A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CLUB

by Roger Pagel
with editorial contributions
by Dylan Mounts

October 7 marked our second annual Senior Center Blitz Fundraiser. It's a small way for us to show our appreciation to the Senior Center for allowing us use of their facilities. My understanding is that our club is the oldest in the state of Missouri, and for most of our history the Senior Center has been our home. It seems fitting, then, to provide a brief history of our club as told by our longest standing member, Roger Pagel:

Historically, for those who do not know, the Center was not always a Senior Center. When the Club was "given use" of this space in the 1980s at the Ray Kelly Park by the Springfield Park Board—now called the Springfield-Greene County Park Board (note the Club has not changed its name)—it was only the back room that then dog legged to the left and was formally a police satellite station that was no longer being used.

It sometimes got crowded in such a small space. There were two window A/C units that would often blow the fuses and it had an exhaust fan the size of a large dinner plate that did little to cool the place off. It got hot excessively hot during the summer months, but we played anyway!

The Club over the years has waxed and waned in members. In the 70s chess teams were part of the club comprised of 4-6 teammates who would then play other teams. We even had team names! If memory serves, we had 6 or so teams and a small newsletter of the matches was distributed among the members.

Then in the late 80s Marty started our first ladder competition and created the newsletter, "The Informant," later changed to "The Outpost," which increased membership to well over 50 and the club thrived with members paying $1 each for each ladder game played to cover rating fees and operating expenses in addition to yearly dues, which if memory serves was $25/yr. Our treasurer then was Clarence Townsend who kept immaculate books and made sure everyone paid the $1. You knew when he approached you to get out your dollar! Clarence was a mainstay of the Club and should not be forgotten.

This saw our coffers soar to over $2000. This amount was used after many years of just sitting there in 2012 for a 40th anniversary tournament with 1st prize of $500 and class prizes of $100-$50. We were able to disburse enough funds to bring our account down to under $400. Since club participation then was very small it was time to disperse the funds to a more manageable size while giving back to the chess community.

And now, thanks to Afzal, who reintroduced the Ladder last year, the Club has grown to our present 40 paid members with many others showing up each week to play and/or learn the game. While the Club provides the Ladder, we like to think we provide fellowship and other forms of chess that welcomes anyone interested in the game.

Thus, we are overly grateful that when the large addition was added to the Senior Center, the Club was still welcomed to the use of the building. The Park Board still owns the park and the building, but only maintains the outside area and provides no funds to the interior maintenance. The Senior Foundation of the Ozarks (assuring seniors are provided food and community) works with the Park Board and in turn leases the building to the current Senior Center Administration. At least, that is our understanding of the operation of the facility.

Prior to being located at the Ray Kelly Park, the Club used many Park Board facilities around the City, thus the reason the Club was named SPBCC to denote the Park Board giving the Club places to play by the founders, members of the Springfield News-Leader and SMSU faculty members. In fact, in the early 70s the Club used to meet on Saturday mornings at the Meador Park Bath House. Not the best facility to say the least, but even worse than the bath house, the Club met at Fassnight Park in an open pavilion—not ideal in bad weather or during the winter in addition to having to contend with the pigeons and their droppings!

Thus, after this lengthy recollection—most of which is accurate though some might remember it differently or explain the history with a different point of view—we have a long and rich history and wish to support the facility where we currently play.

This year's Blitz fundraiser was a great success with first place shared by Ed Rysal, Matthew Pratt, and Roger Pagel, each with a score of 6-1. Nearly $200 was raised for the Senior Center.

Week #25 (9/8)

STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT	Vs	STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT
2	Ethan Stech – 0	Vs	8	Stan Jackson – 1
3	Stan Horton – 0	Vs	5	Ken Brown – 1
6	Ben Elliott – 1	Vs	27	Bob Alarid – 0
12	Charles Burrow – 1	Vs	14	Mike Little – 0
23	Brayden Miao – 0	Vs	30	Zac Schuh – 1
22	Steven Becker – 0	Vs	29	Zach Allen – 1

Steven Becker (unr.) vs
Zach Allen (unr.)

1. e4 e5
2. Nc3

As a lifelong 1. e4 player I've never been fond of the Vienna game. That's not to say it's bad, it just doesn't feel correct to me. You're defending a pawn which isn't being attacked, you're doing nothing to progress towards castling kingside, and you're preventing your c-pawn from maintaining any influence over the center. Of course it's hard to be too critical of a natural developing move, and White will often end up playing Nc3 even if he plays 2. Nf3. But stylistically, I think Nf3 is the more productive option at this point in the game.

2...Nf6
3. Bc4 Nc6
4. d3 Nd4
5. Nf3 d6
6. Ng5

I think g5 may be the king's knight's favorite square. Black must always be wary of these sorts of ideas, and White should always keep an eye open for them. Until the king is castled, the f7 and f2 squares are critical weak points. They are the only squares on the board protected exclusively by the king, and both players should apply as much pressure to them as possible.

Here Black needs to play Be6. While giving up the bishop pair isn't ideal, it's the only reasonable move that defends the threat.

6...Be7??
7. Nxf7 Qd7
8. Nxh8 d5
9. Bb5??

There's no reason not to take the pawn. White has three pieces attacking the pawn, Black has two pieces defending it. As long as the attacking player has more pieces attacking than the defending player has defending, the piece can be taken safely.

9...Nxb5

Backwards moves can be hard to see, and White pays the price.

10. Nxb5 Qxb5
11. exd5 Qxd5
12. c4?

White needs to castle. Probably upset over dropping a piece, White is lashing out when he needs to be regrouping. c4 is ugly in that it creates a backwards pawn, but it's horrendous in that it leaves a pawn hanging.

12...Qg8??

Black is trying to win a piece that's already won. The knight is already completely trapped. It's essentially already captured. Qg8 takes the knight off the board, but it also takes the queen out of the action. Black neutralizes his most powerful piece when the devastating 12...Qxg2 was on the table.

13. Qa4+ Bd7
14. Qa5 Qxh8
15. O-O?

A pawn is a pawn. White should capitalize and play 15. Qxc7.

15...c5
16. Bg5 b6
17. Qc3 e4
18. Rfe1 O-O-O!

There's something about castling on move 18 that just feels good. Obviously you want and need and should castle as quickly as possible, but Black gets style points the delayed long castle.

19. b4 cxb4
20. Qe5 Ng4??

Black discovers White's attack and subsequently drops a piece.

21. Qxe7 Re8
22. Qd6 Ne5
23. Bf4?

White has neglected to grab a few pawns throughout the game, but this one seems especially stingy. 23. Rxe4 wins a pawn and also begins the process of doubling rooks, which is never a bad thing. If you're a computer there's also this delightful theoretical tactic: 23...Nf7 24. Qd5 Nxg5 25. Re7!! Rxe7 24. Qa8+!!

23...Re6
24. Qd5 Nxd3??

The Qa8 idea from the computer's tactic comes into play with the simple-but-not mate in one: 25. Qa1#

25. Rxe4??

White is still dominating, but he missed his chance to end it.

25...Nxf4
26. Rxf4 g5
27. Rf7??

Oh no. White has found himself victim of the most painful checkmate in the game of chess: the back rank mate. In a completely winning position White again misses the crucial Qa8+ idea and hands the game to his opponent. Anyone who has played chess any length of time has lost games on the bank rank, and it's one of the most frustrating ways to lose a game.

27...Qxa1+
28. Qd1 Qxd1# 0-1

**Afzal Chowdhury (1815) vs
Mustafa Farid (1248)**
Comments and annotations by Afzal Chowdhury

1. d4 d5
2. c4 dxc4
3. Nc3 e5
4. d5 c6
5. e4 Bb4
6. Bxc4 b5
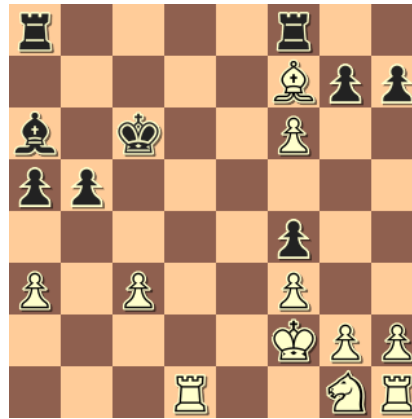7. Bb3 a5
8. a3 Bxc3+
9. bxc3 Nf6
10. Bg5 Nbd7

11. dxc6 Nc5
12. Qxd8+ Kxd8
13. Bxf7 Nd3+

Black decides against picking up White's e-pawn.

14. Ke2 Nf4+
15. Bxf4 exf4
16. f3 Kc7
17. Rd1 Ba6
18. Kf2 Kxc6
19. e5

With the idea of moving the Knight away from defending the d5 square so 20. Bd5 would be possible for White

19…Rhf8
20. exf6

White could have continued with 20. Ba2 Rad8 21. Ne2 Nh5 22. e6 Rxd1 23. Rxd1 Nf6 24. e7 Re8 25. Nd4+ Kc7 26. Re1 Kd7 27. Ne6 Rxe7 28. Nc5+ Kd6 29. Rxe7 Kxe7

20…Rxf7
21. fxg7 Rxg7
22. Ne2 Rf7
23. Rd4 Raf8
24. Rhd1

Taking complete control of the d file

24…Kc5
25. Nc1

Finally White's Knight gets into action of supporting the rooks

25…Re7
26. Nb3+

Rather than going after Black's f4 pawn, White has bigger plans

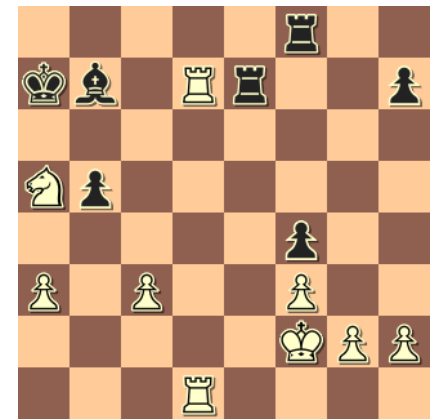26…Kb6
27. Rd6+ Ka7
28. Nxa5

Threatening 29. Nc6+

28…Bb7

Loses to 29.Rd7 Rxd7 30.Rxd7 Kb6 31. Nxb7 Ra8 32. Nd8 Rxa3 33. Rb7+ Ka6 34. Rxh7 Rxc3

29. Rd7

29…Rxd7
30.Rxd7 1-0

As Black has no way to defend his Bishop except for giving up the exchange (30…Rb8 followed by 31.Nc6+ Ka8 32.Nxb8 Kxb8) as well as being down two pawns.

WEEK #26 (9/15)

STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT	Vs	STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT
1	Martin Phillips – 1	Vs	6	Stan Jackson – 0
4	Dylan Mounts – 1	Vs	7	John Last – 0
5	Ben Elliott – 0	Vs	10	Charles Burrow – 0
12	Mike Little – 0	Vs	13	Mustafa Farid – 1
21	Brayden Miao – 1	Vs	25	Zach Allen – 0
24	Austin Gray – 0	Vs	26	Zac Schuh – 1

**Martin Phillips (1811) vs
Stan Jackson (1648)**
Comments and annotations by Martin Phillips

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 g6
3. Nc3 Bg7
4. e4 d6
5. f3 Nbd7
6. Nh3!? c5
7. d5 O-O
8. Be3 Qb6
9. Rb1 a6
10. Be2 Nh5
11. f4 h6

I believe that Stan told me in post-game analysis that he didn't want my knight on g5.

12. Bxh5 gxh5
13. O-O

13 Qxh5? loses to 13...Bxc3+.

13...Nf6
14. Nf2

White does not want to allow Black to mess up his pawn structure in front of his king (14...Bxh3).

14...Ng4

Black was just straightening out his pawns as he knew that White would not want to give up his dark squared bishop.

15. Nxg4 hxg4
16. f5

After this move, I thought White was simply better. Evidently, I was not up to the task of proving my assessment. 16...h5

17. Qd2 Qd8
18. Bh6?!

At the time, I was fairly happy with myself. I was planning to play 19. Qg5. However, Black gets to move first and sometimes forced moves are really good moves. I probably would have been better, had I realized that after the bishop trade he was going to play ...f6, if instead I played 18. f6!? exf6 (18...Bxf6 19. Bh6 Re8 20. Rf2 e6 21. Rbf1 Bh8 22. Rxf7 exd5 23. Nxd5 Be6 24. Rxb7 Bxd5 25. exd5 +/-) 19. Bh6 Kh7 20. Bxg7 Kxg7 21. Rf2 Rg8 22. Rbf1 f5 23. exf5 f6 24. Ne2 Bd7 25. Nf4 Rh8 26. Ne6+ Bxe6 27. fxe6 Rf8 28. Rxf6 works if Black takes wins the rook 28...Rxf6 29. Qg5+ Rg6 30. Rf7+ Kh8 31. Rxg6 +-, but if he takes with the queen 28...Qxf6 29. Rxf6 Rxf6 30. Qg5+ Rg6 31. Qe7+ Kh6 and now White has to try to win with his

mighty pawn chain. However, there's another possibility, Black can take with the king, but I think white gets a slight advantage because the king separates the rooks .

18...f6!

During the game, I didn't even consider this move. The problem is that it completely stymies White's attack.

19. Ne2 Kh7
20. Bxg7 Kxg7
21. Nf4 Rh8
22. b4

I had fantasies of 23 bxc5 dxc5 24 Rxb7 as Black cannot take with the bishop on b7 because the family fork Ne6+.

22...Qb6
23. Kh1

I didn't want to have to think about the possibility of a discovered check on my king.

23...cxb4
24. Rxb4 Qa5
25. Rfb1 Bd7
26. Qe2

Played with the idea of Nxh5+ so that if Rxh5 Qxg4+ almost winning the exchange...well, except that he can play Rg5, so...

26...b5!

Black just keeps making all the right moves.

27. h4!?

If 27...gxh3 e.p., 28. gxh3 and now White has an invitation to attack the king considering Black has opted for an open door policy.

27...Rac8
28. g3

I considered 28. Nxh5+ Kf7 29. Qxg4 it just wasn't clear to me where the game goes after ...Rcg8, so I played 28. g3 so that I could play 29. Nxh5+.

28...Kf7!

This move takes away my possibility of sacking my knight on h5.

29. cxb5 Bxb5
30. Qb2

I was planning on trying to play a4, so something like Qb3, a4 when White bishop is running out of squares.

30...Ba4?!

You might be thinking, "Why is this move just dubious instead of a full question mark?" Granted, he drops his bishop to 31. Qa3. Unfortunately, I've allowed a breach in my hull and my king is painfully exposed. However, if I would have played correctly, this move would have been a full "?".

31. Qa3 Rc2!

This moved forced me to take with the queen.

32. Qxa4 Rxa2

32...Qc5! is the move that worried me. I think 33. Rd4 may be forced and even then, it's difficult to keep Black from drawing the game.

33. Qxa5?

You are probably thinking, "What? You're up a piece and you just traded queens. What else could you ask for?" Does White have a better move? Does he have a winning move?

Dylan Mounts asked me to come up with a chess problem for the Outpost. Test your skillz with this one.

Editor's note: the solution will be featured next month's issue.

33...Rxa5
34. Kg2 Ra3
35. R1b2 a5
36. Rb7 Rc8
37. R7b3?!

37. Nxh5!? 37...Rc1 (Rcc3 38. Rb8 Re4 39. Rh8!? This move becomes thematic. Beginning here, there are many variations where White hopes to exploit Black if he allows just one tempo to get a Rh7 check in...that one tempi is the difference between winning and drawing this game. Rxe4? 40. Rh7+ Ke8 (40...Kg8 41. Rg7+ K any 42. Rb8++; 40...Kf8?? 41. Rb8++) 41. Nxf6+!! exf6 (41...K any 42. NxR) 42. Rb8++) 38. Rb8 Raa1 39. Rh8 Rg1+ 40. Kf2 Raf1+ 41. Kf3+ Kd4 42. Kd4 Rd1+ 43. Kc4 a4 44. Kb4 Rd4+ 45. Ka5 a3 (45...Rxe4? 46. Rh7+ Ke8 (46...Kg8? 47. Rg7 K any 48. Rb8++) 47. Kxf6+!! exf6 48. Rb8++) 46. Rb7 a2 47. Rh7+ Ke8 (47...Kg8? 48. Rg7+ K any 49. Rb8++; 47...Kf8?? 48. Rb8++) 48. Ng7+ Ke8 (48...Kf8 49. Ne6+ Kg8 (49...Ke8?? 50 Rxe7++) 50. Rg7+ K any 51. Rb8++; 48..Kf7 49. Re6+ Kg8 (49...Ke8 50 Rxe7++) 50. Rg7+ Kh8[] 51. Rb8++.

37...Ra1
38. Nxh5 Rcc1
39. Kf2

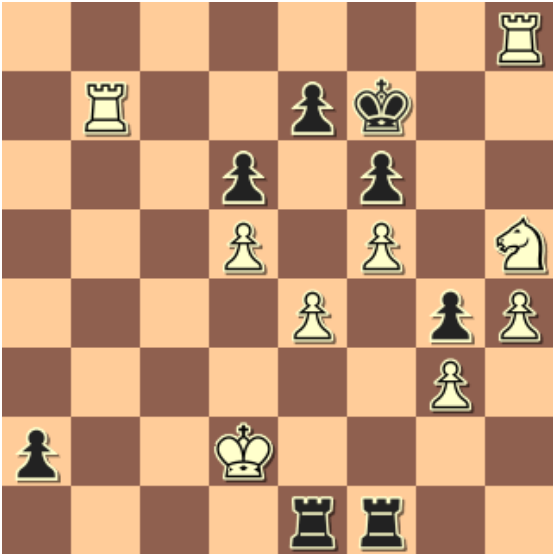I was hoping to get my king to f4.

39...a4
40. Rb8 a3
41. R2b7 a2
42. Rh8 Rf1+

43. Ke3 Rae1+
44. Kd2 Rd1+

44...a1=Q? 45. Rh7+! Ke8 (45...Kg8? 46. Rg7+! Kf8
(46...Kh8 47. Rb8++) 47. Rb8++; 45...Kf8?? 46. Rb8++)
46. Ng7+! Kd8 (46...Kf8 47. Ne6+ Kg8 (47...Ke8 48
Rxe7++) 48. Rg7+ Rh8[] 49. Rg8++; 46...Kf7 47. Ne6+ Kg8
(47...Ke8 48 Rxe7++) 48. Rg7+ Kh8[] 49. Rb8++) 47.
Ne6+ Kc8 (47...Ke8 48. Rxe7++) 48. Rc7+ Kb8[] 49.
Rh8++.

45. Ke3 Rf3+!

Black cannot allow White to get to the f4 square nor can
he take time to queen: 45...a1=Q? 46. Rh7+! Ke8
(46...Kg8? 47. Rg7+! Kf8 (47...Kh8 48. Rb8++) 48. Rb8++;
46...Kf8?? 47. Rb8++) 47. Ng7+! Kd8 (47...Kf8 48. Ne6+
Kg8 (48...Ke8 49 Rxe7++) 49. Rg7+ Rh8[] 50. Rg8++;
47...Kf7 48. Ne6+ Kg8 (48...Ke8 49 Rxe7++) 49. Rg7+
Kh8[] 50. Rb8++) 48. Ne6+ Kc8 (48...Ke8 49. Rxe7++) 49.
Rc7+ Kb8[] 50. Rh8++

46. Ke2 Re1+

46...a1=Q? 47. Rh7+! Ke8 (47...Kg8? 48. Rg7+! Kf8
(48...Kh8 49. Rb8++) 49. Rb8++; 47...Kf8?? 48. Rb8++)
48. Ng7+! Kd8 (48...Kf8 49. Ne6+ Kg8 (49...Ke8 50
Rxe7++) 50. Rg7+ Rh8[] 51. Rg8++; 48...Kf7 49. Ne6+ Kg8
(49...Ke8 50 Rxe7++) 50. Rg7+ Kh8[] 51. Rb8++) 49.
Ne6+ Kc8 (49...Ke8 50. Rxe7++) 50. Rc7+ Kb8[] 51.
Rh8++

47. Kd2 Rd1+
48. Ke2 Re1+

46...a1=Q? 47. Rh7+! Ke8 (47...Kg8? 48. Rg7+! Kf8
(48...Kh8 49. Rb8++) 49. Rb8++; 47...Kf8?? 48. Rb8++)

48. Ng7+! Kd8 (48...Kf8 49. Ne6+ Kg8 (49...Ke8 50
Rxe7++) 50. Rg7+ Rh8[] 51. Rg8++; 48...Kf7 49. Ne6+ Kg8
(49...Ke8 50 Rxe7++) 50. Rg7+ Kh8[] 51. Rb8++) 49.
Ne6+ Kc8 (49...Ke8 50. Rxe7++) 50. Rc7+ Kb8[] 51.
Rh8++

49. Kd2 Rd1+ 1/2-1/2

WEEK #27 (9/22)

STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT	Vs	STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT
2	Ken Brown – 1	Vs	5	Stan Jackson – 0
3	Ethan Stech – 1	Vs	7	Charles Burrow – 0
4	Dylan Mounts – 1	Vs	14	Adam Whitaker – 0
6	Ben Elliott – 1	Vs	16	Brayden Miao – 0
12	Mustafa Farid – 0	Vs	21	Rob Fridge – 1

**Ben Elliot (1352) vs
Brayden Miao (952)**

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 e6
4. Nc3 a6
5. O-O b5
6. Be2

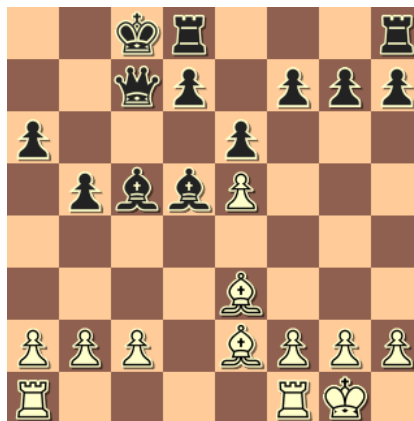Obviously not 6. Bb3, falling victim to a rudimentary version of the Noah's Ark trap after 6…c4.

6…Nf6
7. d3 Bb7
8. d4?

White is wasting time. What's the point of playing 7.d3 if you're going to play d4 the very next move? White essentially allows Black to move twice.

8…cxd4
9. Nxd4 Nxd4
10. Qxd4 Qc7
11. e5 Bc5
12. Qf4 Nd5
13. Nxd5 Bxd5
14. Be3 O-O-O?

This does not look like a very safe home for the king. It's rarely a good idea to move the pawns in front of a castled king, and in this case Black castles into a

situation where his pawns have already moved. White now has ideas of playing a4 and crashing through by force.

15. Bxc5 Qxc5
16. Qxf7?

Winning a pawn but spoiling the position. Now Black has an open file to place a rook on, and White's lost his chance to play a4.

16…Rdf8
17. Qh5 g6
18. Qh4 g5
19. Qh5 Kb7
20. c3 g4?

This does activate Black's other rook, and in the game it actually leads White into making a mistake. But when played correctly Black is just giving up a pawn without compensation.

21. Bxg4 Rhg8
22. Bh3?

Allowing 22…Rxg2+ 23. Bxg2 Rg8! 24. Qh3 Bxg2 25. Qxg2+ Rxg2+ 26. Kxg2 Qxe5 where White must prove that two rooks are better than a queen.

22…Qc6?

Black probably couldn't find 23…Rg8 after 22…Rxg2+. Unfortunately he's run out of time.

23. g3 Kb6
24. Qxh7?

Grabbing a pawn but opening up files for Black's rooks.
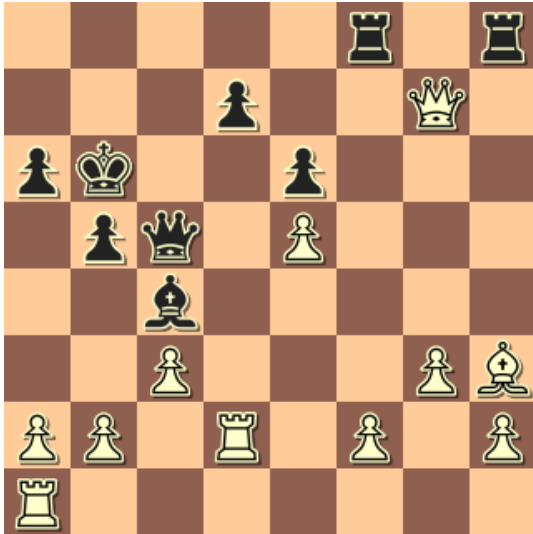
24…Rh8
25. Qg7 Bc4??

Black can't capture the bishop because his other rook would be left hanging. But harassing White's rook isn't a very forcing way to continue the attack. While finding the entire line isn't easy, the correct move, 25…Rfg8, is fairly straightforward. Correct play continues 26. Qf7 Rg5! 27. Qf4 Rgh5, and White can't move his bishop without letting the rooks in on h2

26. Rfd1

Threatening Rd6.

26…Qc5
27. Rd2?

While no longer winning the queen, 27…Rd6+ is still the best moved. If Ka5 White wins the queen anyway with b4+, and if Black moves his king anywhere on the seventh rank White has Rxd7+ and Black might as well resign.

27…Rxh3
28. b4 Qc8
29. Rd6+?

Now with the queen defending d7 this move comes too late.

29…Kc7
30. Rxa6? Qxa6?!

Even better is 30…Rxf2! The rook is already forfeit and at least this way it's able to accomplish something in its death.
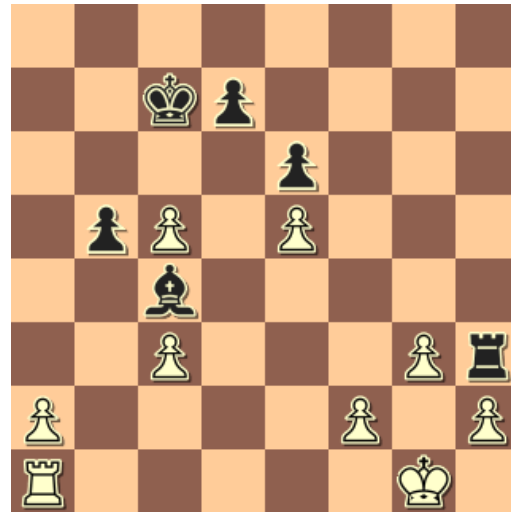
31. Qxf8 Qc6
32. Qc5 Qxc5
33. bxc5

So we make it to an endgame with Black up a bishop but white with three extra pawns getting ready to march up the board. The computer very slightly

favors Black, but I wouldn't want to have to convert this.

Kc6
34. a4 bxa4
35. Rxa4 Bb5
36. Rh4??

White needs to keep his rook on the board to give himself as many options as possible. Further, one of the most important aspects of his position was his two connected passed pawns. Here White voluntarily isolates his advantage on the edge of the board, and greatly simplifies Black's task.

36…Rxh4
37. gxh4 Be2
38. Kg2 Kd5
39. Kg3 Kxe5
40. f4+ Kf5
41. Kf2 Bd1
42. Ke3 Bh5
43. Kd4??

Dropping his f-pawn and making it impossible to protect his h-pawns, White can no longer conceivably win the game.

43…Kxf4
44. Kc4 e5
45. Kb5 e4
46. c6 dxc6+
47. Kxc6 e3
48. c4 (0-1)

Charles Burrow (1813) vs Ethan Stech (1701)
Comments and annotations by Ethan Stech

From what I've seen of Charles' play, he has a very distinctly hypermodern style that relies more on systems than specific opening variations, and he's very good at neutralizing all-out kingside attacks. So my plan going into this game was to not take the bait. I decided I would play flexibly and solidly, never being too committal and not giving him too many weaknesses to exploit, and see what happens.

1.Nc3 d5
2.Nf3 Nf6
3.g3 Bf5
4.Bg2 e6
5.d3 h6
6.0-0 c6
7.a4 Nbd7
8.h3 Be7
9.Kh2 0-0
10.Nd2 Qc7
11.e4 dxe4
12.dxe4 Bh7
13.Qe2 Rfe8
14.Nc4 Rad8

So far, I think I've done what I set out to do. My position is passive, but solid. It's interesting to note that I don't make any more pawn moves until move 27. I've heard it said that pawn moves in chess should be treated like the last drops of water in a desert, because they cannot be taken back and they create permanent structural weaknesses. Charles' style is all about taking advantage of the overextension of his opponents, so I knew it was especially important in this particular game that I not make that mistake.

15.f4 Bb4

This move opens up the rook on e8 so that White cannot immediately play 16.f5 to shut out my bishop on h7, because after 16. ...exf5 his e pawn is pinned and cannot recapture. It also relocates the bishop to a more active square, since it's not doing much on e7.

16.Bd2 Nb6
17.Rad1 Nxc4
18.Qxc4 Qa5

I liked my position at this point. I've managed to exchange my knight on d7

for his more active knight on c4, and the pin on his other knight is not easily dealt with.

19.e5?!

This move seems questionable, since now my bishop on h7 comes alive to attack White's weak pawn on c2.

19. ...Nd5
20.Nxd5 Bxd2
21.Nc3?

According to the computer, the best move is 21.Qe2, when after 21. ...cxd5 22.Rxd2 Qxa4 Black will have won a pawn, but White still has hope. After this move, Black should be winning.

21. ...Bxc2
22.Ne4 Bxd1
23.Rxd1 Bb4
24.Nd6 Bxd6
25.exd6 Rd7
26.Be4 Red8
27.f5 exf5
28.Bc2 Rxd6
29.Bb3 Rxd1
30.Qxf7+ Kh8 0-1

White resigns

Isaac Drum (1628P23) vs Ethan Stech (1701)
Comments and annotations by Ethan Stech

Editor's note: This game was actually played in Week #28. However, Ethan was kind enough to send in two games, and since they're both relatively short it just made sense to give Ethan his own page.

1.e4 c6
2.d4 d5
3.Nc3 dxe4
4.Nxe4 Bf5
5.Ng3 Bg6
6.h4 h6
7.Be3 Nf6
8.Qd2 e6
9.0-0-0 Nbd7
10.h5 Bh7
11.f3?!

I wasn't expecting this move, but I was very happy to see it. It takes away the most natural development square for White's knight on g1, and leaves the knight on g3 vulnerable.

11. ...Bd6
12.Bf2 Qc7

White must now be careful not to allow 13. ...Bf4, pinning the queen to the king, when 14.Be3 would leave the knight on g3 hanging.

13.N3e2 0-0-0
14.Nc3 Rhe8
15.Bd3 Nd5!?

I went back and forth on this move for a long time. I don't think it's the most accurate move, but I felt that after 15. ...Bxd3, my opening advantage would have all but evaporated. After this move, at least I still have a few threats on f4, although I think after 16.Nge2, White is doesn't have much to worry about. Note that the bishop on h7 is not hanging, since after 16.Bxh7 I play 16. ...Bf4, and the e3 square is covered by the knight so 17.Be3 is not an option. And if 16.Nxd5 exd5 17.Bxh7 Bf4 still works because the rook on e8 covers e3.

16.Nxd5 exd5
17.Be3??

Admittedly I didn't see why this was a blunder until after the game. I can now swap bishops on d3 and play 18. ...Rxe3! when 19.Qxe3 would be met with 19. ...Bf4.

17. ...Bxd3
18.Bxh6!?

Knowing he was going to lose a piece anyway, White grabs what material he can for it. I still did not see the tactic, so this move completely took me by surprise. Whether or not I would have seen it if he had played 18.Qxd3, I honestly don't know.

18. ...gxh6
19.Qxd3 Kb8

Getting my king off the potentially dangerous a3-c8 diagonal.

20.Kb1 Nf6
21.Ne2 Re6 0-1

White resigns

**Ken Brown (1730) vs
Stan Jackson (1648)**

1. d4 Nf6
2. Nf3 g6
3. Nc3 Bg7
4. e4 d6
5. Bf4 O-O
6. Qd2 Re8
7. Be2 Nbd7
8. O-O-O

While I rarely play 1. d4 as White I often play the King's Indian as black. These types of positions always seem to give me a lot of trouble. By castling on the opposite side of the board as Black, White has made his intentions clear. He plans to march his pawns down Black's kingside and break open the castled king. Black's plan in response is often to do the same thing, marching his pawn's on White's queenside. These games often become a race to see who can get to the other king first, with fireworks and tactics par for the course.

8...c5
9. Bh6 Ng4?!

At first glance this threatens Nxf2, forking the rooks. But if 10.Bxg7 Nxf2, White can play 11. Bc4! allowing 11...Nxd4/h4 because 12. Qh6 is absolutely devastating. Black has no way to prevent Ng5, and Black must give up his queen to avoid checkmate.

10. Bxg7 Kxg7
11. Bc4 f6?!

Depriving the knight of his preferred retreat square.

12. h3 Nh6
13. g4 cxd4?!

Relieving the tension relinquishes control of the center to White and places his knight on a powerful square. Better would be 13...Nb6, maintaining tension and harassing the bishop.

14. Nxd4 Nf8?

Black further secedes control of the center when he needs to be trying to reestablish himself. Much better would be 14. Ne5, planting his knight in the center of the board. Probably black is trying to find ways to allow himself to play ...e5, but neutering his knight is probably not the way to do it.

15. Rdg1 e5
16. Nf5+!

Black can't take with his pawn and open up the file against his king. 16...gxf5 17. gxf5+ and Black has to give the knight right back with Ng6. If the king tries to retreat to h8 White has Qxh6.

16...Nxf5
17. gxf5 g5??

White has won the pawn race after Black moves the finish line closer. Everything in White's arsenal is point at Black's king, and it's hard for Black to find any good moves. It appears the awkward looking 17...b5!? is best, sacing the pawn but creating the opportunity for 18...d5. Black is still losing, but he'll at least have some chances.

18. Qd5?

White is still in a completely winning position, but it turns out the immediate 18. h4 is better here. There are a number of continuations to analyze, but the essential idea is that 18. h4 more

quickly opens lines against Black's king, and Black has a number of ways to respond to White's checkmate threat.

18...Nd7??

This is not one of them.

19. h4!

If I was playing online blitz I'd play 19. Qf7+ without a second thought. Black's only move is 19...Kh8, and things look overwhelming. The problem is that White can't immediately capitalize, and Black will play 20...Re7, fending off the queen. 19. h4 is a much more sophisticated way for White to approach things.

19...Rf8
20. hxg5 Kh8
21. g6

While still checkmate, White loses style points for missing 21. Rxh7+.

21...Qe7
22. Rxh7+ Qxh7
23. gxh7 1-0

With the likely checkmate sequence 23...Kxh7 24. Qd3 any 25. Qh3#.

Week #28 (10/6)

STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT	Vs	STANDINGS	NAME/RESULT
3	Ethan Stech – 1	Vs	17	Issac Drum – 0
4	Dylan Mounts – 0	Vs	7	Charles Burrow – 0
13	Mike Little – 0	Vs	15	Afzal Chowdhury – 1

Dylan Mounts (1573) vs
Charles Burrow (1813)

Comments by Charles Burrow
(Except for those in italics)

1. e4 c5
2. c3 Nf6

Some kind of crazy Sicilian variation.

Specifically the Alapin. Black's plan in most Sicilians is to trade his c-pawn for White's more central d-pawn. 2.c3 is a very direct way for White to maintain his central pawn presence. It also avoids the huge amounts of theory associated with more main line Sicilians.

That being said, 2. c3 creates a very specific weakness: No more Nc3. The pawn on e4 becomes more difficult to defend, and Black should attempt to apply pressure to it without allowing White to open up c3 for his knight. One option is the move that Charles played. Another option is 2…d5 3. exd5 Qxd5, spiting opening principles and developing the queen on move three. Without the option of Nc3 White will find it difficult to chase the queen around the board.

3. e5 Nd5

I remember taking forever to move Nd5 here. I couldn't remember this line.

But he found the right move. White doesn't necessarily want to push his pawn to e5 where it's overextended and difficult to protect, but his other options to defend the pawn look even worse.

4. d4 e6

Much more common, in my experience, is 4…cxd4 5. cxd4. While I may have miscalculated the strength of my attack, many Alapin games are won with early and aggressive pawn rushes.

5. c4 Nb4!?

I remember doing some work on Fritz years ago and determining for myself that Nb4 might be viable. I'm sure it's not the best but I gave it a shot. I just didn't want to make a mistake.

6. d5 d6!

I have to play d6 now or my opponent creeps in with pawns!

7. a3 N4a6

White has to be better here. While 5…Nb4 may very well be viable, it certainly doesn't look like very much fun.

8. Nf3 Be7

I do want to exchange pawns in the center some but I saw that my rook would be just a few tempi away from coming to e8 where it bugs white's king, so I make preparations.

9. Nc3 O-O
10. Nb5 dxe5

I was glad to see my opponent play Nb5 attacking with the knight. I can open the e-file and it might be too much for white.

I thought I had his bishop trapped with 11. d6. Unfortunately my pawn has been removed from e6 and the bishop now has f7 available. As it turns out 11. d6 was still the best move, but I didn't want to have a pawn so far away from the rest of the pawn chain.

11. Nxe5 Bf6
12. Ng4 Bd4

My opponent surprised me with this move Ng4! I thought to myself; I'm sure my opponent doesn't want to keep the knight there. Just then I saw an amazing continuation with Bd4! The bishop stuck in the center of the board uses a blocking strategy cutting White's queen off the d-file. I rarely see blocking strategies like this used in the game so I was quite proud of the move.

13. Nxd4 cxd4
14. dxe6?

The obvious 14. Qxd4 is indeed the best move, but I was scared of the bishop's discovered attack on my knight after exd5. Looking back it seems obvious now that White has a number of ways to reasonably respond, but unfortunately I didn'thave the gift of hindsight over the board.

14...Bxe6
15. Be2 d3?!

I saw that I could plant the pawn on d3 and get away with it. I know i shouldn't have but I responded very hastily on this move before studying it in depth. The pawn being on d3 just looked too good.

I'm inclined to agree. I didn't see d3 as an option until the move was made. The computer doesn't love it, but it certainly looks impressive.

16. Bf3 Bxc4
17. Bxb7??

I made this move entirely too quickly. The coming fork is not that difficult to find. But I could feel Black closing in and got greedy. Even if I didn't find the best move (17. Ne3!), castling would at least keep me in the game

17...Qe7+
18. Ne3 Qxb7
19. Qg4 Be6

My opponent makes a last attempt to develop with Qg4 but black is ahead too many tempi.
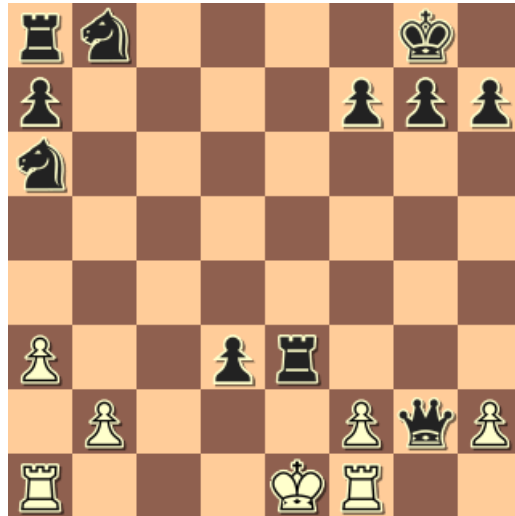
20. Nf5

If you pretend the bishop can't take the knight here, this becomes a much more interesting move. I briefly forgot the basic rules of chess and somehow completely missed the capture.

20...Bxf5
21. Qxf5 Qxg2
22. Rf1 Re8+

The rook finally comes to e8 and is overwhelming.

23. Be3 Rxe3+! 0-1

I'm still impressed with how quickly Charles made the last two moves. Sacing the rook to open checkmate for the queen is not something that's easy for me to see, but Charles immediately found the winning idea. I can't say I'm particularly proud of this game, but at least I was able to lose it in style.