

VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

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2019 - #6



Tammy Stellanova
deludoscachorum.blogspot.com

VIRGINIA CHESS

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2019 - Issue #6

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Virginia Tournament Roundup

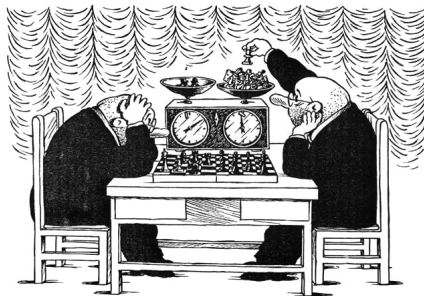
RECENT WEEKS have seen a number of significant tournament played in Virginia. Unfortunately, no one has submitted tournament reports for VIRGINIA CHESS. It's enough to make a newsletter editor feel downright forgotten. Anyway, here is a capsule summary of what's been going on:

The **Virginia Senior Open** was played in Arlington, Sept 20-22. Yefim Treger (New York) & Larry Gilden (Maryland) each scored $4\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ to pace a field of 35 players age 50+. William Marcelino, half a point behind, was top Virginian (on tiebreak over Shawn Hoshall) and will represent our state in the Nation Senior Invitational event at next year's US Open.

The Continental Chess Association's **Washington Chess Congress** attracted 274 players to Falls Church, October 10-14. The open ("Premier") section was tremendously strong with 8 grandmasters and over a dozen IMs in the field. GM Alder Escobar Forero (Columbia) & IM David Brodsky (New York) tied for 1st with scores of 7-2. Justin Paul & Jennifer Yu were the top scoring Virginians with 6 points each.

Former state champion Qindong Yang was clear 1st at the **Fredricksburg Open**, October 19-20. Jessica Lauser topped the Under 1800 section.

Ninety-three players turned out for the **Northern Virginia Open**, Nov 2-3. Larry Larkins scored $4\frac{1}{2}$ out of 5 to tie for 1st with Tianqi Wang (North Carolina) and Enkhbat Tegshsuren (Maryland).





Pal Benko

by Macon Shibut



GRANDMASTER PAL BENKO died in August 26 at the age of 91, and memorials have been appearing in many chess publications both in print and online. Reading them prompted me to revisit my own acquaintance with the eight-time US Open champion, two-time world championship candidate, esteemed problem composer, and pioneer of the once feared and still formidable Benko Gambit.

I got to play against Benko four times, losing twice but also achieving two draws. Our first encounter was also the first time I ever managed to escape defeat against a grandmaster. Perhaps that is why my memories of the game remain vivid even three decades later. Besides new analytic discoveries, my review of the game underscored for me some ways that chess has changed.

Pal Benko – Macon Shibut

New York 1984

Sicilian

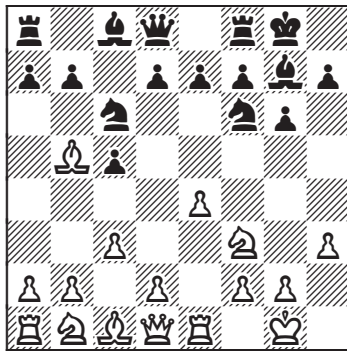
Notes by Macon Shibut

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5

The Rossolimo Variation was nowhere near so popular in 1984 as today. Moreover, there were no databases and a lot fewer books. Nowadays a cursory search on Amazon reveals half a dozen books specifically about 3 Bb5 against the Sicilian (technically the Rossolimo label only applies to 2...Nc6 3 Bb5; the related 2...d6 3 Bb5 is the Moscow Variation), as well as other titles that certainly tackle the variation (eg, Rogozenko's *Anti-Sicilians: A Guide for Black*). If there was any book devoted to the Rossolimo in 1984, I hadn't seen it.

3...g6 4 O-O Bg7 5 c3 Nf6 6 Re1 O-O 7 h3!?

I had previously faced the direct 7 d4. For instance, after 7...cxd4 8 cxd4 d5 9 e5 Ne4 10 Nc3 Nxc3 11 bxc3 Qa5 12 Qb3 Bg4 13 Bg5 Bxf3 14 gxf3 e6 I had a good position in Lucas-Shibut, 1979 although I lost due to defending poorly against an unsound piece sacrifice on the kingside. The memory of this game influenced how I played against Benko.



7 h3!?



7 h3 was entirely new to me. I recall that after Benko played it I considered an analogy with the Ruy Lopez where White defers d4 until after h3 (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 O-O Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 d6 8 c3 O-O and now 9 h3/9 d4!?) but I really couldn't understand why he should proceed so slowly in this position, with Black not yet ready to apply the pin ...Bg4.

Looking today in Chessbase I find over a thousand examples of 7 h3. It is in fact White's second most popular option (by a wide margin). The vast majority of these games are post-1984, but not because it was new then. Benko was not hitting me with cutting edge opening theory. *Every* opening is likely to have a lot more examples in the databases from about 1980 on because that is when the widespread digitizing of game scores kicked in. Great tournaments of the past (eg, New York 1924) were also brought in, of course, as were the complete *oeuvres* of great champions. But untold thousands of games from second and third tier tournaments remain beyond the database horizon, trapped on the printed pages of old books and chess magazines.

Black's most frequent reply to 7 h3 has been 7...e5. This is precisely what I did *not* want to play since I considered that inclining the position closer to that Ruy Lopez somehow "justified" 7 h3. I decided instead to aim for an improved version of my familiar scheme. While this seems reasonable, I note that the specific move I played is only the 6th most popular choice.

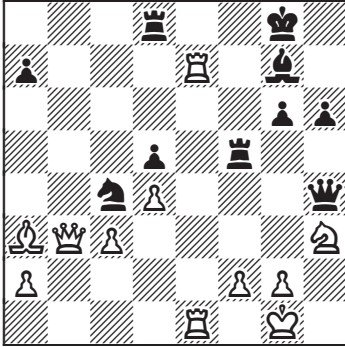
7...Qc7

Of those 1000+ 7 h3 games in Chessbase, there is one I find particularly intriguing. It was likewise played in 1984, and it featured this same 7...Qc7. White was IM Calvin Blocker. The player of the Black pieces was... Pal Benko! I would love to know whether that game occurred before or after my game here. If it was later, I flatter myself to think Benko may have analyzed our game, concluded that he had not achieved much himself as White against this method, and decided to copy my approach as Black. However, if Blocker-Benko happened first, that would mean I inadvertently hit upon the same defense as Benko himself had previously chosen. I wonder if he sat at the board that night considering whether I might somehow know of his earlier game.

8 d4 [Blocker played 8 a4] **cx d4 9 cxd4 d5 10 e5 Ne4 11 Nc3 Nxc3 12 bxc3 Na5** [To this day I cannot see why, in this structure, Black's Qc7 is not a more useful inclusion than White's h3] **13 Bd2 Bd7 14 Rb1 Rad8 15 Bxd7 Qxd7** [Obviously 16...Rxd7 would invite 17 e6. After the text White could likewise try that advance as a pawn sacrifice, but it's not very good. I intended to give the pawn right back by the typical method 16 e6 fxe6 17 Ng5 (17 Qe2 is toothless because after 17... Nc4 White can't continue 18 Qxe6+? Qxe6 19 Rxe6 Rxf3) 17...e5! 18 dxe5 e6 with a fine position.] **16 Ng5** [Plainly intending 17 e6. The obvious countermeasure was 16...e6 myself, and there is nothing wrong with it. However, I was unduly



influenced by my experience in the aforementioned Lucas game and wanted to avoid the weakening of f6 that had been my undoing there.] **16...Qc6 17 h4** [If 17 e6 I intended 17...f6 18 Nf7 Rc8 and I suppose Benko concluded that would be okay for Black.] **17...Nc4 18 Bc1 h6 19 Nh3** [Now 19...e6 was definitely called for. My resolve against that move got me into difficulties.] **19...f5?! 20 exf6 Qxf6**



21 Rxb7 Nd6 [The idea underlying 19...f5: my knight heads for e4 with a vague hope that White's self-inflicted weakness h4 will mean tactical chances on the kingside. Not my finest conception.] **22 Rbxе7 Qxh4** [I'm pretty sure I originally intended 22...Ne4. I may even have assumed it rendered White's last move impossible. I had second thoughts in view of something like 23 R7xe4 dxe4 24 Rxe4 with bounteous compensation for an exchange.] **23 Qb3 Rf5 24 Ba3 Nc4** (*diagram*)

White is much better but it felt like I had a puncher's chance, what with his queen having abandoned the kingside, his knight offside, and my pieces decently active. No matter, something dramatic was about to happen. White should play simply 25 Rxa7. Instead...

25 Rxg7+?! [A complete surprise for me. But Benko also overlooked something.] **25...Kxg7 26 Be7 Re8!** [Desperation is the mother of invention. I'm certain Benko had not noticed this resource when he captured on g7. The point is that now if 27 Bxh4 Rxe1+ 28 Kh2 Nd2 Δ ...Nf1+ draws, an absolute lucky accident.] **27 Bf6+!?**

I don't remember the exact clock situation, but Benko thought a long time here and I do recall starting to hope that time pressure might become a factor.

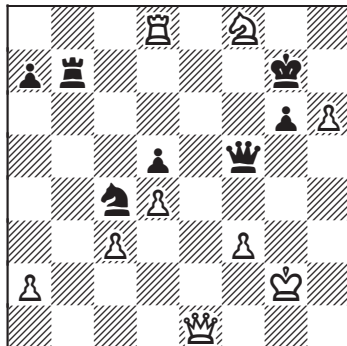
When faced with the unexpected, it is a natural and common—but not necessarily correct!—reaction to try to reassert command over events by playing something forceful. I believe that impulse got the better of Benko here. His bishop check is not bad, but 27 Qb4! would have better maintained the advantage. White recovers the exchange in any case, but he could have done it under better circumstances.

27...Rxf6 28 Rxe8 Rb6 [A pawn down with an exposed king, but now my pieces have good mobility and coordination.] **29 Qd1 Qf6 30 Qe1 Rb7 31 f3 Kf7 32 Nf4!?** [Again he tries to bully me with unexpected tactics and miscalculates something himself.] **32...Qf5** [White's 'point' was pretty transparent: 32...Qxf4? 33 Qe6+ Kg7 34 Rg8+ Kh7 35 Qxg6mate. So, I simply moved the queen to defend d5. But how alarming might it have been for Benko if I'd found 32...Nd2! with the idea 33 Nxd5 Nxf3+ 34 gxf3 Qg5+ 35 Kf1 Qxd5...? With both kings exposed and five moves remaining before time control, anything could have happened then.] **33 g4 Qd7 34**



Rhs Kg7 35 Rds! [He was definitely in time trouble by now, although nothing like Pal Benko hadn't managed countless times before in his career. Perhaps a minute was left for five moves (on an old analog clock, of course). He executed this last move emphatically, thumping the rook down behind my queen.] **35...Qf7** [of course not 35...Qxd8 36 Ne6+] **36 Ne6+ Kh7 37 Kg2!** [A surprise, but fortunately I noticed the idea. Under the guise of defending f3 he's clearing the way for 38 Ng5+! hxg5 39 Qh1+ and Qh8mate] **37...Qf6** [I could have tried 37...Re7 so as to answer 38 Ng5+! Kg7 but after 39 Nxf7 Rxe1 40 Rd7 White should win] **38 g5?** [A violent stab with his flag hanging, but he missed that 38 Ng5+! still works. Whether or not I take the knight, 39 Qe8 comes next with an unstoppable mate.] **38...Qf5** [Suddenly the Black king is safe enough and counter-threats like ...Rb2+ or ...Rb1 look kind of dangerous.] **39 Nf8+ Kg7 40 Ne6+** [repeating moves to make time control!] **Kh7 41 Nf8+ Kg7 42 gxh6+** (*diagram*)

We both have time to think deeply again, and the final act begins.



42...Kf7?

I tried to be tricky because I didn't realize that my position was already fine!

After the more obvious 42...Kf6 White should do something about ...Rb2+. But not 43 Re8 as 43...Qg5+ 44 Kf1 Nd2+ 45 Ke2 White's coordination is so poor that if the knight just goes back 45...Nc4 White would have nothing better than to proffer a draw by 46 Kf1.

The reason I didn't like 42...Kf6 was 43 Qc1 controlling g5. If then 43...Rb2+ I just thought 44 Kg3 escaped all my harassment. And if instead 43...Rb1 I noticed 44 h7! whereupon I'm threatening his queen but not his king, and meanwhile he's promoting a new queen with check!

I impulsively moved on to considering the text move. Obviously, 42...Kf7 invites 43 Qe8+ but in lunging for the Black king it occurred to me White's pieces might have abandoned their own monarch. Then I noticed that the next check would allow me to play an exchange sacrifice that I *hoped* might lead to perpetual check. Enough said, make the move and hit the clock!

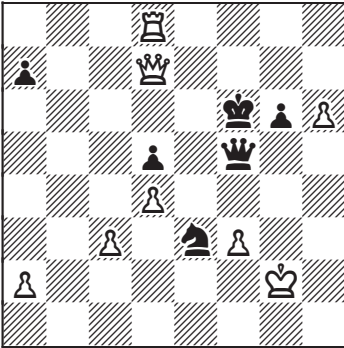
Before we see how that worked out, let's reconsider 42...Kf6. It turns out both of my fears were wrong.

First in the 43...Rb2+ 44 Kg3 line Black can leave his rook *en pris* with the awesome move 44...Nd2! screening White's queen from g5 and also threatening Qxf3+. White would be the one needing to hunt for a draw in that case.



Even sweeter, in the 43...Rb1! 44 h7 variation it should not have been too hard to see that 44...Rxc1 45 h8Q+ is far from deadly. 45...Kg5 46 Nh7+ Kf4 47 Rf8 “winning the queen”—I saw this at the board and straightaway cut off my analysis. But 47...Ne3+ 48 Kh2 Rc2+ 49 Kg1 Kg3! Black’s king spearheads a mating counterattack!

43 Qe8+ Kf6 44 Nd7+ Rxd7 [The only hope. If 44 ... Kg5 45 Qe7+ Kh5 (45...Kf4 46 Qh4+ Ke3 47 Re8+ is also losing, eg 47...Kd3 48 Nc5+ and if nothing else Nxb7 next) 46 h7! Now this is serious! 46...Rb2+ 47 Kg3] **45 Qxd7 Ne3+** (diagram)



46 Kf2?

I guess Benko simply overlooked my reply! 46 Kg3! would have punished my mistake at move 42. After 46...Qg5+ (46...Nf1+ 47 Kf2) 47 Kf2 Qg2+ (47...Nd1+ 48 Kf1 Ne3+ 49 Ke2 Qg2+ 50 Kxe3 is the same thing) 48 Kxe3 Qg1+ 49 Kd2 White’s king will escape to b3/a3. It helps that his queen covers against a possible check from b5.

46...Qc2+! 47 Kxe3 [if 47 Kg3? Nf1+ White even loses] **47...Qc1+** [This check (instead of g1) pushes White towards the kingside where he will find no shelter.] **48 Ke2 Qc2+ 49 Kf1 Qd1+ 50 Kf2 Qd2+ 51 Kg3 Qe1+ 52 Kg2 Qe2+ 53 Kg3 Qe1+ ½-½** There was no draw offer. The grandmaster simply stopped the clock and decreed the result— *“I guess it’s a draw.”* I was not going to argue with him.

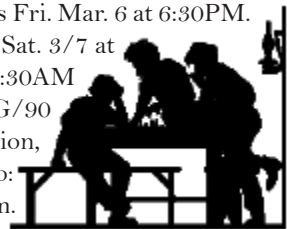


Virginia Scholastic & College Championships March 6-8, 2020

5SS. Organized by the VA Chess Federation at Thomas Jefferson HS for Science & Technology in Arlington, VA. Blitz Championships Fri. Mar. 6 at 6:30PM.

Main tournament Sat.-Sun., Mar. 7-8. Rds.: Rds. 1-3 Sat. 3/7 at 9AM, 12-noon and 4:30PM; Rds. 4-5 Sun. 3/8 at 8:30AM and 12:30PM. T/C: Rds. 1-2 G/60 d10, Rds. 3-5 G/90 d10. Reg.:

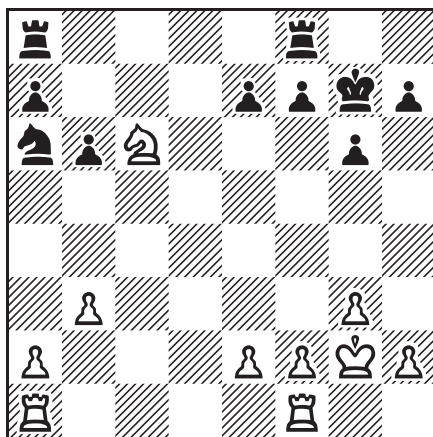
Detailed information including registration, entry, and player eligibility at www.vachess.org. Info: NTD Anand Dommalapati, adommalapati@yahoo.com.





Insidious

by James Richardson



Black to Play

The Quiz Position this issue comes from a game that I played on the final day of a big tournament. Going into the round I was the sole leader in my section with a score of 6½ points out of 7. All I needed was a draw to stay at the top. I was Black and my opponent just moved 16 Nd4-c6. Think through how you would continue before reading on.

When I began preparing the night before, I discovered that my anticipated opponent was a very experienced player. He was around my age and had earned the National Master title back in 2011. I noticed that he tended to favor mainline 1 d4 openings as White and he seemed very solid. I had a strong feeling opening preparation could be very important for this round, and I had a sharp line in mind.

Juan Tica - James Richardson 2017 World Open English

1 Nf3 [So much for preparation! I'd expected 1 d4] 1...Nf6 2 c4 b6 3 g3 c5 4 Bg2 Bb7 5 O-O g6 6 b3 Bg7 7 Bb2 O-O [Instead of playing the main line with 6 d4, he copied my queenside fianchetto. As a result we have complete symmetry. I was a bit surprised; he is half a point behind, yet he is playing such a placid variation. This was quite a different opening from what I expected, as I had anticipated a sharp game.] 8 Nc3 d5 9 Nxd5 Nxd5 10 Bxg7 Kxg7 11 cxd5 Qxd5 [I offered a draw to test the waters.] 12 d4 cxd4 13 Qxd4+ Qxd4 14 Nxd4 Bxg2 15 Kxg2 Na6 16 Nc6 And so we reach the Quiz Position.



continued p 10



46th annual Eastern Open

Over \$15,000 in Projected Prizes!! Over 50 Cash Prizes Awarded!!

Class prizes awarded for each 150-point interval within each section!!

A Heritage Event! GPP 140 (enhanced)! US Chess Junior Grand Prix! VCF Cup Points!

7 Round Swiss: December 27-30, or December 28-30, 2019

Scholastic and Blitz tourneys on December 27; Quick tourney on December 28

CONVENIENT LOCATION: Westin Hotel, Tyson's Corner VA (Exit I-495 at Rt. 7 East);
also shuttle to Metro & Tysons

7-round Swiss in 5 Sections: Open section prizes guaranteed.

Other section cash prizes based on 40 paid entries in each section.

Open: (4-day-FIDE rated) \$2,000-1,000-500-250 U2350: \$750-350-200

Under 2200: (4- or 3-day) \$1,000-500-250-125 U2050: \$450-225

Under 1900: (4- or 3-day) \$1,000-500-250-125 U1750: \$450-225

Under 1600: (4 or 3-day) \$800-450-250-125 U1450: \$400-200

Under 1300: (4 or 3-day) \$700-350-200-125 U1150: \$250-125 U1000: \$200-100

(U/R max prize = \$150 for sections U1600 & U1300)

Scholastic: (1-day, 4 rd) on Thu 12/27 in 3 sections:

K-12 Open, K-8 U1000, K-5 U700. Trophies, medals, certificates, & book credits

Special Prizes: Selection of winners and allocation of subjective special prizes is at the sole discretion of the tournament organizer.

Best Fighting Spirit and Best Played Game: \$200-100 from any round. Selected game must be annotated by winner.

Brilliance: \$100-50 from any round. Submit position, game score, and annotate several moves leading up to the brilliance.

Best Opening Innovation: \$100-50 from any round. Authors must demonstrate the value of their opening innovation vs. current best practice. Winners will have games, brilliances, and opening innovations submitted to *ChessLife* for publication.

Upset Prizes in U1600 & U1300 Sections: For rounds 1-6 at 4-day TC. \$25 book credit prize per rd. Max 2 prizes per player.

4-day Schedule (12/27-12/30) – Open, U2200, U1900, U1600, and U1300 Sections: 7 rounds on Fri-Mon 12/27-12/30.

Schedule: Rd 1: Fri 12/27 at 6 pm; Rds 2-3, 4-5: Sat-Sun 12/28-12/29 at 11 am & 5:30 pm; Rds 6-7: Mon 12/30 at 10 am & 4:30 pm **On-Site Registration:** Fri 12/27: 4-5:30 pm. **Time Control:** 40/120, SD/30, d10.

3-day Schedule (12/28-12/30) – U2200, U1900, U1600, and U1300 Sections: 7 rounds on Sat-Mon 12/28-12/30.

Schedule: Rds 1-3: Sat 12/28 at 5, 7, 9 pm. Join 4-day in Rd 4. **On-Site Reg:** Until Sat 12/28: 4-4:45 pm. **TC:** G/45, d10.

Byes: ½-pt byes available for any round, but Rd 5-7 must commit before Rd 4. Limit 2 byes for prizes.

Reentry: \$75 and limited to rds 1-4. **Equipment:** Please bring sets, clocks, and boards as none will be provided.

Hotel Rates: Only \$89 per night!! To reserve online, go to easternopenchess.com or call (888) 627-8970 and request the Eastern Open chess rate. **Parking:** Free parking for all participants! Shuttle bus to Tyson's Corner and Metro.

Entry Fee: Enter online or mail BY Dec 20: Open = \$135; U2200 = \$125; U1900 = \$120; U1600 = \$110; U1300 = \$100; U1000 or U/R = \$75. Entry fee is \$25 more at site or online late after Dec 20 to Midnight Dec 26! \$10 refund service charge. Dec 2019 Rating List used.

Open Section: GMs: Free entry, but \$135 deducted from any prize. IMs: \$65 advance entry, but \$70 deducted. FMs: \$90 advance entry, but \$45 deducted. Only 4-day schedule. No re-entries allowed.

Online Entries: Enter and pay on the easternopenchess.com Web site.

Mailed Entries: Please make checks or money orders payable to Eastern Open.

Mail entries postmarked by 12/20 to Tom Beckman, 3731 Kanawha St. NW, Washington DC 20015-1809.

For online entry, entry forms, and info: easternopenchess.com and questions: tombeckman@rcn.com

**SIDE EVENTS:**

Eastern Open Scholastic Tournament: 4 rds on Fri 12/27, 10am-6pm

3 sections: K-12 Open, K-8 U1000, and K-5 U700. Prizes are trophies, medals, certificates, and book credit prizes.

Entry Fee: \$35 if online or postmark by 12/20. \$45 late/at site. Please make check payable to Eastern Open. Dec 2019 Rating List.

On-Site Registration: Fri 12/27: 9-9:45 am. **Time Control:** G/45, d10. **Schedule:** Rds 1-4 at 10 am, 12, 2, & 4 pm.

Eastern Open Blitz Championship: 8-rd Swiss; 1 Section. Fri 12/27, 1-4 pm. **On-Site Reg:** Fri 12/27: 12-12:45 pm. Rounds will start at 1 pm promptly & successive rds will start as soon as ready. **TC:** G/7, d2.

Prizes: \$800 in cash prizes based on 40 paid entries: 1st/2nd/3rd: \$250/125/50, U2100: \$150/75; U1800: \$100/50. Higher of USCF and Blitz ratings used for pairings and prizes. December 2019 Rating List.

Entry Fees: \$35 by 12/20; \$45 late/at site. Please make checks payable to the Eastern Open.

Eastern Open Quick Tourney: 4-rd Swiss, 1 section. Sat 12/28, Rd 1 at 10pm. **On-Site Reg:** Until 9:50 pm. **TC:** G/15, d10.

Prizes: \$350 b/20 paid entries: 1st/2nd: \$125/50, U2100: \$70/30; U1800: \$50/25. **EF:** \$30 by 12/20; \$35 late/at site.

Chess Lecture: Fri 12/27, 4-5:30 pm, Speaker and topic TBD.

Online Entries: Enter and pay on the easternopenchess.com website BY Dec. 20th for the advance rate. Entries are \$25 more if players register late online (Dec 21-26) or on-site (Dec 27-28) for Eastern Open; \$10 more for Scholastic and Blitz tourneys; \$5 more for Quick tourney; \$10 service charge for refunds.

Mailed Entries: Complete entry form and make check or money order payable to Eastern Open. Mail entries postmarked by Dec. 20th to Tom Beckman, 3731 Kanawha St. NW, Washington DC 20015-1809.

Open Section Rules: FIDE Rules used, with regular US Chess 1-hr lateness/default rule in effect. If no US Chess rating, use FIDE rating +100 pts. If no US or FIDE rating, then rating assigned for other countries per US Chess rulebook. Foreign players with no FIDE ID, MUST pre-register by Dec. 15th so that country can register player with FIDE. 4-day schedule only and no re-entries allowed.

Tournament Book: After the tournament, all registered players in the Eastern Open will receive a tournament book by email. The book will consist of the article submitted to Chess Life, annotated games submitted for the special prizes, annotated games submitted by other players, tactical puzzles, and games with opening innovations. In addition, all games submitted from the Open section, and selected games submitted from other sections will be published in The Week in Chess download and the Tournament Book.

Eastern Open Advance Entry Form

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ USCF ID #: _____ Exp Date: _____ USCF Rating: _____

EASTERN OPEN TOURNAMENT: December 2019 Rating List used.

Section Entry Fee: Open = \$135 U2200 = \$125 U1900 = \$120 U1600 = \$110 U1300 = \$100 U1000UR = \$75

Open: GM = \$0 IM = \$90 FM = \$65

Section: _____ **Entry Fee Enclosed:** _____ **Byes for Rounds:** _____

For Open section, FIDE Rating: _____ FIDE Country: _____

4-day schedule: For Open, U2200, U1900, U1600 and U1300 Sections: _____ (check one schedule)

3-day schedule: For U2200, U1900, U1600 and U1300 Sections: _____

SIDE EVENTS: December 2019 Rating List used.

Scholastic Tourney (Fri, 12/27), Entry Fee (\$35) _____

Please circle one section: K-12 / Open K-8 / U1000 K-5 / U700

Eastern Open Blitz Championship (Fri, 12/27), Entry Fee (\$35): _____

Eastern Open Quick Tourney (Sat, 12/28), Entry Fee (\$30): _____

Total Amount Enclosed For All Entry Fees: \$ _____



Insidious *continued*

Although outwardly tranquil, such positions can be quite insidious if not treated with respect. If you want to learn about how dangerous they can be, check out the games of Vassily Smyslov and Ulf Andersson in this double fianchetto variation. Smyslov–Castro, Biel 1976 is a classic example of White creating problems from this exact position except with 16 Rfd1 instead of 16 Nc6. Edmar Mednis's *From the Opening into the Endgame* devotes a chapter to this type of endgame.

I underestimated the dangers of not taking immediate action to neutralize White's seemingly microscopic advantage. I don't think I would repeat this position again from the Black side. There are better ways to offer the queen exchange. Also, Black was under no obligation to force simplifications with 8...d5.

16...e6

The most accurate path to equality was 16...Rfc8. I wanted to play this but hesitated and chose the slack text instead. Muddled thinking—*keep more tension in the position with some vague hopes to play for a win should my opponent over-press*—just made the situation worse. After further inaccuracies I found myself in serious trouble and eventually the problems became insurmountable.

After 16...Rfc8! I calculated the obvious 17 Rfc1 Rc7 18 Rc2 Rac8 19 Rac1 Nb8 20 Nb4 Rxc2 21 Rxc2 Rxc2 22.Nxc2 with dead equality. However, I had trouble finding a fully convincing solution against 17 Nxe7.

When I showed that position to my friend Peter Rigby, he instantly found 17...Rc2! Somehow I had missed this entirely, although it is quite logical on the basis of a common endgame principle: *Activate your rook on the seventh (second) rank!* Following 17...Rc2! 18 e3 Rd8 19

Rfc1 Rdd2 20 Rxc2 Rxc2 Black's active rook gives at least sufficient compensation for the pawn. Indeed, White has to play accurately to hold the balance. 21 Nd5 Nc5 22 Nb4 Rd2 23 Kg1 Ne4 24 f4 Re2 25 Nc6 a5 26 Ne5 f5 27 Nc4 Nd2 28 Ne5 Ne4 is a possible continuation leading to a likely draw by repetition. If White tries to free his rook with 29 a4, then 29...Rxe3 aims at a newly created weakness.

While I missed 17...Rc2!, I did consider 17...Re8!? 18 Nc6 Rxe2. Even here Black is doing fine. Maybe I was concerned about the development of my queen's rook, but after 19 Rfe1 Rc2 20 Rec1 Rb2 21 Rcb1 Rc2 it's hard to see how White makes progress. And if instead 19 Rfc1 then 19...Nc5! seems to be comfortable for Black. Everything is so much clearer in post-mortem analysis!

I also remember considering 17...Rc5!? After 18 Rfd1 Black's best is probably 18...Rc2! anyhow.

17 Rac1 [In response to my suboptimal move, my opponent thought for almost 40 minutes. This may seem like bad time management, but the greatly simplified position mitigates that. In any case, he did find some good ideas to increase the pressure, and I failed to sense the danger.] **17...Rfc8 18 Ne5 Nb4 19 Rfd1 Nd5 20 e4 Nf6 21 Kf3 b5 22 b4 a5** [I had a tactical idea but he saw through the tricks.] **23 Rxc8 Rxc8 24 bxa5 Ra8 25 Nc6 Rc8 26 Nb4 Rc4 27 a3 Nxe4** [Recovering the sacrificed pawn but my position crumbles due to the power of his passed pawn.] **28 a6 Ng5+ 29 Ke3 Rc7 30 h4 Nh3 31 Rd6 g5 32 Rc6 Rd7 33 Rb6 Rd1 34 a7 e5 35 a8Q 1-0**

This was a difficult loss. What appeared to be a "sure draw" disappeared before my eyes. I must give credit to my opponent. He did a very good job of finding opportunities in a dry endgame.

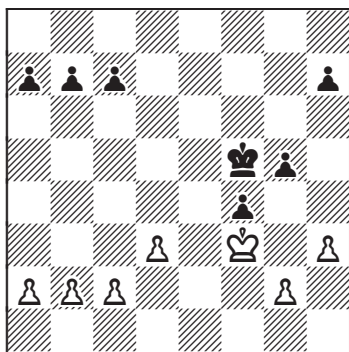


Old Friends

by Macon Shibut

At the US Open in Orlando, Florida this summer, I caught up with someone who will be familiar to many of our older readers, especially in the norther Virginia/DC/Maryland area, someone who I had not seen or heard much of in maybe 30 years: **Vince Moore!** Vince was active as both a player (master strength) and organizer in the 1980s. Like all of us, he looks older but seemingly in good health. He has not played a rated event since before the USCF database went online in 1991, and he visited the US Open merely as a spectator.

Seeing Vince again brought to mind an analysis from long ago.



Mark Hoshor – Vince Moore Tidewater 1983

White to Play

The diagram position comes from a Masters/Experts tournament that Vince won with a 4-0 score. His opponent was another familiar name from the past who I have not seen in many years. Mark Hoshor, also a master (expert at that time), hailed from Tidewater and played regularly in VCF events. A check of the USCF database reveals that he lives in Georgia now and still plays occasionally. Mark and I are the same age and played on numerous occasions. I have a rather painful memory of exhibiting some terrible sportsmanship as he beat me once in high school. I'm thankful that Mark was graceful and forgiving. He never held my petulance against me, and our later meetings were all good times.

There was a regional chess newsletter back then, *TIDEWATER KNIGHT MOVES*, edited by yet another old acquaintance, the 1984 Virginia state champion Errol Liebowitz. Errol last played a rated event in 2005, although I have seen him more recently than that. He annotated the Hoshor-Moore endgame in *TIDEWATER KNIGHT MOVES* but Vince found fault with some of the analysis. Not long after, Vince and I met up at the old World Bank Chess Club in downtown DC and he was anxious to show me his analysis.

With material equality and pawn majorities on opposite wings, Black's primary advantage consists of having his king actively placed on the fourth rank. A secondary advantage is the fact that his majority consists of 3 pawns versus 2, which requires fewer moves to advance as a unit than White's 4-3 queenside majority.

TIDEWATER KNIGHT MOVES stated, "Black has a won endgame. The technique is one everyone should know. Create an outside passed pawn and use it to divert the opponent's king. Then, at the opportune moment, give up the pawn to give



one's king time to run to the other side of the board and win material there."

While this accurately summarizes Black's ideal plan, only long, concrete analysis can determine whether in fact such an "opportune moment" need ever arise. Vince concluded that it should not.

1 g3 fxg3 2 Kxg3 h5 3 b4!

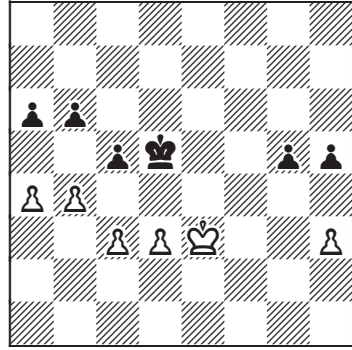
Essential! If Black is permitted to get ...c5 in he will indeed execute the indicated plan. 3 Kf3? g4+ 4 hxg4+ hxg4+ 5 Kg3 (5 Ke3 c5 doesn't help) 5...c5! Now White cannot afford to give ground with his king since he would lose all his pawns after ...Kf4 etc. But otherwise, he soon runs out of useful moves. For example, 6 c3 b5 7 a3 (7 b4 cxb4 8 cxb4 Ke5 9 Kxg4 Kd4 etc) a5 8 b4 (if 8 b3 b4! Black's king will soon invade d4) axb4 9 axb4 cxb4 10 cxb4 Ke5 11 Kxg4 Kd4 12 Kf4 Kxd3 13 Ke5 Kc4 wins; or 6 a3 a5 7 a4 (else Black plays ...b5 as above) Kg5 8 c3 Kf5 Black has unlimited tempos available and he need only wait for White to exhaust his supply of pawn moves.

3...Ke5 4 c3 a6?!

4...b5?! was a TIDEWATER KNIGHT MOVES recommendation, but in that case 5 a3 Kf5 6 Kf3 g4+ 7 hxg4+ hxg4+ 8 Kg3 defends without difficulty. Indeed, after 8...a6 9 c4 Ke5 10 c5! Kd4? (10...Kf5 =) 11 Kxg4 Kxd3 12 Kf5 White even wins: 12...Kc4 13 Ke6 Kb3 14 Kd7 Kxa3 15 Kxc7 Kxb4 16 Kb6.

Vince claimed the best try in principle was neither 4...b5 nor the move played in the game, but rather 4...Kf5. However, it would still be insufficient, as will become clear from what follows.

5 Kf3 Kd5 6 a4 b6 7 Ke3 c5

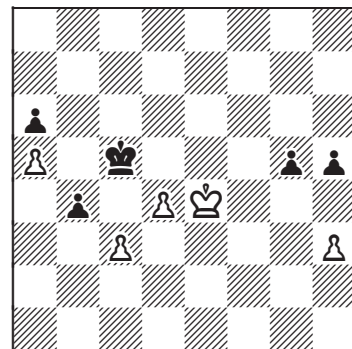


8 b5?

The correct defense was 8 a5! In that case...

{a} 8...bxa5 9 bxa5 Kc6 10 Ke4! Kb5 11 d4 cxd4 12 cxd4 Kxa5 13 Ke5! Kb6 (or 13...g4 14 hxg4 hxg4 15 d5 Kb6 16 Ke6!) 14 Ke6! White's d-pawn is too strong for Black to win. Advancing the g-pawn sometime earlier would not improve the variation because White can always capture it and trade off the c-pawn or else get back into similar variations.

{b} 8...b5 In this line I think Vince made a mistake but not one that invalidates his overall conclusion. 9 bxc5 Kxc5 10 Ke4 b4 11 d4+!





Here what Vince gave was 11...Kb5? 12 cxb4 Kxb4 13 d5 Kc5 14 Ke5 g4 15 hxg4 hxg4 16 d6 Kc6 (not 16...g3? 17 d7 g2 18 d8Q g1Q 19 Qb6+) 17 Ke6 g3 18 d7 g2 19 d8Q g1Q “draw”. In fact White wins that position by 20 Qd7+ Kc5 21 Qa7+.

However, there is an improvement 11...Kc4! at the diagram. Then 12 cxb4 g4! 13 hxg4 hxg4 14 d5 (14 Kf4 sets a trap—14...Kxd4? 15 b5!— but 14...Kxb4! 15 Kxg4 Kc4 =) 14...g3 15 d6 g2 16 d7 g1Q 17 d8Q Qb1+ is indeed a draw.

{c} 8...cxb4 9 axb6 Kc6 10 cxb4 Kxb6 11 d4 is also drawn. One plausible continuation is 11...Kc6 12 Ke4 g4 13 hxg4 hxg4 14 Kf4 Kd5 15 Kxg4 Kxd4 16 Kf4 Kc4 17 Ke3 Kxb4 18 Kd2 Kb3 19 Kc1 Ka2 20 Kc2 =

8...axb5 9 axb5 Ke5 10 Kf3 Kf5 11 Kg3 Kf6 [11...g4 would win but Black was still

figuring things out and also making time control.] **12 Kf3 Ke5 13 Kg3 Kf5 14 Kf3 g4+ 15 hxg4+ hxg4+ 16 Kg3** [16 Ke3 Ke5 doesn't help] **16...Kg5 17 c4** [Perhaps an oversight—see the next note—but nothing that could change the outcome.] **16...Kf5 18 d4 cxd4 19 c5 d3 20 c6**

A protected passed pawn, and one that is on track to promote with check if Black ignores it. But of course Black will not ignore it, and then his own pawns are too far advanced for White to contend with. Earlier Mark may have banked on making an uncatchable passed pawn here by 20 cxb6. That one wouldn't queen with check, however, and after 20...d2 21 b7 d1Q 22 b8Q Black uses the critical move to fashion a cute finish, 22...Qg1+ 23 Kh4 Qe1+! 24 Qg3 (or 24 Kh5) Qh1+ **20...Ke6! 21 Kf2 g3+ 22 Kxg3 d2 0-1**

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