

VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

The bimonthly publication of the
Virginia Chess Federation

2023 - #1



Andrey Shustov — <http://deludoscachorum.blogspot.com/2022/12/andrey-shustov.html>

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Newsletter

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Virginia Chess is published six times per year by the Virginia Chess Federation. Membership benefits include a subscription to *Virginia Chess*. Send material for publication to the editor. Send dues, address changes, etc to Circulation.

The Virginia Chess Federation (VCF)



is a non-profit organization for the use of its members. Dues for regular adult membership are \$15/yr. Junior memberships (under age 18 at expiration) are \$8/yr. President: Anand Dommalapati, PO Box 223582, Chantilly,

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Thomas Jefferson Shines at K-12 Nationals

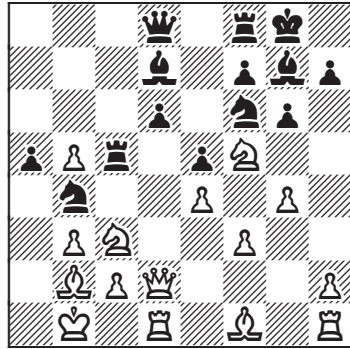
Thomas Jefferson High School (Alexandria, Va) won co-national championships in both the 10th and 12th grade groups at the USCF's 2022 K-12th Grade Nationals, played Dec 9-11 at National Harbor, Maryland. TJ's 9th grade team also did well, finishing 2nd place in their group! The enormous event drew 2,463(!) players from 42 different states. The team expresses thanks to Mr Robert Slate (chess parent), and Dr Peter Gabor as well as Ms Sewon Yang, who serve as their Faculty Sponsors.

The following game took place during the 2nd round in the 10th grade section.

Aarush Vinod - Antara Durbha Sicilian

Notes by Aarush Vinod

1 e4 c5 2 Nc3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Qxd4 [This was popularized by the World Champion and offers an interesting alternative to main line Sicilians.] **4...Nc6 5 Qd2 g6 6 b3 Bg7** [The most critical line here goes 6...Bh6 7 f4 f5 8 Bb2 Nf6 9 O-O-O fxe4 where for the sacrifice of the e4 pawn White gets lots of compensation on the long diagonal. For example, 10 h3 Rf8 11 Nge2 Qa5 12 g4 Bg7 13 Bg2 with favorable complications.] **7 Bb2 Nf6 8 O-O-O O-O 9 f3 Bd7 10 Kb1** [White has achieved his ideal setup in this system.] **10...a5 11 a4** [It is unnecessary to allow any ideas with ...a4 and sacking the exchange or opening the a-file.] **11...Rc8 12 Nge2 Nb4 13 g4? b5!** [13 g4 was a mistake as I underestimated the danger of 13...b5, specifically in the continuation 14 axb5 Bxb5! 15 Nxb5 Rxc2 16 Qe1 Rxb2+ 17 Kxb2 Nxe4+. The engine rates this as equal, but first we came from a much better position for White; and second, even if Black has yet no clear way to attack, my weak king and his monstrous dragon bishop offer lots of compensation.] **14 axb5 Rc5?** [But this gives the advantage back.] **15 Nd4 e5 16 Nf5!**



The key move of this game, and why I chose to submit this game. The knight sacrifice doesn't yield an immediately decisive attack, but lots of long term compensation mostly thanks to pressure along the g-file.

Black's most critical continuation would be 16...gxf5 17 gxf5 Ne8 18 Rg1 Kh8 19 Bc4, where his pieces are driven back and White's compensation exists in pressure on d6 and Black's difficulties resisting threats on the g-file. This line was what convinced me to play 16 Nf5.

An additional important possibility after 16...gxf5 17 gxf5 was 17...d5, eg



2nd Coastal Virginia Open

Sleep Inn Lake Wright - Norfolk Airport
1521 Premium Outlets Blvd, Norfolk, Va
February 4-5, 2023

\$\$ b/70 entries in Open and U1600: *Open* \$800-500-300-150, top Upset rds 1 & 2 \$25 bookstore credit. *Under 1600* \$700-400-200, top U1200 \$100, top Unrated \$100; Unrated winning a place prize limited to \$250. Top Upset rds 1 & 2 \$25 bookstore credit. *Under 1000* Trophies to top 5 overall, top U800, top U600. Medals to other participants with even or plus scores, participation ribbons to remainder of players. Schedule and Time Controls: *Open & U1600* Sat Feb 4 rd 1 10AM (G/75 + 10), rds 2-3 at 2pm & 6:30pm (G/90 + 10). Sun Feb 5 rds 4-5 at 10am & 2:30pm (G/90 + 10). *U1000* Sat Feb 4 only, rds at 10-12-2-4-6 (G/40; d5). Entry Fees: *Open & U1600* \$85 through Sat 1/28, \$95 beginning Sun 1/29 and onsite; *U1000* \$25 through Sat 1/28, \$30 beginning Sun 1/29 and onsite; One ½-pt bye if requested prior to the start of rd 3. Re-entry allowed after rd 1 only (no re-entry in U1000). Re-entry fee \$30. No unrated players in the Open Section. FIDE-titled players free, EF will be deducted from any prize money earned. Hotel: chess rate \$64+tax at the Sleep Inn or \$74+tax at the adjoining Quality Inn, must reserve by January 21st. Many restaurants nearby and the Norfolk Premium Outlets are across the street! COVID protocols: Masks optional. Supplies available to sanitize equipment. Friday Night Blitz Side Event, February 3 at 7pm: 4-SS double rounds, Game/5; d0. Single section, EF \$30 through Sat 1/28, \$35 beginning Sun 1/29 and onsite. \$\$ based on entries. *Enter*: Online at www.kingregistration.com/event/CVO23; or onsite during Friday blitz 2/3 or no later than 8-9:15am Sat 2/4. Cash, checks, PayPal, Venmo, and Cash App accepted on site. VCF membership is required for Virginia players. Join or renew at www.vachess.org. Questions: Christina Schweiss or Robbie Jackson, Senior TDs, Hampton Roads Chess Association, hrca@hrchessclub.org, 757-472-5909

A VCF Cup Event





18 Rg1 Kh8 19 Rxg7 Kxg7 20 Qg5+ Kh8 21 Na4 and White wins thanks to his monstrous dark squared bishop and the weak king: 21...Nxe4 22 Qxd8 Rxd8 23 Bxe5+ f6 (if 23...Kg8 24 fxe4) 24 fxe4 Black can't withstand all this pressure.

16...Bxf5 [In any case, the lines in the previous note would at least ask White to prove the strength of his sacrifice.] **17 gxf5 d5 18 Bd3 d4 19 Na4 Rc8 20 h4?!** [Slightly inaccurate and unnecessary. Instead it was better to go with 20 Bc4 followed by breaking with c3, to start trading into an endgame with a trapped knight on b4 and passed b-pawn.] **20...Nh5 21 Bc4** [the aforementioned plan,

just slightly delayed] **1...Qf6 22 Qg5** [Trying to exchange queens before going c3 to get an easily winning endgame.] **22...Rfd8 23 Qxf6 Bxf6 24 c3 dxc3 25 Bxc3 Nf4 26 Nb6** [forces the trades which followed] **26...Rxd1+ 27 Rxd1 Rd8 28 Rxd8+ Bxd8 29 Nd7** [If White was winning before, the fantastic bishop pair, weak e5 pawn, and extra passed b-pawn mean that at this point his position is very easily winning.] **29...Nbd3 30 fxg6 hxg6 31 b6 Nb4?!** [While everything loses at this point, Black could have fought a little harder with 31...Nc5 32 Nxc5 Bxb6 getting rid of the b-pawn but at the cost of a piece.] **32 b7 Bc7 33 Bxe5 Bxe5 34 Nxe5 1-0**

The next game took place in the 4th round of the 10th grade championship section. The player of the White pieces represented Hunter College Campus in New York. In addition to both players being rated over 2000, both schools were also in the race for the team championship, making this an important contest.

Kiren Nasta - Abinav Mundayat Sicilian D

Notes by Abinav Mundayat

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e5 6 Ndb5 d6 7 Nd5 Nxd5 8 exd5 Nb8 9 a4 [The more popular move 9 c4 would be met with normal play including castling and pushing my f-pawn. But after 9 a4 I was out of my theory.] **9...a6 10 Na3 Nd7** [...a6 created a weakness on b6, so I developed my knight in a manner that covers this square.] **11 Nc4 Nb6 12 a5** [12 Nxb6 Qxb6 13 a5 Qd8 14 Bd3 was better as it allows White to place his bishop on d3 instead of behind his central pawn.] **12...Nxc4 13 Bxc4 Be7 14 O-O O-O 15 Be3 Bg5** [Seeing as how my central pawns are all on dark squares, I aimed to

trade off dark square bishops which will leave me the superior remaining bishop.] **16 f4** [He allows the trade; in case of 16 Bb6 I intended 16...Qf6 with ideas of ...Qh6 and ...f5] **16...exf4 17 Bxf4 Bxf4 18 Rxf4 b5** [Striking on the queenside, instead of playing passive and allowing him to capitalize on the backwards pawn, I push this pawn and open up the long diagonal for my bishop.] **19 axb6 Qxb6+ 20 Qd4 Rb8 21 Qxb6 Rxb6 22 b3 Re8 23 Kf2 f6** [Putting the pawn on the opposite color of my bishop. However 23...Re5 immediately was better in order not to allow his bishop to move.] **24 Rf3 Re5 25 Re3 Rf5+ 26 Ke2 Kf7 27 Rf1**



Rh5 [27...Rxf1 28 Kxf1 would have led to a draw] **28 h3 Rb8 29 Ra1 Rg5 30 Kf2 Rf5+** **31 Rf3 Re5 32 Re1 Rxe1 33 Kxe1** [Now I trade as it puts his king in the back and gives me a way to activate my other rook.] **33...a5** [Establishing another pawn on a dark square and hindering b4.] **34 Kd2 Bd7 35 Rf1 Rc8 36 Ra1 Rc5 37 Kc3 Bf5 38 Re1 h5 39 Re2 Rc7 40 Kd4 g5** [40...Re7 41 Rxe7+ Kxe7 would lead to a quick draw] **41 c3 Re7 42 Rxe7+ Kxe7 43 Be2 h4** [All my pawns are on the opposite color as my bishop, and this restrains his

backward pawn on g2, which works to my advantage later.] **44 Bd1 Kd8 45 c4 Kc7 46 c5?** [A big blunder that costs him the game, all due to the fact that his kingside pawns are badly placed.] **46... dxc5+** **47 Kxc5 Be4 48 Bg4** {White's problem is seen the thematic variation **48 Bf3 Bxf3 49 gxf3 f5 50 d6+ Kd7 51 Kd5 g4 52 fxg4 fxg4 53 hxg4 h3 —ed**} **48...f5 49 Kd4 Kd6 50 Ke3 Kxd5 51 Be2 Bxg2** [The rest is an easy conversion.] **52 Bd3 Bxh3 53 Kf3 Bg4+** **54 Kg2 Kd4 55 Bb5 f4 56 Ba6 Ke3 57 Bc4 f3+** **58 Kg1 f2+** **59 Kg2 Be2 0-1**

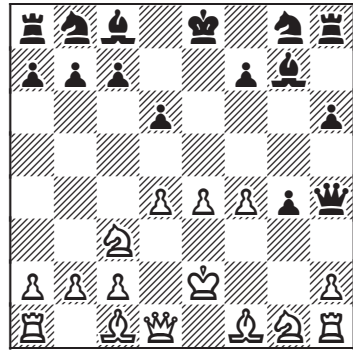
With the tournament coming to a close and TJ's 12th grade team aiming for a 1st place finish, this next game would be a high-stakes matchup.

Tommy Williams - Juan Orellana King's Gambit

Notes by Tommy Williams

1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 g5 4 Nc3 [A dubious but fun sideline to the main move 4 h4. The critical point is that after 4...g4 5 Ne5 Qh4+ 6 g3 fxg3 7 Qxg4 g2+ 8 Qxh4 gxh1Q 9 Qh5! White has a strong attack and even down a rook.] **4...Bg7 5 d4 d6 6 g3** [Going for the less common break on g3. The idea is that in case of 6...g4 I plant my knight on h4 and play on the dark squares until I can bring it to f5.] **6...h6** [Daring me to take on f4 came as a surprise.] **7 gxf4 g4 8 Ng1 Qh4+** **9 Ke2** (*diagram*)

So I'm forced to bongcloud. Although the computer evaluation tilts in Black's favor, I am incredibly comfortable playing positions like this. I have the center and once I develop my pieces I will be able to consolidate.



9...Ne7 10 Be3 O-O [I was happy to see him commit to the kingside. I plan on breaking open the h file with h3] **11 Bg2 f5 12 e5 Ng6 13 Qd2 Qd8 14 Rf1 c6** [In order to get play, Black needs to crack open the position with ...c5. Then he may have a chance to take advantage of my vulnerable king. Playing to close the position only helps



me because I still have the h3 break in pocket.] **15 h3 Nh4 16 Ke1 d5 17 Qf2 h5 18 hxg4** [I get the break! Now I will be able to infiltrate on the h file and my opponent has conveniently closed off the entire other side of the board!] **18...Nxcg2+ 19 Qxg2 hxg4 20 Qh2 Be6 21 Nge2 Nd7 22 Ng3 Rf7 23 Qh7+ Kf8 24 Rh5** [At this point my opponent was running low on time and played his next move almost instantly.] **24...Bxe5 25 Qh6+** [His idea was to give up the bishop on e6 and trap my queen in the center of the board, but he

missed an important detail.] **25...Bg7 26 Qxe6 Rf6 27 Rxf5** [And the rook that is threatening to take my queen is pinned! My queen escapes and I am simply up a piece. With that I easily converted my advantage.] **27...Qc7 28 Rxf6+ Nxf6 29 Kd2 Re8 30 Qf5 Kg8 31 Nh5 Nxh5 32 Qxh5 Qe7 33 Bf2 Qd7 34 Rg1 b5 35 Rxc4 Kf8 36 f5 Qe7 37 Rg6 Qf7 38 Be3 b4 39 Ne2 Rxe3 40 Kxe3 c5 41 c3 bxc3 42 bxc3 Qe8+ 43 Kd2 Qa4 44 Rxc7 Kxc7 45 Qg6+ Kf8 46 Nf4 Qd7 47 f6 cxd4 48 Qh6+ Ke8 49 Qh8+ Kf7 50 Qg7+ 1-0**

This final game, from the 3rd round in the 9th grade section, quickly developed into razor-sharp contest with tactical fireworks occurring all across the board.

Kent Slate - Leonard Sweeney-Barrett Two Knights

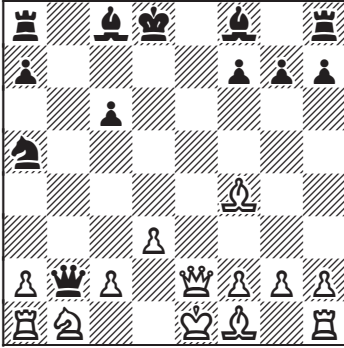
Notes by Kent Slate

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 Ng5 [Although dubious at the higher levels, I thought 4 Ng5 could initiate enough complications to 'test' my opponent's knowledge, as compared to a solid move such as 4 d3 where strategic play ensues.] **4...d5 5 exd5 Na5 6 Bb5+ c6 7 dxc6 bxc6 8 Bd3 Nd5** [All standard moves. Black challenges the knight while intending a potential ...f5/...e4 push] **9 Nf3** [9 h4 is an interesting line, but with the White pieces I wasn't interested in pursuing the double edged imbalances which follow 9...h6 10 Qh5 Qf6 11 Nh7 Rxh7 12 Bxh7 g6 13 Qe2 Nf4 Black's activity compensates for his material deficit.] **9...Nf4?!** [Although natural, this seems too provocative given Black's uncastled king, weak e5 pawn, and inferior development. I contemplated castling for the majority

of my thinking—and indeed, I prefer my position after 10 O-O Nxd3 11 cxd3—but I felt castling 'justified' his knight move as ...Nxd3 isn't forced and he can continue development with a move such as ...Bd6 menacing my kingside.] **10 Bf1!** [Absolutely critical. Keeping my king in the center lets me continue developing without worrying about his pressure against the kingside.] **10...e4** [I calculated a few lines in response to 10 Bf1, but I really underestimated the potential strength of ...e4. My first thought was to remain solid with 11 Ng1 but Black seems to gain too much of an initiative after 11... Bc5 12 d4 exd3] **11 d3!** [Although Black can win the b-pawn by force (11...exf3 12 Bxf4 Qd4/Qf6 13 Qxf3 Qxb2), his uncastled king and loose Na5 allows for numerous geometric



resources, which are later illustrated in the game.] **11...exf3 12 Bxf4 Qf6** [12...Qd5 transposes] **13 Qxf3 Qxb2 14 Qe2+!** [The integral idea of 11 d3. An in-between check allows me to access the a1-h8 diagonal and protect Ra1 with an X-ray.] **14...Kd8?**



I completely missed this move. On the surface, it looks genius. Black is planning to shift the h8 rook to the e-file with a tempo, where it will threaten my queen and king. 15 Be5 becomes impossible because of 15... Qc1+ Qd1 Bb4+ c3 Qb2 and ...Re8 to follow. And 15 Qe5 appears to fall to the tactic 15...Bb4+ 16 Kd1 Re8 and ...Re1# is coming. However, due to sheer luck or something else, at that last minute I have the saving move of grace 17 Qc7mate

15 Qe5! Qb6!? [A practical decision to keep the complications. I knew I should be winning cleanly now with a move such as 16 Be2, but the temptation of 16 Bg5+ f6 17 Bxf6 kept me thinking for around 20 minutes. Eventually, I decided Bg5 was unnecessary, and after the further 17...gxf6 18 Qxf6+

Kc7 19 Qxh8 Bd7 I wasn't sure how to evaluate my position.] **16 Be3!** ['Forcing' a queen trade and avoiding complications. In fact, it turns out the computer evaluates 16 Bg5+ as only 'barely winning' —with upmost precision required from White! 16 Bg5+ f6 17 Bxf6+ gxf6 18 Qxf6+ Kc7 19 Qxh8 Bc5! (instead of the 19...Bd7 I examined) 20 Qe5+ Bd6 21 Qg5 Qb2 22 Qxa5+ Kb7 23 Nd2 Qxa1+ 24 Ke2 Qb2 25 Qa4 Bg4+! 26 f3 (26 Qxg4 Re8+ 27 Ne4 Qxc2+ 28 Ke3 Qc1+ with perpetual) Be6 27 Ne4 ∞] **16...c5?** [Black forfeits a full Rook in a last-ditch attempt to keep the queens on a board. But the position is still tricky: 17 Qd5+ Bd6 18 Qxa8 Qb2 I'd lose a rook of my own.] **17 Nd2?! Be6 18 Be2 Nc6 19 Qe4 Nb4?** [Rather humorously, for the third time my opponent offers a full rook. He intends to trap my queen after 20 Qxa8+ Kd7 21 O-O Bd5, but he missed the saving resource on my 22nd move.] **20 Qxa8+ Kd7 21 O-O Bd5 22 Bg4+! Ke7 23 Qc8 Qg6 24 Bxc5+ Kf6 25 Qd8+ Ke5 26 f4mate 1-0** White wins with a pretty checkmate in the center of the board.

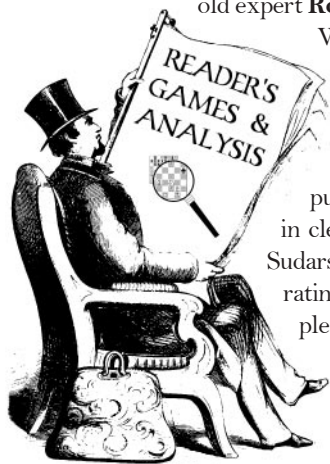




VIRGINIA CHESS did not have a tournament report on the 2022 Skyline Open, held Oct 8-10 at the Dulles Marriot, but attention should be paid to the result there of 14-year-old expert **Ronen Wilson**. The event was strong, with IM Kevin

Wang and GM Jesse Kraai topping the crosstable.

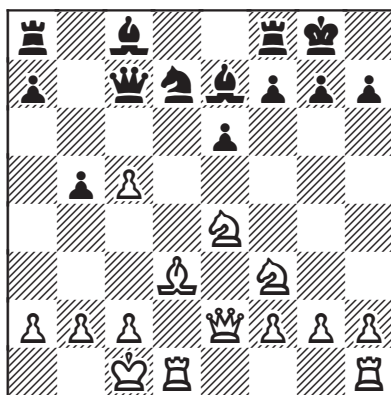
Wilson's starting rating of 2077 seeded him only 22nd out of 45 in the Open section. Yet he proceeded to run off five straight wins, four of them against higher rated (some *much* higher) opposition, which put him a full point clear of the field! He wound up in clear 1st place even with a final round loss to master Sudarshan Sriniaiyer. This incredible performance raised his rating almost 100 points, to 2169, in a single leap! We are pleased to be able to present Wilson's own commentary on his game versus grandmaster Jesse Kraai.



Ronen Wilson - Jesse Kraai 2022 Skyline Open French

Notes by Ronen Wilson

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 dxe4 5 Nxe4 Be7 6 Bxf6 Bxf6 7 Nf3 O-O 8 Qd2 Nd7 9 O-O-O Be7 10 Bd3 c5 11 dxc5 [11 Nxc5 was more accurate] 11...Qc7 12 Qe2 b5!?



This move took me by surprise, to say the least. I was expecting ...Rd8 and ...Nxc5. I had seen (and lost to) similar ideas in the Caro Kann, when Black plays ...b5 to open the queenside, but here something just felt off. I knew my opponent wanted me to play Bxb5, which would result in a pawn advantage but also having to face an attack. Normally, I would devour that pawn in a heartbeat, but since I was up against a GM I was a bit more cautious.

13 c6!



This move throws a wrench in Black's plans, as White can capture on b5 with tempi. 13 Bxb5?! Nxc5 14 Qc4? was my original plan. I thought I would be better here but it would be tricky to defend. However, Black is actually the one that is better despite the pawn deficit: 14...Rb8 15 Nxc5 (or 15 Rhe1? Rxb5! 16 Qxb5 Ba6 17 Qb4 Nd3+! 18 Rxd3 Bxb4 White loses his queen; or 15 Kb1? a6 16 Ba4 Qb7 is also winning for Black) Bxc5 White has many problems to deal with and must be very careful. Some possible continuations include:

16 Rhe1? a6! 17 Bxa6 (17 Ba4? Be3+! 18 Rxe3 Qxc4 winning) Qb6! 18 Bxc8 Qxb2+ 19 Kd2 Bb4+ 20 Ke2 Rbxc8 Black is winning.

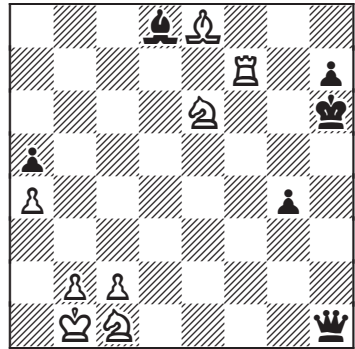
16 b4 Bd6 17 a3 (17 Qxc7 Bxc7 18 a4 a6 19 Bc4 Rxb4 ≠ Black regains the pawn) 17...Qe7 Black has a lot of pressure against White's queenside and plans for opening it with ...a5.

16 Qe2 Qa5 (16...Bxf2 17 Qxf2 Rxb5 ≠) 17 a4 (17 Bc4? Ba6! 18 Bxa6 Rxb2! 19 Kxb2 Ba3+ with forced mate) 17...a6 18 Qe5 axb5! 19 Qxb8 bxa4 White's queenside has been badly damaged and the king is unsafe.

13...Qxc6 14 Bxb5 Qc7 15 Qc4! [The extra tempo proves to be a valuable asset as the Black knight on d7 can't cause trouble for White.] **15...Qf4+ 16 Ned2 Qh6?!** [To say the Black Queen on h6 looks awkward would be an understatement, although there aren't many better places for it that avoid the trade. 16...Qf6 was most likely avoided due to 17 Ne4 Qf4+ which repeats, and my opponent probably wouldn't have been too happy with that result. 16...Qb8? was poor: 17 Bc6 Nb6 18 Qe4 f5 19 Qe2 Bb7 20 Qxe6+ +-] **17 Qc7 Rb8?** [This was probably an attempt to spice up the game with a major material imbalance. However, a rook and two minors are almost always heavily favored over a queen.] **18 Bxd7 Rb7 19 Qxc8 Rxc8 20 Bxc8 Rb8** [Around here my opponent offered a draw. I actually considered taking it—after all, he's a GM, and that would've been my first over-the-board draw against one. But then I looked at my position and decided, "*Nah, we're going big or going home.*"] **21 Ba6 Qf6 22 Nb3** [22 c3? Ba3! wins] **22...g5 23 Kb1?** [I fumbled the position a little. I spent roughly 14 minutes on this move and ended up forgetting that I couldn't play Nd4 after ...g4, because of ...e5. I should have gone 23 Rhe1 g4 24 Ne5 Qxf2 25 Kb1] **23...g4 24 Ne1** [An awkward spot for the White steed. 24 Nfd2 Qxf2 25 h3 was probably a little better. My original plan was 24 Nfd4? but it falls to 24...e5! attacking both the knight and bishop.] **24...Qxf2 25 Rd7?** [My position goes from 'winning' to 'still better but with no clear way to victory'. 25 h3 g3 26 Rf1 Qb6 27 Bd3 would have been better.] **25...Rd8 26 Rxd8+** [not 26 Rxe7? Rd1+ 27 Nc1 Qe3] **26...Bxd8** [I was playing on increment alone by this point, while Jesse still had around 40 minutes left.] **27 Bb7 Qb6 28 Be4 Qe3 29 Bb7** [29 Ba8 ±] **29...Qb6 30 Ba8** [Now the advantage is completely gone.] **30...a5 31 a4 Qb4?** [He allows me a chance to bring my

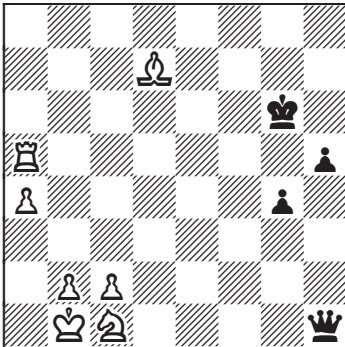


pieces back into the game. 31...Qa6 maintained the balance.] **32 Bc6 Qc4 33 Bb5 Qe4 34 Rf1 Kg7 35 Nc5?** [A tactical mistake. After 35 g3 ± the move Nc5 becomes an option and the Ne1 could take a break from babysitting g2.] **35...Qe5** [forks the knight and the h-pawn] **36 Ned3 Qxh2 37 Be8!?** [White spices up the position by making it very tactical.] **7...Qxg2 38 Rxf7+ Kh6 39 Nxe6 Qh1+ 40 Nc1** [40 Ka2? Qd5+] (*diagram*)



40...Bg5 [40...g3 41 Nxd8 g2 42 Bc6 Qxc1+! gets two pieces instead of one: 43 Kxc1 g1Q+ 44 Kd2 Qd4+ 45 Ke2 Qxd8 both material and position would have been balanced.] **41 Nxb5 Kxg5 42 Bd7 h5** [Now if 42...g3? 43 Rg7+! Kf4 44 Rg4+ Kf3 45 Bc6+ Kxg4 46 Bxh1] **43 Rf5+ Kg6 44 Rxa5**

(*diagram*)



44...Kf6? [Black had only one move to maintain equality, and this wasn't it. 44...g3! was back on: 45 Be8+ Kf6 46 Bxh5 g2 47 Bf3 Qxc1+ 48 Kxc1 g1Q+ 49 Bd1 Qe3+ 50 Kb1 Qd2 51 Ra6+ Kg5 52 Bf3 Qf2 53 Bd1 (53 Bb7 Qf1+ 54 Ka2 Qf7+) 53...Qd2 =] **45 Ra6+ Ke7 46 Bc6! Qe1 47 Bd5 g3?** [I assume my opponent was moving quickly to try to pressure me and forgot to account for my threats. Black would still be losing after 47...Qd2 48 Bb7 h4 49 Rg6

g3 50 Rg4 but the position would remain complex and, with little time, I might still blunder away the advantage.] **48 Re6+ Qxe6 49 Bxe6 Kxe6 50 Ne2 g2 51 Nf4+ 1-0** It was incredibly difficult to contain myself —my first GM win, my highest rated victory by roughly 200 points, and clear first in the tournament. I was so ecstatic I accidentally ripped one of the scoresheets when tearing apart the carbon copy. Overall, an amazing game for me in an amazing tournament.





Northern Virginia Open

The 2023 Northern Virginia Open was contested Jan 6-8 in Dulles. The event drew 185 players across three sections.

The 54-player Open (or “Championship”) section saw an “invasion” from out of state as Sabina Foiser (North Carolina) & Aditya Ponukumate (Missouri) tied for 1st/2nd with 4½ out of 5. Thomas Bartel (Pennsylvania) was joined by Virginian (yay!) Thomas Lane at 4 points apiece to share 3rd/4th.

The Amateur (under 1800) section saw, curiously, only two 1700 players among its 68 entrees. 1556-rated James Wright seized the opportunity and went 5-0, raising his rating all the way to 1673! Parv Jani was runner up, half a point behind. Benjamin Amrany, Joe Mercurio & Lennox Serrette all followed at 4-1.

Fifty-seven “Novices” turned out for the Under 1200 section, and one of them—Charles Hu—recorded a 5-0 sweep. Noah Weinstein followed with 4½, and a half-dozen players went 4-1: Christian Davison, Cheney Zhang, Erick Resek, Mike Anliker, Cameron Willson (who entered the last round likewise bidding for a perfect score but lost to Hu in the top board game) & Christopher H Paunov.

Mike Hoffpauir directed the event, assisted by Steve Jablon (Championship Section), Greg Vaserstein (Amateur Section) & Cheryl Havens (Novice Section).

Owen Levine - Aditya Ponukumate Italian

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5 4 c3 Nf6
5 d3 d6 6 O-O a6 7 a4 Ba7 8 Re1 h6
9 h3 O-O 10 Nbd2 Be6 11 Bxe6 fxe6
12 b4 Nh5 13 Nf1 Nf4 14 Be3 Qf6 15
Bxa7 Rxa7 16 N1h2 Qg6 17 Ng4 h5
18 Nh4 Qf7 19 Nh2 Nxh3+ 20 gxh3
Qxf2+ 21 Kh1 Qxh4 22 Re3 Raa8 23
Ra2 Rf2 24 Rxf2 Qxf2 25 Rf3 Qh4
26 Qf1 Qe7 27 Qg2 Rf8 28 Rg3 Rf6
29 Rg5 Qf7 30 Kg1 Ne7 31 Qe2 Rh6
32 Nf3 Ng6 33 d4 Nf4 34 Qf1 Rf6 35
dxe5 Nxh3+ 36 Qxh3 Rxf3 37 Qh4
Rf1+ 38 Kh2 Qf3 39 Rg2 dxe5 40
Qg5 Qf4+ 41 Rg3 Qxg5 42 Rxc5 Re1
43 Rxe5 Kf7 44 Kg2 Kf6 45 Rxh5
Rxe4 46 Kf3 Rc4 47 b5 Rxc3+ 48
Ke2 axb5 49 Rxb5 b6 0-1

Thomas Lane - Sabina Foiser Gurgenzidze

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 g6 4 e5 Bg7
5 f4 Nh6 6 Nf3 Bg4 7 Be2 e6 8 O-O
Nf5 9 Qd3 O-O 10 Rd1 Na6 11
h3 Bxf3 12 Bxf3 c5 13 dxc5 Nxc5
14 Qe2 Qb6 15 Qf2 Nd7 16 Qxb6
Nxb6 17 Nb5 a6 18 Nd4 Nxd4 19
Rxd4 Rac8 20 Rb4 Rc6 21 a4 Rb8
22 a5 Nd7 23 c3 Bf8 24 Rba4 Nc5
25 R4a3 Nd3 26 Ra4 Bc5+ 27 Kf1
b5 28 axb6 Nxc1 29 Rxc1 Rxc6 30
Rc2 Rxb2 31 Rxb2 Rxb2 32 Rxa6
Be3 33 Ra4 Rc2 34 Rb4 Kg7 35 Ra4
Rxc3 36 Ke2 Rb3 37 g3 Bg1 38 Ra2
Re3+ 39 Kf1 Rxf3+ 40 Kxg1 Rxc3+
41 Kh2 Rf3 42 Ra4 g5 43 fxg5 Rf5
44 h4 Rxe5 45 Kg3 Re4 46 Ra8 h6
47 Rd8 hxg5 48 hxg5 f6 49 gxf6+

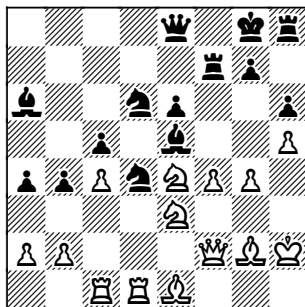


Kxf6 50 Kf3 Rh4 51 Re8 Ke5 52 Kg3 Ra4 53 Kf3 d4 54 Rd8 Ra3+ 55 Ke2 Ke4 56 Rh8 Ra2+ 57 Ke1 e5 58 Rh3 Kd5 59 Rh5 d3 60 Kd1 Kd4 61 Rh8 e4 62 Rd8+ Ke3 63 Kc1 Rc2+ 0-1

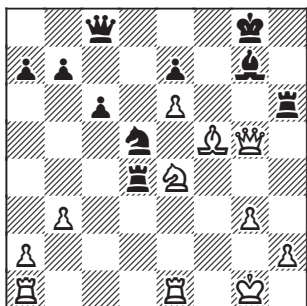
Bd2 Qc7 25 Rf1 Nb6 26 Rac1 Bf8 27 Rfe1 Rd7 28 Nh2 Qd8 29 Nhf1 Be7 30 Be4 f5 31 exf6 Bxf6 32 Red1 Qc7 33 Be1 Qd8 34 Kh2 Nc8 35 Nd2 Nd6 36 Bg2 Qe8 37 g4 Rf7 38 Ne4 Be5

**Zach Traynor - Niraj Patel
Neo-Grünfeld**

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 d5 3 g3 g6 4 Bg2 Bg7 5 O-O O-O 6 c4 c6 7 Nc3 Re8 8 Qb3 dxc4 9 Qxc4 Nbd7 10 e4 Nb6 11 Qe2 Be6 12 b3 Bg4 13 Rd1 Qc8 14 Bf4 Qe6 15 Re1 Rad8 16 Ng5 Qc8 17 f3 h6 18 Nxf7 Kxf7 19 fxg4 Rxd4 20 e5 Nxf4 21 e6+ Kg8 22 Qxg4 g5 23 Be4! Rf8 (23...gxf4 24 Qg6 Rxe4 25 Rxe4 Rf8 26 Rxf4 Rxf4 27 gxf4) 24 Bxg5 hxg5 25 Qxg5 Rf6 26 Bf5 Nd5 27 Ne4 Rh6



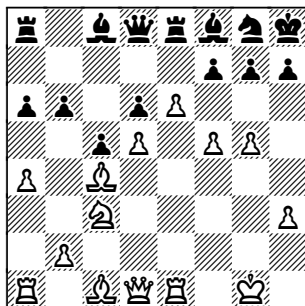
39 fxe5 Rxf2 40 Nxf2 Nf7 41 Nd3 Qb8 42 Kh1 Bb7 43 Nxc5 Bxg2+ 44 Nxc2 Qxe5 45 Nd3 Qe4 46 Nf2 Qe5 47 Nd3 Qe4 1/2-1/2 (47...Qe2 48 Bxb4 Qxg4+)



28 Nd6! Qf8 (28...exd6 29 e7 Qe8 30 Bd7) 29 Nf7 Rf6 30 h4 Rxf7 31 exf7+ Kh8 32 Qg6 Nf6 33 Re6 1-0

**James Wright - Tripp Southerland
Benoni**

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 c5 3 d5 e6 4 c4 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 6 Nc3 Be7 7 e4 O-O 8 Bc4 a6 9 a4 Nbd7 10 h3 Re8 11 O-O Bf8 12 Re1 Ne5 13 Nxe5 Rxe5 14 f4 Re8 15 e5 Nd7 16 e6 Nf6 17 f5 b6 18 g4 Kh8 19 g5 Ng8



**Thomas Bartell - Owen Levine
King's Indian Attack**

1 Nf3 d5 2 g3 Nf6 3 Bg2 e6 4 O-O Be7 5 d3 c5 6 Nbd2 O-O 7 e4 Nc6 8 e5 Nd7 9 Re1 b5 10 Nf1 a5 11 h4 b4 12 h5 h6 13 N1h2 Ba6 14 Ng4 Kh7 15 Qd2 Rh8 16 Nfh2 Kg8 17 f4 Nd4 18 Ne3 Qb6 19 c3 Nc6 20 c4 dxc4 21 dxc4 Rd8 22 Qf2 a4 23 Nhg4 Nd4 24

20 Rf1 fxe6 21 fxe6 Ne7 22 Bd3 g6 23 b3 Bg7 24 Rf6 Ng8 25 Rf7 Bxc3? (25...Re7) 26 Rxh7+! Kxh7 27 Qh5+ Nh6 28 Qxg6+ Kh8 29 Qh7mate 1-0



Vocation Corner Coaching From YOUR OWN Games

by Mike Callahan

AS CRAZY AS IT SOUNDS, anyone and everyone can use their own games to coach chess! The primary responsibility of a chess coach is to give students/pupils a proven growth methodology. Playing skill and coaching skill are two different things. The one thing that all great coaches have in common is that they have analyzed enough of their *own* games to understand that chess development is universal!

The best coaches are usually ‘Complete Chess Personalities’! They are rated, certified coaches, certified tournament directors, and affiliate organizers. Super coaches are also analyst, theoreticians, writers, columnist, and authors. Your willingness to stick strictly to grandmaster best practices is how you earn and maintain the respect, cooperation, and support of chess and other types of personalities! That respect, cooperation, and support is essential to the growth of your coaching business, your club, your events, and the chess community at large! The best book I’ve ever read on grandmaster best practices and advice is *CHESS: WORDS OF WISDOM* by Mike Henebry! — 500 pages No Diagrams!?!

Grandmaster best practices in analysis suggest that you publish your analysis everywhere you can! Your website, other peoples’ websites, chess publications of every kind, social media, club newsletters, and of course you need to make a copy for your training manual.

Great analysis at every level tells a story. What had you done to prepare for the tournament? What were your thoughts as the game began? when you went out of book? and when you reached a branch point? What was your plan as you began the middle game? When you had options, why did you pick the response you chose over the other? Were there any surprises during the game? At what point did you know you were winning? At what point did you know you were losing? What did this game reveal to you about your strengths and weaknesses? What improvements did you find over your initial analysis, either while analyzing on your own later or when you finally put the game on the engine? What is your plan of preparation for your next tournament, and when will that be? This human side of the game is what lets every student know that you can empathize with their struggle and that chess growth is really as universal and as predictable as you keep saying!

Coaching in the internet age has its own set of challenges and benefits. Grandmasters past and present will agree that chess computers have significantly improved how we study. The challenge is that people new to chess do not know or understand that *chess computers* and *computer chess* are not the same thing. The tools of rapid chess growth are books, board, pieces, paper, pencil, clocks, playing up, longer time controls, analysis, a database, and an engine. Lightning, Bullet, Blitz, and Rapid online play are more toys than they will ever be tools! If the goal is inarguable chess growth, results, and accomplishments, your students must play where no computers are allowed! lol



In closing, it doesn't matter whether you charge for coaching or not. Having analyzed your own games and being willing to share your journey is evidence of grandmaster-like discipline and character. It's a needed element of growing players, coaches, clubs, and your chess community. Someone has to lead by a followable example. Remember, *they don't care how much you know until they know how much you care!* As the people who have come in contact with you become more cultured, informed, and evolved, make sure they discover that you cared more than they ever knew.

Need help? Call me @804-426-6058 or email, waterman2010kir@aol.com



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