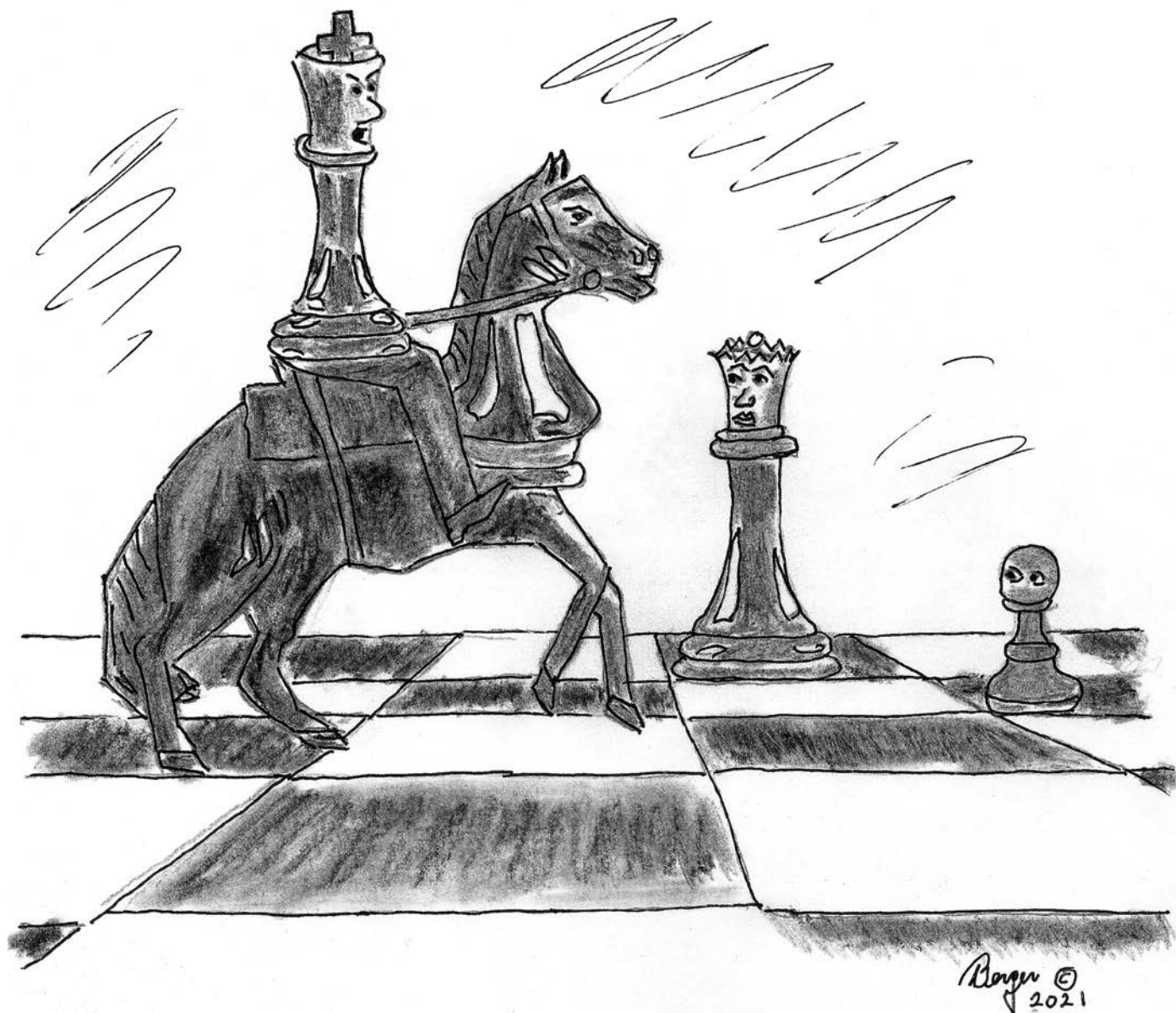




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**"THE ENEMY HAS BREACHED THE 6TH RANK!
I'M OUTTA HERE!"**

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*PNWCC Friday Night Quads at PNWCC June 4, 2021.
 L-R: Eddie Chang, Ignacio Perez. Photo credit: Xuhao He.*



Business Manager To Retire

Eric Holcomb

It may seem hard to believe, but I started as *Northwest Chess* Business Manager in January 2003, and as webmaster six months later in July 2003. This is my 19th year of service, and as I approach 62 years old, it's time to retire! I may stay on for a 20th year to assist with the website, including adding more old magazine scans, but it's time to recruit a new business manager, starting in 2022.

When I started in 2003, things were considerably simpler than they are today. Almost all state memberships (Washington and Oregon at the time) were paid via check, so the most time-consuming part was simply filling out bank deposit slips and recording the memberships in a database. Fred Kleist had started as magazine editor in late

2002 and was responsible for getting "camera ready" copy to the publisher. I just needed to supply the mailing list and pay for printing and mailing by check.

Today things are more complicated. Memberships can still be paid by check, but more often are paid online, either directly to *NWC*, or via the online registration system used primarily for *WCF* events. Since the online registration database is separate from the membership/subscription database, there is an extra layer of work keeping the membership expiration dates for tournaments up to date.

The magazine is also more complicated, albeit of remarkably high quality, thanks to digital publishing using

PDF files. Since I'm also the webmaster, each new magazine must be summarized and a "teaser" edition posted online, followed about three months later by the full edition. The games from each magazine issue are also posted online in PGN format, with a *ChessBase* viewer available.

Financial recordkeeping has been done primarily using Excel spreadsheets, however, there is now a desire to switch to standardized accounting software. In addition, the membership and tournament databases should be combined, and we are looking at a couple options for doing this. Sales tax recordkeeping is also important—Washington has a complicated tax structure in which the tax rate can be different for each location where members receive their magazines.

So, ideally a new business manager should have experience in wide areas of expertise, including accounting, taxes, printing and publishing, advertising, mailing, and membership management. Website experience is also very desirable. All of this in addition to a knowledge of the local chess scene! (However, a strong chess rating is NOT required, or even desirable!)

Unfortunately, the pay for all this work (plan on at least one hour per day on average) is low, although some negotiation with the *NWC* board and the *WCF* may be possible. You can earn extra pay if you are also able to take on most of the website work, which is also time consuming.

I'll still be around to answer questions, finish the 2021 accounting and taxes, and explain how things have been done, but a new business manager should be prepared to take over on January 3, 2022. With some luck, it's possible we may already have a new membership management system by then.

If you think you might have what it takes for the job, please contact the *Northwest Chess* board. (The easiest way to do this is by emailing info@nwchess.com, and your message will be forwarded.)

Thank you for your consideration of this important position.



*Eric Holcomb on September 2, 2012.
Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.*



Pacific Northwest Chess Center Reopened!

We moved to Redmond, right by Microsoft main campus and across street from the new Aloft/Elements Hotel. Our new address is

[2771 152nd Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98052](https://www.pnwchesscenter.org/)
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- WA State COVID-19 regulations apply.
- Masks required, bring your own pens and score sheets.
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- Tournament dates and details are subject to changes

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- Cost - \$30/month. Purchase on NA Chess Hub (Scan the QR Code on the left)
- Play the first Friday Night Quad of each month for free (\$30 value!).
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- Purchase at <https://www.nachesshub.com/Organizers/Details/A6051987>

Friday Night Over-The-Board Quads

July 2,9,16,23,30



- Starts at 7:00 PM on Friday.
- \$25 entry before Friday and \$30 after. Gold Member 50% off.
- July 2 event is free to gold members. \$30 Prize for quad winners
- Register on NA Chess Hub - <https://www.nachesshub.com/Organizers/Details/A6051987>

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July 17 - 18

6 Round G/75;+10 OTB for USCF 1800+ Players. Play up allowed for gold members

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Registrations



- 9:30 - 13:00 - 16:30 on each day. Two half-point byes available.
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- Gold members can play up with extra fees
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2021 Washington Open

Josh Sinanan

The 2021 Washington Open was held over Memorial Day weekend May 29-31 online via Chess.com for the second consecutive year. A total of 71 chess players from throughout the globe, including parts of Washington, Oregon, Missouri, Canada, India, and Armenia, participated in the six-round Swiss tournament. The event was hosted by Washington Chess Federation, directed by online chess specialist WCF Adult Chess Director Rekha Sagar, and organized by WCF President Josh Sinanan. This year's smaller turnout, down about 50% from 2020, was likely caused by the numerous other competing online chess events. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, many regular Northwest players are apparently opting to wait for the return of over-the-board chess in the coming months as things return to "normal."

This year's field was evenly split between the Open (37 players) and Reserve U1600 (34 players) sections. The Open section featured a celebrity cast of several internationally titled players including perennial US Championship contender GM Aleksandr Lenderman (NY), IM David Shahinyan (ARM), IM Bala Chandra Prasad Dhulipalla (IND), IM Mitrabha Guha (IND), FM Rohan Talukdar (CAN), FM Ryan Porter (WA), FM Ignacio Perez (WA), NM Ojas Kulkarni (IND), and NM Joseph Levine (WA). Three separate side events—the Washington Open Chess960, G/10, and Blitz Championships—rounded out the chess festivities each evening!

A trio of titled players: GM Aleksandr Lenderman (5.0, 2650→2650), a recent graduate of Webster University in St. Louis; IM Mitrabha Guha (5.0, 2502→2507) from India; and FM Rohan Talukdar (5.0, 2439→2452) from Canada tied for first place in the Open section, each with an undefeated five points from six games. Lenderman and Talukdar fought to a draw in the third round, while Guha was busy battling local chess hero FM Ignacio Perez (3.0, 2212→2201). Round five proved to be decisive in determining the final standings, as Lenderman drew with Guha while Talukdar vanquished IM David Shahinyan (3.5, 2531→2526) in a wild Philidor Defense! In the final round,

Lenderman and Guha won on demand against Shahinyan and Kulkarni, while Talukdar took a half-point bye to join them in the champions' circle! FM Ryan Porter (4.5, 2346→2345) from Bellevue was the highest-finishing Washington resident in the Open section and won the seed into the 2022 Washington State Championship. Porter's tournament performance rating (TPR) of 2337 claimed the Best NW Region Player prize, ahead of Joseph Levine's (3.5, 2120→2122) TPR of 2180. Three players—Ojas Kulkarni (4.0, unrated→2318) from India, Harry Bell (4.0, 1869→1885) from West Richland, and Isaac "The Penguin" Vega (4.0, 1888→1904) from Beaverton—tied for first U2300/U2100 with four points apiece. Lane Van Weerdhuizen (3.5, 1878→1906) from Issaquah, and Sophie Szeto (3.5, 1646→1684) from Seattle, shared the U1900/U1700 prize with a "plus one" score. Sophie also won the Best Female Player (by TPR) prize with an impressive 2074 performance rating. WCM Mary Kuhner (2.0, 1863→1846) from Seattle won the Second Place Best Female Player prize with a performance rating of 1767. The Best Upset prizes were awarded to youngsters Arjun Yadav (2.0, 1231→1251) from Sammamish and Rishi Lakshminarayanan (3.0, 1595→1623) from Bellevue, who scored astounding 1129 and 478-point respective upset victories!

In the Reserve U1600 section, three up-and-coming Washington juniors—Jamie Zhu (5.0, 1423→1442) from Sammamish, Harishkumar Karthikeyan (5.0, 1441→1448) from Redmond, and Wade "The Doctor" Suess (5.0, 1272→1341) from Seattle—shared first place honors. After a strong 2-0 start, Zhu and Suess faced off in the third round in a complicated Scotch that ended in a drawn R+B vs Q endgame fortress. Karthikeyan lost his third game against underdog Advait Krishnan, but he recovered well and finished the tournament with three straight wins! Meanwhile, Zhu and Suess conceded draws to Ethan Cheng and Edward Cheng (no relation), respectively, in the second half of the tournament to finish on 5-1. Edward Cheng (4.5, 1461→1466) from Seattle claimed first U1500 honors half-a-point back with 4.5 points, storming out to a sensational

4-0 lead in the first four games, only to be stopped by eventual champions Suess and Zhu in the final two rounds. Three rising junior chess stars—Gabriel Razmov (4.0, 1163→1207) from Seattle, Advait Krishnan (4.0, unrated→1527) from Redmond, and Nami Gajcowski (4.0, 673→842) from Bellevue—split first U1300/U1100/U900 honors with four points each. Gajcowski added to her winnings by scooping the Second Place Best Upset prize (771 pts.), Best Female Player prize, and Second Best NW Region Player prize with a TPR of 1523, well above her published online rating of only 608! Selina Cheng (3.0, 827→883) from Seattle won the Best Upset prize by virtue of taking down a 788-point higher-rated player. Shuyi Han (2.5, 1176→1193) from Bellevue claimed the Second Place Best Female Player prize with a TPR of 1378. Advait Krishnan was awarded the Best NW Region Player prize with a TPR of 1538. Congratulations to the winners!

Players in both the Open and Reserve U1600 sections submitted annotated games as part of the Best Annotated Game competition. Washington Open Co-Champions—GM Aleksandr Lenderman, IM Mitrabha Guha, and FM Rohan Talukdar—have each kindly annotated a game for *Northwest Chess* readers to enjoy. In fact, GM Lenderman has graciously annotated all six of his Washington Open games to provide us with a valuable glimpse into the mind of a Grandmaster! We hope that you will find the annotated games which follow to be instructive and entertaining!

**Aleksandr Lenderman (2702) –
David Murray (1924) [E11]**
Washington Open Chess.com
(R1), May 29, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

I cannot believe it's already been exactly a year since last year's Washington Open, which interestingly enough was my first ever serious online event with a slow time control. Back then it felt a bit unusual, but now after having played many such events, I got used to it, and it helped me win the all-important US Chess Championship qualifier round robin last year with a slow time control online. I wasn't able to win last year's event due to

a tough loss to local IM Georgi Orlov, and this year's event is even much stronger, with several strong masters and IMs in it. However, I'll give it my best shot and see if I can do better than last year. My first-round opponent is A-player David Murray. This game went quite smoothly for me after my opponent made some mistakes in the opening. Let's see how it went.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.g3 Bb4+ 5.Bd2 Be7 6.Bg2 0-0 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.Qc2 b6?!



Position after 8...b6

Up to here, it's a theoretical position, but here my opponent made his first inaccuracy. In the closed Catalan, it is usually important for Black to first play ...c6, and only then play ...b6, so that in case of cxd5, Black can take with the c-pawn on d5, which makes the structure more harmonious, and the bishop on b7 ends up having a bigger impact on the position, for example through direct pressure on e4, meaning White won't be able to play e4 very easily. 8...c6 is the main line. 8...Ne4!? is also a very interesting modern line, which Magnus Carlsen first tried against Eljanov, with some ideas to create a stonewall structure. 9.Bf4 g5!? 10.Bc1 f5 with very interesting play.

9.Ne5

An alternative was 9.cxd5 Nxd5 10.e4 Nb4 11.Bxb4 Bxb4 12.a3 Be7 13.Nc3 Bb7 14.Rfd1 c5 15.d5± with a sizable advantage.

9...Bb7

Black should probably try 9...Nxe5 10.dxe5 Ng4 (10...Ne4 11.Bxe4 dxe4 12.Rd1) 11.Bc3 Bb7 12.h3 Nh6±.

10.cxd5 Nxe5?

And this turns out to be a blunder. Here, most likely, my opponent only considered an automatic recapture, dxe5, which brings us the main lesson of the game: In chess, it is important to always consider intermediate moves in our calculations, both for ourselves and our opponents, and at least examine what might happen there.

In chess it is important to avoid playing automatic moves and assuming automatic moves in our calculations.

11.d6!

Now Black loses material.

11...Bxg2 12.dxe7



Position after 12.dxe7

12...Qxd4?!

I found this to be quite strange, since now I just have an extra rook. Of course, the alternative was very unattractive, but it should probably still be played.

12...Qxe7 13.dxe5 Bxf1 14.exf6 Qxf6 15.Kxf1+- Here White has two pieces for a rook and a pawn, which materially seems very close. However, White's pieces are very coordinated, and White should have a winning position once he regroups his pieces to best squares. A sample line can be: 15...c5 16.Na3 Rad8 17.Nc4 b5 (17...Rd7 18.Bc3 Qg5 19.Qa4 Qd5 20.f3 Rfd8 21.Qb5 Qb7 22.Kf2 Rb8 23.Be5 Rbd8 24.a4 with a5 coming up, and Black cannot really do anything with his open d-file.) 18.Ne3.

13.exf8Q+ Rxf8 14.Kxg2

Now I'm simply up a rook, and I just have to be a little bit careful about Black's somewhat active pieces and counterplay.

14...h5 15.Be3 Qd5+ 16.f3 h4 17.Nc3 Qc6 18.Bd4 Neg4 19.e4 e5 20.Bg1 Nh6 21.Be3

I consolidated. Now Black has no attack and his pieces are being pushed back, and I still have the extra rook, so Black decided to throw in the towel.

1-0

Joseph Levine (2179) – Aleksandr Lenderman (2702) [C04]
Washington Open Chess.com
(R2), May 29, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In the second round, I am playing against young local player Joseph Levine, whom I've gotten a chance to play both in person and online in serious events.

He's definitely a talented player, master level with a GM coach, and he held me to a draw in the last event. Therefore, I expected a tough battle.

1.e4 e6 2.d3 d5 3.Nd2

Joseph is quite predictable in this line, and I decided I liked my preparation there, leading me to the decision of playing the French.

3...Nf6 4.Ngf3 Nc6

This is Anish Giri's recommendation in his Chessable course.

5.e5 Nd7 6.d4

Now, this position sometimes arises with White to move in the move order: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Nc6 4.Ngf3 Nf6 5.e5 Nd7. Even that line is considered playable for Black by many people, so it is clear that this position, with my move, has to be decent enough for me.

6...f6 7.Bb5

7.exf6 Qxf6

7...fxe5 8.dxe5 Be7 9.0-0 0-0 10.Re1 Qe8 11.Nf1 a6 12.Bd3 Nc5 13.Ng3?!

It is probably inaccurate to give me the bishop-pair here in a relatively open position. 13.Be2 was what I briefly analyzed, where Black can choose between ...Nd7 where White has nothing better than Bd3, or a plan like ...a5-a4, with an unbalanced game, which the engine evaluates as around equal.

13...Nxd3 14.cxd3 Qg6 15.a3 Bd7



Position after 15...Bd7

16.b4?!

This creates a hook for me to eventually open up the queenside favorably. 16.d4.

16...Rf7?!

Missing a better chance: 16...a5 17.b5 Na7 18.a4 c6±.

17.d4 Raf8

I was still hoping to attack him on the kingside. However, that was probably not the best plan all along.

18.Kh1?!

This gives me a second chance at queenside play, which I do not miss this time. 18.Be3! a5 19.b5 Na7 20.a4 c6 21.b6 Nc8 22.Qb1 (22.Rb1 Bd8 23.Rb2 Be8) 22...Bb4 23.Qxg6 hxg6 24.Bd2 Bxd2 25.Nxd2 Rxf2 26.Nb3 is still not so clear.

18...a5 19.b5 Na7 20.a4 c6 21.Ba3?!

21.b6 Nc8 22.Ba3♣ was the lesser evil.

21...cxb5 22.Bxe7 Rxe7 23.axb5 b6

Maybe Joseph missed this simple defensive move or underestimated it. Now, I'm just much better and get to keep my connected passers.

24.Re3 Bxb5 25.Qb3 Rb7 26.Rc1 Bc4 27.Qa4 Qe8 28.Qa1 Nc6 29.Kg1 b5 30. Qb1 Qg6 31.Qa1 b4+



Position after 31...b4

This is completely winning. White cannot stop the pawns in the long run.

32.h4 b3 33.h5 Qg4 34.Qb2 a4 35.Ra1 Rxf3! 36.Rxf3 Qxd4

Black can win many ways but I liked this method.

37.Qa3 Qxa1+! 38.Qxa1 b2 39.Qb1 Ba2!

The point of this combination. I saw this when I played ...Rxf3, which I was quite happy about.

40.Qxa2 b1Q+ 41.Qxb1 Rxb1+

Now the smoke has cleared. I'm up a pawn, but more importantly, I have two very powerful passers, I'll probably win another one on e5, and White is very poorly coordinated. The rest needs no comment.

42.Nf1 Nxe5 43.Re3 Nc4 44.Re2 d4 45.Rxe6 d3 46.h6 gxh6 47.Re8+ Kf7 48.Ra8 d2 49.Ra7+ Ke6 50.Ra6+ Kd7 51.Kh2 Rxf1 52.Rxa4 d1Q 53.Rxc4 Rh1+ 54.Kg3 Qd3+ 55.Kg4 Qxc4+ 56.Kf5 Rh5+ 57.Kf6 Qe6+ 58.Kg7 Rg5+ 59.Kh8 Qg8#

I was very happy with this win against a strong young player. That put me in a group of seven strong players with 2/2.

0-1

Aleksandr Lenderman (2702) – Rohan Talukdar (2431) [D02]
Washington Open Chess.com
(R3), May 30, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In round three, I got paired against a strong Canadian FM, Rohan Talukdar, with whom I've played many times already in the Washington Chess Federation tournaments. While I've done well against him lately, I knew that in a given day he's capable of playing like a strong GM. This game felt like one of these games.

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.Nbd2

I know he's a Grunfeld player who knows his theory quite well. I try to keep my opponent off-balance and keep surprising him with less theoretical lines.

However, this one wasn't a very lucky surprise, since it seemed like he knew it well, and I surprised myself more.

3...d5

Based on his chess.com games, I thought it was more likely he would play 3...Bg7 4.e4 d6.

4.e3 Bg7 5.b4 0-0 6.Bb2?!

Perhaps, it's more accurate to start with 6.c4, and not commit the bishop move to b2.

6...a5 7.b5 a4 8.c4 c6

Black is already more than fine.

9.cxd5?!



Position after 9.cxd5

9...cxd5?

Black missed a great unexpected opportunity to immediately seize initiative. 9...a3! 10.Bc1 (10.Bc3 Nxd5♣) 10...Nxd5 and White has very poor coordination.

10.Bd3 Bf5 11.Bxf5 gxf5

However, this is still equal, and Black shouldn't have big problems.

12.Ba3 Re8 13.Qc2 Ne4 14.0-0 Qa5

14...Nd7 15.Rfc1 Rc8. There was nothing wrong with the simple development.

16.Qb2 (16.Qxa4?? Nc3) 16...e5=.

15.Rfc1!?

Sacking a pawn for an initiative. 15.Rac1 Qxb5; 15.Rab1 Qc3 16.Qc1 was probably my best chance for an advantage.

15...Qxb5 16.Rab1 Qe2

This is precise. Black is okay in all lines here.

17.Nxe4

17.Nf1 Qxc2 18.Rxc2 Nc6 19.Rxb7 Rac8=

17...Qxc2 18.Rxc2

18.Nf6+ Bxf6 19.Rxc2 Nc6 20.Rxb7 Na5=

18...fxe4 19.Nd2

19.Nh4 e6 20.Rxb7 Na6 21.g4 Bf8=

19...e5 20.Rxb7 exd4 21.Rcc7 dxe3 22.fxe3 Ra6

22...Bf8 was the move I expected, and is also fine for Black.

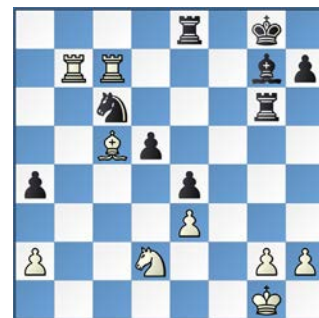
23.Rxf7 Rg6

This is also a good rook maneuver, after which I don't have much.

24.Rfc7

24.Nf1 Nc6 25.Ng3 Nd8 26.Rfe7 Rxe7 27.Rxe7 Nc6= 28.Rd7 d4

24...Nc6 25.Bc5!?



Position after 25.Bc5

Setting a trap...

25...Bc3

...which he doesn't fall for. 25...d4?? 26.Nxe4! dxe3? (26...Rxe4 27.Rc8+) 27.Rxg7+! Rxg7 28.Nf6+ Kh8 29.Rxg7 Kxg7 30.Nxe8+- was a very slight hope, but of course, not very realistic against such a strong player.

26.Nf1 d4

Now, without Nxe4, this works well for Black.

27.Rb6 Ne5 28.Rxg6+ Nxg6 29.Bb6 dxe3 30.Nxe3 Rb8 31.Rxc3 Rxb6 32.Rc4 Rb1+ 33.Kf2 Rb2+ 34.Kg3 Rxa2

A rather sloppy opening by me, with

playing Bb2 too early. The moral of the story is, if you want to create problems to a strong player, every little nuance matters. If you miss a detail early on, and don't create problems, any decent master can play like a strong grandmaster. I was happy at least that I didn't miss any big chances in the middle game and we both played quite well, making a draw a fair result.

1/2-1/2

Aleksandr Lenderman (2702) – Ojas Kulkarni (2216) [A61]
Washington Open Chess.com
(R4), May 30, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

In this game I got a double-white against an Indian master, whom I have never played before, or seen in the WCF tournaments. I got a second white in a row because he had more points than me, and he played White the previous game, so he had to change color. I wasn't sure what to expect, since I briefly saw that he plays many openings. Therefore, I just decided to play what I knew best.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 c5 4.d5 d6 5.Nc3 exd5 6.cxd5 g6 7.Bf4 Bg7 8.Qa4+ Bd7 9.Qb3 b5!?

A very principled line in the Benoni.

10.Bxd6 Qb6 11.Be5 0-0 12.e3 c4

12...b4 13.Nb1 Bf5 is also a line for Black, but I think here, White has good chances for an advantage.

13.Qd1 b4 14.Ne2

14.Nb1 Nb1 of course is also possible.

14...Rc8

Is also possible and is what the engine prefers at very high depth. 14...Bb5

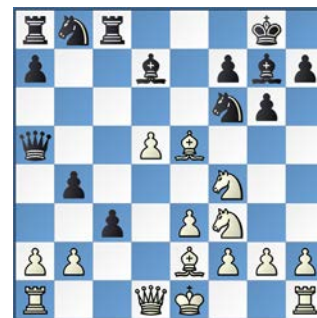
15.Nf4 Qa5

Here my opponent started to think. Perhaps, he couldn't recall his analysis, and therefore, made a slightly inaccurate move. 15...c3 should be played immediately.

16.Be2??

16.Qd4! was actually very important, to use the fact that Black cannot play ...Nbd7 to defend the knight on f6. Now, Black has to make an awkward concession. 16...Qb6 (16...b3+ 17.Nd2 Qxa2 18.Nxb3! Qxb3 (18...cxb3 19.Qd1! Nxd5 20.Rxa2 bxa2 21.Bxg7 Nxf4 22.Be5 (22.exf4 Kxg7 23.Be2)) 19.Bxf6) 17.Rc1±

16...c3



Position after 16...c3

17.0-0

Here 17.Qd4 doesn't work as well. 17...Ba4! 18.b3 (18.Bxf6 Bxf6 19.Qxf6 cxb2 20.Qxb2 Rc2 21.Qd4 b3+ 22.Kf1 b2± With lots of play for the piece.) 18...Nbd7! 19.Bd6 (19.bxa4? Nxe5 20.Nxe5 Nd7) 19...c2 20.Rc1 Nh5±

17...Ba4! 18.b3 Bb5 19.Bxb5 Qxb5 20.Nd4 Qc5?

This was his first real mistake of the game. Perhaps, he missed my Nd3 move. 20...Qb7. Here Black should have good compensation for the pawn. I would've tried 21.Bxf6 Bxf6 22.Nc2 a5 23.e4 Nd7 24.Nd3 Bg7 However, I believe Black might be okay here.

21.Nd3 Qxd5 22.Bxf6 Bxf6 23.Nxb4

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. 7/17 @ 5 PM.**

SUNDAY JULY 18, 2021

Site: Online via Chess.com

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 7/14, \$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. 7/18 @ 9 AM, 11 AM, 1 PM, 3 PM, 5 PM.

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

Prize 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 July 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>

Now, I should be better due to getting rid of the very important b4-pawn. The c3-pawn now requires attention for him too.

23...Qb7 24.Qf3!

Precisely swapping queens off the board to get into a better endgame.

24...Qxf3 25.Nxf3 Nc6 26.Nd5 Bg7 27.Rac1 Kf8?! 28.Ng5!



Position after 28.Ng5

Again, precise! Now Black is going to lose the c3-pawn.

28...h6 29.Nh7+ Kg8 30.Nhf6+ Kh8 31.Ne4+-

Now I win the second pawn and the rest is simple.

31...Ne5 32.Rxc3 Nf3+ 33.gxf3 Bxc3 34.Nxc3 Kg7 35.Rd1 Rd8 36.Rd4 Rac8 37.f4 Rc5 38.b4 Rc6 39.b5 Rc5 40.a4 Rd7 41.a5

This was a nice win for me, where I was happy that I was able to take advantage of his inaccuracies with some precise moves. Now, the hard part comes, with potentially two Blacks in the last few rounds against potentially, two strong IMs.

1-0

Mitrabha Guha (2484) – Aleksandr Lenderman (2702) [B07]
Washingdr Open Chess.com
(R5), May 31, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

Today was the decisive day, and I ended up paired against an IM from India, Mitrabhaa Guha. I've had success with him up to this point, but I knew that he's a very formidable opponent. Because I might have Black in the last game as well, potentially against IM Shahinyan, I decided to treat this game as a game where I should try to push for a win if possible, even with Black, thus my opening choice, 1.d4 d6.

1.d4 d6

Signaling a fight.

2.e4 Nf6 3.Nc3 e5 4.dxe5

This move, however shows peaceful intentions from my opponent. I wasn't afraid of this though, since in my experience, even without queens, this middle game can be quite complex. I wasn't disappointed with this game, either, as I managed to create very serious winning chances.

4...dxe5 5.Qxd8+ Kxd8 6.Nf3 Bd6 7.Bg5 Be6 8.Nd5?!

This move signals the intention to trade off more pieces, but I think that it's also a concession for him, as he is moving the same pieces twice in the opening, and I end up getting a very comfortable endgame out of this.

8...Nbd7 9.Bxf6+?!

9.Bc4 is more natural, after which the engine suggests that my best move is ...h6. Thus, Bxf6 is just a loss of a tempo.

9...Nxf6

I seriously considered 9...gxf6 as well, but I thought it was logical to exchange the d5-knight. After ...gxf6, I thought that Bc4 followed by Ne3 plan should equalize for him, and I didn't want to let him keep that d5-knight. However, perhaps that was more accurate. 10.Bc4 c6 11.Ne3 Ne5 12.Nd2 b5! and after this precise move, perhaps, I can fight for a small advantage.

10.Nxf6 gxf6 11.Nd2

This is what I expected, to try to exchange the bishops. However, it might've not been the best. 11.Bd3 Ke7 12.Nh4 should be equal.

11...Ke7 12.Bc4 h5 13.h4?!

Natural, but the engine really dislikes this. 13.Bxe6 Kxe6 14.0-0 h4 15.g4= (15.h3 Rhg8 16.Kh1=)

13...Rhg8 14.g3 Bxc4 15.Nxc4 Rg4!

Now I push his pieces back and get a little initiative.

16.Nd2 Ke6 17.Ke2 f5 18.exf5+ Kxf5 19.c3 Ke6 20.Rad1 a5 21.Nf1?!

Natural, but also not the best plan. 21.Rhe1

21...a4?!

21...f5 was probably stronger. 22.Ne3 Ra4 23.Ra1 (23.a3 Rg8) 23...Bc5

22.Rd2?!

22.Ne3 Rg7 23.Rd5! would give White some counterplay.

22...Bc5 23.Ne3 Re4 24.Kf3 Bxe3 25.Re2 Rc4

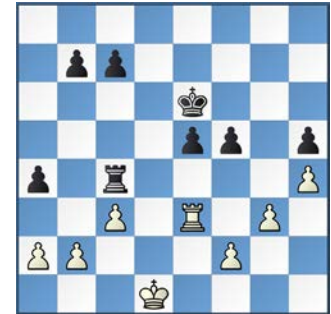
I thought this was good, but apparently, f5 was a more serious advantage, which

I underestimated. 25...f5 26.Rxe3 Rxe3+ 27.Kxe3 Rf8 28.Rd1 f4+ 29.Ke2 b5 30.a3 ffg3 31.ffg3 c6. Black has decent winning chances here, because of the "extra passed pawn," while the majority on the kingside for White is frozen.

26.Rxe3 Rd8 27.Ke2 f5 28.Rd1

I was happy to see this move, since now, for the first time in this game, I thought I might be getting serious winning chances. 28.f3

28...Rxd1 29.Kxd1



Position after 29.Kxd1

29...f4

I thought this was very natural, but perhaps, it wasn't even the best. 29...Rg4! 30.Ke2 b5 31.Rd3 f4. The point is that I don't need to force anything. White is having a very hard time finding moves here, while I can improve my queenside position to the maximum. 32.Kf1 a3 33.b3 (33.bxa3 ffg3 34.ffg3 Ra4+) 33...e4

30.Rd3 e4

This was super tempting, and I thought it's winning, but it turned out to be not so easy. 30...fxg3 31.ffg3 Rg4. Again, it was better to be patient, since my structure is so good here. 32.Ke2 a3 33.b3 e4! This forces a rook to an undesirable square, and Black's position is too strong. Both Black's king and rook are more active than White's; White has a weak g3-pawn, as well as the a2-pawn. White should be losing here. 34.Re3 (34.Rd4 c5 35.Ra4 Rfg3 36.Rxe4+ Kd5 37.Ra4 Rg2+-) 34...b5 35.Kf2 Ke5

31.Rd8 e3

This was my point, but it turned out to be not such an easy win.

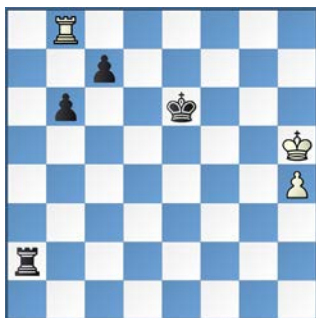
32.Ke2 exf2 33.Kxf2 ffg3+ 34.Kxg3 a3 35.bxa3 Rxc3+ 36.Kf4 Rxa3 37.Rb8!

Up to here, White didn't play this game impressively, and I expected to convert this endgame easily. However, here, my opponent brought himself together, started to take a lot of time, and calculated extremely precisely. He found the best practical chances.

37...b6 38.Kg5 Rxa2?!

This doesn't blow the win, but makes it much harder. I was calculating a lot here, but it was still very hard for me to figure everything out. 38...Ra5+ 39.Kg6. I saw this, but I couldn't understand what the point of this was, since I couldn't find a better move than ...Rxa2. However, here I can make a useful king move. 39...Kd7 (39...Rd5 is also a possibility. 40.a4 (40.Kh6 b5) 40...Kd7 41.Kh6 Ra5 42.Kg6 Rxa4 And only now I take. 43.Kxh5 Re4 44.Kg5 Re8 and now, I have this very strong idea!) 40.Kh6 b5 41.Kxh5 c5 42.Kg5 c4 43.h5 c3 and here I win.

39.Kxh5



Position after 39.Kxh5

39...Rg2?

And even though this is a very natural move, this blows the win. I thought it was improbable, that my two pawns won't queen against his rook with his king so far away and losing so many tempos, but as my luck was, I was always down a tempo. Now I just have to mimic Kramnik and say, White survives by a miracle in all the lines :) 39...Kf5!! was the only way to win. 40.Rf8+ Ke4! It seemed strange to me to lose a tempo with my king like this, so I didn't even consider this. However, I am moving his rook away from the ideal square, and I improve my king. Therefore, I'm not losing a tempo, but rather gain one. However, this is only the beginning of the fascinating variation. 41.Kg4 (41.Re8+. In this case, I get the king to d5, and I gain a tempo. 41...Kd5 42.Rb8 Rg2 43.Kh6 Kc5 44.h5 b5 and I'm up a very important tempo compared to the game, which proves decisive.; 41.Rb8!?) This is a good try, but Black wins with very subtle play. 41...Kf4 42.Rf8+ Kg3 43.Rg8+ Kh3 44.Rc8 Rc2! The only winning move! 45.Kg5 Rc5+ 46.Kf4 Kxh4 47.Rh8+ Rh5 48.Rc8 Rh7 and Black wins.) 41...c5 42.h5 b5! The only winning move (42...c4? 43.Rb8= misses the win.) 43.h6 Ra7!! and now this is the only way to win! Black had to see it all in advance too :) (43...Rh2? 44.Rf4+!

Ke5 45.Rf5+ misses a win) 44.Rf5 Kd4 45.Rh5 Rh7 46.Kf5 b4 47.Kg6 Rh8 48.Kg7 Rb8 49.h7 b3 50.Rf5 (50.h8Q Rxh8 51.Rxh8 c4 52.Rb8 Kc3! The only winning line. 53.Kf6 Kb2! 54.Ke5 c3+- Black is winning by one tempo!) 50...b2 51.Rf8 Rb7+ 52.Rf7 Rxf7+ 53.Kxf7 b1Q 54.h8Q+ Kc4 and Black should win this queen endgame, since White has no good checks. 55.Qh4+ Kb5+-; 39...Rh2? I also considered this 40.Kg5 Kd5 41.h5 Kc5 42.h6 b5 43.Kg6 Kc4 44.h7 But here he also draws.; 39...Kf7 but this doesn't really accomplish much. 40.Kh6=

40.Kh6

From here White plays very precisely and never gives me a chance to win anymore.

40...Kd5 41.h5 Kc5

Unfortunately, I cannot play 41...Kc4 because of 42.Rb7! =

42.Kh7 b5 43.h6 b4

43...Kb4 was also a try, which from far away might've also won, but in fact, White can draw several different ways here. 44.Kh8 (44.Rg8 Rh2 45.Kg6 c5 46.h7=) 44...c5 45.h7 Rh2 46.Kg7 c4 47.h8Q Rxh8 48.Rxh8=

44.Kh8 Kc4 45.h7 Rh2

Necessary if I want to play for a win since

Vancouver Open

July 24 - 25, 2021

A Northwest Chess Grand Prix Event

Site: Hampton Inn & Suites, 315 SE Olympia Drive, Vancouver, WA 98684. (360) 891-3000.

HR: \$169 Standard King/Double Queen Room. Cut-off date July 9.

Format: A 5-round US Chess Rated Swiss in one Open section. Maximum of 30 players, please register early. Max attendance may be increased depending on local health and safety regulations.

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

Prize Fund: \$1,200 (based on 30 paid entries).
1st \$350, 2nd \$200
1st U2200/U2000/U1800/U1600/U1400/U1200: \$100, Biggest Upset: \$50

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

Entry Fee: \$75 if postmarked or online by 7/17, \$85 after 7/17 or at site. Non-members of WCF/OCF/ICA add \$15. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs.

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

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

Rating: US Chess Rated. US Chess August 2021 rating supplement will be used to determine pairings and prizes. Foreign ratings used for players with no US Chess rating. Higher of US Chess or foreign ratings used at TD discretion.

Memberships: US Chess membership required.

Covid Procedures: Face masks are required for all players and spectators. Please bring your own mask, none supplied. Chess equipment will be sanitized between each round.



Info/Entries: Make checks payable to Washington Chess Federation.

Mail To: Washington Chess Federation
c/o Orlov Chess Academy
4174 148th Ave. NE
Building I, Ste. M
Redmond, WA 98052

Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President
Phone: 206-769-3757
Email:
WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Registration: Online at
nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration.

45...c5 46.Rxb4+=

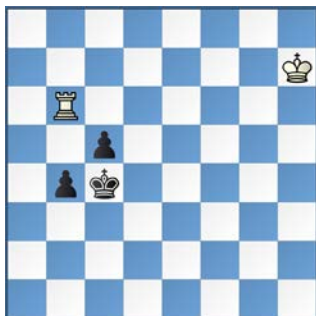
46.Kg7 c5 47.Rb6

47.h8Q Rxb8 48.Rxb8 was also enough for a draw.

47...Rxb7+

47...b3 48.Rh6 Rxb6 49.Kxb6 b2 50.h8Q b1Q 51.Qg8+!=

48.Kxb7



Position after 48.Kxb7

Even though my pawns are far advanced, and his king is far away, I am just one tempo short in all the lines. “White is surviving by a miracle” (Kramnik) :)

48...b3

48...Kb3 is sadly, also not enough. 49.Kg6 c4 50.Kf5 c3 51.Ke4 c2 52.Rc6 Kb2 53.Kd3 c1Q 54.Rxc1 Kxc1 55.Kc4

49.Kg6 Kc3 50.Kf5 c4 51.Ke4 b2

51...Kb2 52.Kd4 c3 53.Kc4=

52.Kd5 Kc2 53.Kxc4 b1Q 54.Rxb1 Kxb1

What started as a very boring looking game, where both of us played quickly, and seemingly not so interested, turned into a great fight and a very exciting endgame with very interesting variations. This is why, even in equal positions, it's better to fight them all out to kings. You can learn great things from the game then and get your money's worth. Kudos to my opponent, who after unambitious play early on, gathered himself nicely, and fought like a champion in a very difficult endgame.

1/2-1/2

David Shahinyan (2531) – Aleksandr Lenderman (2702) [B13]
Washington Open Chess.com
(R6), May 31, 2021
[Aleksandr Lenderman]

1.e4

After a disappointing draw last game, I knew that this game was sort of a must-win if I wanted a decent prize in this tournament. However, my opponent was

half-a-point behind and had a tough loss to the leader, Rohan Talukdar. I knew he had to be out for blood, since only a win would give him the prize. That influenced my decision.

1...c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.Bd3

My opponent was predictable here.

4...Nc6 5.c3 Nf6 6.Bf4 Bg4 7.Qb3 Na5!?

This is an interesting line, which isn't so common, but if Black wants to equalize, it's a good attempt. The drawback of this line is that White can now just repeat moves with Qa4 Nc6 Qb3, etc, where Black either has to make a draw or play an inferior line. However, knowing that my opponent was in a must-win game, I knew that he wouldn't just play like this. I decided to take the risk.

8.Qa4+ Nc6 9.Nd2

As expected, my opponent went for a fight. 9.Qb3 Na5

9...e6 10.Ng3 Bd6 11.Bxd6

11.Ba6?! is interesting, and something I was wondering about during the game, but it doesn't work well for White. 11...Bxf4 12.Bxb7 0-0 13.Bxc6 Rb8+ is too much initiative for Black.

11...Qxd6 12.0-0 0-0 13.Rae1

Up to here, we both played very fast, but here came a critical moment. Unfortunately, the next few moves I started to drift, and quickly got myself into a very unpleasant position.

13...Bxf3

13...a6 14.Ne5 Rfc8 looks like a better plan for Black.

14.Nxf3 a6 15.Qc2

15.Qd1 was probably more accurate. 15...b5 16.Ne5 b4 17.Qa4±

15...b5 16.a3 Rfc8

16...Rac8 in retrospect, it was more logical to play with the other rook. 17.Qe2 Na5

17.Qe2 Qc7 18.Kh1

18.Ne5

18...Na5 19.Ne5 Nc4 20.f4

Starting with 20.g4 was also an interesting option.

20...Re8

20...Nd6 was more accurate. 21.f5 I wasn't sure what to do here, but I can play 21...exf5 22.Bxf5 Rf8 followed by ...Rae8 and everything is in control.

21.f5

21.g4 Nd6 22.g5 Nfe4 23.Rf3 was possibly more challenging for me, with

ideas like Rh3 and Qh5 in the air.

21...exf5 22.Rxf5 Re6

22...Nd6. I was naturally worried about Rxf6, but perhaps I shouldn't have been. 23.Rxf6 gxf6 24.Qh5 Ne4 25.Bxe4 dxe4 26.Ng4 Qf4 27.Kg1 Kh8 28.Nh6 Kg7 29.Nf5+ Kh8 30.Nh6 with a potential draw, which was bad for both of us.

23.Bxc4!

Only move not to be worse actually.

23...bxc4 24.Ref1

Here the engine says dead equal, but I felt very uncomfortable. I felt like I was under very serious pressure.

24...Rf8 25.Qf3 Qe7?!

Probably not the best. 25...Rb6! As it turns out, it's not only an aggressive attempt going after the pawn on b2, but also a prophylactical idea to tie his e5-knight. 26.g4 Rxb2 27.g5 Ne4. Turns out this is good for me, since Nxf7 is impossible due to mate on h2. 28.Qh3 g6 29.R5f4 Qe7 with very murky play.; 25...h5 trying to stop g4 was also possible.

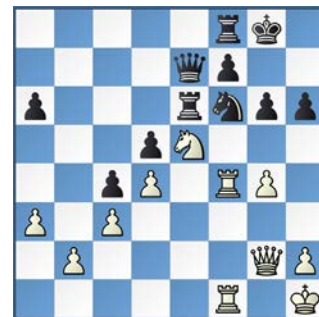
26.g4 h6 27.Qg2!

A strong move, preparing h4-g5, and re-applying pressure. 27.h4 Ne4 was my point, which I thought was good for me. That's why I played ...Qe7.

27...g6

27...Nd7 was actually playable, based on the tactic... 28.Rxf7?! (28.Nxd7 Qxd7 29.Qxd5 Qxd5+ 30.Rxd5 Re2 Black can probably draw this.) 28...Rxf7 29.Rxf7?? (29.Nxf7 Rf6=) 29...Qxf7 30.Nxf7 Re1+→

28.R5f4



Position after 28.R5f4

28...Kg7?

And this was my first big mistake based on an oversight. 28...Rxe5 29.dxe5 Ne4 had to be played immediately. Then, White cannot get h4-h5 in, and thus, he cannot park his rook on f5. This means that White cannot really break through and the position is equal. 30.Rxe4 dxe4 31.Qxe4 Re8 32.Qxc4 Qb7+ 33.Kg1 Rxe5=. I'm

down a pawn but he has a very weak king, so the position is dynamically equal.

29.h4

29.Qf2 was also possible.

29...Rxe5

This was my idea, and I wanted his pawn on h4 to be a weakness. I thought he missed this. However, it turned out that I missed a very important detail. 29...g5 30.Rf5+-

30.dxe5 Ne4 31.Qh2!

This very strong move, defending h4, and defending indirectly f7, I missed. Now I realized that I have to grovel for a draw, and probably I should be losing objectively. However, I was still hoping for the best.

31...Kg8 32.R4f3

32.h5 was the most natural choice, which I would meet with ...g5, and hope that somehow I can hold the fortress. However, it's very unlikely that this is a fortress. 32...g5 33.Rf5 Qe6. My plan was mainly to just go Qe6-Qe7, and pray :) 34.a4 However, after this strong plan, it's clear that Black shouldn't be able to hold the fortress. Here are some lines: 34...a5 (34...Kg7 35.R1f3 Kg8 36.a5 Kg7 37.Qe2 Kg8 38.Qe3) 35.R1f3 Qe7 36.Qg1 Qe6

37.Qd4 Kg7 38.Kh2 Kg8 39.Kh3 Kg7 40.Qa7 Kg8 41.Qxa5+-

32...Qe6 33.Qf4?

This gives me a big chance that I missed.

33...Kg7

I played this automatically, but 33...Rb8! would create serious counterplay, and White cannot take any of my pawns under good circumstances. For example: 34.Qxf7+ (34.Qxh6 Qxg4 35.e6 f5 36.e7 Ng3+ 37.Rxg3 Qxg3=; 34.Qh2 Rb7= and here, I successfully active my rook to a much better square where it both attacks his main weakness and defends mine.) 34...Qxf7 35.Rxf7 Ng3+ 36.Kg2 Nxf1 37.Rxf1 Rxb2+=

34.h5?

34.Kg2 would still provide White good winning chances.

34...g5! 35.Qf5 Qxf5 36.gxf5

I think that my opponent went into this position on purpose, perhaps, thinking it's winning for him. However, I can generate lots of counterplay here.

36...Re8!?

Purposely not taking the exchange, although ...Nd2 winning the exchange back was also possible. 36...Nd2 37.f6+

Kg8 38.Kg2 Nxf1 39.Rxf1 Re8 40.Re1. I wasn't sure if I can hold this endgame if his king gets to f5, and his rook attacks d5, but the engine says I can. 40...Re6 41.Kf3 Kf8 42.Kg4 Ke8 43.Kf5 Kd7 44.Rd1 Kc6 and I just make it in time. It's a fortress. However, I thought it can be a bit risky to go for this, since if I would miss a detail, I could've just been lost, while I have no winning chances. In the other line, I thought I might even have winning chances with my active knight, and some pawns for the exchange. As it turned out, I made a lucky practical choice.

37.Kg2

37.e6 Kf6 didn't yield much for White, and here I felt like I had lots of counterplay.; 37.f6+ Kf8 38.Rf5? Ng3+

37...Rxe5

37...Nd2. Again, I had this move but once again, I wasn't sure about it. 38.f6+ Kf8 39.Re1 Nxf3 40.Kxf3 Re6 41.Kg4 Ke8 42.Kf5 Kd7 43.Rd1 Kc6. Once again, I'm in time to hold. However, sometimes, it is a blessing to NOT make the best move.

38.f6+ Kf8 39.Rf5

I saw this, and planned ...Re6 where I thought I am hanging on, and maybe even have not worse practical chances.

Seattle Seafair Open

July 31 - Aug 1, 2021

A Northwest Chess Grand Prix Event



Info/Entries: Make checks payable to Washington Chess Federation.

Mail To: Washington Chess Federation
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Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President

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Registration: Online at
nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration.

Registration **deadline Fri. 7/30 @ 5pm.**

\$15 Late Fee for payments accepted after the deadline. Unpaid players will receive a zero-point bye for round 1.

Site: Online via Chess.com

Format: A 5-Round Swiss in one Open section. Co-hosted by the Seattle Chess Club & the Washington Chess Federation. Dual NWSRS and US Chess Online Rated. Accelerated pairings will be used if >60 players.

Entry Fee: \$50 by 7/24, \$60 after. Non-members of WCF/OCF/ICA add \$15. SCC members receive a \$15 discount. Free entry for GM/IM/WGM or US Chess Rating 2400+.

Time Control: G/60; +30. Late Default: 10 min.

Rounds: Sat 10 AM, 2 PM, 6 PM. Sun 10 AM, 2 PM.

Prize Fund: 60% of paid entries returned as prizes. Additional prizes may be added if >60 players.
1st 22%, 2nd 15%, 3rd 10%
1st U2200/U2000/U1800/U1600/U1400/U1200: 6% each
Unrated Prize: 6%, Biggest Upset: 1% per round
Best NW Player (by TPR): 6%

Byes: Two half-point byes available for rounds 1-5 if announced before the end of round 2.

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

Rating: Highest of current US Chess, US Chess Online, or NWSRS 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.

39...Re6!

Of course, the only move.

40.Rxd5 Nxf6 41.Rc5 Re2+

A little trick. Now Rf2 loses to ...Rxf2 and ...Ne4.

42.Kg1

42.Kf3 Rxb2 43.a4 was double-edged, but might've been his last chances to play for a win.

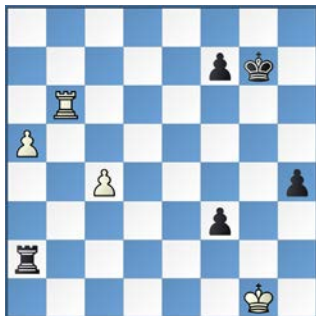
42...Nxb5 43.Rxc4 Rxb2

Now, with his cut-off king, he cannot really play for a win, and he even has to be the one careful. That's why, when he offered a draw after Rxc4, I decided to play on.

44.Rc6 Kg7 45.Rxa6 Nf4 46.Rxf4

Trying to draw. Otherwise, ...Nh3+ followed by ...g4 and ...g3 can create dangerous mating ideas in some lines.

46...gxf4 47.a4 Ra2 48.a5 h5 49.c4 f3 50.Rb6! h4



Position after 50...h4

Until here, White defended well and it's a draw. However, finally, luck came on my side in this tournament, where my opponent, one step away from a draw, made a losing blunder.

51.Rb3??

51.Rb1! was the only move to draw. Here, I cannot win. For example, 51...Rxa5 52.Kf2 Rf5 53.Rg1+ Kf6 54.Rg4=

51...Ra1+! 52.Kf2 h3

This is what my opponent missed. Now in case of Kg3, I just play ...h2 or ...f2, and queen the other pawn, and easily stop his pawns with my rooks.

I cannot believe it's been a whole year since the last Washington Open. I remember the last one like it was yesterday, the pain I experienced, losing that game to Georgi Orlov. If my last round win against IM David Shahinyan is the last one that I play in WCF events, it is very pleasing for me that it ended on such a high note—that on the last day I was able to provide you readers two very fun, fighting games against two strong IMs. The final-round win gave me a nice first-third share, which was a great result for me given that I'm trying to regain my form after studying at university for almost two years.

I want to thank Josh Sinanan for the wonderful tournaments that he's organized for the last year, and for welcoming me with open arms in all his tournaments and giving me a chance to do these annotations.

0-1

**Rohan Talukdar (2434) –
David Shahinyan (2500) [B07]**
Washington Open 2021 Chess.com
(R5), May 31, 2021
[Rohan Talukdar]

An important round for me against IM Shahinyan from Armenia! It was a very complicated game that required a lot of calculation.

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

My opponent uses this move order to play a Philidor setup without letting White have special tricks with an early Nf3.

4.Nge2

My pet line that is extremely easy to play. White will simply fianchetto the bishop and then will typically create a kingside pawn storm.

4...c6 5.a4

Played to avoid any b5 counterplay.

5...g6 6.g3 Bg7 7.Bg2 0-0 8.0-0 exd4

Deviating from our first game in this variation.

8...Qc7 is what my opponent played against me before. We played a really tactical game and I have added the game below 9.h3 b6 10.Be3 Ba6 11.Re1 Nbd7 12.g4 Rfe8 13.Ng3 Nf8 14.Qd2 Ne6 15.d5 cxd5 16.exd5 Nd4 17.Rec1 Rac8 18.Ra3 Qc4 19.g5 Nh5 20.Nxb5 gxf4 21.Qd1 e4 22.Qxh5 Qb4 23.Bxd4 Bxd4 24.Rb3 Bxf2+ 25.Kh1 Qc4 26.Bf1 Qxf1+ 27.Rxf1 Bxf1 28.Nxe4 Rxe4 29.Rf3 Re7 30.Rxf2 Bc4 31.Kh2 Rc5 32.b3 Bxd5 33.b4 Rc4 34.g6 hxg6 35.Qxd5 Rxb4 36.Qxd6 Rbe4 37.c4 Kg7 38.a5 R7e6 39.Qb8 bxa5 40.Qxa7 Re7 41.Qb6 R7e6 42.Qb5 R6e5 43.c5 a4 44.Qb2 f5 45.c6 1-0 (45) Talukdar-Shahinyan Seattle Classic 2020.

9.Nxd4 Na6

9...a5 is really logical to fix the structure so that ...Na6 ...Nb4 is allowed.

10.h3

A logical move in this opening where White denies Black to use the g4-square and often plays g4 themselves.

10...Nb4

Typically, this is the best square for the knight once White plays a4 but here Black has not secured the knight yet.

10...Re8 is the main move when after 11.a5 Nc5 12.Re1 with a playable position for both sides.

11.a5!?

Taking advantage that my opponent has not played a5 and planning Ra4 to kick the enemy knight out!

11...Re8 12.Ra4

The most direct move which asks the knight, "where are you going?" I rejected 12.Re1 since Black equalizes easily with

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12...d5 13.e5 Nd7 14.f4 f6; 12.Kh2! is a prophylactic move played both by Bologan and Ivanchuk! 12...d5 (12...Bd7 13.Be3 Re5 14.Nb3 Rh5 15.f3 Qc8 16.h4 d5 17.Nc5 dxe4 18.N3xe4 Nxe4 19.Nxe4 Rd5 20.Qe2 Bologan-Peralta) 13.exd5 Nfxd5 14.Nxd5 Nxd5 15.a6 Qb6 16.c3 Rb8 17.Qa4 Ivanchuk-Nikolic.

12...c5

My opponent played this quite fast. 12...Na6 was what I was expecting and I was thinking of playing 13.Nde2 Nc5 (13...d5 14.exd5 Nxd5 15.Nxd5 cxd5 16.Be3 Black has an isolated pawn) 14.Rd4 a very cool move to play 14...Bf8 (14...Nfxe4!? 15.Nxe4 Bxd4 16.Qxd4 Nxe4 17.Bxe4 Qxa5) 15.b4 and the rook on d4 is pretty active.

13.Ndb5 d5

The idea! It took me a while to comprehend this position. I had planned for a calm opening, but chaos has erupted! Here I spent a long time trying to find the best idea.

14.Bf4

I calculated this line and thought that it was rather interesting. 14.exd5 and Black's idea is 14...a6. White's pieces are awkwardly placed 15.Na3 Bd7 and the rook is trapped! 16.d6 this is quite unclear but engine notes that Black should not take the exchange but play 16...Na2! 17.Rh4 Nxc3 18.bxc3 Qxa5∞; 14.e5?! is also what I considered so that I get Bf4 with tempo 14...Rxe5 15.Bf4 Rf5! Although it is strange, the rook on f5 is very active and will sacrifice itself in many variations.

14...d4

14...Nh5 is a move that the computer points out which I didn't even consider. 15.Bd6 Bd7 16.Bxc5 Bxc3! 17.Nxc3 Na6! 18.Be3 Bxa4 19.Nxa4 dxe4 20.Qxd8 Raxd8 21.Bxa7∞

15.Nc7 dxc3 16.Nxa8 cxb2 17.Nc7 Qxd1 18.Rxd1

I had seen this position when I played 14.Bf4 and I thought that both sides have chances.

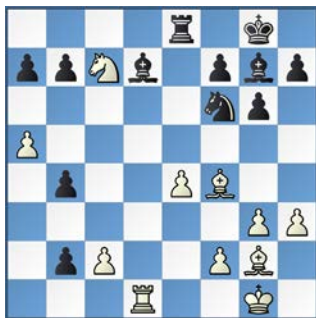
18...Bd7?!

This may seem like a logical move to gain a tempo on the rook on a4. However, I have an extremely clever idea here. 18...Re7! was the best although it is a bit counterintuitive that Rd8 ideas might happen. However, the pawn on b2 is a monster 19.Ra3 Rd7! the idea 20.Rb1 Nh5 21.Nd5 Nxf4 22.gxf4 Nxc2∞.

19.Rxb4!

19.Nxe8? Bxa4

19...cxb4



Position after 19...cxb4

20.e5!

I think that my opponent missed this move. The idea is to misplace the knight, block the long diagonal, and disrupt Black's pieces. 20.Nxe8? allows 20...Nxe8! and now due to the active bishop on g7, the pawn on b2 restricts my rook from any activity 21.Bf1 (21.e5 g5!) 21...Bc3∞.

20...Bf5?

My opponent offered a draw here, but I accurately calculated that White is winning! I think this is the only big mistake of the entire game. 20...Rf8!! is the correct engine move!! I had not anticipated this at all. This is the safest square for the rook! 21.exf6 Bxf6 22.Nd5 Bc3 23.Rb1 Ba4 24.Nxb4 and now 24...Rd8! (24...Bxb4 25.Rxb2 Bxa5 26.Rxb7) 25.Be4 Bxb4 26.Rxb2 Rd4

and Black has miraculously equalized!; 20...Rc8?! 21.exf6 Bxf6 22.Nd5 now the bishop cannot stay on the a1-h8 diagonal since it has to guard e7; 20...Rd8? 21.exf6 Bxf6 22.Nd5 Bc3 now White has 23.Bg5 Re8 24.Nf6+ and Black has to give up the important dark squared bishop; 20...Rb8? 21.exf6 Bxf6 22.Nd5; 20...Nh5 21.Nxe8 Nxf4 22.gxf4 and now the bishop on g7 is blocked so White is better.

21.exf6 Bxc2 22.Nxe8

It is very important that the knight protects f6.

22...Bxd1 23.Be4 Bf8

23...b3 planning ...Bc2 doesn't work 24.Be5 Bc2 25.Bxb2 Bxe4 26.fgx7+; 23...Bh6 trying to slow down Be5 ideas doesn't work 24.Bxh6 b3 now White has a cool idea of 25.Nd6 Bc2 26.Bd5 b1Q+ 27.Kh2 and mate with Bxf7 and Bg7 is inevitable.

24.Be5 Bf3

Trying to distract my bishop.

25.Bd3!

It is very important to force the black bishop to e2 since that is the worse diagonal.

25...Be2

25...Bc6 26.Nc7 Bc5 27.Bxb2 Bd6 28.Nb5 the knight gets out because of the bishop on d3.

26.Bb1 Bc5 27.Bxb2

Finally I have gotten rid of the b2-monster!

27...b6 28.axb6 Bxb6

Now White needs to make sure that the bishops and the knight is active.

29.Ba2!

Threatening Nd6.

29...Bc5 30.Be5

Supporting Nd6.

30...Bd1

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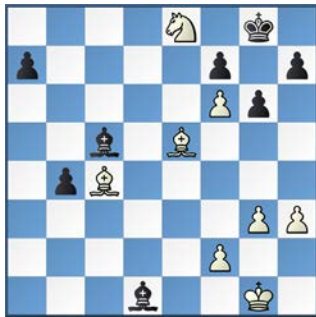
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30...a5 31.Nd6 a4 is too slow 32.Bxf7+ Kh8 33.Be6+- and f7 is coming.

31.Bc4!



Position after 31.Bc4

It is important that the bishop is used for attacking purposes and defending purposes at the same time. Here, it keeps an eye on both f7 and b3.

31...b3 32.Nd6 b2 33.Bd3

33.Bxf7+ Kf8 34.Ba2 was more accurate because after 34...Bc2 35.Bxb2 Bxd6 now there is 36.Bc1! and then Bh6 with f7 is game over 36...a5 37.Bh6+ Ke8 38.f7+-.

33...a5 34.Nc4

Now my knight is back into the game and the pawn on b2 falls.

34...a4 35.Bxb2

Now White should win without too much difficulty.

35...Bb3 36.Na3 g5 37.g4 Bd1 38.Nb5 Bb3 39.Kg2

Improving the king.

39...Bd5+ 40.f3 h6?!

40...Bb3 41.Ba3 Bb6 and now there are a couple winning plans but I really like the following 42.Be7 Be3 43.Nd6! a3 44.Nf5 a2 45.Nh6+ Kh8 46.Bf8 and Bg7 will be mate! 46...a1Q 47.Bg7#.

41.Bc2

Now the a-pawn falls as well so it is game over! An extremely fun game to play that was full of calculation!

1-0

**Ojas Kulkarni (2216) –
Mitrabha Guha (2484) [B13]**
Washington Open Chess.com
(R6), May 31, 2021
[Mitrabha Guha]

1.e4

Very interesting game where I managed to win from being a queen down for two minor pieces and a pawn.

1...c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c3 Nc6

5.Bf4

5.Bd3 Nf6 6.Bf4 Bg4 7.Qb3

5...Bf5 6.Nd2 e6 7.Ngf3 Nf6 8.Be2 Be7

8...Bd6 9.Bxd6 Qxd6 10.0-0 0-0

9.0-0 0-0 10.Nh4 Bg6

10...Be4 11.Nxe4 dxe4

11.Nxg6 hxg6 12.Re1 Bd6 13.Bg5

13.Bxd6 Qxd6 14.Nf3 Rab8 15.a4 a6

13...Rb8 14.a4 Qc7 15.g3 a6 16.Kg2 b5 17.axb5 axb5 18.h4 Nh7

18...b4 19.Bxf6 gxf6 20.h5 g5

19.Be3 Ne7 20.Bd3

20.h5 gxh5 21.Bd3 g6

20...Nf5

20...b4 21.c4 dxc4 22.Nxc4 Nf5

21.h5 b4

21...gxh5 22.Qxh5 Nf6 23.Qh3;

21...Nxe3+ 22.Rxe3 g5 23.Qg4

22.hxg6 fxg6 23.c4 Qf7

This provokes Qf3 which allows a tempo after ...Qb7:

23...Qb7 24.c5 Bxc5 25.dxc5 d4+ 26.Be4;

23...dxc4 24.Bxc4 Qc6+ 25.Kg1 Nxe3

26.Rxe3 Ng5 27.Qg4; 23...Nf6 24.c5.

24.Qf3 Qb7 25.Qe2 Nf6

25...dxc4+ 26.Be4

26.c5 Bxc5



Position after 26...Bxc5

27.Ba6

27.dxc5 d4+ 28.Qf3 dxe3; 27.Bxf5 exf5

28.dxc5 d4+ 29.Nf3 (29.Qf3 Qxf3+

30.Nxf3 dxe3 31.fxe3) 29...dxe3 30.Qxe3.

Engine shows this is clearly winning for White, but I thought this was equal during the game.

27...Qa8 28.Bd3 Qb7 29.Ba6 Qa8

Objectively, a draw is very good for Black as the position is clearly worse, but a draw for me would mean slipping from the joint first position.

30.Bd3 Ba7

Maybe too brave a decision as Black is just clearly lost here, but my opponent doesn't play accurately.

31.Bxf5

31.Rh1 Qb7 32.Nf3; 31.Nf3 Qb7 32.Rh1 Nxe3+ 33.fxe3

31...exf5

31...gxf5 32.Bf4

32.Bf4

32.Qa6 Bb6

32...Rbe8 33.Qa6

My opponent already offered a draw two times up to now.

33...Bxd4 34.Qd3 Ba7 35.Rxe8 Rxe8

36.Qa6 d4+

36...Re7 37.Bd6 Re6

37.Nf3

37.Kg1 d3!! 38.Qxa7 (38.Rf1 Bxf2+

39.Rxf2 Qxa6; 38.Nf3 Qxf3; 38.Nf1

Bxf2+ 39.Kxf2 Re2+ 40.Kg1 Qg2#)

38...Re1+ 39.Rxe1 Qxa7

37...Re7 38.Bd6 Rd7

I had planned to play 38...Rf7, but Rcl Rh1 forces a draw so again had to play the worse ...Rd7 for a win. 39.Rcl Kh7 40.Rc6 (40.Rc8 Qe4) 40...Ne4.

39.Bc5

39.Bxb4; 39.Rc1 Kh7

39...g5

I completely missed Qe6+ here when I played ...Rd7. When I saw after ...g5 I was in complete shock and offered a draw which my opponent rejected now.

40.Qe6+

40.Qc4+ Kh7 41.Rh1+ Kg6

40...Kh7 41.Qxf5+ Kg8 42.Qe6+ Kh7

43.g4 d3 44.Rh1+ Kg6 45.Qf5+ Kf7



Position after 45...Kf7

46.Kg1

We both missed the remarkable 46.Rh8 which instantly wins.

46...Qxf3 47.Qxf3 Bxc5

This is not that bad for Black as all my pieces are protected and I have the passed d3-pawn.

48.Kg2 Rd4 49.Qb7+

49.Rc1 d2 50.Rd1

49...Kg6 50.f3?

This weakens the e3-square.

50...d2 51.Rd1 Bd6! 52.Qc6 Bf4

Everything is protected. Black now needs to bring his rook to c1 or knight to e3.

53.Qc5 Rd6 54.Qf5+ Kf7

Black's king is very safe here while White's rook is tied down.

55.Kf1

55.Kf2! g6 56.Qc8 Nd5 57.Rh1

55...g6 56.Qc8 Nd5 57.Ke2 Ke7 58.Rh1 Re6+ 59.Kd3 Kd6 60.Rd1

60.Qb8+ Kc5 61.Qa7+ Kc6 62.Qa8+ Kd6 63.Qb8+; 60.Qd8+ Kc5

60...Re3+ 61.Kc2

61.Kxd2 Rc3+; 61.Kd4 Be5+ 62.Kc4 Nb6+

61...b3+ 62.Kb1 Re1 63.Qb8+ Kd7 64.Qb7+ Ke8 65.Qxb3 Ne3

I was trying to get to f6 without going to e7 first.

66.Qe6+

66.Qb5+ Kf7 67.Qd7+ (67.Qb3+ Kf6 68.Qc3+ Be5 69.Rxe1 Bxc3 70.Rxe3. There is no check now as the king is on f6) 67...Kf6.

66...Kd8 67.Qb6+ Kd7 68.Qb5+ Ke7 69.Qb4+ Bd6 70.Rxe1 d1Q+

This is the point of the whole variation starting from 60...Re3+. I think my opponent missed this intermediate move. Without this, White is clearly winning.

71.Rxd1 Bxb4 72.Rd3 Ng2 73.Rd4

73.Kc2 Ne1+

73...Bd6 74.Re4+ Kd7 75.Kc2 Kc6 76.b4 Nh4 77.Re3? Bxb4

Now Black will keep on grinding, but my opponent blunders in the next move.

78.Kd3 Bc5 79.Re6+ Kd5 80.Rf6 Be7 81.Ra6

81.Rf7 Ke6 82.Rg7 Nxf3 83.Rxg6+ Bf6 84.Rg8 Ne5+ 85.Ke4 Nxg4

81...Nxf3 82.Ke2

82.Rxg6 Ne5+

82...Ne5 83.Kf1 Bd6

83...Nxg4 84.Rxg6 Ke5 85.Ra6 Bf6 86.Ra5+ Kf4 87.Ra4+ Kf5 88.Ra5+ Be5

84.Ra4 Bc5 85.Kg2 Bd4 86.Kg3 Ke4 87.Ra6 Ke3 88.Re6 Ke4 89.Ra6 Nd3 90.Ra4 Ke3 91.Ra8 Be5+ 92.Kg2 Nf4+ 93.Kg3 Ne2+ 94.Kg2 Kf4 95.Ra4+ Bd4 96.Kf1

96.Kh3 Kf3 97.Ra3+ Be3

96...Kf3 97.Ra3+ Be3 98.Ra4 Nf4 99.Ra3 Ne2 100.Ra4 Ng3+ 101.Ke1 Bf4 102.Ra6 Kxg4 103.Kf2

103.Rxg6 Kf3

103...Kh5 104.Kf3 Nf5 105.Ra5 Nh4+ 106.Kf2 Kg4 107.Ra3 Kf5 108.Ra8 g4 109.Rf8+ Kg5 110.Ra8 g3+ 111.Kg1 Be3+

0-1

Alex Chow (1786) –
Valentin Razmov (1935) [B01]
Washington Open Chess.com
(R5), May 31, 2021
[Valentin Razmov]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qa5 4.d4 c6 5.Bd2

A rare and sharp move that requires precision; Black has to watch out for discovered attacks on the queen.

5...Nf6

5...Bf5 6.g4 Bg6 7.f4 e6 8.Qe2 Ne7 illustrates why Black has to be precise.; 5...Qb6?! does win a pawn for Black, but who wants to lag far behind on development as a result?

6.Bd3 Bg4 7.Nf3 Nbd7 8.h3 Bh5 9.Qe2 e6 10.g4 Bg6 11.Bxg6 hxg6

Both sides have been looking for the right time and direction to castle, depending on the opponent's choices, yet without revealing anything with certainty.

12.0-0-0 0-0-0?

A simple tactical oversight that defines the course of the game from here onward. Black loses the traditionally weak f7-pawn without compensation. Being pushed to the edge of defeat and surviving requires mental and emotional perseverance, clarity of vision, creativity, and deep knowledge in conducting the defense—precisely the qualities for the display of which from this point onward I am submitting this game for a brilliancy prize. 12...Be7 13.Kb1 Qc7 would have been a normal course of play instead.

13.Ng5 Re8 14.Nxf7 Rg8 15.Kb1

Avoiding threats of ...Qxa2 and thus freeing the knight on c3.

15...e5?!

Standing before a major strategic decision

about the course of the game, Black needs to take care of their two weak pawns on e6 and g6 without losing more material. The first concrete decision is to exchange the weak e6-pawn and to activate a piece in the process. If it wasn't for a brilliant potential refutation of this idea—which both players missed and which even a chess engine requires a full minute (!) of computation to “see”—this would have been a great move. In practice, it is still a great idea since not many humans would have found the best continuation for White here. I challenge the reader to look for another sensible move for White besides the obvious capture(s) on e5. 15...Qc7 16.Rhe1 is “correct” in the objective sense, but leaves White with a stable advantage and puts no particular challenges on their forward path.



Position after 15...e5

16.dxe5?!

16.Rhe1!! The reason why this positional queen sacrifice makes any sense is revealed once you see five moves deep: 16...exd4 17.Qxe8+ Nxe8 18.Rxe8+ Kc7 19.Bf4+ Kb6 20.Rxd4±. Black has no good moves here, it turns out, since all black pieces are poorly placed, resulting in a hopeless situation, both strategically and tactically. In reality, who in White's shoes would have a desire to sacrifice material—a queen, nonetheless—without a checkmate in sight, especially at a time when White is up a solid pawn and feels in command of the position! Psychologically such decisions tend to be very difficult.

16...Nxe5 17.Ne4?

After a surprisingly long thought, White emerges with a surprise, ironically one that hurts them more than it helps in the end. As White shared after the game, they were hoping to somehow capitalize on the tactical energy of the white knights near the center. I had only seriously considered the exchange of knights on e5: 17.Nxe5 Rxe5 18.Qd3±

17...Qd5!

After a long thought in turn, in the choice between 17...Qc7 and 17...Qd5, Black

opts for the more active move, intending to put White under some pressure and also laying a hidden tactical trap. 17...Qc7?! 18.Nfg5 Nf7 19.Qd3±

18.Nxf6

A precise decision! 18.Nfg5? was the start of the elaborate trap Black had laid. 18...Nxe4 19.Nxe4? (If 19.Qxe4 Qxe4 20.Nxe4 Nxg4 21.hxg4 Rxe4 and Black restores the balance.) 19...Nc4 Now Black even wins owing to elegant tactics! 20.f3?? (20.Rhe1 doesn't save White due to 20...Rxe4! 21.Qxe4 Nxd2+ 22.Rxd2 Qxd2 23.Qe6+ Kc7= The black rook on g8 is invulnerable due to White's back-rank weakness.; 20.Rde1? Rxe4 21.Qxe4 Nxd2+-) 20...Qb5! and White has a choice between being checkmated and losing the queen to a discovered attack.

18...gxf6

Even though the trap didn't "snap," Black still emerged with another small victory—now their second weak king-side pawn has also been fixed.

19.Nxe5 Rxe5 20.Be3

In a challenging situation, White makes a slippery decision—the bishop is now pinned to the queen, which sets the stage for Black's endgame plan. 20.Qf1 Qf3 is apparently the better choice for White, according to the engine, but once again difficult to make due to White's passive-looking queen on f1, in contrast to Black's active queen on f3.

20...Qe6 21.Rhe1?

This logical looking move only simplifies Black's defensive job, as it allows an easy exchange of bishops. Black had already pre-meditated to transition into a rook endgame or a queen endgame as a path toward rescuing the draw. Both of these types of endgames offer considerable drawing chances when defending a pawn down and often even with two pawns down. White's only realistic chance for continuing to play for a win was to keep the bishops on board, if possible, or to create some weakness in Black's camp. 21.Qd2 Bc5 22.Bf4? (or 22.Bxc5 Rxc5 23.Rhe1 Re5 24.Rxe5 fxe5 25.Qe3± looks like White's best chance forward due to Black's weakened central pawns.) 22...Rd5= Even though the bishop survives the exchange, Black gets back their pawn (on f2).; 21.Qd3!? Bc5 22.Bxc5 Rxc5 23.Rhe1 (or 23.Qa3 Qc4 24.Rc1 a5) 23...Re5 24.Rxe5 fxe5 25.b3 and White similarly retains winning chances due to weaknesses in Black's position.

21...Bc5 22.Qd2

22.Rd3 Bxe3 23.fxe3

22...Bxe3 23.Rxe3

23.fxe3 Rd5± was possible too, keeping more material. Still, the weakened, isolated white e3-pawn, coupled with no clear targets in Black's position and no passed pawn for White, suggests that a draw is the most likely result here.

23...Rxe3 24.fxe3

24.Qxe3?! Black could force the draw by 24...Qxe3 25.fxe3 Rh8 (25...Re8 should still work, but is a bit less clear after 26.Rd3 Rh8 27.e4 Re8 28.Re3 Kd7=) 26.Rh1 Re8 27.Re1 (If 27.h4!? Rxe3 28.h5 gxh5 29.gxh5 Re7= Black blockades the passed pawn and then centralizes their king, while White's rook is passive due to the need to constantly defend its h-pawn.) 27...Rh8= with a logical repetition.

24...Re8 25.b3

Calling Black's bluff attack on e3.

25...Qd5!



Position after 25...Qd5

A nice touch, forcing further exchanges into a choice of technically drawn endgames. 25...Qxe3? The e3-pawn is invulnerable due to 26.Qd7+ Kb8 27.Qd6+ Kc8 28.Qxf6± and suddenly White is close to creating a king-side passed pawn, giving them plausible winning chances.

26.Qxd5

26.Qe2!? but then suddenly 26...Rxe3! 27.Qxe3 Qxd1+ 28.Kb2 and seemingly White wins back their extra pawn, either on a7 or on g6 (via a queen check on e8), except 28...Qd6! and Black manages to maintain equal material or else delivers a perpetual check, since White's queen would be outside of the action on a7 or g6, unable to help its own king avoid the black queen's checks or avert a further loss of a pawn. Other options are much worse for Black: (28...Qf1?! 29.Qe8+ Kc7 30.Qf7+ Kc8 31.g5!±; 28...Qh1? 29.Qe8+ Kc7 30.Qe7+ Kc8 31.Qxf6 Qxh3 32.Qxg6 Qh8+ 33.Ka3 Qf8+ 34.b4±) 29.Qxa7 should be drawn after (29.Qe8+ is equal too after 29...Kc7 30.Qxg6 Qe5+

31.c3 Qh2+=) 29...Qe5+ 30.c3 Qh2+=

26...cxd5 27.Rxd5 Rxe3 28.Rd6 Rf3!

Avoiding a trap—both f6- and g6-pawns were in danger.

29.Rd3 Rf1+

The king-and-pawn endgame would, expectedly, be lost for Black with a pawn down, so there's no reason to want to exchange rooks.

30.Kb2 Kc7

Activating the king and restricting the white rook's options.

31.Kc3 f5

Time to exchange pawns and simplify the position. Black's goal is to eliminate all king-side pawns, while keeping the king close to its minority (two vs three pawns) on the queen-side.

32.gxf5 Rxf5

Not allowing White to have a passed h-pawn.

33.Kd2?!

33.Rg3 Rf4 34.a4 Rh4

33...Rf2+ 34.Kc3 Rg2

"Sticking" to the c2-pawn, thus restricting the white king's movement also.

35.a4 a5

Limiting the queen-side pawns' movement too, or at least demanding that it happen at the cost of more simplifying pawn exchanges.

36.h4!?

Setting a creative trap for defenders who may be overly eager to exchange pawns quickly.

36...b6!

36...g5? 37.h5 Rh2 38.Rd5 Rxh5 39.Rxa5 and White may have renewed winning chances deep in the endgame due to the three vs one majority on the queen side.

37.Rd4 g5

Now White cannot avoid the king-side pawn exchanges.

38.Rc4+ Kb7

Staying close to the pawns for a further reassuring defense.

39.hxg5 Rxg5 40.Kd4 Rh5 41.Kc3 Rg5

Black declares a "no-crossing zone" along the fifth rank.

42.Rd4 Rg2

Back to the "sticking" defense—limiting the white king's mobility.

43.Rc4 Rh2 44.Re4 Rg2 45.Kd3 Rg3+ 46.Kc4 Rg2 47.Kb5?!

White finally gives up trying to move forward all queen-side pawns together. 47.c3 Rg5 (47...Rb2 should be drawn in all cases.)

47...Rxc2 48.Re7+ Rc7

Just in time!

49.Rxc7+

Of course, not 49.Re6?? Rc5#.

49...Kxc7 50.b4

Game drawn by agreement and after just over four hours of play, the game ended peacefully. A good accomplishment by Black, steering the ship to safety from what looked like a stormy ocean after the early loss of a critical pawn.

1/2-1/2

**Parker Betz (1588) –
Gabriel Razmov (1495) [B01]**

Washington Open (Reserve) Chess.com
(R3), May 30, 2021
[Gabriel Razmov]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qa5 4.d4 Nf6 5.Bc4 Bf5

5...Nc6 is a weird move to play in an opening like a Scandinavian, since usually you would play ...c6, but for some reason, the computer likes it.

6.Nf3 c6 7.Bg5

In some cases, an earlier 7.Ne5 could end up benefiting White. Apparently, here it is good to do so. In my experience, in the Scandinavian, I have seen Ne5 played by White, but almost always around move 10.

7...Nbd7 8.0-0

The computer points out the interesting alternative 8.Bd2, which seems counterintuitive because you just put the white bishop on g5, and now you are retreating it. The idea is to create a discovered attack like Nd5 or Ne4, which would force the black queen to retreat to c7 or d8, depending on where the knight lands.

8...e6 9.h3?!

A bit premature. 9.Bf4. Again, Komodo suggests a retreating bishop move, which further supports Ne5 and removes the c7-square from use of the black queen. It also runs away from a h7-h6 tempo later. Often, you might play ...Qc7 early, just to stop Bf4 from happening, since playing g3 to play Bf4 is a weakening.

9...Be7

9...Bd6 developing the bishop was also good here.

10.Re1 0-0

Up to here, I have pretty much been blitzing out the opening, because I have experience with it. After around move ten, I always start thinking, though I still know some general middlegame plans/ideas for Black. 10...h6 is another possibility.

11.Ne5?!

11.Bf4

11...Qd8?!

11...Nxe5 here was better, for instance 12.dxe5 Nd5 13.Bxe7 Nxe7 14.Qe2 Rfd8

12.Bf4

12.g4 was also possible. 12...Bg6 13.Nxg6 hxg6 with approximate equality.

12...Nb6 13.Bb3

13.Bf1 is another possibility.

13...Nbd5

13...h6 was also good, even though it no longer gets a tempo on the bishop.

14.Nxd5 cxd5

Opening the c-file.

15.c3

15.g4 was again possible. 15...Bg6

15...Rc8?!

Rushing a bit too much. 15... h6 would have still been good.

16.Bc2?!

Returning the favor, but at the same time trying to trade the bishops.

16...Bxc2

I oblige. 16...Ne4 17.Qe2 Nd6 trying to get to c4, is a worthwhile alternative idea.

17.Qxc2 Bd6

17...Ne4 was again good here.

18.Bg5 h6 19.Bh4

The engine also likes 19.Bxf6, doubling the pawns.

19...Be7

Unpinning.

20.Qa4 a6 21.Bxf6 Bxf6 22.Nd7 Re8 23.Nc5 Qc7 24.Qb3 Rb8 25.Na4?

Handing the advantage over to Black. 25.Nd3 getting out of any possible trouble was better.

25...b6! 26.Rac1?!

26.Qd1 was almost forced here, to play b3 and give the b2-square to the Knight as an escape route.

26...Rec8?!

I should have played ...Bg5, attacking the rook on c1, followed by going back ...Be7.

27.Qd1

My opponent finds the escape on second chance.

27...Be7 28.b3?

Losing. I was 100% expecting b4 from my opponent.

28...Ba3!

I had foreseen this win of a pawn.

29.Rc2 b5 30.Nc5 Bxc5 31.dxc5 Qxc5 32.Qg4 d4 33.c4 bxc4?

Giving away a lot of my advantage. 33...Rd8 was much better than taking.

34.Rxc4!

Of course! Now I don't get to push my pawn home, and I had to find some creative ideas not to give away my advantage.

34...Qa5! 35.b4 Qxa2 36.Rxd4

Trading rooks on c8 and then playing Qxd4 was also good.

36...Rb5 37.Rf4 Rcb8?!

Ok, but 37...Qd2 was even better.

38.Qf3 e5 39.Rfe4 Rxb4

39...Qe6 was better, since 40.Qc3 Rc8.

40.Rxe5 Rb1 41.Qd3?!

Handing Black even stronger advantage.

41...Rxe1+?!

41...Qa1 was better, since 42.Re8+?! Rxe8 the white rook is pinned. 43.Rxb1 Re1+ 44.Rxe1 Qxe1+ 45.Kh2.

42.Rxe1 a5 43.g3?!

43.Re7 trying to counterattack was a better choice, though still advantageous for Black.

43...a4 44.Kg2?!

44.Re7 still had to be played.

44...a3?

Losing everything I had worked for! 44...Qb3 was still winning, but I think I was a bit too confident. Too overconfident, to be precise.

45.Re2 Qa1 46.Qd6! Ra8 47.Qd5 Ra4??

Losing! 47...Rb8 would have kept a slight edge for Black, though the most likely result here would be a draw.

48.Re8+ Kh7 49.Qf5+??

Equal again! The evaluation bar must have been having a heart attack around

here. :) 49.Qxf7 was winning, since 49...a2 50.Qf5+ g6 51.Re7+. Both of us missed this!

49...g6 50.Qxf7+ Qg7 51.Qa2 Ra7 52. Rb8 h5 53.h4 Qe5



Position after 53...Qe5

54.Rb3??

Losing again! 54.Qg8+, and my plan was 54...Kh6 55.Qf8+? (55.Rb6 Qg7 was still equal.) 55...Qg7, winning!

54...Qc5??

And as soon as I played this, I almost slapped my forehead for missing a simple win. 54...Qd5+! wins, since 55.Kh2 Qxb3!! I utilized a similar idea to win the game, but I missed it here!

55.Re3 Qd6 56.Re6??

56.Re1 and a lot of other moves were still equal.

56...Qxe6!!

Finally!

57.Qxe6 a2 58.g4 hxg4?!

Making a queen right away was also good, and probably better.

59.h5!

Now, I have to dodge persistent checks from White's queen.

59...a1Q 60.Qxg6+ Kh8 61.Qe8+?!

61.Qh6+ was a better try, but still lost for White.

61...Kg7 62.Qg6+ Kf8 63.Qf5+ Rf7 64.Qc5+ Kg8 65.Qg5+ Qg7 66.Qd8+ Kh7 67.Qd3+ Kh6 68.Qd6+ Rf6 69.Qd2+ Qg5

After this, the checks are done.

70.Qd8? Rxf2+

Here, my opponent decided to resign, since he would be down a full Queen, and he knows I am good enough to engineer a checkmate. Overall, a very good game and good ideas for counterplay by White around moves 45–50. I feel like the part I really got the advantage in was when his knight was almost trapped on the side of the board. After that, he valiantly fought

back to winning on move 49 but missed the chance, after which the only reason I won this game was his final game-changing blunder (56. Re6??). Otherwise, I'm almost positive we would have split the point.

0–1

Nicholas Whale (2080) –
Harry Bell (2000) [A36]
Washington Open Chess.com
(R6), May 31, 2021
[Harry Bell]

1.e4 c5 2.c4 Nc6 3.Nc3 g6 4.g3 Bg7 5.Bg2 Nf6 6.Nge2 d6 7.0-0 e5

The computer says that launching the h-pawn (7...h5) at this point is indicated instead.

8.d3 0-0 9.h3 Nd4 10.Be3 Be6

No need to play h6 first before moving the bishop here since the knight cannot harass it on g5.

11.Rb1 a5 12.f4 Ne8 13.Nd5 Nc7

The computer hates this knight maneuver, preferring exchanging both white knights followed by and moving the knight back to f6. 13...Nxe2+ 14.Qxe2 Bxd5 15.cxd5 exf4 16.Rxf4

14.Nec3

White missed a crushing f5-push with: 14.Nxc7 Qxc7 15.f5 gxf5 16.Bxd4 cxd4 17.exf5

14...Nxd5 15.Nxd5 Bxd5 16.cxd5 Qe7 17.Bxd4 exd4 18.Qb3 Qd7 19.Rbe1 Rfe8 20.g4 f6 21.Qd1 b5 22.h4 h6 23.g5 hxg5 24.hxg5 fxg5 25.f5

Now my bishop can come to e5 and block the e- and f-files.

25...Be5 26.fxg6 Bf4 27.Qh5 Qg7 28. Bh3 Qh8 29.Qxh8+ Kxh8 30.Bd7 Reb8 31.Kf2 Kg7 32.Rh1 Rh8 33.Bxb5 Kxg6 34.b3 g4



Position after 34...g4

I think I realized here that my g-pawn would wind up on h2 protected forever by my unopposed dark bishop.

35.Kg2 g3 36.Ref1 Be5 37.Bd7 Rh2+ 38.Rxh2 gxh2 39.Bf5+ Kh5 40.Be6 Kg6 41.Bf5+ Kg7 42.Be6 a4 43.Bd7 axb3 44.axb3 Ra2+

Now nothing can be done about the ensuing mate on g1.

45.Kh1 Kg6 46.Bf5+ Kg5 47.Bd7 Kh4 48.Be8 Rb2 49.Ba4 Kg3 50.Bb5 Rxb3 51.Bc4 Rb2 52.Ba6 Rd2 53.Bc4 Bf4 54.Bb5 Be3 55.e5 Rg2

Game may have continued... 55...Rg2 56.Rf3+ Kxf3 57.Bd7 Kg3 58.Bg4 Rg1#

0–1

Ignacio Perez (2229) –
Harry Bell (2000) [D15]
Washington Open Chess.com
(R4), May 30, 2021
[Harry Bell]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 a6 5.Bg5 Ne4 6.Bf4 Qa5 7.Rc1 e6 8.e3 Bb4 9.Be2 Nxc3 10.bxc3 Bxc3+ 11.Kf1 Nd7 12.c5

Around here I realized I might have difficulty extricating my bishop and queen.

12...Bb4 13.Bd3 Qd8 14.h4 Ba5 15.Qc2 h6 16.Rh3 Bc7 17.Bxc7 Qxc7 18.Rg3 Kf8

18...0-0

19.Re1 f5 20.Rg6 Kf7 21.h5 Nf6

21...Rf8

22.Ne5+ Kf8 23.f3 Bd7 24.g4 Be8 25.Qh2

25.gxf5

25...Kg8

Avoiding the loss of my queen. 25...Bxg6 26.Nxg6+

26.gxf5 Bxg6 27.fxg6 Nd7 28.Kf2 Nxe5 29.dxe5 Qe7 30.Bf1 Kf8 31.Rb1 Ke8 32.f4 Rf8 33.Qg3 Kd8 34.Bh3 Kc7 35.f5 Qxc5 36.Kg1 Qc2 37.Rf1 Rxf5 38.Bxf5 exf5 39.e6+ Kb6 40.Qe5 Qe4 41.Qxe4 dxe4

Now if 42.Rxf5 my rook has time to capture the e- and h-pawns.

42.Rd1 Re8 43.Rd7 c5 44.Kf2 Rxe6

It looks like I was technically lost after this move. 44...c4 was necessary.

45.Rxg7 c4 46.Ke2

46.Rh7 c3 47.g7 Re8 48.Rxh6+ Kb5 49.Rg6

46...Rd6 47.Rf7 c3 48.Rxf5 Rd2+ 49.Ke1 Rg2

49...Rd7

50.Kd1 Kc6 51.Re5 b5 52.Rxe4 Kc5
53.Re8 Kc4 54.Rd8 a5 55.e4 b4 56.e5 a4
57.e6 b3 58.axb3+ axb3 59.e7 c2+

0-1

Harry Bell (2000) –
Arjun Yadav (553) [A36]
Washington Open Chess.com
(R3), May 30, 2021
[Harry Bell]

1.c4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7
5.e4 d6 6.Nge2 a6 7.0-0 Rb8 8.a4 Nf6
9.d3 h5 10.h3 Bd7 11.Nd5 0-0 12.Be3 e6
13.Ndc3 Nb4 14.Qd2?

14.e5 dxe5 15.Bxc5 wins the exchange
for a pawn.

14...Bc6 15.e5?

Now this is not good.

15...Nh7 16.exd6 Qxd6 17.d4 Bxg2
18.Kxg2 cxd4 19.Nxd4 Rfd8 20.Rfd1
Bxd4?

20...Qc5 21.Nf3 Rxd2 22.Bxc5 Rxb2 puts
White a clean pawn ahead.

21.Qxd4 Qxd4 22.Rxd4 Rxd4 23.Bxd4
Rd8 24.Rd1 Nc2 25.Bb6 Rxd1 26.Nxd1
Kf8 27.Bc5+

Now the knight on c2 will be hard pressed
to escape.

27...Ke8 28.Ne3 Ne1+ 29.Kf1 Nd3
30.Bd4 Kd7?

30...e5?

31.Nc2 Kd6 32.Ke2 Nc1+ 33.Ke3 e5
34.Bc3 Na2 35.Bd2 Kc5 36.Kd3?

36.b3

36...Nf6?

36...e4+

37.b4+ Kc6 38.f3 Nd7 39.Ne3 b5
40.axb5+ axb5 41.e5 Nb8 42.Kc2 Na6
43.Kb3 N2xb4 44.Bxb4 Nxc5+ 45.Kc3
Ne6 46.Be7 Nd4 47.f4 exf4 48.Kxd4
fxe3 49.Kxe3 Kd5 50.Kf4 Ke6 51.Bb4
f6 52.Ke4 g5 53.Kd4 Kf5 54.Be7 Ke6
55.Bd8?

55.Bb4

55...g4?? 56.h4

Now the win is easy.

56...f5 57.Bc7 Kd7 58.Bf4 Ke6 59.Kc5
Kf6 60.Kxb5 Ke6 61.Kc5 Kf7 62.Kd6
Kg6 63.Ke6 Kg7 64.Kxf5 Kf7 65.Kg5
Kg7 66.Kxh5 Kh7 67.Kxg4 Kg6 68.h5+
Kg7 69.Kf5 Kh8 70.g4 Kh7 71.g5 Kg8
72.Kg6 Kh8 73.h6 Kg8 74.h7+ Kf8
75.h8Q+ Ke7 76.Qf6+ Kd7

Game may have continued 76...Kd7
77.Kf7 Kc8 78.Qc6+ Kd8 79.Qc7#

1-0

Hannah Nami Gajcowski (608) –
Cleveland Johnson (1379) [E21]
Washington Open Chess.com
(R1), May 29, 2021
[Hannah Nami Gajcowski]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Bg5 0-0
5.Nf3 b6 6.a3 Bxc3+ 7.bxc3 Ba6 8.e4

Here, I wanted to take control of the d5-
square since my opponent hadn't moved
their pawn to take over that center square.
I was also preparing e5, which would win
the pinned f6-knight.

8...h6 9.Bh4 g5 10.Nxg5

Since Black was castled kingside, I
wanted to break open the pawn structure
as well as keep the pin on the knight.

10...hxg5 11.Bxg5 d6

This is the best move here to prevent e5,
which would win the knight.

12.Bd3 Nbd7 13.0-0 e5 14.d5

Right here I could've played 14.f4!
exd4 15.cxd4 getting the ultimate pawn
structure.

14...Nc5 15.Re1 Bc8 16.Re3 Bg4 17.Bxf6

Instead of trading queens coming out a
bishop ahead, I could've kept the queens
on the board because of the open black
king.

17...Bxd1 18.Bxd8 Nxd3 19.Rxd3 Be2
20.Rg3+ Kh7 21.Bxc7 Rac8 22.Bxd6
Rfe8 23.Re1 Bxc4 24.Ree3 Rcd8

25.Bb4??

Here I could've gone 25.Rh3+ Kg6
26.Reg3+ Kf6 27.Rh6#.

25...a5

Here I saw the mate! However, I thought
that I had found a faster mate.

26.Rg4



Position after 26.Rg4

26...Re6

I had missed this move! If I took the rook,
then I would suffer from a back rank mate.

27.h3

This was to stop the mate.

27...Rg6 28.Rxg6 Kxg6 29.Be7 Rd7
30.Rg3+ Kh7 31.Bf6 Kh6 32.Bxe5

1-0

Lane Van Weerdhuizen (1878) –
Ryan Ackerman (1922) [C21]
Washington Open Chess.com
(R2), May 29, 2021
[Lane Van Weerdhuizen]

Ackerman and I were playing a rematch,
having just played against each other in
the Washington Invitational back in
February. This time I had the white
pieces. I think this is the first time
Northwest Chess will ever have a Danish
Gambit game submitted to them! I just
started using chess engines recently and
I'm noticing engines really dislike my
gambits. But I enjoy forcing my opponent
to continually find the best move to refute
a gambit!

Standings. WA Open Chess960 Championship

Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Total	Prize
1	Mitrabha Guha	2484	W9	D2	W3	W4	W7	4.5	1st
2	Rohan Talukdar	2431	W11	D1	D5	W6	W3	4	2nd
3-5	David Shahinyan	2531	W8	W4	L1	W5	L2	3	
	Ignacio Perez	2229	W7	L3	W9	L1	W10	3	Best NW Player
	Ojas Kulkarni	2216	W10	D6	D2	L3	W9	3	
6-7	Valentin Razmov	1986	H---	D5	D8	L2	W11	2.5	U2000
	Michael Rabadan	1449	L4	D8	W10	W11	L1	2.5	U1700
8-10	Edward Cheng	1748	L3	D7	D6	L10	B---	2	
	Stephen Willy	1703	L1	W11	L4	B---	L5	2	
	Gabriel Razmov	1425	L5	B---	L7	W8	L4	2	
11	James Hamlett	1562	L2	L9	B---	L7	L6	1	

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.c3 dxc3

One of the best ways to neutralize this gambit is ...d5 instead of ...dxc3. If I played Nxc3, this turns into the Goring Gambit. My next move is what turns this into the Danish Gambit.

4.Bc4 cxb2 5.Bxb2

This is such a fun opening having a really strong pair of bishops targeting some key diagonals. Along with my queen controlling a half-open d-file, my development and center control are superb.

5...Nf6 6.Nc3 Bb4 7.Bxf7+

7.e5 is also playable but can turn into some counter attacking with 7...d5; Analysis prefers 7.Qb3 here instead of Bxf7+. This forces 7...Bxc3+ followed by 8.Qxc3 and some strong diagonal control. I didn't want to let Ackerman castle and saw an opportunity to win a pawn back!

7...Kxf7 8.Qb3+ d5

This is a great move here as it lets Black gain some center control.

9.Qxb4 Nc6 10.Qb3 Nd4 11.Qa4



Position after 11.Qa4

Black has done a great job here developing his knight with tempo. Analysis shows Black at a 3.3 advantage here until Black's next move. Black's best move here was ...c5. This move gives black more space, protects the Knight on d4, and limits

White's queen movement.

11...dxe4

This mistake turns analysis into +0.0, which is fantastic for a position where White is technically down two pawns. My next move was bold and felt, perhaps, too aggressive. But ended up being the best move!

12.0-0-0 c5

Pinning the knight and forcing Black to play ...c5 sets up my next plan of trying to remove the new defender for the knight.

13.Qc4+ Kg6?

This move was questionable. Black needs to develop his bishop to e6. Analysis just went from +0 to +3.3.

14.Qxc5 Ne6!

Ackerman found a move that really shocked me here. I looked at Rxd8, Rxh8, but I saw Black could play ...Nxc5, ...Nd3+, and ...Nxf2 trapping my Rook. Ackerman and I actually looked at this line, and it ended up with a +3 advantage for White. I missed this and thought Ackerman had found a genius escape. I elected to avoid trading pieces to keep my attack going.

15.Qe5 Qc7

Black tries to trade queens while getting his queen to a stronger square. We are now back at +0.4 as I missed the previous move of Rxd8. Anticipating ...Qc7, I already had my next move planned out.

16.Rd6 Re8 17.f4

This move looks kind of crazy, but my goal here is to develop my g1-knight and also keep my initiative while threatening f5+. Analysis thought this move and Qg3+ were equal.

17...exf3

This move was a blunder and turned my advantage to +3.8. My knight is now

really strong and my rook is now able to get into the game. Black's best move here was a hard-to-find ...Qc5.

18.Nxf3 Qc4?

The goal of this move was to try to play ...Qf4+ and force a queen trade. Unfortunately, this move gave my knight a key square to move to and cause a couple of forks with potential Ne5+.

19.Qg3+ Kh6 20.Rxe6 g6 21.Qg5+ Kg7 22.Qxf6+

1-0

Washington Open Chess960 Championship

By Josh Sinanan

The Washington Open Chess960 Championship was held online via Chess.com on Saturday May 29 in the evening shortly after round two of the main tournament. Chess players from throughout the world were represented in the 11-player field, from regions including Seattle, Shoreline, Yakima, Sammamish, Ontario (CAN), Yerevan (ARM), and Bangalore (IND).

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 five-round, G/12;+5, Swiss tournament consisted of one section with players ranging in rating from 1400 to 2500. Every round featured a different Fischer-random starting position, which the players had a chance to study for two minutes before clocks were started.

IM Mitrabha Guha (4.5, 2484), a Chess960 expert from India, won the tournament with an undefeated 4.5 points

Standings. Washington Open G/10 Championship

Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Total	Prize
1	Mitrabha Guha	2484	W7	W11	W4	W2	W10	W5	6	1st
2	David Shahinyan	2531	W14	D10	W6	L1	W11	W4	4.5	2nd
3	Edward Cheng	1748	L4	W16	L8	W14	W15	W10	4	U2000, NW Region
4-7	Bala Chandra Prasad Dhulipalla	2523	W3	W5	L1	D11	W6	L2	3.5	
	Stephen Willy	1699	X19	L4	D14	W7	W8	L1	3.5	U1700
	Valentin Razmov	1986	X18	D9	L2	W12	L4	W13	3.5	
	Nikash Vemparala	1824	L1	D13	W17	L5	W14	W11	3.5	
8	Alex Chow	1829	W17	L12	W3	L10	L5	X15	3	
9-13	Rohan Talukdar	2431	W13	D6	W10	U--	U--	U--	2.5	
	Ignacio Perez	2229	W15	D2	L9	W8	L1	L3	2.5	
	Ojas Kulkarni	2216	W16	L1	W12	D4	L2	L7	2.5	
	Davey V Jones	1819	H--	W8	L11	L6	L13	W16	2.5	
	Varun Kumar	1545	L9	D7	L15	W17	W12	L6	2.5	
14-16	Yiding Lu	1809	L2	W15	D5	L3	L7	D17	2	
	James Hamlett	1562	L10	L14	W13	W16	L3	F8	2	
	Lois Ruff	1235	L11	L3	B---	L15	W17	L12	2	U1400, Female
17	Jeffery Klink	975	L8	B---	L7	L13	L16	D14	1.5	U1100
18-19	Aleksej Aleksandrov	2708	F6	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	0	
	Gabe Vogel	1098	F5	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	0	

from five games. FM Rohan Talukdar (4.0, 2431) from Ontario (CAN) finished in second place, half-a-point back, with three wins and two draws. FM Ignacio Perez (3.0, 2229), the Cuban speed chess wizard himself, finished on 3-2 and claimed the Best NW Player prize. Seattle's Valentin Razmov (2.5, 1986) and Yakima's Michael Rabadan (2.5, 1449) captured the U2000 and U1700 prizes, respectively, each with an even 2.5-point score.

Washington Open G/10 Championship

By Josh Sinanan

The Washington Open G/10 Championship was held in the evening on Sunday, May 30 online via chess.com. Chess players from across the globe were represented in the 17-player field, from cities including Seattle, Spokane, Shoreline, Bothell, Redmond, Bellevue, Lake Forest Park, Sammamish, Ontario (CAN), Yerevan (ARM), and Bangalore (IND). The six-round, G/10;+3, Swiss tournament consisted of one section with players ranging in rating from unrated all the way up to 2580! There were many exciting and entertaining games throughout the evening, including an epic 50-move draw featuring a K+Q vs. K+N endgame!

IM Mitrabha Guha (6.0, 2484), a strong International Master from India who has become a fixture in WCF online tournaments recently, emerged victorious with a perfect six points from six games! Armenian ChessMood Star IM David Shahinyan (4.5, 2531) claimed second place honors a point and a half back with 4.5 points. Young rising star Edward Cheng (4.0, 1748) from Detective Cookie's Chess School in Seattle took home the U2000 prize and the Best NW Player prize with four points after a huge win against FM Ignacio Perez in the final round. Sammamish Chess Prince Stephen Willy (3.5, 1699) took down the U1700 prize with a very respectable 3.5 points. Legendary Seattle Chess Queen Lois Ruff (2.0, 1235) won the U1400 prize and the Best Female prize.

Newcomer Jeffrey Klink (1.5, 975) from Bothell showed tremendous courage playing against such strong opposition in his first ever tournament and was awarded the U1100/unrated prize for his efforts.

Washington Open Blitz Championship

By Josh Sinanan

The Washington Open Blitz Championship took place in the evening of Memorial Day Monday online via Chess.com. Chess players from across

the globe were represented in the 25-player field, from places including Seattle, Spokane, Sammamish, Shoreline, Redmond, Bellevue, Beaverton (OR), St. Louis (MO), Ontario (CAN) and India. The 11-round, G/3;+2 Swiss Blitz tournament featured one super strong Open section with a star-studded field that included two GMs, three IMs, two FM's, three NM's, and one WCM! There were numerous exciting games throughout the evening featuring daring attacks, brilliant sacrifices, and crafty defenses!

GM Stany George Anthony (9.5, 2502), a strong Grandmaster from India, emerged victorious with an astounding 9.5 points from 11 games! Local star and renowned chess coach IM Georgi Orlov (9.0, 2507) finished in second place half-a-point back with nine points and was awarded the Best NW Region Player prize. Edward Cheng (6.0, 1748), an eighth grader from Detective Cookie's Chess School in Seattle, won the U2000 prize with a very respectable six points. Half-a-point behind Edward were youngsters Stephen Willy (5.5, 1699) and Varin Nallabothula (5.5, 1616), who shared U1700 honors with 5.5 points apiece. Seattle-based WCM Mary Kuhner (5.0, 1932) was the highest-finishing female player with five points. Liuxixiang Chen (1.0, 700), a 3rd grader from Sammamish, showed great courage playing in such a tough field and won the U1400 prize with one point.

Standings. Washington Open Blitz Championship

Place	Name	Rating	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Rd 7	Rd 8	Rd 9	Rd 10	Rd 11	Total	Prize
1	Stany George Anthony	2502	W12	W9	D4	W6	L2	W3	W14	W5	W11	W8	W16	9.5	1st
2	Georgi Orlov	2507	W18	W7	W14	W3	W1	W5	L4	W6	L8	W13	W11	9	2nd, NW Region
3	Alex Lenderman	2728	W11	W8	W5	L2	W10	L1	D6	W4	W14	W16	W17	8.5	
4	Bala Chandra Prasad Dhulipalla	2336	W17	W16	D1	L5	D14	W10	W2	L3	W6	W9	W8	8	
5	Daniel He	2352	W19	W20	L3	W4	W11	L2	W9	L1	W15	W10	D6	7.5	
6-7	Ojas Kulkarni	2216	H---	W15	D8	L1	W19	W20	D3	L2	L4	W12	D5	6	
	Edward Cheng	1748	W15	L2	L10	L19	W25	L12	W21	W17	L13	W24	W18	6	U2000
8-13	Samuel He	2291	W21	L3	D6	W12	L9	L15	W20	W16	W2	L1	L4	5.5	
	Ignacio Perez	2229	W22	L1	W20	L10	W8	W18	L5	D11	L16	L4	W21	5.5	
	Stephen Willy	1699	X27	L23	W7	W9	L3	L4	L15	W18	W20	L5	D13	5.5	U1700
	Vihaan Jammalamadaka	1788	L3	W19	W24	W16	L5	L14	W18	D9	L1	W15	L2	5.5	
	Varin Nallabothula	1616	L1	D21	W15	L8	L17	W7	L13	W25	W24	L6	W22	5.5	U1700
	Ryan S Ackerman	1957	L23	W22	W25	L14	L18	L16	W12	W19	W7	L2	D10	5.5	
14-20	Mitrabha Guha	2484	H---	W25	L2	W13	D4	W11	L1	W15	L3	U---	U---	5	
	Derin Goktepe	1978	L7	L6	L12	W22	W21	W8	W10	L14	L5	L11	W24	5	
	Krishnan Warrior	2127	W24	L4	W18	L11	L20	W13	W19	L8	W9	L3	L1	5	
	Isaac Vega	1973	L4	L18	W21	L20	W12	L19	W24	L7	W22	W25	L3	5	
	Michael Shapiro	1683	L2	W17	L16	W24	W13	L9	L11	L10	W25	W19	L7	5	
	Nikash Vemparala	1824	L5	L11	W22	W7	L6	W17	L16	L13	W21	L18	B---	5	
	Mary Kuhner	1932	X26	L5	L9	W17	W16	L6	L8	W22	L10	L21	W25	5	Female
21	Valentin Razmov	1986	L8	D12	L17	W25	L15	W22	L7	W24	L19	W20	L9	4.5	
22	James Hamlett	1562	L9	L13	L19	L15	W24	L21	W25	L20	L17	B---	L12	3	
23-24	Rohan Talukdar	2416	W13	W10	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	2	
	Arjun Yadav	1412	L16	B---	L11	L18	L22	W25	L17	L21	L12	L7	L15	2	
25	Liuxixiang Chen	700	B---	L14	L13	L21	L7	L24	L22	L12	L18	L17	L20	1	U1400
26-27	Aleksej Aleksandrov	2708	F20	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	0	
	Aiden Zhu	1242	F10	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	U---	0	

A Northwest Chess Grand Prix Event

5th Annual Seattle Chess Classic



August 13-15, 2021

Online via  Chess.com

Format: A 9-round Swiss in two sections: Open and Reserve U1800. Hosted by the Washington Chess Federation. Dual US Chess Online and NWSRS Rated.

Entry fee: \$90 by 8/6, \$100 after. Non-members of WCF/OCF/ICA add \$15. \$40 Play-up fee if rated under 1800 playing in Open section. Free entry for GM/IM/WGM or US Chess Rating 2400+.

Time Control: G/75; +15. Late Default: 10 minutes.

Schedule: Fri./Sat./Sun. @ 10 AM, 2 PM, 6 PM.

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

Open: 1st \$300, 2nd \$200, 3rd \$150, 1st U2200/U2000: \$100, Best NW Player (by TPR): \$50

Reserve: 1st \$200, 2nd \$150, 1st U1600/U1400/U1200/U1000: \$100, Biggest upset: \$50

Annotated Game Competition: \$50 per section. Submit one annotated game that you consider to be well-played or interesting. A panel of judges will select the winner in each section.

Registration: Please register online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration. Registration **deadline Thurs. 8/12 @ 5pm**. \$15 Late Fee for payments received after the deadline. Unpaid players will receive a zero-point bye for round 1.

Byes: Up to 3 half-point byes available for rounds 1-9 if announced before the end of round 2.

Memberships: Current US Chess membership required. Memberships must be paid at time of registration. A 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, 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: Make checks payable to Washington Chess Federation. Mail To: Washington Chess Federation: c/o Orlov Chess Academy, 4174 148th Ave. NE, Building I, Ste. M, Redmond, WA 98052.

Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President, 206-769-3757, WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Hosted by Washington Chess Federation & Susan Polgar Foundation



16th Susan Polgar Foundation National Open for Girls & Boys

October 2-3, 2021



Hyatt Regency Bellevue: 900 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue, WA 98004

Info: spfno.com **Register:** nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration

Email: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com **Call:** 206.769.3757

2-day Championship Sections

Open	Girls
K-5	K-5
K-8	K-8
K-12	K-12

Format: 6SS, G/60; d5. Dual NWSRS and US Chess Rated.

Rounds: Sat/Sun @ 9:30am, 12:00pm, and 2:30pm.

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

1-day Sections (Saturday-only)

Open	Reserve
K-3	K-1 U800
4-8	2-3 U800
9-12	4-8 U900

Format: 5SS, G/30; d5. Dual NWSRS and US Chess rated Open sections, NWSRS rated Reserve sections.

Rounds: Sat @ 9:30am, 11:00am, 12:30pm, 2:00pm, 3:30pm.

WA State Elementary Qualifier.

Fun Side Events: Saturday 10/2: 11am-12pm – Parents & Coaches Seminar, 2-3pm – Girls Workshop, 5:30-8pm – Simul and Q&A. Sunday 10/3: 8:30-9:30am – Breakfast w/ Susan, 10am-4pm – Polgar Chess Camp, 5-5:30pm – Puzzle Solving Competition, 5:30-7pm – Blitz Championship.

All Sections:

Registration **deadline Fri. Oct 1 @ 5pm.** Check-in required only for those that did not pre-pay: 8 – 8:45am. Unpaid players not checked in by 8:45am will receive a zero-point bye for any missed rounds. Trophies for top-scoring individuals and teams. Higher of US Chess or NWSRS rating will be used to determine section and pairings.

Hotel Information:

Hyatt Regency Bellevue, address above. Phone: 425.698.4250, request the Polgar Chess block. For online hotel reservations: <https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/BELLE/G-SPOL> Cut-off date for discounted hotel reservations is 9/3/2021.

Is Chess A Game?

Nobel Ang

A couple of years ago, at a tournament in Pocatello—it might have been the Eastern Idaho Open, but I can't be certain—I played a memorable game against this very friendly gentleman from Boise. In this particular game, I played the black side of the Scotch. Early in the game, I missed a tactical opportunity which would have given me an advantage, and found myself being steadily ground down by my opponent's accurate play. Starting from move 35 or so, I found myself in the chess equivalent of a slow-motion train-wreck. I knew what my opponent had to do to progressively make my position more and more unplayable and eventually bring about my demise; heck, I was almost tempted to tell him what moves to make so he can quickly put me out of my misery. But out of a certain sense of gamesmanship or maybe just sheer stubbornness (or both), I decided to play on rather than throw in the towel and resign.

And then, miracle of miracles, my opponent overextended his army, I was able to get my rook onto the seventh rank, and I suddenly found a way to potentially windmill his king with my rook and bishop (I think it was the light-square bishop). But, as sometimes happens when such unexpected game-turning opportunities manifest themselves, I managed to totally bungle this last chance at salvation: After a couple of intimidating checks from my rook-bishop task force, the enemy king was able to escape to safety, thanks to the priestly incompetence of my bishop. A few more unmemorable moves later, I decided that this was enough suffering for one afternoon and resigned.

As memorable as this game was, the post-mortem was even more memorable. My worthy opponent and I adjourned to the lobby of the Red Lion hotel and proceeded to analyze what went wrong in the game (for me, of course). But before we could get down to the serious business of analysis, I still had to endure one more distraction/subtle humiliation. Just as we were settling down into our seats and setting up the chessboard, my friend Dewayne Derryberry strode in the lobby and proclaimed triumphantly, "I beat player-X-from-Utah-who-is-rated-1900!"

Way to rub it in, I thought to myself.

But being a nice guy, I proceeded to perfunctorily congratulate Dewayne, and then quickly turned to analyzing my most recent defeat. As far as analyses went, it was a great session. My opponent, who is rated about two or three hundred points above me, gave me some useful tips on how I could have played better. After analyzing the game, we then engaged in a rare discussion of chess psychology (I can't speak for anybody else, but it was rare for me). I confessed that at the point in the game where the opportunity arose to possibly turn the game around, I suddenly suffered from an attack of nerves: My heart was pounding, my hands were shaking slightly, and I was certain that these nerves got in the way of my being able to think clearly and objectively about the position.

My opponent listened carefully and empathetically to my confession, and then said, "I understand that this was an important point in the game, but why do you put yourself under so much pressure? After all, we are friends, I wouldn't be too upset if you beat me, and neither should you. And when all is said and done, this is just a game." He paused, seemed a little thoughtful, and then continued, "If you will allow me to say this, you strike me as somebody who is intensely competitive. Nothing wrong with that, but I have noticed with some intensely competitively people that they don't take defeat well." I don't remember exactly what he said after this; I think the topic of conversation switched to something totally unrelated to chess.

I really appreciate this conversation with my opponent, and his well-intentioned chess-life advice. As I said, it is kind of rare to be able to engage in a discussion of chess psychology with people: Perhaps somebody needs to form a support group for people who lose chess games. But as I think over this conversation again, two questions come to mind:

Is chess really *just* a game?

Is your opponent really your friend?

As anybody who plays chess knows, to play chess well is to force your opponent into great mental anguish as they struggle to stop you from capturing

something of value to them. Is this really what friends do to each other?

(Sidenote: Here's a social exercise. The next time you tell your non-chess-playing friends about chess, and they start spouting a bunch of platitudes about chess being a game of strategy, thinking ahead, etc etc., try correcting them by telling them that chess is really about putting people in great mental suffering by making them do what they would rather not do. Then observe the horrified expressions on your friends' faces.)

So, is chess just a game? For starters, chess occupies a strange position in the pantheon of games, and in human culture in general. The German philosopher Moses Mendelssohn has this to say about chess, "For a game it is too serious, and for a serious occupation, it is too much of a game."

There is some truth to the first half of Mendelssohn's remark ("for a game, it is too serious"). At any random house party, the party game of choice is much more likely to be Monopoly, Yahtzee, or even Scrabble. I don't exactly know why this is, but I suspect that this has something to do with the general perception that chess is too cerebral or "serious" to be conducive to fun and socializing. Also, the way most people play chess (staring at a board in silence, their bodies and faces contorted into uncomfortable positions that seem borderline painful) does not seem conducive to the kind of convivial socializing that is expected behavior at parties.

But the second half of Mendelssohn's remark ("for a serious occupation, it is too much of a game") is what's really interesting. In the popular consciousness, chess often gets lumped together with philosophy into the category of heady-intellectual-pursuits-that-are-way-above-the-ken-of-common-mortals. But there is actually a difference between the two: You can get a college degree in philosophy (what you can go on to do with it is another question altogether), but not in chess. I submit that this difference is what Mendelssohn is speaking to when he claims that chess is too much of a game, too... fun to qualify as a serious intellectual pursuit.

Come to think of it, chess is a really strange activity that does not fit neatly into any of our cultural categories. It's not quite a game (too serious). It's not quite a proper intellectual pursuit (not serious enough). It's also not quite a sport (not enough physical/muscular exertion). Nor is it quite art; a "beautiful game" to chess aficionados like us would appear to non-chess players only as pieces of wood scattered around 64 black-and-white squares. Neither does it rise to the level of science, despite Botvinnik's claim that "chess is the art which expresses the science of logic".

But maybe this is not a bad thing. Maybe chess's neither-here-nor-there status enables it to serve a useful function in human culture and society. Perhaps chess is a kind of safe space, if you will, for people to work out certain ideas and emotions, enabling otherwise civilized people to suspend their civility in an environment of controlled violence where it is acceptable to torture others by imposing difficult anguish-inducing mental puzzles on them, all the while maintaining the external forms of civility (for instance, saying "good luck" at the beginning of a game even though what I really want to say is: "I hope you lose, and lose horribly").

Which brings me to (2): Is your opponent really your friend? Is it morally acceptable for friends to inflict mental violence on one another? Rather than answer this question directly, I'm going to share with you my somewhat pessimistic view of human nature: Conflict and warfare is part and parcel of what it means to be human. The only question is how and whether we can manage this problematic aspect of our species, and utilize it to help us to live long and flourish, rather than live short and brutishly.

Actually, let me correct myself: I think chess doesn't just help us to manage our warlike nature. It *sublimates* it. What is the difference? To manage a condition (like, say, a chronic medical condition) is to apply a certain course of treatment to it to prevent it from going out of control and destroying us. This treatment doesn't actually change the underlying condition; it just makes it more tolerable and easier to live with. To sublimate, on the other hand, is to channel two or more opposing forces that would otherwise destroy us, and transform them into something higher or more sublime through aspiring to an ideal with the aid of a symbol. According to Carl Jung, the process of sublimation is about "putting an end to division and forcing the opposites into a common

*Nobel Ang at the Idaho Open in Pocatello, Idaho on April 22, 2017.
Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.*



channel" so that "life can flow on with renewed power towards new goals."¹ In this vein, to play chess is to bring my aggressive, violent tendencies ("I want to smash your skull in") into contact with more socially acceptable dominating tendencies ("I want to checkmate your king") and, through the symbolic ritual of a chess game, combine, channel, and eventually transform these tendencies into something higher and more sublime. Thus, many of us who have played chess for a while will notice that over time, chess has become just as much a battle to improve and win over ourselves as it is a battle with the guy on the other side of the board. We might say that the game

has transformed us, so that we become people for whom life is just as much (if not more) about self-overcoming as it is about overcoming the opponent.

If you think this whole thing sounds a bit magical, well... maybe it is. In chemistry, the term *sublimation* refers to the process of substances changing their state (for instance, from solid to gas) through the absorption of heat, and in the middle ages, this idea was important to alchemists attempting to change base metals to gold. In a similar vein, when applied to psychology, sublimation is a process of spiritual alchemy in which we transform our baser natures into something higher through (what else?) chess.

Care for a game?

¹ C.G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1912).



Coaching Corner

Ralph Dubisch



“So what is this ‘zugzwang?’”

Chess has its own vocabulary. To successfully navigate the conversations in the skittles room (not the confection or the lawn game, but rather the practice and post-game—“post mortem”—analysis area), one needs to be able to correctly use terms such as blitz, lightning, en passant, Fried Liver, Max Lange, Maroczy Bind, Sicilian Dragon, fianchetto, hippopotamus, blockade, isolani, outpost, hanging pawns, Pelikan, intermezzo, and of course zugzwang. That’s not to mention the more basic check, checkmate, stalemate, fork, pin, and skewer. If someone offers you a Greek gift, do you accept? Let’s find out.

Blitz chess is played at a pretty fast time control (the amount of time on a chess clock given to each player). Blitz used to be five-minute chess, but now it can mean three minutes, or the fairly standard three minutes plus two (or five) seconds added each move, the added time being either delay (extra not saved) or increment (extra added on to the base time). Lighting chess is even faster than that, the standard being one minute each, no increment. Sometimes two minutes each is also considered lightning, though if you’re going to play fast, why dawdle?

The Fried Liver attack is a variation (which means a series of moves from a given position) of the Two Knights Defense. Its soundness (meaning whether or not it works) is, surprisingly, still debated, but though dangerous and wildly successful in statistical terms, the line 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5!? (punctuation that means “interesting”) 4...d5 5.exd5 Nx5?! (punctuation that means “dubious,” although here some would offer a “?” for a blunder—a bad mistake—instead) 6.Nxf7!?! (punctuation invented for this article, meaning “OMG White’s giving away a piece”) is generally avoided by masters

who reach the position. White has simpler ways of gaining a serious advantage after Black’s misguided central recapture with the knight, so there’s no need to fish in the troubled waters of the Fried Liver. On move five, Black has better options such as 5...Na5, 5...Nd4, and 5...b5. At the Grandmaster level, White usually avoids 4.Ng5 these days, opting instead for 4.d3 in many cases. The Max Lange attack, though, happens when White tries 4.d4 exd4 5.0-0, with potential massive complications.

En passant is a special pawn capture. It happens only if one side has a pawn advanced three squares (perhaps in two moves) from its starting rank (the rows side to side on the chess board, numbered from one to eight from White’s side for chess notation, or the code we use to record the moves and refer to squares), and the other side moves a pawn on one of the adjacent files (the rows up and down the chessboard, lettered a to h from left to right, viewed from White’s side of the board) two squares forward.

Quite a long time ago pawns could move only one square at a time, but as the queen and bishop moves became more powerful (queens used to move only one square diagonally!) the game needed a change to bring the forces into contact more quickly. Thus the modern pawn’s right to jump forward two squares on its first move... But this introduced a situation that could not happen under the old pawn-move rules, namely a pawn (which, as you know, captures diagonally, despite moving straight ahead) could now potentially jump *through* the capture zone of another pawn. In the old days, the advanced pawn on its fifth rank would always have the opportunity to capture any pawns trying to get past it on adjacent files. With the double-jump initial move thing, the advanced pawn was failing to stop the neighboring runner!

Thus en passant was invented. If a pawn double-jumps through an enemy pawn’s capture zone, that enemy pawn

has one opportunity, and one opportunity only, to capture as if the pawn had only moved one square! This is the only time in a game of chess that a piece is captured with a move to a square other than the one that the piece occupies. If the advanced pawn does not capture on the very next move, the right to capture expires. This special “capture as if it only moved one space” applies only to pawns on adjacent files, not to other pieces who might have been able to capture if the pawn only jumped one square. When that happens to other pieces, they are fresh out of luck.

The Sicilian Dragon is an opening in which Black responds to 1.e4 with 1...c5, then tends to end up with a pawn structure of d6, e7, f7, g6, h7; this supposedly looks like the constellation Draco the Dragon. One of the lines of the Dragon, the Accelerated Dragon in which Black plays to fianchetto the kingside bishop (that is, place the bishop on g7 to be active on the long diagonal, surrounded by pawns on f7, g6, and h7) as quickly as possible, allows White to fix pawns on c4 and e4 in the center, and that structure is called the Maroczy Bind. Hippopotamus is a pawn structure, generally for Black, that can also arise from the Sicilian Maroczy-type structures (as well as the English, 1.c4, and several queen-pawn openings). The basic outline is to exchange the c-pawn for White’s d-pawn, then arrange the black pawns on a6, b6, d6, e6, and huddle the pieces behind them. Though it sounds passive, in fact Black’s position can be a coiled spring pressuring the center with rooks on the c- and e- or d-files, bishops on b7 and e7 or f8, knights on f6 and d7/c5, and possible pawn breaks ...b5 and ...d5.

The Pelikan is another line (variation) in the Sicilian, in this case with Black playing for a quick ...e7-e5 booting a white knight from d4. It is named after the Czech-Argentinian master Jiří Pelikán, not to be confused with the Czech politician of the same name associated with the communist party during Prague Spring

in 1968. Not that you would ever do *that*. Anyway, the Pelikan was originally the Lasker-Pelikan variation, but is now more known as the Sveshnikov... I think we're getting a bit off-track.

An intermezzo is an in-between move, a bit like a musical intermission between acts of a play. It's something forcing played in-between an opponent's capture and the "automatic" recapture that the opponent apparently assumed was necessary. An intermezzo can win material or save the day by removing a juicy target from the crosshairs. Another name for an in-between move is "zwischenzug." Which word you use is probably determined by whether you are feeling more Italian or more German at any given moment.

An isolani is an isolated pawn, one with no friendly pawns on adjacent files. Isolated pawns therefore cannot be protected by a pawn, and so may need piece support. In principle an isolani is a weakness, which should be blockaded (physically blocked from advancing by the placement of an enemy piece directly in front of the pawn), surrounded, and destroyed. In practice, though, having an isolani also means open lines, piece activity, and possible outposts (squares that can be used by pieces, guarded by a pawn, but not able to be challenged by an enemy pawn), as well as being a threat to advance, grabbing space and opening still more lines for piece action.

Hanging pawns are two adjacent pawns with no friendly pawns able to offer support. They're generally found on half-open files (files with no pawns are open; half-open means no pawns of one color), so can come under intense pressure from enemy rooks. If they become blockaded, they can be a major liability; if they stand firmly side-by-side, they can control significant territory in the center and be a positive force.

Basic tactics: check is an attack on the king. Remember one of the two most fundamental rules of chess requires that your king not be under attack at the end of your turn, so awareness of checks is important. Checkmate is a king that's under attack, and there's no possible way to escape (capture the checking piece, block the check, or move the king to safety). Stalemate is a special kind of draw (sharing the point equally, rather than having a winner and a loser of the game). If one side is *not* in check, is on move, but has no legal moves at all, that's a stalemate. Remember it's illegal to move your own king into check, as that would break the aforementioned

fundamental rule. Just having no legal king move doesn't do it—it has to be no legal move at all.

More simple tactics: a pin is an attack, both direct and indirect, along a line that makes it expensive or impossible for the front piece to move. If the pinned piece can legally move, but doing so exposes a larger or unguarded piece behind, that's a relative pin. If the pinned piece cannot legally move (i.e., the piece further along the pinning line is the king), that's an absolute pin. If the piece can move, but only along the line of the pin, that's a line pin. The directly attacked piece (or pawn) is pinned. A skewer is kind of a reverse pin, in that the front piece attacked along a line is the more important one, and when it moves it exposes the back piece to capture.

A fork, just like the one you use to eat dinner, is a multi-pronged threat. A forking piece simultaneously attacks two or more targets. Knights are well-known for their ability to fork, but pawns and queens are also quite adept. Kings can occasionally attack two things at once, and even bishops and rooks can, given the right circumstances, fork two enemy units.

Zugzwang is a German word, actually two words combined. If a non-chess person in Germany used it, it would probably mean "in a tight spot." Zug means move (or, more commonly "train," though that meaning does not appear to apply so much to chess usage); zwang means force or compulsion. So zugzwang means "move compulsion," and in practice it refers to a position that is weakened by any move. Purists will only use this if the position is losing *only* because a player must make a move. Ultra-purists will use it only in cases that the rest of us might call "mutual zugzwang": either player on move will lose because of being forced to move. Remember the other of those two fundamental rules: play alternates. You may not pass your turn.

The famous Greek gift is apparently so named in reference to the even more famous Trojan horse. One side, usually White, will sacrifice a bishop on h7 against a castled black king. Then a knight will jump to g5, a queen to h5, and White will threaten checkmate on h7. In many cases the Greek gift, if accepted, simply wins by force, though in those cases it often just means much longer suffering to decline it. If Black is prepared to defend the h7-square or, sometimes, to run into the middle with the king, taking the gift can return handsome dividends. Calculation rules the day here.

“What are these other things: Bughouse Chess? Suicide Chess? Atomic Chess?”

Bughouse is a game played with four players side-by-side on two boards. Each side has a game with the white forces and a game with the black pieces; the games are timed using two chess clocks (devices with two clock faces and buttons that stop one side and start the other side running, thus allowing players to track the time they have used on their own move). The kicker is that pieces captured on one board are handed to the capturing player's partner, who can at some point use a move to place one of them on the board. This can lead to overwhelming attacks and surprise checkmates.

Suicide Chess used to be called giveaway. The idea is to lose all of your pieces; kings in this variant (weird rules attached to chess-like games) can be captured, and in fact if there is a possible capture a player must make a capture move. Of course the skill comes in the pieces one offers and in the choices one makes when there is more than one capture on the board. There's also a variant called "Loser's Chess" in which kings cannot be taken or offered, and the goal is to either force the opponent to deliver checkmate or give away all of the pieces except the king.

Atomic Chess is a variant in which capturing pieces explode, destroying all the pieces (but not pawns) on surrounding squares. This is a version that allows leaving your own king in check—if, that is, your move blows up the opponent's king first.

“Ah, I begin to understand...”

That's at least a start on the vocabulary you will need to survive in a skittles room full of woodpushers (amateur chess players). There are hundreds of other opening names, possible references to fish (or even Superfish!), patzers, initiative, opposite bishops...

Chess players are often reticent to explain these things, not least because many do not really understand all of it themselves.

Good luck. You're going to need it.

Mainly Chess, Music, And Love

Carol Kleist, Assisted by Fred Kleist

Note: Revised Puzzle to correct some slight errors in the July print issue.
The solution will appear in the September 2021 issue.—Editor.

In accordance with Dr. Siegbert Tarrasch, whose famous quote tells us that “Chess, like music, like love, has the power to make men happy.”

User Friendlier (easier)

Across

1. No chess tmnts. reserved for this kind, but if females keep getting better?
5. Do this to ‘em and win ‘em
8. Coming through the ____
11. Adeste fidelis, let us ____ Him
13. Acknowledging Your debt
14. No notes? Play it by ____?
15. Term in philosophy and religion
16. Orchestra quiets, soloist shows his technique
18. For travel safety
20. In music, the tonic chord will bring you home in order to ____ the piece.
21. You’ll make them in over the board chess.
25. In a Swiss Sys, Rd 1, you could play a beginner or a ____Abbr.
27. Hic, ____, hoc; basic Latin practice
28. Ars as in ars longa, vita breva, only English

29. Yasser’s wife with apology for Abbr.
31. With a circumflex we have the French soul
32. Neither’s companion
33. Female activist associated with a Beatle
34. ____ me your ears
36. Helps solve crime
37. Silent
38. What you owe compared to what you earn
39. Size of our most important star
41. How many __ are in the tmnt.?
43. Works for Dithers Abbr.
44. What Marie Antoinette said instead of cake?
48. Little fairy tale character
52. Top card for card games
53. E-mail Company
54. North territory
55. Possesses
56. Takes ____ to tango
57. Not crazy

9. Friendliest great GM in chess, Seattle sometime home, abbr.
10. Large unit of time
12. To exist, to be (Latin)
17. The wish for what another has
19. Only Kasparov can match this player’s number of World Championships
21. Capablanca, ____ for his endgame
22. If your tmnt. has this, you get a second or third chance
23. UAV: Drone in Turkish
24. Strip along the beach
26. Good for camping and the circus
27. Active in US Chess, has held many tmnts in Eastern area
30. ____ the mark!
35. Queen of Carthage, self immolation when her lover. Aeneas, leaves her to fulfill his destiny as true founder of Rome
37. Great player with this great given name
40. Hungarian village in Eastern section of country
42. Rude language to the cat
44. ____ Humbug!

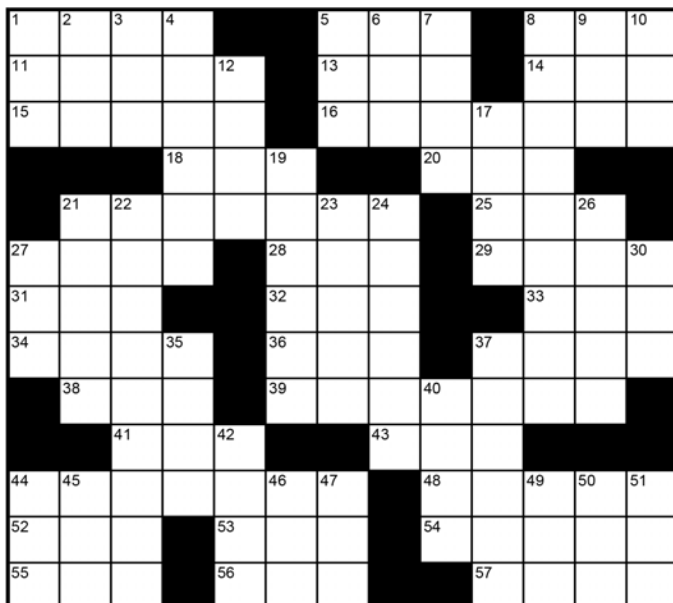
Down

1. Prefix indicating bad
2. Without further ____
3. ____ into your account
4. Sapho, ancient female Greek poet, wrote this kind of poetry
5. Photo or other, for example, abbr.
6. ____ debt, unspecified
7. Descending the staircase by Duchamp
8. Tristan and Isolde, under a spell, hold this
9. Big makers and marketers of recordings in 20th century
46. ____now, Brown Cow?
47. Foreign chess rating system
49. Agrees, but with unusual spelling
50. 1st weekday of the week, abbr.
51. Easterly wind, but more specifically, abbr.

Prize For Solving

Every solver will receive one \$5 discount on the entry fee to any over-the-board Seattle Chess Club tournament. Solutions must be received by August 18, 2021.

Send solutions to kleistcf@aol.com, drop off at the SCC, or mail to Carol Kleist, 2420 S 137 St, Seattle WA 98168.



The 2021 Russell "Rusty" Miller Memorial Northwest Grand Prix

Murlin Varner, Bookkeeper

For the first time in 2021, we had three Grand Prix events in a single month. May provided online opportunities with the Seattle Chess Club Quads and Tornado (on subsequent days early in the month) and the Annual Washington Open to end the month. The Quads had 18 entrants, the Tornado twelve, and the Washington Open had a total of 71 players. Not the usual number for this venerable tournament, but more than any other event thus far in year two of the pandemic. Soon, we will start to see OTB events popping up again. Will there be a lot of pent-up eagerness for a return to the board? Time will tell.

The first return to the board is going to be at the Vancouver Open. Originally scheduled to be held with limited attendance and seating, it may be able to expand from 30 entrants to 60, but we won't know until later this summer. Enter early to be sure of a spot.

The Spokane Chess Club is hoping to hold the Eastern Washington Open at Gonzaga on October 2-3, but Gonzaga won't be confirming any reservations until at least August 1st. They may also institute a vaccination requirement, so if you didn't listen to me last month, go take care of that now! The Spokane area is also lagging far behind the 70% mark, so the June 30 opening could still be in jeopardy there.

The Washington Chess Federation is scheduled to hold the Washington Class Championships at a hotel in November. The Seattle Chess Club is homeless right now and is crashing at Georgi Orlov's pad. They will be doing their Monday and Friday evening things at the Orlov Academy in Greenlake beginning June 14th, and may try to do some Quads or Tornadoes on weekend days come July and August. The Seafair Open is scheduled to go the end of July online, although there may be some talk of making that OTB. Sounds to me like a logistical nightmare on such short notice, but we'll see, won't we? Never fear, normalcy is on the way, in fits and starts.

Once we do get some OTB events under our belts, I will start using the higher of the OTB and Online Regular ratings to determine classes for the Grand Prix. A major headache for me but seems like the fairest way to handle things.

Data below is current through June 1.

Washington			Other Places				
last	first	pts.	last	first	state	pts.	
Masters			Masters				
1	Perez	Ignacio	41.5	1	Mitrabha Guha	IND	70.0
2	Porter	Ryan	26.0	2	Lenderman Aleksandr	NY	51.0
				3	Talukdar Rohan	CAN	44.0
				4	Shahinyan David	ARM	30.5
				5	Bernadskiy Vitaliy	UKR	23.0
Experts			Experts				
1	Vijayakumar	Advaith	32.0	1	Jorajuria Mendt Algol	MEX	22.0
2	Levine	Joseph	31.0	2	Guha Eshan	NJ	11.0
3	Whale	Nicholas	20.0				
4	Shubin	Daniel	10.0				
5	Deshpande	Aaryan	4.0				
Class A			Class A				
1	Razmov	Valentin N	32.0	1	Vega Isaac	OR	30.0
2	Bell	Harry	31.0	2	Murray David E	OR	18.0
3	Ackerman	Ryan	24.0	3	Yin Benjamin	MA	3.0
4	Chang	Eddie	22.0				
4	Van Weerdhuizen	Lane	22.0				
Class B			Class B				
1	Nicoski	Aaron M	43.5	1	Ingram Richard	CAN	38.0
2	Vemparala	Nikash	26.0	2			
3	Szeto	Sophie	22.0	3			
4	Lu	Yiding	21.0	4			
5		Three Tied at	18.0	5			
Class C			Class C				
1	Cheng	Edward	53.0	1	Vasey Daniel	OR	25.0
2	Zhu	Jamie Z	28.0	2	Wei Brian	OR	13.0
3	Devadithya	Lavindu	25.0	3	Kypriotakis Kyriakos	OR	11.0
4	Cordero	Rowland	24.0	4	He Justin S	TX	8.0
5	Liotta	Nicholas J	22.5	5	Metzmaker Robert D, Jr.	IL	4.5
Class D and below			Class D and below				
1	Cheng	Selina	50.0	1	Hack Don	CAN	30.5
2	Ruff	Lois A	46.5	2	Kulkarni Ojas	CA	24.0
3	Kamel	Yaseen	36.0	3	Krzykawski Tomasz	OR	20.0
4	Razmov	Gabriel	35.0	4	Winter Gordon	CA	4.0
5	Devadithya	Hiruna	32.0	5	Guan Marie	CAN	2.0
Overall standings							
1	Cheng	Edward	53.0	1	Mitrabha Guha	IND	70.0
2	Cheng	Selina	50.0	2	Lenderman Aleksandr	NY	51.0
3	Ruff	Lois A	46.5	3	Talukdar Rohan	CAN	44.0
4	Nicoski	Aaron M	43.5	4	Ingram Richard	CAN	38.0
5	Perez	Ignacio	41.5	5	Shahinyan David	ARM	30.5
6	Kamel	Yaseen	36.0	5	Hack Don	CAN	30.5
7	Razmov	Gabriel	35.0	7	Vega Isaac	OR	30.0
8	Vijayakumar	Advaith	32.0	8	Vasey Daniel	OR	25.0
8	Razmov	Valentin N	32.0	9	Kulkarni Ojas	CA	24.0
8	Devadithya	Hiruna	32.0	10	Bernadskiy Vitaliy	UKR	23.0
11	Levine	Joseph	31.0	11	Sharikov Alexander	RUS	22.0
11	Bell	Harry	31.0	11	Jorajuria Mendt Algol	MEX	22.0
11	Ejsing	Simon K	31.0	13	Krzykawski Tomasz	OR	20.0
14	Zhu	Jamie Z	28.0	14	Murray David E	OR	18.0
14	Karthikeyan	Harishkumar	28.0	15	Wei Brian	OR	13.0
14	Suess	Wade	28.0				

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