

THE OUTPOST

SPRINGFIELD CHESS CLUB NEWS



VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2

SPRINGFIELD, MO

SEPTEMBER, 2017

PARDON THE INTERRUPTION

by Dylan Mounts

I can distinctly remember my middle school gym teacher telling our class, "Sometimes life hits you with a big ol' 2x4. And when that happens," he said, "all you can do is stand yourself up and wait for the next one." It may not be the most creative or nuanced metaphor, but he seemed to enjoy saying it, and for some reason it stuck with me.

Those 2x4s he was talking about are the things you don't see coming. The things hiding around the corner or underneath the bed. Despite your best efforts, despite your careful plans, these are the things that hit you when you least expect it and force you to react.

My second ever attempt at our not quite monthly newsletter is delayed by a week because life decided I needed a healthy dose of 2x4, and it took me a second to stand myself back up. And as I spent my time collecting myself I found I was drawn as strongly as ever to the game of chess. At first glance it might seem that I needed a distraction—that chess offered my mind a brief escape from the circles it had been running—but I think there's more to it than that.

By its nature, chess is a game of perfect information. Each player has the same knowledge available to him or her at any given time. You can't make a move and then cover up that part of the board. No one gets to hide their pieces. Everyone knows everything that's happening, and if you look

closely enough no one can make a move that will surprise you.

Within the shelter of these 64 squares we can convince ourselves we are safe. As long as we consider just what's in front of us—this set of moves, these possible responses—we can always make the right choice and things will go the way we planned. In a world filled with 2x4s flying around unchecked, chess offers us the illusion of control.

Is this healthy? Probably not. But while chess is a rich and beautiful pastime, I never want to shy away from the fact that it has an ugly side as well. When chess becomes more than just a game, when you hide yourself inside a chessboard and refuse to come out, it can destroy lives and relationships. This is true of anything not enjoyed in moderation, but chess seems to have an especially consumptive history, and we don't have to look far to find examples. Bobby Fischer, for one, comes to mind.

But I'm of the belief that the potential positives in chess far outweigh the negatives, and I would be doing a disservice to our newsletter if I ended on such a depressing note. Instead, I think it's important to remember that the illusion of control that chess offers is just that: an illusion. While we may fool ourselves into believing we have complete dominion over our 64 squared home, we'll soon find chess has its own share of 2x4s.

Unless you are the aforementioned Bobby Fischer, every

game you play will feature a move you didn't expect. You will nearly always make a mistake, and you'll be forced to figure out how to respond. You can resign and get up and go home. Or you can keep playing. Take a deep breath, accept the position as it stands, and try to find the best move.

Life is not a game of perfect information. You can't know everything, and sometimes bad things happen. And when life hits you with one of its 2x4s, all you can do is stand yourself up, dust yourself off, and remind yourself that the best move is out there, so keep your eyes open.

Upcoming Events

Sep 23	SW MO Diehard's Fall Open – Joplin
Oct 7	2nd Annual Senior Center Blitz Fundraiser
Oct 14	2nd Annual Drury National Chess Day Open
Oct 27	Final Friday Blitz
Nov 4-5	Springfield Open - Drury University
Nov 10-11	Annual Ladder Championship

WEEK #21 (8/4)

STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT	Vs	STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT
3	Ethan Stech – 1	Vs	25	Nick Whitaker – 0
5	Dylan Mounts – 1	Vs	26	Brayden Miao – 0
6	Stan Horton – 0	Vs	29	Charles Burrow – 0
8	Ben Elliott – 1	Vs	30	Rob Fridge – 0
13	Mike Little – 0	Vs	23	Kai Bailey – 1
17	Adam Whitaker – 0	Vs	31	Isaac Drum – 1

Nick Whitaker (167P20) vs Ethan Stech (1682)

Comments and annotations by Ethan Stech

1.e4 c6
2.Ne2 d5
3.d3

A bit of an unusual/passive way to play against the Caro-kann.

3...e5
4.d4!? dxe4
5.dxe5 Qxd1+
6.Kxd1 Bg4

I'm wanting to develop my queenside quickly and castle on that wing, pressuring his king on the open d file.

7.Nbc3 Nd7
8.Bf4 0-0-0
9.Bg5

This move loses a tempo and forces me to play a move I sort of wanted to play anyway.

9. ...f6
10.exf6 gxf6
11.h3?

This would be a decent idea, but unfortunately for White I can just take on e2 with check and then take his bishop.

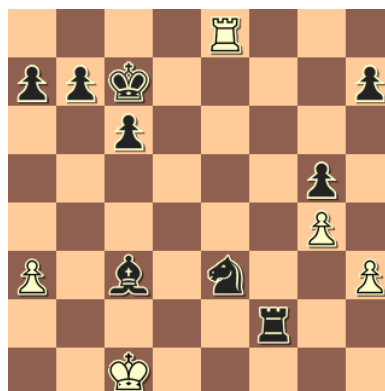
11...Bxe2+
12.Bxe2 fxe5
13.Nxe4?

And now my earlier decision to castle queenside pays off.

13. ...Nc5+
14.Bd3 Nxe4
15.Rf1 Nc5
16.Kc1

16.Kd2 would have kept the pawn defended.

16...Nxd3+
17.cxd3 Rxd3
18.Re1 Nf6
19.Kc2 Rd4
20.Re6 Nd5
21.Re8+ Kc7
22.b4 Bg7
23.Rae1 Rxe8
24.Rxe8 Rxb4
25.Rg8 Bf6
26.a3 Rb2+
27.Kc1 Rxf2
28.g4 Ne3
29.Re8 Bc3



Setting up the checkmate threat ...Rf1#, as well as an exchange-winning tactic if he takes the knight, as he did in the game.

30.Rxe3 Bxd2+
31.Kc2 Bxe3+
32.Kd3 Rf3
33.Ke4 Rxh3
34.Kf5 c5 (0-1)

White resigns.

WEEK #22 (8/11)

STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT	Vs	STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT
2	Ethan Stech – 1	Vs	6	Ben Elliott – 0
4	Dylan Mounts – 1	Vs	5	Ken Brown – 0
7	Stan Horton – 1	Vs	15	Mustafa Farid – 0
13	Mike Little – 0	Vs	18	Stan Jackson – 1
17	Adam Whitaker – 0	Vs	25	Charles Burrow – 1
27	Brayden Miao – 0	Vs	28	Isaac Drum – 1
30	David Mcfeely – 1	Vs	34	Steven Becker – 0

Adam Whitaker (956) vs

Charles Burrow (1826)

Comments by Charles Burrow

1. c4 d6

A variation of the English opening.

2. Nc3 Nf6

3. g3 g6

4. Bg2 Bg7

5. Nf3 0-0

6. 0-0 Nc6

7. d3 a5

Instead of d3, White more usually plays d4. I ran this through some crazy engine on Chess.com and the engine claims that Black playing e5 here, taking territory in the center, is possibly the best move but I personally feel that more can be done in preparation in controlling the center before actually occupying it and instead continuing with a5. Black's move a5 opens rook activity on the a1-a8 column, it also strengthens the b4 square and can be used to disrupt White's queenside which is already being weighed down on by Black's fianchetto'd bishop on the a1-h8 diagonal. Moving a5 also weakens the b5 and b6 squares and must be watched closely throughout the game.

8. e4 h6

9. Bd2 Nd7

10. Rb1 e5

My opponent and I looked at the chess moves after the game and decided that Rb1 could possibly be the first mistake; taking the rook off the a1-a8 column and giving it up to black's rook.

11. a3 Nc5

12. Qc2 Bd7

13. b4 axb4

14. axb4 Ne6

15. Ne2 Qe7

16. Be3 Kh7

17. b5 Na5

As mentioned before the b5 and b6 squares are weakened by the pawn move a5 but with accurate play White cannot muster an attack that is the least bit fruitful.

18. Bd2 b6

The move b6 solidifies Black's queenside pawn structure with its anchor on c7 (black being careful to watch that the c7 square does not fall to an attack itself) and paves the way for the knight on a5 to come back to b7 and rest on c5 where it puts pressure on Black's central pawn structure.

19. Bxa5 Rxa5

For some reason White trades bishop for knight. It does not seem like the best move as black can open up the position later increasing the board presence of his own bishops while White's knights would fail to control the board.

20. Ra1 Rfa8

21. Rxa5 Rxa5

Black's rook wins and controls the a1-a8 column.

22. Nc3 Nc5

I looked at lines involving Nd5 and came to the conclusion that Black can slowly arrange the queen and light squared bishop in a way that both defends c7

and puts pressure on Black's center and kingside.

23. Nd5 Qd8

24. h3 Be6

25. Ne3 Qa8

White removes the pressure on Black's c7 pawn allowing for quick development on the a1-a8 diagonal with Qa8 with the idea of later invading White's queenside.

26. Qe2 Ra2

White's queenside is being invaded and White struggles to hold on to the d3 pawn.

27. Qe1 Nxd3

The queen could have come to d1 in an attempt to save the d3 pawn but White's position is hanging by a thread while Black is now bringing the queen in to the attack and can even start to develop more on the kingside with a future f5.

28. Qc3 Ra3

29. Qc2 Nc5

30. Kh2 Ra2

31. Qb1 Bf6

32. Kg1 Qa4

33. Qc1 Nxe4

34. Nd5 Bxd5

35. cxd5 Rc2 (0-1)

With 2 pawns down white resigns.

Ben Elliot (1351) vs Ethan Stech (1682)

Comments and annotations by Ethan Stech

1.d4 d5
2.c4 e6
3.cxd5 exd5
4.Nc3 Nf6
5.Bg5 Be7
6.Nf3 c6
7.e3 h6
8.Bxf6 Bxf6
9.Bd3 O-O
10.Qc2 Nd7

I would say out of the opening White's position is a tad bit easier to play than Black's.

11.O-O-O

I was not expecting this. Perhaps it's a common way to play this opening and I've just never seen it before.

11...Nb6

On a good day, I'd like to march my pawn down to a3. Either a pawn exchange will take place or he'll play b3; either way his king position becomes a bit airier. I considered 11...b5, and perhaps it's the better move here, but during the game I felt like having the backward c6 pawn on the half-open c file could cause me some problems, and I thought if he could ever get his knight to the c5 square my position could quickly become unpleasant.

12.Rdg1

White makes it very clear that his plan is to storm my king with his g and h pawns. While lacking in subtlety, this plan is not especially easy to deal with.

12. ...a5
13.g4 Bh4

An odd looking move, but my bishop wasn't doing much on f6, and I couldn't think of any other way to blockade his pawns.

14.Nxh4

An interesting alternative is the immediate 14.g5, sacrificing a pawn to open up the g file.

14...Qxh4
15.Bf5 Qf6

Trying to keep the g file closed. Now if he plays 16.g5, his bishop is en prise.

16.Bxc8 Rfxc8
17.h4 Qf3



I don't think this was the best move. I was thinking if he played g5 here, I was going to take it, because if 18.g5 hxg5 19.Rxg5 his rook on h1 is hanging, and if 18.g5 hxg5 19.hxg5 I'll play 19...g6 20.Rh6 Kg7 followed by swinging a rook over to the h file, and I thought that position was relatively safe. The computer, however, notices 21.Rg3, which points out that my queen's only safe square is f5, where White can just trade queens and leave me with double isolated pawns on the f file. I also missed the move that was actually played, which opens the g file by force.

18.Qf5 Qxf5
19.gxf5 Kh7
20.h5 Nd7

The idea is to reroute the knight to f6 to make sure one of his rooks has to stay on the h file guarding the pawn. My alternative was to let him double rooks and passively defend with ...Rg8, which did not look promising.

21.Kd2 Nf6
22.Rg2 a4

The a4 pawn may end up being a weakness, but I really did not want him playing Na4 and getting his knight to c5 or b6.

23.Rhg1?

White misses the threat.

23. ...Nxh5
24.f6? g6
25.Ne2 Nxf6
26.f3 Re8
27.Ng3 Re7
28.f4 Rae8
29.f5 g5
30.Rh1 Rxe3
31.Nh5 Nxh5
32.Rxh5 Kg7
33.Rgh2

Admittedly when I played 30. ...Rxe3, I calculated this and missed the fact that I cannot play 33...Rh8 because the rook on e3 hangs. Time pressure was creeping up on me, and while the computer says White's doubled rooks on the h file are not a problem with correct play, I didn't want to allow him any chances. So I got a bit creative.

33...R3e4
34.Rxh6 Rxd4+
35.Kc3 Rh4!?

Maybe not the most accurate way to play, but it's grounded in practicality: I'm three pawns up, so I can afford to give up one of them in order to simplify the position.

36.R6xh4 gxh4
37.Rxh4 Kf6
38.Rxa4 Kxf5
39.Rb4 b5
40.Rh4 c5
41.Rh5+ Ke6
42.b4 Kd6
43.Rh6+ Re6
44.Rxe6+ fxe6
45.a4 cxb4+
46.Kxb4 bxa4
47.Kxa4 (0-1)

White resigns

Dylan Mounts (1558) vs Ken Brown (1706)

Comments in italics by Ken Brown

1. e4 d5

The Scandinavian. At my level this is one of the most popular defenses I see to 1. e4. Why? It limits White's options. Black sacrifices a tempo in order to force White's hand. While Black won't end up in a better position, he also won't end up worse. Black avoids the abundance of theory associated with 1...e5, 1...c5, or 1...e6, and instead forces White to play Black's game.

This was my first, and perhaps last, time playing the Scandinavian. As a kid I always played 1...e5 against 1.e4. Coming back to chess after so many years, though, trying to take on something like that or a Sicilian is simply too much. As those who have played against me over the past few months know, I've been trying out a variety of openings to see what I might want to build my repertoire around. I saw a game with this Qd8 Scandinavian by Carlsen, and I read a bit of a book on the opening - The Qd8 Scandinavian: Simple and Strong. I thought it was time to give it a go in this game.

2. exd5 Qxd5

3. Nc3 Qd8

I think 3...Qa5 is better. Opening principles say you don't want to develop the queen early on, but opening principles also say you shouldn't move the same piece twice. On a5 the queen is surprisingly safe. After White plays d4 and Bd2 the queen may still make her way to d8, but having her on a5 also threatens a number of tactics, and it again forces White to play a very small set of moves. If Black plays the Scandi to limit White's options, then 3...Qa5 seems the most natural progression.

4. d4 Nf6

5. Nf3 Bg4

6. Bc4 e6

7. O-O c6

Not 7...Bxf6 8. Qxf6 attempting to win the pawn, because 8...Qxe4? allows 9. Qxb7, essentially losing the game.

8. Be3

With Qxb7 no longer an option, White must defend the pawn.

8...Bd6

9. h3 Bxf3

I was happy to see this. I was expecting 9...Bh5 where I would likely have played 10. g4 attempting to march against his kingside. There are a lot of pieces pointed at my king, and I was afraid 10...Bxg4 11. hxg4 Nxc4 would be too much for me to handle, but 12. Ne4 spoils Black's chances. I didn't see this over the board, but I suspect Ken did, which might have prompted him to give up the bishop pair.

On the other hand, exchanging his bishop activates my last piece. Black is behind in development thanks to giving up a tempo on move two. White isn't anywhere near winning, but if given the choice I'd prefer White's position over Black's.

I've played through a number of Qd8 Scandi games, and Black always captures on f3 when prompted to do so. In fact, IM John Bartholomew states this is the way to play. In retrospect, this leaves Black a bit more passive than I would have liked, but it is hard to deny as the game progresses that Black remains fairly solid against White's pressure.

10. Qxf3 Nbd7

Maybe Black should have castled. I'm never one to fault natural development, but White is going to do everything in his power to maintain pressure. I don't know if castling will objectively allow any more protection for Black, but I'm old fashioned and of the opinion that a castled king is always better than a not castled king.

11. Ne4 Nxe4

12. Qxe4 Nf6

13. Qh4 Nd5

Again Black can castle, but now it seems more dangerous. Everything is pointing towards the kingside, and Black probably wants to remain flexible and give his king options. 13...Nd5 proposes a queen trade, neutering White's attack, but also threatens the bishop pair.

14. Qg4!

A subtle move, but an effective one. Black gave up his light square bishop, and now White is capitalizing. Castling is a terrifying prospect for Black with the queen bearing down on g7 and a bishop about to enter h6. Exchanging the knight for the bishop is equally terrifying. The rook would be activated along the f-file, and the e pawn would love to march down the board.

14...g6?!

This probably isn't best, but I don't know what else should be played. Black's queenside looks pretty ragged, so I don't think he wants to castle over there, but this move gives up his rights to castle kingside.

15. Bh6 Qc7

16. a3

I'm expecting Black to castle queenside. I want to play c4, but moving my bishop allows Nb4, which seems inconvenient. In hindsight 16. a3 looks awkward and incorrect, but I was trying to cut off b4 while at the same time threatening to pawn rush his castled king.

16...Bf4

17. Bg7 f5!!

A beautiful tactic that wasn't even on my radar. I was lucky to have enough resources to survive here.

18. Qf3

Not 18. Qh4 because 18...Qxg7 19. Bxd5 Qxd4!!, Black is threatening Bh7+, winning White's Queen.

18...Qxg7?



At this point, I looked at the capture on g7 as well as the intermediate check with the bishop on h2. Over the board and running out of time, the two moves seemed to lead to the same thing. However, I now think 18...Bh2+ is the correct choice. After 19.Kh1 Qxg7, White needs to capture the bishop with 20.Kxh2 which then allows 20...Qxd4. I think it's doubtful Black can hold on to the pawn, but this position seems preferable to the actual game continuation.

19. Bxd5 cxd5?

I'm calling this a mistake because it creates a problem Black can't solve. Pawn moves are some of the most important moves in chess, because pawn moves are permanent. Pawns can't move backwards, so every pawn move you make is irreversible. Here Black creates a backward pawn. It's been left behind the pawn chain; no other pawns can defend it. I'll spend the rest of the game applying pressure to this weak point, because Black can't adequately support it. 19...exd5 would open up the e-file against the king, but Black's pawn chain would remain strong.

20. Qxf4 O-O
21. Qd6



- 21...Rfe8
22. Rfe1 Rad8
23. Qb4 Rc8
24. Qd2 Rc4
25.c3 Qc7
26. Re5

I want this pawn. I blockade it so it can't move. I plan to load up all my pieces behind it and either take it or force Black to use all his pieces defending it.

- 26...a5
27. Rae1 Rc6??

Allowing a straightforward tactic. At this point Black had less than 10 minutes left on the clock. If given more time I'm sure he would have made a better move, but under pressure his play deteriorated.

28. Rxd5 Re7
29. Rde5 Qb6
30. Qg5 Rf7
31. d5 exd5
32. Rxd5??

With my opponent low on time, I started playing quickly because he was playing quickly. Never at any point should you do this. When up on time you should use the time you've

earned to play the best move every move. Allow your opponent to suffer in his time trouble, and make moves that make him think. 32. Rxd5 is not losing, but 32. Qh6 is incredibly forcing and not that hard to find. If I'd taken the time I'd given myself I'd have found the better move, but instead I decided to play blitz with 30 minutes left on my clock.

- 32....Kg7
33. Rd8 h6
34. Qd2 f4
35. Ree8 h5
36. Rg8+ Kh6
37. h4 Rh7
38. Qxf4+ (1-0)

Black ran into time trouble and played a series of bad moves at the end, but this should not take away from his solid play throughout. The mistakes that were made early on were subtle and nuanced, and White won because of strong positional play.

Dylan played a great game. After 19...cxd5?, my position was far too passive, and Dylan did a great job focusing all of his attention on breaking through at e6. While the Qd8 Scandi clearly gives Black a solid position, I don't think it fits my temperament very well. I don't generally enjoy sitting back and defending unless there's something that's going to be unleashed at some point. I'm not sure what I'll play against 1.e4 next time, but the Qd8 Scandi isn't very high on the list of options.

WEEK #23 (8/18)

STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT	Vs	STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT
2	Martin Phillips – 0	Vs	6	Ken Brown – 1
4	Dylan Mounts – 1	Vs	9	Ed Rysal – 0
5	Stan Horton – 1	Vs	16	Kary Kingsland – 0
12	Stan Jackson – 1	Vs	20	Afzal Chowhury – 0
13	Mike Little – 0	Vs	23	Brayden Miao – 1
14	Mustafa Farid – 0	Vs	17	Charles Burrow – 1
21	David Mcfeely – 1	Vs	27	Zach Allen – 0
26	Steven Becker – 0	Vs	28	Craig LaSelle – 1
26	Steven Becker – 0	Vs	29	Austin Gray – 1

Steven Becker (unr) vs Austin Gray (1371P1)

Comments and annotations by Austin Gray

1. e4 e6
2. Qf3 d5
3. d3 c5
4. exd5 exd5
5. d4 Nc6
6. Bb5 Nf6
7. Qe2+ Be6

White's early queen moves leave him behind in development and not fighting for the center.

8. Nc3? cxd4
9. Nxd5?? Nxd5

White attempts to develop his knight but this allows me to take on d4 with tempo. White must play his knight back to the first rank to preserve it. But he blunders by taking on d5.

10. Nf3 Bb4+
11. Bd2 O-O
12. Ng5 Bf5
13. Ne6?? Bxe6

White blunders his knight on e6.

14. O-O Bxd2
15. Qxd2 Qb6
16. a4 Rfd8

17. Rfe1 Rac8
18. b3 Ndb4
19. c4 dxc3
20. Qxc3 a6
21. Re3?? axb5

I develop my rooks to open files and attack the bishop to try and simplify the game. White ignores the threat and lifts his rook for an attack on my king.

22. Rg3 f6??



I make a careless move in defending my king, the g7 pawn is pinned and the queen can now take on f6. 22. ...g6 would have been a much better defense to White's threat of mate though the position is still winning for me if I'm careful.

23. Re1 Qc7

I still miss the Qxf6 idea but luckily White does as well. My queen on c7 defends the pawn on g4 and I allow the rook to take on e6 so that I may put pressure on white's back rank.

24. Rxe6 Rd1+
25. Re1 Rd8
26. axb5 Qe5
27. bxc6?? Qxe1+
28. Qxe1 Rxe1# (0-1)

White takes the bishop on e6 and my rooks and queen come in to threaten checkmate. If 27. Qxe5 then Nxc5 and my extra material is enough to comfortably finish the game. White misses the threat and plays 27. bxc6 which falls to mate in two.

Martin Phillips (1819) vs Ken Brown (1706)

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 g6
3. Nc3 Bg7
4. e4 d6

I've played the King's Indian against Marty a couple of times—once in blitz, and once in classical. I've learned that this is something you probably shouldn't attempt unless you've done your homework. The King's Indian is a sharp and dangerous opening for both sides. Tactics flow freely, and unless both sides know what they're doing the better studied of the two will often find themselves winning quickly.

5. f3 O-O
6. Be3 c5

An important maneuver in the Saemisch Variation. This is, as it appears, a straight pawn sacrifice. 7.dxc5 dxc5 8. Qxd8 Rxd8 9. Bxc5 wins the pawn outright. But Black contends that he has compensation. White will have a difficult time developing with a pawn on f3, and Black has opened up the diagonal for his bishop and created a potential outpost on d4. Is it worth it? Hard to say. It probably depends on who plays better.

7. d5 e6
8. Qd2 exd5
9. cxd5 Nbd7
10. Nh3

With a pawn on f3 it can be very difficult for White to get his king's knight developed. Until this point h3 has been covered by Black's bishop, and White can't afford to have his kingside pawn structure destroyed. White seizes the first opportunity to get his knight activated and his king to safety.

- 10...Ne5
11. Nf2

For the same reasons as above, nearly forced. White cannot allow Bxh3.

- 11...a6
12. a4 Rb8
13. Be2 Bd7
14. O-O?!

Black has been mounting pressure to rush the queenside, and White has been dutifully defending it. Castling concedes the b5 pawn push. The correct move isn't obvious, but I think it's an interesting exercise in defensive resourcefulness. How can White stop b5?



With 14. a4! The more I play chess the more I realize the power that's often behind a simple pawn move. As a wise man once said, "Pawns are the soul of chess."

- 14...b5
15. h3 b4
16. Ncd1 Bc8

This awkward looking move is to prevent Black's knight from being trapped after the upcoming f4.

17. f4 Ned7
18. g4 Re8
19. Bf3 Nb6
20. Qc2 h6
21. a5 Nbd7
22. h4

White has decided he liked how his pawns looked at the beginning of the game and would like to set them up that way on the fourth rank.

In all seriousness, this looks scary for both sides. Black is under pressure, but with a slight misstep White can crumble easily.

- 22...Nxd5!?

Feeling White closing in, Black lashes out. Let's be clear: This sacrifice is not strictly correct. But neither is it incorrect. It takes courage to play a move like this over the board, and that alone earns it an exclamation mark. Black sacs his knight, but in return he is allowed to tear through White's oncoming pawn storm and begin applying pressure of his own.

23. exd5 Qxh4
24. Kg2? Ne5!!

Let's be clear: This is not a sacrifice. This is a beautiful tactic. If 25. fxe5 then 25...Bxe5 threatening either Qh2+ or Qg3+. White can't defend both threats, and 26. Re1 Qg3+ 27. Kf1 Qxf3.

25. Rh1 Nxf3
 26. Rxh4?? Ne1+!



Knight forks on the first rank aren't something you see often, so White can be forgiven for overlooking this one. Still, this oversight will cost White the game.

27. Kg3 Nxc2

Even more elusive than the first rank fork, Black has delivered a fork-fork, or a fork². The knight first forks the queen and the king, and the capture of the queen creates another fork of the rook and bishop. Black probably fell asleep thinking about this beautiful tactic. White probably did too.

28. Rc1 Nxe3
 29. Kf3 Nxd1
 30. Rxd1 Rb5
 31. Ne4 Rd8?
 32. Rdh1 Bb7
 33. Rd1 c4
 34. Kg3?

It's hard for me to find much point behind this king move, but White's position has fallen apart so badly that nearly any move is as good as the other. I commend White for playing on, but Black will not have his tactical prize robbed.

- 34...Rxd5
 35. Rxd5 Bxd5
 36. Nd2 Re8
 37. Kf2 c3
 38. bxc3 bxc3
 39. Nf3 c2
 40. Rh1 Bxf3
 41. Kxf3 Bb2 (0-1)

WEEK #24 (9/1)

STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT	Vs	STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT
2	Dylan Mounts – 0	Vs	16	Mustafa Farid – 1
3	Martin Phillips – 1	Vs	15	Adam Whitaker – 0
4	Stan Horton – 1	Vs	18	Isaac Drum – 0
7	Ben Elliott – 1	Vs	20	Nick Whitaker – 0
13	Charles Burrow – 1	Vs	19	David Mcfeely – 0
22	Brayden Miao – 0	Vs	27	Austin Gray – 1
25	Rob Fridge – 1	Vs	29	Zack Allen – 0

Adam Whitaker (956) vs Martin Phillips (1819)

Comments and annotations by Martin Phillips

1. c4 g6
2. Nc3 Bg7
3. e4 d6
4. g3 e5
5. Bg2 f5?

During the game and postgame analysis, I convinced every one there what a terrible blunder I made by playing 5...f5?

If White plays 6. exf5, he wins at least two pawns in the opening. For example, if 6...Bxf5?, then 7. Bxb7 winning a pawn and an exchange. Granted, White now has some issues to deal with... 7...Nd7 8. Bxa8 Qxa8 so White is forced to play f3 to keep from giving the rook back, but it is enough pressure to compensate for the exchange? I believe I sighed audibly when White played 6. d3.

But per my usual routine after playing a rated game, I consulted the Encyclopedia of Chess Openings (ECO) and to my surprise, 5...f5 (without a question mark) was not only played and recorded for posterity in Informator 3 game 33, but it was played by some relatively unknown GM named Fischer against the revered Robert Byrne. Who does this Fischer guy think he is???

(5...f5 6. exf5 gxf5 7. Qh5+ Kf8 8. d3 Nf6 9. Qe2 Kf7 10. Bg5 c6 11. Nf3 Rf8 12. Qd2 Kg8 - Byrne-Fischer, New York 1967 (3/33) equal – ECO A21 14 #76)

All in all, I was very happy White played the text move...

6. d3 Nc6

Before playing ...f5, I should have played ...Nc6 which then allows Black to capture back on f5 should White decide to exchange pawns on f5.

7. Nf3 Nf6
8. Bg5 h6

I felt 8...h6 is necessary to keep White from playing 9. Qd2 and storming the kingside.

9. Bxf6 Qxf6

Knowing that White would play Nd5, gaining a tempo when the bishop goes back to g7, I opted to put the queen to use early.

10. Nd5 Qf7

10...Qf7 covers the vulnerable c7 square and upon castling Black has a dynamic tandem on the f-file.

11. O-O O-O
12. Rb1

White is playing very thematic moves from an English point of view. He's going to grab space on the queenside and attempt to open up the long diagonal to activate his bishop on g2. Black on the other hand is going to try to steal the initiative while keeping the bishop on g2 at bay.

12...f4!

The English Opening has many dynamic features. Sometimes white attacks on the b-file and other times he can attack on the f-file. But more inherit to the position, White cedes the d4 square leaving it up to Black to figure out a plan to post a knight on this square.

13. b4 Bg4!
14. b5



Damn the torpedoes, full steam ahead!

14...Nd4?

My second out right blunder of this game. I should have played 14...Bxf3 which forces White to recapture on f3. White does not have time to play 15. bxf3 sac'ing the queen. 15. Qxf3 loses time after 16. Nd4.

15. Nxe5!

After my first narrow escape, my brain should be full engaged. I had calculated this fantasy continuation 15. Ng5 Bxd1 16. Nxf7 Be2 17. Nxe6 Bxe6 18. Re1 Bxd3 19. Rbc1 f3 where Black is winning. Unfortunately, White has a better continuation!

15...Ne2+?!

As Roger Pagel pointed out, 15...Bxd1 is simply better than what I played. 15...Bxd1 16. Nxf7 Be2 17. Nxe6 Bxe6 18. Rfe1 Bxd3 19. Rbd1 Ne2+ 20. Kh1[] Bxc4 +- Black is up a piece.

16. Qxe2! Bxe2
17. Nxf7 Bxf1

17...Rxf7!? 18. Rfe1 Bxd3 19. Rbd1 Bxc4 20. Nxf4 Kh7 =/+ Black has the bishop pair and multiple targets.

18. Nxe6+! Bxe6
19. Kxf1 fxe3
20. hxe3

White has 2 pawns for the exchange, but all of White's pawns are connected and Black cannot break though on the open h-file. Basically, Black has to wait for White to make a mistake.

20...Rf7

20...Rf7 holds the f6, e7 and c2 squares. The idea was to free up the other two pieces.

21. Bh3

White threatens to win the exchange with Bd6.

21...Re8
22. f4

This is beginning to get uncomfortable.

22...Bg7
23. Bg2 Bd4

Now at least one piece is active.

24. a4 Kg7
25. a5 Rh8

I am not worried about him pushing either the a- or b- pawns. White actually has the same issue as Black, his pawns are in his way so he attempts to better his position.

26. Ke2 Rh2

I am not threatening to win the bishop, just hoping for a mistake.

27. Kf3?! g5!
28. b6

I was expecting 28. f5, but I cannot let him break on the queenside just yet.

28...axb6
29. axb6 c6!

In my mind, I thought I was winning after this move. If you want to beat me, just let me think that during a game...

30. Nc7

