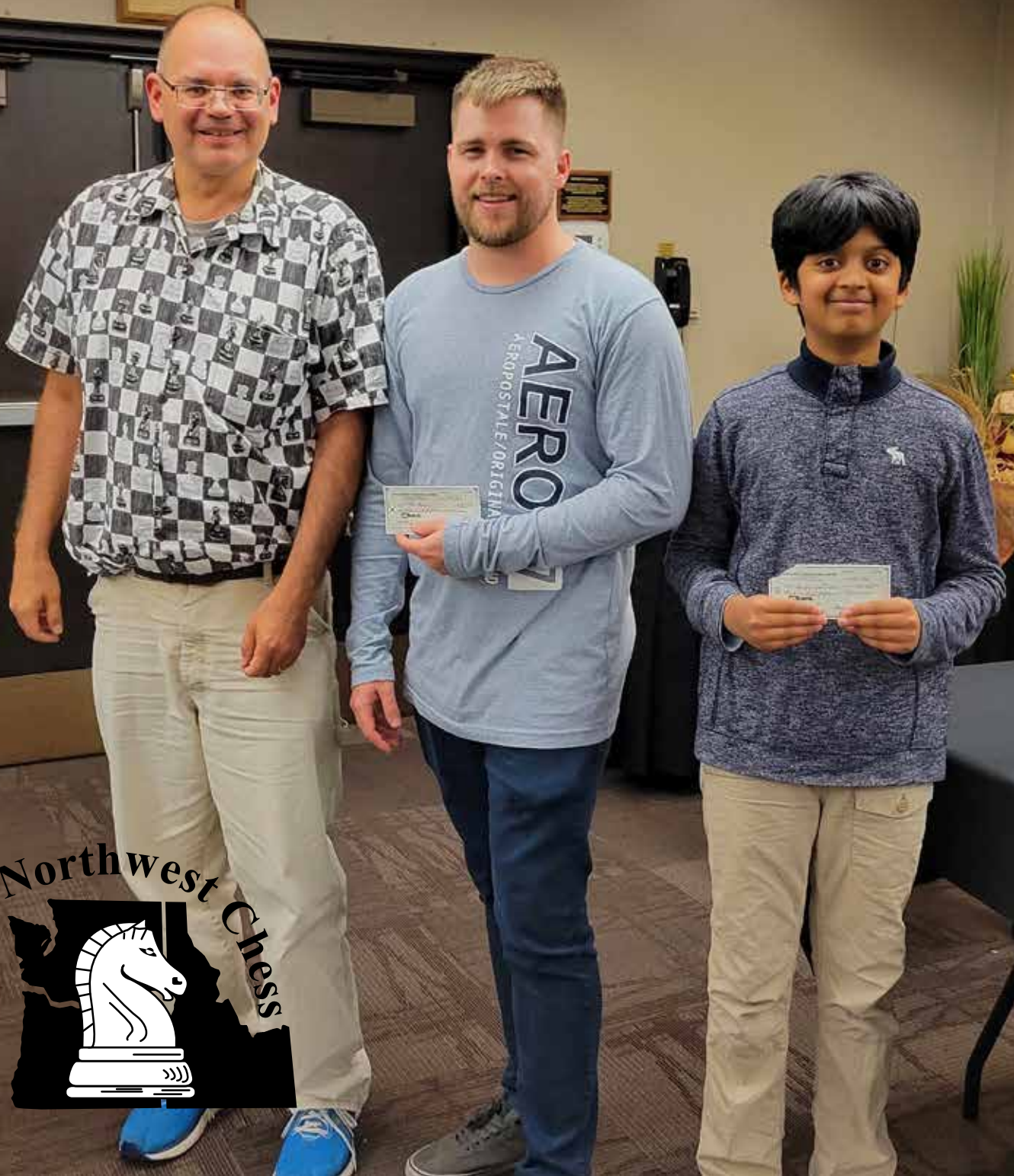


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Charles And His Furrowed Brow

These two pictures were taken at the Pawns and Pints Chess Meetup in Boise recently. Casual chess, especially with a little alcoholic cider, can stimulate some interesting conversation for sure. I was showing off parts of this issue (like the poem by Glen O'Harra) from my phone, and I decided to take this guy's picture. He then looked at the camera and "furrowed" his brow. This started everyone talking about what that means. Charles gave us permission to use the photos and the demonstration of his furrowed brow! You can learn a lot of things at casual chess clubs that you probably wouldn't learn anywhere else! —Jeffrey Roland, editor



Northwest Chess



December 2021

Norman Friedman Memorial

Jeffrey Roland

The 2021 Norman Friedman Memorial was held at the Riverside Inn in Garden City, Idaho October 8-10. This was a dual FIDE-rated/US Chess-rated event and the biggest money tournament of the year for the Idaho Chess Association (ICA).

The chief tournament director was Eric Vigil who came all the way from the state of Iowa to direct this tournament! Eric also entered all the games into PGN as soon as the games were completed (each player turned in the original white copies, he would enter them into the database using both players scoresheets, and then return the originals to the players as soon as he did that) —so by the time the tournament ended, the games were already done and instantly available digitally for history to reference.

There were 26 players in the main event. Most of the players came from Idaho, however, three players came from Washington: H.G. Pitre, Ralph Anthony, and Michael Byrne.

There was a tie for first-second place between Kaustubh Kodihalli and Alex Machin, scoring 4.5/5 points and winning \$300 each. Third-fourth place was also a tie for the third-place prize between James Wei and H.G. Pitre, scoring 3.5/5 points and splitting the prize (so that is \$50 to each player).

The following \$75 prizes were as follows: first place class B, Jeffrey Roland scoring 3.5/5 points; first place class C, Desmond Porth scoring 3.0/5; first place class D, Chase Jablonski scoring 3.0/5; first place class E, Darren Su scoring 2.5/5; and finally first place unrated, Vincent An Cascio scoring 1.0/5.

There was a seven-round blitz tournament held Saturday afternoon. The blitz had 13 players, many of whom were also in the main event, but it was won by a player who did not play in the main event: Lars P. Heineck of Boise with 5.5/7 points.

As always with every chess tournament played anywhere, it was a unique and great experience. Those who came seemed to really have a good time. Friendships were made! The tournament atmosphere was kind and professional.

We got a chance to play under FIDE rules, which has some differences, but those were all explained at the start. I think the TD was fantastic and just set the right tone for the whole event.

**Chase Jablonski (1213) –
Jeffrey T. Roland (1700) [C44]**
2021 Norman Friedman Memorial
Garden City, ID (R4), October 10, 2021
*[Chase Jablonski and Jeffrey Roland
(signified by “—JR”)]*

Chase annotated our game a few days after we played it (originally for his own benefit), but he later gave permission to publish in Northwest Chess! —JR)

G90+30d 1213 v 1700. Opponent made some mistakes early and I felt like I should have been able to press an advantage. Opponent played well and I could not find improving moves. I ended up weakening my position which gave Black the opportunity to develop initiative. He missed some opportunities to gain a decisive advantage, so I managed to defend. Eventually we ran into time constraints and drew. I missed one opportunity to win a piece in time pressure.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.c3 f6?

In post-mortem, opponent told me this was Karpov's recommended reply to the Ponziani. This does not appear to be the case. In the moment I thought my opponent just wanted to take me out of preparation. Stockfish gives +1.7 here.

Well, I was trying to remember a game I had only seen 30 years earlier. My memory was faulty. Karpov of course did play ...d5 first, and then ...f6. I've had this position in tournaments before and played 3...d5 and 4...f6 and had no trouble. I can't explain why I forgot this, but White's 4.Bc4 completely refutes the mistake. I'll never forget this now! —JR

3...d5

4.Bc4!

Intending to take advantage of the weakened light squares. Opponent was clearly distressed by this move but it seemed the most natural progression to me.

4...Nh6?!

I didn't expect this move. Opponent was fighting against Qb3, which was part of my plan. I don't really buy that it's a reasonable move here, but that knight did prove to be very helpful in his defense later. ...Nge7 or the immediate ...Na5 were probably better options.

5.d4 Na5

Two knights on the rim? Stockfish gives +2.2 here.

Yeah, I agree. Looks pretty bad for Black here! —JR.

6.Nbd2?±

After playing this move I walked around. As soon as I returned to the board, I understood it was a mistake. In the moment I was concerned with concrete calculation but after I took another look at the position, I realized giving up the light squared bishop here was a clear positional mistake. Black had weakened his light squares and I offered my light-squared bishop up for a mediocre knight outpost. Bd3 was clearly better.

6.Bd3±

6...Nxc4 7.Nxc4 d5 8.exd5 Qxd5 9.Ne3

Time here was White 1:19, Black 1:20. Black took 24 minutes to make his next move (0:56). I did not understand why. It was a difficult decision where to put his queen, but I was concerned I missed a tactical sequence he was calculating. I never found it and confirmed after the game that my opponent had not either.

Yeah, after the game, Chase asked me why I took so long. The simple and truthful answer was that I didn't know what to do! I kept looking, and the more I looked the more I realized the problems in my position. —JR

9...Qd6

This looks fine. I have no further immediate attacks on the queen. Stockfish prefers ...Qe6, which does take better advantage of my weakened light squares.

10.0–0

I felt clearly ahead in development with a reasonable pawn structure and felt that with solid play I could likely get a win or

draw here.

10...e4

I had not calculated this pawn move, which concerned me at the time. Once again regretting the loss of my light-squared bishop I recognized I would have to play a closed knight game to pursue an advantage.

11.Re1!

I took advantage of a tactical sequence to gain a tempo and move my rook to the half-open file.

11...Be7

11...exf3?? 12.Nf5+ Kf7 13.Nxd6+

12.Nd2 f5 13.Ndc4

Trying to get my knight to a more active square. After the excessive time my opponent took to find his queen's position, I felt that this would cause him additional frustration and time. Stockfish doesn't love this move, but I felt it was appropriate. Opponent took eight minutes to address this move. Time: White 1:02, Black 41 I'm not sure why Stockfish wouldn't like this.

If White's knight ever gets to e5, it seemed to me it would be a powerful piece, right in my face! I had hopes of castling queenside too. I figured doing that, with a majority of pawns on the kingside, I could drum up a nice kingside attack, but after this move, where's a good place to put the queen and facilitate that plan? —JR

13.Qh5+ Qg6 14.Qxg6+ hxg6 15.f3

13...Qd8

Yeah, I hated to go here, but I had to completely change plans here. In hindsight, maybe it's best that I didn't get to castle queenside after all. —JR

14.Qh5+

I wanted to prevent Black from castling. I thought this would force ...Kf8 but missed a tactical defense that saves Black.

14...Nf7!

My favorite move so far in the game. If 15.Ne5, I can castle! —JR

A clever defense. I missed this initially. After 15.Nxf5 g6 forks. 14...g6 15.Qxh6 loses the knight.; 14...Kd7 15.Ne5+ Ke6 16.Nxf5 and Black can resign.; 14...Kf8 15.f3 exf3 16.Qxf3 and White is clearly winning.

15.Qe2

15.Nxf5 g6 16.Ng7+ I tried hard to find a way to make this line work. Spent approximately ten minutes here but could not find anything. Stockfish agrees there's

nothing here.

15...0-0 16.b3

I struggled to find a move here. I felt b3 opened opportunities for my dark-squared bishop and cemented the knight on e4.

16...c6 17.a4

Gaining space on the queenside while discouraging ...b5, which would leave White with a better center.

17...Be6



Position after 17...Be6

18.Bb2??

At this point in the game I was really struggling to find moves. What I missed here is that 18...f4! gives Black a clear initiative that he could use to win the game.

Wow, at the time during the game, I didn't know I was even doing okay. Psychologically speaking, I was just trying to finally get developed and didn't see 18...f4 as a viable move! But I agree, I should have played that! I'm clearly a bit rusty in this game. I need to play more chess! —JR

18...Qc7?!

18...f4! 19.Nd1 f3 20.Qc2 fxg2 21.Bc1 Bd5 and White is completely passive. -4.5.

19.Rad1 Rad8 20.Kh1?

I hated this move when I played it. I spent 11 minutes here and could not find a move that did not weaken my position. The clock was ticking. I was concerned I was lost here. Stockfish concurs, -3.8. Time: White 28m, Black 21m. 20.Nf1 Rfe8 21.Ng3 was a better continuation. I looked at this but wanted to continue applying pressure to f5 from e3. This was clearly a better position in which to do that.

I was completely baffled by this move and didn't understand it at all. All other moves of the game made sense to me, but this, I couldn't figure out what I must be missing! I didn't have analysis to let me know I was up 3.8 but was just trying to figure out what White was thinking.

So finally, after a long time of thought, I played 20...b6 because I needed another clue what White was doing. I didn't get it. White's next move did not shed light as to why the King needed to go to h1 either. —JR

20...b6 21.Nc2 Bf6 22.f3 Bd5 23.fxe4!?

I knew this was dubious but was trying to find some play anywhere on the board. Even though he had a rook on the f-file I thought I might get some counterplay there. (-2.3) 23.Nb4 Rfe8 24.Nxd5 cxd5 25.Ne3 f4 is better per Stockfish but this line did not look good for me. There's a very computerish knight sacrifice that saves the game here, but there is zero chance any human I know could find it.

23...Bxe4 24.N2e3 Ng5

24...Bh4 25.Rf1 Rfe8 maintains an advantage for Black.

25.Nd2

Trying to trade the knight for light-square bishop. Stockfish confirms that would be a good trade.

25...Rfe8

Time: White 18, Black 15. (-0.8 here)

26.Qf2

26.Qc4+ Qf7 27.Qxf7+ Kxf7 28.h4 Equalish. 26.Nxe4 Nxe4 27.Qc4+ was a better choice. I was concerned about the queen on the e-file and the knight outpost. I didn't think his bishop could escape.

26...Nh3!

Saw this but underestimated it. Black starts to get initiative against White's queen, repositioning his pieces with tempo toward Black's king.

27.Qf1 Bd3 28.Qf3 Ng5 29.Qf2 Ne4

Time: White 13:50, Black 7:30.

30.Nxe4 fxe4 31.Ng4 Be7 32.Ne5 Rf8 33.Qe3 Bc2 34.Rc1 Bxb3 35.c4 Bxa4 36.Qxe4 Bd6 37.c5!?

I considered Ra1 here, which was probably better. I spotted a tricky line to pin the rook and opted for it instead because of time pressure. It turned out to be a reasonable choice as Black used all his time. I thought Black retained a slight advantage here since he was up a pawn. Stockfish gives +0.6. Time was approximately White 6m, Black 7m.

37...Be7? 38.cxb6=

38.d5! wins a piece.

Yes, wow, I didn't see that! —JR

38...Qxb6 39.d5 Qxb2 40.Qxa4 Rxd5 41.Qc4

This was the intermediate move I calculated after 37.c5. I wasn't sure there was anything concrete here but knew this would be difficult for my opponent to handle in time pressure. The bishop was in trouble and there was significant fork potential. My opponent played it well but used all his time to do it.

41...Qb5 42.Nxc6

Stockfish says a clear draw from here.

That is good to know! Over-the-board, however, I couldn't tell, and didn't have a lot of time to know. White was very relaxed and peaceful the whole game. —JR

42...Bg5 43.Nxa7 Qxc4 44.Rxc4 Ra8 45.Nc6 Kf7 46.Rf1+ Bf6 47.Kg1 Ke8 48.Re1+ Kd7 49.Nb4 Bd4+ 50.Kf1 Rf8+ 51.Ke2 Re5+ 52.Kd1 Bb2 53.Rc2 Rxe1+ 54.Kxe1 Ba3 55.Nd5 Bd6 56.h3 Bg3+ 57.Kd1 Rf1+ 58.Kd2 Rf2+ 59.Kd3 Rxc2

Black offered a draw and White agreed. White's time was approximately 3:30 and Black was playing on increment.

I found the game with all its flaws just what I needed. I enjoyed the game a lot, and I learned a lot too. It was intense (for me) and I didn't lose! Also, I made a new friend. I always feel in chess, the opponent is not the enemy, the position is the struggle. It's a challenge, it's a game, and it's fun! —JR

½–½

James Wei (1847) –

Niall McKenzie (1326) [B77]

2021 Norman Friedman Memorial
Garden City, ID (R1), October 8, 2021
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Bc4 0–0 8.Bb3 d6 9.f3 Bd7 10.Qd2 a6

10...Nxd4 11.Bxd4 b5 is the most popular theoretical line here.

11.h4 h5 12.0–0–0 Ne5 13.g4!

White builds a strong attack by plowing forward, regardless of the cost in pawns.

13...hgx4 14.h5! Nxh5 15.Bh6

15.f4!? Nc6 (15...Nf3 16.Nxf3 gxf3 17.f5+–) 16.Nxc6 bxc6 17.f5±

15...e6

15...Kh7 16.Bxg7 Kxg7 17.fxg4±

16.Bxg7

16.Rdg1 may offer better chances. It's usually good to keep the tension (in this case between bishops on h6 and g7) rather than unclutter the defensive zone (i.e.,



*Director Eric Vigil entered all the game scores.
Photo credit: Adam Porth.*

giving a black rook access to h8). Take on g7 when it's either forced or strong. 16...Qf6 17.Bxg7 Qxg7 (17...Kxg7? 18.fxg4 Nf4 19.g5+–) 18.f4±

16...Kxg7 17.fxg4

17.f4 Nc6.

17...Nxg4 18.Rdg1 Ngf6

18...Nh6! 19.Qg5 Rh8 20.Rxh8 Qxh8 21.Rxg4 Nxg4 22.Qxg4 Qh6+ 23.Kd1 Qe3, when Black has repelled the boarders and keeps the booty.

19.Qg5



Position after 19.Qg5

19...Kh7??

19...Qb6! 20.e5

a) 20.Nxe6+ Bxe6 21.Bxe6 Qf2 22.Bxf7 (22.Kb1!? Rh8 23.e5 (23.Bxf7 Kxf7 24.Qxg6+ Ke6!?) 23...dxe5 24.Bxf7 Kxf7 25.Qxg6+ Ke7 (25...Ke6 26.Ne4 Qe3

27.Re1 Qxe4! 28.Rxe4 Rag8 29.Rxe5+ Kxe5 30.Re1+ Kd6 likely winds down to a draw.) 26.Ne4 Qf4 27.Nxf6 Qxf6 28.Qe4 The exposed black king makes the extra piece fairly irrelevant. Stockfish sees perpetual check on the horizon. 28...Nf4 29.Qxb7+ Ke6 30.Rxh8 Rxh8 31.Qxa6+ Kf5 32.Qb7) 22...Qf4+ 23.Qxf4 Nxf4 24.Bb3;

b) 20.Nf3 Qf2∞;

c) 20.Nf5+ exf5 21.Bxf7 Kxf7 offers complications favoring Black: 22.Qxg6+ Ke7 23.Rxh5 Qe3+ 24.Kb1 Be8 25.Qg7+ Rf7 26.Qg2 Bc6 27.Rxf5 Rg8+;

20...Qxd4 21.exf6+ Qxf6 22.Qxh5 (or 22.Rxh5 Qxg5+ 23.Rhxg5∞) 22...Rh8∞, with three solid pawns for the piece.

20.e5!

20.Nf5!! exf5 21.Bxf7!+–

20...dxe5 21.Ne4

21.Nf5!

21...Ng4?

21...Nxe4 22.Rxh5+ Kg7 23.Qxe5+ Qf6 24.Qxe4, and with only two pawns for a piece and less activity, Black is probably lost.

22.Rxh5+

22.Qxg4 also cruises to imminent checkmate.

22...gxh5 23.Qxh5+ Nh6 24.Rh1
1-0

**Ralph Anthony (1673) –
James Wei (1847) [B38]**

2021 Norman Friedman Memorial
Garden City, ID (R2), October 9, 2021
[Ralph Dubisch]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Bg7
5.c4 Nf6 6.Nc3 d6 7.f3

7.Be2

7...Nc6 8.Be3 0-0 9.Be2 Bd7 10.0-0
Nxd4 11.Bxd4 a5 12.Qd2 Bc6 13.Nd5

13.b3 Nd7 14.Be3 Nc5 15.Rab1 Qb6
16.Rfc1 Rfc8± and we're still in a main
line of the Accelerated Dragon (Maroczy
Bind) that has been seen hundreds (at
least) of times.

13...Bxd5 14.cxd5 Nd7 15.Bb5 Bxd4+
16.Qxd4 Qb6 17.Qxb6 Nxb6 18.a4

18.Rfc1

18...Rac8 19.Rac1 f5 20.b3 fxe4 21.Rxc8
Rxc8 22.fxe4 Rc3 23.Rf3 Rxf3

23...Rc1+

24.gxf3 g5 25.Kf2 Kf7 26.Kg3 e5

26...Kf6 The cosmetic advantage of
having the bishop restraining the black
knight doesn't translate to an actual edge
here; there is a risk of an ending with bad
bishop versus good knight.

27.dxe6+ Kxe6 28.Kg4 Kf6 29.Kh5



Position after 29.Kh5

29...d5

Time to relocate that knight: 29...Nc8
30.Kh6 Ne7 31.Kxh7 Nc6 32.Be2 Nd4
33.Bd1 and now it's the black knight
dominating the bishop. Black's pawn
minus counts for very little. 33...Ke5
34.Kg6 Kf4 35.Kf6 Nxf3 36.Bxf3 Kxf3
37.Kxg5 Kxe4 38.h4 d5, if that's what
Black wants. Or he could maneuver for
awhile in search of an error.

30.Bd3

30.Kg4 dxe4 (30...d4 31.f4 h5+ (31...gxf4
32.Kxf4 Ke6 33.e5±) 32.Kf3 g4+

33.Kg3±) 31.fxe4±

30...d4 31.e5+ Kxe5 32.Kxg5 h6+



Position after 32...h6+

33.Kg4

White should take that pawn, despite it
taking the king further from the action.
33.Kxh6 Nd5 (33...Kf4?! 34.h4 Nd5
(34...Ke3 35.Bg6 d3? (Even after 35...Nd5
36.h5 Nf4 37.Kg5 Ne6+ (37...Nxg6 38.
hxc6 d3 39.g7 d2 40.g8Q d1Q 41.Qe6+) 38.
Kf6 Nf4 39.h6 Nxg6 40.Kxg6 d3 41.
h7 d2 42.h8Q d1Q 43.Qe5+± White has
excellent winning chances.) 36.Bxd3
Kxd3 37.h5 Nd7 (37...Nd5 38.Kg5)
38.Kg7 and White will promote.) 35.Kg7
Ke3 36.h5 Kxd3 37.h6 Kc2 38.h7 d3 39.
h8Q d2 40.Qh7+ Kc1 41.Qh6 Kc2
42.Qg6+ Kc1 43.Qg5 Nc3



Analysis

Diagram-analysis after 43...Nc3

Black will use the threat of promotion to
force a repetition.) 34.Kg5 Nf4 35.Bf5
d3 36.h4 d2 37.Bc2 Nh3+ 38.Kg4 Nf2+
39.Kg3 d1Q 40.Bxd1 Nxd1, and now
White will decoy with the kingside
pawns while the white king heads left
to eliminate the black foot soldiers. For
example: 41.f4+ Kf5 (41...Ke4 42.f5
Kxf5 43.Kf3 b6 44.Ke2 Nc3+ 45.Kd3
Ne4 46.h5 Nd6 47.Kd4 Kg5 48.Kd5 Nb7
49.Kc6 Nc5 50.Kxb6 Nxb3 51.Kb5 Kxh5
52.Kc4 Nc1 53.Kb5) 42.Kf3 Nc3 43.Ke3
Nd5+ 44.Kd4 Nxf4 45.Kc4 etc.

33...Nd5 34.Kg3 Nf4 35.Bc2 d3 36.Bd1
d2

36...Nd5! 37.Kf2 Kd4 38.Ke1 Ke3+

37.Bc2 Ne2+ 38.Kf2 Nc3 39.Bd1 Kf4

39...Nxd1+ 40.Ke2 Ne3 41.Kxd2 Nf1+-+

40.Be2 h5 41.Bd1 h4 42.Be2 h3 43.Bd1
Nxd1+ 44.Ke2 Nf2 45.Kxd2 Kxf3
46.Ke1 Ng4

0-1

H.G. Pitre (1844) –

Alex J. Machin (1769) [B06]

2021 Norman Friedman Memorial
Garden City, ID (R4), October 10, 2021
[Alex Machin]

With one draw from round two pulling
me down a half point, I went into this
game to win at all costs.

1.e4 g6

This is the first time I've tried this over-
the-board, clearly looking for a dynamic
game.

2.d4 Bg7 3.Nf3 d6 4.Bd3 Bg4 5.c3 e5
6.d5

I was trying to reach an accelerated
King's Indian where I attack White with
the move ...f5 and don't waste a tempo by
moving the knight on g8 twice.

6...Nd7 7.h3

Forcing Black's hand to relinquish the
bishop pair, but I'm happy to do this
because the position is locked up and I
don't lose time. White either damages
his kingside pawn structure or the Queen
ends up misplaced on f3 once ...f5 hits.

7...Bxf3 8.Qxf3 Ne7 9.Na3

White continues his development while
keeping the c1-h6 diagonal open for his
bishop.

9...0-0 10.Bg5 f6 11.Be3 f5

It is apparent that the queen on f3 is
misplaced.

12.g4?!

Definitely wrong. His desire to attack
doesn't work here. He's going to have
problems defending his e4-pawn
combined with the discovered attack on
the queen.

12...fxe4 13.Qxe4 Nf6!



Position after 13...Nf6

Black is threatening to take the queen and is double-attacking the d5-pawn at the same time.

14.Qg2 Nfxd5 15.Bc4 c6 16.h4

Here I thought for a long time because the idea of him playing h5 and ripping open my kingside was difficult to deal with. After a while I found the defensive ...h6 which aims to lock things up.

16...h6 17.0-0-0 Kh8 18.h5 g5 19.Bb3



Position after 19.Bb3

19...Nf4

It was tempting to play ...Nxe3 and snag the bishop, but I thought it was simplest to play ...Nf4 and keep control.

20.Bxf4 Rxf4 21.Rhe1

White is now threatening to play 22.Nc4.

21...Qc7

This discourages Nc4.

22.Re4 Raf8 23.Rxf4 Rxf4 24.Nc2 d5

Now that White has kind of exhausted all of his attacking attempts, I'm finally ready to expand and attack him.

25.f3 a5 26.Qe2? b5?

26...a4

27.Ne3 a4 28.Bc2 a3

Creating holes around his king.

29.b3 e4

I wish I had more time to think about this position. ...e4 is a very double-edged move that creates complications that I hadn't worked out.

30.fxe4 Bxc3 31.Nf5 Qe5

I was trying to figure something with 31... Rxf5 but nothing concrete was coming to me.

32.Nxe7

32.Nxh6 Bb4 33.Bb1 Qc3+ 34.Qc2 Qe3+ 35.Rd2 Rf1+

32...Qxe7 33.Rxd5 cxd5 34.Qxb5 Bb2+ 35.Kb1 Rxe4

0-1

Chase Jablonski (1213) –

Ralph Anthony (1673) [B08]

2021 Norman Friedman Memorial
Garden City, ID (R3), October 9, 2021
[Chase Jablonski]

G90+30 1213 v 1600. A fun attacking game finishing in a two-piece sacrifice to checkmate. White took advantage of Black wasting time with pawn moves. This game was the tournament director Eric Vigil's favorite.

1.e4 d6 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.d4 Bg7 5.Bg5 c6?!

Inaccuracy. ...O-O was best. If Black had castled here, the h6 pawn would not have been a problem, preventing him from castling later in the game. Opponent told me he wanted some craziness. Perhaps our rating difference made my opponent overconfident.

6.Qd2 h6?!

Inaccuracy. ...O-O was best. Black cannot now castle without losing the h-pawn. I think this is premature. 6...0-0 7.h3 Nbd7 8.a4 Qa5 9.Bd3 e5 10.dxe5 Nxe5 11.Nxe5

7.Bf4 b5 8.Bd3 b4?!

This makes six pawn moves by Black in the opening. Perhaps not objectively wrong but this makes Black's game more difficult. This did frighten me away from castling queenside.

9.Ne2 Qb6?!

Inaccuracy. Bg4 was best. One of the options if Black wants to hold onto the b-pawn. I'm not sure Black should have pushed the b-pawn since now he either has to lose it or spend time defending.

10.0-0

+1.9

10.0-0-0 +0.4

10...g5 11.Bg3

Time: White 1:02, Black 0:34.

11...Bg4?!

Inaccuracy. ...c5 was best. 11...c5 12.e5

12.e5 Nh5 13.exd6 Nxd6

A generally good principle to try and trade off the dark-squared bishop but in this case the face-off between the bishops was gone.

14.hxg3

14.Nxg3 Bxf3 15.gxf3 Qxd4 16.Nf5 I think this line was better from a human perspective since the knight ended up being in my way in the game. I was concerned about losing the d4-pawn but Nf5 wins. +7.4; 14.fxg3 This was a line I strongly considered due to opening



(L-R) H.G. Pitre, Alex Machin. Photo credit: Adam Porth.

the f-file but I was concerned about the g1-h7 diagonal with the queen and bishop already deployed. +3.9

14...exd6?



Position after 14...exd6

Opening the king here is bold. The computer might not care but my opponent said he underestimated Qe3+.

15.Qe3+

Mistake. Nxc5 was best. Missed a tactic with Nxc5 to win a pawn. 15.Nxc5 0-0 (15...hxc5 16.Qxc5 Bxd4 17.Qxc4) 16.Nf3 Nd7

15...Kf8 16.Rfe1

Mistake. a3 was best. a3 is difficult to find. I should consider the bishop supporting an attack on the queenside. However, I wanted to play down the e-file, so I have no regrets here. 16.a3 bxa3 17.Rxa3 Nd7

16...Bxf3??

Blunder. Nd7 was best. This is a mistake. Black needs to develop his knight and get his rook into the game or risk being overrun down the e-file. This is why I played Rfe1. 16...Nd7 17.a3 Re8 18.Qd2 b3 19.Qb4 Bf6 20.cxb3 Kg7 21.Qxb6 Nxb6 22.b4 h5 23.Rac1 with a slight advantage for White.

17.Nf4?!

Inaccuracy. Qxf3 was best. A sacrifice I spent about 20 minutes calculating. I calculated ...Bxd4, ...Qd8, and ...Nd7. I was hoping for ...Bxd4 as I had calculated it clearly to checkmate. 17.Qxf3 Nd7 18.Bf5 Nf6



Position after 17.Nf4

17...Bxd4??

Checkmate is now unavoidable. ...Qd8 was best. This move looks like it's the trickiest counterattack. I initially thought this idea defeated my sacrifice, but I had initially missed, as did my opponent, Ne6+.

During the post-mortem, my opponent regretted not spending more time here, but he only had about 20 minutes remaining. 17...Qd8 18.Ng6+ fxc6 19.Qxf3+ The best defense. Stockfish gives only a slight advantage for White but calculating this line I felt it would be difficult to defend against. I was happy enough with this continuation. White is down a piece but Black is completely passive with no active pieces and White has a clear plan of attack.; 17...gxf4 18.Qe8#; 17...Nd7 18.Ng6+ fxc6 19.Qe7+ Kg8 20.Qe6+ Kf8 21.Bxg6 Calculated clearly to here, expecting a mate to follow. Stockfish confirms mate in three. 21...Ne5 22.Rxe5

Qb7 23.Qe8+ Rxe8 24.Rxe8#

18.Qe8+ Kg7 19.Ne6+ fxe6 20.Qe7+ Kg8 21.Rxe6?

Lost forced checkmate sequence. Qxe6+ was best. A clear mistake. Anything wins here but maintaining a forced sequence should have been my priority. I had initially calculated Qe6+ but forgot it in the moment. I had also calculated the text line to checkmate and in the moment felt safer with that. I should have stopped here and recalculated, as time was sufficient. 21.Qxe6+ Kf8 22.Qxd6+ (22.Qe8+ Kg7 23.Re7+ Kf6 24.Qf7#) 22...Kg8 23.Qg6+ Bg7 24.Re8#

21...Bxf2?!

Checkmate is now unavoidable. Bh5 was best. 21...Bh5 22.Rxd6

22.Kh1 Bh5 23.Bg6 Qd4 24.Qf7#

Final time: White 24m, Black 7:39.

1-0



(L-R) Chase Jablonski, Ralph Anthony.
Photo credit: Jeffrey Roland.

My First 109 Issues

Jeffrey Roland

In September 2011, I stood before the *Northwest Chess* board to officially ask for Idaho to be part of *Northwest Chess*. I had only months before accidentally discovered the issues online while doing research on the early days of the Idaho Chess Association (ICA) on nwchess.com, and I asked the webmaster if ICA could advertise an event on the website, which was done free of charge!

A few months later, I met Frank Niro (who then was moving from Portland to Meridian, Idaho), and at that encounter I told Frank about my discovery of *Northwest Chess* and how I really liked it. Again, all this based on the online issues I was seeing of old scanned issues. Frank mentioned he had connections and could get me an audience with the NWC Board if I wanted to present my case. Decades earlier, for reasons nobody knows, and between two people who were no longer even alive, Idaho left... Why?!

During the September 2011 annual business meeting of *Northwest Chess*, I had expressed an interest and committed to submitting monthly articles—around four pages of Idaho chess news, which started in October 2011. At that time, the editor was Ralph Dubisch, and oddly, this was to be his last issue as editor before he stopped in order to spend more time with his family. So ironically, I had not yet gotten a chance to work with him other than my original introductory article, which was mainly just an introduction to the *Northwest Chess* readers. Fred Kleist became editor in November 2011, and so I would submit my articles to him over the coming months.

This was kind of an amazing time for me. I got to cover the Idaho news and did not have the responsibility of the entire issue. Since I was responsible to come up with four pages each month, I became even more involved, attending *everything*, and covering everything I could. I have this quirky quality (or maybe it's a normal quality) that when I am expected to do something, I do! I submitted my articles in Word, gave game files to Fred in PGN (usually having every game from the tournament, with an indication in the e-mail which games were best), which I knew because I had entered each of them

into the PGN file from the score sheets, and even supplied photos.

One time, when writing about the passing of Idaho chess legend Glen Buckendorf, I submitted one of my own games and the tribute I wrote at the end that somehow because of some technical problem was cut off. I thought when it happened that it was edited out... but next month a very small Errata produced

the ending paragraphs, which were really heart-felt on my part and probably the best part! (Thanks, Fred for finding it and putting it in, even if a month later!)

I think it was about three months into things when I began being asked if I was interested in being editor, and I would always say, "No." I had been editor of *Idaho Chess News* between 1982 and 1999, so I had some experience, but I



Photo credit: Adam Porth.

didn't feel I was able to technically do it. I sometimes get nervous about new software! Nevertheless, Duane Polich never gave up. A few more months went by, and he asked again. And I again said no. But I was warming to the idea, and I told him I would be willing to do it if somebody would train me how to physically do it—how to run the software. I guess I felt if I were going to do a job, somebody should be able to train me, right? How does one even start an issue?

Duane really wanted me because one of my qualities has always been reliability, to be on time and to always get the job done. I attribute this quality as something I learned from watching my father (how he dealt with things all my life) and my paper route, which I had for five years from 1975 to 1980 (perfect service without a complaint!). I remember Idaho Governor John Evans sending me a laminated recognition of being a valuable person (because of my five years perfect service) and an example to everyone, etc. Well, naturally I was so impressed that I voted for him for Governor twice... so recognizing others does pay off, but I digress!

They got Frank Niro, who had experience as the editor of *Chess Horizons* from 1984-1986, to train me. Initially, he was going to be training me for six issues, but after four issues we both felt I was ready to take charge! Somehow it was all worked out that Ralph Dubisch would be my games editor; I was a Class B player, though at my peak, I had achieved a rating of 1976. Playing in Idaho tended to slowly dwindle me down to my rating floor. I'm not complaining... just saying... But that is the reason Ralph Dubisch came back on staff of the magazine as games editor. We wanted to keep the quality of annotations up. Of course, we like it when players annotate games themselves, and we like using their voice to speak for their own games, but if we have no games notes, we might use Ralph for that. In fact, almost nobody from Idaho annotates their own games, so Idaho really benefits by Ralph being games editor.

When it came time to do the magazine, Ralph became so much more to me than a mere games editor! I found as a former editor himself, his knowledge of *Northwest Chess* politics, he was former Washington Chess Federation President, editor for 54.25 issues of *Northwest Chess*, and about my age, so our frames of reference are remarkably similar. I had no idea going into my first issue how fun it would be to work with Ralph Dubisch or how good of friends

we would become. Oddly enough though, I did all my communicating with Ralph via e-mail for the first two or three years before I *ever* talked to him on the phone.

For the first several years (and even now I am still much like this), I admitted when I didn't know something (which was often), was always completely honest, didn't know many of the players at first (nor did they know me). I'm sure most people probably figured I would be editor for a few months and then quit and be gone forever... but that's just not the way I am.

I admire very much how Queen Elizabeth II has ruled in England never giving up, always being there, reliable, stable. Many people have lived their entire lives not knowing any other British ruler except Queen Elizabeth II.

And while I'm sure he doesn't know this yet (though he will now), Nick Raptis is also very instrumental in me keeping going. He inspires me in ways that are deep and personal to me, but I have long considered him a friend, and while he unfriended and blocked me on Facebook years ago over an editorial decision I made, that changes nothing about the way I feel about him. He's one the top three inspirations in why I keep going!

It has not always been easy; many issues are downright hard! But there is this little list they keep track of the editors and how many months they have done. Everyone who has been editor probably looks at this and it too is a huge motivator in keeping on keeping on. I was once on the *very* bottom of this list with one month (and now I am on the top of the list with 109 issues!), I thought my first issue was pretty hard, and over time they never get any easier! You would think it should be simple, just do 32 pages, how hard could that be? Well, it is harder than you think! And there are also deadlines. And then you have to start and do it again! When one issue is done, the next one begins; it never ends, month after month, you keep going. If you take time to rest it's even harder to start up again and get your mojo going! But that's life! And that's one of the biggest benefits of the magazine, the fact it comes out monthly!

The June 2014 issue was so hard that I finally had to make only a 24-page issue (the only one I've ever had be that small), all others are at least 32 pages. I can't make things up out of thin air... we need people to submit material, and for some reason that particular month, I just didn't have enough material. Yet the 24 pages that were there were really nice. I liked

the issue, but it just wasn't 32 pages like it should have been. I was still a relatively new editor though, and in the early days it was really hard to get material; people weren't taking me seriously, I think. But persistence pays off. When you stick with something, eventually, people, even some who have written you off, might actually give you another chance.

The pandemic actually seemed to make things better in terms of material. I had more 48-page issues and grandmaster annotations too thanks to Aleksandr Lenderman during the pandemic when nobody was doing over-the-board tournaments. All of this thanks to the remarkable and dedicated support we get from Washington Chess Federation President Josh Sinanan.

It has been remarked between Ralph Dubisch and myself when I once asked how come every issue seems to get just a little bit better than that last one, he in all honesty told me, "It's because you're a slow learner!" An example is that the August 2018 issue was the first one when I used tabs and leader dots in the table of contents. For 68 issues, I did it incorrectly (okay, forget politically correct—it was done wrong!), using spaces and manual dots, and the page numbers didn't always line up. Finally, on my 69th issue, I fixed this. An improvement most people probably never noticed, but it's just one of those little things that have gotten better.

Another example are anchored objects. I went for years not anchoring the objects (like diagrams) in the text, and when I went to move anything even a little, it was a major editorial ordeal and mistakes could be made.

Ralph kept telling me about it (literally for years), it's incredible how patient Ralph was with me, and I kept *not* doing it. Why change something that works, right? Well, because it can be so much better! One day, I finally tried it, and oh my God, holy cow, and whatever else you can think of to convey amazement, it worked great; why on earth did I not do this sooner?!!

This is one of those things we laugh about now. I guess we can add stubborn to my list of qualities!

This issue begins my tenth year as editor. It's a blank slate, with nothing but possibilities ahead for me. Some things will be changing soon. We will be losing our business manager very soon (this may be the last month for Eric Holcomb), and Murlin Varner will be following at some point soon... But *Northwest Chess* will keep on going!

Merely A Game?

By Glen O’Harra



Note: other poems by Glen O’Harra are in the following *Northwest Chess* issues:

[March 2018 — “Shah Mat” \(page 3\)](#)

[May 2019 — “Boise Chess Club” \(page 27\)](#)

[January 2020 — “Toasting the Host” \(page 3\)](#)

— Jeffrey Roland, Editor

Two kings once gazed out, upon a no man’s land,
The battlefield did scout, they laid their evil plans!
One from kingdom dark, one glared with the light,
A cruel conflict starts, as they prepared to fight!

To the front, spry pawns speed, shields loudly clash,
Some will slowly die and bleed, swords proudly flash!

Fearlessly they enter, parry, thrust, and stab,
Price is paid for center; trusty squares are grabbed.

Nimble knights prance and rear, glances all a glaze,
Leaping men without fear, with lethal lances raised!
In the dark will find a track, that leads to secret square
The foe is forked front and back, one had best beware!

Bishops in dim rooms, draped in robe and hood,
Plot the enemy’s doom, gravely probe and brood!
Cramped on lowly square, they squirm as on a rack,
Oft as some holy seer, are like a martyr sacked!

Down a slant they descent, like an arrow sent,
Fragile men find they’re pinned, with evil intent!
Caught in deadly trap, they vainly writhe and flail,
Like a hapless chap, in pain, on pike, impaled!

In their corner safe, kings on castles stand,
Patiently they wait, from ramparts battle scan.
As valiant soldiers die, their bravery is proved,
With a last choked cry, into graves removed!

Royal queens in blind rage, storm from their tower,
The enemy they engage, the weak before them cower!
As they threaten death, and spread fear and dread,
Men will gasp for breath, ere’ they lose their head!

On rank and file crammed, rooks now roll and rumble,
Before them battering ram, sturdy castles crumble!
Kings gird regal robes in fear, before assault they flee,
For one the end is very near, this is plain to see!

Caught now in the open, for him there’s no escape,
With his spirit broken, he hears his fate “Check Mate!”

Susan Polgar Foundation National Open

SPFNO Organizers

Bellevue, WA—The 16th Annual Susan Polgar Foundation National Open for Girls and Boys was held in-person at the Hyatt Regency Bellevue October 2-3, 2021. This marked the first time that the Pacific Northwest has hosted a national-caliber chess tournament since the 2012 US Open in Vancouver, Washington. The Susan Polgar Foundation and Washington Chess Federation collaborated to host the SPFNO in-person this year, after running the event virtually via chess.com last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. SPF Founder GM Susan Polgar and her husband Paul Truong traveled all the way to Seattle from Europe, where they are now enjoying their retirement, especially for the event! WCF President Josh Sinanan orchestrated the weekend's busy slate of activities, which included a Parents and Coaches Seminar, Girls Workshop, 25-board GM Susan Polgar Simul, Private Breakfast with Susan and Paul, Book Signing, Puzzle Solving Competition, and Blitz Championship! An all-star staff of local tournament directors including Ben Radin, Jacob Mayer, Rekha Sagar, and Vijay Sankaran ran the one-day and two-day Championship sections. 2020 Washington State Champion WIM Megan Lee made a special appearance on Saturday in which she reviewed and analyzed games submitted by the players, attended the Girls Workshop, and played blitz chess against all-comers (she went undefeated!), just before leaving to play in the U.S. Women's Championship in St. Louis! The event ran smoothly throughout the weekend largely due to the efforts of the dedicated tournament staff and volunteers, including Eddie Chang, Ani Barua, Detective Denise "Cookie" Bouldin, Larry Greenawalt, Karen Schmidt, Tom Polgar-Shutzman, Leeam Polgar-Shutzman, Duane Polich, Meiling Cheng, Chouchan Airapetian, Angela Agaian, and Valentin Razmov. On Sunday October 3, Bellevue Deputy Mayor Jared Nieuwenhuis made a special visit to the tournament in which he welcomed the players to the city of Bellevue and wished the players good luck with their chess!

The main tournament attracted a total of 247 players competing across 11 sections split between a one-day, five-round schedule and a two-day, six-round schedule for the most serious players. This year's field consisted almost entirely of Washington players, with only a handful from other states: four from California, two from Idaho, two from Oregon, and one from Georgia. The organizers were quite pleased with the nearly 250-player turnout under the circumstances and are optimistic about growing the event in future years! The two-day Championship sections, which featured both Open and Girls divisions, attracted several strong local players, including IM-elect Shunkai Peng, NM Rushaan Mahajan, NM Daniel Shubin, WFM Anne-Marie Velea, CM Vignesh Anand, and CM Owen Xuan. On the line in both the Open K-12 and Girls K-12 Championship sections were scholarships to Webster University, each valued at over \$50,000! Special congratulations to the following 2021 SPFNO winners!

One-day and two-day section Champions:

K-1 U800: **Romi Milner**

2-3 U800: **Mike Tie, Vyan Gupta, and William Ma**

K-3 Open: **Odbayar Yondon and Vincent Liu**

4-8 U900: **Shritan Pothini**

4-8 Open: **Eric Chang and Amelia Day**

9-12 Open: **Alan Ardeleanu**

Girls K-5: **Michelle Zhang**

Girls K-12: **Anne-Marie Velea**—*Webster University scholarship winner!*

Open K-5: **Ted Wang**

Open K-8: **Owen Xuan and Yiding Lu**

Open K-12: **Rushaan Mahajan and Shunkai Peng**—*Webster University scholarship winner!*

Team Standings (Top four score from the same school counted for team score)

Place	Name	Score
1st	Medina Elementary School	18
	Michelle Zhang, Girls K-5	6
	Ted Wang, Open K-5	5
	Sanjay Urali, 4-8 Open	4
	Michael Xiong, Open K-5	3
	Aaron Zhang, Open K-5	3
2nd	Bellevue Children's Academy	15
	Alan Ardeleanu, 9-12 Open	5
	Michael Lin, Open K-5	3.5
	Nikash Vemparala, Open K-12	3.5
	Vihaan Jammalamadaka, Open K-12	3
	Stas Black, 2-3 U800	3
	Daniel Yun, K-1 U800	3
3rd	Einstein Elementary School	15
	Ayaan Kang, 4-8 Open	4
	Arnav Gadde, K-3 Open	4
	Rajas Shah, K-3 Open	3.5
	Paras Shah, Open K-8	3.5
	Gabriel Veiga, Open K-5	2.5

Place	Name	Score
4th	Odle Middle School	13.5
	Ryan Min, K-8 Open	4
	Nikita Chopra, K-8 Open	3.5
	Skylor Chan, K-8 Open	3
	Sonia Devaraju, Girls K-12	3
	Pranav Kokati, 4-8 Open	3
5th	Somerset Elementary School	13
	Owen Xu, Open K-5	4.5
	Lucas Liu, Open K-5	4
	Lucas Zheng, Open K-5	2.5
	Raymond Davenport, 4-8 Open	2

Polgar Blitz Championship:

K-5 Blitz: **Samuel Cha, Ted Shi, and Owen Xu**

6-12 Blitz: **Vidip Kona**

Susan Polgar Simul:

Final Score: GM Susan Polgar 21.5 – Simul Players 3.5

Duration: five hours!

Wins achieved by **Erin Bian** (1893) and **Owen Xu** (1663).
Draws achieved by **Shunkai Peng** (2439), **Valentin Razmov** (1986), and **Greg Prentice** (1737).

Puzzle Solving Competition:

35 brave contestants were given a maximum of 30 minutes to solve 20 checkmates puzzles. Scoring was based on speed, accuracy, and completeness.

	Place	Puzzle Solver	Score
1000+	1st	Daniel Shubin	20
		first to finish (~10 minutes)	
	2nd	Edward Li	20
	3rd	Yiding Lu	20
	4th	Nikash Vemparala	20
	5th	Vihaan Jammalamadaka	20
U1000			
	1st	Romi Milner	15.5
	2nd	Siddharth Bhaskaran	14
	3rd	Oliver Wakeman	10
	4th	Kevin Zhang	8
	5th	Jai Budraja	6

Congratulations to all players and chess families who contributed to the 2021 SPFNO. We look forward to making this event even bigger and better in the coming years!

About SPFNO

The prestigious annual Susan Polgar National Open Championship for Girls & Boys (SPFNO) was created in 2006 and is sponsored by the Susan Polgar Foundation (SPF) to give more opportunities to young chess players. The event rotates throughout the United States and will be co-hosted by the Susan Polgar Foundation and Washington Chess Federation from 2020-2023. For more information, please visit: <http://www.spfno.com/>

About Susan Polgar Foundation

The Susan Polgar Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization supported by charitable donations. The Foundation was established by GM Susan Polgar—the Winner of four Women's World Chess Championships, ten Olympic Medals (five gold, four silver, one bronze), and the first woman in history to break the gender barrier in chess. Since the foundation was started back in 2002, many events have blossomed and become the benchmark events for young girls and boys across North America.

Contact

To learn more about this event, please contact:

Josh Sinanan, Chief Organizer

washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com



*Susan Polgar makes the closing remarks at the
SPFNO awards ceremony.
Photo credit: Valentin Razmov*

Games From SPFNO Events

**Gabriel Razmov (1516) –
Leonardo Zhou (1664) [C54]**
Susan Polgar Foundation National Open
Bellevue, WA (R4), October 3, 2021
[Gabriel Razmov]

This game was played in round four of six at the Susan Polgar National Open for Girls & Boys. I had a good day one (rounds 1–3), winning my first game and drawing Class B and Class A players after that. I was hoping to get in contention for first place, and this game was critical.

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Be4 Be5 4.c3 Nf6
5.b4 Bb6 6.d3 d6 7.0–0 h6 8.a4 a6 9.h3
0–0 10.Nbd2 d5 11.exd5**

Another option, although not necessarily better, was 11.Bb3 d4 12.Nc4 dxc3 13.Nfxe5 Nd4 14.Nxb6 cxb6 15.Be3.

11...Nxd5 12.Ne4 Bf5?!

12...Be6

13.Qb3 Nf6 14.Re1?!

14.Rd1

14...Qe7 15.Ba3

Around here I thought I would be winning out of the opening, but soon enough, I realized it wasn't quite so easy!

15...Qd7

White retains about a +2 advantage here, but now there are no tactics.

16.a5

Frustrated, I tried to win material, but as my minutes burned away I couldn't find a good line. 16.Nxf6+ gxf6 17.Bc1! Bxh3 18.Re4! is promising, in hindsight; 16.b5? Na5! and there is nothing here.

16...Ba7 17.Rad1?!

17.Nxf6+ gxf6 18.Bc1 aiming at the kingside.

17...Bxh3!



Position after 17...Bxh3

A nice sacrifice, due to a lot of white pieces concentrated on the queenside. This is a move which forces White to be extremely precise. Unfortunately, I was already not in the mood to play this type of game, since I couldn't win material earlier on the queenside, and this move got me off balance a little bit.

18.gxh3 Qxh3 19.Nxf6+??

Now Black is winning, as he could utilize the open g-file against the white king! I considered 19.Nh2, but I couldn't work out 19...Nxe4 20.Rxe4 Qg3+ 21.Kh1 Bxf2?? My calculations stopped here, and I thought I must be in a dangerous position here! Unfortunately, my calculations were wrong. As it turns out, 22.Rf1! was winning, due to Rg4 next move. 22...Kh8 23.Rg4 Qe3 24.Bc1.

19...gxf6 20.Nh2



Position after 20.Nh2

20...Bxf2+??

20...Kh8! leaves Black winning, since even 21.Bxf7 doesn't work: 21...Rg8+ 22.Bxg8 Rxg8+ and White must give up his Queen.

21.Kxf2 Qxh2+ 22.Ke3 Qf4+ 23.Ke2

At this point, I thought he would go for the repetition, but surprisingly he didn't.

23...Rae8??

23...Qh2+=

24.Rg1+!

An only winning move. From here, I calculated up to about move 28.

24...Kh8 25.Rdf1! Qh2+ 26.Kd1 e4

26...Qh5+ 27.Kc1

27.Rh1 Qg2 28.Rxh6+ Kg7

This is the crucial position. There is an only way to win (that is your hint), but what is it?

29.Rhh1!

Not 29.Rfh1? Rh8=

**29...e3 30.Rfg1 e2+ 31.Ke1 Qg5 32.Bc1
Ne5 33.Rxg5+?!**

This move was due to a hallucination.

33.Bxg5 Nf3+ 34.Kf2 e1Q+ 35.Rxe1+- is an easier win instead.

33...fxg5 34.Kxe2?!

A brave move, but I am up so much material I can afford such inaccuracies and still retain a winning position. 34.Be3! A nice blocking move, which then wins the pawn on e2 without losing the c4-bishop. 34...Nxc4 35.Qxc4 Rxe3? 36.Qd4+

34...Nxc4+ 35.Kd1 Ne5 36.d4?!

I have no idea why I did not take the g-pawn now. 36.Bxg5

36...Ng4

From here onward White is trying to consolidate and eliminate dangerous counterplay, but Black manages to stir things up anyway. Time on the clocks also becomes an increasingly influential factor for the rest of the game.

**37.Qc2 f5 38.Bxg5 Re4 39.Qb2 Kg8
40.Bh6 Rf7 41.Qd2 Rf6 42.Qg5+ Kf7
43.Qd2 f4 44.Bg5 Rf5 45.Qa2+ Kg7
46.Bh4**

46.Bh6+! Nxh6? 47.Qg2+

**46...f3 47.Qb1 Ne3+ 48.Kd2 Rxh4
49.Rxh4?**

49.Qg1+ Rg4 50.Qxe3

49...f2 50.Qxf5?!

50.Rh1 is simpler

**50...Nxf5 51.Rf4 Ng3 52.Rxf2 Ne4+
53.Ke3 Nxf2 54.Kxf2**

I am lucky that after all the fireworks White is left with a solid extra pawn in the king-and-pawn endgame, leading to a simple technical win. I stopped notating here, as our clocks were quite low (about two minutes left for me and 30 seconds for him). In the end, White went on to win, as expected, from this position.

1–0

**Susan Polgar (2598) –
Erin Bian (1903) [C45]**
Simultaneous Exhibition,
October 2, 2021
[Erin Bian]

1.e4

This was a small surprise; I expected Susan to play 1.d4 or 1.Nf3.

**1...e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4 Bc5
5.Nxc6 Qf6 6.Qf3 dxc6 7.Qxf6?!**

I think this is a bit inaccurate, because it releases the tension and lets me develop my knight to the superior f6 instead of e7. The computer actually likes Qxf6, but it's not scoring very well for White. 7.Nc3 is

the main line, played by many top players.

7...Nxf6 8.f3

This is natural—defending e4 and somewhat restricting my minor pieces.

8...Be6

Develops the bishop and prepares to castle queenside.

9.Nc3 0-0-0 10.Bg5!?

I missed this move, and spent a lot of time thinking here. 10.Bd2 is also a valid choice; this would be similar to if she had played 11.Bd2, first provoking ...h6. But the pawn may be more useful there.

10...h6

Probably the safest choice. I considered 10...Bd4!? for a while but decided against it because I wanted to get rid of the threat of e4-e5 as soon as possible. This is logical, but my concrete reason was flawed—I thought White could play 11.Ne2? Bxb2 12.Rb1 Be5 13.f4 followed by 14.e5, but didn't see that I could return to d4 with the bishop: 13...Bd4! 14.Nxd4 Rxd4+.

11.Bxf6

Susan almost played 11.Bd2, but decided against it. I would argue here that the h6 pawn is better placed here versus if she had played 10.Bd2 in one go.

11...gxf6 12.a3?!

Presumably trying to prevent ...Bb4, but

I don't think White has time for this. 12.Bd3 Blocking the d-file and castling queenside on the next move was probably better.

12...Bd4!?



Position after 12...Bd4

If White moves the knight to e2 or a4, she loses the pawn on b2. If she does something else, e.g., Bd3, I'll always have the possibility of doubling her pawns with ...Bxc3.

13.Nd1?

Stops ...Bxc3 and defends b2, but it's too slow. White is now at least two moves (or more, because if she moves the knight I can take it and prevent castling again) away from castling, which is not going to end well for her once I open the e-file.

13...f5 14.exf5?!

This opens the e-file, which may be disastrous if White can't protect her king quickly. The computer even suggests

returning with 14.Nc3, keeping the e-file closed for the moment and possibly escaping with the king to the queenside.

14...Bxf5 15.Bd3 Rhe8+ 16.Kd2

Forcing the king out.

16...Bf6!

Opening up the d-file and threatening Bg5+. 16...Be5! with the same idea also works.

17.Rb1

After thinking for a long time, Susan decided to play this. Rb1 is a mistake, but there weren't any good options at this point. 17.Re1 is a small improvement, but she probably didn't like 17...Bg5+ 18.Ne3 c5 19.b3 Bxd3 20.cxd3 Re6+ with a clear advantage for Black.

17...c5! 18.b3

Prevents ...c4.

18...b5

Threatens to win the bishop again.

19.Kc1

Saves the bishop, but this runs into another problem—and it's not just about the pawn.

19...Bg5+ 20.Kb2 Bxd3 21.cxd3 Re2+! 22.Ka1 Bf6+ 23.Nb2 Rxd3+



Position after 23...Rxd3

I can now trade a set of rooks, take the kingside pawns, and trade everything on b2. The resulting king and pawn endgame is easily won. White resigns.

0-1

**Susan Polgar (2577) –
Valentin Razmov (1986) [D02]**
Simultaneous Exhibition,
October 2, 2021
[Valentin Razmov]

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.d4 d5 3.Bf4 c5 4.e3 Nc6 5.Nbd2 e6 6.c3 Bd6 7.Bg3 b6?!

Not the best treatment of the London System for Black, since the c6-square and the knight sitting on it are now weakened as a result. 7...0-0



Two young competitors bump elbows on the foyer outside the playing hall. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

8.Ne5

8.Bb5!? is more ambitious, attempting to immediately take advantage of the temporarily weakened a4–e8 diagonal: 8...Qc7 9.Bxd6 Qxd6 10.Ne5 Bd7 11.f4± (11.Nxd7 Nxd7 12.Qg4 0–0 13.Qg3 Qxg3 14.hxg3 Rfc8).

8...Bb7 9.Bd3

Played after a long think by the GM...

9...0–0 10.0–0 Ne7

A well-known plan for regrouping Black's pieces and adding strength to Black's kingside. 10...Qc7 11.Nxc6 (11.f4 Ne7 12.Qb1 c4 13.Bc2 b5∞ 14.Bh4 Ng6 15.Nxg6 fxg6) 11...Bxc6 (11...Bxg3 12.fxg3 Kxc6 13.Rxf6 gxf6 14.Qh5 f5 15.Qg5+ Kh8 16.Qf6+=)

11.Bh4?!

White seems a bit too eager to take advantage of Black's latest move. Now White falls under some pressure herself. 11.Qf3 Qc7

11...Ne4!

A standard way for Black to simplify and gain counterplay in many queen-pawn openings.

12.Bxe4?!

Once again, played after several minutes of thought. 12.Nec4 Bc7 13.f3 Nxd2 14.Nxd2 f6 15.Bf2 Qd7

12...dxe4 13.Ndc4?!

Natural, but not optimal. Alternatively: 13.Qg4 f5 14.Qg5±; 13.Nec4 f6 (13...cxd4 14.Nxd6 Qxd6 15.Nc4 Qd7 16.Bxe7 Qxe7 17.cxd4 Rfc8=) 14.Nxd6 Qxd6 15.Bg3 Qd5.

13...f6



Position after 13...f6

14.Nxd6

And another long thought by the GM here... 14.dxc5?! Bxe5 (14...Bxc5? 15.Nd7 Bd5 16.Nxf8 Bxc4=) 15.Nxe5 Nf5 16.c6 (16.Qg4!? h5!) 16...Ba6±; 14.Qg4?! Bd5!±

14...Qxd6 15.Nc4 Qd5 16.Nd2 Nf5

Now White's bishop is without much prospect.

17.Bg3 Ba6?

Forcing White's rook to where it actually wants to go. 17...cxd4 18.cxd4 (18.exd4?! e3 19.Nf3 g5!±) 18...h5!±

18.Re1 Nxg3 19.hxg3 Rfd8

19...Bd3!±

20.Qb3 f5?!

Attempting to preempt f2–f3, but this move creates a weakness on e5 in the long-term, which the white knight might be able to utilize as an outpost. 20...Bd3 21.Qxd5 exd5 22.f3 f5±

21.Qxd5 exd5

White equalized after Black's recent inaccuracies.



Position after 21...exd5

22.f4?

Once again, White seems overly eager to blockade the center in defense, but this allows Black a future protected passed e-pawn. Perhaps White was influenced at this point by feeling under pressure on all three top boards of the simul event (especially as one of those boards already had a lost position for the GM)—I was playing on board two.

22...Rd6

Looking for potential kingside activity or doubling rooks in the center. 22...Bd3 23.Nb3 Rab8±

23.a4

Likely planning to push a4–a5 and weaken the queenside, including the support of Black's c5–pawn.

23...cxd4 24.exd4

Keeping the c-file closed and planning to blockade on the dark squares (including e3) via either king or knight.

24...b5?

A positional mistake—in an attempt to open up files for the rooks and bishop, Black went too fast in asking for it and accidentally weakened the c5–square,

which the white knight can utilize to blockade the queenside and even turn up the pressure on Black there. 24...Rb8± maintains the pressure on White.

25.axb5

25.Nf1!? bxa4 26.Ne3 Bb5 (26...g6?! 27.Rxa4± 27...Bb5 28.Ra5 a6) 27.Nxf5 Rd7 28.c4!±=

25...Bxb5 26.Nb3 Rb6

In turn, realizing that things aren't going as planned, Black now “presses on the brakes,” and with a series of accurate moves closes the queenside by forcing White to blockade there.

27.Nc5 Bc4 28.b4

During the game I was uneasy about the option 28.b3? Bxb3 29.Reb1 and felt relieved when White didn't take that path (perhaps White didn't even consider it, since move 28 was played very quickly), only to realize later that 29...Ba2! was in fact tactically refuting such an idea by White, e.g., 30.Rxb6 axb6 31.Nd7 Kf7 (31...b5? 32.Kf2) 32.Nxb6 Rb8 33.Rxa2 Rxb6 34.Ra7+ Kf6 35.Rd7 Rc6 36.Rxd5 Rxc3±, and only Black can play for something more than a draw here.

28...Bb5

Ensuring that all light squares are guarded, so the white knight won't be able to jump around and create chaos in the back of Black's position.

29.Kf2 a6

Closing off the queenside for good, and also freeing up the rook on a8.

30.Rh1 Rf8 31.Ra3 Rff6 32.Rh5

Preventing rook trades via ...Rh6, and thus keeping Black from taking over the kingside too. A drawish outcome was already taking shape at this point.

32...g6

Now Black hatches a plan to close off the kingside and hold a fortress-like structure, as there seem to be no realistic winning opportunities anymore.

33.Rh1 h5!

Prevents pawn breaks like g3–g4, unless White is willing to take the risk of a sacrifice to accomplish that.

34.Rha1 Kf7 35.Ke3 Ke7

And here White offered a draw, which was promptly accepted. Neither White nor Black can reasonably expect to press on without taking a big risk in opening up the position at the cost of some pawn sacrifice(s).

½–½

What Did I Get Myself Into This Time?

Karen Schmidt

I had been to my share of scholastic chess tournaments as a “chess Mom”—in a previous lifetime when my son was in elementary and middle school—but never to an event as large as this. The Susan Polgar event in Bellevue, Washington on October 2-3 was the first K-12 national scholastic chess tournament ever held in Washington state. There were about 220 boys and girls from grades K-12 playing.

I had heard about the tournament on September 27 from Josh Sinanan, the organizer of the event. He is also the President of the Washington Chess Federation (WCF). Once I heard that Susan Polgar and Seattle’s Detective Cookie would be there in person, I volunteered to help at the two-day event at the Bellevue Hyatt Regency Hotel.

I arrived at the sumptuous hotel at 8:20AM on Saturday. Checking-in to my 15th-floor room first, I was thrilled to find a mini Keurig-type coffee maker in the

room, with Starbucks coffee. Little did I know that I was really going to need that large cup of coffee over the next several hours. I threw a granola bar into my small purse and headed down to the second-floor ballrooms where the tournament was taking place.

When I entered the main tournament room, I saw several people wearing name-labelled “volunteer” lanyards. I saw a few folks I knew and recognized the names of several others I hadn’t met before. Out in the lobby areas were about 220 kids standing, sitting, and playing chess on the carpet...as well as about 300 parents anxiously awaiting the round one pairing. Inside the main room, I joined a woman who was flying around setting up chess boards. This turned out to be Detective Cookie! She has run a very successful inner-city chess program through the Seattle Police Department for many years, and I have always wanted to meet

her. I followed her lead in straightening the chess pieces and evening out the chairs, so that the room would look neat and organized for round one. Most, but not all, of the vinyl chess boards and pieces had been set up. About halfway through straightening things up, I came to a board where the queens and kings were placed backwards. This prompted me to walk past all the tables again to check that detail. I found seven or eight boards with the same problem. This could have proved disastrous for the younger kids if they began the game with the queens and kings on the wrong squares.

A few minutes later, I came to a

board which was laid out backwards—white on the black side and vice versa. This prompted *another* walk past all the tables and turning three or four boards around and resetting the pieces. This could have proved even more disastrous, since the kids all had to record their games—impossible to do if the white pieces are on the black side and vice versa.

We tore through an adjacent second ballroom doing the same set-up re-checking routine. Meanwhile throngs of young players and parents were pouring into the ballrooms and locating their places at the tables. As the announcements were made by the Tournament Director (TD) about which age groups were to play in which of the *three* rooms, I realized that Cookie and I had missed an entire adjoining room: the K-5 room. We flew into it and saw that the chess pieces were still in the zippered bags. So, in borderline chaos, we mingled with the little kids and their parents getting the boards set up while they were finding their places.

Only about 50+ youngsters needed help setting their chess clocks (I don’t do chess clocks) so those I referred to the several other lanyard-wearing volunteers. I got a photo of Susan Polgar’s two adult sons helping with clock setting. Susan herself opened the tournament with a few remarks and well wishes and we were underway.

Pretty soon the main TD handed me a clipboard with pairing sheets and escorted me to a smaller, quieter room to record results as they came in. This turned out to be the K-12 Open room, with the highest rated players. I got to sit in a corner quietly and do my own thing on my phone, and simply indicate 1, 0 or 1/2 on the pairings as the games ended. The time control was G60 with five-second delay, so I had a couple hours to decompress, after the earlier activities. (I worked on another story for *Northwest Chess* that afternoon!) I was amazed to see the ratings of the players in that room. The top two were 2439 and 2250. Several others were over 2000, and the vast majority were over 1600. (I was very glad I wasn’t playing.)

We proceeded through three rounds of play in the K-12 room on Saturday. In



(L) Tom Polgar-Shutzman and
(R) Leeam Polgar-Schutzman, setting clocks.
Photo credit: Karen Schmidt.

the bigger ballroom the kids were playing a five-round one-day event. Sometime during round two, I started to wonder what we were supposed to do about lunch since there were only fifteen minutes between rounds. Then I remembered the granola bar in my purse and tried to eat it quietly. A little later another volunteer came and told me there was Pagliacci pizza for the volunteers in the “office.” Since there were two of us recording results, I was able to slip out and scarf down two slices of pizza and a root beer.

About 5:30PM, after the third round (and the fifth round in the one-day event), there was an awards ceremony for the one-day event presided over by Susan Polgar and chief TD Jacob Mayer. Susan graciously gave out trophies and posed for photos with all the winners, and many photos were taken by parents.

Much to my amazement, next on the agenda was a Simul event, with Susan playing 26 opponents of all ages and skill levels in a smaller room down the hall. The Simul started at 6PM and (I later learned) ended at 11PM. I lasted until 8PM, at which point I returned to my room and fell asleep in the sixth inning of the Mariners game. One little girl fell sound asleep at her board during the

Simul, so that game was a win for Susan.

Sunday, I started the day with my Starbucks in-room coffee again. There were a lot fewer chess players since the one-day event had ended the evening before. The remaining three rounds were all played in one large ballroom.

In the afternoon I managed to slip out and have a long conversation with Detective Cookie’s head volunteer coach, Larry Greenawalt. I gathered information from him about Cookie’s chess program, which I will write about soon. Larry and I also swapped chess stories about tournaments and various chess people we knew in common, some of which, stories I won’t be writing about!

The K-12 Open first place prize was decided by a blitz game as a tie breaker. In addition to trophies, the first-place grand prize included a \$56,000.00 scholarship (14K per year) to Webster University, which has a high-level chess program as well as an academic program.

I headed home to Seattle after the awards ceremony. However, many kids and parents stayed on for not only a Blitz Tournament but also a Chess Puzzle contest. My trip home was an event in itself. I had bussed from Seattle to

Bellevue early on Saturday morning. The hotel desk gave me a map of downtown Bellevue, but it didn’t have any north-south-east-west arrows! So, I was trying to figure out which side of the street to stand on, to catch the bus back to Seattle. I asked a young woman at an ATM machine if she knew. She told me she was driving to her business in Seattle and would give me a ride home, which she did! We had a lovely chat on the 20-minute drive about all sorts of topics—including the fact that her family had immigrated from Iran, and she now owned a drive-through espresso stand in the Rainier Valley. She was a lovely young woman, and I will send her a thank you card. I would highly recommend getting coffee at Sasha’s Bikini Espresso!

On a more serious chess note, I have played in a lot of chess tournaments. But I have never been a volunteer helping to set one up, especially a national event of this size and scope. Susan Polgar’s team, and the WCF, as well as all the organizers, TDs and volunteers put in untold hours of planning and overseeing. The event was a huge success, and the 17th annual SPFNO will be held in Bellevue again next year. Congrats to all for a fantastic National event!



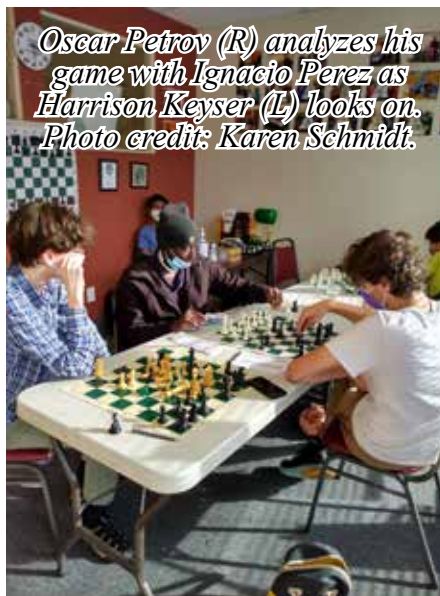
(L-R) Karen Schmidt, Selina Cheng, and Larry Greenawalt. Photo credit: Meiling Cheng.

2021 Washington G/60 Championship

By Josh Sinanan

The 2021 Washington G/60 Championship was held in-person at the Orlov Chess Academy in Seattle on Saturday, October 16. Chess players from throughout Washington State, including the cities of Redmond, Mt. Vernon, Clyde Hill, Shoreline, Sammamish, Bothell, Bellevue, Seattle, Joint Base Fort Lewis, Woodinville, Yarrow Point, and Medina were represented in the 23-player field! Legendary tournament director Fred Kleist directed the four-round Swiss tournament with assistance from WCF Tournament Coordinator Valentin Razmov. The field featured an even mix of ten adults and 13 scholastic chess players.

The Man, the Myth, the Legend FM Ignacio Perez reigned victorious with a perfect four points from four games, taking down top seed and fellow FM Ryan Porter in the third round and newcomer David Paez, who boasts a 2000+ FIDE rating, in the final round. Young star Vidip Kona from Redmond finished in clear second place half-a-



point back after vanquishing Class A players Razmov and Tessiore in the final two rounds. Ted Wang from Medina and Lucas Liu from Bellevue tied for third/ U2000 honors with three points apiece. Harrison Keyser from Sammamish and Darsh Verma from Bothell tied for the U1800/U1600 prize half-a-point back at 2.5 points apiece. Bothell chess wizard Jeff Klink and Yarrow Point wonder boy

Ares Wang rounded out the prize winners with 1.5 points each and split the U1400/ U1200 prize for their efforts. Thanks to all who contributed to this fun event!

2021 Washington G/15 Championship

By Josh Sinanan

The Washington G/15 Championship was held in-person on Sunday October 17 at the Orlov Chess Academy in Seattle. A total of 17 players participated in the six-round US Chess Quick Rated tournament, which was directed by Senior TD Fred Kleist. The field consisted of a single open section featuring players ranging from unrated to master level.

Andrew Latham from Seattle swept the tournament with an impressive six points from six games, including back-to-back wins against Masters Perez and Moroney in rounds three and four. Ignacio Perez, originally from Cuba but now living on Capitol Hill, finished in clear second place with five points. Mountlake Terrace's Tim Moroney, who has recently become the voice of Team Washington in the States Chess Cup with his phenomenal Twitch streaming

A NORTHWEST CHESS GRAND PRIX EVENT

NORTHWEST CHESS WINTER OPEN

In honor of Rusty Miller, 1942-2020.

DECEMBER 11, 2021

Site: Online via Chess.com

Format: A 5-Round Swiss in one section. This is a fundraising tournament for *Northwest Chess* magazine.

Entry Fee: \$25 by 12/8, \$30 after. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, or US Chess 2400+.

Time Control: G/30;+5.

Rounds: Sat. 9 AM, 10:30 AM, 12 PM, 1:30 PM, 3 PM.

Prizes: *Northwest Chess* subscription extensions (includes WCF membership for WA residents): 1st: 3-yr ext., 2nd: 2-yr ext., 3rd 1-yr ext., 1stU1900/U1700/U1500/U1300/U1100/U900/U700: 1-yr ext. 1st Unrated: 1-yr ext. Biggest Upset: 1-yr ext. **Annotated Brilliancy Prize Competition:** Annotate your best game for *Northwest Chess* magazine. A panel of judges will select the winners. 1st: 2-yr ext., 2nd: 1-yr ext.

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

Rating: US Chess Online Rated and NWSRS Rated. Highest of current US Chess regular, US Chess online, or NWSRS rating will be used to determine pairings and prizes.

Procedure: Pairings will be released prior to the start of each round. Games will be started automatically by the TD in the [Live Chess](#) area.

Fair Play Policy: All players and parents (if U18) are required to sign the [WCF Fair Play Agreement](#) prior to the start of the tournament. All players will be monitored by Zoom during the games. WCF's Fair Play Committee will review any suspicious games on a case-by-case basis. Fair play standards strictly enforced.

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

Mail To: Washington Chess Federation
c/o Orlov Chess Academy
4174 148th Ave. NE
Building I, Ste. M
Redmond, WA 98052
Contact: Josh Sinanan, WCF President
Phone: 206-769-3757
Email: WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Registration: Online at [nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration](#).
Registration **deadline Fri. 12/10 @ 5pm.**
\$15 Late Fee for payments accepted after the deadline. Unpaid players will receive a zero-point bye for round 1.

and commentary, took third place with four points, losing only to Latham and Perez. Lakeside Chess star Erin Bian and Seattleite Alan Corey-Derrah tied for U2000/U1800 honors half-a-point back at 3.5 points apiece. Newcomer Lakshmi Vemuri, an unrated player who no doubt has honed his skills during the pandemic, won the U1200/unrated prize with a solid three points. Young Siddharth Bhaskaran from Redmond was declared the U1600 prize winner with 2.5 points. Selina Cheng, a fourth grader from Detective Cookie's Chess School in Seattle, captured the U1400 prize with two points. Congratulations to the winners!

**Alan Corey-Derrah (1771) –
Valentin Razmov (1986) [B01]**
Washington G/15 Championship
(R2), October 17, 2021
[Valentin Razmov]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.d4 Bf5

Letting White develop an initiative thanks to his potential mobile center. More common is 4...Bg4.

5.Nc3

Transposing to the mainline after 3.Nc3, thus blocking the c-pawn and missing

the opportunity to put pressure on Black using 5.c4!?

5...Qa5 6.Bd2

A commonly played move at the club level, but in practice not as dangerous as it looks.

6...c6 7.a3 e6 8.Ne4 Qc7

Not fearing the exchange on f6 with doubling of Black's pawns. An alternative is 8...Qd8.

9.Nxf6+ gxf6 10.Bc3?!

This promising-looking spot for the bishop will become a liability in the near future. More to the point are the alternatives involving the push of the c-pawn: 10.c4 or 10.c3.

10...Nd7 11.Qd2

11.g3

11...Nb6 12.0–0–0 Nd5 13.Kb1 Bd6

Black is already quite comfortable.

14.g3 b5?!

Although not a common idea for Black in this opening, the queenside attack seemed tantalizing, and I decided that it's worth trying at least for the learning experience of doing it. But there was a better way to start that queenside campaign... 14...a5?

15.Ba5

Correctly blockading the dark squares, thus slowing down Black's queenside progress considerably.

15...Qb7



Position after 15...Qb7

16.Bg2?

This looks promising as a developing and solidifying move, but is in fact too slow given the dynamic nature of the position. Both players still had plenty of time left on the clock: nearly ten minutes each out of the original 15 (plus delay). 16.Nh4

16...b4!

Taking advantage of White's slow-down.

17.axb4 Bxb4 18.Bxb4 Nxb4

WASHINGTON WINTER CLASSIC

DECEMBER 26-27, 2021

A NORTHWEST CHESS GRAND PRIX EVENT

Site: Online via Chess.com

Format: An 8-Round Swiss in two sections: Open and Reserve (U1500).

Entry Fee: \$45 by 12/19, \$55 after. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, or US Chess 2400+. \$40 play-up fee if rated under 1500 playing in Open section.

Time Control: G/45+5.

Rounds: Sun/Mon. 10 AM, 12:30 PM, 3 PM, 5:30 PM.

Prize Fund: \$1,500 (based on 60 paid entries).

Open: 1st \$240, 2nd \$180, 3rd \$140
1st U2000/U1800/U1600: \$75

Reserve: 1st \$125, 2nd \$100, 3rd \$75

1st U1400/U1200/U1000: \$65, 1st Unrated: \$65

Special Prizes: Best NW Player* (by TPR): \$65, Best Female Player* (by TPR): \$65, Biggest Upset: \$25.

*Maximum of 1 prize awarded per player; cannot win multiple prizes.

Byes: Three half-point byes available, request before end of round 3.

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

Rating: US Chess Online and NWSRS Rated. Highest of current US Chess regular, US Chess Online, and NWSRS rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes.

Procedure: Pairings will be released prior to the start of each round. Games will be started automatically by the TD in the [Live Chess](#) area.

Fair Play Policy: All players and parents (if U18) are required to sign the [WCF Fair Play Agreement](#) prior to the start of the tournament. All players will be monitored by Zoom during the games. WCF's Fair Play Committee will review any suspicious games on a case-by-case basis. Fair play standards strictly enforced.



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Email:
WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Registration: Online at [nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration](#).
Registration **deadline Sat. 12/25 @ 5pm**. \$15 Late Fee for payments accepted after the deadline. Unpaid players will receive a zero-point bye for round 1.

Now the dark squares on the queenside are once again unblocked and Black is ready to attack. It felt good to be having this promising position as Black.

19.Ne1 Rb8 20.Qc3 Qa6

Black's moves come naturally and are strong. White has his back against a wall and is playing forced moves to defend.

21.Nd3?!

21.Qc5

21...Qa2+ 22.Kc1 Nxd3+ 23.cxd3 0-0?

Black trembles at the prospect of having the king left in the center with White's queen and bishop eyeing the c6-pawn with check! More than that, this prophylactic move releases the pressure on White and gives him a chance to eliminate one of the main threats to his position—with a forced queen exchange. Both players had roughly five minutes left on the clock at this point. 23...Rb3! Gutsy and strong—the black king can safely hide on g7 if needed. 24.Qc2 0-0 25.Qb1+

24.Be4?

24.Qa3! Qxa3 25.bxa3 Rb3+, and although Black has all the chances, White has reasonable hopes to survive in the end.

24...Rb3 25.Qc2 Rfb8 26.Rd2 Bxe4 27.dxe4 R8b4

White's position is at a breaking point. But will Black find the way to crack it with two minutes left on the clock?

28.Qb1

Black has a game-ending strike here and was in fact looking for that, but somehow missed it! Can you spot it?

28...Qa4?!

Missing the effective and efficient way to end the attack and win the game. 28...Rc3+! 29.Rc2 Rxc2+ 30.Qxc2 (30.Kxc2 Qc4+ 31.Kd1 Qxd4+ 32.Ke1 Rxb2+) 30...Rc4+

29.Rhd1 Rc4+?!

From here onward, the game was strongly influenced by the clock: both sides had about one minute left (plus delay).

30.Rc2 Rxd4 31.Rxd4 Qxd4 32.Rxc6 Qxf2 33.Qc2 Qe1+ 34.Qd1 Qxd1+ 35.Kxd1 Rxb2

Simplifying to a manageable and promising endgame that is easier to play (compared to an endgame with queens still left on the board) given the extra material Black has.

36.Ra6 Rxh2 37.Rxa7 Rg2 38.Ra3 Kg7 39.Ke1 Kg6 40.Kf1 Rb2 41.Re3 Kg5 42.Kg1 Kg4 43.Kf1 Kh3

Black decides to avoid pawn exchanges until the time is right—lest White manages to transition to the notorious drawn rook endgame with only f- and h-pawns left.

44.Rf3

With seconds left on the clock, I stopped notating here. The game concluded after one more pawn was exchanged and Black (somehow) managed to trade rooks with a skewer on the f-file, leading to a king-and-pawn endgame with no chances for White to survive.

0-1

2021 Washington Blitz Championship

By Josh Sinanan

The Washington Blitz Championship was held in the evening of Sunday, October 17 at the Orlov Chess Academy in Seattle, immediately following the G/15 Championship held earlier in the day. A mostly-local group of chess players were represented in the ten-player field, from cities including Seattle, Bellevue, Redmond, Enumclaw, and even Minneapolis, Minnesota! The seven-round, double-Swiss tournament was quite top-heavy, with three players

rated above 2000 in either the US Chess or NWSRS rating systems! There were numerous exciting and entertaining games throughout the evening featuring daring attacks and cunning defenses devised by the many colorful characters taking part!

When the smoke cleared, it was the Seattle speed chess kings FM Ignacio Perez and Andrew Latham who emerged victorious with an astounding 13 points from 14 games, splitting against each other in the third round and winning against everyone else! Garfield High School freshman Edward Cheng and Mt. Vernon chess expert Henry Benaid tied for third/U2000 honors with 9.5 points apiece. Sujay Nair from Redmond took home the U1800 prize with seven points, while Enumclaw's Lucas Sauve won the U1200/unr. prize with 4.5 points. Seattle chess queen Selina Cheng lived up to her royal chess pedigree and Redmond's Mikhail Kosau channeled World Champion Mikhail Tal to claim the U1600/U1400 award with three points each. Many thanks to all of the players who competed in these fun events!

2021 Washington Challenger's Cup

By Josh Sinanan

The 2021 Washington Challenger's Cup, which seeds directly into the Washington State Championship, was held in-person October 23-24 at the Orlov Chess Academy in Seattle. Due to space limitations, the Reserve U1700 and Open sections were held on different days and capped at 25 players each. The five-round G/50;d5 Reserve U1700 section took place on Saturday October 23, while the four-round G/75;d10 Open followed on Sunday October 24. Chess players from throughout Washington State were represented in the 49-player field, including the cities of Redmond, Bothell, Shoreline, Blaine, Bellevue,



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Clyde Hill, Seattle, Sammamish, Duvall, View Park (California), Kingston, Yakima, Mercer Island, Yarrow Point, and Medina! The tournament was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation and directed by Tournament Director extraordinaire Fred Kleist with assistance from WCF Tournament Coordinator Valentin Razmov.

Youth was served in this year's event, as seventh grader Austin Liu from Sammamish and tenth grader Eddie Chang from Clyde Hill tied for first place each with 3.5 points from four games. Chang subsequently won the playoff for the seed into the 2022 Washington State Championship, which will be held next February. A trio of players tied for third/U2200/U2000 half-a-point back with three points each: Seattle chess king FM Ignacio Perez, and Bellevue chess princes Yiding Lu and Brandon Jiang. Owen Xu, a second grader from Somerset Elementary in Bellevue, won the U1800 prize with two points after an impressive first-round upset against expert Sophie Tien in the first round. However, no one could top Austin Liu's big upset win over two-time Washington State Champion Ignacio Perez (430 points) in the very first round, which won him the upset prize!

In the Reserve U1700 section, Nikhil Ramkumar, a fourth grader from Ruby Bridges Elementary School in Woodinville, topped the field with an impressive 4.5 points from five games. Former Lakeside chess stud James Wedgwood rebounded well after a first-round loss to Lucas Liu and won his final four games in a row to finish in clear second place with four points. Four players shared third/U1600 honors half-a-point back at 3.5 points: Adam Ellner from Seattle, Haituka Anandkumar from Redmond, Emerson Wong-Godfrey from Seattle, and Gabriel Razmov from Seattle. Vihan "Chess Dude" Dudala from Redmond claimed U1400 honors also with 3.5 points. Yarrow Point chess phenom Ares Wang won the U1200 prize



The Man, the Myth, the Legend, FM Ignacio Perez, plays his favorite King's Indian Defense. Photo credit: Josh Sinanan.

with two points. Rising star Suchir Iyer, a Kindergartner from Christa McAuliffe Elementary in Sammamish won the U1000 prize plus the best upset by virtue of beating an opponent rated 427 points

higher than himself! Newcomer Joshua Hinman from Seattle won the unrated prize with an impressive 2.5-point score.

Congratulations to the winners!

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**Austin Liu (1794) –
Ignacio Perez (2206) [B07]**
Washington Challenger's Cup
Seattle, WA (R1), October 24, 2021
[Austin Liu]

**1.e4 d6 2.d4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.Be3 Nf6
5.f3 0–0 6.Qd2 Re8!?**

An interesting sideline, aiming to drop the bishop back if White tries Bh6. 6...c5 7.dxc5 dxc5 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 9.Bxc5 Nc6 transposes into the Sämisch.

7.0–0–0 b5?

A highly dubious gambit; with proper defense, White gains a clear advantage.

**8.Bxb5 c6 9.Bc4 Qa5 10.Kb1 Qb4
11.Bb3 a5 12.a3 Qb7 13.Nge2**

And Black's attack is already looking very unconvincing.

13...Nbd7 14.g4 Nb6 15.Ka1

With the idea of Rb1.

**15...a4 16.Ba2 Rb8 17.Rb1 Be6 18.Bxe6
fxe6 19.Qd3 Nfd7 20.h4 e5 21.h5 exd4**

22.Bxd4 e5

An "all or nothing" move; if Black's attack doesn't succeed, then White's material advantage and better pawn structure will prevail.

**23.Bxb6 Nxb6 24.hxg6 hxg6 25.Qxd6
Qf7 26.Qxc6**

Freeing up the d5–square for the queen or knight in future lines.

**26...Rec8 27.Qb5 Rd8 28.Rhd1 Rdc8
29.Rd3**

Defending f3, as well as preparing to cover a3 after Nxa4.

29...Bf8 30.Nxa4

I decided to take on a4 instead of on e5, since I was worried about opening the long diagonal for Black's bishop, although both are good.

**30...Nxa4 31.Qxa4 Ra8 32.Qb3 Qxb3
33.Rxb3 Rxc2 34.Nc3 Bc5 35.Nd5 Bd4
36.Ka2 Rf8 37.g5**

At around this point, I went below five

minutes; as such, the following moves are rather messy and made the win a lot harder than it should have been.

37...Rg2 38.Nf6+ Kg7 39.Ng4

39.Rb7+ Rf7 40.Rh1 Rxb7 41.Rh7+ Kf8 42.Rxb7+ is a more elegant solution; Black's unpleasant king situation allows White to easily march the a-pawn to victory.

39...Rf7 40.Rh1 Rg3 41.Nf6 Rgx5

Here, I almost played Rh7+ and Rb6#. Except, the bishop covers b6. That was a near-disaster.

**42.Ne8+ Kg8 43.Rb8 Rg2 44.Nc7+ Kg7
45.Ne8+ Kg8 46.Nd6+ Rf8 47.Rh8+
Kxh8 48.Rxf8+ Kg7 49.Rf7+ Kh6
50.Nc4 g5 51.a4 Rf2 52.Rf5 Rg2 53.a5
g4 54.fxg4 Rxg4 55.Nxe5 Rxe4 56.Nd3
Re3 57.Nc1**

And after 35-ish more moves, I succeeded in earning the full point.

1–0



Vihan Dudala (1295) – Lucas Liu (1602) [D12]
 Washington Challenger's Cup
 Seattle, WA (R5), October 23, 2021
[Vihan Dudala]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6

This is typically the most popular response for Black known as the Slav Defense and is considered to be very solid for Black.

3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 Bf5!?

This is inaccurate. The right choice of move is e6 for Black. The bishop should ideally stay inside the pawn structure to keep b7 protected.

5.e3

I missed an opportunity here. White is better with the following variation: 5.cxd5 cxd5 (5...Nxd5 6.e3) 6.Qb3! White gets the advantage of at least a pawn to grab if played correctly. It's hard for Black to keep d5 and b7 protected at the same time. 6...Qc7 (6...b6 7.e4 dxe4 8.Ne5 e6 9.Bb5+ Nbd7 10.Bg5; 6...Qd7 7.Ne5 Qc8 8.Nxd5) 7.Nxd5

5...e6 6.cxd5

Another option for me was to just continue to keep the tension and play Bd3 immediately. 6.Bd3 Bg6 7.0-0 Be7 8.Ne5 just continuing to keep the tension and not trade anything first.

6...cxd5 7.Bb5+ Nbd7 8.0-0 Bd6 9.h3 0-0 10.Bd3 Bg6 11.Bxg6 fxg6

Not sure if this recapture was best; it leaves a weak backward pawn on e6 that could become a target later. It's usually better to recapture towards the center and minimize the number of pawn islands you get in a standard middlegame. 11...hgx6

12.Nb5?!

This was probably inaccurate. Black

could have retreated ...Bb8 and followed through with ...a6. The knight doesn't accomplish anything on the b5-square. 12.Qd3 Nb6 13.Bd2 Rc8 14.Rac1 just completing development.

12...Nb6?!

Giving up the bishop-pair, maybe the variation below is a better continuation. 12...Bb8 13.Bd2 a6 14.Nc3 b5

13.Nxd6 Qxd6 14.b3 Ne4 15.a4

Threatening Ba3 (skewer).

15...Qc7 16.Ba3 Rfe8 17.Rc1 Qd8 18.Ne5 Nd7 19.Nxd7

Couldn't see what else to do. Since Black had the backward pawn on e6, I figured that this would be a better endgame for White anyway.

19...Qxd7 20.Bc5?!

My original idea was to invite Black to take my bishop on c5 and prepare to double up my rooks. However, after reviewing the game later I realized that a better continuation was to simply kick the knight out with f3 and complete development. 20.f3 Nf6 21.Qd3 Rec8 22.Rc3 Rxc3 23.Qxc3 Rc8 24.Qd2.

20...b6 21.Ba3

Lost a tempo.

21...e5 22.dxe5 Rxe5 23.Qd4

Now Black has a weak d5-pawn that can be targeted.

23...Rae8 24.Rc2 Qf5 25.f4?

A mistake; the better way to prepare this idea was with Rc7 first, followed by f4. 25.Rc7!! Qf6 (25...h6 26.f4 R5e6 27.Qxg7#) 26.Rxa7

25...Ng3

This leads to a lot of complications which

is what eventually lead my opponent to blunder a few moves later.

26.fxex5 Qxf1+ 27.Kh2

Black has to lose material.

27...Ne2 28.Qxd5+ Kh8 29.Rxe2!

My idea was to prepare Qf7 with the strong possibility of setting up mate via Bf8 or alternatively get my e5-pawn going.

29...Qxe2 30.Qf7



Position after 30.Qf7

30...Rc8?!

A blunder that leads to forced mate in five. With correct play, Black can still force a draw, but it is probably not easy to find. 30...Rg8 31.e6 (31.Bf8 Qxe3 32.Bxg7+ Rxc7 33.Qf8+ Rg8 34.Qf6+ Rg7 35.Qf8+ Rg8 36.Qf6+ Rg7 37.Qf8+) 31...Qxe3 32.e7 Qe5+ 33.Kg1 Qe1+ 34.Kh2 Qe5+ 35.Kg1 Qe1+ 36.Kh2 and we have repetition.

31.Bf8!!

Mate is cannot be stopped. My opponent resigned here. If Black continued to play here, it would have concluded in the following line: 31...Qxg2+ 32.Kxg2 Rc2+ 33.Kf3 Rf2+ 34.Kxf2 b5 35.Qxg7#

1-0

2021 Challenger's Cup Scholastic

By Josh Sinanan

The Challenger's Cup Scholastic was held online via Chess.com on Sunday November 7, 2021. Scholastic chess players participated remotely from throughout the Pacific Northwest, including the cities of Sammamish, Bothell, Kenmore, Bellevue, Seattle, Auburn, Redmond, Issaquah, Kirkland, Yarrow Point, Mercer Island, Shoreline, Portland (Oregon), and Lake Oswego (Oregon). The event was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation and directed by WCF Adult Chess Director Rekha Sagar. A total of 65 players competed across four sections: K-3 U800, K-3 Open, 4-8 U1000, and 4-12 Open.

Congratulations to the amazing chess warriors! Our vibrant chess community continues to thrive in both the online and in-person arenas. Special recognition is due to our Amazon gift card and *Northwest Chess* subscription extension prize winners:

Section	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place	5th Place
K-3 U800	Deeksha Shankaranand + Stas Black: Co-Champions!		Jamey Francis	Aiden Wu	Jonathan Lan
K-3 Open	Odbayar Yondon, Vincent Liu, + Vishnu Mohan: Co-Champions!			Alfred Su	Michael Zhang
4-8 U1000	Ishan Kedarisetty	Gaurav Godse	Aaroh Kandhare	Ishan Nair	Manasvi Nalasani
4-12 Open	Ojas Kandhare	Selina Cheng	Mark Wang	Michael Xiong	Nikhil Ramkumar

Why Does Losing Sting So Much?

Nobel Ang

“Chess, like love, like music, has the power to make men happy.”—Siegbert Tarrasch.

I think Tarrasch is only half-right: Chess has the power to make me happy, but it also has the power to make me very sad and angry when I lose. Or perhaps, being the chess great that he was, Tarrasch simply never had to suffer the pain of defeat as much as mere mortals like me.

Whatever the case may be, losing is an important part of every chess player's life. There's nothing really interesting about winning or drawing; when you win (or salvage a draw from a losing game, which is also a kind of winning), there is this palpable sense of dignity, joy,

and ascendant power that suffuses your entire being, along with a general feeling that all is well with the world. The only possible exception to this would be if you were to suddenly die when you are about to win. This actually happened: At the 2009 Acropolis International in Greece, Nikos Karapanos had the white pieces against Israeli GM Dan Zoler. Karapanos had steadily developed a winning position after sacking his queen and was poised to play the winning move when he had a heart attack. His opponent, who happened to be a physician, tried to revive him, but Karapanos died before the ambulance arrived. Hmmm... turns out that sometimes you lose even when you win. Talk about sudden death.

(Oops... too soon?)

But I digress. My apologies. Let's get back to the topic of losing proper. As I was saying, there's generally nothing very interesting to be said about winning or drawing. To paraphrase Tolstoy, all winning chess games are alike, but each losing chess game is losing in its own unique way.¹ For starters, if you are at least a somewhat-serious chess player, you would know that losing is often much more instructive than winning: As the chess adage goes, you learn more from your losses than your wins. Then again, maybe not. Garry Kasparov, the first world champion to lose to a machine, once said that “Losing can persuade you to change what doesn't need to be changed and winning can convince you everything is fine even if you are on the brink of disaster.”

All of this is well and good. But we still need to answer the question: Why does losing sting so much? It might just be that losing at anything sucks, so losing at chess is just one species of suckiness, nothing more. But this can't be it: I lose at Monopoly or Yahtzee, and I just shrug it off. Maybe it's because I'm not playing for money, so nothing very much is at stake when I lose at these games. But this also can't be it: I don't play chess for money either, and it still sucks, even if I lose at so-called casual games.

A very wise friend of mine recently suggested that maybe it's because there is no luck or external factors in chess. Unlike other board or card games, there are no dice rolls or lucky (or unlucky) hands in chess. Everybody starts out with the same 16 pieces on 64 squares. There are also no external factors in chess; if you lose, you can't complain that the ball wasn't properly inflated, or that the floor of the playing venue was slippery etc.

¹ At the risk of being pedantic, I will point out that at the beginning of his novel *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy proclaims that “Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” I don't know if Tolstoy played chess, but I suspect that he will agree with me, not least because chess games and families and tribes have much in common, as we shall see shortly.



Nobel Ang. Photo credit: Jeff Price.

So if you lose, you have nobody else to blame but yourself.

I think my friend is wrong, wise as he otherwise is. First, as any player who is being honest with himself will attest, there is luck in chess. It can happen in a few different ways. Maybe your opponent plays into a line that you happen to have spent a lot of time studying; I once beat a much higher-rated player this way. Or maybe you make a brilliant move at a key moment in a game, but for the wrong reasons: Perhaps the move that you thought was just an okay, non-losing move actually sets you up for a devastating tactic (!!). Or, much less interestingly, it can just happen that your opponent blunders a winning position, allowing you to get back into the game (I have also beat a higher-rated player this way. Now you know how inflated my rating is 😊).

There are also external factors. Even though there is no chess equivalent of Deflate Gate, not all chess pieces and boards are equally conducive to good play to all players. If you are of a certain age and you play online chess, you will probably agree that it is easier on the eyes to play on a board with muted square colors (rather than, say, green and orange squares) and pieces with the standard Staunton design (rather than, say, Gothic design). And here's another externality: If you haven't slept well the night before, the quality of your play will most likely be affected.

So, there is luck and external factors in chess. But would it sting less if I were to blunder away a game on two hours of sleep while playing on a green-and-orange chess board with Gothic pieces?

Honestly... probably not. That would be cold comfort. ("Look, you were unfairly disadvantaged. If you had slept better, and the board weren't so green-and-orange and the pieces weren't so Gothic, you would definitely have crushed him!")

So, the presence or absence of luck or externals has nothing to do with the sting of losing at chess. But my friend may still be right about one thing: I think he is onto something when he says that the sting of losing comes from this awareness that you have nobody to blame but *yourself*. I think losing at chess stings because, for better or for worse, I am invested in the outcome of the game, and in the game of chess itself. Or, to put it another way, being good (or at least not horrible) at chess has become a part of whom I see myself.

In an interview on the *Perpetual Chess Podcast*, entrepreneur and US Chess Master James Altucher puts the points this way (I'm paraphrasing):

"We are all primates, and since the beginning of primate-kind, primates have belonged to tribes where each member is ranked from alpha to omega according to some metric or other. Being humans, we have the additional ability to choose our own tribe. Since I am a chess enthusiast, I have basically chosen the Chess Tribe. Because I have chosen to be in the chess tribe, I care deeply about how I do at chess, and base my self-worth and maybe even self-identity on how I stack up relative to other chess players (i.e., other members of the tribe). If I lose a tournament game, I don't just lose rating points, I actually move down

the tribe's totem pole. I am being pushed to the outer edges of the tribe by the tribe's alpha males, where I am more likely to be eaten by wolves."

I think Altucher's story may be the best explanation of the sting of losing at chess I've heard in a long time (or maybe ever). Maybe I shouldn't take things too literally, but I wonder who the wolves are that Altucher is talking about. Underrated kids, maybe? But joking aside, this actually makes a lot of sense: If I lose to a kid (especially a lower-rated one, as opposed to, say, James Wei), I am basically being pushed down the totem pole by a supposedly more junior and less alpha member of the tribe. And then I get the feeling that whether or not I am even allowed to remain in the tribe basically depends on his good graces.

Thank God for US Chess rating floors: I think they were designed by the creators of the system as a kind of guardrail to protect players from tumbling into the wilderness, where wolves (and lower-rated kids) await...

Hmmm... this is a very interesting topic. There is so much more that can be said. For instance, I sometimes meet older players who are playing at their rating floor and seem content to be there. Losing to younger players doesn't seem to bother them too much. Are they putting on an act? I wonder.

But I can't really think more about these things right now. Being a primate, I have other primate needs to see to at the moment. Maybe there will be a sequel to this article, we'll see. Meanwhile, perhaps I'll see you at the next ~~tribal event~~ chess tournament?

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Interview With The Sinquefields

Karen Schmidt

Recently I received an interesting email out of the blue from the Public Relations team for Rex and Jeanne Sinquefield of Saint Louis. The couple were inducted into the World Chess Hall of Fame on October 5, 2021. I was invited to interview them for a story in *Northwest Chess*. When I asked their publicist how they happened to find me in Seattle, it turned out that they had read my review of the Netflix series *The Queen's Gambit* in *The Seattle Times* last winter (November 30, 2020 online and December 4, 2020 in print).

The Sinquefields have been instrumental in building up a phenomenal chess program in Saint Louis. They established the Saint Louis Chess Club in late 2007 and moved the World Chess Hall of Fame from Miami to Saint Louis. Perhaps as a result of their efforts, nine out of twenty recent national champions have been from Saint Louis. I watched the Induction Ceremony online and have great admiration for the Sinquefields—who almost singlehandedly have revived chess in the United States. The remarks at the ceremony by Garry Kasparov were especially moving.

My goal is to write a human interest story here, rather than a report on the Hall

of Fame induction ceremony. Working together with two *Northwest Chess* board members, we came up with about a dozen questions for the couple. I found their answers to be fascinating, and I hope you will too.

Rex learned to play chess from his Uncle Fred at the age of 13. In fact, he beat him in the second game they ever played, and he said he still feels guilty about that. Jeanne noted that chess was always Rex's hobby, but she decided to learn the game better once they founded the Saint Louis Chess Club.

When asked what inspired them to start the Saint Louis Chess Club, Rex replied, "When I retired and moved back to Saint Louis, I met an artist named Bill Smith. During our conversations, I mentioned that I'm a chess player. He suggested that I meet his uncle Bob, who was also a chess enthusiast. I ended up meeting Bob Jacobs—national master and correspondence international master—and he connected me with the chess community in Saint Louis. After a nice dinner with a dozen or so chess players and organizers in late 2007, I decided Saint Louis needed a permanent club."

Rex went on to explain: "At the time, there were a few loosely-organized clubs

in the area; some met at bookstores, others at area libraries, but Saint Louis hadn't seen a permanent club since the days of the Capablanca Club in the 1970s. With its rich history of chess (Remember, the first world championship was held partly in Saint Louis in 1886!) I decided Saint Louis needed a permanent club again."

Jeanne worked with the Boy Scouts of America to create a chess merit badge. The chess merit badge is one of the most-awarded badges not required for Eagle Scout. To date, nearly a quarter of a million scouts have earned the chess merit badge. When the Scouts started allowing girls to join, the Saint Louis Chess Club hosted the first merit badge workshop and awarded some of the first chess merit badges to girls in the Scouts. Jeanne also wrote a free book, *Learn to Read and Write Chess*, while they hosted some of the strongest tournaments in American history.

When asked, "What is your fondest memory from the U.S. Championships hosted by the Saint Louis Chess Club?" Rex replied, "Wow—there are so many. I fondly remember when Fabiano won the U.S. Championship in 2016. Also, all the years that Irina Krush won the U.S. Women's Championship."

Rex didn't start playing in tournaments until he was an adult. He played tournament chess from 1973 until the mid-1980s. He took a hiatus from chess while they raised their family and started Dimensional Fund Advisors (DFA) in Chicago.

I asked the couple if they have any popular outdoor areas in St. Louis where people gather to play casual chess—similar to Westlake Park in downtown Seattle. They have seven nice concrete chess tables outside the Saint Louis Chess Club where locals regularly play chess. They even purchased propane heaters to extend the outdoor season. Additionally, they donate chess tables to parks in the area—they've coined them their "Chess Pocket Parks." They recently installed two more this year, bringing their total to seven parks. When the weather cooperates, they also send chess instructors to all of these parks to encourage folks to stop for a game or two. (Pacific Northwest: Take



note of these ideas and implement them in your city!)

Rex was always a fan of Bobby Fischer's chess. In fact, he met Bobby once on a flight to Indonesia. It was just before Fischer was to play Anatoly Karpov for the world championship. Rex told me, "I gave Bobby some encouraging words and politely walked away." Not many of us can say that!

Once they moved the World Chess Hall of Fame to Saint Louis, many folks came out of the woodwork with interesting bits of chess history. Rex started collecting chess ephemera in the early 2010s. He now has the largest collection of Bobby Fischer ephemera in the world. He obtained the Fischer collection from an auction.

When I asked about "favorite chess player of all time," Rex replied, "I'd have to say Bobby Fischer. He was a trailblazer in chess, working primarily alone, while he defeated the juggernaut Soviet hegemony—all backdropped by the cold war."

Rex and his wife, Jeanne, met at the Judo Club at the University of

Chicago. They have three children and worked together at DFA, where Jeanne ran the trading department. I asked the Sinquefelds whether they thought it was a good idea for married couples to both play chess. (Kind of a weird question, but one I find interesting...) They believe that everyone also needs their own individual hobbies but observed that it seems to work well for lots of couples. When they've hosted major events at the Saint Louis Chess Club, many married couples—both of whom play chess professionally—have participated either as players or coaches for their spouse. In the early 2010s, Alex Yermolinsky played in the U.S. Championship while his wife, Camilla Baginskiate, played in the U.S. Women's Championship in the next room.

My next question was: "If you could change one thing about the chess world, what would it be?" Rex responded, "The lack of major sponsorship. Many other sports, like tennis or golf, attract hundreds of millions of dollars each year in sponsorship. Even nontraditional sports and competitions like poker and billiards are able to raise tens of millions each year. Chess lags behind, but we work

hard to increase prize funds and provide resources for chess tournaments of all scales. Since the chess club's inception, we've awarded more than nine million dollars in our major events."

I decided to wrap up the interview with a couple quirky questions designed to get to know the couple better on a personal level. When asked what books were on Rex's bedside table, he told me that he is reading a biography about Ulysses S. Grant and a book titled *The Emmaus Code* at the moment.

As for the best piece of advice he was ever given, Rex answered that this goes back to his days in the seminary. He was stressing out about all the work required for one of the courses, when a priest gave him very good advice: "Don't give a course anything more than it's worth." He has followed that advice throughout his life—how much effort and energy is a particular problem worth?



And finally, I asked Rex if there was anything else he would like to say to *Northwest Chess* players. He answered, "Keep playing chess!" Excellent advice which we should all follow.





Seattle Chess Club Tournaments


Address
7212 Woodlawn Ave NE
Seattle WA 98115
Info
www.seattlechess.club
Addresses for Entries
SCC Tnmt Dir
2420 S 137 St
Seattle WA 98168
 ---or---
www.seattlechess.club

December 4 **SCC Novice**
Format: 4-SS. Open to U1200 and UNR. **TC:** G/75; d5.
EF: \$15 by 11/29, \$20 at site. (-\$2 SCC mem., -\$1 mem. other NW dues-req'd CCs). **Prizes:** SCC membership(s).
Reg: 9-9:45a.m. **Rds:** 10-12:45-3:30-6. **Byes:** 1 (Rd 3/4-commit at reg.). **Misc:** US Chess memb. req'd. NS, NC.

 **December 5** **Holiday Tornado**
Format: 4-SS. **TC:** G/50; d10. **EF:** \$18 (+\$7 fee for non-SCC). **Prizes:** 1st 35%, 2nd 27%, Bottom Half 1st 22%, 2nd 16% (\$10 per EF to prize fund). **Reg:** 10:30-11:15 a.m.
Rds: 11:30-1:50-4:10-6:30. **Byes:** 1 (Rd 3/4-commit at reg.). **Misc:** US Chess, WCF; OSA. NS, NC.

 **December 11** **Saturday Quads**
Format: 3-RR, 4-plyr sec. by rtg. **TC:** G/120;d5. **EF:** \$9(+\$7 fee for non-SCC). **Prizes:** Free quad entry. **Reg:** 9-9:45 a.m. **Rds:** 10:00-2:15-6:30. **Misc:** US Chess, WCF; OSA. NS, NC.

SCC Fridays

One US Chess-rated round per night (free to SCC members, \$5 per night for others) normally played at a rate of 40/90 followed by 30/60. Drop in for any round!

Package Express (G/50, inc. 10): 12/3, 10, 17.

Closed (Trim the tree!): 12/24.

Patzer's Challenge: 12/31.

January Thaw: 1/7, 14, 21, 28.

Cabin Fever: 2/4, 11, 18, 25.



Time for SCC Board election

Typically, elections are held on the first Friday in May, but COVID restrictions curtailed in-person activities in 2020 and 2021. The SCC did, however, hold an online election in October 2020. The board has decided to call an election on **Friday, January 7th at 7:30 p.m.**

Seattle City Championship

January 15-16

A five-round Swiss with a time control of G/100;+30.

The prize fund of **\$585** is based on 22 paid entries, 3 per prize group.

a Northwest Grand Prix event

First	\$150	Class C	\$50
Second	\$100	Class D	\$45
Expert	\$65	Class E & Under	\$40
Class A	\$60	Unrated	\$20
Class B	\$55		

EF: \$44 (\$33 for SCC members) if received by 1/10. Thereafter, \$56 (\$44 for SCC members).

Reg.: Sat. 9-9:45am. **Rds:** Sat. 10-2:45-7:30, Sun. 11-4.

Byes: 2 (Sun. rds, commit at reg.). **Misc.:** US Chess & ICA/OCF/WCF memb. req'd. NS. NC.

The 2021 Russell “Rusty” Miller Memorial Northwest Chess Grand Prix

Murlin Varner, using all my fingers and toes

Five events went into the database in October, all of them OTB, and all of them in Seattle. This resulted in many changes to the Washington contest and only two changes (both due to ratings increase) among the “Others.” These events included three at the Seattle Chess Club (Quads, Tornado and Hi-Roller Octagonals), and two sponsored by the Washington Chess Federation (Washington G/60 Championship and Washington Challenger’s Cup). The Challenger’s Cup was a 2x event, doubling every player’s points.

For the last few months, there has been little movement in the “Others” category, as events moved back to over-the-board. This continued into November as the three scheduled events were all OTB. These were the SCC Extravaganza and the SCC Quads, both held at the Orlov Chess Academy in the Green Lake area of Seattle, and the Washington Class Championships held in Bellevue on Thanksgiving weekend. The latter has/had a 5x multiplier, which means a player was guaranteed at least ten points just for playing out their schedule, and five points for every win. But still, other than those who like to travel, opportunities for people not residing in Washington are few. This will change in December.

Online play comes back in December. It may be the last time, or it may become a regular, occasional feature. I don’t know and I was too lazy to ask. But maybe. Regardless, online play is available in December, giving those out-of-Washington players a last chance to put points on the Grand Prix leaderboard. First is the *Northwest Chess* Winter Open, to raise funds for our magazine. It is being held on December 11, through Chess.com. The second online event is the Washington Winter Classic, held December 26-27, also on Chess.com. This one is our last multiplier event of the year, with double points.

OTB is not forgotten in December. As a matter of fact, it gets better! There is the SCC Tornado on December 5, to wrap up the year’s OTB play in Washington, but wait, there’s more! The *Northwest Chess* Grand Prix goes interstate in December, with two events in Boise. These are being held at the Chandra Alexis Chess Club, and they offer both US Chess ratings and FIDE ratings. Attendance is limited to 12 players, and registration is in advance. There is a \$300 prize fund, based on ten players. FIDE titled players get free entry. I think it is fair to say that almost everybody playing in these events will be enhancing their status on the “Others” leaderboard. (For more information, look elsewhere in this magazine and at the Chandra Alexis Chess Club website.) These events are slated to continue into the New Year; whether we end up with an Idaho competition depends on if we can get more than one organizer to join in. Meanwhile, play, play, play!

All data is current through October 30.

Washington			Other Places			
last	first	pts.	last	first	state	pts.
Masters			Masters			
1	Perez Ignacio	73.5	1	Guha Mitrabha	IND	83.0
2	Levine Joseph	31.0	2	Talukdar Rohan	CAN	70.0
3	Porter Ryan	28.0	3	Lenderman Aleksandr	NY	51.0
4	Pupols Viktors	19.0	4	Kulkarni Ojas	CA	42.0
5	Shubin Daniel	10.0	5	Shahinyan David	ARM	30.5
Experts			Experts			
1	Chang Eddie	42.0	1	Jorajuria Mendoza Algol	MEX	22.0
2	Vijayakumar Advait	41.0	2	Tang Austin	OR	12.0
3	Bell Harry	31.0	3	Guha Eshan	NJ	11.0
4	Jiang Brandon	24.0	4	Andrysco Marc	OR	10.0
5	Whale Nicholas	20.0	5	Tripodi Matthew	NJ	8.0
Class A			Class A			
1	Nicoski Aaron M	79.0	1	Vega Isaac	OR	41.0
2	Razmov Valentin N	49.5	2	Ingram Richard	CAN	38.0
3	Vemparala Nikash	44.0	3	Murray David E	OR	18.0
4	Ackerman Ryan	42.0	4	Hosford Michael J	OR	11.0
5	Two tied at	31.0	5	Kodharapu Ishaan	OR	10.0
Class B			Class B			
1	Willy Stephen	29.0	1	Le Hung	OR	10.0
2	Wang Felicity	24.5	2	Beauchet Pierre-Hadrien	OR	9.0
3	Lopez Francisco J	23.5	2	Korda Christopher J	FL	9.0
4	Badillo David	23.0	2	Walquist Elaine	OR	9.0
5	Szeto Sophie	22.0	5	He Justin S	TX	8.0
Class C			Class C			
1	Cheng Edward	58.5	1	Vasey Daniel	OR	35.0
2	Suess Wade	42.0	2	Rodriguez-Melendez Mauricio	OR	17.0
3	Karthikeyan Harishkumar	39.0	3	Wei Brian	OR	13.0
3	Hamlett James M	39.0	4	Kypriotakis Kyriakos	OR	11.0
5	Zhu Jamie Z	32.0	5	Two Tied at		10.0
Class D and below			Class D and below			
1	Razmov Gabriel	63.5	1	Hack Don	CAN	53.5
2	Cheng Selina	59.0	2	Krzykawski Tomasz	OR	20.0
3	Ruff Lois A	53.5	3	Priest Liam H	OR	14.0
4	Devadithya Hiruna	46.0	4	Chang Adelbert	CA	7.0
5	Zhang Michelle	44.0	5	Winter Gordon	CA	4.0
Overall standings						
1	Nicoski Aaron M	79.0	1	Guha Mitrabha	IND	83.0
2	Perez Ignacio	73.5	2	Talukdar Rohan	CAN	70.0
3	Razmov Gabriel	63.5	3	Hack Don	CAN	53.5
4	Cheng Selina	59.0	4	Lenderman Aleksandr	NY	51.0
5	Cheng Edward	58.5	5	Kulkarni Ojas	CA	42.0
6	Ruff Lois A	53.5	6	Vega Isaac	OR	41.0
7	Razmov Valentin N	49.5	7	Ingram Richard	CAN	38.0
8	Devadithya Hiruna	46.0	8	Vasey Daniel	OR	35.0
9	Vemparala Nikash	44.0	9	Shahinyan David	ARM	30.5
9	Zhang Michelle	44.0	10	Bernadskiy Vitaliy	UKR	23.0
11	Chang Eddie	42.0	10	Dhulipalla Bala C P	IND	23.0
11	Ackerman Ryan	42.0	12	Jorajuria Mendoza Algol	MEX	22.0
11	Suess Wade	42.0	12	Sharikov Alexander	RUS	22.0
14	Vijayakumar Advait	41.0	14	Aleksandrov Aleksej	BLR	21.5
15	Karthikeyan Harishkumar	39.0	15	Krzykawski Tomasz	OR	20.0
15	Hamlett James M	39.0				

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