

VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

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2025 - #3



Oil painting by Michael Fitzpatrick - see page 5

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2025 - Issue #3

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



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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,

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Cherry Blossom Classic

The Cherry Blossom Classic attracted 176 players to Sterling, Va over Memorial Day weekend. The top section's field boasted half a dozen grandmasters. GMs Titas Stremavicius & Luka Budisavljevic tied for 1st place with 7 points out of 9. Among Virginia players, Tyson Brady, Matthew Guo Diao & Pranav Swaminathan stood out with 5½ points. Brady's performance looks especially noteworthy in that his 'schedule' included both tournament co-winners.

Titas Stremavicius - Alexander Katz Queen Pawn

Notes by Titas Stremavicius

Going into round 5, I had a middling start to the tournament with two White wins and two Black draws, and was half a point off the leaders. Alex and I had played twice before (both times with these colors), and I was looking to add to my +1 score against him. **1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 3 g3 b5!?** [The "Improved Queen's Indian Defense" was maybe the third most likely option I was expecting while preparing for the game. While I don't recall seeing any of Alex's games reach this position, I've encountered it more than a handful of times myself, with relatively poor results. However, unfortunately for Alex, I had recently looked into a fresh approach to the position that I hadn't had a chance to try until now.] **4 e3!?** [The fifth most common move in the position, inspired by Super-GM Yu Yangyi. The idea is simple: to win half a tempo against the b5 pawn.] **4...a6 5 a4 b4 6 c4 Bb7 7 Bg2 Be7 8 b3 O-O 9 Bb2 d6 10 O-O Nbd7 11 Nbd2 Ne4** [While preparing for the game I was more or less anticipating 11...c5 12 Ne1 Qc7 13 Nd3 a5 14 Qe2 Bxg2 15 Kxg2 Qc6+ 16 Qf3 Qxf3+ 17 Kxf3 aiming for a slightly more pleasant queenless middlegame. The move Black chose is a typical maneuver in QID structures but it doesn't fully work in this position. Sensing that something was off, I sank into a roughly 40 minute think. Unfortunately, I was primarily calculating the wrong response. {diagram}]



12 d5

Apparently, White is doing well after 12 Qe2 Nxd2 13 Nxd2 Bxg2 14 Kxg2 according to the computer. However, during the game it felt like this was exactly what my opponent wanted, and it seemed prudent to try to stop him from accomplishing his goal.

But I had 12 Ne5! I love these types of moves because they immediately put pressure on your opponent. Unfortunately, I rejected it after miscounting the number of pieces at the



end of the line 12...Nxd2 13 Bxb7 Nxf1 14 Nc6 Qe8 15 Bxa8 Qxa8 16 Nxe7+ Kh8 17 d5. For some reason, I thought I would be a piece down, and Black could simply take on e3, close the position with...e5, and emerge a pawn up. In fact, my knight on e7 was alive and well!

Instead of 12...Nxd2, Black should try 12...d5 (if 12...Nxe5 13 Nxe4 Nd7 14 Nf6+ Bxf6 15 Bxb7 ±; or if 12...Ndf6 13 Nxe4 Nxe4 14 Qc2 dxe5 15 Bxe4 Bxe4 16 Qxe4 exd4 17 exd4 ±) but the White gets a nice game with 13 Nd3 a5 14 Rc1 Rc8 15 cxd5 exd5 16 Nf4. Of course, the position remains tense and playable for both sides.

12...exd5 13 cxd5?

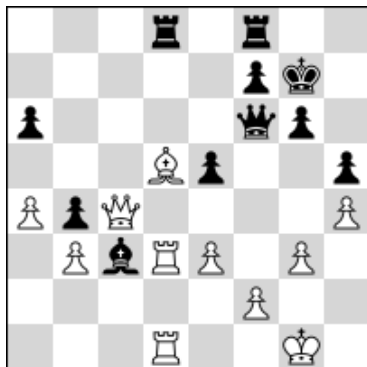
White must fully commit to the pawn sacrifice by 13 Nd4! The lines are quite murky:

13...c5 14 Nf5 Nc3 15 Qc2 g6 16 Nxe7+ Qxe7 17 cxd5 Bxd5 18 e4 Ne2+! 19 Kh1 Bb7 20 Qc4 Nc3 21 Bxc3 bxc3 22 Qxc3 ∞

13...Nef6 14 Nf5 (or 14 g4 Nc5 15 g5 Nfd7 16 f4 with attack) g6 15 Nxe7+ Qxe7 16 cxd5 Nxd5 17 Qc2 ∞

13...Bxd5 14 Nxe4 Bxe4 15 Qd4 Bf6?! [Upon playing this move my opponent offered me a draw and I breathed a sigh of relief. This was the exact line I had in mind when going for the forced sequence starting with 13 d5. However, he could have improved Black's play with 15...Nf6! 16 Qxb4 c5 17 Qc3 Rb8 and while White managed to restore the material balance, the backward b-pawn and his strong center give the second player an easier game.] **16 Qxe4 Bxb2 17 Rab1 Bc3 18 Nd4 ±** [This was roughly the end of what I had calculated. White might be a pawn

down, but Black's queenside remains fairly stagnant, his bishop's utility is limited, and White is uncontested on the light squares. In fact, White is better here.] **18...Qf6 19 Nc6** [Paralyzing Black's queenside even further. I decided not to go pawn hunting with 19 Qb7 Nc5 20 Qxc7 Rac8 21 Qb6 Rb8 22 Qc6 Bxd4 23 exd4 Qxd4 24 Rfd1 Qe5 25 Qxd6 Qxd6 26 Rxd6 as I felt the simplifications bring Black closer to equality.] **19...Rae8** [A natural move, but it abandons the queenside. 19...Rfe8!?] **20 Qc4 Ne5 21 Nxe5 dxe5** [21...Rxe5 is was the computer's choice. Black can probably still hold with precise play. For instance 22 Qxa6 Qf5 23 Qb7 Qc8! Black manages to trade queens, lighting his defensive load; or 22 Qxc7 d5! 23 Rbd1 Rd8 24 Rd3 d4! ±] **22 Rfd1 Rd8 23 Qxc7 h5 24 h4?!** [A pretty significant inaccuracy, allowing counterplay to an otherwise hopelessly passive position. Either 24 Rd5 or 24 Qa5 would be ±] **24...Bd2** [24...g5! was the way to test my previous move. 25 hxg5 Qxg5 26 Qc4 Kg7 27 Qxa6 h4 28 gxh4 Qxh4 29 Qb7 White is probably close to winning, but my king has become noticeably more vulnerable.] **25 Qc4 g6 26 Bd5 Bc3 27 Rd3 Kg7 28 Rbd1**





28...Rd6? [The final mistake, leading to material loss and simplification. 28...a5!? 29 Qb5 Rf8 when if 30 Qxa5? e4 31 Bxe4 Rxd3 32 Bxd3 Qf3 ∞ White's king becomes too weak; but 30 Kg2 Rb8 31 Qc6 Rbd8 32 Qxf6+ Kxf6 33 Bc4 Rxd3 34 Rxd3 should still be very good (most likely winning) for White.] **29 Bb7 Rfd8 30 Rxd6 Rxd6 31 Rxd6 Qxd6 32 Bxa6** [A *déjà vu* moment—the only previous

time I beat Alex was also in a heavy piece, opposite-color bishop endgame where I was a pawn up. This time, however, the win is very simple.] **32...e4 33 Qe2 f5 34 Kg2 Qd8 35 Qc4 Qd1 36 Qc7+ Kh6 37 Bc4 Qf3+ 38 Kg1 Qd1+ 39 Kh2 Qc2 40 Kg2 Be1 41 Qf4+ \$8 Kh7 42 a5 Qb2 43 a6 Qa2 44 Kh3 Qa1 45 Qc7+ Kh8 46 Qf7** [A fairly straightforward conversion after a tense middlegame struggle!] **1-0**

Luka Budisavljevic - Karen Grigoryan King's Indian

Notes by Luka Budisavljevic

Coming into penultimate round, I was tied for first place with GM Stremavicius, and wanted to utilise White pieces to stay in the lead. **1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 d4 O-O 5 e4 d6 6 Be2 e5 7 O-O Na6** [7...Nbd7 can lead to similar positions as the game but with Black's knight being much better placed. Since I knew that there 8 Be3 c6 9 d5 c5 10 Ne1 Ne8 11 g4 is somewhat better for White, I understood playing the same way should lead to advantage.] **8 Be3 c6 9 d5 c5?** [9...Ng4 is most commonly played] **10 Ne1 Nd7 11 g4** [Following the same plan I'd do against the ...Nbd7 line] **11...Nb6 12 Kh1** [preparing for Black's inevitable ...f5 push] **12...f5 13 gxf5 gxf5 14 exf5 Bxf5 15 Rg1 Kh8 16 Bd3?** [I thought this made a lot of sense, though I underestimated Black's only good reply...] {diagram}



16...e4! [This important move brings some of Black's pieces back to life. The seemingly logical 16...Bxd3 would fail due to 17 Nxd3! (but not 17 Qxd3? Qh4! ∞) when if 17...Nxc4? 18 Qg4 White wins] **17 Bxe4 Nxc4 18 Bxf5 Nxe3** [An essential intermediate move. 18...Rxf5 loses on the spot to 19 Qg4] **19 fxe3 Rxf5 20 Qg4** [It is important to keep the initiative and improve my pieces before Black activates his queenside] **20...Qf8 21 Ng2!** [This strong resource makes my knight flexible, combining threats of Nh4 and Nf4] **21...Be5?** [Weaker engines actually show this move as their top line, but in fact it falls into a beautiful trap. 21...Nb4 was better, threatening the d5 pawn and keeping ...Nd3-f2 ideas, eg 22 Nh4 Rf6 23 Ne4 Nd3!∞] **22 Nh4! Rf6** [After a deep thought, Karen realized that his most natural response 22...Rf2 loses on the spot due to 23 Ng6+! hxc6 24 Qh3+ Kg7 25 Rxg6+!! Kxg6 26



Rg1+ Kf7 27 Qe6mate. So he chose a passive alternative that doesn't leave him much chance either.] **23 Ne4 Rh6 24 Raf1** [keeping the initiative with direct threats] **24... Qg8 25 Qf5** [One of many ways to end the game. Black has nothing better than to give up his queen.] **25...Rxh4** [25...Qxd5 26 Qf8+ Rxf8 27 Rxf8+ Qg8 28 Rfxg8mate] **26 Rxg8+ Rxg8 27 Rf4!** [27 h3 also wins, but my move is extremely precise as it immediately leads to favorable liquidations.] **27...Rh6 28 Ng5 Bxf4 29 exf4 Rhg6 30 Nf7+ Kg7 31 Qd7** [The most concrete way to convert the advantage, as the mating threats related to the discovered check are impossible to stop. This win put me in the sole first place coming into the last round.] **Kf6 32 Qe6+ Kg7 33 Qe7 1-0**

Tyson Brady - Luka Budisavljevic Queen's Indian

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Ba6 5 b3 Bb4+ 6 Bd2 Be7 7 Bg2 d5 8 O-O c6 9 Bc3 Ne4 10 Bb2 Nd7 11 Nbd2 f5 12 Rc1 O-O 13 Ne1 Qe8 14 Nd3 Rf6 15 Nf3 Rh6 16 h4 Bd6 17 Rc2 Qe7 18 Bc1 Rf6 19 Nde5 Bxe5 20 dxe5 Rff8 21 cxd5 cxd5 22 Bf4 h6 23 h5 Rfc8 24 Nd4 Nf8 25 Qb1 Qf7 26 Bf3 Ng5 27 Bxg5 hxg5 28 Rfc1 Rxc2 29 Qxc2 g4 30 Bg2 Rc8 31 Qd2 Qxh5 32 Rxc8 Bxc8 33 Qc3 Qe8 34 f4 gxf3 35 exf3 Ba6 36 f4 Qe7 37 b4 Bc4 38 a3 g5 39 Nf3 g4 40 Nd4 Qd7 41 Qc2 Ng6 42 Bf1 b5 43 Qh2 Kg7 44 Qh5 a6 45 Qh2 Qa7 46 Qf2 Kf7 47 Nc6 Qc7 48 Qc5 Ke8 49 Nd4 Qxc5 50 bxc5 Nf8 51 Kf2 Ke7 52 Nc6+ Kd7 53 Nd4 a5 54 Be2 Kc7 55 Bd1 Nd7 56 Nxe6+ Kc6 57 Nd4+ Kxc5 58 Ke3 b4 59 axb4+ axb4 60 Bc2 Nb6 61 Ne6+ Kb5 62 Nd4+ Kc5 63 Ne6+ Kb5 64 Bxf5 b3 65 Bb1 Nd7 66 Kd4 Nb8 67 Kc3 Nd7 68 Kd4 Nb8 69 Kc3 Nd7 70 Kd4 ½-½

The Under 2200 section saw a 4-way tie for 1st at 7-2 among Svetoslav Fedorov, Benjamin Snodgrass, Aneesh Desai & Hanford Chong. The Under 1800 group, on the other hand, had the clearest of winners as Warren Jackson Allen swept the field with a clean 9-0, fully 3 points clear of his pursuers. (Unfortunately, none of his games were available for publication.) Bharat Reddy Seethagari's 6½ points topped the Under 1400 section. In the 6-round Under 1000, Kwame Herrera-Dedo took 1st by winning all his games.

Capital Area Chess once again organized this the 12th edition of the Cherry Blossom Classic. Jeff Forbes served as Chief TD, assisted by Robert Getty, Grishmeshwar Prasad Sinha & Anand Dommalapati.

Andrew Samuelson - Timothy Xie Caro Kann

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 f3 e6 4 Nc3 Bb4 5 Bd2 Nf6 6 e5 Nfd7 7 f4 Be7 8 Nf3 c5 9 Be3 Nc6 10 Qd2 a6 11 Ne2 b5 12 c3 Qc7 13 h4 h5 14 Ng5 g6 15 Kf2 Rb8 16 Ng3 b4 17 Be2 Qa5 18 Rhd1 Bb7 19 a3 bxc3 20 bxc3 Qa4 21 Nf1 Na5 22 Rdb1 Nb3 23 Qc2 Bc6 24 Ra2 c4 25 Bd1 Qa5 {see diagram next page}





26 Nxe6 fxe6 27 Qxg6+ Kd8 28 Qxe6 Rb6 29 Qh3 Qxc3 30 Rc2 Qd3 31 f5 Rf8 32 f6 Nxf6 33 exf6 Rxf6+ 34 Bf3 Qxc2+ 35 Nd2 Nxd2 36 Rxb6 Nxf3+ 37 Kg3 Bd6+ 38 Bf4 Bxf4+ 39 Kxf3 Qd3+ 40 Kf2 Bg3+ 0-1

Kevin Wang - Matthew Guo Diao French

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 Nc6 5 Nf3 Qb6 6 a3 Bd7 7 b4 cxd4 8 cxd4 Rc8 9 Bb2 Nge7 10 Qd2 Nf5 11 g4 Nh6 12 h3 Be7 13 Nc3 O-O 14 Bd3 f6 15 exf6 Rxf6 16 Na4 Qc7 17 Be2 Rcf8 18 g5



18...Rxf3 19 Bxf3 Rxf3 20 gxh6 Bh4 21 Rf1 Ne7 22 Nc3 Nf5 23 Rc1 Qh2 24 Nd1 Ng3 25 a4 Nxf1 26 Kxf1 Bxa4 27 Rc8+ Kf7 28 hxg7 Bb5+ 0-1

On the cover...

The image on the front of this issue comes from the Spanish language photo blog *Artesdrez* (deludoscachorum.blogspot.com). The original is an oil painting by American painter Michael Fitzpatrick. The artist has his own web page www.michaelfitzpatrickpainter.com

I believe the made-up word *Artesdrez* is a portmanteau of the Spanish *artes* (art) and *ajedrez* (chess). The *Artesdrez* writeup accompanying the picture states:

"Around 2013, Fitzpatrick decided to make a series called *A Day in the Life* in which a model appeared doing everyday things. He made a list of things that could be done at a table and finally chose coffee and computer, chess and pastries.

"The first thing he did was make a sketch of a woman playing chess that would give her the general structure of the series. The final idea was to make the still life of the close-up of the natural and paint the model from a photograph. To do this, he made a photo shoot with the model and a few everyday objects... Finally, he performed a composition and color test before painting the series.

"As for the position on the board, the painter seems to have made the very frequent mistake of misplacing the king and the queen. In her initial position, the queen has to be in a square of her color."

Fredericksburg Open Oct 25-26, 2025

Country Inn & Suites by Radisson
Fredricksburg South

5-SS, \$4700 prizes based on 70 paid entries. Full details at <https://nerv.uschess.org/2025-fredericksburg-open>.



Virginia Senior Open

by Macon Shibut

I EXPERIENCED the 2025 Virginia Senior Championship with a distinct sense of déjà vu. Not only was it, well, a *senior* championship, which meant the players were older and a number of them I remember from tournaments long ago. But more than that, the venue — the “Country Inn & Suites by Radisson Fredericksburg-South” — is the same building as used to know as the Howard Johnson’s at what used to be called the Massaponax exit off I-95. The Howard Johnsons hosted the Virginia Open for decades back in the days when I did not qualify for senior events. I played countless other tournaments there as well, with names like “Central Virginia Open” or “Virginia Mid-Level Closed”, to say nothing of “Fredricksburg Open”. In fact, I believe there was a time when I’d played more USCF rated games in that one Howard Johnson’s meeting room than in any other single place.

I could write an entire article on memories from those events, or observations about what has or has not changed in the intervening years — regarding the hotel, the surrounding area, and also just the world of chess. Perhaps for a future issue... For now I’ll focus on this year’s Senior Championship, which served also as a qualifier to be Virginia’s representative at the Irwin Tournament of Senior State Champions, which will be held in conjunction with the US Open in Madison, WI later in the summer.

Without further beating around the bush, the 2025 Virginia Senior Open was won by a new-comer to Virginia, Ameer Ghobrial. He played steadily for the most part to reach 4½-½. He clinched first place by agreeing a draw in his last round from a position of strength.

2025 Virginia Closed State Championships Aug 30 – Sept 1

Hilton Garden Inn Innsbrook, 4050 Cox Road, Glen Allen, Va

Championship and Amateur sections open only to Virginia residents, military stationed in Virginia, and students attending a Virginia school or college (student ID or other proof of Fall 2025 enrollment required). No residency requirement for Novice section or Blitz tournament.

\$5000 based on 90 paid entries. Long and Short Schedule options. Three sections: Championship, Amateur (under 1800) and Novice (Sat-Sun only). Blitz tournament 7:30 PM Friday night, Aug 29

Hotel call 804-521-2901 by Friday August 22 to request the “Virginia Chess Federation” rate \$118/night-King or \$128/night-Double Queen.

Full details and Entry at www.vachess.org or contact Mike Hoffpauir by email (mhoffpauir@aol.com) or text (757-846-4805)



Oladapo Adu – Ameer Ghobrial King's Indian Attack

1 Nf3 d5 2 g3 Nf6 3 Bg2 g6 4 O-O
Bg7 5 d3 O-O 6 Re1 c5 7 Nbd2 d4 8
e4 dxe3 9 fxe3 Nc6 10 Nc4 Qc7 11 a4
Nd7 12 c3 b6 13 d4 Bb7 14 d5 Nce5
15 Nfxe5 Nxe5 16 Nxe5 Bxe5 17 c4
Rad8 18 e4 Rfe8 19 Qf3 Bd4+ 20 Kh1
e6 21 Rf1 Ba6 22 Qd3 exd5 23 exd5
Qe5 24 Bf4? [24 a5] 24...Qe2 25 Qxe2
Rxe2 26 Bc7 Rd7 27 d6 Bxc4 28 Rfe1



28...Rxcg2!? [28...Re6 ♣] 29 Kxg2
Bd5+ 30 Kf1 Bc4+ 31 Kg2 Bd5+ ½-½

IM Adu, of Washington DC, thus finished 4-1, good for a tie for 2nd thru 4th places with former state champion Daniel Miller and Michael Carey, of Rhode Island.



The pivotal game of the tournament was played in the penultimate round. Contrary to the most common practice, the loser of the contest thought it worth his effort to annotate the game for publication!

Ameer Ghobrial - Robert Fischer English

Notes by Robert Fischer

This game was played in the 4th round of the Virginia Senior Open. Both Ameer and I had won our first three games, and since no other Virginian had more than 2 points, it meant the winner this game would be assured of the championship regardless of what happened in the last round, and with it the opportunity to represent our state in the Irwin tournament of state champions at the US Open. Having won this two years ago, I was bound and determined to get my title back and earn the trip to the US Open.

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e6 [angling for the Queens Gambit] 3 e4 This is the Flohr-Mikenas line. It often leads to a pleasant position for White and a slight edge.] 3...c5 [After this move White can play 4 e5 and the knight heads back to g8] 4 g3 [Ameer avoids the theoretical line 4 e5 Ng8 5 Nf3 Nc6 6 d4 cxd4 7 Nxd4 Nxe5 8 Ndb5 a6 9 Nd6+ Bxd6 10 Qxd6 f6 where White gets the bishop pair and good dark square control but Black has an extra pawn. That was exactly the type of unbalanced position I was looking to play to maximize my winning chances.] 4...Nc6 5 Bg2 Be7 6 Nge2 [Here I was afraid of 6 d4, transposing into the Maroczy bind, which was not what I wanted to play.] 6...e5 7 d3 d6 8 h3 O-O

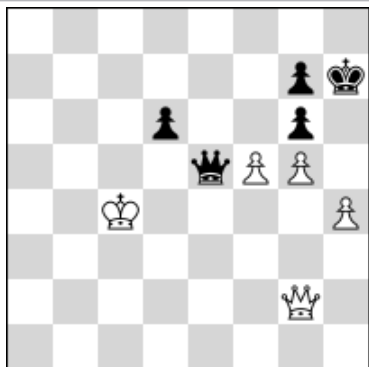


9 f4 exf4 10 Nxf4 Be6 11 O-O [Here I was not sure what to do. I thought perhaps develop my queen to a square that put pressure on h3, but that pawn is easily defended.] 11...Qd7? [In fact, by 11...Nd7 12 Be3 Bf6 I would achieve harmonious development. The position would be about equal.] 12 g4 Rfd8 13 Be3 [The engine says White would have been much better after 13 g5 Ne8 14 Qe1] 13...Rab8 14 Qf3 [14 g5 should still be played] 14...a6 15 a4 [again 15 g5] 15...Ne5 16 Qe2 Ne8 17 b3 Bg5 18 Rad1 Ng6 19 Nxb6 Bxe3+ 20 Qxe3 hxb6 21 d4 cxd4 22 Rxd4 Qc7 23 Rfd1 Qb6 24 Ne2 Nf6 25 Kh1 Nd7 [Now I was starting to feel optimistic about my position. My knight will come to e5 and White's bishop will be a very unhappy piece.] 26 Qg3 Ne5 27 Nf4 Rd7 28 Qc3 Rc8 29 a5 Qd8 30 R4d2 b5 31 axb6 Qxb6 32 Ra1 Rb8 33 Ra3



33...a5? [Blundering a pawn. After 33...Rdb7 Black would have been slightly better.] 34 Rxa5 {presumably Black intended 34...Qxb3? but now noticed 35 Qxb3 Rxb3 36 Nxe6 fxe6 37 Rxe5 -ed} Rdb7 [While I was annoyed at blundering the pawn, my position is still okay thanks to

my bind on the dark squares.] 35 Rb5 Qa6 36 Rxb7 Rxb7 37 Nd3? Qa3 38 Nc1 Qc5 39 Ra2 Kh7 40 g5 Rb8 41 Kh2 Qb6 42 Qd2 Qc5 43 Qf4 Qb4 44 Rd2 Qc5 45 Nd3 Nxd3 [if 45...Qa5 46 Nxe5 dxe5 47 Qh4+ Kg8 48 Rd3] 46 Rxd3 Rb6 47 Qe3 Qb4 48 Qg3 Qc5 49 Qe3 Qe5+ 50 Qg3 Qc5 51 Qf4 Ra6 52 Kg3 [With the extra pawn, Ameer is trying hard to win. But despite the pawn less, Black is okay as he has his own trumps: safer king, better bishop and dark square bind. Chances are about equal.] 52...Ra3 53 Qd2 Qe5+ 54 Kf3 Ra6 [There was also 54...Qh2 55 Qf4 Qg1 to consider. But at this point we were both getting short on time. My scoresheet says I had 4 minutes left.] 55 Qf4 Qc5 56 Qc1 Ra2 57 Qe3 Qe5 58 Rd2 Ra3 59 Bf1 Ra1 60 Kg2 Ra3 61 Be2? [Frustration and time pressure finally have a say...] 61...Rxb3! [Now Black is winning!] 62 Rd3 [62 Qxb3 Qxg5+ 63 Kh2 Qxd2] 62...Rxd3? [Black should keep the rooks on the board, 62...Rb4. White's king is much weaker and Black benefits from more material to attack.] 63 Bxd3 Qc3 64 Kf2 [64 Qe2] 4...Bxc4 65 Bxc4 Qxc4 66 h4 Kg8 67 Kf3 Qc5 68 Qd3 Qe5 69 Qc4 Qh2 70 Qc8+ Kh7 71 Qg4 Qh1+ 72 Ke3 Qe1+ 73 Kd3 Qb1+ 74 Kc4 Qc2+ 75 Kd4 Qd2+ 76 Kc4 Qc2+ 77 Kd4 Qc5+ 78 Kd3 Qe5 79 Qf3 Qe6 80 Kd4 [Nothing has really happened in the last 15 moves, but I realized that eventually I was going to need to push my f pawn. I was trying to elicit a mistake.] 80...f6 81 Qg2 Qe5+ 82 Kd3 Qb5+ 83 Ke3 Qc5+ 84 Kd3 Qe5 85 Kc4 f5? [85...Qf4! wins easily] 86 exf5



Tragedy about to unfold...

BUT THERE IS A HAPPY ENDING to this tale! One day after Bob sent me his notes to the game, we learned that Ghobrial and Miller had both declined the opportunity to go to Wisconsin. Bob gets his wish to represent our state in the tournament of champions after all!

In all, 39 players competed. Mike Hoffpauir organized and directed on behalf of the VCF.

Leif Karell – Ameer Ghobrial King's Indian Attack

1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 Nd2 dxe4 4 dxe4 Nf6 5 g3 Bc5 6 Bg2 e5 7 Ngf3 Nc6 8 O-O O-O 9 h3 h6 10 Re1 Be6 11 c3 a5 12 Qe2 Re8 13 Nc4 Bc8 14 Rd1 Qe7 15 Nh2 Nd8 16 Be3 b5 17 Bxc5 Qxc5 18 Ne3 Ra6 19 Nd5 Nd7 20 Ng4 Qa7 21 Nde3 b4 22 c4? [leaving a hole at d4] 22...Ne6 23 Nf5 Nd4 24 Nxd4 exd4 [The hole is filled but now Black has a passed pawn and free play for his pieces.] 25 c5 Nxc5 26 Rxd4 [The passed pawn disappears but White experiences tactical trouble.] 26...Nb3 27 axb3 Qxd4 28 Rd1 Qc5 29 Ne3 Rd6 30 Rxd6 cxd6 31 Qd3 Be6 32 Kh2 Qe5 33 Nd1 Rc8 34 f4 Qc5 35 f5 Bd7 36 Ne3 Bb5 37 Nc4 Bxc4 38 bxc4 a4 39 Qc2 b3 40 Qd3 Qxc4 41 Qxd6 Qe2 42 e5 Rc2 0-1

Larry Larkins – Gianluca Montalti Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nc3 e6 3 Nf3 a6 4 a4 Nc6 5 g3 Qc7 6 Bg2 Nf6 7 O-O Be7 8 d3 d5 9 Nd2 d4 10 Ne2 e5 11 h3 h5 12 f4 h4 13 f5 hxg3 14 Nxg3 g6 15 Nc4 Nh5 16 Nxh5 Rxh5 17 Bd2 [17 Qf3] 17...b6 18 Qf3 Rh7 19 fxg6 fxg6 20 Qg3 g5 21 a5 bxa5 22 Nxa5 Nd8 23 Rf5!





23...Bxf5 24 exf5 Ra7 25 Be4 Bf6 26 Qg2 Qg7 27 Bf3 Rh6 28 Nc4 Qf8 29 Be1 Nf7? [29...Kf7] 30 Bc6+ Kd8 31 Qd5+ Kc7 32 Rxa6 Nd8 [32...Rxa6 33 Qd7+ Kb8 34 Qb7mate] 33 Qd7+ 1-0

Gianluca Montalti – Oladapo Adu Sicilian

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 a6 5 Bd3 Bc5 6 Nb3 Ba7 7 O-O Nf6 8 Bg5 d6 9 Nc3 b5? [9...Nc6] 10 e5 dxe5 11 Qf3 Qb6 12 Qxa8 Bb7



13 Be3! Qc6 14 Be4 Nxe4 15 Qxa7 Nxc3 16 Qxb8+ [16 f3 Ne2+ 17 Kf2! O-O 18 Nc5] 16...Ke7 17 Qxb7+ Qxb7 18 bxc3 f5 19 Rfd1 f4 20 Bc5+ Kf6 21 Rd6 f3 22 Rad1 Rc8 23 Rd7 Qe4 24 gxf3 Qxc2 25 f4 Qxa2 26 fxe5+ Kg5 27 Kh1? [27 Be3+ Kg6 28 Nd4] 27...Qxb3 28 Rg1+ Kf5 29 Rf7+ Ke4 30 Bd4 Rg8 31 Ra1 Ra8 32 f3+ Kd3 33 Rxg7 a5 34 Rgg1 Qd5 35 Rgf1 Kc4 36 Kg2 Rg8+ 37 Kf2 Rf8 38 Ke3 Ra8 39 Rfc1 Qd8 40 Ke2 Qh4 41 Bg1 Qg5 42 Bd4 Qg2+ 43 Ke3 Rf8 44 Rf1 Qc2 45 Rfd1 Qxh2 46 Rxa5 Qg2 47 f4 Rg8 0-1

Central Virginia Open

by Robert Jackson

The 2nd Central Va Open was held April 4-6 in Glen Allen, Virginia. With a turnout of 116 players, the Richmond chess scene is clearly on the rise!

The Open section saw GM Sergey Erenburg and expert Hardy Gu sharing 1st place at 4-1 apiece. Experts Noah Oneill and Bora Yagiz each scored upset draws against the grandmaster.

The U1700 section had a clear winner with DC resident Zach Traynor scoring 4½ out of 5. Arjun Nair cored multiple upsets on his way to clear 1st in the U1100 section and saw his USCF Rating rise 150 points!

The Scholastic U800 side event saw the only perfect score of the weekend. Anshuman Mishra won all four of his games to claim clear 1st place.

ANTD/FIDE Arbiter Robert Jackson served as Chief TD for the event. Senior TD/National Arbiter Julie Wells was the Chief Assistant. Local TD Sorel Utsey & Club TD Venkat Krishnan also helped out.

Jack Barrow – Noah Thomas O'Neill French

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 e5 Nfd7 5 f4 c5 6 Nf3 Nc6 7 Be3 Be7 8 a3 O-O 9 dxc5 Nxc5 10 b4 Ne4 11 Nxe4 dxe4 12 Qxd8 Rxd8 13 Nd2 f5 14 exf6 Bxf6 15 O-O-O! a5 16 b5 Nb4 17 axb4 axb4 18 Bc4 Bc3 19 Nb1 Bd7 20 Rxd7! Re8 21 Bd4 1-0



Jack Barrow - Alan Chen

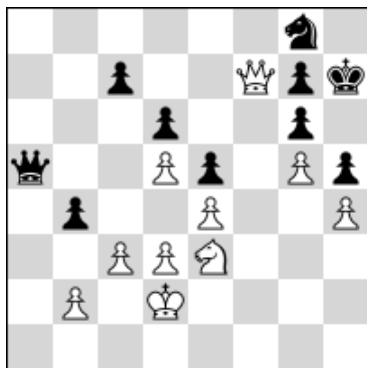
Ruy Lopez

Notes by Jack Barrow

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6
5 O-O b5 6 Bb3 Bc5 7 a4 Rb8 8 axb5
axb5 9 d3 O-O 10 Nc3 h6 11 Be3 Bxe3
12 fxe3 d6 13 Qe1 Be6 14 Nd5 [seizing
control of the d5 square] 14 ... Bxd5 15
exd5 Ne7 16 e4 Ng6 17 Nh4 Ra8 18
Rxa8 Qxa8 19 Nf5 Nh5 20 g3 Qd8 21
h4 Nf6 22 c3 Kh7 23 Bd1 Ne7 24 Ne3
Qd7 25 g4 Ng6 26 g5 Ng8 27 Bg4
Qd8 28 Bf5 Kh8 29 Bxg6 fxe6 30 Qg3
Rxf1+ 31 Kxf1 h5 32 Ke2 Qa8 33 Kd2
Qa1 34 Nd1 Qa4 [My opponent offered
a draw here. However, after taking into
account Black's weakened pawn structure
and his king and knight being cramped in
the corner, I declined the offer.] 35 Qf3
Kh7 36 Qf7 Qa5 37 Ne3 b4

{see diagram top of next column}

[White has two choices here: play 38
Nc4 for what Stockfish perceives as a
straightforward advantage; or play 38
Nf5 and spice up the position. I chose the
latter.] 38 Nf5 bxc3+ 39 bxc3 Qa2+
40 Ke3 gxf5 41 Qxh5+ Nh6 42 exf5



[Taking the knight right away would
allow Black to play 42...f4+ with winning
chances.] 42 ... Qa7+ 43 Kf3 Qg1 44
Qg6+ [removes a defender of the knight
on h6 and prevents Black from pulling
off a skewer that could win my queen via
Qd1+] 44 ... Kh8 45 gxh6 Qd1+ 46 Kg2
Qe2+ [Unfortunately, White doesn't have
an easy way out of the perpetual without
risking getting mated or dropping pawns.]
47 Kg1 Qe1+ 48 Kg2 Qe2+ ½-½ When
I plugged in this game to Stockfish on
Chess.com, it said that we both played at
95% accuracy, which I feel is well beyond
expectation given our ratings.

Shenandoah Open July 18-20

Comfort Inn, Monticello
2097 Inn Drive,

Charlottesville, Va 22911

5-SS G/90 +30. \$4000
prize fund based on 80
paid entries. Organized by
the Charlottesville Chess
Club. More information at

[caissachess.net/online-
registration/index/5810](http://caissachess.net/online-registration/index/5810).



Jack Barrow - photo by Jaclyn Brown



More Archives...

Let's revisit this 1970s-era photo from last issue. I asked for information on the identity of the player looking over GM Kavalek's shoulder.



Ed Kitces wrote in to opine that the standing player is GM Leonid Shamkovich, and that the picture probably taken at the 1976 US Open in Fairfax. The background is indeed suggestive of the George Mason University facility where that US Open was held. Moreover, VCF Archivist Paul Swaney, who submitted the picture in the first place, also identified the individual as GM Shamkovich.

However, The Editor remains unconvinced. There is a resemblance I suppose, but I remember the man Shamkovich, and to my eyes it simply doesn't look like him, particularly the hair and hairline. For comparison, the same set of archival photos (and thus possibly taken around the same time) contains another picture that definitely is Shamkovich...

Also, consider the photo of Shamkovich atop the opposite page, which comes from the CHESSE LIFE coverage of that same 1976 US Open...





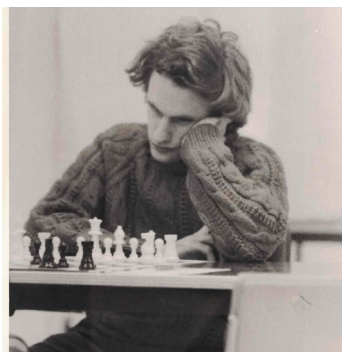
DMV Open July 11-13

Executive Conference & Training Ctr
22685 Holiday Park Dr, Dulles, Va

\$3,500 guaranteed prize fund. 5-round tournament with 3-day and 2-day schedules available for players in 3 sections (Premier-FIDE rated, Under 1900, and Under 1400), rating restrictions apply. More information at this link. Register now at <https://new.uschess.org/3rd-annual-dmv-open>. Organized by DMV Chess.

The Editor's Inbox remains open for any further insights. To me, the original photo is not not Shamkovich. However, I acknowledge two votes otherwise.

Meanwhile, here are a few more interesting pictures from the archives.



*Clockwise
from upper left:
Maryland GM
Larry Kaufman;
former Virginia
state champion
IM **Eugene
Meyer**; and a
simultaneous
exhibition in
Washington DC
by former world
champion **Tigran
Petrosian**.*

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

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