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Hello to the Northwest Chess Community,

An especially big greeting to the folks I've played before and the WCF board members I had the honor to serve with back in the mid-2000s.

As I've been back in contact with the Washington Chess Federation (Josh and Jacob), *Northwest Chess* (Eric Holcomb), and some of the folks I worked with as past WCF President, Eric made the suggestion that I write a "catch-up" blurb on what I've been up to since the surprisingly many years that have flown by.

My businesses kept me extremely busy, but with good fortune we had success and sold the last company I founded last year. I'm retired now, and probably like most of you, I'm laying low to get through this difficult time, during which it's hard to find an "in-person" chess game.

I'm looking to renew my support of chess in the Northwest, and have become very interested in the online classical tournament events run by people like Jacob Mayer. I'm especially interested in those tournaments being fully-rated by US Chess. I'm currently working on some feasibility efforts, with the knowledge of US Chess but not their sponsorship. I really think online chess can be secure (with the right TD and platform) and a great way for players of all ages to participate in tournament chess, now and after we're all able to get together again.

I also want to support adult chess, to see it thrive as our scholastic programs have here in the Northwest.

To those ends I've reactivated both my TD status as well as Apropos Chess Events, and hope to run some online tournaments in the near future. Keep an eye out for "Apropos-style" tournaments, with cash prizes and no entry fees, a formula that worked back in the 2000s for several events. I've really enjoyed the online tournaments I've participated in, and I want to encourage all of you to give it a try.

Be well and safe, and I hope to see you soon across the chessboard!

Yours in chess,

Kent McNall

Past WCF President

US Chess Life Member & Benefactor

US Chess Tournament Director

The Magic Year of 1971

By John Donaldson

Chess has a long and rich tradition in the Northwest with many important competitions held in the region the past century including several U.S. and Canadian Championships. It's not easy to pick one year as the most memorable, but if forced to choose I would select 1971 as both World Champion Boris Spassky and soon-to-be titleholder Bobby Fischer played in Vancouver.

The first major event to be completed in 1971 was the Washington State Championship in February. The annual invitational event, dating back to the early 1930s, was won by John Braley with a score of 7-0 with Viktors Pupols two points behind him. Their game in round six decided who would win the title.

John Braley
Viktors Pupols [D01]

Washington State Championship
Seattle, WA (6)
February 20, 1971

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nc3 d5 3.Bg5

John was playing all sorts of openings in this event. Here he tries the Veresov, named after the Soviet IM Gavriil Veresov.

3...Bf5 4.f3

4.Bxf6 is another way of handling the position.

4...Nbd7 5.Nxd5

The sharpest line. 5.Qd2 was also possible.

5...Nxd5 6.e4 h6

This is the main theoretical response,

7.Bc1

But this is not. Both 7.Bh4 Ne3 8.Qd3 Nxf1 9.exf5 and 7.Bd2 are much more common.

7...e5!

The best response!

8.Ne2 Bxe4

8...exd4 was also quite strong.

9.fxe4 Qh4+ 10.Ng3 Bb4+

10...N5f6! leaves Black in charge. Now things start to get murky.

11.c3 Nxc3 12.bxc3 Bxc3+ 13.Bd2 Bxd4

13...Bxa1 14.Qxa1 f5 15.exf5 0-0-0 was

an interesting alternative.

14.Rc1 c6 15.Qh5 Qxh5 16.Nxh5 0-0 17.Bc4



Position after 17.Bc4

17...b5?

17...g6 18.Ng3 Kg7 with equal chances.

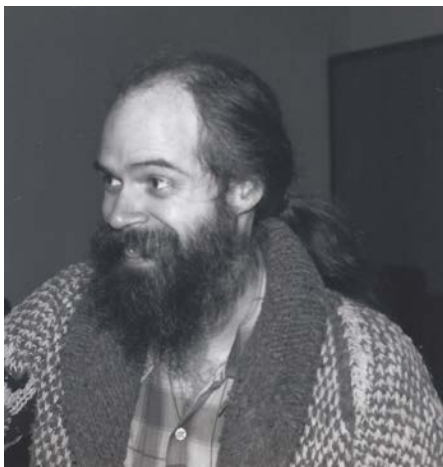
18.Be2 Nc5

18...Rac8 19.Ng3 and the knight comes to f5 with strong effect, but the text is even worse.

19.Bb4 Nxe4 20.Bxf8 Kxf8 21.Rxc6 Bc3+ 22.Kf1 Rd8 23.Ng3 Nd2+ 24.Kf2 Bd4+ 25.Ke1 Nb1 26.Ne4 b4

Black has a bunch of pawns for the rook, but White's technique is more than up to the task.

27.Bc4 Bb6 28.Rf1 f6 29.Nxf6! gxf6 30.Rxf6+ Ke8 31.Rce6+ Kd7 32.Rxe5 Nc3 33.Ree6 Kc7 34.Rc6+ Kb7 35.Rcd6 Rc8 36.Bb3 Ka6 37.Rxh6 Ne4 38.Rc6 Rf8 39.Rh7 Nc3 40.Bc4+ Ka5 41.Rxa7+ 1-0



Three-time (1971, 1983 and 1986)
Washington State Champion John Braley.
Photo Credit: Mike Franett.

A month later Bob Zuk won the Northwest Invitational in Portland. This one-time only event, organized and directed by Hanon Russell, pitted three

representatives (each) from Oregon and Washington and two from British Columbia. Players drew lots to see which opponent they would not face. Bob Zuk of Surrey, B.C., won, scoring 5-1. Viktors Pupols and future Grandmaster Peter Biyiasas shared second and third a half point back. The remaining scores were: 4. George Krauss 3 1/2 5. Mike Franett 3; 6. Mike Morris 1 1/2 7-8. Clark Harmon and Mike Montchalin 1.

The following game forced Biyiasas to play catch-up from the get-go.

Mike Franett
Peter Biyiasas [A42]
Northwest Invitational
Portland, OR (1)
March 5, 1971

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.e4 d6 4.Nc3 Nc6 5.Be3 e5 6.d5 Nce7 7.g4 f5

7...Nf6 8.f3 0-0 9.h4 c6 10.Qd2 cxd5 11.cxd5 Bd7 12.0-0 a6 13.h5 b5 14.Kb1 Qa5 15.hxg6 fxg6 16.Nh3 Rac8 17.Ng5 Rc7 18.Ne6 Bxe6 19.dxe6 b4 20.Nd5 Nfxd5 21.exd5 Rxf3 22.Bg2 Rf8 23.Be4 Rfc8 24.Qf2 1-0 Tarjan-Ivkov, Skopje 1976, was a key win for Jim on the way to earning his final Grandmaster norm.

8.gxf5

8.f3 Nf6 9.g5 Nh5 10.Nge2 h6 11.h4 f4 12.Bf2 Ng8 13.c5 Bf8 14.cxd6 cxd6 15.Rg1 Be7 16.Rc1 Kf7 17.Qb3 Ng7 18.Nxf4!? (18.Nb5 was better for White) 18...exf4 19.e5 hxg5 20.hxg5 Bxg5 21.e6+ Kf8 22.Ne4 Bh4 23.Rxg6 Ne7 24.Rxg7 Qa5+! and Black went on to win in Biyiasas - Braley, Tacoma Centennial Open 1969.

8...gxf5 9.Qh5+



Position after 9.Qh5+

9...Kf8

9...Ng6 10.exf5 Qh4 is considered safer 11.Qxh4 Nxh4 12.Nb5 Kd8 13.Nxa7 Bxf5 14.Nb5 Be4 15.f3 Nxf3+ (15... Bxf3! should be fine for Black. After the text White gets a small edge and steadily outplays Black.) 16.Nxf3 Bxf3 17.Rg1

Bf6 18.Be2 Be4 19.Kd2 Bg6 20.a3 Ne7 21.Raf1 Nf5 22.Rxf5 Bxf5 23.Rf1 e4 24.Rxf5 Bxb2 25.Rf7 Bxa3 26.Rxc7 Bb4+ 27.Kc2 Rg8 28.Bb6 1-0 Tarjan-Levine, D Sioux Falls 1981.

10.Bh3 Nf6 11.Qf3 f4 12.Bd2 Ng6

12...h5 13.Bxc8 Qxc8 14.0-0-0 Bh6 15.Qd3 Rg8 16.Nf3 Rg2 17.Qf1 Rg7 18.Kb1 was a little better for White in Portisch-Ree, Amsterdam 1967;

12...c6 13.Nge2 Bxh3 14.Qxh3 Qd7 15.Qxd7 Nxd7 16.Nc1 Rc8 17.Nb3 and again White has a small advantage, Portisch-Minic, Ljubljana/Portoroz 1973.

13.Bxc8 Rxc8?!

13...Qxc8 was necessary, keeping the h3-c8 diagonal under control.

14.0-0-0 c6 15.Kb1 Kf7 16.Qh3 Re8 17.Nf3 Kg8 18.Rhg1 cxd5 19.cxd5



Position after 19.cxd5

19...Rxc3?

Too optimistic, but quiet play doesn't offer much hope either. 19...a6 20.Rg2 20...b5 21.Ng5 Nf8 22.Rdg1 Re7 is assessed as equal by Bob Zuk in the tournament booklet, but White can improve with 20.Ng5! Nf8 21.Ne6 Nxe6 22.dxe6 Qe7 23.Nd5 Nxd5 (23...Qxe6 24.Qh6) 24.exd5 24.exd5 with a large advantage.

20.Bxc3 Nxe4 21.Be1 Nc5?

21...Qc8 was a better try. Now White finishes things off in style.

22.Ng5 Nf8 23.Qf5 Re7 24.f3 Na4 25.Bf2 Nxb2 26.Rc1!

26.Kxb2? e4+ is not what White wants.

26...Rc7 27.Rxc7 Qxc7 28.Qxf8+! 1-0

The biggest event of 1971, and arguably the most important ever held in the Northwest, was the Fischer-Taimanov match. Played on the University of British Columbia campus in Vancouver from May 16-June 1, this match is remembered as an important moment in Bobby's World Championship run.

Reading magazines of the time it's



Three-time (1970, 1972 and 1973) Washington State Champion Michael Franett with Michael Pollowitz in the back ground. Photo Credit: Robert Karch.

surprising how little advance publicity it received (the ad in *Northwest Chess* only appeared in the May issue) and how modestly it was attended (no more than 200 spectators per game and usually fewer), but this can easily be explained. This match was organized on short notice, the U.S. and Soviet chess federations having a hard time agreeing on neutral ground in a competition that had ramifications away from the chess board as well as on. Fortunately, the bid from Vancouver, supported by John Prentice the great patron of Canadian chess for many years, was acceptable to both players.

Fischer's historic 6-0 victory was well-documented in the June 1971 issue of *Northwest Chess* (available online through the *NWC* scanning project at https://www.nwchess.com/nwcmag/pdf/NWC_197106.pdf) with detailed game analysis from a variety of annotators and daily reports from Bill Rayner of the *Vancouver Sun*. *Northwest Chess* under Rob Hankinson, the only Canadian editor it has had in over 70 years, was really good in 1971. It speaks volumes about its quality that Bobby thought enough of the publication to pay for a subscription — Rusty Miller eventually sold the original uncashed check and note, but the image was preserved on the cover of the February 1993 issue. (See image on page 31.)—Editor.

Former *Northwest Chess* Editor (1974-75) and Tacoma Chess Club alumnus Dan Bailey was one of the lucky ones that got to see Bobby in action—more than one chess player regretted their

decision to wait for what they thought would be the deciding ninth and tenth games only to see the match end early. Here he offers a personal account of what it was like to watch Bobby playing.

Dan writes:

“I think I’ve written you what it was like to watch him, from the second row, in Vancouver vs. Taimanov. I remember a moment Bobby loped in from the wings. Three swift long steps only, then down into the chair in one motion and he was *locked in*. In a split second he was motionless, concentrating with an intensity on the board that did bad things to my blood pressure in the second row. I can’t imagine what it did to Taimanov’s, Larsen’s, Petrosian’s and Spassky’s sitting opposite him. He was riveting. I mean, a guy sitting in a chair playing chess, c’mon. But he was, he was riveting. Fischer sat there, poised like a cobra, motionless... the moments passed... my breath came rather short... and it just stayed that way, all the game. We sat in profound silence out in the darkness. Fischer electrified that auditorium with the force of his concentration.”

Two months after Fischer's victory Hanon Russell organized and directed the U.S. Junior Open in Portland. Future Grandmaster Peter Biyiasas and fellow Canadian John MacPhail shared top honors in the 75-player field with 7-1 scores. Among those in the six-way tie for third a point back were 15-year-old Larry Christiansen and Jonathan Berry. This event is one of only two U.S. Junior Opens to be held in the Northwest. The

other (Seattle 1978) was directed by George Koltanowski and won by Yasser Seirawan.

The other big event of the year,

besides Fischer-Taimanov, was also held in Vancouver. The 9th Canadian Open, held August 24-September 3, attracted 156 players including World Champion Boris Spassky playing in his second-ever

Swiss. All four of the Grandmasters in the competition (Pal Benko, Walter Browne and Lubos Kavalek besides Spassky) struggled in the competition with then National Master and later International

CHESS

LIFE & REVIEW

United States Chess Federation

July 1971—Price 85 cents



Fischer is pondering his 14th move in the sixth and final game of his Candidates Match with Mark Taimanov.

Master Ed Formanek, the chief upset king, who scored 3-1 against the GMs.

Duncan Suttles was leading the 156-player event after nine rounds but Dutch International Master Hans Ree and Spassky were the ultimate winners scoring 9-2, a half point ahead of Suttles, Browne and International Master Zvonko Vranesic.

While Spassky's performance looks good on the surface a closer examination reveals he survived many close calls and could not have been pleased with his play. He won his first four games before making a relatively quick draw with Kavalek and then defeating Suttles in an up and down game which the World Champion could easily have lost. Another quick game as Black against Vranesic in round seven was the first of three consecutive draws and his play in the other two, against Ree and Formanek, was not convincing as he was never close to winning either of them. He then buckled down and finished the event with wins against Bob Zuk (judged to be his best game of the event) and International Master George Kuprejanov.

Let's take a look at what the *British Chess Magazine* called Spassky's indifferent form, judging him to be listless and distraught. Its reporter, Harry Golombek, was on site attending the FIDE Congress held simultaneously on the University of British Columbia campus.

Boris Spassky
Duncan Suttles [B07]
 9th Canadian Open
 Vancouver, BC (6)
 August 29, 1971

1.e4 g6 2.d4 d6 3.c3 Nf6 4.Bd3 e5 5.f4 Bg7 6.Nf3 Bg4 7.fxe5 dxe5 8.Bg5 Nbd7 9.Nbd2 h6 10.Bh4 g5 11.Bf2 0-0 12.h3 Bh5 13.d5 Bg6 14.Qe2 Re8 15.0-0 Nh5 16.g3 Bf8 17.b4 Ndf6 18.Nc4 Bd6 19.Nfd2 Kh7 20.Kh2 Rg8 21.Nxd6 cxd6 22.c4 a5 23.c5 axb4 24.Nc4 dxc5 25.Nxe5

25.Bxc5! Rc8 26.Bxb4 was the right follow-up to White's previous play and would have left him with a solid advantage. Now the play gets messy.

25...Re8 26.Nxg6 fxe6 27.Bxc5 Qc7 28.Bf2 Ra3

28...Nxd5! 29.e5 Ndf4 30.gxf4 Nxf4 31.Qc2 Qd7 and White is forced to return the piece with 32.Bxg6+ when 32...Nxg6 gives Black the advantage. The text is more ambitious. Time pressure will have a strong influence on the following play (the time control was 45 moves in 2 1/2

hours).

29.Qf3 Nxe4 30.Rac1 Qd7 31.Bd4?



Position after 31.Bd4

31.Bb6

31...Rxd3

31...Nf4! (closing the f-file) 32.gxf4 Nd2 33.Qg3 Nxf1+ 34.Rxf1 Qxd5 wins.

32.Qxd3 Nhxg3 33.Rfe1 Qd6 34.Kg1 h5 35.Bb2

35.Qc4 was safer.

35...g4? 36.Qd4?

36.hxg4 Qf4 37.Rc2 was necessary.

36...Nf5 37.Qd3??



Position after 37.Qd3

37...gxh3

37...Qb6+ wins. For example 38.Bd4 Nxd4 39.Rxe4 Ne2+ 40.Kg2 gxh3+ 41.Kxh3 Rxe4 42.Qxe4 Qf2 43.Rc7+ Kh6 and White has no defense to the multiple mate threats.

38.Rxe4 Rxe4 39.Qxe4 h2+?

Black could still hold the balance with 39...Qb6+ 40.Bd4 Nxd4 41.Kh1 Qf6 42.Qe3 Nf5=.

40.Kg2 Qg3+ 41.Kh1 Qf2 42.Rc7+ Kh6 43.Bc1+ 1-0

Boris Spassky
Hans Ree [B07]
 9th Canadian Open
 Vancouver, BC (8)
 August 31, 1971

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.c3 d6 4.f4 Nf6 5.Bd3 e5 6.Nf3 exd4 7.cxd4 0-0 8.Nc3 c5

9.dxc5 dxc5 10.0-0 Nc6 11.e5 Nd5 12.Ne4 Bg4 13.Nd6 Ndb4 14.Be4 Qb6 15.Be3 Rad8 16.a3 Na6 17.b4 Nxe5 18.fxe5 Bxe5



Position after 18...Bxe5

19.Nxe5 Bxd1 20.Nec4 Qc7 21.Raxd1

The position is delicately balanced.

21...cxb4 22.Bxb7 Nc5 23.Bd5 bxa3 24.Nb5

24.Bf4 or 24.Nxa3 Qxd6 25.Bxf7+ Rxf7 26.Rxd6 Rxf1+ 27.Kxf1 Rxd6 28.Bxc5 Rd5 29.Be3 a5 30.Nc4 a4 31.Ke2 with a drawn ending were correct. The text could lead to trouble.

24...Qe7 25.Nbxa3



Position after 25.Nbxa3

25...Nc6

Ree, who had a fantastic tournament, decides not to tempt fate but with 25...Na4! he could have tried to undermine White's pieces. For example: 26.Bf3 Rxd1 27.Rxd1 Nb2 28.Re1 Nxc4 29.Nxc4 Qb4 30.Nd2 Re8 31.Kf2 a5 and White is in deep trouble.

26.Nb5 Qb4 27.Nba3 Qe7 28.Nb5 Qb4 29.Nba3 1/2-1/2

Ed Formanek
Boris Spassky [C18]
 9th Canadian Open
 Vancouver, BC (9)
 September 1, 1971

1.e4 e6

The French is not an opening one commonly associates with Spassky but he used it successfully in his 1968



Boris Spassky (1st), Jacqueline Piatigorsky and Bobby Fischer (2nd) at the 2nd Piatigorsky Cup prize ceremony in 1966.
 Photo Credit: Art Zeller. Thanks to the World Chess Hall of Fame.

Candidates Match with Geller.

2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Ne7 7.Qg4 0-0 8.h4

8.Bd3 is more common but Formanek prefers to go his own way.

8...Nbc6 9.Nf3 f6 10.Bd3 Qe8?!

Here 10...c4 was more challenging as 11.Bxh7+ doesn't work and 11.Be2 fxe5 (or 11...Qa5 12.Bd2 fxe5) are fine for Black.

11.Bh6 Qf7 12.exf6 Qxf6 13.Bg5 Qf7 14.Bxe7 Qxe7 15.Qh5 g6 16.Qg5 Qxg5 17.hxg5 c4 18.Be2 Rf5 19.g3 Bd7 20.0-0 Nd8

Black could equalize immediately with

20...e5 21.dxe5 Re8.

21.Kg2 Ba4 22.Rac1



Position after 22.Rac1

22...Nf7!?

Black purposely sacrifices the exchange for a pawn. He didn't have to as 22...Rc8 was playable, for example. The computer says White is much better in the play after 22...Nf7!?, but the reality is that Black doesn't have much too worry about.

23.Nh4 Rxc5 24.f4 Rf5 25.g4 Rf6 26.g5 Rf5 27.Nxf5 gxf5 28.Rh1 Kg7 29.Rh3 Rh8 30.Bf3 b6 31.Kf2 Bd7 32.Ke3 Nd6 33.Kd2 Be8 34.Rch1 Ne4+ 35.Bxe4 fxe4 36.Ke3 Bg6

[Diagram top of next page]

37.Rb1 Rb8 38.Rhh1 Kf8 39.Rh2 Ke8 40.Rhh1 Kd7 41.Rb2 Kc6 42.Rb4 Rb7 43.Rh3 Rb8 44.Rh4 Kd6 45.Rh6 Rb7 46.Rh1 1/2-1/2



Position after 36...Bg6

Boris Spassky
Robert Zuk [E82]
 9th Canadian Open
 Vancouver, BC (10)
 September 2, 1971

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 b6

The double fianchetto variation, which enables Black to play ...c5 without sacrificing a pawn, was a respected variation until a few years after this game when it was discovered 6...c5 gives Black good play for the pawn if White accepts it.

7.Bd3 Bb7

Unfortunately 7...c5? is met by 8.e5! and Be4. 7...a6 is another way to prepare ...c5.

8.Nge2 c5 9.d5 e6 10.Bg5

Gheorghiu played this move with success four times in the late 1960s and Spassky follows his example.

10...h6 11.Bh4 exd5 12.cxd5 Nbd7 13.0-0 a6 14.a4 Ne5 15.f4 Nxd3 16.Qxd3 Qc7 17.Rad1



Position after 17.Rad1

17...Rae8

Bob Zuk in his annotations to this game in the September 1971 issue of *Northwest Chess* writes that Spassky felt Black should speculate with 17...b5. He was right. For example, 17...b5! 18.axb5 axb5 19.Nxb5 Qb6 20.Nbc3 Ba6 21.Qd2 Qb4 and Black has terrific compensation for the pawn. This begs the question; where

could Spassky have improved his earlier play?

18.Bxf6!

The only way to keep the initiative (Zuk).

18...Bxf6 19.e5 dxe5 20.Ne4 Bg7 21.f5

White has followed the traditional plan dubbed the sweeper and the sealer by Hans Kmoch is *Pawn Power in Chess*. First he plays e4-e5 to open up the e4 square for his pieces and then meets ...dxe5 with f5 sealing e5 from Black's pieces.

White definitely has full compensation for the pawn and maybe even a little more, but Black's position is quite resilient.

21...Rd8 22.N2c3 gxf5 23.Rxf5 f6 24.Rdf1 Qe7 25.Qg3 Kh8 26.Qh4 Bxd5 27.Nxf6?!

Objectively White should have simplified the position with 27.Nxd5 Rxd5 28.Rxf6 (28.Rh5 Kg8 29.Rxh6 Bxh6 30.Qxh6 Qg7 31.Nxf6+ Rxf6 32.Rxf6 Qxh6 33.Rxh6 Rd1+ 34.Kf2 Rd2+ 35.Kf3 Rxb2 leads to a draw) 28...Rxf6 29.Rxf6 Rd1+ 30.Kf2 Bxf6 31.Qxh6+ Qh7 32.Qf8+ Qg8 33.Qh6+ with a draw, but Spassky's tournament standing requires he play more sharply.



Position after 27.Nxf6

27...Bb7!?

Zuk, who was number two in the Northwest among active players at the time behind only Duncan Suttles, and was routinely rated in the top 50 players in the US in 1970-72, opts for the most aggressive placement of the bishop where it attacks g2 but the bishop was better placed on the other side of the board defending the king:

27...Bg8 (27...Bf7 was also good) 28.Rh5 Bxf6 29.Rxh6+ Kg7 30.Rhxf6 Rxf6 31.Qg5+ Kf7 32.Qh5+ Ke6 33.Qg4+ Kf7 draws according to Zuk who adds Spassky didn't believe White has anything better. The computer engines concur and also suggest that Black can improve with 28...Bh7! 29.Nxh7 Qxh4 30.Rxh4 Rxf1+ 31.Kxf1 Kxh7 32.Ke2 Rd4 and White is fighting to draw.

28.Rh5 Rxf6 29.Rxh6+ Kg8 30.Rxf6 Bxf6



Position after 30...Bxf6

31.Rxf6?!

31.Rh8+ Kf7 32.Qh5+ Ke6 33.Rh7 wins more quickly as Zuk pointed out in his notes.

31...Qg7 32.Qc4+ Kh8 33.Rf3 Rd6 34.Qh4+ Kg8 35.Qc4+ Kh8 36.Ne4 Rg6 37.Rh3+ Rh6 38.Rd3 Rf6 39.Rg3 Rg6 40.Ng5 Bc8 41.Nf7+ Kh7 42.Qh4+ Kg8 43.Nh6+ 1-0

Anyone comparing how Fischer and Spassky played in Vancouver in 1971 would not have been surprised at the result of their match the following year. Spassky even prophesized this. Talking to Pal Benko during the Canadian Open he predicted that Bobby (who had already defeated Taimanov and Larsen 6-0) would beat Petrosian and himself.

Spassky played brilliantly from 1964 to 1970, winning an Interzonal, dominating two cycles of Candidates Matches and splitting a pair of World Championships. He even avoided a letdown after winning the crown, taking first place at San Juan 1969, Leiden 1970 and Amsterdam 1970. He would continue to remain a very strong player, but after the Canadian Open he lost a little of his magic.



Bob Zuk circa 1982 at 4715 9th Ave. N.E. in Seattle. This was the long-time home of National Master John Braley (1944-2017) and hosted several invitational tournament games and matches in the early to mid-1980s. The house has since been torn down and rebuilt. Photo credit: John Donaldson.

Seattle City Championships

By Mary K. Kuhner

This event was a two-section Swiss (Open and U1800) held January 17-19 at the Seattle Chess Club. I don't think anyone takes the title of "City Champion" very seriously; it's just a grand name for a weekend Swiss. Initially it looked like a very small tournament, with only four players in the Open section, but by midday Saturday we had 12 players in Open and 15 in Reserve, with LM Viktors Pupols on the top board. Sonia Devaraju bravely switched to the Open after round one despite her 1439 rating.

Upsets were rampant in the Open, with two 1900 players falling in round one. Going into round four there was a three-way tie for first with 2.5/4 between Viktors, Portland junior Havish Sripada (1896), who had drawn Viktors in round two, and myself (1811). On Sunday morning, having heard that I would play Viktors, I reviewed our five previous games and noticed that he didn't much care for the Fantasy Variation of the Caro-Kann. This proved to be true, though the position we reached was actually a Classical French in which both sides had lost a tempo. Viktors never quite solved the problem of the French bad bishop, and I eventually won an endgame with good bishop versus bad.

I was sitting next to Havish, and got to see him dispatch Silas Lainsou (1756) with a crisp Yugoslav Attack vs. the Dragon Sicilian. I was therefore nervous about facing him in the last round, especially as I had Black. We played a sideline of the French Winawer and my position looked precarious, but I think my opponent underestimated the slow-burn attack potential of the French, as he fell to sudden violence in the center. This win gave me first place (4.5/5), my first Open victory since the 1980's! Second/third went to Havish and Frank Fagundes (1652), who tempted Viktors into an unsound combination in the opening and managed to consolidate his material advantage for a win. Fourth place went to Sonia Devaraju, whose decision to play in the Open was rewarded by 3.0/5 despite being lower-rated than every single opponent, jumping her rating to 1549.

The Reserve section was won by unrated player Valentin Razmov (4.5/5), who played in his youth in Eastern Europe but had not previously competed in the US. He was driven to the ropes by George



Valentin Razmov (left), Mary Kuhner (right).
Photo credit: Joseph Frantz.

Oliver (1606) but managed to escape with a draw, and won all of his other games. Valentin is my coach, so this was a clean sweep for the team. Second place went to George Oliver, and third/fourth was split between Ralph Anthony (1672) and Sarah Lawrence—1295 at the start, 1444 at the end!

The tournament was capably directed by Fred Kleist, who also provided games for Reserve players who would otherwise have had to take byes. Here are three interesting games from the event:

Mary K. Kuhner (1811) – Viktors Pupols (2200) [C14]
Seattle City Championship
Seattle, WA (R4), January 19, 2020
[Mary Kuhner]

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3 e6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Bg5 Be7 6.e5 Nfd7 7.Bxe7 Qxe7 8.f4 a6 9.Nf3 c5

Following our game from last year's City Championship; this is now a Classical French despite starting as a Caro-Kann. Last time I castled long hoping for a kingside attack, but his attack got there

first and with overwhelming force. I wasn't inclined to repeat that.

10.Be2

I did not like this move as the bishop is in the way here, but had trouble finding a better one. Qd2 is probably best, not to castle but to bring the rook into play and cover the e1–a5 diagonal.

10...Nc6 11.Qd2



Position after 11.Qd2

11...b5

We both missed an interesting combination starting with 11...cxd4 12.Nxd4 Ndx5 and if 13.fxe5 Qh4+

12.Nd1 cxd4

It's important to play this before I can get in c3.

13.Nxd4 Nxd4 14.Qxd4 0–0 15.0–0

This allows a forced trade of queens due to the pin, which I was reluctant to do—I'd have preferred a more attacking game—but I need to get mobilized now or I'm liable to lose my center pawns.

15...f6

Viktors prefers the thematic French break, to weaken my center and hopefully make it a target.

16.Bf3



Position after 16.Bf3

The idea of this move is to keep Black under pressure with the threat of Bxd5 exploiting the undefended rook, while clearing a line to protect my weak e-pawn, but it's probably too artificial to be good.

16...fxe5 17.fxe5 Qc5 18.Qxc5

The alternative 18.c3 Qxd4+ 19.cxd4 runs into 19...Rf4 and while Stockfish finds compensation for the loss of the d-pawn, I did not.

18...Nxc5 19.Nf2 Bd7 20.Nd3 Rac8 21.Nxc5 Rxc5 22.c3 Rc4

I do not like this move, which re-introduces the possibility of a sack in the center, for example after ...b4 unprotecting the rook: the king, bishop, and rook all seem a bit vulnerable.

23.Rad1 g6

We both saw some lines involving a sudden check on the a2–g8 diagonal, followed by mate or loss of the rook. But it's a shame to block in Black's bishop even further.

24.Rd3 Kg7 25.Rc1

Contemplating b3 and c4 exploiting the pin on the d-pawn.

25...Rf5

He's not going to give me time to do that!

26.Re1 h5

26...a5 looks like a better approach.

27.Rd4 Rf8 28.Kf2 g5 29.Ke3 g4 30.Be2 Rxd4 31.cxd4

I offered a draw here, as I felt I had no plan to win; Uncle Vik raised his eyebrows and quietly made a move.

31...Rc8 32.Kd2 Be8 33.Rf1 Bg6 34.Rc1 Rxc1?



Position after 34...Rxc1

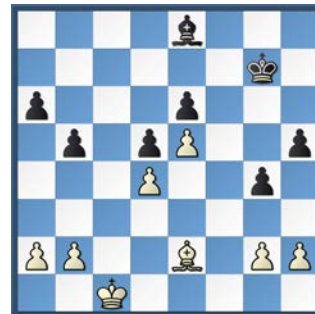
Uncle Vik said gruffly, "I will offer a draw." I thought for a minute and shook my head. I felt the bishop ending had to be better for me, so why not try? Even though White will invade on the c-file I think it is better to keep the rooks on.

35.Kxc1

I believe this position is lost. Black's problem is the terrible bishop. It looks active right now, but it will have to drop back to defend the queenside pawns, and that gives me just enough time to play a4, eventually winning both queenside pawns for my a-pawn. Then he will have

two problems: the b-pawn and the weak pawns on light squares. His king can stop the b-pawn and his bishop can cover the weak pawns at e6 and h5, but neither of them will then be able to move, whereas I can reserve a tempo with the b-pawn.

35...Be8



Position after 35...Be8

36.a4!

The only winning move; I must not allow the queenside to be blocked.

Uncle Vik knows everything there is to know about fortresses, as I found to my cost the first time I played him—I was a whole exchange up, but to no avail.

36...Kg6

Stockfish prefers the pawn sacrifice 36...g3, but in the end it doesn't seem to do the job, though the winning process for White is much more complex.

According to Stockfish White can still exploit the better bishop to eventually win Black's weak pawns, starting with the one on h5.

37.g3 Kf7 38.Kc2 Ke7 39.Kc3 Kd8 40.Kb4 bxa4 41.Bxa6 Kc7 42.Bb5 Bg6

The king and pawn endgame is hopeless here.

43.Bxa4 Kb6 44.Kc3 Ka5 45.Bd7 Bf7 46.Kb3 Kb6 47.Kb4 Kc7 48.Ba4 Kb6

He can't let me into c5. But now his bishop is on the wrong square.

49.Bc2 Be8 50.Bh7

The bishop must go back to f7 (if it goes to d7 the kingside pawns fall off) and can never budge from that square without immediate loss of two pawns. This reduces the game to a K+P endgame with White's king two squares ahead of the pawn.

50...Bf7 51.b3 Kc6 52.Ka5

and Black resigned. The same zugzwang approach can be repeated all the way up the board.

1–0

**Valentin N. Razmov –
Ralph Anthony (1672) [A59]**
Seattle City Championship
Seattle, WA (R3), January 18, 2020
[Valentin Razmov]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5

Hoping to surprise White into playing a less common opening with many underwater reefs, but as it turns out White was at least as well prepared, remembering key ideas for how to approach the challenges.

3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6 Bxa6 6.Nc3 g6 7.e4 Bxf1 8.Kxf1 d6 9.Nf3 Nbd7 10.g3

Preparing to “castle by hand” and free up the king-side rook.

10...Bg7 11.Kg2 0–0 12.h3 Qb6 13.Qc2 Rfb8 14.a4

White starts one of several possible plans to untie themselves from the several pins and tactical combinations against the potentially weak a2, b2, and e4 pawns.

14...Qb4 15.Ra2

Thus far the game has followed known paths, though the black player wasn’t aware of this.

15...Qc4?

This just gives white a useful extra tempo to, without accomplishing anything in return. 15...Nb6

16.Nd2 Qb4 17.b3

Finally, White has stabilized the queen-side, and now has a healthy extra pawn with no tactical threats to lose it.

17...Qb7 18.Nb5 Ne8 19.Bb2 Bxb2 20.Rxb2 Nc7 21.Nxc7 Qxc7 22.b4?

As soon as the stage of converting the advantage begins, however, White errs by hurrying too much to win it, missing a nice tactic. 22.Ra1 was called for to first stabilize the a4-pawn, before attempting to push b3-b4 and thus create connected passed pawns on the queen-side.

22...Qa7!

Now all of a sudden Black has equal chances.

23.Ra1

23.Rhb1 Qxa4 24.bxc5 Rxb2 25.Rxb2 Nxc5 was a reliable path to take if White wanted to draw quickly here.

23...cxb4 24.Nb3?!

Mistakes often come in pairs (or even in bunches.) At this stage White had lost the thread of the game and was still reeling from the earlier tactical oversight. Now Black takes over the initiative! 24.a5 still provided a way to keep equality.

24...Rc8 25.Qd2 Rc3?!

Overambitious. It was apparently Black’s turn to err. The problem is that the b4-pawn isn’t as untouchable as Black would want it to be. 25...Rc4 was a way to stabilize and claim an advantage for Black.

26.Nd4!



Position after 26.Nd4

Suddenly, Black encounters challenges to solve, while approaching time trouble—23 minutes for the remaining 15 moves. White’s latest move was apparently a big and unpleasant surprise, so Black spent half of that remaining time trying to decide which path to take. There are several fork threats in the air, as well as blockade moves, in addition to options to destabilize the rook on c3. Eventually, Black’s choice proves incorrect.

26...Ra3??

Probably the result of a mirage, more than desperation or frustration. 26...Qc5! was the only way to retain the edge for black 27.Nc6 Ne5 28.Nxe7+ (28.Nxb4?? Rb8 29.Nc6 Nxc6 30.dxc6 Rxb2 31.Qxb2 Rc2 32.Qb8+ Kg7 33.Rf1 Qxc6 34.Qb4 Rc4 35.Qb2+ e5 36.a5 Qxe4+ 37.Kg1) 28...Kg7 29.Qg5 Rf3

27.Nb5 Qxa4 28.Nxa3 bxa3 29.Rb4

29.f3 was another way to play it, but after the reversed fortunes White wishes to once again be in the driver’s seat, rather than simply defend the e4-pawn.

29...Qa5 30.Qc3

Preparing for Rb3

30...f6?

Black was apparently afraid of back rank troubles, thus opted to close the long diagonal. 30...f5 would have been more useful for Black, attempting to destabilize White’s d5-pawn, while White is busy winning the a3-pawn.

31.Rb3 Qa4 32.f3 a2 33.Qc2 Kf7

33...f5 was once again a viable alternative, though White clearly retains the edge in both cases.

34.Rb2 Qd4 35.Raxa2

Precise. In case of 35.Rbxa2? Qxa1 36.Rxa1 Rxa1, suddenly Black has hopes of building a fortress.

35...Rxa2 36.Rxa2 Nc5 37.Qe2

With a handful of minutes on the clock before the first time control, it is often useful to simply keep the position under control.

37...Nb3?!

Attempting an obvious tactic in mutual time trouble, but overlooking that due to the hanging knight White can force a queen exchange, which considerably simplifies their job of winning this endgame. 37...Qc3 was a way to get to the time control without ceding much

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ground.

38.Qb2 Qc4 39.Qc2!

Forces the queens off, which is an important step toward White's conversion of the advantage.

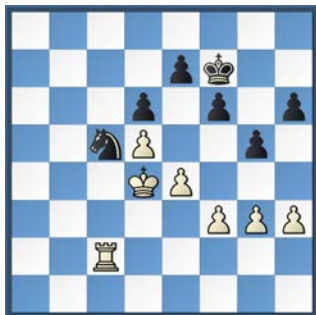
39...Qxc2+ 40.Rxc2 Nc5

At the end of the first time control, after nearly four hours of play, Black was left with 12 seconds on the clock, while White had five minutes...

41.Kf2 g5

Black offered a draw here, but clearly White can keep trying. Even if one doesn't know how to win it. White's "difficulty" is that there are several promising plans here: (a) invade with the king all the way to d8, then put the rook on the seventh rank and win the weakest of Black's pawns, after which the rest fall rapidly; (b) open up the king-side using moves like f3-f4 and h3-h4, after which Black will have an even harder time to defend both left and right. In the game, White tried a combination of both.

42.Ke3 h6 43.Kd4



Position after 43.Kd4

{Another natural plan is to give up the rook for the knight and win a king and pawn ending: 43.Rxc5! dxc5 44.Kd3, etc. Games Editor.}

43...Nd7 44.f4

Keeping the black knight off of the key e5-square is useful, at least to begin with.

44...Nf8 45.Kc4

White's plan is to direct the king to d8, then put the rook on the seventh rank and pressure the backward e7-pawn while not letting Black touch any of the king-side pawns in the meantime. 45.e5!? was winning here also and more directly, but after nearly 15 minutes of trying to convince myself of what's best here, I decided to avoid many pawn exchanges for now lest too few pawns be left in the end.

45...Ng6 46.Rf2 Ke8

46...gxf4 47.gxf4 f5 48.exf5 Nh4 may be worth trying, if Black wishes to diminish the number of pawns left.

47.Kb5

47.h4 was another way to go, an idea which White comes back to in a few moves after the initial attempt to break through the defense does not fully succeed.

47...Kd7 48.Kb6 Kd8 49.Kc6



Position after 49.Kc6

49...Ke8

49...Kc8?? loses instantly after 50.Ra2 Kb8 (forced, to avoid mate) 51.Kd7.

50.Kc7 Kf7 51.Kd8 Kf8 52.Kd7 Kf7 53.h4

53.f5 Ne5+ 54.Kd8 with a subsequent Rf2-Ra2-Ra7 was the most direct way to win, as Black's knight, even though occupying a gorgeous centralized position, cannot help in the defense of the e7-pawn.

53...gxf4 54.gxf4 h5

White was threatening to push h4-h5 and evict the knight from g6 54...Nxf4?? leads to the knight being trapped after 55.f5.

55.Kd8 Kf8 56.Kd7 Kf7 57.Rf1

White is still hoping to reach some kind of triangulation (with king and/or rook) that would force Black to cede access to the e6-square, but that idea does not work out in practice.

57...Nf8+ 58.Kd8 Ng6 59.Rf2 Kf8 60.f5!

Finally, that time of taking bold action has arrived. Black is helpless.

60...Ne5 61.Rb2 Nf3 62.Rb7 Nxf4 63.Rxe7 Nf3 64.Kd7

All White has to do is ensure that the h-pawn can be stopped; White's central pawns will promote and decide the outcome.

64...h4 65.Rh7 Kg8 66.Rh5 Kf7 67.Kxd6 Kf8 68.Kc7

and Black resigned.


1-0

Havish Sripada (1896) –
Mary K. Kuhner (1811) [C17]
Seattle City Championship
Seattle, WA (R5), January 19, 2020
[Mary Kuhner]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.Bd2 cxd4 6.Nb5 Bf8

I have suffered in multiple games where I put the bishop on e7 in analogous positions; it is horribly in the way there, and g7 is weak. While it looks funny, the text move does solve those problems. I was shocked at myself for playing it and expected I'd be sorry, but I could find nothing better. My study partner advocates 6...Bxd2+ but after 7.Qxd2 Nc6 8.f4 I will have permanent issues on the dark squares.

7.Nxd4 Nc6 8.Ngf3 Nxd4 9.Nxd4 Bd7



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10.Bd3 Ne7 11.0–0

During the game I worried a lot about 11.Bb4 but apparently my planned response 11...Qb6 is fine.

11...Nc6 12.Nxc6 bxc6

I like to take back this way in many lines of the French even though it apparently blocks the bishop, because the c-pawn lever is useful. However, here White has c4 and it's not at all clear.

13.c3 c5 14.Kh1

My young opponent makes his intentions clear; he's hoping to mate me on the kingside, or failing that, in the center. I realized I needed counterplay quickly to discourage this plan, and also that I was very unlikely ever to castle.

14...Rb8

Putting the rook on an open line for future use: it might protect f7 from b7, or support a bishop trade on b5, or suddenly take the b2 pawn.

15.Rb1 f5 16.g4?!



Position after 16.g4

Making his intentions absolutely clear, but this move weakens his own king position significantly; if he ever loses the initiative he'll be sorry. 16.exf6 Qxf6 favors White according to the engine, but I felt that I would get attacking chances of my own, which was what I really wanted out of the game.

16...g6 17.gxf5 exf5 18.Re1

I carefully looked at 18.e6 and concluded

I was fine after 18...Bxe6 19.Qe2 Kf7 where the b8 rook shows another virtue—it can defend from b6.

18...Be6

Stockfish allows for other moves here, but I'm with Nimzovitch: "The passed pawn is a criminal who must be kept under lock and key. Milder measures such as police surveillance are not sufficient." On the other hand, the bishop is a bit of a tall pawn at the moment. Keep an eye on it, though...

19.Bc2

I think this wastes time; I wasn't castling anyway so the check on a4 accomplishes nothing.

19...Be7 20.Ba4+ Kf7 21.f3 Qc7



Position after 21...Qc7

22.Bf4

The start of a wrong plan. White's tactical threats are real—if he can distract the Be6 by forcing it to recapture on d5, this will allow e6+ with devastating effect—but I can deal with this problem and then the bishop encourages ...g5 with tempo.

22...Rhd8

Nothing must distract the Be6 from its police duties.

23.Bb3 Qc6

Nothing! Also ...d4 is now a real threat. Oddly, the king will be an adequate blockader if the light-squared bishops are traded; and White's positional issues (inactive Rb1, exposed king, vulnerable pawns) are beginning to tell.

24.Qe2

While I was thinking about my move, my opponent offered a draw.

I confess I thought hard about it. This would have led to us splitting first place, and I was tired. But I felt that I was better

and ought to try to win; and also that the draw offer was made from a position of weakness.

24...Rg8

My turn to make my intentions clear.

25.Qg2

The engine likes this but I felt that it just threw fuel on the fire.

25...g5 26.Be3

At this point I felt I was winning due to the following combination. Of course the engine tells a more complex story.

26...c4 27.Bc2 d4 28.Bxd4

While I was thinking, my opponent whispered "Draw?" I didn't consider it at all.

28...g4

28...Bd5 29.e6+ leads to unpleasant and unnecessary complications.

29.Re3

A clever move which I hadn't considered, protecting f3 and removing the rook from a later f3-f2 discovered check; but it turns out to lose by force.

29...gxf3



Position after 29...gxf3

30.Qf2

30.Qh3 f2+ 31.Be4 and Black can uncork the spectacular 31...Rxb2! I don't know if I had foreseen this move in this precise variation but I do know I'd seen the theme, so I likely would have found it.

30...Rg2

Agreeing to trade queens. I have spoiled a couple of nice attacks by being reluctant to do so when necessary.

31.Qxf3 Qxf3 32.Rxf3 Rxc2

My opponent's next move is a blunder, but even without that his position is fairly hopeless; he can save the Rf3 but then I get in on b2.

33.Rg1 Bd5

and White resigned.

0–1

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Questions? Josh Sinanan | WCF President | joshsinanan@gmail.com | 206.769.3757

Team Washington Victorious In 2020 WA vs B.C. Intermat

By Josh Sinanan, Team WA Captain

The Washington vs British Columbia International Scholastic Chess Match, known informally as the Interimat, was moved online this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation. All 26 players from each team, two in each grade level, played their games from home via Chess.com and were monitored via Zoom during their matches. To accommodate the players, parents, and team captains, two virtual “Team Rooms” and a “Playing Hall” were created using Zoom’s “breakout room” feature. This allowed for a quiet playing area in which players were monitored during their games via Zoom with webcam on and mic muted. Meanwhile in the team rooms, captains and players met to review and analyze games and keep tabs the match games in progress. Following the games in real-time turned out to be quite entertaining and led to a lively discussion about each game in progress!

Team Washington had White on all board in the first round and gained

a strong 17-9 lead. Our young players were especially impressive, having honed their skills over the past few weeks in the Interimat Training sessions, which were held weekly via Zoom and Chess.com. In the higher grades, games were much closer and hard fought, with Team Washington catching a few lucky breaks in the first round. Notable saves were turned in by Daniel Shubin, who came back from the dead against Team British Columbia’s top player Patrick Huang with a tricky mating combination. In the Eighth Grade, Washington’s Sophie Szeto defended a worse position for 80 moves and eventually won a drawn rook ending against British Columbia’s Lucian Wu.

Team Washington was able to hold onto their lead in the second round, despite the momentum shifting to Team British Columbia. The British Columbia players showed their grit and determination with the white pieces and mounted a notable 13.5-12.5 comeback with much closer results, especially in the lower grades. Three Washington players, Brandon Jiang, Zachary Zhang, and Derek Zhang, and opted for the risky Dutch Defense, an opening with a dubious reputation. Despite the dubious opening choice, they still managed to score 1/3 when Brandon Jiang trapped Veronica Guo’s queen in the corner before turning his attention on

her king! Unfortunately, Derek and Zak were not as fortunate, as they both fell to their 12th Grade Canadian opponents. The finale of the match was quite exciting to experience, as Team Washington players and the captains were closely following each game and trying to predict the results up to the very end. Minda Chen’s nail-biting win over Victor Zheng was especially exciting since it sealed the match victory for Team Washington!

Special congratulations to our Team Washington All-Stars, each of whom scored 1.5 or two points from two games: Dann Merriman, Vidip Kona, Vihaan Jammalamadaka, Alexander Yang, Neeraj Harish, Erin Bian, Brandon Jiang, Advait Vijayakumar, Sophie Szeto, and Daniel Stein.

The match ended in a 29.5-22.5 victory for Team Washington, our first since 2015 when the match was hosted at the Chess4Life Center in Bellevue! All games were hard-fought and the match was much closer than the final score would indicate, with the final result boiling down to a few key games.

It was a pleasure for Captain Chouchan and yours truly to review games with many of the players and follow the match games while keeping tabs on how everyone was doing.



Main playing halls. Photo credit: Josh Sinanan.

Congratulations to the players from both teams on an exciting and close match once again! Special thanks to British Columbia Captains Michael Lo, Lara Lo, and Eric Gu, and to our wonderful TDs Stephen Wright and Jacob Mayer for all their hard work in setting up this historical online Intermat. Since no travel was required and the match took place across both Washington and British Columbia, the organizers from both teams decided to co-host this year's Interimat, and I can say that it truly was a collaborative effort! All players and parents from both teams showed remarkable patience and flexibility with the new online format under the circumstances. We look forward to continuing this great tradition, online or in-person, for many years to come!

Alec Chung (1822) – Daniel Stein (1766) [A22]
 2020 WA-BC Interimat
 Chess.com (R2), April 25, 2020
[Daniel Stein]

I had won my first game pretty quickly, so I had some time to prepare for this match. Unfortunately, I saw that my opponent played 1.c4, an opening that I'm never prepared to face. I looked at 3...Bb4 with the engine though, and liked some of the resulting positions.

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.g3 Bb4

This is sort of a reverse Rossolimo. It shouldn't be as good, as I'm a tempo down, but sometimes it can confuse English players.

4.Bg2 0-0 5.a3



Position after 5.a3

This move wasn't part of my prep. The move I expected was 5.e4, which my opponent had played once before. However, this move is a poor one in the Rossolimo, and I already planned to take on c3, so I felt that I had been given my tempo back.

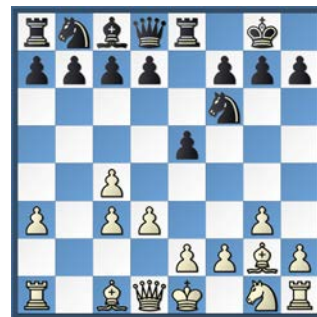
5...Bxc3 6.bxc3

After 5.e4, I want to play c6 and d5, so I played a semi-waiting move that was bound to come in useful. It turns out this is actually the most common master move

in the position.

6...Re8 7.d3

A strategic blunder. Now the doubled pawns will be much more vulnerable. Better was 7.e4 or 7.Nf3.



Position after 7.d3

7...e4 8.Be3

An odd move, which I found somewhat annoying. The idea is that exd3 no longer isolates the pawns, since White's e-pawn is no longer pinned. I calculated a little and decided that d5 would pose problems to White.

8...d5 9.dxe4

I hesitated here, since trading queens is a big step, but I was certain the endgame could only be better for me.

9...dxe4 10.Qxd8 Rxd8 11.Bg5



Main playing halls. Photo credit: Josh Sinanan.

Oops! I had assumed that the bishop would go to d4, after which I could play Nbd7, but now I had to allow doubled pawns or lose e4. I decided that the doubled f-pawns would be harder to attack than the c-pawns.

11...Re8 12.Rb1

For some reason my opponent didn't take. Another small mistake, and one that reassured me.

12...Nbd7 13.e3 h6 14.Bxf6 Nxf6

After this move I indulged myself in a comparison of our respective pawn structures. Moreover, White no longer even has the bishop-pair. Clearly better for me.

15.Ne2 c5

I wanted to play 15...b6, but was afraid of 16.c5. Stockfish is less concerned, citing 16...Re5 17.cxb6 axb6, with a3 falling

soon. This move allowed my opponent an essential tempo for his knight maneuver, which happily he didn't take.

16.0-0 b6 17.Nf4 Ba6

A fun position. As a beginner two years ago, I would often make a threat and assume my opponent wouldn't notice. In this case, though, there's nothing he can do. The c4-pawn is mine.



Position after 17...Ba6

18.Rfd1 Bxc4 19.Bf1

Another turning point. The knight endgame looks winnable, but I wanted to make sure. My decision was mainly made for me, however — where else can my bishop go?

19...Bxf1 20.Kxf1 Rad8 21.Ke2 g5

Maybe my best move of the game. With the white knight out of the game, my victory is certain.

22.Ng2 Nd5 23.Rbc1

I wanted to double on the d-file before moving the knight, but realized that c4 was probably coming.

23...c4 24.Rd4

I didn't see this coming. It's not as bad as it first looks; it cements White's position somewhat.

24...b5 25.Kd2

The Complete Results

Grade	Team WA (29.5)	NWSRS	Score	Team B.C. (22.5)	CFC (*CMA)	Score
K	Dann Merriman	1446	2	Abhiroop Nookala	516*	1
	Ted Wang	1276	1	Jeffrey Deng	450*	0
1	Vidip Kona	1605	2	Ethan Jun Low	866*	1
	Alfred Su	1296	1	Steven Yuhao Zhang	831*	0
2	Vihaan Jammalamadaka	1605	2	Nicholas Pei-Chang Wu	1195*	1
	Yuntao Liu	1388	1	Nathan Yi-Hsin Yang	1070*	0
3	Yiding Lu	1700	1	Justin Gao	1293	1
	Alexander Yang	1648	2	Erwin Jun-Han Mok	1205	0
4	Neeraj Harish	1868	1.5	Anthony Zongyue Li	1172	0.5
	Erin Bian	1688	2	Arya Cyrus Boroomand	1018	0
5	Derin Goktepe	1929	1	Jingyun (Ryan) Yang	1812	1
	Sophie Velea	1878	1	Zhengyuan (Frank) Zhou	1434	1
6	Albert Li	1766	1	Ethan Su	1953	1.5
	Aditya Ramkumar	1591	0	Nathan Ping-Yin Wu	1868	1.5
7	Brandon Jiang	2105	1.5	Kate Jiang	1929	0.5
	Advait Vijayakumar	2008	2	Yu Han (Veronica) Guo	1828	0
8	Pranav Kurungod Anoop	1950	1	Aiden Zhou	2119	1
	Sophie Szeto	1673	1.5	Lucian Wu	1844	0.5
9	Daniel Shubin	2148	1	Patrick Huang	2247	1
	Alec Beck	1916	0.5	Shi Yuan (Sherry) Tian	2045	1.5
10	Minda Chen	1972	1	Andrew Hemstapat	2245	2
	Anand Gupta	1799	0	Victor Zheng	1918	1
11	Daniel Stein	1750	2	Alex Jiale Wang	1832	1
	Ananta Ranganathan	1732	0	Alec Chung	1822	1
12	Derek Zhang	2271	0.5	Callum Lehingrat	2013	1.5
	Zachary T Zhang	1930	0	Ryan Leong	1971	2



Position after 25.Kd2

I expected 25.a4 instead. There's no real threat, since the rook can't go to b1, but it fixes the white pawns somewhat.

25...Nb6

Stopping the "threat."

26.Ne1 Rxd4+

I can't let the knight get to c2.

27.cxd4 Nd5

This is where I realized how easy the win would be. I will soon have two connected passed pawns, and White's pawn is firmly blockaded. It's practically zugzwang.



Position after 27...Nd5

28.Nc2 a5 29.Rb1 Rb8 30.f3 f5

Of course!

31.fxe4 fxe4 32.Ra1

The point of this move is 32...b4 33.axb4 axb4 34. Ra5! (or possibly Ra6!?).

32...Kg7

I played a waiting move that improved my position and may eventually stop his threat.

33.Rf1 Rf8 34.Rxf8 Kxf8 35.h4 Ke7 36.Kc1 Kf6 37.Ne1

White had apparently given up at this stage.

37...Nxe3 38.hxg5+ Kxg5 39.Kb2 Nd5 40.a4 b4 41.Nc2 h5 42.Kc1 Kg4 43.Kd2 Kxg3 44.Ne3

I'm still winning by one tempo.

44...Nxe3 45.Kxe3 h4 46.d5 h3 47.d6 h2 48.d7 h1Q 49.d8Q Qf3+ 50.Kd2 Qd3+



Washington Team Co-Captains (L) Josh Sinanan and Chouchan Airapetian.
Photo Credit: Chouchan Airapetian.

51.Ke1

Really?

51...Qxd8 52.Ke2 Qd3+ 53.Ke1 Qe3+ 54.Kd1 c3 55.Kc2 Qd2+ 56.Kb3 c2 57.Ka2 c1Q+

After 58.Kb3, there are five different mates!

0-1

Callum Lehingrat (2013) –
Zachary T. Zhang (1930) [A80]
2020 WA-BC Intermat
Chess.com (R2), April 25, 2020
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.d4 f5 2.Bf4 Nf6 3.e3 g6 4.h4 h6 5.Qf3 d6 6.Nc3 Bg7 7.Bc4 e6 8.Qg3 Kf7 9.0-0-0 Nc6 10.Nf3 Nh5 11.Qh3

Notable here is White's lack of concern over the threat to double the f-pawns.

11...Rf8 12.g4!



Position after 12.g4

Attempting to use a can-opener on the white squares.

12...fxg4 13.Qxg4 Qf6 14.Rhg1 Nxf4 15.exf4 h5 16.Qg3 Bh6 17.Ng5+ Kg7 18.Ne2 Ne7 19.Qb3 a6 20.Kb1 b5 21.Bxe6!

The tactics work!



Position after 21.Bxe6

21...Bxg5 22.Bxc8 Bxf4 23.Bb7 Rab8 24.Be4±



Position after 24.Be4

24...Kh6??

Better: 24...d5 25.Bxd5 (25.Nxf4 Qxf4 26.Bxd5 Nf5!?) 25...Qxh4 26.Bf3!±

25.Nxf4 Qxf4 26.Qe6! Qf6 27.Qxe7!! Rbe8 28.Qxf6 Rxf6 29.f3+ c5 30.c3 cxd4 31.Rxd4 Re5 32.Rgd1 Ree6 33.a4 g5 34.hxg5+ Kxg5 35.Rd5+ Re5 36.axb5 axb5 37.Rxd6 Rxd6 38.Rxd6 h4 39.Rd5 Rxd5 40.Bxd5 h3 41.f4+ Kxf4 42.Kc2 1-0

Ryan Leong (1971) –
Derek Zhang (2271) [A21]
2020 WA-BC Intermat
Chess.com (R2), April 25, 2020
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.Nf3 d6 2.c4 e5 3.d3 f5 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.g3 Be7 6.Bg2 0-0 7.0-0 c6 8.Rb1 a5 9.b3 Qe8 10.Bb2 Qh5 11.e3 f4?

11...Be6; 11...Qh6

12.exf4! exf4

12...Bg4!?

13.Ne2 g5?

13...fxg3 is necessary here. 14.fxg3 Bd8 15.Nf4 Qh6 16.Qd2±

14.gxf4!

Suddenly White controls all the cool squares in the center and on the kingside.



Position after 14.gxf4

14...g4 15.Ng3 Qg6 16.f5

Or 16.Nh4! Qf7 17.Nhf5 Kh8 18.Re1 Bd8 (18...Re8 19.Rxe7 Rxe7 20.Nxe7 Qxe7 21.Ne4 Nbd7 22.Qxg4+-) 19.Nxd6+-

16...Qg7 17.Nd4 Na6 18.Re1 Nc5 19.a3 Qf7 20.b4 axb4 21.axb4 Na4 22.Ba1 h5 23.Qd2 Kh7 24.Ne6 Bxe6 25.Rxe6 Rg8 26.Nxh5 1-0

Alex J. Wang (1832) –
Ananta Ranganathan (1731) [A53]
2020 WA-BC Intermat
Chess.com (R2), April 25, 2020
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.Nf3

3.d5 is, of course, the nearly universal choice, leading to mounds of theory.

3...d6?!

In almost all cases where White declines to take the offered space on move three, Black will happily exchange c-pawn for d-pawn with 3...cxd4.

4.dxc5!? dxc5 5.Qxd8+ Kxd8 6.Nc3 Be6 7.e4 Nc6 8.Be3 b6 9.0-0-0+ Kc8 10.h3

10.Ng5!?

10...Nd7

10...h6

11.g4

11.Ng5

11...Nde5 12.Nxe5 Nxe5 13.b3 g6 14.f4 Nc6 15.Bg2 Bg7 16.e5



Position after 16.e5

16...Bd7

16...Kb7 17.Nd5 (17.Bd5 Bxd5 18.cxd5 Nd4 19.Bxd4 cxd4 20.Rxd4 Rac8 21.Kd2±; 17.Be4 Rad8 18.f5 Bd7 19.Nd5 gxf5 20.gxf5 Kc8 21.f6 exf6 22.exf6 Bf8±)

17.Rxd7! Kxd7 18.Rd1+ Kc7

18...Nd4 19.Bxd4 cxd4 20.Rxd4+ Kc7 21.Nb5+ Kc8 (21...Kb8 22.Rd7+-) 22.Bxa8+-; 18...Ke6 19.Bxc6

19.Nb5+ Kc8 20.Bxc6 Kb8 21.Rd7 a6 22.Rb7+ Kc8 23.Na7+ Rxa7 24.Rxa7 f5 25.Rxe7 Bf8 26.Ra7 a5 27.e6 Kb8 28.Rb7+ Kc8 29.e7 Bxe7 30.Rxe7 fxg4 31.hxg4 h5 32.Re8+ Rxe8 33.Bxe8 1-0

Ananta Ranganathan (1731) –
Alec Chung (1822) [A34]
2020 WA-BC Intermat
Chess.com (R1), April 25, 2020
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.0-0 d5 6.cxd5 Nxd5 7.Nc3 Nxc3 8.bxc3 c5 9.Ba3?!

9.d4; or 9.Rb1

9...Qa5 10.Qc1 Nc6 11.Rb1 Rb8 12.Ne1 Bf5 13.Nd3 c4!?

White's piece placement is clearly awkward, with the queen doing defensive duty for the bishop on a3, the knight pinned on d3, the d-pawn blocked... 13...

Rfd8 is a natural developing way to ratchet up some pressure.; Other forcing ideas here include 13...Ne5; and 13...Bxd3 14.exd3 Ne5



Position after 13...c4

14.e4 cxd3 15.exf5 Qxf5 16.Re1 Rfc8 17.Bxe7 Nd4 18.Qd1 Ne2+ 19.Kf1?

19.Kh1! has the advantage of providing king safety if Black chooses c3-tactics: 19...Bxc3?! (19...Qe5; 19...Re8; or 19...b5 are better tries for Black.) 20.Bd6! (20.dxc3? Nxc3±) 20...Bd4 21.Qb3 with good play for White.

19...Bxc3!



Position after 19...Bxc3

20.Bd6

20.dxc3 Nxc3 21.Qd2 (21.Qf3 Nxb1 22.Rxb1 d2) 21...Nxb1 22.Rxb1 Rc2 23.Qf4 Qxf4 24.gxf4 d2 25.Rd1 Rc1 26.Ke2 Re8+-

20...Bd4

Now the threat to f2 must be respected.

21.f4 Qh5 22.Rxe2 dxe2+ 23.Qxe2 Qxh2 24.Ke1 Re8 25.Be5



Position after 25.Be5

25...Qg1+

25...Qxg3+ 26.Kd1 Bxe5 27.fxe5
Rxe5 leaves White with few reasons to continue.

26.Qf1 f6 27.Qxg1 Bxg1 28.Kf1 fxe5
29.Kxg1 exf4 30.gxf4 Re7 31.d4 b6
32.Rd1 Rd8 33.d5 Rd6 34.Kf2 Kg7
35.Kf3 Kf6 36.Kg4 Re3 37.Bf3 Ra3
38.Rd2 b5 39.Rb2 a6 40.Rh2 h5+
41.Kg3 Rxd5 42.Rc2 Rdd3 43.Rc6+
Kg7 44.Rc7+ Kh6 0-1



Position after 6...Qc7

The main idea behind Najdorf's 5...a6 is, if not challenged in some way, to continue with 6...e5, when White cannot easily answer with 7.Bb5+ or 7.Ndb5. 7.Nb3 (7.Nf3 Be7 8.Bc4 0-0 9.0-0 Nc6 (9...Be6 10.Bb3 (or 10.Qe2±)) 10.Re1 b5 11.Bf1 Rb8 12.Bg5 Ng4 13.Bc1) 7...Be6 8.f3 (8.f4 exf4 9.Bxf4 Nc6 10.Qe2 Be7 11.h3 Nd7 12.0-0-0 Nce5 13.Nd4∞) 8...Nbd7 9.g4 (or 9.Qd2 b5 10.0-0-0 Be7 11.g4)

9...Nb6 10.g5 Nh5 11.Qd2 Be7 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.Rg1 Rc8 14.Kb1 g6 15.Qf2 Nc4 16.Bxc4 Bxc4 17.Na4∞

7.f3

7.Be2; or 7.a4 make some sense here.

7...e6 8.g4 Be7 9.h4 b5 10.h5

10.g5 Nfd7 (10...Nh5 11.Bh3±) 11.a3±

10...b4 11.Nce2 d5?!

11...h6∞

12.g5 Nfd7 13.exd5 Qe5

13...exd5?! 14.Nf5±

14.Qd2 Qxd5 15.Nf4 Qe5 16.Nd3 Qg3+ 17.Nf2 Bb7?

17...Qc7±

18.Bf4 Bxg5 19.Bxg3 Bxd2+ 20.Kxd2 e5 21.Re1 0-0 22.Bxe5 Rd8 23.Kc1 Nxe5 24.Rxe5 f6 25.Re7 Bc8 26.Bc4+ Kf8 27.Rf7+ Ke8 28.Re1+ 1-0

Daniel Stein (1766) –

Alex J. Wang (1832) [B80]

2020 WA-BC Internat

Chess.com (R1), April 25, 2020

[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6
5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 Qc7

[Diagram top of next column]



(L) British Columbia and Washington State flags from a Washington vs British Columbia Challenge Match. Photo Credit: Wendy Matsubuchi.

2020 Washington Senior Championship

By Ani Barua

The 2020 Washington Senior Championship just concluded recently. This was Ani Barua's first time as TD in-training (with Jacob Mayer being the main TD) and what a first day we had. More on that later. But first, this year we attracted eight senior players with an average US Chess rating of 1644. The highest rated player with a US Chess expert rating of 2012 was Fritz Scholz.

Due to the COVID-19 virus, all the games were held online on chess.com. Prior to the tournament, players had to sign a "Fair Play Agreement" in which Zoom monitoring with webcam is required in all games.

Saturday April 18, first round was supposed to start at 10:00am. But we were having issues starting the matches after the announcements. Luckily through Zoom, we could confirm with other players that the problem was not from our end but instead it was a major server issue with chess.com. At about 10:30am chess.com Tweeted "We have been experiencing server issues in the games server today. Our development team is working hard to restore stability."

After some discussion, we decided to give every player a half point bye and start next round at 2:00pm with the hope that the server issue would be resolved. Next round started right on time and fortunately there were no issues with the server! All games were 90-minutes with 30-second increments per move. Fortunately for the organizers and players, the rest of the day went smoothly without any major hiccups.

After four rounds of highly competitive play, it was a close battle between Seattle's WCM Mary Kuhner (3.5/4 points) and West Richland's Harry Bell (3.0/4 points). Ultimately, Mary Kuhner became the victor and is the 2020 Washington State Senior Champion! Mary now earns a seed into the Invitational section of the 2021 Washington State Championship and will represent Washington State at the 2020 National Tournament of Senior State Champions. Good luck Mary!

Harry Bell finished in clear second place with 3.0/4 points while Fritz Scholz of Edmonds captured third place with 2.5/4 points. Former WCF President Kent

McNall, also from Edmonds, won first place in the U2000 category with 2.0/4 points. Bothell's Sridhar Seshadri won first place in the U1700 category. Don Hack from Surrey, B.C. won first place in the U1400 category. Last, but certainly not least, Lois Ruff from Seattle won the 70+ age category prize as the only player above the age of 80 in the field! Bill Elliott of Gig Harbor, who was an active tournament player in the Seattle Chess Club and weekend Swiss events in the '80s and '90s, also took part in the tournament as he continues to make his return to competitive play.

Washington Chess Federation would like to thank all participants for supporting the local chess in this time of uncertainty

Fritz Scholz (2012) – Sridhar Seshadri (1626) [B01]
WA Senior Chess.com, April 18, 2020
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qd8 4.d4 Nf6 5.h3

5.Nf3 Bg4 6.h3 Bxf3 7.Qxf3 c6 8.Be3 e6 9.Bd3± Close reading of Andrew Martin's 2004 book, *The Essential Center-Counter*, informs me that Black's plan revolves around suffering for a long time with a slightly worse position in hopes that White will suffer an aneurysm.

Of course, that's with Black choosing the "active" 3...Qa5.

5...h6 6.Nf3 c6 7.a4 a5 8.Bc4 e6 9.0-0 Bd6 10.Be3 0-0 11.Qd2 Nd5 12.Nxd5

12.Ne4!?

12...exd5 13.Bd3 Qf6



Position after 13...Qf6

14.Rae1?

14.Ne5 Bxe5?! 15.dxe5 Qxe5 16.Bc5 (or 16.Rae1 offers White more than enough compensation for the material.)

14...Bf5

14...Bxh3!? complicates. 15.Bxh6 a) 15.gxh3?! Qxf3 16.Bxh6! Qxh3! (16...gxh6?? 17.Qxh6 f5 18.Re6+-) 17.Bf4 Qg4+ 18.Bg3 Bxg3 19.fxg3 Qxg3+±;

b) 15.Ne5!?!; 15...gxh6 16.gxh3 Kh8 (16...Qxf3?? 17.Qxh6+-) 17.Ne5 Rg8+ 18.Kh2 Na6±

15.Nh2 Bxd3 16.Qxd3 Nd7 17.f4 Nb6 18.b3

18.Ng4! Qd8 19.f5! The a-pawn would be a very small investment for this kingside initiative. 19...Nxa4? 20.f6+-

18...Rfe8 19.Ng4 Qd8 20.Rf3 Re4 21.c4 Bb4 22.Ref1 f5 23.Nf2?!

23.Ne5∞ seems the natural outpost for the knight, especially since White has little opportunity to capture the e4-rook.

23...Qh4

23...Qe7! puts pressure on e3, making it impossible for White to retreat the queen.

24.g3

Forcing the queen back to the square it should have chosen on move 23. 24.Qc2! lets White take on e4. The f5-pawn hangs if the rook retreats, and Black's exchange sac ends well for White: 24...Rxe3 25.Rxe3 Qxf4 26.Rf3 Qxd4 27.cxd5 Nxd5 28.Qxf5±

24...Qe7 25.c5 Nd7 26.Nd1 Re8 27.Kg2 Nf6 28.R1f2



Position after 28.R1f2

28...Ng4

Fancy, but perhaps a little misguided. Does Black really prefer to exchange this knight for the bad e3-bishop? 28...h5! threatens 29.-- h4±, when 30.gxh4 Nh5 and ...Qxh4 will regain the pawn with multiple advantages.

29.Re2 Nxe3+ 30.Rfxe3 Qf6 31.Nf2 Rxe3?!

31...Rd8 looks like a sound exchange offer. 32.Nxe4 dxe4 33.Qc4+ Kf8 34.g4 Rxd4 35.Qc2 g6. ...Rd5 is coming.

32.Rxe3 Re6 33.Re5

33.Qe2!?

33...g6

33...Rxe5 34.fxe5 Qg5

34.Kf3

34.h4; or 34.Qe2 Kf7 35.Nd3±

34...h5

34...Rxe5 35.fxe5 Qg5 again. 36.h4 Qd2 37.Qxd2 Bxd2 and there's no winning going on here.

35.h4 Rxe5 36.fxe5+– Qe6

Clearly not an effective blockade.

37.Nh3 Kg7 38.Ng5 Qe7 39.Qe3 b6 40.e6! bxc5 41.Qe5+ Kg8 42.Nf7 Qxf7 43.exf7+ Kxf7 44.dxc5 Bxc5 45.Qc7+ Kg8 46.Qxc6 Bb4 47.Qxg6+ 1–0

Mary Kuhner (1876) –

Fritz Scholz (2012) [B22]

WA State Senior Championship

Chess.com, April 19, 2020

[Mary Kuhner]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.c3 e5 4.d4 cxd4 5.cxd4 exd4 6.Bc4

At this point the obvious move, which I've played many times in blitz, is 6.Nxd4. But I somehow got cold feet. I don't think I have had this position in a tournament game, and my blitz opponents weren't strong. I decided to play a temporary gambit which turned out to be not so temporary. The line that bothered me was 6...Bb4+.

6...Bb4+ 7.Bd2 Qe7

This move had not factored into my analysis at all. I don't think it's particularly good, but it's certainly tricky.

8.0–0 Bc5

Retaining the extra pawn, but the engine thinks it's too greedy, and I'm inclined to agree. Black is lagging dangerously in development, though the difficulty in developing the Nb1 is some consolation.

9.Bg5 f6

The line I expected was 9...Qd6 10.e5 Qc7

10.Bh4?!

My big concern in this position was ...Ne5. If I have to take a knight on e5 and Black can recapture with the f-pawn, he will have stabilized the d-pawn, opened the f-file against my king, and generally improved his position. I thought it was worth stopping this even at the cost of getting my bishop kicked around, even threatened with loss by a general advance of the kingside pawns. Both the engine and my study partners think this line of reasoning is wrong, but at the time it seemed compelling.

10...g5 11.Bg3 d6

Again Black threatens ...Ne5 and I take further steps to prevent it.

12.Bb5

The engine suggests 12.b4 with the intention of taking on d4 if Black takes on b4. I did look at this, but became worried about the safety of the Ra1.

12...Kf8 13.Bxc6 bxc6 14.Nxd4 Qxe4

This move opens lines which I didn't think the poorly developed Black pieces could afford, though I didn't entirely succeed in proving my point.

15.Nb3 Qd5 16.Nc3

It is sad to trade queens when Black's king seems unsafe, but after considering the alternatives I thought it best. I am trying to overcome a lifelong prejudice against trading queens which has cost me quite a few games over the years...

16...Qxd1 17.Raxd1 Ba6 18.Rfe1?!

Missing a nice combination: 18.Nxc5 Bxf1 (18...dxc5 is better but still offers White a nice advantage) 19.Bxd6+

18...Bb6 19.Bxd6+

So my gambit pawn has finally been recovered. I evaluated this position as much better for me despite Black's bishop pair, as his pawns are weak and his kingside still undeveloped.

19...Kf7 20.Ba3 Rd8 21.Rxd8 Bxd8



Vancouver Open

July 25-26, 2020



Site: Hampton Inn & Suites, 315 SE Olympia Drive, Vancouver, WA 98684. 360-891-3000. Event may be moved online via Chess.com pending the COVID-19 situation.

HR: \$169 Standard King/Double Queen. Cut-off date: 7/17.

Format: A 5-round Swiss in two sections: Open and Reserve (U1700).

Time Control: Rd 1: G/60; d10, Rds 2-5: 40/120 SD/30; d10.

Entry Fee: \$65 if postmarked or online by 7/17, \$75 after 7/17 or at site. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs. \$40 play-up fee if rated under 1700 playing in Open section.

Registration: Saturday 9:00 - 9:45 AM.

Rounds: Saturday 10:00 AM, 12:30 PM, 6:00 PM; Sunday 10:00 AM, 3:30 PM.

Rating: US Chess July 2020 rating supplement will be used to determine pairings and prizes. Foreign ratings used for players with no US Chess rating. Higher of US Chess or foreign ratings used at TD discretion.

Prize Fund: \$1,800 (based on 40 paid entries).

Open: 1st \$325, 2nd \$250, 3rd \$175

1st U2100: \$100, 1st U1900: \$100, Biggest Upset: \$50

Reserve: 1st \$200, 2nd \$150, 3rd \$100

1st U1500: \$100, 1st U1300: \$100, 1st U1100/unrated: \$100
Biggest Upset: \$50

Byes: Two half-point byes available, request before end of round 2. US Chess membership and WCF membership/NWC subscription required. US Chess Grand Prix Points: 6. US Chess Junior Grand Prix event. Northwest Chess Grand Prix event.

Entries: Make checks payable to Washington Chess Federation.

Mail To: Jacob Mayer, 9502 44th Avenue NE, Seattle, WA 98115-2610.

Phone: (206) 697-5625. **Email:** Jacob.MayerChess@gmail.com

Online Registration: nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/.

22.Rd1



Position after 22.Rd1

22...Bc8?

and unfortunately this blunder ended the game. I think that many games in this event were decided by fatigue, worsened by the unfamiliar format and technical issues. After 22...Bb6 I had planned to continue 23.Nc5 with a hard fight still ahead. The White knights lack outposts and may be harassed by the bishops; on the other hand, it's move 23 and Black still hasn't managed to develop his kingside. I hoped to develop some threats against his pieces and rather exposed king before he could remedy this.

1-0

2020 Washington Senior Championship							
Final Standings							
#	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Total
1	Mary Kuhner	1878	W6	W2	W3	D4	3.5
2	Harry Bell	2000	W7	L1	W4	W6	3
3	Fritz Scholz	2012	W5	D4	L1	W8	2.5
4	Kent McNall	1867	W8	D3	L2	D1	2
5	Sridhar Seshadri	1626	L3	W8	L6	W7	2
6	Don Hack	1204	L1	W7	W5	L2	2
7	William Elliott	1541	L2	L6	W8	L5	1
8	Lois Ruff	1027	L4	L5	L7	L3	0

Place	Prize	Winner
1st Overall	\$100.00	Mary Kuhner
2nd Overall	\$82.50	Harry Bell
3rd Overall	\$66.67	Fritz Scholz
1st U2000	\$50.00	Kent McNall
1st U1700	\$50.00	Sridhar Seshadri
1st U1400	\$50.00	Don Hack
1st Age 70+	\$50.00	Lois Ruff

4th Annual Seattle Chess Classic

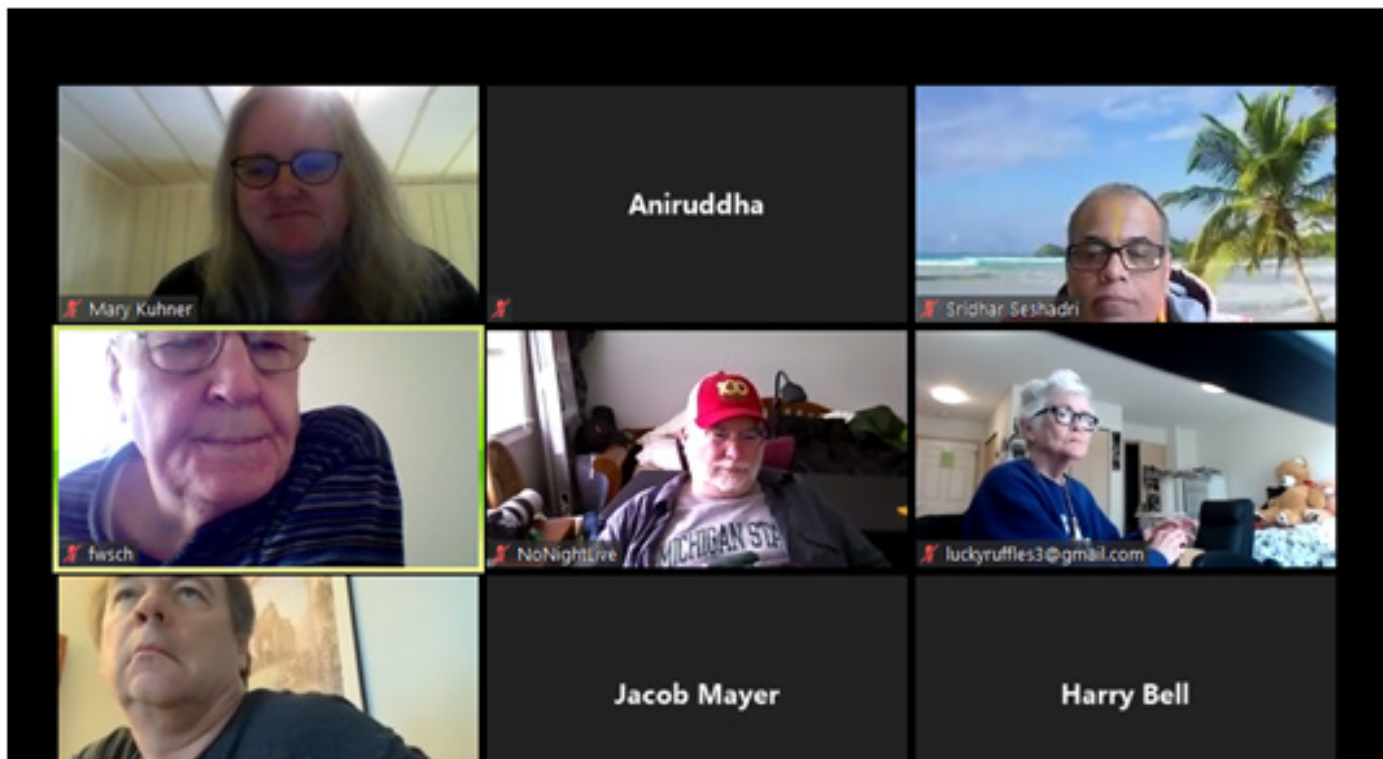
August 12-16, 2020

\$2000 in Prizes based on 30 paid entries.

Site: Seattle Chess Club or online via Chess.com pending COVID-19 situation.

Format: A 9-round Swiss in two sections: Open and Reserve U1800. If held in-person, both sections US Chess rated and Open section FIDE rated. Unrated if held online.

Online Registration: nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration



2020 Washington Senior Championship players. Photo credit: Ani Barua.



15th Susan Polgar Foundation National Open for Boys & Girls Saturday-Sunday, October 3-4th 2020



Prizes include \$100,000 in Scholarships to [Webster University](http://www.webster.edu)!

Site: Hyatt Regency Bellevue: 900 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue, WA 98004-4206 Phone: 425.698.4250, Request the Polgar Chess block. For online hotel reservations: <https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/BELLE/G-POLG>

Info: spfno.com **Register:** nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration **Email:** WCF.Tournaments@gmail.com **Call:** 206.769.3757

2-Day Championship Sections: K-5 Open, K-8 Open, K-12 Open, K-5 Girls, K-8 Girls, K-12 Girls. 6SS, G/60;d5. Dual NWSRS & US Chess rated.

1-Day Sections (Saturday only): K-3 Open, 4-8 Open, 9-12 Open, K-1 U800, 2-3 U800, 4-8 U900. 5SS, G/30;d5. Dual NWSRS & US Chess rated Open Sections, NWSRS rated Reserve Sections. WA State Elementary Qualifier.

Fun Side Events: Parents & Coaches Seminar, Girls Workshop, Simul and Q&A, Breakfast w/ Susan, Polgar Chess Camp, Puzzle Solving Competition, Blitz Championship.

How to Understand Middlegame and Pick the Best Move

based on [a webinar](#), led by Chouchan Airapetian;

extracted and edited by [Valentin Razmov](#)

May 04, 2020

First, seek to reach middlegame positions that you can actually understand. For this, play openings that suit *your style* and preferences – not someone else’s style. That way you’ll understand and enjoy your games more. In contrast, blindly following and trying to repeat other (strong) players’ games or styles can be confusing and not enjoyable at all.

After you come to the end of an opening, **evaluate the position** and **create a game plan** based on that.

Why evaluate the position? Some important reasons are:

- (a) to know your and your opponent’s weaknesses (and strengths) in the position;
- (b) to know what & when to defend, and what & when to attack;
- (c) to assess the kings’ safety;
- (d) to see which pieces are more (or less) active;
- (e) to understand which pieces to keep and which to exchange.

What to do after evaluating a position? What can your game plan include? Some ideas are:

- (a) fix the opponent’s weaknesses (so that they become long-term weaknesses that cannot be easily fixed);
- (b) chase away the opponent’s active pieces – or exchange them;
- (c) improve the position(s) of your least active (or least safe) piece(s);
- (d) seek to create additional weaknesses in the opponent’s position – with more than 2-3 weaknesses the position is very hard to defend, and often the stronger side can win;
- (e) identify possible pawn sacrifices to change the character of the position – e.g., to capture key squares, to improve piece positions & activity, to grab the initiative, to start active counterplay, to confuse the opponent’s game plan, etc.

How to further improve in this skill?

- (a) regularly practice doing positional evaluation in your own games (both past and present);
- (b) slowly go through strong players’ games – one move at a time – and attempt to guess the next move (before you see it), then compare to the actual move being played;
- (c) analyze positions on a real (3-dimensional) chess board, not so much on a computer screen.

Related useful references:

- “Chess Strategy for Kids”, by Thomas Engquist.
- “How to Re-Assess Your Chess: Chess Mastery through Chess Imbalances”, by Jeremy Silman.
- “Chess Strategy for the Tournament Player”, by Lev Alburt and Sam Palatnik.
- “Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy: Advances since Nimzowitsch”, by John Watson.



The 2020 Mike Neeley Memorial Northwest Grand Prix

Murlin Varner, Administrator (mevjr54@outlook.com)

I have more to report on this month. Two events were held online in April. One was the Arthur Dake Memorial, held under the auspices of the Portland Chess Club, with 13 players. The other was the Clark Harmon Memorial, hosted by the Washington Chess Federation this year, with 66 players. Both were held on the same weekend and both were conducted using Chess.com. This kind of chess could be the state of the art until we beat this virus.

Two more online tournaments were held in May. The Northwest Chess Open was held the second weekend, with magazine subscription extensions as the prizes, plus Grand Prix points, of course. This was a fund-raiser for our magazine. The other was the Washington Open, held over the Memorial Day weekend. A reduced prize fund was offered (less incentive to cheat that way), but still enough to qualify for a 3x multiplier for Grand Prix points. A Seattle Chess Club event had also been on the schedule, but it looks as though COVID-19 restrictions won't let face-to-face chess happen that soon.

Obviously, any scheduled events have to be considered as tenuous with our current situation. June has only three scheduled Grand Prix events, all in Seattle. These include the SCC Tornado on the seventh, the SCC Quads on the 13th and the Emerald City Open on June 21-23. Whether any of these actually happen remains to be seen. Chess from six-feet away could be a rather difficult thing.

Even though there were only two GP events, the standings did undergo a bit of shuffling. Some Idaho players joined in to the Harmon memorial, which allowed them to move up in my chart. Along with the 13 Oregon players in the Dake Memorial, a handful of others played in the Harmon Memorial. And almost 50 Washingtonians in the Harmon meant changes throughout the chart for the Washington columns. Remember you can get points toward GP prizes in any official GP event in any of our three states. You are only competing for your own state's prizes but importing points is allowed, and at this time, you can travel to another state without leaving your computer desk. I encourage you to try it out.

I haven't heard if Idaho plans to try online chess or if they are just going to wait it out. I also don't know when additional Oregon events will be scheduled for the Grand Prix. It seems clear this is not going to be a record-breaking year for us, but eventually we should get back to something that slightly resembles "normal." If that looks like chess with gloves and masks and lots of open space, we'll just have to see. When we do get back to over-the-board chess, I hope we can do so with vigor and many locations. I was looking back over my fifty years of tournament chess, and it seems as though opportunities have declined. I have played chess in 33 cities and towns within Washington, plus seven in Oregon and three in Idaho. Obviously, some of those locations are just suburbs of larger cities, but 18 of the Washington locations are out of the Everett-to-Tacoma corridor. It would be nice to develop a new generation of organizers who can again broaden our opportunities.

Data below is current through May 1.

2020 Memorial Northwest Grand Prix Standings

Idaho			Oregon			Washington			
last	first	pts.	last	first	pts.	last	first	pts.	
Masters									
			1 Raptis	Nick	21.0	1 Pupols	Viktors	24.5	
			2 Tarjan	James	19.5	2 Kaufman	Ray	19.5	
			3 Lebovitz	Andrew E	11.0	2 Mahajan	Rushaan	19.5	
						4 Levine	David	5.5	
						5 Perez	Ignaco	5.0	
Experts									
M/X/Class A									
1	Cambareri	Michael E	21.0	1 Vega	Isaac	21.0	1 Leslie	Cameron	30.0
2	Maki	James J	19.5	2 Bjorksten	Lennart	12.0	1 Jiang	Brandon	24.5
3	Erickson	Kenneth	15.0	2 Tang	Zoey	12.0	3 Vijayakumar	Advait	21.5
4	Nathan	Jacob A	7.0	2 Wu	Ethan	12.0	4 Deshpande	Aaryan	18.0
5	Wei	James	6.5	5 Janniro	Mike E	10.0	5 Fisette	Robert	18.0

Idaho			Oregon			Washington					
last	first	pts.	last	first	pts.	last	first	pts.			
Class B			Class A								
1	Machakos	Seth D	21.5	1	Moore	Michael	26.5	1	Razmov	Valentin N	47.5
2	Herr	Griffin G	16.5	2	Murray	David E	21.0	2	Tien	Sophie	34.5
3	Kircher	Caleb P	15.0	3	Sherrard	Jerry	18.0	3	Qian	Daniel	30.0
3	Martonick	Nick	15.0	4	Mamaril	Jonathan	15.0	4	Baxter	Brent L	28.0
5	Rainey	Samuel W	12.0	5	Duron	Ritchie	13.5	5	Deng	Lily	27.0
Class C			Class B								
1	Porth	Adam	18.5	1	Roshu	David L	16.0	1	Johar	Mudit	43.5
2	Gilton	Terry	13.5	2	Erard	Eric C	10.0	2	Lainson	Silas	34.0
2	Zeng	Forrest	5.5	2	Nelson	James	10.0	3	Oliver	George	27.0
2	Porth	Desmond	5.5	2	Li	Andrey	10.0	4	Kirsch	Ronald B	25.0
5	Aderogba	Temiloluwa D	5.5	2	Zhang	Ethan Y	10.0	5	Fagundes	Frank A	22.5
Class D			Class C								
Class E and Below			Class D And Below								
1	Porth	Darwin A	13.5	1	Wang	Jalen	30.0	1	Ruff	Lois	35.0
2	Brown	Alexander J	10.5	2	Midson	Tony	14.0	2	Devadithya	Hiruna	30.0
3	Wei	Luke	4.5	3	Kenway	Geoffrey	13.0	3	Zhang	Kylie	29.5
3	Gao	Emma	4.5	4	Wang	Jeremy	12.0	4	Willy	Stephen	28.5
5	Three Tied at		4.0	5	Sripada	Anisha	8.0	5	Two tied at		25.5

Overall Leaders, by State

1	Machakos	Seth D	21.5	1	Wang	Jalen	30.0	1	Razmov	Valentin N	47.5
2	Cambareri	Michael E	21.0	2	Moore	Michael	26.5	2	Johar	Mudit	43.5
3	Maki	James J	19.5	3	Raptis	Nick	21.0	3	Ruff	Lois	35.0
4	Porth	Adam	18.5	3	Vega	Isaac	21.0	4	Tien	Sophie	34.5
5	Herr	Griffin G	16.5	3	Murray	David E	21.0	4	Lakshminarayanan	Rishi	34.5
6	Erickson	Kenneth	15.0	6	Tarjan	James	19.5	6	Lainson	Silas	34.0
6	Kircher	Caleb P	15.0	7	Sherrard	Jerry	18.0	7	Devadithya	Lavindu	33.0
6	Martonick	Nick	15.0	8	Roshu	David L	16.0	8	Leslie	Cameron	30.0
9	Gilton	Terry	13.5	8	Roshu	Cassandra	16.0	8	Qian	Daniel	30.0
9	Porth	Darwin A	13.5	10	Mamaril	Jonathan	15.0	8	Chan	Ethan	30.0
11	Rainey	Samuel W	12.0	11	Midson	Tony	14.0	8	Deng	Grace	30.0
12	Brown	Alexander J	10.5	12	Duron	Ritchie	13.5	8	Devadithya	Hiruna	30.0

Seattle Chess Club Tournaments

Address ↙
 2150 N 107 St, B85 ←
 Seattle WA 98133
 Info ↗
 206-417-5405 ↖
www.seattlechess.club
 kleistcf@aol.com
Addresses for Entries
 SCC Tnmt Dir
 2420 S 137 St
 Seattle WA 98168
www.seattlechess.club

June 6, 13, 20 **Saturday Quads**
Format: 3-RR, 4-plyr sec. by rtg. **TC:** G/120;d5. **EF:** \$9 (+\$7 fee for non-SCC). **Prizes:** Free quad entry. **Reg:** 9-9:45 a.m. **Rds:** 10:00-2:15-6:30. **Misc:** US Chess, WCF/ICA memb. req'd, OSA. NS, NC.

Jun 7, 21 **Sunday Tornado**
Format: 4-SS. **TC:** G/60; d5. **EF:** \$18 (+\$8 fee for non-SCC). **Prizes:** 1st 35%, 2nd 27%, Bottom Half 1st 22%, 2nd 16% (\$10 per EF to prize fund). **Reg:** 10:30-11:15 a.m. **Rds:** 11:30-1:50-4:10-6:30. **Byes:** 1 (Rd 3/4-commit at reg.). **Misc:** US Chess, WCF/ICA memb. req'd, OSA. NS, NC.

June 14 **SCC Novice**
Format: 4-SS. Open to U1200 and UNR. **TC:** G/75; d5. **EF:** \$13 by 6/10, \$18 at site. (-\$4 SCC mem., -\$2 mem. other NW dues-req'd CCs). **Prizes:** SCC membership. **Reg:** 9-9:45a.m. **Rds:** 10-12:45-3:30-6. **Byes:** 1 (Rd 3/4-commit at reg.). **Misc:** US Chess memb. req'd. NS, NC.

SCC Annual Meeting, Fri. June 5

Come elect the SCC Board of Directors for the next twelve months (minus one month)!!

SCC Adult Swiss

June 27-28, 2020

A four-round Swiss open to those born before 6/28/1999 with a prize fund of \$240 guaranteed.

First	\$68
Second	\$40
U2000	\$36
U1800	\$34
U1600	\$32
U1400/Unr	\$30

Time Control: G/120; +30.

Entry Fees: Free for SCC members. Others-\$10.

Registration: Sat. 10-10:45 a.m. **Rounds:** 11-4:30, 11-4:30.

Byes: 1 (Sunday rounds, commit at registration).

Miscellaneous: US Chess & WCF membership req'd (OSA). No smoking. No computers.

The SCC remained closed in May. It looks like gatherings will be restricted in size during June, if recreational institutions are allowed to open. Perhaps, sixteen players would be about right. Therefore, the Emerald City Swiss is being postponed. We've added two Quads and a Tornado along with an Adult Swiss.

If you would like help the SCC pay its rent, you can **make a tax-deductable donation** or you can join the club through our website. Microsoft employees can also donate, and have their donations matched, through Microsoft. Stay healthy!!

SCC 2020 Wknd. Schedule (rev.)

Novice: June 14, Aug 30, Oct 25. **Quads:** Jun 6, 13, 20; July 11, Aug 1 & 29, Sep 26, Oct 24, Nov 21, Dec 19. **Tornado:** June 7, 21; July 5, Aug 1, Sep 6, Oct 4, Nov 1, Dec 6.

Seafair Open 24-26 July

Seattle Fall Open 18-20 Sept.

Extravaganza 6-8 Nov.

Upcoming Events

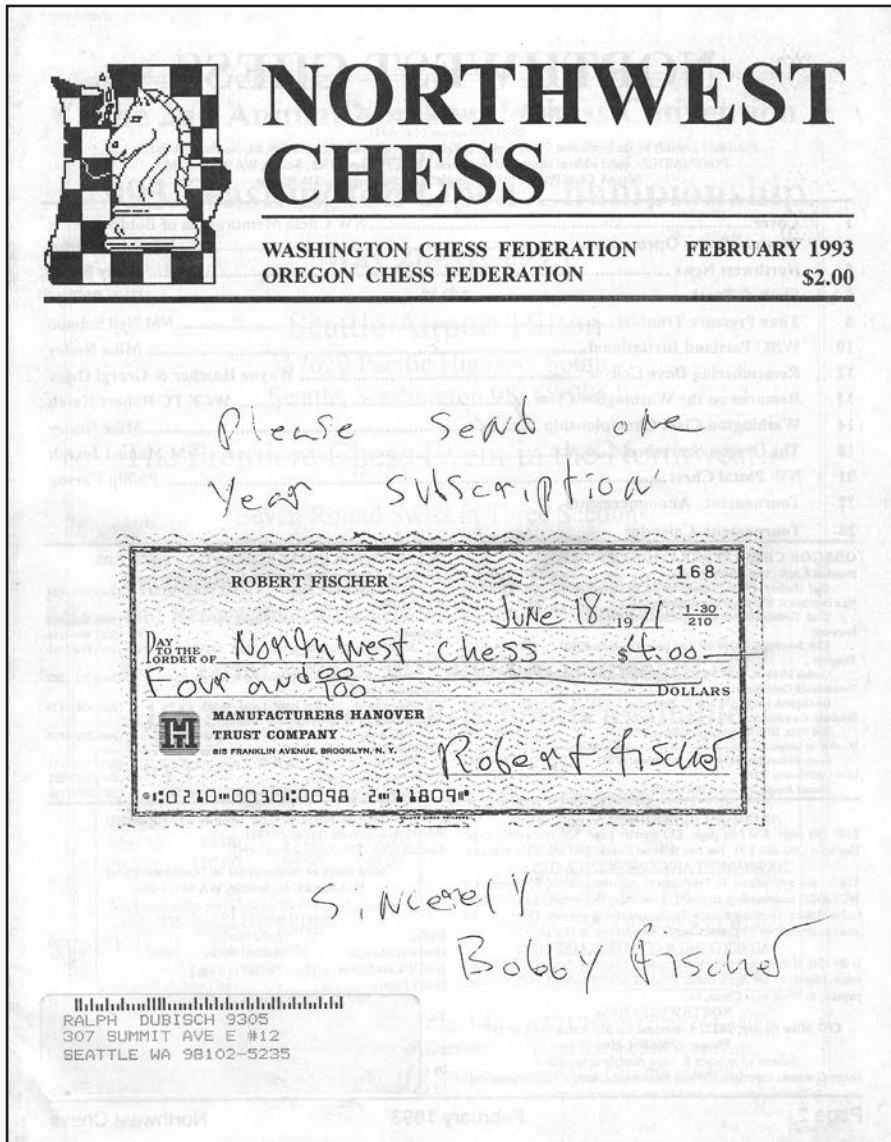
♞ denotes 2020 Northwest Grand Prix event.
Seattle Chess Club events see page 30.

Jun 8, 15, 22 Northwest Chess Webinars, **Online via Zoom**. Full-Page Ad Page 15.

♞ **Jul 25-26** Vancouver Open, Vancouver, WA. Half-Page Ad Page 23.

♞ **Aug 12-16** 4th Annual Seattle Classic, SCC or Chess.com. Half-Page Ad Page 24.

Oct 3-4 15th Susan Polgar Foundation National Open for Boys & Girls, **Bellevue, WA**. Half-Page Ad page 25.



Historic front cover of the February 1993 issue of Northwest Chess. The editor then was the late Mike Neeley (this year's Northwest Chess Grand Prix honoree). This image ties in with "The Magic Year of 1971" by John Donaldson (pages 4-9 of this issue).

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