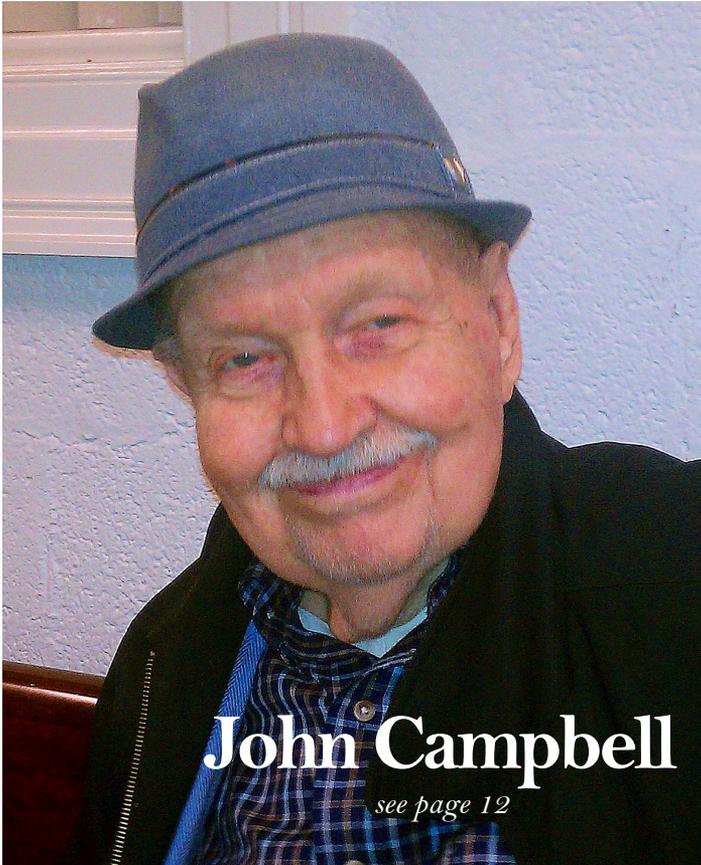


VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

The bimonthly publication of the
Virginia Chess Federation

2018 - #1



John Campbell

see page 12

VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

2018 - Issue #1

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2017 Eastern Open

by Tom Beckman *

THE EASTERN OPEN has long been among the premiere mid-Atlantic chess tournaments. Back in 1956 the 4th edition of the “Eastern States Open” was held in Washington DC and saw fast-rising teenage Bobby Fischer finish as part of a tie for 2nd place. (Hans Berliner won.) The series was interrupted for a while in the 1970s but resumed in the 1980s at its now-traditional calendar slot between Christmas and New Year’s.

The modern Eastern Open took root at the Vista Hotel (at some point renovated and rebranded as a Westin) near Washington’s Thomas Circle. More recently the event moved to Bethesda, Maryland. But for its 44th edition, the Eastern Open relocated to Virginia, at the Westin Tyson’s Corner. The move attracted 205 players to the 6-section, 7-round tournament December 27-30, 2017. Grandmaster Alexander Shabalov dominated the Open section scoring a perfect 7 wins. GM Aleksandr Lenderman finished 2nd with 5½ points. Other section winners were: Ali Mirafzali (U2200), Matthew Orye & Arnav Tamna Gupta (U1900), Carson Collier & Andrew Guo (U1600), Sherlock Grigsby II (U1300), and Ryan Ho (U1000).

In addition to the main tournament, a single-day Scholastic tourney drew 57 players in 3 sections, and the Blitz tourney attracted 38 entrants. A lecture by Alex Lenderman on active and defensive prophylaxis also highlighted the event.

The decisive game in the open group came in round 4 when Shabalov downed Lenderman to open a full-point lead over the field.



GM Alex Shabalov

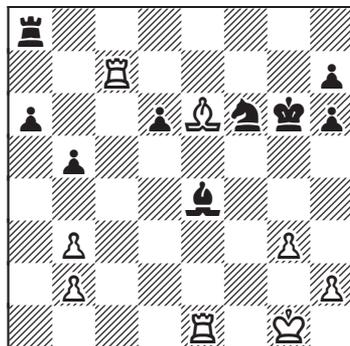
* - Eastern Open organizer Tom Beckman provided an email copy of ‘2017 Eastern Open Tournament Book’. It is the source for most of this report—ed



Alexander Shabalov - Aleksandr Lenderman

Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 a6!? 4 Nbd2 Nf6 5 g3 dxc4 6 Nxc4 b5
 7 Nce5 Bb7 8 Bg2 Qc8 [safeguarding against Nxf7 followed
 by Ne5+] 9 O-O Be7 10 Bf4 O-O 11 Rc1 Ra7 12 Bh3 Bd5 13
 Nd2 Qd8 14 Qc2 Nh5 15 Be3 f5 16 f3 Bd6 [16...c5!?] 17 Bf2
 Qg5? [17...c5] 18 Bg2 Qh6 19 e4
 Bb7 20 exf5 Rxf5 21 Ng4 Qg6 22
 d5 Ra8 23 dxe6 Qxe6 24 Rfe1 Qf7
 25 Bh3 Rxf3 26 Nxf3 Qxf3 27 Qb3+
 Qxb3 28 axb3 Nd7 29 Nh6+ gxh6 30
 Bxd7 Nf6 31 Be6+ Kg7 32 Bc5 Kg6
 33 Bxd6 cxd6 34 Rc7 Be4 (diagram)
 35 Rxe4! Nxe4 36 Bd5 Re8 37 Bf7+
 1-0



The following amazing game won a special prize for Best Fighting Spirit.

Stephen Jablon - Konstantin Molodtsov

French

Notes by Stephen Jablon

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7 7 Qg4 cxd4 8
 Qxg7 Rg8 9 Qxh7 Qc7 10 Kd1 [This move initiates the Euwe Variation.
 He was threatening both 10...Qxc3+ followed by Qxa1 and 10...Qxe5+
 followed by dxc3. The most common way of answering both threats is
 10 Ne2 but 10 Kd1 ensured that my knight could quickly go to g5 via
 f3 and that my light-squared bishop's development wasn't hampered.]
 10...Nbc6 11 Nf3 dxc3 12 Ng5 Qxe5 [This move was suggested by
 Viktor Korchnoi, abandoning the defense of f7 for active piece play.
 Molodtsov had played this tricky move twice before against me, winning
 once and losing once, and I had a feeling he was waiting for a third
 opportunity.] 13 Qxf7+ Kd7 [Black must block in his bishop because
 13...Kd8 is met by 14 Qxg8+ Nxc8 15 Nf7+ followed by 16. Nxe5] 14
 h4 [In our previous encounters I had played 14 f4 and 14 Bf4. I wanted
 to surprise him with something he hadn't seen before. Lev Psakhis
 gave 14 Bf4 as the main move back in 2003 and mentioned 14 h4 as an



interesting possibility without giving any analysis. In 2012 John Watson went so far as to recommend the move as favoring White and gave the sample continuation 14...Qxd4+ 15 Bd3 e5 16 Be3 Qg4+ 17 Kd1, which is exactly what happened in this game.] **14...Qd4+** [Molodtsov was evidently surprised as he thought for a long time before replying. In the only other example of 14 h4 in the databases, Black played 14...Rg7 (Schuermans-Kreschke, Dresden 2013 1-0, 56] **15 Bd3 e5 16 Be3 Qg4+ 17 Kc1** [I paused here, considering whether to play 17 Be2 or continue to follow Watson. 17 Be2 prevents Black from taking the g2-pawn as 18 Bf3 would trap the queen; and after 17...Qf5 18 Qxf5+ Nxf5 I would have the better endgame due to the connected outside passed pawns. With my king in the center, it was certainly tempting to play an endgame. But Molodtsov's king was also in the center, so I chose the trickier option.] **17...d4** [A crossroads. He could have patiently prepared development of his bishop with 17...Kc7 or 17...b6, or he could pursue my precariously placed dark-squared bishop with 17...d4. Grabbing a pawn with 17...Qxg2 wouldn't have been good however, as after 18 Rd1 I would have been threatening 19 Bh7 followed by 20 Rxd5+]

51st Virginia Open

March 23-25, 2018



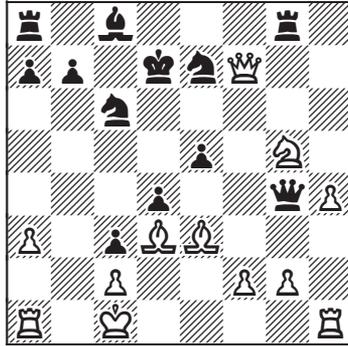
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A Heritage Event - a VCF Cup Event - a US Chess Junior Grand Prix event

30 US Chess grand prix points



18 Ne4

My preparation of 14 h4 consisted of a quick cram session with the fourth edition of John Watson's *Play the French* during the half hour between when the pairings were posted and the clocks were started. As this was the first move where I needed to think for myself, and my dark-squared bishop is hanging without any visible escape squares, I played 18 Ne4 to threaten a fork on f6 and free up g5 for my attacked bishop. But this gave Molodtsov the opportunity to double my pawns had he played 19...Be6 on his nineteenth move.

The alternative 18 Be4 is attractive, but Black has resources:

i) 18...Kd8 to free his light square bishop and threaten ...Rxc5 since Bxc6 no longer comes with check. However, White has the fine intermezzo 19 Rd1! Rxc5 (19...Qxh4? 20 Bxc6 Rxc5 21 Qf6) 20 Bxc6 Rg7 (20...Rg8 21 Bf3 is also winning) 21 Qf8+ Kc7 22 Bf3 Qg6 23 Bf4!! exf4 24 Rxd4 Qh6 25 Qd8+ Kb8 26 Rd7 Qb6 27 Rxb7+ winning.

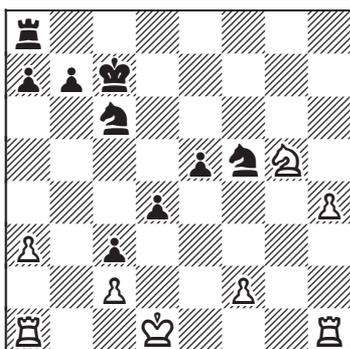
ii) 18...dxe3 correct! 19 Bxc6+ Kxc6 20 Qxe7 b6 and now either 21 Nf7 Qe6 22 Nxe5+ Kd5 23 Qc7 Qxe5 24 Rd1+ Ke6 25 Qc4+ Ke7 26 Qxg8 exf2 27 g3 Rb8 28 Qh7+ Ke8 29 Qg6+ Ke7 30 Qh7+ and I would have been forced to give perpetual check; or 21 fxe3 Qxg2 22 Rd1 Bg4 23 Rd6+ Kb5 24 Qxe5+ Ka6 25 Qxc3 Rac8 26 Qd3+ Kb7 27 Kb2 with two extra pawns, but Black's pieces are so active that it is hard to see how the extra material matters.

18...Kc7 19 Bg5 Qxg2 [While he does get some compensation for the forthcoming exchange sacrifice, 19...Be6 20 Qf3 Qxf3 21 gxf3 was a more solid alternative.] **20 Re1 Rxc5 21 Nxc5 Qg4?** [Immediate 21...Bf5! with the idea of forking my bishop and rook in case of 22 Bxf5 Qxf2 would have gained a tempo allowing him to mop up my h-pawn.] **22 Rh1** [22



Nf3 and 22 Kb1 were alternatives.]
22...Bf5 23 Bxf5 Qxf5 24 Qxf5
Nxf5 25 Kd1 (diagram)

The immediate 25 h5 was insufficient to win, eg 25...Rg8 26 Nf7 Rg2 27 h6 Rxf2 28 h7 d3 29 cxd3 Ncd4 30 h8Q Rc2+ 31 Kb1 Rb2+ 32 Kc1 etc. As I couldn't hold on to the h-pawn, I focused on activating my king.



25...Re8

Molodtsov prepares to mobilize his own pawn mass, but my lone h-pawn is faster. He should have preferred 25...Rg8 because I couldn't have stopped 26...Nxb4. My intention

was then 26 Ke2 and after 26...Nxb4 27 Rxb4 Rxb4 28 Rh7+ Kd6 29 Rxb7 I would still have been playing for a win, but I shouldn't have been able to achieve it.

26 h5 e4?! [Even though he could no longer win the h-pawn, he could have made my task much more difficult by preventing it from reaching h6. Both 26...Nh6 and 26...Rh8 come to mind.] **27 h6 e3 28 Ke2 Ne5 29 h7 Ng6 30 Rag1** [Threatening 31 Ne6+ Rxe6 32 Rxe6. The preparatory 30 Rh2 was possible but unnecessary.] **30...Nf4+** [If 30...d3+ 31 Kxd3 exf2 32 Rf1 Ng3 33 h8Q Rxh8 34 Rxh8 Nxf1 35 Rh7+ White can rapidly collect Black's advanced pawns and win the game.] **31 Kf3 exf2 32 Kxf2 d3 33 h8=Q Rxh8 34 Rxh8 dxc2 35 Rhh1 Nd3+ 36 Kf3 Nb2 37 Ke4 Nd1** [The most testing response, 37...Ng3+, wouldn't have saved him due to 38 Rxe3 Nd1 39 Rxc3+ Nxc3+ 40 Kd3] **38 Rxd1 Ng3+ 39 Kd3 cxd1Q+ 40 Rxd1 1-0**

The following game won a special Brilliancy prize.

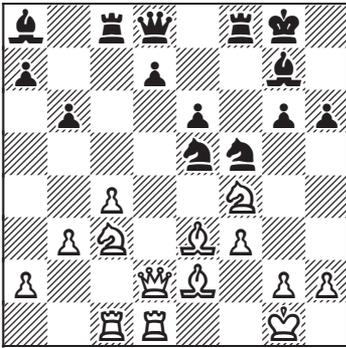
Dominique Myers - Nathan Resika Sicilian

Notes by Nathan Resika

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 g6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Bg7 5 c4 Nc6 6 Nc2 Nf6 7 Nc3 O-O 8 Be2 b6!? 9 O-O Bb7 10 Be3 Rcs 11 f3 Ne8!? **12 Qd2 Nd6 13 Rfd1 f5 14 exf5 Rxf5 15 Rac1 Ne5 16 b3 Ba8 17 Nb4?! [White has four knight moves, but he finds the worst one. Black's knight on d6 is holding his position together, so White should exchange it. 17 Nd4! Rf6 18 Ndb5 Nxb5 19 Nxb5 a6 20 Nc3 Rd6 21 Qe1 Rxd1 22 Rxd1 d6 ± —Tom Beckman] 17...Rf8 18 Nbd5?! [After**

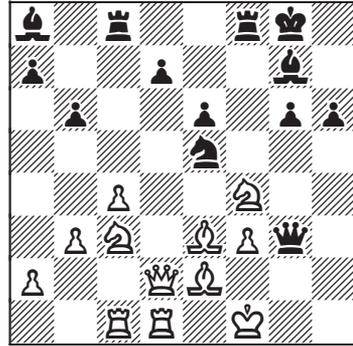


being in a worse position for a while, I was being very vigilant should my opponent go wrong in this full-bodied position with so many pieces on the board. My opponent had just relieved the pressure on my backward center by playing the “normal” centralizing N-b4-d5, which allowed my pieces to start their migration toward the White’s king.] **18...Nf5 19 Bg5 h6 20 Be3?!** [20 Bf2 allows 20...Bh6 21 f4 e6! Myers suggested 20 Bf4. Eg 20...e6 21 Ne3 Nh4 22 Bg3 Rxf3! 23 Bxh4 Qxh4 24 gxf3 Bxf3 25 Rf1 Qg5+ 26 Kf2 Qh4+ 27 Kg1 with perpetual check —Beckman] **20...e6!** [better than snatching the bishop right away] **21 Nf4?** [The final mistake. Going back to b4 was a must. Now Black has his opponent where he wants him.]



21...Qg5! [Winning material, unless something better shows up...] **22 g3?** [Understandably cracking under the pressure of six

Black pieces focusing like lasers on f3 and g2. Either 22 Bf2 or 22 Nxe6 would have been a better way to bail out.] **22...Nxe3!** [better than just taking f3] **23 hxg3 Qxg3+ 24 Kf1**



24...Ng4!!

It was the 4th day of Christmas and I was thinking it was better to give than to receive. With about 3 minutes left for 17 moves, I played this move mostly on instinct. It took Stockfish about half a minute, but it turns out to be the strongest of the several winning lines, ‘can-opening’ both the f-file and the long diagonal as well as threatening 24...Nh2mate]

25 Ng2 [if 25 fxg4 Rxf4+! 26 Bxf4 Rf8! 27 Nd5 exd5 does the job] **25...Nh2+ 26 Kg1 Bxf3 27 Bf1 Bxd1 0-1** White resigned as his time ran out with huge material losses imminent.



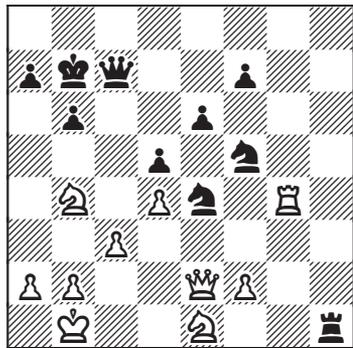


Andy Huang - Alex Lenderman Caro Kann

Notes by Aleksandr Lenderman

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 Bd3 Nc6 5 c3 Qc7 6 h3 g6!? [This might not seem like a big deal, but in my opinion it's actually quite important to play ... g6 here on move 6 rather than 6...Nf6 7 Nf3 g6 because of 8 Qc2! stopping ... Bf5. I found this idea when I analyzed this line for a 2000 level friend. After 8...Bg7 9 O-O O-O 10 Re1 White is slightly better and it's hard for Black to find an active plan.] **7 Nf3** [Now if 7 Qc2 because I didn't commit my knight on g8 yet, I have a very nice idea 7...f6! and suddenly I get in ...e5 with a very good position.] **7...Bf5** [With ...Bf5 in safely, Black probably gets a decent position.] **8 Bxf5 gxf5 9 Bg5 e6 10 Nbd2 h6 11 Bh4 Be7 12 Bxe7 Ngxe7 13 Nh4** [trying to stop ...Ng6] **13...O-O-O 14 Qe2 Ng8 15 Qe3** [I looked at 15 g4?! but it's probably not so good. 15...Nf6! 16 gxf5 e5!] **15...f4 16 Qd3 Nf6 17 O-O-O Rhg8 18 Rhg1 Rg7 19 Kb1 Rdg8 20 Qf3 Nb8?!** [Probably just too deep. I'm trying to play ...Nbd7 to protect Nf6 and so discourage g3, but perhaps I'm allowing too much play if White starts preparing c3-c4. Therefore 20...Nh7 was preferable, eg 21 Qh5 Ng5 22 Rgf1 Qd8 23 Nhf3] **21 g4?** [Overlooking the reply 21...h5, and it seemed to affect my young opponent from this point on. He was

also getting somewhat low on time. After the simple 21 Rc1 I would have nothing better but to go back with 21...Nc6] **21...h5 22 Qe2** [22 Rg2] **22...hxg4 23 hxg4 Nxc4** [23...Rxc4 24 Rxc4 Rxc4 25 Nhf3] **24 Nhf3 Nc6 25 Nb3 Nf6 26 Rxc7 Rxc7 27 Nc5 b6 28 Nd3** [I thought there isn't quite sufficient enough compensation for him after 28 Nxe6 fxe6 29 Qxe6+ Nd7 30 Qxd5 Nd8 ♯ but I wanted him to spend run out some more of his clock on it.] **28...Kb7 29 Rh1 Ne4 30 Rh4** [30 Nd2! ♯ =] **30...Ne7 31 Rxf4 Nf5 ♯** [His pieces are still a bit clumsy, and such a position is a nightmare to play with huge time pressure.] **32 Nfe1** [32 Qe1 seems to be the best move according to the computer] **32...Rg1 33 Rg4 Rh1** [important to keep the rooks on] **34 Nb4?** [He fell for my trap. It's very easy to miss backwards defensive knight moves when we look for attacks.]





34...Nf6! [And amazingly, I'm just winning now since white has no attack whatsoever and his knight on e1 is in big trouble.] **35 Rg2 Qc4 36 Qe5 Nd7 0-1** I was overall quite

happy with this game. This was a very important win since it clinched me a prize, and almost certainly clear 2nd place, barring a loss with White in the last round.

Neo Zhu - Tom Beckman Sicilian

Notes by Tom Beckman

1 e4 c5 2 c3 Nf6 3 e5 Nd5 4 d4 cxd4 5 Nf3 Nc6 6 cxd4 [6 Bc4 Nb6 7 Bb3 is more testing.] **6...d6 7 Bc4 Nb6 8 Bb5 Bd7** [I thought 8...dxe5 was correct but didn't play it. It turns out that both moves are fine, but I now prefer 8...Bd7] **9 Nc3 dxe5 10 dxe5** [10 d5 is risky after 10...Nb4!] **10...Qc7?!** [I was going to play the natural and best 10...g6! but I saw this funny move and got

sucked in.] **11 O-O!** [Of course it is too dangerous to take the pawn, but I had planned my next move anyway.] **11...Rd8** [Not 11...Nxe5? **12 Bf4**. My original intention was 11...O-O-O?! but 12 Be3 is strong.] **12 Qe2 a6?!** [I crossed up my moves, and Black can ill afford the luxury of wasting time. The prophylactic **12...e6!** was best, and then **13 a3 Be7**] **13 Bxc6 Bxc6 14 e6!** [Somehow



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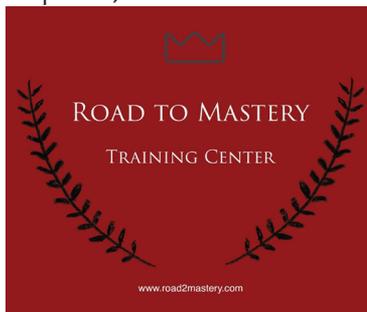
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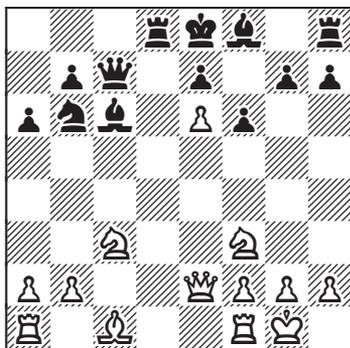
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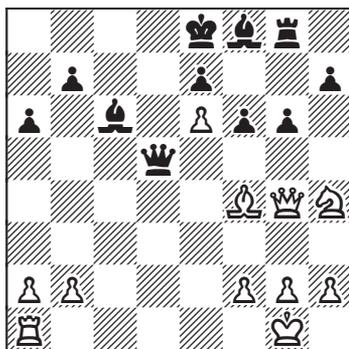
I forgot this obvious and winning
retort!] **14...f6**



*Black's king has no escape squares.
How should White take advantage?*

15 Nh4? [This is actually what I feared, but I should have been more worried about White simply building with 15 Be3 Nd5 16 Rac1 g6 17 Nxd5] **15...g6! 16 Qg4 Nd5 17 Nxd5?!** [Either 17 Ne4 a5 18 Re1; or 17 Re1 Nxc3 would have been somewhat better.] **17...Rxd5?** [I'm embarrassed that I didn't see any danger and I was trying for too much. In retrospect, I should have played 17...Bxd5 18 Re1 Qc4!] **18 Bf4 Qa5 19 Rfd1 Rg8?** [A waste of time—20 Nxg6 was no threat since 20...Rg8 saves the day. I rejected 9...f5! 20 Qg3 Rg8 21 Nf3 Bg7 because I didn't want to weaken the dark squares—a typical example of general considerations clouding concrete analysis!] **20 Rxd5 Qxd5** 20...Bxd5 was no better, but I saw that 21 Rc1 Bc6 22 Qd1 was winning. I did not foresee what happened next! In fact, the next four half-moves contain

some of the most amazing twists I have ever encountered. Good luck finding them!]



21 Rd1?!

Amazingly, this obvious develop-with-tempo move loses in some variations. But White is to be excused for missing that 21 Bc7! should come first: 21...f5 22 Qe2 Qc5 23 Rd1 Bd5 24 Qe5 and wins.

After the text, it looked at first like I was totally busted. Then I thought that I had found a defense!...

21...Qxa2!? 22 Bc7?

Truly the losing move! Both of us missed 22 Nf5!! Bd5 23 Nd4 h5 24 Qe2 Bc4 25 Rc1 b5 26 Bd2 blocking the second rank to threaten 27 b3! Because of this I realize now I should have played 21...Qa5! to prevent the knight's beautiful incursion.

However, White expected me to resign after the text. Why? And why did 22 Nf5!! work but not 22 Bc7?



22...Bd5! [turns the tables] **23 Qf3** [White tries to confuse me. 23 Nf3 is slightly better.] **23...Bxe6** **24 Qxb7 Kf7!** **25 Re1 Bh6?!** [25... Bd5 first was somewhat better.] **26 Nf3 Bd5** **27 Qb4 Re8** [Black finally unwinds his development.] **28 Nd4?!** [In time trouble, White makes the win easy. 28 Qh4 Kg7 is a little harder, but the outcome is not in doubt.] **28...e5** **29 Nf3 Bf8?!** [...e4-

e3 was more accurate, but I wanted simple.] **30 Qh4?** [White's last vague chance lay in 30 Bd6] **30...Kg7** **31 h3 Qxb2** **32 Rd1 Qb3** **33 Rc1 Ba3** **34 Re1 Bxf3** [or 34...Bc5] **35 gxf3 Qc3** **36 Re3 Qxc7** **37 Qa4 Qc1+** [37...Rd8 first is even better] **38 Kg2 Rb8** [38... Bc5 is simpler] **39 Rxa3?** [White must play 39 Qxa3 Rb1 40 Qxc1 Rxc1] **39... Rb1** **40 Qd7+ Kh6** **41 f4 exf4** **42 Kf3 Qxa3+** **43 Kxf4 Rb4+** **0-1**



Jimmy Allen came across this old newspaper clipping that might interest some readers.

Richmond News Leader,
May 31, 1946

They Take Their Chess Seriously — For the first time in the history of the Richmond Chess Club junior players are included in the annual championship tournament which opened here yesterday in Battery Park clubhouse. The four absorbed players above are, left to right, Andrew Briggs and Robin White, Harold White and June Feys. The tournament will continue through tomorrow.



Mid-Atlantic Girls Championship

Christina Schweiss, Hampton Roads Chess Association President and Director of Hampton Roads Scholastic Chess Club, as well as VCF Women's Chess Coordinator, send the following report.

On October 14, 2017, I traveled to Washington, DC for the 1st Mid-Atlantic All-Girls Chess Tournament organized by Robin Ramson of the non-profit Chess Girls DC. The tournament was directed by Anand Dommalapati of the affiliate Capital Area Chess. While I initially planned to attend the event as an observer, I ended up serving as Anand's Chief Assistant, as I'm a certified Tournament Director.

On Friday night, WGM Sabina Foisor, 2017 US Women's Champion, conducted a simultaneous exhibition with the girls. Foisor remained on site all day Saturday, analyzing games with girls, signing autographs, answering questions and providing guidance.

The main event on Saturday consisted of a tournament with three rated sections—Under 14, Under 10, and Under 8—as well as a small non-rated section. In the rated sections, six states (MD, VA, PA, DE, NY, and NJ) and the District of Columbia were represented, including 14 girls from Virginia. Notable performances by Virginia girls included: Allison Tay & Ritvika Palani tied for 2nd in U14 with 3 out of 4 points; Chance Nguyen took 1st place in U10 with a perfect score of 4 points; and Kelsey Routman took 2nd in U8 with 3 out of 4 points. Aadasini Murugan Ayyappan also finished with a plus score (2½) in U14.

VIRGINIANS AT THE 2017 US OPEN

Jack Barrow - John Fedorowicz
2017 US Open, Norfolk
Sicilian

Notes by Jack Barrow

Long tournaments like the US Open offer schedule options where you can join the tournament a few days in and make up the early rounds in a short time using an accelerated time control. For this game the time control was Game/60 minutes (with 5 second delay), so we didn't exactly have too much time to think. **1 e4 c5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 g3 g6 4 Bg2 Bg7 5 d3 d6 6 f4 e6 7 Nf3 Nge7 8 O-O O-O** [typical book moves] **9 Ne2 b6 10 c3 Qd7 11 Qc2 Ba6 12 Be3 Rac8 13 Rfe1** [removing the rook

from the a6-f1 diagonal that Black's light-squared bishop controls so the knight on e2 is free to move whenever the d-pawn advances] **13...Bb7 14 Rad1 e5 15 Nc1 Nd4 16 Qf2** [Capturing the knight would just result in opening the c-file, which can give Black some play on the queenside.] **16...Nxf3+ 17 Bxf3 d5 18 fxe5**

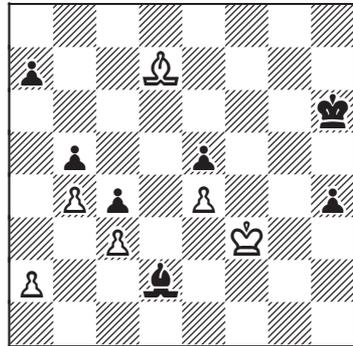




dxe4 19 dxe4 Qc7 20 Qc2 [Since I anticipate Black trying to open up the f-file, I removed my queen, providing support to the e4-pawn at the same time.] **20...Nc6 21 e6** [The pawn is a goner, so I might as well give him up in a way that isolates one of Black's pawns.] **21...fxe6 22 Bg4 Qe7 23 Rf1** [Offering the exchange of material in an attempt to increase the likelihood of reaching a drawn endgame.] **23...Ne5 24 Be2 Kh8 25 Rxf8+ Rxf8 26 Rf1 Rxf1+ 27 Bxf1** [If 27 Kxf1 then 27...Qf7+ 28 Kg1 (28 Kg2 Qf5 wins the e4 pawn) 28...Nf3+ 29 Kh1 Ne1 30 Qd1 Qf5 results in winning the e4 pawn or mating—31 Qxe1 Qxe4+ 32 Kg1 Qg2mate] **27...Ng4 28 Bf2 Nxf2 29 Kxf2 Qf6+ 30 Ke1 Qg5 31 Bg2** [providing support for e4] **31...Qe3+ 32 Ne2 Ba6 33 Qd2** [forcing the exchange of queens] **33...Qxd2+ 34 Kxd2 Bh6+ 35 Ke1 e5 36 b3** [Attempting to blockade Black's queenside pawns from progressing by playing c3-c4 next; but considering that my opponent was a grandmaster, he probably saw through this and played...] **36...c4 37 b4 Be3 38 h3 Kg7 39 g4 Kf6 40 h4** [preventing the Black king from advancing any further on the kingside for the time-being] **40...h6 41 Ng3 Bf4 42 Nf1 Bb5 43 Ke2 h5 44 gxh5 gxh5 45 Bf3 Kg6 46 Kf2 Bd7 47 Ne3 Be6 48 Ke2 Bg3 49 Ng2 b5 50 Ke3 Bh3** [trying to undermine the h4-pawn through removal of the knight] **51 Ke2 Kf6 52 Ne3 Kg6 53 Ng2 Kh6 54 Kd2 Bxg2 55 Bxg2 Bxh4** [Although Black is up a pawn, I don't think it is going to do him much good considering the opposite-colored bishops.] **56 Bh3** [preparing for the removal of Black's queenside pawns that are on the same color squares as my bishop] **56...Bg5+ 57 Ke2 h4 58 Kf3 Bd2 59 Bd7**

59...Bxc3

After the game, I thought Black could have gained tempo and possibly won by 59...a6. After looking at it further, I realized that this also results in a draw since White can play 60 Bc8 Bxc3 61 Bxa6 Bxb4 62 Bxb5 c3 63 Bd3 Kg5 64 a4 h3 65 Kg3 h2 66 Kxh2 Kf4 67 Kh3 Ke3 68 Bb1 Kd2 69 Kg4 c2 70 Bxc2 Kxc2 71 Kf5 where the only two moves that prevent the automatic draw are 71...Bc3 72 a5 Kd3 73 a6 Bd4 74 a7 Bxa7 which forces the draw, or 71...Bd6 72 a5 Kd3 73 a6 Bb8 74 a7 also forcing the draw.



60 Bxb5 Bxb4 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ He offered a draw since 61 Bxc4 will pretty much seal it after 62 Bd5

John Campbell 1927-2018

Just as we go to press we have learned of the passing of John Campbell. He was a long-time President of the Arlington Chess Club, several times state Senior Champion, and made many other notable contributions to chess in Virginia. A more comprehensive memorial to John will appear in the next issue of VIRGINIA CHESS.



Marvin Sparrow - David Hulvey
2017 US Open, Norfolk
Sicilian

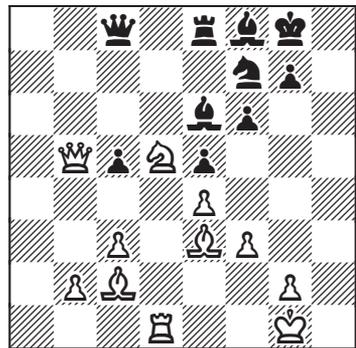
1 e4 c5 2 d4 cxd4 3 c3 dxc3 4 Nxc3 Nc6 5 Nf3 e6 6 Bf4 a6 7 Bc4 b5 8 Be2 Bb7 9 O-O Nge7 10 Bd6 Ng6 11 Bxf8 Nxf8 12 Nd4 Ng6 13 f4? Qb6 The pin leads in short order to discovered check and then discovered mate. 14 f5 Nxd4 15 fxg6 Nxe2+ 16 Kh1 Ng3+ 17 hxg3 hxg6+ 0-1

Macon Shibut – Drew Hollinberger
2017 US Open, Norfolk
Ruy Lopez

Notes by Macon Shibut

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 Qe2 b5 6 Bb3 Be7 7 d4 d6 8 c3 h6?! [There are more constructive things Black could do with his turn.] 9 a4 [In the Ruy Lopez, my general rule for if and when to play a4 is to not play it unless it accomplishes something concrete. Here I violated my rule as I was seduced by the trivial yet plausible trap 9...Rb8? 10 axb5 axb5 11 d5] 9...Bd7 10 O-O O-O 11 Rd1 Qe8 [Threatening ...bxa4 followed by ...Nxd4 and so beginning my punishment for the 'violation' on my 9] 12 axb5 axb5 13 Rxa8 Qxa8 14 Nbd2 Qb8 15 Nf1 [The natural continuation, but I played it with misgivings, fearing the reply 15...b4 would complete the retribution. The point is that then 16 Bc2 meets the unpleasant 16...bxc3 17 bxc3 exd4 18 cxd4 Nb4 19 Bb1 Bb5. I would have tried 16 Bc4 instead, but without great conviction.] 15...Na5 [After this White can once again "milk the cow", inflict "the Spanish torture", or whatever cliché you prefer.] 16 Bc2 c5 17 dxe5 dxe5 18 Ne3 Re8 19 h3 [My plan was to exchange off his Nf6, defender of point d5. If right away 19 Nd5 Nxd5 20 Rxd5 (20 exd5 Bd6 a nice blockade) 20...Bc6 21 Rxe5 f6, or 20...Be6 21 Rxe5 Nc4

22 Rh5, White's rook is uncomfortable; 20...Bd6 would be possible too.] 19... Nb7 20 Nh2 Nd6 21 Nhg4 Nxg4 [21... Ndx4? Loses a piece after 22 Bxe4] 22 hxg4 22...f6 [Reinforcing a pawn that is not under attack. 22...Bg5 was better.] 23 Nd5 Bf8? [An oversight, although White is still better after 23...Be6 24 Be3 c4 25 Ra1] 24 Bxh6 Be6 25 Bc1 Nf7 26 Be3 Qc8? 27 Qxb5 Bxg4 28 f3 Be6 [The bishop has no good retreat. If 28...Bd7 29 Qxd7 Qxd7 30 Nxf6+ Of course 28...Bxf3 29 gxf3 Qh3 is hopeless—White can even play 30 Qxe8]



29 Nc7! [Everything falls into place.] 29...Nd6 [29...Qxc7 30 Qxe8] 30 Rxd6! Bxd6 [30...Qxc7 31 Rxe6 Rxe6 32 Bb3 Qc8 33 Bxe6+ Qxe6 34 Bxc5] 31 Qxe8+ 1-0



Reflections

REFLECTIONS



Looking Back on an Amateur Chess “Career”

by Mark Warriner

PRACTICE – PART II

Before continuing with the analysis of the games of the training match between myself and Joe Faries, it probably would be helpful to give just a bit more context. Over the past eight years, we’d played a total of 10 off-hand, unrated games for, well, practice. As I noted last issue, Joe can be a difficult opponent in that he’s capable of playing solid chess in positions that suit his skills. Here are a couple of those games with light notes that show how he thwarted my efforts.

Joe Faries - Mark Warriner

1st Betty Faries Invitational 2010 Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 [At the time, I played this line exclusively when selecting the Sicilian.] 3 c3 [This gave me heartburn because I like being on the White side of this, not Black. I made a decision to steer well away from any of those lines.] 3...d5 4 exd5 [Joe would change to 4 e5 for our future battles.] 4...exd5 5 d4 Nf6 6 Be2 [6 Bb5+; 6 Bg5 also okay.] 6...Be7 7 O-O O-O 8 Nbd2 [or 8 dxc5] 8...Bg4 [8...Nc6 is better] 9 dxc5 Bxc5 10 Nb3 Be7 11 Nbd4 Nc6 12 Be3 [12 Re1] 12...Re8 13 Qc2 [13 Re1; 13 h3] 13...Rc8 14 Bd3 [No point in giving up the bishop pair.] 14...Nb4 15 Qd1 Nxd3 16 Qxd3 [Here I floundered, not being able to find a cohesive plan.] 16...a6 17 Rfe1 Bh5 18 h3 Bg6 [Maybe 18...

Ne4 is slightly better.] 19 Qd1 [19 Nf5 Ne4 20 Nxe7+ Rxe7 21 Qd4 f6 22 Rad1 Bf7 would be more active.] 19...h6 [19...Nd7] 20 Qb3 Qc7 21 Rac1 [21 Rad1] 21...b5 22 a3 Be4 23 Qd1 [23 Nd2] 23...Bd6 [23...Nd7; 23...Qb7 Being down on time and not knowing what to do, I decided to bail and offer a draw. I thought I was a little better and evidently Joe agreed as he accepted, but it’s actually just equal. White’s comfortable with d4 as an outpost and Black’s saddled with the isolani on d5] ½-½

Joe Faries – Mark Warriner 2012 Casual Game French

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 c3 d5 4 e5 [Fast forward a couple of years and Joe springs an improvement. His blow landed effectively.] 4...Nc6 [Oops. Okay, this is certainly playable.



However, it goes headlong into a line of the French. To give away my plans for the next series of articles, I made a big decision to give up the French altogether after this experience combined with a lifetime of frustration. I've had a lot of great games and a lot of awful games with the French. The awful ones just piled up too high. It hurts to even think about this game.] **5 d4** [*Thud*. And now you know why I played 4...d4 in subsequent games. I couldn't believe I'd allowed this and was disgusted with myself. Negative thoughts don't help at all during a game and I supposed it caused me to shut down a bit or beat myself up mentally, which led to some pretty bad moves.] **5...Qb6** [Into a forest about which I knew nothing. Brilliant.] **6 Bd3** [6 a3; 6 Be2] **6...cxd4** [6...Bd7] **7 cxd4 Bd7 8 Bc2** [8 O-O] **8...Rc8?** [8...Nb4 was obvious and gives Black a more comfortable game.] **9 O-O Nge7** [9...Nb4] **10 Nc3 Ng6 11 h4** [11 a3] **11...Bb4?** [Rattled nerves. Get ready, the bad moves start raining down. 11...Be7; 11...Nb4] **12 h5 Nge7** [12...Nf8] **13 a3?** [Lets Black off the hook; instead 13 h6 brings the pain.] **13...Bxc3 14 bxc3 Na5?** [14...h6 was mandatory. The text just gives the game back.] **15 Rb1 Qc7 16 Ba4?** [He should play 16 h6 but again he let me off the hook, even allowing a slight advantage (again.) Except...] **16...Bc6?** [I was just determined to be

an idiot. 16...h6] **17 h6** [Finally] **17...g6?** [Just cements White's positional advantage, though alternatives aren't much better. 17...Bxa4 18 Qxa4+ Nac6; or 17...gxh6 18 Bc2 Nc4] **18 Bg5 Qd7?** [18...Bxa4 19 Qxa4+ Nec6 is ugly and still losing, but better than the game. I knew the queen move was bad, but was trying to figure out some way to confuse things. Well I did, but I mostly confused myself.] **19 Bc2** [Joe has the disturbing knack of finding best moves at the worst times for his opponents! I'll let most of the rest of the game pass without much further comment as Joe's technique was up to the task and the quality of my play was pitiful. We play several more less than best moves, but my position is so lost it simply can't be held.] **19...O-O 20 Re1 Nc4 21 Ra1 Nb6 22 a4 Na8 23 Nh2 Qc7 24 Bf6 b5 25 Bg7 Nf5 26 Bxf8 Kxf8 27 Ng4 Kg8 28 Qd2 Qe7 29 Nf6+ Kh8 30 Bxf5 exf5 31 axb5 Bxb5 32 Ra5?** [32 Nxd5] **32...a6 33 Raa1** [33 Nxd5] **33...Nc7 34 Qe3** [34 Qa2] **34...Rd8 35 Rab1 Ne6 36 g3 Nc7 37 Kg2 Ne6 38 f4 Nc7 39 Kf2 Ne6 40 Rh1 Qa3 41 Kf3 Rc8 42 Rbc1 Rd8 43 Rhg1 Qa2 44 Rg2 Qa3 45 Rf2 Rc8 46 Kg2 Nxd4?** [*Zeitnot*. In desperation, I hallucinated a tactic that didn't exist. 46...Rb8; 46...Nc7] **47 Qxd4 Qxc1 48 Nxd5 Kg8 49 e6 Kf8 50 Qg7+ 1-0** A painful lesson and just awful "thinking" on my part. Put the pieces back in the box.



So, you have to respect Joe's game. If you don't, you'll pay the price. Joe's style is like Rocky Balboa's: he'll play rope-a-dope and let you wear yourself out until you stray and then it's clobbering time. It's an effective and slippery strategy unless you take the time to prepare. It was with these prior experiences in mind that I changed my repertoire as Black. With Black my score versus Joe prior to our training match had been +2 -1 =2 and I felt there was clear room for improvement. I'd scored +3 -0 =2 as White and didn't feel the need to vary so much there, especially given the limited time my schedule permitted for preparation.

Mark Warriner – Joe Faries
2017 Training Match G5
French

1 e4 e6 2 Nf3 d5 3 e5 c5 4 b4 b6 5 c3 Nd7 [Joe's improvement over 5...c4 in game 3] **6 a3 Bb7 7 d4 cxd4?** [There's no need to release the tension. I was a lot more worried about 7...a5] **8 cxd4 Qc7?** [This is a throwback to the problems from game 1. What's he doing on the c-file? That's a no-go. 8...Ne7 or 8...a5] **9 Bd3 Rc8 10 O-O Ne7 11 Ra2** [Okay, but 11 Bd2 is probably better.] **11... Ng6** [11...Nc6] **12 h4** [Also okay, but 12 Rc2 puts Black on the spot.] **12... Be7 13 g3?** [Why on earth I didn't just essay 13 h5 I have absolutely no idea.] **13...a6** [Wrong tiny rook pawn push. 13...h6] **14 Kg2?** [Again I was a weenie and didn't play the effective 14 h5. Still no idea what I was thinking. It is never, let me repeat, *never* a good idea to play without a plan or an idea. You should also be able to articulate that plan. Then and only then will you realize gains in playing strength. My little nugget of wisdom.] **14... b5 15 Rc2 Qb8 16 Bg5?** [Time

pressure (already!) was biting at me and I went wildly astray with my 'plan'. Basically, I panicked and tried to develop my pieces as in game 1. I should have played 16 Rxc8+ Qxc8 17 h5] **16...Rxc2 17 Bxc2 Nb6 18 Qd3** [Again I insist on generosity, eschewing the demanded 18 h5] **18... Nc4 19 Re1** [19 Nbd2; 19 Bxe7] **19... Qc7 20 Qe2** [20 Nbd2] **20...h6 21 Bc1** [Disgusting. Dead equality after achieving a nice advantage.] **21...Bd8 22 Bd3 Ne7 23 Nbd2 Nc6 24 Nb3 a5 25 bxa5** [25 Bd2] **25...N6xa5 26 Qa2?** [Slipping further and further in time-pressure. 26 Na1] **26...O-O** [Offering back just a glimmer of hope. Oh, will White finally find the move? 26...Be7; 26...Nc6] **27 h5** [*Now* I want to play this?! 27 Bb1 made so much more sense. *Sigh...*] **27... Bc6?** [27...Nxb3 kept Black in the game] **28 Bb1** [Not bad, but perhaps 28 Nc5 was better] **28...f5 29 exf6 Rxf6?** [29...Nxb3 had to be played. Now it's just over.] **30 Nxa5 Nxa5**

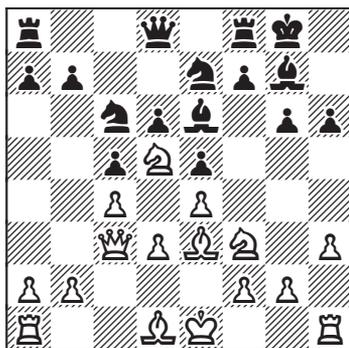


31 Qc2 g5 32 hxg6 Qg7 [32...Be8 still loses but would have offered more resistance.] **33 Rh1** [33 Ne5 is more to the point] **33...Rxf3 34 Kxf3 Bg5?** [34...Qxd4 instead, if one insists on playing this out.] **35 Bxg5 hxg5 36 Qe2** [36 Qd2!] **36...Qf6+ 37 Kg2**

Nc4 38 Qh5 [38 Rh7] **38...e5** [38...Nd2] **39 Qh7+ Kf8 40 g7+** [40 Qc7 leads to forced mate and I considered it but couldn't calculate it.] **40...Qxg7 41 Qf5+ Qf7 42 Rh8+ Ke7 43 Rh7 1-0** I was very fortunate to pick up this game after blowing the advantage.

Joe Faries – Mark Warriner
2017 Training Match G6
Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 d3 g6 5 Bd2 Bg7 [I was happier with how play went in game 2 and so decided to go back to this type setup.] **6 Qc1** [Joe told me he'd play this if I went down the same setup and by golly he did!] **6...h6** [My little TN. No bishop on g5 for you.] **7 h3 Nc6 8 Be3** [A bit of a waste of time; if the Bishop was headed there, it would have been better not to lose the tempo playing Bc1-d2-e3] **8...e5 9 Nd5 Be6?** [Better to just snap off the knight and mangle White's pawn structure. After 9...Nxd5 10 exd5 Ne7 there is the thematic idea of expanding on the kingside with ...f5] **10 c4** [So, realizing that having permitted c4 wasn't so hot, I rationalized that at least White wasted some tempi so I had time to reroute the king knight.] **10...Ng8 11 Be2 Nge7 12 Qc3** [12 Rb1] **12...O-O** [12...Nd4] **13 Bd1**



Oh, not that again, like in game 2! Actually, this time it's not as good. White still needs to get the queen off of the diagonal, 13 Qc1

13...Kh7? [Just 13...f5 now] **14 Ba4** [14 O-O] **14...f5 15 b4?** [Just drops a pawn. 15 Bd2 or 15 Bg5!] **15...Bxd5 16 cxd5 Nxb4 17 a3?** [Invites even more trouble. 17 O-O] **17...Na6?** [Mark, what are you doing?! 17...Nbx5 18 Qd2 (18 exd5 e4 19 Qc4 exf3

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) 18...f4] **18 Rb1** [Now Black must start all over again.] **18...Rb8 19 Rb3?** [19 Qc4] **19...Nxd5** [Won't miss the tactic twice! Ah okay, you know better. I've missed them again and again. Bubble burst.] **20 exd5 e4 21 Qd2** [21 Ng5+ hxg5 22 Qc4] **21...exf3 22 gxf3** [22 g3] **22...Nc7** [22...f4 23 Bxf4 Qh4 24 Bxd6 Qxa4 was stronger, but how many amateurs are going to find that, especially with the clock ticking?] **23 Bb5** [23 d4] **23...Nxd5** [23...f4 okay, now 24 Bxf4 Nxb5 25 Rxb5 Qe8+ should have been obvious. Oops.] **24 Bc4** [24 d4] **24...Nc7** [24...Nxe3 25 fxe3 d5] **25 Rb1 d5** [25...f4 26 Bxf4 Qf6 27 Bg3 Rbe8+ 28 Kf1 b5] **26 Ba2 Ne6 27 Kf1** [27 f4] **27...f4 28 Bxc5 Nxc5 29 Rc1 Ne6 30 h4 Rf5 31 Qb4 Nd4 32 Kg2 Rh5 33 Rc5 Rxh4?** [Wow. It hurts to have played pretty well for that last sequence only to uncork this. No excuse, just clock getting low and no vision. 33...b6] **34 Rxd5 Qf6 35**

Rxh4 Qxh4 36 Rxd4 Qg5+ 37 Kf1 Bxd4 38 Qxd4 Rd8 [Black is still winning, but I've made the job much more difficult.] **39 Qc4 Qf6** [39... Qf5] **40 a4** [40 Qc7+ Kh8 41 Bc4] **40...Qa1+** [40...h5 for some breathing room] **41 Kg2 Qf6 42 a5 b6 43 axb6 axb6 44 Qc7+ Kh8 45 Bc4 Qg5+ 46 Kf1 Qf6 47 Qb7 Rf8** [47...h5] **48 Qd5 h5 49 Qb7 h4** [49...Qa1+ 50 Kg2 Rf5 and the White king is corralled] **50 Bd5? h3** [Works, but also 50... Qa1+ 51 Ke2 Qe5+ 52 Kf1 h3 53 Qd7 Rf5 54 Qc8+ Kg7 55 Be6 Qa1+ 56 Ke2 Re5+ 57 Kd2 Qb2+ 58 Kd1 Qe2+ 59 Kc1 Rxe6] **51 Be4** [51 Qd7 holds off mate longer but it's over anyway] **51...Qa1+ 52 Ke2 0-1** Joe resigned rather than watch the h-pawn queen. As with game 5, grateful for the win but I made it much harder than it should have been and might easily have had to settle for less.

Virginia Scholastic & College Championships

March 3-4, 2018

William Fleming High School

3649 Ferncliff Ave NW, Roanoke, Va

6-SS, Rds 1-3 G/60 d5, rds. 4-6 G/90 d5. Players must be K-12 or College players attending school full time in Virginia as of Jan 2018, or must be Virginia residents, including children of military stationed in Virginia. Tournament schedule, Prizes, Registration, Player Eligibility, Hotel Info and other details at www.vachess.org. Questions: Mike Hoffpauir, mhoffpauir@aol.com or 757-846-4805. **Parents & Friends tournament** on Sat. and Sun. **Blitz Championships** Friday Mar. 2 at 6PM (Virginia residency not req'd for Blitz).



Mark Warriner – Joe Faries

2017 Training Match G7

French

1 e4 e6 2 Nf3 d5 3 e5 c5 4 b4 d4 [I'd shown Joe this improvement after our last game and sure enough, he played it! It does no good to hold back on showing your practice partner how to play against your lines. You have to practice in order to make perfect.] 5 bxc5 Bxc5 6 Bd3 [Looks screwy but is better than the more common 6 Ba3 White's aiming hard at the kingside. Typically, he'll free his queenside minor pieces with c3] 6...Ne7 7 O-O Nbc6 8 a4 [Again a diminutive TN. It's probably not as good as several alternatives but I was trying to get Joe out of book, if indeed he was aware of it. 8 Re1; 8 Qe2] 8...a6 9 Re1 Ng6 [9...h6; 9...b6] 10 Na3 [10 Ba3] 10...Nf4 [10...Na5; 10...Rb8] 11 Be4 O-O [White is very comfortable here and has plenty of time to make clear, easy developing moves.] 12 Bb2 [That wasn't one of them. Why put the dark square bishop on such a wretched diagonal? 12 d3; 12 Nc4] 12...d3 [Not a horrible idea, but 12...f5 13 exf6 gxf6 would've made White squirm] 13 Bc3 [Meh. 13 Rf1 or 13 Re3—yes, even this was better! 13...Bxe3 14 dxe3 dxc2 15 Qxc2 Ng6 16 Nc4 with compensation in the form of space and the active bishop pair] 13...Ne2+ [13...Qb6; 13...f5] 14 Kf1 [14 Rxe2 dxe2 15 Qxe2] 14...Nxc3 15 dxc3 dxc2 16 Qxc2 g6 [So once again I found myself in time pressure. I used a lot of time trying to chase down solutions in the weird position and it wasn't worth the trouble.] 17 h4 [17 Bxc6

bxc6 18 Nc4 felt uncomfortable, leaving a knight pair to fight his bishop pair, but it's probably okay given the pawn structure and very slight space advantage. With the text, I was contemplating a possible draw with h4-h5xg6, Bxg6, Qxg6+] 17... Qc7 18 h5 Ne7 [I thought he might play this. Its drawback is a temporary lack of coordination that delays the dark square bishop being able to get back to f8] 19 Qc1 [straight at the vulnerability] 19... Nd5 20 c4 Nb4 [20...Nb6 may be slightly better but Black's now in a jam] 21 Qh6 f5 22 exf6 Rxf6 23 hxg6 hxg6 [As in Poker, sometimes aggression pays! White is in control and pressing.] 24 Ke2? [What?! No, no, NO Mark! Such timidity, ugh. 24 Rad1 and Black has no easy answers.] 24... Qg7 [24...e5] 25 Qxg7+ [25 Qg5] 25... Kxg7 26 Rad1 [I totally messed up the move order and now must play this just to stay in the game. It was precisely here that I realized my mistake. I was getting real tired of working hard to realize advantages, only to throw them away and having to rebound again and again. This isn't basketball!] 26...Nc6 [26...e5 and if 27 Nxe5? Rxf2mate!] 27 Nc2 Rf4 [27...e5] 28 Kf1 Rb8 [allowing a glimmer of hope; 28...e5] 29 g3 Rf8 30 Kg2 [30 Ne3] 30...e5? [Having failed to play this advantageously for several moves, he finally does it when it critically weakens the Black position. 30...Na5] 31 Rd5 Bb6 [31...Be7; 31...Ba7] 32 Ne3 [32

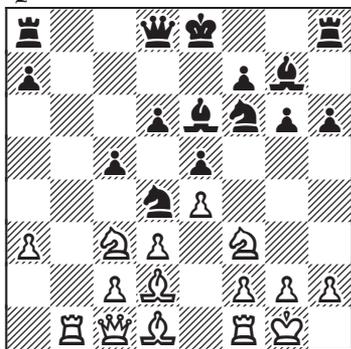


Rb1] **32...Bxe3?** [only renders comfort to White; 32...Be6] **33 Rxe3 Be6** [I had a funny feeling Joe would play this and I'd figured out the next sequence.] **34 Rd6** [34 Rc5 is better] **34...Bf5** [I thought he'd fall for this too. 34...Rf6] **35 Bxc6 bxc6 36 Rxe5 Rb4 37 Rxc6?** [37 Ng5 Rxc4 38 Re7+ Kh6 39 f4 Rc2+ 40 Kf3 Rc3+ 41 Ke2 Rc2+ 42 Kd1 Kh5 (42...Rh8 43 Nf7+) 43 Nh7 Rh8 44 Nf6+ Kh6 45 g4] **37...Rxa4** [37...Rf6 Time pressure was forcing us to move quickly. Now I almost tossed the win again.] **38**

Nd4 [White's still pressing after 38 Re7+ Rf7 39 Rxf7+ Kxf7 40 Ne5+ Ke8 41 Kf3] **38...Bg4?** [There's nothing after 38...Ra2 39 Rc7+ Kh6 40 Nxf5+ Rxf5 41 Rxf5 gxf5] **39 Ne6+** [39 Rg5 Bf5 40 Nxf5+ Rxf5 41 Rgxf6+] **39...Bxe6 40 Rxe6 Ra2 41 Rxf6+ Kh7** [trying to save the a-pawn and keep the f2 threat, but neither is hard to spot or address] **42 Rh6+ Kg7 43 Rcg6+ Kf7 44 Rxa6 Rxa6 45 Rxa6 Rcs 46 Ra4 Rc5 47 f4 Kf6 48 Rb4 Kf5** [It's lost, but this shortens the game quite a bit.] **49 Rb5 1-0**

Joe Faries - Mark Warriner 2017 Training Match G8 Sicilian

For this final match game, I really wanted to close out strong. But when play actually started, I found myself out of competitive juices and just ready for the match to end. I tried hard to summon the will to push, but it just wasn't there. **1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 d3 Nc6 5 Be2 g6 6 Bd2 Bg7 7 Qc1 h6 8 O-O e5 9 Rb1 Be6 10 a3 b6** [10...Nd4] **11 b4 Nd4 12 bxc5 bxc5 13 Bd1**



There's that move again—and our metal friends don't disagree!

13...Rb8 14 Nxd4 [So far everything had been reasonable. This probably is

not best, though not terrible. 14 h3; 14 Rxb8] **14...cxd4 15 Ne2 O-O** [15...Rxb1 16 Qxb1 O-O] **16 Rxb8 Qxb8 17 Bxh6** [I'd like to tell you that I was cool, calm and collected and had this all worked out. The reality is I was asleep at the switch, completely missed it, and was lucky a resource existed.] **17...d5 18 Bxg7** [18 exd5 Nxd5 19 h4] **18...Kxg7 19 Ng3 dxe4 20 Nxe4? Nd5?** [Black can at least make White uncomfortable by 20...Nxe4 21 dxe4 Rc8] **21 Bf3 Rh8 22 Qb1 Qc7 23 Qb2** [23 Qd1; 23 Qc1] **23...Nc3** [Played quickly, hoping for *el cheapo*, but Joe was having none of that.] **24 Qb4?** [But this is taking serious chances.] **24...Nxe4** [24...Rb8 25 Qc5 Rc8 26 Qxc7 Rxc7 though down a pawn Black has space and activity] **25 Bxe4 Rb8?** [Fizzles out. 25...f5 is thematic and who knows?] **26 Qd2 Rc8 27 h3** [27 Qg5] **27...Qxc2** [27...f5—but I just wanted to bail



out] **28 Qa5 Qc7?** [Blissfully ignorant of the fact that I could actually press for a win after 28...Qc5] **29 Qa6 Rb8** [finally waking to the fact that something's up] **30 g4** [For once time pressure was not the issue. However, this being the final match game was. I couldn't get my brain to calculate—an unfortunate consequence of too much online bullet and blitz for the past

decade-and-a-half. Time to rewire the ol' brain!] **30...Rb6** [30...Bd7] **31 Qa5 Rc6** **32 Qa4 Rb6** **33 Qa5 Rc6** **34 Qa4 Rb6** **35 Qa5?** $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ It hurts to see how many chances I passed up instead of being ever alert for small advantages and chances to press. Magnus Carlsen I am not. Well, he's a little younger; I'll salve my ego with that poor excuse.

AT THE END OF THE MATCH, one sits back and draws conclusions. It was interesting that I felt much more comfortable playing OTB now than 25 years ago. I used to get quite nervous, but there was none of that. Of course, it could have been the setting—Joe's house—or it could have been that I'm older now, or the fact that this was not a “real” (ie, rated) match. Or it could be that over a hundred thousand online games later I've finally developed just a smidgeon of sangfroid. You win some, you lose some, you draw some, and you set up the pieces and play again. I found myself plagued by time pressure, which inevitably leads to bad decisions. That's correctable, so no disaster and a good learning lesson there. I found my evaluations were consistently pretty accurate, but I was just as consistently unable to come up with a sound plan to implement. That's also correctable with applied study and practice exercises, which are available in many books these days. A couple of decent ones that come to mind are *How to Reassess Your Chess* 4th ed by Jeremy Silman (ISBN 978-1-890085-13-1, Siles Press, 2010), and *How to Choose a Chess Move* by Andrew Soltis (ISBN 0-7134-8979-0, Batsford, 2005). One can improve at any age, but time isn't kind to the competitive chess player. You can keep up your skills; many great players were very strong into their 80's (Kortchnoi & Reshevsky come to mind), but you must work harder and harder as you get older to keep the mind sharp.

As for the result of the match, had it been rated our ratings would have stayed almost exactly the same. I'm currently rated about 250 pts higher than Joe. Still I was surprised to learn that I would have had to pitch a perfect 8-0 to achieve any gain at all. Good grief!

Well, I hope you enjoyed watching our practice. I doubt I'll dominate on the chessboard any time soon, or ever. But I'll be better prepared for the next time. And that is what practice is all about. That's when you learn your lessons and prepare for rated games so you'll have better results. Remember, *we're talking about practice; not a game, not a game, we're talking about practice.*

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