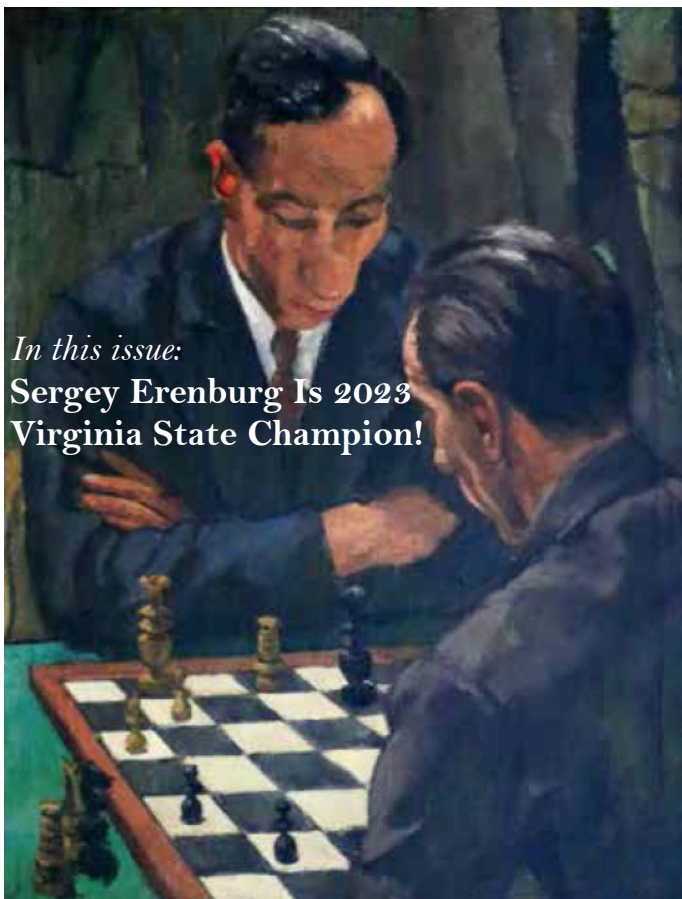


VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

The bimonthly publication of the
Virginia Chess Federation

2023 - #5



In this issue:
**Sergey Erenburg Is 2023
Virginia State Champion!**

Frantisek Zdenek Eberl

VIRGINIA CHESS

Newsletter

2023 - Issue #5

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Virginia 'Closed' State Championship

Grandmaster Sergey Erenburg swept through the 2023 state championship. We are pleased to present below the new champion's own account of his 6-0 romp. Defending champion Jason Morefield and expert Kevin Su each scored $4\frac{1}{2} - 1\frac{1}{2}$ to tie for 2nd/3rd places. Six players shared top class A honors: Saharsh Darsh Shetty, Aneesh Desai, Darreion Baily, Timothy McCall, Mahin Ganesan & Arav Srivastava. Ashvath Krishnan won the Upset prize. There were 44 entrants to the championship section.

In the Amateur section, Gabriel Cumming & Siddhant Yambem tied for 1st with $5\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}$ scores, Cumming taking the Amateur Champion title on tiebreaks. Jackson Twilley was 3rd with 5 points. Gabe Kaczor & Jadon Gary shared top C/D. All told, 46 players competed.

The 46-player Novice section saw Joseph Andrews Jr score 5-0 for clear 1st place. One point behind him lay a 5-way tie between Mike Anliker, Mikhail Wilson, Samuel Millman, Jonathan Davis & Elliot Allen. Aryan Shiven Kumar, Aarav Hemanth & Abhinav Chokkalingam split the top under 800/600 prizes. Christopher Neal was the top unrated.

GM Erenburg also won the Friday night Blitz championship, scoring $7\frac{1}{2}$ out of 8. Isaac Spence's 6 points was good for clear 2nd place. Jason Morefield, Andrew Samuelson & Will Moorhouse were all half a point further back.

All told, the 134 entrees in the main tournament was a great success and taxed the capacity of the Hilton Garden Inn playing venue. Mike Hoffpauir, Robert Jackson & Cheryl Havens ably directed the throng. The annual VCF Business Meeting was held Saturday morning in a combined live + Zoom mode. This allowed the participation of some who were unable to be there in person (including the outgoing President) but it did introduce some confusion into the meeting. Adam Chrisney was elected as President for the coming year. Michael Callaham will be Vice President. Mike Hoffpauir Treasurer/Secretary, and Todd Hammer & Robert Jackson begin two-year terms in At-Large positions on the VCF Board.

And with that summary, we turn it over to the new 2023 Virginia State Champion. We have a few other games from the tournament that appear following GM Erenburg's account.



"This year it was very important for me to win the event." by Sergey Erenburg

I was born in Siberian part of Russia that was part of the former Soviet Union. Although chess was big in the Soviet Union, my growth opportunities were very limited, given the collapse of the country and the cease of government support for chess in the 1990s. Despite the difficulties, thanks to the support from my parents, I was consistently placed among the top 10 Russian youth chess players, winning the U10 Russian Blitz Championship in 1993 - and sharing 3rd the same year.



In 1998, my family and I immigrated to Israel, where I consistently won the U16, U18 and U20 championships and represented Israel in World Youth and Junior Championships, taking the shared 3rd in 2003. That year, I also officially became a Grandmaster and the following year I became the Israeli national champion at the age of 21.

Upon finishing mandatory military service, I became a full-time chess professional. Besides winning some international tournaments, in 2005 I helped the Israeli national team claim silver medals at the European Team Championship and I made it to the second round of FIDE World Cup. The following year I finished 9th at the World Blitz Championship.

However, that same year I decided to leave professional chess for collegiate studies. During the 2007-2011 time frame I led the University of Maryland, Baltimore County chess program to numerous victories at Pan American and Final Four championships.

After completing my second graduate degree from University of Pennsylvania in 2012, my first job in finance industry, with Capital One, brought me to Richmond. I was ranked 4th in USA, but I performed poorly in the 2014 US Championship, finishing only 9th place. That same year I also played in Virginia 'Closed'. Even though the event was just days after the birth of our first child, I assumed it would be an easy victory. That event turned into a complete disaster for me, where I drew two games plus I'd committed to a ½ pt bye in the last round, leaving me nowhere close to winning the championship.

That disastrous experience motivated to do better next time! But I had not returned to the Virginia 'Closed' until this year. In 2016 we moved to Northern Virginia, followed up by a move to Philadelphia. We always wanted to come back Richmond, and we finally did in 2019 shortly before COVID-19 pandemic began. The pandemic, my challenging job, and the expansion of my family prompted a very long 4-year break from chess tournaments. I made a comeback only this summer.

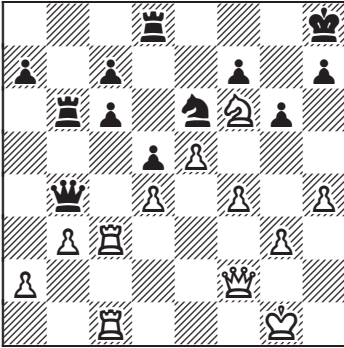
This year it was very important for me to win the event. I approached the state championship with the mindset that it will not be easy, and I was motivated to prove to myself that I can do better than in 2014. In fact, all six of my games were hard fought—credit to my opponents! I think that I played fairly well in all my games, with the exception of a few moves in the last round where my opponent nearly escaped for a draw.





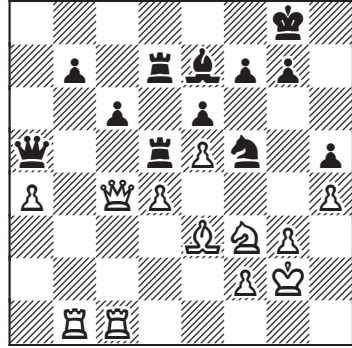
Rd 1

Sergey Erenburg - Timothy McCall

*White to Play*

Rd 2

Brian Tay - Sergey Erenburg

*Black to Play*

After a hard fought opening and middlegame, White achieved advantage and with the knight on f6, their attacking prospects look good. But how to convert this?

31 f5! [I spent quite a lot of time before making this move. Only when I saw white's quiet 34-th move that happened in the game, it became obvious that I'm winning.] **31...gxf5** [Black loses a knight after 31...Nxd4 32 a3!] **32 Qxf5 Qxd4+** **33 Kh1 Nf8 34 Qh5!** [White's knight on f6 controls all the key squares and Black can't defend the f7 pawn. My difficulty in playing 31 f5 had been from trying—unsuccessfully—to find a win after 34 Qg5 Ng6 35 Qh6 Nf8] **34... Rd7** [Desperation. Everything else loses, too, eg, 34...c5 35 Qxf7 Rxf6 36 Qxf6+ Kg8 37 Qxd8; or 34...Kg7 35 Qg5+ Ng6 36 Nh5+] **35 Qg5 1-0**

Changing Address?

Notify the membership secretary
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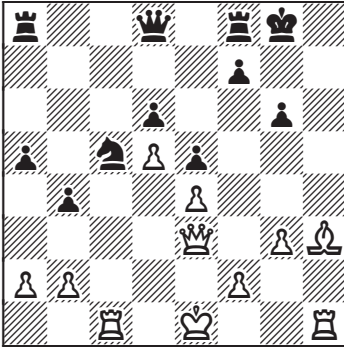
Black's position is better thanks to outposts on f5 and d5, as well as slightly better pawn structure. Now I am switching to attack the a4 weakness and preparing to open the long diagonal.

23...Qa8! 24 Qb3 Ra5 25 Rc4 b5! 26 axb5 cxb5 27 Rc3 Nxd4 [Winning a pawn. Computer suggests that there was even a better continuation: 27...b4 28 Rd3 Nxe3+ 29 fxe3 Ra2+ 30 Rb2 Rda7 31 Rbd2 R7a3 32 Qc4 Qe4 winning] **28 Bxd4 Rxd4 29 Qc2 Rd8 30 Rd1?!** [30 Rc7 Ra3 31 Qc6 Qxc6 32 Rxc6 b4 ♯] **30...Rxd1 31 Qxd1** [31 Rc8+ Rd8 32 Rxa8 Raxa8 33 Qc7 Re8 34 Nd4 b4 35 Nc6 Bf8 Black wins] **31...b4 32 Rc7 Ra7 33 Qd7 Rxc7 34 Qxc7 Bf8** [Typically queen and knight are stronger than queen and bishop, but here the knight is pinned and Black's pieces are well coordinated to advance the passed pawn.] **35 Qb6 Qd5! 36 Qd4 Qb7! 37 Qd3 b3 38 Kh2 b2 39 Nd2 Qb4!** [Threatening to take on d2 and pushing the knight into an even more passive position.] **40 Nb1 Qe1 41 f4 Bc5 42 Qd8+ Kh7 43 Qd3+ g6 0-1**



Rd 3

Sergey Erenburg - Tyson Brady

*White to Play*

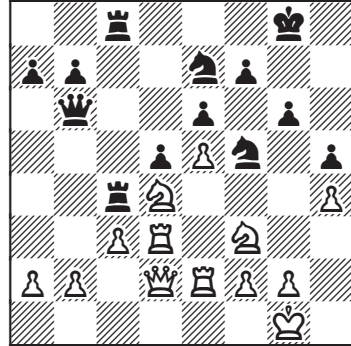
From the first glance, it may seem like black is just fine with their knight on c5. Indeed, if Black can stabilize the situation and secure their king, they can even be better. However, White has a tactical resource to activate their bishop and get an advantage.

24 Bd7! Qf6 [If 24...Qxd7 25 Qh6 f6 26 Rxc5 dxc5 27 Qh8+ Kf7 28 Rh7+ Ke8 29 Qxf8+ Kxf8 30 Rxd7 ± In this line if Black tries 25...f5 instead of ...f6 then 26 Rxc5 Qg7 (26...dxc5 loses: 27 Qh8+ Kf7 28 Rh7+ Ke8 29 Qxe5+) 27 Rc7 ±] **25 Bc6 Rac8 26 Rh4** [26 Kf1?!] **26... Rfd8 27 Kf1** [securing the king on the kingside] **27...Kf8 28 Kg2 Ke7** [Black is ready to trade the rooks along the h-file, so White must act quickly!] **29 Rxc5 dxc5 30 Qxc5+ Qd6 31 Qa7+!** [Keeping the rook on the board is more important than winning black's a5 pawn. Black would be fine after 31 Qxa5 Rh8] **31...Qc7 32 Qe3 Qd6 33 Rh1** [Now the rook is ready to support attacking efforts.] **33...Rh8?! [33...Rxc6 34 dxc6**

Qxc6 35 Rc1 ±] 34 Qg5+ Qf6? [Black blunders in a worse position. White has a significant advantage, but the game is not yet over after 34...f6 35 Qxg6 Rxh1 36 Qg7+] **35 d6+ 1-0**

Rd 4

Jason Morefield - Sergey Erenburg

*Black to Play*

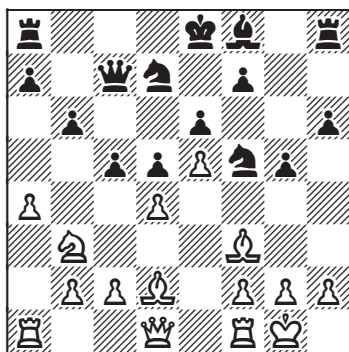
The position is close to equality, although Black is out of risk here. **22...Nxd4 23 Rxd4?** [White could have maintained equality by 23 Nxd4 Nc6 24 Nf3! Re4 25 g3] **23...Nf5 24 Rxc4 Rxc4 25 Qg5** [protecting the h4 square] **25...Qc7** [preparing the potential breakthrough along the c-file] **26 Rd2 Re4! 27 Qf6 b5** [It was possible to play immediately 27...Nh6 28 Rd4 Ng4 29 Qg5 Re2 30 Rd2 Qc4] **28 a3 a5?!** [The immediate 28...Nh6 was probably more precise: 29 Rd4 Ng4 30 Qg5 Re2 31 Rd2 Qc4] **29 g3** [If 29 Qg5 Rg4 30 Qf6 Ng7! (threatening to win the queen with Ne8) 31 Nd4 Ne8 32 Qf3 Qxe5 33 Re2 Qd6 34 Nxb5 Qa6 35 Nd4 Rxh4 ±] **29...Nh6!** [winning the important central pawn e5] **30 Nd4 Rxe5** [Of course not 30...Ng4? 31 Nxe6!] **31 Kg2 Re1 32 f3?!** [Although White is in



trouble, 32 Nc2 offered a more tenacious defense: 32...Ng4 (32...Rb1 33 Ne3 ♣) 33 Qf4 Qxf4 34 gxf4 Rb1 35 Nd4 Nh6] 32...Qc4! [Now Black is winning with a direct attack on White's monarch.] 33 Rf2 Qd3 34 Qd8+ [34 Nc2 Re2] 34... Kh7 35 Qxa5 Qd1 36 Qxb5 Rg1+ 37 Kh3 Rh1+ 38 Rh2 Qg1 39 Qe2 Ng4! [All Black's pieces are participating.] 40 fxg4 Rxh2+ 0-1

Rd 5

Sergey Erenburg – L L Xiong

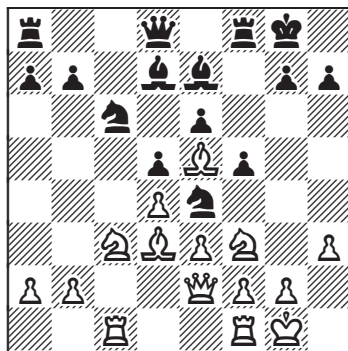
*White to Play*

Black's king is uncastled but the position is closed and Black's center looks solid. 15 c4! [Very logical, but this required precise calculation.] 15...g4 16 Be2! [Sacrificing central pawns for an initiative that I thought Black could not neutralize. It turns out White was better even after 16 Bxg4 dxc4 17 Bxf5 (17 d5 O-O-O) exf5 18 e6!] 16... dxc4 17 Bxc4 cxd4 18 Rc1 Qxe5 19 Re1 Qg7 [Protecting the g4 pawn that covers the important f3 square and prevents White from taking control over the long diagonal. White's attack would be very dangerous also after 19...Qf6 20 Bb5 Rd8 21 Rc7] 20 Qe2 Be7 [20...Bd6 loses immediately:

21 Bxe6 fxe6 22 Qxe6+] 21 Bb5 [Black was just one move away from castling, but this pin and White's rook invasion to the 7th rank are decisive.] 21...Rd8 [White is winning also after 21...Nd6 22 Bc6 Rd8 23 Nxd4 O-O 24 Nxe6 fxe6 25 Bxd7] 22 Rc7 Bd6 23 Rxa7 Ke7 24 Qe4 Qg6 25 Bxd7! The simplest and most precise., although 25 Qc6 wins as well: 25...Bxh2+ 26 Kxh2 g3+ 27 Kg1 gxf2+ 28 Kxf2 Qg3+ 29 Kg1 Kf6 30 Bc4.] 25...Rxd7 26 Rxd7+ Kxd7 27 Qb7+ Bc7 [if 27...Ke8 28 Qc8+ Ke7 29 Qxh8] 28 Rc1 Rc8 29 Bf4 Nd6 30 Bxd6 1-0

Rd 6

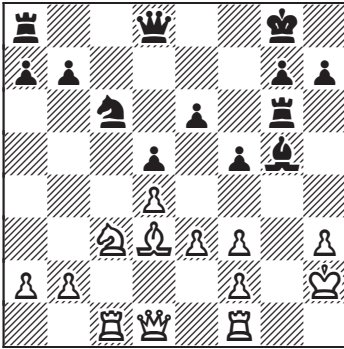
Sam Martin – Sergey Erenburg

*Black to Play*

In this symmetric position, White has occupied the e5 outpost and it may seem like he has the better light square bishop. However, Black's knight on e4 is very hard to get rid of. Perhaps more importantly, Black's light square bishop in fact becomes very active and dangerous after the following typical maneuver: 18...Be8! 19 Qd1 [preparing Be2] 19...Bh5 20 Bh2 [Unfortunately for White, he doesn't have time to play 20 Be2 because of the weakness of his central pawn: 20...Bxf3 21 Bxf3 Nxe5 22 dxe5 Qb8!] 20...Bxf3! 21



gxf3 [21 Qxf3? Nd2] **21...Ng5! 22 Kg2 Rf6**
23 Bf4 Rg6 24 Bxg5? [White must have underestimated Black's attacking resources. It was not too late to play 24 Bg3 Nf7 25 Ne2 although 25...Bd6 is a comfortable position for Black.] **24...Bxg5 25 Kh2**



25...Nxd4?

I was happy to capture the central pawn and confident that I would win the game shortly after. However, after this move Black's attack is not decisive. Instead, I had the amazing and decisive **25...Bf4+!** **26 exf4 Qh4 27 Ne2** (or **27 Rg1 Qxf2+ 28 Kh1 Rxg1+ 29 Qxg1 Qxf3+**) **27...Rh6 28 Ng1 Qxf4+ 29 Kh1 Rg6** with following **Qg5** and a swift win.

26 Rg1 [Of course White can't take the knight: **26 exd4 Bf4+ 27 Kh1 Qh4** with inevitable checkmate.] **26...Nc6 27 f4 Bf6** [27...Bh4 28 Rxg6 hxg6 29 Qf3 g5 30 fxg5 Ne5] **28 Rxg6 hxg6 29 Qf3 g5 30 fxg5 Bxc3?** [This is already a serious mistake that gives White real survival chances. The bishop is very important. It controls all the key dark squares, so it made no sense to trade it. Simply **30...Bxg5** was better.] **31 Rxc3 Qxg5 32 Bb5 Rc8 33 a4 Qd8** [Better was **33...Kf7 34 Bxc6 Rxc6 35 Rxc6 bxc6**

36 Qe2 Qh4; but not **33...Ne7?** **34 Rxc8+ Nxc8 35 Bd7**] **34 Kg2 Ne7 35 Qf4!** [Now White starts taking control over the dark squares.] **35...Rxc3 36 bxc3 a6 37 Be2 Nc6** [Although Black is a pawn up with Q+N vs Q+B and a much better pawn structure, it is still not easy to convert this. Black does not have too many outposts and it's hard to target White's pawns. Advancing Black's pawns will make them easy targets for the bishop.] **38 h4! Qb8 39 Qg5 Qc7 40 h5! Qe7 41 Qf4 Kh7?** [41...Na5! was better: **42 Qg3 Qf7 43 Qg5 Qf6!** It was hard for me psychologically to move the knight away from the center.] **42 c4 dxc4 43 Bxc4** [Now the bishop is very active and White's queen is also more active than her counterpart, increasing the drawing chances big time!] **43...Qf7?** [Another mistake that throws away nearly all the advantage. **43...Qd7! 44 Qg5 (44 Qg3 Ne7) Ne5** was better.] **44 Qd6 Qxh5 45 Bxe6 Qg5+ 46 Kf1 Ne7 47 Qd7 Qf6 48 Kg2 b5 49 axb5 axb5** Here we both had less than 5 minutes remaining and we stopped recording moves. I managed to convert this into knight + 3 pawns vs bishop + 2 pawns, and I won eventually, although objectively White should be able to hold this endgame with queens on board. ... **0-1**



John Gray - Gabe Kaczor
Neo Gruenfeld

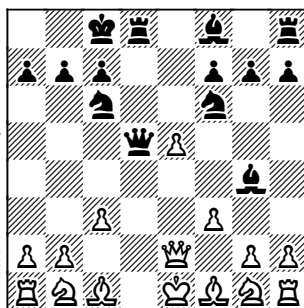
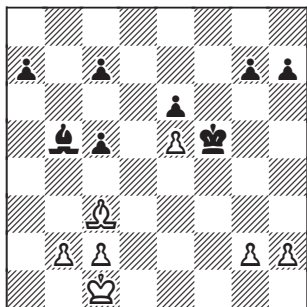
Upset prize winning game - 497 points!
1 Nf3 d5 2 g3 Nf6 3 Bg2 g6 4 d4 Bg7
5 O-O O-O 6 Bf4 Nbd7 7 Nbd2 Re8 8
c4 c6 9 cxd5 Nxd5 10 e4 Nxf4 11 gxf4
Bh6 12 Ng5 Qc7 13 Qf3 Nf6 14 h4 Bg4
15 Qb3 Rf8 16 e5 Bxg5 17 fxg5 Be6 18
Qf3 Nh5 19 Qe3 Rad8 20 Nf3 Qb6 21



b3 Ng7 22 Rad1 Nf5 23 Qc3 Bd5 24 h5 Bxf3 25 Bxf3 Rxd4 26 hxg6 hxg6 27 Rfe1 Rfd8 28 e6 Rxd1 29 exf7+ Kxf7 30 Bxd1 Qd4 31 Qh3 Rh8 32 Qg2 Qd2 33 Qe4 Qxg5+ 34 Bg4 Qf6 35 Qb4 b6 36 f3 Qd4+ 37 Qxd4 Nxd4 38 b4 Kf6 39 Rc1 [Blunders come easily in lost positions] 39...Ne2+ 0-1

P Motoharinezhad - S Yambem Rousseau Gambit

Black won a 'hopelessly drawn' opposite bishop ending. We are also intrigued that the winner actually noted the name of the rare Rousseau Gambit on his scoresheet.
1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 f5 4 d4 exd4 5 Nxd4 Nf6 6 Nxc6 bxc6 7 e5 Ne4 8 Nd2 Nxd2 9 Bxd2 Bc5 10 Qf3 Qh4 11 Qf4 Bxf2+ 12 Qxf2 Qxc4 13 Qxf5 Ba6 14 O-O-O Qxa2 15 Bc3 Qe6 16 Qxe6+ dxe6 17 Ba5 Rc8 18 Rd2 O-O 19 Rhd1 Bb5 20 Bb4 Rf5 21 Rd8+ Rxd8 22 Rxd8+ Kf7 23 Rf8+ Kg6 24 Rxf5 Kxf5 25 Bc3 c5



26 Kd2 Ke4 27 Ke1 g5 28 Kf2 h5 29 b3 c4 30 b4 Ba4 31 Bd2 Bxc2 32 Bxg5 Kxe5 33 g3 Bf5 34 Bf4+ Kd4 35 Bxc7 c3 36 Ke2 a6 37 Bb6+ Kc4 38 Ba5 c2 39 Kd2 Kb3 40 Kc1 e5 41 Bc7 e4 42 Bd6 Kc3 43 Be5+ Kd3 44 Bf4 e3 45 h4 Ke4 46 Bd6 Kf3 47 b5 axb5 48 g4 hxg4 49 h5 e2 50 Bf4 e1Q+ 51 Kb2 Qb1+ 52 Ka3 Bd7 53 Bd2 c1Q+ 54 Bxc1 b4mate 0-1

Finally, a remarkable game from one of the top boards in the final round of the Amateur section.

P J Chokkalingam - Gabe Kaczor Nimzowitsch

1 e4 Nc6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 Qxd5 4 c3 e5 5 Qe2 Nf6 6 dxe5 Bg4 7 f3 O-O-O!

8 fxe5 Nxe5 9 g5 Nfg4 10 Nd2 Bc5 11 Ne4 Rhe8 12 h3 Nd3+ 13 Qxd3 Rxe4+ 14 Be2 Qxd3 15 Bf4 Rde8 16 Rd1 Rxe2+ 17 Kf1 Re1mate 0-1

Fredericksburg Open

October 27-29, Fredericksburg, Va

Blitz on Friday night, 5-round main event on Saturday and Sunday.
3 sections: Open, U1800, and U1200. \$4,000 prize fund with 1st-3rd places guaranteed in all sections. Full details at www.vachess.org



The Roanoke Valley Chess Club - 75 Years!

Founded in 1947, the Roanoke Valley Chess Club (RVCC) is the oldest continuously operating chess club in Virginia. Nowadays the club meets on Wednesday evenings in the Community Room of the Raleigh Court Branch Library at 2112 Grandin Road SW, Roanoke, VA 24015.



photo by Dan Casey

The RVCC remains very active under the leadership of club president Mike Huff and board chairman Rusty Potter. Recent events included a thematic tournament (in this instance focusing on the Cunningham Defense to the King's Gambit – all games began 1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 Nf3 Be7 4 Bc4 Bh4+); a club championship in June (Chase Bailey won with a perfect 5-0 score); and a Summer Quick Championship in July (Isaac Spence & Phil Harmon tied for 1st, each 3-0).

There are also a series of events commemorating the club's diamond jubilee. Local media have published articles highlighting the RVCC. Three-time state champion Macon Shibut visited the club on July 19 to give a brief lecture followed by a simultaneous exhibition. The event was well covered by the *Roanoke Times* newspaper, and four RVCC members defeated the master: club champion Bailey & fellow expert Spence, along with Ray Megginson & Martin Irving. As the *Times* reported, "several other players hung in there tenaciously, but eventually succumbed to Shibut's technique."





Vocation Corner

HOW TO APPROACH BUSINESSES ABOUT CHESS

by Mike Callahan

MOST CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS can only boast about being tax deductible. Combining altruism, philanthropy, and entrepreneurship entitles chess to boast about wanting increased profits for the people, groups, and organizations that help us with our mission! How many business owners do you think have seen that before? Getting them enlightened requires a process. It's a lot easier than you'd think!

Talking about chess is rejection free! Everyone wishes everyone played more chess. Renewable Community Advertising Partnerships are as legitimate and as 100% tax deductible as Val-Pak, Craig's list, The Super Bowl, Facebook, NBC, or the classifieds! If you are successful, it stands to reason that they will get more and more involved each time they renew!

There are 6 steps to follow: Approach, Entry, Questionnaire, Flyer, Requesting an Appointment, and the Presentation.

Approach. The Approach begins and ends before you walk in! lol You will need some type of chess clothing, a chess set, clock, and scoresheets. A box type clipboard to hold your trifolds, surveys, flyers, tape, thumbtacks, and a stapler. A presentation book in the form of a 3-hole binder with extra sheet protectors. Your presentation book should include a cover picture with all of your partners' logos, your address, phone number, website, email, and club information. You can make your flyer the cover picture. Inside your presentation book there should be a flyer, extra surveys, a copy of your business license, a copy of your Tax ID, your US Chess Affiliate Certificate, your US Chess Certified Coach Certificate, and your US Chess Tournament Director's Certificate. You need pictures of your staff/team, a full tournament room, a simultaneous exhibition, class room instruction, trophy presentations, logos and the coupons of all of your partners, pictures of any business owners you have been able to play, pictures of any events held at/or sponsored by any of your partner's businesses, pictures of any recognition you have bestowed on any partners, pictures of any partner bannerings you have done at events, and PTA logos from all the schools you work with! This may seem like a lot, but the purpose of your book is to answer questions with pictures and a story, not just 'yes' or 'no' all the time.

Entry. When you enter the business, never just walk up to someone and explain the purpose for your visit. Walk around, see what they sell. Do they have public restrooms? Could the business facility be used for chess? Where can you do a class, a simul, put out a display? Are any school, team, family, or local sports pictures on display? Are there any fire, police,



fraternal, or charity stickers on the doors, windows, or registers? Are there any change boxes for donations to charities? Sooner or later somebody will ask, "How may I help you?". Respond, "I'm taking the place in for a moment, I'll be right there..." They shouldn't know whether or not you are a customer until you've completed your walk-through. Wait until there is a break in the traffic and go for it. This is my presentation, which you can use mine or develop your own: *"Hello again, my name is Mike Callaham, I'm with the Scholarship Chess Business Center... is the owner here today?"* They will ask what this is in reference to. With a smile and a cheerful attitude, *"Sure you can! We help chess families earn scholarships, job, and entrepreneurial opportunities. I'm not here for a donation, are they around?"* At this point they either say that they are the owner, they'll go get the owner, the owner is not there, or the owner doesn't work at that location. When you get to the owner, you go into more detail... *"As I was explaining, I'm with the Scholarship Chess Business Center! We help chess players of all ages earn scholarships, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities because they play, coach, referee, and organize chess! My job is to invite you, your employees, and customers to come play with us, see if there's any current or future employment opportunities for our chess families, and see if you'd like to take advantage of any of our services. Would it be ok if I did a brief survey with you?"*

Questionnaire. My survey questions are: 1) What is the correct spelling of your name, email, website, facebook, and best phone number. 2) Do you or any of your employees play chess? 3) How long have you been at this location? How many people work here? 4) How old do you need to be to work here? 5) How many events do you have a year? 6) Do you ever have a need for day or short-term labor? 7) Do you have any coupon specials in the marketplace right now? At this point the Questionnaire sqgues into...

Flyer. ... 8) Would it be okay to put one of these flyers out to invite people to come play chess with us? 9) We have weekly club meetings, monthly tournaments, an ongoing flyer system that covers just about every place people can work, play, shop, study, and worship, a monthly newsletter/magazine that is emailed and snail mailed to every place we visit, a bannering system for all our events, coupon partnering, and a partner recognition system! If it cost little to almost no money, how would you feel about your "brand" being associated with chess in our community?

Requesting an Appointment. *"Thank you so much for answering my questions today. When someone says 'yes' to chess, we like to do a little homework and then suggest how we can help each other. We'd only need 15-20 minutes to share our findings and answer any questions you have. When is usually the best day and time to talk to you? We could stop by this/next ... Would that be a good time for all the owners? Great! We will definitely see you on that date and time. We'll get you an anchor email today so that you have all of our info. Unless we hear from you, we will definitely be here on (date and time). Thank you for allowing us to post the invitation, we'll see you soon!"*

The Presentation: Make sure to send the confirmation email and get to work. Find out everything you can about their business, their product or service, what their competitors are doing and offering, etc!. Better Business Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, trade organizations,



past events, past coupons, past sponsorships, frequency of posting, their web links, search the newspaper, google the owners name. How do you feel about how much this client can help your mission? Did they have a great space, lots of employees, cater to kids, lots of traffic? It's time to put your package together and show them what you can do for them. Print a sample coupon, sample flyer with their logo, sample banner, sample presentation book cover, sample a screen shot of their logo in your widget on your website, your logo or widget on their website, write a sample press release about the partnership with coupon, and a sample newsletter story about them coming on board. Fill out a sample partnership certificate and date it the day of the appointment. Your press release and newsletter samples only need a heading and a coupon. The body can be a filler of any kind.

Again, I know that this seems like a lot, but with 12 sheets of paper on the table showing what the partnership offers, it's a no brainer for the 'yes!' Now it's time to work out the "little" or "almost nothing"! Every business is different. That's why you do the research! I like 6 month and 1 year renewals and I offer Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Pewter Partnerships! There's not enough room to explain pricing and closing until the next issue, but you can always call. If you have questions or need help for any reason, I'm at 804-426-6058.

2024 Virginia Open

January 5-7, 2024, Dulles, Va

\$6,050 prize fund. 3 sections: Open, U1800, and U1200. Open & U1800 are FIDE-rated. Full details at www.vachess.org

A Tale of Two Opening Repertoires – Part 2

by *Rusty Potter*

HEREWITH THE SECOND INSTALLMENT sketching out a complete opening repertoire for White beginning 1 e4. Previously we addressed various "minor" defenses—Caro Kann, Scandanavian, Pirc/Modern, Alekhine, et al. This time we look at what I consider one of the biggies: the French Defense, 1 e4 e6. Again, my intention is to list Black's options in order to give you a framework for building your repertoire. To be ready ready for whatever Black tries, you need to know his options. Along the way I share occasional observations and opinions about particular lines.

So, the French. For starters, I am a minor rebel regarding the solid, if somewhat passive, Rubinstein Variation. I think that it has suffered something of a premature burial. 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 dxe4 4 Nxe4 Nbd7 5 Nf3 Ngf6!

If White now swaps knights at f6, this helps to free Black from cramp. But if White plays 6 Bg5, then 6...Be7 forces off even more wood, eg 7 Nxf6 Bxf6!; 7 Bxf6 Nxf6! – again maximizing the amount of swaps to happen.



I do not want to hear from any French Defense nay-sayers who are exotic proponents of the Caro-Kann! Master Selecki is apparently happy with his particular orthodoxies...

Still, I have to concede that my French players want more imbalance after 3 Nc3. Okay then, we will first examine the Classical 3...Nf6 4 Bg5 Be7 5 e5 Nfd7 6 Be7 Qxe7, White still controls more space plus he has swapped off Black's good bishop, leaving Black with a rather cramped position and a bad bishop as well. 7 f4 further accents White's good bishop by *complementing* White's good pawn structure. Black's central pawns are all on squares that *conflict* with his remaining bishop. Clearly White's position here is better than Black's...

Hmmm. All right, let's try the MacCutcheon variation: 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 and now 4...Bb4! Typical play continues 5 e5 h6! 6 Bd2 Bxc3 7 bxc3 Ne4 8 Qg4 g6 9 Bd3 Nxd2 10 Kxd2 c5 11 h4 Bd7 12 Nf3 Qe7 13 Qf4 Bc6 14.Nh2 Nd7 15 Ng4 O-O-O. The theorists tend to think such positions are either unclear or slightly in White's favor. Sharp battle, yes. Easy drawish line, *NO!*

The last "Big Boy" in the French complex is the Winawer. Let me show you some general themes that pertain to this vast variation. 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3.

White's main attacking plans are built around playing a3-a4 Δ Ba3 and Nf3. In this system White operates on the queen's wing. White's other main attacking plan involves an early Q-g4xg7. In both systems, Black plays against White's doubled c-pawns. This sometimes includes Black actually gambiting his entire kingside to White's marauding queen. The Winawer French has seen enormous amounts of published theory deeply rooted in the practice of masters and grandmasters. In fact, the theory on the Winawer exceeds many Sicilian Defense branches!

Speaking of which... next time we will overview the various Sicilians that you can arise against your 1 e4. Some of these are more complex than others. Until then...



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“That’s Rude” by Lee Bennett

I began playing rated chess in the mid-1980s as a high school student. In those days, young players mixed among the adults at a tournament was a rare sight. Tournaments often divided Scholastic & Adult sections. Exceptions might be made for high school players, who were old enough to understand and obey the time-honored traditions of tournament etiquette.

Somewhere over the last 40 years, the age groups merged. Not coincidentally, once presumed courtesies have given way to immaturity and downright rudeness. I witnessed several examples of poor etiquette and sportsmanship at the recent Virginia State Championships—situations that went way beyond the typical fidgeting, leg shaking, pacing, rocking, pencil tapping, pen clicking, and excessive throat clearing. Unfortunately, those types of distractions seem to have become accepted as commonplace nowadays, but in fact what I witnessed falls squarely under Section 20G (“Annoying Behavior”) of the USCF Rules of Chess.

- 1) A gentleman was taking some time to calculate his next move. His young opponent began tapping his fingers loudly on the table as if to say, “Hurry up!” To his credit, this gentleman raised his head to look his challenger in the eye and said, “*That’s rude*” before lowering his head again and slipping back into thought.
- 2) During one of my own games, a young player repeatedly offered draws—with hand extended—in positions clearly losing for him. I recalled the 2017 US Open in Norfolk where another youngster in a hopeless position offered me a draw *six times* and began to cry at the table when I politely asked him to stop.
- 3) A different young opponent asked me three times—while my clock was running—if I had a cell phone on me. Upon my answering in the negative, he persisted asking if I had one in my bag. (I didn’t even have a bag in the room.)
- 4) Another child loudly crunched on potato chips while playing. Even after the TD instructed him to not eat in the playing room, he continued noisily while staring directly at his opponent.

Unfortunately, misbehavior does not stop at the chess table. At the 2023 National Elementary Championships, over \$10,000 worth of damage done to the Baltimore Convention Center. For comparison, there had been relatively little destruction when the same venue hosted a college basketball tournament and a tattoo convention in the preceding months.

By USCF rules, TDs have leeway to admonish annoying behavior up to forfeiture of a game. Further infractions can lead to a player being banned from future USCF events. If TDs are hesitant to execute these options, perhaps they should reconsider the old alternative of putting young players in separate age-appropriate sections—and separate rooms, away from the rest of the tournament.

Of course, separating players by age does not solve the root problem. The solution really comes down to parents and coaches addressing this problem before a child even enters a tournament. Regrettably, adults who prepare those kids seem either unaware of proper etiquette themselves or blithely complicit in its violation (eg, supplying crunchy potato chips during a game).

In the meantime, eradicating unpleasant conduct falls on the players who are annoyed by it. If your opponent (regardless of age) is bothersome, *stop your clock and raise your hand*. TDs need to be informed and then they need to take action immediately. Tolerating bad behavior only passes the problem on to the next round, the next opponent, the next tournament.

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