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Senior/Memorial co-winners Jonah Romero (left) and Stephen Sandager (right) are congratulated by NMCO President Andrew Flores (middle).

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Christian von Huene, 23-24, 28-31

Victor Lopez, 40-41

Jonah Romero, 10-12

John (JJ) Scott, 38-39

Bill Enright, 5-6

Editor's Note

My sincerest thanks go to each person who contributed to this issue of the Desert Knight. They each have put a lot of attention into the games they annotated, the articles they wrote, or both. I invite the reader to see the work that each contributor gave to this issue and have made that easy by putting the page numbers where their work can be found next to their name in the previous section.

Tournaments are listed chronologically and games within those tournaments are listed by the average rating of the players in each game. Unless stated otherwise at the beginning of a game, notes are made by the Editor. Thank you for reading.

Douglas Thigpen

Desert Knight Editor

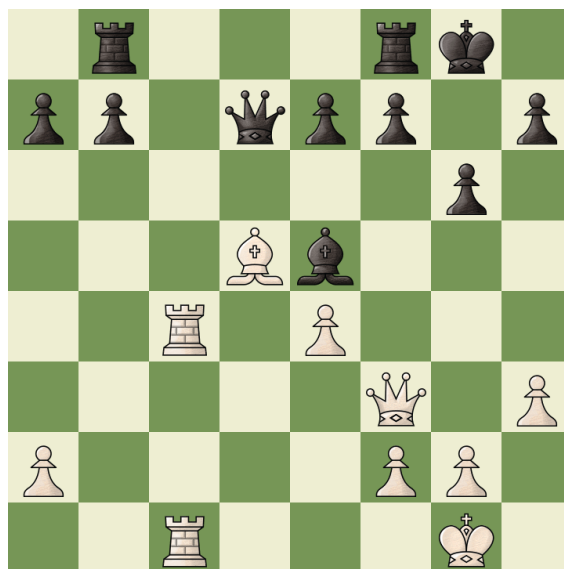
Evaluation Symbols

Good move	!
Brilliant move	!!
Bad move	?
Blunder	??
Interesting move	!?
Dubious move	?!
Check	+
Checkmate	#
White is winning	+-
Black is winning	-+
The position is equal	=

Tactics

Solutions on page 46

Gerald Casteel v. Joe Schrader

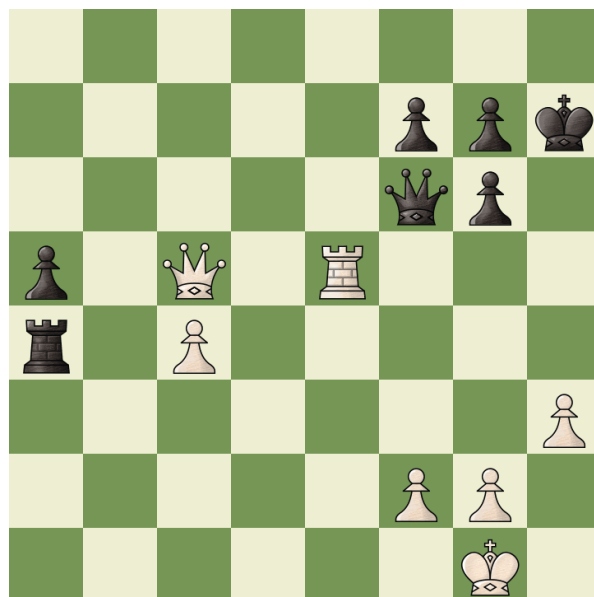


Black to play

Steve Williams v. John (JJ) Scott



Black to play

Tim Martinson v. Christian von Huene**Black to play****Douglas Thigpen v. Munir Hammad****White to play**

Senior/Memorial Warm-Up

Gathered in the basement of a library in downtown Albuquerque, players in this small tournament tested their mettle in preparation for the Senior/Memorial. While certainly a prelude to a much larger event, this tournament was not without excitement of its own.

The first two sections had four players each for a traditional quad tournament, while the bottom section fielded eight players. The first section was tied between Doug Thigpen and Andrew Ackerman with 2/3. The second section was won by Eddie Sedillo with 2.5/3. The third section was won by Elonzo Santillanes with a perfect score of 3/3.

Senior/Memorial Warm-Up, Section one, Round 1

Bill Enright (1865) v. Douglas Thigpen (2176)

Notes by Bill Enright

1. e4 c6 2. c3 d5 3. exd5 cxd5 4. d4 Bf5 5. Nf3 e6 6. Bd3 Bxd3 7. Qxd3 ...

White is content to have his queen on the long diagonals for now.

7. ... Nc6

The focus on e5 begins.

8. Nbd2 Nf6 9. 0-0 Be7 10. Ne5 Qc7 11. Ndf3 ...

White could play f4, followed by Ndf3 and g4. But then a plan with 0-0-0 looks fine for Black.

11. ... Bd6 12. Bf4 Nh5

Of course, forcing away the e5-defender.

13. Bd2 f6 14. Nxc6 bxc6 15. Rfe1 Kf7

If 15. ... e5?! 16. Qf5+ g6 then 17. Qe6+ and things look dicey for Black.

16. c4 Nf4 17. Qc2 Qb7!?

Black prepares for the long-term control of the b8-h2 diagonal, giving White a little tempo.

18. c5 Bc7 19. g3 Ng6 20. a3 ...

White tries to fortify his queenside.

20. ... Rhe8 21. h4 Kg8 22. h5! ...

White creates space for his knight.

22. ... Nf8 23. Bc3 Re7 24. Re2 Rae8 25. Rae1 Nd7 26. Nh4 e5 27. Nf5 Rf7 28. f3 ...

White can't let e4 come in yet, but now g3 needs help.

28. ... Qb8 29. Kg2 Nf8 30. Bd2 Ne6 31. Bc3 Nf8 32. b4 ...

White is happy with his queenside.

32. ... Rd7

Black prepares to boot the knight with g6 now that the threatened fork on h6 is gone.

33. Qb2 g6 34. hxg6 hxg6 35. Nh6+ Kg7

To this point, Black's e5-pawn and control of the b8-h2 diagonal have been balanced by White's pressure on the e-file. Now the play becomes much sharper as Black opens the diagonal.

36. Ng4 e4 37. fxe4 Bxg3 38. Rf1 Bh4 39. e5 f5 40. Nf6 Bxf6 41. exf6+ Kxf6 42. Rfe1 Rde7 43. Re5! Ne6

Black is trying to get his knight into the action, since 43. ... Rxe5 44. dxe5+ will give White's diagonal some life.

44. Qf2 Rh7

44. ... Ng5 fails to 45. Rxe7 Rxe7 46. Rxe7 Kxe7 (46. ... Ne4 47. Rxe4 dxe4 48. d5+) 47. Qh4 and the knight is lost, but there is still some fight left for Black.

45. Bd2

A crucial move to cover the g5-square from Black's knight. The bishop is headed to f4.

45. ... Ng7 46. Bf4! Qc8 47. Qe3 ...

A momentary Alekhine's Gun!

47. ... Rxe5 48. Qxe5+ Kf7 49. Bg5! Nh5

It's difficult for Black now, but this move assures White a winning passed pawn.

50. Qe7+ Kg8 51. Qe8+ Qxe8 52. Rxe8 Kf7 53. Re7+ Kg8 54. Rxh7 Kxh7 55. b7 Ng7 56. b6!

...

1-0

Senior Memorial Warm-Up, Section 1, Round 3

Eddie Wckyoff (2037) v. Bill Enright (1865)

1. e4 d6 2. d4 g6 3. Nf3 Bg7 4. Bc4 Nf6 5. Nc3 0-0 6. Bb3 Nc6 7. h3 Na5

The b3-bishop is dangerous and the desire to swap it off is wise. But two tempi to trade it off is a high price to pay, especially when White's pieces are well poised to attack.

8. Be3 NxB 9. PxN e6 10. Qd2 c6 11. Bh6 a6 ...

Over the last five moves, White has completed his development and actively positioned his pieces. Black's play has been more passive and would have been better used developing active play of his own.

12. 0-0 Qe7 13. e5! ...

White seizes control of the dark squares in the center and around Black's king. Additionally, he will gain the e4-square for his knight to reach those squares.

13. ... Nd7 14. Rfe1 dxe5 15. dxe5 Rd8 16. Rad1! ...

Patently, Wckyoff seizes control over the key open d-file, develops his last piece into the game, and pins Black's knight. All in one fell swoop.

16. ... b5 17. Bg5! f6 18. exf6 Bxf6 19. Bxf6 Qxf6 20. Qd6 ...

White's pieces break into Black's position with devastating effect. The alternative 20. Ne4 Qe7 (20. ... Qg7 21. Nc5) 21. Ne5! would have reached an even stronger position for White.

20. ... Re8 21. Qxc6 Ra7 22. Nd5 Qg7 23. Rxe6 Rxe6 24. Qxe6+ Kh8 25. Ng5! Nf8 26. Qxc8 Rd7 27. Ne6

Wckyoff ends the game in style, after a well-executed attack.

1-0

Senior Memorial Warm-Up, Section 3, Round 3

Anthony Sandoval (1530) v. Kirk Hackett (977)

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 e5 5. Nb5 a6 6. Nd6+ Bxd6 7. Qxd6 Qe7 8. Qxe7+ Ngxe7 9. Be3 d5! 10. exd5 Nxd5 11. Bc5! ...

A sharp position is reached. Black enjoys more space, with his advanced knights and center pawn, but at the price of his king being under early pressure.

11. ... Ncb4

Perhaps slightly stronger is 15. ... b6 immediately challenging White's powerful bishop, which is White's only ace in the position. If 16. Bc4!? Be6 the position is even sharper, with chances for both sides in the tactical mayhem that will ensue. If 16. Ba3 Nd4! Black has a promising game.

12. Na3 b6 13. Bd6!? ...

White boldly keeps up the pressure with his bishop leading the way.

13. ... f6 14. c3 Nc6 15. 0-0-0 Be6 16. Nc2 ...

After 16. Bc4! Black's position is under a lot of pressure. If 16. ... Nf4 17. g3 White's active pieces assure him an advantage. After the game move, Black's pieces look intimidating and have as much bite as bark.

16. ... Rd8 17. Ba3 Na5?

Perhaps Black missed his a6-pawn was hanging. Or perhaps he thought losing it wouldn't be very important, as is so often true with rook-pawns. Whatever the case, the pawn was well worth securing and would have helped him gain the c4-square his knight has eyes for with 17. ... b5!

18. Bxa6 Nc7?

Too weakening. Black's pieces have acted as their king's shield, as the besieged monarch has been unable to castle. It is easy to forget that if those pieces move, it will become apparent how vulnerable the Black king really is.

19. Rxd8+! Kxd8 20. Rd1+ Ke8 21. Rd6! ...

Sandoval forces his way into Black's position, attacking everything in sight.

21. ... Kf7 22. Rxb6 Kg6 23. Ne3 Bxa2 24. b4 Ra8? Black responds to an attack with another attack, but misses White's response.

25. Bd3+! ...

White avoids the attack with time, gaining a full piece.

25. ... Kg5 26. bxa5 Rxa5 27. Bb4 Ra8 28. Rb7 Ne6 29. g3! ...

White secures squares around the Black monarch, slowly surrounding him.

29. ... Kh6 30. Bf5 g6 31. Bxe6 Bxe6 32. c4 Rc8 33. c5 Ra8 34. Bd2 Rc8 35. Nf5+ ...

Winning even faster is 35. Ng4+! Kh5 36. Nxf6#

35. ... Kh5 36. Ng7+

1-0

Senior Memorial Warm-Up, Section 3, Round 1

Richard Warren (775) v. Elonzo Santillanes (1606)

1. e4 c5 2. d3 Nc6 3. Nd2 d6 4. g3 e5 5. Ngf3 Be6 6. Bg2 Qd7 7. 0-0 Be7 8. a3 h5!?

A creative idea! Black threatens to pry White's king into the game.

9. Re1?! ...

White doesn't seem to sense the danger. Both 9. h4 and 9. Nc4 seem like reasonable alternatives to me.

9. ... h4 10. gxh4 Bh3! 11. Kf1 Bxg2+ 12. Kxg2 Qg4+

Black strikes while the iron is hot.

13. Kf1? ...

Running in line with a queen and rook with 13. Kh1 sure isn't appealing, but, as Black will show, running to the center also has perils of its own.

14. ... Qh3+ 14. Ke2 Bxh4! 15. Nxh4?? ...

Missing the conclusion to Black's attack.

15. ... Nd4#

0-1

Art Byers Memorial and State Senior Championship

Often simply referred to as the “Senior/Memorial,” this unique tournament serves two important purposes in New Mexico Chess. The first is to commemorate a chess player that we have lost and the second is to determine a senior state champion. For those that knew him, there can be no doubt that Art Byers had a monumental impact on New Mexico chess throughout his lifetime. A regular in the tournament halls and on the NMCO board, Art has had an immeasurable influence on our community.

The open section saw a tie for first between Jonah Romero and Stephen Sandager with 3.5/4. However, Jonah has quite a few years to go before he can compete for the title of senior state champion. That honor was won by Stephen Sandager, who is no stranger to success in all varieties of state championships.

The second section also saw a tie between Elonzo Santillanes (who enjoyed his second tournament win in a row!) and John (JJ) Scott with 3.5/4. The third section was won by Matthew Bossert with a perfect score of 4/4. The scholastic section was also won with a perfect score of 4/4 by Steven Williams.

To read more about this year’s tournament, see Matthew Grinberg’s article on page 42.

Art Byers Memorial, Open section, Round 4

Douglas Thigpen (2169) v. Jonah Romero (1997)

Notes by Jonah Romero

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Bc4 e6 7. Bb3 Nc6 8. 0-0 Qc7 9. Be3 Be7 10. f4 Na5 11. Qf3 Nxb3 12. axb3 0-0 13. g4 Nfd7

Everything after 13. ... e5 is much worse for Black. 14. Nf5 Bxf5 15. exf5 e4 (15. ... d5 16. g5 Ne8 17. Nxd5 +-) 16. Qg2 d5 17. g5 +-

14. g5 Qd8

14. ... Qd8 in order to play e5 and protect the bishop after a possible Nd5. If 14. ... e5 immediately 15. Nd5 Qd8 16. Nxe7+ Qxe7 17. Nf5.

15. Kh1 ...

Kh1 moves off the file to make room for the rook to defend g5 and adds an attacker to the kingside. However, it gives me an extra move to support my e5 push. I thought 15. h4 would’ve been better as it keeps pressure on me.

15. ... g6 16. h4 e5

I finally get e5 in. While it's still not equal, I can open the center to get more counter-play.

17. Nde2 exf4

I can't let him get f5 or my pieces' activity will be extremely limited for the rest of the game. Now I can at least get my knight in the center and the bishop on c8 will be unobstructed.

18. Nxf4 Ne5 19. Qg3 f5

This move, trying to get any piece activity, is for the sad rook on f8. I also didn't want to worry about any about a maneuver like Nd5-f6.

20. Ndf5 Be6

Any development is usually good.

21. Bf4 Nf7 22. Rae1 ...

Threatening 23. exf5 Bxf5 24. Nxe7+

22. ... Re8 23. Be3 Rc8 24. Bd4 fxe4 25. Rxe4 Qd7

At this point White's pieces are beginning to reorganize along my weaker squares. I didn't want to move my bishop if I could partially develop my queen and defend it. The downside is White's Nb6 forking my queen and rook. While the computer doesn't like the move 25. ... Qd7, I was ok with the trade because the knight on d5 is a very powerful piece that I'd be ok trading for my useless rook on c8. Also, after I go down the exchange, my bishops will gain more space as there's fewer pieces.

26. Nb6 Qc6 27. Nxc8 Bf5 28. Qf3 Qxc8 29. Ree1 Qd7 30. Nd5 Bd8

Bringing the bishop back, because I want to keep my bishop pair for as long as possible.

31. Kg1 ...

My knight's not doing anything on f7 so I might as well put him in the center.

31. ... Ne5 32. Bxe5 dxe5 33. c4 Qd6 34. Rd1 Qc5+ 35. Qf2 Qc6 36. Rfe1 e4

I can't defend the dark squares very well since my dark-square bishop is stuck babysitting the knight, so I put the e-pawn on a white square. I also have plans of bring my bishop to f3 which could serve as a good attacker against his king. If an endgame arises, the bishop on f3 can possibly debilitate White's rooks or force a trade of the two.

37. Qd4 Bg4 38. Rd2 Bf3 39. Ne3 Qc7

This threatens a variety of things on the kingside. For example, if White makes a random move such as 40. b4 the following can happen: 40. b4 Qg3+ 41. Rg2 Qxe1+ (41. Ng2 Bxg2 42. Rxg2 [42. Re3 Bf3+] Qxe1+) or 41. Kf1 Qh3+ 42. Kf2 Qxh4+ 43. Kf1 Bxg5.

40. Qd6 Qxd6 41. Rxd6 Bc7

If White moves the rook, which is fine, the black bishop will go to g3 and dominate the kingside with the bishop pair. The pawn on h4 will also fall.

42. Red1 Bxd1 43. Rxd1 Bb6 44. Re1 Rd8 45. Kg2 Rd2+ 46. Kg3 Rxb2 47. Kf4 Rxb3 48. Nd5 e3 49. Nxb6 Rxb6 50. Rxe3 Kf7 51. Re5 Re6 52. Rd5 Re7 53. Rd8 Ke6 54. Ke4 Rd7 55. Rf8 Kd6 56. Rf6+ Kc5

0-1

Art Byers Memorial, Open section, Round 2

Stephen Sandager (2200) v. Robert Nolan (1928)

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Bc4 0-0 8. Bb3 a5 9. a4 d6

An alternative worth considering is 9. ... Ng4!?

10. h3 Bd7 11. 0-0 Nb4!?

Black is inspired by an original plan to re-coordinate his pieces. While I believe it is certainly creative, it also gives White dangerous control over the center and leaves the d4-knight as the center's sole proprietor. The prosaic 11. ... Rc8 keeps the game balanced.

12. f4 Bc6 13. Qf3 Nd7 14. Rad1 Na6?!

This gives White too much. 14. ... Rc8 offers more resistance, though White maintains an initiative.

15. Nxc6! ...

Stephen rarely misses such opportunities!

15. ... bxc6 16. e5 d5 17. Nxd5! ...

White punches through Black's center! If 17. ... cxd5 18. Qxd5 the pinned d7-knight has nowhere to run.

17. ... Rb8 18. Nc3 Qc8 ...

Black tries to hold everything together, stepping his queen out of danger and defending the lonely c6-pawn.

19. Ne4!? ...

A calm move, getting each of White's pieces into play before the final onslaught on Black's position. However, even stronger is the immediate 19. e6! After 19. e6 Ndc5 20. exf7+ Kh8 Stephen might have opted against this as White's attack appears stopped in its tracks. However, after the cool-headed 21. Bc4! White's attack is on a collision course with Black's king. One sample line is 19. e6 Ndc5 20. exf7+ Kh8 21. Bc4! Rxb2 22. Ne4 Nxe4 23. Qxe4 Rb4 (23. ... Nb8 24. Bd4 Qf5 25. Qxe7 Bxd4+ 26. Rxd4 Kg7 27. Rd8! +/-) 24. Bd4 Qf5 25. Bxg7+ Kxg7 26. Qxf5 gxf5 27. Bxa6 +/-

19. ... Nb4?!

Black can and should have prevented White's next move with 19. ... Nc7.

20. e6! Nf6 21. exf7+ Kh8 22. Nxf6 Bxf6 23. Qf2 ...

23. f5! opening lines to the king, would end the game in short order. For example, 23. f5 Qxf5 24. Qe2 Qc8 (24. ... Qh5 25. Qxh5 gxh5 26. Rxf6 exf6 27. Bh6 with a winning endgame) 25. Bd4 Bxd4+ 26. Rxd4 Qc7 27. Rd7!

23. Qb7 24. f5 Nd5 25. fxe6 Nxe3

Bob looks for his chances to escape in the opposite-colored bishop endgame, but Stephen shows his advantage is more than enough.

26. Qxe3 Qb6 27. Qxb6 Rxb6 28. gxh7 Bxb2 29. Rf5! ...

With a three pawn surplus, more active rooks, and a monster on f7, this endgame is (as they say) 'a matter of technique.'

29. ... Bf6 30. Rxa5 Rb4 31. Kh1 Re4 32. Rf1 Kxh7 33. Rc5 Kg7 34. Rc6 e6 35. Bxe6 Rxa4 36. Bb3 Ra7 37. Rxf6

1-0

Art Byers Memorial, Open section, Round 2

Paul Covington (1870) v. Laurence Wutt (1971)

1. d4 Nf6 2. Bf4 g6 3. Nf3 Bg7 4. Nbd2 c5 5. e3 b6 6. Bc4 Bb7 7. c3 0-0 8. dxc5?! ...

A small but important concession. The d4-pawn represents a stronghold of White's position and contests key squares in the center. To trade it for Black's b6-pawn (after Black's recapture) simply benefits Black, and not White.

8. ... bxc5 9. Qb3 Qb6 10. Qxb6?! ...

Another small but important concession. This trade solidifies Black's pawn structure and opens the a-file for the a8-rook. These small victories add up quickly. Black now controls large swaths of territory amounting to the a-file and most of the center, and he owes it to White's last several moves. On moves 8 or 10, castling would have been the best alternative for White.

10. ... axb6 11. Bc7 d5 12. Bb5 Nbd7 13. 0-0 Rac8?! ...

An open file is no good if you don't use it. There are any number of reasonable alternatives for Black. Ba6, Ra5, Rfc8 to name a few. But Black's most effective plan must surely include utilizing a rook on the a-file.

14. Bg3 Rfd8 15. a4 h6 16. a5 bxa5 17. Rxa5 Nh5 18. Ra7 Nxc3 19. hxc3 Rb8 20. Nb3?! ...

Lining up so many undefended targets in front of Black's rook is a dangerous idea, but a slight twist would have Nb3 more effective. 20. Bxd7! Rxd7 21. Nb3 and the difference is that White has rid Black of a potential target on the b-file. If 21. ... Rc8 22. Rfa1 and White has a more playable game.

20. ... Bc8

20. ... Ba6! is even stronger as after 22. Bxa6 Rxb3 Black can target the weak b-pawn after the trade.

21. Ra5 Rxb5

Again 21. ... Ba6! is strongest. Black now simplifies closer to the endgame, but is this endgame is no longer as dominant for Black.

22. Rxb5 Ba6 23. Ra5 Bxf1 24. Kxf1 Rb8 25. Nxc5 Nxc5 26. Rxc5 Rxb2 27. Rxd5 Bxc3

We have now arrived at an equal endgame that both players might have reasonably expected to end in a colorless draw. But things can still go awry...

28. g4 ...

In itself, this is not a mistake, but it is the first step in the wrong direction. The g4-pawn sticks out like a sore thumb, and will require defense on this forward post.

28. ... Rb4 29. Rd3 Bf6 30. Nd2? ...

Unnecessarily giving up a pawn. 30. Nh2, while not pretty, holds everything together and doesn't give Black an inch of ground to work with.

30. ... Rxc4 31. f4 g5! 32. f5 Ra4 33. Kf2 g4!

From the start of an innocuous endgame position, Black has gained a pawn, aggressive pieces, and kingside space. This endgame has already spiraled out of White's control.

34. Kg3 h5 35. e4 Kg7 36. Rd5 Kh6 37. e5 h4+ 38. Kh2 Bg5

Black's pieces march onward as White's king looks desperately short of space with each passing move.

39. f6 exf6 40. exf6 Bf4+ 41. Kg1 Ra1+ 42. Kf2 Ra2 43. Ke2 Kg6 44. Rd4 Rxd2+

0-1

Art Byers Memorial, Open section, Round 2
Peter Cuneo (1939) v. Hector Martinez (1714)

1. e4 c5 2. Nc3 d5!?

Whoever says nothing is original anymore didn't see this move. Objectively, of course, this must be ill-advised to throw away a central pawn so soon for so little. But it's hard not to admire Hector's creativity in playing a new move on move two!

3. Nxd5 e6 4. Nc3 Nc6

Black's idea starts to take shape: he will dominate the half-open d-file and use d4 as a base for his pieces. White's plan is also simple: cling to his extra pawn and win with it.

5. Nf3 a6 6. Be2 Nd4 7. d3 Bd7 8. 0-0! ...

The exclamation point is for White's restraint in avoiding 8. Nxd4. Nxd4 almost seems to suggest itself, forcing a Black pawn onto the square and burying its use for Black's pieces. However, Black would gain a new advantage in using the c-file, instead of the d-file, to his benefit. White would be likely to be forced to play c3 at some point in the game. Black would then again gain the d-file for his pieces, but with the added benefit that the d3-pawn no longer enjoys the protection of another pawn.

8. ... g6?!

I'm skeptical of this idea. Until now, Black has had all the fun, and will likely continue to enjoy all of the active play for some time. After 8. ... g6 White has a new advantage to build on in the form of control over the dark squares around Black's king. After the patient Ne7-g6 Black can continue to slowly build his play.

9. e5! Bc6 10. Re1 Qc7 11. Bf4 Bh6!/? 12. Bxh6 Nxh6 13. Nb1! ...

Karpov's ghost surely smiled on this move. The knight prepares to maneuver to the d2 square, where it support its companion on f3, and dream of leaping to either e4 or c4.

13. ... Nhf5 14. Nd2 Rad8 15. Bf1 Qe7 16. c3 Nxf3 17. Nxf3 h5 18. Qd2?

White makes his task immensely more difficult. Instead 18. Nd2! would have maneuvered the knight to territory its brother-in-arms had previously enjoyed.

18. ... Bxf3 19. gxf3 h4?!

You can almost hear Black's knight groan as the pawn steps forward onto a square it wanted to use. Black's attack certainly isn't easy to play, but after a series of moves that gradually build on Black's position such as Nh4, g5, Rg8, Ng6-f4, Black's position will become gradually more intimidating. Black's task is made easier in that White doesn't have any clear source of counter-play. White's strongest source of active play seems to be in preparing d4, playing d4, then shifting his pieces back over to the c-file after both sides trade their c-pawns on d4.

20. Bh3 Rh5 21. Bg4 Rg5?

Black's ambitious play finally gets the best of him. The rook is overextended on g5.

22. h3! Nh6 23. f4 Rxc4+ 24. hxc4 Nxc4

White now only needs to finish the game. Peter builds his pieces around the advance of the d-pawn. The same pawn that was restricted the entire game for Black's plan will lead the charge to victory.

25. Qe2 Nh6 26. Rad1 Nf5 27. Kh2 b6 28. Qe4 Qd7 29. Re2 b5 30. Red2 b5 31. d4 cxd4 32. cxd4 Qa7 33. Qc6+ Kf8 34. Qc5+ Qe7 35. Qxe7+ Kxe7 36. d5 exd5 37. Rxd5 Rxd5 38. Rxd5 Ke6 39. Rxb5

1-0

Art Byers Memorial, Open section, Round 4
Paul Covington (1870) v. Jim Johnston (1700)
Notes by Matt Grinberg

1. d4 d5 2. Bf4 ...

White prefers piece development to putting immediate pressure on Black's center.

Normal is the Queen's Gambit. 2. c4 After 2... e6 Queen's Gambit Declined - White's pressure on the center gives him the initiative. (The same goes for the Slav Defense. 2... c6; Or Black can play the Queen's Gambit Accepted. 2... dxc4 But then he has lost time and given White control of the center.

2. ... Nf6 3. e3 e6 4. Bd3 ...

This is the last chance for White to play 4. c4 and try for an advantage.

4. ... c5!

Now it is Black who puts pressure on White's center.

5. c3 Nc6 6. Nf3 ...

A friend of mine from Virginia, Ray Jones, used to play this line with the idea of holding the center solid and going for an eventual kingside attack. This is exactly the plan that Paul Covington follows in this game. Ray wrote a book about this line, but I don't think the book was ever published. He called it "The Nf3-Bf4 System," although it is usually called the London System. I still have a copy of his first draft that he sent to me in 1983.

6. ... Bd6 7. Ne5 cxd4 8. exd4 ...

Here's a game in this line won by a fellow I played several times in the Washington area. Evidently he gets around and plays nice kingside attacks. 8. cxd4 Qc7 9. Qc2 Nh5 10. Nxc6 Nxf4 11. exf4 Qxc6 12. Nc3 Bd7 13. f5 exf5 14. Bxf5 Bxf5 15. Qxf5 Rd8 16. O-O O-O 17. Rfe1

Qb6 18. Re3 Qxb2 19. Rae1 Bb4 20. Nxd5 Bxe1 21. Ne7 Kh8 22. Qxh7!! 1-0, Jablon, Stephen (USA) 1870 - Magnusdottir, Veronika Steinunn (ISL) 1564 , Reykjavik 2/24/2013 It (open)

8. ... 0-0 9. 0-0 Qc7 10. Re1 Bd7 11. Nd2 Rac8 12. Bg3 h6!?

This creates a weakness on his kingside that comes back to haunt him. Any of the following look better: 12... Ne8; 12... Ne7; 12... a6.

13. Ndf3 a6 14. a4 Rb8 15. Bf4 ...

Given the weakness created by 12... h6, White moves his bishop back to f4 contemplating a sacrifice on h6.

15... b5?!

Black does not see the danger on the kingside and goes for play on the queenside. Better is 15... Be8 , but after 16. Nxc6 Qxc6 17. Be5 Bxe5 18. Nxe5 Qc7 White is better due to his control over e5 and better bishop.

16. axb5 axb5 17. Qd2 Bxe5

With six White pieces aimed at his king, Black finally sees the danger and trades to relieve the pressure.

18. Nxe5 Nxe5 19. Rxe5 Qd8 20. Bxh6!! ...

White takes advantage of the weakness created by Black's 12th move. This is exactly the kind of attack White is looking for in playing the London System. The highly tactical nature of the next phase of the game leads to several mistakes by both sides.

20... Ng4?

Black tries to counter White's kingside attack by playing for a kingside attack of his own. But it is better to take a move or two to defend, then focus back on the queenside. 20... Ne8 21. Rg5 f5 22. Rg3 b4 Black is a pawn down and his position is weak, but at least White's kingside attack is temporarily stopped. Not 20... gxh6?? 21. Qxh6 Ne4 22. Rh5 Nd6 23. Qh7#

21. Bxg7! Qh4!?

Black continues his attack against White's king. Objectively it is not best, but sometimes a desperate counter attack is the best option. Best is simply taking the bishop. But after 21... Kxg7 22. Rg5 Kf6 23. Rxg4 Ke7 24. h4 Black is two pawns down and his king is still exposed to attack. White wins.

22. h3?? ...

Black's gamble on his last two moves pays off! The threat on h2 suckers White into missing a devastating alternative.

Instead 22. Rg5! Black has to give his king some air to counter the mate threats. 22... f6 (Taking on either f2 or h2 leads to mate for White. 22... Qxh2 23. Kf1 f5 (23... Qh1 24. Ke2 f5 25. Be5 Kf7 26. Rg7 Ke8 27. Qg5 Qh4 28. Qxh4 Rf7 29. Rg8 Rf8 30. Bd6 Kf7 31. Qh7 Ke8 32. Rxf8#) 24. Be5 Kf7 25. Rg7 Ke8 26. Qg5 Rf7 27. Rg8 Rf8 28. Qg6 Ke7 29. Rg7 Kd8 30. Rxd7 Kc8 31. Qxe6 Ne3 32. Ke2 Qh5 33. f3 Qxf3 34. gxf3 Rb7 35. Rxb7 Kxb7 36. Qa6#; 22... Qxf2 23. Qxf2

f5 (23... Nxf2 24. Bf6#) 24. Qh4 Kf7 25. Bxf8 Kxf8 26. Rxc4 Be8 27. Qf6 Bf7 28. Ra7 Rb7 29. Ra8 Rb8 30. Rxb8#) 23. Bxf6 Kf7 24. Qf4 Qxf2 Black avoids a quick mate by forcing a trade of queens. 25. Qxf2 Nxf2 26. Be5 Nxd3 27. Rg7 Ke8 28. Bxb8 Black is down an exchange and two pawns as White's attack rages on.

22... Nxe5 23. Bxe5?

There goes most of what remains of White's advantage. Better is taking the rook. 23. Bxf8 Nf3 (White was probably afraid of 23... Nxd3? but then White ends up two pawns up anyway and keeps his kingside pawn structure intact. 24. Bd6 Rd8 (or 24... Rb6 25. Ra8 Kg7 26. Bf8 Kf6 27. Qxd3) 25. Qxd3) 24. gxf3 Kxf8 25. Ra7 Be8 26. Bf1 White is two pawns up and has the better bishop, but White's bad kingside pawn structure gives Black some hope.

23... Rbc8??

Black immediately returns the favor! Once again Black is headed to oblivion. Obviously Black should contest White's rook on the open a-file. 23... Ra8 24. Re1 White has two pawns for the exchange, but the bishop pair and Black's bad bishop give White the advantage.

24. Bg3 Qh8 25. Ra7 Bc6 26. Qf4 ...

The quicker path to victory is 26. Qg5 Qg7 27. Qh5 Qh8 28. Qf3 Ra8 29. Be5 Qh4 30. g3 Rxa7 (The queen is trapped because Black will be checkmated after 30... Qh6 31. Qg4 Qg6 32. Bxg6 f6 33. Bh7 Kh8 34. Qg7#) 31. gxh4 White wins with a bishop, queen and two pawns for two rooks.

26... Qg7 27. Qh4 Qh8 28. Qe7?? ...

White again misses the chance to play Qg5+ and taking his queen out of the kingside relieves the pressure on Black. 28. Qg5 would win quickly the same as at move 26.

28... Rce8?

Better is 28... Qh6 to stop White's queen from getting back to the kingside. Material is even, but White should still win because his pieces are much more active and Black's king is still exposed.

29. Qc5 ...

Or 29. Qg5 but then Black has a resource he didn't have before. 29... Qg7 30. Qh5 Qh8 31. Qf3 e5! 32. Bxe5 Rxe5! 33. dxe5 Qxe5 White is "only" two pawns up.

29... Rc8 30. Be5 Qh6 31. Qe7 Rce8 32. Qb4? ...

White is overly cautious. He is worried about Black winning a pawn with Qc1+.

32. Qc7! wins back the exchange. 32... Rc8 33. Qd6 Ra8 34. Rxa8 Bxa8 35. Qe7 Bc6 36. Qc7 Qc1 37. Bf1 Be8 (37... Ba8? 38. Bd6 Re8 39. Qd7 Rf8 40. Bxf8 Kxf8 41. Qc8 Kg7 42. Qxa8 Qxb2 43. Qc6) 38. Bd6 Qh6 White ends up three pawns up after either 39. Bxf8 Qxf8 (or 39... Kxf8 40. Qd6 Kg8 41. Qb8 Qf8 42. Bxb5 Bxb5 43. Qxb5) 40. Qb8 Bc6 41. Qg3 Kh8 42. Bd3 Qe7 43. Qb8 Kg7 44. Bxb5 Bxb5 45. Qxb5 ...

32... Rc8?

Black misses a chance to finally put an end to White's kingside attack. 32... f6! 33. Bg3 Rf7! 34. Rxf7 Kxf7 35. Qc5 Rc8 36. Bxb5 Qf8 37. Bxc6 Qxc5 38. dxc5 Rxc6 39. Bd6 With three passed pawns for the exchange, White should win this endgame.

33. Kh2? ...

Again White is overly cautious. White wins much the same as in the note to White's last move after 33. Qd6 Ra8 (Going after the pawn is bad. 33... Qc1 34. Kh2 Qxb2?? (34... Qh6 at least keeps him in the game, but he has wasted time) 35. Qxe6!! Qe2 36. Bh7 Kxh7 37. Rxf7 Rxf7 38. Qxf7 Kh6 39. Bf4#) 34. Rxa8 Bxa8 35. Qe7 Bc6 36. Qc7 Qc1 37. Bf1 Be8 38. Bd6 Qh6 39. Bxf8 White will win the b-pawn leaving him three pawns up.

33... Rfe8 34. Bxb5 Bxb5 35. Qxb5 Qg6 36. Qe2?! ...

This retreat gives Black a good opportunity. Instead he should keep up the pressure with 36. Qb7.

36... f6?!

Opening the 7th rank for White's rook is a bigger problem than the annoying bishop on e5. Instead Black can take advantage of White's last move to challenge White's rook on the a-file. 36... Ra8! Black has good drawing chances.

37. Bg3 Qf5 38. Qe3 ...

In this position White has no forced winning attack on the kingside. However, the possibility of the kingside attack keeps Black's queen tied up on the kingside. Therefore White should make use of his other big asset, the passed b-pawn, and start pushing it. Black, on the other hand, has only one possibility for getting active play - challenging White on the a-file, so he should play Ra8. Both players miss their best opportunity for the next few moves.

38... Qg6 39. Qf3 Rcd8 40. Bh4 Rf8 41. Ra6 Rde8 42. b4! ...

Finally! Here comes the b-pawn! 42... Qh6? Black slides back into a losing position. Attacking the bishop may feel good, but it forces the bishop back to g3, where it can support the advance of the b-pawn.

If Black plays in an active and coordinated way, he still has drawing chances. 42... Rf7! 43. Rc6 Rh7 44. Qxf6 Qxf6 45. Bxf6 Rf8 46. Be5 Rxf2 47. b5 Rb2

43. Bg3 Qg6 44. b5 Rf7 45. b6 Rb7 46. c4! ...

Black cannot take because of the hanging rook on b7. Other tries by Black will be answered with c5, giving White two connected passed pawns. Jim decides he has had enough and resigns. This is a little surprising since he already salvaged a lost position twice in this game. But defending a bad position can wear you down after a while.

Art Byers Memorial, Section 2, Round 1
Jorge Cardenas (1450) v. Paul Padilla (1669)

1. d4 Nf6 2. e3 g6 3. Bd3 Bg7 4. Nd2 d5 5. f4 c5 6. c3 c4 7. Bc2 0-0 8. e4 b5?!

Allowing White to play e5 gives White an easy, and enjoyable, position to work with. Instead 8. ... dxe4 is far less accommodating with White's plans and offers more resistance in the center.

9. e5 Nh5 10. Ndf3 Bg4 11. Be3 Bh6

11. ... f6! offers better chances of breaking White's center.

12. Qd2 Ng7 13. h3 Bf5 14. g4 Bxc2 15. Qxc2

White has succeeded in gaining a massive chunk of territory in the center and on the kingside. Jorge now needs only to turn his advantage into something concrete.

15. ... Ne6 16. g5! Bg7 17. h4 Nc6 18. h5 Re8 19. f5 ...

Slightly more accurate is 19. hxg6 followed by f5. The difference is that the h1-rook has an open file to work with, as opposed to the game variation.

19. ... gxf5 20. Qxf5 Nf8 21. Nh4 e6

White patiently builds his attack. There's no rush, as Black's lacks any counter-play to speak of.

22. Qg4 Ne7 23. Nh3 Qd7 24. Nf4 Nf5 25. Nxf5 exf5 26. Qh3 Re7 27. h6 Bh8 28. Nh5 Ng6 29. Qh2 Nxe5!?

Tired of sitting on his hands and waiting for checkmate, Black lashes out against his invaders.

30. dxe5 Bxe5 31. Qf2 d4 32. Qg2 Qd8 33. 0-0-0

With his king tucked safely away, an extra piece to his name, and pressure on the kingside that seems to have lasted the entire game, the game is all but over.

d3 34. Nf6+ Kh8 35. Bc5 Bf4+ 36. Kb1 Re2 37. Qb7 Bc7 38. Bd4! Bb6 39. Qxf7 Re7 40. Ne8+!

1-0

Art Byers Memorial, Section 2, Round 2
Della Nicole Carter (1401) v. Preston Herrington (1661)

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 d5 3. Bf4 c5 4. c3 e6 5. e3 Qb6 6. Qc2 h6 7. h3 ...

The benefit of White's h3 is that preserves the f4-bishop against any thoughts of Nh5. However, I don't see the same utility in Black's h6 and have to think a developing move would have been more wisely spent.

7. Nbd7 8. Nbd2 Be7

As Black goes on to play Bd6 in a few moves, it makes more sense to play Bd6 immediately.

9. Be2 0-0 10. 0-0 Bd6 11. Ne5 Qc7 12. Ndf3 cxd4 13. exd4 Ne4 14. Nxd7?! ...

Trading off such an active knight to help Black develop can't be the best way to proceed in this position. White might have been worried about Black playing f6, but there would be time to capture on d7 later if it becomes necessary. 14. Bd3 putting pressure on Black's strong e4-knight seems a better alternative to me.

Bxd7 15. Ne5?! ...

This knight will also be destined to trade itself on d7. To trade such a fine stallion on e5 for the d7-bishop that's trapped behind its own pawns is another loss for White's position and should be avoided. Instead 15. Be5!? f6 16. Bxd6 Qxd6 17. Bd3 leaves White with a stronger bishop than Black's.

15. ... f6 16. Nxd7 Bxd7 17. Bxd6 Qxd6 18. Bd3 f5

Black now enjoys more activity, space, and the initiative and can expect his advantage to grow.

19. Rfe1 Rf6! 20. Qe2 Rg6 21. Qh5 Kh7 22. g3?

It is reasonable to want to block the rook's view of White's king, but White underestimates the collective force of the Black army aimed at the kingside. In White's defense, Black's activity has become dangerous and it is easy to miss all of the attacking possibilities. For instance, kicking the active e4-knight with 22. g3?? Loses immediately to 22. ... Rxc2+! 23. Kxc2 Qg3+ 24. Kh1 Nf2#

22. ... Rxc2+! 23. Kf1 ...

If 23. fxg3 then 23. ... Qxc2+ 24. Kh1 Nf2# (24. Kf1 Qf2#).

23. ... Rxd3 24. Kg2 Rg3+!

The rook flaunts its invincibility.

25. Kf1 Qf4

25. ... Qa6+! is another path to victory. After 26. Re2 (26. Qe2 Nd2#) Nd2+ 27. Ke1 Nf3+ 28. Kd1 (28. Kf1 Rg1#) Qd3+ White's army, and soon the king, collapse.

26. Qe2 ...

26. Re2, defending f2 and keeping the queen on h5 to defend h3, would have prolonged the struggle.

26. ... Rxh3 27. Kg2 Qh2+ 28. Kf1 Qh1#

Art Byers Memorial, Section 2, Round 1

Dean Brown (1447) v. David Lewis (1610)

1. e4 d6 2. d4 Nd7 3. Nf3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. Bc4 Be7? 6. c3 ...

After 6. Qd5! the game would have been over before it even began.

6. ... Nf6 7. Ng5?! ...

The first step in the wrong direction. Castling is better and keeps the balance. If 7. 0-0 Nxe4? then 8. Bxf7+! Kxf7 9. Qd5+ with a strong position.

7. ... 0-0 8. Nxf7?! ...

Dean sees the open king, the open diagonal towards His Majesty, and the seemingly sleeping Black pieces, and takes his moment to attack. However, White will need more pieces than his queen, and the reinforcements are a long way off. David will show just how quickly his drowsy pieces can get in the game, and with devastating effect.

8. ... Rxf7 9. Bxf7+ Kxf7 10. Qb3+ Kf8 11. Nd2 Nc5!

The exclamation point is not just for this move, but for the series of Black's next moves in which he brings his army into the game quickly, effectively, and aggressively.

12. Qc2 Nd3+ 13. Ke2 Nf4+ 14. Kf1 Be6

Only a few short moves later Black's pieces dominate the board.

15. b3 Qe8!

The introduction of the queen will be the decisive ingredient in Black's attack.

16. Bb2 Qg6 17. Rg1 Rd8 18. Re1 Qh5

The immediate 18. ... Nxc2! is even stronger. Whether or not White captures the intrusive knight, Black's bishop will arrive on h3 as a harbinger of victory.

19. Rh1 Bc5 20. Nc4 Nxc2!

If 21. Kxc2 then Black finishes in style with 21. ... Bh3+ 22. Kg1 Qg4#

Art Byers Memorial, Section 2, Round 2

Dustin Harris (1404) v. JJ Scott (1533)

Notes by Christian von Huene

1. e4 c6 2. Nf3 d5 3. Nc3 Bg4 4. h3 Bh5 5. exd5 cxd5 6. g4 Bg6 7. Ne5 Nc6 8. Bb5 Qc7 9. d4 Nf6 10. Bf4 Qc8

A wise sidestep.

11. Nxc6 hxg6 12. f3 ...

After such energetic, aggressive, play, White takes a moment to prevent the Black knight from reaching e4.

12. ... e6 13. Qe2 a6

Good question.

14. Bxc6+ Qxc6

Black is for choice now, in this equilibrium.

15. 0-0-0 Bb4 16. g5? ...

Patience... is a waste of time. White should first take care of Black's threat, however.

16. ... Nh5!

Correct! On first glance, it isolates the knight on the edge of the board. On second glance, it's the same!

17. Bh2 Bxc3 18. bxc3 Qxc3 19. Kb1 Rc8

The rook lift is the end of White. He must shift that queen!

20. Rd3 Qc4 21. Rhd1 Rc6 22. Qd2 0-0 23. Kb2 Rfc8

Wait, isn't this Alekhine's Gun? Since White is helpless, why not rearrange the queen?

24. Rc1 a5 25. Rb3 b6 26. a3 Qa4 27. Qd3 Rc4!

A nice move, demonstrating the bishop's beautiful, useless diagonal. He has to stay there, however, to keep the knight at bay.

28. Rxb6 ...

A dying man may eat anything. 28. c3 holds the fort for the moment. An odd crown for the White monarch.

28. ... Rc3

If a3 falls...

29. Qxc3

29. Qd2 Qxa3+! with inevitable doom.

29. ... Rxc3 30. Kxc3 Qc4+

And wherever his majesty steps, he must lose touch with d4, revealing White's good foresight.

**31. Kd2 Qxd4+ 32. Ke2 Qb6 33. Be5 f6 34. Bc3 Nf4+ 35. Kd1 Qb5 36. Ra1 e5 37. gxf6 gxf6
38. h4 d4 39. Bd2 Qf1+ 40. Be1 Qe2+ 41. Kc1 Qxe1+ 42. Kb2 Qc3+ 43. Kb1 d3 44. cxd3
Nxd3 45. Ra2**

0-1

Art Byers Memorial, Section 2, Round 2

Paul Padilla (1669) v. Hector Herrera (1248)

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 Bg4 4. Be3 ...

4. dxe5 would follow in the footsteps of Paul Morphy from his famous 'Opera House Game.'

4. ... a6 5. dxe5 Bxf3 6. Qxf3 dxe5 7. Bc4 Qf6 8. Nd2 Bd6 9. 0-0-0 Qxf3 10. Nxf3 h6?!

Black gives up what will become a key tempo. Hector may have been worried about White playing Ng5, but 10. ... Nf6 11. Ng5 0-0 White's e-pawn is not easy to defend without a concession. Either 12. Bd3, giving up the bishop's activity, or 12. f3 h6 13. Nh3 giving up the knight's activity must be played, when the game is balanced.

11. Rd5!? ...

The beginning of a creative idea. However, 12. Bd5! is even stronger as White's pieces become too active for Black to hold everything together. After 12. ... Nc6 (12. ... c6 13. Bxf7+) 13. c4! Nf6 (if 13. ... f6 14. Nh4 and White keeps an advantage) 14. Bxc6 bxc6 15. c5 Be7 16. Nxe5 Nxe4 White has a pleasant choice between 17. Rhe1 and 17. Nxc6.

11. ... Nf6?

Missing Paul's idea. Instead after 11. ... Nd7! Black keeps everything defended and will dispel the pernicious rook next turn with 12. ... Ngf6.

12. Rxe5+! ...

For the price of an exchange, White's piece activity breaks through to Black's monarch.

12. ... Bxe5 13. Nxe5 0-0

Another try would be 13. ... Nbd7 14. Nxf7 Rf8 15. e5 when White has two pawns and an initiative in return for his exchange.

14. Bc5! Nbd7 15. Nxd7 Nxd7 16. Bxf8 Rxf8 17. f4 Kh8 18. Rd1 Nc5

Black's knight probes for weaknesses in White's camp. White has a number of advantages including an extra pawn, a superior bishop versus the knight, and a more active rook. But Black isn't done fighting!

19. e5 c6 20. b4 Ne6 21. g3 b5 22. Bxe6 fxe6 23. Rd6 ...

With control of the only open file, an extra pawn, and pressure on a slew of Black's pawns on the sixth rank, White confidently strolls into the rook endgame with his rook held high.

23. ... Rc8 24. Rxe6 Kh7 25. Kd2 h5 26. Kd3 Kg8 27. Kd4 Kf7 28. f5 Rd8+ 29. Rd6 Ke7 30. Rxd8 Kxd8 31. Kc5 Kc7 32. c4 bxc4 33. Kxc4 Kd7 34. h4 Kc7 35. a4 Kb6 36. f6

1-0

Art Byers Memorial, Section 2, Round 1

Gerald Casteel (1502) v. Willow LeTard (1249)

1. d4 c5 2. d5 e6 3. c4 Nf6 4. Nc3 a6

A unique, albeit slow, approach to the Benoni. A more standard approach would be 4. ... exd5 5. cxd5 d6.

5. Bg5 b5 6. e4 b4

Both players poise aggressively and seem ready for a fight. Black pushes for queenside space while White pushes aggressively on the kingside and the center.

7. Na4 Qc7

Willow stops White from playing the binding d6 advance, but at the price of her kingside structure. A less committal way to reach the same goal is 7. ... d6, which will need to be played sooner or later anyway.

8. Bxf6 gxf6 9. Qh5 Qa5 10. b3 Bb7 11. f4 ...

White lunges on the kingside to attack as quickly as possible. Black's last moves (Qa5 and Bb7) inspire little confidence to the defense's prospects. Black will need to play quickly to react to White's threats, and she reacts accordingly.

11. ... Qc7 12. g3 f5!?

If the gloves were ever on, they're off by now. Both players throw caution to the wind as they strive to make their hits land first and hardest.

13. Bg2 ...

Better is 13. Nf3! when 13. ... fxe4 14. Ng5 leaves Gerald with an all but decisive attack.

13. ... Bg7 14. e5 exd5?

Best is the immediate 14. ... Bxe5 for reasons that will soon be clear.

15. cxd5 Bxe5 16. Qxf5?

White misses a key resource against Black's trick. After 16. fxe5! Qxe5+ 17. Qe2! Black's queen is pinned and White will remain comfortably up a piece.

16. ... Bxa1 17. d6 Qxd6 18. Bxb7 Ra7 19. Nxc5

We've reached a wild position that's about as easy to navigate as a thick rainforest. For the moment, Black is up material. Both players have vulnerable kings and are actively invading each other's side of the board. In such positions, simply having the move is the largest advantage and both sides must strive for the initiative seemingly above all else.

19. ... Bc3+! 20. Kf1 Qd1+

Finding 20. ... Nc6!! would have deserved both exclamation marks in my view, as it is a calm move, played in the thick of a raging storm, that addresses the needs of the position. 21. Nf3 Ne7! 22. Qh5 Qc2+ 23. Kh3 Qg6! forces a queen trade into a winning endgame. Finding such a variation is much easier for me, with the help of a computer and without the pressure of a clock, than it would have been for the players in the heat of the game.

21. Kg2 Bd4?

The initiative now passes firmly into White's hands.

22. Nf3! ...

Strong, and gaining a decisive advantage, but even stronger would 22. Qe4+! Kd8 23. Nf3 forking the bishop and queen.

22. ... Qe2+ 23. Kh3 Bxc5 24. Re1 Qxe1 25. Nxe1 ...

The smoke has cleared and Black's queen is now watching from the side of the board. Black's scattered and passive army will soon follow.

25. ... Rxb7 26. Qe4+ Be7 27. Qxb7 0-0 28. Nd3 a5 29. Ne5 Rd8 30. Qd5! Rf8 31. Qb7 ...

31. Ng4! is a strange but strong zugzwang. Black's pieces are simply too tied up to put up a fight. After any knight move, Qxd7. After any rook move, Nh6+. After any king move, Qe5+ wins the bishop. The only bishop move is 31. ... Bd8 when 32. Nh6+ Kg7 33. Nf5+ leaves White with an even stronger position.

31. ... Rd8 32. Qc7 f6 33. Qc4+ Kh8

33. ... d5 would have offered more resistance. After 34. Qc7 Kf8 35. Nd3 the White queen single-handedly leaves all four of Black's pieces tied up. The game would have gone on, with the same strong positional bind that has tormented Black for all of the endgame.

34. Nf7+ Kg7 35. Nxd8

Utopian Open

The Utopian Open might was played in April in Santa Fe and directed by the area's very own Jim Johnston. Jim directs a wide range of regular tournaments in our state's capital and the Utopian Open is one of the largest of those tournaments.

The open section was won by Christian von Huene with a score of 4/5. The reserve section was won by Miles Teng-Levy, also with a score of 4/5.

Utopian Open, Open section, Round 4

Christian von Huene (1750) v. Jonah Romero (2052)

Notes by Christian von Huene

1. d4 Nf6 2. Bg5 Ne4 3. Bf4 d5 4. e3 Nd7 5. Bd3 Nef6

It's more consistent to bring up the reserve cavalry.

6. c4 c5 7. Nc3 e6 8. Nb5!? ...

And we are off on wild adventures.

8. ... Qa5+

The only move, played after thirty minutes of thought.

9. Kf1 ...

I considered 9. Qd2 Qxd2+ 10. Kxd2 but rejected it on principle.

9. ... dxc4!

Absolutely correct, as Nd5 is a strong threat.

10. Nc7+ Ke7

Not falling for 10. ... Kd8? with the bishop eager to follow the knight to c7.

11. Bxc4 Rb8 12. Nb5 a6 13. Na7? ...

Cute, as b5 is now impossible. Yet, trading a prize racehorse for an impoverished priest is poor business. Instead 13. Bc7! Qb4 14. Nd6!! is the correct way to fulfill a fantasy and this tiny bridge is difficult to shift.

13. ... Ra8 14. Nxc8+ Rxc8 15. dxc5?! ...

I'm determined to help Black equalize.

15. ... Qxc5 16. Bb3 Nh5 17. Bg3 Nxc3 18. hxc3 g6

The bishop who was to be king. It might even be film-worthy.

19. Ne2 Bg7 20. Nd4? ...

I intended Rc1 on my previous move, but somehow didn't play it here.

20. ... b5 21. Ke2 Qb6!

Marvelous positional sense. The knight belongs to c5.

22. Rc1 Nc5 23. Qd2 a5 24. g4 ...

Not much else to do. At least I have extra time to enjoy the poverty of my position.

24. ... h6 25. Bc2 Rhd8 26. Qe1 ...

Much better is 26. b4! Finding this would save White. Black correctly prevents it next move. Of course, I find it right after it is too late.

26. ... b4 27. f3 Bxd4 28. exd4 Rxd4 29. Rxh6 Rcd8 30. Qh4+ ...

My opponent overlooked this move and was already in serious time pressure.

30. ... Kd7 31. Rh8 Kc8 32. Rxd8+ Qxd8 33. Qxd8+ Kxd8 34. Bxg6 ...

A simple tactic, but so exciting to find. I knew White was winning now, but conversion against such strong opposition is never easy.

34. ... Na4 35. Bxf7 Ke7 36. Rc7+ Kf6 37. g5+ ...

Unnecessary clarification.

37. ... Kxg5 38. Bxe6 Nxb2 39. Rc5+ Kf6 40. Bg8 a4 41. Ra5 Nd1 42. g4! ...

It's necessary to recognize and utilize White's advantage in order to win. Of course not 42. Rxa4 Nc3+ ... Wait, and then 43. Kd3 and White collects a free pawn!

42. ... Nc3+

Oddly enough, the horse isn't very good when it comes to racing. The bishop somehow seems faster.

43. Ke3 Rd8 44. Bc4 Rb8 45. g5+ Kg6 46. f4 b4 47. axb3 axb3 48. Ra6+ Kg7 49. f5 b2 50. Ra7+ Kf8 51. g6 ...

Each side was playing on the five second delay, with only seconds in reserve.

51. ... b1=Q

51. ... Re8+!! 52. Kd4 Ne2+ 53. Kc5 Re7 miraculously saves Black, if your name is Magnus.

52. g7+ ...

More games are won on the a2-g8 diagonal than any other. I don't know if that's true, but it sounds nice.

52. ... Ke8 53. g8=Q+

An exceptionally hard fought game, uncertain to the last second. I will look forward to my next encounter with Jonah. I learn so much from his positional mastery, it will be a pleasure when he takes revenge.

1-0

Utopian Open, Open section, Round 2

Eddie Sedillo (1710) v. Christian von Huene (1750)

Notes by Christian von Huene

1. e4 d5 2. d4 dxe4

Editor: The Blackmar-Deimer Gambit is a rare but entertaining guest in tournament play.

3. Nc3 Nf6 4. f3 exf3 5. Nxf3 e6 6. Bd3 Be7 7. 0-0 0-0 8. Kh1 c5 9. Be3 cxd4 10. Bxd4 Nc6 11. Bg1 Qa5 12. Rd1 Rfd8 13. Qe1 Bd7 14. Qg3 Be8 15. a3 Bd6

15. ... Bxa3 16. bxa3 (16. Ra1 Bd6 a simple move, but it's very hard to evaluate all the possibilities here.) 16. ... Qxc3 17. Ng5 Qxa3 18. Rxf6 and Black becomes toast.

16. Qe1 Rac8 17. Ne4 Qxe1 18. Nxf6+ gxf6 19. Rdx1 b6 20. Re4 Ne5 21. Nxe5 Bxe5 22. Rg4+ Kh8

This was better than 22. ... Kf8 as it protects the pawn on h7!

23. Bxh7 ...

Eddie said, "Well, let's have some fun," then he played this violent sacrifice. Objectively it's incorrect. But why let good moves spoil the fun?

23. ... Bc6

A sufficient, if not cowardly, response. 23. ... Kxh7 24. Rf3 looks ominous. 23. ... f5 24. Bxf5 exf5 25. Rxf5 f6 -+. I calculated this line in the game, but failed to see the discovered defense of the h5-square. 23. ... Bb5 24. Rf3 Be2!?

24. Bd3 Bxb2

I'm going to misquote the great Douglas Thigpen here: "When in doubt, be greedy. It usually works out."

Editor: I've absolutely said many things to this effect, and may well have used these exact words. However, I do contest the "great" aspect of this.

25. Bb5? ...

Eddie must clean up at poker. It is very scary playing with your king all alone on h8.

25. ... Ra8

25. ... Bxb5 26. Rf3 Rc3 Rxf6 Rh3!! Absolute art.

26. Bd3 Rg8 27. Rxc8 Rxc8 28. Rf2 Bxa3 29. Bf1 ...

Rally to the king.

29. ... f5 30. c3 a5 31. Ra2 Bc5 32. Bxc5 bxc5 33. Rxa5 Rc8 34. Ra7 Kg7 35. Kg1 c4 36. Kf2 f4 37. Be2 Be4 38. Bh5 Bg6 39. Bg4 Kf6 40. Kf3 ...

The best way to defend the f4-pawn is, of course, to play e5! It is comical how I then made a note not to blunder Bxc8.

40. ... Kg5 41. h4+ Kxh4 42. Kxf4 ...

For the second time White weaves a mating net around the Black monarch. Simply Ra1-h1 will complete the picture.

42. ... e5+ 43. Kf3...

43. Kxe5 Kxg4 is a good trade.

43. ... Kg5??

Choosing between this and 43. ... Rc5 was difficult. I chose to blunder a rook in front of half a dozen kibitzers.

44. Bxc8 e4+ 45. Ke3 f5 46. Ba6 f4+

Black is totally lost, but it's fun to give check!

47. Kf2 e3+ 48. Ke1 Bd3 49. Bc8 Kh4 50. Rg7 ...

Black has grown quite accustomed to having his king trapped on the edge of the board. This is the third time White sets up a mating net. It's charming to be sure!

50. ... Be4 51. Bb7 Bd3 52. Bf3 Be2!!

Played instantaneously. White had very little time to sort out this gift.

Editor: Christian is too modest to give this move the "!!" marker it deserves, but I believe it is worthy of the sign in a practical, if not also objective, sense.

53. Kxe2 ...

And to the amazement of all, the game ended peacefully.

0.5-0.5

Utopian Open, Open section, Round 2

Kevin Toland (Unrated) v. Jim Johnston (1700)

Following this event, Kevin's provisional rating became 1630. A very strong performance, especially for a first tournament.

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. exd5 exd5 4. Nf3 Bd6 5. Bd3 Ne7 6. 0-0 Bf5 7. Ng3 c6

Both sides have something close to comfortable equality, but they will have to be creative to play for much more than that.

8. Bg5 Bxd3 9. Qxd3 0-0 10. Rfe1 h6 11. Bd2 Nd7 12. Nh4?!

Trying to stir up the position, but there were better ways to play for an advantage. Instead 12. Ne5 keeps the stallion in the center of the game. Black's best play against this might be 12. ... c5 to undermine the knight's support, when the game is becoming more imbalanced.

12. ... Nf6 13. h3?! ...

To justify White's previous move, 13. Nf5 needed to be played. Otherwise Black will simply develop while preventing White's plan with 13. ... Qd7, when the knight looks even sillier on h4.

13. ... Qd7 14. a3 Rac8 15. Re2 g5!

Black makes the first strike at his opponent. This may weaken the kingside, but the control over the f4-square with more space on the kingside seems to outweigh the weaknesses it causes.

16. Nf3 Ng6 17. Rae1 Rxe2

Mass trades down the e-file are inevitable, but by initiating the trades Black has lost a precious tempo. Instead 17. ... Nh5!? might be a stronger way to play for an advantage, continuing his buildup on the f4-square.

18. Rxe2 Re8 19. Rxe8 Qxe8 20. Kf1 Kg7

Instead 20. ... Ne4 seems more ambitious.

21. Qf5 Qe6 22. Qxe6 fxe6 23. g4 e5 24. dxe5 Nxe5 25. Nd4 Nc4 26. Bc1 Kf7 27. Nf5 Bf8

Black has a comfortable endgame, with control key squares, such as c4 and d4, and more space for his pieces.

28. b3 Nd6

Black wisely decides against 28. ... Nxa3 29. Bxa3 Bxa3 30. Nxb6+ when the players have strangely traded an a-pawn for an h-pawn, but the trade favors White, as White is much closer to getting a passed kingside pawn (or two!) than Black is to getting a passed pawn on the queenside.

29. Nxd6 Bxd6 30. f3! ...

Ever so slightly improving his position, by placing keeping the knight out of e4 and consistently placing his pawns on light squares.

30. ... Kg6

It is strange to criticize such a natural move as 30. ... Kg6, but over the next series of moves Black slowly slides into a worse position, without any clear point (to me anyway) of where things went wrong. I believe this is the point Black might have changed things. The problem is that the knight lacks any real purpose on f6 and needs a better square. Nf6-d7-e5-g6 is a winded maneuver, but that places the lost steed on a square where it becomes a force to be reckoned with, eyeing the f4 and h4 squares.

31. Ke2 a5?!

Gaining space on the queenside is natural and fine, but Black is putting a large number of his pawns on dark squares. With every pawn Black puts on a dark square, Black limits his own dark-square bishop, makes his opponent stronger, and gives the White king more pathways into Black's territory.

32. a4 d4 33. Ne4 Nxe4 34. fxe4 Kf6 35. Kd3 Ke5 36. Bd2 ...

White seems to threaten everything at once. The queenside pawns are attacked, the kingside pawns can be attacked, and White's king seems to hold the entire center.

36. ... b6 37. Be1 c5 38. c3 ...

More convincing is 38. Bg3+! when Black can't defend the king and pawn endgame, due to the quick entry by White's king via c4 and the passed e-pawn. For example, 38. Bg3+ Ke6 39. Bxd6 Kxd6 40. Kc4 Ke5 41. Kb5 Kxe4 42. Kxb6 d3 (42. ... Ke3 43. Kxc5) 43. cxd3+ Kxd3 44. Kxc5 Kc3 45. b4 and White safely promotes.

38. ... dxc3 39. Bxc3 Kf4 40. Bg7 Kg3 41. Bxh6 Be7

If the immediate 41. ... Kxh3 then 42. Bxg5 Kxg4 43. Bd8! followed by hungrily devouring the remaining queenside pawns.

42. Ke3! ...

Gaining the opposition. White is keeping Black's bishop tied to the defense of the g-pawn with his own bishop, and Black's king tied to the edge of the board with his own king. White gained his endgame advantage by cleverly using his pawns, and is now converting this endgame to a win through a clever use of piece domination.

Kxh3 43. Kf3 Kh4

No better is 43. Bf6 when follows 44. Bf8 Bd8 45. e5! when the pawn can only be stopped by giving up the bishop.

44. e5 Bd8 45. Bg7 Bc7 46. Bf6

An impressive endgame by Kevin, played against an experienced veteran of New Mexico chess.

Utopian Open, Reserve section, Round 3

Jason Murray (819) v. Andy Merriell (1463)

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 c5 4. Nf3 Nc6 5. Bf4!? ...

Not to be bothered defending a measly pawn, White goes straight for the attack. For now, the pawn and the center that come with it have to be preferred. But you never know what can change when one side has all the activity.

5. ... cxd4 6. Nxd4 dxe4 7. Ndb5 e5!

Using his extra material, Black occupies the center and plays against White's piece activity.

8. Qxd8+ Kxd8 9. 0-0-0+ Bd7 10. Be3 a6?

A big part of playing against your opponent's initiative is not giving them squares in your camp to use. Black tries to force out the intrusive b5-knight, but giving up the b6-square is a high price to pay.

11. Nd6+ ...

Instead 11. Bb6+! is the beginning of a powerful attack that Black may not recover from. 11. Bb6+ Kc8 12. Nc7 Rb8 13. Nxa6! when 13. ... bxa6 is met by 14. Bxa6+ Rb7 15. Rxd7! with a decisive advantage.

11. ... Bxd6 12. Rxd6 13. Bc4 Kc7 14. Rd2 ...

If 14. Rhd1?! then 14. ... Nd4! leaves the d6-rook stranded behind enemy lines.

14. ... Rhf8 15. Nd5+ Nxd5 16. Bxd5 f5

Each trade of pieces does bring Black that much closer to an endgame in which he is currently up a pawn, but White continues to have lingering activity that should not be underestimated.

17. Rhd1 Rad8 18. Bb3 h6 19. Bc5 Rh8

Slightly better is 19. ... Rf6, keeping his rook in the game.

20. Bd6+ Kc8 21. Bxe5? ...

I'm more than a little confused by this move. It's possible White simply missed this pawn was defended (happens to all of us sometimes) or it's possible White saw ahead to the next tactic and thought this would be stronger than it was.

Nxe5 22. f4 Nc6 23. Rxd7! Rxd7 24. Be6 Nb8 25. Bxf5 Rhd8

The rook is already defended enough times, but the e-pawn isn't. 28. Re8 would have made Black's advantage more convincing.

26. Re1 Kc7 27. Bxd7 Rxd7 28. Rxe4 Nc6 29. g3 Re7 30. Rxe7 Nxe7

After a tough fight, with White struggling to break Black's defenses and holding his fort together, we have reached a fascinating endgame. With his extra piece, Black has a large advantage here. But they say winning a won game is the hardest thing in chess, a saying I've always found to have a lot of truth. Black may have an extra piece, but White has pawn majorities on both sides of the board.

31. Kd2 Nf5 32. Kd3 Kd6 33. Ke4 Ke6 34. c3 h5!

To succeed, Black will need to tie down at least one side of the board.

35. b4 b5!

Tying down both sides, and forcing the White king into retreat.

36. Kd3 Kd5 37. a3 g6 38. a4 bxa4?

Not a losing mistake, but this makes Black's job more difficult as the unfettered White pawns show their strength. Not giving White an inch to work with is 38. ... Nh6 preparing to target the h-pawn. After 39. axb5 axb5 40. h3 Nf5 41. g4 hxg4 42. hxg4 Nh6 43. g5 Nf5 White has run out of options and is in zugzwang. Either the White king retreats when the Black king advances (to either c4 or e4) or the g-pawn advances, when Nh4 picks it off.

39. c4+ Kc6 40. Kc3 Kb6

Better is 40. ... Ne3! with Nf1 to follow.

41. Kb2 Nd6??

Alas, chess can be a cruel game. A whole's game hard work can disappear in a moment. I would imagine time trouble was a factor at this point.

42. c5+! Kc6 43. cxd6 Kxd6 44. Ka3 Kc6 45. Kxa4 Kb6 46. h3 Kc7 47. Ka5 Kd7 48. Kxa6

1-0

Utopian Open, Reserve section, Round 4

Jason Murray (819) v. Gerald Casteel (1454)

1. e4 c5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. g3 Nf6 4. Bg2 g6 5. Nge2 Bg7

The players poise themselves for a slow game, but one that can leap into aggression at a moment's notice.

6. 0-0 0-0 7. d3 d6 8. Bg5 a6 9. Qd2 Re8 10. Bh6 Bh8 11. Rae1 Ne5?!

Inviting White to advance his f-pawn with time is a dangerous idea. If Black can win the dark-square bishop, it would be significant positional victory. And, in fact, he can! 11. ... Ng4 12. Bg5 Bg7 with h6 to follow and e5, if necessary, to push the bishop to e3 where it can be swapped for the brave g4-knight.

12. f4! ...

The pawn storm begins!

12. ... Neg4 13. Bg5 Nd7

13. ... h6 would have left White's bishop on a less optimal square and given Black the option of playing g5 after a near-future f5 advance.

14. h3 Ngf6 15. f5 ...

In a few short moves, White's pawns are at the gates to Black's kingdom.

15. ... Ne5 16. Nf4 gxf5?

It is never easy to play when watching a massive pawn force, and an entire army behind them, eyeing your kingside. But this move opens the door wide open for the invading forces. The best approach, it may seem strange, is to go about your business as if there wasn't any mob there at all. 16. ... b5! Develops your own pieces, and dares White to break his own way inside.

17. Bxf6! ...

Absolutely! After this White's already accelerated forces reach their target even faster.

17. ... Bxf6 18. Nh5 Bh8

18. ... e6 brings reinforcements to their monarch's defense in the e6-pawn and the queen. The queen makes a poor defender, but she'll, at least temporarily, hold back the White attack.

19. Qg5+ Ng6 20. exf5 f6 21. Qg4 ...

The pinner becomes the pinned. Winning with ruthless efficiency is 21. Bd5+! e6 22. fxe6 when if Black captures the White queen 22. ... fxg5 he gets checkmated immediately 23. e7+ Bxe6 24. Bxe6#

21. ... Rb8 22. Bd5+ Kf8 23. Ne4 ...

If White is looking to give up his queen for mate (don't we all?) there are quite a few variations in this game to do it. 23. Qg5! threatens Qh6+ with mate to follow. If 23. ... fxg5 White has forced mate with a beautiful last move: 24. fxg6+ Bf5 25. Rxf5+ Bf6 26. g7#. Instead Black's only defense is 23. ... Bg7 when White can carry on with his attack as though his queen isn't being attacked at the start of every move 24. Ne4!

23. ... Bd7 24. Nf4 ...

White's pieces begin to circle Black's position like sharks.

24. ... e6

It's difficult to offer Black advice here. This move seems to crack and let the invading forces in, but that was hardly to be helped. If Black ignores everything and plays something like 24. ... b5 White has 25. Ng5! threatening h7, which undermines what remains of Black's kingside. If 25. ... fxg5 26. Nxg6+! hxg6 27. fxg6+ Kg7 28. Qh5 with mate on h7 soon to follow. If 25. Ng5

Kg7 26. Nh5+! with mate in one no matter where Black goes **26. ... Kh6 27. Nf7#** or **26. ... Kf8 27. Nxh7#**.

Still, there's something to be said for making your opponent find the complicated ways to win. After **24. ... e6** White has very little work to do to finish the game.

25. Bxe6+ ...

25. fxe6 wins faster as it keeps attacking White pieces on the board.

25. ... Bxe6 26. Nxe6 Rxe6 27. fxe6 Ne5 28. Qf5 ...

The smoke of the initial attack has cleared. While Black has survived the starting onslaught, and some very picturesque checkmates, his fate will be the same.

28. ... Qe4 29. Nxf6 Bxf6 30. Qxf6 Qxf6 31. Rxf6 Kg7 32. Ref1 Re8 33. c3! ...

Preparing the final pawn push to force the knight from the defense of f7.

Re7 34. d4 cxd4 35. cxd4 Ng6

An impressive game by Jason. Even more so after realizing his opponent was rated more than 600 points higher than him! At the time of writing this, Jason's rating is still provisional. I'm sure I speak for more than myself when I say I hope he'll stick around so we can see more such games from him in the future.

1-0

K-12 State Championship

Played in Albuquerque in May, the K-12 State Championship is no less than the highest crowning achievement for scholastic play in the state. This year that crown was won by Jonah Romero with a score of 3.5/4.

K-12 New Mexico State Championship, Round 4

Jonah Romero (2062) v. John (JJ) Scott (1619)

Notes by John (JJ) Scott

Editor's Note: A hard-fought game between two very talented young players that would decide the K-12 State Championship.

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5 5. e4 Nxc3 6. bxc3 Bg7 7. Be3 c5 8. Qd2 Nc6?!

This is the wrong move order. 8. ... Qa5 is the main move here.

9. d5 Na5 10. Rc1 Ne5 11. d6?! ...

This move weakens White's hold on the center and on the bishops.

11. ... Be6!

Black should not be afraid to give up castling for development here, because White has no way to attack the king.

12. dxe7 Kxe7 13. Be2 b6

This move is slow but strong. After 13. ... Qxa2 14. Bxc5+ Black's king is suddenly vulnerable.

14. f4 Nxc4 15. Bxc4 Bxc4 16. e5! ...

This move blocks in the dark-square bishop, which is annoying for me.

16. ... Rhd8 17. Qf2 Qxa2 18. Qxa2 Bxa2 19. Nf3 Bc4

This move prevents castling, which makes White's job slightly more difficult.

20. Kf2 Bf8?!

Here I wanted to play ... b5 and ... a5 without c5 falling, but my plan was too slow. Instead, 20. ... f5 or 20. ... h5 to prevent counter-play.

21. f5! Ke8 22. g4 ...

Now White is gaining counter-play on the kingside.

22. ... a5 23. Ng5 gxf5 24. gxf5 h6 25. Nh7 ...

Now White is gaining back the pawn, which makes the position slightly unclear, with some edge to Black.

25. ... Bd3 26. Nxf8 Kxf8 27. Bxh6+ Kg8?!

27. ... Ke8, ignoring White's counter-play, is better.

28. f6 Kh7 29. Bg7?! Rd5

Now my plan is to attack the weak e5-pawn, since the bishop can no longer defend it.

30. Rhe1 Re8 31. Rcd1 c4!?

This move is important, because otherwise the rook on d5 is slightly immobile. However, it does allow 32. e6, with more play for White.

32. e6! Rxe6 33. Rxe6 fxe6 34. Ke3 a4?!

34. ... b5 was much better, trying to push through with b4.

35. Rg1 Bg6 36. Bf8 Rf5?

36. ... Rd3+ was much better, but Black is still better.

37. Be7 e5 38. Rg4 b5 39. Rh4+ Kg8 40. Rg4 Kf7

With the king blockading this pawn, this endgame is winning for Black.

41. Rg1 Rh5 42. Rg2 Rh3+ 43. Rg3 Rxh2 44. Bb4 Kxf6

Without any kingside pawns, this is totally winning for Black.

45. Rf3+ Bf5 46. Rg3 Rh3??

This makes the win much more difficult, because without rooks the bishops of opposite color make the win quite difficult.

47. Rxh3 Bxh3 48. Ke4 Bg2+ 49. Ke3 ...

Here I was unwise enough to take a draw. While Black is still much better, finding the win is quite difficult.

0.5-0.5

The Ultimate Prize in Chess

By Victor Lopez

Dear NM Chess Community and Desert Knight Readers,

I will get right to the point of this article, which is a request to each and every one of you. Please take the wonderful gift of chess that has been given to you and teach others. Not just to play chess, but teach them, mentor them, and coach them to think. To slow down, to breathe, to analyze, and to develop their own path towards ultimately arriving on informed strategic decisions, both over the chess board and in real life.

You have been lucky enough to stumble across this wonderfully deep and beautiful game. While it is a game that gets so little respect in our current society, it is a game that has so much to offer our society. A real live, competitive chess game with a worthy, respectable opponent played over the course of a few hours is a refuge from the often hectic noise of everyday life.

Most basically, these days, chess can simply get kids off the screen addictions that so many of them are developing. More than that, chess can teach kids and adults alike to have patience through adverse circumstances. When a chess learner is still in the first few phases of learning not to blunder pieces and to keep track of everything happening on the board, their mind is overwhelmed with all of the possible combinations and circumstances that they just cannot see. But if they are playing and learning from you, me, or any experienced chess player, they can be mentored to take their time, and develop their own systematic approach for analyzing each position that they will confront. For kids, especially, this systematic process of analyzing, calculating, and making an informed decision can be something incredibly useful. They can further develop and use this skill for the rest of their life: over the chess board and in real, live, stressful decision-making moments.

It is for these reasons that I believe that more people learning chess can make the world a better place. That is why I have devoted so much of myself and my time to teaching kids how to play chess. It is why at Learners Chess we work with thousands of kids every year, in dozens of chess clubs in the schools and at camps. It is why we raise funds to run chess clubs in low-income schools at no cost to parents and it is why we have made our fee-based programs fully accessible to any child whose parent is either willing to pay a fee or fill out a need-based scholarship application.

So, in this article that I have been given the opportunity to write, I am asking you to join me, and teach others. Not just to play chess, but to think, evaluate, breathe, and patiently organize information and consider circumstances towards the end goal of making strategic decisions. It starts, for many, on a chess board and it can easily and beneficially seep into other aspects of their lives.

Do you have nobody to teach? Come coach for Learners Chess, start a club at your local neighborhood school, or go to your local community center and start a regular club there. Chess equipment is not a huge investment and most schools or community centers would be willing to invest in some. You can also apply for a grant from the Nowak Youth Chess Fund: <https://sites.google.com/site/andynowakfund/>.

When you do this, you'll need to jump through a few bureaucratic hoops, like background checks, talking to administrators about the structure of your club about when and where it'll meet and for how long, etc. But these are very small initial investments for you to make, as you can ultimately change people's, and especially children's, lives with the gifts you can give them by teaching them to play chess. I guarantee you, that teaching a group of people how to play chess and watching them grow as learners and thinkers is a reward for you and one that, much like your knowledge of the game itself, you will cherish for the rest of your life.

Victor Lopez

Victor Lopez is the Founder and Executive Director of Learners Chess Academy, a local Albuquerque-based non-profit that operates over 45 local youth chess clubs, summer chess camps, and chess service trips, through a program called Learners Without Borders. You can learn more about Learners Chess or contact Victor through their website: www.learnerschess.org.

Art Byers Memorial Senior

By Matt Grinberg

The 2019 Art Byers Memorial was played the weekend of February 9 at the Meadowlark Senior Center in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. It is an excellent playing site and I am happy that the NMCO can once again make use of it. The four section tournament had an strong turnout of 72 players.

I knew it was going to be a great tournament when I saw this sunset upon arriving in Rio Rancho. Either that or we were all doomed!



Open Section

The Open Section featured three former New Mexico Champions: 13 time Champion, Steve Sandager (2200); three time Champion, Doug Thigpen (2169); 2015 Champion, Andy Flores (2178). But in spite of the wide rating gap between the former state champions and the rest of the field, all were put to the test. In the end Sandager scored 3.5-0.5 tying for first with young Jonah Romero (1997). Tied for third at 3.0 were Laurence Wutt (1971) and Paul Covington (1870) of Colorado and Munir Hammad (1870).

The first round already saw a big upset with Andy losing to Munir. Paul also scored an upset winning against Tony Schroeder (2000). Steve, Jonah and Doug all won their first round games. In the second round Andy fell out of contention by drawing against Art Glassman, while Doug won against Munir and Laurence won against Paul. The ultimate winners, Steve and Jonah also won. Moving on to the third round on Sunday, Steve and Jonah played to a hard fought draw. Laurence scored his second big upset in a row, winning against Doug! Munir and Paul also won. So, going into the last round Laurence had the only perfect score. His prize was being paired against Steve. Steve won to secure a tie for first. Jonah secured his share of first by handing Doug his second consecutive defeat. Munir and Paul also won to share third place with Laurence.

The Open Section at the start of the last round. On the right is first board featuring Laurence Wutt versus Steve Sandager.



U1700 Section

The U1700 also had a tie for first at 3.5-0.5. Elonzo Santillanes (1642) and John Scott (1533) both won their first three games, and then drew against each other in the final round. In a very unusual development, the two top rated players, Paul Padilla (1669) and Preston Herrington (1661), both lost in the first round. Preston dropped out of contention by losing again in round three. But Paul won his last three games to tie for third at 3.0. Also tying for third were David Lewis (1610), Dustin Harris (1404) and Joe Schrader (1372). Dustin and Joe each gained about 100 rating points!

U1200 Section

Matthew Bossert (952) tore up the field with a perfect 4-0 score. In the process he gained 249 rating points to rise to 1201! In sole second place with 3.5 was Marcus Santillanes (900). Marcus' only draw came in the first round against Manny Castillo (1110) of Las Cruces. Tying for third with 3 were Daniel Miller (Unrated), Sherlock Chen (1101) who only lost to Matthew in the final round and Diego Santillanes who gained 200 rating points for his performance.

Scholastic Section

The Scholastic Section was won by Steven Williams with a perfect 4-0 score. Playing in his first USCF tournament, Steve earned a preliminary rating of 914. Tied for second with 3 were Vladislav Debelak (778), Po Chen (778) and Esha Shankar (303).

NMCO Service Award

Prior to the final round, longtime New Mexico player and tournament director, Art Glassman, was presented with an award for his service to New Mexico chess. In addition to being a Class A player (and former expert), Art is credited on the USCF website as a Senior Tournament Director and with having been the Chief Tournament Director of 141 New Mexico Tournaments and 351 sections from 1991 to the present.

Congratulations Art and thank you for your service!



Art Glassman (right) modestly receiving his award

Solutions

1) ... e6! and the adventurous bishop is trapped in the middle of the board. Black found the move in the Gerald Casteel v. Joe Schrader played in round 3 of the Art Byers Memorial.

2) Black has a number of strong moves, but the best is 1. ... d3! Forking White's minor pieces. If White takes twice on d3, the a1-rook suddenly falls prey to the discovered attack by the queen on e5. In the game, Black played 1. ... Qg5 but cruised to victory regardless with his kingside attack in the game Steve Williams v. John (JJ) Scott, played in round 1 of the K-12 Championship.

3) It's mate, plain and simple, after 1. ... Ra1+ 2. Kh2 Qf4+ 3. g3 Qf3. White can throw in a number of spite checks, but there's no stopping ... Rh1#. Black found this sequence and White, convinced, resigned after 3. ... Qf3 in Tim Martinson v. Christian von Huene played in round 5 of the Utopian Open.

4) I'll admit this is a devilishly hard puzzle, but perhaps it's made easier that White has two strong moves. The object in both is to reach a decisive attack.

1. g6+! Kg8 2. h6 ... when the point is that White's attack is crushing. For example, 2. ... Rh4 3. Rxh4 Bxh4 4. hxg7 Kxg7 (4. ... Re8 5. Qh5 ...) 5. Qxe5+ Kxg6 6. Rg1+ with mate to follow shortly. Or 2. ... Bf6 3. Rdg1! fxg6 (3. ... Bf5 4. gxf7+ Rxf7 5. Qh5 ...) 4. hxg7 Bxg7 5. Rxg6 Qxf2 (6. ... Rf6 7. Be3 ...) 8. Qh5 with two threats: Qh8+, Qxg7+ and Rxg7+, Qh7+, Rh6#

Far easier, in my opinion, is 1. h6! because it is less abstract but just as decisive. Thereafter follows 1. ... g6 2. Qxe5 Rg8 3. c4! when White has a very simple, but devastating, plan: he's going to play Bc3, Qg7+, and hxg7#. If 3. ... Rxc4 White can calmly recapture the rook, as the queen defends any attempted mates on b2.

In the actual game, White saw none of the above and fell on his face with 1. Be3?? immediately turning the advantage over to Black after 1. ... Qa6! However, White used eight of his nine lives and went on to win regardless in Doug Thigpen v. Munir Hammad played in round 2 of the Art Byers Memorial.