

GM Aleksandr Lenderman Tops the 43rd Eastern Open

by Tom Beckman

Tournament Results: 170 players came ready to play in the 5-section, 7-round Eastern Open, held in Bethesda MD over December 27-30, 2016. GM Aleksandr Lenderman scored 6½ points out of 7, drawing only with GM Alexander Shabalov. The decisive game came in round 5 when GM Lenderman downed GM Sergey Erenburg (last year's winner) to take a ½-point lead over the field, which he did not relinquish. GM Alexander Shabalov took clear 2nd with 6 points. Section winners were:

Section	Winners	Score
Open	GM Aleksandr Lenderman	6½
U2200	Alex Jian	5½
U1900	Nicolas Xie	6½
U1600	Theodore Covey	5
U1300	Nikki Khmelnitsky & Prani Gunasekaren	5

Due to the number of fine submissions, it was quite difficult to settle on the winners of the special prizes, the source for this article. The number of special prizes were increased in the 3 categories: Best Played Game/Best Fighting Spirit, Brilliancy, and Opening Innovation. In addition to the main tournament, a one-day Scholastic Tournament drew 40 players in 3 sections.

The Winner's Perspective: GM Aleksandr Lenderman, one of four GMs who competed in the event, won clear first place in the open section for the third time and said he considers the Eastern his "lucky tournament." "I don't win clear first very often but somehow this is just my lucky tournament," said Lenderman, who also won clear first place at the Eastern back in 2009 and 2010. Aleks said he enjoys playing in the Eastern because he has several good friends in the area, including tournament organizer Tom Beckman, GM Larry Kaufman, and one of his students, Carla Naylor.

The Organizer's Perspective: This year, more than 60% of the entrants were scholastic players, over 35% were from out of town, and 50% of the entrants were first-timers at the Eastern Open. The tournament was ably directed by TD's Mike Adkins and Andy Rea. This year I experimented with the Power Move prize where players submit positions with their best move: a good cheapo, tactic, attack, or defense. Then players in their section vote on the submitted positions and moves. Finally, a tournament e-booklet was sent out to all participants containing over 65 annotated and raw game scores, as well as brilliancies and an opening survey.

Featured Games from the 2016 Eastern Open:

QUEENS GAMBIT DECLINED (D30)

GM Aleksandr Lenderman (2658)

GM Alexander Shabalov (2670)

43rd Annual Eastern Open (4)

Bethesda, Maryland, 12.29.16

Notes by GM Aleksandr Lenderman [AL] and GM Alexander Shabalov [AS]

[AL] In this game I'm playing White against GM Alex Shabalov, who historically has been a very tough opponent for me, especially in decisive games. In this point in the tournament, we both have perfect scores (3/3), and I just made sure to be ready for a good fight because Alex Shabalov is always going to create a good fight. And indeed that's exactly what happened :). I decided that my best preparation for this game is to get a good night sleep since Alex Shabalov usually surprises me anyway, and therefore I am not often able to guess his openings.

1.d4

[AS] This game felt like a rematch of our decisive game at the 2016 US Open.

1...d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 a6

[AL] I was happy to see this move, since that meant that I was correct not to prepare for this game :). By the way, this move isn't as silly as it looked. It was played by none other than Magnus Carlsen, along with some other decent players.

[AS] A new strange way to meet Queen's Pawn openings that been popularized lately by one of the top Russian juniors, Fedoseev. Even the world champion, Magnus Carlsen, jumped on the bandwagon recently.

4.e3

[AL] Ultimately I decided to play this move for two reasons: to avoid any kind of Alex's deep preparation, and because GM Peter Svidler mentioned this way of playing when he commentated his game from the Russian Super Finals against GM Vladimir Fedoseev, who used this a6 idea also against him, though it might have been in a slightly different move order. For other ways to play, including 4.cxd5 and 4.Bg5, see the Opening Review.

[AS] This humble move cannot create serious problems for Black as he is getting a favorable version of some Slav lines.

4... Nf6 5.b3

[AL] So now we have transposed into a 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.e3 a6 5.b3 Colle-Zukertort line. I thought that this is a reasonable line for White, since I wasn't sure if a6 is the main move for Black there.

5...c5

[AS] 5... b6 is another good way to proceed for Black.

6.Bb2 cxd4 7.exd4 Nc6 8.Nbd2 g6!?

[AL] Now this was relatively new to me. I was only familiar with Be7 setups or maybe Bd6. I guess that's the plus of playing a semi-useful 3...a6 move and not committing to developing the Bishop on f8 right away.

9.c5?!

[AL] My strategy of gaining space didn't work out too well in the game since Black got a comfortable game as a result. Likely better is 9.g3, so that if Black takes his time building his harmony, I can afford to do the same thing. After 9...b6 10.Bg2 Bb7 11.O-O Bg7 12.Qe2 O-O 13.Rfd1 Rc8 and now either 14.Rac1 or 14.Nf1 yields White active play.

[AS] This is a super-ambitious push. 9.Be2 led to a standard structure with mutual chances.

9...Bg7 10.Rc1 O-O

[AL] After 10...Nh5!? 11.Be2 (11.g3 f6 was also very interesting) 11...Nf4 with a fight.

11.Be2 b6 12.O-O bxc5 13.Rxc5

[AL] Already I made this move not being very happy. I had planned to take 13.dxc5 but then I realized that Black's center will just be way too strong: 13.dxc5 Qc7 14.a3 e5 15.b4 Nh5 or 15...e4 16.Nd4 Ng4 and Black has the initiative. Playing a position like this with White against Shabalov is really asking for it :).

[AS] Forced for White, as after 13.dxc5 Qc7, he cannot stop e6-e5 and faces a tough task to stop Black's central pawns.

13...Bb7

[AL] Or 13...Qb6!?

14.Qa1!?

[AL] At least I am trying to defend the d4 pawn and to connect my Rooks, but I already felt like I was getting outplayed here.

[AS] I thought that delegating your strongest piece to an exile cannot be correct, but it turned out to be an interesting way to continue.

14...Ne4 15.Rc2?!

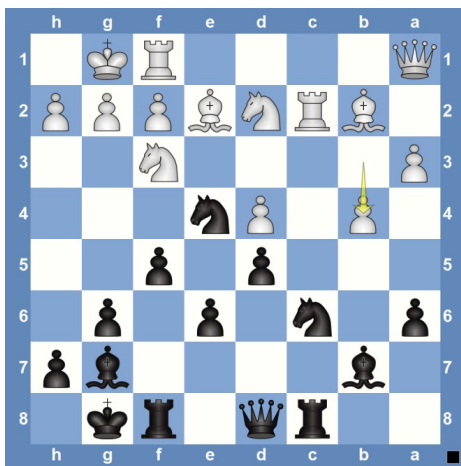
[AL] 15.Nxe4 dxe4 16.Ne5 Nxe5 17.dxe5 Qd2 followed by e3 didn't appeal to me, even though objectively it might have been not so bad for me.

15...f5?!

[AL] A very ambitious move, but I was happy to see this move since I thought now at least I will get a chance to exploit Black's weaknesses if I'm able to beat back Black's attack. The better 15...Rc8 16.Rfc1 Bh6 would have been very unpleasant for me, as Black's pieces are clearly dominating mine.

16.a3 Rc8 17.b4

[AL] To be honest, I miscalculated a bit in the end, but I really wanted to play this move positionally, so I tried hard to make it work. And since I wasn't particularly thrilled with the alternatives anyway, I gambled that it might work. Further, I thought that my opponent might not work out 17...Nxd4 so cleanly, and even if it works for Black, it still looked unclear to me.



17...g5?!

[AL] Better is 17...Nxd4! 18.Bxd4 (if 18.Nxd4?! Rxc2 19.Nxe4? Rxb2) 18...Rxc2 19.Bxg7 (19.Nxe4!? fxe4 20.Bxg7 Rf7! 21.Nd4 Rxe2 22.Nxe2 Rxc7 23.Qe5 Is also a respectable alternative for White, with some compensation for the pawn) 19...Nxd2 20.Nxd2 Rf7! (if 20...Rxd2 21.Bh6 was my point) 21.Bh6 Qh4! This move I missed. After 22.Bd1 Qxh6 23.Bxc2 Qxd2, I'm groveling for a draw.

[AS] Still under impression that White cannot launch a successful defense with the Queen on a1, Black misses a sudden tactical chance with 17...Nxd4! 18.Bxd4 Rxc2 19.Bxg7 Nxd2 20.Nxd2. I stopped my calculation here assuming that 20...Rxd2 fails to 21.Bh6, but the engine continues the line for two more moves 20...Rf7 21.Bh6 Qh4! and Black wins.

18.Nb3 g4 19.Ne1

[AL] Stronger is 19.Nfd2! trying to eliminate the knight on e4 right away. Somehow I thought 19.Ne1 was also strong, getting it to d3, and fighting for the c5 square, but this turned out to be weaker than 19.Nd2.

19...Qg5

[AL] Interesting is 19...Qh4!?

20.Nd3 f4

[AL] A worthwhile option is 20...g3!? 21.hxg3 Nxd4 22.Nxd4 Bxd4 23.Rxc8? (23.Rfc1! spoils black's fun after 23...Be3! 24.Rxc8 Rxc8 (if 24...Bxc8 25.Rc7) 25.Rxc8+ Bxc8 26.Bf3) 23...Nxc3!! Wow! :) What a line!

[AS] I was sure that the game wouldn't last long here as 21.f3 fails to both 21...Ng3 or 21...Nxd4 and Black wins quickly.

21.Qc1!

[AL] This move was important, otherwise I would face a very dangerous attack. Weaker is 21.Nbc5? f3 22.Nxe6 Qh4 or 22...Qe7 is too dangerous for White.

[AS] White's Queen gets back just in time and surprisingly Black's position is just bad now!

21...f3

[AL] If 21...Rf6 then 22.Nbc5 or 22.f3.

22.Qxg5 Nxg5 23.Bd1

[AL] Here I was very happy with my position. I got Queens off the board, and I still kept most of my positional trumps. Black's attack failed perhaps because his bishop on b7 was a bad piece.

23...fxg2 24.Kxg2 Nf3 25.Ndc5 Nd8

[AL] Taking on d4 didn't work as 25...Ncx4 26.Bxd4 or 25...Nfx4 26.Nxd4 Nxd4 27.Bxd4.

26.Be2?!

[AL] This move seems so natural, pressuring a6, activating the Bishop, and next move trying to activate the Rook, but in fact it was inaccurate according to the computer. Better is 26.Rc3! which also threatens Nxb7 but also attacks his very active Knight on f3. So the 2 main defensive moves I missed involved trying to challenge Black's most active piece. I guess that's something I have to keep in mind for future games since it's a pattern already.

26...e5!?

[AL] A very interesting try, activating his passive Knight from d8. Objectively, even stronger is 26...Rc7! since Black is still solid, his next move will be Bc8, and he can keep all his ideas in reserve. After 27.Rfc1 Bh6 is very annoying as we will later see.

27.dxe5 Ne6!

[AS] I was able to find some defensive resources in time trouble, but White is firmly in control.

28.Bxf3

[AL] 28.Bd1!? was possible, but I finally wanted to trade off all the Knights and get rid of a lot of dynamics. However, there are still more dynamics to come:).

28...Rxf3 29.Nd4 Nxd4 30.Bxd4 Rxa3 31.Rfc1 Ba8

[AL] And originally I thought here I should be nearly winning, but then after 15 minutes of thought, I simply couldn't find a knockout blow. No matter where I move my knight, Black has 32...Rc4, a very strong counterplay resource.

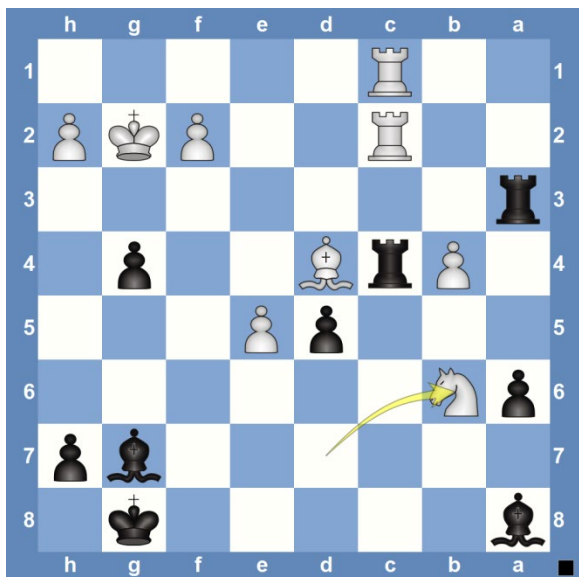
32.Nd7?!

[AL] 32.Rd1 and 32.Kg1 +/- were viable options, but I wanted more.

[AS] Alex Lenderman miscalculates here. Simply 32.Rd1 would leave Black's position pretty grim.

32...Rc4! 33.Nb6

33...???



33...Bh6!!

[AL] Unfortunately I missed this move. 33...Rd3 was also possible. However, I'm much better after 33...Rxd4? 34.Rc8+ Kf7 (or 34...Bf8 35.Nd7 Rf3 36.Rxa8 +/-) 35.R1c7+ Kg6 36.Rg8 and I'll win both his bishops.

[AS] White missed this strong Zwishenzug and should be happy not to lose right away.

34.Be3

[AL] 33...Bh6 was a cold shower for me, so I needed some time to gather myself and find the right way to continue.

[AS] Nearly forced, but perhaps White may survive with 34.Nxc4 dxc4+ 35.Kf1 Bxc1 36.Rxc4! Rd3 37.Rxc1.

34...Rxc2

[AS] Or 34...Bxe3 35.fxe3 Rxc2+ 36.Rxc2 Rc3.

35.Rxc2 d4+ 36.Nxa8 dxe3 37.e6!

[AL] I realized that I still have practical chances here since he has to be a bit careful with my passed pawn and he still has to make move 40 and he's in huge time pressure here.

[AS] This should not give Black too much trouble, but with few seconds left on my clock I made two bad mistakes in a row.

37...Kf8?!

[AL] 37...Bg5 might have been safer.

38. Nc7 Ke7?

[AL] But this is already a serious inaccuracy after which Black's position becomes suddenly nearly critical. Better is 38...Rd3! 39.Rc5 e2 40.Re5 Ke7 41.Rxe2 Bf4 42.Nxa6 Rh3 with a draw, but finding such precise lines with seconds on the clock is very hard to do.

39.fxe3! Rd3!

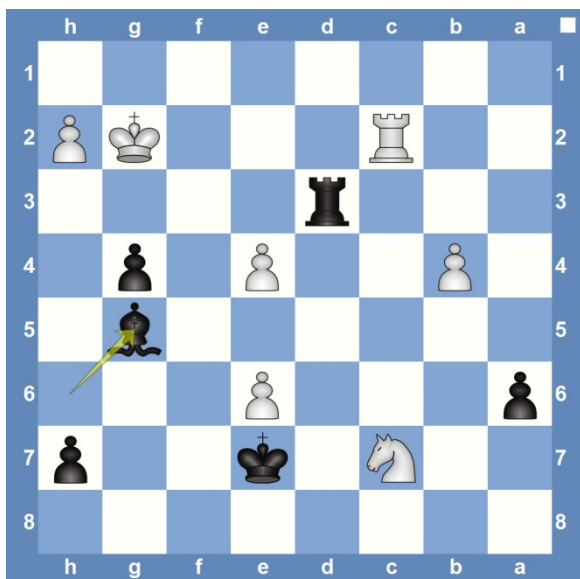
[AL] Alex to his credit gathered himself very well and found the best practical resource instead of just giving in mentally after he realized his mistake. 39...Bxe3 is not good because of 40.Re2! and now Rxe3 is a big threat and Black will have to give up his Bishop after 40...Bg5 (if 40...Kd6 41.e7 Kxe7 42.Rxe3+ Rxe3 43.Nd5+ with decisive advantage) 41.Nd5+ Ke8 (or 41...Kd6 42.e7 Bxe7 43.Nxe7 Ra4 with vague drawing chances, but my guess is White is more likely winning than Black drawing) 42.e7 wins.

40.e4?!

[AL] 40.Rc4 was better.

40...Bg5?!

[AL] And this last move before time control is a mistake. Better is 40...Rd2+! Maybe this would have worked, but it is very hard psychologically to transpose into an endgame unless you're sure it is definitely a draw, especially on the last move before time control. Now 41.Rxd2 Bxd2 42.Nxa6 Kxe6 should lead to a draw though. White's Knight is sort of clumsy and Black has enough counterplay with his active King.



41.Nxa6?!

[AL] Not taking advantage of my chances. Honestly speaking, this tough game took a toll on me and I was starting to get very tired. This tends to happen all the time when I play against Alex Shabalov, since he plays interesting unconventional chess and forces you to solve problems all the time. Better is 41.Rc6! Rd6 42.Rc5! I didn't see this idea, I only looked at 42.Rxd6 which I calculated to a draw after 42.Rxd6 Kxd6 43.Nxa6 Kxe6. Now Black has to play probably "only" moves to possibly survive by the skin of his teeth after 42...h6 (42...Bh4? 43.Rh5) 43.Kg3 Rd4! 44.Kxg4 Rxe4+ 45.Kf5 Rxb4! and this accurate move looks like it makes a draw, despite the high evaluation given by the computer. White will probably not be able to make progress after 46.Nd5+ Kd6 47.Nxb4 Kxc5 48.Nxa6+ Kd6 due to the fortress-like defensive structure. If Shaba had played 45...Re2?!, then I should be winning after 46.Rd5 Kf8 47.Rd7 +-. [AS] My opponent falters at the technical stage. 41.Rc6! would finish this game up.

41...Bf4!

[AS] Now Black gets enough counterplay and finally steers this game toward the draw.

42.Nc7 Bd6

[AL] 42...Bxc7 was also fine for Black after 43.Rxc7+ Kxe6 44.Rxh7 Ke5.

43.b5 Rh3

[AL] Now Black has very good counterplay, and from here on I didn't have any real winning chances anymore, although I did try a bit :).

44.Kg1 g3 45.hxg3 Rxg3+ 46.Kf2 Rh3 47.Nd5+ Kxe6 48.Rc8 Rb3 49.b6 Ke5 50.Re8+ Kd4 51.Ke2 Bc5 52.Re6 h5 53.Kf2 h4 54.Kg2 Rg3+ 55.Kh2 Bxb6

[AL] This move may be unnecessary as 55...Rb3 gives equal chances.

56.Rxb6 with a draw after another 30 moves.

[AL] It was a very interesting tough battle. I was quite happy with this game overall. It wasn't perfect, but compared to my last few games against Alex Shabalov, this game was a big improvement, and I felt like in the battle I was able to match him and also find some interesting ideas.

[TB] This game jointly won the prize for Best Played Game.

FRENCH DEFENSE, TARRASCH VARIATION (C07)

GM Sergey Erenburg (2647)

GM Aleksandr Lenderman (2658)

43rd Annual Eastern Open (5)

Bethesda, Maryland, 12.29.16

Notes by GM Aleksandr Lenderman

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 c5 4.Ngf3

This approach is rather popular today. 4.exd5 is of course the most popular move. See the Opening Survey for two examples of the long variation.

4...cxd4 5.Nxd4 Nc6 6.Bb5 Bd7 7.Nxc6 bxc6

7...Bxc6 8.Bxc6+ bxc6 9.c4 leads to a position which should be equal but Black has to be a bit precise to equalize without many winning chances. It's not my type of position. 7...bxc6 is heading for more dynamic play.

8.Bd3 Qc7!?

And now the point of my opening idea. Well, actually the credit goes to my coach, Giorgi Kacheishvili here, who found it.

9.Qe2 Ne7

The point. I don't want to commit to Bd6 yet, as I want to see first what plan white chooses.

10.O-O Ng6

See the Opening Survey for details on this variation.

11.Nf3 Bd6

It's too early for 11...Nf4?!, since I'm not well-developed yet and the game can open up quickly after 12.Bxf4 Qxf4 13.exd5 cxd5 14.Bb5 +/- 11...Be7 12.c4 dxc4 13.Bxc4 O-O 14.b3 +/- Is comfortable for White.

12.Re1 Nf4

Alternatives are 12...0-0 and 12...Rb8.

13.Bxf4

This honestly surprised me a little bit. I was more worried about white giving up his d3 bishop. But possibly objectively 13.Bxf4 is indeed the best move. Alternatives are 13.Qe3 and 13.Qd1.

13...Bxf4 14.g3 Bd6 15.c4

15.exd5!? cxd5 16.Rac1 maybe was worth a try. Here I would have to play carefully though 16... Qb6 should solve the problems.

15...O-O

15...dxc4 was probably a little bit more accurate after 16.Bxc4 O-O 17.Rad1 Rfd8 18.Rd3 Be8 and Black should have no problems at all here.

16.Rac1

16.exd5 cxd5 17.Rac1 would be awkward for me as I already mentioned earlier after 17...Qb6 18.Qc2! 18.Rxc4 Qb6 19.Rd4.

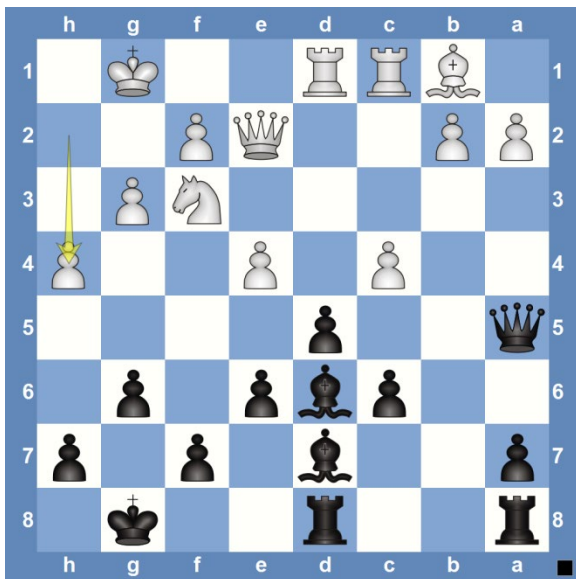
16...Qa5

Again, 16...dxc4 is preferred.

17.Bb1

Somewhat better is 17.exd5 exd5 (17...cxd5 18.a3!? dxc4 19.Bxh7+!? Kxh7 20.Red1 Bc6 21.Rxd6 is strong.) 18.Qc2 g6 19.c5 Bb8 20.Re3 with some pressure for White.

17...g6 18.Red1 Rfd8 19.h4



19...dxe4

19...dxe4 is an important move. When being attacked on the wing, I wanted to make sure I counterattack in the center, and clarify the situation there before I start having problems on the kingside. Objectively, a slow move such as 19...Rab8 should also be OK here.

20.Qxe4?!

This is harmless, after which now I definitely get a comfortable game, where in fact only I can claim to be pressing slightly due to 2 bishops and potentially a stronger center. Besides, I had a big time advantage by now, so already here I was starting to become ambitious. I think White should have tried a Pawn sacrifice, which was something I was slightly worried about, and turned out rightfully so. Better is 20.Rxd6 exf3! 21.Qd3! (21.Qxf3 Be8 is harmless.) 21...Be8 22.Rd1 Rxd6 23.Qxd6. Now Black should equalize, but it is

clear that White has some initiative here for the pawn. Sergey has control of the d-file, and the f3 pawn is hardly a factor right now. Also the c6 pawn is quite weak, and the only role for my Bishop on e8 is defending some weak pawns or squares.

20...Be8 21.Kg2 Bf8 22.Qe2 Bg7 23.b3 c5 24.Be4 Rxd1 25.Rxd1 Rd8

I wanted Rooks off the board so that if White ever opens the h-file, I will never be even close to getting mated there.

26.Rxd8 Qxd8 27.Qe3 Qc7 28.h5 gxh5!

Seems unnatural and Sergey told me he was surprised by this move. However, White doesn't have much of an attack, my Bishop on e8 will now have a very good role, defending a Pawn, and also in the future, this Pawn will advance to h4 when the time is right. In the meantime, it is very hard for White to actually attack my Pawns on h7 or h5, and even if he does, that will disrupt the coordination of his pieces. Also, I will be able to get some active play.

29.Ng5 h6 30.Nf3

30.Nh3 Qe7 31.Nf4 h4 is an example of what I wanted. Here I would just have a healthy extra Pawn.

30...Qe7 31.Kg1 Kf8 32.Qf4 f5 33.Bc2 Kg8 34.Qb8 Kh7 35.Ne5?

And now in huge time pressure, Sergey makes his first real mistake, although I didn't take advantage of it.

35...Bf6?!

This seems like a good move, trying to build harmony, but I missed an even stronger idea. 35...h4! 36.gxh4 (36.g4 h5! 37.gxf5 Qg5+ and White loses a piece by force, and probably soon gets mated too.) 36... Bh5 -/+.

36.Kf1 Kg7 37.Nd3 Bd4 38.Nf4 Bf7 39.Ne2 Bf6 40.Nf4

Sergey made this move with 1 second left on his clock!

40...h4 41.gxh4 Bxh4 42.Nd3 Bf6 43.Qg3+ Kh7 44.Ne5 Be8 45.Qe3 Qd6 46.f4 Bc6?!

A perhaps counterintuitive idea. I wanted opposite colored Bishops since I thought White's King is weaker than mine, and with Queens on the board, opposite colored Bishops can help my attack. However, I underestimated a very strong idea for White counterplay.

47.Nxc6?!

White missed his opportunity. Now I get an endgame which is very pleasant for me to play especially having roughly 1 hour against White's 10 minutes. Better 47.b4! and now either:

- 1) 47...Bxe5 48.fxe5 Qe7 I would have to go for this but here White already has more counterplay than he should've gotten after 49.b5! Bb7 50.Bd1! and White is still defending successfully.
- 2) 47...cxb4?! 48.Qxa7+ Bg7 49.Qf7! I think I missed this move. I was getting very tired, having played a very long game against Shabalov the round before, and now playing already 3 more hours in this game.

47...Qxc6 48.Ke2 Qg2+ 49.Kd1

49. Qf2 Qg4+ 50. Qf3 h5 I wanted to get this position which I thought I would be winning, even though I'm not 100% sure.

49...Qh1+

I decided to repeat a few times, trying to eat some time off Sergey's clock, and also setting a few traps along the way.

50.Kd2 Qc6

I knew I can always return to square one, and since there is no increment, I don't risk anything with that strategy, since he can never gain time.

51.Ke2 a5 52.Bd3

(52.Qf3 Qd6)

52...Qg2+ 53.Kd1 Qc6 54.Ke2 Qd6 55.Qf3 Bd8

Now I found an plan to try to pressure the f4 pawn some more.

56.Qh5 Kg7 57.Qe8 Bf6 58.Bc2 Bb2 59.Qa8 Bc3 60.Qg2+ Kf6 61.Kf3 Bd2 62.Qh2 Kg7 63.Qh4 Kh7 64.a4 Bc1 White lost on time

And here Sergey in a very tough position lost on time. In fact I thought that he was in Zugzwang, as no matter what he does, he weakens his position some more. His best try might be to give up the f4 Pawn with check and hope for some desperate counterplay. But in a practical game, it should be winning for me regardless. I was very happy to win this game being very tired, and also with Black against a very formidable GM who has always been and still is a very difficult opponent for me. After this game I started to believe I had very good chances to do well in this tournament. This game won the 2nd prize for Best Played Game and tied for the Opening Innovation Prize.

**ENGLISH OPENING,
ANGLO-GRUENFELD (A16)**

GM Alexander Shabalov (2670)

WFM Carissa Yip(2307)

43rd Annual Eastern Open (5)

Bethesda, Maryland, 12.29.16

Notes by GM Alexander Shabalov [AS]

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.g3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.Bg2 Nb6 6.Nf3 Bg7 7.d3 e5 8.Be3 O-O 9.O-O Nc6 10.Rc1

After witnessing the demolition of GM Erenburg in a previous round, it is little wonder that White chooses a quiet line without any hope for the advantage.

10...Nd4 11.Nd2 c6 12.b4

Technically a novelty.

12...Re8 13.a4 a5?!

During the game i felt that this gives White control of squares.

14.b5 Bd7 15.bxc6 Bxc6 16.Bxc6 Nxc6?

This is the first real mistake on Carissa's part. 16...bxc6 should have been preferred. This is a counterintuitive decision as Black creates a weakness on c6, but increased light squares control is more important here.

17.Qb3 Nd4 18.Bxd4 exd4 19.Nb5!

This pawn sacrifice was probably underestimated by the young player.

19...Rxe2 20.Nc7

The interesting attempt 20. Ne4 fails to Qd5 21.Qd1 Qa2!)

20...Rb8

Black should have played the more dynamic 20...Rc8 21.Qxb6 Rxd2 22.Qxb7 Qd7 (20... Rxd2? was losing to 21.Nxa8 Nxa8 22.Qxb7 Nb6 23.Rc7).

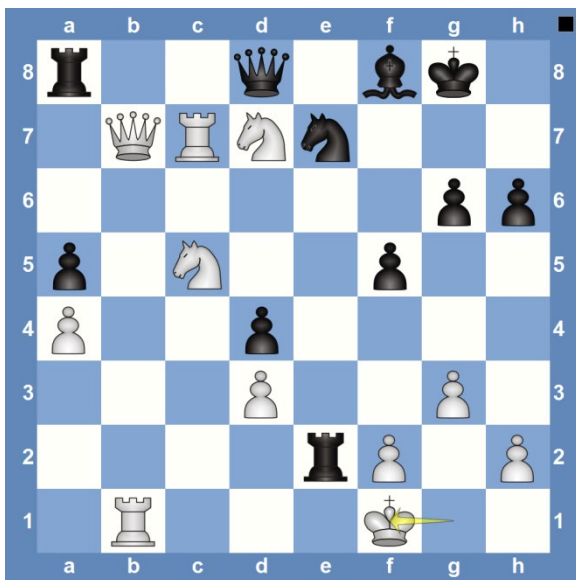
21. Ne4 Nc8?

Here comes the blunder. 21...Nd7 22.Nd5 was unpleasant, but still playable for black.

22.Na6! Ra8 23.Qxb7 Ne7 24.Rc5 h6 25.Rb1

With the funny idea of 25.Nb8.

25...f5 26.Rc7 Bf8 27.Nec5 Re5 28.Nd7 Re6 29.Nac5 Re2 30.Kf1! 1-0



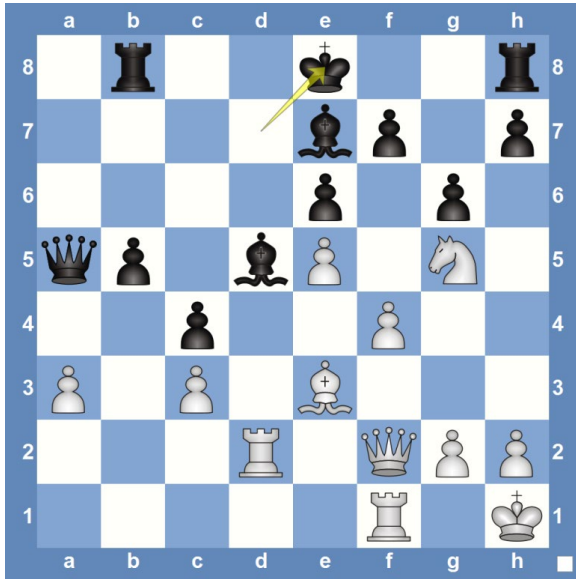
A nice finishing touch. The Rook has to leave e2 and then 31.Nxf8 decides. The final position is a picture of total domination.

Brilliance Prize:

Full Speed Ahead: GM Alex Shabalov(2670)-Sahil Sinha(2309), (7)

Black's King is in the center. White's pieces look powerful, but how to breakthrough?

29.???

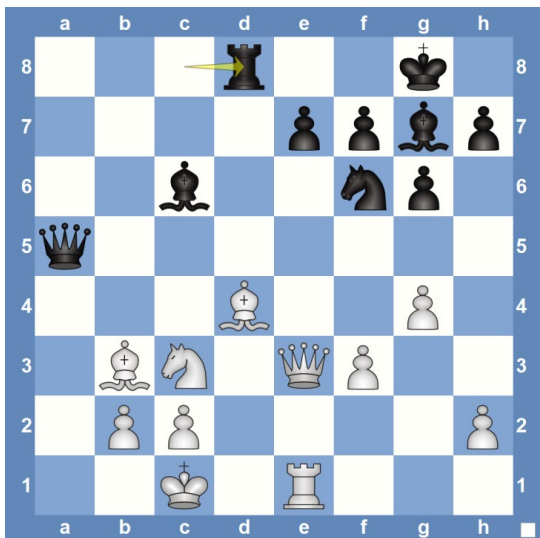


29.f5!! [AS] "As usual, the break in the most protected spot decides." 29.Rxd5 also wins. **29...gxf5 30.Rxd5! h6?** Losing on the spot. Better but hopeless is 30...exd5 31.Qxf5 Qc7 32.Qxf7+ Kd7 33.Qe6+ Ke8 34.Rd1 Rf8 35.Nxh7 Qc8 36.Qxd5 Qf5 37.Nxf8) **31.Nxf7** (or 31.Ne4) **31...Kxf7 32.Rd7** Black is helpless against numerous threats. **32...Rhd8 33.Ra7 Qxc3 34.Qh4 Re8 35.Qf6+ Kg8 36.Qxe6+ Kh8 37.Qxh6+ Kg8 38.Ra6 Rf8 39.Qg6+ Kh8 40.Qh5+ 1-0**

Chess Blindness...Did I Really Miss That? GM Sergey Erenburg(2647)-WFM Carissa Yip(2307), (3)

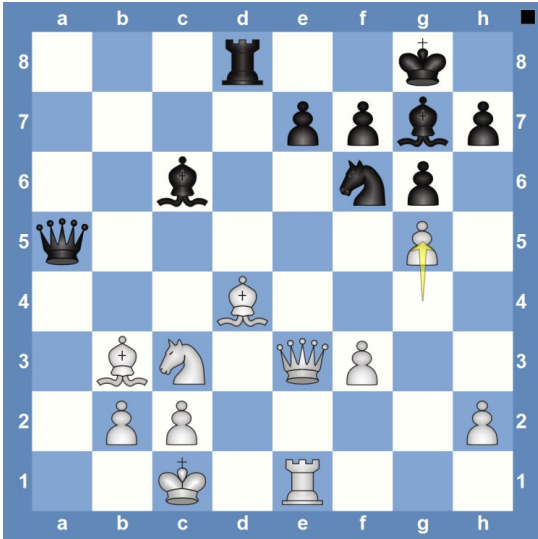
Last year, GM Erenburg breezed through the competition to win the tournament handily. This year, things didn't go so smoothly...

24.???



After outplaying his young opponent in a Yugoslav Dragon Sicilian, Sergey uncharacteristically fails to find the coup de grace. Crushing is **24.Bxf7+ Kxf7** (24...Kh8 is also hopeless) **25.Qe6+ Kf8 26.Qxe7+ Kg8 27.Qe6+ Kh8 28.Bxf6 Qa1+ 29.Nb1**. Instead, GM Erenburg played **24.g5?**.

24...???



And Carissa doesn't miss her chance for glory! She finds **24...Rxd4!! 25.Qxd4?** White's best chance is **25.Bxf7+ Kxf7 26.Qxd4 Qxg5** although Black should still win. **25...Ne4!** Note that this Knight move covers the d2 escape square. And now there are several options, but they all lose:

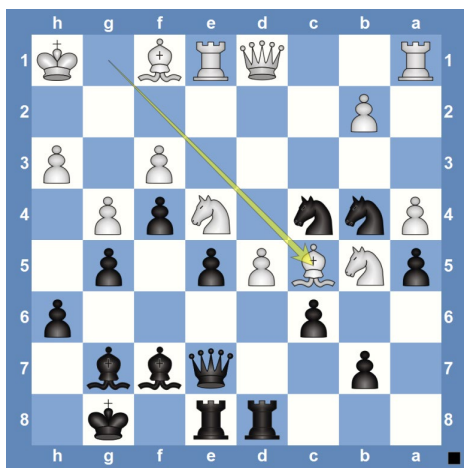
- 1) **26.Qxg7** Played in the game and White's best chance. **26.Qxg7+ Kxg7 27.fxe4 Qxg5+ 28.Kb1 Qd2 29.Re2 Qf4** Better is **29...Qd4**, but this is good enough. **30.Bc4 h5 31.Bd3 Qe5 32.Kc1 g5 33.Kd1 g4 34.Ke1 h4 35.Kf1 Qf4+ 36.Kg1 Qc1+ 37.Kg2 f5 38.h3 Qxb2 39.Nd1 Qe5 0-1**
- 2) **26.Qxe4 Bxe4 27.Rxe4 Qxg5+ 28.Kb1 e6 29.Nd1 Qg1**
- 3) **26.Rxe4 Bxd4 27.Rxd4 Qxg5+ 28.Kb1 Qg1+**
- 4) **26.Qc4 Qxg5+ 27.Kb1 Nd2+**
- 5) **26.Qe3 Bxc3 27.Kb1 Nd2+ or 27.bxc3 Qa1#**

To Sac or Not to Sac, That Is the...Gazorninplat! [Evan Ling\(2089\)-David Bennett\(2231\) \(7\)](#)

In "An Infinite Number of Monkeys" sketch, comedian Bob Newhart imagines that although an infinite number of monkeys given enough time would type out "all the Great Books," someone must check their work to see if they are "turning out good stuff." In the sketch, after reading through much gibberish, one of the monitors exclaims: "Hey Harry, I think this one has got something – "To be or not to be, that is the gazorninplat."

So, should Black sac his Q with **26...Qxc5**, or wimp out with **26...Qd7**? And, without a computer to check, can you really be sure?

26...???



Well, perhaps only Stockfish or Komodo can ferret out the truth. Over the board, with the clock counting down, what to do?

The Wimp: **26...Qd7! 27.Bxc4 cxd5 28.Bxb4 axb4** -/=

The Hero: **26...Qxc5?!! 27.Nxc5 cxb5 28.axb5** and now either:

- 1) **28...Bxd5 29.Qxd5+!** The irony is that only this Queen countersac wins! **29...Nxd5 30.Bxc4 Kf8 31.Nxb7 Rd7** and now White is likely winning, although Black may have chances to hold.
- 2) **28...Ne3?!** As played in the game. **29.Rxe3!** Rather than this strong countersac, White played 29.Qe2? and subsequently lost. **29...fxe3 30.d6! Bd5 31.Ne4 Rf8 32.Be2** (32.Rxa5 Rxd6 +/-) And here the question is, can Black set up a fortress given all of his piece activity... **32...Rf4!** Black doesn't have time for 32...b6 33.Rc1! **33.Rxa5 Bf8 34.Ra7 Bxd6 35.Nxd6 Rxd6 36.Ra8+ Kg7 37.Kg1 Rd7 38.Qc1 Bxf3 39.Qxe3 Nd5 40.Qxe5+ Nf6** and despite a computer score of +2.07, it isn't clear how White can make progress. Stick that in your computer program!

Opening Survey: This year's Eastern Open was rich in opening innovations, and near innovations. As with all the special prizes, it takes two to tango, play well, and in this case, produce interesting opening novelties.

Sicilian, Yugoslav Dragon [B78]:

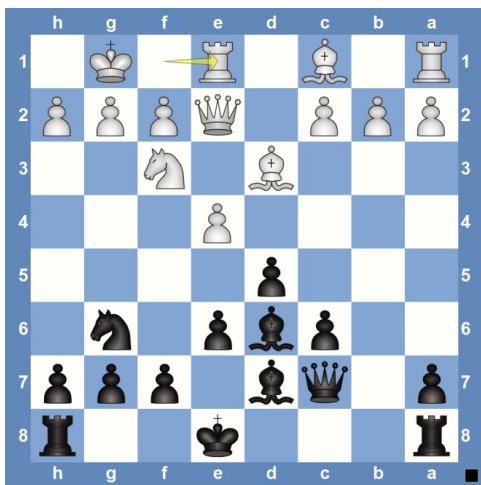
GM Sergey Erenburg(2647)-WFM Carissa Yip(2307) (3): **1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Be3 Bg7 7.f3 O-O 8.Qd2 Nc6 9.Bc4 Bd7 10.O-O Rc8 11.Bb3 Nxd4** The old mainline goes 11...Ne5 12.h4 h5 13.Bg5 Rc5. However, 11...Nxd4 has gained some traction recently, and appears like a good try for equality! I used to play the Dragon...who knew 11...Nxd4 was correct! **12.Bxd4 b5**

- 1) **13.h4** The most common and critical move. **13...a5 14.h5 a4** with a mess **15.Bxf6 Bxf6 16.hxg6 e6! 17.e5! Bg5 18.f4 fxg6 19.Bxe6+ Bxe6 20.fxg5 b4 21.Qxd6 Qxd6 22.Rxd6 bxc3 23.Rxe6 cxb2+ 24.Kxb2 Rf2** with equality if you believe Stockfish!
- 2) **13.a3** Played in the game. **13...a5**
 - a) **14.Rhe1 Bc6 15.h4 b4 16.axb4 axb4 17.Na2 Ra8 18.e5 dxe5 19.Bxe5 Qc8** with a slight edge.
 - b) **14.e5 dxe5 15.Bxe5 b4!** The weaker **15...Bc6?!** was played in the game. **16.Bxf6 Bxf6 17.Ne4 Rc7 18.Nxf6+ exf6 19.a4 Qb8 =**

French Tarrasch [C07]: And here we have 3 games of theoretical interest after **1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 c5:**

GM Sergey Erenberg(2647)-GM Aleks Lenderman(2658) (5): Notes by Lenderman [AL]. **1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 c5 4.Ngf3 cxd4 5.Nxd4** Some people play 5.exd5 here to transpose back into the mainline. **5...Nc6 6.Bb5 Bd7 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.Bd3 Qc7!?** And now the point of my opening idea. Well, actually the credit goes to my coach, Giorgi Kacheishvili, who found it. **8...Bd6** is the more common way to play here. **9.Qe2 Ne7** The point. I don't want to commit Bd6 yet. I want to see first what plan white chooses. Here White has either 10.0-0 or 10.Nf3:

10.O-O Ng6 11.Nf3 Bd6! 12.Re1 and now there are fascinating possibilities:



- 1) **12...Nf4** and now either:
 - a) **13.Bxf4!** This move honestly surprised me a little bit. I was more worried about White giving up his d3 bishop. But possibly objectively 13.Bxf4 is indeed the best move. **13...Bxf4 14.g3 Bd6 15.exd5!?** 15.c4 was played in the game. **15...cxd5 16.Rac1** Maybe was worth a try. Here I would have to play carefully with **16...Qb6 17.c4 dxc4 18.Rxc4 Rd8 19.Ne5 Bxe5 20.Qxe5 O-O 21.a3 Be8 22.Rb4 Qd6** And Black should be close to equal here.
 - b) **13.Qd1 Nxd3 14.Qxd3 f6!?** (14...0-0 15.e5 Be7 16.Ng5 This actually could've been a bit dangerous for me and I was kind of worried about it. Stockfish doesn't see the danger right away but after thinking for a while it starts seeing black's position is something to worry about.) **15.exd5 cxd5 16.Qxd5 0-0 17.Qe4 Rfe8 18.b3 Bc6 19.Qc4 Qd7** Would have been very interesting, with hidden compensation. Black gets 2 Bishops, a strong center and strong pressure along the b and c-files. White doesn't have a clear plan, and I realized that whenever we sacrifice material, but opponent doesn't have a good clear plan to take advantage of it, very often that means there is good compensation for the sacrificed material.
 - c) **13.Qe3 f6!?** (for 13...Nxd3, see 13.Qd1) **14.e5** (14.Bf1 0-0 15.c4 e5) **14...fxe5 15.Nxe5 0-0 16.g3 Nh3+ 17.Kg2 Bxe5 18.Qxe5 Qxe5 19.Rxe5 Nxf2** with a slight edge for Black [TB].
- 2) **12...O-O 13.e5 Bc5!?** (13...Be7 14.h4 f5 15.h5 Nh8 Nh2 +/-) **14.c3 a5 15.h4 h6 16.b3 Ne7 17.Nd4 f5 18.Qf3 Kh8 19.Rb1 Bb6** with a slight edge for White.
- 3) **12...Rb8 13.e5** Is rather pointless for Black, but what does White have after [TB] **13...Be7 14.b3 c5**
 - a) **15.Ng5 0-0 16.c4 dxc4 17.bxc4 Bc6 18.Qh5 Bxg5 19.Bxg5 Rb2 20.Bc1 Rb7 =**

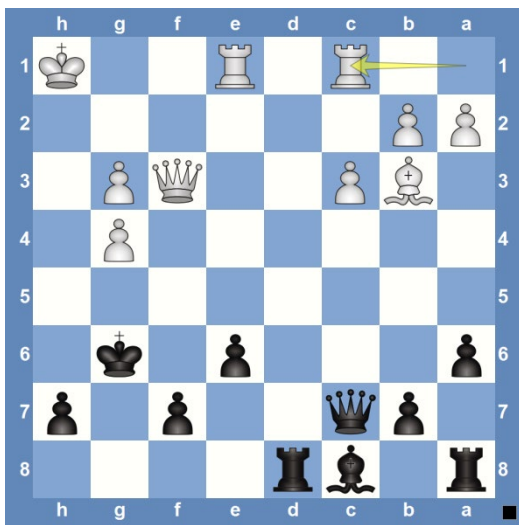
b) 15.c4 0-0 16.cxd5 exd5 17.Bd2 Rfe8 18.Rac1 Qb6 =

c) 15.c3 Bc6 16.Ng5 c4 17.bxc4 dxc4 18.Bxg6 hxg6 19.Qxc4 0-0 20.Qh4 Bxg5 21.Bxg5 Rb2 22.c4 Bb7 is nearly equal

10. Nf3 In another game, my GM opponent played 10.Nf3, and here was the first time I got to execute me and my coach's idea accurately with **10...Ng6 11.e5 f6!** The point. I allowed e5, but since I didn't lose on a tempo, I am able to chip away on his center very quickly, and after a few inaccuracies from my opponent, I already got a much better position out of the opening. **12.Bxg6+ hxg6 13.Qd3?! 13.O-O** Would lead to a normal dynamic position. **13...Kf7 14.Qd4?!** Very strange dubious maneuverings by White with the queen. I had a feeling I should already be a bit better. **14...Qb6!** It makes sense to trade off his active piece, especially since he spend so much time moving it around :). **15.Qf4 Qb4+ 16.Qxb4 Bxb4+ 17.c3 Be7 18.Be3 g5** +/- And later I won without too much trouble against P. Idani at the 2016 World Team Championship.

Vishal Kobla [VK]-Beckman/Shen: 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 c5 4. exd5 Qxd5 5. Ngf3 cxd4 6. Bc4 Qd6 7. O-O Nf6 8. Nb3 Nc6 9. Nbx d4 Nxd4 10. Nxd4 a6 11. Re1 Qc7 12. Bb3 (12.Qe2 is a recent try for an advantage, but Black equalizes with Aagaard's 12...h6!) 12...Bd6 13. Nf5 Bxh2+ 14. Kh1 O-O 15. Nxc7 Rd8 16. Qf3 Kxg7 17. Bh6+ Kg6 18. c3

Vishal Kobla(2180)-Tom Beckman(2055) (3): 18... Nh5! 19. Bc1 Bf4 20. g4 Ng3+ 21. fxc3 Bxc1 [VK] To summarize so far: Following a piece sacrifice by White, Black returned the piece and has a fairly stable position in return. The only nuisance being the king out in the open on g6, so White henceforth attempts to take advantage before the Black king can find safe haven. **22.Raxc1**



[TB] This is the tabiya that all 3...c5 French players must know in order to successfully play this line, and this was my first game. I was relieved that I had recalled everything correctly until here. For some reason, I relaxed too soon and forgot that **22...b6** is necessary and correct with **23.Qe3 Bb7+ 24.Kh2 Qc5** equalizing. In the game, I played **22...b5? 23.Qe3!** (23.Bc2+?! was played in the game, and Black could have equalized.) **23...Bb7+ 24.Kh2 Qe7** (Here Black can't play 24...Qc5 to equalize.) **25.Rf1 Kg7 26.Rf2 Bd5 27.Rcf1 Bxb3 28.axb3 f6** +/-

Vishal Kobla(2180)-Christopher Shen(2229) (5): 18...e5? [TB] This move and 18...Nd5 are what I was afraid of blundering...only 18...Nh5 equalizes. **19.Bc2+ e4** [VK] It is at this move that White must commit to his intentions. The bishop pair becomes extremely strong on such an open board after the R sac:

1) **20.Bxe4 Bxe4 21.Rxe4 Qc6 22.Qe3 Qb5 23.Rh4** [TB] and Black is on life-support without sacrificing a R.

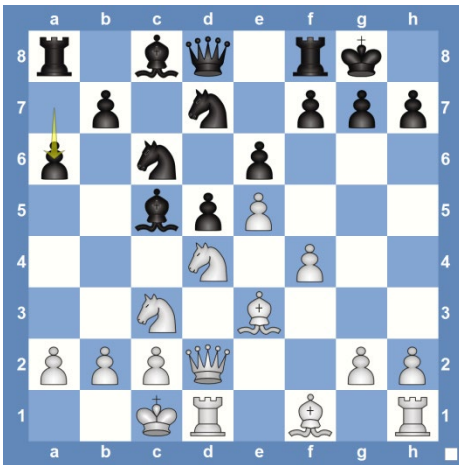
2) **20.Rxe4?! Nxe4 21.Qxe4+**

a) [VK] **21...Kxh6** is another try, where the engine says that a perpetual is the best option for White. I have a feeling that if the engine is left to calculate this position for a few hours, it might find a better continuation. In either case, it's a fairly complicated position.

b) **21...f5? 22.Qh4 Be6** The winning continuation was **23.Re1!** (23.Qg5+ was played in the game with a draw although White had another chance to play Re1 with good winning chances), where I missed the key move after **23...Be5 24.f4 +-** This move happened to slip out of my conscious at the time. Now that I reflect back on it, I find it quite surprising that I missed it, but oh well.

French Steinitz [C11]: GM Larry Kaufman and his opponents produced two games of interest after **1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.f4 c5 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.Be3**

GM Larry Kaufman(2401)-Tom Beckman(2055) (7): went 7...cxd4 The other recommended approach, 7...a6 8.Qd2 b5, was played in another game, although 7...Be7 has been tried on occasion. 8.Nxd4 Bc5 9.Qd2 O-O 10.O-O-O a6 and the battle lines are drawn: White will attack on the K-side, while Black attempts to breakthrough on the Q-side.



11.Nb3 (This is the tabiya for this variation. This move and 11.Qf2 and 11.h4 are considered most challenging to Black. Other tries are 11.Kb1, 11.g4, and 11.Nce2.) **11...Bb4!** Perhaps less good is 11...b6 12.h4 Qc7 13.h5 h6 14.g4 Bb7 +.28/24. **12.Bd3** Or 12.a3 Be7 followed by b4 =. **12...b5** And now there are several options:

- 1) **13.Qf2! N** White is not afraid of the doubled cPs and likely loss of a P because he sees that his K-side attack may gain momentum, while Black's attack has been slowed somewhat. Larry's intuition is terrific! Critical is the obvious **13...Bxc3** (13...Na5?! was played in the game) **14.bxc3 Na5 15.Nxa5 Qxa5 16.Kb1 Qxc3 17.Bd4 Qb4+ 18.Ka1** and Black can reach quality with **18...f6!**.
- 2) Cyrus Lakdawala's book on the Classical French analyzes Anand-Morozevich, FIDE World Ch, San Luis 2005 which starts with **13.Rhf1**.
- 3) Gharamian-Ni Hua, Biel 2011 went **13.g4** and now Stockfish prefers **13...Bb7! 14.a3 Be7 15.Kb1 b4** -/=.
- 4) Also OK is **13.Kb1 Bb7 14.Qf2 Bxc3 15.bxc3 Rc8** =.

QGD [D30]: Lenderman-Shabalov (4) -- Notes by GM Aleksandr Lenderman [AL] and GM Alexander Shabalov [AS]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3

3...a6 [AS] A new strange way to meet Queen's Pawn openings that been popularized lately by one of the top Russian juniors, Vladimir Fedoseev. Even the world champion, Magnus Carlsen, jumped on the bandwagon recently.

[AL] After **3...Nf6**, White too can avoid mainlines with **4.e3** (Mainline is 4.Nc3) **4...c5** and then either:

- 1) **5.cxd5 exd5 6.Bb5+ Bd7 7.Bxd7+ Nbx d7**
- 2) **5.Nc3 Nc6 6.a3 cxd4 7.exd4 g6** or **7...b6 8.cxd5**
- 3) **5.b3** or **5.a3**.

4.e3 Other ways to play are [AL]:

- 1) **4.cxd5!?** is probably the most critical move and then **4...exd5 5.Nc3 Nf6** (or 5...c6 6.e4!?) **6.Bg5 Be6** and now it transposes into several games played by Fedoseev.
- 2) **4.Bg5** is another try that was played by Hammer against Carlsen. After **4...Be7**, Black probably has a good chances to equalize. Sharper is **4...f6**. Carlsen played this ambitious move, trying to win and hold on to the c4 pawn, but later on Hammer got a strong initiative and ended up beating Magnus. After **5.Bxe7 Nxe7** (or 5...Qxe7) **6.e3 O-O 7.Nc3**.
- 3) Finally, **4.Nc3 dxc4** transposes into good lines for Black in the QGA after **5.e3 Nf6** (or 5...b5 6.a4) **6.Bxc4 b5**.

4...Nf6 5.b3 c5 ([AS] 5...b6 is another good way to proceed for Black.) **6.Bb2 cxd4 7.exd4 Nc6 8.Nbd2 g6!?** [AL] Now this was relatively new to me. I was only familiar with Be7 setups or maybe Bd6. I guess that's the plus of playing a semi-useful 3...a6 move and not committing to developing the Bishop on f8 right away. Next move, likely better is **9.g3** (9.c5?! N was played in the game), so that if Black takes his time building his harmony, I can afford to do the same thing. After **9...b6 10.Bg2 Bb7 11.O-O Bg7 12.Qe2 O-O 13.Rfd1 Rc8** and now either **14.Rac1** or **14.Nf1** give White an active game:

- 1) **14.Rac1 Qe7 15.Nf1 Rfd8** (15...Nb4!?) **16.Ne3** +/-
- 2) **14.Nf1** and now I get to put my knight on a move active, e3 square where it pressures the center more, staring at the d5 pawn, and does not duplicate my f3 knight. Then **14...dxc4 (14...Qe7 15.Ne3 Rfd8 16.Rac1 dxc4 17.bxc4 Na5 18.Bh3 Rc7 19.Ne5) 15.bxc4 b5 16.Ne3** with interesting play.

Catalan, Closed [E06]: Christopher Shen(2229)-GM Larry Kaufman(2401) (6): Although Black can equalize with 4...Bb4+ as Larry demonstrated in his book, *The Chess Advantage in White and Black*, he now plays a line with more dynamic chances.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.g3 Be7 5.Bg2 0-0 6.0-0 by transposition **6...c6 7.Qc2 b6 8.Nbd2 Bb7 9.e4 Na6** and now there are several options:

1) **10.a3 c5**

a) **11.e5 Nd7 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.cxd5 exd5 14.b3 Nc7 15.Bb2 Ne6 16.Rfe1 a5 17.a4 Nb8** as in the game, or **17...Rb8** -/= with a nice edge for Black

b) **11.exd5 exd5 12.dxc5 Nxc5 13.b4 Ne6 14.Bb2 Rc8 15.Ne5 Rc7 16.Rad1 Qa8 17.Qf5 g6 18.Qh3 Ng5 19.Qh6 Nh5 20.h4 Re8 21.c5 bxc5 22.bxc5 Ne6 23.c6 Bxc6 24.Nxc6 Qxc6 25.Qe3** -/+

2) **10.e5 Nd7 11.a3 c5 12.Re1 Rc8 13.b3 Rc7 14.cxd5 cxd4 15.Qb1 Bxd5 16.Bb2 Qa8 17.Bxd4 Rfc8 18.Bb2 Nac5** -/=

3) **10.b3 Nb4 11.Qb1 dxe4 12.Nxe4 c5 13.Nxf6+ Bxf6 14.dxc5 Qd3 15.Ne1 Qxb1 16.Rxb1 Bxg2 17.Kxg2 Nxa2** =

4) **10.Ne5 Qc7 11.exd5 cxd5 12.b3 Nb4 13.Qc3 Rac8 14.Bb2 Rfd8 15.Rfc1 dxc4** -/=

5) **10.Rd1 c5 11.dxc5 Nb4 12.Qb3 Bxc5 13.a3 Na6 14.exd5 exd5 15.cxd5 Bxd5 16.Qf4 Qc8 17.Qf4** -/=

Other Annotated Games from the Eastern Open:

To play through these next 3 games, load into any chess program:

[Event "43rd Annual Eastern Open"]

[Site "Bethesda Maryland USA"]

[Date "2016.12.28"]

[Round "2.2"]

[White "Lenderman, Aleksandr"]

[Black "Huang, Andy"]

[Result "1-0"]

[WhiteTitle "GM"]

[WhiteElo "2581"]

[BlackElo "2143"]

[ECO "B14"]

[Opening "CaroKann Defense"]

[Variation "Panov-Botvinnik Attack"]

[WhiteFideld "2021285"]

[BlackFideld "30901014"]

[PlyCount "43"]

[EventDate "2016.12.27"]

1. c4 c6 2. e4 d5 3. exd5 cxd5 4. d4 Nf6 5. Nc3 e6 6. Nf3 Be7 7. cxd5 Nxd5 8. Bd3 (8. Bc4 \$5) 8... O-O 9. O-O Nc6 10. Re1 (10. a3 Bf6 11. Bc2 Nce7 (11... Nxc3 12. bxc3 b6)) 10... Bf6 11. Be4 {The most common and probably the best move.} (11. Bc2 Ndb4) (11. a3 {Perhaps deserves attention but probably be4 is stronger.} Nxc3 (11... Bd7) 12. bxc3 b6) 11... Nde7 \$6 {A rare move and seemingly not the most accurate because it lets go of the d5 square and also white now has more pressure on the h1-a8 diagonal} (11... Nce7 {Is the main line.} 12. Ne5 {With complicated play can follow}) 12. Be3 (12. Bg5 \$5 {I have to admit that I didn't even see this interesting idea.} Bxg5 13. Bxh7+ \$5 {This idea I just didn't see.} (13. Nxg5 Nf5 {This is what I calculated and I didn't think white had anything special here but I missed a brilliant}) 14. Bxc6 Qxg5) 13... Kxh7 \$6 (13... Kh8 \$3 14. Nxg5 g6 {However amazingly this seems fine for black according to stockfish once it gets to a higher depth.}) 14. Nxg5+ Kg6 (14... Kh6 15. Qg4) 15. Qg4 f5 16. Qg3 Kf6 17. Nb5 \$1 {Will lead to a very strong attack} (17. d5 exd5 18. Rad1 d4 19. b4) 17... Nd5 18. Nd6 g6 19. Rac1) (12. Ng5 Nf5) (12. Bf4 Nxd4 13. Nxd4 Bxd4 14. Nb5 Bxf2+ 15. Kxf2 Qb6+ 16. Nd4 f5) 12... b6 \$2 {[%csl Gc6,Gh7][%cal Gd4d5,Gf6c3,Gf3e5,Gd1a4] This is just a mistake} (12... Nd5 \$1 {Might be objectively the best move, but what guts would it take to play such a move after just previous move going nde7 :}))

13. Ne5 \$6 {Also a poor move, not taking advantage of black's mistake} (13. Ng5 \$1 {After this move white is nearly winning} g6 (13... Bxg5 14. Bxg5 {[%cal Ge4c6,Gg5e7,Gd4d5]} f6 15. d5 \$1 (15. Be3 {[%cal Gd4d5]})) (13... h6 14. Nh7) 14. Qf3 \$18 {Black's pieces are extremely loose here.} (14. Nxh7 Kxh7 15. Qh5+ Kg8) 14... Bxd4 15. Bxd4 (15. Bxc6) (15. Rad1) 15... Qxd4 (15... Nxd4 16. Qh3 \$18) 16. Bxc6) 13... Bb7 (13... Bxe5 14. dxe5) 14. Ng4 \$2 {My knight is awkward here and again I miss a very strong move which induces weaknesses by my opponent.} (14. Qh5 \$1 g6 (14... h6 15. Bxh6 gxh6 16. Qxh6 Nf5 17. Bxf5 exf5 18. Re3) 15. Qh3 (15. Qf3 Bxe5) 15... Rc8 16. Bh6 Re8 17. Ng4 \$16) 14... Ng6 \$2 {Sort of trusting me and not going with the most critical move.} (14... Bh4 \$1 {This was the move I saw and was worried about.} 15. g3 (15. d5 {This was my plan, but my position isn't great here because my knight on g4 isn't well placed.} exd5 16. Nxd5 Nxd5 (16... f5 \$1 {Black can even get away with f5 here} 17. Nxe7+ Qxe7 18. Qb3+ (18. Bd5+ \$2 Kh8 19. Nh6 Qf6) 18... Kh8 19. Bxc6 Bxc6 20. Bf4 Be4 21. Ne3 Bxf2+ 22. Kxf2 Qh4+ 23. Bg3 Qe7 {[%cal Gf5f4]} Could've been a very funny repetition)) 17. Bxd5 Qd7 18. g3 {Is a slight pull, something along the lines that I was trying to get.}) (15. Bf3 \$5) 15... f5 16. Bg2 fxg4 17. gxh4 Nf5 {Is excellent counterplay for black and I probably wasn't going to play that.}) (14... Bxd4 \$5 15. Bxd4 f5 16. Bxc6 Nxc6 17. Nb5 a6 18. Qb3 axb5 19. Qxe6+ Rf7 20. Ne5) 15. Qf3 {Now I'm better again and from here on I don't let go of my advantage.} (15. Nxf6+ Qxf6 16. Qd2 h6) 15... Rc8 16. Nxf6+ (16. Rad1 Bxd4 17. Bxd4 (17. Qh3) 17... Nxd4 18. Rxd4 Qxd4 19. Bxb7 Rcd8) 16... Qxf6 (16... gxf6 17. g4 \$5 (17. Rad1 f5 18. Bxc6 Bxc6 19. d5 Bb7 20. Qg3 Qf6 21. Bh6 Rfe8 22. d6)) 17. Qxf6 gxf6 18. d5 Na5 (18... Nb4 19. Bh6 Rfe8 (19... Rfd8 20. dxe6) 20. d6) 19. Bh6 f5 (19... Rfe8 20. Bxg6 hxg6 21. Ne4 Kh7 22. Bd2 {[%cal Ge4d6,Ge4f6]} Kg7 (22... Red8 23. Bc3 exd5 24. Nxf6+) 23. Bxa5 bxa5 24. Nd6 Bxd5 25. Rac1 Rcd8 26. Nxe8+ Rxe8 27. b3) 20. Bxf8 fxe4 21. Bh6 exd5 (21... Rxc3 \$5 {I thought was the best practical chance} 22. bxc3 Bxd5 {[%cal Gf7f5,Gg8f7,Ga5c4,Gc4d6,Gd6f5]} 23. Re3 \$1 {This rook lift plan should be good for white though but I during the game didn't see it} f5 24. Rg3 Kf7 25. h4) 22. Rad1 {[%csl Gd5]} Black has no adequate way to defend the d5 pawn without hanging more material} 1-0

[Event "43rd Annual Eastern Open"]
 [Site "Bethesda Maryland USA"]
 [Date "2016.12.30"]
 [Round "7.2"]
 [White "Shabalov, Alexander"]
 [Black "Sinha, Sahil"]
 [Result "1-0"]
 [WhiteTitle "GM"]
 [BlackTitle "FM"]
 [WhiteElo "2563"]
 [BlackElo "2277"]
 [ECO "B82"]
 [Opening "Sicilian Defense"]
 [Variation "Levenfish"]
 [WhiteFideld "2008572"]
 [BlackFideld "2065231"]
 [PlyCount "79"]
 [EventDate "2016.12.27"]

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. f4 \$5 {Another treat from the past.} e6 (6... g6 {requires at least some knowledge of Levenfish Dragon} 7. Nxc6 bxc6 8. e5) ({after} 6... e5 7. Nf3 {black knight on c6 might

be misplaced}) 7. Nf3 a6 8. Bd3 Qc7 9. O-O Be7 10. Kh1 b5 11. a3 Bb7 12. Qe1 Rd8 13. b4 \$5 {This is an old idea. White gets his bishop on b2, taking b4 and Nd7-c5 options away from black.} d5 14. e5 Nd7 15. Ne2 Nb6 16. Ned4 (16. f5 \$5 exf5 17. Ned4 g6 18. Bh6 \$16) 16... Nc4 17. c3 g6 18. Ra2 Qb6 19. Re2 a5 20. Qf2 {that's too slow} (20. f5 \$1 gxf5 21. Bxf5 \$16) 20... Kd7 21. Bxc4 dxc4 22. Be3 Nxd4 23. Nxd4 Qa6 24. bxa5 (24. a4 bxa4 25. b5 Qa8 26. Ra1 a3 27. Bc1 \$16) 24... Be4 25. Rb2 Rb8 26. Nf3 Qxa5 27. Rd2+ Bd5 \$2 {that's a losing mistake. Up to this point black defended nicely and could have keep up with} (27... Bd3) 28. Ng5 Ke8 29. f5 \$3 {As usual, the break in most protected spot decides} gxf5 30. Rxd5 h6 ({losing on the spot} 30... exd5 31. Qxf5) 31. Nxf7 (31. Ne4) 31... Kxf7 32. Rd7 {Black is helpless against numerous threats} Rhd8 33. Ra7 Qxc3 34. Qh4 Re8 35. Qf6+ Kg8 36. Qxe6+ Kh8 37. Qxh6+ Kg8 38. Ra6 Rf8 39. Qg6+ Kh8 40. Qh5+ 1-0

[Event "43rd Annual Eastern Open"]
 [Site "Bethesda Maryland USA"]
 [Date "2016.12.29"]
 [Round "5.9"]
 [White "Kobla, Vishal"]
 [Black "Shen, Christopher"]
 [Result "1/2-1/2"]
 [WhiteTitle "CM"]
 [WhiteElo "2050"]
 [BlackElo "2166"]
 [ECO "C07"]
 [Opening "French Defense"]
 [Variation "Tarrasch"]
 [WhiteFideld "2078457"]
 [BlackFideld "2090635"]
 [PlyCount "83"]
 [EventDate "2016.12.27"]

{This game was played in the fifth round on the night of December 29. Having taken a quick draw against a higher rated player in the morning, I had ample time to rest and was ready to take on whatever came my way. As it would turn out, this game would follow my round 3 game against Beckman until a crucial deviation.} 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 c5 4. exd5 Qxd5 5. Ngf3 cxd4 6. Bc4 Qd6 7. O-O Nf6 8. Nb3 Nc6 9. Nbx4 Nxd4 10. Nxd4 a6 11. Re1 Qc7 12. Bb3 Bd6 13. Nf5 Bxh2+ 14. Kh1 O-O 15. Nxc7 Rd8 16. Qf3 Kxc7 17. Bh6+ Kg6 18. c3 e5 {Unlike in the previous game, Black opts to keep the kingside pieces where they are and instead attempts to clog the b1-h7 diagonal.} 19. Bc2+ {Consistent with White's plan of attacking the vulnerable king.} e4 20. Rxe4 \$1 {It is at this move that White must commit to his intentions. The bishop pair becomes extremely strong on such an open board.} (20. Bxe4+ {was a possibility, but I only really considered the possibility of keeping the two bishops, so I went with the rook sac.} Nxe4 21. Rxe4 {This has been played a few times with mixed results. White is sometimes able to reel in the point, while Black is sometimes able to fend off the heat. In either case, it's anyone's game.}) 20... Nxe4 21. Qxe4+ (21. Bxe4+ \$2 {is refuted by} f5 22. Qe3 fxe4 23. Qg5+ Kf7 24. Qg7+ Ke6 {where White does not have enough pieces to do much against the Black king.}) 21... f5 (21... Kxh6 {is another try, where the engine says that a perpetual is the best option for White. I have a feeling that if the engine is left to calculate this position for a few hours, it might find a better continuation. In either case, it's a fairly complicated position.}) 22. Qxh7+ Kg5 23. Qg7+ 22. Qh4 {I'm winning in this position, but I have to find the

right moves.} Be6 23. Qg5+ {And already I play an imprecise move.} {The only winning continuation was} 23. Re1 {, where I missed the key move after} Be5 {The thought of} 24. f4 {happened to slip out of my conscious at the time. Now that I reflect back on it, I find it quite surprising that I missed it, but oh well.} 23... Kf7 24. Qh5+ Kg8 25. Qg5+ Kf7 26. Qh5+ Ke7 27. Bg5+ Kd7 28. Bxd8 Rxd8 29. Qxh2 Qxh2+ 30. Kxh2 {After this, the game quickly peters out to a drawn endgame.} Ke7 31. Rd1 Rxd1 32. Bxd1 Bxa2 33. Bc2 Be6 34. Kg3 Kf6 35. Kf4 h6 36. g3 b6 37. Bd3 a5 38. Bc2 Bd7 39. Bb1 b5 40. Bc2 b4 41. cxb4 axb4 42. Bd3 1/2-1/2

[Event "43rd Annual Eastern Open"]
[Site "Bethesda, MD"]
[Date "2016.12.30"]
[Round "7.7"]
[White "Ling, Evan Maxwell"]
[Black "Bennett, David M"]
[Result "0-1"]
[BlackTitle "CM"]
[WhiteElo "1824"]
[BlackElo "2077"]
[ECO "B01"]
[Opening "Scandinavian"]
[Variation "Marshall, 4.Nf3 g6"]
[WhiteFideld "30901073"]
[BlackFideld "2028271"]
[PlyCount "79"]
[EventDate "2016.12.27"]

1.e4 d5 { The Scandinavian or Center-Counter Defense. } 2.exd5 Nf6 3.Nf3 { My opponent opted to avoid the razor-sharp variations arising from } (3.d4 Bg4!? 4.f3 Bf5 5.c4 e6) 3...Nxd5 4.d4 g6 5.g3 { A highly uncommon but interesting choice. White adopts a more solid, positional setup. However, the absence of the bishop from the f1-a6 diagonal will be felt, as a c4 thrust will lack support and the black pieces can try to take up residence on the queenside light squares. It's also unclear whether the lost tempo (since the bishop already has an open door) is justified. Due to the shortcomings of this move, Black should be able to equalize more easily. } 5...Bg7 6.Bg2 O-O 7.O-O Nc6 { Immediately generating pressure on d4, a thematic idea in the Scandinavian. } 8.h3 { The superficially attractive } (8.c4?! Nb6 9.d5? { simply drops a pawn to } (9.c5 Nd5 { gives black a nice grip on the light squares with long-term pressure on d4. }) 9...Na5 10.Nfd2 Naxc4 11.Nxc4 Nxc4 { and Black stands much better. }) 8...Nb6! { Usually Black only plays this move after prompted to do so with c4. Here, though, there are multiple reasons to make this "retreat" voluntarily: (1) moving the knight to b6 unveils the queen, which joins in on the attack on d4, (2) the knight eyes the undefended c4 square, where it might hop one day, and (3) annoying ideas around the c4 push (attacking the knight if it remains on d5) are prevented altogether. Now white would need to play b3 to prepare c4, but this would critically weaken the a1-h8 diagonal, which would only encourage an eager g7 bishop. } 9.c3 { Essentially forced. } (9.Be3 { gets hit with the annoying } 9...Nc4 { and White is under significant pressure. }) 9...Be6 { Consistent. I continue to generate pressure on the light squares. Generally Black will opt for a pawn break with either ...e5 or ...c5. However, this setup makes it difficult to achieve these breaks. The silver lining for Black is that, while White holds a steady grip on the dark squares, his light squares are conversely weakened, so Black can achieve ample piece play on the a2-g8 diagonal in particular. } 10.Re1 a5 { Continuing with the plan of light square domination. The idea is a5-a4, when Black has options like Nc6-a5-c4. It would be difficult for White to

play b3 and boot the knight since Black would reply axb3 and, so long as White's rook stands on a1, he cannot recapture with the a-pawn, since this would leave the rook hanging. Further, the Black pieces would place pressure on the softened b3 point even if a pawn recapture were made possible. } 11.a4 { White is understandably cautious about the prospect of a5-a4 and seeks to stop the pawn in its tracks. However, this has drawbacks of its own: a hole is now created on b3, and if the queen ever moves (say, to e2) Black will play Bb3 and the a4 pawn - now rendered a target! - will drop instantly. } 11...Bd5 { Increasing the scope of the bishop and discouraging White's Ne5, when Black would trade light-squared bishops and attempt to further expose White's light-squared weaknesses. } (11...Qd7 12.Kh2 Rad8 13.Nbd2 Bd5 14.Ne4 Rfe8 (14...Bxe4?! 15.Rxe4 e5 16.Bg5 f6 17.Bc1 f5 18.Re1 exd4 19.Ng5 { doesn't look palatable for Black. }) 15.Nc5 Qc8 16.Bf4 Nc4 17.b3 Nd6 18.Rc1 b6 { and the knight is eventually booted from c5, but over the board I didn't see a good reason to place my queen on the potentially uncomfortable d7-square. }) 12.Bf4 e6 { This keeps ideas like Ne7-f5 possible and makes some of the interesting events that transpired in the game possible. However, objectively this weakens the d6 square after Na3-b5 (since booting the knight via ...c6 allows Nd6 in some lines), a possibility I did not adequately consider (I was anticipating Nd2-e4-c5 maneuvers). } 13.Na3 h6 { Introducing the double-edged ...g5 idea. } 14.Nb5 Rc8 15.g4?! { White insists on keeping his bishop on the h2-b8 diagonal, and understandably so, but the weaknesses that are now created on the kingside provide me with a fantastic resource that allows Black to seize a strong initiative. } (15.b3! { was now possible! The pressure on c7 combined with the g2 bishop's presence on the h1-a8 diagonal means that c4 ideas now become possible. } 15...g5 (15...Ne7 16.c4 Bc6 (16...Bxf3 17.Qxf3 c6 18.Nd6 Rc7 19.c5 { and White's dark-squared pressure becomes more relevant than Black's light-squared pressure, placing Black in something of a bind. }) 17.Na7) 16.Bd2 Ne7 17.c4 Bxf3 18.Qxf3 c6 19.Nc3 Bxd4 (19...Qxd4 20.Rad1 Qf6 21.Qxf6 Bxf6 22.Ne4 Bg7 23.Bxa5) 20.Rad1) 15...g5! 16.Bg3 f5! { As my coach GM Varuzhan Akobian would often tell me, "You gotta risk if you wanna drink champagne." This was certainly one of those moments. I can either defend a somewhat passive position or bury White's g3 bishop. Isn't the choice obvious then? } 17.Nd2 f4 18.Bh2 { Now Black is in the driver's seat. White is effectively playing a piece down, and it will take a while to re-route the bishop into the game. In the meantime, Black will break in the center with ...e5! and tear open the position while playing with an extra piece (like a power play in hockey). Note that both sides have both weakened their kingsides, but the f4-pawn is very strong and it is not easy to reach the holes around the Black king (but I must still be cognizant of them and tread carefully). } 18...Re8?! (18...e5! { clearly needed to be played. I was planning on playing this on the next move, at which point its effectiveness seems to be diminished based on the game continuation. I didn't like } 19.dxe5 Bxg2 20.Kxg2 Nxe5 (20...Bxe5 21.Qc2 Qf6 22.Rad1 Rcd8 23.f3 Nd5) 21.Nd4 { when the knight's prospect of landing on f5 looks liked something I wanted to avoid. However, I failed to consider the strength of } 21...Nd3! 22.Re4 Qd5 23.f3 Nxb2 { =/+ }) 19.Bf1 { with the interesting idea of c4, trapping the d5 bishop in the center of the board! I spent some time waffling over whether I should grab the g2 bishop or wait. As it turns out, the d5 bishop becomes a force to be reckoned with later in the game, but I nonetheless could have avoided any trouble altogether by playing ...e5 a move earlier. Now White gets counterplay with c4 and d5, rendering the game more double-edged and killing some of Black's initiative - for now. Of course, these moves weaken additional squares in White's camp and provide Black with fresh opportunities... } 19...e5! { Better late than never! Well, now it's forced to

save my own bishop! } 20.c4 Bf7 { Or Black can lose on the spot with } (20...Be6?? 21.d5) 21.d5 Nb4 { More aggressive than ...Nd4, preparing for a strong ...c6 counter-thrust to demolish White's central pawn mass and kick out the b5 knight, who has clearly overstayed his welcome. However, the computer prefers ...Nd4 to eliminate the beast immediately (and to prevent the ensuing complications...yet, even if it is objectively not best, those complications make the forthcoming idea possible). } 22.Ne4! { I feel that this was my opponent's strongest move of the game. The e5 pawn is firmly blockaded, and the knights work in tandem to prepare a potentially dangerous d6 thrust, when the knights would hope to gain access to c7 or d6, or to create a passed pawn deep in the heart of the enemy position. Whether this thrust will work - or whether it will even be successfully achieved - is a topic for debate over the next few moves... } 22...Qe7! { Walking into the spear! Although the move is superficially quite an ugly one, objectively it is not bad at all; now a rook is prepared to slide to d8 and place additional pressure on the d-file, where the queen sits. } 23.f3! { Another good move. My opponent skillfully prepares to give his h2 bishop another lease on life. But as I mentioned, this takes time. } (23.d6 { appears feckless after } 23...cxd6 24.Nbxd6 Rcd8 { yet interestingly } (24...Nxc4! { is the exchange sacrifice that needs to be played, but the following line to justify it does appear a bit nebulous over-the-board: } 25.Nxc8 Rxc8 26.b3 Rd8 27.Qe2 Nb6) 25.c5 Nc8 26.Rc1 { provides White with a very good position! }) 23...Rcd8 24.Kh1 c6 { Finally, the break is achieved! Tremendous complications now ensue as the position explodes. } 25.Bg1 { And the bishop finally rears its ugly head and sees light again. } (25.d6! { is superficially loose but ends up being quite strong for the first player: } 25...Qd7 26.Na3 Qc8 27.c5 Nd7 28.Bg1 Bd5 29.Nc4 { and White stands better. }) 25...Nxc4!? { Risky. Black should be fine after } (25...cxd5 26.Bxb6 dxe4 27.Bxd8 Rxd8 28.Qb3 exf3 29.Qxf3 (29.Rad1 Rxd1 30.Qxd1 f2 31.Re4 Bg6 { and Black's phalanx of pawns, bishop pair, and active pieces swamp White. }) 29...Nc2 { and Black recovers the exchange with a winning position. }) 26.Bc5 { A strong move objectively, and one that I was quite worried about. Once I saw the coming sacrifice opportunity, though, I was hoping that my opponent would opt for it! } (26.d6 { I was expecting this and it is White's best shot: } 26...Qd7 27.Nc5 Qc8 28.d7 Rxd7 29.Nxd7 cxb5 30.Nb6 Qe6 31.Nxc4 bxc4 { when black has two pawns and plenty of compensation for the exchange. The knight eagerly awaits the opportunity to hop into d3. If the light-squared bishop captures it, those light-squared weaknesses in White's camp become lethal, with an uncontested Black dark-squared bishop. }) (26.Bxc4 cxd5 { wiping out White's center and regaining the piece. } 27.Bc5 Qd7 28.Bb6 dxc4 29.Bxd8 Rxd8 30.Qxd7 Rxd7 { And again Black has two pawns and at least full compensation for the exchange, although here the White knights are quite well placed. Note the importance of the e4 knight to blockade the e5 pawn and preventing the light-squared bishop from decisively entering the h1-a8 diagonal in various scenarios. }) 26...Qxc5!! { Slightly speculative, but the compensation that I achieve for the investment of my queen is clear: two minor pieces and potentially a pawn, a bishop pair that will cut across the open board and tear into White's weaknesses (including around the king), incredibly active pieces, and an enduring initiative. In a must-win final round, how could I resist? Bobby Fischer's "Game of The Century," where he gives up his queen to eventually gain a bouquet of pieces in return, definitely served as inspiration, encouraging me to try this move. I don't usually give myself "!!!", but I figured it was worth submitting this for the brilliancy prize so this is the analysis I am including - after all, you can't ask for a brilliancy prize without denoting that you played some brilliant move, can you? } (26...Qd7 27.Bxc4 cxd5 28.Bb6 dxc4 29.Bxd8 { transposes to the aforementioned line with equal chances. }) 27.Nxc5 cxb5 28.axb5 Ne3! { White is now forced to give up an exchange, granting Black a rook and bishop for queen - much closer to material parity (Nbc2 is next, forking the rooks). However, my opponent chooses not to take the knight, and I have no intention to force him to do

so. I'd prefer that my knights transform into monsters! } 29.Qe2? { This move gives Black more than full compensation for the queen, according to Komodo. My opponent can't be faulted, though, because it's far easier to play Black than to defend against an influx of enemy pieces as White here. } (29.Rxe3 fxe3 30.d6! Bf8 31.Ne4! { is far more complicated, where Black needs to prove his compensation. }) 29...Nbc2 30.Nxb7 { Natural enough, but this misplaces the knight. The lack of defenders around the White monarch will soon be felt... } 30...Rxd5 31.Red1 { My opponent seems to reason that if he's going to part with one of his rooks, he may as well trade off one of Black's. I do not oblige. } (31.Nxa5 e4 { is very strong. Again, note the need for the knight to blockade the e5 pawn! }) 31...Nd4!? { Preferring powerful centralization over slight material gain. I want to use as many pieces as possible to attack the White king here. Komodo gives Black about +1 here. } (31...Nxa1 32.Rxa1 e4 { is winning as well. }) 32.Qf2 (32.Rxd4 { is no better. } 32...exd4 33.Qd3 Nxf1 34.Rxf1 Re3 35.Qd2 d3 { Black controls the board in all lines here. The rooks, bishop pair, and passed pawn simply cannot be contained. Black maintains a perfectly safe king all the while. }) 32...e4! { The second and long-awaited central break, gaining access to White's kingside light squares. Note the importance of the e3 knight in controlling g2, preventing the enemy bishop from protecting that square. It can also grab the bishop if need be. The knight could care less about the d1 rook because it doesn't fit into this design. } 33.fxe4 Rxe4 { Now all that's left to do is move the rooks out of the way to make way for the f7 bishop. Ideas like Bd5+ followed by Nf3+ are devastating. This is probably my favorite game I've played from an aesthetic perspective due to the utter centralization and unique placement of the Black forces. It's a joy because it reminds me of the power of the chess pieces and the possibilities that Caissa presents. } 34.Rd3 Re7 (34...Nxf1?! 35.Qxf1 Ne2 36.Rad1 Rxd3 37.Rxd3 Ng3+ 38.Rxg3 fxd3 39.Qd3 { is actually not so clear at all! There is no need to rush. The Black pieces simply need to maneuver to the most aggressive posts. }) 35.Nxa5 Rdd7 { Fully clearing the diagonal for the bishop. We were both in time pressure so I opted to simply keep my pieces well coordinated and increase the pressure. } (35...Rxb5? 36.Rxd4 Bxd4 37.Bxb5 Bd5+ 38.Kg1 Nc2 39.Qxd4 Nxd4 40.Rd1 Re4 41.Bf1 { with material parity and only a slight advantage for Black! }) 36.Be2 (36.Bg2! Nxd2 37.Kxg2 { White's best defense, complicating matters. The light-squared bishop's absence should eventually pay dividends, but the way forward is not so clear. This is why I was thinking that 35...Rc5 may have been superior to ...35. Rdd7, so that ...Re2 would be possible in this scenario, regaining the queen without hanging the d7 rook after Qxe2 Nxe2. }) 36...Bd5+ (36...Nec2! { Was a more accurate move order: } 37.Bd1? (37.Rad1 Rxe2 38.Qxe2 Bd5+ 39.Kh2 Nxe2 40.Rxd5 Rxd5 41.Rxd5 Ne3 42.Rd8+ Kh7 43.Re8! (43.b6? f3! { -+ }) 43...Bd4 44.Nb3 f3 45.Nxd4 Nf1+ 46.Kh1 Nfg3+ 47.Kh2 f2 48.Nxe2 f1=Q 49.Kxg3 Qf7 { And now it is Black who possesses the queen, but White has some compensation for it here! }) 37...Bd5+ 38.Kh2 Nxa1 39.Rxd4 Bxd4 40.Qxd4 Re1 { -+ }) 37.Kg1 Nec2 { The a1 rook and bishop both hang. } 38.Bd1? { A critical error in time pressure. Now Black is completely winning. } (38.Bf1! Ne3 (38...Nxa1 39.Rxd4 Bxd4 40.Qxd4 Nc2 41.Qf6 Bf7 42.Qxh6 Rd5 43.Qf6 { is far less clear. }) 39.Nc6 Nf3+ 40.Kh1 { and, shockingly, there is no clear way for Black to continue the attack here! For a human to see this with less than a minute on the clock would be nearly impossible, though. }) 38...Re1+ { and it's curtains. Black regains the queen with decisive advantage now. } 39.Qxe1 (39.Kh2 Rh1#) 39...Nxe1 { And the d3 rook is trapped in the middle of the board! Black emerges from the attack a piece up! } 40.Raa3 { 0-1. My opponent flagged after making this move. After capturing the rook, though, I would be up a piece with a mere technical task ahead. The superior forces would help to usher the f4 pawn down the board. } (40.Rc3 Re7 (40...Ndf3+ 41.Kf1 Bxc3 42.bxc3 Nd3 43.b6 Nc5 { is still a piece up, but with a slightly more

difficult task for Black ahead. }) 41.Rc8+ Kh7 42.Rd8 Ndf3+ 43.Kh1 Be4 44.Nb3 Nd2+ 45.Kg1 Nxb3 46.Bxb3 Bd4+! 47.Rxd4 Nf3+ 48.Kf2 Nxd4)
0-1

[Event "Eastern Open"]
[Site ""]
[Date "2016.12.30"]
[Round "6"]
[White "Kallat, Sriraj"]
[Black "Kobla, Akshay"]
[Result "0-1"]
[ECO "A48"]
[WhiteElo "1326"]
[BlackElo "1535"]
[PlyCount "82"]
[EventDate "2016.12.31"]

{Going into this last round game, I knew I had to win to get some money.} 1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 g6 3. Bf4 Bg7 4. e3 d6 5. c4 Nc6 6. d5 Nb4 {This is definitely a blunder because it loses a piece immediately, so I have to try to catch up.} 7. Qa4+ c6 8. Qxb4 cxd5 9. Qd2 Ne4 {I played Ne4 so that if he takes the pawn then I would take his b2 pawn and I would be much better after I win the rook. But I didn't see that after he takes the pawn and I take b2, he could play Qb5 check, winning my Bishop.} 10. Qxd5 O-O 11. Qb5 a6 12. Qb3 Bg4 13. Be2 Bxf3 14. Bxf3 Qa5+ {Forcing him to move his king because he can't block with the knight because I can just take it.} 15. Ke2 Nc5 16. Qc2 Na4 {He can do nothing to stop me from winning the b pawn.} 17. Nd2 Bxb2 18. Rae1 Nc3+ 19. Kf1 Qxa2 20. Nb1 Qxc4+ {My opponent gives up a few pawns for no reason.} 21. Be2 Qb4 22. Nxc3 Qxc3 23. Qe4 e5 {Attacking the bishop, so that I could protect both pawns.} 24. Bh6 Rfb8 25. Qf3 {Trying to put his queen on f6 to mate me up but I don't think he saw e4 after Qf6.} a5 {I just start pushing my pawn because I knew it would be hard or impossible to stop the pawn unless he sacs.} 26. g3 a4 27. Kg2 a3 28. Rc1 {If I took the rook right away, then Qf6 would be winning.} e4 {Now I can take the rook after he moves his queen, because f6 would be protected.} 29. Qf4 Bxc1 30. Rxc1 {Sacs another exchange thinking he could try something and win but I could easily stop it.} Qxc1 31. Bc4 Qb2 {protects from all checks and possible mates after Qxf7+.} 32. Qxf7+ Kh8 33. Bg5 Rf8 34. Qe6 {He can't play} 34... Bf6+ {because I just take it with the queen.} Qxf6) 34... Rxf2+ 35. Kh3 Rxh2+ 36. Kg4 h5+ 37. Kf4 Rf8+ 38. Kxe4 Qe5+ 39. Qxe5+ dxe5 40. Kxe5 Rf5+ {This would win the bishop so he resigns after I take it.} 41. Kd4 Rxc1 {This win allowed me win \$212.50 !} 0-1

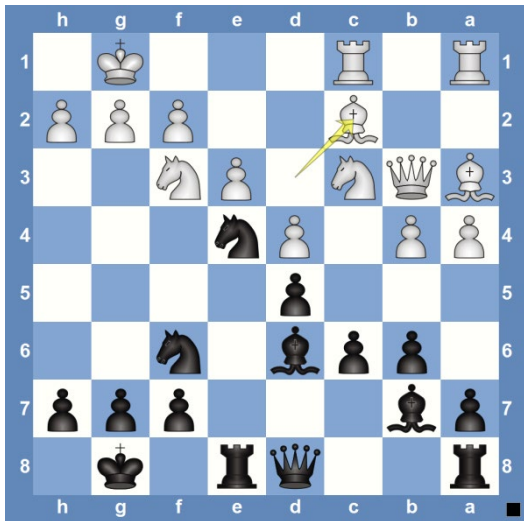
The following games should be played through on a board:

E52-1, GM Aleks Lenderman(2658)-Tom Beckman(2055), Eastern Open Simul, Bethesda MD, 12-27-16: **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 O-O 5.Bd3 d5 6.Nf3 b6** (Afterwards, Aleks stated that this line is the reason he doesn't play 4.e3 any longer.) **7.cxd5** (This is White's best chance for an edge.) **7...exd5 8.O-O Bb7** (Also fine is 8...c5! and now:

- 1) 9.a3 Bxc3 10.bxc3 Nc6! 11.Nd2 {11.Bb2 c4 =}
 - a) 11...Qc7 12.Bb2 Re8 13.Re1 Bb7 14.f3 Rad8 15.Rc1
 - i) 15...Na5! 16.Qe2 Bc6 17.Bc2 Qd7 18.Qd1 Bb5 19.a4 Ba6 +.00/26
 - ii) 15...Qd6 16.a4 Na5 17.Ba3 h6 18.Qc2 Qc7 19.dxc5 bxc5 20.c4 d4 +.00/25
 - iii) 15...Re6 16.Qe2 Na5 17.Bf5 Re7 18.Qf2 Ne8 19.Bc2 Nd6 +.25/24
 - iv) 15...Qd7 16.Qc2 Re7 17.Rcd1 Na5 +.20/24
 - b) 11...Re8 12.Re1 Bg4 {or 12...Qd6} 13.f3 Bh5 +.24/24

2) 9.Ne5 Bb7 10.Qa4 a5! 11.Be2 c4 12.Bf3 Qc8 13.Qb5 Ba6 14.Qa4 Bb7 rep draw.)

9.a3 Bd6 10.b4 Re8?! (Inaccurate. Black should prevent b5 with 10...a6! 11.Qc2 Nbd7 12.b5 Be7 13.bxa6 Bxa6 14.Bxa6 Rxa6 15.Ne5 Qa8 16.Nb5 Rc8 17.Nc6 Bf8 18.Bd2 Ra4 19.Bb4 Bxb4 20.Nxb4 c5 21.Rfc1 g6 22.Rab1 Ra5 23.Na2 Qc6 24.Nac3 +.04/26.) **11.Qb3** (Slightly better is 11.Qc2 a6 12.Bb2 Nbd7 13.b5 Qe7 14.Rfc1 Rec8 15.a4 axb5 16.axb5 Ne4 +.32/25.) **11...Nbd7?!** (Missing another chance to prevent b5 with 11...a6 12.a4 c6! 13.a5 b5 14.Nd2 Nbd7 15.Ba3 Nf8 16.Rae1 g6 17.Nf3 Ne6 18.h3 +.06/24.) **12.a4** (Slightly better is 12.b5! Nb8! 13.a4 c5 14.bxc6 Nxc6 15.Ba3 {15.a5 Nxa5 => 15...Na5 16.Qa2 Rc8 17.Rfc1 Bb8 18.Rc2! Nc4 19.Rac1 Nxa3 20.Qxa3 Ne4 +.25/27.}) **12...c6! 13.Ba3 Ne4?!** (Sloppy. Now the dP isn't defended. Somewhat better is 13...a5! 14.bxa5 Bxa3 15.Qxa3 Rxa5 +.05/27.) **14.Rfc1?!** (Overbuilding. 14.b5 c5 15.Nxd5 Ndf6 16.Nxf6+ Qxf6 +.44/24 is called for.) **14...Ndf6! 15.Bc2?** (White needed to prevent Ng5 with 15.h3 Qe7 -.09/23.)

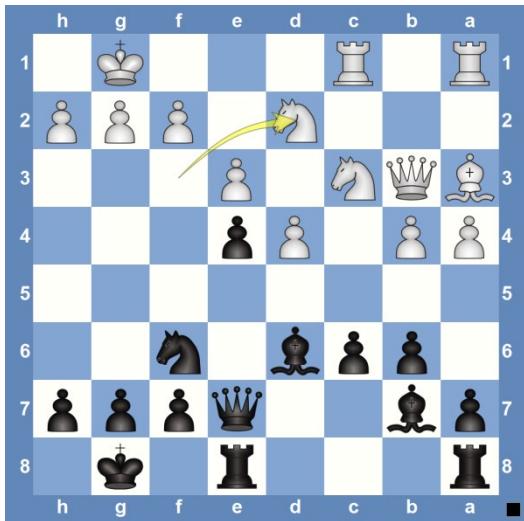


15...Qe7? (Missing the win with 15...Ng4! 16.Nd1 {16.Rf1 is similar} 16...Ng5! 17.Ne5 Nxe5 18.dxe5 Bxe5 19.Bb2 Bxb2 20.Qxb2 d4 -1.45/24.)

16.Bxe4?! 1/2-1/2 (White had retreated his KB and should have captured with the N: 16.Nxe4 dxe4 17.Ne5! Bxe5! 18.dxe5 Qxe5 19.Bb2 Qe7 20.a5 Ba6 21.Rd1 Bb5 22.axb6 axb6 23.Rxa8 Rxa8 24.h3 Ba4 25.Qa3 b5 26.Bb3 h6 27.Ra1 Qd6 28.Bd4 Nd5 -.04/35)

After 16.Bxe4?! dxe4 there are some fascinating possible tactics:

- 1) 17.Ne5 Rad8 18.Ne2 Bxe5 19.dxe5 Ng4 20.e6 Qxe6 21.Qxe6 Rxe6 22.Rd1 Red6 23.Rxd6 Rxd6 -.74/26
- 2) 17.Nd2? and now:



17...c5!! 18.bxc5 Bxh2+ 19.Kxh2 Ng4+ 20.Kg1 Qh4+ 21.Nd1 Ba6 22.Nc4 Rac8! 23.Kf1 bxc5 24.Bxc5 {or 24.Ke1 Rb8 -3.48/31} 24...Rxc5! 25.dxc5 Rd8!

a) 26.Rc2 Qh1+ 27.Ke2 Nh2 28.Nc3 Qxa1 29.Nb1 Qe5 -3.62/25

b) 26.Ke2? Nh2! 27.f3 Qg3 28.Nf2 exf3+ 29.gxf3 Qxf3+ 30.Ke1 Qg2 31.Ke2 Ng4 -8.82/26.

With the QGD Exchange Variation P structure, both sides should be on the lookout for K-side play for Black. Notice the 3/4-1 piece ratio on the K-side, plus the Greco sac opportunities. A good warmup for me, but perhaps not so good for Aleks!

E04/23, Tom Beckman(1963F)-WIM Akshita Gorti(2164F), 43rd Eastern Open, Rd. 1.10, Bethesda Maryland, 2016.12.27: **1.d4 e6 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 d5 4.Nf3 c5 5.O-O Nc6 6.c4 dxc4** (And now we have transposed into the 4...dxc4 open variation of the Catalan.) **7.Qa4!**? (This is the most popular move, and it may be best. However, ECO E volume doesn't even mention the move 7.dxc5, and it is the 3rd most popular move in the database: 7.dxc5 Qxd1 8.Rxd1 Bxc5 9.Nbd2 c3 10.bxc3 0-0 11.Nb3 Be7 12.Nfd4 Nxd4 13.cxd4 Nd5 14.Bd2 f5 15.Na5 Bf6 16.e3 b6 17.Nc6 Bb7 18.Nb4 and now either:

- 1) **18...Be7** 19.Rdb1
 - a) 19...Rab8 20.Bxd5 Bxd5 21.Nxd5 exd5 22.Rb5 Rfd8 23.Rab1 Rbc8 24.a4 Rc2 25.Be1 +.32/28
 - b) 19...Rfd8 20.a4 Bxb4 21.Bxb4 Ba6 22.a5 Bd3 23.Rb2 Kf7 24.Bf3 {24.Ba3} 24...h6 25.h3 Be4 26.Be2 Nxb4 27.Rxb4 Rdc8 28.Rb2 {or 28.f3 28.f3 bxa5 29.Rxa5 Bd5 30.Rb2 transpo} 28...bxa5 29.f3 Bd5 30.Rxa5 Rc1+ 31.Kf2 Kf6 32.Bd3 Rh1 33.Re2 Rh2 34.Kf1 Rh1+ 35.Kg2 Rd1 36.Bc2 Rc1 37.g4 fxg4 38.hxg4 Rb8 39.e4 Bc4 40.Rf2 a6 {40...Rb2 41.g5} 41.Rc5 Bb3 42.Bxb3 +.15/26 White is +.34 earlier
- 2) **18...Rfc8** 19.a4 Rab8 20.a5 Nxb4 21.Bxb4 Bxg2 22.Kxg2 Rb7 23.axb6 axb6 24.Rab1 +.32/25

7...cxd4 (I vaguely recalled a game from two years ago at the Washington Chess Congress, where Jennifer Lu played the slightly better 7...Bd7 8.Qxc4 and now either:

- 1) **8...b5!** 9.Qd3 Rc8 10.dxc5 Bxc5 {Book up to here. 10...Nb4 N was played in the game} 11.Nc3 Nb4 12.Qd1 0-0 13.a3 Nbd5 14.Nxd5 Nxd5 15.Ne5 Qc7 16.Nxd7 Qxd7 17.Qb3 Qc6 18.Rd1 Qb6 19.e3 Rfd8 20.Bd2 d5 +.22/22
- 2) Also decent is **8...Rc8** 9.dxc5 Na5 10.Qh4 Rxc5 11.Bg5 Be7 12.Nbd2 Rb5 13.Ne4 Nxe4 14.Bxe7 Qxe7 15.Qxe4 0-0 16.b3 Rd8 17.Rfd1 Nc6 18.Nd4 Rc5 19.Qe3 Nxd4 20.Rxd4 Rc7 21.Rc1 Rdc8 22.Rxc7 Rxc7 23.f4 f6 24.Qd2 g6 25.Rd6 Kf7 26.Bf3 +.18/23.)

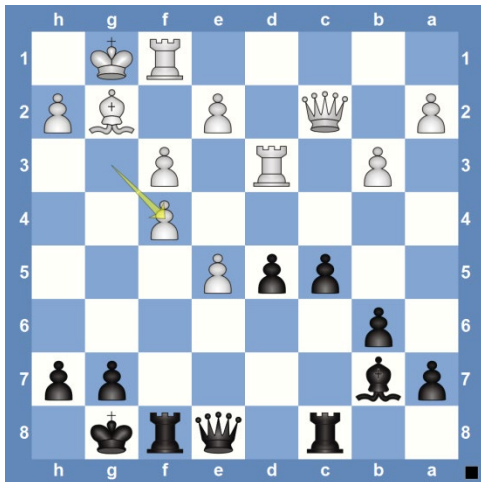
8.Rd1? (A horrible move. I looked at the much better 8.Nxd4! Qxd4 9.Bxc6+ Bd7 10.Rd1! {I missed this move} and now:

- 1) **10...Bxc6** 11.Qxc6+ bxc6 12.Rxd4 with the following alternatives:
 - a) 12...Rd8 13.Rxc4 Rd1+ 14.Kg2 Kd7 15.Nc3 Re1 16.b3 Nd5 17.Bb2 Rxa1 18.Bxa1 Nb6 19.Rd4+ Kc7 20.f4 Be7 +.38/33
 - b) 12...c5 13.Rxc4 Be7 14.Be3 Nd5 15.Nd2 Nxe3 16.fxe3 Rb8 17.b3 Rb4 18.Rac1 Kd7 +.46/27
 - c) 12...g6 13.Rxc4 Bg7 14.Nc3 Nd5 15.Rxc6 Kd7 16.Ra6 Bxc3 17.bxc3 Nxc3 18.Kf1 +.57/25
 - d) 12...Nd5 13.Rxc4
 - i) 13...Be7 14.e4 Nb4 15.Be3 0-0 16.Nc3 Nc2 17.Rd1 Nxe3 18.fxe3 +.51/25
 - ii) 13...0-0-0 14.Rxc6+ Kb7 15.Rc2 Be7 +.68/24
- 2) **10...Qxd1+** 11.Qxd1 Bxc6 12.Nd2 Rd8 13.Qc2 b5 14.a4 a6 15.b3 Be7 16.axb5 axb5 17.bxc4 0-0 18.Ra7 +.110/26.)

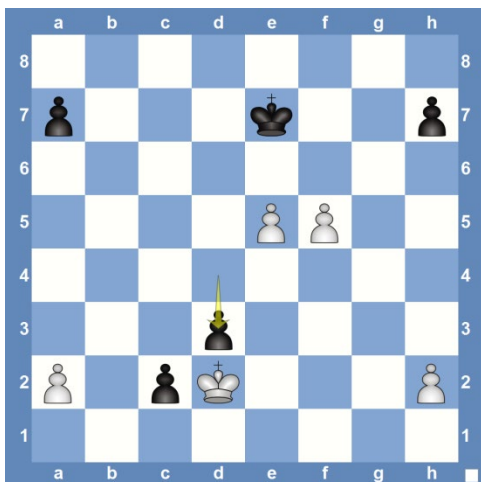
8...Bd7 9.Qxc4 Qb6?! (Even better is 9...e5 10.e3 Rc8 11.Qf1 Bg4 12.Nc3 Bc5 13.exd4 Nxd4 {13...Bxd1 14.Qb5+} 14.Nxd4 Bxd4 15.Ne2 Qb6 16.h3 -.79/25.) **10.Nxd4 Nxd4 11.Qxd4 Bc5** (This is the problem...Black gains time and puts the White Q in a precarious position.) **12.Qf4 O-O 13.e3?!** (Ugly but somewhat better is development with 13.Be3 Bxe3 14.Qxe3 Qxb2 15.Nd2 -.41/26.) **13...Rfd8 14.Nc3 Bc6 15.Bd2** (Or 15.Nc3 or 15.Rxd8+ first.) **15...Bxg2 16.Kxg2 Rac8?!** (My semi-bluff worked. Here Black has the obvious 16...Qxb2 17.Na4 {weaker is 17.Rab1 Qc2} 17...Qa3 18.Nxc5 Qxc5 19.Bb4 Qc6+ 20.Qf3 Qxf3+ 21.Kxf3 Nd5 21.Ba3 -.81/26.) **17.Qf3!?** (I failed to generate the obvious 17.Rab1 -.29/23 after which White can survive.) **17...Bf8!** (Likely best. Now chopping the P with 17...Qxb2 18.Rab1 Qc2 19.Qxb7 -.18/25 is no big deal. 17...Be7 is an alternative.) **18.Na4?!** (I rejected 18.Be1 because I thought it too passive. But 18.Ne1! -.06/24 is best to safe up the N.) **18...Qa6?!** (Better is 18...Qb5 19.Nc3 Qxb2 20.Rab1 Qc2 21.Rbc1 Qg6 22.Qxg4 Ng4 23.Be1 -.11/38.) **19.Nc3 Qb6 20.Na4** (20.Rab1? doesn't work due to 20...Rxd2. However, slightly better may be 20.e4 Qxb2 21.Rab1 Qa3 22.Rb3! Qa6 23.Bg5 Rxd1 24.Qxd1 -.82/27.) **20...Qa6?!** (Again, 20...Qb5 is close to winning.) **21.Nc3 b5?!** (Again, 21...Qb5.) **22.a3 Qb6** (Slightly better is 22...Nd7 23.Ne2 -.15/23.) **23.Ne4** (Also good is 23.e4 Nd7 24.Bg5 f6 25.Be3 +.10/24.) **23...Nd5** (23...Nxe4 24.Qxe4 a5 is equal.) **24.Nc3** (Or 24.Ng5 Nf6 25.Bc3 Be7 +.10/24.) **24...Nf6 25.Ne4 Nxe4 26.Qxe4 a5 27.Bc3 f6** (Funny, both sides should exchange Rs when they have the chance!) **28.Bd4** (White should throw in 28.Rxd8+ first.) **28...Qc6** (Or 28...Qa6 29.Qf3 -.06/24.) **29.Qxc6 Rxc6 30.Rac1** (Here I offered a draw.) **30...Rdc8** (Stockfish prefers 30...Rxc1 31.Rxc1 e5 32.Bc3 -.17/25, or 30...Rcd6 -.20/23.) **31.Rxc6 Rxc6 32.Rd3?!** (I was quite happy with this move, but 32.f4 is stronger after 32...Rc2+ 33.Kf3 Rxb2 34.Rc1 -.06/23 and White gains enough activity to win back some Q-side Ps.) **33...b4 33.axb4 axb4** (Or 33...Bxb4.) **34.e4!** (Finally a decent move.) **34...e5** (Slightly better is 34...Rc2 35.e5 fxe5 36.Bxe5 Bc5 37.Kh3! Rxf2 38.Rd8+ Kf7 39.Rd7+ Ke8 40.Rxg7 -.33/27.) **35.Be3 Kf7 36.Kf1** (Monkey see, monkey do. Better is 36.f4! -.06/24.) **36...Ke6 37.Ke2 Bd6** (37...Bc5 is slightly better.) **38.Kd2** (It is slightly better to keep the R back with 38.Rd1 =.) **38...g6** (Black still finds ways to cause trouble.) **39.f3** (Stockfish prefers 39.g4 h5 -.13/25.) **39...f5 40.Rd5?!** (Can't I finally play one aggressive move? No. 40.Ke2 makes the draw easier.) **40...Ra6** (Black's nearly last chance to cause trouble is 40...b3! 41.Kd1 Rc2 42.Rd2 fxe4 43.fxe4 Rc4 44.Rd3 Rxe4 45.Rxb3 h5 46.h3 -.27/24.) **41.Kc2** (Slightly better is the messy 41.Rb5 Ra2 42.Kc2 Ra1 43.Rb6 Kd7 44.Rb7+ Kc6 45.Ra7 =.) **41...Ra1 42.Rd1?!** (A mistake! Somewhat better is 42.Rd2 Re1 43.Kd3 f4 44.Bb6 -.20/24.) **42...Ra8?!** (Black misses the last chance to make trouble with 42...b3+! 43.Kd2 Bb4+ 44.Ke2 Ra2 45.exf5+ gxf5 46.Rb1 Bc3 47.Kd3 Bxb2 48.Kc4 Ba3 49.Kxb3 Re2 50.Ba7 -.29/33.) **43.Kb3 Rf8 44.Kc4!** (Do you see the tactic that brings the game to a peaceful conclusion?) **44...Rc8+** (Or 44...Ra8 45.Bh6 =.) **45.Kb3 Rf8 1/2-1/2** It wasn't pretty, but I held on tenaciously to draw with a 2300 player in round 1. A fair start.

E11/37, FM Trung Q Nguyen(2214)-Tom Beckman(2055), Eastern Open, Rd. 2.10, Bethesda MD, 12/28/2016: **1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5** (With the Nimzo move order, I avoid the best version of the QGD Exchange variation. Now the game becomes a Catalan.) **4.g3 Bb4+** (This is the line that Larry Kaufman recommended over 10 years ago! Black slightly displaces the White QB and then plays a closed Catalan.) **5.Bd2 Be7 6.Bg2 O-O 7.Qc2** (More popular and less committal is 7.0-0 c6 8.b3 dxc4 9.bxc4 c5 10.dxc5 Nc6 11.Nc3 Bxc5 12.c2 Bd7 13.Rad1 Re8 +.11/23.) **7...c6 8.O-O b6** (Or 8...Nbd7 9.Bf4 b6 10.Nc3 Nh5 11.Bc1 Nhf6 12.Bf4 rep draw.) **9.b3** (Or 9.Nc3 Nbd7 10.Bf4 Nh5 11.Bd2 Nhf6 rep draw.) **9...Bb7** (Or 9...Nbd7 10.Rd1 Re8 11.Bf4 Ba6 12.Nbd2 +.06/27, or 9...c5 10.Nc3 Nc6 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.Bf4 Bb7 13.cxd5 exd5 14.Rfd1 d4 15.Ne5 +.05/23.)

10.Bc3 (Repositioning the QB. Also equal is 10.Rd1 Ne4 11.Nc3 Nxd2 12.Nxd2 f5 13.Nf3 Bd6 14.e3 Qe7 +.00/29.) **10...Ne4** (Slightly better is 10...c5 11.Nbd2 Nbd7 12.dxc5 bxc5 13.e3 Qc7 14.Rfd1 a5 15.Rac1 Rfc8 16.cxd5 exd5 17.Bh3 Rd8 +.08/23.) **11.Bb2 Nd7 12.Nbd2** (Or 12.Rd1 Rc8 13.Nc3 f5 14.Rac1 +.03/23.) **12...f5!** (And now we have transposed into a Dutch Stonewall where Black has picked up 2 tempi due to Bd2-c3-b2.) **13.Rad1 Rc8** (Or 13...Qe8 14.Ne5 Nxe5 15.dxe5 Rc8 16.Nf3 Qd7 -.02/23.) **14.Ne5 Nxe5 15.dxe5 Nxd2** (Black's plan was to create a deadpoint on e5, blocking the White QB's scope. Another plan worthy of merit is 15...Qe8 16.Nxe4 fxe4 17.f4 exf3 18.exf3 Bc5+ 19.Kh1 b5 +.00/41.) **16.Rxd2 16...Qe8** (Or 16...Bc5+ 17.e3 Qe7 =, but this seems weird.) **17.f3** (Slightly better is 17.e3 g5 18.f4 Kh8 19.Rfd1 Bc5 +.00/26.) **17...Bc5+** (Slightly better is 17...f4 18.Bh3 Bc5+ 19.Bd4 Bb4 20.Rdd1 Qe7 -.22/25.) **18.Bd4 Bxd4+** (Or 18...Qe7 or 18...Bb4.) **19.Rxd4 c5 20.Rd3 f4** (Or 20...d4 21.e3 dxe3 22.f4 =.) **21.cxd5?!** (Somewhat better is 21.gxf4 d4 =.) **21...exd5** (I deliberated for 10 minutes over which way to recapture. Even Stockfish goes back and forth before finally settling on 21...exd5.) **22.gxf4**



22...Rxf4?! (Automatic, but not best! Better is to throw in 22...d4! 23.Qc4+ Kh8 24.e3 Bc6 25.a4 dxe3 26.Rxe3 Rd8 27.Rfe1 Bd5 28.Qa6 Qe7 -.35/27.) **23.e3 Rh4 24.f4 Rd8** (Best, but Black is on a tightrope for the next few moves.) **25.Rfd1** (A tiny bit better is 25.Rdd1 Bc6 26.Kh1 Rh6 +.05/24.) **25...Qg6!** (The only move that holds Black's position together.) **26.Qf2?!** (I thought was strong at first, but there is a problem...Somewhat better to unpin with 26.Kh1 Bc6 27.Bf3 d4 28.Bxc6 Qxc6+ 29.Qg2 Qc8 30.exd4 Rxf4 +.00/25.) **26...d4 27.Kh1 Bxg2+ 28.Qxg2 Rg4?!** (Tempting, but better is 28...Qf5! 29.Rg1 g6 30.Rd2 Rf8 31.exd4 cxd4 32.Rxd4 Rxf4 33.Qd5+ Kg7 34.Rxf4 Qxf4 -.49/25.) **29.Qf3 Rg1+!** (For a time after the game, I thought this move was the culprit, but Stockfish showed me that Black is equal now.) **30.Rxg1 Qxd3** (A fascinating position with multiple potential opposing passed Ps has arisen. I underestimated the importance of White's eP.) **31.Rd1** (Stockfish prefers 31.Qc6 Qf5 32.e6 Qd5 33.Qxd5 Rxd5 34.e7 Kf7 35.Rxg7+ Ke8 36.e4 Rd7 37.Kg2 Rxe7 38.Rxe7 Kxe7 =, but the multiple opposing protected passed Ps aren't resolved yet. After 39.Kf3 b5 40.e5 c4 41.bxc4 bxc4 42.f5 c3 43.Ke2 c2 44.Kd2 d3



OK, I'm clueless about endgames, but doesn't someone run out of tempos first? 45.a3 a6 46.a4 a5 47.h4 h5 48.Kc1 Kf7 49.f6 Ke6 50.Kd2 Kf7 guess not!). **31...Qc3** (Slightly better is 31...Qf5 32.Rd2 b5 = as the eP is under watch now.) **32.e6 g6??** (Way too optimistic! This move allows White to blow open Black's K-side. Short of time, I miscalculated. I didn't see that 32...Re8! 33.Qc6 Kf8! 34.Qd6+ Re7 I stopped here 35.Qd8+ Re8 36.Qd7 Re7 37.Qc8+ = holds.) **33.f5** (Of course!) **33...gxf5 34.Qxf5** (Or 34.Rg1+.) **34...d3** (Or 34...Qxe3 35.Qf7+.) **35.Rg1+ Kh8 36.e7 Rg8 37.Rxg8+ 1-0** Really just one bad move in time trouble, and I'm lost. Having said that, my opponent played quite well and was very resourceful.

C07/28 n169c, Vishal Kobla(2180F)-Tom Beckman(1963F), 2016 Eastern Open, Rd 3.14, 2016.12.28:
Notes by Vishal Kobla [VK] unless otherwise noted and Tom Beckman [TB].

Some background: This was the round 3 game, played on the night of December 28. Having lost in the morning, I found myself in a 0.5/2 hole and needing a win in this game to right the ship once more. **1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 c5** The second most popular move following the characteristic "Tarrasch French" move 3...Nf6. [TB] Only 3...c5 equalizes. **4. exd5 Qxd5 5. Ngf3 cxd4 6. Bc4 Qd6** The queen retreats to her most mobile square. [TB] Some GMs play 6...Qd7 to avoid the theoretical long variation played here. **7. O-O** (7. Nb3 is met by 7...Qb4+ , forcing a knight retreat.) **7... Nf6 8. Nb3 Nc6** (8... e5? 9. Re1 Nc6 10. Bf4 and the central pawns fall. If 10...Bg4, 11. Nxe5 Bxd1 12. Nxc6+ Kd7 13. Bxd6 is winning.) **9. Nbx d4 Nxd4 10. Nxd4 a6 11. Re1 Qc7** {vacating d6 for the bishop.} **12. Bb3** ([TB] A recent try is 12.Qe2 but Aagaard's 12...h6!! equalizes.) **12...Bd6 13.Nf5 Bxh2+ 14.Kh1 O-O 15.Nxg7!** This marks the beginning of a long-lasting attack. **15...Rd8!** (15... Kxg7? was played in an early game 16.Qd4! The threat of Bh6+, Qh4, and a rook lift are dangerous in any particular order.) **16.Qf3 Kxg7 17.Bh6+ Kg6 18.c3** The second bishop comes into play. **18...Nh5 19.Bc1!** The best retreat square. All others hinder the mobility of another key piece.} **19...Bf4!** This move essentially gives back the piece in order to take pressure off the position. The immediate threat was Qg4+, so this move also allows the king to run to h6 if need be. [TB] The only move to reach equality. **20.g4 Ng3+ 21.fxg3 Bxc1** To summarize so far: Following a piece sacrifice by White, Black returned the piece and has a fairly stable position in return. The only nuisance being the king out in the open on g6, so White henceforth attempts to take advantage before the Black king can find safe haven. **22.Raxc1 b5?!** (22... b6! is more accurate due to a reason I did not see... **23.Bc2+?!** ([TB] 23.Qe3! is rather strong as now Black doesn't get in Qc5. [VK] The better move is 23.Qe3, and the consequences behind 22...b5 are very clear. If 22...b6 was played, 23.Qe3 would lead to the variation in the game. Now, however, the Black queen cannot reach c5 and this move is actually better than the text move. 23...Bb7+ 24. Kh2 where Bc2+ followed by the queen's dark square invasion is practically inevitable. The rook capture via 23.Qxa8 is not possible due to 23...Bb7+.) **23...Kg7 24.Be4 Rb8** 24...Ra7 is slightly more accurate because Black will have an easier time doubling rooks on the d-file if need be. **25.Rc2!** A rook maneuver designed to hit at the weak h7 pawn. **25...Bb7 26. Rh2 Bxe4 27. Qxe4 h6?!** A step in the wrong direction. However, there were still chances to recover. 27...Qb7! is the right idea, but it is more difficult to find than usual because it entails sacrificing a pawn. The queens have to come off for Black if he wants to have a worry-free game. 28. Rxh7+ Kg8 29. Qxb7 Rxb7 30. Rh2 Rd3! [TB] I did see this idea, but inexplicably got greedy! **28.g5 hxg5?** Black misses his last chance. 28...h5! had to be played; the idea is to play Qb7 next move with essentially the same idea as before. The only difference is that there is a White pawn on g5, but it hardly makes a difference. 29.Rxh5 Qb7. **29.Qh7+** The White queen enters the fray with devastating effect. The Black king can only run and hope for the best.} **29...Kf8 30.Qh6+** (30.Rf2 is better according to the computer, but the text move poses just as difficult of a problem for Black to solve.) **30...Ke8?!** (30...Ke7 seems counterintuitive due to 31. Qxg5+, but in the end, it was probably the better move. The following sequence is the reason why this was the better continuation. **31.Rxe6+! Kd7** (31... fxe6 leads to forced mate with 32.Qxe6+ Kf8 (32... Qe7 33. Rh8#) 33. Qf6+ Ke8 (33... Kg8 34. Rh8#) (33... Qf7 34.Rh8#) 34. Re2+ Kd7 35. Qe6#) **32. Rxa6** (32. Rf6 was a possible alternative. I looked at both during the game and eventually decided on Rxa6 since it picked up a pawn while simultaneously moving the rook out of harm's way.} **32... Qb7+ 33. Kg1 Kc7 34. Re2 Rd7 35.Qf6** 35. Re7!? Rxe7 36. Qd6+ Kc8 37. Rc6+ Qc7 38. Qc5 was an interesting alternative, but I eventually settled on the quieter move. Fortunately, the Silicon Beast concurred with my decision. **35... Rbd8??** The game-ending blunder. I miss the crushing idea multiple times, but it didn't matter in the end. **36.Re7** This move seems like it simply pins the rook to the king, but it's more than meets the eye. **36...Rxe7 37. Qxe7+ Rd7 38.Qe5+ Kc8 39. Qc5+ Kd8 40. Qxg5+** (40.Ra8+!! The first time I miss the idea. 40...Qxa8 41. Qf8+ picks up the queen.) **40... Ke8 41. Qe5+** (41. Ra8+ Second time.) **41... Kd8 42. Rd6** (42. Ra8+ Third time.) **42... Qa7+ 43. Qd4** {This forces an immediate liquidation to a winning king+pawn endgame. Although I missed the crushing blow multiple times, it was still satisfying to end the game in this way.} **1-0**

C11/26 n147e, Larry Kaufman(2401)-Tom Beckman(2055), Eastern Open, Rd. 7.8, Bethesda MD, 12/30/2016: **1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.f4 c5 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.Be3 cxd4** (I had decided to replace the 7...a6/8...b6 approach with this faster development, despite my considerable success with the other line. However, this was my first outing, and I wish I could have tried it out earlier against an equal as the attacks and corresponding defenses are often hard to see without experience and analysis. I have purchased Cyrus Lakdawala's book on the Classical French, but haven't had time to closely analyze the games presented in this line. For 11.Nb3, he analyzes Anand-Morozevich, FIDE World Ch, San Luis 2005.) **8.Nxd4 Bc5 9.Qd2 O-O 10.O-O-O a6** (And now the battle lines are drawn: White will attack on the K-side, while Black will storm the White K on the Q-side.) **11.Nb3** (This is the tabiya for this variation. This move and 11.Qf2 and 11.h4 are considered most challenging to Black. Other tries are 11.Kb1, 11.g4, and 11.Nce2. White has 3 ways to attack the Black K:

- 1) Attack the h7 square with Qh4 and Bd3, force ...h6, and then advance the gP, as occurs in this game
- 2) Attack down the h-file with Ph4-h5 and either:
 - a) Force P...h6 followed by the gP advance, 1/2 opening the h- and g-files
 - b) If allowed, play Ph6 and after P...g6, play the Pf5 sac, opening lines
- 3) Attack with Pf5 either supported by pieces and/or Pg4,, while the P at e5 is adequately defended.)

11...Bb4! (Perhaps less good is 11...b6 12.h4 Qc7 13.h5 h6 14.g4 Bb7 +.28/24.) **12.Bd3** (Or 12.a3 Be7 +.03/25.) **12...b5 13.Qf2!** (White is not afraid of the doubled cPs and likely loss of a P because he sees that his K-side attack may gain momentum, while Black's attack has been slowed somewhat. Larry's intuition is terrific! Lakdawala's book covers 13.Rhf1 {the Anand game} as well as 13.g4 Na5 {Stockfish prefers 13...Bb7! 14.a3 Be7 15.Kb1 b4 -.38/26} 14.Bd4 {14.Nxa5} 14...Nc4 {14...Nxb3+ 15.axb3 Bb7 16.Kb1 Qh4 +.10/25} 15.Qf2 {15.Qg2!} 15...a5! 16.a3 Be7 17.Nxb5 Ba6 +/- Gharamian-Ni Hua, Biel 2011. Also OK is 13.Kb1 Bb7 14.Qf2 Bxc3 15.bxc3 Rc8 +.00/23.) **13...Na5?!** (Critical is the obvious 13...Bxc3 14.bxc3 Na5 15.Nxa5 Qxa5 16.Kb1 Qxc3 17.Bd4 Qb4+ 18.Ka1 and now:

1) 18...f6! {logical given the positions of the White Q and Black R}

a) 19.Rb1 +.31/38

i) 19...Qa5 20.Qh4 f5 21.Qf2 Nb8 22.Rb3 +.29/29 Qc7 23.Rg1! Nc6 24.Bb6 Qf7 25.g4 {or 25.Bc5 Re8} 25...Kh8 26.Bc5 Rg8 27.Be2 +.36/31 {or 27.Ra3} 27...Bd7 {or 27...g6 or 27...fxg4} 28.gxf5 exf5 29.Bd6 {or 29.Rd3 Be6} 29...Be6 30.Rh3 {or 30.Rc3} 30...g6 31.Rc3 Rgc8! {or 31...Qa7 +.23/33} 32.h4 d4 33.Rc5 Ne7 34.Qxd4 Rxc5 35.Bxc5 Rc8 36.Bf3 Nd5 37.Bxd5 Bxd5 38.h5 Be6 39.Bb6 Kg7 40.c3 Qe8 +.00/30

ii) 19...Qa4 20.Rhe1 Rf7 21.Rb3 Bb7 22.exf6 Nxf6 23.Bxf6 Rxf6 24.Qb6 Rf7 25.g3 +.43/31

b) 19.c3 Qa3 20.exf6 Nxf6 21.Rhe1 Bd7 22.Qh4 Rf7 23.Re3 Rc8

i) 24.Rg3 Qe7 25.Rh3 h6 26.Rg3 Kf8 27.Be5 Ne4 28.Qxe7+ Kxe7 29.Bxe4 dxe4 30.Bxg7 h5 31.Be5 Bc6 +.20/26, but B opps

ii) 24.Rh3 h6 25.Bg6 Rff8 26.Be5

(1) 26...Qa4 27.Rg1 d4 28.Bxd4 b4 29.cxb4 e5 30.fxe5 Nd5 31.Qg3 Bxh3 32.gxh3 Rc7 +.00/26

(2) 26...a5? 27.g4 +.24/22

2) 18...Qe7 19.g4 +.76/24.)

14.Ne2! (Probably White shouldn't allow the N into c4. Somewhat better is 14.Nxa5 Qxa5 15.Bd4 Qc7 16.Kb1 +.45/26.) **14...Nc4 15.Bd4?**

(15.Bd4 looks solid, but Stockfish prefers 15.Kb1 Bb7 16.h4 Qc7 17.h5 h6 18.Ned4 Rfc8 19.Bc1 Nc5 20.a3 +.50/24.) **15...a5** (Now Black's aP rolls.)

16.Kb1?! (Somewhat better is 16.Nc5 Nxc5 17.Bxc5 Bxc5 18.Qxc5 Bd7 -.36/26.) **16...a4 17.Nbc1 a3 18.b3 Nb2?!** (Correct is continuing to build with 18...Qc7 19.Qh4 g6 20.c3 Bc5 21.Qh6 Ne3 22.Bxe3 Bxe3 23.Bxb5 Nxe5 24.Qh3 Bxc1 25.Rxc1 Nd7 26.Qe3 Nf6 27.Qd4 -.53/29, but I was drawn to this flashy move like a moth to light.) **19.Rdf1!** (For a time, I thought that White had to take 19.Bxb2 axb2 20.Kxb2 Qa5 21.Kb1 Ba3 22.Qh4 f5 23.g4 Nc5 +.06/31, and that Black would have a great attack due to the elimination of the QB and the open lines created on the Q-side, all for the price of the aP. However, things are not so simple. White has adequate defensive resources, and White can attack too! Larry didn't seem to consider taking the N for all those human GM reasons, although it appears to be best! A fascinating position for further study!) **19...Qc7?!** (Larry queried why I allowed 20.Qh4 now. Well, I thought that Black could satisfactorily defend as in the game, but in retrospect, this does not to appear to be the case. This calls into question Black's entire opening strategy and ability to withstand White's K-side attack after Black's h6. Does Black's attack have to be quite swift to distract White? So, Black should keep the Q on d8 {I did consider it} and play 19...Nxd3! {now the Q is freed from preventing White's Qh4} 20.Nxd3 Be7 21.Qe3 b4 22.f5 exf5 23.h4 Nb8 24.Bb6 Qe8 25.Nd4 Na6 26.Nf4 +.00/26.) **20.Qh4 Nxd3?!** (Perhaps a better try is 20...h6 after 21.Rf3 Bd2 22.Rg3 Kh8 23.f5 f6 {must prevent White from playing 24.f6} 24.exf6 Nxf6 25.fxe6 Ra6 26.Rf3 Rxe6 27.Nf4 Bxf4 28.Qxf4 Qxf4 29.Rxf4 Nxd3 30.Nxd3 +.55/27.) **21.Nxd3 Bc5** (I looked at the odd move 21...Bd2, but saw no reason to play 21...Bd2 22.f5 exf5 23.Rxf5 Nb8 24.Rh5 h6 25.Bc5 Re8 26.Qg3 + 1.27/24, as the B looks to be out of play.) **22.Nxc5?** (Instead of a winning game, the game is equal. It is much stronger to first play 22.Rf3! Bxd4 23.Bxd4 Qd8 {or 23...Nc5 24.Rh3 h6 25.Nf2 + 1.22/33} 24.Qxd8 Rxd8 25.Re1 Nb8 + 1.28/29.) **22...Nxc5**

23.Rf3 Ne4 24.Rh3 h6 25.g4 (Also equalizing is 25.Ng3 Bb7 26.Nxe4 dxe4 27.Rc3 Bc6 +.00/26.) **25...Ra6?!** (Too slow. Larry suggested 25...Ba6 but it is not so good after 26.g5 Rfc8 27.Nc3 b4 28.f5 Nxc5 29.f6 Nxc3 30.Qxc3 Kh7 + 1.03/25. Stockfish likes 25...b4! 26.g5 Ba6 27.gxh6 g5! {this fine move is why Black doesn't need Kh7} 28.h7+ Kh8 29.Qh5 Bxe2 30.Qxe2 f5! 31.exf6 Qxf4 32.Rd3 Rf7 33.Rg1 Rc8 34.Ba1 Kxh7 +.00/27 and Black has beaten back the attack.) **26.g5 Kh7!** (Larry missed this idea to restrain the g- now h-P to h6 rather than h7, so Black won't face mate at g7 after Qh6. If 26...Rc6? {what I had originally planned} 27.gxh6 g5 28.h7+ Kh8 29.Qh6 Qe7 30.gxf5 +.63/25 and Black can resign.) **27.gxh6?!** (And here White should first play 27.Nc3 Rc6 28.Nxb5 +.04/26.) **27...g6 28.Nc3!** (A strong move that I totally missed. Please note that White's K-side attack is stalled, and so Larry moves his active operations to the Q-side, since the center is blocked!) **28...Nxc3+?!** (This just helps out White. Here Black should play the gutsy 28...Rc6 29.Nxb4 Qb7 30.Nxa3 Qb4 31.Bb2 Bb7 32.Qe1 +.82/26 with some vague comp for the 2 pawns.) **29.Rxc3 Qd8 30.Qxd8?!** (Even better is 30.Qg5! + 1.36/24.) **30...Rxd8 31.Rc7 Bd7** (Black is hunkered down, but has some chances of holding.) **32.Bc5 Be8!** (Another idea here is to get active at the cost of a P with 32...Rc6 33.Rxc6 Bxc6 34.Bxa3 Kxh6 +.87/27.) **33.Bf8** (Slightly better is 33.Rd1 +.89/30.) **33...Kg8?!** (In the post mortem, Larry praised this move, but it may not be best. I considered the best move: to guard the aP and remove White's active R after 33...Rda8! 34.Rg1 Rc6 35.Rxc6 Bxc6 36.Be7 Ra7 +.86/27.) **34.Bg7?!** (A difficult choice: which way should the B go? 34.Bg7 is very committal and off-side, but is very dangerous for Black. However, Stockfish prefers 34.Be7! Rd7 35.Rxd7 Bxd7 36.h7 Kxh7 37.Rg1 + 1.32/26 and White is close to winning despite the Bs of opposite colors.) **34...Rc6 35.Ra7?!** (Giving up the c-file was a very surprising choice to me, especially with less than 2 minutes to complete 40 moves on Larry's clock. This risky plan demonstrates Larry's fighting spirit and will to win, despite the B opps. Somewhat better is 35.Rxc6 Bxc6 36.Bf6 +.58/25) **35...Rdc8 36.Rxa3 Rxc2 37.h4** (Surprisingly best is 37.Ra8! Rxa8 38.Kxc2 Rxa2+ 39.Kd3 +.31/26.) **37...Kh7!** (Even though I wasn't in time trouble, I started to make weaker moves. Maybe my sleep deficit was finally taking its toll? Slightly weaker is 37...d4 {a move I only noticed several moves later} 38.Ra8 d3 39.Rxc8 Rxc8 40.Rd1 Bc6 41.Kb2 Be4 42.Rc1 Ra8 43.Bf6 +.34/24.) **38.Ra7 Rf2??** (Black is erroneously playing for the win, but I offered a draw at this point {OK, I see that makes little sense}. My overzealous optimism likely cost me the game. How did I overlook White's next move? Much better to mark time with 38...R2c3 Rd1 +.29/25 and a likely draw.) **39.Rc1** (Of course.) **39...Rd8** (39...Rb8 + 2.47/24 is another way to lose.) **40.Rac7 g5?** (Better is the intended 40...Rxf4 41.Rc8 Rxc8 42.Rxc8 g5 43.h5 + 2.83/25, but the outcome is still no longer in doubt.) **41.fxc5 d4** (Or 41...Rh2 + 5.33/25.) **42.Rc8 Rxc8 43.Rxc8** (Parents should cover their children's eyes at this point.) **43...d3 44.Kc1 Bd7 45.Rc7 Be8 46.h5 Rh2 47.Rc8 Rc2+ 48.Rxc2 dxc2 49.Kxc2 Bc6 50.Kc3 Bf3 51.Kb4 Be2 52.Kc5 Bd3 53.a4 bxa4 54.bxa4 Be2 55.a5 Bxh5 56.a6 Bf3 57.Kd6 Kg6 58.Bf6 1-0** I was

quite happy with my play in this game, and this is as good as I can play right now. It is always a pleasure to play Larry Kaufman because his bravery means he doesn't avoid complex main lines and will give you the opportunity to test out your theoretical opening knowledge. I think that I have demonstrated the worthiness of this variation. However, the necessary defenses for Black on the K-side may need to be better worked out (I defended over the board for the first time in this line), as should be White's setup on the Q-side. What else did I learn from this game? Continuously improve the positioning of your pieces. And most importantly for me -- unwarranted (unbridled?) optimism in chess will cost you points: witness 35.Ra7?! and 38...Rf2??. On the flip side, 13.Qf2! was a fine optimistic move, and aren't you allowed to take a few liberties against a much weaker player??