

VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

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2021 - Issue #1

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Thank You & Godspeed, Andy Rea

Andy Rea joined our Virginia chess ‘family’ 12+ years ago. Almost immediately he immersed himself in almost every aspect of organized chess in our state—organizing and running tournaments, spearheading the VCF Cup series, writing for VIRGINIA CHESS, holding VCF offices, and of course playing, roughly 60 to 80 rated games per year. Andy has served on the VCF Board of Directors from 2010 until this very day. He was VCF President in 2011 and 2012.

Andy recently announced his imminent move to the state of Florida. *“I will very much miss our excellent chess community in Virginia! I will stay on the VCF Board of Directors until my term expires, and will continue to provide electronic assistance regards VCF Cup points calculations and VCF organized online tournaments. ... It has been 12+ great years, and have nothing but best wishes to our Virginia chessplayers!!”*

The Editor returns those best wishes to you, Andy. Virginia’s loss is Florida’s gain!

The following exciting game and characteristic notes by Andy first appeared in the 2015/#3 issue of VIRGINIA CHESS. His opponent would go on to win the state championship just a few months later.

Andy Rea - Jennifer Yu 2015 Cherry Blossom Classic Colle

Notes by Andrew Rea

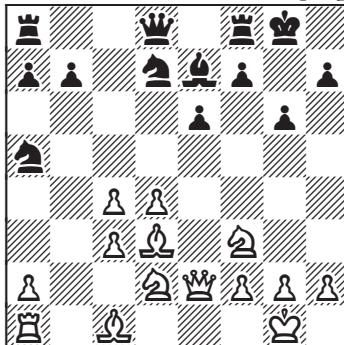
1 d4 d5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 e3 c5 4 c3 Nc6 5 Bd3 Bg4 [Not subtle, steering for ...e5 in one shot!] 6 Nbd2 e6 [Turns out 6...e5 is playable, the queen sac 7 dx5 Nx5 8 Nx5 Bxd1 9 Bb5+ Ke7 10 Kxd1 is interesting but inadequate. The Black will not stay on e7 and Kd1 is not safe. However, White can go with 7 Bb5—Black understandably is not willing to put all the chips this early on this equalish variation. Draws are about as bad as losses in Swisses!] 7 Qa4 c4 8 Bb1 [Ra1



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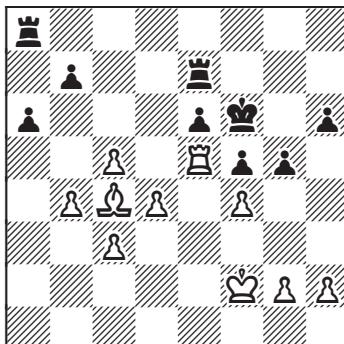


is not happy, but e2-e4 needs immediate support, the prospective Kg8 needs to be hit.] 8...Nd7 9 e4 Nb6 10 Qc2 [A capture on e4 weakens c4 while keeping other White forces active with o-o and d4-d5 not pleasant for Black.] 10...Be7 11 O-O Bh5 [Not allowing 11...O-O 12 exd5 Bf5 13 Qd1 yes (13 Qxf5 merits consideration!) 13...Bxb1 14 dxc6 Bd3 15 cxb7 Rb8 16 Re1 White has a clear extra pawn.] 12 Re1 Bg6 13 b3 O-O 14 bxc4 dxe4 [Black is not up for 14...dxc4 15 a4 Nd5 despite the Nd5 Black attacks nothing while still having kingside problems.] 15 Rxe4 [I like the center, especially as it threatens to expand to g8! Black can improve mildly with ...Rc8 but this seems fairly transpositional.] 15...Bxe4 16 Qxe4 g6 17 Bd3 [a bit naive—17 Bc2 does much of the same without allowing a target on d3] 17...Na5 18 Qe5 Nd7 19 Qe2 (*diagram*)



[Good news: h2-h4-h5 is not so simple, but this can get help from g2-g3, Nd2 is free to move, Black still has problems with counterplay. White does not have a mating attack, but time to organize his forces...] 19...Rc8 20 Nb3 Qc7 21 c5 [hard to ask Black to roll with 21.. b6 22 Nxa5, is Black really scoring on the b-file?] 21...Rfe8 22 Ng5 Nf6 23 Qf3 [not subtle but Bc1-f4-e5 cannot be ignored] 23...Nxb3 24 axb3 a6 [24...b6 25 Ba6 Ra8 26 Bf4 Qd8 27 c6 would be quite winning for White, one example being 27...Qd5 28 Bb7 Rad8 29 Be5] 25 Bf4 Qc6 26 Ne4 Nh5 27 Bd6 f5 28 Bxe7 Rx e7 29 Nd2 Qxf3 30 Nxf3 Nf6 31 Bc4 Kg7 32 Ne5 Rce8 33 f3 Nd7 34 Re1 Nxe5 35 Rxe5 Kf6 [Much has changed, Black has avoided kingside collapse, White missed a good chance (28.g4!) but still the bind on e5 gives White winning chances if the Q-side majority can be mobilized and/ or the king can become active. e6 is fragile; can we see Ka5? Nahh, Black can hit back...] 36 b4 Ra8 37 f4 h6 38 Kf2 g5 (*diagram*)

[The examination continues! 39 g3 looks obvious—e5 stays intact—but Black can then hit the g-file. So White makes a trade; the bind on e5 is diminished but the Black rooks do not get to cruise the kingside...] 39 fxg5+ hxg5 40 h3 a5 [This advance is not free! Black does not wait to get invaded but the White pawns become a veritable wave. Active, risky, not drawish!] 41 b5 a4 42 Ba2 [the rook can reach d1 or b1, no forks, Kf6 is not effective against that blob of White pawns] 42...a3



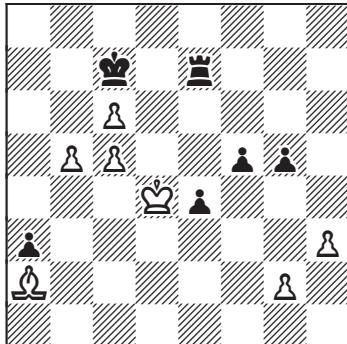


43 Re1 e5 44 d5 e4 45 Rd1 Rc7 46 c6 bxc6

47 dxc6 Ke7 48 Rd4 Rd8 49 Ke3 [Black is not able to stay on the d-file. 49...Rf8 50 Rd5 Rf6 51 c4 is not promising for Black. Wait, what of those passed Black pawns?] 49... Rxd4 50 Kxd4! [50 cxd4 Kd6 Black is hardly in trouble] 50...Kd6 51 c4 Re7 52 c5+ Kc7

(diagram)

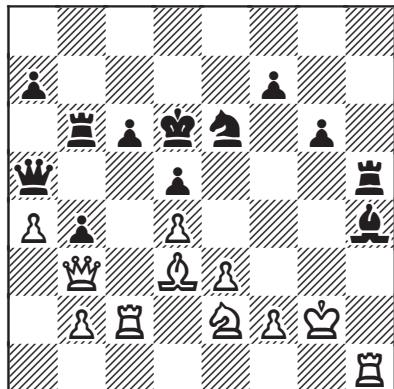
[Both players have been all in, but the White plan proves correct, even so barely!] 53 Kd5 e3 [53...Re5+ doesn't quite make the grade] 54 b6+ Kc8 [Black chooses the losing Q+P ending. The alternatives still do not avoid the machinations of the White king, bishop, and pawns. For example, 54...Kd8 55 Kd6 Rd7+ 56 cxd7 e2 57 c6 e1Q 58 c7mate] 55 Kd6 e2 56 Kxe7 e1Q+ 57 Be6+ Qxe6+ 58 Kxe6 a2 59 b7+ Kc7 60 b8B+ [A queen would have been fine—no stalemate for Black as she still has pawns—but it comes to the same thing. Black fights on, but the cause is lost, White ends up with a decent result after all!] 60...Kxb8 61 Kd7 a1Q 62 c7+ Ka7 63 c8Q Qg7+ 64 Ke6 Qg6+ 65 Kd5 Qf7+ 66 Qe6 Qb7+ 67 Qc6 Qf7+ 68 Ke5 g4 69 Qb6+ Ka8 70 Qd8+ Ka7 71 hxg4 fxg4 72 c6 Qg7+ 73 Kd6 Qh6+ 74 Kc7 Qf4+ 75 Kc8 Qb8+ 76 Kd7 Qb5 77 Qc7+ Ka6 78 Qb7+ Qxb7+ 79 cxb7 Kxb7 80 Ke6 1-0



Blitz Specialist *by James Richardson*

Do not to hurry in winning positions. You see this adage in classic books by the Russian teachers Dvoretsky and Shereshevsky. It especially applies to positions where the opponent does not have any counterplay and his only chance depends on you. One can interpret the principle in two ways. In terms

of time management, you should not rush decisions that can potentially end the game if you have time on the clock to work them out thoroughly. In terms of the game length, a win is a win regardless of how many moves it takes. Eliminating counterplay may be the best course, even if it means not winning in the least number of moves.



Take your time and decide how White ought to play in the diagram. Only then, read on...



**James Richardson - Max Jiahua Li
2017 World Open
Queen's Gambit Declined**

MY OPPONENT had played on a board near mine in several of the preceding rounds of the tournament. He was a young player from New York who ranked 27th nationally among 14-year-olds. He always wore a red jacket to his games, but what really stood out about him was the way he played. During the 4th round, I was just getting settled into my game when—*Bang!*—I checked the board next to mine and it appeared Max had already landed a decisive combination. I'd briefly noted his opening when I first arrived at the board, and I was surprised at how quickly the game had progressed. In short order, I watched as the play approached blitz pace. In the final stage, Max snapped out moves quickly and confidently. My own game was still in the opening when Max's opponent resigned and they shook hands. My opponent joked, “Hey, you guys should be playing in the 3-day schedule! Just kidding!” I smiled and did my best to hold back a laugh. Max's opponent seemed a bit stunned and wore a “*what just happened?!*” expression on his face.

A couple rounds later, I noticed Max was playing against one of the top seeds. Again his game appears to be moving faster than usual. However, this time Max appeared to be having some difficulty in the middlegame. All of the sudden—*Bang!* Max had slammed his piece on board. I looked and saw that he had managed to turn the game around with a cunning tactical shot. His opponent sank into thought, but it was too late.

Observing these games gave me a sense of Max's psychology. He would play quickly and confidently, luring opponents in a tit-for-tat exchange to keep up with his speed. Once the game accelerated to an unusual pace, the opponent would be outside his normal game and errors would inevitably occur. Like a tiger, Max would pounce on an error and—*Bang!* It was actually quite impressive.

I have played blitz specialists like these in longer time controls. I usually do pretty well against them since I make a deliberate effort to manage my own pace. Often their superficial play comes back to haunt them. Then their moves begin to slow down!

Chess in longer time controls is not a race. Ultimately, it's consistency that matters. One method I use is to record the time next to my moves on my scoresheet. This can prevent me from rushing decisions and it allows me to monitor my pace throughout the game. I learned this habit in my youth from titled players and nationally ranked juniors, and studying the data afterwards can yield productive insights on time management. Alex Yermolinsky's *The Road to Chess Improvement* is a good book that discusses this topic.



WHEN I SAW that I was paired against Max, I wracked my memory to try to recall the openings of his earlier games. I recalled him playing a Queen's Gambit Declined as Black and decided to base my preparation on that. I quickly reviewed my database files. I had a feeling he might try a sideline. This was the last round, and final rounds can be very tense. This can lead to some very strange decisions. I will do my best to explain the bizarre course of this game.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Bg5 Be7 6 e3 c6 7 Bd3 [a standard QGD Exchange Variation, which I anticipated before the game] **7...Bg4!?** [Concrete

preparation pretty much ends here. This is a natural move, but it is often omitted from books that cover the Exchange Variation. Black aims to exchange off the light-squared bishops by the maneuver Bh5–g6, but this takes time. I had been drinking coffee before the round to keep me awake and I wanted to take a bathroom break the moment my opponent started to think. Of course this was Max, so he was making all of his moves instantly, and now it was I who had to think.] **8 Qc2** [A normal move like 8 Nge2! is quite reasonable. Peter Rigby suggested this when I showed him the game and it is indeed a move that 'can't be wrong' and indeed may be the most practical way to aim for a slight advantage. If Black persists with 8...Bh5, the sequence 9 Qb3 Qb6 10 Nf4 seems to offer a slight edge. 8 Qb3!? is also interesting and recommended in Alexei Kornev's repertoire book. After 8...Qb6 9 Qc2 he considers 9...Bh5 a mistake on account of 10 f4! giving a clear advantage to White, but I am not so sure about this assessment. Maybe it is correct, but it seems very complicated. For instance, after 10...Na6 11 a3 0–0 12 h3 Rae8 13 g4 Bg6 14 f5 Nxg4 15 hxg4 Bxg5 16 0–0–0 Qxd4 Black has sacrificed a piece for interesting compensation.] **8...Bh5** [I had seen this before somewhere, but my memory was vague. I wanted to disrupt his plan and I remembered an aggressive counter with f4. I thought for a while but did not feel so comfortable with the idea. On the other hand, I wanted to play dynamically and aggressively. I knew this was important decision. *Okay, I'll decide the course of the opening now and go directly to the bathroom after I make my move.*] **9 Bxf6!?** [This displays good fighting spirit but I did not follow up correctly. I also considered 9 f4!? but I found a few problems. 9...Ng4! is a strong reply—Black is already better. I may have vaguely remembered Kornev's analysis of 8 Qb3!?

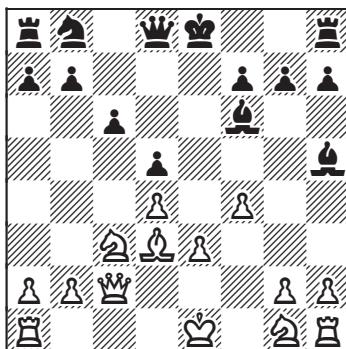


$Qb6\ 9\ Qc2\ Bh5\ 10\ f4!$ but mixed up that Black's queen must be diverted from d8 for it to work. I started to develop serious doubts about the f4 idea altogether. Then, in the middle of my calculations, I began considering a crazy idea. I went ahead and waited another move before heading to the bathroom in order to get my sudden "inspiration" on the board. *Phase One complete!* 9...**Bxf6** 10 g4?

This is a terrible move, which I started to realize as I was walking to the bathroom. Even if Black falls into my "trap" I could no longer make sense of my position assuming he doesn't then commit an obvious blunder. It's unbalanced all right, but that doesn't mean it works. Really, the best thing that could happen is my opponent would believe my bluff and retreat to g6 with a balanced position.

Meanwhile, the discarded 10 f4! would actually have been an interesting move here!

It can become very complicated and White's ambitions can easily backfire, but these positions are hard to judge and interesting to analyze. To human eyes, White's plan to trap the bishop may look very strong. An engine shows the truth is not so simple. 10...Qe7!? is a natural move suggested by Stockfish, continuing 11 Kf2 Nd7 12 Re1 (12 h3?! g5?! leads to great complications: 13 g4 gxh4 14 exf4 Bxd4+ 15 Kg2 (15 Kf1 0-0-0! 16.gxh5 Qh4 with promising compensation) 15...Rg8 (15...0-0-0?! also looks interesting) 16 Qe2 (16 Kh2? Ne5!+; 16 Bxh7 Bg6 17 Bxg6 fxg6 with a messy position where Black does not seem worse) 16...Bg6 17 f5 The bishop on g6 looks dead, but Black can really hassle White for it. 17...Bh5 18 Qxe7+ Kxe7 19 Re1+ Kd6 20 Kf1 Ne5 21 Be2 Rg5 22 Rd1 Bxc3 23 bxc3 f6 24 gxh5 Rxh5+ White finally won the bishop, but is his position better? I think not. The point of all these variations is that trapping the bishop is never the end of the story.) 12...Nb6 13 b3 Bg4 14 h3 (14 f5?! Here too attempting to trap the bishop is overly ambitious 14...0-0-0 15 h3 Bh5 16 g3 The potential check on h4 is an issue. 16...Rde8 17 Kg2 Bxd4 Again Black gets strong counterplay when White overextends. 18 exd4 Qxe1 19 g4 It looks like White will get the bishop, but he is suffering for it. 19...g6 20 Nf3 Qe7 21 Re1 Qf6 22 Rxe8+ Rxe8 It is still difficult to take the bishop and Black has good counterplay on the dark squares to compensate for the zombie.) 14...Be6 15 Nf3 g6 with equality, which seems like a fair result and is much better than what I played in the game.

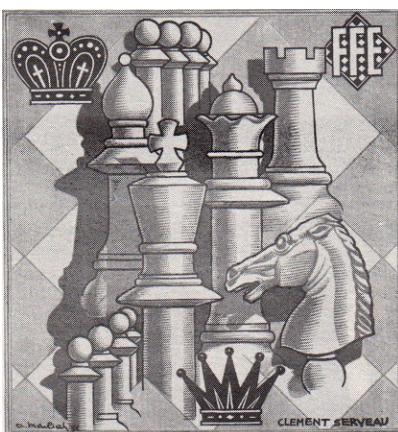


Discarded

I should mention also that the normal 10 Nge2 is again quite a decent move. After 10...Bg6 White could prepare a minority attack with 11 b4 and my exchange on f6 has actually served a useful purpose here. So this may have been the objectively strongest continuation, even if Black looks close to equality.



10...Bxg4 [At length, I returned to the board. Of course, he took the pawn. Why wouldn't he?] **11 Bxh7** [My "point". Essentially I wreck my own position with loss of tempo. Where is my king going? Good question.] **11...Na6** [The ridiculous 11...g6? 12 Bxg6 was part of my lame bluff.] **12 Bf5** [So I want to trade bishops after previously embarking on a plan to avoid a trade—and worsen my position!—except now *he* avoids the trade to preserve his advantage. This is a getting a bit comical, although at this point I was less amused than depressed with my position. Once I saw that he captured the pawn, I knew I would have a difficult road ahead. My opponent was very confident and proceeded to move very quickly (as usual). He'd used no more than three minutes on his clock thus far.] **12...Bh5 13 a3 Qa5 14 Qb3 g6?** [His hasty play over the last few moves (he still had spent only five minutes up to this point) gave me a chance to reverse the situation.] **15 Bd3?** [After I made my move, I realized that I forgot to check an important possibility. I wasn't sure if 15 Qxb7 worked, and I decided not to dwell what was past during the game. But it did occur to me, in the moment, that I was falling under my opponent's spell in the very manner I'd resolved to avoid before the game. *Possibly he made an error. Maybe he will make another one. Whatever the case, I need to be vigilant, focus on the present, and challenge his ideas whenever possible!* In fact, 15 Qxb7! would indeed have significantly changed the evaluation. I probably would have noticed this intermediate move had I done a better job containing my depression. Objectivity is important regardless of the situation. 15...0–0 16 Qxc6 Bg7 17 Qxd5 Qxd5 18 Nxd5 gxf5 19 Nf4 Bg6 20 Nge2 White is pressing with three pawns for the piece, while resolving his coordination problems and repulsing Black's initiative. It may not be as big as the advantage that Black once had, but it is certainly a reversal.] **15...b5?!** [This was maybe too ambitious. Black still appears to be significantly better, but now things start to get a bit crazy. 15...0–0! would have given Black a clear advantage with little risk.] **16 Kf1?!** [An interesting idea...] **16...Nc7 17 Kg2?!** [...but perhaps a king walk at this moment is going overboard. 17 Qc2 Ne6 18 Nce2 Rc8 19 Ng3 Qc7 20 Rc1, as recommended by Stockfish, seems to be the reasonable path. Interestingly, it already evaluates this position as roughly equal.] **17...Ne6 18 Nce2 Rb8 19 Rc1 Kd7 20 Ng3 Rb6?** [The last couple of moves were strange. Max started to slow down quite a bit. His last move appears to be a mistake. Black is trying to do too much with his rook and he runs into some coordination problems. 20...Qa4! 21 Qc3 c5! was the way to maintain Black's





advantage.] **21 h4?!** [I missed another opportunity to play for an advantage with 21 Nxh5 gxh5 22 Qd1! Qa4 23 Bc2 Qa5 24 Ne2 b4 25 a4 b3 26 Bd3 Qxa4 27 Ra1 Qb4 28 Rxat+ Rb7 29 Ra3 White's position is much more harmonious. The king safety situation has also completely reversed. 21...Rxh5 22 Be2 Rh8 23 Bg4 is also better for me. The semi-open h-file isn't as much of a concern now and my king looks safe] **21...b4 22 a4 Kd6?!** [Wow. I thought *my* king moves were audacious.] **23 N1e2 Bxe2 24 Nxe2 Rh5?** [Perhaps he should have taken the pawn now. 24...Rhx4 25 Rxh4 Bxh4 26 Nf4! Rb8 (26...Nxf4+ 27 exf4 Rb8 28 Rc5 Qd8 29 Bb5! is strong for White) 27 Nxe6 fxe6 28 Qc2 Qb6 29 b3 a5 30 Bxg6 Rg8 31 f4 is a complicated middlegame with bishops of opposite color where it is difficult to prove an edge for White.] **25 Rc2** [This worked because my opponent missed one of the main ideas, but I had an even stronger move in 25 Nf4! Nxf4+ 26 exf4 Rb8 The queen must be freed! 27 Be2 Rhh8 28 Rc5 Qd8 29 Bb5! This cool idea also appeared in the previous variation. After the possible continuation 29...Ke7 30 Rxc6 Kf8 31 f5! Rb6 32 fxg6 Rxc6 33 Bxc6 Bxh4 34 Qxd5 White would have been a pawn up in a favorable endgame.] **25...Bxh4?!** [Black had a defense available with 25...Rb7! 26 Rhc1 Rc7 It is important to reroute the rook to c7 instead of c8 so that the pinning resource Bb5 is not possible. The line continues 27 e4 dxe4 28 Bxe4 with an odd dynamic balance. Both sides are equally distressed! But the text leads to our original quiz position. What did you decide?] **26 Rhc1!** [I believe my opponent had considered this move but did not fully sense the danger. Doubling rooks keeps the b6 rook tied down to protect c6—but the real stinger is on c5! (Take credit if you chose 26 Nf4! which is also very strong.) Now my opponent sank into thought for about 30 minutes. He also took off his red jacket, which had not happened previously throughout the tournament. Periodically, he would reach out as if to move and then retract his hand in hesitation.] **26...Bf6 27 Rc5** [The queen is trapped. The earlier course of the game had a sobering effect on my play from here. I'd seen how easily reversals could occur and I was determined to convert the point. I had no desire to rush and I did not let the win slip out of my hands.] **27...Nxc5 28 Rxc5 Qxc5 29 dxc5+ Kxc5 30 a5 Rb7 31 Ba6 Rc7 32 Nf4 Rh4 33 Nd3+ Kd6 34 Nxb4 d4 35 Nc2 c5 36 exd4 Rxd4 37 Nxd4 Bxd4 38 Qg3+ Be5 39 Qd3+ Ke7 40 f4 Bd4 41 b4 Kd6 42 bxc5+ Kxc5 43 Qc4+ Kd6 44 Qxd4+ Kc6 45 Qe4+ Kd6 46 Qe5+ Kc6 47 Bb5+ Kb7 48 Ba6+ Kc6 49 Bb5+ Kb7 50 Qd5+ Kb8 51 Qd8+ Kb7 52 a6+ Kb6 53 Qb8+ 1–0**



based on a photograph by
Martin Waldbauer



Viktor Korchnoi: How to be "Wrong" in Chess

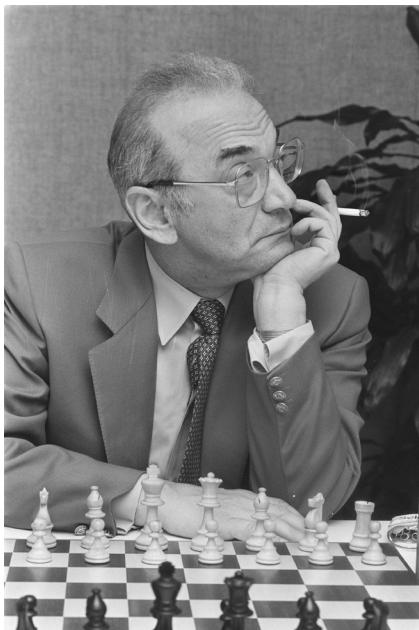
by Aleksey Bashtavenko

"I began to feel like a bird in a gilded cage, only to be fed if the master wished, to sing only at his pleasure." —Viktor Korchnoi

WORLD WIDE, Viktor Korchnoi is widely regarded as the iconoclast who famously went against the ideology of the Soviet chess machine. At the end of the Amsterdam tournament of 1976, Korchnoi cautiously escaped the surveillance of his KGB minders and made his way to the local police station, where he requested political asylum. Until that point, numerous prominent Soviet athletes and intellectuals had defected, but Korchnoi was the first chess grandmaster to do so. His reasons? One may argue that it had little

to do with anything but his profoundly contrarian temperament, his mercurial nature and his unwillingness to sacrifice his individuality for economic security.

Many admire Korchnoi for his resilience, mental toughness and ability to avoid defeat, even under the most dismal of circumstances. Yet, he is an unlikely model for a beginner to emulate. Every seasoned chess teacher understands that new players must learn the value of developing pieces, of providing security for the king, of seizing the initiative and appreciating the relative value of pieces—and pawns, above all. Indeed, the true value of a pawn may be the most difficult lesson to grasp for an intermediate player.

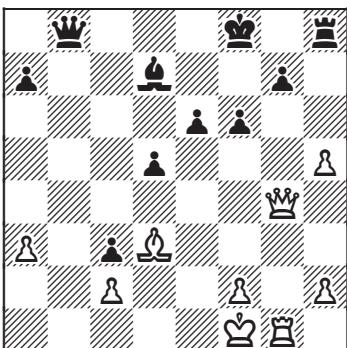


Yet, Korchnoi famously grabbed pawns, forestalled castling and even deliberately surrendered the initiative in order to prompt his opponents to overextend their positions. In light of the unique virtues of his playing style, Korchnoi proved to have been a remarkably challenging opponent for Mikhail Tal, who valued the initiative above all other aspects of the game.



**Mikhail Tal – Viktor Korchnoi
1958 USSR Championship
French**

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 Ne7 7 Qg4 Nf5 8 Bd3 h5 9 Qh3 cxd4 10 Nf3 Qc7 11 Rb1 dxc3 12 g4 Ne7 13 gxh5 Nbc6 14 Bf4 Ng6! 15 Bg3 Ngxe5 16 Nxe5 Nxe5 17 Kf1 Bd7 18 Qh4 f6 19 Bxe5 Qxe5 20 Rxh7 Rb8! 21 Rxb8+ Qxb8 22 Qg4 Kf8 23 Rg1



23...g5! [“The only defense, but a sufficient one. Black returns the last of his extra pawns, but his king finds a safe refuge at g7.” —Korchnoi] 24 hxg6 Kg7 25 h4 a5 26 Rg3 Qb1+ 27 Kg2 Qb7 28 h5 d4+ 29 Be4 Bc6 30 Bxc6 Qxc6+ 31 Kg1 Qd5 32 Qf4 Qe5 33 h6+? [33 Qf3! Qd5 34 Qf4 =] 33...Rhx6 34 Qxh6+ Kxh6 35 g7 Qxg3+ 0-1

In a similar vein, Korchnoi excelled in counter-intuitive positions that called for creative defensive play and the ability to turn the opponent's energy against him, quite reminiscent of the strategy employed by Aikido fighters.



**Miroslav Filip – Viktor Korchnoi
Bucharest 1954
Grünfeld**

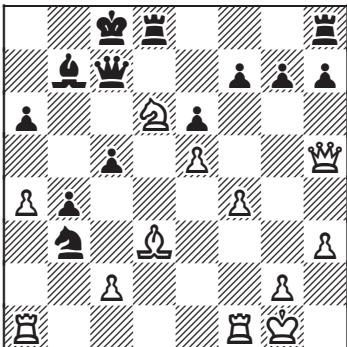
In this remarkable game, Filip built up a considerable kingside attack, yet Korchnoi thwarted his initiative by sacrificing queen for two minor pieces and a pawn. In the resulting course of play, White was forced to sacrifice the exchange in order to blockade the runaway d-pawn. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Bc4 O-O 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 Bg5 Qd7 10 O-O Na5 11 Bd3 b6 12 Qd2 Rds 13 Bh6 Bh8 14 Rad1 Bb7 15 Qg5 e6 16 e5 c5 17 Nf4 cxd4 18 cxd4 Nc6 19 d5 exd5 20 Bb5? [20 e6] Bxe5! 21 Bxc6 Bxf4 22 Qf6 Bxh6 23 Bxd7 Rxd7 24 Rfe1 Bf8! 25 h4 Rad8 26 h5 d4 27 hxg6 hxg6 28 Rd3 Ba6 29 Red1 Bxd3 30 Rxd3 Rc8 31 Qf3 Bg7 32 Qe4 Rcd8 33 f4 Rd5 34 g4 Bf6 35 Kg2 Kf8 36 Kf3 b5 37 Qe1 Kg8 38 Qb4 Rsd7 39 Qb3 a5 40 a3 Rc5 41 Qb1 Rdc7 42 Ke2 a4 43 Qh1 R7c6 44 Qb1 Rc8 45 Qh1 Rc2+ 46 Rd2 Re8+ 47 Kd1 Rc3 48 Qd5 Rxa3 49 Qxb5 Ra1+ 50 Kc2 Rc8+ 51 Kd3 Re1 52 Rc2 Rd1+ 53 Ke2 d3+ 54 Kxd1 dxc2+ 55 Kc1 a3 56 Qa6 Bb2+ 0-1

**Nikolai Krogius – Viktor Korchnoi
1958 USSR Championship
Sicilian**

In his trademark style, Korchnoi cedes the initiative, exposes himself to a raucous kingside attack, and then launches a characteristically incisive counterattack starting with the exchange sacrifice on move 21. 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 a6



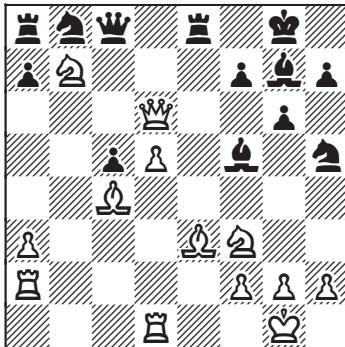
5 Nc3 b5 6 Bd3 Qc7 7 O-O Bb7 8 Qe2 Nc6 9 Nxc6 dxc6 10 a4 b4 11 Nd1 c5 12 Ne3 Ne7 13 b3 Nc6 14 Bb2 Bd6 15 h3 Be5 16 Bxe5 Nxe5 17 f4 Nc6 18 e5 Nd4 19 Qh5 O-O-O 20 Nc4 Nxb3 21 Nd6+



21...Rxd6! 22 exd6 Qc6 23 d7+ Kc7 24 Qe5+ Kxd7 25 Qxg7 Nxa1 26 f5 Qxg2+ 27 Qxg2 Bxg2 28 fxe6+ fxe6 29 Kxg2 c4 30 Be4 Nxc2 31 Bxc2 b3 32 Be4 Kd6 33 Rc1 Kc5 34 Kf3 Kb4 35 Ke3 c3 36 Rb1 Ka3 37 Ra1+ Kb2 38 Rb1+ Ka2 39 Rg1 c2 40 Kd2 Rd8+ 41 Kc1 Rc8 0-1

**Lev Polugaevsky - Viktor Korchnoi
1960 USSR Championship
Grünfeld**

Once more, Korchnoi falls into deep defense. The retreat 21...Nb8 seemed like a last-ditch effort to prevent his opponent from thoroughly infiltrating his position. Yet when White's reply appeared to trap his rook on e8, without missing a beat Korchnoi turned the tables with another exchange sacrifice. 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 Nf3 Bg7 5 Qb3 dxc4 6 Qxc4 O-O 7 e4 Na6 8 Be2 c5 9 d5



22 Bb5 Rxe3 23 fxe3 Bf8 24 Qd8 Qxb7 25 Bc4 Nc6 26 Qh4 Na5 27 Bf1 Qb3 28 Rad2 Qxe3+ 29 Kh1 Be7 30 Qa4 Qc3 31 d6 Bf6 32 d7 Rd8 33 Re2 Kg7 34 Kg1 Qb3 35 Qxb3 Nxb3 36 h3 Ng3 37 Re3 Nxf1 38 Rxb3 Bc2 0-1

**Viktor Korchnoi - Paul Keres
1965 USSR Championship
Queen's Indian**

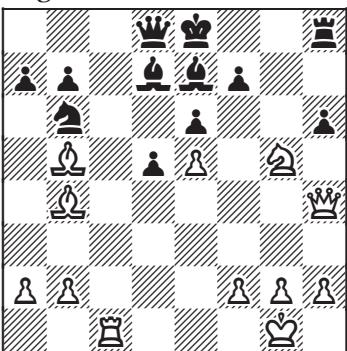
In this case, Korchnoi's provocation backfired. In characteristic fashion, he grabbed a pawn, 23 Nxg4, and allowed his king to be attacked—but on this occasion, he bit off more than he could chew. 1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 3 Bg5 h6 4 Bxf6 Qxf6 5 e4 b6 6 a3 Bb7 7 Nc3 d6 8 Qd2 Nd7 9 O-O-O g5 10 Nb5 Kd8 11 h4 g4 12 e5 Qg7 13 Ne1 a6 14 Nc3 d5 15 f4 f5 16 exf6 Qxf6 17 h5 c5 18 dxc5 bxc5 19 g3 Bc6 20 Rh4 Rg8 21 Nd3 Rb8 22 Nf2 c4



23 Nxg4 Qe7 24 Re1 Rxb2 25 Kxb2 Qxa3+ 26 Kb1 Bg7 27 Ne5 Kc7 28 Nb5+ axb5 29 c3 Bxe5 30 fxe5 Rxe3 31 Rh3 Rg5 32 Rhe3 Nc5 33 Rf3 Be8 34 Qa2 Qxa2+ 35 Kxa2 Rxh5 36 Ka3 Ne4 37 Rf8 Bd7 38 Kb4 Rxe5 39 Ra1 Rf5 40 Rh8 Rf2 0-1

**Viktor Korchnoi - Mijo Udovcic
Leningrad 1967
French**

The gambit line with 11 Nf3 and 12 Qa4! bears Korchnoi's name. White combines action on the king (the b1-h7 diagonal) with a queenside initiative (the c-file). **1 d4 e6 2 e4 d5 3 Nd2 Nf6 4 e5 Nfd7 5 c3 c5 6 Ngf3 Nc6 7 Bd3 Qb6 8 O-O cxd4 9 cxd4 Nxd4 10 Nxd4 Qxd4 11 Nf3 Qb6 12 Qa4 Qb4 13 Qc2 h6 14 Bd2 Qb6 15 Rac1 Be7 16 Qa4 Qd8 17 Rc2 Kf8 18 Rfc1 Nb6 19 Qg4 Bd7 20 Ba5 Rc8 21 Rxc8 Bxc8 22 Bb4 g6 23 Qh4 g5 24 Nxg5 Ke8 25 Bb5+ Bd7**



26 Nxe6! fxe6 27 Qh5+ Kf8 28 Rc3 Rh7 29 Qg6 Rg7 30 Qxh6 Bxb4 31 Rg3 1-0

Besides the French Defense, Korchnoi was also famous for his preparation against the King's Indian Defense,

developing the "Orthodox" variations to great effect. Here against Zaitsev, Korchnoi rapidly seized the queen's side initiative with Ba3 and b4, planting a powerful knight on d5. After the exchange of minor pieces, White achieved a spatial advantage on the queen's side (which is characteristic of the main line King's Indians). The following year, against Geller, Korchnoi rapidly achieved the thematic c5 break and subsequent capture of d6. He followed up with Bb5, initiating the exchange of the light-squared bishops. As a general rule, the light squared bishop is Black's strongest minor piece in the King's Indian Defense. Often this bishop can be sacrificed on h3, opening up the position of White's king. Conversely, White's own light square bishop has rather limited potential because all of his pawns are on light squares.

**Viktor Korchnoi - Igor Zaitsev
1970 USSR Championship
King's Indian**

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 O-O 6 Nf3 e5 7 O-O Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Nd2 Bd7 10 b4 c6 11 Ba3 a6 12 dxc6 Bxc6 13 Re1 b5 14 Bf1 Qb6 15 Nb3 Rad8 16 Na5 Ba8 17 Nd5 Bxd5 18 cxd5 Bh6 19 g3 Nh5 20 Bc1 Bxc1 21 Rxc1 f5 22 Nc6 Nxc6 23 Rxc6 Qa7 24 Bh3 fxe4 25 Qd2 Rf6 26 Qe3 Qxe3 27 Rxe3 Rdf8 28 Re2 Ng7 29 Rxa6 Nf5 30 Rxe4 Nd4 31 f4 g5 32 Be6+ Nxe6 33 dxe6 gxf4 34 Rxd6 fxg3 35 Rg4+ Rg6 36 Rxe6+ hxg6 37 hxg3 Kg7 38 e7 Re8 39 Re6 1-0



Viktor Korchnoi - Efim Geller Moscow Candidates match

1971

King's Indian

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 O-O 6 Nf3 e5 7 O-O Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Bd2 Ne8 10 b4 f5 11 Qb3 Nf6 12 exf5 gxf5 13 c5 Kh8 14 cxd6 cxd6 15 Rac1 Bd7 16 a4 Ng6 17 Bb5 h6 18 Bxd7 Qxd7 19 Nb5 Ne8 20 Ne1 Kh7 21 Qh3 e4 22 Nd4 Nc7 23 Rxc7 Qxc7 24 Ne6 Qe7 25 f3 Qh4 26 Qxh4 Nxh4 27 Nxf8+ Rxf8 28 fxe4 fxe4 29 Rxf8 Bxf8 30 Kf2 Nf5 31 Nc2 h5 32 Bf4 Bh6 33 g3 Bxf4 34 gxf4 Kg6 1/2-1/2

In his book *My Best Games as White*, Korchnoi claimed credit as the main developer of Mar Del Plata variation of the King's Indian Defense. While some may dispute that (other grandmasters have also contributed a great deal to this variation) the importance and originality of Korchnoi's ideas cannot be denied. Indeed, he fully deserves credit for the idea a2-a4-5. In this manner, White prompts Black to play ...a6, which will give White an outpost on b6. The outpost can be occupied by either a bishop or knight, with the intent of controlling c8 and d7.

Although the light-squared bishop tends to be white's bad piece, Korchnoi concocted an ingenious solution to that problem in this game against Shirov. He simply allowed his central pawns to be captured(!), thereby empowering his light-squared bishop to achieve its potential. The bishop pair on c4 and

b6 proved to be too difficult for Shirov to handle. This clearing away of one's own central pawns to maximize the potential of your pieces is the thread of thematic continuity between Korchnoi's play on the White side of the French Defense and the King's Indian Defense.

Viktor Korchnoj - Alexei Shirov Buenos Aires 1993

King's Indian

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 g6 3 e4 d6 4 d4 Bg7 5 Be2 O-O 6 Nf3 e5 7 O-O Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 Ne1 Ne8 10 Be3 f5 11 f3 f4 12 Bf2 h5 13 c5 g5 14 a4! Ng6 15 a5 Bh6 16 Nb5 a6 17 Na3 Kh8 18 Nc4 Rg8 19 Ra3 Nf6 20 cxd6 cxd6 21 Nb6 Rb8 22 Rc3 g4 23 fxg4 Nxе4 24 Rxc8 Rxc8 25 Nxc8 Qxc8 26 Bb6 Ne7 27 gxh5 Nf6 28 b3 Nexd5 29 Bc4 Qc6 30 Rf2 Rc8 31 Bxd5 Nxd5 32 Rс2 Nc3 33 Qg4! Bf8 34 Nd3 Qe8 35 Nb4 d5 36 Nxd5 Bc5+ 37 Bxc5 Rxc5 [if 37...Nxd5 38 Bf8!] 38 h6 Qf8 39 Rxc3 1-0

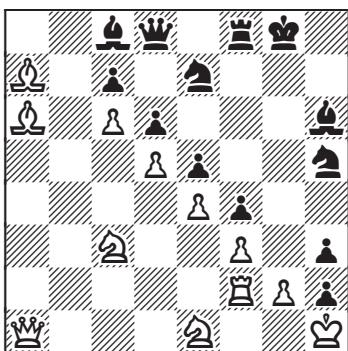
Viktor Korchnoi - Judit Polgar Monte Carlo 1993

King's Indian

In this remarkable and long game, Judit Polgar anticipates Korchnoi's opening preparation by playing 7...a5. Although such a prophylactic move may seem premature, it acknowledges the merit of Korchnoi's signature plan. Later she plays yet another prophylactic move with 14...b6. At this point, the battle lines are clearly drawn: g4 is the bottleneck of White's defense and c5 is the key point of Black's defense. Korchnoi systematically



breaks down Black's construction by the moves b3, a3, b4 and finally c5! The move order had to be precise: the b pawn must be moved before the a-pawn, lest Black stymie the whole initiative with ...a4! 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Be2 O-O 6 Nf3 e5 7 O-O a5 8 Be3 Ng4 9 Bg5 f6 10 Bc1 Nc6 11 d5 Ne7 12 Ne1 f5 13 f3 Nf6 14 Be3 b6 15 Rc1 Bd7 16 b3 f4 17 Bf2 g5 18 a3 h5 19 b4 axb4 20 axb4 g4 21 c5 bxc5 22 bxc5 Bh6 23 c6 [Korchnoi declined to play cxd6, judging that open the queenside would not give him enough initiative. But what he played seems counterintuitive, with Black almost ready for ...g3] Bc8 24 Ra1 Rxa1 25 Qxa1 g3 26 Ba7 gxh2+ 27 Kh1 [White's king hiding underneath the pawn leaves Black only one way of attacking: ...h4, ...Nh5 and ...Ng3+] h4 28 Ba6 Nh5 29 Rf2 h3



White's obvious response would have been 30 gxh3, keeping the h-file closed. Yet Korchnoi elected the more counterintuitive 30 Kxh2, laying his king bare. To deliberately expose himself to such a swashbuckling attack was certainly not out of character for him. Yet, this seemed like another instance

where he had gone too far, his distinctive impishness bordering on foolhardiness. To grant Judit Polgar a venomous attack to is something no coach would recommend to a student. The rest was remarkably complicated—with Korchnoi winning by mate on move 69.

30 Kxh2 hxg2 31 Nxg2 Ng3 32 Kg1 Bg5 33 Rb2 Qe8 34 Bxc8 Nxc8 35 Ne1 Kg7 36 Qa5 Bd8 37 Bf2 Rh8 38 Bxg3 fxg3 39 Rg2 Qh5 40 Rxg3+ Kf7 41 Kf1 Nb6 42 Qa2 Bg5 43 Qg2 Kf6 44 Ke2 Nc4 45 Kd3 Ne3 46 Qg1 Bf4 47 Rg7 Bh2 48 Qxe3 Kxg7 49 Qa7 Qf7 50 Nb5 Bg3 51 Qg1 Qg6 52 Nxc7 Bxe1 53 Ne6+ Kf6 54 Qxe1 Rh3 55 Kc4 Qg2 56 Qe3 Rh1 57 Kc3 Rh3 58 Kb4 Rh1 59 Ka5 Kf7 60 Kb6 Rb1+ 61 Kc7 Qb2 62 Qg5 Qb8+ 63 Kd7 Qe8+ 64 Kxd6 Qb8+ 65 Nc7 Qb4+ 66 Kd7 Rh1 67 Qf5+ Kg8 68 Qg6+ Kf8 69 Ne6mate 1-0

It goes without saying that Korchnoi was also a refined endgame technician. In his autobiography, he noted that while the majority of young players devoted the bulk of their time to the study of tactics and openings, he was more interested in the endgame. This was evident as early as 1953, when Korchnoi was only 22 years old.

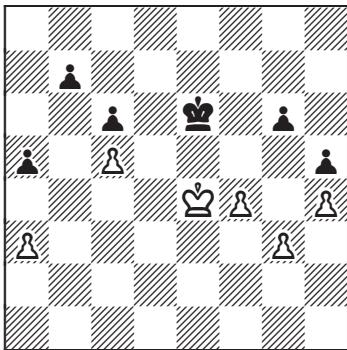
(see diagram, top of next page)

41 a4! 1-0!

In this remarkable endgame, 41 a4 put Bonch-Osmolovsky into zugzwang. On the face of it, the immediate resignation seems premature, the finish far from clear. {Given the move number, odds



Korchnoi - Bonch-Osmolovsky Leningrad 1953

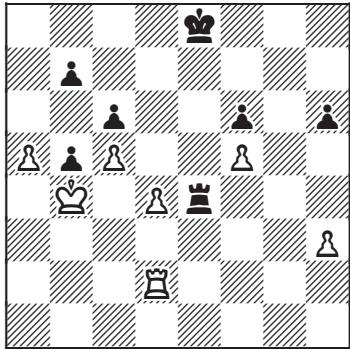


White to Play

are the game adjourned and resigned sometime prior to resumption.-ed} Indeed, give the position to an engine and it might evaluate it as dead drawn for a long while. But appearances can be deceiving. Regardless of what Black plays, show it 42 Kf3 and the engine begins to see the light. White inevitably follows with g4 and f5, guaranteeing safe passage for the h-pawn.

An endgame against Karpov from the 1978 World Championship match strikes me as even more remarkable.

Korchnoi – Karpov, Baguio 1978



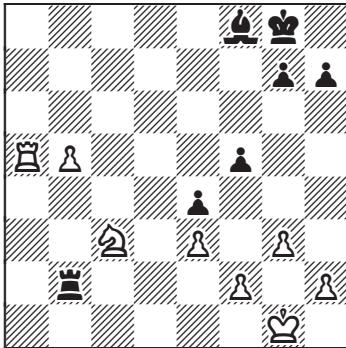
White to Play

52 a6!

Sacrificing a pawn for the sake of a king penetration that will in turn maximize the d5 break coming up on move 55. From there White will regroup and collect the kingside pawns, finally emerging with an technical endgame two pawns up.

52...bxa6 53 Ka5 Kd7 54 Kb6 b4
 55 d5 cxd5 56 Rxd5+ Kc8 57 Rd3 a5
 58 Rg3 b3 59 Kc6 Kb8 60 Rxb3+ Ka7
 61 Rb7+ Ka6 62 Rb6+ Ka7 63 Kb5 a4
 64 Rxsf6 Rf4 65 Rxh6 a3 66 Ra6+ Kb8
 67 Rx a3 Rxf5 68 Rg3 Rf6 69 Rg8+
 Kc7 70 Rg7+ Kc8 71 Rh7 1-0

Korchnoi – Karpov, Baguio 1978



Black to Play

White's last move was 33 Rxa5 to go a pawn ahead. Needless to say, Karpov was famous for his endgame technique. His rook is ideally placed behind the pawn. Queening that pawn would have been a tall order for many grandmasters. Yet, Korchnoi pulled it off with a plan anchored by the moves Ra8 and Na4-Nc5: 33...Bb4 34 Ra8+ Kf7 35 Na4 Rb1+ 36 Kg2 Bd6 37 Ra7+ Kf6 38 b6 Bb8 39 Ra8

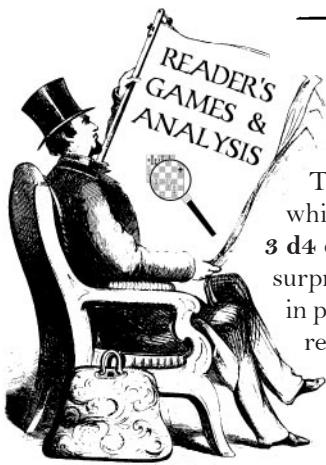


Be5 40 Nc5 Bd6 41 b7 Ke7 42 Rg8 Be5 43 f4 exf3+ 44 Kxf3 Kf7 45 Rc8 Ke7 46 h3 h5 47 Rg8 Kf7 48 Rd8 g5 49 g4 hxg4+ 50 hxg4 Ke7 51 Rg8 fxg4+ 52 Kxg4 Kf7 53 Rc8 Bd6 54 e4 Rg1+ 55 Kf5 g4 56 e5 Rf1+ 57 Ke4 Re1+ 58 Kd5 Rd1+ 59 Nd3 Rxd3+ 60 Kc4 1-0

ABOVE ALL Korchnoi was a contrarian, in life and in chess. He had little use for conventional wisdom, authority or a secure lifestyle. In the Soviet Union, he had it all: celebrity status, world-class coaches, career prospects and ample means to support his family. Yet he turned his back on it all, saying he did so for the sake of his chess career. That makes as much sense as... well, forfeiting the initiative in order to grab a pawn and expose your king to a vicious attack.

Regardless of whether we see him as the ideological torchbearer for liberty or a mere eccentric, there must be a little bit of Korchnoi in us all. The chess scene is a magnet for highly contentious people who are relentless in their pursuit of what is true rather than what is expedient or socially appropriate.

On one fateful afternoon in the early 1960s, Korchnoi arrived at his son's school to register him for classes. Against the better judgment of his wife, Korchnoi registered Igor as a Jewish student. Returning home, he had to hear about what an "utter fool!" he was. Viktor put on his coat, shrugged his shoulders and exclaimed on his way out the door, "A whole life with a wife is like an endgame with bishops of opposite colors!" In a cruel twist of fate, the same Igor was condemned to serve time in a gulag because his father declared himself to have been the enemy of the people.



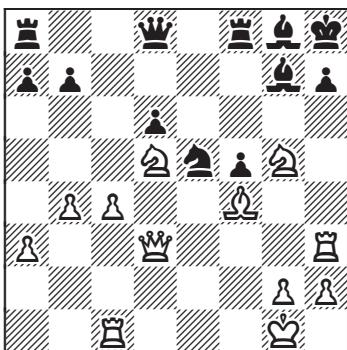
Andrew Samuelson - Jakhongir Vakhidov 2020 Atlantic Open Sicilian

Notes by Andrew Samuelson

This game is from the most recent Atlantic Open, which was online (ICC) this year. 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 g6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Bg7 5 c4 Nc6 6 Be3 Qb6 [I was surprised by this choice as I rarely if ever see this line in practice.] 7 Nb5 [7 Nb3 may actually be the best reply, but I didn't remember much here.] 7...Qa5+ 8 N5c3 Nf6 9 Bd3 [9 Nd2 O-O 10 Be2 seems a little more natural, in hindsight. The bishop usually goes to e2 in this type of position.] 9... d6 10 f3 Qb4 [I think this is a mistake as Black is not able to take on b2 and I can gain some time and space. 10...Be6 11 O-O Ne5 12 b3 Nc6 13 Bd2 Qc5+ 14 Kh1 b6 seems more or less okay for Black.]



11 a3 Qa5 [11...Qxb2 12 Ra2 traps the queen.] **12 O-O O-O 13 Nd2 Be6** **14 b4 Qd8** [14...Qh5 15 Be2 Qh4 16 Nd5 seems better for White; Black may regret putting his queen out of play] **15 Rc1 Nd7 16 f4 f5** [This move came with a draw offer. I thought I should be better here, but had memories of my last round game from the 2020 (online) World Open where I declined a draw from another GM and went on to lose.] **17 Nf3 Kh8 18 Ng5** [18 exf5 gxf5 19 Ne2 Nf6 20 h3 Ne4 21 Bxe4 fxe4 22 Ng5 Bg8 23 Ng3 d5 24 cxd5 Qxd5 25 Qxd5 Bxd5 26 Rfd1 Bb3 27 Rd7 is probably better.] **18...Bg8 19 exf5 gxf5 20 Rf3** [Maybe not the best move, but it did create some threats. I should still be better here.] **20...e5** [I think Black should try 20...Bd4 For example 21 Qe2 Rc8 22 Rh3 e5 23 Nd5 Nb6 24 Qf2 Nxd5 25 cxd5 Bxe3 26 Qxe3 exf4 27 Qxf4 Ne5 28 Rxc8 Qxc8 Black has traded some pieces and his king is safer than in the game.] **21 Rh3** [continuing to menace the kingside] **21...exf4 22 Bxf4 Nce5 23 Nd5 Nxd3** [This seems like a mistake, but the position is dangerous for Black. If 23...h6 24 Qd2 Nf6 25 Nxf6 Qxf6 26 Nf3



Ng4 27 Bg5 Qf7 28 Rh4 most of Black's pieces are awkwardly placed or simply out of play.] **24 Qxd3 Ne5** [24...Nf6 is only a modest improvement and not enough to save Black's position. 25 Qxf5 Qd7 26 Qd3 h6 27 Nxf6 Rxf6 28 Be3 White has an extra pawn and the attack continues.] (diagram)

25 Rxh7+ [It's not every day I get to play a move like this against a GM!] **25...Bxh7 26 Qh3 Qxg5** I calculated 26...Bh6 27 Qxh6 Qd7 during the game and thought it should

be very good for me, but I wasn't sure about the best follow-up. The engine provides a convincing solution: 28 c5 Qg7 29 cxd6 Qxh6 30 Bxe5+ Qg7 31 Bxg7+ Kxg7 32 Ne6+ Kg6 33 Nxf8+ Rxf8 34 d7 Rds 35 Rc7. My main thought during the game was 28 Nf6 Qg7 29 Qxh7+ Qxh7 30 Nfxh7, which should be good enough to win too.] **27 Bxg5** [White has a material edge, plus better placed pieces.] **27...f4** [I thought 27...Ng4 was a more likely reply. 28 Rd1 Be5 29 Bf4 a5 30 b5 Rac8 31 Qh4 Bg7 32 Bxd6 should be good.] **28 Bxf4 Nd3 29 Rf1 Rae8** [29...Bd4+ 30 Be3 Rxf1+ 31 Kxf1 doesn't really help Black's cause, but I needed to make sure of the tactics.] **30 Be3 Rxf1+ 31 Kxf1** [Black has no way to get his rook to e1 for mate. From here I was able to play energetically and finish the game quickly.] **31...Nb2 32 Qh4 Kg8 33 Ne7+ Kf8 34 Bg5 Bd3+ 35 Kf2 Bxc4 36 Bf6 Nd3+** [or 36...Bxf6 37 Qxf6+ Bf7 38 Ng6+ Kg8 39 Qh8 mate] **37 Kg3 b5 38 Nf5 Kf7 39 Nxd6+ 1-0** Black simply has too many hanging pieces. After this game, I lost in round 4 but won in round 5 to tie for 2nd place.

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