

# VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

The bimonthly publication of the  
Virginia Chess Federation

2023 - #3



*King Philidor (Michael Callahan) builds up the next generation of chess talent with free instruction and game analysis at the Meadowdale Branch Library in Chesterfield County.*

*See page 15 for Mike's account of this event as well as his guidance for planting chess in schools.*

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## Newsletter

2023 - Issue #3

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## Back in the Land of the Future

by Aleksey Bashtavenko

*“I’ve never beheld such a paradise. The people are enchanting and—a mercy on this earth of ours—this is the only place where there isn’t any race question. Negroes and whites and Indians, three-quarters, one eighth, the wonderful Mulatto and Creole women, Jews and Christians, all dwell together in a peace that passes describing. The Jewish immigrants are in seventh heaven; all of them have jobs and feel at home.” - Stefan Zweig*

**I** RETURNED TO BRAZIL in the middle of July, this time with a Russian passport. The previous year, I entered as an American and was allowed to stay for a maximum of 180 days. I used up nearly all of my time there, and would have been allowed to return after the eighth of August, but having grown weary of life as I knew it in Serbia, I was eager to return to the proverbial “land of the future”. To my surprise, the immigration officers had no questions about my double nationality, and no comments about the war in Europe. It almost seemed as if life had hardly changed in this part of the world; quite a glaring contrast to the former Yugoslavia at the beginning of 2022.

But in the next months I realized that I had grim prospects of becoming a legal resident in Brazil if I were to remain there as a Russian tourist. Hence, a border run was in order. I devised a plan to leave Brazil with my Russian passport, and then return the same day as an American. Around that time, a championship of Brazil took place in Cuiaba, the capital of the state of Mato Grosso. I knew nothing of that state, other than how Stefan Zweig famously characterized it as



*The author (right) jousts at the Casa Stefan Zweig in Petrópolis, Brazil*



a vast, uninhabited plain. Cuiaba was a good 24-hour drive away, but the route there was near the border with Paraguay and Bolivia.

In one of the previous tournaments I met IM Luis Rodi, who took me on as a student. Luis also had a bit of experience with border runs. Originally from Uruguay, it took him a while to become a lawful resident of Brazil. He advised me that traveling to Bolivia was a terrible idea. Back when Luis was still making border runs before becoming a permanent resident in Brazil, he went to get a passport stamped in Bolivia and was told that the officer in charge wasn't working that day and that Luis *should track him down at his home*. Approaching the address he'd been given, Luis couldn't help but feel a sense of dread. What if this was all some elaborate trap? But the officer simply told him to come back the next day, leaving Luis shaken but unharmed. Since then the situation there has deteriorated to the point where seemingly the only reasons to go there might be to dispose of a body or smuggle drugs.

So, despite its own less-than-ideal conditions, Paraguay seemed like the better option. On my drive to Cuiaba, I stopped in Ponta Porra, Paraguay. At the border I encountered what looked like an old, deserted building, untouched for decades— crumbling walls, shattered windows were, the roof caved in. It reminded me of Detroit in the late 90s, the last time I visited. But to my surprise, it was a functional government office with an immigration officer and a health ministry that enforced COVID policies.

The immigration officer wouldn't give me an entry stamp into Paraguay because I didn't receive an exit stamp from Brazil. I went back to Brazil to sort things out, and fortunately the immigration officer there was able to get me back to Ponta Porra. As I walked through the bustling streets, I couldn't help but feel a bit uneasy. The vendors selling their wares, the homeless people begging for money, and the menacing looking thugs lurking about, all



## 2023 Charlottesville Open

July 15-16

Comfort Inn Monticello

2097 Inn Drive, Charlottesville, Va 22911



5-SS, Rd 1 Game-75 +10 sec, rds 2-5 Game-90 +10 sec. \$\$\$3,170 b/70. In two sections: *Open* \$650-450-325, U2000 \$170, U1700 \$160, Upset \$100. *Under 1600* \$450-300-175, U1300 \$150, U1000/Unr \$140, Upset \$100. Trophies to 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>, Top U1300, Top U1000/Unrated. *Both Rds* 10-1:30-6, 10-2:30. EF \$65 through 7/8, \$80 thereafter, \$5 retained from player who withdraws before rd 1. Hotel \$129 plus taxes if reserved by Wednesday, June 14, (434) 977-3300 identify group "2023 Charlottesville Open Chess Championships." Blitz (game/5 minutes) tournament Friday night, 7/14, on site Reg 4-6:15pm, rd 1 7pm. Register online at [www.vachess.org](http://www.vachess.org). Questions/more info Mike Hoffpauir, [mhoffpauir@aol.com](mailto:mhoffpauir@aol.com), 757-846-4805 (cell/text).

*A Heritage Event - 15 US Chess Grand Prix Points*



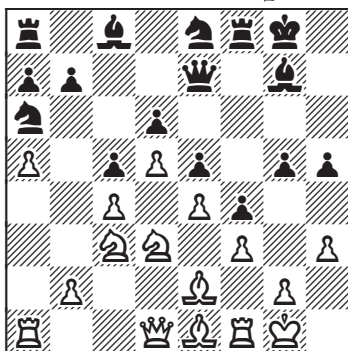
seemed to blend together into a chaotic blur. It brought to mind what Luis had said about Paraguay being a “*pais del octavo mundo*” — a country of the eighth world. This wasn’t just some run-of-the-mill third-world place. The difference between Paraguay and even the roughest parts of Mexico was like night and day, like comparing the glitz and glam of Manhattan to the gritty, dangerous favelas of Rio de Janeiro.

A day later I hit the road again, only to be pulled over by federal police in Mato Grosso do Sul, a Brazilian state that borders Paraguay. The area was known to be quite lawless, so police intervention was necessary. It was a routine inspection, and thankfully I didn’t have to explain why I had a Russian passport and an American driver’s license.

I arrived in Cuiaba the next morning after driving all night. I had to play against GM Alejandro Hoffman in my opening round, and I barely had any time to sleep that afternoon. The food in Cuiaba wasn’t anything extraordinary, but it was decent enough. My fiancée and I went to a sushi buffet where we could eat our fill for just \$20.

### Aleksey Bashtavenko - Alejandro Hoffman King’s Indian

1 d4 g6 2 c4 Bg7 3 Nc3 c5 4 d5 d6 5 Nf3 Nf6 6 e4 O-O 7 h3 e6 8 Be2 Na6 9 O-O Nc7 10 a4 e5 [I was happy to see this pawn structure because it gave me exactly what I was looking for: a closed center where I had c4-d5-e4. I was confident this favored White and I felt comfortable with my position.] 11 Ne1 Na6 12 Bg5 h6 13 Be3 Ne8 14 Nd3 Qe7 15 a5 f5 16 f3 f4 17 Bf2 g5 18 Be1 [Too slow. It would have been better to initiate a pawn break with b4. If Black plays 18...cxb4 White wins the pawn back after Nb5 and Rb1] h5



19 Nf2 [19 Kf2 would have been an interesting alternative. Odd though it may appear, this move allows White to get his king out of the dodge in a nick of time. Black is not yet ready for the critical break with ...g4. The following sequence may have ensued: 19...Nf6 20 Rh1 Rf7 White anticipates the ...g4 break and prepares to counterattack Black’s king on the open h-file. Meanwhile, Black lifts his rook to f7 with the intention of moving it to g7, where it can facilitate the g4 pawn-break. 21 Bd2 Bf8 White vacates a flight square for his king, and Black liberates the g7 square for his rook. 22 Ke1 Rg7 Black is finally ready for the g4 pawn break, but White’s king is nowhere to be found! Moreover, ...g4 will expose Black’s own king to a potential counterattack in view of White rook on h1. This prompts the question of whether Black would have been better off forsaking ...g4 and if he ought to play ...Rh7 instead of ...Rg7] 19...Rf6 20 Nb5 Rg6 21 Rb1 Nf6 22



**b4** [White achieves his own break] **22...cxb4 23 Bxb4 Nxb4 24 Rxb4 a6 25 Nc3 Qc7 26 Qa1?** [A blunder that allowed Black to achieve the much-needed ...g4. One lesson of this position appears to be that White's a-pawn became a target after it had advanced too far. It would have been better to retreat the rook and surrender the pawn: 26 Rb2 Qxa5 27 Na4 Nd7 28 Qc2 Bf8 29 Rfb1 Qc7 Black is up a pawn, but he cannot

achieve ...g4 break. White has a clear plan of counterattack on the half-open b-file, and Black's bishop is confined to the bleak task of defending d6.] **26...g4 27 fxg4 hxg4 28 hxg4 Bxg4 29 Bxg4 Nxb4 30 Nd3 Ne3 31 Rf2 Bf6 32 Qa2 Qh7 33 Rbb2 Rh6 34 Rf3 Rh1+ 35 Kf2 Qh2 36 Rxe3 Bh4+ 0-1** After Black pushed g4, the positioned titled decisively in his favor, and White had no way to achieve reasonable counterplay.

In the following game I faced a young player who played much better than his supposed rating of 1400.

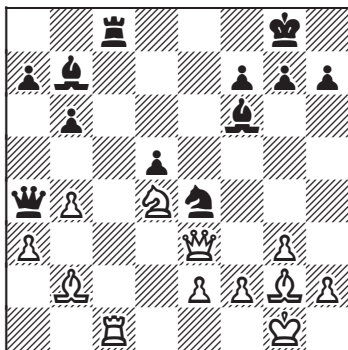
### Olavo Rodriguez - Aleksey Bashtavenko Queen's Indian

**1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Ba6 5 b3 Bb7** [I opted for 4...Ba6 because the 4...Bb7 variation allows White to deliver a dangerous pawn sacrifice with d5 (4...Bb7 5 Bg2 Be7 6 O-O O-O 7 d5 exd5 8 Nh4) whereas 4...Ba6 often prompts White to play some awkward looking move like b3 or Qc2. Once I saw that White committed to playing b3, I was happy to return my bishop back to b7.] **6 Bg2 Be7** [More accurate was 6...Bb4+—it was also playable a move earlier—when White's best move 7 Bd2 would have prevented him from developing Bb2 as in the game.] **7 O-O O-O 8 Nc3 d5 9 cxd5 exd5 10 Bb2 c5** [I would have been better off playing 10...Nd7 but in any case White managed to develop his queenside pieces to their most active squares: bishop on b2, knight on c3] **11 Rc1** [White forfeited the opportunity to punish my inaccuracy. 11 Ne5, occupying a critical central square, would have made his minor pieces even more active.] **11...Ne4 12 Ba3** [Likewise inaccurate. He should played 12 Nxe4 with

the following variation: 12...dxe4 13 Nd2 f5 14 dxc5 Nc6 15 g4 Bxc5 16 gxf5 e3 and here the provocative exchange sacrifice 17 Rxc5 seems not only tempting but necessary since 17 Nf3 allows Black too much counterplay. After 17 Rxc5 Black has the option of playing the immediate 17...exf2+, which wins back a pawn, or 17...bxc5, which would saddle White with a crippled pawn formation after 18 fxe3. The position becomes dicey and irrational, which makes it easy to see why my opponent opted for the comparatively modest, if somewhat passive text move.] **12...Na6 13 dxc5 Naxc5** [At this point I felt entirely comfortable. My d-pawn is isolated, but my knights were developed to very active central squares and I was prepared to fianchetto my bishop next.] **14 Bb2 Bf6 15 Nd4 Qd7 16 b4 Nxc3 17 Bxc3 Ne4 18 Bb2 Rac8 19 Qd3 Qa4 20 a3 Ba6 21 Qe3 Bb7** [I considered 21...Bg5 but noticed that it loses a pawn. At the time, I did not see how Black could have received compensation after 22 f4 Bf6 23



Bxe4 dxe4 24 Qxe4. In hindsight, 24...Rfe8 now seems tempting. White may respond with 25 Rxc8 deflecting Black's rook from threatening the queen, but I believe the pawn sacrifice would have been justified. Black has an active bishop pair and control of the c-file while White has weak squares around his king and a weak pawn on e2] 22 Rxc8 Rxc8 23 Rc1



Anticipating a series of exchanges, my opponent offered a draw. I declined because my position seemed good and

I wasn't willing to give away rating points that easily. We were down to under five minutes on the clock. In retrospect, his draw offer seems reasonable because the dynamic aspects of my position were not enough for me to claim a considerable advantage.

23...Qd7 24 Rxc8+ Qxc8 25 Qd3 Qc4? [This is a severe tactical blunder. Under time pressure, I was not able to objectively evaluate the situation. White's position was passive, but it was also solid and worthy of a draw. Instead of Qc4, I should have played 25...g6 followed by ...h5 grabbing space on the kingside. I might have gradually improved my position in minor ways, which may have had the effect of prompting my opponent to react rashly. Instead, I was the one who played the ill-conceived move resulting in defeat.] 26 Bxe4 Bxd4 27 Bxh7+ Kh8 28 Qxd4 Qxd4 29 Bxd4 1-0

My adult player in the next game presented himself provocatively as "Rambo".

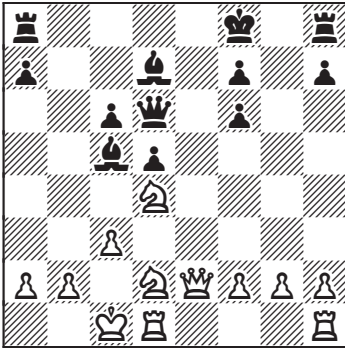
### "Rambo" - Aleksey Bashtavenko Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 c3 d5 4 exd5 exd5 5 d4 Nf6 6 Bg5 Be7 [6...Be6 would have allowed me to recapture on f6 with my queen without losing a pawn.] 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 Bxf6 gxf6?! [Unnecessary! I could have played 8...Qxf6 all the same and if White wins the pawn with 9 Qxd5 Qb6 threatens f2. White could defend by 10 Qe4+ Be6 11 Qc2 but the resulting position leaves him with significant development issues. For example, 11...Bd5 putting pressure on the long diagonal, when the most natural

move for White here appears to be 12 b4 and Black can double White's pawn with 12...Bxf3 13 gxf3 Be7 and it appears that Black has enough compensation for the missing pawn since White has two double pawns on the f-file, White is lagging in development, and Black's queen dominates an important diagonal.] 9 Bb5+ Nc6 10 Nd4?! [It would have been better to simply castle. Black's pawn structure was already inferior, so White had no need to force the issue, 10 O-O O-O 11 Nbd2 Kh8 12 Nb3 Bb6 13 Nbd4



Qd6 14 Qd2 Rg8 15 g3 Bg4 16 Kg2 etc] **10...Qd6 11 Qe2+ Kf8 12 Bxc6 bxc6 13 Nd2?** [13 O-O was again best] **13... Bd7** [13...Rg8] **14 O-O-O** [And now there was no reason to castle in the long direction. 14 O-O would still have been fine. I immediately saw the opportunity to punish 14 O-O-O] **14...a5 15 N2b3 Bb6 16 Qf3 a4 17 Na1 a3 18 b3 Rg8**



Obviously ...Bg4 is threatened. While 19 h3 would not have been the best move, it was the most intuitive choice. In fact there was no reason to prevent ...Bg4 provided White do it by 19 Nac2! when 19...Bg4 20 Qe3 creates interesting complications: 20...Bxd1 21 Qh6+ Ke8 22 Re1+ Kd7 23 Nf5 with full compensation. Black could be tempted to continue 23...Qf8 but then 24 Re7+ Qxe7 25 Nxe7 Kxe7 26 Kxd1. White either overlooked the obvious threat or envisioned a different way to refute it.

**19 Rhe1? Bg4 20 Nf5?** [Making a bad situation worse. Had he played 20 Qe3 Black could not win material immediately in view of 20...Bxd1 21 Qh6+ Rg7 22 Nf5! Black would have had to settle for 20...c5 21 Ne2] **20... Bxf3 21 Nxd6 Bxd1 0-1**

Before next round Luis assured me that I should win, saying that if I couldn't beat Natasha, then he wouldn't know what to do with me. Apparently, Luis had had my upcoming opponent as a student, where he witnessed her allegedly mediocre aptitude for chess.

### Aleksey Bashtavenko – Natasha Moraes Silva French

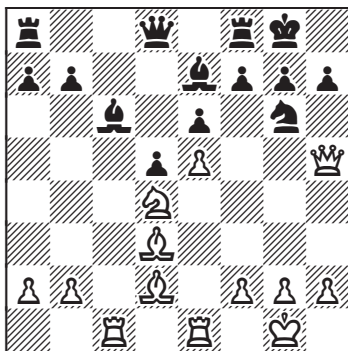
**1 d4 e6 2 e4 d5** [I always relish the prospect of playing positions with a closed center where I have a spatial advantage. The mainline King's Indian Defense and the Advance Variation of the French Defense are my favorite openings to play as White. I gleefully pushed my e-pawn the moment I saw 1...e6. My opponent might have tried to transpose to the Sicilian Defense with 2...c5, but in that case 3 d5 aims for a superior version of the Benoni set-up with White's pawn remaining on c2 and his knight coming out to c3] **3 e5 c5 4 c3 Nc6 5 Nf3 Qb6**

**6 Bd3 Bd7 7 O-O cxd4 8 cxd4 Nxd4 9 Nxd4 Qxd4 10 Nc3 Ne7?** [I got my favorite Milner-Barry gambit. Instead of 10...Ne7 Black should have played 10...a6 to neutralize the threat Nb5. The continuation might then be 11 Re1 Ne7 12 g3 Qb6 13 a3 Rc8 14 Bd2 Ng6 15 b4 Qd4 16 Re3 Be7 17 Ne2] **11 Re1?** [I should have allowed Black to accept a second pawn. 11 Nb5 Qxe5 12 Re1 Qb8 13 g3 Black already has a number of challenging problems to solve. It seems to me that 13...Bxb5 is the most natural move, but that further exposes the king





to grave danger after 14 Bxb5+ Nc6 15 Qxd5 winning back a pawn and asserting control in the center.] 11...Ng6?! [11...a6] 12 Nb5 Qb6 13 Be3 Qa5 14 Bd2 Qd8?! [14...Qb6 and if 15 Be3 Qa5 16 Bd2 Qb6 draw?] 15 Rc1 Bc6 16 Qh5? [16 Qa4 is the way to demonstrate the advantage, eg 16...Rc8 17 Qb3 Ra8 18 g3 d4 19 Qa4 Rc8 20 Ba5 Qd7 21 Qxd4 Qxd4 22 Nxd4] 16...Be7 17 Nd4 O-O?



17...Bd7 was necessary. However, now I returned all the favors. I could not find the way to keep the initiative, so I regretfully settled for recovering a pawn. Instead of that, 18 Re3! Maintained the pressure. 18... Bg5 19 Rh3 h6 20 Nxe6 Bxd2 (if 20...fxe6 21 Qxg6) 21 Nxd8 Raxd8 22 Rxc6 Nf4 23 Qd1 bxc6 24 Qxd2 Nxb3+ 25 gxh3 would favor White with a queen and a bishop for two rooks.

18 Nxc6? bxc6 19 Rxc6 Rc8 20 Rec1? [20 Rxc8 might still have created something after 20...Qxc8 21 Re3 Δ Rh3] 20...Rxc6 21 Rxc6 Qd7 22 Rc2 Qa4 23 b3 and the game ended in a draw. This was a story of squandered initiative. ½-½



**L**UIS AND I MET UP at a typical Brazilian restaurant where we had steak, draught beer, and a side of potatoes with rice. It was a pretty standard and reasonably priced meal. Hoffman would be paired against fellow GM Neuris Delgado for the next day's and final round. The next day arrived, and my last game ended in a quick draw. Around 11 am my fiancée and I stumbled upon Alejandro in the local restaurant, guzzling down caipirinhas. Before I could even inquire about his game, he ordered drinks us. It turned out Neuris had an early flight to catch, and they agreed to a quick draw.

Alexandr Fier won the tournament and became the champion of Brazil. Following the awards ceremony, we all made our way to a sponsored lunch at "Detroit wings"—emblazoned with the Detroit Red Wings hockey logo. As a former resident Detroit, I'd always found it peculiar that the area was famous for its distinctive chicken wings. Before we could even sit down, we were presented with colossal caipirinhas served in industrial-sized buckets, the biggest I had ever seen.

The Brazilian presidential elections were taking place that day, with the incumbent Jair Bolsonaro seeking reelection against his arch-nemesis Lula. We later moved to a bar in the city center packed with people wearing yellow jerseys, similar to ones handed out at our tournament. Apparently yellow symbolized Bolsonaro's bid for reelection. GM Fier was knocking back hard liquor at an unprecedented pace. GM



Darcy Lima and his teenage son were also present, with the latter pestering his father to stop drinking. And of course, Luis was there, bombarding me with absurd comparisons between Bolsonarismo and Argentina's "National Reconstruction Process" government that murdered tens of thousands in the late 70s and early 80s.

Upon learning that Bolsonaro had lost the election we left the city center as quickly as possible, fearing riots could be imminent. Fier hitched a ride back to the hotel with us. That evening, my fiancée and I joined Rodi and Hoffman for a fish buffet ten kilometers outside the city. It was a much-needed break from the tense atmosphere of earlier that day.

The next day, Bolsonarista truckers staged a nationwide protest, hoping to overturn the election results and instigate a military coup. Brazil's mountainous terrain, lack of infrastructure, and limited freeways made it easy for them to block major roads, causing our trip home to take three days instead of two. It was apparent that Bolsonaro won the majority of votes in all the states we traveled through. The rural regions where the protests took place were overwhelmingly pro-Bolsonaro, while Lula supporters primarily lived in impoverished Northeast regions, rarely traveling to areas I've visited.

The protestors' plan to provoke a *coup d'état* displayed a complete lack of understanding of the geopolitical context. Brazil's 1964 coup had been possible only with United States' support, aiding military dictatorships to fight communism in South America. We now live in a different time and the Biden administration has zero interest in supporting a military takeover. Moreover, Republican foreign policy under Trump's influence has diverged from neo-conservative interventionism. Peter Zeihan was right. We cannot turn back the clock to a post-globalization era; the epoch of America imposing order upon the world has passed.

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## Stumper by Gary T Robinson

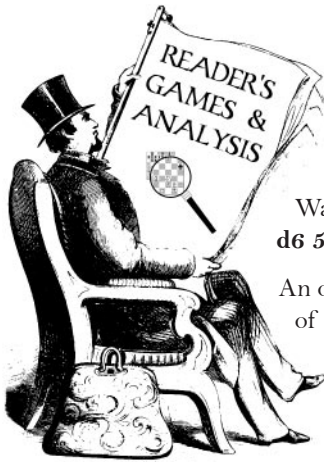
*Our old friend Gary Robinson has reached out with another original puzzle. Send solutions to the Editor (editorvcf@gmail.com) and there will be prizes (books) for the first few correct solutions submitted. —ed*

**T**HERE ARE MORE THAN A BILLION ways for White and Black to combine to play the first four moves of a game. Most of the resulting positions are, of course, quite bizarre. In fact, I know of a way that, after his fourth move, White can (if Black responds with an innocuous move like 4...Rg8) administer four different fifth-move checks, and three of these four checks are checkmates!

**Question: What are the moves?**

**Hint #1:** Black can, wisely or not, can avoid all the 5<sup>th</sup> move mates by immediately forcing White's king to move;

**Hint #2:** There are *two* ways to reach the key position.



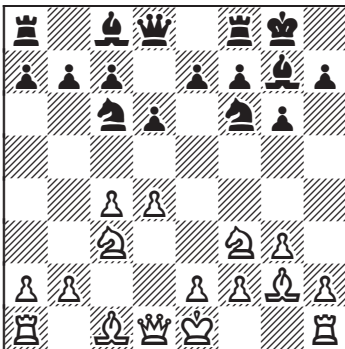
## Ray Atkins - Roger Pauley Metro vs Cosmos Club match 2023 King's Indian

*Notes by Macon Shibut*

The decisive game on the top board of a match between the Metro and Cosmos club in Washington DC 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 O-O 6 Be2 Nc6

An old fashion approach dating back to the early days of the Kings Indian. Developing ...Nc6 ahead of ...e5 exemplifies the 'hypermodern' idea of fighting the pawn center with piece pressure. Later, if you manage to provoke a "weakening" advance, those same pieces can occupy the breach

The game Alekhine-Yates, Carlsbad 1923 differed slightly from the present position in that Alekhine had played the moves g3 and Bg2 instead of e4 and Be2, but it illustrates the theme beautifully.



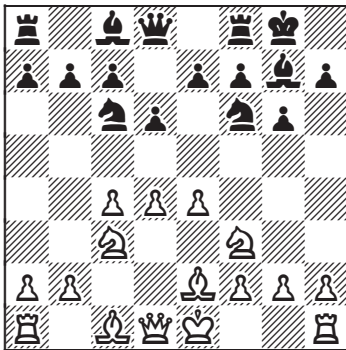
*Alekhine-Yates, Carlsbad 1923  
After 6...Nc6*

7 d5 Nb8 8 O-O Nbd7 9 e4 a5 10 Be3 Ng4  
11 Bd4 Nge5 12 Nxe5 Nxe5 13 c5 dxc5 14  
Bxc5 b6 15 Bd4 Ba6 16 Re1 Qd6 17 Bf1 Bxf1  
18 Rxf1 c5! 19 Bxe5 (19 dxc6? Qxd4) Qxe5  
20 Qb3 Rab8 21 Qb5 f5 22 Rae1 f4 23 Qd7  
Rbd8 24 gxf4 Qxf4 25 Qe6+ Kh8 26 f3 Qg5+  
27 Kh1 Rd6 28 Qh3 Be5 29 Re2 Rdf6 30 Nd1  
Rf4 31 Ne3 Rh4 32 Qe6 Qh5 33 Ng4 Rxf4 34  
fxg4 Rxf1+ 35 Kg2 Qxh2+ 36 Kxf1 Qh1+ 37  
Kf2 Bd4+ 38 Kg3 Qg1+ 39 Kh3 Qf1+ 40 Rg2  
Qh1+ 41 Kg3 Qe1+ 42 Kh3 g5! 43 Rc2 Qf1+  
44 Kh2 Qg1+ 45 Kh3 Qh1+ 46 Kg3 Qd1! 47  
Rc3 (The rook had no good squares. 47 Rg2  
Qe1+ 48 Kh3 Qh4mate or 48 Kf3 Qe3mate) 47...

Qg1+ 48 Kh3 Qf1+ 49 Kg3 Bf2+ 50 Kf3 Bg1+ 51 Kg3 Qf2+ 52 Kh3 Qh2mate

A curious side note to this famous game: Somehow F D Yates' name came up during one of Bobby Fischer's appearances on the Dick Cavette television show. The host, well prepared, stated accurately that Yates had twice defeated the great Alekhine. Although Fischer supposedly studied and memorized 'everything' about chess, he seemed surprised by this, declaring Yates to have been a weak player and doubting whether it could have happened.

Anyway, back to our game...

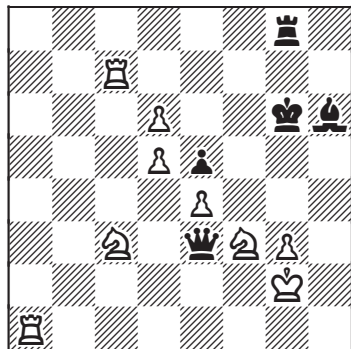


7 d5 Nb8 8 O-O e5

The consistent hypermodern method would be to create favorable tension by 8...c6 ("favorable" in the sense that Black has better options for releasing or retaining the tension going forward) combined with ...a5 and ...N-a6-c5. The text move elicits comparison with the main lines that could have arisen by 6...e5 7 O-O Nc6 8 d5 Ne7. The sole difference is that Black's queen knight is on b8 rather than e7. The knight is not conclusively

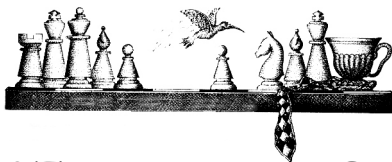
better at e7, but it does typically join in Black's kingside attack (eg ...Nd7, ...f7-f5-4, ...g5 and ...Ng6). In that light we could regard ...N-c6-b8 as played here a loss of time.

**9 Bg5 h6 10 Bxf6?** [White's dark square bishop is really important! Any other bishop move (except Bxh6) would have been better.] **10...Qxf6 11 Qd2 Qe7 12 Rac1 a5 13 a3 Na6** [13...a4] **14 Nb5 b6?!** [After 14...Nc5 15 Qc2 a4 White misses that dark square bishop.] **15 b4 axb4 16 axb4 f5 17 Bd3 f4 18 Ra1 g5 19 Ra2 g4 20 Ne1 h5** [*"Slow, but I wanted to put my bishop on h6 and I might need to advance the rook pawn further later on as happened in the game."*-Pauley] **21 Nc2 Kh7 22 Rfa1 Bb7 23 Nc3 Bh6** [Maybe first 23...f3 (24 g3 h4) so as not to give White the option of blocking the f-pawn now by 24 f3 Rg8 25 Kh1] **24 Qd1 Qg5 25 c5** [*"Winning a piece but at the cost of losing his bishop for defense."*-Pauley] **25...g3 26 Bxa6** [*"If 26 f3 I was prepared to play 26...gxh2+ 27 Kh1 Bc8 sacrificing material on the queenside for an all-out attack."*-Pauley. The piece won't run away, so maybe White should defend 26 f3 gxh2+ 27 Kh1 Bc8 28 Bxa6 Rg8 29 Qf1] **26...gxf2+ 27 Kxf2 f3 28 g3 Bxa6** [28...h4!?] **29 Rxa6 Rac8 30 Ra7 bxc5?** [The b-pawns don't matter, but this capture is a tempo that gives White a big option on his next turn. 30...h4 ought to have come straightaway.] **31 bxc5?** [He had 31 Nb5! threatening not only c7 but also Nxd6 when it would be catastrophic for Black if the knight hops into f5.] **31...h4 32 cxd6** [Might as well; 32 Qe1 hxg3+ 33 hxg3 Rg8 34 Kxf3 Qh5+ 35 Kg2 Bd2! 36 Qxd2 Rxc3+ mates] **32...hxg3+ 33 hxg3 Rg8 34 Qxf3 Rcf8 35 Rxc7+ Kg6 36 Ne1** [If 36 Rd1 (to stop ...Qd2+) Rxf3+ 37 Kxf3 Rf8+ 38 Kg2 Qf6] **36...Rxf3+?** [This might have cost the game! 36...Qe3+ would likewise have been wrong as 37 Kg2 Rxf3 38 Nxf3 will transpose to the game. The correct, winning way was 36...Qd2+! preventing White's king from going to g2. Then 37 Ne2 Qe3+! 38 Kg2 Rxf3 39 Nxf3 Qxe2+ etc] **37 Nxf3** [Now there is no more d2 check] **Qe3+ 38 Kg2** (diagram)





**38...Bf4** [A good try inasmuch as it gave White a chance to blunder. But White could have won by 39 d7. If then 39...Rd8 he then takes the bishop under better circumstances. Black probably intended 39...Bxg3 but then comes the coldblooded 40 d8Q and either Rxd8 41 Ra6+ White forces mate; or 40...Qf2+ 41 Kh3 the knight performs defensive wonders and again Black's king will be the one mated.]  
**39 gxf4?** [After this all is again right with Black's world.] **39...Kf6+ 40 Ng5 exf4 41 Rf7+ Kxg5 42 Rh1 Qxc3 43 Rf5+ Kg4 44 d7 Ra8 44...Qf3+ 45 Kg1 Kg3** was the artist's way, but in any case... 0-1



## A Tale of Two Opening Repertoires

by Rusty Potter

"*It was the best of times; it was the worst of times*". So begins A TALE OF TWO CITIES, Charles Dickens' classic chronicle of the French revolution and the wretchedness of the British industrial revolution. The novel deals with *lots* of social problems, eventually dealt with to some degree. I thought of these words upon considering my opening repertoire with the White pieces...



After a *lifetime* of playing 1 d4 leading to various forms of the Queen's Gambit, I was experiencing way *worse* results. My main problem was that Black actually has a surprising number of queenside pawn advances. Originally, some years ago, I envisioned the Queen's Gambit giving me lots of attacking chances on the king wing, with few worries on the queenside. It was *not* that easy!

Yes, Black's a-, b- & c- pawns were always conspiring to make my life on the queenside a *constant* distraction. The only convincing solution to all of this was... to open with 1 e4!

*Heresy !!* After all, against 1 e4 Black gets to duke it out from move *one* if he wants: 1...e5 or 1...d5 or 1...c5.

Still, there had to be a change, and soon. Chess after 1 d4 was just losing some of its appeal for me...

My early experiments with 1 e4 were neither very promising nor very bad. *Hmmm*. Was the ancient mild restraint of the Ruy Lopez the answer? Well, it *does* put Black on the defensive for a while, albeit the pressure is modest. After looking at a zillion other defenses facing the very best White attacking lines, I had to admit: White has a *lot* of interesting and somewhat subdued piece-play.

This and forthcoming articles will be about how to get at least some initiative for White after 1 e4 versus *all* of Black's main defenses. Since I have been around serious chess,



playing and teaching, for many years, 1 e4 will probably be my last major repertoire experiment with the White pieces. My hope is that readers who play 1 e4 and are experiencing difficulty against this or that defense—or maybe readers who want an entire 1 e4 repertoire laid out for them—will find it useful to see the selections of a master who has painstakingly surveyed what modern theory has to offer.

For this first installment I will sketch out the repertoire I have selected. In subsequent issues we will delve in deeper. So, here we go...

Philosophically and, these days practically speaking, the first pillar of an 1 e4 repertoire must address the reply 1...e5. A well-researched Ruy Lopez *does* put some mild pressure on Black. White's king bishop presses Black's queen knight, which the central pawn on e5 depends partly upon for support. That means Black cannot have a trouble free life. White is ready to castle after 3 Bb5 and he can often prepare the c3 & d4 pawn advance with relative ease. Thus, White gets to establish the important e4/d4 central pawn duo without much trouble.

This raises a question for Black players. How might your opponents defend against the Ruy Lopez? In preparing to play the Ruy Lopez as White, you'll be considering a lot of different defenses from Black.

3...a6 puts the direct question to your bishop: are you going to *swap* or *retreat*? I think the best thing that White can do is to just maintain the mild pressure he has by withdrawing to the a4 square. If Black is in a big hurry, he plays a very quick ...b5 to get rid of the pressure

from the obnoxious bishop once and for all. However, Black must be careful about playing an early ...b5 as it is loosening and can become a useful target for a timely a4! pawn thrust by White.

The Open variation (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Nxe4—my own favorite *as Black* against the Ruy, incidentally) does loosen Black's pawn structure, but it also gives Black active counterplay in the center. This variation has pedigree, a very *old* story in the history of the Ruy.

If Black wants to play more solidly, there are a number of different center-holding defenses you might face: Tchigorin, Strongpoint, Breyer, Classical, etc. Opponents who like their chess studies to be served right up to the *endgame* may confront you with the Marshall Countergambit, where Black tries to prove either equality or "active enough to draw" in a pawn-down ending. Yes, you must be ready for *lots* of choices against the Ruy! In these highly topical lines, there is still plenty enough room for innovation for both colors.

After you have digested lots of Ruy Lopez theory, it will be time to pick your favorite attacks against the following *other* Black defenses against 1.e4 : 1...c5 (Sicilian), 1...e6 ( French), 1...c6 (Caro Kann), 1...Nf6 (Alekhine), 1...Nc6 (Nimzowitsch), 1...g6 (Pirc), 1...d5 (Scandinavian), 1...b6 (Owen) and even 1...a6 (St George). (Incidentally, a lot of these 3<sup>rd</sup> rank defenses can be played against 1 d4 as well as 1 e4)

Any defense against 1 e4 that is not on this list is, well... *indefenseable!*



I'm going to defer any discussion of the Sicilian and French Defenses until a future installment. Those are each *big* topics. For the rest, here in brief are my recommendations:

#### WHITE'S BEST ATTACKS VERSUS THE CARO KANN DEFENSE.

I believe that the so-called Main Line leaves a somewhat simplified position with some pawn-storm squeeze play chances for White. But don't take my word for it. Play through the following variation. 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 d5xe4 4 Nxe4 Bf5 5 Ng3 Bg6 6 Nf3 Nd7 7 h4 h6 8 h5 Bh7 9 Bd3 Bxd3 10 Qxd3 Nf6 11 Bd2 e6 12 0-0-0 Qc7 13 Qe2 0-0-0 14 Ne5 Nxe5 15 d4xe5 Nd5 16 f4 Be7 17 Ne4 Δ g4. White can *carefully* prepare a space-gaining pawn advance on the king wing.

That said, I personally prefer a Queen's Gambit style of attack based on active pieces in return for an isolated pawn at d4: 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e4xd5 c6xd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6.Nf3 Be7 7 cxd5 Nxd5, 8 Bd3

Nc6 9 Re1. White has freer piece play in the center and king wing.

#### WHITE'S BEST ATTACK VERSUS THE ALEKHINE'S DEFENSE

1 e4 Nf6 2 e5 Nd5 3 d4 d6 4 c4 Nb6 5 exd6. Now *regardless* of whether Black retakes with the c- or the e- pawn, White enjoys a long term initiative with little risk. Black winds up with a small bone in his throat either way. How good is this line for White? Even GM Lev Alburt, who had defended the cramp in the Alekhine Defense for many years, finally decided that spatial equality for Black was not easy to find, and he gave up 1...Nf6!

#### WHITE'S BEST ATTACK VERSUS THE NIMZOWITSCH DEFENSE

A chess critic once said about 1...Nc6 "While it's not really a *bad* move, it just doesn't fit easily with anything else. It's just kind of um...*awkward*." I know the feeling. Most 1 e4 players never bother to even prepare against 1...Nc6! Well relax; we do have a respectable recommendation. Here goes..



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1 e4 Nc6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 d5xe4 4 d5 Ne5  
5 Qd4 Ng6 6 Bb5+ Bd7 7 Bc4 Nf6 8 Bg5.

#### WHITE'S BEST ATTACK VERSUS THE PIRC DEFENSE

After 1 e4 if Black plays 1...d6 Δ Nf6 and a kingside fianchetto, we have the Pirc Defense. The most aggressive setup for White involves pawns at e4 & d4 and, after a quick Nc3, adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> central pawn to White's setup with f2-f4. White should then play Nf3, typically on move 5.

If his center remains undisturbed, White will normally continue Bd3 (pointing at the kingside) followed by 0-0. This is a formidable attacking setup; White has a variety of plans. One approach features e4-e5 driving Black's knight away from his lookout post protecting his king. Other attacking schemes involve maneuvering White's queen via e1 to h4. Once there White has several ways to threaten the Black king! Combined with the line opening pawn push of f4-f5, there is Bh6 to swap off Black's important king bishop. Alternately, White can again play e4-e5 to drive away the important defender knight.

#### WHITE'S BEST ATTACK VERSUS THE SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE

If Black meets 1 e4 with 1...d5, then 2 exd5 gives White an easy central advantage after 2...Qxd5 3 Nc3. Black will usually move ...Qa5, after which White plays 4 d4 with a clear edge in space in the center. If Black instead opts to retreat ...Qd6, White once again plays 4 d4 Δ Nf3, Bc4, o-o and a well-timed Be3 if needed.

But what if Black plays 2...Nf6 instead of exposing his queen in the center? Then I recommend 3 Bb5+! Bd7 4 Bc4! Black still has to work to win back his pawn: 4...Bg4 5 f3! Bf5 6 Nc3.

Conclusion: White gains a lead in space by playing developing moves against the Black pieces in the center.

#### WHITE'S BEST ATTACK VERSUS THE OWEN DEFENSE

After 1...b6 (Owens Defense) White should play 2 d4 Bb7 3 Nc3. Although White's queen knight can be pinned by Black's king bishop in a few moves, still Nc3 does not impede development of White's queen & queen bishop. After 3...e6 4 Nf3 Bb4 5 Bd3! develops the king bishop to a good central square as well as guards e4. Continuing, 5... Nf6 6 Qe2 0-0 7 0-0 c5 8 a3! Bxc3 9 b2xc3 White will soon play Bg5 Δ e4-e5 with a kingside attack.

#### WHITE'S BEST ATTACK VERSUS THE ST GEORGE DEFENSE

With 1...a6 (St George Defense), Black is usually trying to get a more aggressive version of the Owen Defense. He particularly has his sights on White's knight on c3. For Black to drive it away with ...b7-b5-b4 is a *big deal* for some flank openings addicts.

However, 1...a6 is in itself a time wasting move as far as control of the center goes. Accordingly, the *best* White attacking plan is this: Pawns at e4 & d4, Bd3, Nf3. Then put your queen knight on d2 and rejoice(!) at the nice attack against Black's king that will soon be coming your way! "*What about my queen bishop?*," you ask? Two different solutions: one is to get behind the advance e4-e5! and bring up the knight Nd2-e4. However, if the center is locked down, the good ol' Ruy Lopez maneuver Nd2-f1-g3 is available. Soon your entire army will be near the Black king's doorstep! Black's consolation prize will be to move up his b-pawn to b4. Well, whatever makes him happy..





## Vocation Corner

by *Mike Callahan*

This month's vocational corner is about how to approach schools. Approaching schools is a rejection-free task when you have the right attitude. The primary purpose of your visit is to find the people and/or organizations that can help you consistently and politely invite students, parents, and faculty, to play, grow, and serve chess! If you want to teach chess in the schools, there are four roads that lead there: PTAs, Parks and Recreation, the school district, and contract service providers.

**PTAs:** In the county schools, the PTA is usually the driving force for extracurricular activities. The PTA is approachable year round, has access to school facilities year round, and has the autonomy to create and implement any chess program! Get yourself on the agenda as a speaker at one of their meetings. If you are able to get a program launched, continue to attend every PTA meeting, become a sponsor, and include your partnership with that PTA in all of your advertising.

**Parks and Recreation:** Parks and Recreation can be funded by the city or the county and often runs before- and after-school programs. Parks and Recreation doesn't have the autonomy that PTAs do, which means parameters, budget restraints, and deadlines for its programs. But they have access to schools year-round, as well as a wealth of other facilities that could host tournaments, camps, simulms, chessathons, etc. Schedule a meeting with the director, get them on your email list, and get a commitment that they will post your flyer and print your newsletter each month at all of their facilities!

**School Systems:** Until you find out otherwise, the school principal is your best point of contact for all things chess at a particular school. If they have a PTA, you may need to coordinate with both. You will probably need principal approval and a teacher, PTA, or parent sponsor for your club. Like Parks and Recreation, schools systems have budget restraints and deadlines. In some cases extracurricular activities are handled by "traffic organizations" who recruit, manage, and schedule volunteers, community partners, and grant recipients. Traffic organizations have no authority over building use outside of their program parameters. They also have no authority to compensate service providers. Once you've made all of your visits to a school system, county or city, you should try to get on the speakers list at every school assembly and school board meeting!

**Contract Service Providers:** Providing contract service is big business! Contract service providers usually have grants, community partners, stakeholders, donations, and ongoing service provider training requirements. They will require advance applications, program narratives, and budget submissions. Information for how to apply to be a service provider will be available on line. Some are year-round, others are only for the school year.



Ideally you would personally visit to every school in your service area. My area has 171 public schools! Always carry a chess set, clock, USCF ID, trifolds, and flyers.

At the door: “Yes, may I help you?” “Yes Sir, my name is Mike Callaham, I’m with the Scholarship Chess Business Center...” When you get to the main office. “I’m Mike Callaham with the Scholarship Chess Business Center. Is the principle, vice principal, or guidance counselor available?” “Can I tell them what this is about?” “Sure! We wanted to briefly share what we are doing in the community and invite all of you come play chess with us! Are any of them available?”

When you’ve finished talking to the school representative, get contact info. Hand the receptionist a trifold and ask for the name, phone number, and email of the principal, the vice principal, and the PTA president.

Back home or at the office, look up each school and find out their team name and the name of the PTA. Email the PTA contact and cc the principals about having visited the school today. Make sure to attach a copy of the trifold and the flyer. Your letter should read something like this:

Dear Tiger’s PTA

My name is Mike Callaham. I’m a member of the Scholarship Chess Business Center. We stopped by your school today to invite you, your children, and faculty to come play chess with us! We also wanted to know if you would like to have a chess club/team at your school. Attached is our club flyer, and a trifold about what we are doing in the community! Please share them with your membership and let everyone know they can call us with any questions they have about chess! Hope to see or hear from you soon.

- Mike Callaham 804-426-6058, [waterman2010kir@aol.com](mailto:waterman2010kir@aol.com)

Give them two or three days, and if you haven’t heard back from them then call and verify your email got to the right person. Offer to answer any questions they may have.

Most questions will be seeking the following sorts of answers: Your target time should be 75-90 minutes. Your class should be structured to allow concurrent instruction and play. Your target service schedule should be 10 weeks in the fall, winter, and spring—30 weeks a year! Market rate is \$10.00 per hour per child for beginner to intermediate non-tournament players. If your class includes a weekly handout, optional homework assignments, and weekly email updates, (strongly suggested) then \$15.00 per person per session leaves you right at \$149.00 per person for a 10 week course. Encourage students to bring a snack, and ensure you have school-safe snacks for when parents forget.

Each month, send the principals and the PTA a copy of your newsletter and your flyer! As always contact me if you need any help! (That’s my real number and email up there!)



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#### EVENTS IN THE CHESS COMMUNITY

James Hudson of the Chesterfield County Library is the embodiment of chess advocate! I've known James for nearly a decade. From day one, he has been a strong advocate for chess for all ages. James loves chess and what it does for people so much that he actually got a chess tattoo! His library hosts a chess club that meets every Tuesday from 5-7 pm. It's free and open to all ages and skill levels. James opened his facility to tournaments back in 2014! There is a tournament every fall and spring.

The Meadowdale Library is a spacious modern branch with ample parking and easy access. They have a main event room, which we've used for scholastic events, and two other meeting rooms that house our adult quads. My space is in the back, beside the media and study rooms. That's been my home for free post-round analysis since our very first event!



*Tattoo!*

Everyone is coming back to chess! I watched as the ones that used to be in strollers are now sitting at the tournament table and the ones that used to sit at the tournament tables are now the tournament directors. Time flies...

Was there a place you remember going to for tournaments? Maybe it's time to pay them a visit! If you're lucky you'll find that only times have changed, not their values or interests!

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## In This Issue:

Back to the Land of the Future (Bashtavenko) .....	1
Gary Robinson Stumper .....	8
Readers' Games .....	9
A Tale of Two Opening Repertoires (Potter) .....	11
Vocation Corner (Callaham) .....	15
Upcoming Events .....	2
VCF Info .....	<i>inside front cover</i>

