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Washington State Champion Anthony He.
Photo credit: Xuhao He.

On the back cover:

(L-R): Xuhao He, Chunfeng Bi, Anthony He, and GM Miroslav Miljkovic, July 4, 2018 in Belgrade, Serbia.
Photo courtesy of Xuhao He.

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Letter To The Editor

Dear Jeffrey Roland,

It's a treat to see the photo of Morgan The Adventure Dog on page 46 of the March 2021 issue. Here's an update.

Morgan would be 13 if he makes it to August, but I must mention that is in question.

Sad to say, he is diagnosed with terminal cancer. Weeks left in his life, estimates Morgan's excellent veterinarian Dr. Maggie Anthony in Bingen, Washington. Obviously, she deals with ill and dying animals as part of her career, but yesterday she was expressing particular sadness about Morgan. We agree there's something special about the guy, and her comments were, I am convinced, considerably beyond typical comfort-the-customer talk. We had quite the philosophical conversation, that suffering and death are part of life, that's just how it is, that one must make the best one can of this day, try to be of good attitude, try to keep learning, that the German philosopher Goethe said, "The present moment is a powerful goddess," that sort of comment.

As I think on it, one reason I like chess is that you simply must be right there in the moment to do OK. I suppose that is true also for sports, or many other crafts and activities, but chess works for me.

My big insight years ago was that it's definitely a two-way street with Morgan. Yes, I do try to take good care of Morgan, but also, he takes seriously his life responsibility to try to take care of me, in his own areas of perception and expertise. Hard to define, but it's there for sure. Am I a better person for having had Morgan in my life for 13 years? Um ... I'll say yes.

Concerning making the best of the day, and thus concerning the related rather sad topic of when euthanasia might be appropriate, Dr. Maggie and I have a pretty good sense of the quality-of-life line for Morgan. Symptoms to watch for, weight loss to monitor, and so forth. Right now, Morgan has somewhat of a decline in energy, but otherwise is doing well. By no means near that quality-of-life line, I am happy to report.

Right now, he has just finished grooming his paws, and is sleeping comfortably on his cushion under the table. Who knows, it may be more than weeks. A friend in Port Townsend had a dog the vet diagnosed as likely to die in a few days, and he, the dog that is, not sure about the vet, had a good life for more than a year.

Morgan has just come over to request being put outside, likely to sleep in the beautiful morning sun. So it goes.

Best,

Jerry Richards

2021 Washington State Championship

By Josh Sinanan

The 2021 Washington State Championship took place February 13-15 online via Chess.com. This year's event, which is traditionally run as a ten-player round robin tournament over the first two weekends in February, was condensed to a single weekend with a shorter time control of game in 60 minutes with a ten-second increment to be more compatible with online play. Thirty players took part in three round-robin sections: Championship, Premier, and Invitational. The Challengers section was canceled this year to encourage more participation in the President's Cup, which occurred the previous weekend and seeds the winner into next year's Invitational section. The Washington State Championship was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation, directed by WCF Scholastic Coordinator Jacob Mayer, and organized by President Josh Sinanan. A panel of judges decided the \$100 Brilliancy Prizes for each of the three sections.

Youth triumphed over experience in this year's Washington State Championship, with FM Anthony He (15), NM Kyle Haining (20), and Pranav K. Anoop (14) emerging victorious in the Championship, Premier, and Invitational respectively.

In the Championship, Anthony He got off to a slow start with a first-round loss to the ever-dangerous FM Tian Sang, a many-time Washington State Championship runner-up. From round two onward, Anthony kicked it into high gear, and showed us why he has a 2500 online chess rating, by rattling off seven wins and one draw in his remaining eight games! Anthony's nearest rival, Tian Sang, could not keep pace, dropping a point to former child prodigy Ryan Porter in the penultimate round. With this victory Anthony became the 2021 Washington State Chess Champion one day before his 16th birthday and adds to his list of impressive accomplishments, including the 2021 Washington State High School Co-Champion!

The Premier featured a three-horse race between NM Kyle Haining, FM Ignacio Perez, and Thanh Nguyen. Haining and Perez, both veteran masters, came into the tournament as the heavy favorites. Kyle began the tournament in superb form with seven wins from

his first eight games, allowing only one draw against Thanh. Heading into the final round, Kyle would face his former coach and mentor, Ignacio Perez, with the white pieces and needed only a draw to secure clear first place. Despite his solid and careful play against the wild and unpredictable Ignacio, Kyle soon found himself entangled in one of the Cuban magician's mystical attacks. Luckily for Kyle, Thanh was held to a draw by Nicholas Whale, so Kyle ended up winning the Premier anyway! For his creative and daring play in round seven, Thanh was selected as the winner of the Premier Brilliancy Prize.

The Invitational, first introduced in 2007 by former WCF President Geoff Gale, was won by Pranav K. Anoop, a freshman at Interlake High School in Bellevue. His score of six wins, two draws, and one loss was good enough for clear first place in this year's event. Pranav's final-round victory against Erin Bian, last year's Challengers Champion, enabled him to leapfrog her in the standings and clinch the victory! Teddy Roberts and Harry Bell shared third/fourth place honors with 5.5/9 points. Half-a-point back were former WCF Tournament Coordinator Dan Mathews and local Chess4Life coach Lane Van Weerdhuizen, who was awarded the Invitational Brilliancy Prize.

Several of the players have graciously annotated a game for the Northwest Chess readers to enjoy.

Player Bios

These are presented in random order and most are written by the players themselves.

Photos provided by the players.

Dominic Colombo

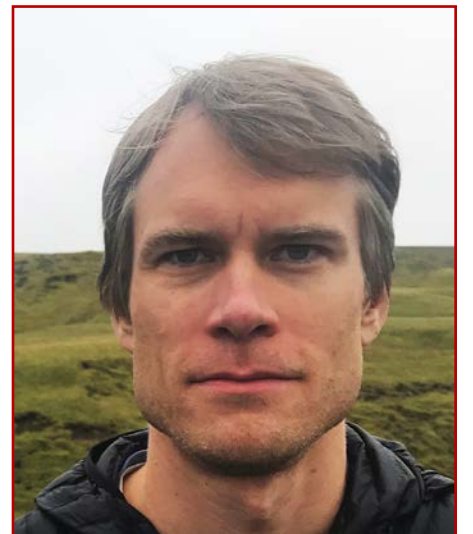
Dominic Colombo began playing competitive chess in 2013 at the age of eight, after finally convincing his dad to teach him the game two years earlier. Since then, he has competed in many tournaments and currently holds the US Chess rating of 1960. He won the grade-level state championship for Georgia

twice before moving. He recently became the high school state co-champion. He currently studies under NM Dominique Myers from the Charlotte Chess Center. Dominic is also an assistant teacher at St. Nicholas Catholic School.



Ryan Porter

Ryan Porter was very active in his youth. He was a member of the All-America Team from 1990-1996 and represented the U.S. in the 1991 World Under-12 Championship. He later finished second in the 1994 U.S. Cadet Under-16 Championship and third in the 1997 National High School Championship. Then, college did what it so often does to interest in and time for chess. He is now hoping to finally carve out some time to get more serious about the game again.



Kyle Haining

Kyle Haining is a student majoring in computer science at the University of Washington. He began playing chess against his dad in first grade and has since gone on to become a National Master. He currently coaches a high school chess club at Seattle Preparatory School along with GM Emil Anka.



Valentin Razmov

Valentin Razmov is a local chess coach who works with both students and adults, from beginner to advanced levels. He returned to active tournament play in 2020, many years after being trained to expert level as a youth in Eastern Europe. Valentin earned a spot in the Premier section of the 2021 Washington State Championship by winning the 2020 Washington President's Cup. He is also a regular contributor of articles and annotated games to *Northwest Chess* magazine.



Northwest Chess

Lane Van Weerdhuizen

Chess has been a huge part of my life both as a player and as a coach. My last tournament was eight years ago! I have been playing chess since age five. Tied for first in State in fifth grade (2000). Competed in Nationals same year (20th place blitz section). Third in High School (9-12) State Junior Year (2006). Competed in WA vs BC Intermat for team WA as a Junior in High School.

Graduated high school with most NWRS games in the State played (record was 500 at the time)

Led Lynden High school to fifth place team in State Team in 2007. Have been teaching chess since 2008.

Teaching chess has been my full-time profession since 2010 working as a coach for Chess4Life. (11 years). Have been Chess4Life's Tournament Director for ten years.

Tournament Director for Washington State Elementary Bughouse Tournament the last two years (2018/2019).



Harry Bell

Started playing chess while in the US Army Band in the mid 1970s. Played a lot of Northwest tournament chess in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Notable results:

Winner of the Grants Pass Open (May 8, 1984) beating Jeremy Silman on the white side of an Accelerated Dragon Variation and later drawing with Oregon State Champion Richard Wood.

Winner of an Oregon City tournament (not sure what year).

Co-winner of a Portland tournament along with John Donaldson (I think); I remember not being paired with John

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that tournament because the number of players was so large.

Fell out of tournament chess in the late 1980s due to work and marriage priorities.

Started up online chess in the 2000s and played a number of Northwest online tournaments since last year.



Cameron Leslie

Cam loves chess and has been playing for 30 years. It is his second time playing in the Washington State Championships. He is very excited to be playing again this year and hopes to return to OTB play sometime soon. He is also an Electrical Engineer for Schweitzer Engineering Labs and is currently pursuing his PE License and hopes to obtain that sometime in April. For work he travels all over the world helping customers with incorporating SEL protective relays in their power systems. He graduated from the University of Idaho with a bachelor's in mechanical engineering and a master's in electrical engineering. He also competes in Powerlifting Meets in his spare time. His wife Paula, a physician with MultiCare in Spokane, supports him in all these crazy endeavors. Together they have two dogs and one horse and are looking to add to their family soon, hopefully twins! He looks forward to meeting some new friends in this tournament and wishes everyone the best of luck!



Page 5

This was my first tournament since the 2012 US Open! I was very nervous going into this game playing against another professional chess coach and highly skilled chess player, Ryan Ackerman. I went into this tournament hoping for a score of 4.0/9 (which I was able to achieve after my 7th round!) wanting to prove to myself I could still compete with some of Washington's best players! Getting this first win in round one really boosted my confidence going forward!

1.d4 g6 2.c4 Bg7 3.e4 d6 4.Be2 Nc6

I like my move here of...Nc6 (analysis also agreed it was the best move). Adding some pressure on d4, while keeping my Bishop on g7 unblocked!

5.Be3

Analysis says Nf3 is equal here. I think Ackerman's plan was to use his f-pawn aggressively, so Nf3 would have blocked that plan.

5...f5

My best move here was 5...e5. I wanted to play something more aggressive (since White has no knights developed yet). I decided to play 5...f5 to attack the center and play something unpredictable!

6.exf5 Bxf5 7.g4??

Analysis says g4 is a blunder. Nf3/Nc3 are equal. g4 kinda blocks some of White's pieces and attempts to displace my light bishop.

Here I had two options. I considered ...Bd7 (which was the best move according to analysis) but I was worried my bishop would be too limited in space so I decided to take the knight on b1 with a small tempo of ...Be4 to force f3 (and block a good developing square for White's knight!)

7...Be4 8.f3 Bxb1 9.Rxb1??



Position after 9.Rxb1

Analysis is such a fun thing. After ...Bxb1, White was supposed to play d5. Such a hard Zwischenzug move to find, naturally. This move displaces my c6-knight, while also making it harder to play a move like ...e5 later.

9...e5

I was able to find the best move here with ...d5 being slightly worse. Black need to compete for the center and pawns are the best way to do it!

10.d5 Nd4

Once again, ...Nd4 is the best move by quite a bit; took me a bit to find it. Looks scary, though, as I'm committing to having double pawns on the d-file and it might be hard to hold onto the pawn after it goes to d4.

11.Qa4+ Qd7 12.Qxd7+ Kxd7

I really hate trading queens. I'm a very tactical player, and the Queen is the best piece at making tactics. Ryan was able to force a queen trade here and force me to go into an endgame!

13.Bxd4 exd4

Now Ackerman creates my doubled pawn, the opposite-colored bishops help me protect the pawn, and I'm planning on playing ...c5 ASAP. Best piece at protecting a pawn is another pawn!

14.Nh3 Re8

Ackerman didn't let me castle... so I was going to make it very difficult for him to develop all of his pieces. With the exception of his knight, I was able to really hold a lot of White's pieces in place.

15.Nf4 Bh6 16.Ne6 Be3

I saw Ackerman's outpost that he had on e6. It was an impressive outpost, and I was struggling at finding a way to stop it from happening. I decided to get an outpost myself on e3 (which was happy to find out later that analysis liked as well). My ...Be3 stopped White from being able to castle and really controlled lots of important squares White's rooks/king wanted to move to!

17.Rd1 c5

Analysis didn't like ...c5 as much as I did. Best move here was ...c6 or ...Nf6. My move wasn't terrible though.

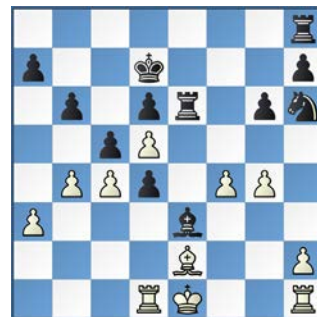
18.b4 b6

Apparently we both blundered here! b4 was losing a pawn, and I was supposed to take that pawn! I was worried my pawns would all be too hard to defend if I captured b4.

19.a3 Nh6

...Nf6 was slightly better. I wanted my knight to have the ability to go to f7 and then e5.

20.f4 Rxe6!



Position after 20...Rxe6

This was my favorite move of the game. And maybe my favorite move of the tournament! This was me deciding I wanted to go for a win and try to create some imbalances in my favor (analysis liked my move here as well).

21.dxe6+ Kxe6 22.Rf1 Rf8 23.f5+ gxf5 24.gxf5+ Ke5

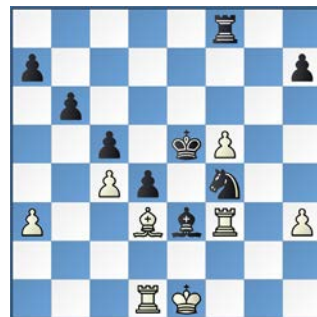
I saw after I sacrificed my rook, I had the ability to get a knight and *two* pawns in return.

I knew f4 was going to be hard to defend. I decided winning that pawn back wasn't worth it as I wanted to keep more pieces on the board. Capturing the f-pawn would have simplified things too much. Analysis agreed not to take the pawn, but preferred ...Kf6 over the move I played.

25.Bd3 Ng4 26.h3 Nf6 27.bxc5 dxc5 28.Ke2 Nh5

I played ...Nh5 with the plan of relocating my knight to either f5 or g3. When you are unsure of what kind of plan to make in chess, try to find ways to make your weaker pieces stronger.

29.Rf3 Nf4+ 30.Ke1



Position after 30.Ke1

Interesting move here. Apparently, White's best move was Rxf4 instead of Ke1. Definitely would have simplified the game for White and make for an annoying

endgame of opposite-colored bishops. At this point Ackerman had just under three minutes on his clock (while I was at seven minutes). I'm sure that helped me at this point in the game.

30...Rg8 31.Rxe3+ dxe3

Once again, Rxf4 was the better move. Ackerman was down to 57 seconds at this point. My knight is much stronger than my bishop.

32.Bf1 Kxf5

Analysis preferred ...Ke4 instead of ...Kxf5.

33.Rd7 Ke4 34.Re7+ Kf3 35.Rf7 Rg1

The Rg1-pin locked up this win. I knew ...e2 would be coming and I'm using all three of my pieces together to help push my e-pawn up the file.

36.Rxf4+ Kxf4 37.Ke2 Rxf1 38.Kxf1 Kf3

After winning the exchange and maintaining my passed e-pawn, I decided to convert the advantage and play ...Rxf1.

White resigned here and after that it was on to round two!

0-1

Chouchanik Airapetian (2104) – Nat Koons (2290) [C45]
2021 WA State Championship
Chess.com (R1), February 13, 2021
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4 Qf6

4...Bc5 and 4...Nf6 are the most common moves here.

5.Be3 Qg6?!

5...Bc5 6.c3 Nge7 7.Bc4 Ne5 8.Be2 Qg6 is the usual move order to threaten a pawn grab. After 9.0-0, however, Black generally avoids the risk, and continues 9...d6 with roughly balanced chances and plenty of action to follow. (9...Qxe4!? 10.Nd2 (10.Nb5!? Bxe3 (10...Qc6? 11.Bxc5 Qxc5 12.Qd4! wins material for White.) 11.Nxc7+ Kd8 12.Nxa8 is wild and crazy, but could be fertile ground for home analysis.) 10...Qg6 11.Bh5 Qd3 12.N4f3! Bxe3 13.Nxe5 Qxd2 14.Bxf7+ Kf8 15.fxe3 Qxe3+ (15...Qxd1 16.Raxd1 d6 17.e4+-) 16.Kh1 Qxe5 17.Bg6+ Kg8 18.Qb3+ d5 19.Rae1+- looks like a throwback to the romantic era.)

6.Nc3 Bb4 7.Be2 Bxc3+ 8.bxc3 Qxe4

Black chooses his poison.

9.0-0 Nf6 10.Bd3

10.Nb5 is a standard method of causing

Black discomfort when the queen has gone for a walk. 10...Kd8 (10...Qe5?? 11.Bd4 Nxd4 12.cxd4 Qf4 13.g3+-) 11.Re1 d6 12.Bf3 with a ton of development and Black's king caught in the center. White can claim more than adequate compensation for a pawn and queenside structural weaknesses. Those, after all, only show up as a deficit in the endgame.

10...Qe5

10...Qd5 11.Nb5 Kd8 12.c4±

11.Re1 0-0 12.Nf5

Now that the black king has successfully escaped to the kingside, White redirects to kingside attack mode. However, 12.Nb5 still appears a strong option.



Position after 12.Nf5

Seattle Chess Club Quads

FEB. 13, MAR. 7, APR. 4, MAY 8

A NORTHWEST CHESS GRAND PRIX EVENT

Site: Online via Chess.com

Format: A 3-Round Quad in 4-player sections by rating. Dual NWSRS and US Chess Online Rated.

Time Control: G/75;+10 sec. increment.

Entry Fee: \$25. Non-members of WCF/OCF/ICA add \$15. SCC members receive a \$10 discount. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, or US Chess 2400+.

Rounds: 10 AM, 1 PM, 4 PM

Prizes (per quad): 1st \$50.

Memberships: Current US Chess membership required. Memberships must be paid at time of registration. A working Chess.com and Zoom account are required.



Rating: Highest of current US Chess, US Chess Online, or NWSRS rating will be used to determine section and pairings.

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.

Fair Play Policy: All players 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. Fair play standards will be strictly enforced.



Info/Entries: Josh Sinanan, WCF President

Phone: 206-769-3757

Email: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. Registration deadline @ 5pm on the eve of the tournament. \$15 Late Fee for payments accepted after the deadline. Unpaid players will receive a zero-point bye for round 1.

12...Qxc3?

One of Karl Schoffstoll's sayings, back in the day, was "I may be a fool, but I'm a greedy fool!" Much safer is 12...d6 13.Bh6 (13.Nxg7?? loses instantly to 13...Ng4) 13...Qxc3 14.Nxg7 (14.Bxg7?? Bxf5 15.Bxf8 Bxd3+-) 14...Ng4 with possible complications. For example: 15.Qf3 Qf6 (15...Kh8 16.Qxf7! Bd7! 17.Qxd7 Nce5! 18.Qe7 Nxh6 19.Ne6 Rf7 20.Qh4 Nf5) 16.Qxf6 Nxf6 17.h3 Bd7

13.Bd2 Qc5 14.Qf3 d6

14...g6 15.Bg5±

15.Nxg7!!

Smashing the black king's cover.

15...Ng4

15...Kxg7?? 16.Bh6+ Kg8 17.Qxf6 Qd4 18.Qg5+ Kh8 19.Bxf8+-

16.Nf5 Bxf5 17.Bxf5 Nge5 18.Qh5 Ng6 19.Re3 Rfe8 20.Rh3 Re2 21.Be3

21.Qxh7+ Kf8 22.Bh6+ Ke7 23.Re3+ Rxe3 24.Bxg6!+- with a monster attack. Black is hoping for 21.Qxe2 Qxf5, when White is merely winning.

21...Qe5 22.Rf1 Rxe3!?

22...Kf8 23.Bxg6 Qxh5 24.Bxh5 Rxc2 25.Re1+-

23.fxe3?

23.Qxh7+ Kf8 24.Bxg6+-

23...Qg7 24.Rg3 Re8 25.Qd1

Simple plan: push the h-pawn.

25...Re5 26.h4 Qh6 27.h5 Rxe3?

27...Nce7 28.e4+-

28.Rff3?

28.Qd2 pins the rook and ends all hope for Black.

28...Rxf3 29.Qxf3 Nd4

29...Nce5 30.Qe2



Position after 29...Nd4

30.Qf2??

Now things go from bad to worse for White, who turns a crushing attack into a miserable loss in the space of just a

couple moves. 30.Qg4+-

30...Qxh5 31.Bxg6 Qd1+ 32.Qf1??

32.Kh2 hxg6 33.Rh3 Nf5 34.Qxa7 Kg7 35.Qxb7

32...Ne2+ 33.Kh2

33.Kf2 doesn't help. 33...Qxf1+ 34.Kxf1 Nxg3+ 35.Kf2 hxg6+-

33...Qxf1 34.Rg4

34.Bd3+ Nxg3 35.Bxf1 Nxf1+

34...Qg1+ 35.Kh3 Qh1#

Ah, the joys of online chess.

0-1

**Kyle Haining (2288) –
Tim Moroney (1927) [B90]**
2021 WA State Championship
Chess.com (R7), February 14, 2021
[Kyle Haining]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 e5 7.Nb3 Be6 8.Qd2 Be7 9.f3 0-0 10.0-0-0 Qc7

An interesting sideline where Black opts for quick activity along the c-file. 10...Nbd7 11.g4 b5 12.g5 b4± is main line and an important position to be aware of. Different online databases give this as resulting from the top line in chess.

11.g4 Rc8 12.Kb1

12.g5 is a better move for White, preventing ...d5. For some reason I was thinking the reverse, that g5 runs into ...d5 while Kb1 avoids it by getting out of any ...Qxc2 checkmate ideas. 12...Nh5 13.Kb1 Nd7 14.Nd5 Bxd5 15.exd5±

12...d5 13.exd5

13.g5 d4 is fine for Black: 14.gxf6 dxc3 15.Qxc3 Qxc3 16.bxc3 Bxf6±

13...Nxd5 14.Nxd5 Bxd5 15.Be2

15.Qxd5? runs into 15...Rd8 16.Qxd8+ Bxd8±. White does not have enough for the queen.

15...Rd8?



Position after 15...Rd8

Amazingly, this move turns out to be

the losing move of the game, which is surprising because it looks fairly natural. The reason is that I have a series of power moves here that turns the table in my favor. 15...a5! is a strong move for Black, the point being that White is not really threatening to capture the bishop. After 16.Qxd5?! ...Rd8 no longer works, but Black has instead 16...Qxc2+ 17.Ka1 Qxe2±.

16.Qa5 Qxa5 17.Nxa5 b5 18.c4 Be6

18...bxc4 19.Nxc4 is highly unpleasant for Black, with the knight threatening to hop onto b6. A sample continuation: 19...Bxc4 20.Rxd8+ Bxd8 21.Bxc4+- White's bishop pair and active piece placement are too much.

19.Bd3 Nd7 20.Be4

Now White has the dominant light-squared bishop and overwhelming piece play. Since erring with 15...Rd8, Black has been playing more or less the engine's top move (it preferred giving up material with...f5 the previous move), but White's positional takeover was unavoidable.

20...Rac8

I went into a long think here to figure out the best continuation. Black's position looks loose, and it feels like I should be able to win material here, but it's harder than it might seem. I eventually found the knockout punch.

21.cxb5 axb5 22.Nc6 Re8 23.Na7 Ra8

23...Rb8 24.Bc6 Red8 25.Bxb5+-

24.Bxa8 Rxa8 25.b3+-

25.Nxb5?! Bxa2+ gives Black an unpleasant amount of counterplay.

25...b4 26.Rc1 Nf6 27.Nc6 Bd6 28.Bc5 Bxc5 29.Rxc5 Nd5?! 30.Rxd5 Bxd5 31.Ne7+ Kf8 32.Nxd5

1-0

**Anthony He (2500) –
Rushaan Mahajan (2221) [B15]**
2021 WA State Championship
Chess.com (R2), February 13, 2021
[Anthony He]

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ exf6 6.c3 Bd6 7.Bd3 0-0 8.Qc2 Re8+ 9.Ne2 h5!

Known to be the best in terms of modern theory.

10.0-0 h4 11.Nf4!?

An interesting idea I came up with. The point is to exploit the movement of the h-pawn and pretty much just attack the king.

11...Nd7 12.Qd1 Nf8

12...Qc7 13.g3 doesn't really help Black honestly.

13.Qh5



Position after 13.Qh5

13...f5!?

This wasn't something I expected, but the more I looked at it the more reasonable it seemed. 13...g6?! 14.Nxg6! Most clear and concise. (14.Qh6!? Bxf4 15.Bxf4 h3 16.Rfe1 Qd5 17.gxh3 Bf5∞ Less clear. White should be better still but it's not easy at all.) 14...fxg6 15.Bxg6 Be6 (15...Re7 16.Bh6± is just really bad for Black.) 16.Re1 Qd7 17.Bxe8 Rxe8 18.Qxh4± This is close to equal but in both an objective and practical sense White has the edge, due to it being easier to play and

the material "advantage."

14.Bd2

14.Bxf5?? I nearly played this move expecting g6, but then realized I actually just lose a piece. 14...Bxf4! 15.Bxc8 (15.Bxf4 g6-) 15...Bxc1 16.Bxb7 Bxb2 17.Bxa8 Bxa1 18.Bxc6 Re6 19.Bd5 g6 20.Qf3 Rf6+; 14.Nh3!? was also a consideration but I wasn't so sure because Ng5 doesn't really pose a threat: 14...Qc7 15.Ng5 Bxh2+ 16.Kh1 Bd6 17.Qxh4 b5!∞ The point is to stop g3-Kg2-Rh1 maneuvers by preparing Bb7 + c5+. I didn't really feel like entering these types of positions.

14...g6 15.Qh6 Nh7??

This was a mistake which I wasn't expecting. He spent around 20 minutes on this move and that was when I started to realize he must have been considering Nh7 + Bf8 ideas but missed the next move.

15...Qf6! was the move I was expecting. It's not so easy to play though because it runs straight into Nh5, but there is nothing direct for White. White is still += though. 16.Rfe1! White should take it slow and play with a better pawn structure. (16.Nh5?! is tempting, but does nothing. 16...Qh8 17.Rfe1 Some

variations I was looking at. 17...Ne6 18.Qxh8+ Kxh8 19.Nf4= White has literally nothing here. (19.Nf6?? Rd8-+ White can't save the knight. 20.d5 cxd5 21.Nxd5 Bxh2+ 22.Kxh2 Rxd5)) 16...Be6 (16...Bd7 17.Nh3!± The simple way to just get a pawn. (17.Nh5!/? Now and only know is this good because the d7-bishop will be under attack. 17...Qh8 18.Qxh8+ Kxh8 19.Nf6 Rxe1+ 20.Rxe1 Be6 21.Bg5 h3±. This is unclear. White's probably still better but there's really no point to go for it.) 17...Ne6 18.Ng5) 17.c4 Qh8 18.Qxh8+ Kxh8 19.g3± This is easier and much more pleasant with White pieces.

16.Bc4!

Move I'm guessing he missed.

16...Bxf4?!

Black was already dead lost but this made the task simpler. 16...Qf6 is the only chance, even though I can get a pawn with no compensation. 17.Qxg6+ (17.Rfe1 Also good too. 17...Bd7 18.Qxg6+ Qxg6 19.Nxg6+; 17.Nxg6?? Be6-+ And the tables turn.) 17...Qxg6 18.Nxg6 h3 19.Rfe1+; 16...Bf8 17.Qxg6++-

17.Bxf7+ Kxf7 18.Qxh7+ Ke6

18...Kf8 19.Bxf4 g5 is the best chance, but still hopeless nevertheless. 20.Be5+-

WA SPRING INTO CHESS960 OPEN



Info: Josh Sinanan, WCF President
Phone: 206-769-3757
Email: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com
Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. Registration **deadline Sat. 4/10 @ 5 PM.**

SUNDAY APRIL 11, 2021

Site: Online via 

Format: A 5-Round Swiss in three sections: Open, Premier U2000, Reserve U1400. Sections with <7 players will be played as RR's with no half-point byes allowed.

Entry Fee: \$35 before 4/7, \$40 after. Non-members of WCF/OCF/ICA add \$15. \$20 fee to play-up 1 section. Free entry for GMs/IMs/USCF 2400+.

Time Control: G/30; +10.

Rounds: Sun. 4/11 @ 9 AM, 11 AM, 1 PM, 3 PM, 5 PM.

Byes: Two half-point byes available, request before end of round 2.

Pize Fund: \$700 based on 30 paid entries.

Prizes awarded to the top 3 finishers in each section:
1st \$100, 2nd \$70, 3rd \$30
Best female player (by TPR): \$50
Best NW-region player (by TPR): \$50

Memberships: Working Chess.com and Zoom account required. No US Chess or State membership necessary. Zoom monitoring with webcam required in all sections.

Rating: Unrated. Section eligibility and pairings based on the highest of April 1st NWSRS, US Chess Online, or US Chess rating.

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. Each round features a different randomized starting position of the back-rank pieces!

Fair Play Policy: All players 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. Fair play violators will be haunted for life by the ghost of Bobby Fischer!

Useful Chess960 links:

📌 <https://chess960.net/how-to-play/>

📌 <https://www.chess.com/article/view/chess960-fischer-random-explained>

19.Qxg6+ Kd5 20.Bxf4

Mate comes soon.

20...Be6 21.Rfe1 Qd7 22.Re5+ Kc4
23.Rc5+ Kd3 24.Qh5

1-0

Advaith Vijaykumar (2026) –

Anthony He (2500) [A48]

2021 WA State Championship

Chess.com (R7), February 15, 2021

[Anthony He]

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.e3 Bg7 4.Be2 0-0
5.0-0

Not what I expected from my opponent, but it's a rather timid approach and White can't really expect much from such lines. However, the point I assume is to prevent Black from getting Grunfeld type positions by refraining from putting his knight on c3.

5...b6 6.b3?!

I don't get the point of this, since this doesn't contribute to the idea behind playing e3, Be2. 6.c4!? is probably the expected approach, even though White eventually has to go Nc3 sooner or later. 6...Bb7 (6...d5?? 7.cxd5 Nxd5 For example, if I were to play in the spirit of Grunfeld, White gets a comfortable edge because his knight is not yet on c3. 8.e4 Nf6 9.Nc3±. I had no option to go Nxc3 after e4.) 7.Nc3 d5 8.cxd5 Nxd5=.

6...Bb7 7.Bb2 c5 8.c4 e6!?

I decided to play such positions. This is basically Reti in reverse but I'm down a tempo. However, I believed this was still playable as the pawn structure is very flexible.

9.Nc3 d6 10.Qc2 Qe7 11.Rfd1 a6

Just prophylaxis against dxc5 + Nb3 ideas.



Position after 11...a6

12.e4?

I think this is the first mistake. First of all, it wastes a tempo by going e3-e4. Additionally, his bishop is not so well placed on b2 and in Maroczy/hedgehog

structures his bishop should be on e3. Finally, it willingly puts a target on e4 already attacked by both my f6-knight and b7-bishop. 12.Rac1 could have been a better and more normal idea. 12...Rd8=. Nothing crazy is going on but I think Black's position is relatively pleasant.

12...cxd4 13.Nxd4 Nbd7 14.b4?

Another mistake. Again, such ideas rarely work and are only supported if the bishop is on e3. In this case, this just creates another weakness on c4 and b5 is never seriously to be considered. I believe 14.Bf1! is probably best, just trying to consolidate and prepare against ...d5/...b5 breaks while preparing Re1 if needed. 14...Rac8 15.Qe2 Rfd8∞. Black will play for ...d5 in the long term. (15...Rfe8 16.f3 h5∞ Typical hedgehog position.)

14...Rac8?!

Intuitively I felt that 14...Rfc8! somehow was more accurate than ...Rac8 because it completely stops b5 ideas due to the rook being on a8, but I liked the idea of ...Rac8 + ...Rfd8 and then breaking open with ...d5. 15.b5 (15.Bf1 Ne5; 15.Rac1 Bh6 16.Rb1 Ne5 17.b5 Bg7 18.Bf1 Nxc4 19.Bc1 Ng4 20.h3 Nge5 21.bxa6 Bxa6--+) 15...Ne5 16.bxa6 Bxa6 17.Ncb5 Bb7 18.f3 d5. Now we see the difference. With the rook on a8 White has no Ba3. However, if I went ...Rac8 White would have Ba3 here.



Position after 14...Rac8

15.f3?

Game is pretty much decided after this final inaccuracy. He had to take advantage of this moment to play 15.b5!, otherwise b4 was totally pointless. In deeper lines we see the inaccuracy behind ...Rac8. 15...Ne5 (15...Rfd8 16.bxa6 Bxa6 17.Ndb5 Nc5 18.f3 h5 is still better for Black but less clear.) 16.bxa6 Bxa6 17.Ncb5 Bb7 18.f3 Rfd8 (18...d5 no longer possible since our rook gave up control of the a3 square. 19.Ba3) 19.Ba3

15...d5

Critical move.

16.exd5 exd5 17.Qb3

17.cxd5 The best try. 17...Qe3+ (17...Qxb4!? Adequate as well. 18.Qb3 Qa5 19.Nc6 Bxc6 20.dxc6 Rxc6 21.Nd5 Nxd5 22.Bxg7 Kxg7 23.Rxd5 Nc5 24.Qb2+ Kg8♠. White will suffer but has hopes of holding at least.) 18.Kh1 Nxd5 19.Nxd5 Rxc2 20.Nxe3 Rxb2 21.Ndc2 Bc8 22.Rdb1 b5♠. Black is much better still, but it will require some technical work.

17...dxc4 18.Bxc4 Ne5 19.Bf1 Rfd8

All sorts of sacrifices hang in the air.

20.Nc2?

Losing, but it was difficult to suggest another move. 20.Na4 Nd5♠

20...Bxf3+–

Such moves should be able to be played without thinking. Even if you don't calculate everything you can see White's knight, queen, bishop, and rook on the queenside and quickly deduce this is mate.

21.gxf3 Nxf3+

Critical move.

22.Kf2 Nd2

Nice and simplest resource.

23.Rxd2

23.Qa3 Ng4+++

23...Rxd2+ 24.Be2?!

24.Kg1 Ng4++

24...Rxc3

0-1

Ryan Ackerman (1922) –

Erin Bian (1795) [E12]

2021 WA State Invitational

Chess.com (R7), February 15, 2021

[Erin Bian]

This was the seventh round of the Invitational section of the Washington State Championship. I had drawn three games in a row and was hoping to get a win this round.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3

This came as a surprise, as my opponent normally plays 3.Nc3.

3...b6

The Queen's Indian Defense.

4.Bg5 h6 5.Bh4 c5?!

Inaccurate, as this allows White to play d5. 5...Bb7 6.Nc3 Be7 7.e3 0-0

6.d5 d6 7.Nc3 Be7 8.Bxf6?!

This is too rushed. White does not need to give up the bishop pair.

8...Bxf6 9.Qc2 Bxc3+!?

In my opinion a good decision, trading off the bad bishop before White plays Ne4.

10.Qxc3 0-0 11.e4 e5

Closing the center. 11...exd5 12.cxd5 Re8 may have been better.

12.Bd3 Nd7 13.g4

Aiming to attack Black on the kingside, but this leaves the f4-square very weak.

13...Re8

Clearing f8 for the knight.

14.Rg1 Nf8 15.g5 h5

15...hgx5 16.Nxg5 is good too, but why not close off the attack?

16.h4 Ng6 17.Be2 Bg4

Looking to remove the defender of h4 with Bxf3.

18.Nh2?

Unaware of the threat, White offers a trade of bishops, dropping a pawn.

18...Bxe2 19.Kxe2 Nxh4!

White does not have anything after this pawn-grabbing move. Black's knight will reroute to f4 in the upcoming moves.

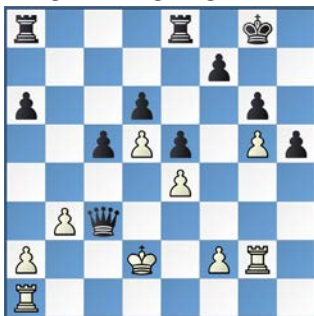
20.Nf1 Ng6 21.Kd2 Nf4 22.Ne3 g6

Guarding f5 and solidifying h5.

23.Rg3 a6

Now that I have locked the kingside, I will try to open up the queenside with b5.

24.Ng2 Nxg2 25.Rxg2 b5 26.b3 bxc4 27.Qxc4 Qa5+ 28.Qc3 Qxc3+



Position after 28...Qxc3+

The engine dislikes this, but I wanted to trade into a rook endgame up a pawn. 28...Qb5 29.Rb1 Qd7 30.Rgg1 a5 31.Qf3 Reb8

29.Kxc3 Rab8 30.a3 a5 31.Rg3 Rb5

Looking to double on the b-file.

32.Kc4 Reb8 33.Rf3 Kg7 34.Rh1 a4!

Isolates a3 and makes e4 a potential target.

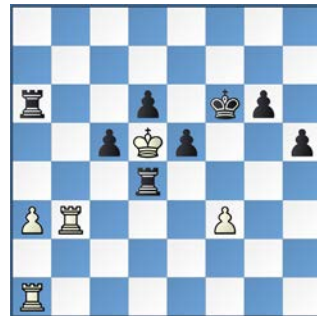
35.bxa4 Ra5 36.Rb3 Rxa4+ 37.Kc3 Rba8 38.Ra1 R8a6?!

Preventing Rb6, but I could have taken on e4 right away. 38...Rxe4 39.Rb6 h4 40.Rxd6 h3 41.Rc6 h2 threatening Rxa3+. 42.Rh1 Rxa3+-+

39.Kb2? Rxe4+-

And the rest was easy.

40.f3 Rd4 41.Kc3 Rxd5 42.Kc4 Rd4+ 43.Kb5 Rda4 44.Rd3 R4a5+ 45.Kc4 f6 46.gxf6+ Kxf6 47.Kd5 Ra4 48.Rb3? Rd4#



Position after 48...Rd4#

Interesting checkmate! I was happy to win this game, as it put me in the competition for first again.

0-1

Washington Senior Championship

APRIL 16-18, 2021

Highest finishing Washington resident receives the title of Washington State Senior Champion, a seed into the Invitational Section of the 2022 Washington State Championship, and a \$750 travel stipend from the WCF to attend the 2021 National Tournament of Senior State Champions.

Site: Online via Chess.com

Format: A 5-Round Swiss in one Championship section. Open to Seniors age 50+ (or reaching age 50 by or before August 1, 2021). Playoff round if needed to break tie for 1st place will be resolved later in the year by a G/90 playoff game.

Entry Fee: \$50 by 4/14, \$60 after. Non-members of WCF/OCF/ICA add \$15. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, or US Chess 2400+.

Time Control: G/90;+30. Late default: 10 min.
Rounds: Fri: 6 PM, Sat: 10 AM, 3 PM, Sun: 10 AM, 3 PM.

Prize Fund: \$750 (based on 25 paid entries).
1st \$150, 2nd \$125, 3rd \$100, 1st U2000 \$75, 1st U1700 \$75, 1st U1400 \$75. 1st Age 70+ \$75, 1st Age 80+ \$75. There must be at least two eligible players for the age prizes to be awarded. Only one age-based prize allowed per person, cannot win multiple age-based prizes.

Byes: Two half-point byes available, request before end of round 2.

Memberships: Current US Chess membership required. Membership must be paid at time of registration. A working Chess.com and Zoom account are required.

Rating: US Chess Online Rated and NWSRS Rated. Highest of April 2021 US Chess rating, US Chess Online rating, or foreign rating will be used to determine pairings and prizes.

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.

Fair Play Policy: All players 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. Fair play standards will be strictly enforced.



Info/Entries: Josh Sinanan, WCF President

Phone: 206-769-3757

Email: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. Registration **deadline Thu. 4/15 @ 5pm**. \$15 Late Fee for payments accepted after the deadline. Unpaid players will receive a zero-point bye for round 1.

**Nicholas Whale (2074) –
Tim Moroney (2048) [B20]**
2021 WA State Premier
Chess.com (R8), February 15, 2021
[Nicholas Whale]

I had a pretty disappointing event this year. Before this round I had already let two winning positions as Black slip first into draws, and then all the way to losses, which was quite dispiriting and put me way out of contention for the top places. But on the bright side, that meant no pressure to produce a win anymore. So, I managed to finish much better, with 2.5 out of the final three, and this game was my favorite.

1.e4 c5 2.Ne2

Everyone seemed to be avoiding all my preparation, so by this point I just thought “screw it, let’s purposefully play something weird.” But Tim was unfazed.

2...d6 3.Nbc3 Nf6 4.g3 g6 5.Bg2 Bg7 6.0–0 0–0 7.d3 Nc6 8.h3 Rb8

We ended up in a Closed Sicilian position where the most common move is 9.f4, but I elected to slow down Black’s queenside play first, rather than just going for broke on the kingside.

9.a4 a6 10.Be3 b5 11.axb5 axb5 12.Qd2 Qb6?!

The first new move, but I didn’t really like it for Black since the queen seems to be more in the way and potentially vulnerable here. I was expecting 12...b4 13.Nd5 and now either 13...Nxd5 (or 13...Nd7, but in either case Black is fine.) 14.exd5 Ne5

13.Bh6 b4?!

Again I didn’t think this move was the best. Black is picking a fight while not fully developed, which often backfires. 13...e6

14.Na4

14.Nd5 was perhaps a bit better, but I didn’t like that after 14...Nxd5 15.exd5 Ne5 my light-squared bishop’s diagonal is blocked.

14...Qb5

Continuing the aggressive action but retreating with 14...Qc7 would have saved Tim a lot of grief later.

15.Bxg7 Kxg7 16.b3!

Stockfish claims this is equal, but I was very happy with my position here since now Black’s queenside operations are dramatically slowed down.

16...Nd7 17.f4

Now it’s time to get back to the attack.

17...Nb6 18.Nb2!

Trading would only help Black.

18...e6?!

Stockfish is not a fan of this. 18...Bb7 Develop!

19.Nc4

I thought 19.f5! was premature but the computer disagrees. If Black dares to play 19...exf5 20.exf5 Bxf5 there are a number of promising continuations, the most forcing of which is 21.Rxf5 gxf5 22.Qg5+ Kh8 23.Qf6+ Kg8 24.Nf4 with a very strong attack.

19...Rd8

The best try was 19...Nxc4! 20.dxc4 Qb6! since the d-pawn is poisoned: 21.Qxd6?? Rd8; A cute trick is 19...d5?? 20.Nd6 and Black’s queen is trapped!

20.e5!?

Stockfish claims this is a mistake, but I thought it was the most direct and the game continuation turns out perfectly. 20.f5! is once again the computer favorite, with a possible continuation 20...Nxc4 21.dxc4 Qb6 22.fxc6 fxc6 23.Qg5 Ne5 24.Nf4 and Black at least has a chance to defend, unlike in the game.

20...dxe5?

Again better was 20...Nxc4 21.dxc4 Qb6 although here after 22.exd6 Nd4 23.Nxd4 Rxd6 24.Nxe6+ Bxe6 25.Qe3, Black remains a pawn down.

21.fxe5 Nxc4 22.bxc4

Now Tim thought for awhile, perhaps realizing the difficulties he had fallen into.

22...Qb6

The tactical justification to my decision to push e5 was that here 22...Qxc4? allows 23.Bxc6.



Position after 22...Qb6

23.Qg5!

This was the most difficult and important move for me to find. Originally I was intending the natural 23.Qf4? attacking along the f-file with threats like Qxf7+ and Bxc6 followed by Qf6+, but Black can

defend with simply 23...Rd7. However, in the game line, by having my queen not sitting on the f4-square, I can meet this move by bringing another attacker into the fray.

23...Rd7 24.Nf4!

Suddenly Black is simply lost, as his pieces are too uncoordinated and his king too weak to defend.

24...Rc7

The best try was 24...Kg8, but 25.Nh5 f5 26.exf6 Rf7 27.Be4 still leaves me with far too many threats.

25.Nh5+ Kg8

Others lose more quickly: 25...Kf8 26.Qf6 gxf5 27.Qh8+ Ke7 28.Rxf7+! Kxf7 29.Rf1+ Ke7 30.Qg7+ Kd8 31.Rf8#; 25...Kh8 26.Qf6+ Kg8 27.Qg7#

26.Rf4 Bb7

Better late than never, I suppose.

27.Nf6+ Kg7 28.Rh4 Nd4

This move allows about six different forced mates, and I picked the quickest but least interesting one.

29.Qh6+

Much prettier is 29.Rxh7+! Kf8 30.Rh8+ Ke7 31.Ng8+! (or 31.Nd5+ Kd7 32.Nxb6# , which is also quite nice.) 31...Ke8 (31...Kd7 32.Qe7+ Kc8 33.Qe8#; 31...Kf8 32.Nh6+ Kg7 33.Qf6#) 32.Qe7+!



(#Diagram-analysis after 32.Qe7+)

32...Rxe7 33.Nf6#

29...Kh8 30.Qxh7#

Even here, 30.Qf8+! Rxf8 31.Rxh7# would be cuter. Maybe next year...

1–0

**Ryan Ackerman (1922) –
Erin Bian (1795) [E12]**
2021 WA State Invitational
Chess.com (R7), February 15, 2021
[Ryan Ackerman]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.Bg5 h6 5.Bh4 c5 6.d5! d6 7.Nc3 Be7

“Is 8. e4 playable?” is the question I asked myself. I answered this question erroneously which became the basis for my illogical decision thereafter.



Position after 7...Be7

8.Bxf6?!

8.e4! Nxd5?! 9.exd5 Bxh4 10.Nxh4 Qxh4 11.dxe6!

8...Bxf6 9.Qc2 Bxc3+ 10.Qxc3 0-0= 11.e4 e5 12.Bd3 Nd7

The knight is beckoned by the f4-square. It's a match made in heaven, but Lord Capulet wants to hinder this development from happening. What's the best way to do so?



Position after 12...Nd7

13.g4?!

13.Nd2! Nf6 14.Be2!

13...Re8 14.Rg1

Despite the aggressive tonality of this plan I was well aware that Black is already slightly better and a draw would be an acceptable result for me.

14...Nf8 15.g5 h5 16.h4!? Ng6 17.Be2 Bg4 18.Nh2?!

My small errors are slowly adding up and it seems I'm unwittingly allowing Biam to outplay me positionally. But her triumph this game had more to do with superior calculation: I thought the pawn on h4 was taboo. It wasn't. 18.0-0-0! Nf4 19.Rde1 a6 20.Kb1 b5 21.Bf1 Bxf3 22.Qxf3 Qa5 23.Be2 Reb8 24.Rc1 Rb6 25.Rc2 bxc4 26.Bxc4 Rab8 27.Rgc1 Qb4 28.Bb3 Qd4.

18...Bxe2 19.Kxe2 Nxh4! 20.Nf1

20.Qh3? Ng6! Whoops. I didn't look far



enough.

20...Ng6 21.Kd2 Nf4+

Lord Capulet: Shaking my head.

22.Ne3 g6 23.Rg3! a6 24.Ng2 Nxg2 25.Rxg2 b5 26.b3!?

26.Rh1 might've been more resilient. 26...bxc4 although defensive measures are still mandatory for some time. White cannot do a Hail Mary: 27.Kc1! (27. Rgh2?? Qxg5+--; 27.Qf3 Qa5+ 28.Kc2 Qxa2--+) 27...Rb8 28.f3 Rb4 29.Kb1 Qb6 30.Rf1 Rb8 31.f4 exf4 32.Rxf4 Qa5 33.Rf3 Ra4 34.Qxa5 Rxa5 35.Rf6 Keeping black's advantage to a minimum; albeit still a significant one after: 35...c3! 36.Rxd6 h4!

26...bxc4 27.Qxc4 Qa5+ 28.Qc3 Qxc3+ 29.Kxc3 Rab8 30.a3!? a5 31.Rg3 Rb5!

[HIARCS -1.67/0]

32.Kc4 Reb8 33.Rf3 Kg7 34.Rh1?

34. Rb1 would've kept matters more

complicated. But I had less than ten minutes remaining and I made a major oversight as a result of misvaluing the viability of:

34...a4!+-

She outplayed me.

35.bxa4 Ra5 36.Rb3 Rxa4+ 37.Kc3 Rba8 38.Ra1 R8a6 39.Kb2? Rxe4 40.f3 Rd4 41.Kc3 Rxd5 42.Kc4 Rd4+ 43.Kb5 Rda4 44.Rd3 R4a5+ 45.Kc4 f6 46.gxf6+ Kxf6 47.Kd5 Ra4 48.Rb3? Rd4#

0-1

Vignesh Anand (2085) – Satyajit Malugu (2156) [E91]

2021 WA State Premier Chess.com (R6), February 14, 2021 [Vignesh Anand]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 c5 6.d5

6.dxc5 looks tempting as after ...dxc5,

White can force the trade of Queens, and easily develop to a better position in the endgame. However, Black has the move Qa5! in this position, and White would have to play accurately to maintain his advantage.

6...e6 7.dxe6 Bxe6 8.Nf3

8.Bf4 looks to win the pawn on d6, but ...Qa5 yet again makes things tricky for White.

8...0-0 9.0-0 Qb6 10.Qc2 Nc6 11.Rd1 Nd4 12.Nxd4 cxd4 13.Na4

This move intuitively doesn't feel right, but after deep calculations, I thought I should be fine.

13...Qc6 14.Rxd4 Nd7 15.Rd1 b5 16.Nc3 Bxc4

Here I missed the move Bf4, which would complete my development and secure myself a better position as Black has the annoying isolated d6 pawn to deal with.

17.Bxc4 Qxc4 18.Qd3

18.Rxd6 Nc5 and now my e4-pawn is weak, and Black has threats like ...b4 winning the knight, and it's hard to hold onto everything so I concluded that being pawn greedy wasn't the best option here.

18...Qxd3 19.Rxd3 Nc5

I started to realize that I might be on the back foot here because there weren't a lot of good options for me, and my clock continued to tick down.



Position after 19...Nc5

20.Re3

I started to feel frustrated here after spending a lot of time to have to play this passive move and give my opponent the initiative. 20.Rxd6 Bxc3 21.bxc3 Nxe4 22.Rd3 Rfd8. This position with the undeveloped bishop on c1, a weak back rank, and an isolated-backwards pawn on c3 looks too ugly for me.

20...b4 21.Nd5 a5 22.Re2

Trying to give my pieces space to develop.

22...Rae8 23.f3 f5 24.Bf4 Bd4+

At this point, my loss of the e4-pawn was

almost guaranteed, but I still had one trick left up my sleeve.

25.Be3 Bxe3+ 26.Rxe3 fxe4 27.Rae1

I played this move quickly, and then proceeded to pretend to be frustrated on the camera, hoping that my opponent would see ...exf3 and think it a brilliant winning move.

27...exf3 28.Nf6+!

The interference between the rook on f8 and the pawn on f3 allows me to win an exchange here. 28.Rxe8 f2+ 29.Kh1 Rxe8 30.Rxe8+ Kf7. The line that my opponent most definitely calculated to think he was winning here.

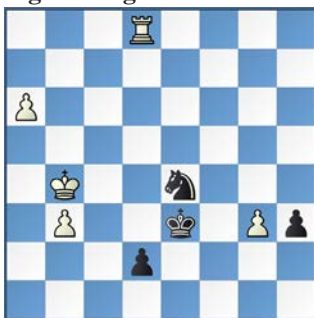
28...Rxf6 29.Rxe8+ Kg7 30.gxf3 Rxf3

Here I'm probably winning with best play, but I was running really low on the clock at this point and needed to find the most accurate moves to win.

31.R1e7+ Rf7 32.Rxf7+ Kxf7 33.Ra8 a4 34.Kf1 h5 35.Ke2 g5 36.Rh8 h4 37.Ke3 Kf6 38.Kd4 Kf5 39.Rh6 Ne4 40.Kc4 a3 41.b3 Ke5?

This move definitely surprised me as it was a huge mistake by my opponent. ...Kg4 looked like the most dangerous line to go after my h-pawn, but now I'm winning.

42.Kxb4 d5 43.Kxa3 Kd4 44.Kb4 Ke3 45.Rh8 d4 46.a4 d3 47.a5 g4 48.a6 d2 49.Rd8 g3 50.hxg3 h3!



Position after 50...h3

I overlooked this move in time pressure, and then started to panic because I thought I had an easy win, and now we were both going to promote into a chaotic endgame where I had just a few seconds on the clock and was practically playing on the increment.

51.a7 h2 52.a8Q h1Q 53.Qa7+ Ke2 54.Qa6+

I'm now just frantically throwing in checks to gain increment on the clock so I can spend more time to think.

54...Ke3?

Definitely a huge mistake allowing me to

play Qd3+.

55.Qd3+ Kf2 56.Rf8+ Ke1 57.Qe3+ Kd1 58.Qd3 Ke1

Here my opponent offered me a draw, but I really didn't want one as I knew I would be disappointed, not being able to convert an endgame up an exchange.

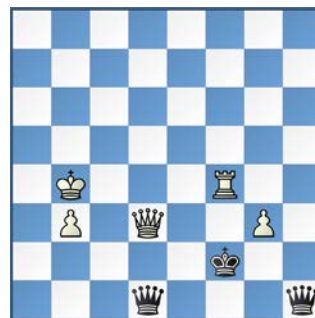
59.Re8!?

A very interesting move that spices up the game. 59.Ra8 is the winning continuation according to Stockfish 59...d1Q 60.Qxd1+ Kxd1 61.Ra1+ should be an easy 1-0, but I missed this line due to time pressure once again.

59...d1Q

Forced.

60.Rxe4+ Kf2 61.Rf4+



Position after 61.Rf4+

Here my opponent missed a perpetual with ...Ke1, after which I'm forced to repeat. However, in a time scramble, ...Ke1 doesn't feel like the most intuitive move.

61...Kg2??

Now the game is lost. 61...Ke1 62.Qe3+ Qe2 63.Qc1+ Qd1 64.Qe3+ Qe2 65.Qc1+ Qd1 1/2-1/2.

62.Qe4+ Kxg3 63.Qe3+ Kg2 64.Qf2+ Kh3 65.Rh4#

1-0

Vignesh Anand (2085) – Valentin Razmov (1986) [D45]

2021 WA State Premier Chess.com (R8), February 14, 2021 [Vignesh Anand]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 d5 4.e3 e6 5.Nf3 Nbd7 6.Qc2

Last time I played 6.b3 I lost a pawn to the variation 6...Bb4 7.Bb2 Qa5 8.Qc2 Ne4 9.Rc1 Qxa2.

6...b6 7.b3 Bb7 8.Bd3 Bd6 9.Bb2

Trying to bait out castles kingside by my opponent so I can maybe get aggressive with g4 or h4.

9...Qe7 10.0-0 0-0 11.Rae1

Hoping to get a big break in the center.

11...Rac8 12.Qe2 dxc4 13.bxc4 e5 14.dxe5

14.c5!? bxc5 15.dxe5 Nxe5 16.Nxe5 Bxe5 17.f4 Bc7 18.Na4=.

14...Nxe5 15.Nxe5 Bxe5 16.f4 Bxc3 17.Bxc3 Ne4!

My opponent now has strong light-square control, and I'm not going to be able to kick the knight out of e4, so I'm going to have to give up the two-bishops advantage and try to hope I have a good enough kingside attack to win.



Position after 17...Ne4

18.Bxe4 Qxe4 19.f5 f6

19...Rfe8 seemed annoying because it prevented my plan of Rf4.

20.Rf4 Qe7 21.Rh4 c5 22.Qh5 h6 23.Rg4 Kh7

A small oversight by both me and my opponent. This strong move, 23...Be4, would prove to be effective in maintaining equality and shut down my attack 24.Qxh6 Bxf5 25.Rg3=.

24.e4+-

Now Be4 is no longer a move, and there are too many threats for my opponent to prevent.

24...Qf7 25.Rg6!

Bxf6 is now a major threat in the position.

25...Qxc4

Desperate times call for desperate measures.

26.Rxg7+!!



Position after 26.Rxg7+

The following moves are now forced, which leads to forced checkmate for White. 26.Rxh6+ gxh6 27.Qg6+ would also transpose to what was played in the game.

26...Kxg7 27.Qg6+ Kh8 28.Qxh6+ Kg8 29.Qg6+ Kh8 30.Re3

1-0

Ryan Porter (2310) –
Rushaan Mahajan (221) [B12]
2021 WA State Championship
Chess.com (R9), February 15, 2021
[Ryan Porter]

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3!? e6 4.Be3?!

Commits White to sacrificing a pawn. 4.Nc3 is the main move.

4...dxe4 5.Nd2

5.fx4e?! Qh4+ is just a worse way to sacrifice the pawn.

5...exf3 6.Ngxf3

We now have the structure of a Blackmar-Diemer Gambit, which does not have the best reputation. I think that White can make some claim to this being a better version of it, because he has developed his pieces while Black has pushed two pawns up a single square. However, objectively, Black is probably at least equal here. The reason I played this variation in a G/60 game is that it is much easier to play with the White pieces.

6...Nf6 7.Nc4 Nbd7 8.Bd3 Be7 9.0-0 0-0 10.Qe2 b5?!

Pushes White's knight to the square it wants to go to anyway and creates a weakness on c6 that draws another potential defender away from the kingside. Black should instead strike at White's center with 10...c5.

11.Nce5 Bb7 12.Ng5

White now has two half-open files and six(!) pieces aiming at Black's king.

12...h6 13.Ngxf7 Rxf7 14.Nxf7 Kxf7 15.Bxh6!



Position after 15.Bxh6

15...Nf8!

The bishop cannot be captured, because the king has zero pinned defenders. 15...gxh6?? 16.Qh5+ Kf8 (16...Kg7 17.Qg6+ Kh8 18.Qxh6+ Kg8 transposes) 17.Qxh6+ Kg8 (17...Kf7? hastens the end 18.Qh7+ Kf8 19.Bg6 Ne5 20.Qh8#)

Washington State Championship

	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	S-B	Place	Prize
1	WIM Megan Lee	2329	X	0.5	1	0.5	1	1	0.5	1	0	0	5.5	18.5	4th	\$152.50
2	FM Tian Sang	2344	0.5	X	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0.5	7	26.75	2nd	\$381.25
3	NM Rushaan Mahajan	2221	0	0	X	1	0	1	0	1	0	0.5	3.5	11		
4	NM Joseph Levine	2179	0.5	0	0	X	0	1	0.5	1	0	1	4	15.25		
5	WFM Chouhanik Airapetian	2104	0	0	1	1	X	0	0	0	0	0	2	7.5		
6	NM Nat Koons	2290	-	-	-	-	1	X	0.5	0	0	0.5	2	7.5		
7	FM Ryan Porter	2310	0.5	1	1	0.5	1	0.5	X	1	0	0.5	6	23.25	3rd	\$228.75
8	Advaith Vijayakumar	2026	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	X	0	0.5	2.5	6.5		
9	FM Anthony He	2500	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	X	0.5	7.5	28	1st	\$686.25
10	FM John Readey	2289	1	0.5	0.5	0	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	X	5	21.75	5th	\$76.25

18.Qg6+ Kf8 19.Qh7+- and Black cannot prevent Bg6 and Qf7# without a major loss in material. During the game, I must admit that I did not take the time to work out these variations before I played Bxh6. I instead made the practical choice of recognizing that I could always bail out with a perpetual check if I ended up not being able to find a mating net.

16.Be3

Time to take stock of how the position has been transformed. Material is roughly balanced, with a rook and pawn versus two knights. White has zero weaknesses, while Black has a weakened pawn structure in front of his king, with four white pieces already aiming at it. Somehow, given enough time, Stockfish finds a way for Black to solve all of his problems and equalize, but I definitely prefer to play White here.

16...Qd5?!

Safer is 16...Kg8.

17.e4 bxc4 18.Bxc4 Qd6

Black has induced a weakness on d4, but at the cost of bringing another attacker to aim at e6, which is a much more important pawn.

19.Rad1

Freeing up the bishop on e3 to reroute to e5, where it will again guard d4, but also take better aim at the kingside.

19...Ng6 20.Bf2 Rh8 21.Bg3 Qd7 22.Rde1

Forces Black add a defender to e6 before the bishop on e5 blocks the line of attack.

22...Bc8 23.Qd3 Nf8 24.Be5

This is another position that Stockfish claims offers equal chances, but I just don't see it. Black's pieces are passive, while all of White's are very well placed.

24...c5??

The idea is sound. Black wants to open up the h1-a8 diagonal for his bishop to either attack g2 or stake a claim to d5. Unfortunately, the d5-square is currently too weak to allow for the removal of a defender. 24...Rh6 followed by Rg6, continues the fight.

25.d5+ Kg8



Position after 25...Kg8

26.d6??

Immediately returning the favor. The prospect of a slamming a pawn down Black's throat proved to be too tempting to me, but it doesn't actually do anything there, and now is absolutely not the time for White to reduce the tension. 26.Qg3 adds threats to f6 to the existing pressure on e6. 26...exd5 (26...Rh6 27.dxe6 Nxe6 28.Bxf6 Bxf6 29.Bxe6+-) 27.Bxf6 Bxf6 28.Rxf6 dxc4 29.Rd6+-. White's major pieces dominate the open board and will soon invade the last rank.

26...Bd8 27.Qg3 Qf7 28.Bc3 Rh6

Black is now bringing his pieces into better coordination.

29.Re5 N8h7?!

The knight should keep the guard on e6 to free up the white-squared bishop to use the long diagonal that I generously opened for it. 29...Bb7∞

30.Kh1

Gets the king off of the g1-a7 diagonal to threaten Rxc5.

30...Rg6?! 31.Qe1?

31.Qh3± is much stronger, because it keeps an eye on g2. 31...Bb7 32.Bxe6 Bxg2+ 33.Qxg2+-.

31...Bb7!±

And now the tables have turned. Black's pieces are now well coordinated, and White's weakness on g2 allows Black time to solve his e6-problem.

32.Re2

32.Bxe6?? immediately loses to 32...Bxg2+ 33.Kg1 Bd5+.

32...Ng5?



Position after 32...Ng5

32...Bd5 was necessary. It should be noted that Black now had less than 90 seconds left, and thus was mostly playing on a 10-second increment for the rest of the game.

33.Rff2 Kh8 34.Bxe6?!

34.h4 is stronger, first driving away a defender of e6, but it's a hard move for a human to make.

34...Nxe6 35.Rxe6 Rh6 36.Qe5? Qg6?

36...Bc8 Oops. My rook would now be trapped. Maybe it's a good time to try the

Washington State Premier

	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	S-B	Place	Prize
1	Charles Novitski	2073	X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	2.25		
2	FM Ignacio Perez	2244	1	X	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	7	25	2nd/3rd	\$215
3	Vignesh Anand	2085	1	1	X	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	6	20	4th	\$107.50
4	NM Satyajit Malugu	2156	1	0	0	X	0	0	0.5	0	1	0	2.5	6.75		
5	Thanh Nguyen	2053	1	1	1	1	X	1	1	0.5	0	0.5	7	27.5	2nd/3rd	\$215
6	Valentin Raznov	1986	1	0	0	1	0	X	0	0	0	0	2	3		
7	Eddie Chang	1897	1	0	0	0.5	0	1	X	0	0.5	0.5	3.5	8.25		
8	NM Kyle Haining	2288	1	0	1	1	0.5	1	1	X	1	1	7.5	27	1st	\$483.75
9	Tim Moroney	2048	1	0	1	0	1	1	0.5	0	X	0	4.5	17.25	Tied 5th	\$26.88
10	Nicholas Whale	2074	0.5	0	0	1	0.5	1	0.5	0	1	X	4.5	14.5	Tied 5th	\$26.88

excuse that I was now down to a couple minutes left on the clock.

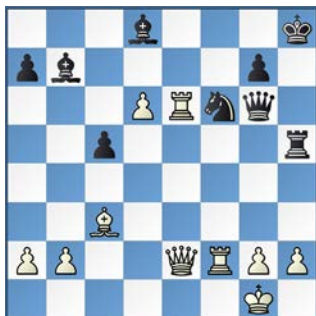
37.Kg1?

37.d7 prevents ...Bc8, and actually Black will have to give up a piece for the pawn.

37...Rh5?

37...Bc8 was still available.

38.Qe2



Position after 38.Qe2

38...c4??

38...Rd5 leads to a very complex position, with roughly equal chances.

39.Bxf6!

Finally, I find tactic to run the d-pawn, which now cannot be stopped.

39...Bxf6 40.d7 Rd5 41.Rexf6 gxf6 42.Qe8+ Kg7 43.d8Q Rxd8 44.Qxd8??

White is still winning, but the double question mark is for missing a simple tactic that would have left Black down material, with no counterplay. 44.Qe7+ Qf7 (44...Kh6 45.Rxf6) 45.Qxd8 and White has time to regroup before the black queen gets to the back rank.

44...Qb1+

Now it's messy.

45.Rf1 Qxb2 46.Qc7+ Kh8 47.Qd8+ Kg7 48.Qd7+ Kf8 49.Qd6+ Kg7 50.Qg3+ Kf7 51.Rd1 c3 52.Rd7+ Ke6

53.Qd6+ Kf5 54.g4+ Kxg4



Position after 54...Kxg4

55.Rg7+??

Our silicon friend immediately sees mate in seven after 55.Qe6+, but I'm not too disappointed that I couldn't work these lines out in a time scramble. 55...Kg5 56.h4+ Kg6 (56...Kxh4 57.Qxf6+ Kh3 58.Rh7+ Kg4 59.Rh4+ Kg3 60.Qf4#) 57.Qg4+ Kh6 58.Qg7+ Kh5 59.Qh7+ Kg4 60.Rd4+ Be4 61.Qxe4+ Kh5 62.Qh7#

55...Kf3??

55...Kh5 and White's checks will run out after the next one by the queen, because ...Kh6 threatens the rook, while Rh7 would be met by Kg6. Stockfish sees nothing better here than for White to take a draw.

56.Qxf6+ Ke4 57.Qe7+?

Winning the bishop, but 57.Qe6+ was another mate in seven that I'm not ashamed of missing.

57...Kd3 58.Qxb7 Qc1+

Time to take stock again. Black is down a full rook, but now it's his turn to chase White's king around. My mindset was that there should not be a perpetual, and that I could eventually block a check by giving check with my queen, forcing a trade. Then, White simply gives up his rook for the c-pawn and runs the h-pawn.

59.Kg2 Qd2+ 60.Kg3 Qe1+ 61.Kf4 Qe3+ 62.Kf5 Qf2+ 63.Ke6 Qe3+ 64.Kf7 Qf4+ 65.Kg8?

I'm not sure why, given my plan, I did not run towards my queen with 65.Ke8.

65...Qc4+ 66.Qf7 Qc8+ 67.Qf8 Qe6+ 68.Rf7

Okay, I've now gotten my king sheltered in a corner. I planned to continue with moves like Qg7, Rf8, and Kh8, after which Black would have check on the h-file. Then Qh7 forces a queen trade, completing my plan.

68...c2!

D'oh! I wasn't even considering the possibility that Black could stop checking, but now is the opportune moment to do so, with my rook is pinned. I think this showed impressive presence of mind by my opponent, in the midst of a time scramble, to find the best practical chance. I was worried that Black had now saved a draw, but fortunately the tactics still worked out.

69.Qa3+ Kd2 70.Qb4+ Kd3 71.Qb5+! Kd2

71...Kc3 forces White to be more precise 72.Qb3+! Qxb3 73.axb3 Kxb3 74.Rb7+! (74.Rf1 also works, but it far less pretty) 74...Kc3 75.Rxa7 c1Q 76.Rc7+

72.Qd7+

Finally completing the plan. Whew. Overall, that was a tough, interesting game, with several large evaluation swings.

1-0



Washington State Invitational

	Name	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	S-B	Place	Prize
1	Cameron Leslie	2030	X	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	4	11		
2	Harry Bell	2000	1	X	0.5	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	5.5	21	3rd/4th	\$65.63
3	Dan Mathews	1702	1	0.5	X	0	0	1	1	0	1	0.5	5	17.5	5th	\$13.13
4	Ryan Ackerman	1922	0	1	1	X	0	-	0	1	0	0	3	16		
5	Pranav K. Anoop	1951	1	0	1	1	X	1	0.5	0.5	1	1	7	26.25	1st	\$236.25
6	Victor Zhang	1734	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	0	0		
7	Lane Van Weerdhuizen	1869	1	0	0	1	0.5	1	X	0	1	0.5	5	16.25	5th	\$13.13
8	Teddy Roberts	1934	0	1	1	0	0.5	1	1	X	0.5	0.5	5.5	23.5	3rd/4th	\$65.63
9	Dominic Colombo	1960	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0.5	X	0	2.5	5.75		
10	Erin Bian	1795	1	1	0.5	1	0	1	0.5	0.5	1	X	6.5	22.75	2nd	\$131.25

Chess Shorts: Geri's game

By Breck Haining

Geri's game is a delightful 1997 Pixar short about an old geezer—excuse me, elderly gentleman—who plays a game of chess against himself outdoors in the fall. The film, written and directed by Jan Pinkava, won an Academy Award in the “Short Film (Animated)” category. The honor is well deserved. The scenery is lovely. The chess pieces are shown in fine detail. The gestures, as in the picture below, and subtle human behaviors Geri exhibits make the film all the more enjoyable. The film has inspired young and old to reimagine the film, some faithfully retelling the story and others adding their own twist. On YouTube I found 70 or so remakes and several commentaries.

After setting up the board, Geri sits down behind the white pieces, puts on his glasses, plays his move, and looks expectantly across the table. The film is cropped tight on Geri. We don't see that he doesn't have an opponent until the film cuts to a wider-angle showing Geri alone in an empty park. Geri appears to

sigh. He takes off his glasses (note in the poster-image on the facing page that you actually see refraction in the image of the glasses). The viewer is left momentarily to think that Geri will wait patiently for his opponent to arrive. Geri gets up as if to stretch, then feebly makes his way around to the other side of the table, where his alter-ego takes over. As Black, Geri is smug and aggressive. His alter-ego takes particular delight snapping up White's pieces. As White, Geri is timid and unsure of himself; he is a horrible player. I can imagine more than one theater hooligan shouting out, “Hey Geri, don't quit your day job!” Black captures all of White's pieces. White captures none of Black's pieces. As checkmate looms Geri fakes a heart attack and sinks under the table. Geri's alter-ego checks his own condition, then begins to look for Geri. Geri crawls out from under the table and quickly spins the board around. Geri's alter-ego doesn't notice the change and is shocked when Geri, now playing Black, checkmates him. Geri then demands the prize, which he receives. Dentures! Geri happily puts

the dentures in, sits back, and laughs.

The game Geri plays progresses:

1.e4 e5 2.f3 d5 3.Bd3 Nc6 4.Na3 Bxa3

The analysis board I used on Chess.com says this: C20: King's Pawn Opening: King's Head Opening.

After move four it is difficult to describe the game, because of multiple anomalies. Some on YouTube claim the animators made mistakes when piecing scenes together, but I think there are other explanations. I'll try to describe what happens:

5.1 Be2

The white bishop that had been on d3 has been moved to e2. Was this an animation mistake? Or did Geri, as White, cheat? Or possibly his alter-ego allowed him to change a move. Possibly, a pesky bird moved the piece. In another article, which you may or may not have seen, I wrote about a bird disrupting chess games that dogs were playing.



Geri's game is being played outdoors. Given that Geri's alter-ego doesn't notice the board being switched around it's pretty clear that Geri and his alter-ego are not all that perceptive. A bird could have moved the piece without Geri noticing it. Or a kid might have disrupted the game. No one saw what actually happened.

5.2 Bf1

The white bishop that had been moved to e2 shows up on f1. Possibly White is cheating. We know at the end of the game he cheats.

5.3 d4...

A third move. Now the white pawn on c2 disappears and a white knight shows up on b1.

5.4...Nxd4

The white knight on b1 disappears. Perhaps Geri as White or Geri as Black has noticed that a pesky bird slipped the knight onto b1 earlier, and one or the other has removed the piece.

6.Nh3...

A number of changes occur off screen. White has played b3 and placed a knight back onto b1. Perhaps Geri as White was cheating, and tried to slip a knight back onto b1. The black bishop on a3 mysteriously appears on a4, but we only catch a glimpse of this. Geri, as Black, plays his next move quickly.

6...Bxb3

A white pawn appears on c2 and Black's bishop has moved back to a3. We don't see White's move.

m. ... QxPe4

n. ... BxP

o. ... RxN

p. Kg2-g1 QxQe2

We don't see what happens, but somehow the black queen moves to e3. Geri's alter-ego laughs derisively. The position of the board is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1

As White, Geri tries to move his king to g2, but his alter-ego chides ah-ah-ah! He tries to move his king to f1, the only legal move, but his alter-ego says ah-ah. He tries to move his king to h1, but his alter-ego simply laughs and laughs.

Geri's hand is on his king. The king rocks back and forth. Geri may be thinking about tipping his king over, but then comes up with his plan to fake a heart attack. When Geri sneaks back up from under the table the board has changed. The board now appears as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2

After thinking about this for a while I'm fairly certain the same pesky bird that bothered the dogs playing chess moved pieces around here. Jan Pinkava reportedly grew up in Czechoslovakia. The dogs and bird were featured in a Czechoslovakian production. The game might have been played in Czechoslovakia. That pesky bird might have been hiding in a tree and swooped down when both Geris were occupied.

Miraculously, after spinning the board around the pieces are restored to the positions they were in before Geri faked his heart attack. Geri, now playing Black, finishes the game with:

q. ...Qe1#.

Geri has had an enjoyable day.

For those who wonder what became of Geri, I'm happy to report that Geri did not quit his day job. In *Toy Story 2* Geri makes a cameo appearance as the toy repairman who fixes Woody's arm. We briefly see a photo of Geri in *Toy Story 4*.

Whether we're great players or not, we all can enjoy a day playing chess.

P I X A R
PRESENTS



Geri's
game

Readers' Showcase

By Ryan Porter

Ryan Porter (2308) – GM Anton Demchenko (2680) [A21]
Live Chess PNWCC Online Super G/60
February 27, 2021
[Ryan Porter]

This game was played in round one of a strong online G/60 tournament hosted by PNWCC. I played up in the 2400+ section for opportunities like this to play against grandmasters.

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 d6 3.g3 Be7 4.d4 exd4 5.Qxd4 Nf6 6.Bg2 0-0 7.Nh3

Aiming for d5.

7...Nc6 8.Qd2 Ne5

White has been a bit slow in developing the queenside. So, Black takes immediate action there.

9.b3 a5 10.Bb2 a4 11.Rd1

A concession, which gives Black the a-file, in conjunction with the weakness on b3. I did not consider 11.Nxa4!? due to 11...Nxc4 but it's actually not all that bad for White after 12.bxc4 Rxa4 13.Qc2 Ra6 14.Nf4. White's active minor pieces and control of d5 compensate for the weakness on a2. The main alternative I considered was 11.0-0 a3. The point of Rd1 is to open up a1 for the bishop after this move. 12.Bc1 I did not like the prospect of spending several more moves now to complete my development. Longer term, though, that pawn could prove to be offside.

11...axb3 12.axb3 c6 13.0-0

Looking back, I now prefer 13.Qc2 to immediately guard the weak b3-pawn, while also preventing Black's next move.

13...Bf5

By making the c2-square off limits for the white queen, Black has the immediate threat of ...Qb6, when it will be very awkward to try to defend b3. I spent a while on my next move, first evaluating passive options for defending b3. Not finding a good solution, I next looked for an active way to maintain the balance.

14.c5!

Makes use of my central pressure, and the fact that, if the d6-pawn moves, then both the knight on e5 and bishop of f5 are unguarded. 14.Nf4?! Qb6 15.e4 Qxb3 (15...Bg4 is also not fun for White)

16.exf5 Nxc4 17.Qe1 Qxb2 18.Rb1. White is still making a game of it, but Black clearly has the upper hand. 14.e4?? of course loses on the spot to 14...Bxh3.

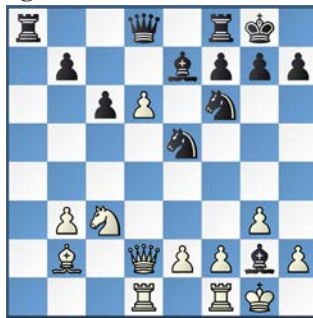
14...Bxh3

14...d5?! 15.Qf4 Bxh3 16.Bxh3 Ng6 17.Qd4±

15.cxd6

15.Bxh3!? dxc5 16.Qf4=/? is a very interesting alternative. White has plenty of compensation for the pawn.

15...Bxg2



Position after 15...Bxg2

16.dxe7?!

Honestly, I just went into auto-pilot here and failed to even consider 16.Kxg2, when the trapped bishop on e7 will allow White to win back the piece more favorably.

16...Qxe7

16...Qxd2?! 17.exf8Q+ Kxf8 18.Rxd2 Bxf1 19.Kxf1±

17.Kxg2 Qb4

I still do have that weakness on b3, but it is easier to guard now.

18.Na4

Unleashing the bishop, temporarily blocking the a-file, and aiming to relocate to c5 at some point. I would welcome a queen trade here, after which it's harder for Black to attack b3.

18...Qb5

18...Qxb3?? 19.Nc5 Qc4 20.Bxe5 Qxc5 21.Bd6 and White wins the exchange.

19.Qc2 Rfe8 20.Rd2

I couldn't find a good plan here. So, I just improved the position of my rooks.

20...h5 21.Rfd1 h4 22.Qf5!?

Leads to complications if Black takes the pawn left behind on b3. I did not fully analyze the resulting lines during the game, but I felt like my rooks on d-file supported such a move.

22...h3+

Woah. I was not expecting that. 22...hxg3 23.hxg3 Qxb3 24.Bxe5 Qb5! A key intermediate move to induce f4. (24...Qxa4?? 25.Bxf6 gxf6 26.Rd4 and White wins by swinging his rook to g4, unblocked by a pawn on f4. 24...Rxa4?? 25.Bxf6 gxf6 26.Rd8 Ra8 27.Rxa8 Rxa8 28.Rd4 is similarly crushing.) 25.f4 Qxa4 26.Bxf6 gxf6 27.Qxf6 Qe4+=

23.Qxh3

Obviously not the best square for my queen, and I wanted to play 23.Kxh3 Neg4. However, during the game I rejected this line, because I only saw the losing 24.Qxb5?? (White could maintain the balance with 24.e4! Qxf5 25.exf5 Ra5 26.Kg2 Rxf5=) 24...Nxf2+ 25.Kg2 cxb5-+.

23...Neg4!?

23...Qxb3 is objectively a better move, but it allows White to simplify the position. I was expecting the game to proceed in the general direction of the following lines. 24.Nc5 Qb5 25.Bxe5 Rxe5 26.Nd7 Nxd7 27.Qxd7=



Position after 23...Neg4

24.Bd4??

I thought that I might start to take control of the position, with the bishop supporting Nc5, and the threat of Nc3 preventing an immediate Re2. 24.Bxf6 Nxf6 25.Rd3 holds everything together, with the knight ready to jump to c3. (25.Rd4!? is also an interesting attempt to try to use the h-file.)

24...Rxe2

Uh-oh. Now I see that he can just take

both my rooks if I grab his queen.

25.Nc3 Rxd2 26.Rxd2

26.Nxb5? Rxd1 27.Bxf6 Nxf6 28.Nc3 Rd3 29.Ne2 Rxb3 should be a pretty straightforward win for Black.

26...Qxb3 27.Ne4!?

Objectively this isn't the best move, but I'm doing everything I can to try to mix things up in a losing position. The clock situation was six minutes for me, and just under ten for him.

27...Qb4

Black finds the best move, but the victory proved pyrrhic, because he spent over 80% of his remaining time to find it, leaving himself with just 90 seconds (plus the increment) for the rest of the game! Given the clock situation, I think Black should have spent far less time and played the natural move 27...Qd5 when I expected the game to continue 28.f3 Nxe4 29.Qxg4 Qg5 30.Qxg5 Nxc5. I was planning to try to cause some problems with Be3 and Rd7, but Black is clearly winning, and anything more than five minutes left should be plenty for a GM.

28.Nxf6+

Stockfish prefers 28.Qh4 but Black can simplify with 28...c5 29.Nxf6+ Nxf6

30.Be3 Qxh4 31.gxh4 b6.

28...Nxf6 29.Rd3 Qc4 30.Rd2 Qd5+ 31.f3 Qg5 32.Rb2 b5 33.Rc2 b4 34.Bxf6 Qxf6 35.Qd7 b3



Position after 35...b3

36.Rxc6?!

36.Qxc6 may have been a better try, but Black is of course still winning. 36...Qa1! 37.Re2 g6+

36...Ra2+??

With 15 seconds left, Black blunders horribly. Even a superficial evaluation of position should have told him not to leave the back rank.

However, I believe that the greater mistake was spending so much time on move 27. As we all know painfully well,

anything can happen in a time scramble.

37.Kh3 Qxf3?

For the puzzle inclined, White now has mate in four. The only way to continue the game is 37...Qxc6 38.Qxc6, but White is certainly winning, especially with an extra pawn on the kingside to use to pry open any attempt at a fortress.

38.Qd8+

This is not a difficult tactic, but I did have to find it quickly, and every other move loses. Perhaps Black only analyzed the superficially tempting 38.Rc8+?? Kh7 when Black's queen prevents any follow-up checks.

38...Kh7 39.Qh4+

Black let his little remaining time run out, with mate in two coming. Obviously, I was outplayed and outclassed in this game; I got lucky in the end, aided by the shorter time controls, which can add a dose of randomness.

However, I am proud of the way that I competed and found active moves to continue the fight into a time scramble against an opponent who is by far the best player I've ever defeated in a non-blitz game.

1-0

Seattle Chess Club Tornadoes

FEB. 14, MAR. 14, APR. 25, MAY 9

A NORTHWEST CHESS GRAND PRIX EVENT

Site: Online via  Chess.com

Format: A 4-Round Swiss in one section. Dual NWSRS and US Chess Online Rated.

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Entry Fee: \$35. Non-members of WCF/OCF/ICA add \$15. SCC members receive a \$10 discount. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, or US Chess 2400+.

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Byes: 1 half-point bye available (Rd 3/4 must commit at registration)

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Info/Entries: Josh Sinanan, WCF President
Phone: 206-769-3757
Email: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com
Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration.
Registration deadline @ 5pm the eve of the tournament. \$15 Late Fee for payments accepted after the deadline. Unpaid players will receive a zero-point bye for round 1.



2021 Washington Chess 960 Championship

By Josh Sinanan

The first annual Washington State Chess960 Championship was held online via Chess.com on Sunday, January 10, 2021. Chess players from throughout the world were represented in the 26-player field, from regions including Washington, Arizona, Peru, Armenia, and India. In Chess960, the back-rank pieces are scrambled each round, so players must adapt to the new starting position and cannot rely on memorized opening theory.

The event was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation under the directions of WCF Adult Chess Director Rekha Sagar. Seattle-based chess enthusiast Valentin Razmov and WCF President Josh Sinanan coordinated with Rekha to organize the tournament. The five-round Swiss tournament was split evenly between the Championship and Premier U1600 sections, with 13 players in each. Each round featured a different Fischer-random starting position, which the players had a chance to study for five minutes before clocks were started.

IM Mitrabha Guha, a strong International Master from India, won clear first place in the Championship section with an undefeated 4.5/5 games, allowing only a single draw against fellow IM David Shahinyan in the second round. Armenian ChessMood celebrity IM David Shahinyan finished in clear second place with 4.0/5 points. Local eighth-grader Edward Cheng from Detective Cookie's Chess Club won clear third place with 3.5/5 points and was crowned the 2021 Washington State Chess960 Champion as the highest finishing Washington State resident in the Championship section. Congratulations to Edward!

Yakima chess King Michael Rabadan dominated the Premier U1600 section, scoring a perfect 5.0/5 games! Mill Creek's Parker Betz finished in clear second place with 4.0/5 points. Sammamish chess Prince Luke Yu rounded out the prize winners with 3.5/5 points. Congratulations to the winners and many thanks to all who contributed to this fun event.

WCF hopes to host more Chess960 events in the future!

Valentin Razmov (1986) – Travis Olson (1714)
Washington State Chess960 Championship
Chess.com (R4), January 10, 2021
[Ralph Dubisch]



1.e4 c5 2.b3

Although the first moves look like the Sicilian, it's clear that many normal Sicilian lines are simply not going to work here. One variation that might: 2.b4!? would be the 960 equivalent of the Sicilian Wing Gambit.

2.c3 d5 is a bit different than a normal Alapin (c3) Sicilian, as White isn't preventing a knight from going to c3 with the move, but that a1-bishop needs consideration. Black's central counter-thrust is still good and natural, though. 3.exd5 b5!? (3...Nb6!?!); 2.c4 has a bit more bite than you might expect, as the natural aim for central symmetry, 2...e5, might run into 3.Nd3 Ne6 4.b4!? with some initiative.

2...e5 3.Ne3 b6 4.c3

4.c4. White has the move in an otherwise completely symmetrical position, but there doesn't seem to be much to do with it.

4...Ne6 5.Ne2 Ne7 6.d4 exd4?!

6...d5! 7.dxe5 (Or 7.f3 0-0 8.0-0. I'd call this an edge to Black, as Black is on move and has the slightly more aggressive side of a near symmetry. Worse, 7.dxc5 dxe4, and Black's kingside pawn mass has the potential to become quite unpleasant for White. 8.cxb6?! Qxb6 9.Ng3 0-0 10.Nxe4 f5 ♯ is close to winning.) 7...Bxe5 8.Nxd5 Nxd5 9.exd5 Bxd5, again with symmetry, but Black has the minor plus of the

temporary pin of the c3-pawn and better centralization.

7.cxd4± cxd4

7...d5 8.e5

8.Nxd4 0-0 9.Qg4

Suddenly Black's king position seems vulnerable.

9...Nxd4 10.Bxd4 f6 11.0-0 d5?

Black tries to solve the problem of the isolated queen pawn, but kingside weaknesses and White's threatening kingside posture make this dubious. 11...Qc7 12.g3±; 11...Ng6 12.Nf5±; 11...Be5 12.Rd1±

12.exd5 Bxd5

Black must surrender the bishop-pair. 12...Nxd5? 13.Qh5 g6 14.Bxg6 hxg6 15.Qxg6+ Kh8 16.Nxd5 Bxd5 17.Rxe8 Qxe8 18.Bxf6+ Rxf6 19.Qxe8++-

13.Nxd5 Qxd5 14.Rd1 Qg5 15.Qe6+ Kh8 16.Rfe1

16.Qh3!±

16...Qh5 17.g3 Nc8

17...Be5!? 18.Bxe5 Ng6! 19.Qd5 Nxe5 20.Kg2±. White likely still has an edge with bishop versus knight and more active rooks, but it's clearly less than that conferred by the bishop-pair on the open board.

18.Qd7 Rd8 19.Qc6

The ending with 19.Qf5 Qxf5 20.Bxf5± also favors White, of course.

19...Qd5?

19...Be5 is again the best chance, getting rid of one of the nasty bishops.

20.Qc2! Qh5

20...Qg8 makes for an interesting back-rank picture.

21.Re4 Qf7 22.Rh4 g6 23.Qxg6 Qxg6 24.Bxg6 Kg7 25.Bxh7 Rh8 26.Bc2 Rxh4 27.gxh4

Or 27.Bxf6+ Kxf6 28.Rxd8.

27...Rh8 28.Be3 Rxh4 29.Rd7+

Convincing.

1-0

2021 Washington Junior Closed

By Jacob Mayer

The 2021 Washington Junior Closed Chess Championship took place on Saturday, January 30 online via Chess.com and featured five of the top juniors in Washington State. The tournament was organized by Washington Chess Federation and directed by WCF Scholastic Coordinator Jacob Mayer.

National Master Joseph Levine came in as a strong favorite and wound-up finishing in clear first place with 4.5/5 points. In his first-round game, he played a stunning (temporary) piece sacrifice that resulted in a crushing attack. Joseph's second round game ended with a pawn-move checkmate. In round three, he drew with Dominic Colombo, dropping his only half-point of the event. And after a round four bye, Joseph was a half-point clear with one round remaining. However, a final round win over Drew Bunch guaranteed him sole first place, earning him a spot in the 2021 Washington State Championship. Congratulations to all our juniors for participating!

**Joseph Levine (2244) –
Brian Lee (1898) [B42]**

WA Junior Closed
Chess.com (R2), January 30, 2021
[Ralph Dubisch]

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

The Najdorf variation is the most popular line of the Sicilian in modern times. Black makes it expensive for White to put a bishop or knight on b5, so Black can now consider an early...e5. Black also supports a possible...b5 with queenside expansion and perhaps a threat (...b5-b4) to the e4-pawn.

6.Bd3

This is a bit unusual here, though White may be hoping to transpose into a different line.

6.Be3 is the most common relatively modern move, while; 6.Be2; and 6.Bg5 are somewhat more traditional lines.

6...e6 7.0-0 b5 8.Be3

8.a4 b4 9.Na2 e5 10.Nf3 Nc6 11.c3

8...Bb7 9.a3 Nbd7 10.f4 Qc7 11.Qf3 Nc5 12.Rac1

I haven't seen this move here before, but my Stockfish engine likes it slightly better than the "theoretical" 12.Rae1.

12...Be7 13.b4!?

Thus explaining the placement of the rook.

13...Ncd7

13...Nxd3?! 14.cxd3± forces the black queen to move again, thus explaining one idea behind putting the rook on c1.

14.Nce2 Nb6 15.g4 d5?!

Black loses central flexibility. More thematic, and better, is 15...Nc4, occupying the outpost and hitting both the e3-bishop and the a3-pawn.

16.e5 Nfd7

16...Ne4 17.f5! 0-0 (17...exf5? 18.Nxf5; 17...Qxe5 18.fxe6 fxe6 19.Qf7+ Kd7 20.Nf3! Qd6 21.Bf4, and White wins material.) 18.f6 gxf6 19.exf6 Nxf6 (19...Bd6 20.Qh3 Kh8 21.Rf3! and it's starting to get very difficult to imagine a defense.) 20.Qh3 Ne4 21.Qh6 with a serious attack.

17.Ra1!?

Direct advance is also possible: 17.f5 Nxe5 18.Qg3 Nbc4 19.fxe6 f6 20.Nf5±; 17.Qh3!?

17...Nc4 18.c3?

18.Qh3

18...0-0-0

Stockfish points out the positional tactic 18...g5!, breaking up the mobile pawn mass at just the right

moment: 19.Rae1 (19.fxcg5? Ndx5 20.Qg3 Nxe3 21.Qxe3 Nxd3 22.Qxd3 Bxg5?) 19...0-0-0.

19.a4



Position after 19.a4

19...Ndx5?

Black finds a tactic to take advantage of the loose bishop on d3; unfortunately, it's the wrong tactic for the job. Instead, the short, sharp, flurry 19...bxa4 20.Rxa4 Nb2 21.Bxa6 Nxa4 22.Nb5 Qb8 23.Na7+ Kc7 24.Nb5+ repeats.

20.fxe5 Nxe5 21.Qg3

Or 21.Qh3.

21...Nxd3 22.Qxc7+ Kxc7 23.Rxf7 Kd7

23...Rd7 24.axb5 axb5 25.Nxe6+ Kc8 26.Rxg7± when Black's plan to grab pawns has clearly not met with success.

24.Bg5 Rde8 25.axb5 Ne5 26.Rxe7+ Rxe7 27.Bxe7 Kxe7 28.bxa6 Ba8?

28...Ra8 29.b5 (29.axb7? Rxa1+ 30.Kf2 Nd7.) 29...Bc8 also doesn't look like fun.

29.Nf4 Rc8 30.Nfxe6

30.Re1

30...Rxc3 31.Nxg7 Rc4 32.b5 Rb4

32...Nf3+ 33.Nxf3 Rxg4+ 34.Kf2 Rxg7 35.Rc1 doesn't help Black.

33.Re1 Kd7 34.Ng5 Ng6 35.h4 Nxh4 36.Re7+ Kd8 37.Ne6+ Kc8 38.Nd6+ Kb8 39.a7#

An aesthetic checkmate pattern to end the game.

1-0



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Game of the Gods

Paolo Maurensig

Review by Karen Schmidt

I am a long-time Seattle resident, former Nordstrom and University of Washington accountant, and serious chess enthusiast. I belong to the Seattle Chess Club and play casual and tournament chess. I am also the only female chess player at Westlake Park in downtown Seattle, a small urban park frequented by chess players of all ages, walks of life, and ethnicities. (See *The Seattle Times*, July 15, 2019.)

After writing a monthly chess column for *Northwest Chess* magazine for the past year, I was recently invited to write a review of the new Netflix series,

The Queen's Gambit for *The Seattle Times*.

(The series

is about

an orphaned

Kentucky girl, a chess

prodigy in the 1960s, based on the 1983 Walter Tevis novel of the same title, and has become the most-watched Netflix series ever.)

After my review was published online November 30, 2020, and in print December 4, 2020, I was amazed to receive a couple dozen emails from *The Seattle Times* readers. One of those emails invited me to read and review an advance copy of a new book, *Game of the Gods*, by popular Italian author Paolo Maurensig. I must admit that I had never heard of Signore Maurensig, nor had I read any of his several best-selling books. The English-language edition came out in January 2021.

I was surprised to learn that several of Maurensig's books have a chess theme—including his earlier popular novel, *The Lunenburg Variation* (1995). I read *Game of the Gods* in three days; once I started it, I couldn't put it down.

This is the fascinating life story, based on (mostly) fact, of a low-caste Indian man, Malik Mir Sultan Khan (1901-1966). Sultan Khan, as he was commonly known, was from a poor Muslim family in the Punjab region. He was orphaned as a child. After the death of his parents, he was taken in by a wealthy landowner, Sir Umar Khan. The youth had been taught how to play the ancient Indian variation of chess called "chaturanga" by his father when he was nine years old. After taking him in following the death of his parents, Sir Umar Khan taught Malik how to play western chess, and the boy

showed a startling genius for the game. Malik, who became the head manservant (majordomo) of Sir Umar Khan, was taken to England in his twenties to compete against the highest-level British chess players. Sir Umar Khan arranged for him to be trained first in India, and then for about a year in England, playing against top-rated international players, including prior World Champion Jose Raul Capablanca and several other former and later champions. Amazingly, Sultan Khan rocketed to the top, winning the British Chess Championship three times in four attempts: 1929, 1932, and 1933.

As a fairly serious student of chess, I was surprised

that I had never heard of

this top player. Although

he had a short top-tier chess career, about five years, he was among the top ten players in the world during that time. He actually beat Capablanca twice, not only in a famous match in Hastings (1930), but also in a Simul during the first year that he spent training in England.

Maurensig writes a fascinating account of Khan's life. The story had many twists and turns, and I was quite mesmerized from the start. After his meteoric chess career in England, Khan essentially stopped playing chess. In some of the fictionalized segments of the novel, he served as the majordomo of a large English estate for many years. Later (also fictionalized), on the brink of World War II, he left England under duress and sailed to New York City. He gave up the wealth that his master in India had bequeathed him. For a time in NYC, he was employed in a series of menial jobs, including as a taxi driver.

In the fictionalized New York City portion of the novel, via fate or karma or luck, he met a wealthy elderly American woman, Cecilia Abbott. She invited him to live in her sumptuous residence as her personal aide. She had a retinue of other maids, housekeepers, etc. But Khan assisted her with various daily tasks and activities, and became her chauffeur. Many years later at her passing, she bequeathed Khan her beloved Rolls-Royce and a generous monthly stipend.

Although Sultan Khan had the option to remain living in her elegant NYC apartment for as long as he wished after

her passing, he chose to return to India. He sold the Rolls for 1/10 of its value and spent the last years of his life living in a mission, helping the poor and even the lepers shunned by the rest of society.

In actuality, after leaving England in 1933 with his master, Khan returned to Pakistan; he married and had children. According to biographer Daniel King, British Grandmaster and author, Khan did not teach his children to play chess. He wanted them "to do something of more value with their lives." He died of tuberculosis, which he had battled for many years, in 1966.

The book includes quite a comparison of Western versus Eastern thought, tenets, and philosophies such as karma and reincarnation. There is also much interesting historic detail about circumstances in Colonial India prior to World War II, and the tension and eventual war between India and Pakistan after World War II.

Sultan Khan, for most of his life, was the victim of prejudice due to his low caste in India. However, according to other online information which I researched, he was a humble and kind man, and was actually admired and well-liked by the British chess players and other international top-level chess players of that period. Capablanca, in particular, was quite outspoken regarding Khan's chess genius.

I have been intrigued by the interesting lives of many of the men I have met through the world of chess. The Sultan Khan story was especially engrossing. I had heard about many of the world's top chess players of the 1930s era, but I did not know anything about Khan's life.

Maurensig writes with an engaging style—this edition is a translation from the Italian—and I found his book to be quite a page-turner. In my internet research about Sultan Khan, I discovered that there have been two biographies written about him: *Mir Sultan Khan* (R.N. Coles, 1965) and *Sultan Khan* (Daniel King, 2020). I found Maurensig's book so intriguing that I plan to read both of those biographies.

I highly recommend *Game of the Gods*, not only for chess players and chess historians, but for any readers who have an interest in historical events and World War II, an interest in the dichotomy between Western and Eastern philosophies of life, and indeed, for anyone who enjoys an engrossing tale spanning over 50 years. This is a great read for chess enthusiasts and readers in general.

**"Maurensig writes with an engaging style...
...quite a page-turner."**

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Registration: Register online at <https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration> OR email USCF ID# and chess.com username to kentmcnallchess@gmail.com by Friday April 23rd 6pm

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2021 Seattle City Championship

By Josh Sinanan

The 2021 Seattle City Championship took place online via Chess.com January 30-31. A motley mix of chess players from the following twenty-two different cities were represented in the 38-player field: Auburn, Bellevue, Bothell, Chernovtsky (UKR), Everett, Gresham, Issaquah, Kirkland, Medina, Mercer Island, Mill Creek, North Bend, Pasco, Portland, Redmond, Richland, Samara (RUS), Sammamish, San Jose, Seattle, St. Louis, and Vancouver BC. The event was co-hosted by the Seattle Chess Club and the Washington Chess Federation. WCF Adult Chess Director Rekha Sagar directed the tournament with assistance from WCF President Josh Sinanan. The five-round Swiss tournament featured 13 players in the Open section and 25 in the Reserve U1600 section.

New York native and top U.S. GM Alex Lenderman tied for first place with the strong Ukrainian GM Vitaliy Bernadskiy, each with 4.0/5 games. The two grandmasters faced off in the third round, with Bernadskiy edging out a narrow victory in the complications. Lenderman won his last two games and managed to catch Bernadskiy, who conceded draws to IM Mitrabha Guha from India and NM Jiangwei Yu from San Jose, California in the final two rounds. Experts Alexander Sharikov from Russia and Advait Vijayakumar from Bothell split the Expert prize with three points each. Seattle-based chess coach Ryan Ackerman won the Class A prize with two points in the ultra-strong field. Young up-and-comers Nikash Vemparala from Redmond and Aditya Ramkumar from Sammamish shared the Class B prize also with 2.0/5 games.

Brian Wei, a sixth-grade student from Portland, captured clear first place in the Reserve U1600 section with an undefeated 4.5/5 games. Wei conceded only a single draw to Seattle chess ironman and 2021 Washington Chess960 Champion Edward Cheng in the final round to secure his victory. Edward shared equal second place/Class C/Class D honors with Medina's Michelle Zhang and Gresham's Daniel Vasey, each of whom finished with four points. A trio of players shared the first place Class E & below prize at 3.0/5: Bellevue's Justin Blachman, Seattle's Adam Ellner, and Redmond's Neel Borate. Newcomers Leif Carman from Richland and Dylan Vo from Everett tied for the Unrated Prize with three points. Congratulations to the winners and many thanks to all who contributed to this fantastic event. Our vibrant chess community continues to flourish despite these tumultuous times!

Richard Ingram (1880) – Aleksandr Lenderman (2704) [C07]
Seattle City Championship
Chess.com (R1), January 30, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

The first round game was a good textbook example of how, just because queens and most minor pieces get exchanged, you are far from guaranteed an easy draw.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 c5

In my opinion, the only line that should equalize against the Tarrasch French. Giri also believes that in his Chessable course. The only drawback of this line is that often the game can become simplified. However, this game shows that you can still get winning chances in any quiet line even if the opponent does not make any obvious mistakes.

4.Ngf3 cxd4 5.exd5

5.Nxd4 Nc6 6.Bb5 Bd7 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.Bd3 is another line which can lead to more of a double-edged fight.

5...Qxd5 6.Bc4 Qd6 7.0-0 Nf6 8.Nb3 Nc6 9.Nbxd4 Nxd4 10.Qxd4

10.Nxd4 is a more principled line, after which Black usually plays either ...Be7 or ...a6, followed by ...Qc7. 10...Be7 (10...a6).

10...Qxd4 11.Nxd4 Bc5



Position after 11...Bc5

I think this is accurate, since Nb5 isn't really a threat, so ...a6 isn't necessary.

12.Bb5+?!

Trying to simplify further, however probably not the best. That is the drawback of trying to play for the draw too much without forcing it: you often make concessions as a result, and make unfavorable trades. Logically, White should not trade his developed bishop on c4 for my undeveloped one on c8. 12.Nb5 Ke7; 12.Nb3 is probably the main line here. 12.Rd1.

12...Bd7 13.Bxd7+ Kxd7 14.Ne2?!

Also inaccurate. Too passive. Susan Polgar often mentions how it is better to avoid backward knight moves in most cases unless there is a concrete reason for it. This is no exception. 14.Rd1 Ke7 15.Bg5 should still be close to equal.

14...Ke7 15.Bg5 h6 16.Bxf6+ Kxf6

Another pair of minors were traded, but let's take stock here. This looks like an equal position. However, Black is better for three main reasons. 1) My king is a bit more active, which is important in the endgame. 2) Bishop against a knight in an open and structurally unbalanced structure is favorable for me. 3) Most importantly, I have a central pawn against his side pawns. However, my bishop can deal with his three on two majority very well. Let's now see how such a position can be won.

17.Rad1 Rhd8 18.Ng3 Bb6 19.Rfe1 Rac8 20.c3 g6

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Preparing ...Ke7 and ...f5, to restrict the g3-knight.

21.Kf1 Ke7 22.Ke2 f5 23.Kf3 Kf6 24.Ne2 e5 25.g3 g5

My kingside pawns are coming.

26.Nc1 e4+ 27.Kg2 Rxd1! 28.Rxd1 f4

I've got to give something to get something. I am sacking a pawn in order to get the pawn potentially to f3.



Position after 28...f4

29.Nb3

29.Rd6+ Ke5 30.Rxh6 f3+ 31.Kf1 Rd8 32.Ke1 e3-+ is a sample line where Black is crashing through.

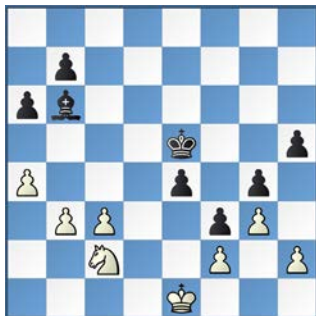
29...f3+ 30.Kf1 Ke5 31.a4 Rd8!

And finally, the last part of the plan. Exchanging rooks guarantees me the winning bishop against knight endgame because his king is in a box, and eventually I can induce queenside weaknesses.

32.Rxd8 Bxd8 33.Nd4 Bb6 34.Nc2 g4 35.b3 h5

Just shoring up the kingside, since White cannot do anything anyway.

36.Ke1 a6



Position after 36...a6

37.Kf1

37.Ne3. It's worth noting that White cannot active his knight and transpose into a king and pawn endgame. 37...Bxe3 38.fxe3 a5 39.Kf1 Kd5 40.Ke1 Kc5 41.Kf1 b5 42.axb5 Kxb5 43.Ke1 a4 and I win easily.

37...Ba5

Finally provoking more weaknesses.

38.b4

38.c4 Bd2 39.b4 Kd6 (39...a5 40.bxa5 Bxa5. Here Black is breaking through.) 40.a5 Bc3 41.Kg1 Ke5 42.Kf1.

38...Bd8 39.c4 a5 40.b5 Bb6 41.Ke1 Kd6 42.Na1 Kc5

I broke through. The rest was very simple.

43.Nb3+ Kxc4 44.Nd2+ Kd3 45.Nf1 Bc5

Picturesque position of a total domination.

46.h4 gxh3 47.Nh2 Kc2 48.g4 hxg4 49.Nxg4 Kb3

0-1

Aleksandr Lenderman (2704) – Advaith Vijayakumar (2062) [A05]
Seattle City Championship
Chess.com (R2), January 30, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

This game was against a local young player, Advaith. He's playing at a solid expert level, moving on to master level. I know that he's a very solid player, and he definitely lived up to his reputation of holding a difficult position out of the opening for many moves until only cracking deep in the endgame with less than a minute on his clock.

1.b3

I know he's good at openings so I just wanted to play chess this time.

1...Nf6 2.Bb2 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.Nf3 c5 6.0-0 Nc6

6...d6; 6...d5 7.c4 d4 8.b4 is another interesting direction the game could've gone.

7.c4 d5?!

The timing of this wasn't best and I got a very good position as a result.

8.cxd5 Nxd5 9.Bxg7 Kxg7 10.d4 cxd4

10...Qa5 11.e4 Nc3 12.Nxc3 Qxc3 13.Rc1

11.Nxd4 Nxd4 12.Qxd4+ Nf6 13.Qe5!



Position after 13.Qe5

I already had this exact position before in another game, so I knew that Qe5 is

the right move here, really restricting his development and forcing more concessions. So far, I'm playing quickly and confidently. However, soon, I started misplaying it.

13...Qd6!

Definitely this is not the move he wants to play, to weaken the d6-pawn. However, this was really the only way to get rid of this queen, and somehow free his development. I should be better, but it is actually not so easy.

14.Qxd6 exd6 15.Nc3 a6?!

15...Rd8 16.Rfd1 Rb8 was more precise to try to develop the c8-bishop immediately.

16.Rfd1 Rd8 17.Rac1?!

I wanted to play 17.Rd2. However, I did not see how to proceed if he brings his king to e7. 17...Kf8 18.Rad1 (18.Rc1 However, I can play Rc1 and Nd5 here. I guess I was looking for something more than that.) 18...Ke7.

17...Ra7

I expected 17...Rb8 more.

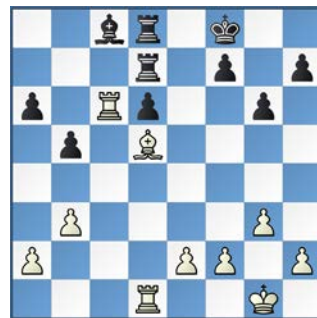
18.Ne4?!

18.Nd5 was more accurate. 18...Nxd5 19.Bxd5 b5 20.Rc6 Kf6 21.Rdc1± with a big advantage due to better pieces and better pawn structure. Black is still alive though.

18...Nxe4 19.Bxe4 b5 20.Rc6 Rad7

I expected 20...Re7 more.

21.Bd5 Kf8



Position after 21...Kf8

22.Rb6?

This was a mistake and most likely the start of my technical problems. I wanted to stop ...Bb7 trying to trade off the bishops. However, that wasn't ever a threat, and giving him the c-file gave him too much unnecessary counterplay and made my technical task very difficult. 22.f3 Ke7 23.Kf2 should be winning step by step since Black has no counterplay and ...Bb7 is simply met by Rb6. 23...Bb7 24.Rb6 Bxd5 25.Rxd5 Ra7 26.g4. This rook endgame is totally winning for

White since Black is totally passive with both rooks.

22...Rc7 23.Rd2 Ke7

I calculated 23...Bh3 24.f3 Rc1+ 25.Kf2 Rf1+ 26.Ke3 Re8+ 27.Kd3 to be safe for me.

24.f4

Perhaps 24.f3 was a better way.

24...f5?!

Probably not recommended to put another pawn on the color of the bishop.

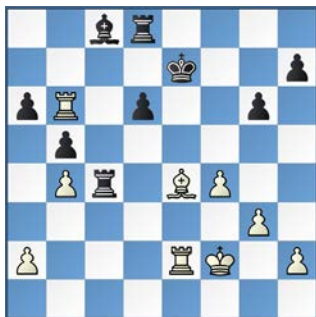
25.Kf2 Rc5 26.b4?!

Another hasty move, allowing too much counterplay. 26.Bf3.

26...Rc3 27.e4?

Wow, this was just very bad, a clear positional mistake. How could I possibly have thought of activating his horrible c8 bishop?! 27.Bb3±.

27...fxe4 28.Bxe4 Rc4 29.Re2??



Position after 29.Re2

Amazingly, this is just a blunder. I was lucky he didn't have much time left here. I saw he can play ...Kd7, but I didn't see that I was just lost there. Amazing stuff.

29...Kf6??

Phew, I dodged a bullet here. I thought 29...Kd7 30.Rb8 Kc7 31.Ra8 was fine, but 31...d5 followed by a potential ...Kb7, and I lose.

30.a3 Rc3 31.Re3 Rc1 32.Kg2?!

Here I continue to play inaccurately. At this point I just probably got lazy and started to play on his time. It worked I guess, but very often, it might not work. 32.Rd3

32...Kg7 33.Bb7 Rc2+ 34.Kf3 Bh3 35.g4 h5 36.gxh5 gxh5 37.Kg3 Bf5 38.Kh4!?

A trick that worked because my opponent was now below a minute.

38...Rxb2+?

The final mistake letting my king in. Now I was able to generate a decisive attack. 38...Kf6. Here Black is totally fine, and

actually with ideas like ...Rxb2 and ...Rb8, if anyone has to be careful, it's me.

39.Kg5 Rf8?

This loses quickly. 39...Bb1.

40.Re7+ Kh8 41.Rxd6 Rh3

41...Bh7 42.Bd5

42.Rh6+ Kg8 43.Bd5+

It was good to win in the end, but certainly a very unconvincing technique for me after a very good opening.

1-0

Vitaliy Bernadskiy (2619) – Aleksandr Lenderman (2704) [D37]
Seattle City Championship
Chess.com (R3), January 30, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

This game was the critical game for the tournament standings, against the other GM in the tournament, Vitaliy Bernadskiy. Unfortunately, this time it did not go my way, as I lost my way in complications.

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 d5 4.d4 a6

A solid system that Magnus has played many times.

5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bg5 Be6 7.e3 Nbd7 8.Bd3



Position after 8.Bd3

8...Bd6

Since I am annotating the games, I was not interested in a short draw, and instead wanted a fight. Therefore, I chose the ...Bd6 line. Actually, the truth is, I just forgot during the moment that the ...h6 move existed here. :) 8...h6 9.Bf4 g5 (9...Nh5 10.0-0) 10.Bg3 Nh5 11.Be5 Nhf6 is another interesting line. Or ...Ng7 if I want to avoid the draw. (11...Ng7 12.Bg3 though difficult if White really insists. :) Black now needs to go for a worse position to avoid a draw: 11...Nxe5 12.Nxe5).

9.0-0 0-0 10.h3 c6 11.Bf4

We both played this part very quickly. I turned down his draw offer here.

11...Qc7 12.Bxd6 Qxd6 13.Rc1

Here I needed to find a plan. I'm not sure if I played the best way.

13...Rfe8

Most likely I should play 13...Qe7 and then try to bring one of my knights to d6, usually the best structure in Carlsbad. Not sure why I forgot about that idea. 14.Qc2 g6 15.a3 Nb6 16.Rfe1 Nc8 17.Na4 Nd6 18.Nc5 Bf5 19.Bxf5 Nxf5 20.Ne5 Rfe8. My gut tells me Black should be fine here, though, perhaps White has some concrete ideas like f3 e4.

14.a3 h6 15.Re1 Rac8 16.Qb3

So far we've both played waiting moves, but now I felt that with the queen on b3, it might be time to play ...c5. On one hand it might be logical. On the other hand, it's a very concrete move, which requires precise play from me after that to not end up statically worse. I did not manage to handle the dynamics well, unfortunately.

16...c5

I was actually a little bit worried about 16...Rc7 17.Qb4, though probably after trading I should be ok. I remember Magnus beat Fabi in a similar structure by trading queens on a3. (Of course, he can just play a move like 17.Qc2) 17...Qxb4 18.axb4 Nb6.

17.dxc5 Nxc5 18.Qd1 Qb6 19.b4 Nce4

I thought I would get some dynamic counterplay here, but maybe I don't.

20.Na4

20.Ne2 was probably also a small plus for White.

20...Qd6

20...Rxc1 21.Nxb6

21.Bxe4 Nxe4

21...Rxc1 22.Bh7+ Kxh7 23.Qxc1 Rc8 24.Nc5 was annoying since he always has Qb1+ intermezzo. However, maybe this was the way to go. 24...Ne4 25.Qb1 Bf5.

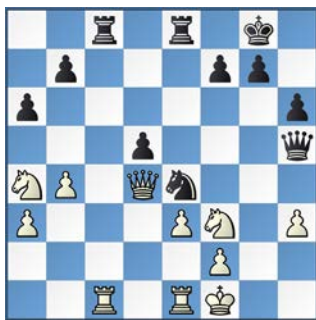
22.Qd4

Now the problem is he has a perfect setup with Nc5 and so on. However, I was banking on a concrete idea here. It worked but I just didn't follow up correctly.

22...Bxb3 23.gxb3 Qg6+?!

23...Qd7 was the move to play here. For some reason I never considered this. Just goes to show I have to continue sharpening my tactics. 24.Nb6 Qxb3 25.Rxc8 Rxc8 26.Nxc8 Qg4+ 27.Kh2 Qxf3 28.Rf1 Qh5+ leads to a draw, which would be a logical result.

24.Kf1 Qh5?



Position after 24...Qh5

But this is just a serious mistake. Perhaps at this point I already saw some flaws and didn't believe in my position anymore. Of course, I must play 24...Qf5 25.Ke2 and here I cannot believe that I missed a very straightforward idea, 25...Rxc1 26.Rxc1 Re6±. If White is better, it's still very complicated. For some reason I only considered 25...Qxh3. Very poor dynamic skills on my part today.

25.Ke2!

For some reason I thought 25.Ng1 is the only move, and didn't consider that Ke2 is still possible here stepping into a pin. However, I cannot take advantage of it. 25...Qh4 26.Qb2 Rxc1 27.Rxc1 d4. I was hoping to drum up some counterplay here, though objectively of course, it shouldn't be enough after the strong move 28.Nc5 Nxc5 29.Rxc5 dxe3 30.Rc3 exf2 31.Qxf2±.

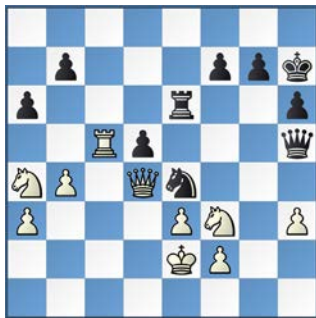
25...Rxc1 26.Rxc1 Re6

Here I was actually happy again, since I thought his only move is Rg1 with the idea of Rg4.

27.Rc8+!

27.Rg1 g6!! (27...Rf6?! was actually my intention. 28.Rg4 Qxh3 29.Rf4 Qg2 30.Ne1 Qh2 with some vague hope to create a mess.) 28.Rg4 Qxh3. However, here I have quite a lot of counterplay, maybe even enough for equality.

27...Kh7 28.Rc5!



Position after 28.Rc5

What to say. I just never saw this idea until he played it. Great idea, forcing a trade of

my great knight or killing my attack. His threat of Qxe4+ is a killer.

28...Qxh3!?

I was hoping for the best here, but it shouldn't work. I thought 28...Nxc5 29.Nxc5 Re7 30.Qg4 should be a hopeless endgame. Maybe it's not as hopeless as I thought. At least, today, Firouzja saved a seemingly even more hopeless one, even after Giri made time control. This gave me some hope today. But Bernadskiy was up to the technical task.

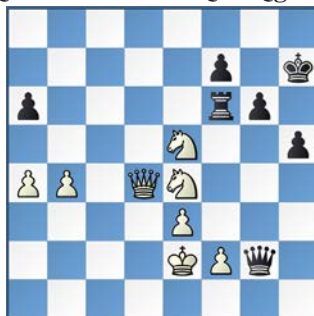
29.Qxd5!

Of course not 29.Rxd5?? Qg2 and suddenly, I have a very strong attack.

29...Nxc5 30.Nxc5 Rf6 31.Qxb7 Qh5 32.Qe4+ g6 33.a4

Now it is totally lost. No more counterplay. My last chance was 33.Nd7?? Qb5+.

33...Qh3 34.Ne5 h5 35.Qd4 Qg2 36.Ne4



Position after 36.Ne4

His pieces are now beautifully coordinating and his king is now safer than mine!

36...Rf5 37.Nd7 g5 38.Nef6+ Kh8 39.e4 Qf3+ 40.Ke1 Qh1+ 41.Kd2 Qh4 42.Ng4+ f6 43.exf5

An interesting battle. It's a pity that I couldn't do better in the dynamics. However, full credit to Vitaliy for playing a great game and showing precise calculation, good technique, and good opening preparation to create some problems.

1-0

Aleksandr Lenderman (2704) – Aditya Ramkumar (1614) [A13]
Seattle City Championship
Chess.com (R4), January 31, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

After losing the previous game to GM Bernadskiy, I got paired all the way down against a 1500+ player. However, this game was very hard, and I never felt like I had control of the game until he got down to under two minutes in the endgame.

1.b3 d5 2.Bb2 c5 3.e3

The accurate move order. 3.Nf3 is effectively met by 3...f6.

3...Nc6

3...f6 4.c4 d4 5.Qh5+

4.Nf3 e6 5.d4

5.Be2 Nf6 6.0-0 Be7 7.d4

5...Nf6 6.Be2 Be7

6...cxd4 7.Nxd4 Bb4+ was slightly annoying, or Qa5+.

7.dxc5 Bxc5 8.0-0 0-0 9.c4

9.a3!?

9...Ne4?!

9...dxc4 10.Bxc4 Qxd1 11.Rxd1 b6 was probably more solid.

10.cxd5?!

I played this quickly since I wanted to give him an isolated pawn. However, it might've not been the most accurate. 10.Qc2! keeping the tension was apparently very strong. Now ...Nc3 can be followed by Qxc3. 10...Nb4 11.Qc1.

10...exd5 11.Nc3 Nxc3

11...Ba3 was also interesting. I can probably get an advantage here though. 12.Bxa3 Nxc3 13.Qc2 Nxe2+ 14.Qxe2 Re8 15.Bb2 d4 (15...Bg4 16.Rfd1) 16.Rfd1.

12.Bxc3 Be6 13.Nd4?!

Looking back, I don't really love this move. 13.Qd2.

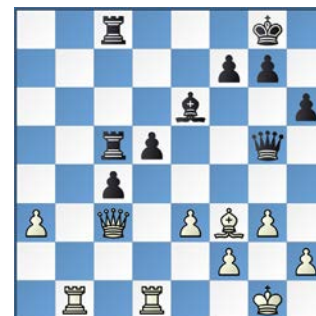
13...Qe7 14.Nxc6 bxc6 15.Rc1 Bb6 16.Qd2 c5

Now, Black is totally fine with the hanging pawns. I have nothing.

17.Rfd1 Rfd8 18.Bf3 Rac8 19.Ba5 h6 20.Bxb6 axb6 21.Qb2 Qg5 22.g3 Rd7 23.b4 Rdc7

23...c4 here, probably only Black can be better.

24.bxc5 bxc5 25.a3 c4 26.Qc3 Rc5 27. Rb1



Position after 27.Rb1

Here I knew I lost the grip of the position, and Black should be totally fine, maybe even slightly better. Therefore, I was trying to play quickly and wasn't focused as much on playing the best moves anymore. My focus was to get him low on time.

27...Qf5 28.Bg2 Qf6 29.Rd4 Qe7

29...Ra8.

30.e4 dxe4 31.Bxe4 Qa7 32.Bc2 Ra5 33.a4 Rd5 34.Rxd5 Bxd5 35.Rb5 Qa8 36.Qa5 Be6?!

36...Bf3 37.Qxa8 Rxa8 38.Kf1 Re8 39.a5 g6 kept the balance since it's hard for me to activate my king.

37.Qxa8 Rxa8 38.Kf1

Now I get my king to c3, blockading the c-pawn and my a-pawn becomes lethal. From here on, I was in control and also my opponent was very low on time.

38...Kf8

38...Re8. He should still try to stop my king from going to e2, though here, I can play f3 without too much risk. 39.f3±

39.Ke2 Ke7 40.Kd2 Kd7 41.Kc3 Kc7 42.a5+-

Now my a-pawn is just decisive.

42...Ra6 43.Be4 Ra7 44.Kd4

44.Bd5 was actually probably the simplest.

44...Kd6 45.f4 g6 46.Rb6+ Kc7 47.Rc6+ Kd7 48.a6 Bf5

48...Kd8 was the best chance, but I should win with a nice simplification technique: 49.Rxe6! fxe6 50.Bb7. All the king and pawn endgames will be lost for him, and his rook is forever stuck.

49.Bd5 Be6 50.Kxc4 Bxd5+ 51.Kxd5 Ra8 52.Rb6 Rc8 53.Rb7+ Ke8 54.a7 Rd8+ 55.Ke5 Ra8 56.Kf6 Kf8 57.Rb8+ Rxb8 58.axb8Q#

Not a game I'm proud of, but a win is still a win.

1-0

Aleksandr Lenderman (2704) – Mitrabha Guha (2445) [A30]
Seattle City Championship
Chess.com (R5), January 31, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

This is the last round against IM Mitrabha Guha. In the beginning the game did not go my way, but later, unexpectedly, I got some incredible chances which I was able to take advantage of.

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 Bb7 4.Bg2 c5

5.0-0 g6

This is a system that I honestly speaking, dread playing against.

6.b3

6.d4 cxd4 7.Qxd4 d6 8.Nc3 Bg7 9.Rd1 Nbd7 10.Qh4 is another common line.

6...Bg7 7.Bb2 0-0 8.d4

8.Nc3 d5 9.Nxd5 Nxd5 10.Bxg7 Kxg7 11.cxd5 Qxd5 12.d4 Na6= was my game against Jeffrey Xiong, where I had nothing and in fact at some point I ended up suffering for a draw in that game.

8...cxd4 9.Qxd4 d6 10.Nc3 Nbd7 11.Rfd1 Rc8 12.Rac1 Ne5 13.Qe3?

In a quiet position, I made a natural move, but amazingly, it turns out to be a serious mistake. Even in the quietest of positions, you still have to be very careful of tactical ideas. 13.Ne1 or 13.Bh3 would be normal moves.

13...Ng4!

Of course! Now I have concrete problems.

14.Qf4

Unfortunately the only move. However, my queen is a bit awkward there. The natural 14.Qd2?? of course fails to 14...Nxf2! 15.Kxf2 Bxc3-+ with Ne4+ to follow.

14...h5



Position after 14...h5

15.Ng5?

Another mistake in a difficult situation. As it turned out I was still ok, but I couldn't find the right way. 15.h3 Bh6 16.Qd4. I should sac the exchange this way. 16...Bxc1 17.Bxc1 Nf6 18.Qd2± Surprisingly I might still have full compensation here. 15.Rc2 Bh6 16.Qd4 was also fine for me. I actually hallucinated here, thinking ...e5 wins for Black, but it doesn't since I have Qxd6. In hindsight, maybe it's good I didn't see it, since Black can just make a forced draw here, which he might've done. 16...Bg7 17.Qf4 which I have to make, since Qd2? again loses to Nxf2.

15...Ne6

This is ok, but he had good alternatives here. I thought 15...f6! 16.Bxb7 fxe5 17.Qxg5 Nxb7! 18.Qd5+ is ok for me, and probably so did my opponent. However, here it turns out that Black has lots of initiative. 18...Rf7 19.Qxb7 e6 20.Qg2 Rxf2↑; 15...Bxg2 is what I expected, and I didn't really have an answer to this. 16.Kxg2 f6 17.Nf3 Bh6 18.Qd4 Bxc1 19.Bxc1. I am not lost here since I have some compensation, and he doesn't have open files for his rooks. However, Black is clearly better, and I have no real way to get to his king.

16.Qd2 Bxg2 17.Kxg2 Nxe5 18.Qxg5 Bh6 19.Qd5 Rc5

Maybe not the best, practically speaking. 19...Bxc1 20.Rxc1 (20.Bxc1 Nf6 21.Qd4 Qd7 22.Bg5 Qe6 23.Bxf6 Qxf6 24.Qxf6 exf6 25.Rxd6 Rcd8 and here only Black can probably win.) 20...Nf6.

20.Qd4 Bxc1 21.Rxc1 Nf6

In hindsight, 21...f6 followed by ...Ne5 might've been more solid. However, even here I have more compensation than I thought I had.

22.Rd1!

This move was very important to stop him from playing ...e5 and blocking my bishop. Suddenly, I have many ideas that he has to worry about like Nd5, Ne4, and so on.

22...Kg7?!

A bit unnatural to step in the pin. Unsurprisingly, it turns out to be inaccurate. 22...Re8! was the correct move here. However, it's far from obvious, it's a very subtle prophylaxis. Here I don't have anything immediate. 23.Ne4 (23.Nd5 b5 24.Nxf6+ exf6 and here because he has counterplay on e2, I cannot get very far by taking his weak d6 and f6 pawns.) 23...Re5.

23.f3 Qa8?

This is already a mistake since it leaves behind a weak target, which I pounced on. 23...Rc7 was better, to move the rook out of the fifth rank.

24.Qe3!

A very strong multi-purpose move. First of all, I am attacking his weak target, e7. Also, I am opening my bishop from b2 to make Ne4 and Nd5 threats more lethal. All of a sudden, this is very hard for him to play. I am objectively better. As he started to think a lot here, I started liking my position more and more.

24...Rf5?!

A tricky move, but not the best. Here he

probably started to miss stuff. 24...Re5 25.Ne4 Re6 26.Qd3 is one sample line where I get back the exchange by force, since Ng5 cannot be stopped. Still, though, Black should be close to equal here. 26...Qc8 27.Ng5 Kg8 28.Nxe6 Qxe6.



Position after 24...Rf5

25.Nd5!

25.Qxe7?? Re8 26.Qxd6 Rxe2+ 27.Nxe2 Qxf3+ 28.Kg1 Qe3+ 29.Kh1 Qxe2+ was an example of how one careless move missing opponent's counterplay can be fatal immediately.

25...Re8?

This is just losing. He probably missed Rxd6 on move 28. He had to try 25...Rxd5 26.cxd5 Qb7, though even here I am definitely better.

26.Nc7 Qc6 27.Nxe8+ Qxe8 28.Rxd6 e5

Losing, but what else to do? 28...Kf8 29.Rxf6 exf6 (29...Rxf6 30.Bxf6 exf6 31.Qxe8+ Kxe8 32.Kf2 is obviously a trivially winning pawn endgame with my queenside majority.) 30.Ba3+.

29.Rxf6

This wins a piece by force. It turns out the engine gave me even higher scores on other moves, but a line like Rxf6 cannot be considered a mistake. :)

29...Kxf6

29...Rxf6 30.Qxe5+- (30.Bxe5?? Kg8)

30.g4 hxg4 31.fxg4 Qc6+ 32.Kg3 Rg5 33.Qf4+

And this win allowed me to leapfrog my opponent, who had 3.5, and put me in shared first with GM Vitaliy Bernadskiy. Not great chess from me, with many tactical mistakes, but I was happy with my resiliency in this game.

1-0

Ryan Ackerman (1922) –
Atharva Joshi (1366) [E38]
Seattle City Championship
Chess.com (R5), January 31, 2021
[Ryan Ackerman]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 0-0 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.Qxc3 c5 7.e3 b6 8.Bd3 Bb7 9.f3 Nc6 10.Ne2 cxd4 11.exd4 d5 12.b3 Rc8 13.Bb2 Na5 14.c5 Re8 15.b4 Nc4 16.Bxc4 dxc4 17.Qxc4 Nd5 18.Qd3 Qg5 19.0-0 e5 20.dxe5 Rcd8



Position after 20...Rcd8

Can you find the only move for White that retains the advantage? My opponent, an up-and-coming youngster has scored a draw against Richard Ingram (1880 US Chess) in his last round and now he's poised and ready for a full-on assault against me. At a glance, Black's position seems to check all the boxes for having a winning attack. He also has plenty of time, a little over 29 minutes to potentially score a big upset over me. My clock reads 27:45 and I felt uncertain. 21. Qb3 Qxe3+ leads to equality. I spent 11 minutes looking for alternatives.

21.Bd4!! Re6!?

HIARCS suggests Joshi abandon his kingside attack in favor of controlling the center: 21...bxc5 22.bxc5 Nc7 23.Rf2 Rd7 24.f4 Qg4 25.Qc2 Bc6 26.h3 Qh4 27.Rd1 Red8 28.Rff1±

22.Rad1 Rg6 23.Ng3!?

Computer suggests moving the rook to the second rank and then retreating back to f1. Ah yes, 'twiddle my thumbs' - why, of course! Why didn't I think of that? 23.Rf2! bxc5 24.bxc5 Nf4 25.Nxf4 Qxf4 26.Rff1

23...Re8 24.Rfe1 Nf4

Twelve minutes remain on my clock, to Atharva's 21 minutes. He's begun playing faster, giving me little time to think during his turns. I imagined that my most likely chance for a win would be to prompt resignation during an endgame, which I approximated to be approximately 25 moves away, so each of my next moves should average at 30 seconds maximum. Nevertheless, I spent four minutes and played for the cheap:

25.Qc4?

Here he spent only two minutes, hoping to dismantle my resolve so I'd crack

under pressure. 25.Qc3! Qh4 26.Bf2!+- 25...bxc5??

I completely missed 25...Qh4!!.. Maybe Joshi saw it, but I doubt he had much interest in scanning for bail-out plans. 26.Re3 Rh6 27.Nf1! Rg6 28.Rd2 Nh3+ 29.Kh1 Nf2+=

26.Be3!

Nope!! Your attack's over now kiddo!

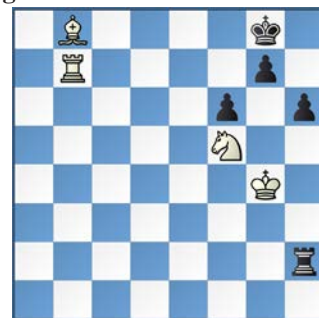
26...Nh3+ 27.gxh3 Qxe5 28.Bf2 Qb8 29.Rxe8+ Qxe8 30.Qxc5 Bxf3 31.Re1 Qd8 32.Qe7

Under four minutes remain on my clock, whilst Joshi has nearly 18 minutes. My adrenaline's pumping. My technique was pretty sloppy, but what matters is that his attack failed because that makes me happy. Now the fun is all mine.

32...Qxe7 33.Rxe7 h6 34.Bxa7 Ra6 35.Kf2 Rxa3 36.b5 Bd5 37.b6 Bb3 38.Rd7 Bc6 39.Rd6 Bb7 40.Bb8 Rb2+ 41.Ke3 Rxb2 42.Rd7 Bc6 43.Re7 Rxb3 44.b7 Bxb7??

44...h5! would've kept matters complicated. I only had 29 seconds and I might've failed to convert against Black's best moves: 45.Kd4 (45.Bf4?? Bxb7 46.Rxb7 h4=) 45...h4 46.Ne4 Rb3 47.Nc5 Rb1 48.Bd6 Rd1+ 49.Ke5 Rd5+ 50.Kf4 Bxb7 51.Nxb7 Rd4+ 52.Ke3 Ra4 53.Nd8+-

45.Rxb7 f6 46.Kf4 Rh4+ 47.Kf3 Rh3 48.Kg4 Rh2 49.Nf5??



Position after 49.Nf5

The computer informed me this a blunder because it's under the impression I learned how to mate with a bishop and knight, and can do so with only 41 seconds on my clock. Can you believe that? My goodness—complete trust! I'm blushing.

49...Rg2+ 50.Bg3 Rd2 51.Rxg7+

Black resigned 11 moves later.

51...Kf8 52.Rh7 Ra2 53.Nxb6 Ra4+ 54.Bf4 Ra6 55.Nf5 Rc6 56.Bh6+ Ke8 57.Bf4 Rc4 58.Nd6+ Kf8 59.Nxc4 Kg8 60.Rc7 Kh8 61.Kf5 Kg8 62.Kxf6

1-0

A NORTHWEST GRAND PRIX EVENT



WASHINGTON OPEN

MAY 29-31, 2021

ONLINE VIA  Chess.com

Format: A six-round Swiss tournament in two sections: Open & Reserve U1600. US Chess Online rated and NWSRS rated. Higher of May 2021 US Chess rating or US Chess Online rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes. Foreign ratings used for players with no US Chess rating. Higher of US Chess or foreign ratings used at TD discretion. ***Highest finishing Washington resident in the Open section seeded into the 2022 Washington State Championship.***

Time Control: G/100; +30 second increment. Late Default: 10 min.

Rounds: Sat./Sun./Mon. @ 10 AM & 3 PM. WCF Annual Meeting and Elections at 2 PM on 5/31 via Zoom.

Entry Fee: \$75 if postmarked or online by May 15, \$85 after. Non-members of WCF/OCF/ICA add \$15. Less \$30 for Seniors (age 50+). \$40 play-up fee if rated under 1600 playing in Open section. Re-entry for ½ of your original entry fee. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, and US Chess 2400+.

Prizes: \$5,000 based on 100 paid entries. Open: 1st \$750, 2nd \$600, 3rd \$450, 1st U2300/U2100/U1900/U1700: \$200.
Reserve: 1st \$550, 2nd \$400, 3rd \$250, 1st U1500/U1300/U1100/(U900/unrated): \$200.

Special Prizes (per section): 1st \$50, 2nd 1-yr NWC subscription ext. for each of the four (4) categories below.

1) Best Upset, 2) Best Female player (by TPR), 3) Best NW-region player (by TPR), 4) Best Annotated Game - Submit one annotated game that you consider to be interesting or well-played. A panel of judges will select the winners in each section.

Registration: Online at <https://nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration/> - pay by Credit/Debit/PayPal. Registration **deadline Fri. May 28 @ 5:00 PM**. No registrations accepted after the deadline. \$15 Late fee for payments received after the deadline. Unpaid players will receive a zero-point bye for round 1. Current US Chess membership required. Memberships must be paid at time of registration. A working Chess.com and Zoom account are required. Up to 2 half-point byes available if requested before the end of round 2.

Procedure and Fair Play Policy: Pairings will be released prior to the start of each round. Games will be started automatically by the TD in the [Live Chess](#) area. All players and parents (if U18) are required to sign the [WCF Fair Play Agreement](#) prior to the start of the tournament (including side events). All players will be monitored via Zoom during the games. WCF's Fair Play Committee will review any suspicious games on a case-by-case basis. Fair play standards will be strictly enforced.

Entries: Make checks payable to Washington Chess Federation. **Mail To:** Josh Sinanan, 4174 NE 148th Ave. NE, Building I, Suite M, Redmond, WA 98052. **Phone:** 206-769-3757 **Info:** washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com

Fun Side Events!

- **Washington Open Chess960 Championship:** Sat 5/29 @ 7:30 PM. Format: A 5-Round Swiss in one section. TC: G/12;+5. Games will be paired by the TD in the [Live Chess](#) area. Pairings based on the highest of current NWSRS, US Chess Online, or US Chess rating.
- **Washington Open G/10 Championship:** Sun 5/30 @ 7:30 PM. Format: A 6-Round Swiss in one section. TC: G/10;+3. Chess.com Rated, games will be paired via Chess.com.
- **Washington Open Blitz Championship:** Mon 5/31 @ 7:30 PM. Format: An 11-Round Swiss in one section. TC: G/3;+2. Chess.com Rated, games will be paired via Chess.com.

Details (per side event): EF: \$25. Rating: US Chess Unrated; US Chess Membership not required. Prizes based on the highest of current NWSRS, US Chess Online, or US Chess rating. Prize Fund: \$500/b25. 1st \$120, 2nd \$80, 1st U2000 \$50, 1st U1700 \$50, 1st U1400 \$50, 1st U1100/unr. \$50. Highest finishing Female player: \$50, Highest Finishing NW-region player: \$50.

Self-Acceptance: My Chess Story

By Nobel Ang

First, a couple of things about myself. I live in Pocatello, Idaho, where I am a lecturer in the Philosophy Program at Idaho State University. I was born and raised in Singapore, where I lived until the age of 25. In 2001 I moved to Florida to attend the University of Florida, where I eventually obtained both my MA and PhD in philosophy. After teaching for a few years at a couple of universities in the Midwest, I moved to Pocatello in 2013 to assume my current teaching position.

I honestly do not remember when I first learned to play chess. I do remember that before I learned chess, I picked up *Xiangqi* (Chinese chess) by watching my father and uncles play it. Having evolved from a common ancestor (the ancient Indian game of *Chaturanga*), *Xiangqi* has many similarities to chess. There is a chariot that moves exactly like the rook. There is a horse that moves in a similar fashion to the knight, except that it is incapable of jumping over pieces and hence can be blocked; perhaps horses had shorter legs in ancient China. But there are also significant differences: There is a river that runs across the middle of the *Xiangqi* board, and certain pieces such as the elephant (the equivalent of the bishop in chess) cannot cross it, and thus can only function as defensive pieces within friendly territory. Also, pawns in *Xiangqi* do not promote to anything if they make it to the enemy's back rank. Oh, and speaking of promotion, there is no queen in *Xiangqi*. Please don't ask me why; there is probably some very interesting socio-historical reason somewhere—I just don't know what it is. And last but not least, there is no castling in *Xiangqi*; the king/general has to stay ensconced in his palace in the middle of the board the entire time, relying on his loyal subjects to protect him.

My apologies for the digression; I know this is supposed to be my chess story, not my *Xiangqi* story. As I mentioned, I do not remember when I first learned chess. I probably learned it by watching some classmates play it in elementary school. Since I already knew

Xiangqi, picking up chess wasn't too difficult. That said, I never played much chess (or *Xiangqi*) when I was a kid. I was a rather impatient and impulsive kid, and having to sit down and think through the consequences of every move proved too demanding for me. When I moved to Florida, however, one of my professors in grad school started making me play chess with him whenever we both had a spare moment in the department. To this day, I still have no idea why he did that; perhaps he couldn't find anybody else around him who shared this passion, so he simply decided to "pull rank" and make one of his grad students engage him in his hobby. I didn't spend much time studying chess at the time, and I never got good enough to beat him, but I did learn a few basic chess principles from him (control the center, develop all the pieces early, etc.). I also learned my first opening: the Ruy Lopez.

Fast forward to 2016. This was the year I played my first chess tournament after having lived in Idaho for a couple of years. When I told my mother that I had started playing chess competitively, she remarked that I must have inherited the "chess gene" from my late paternal grandfather; it turns out that he was the *Xiangqi* champion in his hometown for many years. My own reasons for playing tournaments were, unfortunately, a little less interesting. First, since coming to Idaho, I had been spending quite a bit of my free time playing chess online. As

many of you know, playing online chess is a very solitary activity which can eat up a surprising amount of time: I once played online for seven hours straight! Spending all this solitary time in front of a computer screen moving virtual chess pieces sometimes felt a bit... masturbatory. Actually, on this note, the wife of one of my regular chess partners here in Pocatello once told me, only half-jokingly, that she would much rather her husband watch pornography than play chess online, probably because you can only watch porn for so long before your

biological limits kick in, and you simply have to go do something else.

But I digress. Anyway, as I was saying, playing online chess started feeling a bit self-indulgent after a while, and I decided that if I was going to become a chess addict, it was better to do it in a way that is public and somewhat social, and maybe win a bit of cash sometimes, if I'm lucky. Moreover, there's also a part of me that was curious to find out how well I stack up in the real world against people who play "real" over-the-board (OTB) chess.

It was with all of this in mind that I played in my first tournament here in Idaho in February 2016 (the Idaho Closed). If you would indulge me a little, I would like to make a couple of sociological observations here. I have always thought of chess as being an intellectual, thinking-person's game. Before I played my first tournament, I imagined a chess tournament hall to be a dimly lit, austere place with plush velvet armchairs and somber gentlemen in pipes and monocles sitting in dignified thoughtful poses over chess boards.

Nothing could be further from the truth. First of all, most tournaments here in Idaho take place in the meeting room of some three-star hotel such as the Holiday Inn Express, or in some public library. Such places are usually lit by rather harsh fluorescent lighting, and rather than plush velvet armchairs, all one sees are plastic folding chairs at plastic folding tables. Secondly, in place of gentlemen in suits and monocles, chess tournaments in Idaho (and I suspect, in much of the rest of the country as well) are populated for the most part by two species of humans: Retirees or semi-retirees, and kids. The retirees are people who have found time to return to the pastime of their youth after raising a family and building a career. As for the kids, a large proportion of them are Asian. Why is this? I'm not sure, but I imagine that they probably have Tiger Moms who helicopter-parent them and make them play in chess tournaments because of the supposed boost to critical thinking that chess gives to young minds. Or maybe, like me, they have also inherited the chess gene from their grandfathers. But despite being possibly Tiger-mommed, these kids seem to be enjoying themselves. Being

"...self-acceptance both in chess and in "real" life is a continual work in progress."



*Nobel Ang at the 2016 Idaho Open.
Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.*

kids, they also seem to have limitless amounts of energy: In between rounds, they either run around the hallways snacking on Doritos, or play casual chess games (“skittles”) in the break room.

I am neither a kid nor a retiree, and at first, I found myself a rather strange animal in this environment. Here I was, a 40-something with a PhD in philosophy hoping secretly to wow everybody with my considerable intellectual prowess, being faced instead with the benign indifference of a universe of very young and older people. I also had a nagging suspicion that the Chinese parents probably thought me a real oddity: What’s a grown man doing playing games during the weekends instead of being engaged in something more... productive?

Oh, and speaking of kids, I should also bring up something else here. One of the first things that my (adult) male friends ask me when I tell them that I play in chess tournaments is “Have you

ever lost to a kid?” They ask this question with a certain kind of expectant look on their faces. I’m not exactly sure what they are expecting, but I suspect that they probably avoid playing chess in order to not have to face the social humiliation of being bested by a child. Anyway, I always reply to this question in the affirmative without any hesitation. My personal philosophy of chess, if there is such a thing, is that you don’t know anything about chess until you have been beaten by a kid. The fact is that many kids are really good at calculating long combinations of chess moves, probably because their minds are young and pliable and have yet to be corrupted by the mundane pressures (paying bills, worrying about what your friends think of you etc.) that plague and take up precious RAM space in adult minds.

Over the course of the last few years I have actually come to see the presence of these kids as a good thing. With their boundless energy, kids rebound really

quickly from losses, and playing casual skittles games with them between rounds helps me to unwind and not take wins and losses too seriously. There’s also something infectious about their energy and cheerful resilience which helps me to take myself less seriously, and just accept that I am only as good a chess player as I am, no more, no less.

Which brings me to the most important lesson I have learned from all these months and years of competitive chess: Self-acceptance. Very simply, I am slowly learning to accept my strengths and weaknesses (especially the latter), and just kind of work with them as best as I can over the chess board. Accept that I will only very rarely (if ever) play a perfect game (what would that even look like?), and that 99% of my games will be filled with cringe-inducing mistakes and blunders; and that if I win, it’s probably only because, in the words of Savielly Tartakower, I made the second-to-last blunder.

This is not to say that I am not working on improving at chess. Rather, the idea is to be more accepting and kinder to myself, and acknowledge and accept my mistakes as they occur, rather than beat myself up and become discouraged by them. Surprisingly, I have discovered that due to this self-acceptance, I have actually become more resilient in my games. When I first started playing tournaments, I tended to get discouraged and to succumb to negative self-talk (“Why are you such a poor player? Why do you allow your opponent to get the upper hand?” etc.) whenever I found myself in a difficult position in a game. But with increased self-acceptance, I am able to become more present in the game, and deal with the situation on the board as it is, rather than as what I would wish for it to be and try to resolve the problems as they occur rather than worry too much about the outcome of the game. The results are pretty amazing. Over the last few months, I’ve had at least two or three occasions in which I have converted a losing or difficult position into a draw because I have been able to focus on the present moment in the game rather than worry about its eventual outcome.

Needless to say, self-acceptance both in chess and in “real” life is a continual work in progress. I do better at this some days, some days not so much. And I am still trying to fully incorporate these lessons I have learned over the chessboard into my life at large. But that’s okay: This is a life’s work, and I’m okay with not getting everything right right away.

2021 Washington President's Cup

By Josh Sinanan

The 2021 Washington President's Cup was held online via Chess.com February 6-7. A diverse cast of chess characters from throughout the world was represented in the 33-player field, including parts of Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, Ontario, California, Texas, New Jersey, St. Louis, Ukraine, Armenia, Russia, and India! The event was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation and directed by WCF Adult Chess Director Rekha Sagar with assistance from WCF President Josh Sinanan. The five-round Swiss tournament featured 18 players in the Open section and 15 in the Reserve U1600 section.

Alexander Sharikov, a strong master from Russia, won clear first place in the super-strong Open section with 4.0/5 games. His only defeat came at the hands of Ukrainian GM Vitaliy Bernadskiy in the second round. Five players tied for second place with 3.5/5: GM Alex Lenderman from St. Louis, GM Vitaliy Bernadskiy from Ukraine, IM Mitrabha Guha from India, FM Rohan Talukdar from Ontario, and Expert Eshan Guha from New Jersey. Seattle Chess King Valentin Razmov won the U2000 prize with 3.0/5 points. Emerson Wong-Godfrey, also from the Emerald City, claimed the U1800 prize with 2.5/5 points and scored a 560-point upset along the way!

Daniel Vasey from Gresham won the Reserve U1600 section with an undefeated 4.5/5 points, conceding only a single draw to Seattle's Gabriel Razmov in the penultimate round. Evan Takayoshi from Milton finished in clear second place with 4.0/5 points, recovering well from a second-round loss against Vasey by winning his final three games. Gabriel Razmov, son of Valentin, claimed third

place honors with 3.5/5 points. Five players rounded out the prize winners in a tie for first U1400/U1200/U1000 with 3.0/5 points each: Lixing Shen from Sammamish, Darsh Verma from Bothell, Joshua Ehrenberg from Auburn, Selina Cheng from Seattle, and Rohan Dhillon from Seattle. The talented Selina Cheng from Detective Cookie's Chess School captured the best upset prize of 508 points! Congratulations to the winners, and thanks to all who contributed to this event. Our vivacious chess community continues to thrive despite these difficult times!

Aleksandr Lenderman (2704) – Harry Bell (2000) [A11]
Washington President's Cup
Chess.com (R1), February 6, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In the first round I am playing a veteran local player, Harry Bell, whom I've played several times already in the WCF online events. This is my first time playing White against him.

1.Nf3 d5 2.e3 Nf6 3.c4 c6 4.Nc3 Nbd7 5.Qc2!?

My opponent is clearly trying to set up a Semi-Slav, but he keeps his options open, where he considers playing ...e6, as well as ...e5. Therefore, I also try to play a flexible move. 5.d4 e6 would transpose into Semi-Slav main lines while 5.b3?! would already be inaccurate due to 5...e5.

5...e5

If 5...e6, I wanted to play b3, where I hold off playing d4 at least for some time.

6.cxd5

Now the point is I force him to recapture with the knight.

6...Nxd5

6...cxd5? 7.Nb5! is the point: 7...Bc5 8.Nxe5+.

7.Bc4

Now we transposed into a reversed Taimanov Sicilian where I am probably up at least a tempo since I'm White and Black played a weird move ...c6

(c3 as White in open Sicilians is usually not so useful). 7.Be2 was also a logical alternative.

7...Qc7?!

An interesting move, a move which I didn't consider, but probably should be inaccurate if I react correctly. I thought 7...Nb4!? didn't work due to Qb3 followed by a3, but the engine finds something brilliant. 8.Qb1 (8.Qb3 Nd3+!! This move I didn't see. Now I have to play Kf1, since 9.Bxd3? (9.Kf1 N7c5 10.Bxf7+ Ke7 11.Qc4 Bf5) This position is of course very murky.) 9...Nc5, and suddenly Black is dominating.) 8...Nb6! 9.Be2 (9.Nxe5? Nxc4 10.Nxc4 Nd3+) 9...Bd6 with a balanced position.

8.a3

I thought for some time here but didn't find the best way. 8.0-0 Be7 (8...Bd6 9.Ne4±) 9.Bxd5 cxd5 10.Qb3 nets a pawn. I just needed to make sure I would castle first. 8.Bxd5 cxd5 9.Qb3 Nc5 10.Nxd5 Qd6±; 8.d4 exd4 9.exd4 Be7 10.0-0 0-0 11.Bd3 N5f6 was also promising. 12.Bg5.

8...Bd6 9.Ba2?!

9.Ne4 was again better to at least get two bishops. 9...Be7?? 10.Bxd5.

9...N7f6 10.d4 exd4 11.Nxd5 Nxd5 12.Qe4+ Ne7

And now I thought I had a clever trap prepared in case he would go Ne7, but as soon as I played my move I realized I just made a horrific blunder.

13.Ng5??

13.Nxd4=

13...Qa5+



Position after 13...Qa5+

Of course! Wow! Not only will I be down a piece without compensation, but my position is probably worse on top

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of that. Here, I seriously contemplated resigning but for the sake of the readers of the articles I wanted to at least play some moves and test my opponent's techniques, just in case there will still be something to learn from this game. Of course, I did not expect to possibly have any chances to save this game, but in the very endgame, a miracle happened. This just goes to show that it is important to not only fight until the end, but never relax until the game is completely over. Honestly speaking though, I mentally did resign, and was prepared to just be a good sport about it and was looking forward after losing this game to give some lower-rateds a chance to play me. I thought, ok that can be a positive outcome of losing this game. I believe it is important to look for something positive in anything negative.

14.Bd2 Qxg5 15.Qxd4 Qe5 16.Bc3

As much as I did not want to exchange queens, keeping queens can only make my position worse. In my experience of trying to play piece odds against the engine with, let's say, blitz time control, I noticed that some endgames can sometimes be tricky to win up a piece, so I didn't lose all hope yet in the endgame. 16.Qd3 Bf5 17.Qe2 Qxb2 only makes it much worse.

16...Qxd4 17.Bxd4 0-0 18.Rd1 Bc7 19.Ke2 Bf5 20.Rd2 b6 21.Rhd1 Rfd8 22.b4 Be6

My opponent is playing very well so far, exchanging pieces, and putting pieces on good squares. I cannot do much about it since it is an open position.

23.Bxe6 fxe6 24.e4 Kf7 25.g3

At least trying to restrict his knight.

25...e5 26.Bc3 Rxd2+ 27.Rxd2 Ke6 28.f3 Rd8 29.Rc2

Not yet!

29...Bd6 30.a4 c5 31.b5

Cannot allow the knight to c6-d4.

31...Bc7 32.Ra2 a6 33.bxa6 Ra8 34.Kd3 Rxa6 35.Kc4 Ra8 36.Kb5 Rd8 37.Rd2

I had to, otherwise I allow ...Rd3, or if Kc4, then ...Nc6-d4.

37...Rxd2 38.Bxd2 Kd7 39.f4

Only chance of counterplay now, trying to make a passer on the kingside.

39...Nc6 40.Kc4 Ke6 41.f5+ Kd6 42.g4 Nd4 43.h3 Kc6 44.Be3 Bd6 45.g5 b5+ 46.axb5+ Nxb5 47.h4 Na7

Now this move I thought was very odd. Black is still winning, but why spend

three tempi to get the knight to b6, when he can play ...Be7 and ...Nd6+ where the knight is closer to the kingside, attacks e4, and kicks the white king out of his post? 47...Be7 48.Kd3 Nd6+ looked much simpler to me.

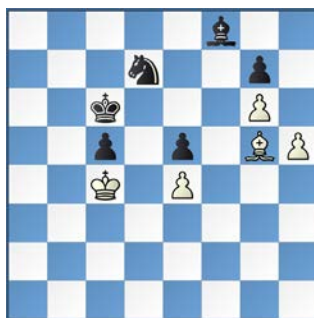
48.h5 Nc8 49.g6

Only chance to try to exchange as many pawns as I can. At this point I was just hoping to somehow get B+N versus king and hoping he didn't know how to do the mate. 49.f6 g6.

49...Nb6+ 50.Kd3 hxg6 51.fxg6 Bf8 52.Bg5

Last chance. Threatening h6 and Bf6, not that it saves the game, but at least something for him to think about.

52...Nd7 53.Kc4



Position after 53.Kc4

53...Nf6??

I couldn't believe my eyes! What was I missing! Now it dawned on me that a miracle happened. He fell for my only remaining trap in the position, and now not only am I saving the game, but I am also actually miraculously even winning! This is exactly why we should always fight until the end and try to never relax even when winning. 53...Kd6. All Black needed to do was to bring the king to e6 so that the knight on f6 will be protected, and then I can literally resign, since I am out of any possible remaining tricks.

54.h6

Wow! Just incredible!

54...Nxe4

54...gxh6 was also not saving the game. 55.Bxf6 h5 56.g7 Bxg7 57.Bxg7 Kd6 58.Bf6+-.

55.h7 Nxc5 56.h8Q Ne6

The problem for Black here is that the g6-pawn is still alive.

57.Qh1+ Kd7 58.Qe4 Bd6?!

Speeds up the process for me. 58...Be7 was still losing but much more tenacious. Now I still have to play accurately to win. 59.Qd3+! It is better to disturb Black's

harmony first. (59.Qxe5?! I was actually planning to just take the pawn, but that would be a very bad idea since that would activate his bishop. and let him park it to f6 where he defends many key squares and has some chances for a fortress. 59...Bf6 60.Qd5+ Ke7 61.Qb7+ Kd6 62.Qf3 I assume it should still be winning but would definitely take work.) 59...Nd4 (59...Ke8 60.Qf5 Nd8 61.Qxe5) 60.Kd5.

59.Qf5

Now it is totally over.

59...Be7

59...Ke7 60.Qf7+

60.Kd5 Bf6 61.Qxe6+ Kd8 62.Kc6

I feel terrible for my opponent, but what to do? Sometimes chess can be so cruel.

1-0

Mitrabha Guha (2505) – Aleksandr Lenderman (2704) [A80]
Washington President's Cup
Chess.com (R2), February 6, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In round two I was playing IM Guha Mitrabha. I wanted a fight against him, since I have two byes the last two rounds. I got a very interesting fight and was able to outplay him only to then get unnecessarily cute in the end.

1.d4 f5

Going for a fight. Last time I played a more solid Queens Gambit Accepted.

2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Bg5 d5 4.Bxf6 exf6 5.e3 Be6 6.Bd3 Qd7 7.Nf3 Nc6 8.Ne2

8.a3

8...Nb4

I believe that White didn't play the opening in the most ambitious way, and I am already totally fine after exchanging his good bishop.

9.Nf4 Nxd3+ 10.Qxd3 Bf7 11.h4 h5

I played this move automatically, but perhaps it wasn't necessary. 11...Bd6.

12.0-0-0 0-0-0 13.Qc3 Bd6 14.Nd3 b6 15.Kb1 Rhe8 16.a3 Bf8

Now, for many moves we will have an even maneuvering battle.

17.Nf4 Kb7 18.Rd3 Rc8 19.Qd2 Red8 20.Rd1 a5 21.Rb3 Ra8 22.g3 Rdb8 23.Nd3

23.Qe2 Kc8 24.Kc1. Maybe it was time for White to escape with his king while he can.

23...Kc8 24.Rc3 Qe8 25.Qe2 Bd6

26.Nd2 Kd8

I want to eventually break on the queenside, so I am moving my king to the kingside, and taking advantage of the closed nature of the position.

27.Qf3 g6 28.Nb3 Ke7 29.Nf4 c6 30.Nd3 30.Nc1

30...Kf8 31.Kc1 Rc8 32.Nf4 Kg7 33.Qg2 Qe4?

This was a mistake that wasn't taken advantage of. 33...Rab8 34.Nd2 Qd7. Eventually my plan is ...Qb7 and ...b5 and ...b4. It is hard for him to play. His queen is also off-side.



Position after 33...Qe4

34.Nd2?

Missing a good opportunity. 34.f3 Qe7 35.g4 fxg4 36.fxg4 creating counterplay.

34...Qxg2?

The engine thinks I shouldn't have traded queens. 34...Qe7.

35.Nxg2 c5 36.Rb3 Rab8 37.Nb1 c4

37...a4 38.Rbd3 c4 39.R3d2 looked too drawish to me.

38.Rb5 Rd8!?

An interesting try.

39.Nc3 Be8 40.Rxd5 Bc6

Now the point of ...Rd8 was revealed. The d6-bishop is now protected.

41.Nf4?

Here, White doesn't choose the best way though. 41.Rxd6 Rxd6 42.d5 Bd7 43.a4 b5 44.axb5 Bxb5 45.Rd4 is decent for White.

41...Bxd5 42.Nxd5 Kf7 43.a4 b5

Of course! Opening up the files for my rooks since I am up an exchange.

44.axb5 Rxb5 45.Nc3 Rb7 46.Nfe2 g5

Opening up the second front. I need to create a second weakness in order to win. 46...Rdb8 47.Na4. Here I considered something interesting, but it didn't work. 47...Rxb2 48.Nxb2 Ba3 49.Kd2 Bxb2 50.Nc3 because he is in time to stop ...a4.

47.Rh1 Kg6 48.Na4 Rb4 49.Nec3 f4 50.gxf4 gxf4 51.e4 f3!

Now I'm winning.

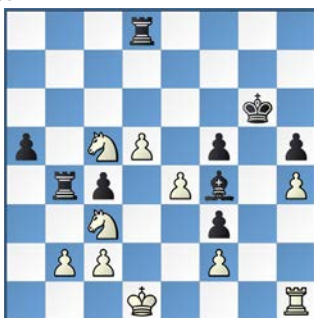
52.d5 Bf4+?!

Here I started rushing. Very bad rookie mistake. Now I'm complicating it a bit. 52...Rg8 53.Rh3 Kf7 54.Rxf3 Rg1+ 55.Kd2 Rh1+ was cleaner.

53.Kd1 f5?!

Natural, but why allow counterplay? 53...Kf7 54.Rh3 Rg8 55.Rxf3 Rg1+ 56.Ke2 Bd6.

54.Nc5



Position after 54.Nc5

54...fxe4??

Looks clever but getting too cute and based on a serious miscalculation. 54...Rb6 should win simply by stopping Ne6.

55.Ne6 Be5 56.Rg1+!

Of course! This check is very unpleasant since it disturbs my harmony, and I have no good square for my king. 56.Nxd8? would reveal the point of my line: 56...Bxc3 where I win routinely.

56...Kf6

Now I have to allow Nxe4 with check. I think I might've thought 56...Kh6 was possible, but I missed a key detail. 57.Nxd8 Bxc3 58.Nf7+ Kh7 59.Ng5+ and I cannot escape perpetual. 56...Kf5? allows a very nasty check. 57.Rg5+ Kf6 58.Nxe4+; 56...Kh7 and I thought maybe I can even do this but 57.Ng5+. He doesn't actually have to take the rook and I still don't have a good way to escape with my king. Very annoying! Knights are very tricky.

57.Nxe4+ Kf5 58.Nxd8 Kxe4 59.Nc6

Now it just leads to a forced draw.

59...Rxb2 60.Re1+ Kxd5 61.Rxe5+ Kxc6 62.Rxa5 c3 63.Kc1 Rb4 64.Rxb5 Re4 65.Kb1

65.Kd1?? Ra4+ shows that it is still never too late to blunder.

65...Rb4+ 66.Kc1 Re4 67.Kb1 Rb4+

67...Re2 68.Rf5 Rxf2 69.h5 is also drawn, but I have to fight for it.

68.Kc1

Game drawn by repetition. I guess compensation for my luck first game. :) Anyway, a fun up and down game, and definitely very instructive.

1/2-1/2

Aleksandr Lenderman (2704) – Rohan Talukdar (2400) [A15]
Washington President's Cup
Chess.com (R3), February 6, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

My round-three game was against Rohan Talukdar, another frequent opponent of late for me in online events.

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.b4

So far I've changed what I played against him every single time to keep him guessing, and this game isn't any different. I decided to try out this rare system against the Grunfeld, which can be similar to the reversed system, Nf3 Nf6 g3 b5 for Black, which I consider quite reputable and under-rated.

3...a5 4.b5 c6 5.a4 Bg7 6.Bb2

Natural, but actually, maybe it was better to start with d4, e3, Be2, 0-0, and leave some flexibility for the c1-bishop to potentially go to a3 in some cases.

6...0-0 7.e3 d5 8.cxd5 cxd5 9.Be2 Bg4 10.0-0 Nbd7 11.d4 Ne4

11...Nb6= was also natural. The way I played probably should not cause too many problems for Black.

12.Nc3 Nxc3 13.Bxc3 Qc7

Not sure if it was a good idea to put the queen on a file where I can put the rook. 13...Nb6.

14.Qb3 Rfc8 15.Rfc1 e6 16.Bd2 Qd8 17.h3 Bxf3 18.Bxf3 Bf8?!

This is inaccurate, though, since it loses control of the d4-pawn and gives me a chance to get some initiative. Still nothing that special, but at least it's something. 18...Rxc1+ 19.Rxc1 Nb6 20.Be2 Bf8= should still be equal.

19.e4!

I don't miss my chance!

19...Nf6

19...Nb6 20.Rxc8 (20.exd5 Rxc1+ 21.Rxc1 exd5±. Black should be able to hold this. However, at least, here the d5-pawn can be a long-term weakness.) 20...Rxc8 21.Bxa5 dxe4 22.Bxe4 Qxd4 was still fine for Black, but it's a bit more

double-edged.

20.Bg5!?

The most ambitious move, but maybe not best. 20.exd5; 20.e5; both secured some small edge. I guess I wanted more though.

20...dxe4 21.Bxe4 Rxc1+ 22.Rxc1



Position after 22.Rxc1

22...Bh6?

And here comes his decisive mistake. Giving up such a bishop and weakening the dark squares turns out to be deadly for Black. 22...h6 23.Bxf6 Qxf6 24.Bxb7 Rb8 25.Bf3 Qxd4 and Black has good chances of holding with a very good blockade on the b6-square.

23.Bxh6 Nxe4 24.Qe3

Here I was already choosing between several pleasant options.

24...Qd5 25.Rc7 Nd6 26.Rd7

Once again, the simplest. Black has to play ...Nf5 due to a deadly Qf4 threat, but I assessed the endgame as completely lost.

26...Nf5 27.Rxd5 Nxe3 28.Rd7 Nd5

28...Nf5 29.Bg5 b6 30.g4 Ng7 31.Rd8+ definitely didn't offer saving chances.

29.Rxb7 Nc3 30.b6 Nxa4 31.d5

Freeing the e3-square for the bishop to defend b6. Black will be forced to lose the knight now.

31...exd5 32.Be3 g5 33.Bd4 f6?!

33...Nxb6 34.Rxb6 (34.Bxb6 a4 35.Ra7 Rxa7 36.Bxa7 a3 37.Bd4. My gut tells me this should be winning for White too.) 34...a4 was relatively best, but should be hopeless in the long run.

34.Bxf6 Rc8 35.Rg7+ Kf8 36.b7 Rc1+ 37.Kh2 Rb1 38.Rc7 h6 39.Bd4 Ke8 40.Rc8+

My cleanest game for today, with some help by my opponent.

1-0

**Joseph Levine (2179) –
David Shahinyan (2578) [B07]**
Washington President's Cup
Chess.com, (R2) February 6, 2021
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6

2...e5 3.Nf3 (Or 3.dxe5 dxe5 4.Qxd8+ Kxd8 5.Bc4 Be6 6.Bxe6 fxe6 7.Be3 Nf6 8.f3 Nbd7 9.Nd2 Bc5 10.Bxc5 Nxc5 11.Nc4 Ncd7 12.Nh3 Ke7 13.Nf2± and Black must find something to do about the unpleasant threat of Nd3. White has benefited from the flexibility to develop the b1-knight to d2 and c4.) 3...exd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 (5.f3!?) 5...Be7 6.Bf4 0-0 7.Qd2 Nc6 8.0-0-0 Nxd4 9.Qxd4 Be6 10.f3±

3.Nc3 e5 4.dxe5

If you're familiar with the Philidor, there's a direct transposition into the main lines. 4.Nf3 Nbd7 5.Bc4 Be7 6.0-0 0-0 7.a4 c6, for example.

4...dxe5 5.Qxd8+ Kxd8



Position after 5...Kxd8

6.Bg5

6.Bc4 Be6 (6...Ke8 7.Nf3 Bd6 8.Bg5 Nbd7 9.0-0-0 a6 10.a4 h6 11.Bh4 Kf8± is another way to go, with lots of alternatives along the route, but even here there's plenty of play left for everybody.) 7.Bxe6 fxe6 8.f3 Bd6 9.Be3 Ke7 10.0-0-0 Nc6 11.Nge2. Sure, Black has doubled isolated e-pawns, but they're devilishly difficult to attack. Black's position is a hard rock to break.

6...Be6 7.Nf3?!

7.0-0-0+ intending 8.f4 against, well, almost any rational reply, looks like a better chance for advantage.

7...Bd6 8.0-0-0 Nbd7 9.Bb5 Kc8 10.Rd2
10.Bxf6 Nxf6 11.Ng5 is probably equal.

10...a6

10...Bb4 is slightly uncomfortable to meet.

11.Bxd7+ Nxd7 12.a3

12.Be3 keeps an eye on b6, in case a knight happens to transit through there.

12...b5

12...Nb6!?

13.Rhd1 Kb7

13...Nb6 again. I'd probably call this a small edge for Black, due to the excellent semi-outpost on c4 and the bishop-pair. White's doubled d-file rooks and d5-square offer some hope, though. Black's king requires only one move to reach a reasonable safe haven.

14.Be3 f6 15.Nd5 Nc5?

15...Rhd8. Black is fine.

16.Nxc7! Nb3+ 17.cxb3 Bxc7 18.Rd3 a5 19.Kb1 Rhc8

19...Rhd8±

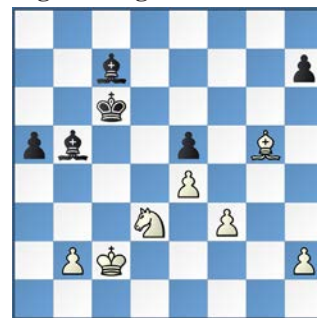
20.Ne1 Bd8?

20...a4±

21.Rd6! Bxb3 22.Rd7+ Bc7 23.Rc1 Bc4 24.a4 Ra6 25.Rxg7 Rc6 26.axb5 Bxb5 27.Rxc6

27.Rxh7?!±

27...Bxc6 28.f3 Rd8 29.Kc2 Rd7 30.Rxd7 Bxd7 31.Nd3 Bb5 32.g4 Kc6 33.g5 fxg5 34.Bxg5



Position after 34.Bxg5

34...Bxd3+?!

Gives up the bishop-pair unnecessarily. 34...Kd7, using the bishops to prevent inroads on the queenside while bringing the king to the side where White has an extra pawn, should hold.

35.Kxd3 Kb5 36.b3 Bd6 37.Bd2 Bb4?

Black's entire exchanging strategy in this endgame is erroneous. 37...Bc7, while perhaps not holding out forever, at least has the benefit of not losing immediately.

38.Bxb4 Kxb4 39.f4!

Of course. White wins.

39...exf4 40.e5 f3 41.e6 f2 42.Ke2

1-0

Meet Xuhao He

By Breck Haining

The October 2019 edition of *Northwest Chess* had two articles that I really enjoyed. Both featured people who are contributing to our chess community. One article was by Sarah McCoy. The article was entitled: “Meet Chad Lykins: A Champion of Scholastic Chess.” The other was by Carol Kleist on Josh Sinanan. Carol began her article, “If you play chess in the Northwest you must have heard the name Josh Sinanan.” As I read these stories I thought: “What a great idea! I’d like to read more articles on people who contribute to our chess community.” My wife, who likes to write in her spare time, encouraged me to try my hand at writing. I thought for a while regarding whom I should write about, and the person who came to mind was Xuhao He. I had intended to write my article early in 2020, but 2020 happened and I had to revise plans. I regret that it is now near the end of 2020 and I am just getting to the article I had intended to write at the start of the year.

In homage to Sarah’s article

I am entitling this article “Meet Xuhao He.” I would like to begin my article in the same way that Carol began her article, but I’m not certain that I can say Xuhao is as well-known as Josh. What I can say is if you play chess in the Northwest you should have heard the name Xuhao He, and not simply as Anthony He’s father. For the longest time I only knew Xuhao as Anthony’s dad. In years past I used to play in an occasional tournament. I’d see Xuhao from time to time when he came by to drop Anthony off or pick him up. Once in a while I’d chat with him about this or that. He seemed much like any parent whose child was active in a sport.

What initially made him stand out to me was that he arranged for the Washington State Championship tournament to be played in one of Microsoft’s facilities. The facilities were quite nice. Four sections of players could be comfortably seated in the playing room. Xuhao saw a need and stepped in to fill it. Xuhao arranged for the same facilities to be used for the State Championship tournament several years in a row. What really caught my attention, however, was his work in setting up the Pacific Northwest Chess Center (PNWCC) and his tireless efforts to keep the center going.

chess should be played. This is one of the tremendous benefits of having a place like the PNWCC—the opportunity to play against great chess players and see how they play.

Back in 2015 my son was invited to participate in the 30th US Chess School training camp, which was being held in Seattle that year. The US Chess School was established in 2006 to provide many of “the nation’s most talented young chess players with top-level training from some of the best coaches in the country.” During the camp IM Greg Shahade asked whether the players thought the lack

of high-level competition in the area might be a hindrance toward their development. To my surprise the player consensus, or at least the consensus of those who were more vocal, was no, the lack of high-level competition was not a problem. I didn’t agree, but didn’t say anything, as it didn’t seem to be my place to disagree, since the question was posed to the players, not to observers. Over the years I spoke

with a number of parents who felt we really needed high level competition here in the Pacific Northwest, but no one did anything, perhaps because the task and expense was too daunting.

At PNWCC tournaments our most talented players can see what they have been missing and learn from their experiences. The excitement that high-level competition brings breathes life into a sport. Players become inspired to improve. Excellence drives excellence. As the nation and world recover from COVID-19 I do so hope to see chess programs resume and I very much hope

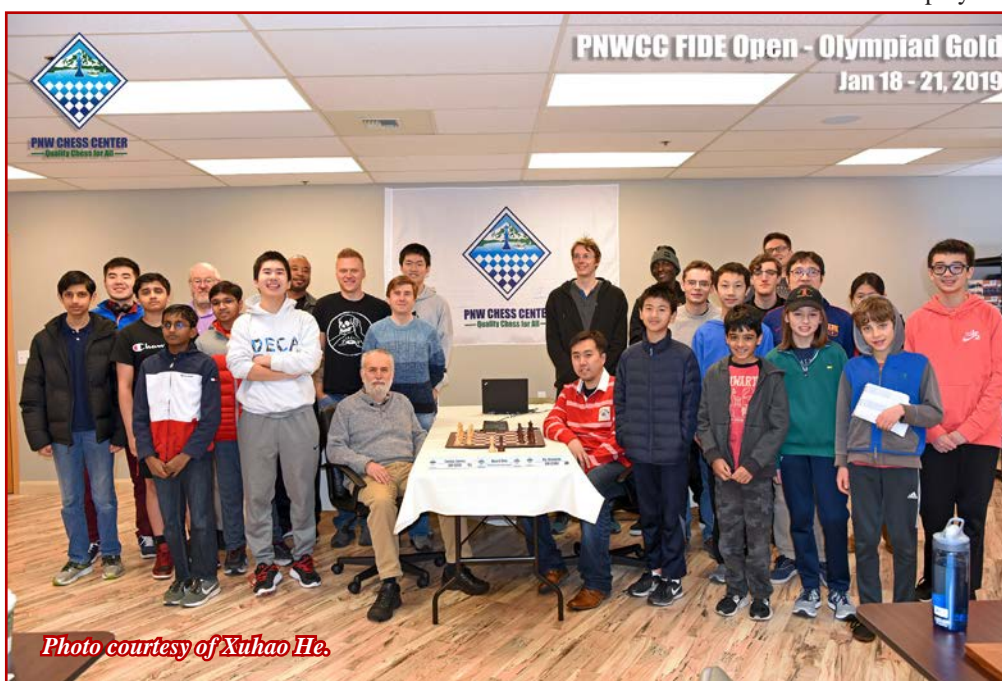


Photo courtesy of Xuhao He.

Before COVID-19 forced chess tournaments online, the PNWCC offered local players a golden opportunity to play over-the-board games with some of the best players in the world. The online tournaments continue to provide up-and-coming local players real possibilities of facing top talent. My son, a National Master, got to play against Bu Xiangzhi in a PNWCC tournament in January 2019. GM Bu had a US Chess rating of 2780 at the time. It will come as no surprise when I tell you that GM Bu beat my son soundly in short order. Even so, my son thoroughly enjoyed the game. He told me he got to see chess played the way

to see the PNWCC reopen their doors to over-the-board play. I know it will be tough. We shouldn't expect people like Xuhao to do everything on their own. I would encourage all chess players and readers of *Northwest Chess* to think about how we can help to rebuild our chess centers and help people like Xuhao, who are finding ways to build, improve, and sustain our chess community. With that being said, let's meet Xuhao He:

[Breck:] As I recall, you once told me you were not a chess player. This surprised me, because I thought Anthony must have learned early on from you how to play chess, and the times I talked with you about a game you seemed to have a good understanding of the board. When did you learn to play chess? Did you ever play chess when you were growing up?

[Xuhao:] I knew absolutely nothing about how to play chess before Anthony started playing. China's first women's world champion GM Xie Jun helped make chess popular/known to Chinese people in 1991. But even then I only knew the names of some of the top players such as Karpov and Kasparov and the women's world champion GM Maia Chiburdanidze that Xie Jun challenged as they were mentioned time after time in newspapers and on radio stations. I learned to play chess when Anthony picked it up after some summer camp before kindergarten. I learned the rules and watched some of the DVD's that C4L founder NM Elliot Neff made. I scored quite a few victories against five-year-old Anthony by scholar's mate and that is probably some of the few won games I still remember. I later on read some chess books, such as Jeremy Silman's How to Reassess your Chess and Silman's Complete Endgame Course, and I sat in Anthony's private lessons with GM Emil Anka a lot for a few years, which helped me develop my understanding of the game. But still, I am not a chess player, and I will not be offended if people say I know nothing about chess, because they are absolutely right!

[Breck:] I see you attended Tsinghua University in Beijing and the University of Minnesota. My wife tells me Tsinghua University is like the MIT of China. Did you grow up in Beijing or did you relocate to Beijing to attend college? I presume you studied in the Information Science and Technology department. Did you major in Computer Science there? I presume you graduated with a bachelor's degree from Tsinghua University and then went to University of Minnesota for



Xuhao He. Photo credit: Xuhao He.

graduate school, correct?

[Xuhao:] I grew up in Guangdong, a southern province adjacent to Hong Kong. I went to Beijing for college. I studied Electrical Engineering (EE). I went to UMN in 1999 for my graduate program in EE but got interested in computer science later.

[Breck:] What are some of your memories from Tsinghua University and life in Beijing? What attracted you to the University of Minnesota? Cray computers, possibly? Which campus in Minnesota did you attend? How did life in Minnesota compare with life in Beijing? Were your graduate studies in computer science? Which field? AI?

[Xuhao:] Life in Tsinghua and Beijing was pure college life. I lived in the dorm and went back home to Guangdong after each semester. My memories of Tsinghua are mainly about study and soccer. I had some schoolmates and friends who were attending UMN and with their help got a scholarship from UMN and moved to the US. I studied at the Twin Cities campus, mostly in Minneapolis. Life in Minnesota is very memorable—for the first time, I needed to pay rent and cook by myself. Everything was on my own, but I got the chances to play soccer on a grass field! It was like a dream! I studied data learning stuff, but back then it was not really a popular field and I was more interested

in various Internet technologies, such as systems engineering and networking.

[Breck:] Where did you meet your wife?

[Xuhao:] We met on the Tsinghua campus.

[Breck:] When did Anthony become interested in chess? Were you primarily the one who took Anthony to tournaments and chess lessons?

[Xuhao:] In the summer of 2010 after Pre-K, we sent Anthony to a few summer camps. He learned how to play chess at one of the camps and started bothering me to play with him game after game and day after day. I am the one that took Anthony to his chess lessons and most of the local chess tournaments, even though many times I dropped him off at the Seattle Chess Club (SCC), and then went to play soccer or go snowboarding :) For national or international tournaments, usually my wife accompanied us.

[Breck:] I know you work for Microsoft. Are there general things you can say about your work? I don't want to put you on the spot by asking anything too specific about your work.

[Xuhao:] My career in Microsoft was mostly cloud services focused, starting with the 2001 Office.net (which failed unfortunately) era to the Office 365 and

now Azure. I witnessed and participated in the boom of Microsoft cloud services, especially the Office 365 part.

[Breck:] I think people generally know that you were one of the founders of the PNWCC. How did the idea come together? How do you see the PNWCC continuing after the pandemic?

[Xuhao:] The idea started back in 2018 with the simple goal to improve the playing conditions (venues) and level of chess in Seattle. I met many chess parents in SCC and some of them, including Dr. Lisa Levine (NM Joseph Levin's mom), Jenny Cui (NM Jason Yu's mom) and Vijay Sankaran (Advaith's dad) shared the same idea and goals. We started working together and acted fast to start the PNWCC. As you know, we had to sublease our premise in Kirkland due to the pandemic. We might lease a new place on the East Side after it's over. We will discuss this with other board members.

[Breck:] The PNWCC has introduced several novel ideas to the chess community here, such as arena chess and jackpot chess. I have learned what arena chess is and think this works well online. I don't know what jackpot chess is but am under the impression this has drawn a number of high-level players to play in PNWCC tournaments. Could you briefly explain what jackpot chess is? [Arena chess tournaments do not have rounds, rather they run for a set period of time. Players are paired almost immediately after their games conclude with whoever is available at the moment until the tournament ends.]

[Xuhao:] Arena chess is not a new idea developed by the PNWCC. Jackpot chess is basically a blitz tournament played online which awards prizes based on the player's total points. Point-based prize systems are not an invention of the PNWCC either, but the term "Jackpot Blitz" might be an original one created by the PNWCC. In traditional chess events where prizes are based on places it is quite common to see top boards agree to quick draws in the last round to secure a share of prizes. In Jackpot Blitz a full point more can mean much higher prizes, sometimes double. We also have the concept of "hitting a jackpot" when a player wins all his games with perfect scores, winning a hefty \$1,000 prize. We had 20 Jackpot Blitz tournaments in 2020 and the best score was 10.5 by Russian GM Vladimir Fedoseev in Jackpot 20, in which former world champion GM Vladimir Kramnik also played. GM Fedoseev wrote an article on ChessBase

about this: <https://en.chessbase.com/post/fedoseev-wins-jackpot-blitz-tournament>.

[Breck:] I saw the PNWCC recently announced a parent-sponsored tournament. Could you tell me more about this?

[Xuhao:] Yes, definitely. The PNWCC is basically a club founded by chess parents. I always say what the PNWCC did, you (chess parents) can also do, and do even better! I, myself, am not a chess player and basically know little about chess, yet my colleagues and I put some interesting ideas into action and made some great events, though not all of our ideas were received well by chess players and their parents. We thought, "Why not have the chess parents be more proactive and involved, and invite them to create events that meet their chess kids' development needs?" This way, they can also look at chess from an organizer's perspective and contribute more! We had our first PDT (Parents Driven Tournament) on December 19. Believe it or not, from idea to the event being rated only took one week, and the event was sold out (40/40)!

Two chess moms, one from California and the other from Florida, ran the whole event from beginning to end, with assistance from the PNWCC. Now they are on their own and are working on the second tournament to be played on January 2, 2021! I wish more parents can join the effort, bring their ideas, and put them into action!

[Breck:] Back in January 2019 you played in a kids vs. parents tournament and faced some of our up and coming talent. What struck you about this experience?

[Xuhao:] For the first time by firsthand experience I got to know how hard chess is! I forgot to press my clock after making my moves and my teenage opponents started holding their laughs. I felt they had some kind of threat on the board from the hidden smiles on their faces and the spectators, but I couldn't see any!

[Breck:] What do you think would help the chess community? What is something you hope to see change?

[Xuhao:] I feel young players, and sometimes parents, are overly driven by ratings and results, rather than on improvement and the pure joy of this sport, which can lead to irrational decisions. The formula to improve in chess is quite simple, at least from my own observation, which is: work, play, work, play, work,

play... Worrying about results and ratings too much will cause young players to quit before they realize their full potential. Encouraging our players to enjoy the game truly, and to work hard to improve, is help needed from our chess community.

[Breck:] Thank you, Xuhao! I appreciate the work you have been doing to build a stronger chess community in this area!

Epilogue: A struggle Xuhao once told me about is that players often wait for others to register for a tournament first, to see whether an attractive field develops, before jumping in, which makes it very hard to plan. Xuhao pointed out that delaying registration hurts the events and eventually hurts the players themselves. I know this is not unique to the PNWCC and I also understand that people have reasons for not signing up right away. I know top players will sometimes register late so as not to give opponents advance notice they will be playing in the tournament, which would allow opponents more time to prepare for games against them. I know that students sometimes do not know whether they will have important assignments completed in time to be able to play in a tournament; that they do not want to register only to have to drop out if more time is needed to complete a project. I know employees don't always know whether they will be available to play, but let's try to find a balance. If you can register early, help organizers out by registering early.

I hope in writing this I'm not coming across as preachy. This is not my intent, rather my desire is to encourage people to find ways to help our chess community grow and improve. When over-the-board games resume I would like to help out at tournaments for kids. I have more chess-playing experience than Xuhao, but don't have as much confidence as he has to try to help out at higher-level tournaments, at least not yet.

I've thought I might write articles for *Northwest Chess*. I don't have the knowledge to be able to write insightful analyses on games, but I can write book reviews, movie reviews, and articles on people who are making our chess community better. Perhaps you know of someone contributing to our community whom you would like to recognize. Please share your story! Possibly your plate is full; you can't add anything to what you already do. That's okay. I won't be judgmental. My wish is simply to encourage those who are able to find ways to build up our community.

Washington State High School Individual 2021

By Jacob Mayer

The 2021 Washington State High School Individual Championship took place January 22-23 online via Chess.com and attracted 67 players in two sections. The tournament was organized by Washington Chess Federation, in coordination between Chief Organizer: WCF President Josh Sinanan and Tournament Director: WCF Scholastic Coordinator Jacob Mayer.

Top players taking part in the star-studded Championship section included FIDE Master Anthony He (Tesla STEM HS), and US Chess Experts Daniel Shubin (Eastside Prep) and Aaryan Deshpande (Interlake HS), and Women's FIDE Master Anne-Marie Velea (Eastlake HS).

In the Championship Section: Congratulations to FM Anthony He and Dominic Colombo (Gig Harbor HS), the 2021 Washington State High School Co-Champions! They will have a playoff game at a later date to determine the Washington State representative for the Denker Tournament of High School Champions, which will be held at the US Open in early August. Finishing in third/fourth place were Interlake's Pranav K. Anoop and Eddie Chang, each with 4.0/5 points. Lakeside freshman Sophie Szeto and Eastside Prep. sophomore Daniel Shubin tied for fifth/sixth with 3.5/5 points.

The Premier section (U1500) came down to a round five matchup between Toby Black (Lakeside School) and Ethan Wang (Skyline HS). Going into the double-round Ethan held a one-point lead, but after Toby won the first game, it all came down to one game. In a well-played Rook endgame, Ethan Wang converted the full point and would go on to win

the Premier with 9.0/10! Toby Black and Andrew Nakamoto (Garfield High) finished tied for second with 8.0/10, with Andrew dropping only two games to the first place finisher Ethan Wang. Seattle Prep Senior Oliver Lane finished in clear fourth place with 7.5/10, half-a-point ahead of Garfield's Logan Teh, at 7.0/10 points.

Team Prizes were awarded to Garfield High School (first place, 28 points), Interlake High School (second place, 27.5 points), and Lakeside School (third place, 23.5 points). Congratulations to the winners!

2021 Washington Junior Open And Reserve

By Jacob Mayer

The 2021 Washington Junior Open and Reserve Chess Tournament took place on MLK Monday, January 18 online via Chess.com and attracted over 180 players in six sections. The tournament was organized by Washington Chess Federation and directed by WCF Scholastic Coordinator Jacob Mayer, with assistance from Derek Zhang.

Congratulations to the following players for their winning performances:

K-3 U800: first place (Perfect Score of 5.0/5) – Kanav Shah.

K-3 Open: first place (Perfect Score of 5.0/5) – Lucas Liu

4-8 U900: first place (Perfect Score of 5.0/5) – Minh Moriguchi

4-8 Open: first place (Perfect Score of 5.0/5) – Ethan Chung

K-12 U1600: first place (Perfect Score of 4.0/4) – Darsh Verma

K-12 Open: first place TIE (Perfect Scores of 4.0/4) – Eddie Chang and Brian

Lee! Eddie Chang won the Blitz Playoff and wins a seed into the 2021 Premier and 2022 Washington Junior Closed.

Congratulations to all our players, this may be the largest online scholastic tournament organized by the WCF!

Membership/ Subscription #6000

By Eric Holcomb

Northwest Chess has assigned membership/subscription numbers dating back decades, at least to the time when the late Russell Miller was business manager.

On March 3, 2021, subscriber number 6000 was assigned to junior chess player David Trochesset, who won a membership prize awarded by the Washington Chess Federation based on the results of the Presidential Scholastic tournament held on February 21, 2021. WCF President Josh Sinanan remarked, "6000 is indeed a milestone!" David received an extra year of membership as a prize.

The numbering system includes all participating states (if the state membership either includes a *NWC* subscription or is an additional family member), plus subscriptions from other states, clubs and organizations, libraries, etc.

Only 20 of the first 1,000 numbers are still in use, with the lowest number (33) belonging to U.S. Chess. Statistics for the remaining 1,000-number blocks are as follows, excluding anyone with an expiration date earlier than this year: 1001-2000 (36 in use), 2001-3000 (80 in use), 3001-4000 (49 in use), 4001-5000 (117 in use), 5001-6003 (449 in use). Total of 751 (12.5%) in use.

There are a few cases, until recent years, where an additional family member was assigned the same number, but with an "F" suffix. Otherwise, number 6000 would have been reached a little sooner.

If you have one of these duplicate numbers, you can request to have a new number assigned by emailing info@nwchess.com.

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1966 US Open

By Daniel Shubin

There are over a dozen popular chess tournaments held yearly in Washington, each with hundreds of participants. However, I always wondered: has there ever been a national, or even an international level chess tournament in Seattle? After a bit of research, I discovered that the answer to my question was yes, there had been a nationwide chess tournament in the Evergreen State—the 1966 US Open.

The US Open is a prestigious event that started as early as 1900 and recent winners include strong grandmasters such as Alexander Shabalov, Aleksandr Lenderman, Timur Gareyev, and Illia Nyzhnyk. Furthermore, after looking at even earlier editions of this tournament, I discovered that other winners included the world-famous Judit Polgár, Alex Yermolinsky, Yasser Seirawan, and even Bobby Fischer. The 1966 event was no different and included players such as Edward Formanek, Duncan Suttles, Robert Byrne, and even Pal Benko.

The tournament was held at the Seattle Center, the site of the 1962 World's Fair, between Sunday August 14 and Friday August 26, and there were no days off. Each day there was to be one round played, which resulted in a grand total of 13 games played at a time control of 50 moves in 150 minutes followed by 20 moves per hour. In addition to this format, apparently common in the past, after five hours of play the game would be adjourned and would be finished the next day at 10 AM (all rounds were scheduled in the evening at 7:00 PM).

Over two hundred people participated in this tournament (making it, at the time, the third-largest US Open), and the prize fund reflected that amount: The total prize fund was over \$4,100 (these days, due to inflation, that is worth around \$33,100). The first-place prize included a championship trophy, bragging rights, and over \$800. Other prizes included \$200 for best woman, a book for the first junior, and other class prizes.

This tournament was not only a popular event for people out of state, but also attracted 96 Washingtonians, making it the US Open with the largest number of people from a single state at the time. James McCormick did a nice job representing the Northwest, and

even though he started off with 3.5/6 he was able to finish off with an impressive 5.5/7 allowing him to finish tied for tenth place. Local favorite Viktors Pupols was also able to do a nice job, playing steady, sharp chess throughout the tournament to also finish tied for tenth place. The fight for the top places was no different and featured tough competitive chess.

For eight rounds, apart from Cleghorn's upset against Benko in round four, the top-seeded players were disposing of their opponents with ease. Byrne, Lombardy, Saily, and Bisguier were all tied for first place with 7.0/8 points. However, the next round allowed Byrne to move half a point ahead of his opponents by winning against Lombardy. This cushion allowed Byrne to confidently draw against Benko in round ten and not worry that Saily and Bisguier could catch up to him.

After ten rounds, despite there being a three-way tie at first place, Byrne was the clear favorite as, unlike his competitors who had not yet played Benko, he had already faced most of the top-rated players. Byrne was correctly considered the favorite and he finished the tournament with two wins and a quick draw to complete the tournament with an impressive 11.0/13.

Benko, however, not to be outdone, beat all his next three opponents and finished the tournament with 11.0/13 points to tie for first place.

This tournament not only featured strong grandmasters, large prizes, and bold predictions, but also exciting chess games.

This is Peter Cleghorn's upset against Pal Benko. It featured a time scramble, a missed win, surprising blunders, and is an interesting game to explore.

**Peter Cleghorn –
Pal Benko [A02]**

67th US Open
Seattle, WA (R4), August 17, 1966
[Daniel Shubin]

1.f4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0 5.0-0 c5 6.d3 d5

Bird's Opening with ...d5. This is really a reversed Leningrad Dutch Defense.

7.Nc3 d4 8.Na4 Nfd7 9.c4 a6!?

Better might have been 9...Na6 10.Bd2 Rb8 11.Qc2 (11.e4 dxe3 12.Bxe3 b5 13.cxb5 Rxb5) 11...Nf6 12.a3 Qc7 13.Rab1 Ng4 14.Ng5 Rd8=.

10.Ng5



Position after 10.Ng5

10...Ra7 11.Ne4 Qc7 12.f5

12.Bd2!? Develop before you attack. This way White can bring in the rook if it is ever needed.

12...b5 13.Bf4 Ne5

13...Be5 14.cxb5 axb5 15.Naxc5 Nxc5 16.Rc1 Bxf4 17.gxf4 Nba6 18.b4 Bxf5 19.Nxc5 Nxc5 20.Rxc5 Qd6

14.fxg6 bxa4

14...hxg6 15.cxb5 axb5 16.Naxc5 Nbd7

15.Bxe5 Qxe5 16.gxf7+ Rxf7 17.Rxf7 Kxf7



Position after 17...Kxf7

Black is up a bishop for a pawn. However, the king is unsafe, and White is ready to pounce on that.

18.Qxa4 Bf5

18...Bb7 Δ19.Rf1+ Bf6 20.Qa5 Nd7 21.Qd8≡

19.Rf1 Bf6 20.Qa5

20.b4 cxb4 21.Nxf6 exf6 22.Qxb4 Nd7

23.Rf4 Rc7 24.Bd5+ Ke8

20...Nd7 21.Qd8 Kg7 22.Rf4 e6-+
23.Qc8 Qc7

23...Be7 24.Bf3 Nf8 25.Bh1. White is out of moves while Black slowly improves.

24.Qe8



Position after 24.Qe8

24...Ne5??

24...Qb6 25.Qh5 Bg6 26.Qg4 h5 27.Qh3 Be7

25.Nxf6 Kxf6 26.Qh8+ Kg6 27.Be4

27.Qg8+ Qg7 28.Qc8 attacking all the weak pawns, and Black cannot defend them without risking a repetition.

27...Qg7 28.Qe8+ Kg5 29.Qc8 Nd7 30.Qc6 Qg6 31.Qd6 h5 32.Bc6 Nf6??

32...Qf7 33.b4 cxb4 (33...Qf8 34.bxc5 Qxd6 35.cxd6=) 34.Qxd4

33.Qxc5 Rc7??

Two mistakes in a row from Benko??

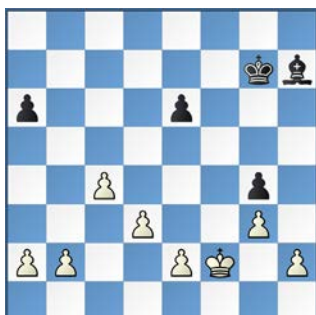
34.Rxd4

34.e4 dxe3 35.Qxe3 Rxc6 (35...Kh6 36.Rg4+±) 36.Re4# (36.Rh4#; 36.Rd4#)

34...Kh6 35.Qf8+ Rg7 36.Bf3

36.Rf4 with the idea of e4!

36...Qg5 37.Kf2 Ng4+ 38.Bxg4 hxg4 39.Rd7 Bh7 40.Qxg7+ Qxg7 41.Rxg7 Kxg7



Position after 41...Kxg7

Endgame with four pawns for a bishop, with the correct technique, should be winning.

42.Ke3 e5 43.d4 Kf6 44.d5 Bg8 45.Kd3

Bh7+ 46.e4 Ke7 47.c5 a5 48.b3

b3, a3, b4.

48.a3 a4. One pawn holds two rule.

48...Bg8 49.Kc4 Bh7 50.Kd3 Kd8 51.a3 Bg6 52.b4 Be8 53.Kc4 axb4 54.axb4 Ba4

54...Bg6 55.b5 Bxe4 56.c6 Bg6 57.Kc5 Be8 58.d6

55.b5 Kc8 56.c6 Bc2 57.Kc5 Bxe4 58.b6

The pawns are unstoppable.

1-0

This is Leroy Jackson's (the best junior) game against strong Senior Master Edward W. Formanek. It featured a beautiful attacking win by Jackson.

Leroy Jackson –
Edward W Formanek [C14]

67th US Open
Seattle, WA (R10), Augustdt 23, 1966
[Daniel Shubin]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3

French Defense.

3...Nf6

Other possible opening lines: 3...Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Ne7 7.Qg4 Qc7 8.Qxg7 Rg8 9.Qxh7 cxd4 10.Ne2 Nbc6 11.Qd3 dxc3 12.Nxc3; 3...dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Nf3 Ngf6 6.Nxf6+ Nxf6 7.Bd3 c5 8.dxc5 Bxc5 9.0-0 0-0.

4.Bg5 Be7 5.e5 Nfd7 6.Bxe7 Qxe7 7.f4 0-0 8.Nf3 c5 9.Bd3

Regular opening preparation.

9...f5!?

Potential weakness if White castles queenside and goes g4...

10.0-0

10.Qd2 Nc6 11.0-0-0 cxd4 12.Nb5± with Nd6 / Nxd4

10...Nc6 11.Nb5 a6 12.Nd6 cxd4 13.Kh1?

Maybe with the idea of going Rg1, g4. Instead, I would think about playing slowly...

13.a3!/? limits opponent's moves: 13...h6 14.Qd2 g5 (14...Nc5 15.b4 Nxd3 16.Qxd3 and pawn on d4 falls) 15.fxg5 hxg5 16.Qxg5+ Qxg5 17.Nxg5↑

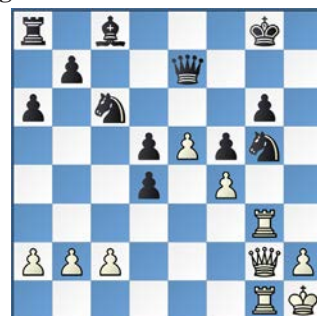
13...Nc5 14.g4? fxg4 15.Bxh7+ Kxh7 16.Ng5+ Kg8 17.Qxg4 g6 18.Rf3 Rf5??

18...Qg7 19.Rh3 Ne4 20.Rh7?? (20.Ngxe4 dxe4 The attack has vanished and Black is just up a piece.) 20...Nf2+

19.Nxf5

19.Rh3 Bd7 20.Rh7?? (20.Nxf5 exf5 21.Qh4 Qg7 22.Nh7∞ and Nf6 coming.) 20...Rxc5 21.fxg5 Kxh7

19...exf5 20.Qg2 Ne6 21.Rg1 Nxg5 22.Rg3



Position after 22.Rg3

22...Qe6??

22...Qh7 23.Rxc5 Ne7 24.Qd2 Be6 25.Qxd4 Kf7 26.b3

23.Rxc5 Ne7 24.Qh3 Bd7 25.Rh5 Rf8 26.Rh7

Black resigned. Might have continued with 26...a5 27.Qh6 Qxe5 28.fxe5 Rf7 29.Rh8#.

1-0

These are the top 15 finishers:

1	Robert Eugene Byrne	11.0
2	Pal Benko	11.0
3	Duncan Suttles	10.0
4	Anthony Saidy	9.5
5	Arthur Bisguier	9.5
6	Peter Cleghorn	9.5
7	Ivars Alvis Dahlberg	9.5
8	Touradj Saidi	9.5
9	Ronald Joseph Gross	9.5
10	William James Lombardy	9.0
11	Edward W. Formanek	9.0
12	Andrew Kalotay	9.0
13	Jerome B. Hanken	9.0
14	Viktors Pupols	9.0
15	James McCormick	9.0

The tournament, which was directed by George Koltanowski, ran smoothly and there were no problems. Congratulations to everyone who played in this wonderful and exciting chess tournament.

The 2021 Russell “Rusty” Miller Memorial Northwest Grand Prix

Murlin Varner, Aggregator

Errata

The wrong final table was used in the print-version of the February issue on pages 30-31. The correct table in a smaller format is shown below.—Editor.

2020 Mike Neeley Memorial Northwest Grand Prix Final Standings

Washington			Other Places			
last	first	pts.	last	first	state	pts.
Masters			Masters			
1 Mahajan	Rushaan	52.0	1 Shahinyan	David	ARM	133.5
2 Levine	David	25.0	2 Lenderman	Aleksandr	NY	119.0
3 Pupols	Viktors	24.5	3 Talukdar	Rohan	CAN	94.5
4 Orlov	Georgi	22.5	4 Raptis	Nick	OR	84.0
5 Kaufman	Ray	19.5	5 Bernadskiy	Vitaliy	UKR	58.5
Experts			Experts			
1 Vijayakumar	Advaith	115.5	1 Vega	Isaac	OR	67.0
2 Whale	Nicholas	110.5	2 Sairam	Pranav	CA	51.0
3 Bell	Harry	73.0	3 Huang	Patrick M	CAN	47.5
4 Shubin	Daniel	66.5	4 Guha	Eshan	NJ	44.0
5 Jiang	Brandon	42.5	5 McConnell	Griffin	CO	25.5
Class A			Class A			
1 Tien	Sophie	129.0	1 Moore	Michael	OR	74.0
2 Razmov	Valentin N	104.0	2 Ingram	Richard	CAN	54.0
3 Qian	Daniel	93.0	3 Bagchi	Sounak	NJ	28.0
4 Chang	Eddie	72.0	4 Pang	Ashley	CA	19.5
5 Chen	Minda	54.5	5	Two tied at		19.0
Class B			Class B			
1 Li	Edward	91.5	1 Fowler	James F	OR	31.0
2 Wang	Felicity	90.5	2 Guo	Yu Han (Veronica)	CAN	30.0
3 Gottumukkala	Ananth	88.5	3 Pai	Kushal	OR	21.0
4 Vemparala	Nikash	87.0	3 Zhao	Maxwell Z	IL	21.0
5 Johar	Mudit	79.5	5 Herr	Griffin G	ID	16.5
Class C			Class C			
1 Li	Emma	141.0	1 Martin	Andrew	CAN	41.0
2 Brown	Northern	107.5	2 Zhu	Florina	NJ	31.5
3 Ramkumar	Aditya	92.0	3 He	Justin	ID	19.5
4 Singh	Saket	81.5	4 Gabunia	Davit	OR	18.0
5 Devadithya	Lavindu	77.5	5	Two Tied at		16.0
Class D and below			Class D and below			
1 Ruff	Lois	150.5	1 Malakar	Saarthak	OR	56.5
2 Kona	Vidip	118.5	2 Hack	Don	CAN	54.5
2 Devadithya	Hiruna	118.5	3 Arul	Sharvesh	AZ	54.0
4 Zhang	Michael	110.0	4 Morris	Brian L	OH	40.0
5 Wong-Godfrey	Emerson P	107.0	4 Li	David	IL	40.0
Overall standings						
1 Ruff	Lois	150.5	1 Shahinyan	David	ARM	133.5
2 Li	Emma	141.0	2 Lenderman	Aleksandr	NY	119.0
3 Tien	Sophie	129.0	3 Talukdar	Rohan	CAN	94.5
4 Kona	Vidip	118.5	4 Raptis	Nick	OR	84.0
4 Devadithya	Hiruna	118.5	5 Moore	Michael	OR	74.0
6 Vijayakumar	Advaith	115.5	6 Vega	Isaac	OR	67.0
7 Whale	Nicholas	110.5	7 Bernadskiy	Vitaliy	UKR	58.5
8 Zhang	Michael	110.0	8 Tarjan	James	OR	58.0
9 Brown	Northern	107.5	9 Malakar	Saarthak	OR	56.5
10 Wong-Godfrey	Emerson P	107.0	10 Hack	Don	CAN	54.5
11 Razmov	Valentin N	104.0	11 Ingram	Richard	CAN	54.0
12 Qian	Daniel	93.0	12 Arul	Sharvesh	AZ	54.0
13 Ramkumar	Aditya	92.0	13 Sairam	Pranav	CA	51.0
14 Li	Edward	91.5	14 Huang	Patrick M	CAN	47.5
4 Zhang	Michelle	91.5	15 Aleksandrov	Aleksej	BLR	46.0

As you probably noticed over the past two issues, long time *Northwest Chess* supporter Rusty Miller passed away suddenly at the end of 2020. During his roughly 60 years associated with the magazine he held just about every job the magazine had, some more than once. Among the many ideas he brought to our publication was the idea for a Northwest Chess Memorial Grand Prix. His idea was to recognize and reward players from all classes, not just the top-rated players as is done at the US Chess level. The system was set up to award every player point based on the player’s score, with a bonus for completing the schedule without a forfeit or withdrawal. Awards were increased for players supporting the premier events, those with the highest guaranteed prize fund. This system continues to this day, over 25 years later.

Every player receives the points earned in the event, including byes and half-point byes, and a two-point bonus for sticking it out to the end. Then, if the event has a guaranteed prize fund of \$500 or more (\$1000 if based on a number of entrants), a multiplier is applied to that total. In the three events included so far in 2021, The Seattle City Championship (\$1000, based on...) and the Presidents’ Cup (\$1200 based on...), each had a multiplier of two. Therefore, if you scored 3.5 in one of these events, you received that amount, plus the two points for completing your schedule and then it was multiplied by two, giving a final score of 11. The Seattle Chess Club (SCC) Quads did not have a prize fund that qualifies, so points earned there were not multiplied. (In a quad, you can earn from two to five points if you play all three games.) At \$1,000 guaranteed, the multiplier is 3x. At \$2,000, it goes up to 4x, followed by 5x at \$5,000+ and 6x at 10,000+. My chart even has a 7x at \$20,000+, but we’ve never used that (yet). I keep hoping to win the Powerball so I can sponsor THAT event.

Upcoming events, all online, include the SCC Quads (March 7, April 4 and May 8), and the SCC Tornadoes (March 14, April 25 and May 9). All of those are non-multiplier events, and you can sign up at the [Northwest Chess](http://NorthwestChess.com) website. Then, May 29-31 is the Washington Open, with a \$5,000 based on attendance prize fund. This has a 4x multiplier. Again, sign up at the [Northwest Chess](http://NorthwestChess.com) website.

Normally, the Grand Prix uses over the board (OTB) ratings from US Chess to divide players into classes. Since we have been playing only online for about a year, those ratings are a bit outdated. Therefore, for 2021, I will be using the US Chess online regular ratings for class determination. These ratings are published monthly just as all other US Chess ratings and become official for the following month about the third Friday of every month. Should we get back to OTB play before the end of the year, I would at that time use the higher of the two systems, because I always need more work.

Since we only have four events in the books so far, I have not used my usual format for the standings chart. This month, I present a chart showing the points of everybody who has played in a GP event thus far. With only a Tornado and Quads during March, next month might also be in this format, unless a lot more of you join in on the fun. Please do.

2021 Russell "Rusty" Miller Memorial Northwest Grand Prix Standings

Washington				Other Places						
last	first	rating	pts.	last	first	state	rating	pts.		
1	Cheng	Selina	830	19.0	1	Mitrabha	Guha	IND	2528	26.0
2	Ehrenberg	Joshua B	880	18.0	2	Vasey	Daniel	OR	1503	25.0
3	Kamel	Yaseen	890	16.0	3	Lenderman	Aleksandr	NY	2689	23.0
3	Ruff	Lois A	872	16.0	3	Bernadskiy	Vitaliy	UKR	2641	23.0
5	Cheng	Edward	1381	14.0	5	Sharikov	Alexander	RUS	2281	22.0
5	Joshi	Atharva	1376	14.0	6	Talukdar	Rohan	CAN	2402	16.0
7	Takayoshi	Evan R	1446	12.0	7	Ingram	Richard	CAN	1768	15.0
7	Zhang	Michelle	1248	12.0	8	Wei	Brian	OR	1496	13.0
9	Smith	Catherine	1476	11.0	9	Yu	Jiangwei	CA	2287	11.0
9	Razmov	Gabriel	1154	11.0	9	Guha	Eshan	NJ	2144	11.0
11	Vijayakumar	Advaith	1999	10.0	9	Kypriotakis	Kyriakos	OR	1432	11.0
11	Razmov	Valentin N	1944	10.0	12	He	Justin S	TX	1446	8.0
11	Shen	Lixing	1194	10.0	13	Shahinyan	David	ARM	2546	3.0
11	Vo	Dylan K	1170	10.0						
11	Ellner	Adam	1164	10.0						
11	Blachman	Justin	1144	10.0						
11	Verma	Darsh	1058	10.0						
11	Borate	Neel	854	10.0						
11	Carman	Leif J	790	10.0						
11	Dillon	Rohan	769	10.0						
21	Levine	Joseph	2139	9.0						
21	Willy	Stephen	1460	9.0						
21	Wong-Godfrey	Emerson P	1253	9.0						
21	Ejsing	Simon K	1232	9.0						
21	Wang	Daniel	1197	9.0						
21	Fong	Byron	970	9.0						
21	Zhang	Michael	924	9.0						
28	Ackerman	Ryan	1908	8.0						
28	Ramkumar	Aditya	1641	8.0						
28	Vemparala	Nikash	1641	8.0						
28	Mathur	Aashi	1058	8.0						
28	Meiyalagan	Ruban S	1006	8.0						
28	Kang	Ayaan	859	8.0						
28	Ejsing	Oscar K	552	8.0						
28	Varthakavi	Sreecharan	520	8.0						
28	Ying	Zhida	474	8.0						
37	Bell	Harry	1891	7.0						
37	Lu	Yiding	1694	7.0						
37	Devadithya	Hiruna	1219	7.0						
40	Nicoski	Aaron M	1745	6.0						
40	Sood	Akul	623	6.0						
40	Perez	Oswaldo	366	6.0						
40	Reddy	Ira	123	6.0						
44	Hawkins	Holden	130	5.0						
45	Weller	Stephen F	1283	4.0						
45	Ejsing	Konrad K	100	4.0						
47	Selsky	John	690	3.0						



*Murlin Yamer
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