treatises;

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monographs on specific strategic and tactical themes; books on training and chess psychology; beginners' texts; guides to computer and internet chess; etc, etc. Offhand, tournament and match books would seem to be the only significant subgenre of chess literature to which Everyman has not contributed. The complete list of Everyman titles is available online at www.everymanbooks.com.

Everyman books are nicely produced, with reliable bindings, clear type, good paper. Most of them share a common style sheet. Diagrams are plentiful. Cover graphics tend towards a sort of abstract sci-fi look. Overall, the tone is practical and unobtrusive, if also rather unadventurous.

BTARTING OUT

Everyman's Starting Out... series consists of a programmed line of books aimed at readers who are, in the European parlance, "club players." This means nonprofessional but serious students of, let us say, classes C through Expert. I believe the original *Starting Out*... titles focused on popular openings but now there are volumes on endgames and also on attacking and defensive play. All are conceived as textbooks. To this end, special typefaces and cartoon icons are employed to underscore important points - "Notes", "Warnings", "Tips", etc.

9th Annual

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The new *Starting Out*... titles at hand here are John Emms' *Starting Out*: *The Queen's Indian* and two endgame books, *Starting Out*: *Pawn Endgames*, by Glenn Flear, and *Starting Out*: *Minor Piece Endgames*, also by Emms.

Opening monographs tend to follow one of two templates: the Outline of Variations form or the Games Collection form. *Starting Out...* opening books employ the Games Collection approach. This is less comprehensive, which is to say there's a greater chance of some variations falling through the cracks unnoticed. On the other hand, it's a more holistic way of looking at openings and connecting them with the ensuing middlegames. *Starting Out: The Queen's Indian*'s summaries of each main variation include a note about the line's statistical performance in elite games. Under the label "Theoretical?", there is also advice about how concrete one's preparation need be to confidently venture the line in practice.

Mixing theory with regular doses of elementary guidance ("Be careful when lunging pawns up the board. They can never come back!") and test positions (Try it Yourself") reinforce the impression that *Starting Out: Pawn Endgames* and *Starting Out: Minor Piece Endgames* are basic manuals. Each book opens with the most fundamental positions. However, things quickly become more complicated, which challenges Flear and Emms to sustain their light, it's-easy-once-you-know-how tone. A quick scan suggests that they generally succeed. Moreover, there's some really interesting stuff here, which might benefit players of almost any strength. For example, *Starting Out: Pawn Endgames* examines the implications of having different numbers of files separating a pair of passed pawns, including the concept of the "common square" of two passed pawns, in a way that I haven't seen before.

THIS & THAT

Mikhail Tal, Tactical Genius, by Alexander Raetsky and Maxim Chetverik, is a puzzle book based on the games of the Latvian hero. It gets off to an inauspicious start as the second sentence of the Introduction already contains an obvious, if unimportant, editing error. Nonetheless, this appears to offer a very satisfying tactics workout. Aside from Tal's unique touch, what distinguishes this book is its organization. Typically, puzzle books arrange exercises either according to the material on the board or thematically, ie, according to tactical ideas contained in the solutions. This has the advantage of really driving home the mechanism of each motif, but it also provides an unnatural hint to the solver. In a real game, you won't know that the winning idea necessarily hinges on exploiting a *pin*, for instance. *Mikhail Tal, Tactical Genius* follows the less systematic but more organic course of beginning with what the authors judge to be easy positions and

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gradually progessing to more elaborate tasks. Thhe titles of chapters 2-6 (chapter 1 is a brief biography of Tal, with a few signature games included) are indicative: Simple but Effective; Stepping Up; Getting There; Tal's World of Magic; and finally, Chess Wizardry. Then there follows Endgame Wizardry, which illustrates how combinative shots occur with even the most reduced material, and A Tasting of his own Medicine, where Tal is on the hard end of the quiz tactic. A chapter of "Tal Tips" provides itemized hints for all the exercises in the preceding chapters. Of course Solutions to Puzzles rounds out the book. The Solutions chapter is no mere formality. Variations are thoroughly annotated, in some cases including the complete game leading to the exercise position.

The unavoidable first impression of Neil McDonald's *Concise Chess Middlegames* is created by its 4.5 x 5 inch form factor. The contents are traditional chess discussion and analysis, which is to say you'll probably need a board and pieces to read it properly. Given that, it's unclear what suggested making this a "pocket book." unless there just wasn't enough material to fill out a volume of full-size pages. Well, in that case at least Everyman deserves kudos for not just filling it out with excessive diagrams, oversize margins and a bunch of superfluous extra 'illustrative games' pulled from a database.

The book reads like a collection of lessons for players who are beyond the beginner stage. In fact, it is easy to imagine that it originated as a lecture series adapted to book form. Chapter titles include Tactics and Calculation; First Thoughts on Strategy; Attacking the King; All About Defence; General Ideas on Planning; Winning Piece Strategy; Pawn Structure and Model Thinking; Winning Pawn Strategy; Exchanging Pieces and Simplification; Knights and Bishops; and The Blockade. There is general discussion with an emphasis on practical advice, and lots of examples from recent grandmaster practice. I do not notice anything terribly original as I thumb through this cute little book, but it appears to be a very competent and readable treatise.

Offbeat Kings Indian, by the vowel-challenged Krzysztof Panczyk and Jacek Ilczuk, is another opening book using the Complete Games form. The title is a bit misleading. This is in fact a study of four specific anti-Kings Indian systems, presented more with an eye towards preparing White to play one or the other rather than with providing Black antidotes. The variations all follow 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6, whereupon we consider 5 Nge2, which I think I've seen called the Kramer Variation, although Panczyk & Ilczuk don't use this name; 5 Bd3, foor which they suggest Seirawan's name might be fitting; 5 h3, the Makogonov Variation; and 5 Bg5, which is the by no means offbeat Averbahk Variation. The games are mostly from the 1990s. Compared to the Starting Out... opening books, there is a denser, more intense quality to the analysis here that goes beyond the absence of elementary tips and cartoon icons.

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Garry Kasparov is given as the author of *Checkmate: My First Chess Book*, and although I have absolutely no evidentiary grounds for challenging this, I frankly find it hard to believe. I simply can't see Kasparov spending time writing out an absolute beginners' text, beginning with the rules ("The chessboard is the battlefield for your game. The board is made up of 64 squares arranged 8 x 8"), progressing through chess notation ("in this diagram, if the white queen moves to the square marked with the star we write Qb6"), basic tactics ("if you can create two threats at once, your opponent could be in real trouble. ... A move which creates two threats is called a fork"), and eventually making his way to a few very basic openings and endgames. Moreover, whereas Kasparov's many writings and interviews all exhibit a relatively distinctive voice, I find no trace of that here.

Which is not to say that this isn't a perfectly good choice for somebody's first chess book, or even a very good one. What sets *Checkmate: My First Chess Book* apart from its competition is, again, less its content than its physical form. Hardcover, with a cartoonish dust jacket and 8x8 inch dimensions, it looks more like a children's storybook than a chess primer. The insides reinforce this impression: every page is printed on vividly colored paper, with a different base color for each chapter. There's even a rainbow table of contents with all the hues arrayed in full saturated glory. The book is illustrated throughout by what appear to be computer generated 3-D chess pieces. Soft and doughy-looking, these figures are always presented in a neutral grays and beiges — an artful layout device to further emphasize the color explosion all around them.

KNOW YOUR MIND

Finally, we have not one, not two, but three new entries in the seemingly endless parade of Inner Game manuals – that is, chess books that are not really so much about chess as they are about the mental process of playing chess. I ought to acknowledge my own prejudice against such things, which I have written of previously in *Virginia Chess*. I consider this sort of book to be symptomatic of dopey postmodernism in the world at large. Not that there isn't room for some of this sort of thing: Kotov's *Think Like A Grandmaster* is deservedly recognized as a classic, not only because it's a fine book but because it was groundbreaking, the first of its kind. But enough is enough. If what you're actually interested in is psychology, fine, but if your goal is to play chess better, my advice is more time and energy thinking about chess positions, less time and energy thinking about thinking about these positions.

Who is Jacob Aagaard, and how has he suddenly written all these books? His earlier work, *Excelling At Chess*, was widely acclaimed — although I did not read it, following the counsel of reviewers I trust, plus my general predisposition as described above. But as I say, the book was nonetheless well received, and now it has spawned at least four follow-on volumes by the same author: *Excelling at Combinational Play, Excelling at Positional Chess, Excelling at Chess Calculation*, and *Excelling at Technical Chess*. I have the latter two on hand here.

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I must admit, there is a lot more pure analytic chess content to these books than I had been led to expect. With a different tone, the same base material could comprise excellent 'traditional' chess books. At least in *Excelling at Chess Calculation*, however, the tone, the whole orientation, is nonetheless very subjective. One need only cite its chapter titles: Before you can think you need to learn how to see; Candidate Moves; When is the right time to Calculate²; Important Thinking Techniques; Visualization and Stepping Stones; When it is time to Calculate; Creativity and Combinational Vision; How to Train Calculation.

Both books give the impression of being very meaty. Aagaar does not just roll out the same overworked example of zugzwang or a deflection sacrifice. He's got ideas. He's got opinions. He devotes space to critical analysis of what other players and writers have said about particular positions or concepts. A brief thumb-through of these books suggests that Aagaard would be a very interesting guy to have in the car during a long drive to a tournament, even if we don't always agree with him. In short, these appear to be substantial and interesting books; I might even read them some day.

I'm pretty sure I won't ever read Aagaard's other new book, *Inside the Chess Mind*, however. If *Think Like A Grandmaster* was the seminal Inner Game book, this one is the Über- Inner Game book. Its topic is ten specific chess positions from grandmaster practice. Most are middlegame positions, a couple are complicated endings. The reader is invited to contemplate these positions – not solve them in a normal exercise sense, for we have no assurance that there even is a solution, as such. Just like in real life, the game will probably continue long after the point where whatever we calculate on this turn will have been overtaken by events.

But you are to think about the positions, and Aagaard even recommends that you record your thoughts aloud into a microphone, stream-of-consciousness style. Then you turn to the heart of the book, where we find that others have done the same thing: specifically, a couple grandmasters (Arthur Yusupov and Peter Heine Nielsen), an IM, a 2200- player, a couple 2000- players, a 1500- player, and a beginner. Oh yes, and a version of the *Fritz* computer program. Aagaard has employed all of them for "the experiment" as he calls it. *Inside the Chess Mind* presents a sort of edited, annotated transcript of *their* musings about each test position. You can compare the players with one another — see how a grandmaster's thoughts differ essentially from a class player's, for instance. Of course you can also compare them with your own recorded notions.

I will concede the potential interest of this sort of research, and I don't want to say that *Inside the Chess Mind* is not a fine book. You may love it if it's your sort of thing. It's just not what I'm into, any more than I'd likely read a book on ceramics or Siberian agriculture. I would rather spend my precious chess study time on Kasparov's annotations in the forthcoming volume of *My Great Predecessors*.





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