November 2020

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Northwest Chess

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Grand Prix events must be advertised in an Upcoming Events listing or in a ¼-page or larger display ad.

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Chess cartoons drawn by local artist Brian Berger, of West Linn, Oregon.

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Submissions of games (PGN format is preferable for games), stories, photos, art, and other **original** chess-related content are encouraged! Multiple submissions are acceptable; please indicate if material is non-exclusive. All submissions are subject to editing or revision. Send via U.S. Mail to:

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From The Editor's Desk

This issue is very much like the last one. It too is 48 pages, packed full of games, many with annotations by GM Lenderman. Again, to my knowledge, I put in every contribution I received by the fifth deadline, holding nothing back! Seattle Fall Open and Washington Women's Championship will be covered next issue.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, over-the-board events are still rare to non-existnt. Without over-the-board tournaments, it's very hard to come up with relevant photographs and images, but fortunately most former editors of *Northwest Chess* still enthusiastically support the magazine; when I asked Phil Peterson for some photographs of chess pieces, he was more than happy to oblige. (See image below.)

Brian Berger, back home after being evacuated last issue due to Oregon fires, was able to give me a great chesstoon.

— Jeffrey Roland, Editor

Knight. Photo credit: Philip Peterson.

Teaching Others To Play Chess

By Karen Schmidt

I have been teaching my neighbors' children to play chess over a period of about six months. They were ages five (boy) and seven (girl) when we started. The Covid-19 virus has temporarily suspended our weekly lessons, but I was amazed how much they learned in a few short months with an hour-long weekly lesson.

I am using a book as the basis for my lesson plans: *Chess is Childs' Play: Teaching Techniques that Work*, by Laura Sherman and Bill Kilpatrick. I found a like-new hardback copy of the book online on AbeBooks, my favorite used book site, for about $5. First let me say that this book's format can be used to teach anyone to play chess, not just children. I found that the short, clear, and concise chapters were very easy to follow. There are good tips about what to do if your student does not grasp a certain concept. Helpful hints and comments abound. The photos and drawings are clear and easy to understand. Most importantly, the chapters are in an excellent order, and that is the same order that the various concepts and techniques should be taught.

I would literally read a chapter the night before a lesson, make a few notes for myself on a lined pad, and follow the chapter and notes to the letter the next day. The most important tool in the first several lessons is to teach a few basics (names and point value of pieces, number of squares on the board, the terms rank and file, etc.), and then teach about each piece in a certain order. This was a new concept to me and was very important. The order is rook, bishop, knight, queen, king, and finally, pawn. Now that I have taught the pieces in this order, I can see why it is so important. The rook is easiest for a novice to grasp: it moves sideways and vertically, any number of squares. After establishing this, there are several practices and exercises to go through with the student, familiarizing them with the basics and all the "ins and outs." The authors even have suggested little games and puzzles to go with learning about each piece. Another point to establish when teaching about the movement of a piece is how that piece captures another piece.

Next comes the bishop. Once the student has grasped that the rook can move any number of squares vertically or horizontally (unless there is a piece in the way), it is easy to grasp that the bishop can do the same, except diagonally in either direction (and again, unless there is a piece in the way.) Each chess piece is covered in a short chapter.

Another very important point, especially if you are working with children, is to keep the actual learning lesson to about 20 minutes. After that the rest of the lesson consists of fun examples, puzzles, and games centered around that piece. With an adult, you might be able to include two chapters in one hour-long lesson, for example, how both the rook and the bishop move and capture.

The knight was next. This piece has more of an unusual move, but we started with a knight in the center of the board and grasping that there are eight potential squares a knight can hop to from a center starting point. From the middle of any side of the board (a- or h- files, or ranks one or eight) there are only four potential squares to land on. From a knight in any corner position, there are only two landing squares. This lesson also covered how the knight captures another piece and the fact that the knight is the only piece that can jump above or over other pieces.

Then followed, in order, the queen, king, and pawn. I can see where, for some people, the pawn might seem to be the simplest piece to teach, but it is rather complicated. It can move either one or two squares on the first move of the game, and it captures quite differently, on a diagonal. A pawn can also be pushed to become a queen (or another piece of the student's choosing), the only piece having that capability.

My students always enjoyed playing games of chess in the latter part of the day's lesson. Sometimes they would play each other, sometimes the two of them would play against me, and sometimes they would play what we dubbed a random game. (Note: this is different from Bobby Fischer's random game invention.) In our scenario, this involved the students
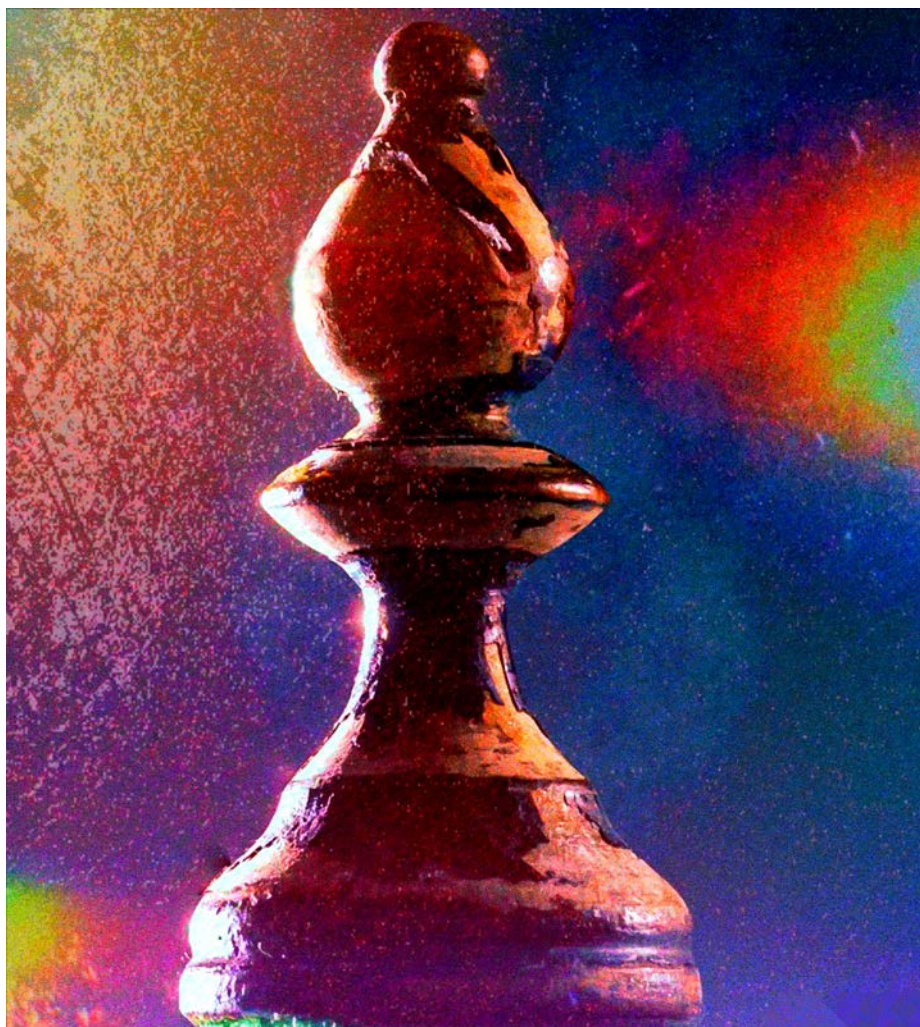
Ultra-Color Bishop. Photo credit: Philip Peterson.

each setting their pieces anywhere on the board. The only exception was, they could not place pieces so that their opponent's king was in check or checkmate. While the ensuing game was nothing like a real game of chess, it was still good practice about how to move each piece, how to capture with each piece, and how to promote a pawn.

In later lessons we honed the fine points, worked on playing actual games, and learned the basic tenets and strategies of the game of chess: consider all moves before making the next move; control the center of the board; be alert for checks, threats, and captures. In later lessons we worked on tactics. One day I introduced the topics of forks and pins. We spent the day studying examples of various forks and pins. By now both of my students had had birthdays and were six- and eight-years-old respectively. Each week at the start of my lesson, I would ask them a few basic questions such as "What do you do and say at the end of a chess game?" Answer: Shake hands and say "good game" whether it was a win or a loss. Then I would announce that we were going to quickly review what we had covered the previous week. The week following our discussion of forks and pins, I reviewed forks first, and we went over several examples with knight, bishop, and pawn. Then, much to my surprise, my six-year-old student piped up and asked "What about pins?" I was very impressed that he remembered we had covered two tactics and even remembered the name of the second topic!

I devised a reward system since I was working with young children, and it worked very well to keep them focussed and on track each week. I made a construction paper chart for each of them with their names at the top and divided it into grids. Whenever they had a "focused lesson" they earned a gold star or a colored star of their choosing to affix to their chart. When they accumulated three stars, they got to pick a prize out of a colorful little lunch box where I had a selection of small toys, individual candies (like lollipops), markers, mini boxes of crayons, little crossword booklets, superhero notebooks, and magnets and the like. I picked up the prizes at thrift stores for the most part, for 25 or 50 cents each. If one of the students got a little distracted during the lesson, I would simply remind them that they would earn a star that day if they paid attention during our lesson! To myself I called this method "innocent bribery," and it worked like a charm.

I would encourage any of you who have interested parties at home to give a few lessons! And especially if you have children at home who do not have the option of a chess club at school right now. A few lessons at home could give them a very good running start! I personally read through the whole above-mentioned book first and then re-read it chapter-by-chapter before each weekly lesson. I think it is fair to say that a non-chess-playing parent could read the book, and then teach himself/herself as well as a child or children, all at the same time. Once a child has the basics (or a teen or an adult!) there is a wealth of online lessons and YouTube tutorials to advance one's skills.

I like the chess.com app, and I do the six free puzzles every day as well as playing against their computer, playing random strangers online, and chess friends I know. You can control the level of the app computer opponent and also set the time control of any games you play with strangers or friends. I have even reconnected with a long lost cousin who lives in Monroe, and we are really enjoying a planned weekly chess game on chess.com.

Until next time, stay safe and well, and keep playing chess!

Recap For ICA Online Events

By Jeffrey Roland

After the 2020 Idaho Closed in February, all ICA tournament activity stopped due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ICA Board still met monthly via Zoom to closely monitor the situation.

Finally, in July, the ICA Board greenlit a plan to start holding online events via chess.com. These events would be held every two weeks to make up for lost time and to catch up the traditional annual events while still in the calendar year of 2020. The 2020 Idaho Scholastic Championship was simply canceled and will not ever happen. And that's the only time this event has ever been missed since its inception in 1980.

The first four events are briefly recapped below. There is a learning curve when taking on and organizing a new kind of event. Many players are still getting used to it as well. We felt we needed to just jump in and swim so that we could start to get something done!

August 1, 2020: **ICA Players' Memorial** — 4SS, G/30;d0 (29 total players). Winners: First — Seth Machakos 4.0/4 (SB 10), Second — Peter Olsoy 4.0/4 (SB 7.5), Third — Luke Wei 3.0/4 (SB 6.5).

August 15, 2020: **ICA Summer Classic** — 4SS, G/45;+5 (21 total players). Winners: First — Forrest Zeng 4.0/4 (SB 9), Second — Peter Olsoy 3.0/4 (SB 6), and Third — James Wei 3.0/4 (SB 5.5).

August 29, 2020: **ICA End Of Summer** — 4SS, G/30;d0 (23 total players) (US Chess Rated). Winners: First — James Wei 4.0/4 (SB 9), Second — Nobel Ang 3.5/4 (SB 6.5), and Third — Forrest Zeng 3.0/4 (SB 7.0).

September 12, 2020: **Idaho Open** — 5SS, G/45;d0 (18 total players) (US Chess Rated). Winners: First — James Wei 4.5/5 (SB 15.75), Second — Jeremy Fugal 4.0/5 (SB 10), and Third — Forrest Zeng 4.0/5 (SB 8).

In all four events, play started promptly at 10:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning. Entry was free in all four events. Prizes were *nothing* (since there was no entry fee) in all four events. The first two events were rated only by chess.com, whereas the last two events were rated by US Chess and also by chess.com. In the Idaho Open, an attempt was made to monitor all games via Zoom.

Ice Black Rook. Photo credit: Philip Peterson.

Apropos Adult Swiss #4
November 14th-15th, 2020
via Chess.com
USChess RATED!!!

Open to players age 18+ with established USChess membership.

Format: 5-round Swiss System online tournament. Pairings will be made offline by the TD, game launches automatic.

Entry Fee: There is no entry fee for the tournament. USChess membership required.

Rounds: Sat. 10am, 2pm, 6pm Sun. 10&2
Time Control: G/90 +5

Prize Fund: $500 Guaranteed. **20% added** if 20 or more players, +30% added for 30 or more players with all prizes bumped proportionally. 1st/2nd/3rd $125-$50-$25, 1st/2nd U2000 $100-$50, 1st/2nd U1800 $50-$25, 1st/2nd U1600 $50-$25. Prizes without players will be split among other rating classes.

Ratings – USChess Rated! USChess classical online rating used.

Byes: Two half-point bye available by end of day November 13th, 6pm. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Zoom: All players will be required to use Zoom throughout the tournament, no exceptions.

Memberships and Accounts: Current USChess membership required. WCF membership required for WA residents. All must be paid 11/13. Renew USChess at uschess.org. Working chess.com account and Zoom capability xxrequired.

Registration: Register online at https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration OR email USCF ID# and chess.com username to kentmcnallchess@gmail.com by Friday November 13th 6pm

Apropos Chess Events is hosting this tournament and a series for no-entry free online events to promote online chess, adult and junior chess, and to advocate for USChess OTB ratings to be used online. Watch for additional A.C.E. adult, open, and junior tournaments each month!

TD: Kent McNall, kent.mcnall@gmail.com 206-853-8624.

Please Contact Kent McNall at Apropos Chess Events with Questions 206-853-8624

Seattle Chess Classic

By Josh Sinanan

The 2020 Seattle Chess Classic was held online via Chess.com August 12-16. Chess players from across the globe, including parts of Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, Ontario, California, Missouri, Illinois, Armenia, and Ukraine were represented in the 34-player field! The event was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation. WCF Scholastic Coordinator Jacob Mayer, online chess TD wizard, directed the tournament. The field was split evenly between the Open and Reserve U1800 with 17 players in each. Several ambitious souls opted to "play-up" into the Open, which featured three GMs, one IM, and two FMs.

Super GMs Aleksandr Lenderman from New York and Vitaliy Bernadskiy from Ukraine tied for first-second place, each with an undefeated 7.5/9 points! IM David Shahinyan from Armenia captured clear third place with 6.5/9 points by drawing against both of the co-champions, but falling to the strong Canadian FM Rohan Talukdar in round six.

NM Rui Yang from Mountain View, California finished in clear fourth place with 5.0/9 after scoring a clutch victory against fellow NM Joseph Levine in the final round. Nicholas Whale from Mountlake Terrace and Joseph Levine from Clyde Hill split first U2200 honors with 4.5/9 points each. Young Ashley Pang from Fremont, California won the U2000 prize, also with 4.5/9 points. Redmond's Nikash Vemparala won the Open section upset prize (709 points!) in the very first round.

WCM Stephanie Velea, from Sammamish, won the Reserve U1800 section with an undefeated 7.5/9! Stephanie finished half a point ahead of fellow chess queen Emma Li, who was leading the tournament after five rounds with a blistering 4.5/5 start! Portland's Saarthak Malakar claimed clear third place honors with 6.5/9 points.

Northern Brown from Bellevue won the U1600 prize with 6.0/9 points. Young Varin Nallabothula from Redmond took down the U1400 prize with 5.0/9 points. Despite his relatively low rating, Bellevue's Aadi Hetamsaria captured the U1200 prize with an amazing 6.0/9 points! Liam Priest from Springfield and Aashi Mathur from Sammamish split U1000 honors with 4.5/9 points apiece. Aashi was also the recipient of the reserve section upset prize (821 points!).

Thanks to all who contributed to making this a successful event. Our vibrant chess community continues to thrive despite these uncertain times!

**Ashley Pang (1947) –
Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) [C00]**
Seattle Chess Classic
Chess.com (R1), August 12, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In the first round I am playing a girl, Ashley Pang, rated around 1900. The game was extremely hard and felt like a long-suffering never-ending game to me where at many times I was simply stuck and could not even find a satisfactory move. I was happy to prevail in the end.

1.e4 e6 2.d3 d5 3.Nd2 Nf6 4.Ngf3 Nc6 5.g3

5.e5 is principled. 5...Nd7 6.d4 f6 would take the game in a different direction. 5.Be2 would be a Philidor up a tempo for White.

5...dxe4 6.dxe4 e5 7.Bg2 Bc5 8.0-0 0-0 9.Qe2 b6 10.c3 a5!∓

Position after 10...a5

It all started very promising. I could not have asked for anything more out of the opening with black. After I played this, I thought I might have a relatively easy win, since I felt like I got the perfect setup out of the opening, and I was playing a 1900. Once I won very quickly against some 2100 when he blundered some ...Ng4 stuff against this setup.

11.b3 Ba6

In a few moves I regretted playing this, since my bishop ended up misplaced there. Maybe I should play 11...Qe7.

12.c4

The engine said that it's a mistake, but I couldn't exploit it. 12.Nc4 Qe7.

12...Qe7

I also considered 12...Nd4 13.Nxd4 Qxd4 14.Rb1. I wasn't as sure about this, but I'm probably much better now after 14...Rad8.

13.Bb2 Rfd8

13...a4 14.Rad1 Rfb8. For some reason this setup with rook on b8 was better for me than rook on d8. Most likely it's to play b5. I'm not sure why I didn't consider this.

14.Rad1 a4 15.Nb1

Around here the laboring part started. Suddenly I was just struggling to find a plan.

15...Rxd1 16.Rxd1 axb3 17.axb3 Ng4 18.Rf1

Here I was spending forever trying to figure something out and couldn't find anything I liked.

18...Re8

18...Qd6. Apparently I might still be better but now it's based on some freak tactical ideas. 19.Nc3 *(19.h3 Nxf2 20.Rxf2 Bxf2+ 21.Kxf2 Qc5+ 22.Qe3 Bxc4!)* 19...Na5.

19.h3 Nf6 20.Nc3 Nd7?!

There's a reason they say that backward knight moves without a good reason often end up not as good. 20...Nd4 21.Nxd4 exd4 was better I guess. I think I might've missed ...exd4 for some reason.

21.Nd5 Qd8 22.Rd1 Bd6 23.Nh4 g6 24.Qd2 Bc8 25.b4 Bf8

Position after 25...Bf8

26.b5?!

At least it gives me some hope because I am controlling some squares. Somehow 26.Nf3 Bg7 27.Qc2 is just very unpleasant for me. I'm very passive.

26...Na5 27.Qe2 Bg7

For some reason the engine doesn't like this. 27...Bd6; 27...Bb7.

28.Bc3

28.Ba3.

28...Nb7 29.Nb4 Re6 30.Nd5 Rd6?

Around here I was just simply struggling to find moves. 30...Nd6 31.Nf3 Bb7 was better.

31.Nf3

Apparently 31.f4 was strong, I was always worried about this but couldn't calculate it clearly. 31...exf4 32.Bxg7 Kxg7 33.Qb2+ Kg8 34.e5.

31...Nbc5 32.Ne1 Bb7 33.Nc2 Ne6 34. Ncb4 Ndc5 35.Qc2 Rd7 36.Nc6!? Bxc6 37.bxc6 Rd6 38.f4! f6

Position after 38...f6

39.fxe5?

A relief! Finally she made a positional mistake and started to lose the thread. The big reason why fxe5 is a big mistake is because it opened up my bishop on g7. 39.Ra1±.

39...fxe5 40.Qa2 Nd4 41.Bxd4?

This makes my bishop on g7 even more powerful, giving it the e5-square.

41...exd4 42.Qa7 Ne6 43.Qb7 d3

43...Be5 44.Ra1 Kg7.

44.Bf1

44.Qa7 would be very hard to play though.

44...Be5 45.Kg2 Nc5

Position after 45...Nc5

46.Qa7

46.Qxc7 Rxd5 was of course the point.

46...Rxd5

Here I just wanted to kill all her counterplay with the knight and queen tandem, defend c7 for good, and create an unstoppable attack. From here on, White is defenseless on the dark squares, missing the knight or a dark-squared bishop. Opposite-colored bishops increase attack opportunities!

47.cxd5 Qg5 48.Qa2 Qxg3+ 49.Kh1 Qf3+ 50.Kg1 Bd4+ 51.Kh2 Qxd1 52.d6+ Kg7 53.d7 Qxf1 54.Qg8+

54.d8Q Be5# *(54...Qg1#).*

54...Kh6 55.h4 Be5#

0–1

Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) – Rohan Talukdar (2402) [D72]
Seattle Chess Classic
Chess.com (R2), August 13, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In round two I am playing FM Rohan Talukdar, who I failed to beat the last two times I faced him. However, this is the first time I am playing white against him in one of these tournaments. Luckily for me it worked out better since I was able to prepare well for his Grunfeld and get the position I wanted to play, which gave me an opportunity to play a good game.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 d5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e4 Nb6 7.Ne2 c5 8.d5 e6 9.0-0 exd5

I think 9...0-0 is more accurate, not yet declaring the intentions. 10.Nec3 Na6 so that if I play Nec3, Black can play ...Na6, and White now needs to make a commitment on how he continues his development.

10.exd5 0-0 11.Nec3 Na6 12.Nd2 Bf5 13.Nde4

Position after 13.Nde4

This was all preparation to this point which as far as I knew was good for me.

13...Bxe4?!

Probably not best since my knights on c3 and e4 are redundant anyway. 13...h6.

14.Nxe4

I took some time on this move since I knew I wanted to take with the knight from a positional standpoint of view. First of all, I have the Bg5 idea. Also, I am controlling the d6-square more, which means it is less likely that my pawn on d6 will be blockaded. Rohan has won a game earlier this year against my student in a similar opening where he got his knight to d6. However, having said all that, I needed to make sure that he cannot take on d5, and I calculated that he couldn't under favorable circumstances.

14...h6

Sensible trying to stop Bg5. 14...Nxd5?! 15.Bg5 Qd7 16.Nc3! is a very important move which ensures an advantage for me. 16...Bxc3 *(16...Nb6 17.Qxd7 Nxd7 18.Bxb7±)* 17.bxc3 Nac7 18.c4 Qf5 19.Bh6± and because of this important move, White ends up being up an exchange.

15.d6

Here I had a deep think since I was trying to evaluate how good d6 is, and whether I'm not overextending my pawn. I was also trying to see if I had a better move. Ultimately, I decided that this was my best course of action after 10 minutes of thought.

I also considered 15.Bf4 but didn't like it because of 15...f5 16.Nc3 g5. I briefly looked at 15.a4 but then 15...Nxd5 might be possible.

15...Re8 16.Qc2

This was good but even better might've been 16.Be3 Nc4 *(16...Re6 17.Rc1)* 17.Qd5! The point! Because of how strong the f-file is, I didn't have to be afraid of 17...Nxe3 18.fxe3+-.

16...c4 17.Be3 Nb4 18.Qd2

Position after 18.Qd2

18...c3!?

I have to admit that I missed this idea completely, but luckily, it wasn't that dangerous for me.

19.bxc3 Nc4 20.Qd1 Nxe3 21.fxe3

It turns out that the positional weaknesses that were created are irrelevant because of all the dynamics that the open f-file has created for me.

21...Nc6 22.Rxf7!

And now the petite combination that wins the game for me.

[Diagram top of next page]

Position after 22.Rxf7

22...Qb6

Sort of forced. 22...Kxf7 loses routinely of course to 23.Qd5+ Kf8 24.Rf1+ Bf6 25.Rxf6+ Kg7 26.Qf7+ Kh8 27.Rxg6+- with unstoppable mate threats.

23.Kh1!

I liked this move. The way I came up with this move was since I didn't see a way I can win immediately with forcing moves, and I saw that Kxf7 is still not a threat, I wanted to play a move that I will need to play anyway.

And now it's a case where a threat is stronger than the execution. Some of my threats now include Rb1 and Qd5, where the pawn on e3 isn't hanging with check, while if he plays now ...Qxe3, I can take on b7.

23...Ne5

23...Qxe3 24.Rxb7 *(24.Qb3+- is also more than good enough.)* 24...Rxe4 25.Qd5+ Re6 26.Qxc6+-.

24.Rxb7 Qxe3

24...Qxb7 25.Nf6+ is the point of course.

25.Qd5+ Kh8 26.Rxg7

One of many wins in this position.

26...Kxg7 27.d7 Nxd7 28.Qxd7+ Kh8 29.Qc6 Rg8 30.Nf6

Now I win a piece by force or mate.

30...Rac8 31.Qd7

Position after 31.Qd7

Unstoppable mate now. I was very happy with this game, this game felt like by far my most quality game in a very long time. It also had a brilliancy, Rxf7. Therefore, I submit this game for brilliancy/best game prize.

1–0

Vitaliy Bernadskiy (2679) – Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) [C13]
Seattle Chess Classic
Chess.com (R3), August 13, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In round three I am already playing a GM since the field is very small. I was looking forward for a fighting game but somehow the way the game played it, it didn't work out like this.

1.d4 e6

I was actually luring him into a French since I wanted to play a French and get a nice opposite-side castles fighting position.

2.e4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5

He plays 4.e5 here more often.

4...dxe4 5.Nxe4 Nbd7

The safest most reliable line, and a line that I was the most familiar with. 5...Be7 6.Bxf6 gxf6 is also a good line for Black but it is highly theoretical where one mistake can be very costly for Black.

6.Nf3 Be7 7.Bxf6

Here, interestingly, more common is 7.Nxf6+ Bxf6 8.h4!? with interesting sharp theory to follow.

7...Nxf6 8.Bd3 c5?!

Looking back at the game, it was a regrettable decision since as a result, I
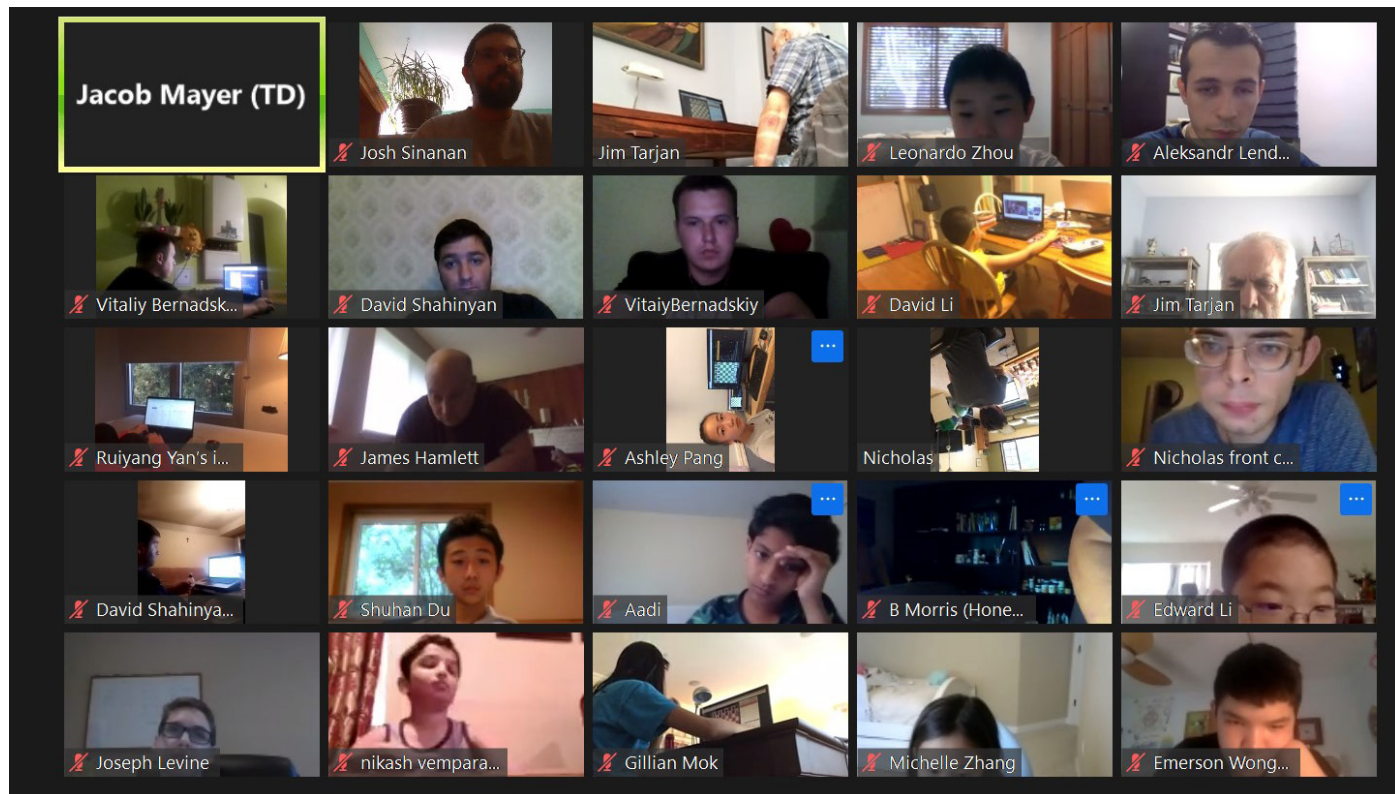
got a position where his play is very easy and comfortable and I have to defend. 8...Nxe4 was my first instinct, and I should've followed it. I overthought things, thinking that I am helping him with bringing his bishop and potentially the queen to a better attacking position but it turned out that keeping the two bishops was more important. 9.Bxe4 c5 10.c3. Now I thought that something like c3 and Qc2 can be annoying, but anyway, it was much better to go for this position than the other one. *(10.Qd3?? f5; 10.Qd2; 10.dxc5 Qa5+; 10.d5? f5∓)* 10...0-0 (10...cxd4 11.Qa4+ Bd7 *(11...Qd7 12.Qxd4 Qxd4 13.Nxd4 Bd7 14.0-0-0=)* 12.Qxd4) 11.0-0 *(11.dxc5=*. Probably in these positions White doesn't risk that much but at least I would be on a more comfortable side of equality.)*

9.Nxc5 Bxc5 10.dxc5 Qa5+ 11.Qd2 Qxc5 12.0-0-0

Position after 12.0-0-0

Here we agreed to a draw since I wasn't a big fan of my position; I thought that my king will be under attack, and I didn't see clearly how to equalize. Here are some additional lines of how the game might've proceeded with perfect play from both sides:

12...Bd7

This was my plan if I were to decline a draw. I also didn't like 12...0-0 13.Rhe1 so much. I guess I can try ...b6 here. 13...b6 *(13...Bd7 14.Ne5)* 14.Ne5 *(14.Qe3 would be a risk-free endgame for White probably.)* 14...Bb7 15.Qf4 *(15.f4 Rad8 16.g3.* Here it looks like White has a small grip, but Black can probably hold with best play.)* 15...Rad8. Here probably Black's fine.

13.Rhe1

I wasn't sure about what to do here.

13...0-0

13...Rc8 14.Ne5.

14.Ne5

Somehow this type of position seemed uncomfortable to me but I guess with precise play I can hold; it was hard for me to psychologically turn down the draw on the table and instead play this position where I feel like one wrong move can get me mated.

14...Rac8 15.g4 Bb5

Looks like best play for Black and now both

16.Bxb5

and 16.g5 Nd5 17.Be4 promise White some initiative.

16...Qxb5 17.g5 Nd5 18.Re4↑

½–½

Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) – James Tarjan (2469) [E07]
Seattle Chess Classic
Chess.com (R4), August 14, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

After a relatively quick draw against GM Bernadskiy I wanted to get a fighting game with white against experienced GM Jim Tarjan. I have lost to him the last serious game I played with him, also with white so I was looking for revenge.

1.c4 e6 2.g3 d5 3.Bg2 Nf6 4.Nf3 Be7 5.0-0 0-0 6.d4 c6 7.b3 Nbd7 8.Bb2 b6 9.Nc3

This was all preparation but now my opponent surprised me.

9...a5

I expected more. 9...Bb7; 9...Ba6.

10.Nd2

A pretty natural move, but objectively speaking might've not been the best

move. I also considered 10.Ne5, but it seemed unclear to me because of the following variation: 10...Nxe5 11.dxe5 Nd7 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.e4 Ba6⇄. However at the high depth, the mysterious 10.a3 move apparently might be best. I don't think any human would seriously consider such a move, but it looks like the idea is to meet ...b5 with c5 and then to play b4, and also discourage Black to play ...b4. 10... Ba6 11.Nd2 b5 12.c5±.

10...Ba6

Natural and expected, but not best. I knew the 10...b5!! idea existed in the closed Catalan, but I just didn't think it worked with my bishop already being on b2 and with him having already played ...a5, but it seems like Black might have enough counterplay here. 11.cxb5 cxb5 12.Nxb5 Qb6 13.a4 *(13.Nc3 a4)* 13...Ba6≌.

11.e4 b5

Almost forced, or else I just get a free advantage. 11...a4 12.e5 a3 *(12...Ne8 13.bxa4±)* 13.exf6 axb2 14.fxe7+- doesn't work for Black.

12.exd5 exd5 13.cxb5 Bxb5 14.Re1 Bb4

14...Ba6 15.Nf3± I thought that Black cannot favorably move the bishop on b5 anyway, so I avoided exchanging it.

15.Nxb5 cxb5 16.Re3

I considered 16.a3 but didn't like it because of Black seizing the c4-square. 16...Bxd2 17.Qxd2 a4 18.Qb4. However, it's possible that Black is facing concrete problems with the b5-pawn.

16...Re8

16...a4 was probably more accurate.

17.Nf1

Eventually trying to bring the knight to e3.

17...a4 18.Qd3

I think 18.Rxe8+ Qxe8 19.Ne3 was more accurate to not allow him counterplay with ...Qa5, and also I ensure that I get the

knight to e3 right away and put pressure on d5.

18...Qa5 19.Rc1 Rec8!

Position after 19...Rec8

Now after this clever move, suddenly I found my harmony on the kingside to be a bit awkward. I have to now lose a tempo to bring my knight to the game.

20.Rc2 g6?!

20...Rxc2 21.Qxc2 Qa6 was more accurate with ...Rc8 to follow. Black should probably equalize here.

21.Ree2

Now I felt like I was pressing again.

21...axb3 22.axb3 Rxc2 23.Rxc2 Ba3

A good move to try to get rid of my two bishops.

24.Bxa3 Qxa3 25.Bf3

25.Ne3 right away is met with an annoying 25...Qa1+.

25...Qb4 26.Ne3 Ra3?

Position after 26...Ra3

The first real mistake of this game. I assume this was some kind of a blunder where my opponent might've missed that after Rc3, I have an unexpected Nc2 threat, which is hard to deal with, since Nxd5 also becomes a threat. Black should create counterplay with 26...Ra1+ 27.Kg2 Qe1. 28.Bd1 was my plan, but I had a feeling that Black should be fine here in several different ways. 28...Nf8⇄.

27.Rc3 Ra6

Played after a long thought. It was a decent try but unfortunately for Black, he loses material no matter what.

28.Bxd5 Rd6 29.Nc2

This attacks the queen with a tempo and defends d4.

29...Qa5 30.Bg2

Maybe it made sense to also include 30.b4.

30...b4 31.Rc8+

31.Rc4 Ne5 32.Rc8+ Kg7 33.Qd2 might've been a slightly better version for White.

31...Kg7 32.Ra8 Qh5 33.Qf3 Qg5 34. Qd1 h5 35.h4 Qb5 36.Qf1
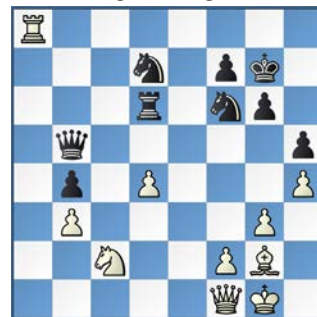
Position after 36.Qf1

Step-by-step consolidating my extra pawn and on my way in winning a second pawn.

36...Qxf1+ 37.Kxf1 Ng4 38.Ra7

Maybe 38.Rd8 was cleaner.

38...Ndf6 39.Ra4 Re6 40.Rxb4 Nh2+

41.Kg1 Re2 42.Ne3 Nhg4 43.Nxg4 Re1+ 44.Bf1 hxg4 45.Kg2 Rd1

In the last few moves Black did a good job at creating good practical chances. Here I spent some time trying to calculate a clean win but couldn't find one.
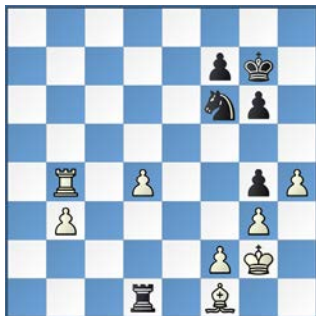
Position after 45...Rd1

46.Be2

I tried to calculate 46.Bc4 deeply. 46...Rxd4 47.Rb7 Nd5 48.Kh2 *(48.Rd7?? Ne3+; 48.Kf1 however, apparently this still promises White very good winning chances. I didn't want to part with my pawn though.)* 48...Rd2 49.Rd7 Rxf2+ 50.Kg1 Nb6 unfortunately for me, this move saves the day for him. 51.Rb7 Rf6 52.Bxf7 Rxf7 53.Rxb6 Rf3 and Black should draw.

46...Rd2 47.Kf1 Ne4 48.Ke1 f5?!

Probably not the best as it leads to a lost rook endgame for Black. 48...Rb2 49.Bxg4 Nxf2 50.Be2 Ne4 51.Bd3 Nxg3 52.d5 was my intension with very good winning chances for White. 48...Ra2 49.Bxg4 Nxf2 50.Be2 Ne4 51.Bd3 Nxg3 52.d5 Ra8, however, might give Black serious drawing chances.

49.f3! gxf3 50.Bxf3 Rb2

I expected 50...Rd3 more, however White should win after the accurate 51.Ke2! Rc3 52.Bxe4 fxe4 53.g4 Rg3 54.g5 Rg4 55.Rb7+ Kf8 56.b4+-.

51.Bxe4 fxe4 52.d5 Kf6 53.d6

I thought this is the simplest but probably not the only way to win.

53...Ke6 54.Rxe4+ Kxd6 55.b4 Kd5 56.Rg4 Ke5 57.Kd1 Kf5 58.Kc1 Rg2 59.Rg5+ Ke4

This is a last-ditch counterplay attempt but it falls way short.

60.b5 Kd3 61.b6 Rg1+ 62.Kb2 Rg2+ 63.Kb3

I was very happy with this win. This game took four hours and came down to the wire. Jim Tarjan is a very formidable opponent who has even beaten Kramnik in one game. I consider him a legend of US chess and because of his experience, he can be dangerous in any particular game and always can be counted on to give a very good game, and this game was not an exception. I was very happy to come out on top after a long fight.

1–0

**David Shahinyan (2502) –
Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) [B26]**
Seattle Chess Classic
Chess.com (R5), August 14, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In this game I was playing against Armenian IM David Shahinyan, who has been very successful so far in the Washington Chess Federation events, winning several of them. I knew he's quite a good player, but I wanted a fight against him, so I chose the Sicilian Defense.

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.d3 d6 6.Be3 Rb8 7.Qd2 b5 8.Nge2 b4 9.Nd1 h5 10.h3 Nd4

Up to this moment it was preparation for me, since I saw that David almost exclusively plays this system, specifically with 6.Be3, and 10...Nd4 was my "improvement" over his game. However, later on, unfortunately I just misplayed my position.

11.0-0 e6 12.Nc1 Ne7 13.c3 Ndc6 14.Ne2

Around here I was on my own and I started to drift.

14...bxc3

Possibly 14...Ba6 was better.

15.bxc3 Qa5

15...Ba6.

16.f4 f5 17.Nf2 Ba6 18.Rab1 Kf7

18...0-0.

19.g4 d5 20.gxf5 gxf5 21.e5 Rxb1

I wanted to play 21...Ng6!, but the following line bothered me. 22.Rxb8 Rxb8 23.c4? Qxd2 24.Bxd2 but I totally misevaluated it. I'm actually winning here! 24...Rb2.

22.Rxb1 Bf8

22...Ng6 23.c4 Qxd2 24.Bxd2 Nce7 was still somehow good for me.

23.Kh2

Position after 23.Kh2

23...c4?

A positional mistake. 23...Ng6 24.c4 Qxd2 25.Bxd2 Nce7 not sure why but I kept being afraid of this type of position, but somehow I'm doing very well here.

24.d4 Ng6

Game drawn by agreement. Since I didn't like where this game was heading, I decided to offer a draw. I think this position is close to equal but if anyone can try it's probably him. I offered a draw since he offered me a draw earlier so I thought it can be appropriate to offer a draw back.

½–½

Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) – Eddie Chang (1887) [D72]
Seattle Chess Classic
Chess.com (R6), August 15, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In this game I am playing a dangerous Eddie Chang. He might be under 2000, but seeing his games I noticed that he's quite creative and has beaten many higher-rated players, so I knew to not underestimate him.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 d5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.e4 Nb6 7.Ne2 c5 8.d5 e6 9.0-0 0-0

Position after 9...0-0

Interestingly enough, the opening is the same as against Rohan Talukhdar in round two. I knew he plays Grunfeld, and I was also aware that he prepares quite well for his games. Therefore, this time I decided to change a little bit and play with the other knight to c3 to throw him off.

10.Nbc3

I played 10.Nec3 against Rohan.

10...Na6

He blitzed this out, so that told me that he prepared since that's also the best move in the other line.

11.Nf4 exd5 12.Nfxd5 Be6?!

I think his prep ended here since he started thinking and didn't make best move. As far as I was aware, 12...Nb4 is the main line. 13.Be3 N6xd5 14.exd5 c4! 15.Bc5 Nd3 16.Bxf8 Qxf8♔ with compensation for exchange. This would lead to interesting play.

13.Bf4

The most natural.

13...Bxd5 14.exd5 Nc4 15.Qb3

15.Qe2 might be better. 15...Nd6 16.Ne4 Re8 17.Bxd6.

15...Nd6 16.Rad1 Re8 17.Rfe1?!

Here 17.Nb5 might've been better.

17...Rxe1+ 18.Rxe1 c4

Somehow I missed this move, that now after Qa3 there is ...Bf8!

19.Qd1 Nc5 20.Bf1

Position after 20.Bf1

I'm lucky to still retain some advantage here. From this point though my opponent started to play very inaccurately.

20...Rc8

20...a6! was better. 21.Bxd6 Qxd6 22.Bxc4 b5.

21.Bxd6 Qxd6 22.Bxc4 Bxc3?!

Creative but not the best since it gives my queen a very strong d4-square. 22...Nd7♔; 22...a6.

23.bxc3 Nd7 24.Qd4 Qc5

24...Qf6 25.Bb3 Rxc3 26.Qxf6 Nxf6 27.Re7; 24...a6♔.

25.Bb3 Qxd4

25...Qxc3 26.Re8+ Nf8 27.Qxc3 Rxc3 28.Re7+- would also be dominating for me.

26.cxd4 Kf8 27.d6 Re8 28.Rc1 Rd8 29.Rc7

I was happy to win this game quickly and keep pace with the leaders.

1–0

Joseph Levine (2094) – Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) [B10]
Seattle Chess Classic
Chess.com (R7), August 15, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In round seven, I was playing against a talented young player, Joseph Levine, rated around 2200. I have won against him with white last year in Seattle, but this time, I was Black and I had a feeling the game will not be as easy. It turned out unfortunately that not only was my prediction right, but I failed to even win the game.

1.e4 c6

I decided to play Caro this time since I saw what Joseph plays against it, and I liked the kind of position that I would get out of it.

2.d3 d5 3.Nd2 g6 4.Ngf3 Bg7 5.g3 e5

6.Bg2 Ne7 7.0-0 0-0 8.Re1 d4 9.a4 c5 10.Nc4 Nbc6

Around here my preparation ended. I was happy with the opening outcome since I felt like I have a pleasant space advantage and also a position with all the pieces still on the board. However, from here on, I don't think I played it the best way.

11.Nfd2

He is not hiding his intension, wanting to play f4 and take with the g-pawn.

11...Be6 12.f4

Position after 12.f4

12...Qd7

I considered 12...exf4 of course, but I wanted to wait until he played a move like Nf3. Continuing 13.gxf4 f5, I saw that he can play 13.e5?!, and thought that 14...Nd5 15.Nf3? would give him the d6-square. However, I am simply winning here after 15...Bh6 16.Ng5 Bxg5 17.fxg5 f4. Alternately I could try 13...Qd7 14.e5, when I also didn't like the idea of giving him e5 and Ne4, but I can disturb his harmony first with 14...Bg4 15.Bf3 Bxf3 16.Qxf3 Nb4 17.Qd1 f6.

So in the first line, after 12...exf4 13.gxf4 f5, White should probably take: 14.exf5 Bxf5 (Or 14...Bxc4 15.Nxc4 Nxf5 16.Bd2 with a complex game; he gets the two bishops but his king is compromised and my knight on f5 is powerful.) 15.Ne4.

I also considered 12...f6, but didn't like it due to 13.f5 gxf5 14.exf5 Bxf5, and he gets 15.Ne4. This is the reason I wanted him to play Nf3 first.

13.Nxe5

I was more worried about 13.Nf3.

Here I was debating whether to take on f4 or play ...f6. 13...exf4 *(13...f6; 13...Bxc4 14.dxc4 exf4 15.gxf4 Rad8)* 14.gxf4 f5.

13...Nxe5 14.fxe5 Nc6

Perhaps it was better to keep the knights on the board 14...Bxe5 15.Nf3 Bg7.

15.Nf3 Nxe5

15...Bg4 16.Bf4 *(16.Rf1)*.

16.Nxe5 Bxe5 17.Bf4 f6

I considered 17...Qd6 to gain a tempo and not let him play b3. However, he can still play Bh6 or even 18.Bxe5 Qxe5 19.b3, but maybe that was a better version for me than the game.
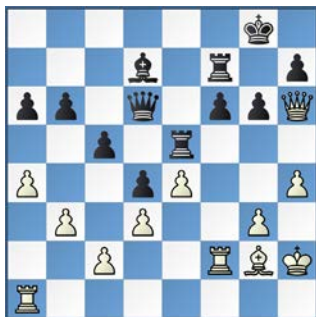
18.b3 b6

The engine likes 18...g5, which I considered briefly. 19.Bxe5 fxe5 20.Qh5 Qg7 21.Rf1. However, here I would probably have to trade lots of pieces, and I was just not sure how good were my winning chances here.

19.Qd2 Qd6 20.h4 Rae8 21.Rf1 Bd7 22.Bxe5 Rxe5 23.Qh6 Rf7

23...Rh5 24.Qf4 Qxf4 25.Rxf4 g5 26.hxg5 fxg5 was playable but felt like nothing so special.

24.Rf2 a6 25.Kh2?

Position after 25.Kh2

With a positional idea of Bh3, but this is the move I was hoping for, since it's a blunder. However, unluckily for me, his position doesn't actually collapse, and he still has some hidden compensation even after this. From here on Joseph defended really well and found the best chances.

25...Rh5 26.Qf4 Qxf4 27.Rxf4 g5

The point! Now I'm winning at least a pawn.

28.Rf2 gxh4 29.g4!

This move, however, is very strong. He sacrifices another pawn but blocks the h-file from my rook and now he has counterplay against my weak pawns.

29...Bxg4?!

I played this relatively quickly but apparently it wasn't best. Here I would still keep very good winning chances with 29...Rg5 30.Raf1 Kg7.

30.Raf1 Kg7 31.Bh3 Bxh3 32.Kxh3 Kg6?

After this mistake it looks like my game isn't winnable anymore. I should've played 32...a5.
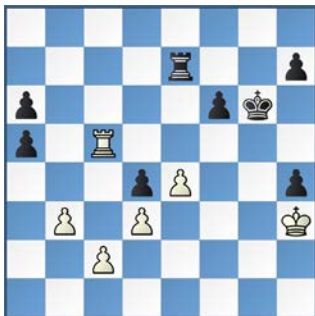
33.Rf5 Rxf5 34.Rxf5 Re7?!

This move looked very attractive with the idea of ...Re5. Somehow I only considered Kxh4 and Rd5, but completely missed his move. I only saw it after he played it. 34...a5 was a try even here, but now it shouldn't yield winning chances anymore after 35.Kxh4 Rg7 36.Rd5 Kf7 37.Rd7+! Kg6 38.Rd6.

35.a5!

Of course! A very strong move.

35...bxa5 36.Rxc5

Position after 36.Rxc5

Now we reach an amazing position. I am currently two!! pawns up and it's my move, and my king is safe. Yet, after looking at the position for a few minutes, I realized that not only is it hard for me to keep winning chances, but in fact I have to be very precise to not lose!

That reminded me of a famous episode where during Soviet Union times, two strong masters were analyzing a certain adjourned position and were looking for a way to create winning chances in a position. Then, Vassily Smyslov, the seventh World Champion came nearby, and they asked him to try to find a winning attempt since he was known for being an endgame maestro!

Smyslov looked at the position and said: Yes, I think with very precise play, maybe, we can make a draw!!! With that story, I will let you, the readers, try to analyze the endgame and see why this is the case here.

I didn't want to chance it and decided to offer a draw after my move before it is too late.

36...Rb7

Game drawn by agreement. 36...Re5 was my intension, but 37.Rc4 f5 38.Rxd4 Kg5? This was what I was hoping to work but this is one sample line where I can even lose!!! 39.Rd5!

Always be aware of these King and Pawn endgames! 39...Rxd5 40.exd5 f4 41.d6 Kf6 42.c4 Ke6 43.c5 f3 44.d4 Kd7 45.d5+- and eventually I run out of moves! That would be comical! Not for

me though.

½–½

**Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) –
Rui Yang Yan (2151) [E04]**
Seattle Chess Classic
Chess.com (R8), August 16, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In round eight, I am playing Rui Yang, a talented young girl, rated 2200+. I've played her a few times with black but it's the first time I played her with white. I was looking forward to a slow grind from a pleasant position based on what she played in the past against the Catalan. However, she threw a very unpleasant surprise at me early on.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.Bg2 dxc4!?

Oh no! Had I known that she prepared the open Catalan against me where I had to show my deep preparation and remember it, I would try to play in a different way in the opening. 4...Be7 5.Nf3 0-0 6.0-0 c6 I expected something along those lines from her.

5.Nf3 a6 6.0-0 Nc6 7.e3 Rb8

She played all of this very quickly. She's inviting me to enter the complications after 8.Nfd2, which is the main line.

8.Qe2

Position after 8.Qe2

A bit of a concession. Now Black is happy, she keeps her pawn, and is able to develop her bishop to b7. 8.Nfd2 is the main line, and now 8...e5 9.Bxc6+ bxc6 10.dxe5 Ng4 11.Nxc4 Be6. Here the theory only starts, and the lines can get very sharp and interesting all the way up to move 30–40. I was not interested in entering into a large theoretical debate against someone who I was sure has just looked at these lines, and at the moment I couldn't remember the details.

8...b5 9.b3 cxb3 10.axb3 Be7 11.Bb2

11.Rd1 0-0 12.Nc3 Bb7 13.Ne5 was maybe a better try, but I don't think I can realistically fight for an advantage here.

11...0-0 12.Rc1 Bb7 13.Nbd2 Nb4

She was still blitzing. I was getting very restless here. I'm down a pawn, my compensation is fading away, and I'm facing a well-prepared player. Definitely not something I signed up for in the morning. Now I'm just fighting to try to not be worse with white after 14 moves, definitely not a pleasant feeling. I was just trying to find the strong will in myself to try to keep fighting rather than just to offer a draw out of frustration.

14.Ne5

Looks like relatively best.

14...Bxg2 15.Kxg2 Rb6 16.Qf3?!

The engine doesn't like this. 16.Ba3 Qa8+ 17.e4 was probably still roughly equal.

16...Bd6

16...Nd7 17.Nc6 Nxc6 18.Rxc6 Rxc6 19.Qxc6 Nb8. Here Black seems to keep some advantage thanks to her extra pawns and for sure she guards all her weaknesses. Not clear how I should proceed here.

17.Nc6?!

Also not best. 17.Ba3.

Position after 17.Nc6

17...Qa8?!

Missing a great chance. 17...Nxc6 18.Rxc6 Qa8∓ and I'm down a pawn with minimal compensation.

18.Nxb4 Bxb4 19.Qxa8 Rxa8 20.Nf3

At least I gain a tempo on the c7-pawn.

20...Bd6

20...Nd5 was maybe even better.

21.Ra5?!

A very awkward move. 21.Bc3.

21...Bb4 22.Ra2 Bd6 23.Ba3

Yes, I'm actually playing for a win down a pawn. I felt like my opponent was unsure of herself when she started to repeat and I wanted to make her believe that my position isn't as bad. I was also trying to be confident in my position since I didn't see anything that clear for her. However, as it turns out, I'm just much worse.

23...b4 24.Bb2 a5?

This is a serious mistake though. 24...Ne4! stops Nd2 and therefore keeps the pawn alive.

25.Nd2 Rba6 26.Nc4 Kf8 27.Rca1 Ke8 28.Rxa5 Rxa5 29.Rxa5 Rxa5 30.Nxa5
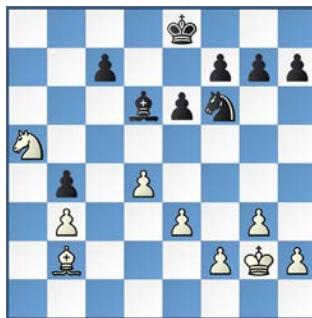
Position after 30.Nxa5

Phew! I got the pawn back. Now at least I figured I cannot be worse. I didn't really believe I can be better here, but this position felt like paradise now where I can try to play without too much risk for a long time, and Black cannot force a draw immediately.

30...Kd7 31.Nc4 Kc6 32.Kf3 Nd7 33.Ke2 f6 34.Kd3 Be7 35.g4 Kb5 36.e4 Bd6 37.e5!?

A bit risky but I felt like this was my only chance to create some imbalance to be able to outplay her.

37...fxe5 38.dxe5 Nc5+ 39.Kc2 Be7 40.f4 g6 41.Ne3 Kc6 42.Bd4

I should've played 42.g5 one move earlier, but I was mostly trying to play f5, and only saw the g5 idea later out of desperation.

42...Nb7 43.g5

43.f5 exf5 44.gxf5 gxf5 45.Nxf5 Bd8 doesn't really yield winning chances for me, in fact I might have to be careful here to keep the balance.

43...Na5

43...Bc5 44.Bxc5 Kxc5 45.Ng4 Kd4 46.Nf6 Ke3 47.f5! Nd8 leads to a draw with best play.

44.h4 Bf8 45.Bb2 h5?!
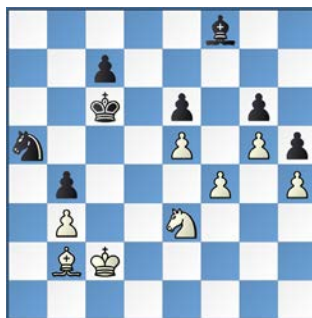
Position after 45...h5

I actually missed this move and at first I was scared since I thought that now I cannot go Ng4 and then I have to fight for a draw. However, luckily for me, I had an excellent move here. As I teach my students, one of the pluses of pawn moves is that sometimes it clears a very important square for your piece, and this is exactly the case here!

46.f5!

Of course! If not for this move I would even be worse.

46...gxf5?!

Also a mistake. 46...exf5 47.Ng2 Nb7 48.Nf4 Nc5 49.Bc1! *(49.Nxg6 Ne6=)* 49...Kd7 50.Nxg6 Ne6 51.Kd3 Ke8 still yielded drawing chances.

47.Ng2 Kd7 48.Nf4 Ke7 49.Nxh5 Kf7 50.Nf4 c5 51.h5

Now my connectors on the kingside win the game.

51...c4 52.bxc4 Nxc4 53.h6 Ke7 54.Bd4 b3+ 55.Kxb3 Nd2+ 56.Kc2 Ne4 57.h7 Bg7 58.g6 Bh8 59.Nh5 Kf8 60.Bb2

A very big relief and even a surprise that I was somehow able to win this game. It was definitely not without at least some luck.

1–0

**Nicholas Whale (2065) –
Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) [E19]**
Seattle Chess Classic
Chess.com (R9), August 16, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In the last round, I am playing against expert, Nicholas Whale, a local Washington State player. This game like all my black games in this tournament was also quite a struggle.

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 b6

Inviting complications after 4.e4.

4.g3

4.e4 Bb7; 4.d4 Bb7 5.e3 is what I expected from my opponent since I thought he likes systems with e3. 5...d5. Here I was just going to go for this kind of a fight.

4...Bb7 5.Bg2 Be7

5...Bb4 6.0-0 0-0 7.Qc2.

6.0-0 0-0 7.d4 Ne4

This is comfortable equality for Black, I thought, but how to win this is another question.

8.Qc2

8.Bd2 is the main line here.

8...Nxc3 9.Qxc3 Be4

9...c5 might be better but again, how to create winning chances?

10.Rd1 Bf6 11.Qe3

11.Ne5 gives White some chances for an advantage. 11...Bxg2 12.Kxg2 c5 (*12...d6 13.Qf3*) 13.dxc5.

11...d5 12.Ne5 Bxg2 13.Kxg2 dxc4 14. Qf3 Qd5 15.Nxc4

Position after 15.Nxc4

Now here comes a very important critical moment.

15...Nc6

I was trying hard to make 15...Qxc4 work but just couldn't. 16.Qxa8 Nc6 17.Qb7 and here I calculated many lines, but I just couldn't find something I really liked. I also looked at 15...Rd8 but after 16.Bf4! it seemed too drawish to me. I also considered 15...Qxf3+ 16.Kxf3 Nc6 but after 17.e3 I didn't see how I can do much.

16.Qxd5 exd5 17.Ne5

I didn't even see this, I only looked at Ne3.

17...Nxe5 18.dxe5 Bxe5 19.Rxd5 Rfe8 20.Rb1 Rad8 21.Rxd8 Rxd8 22.Be3

Position after 22.Be3

This position is just equal, but I was hoping with my three on two majority on the queenside and control of the open file, I might generate some winning chances.

22...f5

I wanted to at least take away the e4-square from the king. 22...c5 23.f4 Bf6 24.Kf3.

23.b3

I was more concerned over 23.b4.

23...c5 24.Rc1 Kf7 25.Kf3 Ke6 26.Rc2 a5 27.Rc4

Here I thought I might have good winning chances with 27.Rd2?! Rxd2 28.Bxd2 Kd5 because my king gets to the center first, and I can play c4 next move and create a passed pawn.

27...h5

27...Rd1 right away might've been better. 28.h3 Rh1 29.Kg2 Rb1.

28.Bg5 Rd1 29.e4

A strong move.

29...Rh1

I was just not sure about this position but I think this was the best winning try. 29...Bd4 30.Be3 fxe4+ 31.Kxe4 b5 32.Rc2 Re1.

30.exf5+ Kxf5 31.Bd8

I didn't even see this move! Just total blindness. I was lucky that I'm not actually worse here.

31...Rxh2 32.Bxb6 Bd4 33.Rc2

33.g4+ hxg4+ 34.Kg3 Be5+ 35.f4 Rh3+ 36.Kg2 Bxf4 37.Rxc5+ Ke6 38.Rxa5 Rh2+ 39.Kg1 Rb2 40.Bd4 gave White good drawing chances, but of course the line was complicated.

33...g5

Position after 33...g5

I was lucky I had all this since I didn't foresee this at all.

34.Bxa5?

This loses. I was very surprised he didn't go for 34.Rxc5+ since I didn't actually see how I'm winning here. 34...Bxc5 35.Bxc5 Rh1? One of these rare occasions when the engine is flat out wrong. The engine screams for Rh1 and gives -3 for Black, but in fact I think it's just a fortress. (35...g4+. My intension was to play this to not allow the king to get to g2. 36.Ke3 Rh1 37.Bb6 (*37.Bd4 Re1+ 38.Kd2 Rf1 39.Bb6 Ke4.* I might not be winning, but I thought my winning chances are good

here.*)* 37...Ra1 38.Bxa5 Rxa2 and here I was hoping that I'm winning.) I don't think 36.Bb6 Ra1 37.Bxa5 Rxa2 38.b4 Rb2 39.Kg2 is winnable. 39...g4 (*39...h4 40.gxh4 gxh4 41.Kh3; 39...Kg4 40.Bc7 Rxb4 41.Be5 h4 42.gxh4 gxh4 43.Bd6 h3+ 44.Kh2 Rb2 45.Bc5=*) 40.Bb6 Rxb4 41.Bc5=.

34...g4+ 35.Ke2 Rxf2+ 36.Kd1 Rxc2 37.Kxc2 h4

My guess is that my opponent only calculated ...Ke4 and bishop moves, but missed ...h4.

38.gxh4 g3 39.Bc7 Be5 40.Bb6 Bd6

My pawn queens. I was very happy to finish the last day with two wins. However, both of these games were quite tough. I never felt like I had that much control of the result until the very end.

0–1

**Nick Raptis (2393) –
Nikash Vemparala (1684) [D00]**
Seattle Chess Classic
(R1), August 20, 2020
[Nikash Vemparala]

1.d4 d5 2.Nc3

This is the Chigorin Variation! I did not really know what to play here, so I went with my normal opening against d4. I saw later that this is the Chigorin.

2...Nf6 3.Bg5

This is the Richter Veresov Attack! Again, I had no clue what to do here. After Bg5 I was considering a couple of moves like …g6 and …e6, but I think that …g6 was best.

3...g6 4.Nf3

I think Nf3 is a mistake. I think the best move is Bxf6. 4.Bxf6 exf6 5.e3 (*5.Nf3 Bg7 6.g3 0-0 7.Bg2 Be6*) 5...Bg7 6.Nf3 0-0.

4...Bg7 5.e3 c6 6.Be2!?

I think he played Be2 to defend against Bg4. I think that Bd3 is better as it has a better diagonal there and is more active. 6.Bd3 Nbd7 7.0-0 0-0.

6...Nbd7 7.Qd2 Qc7??

This was a big mistake on my part. I realized during the game he was going to castle long, and I wanted to prepare …c5 and a possible …e5. I missed Bf4 here which was a costly mistake.

8.Bf4 Qd8 9.h4 h5!!

…h5 is a good move here as it stops h5 ideas and blocks off g4 for the moment. But Ne5 could have been interesting.

10.0-0-0

10.Ne5 Nxe5 11.Bxe5 0-0 12.f3 Bd7 13.0-0-0 b5.

10...a5

Here …b5 was better. I played …a5 first because I had the idea of …a4 and …a3. 10...b5 11.Rdg1 Qa5 12.a3.

11.Ng5?!

I was not sure why he played Ng5. During the game I felt like if he was going to move the knight, he should have moved it to the outpost on e5. 11.Ne5 Nxe5 12.Bxe5 0-0.

11...b5

During the game I was a bit scared to play …b5 because I felt like some Bxb5 sacs were possible. But when I analyzed, I found out it was not a threat. I played …b5 to attack on the queenside.

12.Bf3

Here I think he played Bf3 to get ready to play e4. During the game I was thinking about how to prevent e4, and I found an idea. 12.Bxb5 cxb5 13.Nxb5 0-0 14.Nc7 *(14.Bc7 Qe8)* 14...Ra7.

Position after 12.Bf3

12...b4!!

12...Nb6 13.e4 Nc4 14.Qe2 e6 15.e5 Nd7 16.g3 *(16.g4* and here White is better*)*.

13.Na4 Nb6!

I thought the idea of …b4 and …Nb6 to get to the c4-square was very nice.

14.Nc5!? Nc4 15.Qe1!?

During the game I was not quite sure why he played Qe1. I think Qe2 would have been better. 15.Qe2 Bf5.

15...0-0 16.e4

Here he played e4. During the game I was not quite sure what to do here, but I thought that e6 was best.

16...e6

16...dxe4 17.Ngxe4 Nd5.

17.e5 Nd7 18.Nxd7 Bxd7 19.g4

In this position I thought I was toast.

During the game I thought to myself, "how do I stop his attack?" After thinking for about ten minutes I realized I could not stop his attack. Then I realized it. If you can't defend the attack, then you have to attack yourself.

19...Qb6

Here I started my attack. My thought process here was to protect the b4-pawn so I could play …a4. 19...hxg4 20.Bxg4 f6 21.exf6 Qxf6 22.Nxe6 Bxe6 23.Bxe6+ Kh8 24.h5.

20.gxh5

Here I had to continue my attack, so I continued it with …a4.

20...a4 21.h6

Here in this position during the game I realized it was do or die. I had to go for the attack no matter what the cause! So I continued the attack.

21...b3 22.cxb3 axb3 23.a3

Position after 23.a3

I was calculating lots of sacs on a3 here, but I did not think it would work. Little did I know that …Rxa3 was winning!

23...Bxh6

23...Rxa3 24.bxa3 b2+ 25.Kc2 Nxa3+ 26.Kd2 Qb4+ (26...Qxd4+ 27.Ke2 Qxf4 this works because if hxg7 then …Qxe5+ *(27...Qc4+ 28.Rd3 Qc2+ 29.Rd2)* 28.hxg7 Qxe5+) 27.Ke2 Qc4+ 28.Rd3 here there is no attack. That is why you have to play …Qxd4+ instead of …Qb4+.

24.h5

After h5 I thought there was a checkmate after …Nxa3, so I went for it.

24...Nxa3 25.bxa3 b2+ 26.Kd2

I think Kc2 is better here. 26.Kc2 Rxa3 27.Rd3.

26...Rxa3 27.hxg6 Qb4+ 28.Ke2 Qb5+ 29.Kd2 Qd3#

After 27.hxg6 it is just game over. …Qb4+ leads to checkmate.

0–1

Rohan Talukdar (2402) –
David Shahinyan (2502) [B07]
Seattle Chess Classic
Chess.com (R6), August 15, 2020
[Rohan Talukdar]

A very tactical and interesting game which includes mysterious rook moves, a queen sacrifice, and a lot of hidden tactical resources.

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e5 4.Nge2

A safe setup which aims to fianchetto my bishop. 4.Nf3 is what I played last time against my opponent and did not achieve much in the opening 4...Nbd7 5.Bc4 Be7 6.0-0 0-0 7.Re1 c6 8.a4 exd4 9.Nxd4 Ne5 10.Ba2 Re8.

4...c6!

This move deserves an exclamation mark because it masks Black's idea of g6 and waits for White to make the committal g3. 4...g6 right away allows me to develop a nasty attacking game 5.f3 this is a typical setup for attacking play 5...Nc6 6.Be3 Bg7 7.Qd2 0-0 8.0-0-0 exd4 9.Nxd4 Nxd4 10.Bxd4 Be6 11.g4 with an attacking game for White.

5.g3

5.f3 is now met with 5...Be7 and now White's attack will be much weaker than if the bishop was on g7.

5...g6

This move order does not allow me to play the typical f3 stuff. Now I have to continue with my fianchettoed setup and Black's bishop is better placed on g7 than e7.

6.a4

Just stopping any potential …b5 ideas which could happen at any time. 6.Bg2 would probably transpose to the game.

6...Bg7 7.Bg2 0-0 8.0-0 Qc7

Position after 8...Qc7

A rare move but a solid one. 8...a5 is the main line with the idea of playing ...Na6 and ...Nb4 9.h3 Na6 10.Be3 Nb4 11.Qd2 Be6 12.Rad1 Bc4 13.Rfe1 Qc7 14.b3 Ba6 15.g4 with complex play.

9.h3 b6!? 10.Be3 Ba6

This is a good diagonal for the light-squared bishop to be on. 10...a6 with the idea of ...Bb7 then ...b5 is probably too slow as White has 11.f4 Bb7 12.g4 b5 13.axb5 axb5 14.Rxa8 Bxa8 15.g5±.

11.Re1 Nbd7 12.g4 Rfe8

12...h5?! is not so good here because White has 13.g5 Ne8 14.d5! c5 15.Ng3 Qd8 16.Nf5!→.

13.Ng3 Nf8?!

Black's idea of ...Ne6 ...Nd4 is slow and should be stopped. 13...exd4 was probably the best here: 14.Bxd4 h6 15.Qd2 Rad8 16.Rad1 Nf8 17.Be3 Kh7 18.f4 with a preferable position for White.

14.Qd2?!

This is a positional mistake because this allows my opponent to get a decent position with ...Ne6. 14.d5! was the correct move because it stops Black's knight maneuver and attacks c6. 14...Bb7 *(14...c5 15.g5 N6d7 16.h4 f6 17.Bh3 is very unpleasant for Black)* 15.g5 N6d7 16.h4. Black's problem is that he lacks breathing space. 16...cxd5 17.Nb5 Qb8 18.exd5 f5 19.gxf6 Nxf6 20.h5±.

14...Ne6 15.d5 cxd5 16.exd5 Nd4!

A very strong move which establishes a strong knight in the center. I completely overlooked this move. 16...Nf4 was what I was expecting and I thought I would be a nice pawn up after 17.Bxf4 exf4 18.Qxf4 Nd7 19.Nge4, but here Black has some compensation for the pawn. 19...Re5 20.g5 Rf8⩲.

17.Rec1!

Position after 17.Rec1

A mysterious rook move, as Nimzowitsch would call it! This is a really creative plan that I start here. It looks really strange that the rook is strangely protecting c2 when it is not even in danger. The idea will be revealed later. 17.Bxd4 was playable but Black gets compensation after 17...exd4 18.Qxd4 Ne4! 19.Qe3!, a sudden resource that White has: 19...Nxc3 20.Qxe8+ Rxe8 21.Rxe8+ Bf8 22.bxc3 Bc8! *(22...Qxc3 23.Rae1)* 23.Rae1 Bd7, and here a draw can be made by 24.Ra8 Qb7 25.Rd8 Qc7=.

17...Rac8

A logical move but now the rook has stopped protecting a7.

18.Ra3!?

The idea of this move is actually to move the knight and then play c3 to trap the knight. The rook on c1 enables the knight on c3 to move in the future. 18.Nb5 was objectively the best and I considered this but I had a different idea in mind. 18...Nxb5 *(18...Bxb5 19.axb5 Nxb5 20.Qb4 Qc4 21.Qxc4 Rxc4 22.Bf1 Rb4 23.g5±)* 19.axb5 Bxb5 20.c4 Bd7 21.b4±. White is down a pawn but has really strong compensation as c5 is coming so White is better.

18...Qc4?

My opponent was really confused about what I was doing. He now stops knight moves, but his queen is misplaced. 18...Rf8!? planning some future ...f5, and now I can show my idea: 19.g5 Ne8 20.Na2! f6 21.Nb4 Bb7 22.Bxd4 exd4 23.Nc6. White is a bit better here.

19.g5

19.Na2? Nxd5.

Position after 19.g5

19...Nh5

The most dynamic option but this ruins Black's structure. 19...Nd7 gives White a really nice position after 20.a5 b5 21.Nce4 Qc7 22.Rc3 I had seen up to here and figured that White has to be much better now. 22...Qb8; now engine suggests 23.Rc6! It is amazing how the rook on a1 is now on c6! 23...Nxc6 24.dxc6 Nf8 *(24...Rxc6 25.Nf6+)* 25.Qxd6±.

20.Nxh5 gxh5 21.Qd1?!

A logical human move which attacks the weak h5-pawn, but the ideas with Ne4 and Rd3 were stronger. 21.a5! was the best as White has a really nice trick which is shown by Stockfish: 21...b5 22.Ne4! I did not think this was anything special during the game, but 22...Red8?! fails to *(22...Ne2+ 23.Kh1 Nxc1 24.Nxd6 Qc7*

25.Nxe8 Rxe8 26.Qxc1±) 23.Rd3! The insertion of a5 ...b5 favors White, and now White is going to have Bxd4 then Nf6 with a winning position! 23...Kh8 24.Bxd4 exd4 25.Nf6 Bxf6 26.gxf6 Rg8 27.Rxd4+-.

21...e4!

Black starts to get a lot of counterplay on his own.

22.Qxh5 Qb4 23.Bxd4

Position after 23.Bxd4

23...Bxd4?

My opponent sets up a trap here but it doesn't work. 23...Qxb2 is lost because 24.Rb1 Qxa3 25.Bxg7 Kxg7 26.Qh6+ Kh8 27.Nxe4+-; 23...Qxd4! was the best because Black has an amazing resource possible 24.Rd1 e3!! Black's e-pawn and the rook is more compensation than his queen!!! When Stockfish first pointed out this move, I thought it was crazy. 25.Rxd4 Bxd4 26.fxe3 Rxe3 27.Kh2 Be5+ 28.Kg1 Bd4. White cannot save himself and has to take the draw!

24.Rb3 Bxf2+!

I completely missed this idea but luckily it doesn't work!

25.Kh1

Now it is hard for Black to make the proper move as he doesn't really want to retreat and lose the e-pawn. 25.Kxf2?? Qd4+ 26.Kg3 *(26.Ke1 Qg1+)* 26...Qe3+ 27.Kh2 Qxc1-+.

25...Qc4?!

A really logical move but I have a hidden resource. 25...Qd4 was objectively the best 26.Rd1 Qg7 *(26...Qc4 27.Bf1 will transpose to the game)* 27.Nxe4 Re5 28.Qf3 Bc5 29.Nf6+ Kh8 30.h4 Be2 31.Qh3 Rd8 32.Rd2±. White is in control and Black does not have so many threats anymore.

26.Bf1

Without this move I am lost!

26...Qxf1+ 27.Rxf1 Bxf1 28.Nxe4!

[Diagram top of next page]

Position after 28.Nxe4

The move that my opponent missed! Without this, Black would have very dangerous compensation for the queen. 28.Rb4?! would probably be my move if I didn't see Nxe4. 28...Rxc3! A very strong positional sacrifice. 29.bxc3 Bc5 30.Rb1 Bc4. The two bishops and the passed pawn are worth the queen! Stockfish is showing equal right now even though White has the queen. The more the engine thinks, the more it prefers Black's position.

28...Rxe4 29.Rf3

This is a really unique chess position! It's not every day that a rook pins bishops that are on f1 and f2, and attacks f7. Black has to lose a bishop now.

29...Re7

29...Bd4 may have been the better bishop to keep, but Black needs to keep the f7-pawn: 30.Qxf7+ Kh8 31.Rxf1 Be5 32.c3+-.

30.Rxf2 Bc4 31.Kh2!

Very strong prophylaxis!

31...Rc5

It looks like Black will win the d5 pawn but now White has another hidden resource which my opponent missed. 31...Bxd5? loses to 32.g6 hxg6 33.Qxd5+-.

32.b3! Bxd5

32...Ba6 is just lost because of 33.c4. This structure restricts the bishop and the queen will be too powerful.

33.b4!

The idea of misplacing the rook. The rook cannot protect the bishop anymore.

33...Rc4 34.g6 hxg6 35.Qxd5

My idea has succeeded, and I have a queen against a rook.

35...Rxb4 36.Qxd6 Rbe4 37.c4

Correct practical move to try to advance my pawns.

37...Kg7 38.a5! R7e6 39.Qb8 bxa5

39...Rxc4 does not work 40.Qxa7.

[Diagram top of next column]
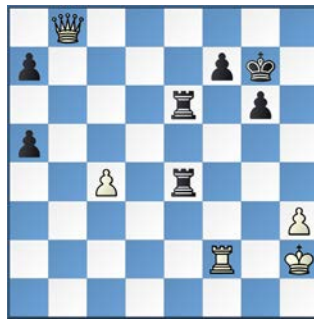
Position after 39...bxa5

40.Qxa7

40.c5 was definitely the most accurate as after 40...a4 *(40...Rc4 41.Qc7)* 41.c6! Rxc6 42.Qb7 f7 cannot be protected now: 42...Rce6 43.Qxf7+ Kh6 44.Qf8+ Kh5 45.Rg2 and mate is on the way.

40...Re7 41.Qb6 R7e6 42.Qb5

42.Qxa5 Rxc4 43.Qa7 was the best as f7 is too weak.

42...R6e5 43.c5 a4 44.Qb2 f5?!

44...a3 was the best try but after 45.Qxa3 Rc4 46.Qa6 Rcxc5 47.Qf6+ Kh7 48.Qxf7+ Kh6 49.Qf8+ Kh5 50.Rg2 g5 51.Qg8 Kh6 52.h4 mate is on the way.

45.c6

My c-pawn is hard to stop and my opponent has no chances so he chose to resign. A very complex and interesting battle.

1–0

Brian L. Morris (1382) –
Varin Nallabothula (1293) [C24]
Seattle Chess Classic (Reserve)
Chess.com (R3), August 13, 2020
[Varin Nallabothula]

1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Nf6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nf3 d5 5.exd5 Nxd5?!

This move is bad because White can castle and my king will still be in the center.

6.Qxd4?!

I don't like this move either since now it is easier for me to castle.

6...Be6 7.0-0 Nc6 8.Bb5 Nf6 9.Bxc6+ bxc6 10.Qxd8+ Rxd8

Trading off the pieces.

11.Be3 c5 12.Nc3 a6

I played …a6 because I didn't feel comfortable with his knight coming to b5.

13.Rfd1 Nd5 14.Nxd5 Bxd5 15.Ne5 f6 16.Nd3 c4 17.Nf4 Bf7 18.Rxd8+

Trading off more pieces.

18...Kxd8 19.Rd1+ Kc8 20.c3 Bd6

21.Nd5??

This move was a blunder because of …Rd8.

21...Rd8!!

This is a brilliant move because it is the only move that is winning in this position as this move will win some material.

22.Kf1

22.Nf4 g5 23.Nh3 Bxh2+ 24.Kxh2 Rxd1; 22.Nb4 Bxh2+ 23.Kxh2 Rxd1.

22...Bf8!!

Position after 22...Bf8

This is also the only winning move in the position as it stops Ne7. 22...Be5?? 23.Ne7+ Kb8 24.Rxd8+.

23.Nb6+

Trying to get at least a pawn.

23...cxb6 24.Rxd8+ Kxd8

In this position there is no hope for White.

25.Bxb6+ Kd7 26.Ke2 Kc6 27.Bd4 a5 28.a4 Be8 29.Kd2 Kb7 30.Kc2 Bxa4+ 31.b3 Bxb3+ 32.Kb2 a4 33.h4 a3+ 34.Ka1 Kc6 35.g4 Kd5 36.f3 Bd1 37.g5 fxg5 38.hxg5 Bxf3 39.Ka2 Ke4 40.Kb1 g6 41.Ka2 Be7 42.Bf6 Bd6 43.Kb1 Be5 44.Ka2 Kf5 45.Bxe5 Kxe5 46.Kxa3 Kf5 47.Kb2 Kxg5 48.Kc2 Kf4 49.Kd2

Kg3 50.Ke1 Kg2

This is just losing since I will promote my pawn and there is no hope, so my opponent resigned here! This was a very intense game and I enjoyed it!

50...Kg2 51.Kd2 h5 52.Ke3 h4 53.Kd4 h3 54.Kxc4.

0–1

Photo credit: Philip Peterson.

Open Section Final Standings:

#	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Rd 8	Rd 9	Total
1	Aleksandr Lenderman	2717	W9	W6	D2	W5	D3	W12	D7	W4	W8	7.5
2	Vitaliy Bernadskiy	2679	W8	W4	D1	D3	W6	W5	W13	D7	W10	7.5
3	David Shahinyan	2502	W12	W7	W11	D2	D1	L6	W8	W9	D5	6.5
4	Rui Yang Yan	2242	W15	L2	H---	L12	W11	D8	W14	L1	W7	5
5	James Tarjan	2469	B---	W14	H---	L1	H---	L2	D6	H---	D3	4.5
6	Rohan Talukdar	2402	W13	L1	W9	W7	L2	W3	D5	U---	U---	4.5
7	Joseph Levine	2179	W16	L3	W13	L6	D12	W11	D1	D2	L4	4.5
8	Nicholas Whale	2065	L2	W15	D14	D11	W9	D4	L3	W12	L1	4.5
9	Ashley Pang	1947	L1	W16	L6	W14	L8	D10	W15	L3	W12	4.5
10	Advaith Vijayakumar	2026	H---	L11	H---	D13	D15	D9	D12	W14	L2	4
11	Daniel Qian	1886	H---	W10	L3	D8	L4	L7	W16	D15	D13	4
12	Eddie Chang	1887	L3	H---	W16	W4	D7	L1	D10	L8	L9	3.5
13	Shuhan Du	1814	L6	B---	L7	D10	D14	W15	L2	L16	D11	3.5
14	Nikash Vemparala	1684	W17	L5	D8	L9	D13	B---	L4	L10	D16	3.5
15	Edward Li	1595	L4	L8	H---	W16	D10	L13	L9	D11	B---	3.5
16	Gillian Mok	1508	L7	L9	L12	L15	B---	H---	L11	W13	D14	3
17	Nick Raptis	2393	L14	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	0

Reserve Section Final Standings:

#	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Rd 8	Rd 9	Total
1	Stephanie Velea	1700	W3	D2	D4	W5	W6	W13	D7	W9	W10	7.5
2	Emma Li	1342	W16	D1	W13	W6	W4	D3	L5	W8	W9	7
3	Saarthak Malakar	1270	L1	W8	W12	W15	W7	D2	D6	D4	W5	6.5
4	Northern Brown	1480	W8	W12	D1	W7	L2	L5	W11	D3	W14	6
5	Aadi Hetamsaria	1159	L6	W16	W14	L1	W11	W4	W2	W7	L3	6
6	Leonardo Zhou	1494	W5	D7	W10	L2	L1	W8	D3	L11	W16	5
7	Varin Nallabothula	1293	W9	D6	W15	L4	L3	W10	D1	L5	W11	5
8	Emerson Wong-Godfrey	1114	L4	L3	W17	W14	H---	L6	W13	L2	B---	4.5
9	Liam Priest	830	L7	B---	D11	W10	W12	H---	H---	L1	L2	4.5
10	Aashi Mathur	561	B---	D11	L6	L9	W15	L7	W16	W12	L1	4.5
11	David Li	1344	L12	D10	D9	W16	L5	W14	L4	W6	L7	4
12	Lois Ruff	1027	W11	L4	L3	B---	L9	L16	W14	L10	W13	4
13	James Hamlett	1561	W14	H---	L2	H---	H---	L1	L8	W16	L12	3.5
14	Michelle Zhang	1267	L13	W17	L5	L8	W16	L11	L12	B---	L4	3
15	Brian L Morris	1382	W17	H---	L7	L3	L10	H---	U---	U---	U---	2
16	Michael M. Zhang	977	L2	L5	B---	L11	L14	W12	L10	L13	L6	2
17	Sujan Saravanan	1108	L15	L14	L8	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	0

Seattle Classic Blitz Championship (Olympiad Fundraiser)

By Jacob Mayer

The WCF hosted a Blitz Tournament after the Seattle Classic concluded on August 16 to help raise funds for the US Olympiad Team. The seven-round event was held online via Chess.com and attracted players from all around the US and the World. A total of 27 players competed in the event, including USA Team Members GM Ray Robson, IM/WGM Carissa Yip, WGM Tatev Abrahamyan, and IM John Donaldson. Team USA members were not paired with one another to offer more opportunities for local players to compete against the renowned team. Tournament Director Jacob Mayer commented what a treat it was to work with such a fabulous group of professional chess players, who were more than happy to share advice with the local competitors in between rounds.

At the end, it was GM Aleksandr Lenderman who finished in clear first with 6.5/7. GM Ray Robson finished with 6.0/7 despite live streaming and commentating his games on his Twitch feed. And Team Captain IM John Donaldson finished in clear third with 5.5/7, narrowly losing his game in the early rounds with GM Lenderman, which proved decisive in the final standings.

In total, the event raised $1000 for the US Olympiad Team! Thank you to all who were involved in putting on such a special event, including (but not limited to): Organizers Jacob Mayer, Josh Sinanan, and Florian Helff, WCF, and each of the Team USA members for their wonderful contributions to this event. We wish them the best as they go for the Gold in the FIDE Online Olympiad!

Blitz Championship Final Standings:

#	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Total
1	Aleksandr Lenderman	2717	W14	W3	W7	W5	D2	W13	W9	6.5
2	Ray Robson	2749	W10	W18	D4	W8	D1	W15	W13	6
3	John Donaldson	2420	W12	L1	W10	W16	W4	D8	W15	5.5
4	David Shahinyan	2502	W17	W8	D2	D6	L3	W5	D7	4.5
5	Carissa Yip	2493	W21	W9	W15	L1	L8	L4	W16	4
6	Anna Zatonskih	2486	W22	W16	W14	D4	L13	L9	D8	4
7	Tatev Abrahamyan	2451	W20	W13	L1	D9	L15	W16	D4	4
8	Pranav Sairam	2087	W26	L4	X21	L2	W5	D3	D6	4
9	Advaith Vijayakumar	2026	X27	L5	W17	D7	D10	W6	L1	4
10	Derin Goktepe	1930	L2	W12	L3	W21	D9	D11	W17	4
11	Jacob Mayer	1827	H---	H---	H---	H---	H---	D10	W19	4
12	Aadi Hetamsaria	1159	L3	L10	W26	L14	W21	W22	W20	4
13	Stephen Willy	1137	W15	L7	W22	W18	W6	L1	L2	4
14	Shuhan Du	1814	L1	W20	L6	W12	L16	D19	W21	3.5
15	Rushaan Mahajan	2209	L13	W22	L5	W17	W7	L2	L3	3
16	Francisco Lopez	1778	X25	L6	W18	L3	W14	L7	L5	3
17	Stephanie Velea	1700	L4	W26	L9	L15	W19	W20	L10	3
18	Brandon Jiang	2110	W19	L2	L16	L13	L20	D21	W22	2.5
19	Emerson Wong-Godfrey	1114	L18	L21	W20	W22	L17	D14	L11	2.5
20	Saarthak Malakar	1270	L7	L14	L19	W26	W18	L17	L12	2
21	Nikash Vemparala	1684	L5	W19	F8	L10	L12	D18	L14	1.5
22	Varin Nallabothula	1293	L6	L15	L13	L19	X26	L12	L18	1
23	Aleksej Aleksandrov	2708	H---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	0.5
24	Yajat Deshpande	695	H---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	0.5
25	Pavel Kotsur	2571	F16	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	0
26	Sid Siddem	988	L8	L17	L12	L20	F22	U---	U---	0
27	Edward Zuo	412	F9	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	0

In this game I am playing the legendary US captain, IM John Donaldson, who I've gotten to know quite well over the years since I coached the US Olympiad two years in a row and also played in two World Team Championships for John. This is my first ever game against him.

1.Nf3 c5 2.d4!?

A tricky move order that I use for my blitz games. Now, I either get the Smith-Morra Gambit Accepted, which I used to play a lot as a kid, or I get an Exchange Slav, which I also play.

2...cxd4 3.c3 d5

3...dxc3 4.Nxc3 is of course principled, but it's tricky to play in blitz if you don't expect it coming.

4.cxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Bf4 a6 7.Rc1 Bf5 8.e3
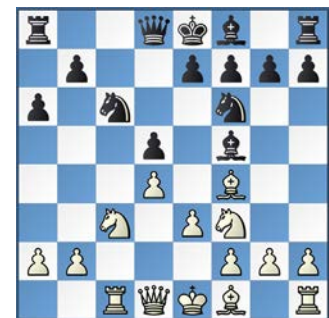
Position after 8.e3

8...e6

8...Rc8 is considered theory.

9.Qb3

An important move to disturb Black's harmony.

9...Na5?!

This is imprecise, but I didn't take advantage of it.

10.Qa4+ Nc6 11.Ne5 Qb6

Position after 11...Qb6

12.Nxc6?

Missing a chance for a big advantage.

I looked at 12.Bb5! briefly, but I didn't think it was anything special. However, it was very good for White since I simply win the c6-pawn. 12...Rc8 13.Bxc6+ bxc6 14.0-0 Be7 15.Ne2!± Black is one tempo short here in his development and that costs him.

12...bxc6

Now there is simply no knockout punch, and positionally Black isn't doing so badly anymore.

13.Be2

13.f3!? was a better try, which I also missed. This move opens the f2-square for the king and takes away the e4-square from the knight. 13...Be7 14.g4 Bg6 15.Nd1; 13.Nd1 right away doesn't work because of 13...Bb4+.

13...Be7 14.0-0 0-0 15.Qb3

15.Qd1 Qxb2 16.Na4 was perhaps a slightly better try for some initiative.

15...Qxb3 16.axb3 Nd7 17.Na4 Rfc8

Now Black is totally fine. Moreover, I think Black's position is easier to play. I was simply fishing for a plan, and from here I am ashamed of the way I played.

Position after 17...Rfc8

18.Rc3?!

What on earth was this? Just losing a tempo after …Bb4. I saw this earlier, and for some reason I blanked out and forgot about it.
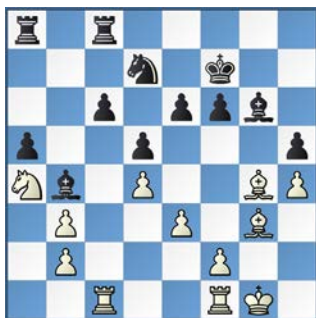
18.g4 Bg6 19.Kg2=.

18...Bb4 19.Rcc1 f6 20.g4 Bg6 21.g5 Kf7 22.h4?!

Continuing on a wrong plan.

22.gxf6.

22...Bf5 23.Bg3 a5 24.gxf6 gxf6 25.Bh5+ Bg6 26.Bg4 h5

26...Ke7.

Position after 26...h5

27.Bh3??

Now this is just very bad. I was really trying to stop Black from playing e5, but this move is just a blunder.

27.Be2= e5 28.Rfd1.

27...c5??

Missing the chance.

27...Bd3 28.Rfd1 Be2-+. I guess this game set the tone for me. When you get lucky like this, you often end up winning the tournament!

28.dxc5 Bxc5

Even here, Black is much better.

29.Rfd1 Bb4 30.Bf1 Bc2 31.Bb5
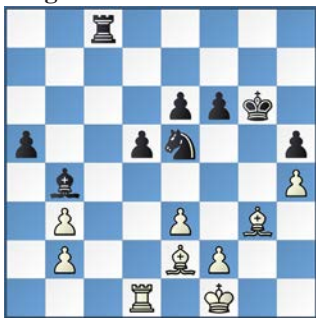
I'm just trying to confuse here.

31...Bxd1 32.Rxd1 Ne5 33.Nb6 Rab8?!

33...Rc5 34.Nxa8 Rxb5 35.Rc1 Bd6 was just crushing for Black. My knight on a8 is stranded, and my pawns are very weak.

34.Nxc8 Rxc8?

34...Rxb5 was still much better for Black.

35.Be2 Kg6 36.Kf1!

Position after 36.Kf1

My only good move in the game, a tricky move, which unexpected yielded an immediate win for me.

36...Rc2??

I couldn't believe my luck here.

37.Bxe5 fxe5 38.Bd3+

A very poor game on my part, but sometimes you need to get lucky to win a tournament.

1–0

**Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) –
Carissa Yip (2493) [E62]**
Seattle Chess Classic Blitz
Chess.com (R4), August 16, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In this game I am playing with white against Carissa Yip. We are both at 3.0/3 at the moment.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Nc3 Bf5

She plays her King's Indian, which she plays quite often.

7.Nh4 Bc8 8.0-0 c6 9.e4 e5 10.Nf3 Bg4 11.d5 Na6 12.h3 Bd7 13.Be3 cxd5 14.cxd5 b5 15.a3±

Position after 15.a3

15...Re8?!

I didn't really understand this move.

15...Nc7.

16.b4

I was very happy with the outcome out of the opening.

16...Nc7 17.Nd2 h5 18.Nf3

An overreaction to her idea.

18.Nb3. I should've just continued with my plan and not be afraid of h4. 18...h4 *(18...Qc8 19.Kh2 h4 20.Na5)* 19.Bg5.

18...Qb8 19.Qd3 Qb7 20.Rab1 Rac8 21.Rfc1 Na8 22.Nd2 a6 23.Nb3 Nb6 24.Na5

24.Nc5!

24...Qb8 25.a4 Nxa4 26.Nxa4 Rxc1+ 27.Rxc1 bxa4 28.Nc6 Qb5 29.Bf1

Looked promising in blitz since I saw I was winning the a6-pawn. However, Black had an amazing defense here which we both missed.
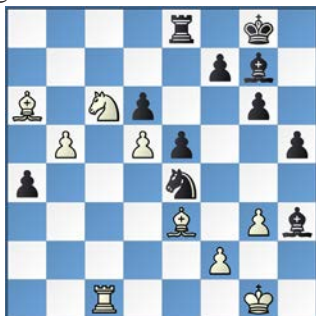
29.Qc2±.

29...Qxd3 30.Bxd3 Bxh3 31.Bxa6

31.f3 was better, but it would also allow her to play 31…Ra8 and defend her position for now.

31...Nxe4 32.b5

I thought this is more or less winning for me because the pawn is unstoppable, but there are hidden dynamic ideas here which are almost impossible to spot in a blitz game.

Position after 32.b5

32...Nc5

32...f5!? 33.b6 f4! Suddenly opening her bishop. 34.Rc4!! The only move that gives White an advantage. At this point we are reaching the "impossible for a human to find" territory, especially in a blitz game. 34...Bf5 35.gxf4 exf4 36.Bxf4 g5 37.Bc1 Nc5 38.Rxc5 dxc5 39.b7 and White should have good winning chances after winning the rook.

33.Bxc5 dxc5 34.b6 e4?!

34...Bf8 still gave defensive chances. 35.b7 Bd6 36.Ra1 Kg7 37.Rxa4 Bd7.

35.b7 e3 36.fxe3 Bf5

36...a3 37.Bc4.

37.b8Q Rxb8 38.Nxb8 a3 39.Bc4

After the smoke cleared, I ended up being up a rook. A nice game for me.

1–0

Ray Robson (2749) –
Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) [C10]
Seattle Chess Classic Blitz
Chess.com (R5), August 17, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

This game against Ray Robson was ultimately a battle for first place in the blitz event.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7

The Rubinstein is my pet opening in blitz these days.

5.Nf3 Ngf6 6.Nxf6+ Nxf6 7.Bg5 h6 8.Be3 Bd6 9.Bd3 b6 10.Qe2 Bb7 11.0-0-0 Nd5

11...0-0 right away is also possible.

12.Bd2 Nf4 13.Bxf4 Bxf4+ 14.Kb1 0-0 15.Be4 Bxe4 16.Qxe4 Qf6 17.h4 Rad8 18.g4

White starts his aggressive play against my king.

Position after 18.g4

18...Bd6?!

In blitz, my knee-jerk reaction was to meet g5 with …Qf4, but it was a passive move and a bit of a concession which gave White the initiative. I should've fought for the initiative myself with 18...c5 and not worried about 19.g5 Qf5. This position is totally fine for Black.

19.g5 Qf4 20.Qe2 h5?!

20...c5 was still better.

21.g6 fxg6 22.Qxe6+

Position after 22.Qxe6+

22...Kh8

Here I realized that my desired …Qf7? is met with Ng5! winning the exchange.

22...Qf7? 23.Ng5 Qxe6 24.Nxe6±.

23.Ng5 Rf6

23...Qf5 was better.

24.Qc4 Rg8?!

An awkward move. 24...Re8.

25.a3

25.f3! Qf5 26.Ne4±.

25...Qf5 26.Rde1 Bf4 27.Ne6 Bd6 28.f4!?

Fighting for the win.

Position after 28.f4

28...b5 29.Qb3 a5

29...c6! was strong, preventing d5, which cements the knight on e6.

30.d5 Rb8 31.Rhg1 a4 32.Qf3 Bxf4 33.Ref1 Bd6 34.Qxf5 gxf5 35.Nxg7 Rg8 36.Nxh5 Rxg1 37.Rxg1 Rh6

37...Rf7 was better. 38.Ng3 Rg7 39.Ne2 Rxg1+ 40.Nxg1 Kg7=.

38.Rg5 f4 39.Rf5 f3?
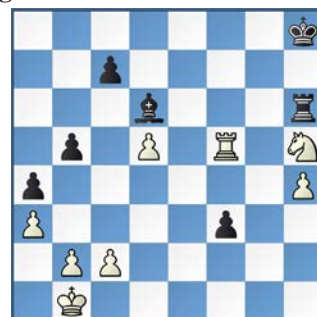
Position after 39...f3

This is a mistake which thankfully for me went unpunished, partially because by now he was getting very low on time, having under 30 seconds. 39...Kh7 40.Nxf4 Rxh4 41.Ne6 Rh1+ 42.Ka2 Kg6 gave better drawing chances.

40.Nf4?

40.Nf6! was very nasty, with the idea of meeting 40…Rxh4? with 41.Rg5!! I think we both missed this. *(41.Rxf3 Rh1+ 42.Ka2 Rh2 I thought I'll just have to play this endgame.)*

40...f2 41.Nd3 Rxh4 42.Rxf2 Rd4

Now luckily for me I get the pawn back.

43.Rf5 Kg7 44.Kc1 Kg6 45.Rf3 Rxd5 46.Kd2

Game drawn by agreement. A very nice fight and a close shave. I think it was a well-played game for a blitz game.

½–½

"METHINKS, MY KING, THAT YON BISHOP DOTH MOCK YOUR COMMAND TO IGNORE THE ROYAL CDC GUIDELINES."

Readers' Showcase
(Miscellaneous Games Submitted For Publication)

**Jamie Lang (1774) –
Jeffrey T. Roland (1584) [C54]**
Let\\'s Play! Chess.com
June 11, 2020 through October 3, 2020
[Jeffrey Roland]

Seven days per move.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5

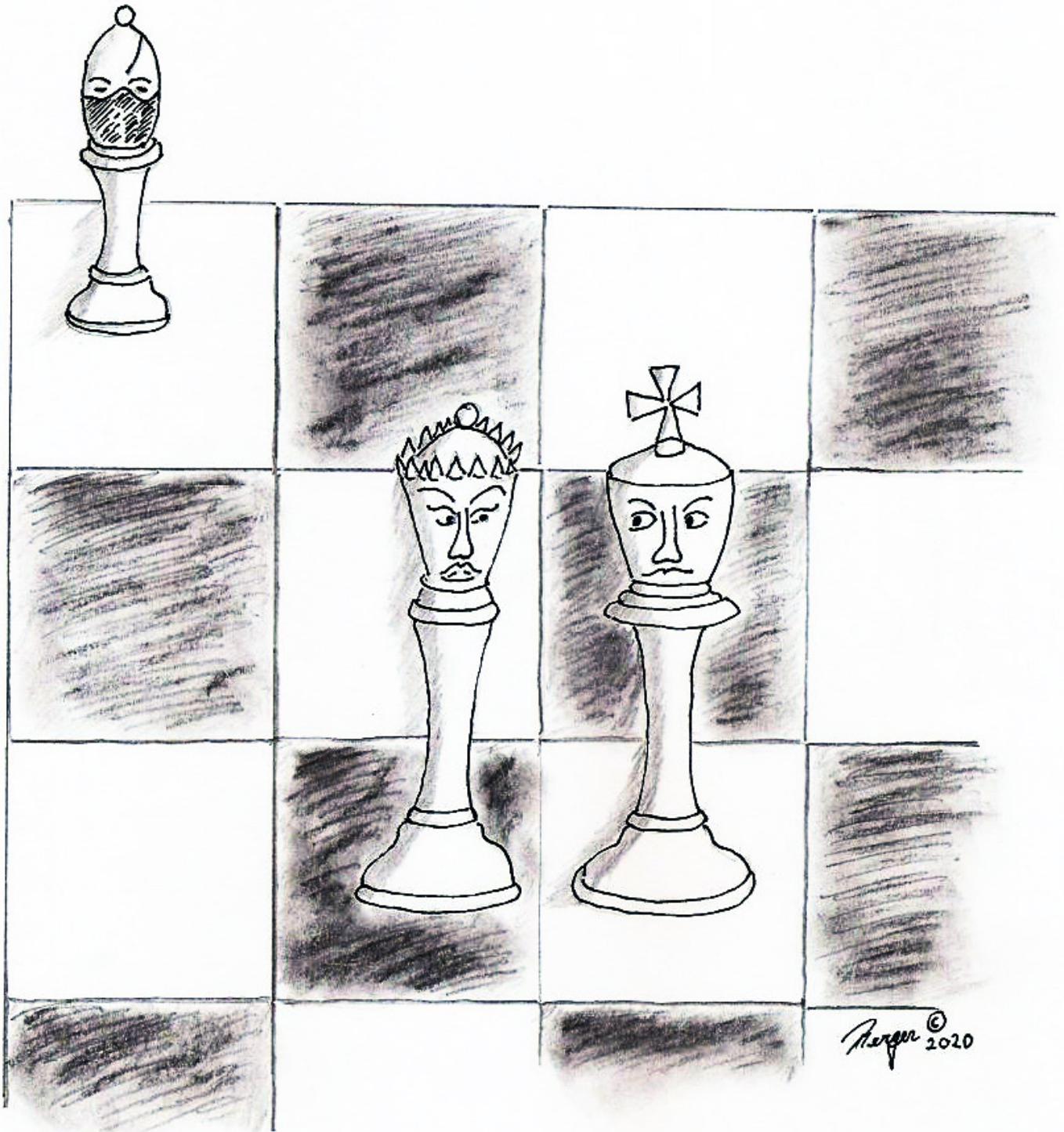The Giuoco Piano. I guess this is becoming popular again. It is certainly a beautiful opening. It was somewhat of a surprise to me to see Jamie Lang play this though. He usually has played 3.Bb5 in our casual games. I normally play the Two Knights' Defense with 3...Nf6 here, however, as this was a correspondence game, I decided to try to learn something new (or old!).

4.c3 Nf6 5.d3 a6 6.Bb3 d6 7.0-0 Ba7

I remembered a long time ago, in the Karpov vs Korchnoi match of 1981, they took great pride in finding an improvement that allowed Black to go to a7 in one move rather than two... something like that. Anyway, that's kind of why I played ...a6 when I did too.

8.Nbd2 0-0 9.h3 h6 10.Re1 Be6

Now that ...h6 has been played, I felt I could do this because if White takes on e6 and doubles my pawns, I get the open f-file with a bishop aiming at f2 (and things like ...Nh5, ...Qf6 possible, and g3 by White not possible due to my bishop-pin along the long diagonal a7–g1), so it would have to be good, plus this is a

Old Knight. Photo credit: Philip Peterson.

good developing move anyway and with ...Qd7 I can look to bust open the kingside should White make an error.

11.Nf1 Re8 12.Ng3

It does seem pretty intimidating being Black and seeing these two knights getting ready to pounce!

12...Bxb3 13.axb3 d5 14.Qe2 dxe4 15. dxe4 Kh7

Position after 15...Kh7

In so many lines I was thinking that White is just better. Moves like Be3, and Rad1, I just couldn't find anything weak in White's position. But I did see a weakness in mine. I felt that when an eventual Nf5 comes, h6 would be weak and I would have trouble kicking him out if the h6–pawn isn't defended.

16.b4

This was probably played to prevent Black from playing ...Bc5 next move and regrouping defense to the kingside. Also White seems to threaten b5, sort of, but not yet. Before White plays b5, he must take away Black's ...Bxf2+ tactic.

16...Qd7 17.Nh4 Ne7 18.Nhf5 Neg8 19.Rd1

White keeps hitting Black, but given that Black has pretty good development, I don't think anything bad is going to happen. But the big decision is where to put the queen.

19...Qe6 20.Nh4

20.Be3 Nxe4? 21.Qg4! Ng5 22.Bxg5 hxg5 23.Qxg5+-.

20...Rad8 21.Be3

White wisely does this now, completing his development and taking away most of Black's tricks in the position.

21...Bxe3 22.Qxe3 Qb3 23.Rxd8 Rxd8

24.Qe2 Ne7 25.Nf3 Ng6

Oddly enough, White's 25.Nf3 practically forces me to go to this great square. Now I'm looking at ...Nf4, which could seriously win the b-pawn! Jamie finds a move that surprisingly works here.

26.Rc1 Nf4 27.Qc2 Qxc2 28.Rxc2 Rd1+ 29.Kh2

This position I probably spent the most time on the entire game. I wanted to play 29...Nd3, which now that I can look at computers, it turns out that was best! But during the game, I can't use a computer, and so I was trying to figure everything out. In so many of my variations I found that White could sometimes thwart me with the simple Nxe5.

29...Nd7 30.Ne2

I had not even seen this move as a possibility, and yet he played it, therefore it must be good, right?

30...Nd3 31.Ng3

Perhaps Jamie was hoping I would go for a draw here by repeating the position. The thing is, it's really not easy to find a move for White here, so I felt like I was winning here and played a move which further tied up White's possibilities.
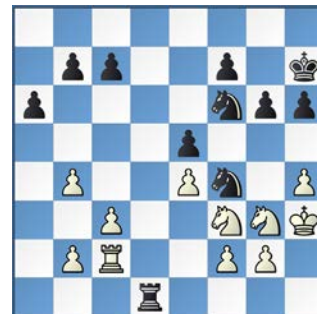
31...g6 32.h4?

Okay, this move was just bad! I don't know what White was thinking here. Now my knights can infiltrate at will.

32...Nf6 33.Kh3

This move loses to mate in two. He played this after only about five minutes thought. I played my reply with about five seconds thought.

33...Nf4+

Position after 33...Nf4+

0–1

Book Review

The Grandmaster: Magnus Carlsen and the Match that Made Chess Great Again. Review by Breck Haining.

The setting: New York City. The time: November 2016. Protesters have gathered outside Trump International Hotel & Tower to express their outrage at the election of Donald Trump as 45th president of the United States. A few blocks away, at the Palm Court of the Plaza Hotel, men and women in elegant attire have gathered for an entirely different purpose. By invitation only they have come to witness the opening ceremony of the World Chess Championship tournament between reigning champion Magnus Carlsen and challenger Sergey Karjakin. Brin-Jonathan Butler, author of *The Grandmaster: Magnus Carlsen and the Match that Made Chess Great Again,* has been given an assignment by Publishing House Simon & Schuster to answer three questions: 1) Why wasn't Carlsen more of a household name? 2) What was the secret to his greatness? and 3) How long could he continue to do it?

I found "The Grandmaster" at a local bookstore a day after the air had cleared sufficiently to venture out of the house. I had seen the book before. It came out about two years ago. On the cover a quote from the Los Angeles Review of Books proclaimed, "sports writing at its finest." For whatever reason I was motivated to purchase the book. I took it home and began reading immediately.

"The Grandmaster" is not typical of books one finds in the chess section of a bookstore. There are no diagrams, no tactics, no openings, nor game analyses. Butler never meets the champion or challenger, and truly little is said about the match itself. Instead, Butler writes about his investigations into chess, the people he meets, the leads he chases down, and speculates on why some are completely absorbed into the sport. He writes about the oft-told tale of chess geniuses and madness, setting the reader up to wonder whether at the highest levels players are pushed the brink of a mental breakdown.

An attempt is made to link the 2016 championships to the cold war and the 1972 World Chess Championship match, where Bobby Fischer famously defeated Boris Spassky. Carlsen is reportedly a fan of Donald Trump. Ties are made between Karjakin and Vladimir Putin. In the opening round, in an apparent nod to Trump, Carlsen plays the Trompowsky.

After seven draws the eighth round ends in victory for Karjakin. The stage is set for the reader to ask, "Will Carlsen crack up?"

"The Grandmaster" is not intended for chess players, nor aficionados, rather it is written for the "laity." Butler strives to convey to the uninitiated what it takes to play at the highest levels. I liked how he understood at higher levels chess is a sport. The book is not intended for children. I am fairly conservative in my views and there is language in the book I would not approve of my children reading had the book been out when they were younger, but this is not why I say the book is not intended for children. There are many cultural references which children simply would not understand: Captain Kirk's chair in "Star Trek," Stanley Kubrick and "2001: A Space Odyssey," Harry Houdini, Humphrey Bogart, Andy Warhol, Yoko Ono, Franz Kafka, "The Catcher in the Rye" and crowds seeking answers from JD Salinger—at times it seems there is an excessive amount of name dropping; chapters titles in the book: "Still Searching for Bobby Fischer" and "Finding Josh Waitzkin"; even the reference in the title of the book to Trump's MAGA, Make America Great Again. It is through these cultural references that Butler conveys to those with but a passing knowledge of chess what the sport is about.

Overall, I enjoyed the book. I found it a light read. When I set the

book down, I soon wanted to pick it up again and read more. The most interesting character for me was Imad Khachan, owner of the Chess Forum, who after the attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11/2001, opened his shop to people who had nowhere to go, recognizing his shop would offer some measure of refuge to those who indulge in the sport or game.

In the closing pages of the book Butler strives to answer the three questions he was given. The reader may not find his speculations entirely satisfactory, but his description of Carlsen's end to the final match game arguably is masterful. He conveys to the non-enthusiast the beauty and creativity the chess world was seeking in "50.Qh6+!!"
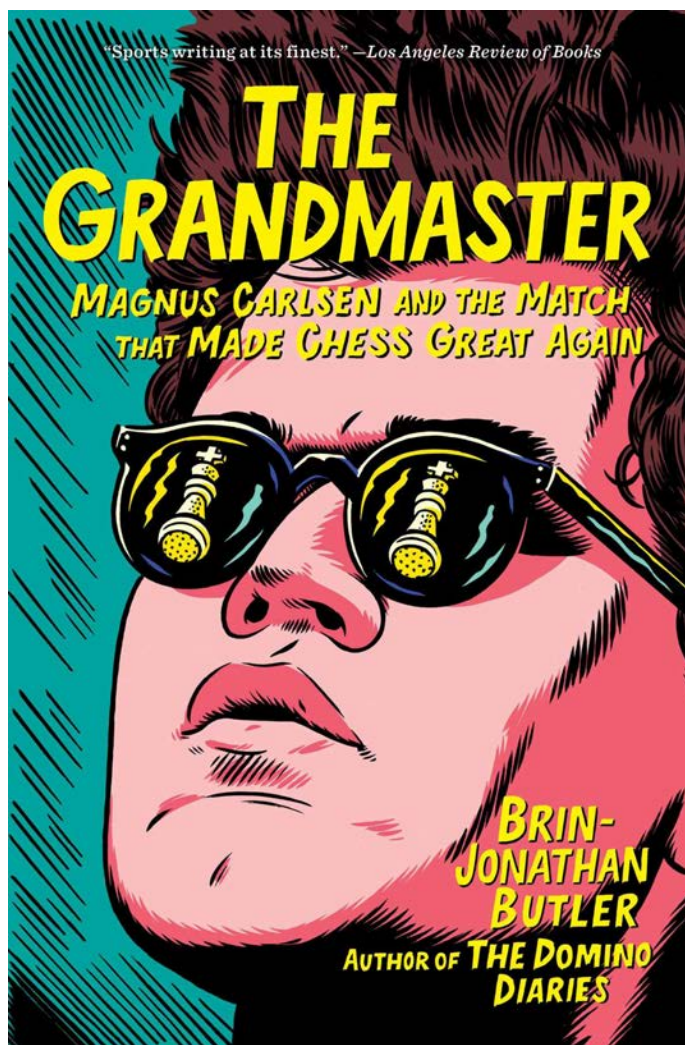
Oregon Class Championships
Nov. 7-8, 2020
US Chess online rated

This year's tournament is dedicated to David Yoshinaga in appreciation for his many years of guidance as President of the Oregon Chess Federation.

> The Oregon Chess Federation has re-joined *Northwest Chess* and so OCF membership will once again require subscription. OCF members can purchase the "Basic" subscription (online only, Adult $17.50; Junior $10) or the "Premium" subscription (which includes both print and online magazines, Adult $30; Junior $24.)

4-round Swiss in 5 sections—Players may play up one section for additional fee of $10

M/X (2000+); Class A (1800-1999); Class B (1600-1799);

Class C (1400-1599); Under 1400

Prizes in each class: $80-45, based on 10 entries in that class

Entry Fee: $25

Time control: G/90, inc. 30 **Rounds:** 10:00 am & 2:00 pm, each day

The top Oregon finisher in the Master-Expert section is seeded into the 2021 Oregon Closed Championship. Next Oregon finisher in M/X, who has not qualified for the Championship, is seeded into the 2021 Oregon Closed Challengers.

Registration: Online only through the *Northwest Chess* registration system: https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/ Deadline is Friday, November 6 at 7p.m.

Other: OCF/WCF & US Chess memberships required. OCF renewals will require either paper or online subscription to *Northwest Chess* magazine. OSA. Classes may be combined if fewer than 8 players in a section. One half-point bye allowed if requested before round 1.

Rating system: US Chess regular ratings will be used for determining class and pairings.

Online play: All games will be played through lichess.org. Accounts are free. Players must also have a camera on their computer or phone so they can be observed through Zoom.com during their games. Pairings will be made manually and sent before each round.

Fair Play procedures:

1. All players (or their parents, if under 18) will sign the Oregon Fair Play statement.
2. Before prizes are paid the Fair Play Committee will determine whether there are violations of the Fair Play rules. Violators may be banned from future tournaments.

Information: Mike Morris, mikejmorris@earthlink.net. Text or phone: 971-409-4841

Oregon Open

By Josh Sinanan

Amidst the global COVID-19 pandemic, organizers from Oregon and Washington teamed up to host the 2020 Oregon Open online via Chess.com over Labor Day weekend, September 5-7. The idea to host the Oregon Open online, with the goal of preserving the tradition of Oregon's largest annual open tournament, came up in a conversation between WCF President Josh Sinanan and OCF Treasurer Mike Morris back in mid-July. The outcome was a collaborative effort between the Oregon Chess Federation, Portland Chess Club, and Washington Chess Federation to host the tournament virtually on Chess.com, the world's largest online chess platform.

A total of 94 chess players took part in the three-day six-round chess festival: 29 from Oregon, 54 from Washington, and 11 from other places throughout the world including Idaho, California, New York, Illinois, British Columbia, Ontario, Peru, and Russia. The players were spread even across four sections: Open, U2000, U1600, and U1200. Sixty-four juniors, one for each square of the chess board, competed in the Oregon Open Scholastic on Saturday, September 5. A ten-round blitz tournament featuring 17 players, including a GM, FM, and NM, took place Saturday evening. Nine speed chess wizards reconvened on Sunday evening for the 12-round Bullet Championship, which was run as three four-round Swiss tournaments. WCF Adult Chess Director Rekha Sagar directed the tournament with assistance from legendary Oregon organizer Mike Morris and WCF President Josh Sinanan.

GM Alex Lenderman (2719 – 2722, 5.0/6) from New York won the 28-player Open section with an undefeated 5.0/6 after defeating FM Talukdar, his nearest rival, in the fifth round. FM Rohan Talukdar (2425 – 2422, 4.5/6), a strong Canadian FIDE Master based in Ontario with two IM Norms, finished in clear second place half-a-point back. Four players rounded out the Open section prize winners by tying for =third/first U2200/second U2200 at 4.0/6: Daniel Shubin (2161 – 2174, 4.0/6) from Redmond, Nicholas Whale (2053 – 2065, 4.0/6) from Mountlake Terrace, Ryan Lu (1948 – 1969, 4.0/6) from Beaverton, and Havish Sripada (1932 – 1975, 4.0/6) from Portland.

Kushal Pai (1687 – 1752, 5.0/6), a high school Junior from Portland, emerged the winner of the 26-player U2000 section with an impressive 5.0/6, conceding only two draws along the way! A trio of players tied for second place with a 4.5/6 points apiece: Valentin Razmov (1986 – 1961, 4.5/6) from Seattle, Randy Smolensky (1866 – 1857, 4.5/6) from Myrtle Creek, and young Michael Shapiro (1502 – 1619, 4.5/6) from Sammamish. Shapiro, the son of five-time Washington State Champion FM Slava Mikhailuk, won the U1800 prize for his efforts. Brandon Peng (1697 – 1707, 4.0/6), a high school freshman at Lakeside School from Medina, captured second U1800 honors with an undefeated 4.0/6 score.

Young Saarthak Malakar (1296 – 1403, 6.0/6) from Portland took down the 26-player U1600 section with a splendid 6.0/6 performance! Two Washington juniors tied for second place at 5.0/6: Northern Brown (1419 – 1495, 5.0/6) from Bellevue and Emma Li (1476 – 1487, 5.0/6) from Redmond. Since regular US Chess ratings were used to determine prizes, Emma won the first U1400 prizes for her efforts. Four players split the second place U1400 prize: Geoff Kenway (1350 – 1328, 4.0/6) from Troutdale, Jamie Zhu (1175 – 1291, 4.0/6) from Sammamish, Emerson Wong-Godfrey (1133 – 1197, 4.0/6) from Seattle, and Ted Wang (813 – 937, 4.0/6) from Medina.

Thomas Schuff (1244 – 1271, 6.0/6), a high school Junior from Portland, won the 14-player U1200 section with a marvelous 6.0/6 score! Sawyer Bergstedt (523 – 754, 5.0/6), a student from Dr. Nancy Keller's Chess Club in Coquille, captured clear second place with 5.0/6. Young Ashvant Daniel (943 – 1000, 4.5/6) from Portland took home the first place U1000 prize with an impressive 4.5/6 points.

GM Alex Lenderman completed the Oregon Open Triple Crown by winning both the 17-player Oregon Open Blitz Championship and nine-player Oregon Open Bullet Championship! GM Lenderman (2570 – 2571, 10.0/10), who is originally from New York but now studies with Susan Polgar at Webster University, won the Blitz with a perfect 10.0/10 and the Bullet Championship with 11.0/12! Remarkably, Lenderman's only loss in the entire event came at the hands of Canadian FM Sohal in a one-minute bullet game. FM Tanraj Sohal (2081 – 2085, 8.5/10) from Surrey, B.C., finished in clear second place in both the Blitz and Bullet Championships. NM Ted Belanoff (1889 – 1907, 8.0/10), from New York, rounded out the Blitz Prize winners one and a half points ahead of the field.

Young Benjamin Yin, from Lexington, Massachusetts, cruised to a clear third place finish in the Bullet Championship with 7.0/12.

Congratulations to the winners!

As is now becoming customary, GM Alex Lenderman has kindly annotated several of his games from the Oregon Open for the Northwest Chess readers to enjoy.

**Michael Moore (1950) –
Aleksej Aleksandrov (2608) [C91]**
Oregon Open Chess.com
(R1), September 5, 2020
[Ralph Dubisch]

Before all the sheltering-in-place, the number of games submitted to the magazine tended to be manageable. I'd scan virtually all of them, pick a few based on both chess appeal and editorial needs, and annotate as space allowed.

Now, with all the games being played online and automatically submitted, we have a pgn (portable game notation) file of perhaps 1000 new games each month. Just playing over all these games for one issue could bankrupt the games editor time budget for the entire year.

So I need to apply new selection criteria. Since strong Grandmasters are annotating their own games in NW events these days, I thought I'd focus on a non-master who scores well and often manages to produce very interesting chess.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.d4

Position after 9.d4

9.h3 is the most common move, avoiding the ...Bg4 pin before attempting to occupy the center, and leading to centuries of theory.

9...Bg4 10.Be3 Bh5

10...exd4 11.cxd4 Na5 12.Bc2 c5 *(12... Nc4 13.Bc1 c5 14.b3)* 13.h3, etc. Tale as old as time...

11.d5

11.h3; 11.Nbd2.

11...Na5 12.Bc2 Nc4 13.Bc1 c6 14.b3

I don't think White needs to expend a move (and create slight queenside weaknesses) to drive away the knight here. 14.dxc6 Qc7 15.Nbd2.

14...Nb6 15.dxc6 Qc7 16.Nbd2 Qxc6 17.Bb2 a5 18.a4?!

Perhaps an overreaction to Black's queenside advance, creating permanent weaknesses. 18.Qe2 a4 19.Rab1 axb3 *(19...a3 20.Ba1)* 20.axb3. Black has a pleasant game and clearly some initiative, but White looks solid.

18...bxa4 19.bxa4 Rab8 20.Bd3 Nxa4 21.Qxa4 Qxa4 22.Rxa4 Rxb2 23.Nc4 Rb3 24.Rc1
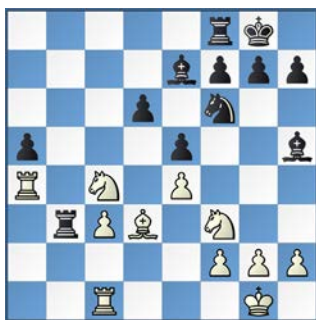
Position after 24.Rc1

24...d5?!

24...Bxf3 25.gxf3 *(25.Nxa5 Bxe4! 26.Bxe4 Rb6∓)* 25...Rc8 26.Rxa5 Nh5.. The weakness of c3 and Black's secured outpost on f4 offer an edge.

25.exd5 e4?!

25...Nxd5 26.Nfxe5 Nxc3 27.Rxa5 is heading to a no-win situation. So Black enters the complications. Also 25...Bxf3 26.d6 *(26.gxf3 Nxd5 27.Nxe5)* 26...Bxd6 *(26...Bc6 27.dxe7 Bxa4 28.exf8Q+ Kxf8 29.Nxa5)* 27.Nxd6 Bd5 28.Rxa5 leads nowhere.

26.Nfd2! Rb5

26...Rxc3!? would be complex, but ultimately no more successful: 27.Rxc3 Bb4 28.Nxe4! Nxe4 29.Rca3!

a) 29.Bxe4 Bxc3 30.d6 *(30.Nxa5 f5 31.Bc2 Bxa5 32.Rxa5 Rc8 33.g4! Bxg4 34.d6)*;

b) 29.Rc1 Nc3 30.Raa1 Be2 31.Nb2 Bxd3 32.Nxd3 Ne2+ 33.Kf1 Nxc1 34.Rxc1 is a tactical flurry leading to dead equality.
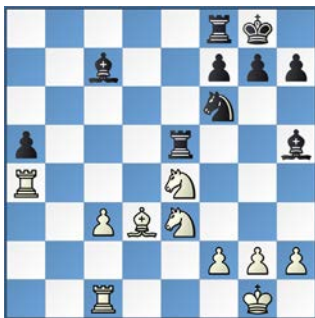
29...Nc5 30.Nxa5 Bxa3 31.Rxa3±.

27.d6! Bxd6 28.Nxe4?

Why not 28.Nxd6!, hitting the rook b5? 28...Rd5 29.N6xe4 Rxd3 *(or 29...Nxe4 30.Bxe4 Rxd2 31.Rxa5±)* 30.Nxf6+ gxf6

31.Rxa5± leaves White clearly ahead in the ending, though Black may be able to grovel a draw eventually.

28...Bc7 29.Ne3 Re5

Position after 29...Re5

30.Ng3?!

For some reason White now avoids exchanges, leading to some awkward piece placements. 30.Nxf6+ should be completely equal: 30...gxf6 31.Ng4 Re6 *(31...Bxg4 32.Rxg4+ Kh8 33.Rc4 (33. Rh4 Rd8 34.Rxh7+?! (34.Bxh7) 34...Kg8 35.Rh3 (35.Bb1?? Red5-+)))* 32.Bf5 Rd6 33.Ne3.

30...Bg6 31.Bf1

31.Bxg6 fxg6. White really shouldn't have much trouble holding this position either.

31...h5 32.Ba6

32.Ne2.

32...Nd7 33.Be2 Nc5 34.Ra3 Rb8 35. Nc4
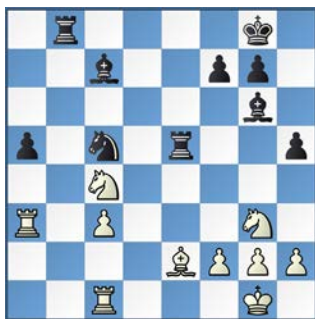
Position after 35.Nc4

35...Ree8

Black likely also considered 35...Rxe2 36.Nxe2 Bd3 37.Nxa5 Bxe2, and perhaps decided it could be difficult to convert with no favorable pawn imbalance.

36.Bxh5?

36.Bf1 a4∓.

36...Bxg3 37.Bxg6 Bf4 38.Bxf7+

If the goal is to struggle on, removing the a5–pawn seems more critical than taking f7. 38.Rd1 fxg6 39.Rxa5 Ne4 40.g3. It's hard to believe White has any real chances

to survive, but at least there are still some technical questions.

38...Kxf7 39.Rca1 a4

The rest is, as they say, a matter of technique, and the Grandmaster is quite up to the task.

40.g3 Re4 41.Na5 Bc7 42.Nc6 Rb3 43.Nd4 Rxa3 44.Rxa3 Be5 45.Nc6 Bf6 46.Na5 Re1+ 47.Kg2 Rc1 48.c4 Bb2 49.Rf3+ Kg6 50.Nc6 Bf6 51.Rf4 a3 52.Nb4 Rb1 53.Na2 Rb2 54.Nc1 Rc2

0–1

**Eddie Chang (1887) –
Michael Moore (1950) [E51]**
Oregon Open Chess.com
(R2), September 5, 2020
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Bd2

A lesser line, but not at all bad for White.

4...0-0 5.e3

Position after 5.e3

5...d5

I'd probably try 5...b6 instead. In general Black's b4–bishop is exerting indirect influence on the e4–square, so if Black can achieve piece control in the center, that's a success for the ...Bb4 pin.

If Black sets up the ...e6/...d5 central pawns, exchanging the dark bishop for a knight-c3 makes less positional sense.

6.Nf3 c5 7.a3 Bxc3 8.Bxc3 b6 9.cxd5

9.dxc5 bxc5 10.Bd3±.

9...exd5?!

9...Nxd5.

10.Rc1

10.dxc5 bxc5 11.Bxf6 Qxf6 12.Qxd5 Qxb2 13.Rd1± is an obscure tactically forcing line.

10...c4 11.Ne5 Bf5 12.Be2 Re8 13.0-0 Nbd7 14.f4 Ne4 15.g4 Nxc3 16.Rxc3 Be4 17.Bf3 Nf6 18.g5 Bxf3 19.Qxf3 Ne4 20.Rc2 b5

20...f6!? 21.gxf6 Qxf6 is fairly balanced.

21.Rg2 a5

Position after 21...a5

22.Qh5

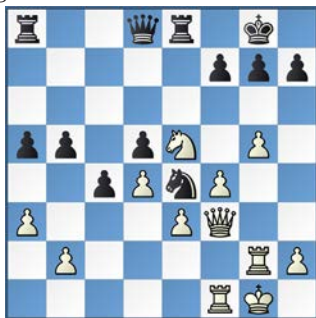22.f5! Nxg5 (22...f6 23.gxf6 Nxf6± *(23...Qxf6? 24.Ng4+- followed by the can-opener f5–f6.))* 23.Qh5 f6 24.h4±. White's attack starts to look quite dangerous here.

22...g6 23.Qh6 Rxe5!? 24.fxe5?

While it's understandable that White wants to open the f-file, it is quite difficult to get anything going along that line. The weakened g5–pawn, however, begins to require major-piece support. 24.dxe5 is, therefore, stronger. 24...Qf8 appears necessary to avoid problems with a rook-lift to the h-file. 25.Qxf8+ Kxf8 26.Rd1± targeting d5, and slowing the mobile black pawn mass.

24...b4 25.axb4 axb4 26.Rg4
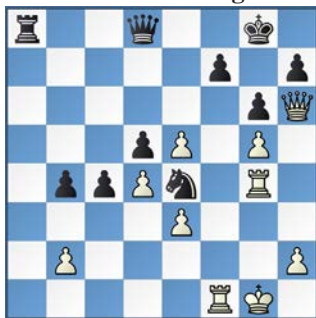
Position after 26.Rg4

Rg4 is not a mistake per se, but combined with the plan of h4–h5 it turns out badly. 26.h4 is fine here, as White can force through h5 and hxg6. For example 26...Qd7 27.h5 Qh3 28.hxg6 Qxe3+ 29.Kh2 fxg6 30.Qh3.

26...Ra7 27.h4?

After this the queen never escapes from its box, as White can't find the time to push it on to h5. The loose rook-g4 gives Black extra time to infiltrate with major pieces.

27.Rg2∞ or 27.Kh1.

27...Qc8 28.Rgf4 Qh3 29.R4f3 Qg4+ 30.Kh2 c3 31.e6 Qxe6 32.bxc3 Ra2+ 33.Kh1 Qd6 34.Rf4 Ng3+ 35.Kg1 Nf5

35...Nxf1 36.Kxf1 Qa6+ is even stronger, though it's hard to argue with a move that forces resignation!

0–1

**Michael Moore (1950) –
Sridhar Seshadri (1626) [B04]**
Oregon Open Chess.com
(R3), September 6, 2020
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.Nf3 e6

Not recommended. Black needs to challenge White's center, and the c8–bishop should participate either at f5, directly hitting center squares or on g4, pinning and contesting the squares the f3–knight controls.

4...Bg4 5.Be2 e6 would make more sense.

5.c4 Nb6 6.exd6 cxd6 7.Nc3 Be7 8.Bd3 Nc6 9.Qe2±

I'd prefer 9.0-0, as I am not yet certain where the queen belongs.

9...0-0 10.h4!?

Making 0-0 less secure, but setting a basic opening trap...

10...Bf6??

10...e5! should lead to dynamic and roughly balanced possibilities. Sacs on h7 don't work here because Black can take, retreat to g8, and defend along the diagonal with ...Bf5 when faced with the attack in the next note.

Position after 10..Bf6

11.Bg5??

If you're going to set up the tactic with h4, you should at least follow through when the opponent allows the sacrifice. Completely winning is the standard Greco-Roman 11.Bxh7+! Kxh7 12.Ng5+ Kg8 13.Qh5 Bxg5 *(13...Re8 avoids mate for a while, if you enjoy torturing yourself. 14.Qxf7+ Kh8 15.Nce4 Bxd4 16.Rh3 Ne7 17.Nxd6 Nf5 18.Nxe8, and it doesn't get any better.)* 14.hxg5 f6 15.g6.

11...h6

11...d5 12.c5 Nd7±.

12.Qe4 g6 13.Bxh6 d5 14.Qf4

14.cxd5 exd5 15.Qf4 Re8+ 16.Kf1±.

14...e5 15.dxe5 Nxe5 16.0-0-0 Nxd3+ 17.Rxd3 Bg7

17...Bf5±.

18.Bxg7 Kxg7 19.h5 Qf6 20.h6+ Kh7 21.Qxf6 Rg8 22.Ng5#

1–0

**Nicholas Whale (2065) –
Michael Moore (1950) [B51]**
Oregon Open Chess.com
(R4), September 6, 2020
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Nd7 4.0-0 a6 5.Bd3 Ngf6 6.c3 e6

More common: 6...b5 7.Bc2 Bb7 8.Re1 e5 9.d4 Be7 10.Nbd2 0-0 11.Nf1 Re8 with a very familiar feel. Weirder: 6...Ne5!? 7.Nxe5 dxe5 8.Bc2∞ has a more unique aspect.

7.Bc2 Be7 8.d4 Qc7 9.Bg5 b5 10.Nbd2 Bb7 11.Re1 e5

As occasionally happens, the Sicilian has transformed into a Spanish (Ruy Lopez) structure.

12.Rc1 0-0 13.Nf1 Rfe8 14.Ng3 h6 15.Bxf6 Nxf6 16.d5 a5 17.Nd2 a4 18.Bd3

18.c4!∞.

18...c4 19.Be2 a3?!

Position after 19...a3

No need to rush forward. Stockfish gives 19...Bc8!, apparently with the point that from d7, the bishop defends b5, and eventually the threat of a tactical advance will force White into either b3 or a3, creating either a passed black a-pawn or a big hole on b3.

If White tries to break up the queenside pawns right away, things go awry: 20.b3 *(20.a3 Nd7∓)* 20...cxb3 21.axb3 *(21.Bxb5 Bg4! 22.Ne2 Reb8 23.Bc6 b2 24.Rb1 a3∓)* 21...Bd7∓.

20.b3 cxb3 21.Qxb3 Ba6

21...Reb8.

22.Qxa3?!

Black has plenty of compensation for the pawn here — really it's hard to worry at all about the pawn at this stage. Black's bishop-pair and nice potential outposts for the knight, open lines for the majors, and pressure on weak white pawns probably should be evaluated as a slight edge.

22.c4 might be better, starting to eliminate weak pawns on the road to equality.

22...b4??

Apparently just an oversight, perhaps missing that the black queen would be under attack after cxb4, or the error could have been slightly deeper, thinking ...Bxe2 would be possible.

23.cxb4 Qb6

23...Bxe2 24.Qxa8 Qxc1 25.Qxe8+ game over.

24.Rc6 Qd4 25.Nb3 Bxe2 26.Qxa8 Qxb4 27.Qa5

Not much more to say. All the tactics work for White.

27...Qxa5 28.Nxa5 Bd3 29.Nc4 Ra8 30.Nb2 Bb5 31.Rb6 Be8 32.a4 Nd7 33.Rb7 Bd8 34.Nd3 Rxa4 35.Nf5 Ra6 36.Nb4 Rb6 37.Rxb6 Bxb6 38.Nxd6 Bc5 39.Nxe8 Bxb4 40.Rb1 Bc5 41.Rb7 Nb6 42.Nd6 Nxd5 43.exd5 Bxd6 44.Rd7 Bc5 45.Rd8+ Kh7 46.d6 Kg6 47.d7 Kf6 48.Re8 Bb6 49.d8Q+ Bxd8 50.Rxd8 Ke6 51.Kf1

1–0

**Michael Moore (1950) –
Zoey Tang (2097) [B63]**
Oregon Open Chess.com
(R5), September 7, 2020
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Bg5 e6 7.Qd2 Be7 8.0-0-0 0-0

Position after 8...0-0.

9.Nxc6?!

Mr. Moore often goes his own way in

the opening around move nine or ten. 9.f4 is the most popular — and the most theoretical — line here. 9...Nxd4 *(9... h6 10.h4!?)* 10.Qxd4 Qa5 11.Bc4 *(11. Kb1!?)* 11...Bd7 12.e5 dxe5 13.fxe5 Bc6 14.Bd2 Nd7 *(14...Bc5 15.Qh4 Nd7 with complications.)* 15.Nd5 Qd8 16.Nxe7+ Qxe7 17.Rhe1 Rfd8± : bishop-pair advantage for White, two vs three pawn-islands structural edge to Black, but White's pieces are more mobile and aggressive, and the e5–pawn confers space to maneuver as well. Theory (and several games) actually continues further from here: 18.Qg4 Nf8 19.Bd3 Rd5 *(19... Rxd3!? 20.cxd3 Qd7 21.Bb4 Ng6± has been tried more than once.)* 20.Bb4 *(or 20.Be4 Rd7 21.Bb4 Rxd1+ 22.Rxd1)* 20... Qd8 21.Bd6 Ng6± . But enough on the theory tangent. Back to the real chess.

9...bxc6 10.f4 d5 11.Be2 Rb8 12.Qe3 Qc7?!

12...h6 13.h4; 12...c5.

13.e5! Ne8

13...Qb7! 14.b3 *(14.Na4 Ne4 15.Bxe7 Qxe7 16.Bf3 Rb4 17.Rd4 Rxd4 18.Qxd4 c5∞)* 14...Ba3+ 15.Kb1 Nd7∞.

14.Bxe7 Qxe7 15.Na4

Suddenly White establishes good knight vs bad bishop, with a strong bind on the dark squares.

15...Qb4

15...Rb4 16.Rd4 Nc7 17.c3?! *(17.Qc3 Rxd4 18.Qxd4±)* 17...Rb5!

16.Rd4 Qa5 17.Qc3 Qxc3 18.bxc3!? Nc7 19.Nc5 f6

Position after 19...f6.

20.Re1

More accurate is 20.Rf1!, when 20...fxe5? 21.fxe5 Rxf1+ 22.Bxf1 succeeds only in exchanging Black's remaining active piece. Black's position is very difficult and may already be lost.

20...fxe5 21.fxe5 a5

21...Rf2 probably doesn't equalize, but may offer more hope. 22.Ra4 *(22.Bf3 Ba6; 22.Bf1 Nb5 23.Rb4 Rb6 24.Kb2*

d4 25.c4 Nc3 26.a3± seems a dance too intricate for the bulls-in-the-china-shop role that rooks normally play. Nb3 is coming soon to undermine much of Black's counterplay.) 22...Nb5 23.Bxb5 Rxb5 24.Nd3 Rf7 25.c4±.

22.Kd2 Nb5

22...Rf2 23.Rg4.

23.Rg4 Rf5? 24.Bd3 Rf2+ 25.Ke3 Rf7 26.Rb1! Ra8 27.Rb3+-

All of Black's activity has been Petrosianed off the board, leaving only the problem of organizing the final onslaught. White manages this in exemplary style.

27...g6 28.a4 d4+ 29.cxd4 Nc7 30.c4 Na6 31.Ne4 Nb4 32.Nf6+ Kh8
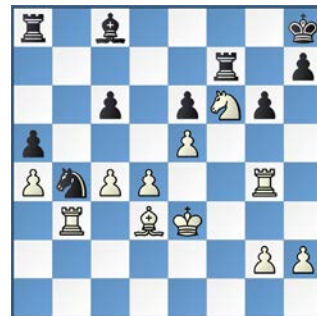
Position after 32...Kh8.

33.Bxg6! hxg6 34.Rh4+ Kg7 35.Rh7+ Kf8 36.Rh8+ Kg7 37.Rg8+ Kh6 38.Kf4 Nd5+ 39.cxd5 exd5 40.g4

Notice that the c8–bishop never left its square.

1–0

See page 36 for the same Moore vs Tang game annotated by GM Aleksandr Lenderman. I had both and didn't want to lose either one!—Editor.

**Megan Chen (1826) –
Michael Moore (1950) [B21]**
Oregon Open Chess.com
(R6), September 7, 2020
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.c3 dxc3 4.Nxc3 Nc6 5.Nf3 e6

There are lines in which Black does without ...a6 and queenside expansion, such as 5...d6 6.Bc4 e6 7.0-0 Nf6 8.Qe2 Be7 9.Rd1 e5 10.h3 0-0 11.Be3 Be6 12.Bxe6 fxe6. White has partial compensation for the pawn.

6.Bc4 a6 7.0-0 b5 8.Bb3 Na5 9.Bc2 Bb7 10.e5

[Diagram top of next page]

This is a good point to pause and discuss positional features.

Position after 10.e5

Black has an extra backward pawn, of course, on the d-file. He has queenside space and good control of the c4–square on the open file. The long diagonal looks useful, and the f8–bishop has potential. The g-knight will take a few moves to find a purpose, but could prove helpful on c4, d5, f5, or g6. The queen, and especially the king, have yet to find secure lodging.

White has central space and some control over the dark squares, with the e5–pawn keeping an eye on d6 and f6. Her king is secure, there are plenty of open lines for rooks and bishops, and good places to drop a knight, if given a chance.

White's development advantage is approaching the Smith-Morra gambit "holy grail" number of three moves, assumed by adherents to be at least adequate compensation for a pawn.

10...d6

Black challenges the advanced central pawn, but at the cost of allowing further development for White. 10...Rc8!? 11.Ne4 *(11.Bg5?? Bxf3-+*, an extra bonus of removing the rook from a8.*)* 11...Be7∓, followed by ...f5, is an attempt to close the development gap while improving the two major positional plusses for Black: the c-file and long diagonal.

11.Bg5! Qc7

11...Be7 12.Bxe7 Nxe7 13.exd6 Nd5∞.

12.exd6 Bxd6 13.Ne4 Be7 14.Bxe7 Kxe7

14...Nxe7?? 15.Nd6+ Kf8 16.Ng5+-; 14...Qxe7? 15.Nd6+ Kf8 16.Ne5±.

15.Qe2

15.Qd4! Qxc2?? *(15...Nf6 16.Qb4+±;* or *15...Kf8 16.Rfd1 Ne7 17.Rac1 with very definite and more than sufficient compensation for the pawn.)* 16.Qb4+ Ke8 17.Nd6+ Kf8 18.Nxb7+ Ne7 19.Nxa5+-.

15...Nf6 16.Rfd1 Nxe4

Black is very comfortable after 16...Rhd8! 17.Nxf6 (17.Rac1 Rxd1+ 18.Rxd1 *(18.Qxd1? Rc8-+)* 18...Nd5∓) 17...gxf6 18.Bxh7 Qf4∓.

17.Bxe4 Bxe4?

17...Rac8 18.Bxb7 Nxb7∞.

18.Qxe4 Qc4 19.Rd7+!

Or 19.Qe3!, eying Qg5+ as well as swinging rooks to the center files, when Black has huge problems with king safety.
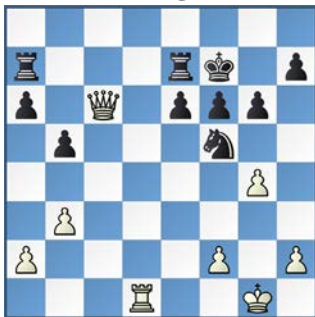
19...Kxd7 20.Ne5+ Ke7 21.Nxc4 Nxc4

White's active queen and rook combined with the exposed black king should prove decisive, despite the near equality in material terms.

22.b3

22.Qb7+ Kf6 23.a4.

22...Nd6 23.Qh4+ f6 24.Qg3 g6 25.Qe3 Nf5 26.Qc5+ Kf7 27.Rd1 Rhe8 28.Qc7+ Re7 29.Qc6 Raa7 30.g4

Position after 30.g4

Black has done a little to repair the king safety issues and his pieces are beginning to be better coordinated, but there are still problems. 30.h3 for luft, and then perhaps White can try to infiltrate on the back rank.

30...Rec7

30...Nh4!?±.

31.Qb6 Ne7 32.Qb8 Kg7 33.Rd8

The attempt 33.Qe8 g5! 34.Rd8 Rc1+ 35.Kg2 Ng6± fails to force a win.

33...Rab7 34.Qa8 Ra7 35.Qe4 Rc6

35...Nd5!?, since 36.Qxe6?? Rc1+ 37.Kg2 Nf4+.

36.g5! Rac7 37.gxf6+ Kxf6 38.Qh4+

38.Rf8+ Kg7 39.Re8 also sets Black some problems that are very difficult to solve.

38...g5 39.Qh6+ Ke5 40.Qg7+ Kf5 41.Rf8+ Ke4 42.Qxg5 Nf5 43.Qg4+

43.Qd2! Rc1+ 44.Kg2 R7c2 45.Qd7. 43.Rf7!?, with the idea 43...Rxf7 44.Qg2+.

43...Ke5

Black might try running toward the queenside instead: 43...Kd3 44.Rd8+ Kc3.

44.Qe2+ Kd6 45.Qd2+ Ke5 46.f4+??

Save the pawn check until it wins material! Among others: 46.Qb2+ Ke4 47.Qe2+ Kd5 48.Rd8+ Rd6 49.Qd3+ Ke5 50.f4+.

46...Ke4 47.Qg2+ Kxf4 48.Qg3+ Ke4 49.Qg4+ Ke3 50.Qg5+ Kf3 51.Qg2+ Ke3 52.Qf2+ Ke4 53.Qe2+ Kf4 54.Rd8 Rc2 55.Qf1+ Ke5 56.Qa1+ Kf4 57.Qf1+ Ke5 58.Qa1+ Kf4
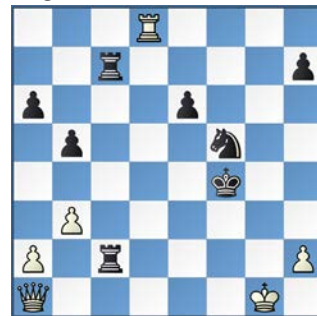
Position after 58...Kf4

Black's tenacity saves the half point.

½–½

Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) – Ananth Gottumukkala (1785) [B09]
Oregon Open Chess.com
(R2), September 5, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

After taking a first-round bye, I am playing against a very under-rated player in round two who won his first game against a higher-rated player and has won against many higher-rated players in the Washington State online tournaments. Despite his relatively low rating, slightly under 1800, I estimate his real strength to be at minimum expert. Therefore, I expected a tough game.

1.e4

I normally play 1.d4 or 1.Nf3, but I decided to play 1.e4 to play a sharp game against his Pirc Defense, which he plays all the time. By the way, his chess.com nickname also partially gives it away :)

1...d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.f4 Bg7 5.Nf3 c5!?

Position after 5...c5

Here he surprised me. Even though …c5 is one of the main lines here, from what I saw on chess.com, he always castled on move five, and I was looking forward to playing some interesting sharp positions. I had some basic knowledge as White against 5...c5 but very soon, I was improvising.

5...0-0 6.Bd3 Nbd7 is something that he was always playing, and I was looking forward to some sharp complications after 7.e5 Ne8 8.Ng5!?

6.dxc5

The other main move to my knowledge is 6.Bb5+, but I have a feeling he was theoretically more equipped than me there. 6...Bd7 7.e5 Ng4 with lots of theory to follow.

6...Qa5

Of course, the point of this line.

6...dxc5? 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8 8.e5± would be just bad for Black where I have center, and lead in development.

7.Qd3

A tricky move.

7.Qd4!? is another line. 7...0-0 *(7...dxc5 8.Qc4 0-0 9.Qb5 Qxb5 10.Bxb5±)* 8.Bd2 Nc6 *(8...dxc5 9.Qg1)* 9.Qc4.

7...Qxc5

7...Nxe4 can be tempting, but loses badly to 8.Qb5+! Qxb5 9.Bxb5+ and White wins a piece.

8.Be3 Qa5 9.Qb5+ Qxb5 10.Nxb5

10.Bxb5+ might've also been possible. 10...Nc6 *(10...Bd7)* 11.0-0-0.

10...Na6 11.Bd4

Position after 11.Bd4

I thought this is logical, to activate my bishop, pin his knight, and stabilize, but the engine isn't a fan of it.

11.Nc3 0-0 12.0-0-0 Nc7=, however, doesn't yield much to White either. 11.Nxa7?! isn't so great because of 11...Bd7 12.e5 Nd5 13.Bf2 Nc5 and Black has very good counterplay here and will at minimum get the f4-pawn back.

11...0-0 12.e5 Nd5?

This move is my opponent's first serious mistake of the game.

12...dxe5 was very important so that I don't get a chance to take on d6 and weaken his pawn. 13.fxe5 Nd5 and here Black is totally fine since White cannot really take on a7 safely. 14.Nxa7? *(14. Bxa7 Nab4)* 14...Nab4∓. White simply doesn't have a great way to defend all his weak spots like c2, and his pieces lack coordination.

13.exd6 exd6 14.0-0-0 Nxf4 15.Be3

This is interesting to drive his knight to an awkward square.

15...Ne6 16.Nxd6 Nac5 17.Bc4 Rb8

Position after 17...Rb8

Here I felt that I was much better because of better piece coordination. However, I spent a lot of time here to try to find a knockout. I was already looking at sacrifices on f7 but unfortunately they didn't quite lead to something I liked.

18.Rhf1

I felt that this shouldn't be bad since I'm bringing my last piece into the game, to a semi-open file where I can target one of his weaknesses. My other two serious candidate moves were Nxf7 and Rhe1.

I was trying to make 18.Nxf7 work, but 18...Rxf7 19.Bxc5 Bh6+!! A very important move without which Black will be lost. *(19...Nxc5? 20.Rd8+ Bf8 21.Ng5+-.* Black is totally paralyzed here and loses material.*)* 20.Kb1 Nxc5 21.Rd8+ Kg7. Now Black has the g7-square for the king. 22.Bxf7 Kxf7 23.Ne5+ Ke7 and Black is definitely alive, I couldn't find the knockout here, and it turned out that indeed, there is no knockout here. Objectively 18.Rhe1! was probably the best. It turns out that in complications, the rook on e1 is slightly better placed than on f1. However, it is very hard for a human to see all that and notice these subtle differences. Now if Black tries to do what he did in the game (18...Na4), then 19.c3 b5 20.Bxa7 Ra8 21.Nxb5 Ba6 22.Rd7 Nac5 23.Re7 Bf6

24.Bxc5 Nxc5 25.Rc7.

18...Na4!? 19.c3 b5!

Lots of credit goes to Black here for finding a creative way to create counterplay and make it messy and complicated, forcing me to continue to calculate.

20.Bd5?!

Not the best move for me in this critical moment. It was just hard for me to navigate through all these complications.

20.Bxa7?! didn't seem to work for White. 20...Ra8 21.Nxb5 Ba6 22.Bd4 Rfb8. Black has more counterplay than I would like to see on these open files against my king. 20.Bxb5! was good for White. 20...Nxb2 21.Kxb2 a6. I kind of stopped here thinking it's good for Black but 22.Ba7! Ra8 *(22...Rxb5+ 23.Nxb5 axb5 24.a3±)* 23.Be8!! A brilliant move, cutting communication between Black's pieces and now he loses material. 23...Rxa7 24.Nxc8 Rb7+ 25.Kc2 Rxe8 26.Nd6+-. I will be winning here up an exchange. 20.Bb3!? I also considered this. However, I didn't quite see all the details after that. 20...Nac5 21.Bxc5! *(21. Bd5* I only considered Bd5 here but *21... b4* seemed to be annoying*)* 21...Nxc5 22.Bxf7+! Kh8 *(22...Rxf7 23.Nxf7 Kxf7 24.Ng5+ Ke8 25.Rfe1+-)* 23.Bd5±.

20...b4!

Continuing strong energetic play. As they say, when you say A, you want to say B!

20...Nb6 21.Bb3±. I was counting on this, where I felt that I have a pretty safe advantage, and I kill the complications. 21...a5 22.a3.

21.Bxa7 Ba6 22.Bxb8?!

Again not the best.

22.Rfe1 bxc3 23.b3 Nb2 seemed very risky for me, but 24.Bxb8 Rxb8 25.Nxf7! The key move, after which White ends up being on top, though it's still a bit tricky.

22...Rxb8?!

Here Black erred.

I think it was important to regain the material here. 22...Bxf1 23.Rxf1 Rxb8 24.Nxf7. I was hoping that this move would work but it doesn't. *(24.Bxe6 fxe6 25.Nc4 bxc3 26.b3.* This line ultimately is best, keeping me with some advantage, though Black can still make White's task quite hard. *26...Nc5 27.Kc2 Ra8 28.a3 e5 29.b4 e4* still with some counter chances.*)* 24...Kxf7 25.Nd4+ Ke7 26.Nxe6 *(26. Nc6+ Kd6 27.Nxb8 Kxd5 28.c4+ Kd6* is also not so clear.*)* 26...bxc3!! 27.Nxg7 cxb2+ 28.Kc2 b1Q+ 29.Rxb1 Rxb1 30.Kxb1 Nc3+ 31.Kb2 Nxd5 32.Kb3 Kf7

33.a4 Kxg7 34.a5 and White is the one who has to fight for the draw, though he probably makes it, since the black king is far from the a-pawn and knights are notoriously bad in dealing with the a- or h- pawns.

23.Bc4?!

Position after 23.Bc4

Now it's my turn to be a bit imprecise.

I really wanted to play 23.c4! to shut down his bishop and keep my strong construction. However, I just couldn't quite work out what to do against b3. 23...b3 24.axb3. It turns out that it's just very good for White. 24...Rxb3 25.Bxe6 Bxb2+ 26.Kc2 Rc3+ 27.Kb1 fxe6 28.Nd2+-. It looks menacing, but White is up an exchange, Black's bishop on a6 is out of play, and Black's king isn't totally safe either. 23.Rfe1 is also good. 23...bxc3 24.b3 Nb2 25.Nxf7. Again that Nxf7 appears.

23...Bxc4?!

I was very happy to see this played, since I knew that now I'm in relatively safe waters.

23...bxc3. This move concerned me, and even though I saw this move, somehow I still couldn't quite find anything better than …Bxc4. 24.b3 Nb2! sacrificing more material, but 25.Bxa6 Nxd1 26.Rxd1 Ra8 and suddenly Black, despite being down a piece, has serious counterplay because my pieces are uncoordinated. If I move the bishop, he has …Rxa2 and that pawn on c3 becomes a big nuance. My best now is to give back the piece and still be better due to my passed pawns. 27.a4 *(27.Bc4? Rxa2 28.Re1 Bh6+ 29.Kb1 Rb2+ 30.Ka1 Rxg2 is one line that shows how dangerous it can be for White. Not clear how I should stop the pawn now.)* 27...Rxa6 28.Nb5±.

24.Nxc4 bxc3 25.b3 Nb2?!

Natural but missing the last chance.

25...Ra8!! was still a chance since 26.bxa4 Rxa4 27.Ne3 Bh6 28.Rfe1 Rxa2. Here despite me up a rook, it's still quite hard for me to play.

26.Nxb2 cxb2+ 27.Kb1 Nc7

A good attempt but thankfully, I can defend here.

28.Nd4

Taking away the b5-square, from where the knight would attack the a3- and c3-squares.

28...Nd5 29.Rf3

Making sure to cover the c3 square.

29...Rd8 30.Ne2 Re8 31.Rxd5 Rxe2 32.Rd8+ Bf8 33.b4

Now my pawns will be unstoppable.

33...Kg7 34.Rb3 Be7 35.Rd1 Bf6 36.a4 Rxg2 37.a5 A very interesting tough battle. I was very happy to win it in the end but also have my brain be really forced to work.

1–0

**Ted Belanoff (2241) –
Zoey Tang (2097) [B80]**
Oregon Open Chess.com
(R3), September 6, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In this game, in round two of the Oregon Open, master Ted Belanoff from New York is playing against a young expert female player from Oregon, Zoey Tang, who I had the privilege of facing the very next round. I knew Ted from the few times he played at the famous Marshall Chess Club. I knew he was a relatively fast player.

1.e4 c5 2.g3

Trying to play a Closed Sicilian.

2.Nc3 is the more traditional way of playing a Closed Sicilian.

2...d6

2...d5 is an interesting approach trying to take advantage of the move order. 3.exd5 Qxd5 4.Nf3 Nc6 with an interesting game.

3.Bg2 Nc6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Nge2 e6

5...g6 is also quite common here.

6.0-0 Be7 7.d4

Transposing into an Open Sicilian.

7...cxd4 8.Nxd4 0-0 9.Be3 a6 10.Qd2?!

This allows …Ng4.

10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.Na4 was probably better.

10...Bd7?!

10...Ng4 would be awkward to meet for White. 11.Nxc6 bxc6 and Black will get two bishops.

11.Kh1?!

Still allowing …Ng4.

11...Ng4 12.Rad1 Nxe3 13.Qxe3 Rc8 14.Nde2 b5 15.f4 Qc7?!

15...Na5 was stronger. 16.a3 *(16.b3 b4)* 16.Nc4 17.Qc1 a5 18.b3 Nxa3 19.Qxa3 b4 20.Qa1 bxc3∓.

16.f5?

Position after 16.f5

This is quite anti-positional, giving up the e5-square. White does have some merit to give up the e5 square, putting pressure on e6, but in this case it is not nearly enough to compensate for the e5 weakness.

16.Rd2 Na5 17.b3 was better to defend the c2-pawn in case of b4.

16...Ne5 17.Bh3 b4 18.Nb1 exf5 19.exf5 Bc6+! 20.Kg1 Bf6

These bishops are now monsters on the long diagonals.

21.g4 Rfe8 22.Qg3 Qb6+ 23.Rf2 Bh4!

A very nice tactic to finish off a good game.

24.Qxh4 Nf3+ 25.Kf1 Nxh4 26.Rxd6 Bg2+ 27.Bxg2 Qxd6 28.Ke1 Nxg2+ 29.Rxg2 Rxc2

A nice game for Zoey, taking advantage of White's serious positional inaccuracies.

0–1

**Zoey Tang (2097) –
Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) [A80]**
Oregon Open Chess.com
(R4), September 6, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

After another bye in round three, I played Zoey Tang in round four, a young female player, rated around 2100. She had 2.5/3 and just beat a master player, so I knew she would be dangerous. I was looking forward to an interesting fight.

1.d4 f5!?

Going for a sharp fight right away.

2.Bg5

This was played instantly. I have a feeling she must've expected the Dutch slightly since I recently played it in another tournament against GM Aleksandrov.

2...g6

2...h6 3.Bh4 g5 4.e3 Nf6 is another line. *(4...gxh4?? 5.Qh5#)*; 2...c6 is also a line as a vaguely recall but probably not the best one.

3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e3

As far as I knew 4.e4 fxe4 5.Nxe4 d5 is supposed to be decent for Black.

4...Nf6?!

I have a feeling that I might've chosen a wrong move order. 4...h6 5.Bf4 *(5.Bh4 d6 with an interesting Dutch fight.)* 5...Nf6.

5.h4! h6?

Apparently, this is already bad.

Maybe 5...c6 was the lesser of the evils, with the idea of …d5. 6.h5 Ne4; White might be better, but it seems like Black is fighting.

6.Bf4?

Transposing into well-known theoretical lines but not taking advantage of an unexpected chance.

6.Bxf6! Bxf6 7.Qf3 d6 8.0-0-0±. White has a nearly winning position already, with Black's king being so compromised.

6...d6 7.Bd3

7.Bc4 e6.

7...0-0

8.d5 is probably objectively still ok, but flirting with danger. I don't understand why I simply didn't play 7...Nc6 when I have flexibility in my ideas. Black is probably for choice here. It also stops e4, one of his ideas.

a) 8.e4? Nxd4;

b) 8.Nf3 and only after this I can castle but I don't even have to. 8...0-0 *(8...Nb4 9.Bc4 e6=)* 9.Qd2 Nb4;

8...e5! 9.dxc6 exf4∓.

8.Qd2 Nh5?!

This is quite poor. Somehow I failed to realize that I'm not really ever threatening to take on f4.

8...Nc6 was again asking to be played. 9.e4 *(9.0-0-0 Qe8 (9...Kh7))* 9...fxe4 10.Nxe4 Ng4 11.f3 d5 12.Nc3 e5! with a messy but good position for Black. Now White has to be careful not to get under a serious initiative. 13.dxe5 d4 14.Ne4 Rxf4! 15.Qxf4 Ne3.

9.0-0-0

9.Bh2 e5 was my plan. Even here, White is doing well.

9...e6?!

Here I'm definitely overanalyzing.

9...Nxf4 10.exf4 e6 *(10...Bxd4?! 11.Bc4+; 10...h5 11.Nf3)* 11.h5±. White has a strong attack. Again, 9...Nc6 was the best choice.

10.Nge2 Qf6 11.f3 e5 12.Bh2 Nc6

At last!

13.g4?!

Very tempting but probably not best. However, I did expect this move, and I might've played it myself.

13.Bc4+ Kh8 14.Nd5 Qd8 15.dxe5 dxe5 16.Qe1± was objectively stronger.

13...fxg4 14.fxg4 Bxg4 15.Rhg1?

Looks logical but actually it just gives up the pawn on h4 with tempo.

15.Nd5

15...Bf5?

Don't ask me why I didn't take this pawn. 15...Qxh4.

16.e4 Bd7 17.Bc4+?

Position after 17.Bc4+

I didn't understand this move. It pushes my king to go to where it wants to anyway, that is to defend my g6-pawn and free my queen.

17.Nd5 Qxh4 18.Rxg6 would lead to a mess since 18...Qxh2?? *(18...Kh7 19.Rg2 is objectively around equal.)* 19.Qxh6 Rf7 20.Rdg1 leads to a winning attack for White.

17...Kh7 18.Rg2?!

Also losing a tempo.

18...Bh3 19.Rgg1 Nxd4?!

A poor move, giving White unnecessary counterplay.

19...Qxh4 is sort of game over without too much counterplay.

20.Nxd4 exd4 21.Nd5 Qxh4 22.Nxc7 Rad8

At first I thought I can just play 22...Rac8? here and win, but I forgot that White can take on d6 and defend everything. 23.Bxd6; 22...Rf2 23.Nxa8 Rxd2 24.Rxd2 Bf6-+ was also good for Black.

23.Qb4 Nf4 24.Kb1 Qe7 25.Nb5

25.Bxf4 Qxc7 26.Bc1. Here White is down two pawns but still has some small compensation. It was probably better for White to eliminate my knight earlier.

25...Qxe4 26.Rge1 Qg2 27.Bxf4 Rxf4 28.Nxa7?!

This just loses.

28.Rg1 is also losing for White in the long run, but the game continues. 28...Qc6∓.

28...d3!

Probably my only good move of the game! The idea is to activate two of my pieces, my bishop and rook and create many new tactical possibilities. Now White is just lost.

29.Rxd3 d5 30.b3 Bf5 31.Rd2 Qg5 32.Red1 dxc4

A cute little finish.

33.Rxd8 Qxd8

White resigned since taking the queen would lead to quick mate after Rf1+. A back and forth game, an interesting game, but definitely my hope is to be able to navigate through the complications better.

0–1

Michael Moore (1950) – Zoey Tang (2097) [B63]
Oregon Open Chess.com
(R5), September 7, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

This is a game in round five between Michael Moore, a dangerous tactical mid-1900 player and Zoey Tang, who was already mentioned in the games against me and Ted Belanoff.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Bg5

The sharpest variation of the Classical Sicilian, the Rauzer Attack.

6...e6 7.Qd2 Be7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.Nxc6?!

I think this is inaccurate since it opens the b-file for Black to attack and helps Black to play …d5.

9.f4 first is more common here.

9...bxc6 10.f4 d5 11.Be2 Rb8 12.Qe3 Qc7?!

However, this is too passive. 12...Qa5 13.e5 Bc5 14.Qg3 Ne8 15.a3 f6 was better for Black.

13.e5 Ne8

13...Qb7 14.b3 Ba3+ 15.Kb1 Nd7. It was better to try to keep bishops on the board so that the c5-square does not get weakened.

14.Bxe7 Qxe7 15.Na4 Qb4 16.Rd4 Qa5 17.Qc3

17.Qa3 might be even better.

17...Qxc3 18.bxc3 Nc7 19.Nc5 f6 20.Re1

20.Rf1 was a bit more accurate here since the key is to not allow …Rf2 counterplay. White certainly does not mind exchanging rooks here since all the rest of the pieces are in White's favor.

20...fxe5 21.fxe5 a5 22.Kd2

Again 22.Rf1 was better.

22...Nb5

22...Rf2 23.Rg4 Na6 was an improvement.

23.Rg4 Rf5

23...h5 24.Rg5 Na3 25.Rxh5 Nb1+ was the last chance for counterplay.

24.Bd3!

Now White gets total control of the game.

24...Rf2+ 25.Ke3 Rf7 26.Rb1 Ra8 27.Rb3 g6 28.a4 d4+ 29.cxd4 Nc7 30.c4 Na6 31.Ne4 Nb4 32.Nf6+ Kh8 33.Bxg6!

A nice finishing touch!

33...hxg6 34.Rh4+ Kg7 35.Rh7+ Kf8 36.Rh8+ Kg7 37.Rg8+ Kh6 38.Kf4 Nd5+ 39.cxd5 exd5 40.g4

This was a very nice positional game by Michael Moore, beautifully exploiting the dark-square domination and killing Black's c8-bishop. Then, the attack was also excellently executed.

1–0

Rohan Talukdar (2402) –
Aleksandr Lenderman (2717) [B09]
Oregon Open Chess.com
(R5), September 7, 2020
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In round five, I am playing against a strong young player from Canada, FM Rohan Talukdar, who is close to 2400 FIDE and against whom I've already played many times. He has gotten a draw against me at least four times, as far as I can remember, and I was only able to win a couple of games, so I knew this would be very challenging.

1.e4 g6

I am trailing so I need to win on demand, hence the opening choice.

2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.f4 Nf6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Bd3 Nc6!?

A relatively modern line, which might've come as a surprise to my opponent. 6...Na6 is more common, with the idea of …c5, and Rohan already had a game here. 7.0-0 c5 8.d5 Bg4 with lots of theory to follow here.

7.e5

7.0-0 e5 would be my idea here with sharp play to follow, exactly what I wanted in a must-win game.

7...dxe5 8.dxe5

8.fxe5 is also an important line, after which Black follows with 8...Nh5 9.0-0 Bg4 10.Be3 f6 with interesting play.

8...Nd5 9.Nxd5 Qxd5 10.Qe2 Bg4 11.Be4 Qa5+ 12.Bd2 Qb6

Up to here it is still my preparation, where we are following the game, Firouzja-Duda, where Black won in a nice way. However, here, White improves on this game in a logical way.

13.0-0-0

13.Bc3?! was played by Firouzja in a rapid event, after which his position turned sour. 13...Rad8 14.h3?! *(14.Qf2)* 14...Bxf3 15.Qxf3 Nd4 16.Qg3 f6∓ 17.Bd3 fxe5 18.0-0-0 exf4 19.Qg4 Qc5 20.Rhe1 Nc6 21.Qe6+ Kh8 22.Bxg7+ Kxg7 23.Kb1 Rf6 24.Qg4 Ne5 25.Qg5 Rd5 26.Be2 Nd3 27.Qxd5 Qxd5 28.Bf3 Qxf3 29.Rxe7+ Kf8 30.gxf3 Kxe7 31.Rxd3 Rd6 0–1 (31) Firouzja,A (2723)-Duda,J (2758) Moscow RUS 2019.

13...Nd4

I also considered 13...f6, but it's not so great. 14.exf6 Bxf6 15.c3±. Somehow, I didn't like it, and indeed, Black's pieces are very uncoordinated here.

14.Qe3

14.Qd3 Rfd8 15.Be3 was quite good for White.

14...Rfd8

14...Rad8 was also possible. I couldn't decide which rook to move to d8.

15.c3

15.Rhe1. I thought it was better to bring the last piece in the game.

15...Nxf3 16.Bxf3 Qxe3

I was a bit hesitant in going into this game, since even though I could be marginally better, I knew it might not be enough. However, ultimately, I decided that this was still the best objectively.

16...Bxf3 17.Qxf3 Qa6 is also something I seriously contemplated. However, I did not think I had more than equality here after 18.a3. His king looks a bit weak, but he will play Be3, exchange the rooks, and my bishop on g7 is restricted. I didn't think I could realistically be better here.

17.Bxe3 Bxf3 18.gxf3 f6

I thought this would be the most challenging.

19.exf6 exf6 20.Rxd8+

20.f5!? was an interesting pawn sacrifice. 20...gxf5 21.Bf4 activates his bishop and keeps his bishop restricted. However, I can hope to play for a win after 21...c6. here.

20...Rxd8 21.Rd1 Re8

21...Rxd1+. I was calculating this and trying to see whether I can have real winning chances here but decided that it's better to keep the rooks on the board. 22.Kxd1 a6 23.Ke2 Kf7 24.Kd3 Ke6 25.Ke4. The problem is, his king makes it in time to prevent …Kf5, and I just didn't see how I can create winning chances here.

22.Rd3

22.Bxa7? didn't work because 22...b6 23.Rd7 *(23.Rd4 Ra8 24.Ra4 Kf7 25.Ra6 Bh6)* 23...Bh6!

22...Bf8 23.Kd2 Bd6 24.c4

Position after 24.c4

24...Bb4+?!

Strange move, not sure why I played this. 24...b6 25.c5 bxc5 26.Ra3. I was afraid of this, I think, but here I can still play for a win with 26...Ra8 27.Ra5 *(27.Ra6 Rd8 28.Kc2 Re8 29.Kd2 c4 30.Ra4 Rb8 31.Kc2 Kf7 32.Rxc4 Rb5)* and White still has to answer some questions.) 27...a6.

25.Kc2 b6 26.a3 Bd6 27.b4 Re6 28.c5 bxc5 29.bxc5 Be7 30.Kb3 Kf7 31.Kc4

Here I wasn't optimistic anymore about my chances of winning. I tried my last resort.

31...g5!?

Just trying to confuse matters.

32.Rb3 a6 33.fxg5 fxg5 34.Kd3

I thought 34.Kd5 was better, to induce …c6, and therefore, opening the b6-square for the rook.

34...Ke8 35.Rb8+ Kd7 36.Rh8

36.Rg8 seemed like an easier draw to me.

36...Rh6

Now it starts getting to the point where White has to be very precise to hold the balance.

37.f4?!

This is already a serious inaccuracy. 37.Ra8! was strong, tying me down to the a6-pawn. This keeps the balance.

37...Rh3

I have a feeling my opponent missed this move. Now I win a pawn.

38.Ke4 gxf 39.Bxf4 Bxc5 40.a4 Bd6 41.Bg3 Bxg3?!

Definitely this was inaccurate. Why give White a chance to start pushing his g-pawn and create counterplay, when White cannot take on d6 anyway. 41...Kc6∓.

42.hxg3 Kc6 43.g4

Now this is probably closer to a draw than a win. But I was up a lot on time.

43...Rh1 44.g5 Kc5 45.Ra8 Kb6 46.Ke5?!

Seems logical but the wrong plan. 46.Kd3. Keeping the king around the queenside would yield White very good drawing chances. 46...Rh4 *(46...Ka5 47.Ra7)* 47.Rh8.
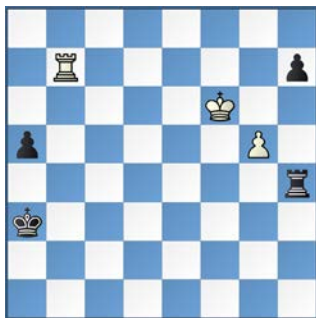
46...Rh4

46...c5 47.Rh8 Rh5 was perhaps a better try in this complicated endgame.

47.Rb8+ Ka5 48.Rc8 Kxa4 49.Rxc7 a5 50.Rb7 Ka3

I thought this is a real winning chance for Black, but it turns out it is still a draw.
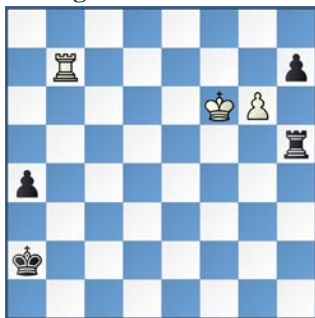
51.Kf6?!

Position after 51.Kf6

This, however, is the wrong direction.

51.Kd5! a4 52.Kc5 Ka2 53.Rf7 Rh2 54.Kb4 a3 55.Rf3 Rh4+ 56.Kc3 and I cannot make progress. The side checks idea saves White.

51...a4 52.Kg7 Rh5 53.Kf6 Ka2 54.g6??

Position after 54.g6

A very poor move, which came as a shock to me, since now Black can probably win in many different ways since the white king is very far away. 54.Rb8 a3 55.Rb7 Rh3 56.Ke5 Ka1 57.Kf6 a2 58.Kf7 Rh2 59.Kf6. White can wait here. Black cannot make progress since Rb2 is always met with 59...Rb2 60.Rxh7 Kb1 61.Ra7 and now the all-important g-pawn saves the day for White.

54...hxg6 55.Kxg6 Re5 56.Kf6 Re2

The white king is cut-off on four ranks, so I knew it is a theoretical win.

57.Kf5 a3 58.Kf4 Ka1 59.Kf3 Rb2 60.Ra7 a2 61.Re7 Rb3+ 62.Kf2 Kb2 63.Re2+ Ka3 64.Re1 Rb1 65.Re3+ Kb4 66.Re4+ Kc5 67.Re5+ Kd6

A nice grind for me where I felt like my patience and perseverance paid off, and eventually my strong opponent cracked. This important win with black put me in excellent position to win this tournament, which I was able to do after I won my last-round game with white while Rohan was only able to draw his last-round game, and he ended up getting second.

0–1

This was a last-round game between a young player, Ryan Lu, in the mid–1900s and an experienced master, Corey Russell. And what a fight it was, down to the wire!

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nf3 d6 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Be2 0-0 6.0-0 c6 7.a4

Stopping b5. White is playing a solid line against Black's aggressive Pirc Defense.

7...a5 8.h3 Na6 9.Be3 Nb4 10.Qd2 Qc7

11.Rad1 d5 12.exd5?!

Up to here, White's play is logical, but here White starts losing his edge. 12.e5 here was better to gain the space advantage. 12...Ne4 *(12...Nd7 13.Bf4 Qb6 14.Rfe1±)* 13.Nxe4 dxe4 14.Ng5.

12...Nbxd5 13.Nxd5 cxd5 14.c3 Bd7 15.Qc2 Rfc8

15...b5 was stronger. 16.axb5 Rfb8.

16.Ne5 Be8 17.f4?

Position after 17.f4

This move is a serious mistake, giving up the e4-square, especially here since White's attack is really going nowhere. Since White started to play solidly and positionally it would be better for White to continue playing like that rather than mixing plans. 17.Bf4 Qd8 18.Bd3 would keep a slight edge for White due to more active pieces.

17...Ne4 18.Bd3 e6

18...f6 19.Nf3 Bc6.

19.Ra1

19.Bxe4 would probably be stronger. 19...dxe4 20.Qxe4 *(20.d5!)* 20...Bxa4.

19...f6 20.Ng4 Nd6 21.Bc1 b5 22.axb5 Nxb5

It was probably more accurate to exchange the bishops here with 22...Bxb5, trading off pieces and leaving White with a bad c1-bishop.

23.Qe2 Qb6 24.Kh1

It was interesting to sacrifice the pawn to activate the bishop on c1. 24.f5!? exf5 25.Nh6+ *(25.Ne3 Qc6 26.g4 fxg4 27.Nxg4↑)* 25...Kh8 26.Bf4⯹.

24...Nc7

24...f5 25.Ne5 Nd6.. I think ultimately, the knight should head back to e4.

25.Nh2 Bb5 26.Bxb5 Qxb5 27.Qf3 Rf8 28.g4 e5!

It makes sense for Black to open up the center when White's king is weak.

29.dxe5

29.f5 was better at cutting his losses so

that Black's bishop doesn't get active. Always all about piece activity.

29...fxe5 30.f5 Ne6?

This was just a bit careless, losing a tempo. 30...Ne8. once again, heading towards e4.

31.Qg2 Nc7 32.Bg5 Ra6 33.Rad1 h6 34.Be7 Rf7 35.Bd8 d4 36.fxg6?

36.Bxc7. It was better to get rid of this knight first before it can later do some damage.

36...Rxf1+ 37.Rxf1 Nd5?!

37...Ne6 was better, gaining a tempo and heading to f4.

38.Qf3 dxc3 39.Qf7+ Kh8 40.g5!

This gets very sharp.

40...hxg5 41.Bxg5 Qc6 42.bxc3 Nf4+ 43.Nf3 Qxg6 44.Qxg6

44.Qb7. It was probably practically better to keep queens on here since the endgame turns out to be unpleasant.

44...Nxg6 45.h4 e4 46.Nd4

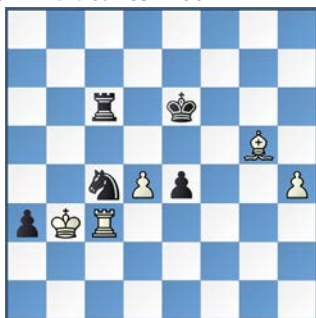46.Nd2 was probably better, but it was a complicated position.

46...a4 47.Ra1 Ne5 48.Kg2 Nc4 49.Kf2

49.Kg3 was more accurate to go right after the e4-pawn.

49...a3 50.Ke2 Kh7 51.Kd1 Bxd4

51...Rb6 would be good here to prevent Kc2. 52.Kc2 *(52.Bc1 Rf6! and seizing control of the file and trying to play Rf1.)* 52...Rb2+.

52.cxd4 Rd6 53.Kc2 Kg6 54.Kb3 Rc6 55.Rc1 Kf5 56.Rc3 Ke6

Position after 56...Ke6

57.Be3??

By now both players are probably in time pressure, and deep into the endgame both players might be tired. White here makes the first big mistake in an endgame that is currently balanced. 57.Ka2 Kd5 58.h5 Kxd4 59.Rh3 was equal.

57...Kd5?!

Still wins but not the cleanest. 57...Na5+!

58.Kc2 Rxc3+ 59.Kxc3 a2 60.Kb2 Nc4+ and here it becomes evident Be3 was a mistake as White now loses this bishop by force, and with it, the game.

58.h5 Na5+ 59.Kb4 Rxc3??

Ironically, the same idea that was winning a few moves earlier, now with White having gained a tempo with h5, doesn't win anymore. 59...a2 60.Ra3 Nc4 61.Rxa2 Nxe3-+ was quite a straightforward win.

60.Kxc3 Nc4 61.Kb3! Ke6??
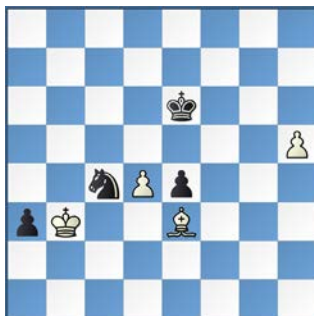
Position after 61...Ke6

Probably here Black realized to his horror that …Nxe3 doesn't actually win and made a losing blunder. This is why precise calculation is very important in endgames. 61...Nxe3 62.h6; 61...a2 62.Kxa2 Ke6 was still giving a draw.

62.Kxc4 a2 63.d5+!

Of course. Preparing Bd4, stopping the pawn. Could Black have missed this?

63...Kf5 64.Bd4 e3 65.Kd3

And now that both of Black's pawns are stopped, Black is lost since he cannot stop both pawns with his king.

65...e2 66.Kxe2 Ke4 67.Ba1 Kxd5 68.Kf3

And because the bishop controls the right corner, h8, White wins, so Black resigned. A very exciting up and down game, unfortunately marred by time pressure most likely.

1–0

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Nf3 0-0 5.Bg5 d6 6.e3 Nbd7 7.Be2 h6 8.Bh4 Bxc3+ 9.bxc3 b6 10.0-0 Bb7 11.Qc2 c5

Better would have been 11...g5.

12.Rfd1 Qc7 13.Rac1 Rac8 14.Qb2 Rfe8 15.Bg3

15.Nd2 Ne4 16.Bd3 Nxd2 17.Qxd2 leads

Brandon Peng.

to an equal position, rather than 15.Bg3 which gives Black an advantage.

15...Nh5 16.Qb3 Nxg3 17.hxg3 Nf6 18.Nd2 d5 19.cxd5 exd5 20.Nf3 cxd4

This move evens up the position. After 21.Nxd4 neither side has much play.

21.Nxd4 Ne4 22.c4 dxc4 23.Rxc4 Qe5 24.Rxc8 Rxc8 25.Bc4

This allows Black to take the initiative with 25…Qf6 attacking the f-pawn and forcing White into a passive position.

25...Qf6 26.Nf3 Nc5 27.Qc2 Bxf3 28.gxf3 Qxf3

Black now has a slight advantage in this position. White can't really advance much, but there are possibilities of Rd4 and Rf4 to double-attack the f7-pawn.

29.Ba6 Re8 30.Bb5 Rb8 31.Rd4 g6?

This move gives up Black's advantage, as White can now start his attack with Bc4.

32.Bc4 Qc6?? 33.Bd5

Black is in a losing position. The rook will swing to f4, and Black's kingside is very weak with a pinned and weak f7-pawn as well and there's the threat of Qxg6+ if the black queen leaves that pawn unprotected.

33…Qf6 34.Rf4 Qg5

34...Qa1+ 35.Kh2 Kh8. Although not great, this line keeps most of Black's pieces intact. …Qg5 just loses to Rxf7 and the threats of a mate and discovered attacks.

35.Rxf7 Rd8 36.Bc4

Although 36.Bc4 gives White a decisive advantage, there was a forced mate here: 36.Qc3 Ne6 37.Bxe6 Qe5 38.Qxe5 Rd1+ 39.Kg2 Rg1+ 40.Kxg1 b5 41.Qg7#.

36...b5

Once again, Qb2 or Qc3 lead to a forced mate.

37.Rf5+ bxc4 38.Rxg5 hxg5 39.Qxc4+ Kh7 40.Qxc5 Rd2 41.Qxa7+ Kh6 42.Qb8 Kh5 43.Qh8+

Another forced mate here: 43.f3 Rd1+ 44.Kh2 Rd2+ 45.Kh3 Rh2+ 46.Kxh2 g4 47.fxg4+ Kxg4 48.Qf4+ Kh5 49.Qh4#.

43...Kg4 44.Qc8+ Kf3 45.Qc6+ Kg4 46.Qxg6 Rxa2 47.Qe6+

Black loses his rook to a fork and the game is over.

1–0

**Ademidun Adebolu (1260) –
Ted Wang (779) [B33]**
Oregon Open (U1600) Chess.com
(R5), September 7, 2020
[Ted Wang]

Ted Wang.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e5 6.Ndb5 d6 7.Bg5 a6

Black saw Black's pawn would be doubled if White played 8.Bxf6. However, this gave Black an open g-file.

8.Na3 b5 9.Bxf6 gxf6

The action expected at move eight happened.

10.Nd5 Be6

The main line was supposed to be 10...f5.

11.Bd3 f5 12.Qh5 Rg8 13.g3 Rg6

If queen captured on h7, it would be trapped.

14.exf5

This was a mistake.

14...Bxd5 15.fxg6 hxg6 16.Bxg6 Qf6 17.Bxf7+ Qxf7 18.Qxf7+ Kxf7

Position after 18...Kxf7

At this point, although White had a material advantage, Black had a much better position.

19.Rg1 b4 20.Nb1 Nd4 21.Kd1 Bf3+ 22.Kd2 Bh6+ 23.Kd3 Be2+ 24.Ke4 Nxc2

Black turned the positional advantage into a material advantage. Given White's king was exposed and material down, White resigned.

0–1

**Valentin Razmov (1986) –
Edward Li (1595) [D36]**
Oregon Open Chess.com
(R6), September 7, 2020
[Valentin Razmov]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5

The exchange variation of Queen's Gambit Declined is not without teeth for either side, as this game illustrates.

4...exd5 5.Bg5 Be7 6.e3 c6 7.Bd3 0-0 8.Qc2 h6 9.Bh4 Be6

The more popular plan for Black is to put a knight on this square, via Nb8–Nd7–Nf8–Ne6, combined with ...Re8. 9...Nbd7 10.Nge2 Re8 11.f3 c5 12.0-0 Nf8 13.Rad1 c4 14.Bf5 Bxf5 15.Qxf5.

10.Nge2

One of two main plans for White, intended to include f3+e4 for central dominance. Hence the knight avoids the f3-square, making room for the f-pawn. In turn, Black has to decide when to play the pawn break ...c6–c5.

10...Nbd7 11.0-0

11.Nf4!? has the idea of weakening the light squares around the black king, while enjoying the advantage of a bishop pair. I considered this seriously, but decided to stick to my original plan, rather than

be distracted away by "side attractions." 11...Bd6 12.Nxe6 fxe6.

11...Rc8 12.f3 Qc7 13.e4?

Consistent with the overall idea, but the timing is wrong. White converts one weakness into another — now the d4-pawn becomes weak. Due to a miscalculation, I hadn't foreseen Black's strong defense and upcoming counterplay. Suddenly the calm maneuvering game becomes loaded with tactical opportunities. 13.Rae1 would have been a logical continuation. Note that 13.Rac1? intending to fortify the queen on c2 in preparation for an upcoming ...c6–c5 would be a subtly hidden tactical mistake: Black has 13...Ng4!, winning a pawn by taking advantage of several weaknesses at once in White's position: the hanging or ill-defended pawns on e3 and h2, and the bishop on h4. A knight jump to remember!

13...dxe4

13...c5? would lose material to 14.e5.

14.fxe4 c5?

Remember that knight jump idea from two moves ago? 14...Ng4 It's easier to spot now (at least the knight is not *en prise* on g4), and while it doesn't win a pawn on e3 anymore, it helps to put pressure against the newly weakened d4–pawn. Both players apparently missed that detail. 15.Bg3 Qb6 underscoring the weakness of White's dark squares around the center... Black is threatening the ...Ne3 fork, but also the pawn thrust ...c6–c5–c4, sometimes with a discovered check. 16.Qd2 Bg5 17.Bf4 Bxf4 18.Rxf4 *(18.Qxf4?! c5)* 18...Rfd8∓.

15.e5

Once you've lit the fire, the only way out is through!

15...cxd4 16.exf6

Position after 16.exf6

16...Nxf6!

This is the move I had missed from my calculation vantage point at move 13. The automatic recapture 16...dxc3? obviously leads to a White win. White is now — unexpectedly — up a piece, but the

knight on c3 is pinned and cannot escape. 16...Bxf6?! 17.Bxf6 Nxf6 18.Nxd4 Ng4 19.Nf3 Ne3 20.Qf2 Nxf1 21.Rxf1 and White will have successfully made it through the scary moments, arriving at a pleasant endgame position.

17.Bxf6!

Realizing that the game can turn on its head if another miscalculation happens, I spent many minutes evaluating variations here. It became clear that the position requires to eliminate, once and for all, Black's attacking possibilities associated with ...Ng4. There was simply no other safe way forward. In contrast, after my pre-planned move 17.Nxd4?!, Black has that same knight jump idea: 17...Ng4 18.Bg3 Qb6 19.Rf4 Bc5 20.Bf2 Nxf2 21.Qxf2 Rcd8 22.Nce2 Qxb2 and White barely hangs on to the pinned knight. Who would want to play this position as white, and who could be confident that Black can't somehow win that knight — and with it the game — after all! Especially after the earlier miscalculation, I was not willing to take additional calculation risks.

17...gxf6?

A surprise, played surprisingly quickly. Black voluntarily weakens his king's position, without forcing White to give up the exchange (on f6) for that. This immediately felt like a mistake, giving me wings (tactically and psychologically) for the rest of this game. 17...Bxf6 was the main, and sound, alternative. 18.Rxf6 Practically forced and planned upfront. *(If 18.Ne4? Qxc2 19.Bxc2 Rxc2 20.Nxf6+ gxf6 21.Nxd4 Rxb2 22.Rxf6 Rxa2 23.Rxa2 Bxa2 24.Rxh6, the resulting position would be a losing endgame for White due to Black's two connected queen-side passers and the presence of the long-range bishop.)* 18...gxf6 19.Nxd4 Qb6 20.Qf2 Rfd8 21.Nce2 Bg4. Here White would have to find 22.Bf5 *(or 22.Nf5).* with approximate equality.

18.Qd2!

Getting out of the pin with tempo and winning a crucial pawn on the next move. I could not ask for more!

18...dxc3 19.Qxh6 Qc5+??

Move order often matters a lot. In this position too! Black has seen the correct defense ...f6–f5, but adding this queen check spoils it. 19...f5 was an only move. 20.Rf3 *(Neither 20.Bxf5?? Qb6+ 21.Kh1 Bxf5 22.Qxb6 axb6 23.Nxc3 Be6-+; nor 20.Rxf5?? Bxf5 21.Bxf5 Qc5+ 22.Kh1 Qxf5-+ would work for White, spectacular as they may look at first. The black queen's options for double-attack checks

on b6 or c5 prevent these sacrificial White moves.)* 20...cxb2 21.Rd1 This is a good moment to pause and look for Black's "only move" to stay in the game. 21...Bc4! An important in-between move, allowing Black to exchange queens and thus reduce the pressure on their own king. 22.Bxc4 Qb6+ 23.Qxb6 axb6 24.Bd3±. White would still have a long technical endgame ahead, though thankfully playing for only two results now. Plus, endgames are fun and I would have enjoyed it.

20.Kh1 f5 21.Rf3

A textbook rook lift and suddenly the game is over. There are too many mating threats to try to prevent. Interestingly, 21.Rf4 would have worked too, as the threat of Rg4+ and Qh7# cannot be adequately defended against.

21...Qe5 22.Rg3+ Qxg3 23.Nxg3 cxb2 24.Rf1 Rc6

24...f6 would not change the end result after 25.Qg6+ Kh8 26.Nxf5+-.

25.Nh5

1–0

Felicity Wang (1667) –
Michael Shapiro (1502) [C61]
Oregon Open (U2000) Chess.com
(R5), September 7, 2020
[Michael Shapiro]

Michael Shapiro.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5

I expected my opponent to play the Ruy Lopez against me.

3...Nd4

I studied this move for a bit and wanted to surprise my opponent.

4.Nxd4 exd4 5.Bc4 h5 6.d3

6.0-0 here is more commonly played. For example: 6...Bc5 7.c3 c6 8.cxd4 Bxd4 9.Nc3 d6 10.d3 Nf6 11.Be3 Bxe3 12.fxe3

d5 13.exd5 cxd5 14.Bb5+ Kf8 15.Qd2 Qb6 16.Rf4 Be6 (Alexander Morozevich - Evgeniy Najer).

6...Bc5 7.Nd2 c6 8.f4?!

I was very surprised to see this move happen on the board. From all the games that I have seen, White usually castles here. 8.0-0 d6 *(8...d5 9.Bb3 Nf6 10.Qe2 Bg4 11.Nf3 Qe7 12.Bg5 dxe4 13.dxe4 0-0-0 14.h3 Rde8 15.Rfe1 Qxe4 16.Qxe4 Nxe4 17.Bxf7 d3* (Vladimir Belov - Evgeniy Najer)*)* 9.Nf3 Bg4 10.h3 Bxf3 11.Qxf3 Qf6 12.Qd1 Ne7 13.Bd2 a5 14.a3 a4 15.Qe2 0-0-0 (Emil Anka - Tamas Ruck).

8...Qh4+?!

In this game, I played 8...Qh4?! to do ...Qh3 and stop White from castling. I did not realize that my queen would be misplaced there. Stronger here was 8...d5 9.exd5 cxd5 10.Bb5+ Kf8.

9.g3 Qh3 10.Qe2

If 10.Qf3?! d6 11.Qf1 h4 12.Qxh3 Bxh3 and I am doing just fine here.

10...b5?!

The idea behind this was to force the bishop to go to b3 and play 12...Bb4 pinning the knight to the king and not allowing the knight to go to f3. Interesting here is 10...Kf8!? preparing the idea of ...h4 and then ...d5 11.Nf3 d5! 12.Ng5 *(12.Ng1?!; 12.exd5? Bg4 13.Ng5 Bxe2 14.Nxh3 Re8 and this is good for me.)* 12...Qd7 13.exd5 cxd5 14.Bb3 h4 15.g4 Qxg4 16.Qxg4 Bxg4 17.Bxd5 Re8+ 18.Kf1 *(18.Kf2? Re2+ and then ...Rxc2.)* 18...Bb4.

11.Bb3 Bb4

I was happy here that the knight now cannot go to f3 and then to g1 kicking my queen out. However, I wasn't happy about the fact that my knight on g8 and bishop on c8 are not working. A move like 11...Kf8 is still possible here.

12.a3 Ba5

If 12...Bxd2+ then 13.Bxd2 and White has better pieces than mine.

13.Ba2 b4?

I played this move to stop White from playing b4 so that I can keep the knight pinned to the king. But I never realized that I can lose a pawn this way. There is an interesting idea of playing. 13...d5!? 14.exd5+ Kf8 15.dxc6 Bg4 and then ...Re8.

14.Nb3

I was a little discouraged to see this move on the board. However, not only is

White's knight not going to go to f3, most of his pieces are on the queenside of the board. It will take some time for White to make all of his pieces work.

14...Bb6 15.axb4 Nf6

Finally my knight comes into the game.

16.Qf1 Qg4 17.Rg1 d5

17...h4? fails because of 18.h3! Qg6 *(18... Qe6?? 19.Nxd4; 18...Qh5 19.g4.).*

18.e5 Qe6 19.Qe2 Ng4 20.Rh1?

I was very surprised to see this move. In the game, I expected my opponent to do 20.h3 Ne3 *(20...Nh6 21.Qxh5)* 21.Bxe3 dxe3 22.d4. After my opponent played 20.Rh1?, I felt that I still had a chance to win the game.

20...h4 21.Qg2 f6 22.h3 fxe5!

Position after 22...fxe5

I was very proud of this move.

23.hxg4??

Because of this move, I won the game quickly. White should have done 23.f5 Qxf5 24.hxg4 Qxg4 with kind of a bad position (especially because of that h-pawn that I have) but it's still a game.

23...exf4+

My pawns are too strong, and his king is open.

24.Kf1

If 24.Qe2 then 24...Qxe2+ 25.Kxe2 Bxg4+ 26.Kf1 fxg3 and one of those pawns will promote.

24...fxg3 25.Bd2 0-0+!

What a fun little check!

26.Kg1 Rf2 27.Qh3 Rxd2

White resigned because ...Qe3+ is unstoppable.

0–1

This was indeed a tactical game and I loved it!

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 a6

Normal O'Kelly System.

3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e5 6.Nf3 Bb4 7.Bd2 0–0 8.Bd3 d6 9.0–0

Now the middlegame is reached.

9...Nbd7 10.a3 Bxc3

Here I wanted to take the knight because then I play ...Nc5 which gets an active knight.

11.Bxc3 Nc5

Position after 11...Nc5

In this position, White has a bishop pair. By looking, we can state that White's black bishop is better than White's white bishop. Trading off the knight for the white bishop would be useless. So, I planned to trade my knight for the black bishop, and then I will have a good bishop and a knight.

12.Re1 Na4 13.Qd2 Nxc3 14.Qxc3 Be6

Here you can see that Black's bishop is pretty good whereas White's bishop is not that good. It can be referred to as a "tall pawn" where the bishop is doing nothing but just standing there like a pawn.

15.Rad1 Rc8 16.Qd2 b5 17.Ng5

Here, I have two choices: ...Bd7 and ...Bg4. ...Bd7 does nothing, just a retreat, so that's why I thought ...Bg4 was better; turns out both of them were okay.

17...Bg4 18.Be2 Bxe2

I was forced to trade here because if I did ...Be6, she would have traded her knight for my awesome bishop. The other option ...Bd7 just loses a pawn by Qxd6.

19.Rxe2 h6 20.Nf3 Qc7 21.c3

21...Rfe8

A fun trap, Qxd6 loses to ...Red8. But I was pretty sure my opponent was going to see it. Note that this trap only because of the rook on e2. If it was on e1 instead of e2, it wouldn't have worked.

22.Ree1

Now it doesn't.

22...Red8 23.Qe2 Qb7 24.h3 Nh5 25.g3 Nf6 26.Nh4 g6 27.Ng2 Kg7 28.Rd3 Rc4 29.f3

Still clearly a draw. Here I tried an interesting idea of ...d5 followed by ...e4.

29...d5 30.exd5 e4

I get my pawn back anyways.

31.Rdd1

In the game, I calculated that 31.fxe4 is a bad move because of ...Rxe4 where my pieces are really active.

31...Rxd5 32.Rxd5 Qxd5 33.Ne3

You might think Black's losing here but it is actually not.

33...Qd6 34.Qf2

If Nxc4, ...Qxg3+, that's why Black isn't losing.

34...Rc8

Retreating my rook.

35.Rd1 Qc6?!

You might prefer ...Qe6 and say ...Qc6 is an inaccuracy. Even an engine might prefer the same, but I played differently.

36.f4 Re8 37.f5 g5

I still thought this is a draw because both White and Black had no attack.

38.g4 Qc7 39.Qh2 Qxh2+ 40.Kxh2

Just traded off my queens, seeing that I couldn't do anything more.

40...h5 41.Kg3 hxg4 42.hxg4 Rh8 43. Nd5?
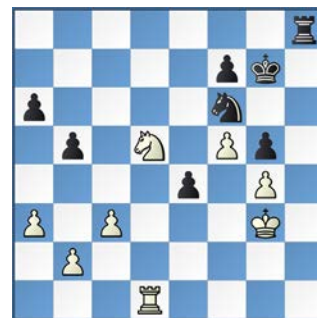
Position after 43.Nd5

The key moment of the game and for White, this is a critical mistake. I was really hoping for this move because, after Rxd5, I have ...Rh1, penetrating into White's camp.

43...Nxd5 44.Rxd5 Rh1 45.Re5 Rb1

After the game, when I was analyzing, I saw that the engine suggested ...Rg1+ for Black but I played differently. I just went with normal attacking play.

46.Rxe4 Rxb2 47.a4 Rb3 48.Kf2 Rxc3 49.axb5 axb5 50.Rb4 Rc5

...Rc4 also works here, threatening to take the last two pawns by Rxg4 followed by ...Rf4+ and ...Kf6.

51.Ke3 Kf6 52.Kf3 Rc3+ 53.Ke2 Rc4!

Finally found that idea in the game.

54.Rxb5 Rxg4

It's clearly losing for White here because the last pawn is going to fall and rook and two pawns versus rook should be an easy win for me. It was indeed a nice and tactical experience.

0–1

Official Standings: 2020 Oregon Open Blitz Championship

#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Rd 8	Rd 9	Rd 10	Total
1	1	Aleksandr Lenderman	2717	W10	W9	W3	W2	W6	W4	W5	W11	W7	W8	10
2	2	Tanraj S Sohal	2326	W14	W5	D4	L1	W12	W3	W6	W13	W10	W11	8.5
3	3	Ted Belanoff	2241	W7	W6	L1	W4	W10	L2	W8	W5	W9	W12	8
4	4	Micah Smith	2003	W11	W12	D2	L3	W8	L1	W9	W6	W15	L5	6.5
5	5	Ananth Gottumukkala	1785	W17	L2	W16	L10	W11	W12	L1	L3	W14	W4	6
6	6-7	Francisco Lopez	1778	W13	L3	W15	W8	L1	W9	L2	L4	B---	D10	5.5
7		Varin Nallabothula	1293	L3	L13	W17	W16	L9	B---	D10	W12	L1	W15	5.5
8	8-13	Harry Bell	2000	L12	W15	W14	L6	L4	W10	L3	W17	W13	L1	5
9		Valentin Razmov	1986	W16	L1	L12	W15	W7	L6	L4	B---	L3	W17	5
10		Austin Liu	1595	L1	W11	W13	W5	L3	L8	D7	W16	L2	D6	5
11		Drew Bunch	1169	L4	L10	B---	W13	L5	W16	W14	L1	W17	L2	5
12		Stephen Willy	1137	W8	L4	W9	W14	L2	L5	B---	L7	W16	L3	5
13		Owen Xu	unr.	L6	W7	L10	L11	W15	W14	W17	L2	L8	B---	5
14	14	Ethan Chung	1373	L2	W17	L8	L12	B---	L13	L11	D15	L5	W16	3.5
15	15	Ethan Cheng	828	B---	L8	L6	L9	L13	W17	D16	D14	L4	L7	3
16	16	Emerson Wong-Godfrey	1114	L9	B---	L5	L7	W17	L11	D15	L10	L12	L14	2.5
17	17	Leo Saloranta	unr.	L5	L14	L7	B---	L16	L15	L13	L8	L11	L9	1

Official Standings: 2020 Oregon Open Bullet Championship

#	Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Rd 8	Rd 9	Rd 10	Rd 11	Rd 12	Total
1	1	Aleksandr Lenderman	2717	W6	W3	W4	L2	W6	W3	W2	W4	W6	W3	W2	W4	11
2	2	Tanraj Sohal	2326	W5	W7	W3	W1	W5	W7	L1	W6	W5	W7	L1	W9	10
3	3	Benjamin Yin	1786	L2	W8	W7	W4	L2	L8	Bye	W9	L2	W8	L3	Bye	7
4		Ted Belanoff	2241	W8	L1	L2	D9	W8	L1	W9	L7	W8	L1	W5	W7	6.5
5		Micah Smith	2003	W9	W6	L1	L5	W9	L6	W8	L1	W9	L6	W7	L1	6
6		Stephen Willy	1137	L3	L5	Bye	W7	L3	W5	L4	Bye	L3	L5	Bye	W6	6
7		Francisco Lopez	1778	L1	L4	W9	Bye	L1	W4	W7	L2	L1	W4	L9	L8	5
8		Emerson Wong-Godfrey	1114	L4	Bye	L6	D3	L4	Bye	L3	L5	L4	Bye	W6	L2	4.5
9		Ethan Chung	1373	Bye	L2	L5	L8	Bye	L2	L6	W3	Bye	L2	L4	L3	4

A NORTHWEST CHESS GRAND PRIX EVENT

WASHINGTON CLASS CHAMPIONSHIPS

NOVEMBER 27-29TH, 2020

ONLINE VIA **Chess**.com

$3,500 based on 100 Paid Entries

Master (2200+): $200, $125, $75 U2300 $50

Expert (2000-2199): $200, $125, $75, U2100 $50

Class A (1800-1999): $200, $125, $75 U1900 $50

Class B (1600-1799): $200, $125, $75 U1700 $50

Class C (1400-1599): $200, $125, $75 U1500 $50

Class D (1200-1399): $200, $125, $75 U1300 $50

Class E (1199 & Under): $200, $125, $75, U1000/unr. $50

Upset Prizes: 1st $25 per section**,** 2nd 1-yr NWC subscription extension

Annotated Brilliancy Prize Competition: $25 per section. Submit one annotated game that you consider to be *Brilliant*. A panel of judges will select the winner in each section.

Format: A 6-Round Swiss in seven class sections as shown above. Sections may be combined if less than 12 players in a section.

Entry Fee: $60 if postmarked or online by Nov. 20, $70 after. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs. Rated players add $40 to play up one class only (can't play up two classes). Reentry for 1/2 of your original entry fee. Canadians may pay C$ at par for entry fee.

Time Control: G/90;+30.

Rounds: Fri./Sat./Sun. @ 10 AM & 3 PM.

Byes: Two half-point byes available. Request before end of round 2.

Online Registration: https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/ – pay by Credit/Debit/PayPal. **Registration deadline Thurs. Nov 26 @ 5:00pm**. $15 Late Fee for payments accepted after the deadline. Unpaid players will receive a zero-point bye for round 1.

Rating: US Chess Online Rated. US Chess November 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.

Memberships: Current US Chess and WCF membership/Northwest Chess subscription required. Memberships must be paid at time of registration. A Chess.com and Zoom account are required.

Procedure: Pairings will be released prior to the start of each round. Games will be started automatically by the TD in the Live Chess area. Players must report their result upon completion of the game.

Fair Play Policy: All players and parents (if U18) are required to sign the WCF Fair Play Agreement prior to the start of the tournament. All players will be monitored by Zoom during the games. WCF's fair play committee will review any suspicious games on a case-by-case basis. Cheating of any kind is strictly prohibited.

Info/Entries: Make checks payable to Washington Chess Federation. **Mail To:** Josh Sinanan, WCF President c/o Orlov Chess Academy: 4174 148th Ave. NE Building I, Ste. M Redmond, WA 98052. **Phone:** 206-769-3757 **Email:** WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Washington Class Blitz Championship: Sunday 11/29 at 7 PM. Format: A 9-Round Swiss in one section. Games start at 7 PM in the Live Chess area. TC: G/3;+2. EF: $25. Prize Fund: $400/b20. 1st $120, 2nd $80, 1st U2000 $50, 1st U1700 $50, 1st U1400 $50, 1st U1100/unr. $50. US Chess Online Blitz rated. Current US Chess and WCF membership/Northwest Chess subscription required. A Chess.com and Zoom account are required.

NORTHWEST CHESS WINTER OPEN

DECEMBER 13TH, 2020

In Memory of Mike Neeley, Northwest Chess editor 1993-1994.

Info/Entries: Make checks payable to Washington Chess Federation.

Mail To: Washington Chess Federation c/o Orlov Chess Academy 4174 148th Ave. NE Building I, Ste. M Redmond, WA 98052
Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President
Phone: 206-769-3757
Email: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. Registration **deadline Sat. 12/12 @ 5pm**. $15 Late Fee for payments accepted after the deadline. Unpaid players will receive a zero-point bye for round 1.

Site: Online via Chess.com

Format: A 5-Round Swiss in one section. This is a fundraising tournament for Northwest Chess magazine.

Entry Fee: $25 by 12/6, $30 after. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, or US Chess 2400+.
Time Control: G/25;+5.
Rounds: Sun. 9 AM, 10:30 AM, 12 PM, 1:30 PM, 3 PM.

Prizes: Northwest Chess subscription extensions (includes WCF membership for WA residents):
1st: 3-yr ext., 2nd: 2-yr ext., 3rd 1-yr ext.**,**
1stU1900/U1700/U1500/U1300/U1100/U900/U700: 1-yr ext. Unrated Prize: 1-yr ext. Biggest Upset: 1-yr ext. Annotated Brilliancy Prize Competition: Annotated your best game for Northwest Chess magazine. A panel of judges will select the winners. 1st: 2-yr ext., 2nd: 1-yr ext.

Byes: Two half-point byes available, request before end of round 2.

Memberships: Current US Chess and WCF membership/Northwest Chess subscription required. Memberships must be paid at time of registration. A Chess.com and Zoom account are required.

Rating: US Chess Online Rated and NWSRS Rated. US Chess December 2020 rating supplement will be used to determine pairings and prizes. Higher of US Chess or foreign ratings used at TD discretion.

Procedure: Pairings will be released prior to the start of each round. Games will be started automatically by the TD in the Live Chess area. Players must report their result to the TD upon completion of the game.

Fair Play Policy: All players and parents (if U18) are required to sign the WCF Fair Play Agreement prior to the start of the tournament. All players will be monitored by Zoom during the games. WCF's Fair Play Committee will review any suspicious games on a case-by-case basis. Cheating of any kind is strictly prohibited.

WASHINGTON WINTER CLASSIC

DECEMBER 26-27TH, 2020

Info/Entries: Make checks payable to Washington Chess Federation.

Mail To: Washington Chess Federation c/o Orlov Chess Academy 4174 148th Ave. NE Building I, Ste. M Redmond, WA 98052
Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President
Phone: 206-769-3757
Email: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. Registration **deadline Fri. 12/25 @ 5pm**. $15 Late Fee for payments accepted after the deadline. Unpaid players will receive a zero-point bye for round 1.

Site: Online via Chess.com

Format: An 8-Round Swiss in two sections: Open and Reserve (U1700).

Entry Fee: $45 by 12/19, $55 after. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, or US Chess 2400+. $40 play-up fee if rated under 1700 playing in Open section.

Time Control: G/45;+5.
Rounds: Sat/Sun. 10 AM, 12:30 PM, 3 PM, 5:30 PM.

Prize Fund: $1,800 (based on 60 paid entries).

Open: 1st $300, 2nd $225, 3rd $175
1st U2000: $100, 1st U1800: $100 Biggest Upset: $25
Reserve: 1st $200, 2nd $150, 3rd $100
1st U1600/U1400/U1200: $100, 1st U1000/unrated: $100
Biggest Upset: $25

Byes: Three half-point byes available, request before end of round 3.

Memberships: Current US Chess and WCF membership/Northwest Chess subscription required. Memberships must be paid at time of registration. A Chess.com and Zoom account are required.

Rating: US Chess Online Rated and NWSRS Rated. US Chess December 2020 rating supplement will be used to determine pairings and prizes. Higher of US Chess or foreign ratings used at TD discretion.

Procedure: Pairings will be released prior to the start of each round. Games will be started automatically by the TD in the Live Chess area. Players must report their result to the TD upon completion of the game.

Fair Play Policy: All players and parents (if U18) are required to sign the WCF Fair Play Agreement prior to the start of the tournament. All players will be monitored by Zoom during the games. WCF's Fair Play Committee will review any suspicious games on a case-by-case basis. Cheating of any kind is strictly prohibited.

The 2020 Mike Neeley Memorial Northwest Grand Prix

Murlin Varner, Administrator

September had just one Grand Prix event, the Seattle Fall Open, which had a total of 61 players at Chess.com. Once again, the event had a multiplier, this time 2x, and so all points gained were doubled. There were a few changes in the leaderboard, but nothing widespread. Usually, during a year, we have many players who will move from the leadership in one class the next higher class, as their ratings rise. Since I use standard US Chess ratings (for the most part), there have not been any changes to speak of over our Covid-tainted year. The only places where I have looked for ratings changes are in the handful of players who have no rating in the US Chess system. For those players, I have used the NWSRS rating system and have looked for any that have gone up. That did result in one leader moving up a class, but remaining on the leaderboard. Since OTB chess has become available in some places in the USA, there is a possibility that some of our Grand Prix people will have seen their US Chess rating rise during recent months. When December ratings are official (usually by the third Friday of the previous month), I will go through all members to see if anyone has had a rating rise which might impact our standings. By next year, I hope we are soon back to where I will have to resume my monthly ratings checks.

October had two more events, the Washington Game/60 Championship on October 3, and the Washington Challengers' Cup on October 24-25. Both had 2x point multipliers. November, of course, is the time for the traditional Washington Class Championships. This year it is going to be held on November 27-29, on Chess.com. The prize fund for this event earns it a 3x multiplier. This is the only Grand Prix event in November.

The 2020 Grand Prix competition, altered as it is from our traditional operation, will conclude in December with two more Grand Prix events. The first is the Northwest Chess Winter Open, on Chess.com, in memory of former editor Mike Neeley, which is offering membership extensions as prizes and is a 1x event. The other is right after Christmas with the Washington Winter Classic on December 26 and 27, also on Chess.com, with a 2x multiplier. At that point, our strange year of the Covid Grand Prix will be over, with 2021 still being an unknown quantity for the future. Stay tuned…

Data below current through October 1.

2020 Memorial Northwest Grand Prix Standings

	Washington				Other Places			
	last	first	pts.		last	first	place	pts.
	Masters				**Masters**			
1	Mahajan	Rushaan	52.0	1	Lenderman	Aleksander	NY	102.0
2	Levine	David	25.0	2	Shahinyan	David	ARM	84.0
3	Pupols	Viktors	24.5	2	Raptis	Nick	OR	84.0
4	Orlov	Georgi	22.5	4	Talukdar	Rohan	CAN	65.5
5	Kaufman	Ray	19.5	5	Tarjan	James	OR	51.0
	Experts				**Experts**			
1	Vijayakumar	Advaith	90.0	1	Vega	Isaac	OR	58.0
2	Whale	Nicholas	79.5	2	Sairam	Pranav	CA	51.0
3	Bell	Harry	62.0	3	Huang	Patrick M	CAN	47.5
4	Shubin	Daniel	56.5	4	Guha	Eshan	NJ	33.0
5	Jiang	Brandon	42.5	5	McConnell	Griffin	CO	25.5
	Class A				**Class A**			
1	Tien	Sophie	102.0	1	Moore	Michael	OR	74.0
2	Qian	Daniel	79.5	2	Ingram	Richard	CAN	38.5
3	Razmov	Valentin N	79.0	3	Bagchi	Sounak	NJ	28.0
4	Chang	Eddie	59.0	4	Pang	Ashley	CA	19.5
5	Chen	Minda	54.5	5	Two tied at			19.0

	Washington				Other Places			
	last	**first**	**pts.**		**last**	**first**	**place**	**pts.**
	Class B				**Class B**			
1	Gottumukkala	Ananth	73.5	1	Guo	Yu Han (Veronica)	CAN	30.0
2	Kompella	S Aditya	73.0	2	Pai	Kushal	OR	21.0
3	Li	Edward	72.5	2	Zhao	Maxwell Z	IL	21.0
4	Wang	Felicity	68.0	4	Fowler	James F	OR	17.0
5	Vemparala	Nikash	67.5	5	Two tied at			16.5
	Class C				**Class C**			
1	Li	Emma	116.0	1	Zhu	Florina	NJ	31.5
2	Brown	Northern	107.5	2	Martin	Andrew	CAN	29.0
3	Singh	Saket	81.5	3	He	Justin	ID	19.5
4	Ramkumar	Aditya	71.5	4	Gabunia	Davit	OR	18.0
5	Devaraju	Sonia	59.0	5	Three Tied at			15.0
	Class D and Below				**Class D And Below**			
1	Ruff`	Lois	107.5	1	Malakar	Saarthak	OR	56.5
2	Kona	Vidip	93.5	2	Hack	Don	CAN	54.5
3	Wong-Godfrey	Emerson P	89.0	3	Arul	Sharvesh	AZ	44.0
4	Devadithya	Hiruna	83.0	4	Li	David	IL	40.0
5	Zhang	Michael	81.0	5	Morris	Brian L	CA	36.0
	Overall Standings							
1	Li	Emma	116.0	1	Lenderman	Aleksander	NY	102.0
2	Brown	Northern	107.5	2	Shahinyan	David	ARM	84.0
2	Ruff`	Lois	107.5	2	Raptis	Nick	OR	84.0
4	Tien	Sophie	102.0	4	Moore	Michael	OR	74.0
5	Kona	Vidip	93.5	5	Talukdar	Rohan	CAN	65.5
6	Vijayakumar	Advaith	90.0	6	Vega	Isaac	OR	58.0
7	Wong-Godfrey	Emerson P	89.0	7	Malakar	Saarthak	OR	56.5
8	Devadithya	Hiruna	83.0	8	Hack	Don	CAN	54.5
9	Singh	Saket	81.5	9	Tarjan	James	OR	51.0
10	Zhang	Michael	81.0	9	Sairam	Pranav	CA	51.0
11	Whale	Nicholas	79.5	11	Bernadskiy	Vitaliy	UKR	49.5
11	Qian	Daniel	79.5	12	Huang	Patrick M	CAN	47.5
13	Razmov	Valentin N	79.0	13	Arul	Sharvesh	AZ	44.0
13	Zhang	Michelle	79.0	14	Li	David	IL	40.0
15	Shanmugam	Meera	75.5	15	Ingram	Richard	CAN	38.5