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FM Ignacio Perez (1967-2022)



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On the front cover:

Ignacio Perez vs Michael MacGregor (hand shown hitting the clock) at the 2007 Washington State Championship. Ignacio was a lifelong practitioner of the white side of the Ruy Lopez and scored many fine victories with it. Photo Courtesy of Washington Chess Federation.

On the back cover:

Chesstoon drawn by local artist Brian Berger, of West Linn, Oregon.

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Table Of Contents

Ignacio Perez Washington Chess Federation	Front Cover
Solutions To Last Month's Puzzles Valentin Razmov	3
Memories Of Ignacio Perez... Various.....	4
Ignacio's Brilliant Attacking Play Josh Sinanan	6
Play Like Ignacio! Josh Sinanan	7
A Pre Grand Prix Mike Murray	8
Harmon Memorial (Ad) Redmond Apr 2-3	9
WOW Tournament Jacek Stopa	10
Sixth Annual Neil Dale Memorial Open Steven Breckenridge	14
Chandra Alexis Chess Club (Ad) Boise.....	15
East Regional Scholastics Qualifier Jay Simonson	16

9th Sands Regency Reno-Larry Evans Memorial (Ad) Reno Apr 15-17 or Apr 16-17 (Revised 2-21-2022)	17
Winning And Losing In Person Once Again Jim Tarjan.....	18
To Draw Or Not To Draw? Nobel Ang.....	22
Play Like Ignacio! (answers to positions from page 7) Josh Sinanan	24
Washington Senior Championship (Ad) Redmond Apr 15-17	25
WA State Barber/Rockefeller Qualifier (Ad) Redmond Apr 17.....	26
Washington News Roundup Josh Sinanan	27
Washington Open (Ad) Redmond May 28-30.....	28
Seattle Chess Club (Ad) Seattle	30
Northwest Chess Grand Prix Report Murlin Varner	31
Chesstoon Brian Berger	Back Cover

Solutions To Washington Class Puzzle Solving Competition (from NWC February 2022 issue, page 25) provided by Valentin Razmov

#1) Q: White to play and mate in one.

A: 1.Ng6#

#2) Q: Black to play and mate in one.

A: 1...Qh8#

#3) Q: Black to play and mate in two.

A: 1...Qb3 2.axb3 (or 2.AnyOtherMove Qxa2#) 2...Nxb3#

#4) Q: White to play and mate in three.

A: 1.Rxe7+ Bxe7 (or 1...Kc8 2.Qf5#) 2.Qe6+ Ke8 3.Qxe7#

#5) Q: White starts and wins material.

A: 1.Bxb6 with the idea Qc3+, winning the Rh8.

#6) Q: Black starts and wins material.

A: 1...Bd3 2.Qxb5 Bxb5, and White's rook is trapped.

#7) Q: White starts and wins material.

A: 1.g4 and Black loses the Nd4, e.g., 1... Qxg4 Nxd4 or 1...Qf6 Nxd4.

#8) Q: White's Ne5 looks to be in trouble. What should White do?

A: 1.O-O saves Ne5 due to the Re1 threat, and White remains two pawns up.

#9) Q: White to move and win.

A: 1.Bf7+ Kh8 2.Be8, and Black cannot defend both the Bf8 and the backrank.

#10) Q: White to move and win.

A: 1.Ra6 Qd8 2.Ra8 Qxa8 3.Nc7+ wins material (queen for a rook).

#11) Q: White to move and make a new queen within no more than five moves.

A: 1.Bf5 Bb7 2.f3 g6 (or 2...Bxf3 3.e4, blockading the diagonal) 3.Be4, and the a-pawn will promote.

#12) Q: Black's f3-pawn looks menacing. White to move and stop it from promotion.

A: 1.Rb6+ (not 1.Kf2? g4, followed by ...g4-g3+ and the f-pawn promotes.) 1... AnyKingMove 2.Rf6.

#13) Q: White to move and avoid defeat.

A: 1.Qxf8+ Kxf8 2.b8=Q+ Ke7 3.Qc7+ Kf6 (or 3...Ke8 4.Qc6+) 4.Qf4+, with perpetual check in all lines.

#14) Q: White threatens to open up the king-side via g3-g4 and checkmate soon after. Propose a plan for Black to survive in the long-term.

A: 1...b5! (destabilizing White's pawn structure and/or driving away the white Na4, then forcing queen exchanges in order to defend against the threat of a king-side attack by White) 2.Nb2 Qc5. Partial credit given for proposing 1...Red8 instead, with ideas 2.Nc3 (or 2.g4 Bxd5 3.cxd5 Rc2) 2...Qxe6.

#15) Q: White threatens to open up the Black king and checkmate. Propose a plan for Black to survive and even thrive.

A: 1...Rxe3! (sacrificing an exchange to eliminate the dangerous Be3 and c5-pawn, leaving White with no attack and Black with active pieces, e.g., 2.cxb6 (or 2.fxe3 Bxc5, or 2.c6 Re5 3.cxd7+ Kxd7) 2...axb6 3.fxe3 (or 3.Qxe3 Bc5) 3...Ba3. Partial credit given for proposing 1... Kb7, which stops White's attack, albeit without the counterplay for Black as in the mainline.

Memories Of Ignacio Perez...

(February 1967 — January 2022)

Karen Schmidt, Kyle Haining, Mark Ryan, Ryan Ackerman

Karen Schmidt...

I was devastated to hear of the passing of Ignacio Perez on January 11, 2022.

I had the honor of interviewing Josh Sinanan, President of the Washington Chess Federation, to gather information for this story. Josh knew Ignacio well. I had always wondered when and how Ignacio—who was originally from Cuba—got to the United States. According to Josh, there are differing versions of the story...but Ignacio told him that he immigrated in the early 1990s. He came on a raft with several other refugees, and they were all badly dehydrated by the time they were picked up by U.S. personnel, probably the Coast Guard. Ignacio first settled in Miami, and then eventually ended up in Seattle. Josh had the impression that Ignacio might have been drawn to Seattle because of the active chess scene here.

Josh met Ignacio in the early 2000s, watching him play speed chess at the Crossroads Mall. Josh had graduated from high school by then. Ignacio had very impressive speed chess skills, attacking style, and chess prowess in general.

A little later, Josh hung out with Ignacio and other chess players at the Redline, a pizza joint on Capitol Hill. Many strong players frequented the pizza and beer joint for Friday night blitz chess.

Ignacio taught private lessons at the food court at the Crossroads Mall in Bellevue. He trained several strong young players there, including Kyle Haining and Ryan Ackerman. After living in Bellevue for a while, Ignacio settled on Capitol Hill in Seattle.

Ignacio was an extrovert and was great at attracting a big crowd at the mall and at tournaments. His games provided excitement and action. He often made wild and sometimes unsound sacrifices. He was thought of as “the local chess medicine man” ...the wise sage... and a skilled teacher. Parents and players recognized those qualities, and Ignacio was a role model and mentor. Parents of top junior players were very grateful for

his teaching skills.

Josh and I agreed that Ignacio resembled the “Vinnie” character (played by Laurence Fishburne) in my favorite movie of all time, *Searching For Bobby Fischer*. Vinnie taught street chess: he and Ignacio were gamesmen, sometimes bluffing, sometimes playing for money. Ignacio was also an avid poker player and enjoyed that type of “risk taking” in both poker and chess. Josh observed (and Kyle Haining confirmed) that sometimes top players called his bluff at the chess board.

Ignacio became a National Master in 1997, and by 2007 he was a FIDE Master (with higher level requirements). After his first win (2007) in the Washington State Championship, he helped teach chess at Medina Elementary School in Bellevue. He and Coach Leo Stefurak even accompanied the Medina chess team to the Nationals one year.

Ignacio believed that the human side of chess was more important than playing by the book. However, he religiously studied the games of Mikhail Tal and Kasparov/Karpov games. He had a “Mikhail Tal personality.” Before immigrating to the United States, he frequented the Havana Chess Club and knew many famous players—GM Julio Becerra and IM Blas Lugo among others. He talked about speed chess, high level players, and lots of excitement when he spoke of his early years in Cuba. Ignacio’s peak chess years were from 2007 to 2013. He won the Washington State Championship in both of those years.

Locally, Ignacio and our other legendary player, Viktors Pupols, were rivals. They played each other many times, and neither of them ever wanted a draw. “It was always a good fight,” according to Josh.

After Ignacio was diagnosed with throat cancer in 2019, chess friends got him into treatment at the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance (SCCA). Since he was not able to teach lessons after the surgery and during chemo treatments, the Pacific Northwest Chess Center raised funds for his treatment. Ignacio had also played at that new chess center established on the East Side (of Lake Washington) from

2018-2022.

Several other chess players also gave me personal stories about Ignacio. He helped Detective Cookie by volunteering at her Rainier Beach chess program in the early 2000s. She told me that he was great with the kids and parents.

Here’s a little story about Ignacio from fellow chess player and friend John Readey:

“I first met Ignacio about 16 years ago while playing speed chess at Crossroads. Someone told me this ‘new guy’ was pretty good and I should play him. Shortly thereafter I lost the first of what was to be many speed games against Ignacio. His attacking play while offering colorful commentary in Spanish usually had me bamboozled in short order. Later we would meet up at the Canterbury or a restaurant where we would play chess late into the night. Often times I would say ‘I need to go home now,’ but he would say that I needed to win one more game first! Well... that could take another four or five games, but he was always a good sportsman and taught me a lot about chess.”

Two of Ignacio’s private students, Kyle Haining and Ryan Ackerman, also contributed personal memories for this story. Both gave me permission to quote from their comments. I was so moved by their heartfelt stories that I decided we should use them in their entirety, in the related story following this one. Also appearing in that related article is a remembrance by Ignacio’s friend and fellow chess player, Mark Ryan.

I would like to thank Josh Sinanan, John Readey, Mark Ryan, Detective Cookie, Kyle Haining and Ryan Ackerman for their time and contributions about Ignacio. While writing this story, it became clear to me that I am not the only one who will greatly miss our friend Ignacio Perez. May he rest in peace.

Kyle Haining...

Ignacio was a familiar sight at chess tournaments. He was a strong player, a former two-time Washington State Champion, and was well-known for his

attacking, sacrificial style.

I used to take lessons from Ignacio. This was back when I was in third grade, which was over a decade ago. He liked to teach from a book, *Attack with Mikhail Tal*, which was hardly a surprise, as Tal was a world champion famous for his sacrificial style. After the lesson, we'd play games. Ignacio preferred bullet. I remember, I believe on more than one occasion, I would be down to only a couple seconds. Ignacio would have a bit more, but he'd purposely wait and look at the board to bring his time down. I think he enjoyed having a mad time scramble at the end.

Years later, I got strong enough that I'd play Ignacio fairly regularly in tournaments. I was happy to have a plus score against my former teacher. In my opinion, he liked sacrifices a little too much and could go overboard, but proving this was not an easy thing! Sometimes, you just couldn't contain his attack well enough, and he'd beat you convincingly. His daring style was dangerous and could even pose risk to someone of the GM level.

Ignacio was a good sport, even when he lost. One time, when I was beating him in a game, he told my dad, "Kyle has my number!" He managed to have good humor and positiveness even when losing.

Ignacio would bring a certain liveliness and energy to tournaments. Analyzing games with Ignacio was always a lot of fun. I remember a couple stories he told.

Back when Hikaru Nakamura came to Seattle, Ignacio wanted to challenge him. But since Nakamura was high profile, you couldn't just go up to him and ask. So, what did Ignacio do? Trash-talking. He and a friend talked about Nakamura when Nakamura was around. The trick was to pretend like you didn't notice him there (avoid looking in his direction). I'm not sure what Ignacio said, but I imagine it may have been along the lines of, "That Nakamura, you know GMs are overrated." His friend might have responded, "Yeah, if you played him best-of-five, how do you think you'd do?" And Ignacio might have replied, "I'd win... three easy." Eventually Nakamura, who's been overhearing this, comes over and says (imagining words again), "Hey, you wanna play?" And so, Ignacio got to play Nakamura. Apparently, Ignacio even managed to win one of the games, which did not make Nakamura very happy.

Another story has to do with Ignacio's

journey to the US. As many people know, he came to the US on a raft from Cuba. Apparently, a useful thing to bring on the journey was limes. They guarded against dehydration. Ignacio (or someone else) brought limes for the journey, so he could suck on them when dehydrated.

Ignacio was a strong player over the board, and a gentleman off the board. He will be missed by many in the chess community.

Mark Ryan...

Ignacio was a really kind-hearted person with an infectious smile.

I met him initially at the Washington Open in 1998 when we analyzed a barn burner of a game that he had played. It was some line of the King's Indian Defense.

After that, we ended playing hundreds of speed games all around Seattle. In bars, cafes, coffee shops, and in parks. I also invited him to teach some of my chess classes with special topics.

We often talked about chess theory. We had many conversations where we talked when to "release the tension" "gaining tempos from exchanging certain pieces on the right squares" the "importance of creating the two weaknesses" "color complexes," etc. etc.

We had a personal joke that always lit up a smile, and it was 'THE SQUEEZE', where you have a small advantage that you just build up the pressure and put as much psychological pressure on the opponent as possible. If he was playing, I would pinch my fingers showing him I'm noticing the squeeze, he would just smile.

After I stopped playing chess and I went to tournaments to observe and I saw him I would pinch my fingers, he would bring up that infectious smile!!

One of the funniest moments we had was when Josh Sinanan got initially voted in as President of the WCF. There was a Board meeting going on and there were a few other candidates and observers in the room. I recommended that Josh run and he agreed. I went to find Ignacio so that we could gather as many people as possible to vote for Josh. Ignacio went wild and got all his Hispanic/Cuban friends and others. I went and got people, and Geoff Gale got a bunch; it was a landslide victory for Josh. Ignacio looked at me and pinched his fingers.

Rest in peace my friend and "SQUEEZE!"

Ryan Ackerman...

One evening in the Summer of 2010, I was in the middle of a lesson with Ignacio at Crossroads mall in Bellevue. A voice came on the intercom and said, "The time is now 9:45 PM and the mall will be closing in 15 minutes."

Our lesson had begun at 5 PM, and we now approached the five-hour mark.

Per usual we gathered our belongings and walked across the street to a neighboring grocery store and continued the lesson in the cafe area until 1 AM. We'd study my tournament games, masterful attacking chess games, isolated queen pawn structures, and everything in between.

I felt badly I could only afford to pay him for one hour, but we both had so much fun that we'd go until they'd kick us out. I loved it. We laughed and joked, and he stretched my thinking to new heights. Eight-hour lessons, once a week, every week. My style of play and my appreciation of the art of attack were forever changed by this legendary human being.

He will be missed.



*Ignacio Perez at a blitz event held at Crossroads, Bellevue, on June 13, 2008.
Photo credit: Fritz Scholz*

Ignacio's Brilliant Attacking Play

NM Josh Sinanan

Over the course of his chess career, FM Ignacio Perez played many exciting and tactical games. He was like our local "Northwest Tal," always coming up with creative and insightful ideas at the board. Ignacio twice won the Washington State Championship in 2007 and 2013.

2007 Washington State Championship

	Name	Title	City (WA)	Rtg	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
1	Readey, John	FM	Bellevue	2336	x	0	1	0.5	0	1	0.5	1	0	0	4.0
2	Bartron, Paul		Tacoma	2118	1	x	0	0.5	0	0	0.5	0	1	1	4.0
3	Bragg, David	FM	Bothell	2205	0	1	x	0	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	4.0
4	Raptis, Nick	NM	Vancouver	2312	0.5	0.5	1	x	0	0F	0.5	0.5	0	0	3.0
5	Perez, Ignacio		Seattle	2239	1	1	0.5	1	x	1	0.5	1	0	1	7.0
6	MacGregor, Mike		Tacoma	2161	0	1	0	1F	0	x	1	0	0	0.5	3.5
7	Collyer, Curt		Spokane	2219	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	x	0	1	1	4.5
8	Koons, Nat	NM	Kenmore	2293	0	1	0.5	0.5	0	1	1	x	1	1	6.0
9	Lee, Michael		Bellevue	2202	1	0	0.5	1	1	1	0	0	x	1	5.5
10	Pupols, Viktors	LM	Poulsbo	2240	1	0	1	1	0	0.5	0	0	0	x	3.5

2013 Washington State Championship

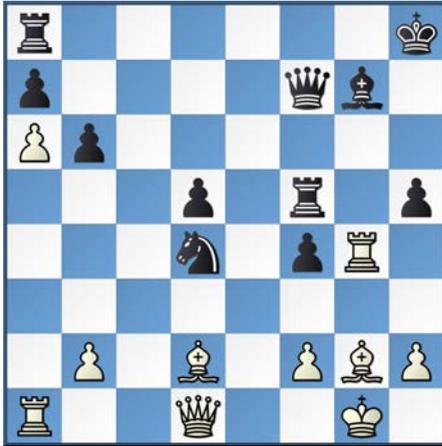
	Name	Title	City (WA)	Rtg	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Pos
1	Nathan Lee		Issaquah	2131	x	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0	1.0	4.5	5th
2	Roland Feng	NM	Seattle	2218	0.0	x	0.0	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	1.0	0.0	3.0	
3	Ignacio Perez	FM	Seattle	2235	0.5	1.0	x	0.5	0.0	1.0	1.0F	0.5	1.0	0.5	6.0	1st
4	Costin Cozianu	FM	Everett	2508	0.5	0.5	0.5	x	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.5	1.0	5.5	2nd
5	Tian Sang	NM	Bellevue	2288	0.5	0.0	1.0	0.5	x	1.0	0.5	1.0	0.0	1.0	5.5	2nd
6	Samir Sen	NM	Vancouver	2211	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	x	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.5	3.5	
7	Igor Ummel		Arlington	2187	1.0	0.5	0.0F	0.0	0.5	0.5	x	0.5	1.0	0.5	4.5	
8	David Golub	NM	Bellevue	2213	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.0	1.0	0.5	x	1.0	0.5	5.5	2nd
9	Curt Collyer	FM	Seattle	2311	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	x	0.5	3.5	
10	Josh Sinanan	NM	Brier	2254	0.0	1.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	x	3.5	

In words of OCF President Wilson Gibbins: "Looking over his games made me realize what a creative player he was. I felt that we played two different games, and while he understood mine, I could never understand his."

Play Like Ignacio!

Here are a few game fragments showcasing Ignacio's attacking prowess. It's Ignacio's move in each position. How would you continue?

For the game continuation, see page 24.



1. Perez-Lee, Mi. WA Class 2006



2. Perez-Readley, WA State Ch. 2007



3. Perez-Pupols, WA State Ch. 2007



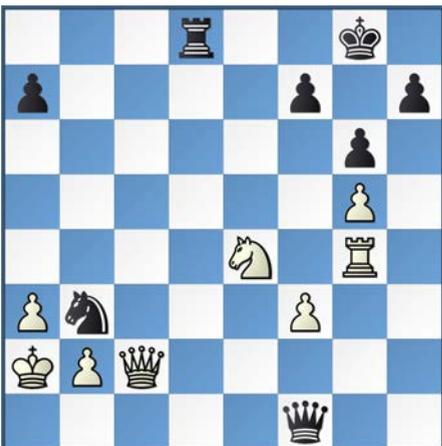
4. Guo-Perez, WA State Ch. 2008



5. Perez-Readley, WA State Ch. 2008



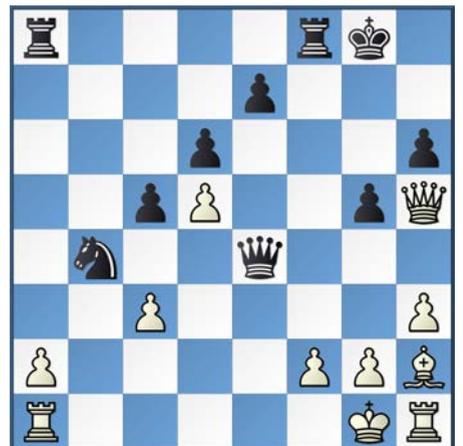
6. Perez-Pupols, WA Open 2008



7. Kelley-Perez, WA State Ch. 2012



8. Greninger-Perez, WA Class 2012



9. Feng-Perez, WA State Ch. 2014

A Pre Grand Prix

Mike Murray

The St. Louis Chess Club sponsors a number of YouTube presentations, and the price (free) is right. I was browsing one of these, a 50-minute lecture by IM Eric Rosen, on various ways of countering the Sicilian with 2.Nc3. The lecture title, “Crush the Sicilian with 2 Nc3 / Games to Know by Heart” has to perk the interest of an anti-Sicilian buff. That’s me, so I sat down at the computer to pick up some pointers. Along about 10:16 into the lecture, I started getting a sense of déjà vu. Rosen says he’s played essentially the same game, an old-time Grand Prix attack, four or five times, and there’s 27 games in the database with this line, White winning all of them. So, it’s worth knowing. But wait a minute! I also played this game in the 1970 Washington State Championship against Johnny Walker, almost a quarter century before Rosen was born!

Old-timers around the Northwest chess scene remember the late John Walker. He placed second in the Washington State Championship in 1972 and 1973 and won it 1975. His rating peaked at about 2350. He died about five years ago, but he’s still in the US Chess

rating database with a master’s rating—no events shown since 1991. I played four tournament games against him, all in the Washington State Championship tournaments from 1970-1973. We split two wins each over those years, but there was little doubt he was a stronger player. He hung out at the Last Exit on Brooklyn taking on all comers at blitz. I spent many hours there getting crushed by him. We both eventually dropped out of chess for decades but had some friendly contact on Usenet and later Facebook.

I learned what much later became known as the Grand Prix Attack from a little magazine published by Hanon Russell called *Shakhmaty in English* and had good results with it for several years.

Anyway, here’s the game:

Mike Murray (2103) – John Walker (2110) [B23]

Washington Closed
Seattle, WA (R4), February 10, 1970
[Mike Murray]

Walker, a NM, was Washington State Champion in 1975, taking second in

1973 and 1974. Northwest Ratings above are approximate; my usual source, the Northwest Chess Scanning Project, is incomplete for early 1970.

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 d6 3.f4 Nc6 4.Nf3 g6 5.Bc4

This became known as the Grand Prix Attack in the 1980s, over a decade after this game was played.

5...Bg7 6.0-0 e6 7.f5

In the old days, this sac was a shocker.

7...exf5 8.d3 Nge7 9.Qe1 0-0?!

NEVER castle into this mess! Correct is 9...h6! when White’s attack sputters.

10.Qh4

Check out IM Erik Rosen’s YouTube lecture at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnm7yXtx6yw>, about ten minutes into it.

10...Ne5?



Position after 10...Ne5

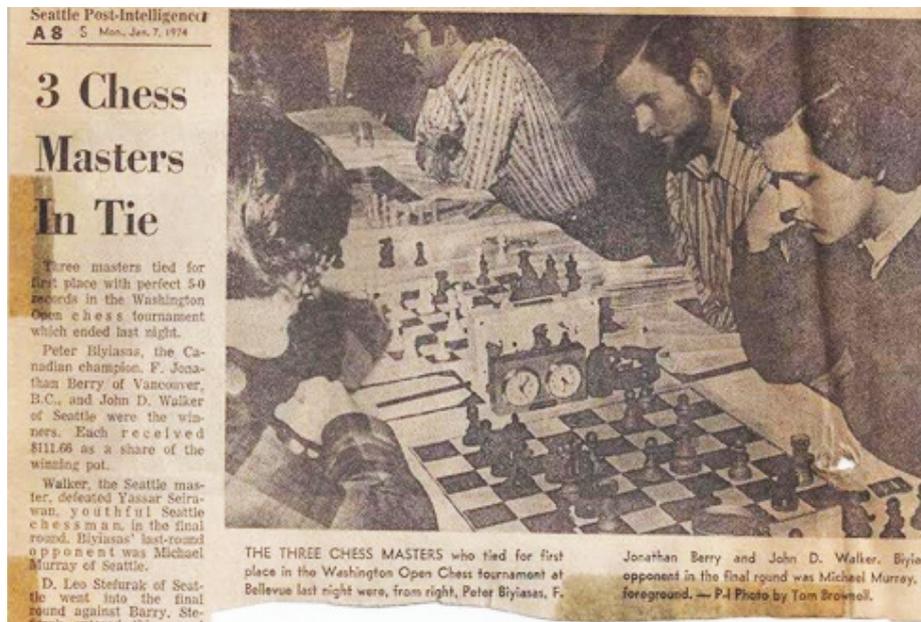
Black’s position is bad no matter what he does, but it’s dead lost after this. The database has 81 games with this position, one of them going back to the 1970s. 10...h5 is best, but still bad. White’s attack is crushing. The game might continue 11.Bg5± Qd7 12.Rae1 a6 13.Bd5

11.Bg5 Re8

There are many ways to lose. Here’s one more: 11...Nxf3+ 12.Rxf3 Qb6 13.Na4 Qb4 14.Bxe7 Qxa4 15.Bxf8 Bxf8 16.exf5 d5 17.fxg6 hxg6 18.Rxf7 Bg7 19.Qe7 Bd4+ 20.Kh1 Be6 21.Qxe6 dxc4 1-0 (21) Medianikova,N-Sternina,V Moscow 1970.

12.Nxe5 dxe5 13.Nd5 h6 14.Bxe7

1-0



Here’s a photo which appeared in the Seattle PI, the last round of the 1974 Washington Open, where Walker tied for first with Bilyasas and Berry. That’s John in the center back, and me in the front left (getting crushed by Bilyasas).

HARMON MEMORIAL CHESS TOURNAMENT

A NORTHWEST CHESS GRAND PRIX EVENT



APRIL 2-3, 2022

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Dual Format: A 5-round Swiss in two sections. Max 25 players in Open section, max 20 players in Reserve (U1500) – please register early!

Open (in Seattle): NWSRS, US Chess & FIDE (rds. 2-5 only) Tri-Rated. Time control: Rd. 1: G/60; d10. Rds. 2-5: 40/100, SD/30; d10. Rounds: Sat 10 AM, 1 PM, 6:30 PM; Sun 10 AM, 3:30 PM. Two half-point byes available, request before end of round 2.

Reserve U1500 (in Redmond): NWSRS & US Chess Dual-Rated. Time control: 30/75, SD/30; d10. Rounds: Sat 9:30 AM, 2:00 PM, 6:00 PM; Sun 9:30 AM, 2:00 PM. Two half-point byes available, request before end of round 2.

Entry Fees: Must be paid by Mar 30: no late or on-site registrations or payments. \$80 by Mar 26, \$95 after. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, or US Chess 2400+. \$40 play-up fee if rated under 1500 and playing in Open section.

Prize Fund: \$1,800 (based on 45 paid entries)

Open: 1st \$400, 2nd \$300
1st U2100/U1900/U1700: \$100.

Reserve: 1st \$250, 2nd \$150
1st U1400/U1200/U1000: \$100
1st Unrated \$100.

Special Prizes (per section):

Biggest Upset/Best Female Player (by TPR)/Best Senior (65+, by TPR): 1-yr WCF ext.

Memberships: Current US Chess and WCF membership required, other states accepted. Memberships must be paid at time of registration. This tournament is a qualifier for the WA State Elementary Championships.

Rating: Highest of current NWSRS, or US Chess Regular/Online April supplement rating will be used to determine section, pairings, and prizes.

Registration: Online at nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration
Registration, payment, & Health/Safety Form deadline: Wed, Mar 30 @ 5pm. Unpaid players will be removed from the roster after the deadline, and players from a Waitlist will be offered a spot.

Info: Josh Sinanan, WCF President,
206.769.3757,
WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Health/Safety Protocols: Face masks required for all players and spectators. Please bring your own mask; a limited number is available. All players and parents (if U18) are required to sign the [WCF Health/Safety Protocols & Waiver of Liability](#) form prior to the start of the tournament.

WOW Tournament

December 26-31, 2021

GM Jacek Stopa



*L-R: Jacek Stopa, Vladimir Georgiev, Nikola Mitkov.
Photo courtesy of Jacek Stopa.*

Undeterred by the Omicron outbreak, PNWCC did it again, keeping up its Christmas tradition of a GM Swiss tournament in snowy Redmond, Washington. Located less than a mile away from Microsoft HQ, the tournament attracted no fewer than four GMs of distinct federations to provide a chance for the young players to score their norms. Fighting chess was displayed far and wide with many exciting games played.

I was fortunate to win the event, after a two-year long break from chess. I did play reasonably well against the lower-rated opposition, although those games were not without their challenges, and ended up drawing the tournament's favorites. The titled players successfully "defended" the golden fleece of chess, and nobody scored norms in the event. We wish the young players more fortune next time. One notable mention goes to Mr. Eugene Yanayt, a young aspiring player from Massachusetts, whose legendary prep did not go unnoticed in the event. Among other gems of the art of chess readiness, Eugene started off the event by showing up just a few minutes short of one hour late for his first game against yours truly, betting on extra sleep and psychological advantage. More details on this below.

It is also noteworthy that IM Anthony He played very well throughout the event and went undefeated while showing a lot of confidence and high-quality moves over the board. If I were to put my chips on the next "big deal" in the world tournaments, this guy will definitely be among my picks.

The highest-rated player, my roommate at the event and also a fellow Slav, GM Vlad Belous of Russia, had to settle for a finish outside of top three this time. He perhaps came to regret showing great respect for this author's chess by making a quick draw with the white pieces in the seventh round. We look forward to fireworks from this talented player next time!

I will now provide brief analysis of some of the games played in the

tournament, starting off with the first-round encounter.

Hat tip to the Organizer Xuhao He and Chief Arbiter Andrei Botez! Great event, folks, I look forward to future editions.

**Eugene Yanayt (2070) –
Jacek Stopa (2427) [A04]**
PNWCC FIDE Masters – WOW
December 26, 2021
[Jacek Stopa]

May I start with saying that my very previous event kicked off in the exact same fashion, playing Black against this rare talent. Eugene is well-known for theoretical erudition resulting in posing early challenges to his opponents. As if White clawing his way to early advantage, he likes to seek educated opening hacks. Therefore, even despite being thrown aback by his unexpected lateness, I decided to take initiative immediately.

1.Nf3 e6 2.g3 g5?!



Position after 2...g5

This controversial early strike was no touch-move accident, even though I did think of playing my regular 2...f5 while going into the game. On the contrary, I used an old weapon prepared during my junior years and practiced heavily in quick games. A regular position ensued. Probably the best move in this position, as there really is no way to punish Black immediately for such blatant opening blasphemy.

3.d4! g4

Staying true to the spirit of this ultra-

aggressive opening, Black pushes forward, creating a need for White's immediate reaction.

4.Ne5

4.Nh4 Be7 5.c4! is the engine's recommendation, but it does take prior knowledge to do this kind of a trick. I had to play my time advantage to put Eugene on the spot here.

4...h5

Black continues on his journey of denying basic opening principles, as if putting to question the quixotic preparation idea of White's.

5.h3 d6 6.Nd3

This appears forced, and we arrive at a crucial juncture that ends up determining the nature of the ensuing middle game.

6...Qf6

A very thematic response. Staying true to my style, I do not hesitate to challenge White's set-up. This move is not only a defensive resource, but it also casts a shadow over the central d4 square.

7.e3 gxf3 8.Rxh3

8.Nc3 was a way to seize piece development driven progress in the opening that Eugene perhaps overlooked. I intended to continue my development with 8...Nc6 9.Bd2 Bd7 10.Qe2 0-0-0 11.0-0-0 h4!? with interesting complications.

8...h4 9.Rxh4 Rxh4 10.gxf4 Qxh4 11.Qf3 Nc6

A calm move intending ...e5, posing

time pressure as well as showing White that this game will take its own opening course regardless of any preparation.

12.Nd2?!

This move looks a bit odd. A more natural response was 12.Nc3.

12...e5! 13.dxe5 dxe5 14.Ne4!? Be6?!

I overlook 14...Bg4 15.Qg3 Qh5! 16.Bd2 0-0-0.

15.Bd2 0-0-0 16.Bc3 Bd6=



Position after 16...Bd6

17.Nec5!?

Critical moment in the game. Black needs to make a decision now which will determine the type of position to ensue. However, 17.Nc5 is perhaps not the most obvious choice here for White. The move 17.Bg2 Nge7 18.0-0-0 Bg4 19.Qxf7 Bxd1 20.Kxd1 with a very unclear endgame.

17...Nf6

I was surprised by the move 17.Nec5 and ended up spending a good 20 minutes to think on this move. I chose the provocative 17...Nf6. Engine likes a very different

approach better: 17...Bg4! 18.Qxf7 Bxc5 19.Nxc5 Nge7! 20.Qc4 Rf8 21.Nd3 Nf5 where Black has dangerous initiative. I wasn't quite sure how to respond to White's most ambitious try 18.Nxe5?! This spectacular tactic fails to 18...Bxe5 19.Bxe5 Nd7!-+ with the black queen gaining access to b4, but once the game ended, just glancing quickly, Eugene and I speculated 18.Nxe5 may have been winning. Knowing my opponent didn't have a spare half-hour for fantasy variations, I correctly assumed he would quickly play the next few forcing moves in the game, which were best.

18.Nxe6 fxe6 19.Qh3 Qxh3 20.Bxh3 Kd7 21.0-0-0 Ke7

I was ready to play a few more moves, but without any major ambition at this point. The position favors White, but only slightly. It is relatively simplified without the king-side pawns, and I do have an outpost on d5 for my knight. My central set-up, although quite awkward due to the double pawns, does resemble a Phillidor-style set-up and I didn't think I would risk much here. Furthermore, Eugene's time left has been severely reduced by now and it's not so easy to come up with a positional improvement here without undermining his own set-up.

22.Bg2 Nd5 23.Bd2

White prepares the move c4.

23...Rg8 24.Bf3 Rf8 25.Bg2?!

The safest and best square for the bishop is 25.Be4 where it cannot be kicked by 25...Nf6 due to 26.Bxc6, and placing it on an inferior square instead winds



L-R: Jacek Stopa, Eugene Yanayt, Nikola Mitkov.
Photo courtesy of Jacek Stopa.

up affording Black some nice practical chances in a few moves.

25...b5!? 26.Rh1 Nb4

My only try really, I can't see any other way of posing challenges here.

27.Rh7+ Kd8

The position is essentially equal, but a lot of accuracy is required still on both sides. A very tricky endgame follows.

28.Nxb4 Nxb4 29.Bxb4

29.a3 is more of an engine move here than a practical one. 29...Rxf2 30.Bh3! Nc6 31.Be1 Rh2 32.Bh4+ Kc8 33.Bxe6+ Kb7=

29...Bxb4 30.f3

This is dubious as White decides to lock his own bishop. Instead, 30.Bc6 was a more active option posing threats on the queen-side. White was probably afraid of losing both the f2- and e3-pawns, which would lead to forming a passed pawn for Black. However, ...Rxf2 31.Rd7+! Kc8

32.Bxb5 manages to keep the e-pawn afloat. For example ...Bc5 33.e4 Be3+ 34.Kd1=

30...Rg8! 31.Rh2?!

White should seek some more active options here again, 31.c3! Bc5 32.Bh3 Bxe3+ 33.Kc2 Rg6 34.b4= is equal even though Black is up a pawn; there is no passer or any real danger on board.

31...Be1

A good practical option calling into question White's position of the pieces. Better, perhaps, was 31...e4 with the sneaky idea: 32.fxe4 Bc5 33.Kd1 Bd6 34.e5 Bxe5 35.Rh5! Bxb2 36.Rxb5 persistently chasing that bishop despite his own hanging, and after 36...Rg2 37.Rb2 will in all likelihood peter out to a draw. With little time left, though, many players would be uneasy to enter this path with White.

32.Kd1 Bf2 33.Bh3

33.Bf1 seems better as White grabs the

b5-pawn instead of the e6-pawn. 33... Bxe3 34.Bxb5 Bf4 35.Rh7 Rg2 36.Bd3 and White has the better pawn structure with a mini advantage here.

33...Bxe3 34.Bxe6 Rg1+ 35.Ke2 Bf4 36.Rh7 Rg2+ 37.Kd3 Rd2+ 38.Kc3

This equal position is more practically difficult for White as, suddenly, Black starts posing mating net threats to the white king. More aggressive was 38.Ke4!? Rxc2 39.Rd7+ Ke8 40.Kf5, where White would essentially favor his own initiative over material. Bc1!? Black seeks further pawn grabbing 41.b3! Rc3 42.Kg4 Rc6 43.Kf5= But perhaps this is far from over as these types of endgames tend to have a lot of hidden fireworks, as we will see in the game.

38...a5 39.Bf5 Rd4!

While White's focus had been on defending his pawns, I aspired to win a much bigger prize. The idea had been overlooked by Eugene, and of course now mates start lurking in the air.



L-R: Anthony He, Aaryan Deshpande. Photo credit: Andrei Botetz.

40.a3!



Position after 40.a3

Important defensive resource going against Black's mating nets. 40.b3?? would have been tragic due to 40...Bc1! with impending checkmate on b4 or hopeless material loss.

40...a4 41.b3

This is still equal objectively, but it is the kind of position where Black is having fun picking the most annoying threats, while Black is walking down a minefield. Interesting was 41.Bd3 c5 42.b4! e4! Black really has resources here! 43.fxe4 Be5 44.Kd2 c4 45.Rh5! Saving the day in a very dangerous position. Bf4+ (45...Bf6 46.Rxb5 cxd3 47.cxd3 is a drawn endgame) 46.Kc3 cxd3! 47.cxd3! Rd6 48.Rxb5 and again, White escapes the threats and draws.

41...Bc1! 42.Rh8+

White struggles to come up with counterplay ideas. Better was 42.bxa4! bxa4 43.Be4 Bxa3 44.Rh8+ Kd7 45.Rh7+ Be7 46.Bf5+ Kd6 47.Rh6+ Kc5 48.Ra6 Kb5 49.Ra8 and it is not easy to make progress with Black here.

42...Kc7 43.Rh7+??

White is oblivious to the danger on the queen-side and misses last resort: 43.bxa4! transitioning into the 42.bxa4 line with great drawing chances.

43...Kf6+

Now Black is winning.

44.Bd3 b4+!!



Position after 44...b4+

The point of the whole queen-side masquerade.

45.axb4 a3 46.f4 Bb2+

0-1

Baasansuren Erdene (2285) – Anthony Bi He (2453) [D85]
PNWCC FIDE Masters – WOV
(R6), December 28, 2021
[Jacek Stopa]

Very nice middle game play here by Black showcasing just how deadly the Grunfeld Defense can be if White mishandles early.

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

A standard Grunfeld line, with 7.Be3 being relatively rare but definitely playable.

7...c5 8.Rc1 Qa5

Typical idea threatening 9...cxd4. Position will now simplify into an endgame after a queen trade. These Grunfeld endings are known to be very tricky. White has the central space and pressure down the c-file, but Black is very active against White's central pawns and has potential for good endings later on with two pawns against one on the queen-side.

9.Qd2 cxd4 10.cxd4 Qxd2+ 11.Bxd2 0-0 12.Nf3 Bg4 13.Be3 Nc6

Almost every move by Black hits White's central set-up. White's goal is to hold on to his center and if he successfully does that, a small advantage will be secured.

14.d5 Nb4!?

14...Bxf3!? 15.gxf3 Nd4 is another option for Black here. 16.Rc7 e6 17.dxe6 Nxe6 18.Rxb7 Rab8! With a nice counterplay for the sacrificed pawn. The line could then continue: 19.Rxb8 Rxb8 20.Bd3 Rb2 21.0-0 Rxa2 22.Bc4= Anthony's 14th move is an attempt to grab early initiative and White is now put on the spot.

15.a3 Na2



Position after 15...Na2

16.Rc2?!

White makes first mistake. Better was 16.Rc7 Rac8 17.Rxe7 Rfe8 18.Rxe8+ Rxe8 19.Bd3 Nc3 20.h3 Bd7 21.Nd2! b5! with counterplay. Black sacrificed a pawn and is betting on activity and quick queen-side progression of the b-pawn. Very both-sided play will ensue.

16...Nc3 17.Nd4 Rfc8 18.f3

18.Bd3 is better inviting the following complications 18...Nxe4!? 19.Bxe4 f5 20.Bd3 f4! 21.Bxf4 Bxd4 with a very twisted endgame ahead, slightly favoring Black due to the queen-side two pawns against one.

18...Bd7 19.Bd3??

White gives the game away missing an impending strike. One move too late for this otherwise logical development resource.

19...Ba4! 20.Rc1

There is no good square left for this rook.



Position after 20.Rc1

20...Nxd5!!

Winning material on the spot. White gets punished for not completing his development on time.

21.Rxc8+ Rxc8 22.exd5 Bxd4 23.Ke2 Bxe3 24.Kxe3 Bb3 25.Be4 a5 26.d6 exd6 27.Bxb7 Rc2 28.f4 Ra2 29.f5 Rxa3 30.Kf4 Kg7

Black plays very accurately until the very end.

31.g4 Ra4+ 32.Kg3 gxf5 33.gxf5 Kf6 34.Rf1 Rb4

White resigns due to Black's overwhelming advantage.

0-1



Sixth Annual Neil Dale Memorial Open

January 8-9, 2022

FM Steven Breckenridge

The Neil Dale Memorial was hosted by the Portland Chess Club online via chess.com on January 8-9, 2022. There was a total of 12 players combined into one section from the original three sections advertised. Mike Morris was the head TD and David Murray assistant TD who also competed.

This tournament is the one tournament I've hoped to play each year in recognition of the great Neil Dale who in my opinion has done more for Oregon chess than anyone else I've known. He was my TD growing up and promoted the highest class of fairness with a rigorous understanding of every US Chess rule to answer each question and resolve any dispute. Perhaps out of just 100 tournaments I played growing up, he was in more than 90% of them, and I greatly respect everything he ever did.

**Steven Breckenridge (2306) –
Mark Hanna (1516) [B22]**
Neil Dale Memorial Open
Chess.com (R1), January 8, 2022
[Steven Breckenridge]

**1.e4 c5 2.c3 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4.cxd4 Nc6?
5.d5 Nb8 6.Qd4 Nf6 7.e5 Ng8 8.h4!?**

More provocative than anything and a little slow/less precise. My idea was to possibly provoke h5 for his g6 to be weakened to win the game after e6 f6.

8...Bg7 9.h5 d6 10.Bf4



Position after 10.Bf4

10...dxe5

10...Nd7 11.Bb5 g5 12.Bg3 Nh6 is hard to find but the missed opportunity.

11.Bxe5 Bxe5 12.Qxe5 Nf6 13.Nc3 Qd6

Trading queens simplified my advantage, so this was a mistake.

**14.Qxd6 exd6 15.hxg6 fxxg6 16.Bd3 0-0
17.Nb5 Re8+**

17...Na6 was the important defense
18.Nxd6 Nb4 19.Bb1 Rd8=.

**18.Ne2 Nxd5?? 19.Bc4 Be6 20.Bxd5
Bxd5 21.Nc7 Bxxg2 22.Nxe8 Bxxh1
23.Nc7 Nc6 24.Nxa8 h5 25.0-0-0 Bf3
26.Rd2 d5 27.Nc7 Ne7 28.Ng1 Bh1
29.f3 h4 30.Rh2**

1-0

**Moises Buckner (1311) –
Steven Breckenridge (2306) [E92]**
Neil Dale Memorial Open
Chess.com (R2), January 8, 2022
[Steven Breckenridge]

Though only 1311 US Chess, my opponent had close to an 1800 rapid rating on chess.com and his play was not too shabby finding precise moves.

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 0-0
5.Be2 d6 6.Nf3 e5 7.d5**

Known as the Petrosian/Karpov variation which I normally have some difficulty with against top players online.

7...Nh5 8.Be3

8.g3 is most common 8...a5 9.Be3 f5 10.exf5 gxf5 11.Nxe5 f4 12.Bd2 Qe7 13.Bxxh5 Bxe5 14.Qe2 f3 15.Qe3 is an interesting sequence with slight edge to White.

8...Nf4 9.0-0 Nxe2+ 10.Qxe2 f5

Black is now cruising.

**11.exf5 gxf5 12.Bg5 Qe8 13.Rfe1 Qg6
14.Bh4 Kh8 15.Ng5 Rg8 16.Ne6? Bxe6
17.dxe6 Qh6 18.g3 Nc6 19.Rac1 Qxe6
20.Nd5 Qf7 21.f3 Nd4 22.Qd3 c6 23.Nc3
d5**

A little hasty, ...Raf8 or ...Qh5 were nicer.

24.cxd5 cxd5 25.Rf1 Qe6 26.Nb5 Qb6

I missed 26...Qa6.

27.Nxd4 e4 28.fxe4 fxe4 29.Qe2 Raf8

**30.Kg2 Qxd4 31.Rc7 Rxxf1 32.Qxf1 Rf8
33.Qb5 e3**

Now it's over, and I put on the clinic.

**34.Re7 h5 35.Re8 Qd2+ 36.Kh3 Qf2
37.Rxxf8+ Qxxf8 38.Qe2**

38.Qxd5?? Qf1+ 39.Qg2 e2

**38...Qf5+ 39.Kg2 d4 40.Qf3 Qe5 41.Qf4
d3 42.Qxe5 Bxe5 43.Kf3 e2 44.Kf2 Bxb2
45.g4 Bd4+ 46.Kf3 hxxg4+ 47.Kxxg4 d2**

Not bad for a 1300 rated US Chess!

0-1

**Steven Breckenridge (2306) –
Tony Wang (2135) [C01]**
Neil Dale Memorial Open
Chess.com (R3), January 9, 2022
[Steven Breckenridge]

I did a bit of preparation the night before playing this game as I knew he was a Petrov player and wanted to be sure to get something out of the opening. I was conflicted with two lines to try and ultimately went for the French exchange Nf3 Nf6 transposition line. My other line was a Nc3 Petrov line I prepped that I saw could get a decisive advantage from his game history on chess.com.

In our game the surprise for me was his 7...Be7 move, though I also had some small prep for it, but mostly prepped Bb6 Qe2 Qe7 (or Be6) and Qxe7 Bxe7 Bf4 or Kxe7 (mainline) that I defeated Washington Champion Roland Feng in 2016 Washington Open.

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nf3 Nxe4
5.d3 Nf6 6.d4 d5 7.Bd3 Be7**

7...Bd6 8.Qe2+ Qe7 9.Qxe7+ Kxe7 (9...Bxe7 10.Bf4 c6 11.Nbd2 0-0 12.0-0-0 Re8 13.h3 Nbd7 14.Bh2 was the beginning of some of my Bxe7 prep) 10.0-0 Re8 11.Nc3 c6 12.Bg5 h6 13.Rae1+ Be6 14.Bd2 Kf8 15.Ne5 Nbd7 16.f4 Nb6 17.f5 was the end of my Kxe7 prep.

8.h3

Avoiding some potentially annoying ...Bg4 lines, which I know he would have obliged to do.

8...0-0 9.0-0 Re8 10.c4 c6

A bit too passive, the computer now almost gives me a +1 score from a previous +3.

11.Nc3 Nbd7 12.Ne5

A bit precarious, but very provocative as the risk paid off for the sequence of a brilliancy. 12.cxd5 Nxd5 13.Nxd5 cxd5 14.Qb3 was apparently a more secure +1

12...c5?

Hard to give this a ? since it is so natural to try and give Black some sort of play. 12...Bd6 13.f4 c5 was the best defense.

13.Nxd5! Nxd5

13...cxd4 14.Nxe7+ Qxe7 15.Nf3 Ne5 16.Nxe5 Qxe5± 17.Qf3 was a try.

14.Bxh7+! Kxh7

14...Kf8 15.Qh5 Nxe5 16.dxe5 Nc7 17.Bc2 is gg.

15.Nxf7!

The crux of the idea to distract the queen first from defending the rook on e8.

15...Qb6 16.Qh5+ Kg8 17.Nh6+ gxf6 18.Qxe8+ Bf8 19.cxd5 cxd4 20.a4!



Position after 20.a4

Perhaps the nail in the coffin as the rook lift is just a tempo too fast. 20.Re1 I didn't like 20...Nc5 21.Re7 Qf6 22.d6 b6 and didn't see anything concrete though the computer likes... 23.Qc6 and gives +3 instead of 20.a4 for +2.5 but sometimes the human way produces the fastest result as it was much harder to find a defense to Ra3!

20...Qf6 21.Ra3 Ne5 22.Rg3+ Kh7 23.Re1 Bg7 24.Rxe5

24.d6 was an alternative I was calculating, but there is no need to be fancy since calculating the game continuation.

24...Qxe5 25.Qg6+ Kg8 26.Bxh6 Bf5 27.Qg5

Now you can also see the multipurpose of h3 in the opening!

27...Re8 28.Bxg7 Qxd5 29.Be5+

29.Bh8+ more aesthetic.

29...Kf7 30.Qf6#

A nice way to beat two openings in one! (Petrov and French)

1-0

David Murray (1902) –
Steven Breckenridge (2306) [D00]
Neil Dale Memorial Open
Chess.com (R4), January 9, 2022
[Steven Breckenridge]

I did some small preparation before this game as I knew he had a Jobava-type London system in mind with Nf3 included, but in my humble opinion Black should at least equalize rather comfortably and the ideas can favor Black for dynamic central initiative.

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Bf4 Bg7 5.Nb5 Na6 6.e3 c6 7.Nc3 Qa5

7...Nc7 is an alternative.

8.Nd2 Nh5 9.Nb3 Qb6 10.Bg5

I thought 10.Be5 was important for White 10...f6 (10...Bxe5 11.dxe5 Nc5 12.Be2 Ng7 seemed too equal for my liking) 11.Bg3 and White retains a small advantage.

10...h6 11.Bh4 e5 12.Be2 exd4



Position after 12...exd4

13.Nxd4?

13.exd4 Nf4 14.Bg3! (14.Bf3 Ne6 15.0-0 Nxd4 16.Bxd5! keeping White in the game by a tempo 16...cxd5 17.Re1+ Ne6 18.Nxd5 Qc6 and computer is floating around equal from this dynamic initiative with no castling) 14...Ne6 (14...Nxc2+ 15.Kf1 Bh3 16.Kg1 should give White the edge) 15.0-0 0-0 (15...Nxd4 16.Bxa6/bxa6 17.Na4 Qb4 18.Nbc5)

13...Qxb2

White is now busted.

14.Na4 Qa3 15.Bxh5 gxf6 16.c4 b5 17.cxb5 cxb5 18.Nc2 Qxa4 19.Qxd5 Qxh4 20.Qc6+ Kf8 21.Qxa8 Bc3+ 22.Kf1 Qc4+ 23.Kg1 Bxa1

0-1

Chandra Alexis Chess Club

Upcoming Northwest Chess grand prix

chandraalexischessclub.org

US Chess and FIDE rated tournaments for March—April 2022

Downstairs: Scott Hayhurst DMD building at 7337 W. Northview Street, Suite 4, Boise Idaho 83704.

5 SS; G/90, +30; EF: \$37.50; \$300 b/10; Sat: 9 am, 1:30 pm, 6 pm & Sun: 9 am, 1:30 pm

Once six players have registered and paid their entry fees two Mondays before round one, this tournament is FIDE rated.

Sponsored by MexInsurance.com: March 19-20: [Breakfast at Vinny's!](#)

March 26-27: [When I lose, Vinny! will WHAT?](#)

April 2-3: [Dancing Knights](#)

April 9-10: [Chandra's Killer Queen](#)

East Regional Scholastic Qualifier

Jay Simonson



Senior student Niall McKenzie of Pocatello won all five of his games to score a perfect five points to win the 9-12 Grade Section of the East Regional Scholastic Qualifier held at ISU in Pocatello on January 29, 2022. Hayden Egbert of Rexburg scored three points to win First Place in the 6-8 Grade Section, and Olivia Ding of Idaho Falls scored 4.5 points to win the K-5 Section.

One week before the tournament, participation looked bleak, with only six students signed up. This number continued to grow during the week, and on the day of the event, 27 students were registered. I count that as a huge success.

Distributing 1800 flyers (one per classroom, one for the main bulletin board, one for the councilors' office, and one for a chess coach, if any) among the four largest school districts, emailing the flyer to 29 school districts, and placing an announcement on three TV websites, seven radio stations, and two newspapers apparently paid off.

We not only had a great turnout of players, but we were also on TV. KIFI Channel 8 showed up complete with a camera and a newsmen. Niall McKenzie and fifth-grader new player Mya Del Toro were interviewed as well as the Tournament Director, Jay Simonson. It was about a seven-minute blurb that aired on the evening of Sunday 30 January 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ok3UUYjwW_s

This was a five-round Swiss System tournament. Due to an uneven number in the 6-12 section, one student per round received a full one-point bye. Due to some players needing to leave the tournament early, some players in the K-5 section were given a one point bye in the last two rounds.

The flyer advertised three sections, Kindergarten thru fifth grade, sixth through eighth grade, and ninth through twelfth grade. On the day of the event, there were only two seventh graders for the sixth through eighth grade section, so it was combined with the ninth through

twelfth grade section for chess play, but, as noted above, prizes were awarded to the top two players (the only two) in the 6-8 Section.

The Top School trophy was awarded to Alturas International after a mix-up was cleared up. At first, only the 6-12 Section team (school) scores were counted, and the trophy was awarded to Canyon Ridge High School from Twin Falls. Once this error was pointed out to the Tournament Director, The school scores for the K-5 section proved that Alturas International scored more points than Canyon Ridge. The students of Canyon Ridge graciously yielded the trophy to the winners.

In the 9-12 Section, Behdad Ebadeh-Ahwazi won second place on tie breaks, and Ali Salvar won third. In the K-5 Section, Isabella Luo won second place and Everett Hauge won third.

Niall was the lone senior in the tournament. Eleventh grade honors went to Christian Del Toro, besides the second and third place section winners. Ean Harker won first place tenth grade, and the other two tenth graders withdrew. Oliver Nathan, younger brother of former Idaho State Chess Champion Jacob Nathan won first place in the ninth grade, and William Ford placed second.

In the fifth grade, Raj Ramirez won first, Cooper Van Hoff placed second, and Mya Del Toro was third. In the fourth grade, Sophie Ma Placed third, just behind the section winners, Olivia Ding and Everett Hauge. Amelia Douglass took honors in the third grade besides Isabella Luo, who won second place in the section. Ned Douglass won first place in the second grade, and Owen Simpson won second.



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Winning And Losing In Person Once Again

GM Jim Tarjan

**Aleksey Sorokin –
Jim Tarjan [E06]**

Western States Open

Reno, Nevada (R3), October 16, 2021

[Jim Tarjan]

In 2021 I was very happy to find myself again playing chess in what I can't help thinking of as "real" tournaments, in a real room, on a real board, and with a real, physically present opponent. Strange, perhaps, that it should matter, with something like chess, which seems so well adapted to a virtual world. I'd like to share three games from these recent tournaments. To me the first two are the most interesting games I have played recently. Unfortunately, I lost both games! I was reluctant for that reason to try to make an article out of them. But, as all real chess players know, losing is part of the game, and the most educational part. It is generally my losses, including these two, that I spend the most time with later, rather than merely patting myself on the back, over and over, after a win. And besides, I will mollify my pride by also including a pleasant victory from the 2021 US Senior.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.g3 Be7 5.Bg2 0-0 6.0-0 c6

These two recent loses of mine have three things in common. Both have very strong, talented, young players handling the white pieces. Both feature the same opening, the Closed Catalan. And in the middle game both descend into what were, at least for me at the board, fascinating but unfathomable complications.

More popular among the current elite of the chess world is the Open Catalan of one sort or another, with Black at some moment taking on c4. As for example here: 6...dxc4

7.Qc2 b6 8.Rd1 a5 9.Nbd2 Bb7 10.e4 Na6 11.e5 Nd7 12.cxd5 cxd5

12...Nb4! 13.Qb1 cxd5 as in Wojtazsek vs. Carlsen, World Cup 2021! (The top players do not always choose the Open Catalan!) The point being, which I didn't see at the board, that if kicked the Nb4 can go back to the better square c6. (13...Nxd5!? is also worth considering;

13...Ba6?! vainly hoping for ...Bd3 is not a good idea because of 14.Ne4 and Neg5 next)

13.a3



Position after 13.a3

A French Defense looking thing, but with both sides' pieces in need of reorganizing.

13...b5 14.Bf1 Rc8 15.Qb1 Qb6 16.Bd3 f5

Seemed a good moment to get this in, while White's queenside is undeveloped. 16...h6 is also a possible useful move.

17.Nf1

Despite White's undeveloped queenside, an interesting alternative is to go ahead and open the game: 17.exf6 Nxf6 18.Ne5! (18.Re1 is nicely met by 18...Nc5! 19.dxc5 Bxc5 20.Rf1 Bxf2+! and indeed White's lack of development is a problem) 18...Qxd4 19.Ndf3 bringing out the pieces with tempo; White has plenty of compensation for the pawn.

17...b4 18.h4 h6 19.Bd2 Nab8

19...Ndb8!? Very challenging to understand exactly where the pieces should go.

20.axb4 axb4 21.b3 Nc6 22.Qb2 Ra8

The computer plays 22...g5!? which is certainly not a move I considered at the board.

23.Be3 Ba6

23...Ra3 was my first instinct and likely best, with an edge for Black, but I talked myself out of it.

24.Qe2 Bxd3 25.Qxd3 Ra3 26.Rac1 Rfa8

Looking at the position now with fresh

eyes, not surprising that after this move, away from the defense, White thinks to attack on the kingside. Though the computer remains happy with Black's position. In both of these Catalan games, while I understood in principle the danger of White's kingside attack, I was all too willing to walk along a razor's edge of defense. It was the style of my youth; however, judging at least by these couple of games, it would seem I no longer quite have the chops to make it work. 26...Na7; 26...Qa6

27.h5 Qa6 28.Qc2 Rc8



Position after 28...Rc8

28...Na7

29.g4

So here it comes, the kingside attack. The logical consequence of first, the pawn on e5, and second, Black having shifted his rooks and queen over to the queenside. And yet, the objective truth is that Black is fine, and that 29.g4 is a mistake. From here on, the positions become very obscure and difficult: good material for an advanced course in middle game calculation. My instinct said that White's attack was not quite right; my instinct was right, but my analytical skills were not up to the task of proving it.

29...Na7 30.Qb1 Rxc1?

30...Nb5! With precise moves, Black refutes the attack. But he needs the threat of a ...Nc3 forking R and Q, which he loses by exchanging the rooks first. 31.Rxc8+

a) 31.gxf5 Nc3 wins;

b) 31.Bd2 Nc3 32.Bxc3 Rxc3! attacking the Nf3 33.Rxc3 bxc3 34.gxf5 (34.

Rc1 fxc4 With the Bd2 gone there is no Qg6) 34...Qe2 and Black comes first: the threat of ...c2 is another reason to leave a white rook on d1.; 31...Qxc8 32.gxf5 (I don't remember now exactly what I was calculating; possibly I misjudged the position after 32.Rc1 Nc3! At the moment, this N is pinned to Black's queen, but that turns out not to matter 33.gxf5 (33.Qd3 fxc4 34.N3h2 Qe8! breaking the pin and attacking the pawn on h5; with b3 falling and no attack or other meaningful play, White is busted.) 33...Qa6! Ideally one would have seen this back on move 30; I'm sure there are players who could do it. The point not being to win an exchange, but rather White's queen after 34.Qc2 Ra2) 32...Nc3 33.Qc2 Ra2! 34.Qd3 Nxd1 35.Qxd1 Starting from 30...Nb5!, this is the best White can get to; but he is an exchange down, with nothing real to show for it. The practical move for Black would be 35...Qc2 trading queens.; I saw that 30...fxg4 is dangerously met by 31.Qg6 but then I missed the same concept down the road.

31.Rxc1 Nb5 32.Bd2 fxc4 33.Qg6

I overlooked Qxg4 next.

33...Nf8 34.Qxg4



Position after 34.Qxg4

White has created strong threats on the kingside, without sacrificing any material. But the game is far from over; b3 is weak, all Black's pieces play; Black can defend against the immediate threats. As so often, my computer blithely calls the chances "equal".

34...Kh8

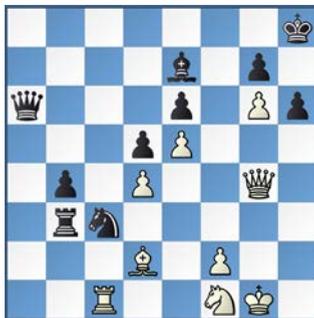
Which square for the king? 34...Kh7 35.Nh4 Bxb4! of course, eliminating the dangerous piece 36.Bxb4! but this is complicated and just the sort of thing my old mind cannot register 36...Rxb3 37.Bxf8 Bg5! "equal" because if 38.f4? Nxd4! 39.fxg5 Ne2+ 40.Kg2 Nxc1 Black wins 41.gxh6 Qe2+ The computer spits out these lines, showing us to be the monkeys we are.

35.Nh4 Nc3

35...Rxb3 36.Ng6+ Nxg6 37.hxg6±; 35...

Bxb4! =

36.Ng6+ Nxg6 37.hxg6 Rxb3



Position after 37...Rxb3

38.Ng3



Position after 38.Ng3

Whatever else we did wrong in this game, Sorokin and I both handled the clock well. He had the time, took a long think, but missed: 38.Bxb6!! gxh6 (38...Ne2+? 39.Qxe2) 39.Rxc3!! the point of the previous move, needed to make Qf4 possible 39...Rb1 (39...bxc3 40.Qf4 mates!) 40.Kh2!! Rxf1 (40...Qxf1 41.g7+ Kg8 42.Rc8+) 41.Rf3 (or 41.g7+ Kg8 42.Rf3 also wins: 42...Bg5 43.Qh5 Qa7 44.Qe8+ Kxg7 45.Qf8+ Kg6 46.Kg2!! yet another incredible only move to win) 41...Qc8 42.Kg2 (or 42.Rf7 Deep Fritz in action: White mates)

38...Qc8 39.Nh5 Rb2 40.Bxc3 bxc3 41.Qf3 c2 42.Kg2

I made the time control, relaxed, and hoped I would stand well... but it remains not the simplest of positions. Black has an extra passed pawn to his credit, but to his serious debit is his trapped back rank king and the weak e-pawn; the position still hangs by that razor's edge.

42...Bb4

Black must see something very clever: 42...Qe8! 43.Qd3 and now it looks like Black is losing his trump, the c-pawn, or going back with the queen to c8. But there is what used to be called a "problem move"; now we would call it a "computer move": (43.Qf7 Qxf7 44.gxf7 g5!/-+) 43...Ra2!♣ the lovely point being if 44.Rxc2 Ra3! driving White's queen

from the defense of g6. Which I needed to see to save this game. Or even win it. So, 43...Ra2! saves the c-pawn, but Black needs more: a plan to progress. 44...Ba3? is not it, because the B takes away the square the rook needs and so White can just take on c2. Progress is provided by 44...Bb4! With more lovely geometry: 45...Ra3! 46.Qxc2 Rc3, trading on c1 and finally taking on g6 with the queen. 44.f4! the best try, with f5 next.

a) 44.Nf4 Bg5;

b) 44.Kh2 Qa4! 45.Qf3 Qxd4 46.Qf7 Qxe5+ Black is winning 47.Kg2 Qg5+ (or 47...Ra8) 48.Ng3 Qf6;

44...Bb4! only winning move: now as I pointed out above the idea is 45...Ra3 46.Qxc2 Rc3 (44...Qc8? 45.Qb3 Ba3 46.Qxa2 Bxc1 47.Qa7! Qg8 48.Qc7 and taking the c-pawn; Black's bishop gets the d-pawn but even a pawn down White is the one with the chances.) 45.f5 (45.Rxc2 Ra3! 46.Nxg7 Qd7!) 45...exf5 Black is winning by the barest of margins 46.Qxf5 (46.Nf4 Qc8 (or 46...Qd8! 47.Rxc2 (47.Qxf5 Ba3 48.Rxc2 (48.Ne6 Qc8 49.Qf7 Qg8) 48...Qg5+ 49.Qxg5 Rxc2+) 47...Qg5+ 48.Kh1 Ra1+) 46...Qf8! 47.Nf6 (47.Qf7 Qxf7 48.gxf7 g6 Black wins: ...Ba3 wins White's rook before White can do something with his N and advanced pawns) 47...Be7!-+

43.Qf7

Already Black is struggling, and any possible defense would be problem-like, or should I say, computer-like.

43...Qg8

43...Bf8 44.Nf6 Ba3 45.Rh1 c1Q 46.Rxc1 Rxf2+ 47.Kxf2 Bxc1 48.Qe8+±; 43...Qf8! apparently holds 44.Qc7 (44.Nf4 Qg8! "equal"?); 44.Qxe6 Bd2 45.Qf7 Qg8! 46.Nf6=) 44...Rb3! unlike in the game, Black's queen is active with ...Qf3+ 45.Rxc2 Qf3+ 46.Kg1 Bf8! 47.Ng3 Qg4!♣

44.Qc7+- Ra2 45.Rxc2 Ba5 46.Qc8 Rxc2 47.Qxc2 Bb6

I managed to maneuver my B around to where it attacks d4. But in the long run, and in the hands of Sorokin, it doesn't matter. The smoke has cleared, and with the pawn on c2 gone, Black's back rank weakness, trapped K, weak e6-pawn, and dangling bishop, I am doomed.

48.Qb2 Ba7 49.Nf4 Qf8 50.Qc2 Qe8 51.Qc3 Kg8 52.Kf3 Qd7 53.Ke3 Kf8 54.Qa3+ Ke8 55.Qa6 Ke7 56.Nxe6 Qxe6 57.Qxa7+ Kf8 58.Qb8+ Ke7 59.Qc7+ Qd7 60.Qxd7+ Kxd7 61.Kf4 Ke6 62.Kg4

1-0

**Michael Lee –
Jim Tarjan [E06]**
PNWCC Artist Point,
Redmond, Washington
(R7), September 5, 2021
[Jim Tarjan]

**1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 e6 4.0-0 Be7
5.c4 0-0 6.d4 c6 7.Qc2 b6 8.Nbd2 a5
9.e4 Na6**

I had thought that this was the way I had played this before, but in fact my prior games had ...Nbd7 (Ghazarian, Stembuliak, Leiva). This position is already new in the database. (Or was when it was played: now I see this game in my Mega Database 2022, as well as one blitz game.) It makes a certain sense to leave d7 for the other N, and then this one if need be, can go to c7.

10.e5 Nd7 11.b3 Bb7

11...c5 Black could already play ...c5, but it is not necessarily to Black's advantage who remains with less space. And my plan was to develop and wait.

12.Bb2 Ra7

My play in these positions is inspired by the games of the Canadian GM Anton Kovalyov.

13.Rac1 Qa8 14.h4 h6 15.cxd5 Nb4

I mentioned this possible maneuver in the last game.

16.Qb1 Nxd5

And this time Black is playing it with the N on d5.

17.Ne4 a4

For what it is worth, my computer's assessment has already shifted from the expected "slightly better for White" to "Black has an edge."

18.Nh2

For White, the logical and perhaps only dangerous plan is to play for mate.

18...c5

Again the computer validates my timing: logical to make the break in the center at the moment when White removes his N towards the kingside. But now Black is walking on that razor's edge, because 18...c5, while activating Black's B and Q on the long diagonal, also, crucially, enables White's dormant bishop on b2 to participate in the mating attack. 18...Rd8 19.Ng4 Bf8 is no doubt the practical way to play the position. The B on f8 prevents White's main dangerous sacrificial idea involving a Ngxh6 (after Nef6) as in the game. Waiting to play ...c5, Black does not stand better but it is not clear he is appreciably worse either.; 18...a3 A difficult decision: to push ...a3, to open the a-file with ...axb3, or to wait and keep the option of both. One point of ...a3 would be to deactivate the Bb2 even further on a1: soon we will see a Bc1 move playing a role. If I had this position again, I would play ...a3, especially if it forced the bishop to a1. Opening the a-file and "activating" the Ra7 has no meaningful effect, whereas the bishop is certainly awkward on a1, and the formation with the white a2- vs. black a3-pawns may well be great for Black when the game is opened later. 19.Bc3 Another difficult question: 18...a3 doesn't make much sense if White can respond 18.Bc3, but it was my instinct (and the computer's as well) that the bishop is in the way on c3, or Black can even trade 19...Nxc3.

19.h5 Rd8

Trying to make sense of this position using the computer is very confusing; lost in a welter of complications. Here, the computer likes 19...Nb4! which to my eyes looks to move one piece too many away from the kingside. With the follow-up analysis 20.dxc5 axb3 21.axb3 Nxc5 22.Nf6+ gxf6 23.Bxb7 Qxb7 24.exf6 Bd6 25.Rc4 at the end of which, the computer's evaluation "Black is slightly better" seems hardly relevant down in my human world.

20.Ng4 axb3 21.axb3 Nb4?

This really steps into it. Again, 21...Bf8= is the practical move.

22.dxc5

Certainly looks right, bringing the Bb2 into the attack. 22.Nef6+ Bxf6 (22...gxf6 23.Nxh6+ Kg7 24.Nxf7 f5 25.Bxb7 Rxb7 26.Nxd8 Qxd8 27.Rfd1) 23.Bxb7 Qxb7 24.exf6 Qf3. The tactics end in evaluations somewhere around equal.

22...Nxc5?



Position after 22...Nxc5

But the question marks are only after the fact in the postmortem, because at the board Lee could not work out the right way. 22...bxc5 23.Nef6+ gxf6 24.Nxh6+ Kg7 25.Nxf7 f5 26.Bxb7 Qxb7 27.Nxd8 Bxd8±

23.Nef6+ gxf6

Too late now for 23...Bxf6 24.Bxb7 Qxb7 25.exf6 and White wins.

24.Nxh6+ Kg7 25.Bxb7?

25.exf6+! Bxf6 (25...Kxh6 26.fxe7+-) 26.Ng4!!+- rather than sacrifices on f7 which I did see are less effective 26...Bd4 (only hope), but White's attack is too strong here 27.Bxb7 (27.h6+ Kf8 28.h7 is another way 28...Ke7 29.Bxb7 Rxb7 30.Rc4!) 27...Qxb7 28.Rc4!

25...Qxb7 26.Nf5+?

Same idea of 26. exf6+ is right here as well, but less overwhelming than on the prior move: 26.exf6+ Kxh6! because now Black has this (26...Bxf6? 27.Ng4!) It looks good for Black, but: 27.Rxc5!!

Bxf6! (27...Bxc5 28.Bc1+ forces mate) 28.Bxf6 bxc5 29.Bxd8 is better for White, but Black can fight after 29...Qd5; 26.Nxf7 is possible but 26...Rd3!. (I was going to play 26...f5±)

26...exf5 27.Qxf5



Position after 27.Qxf5

27...Kh8!-+

Black is two knights ahead, and the game "should" be over.

28.e6 Nxe6

The clearest. 28...Rd5 29.Bxf6+ Bxf6 30.Qxf6+ Kh7 31.Rc4 Nbd3

29.Bxf6+ Bxf6 30.Qxf6+ Kg8 31.Rc4 Nd5 32.Rg4+

32.Qh6 Ng7 33.Rg4 f5

32...Kf8 33.Qh6+ Ke7 34.Re1 Kd6 35.Qd2



Position after 35.Qd2

35...Kc7?

Here it starts to go terribly wrong. The king is actually best on d6. In some sense it is "castled" nicely out on d6. The knights protect all the squares, and there are no white pawns left in the center to break things up. But my old brain simply could not wrap itself around the position. I still had time on my clock. All I could think of was to put my king back in a normal position in the corner, and then I would win. But back on the seventh or eighth rank my king gets in the way of my major pieces. Some sort of lesson here about chess talent, the ability to look at any position and instinctively see where all the pieces should go to work perfectly with each other. The right

move is pretty, and instructive: 35...Qa8! Corner to corner, eyeing a1, h8, and even a later mate on h1.; 35...Qe7 and ...Qf6 neutralizing the h-pawn should also do the trick.

36.h6 Raa8?

Not too late for 36...Qa8!; or 36...Ra5 37.h7 Qa8

37.h7 Rh8?

Already Black must find difficult moves to keep the advantage: 37...Rac8!

38.Rxe6! =

Now I needed to regroup just to hold a draw, but I was gone by this point, and fated to lose this game. Of course, it bears pointing out that Lee, after missing a win in the really complicated part a few moves earlier, did not despair, kept his head, and was rewarded.

38...Ra1+

38...fxe6 39.Rg7+ Kb8 =

39.Re1 Rxe1+ 40.Qxe1 Rxh7?

40...Kd6! =

41.Qe5+- Kc6 42.Rc4+ Kb5 43.Qe8+ 1-0

Alex Shabalov –
Jim Tarjan [C84]

US Senior, St. Louis, Missouri,
July 24, 2021
[Jim Tarjan]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.d3 b5 7.Bb3 d6

A relatively new try in this ancient position. White develops a piece, albeit to a relatively unimpressive square, at the same time preventing ...Na5.

8.Bd2 0-0 9.h3 h6 10.Re1 Re8 11.a3 Be6 12.Bxe6 fxe6

First I put my R on the e-file, then I block the file with doubled pawns! But not as pointless a maneuver as it might appear. After a later ...d5 the rook is useful protecting e6, and, indirectly, e5. The center squares are very important.

13.c3

Up until now, small but arguably useful moves have been played by both sides. However, this 13.c3 strikes me as inconsistent. 13.Nc3; or 13.b4 and on 13...Bf8 14.c4 followed by Nc3 behind the c-pawn.

13...d5

This involves a possible sacrifice of the e-pawn, but, considering White's undeveloped queenside, it did not take

precise calculation to convince me.

14.exd5 Qxd5 15.Qe2 Rad8 16.Nxe5 Nxe5 17.Qxe5 Qxd3 18.a4

On my opponent's time I was busy trying to calculate just exactly how to play if he took the pawn, but it did not surprise me that he refused the offer. 18.Qxe6+ Kh7 19.Qe2 Qc2 is very sad for White.

18...Bd6

18...Qc2!?

19.Qe2 Qxe2 20.Rxe2 Nd5 21.Na3 Rb8 22.axb5 axb5

An even position. Black has the isolated e-pawn, but very nice active pieces to make up for it.

23.Nc2 Ra8 24.Rae1

24.Rxa8 Rxa8 25.Rxe6 does not win a pawn: 25...Ra2 26.Bc1 Nxc3

24...Ra2 25.Bc1 Bc5 26.Kf1 Kf7 27.Rd1 c6 28.Ke1 Re7



Position after 28...Re7

Other players not named Shabalov would aim here to steer the game towards a draw. Instead, true to his aggressive style, the four-time US Champion sends his rook on an adventure.

29.Rd3?! e5 30.Rf3+ Ke8 31.Rf5 e4 32.Rh5 Bd6 33.Rh4?

33.Kd1 should be played.

33...e3!

The pawn cannot be happily captured any which way.

34.Bxe3

The best hope is 34.Kf1 exf2 35.Rxe7+ Bxe7 36.Re4 though Black retains the advantage after for example 36...Kd7 37.c4 Nf6 38.Re2 bxc4 39.Kxf2.

34...Rxb2 35.Kd2 Be5 36.c4 Bf6 37.Rh5 Nxe3 38.fxe3 b4

0-1



To Draw Or Not To Draw?

Nobel Ang

In an article in this magazine back in December¹, I declared that only losing at chess is worth talking about, that there's nothing really interesting about winning or drawing.

I was wrong. Recent events in my chess career—if you can call it that—have shown me that drawing in chess is a multifaceted and exotic animal that can teach us much about chess psychology, and human psychology in general. But more about this later. Let us begin by getting the lay of the land, so to speak, so we can be sure that we are all on the same page and talking about the same things.

As we all know, there are several different ways for a chess game to end in a draw. I am not interested in those situations in which a draw is technically inevitable (three-fold repetition, insufficient material, perpetual check, stalemate, fifty-move rule etc.). Rather, I want to focus on that one fascinating animal known as draw by agreement. If you don't share my fascination, consider the following. To my knowledge, there are nine different situations from which a draw by agreement might arise:

1. Lower-rated player offers a draw in a losing/inferior position.
2. Lower-rated player offers a draw in a winning/superior position.
3. Lower-rated player offers a draw in an equal position.
4. Higher-rated player offers a draw in a losing/inferior position.
5. Higher-rated player offers a draw in a winning/superior position.
6. Higher-rated player offers a draw in an equal position.

7. Two similarly-rated players (less than 50 points rating difference) agree to a draw when one player has a losing/inferior position. The player with the losing/inferior position is the one offering the draw.
8. Two similarly-rated players (less than 50 points rating difference) agree to a draw when one player has a losing/inferior position. The player with the winning/superior position is the one offering the draw.
9. Two similarly-rated players (less than 50 points rating difference) agree to a draw when the position is equal.

Since this is not supposed to be a full-blown treatise on draws, I won't bore you by going over every single one of these nine scenarios. Instead, I'll just offer a few scattered musings. Consider situation #1. This has actually happened to me quite a few times when I play lower-rated scholastic players. At a recent tournament, for example, my young opponent actually made such an offer when I was up a rook and a minor piece and had mate in two. I was slightly confused and also a bit amused at the same time. Did he really think I would say yes? Or wait... maybe he had some shocking way of turning the tables on me that I was somehow not seeing, and the offer was basically his way of saying, "This is your last chance. Draw, or die!"

My young opponent offering me a draw

I did not die, but I was so weirded out by his Jedi mind-trick draw offer that I actually missed the mate in two, and took another ten moves to win.

Personally, I think the hardest draw offers to decide are the ones in which a similarly rated or higher rated player makes an offer in a position that is more or less equal (situations #9 and #6, respectively). At the Idaho Closed a

couple of years ago, my similarly rated opponent offered me a draw in what was probably an equal position: I was up a pawn, but there were still plenty of pieces on the board, and there was no clear way to convert that extra pawn into a significant advantage. I had played the black side of the Scotch Gambit, and had emerged from the opening with a two-pawn advantage, which he had then whittled down to one. I was rather annoyed at losing the upper hand, and wanted to find a way to regain it. So I declined his offer, and he roundly punished me for it: His major pieces outmaneuvered mine, and I soon found myself in a very inferior position. I then lamely offered him a draw, which he declined with a sad and—to my mind anyway—slightly condescending smile ("Shoulda taken that draw when I offered it. Now you die.").

This, to my mind, is the hardest thing about considering a draw offer in an equal position. Do I fight on to try to get an advantage, or do I play it safe and take the draw? The situation is even more interesting when the one making the offer is a higher-rated player. This actually happened to me at the recent Western Idaho Open in Mountain Home. My opponent, who was rated more than 300 points higher than me, offered me a draw at move 10!

Here's what led up to this offer. I had the black pieces in the Italian game, and played this cute opening gambit (1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4. Nc3 Nxe4). **Full disclosure:** I had recently gotten rather disenchanted with my inability to master the main lines of the Italian, so I decided to just play this gambit to blow up the center every chance I get. As you might surmise, the accuracy of my play is questionable at best. This is how the first 10 moves transpired:

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Nc3 Nxe4 5.Nxe4 d5 6.Bb5 dxe4 7.Nxe5 Bd7 8.Bxc6 Bxc6 9.Nxc6 bxc6 10.Qg4

Barely had my opponent set his queen down on g4, when his baritone resounded across the battlefield: "I offer you a draw!" This is how the board looked like:

1 "Why Does Losing Sting So Much?," *Northwest Chess* December 2021, pp. 26–27.



Black to move

I was very surprised by his offer. And so were other onlookers, judging from the quick glances that the players at the next board cast in our direction upon hearing those five words. There was certainly nothing on the board which would warrant such an early peace offering: As far as I could tell, neither side had any significant advantage. Sure, I had doubled pawns, but that just meant, among other things, that my a-rook had a ready-made semi-open file. And this being only move ten, there was still plenty of time to find ways and means to improve my pawn structure. Neither of us had completed our development, but he could easily castle on the next move. In short, the game had plenty of play left for both sides.

So why was he offering me a draw?

I can't really know for sure, but I can try playing amateur psychologist here. Perhaps he was well-studied in the main lines of the Italian, and was annoyed at himself for failing to punish me for my deviation. This being so, he might have wanted to cut his losses by suing for peace, rather than venture into uncharted and possibly losing territory. In addition, he might also have been thinking that given the difference in our ratings, I would be happy, maybe even grateful, to be granted a reprieve from a potentially long-drawn-out and bloody battle.

I spent a full two minutes—probably longer, actually—mulling over his offer. The prospect of a quick draw and an easy gain of a few rating points was indeed tempting: If this isn't low-hanging fruit, I don't know what is. But just as I was about to reach over and shake his hand, an unexpected thought flashed in my reptilian brain: So you get a draw with an 1800 player after playing nine mediocre moves? What does that prove? If you were to die in the next five minutes, would you want this to be the last game of your life? If you play on, you might very well lose, but isn't it better to find out how you stack up against a stronger player in this strange line? Wouldn't you want to know??

And with that, I suppressed my desire for an easy draw, and found myself

saying, "I would like to keep playing." (I'm too nice to just say "I decline.") So we played on. It turns that he really didn't know this line; he committed the proverbial last blunder, and resigned on move 20. Fortune, as they say, favors the brave: I had declined a draw, and gone on to win decisively against a higher-rated player.

The occurrence of draws by agreement, especially at the highest levels of chess, has led many to complain that chess is a boring, unexciting game where players often stop playing just when the action is about to get exciting. There may be some truth to this claim. But I think the full picture is more complicated and interesting than that, as I have hopefully shown with the brief vignettes above. I believe that part of the tension and the drama of chess lies in the possibility of these draw offers, that this ever-present possibility of a sudden suspension of hostilities actually makes the game as a whole richer and more interesting. More specifically, from the point of view of the player deliberating the offer, a certain kind of existential question looms: Do I fight on and risk everything? Or do I compromise, and live to fight another day?

Try offering me a draw sometime. I might just accept.



Nobel Ang, Photo credit: Jeff Price.

Play Like Ignacio!

(answers to positions presented on page 7)

https://www.nwchess.com/articles/games/published/NWC_2022_Published_Games_cb.htm#202203

1. Ignacio Perez (2241) – Michael Lee (2163) [A04]

Washington Class-ch Master/Expert
Seattle (R5), November 26, 2006



29.Rxg7! Kxg7

29...Qxg7 30.Bc3 Rg5 31.Kh1+-

30.Bc3 Kh7 31.Qxd4+- Rg8 32.Kh1 f3
33.Bh3 Rfg5 34.Re1 Qg6 35.Qd1 Qf7
36.Be6 Rg1+ 37.Rxg1

1-0

2. Ignacio Perez (2239) – John Readey (2336) [B07]

WA Championship 2007
Seattle (R5), February 17, 2007



27.Ng6+! Rxg6

27...Qxg6 28.Bxg6 Rxg6 29.Qc7+-

28.Rxf7+! Kxf7 29.Qc7+ Kf6 30.Qe5+
Kf7 31.Qe7#

1-0

3. Ignacio Perez (2239) – Viktors Pupols (2237) [C99]

WA Championship 2007
Seattle (R9), February 19, 2007



47.Nxg5+! Kh6

47...Bxg5 48.Qxh5+ Bh6 49.Qf7+-

48.Ne6 Ng7 49.Nxg7 Bxg7 50.Kd1 Bf6
51.Kc1 Bg5 52.Kb1 h4 53.Qf3 Be8
54.Be2 Qd8 55.Nd1 Rc8 56.Qg4 Rxc2
57.Qe6+ Bg6 58.Kxc2 f3 59.gxf3 Qc7+
60.Nc3 Qb6 61.Qd7 Qd4 62.Qc6 Qd2+
63.Kb1 Qc1+ 64.Ka2 Qc2+ 65.Ka1
Qc1+ 66.Nb1 Qe1 67.Qxb5 Qxf2
68.Qd3 Be3 69.Kb2 Bd4+ 70.Kc2 Be8
71.Nc3 Bd7 72.Qd2+ Kg6 73.Nb5 Bxh3
74.Nxd4 Qxd4 75.Qxd4 exd4 76.b5
Kg5 77.b6 Bc8 78.Bf1 Kf4 79.Bh3 Ba6
80.Kd2 Ke5 81.Bf1 Bc8 82.Ke1 Kf4
83.Kf2 Ke5 84.Bb5 Kf4 85.Bxa4 d3
86.Bd1 h3 87.a4 Ba6 88.Bb3 d2 89.e5
Kxe5 90.Kg3 Kd4 91.Kxh3 Bc4 92.Bd1
Bxd5 93.a5 Kc5 94.Be2 Kc6 95.f4 Kb7
96.f5 Bb3 97.f6

1-0

4. Alex Guo – Ignacio Perez (2260) [B24]

Washington State-ch
Seattle (R4), February 10, 2008



32...Rc1! 33.Rb1 Qd1! 34.Rxc1 Qxe2+

34...Rxc1 35.Qb2 Qh1#

35.Kg1 Rxc1+ 36.Qxc1 Qxf3 37.Bf2

dxh5 38.Qc5 Qd1+ 39.Kg2 Qxd3
40.Qxa7 h6

0-1

5. Ignacio Perez (2280) – John Readey (2325) [B07]

WA Championship 2008
Seattle (R5), February 16, 2008



38.Bf6!! Rc2+

38...Kf8 39.Rh8+; 38...Bxf6 39.gxf6
Rc2+ 40.Ke3

39.Ke3! Nd6 40.Rh8+

1-0

6. Ignacio Perez (2306) – Viktors Pupols (2204) [C13]

Washington Open
Redmond (R5), May 26, 2008



32.Rxh7+! Nxh7 33.Qh6+!

33.Qxh7+? Kf8 34.Qh8+ Ke7+-

33...Kg8 34.Bxh7+

1-0

**7. Dereque Kelley –
Ignacio Perez [E90]**
WA Championship
Seattle (R8), February 11, 2012



44...Rd3! 45.Qxb3

45.Nc3 Nc1+ 46.Ka1 Rd2 47.Qb1 Rh2–
+; 45.Qc8+ Kg7 46.Nc3 Nc1+ 47.Ka1
Ne2+ 48.Nb1 Rd1 49.Qc2 Nd4+–

45...Rxb3 46.Nd2 Rxa3+

0–1

*Note: The full games will be shown
in the online game file—link found
on page two and also in the header
on page 24.—Editor.*

**8. Harley Greninger (2198) –
Ignacio Perez (2273) [E83]**
Washington Class Championship Master
Redmond (R1), November 24, 2012



18...Rxb2??!

A chess bluff, but a tough one to refute!

19.Qxb2 Nxd5 20.cxd5 Bxc3 21.Qf2??

21.Qb3! Ba4 (21...c4 22.Bxc4 Rc8
23.Rd3+– and Black's attack seems to run
out.) 22.Bc7!+–

21...Qa3+ 22.Kb1 Qb4+ 23.Kc1 Qxf4+
24.Kc2 Ba4+ 25.Kxc3 Qb4+ 26.Kd3
Qa3+

0–1

**9. Roland Feng –
Ignacio Perez [E61]**
WA Championship
Seattle (R5), February 15, 2014



23...Rxf2!

23...Rxa2! was also strong

24.Kxf2

24.Qg4 Qxg4 25.hxg4 Raxa2 26.Rxa2
Rxa2 27.cxb4 (27.Bxd6 Ra1+ 28.Kh2
Rxl1+ 29.Kxl1 exd6 30.cxb4 cxb4+–)
27...Ra1+–

24...Nd3+ 25.Kf1

25.Kg1 Qe3+ 26.Kf1 Qf2#

25...Rf8+ 26.Bf4 Nxf4 27.Qg4 Nxl3+

0–1

Washington Senior Championship

APRIL 15-17TH, 2022

Highest finishing Washington resident receives the title of Washington State Senior Champion, a seed into the Invitational Section of the 2023 Washington State Championship, and a \$750 travel stipend from the WCF to attend the [2022 National Tournament of Senior State Champions](#), which is held concurrently with the U.S. Open in early August.

Site: Orlov Chess Academy: 4174 148th Ave NE
Bld. I, Ste. M, Redmond, WA 98052.

Format: A 5-Round, G/90; +30 Swiss. Open to Seniors age 50+ (or reaching age 50 by or before August 1, 2022). Playoff round if needed to break tie for 1st place will be resolved later in the year by a G/90 playoff game.

Entry Fee: \$50 by 4/8, \$60 after. Free entry for GMs, IMs, WGMs, or US Chess 2400+.

Rounds: Fri: 6:30 PM. Sat: 10 AM, 3 PM. Sun: 10 AM, 3 PM.

Prize Fund: \$500 (based on 20 paid entries).
1st \$150, 2nd \$125
1st U2000/U1700/U1400 \$75

Byes: Two half-point byes available. If interested, request before end of round 2.

Memberships: Current US Chess and WCF membership required, other states accepted. Membership must be paid at time of registration.

Rating: Dual US Chess and NWSRS Rated. Highest of April 2022 US Chess Regular/Online rating or currently NWSRS will be used to determine pairings and prizes.

Health/Safety Protocols: Face masks required for all players and spectators. Please bring your own mask; a limited number is available. All players and spectators are required to sign the [WCF Health/Safety Protocols & Waiver of Liability](#) form prior to the start of the tournament.



Info/Entries: Josh Sinanan, WCF
President

Phone: 206-769-3757

Email:
WashingtonChessFederation@gmail
.com

Registration: Online at
hwchess.com/OnlineRegistration.
Registration **deadline Thu. 4/14 @
5pm**. \$15 Late Fee for payments
accepted after the deadline.
Unpaid players will receive a zero-
point bye for round 1.

WA State Barber/Rockefeller QUALIFIER TOURNAMENT

Sunday, April 17, 2022

Redmond Marriott

7401 164th Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98052

CLASSICAL SECTIONS:

K-5 Open (Rockefeller Qualifier)
6-8 Open (Barber Qualifier)

A 4-round G/75; d5 Swiss. Longer time control for Intermediate to Advanced players. Dual NWSRS and US Chess Rated; US Chess membership required. Rounds: 9am, 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm. Awards ceremony ~ 9:45pm.

RAPID SECTIONS:

K-3 U800, K-3 Open, 4-12 U900, 4-12 Open: A 5-round G/25; d5 Swiss. Shorter time control for players of all levels. Rounds: 9am, 10:15am, lunch, 12:15pm, 1:30pm, 2:45pm. Awards ceremony ~ 4pm.

ALL SECTIONS:

NWSRS Rated. Open sections are also US Chess Rated, which requires clocks, notation, and US Chess membership. **Please bring a digital clock if you have one**, a limited number will be available to borrow. The U800 and U900 sections don't require clocks or notation, but a clock set for 10 minutes will be placed in the game after 40 minutes of play.

WA State Elementary Qualifier!

ELIGIBILITY:

Open to all students registered in grades K-12. Out-of-state players welcome!

ENTRY FEE:

\$45 by Apr. 10th, \$55 after. Room for 300 players.

AWARDS:

Section Prizes: Amazon Gift Cards awarded and WCF membership extensions awarded in each section: 1st \$70, 2nd \$60, 3rd \$50, 4th \$40, 5th 1-yr WCF ext., 6th 6-mo WCF ext.

Team Prizes: Amazon Gift Cards awarded to the top 4 players from the top 5 finishing teams (top 4 scores from same school comprise team score) across all sections: 1st \$30, 2nd \$25, 3rd \$20, 4th \$15, 5th \$10.

Special Prizes (per section): Medals for first-timers, best female player, and biggest upset.

RATING:

Highest of April supplement US Chess Regular/US Chess Online, or current NWSRS rating used to determine section and pairings.



THE DETAILS

Health/Safety Protocols: Face masks required for all players and spectators. Please bring your own mask; a limited number is available. All players and spectators are required to sign the [WCF Health/Safety Protocols & Waiver of Liability](#) form prior to the start of the tournament.

100% pre-registered, no on-site entries or payments. Entry + payment deadline Fri. Apr 15th @ 5:00pm. No registrations accepted or refunds offered after the deadline. Unpaid players will be immediately withdrawn from the tournament.

Highest finishing WA State resident in the K-5 Open and 6-8 Open section will earn a \$750 travel stipend (donated by the WCF) to become the WA State representative at the Rockefeller (K-5) and Barber (6-8) Tournament of Champions, respectively, held concurrently with the US Open in early August. A tie for first place in the Barber/Rockefeller Qualifier sections will be resolved later in the year by playoffs, to be played within two months from the end of the tournament.

Online Registration:
NWchess.com/OnlineRegistration/
Pay by Credit/Debit/PayPal.

Questions? Contact Josh Sinanan, WCF President at 206.769.3757 or washingtonchessfederation@gmail.com

Washington News Roundup

NM Josh Sinanan

Liu and Vemparala Shine At Washington Junior Closed And Invitational

The 2022 Washington Junior Closed Chess Championship took place January 8-9 in-person at the Orlov Chess Academy in Redmond. The Closed section consisted of a six-player round robin featuring the highest-rated junior players in Washington State. The 14-player Invitational section, a five-round Swiss, was run alongside the Closed and consisted of numerous fast-improving youngsters. The tournament was organized by Washington Chess Federation and directed by WCF Scholastic Director Rekha Sagar, who came up all the way from San Diego to direct the event.

Austin Liu, a seventh grader from Pine Lake Middle School in Sammamish, emerged victorious in the Closed section with an undefeated four points from five games, conceding draws to NM Joseph Levine and Vidip Kona. For his efforts, Austin was seeded into the Championship section of the 2022 Washington State Championship! NM Joseph Levine from Clyde Hill and Aaryan Deshpande from Sammamish shared second/third place honors with 3.5 points apiece. In the Invitational section, it was Redmond's Nikash Vemparala, just back from a chess trip abroad, who dominated the field with 4.5 points from five games, winning his first four games in a row before drawing with Luca Tessiore in the final round. Tessiore, a fifth grader from Decatur Elementary School in Seattle, captured

second place 3.5 points, rebounding well from a first-round loss against dark horse Paras Shah. A slew of players shared third place honors with three points: Jamie Zhu, Stephen Willy, Ted Wang, Harishkumar Karthikeyan, and Arjun Tiwari. The future is certainly bright for scholastic chess in Washington State, as well as throughout the Northwest! Many thanks to all who contributed to this event and congratulations to the winners!

Aaryan Deshpande (2147) –

Austin Liu (1862) [A15]

2022 Washington Junior Closed
Redmond (R1), January 8, 2022

[Austin Liu]

**1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.f4
0-0 6.Nf3 c5 7.d5 e6 8.Be2 exd5 9.cxd5
Bg4**

Not the most testing line, but it's not as theory heavy as ...Re8. The idea of ...Bg4 is to trade off the light-squared bishop, which serves two purposes; first, mitigating White's space advantage, and second, getting rid of the not-so-useful bishop.

**10.0-0 Nbd7 11.h3 Bxf3 12.Bxf3 a6
13.Re1 Ne8**

Black cannot allow White to play e5. This move also often serves the purpose of maneuvering the knight to c7, where it can support the b5-break.

14.a4 Rb8 15.a5

Although this appears to restrict Black's queenside play, in fact Black can quite

often play b5 anyway.

**15...b5 16.axb6 Rxb6 17.Qc2 Nc7
18.Bd2 Qb8**

18...Nb5!? 19.Nxb5 axb5 20.Ba5 This seems to refute the line, but in fact things are hardly so simple. 20...Qh4 21.Bxb6 Nxb6 White's dark squares are very weak. Along with Qxf4, Black also has ideas of Bh6 and Nc4. 22.e5! The only move to maintain the balance. 22...Qxf4 23.Re4 Qg3 24.exd6 Qxd6 With a highly complicated position in which I believe Black has easier play.

19.Ra2 Nb5 20.Nxb5 axb5 21.b3 c4?!

A pawn "sacrifice," although it is clear it can't be taken. However, White has a good idea against this line.

22.Be3?!

22.bxc4? b4! Black has a clear advantage, as Black's pieces coordinate together very well to support the passed-pawn. Black's knight will soon jump to the excellent c5-square as well.; 22.b4! is better. White will soon play Bc3 and establish a solid blockade, leaving him with a small but enduring edge.

22...Rb7 23.e5!?

This tactic doesn't give White anything, but on the other hand I can't really suggest anything better. 23.b4 is still possible, but less effective now due to the lack of a solid blockade. 23...c3

23...dxe5 24.d6 exf4 25.Bxf4

25.Bf2 Rb6 26.bxc4 bxc4 27.Bxb6 Forced. 27...Qxb6+ 28.Kh1 Ne5 Black wants to preserve the c4-pawn. 29.Rd1

Supporting and promoting chess related activities
throughout Washington State since 1946.



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Email: SSeshadri@srichessacademy.com

Bf6= With mutual chances for both sides. Even though the engine claims it's equal, in a real game these are the kinds of positions that often end up as a win for either side.

25...Ra7 26.bxc4 bxc4 27.Qxc4 Ne5!

The crucial tactical counterpoint - without this, Black would be worse due to White's bishop pair and passed pawn.

28.Bxe5

28.Qe2 also doesn't give anything. 28...Rxa2 29.Qxa2 Qxd6.

28...Bxe5 29.Rxe5?

A poorly conceived decision which I can't quite understand. 29.Kh1 Rxa2 30.Qxa2 Bxd6!. This is a rather unpleasant position for White to defend, especially in time trouble, but it's better than the game line for sure. (30...Qxd6 31.Qd5 and once the queens are off, the draw is much easier.)

29...Qb1+ 30.Kh2

I think around this point, my opponent went below five minutes, explaining a few subsequent mistakes.

30...Qxa2?

Allowing a drawn endgame.

31.Qc5?

31.Qxa2! Rxa2 To my surprise, while analyzing after the game, I found this is actually a draw. The point is if White just puts the pawn on d7 and defends it with the bishop with the a4-b5-c6 squares, Black can't drive it off. Sacking the rook for the bishop and pawn is also a draw. 32.d7 Rd2 33.Bc6= and White has constructed his fortress.

31...Qd2! 32.Re4

32.Qxa7 Qf4+ 33.Kh1 Qxe5+ This is a win due to the weakness of White's king and the presence of queens.

32...Rd7 33.Rd4 Qe3 34.Bc6 Rc8! 35.Qd5 Qxd4!

The only winning move.

36.Qxd4 Rxc6 37.Qe4 Rcx6

Black has two rooks vs a queen and is a healthy pawn up, which should make this a win.

38.Qe8+ Kg7 39.Qe5+ f6 40.Qe8 g5 41.Qe4 h5

My plan is clear: push the pawn to h4, then create mating threats along the first rank.

42.Qf5?!

My opponent, in time trouble, didn't do anything to stop my plan. 42.Qe2 White

should keep his queen on the e-file, so that if Black puts his rooks on the first rank, White has perpetual ideas with Qe7+. Black now needs to be patient and drive the queen off the e-file before executing his plan.

42...Rd1 43.Qf3 h4 44.Qf5 Rc7?!

Sloppy technique - of course I should put my rook on the e-file, to not allow White's queen to go there. 44...Re7+

45.Qg4 Rcc1 46.g3 Rd2+

0-1

2022 Washington Junior Open And Reserve

The 2022 Washington Junior Open and Reserve was held online via Chess.com on MLK Monday, January 17. The event, originally planned to take place in-person at the Redmond Marriott, was moved online due to health and safety concerns caused by the recent Omicron surge of Covid-19 cases. Scholastic chess players in grades K-12 participated from throughout North America, including parts of Washington, Oregon, California, British Columbia, and Missouri! The event was hosted by the Washington



WASHINGTON OPEN

Sat-Mon, May 28-30, 2022

Redmond Marriott

7401 164th Ave NE, Redmond, WA 98052

Format: A 6-round OTB Swiss across 3 sections: Open, Premier (U1800), and Reserve (U1400)

Schedule: 3-day or 2-day option; up to 2 byes available. A Northwest Chess Grand Prix event.

Rating: Dual rated - US Chess & NWSRS, plus FIDE rated in Open section.

Fun Side Events:

- Adult-Only Swiss (3 days)
- Rapid Championship (1/2 day)
- Blitz Championship (3 hrs, evening)
- Puzzle Solving Competition (1 hr, afternoon)
- Chess960 Championship (3 hrs, evening)

Online Registration: nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration

Chess Federation and directed by WCF Scholastic Director Rekha Sagar, with assistance from Minda Chen, Melina Li, Soumya Sagar, and Ani Barua. A total of 156 players competed across seven sections separated by grade level and rating: K-1 U800, 2-3 U800, 4-12 U900, K-3 U1400, 4-12 U1400, U1600, and Open. The tournament featured two formats: the standard five rounds of G/25;+5 for the U800, U900, and U1400 sections, and four rounds of G/50;+5 for the U1600 and Open sections.

Congratulations to the section winners:

K-1 U800: First place - **Daniel Yun**
(5/5!!)

2-3 U800: First place - **Vihaan Pai!**

4-12 U900: First Place- **Adhrith Vutukuri** (5/5!!)

K-3 U1400: First Place - **Guru Harshith Reddy Avula!**

4-12 U1400: =First/Second Place - **Aaroh Kandhare & Zane Wirkkala:**
Co-Champions!

U1600: First Place - **Vijay Nallappa**
(4/4!!)

Open: =First/Second Place - **Daniel Qian & Eddie Chang:** Co-Champions!
Daniel won the blitz playoff and earned a seed into the Washington State Premier in February 2022, and the 2023 Washington Junior Closed.

Congratulations to the Top five finishing teams:

First Place: **Odle Middle School, Bellevue**

Second Place: **Open Window School, Bellevue**

Third Place: **Bellevue Children's Academy, Bellevue**

Fourth Place: **Blackwell Elementary School, Sammamish**

Fifth Place: **Einstein Elementary School, Redmond**

2022 Washington State High School Individual Championship

The 2022 Washington State High School Individual Championship took place Friday-Saturday January 21-22 online via Chess.com and attracted 54 players in two sections: Championship (NW rating 1500+), Premier (U1500). The tournament was hosted by the

Washington Chess Federation, directed by online chess extraordinaire Jacob Mayer, and organized by WCF President Josh Sinanan.

Top players taking part in the star-studded 21-player Championship section included newly-minted International Master Anthony He (Tesla STEM), National Masters Rushaan Mahajan (Overlake) and Joseph Levine (Davidson Academy Online), and US Chess Expert Vignesh Anand (Redmond HS). Congratulations to IM Anthony He and NM Joseph Levine, the 2022 Washington State High School Co-Champions! The two masters each finished with an undefeated 4.5 points from five games, drawing against each other in the third round. They will have a playoff at a later date to determine the Washington State representative for the Denker Tournament of High School State Champions, which will be held concurrently with the US Open in early August. Edward Cheng from Garfield High School in Seattle finished in third place with 3.5 points. Four players shared fourth place honors with three points apiece: Vignesh Anand from Redmond High School, Rushaan Mahajan from Overlake, and Rishi Lakshminarayanan and Toby Black from Lakeside School in Seattle.

In the massive 33-player Premier section, Vivaan Gupta from Eastlake High School in Sammamish dominated the field with a massive 9.5/10 score! Ferndale High School's Theo Lewis finished in 2nd Place with 7.5 points. Three players tied for third/fifth place half-a-point back at 7-3: Raphael Menon from Lincoln High School in Seattle, Hieu Tran from Shorecrest High School in Shoreline, and Logan Teh from Garfield High School in Seattle. Lucas Deng from Shorecrest won the U1000 Prize with an impressive six points. Mercer Island High School's Nikolas Goodrum captured the second place U1000 Prize with 5.5 points to round out the prize winners. Many thanks to all who contributed to this successful event, and congratulations to the winners!

2022 Washington Chess960 Championship

The second annual Washington State Chess960 Championship was held online via Chess.com on Sunday, January 30, 2022. Chess players from throughout Washington State and India were represented in the 11-player field, from locales including Redmond, Seattle, Olympia, Shoreline, Bellevue, Mountlake

Terrace, Raymond, and Bothell. In Chess960 the back-rank pieces are scrambled each round, so players must adapt to the new starting position and must come up with new ideas and strategies for each position, rather than relying on memorized opening theory.

The event was hosted by the Washington Chess Federation under the direction of WCF Adult Scholastic Director Rekha Sagar, who ran the tournament all the way from India. WCF Tournament Coordinator Valentin Razmov and WCF President Josh Sinanan coordinated with Rekha to organize the tournament. The five-round Swiss tournament was split between the Championship and Premier U1600 sections. Despite a paltry attendance of only five players in the Championship section, the organizers opted to keep the sections separate to ensure competitive balance and level matchups. Each round featured a different Fischer-random starting position, which the players had a chance to study for a few minutes before clocks were started.

GM Mitrabha Guha, a newly-minted Grandmaster from India and regular competitor in WCF online tournaments, won clear first place in the Championship section with an undefeated 4.5 points from five games, allowing only a single draw to youngster Gabriel Razmov in the final round. Local chess studs Gabriel Razmov from Seattle and CM Tim Moroney from Mountlake Terrace tied for second/third place with three points apiece and were crowned the 2022 Washington State Chess960 Co-Champions by virtue of being the highest finishing Washington State residents in the Championship section. Congratulations to Fischer Random Chess Kings Gabriel and Tim!

In the Premier U1600 section, it was "to be," as Shoreline's James Hamlett won all five of his games and emerged victorious with an amazing 5/5 score that would have made Bobby Fischer proud! Selina Cheng, a fourth grader from Detective Cookie's Chess School in Seattle, finished in second place with four points. Redmond seventh grader Anish Bharadwaj claimed the third place prize with a "plus one" score of three points. Edward Cheng, a ninth grader from Garfield High School in Seattle, scored the best upset (518 pts.) and was the Best NW Region Player (by Tournament Performance Rating) with a TPR of 1939. Congratulations to the winners, and thanks to all who contributed to this fun event. Somewhere, Bobby Fischer is smiling!

Seattle Chess Club Tournaments

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

♠ **March 5** **Saturday Quads** ♠
Format: 3-RR, 4-plyr sec. by rtg. **TC:** G/120;d5. **EF:** \$9(+\$7 fee for non-SCC). **Prizes:** Free quad entry. **Reg:** 9-9:45 a.m. **Rds:** 10:00-2:15-6:30. **Misc:** US Chess, WCF; OSA. NS, NC.

March 12 **SCC G/20 Hexes**
Format: 5-RR in 6- or 5-player sections. **TC:** G/20;+8. **EF:** \$12 (+\$6 fee for non-SCC). **Prize Fund:** \$\$54 b/6. **Prizes:** \$36-18. **Reg:** 12-12:45 p.m. **Time Frame:** 1 to ~6:30 p.m. **Byes:** 0. **Misc:** US Chess. NS, NC.

March 13 **SCC Novice**
Format: 4-SS. Open to U1200 and UNR. **TC:** G/75; d5. **EF:** \$15 by 2/21, \$20 at site. (-\$2 SCC mem., -\$1 mem. other NW dues-req'd CCs). **Prizes:** SCC membership(s). **Reg:** 9-9:45a.m. **Rds:** 10-12:45-3:30-6. **Byes:** 1 (Rd 3/4-commit at reg.). **Misc:** US Chess memb. req'd. NS, NC.

♠ **March 27** **Sunday Tornado** ♠
Format: 4-SS. **TC:** G/60; d5. **EF:** \$18 (+\$7 fee for non-SCC). **Prizes:** 1st 35%, 2nd 27%, Bottom Half 1st 22%, 2nd 16% (\$10 per EF to prize fund). **Reg:** 10:30-11:15 a.m. **Rds:** 11:30-1:50-4:10-6:30. **Byes:** 1 (Rd 3/4-commit at reg.). **Misc:** US Chess, WCF; OSA. NS, NC.

Mondays are for casual play, from
 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm

SCC Fridays

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

March Winds (Close Ratings): 3/4, 11, 18, 25.

April Fools G/15 (4 or 5 rds.): 4/1.

April Showers: 4/8, 15, 22, 29.

Close Ratings 2: 5/6, 13, 20, 27.

It's Summertime!: 6/3, 10, 17, 24.

Seattle Spring Open

March 19-20, 2022

A five-round Swiss with a time control of G/100 with a 15-increment. The prize fund of \$1000 is based on 20 paid entries, 3 per prize group.

a Northwest Grand Prix event

First	\$220	Second	\$120	U2100	\$100
U1950	\$160	U1700	\$80	U1450	
U2100	\$100	Unrated	\$70		

Entry Fees: \$39 if rec'd by 3/14 (\$26 SCC memb., \$32 memb. of other dues-required CCs in the NW), \$50 at site (\$36 SCC memb., \$42 memb. of other dues-required CCs in the NW). **Unrated**-Free with purchase of 1-yr US Chess & 1-yr WCF.

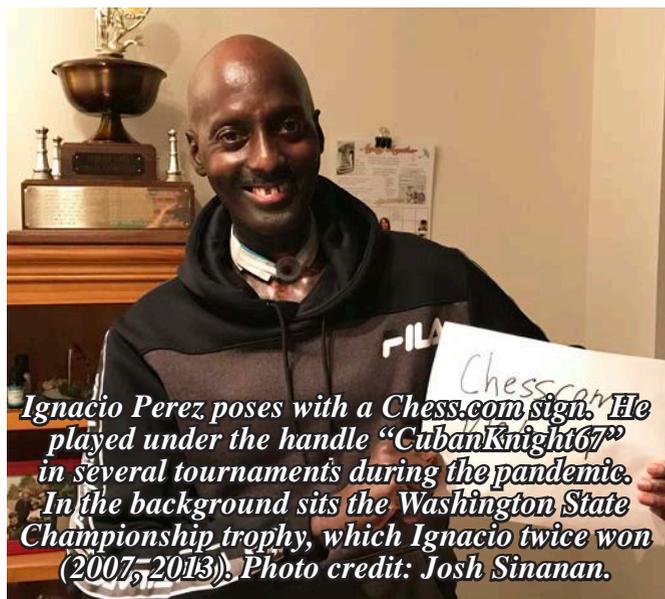
Registration: Sat. 9-9:45am. **Rounds:** Sat. 10-2:30-7, Sun. 11-3:30.

Byes: 2 (Sunday rounds, commit at registration). **Miscellaneous:** US Chess & WCF membership req'd. No smoking.

The 2022 Ignacio Perez Memorial Northwest Chess Grand Prix

Murlin Varner, one more year!

Welcome to the 2022 edition of the Northwest Chess Memorial Grand Prix. This year we will be honoring a well-known Northwest chess player who recently died, way too young. Ignacio Perez was one of our most active Masters in Washington and was the winner of the 2021 Master Class and placed second overall, by just a half-point. He passed away from cancer in January of 2022. Look to the February (and elsewhere in this issue) issue of Northwest Chess for additional information about Ignacio's life.



Ignacio Perez poses with a Chess.com sign. He played under the handle "CubanKnight67" in several tournaments during the pandemic. In the background sits the Washington State Championship trophy, which Ignacio twice won (2007, 2013). Photo credit: Josh Sinanan.

January of 2022 brought us six events, all over the board. I am not sure if there will be any future online events, none are showing on my calendar at this time. As a result, I shall be using OTB ratings only for my sorting into classes. If we do get online events later, I would use regular online ratings only for those who have no OTB rating.

Three of those above-mentioned events were held in Boise and three in Seattle. With the Boise events we welcome Idaho back into our competition. (Now if some other organizers would join in...) I will continue to keep track of the points for folks not from Washington or Idaho, but I will have to consult with our editor before deciding if I will publish those standings on a regular basis.

As of this moment, those six events have resulted in 54 players who made 72 entries. As this is a small number, I am listing the results in one table sorted by points, rather than the full class sort. None of the January events had multipliers, sort the point values are small.

Looking to February, we have six more events on the docket, including the WCF President's Cup (2x multiplier), being held as I write this. The Chandra Alexis Chess Club in Boise will attempt three more of their FIDE rated events, the Seattle Chess Club will hold a Tornado the last weekend of the month, and the Annual David Collyer Memorial event (3x multiplier) will also be held that weekend in Spokane.

Of course, for the reader, all that is history. What you need to know are the March prospects. The Chandra Alexis Chess Club in Boise will continue holding their FIDE-rated events every weekend in March, with a limit of 12 players per event and a requirement of advanced entry. The Seattle Chess Club will hold a Quad event on March 5, and the Seattle Spring Open on the weekend of March 19-20. None of these events will have multipliers.

Data below are current through February 1.

	last	first	state	rating	fee paid
1	Lundy	George	ID	1453	14.5
2	Zhang	Michelle	WA	1508	14.0
3	Pupois	Viktors	WA	2200	13.0
4	Corey-Derrah	Alan	WA	1622	12.5
5	Longhurst	Corey K	ID	1478	10.5
6	Jiang	Brandon	WA	2153	9.0
6	Ramkumar	Nikhil	WA	1251	9.0
6	Wolff	Taylor	WA	1214	9.0
9	Marinescu	Andra	WA	1079	8.5
10	Anthony	Ralph	WA	1618	7.5
11	Vijayanandh	Vishnu	WA	685	7.0
12	Barrett	Evan	ID	1678	6.5
13	Yan	Henry	WA	1721	6.0
13	Zhou	Angela	ID	unr	6.0
15	Hansen	Zach	WA	1657	5.5
15	Kircher	Caleb	ID	1832	5.5
15	Parsons	Larry R	ID	2001	5.5
15	Subcliff	Jackson	WA	1550	5.5
15	Wang	Ted	WA	1739	5.5
20	Aiello	Roberto	OR	1956	5.0
20	Boeckel	Clayton	ID	993	5.0
20	Eggleston	Jack	WA	1498	5.0
20	Jablonski	Chase	ID	1392	5.0
20	Min	Ryan	WA	1929	5.0
20	Venis	Adam	WA	1445	5.0
26	Buzek	Jan	WA	1691	4.5
26	Choi	Alex	WA	1438	4.5
26	Hoyt	Coleman A	WA	1475	4.5
26	Louie	Henry	WA	1302	4.5
26	Semancik	Zackary T	MT	1454	4.5
26	Tate	Alexander	ID	590	4.5
26	Tu	Robin	WA	1806	4.5
33	Bruckner	Joseph	WA	1583	4.0
33	Chowdhery	Evan M	WA	1586	4.0
33	Edmunds	Elliot	WA	unr	4.0
33	Gillen	Paul M	OH	1529	4.0
33	Strong	Edward	WA	1660	4.0
33	Zhang	Michael	WA	1059	4.0
39	Anandkumar	Haituka	WA	1142	3.0
39	Chinni	Rishabh	WA	1799	3.0
39	Dahlke	Addison A	WA	1028	3.0
39	Mao	Bryce	ID	581	3.0
39	Pon	Caleb K	ID	unr	3.0
39	Roberts	Liam	ID	208	3.0
39	Schweizer	Ryan	WA	unr	3.0
46	Wetherell	Caleb	WA	789	2.5
47	Foxley	Rowan	WA	1535	2.0
47	MacDowell	Nicholas	WA	758	2.0
49	Ozusta	Ozgun	WA	unr	1.5
50	Mumford	Glenn E	ID	unr	1.0
50	Ozusta	D. Dilan	WA	1045	1.0
52	Longhurst	John W	ID	945	0.5
53	Connors, III	John E.	ID	432	0.0
53	Presutti	Michael J	ID	1600	0.0

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HAROLD, DESPITE HIS USE OF AN ENGINE, FAILED MISERABLY IN HIS ATTEMPT AT CHEATING.