

VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

The bimonthly publication of the
Virginia Chess Federation

2024 - #1



VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

2024 - Issue #1

Editor:

Macon Shibut
1572 Lee Hwy
Fort Defiance VA 24437
editorvcf@gmail.com

Circulation:

Georgina Chin
2851 Cherry Branch Lane
Herndon VA 20171
membership@vachess.org



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: Adam Chrisney,

PO Box 151122, Alexandria, VA 22315

chrisney2@gmail.com Vice President: Michael Callaham, 607 Wickham

Street #2, Richmond, VA 23222 waterman2010kir@aol.com Membership

Secretary: Georgina Chin, 2851 Cherry Branch Lane, Herndon VA 20171,

membership@vachess.org Treasurer Mike Hoffpauir, 405 Hounds Chase,

Yorktown VA 23693, mhoffpauir@aol.com

VCF Inc Directors: Adam Chrisney, Michael Callaham,

Mike Hoffpauir, Robby Jackson, Todd Hammer





Virginia Open

Ronen Wilson & Andrew Jing tied for 1st place at the 2024 Virginia Open, held Jan 5-7 in Dulles, each scoring 4½ out of 5. Wilson got the champion's plaque on tiebreaks. Will Moorhouse, Nicholas Desmarius & Thomas Bartell tied for 3rd thru 5th places with half a point less. Benjamin Lin, Grant Peed & Benjamin Tyrrell shared the top class A prize. Benjamin Soyka, Alice Chovanec & Nathan Favero were equal top B.

The Under 1800 section also saw a tie for 1st at 4½ points between Kevin Sathiesh & Alan Lofdahl. Reevu Adakroy & David Phillips followed half a point behind. The top C prize was split between Zach Traynor, Esat Demirel & Samuel Carson. Kevin Kennedy & Shreyas shared the D prize, the former also taking the upset prize. *{Apologies to Mr Kennedy if I got his first name wrong. I'm relying on the crosstable, which is confusing in his case.—ed}* Vivaant Wagh was top Under 1200.

In the Under 1200 section, Zarnie Htut scored a perfect 5-0 to claim clear 1st. Ughur Bakhiiish was clear 2nd on 4½. Vedh Jupally & Tanmay Dondapati shared 3rd/4th places. The Under 1000 prize went to Anshith Mamillapalli, Ronak Nanda & Ayush Anaspure. Adelid Claire & Diesel Reams were winners in some kind of complicated mix of Under 800, Under 600 and Upset prizes. Constantine Bueltmann-Prok & Prem Sreekumar also had shares of the Under 600 prizes. Adam Afifi was top Unrated.



Tournament Director Gergory Vaserstein calls for order just prior to kicking off the 56th edition of the Virginia Open. Over 150 players participated.

This and all other photos from the event, including the front cover image, by Paul Swaney.

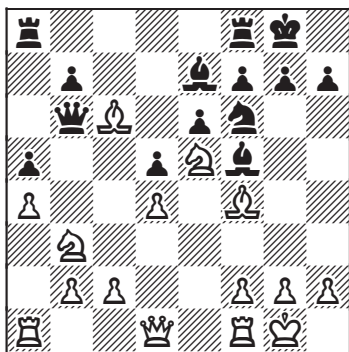


After a clean round 1, the eventual co-winner faced off against Elvin Baim, whom he had drawn the last time they met.

Elvin Baim - Ronen Wilson London

Notes by Ronan Wilson

1 Nf3 d5 2 d4 Nf6 3 Bf4 c5 4 e3 Nc6 5 Nbd2 cxd4 6 exd4 Qb6 7 Nb3 a5?! [I had fumbled my prep 7...Bf5 8 c3 e6 9 Be2 a5 10 a4 h6 White must waste an extra tempo if they want to play Bb5] 8 a4 Bf5 9 Bb5 [White's bishop becomes a major thorn in Black's side in many lines] 9...e6 10 O-O Be7 11 Ne5 O-O 12 Bxc6



Here I started to panic. I saw g4-g5, ...Nd7 and thought that I'd be spending the rest of the game fighting for a draw. However, Black ends up with a surprising amount of compensation, which will be seen in full effect later on. 12 c4 would have been better: 12...dxc4 13 Nxc4 Qd8 14 Bxc6 bxc6 15 Bd2 Be4 (15...Bd3? 16 Bxa5

Rxa5 17 Ncxa5 Bxf1 18 Nxc6 Qd7 19 Nxe7+ Qxe7 20 Kxf1 winning) 16 Ncxa5 White manages to snag the a-pawn, but Black's active bishop makes up for it.

12...bxc6 13 g4!? [Interestingly, this is Stockfish's top pick, though not because of g5] 13...Bg6 14 g5?! [There's no turning back now. 14 h4 h5 15 g5 Ne4 16 Rc1 (taking on g6 is never a good idea—16 Nxc6? fxc6 17 Be5 Bd6 Black's monster knight and powerful rook will annihilate White's kingside, and all White can do in response is sit and watch) 16...Rfd8 17 c4 dxc4 18 Nxc4 Qb4 both sides have many weaknesses, which balance the position.] 14...Nh5 15 Nd7 Qd8 16 Nxf8 Kxf8?! [16...Nxf4 would have retained the advantage: 17 Nxc6 hxc6 18 h4?! Bxc5! 19 Qg4 (19 hxc6? Qxc6+) Bh6] 17 Bg3 Bxc5 [So far I have only one pawn for the exchange, but my active pieces and my opponent's weak king compensate for it.] 18 f4? [White's bishop has been relegated to tall pawn status 18 Nc5



(a perfect square for the knight) 18... Nf4 19 c3 Kg8 (allowing ...Qf6) 20 b4 Qf6 21 b5 Qf5 22 f3 =] **18...Be7 19 Rc1 Nf6 20 c3?** [This move is counterproductive. Why put your rook on c1 just to have it stare at the back of a pawn? 20 Bh4 would've been better; White gets to trade off his bad bishop. 20...Qb6 21 Bxf6 Bxf6 22 Qd2] **20...Qb6?!** [20...Ne4 21 Nd2 Qb6 would have been more accurate] **21 Na1?!** [My opponent attempted to trap my queen, but his efforts proved unsuccessful. The sooner White gets rid of his bishop, the better so 21 Bh4 and then if 21...Rb8 22 Nd2 Qxb2? 23 f5! Bh5 (23...Bxf5? 24 Rxf5! exf5 25 Rb1 wins) 24 Qe1 White has managed to breathe life into an otherwise dead position] **21... Qxb2** [Now I have two pawns so the material is equal—a statement that will become less and less true as the game goes on and things go downhill for my opponent... and fast.] **22 Nb3 Ne4** [my queen will soon be released from captivity] **23 Re1** [if 23 Be1 White is virtually

helpless 23...Bf5 24 c4 Bh3 -+] **23... Nxc3** [Now I am ahead in material with three pawns.] **24 Qd2 Qxb3** [24...Qxd2 25 Nxd2 Bb4 may have been more practical] **25 Rxc3 Qxa4** [Four pawns against an exchange is pretty comfortable...] **26 f5 Bxf5** [Five pawns?!?] **27 Qc1 Qxd4+** [SIX PAWNS?!?!?!] **28 Bf2 Qg4+** **29 Rg3 Qc4** [At this point my time was getting low, but I felt confident that my armada of pawns would take care of business for me.] **30 Qb2 f6 31 Qb7 Qa6** [White's pieces are too uncoordinated to mount a meaningful attack.] **32 Qc7 Rc8 33 Qd7 Rd8 34 Qc7 Rc8 35 Qd7 Rd8** [Repeating moves to get closer to the time control.] **36 Qc7 Qc8 37 Qxa5** [Back down to a meager five pawns for an exchange. So sad.] **37...c5 38 Rc1 d4 39 Qa7 Qb8 0-1** We would hit the time control on the next move, and with an additional 30 minutes it's very hard for things to go wrong for Black. My opponent tipped his king and the game was over.

2024 Virginia Scholastic & College Championships

March 9-10, 2024

William Fleming High School

3649 Ferncliff Ave NW, Roanoke, Va 24017

Details and Registration at www.vachess.org



Aayansh Pramanik - Daniel Lowinger

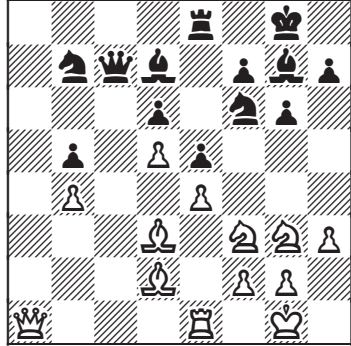
Two Knights

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 d4 exd4 5 e5 d5 6 Bb5 Nd7 7 O-O
 Be7 8 Re1 O-O 9 Bxc6 bxc6 10 Nxd4 Nb8 11 Bf4 c5 12 Nf3 Na6
 13 Nc3 c6 14 h3 Nc7 15 Bh2 Ne6 16 Qd2 Qb6 17 b3 Rd8 18 Rad1
 Qb4 19 Ne2 Qxd2 20 Rxd2 a5 21 g4 a4 22 Bg3 g5 23 Red1 Ba6
 24 Nc3 axb3 25 axb3 c4 26 Ne2 c3 27 Nxc3 Bb4 0-1

Kyle Zhuang - Andrew Jing

Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 d3 b5 6 Bb3 Be7 7 c3
 O-O 8 O-O d6 9 Re1 Na5 10 Bc2 c5 11 d4 Qc7 12 d5 c4 13 Nbd2
 Re8 14 Nf1 Bf8 15 h3 g6 16 Ng3
 Bg7 17 b4 cxb3 18 axb3 Bd7 19 Bd2
 Nb7 20 b4 a5 21 Bd3 axb4 22 cxb4
 Rxa1 23 Qxa1 *(diagram)*
 23...Nxd5 24 Qc1 Qxc1 25 Rxc1 Nf6
 26 Rc7 Rb8 27 Bg5 Be8 28 Ne2 Nd8
 29 Bxf6 Bxf6 30 Nc3 Kg7 31 g3 h6 32
 Nd5 Nc6 33 Nxf6 Kxf6 34 Nd2 Nxb4
 35 Be2 Nc6 36 Nb3 h5 37 Kf1 Ke6 38
 Bf3 Bd7 39 g4 Ke7 40 gxh5 Kd8 0-1



RUSSELL POTTER:

- ◆ National Chess Master ◆
- ◆ Three-Time Virginia State Chess Champion ◆
- ◆ Over 40 Years of Chess Teaching Experience ◆

CHESS LESSONS BY PHONE OR IN PERSON

PHONE:

(540) 344-4446

e-mail: chess.lessons.potter@gmail.com

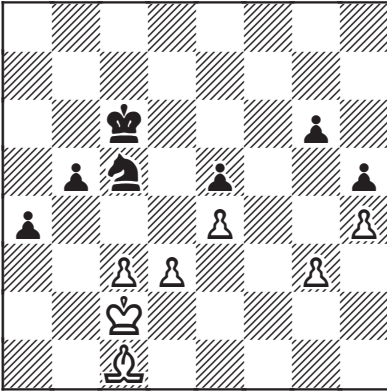
webpage: chessinstructor.org



Ronen Wilson - Will Moorhouse

(Notes by Ronan Wilson)

In round 3 I was up against Will Moorhouse, a very talented player whom I had sparred against many times. We had just hit the time control, giving me a much-needed additional 30 minutes. I'd had an edge in the early stages of the game, but Will fought back and managed to equalize after I fell into time pressure. (*diagram*)



Position after 40...Kc6

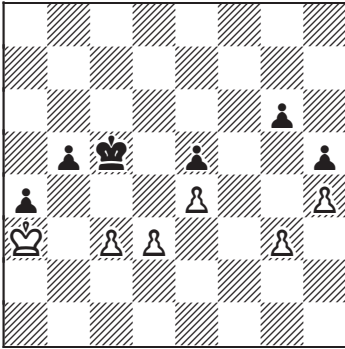
The position is drawn. At this point, there's not much for either side to do. My bishop prevents Black's pawns from advancing, but his knight restrains my pawns as well. **41 Ba3 Na6 42 Kb2** [With this move I had laid a trap for my opponent to fall into...] **42... Nc5?** [Though not immediately obvious, this move loses the game. Sitting tight by 42...Kd7 would've been a better course of action. **43**

Bf8 Kc6 and if **44 Ka3? Nc5!** **45 Bxc5 Kxc5** now it's White who is in zugzwang **46 Kb2 b4 47 c4 a3+ 48 Ka2 Kc6!** (Black triangulates the king for an optimal entrance **48...Kd4!** **49 Kb3** accomplishes nothing) **49 Kb3 Kd6 50 Ka2 Kc5 51 Kb3 Kd4 52 Ka2 Kc3!** White is too slow **53 c5 b3+ 54 Kb1 (54 Kxa3 b2 55 c6 b1Q 56 c7 Qb3mate) 54...a2+ 55 Ka1 Kc2 56 c6 b2+ 57 Kxa2 b1Q+ 58 Ka3 Qb3mate]** **43 Bxc5!** [I had spent almost all of my additional sudden death time on this move. There was no margin for error.] **43...Kxc5**





44 Ka3! [The purpose of Kb2 is revealed. My opponent is now in zugzwang.]



44...b4+ [Everything that follows is forced (unless stated otherwise). The passive approach 44...Kc6 also fails: 45 Kb4 Kb6 46 c4 (breaks apart Black's pawns) 46...bxc4 47 dxc4 a3 48 Kxa3 Kc5 49 Kb3 Kd4 (Black goes for the e-pawn) 50 Kb4 Kxe4 51 c5 Kd5 (Black gets out of the way of their pawn while preventing White's pawn from advancing, but White has a trick up their sleeve... If instead 51... Kd3 52 c6 e4 53 c7 e3 54 c8Q e2 55 Qc1 +-) 52 Kb5 e4 (now it has become a race) 53 c6 e3 (53...Kd6 trying to stop the pawn is also fruitless 54 Kb6 e3 55 c7 Kd7 56 Kb7 e2 57 c8Q+ +-) 54 c7 e2 55 c8Q e1Q 56 Qd7+! (56 Qd8+ works too) 56...Ke4 57 Qe6+ and White wins the Queen] **45 Kxa4** [45 cxb4+? Kb5! now *White* is in

zugzwang 46 d4! the only saving move 46...exd4 47 e5 d3 48 e6 Kc6 (48...d2 49 e7 d1Q 50 e8Q+ White Queens with check right before Black can checkmate them on b3) 49 b5+! White diverts Black's attention to the b-pawn 49...Kd6 50 b6 d2 51 b7 Kc7 52 e7 d1Q 53 b8Q+! (White must queen with check to prevent *Qb3mate*) 53...Kxb8 54 e8Q+ =] **45...bxc3** **46 Kb3 Kd4** [46...Kb5 47 Kxc3 Kc5 48 d4+! exd4+ 49 Kd3 and Black is in zugzwang] **47 Kc2 Ke3** **48 Kxc3 Kf3** [Black sets his eyes on the kingside pawns, while also preventing an immediate d4] **49 Kc4** [The only move! I had to bring my king up in order to support the pawn.] **49...Kxg3** **50 d4!** [Everything else is too slow.] **50...Kxh4** **51 d5!** [The distinction between this move and dxe5 will become apparent... 51 dxe5 Kg5! White must spend an extra tempo moving their king to support their pawn: 52 Kd5 h4 53 e6 h3 54 e7 h2 55 e8Q h1Q =] **51...Kg5** **52 Kc5** [My king assists the pawn. 52 d6 Kf6 53 Kc5 also works.] **52...Kf6** [52...h4 53 d6 h3 54 d7 h2 55 d8Q+ White promotes with check and can stop Black from queening, which wouldn't be possible after 51 dxe5] **53 Kc6** **1-0**



The eventual co-winners had their head-to-head game in the penultimate round.

Andrew Jing - Ronan Wilson
Catalan

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 g3 Nf6 4 Bg2 dxc4 5 Nf3 a6 6 O-O Nc6 7 Nbd2 b5 8 b3 c3 9 Nb1 b4 10 a3 Rb8 11 axb4 Bxb4 12 Qd3 O-O 13 Nxc3 e5 14 Be3 exd4 15 Nxd4 Ne5 16 Qc2 Nfg4 17 Nd5 Nxe3 18 fxe3 Bd6 19 e4 Qg5 20 Nf3 Qh6 21 Nxe5 Bxe5 22 Rad1 Be6 23 Rd3 Kh8 24 Qc6 a5 25 Qc5 Bxd5 26 Rxd5 ½-½

Elvin Baim – Macon Shibut
London

Notes by Macon Shibut

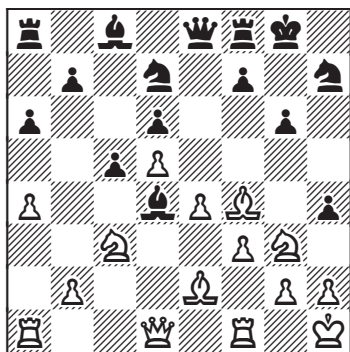
1 Nf3 Nf6 2 d4 d6 3 Bf4 [Based on my observations at the Virginia Open, various forms of the London (both the classical approach as played here and also lines with White opting for Nc3) are all the rage nowadays.]
3...g6 4 e3 Bg7 5 h3 O-O 6 Nbd2 Nc6 7 Bc4 Nd7 8 Bg3 e5 9 c3 Kh8 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 Ne4 h6 12 Bh4 Qe8 13 Bg3 [I expected 13 g4 and would have replied 13...f5, eg 14 gxf5 gxf5 15 Ned2 Nb6 or 15 Ng3 f4 16 Ne4 Qh5] **13...f5 14 Ned2 Nb6 15 Qe2 Nxc4 16 Nxc4 f4 17 Bh2 Be6 18 O-O-O Qf7 19 b3 Qf6** [I wanted to prevent 20 exf4 exf4 21 Nce5] **20 Nfd2 b5 21 Ne4 Qe7 22 Nb2 a6 23 Nd3 g5 24 f3 Bf5 25 Ndc5 Rab8 26 Bg1 a5 27 h4 gxh4 28 Bf2 h3 29 gxh3 b4 30 c4?** [This is the turning point. He should not have allowed my knight to hop into d4, so 30 exf4 was correct.] **30...fxe3 31 Bxe3 Nd4 32 Bxd4** [Maybe 32 Qg2 but my knight is a monster] **32...exd4 33 Nd3 a4 34 Qe1 axb3 35 axb3 Rfe8 36 Nec5 Qd6 37 Qd2 Re3 38 Rdg1 Ra8 39 Kb2 Rae8** [Unfortunately 39...Qxc5 does not work yet because of 40 Nxc5 d3+ 41 Rxc7. I considered preparing it by 39...Bf6 but then I wasn't convinced about 40 Ne4 although it seems to me now that Black would be winning after 40...Qc6. Anyway, I played to just keep a firm grip on the position and force him to make moves under difficult circumstances.] **40 Rg2 Bf6 41 h4 Kh7** [covering h6 in case the Re3 wants to move.] **42 Rhh2** [Now I go back to the a-file plan, threatening to penetrate there when White no longer has the immediate Ra1 reply—and now the queen sacrifice is fully prepared.] **42...Ra8 43 Rh1 Qxc5! 0-1**



And so the final round. Four players stood at $3\frac{1}{2}/4$ and they were paired on the top two boards: Wilson playing White *vs* Thomas Lane, and Jing as Black against Benjamin Amrany. A large group followed at 3-1, all hoping for two draws on the top boards. That hope would not be realized. The first key game to finish was Amrany-Jing. Right out of the opening Jing won a piece—but not necessarily the game.

Benjamin Amrany - Andrew Jing King's Indian

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6
5 f3 O-O 6 Nge2 c5 7 d5 e6 8 Ng3
exd5 9 cxd5 a6 10 a4 h5 11 Bg5
Nbd7 12 Be2 Qe8 13 O-O Nh7 14
Bf4 [14 Be3] Bd4+ 15 Kh1 h4



Black wins a piece, but it's not over.

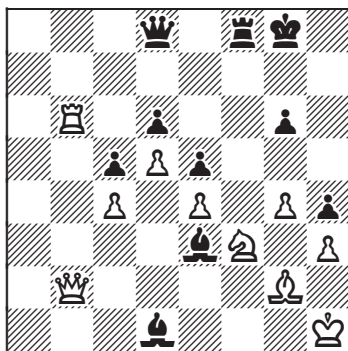
16 Nf5 gxf5 17 Bxd6 Ne5 18
Qe1 Qd8 19 Bxf8 Nxf8 [With
R+P *vs* two pieces White is still
kicking. However, from this point
he never finds a constructive plan
and things go gradually downhill.
The direct approach was worth
a try: 20 f4 Neg6 (or 20...Ng4 21
Bxg4 fxg4 22 Qc1) 21 e5 Bxc3
22 Qxc3 Qxd5 23 Bf3 Qd4 24
g3] 20 Rd1 f4 21 Rc1 Nfg6 22

Nd1 Bd7 23 b4 b6 24 a5 Bb5
25 Bxb5 axb5 26 Qe2 c4 27 g3
hxc3 28 hxc3 fxg3 0-1

Boards 3 saw a curious 'double'.
Here too White lost a piece
but might still have been
okay. However, perhaps overly
discouraged, he did not put up
the best resistance.

Pranev Swamibatten - Thomas Bartell King's Indian

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6
5 h3 O-O 6 Be3 e5 7 d5 Na6 8 Nf3
Nc5 9 Bxc5 dxc5 10 g3 Ne8 11 Bg2
Nd6 12 Qe2 f5 13 O-O f4 14 a3 a5
15 Rfb1 b6 16 Nd2 a4 17 b4 axb3
18 Rxb3 h5 19 a4 Bh6 20 Nb5 fxg3
21 fxg3 h4 22 g4 Bd7 23 Nf3 Bf4 24
Nxd6 cxd6 25 Qb2 Rxa4 26 Rxa4
Bxa4 27 Rxb6 Be3+ 28 Kh1 Bd1





29 Nxe5 dxe5 30 Rxc6+ [Again White lost a piece but not necessarily the game.] **30...Kh7 31 Re6?** [He had to play 31 Ra6 to prevent the invasion ...Q-a5-e1] **31...Qa5** [Now it's over.] **32 Qb7+ Kh8 0-1**

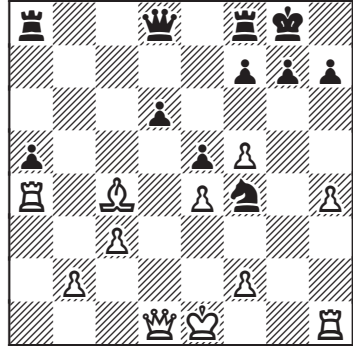
Jing was left to wait and see if he would win the tournament outright, or if Wilson would grind down Lane. That finally happened in what was a very well contested game overall.

Ronan Wilson - Thomas Lane Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Ndb5 d6 7 Bf4 e5 8 Bg5 a6 9 Na3 b5 10 Nd5 Be7 11 Bxf6 Bxf6 12 c3 O-O 13 Nc2 Bg5 14 a4 bxa4 15 Rxa4 a5 16 Bc4 Ne7 17 h4 Bh6 18 g4 Bf4 19 Nce3 Bxe3 20 Nxe3 Ng6 21 Nf5 Bxf5 22 gxf5 Nf4

(diagram)

23 Qg4 Kh8 24 Rg1 g6 25 b3 Qf6 26 Qg5 Qxg5 27 hxg5 gxf5 28 exf5 d5 29 Bb5 Rfb8 30 c4 d4 31 Kd2 Nh3 32 Rg2 Rg8 33 g6 fxg6 34 fxg6 Rxc6 35 Rxc6 hxg6 36 f3 Kg7 37 b4 Ng5 38 Bc6 Rc8 39 b5 Rc7 40 Rxa5 Ne6 41 Bd5 Re7 42 b6 Nd8 43 c5 Kf8 44 c6 Nxc6 45 Bxc6 Rh7 46 Ra8+ 1-0



Chief TD Mike Hoffpauir organized and directed the Virginia Open on behalf of the VCF.



Championship of Santa Catarina U2400

by Aleksey Bashtavenko

As October drew to a close, the city of Blumenau in Santa Catarina, Brazil, bid a fond farewell to the exuberant festivities of Oktoberfest that marked the culmination of a month-long celebration of its rich German heritage. Nestled amidst lush greenery, Blumenau's architectural landscape stands as a picturesque testament to the harmonious fusion of German and Brazilian influences. The charming streets are lined with half-timbered houses, showcasing the enduring legacy of German craftsmanship. Structures adorned with intricate details and vibrant colors transport visitors to a bygone era, an immersive experience of the city's historical roots.

Beyond the architectural allure, German influence is also pronounced in the way of life in Blumenau. Locals proudly embrace the German way of dressing, with traditional costumes such as dirndls and lederhosen adding a touch of authenticity to everyday life. When it comes to dining, the aroma of freshly baked pretzels and the savory scent of sausages waft through the air as traditional beer gardens beckon locals and visitors alike. The city's dining establishments serve up a delectable array of German dishes, from hearty sauerkraut and schnitzels to mouthwatering pastries.

Adjacent to Blumenau, the quaint city of Timbó, nestled in the heart of Santa Catarina, provides a distinct counterpoint to its vibrant neighbor. Timbó, though small, possesses a certain charm in its tranquility. The German influence is still palpable, but it manifests in a subtler manner.

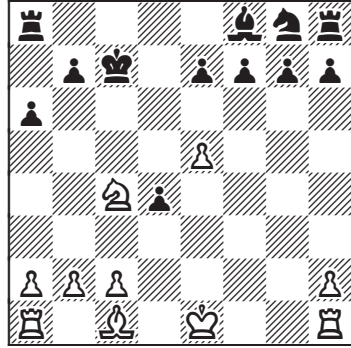
My decision to participate in the chess tournament at Timbó was definitely influenced by the presence of Kaiser Luiz Mafra as the tournament director. Having attended several tournaments in Santa Catarina, I knew from experience the range of organizational quality, but Kaiser's reputation preceded him. His impeccable track record had made him truly the undisputed "kaiser" of chess tournament directors. His events run with the precision of a Swiss watch, a testament to meticulous planning and unwavering commitment to excellence. With Kaiser at the helm, I anticipated a chess competition that would be as masterfully orchestrated as the moves on the board.

Kaiser's consummate management of chess tournaments stands as a testament to the integration of German cultural values into Brazilian society. Under Kaiser's leadership there is no tolerance for last-minute cancellations, frivolous excuses, corrosive tolerance, or any form of deception. Rounds commence precisely as scheduled, and any deviation from the timeline is a rare exception, usually accompanied by a compelling reason.



Lucas Fernando Alves - Aleksey Bashtavenko Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 f4 d5 3 exd5 Qxd5 4 Bb5+ Bd7
5 Nc3? Qxg2 6 Qf3 [the only way to avoid
further loss of material] 6...Qxf3 7 Nxf3
Nc6 8 Ne5 Nxe5 9 fxe5 Bxb5 [It would
have been better to play 9...e6, which is a
natural developmental move. 9...Bxb5 was an
inaccuracy because it helps White activate his
knight.] 10 Nxb5 Kd7 [Initially I thought this
king position was not a problem because the
queens had been traded, but I later understood
White had counterplay with possible moves
such as Bf4 and e6.] 11 d4 a6 12 Na3 [I
thought that 12 Bf4 might have been strong.] 12...cxd4 13 Nc4 Kc7 (diagram)



White could have tried to punish this with 14 e6, sacrificing a third pawn, but gaining dynamic counterplay after a further Bf4 and 0-0-0. Despite being down two pawns, his pieces would be active and centralized, his rooks connected and his king is not only safe but ready to join the endgame at the right time. On the other hand, Black would have an exposed king and difficulty completing his development.

14 a4? e6 15 Bf4 Bb4+ 16 Nd2 Ne7 17 O-O-O Bxd2+ 18 Rxd2 Nf5 19 h4
Rac8 20 h5 h6 21 Rd3 Kbs 22 Rf1 Rc6 23 Bh2 Ka8 [I understood White
had the possibility of a tactical breakthrough with Rxf5 and e6, but I wasn't
sure if this would work. Nonetheless, instead of calculating all of these tactical
possibilities, I opted for safety.] 24 b4 Rhc8 25 Rf2 Rc3 26 Kd2? Rxc2+ 27
Ke1 Rxf2 28 Kxf2 Rc3 29 Rxc3 dxc3 30 Ke2 Ne7 31 Kd3 Nd5 0-1

It was pleasant to begin a tournament with a comfortable win.

Aleksey Bashtavenko vs Antonio Babinho Czech Benoni

1 d4 c5 2 d5 e5 3 e4 d6 4 c4 Be7 [Prior to the round, I looked up my opponent's
recent games and discovered that he played the Czech Benoni. My initial impression
was that this was good news because I studied this opening in Korchnoi's *My Best
Games as White*. The pawn structure resembles a King's Indian Defense except in
the Czech Benoni, Black has a pawn on c5. Korchnoi played the same Nf3-e1-d3
maneuver combined with Be3 as he did in the King's Indian, intending to sacrifice
the knight on c5 and then recapture there with the bishop. For his piece White
gets a couple pawns, an active dark-squared bishop and dynamic central pawns.
As alluring as this plan may have seemed, I decided that a different approach was
in order. I decided to focus on preventing Black from playing ...f5 in order to make
it difficult for him to generate attacking chances against my king. However, the



illustrative games that I studied with this plan all featured Black playing ...g6. In the line that my opponent played, I had less reason to be concerned with the ...f5 break.] **5 Nc3 Bg5 6 Be2 Bxc1 7 Qxc1** [Black exchanges his dark-squared bishop because all of his pawns are on dark squares.] **7...Ne7 8 Qg5** [Trying to stop him from playing ...f5, but as already explained, here inhibiting the pawn storm commencing ...f5 is not as important.] **8...O-O 9 Bg4 h6 10 Qh4 Nd7 11 Nge2 a6 12 a4 Nf6 13 Bxc8** [And so both players have exchanged their bad bishops.] **13...Rxc8 14 g3** [I got far too involved in worrying over Black going ...Ng6 followed by ...Nh5 and ...Nf4. I should have just castled and if Black were to reply 14...Ng6 then 15 Qh3 prevents 15...Nh5 anyway.] **14...Qb6 15 O-O Qb3 16 f3 Qxc4** [The game went on for another ten moves, but once a foundational pawn falls, the rest of the structure follows. I tried to trap Black's queen but he found an escape.] ... **0-1**

Adrian Felipe Gomes - Aleksey Bashtavenko

Slav

1 c4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 cxd5 cxd5 4 Nc3 Nf6 5 Nf3 Nc6 6 Bf4 a6 7 e3 Bg4 8 Be2 e6 9 O-O Bd6 10 Bg3 Bxg3 11 hxg3 O-O 12 Rc1 Rc8 13 Qd2 b5 14 a3 Qd6 15 b4 [By responding to the English Opening with 1...c6 I steered the game into the familiar territory of a queen's pawn game. The ensuing position was very symmetrical, and I fell under the illusion that there were no tactical possibilities. *All I need do was develop my pieces and try to control the open file...*] **15...Rc7?** [15...h6 or 15...Rfd8 would have been correct] **16 Bxb5** [The pawn goes for nothing because if 16...axb5 17 Nxb5 Qd7 18 Nxc7 Qxc7 19 b5 or 19 Ne5] ... **1-0** Tactics are waiting in even the most balanced and symmetrical of positions.

The next round was scheduled for seven in the evening, but for an unspecified reason it was postponed by an hour. Given Kaiser's reputation, we could not help but wonder why. But some of the players found solace at the hotel bar where we watched a soccer match between Fluminense, from Rio de Janeiro, and Boca Juniors, from Buenos Aires. As usual in Brazil, I was the only person rooting for the team from Argentina. The match went into overtime, and just as we were ready to play chess, we received notice that the round was delayed by yet another hour!

Now the round would start at nine in the evening. "*Isso é absurdo!*" I heard someone yell outside the hotel, and his exclamation was met with lukewarm cheers. What could be the reason for the delay? Was it possible the tournament director wanted to give players a chance to watch the ending of a much anticipated soccer match? That has happened before, and indeed the overwhelming majority of South American chess players are men who watch soccer. As it turned out, the actual reason was something quite different and it was met with outright derision when the facts came to light. The fourth round was postponed twice so as not to disturb some climactic moment of a women's tournament going on at the same venue.



At nine o'clock, I arrived at my board to find that the directors were even then not ready to start the round because they were still conducting the women's tournament awards ceremony. There was nothing to do other than walk back to the hotel bar to grab yet another drink and watch the highlights for the soccer. I returned to me board 15 minutes later and discovered I was missing seven minutes on my clock.

Aleksey Bashtavenko - Otavio Schmidt Spieker French

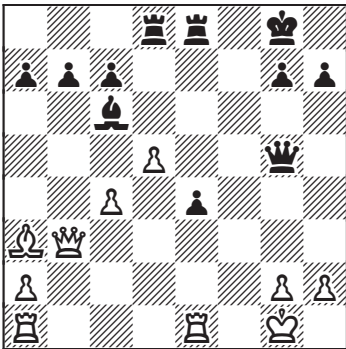
1 d4 d5 2 Nc3 e6 [So far so good, exactly the opening that I was looking for. I'd reviewed my 12 year old opponent's games prior to the round and noticed his penchant for isolated queen pawn positions, especially the Tarrasch Defense. I also observed that he was strong tactically, but seemed to lack a basic understanding of positional play. My idea with 2 Nc3 was to transpose the opening into a French Defense, which I was certain that he had no idea how to play. Had he not opted for 2...e6, I prepared a number of sidelines that were different from the various queen pawn positions that my opponent had experience with.] **3 e4 c6** [Indeed, young Spieker did not understand the French Defense, and I wondered if he had even heard of it.] **4 e5 Nd7 5 Bd3 a6** [It is still not too late to play 5...c5. Passive rook pawn moves are a waste of time in such positions.] **6 f4** [This is exactly the kind of a position I relish. Not only do I have a space advantage in a closed position, but now I have the opportunity to plan a king's side attack because I am already two tempi ahead of my opponent.] **6...Bb4** [Black is more than welcome to give up his good bishop to double my pawns. Exchanging on c3 would strengthen my pawn on d4 and allow my dark square bishop to a3.] **7 Nf3 Ne7 8 O-O h6 9 Ne2** [rerouting my knight to the kingside] **9...O-O 10 c3 Ba5 11 b4** [once and for all depriving my opponent of the critical ...c5 source of counterplay] **11...Bc7 12 a4 Nb6 13 a5** [Although my plan is to attack the king and keep the center closed, I advanced my pawns on the queenside to further deprive my opponent of any potential counterplay.] **13...Nc4 14 Qb3 b5 15 axb6 Nxb6 16 Be3 Nf5 17 Bf2 Kh8 18 g4 Ne7 19 Bh4 Qe8 20 Bxe7 Qxe7 21 Ng3 Bd8 22 f5 Qe8 23 Qa2 Nd7 24 Qd2 Bb7 25 f6 Nxf6** [My opponent took over 15 minutes to respond, but he found a move that prevented checkmate. I took the liberty to walk around the hotel. There I encountered Otavio's mother, a rather unpleasant middle-age woman. Quite the opposite of typical Brazilians, who are generally too tolerant for their own good and eager to avoid unnecessary conflict, she insisted I was breaking the rules and must return to the tournament hall straightaway.] **26 exf6 Bxf6 27 Ne5** [My advantage seemed insurmountable. However, I realized that it wasn't too late to throw the game away. It is entirely possible to play carelessly and wander into a tactical trap.] **27...Bg5 28 Qe2 Kg8 29 Bxa6 Bxa6 30 Rxa6 Rxa6 31 Qxa6 f6 32 Nxc6** [This reminded me of a note by Fischer annotating his game against Laszlo Szabo in *My 60 Memorable Games*: "Pawns fall like ripe apples". Just as in my second round, once one falls, others very often drop shortly.] **32...e5 33 Nf5 exd4 34 Nfe7+ Kh8 35 Qd3 Rf7 36 Ng6+**



Kg8 37 Nxd4 Qd7 38 Nf5 Qa7+ 39 Qd4 Qxd4+ [My opponent did me a huge favor by exchanging queens, exponentially reducing the odds of my blundering.] **40 cxd4 Kh7 1-0** Seldom have I played a game where almost everything went according to plan. My opponent gave me every advantage I could have hoped for and more.

Vinicius Blazskosky - Aleksey Bashtavenko Nimzoindian

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2 O-O 5 Nf3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 [I was expecting 6 Qxb3, which I intended to answer with 6...d5 and play could have proceeded 7 Bg5 dxc5 8. Qxc5 b6 Black intends to tempo White's queen with ...Ba6 and exchange the light squared bishops in a way that deprives White of castling privileges.] **6...d5 7 cxd5 exd5 8 e3 Re8 9 Bd3 Ne4 10 O-O f5 11 Ne5 Nd7 12 Nxd7 Bxd7 13 f3 Nd6 14 Ba3 Nb5** [14...Bb5 was also viable. Play could have continued 15 Bxd6 Bxd3 16 Qxd3 Qxd6 17 Rfe1 Qe6] **15 Bxb5 Bxb5 16 Rfe1 Qg5 17 Qb3 Bc6** [17...c6 was playable too, with the possible continuation 18 Bd6 Rxe3 19 f4 Rxe1+ 20 Rxe1 Qh5 21 a4 Ba6 22 Qb1 Re8 23 Rxe8+ Qxe8 24 Be5 Qf7 with an interesting endgame with bishops of opposite colors. Although down a pawn, White has considerable drawing



chances.] **18 c4** [White should have played 18 e4 eg 18...Qh4 19 e5 Re6 with an edge because Black must blockade a protected passed pawn.] **18... Rad8 19 e4 fxe4 20 fxe4 dxe4 21 d5** (diagram)

21...e3! [I was especially proud of this move. In my judgment, it was the best move I played in this tournament, by far. I saw a chance to sacrifice a bishop on c6 and stage a direct attack with a queen and a rook; I also noticed that White had a defensive resource on the third rank with Qg3. Hence, 21...e3 to solve that problem!] **22 dxc6?** [My opponent underestimated the attack. 22 Bc1 was the only correct defense.] **22...Rd2 23 g3 Qh5 24 h4 Qf3 0-1** Forced mate!

Afterwards I wandered around Timbó looking for a place to eat with my roommate FM Fanny Duarte, a refugee from Cuba. This was Sunday and every restaurant was closed. After walking over two kilometers, we finally found a Subway sandwich shop. As we began discussing my upcoming opponent, several other chess players showed up.

Aleksey Bashtavenko - Eduardo Sperb Kings Indian

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 O-O 6 Be2 e5 7 O-O Nbd7 [I would much rather have played against the main line 7...Nc6. I wondered if somebody overheard my conversation at Subway and tipped off my opponent.] **8 Re1** [The idea is to go Bf1 and protect e4 with the rook.] **8...h6 9 Bf1 Kh7**

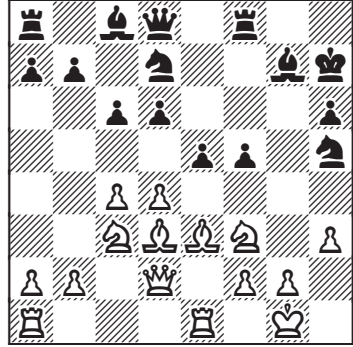


10 h3 Nh5 11 Be3 c6 12 Qd2 [12 Qc2 was also playable to overprotect e4.]
 12...f5 13 exf5 [My pieces were better developed in the center, so I thought it
 was a good idea to open up the position as much as possible.] 13...gxf5 14 Bd3!?

(diagram)

If Black pushes 14...e4 forking my minor pieces, I would win three pawns and open up the position of his king. I felt that the opening had worked out very well for me because of my active centralized pieces.

14...Qf6 15 dxe5 dxe5 16 Nh2 [I considered 16 g4, eg 16...e4 17 Bd4 Qd8 18 Nxe4, but I was afraid to expose my own king and disorganize my pawn structure.] 16...Kh8 17 Be2 Qg6 18 Bxh5 Qxh5 19 Qe2 [Instead of trying to exchange queens, it would have been better to play 19 f4 protecting g2 and contesting Black's control of the center.] 19...Qg6 20 Rad1 Rg8 21 f3 [My play had become dreadfully passive, and shortly thereafter, the position turned untenable.] 21...Nf8 22 Bc5 Be6 23 Rd6 Re8 24 Bxa7 Bf6 25 Rd2 Qg7 26 Nd1 Ng6 27 g4 b5 28 Be3 Bxc4 29 Qg2 Bh4 30 Nf2 Bd8 31 Red1 Nh4 32 Qg3 f4 0-1



My immersion into the German heritage of Santa Catarina, particularly through the lens of the chess tournament in Timbó, has been positive and enlightening. The blend of German efficiency with Brazilian affability has shaped an environment where precision and warmth coexist harmoniously. Yes, it is true that not all individuals exemplify these commendable virtues. But Kaiser's adept management left no room for such bugbears to sow chaos. While my own result may be deemed mediocre, the efficiency of the organizers made the tournament a microcosm, echoing the delicate dance between German precision and Brazilian warmth. In the realm of chess, quality of play triumphs over personal biases and discord.

President's Day Open

Feb 16-19

Marriott Washington Dulles Airport, 45020 Aviation Dr, Dulles, Va
 4-day and 3-day schedules. \$5,500 in prizes based on 80 players. Premier
 Section is 4-days, 7 rounds, FIDE and US Chess rated (minimum rating to
 play is 1900). Other Sections are Under 1900, Under 1500, and Under
 1100. Entry Fee varies depending on the section you enter. Scholastic
 & Blitz tournaments co-located.



See <https://new.uschess.org/presidents-day-open> for full details. *J. M. Kasper*



Rohit Guha – Macon Shibut

World Open (9) 2023

Benoni

Notes by Macon Shibut

1 d4 c5 2 d5 Nf6 3 c4 e5 4 Nc3 d6 5 e4 Be7 6 h3 Nbd7 7 Nf3 O-O [There are numerous plans in this opening. You adapt yourself to how White is developing. In this moment I also thought about ...N-f8-g6] 8 Bd3 Ne8 [I call this the Seirawan Plan as I saw him use the entire sequence in multiple games: Ne8, g6, Ng7 with an optional second phase Nf6, Kh8, Ng8. I have more than once played

all of this myself.] 9 Qe2 g6 10 Bh6 Ng7 11 g4 Nf6 12

Nd2 [perhaps Δ N-f1-g3] 12...Kh8 13 O-O-O Ng8

14 Be3 f5 [Although White appears to have a space advantage thanks to the d5 pawn, ALL of Black's pieces are able to play on the kingside, which is the 'secret' point of this defense.] 15 gxf5 gxf5 16 exf5

Nxf5 17 Rdg1 Nf6 18 Nde4 Nxe4 [18...Nd4 would have made little sense since I can just capture the dark square bishop if I want to force (or allow) its exchange for this knight, and a protected passed pawn on d4 is less useful

than the pawn on e5 controlling f4. However, 18...Bd7 was an alternative if I simply wanted to make a useful move while retaining all the tension.] 19 Nxe4 Nxe3

20 Qxe3 [I expected 20 fxe3 and thought (hoped?) 20...Bf5 was marginally better for Black thanks to the

bishop pair.] 20...Rf4 [20...Bf5 was possible here too but after 21 Qh6 Black must then play 21...Rf7 and not 21...Rg8? 22 Nxd6!] 21 Rg2 Qf8 22 Rhg1 Bf5 [The post mortem revealed an interesting case of double blindness. My opponent and I had both

considered the capture 23 Nxc5 incorrect here on account of 23...dxc5(?) 24 Qxe5+ Qf6 25 Qxf4 Bxd3 each of us overlooking 24 Rg8+! Qxg8 25 Qxe5+ and mates. I don't know for certain, but had 23 Nxc5 been played I believe I would have found

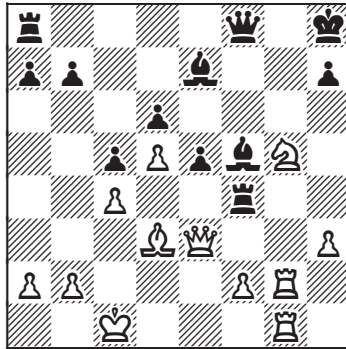
the mistake in time as I was not 100% sold on taking the knight, having in mind that 23...Rc8 might merit a look (not really) and also 23...Bxd3 24 Nxd3 Rxc4+ (simple enough and indeed acceptable for Black). In any case, my opponent actually played...]

23 Ng5 ...and accompanied the move with a draw offer. (See diagram next page)

I settled in to analyze 23...Bxd3 24 Qxd3 Bxg5 25 Rxg5 Rxf2. The variation is very direct and at first things looked promising. However, eventually I hit upon a snag with the move 26 Rg7. Capturing the two rooks is no good because at the end White has Qg3+ and Qxf2. But otherwise mate on h7 is threatened. It seemed the only way would be to trade queens in some variation like 26...Qf5 27 Qxf5

Rxf5 but then 28 Rxb7—White would have the chances here.





If I didn't play to win the f2 pawn this way, I couldn't see any other justification for playing on. So I accepted the draw. $\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}$

However, the story doesn't end there. First of all, in the line just given up through White's 26 Rg7 it turns out there is another possibility for Black: 26...Qf4+! (I'd looked at this but didn't see a point) 27 Kd1 e4! 28 Qc3 and only now trade queens 28...Qf3+ 29 Qxf3 exf3 When my e-pawn recaptures, it becomes a force—the point! After, say, 30 Rxb7 Rg2 31 Rf1 Rf8 I'm not sure Black is better but the advanced f-pawn is dangerous enough that he cannot be worse. So this would have been a way to continue.

Second, in the post mortem my opponent mentioned that instead of taking on f2 he had feared (and on this account he offered the draw) the move 25...Qf7(!) Again I'd considered this but didn't grasp the meaning of it since the move doesn't threaten anything that I couldn't do straightaway (ie, capture f2). In fact, White can't do much either! Black can improve his position a bit while White will always have these pawn weaknesses—f2 especially, but also c4 and h3. The endings are basically painful for him and the best we could suggest was 26 Kb1 Rf8 27 a3. Then finally 27...Rxf2 and Black is certainly better. So this was a pure miss on my part. I didn't appreciate the subtle power of 25...Qf7!

Finally, also in the post mortem, a kibitzer suggested in the final position 23...h6!? a move that neither I nor my opponent had considered at all. (Guha's immediate reaction mirrored my own feelings: "It's unbelievable if that actually works because it just looks so ridiculous") But indeed, after 24 Ne6 Bxe6 25 dxe6 the point is that 25...Bg5 practically forces White to sacrifice the exchange, 26 Rxc5 hxc5 27 Rxc5.

At the time we were both tired and a bit nonplussed at overlooking such a simple forcing line. Looking at it anew at home, I now think matters are not so simple. White is threatening Rh5+ and Qg3+ so 27...Qh6 looks close to forced. Then 28 Rg4 Rf6 29 Qxh6+ Rxh6 30 Bf5 I'd say the position is unclear. Black cannot continue 30...Rxh3? on account of 31 Bg6 and the e-pawn advances. So maybe 30...Re8 instead, and after 31 h4 chances would be equal. In summary, 23...h6 certainly ought to have been considered, but our intuition about its worth may have been not so far off.

Virginia Chess
2851 Cherry Branch Lane
Oak Hill, VA 20171-3843

Non-profit Org.
US Postage PAID
Orange VA
Permit No. 97

In This Issue:

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 56th Virginia Open..... | 1 |
| Bashtavenko Wanderings..... | 10 |
| Readers' Games (Shibut)..... | 16 |
| From the Editor..... | 3 |
| Upcoming Events..... | 3, 15 |
| VCF Info..... | <i>inside front cover</i> |

