

VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

The bimonthly publication of the
Virginia Chess Federation

2019 - #5



Niña jugando al ajedrez, by Montserrat Almonacid (2013)

VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

2019 - Issue #5

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2019 Virginia "Closed"

DANIEL MILLER is the Virginia state champion for 2019. He prevailed on tiebreak over defending champion Praveen Balakrishnan at the annual Labor Day weekend tournament at the Hilton Garden Inn in Glen Allen, just outside Richmond. They each scored 5-1. Justin Paul, Macon Shibut & Jason Morefield tied for 3rd place with 4½ points apiece. Robert Fischer & Tim Hamilton split the Export prize. Patrick Spain won top class A. Ed Kitces was top Senior.

The Amateur (under 1800) section saw a 5-way tie for 1st involving Peter Snow, Brighton Sujit Roy, Tyson Brady, Aaron Osborne & Pranav Chinthakuntla, all scoring 4½-1½. Lulu Huang won both top class D and top Female.

Dulitha Jayakodige was the clear winner in the Under 1200 section with 5½-½. Runner-up Sriharsh Sambangi finished half a point behind, the 3rd place Soham Pattnaik was a further half point back at 4½. Rishhi Naavaal took the Under 1000 trophy. Ashlyn Crowell was top Under 800, and Ashvik Reddy Gundu top Under 600. Top Unrated went to Cody Pinkerman.

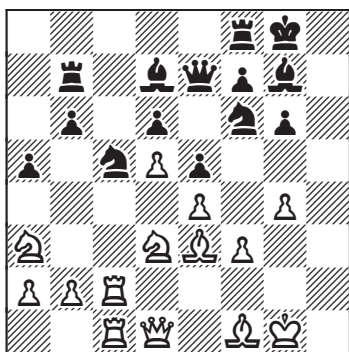
For Miller it was a remarkable sixth time as state champion. The late Charlie Powell's once seemingly insurmountable record of 7 titles is definitely within reach! Balakrishnan's bid for a third consecutive championship took a hit with his 2nd round upset loss to Virginia Beach master Nemanja Milanovic. He won out after that, including



a last round victory over Justin Paul, who stood half a point clear of the field at 4½ entering the final round. However, it was not good enough to overtake the tiebreak score of Miller, who closed out the tournament by defeating Kitces on board 2.

Ed Kitces – Daniel Miller King's Indian

1 Nf3 Nf6 2 g3 g6 3 Bg2 Bg7 4 O-O
O-O 5 d4 d6 6 c4 Nbd7 7 Nc3 e5 8 e4
c6 9 h3 Qb6 10 d5 Nc5 11 Re1 cxd5
12 cxd5 Bd7 13 Re2 Rac8 14 Ne1 Qa6
15 Be3 Rc7 16 Rc1 b6 17 Rec2 Qc8 18
g4 a5 19 f3 h5 20 Bf1 Qe8 21 Nd3 Rb7
22 Nb1 Qe7 23 Na3 hxg4 24 hxg4



24...Ncxe4!? 25 fxe4 Nxg4 26 Qe1
Nxe3 27 Qxe3 f5 28 Bg2 Qh4 29 Qf2
Qg5 30 Qe2 fxe4 31 Nf2 Bh6 32 Re1?
[32 Nxe4] e3 33 Nd1 Bg4 34 Qxe3
Qh4 35 Qe4 Bf4 [threatening Bh2+
-g3+ & Qh2mate] 36 Rf2 Bxd1 37 Rxf4
Rxf4 38 Qxg6+ Rg7 39 Qe6+ Kh8 0-1

There were in all 95 entries across the three sections. Christina Schweiss served as Chief TD on behalf of the Virginia Chess Federation (VCF).

The VCF's annual business meeting was conducted Saturday morning prior to the tournament's opening round. Anand Dommalapati was elected VCF President, succeeding Adam Chrisney who had

served for several years. Chrisney will continue on the VCF Board, having been elected for that alongside Andy Rea and Michael Callahan.

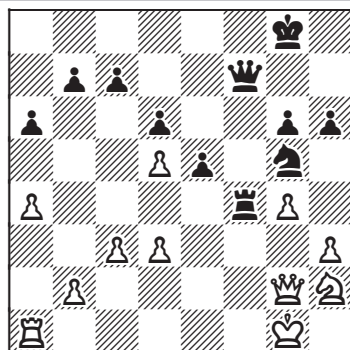
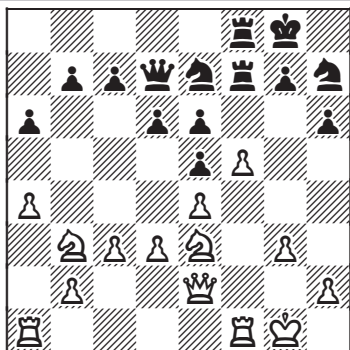
Former state champion Andy Samuelson won the Blitz tournament on Friday night with 6½ points out of 8. Jason Morefield (6) and Daniel Miller (5½) rounded out the prize circle.

Daniel Miller – Sriniaiyer Sudarshan Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 Qxd5 4 d4 Nc6
5 Nf3 Bf5 6 Na3 cxd4 7 Bc4 Qd7 8 Qb3
e6 9 Nxd4 Nxd4 10 cxd4 [threatening
Bb5] 10...Be4 11 O-O Nf6 12 Bg5 Be7
13 Rfe1 Bd5 14 Bxf6 Bxc4 15 Nxc4
Bxf6 16 d5 O-O [16...Qxd5 could
become dangerous, eg 17 Rad1 Qc6 18
Na5 Qb6 19 Qa4+ Kf8 20 Rd7] 17 dxe6
fxe6 18 Rad1 Qc6? [18...Bd4 Stepping
into the pin looks alarming to but the
tempo gained attacking f2 prevents
White from being able to exploit it before
Black plays Rad8 and probably Qf7] 19
Nd6 Qb6 20 Qxe6+ Kh8 21 Nf7+ Rxf7
22 Qxf7 h6 23 Re8+ Rxe8 24 Qxe8+
Kh7 25 Qe4+ Kh8 26 Rc1 Kg8 27
Rc8+ Kf7 28 Qe8mate 1-0

Andrew Samuelson - Praveen Balakrishnan Italian

1 e4 e5 2 Bc4 Nc6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 d3 Bc5
5 O-O d6 6 c3 a6 7 a4 Ba7 8 Na3 h6 9
Nc2 Be6 10 Bxe6 fxe6 11 Be3 Bxe3 12
Nxe3 O-O 13 Nd2 Qd7 14 Qe2 Nh7 15
Nb3 Rf4 16 g3 Rf7 17 f4 Raf8 18 f5 Ne7



19 g4?

White subtly begins to go off course. 19 fxe6 would be equal. With the text he wants to claim an initiative on the kingside but the reply reveals that he has merely created weaknesses.

19...g6! [The f5 spearhead cannot be maintained. White doesn't want 20 fxg6 Nxg6 and Black's knight reaches f4, but the inconveniently hanging Nb3 renders his other way of capturing problematic also.] 20 fxe6 Qxe6 21 Nd2 Ng5 [the other knight threatens to appear on f4 via Nh3+] 22 Qg2 Qd7 [Clearing the way for N-e6-f4 and also tickling the a4 pawn. White decides he needs to do something rather than just wait as his position slides downhill.] 23 Nd5 Rxf1+ 24 Nxf1 Nxd5 25 exd5 Rf4 26 h3 Qf7 27 Nh2

(see diagram top of next column)

27...Rf2! 28 Qg3 [28 Qxf2 Nxh3+] 28...Rxb2 29 Rf1 Qxd5 30 Rf2 Rxf2 31 Kxf2 Qa2+ 32 Kg1 Qxa4 33 h4 Qf4! [adding insult to injury with the same trick once again] 34 Qg2 Qe3+ 35 Kh1 Qe1+ 36 Nf1 Qxh4+ 37 Nh2 Qe1+ 38 Nf1 c6 39 c4 Qd1 40 Kg1 Qf3 41 Qb2 Nh3+ 42 Kh2 Qf2+ 43 Qxf2 Nxf2 0-1

Macon Shibut - Nemanja Milanovic Nimzowitsch Larsen

Notes by Macon Shibut

1 b3 a5 2 c4 [Calling the bluff of Black's wiseacre first move. If he pushes his pawn again I will take it and while not the greatest extra pawn, there would be no way for Black to get it back. Otherwise White hopes to reach a normal position where Black has committed to ...a5 for no clear reason.] Nf6 3 Bb2 e6 4 Nf3 d5 5 e3 Be7 6 Nc3 O-O 7 d4 c5 8 Bd3 Nc6 9 O-O cxd4 10 exd4 b6 11 Qe2 Ba6 [not 11...dxc4 12 bxc4 Nxd4? 13 Nxd4 Qxd4 14 Nd5] 12 Rfd1 Rc8 13 a3 Re8 14 Rac1 Bf8 15 Nb5! a4 16 bxa4 dxc4 17 Rxc4 Nd5? [an oversight] 18 Qc2 Na5 19 Bxh7+ Kh8 20 Rxc8 Qxc8 21 Ne5 [The desire to consolidate my material advantage conflicted with an urge to keep queens on longer and go for his exposed king, eg 21 Qb1!? g6 22 Bxg6 fxg6 23 Qxg6 Re7 24 Rc1 Qe8 25 Ne5] 21... Qxc2 [here 21...g6? 22 Bxg6 fxg6 23 Qxg6 would just be winning] 22 Bxc2 Kg8 23 Be4 Rc8 24 Bxd5? [Having decided upon Door # 1 ("consolidate my material advantage") I took it too far. Yes, I eliminate his best piece, but I also give



him this outpost on c4 that transforms into an annoying passed pawn. 24 Rc1 was better.] **24...exd5 25 Rc1** [The last few moves before time control were made nervously and without purpose. Now I settled back down to find a plan. The bishop will go to c3 and hopefully someday b4, the rook to the e-file.] **26 Nxc4 dxc4 27 Kf1 f6 28 Rc3 Kf7 29 Ke2 Ke6 30 Kd2 Bb7 31 f3 Kd7 32 Rc1 Bd5 33 Bc3 g6 34 Re1 Bh6+ 35 Kc2 Bg5 36 Bb4?** [I was so pleased to achieve this activating move that I never even considered 36 Bd2! Eliminating Black bishop pair should win eventually, I think.] **36...f5 37 Re5 Bg8 38 h3** [My computer recommends 38 Nd6! with various inhuman follow-ups such as 38...Rb8 39 Kc3 Bf4 40 Nf7! Bxe5 41 Nxe5+ Kc7 42 Nxc6] **38...Bf6 39 Re1 Ra8 40 Nc3 Bf7** [Having missed my chance at move 36, I couldn't find a way to make progress. I decided to return one of the pawns—one of the stupid doubled ones—to open a different file for my rook. This was not a bad idea but I should have deferred the sacrifice in favor of the preparatory move 41 Rb1! here. In playing as I did I underestimated his 43rd move.] **41 a5? bxa5 42 Bc5 Rb8 43 Rb1** [Now if 43...Rxb1 44 Kxb1 Kc6 45 Kc2 Be6 46 a4 White can at least try to make progress.] **43...Rb3!** [I thought this wouldn't make any essential difference, reckoning on some N-e2-c1 to force him into exchanging rooks after all...] **44 a4 Kc6 45 Ne2 Bg5** [...but I can't get it! Black can always arrange to take the knight with his dark square bishop, leaving opposite color bishops and a certain draw. Trading rooks myself Rxb3

offers no winning chances either; the b3 pawn would be too strong.] **46 Nc3 Bh4 ½-½** Had I won this I could have joined the tie for 1st but Danny's tiebreaks would have beaten mine in any case.

Andrew Rea - Jason Morefield Queen's Indian

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 3 e3 b6 4 Nbd2 Bb7 5 Bd3 c5 6 c3 Nc6 7 O-O Be7 8 b3 O-O 9 Bb2 Qc7 10 Rc1 Rac8 11 e4 cxd4 12 cxd4 Qf4 13 g3 Qh6 14 a3 d5 15 e5 Nd7 16 Re1 f6 [16...Rc7 Δ Rfc8 =] **17 exf6 Rxf6 18 b4 Bd6 19 b5 Ne7 20 Rxc8+ Nxc8 21 Nf1 Rf8 22 Qe2 Qf6 23 Kg2 Re8 24 Ne3 Qf8 25 Ng4** [White has gradually gotten a grip on the weaknesses created by ...f6. Now Black allows his queen to be pulled away from the kingside and his position collapses.] **25...Bxa3? 26 Ng5 h6** [26 ... g6 is no better] **27 Nh7 Qe7 28 Bxa3 Qxa3 29 Nxb6+! gxh6 30 Qg4+ Kh8 31 Qg6 Qe7** [31...Re7 was more resilient but White still wins after 32 Nf6 Nxf6 33 Qxf6+ Rg7 34 Qxh6+ Kg8 35 Qxe6+] **32 Qxh6 Kg8 33 Qg6+ Kh8 34 Ng5 Rf8 35 Qh6+ Kg8 36 Bh7+ Kh8 37 Bf5+ 1-0**

Justin Paul - Andrew Rea Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 Bb5+ Bd7 4 Bxd7+ Qxd7 5 O-O Nc6 6 Qe2 e6 7 Rd1 Nge7 8 d4 cxd4 9 Nxd4 Nxd4 10 Rxd4 Nc6 11 Rd1 Be7 [Seems like Black ought to be okay.] **12 c4 Qc7 13 Nc3 O-O-O?!** [Woah! The other side looks safer. (Play 13...a6 first to prevent Nb5, Bf4 etc)] **14 Nb5 Qb8 15 Bf4 g5 16 Be3 Rd7 17 Rd2 a6 18 Nc3 b6** [The Black position is just too awkward to hold together in the long run.] **19 Rad1 Rb7 20 Qh5**



f6 21 h4 Ne5 22 hxg5 Nxc4 23 Qf7
Nxd2 24 Qxe6+ Kd8 25 gxf6 Bf8 26
f7 Re7 27 Qf6 Kd7 28 Rxd2 Bg7 29
Qxg7 Qf8 30 Bh6 Rxf7 31 Qxf8 Rhxf8
32 Bxf8 Rxf8 33 e5 1-0

Andrew Samuelson - Larry Larkins French

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5
e5 Nfd7 6 h4 a6 7 Qg4 Kf8 8 Nf3 c5 9
dxc5 Nc6 10 Qg3 Nxc5 11 O-O-O Bd7
12 Nd4 b5 13 Nxc6 Bxc6 14 Bd3 h6 15
Bxe7+ Qxe7 16 Qf4 b4 17 Ne2 a5 18
Nd4 Bd7 19 Rh3 a4 20 Rf3 Ke8 21 Qg4
g5 22 Rf6 b3 23 cxb3 a3 24 Qe2 gxh4
25 Kb1 h5 26 f3 Nxd3 27 Rxd3 Qc5 28
Qc2 Qb6 29 Nf5 Rf8 30 bxa3 Qa5 31
Nd6+ Ke7 32 b4 Qa7 33 Qd2 Qg1+ 34
Kb2 Rg8 35 Rxf7+ Kd8 36 g4 h3 37
Qf4 Qf2+ 38 Rd2 Qe1 39 Rf8+ Kc7 40
Rc2+ Kb6 41 Qd4+ Ka6 42 Qc5 1-0



2019 Fredericksburg Open

October 19-20, 2019

Country Inn & Suites South

5327 Jefferson Davis Hwy, Fredericksburg, Va 22408

5SS. Rd 1 Game/75 d10; Rds 2-5 G/90 d10. \$\$ Prizes: \$2,800 b/70, place prizes in each section guaranteed. In two sections: *Open*: \$600-400-250, X \$200, A \$180. *Under 1800*: \$400-260-150, C \$135, U1400 \$125, Unrated \$100. Unrated limited to \$250 when winning place prize, must play in the U1800 section. *Both*: Rds Sat 10-2-7, Sun 9:30-2:30. EF \$65 if rec'd by Sat 10/12, \$80 thereafter and at the tournament. One ½pt bye allowed if req by 1:30pm 10/19. Re-entry \$30 after rd 1 with ½pt bye. USCF memb req'd, VCF memb req'd for Va residents, both available at site, other state memberships honored. Hotel chess rate \$79+tax, call 540-898-1800 by Fri 10/4. *Enter*: Online www.vachess.org or on-site Fri 6-9pm, Sa 7:30-9:15am. Send mail-in entries to Mike Hoffpauir, ATTN: Fredericksburg Open, 405 Hounds Chase, Yorktown, VA 23693.

VCF Cup Tour — US Chess Junior Grand Prix — 20 US Chess Grand Prix Points



VCF Cup

by Andrew Rea

WITH the Charlottesville Open our most recent season has finished, and the final standings have been tabulated. Congratulations to our 2019 VCF Cup overall champion, Daniel Clancy! Well earned, as Daniel played and scored well in many of the 2018–2019 VCF Cup events—it pays to be persistent, consistent, and proficient!

Daniel had several chasers, with quite the late surges from Sudarshan Sriniaiyer and Nemeja Milanovic. Per usual, there are also other prizes in this annual competition—place prizes and class prizes. Winners are posted on www.vachess.org. Congratulations to all, as it is not easy to land in the prizes!

Thus we can get to the matter again as to the nature of our annual VCF Cup competition: what events can qualify, and how to score those points! The VCF Cup is an annual competition, running from September through mid-August. It is similar to the US Grand Prix as a manner of rewarding participation. Players accumulate points by performing well in events throughout the season—but of course you must play to perform!

Tournaments must be open to qualify as Cup events. That means all players are eligible to enter, to include those from out of state. Class tournaments where players are allowed to play up in class/classes is also eligible. A scholastic tournament, a military tournament, even the Virginia Closed Championship, worthy events as they may be, cannot award Cup points as they restrict participation one way or another.

Several VCF Cup chess tournaments are organized by the VCF, but by no means all of them! So long as the organizer of an eligible event provides 30 days (or more) notice via website and/or TLA, and commits to \$1 per player contribution to VCF (maximum fee \$200 for a given event), that event is part of the VCF Cup!

This past year's Cup lineup included the Washington Chess Congress, Emporia Open, David Zofchak Memorial, Northern Virginia Open, Virginia Open, Colonial Open, Cherry Blossom Classic and Charlottesville Open. This year we lose the Emporia Open but gain the Fredericksburg Open... and the Eastern Open! Welcome aboard, thank you organizer Tom Beckman for your support! Thus we figure to have another interesting competition to see who gets the most points, both overall and in class categories. And let's not forget the special prize for Most Games!

How to score points... Essentially points are rewarded based on your score within your event/section, but degree of difficulty also factors in. It is typically more difficult to win chess games in an Open section than in an Amateur; a Class C section is usually more difficult than the Class D. Cup scoring strives to take this into account. One element that is the same for all is that winning an event earns a



3 point bonus, whether it's the Virginia Open, Class C of the former Kingstowne Open, the U1900 of the Colonial Open, or whatever. You can find a more detailed explanations on our state website.

When compiling results, we also need to determine who is eligible for which prizes. Players can receive a maximum of one prize, so someone who is eligible for multiple prizes will receive the largest one. For a recent example, Nemenja Milanovic just finished 3rd place overall but he was also eligible for Top Expert, which was more prize \$\$\$. Note also that the VCF Cup is a year-long competition, while ratings are not static—players can have multiple eligibility across rating classes too. We've had instances where players progress from class D through C and up to to B, all in the course of the year. If you play in VCF Cup events at a level, you have eligibility at that level.

We score on a cumulative basis—no averaging, no dropping of worse result. If you have a bad event, come out and try again! As we close out 2019, its wait 'til next year, but as noted, its coming fast! Hope to see you at our 2019-2020 VCF Cup events!

Greg Acholonu - Geoff McKenna DC League 2019 English

Notes by Geoff McKenna



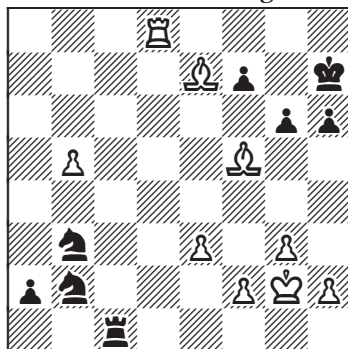
1 Nf3 d5 2 g3 c6 3 b3 Bf5 4 Bb2 Nf6 5 c4 h6 [Now would be a good time for White to try Bxf6] 6 Bg2 e6 7 O-O Be7 8 Na3 a5 9 Nc2 O-O 10 Ne3 Bh7 11 Rc1 Nbd7 12 d3 Re8 13 a3 Bf8 14 Re1 e5 [I had my doubts but the computer is okay with this.] 15 cxd5 cxd5 16 Qc2 e4 17 dxe4 Nxe4 18 Qc7 Ndc5 19 Qxd8 Raxd8 20 Rcd1 Nxb3 21 Nxd5 Bc5 22 e3 Nd6?! [Rc8 is better] 23 Nd4 Bxd4 24 Bxd4 Bc2 25 Bb6 Rc8 26 Nc7 Bxd1 27 Nxe8 Rxe8 28 Rxd1 Nc4 29 Bc7 Rc8 30 Bd8 b5 31 Bh3 Nb2 32 Rd5 Rc1+ 33 Kg2 b4 34 axb4 a4 35 Be7 a3 36 b5 a2 37 Rd8+ Kh7 38 Bf5+ g6

39 Bf6?

We both missed 39 Be4!! Black can avoid the mate but succumbs due to the b-pawn. For instance:

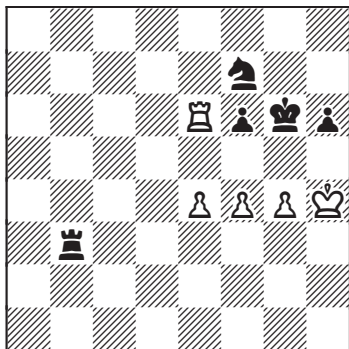
39...Kg7 40 Rd6! Rc8 (40...f6 41 Bxf6+ Kf8 42 Bd5 Rc8 43 Bxb2) 41 Bf6+ Kf8 42 Bxb2 a1Q 43 Bxa1 Nxa1 44 b6;

39...Rd1 (39...Rg1+ 40 Kh3 makes no difference) 40 Rxd1 Nxd1 41 Bf6





39...gxf5 40 Bxb2 Rb1 41 Be5 a1Q
42 Bxa1 Nxa1 43 Rd5 Kg6 44 h3 f6
45 g4 fxg4 46 hxg4 Nc2 47 Kg3 Rb3
48 Kh4 Rb4 49 Rc5 Na3 50 b6 Rxb6
51 Rc7 Nb5 52 Re7 Nd6 53 e4 Nf7
54 f4 Rb3 55 Re6



55...Ng5! 0-1

Julia Sevilla – Macon Shibut 2019 US Open, Orlando Fla King's Indian

Notes by Macon Shibut

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 d6 3 Nf3 g6 4 g3 Bg7 5
Bg2 O-O 6 O-O Nc6 7 Nc3 Bg4 8 Bg5
h6 9 Be3 e5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 h3 Be6
12 Qc1 Kh7 13 Rd1 Qc8 14 Nd5 Ng8
[14...Bxh3 15 Nxf6+ Bxf6 16 Bxh6 would
be dangerous] 15 Kh2 Rd8 [15...f5 was
also possible. The point of the text move
is to prepare 16...Nd4—then if 17 Nxd4
exd4 18 Bxd4? Bxd4 19 Rxd4 there will
be 19...c6] 16 Nd2 Nd4 17 Bxd4 exd4
18 Ne4 c6 [I rejected 18...Bxd5 19 cxd5
Rxd5 because of 20 Nc5 but even then
20...Rf5 would be interesting.] 19 Nf4
Bf5 20 c5 Bxe4 21 Bxe4 Re8 22 Qc2
[actually threatening 23 Bxg6+ fxg6 24
Nxxg6 wins] 22...Ne7 23 Rac1 Qc7 24 b3
Qe5 25 Bf3 Rad8 26 Qc4 Kg8 27 b4 h5!
28 Nd3 Qc7 29 h4 Nf5 30 Kg1 [or 30
Kg2 Bh6 31 Rc2 Be3!] 30...Bh6 31 Rb1
Nxxg3 [31...Be3 is strong here too, but I
calculated the text to a forced win] 32

fxg3 Qxxg3+ 33 Kh1 [if 33 Kf1 Be3; or if
33 Bg2 Be3+ 34 Kf1 Re6] 33...Qh3+ 34
Kg1 Be3+ 35 Nf2 Qg3+ 36 Kh1 Qxxh4+
37 Kg2 Qxxf2+ 38 Kh3 Bf4 0-1

At the recent North American Youth tournament in Kingston, Canada, Jason Liang captures 1st place with a 8-1 score in the Under 12 Open Section and earned the title of FIDE Master. Jason will be familiar to Virginia players as he was very active in our area (including =2nd at the 2018 state championship) until his family moved to New York in July. In the Under 8 Girls Section, young Virginia player Lucia Huang scores 7-2 to reach 2nd place and earn a conditional Women Candidate Master title. Congratulations to both players!

Jason Liang - Arthur Xu 2019 North American Youth Ch Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6
5 Nc3 a6 6 Be2 e5 7 Nb3 Be7 8 O-O Be6
9 Re1 O-O 10 Bf3 Nbd7 11 a4 Rc8 12
Nd2 Nb8 13 Nf1 Nc6 14 Nd5 Nd4 15 c3
Nxf3+ 16 Qxf3 Nxd5 17 exd5 Bd7 18 a5
f5 19 Be3 Qe8 20 Nd2 g5 21 Qe2 f4 22
Ba7 Rf6 23 f3 h5 24 c4 Qf7 25 Ra3 g4
26 Rb3 gxf3 27 Nxf3 Rg6 28 Kh1 Re8
29 Rxb7 Bc8 30 Rc7 Qf5 31 Bb6 Bd8 32
Nd4 Qg4 33 Ra7 Bh4 34 Rf1 Qxe2 35
Nxe2 Bf5 36 Bf2 Bd3 37 Bxh4 Bxe2 38
Rf2 Bxc4 39 Rc2 Bxd5 40 Kg1 f3 41 Rxa6
fxg2 42 Rd2 Rf8 43 Bf2 e4 44 Bg3 Bb7 45
Raxd6 Rxd6 46 Bxd6 e3 47 Rxxg2+ Bxxg2
48 Bxf8 Bb7 49 Bc5 e2 50 Kf2 Ba6 51 Bb4
Kf7 52 Ke3 Bb5 53 Kd4 Ke6 54 Kc5 Bd3
55 Kb6 Kd7 56 Be1 Kc8 57 Bg3 Be4 58
b4 Bf5 59 b5 Bd3 60 a6 Bc4 61 Ka5 Bd3
62 b6 Be4 63 b7+ Bxb7 64 axb7+ Kxb7
65 Kb5 Kc8 66 Kc6 Kd8 67 Kd6 Ke8 68
Ke6 Kf8 69 Kf6 Kg8 70 Kg5 e1B 71 Bxe1
Kh7 72 Kxh5 Kg7 73 Bc3+ 1-0



Reflections

Reflections

by Mark Warriner



Looking Back on an Amateur Chess “Career”

COMEBACK! - 2019 CHARLOTTESVILLE OPEN

Okay, perhaps I should have left off the exclamation mark given the mixed results of my first tournament back in over a decade, but it reflects my enthusiasm. Going into it, I wondered would my general attitude and approach be improved over the past, and would my “fortunes” change? I have tended to get more Blacks than Whites and I usually started tournaments slowly. At my rating I was often paired way up or way down, which made progress difficult. So, did any of that change? A gratifying “yes” was the verdict. How did I play? Let’s see.

Mark Warriner – Remus Whitt French

My coach James Richardson and I tried in vain to predict my first round opponent based on listed entries. Guessing that I’d be on a top board, we prepared to face Nemanja Milanovic or Sudarshan Sriniaier. Imagine my consternation at discovering I was on the last board versus the lowest rated player! Someone else entered at the last second, after we’d looked at the list of players. **1 e4 e6** [A French Defense! Read previous columns about my decision to leave that opening behind. Also, my first rated game ever was a French, my last game before I stopped playing years ago was a French, and now with my return—another French!] **2 d4** [Sadly no more Wing Gambits for me, I’m a Solid Sam now.] **2...d5 3 Nd2** [My current preparation, out for its first road test.] **3...c5 4 Ngf3 Nc6 5 Bb5** [A slightly unusual move order, instead of 5 exd5 to confuse my lower-rated opponent. It worked inasmuch as he did vary from the most common replies 5...a6; 5...cxd4; or even 5...dxe4] **5...Bd7 6 exd5 exd5 7 O-O cxd4 8 Re1+ Be7 9 Nb3 Nf6 10 Bg5 O-O 11 Nbx d4 Nxd4 12 Nxd4 Bxb5 13 Nxb5 Re8** [Oops. Up until this point my opponent had been significantly outperforming his rating. But eventually it catches up with you.] **14 Bxf6 gxf6** [The problem was 14...Bxf6 15 Rxe8+ Qxe8 16 Nc7] **15 Nc3** [The first round was played at a faster time control than the other four and I had to pick up the pace. Perhaps with more time I would have found the better 15 Qg4+ Kh8 16 Qh5. My move played is okay, but risks allowing more counterplay than necessary.] **15...d4 16 Qg4+ Kh8 17 Rad1 f5** [This only helps White. 17...Bd6; 17...Bc5] **18 Qxf5 Bf8 19 Rxe8** [19 Nd5 gives White more] **19...Qxe8 20 Ne4** Here my opponent surprised me by resigning! White’s clearly better, but Black can still offer some resistance. But hey, a fairly reasonable win in my first game back, and no major mistakes. A quick victory without major energy expenditure is important as three rounds on first day is a difficult, and in my opinion a bit ridiculous. **1-0**

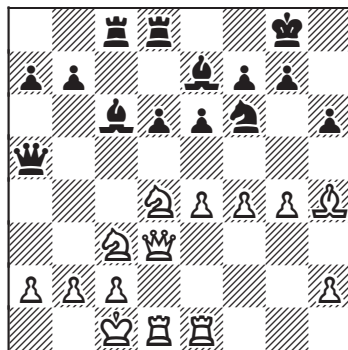


Nemanja Milanovic - Mark Warriner

Sicilian

1 e4 [My reward for a 1-0 start? From last board to first and the highest rated player in the tournament. Talk about whiplash!] **1...c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Qxd4** [“Houston, we have a problem.” I now appreciate what top players mean when they confess that they forgot their opening preparation and landed in time pressure. I didn’t panic, but I could not remember what my coach and I covered for this as it had been several months ago. I used huge amounts of time, which caused some critically bad decisions later in the game.] **4...Nc6 5 Bb5 Bd7 6 Bxc6 Bxc6 7 Nc3 e6** [7...Nf6 is played much more often. Nemanja was blitzing out moves faster than the delay (five seconds) and I felt like I was getting steam rolled.] **8 Bg5 Nf6** [transposing right back] **9 O-O-O Be7 10 Rhe1** [I was vaguely aware of a Svidler-Kasparov game from 20 years ago, but couldn’t remember how it went. Indeed, I was still within the move order(!) but no matter, I was in way over my head at this point anyway. **10...O-O 11 Kb1 h6 12 Bh4 Re8 13 Bg3 d5 14 e5 Ne4 15 Nxe4 dxe4 16 Qxd8 Rxd8 17 Nd4 Be8 18 c3 Svidler-Kasparov, Linares 1999 (0-1, 42)**] **10...h6 11 Bh4 O-O 12 Qd3** [Finally he paused to think. I was concerned that I was already almost a half hour behind on the clock.] **12...Qa5** [Still on the right path, but I burned a lot more time. I was averaging almost 10 min. a move, ridiculous in a 90-minute game. I paid the price.] **13 Nd4 Rac8 14 f4 Rfd8** [Not the end, but I zigged when I should have zagged. I thought again for a very long time, looking hard at the alternative **14...Rfe8** and almost played it, but I decided to ‘go for it’ being low on time. Problem was, my plan after this was bad.] **15 g4** [I’m still well in the game after this, but I had completely overlooked that he could do it and thought I’d blundered the game. Sure wish I’d moved more quickly earlier so I would have had more time for a sober assessment.]

15...Kf8 [Well, what to say? I tried hard and did well move-wise until this point, but failed to manage my time properly and it got me in trouble. **15...b5 16 e5 Nd5** and White’s better but I’m still fighting.] **16 Rg1 d5** [During the brief post-mortem Nemanja said he thought I might be going for **16...g5 17 fxg5 Nh7 (17...hxcg5 18 Be1)**] **17 Bxf6 Bxf6** [17...gxf6 is better, but it’s over anyway] **18 e5 Be7 19 Qh7** [Perhaps **19 g5** would have been more accurate.] **19...Ke8** [19...



Bc5 20 f5 Bxd4 21 Rxd4 Qc5 prolongs the inevitable] **20 Qxg7 Bc5 21 f5 Bxd4 22 Rxd4** [22 Qg8+ Ke7 23 f6+ Kd7 24 Qxf7 mate] **22...Bb5 23 fxe6 1-0** I resigned, feeling quite frustrated. I had high hopes that I was ready to consistently give strong players a better game, but I still need much more preparation before I reach that level.

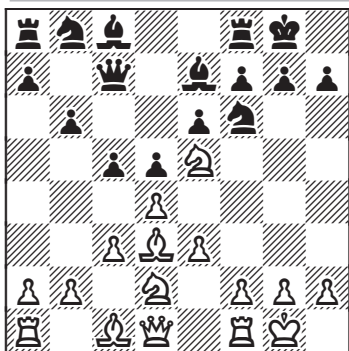


Mark Warriner – Bill Keogh Scandinavian

It had been 32 years since I'd played Bill Keogh and resigned what incredibly turned out to be a drawn position. This was an opportunity to achieve one of my goals: to gain revenge on players who previously beat me. It was fortunate that my first two games had been short and I still had enough energy. **1 e4 d5** [We correctly figured out who I'd be playing, but Bill was having no part of our opening preparation. He told me afterwards that this was his first time ever playing the Scandinavian. There is a subculture on Twitter that labels itself #TeamScandi and I've often teased them about the viability of this opening. I hoped I wasn't going to be eating crow after this game.] **2 exd5 Nf6 3 d4 Nxd5 4 Nf3 g6 5 c3** [5 c4 and Be2 score much better, even 5 Bc4. 5 h3 is also possible.] **5...Bg7 6 Bd3 O-O 7 O-O Nc6 8 Re1** [Given that I chose 5 c3, so far so good for both sides.] **8...h6** [This seemed highly suspicious. It weakens Black's king position and gives White an attacking idea that I went for, but maybe it's not as bad as I thought.] **9 Nbd2 Re8 10 Nf1 Kh7 11 h4** [I thought this set a clever trap but turns out to be not that great.] **11...Bg4** [If 11...e5 12 Nxe5 Nxe5 13 dxe5 Qxh4 14 Bxg6+ fxg6 15 Qxd5 White's only very slightly better.] **12 N1h2** [Good, but missing the best 12 Ng5+ hxg5 13 Qxg4 e5 14 Bxg5 Nf6 15 Bxf6 Qxf6 16 h5 with a clear advantage.] **12...Nf6** [This mistake is what I anticipated Bill would play. 12...Bxf3 13 Qxf3 Nf6 would have left him only a bit worse.] **13 Nxc4 Nxc4 14 h5** [Harry the h-pawn hits his mark.] **14...e5 15 hxg6+ fxg6 16 Ng5+ hxg5 17 Qxg4 exd4** [17... Bh6 resists better.] **18 Bxg5** [Played automatically, but engines begin finding lengthy forced mates after 18 Qh5+ Kg8 (18...Bh6 19 Qxg6+ Kh8 20 Qh7mate) 19 Bc4+ Kf8 20 Rxe8+ Qxe8 21 Qf3+ Ke7 22 Qd5.] **18...Qd6** [I thought carefully and found one of several forced mates here, except I didn't realize it was mate!] **19 Qh5+ Kg8 20 Bc4+ Kf8 21 Qf3+ Bf6** [Decent calculation on my part, only...] **22 Bxf6** ... I eschew a mate-in-one! (22 Bh6) Fortunately **1-0** anyway. I remained blissfully unaware of this embarrassment until about an hour later. Still, a revenge win achieved!

Andy Rea - Mark Warriner Colle

Back up to board three. I'd never played Andy Rea before, but I spent some quality time preparing with my coach. The twist here is that I had decided to save money by driving back and forth between Richmond and Charlottesville each day, resulting in a scant five hours sleep. But James' prep was up to the mark and more than made up for my fatigue. **1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 3 e3 d5 4 Bd3 c5 5 c3** [The Colle System, as predicted! This alone gave me a confidence boost, and moreover we had a line in mind.] **5...Be7** [Not the most common move. That would be 5...Nc6, and there are also 5...Nbd7 and 5...Bd6. Anish Giri even tried 5...b6 against Magnus Carlsen and drew.] **6 Nbd2 O-O 7 Ne5** [7 O-O is more common.] **7...b6** [7...Qc7 scores amazingly well, albeit in a very small number of games. We transpose to those lines.] **8 O-O Qc7**



According to ChessBase this setup has performed very well for Black. White struggles in any of the various plans.

9 f4 Ba6 [Here is the idea James prepared and imparted to me. The point is to exchange off White's best attacking piece. After that, what's White going to do? It worked—after the game, that's exactly what Andy complained about.] **10 Bxa6 Nxa6 11 Qe2 Qb7** [The end of exact preparation. My queen is quite happy on b7. Solid setup.] **12 b3 Rac8** [I wanted

to play ...a5 as we'd looked at a few games where this had proved useful, so I readied the preliminary ...Nb8-d7] **13 Bb2 Nb8 14 Rac1** [This looked 'off' to me and my instincts were correct. 14 f5 or 14 c4 concerned me more.] **14...a5 15 a3 Nbd7** [Thanks to the good preparation my clock situation was great, but by 15...b5 Black might gain a real advantage in space and position.] **16 c4 a4 17 cxd5** [I'm happy after 17 bxa4 Ra8] **17...exd5 18 Nxd7** [The first genuine error. 18 bxa4 was correct.] **18...Qxd7 19 dxc5 bxc5** [How White satisfactorily solves the issue of the backward e3 pawn is not clear, and Black's pawns control the e4, d4, c4, b4 squares.] **20 b4** [Jettisoning a pawn for piece play but it's another clear error. Andy said during post-mortem that he felt he "had to do something." There are times where a player has to simply hunker down and take the hits.] **20...cxb4 21 axb4 Rb8** [I miscalculated that 21...Rxc1 22 Rxc1 Bxb4 23 Bxf6 gxf6 wasn't so good for Black, but it's clearly better.] **22 Nf3** [If 22 Be5 Black chooses between 22...Rb7 or the wild 22...Qb5—but not 22...Rxb4 23 Rc7] **22...Rxb4 23 Ba3 Rb3 24 Ne5 Qb7 25 Bxe7 Qxe7 26 Rfd1** [Now I pondered for a bit deciding how to proceed. I made luft for the king, reckoning I had plenty of time to push my advantage home. But the immediate 26...a3 is totally fine; there are no back-rank threats yet and White would be hard pressed to deal with the advancing a-pawn.] **26...h6 27 Qa6 a3** [I felt things were under good control. Evidently Andy agreed and he went for broke.] **28 e4 dxe4 29 Rc8 Rxc8 30 Qxc8+ Kh7 31 Nd7 Nxd7** [We both hallucinated there was some sort of perpetual involving White's knight checking on f8. I considered 31...Rd3 but saw 32 Nf8+ Engines calmly brush it off with 32...Qxf8! 33 Qxf8 Rxd1+ with forced mate in less than 15 moves! Woof, I'm not at that level of calculation yet.] **32 Rxd7 Rb1+** [It's forced mate here too, but 32...a2! was prettiest and quickest.] **33 Kf2 Qh4+ 34 Ke3 Qe1+ 35 Kd4 a2** [35...Qd2+] **36 Ra7 Rb4+** [Again 36...Qd2+ but I saw one mate and stopped calculating for accuracy.] **37 Kd5 Qd1+ 38 Kc5** [I thought he'd try 38 Ke5 if he was going to continue.] **38...Qd4+ 39 Kc6 Rb6+ 40 Kc7 Qd6mate 0-1** Andy played it through to mate with the comment, "At least I made it to move 40."

I was elated. And full credit to James for preparing me well. Unfortunately I let my emotions flow a bit unchecked and was not prepared for where I found myself



next—which was board 2 in the final round with a small but real chance to tie for first place in the tournament. Nemanja had a perfect 4–0. Along with Sam Schenk, I was on three points. As I had already played Nemanja, Sam would now face him on board 1.

For a shot at tournament victory only a win would do. I had the White pieces and James tried to help me review the opening he guessed (correctly!) Sudarshan might play. We couldn't find a more convenient place to set up than in the playing room. As we went over lines 10 minutes before the round, we had the exact variation on the board when Sudarshan walked by to get set up! I don't think he noticed but it gave us a start!

Mark Warriner – Sudarshan Sriniaier Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 Nc3 Qc7 6 Be3 a6 7 Qf3 Nf6 [About now, Nemanja and Sam suddenly drew their game after a scant dozen moves or so. Any chances I had, however improbable, of catching a piece of first place evaporated without so much as fight. It was a good practical decision for Nemanja of course, as he secured first and could head home early. I failed to handle this disappointment—there was still a game to play and prizes at stake!] **8 O-O-O Bb4** [I completely forgot my preparation. Not just what we'd reviewed a few months ago, I couldn't remember anything we'd crammed in the brief few minutes before the start of the round.] **9 Nce2 O-O** [Had I kept my composure, I'd have noticed that my opponent was taking a long time for his moves—he was nervous too.] **10 a3 Be7** [10...Ne5 gets perhaps a little more out of the position.] **11 Nc3 b5 12 Qg3** [12 Nxc6 dxc6 13 g4 gave some play, maybe.] **12... Qxg3** [12...Bd6] **13 hxg3 Ng4 14 Nxc6 dxc6 15 Re1** [I never considered either of the engine's top choices, 15 e5 or 15 Bb6] **15...Nxe3 16 Rxe3 Bc5 17 Re2 e5 18 Rd2 Be6** [I was almost a half hour ahead on the clock and this isn't that easy for Black. Remain tenacious and he'd probably slip somewhere. But circumstances got the better of me. I'm determined not to let that happen again!] **19 Bd3 a5 20 Nd1 b4** [20...a4] **21 a4 Rad8 22 Be2** [I thought about 22 b3 or 2 f4 but for some reason decided I had more chances with a pair of rooks coming off. Not.] **22...Rxd2 23 Kxd2 Rd8+ 24 Kc1 Rd4 25 c3** [Trying to be tricky, but just 25 b3 should have been played instead.] **25... bxc3 26 Nxc3 f6** [Better 26...Rb4 making way for the dark-squared bishop to go to d4 or f2] **27 f3 Bb4 28 Rd1 Bxc3 29 bxc3 Rxa4 30 Kb2?** [I hallucinated that Black had trapped his rook with no escape square. The fact is that I was done and had no more fight left in me at the end of the tournament. I ran out of gas. A devastating mistake to conclude my first tournament back.] **30...Ra2+ 0-1**

So, 3–2, a share of the U1900 prize (along with my training partner Adrian Rhodes). I performed slightly above my rating. All in all a good start, albeit one that showed I still have to nail down some character flaws that are standing in the way of greater results. And of course there is still an ocean of chess knowledge to learn. Those issues are correctible, so I feel quite encouraged. A special thank you to my coach and trainer, James Richardson. To future successes, *Excelsior!*

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In This Issue:

Tournaments
2019 Virginia Closed..... 1

Features
VCF Cup 6
Readers' Games (McKenna, Shibut, Liang) 7
Warriner Reflections 9

Odds & Ends
Upcoming Events 3
VCF Info *inside front cover*

