

VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

The bimonthly publication of the
Virginia Chess Federation

2018 - #5

Inside this chocked-full issue...

State champion Praveen Balakrishnan shows how it's done, Andy Huang recounts the Barber K-8 Invitational, the Editor continues his European Vacation, and Mark Warriner reflects back



*To learn why a picture of a wild boar pelt is on
the cover of Virginia Chess, read the article beginning page 9*

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2018 - Issue #5

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Shawn Hoshall came out of relative tournament seclusion to run the boards (5-0) at the 2018 Virginia Senior Open. The tournament was open to players age 50 or older. Hoshall's wins included beating 4-time state champion Geoff McKenna, and the defending senior champ Willie Marcelino, in the final two rounds. In addition to the 1st place prize and trophy, Hoshall becomes Virginia's representative in the USCF's National Tournament of Senior Champions, to be held in conjunction with the 2019 US Open in Orlando, FL.

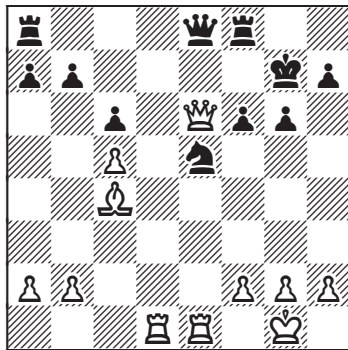
Narciso Victoria won clear second place with 4½ points. Salvador Rosario & Raymond Duchesne each scored 4-1 to tie for 3rd/U2000. The U1800 prize saw a 4-way split between Peter Snow, Carla Naylor, Karl Peterson & Phil Newcomb. Pennsylvania native Joe Sackey Jr outperformed expectations by winning the U1600 prize and Steven Chilson was top U1400. Trophies for the Top Player Over Age 70 and the Top Player Aged 60-69 went to Leif Karell & Salvador Rosario, respectively.

Teammates from DC Chess League teams were well represented among the prize winners: from the Coral Reef (Rosario, Karell) and Morphy's Mojos (Snow, Peterson). The thought on everyone's lips throughout the event was: *how $Q \sim U \sim I \sim T \sim E$ senior events are (!)*. The good turnout represented a 25% increase over in recent years and likely reflected the increased prizes and the advantages of the new Marriott Residence Inn – Ballston venue. The site offers large indoor and outdoor skittles areas, free parking and numerous restaurants within a block of the hotel.

Milo Nekvasil provides the following interesting game from the event. Milo's opponent is a two-time US Armed Forces chess champion.



1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 c6 4 e4 dxe4 5
Nxe4 Bb4+ 6 Bd2 Qxd4 7 Bxb4 Qxe4+
8 Be2 Qh4 9 Nf3 Qd8 10 Qa4 f6 11 Rd1
Bd7 12 Qa3 Nh6 13 O-O Kf7 14 Qd3 g6
15 Bd6 Bc8 16 Qe4 Nd7 17 Nd4 Qe8
18 c5 Nf8 19 Bc4 Kg7 20 Rfe1 Nf7 21
Bxf8+ Rxf8 22 Nxe6+ Bxe6 23 Qxe6
Ne5? [23...Qxe6]



24 Rxe5! fxe5 25 Rd7+ Kh8 26 Re7
Qb8 27 Qd7 Rf7 28 Rxf7 Qg8 29 Re7
Qxc4 30 Rxh7+ 1-0

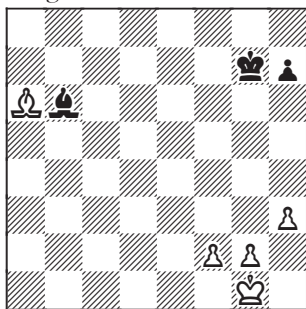


State Championship WrapUp

As reported last issue, Praveen Balakrishnan successfully defended his state champion title at the annual Virginia "Closed", held Labor Day weekend in Richmond. We previously gave Praveen's first round game versus Robert Fischer. The champion has kindly provided his remaining games, two of them annotated!

Praveen Balakrishnan - Shawn Hoshall
French

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 Nf6 4 e5 Nfd7 5 Bd3 c5 6 c3 Nc6 7 Ne2 cxd4 8 cxd4 f6 9 exf6 Nxf6 10 Nf3 Bd6 11 O-O Qc7 12 h3 O-O 13 Be3 Bd7 14 Re1 Rae8 15 Rc1 Qb8 16 Nc3 a6 17 a3 b5 18 Bb1 Na5 19 Ne5 Nc4 20 Bf4 b4 21 axb4 Qxb4 22 Bg5 Nxb2 23 Qc2 Re7 24 Bxf6 gxf6 25 Nxd7 Rxd7 26 Rxe6 Rc8 27 Rxf6 Na4 28 Rf3 Nxc3 29 Rxc3 Rxc3 30 Qxc3 Qxc3 31 Rxc3 Rc7 32 Rxc7 Bxc7 33 Ba2 Bb6 34 Bxd5+ Kg7 35 Bc4 Bxd4 36 Bxa6 Bb6



Opposite color bishops — 'Wrong' rook's pawn

37 Be2 Bd4 38 g3 Bc5 39 Kg2 Bd4 40 f4 Bc5 41 Kf3 Bb6 42 Bb5 Bc7 43 Bc4 Bd6 44 Bd3 Bc7 45 Kg4 h6 46 Kf5 Bd8 47 h4 Bf6 48 Kg4 Bd8 49 Kh5 Bc7 50 Kg4 Bd6 51 Kf5 Be7 52 Bb5 Bd8 53 Be8 Bf6 54 Kg4 Bd8 55 Bc6 Bc7 56 Be4 Bd6 57 Bc2 Bc7 58 Kf3 Bd8 59 Kg2 Be7 60 Be4 Bd8 61 Bc6 Be7 62 Kh2 Bd8 63 Kh3 Bc7 64 Bb5 Bd6 65 Kg4 Be7 66 Ba4 Bd8 67 Kf5 Be7 68 Ke6 Bd8 69 Bd1 Bf6 70 Bh5 Bd8 71 Be8 Bc7 72

Kf5 Bd8 73 Kg4 Bc7 74 Ba4 Bd6 75 Bc2 Bc7 76 Kf5 Bd8 77 Bd3 Bf6 78 Bc2 Bd8 79 Kg4 Bc7 80 Kh5 Bd6 81 Kg4 Bc7 82 Kf5 Bd8 83 Ke6 Bf6 84 Kd5 Bd8 85 Ke4 Be7 86 Kf3 Bd8 87 Bb1 Be7 88 Ba2 Bd8 89 Kg4 Be7 90 Kf5 Bd8 91 Ke6 Bf6 92 Kd6 Bd8 93 Bb3 Bf6 94 Ke6 Bd8 95 h5 Bf6 96 g4 Bd8 97 Bd1 Bh4 98 g5 Bxg5 99 fxg5 hxg5 100 Kf5 Kh8 101 Kg6 g4 102 Bxg4 Kg8 103 h6 Kh8 104 h7 ½-½

26th David Zofchak Memorial
Nov 17-18, 2018

Sleep Inn Lake Wright

1521 Premium Outlets Boulevard

Norfolk, Va 23502

*½ mile off I-64 exit 282 onto Northampton
Blvd heading NE*

5-SS, Game/120 d5. \$\$2000 b/45 in two sections: *Open*: \$350-225-160 (G), X 150, A 125. *U1800*: \$270-170-130, C/Unr 120, D 110, E 100, U1000 90. *Both*: EF \$55 if rec'd by 11/15 else \$65. Reg Saturday 8:30-9:10am, rds 9:30-2-7:00 9:30-2. VCF membership req'd for Va residents (\$15/Jr \$8). Hotel: Sleep Inn \$59+tax, Quality Suites \$69+tax, free breakfast for morning after stay (757) 461-6251, reserve by 10/13. Many places to eat nearby. *Enter*: Virginia Chess, 1370 S Braden Cres, Norfolk, Va 23502. On-line entry and details www.vachess.org. Info only: ernest.schlich@gmail.com (757) 853-5296.

10 US Chess Grand Prix Points



Patrick Spain - Praveen Balakrishnan
London

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 d5 3 Bf4 e6 4 e3 Bd6 5 Bg3
O-O 6 c4 c5 7 Bxd6 Qxd6 8 Nc3 cxd4 9
exd4 Nc6 10 c5 Qe7 11 Be2 e5 12 dxe5
Nxe5 13 O-O Rd8 14 b4 a5 15 Nxe5 Qxe5
16 Nb5 axb4 17 Nd4 Ne4 18 Nf3 Qb2 19
Bd3 Nxc5 20 Rb1 Qc3 21 Bxh7+ Kxh7 22
Rc1 Qd3 23 Rxc5 Qxd1 24 Rxd1 Rxa2 25
h3 Bf5 26 Nd4 Bg6 27 Rb5 Rb2 28 Rxb7
Ras 29 Nf3 f6 30 Nh4 Be4 31 f3 Rb1 32
Rxb1 Bxb1 33 Rxb4 Ra1 34 g4 g5 35 Ng2
Bd3+ 36 Kf2 Rf1+ 37 Ke3 Bc4 38 h4 Rd1
39 Rb2 Rd3+ 40 Kf2 d4 41 hxg5 fxg5 42
f4 Bd5 43 fxg5 Rf3+ 44 Kg1 Rg3 45 Kf1
Rxc4 46 Ne1 Kg6 47 Ke2 Kf5 48 Kd3 Ke5
49 Rh2 Rg3+ 50 Kd2 Be4 51 Re2 Kd5 52
Rh2 Rxc5 53 Rh8 Rg4 54 Rd8+ Kc4 55
Rc8+ Kb5 56 Rd8 Bg6 57 Rb8+ Kc4 58
Rc8+ Kd5 59 Rh8 Rg3 60 Rh6 Bf5 61 Rh2
Ra3 62 Rg2 Kc4 63 Rg5 Ra2+ 64 Kd1 Be4
65 Rg3 d3 66 Nxd3 Bxd3 67 Rg7 Kd4 68
Rd7+ Ke3 69 Re7+ Be4 70 Kc1 Rc2+ 71
Kd1 Rb2 0-1

Praveen Balakrishnan - Qindong Yang
Pirc

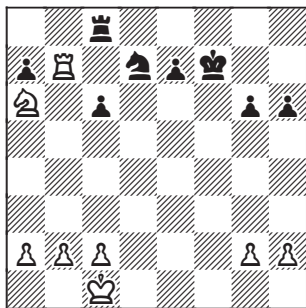
Notes by Praveen Balakrishnan

1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 g6 4 f4 Bg7 5
Nf3 O-O 6 e5 Nfd7 7 Bc4 Nb6 8 Bb3
dxe5 [My previous games with Qindong
have gone 8...Na6 9 O-O c5 10 dxc5 Nxc5
11 Be3 after which White has a tiny edge
due to his greater activity.] 9 fxe5 c5?!
[After this, Black seems to voluntarily
land himself in an inferior endgame.
9...Nc6 10 O-O Bg4 11 Be3 Na5 is the
main line. Although White has a space
advantage, Black can claim equality due
to the potential for his knights to land on
c4 or d5 and with the ...c5 break in the
air.] 10 dxc5 Qxd1+ 11 Nxd1 N6d7

12 e6! [making sure Black gets saddled
with an isolated weak e-pawn] 12...fxe6
13 Be3 [13 Bxe6+ Kh8 14 Be3 Na6 is
another route to the game position.]
13...Na6 14 Bxe6+ Kh8 15 c6! [The
purpose of this move is, once again, to
isolate the Black pawns making them
easy targets in the endgame.] 15...bxc6
16 Nc3 Ne5!? [16...Nb6 would give
me a chance to keep the bishops with
17 Bb3] 17 Nxe5 Bxe5?! [This allows
White to trade off many minor pieces,
after which Black's pawn weaknesses
will be more apparent. Black's best
chance would be 7...Bxe6 sacrificing a
pawn for activity.] 18 Nxc6 Rac8 19
Nd4 Bg4 20 h3 Rc4 [White still has
an advantage, but Black's activity makes
it difficult to convert the extra pawn.]
18 Bxc8 Raxc8 19 O-O-O! [This has
multiple advantages: it moves the king to
safety on the queenside, it protects the b2
pawn from potential attacks on the file,
and it also creates threats of planting a
rook on the 7th rank.] 19...Bf4 20 Bxf4
Rxf4 21 Rhe1 [With e7 under fire and
his knight on a6 completely out of the
game, Black's position is positionally
awful.] 21...Rc7 22 Ne2 [the start of a
knight maneuver to the strong outpost
on e6] 22...Re4 23 Nd4 Rxe1 24 Rxe1
Kg8 25 Ne6 [There are many weak
squares in the Black camp that I can
exploit due to his isolated pawns. Over
the next few moves, I maneuver my rook
to the queenside to attack pawns while at
the same time limiting counterplay.] 25...
Rc8 26 Rd1 Nb8 [More or less forced
to prevent the rook from invading on d7;
26...Kf7 27 Ng5+ would force the king
back to defend h7] 27 Rd3 [Now the



rook is planning to go to a3 to pressure a7] **27...h6** [preventing Ng5+ after ... Kf7, but this costs valuable time] **28 Ra3 Kf7 29 Nc5** [The knight may not have the e6 square anymore, but c5 may be even stronger! Black's knight is completely restricted and the a7 pawn is a weakness.] **29...Rc7 30 Rb3?!** [This gives Black a chance to get some counterplay. Switching my focus to the weak kingside pawns, 30 Rf3+ Ke8 31 Ne6, would have been the easiest way to convert the game, eg 31...Rc8 32 Ng7+ Kd7 33 Rd3+ Kc7 34 Ne6+ Kb7 35 Rb3+ Ka8—now that all Black's pieces have been pushed to the queenside, it's time to attack h6 and g6—36 Rh3 h5 37 Rg3 and Black is going to lose material.] **30...Nd7 31 Na6 Rc8 32 Rb7**



32...Ne5

After this, Black never gets the kingside activity required to counter my queenside pawns. But he might have tried 32... Ke6!, a brilliant move with a hidden intention. After 33 Rxa7 Rf8! Suddenly Black's pieces aren't so passive anymore. His rook will invade my second rank and the game will essentially become a pawn race on both sides of the board. White should still have the advantage, but converting this isn't easy at all. A

sample continuation: 34 a4 Rf1+ 35 Kd2 Rf2+ 36 Kc3 Rxc2 37 a5 Rxh2 38 Nc7+ Kd6 39 Ne8+ Ke6 40 a6 Rh3+ 41 Kb4 and Black is up a pawn now, but he may have to sacrifice the knight to prevent the a-pawn from promoting.

33 Rxa7 Ng4 34 a4 Nxh2 35 Rc7! [Trading rooks would cost Black a pawn.] **35...Ra8** [35...Rxc7 36 Nxc7 e5 37 a5 Ke7 38 a6 Kd7 39 a7 Kxc7 40 a8Q White's pawn is too quick.] **36 Rxc6 Ng4 37 Nc5 Ne5 38 Rc7 Nc4 39 b4 Nb6 40 a5 Nd5 41 Rb7 h5 42 Ne4** [Of course, I could keep pushing my pawns, but I decided to restrict Black's pawns first. 42 a6 g5 43 b5 h4 44 b6 g4 45 Rxe7+!!—without this idea, Black may be the one promoting first!—45...Nxe7 46 b7 Rb8 47 a7 wins] **42...h4 43 Rb5 Ne3 44 Rg5** [Now g2 is defended and Black has no way to advance on the kingside. I can focus on slowly advancing my queenside pawns.] **44...Rc8 45 c3 1-0** If 45...Rc4 46 a6 Rxe4 47 a7 and even being up a knight, Black cannot prevent White's a-pawn from queening, a sample line that illustrates the dominance of White's pawns.

Andy Huang - Praveen Balakrishnan
Caro-Kann

Notes by Praveen Balakrishnan

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 Bd3 Nc6 5 c3 Nf6 6 h3 [6 Bf4 is the main line, eg 6...Bg4 7 Qb3 Qc8 8 Nd2 e6 9 Ngf3 Be7 10 O-O O-O 11 Ne5 Bh5 with approximate equality. The point of the text move is to prevent ...Bg4. Now Black's goal should be to get the light-squared bishop out before playing ...e6 and closing it in.] **6...Qc7 7 Nf3 g6** [The subtle idea is not to fianchetto



the bishop, but to play ...Bf5] **8 O-O Bf5 9 Re1 Bxd3 10 Qxd3 e6** [I like this over 10...Bg7 since it retains the option of putting a bishop on d6.] **11 Ne5 Nxe5 12 Rxe5 Nd7** [Looking back at the game, I prefer 12...Bd6 to what I played since this piece would be more helpful in a future minority attack on the queenside.] **13 Re2 O-O 14 Bh6 Rfc8 15 Nd2 b5** [I prefer Black in this position since my queenside pawns are quick while the weak dark squares on my kingside cannot really be exploited.] **13 Re2 Bg7 14 Nd2 O-O 15 Nf3 a6 16 a4** [preventing ...b5 and expanding on the queenside] **16...Rfc8 17 a5** [This permanently prevents ... b5 but now the a5-pawn is a weakness.] **17...Nb8** [Δ

...Nc6 to pressure White's a-pawn] **18 g3?!** [White has to play actively to avoid falling worse: 18 Ne5!, eg 18...Bxe5 19 dxe5 Nc6 20 Bh6! Nxe5 (Black has to be careful since 20...Nxa5 21 Qf3 would win for White) 21 Qd4 f6 22 Bg5! White's activity should compensate for his pawn deficit.] **18...Nc6 19 Bf4 Qd8** [Black's pieces are well-placed, and he is left with the option of either preparing the f6 and e5 breakthrough in the center or putting pressure on White's queenside pawns. If White ever tries to play b4 to support a5, the c4-square will become a major weakness.] **20 Bg5 Qc7 21 Bf4 Qd8 22 Bg5 f6!** [Δ Qd7, Re8, preparing ...e5] **23 Bf4 Qd7 24 h4 Re8 25 Qd2 Qd8 26 Rae1 Qd7**

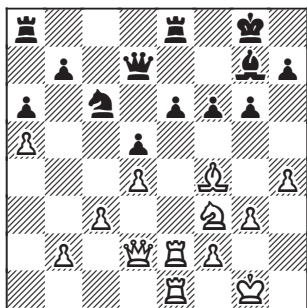
Our Upcoming VCF Cup Season *by Andrew Rea*

Well earned congratulations to 2018 VCF Cup Champion, Jason Liang! Our youngest winner, Jason was steady, consistent, and successful in his tournaments—a fine formula for climbing up the standings! As can be observed in our posted results (www.vachess.org) it was not as though he was on a solo breakaway! As with previous editions of the VCF Cup, we also had category winners, so congratulations to them all as well.

To recap what makes an event eligible to participate in the VCF Cup: 1) open to all players (thus, eg, scholastic, senior opr military events would not be eligible); 2) not to be too obvious, but it has to be in Virginia; 3) needs to be on a weekend (which includes possible first rounds on a Friday evening, or Mondays if it is a federal holiday weekend).

There are two more considerations for organizer. We need 30 days notice of the event (whether by posting a TLA, or posting on vachess.org, or via email to andrea2@yahoo.com) so that players have time to plan and last-minute 'rogue' events to not pop just to game the Cup standings; and to make the VCF Cup as a self-financing operation, \$1 per player must be remitted by the organizer to VCF (maximum event fee \$200, house games/extra games do not count, re-entries count as half a player—50¢).

The 2018-2019 VCF Cup kicked off with the Washington Chess Congress in early October. We have the Emporia Open, David Zofchak Memorial, Northern Virginia Open, Virginia Open, Cherry Blossom Classic, and Charlottesville Open already lined up to participate!

**27 b4**

This was what I was hoping to provoke. Now c3-pawn is a weakness and my knight can invade c4 and b5. White could argue that my e6 pawn is also weak, but if I can place a rook on c6 and a knight on b5, e6 would be well defended while c3 is not.

Had White retreated with his rook, I was planning 27 Ra1 e5! 28 Bh6 Rad8 29 Bxg7 Qxg7 with a strong center, Black should have an advantage;

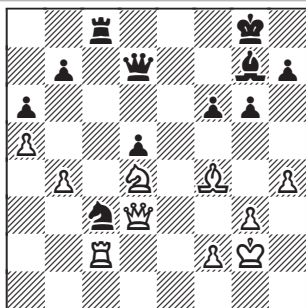
Sacrifices like 27 h5 g5 28 Bxg5!? are always a possibility and had to be considered also. 28...fxg5 29 Qxg5 h6! (preventing h6) 30 Qg4 Re7 31 Nh4 e5 Black is just in time to create counterplay and trade off into a better endgame.

27...Rac8 28 Kg2 Na7 29 Qd3 Nb5



*Andy Huang (left) vs Praveen Balakrishnan
photo by Mike Hoffpauir*

[White must move a rook of his choice to an inferior square to defend c3] **30 Rc1 Rc6** [Δ ...Rec8 xc3] **31 c4?!** [This is one of the scenarios where passive defense may have been best, although it's difficult for any player to want to endure this type of position. 31 Kh2 White cannot really do much and has no plan, so he waits for Black to try something. 31...Rec8 32 Rec2 Qf7 33 Kg2 Rc4 The plan from this point onward would be to switch sides and play for h6-g5 to try to create problems on the kingside. White is in for a long and brutal defense.] **31...dxc4 32 Rxc4 Rec8 33 Rxc6 Rxc6 34 d5!?** [I missed this. If White had played anything else, his weaknesses on b4 and d4 would make it an easy conversion for me, eg 34 Bd2 Qd5 35 Qe4 Qxe4 36 Rxe4 Kf7 and when Black's rook comes to c4 it's hard to believe White can survive.] **34...exd5?** [34...e5! was stronger—Black can win the d5-pawn without having to make any concessions as I did in the game. For instance, 35 Bd2 (35 dxc6 Qxd3 36 cxb7 Qd8 37 Rc2 Nd6 38 Rc8 Nxc8 39 b8Q exf4 is an amusing forcing line, but Black comes out of it a piece ahead) 35...Rd6 36 Qc4 Rxd5 and Black is just a clear pawn up.] **35 Rd2** [Here too I'm up a pawn, but keeping it requires me to make some awkward-looking moves] **35...Nc3** [the only way to defend the pawn] **36 Nd4 Rc8** [if 36...Rc4?! 37 Rc2 Qc8 38 Ne2! Black cannot hold onto his extra material: 38...f5 39 Rxc3! Bxc3 40 Qxd5+ Kf8 41 Nxc3 Rxc3 42 Bh6+ White has at least a perpetual and may even win if Black errs.] **37 Rc2**



37...Na4

37...Ne4 would be a lovely square for my knight, except after 38 f3 Rxc2+ 39 Qxc2 it must retreat 39...Nd6 and after 40 Bxd6 Qxd6 41 Qc8+ Bf8 42 Qxb7 Black actually has to be careful not to lose this.

The text, on the other hand, looks like an awful square for my knight—and it is. The only good thing is that there is no way for White to win it, since my queen can always defend from d7. I hoped to eventually bring the knight back into the game via c3.

38 h5 [38 Rxc8+ Qxc8 39 Qb3 Qd7 40 Be3 is probably White's best chance to hold. As long as he prevents me from playing ...N-b2-c4 or ...Nc3 my pieces will always be tangled up and the extra pawn of no use. 40...f5 41 Qc2 and there's no obvious way for Black to improve.]

38...f5 [I was happy for the chance to open the diagonal for my bishop. My opponent was in immense time pressure here, to my 15 minutes, so I knew he would falter somewhere eventually.] **39 Nf3 Rxc2 40 Qxc2 Nc3** [Objectively, White should be able to hold this position with perfect play, but practically, with so little time on his clock, he he's

going to lose rather quickly.] **41 Ne5?**

[It was worth throwing in 41 h6 just so I never capture on h5. Then 41...Bf6 42 Be5! Ne4 43 Bxf6 Nxf6 44 Ne5 Qe6 45 f4 Ne8 White's knight is extremely active and should be enough to account for the missing pawn.] **41...Bxe5 42 Bxe5 d4!**

[Now my pieces are stable and White's activity is minimal.] **43 Kh2** [43 Qb3+ Qd5+ 44 Qxd5+ Nxd5 45 hxg6 hxg6 46 Bxd4 Nxb4 may be White's best chance to hold, but it's still unpleasant.] **43... Qd5** [With Black's pieces finally active, the end is near.] **44 Bf6 Kf7 45 Bg5 Qa2 46 hxg6+ Kxg6 47 Qxa2 Nxa2 48 Bd2 Nc3 49 f3** [49 Kg2 wouldn't have helped. After 49...Kf6 50 Kf3 Ke5 Black's position is easily winning.] **49... Nb1 0-1** The d-pawn is unstoppable.

Praveen Balakrishnan – Jason Liang
Petrov

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nxe5 d6 4 Nf3 Nxe4 5 Nc3 Nxc3 6 dxc3 Be7 7 Be3 Nc6 8 Qd2 Ne5 9 Nd4 c5 10 Nb3 Be6 11 Bb5+ Kf8 12 Be2 Qc7 13 Bf4 f6 14 O-O Kf7 15 Bg3 Nc4 16 Qc1 Rad8 17 Nd2 Nxd2 18 Qxd2 Qb6 19 Rfe1 d5 20 Bf3 g6 21 Re2 Rhe8 22 Rae1 Bf8 23 b3 d4 24 c4 Bd7 25 Bd5+ Kg7 26 c3 dxc3 27 Qxc3 Rxe2 28 Rxe2 Re8 29 Rxe8 Bxe8 30 Qf3 Bf7 31 Bxf7 Kxf7 32 Qd5+ Kg7 33 h3 Qb4 34 Kh2 Qb6 35 Bf4 Qa6 36 Qd7+ Kg8 37 Qe8 Qb6 38 Bh6 Qd6+ 39 g3 b6 40 Qa8 a5 41 Qc8 Kf7 42 Bxf8 Qxf8 43 Qb7+ Qe7 44 Qxb6 h5 45 Qxa5 g5 46 Qd2 Kg6 47 a4 f5 48 a5 Qc7 49 a6 h4 50 Qa2 hxg3+ 51 fxg3 f4 52 a7 fxg3+ 53 Kg1 g4 54 a8Q gxh3 55 Q2a6+ Kg5 56 Qd5+ Kg4 57 Qg6+ Kf4 58 Qgg5mate 1-0



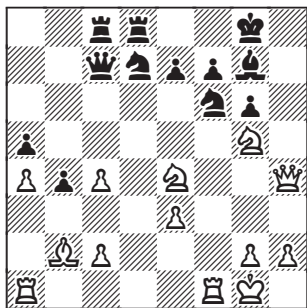
The report in VIRGINIA CHESS #2018/4 incorrectly reported the name of the winner of the Amateur (under 1800) section. The 2018 Virginia Amateur Champion is in fact Joseph Cagle (not “Cagler”). Our apologies for the error.

A few other games from the state championship follow:

Shawn Hoshall - Qindong Yang Bird

Notes by Macon Shibut

1 f4 d5 2 Nf3 c5 3 e3 Nf6 4 b3 g6 5 Bb2 Bg7 6 Bb5+ Bd7 7 Bxd7+ Nbx d7 8 O-O O-O 9 Qe1 b5 10 a4 b4 11 d3 a5 12 Nbd2 Nb6 13 Qh4 c4 14 bxc4 dxc4 15 dxc4 Rc8 16 f5 Qc7 17 fxg6 hxg6 18 Ng5 Rfd8 19 Nde4 Nbd7



Black's position looks precarious, but where is the knockout? The cynical 20 c5 may actually be White's best try. Forget the direct attack, just maintain his extra pawn and challenge Black to find a move. But White's pawn formation is ugly and the siren song on the kingside is probably too sweet to ignore. 20 Rad1 and 20 Rf3 are much more human reactions.

On 20 Rad1 it turns out that eliminating the defender Nd7 is not all that it first appears. Black can answer 20...Qxc4 and it is relevant both that his queen defends f7 and the pseudo-pin along the 5th rank limits White's possibilities. After 21 Rxd7 Rxd7 22 Bxf6 (22 Nxf6+? exf6 23 Qh7+ Kf8 is less than nothing) 22...exf6 White

must find 23 Nh7! Rd6 (23...Rd2 allows a forced perpetual check: 24 Nxf6+ Bxf6 25 Nxf6+ Kg7 26 Qh7+ Kf8 27 Nd7+!—perhaps impossible to foresee from afar—27...Rxd7 28 Qh8+ Ke7 29 Qf6+ Ke8 30 Qh8+ etc) 24 Nxf6+ Bxf6 25 Nxf6+ Rxf6 26 Qxf6 White has a pawn more but his position is worse.

On 20 Rf3 Qxc4 21 Raf1 (21 Rh3 is nothing, Black keeps eating 21...Qxc2) there is evident pressure but still no breakthrough. If he wishes, Black can force matters by attacking White's bishop, 21...Qa2 22 Bxf6 Nxf6 White's forces are about as well deployed as they can get, but to what end?

Under the circumstances, the solution Hoshall found probably felt like a lifeline to him.

20 Nxf7 Kxf7 21 Qh7! [The brilliant point, whereas winning back the piece by 21 Ng5+ Ke8 22 Ne6 Qxc4 23 Nxc7+ would not have ended well for White after 23...Kf7] **21...Rh8** [Black could also play 21...Qxc4 but White has sufficient resources there too. The text move clarifies everything immediately.] **22 Ng5+ Kf8 23 Ne6+ Kf7 24 Ng5+ ½-½**

Nick Fallon – Andrew Samuelson Benoni

Notes by Macon Shibut

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 c5 4 d5 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 6 Nf3 g6 7 Bf4 Bg7 8 Qa4+ Bd7 9 Qb3 b5 10 e4 O-O 11 Bxd6



[Benoni players are accustomed to such incidents. White might in fact prefer the developing capture 11 Bxb5] 11...c4 12 Qc2 Re8 13 Be2 Na6 14 Nd2 b4 15 Nd1 Nxe4 16 Nxe4 Bf5 17 Qxc4 Bxe4 18 Qxa6 Bxg2 19 Rg1 Bxd5 20 Bxb4? [the wrong direction—20 Bg3] 20... Qh4 [With two threats, one of which (...Qxb4) White notices, the other he overlooks.] 21 Bd6? Bc4 0-1

Missaka Warusawitharana – Macon Shibut Sicilian

Notes by Macon Shibut

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e5 6 Ndb5 d6 7 Bg5 a6 8 Bxf6 gxf6 9 Na3 b5 10 Nd5 Bg7 11 Bd3 Ne7 12 O-O Nxd5 13 exd5 f5 14 c3 O-O 15 Re1 b4 16 Nb1 [16 cxb4! was a better try because of the trick 16... e4 17 Bf1 Bxb2 18 Rb1 and if 18...Bxa3 19 Qa4 recovers the piece] 16...Rb8 17 Qd2 Qb6 18 Re2 e4 19 Bc4 Bd7 20 a3 Rfc8 21 b3 bxc3 22 Nxc3 Bb5 23 Rae1 Bxc4 24 bxc4 Rxc4 25 Nd1 Qd4 26

Qg5 h6! [displacing White's queen] 27 Qxf5 Rc1 28 Ne3 Rbb1 29 Nc2 [if 29 Kf1 Rxe1+ 30 Rxe1 Qd3+ mates] 29... Qc3 30 Qxe4 [30 Kf1 meets the same reply] 30...Qxc2! 31 Qxc2 Rxe1+ 32 Rxe1 Rxe1 mate 0-1

Al Harvey – Bill Keogh Two Knights

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 c3?! [Move punctuations and the note at move 30 are all from the scoresheet submitted by the winner. For this move, '?' or even just '?' seems more apt—ed] 4...Nxe4 5 Bd5 Nc5 6 d4 exd4 7 cxd4 Ne6 8 O-O Be7 9 Re1 O-O 10 Nc3 Bf6 11 Be3 Ne7 12 Bb3 d5 13 Rc1 c6 14 Qd2 Nf5 15 Qd3 Nxe3 16 fxe3 g6 17 Red1 Ng5 18 e4 dxe4 19 Nxe4 Nxe4 20 Qxe4 Bf5 21 Qe3 Qb6! 22 Rc5 Rae8 23 Qh6? Bxd4+! 24 Rxd4 Qxc5 25 h3 Re1+! 26 Kh2 Qc1 27 Ng5 Rh1+ 28 Kg3 Qe3+ 29 Kh4 Qxd4+ 30 g4 [or 30 Kg3 Qe3+ 31 Kh4 Qf4+ 32 g4 Qf2mate] 30...Qf2mate 0-1

European Vacation (part 2 - Prague)*

by Macon Shibut

TWO DAYS AFTER THE CANDIDATES TOURNAMENT, I find myself wandering the vast Death Star that is the Berlin Hauptbahnhof, the largest train station in Europe. Everything is accomplished by machines here. I search in vain for a ticket window staffed by human beings. A kindly German traveler eventually helps me buy a ticket for my five-hour trip to Prague...

I'd visited the Czech Republic before, so I knew generally what to expect. First, *Prague is beautiful*. For whatever reason, Prague did not get bombed during the war, so it's intact right down to its medieval core in a way that most central European cities are not. In fact, one of Prague's biggest industries is moviemaking because the city looks precisely how American audiences expect old Europe to look. The next time you

* — Part 1 appeared in Virginia Chess #2018/3



watch a Tom Cruise thriller ostensibly set in Amsterdam or Paris, check the credits; there's a good chance it was actually filmed in Prague. (For a short intro to Prague in all its romantic splendor, get on YouTube and watch the INXS "Never Tear Us Apart" video. That saxophonist standing in the old Jewish cemetery is no more than a few hundred yards from where Wilhelm Steinitz was born.)

Second, *Prague is affordable*. Although touristy places will accept Euros or even US dollars, the Czech Republic uses its own currency, the koruna (Kč). You might suffer sticker shock the first time you look at a restaurant menu. “*What?! A plate of svíčková na smetaně costs 119 Kč!!?*” Relax, it’s only 5 or 6 dollars. In general, you can get dinner for two at a nice restaurant in Prague, including wine or beer, for under \$40. My hotel, a standard business-quality place in a decent area, ran me just \$36 per night—almost too good to be true. If you’re sightseeing near *Staroměstské Náměstí* (the old town square), I recommend the cafeteria-style Restaurant Havelska Koruná for cheap, authentic Czech cuisine favored by locals.

My daughter was enrolled at Univerzita Karlova (Charles University) in the heart of downtown. Her apartment building was constructed in the year 1420. The venue for my Prague Easter Open was a suburb about 15 minutes out via the excellent public transportation system. For reasons that were not clear at the time, my attempts to book a room in the tournament hotel before I left home had failed. No problem, I searched Yelp for something else nearby and had a reservation at the Hotel Iris Eden.

Two big rival sports clubs in Prague are Sparta and Slavia. The Iris Eden turned out to be literally attached to Slavia's soccer home, Eden Stadium. Imagine if Boston had a 'Marriott Fenway Park' nestled right under the outfield bleachers and you have the general idea. Moreover, the surrounding area turned out to be a massive training complex, with various fields, gyms, and other club facilities. The tournament hotel (the Hotel Slavia, naturally) stands inside the gates of the sports complex. The reason I was unable to reserve a room is that it really doesn't operate as a regular hotel so much as a dorm for training athletes. The parking lot was filled with team buses and there were always a lot of very fit-looking young people hanging around.

THE PRAGUE EASTER OPEN is not a big event

I full of grandmaster luminaries. The level of competition was roughly what I might face at a Virginia Open. Most of the players were Czechs, but there were also quite a few Germans and a smattering from Turkey, Israel, France, Italy, Austria, Russia... and the USA—the lone American, I appeared on the wallchart as the 5th-rated entrant.

not a big event

Veselé Velikonoce
PRAGUE OPEN

Billy White Alexander Kovarik
Cerny Black Maciej Skibor
Kolo Round 5
Datum Date
Wykres Results

Billy **Cerny** **Billy** **Cerny** **Billy** **Cerny** **Billy** **Cerny**

1	P04	NK33	21	P2X	NX2	41	TAS	RUP	61
2	P04	P03	22	NB3	NB5	42	KES	R08	62
3	P04	P03	23	NX8	NX4	43	P04	R09	63
4	N083	P043	24	PXW	N87	44			64
5			25			45			65
6			26			46			66

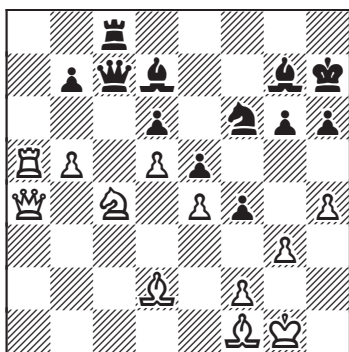
0-1



European chess culture provided some trappings that one expects only in elite American tournaments. First, sets and clocks were provided on all boards. I have to say, however, they were cheap clocks and horrible East-bloc style sets of lightweight wood except for the knights, whose bodies were incongruously made of plastic. But besides the equipment—we got fed! Each day, all the chess players were issued vouchers for meals at the Hotel Slavia training table. Also, there was ‘point money’—every time you recorded a win on the result sheet, the TD would pay you 40 Kč on the spot. And for the first round, there were little Easter gifts awaiting the players at every board.

There were no alternate schedules, no re-entries, no half-point byes. And no one—repeat, not a single player—withdrawed before the final round. It just doesn’t work that way there. You enter a tournament, and then you play the tournament, the whole tournament, period.

ALREADY in the first round I had to grind out a drawish rook ending against a lower-rated Czech. I won more cleanly against a German in round 2. My 2-0 start brought me up to board #1 against the tournament’s top-rated player.



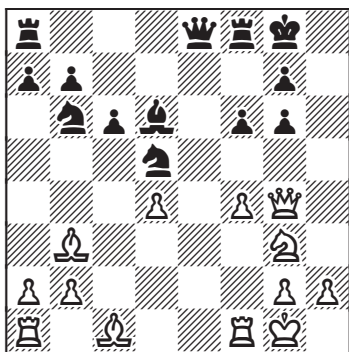
Ali Polatel – Macon Shibut
After 42...Nf6

43 b6 Qd8 44 Qb4? [44 Qc2 was correct when 44...fxg3 45 fxg3 Qxb6+ 46 Nxb6 Rxc2 47 Nxd7 Rxd2 48 Nxf6+ Bxf6 49 Rb5 could have led straight to a draw.] **44...Nxe4 45 Nxd6 Nxd2 46 Nxc8 Nxf1** [I calculated 46...Nf3+ 47 Kg2 Qxc8 48 Kxf3 Bg4+(?) 49 Kg2 Bh3+ 50 Kg1 Bxf1 51 Kxf1 Qh3+ 52

Ke1 fxg3 but couldn’t find a knockout in this position, and indeed there is none. But early in that variation I missed 48...e4+! with the points 49 Qxe4 Qc3+ 50 Bd3 Bf5; or 49 Kxe4 Bg4! White’s king has no way back. So, that was a miss, but Black is still better even after the text.] **47 Qe7?! [Should lose. 47 Ne7 was correct, with chances for Black but no clear win, eg 47...Nd2 48 d6 Nf3+ 49 Kg2 Nd4 50 h5 Nc6 (50...Bc6+!?) 51 hxg6+ Kh8 52 Nxc6 Bxc6+] 47...Qxc8 48 Rc5 Qe8?** [Trading a win for a loss. My 32-year-old Turkish opponent commented afterwards that he had calculated 48...Qa8 to “I think a draw” but we did go into whatever variation he had in mind. In fact, it looks to me now like a win for Black, but one that was beyond my powers: 49 Rc1 Nxc3 (I certainly did not see this!) 50 fxg3 Qa4! White’s king is too exposed, eg 51 Qc5 Qb3 52 Qc3 Qxd5 53 Qc4 Qf3 54 Qc3 Qg4] **49 Qxe8 Bxe8 50 Kxf1 [50 Rc7!]** **50...fxg3 51 Rc7 Bb5+ 52 Kg2 gxf2 53 Kxf2 Kg8 54 Rxb7 Bf6 1-0** *Zeitnot* put an end to scorekeeping, but in any case I eventually lost on time in a hopeless B+2P vs R+P position.



I bounced back against another German opponent the following morning. Not for the first time, I had to win the ending K+Q vs K+R.



Macon Shibut – Soeren Koop
After 42...Qe8

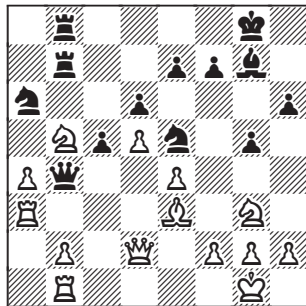
18 f5 Bxg3 19 fxg6! f5 20 Qh5 Rf6 21 Qh7+ Kf8 22 Qh8+ Ke7 23 Qxg7+ Kd6 24 hxg3 Rxg6 25 Qh7! [Black would be better after 25 Qxb7? Rxg3 26 Bd2 Qg6] 25...Rxg3 26 Qxf5 [26 Qh2? Qg6 27 Rf3 Rg8 28 Kf2 f4 breaks the pin and threatens ...Rxg2] 26...Qg6 27 Bf4+ Nxf4 28 Qxf4+ Kd7 29 Qf7+ Qxf7 30 Rxf7+ Kd6 31 Raf1 Nd5 32 Bxd5 Kxd5 33 Rd7+ Ke4 34 Re1+ Kd3 35 Rxb7 Rag8 36 Rb3+ Kxd4 37 Rd1+? [Playing to cut his king off far from the g-pawn, but a much easier win was available after 37 Rxg3 Rxg3 38 Re7 and hunt down the a-pawn] 37...Kc4 38 Rxg3 Rxg3 39 Kf2 Rg7 40 Rd2 c5 41 g3 Rf7+ [41...a5 immediately was better but he wanted to draw my king away from the queenside in view of a potential R vs P ending] 42 Ke3 Re7+ 43 Kf4 Rf7+ 44 Ke5 Rg7 45 Rg2 a5 46 g4 a4 47 a3? [Endangering the win! 47 g5 and if 47...a3 48 b3+ was correct]

47...Kb3 48 g5 c4 49 g6 c3 50 bxc3 Kxa3 51 Kf6 Rg8 52 Rg4! [the only way now] 52...Ra8! [best try] 53 g7 Kb3 54 Rb4+! Kxc3 55 Rxa4 Rxa4 56 g8Q Rd4 57 Ke5 Rd3 58 Qg7 Kd2 59 Qg2+ Kc3 60 Qa2 Kb4 61 Ke4 Rd8 62 Qb2+ Kc4 63 Qc1+ Kb4 64 Qc7 Rd1 65 Qb6+ Kc4 66 Qe6+ Kb4 67 Qe7+ Kc4 68 Qf7+ Kb4 69 Qf3 Rd8 70 Qf6 Rd1 71 Qb2+ 1-0

Okay, 3 points out of 4, not bad, and back up to board 2 for the 5th round. My opponent was a Russian mathematician whose career has included teaching posts at universities in France and Taiwan!

Alexander Kononov – Macon Shibut
King's Indian

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 d6 3 Nc3 g6 4 e4 Bg7 5 Be2 O-O 6 Bg5 c5 7 d5 b5!? 8 cxb5 a6 9 a4 h6 10 Bf4 Qa5 11 Qd2 g5 12 Be3 axb5 13 Bxb5 Ng4! [When I made this move I could not have imagined ...Nxe3 would never get played, but games do take strange turns.] 14 Nge2 Ba6 15 Ra3! Qb4! 16 Bxa6 Nxa6 17 O-O Rfb8 18 Rb1 Rb7 19 Ng3! Rab8 20 Nb5 Ne5!



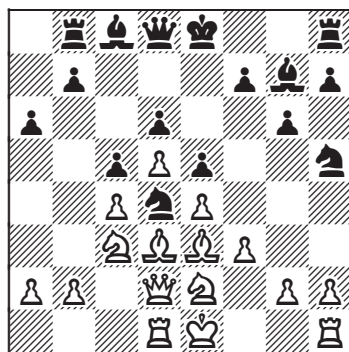
Objectively, taking the bishop is better, but in practical terms this move won the game. I reckoned it would be less expected, and indeed Dr Kononov burned



a lot of time now. We both had about 50 minutes left on our clocks, but White got down to 20 minutes before he finally replied, and he never recovered from that.

21 Qxb4 Nxb4 22 Nf5! Nc4 23 Nxcg7! [A draw would follow 23 Rb3 Na5 24 Ra3 Nc4 25 Raa1 Nc2 26 Ra2 Nb4 etc, but White justifiably looks for more.] **23...Nxa3!?** [I foresaw this trick when choosing my 20th move. The safer 23...Kxg7 24 Rc3 Nxe3 25 Rxe3 (25 fxe3!?) Nc2 26 Rd3 Nd4! is only slightly better for White, eg 27 Nxd4 cxd4 28 Rxd4 Rxb2 29 Rxb2 Rxb2 30 h3 Kf6 etc] **24 bxa3 Na2! 25 Nf5** [I saw 25 Ra1! Kxg7 26 Rxa2 Ra8 27 Nc3 Rxa4 28 f3 Rc4 29 Bd2 Rb3 30 a4! Rexc3 31 Bxc3+ Rxc3 32 a5 Rb3 33 a6 Rb8 and wasn't sure about the evaluation. 25 Bd2 leads to the same thing: 25...Kxg7 26 Rb2 Ra8 27 Rxa2 Rxa4 28 Nc3 Rc4 29 f3 Rb3, a weird transposition!] **25...Nc3! 26 Nxe7+!** [White would be losing after 26 Rb3 Nxa4!] **26...Kf8 27 Nc6 Nxb1 28 Nxb8 Rxb8 29 Kf1** [if 29 Nxd6 Nc3! threatening mate, and then ...Nxa4 defending c5] **29...Ke7 30 Ke2?** [better 30 e5! Kd7! White had only 2 minutes left] **30...Ra8 31 f4 Rxa4 32 fxg5 hxg5 33 Bxg5+ Kd7 34 Kd3 Nxa3 35 Nc3 Rd4+ 36 Ke2 Rc4** [I saw 36...Rb4 was correct, but in playing the text I expected him to move his king back to d3 when I would check again and then play Rb4] **37 Bf6 Rb4 38 h4 Nb1 39 Nxb1 Rxb1 40 g4?** [White can still resist after 40 h5 but now his undefended bishop turns out to be the decisive liability.] **40...Rg1! 41 h5** [41 Kf3 Rf1+] **41...Rxc4 42 Kf3 Rg1 43 h6 Rf1+ 0-1**

A very tense and satisfying win! Better still, Polatel, who had appeared to be running away with the tournament, unexpectedly lost to the young Czech player Filip Novy. Novy started as the #4 seed but had been skating under the radar after conceding a draw in the very first round. Now he bubbled up to first place with 4½-½. Polatel and I were tied for 2nd at 4-1. That meant I would be back on board 1 in the final round, playing for the tournament. The only bad news was I would have Black for the fourth time in six games. Novy and I were a forced pairing and he was coming off two Blacks in a row.



Filip Novy – Macon Shibut
After 11...c5

12 f4?!

I didn't believe this was any good (and I still don't think so), but I was unable to prove it over the board.

12...exf4 13 Nxf4 Be5

Here was the moment. 13...Qh4+ 14 Qf2 Nxf4 15 Bxf4 Nf3+!—the move I overlooked—16 gxf3 Qxf4 Black would be better. After missing this chance, my position went gradually downhill.



14 **O-O Qh4** [Simply 14...Nf6 also came into consideration and is perhaps equal.] 15 **Qf2 Qxf2+ 16 Rxf2 Nf6 17 h3 O-O 18 Bb1 Nd7 19 Nd3 Bg7** [White has secured the upper hand. If 19...Bg3 20 Rff1 Ne5 21 Bxd4 cxd4 22 Ne2 Bh4 23 b3 Bg5 24 Ndf4 Bd7 25 Nxd4] 20 **Bf4 Ne5 21 Bxe5!** [Leaving no options. Novy had

already worked out the coming tactics.] 21...Bxe5 22 **Nxe5 dxe5 23 Na4! b6 24 Rf6 b5** [Unfortunately the clever 24...Bd7 25 Nxb6 Bc6 fails to 26 Rxd4] 25 **cxb5 Rxb5 26 Bd3 Ra5 27 b3 Bd7 28 Nb6! Bb5 29 a4! Kg7 30 axb5!** [a cold shower!] **Kxf6 31 Nd7+ Ke7 32 Nxf8 Kxf8** [32...axb5 33 Nxb7 f6 34 Rf1 was likewise hopeless] 33 **b6! 1-0**

SO Novy wound up clear first, $5\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$. Polatel won his last round game to finish second. I tied for 3rd with five other players at 4-2. My prize was a couple thousand Kč (about \$100), which I used in a street market to buy a wild boar pelt. Those are hard to find around the Virginia Open.



A scene from the Prague Easter Open. The guy playing Black in the foreground is the eventual tournament winner Filip Novy.

The Barber Tournament of K-8 Champions

by Andy Huang

I WAS ECSTATIC coming into the Barber tournament. After four failed attempts in the K-8 Virginia Scholastic Championship, I finally won the elusive title. The winner from each state qualifies to play in the Barber Tournament of Champions. I had wanted to earn this invitation ever since I started playing in the K-8 Scholastic Championship.



I came into the Barber as the 4th seed in a field of 50. The top 7 boards were over 2200, so lots of people had a shot of winning. In these tournaments with only 6 rounds, it is key to squeeze the maximum number of points against weaker opponents. Rounds 1 and 2 were smooth, easy games allowing me to fall into my rhythm. I was still nervous, but I knew I could perform as well as anyone. Already, the field was beginning to thin out. Arthur Guo, the third seed, had drawn, allowing me to move up a board. In the third round, I was playing Nastassja Matus, rated 2100. The game was a Tarrasch French and she was able to gain a significant advantage after I misplayed the opening. But she misplayed the position and then blundered in time pressure, allowing me to reach 3-0.

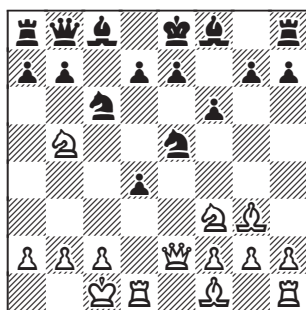
HAVING AVOIDED potential disaster, I found I was in clear first place, facing off against the top seed, Shunkai Peng, from Oregon. I had played him once before, in the World Youth U12 Championship in 2015 where I lost as White in a tough Najdorf. This time I was Black. I was extremely worried going into this game. *Would I win? Would I lose? If I lost, would I still have chances of winning first place?*

Shunkai Peng - Andy Huang Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Nc3 [Avoiding the main lines; I was expecting him to play the Rossolimo variation, 3 Bb5] **3...Nf6 4 e5** [I knew that this line was bad during the game, but I forgot what the refutation was.] **4...Ng4 5 Qe2 Qc7** [This is already a mistake. 4...f6 was better, with the idea of destroying White's center.] **6 d4 cxd4 7 Nb5 Qb8** [7...Qb6 is much better] **8 Bf4 f6 9 Bg3 Ngxe5 10 O-O-O**

(diagram)

The position is roughly equal but it is extremely complicated. Black needs to solidify by playing ...d6 and ...e6 and then develop his dark squared bishop and castle. White needs to play Nfxd4



and f4. The next few moves see the execution of our respective plans.

10...d6 11 Nfxd4 a6 [This forces 12 Nc3 because 12 Nxc6 would allow Black to build his center and open up the b-file.] **12 Nc3 e6 13 Ne4** [13 f4 was also an option. After 13...Nxd4 14 Rxd4 Nc6 15 Rd1 Kf7 (15...f5 is the idea, to blunt the bishop, but if played immediately 16 Nd5! is very strong) 16 Qf3 f5 ♣] **13...Be7 14 Qh5+ g6 15 Qh6 Kf7** [preventing Qg7; I can castle by hand later, so the loss of castling rights is not too important] **16 Qe3?** [Pulling back the queen unnecessarily. 16 Be2 was better, and prepare f4] **16...h6?!** [My idea was to cover g5 so when I play ...f5 or ...d5, Ng5 won't be an option. But I have more pressing matters to attend to, besides which ...h6 creates a new weakness. 16...



Nxd4 was better, eg 17 Qxd4 (17 Rxd4 d5 (17...Kg7 is also good) 18 Ng5+ Kg7 19 Nf3 Bd6 ♣) 17...d5 18 Ng5+ Kg7 is fine for Black, but during the game I thought White would be slightly better after 19 f4 fxg5 20 fxe5] **17 f4 Ng4 18 Qc3 Nxd4 19 Qxd4** [19 Rxd4 was also an option] **19... d5 20 h3 Qa7! 21 hxg4 Qxd4 22 Rxd4 dxe4 23 Rxe4 b5** [Without this move Black is worse, but ...b5 prevents Bc4 and allows the Black bishop to take up a powerful post on b7, giving Black a slight edge.] **24 Bd3 Bb7 25 Re2 Bd6?** [This allows 26 Bxg6! Kxg6 27 f5+ exf5 28 gxf5+ Kxf5 29 Bxd6 with equality] **26 Rhe1?** [entering a needless period of suffering] **26...Rhe8 27 Rh1 Rh8 28 Rh3** [Shunkai played this quickly, but the move is definitely not good as he cannot double on the h-file.] **28...f5!** [At first sight this looks like it is just undoubling his pawns, but he does not want to take on f5 as that would open the g-file for my rooks. Either way, his g and f-pawns are being uncomfortably attacked by my bishops.] **29 Kd2 Rag8** [I also could have taken on g4: 29...fxg4 30 Rh4 Bd5 31 Rxg4 Rag8 followed by h5 ♣] **30 Rh1 fxg4 31 Rhe1 Bd5** [From here on out, it is clean up for the Black forces.] **32 Rf1 Rc8 33 a3 Rhd8 34 Bh4 Rd7 35 Kd1 Bc5 36 Ke1 Bd4 37 c3 Bg7?** [This is a mistake, although not one that costs me my winning edge. The bishop belongs on the g1-a7 diagonal and so 37...Ba7] **38 Rd2 Rcc7 39 f5?** [I think that he missed that after 39... gxf5 40 Bxf5 exf5 41 Rxf5+ I had 41...Ke6 defending my bishop] **39...gxf5 40 Bg3 Rb7 41 Rff2 Bf6 42 Be2 Bg5 43 Bf4 Kg6 44 g3 Bxf4 45 Rxf4 e5 46 Rf2 Be4 47 Bf1 Kg5 48**

a4 bxa4 49 Bxa6 Rxd2 50 Rxd2 Rb6 51 Be2 f4 52 gxf4+ exf4 53 Rd4 Bb7 54 Rxa4 Rxb2 55 Bd1 f3 56 Rb4 Rxb4 57 cxb4 Kf4 58 Kf1 Ba6+ 59 Kg1 g3 0-1

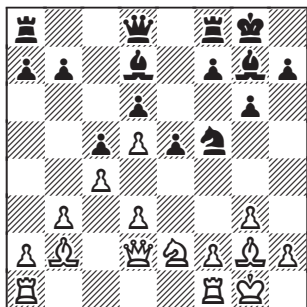
The next round was psychologically the most difficult for me. My opponent was Arthur Guo, of Georgia. I had always had a hard time playing him, so I was pleased at the chance to bail out for a quick draw. I think it was a good strategic decision as it gave me a good night's rest for the final round.

Alex Costello – Andy Huang Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Nge2 [Another sideline. Already I was out of my book. I had expected him to play into the main line Sveshnikov {eg 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 d4 cxd4 5 Nxd4 e5—ed} as in a previous game we played. The idea of 3 Nge2 is to avoid the Sveshnikov in that if Black plays ...Nf6 now, White will answer g3 and Bg2 to get a good version of the Closed Sicilian. At least this is what I thought during the game, and it would be true except that in fact Black can play ...d5 immediately after g3 with an equal position.] **3...e5** [Stopping d4 at all costs. Definitely not a good move. As previously mentioned, 3...Nf6 4 g3 d5 leads to equality.] **4 Nd5 g6 5 g3** [5 Nec3 was better, followed by Bc4, d3, and f4. Although it may not give an edge White's position is certainly easier to play.] **5...Bg7 6 Bg2 Nge7 7 O-O O-O 8 d3 Nxd5 9 exd5 Ne7** [9...Nd4 10 Nxd4 exd4 was completely dry so I played Ne7 to keep some play alive.] **10 b3?** [This move makes little sense. The bishop is much better placed on the c1-

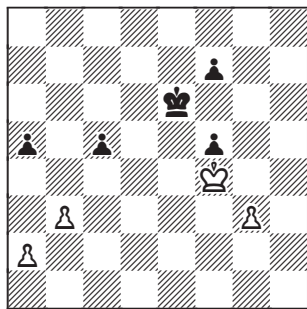


h6 diagonal.] **10...d6** **11 Bb2 Bd7** [11... h5 was also an option, introducing the idea ...h4] **12 Qd2 Nf5** **13 c4**



13...Re8! [It is unlikely the e-file will open up as White does not want to play f4. 13...h5 Δ Bh6, h4 was much better.] **14 Rfe1** [This wasted move does not go along with White's plan to expand on the queenside with b4] **14...b6** [Also unnecessary; 14...h5 continuing with Black's plans is a large improvement.] **15 Be4** [more wasted time] **15...h5** [finally] **16 Qc2 b5** [Although the computer's second choice, the concept behind the text move is not good as it plays on the side of the board where White basically has an extra pawn on d3. So 16...h4 was better.] **17 cxb5?** [This loses any edge White had on the queenside and leaves a weakness on d5] **17...Bxb5** **18 Bxf5 gxf5** **19 f4 Rc8** **20 Rad1 Bd7** [20...Ba6 was also an option with the same idea of getting out of the way of Nc3] **21 Qd2 h4** **22 Kg2 a5** **23 Ng1 hxg3** [I decided to release the pawn tension because I wanted to free my queen.] **24 hxg3 Qb6** **25 Ne2 Qb7** [tying him down to the defense of the weak d5 pawn] **26 Nc3 Be6** [I was not sure about this during the game, but I was low on time and decided to be greedy. 26... Re6 Δ Rg6 was also interesting.] **27 Kg1**

Bxd5 **28 Nxd5 Qxd5** **29 fxe5 Qf3?** [A poor move. Instinctively I thought so at the time, but I convinced myself that it was good, having calculated this far back I played 24...Qb6 and I completely missed his next move.] **30 Qf4 Qh5?** [I wanted to keep the queens on the board as his king was weaker than mine, but I missed that after 31 exd6 Rxe1+ 32 Rxe1 Bxb2 33 d7 Rf8 White has 34 Qd6 which wins] **31 Rb1? Re6?** [again White could have answered 32 exd6] **32 Kg2 dxe5** **33 Qf3 Qxf3+** [Now it is easily winning.] **34 Kxf3 Rd8** **35 Ke2 Red6** **36 Red1 e4** **37 Bxg7 Kxg7** **38 Rbc1 exd3+** **39 Kd2 Rd5** **40 Rc3** [From move 34 to here has been smooth, but now...] **40...Re8?** [I completely miscalculated the ensuing king and pawn endgame. Obviously, I should have played 40...Kf6] **41 Rxd3 Rxd3+** **42 Kxd3 Rd8+** **43 Ke2 Rxd1** **44 Kxd1 Kf6** [About here I realized that this is a draw as I am not fast enough with my pawn.] **45 Ke2 Ke5** **46 Ke3 Kf6** **47 Kf4 Kg6** **48 Ke3 Kg5** **49 Kf3 Kf6** **50 Kf4 Ke6**



51 Kf3 [If he had played 51 Ke3 I wouldn't even be able to reach the queen endgame up a pawn and it would be draw, eg 51... Ke5 (51...Kd5 52 Kd3) 52 a3. {The original note was garbled; I doctored it to say what I think Andy intended—ed}] **51...Kd5** **52 Kf4**



Kd4 53 Kxf5 Kc3 54 Kf6 Kb2 55 Kxf7
Kxa2 56 g4 Kxb3 57 g5 a4 58 g6 a3 59
g7 a2 60 g8Q a1Q {A Tablebase could tell
for certain whether Black can win this, but in
practice it's very difficult. Andy kept plugging
away and got it done—ed} 61 Qb8+ Kc4 62
Qf4+ Qd4 63 Qf1+ Qd3 64 Qc1+ Kd4 65
Qf4+ Kd5 66 Qg5+ Kc4 67 Qf4+ Kb3 68
Qb8+ Kc2 69 Qh2+ Qd2 70 Qh7+ Kc3 71
Qg7+ Kb4 72 Ke6 {In principle the wrong
direction. Unless the king can actually block the
pawn, which this one can't, he should run away
from the pawn, not towards it, to minimize his
own king interfering with his queen's checking
campaign—ed} 72...c4 73 Qb7+ Kc3 74
Qg7+ Kc2 75 Qh7+ Kc1 76 Qh1+ Qd1
77 Qh6+ Kb2 78 Qh2+ Kc3 79 Qe5+ Kc2
80 Qf5+ Qd3 81 Qf2+ Qd2 82 Qf5+ Kb3

83 Qf3+ c3 84 Qb7+ Kc2 85 Qe4+ Kc1
86 Qh1+ Kc2 87 Qe4+ Kd1 88 Qb1+
{if 88 Qh1+ Qe1+ see previous note—ed}
Ke2 89 Qb5+ Qd3 90 Qh5+ Kd2 91
Qa5 Qg6+ 92 Ke7 Qc6 93 Kf8 Kd1 94
Qh5+ Kc2 95 Qh2+ Kc1 96 Qf4+ Kb1
97 Qb8+ Ka2 98 Qa7+ Kb3 99 Qb8+
Ka3 100 Qa7+ Qa4 101 Qe3 Qb3 102
Qa7+ Kb2 103 Qd4 Ka2 104 Ke8 c2 105
Qf2 Ka3 106 Qc5+ Kb2 107 Qf2 Kb1
108 Qf5 Qb2 109 Qd3 Qb6 110 Qe4
Kb2 111 Qe2 Kb3 112 Qd3+ Kb2 113
Qe2 Qc7 114 Qd2 Qc8+ 115 Ke7 Qc7+
116 Ke8 Qc6+ 117 Ke7 Kb3 118 Qe3+
Qc3 119 Qe6+ Qc4 120 Qe3+ Ka2 121
Qf2 Kb3 122 Qe3+ Qc3 123 Qe6+ Kb2
124 Qe2 Qc5+ 125 Ke8 Qd5 126 Qf2
Qe6+ 127 Kf8 Kb1 0-1

I DIDN'T KNOW RIGHT AWAY if I had won the tournament. Anthony Wang (4½ out of 5) had finished playing against Arthur Guo (4) but I didn't know the result of their game. If Anthony had won, he would also finish with 5½ and tiebreaks would decide which of us was the champion. As I walked out of the empty playing hall towards the pairing sheet, I felt a rush of nerves. When I saw the result, I exploded with joy. *Wow. Wow. Wow!*

I never would have been able to get close to winning the Barber Tournament without the help of Adam Chrisney at the Arlington Chess Club, who helped me find a strong player to practice with. Thank you, Andrew Samuelson for being that sparring partner. Finally, thanks to my friends and family for supporting me to improve my chess. Seeing the fruits of my hard work is the best feeling ever, and it is thanks to all of you that I was able to experience this feeling.



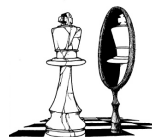
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Reflections

Reflections



Looking Back on an Amateur Chess “Career”

THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY – AU REVOIR TO THE FRENCH DEFENSE, PART III

We continue my mental purge of bad memories in the French Defense. This installment includes actual victories, though only one of them stands out. It set me up for the failures that followed, a trick by Caissa allowing a taste of beauty before dashing the hope that I’d found my reliable defense to 1 e4.

Erik Gerlach – Mark Warriner

1986 Va State Championship

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Bb4 [Back in the day—the ‘80s/early ‘90s—Erik was known for his diligent theoretical preparation, and the McCutcheon was one of his specialties. To try it against him was not just playing with fire, it was jumping squarely into it.] **5 e5 h6 6 Bd2 Bxc3 7 bxc3 Ne4 8 Bd3** [8 Qg4 is the main line, Black replying either 8...g6 or 8...Kf8] **8...Nxd2 9 Qxd2 c5 10 Nf3 Nc6 11 O-O** [Up to this point I’d gotten lucky and played approved moves for this variation. But luck only runs so far.] **11...O-O** [Never played at the top levels, and for good reason. 11...Qa5 is common.] **12 a4** [White has a number of moves that score well, but oddly enough this wasn’t one of them. In fact, it isn’t even listed in Chessbase.] **12...Qa5 13 Rfd1 Bd7 14 Qe1 Rac8** [14...c4 15 Be2 Rfb8] **15 Rdb1 Qc7 16 Qe3 Na5 17 Nd2 cxd4** [17...b6; 17...c4] **18 cxd4 Qc3** [Not sure what I was thinking, but this is a little too adventuresome. 18...b6; 18...Rb8] **19 Rc1** [Not sure why but our Metal Friend is fond of 19 g4 f6 20 exf6 Rxf6 21 Nf3 Qc7 22 Ne5 Rcf8 23

g5 hxg5 24 Ng6 Rxg6 25 Bxg6 Rf4, a variation beyond my pay grade.] **19... Kh8 20 Nf3 Nc4 21 Qe1 Na3** [Black’s fine after 21...Qxe1+ 22 Nxe1 b6] **22 a5 Rc7 23 Qe3** [23 Ra2] **23...Rfc8 24 Ng5?** [Black’s slightly better. For some reason, White lashes out, which should have landed him in hot water.] **24... hxg5?** [But this should have cost the game. Simply 24...Be8 would show the futility of White’s demonstration.] **25 Qh3+ Kg8 26 Qh7+?** [26 Rxa3!—Black can’t recapture because of Bh7+] **26... Kf8 27 Qh8+ Ke7 28 Qxg7 Rf8 29 Qxg5+ Ke8 30 h4 Ba4?** [Tossing a lot of the advantage. 30...Nc4 frees the queen, threatening ...Qxd4 for starters] **31 h5 Rc8?** [Throwing away whatever advantage was left. The intent of the previous move was clearly 31...Nxc2 so it should have been ventured, come what may.] **32 h6 Kd7 33 h7** [33 Qg7] **33... Bb5??** [Ouch! A losing mistake. Black had at least two better moves to preserve equality, 33...Bc6 or 33...Rce8] **34 Rxa3 Qxa3 35 Bxb5+ Kc7 36 Qd2?** [36 Rb1 Rh8 37 Bd3 Kb8 38 a6 b6 39 g4 White’s magnificent bishop would anchor a rock-



solid position.] **36...Kb8** [36...a6 37 Bd3 Kb8] **37 Bd3 f5?** [Desperation. Black was in trouble in any event, but this should have hastened his demise.] **38 exf6 Rxf6 39 Qg5** [39 a6] **39...Qf8 40 Qe5+ Ka8** [Now White's ready to deliver the crushing blow.] **41 f3** [And that wasn't it. Good enough to win, but not best, which was again 41 a6] **41...Qh6 42 Re1?** White's still clearly winning but the inexplicable happened here. It was late in the evening, the second round of the tournament, and I sensed Erik was getting tired and thinking of getting enough sleep for the next morning's round. So, I offered a draw, which incredibly he accepted! To be sure there is still work to do for White to win—evidently just enough to confuse the issue. I count myself beyond fortunate. $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$

Robert Kramer – Mark Warriner 1989 Va State Championship

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e5 Nfd7 6 Bxe7 Qxe7 7 Qd2 b6 8 Nb5 Nf8 [Putting the queen back on d8 seemed an admission of error, but perhaps one I should have made.] **9 Qc3 Kd8 10 Qg3 Rg8** [I remember praying no one would walk by my board and see the mess I'd made. I mean seriously, look at that back rank, it's as if Black had been playing Chess960.] **11 O-O-O a6 12 Nc3 Bb7 13 f4 Nbd7 14 Nf3 Rc8?** [I failed to play 17...b4 and we commence a series of less-than-best moves, offering each other opportunities.] **18 Qg5 Nb6 19 Qxe7+ Kxe7 20 Rdf1 b4 21 Nd1 Nfd7 22 g4 h6 23 f5 Rcf8 24 fxe6 fxe6 25 g5 Bc6 26 Rf2 Nb8 27 g6 Be8 28 h5 a5 29 Rhf1 Nc6 30 Ne3 Na8?! 31**

Bxc4? [My opponent panicked and went for an unsound sac. Panic serves poorly in time pressure and is about the worst thing you can do. Better to grit one's teeth and dig in: 31 c3] **31...dxc4 32 Nxc4 Nc7 33 Nd6 Nd5 34 Kd2 Rf4 35 c4 bxc3+ 36 bxc3 Rgf8 37 c4 Nb6** [37...Nxd4! 38 cxd5 Rxf3 makes my task much harder.] **38 Ke3 Rg4 39 Rb1 Nd7 40 d5 exd5 41 cxd5 Ncxe5? 42 Nd4?** [My last move relied on removing the defender of Nd6 but White could have saved his knight and still captured mine by 42 Nc8+ Kd8 43 Nxe5 Rxf2 44 Nxg4] **42...Kxd6 43 Rxf8 Nxf8 44 Nf5+ Kxd5 0-1** Mercifully.

Mark Saunders – Mark Warriner Fredricksburg 1993

My only rated game of 1993 occurred when I went to spectate the Fredericksburg Open and got asked to play a pick-up game against the odd-man out at the bottom of the table. I was reluctant, but the guy really wanted to play, so I caved. I wasn't focused and nearly coughed up a chunk of rating points. **1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e5 Nfd7 5 Nf3 c5 6 Bg5 Qb6 7 Be3** [7 dxc5] **7...Nc6 8 b3 a6 9 g3 Be7** [For some unfathomable reason I was reluctant to play 9...cxd4] **10 Bg2 f6 11 O-O O-O 12 Bh3 Nxd4 13 Nxd4 cxd4 14 Bxd4 Qc6 15 Qf3?** [Oops!] **15...fxe5** [Some flailing ensues, but it no longer matters.] **16 Nxd5 exd5 17 Qxf8+ Nxf8 18 Bxc8 Rxc8 19 Rae1 e4 20 f4 Ne6 0-1**

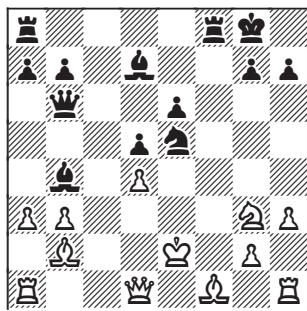
Dwight McCurry – Mark Warriner 1995 Va State Championship

Caissa gave me a tease to keep me coming back for real punishment. **1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e5 Nfd7 5 Nce2 c5 6**



c3 Nc6 7 f4 Qb6 8 Nf3 f6 9 b3 [Why weaken c3? And where's the dark-squared bishop going?] **9...Be7 10 Bb2** [I showed this game to James Richardson and he remarked "That's a bishop aspiring to be a pawn."] **10...O-O 11 Ng3** [Weakening White's control of the c3 square leads to trouble.] **11...cxd4 12 Nxd4 Nxd4 13 cxd4** [Nothing else really helps. 13 exf6 Nxf6 14 Qxd4 Bc5 15 Qd2 Ng4; or 13 Qxd4 Bc5] **13...fxe5 14 fxe5 Bb4+ 15 Ke2 Nxe5** [A thematic idea in the French, of course. I took a break at this point. Passing my opponent on the way down the hall, he gave me a wry grin and said "Uncle!" as he walked by.] **16 h3 Bd7 17 a3**

Here I eschewed my shot at immortality...



17...Be7

Doesn't lose, but oh what could have been! I wanted to play the beautiful 17...Bb5+! 18 Ke3 Qd8!! but couldn't calculate to mate and chickened out from leaving three minor pieces attacked. But sometimes you have to go with your instincts and trust that things will become clear as you go along. 19 Bxb5 Qg5+ 20 Ke2 Qxg3 Black leaves all his minor pieces to be taken, but there's nothing White can do to stop the inevitable. 21 Qg1 Rac8 22 Rc1 Qxb3 23 Bc3 Bxc3 24 Bd3 Nxd3 25 Qe3 Nxc1+ 26

Rxc1 Qb2+ 27 Kd3 Qb5+ 28 Kc2 Ba5+ 29 Qc3 Rf2+ 30 Kd1 Qe2mate

18 Kd2 Rac8 19 Bc3 Qc7 [19...Bg5+ 20 Kc2 Ba4! 21 bxa4 Rxc3+ 22 Kxc3 Rc8+ 23 Bc4 Rxc4mate] **20 Ne2 Bb5** [simple chess, remove the defender] **21 Bb2 Bg5+ 0-1** It's mate in five. I like this final position where there's domination without either side having crossed the center of the board.

Dan Miller – Mark Warriner 2004 Va State Championship

After Caissa smiled upon me, I then received this harsh punishment. The 5-time state champ took me behind the woodshed and whipped me like a recalcitrant mule. And I deserved it, which is actually the reason I eventually quit the French Defense. **1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 Nf6 4 e5 Nfd7 5 Bd3 c5 6 c3 Nc6 7 Ne2 Qb6 8 Nf3** [Full disclosure: I did not know that this was a main line in the French. I was just fortunate in my choices, up to a point...] **8...Be7** [8... cxd4 9 cxd4 f6] **9 O-O f6 10 Nf4 Nd8 11 Re1 f5?** [11...cxd4 12 cxd4 O-O is not as bad as what I played] **12 Bxf5** [Flashy, but maybe 12 c4 was technically better.] **12...Nf8** [12...O-O] **13 Bd3 Bd7 14 Nh5 Nf7** [Since I was refusing to resign, 14... c4 would have been more appropriate.] **15 Nxg7+ Kd8 16 Nh5 c4 17 Bf1 Kc7 18 b3 cxb3 19 Qxb3 Ng6 20 Ba3 Qxb3 21 axb3 Ng5 22 Bd6+** [I just couldn't bring myself to resign before move 30. But playing on was even worse. My apologies Dan!] **22...Kb6 23 Nxg5 Bxg5 24 g3 Be7 25 c4 a6 26 Bh3 Rhf8 27 cxd5 Rac8 28 dxe6 Be8 29 Rac1 Rxc1 30 Rxc1 Bc6 31 Bg2 1-0** Put the pieces back in the box.

To Be Continued...

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