

New Mexico Chess Champions

Andrew Flores

In the seven years since I moved to New Mexico, Andrew Flores has been a rapidly improving player. As a result of a lot of hard work, he has seen his rating go from 1604 to 2166!

In addition to being one of the strongest players in New Mexico, he is also one of the prominent organizers. Under the name of his USCF affiliate, Charlie's Chess Club, he has organized 19 New Mexico Chess Tournaments in the last 5 years.

Last year was a big year for Andrew. He tied for first with Doug Thigpen in the New Mexico Memorial Senior, tied for first with Eddie Wyckoff in Charlie's Spring Open, and won first at the Charlie's Chess Club Summer Open. But the biggest tournament came in September when he won the New Mexico Championship!

The game below against Thomas Green is from the 2015 U.S. Open in Phoenix. Both sides are well versed in the opening. The game doesn't deviate from book until move 17. But once the players are on their own, Andrew's superior tactics quickly establish a winning position. The queen sacrifice is a pretty way to end resistance.



Andrew Flores deep in thought at 2015 U.S. Open – Will Barela

Flores, Andrew - Green, Thomas, 1-0
U.S. Open Chess Championship, Round 5
Phoenix, Arizona, 8/5/2015

Sicilian Defense, Najdorf Variation

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 The Najdorf Variation. It is one of the most complex openings, the kind of opening that only a grandmaster can really understand. But it always leads to an interesting game! **6. Bg5 e6 7. f4 Be7**

[Then there is the Poisoned Pawn Variation. 7... Qb6 8. Qd2 (Tamer is 8. Nb3 Nbd7 9. Qf3 Be7 10. O-O-O=) 8... Qxb2 On old chess saying, "He who takes the queen's Knight's pawn will sleep in the streets." 9. Rb1 Qa3 10. f5= White has given up the b-pawn to get open lines and better development]

8. Qf3 Qc7 9. O-O-O Nbd7 10. g4 b5 11. Bxf6 Nxf6 12. g5 Nd7 Up to here, this is the most popular line of the Najdorf. **13. h4** But here White deviates from the popular line.

[As amazing as it may seem, the standard move in this position is 13. f5 giving up a pawn with check! 13... Bxg5 14. Kb1 Ne5 15. Qh5 Qd8 16. Nxe6 Bxe6 17. fxe6 O-O White is slightly better]

13... b4 14. Nce2 Bb7 15. Ng3 Rc8

[15... g6 16. Bh3 Nc5 17. Rhf1 O-O-O 18. f5 gxf5 19. Qe3 Nxe4 20. Ngxf5 Kb8 21. Nh6 Rc8 22. Bg2 d5 23. Bxe4 dxe4 24. Qe2 Rhf8 25. Rxf7?? You don't often see a 2500 player make a move this lame. 25... Rxf7 0-1, Perunovic, Milos (SRB) 2576 - Brkic, Ante (CRO) 2577 , Vogosca 6/ 9/2007 Ch. Bosnia & Herzegovina (team) If 26. Nxf7 then 26... Qf4 winning a piece]

16. Rh2 Nc5 17. f5 e5?! It is tempting to attack the knight, but it leaves Black weak on both d5 and f5.

[He is better off playing the standard equalizing move for Black in the Open Sicilian. 17... d5! 18. e5 Qxe5 19. Re2 Ne4 20. fxe6 O-O 21. Nxe4 dxe4=]



18. f6N!? Andrew goes for the gusto with a novelty.

[Previously played was 18. Nb3 which also worked out nicely for White. 18... d5 (18... Nd7 is better) 19. f6 gxf6 20. Nxc5 Qxc5 21. gxf6 Bf8 22. exd5 Rd8 23. Re2 Rxd5 24.

Rxd5 Qxd5 25. Qh5 Bd6 26. Nf5 e4 27. Rxe4 1-0, Timman, Jan H (NED) 2605 - Ree, Hans (NED) 2500 , Amsterdam 1983 It "OHRA" Black has seen enough. If 27... Qxe4?? then 28. Nxd6 and White wins]

18... Bf8? Black immediately flinches. In a wide open position you can't afford to play defensively.

[18... exd4 19. fxg7 (19. fxe7 Qxe7 20. Rxd4 O-O=) 19... Rg8 20. Bh3 Rxg7 White has a small edge]

19. fxg7

[Or 19. Bb5! Kd8 (19... axb5? 20. Nxb5 Qc6 21. fxg7 Bxg7 22. Nxd6 Kd8 23. Nxb7et cetera) 20. fxg7 Bxg7 21. Ndf5 With Black's king stuck in the center, White's attack is irresistible]

19... Bxg7 20. Ndf5 Bf8 21. Bh3 Rd8 22. Rf2 Rg8 23. Nh5! threatening Nf6 mate. 23... Nxe4? Black stops the mate and gambles that White won't find the best response.

[23... Rg6 24. Nf6 Rxf6 25. gxf6 Black is down an exchange with nothing to show for it]



24. Qxe4!! A curious similarity to 27. Rxe4+ in the Timman vs. Ree game above. But this is even better because taking allows checkmate. 24... Rg6 There's nothing better.

[24... Bxe4 25. Nf6#]

25. Qe3 Bc8

[25... Be7 26. Nfg7 Kf8 27. Ne6 Rxe6 28. Bxe6 White is a rook up anyway]

26. Nf6 Rxf6 27. gxf6 White is a rook up. The game is effectively over. 27... Be6 28. Ng7 Kd7 29. Bxe6 fxe6 30. Qxe5 Bxg7 31. fxg7 Black resigned. [1:0]

Matt Grinberg, 4/22/2017