

VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

The bimonthly publication of the
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2022 - #4/5



El Sombrero Loco, by Dominic Murphy

Jason Morefield Repeats As State Champion!!

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Woody Harris

by Sam Conner

F Woodrow “Woody” Harris has passed, and—as Lewis Grizzard said when Elvis did likewise—I don’t feel too good myself.

Woody died in September 2022 at the age of 65. He left behind his wife of 24 years Carla and a record of community involvement and impact that helped people and changed lives.

More than a chess organizer and player, Woodrow was my friend. I served as VCF Vice President while he was VCF President, and then served with him as VCF President myself. We were groomsmen at each other’s weddings. I am going to miss him.

I met Woodrow in 1976 at the US Open in Fairfax. He made an impression. There was his size (it was said, “Woody is a big man in chess”), there was



his distinctive staccato laugh, but more than anything there was a warm, infectious smile that made friends immediately.

Woody was a product of the Fischer Boom, and served as VCF President, USCF Voting Member, Delegate, and USCF Board Secretary. He ran tournaments across the Commonwealth, including his own very popular Emporia Open. Along the way he also won the State Amateur Championship in 1991.

Woodrow was a generous man who showed that generosity in many ways. One was his Emporia Open. We all know how getting meals at weekend tournaments can be a challenge. Woodrow decided to bring the food to the players. The event was held in the Ruritan Lodge in Emporia, and each year Woody arranged for the Ladies Auxiliary of the Lodge to make food for the players. The tournament announcement would read “significant refreshments provided”. This was an understatement! Platters of ham biscuits, plates of fruits, veggies, all manner of sandwiches and sodas made their way into the kitchen of the Lodge and then out to hungry players. The homemade pizzas were an annual triumph.

Another example was Woody’s willingness to talk and discuss. Chess players can be an opinionated bunch; many was the time at a tournament that someone came at Woody with a full head of steam over something. Rather than citing chapter and verse from the rulebook and dismissing the complainant, Woody would sit and talk for as long as it took to work through the problem. The petitioner might not ultimately agree, but they would understand the decision.

My own benefit of his generosity came at the 1991 Virginia Open in Fredericksburg. I was the Chief TD at the beloved/infamous Howard Johnsons, and I lost my car keys. There was no one at home in Manassas to bring me my back-up keys. I was trying to figure out my next move as Woody approached just as the Saturday morning round was about to start. When I told him what was going on, he immediately handed me the keys to his truck. His only condition? “Be back to pair the next round!”

Woodrow served as USCF Secretary from 1985-1988. He soon turned his attention to a different competition and was elected to the Emporia City Council in 1990. He served in that position for 32 years, and was cruising to unopposed reelection when he passed. He had become a local legend in Emporia, the man you went to in order to make things happen. The man who could help you when no one else could. *Electricity about to get shut off?* See Councilman Harris. *Need help at Christmas?* See Woody. *Got an idea to help the community but no one will listen?* Woody!

A fuller description of his impact was in The local paper called him an “icon” – see https://www.emporiaindependentmessenger.com/news/article_65038bce-3050-11ed-afba-93fe79486c64.html. He essentially backstopped a community. Flags at all City of Emporia facilities were flown at half-staff in his honor. God Bless you, Woodrow. *Vaya con dios*, and may St Peter present you with a platter of ham biscuits when he greets you.



Personal & General

From the Editor...



IF IT SEEMS LIKE IT'S BEEN A WHILE since the last issue of VIRGINIA CHESS, well, it has. For the past thirty years we produced six issues a year, normally in February, April, June, August, October and December. That pattern persisted through the first half of this year. But August came and went with... nothing. The reason? In a nutshell, there was nothing to publish.

I'd feared this at the outset of the COVID lockdown, but the problem never really materialized back then. Contributors like Andy Rea, Andy Samuelson, Bobby Fischer (not *that* Bobby Fischer) & James Richardson stepped up to keep the material coming even in the absence of over-the-board tournaments and chess clubs. And of course Alexey Bashtavenko provided a whole series of lengthy essays about his global wanderings. Not exactly routine state chess newsletter stuff, but it filled pages and readers seemed to find it interesting.

But as chess gradually returns to normal, a combination of circumstances shut down my 'supply chain'. My own opportunities to hang out at chess tournaments and report on them, or twist arms to get others to write, got curtailed. First, because we're not "normal" yet and spectators are not welcome at tournaments; and second, because personal circumstances (chiefly moving from NoVa to Staunton) kept me preoccupied. Emailing pleas to tournament directors for reports on their events didn't yield anything. And for whatever reason, Bashtavenko went 'dark' for a while.

When the time came to produce VIRGINIA CHESS 2022/#4, what I found on hand consisted of precisely one unannotated game score. (An "interesting draw" by a 1900-player against Enkhbat Tegshsuren at the Virginia Open, submitted by Mike Hoffpauir.) That's it. No other reports, games, articles, photos. *Nada*.

Faced with this semi-zugzwang, I played 'waiting moves'. Eventually I brought up the situation at the VCF annual meeting. As a result, several contributors have delivered. Thanks to Mike Callaham, Aasa Dommalapati, Sam Conner, Adam Chrisney, and a few others, we can make this a 'double issue' (that's not cheating, is it?) and hopefully get VIRGINIA CHESS back on track.

This seems an appropriate spot to urge more VCF members to contribute material for publication! It's not my newsletter, I'm just the editor. It's the Virginia Chess Federation's newsletter, which means it is *your* newsletter. Submit games, photos, book reviews, articles, stories, analysis—whatever you think might interest your fellow chess lovers—to editorvcf@gmail.com



ONE of those “a few others” who contributed to this issue, indirectly, is a long-time ACC member and northern Virginia expert **Matt Grinberg**. Adam Chrisney, who edits the Arlington Chess Club’s email newsletter, offered me some articles that Matt had originally sent to him. So, in this issue you will find Matt’s *The Right Frame of Mind* and expect more along these lines in future issues. Thank you, Matt—I’m trusting you’ll see this somehow! Because here’s the thing... Matt is a familiar face to me, and while I guess I had not seen him ‘for a while’, only now do I learn that in fact he moved to New Mexico *over a decade ago!* A check of the USCF database shows that Matt’s last tournament in this area was way back in 2010. He has played exclusively in New Mexico and Texas since. So time flies, and mark me down as kind of oblivious on that.

OUR 2015 Virginia state champion **Jennifer Yu** has won the US Women’s Championship for the second time! Although rated only 8th out of 14 in the field, she stayed near the lead throughout the round-robin tournament and finished tied for 1st with top-rated, 8-time champion GM Irina Krush. After they split a rapid tiebreaker 1-1, Jennifer took the title in a crazy Armageddon game. Congratulations!

FINALLY, I want to add a few words of my own to Sam Conner’s tribute to **Woody Harris**. I first met Woody way back around 1977 at a small tournament at the University of Richmond. I can attest that Woody’s contributions to chess in Virginia were great and varied. Besides serving as VCF President for some years, he also occupied the newsletter editor seat for a while. As a player Woody was regularly a contender for the state “Amateur” (under 1800) championship. In 1994 he scored perhaps his finest tournament performance, winning the Amateur section of the Virginia Open with a score of 5½ out of 6 where the lost half point was a consequence of his taking a ½-pt bye.

My own memories of Woody are mostly connected with his fabulous Emporia Open. Woody organized and directed his ‘baby’ for 25 years, and I played in at least half of them. The distinctive rural setting and outstanding support (read: food!) from the Ruritan Club made Emporia over Columbus Day weekend a chess tournament like no other. Woody was always welcoming, always helpful. I haven’t met a friendlier or more agreeable tournament director in half a century of competitive chess.





2022 Virginia State Championship

by Mike Callaham



THE 84th VIRGINIA "CLOSED" was played in Glen Allen at the Hilton Garden Inn on Sept 3-5, 2022. The turnout was fantastic, with 128 players in attendance—a full house indeed! When all was said and done, **Jason Morefield** repeated as Virginia State Champion. I won't even try to imagine how hard that is! Jason made it look easy.

Last year Jason was opening 1 d4 as White. This year he came in as a 1 e4 player. That did not help opponents who may have tried to prepare for him. Jason comes from a chess family. When your grandfather is a Master, the apples don't fall far from the tree. When I first met Jason, he was recording and analyzing every game he played. He became a coach shortly after winning the Amateur Championship back in 2014. In fact, he is the only player ever to win both the Amateur and Open championships!

Arjun Srinivasan - Jason Morefield Sicilian

Notes by Mike Callaham

A study of how top players use their time is very instructive. Jason records the times on his score sheets, and I will make use of this in my notes to this and his later games. The clock is the 36th piece. We start with round 1, a theoretical battle in the Richter Rauzer Variation of the Sicilian. If like me you have some old books, Jason is ready to provide the full update! **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 e6 7 Qd2 a6 8 O-O-O Bd7 9 f4 Be7 10 Bxf6?! gxf6** [Jason played this so fast I assume he was playing by rote. But 10...Bxf6 was better, the point being that White can't win the d-pawn by 11 Nxc6 Bxc6 12 Qxd6 because of 12...Qxd6 13 Rxd6 Bxc3 14 bxc3 Bxe4] **11 f5 Qb6?! 12 Nb3** [12 Nxc6] **12...O-O-O 13 Be2** [Dead equal. The way it should be when both players are doing well. No blunders or 'major' errors.] **13...h5 14 Bf3 Ne5 15 Qe2 h4 16 h3 Kb8** [The game is definitely easier for Black, and it shows on the board and on the clock. Arjun had 53 minutes left against Jason's 76. The next sequence shows Black's deeper understanding of the position.] **17 Nd2** [White could have played Kb1 now and over the next couple moves. Or was it time to double rooks? 17 Rd4!? Rc8 18 Rhd1 Rhg8 19 Kb1] **17... Rc8 18 Qf1?** [Just putting the knight back may have been less painful.] **18...d5 19 Nb3 Rxc3** [the classic sacrifice!] **20 bxc3 Qe3+** [The clocks were down to 39 and 64. Jason only took 2 minutes for his reply, and the check is good, but I'd have taken a little more time and probably selected 20...dxe4. The bishop could not retake the pawn because of the same check.] **21 Kb1 dxe4 22 fxe6** [22 Qe2!?] **22...Bb5! 23 Qg1 Qxg1 24 Rhxg1 exf3 25 gxf3 fxe6 26 Rg7 Re8 27 f4 Nf3 28 c4 Bc6 29 Na5**



Be4 30 Rd7 Bf8 [Make the time control and see what you've got. Jason used less than 10 minutes to conclude the game.] **31 Rgf7 Ba3 32 Nxb7 Rg8 33 Rd8+ Rxd8 34 Nxd8 Ne1 35 c5 Kc8 36 Nxe6 Bxc2+ 37 Ka1 Nd3 38 Rf8+ Kd7 39 Rb8 Kxe6 40 f5+ Kd5 41 Rd8+ Kc4 42 Rxd3 Bxd3 43 c6 Kc3 0-1**

Jason Morefield - Samuel He

Caro Kann

Notes by Mike Callaham

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 Nf3 Bg4 [4...cxd4 is equality from what I can tell after 5 Nxd4 (5 Nbd2 or 5 Qe2 are equal too) 5...Nc6 6 Nxc6 bxc6] **5 dxc5 Nc6 6 c3 e6 7 Be3 Bxf3** [This and Black's last move cost him 20 minutes off the clock! Make him respect that bishop—7...a6! 8 Nbd2 Nxe5 9 Be2 Nc6] **8 Qxf3 Nxe5 9 Bb5+ Nc6 10 O-O Be7** [The engine keeps saying 10...a6 but I don't trust it yet.] **11 c4 Bf6 12 Nd2** [White took 8 minutes deciding he wanted no part of the complexities that come with 12 Nc3! d4 13 Rad1, for instance 13...Kf8—gonna have to do it sooner or later—14 Bxc6 bxc6 15 Qxc6 e5 16 Ne4 Qe8 17 Qxe8+ Kxe8 +] **12...Ne7 13 cxd5 Qxd5?** [Black is not going to recover from this blunder! 13...exd5 or 13...Nxd5 are better] **14 Ne4! O-O** [14...O-O-O] **15 Nxf6+ gxf6 16 Qxf6 Qh5** [16...Qf5] **17 Bxc6 Nxc6 18 Bh6 Qg4 19 f3 Qd4+ 20 Qxd4 Nxd4 21 Bxf8 Kxf8** [Black throws himself on the sword. From here both players finished the game using less than 5 minutes off of their clocks.] **22 Rfd1 e5 23 Kf2 Ke7 24 Rac1 Ke6 25 Rc3 f6 26 f4 Kd5 27 Rh3 Kxc5 28 Rxh7 b6 29 Rf7 Kc6 30 Rxf6+ Kb7 31 fxe5 Re8 32 Rf7+ Ka8 33 Rxd4 Rd8 34 Rxd8mate 1-0**

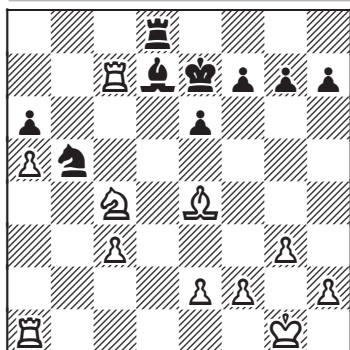
Jason's round 3 opponent Arnav Gupta came the closest to having the champ on the ropes!

Arnav Gupta - Jason Morefield

Catalan

Notes by Mike Callaham

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 Bg2 dxc4 5 Nf3 a6 6 a4 c5 7 O-O Nc6 8 dxc5 Qxd1 9 Rxd1 [Both players are out of 'the book'. How do I know? Jason took 6 minutes for his next move and Arnav took 10 minutes to respond—and both of their moves were errors! Lol] **9...Nd7?! [9...Bxc5** is not exciting, but the problem with the move played is that it doesn't cause the desired complications because Black is not developed!] **10 Be3?! [Even at the master level, mistakes come in pairs—don't chase exchanges that only help the defender! 10 Na3! ± for instance 10...Bxc5 (10...c3!?) 11 Nxc4 O-O 12 Bf4 Nf6 13 Bd6 Bxd6 14 Rxd6 would leave Black uncoordinated with two pieces on vacation.] 10...Bxc5 11 Bxc5 [11 Nd4!?] 11...Nxc5 12 Nbd2 c3 13 bxc3 Bd7 14 Nc4 Ke7!** [An uneasy but real equality has been restored.] **15 a5 Rac8 16 Nfd2** [That took 9 minutes. Choosing a move when they are all equal is time consuming. 16 Nb6; 16 Nfe5; 16 Rab1] **16...Rc7 17 Ne4 Nxe4 18 Bxe4 Rd8?! [18...Na7!** saves a tempo. It's not much, but it can be the difference!] **19 Rdb1 Na7 20 Rxb7 Nb5? [20...Rxb7 21 Bxb7 Bb5] 21 Rxc7 ½-½**



draw? I would say the position is somewhat unclear *depending on your skill level!* This is a great training position—set it up over and over and take both sides. Black will win a few (lol). I'm going to be using this position with my students!

Jason Morefield - Issac Steincamp
Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 g6 3 c3 Bg7 4 d4 cxd4 5 cxd4 d5 6 e5 Bg4 7 Nbd2 Nc6 8 Bd3 I remember this! About 3-5 years ago, the big thing on Chessable was...c5, g6, Bg7, and Qa5 as a system. The ideas in it became routine for fianchetto players. But Black's next play is wrong... 8...e6 [This makes sense when the knight is on c3, but not d2! To both my engines and my own eye, 8...Qa5! looks like the right move.] 9 h3! Bf5? [9...Bxf3 was forced] 10 Bxf5 gxf5 [10...exf5 doesn't come close to fixing the permanent damage that's been done, but its value would be that it's way more complicated. There's always a chance it might be your opponent who makes the next pair of mistakes.] 11 Nb3 Bf8 12 Ng5? [This move gives up a lot. A bishop move or castling was to be preferred.] 12...Bb4+?! 13 Kf1! h5 14 h4 [± -Black is still in this] 14...Rc8?! [But this has got to be considered a mistake. Trouble is coming—however the position is closed and White's queen hasn't yet developed. His king is safer but he still has to develop and coordinate. And one thing holding up White is *not knowing which wing the black king will wind up on!* So avoid commitment—14...a5 would have been better.] 15 Rh3 Na5 16 a3 Bf8 17 Nxa5 Qxa5 18 Bd2 Qa6+ 19 Kg1 Ne7 20 Bb4 Nc6 [20...Qb5!? might keep it undetermined] 21 Bxf8 Kxf8 22 Rc3 Qb6 23 Rac1 Ke7 24 Rc5 Qd8 25 b4 a6 26 b5 [26 a4 is stronger but the text is still winning] 26...axb5 27 Rxb5 Qd7 28 Rcb1 Rc7 29 Qd2 Qc8 30 Nh3 Rg8 31 Nf4 Qa8 32 Nxb5 Rg4 33 Nf6 Rg7 34 h5 1-0

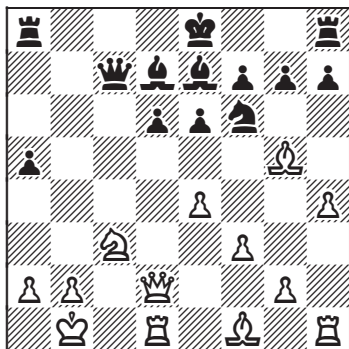


The last round game on board #1. {An account of Jason Morefield's 5th round victory over expert Kevin Su was not provided.—ed} They knew their stuff. The post mortem with them was so enjoyable. Two kids I've known for so long growing into Masters is a beautiful thing!

Sudarshan Sriniaier - Jason Morefield Sicilian

Notes by Mike Callaham

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 e6 7 Qd2 [Coach gets a lesson from two masters about his, "Old" Rauzer! Lol. Matthew Butler had reached this position in one of his games earlier in the tournament, and afterwards I recommended 7...Be7 instead of his choice 7...Bd7. When Jason and Sudarshan started going over the present game, I again offered that 7..Be7 was the standard and still rated best on the engine. They both broke out into big belly laughs! Between gasps they together told me that move was no good any more. Believe the engine if you want, they said, but 7...a6! is the new fire in the Rauzer. As we all laughed, me to the point of exhaustion, they began explaining all the ideas, who was playing what, and on what number moves my ancient 7...Be7 would tanks and why. When I put their game on the analyzer, their accuracies were 96.9 and 96.1—lol!!! It was one my best-ever 'the students have become the teachers' moments!] 7...a6! 8 O-O-O Bd7 [Up to this point it's the same as Arjun and Jason from round 1] 9 Kb1 [Explorer and the engine, both say 9 f4 is best/most played. What I noticed is the rise of 9 f3! which gave White's highest win %. So again I was exposed to theoretical changes in major openings.] 9...Nxd4?! [When I remarked that this move looked a little strange, they started laughing at me again! I could tell both of them had spent 'working weeks' making sure they had knocked out the kinks.] 10 Qxd4 Be7 11 h4 Qc7 12 Qd2! b5 13 f3 b4 14 Ne2 a5 15 c4 bxc3 16 Nxc3 (diagram)



16...Qb7 17 a4 h6 18 Be3 Rb8 19 g4 Qb3 20 Bb5 Bxb5 21 axb5 Nd7 22 f4 ½-½

A true 'grandmaster draw' to sew up Jason's second state championship title! The moves after the diagram were all top engine picks, making this the most accurate game I reviewed from the tournament. Jason's 4 wins and 2 draws put him half a point clear of Sudarshan, Tyson Brady & Kevin Su who scored 4½ points apiece. ...

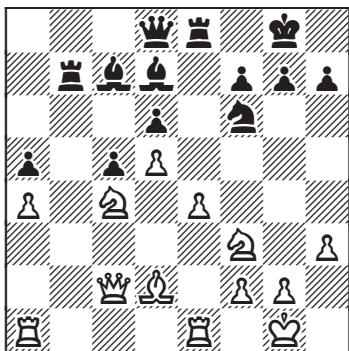
{Before Mike moves on to the Amateur and Novice sections, we will interject that Jack Barrow also helpfully submitted a trio of games from the Open section...—ed}



Jack Barrow - Joaquin Litzenberger-Brunetti

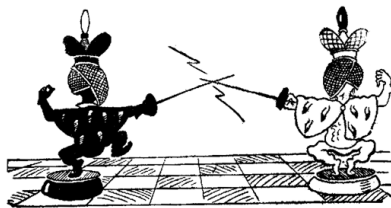
Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 d3 b5 6 Bb3 Bc5 7 O-O d6 8 h3 Na5
9 c3 Nxb3 10 Qxb3 O-O 11 Nbd2 Be6 12 Qc2 Bb6 13 d4 exd4 14 cxd4 c5 15
d5 Bd7 16 b3 a5 17 a4 Re8 18 Re1 bxa4 19 bxa4 Rb8 20 Nc4 Bc7 21 Bd2 Rb7?



(diagram)

22 e5! dxe5 23 d6 Bb6 24 Nfxe5 Nd5 25 Nxb6
Nxb6 26 Bxa5 Qa8 27 Bxb6 Rxe5 28 Rxe5
Rxb6 29 Qxc5 Rc6 30 Qd5 Be6 31 d7! 1-0

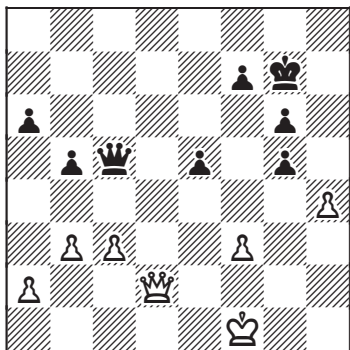


Jack Barrow - Patrick Spain

Pirc

Notes by Jack Barrow

1 e4 g6 2 d4 Bg7 3 Nf3 d6 4 Bc4 Nf6 5 Nc3 O-O 6 O-O Nxe4 7 Nxe4 d5 8 Bd3
dxe4 9 Bxe4 Nd7 10 c3 c5 11 Bg5 cxd4 12 Nxd4 Nf6 13 Bc2 e5 14 Nb3 Qc7 15
Qf3 Bg4 16 Qg3 Bd7 17 Rad1 Bc6 18 Qh4 Nd5 19 Be4 Nb6 20 Bxc6 Qxc6 21 Rfe1
Nc4 22 Bc1 Qc7 23 Nd2 Nxd2 24 Rxd2 Rad8 25 Red1 Rxd2 26 Rxd2 Re8 27 Qa4
Rd8 28 Qd1 Rxd2 29 Qxd2 a6 30 g3 Bf6 31 f3 Qc6 32 Qd3 Kg7 33 Be3 Be7 34 b3
Bc5 35 Bxc5 Qxc5+ 36 Kf1 b5 37 g4 h6 38 h4 Qa3 39 Qd2 Qc5 40 g5 hxg5 1/2-1/2



Upon capturing g5, Black offered a draw and I accepted. Why do I like this game, in which nobody won and nothing dramatic seemed to happen? Well, despite both my opponent and I being far from grandmasters, when I plugged the game into Stockfish 14/15, our overall accuracies were reported as 96%-97% (!) and our average centipawn losses were both 13. These metrics have their limitations—they don't take into account the complexity of the positions—but it pleased me to produce a game on a level suggestive of grandmaster play!

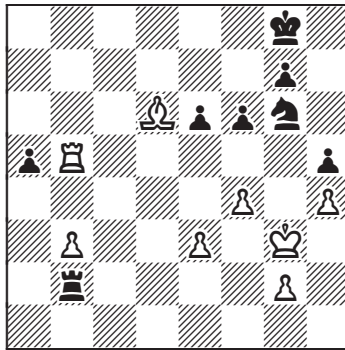




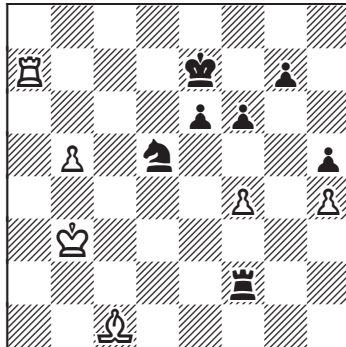
Sudarshan Srinaiyer - Jack Barrow Semi-Slav

Notes by Jack Barrow

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e3 e6 5 Nf3 Nbd7 6 Be2 Be7 7 O-O O-O 8 b3 b6
9 Bb2 Bb7 10 Qd3 Re8 11 Ne5 dxc4 12 Nxc4 c5 13 Rfd1 Nf8 14 dxc5 Qxd3 15
Rxd3 Bxc5 16 Nd6 Bxd6 17 Rxd6 Red8 18 Rdd1 Ne4 19 Nxe4 Bxe4 20 f3 Bb7
21 Rac1 Rac8 22 Rxd8 Rxd8 23 Rc2 f6 24 Ba3 Rc8 25 Rd2 Bc6 26 Ba6 Ra8
27 Rc2 Be8 28 Rc7 Rd8 29 Bb4 Ra8 30 Kf2 Bf7 31 Bc4 Ng6 32 f4 b5 33 Bxb5
Rb8 34 Ba3 Rxb5 35 Rc8+ Be8 36 Rxe8+ Kf7 37 Rc8 Ra5 38 Rc7+ Kg8 39 Bc5
Rxa2+ 40 Kg3 a5 41 Rb7 Rb2 42 Rb5 Ra2 43 h4 h5 44 Bd6 Rb2



According to Stockfish 15, the position is roughly equal. At this point, I ran into time pressure—less than 5 minutes, while White still had roughly 20 minutes left. I stopped keeping score but somehow after blitzing out the next moves we reached this position:



Stockfish 15 says it's still equal. However, after 5 hours, I was burnt out mentally and more or less playing on autopilot at this point. Not to mention I had only 39 seconds left on my clock! (My opponent had about 3 minutes.) Unfortunately I now played...

57...Kd6?



...and of course my opponent replied **58 Ba3+** forcing me to give up the knight and pretty much winning. **1-0. 57...Kd8** should likely have drawn with 'best play'—of course, with 39 seconds in a position that still could get tricky, that wouldn't exactly have been a simple task to pull off!

{Thank you, Jack! And now back to Mike Callaham... —ed}

The Amateur (and title of Virginia Amateur Champion) was won confidently by Walden Lambert with a score of $5\frac{1}{2}$ out of 6. He too salted it away with a draw in the final round. Saharsh Shetty was clear runner-up with 5 points. We have one of Walden's games with his own annotations!

Mike McLemore - Walden Lambert Nimzowitsch

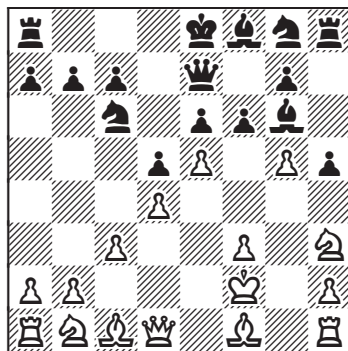
Notes by Walden Lambert

I'm going into this game with 3 out of 3, but this is my highest rated opponent in the tournament yet by almost 300 points, and I'm playing Black. **1 e4 Nc6!**? [Although this move seems quite odd it is not really that bad and can be a good surprise weapon.] **2 d4** [This is the ambitious approach. **2 Nf3 e5** transposes into a more standard opening.] **2...d5** [3...e5 is also played here, but I prefer this line.] **3 e5** [This is a more positional line, as opposed to **3 exd5**. One might argue that Black is playing a French without the ...c5 break, but the light-square bishop is open.] **3...Bf5 4 c3 e6 5 g4** [I was surprised to see this move. This is an idea in the Caro Kann, but here the situation is different as I already have the move ...e6 in.] **5...Be4 6 f3?!** [This allows ...Qh4.] **6...Qh4+ 7 Ke2 Bg6 8 Nh3!** [9 Bg5 is a killer threat. I almost played **8...O-O-O?**] **8...Qe7 9 Kf2 h5** [Trying to break things open around White's weak king.] **10 g5 f6** (diagram)

Stockfish says this is a mistake and suggests a crazy line where white wins the exchange but would be hard to spot over the board.

*{Walden does not give Stockfish's variation but something along the lines of **11 Nf4 Bf5 12 Bd3**, trading the bishops and then White's knight somehow landing on g6, does not seem at all crazy.—ed}*

11 Bd3 Bxd3 12 Qxd3 O-O-O? [Sadly for me this is a very bad move, and the refutation is more clear: **13 Nf4!** (pressuring g6) **Qe8 14 Ng6** and White wins the rook on h8. Stockfish says Black somehow gets three pawns for the rook, but White still has the advantage.] **13 exf6 gxf6 14 Bf4 Bg7** [Trying to support an ...e5 break] **15 Nd2 Qd7** [Pressuring h3 and stopping Qf5 ideas after a future ...e5] **16 gxf6 Bxf6 17 Bg5 e5 18 Bxf6 Nxf6 19 Ng5 e4!** [Black is sacrificing a pawn for a crushing attack. Even better: I looked





after the game and Stockfish actually agrees with the move!] **20 fxe4 Ng4+ 21 Ke2 dxe4** [Finally the position has been opened up—and with it, White's king] **22 Ndxex4 Nce5!** [This is crushing, as it attacks the queen and opens up the b5 square for the queen. As a bonus we get a rarely seen Knight Rectangle!] (diagram)

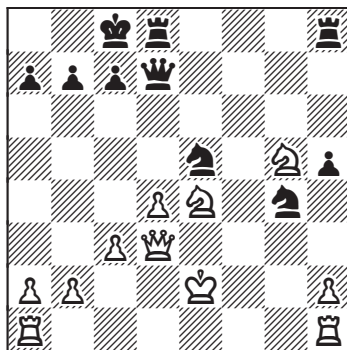
23 Qg3 [The computer says this is a blunder, but Black is winning even after the best move **23 Qc2**. The position is very hard to defend.]

23...Qb5+ 24 Ke1 [There are many tempting options here but I eventually settled for...] **24...Nd3+ 25 Kd2 Ndf2!** [A nice move. But taking on b2 right away would lose to Kxd3 and White can defend.] **26 Rhb1** [defending b2; **26 Nxf2?** Qxb2+ **27 Kd3 Nxf2+** loses] **26...Rde8 27 a4**

[One last try. If instead **27 Nxf2?** Re2+ **28 Kd1** (or **28 Kc1 Qxg5+**) Nxf2+ **29 Kc1 Qf5** Black wins] **27...Qf5 28 Nxf2 Qxg5+ 29 Kc2**

[This allows a fork, but all other moves were losing as well: **29 Kd1 Nxf2+ 30 Qxf2 Rhf8** Stockfish's evaluation is -6.4 and it's clear Black has a crushing attack; or **29 Kd3 Re3+** etc] **29...Re2+ 30 Kb3 Rxf2**

31 h3 Qd5+ 32 c4? [A final blunder, but White was lost anyway. **32 Ka3 Rf3** etc] **32...Rf3+ 33 Kb4** [This allows mate but there's not much else to do.] **33...a5 mate 0-1** It's not every day you get to mate with the a-pawn!



The Amateur also featured this 400 point rating upset.

Ted Ambrose - Ved Vanga Ragozin

Notes by Mike Callahan

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 Nc3 Bb4 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bxf6 Qxf6 7 e3 O-O 8 Qc2 dxc4 [8...c5! is the engine's top choice. If you have a bishop on b4 in a queen pawn opening, you must be thinking about ...c5 on every turn until—and sometimes after—White has castled!] **9 Bxc4 a6** [9...c5] **10 O-O b5** [10...Bxc3] **11 Ne4 Qe7 12 Bd3 Bb7 13 Rfc1 Ba5** [13...Bd6 **14 Nxd6 cxd6 15 Qc7 Qxc7 16 Rxc7 Bxf3 17 gxf3 Rd8 18 Kf1** ± where'd the middlegame go?! This is an ending already and White is looking strong.] **14 a4 b4 15 b3?!** [15 Ne5! ±] **15...Nd7 16 Nfd2 Rac8 17 Nc5! Nxc5 18 Qxc5 Qxc5 19 Rxc5 Bb6 20 Rc2 a5 21 Be4?!** [White is stealing the game an inch at a time!?!—or is he?] **21...Bxe4** [As a practical consideration, recognizing the drawing potential of opposite colored bishops, the correct role for Blacks light squared bishop should be knight hunting. **21...Ba6!** so that if **22 Nc4?! Bxc4**] **22 Nxe4 Rfd8 23 Nd2 Kf8 24 Rac1 Rb8 25 Nf3 Rd6 26 Ne5 Rbd8 27 Nc4** [27 Nc6] **27...Rd5 28 g3 g6** [Taking away the outpost **28...f6** should be at the top of the list.] **29 Ne5 h5 30 Rc6 R8d6 31 Kf1 Rxc6** [31...g5] **32 Rxc6 Rd6?** [That's lights out.] **33 Rxd6 cxd6 34**



Nd7+ Ke7 35 Nxb6 d5 36 e4 Kd6 37 exd5 exd5 38 Ke2 Kc6 39 Nc8 Kd7 40 Na7 Kd6 41 Ke3 f6 42 Kf4 Kc7 43 h4 Kd6 44 g4 hxg4 45 Kxg4 Ke6 46 Nc6 Kd6 47 Na7 Ke6 48 Nb5 Kd7 49 h5 gxh5+ 50 Kxh5 Ke6 51 Kg6 Ke7 52 f4 Ke6 53 f5+ Ke7 54 Kg7 Ke8 55 Kxf6 Kf8 56 Ke6 Ke8 57 f6 Kf8 58 f7 Kg7 59 Ke7 Kh7 60 Kf6 Kh6 61 f8Q+ Kh5 62 Qg7 Kh4 63 Kf5 1-0

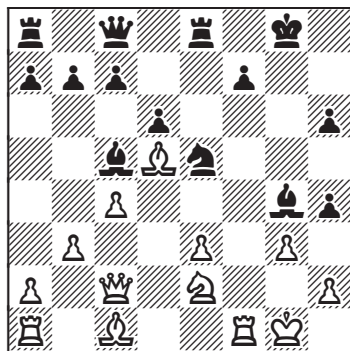
Saket Sambaraju dominated the 5-round Novice section, recording a clean 5-0. Micah Kuester, Esat Demirel, Timothy Fuller & Ej Hofmann all tied for 2nd with one point less. We'll now look at a game from round 3. Both players were rated in the 900s but their first 11 move were all pro and the fireworks after that were tough enough to confuse even some stronger players.

Samyak Gupta - Josith Vurimi

English

Notes by Mike Callaham

1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 g3 Bc5 5 Bg2 d6 6 O-O O-O 7 d3 h6 8 Bd2 Re8 9 e3 Bf5 10 Bc1?! [Not terrible, but 10 Qb1, 10 Qe2, or 10 Ne1 are to be preferred.] 10...e4?! [A smidgeon impatient. 10...Qd7 building the battery, or 10...a5 holding space and giving the bishop a retreat, would have maintained the initiative.] 11 Nh4 Bg4 12 Ne2? [Samyak makes the first real mistake. Black gets only a slight edge after 12 f3 exf3 13 Bxf3 Bh3 14 Ng2] 12...exd3? [Mistakes come in pairs. If you make the first one, try not to make the second! Black could have the knight that has no retreat by 12...g5! 13 f3 Bd7] 13 Qxd3 Ne5 14 Qc2 Qc8 15 b3 g5 = 16 f4? [16 f3! was forced, and the computer sees only a modest edge for Black in complications like 16...gxh4 17 fxg4 Nexg4 18 Kh1 Rxe3 (or 18...Bxe3 19 Bb2 h3 20 Bxh3 Ne4 21 Kg2 Bg5 22 Bxg4 Qxg4 23 h3 Qh5 =) 19 gxh4 Qe6 20 Bxe3 Nxe3 21 Qb2 Nfg4 22 Rf3] 16...gxh4? [Josith misses 16...Bxe2! 17 Qxe2 Neg4 with favorable complications] 17 fxe5 Nd7 [Blacks best try was 17...h3] 18 Bd5 [In such complications, it's hard to decide among tempting possibilities. 18 Rxf7! was beautiful and winning, but still a big decision over the board.] 18...Nxe5? [18...Be6 was necessary, the move played loses. *Which piece should go first?*]



19 Bxf7+?

Black dies a horrible death after 19 Rxf7! Bf5!—Black better not take the rook!—20 Rxf5+ Kh8 21 Bb2! Qd7 22 Rf7 Qxf7 23 Bxf7 Rg8 24 Bxg8 Kxg8 25 Bxe5 +- However, all turned out well because Black now played...

19...Nxf7? [...whereas after 19...Kh8! 20 Bxe8 Qxe8 White 'merely' has a material advantage and the game goes on.] 20 Qg6+ Kh8 21 Rxf7 Bxe3+ 22 Bxe3 Bf5 23 Rh7mate 1-0



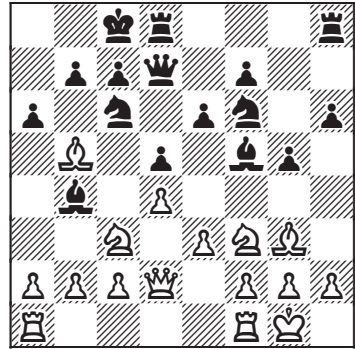
The next game is the embodiment of 'aspiring' 'Novice' competition. Unjustifiable symmetry, missed stock tactics, capture everything, and... never quit! We all remember what that was like and I hope this game brings back memories. Arnav has just 9 rated games under his belt. For hanging in to the end, he bagged a 563 rating point upset!

Neil Vanga - Arnav Aggarwal Queen's Pawn

Notes by Mike Callaham

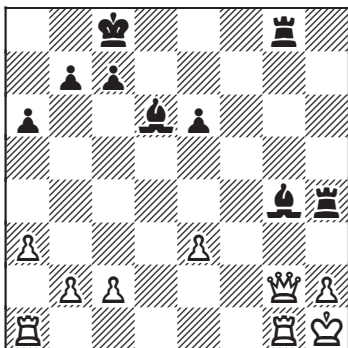
1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nc3 Nc6 4 Bf4 Bf5 5 e3 e6 [The New Four Knights?! These types of, "make the same move" openings eventually reach a point where you have to break off on your own.] **6 Bg5 h6 7 Bh4 g5 8 Bg3 Bb4 9 Qd2?** [This loses thematically! The fight is the same as the 'real' Four Knights: who will get to plant a knight first? Yet White practically invites Black to play the winning **9...Ne4** **10 Qc1 Nxc3 11 bxc3 Bxc3+**] **9...Qd7?** [Black refuses the invitation and extends one of his own!] **10 Bb5?** [still allowing **10...Ne4** although now White could at least limit the damage by replying **11 Ne5!**] **10...O-O-O? 11 O-O?** [You know what he should play.] **11...a6?** *(diagram)*

12 Ba4? [White could still have been winning by **12 Ne5 Qe8 13 Nxc6 bxc6 14 Bxa6+ Kd7 15 Bd3!**—defense!] **12...g4?** [literally forcing his own defeat] **13 Ne5 Nxe5!** **14 Bxd7+ Nxd7** [Black opted for two pieces for the queen. Now White should be trying to open the position, make threats, and create favorable exchanges.] **15 Bh4 Rde8 16 Bxf6 Nxf6 17 a3 Bd6 18 f3 gxf3 19 Rxf3 Ne4?** [Breaking a rule: *try to avoid exchanges when you are down material.*



If you keep exchanging, eventually you won't have anyone left to help you get back in the game!] **20 Nxe4 dxe4 21 Rff1 Rhg8 22 g3 Rg7 23 Kh1 Reg8 24 Rg1 h5 25 d5 Bh3 26 dxe6 fxe6 27 Qe2?** [Like putting his head into a lion's mouth. Things are actually a bit tricky for White now due to the combined ideas ...B-g4-f3+ and ...h4. but, for example, **27 Qd4** hitting e4, is still good.] **27...Bg4!** **28 Qd2?** [28 Qc4 was necessary and after **28...Bf3+** **29 Rg2**. Black could still play as in the next note, but White would have the distracting **Qxe6+** resource to maintain the balance.] **28...Bh3?** [Black wins on the spot with a simple check. **28...Bf3+**! **29 Rg2** followed by the not-so-simple breakthrough **29...Bxg3!**] **29 Qd4** [White has gotten his reprieve and he is winning again. But Black just keeps coming, absorbing punches but always moving forward... and eventually it works!] **29...Rh7 30 Qxe4 Bf5 31 Qf3 Bg4 32 Qg2 h4 33 gxh4 Rxh4** *(diagram, next page)*





34 Raf1? [Catastrophe! The only defense was the optical illusion move 34 h3 which appears pointless but in fact saves the day because Black's bishop is pinned in front of the undefended Rg8! So, 34...Rgh8 (if 34... Rxh3+ 35 Qxh3 Bxh3 36 Rxg8+) 35 Qxg4! Rxh3+ (or 35...Rxg4 36 Rxg4 Rxh3+ 37 Kg1) 36 Kg2 Rg3+ 37 Qxg3 Bxg3 38 Kxg3] **34... Rgh8!** [White is helpless] **35 Rf2 Bf3! 36 Rxf3 Rxh2+ 37 Qxh2 Rxh2mate 0-1**

Our final game is a display by section winner Saket Sambaraju. His performance in this tournament moved his rating two hundred points(!) from 961 to 1161.

Saket Sambaraju - Nathaniel Zuraw London

Notes by Mike Callaham

1 d4 d5 2 Bf4 Bf5 3 e3 h5 4 h3 e6 5 Nf3 Bd6 6 Bxd6 Qxd6 7 Bd3 Nh6 8 c3 [All of us have done this... playing 'standard' moves out of order. 8 O-O was better!] **8... Qb6 9 b3 Nd7 10 O-O Qd6** [10...Rg8 or 10...g5!? are more in line with the demands of the position.] **11 Bxf5 Nxf5 12 c4 O-O-O** [Black has a slight lead in development and White has more threats and space. Black needs to open lines on the kingside and White needs to complete his development and start his attack before Black gains



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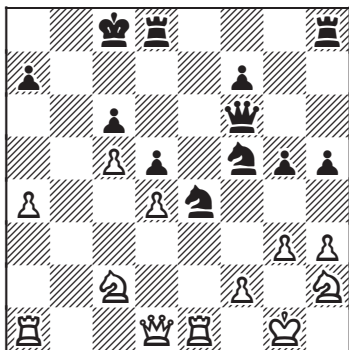
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momentum.] **13 c5?! [This is bad for several reasons. Tension is your friend—as long as that exchange has to be calculated, your opponent must work harder at the board. And what about the knight? 13 Nc3 looks perfect to me. Black's attack is faster because ...g5 is being threatened at virtually every move. I have to tell students all the time: you can't start most operations until your development is complete! 13 Nc3 or 13 Qc2 put enough pressure on the center to keep Black building instead of attacking. Finally, the text is simply a loss of time.] 13...Qe7 14 g3? g5 15 Nh2 e5 16 Na3 exd4 17 exd4 Qe4? [17...g4; 17...Nf6; or 17...Qf6 all make ripping the kingside open and scoring the full point more imminent! I would have preferred the latter to take my queen off the open file, threatened to win a pawn at d4, and prepare to possibly transfer my queen to the g and h files.] 18 Nc2 Qe6 19 Re1 Qg6 20 b4 c6 21 a4 Nf6 22 b5 Ne4?! 23 Nb4 Qf6! 24 bxc6 bxc6 [24...Nxd4!] 25 Nc2 (diagram)**



25...Kc7 [After just 10 games, Nathaniel understands he has to get the king off of the c8-h3 diagonal to continue the attack. To me, that's amazing! But what he hasn't learned yet is that whenever you move a pawn, a knight, or a king, you should always be thinking in terms of two or more moves, not just one. The safe square for the king is a8! (Not thinking this way is also why Saket didn't play c6 immediately after he played c5!?) I imagine Nathaniel was hesitant to place the king on the b file because of the rook check, but it was not dangerous: 25...Kb7! 26 Rb1+?! Ka8 27 Qd3

g4 28 Qa6 Rb8 29 Rxb8+ Rxb8 30 hxg4 Ne3! White's attack is at a dead end, Black's is shifting into high gear. When it's your move, always think of what you can do to them and then think of what they can do to you. It's possible to get the answer you're looking for from either question—or from both!] 26 a5? [26 Qf3!; 26 Rb1; and 26 Qe2 are all complicated options. The lines are crazy, instructive, and confusing—just ask your engine twice and see if you get the same answer. (Dat's funny.) For example, here's a sample continuation after 26 Qe2: 26...Rb8 27 Rab1 Nc3 28 Qa6! Nxb1 29 Nb4! Rxb4 30 Qa5+ Rb6 31 cxb6+ axb6 32 Qa7+ Kd6 33 Qxb6 Nxd4 34 Qxb1 ♣ 26...Rb8 27 Qd3?! [27 Qf3 was a bit better] 27...Nh6? ♣ [Black missed the instructive combination 27...Nxf2! White has two responses. The novice is 28 Kxf2 Rb3! 29 Qxb3 Nxd4+ 30 Qf3 Nxf3 31 Nxf3 g4 32 Ra3 gxf3 33 Rxf3 Qb2 34 Re2 -+ The tougher reaction is 28 Qf1! Ne4 29 Ra3 Qg6 30 Rf3 Nh6 31 Ne3 Rhe8 -+ 28 Qf3? [28 Re2 ♣] 28...Nf5 29 Rad1 Rb5 [29...Rb2 is better] 30 Ne3 Nxe3 31 Qxf6 Nxf6 32 Rxe3 Rxa5? [32...Ne4 33 f3 Nxe3 34 Re7+ Kb8 35 Nf1 Black has some initiative but it's level. Now White's pieces coordinate well and he gets an initiative that eventually causes Black to crack.]. 33 Re7+ Nd7 34 Nf3 f6 35 Rde1 g4 36 hxg4 hxg4 37 Nh4 Ra4 38 Ng6 Rh6? [Loses. 38...Rg8 keeps fighting.] 39 Nf8 Rxd4 40 Rxd7+ 1-0



The strong attendance led Chief TD Mike Hoffpauir and VCF President Anand Dommalapati to increase the prize fund on the spot by \$1,000, adding money to existing prizes and also creating a few new ones!

The weekend actually began earlier, on Friday evening, with the traditional Blitz tournament. Twenty-six players pushed pawns in two sections, Open and Under 1600. Young Will Moorhouse, of Fairfax Station, scored 7-1 to grab 1st place in the Open ahead of former state champion Daniel Miller & Isaac Spence with 6 points apiece. In the Under 1600 group, Siddhant Yambem, of Virginia Beach, fought his way to 1st place with 6½ points. Tidewater players Jadon Gary & Maddox Jackson shared 2nd with a point less.



Aasa Dommalapati was Virginia's representative at the 2022 Ruth Haring National Tournament of Girls State Champions. She finished in 6th place (out of 46) and sent me her games. Aasa also recently attained the Women FIDE Master (WFM) title! Annotations in the games below are hers.

Aasa Dommalapati - Molly Tefft **French**

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e5 Nfd7 6 h4 h6 7 Bxe7 Qxe7 8 f4 a6 9 Nf3 c5 10 dxc5 Nxc5 11 Qd2 Nc6 12 O-O-O Bd7 13 Kb1 O-O-O 14 Bd3 Kb8 15 g4 Rc8 16 Rhe1 Nxd3 17 Qxd3 Qb4 18 Ne2 Na5 19 c3 Qb6 20 Qd4 Qb5 21 Qb4 Qc4 22 Qxc4 Nxc4 23 Ned4 g5 24 hxg5 h5 25 gxh5 Rxh5 26 Rh1 Rch8 27 Rxh5 Rxh5 28 Rg1 Rh3 29 g6 fxg6 30 Rxg6 Ne3 31 b3 Nd1 32 Kc2 Nf2 33 Rg7 Kc8 34 Rg8+ Kc7 35 Ng5 Rh6 36 f5 exf5 37 e6 Rf6 38 Rg7 1-0

Merissa Wongso - Aasa Dommalapati **Sicilian**

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e5 Ng4 5 Qe2 Qc7 6 Nb5 Qb8 7 d4 a6 8 Na3 cxd4 9 Bf4 b5 10 Nxd4 Nxd4 11 Qxg4 d6 12 Qg3 Nf5 13 exd6 Nxd6 14 d7+ Bxd7 15 Bxb8 Nxb1 16 Bf4 e6 17 Be3 Rc8 18 Rc1 Bc5 19 Bd3 Bxe3 20 fxe3 Bc6 21 e4 f5 22 exf5 exf5 23 Bxf5 Rc7 24 g3 Re7+ 25 Kd2 Nf2 26 c4 O-O 27 cxb5 Bxb5 28 Nxb5 axb5 29 Rc5 Ne4+ 30 Bxe4 Rxe4 31 Rxb5 Rf2+ 32 Kd3 Ree2 33 Kc3 Rc2+ 34 Kd3 Rxb2 35 a4 Rxb5 36 axb5 Rxh2 37 Kc4 Rb2 38 Kc5 h5 39 b6 g5 40 Kc6 h4 41 gxh4 gxh4 42 b7 h3 43 Kc7 Rxb7+ 44 Kxb7 h2 45 Kb6 h1Q 0-1

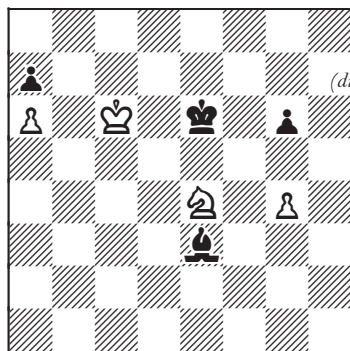


Zoey Tang - Aasa Dommalapati Trompovsky

1 d4 Nf6 2 Bg5 g6 3 Bxf6 exf6 4 e3 d5 5 c4 dxc4 6 Bxc4 Bd6 7 Nc3 Nd7 8 Nf3 Nb6 9 Bb3 f5 10 O-O O-O 11 Rc1 c6 12 Qe2 Qe7 13 Rfd1 Be6 14 Bxe6 Qxe6 15 h3 Rfe8 16 Qf1 Nd5 [16...Rad8 Waiting to play Nd5 is a better option] 17 Nxd5 Qxd5 18 Qc4 [I was not expecting her to offer the queen trade, especially because I had the rook and bishop vs her rook and knight, but it went into a fairly equal endgame.] 18...f4 [18...Qxc4 19 Rxc4 Rad8 20 g3 is another option but I wanted to get rid of my doubled pawn on f5] 19 Qxd5 cxd5 20 exf4 Bxf4 21 Rc5 Rad8 22 g3 b6 23 Rc6 Bd6 24 Kf1 Kg7 25 Re1 Re4 26 Rxe4 dxe4 27 Ng5 Be7 28 Nxe4 Rxd4 29 f3 Rd7 30 Ke2 f5 31 Nf2 Bf6 32 b3 Be5 33 g4 fxg4 34 fxg4 Rc7 35 Rxc7+ Bxc7 36 Ne4 Be5 37 Kd3 b5 38 a4 bxa4 39 bxa4 h5 40 Kc4 hxg4 41 hxg4 Kf7 42 Kd5 Bf4 43 a5 Ke7 44 Kc6 Be3 45 a6 Ke6

(diagram)

46 Nd6 g5 47 Nc8 Bf2 48 Kb7 Kd7 49 Nxa7 Bxa7 50 Kxa7 Kc7 51 Ka8 Kc8 52 Ka7 Kc7 ½-½



Aasa Dommalapati - Anne-Marie Velea Sicilian

1 e4 [I came an hour late to this game because I thought the round was at 1pm, not 12pm! With only 30 minutes on the clock, while she had 90 minutes, I really was just hoping to get a draw.] 1...c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 Bb5+ Bd7 4 Bxd7+ Nxd7 5 O-O Ngf6 6 Re1 e6 7 c3 Be7 8 d4 O-O 9 Bf4 [Something I missed is that getting the 9 e5 breakthrough is important after Black decided to not take on d4. Then 9...dxe5 10 dxe5 Nd5 11 c4 Nb4 12 Nc3] 9...Qb6 10 Qe2 cxd4 11 cxd4 d5 12 e5 Ne4 13 Nbd2 Nxd2 14 Bxd2 Rac8 15 Bc3 [My bishop looks like a pawn and my planned attack on the kingside is too slow, so I was just trying to hold the position.] 15...Rc6 16 a3 Rfc8 17 Nd2 Qa6 18 Nf1 Qxe2 19 Rxe2 b5 20 Ne3 Nb6 21 f4 Na4 22 Be1 Rc1 23 Ra2 [This looks funny but taking the c1 rook just loses a pawn: 23 Rxc1 Rxc1 24 Kf1 Rb1 25 Rc2 Nxb2] 23...Bd8 24 Kf2 Bb6 25 Rd2 Rb1 26 Ke2 Ba5 27 Rd1 Rxd1 28 Kxd1 [This trade is what I was hoping for because I can play b4 and reposition my rook, and it's hard to find a breakthrough for Black. My king is guarding the rook squares.] 28...Bb6 29 Nc2 Kf8 30 Kd2 Ba5+ 31 b4 Nc3 32 Rb2 Bb6 33 Kd3 Na4 ½-½





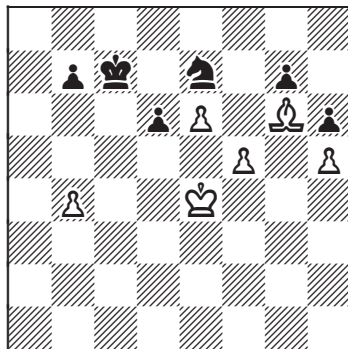
Ellie Zheng - Aasa Dommalapati King's Indian

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 Nf3 O-O 5 Bg5 d6 6 e3 h6 7 Bh4 g5 8 Bg3 Nh5 9 Nd2 Nxc3 10 hxg3 c5 11 Qc2 cxd4 12 exd4 Nc6 13 Nf3 g4 14 d5 Nb4 15 Qb3 Qa5 [15...Qb6 is a slightly better option. I was worried about losing a tempo after 16 Na4 but in that case 16... Qa5 17 Nd2 Bf5] 16 Nh4 Bd7 [I felt good about my opening; my pieces were active and I had a good attack on the queenside, while my dark square bishop was safely defending my king.] 17 a3 Na6 18 O-O-O Rfc8 19 Qc2 b5 20 Nf5 Bxf5 21 Qxf5 b4 22 Bd3 bxc3 23 Rxh6 Bxh6+ 24 Kb1 Bg7 25 Rh1 [She had a few threats here, but I was able to defend them with my bishop. My attack was a lot faster and I was also up a piece!] 25...e6 26 Qh7+ Kf8 27 dxe6 fxe6 28 Re1 c2+ 0-1

Aasa Dommalapati - Olivia Laido Scotch

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4 4 Nxd4 Bc5 5 Nb3 Bb6 6 Nc3 Qf6 7 Qe2 Nge7 8 Be3 d6 9 O-O-O Bd7 10 Kb1 O-O-O 11 Bxb6 axb6 12 g3 Qg6 13 Bg2 Rhe8 14 Nb5 [My idea of attacking the king was premature. I should prepare for it by improving my rook and queen first and maybe even putting pressure in the center.] 14...Ne5 15 N3d4 N7c6 16 Nxc6 Nxc6 17 Qc4 Re7 18 Rd3 Qh5 19 Rc3 Be8 20 a4 Qc5 21 Qe2 Qg5 22 f4 Qg6 23 h4 f5 24 Re3 Kb8 25 Nc3 Bf7 26 h5 Qf6 27 Nd5 Bxd5 28 exd5 Rxe3 29 Qxe3 Ne7 30 Re1 Ng8 31 Qf3 Qf7 32 Bh3 Rf8 33 Re6 Qd7 34 b3 Qf7 35 Qe2 Ka7 36 Bg2 Kb8 37 Bf3 [It's difficult to find a breakthrough despite having better placed pieces. I was trying to bring my bishop to the other side so that I could potentially attack the king with my queen, bishop, and a5] 37...Ka7 38 Qd3 Kb8 39 Be2 Re8 40 Qe3 Rxe6 41 Qxe6 Qxe6 42 dxe6 Ne7 43 g4 fxg4 44 Bxg4 Kc8 45 f5 h6 46 Kc1 Kd8 47 Kd2 c6 48 Kd3 Kc7 49 Ke4 Kb8 50 b4 c5 51 c3 Kc7 52 Bf3 Kb8 53 Kf4 Kc7 54 Ke4 Kb8 55 Be2 Kc7 56 Bb5 Kb8 57 a5 Ka7 58 Be8 Ka6 59 axb6 Kxb6 60 Ba4 cxb4 61 cxb4 Ka6 62 Bd7 Kb6 63 Be8 Kc7 64 Bg6 [It would still be difficult to breakthrough after 64 Bb5 Kb6 65 Bc4 Kc7 66 b5 Kb6. The main problem was that her pawns were on dark squares and I had no entry for my king because of her knight, so I couldn't attack her weak pawns.] (diagram)

64...Kb6 65 Kd4 Kb5 66 Kc3 Ka4 67 Kc4 b5+ 68 Kc3 Ka3 69 Be8 Ka4 70 Bg6 Ka3 71 Bh7 Nc6 72 Bg6 ½-½





The Right Frame of Mind

by Matt Grinberg

I RECENTLY LOST A GAME rather decisively. I was on the White side of an Open Sicilian. My opponent achieved the standard equalizing move ...d5, but then instead of playing something simple and obvious leading to an equal game, I did something cute and dumb. Immediately upon releasing the piece I realized that my move led to the loss of a knight for a pawn. Instead of calmly assessing the situation and looking for good moves, which might have saved the game, I freaked out. I indiscriminately avoided exchanges by retreating my pieces to worse squares, all the while striving to “make something happen” by means of weakening pawn moves. The result was that my position quickly went downhill. To cap it off, I hung my queen in a situation that was already beyond hope.

After the game my opponent revealed that *only in the last few moves did he realize he was a knight up!* He totally misunderstood the position—but he played strong moves and won because he was in the right frame of mind. I understood the position, but I lost because I was in the wrong frame of mind.

This brought to mind another game I played at the Arlington Chess Club many years ago. On that occasion I won in no small part because *I didn't realize that I was down material.* With a confident frame of mind, I just found good moves!

What I show in these notes is not an objective analysis of that game, but rather a subjective account of what I was thinking. The lesson is not the moves on the board, but rather the moves in my brain.

Dave Long - Matthew Grinberg
Arlington Chess Club Ladder 1987

Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 O-O b5!? [This is considered to be premature, but I have a pet line in mind. The normal Closed Ruy Lopez is 5...Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 d6 8 c3 O-O 9 h3 White has a small edge] **6 Bb3 d6 7 c3** [Dave allows a transposition back to normal lines. My pet line was 7 Ng5 d5 8 exd5 Nd4 9 Re1 Bc5 10 Rxe5+!? (10 d3 O-O = is the safe alternative) Kf8 and yes, Black is down two pawns and has lost his castling privilege, but White's pieces are disorganized and vulnerable to attack. The position is quite unbalanced and unclear.] **7...Be7 8 Re1 O-O 9 h3** [We are now back to the Closed Ruy Lopez.] **9...Nb8** [The Breyer Defense.] **10 d4 Nbd7 11 Nbd2 Bb7 12 Bc2 c5 13 d5 c4 14 Nf1 Qc7 15 Ne3 Rfc8** [Since I have more space on the queenside, that is

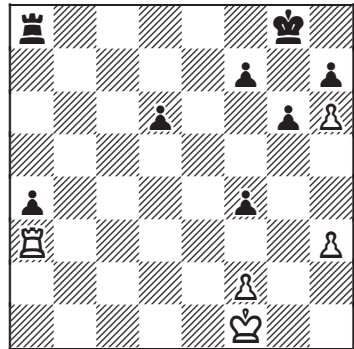


where I want to play.] **16 Nf5** [While Dave is looking for a king side attack.] **16... Bf8 17 g4 a5 18 g5 Ne8 19 N3h4 b4 20 Qg4 Nc5 21 Be3 Nd3** [I strike first!] **22 Bxd3 bxc3!** [I could play 22...cxd3 23 cxb4 axb4 24 Bd2 Qb6 25 Qf3 Ba6 but I was looking for more] **23 Rac1** [If 23 Bc2 cxb2 24 Rab1 c3 I would have connected passed pawns on the 6th/7th ranks, which I figured was more than enough for the knight I gave up] **23...cxb2!** [I could play 23...cxd3 24 Rxc3 Qb8 25 Rxd3 Ba6 26 Rd2 with possible compensation for the pawn because my rook and queen are lined up on the open b- and c- files, but it is not clear] **24 Rxc4 Qxc4!** [perfectly happy to give up my queen for a rook, bishop and a passed pawn on the 7th rank] **25 Bxc4 Rxc4 26 Rb1** [Dave prefers getting rid of my passed pawn to making an effort to hold his center. If 26 Qg2 Ra4 27 Rb1 Rxa2 the pawns should win.] **26...Bxd5 27 Rxb2 Rxe4 28 Qh5?** [Desperate to get some counterplay, Dave plays his queen into a tight corner. He still has a decent position after 28 Qd1 Be6 29 f3 Rc4 30 Bf2] **28...g6 29 Nh6+ Bxh6 30 Qxh6 Rb4 31 Rc2 Rb1+ 32 Bc1** [Losing the a-pawn, but there is no way to hold it anyhow. If 32 Kh2 Ra1] **32... Bxa2 33 Rxa2 Rxc1+ 34 Kg2 Rc4 35 Nf3 Ng7 36 Nh4 a4 37 Ra3 Rf4 38 Kf1 Rb8 39 Rc3 Ra8 40 Ng2?** [Apparently he decided it was better to give up his useless queen for an active rook than to effectively be a queen down. 40 Ra3 probably loses because he can never get his queen into play, but at least it doesn't give up the queen.] **40...Nf5! 41 Nxf4 Nxh6 42 gxh6 exf4 43 Ra3**

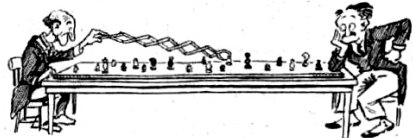
At this point I stopped to assess the position. I looked at the captured pieces beside the board.

"Let's see... in the early middle game I gave up my queen for a rook and a minor piece. I just won his queen for a rook. That means I am now ahead a minor piece, right? So where is my extra piece?" I didn't see it beside the board. *"Is it on the board?"* Nope, it's not there either. *"What's going on here?"* I reviewed my score sheet and suddenly realized I gave up a knight with my 21st through 23rd moves and had completely forgotten about it.

"Gad! I played the whole game down a queen for a rook!" That was a kick in the stomach! For a moment I assumed I must be losing. But looking back at the board, I saw that I was three pawns up!



43...g5 44 Kg2 f6 45 Kf3 Kf7 46 Kg4 Kg6 47 h4 Ra5 48 hxg5 fxg5 49 Rd3 Kxh6 50 Rxd6+ Kg7 51 Rd7+ Kf6 52 Rxh7 a3 53 Rh6+ Ke5 0-1 His rook will be forced to go back to a1 to stop my a-pawn. With the rook effectively out of the game, it will be an easy win.



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In This Issue:

Tournaments	
2022 Virginia Closed.....	5
Features	
Woody Harris (by Sam Conner)	8
Readers' Games (Aasa Dommalapati)	17
The Right Frame of Mind (Matt Grinberg) ..	20
Odds & Ends	
From the Editor	3
VCF Info	<i>inside front cover</i>

