

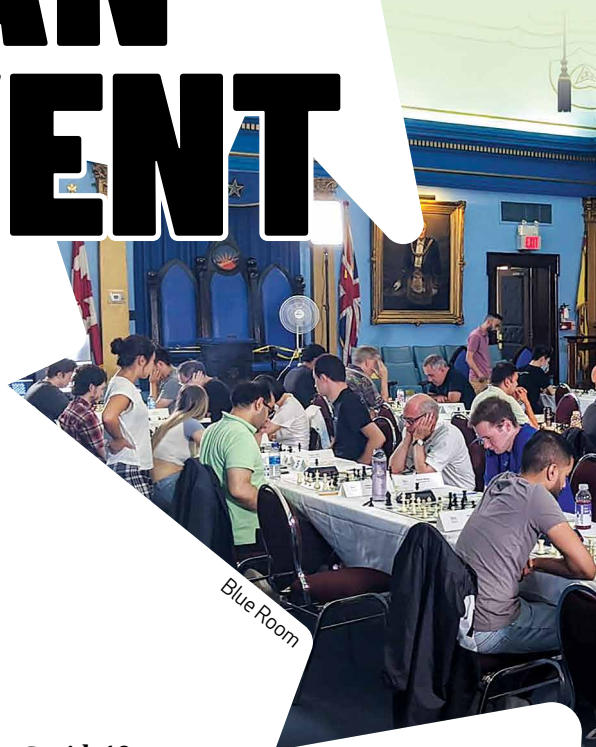


A VERY CANADIAN SPECIAL CHESS EVENT

By George Supol

Faced with numerous challenges, eager organizers from Annex Chess Club of Toronto gathered together all their know-how and enthusiasm to solve myriad issues and details. Eventually they were able to create a great chess tournament to satisfy everyone – players, arbiters, organizers, sponsors, the entire chess community! American Chess Magazine is proud to support such efforts and present them as an example of a job well done, which we hope will encourage more enthusiastic chess organizers, far and wide, to follow and bring to fruition.

2022 ONTARIO OPEN – PLAYERS HUNGRY FOR CHESS COMPETE AT A TRUE FEAST INSIDE THE WEST TORONTO MASONIC TEMPLE!



During a Covid-19 surge, could we successfully organize a major over-the-board chess tournament in Toronto and within a 2-3-month time frame? Would enough players register to make the tournament financially viable? What Covid-19 protocols might apply at the start of the tournament? What other uncertainties might we be facing?

On a cold and snowy Canadian winter evening, near the end of February 2022, the Annex Chess Club (ACC) board members met online to discuss those very questions, just as the 6th Covid-19 wave was raging throughout North America.

The questions sounded unfamiliar and were initially met with silence. Organizing a major event under such uncertain circumstances seemed at best on a par with Don Quixote's "Tilting at windmills."



For two years, the pandemic had halted over-the-board chess in Canada. As such, no one was more eager than ACC's Board to bring back the Toronto chess community. With our own internal prediction that the pandemic would subside in time, we took a leap of faith and submitted our bid for the 2022 Ontario Open. It was received with enthusiasm by the Ontario Chess Association.

And I'm very glad we took that leap of faith. The success of this event took everyone by surprise. It also revived the community's appetite for over-the-board chess in a way similar to how a beautiful spring day brings a sun-starved flower back to life.

The 2022 Ontario Open chess tournament was special for a number of reasons and let me, George Supol the Tournament Organizer, tell you why.

ACC is located in downtown Toronto and our motto is "Chess for Everyone." We were familiar with the Ontario Open Chess Tournament, having organized it in both 2016 and 2018.

The 2022 Ontario Open would be the first major chess tournament in the Greater Toronto Area since the pandemic started.

Our first major challenge was to find a venue that would permit a large event to be scheduled during a pandemic and at relatively short notice.

The Stunning Venue

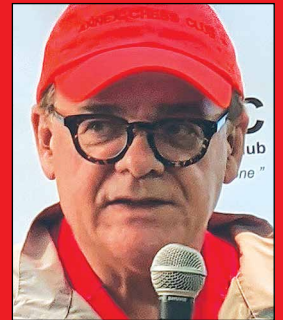
With the West Toronto Masonic Temple's approval, ACC's Board of Directors selected their beautiful and historical building as the venue for the May 21-23

Victoria Day long weekend tournament.

The building was completed in 1909 and its famous Blue Room was previously used to make a 2021 promotional video, *Alex's Gambit*, for Chess Institute of Canada. That video was inspired by the famous Venice hotel chess scene opening the 1963 James Bond film *From Russia With Love*. In that scene, SPECTRE Agent (GM Kronsteen) defeats a Canadian (GM McAdams) in the decisive chess match. ACC's Board felt that this setting, with its tie-in to the original movie, would give the tournament a wow factor that romantic chess players would certainly appreciate.

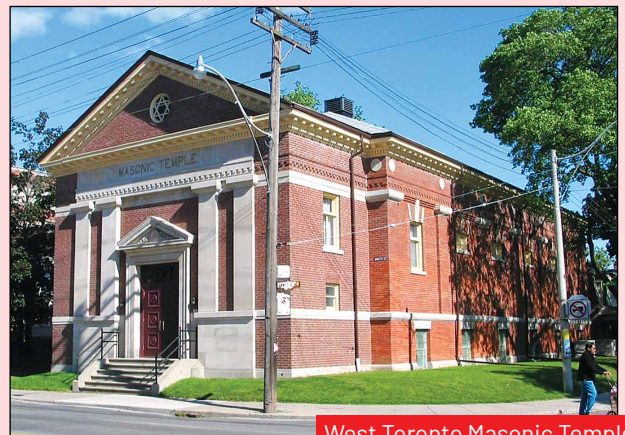
The ACC Board believed that the Temple's second floor Blue Room and accompanying foyer would provide an incredible backdrop for the top 75-80 players (mostly from the Crown and U2200 sections), while the downstairs ballroom

George Supol is a self-employed consultant and a Canadian CPA CA with over 40 years of related experience. He also holds a U.S. CITP technology designation. George is a chess enthusiast and has been a member of the Board of Annex Chess Club (ACC) since shortly after the Club's inception in 2010. He can be seen most Monday nights managing the ACC front desk. George has helped ACC to organize/run a number of annual tournaments including Toronto Opens, Ontario Opens, and Toronto Blitz Championships.



could handle the remaining 85-90 players (mostly from the U1800 and U1400 sections.) The Blue Room, equipped with massive historic paintings mounted on blue-painted walls accompanied by blue carpeting and a central chessboard floor pattern, was truly stunning.

In fact, later during the tournament, one player was heard to say that this was the first time he had played in a chess tournament where pictures of Grandmasters, albeit Masonic ones, were staring back at the players. The ceiling was also hand-painted with beautiful Masonic symbols including the signs of the Zodiac.



West Toronto Masonic Temple

As a historical building, the Masonic Temple certainly had its challenges. ACC had to bring in supplementary lighting, rented tables and chairs, and several electric fans to ensure the venue was sufficiently equipped to handle a major chess tournament like this. Because of Temple policy and another conflicting event, set-up for the tournament could only commence at 1:00 a.m. on the morning of May 21. This required that we rent an extra 20-foot truck which I drove (laugh!) to pick up the rented equipment from suppliers during normal business hours for our planned after-hours delivery to the venue. We also added a small army of volunteers, mostly friends and family, who helped to unload the truck and get the site ready for an early Saturday morning start.



The Organizers

The complexities of the tournament required all hands to be on deck at ACC, and we organized ourselves as follows: I ran the logistics including website promotion and registration; Salim Belcadi (ACC President – player acquisition, interviews and relations); Keith Denning (Assistant Arbiter and lighting); Mel Directo (social media, printing, posters, backdrops, beverages, and volunteers); and Michael Sutton (technology and equipment rentals). Other experienced support staff included Alex Ferreira, (Tournament Arbiter) and Ken Remark (photography and videography).

It certainly helped that Ken, Michael and I were familiar with the venue due to our involvement in the previously mentioned Blue Room promotional video, as director, actor, and producer, respectively.

The Players

As word spread about the upcoming over-the-board tournament with relaxed Covid-19 protocols, the beautiful and historical venue, and the deep and expanding field of players, registrations quickly exceeded the estimated capacity. The result was that the Tournament was sold out a month before its official start.

The final 170-player field included 28 titled players (25 in the Crown Section) as follows – 22 men (2 Grandmasters, 7 International Masters, 4 FIDE Masters, 2 Candidate Masters, 6 Canadian National Masters, 1 Arena International Master) and 6 women (2 Woman Grandmasters, 3 Woman International Masters, 1 Woman FIDE Master).

We had great representation from Quebec, and the strong field of women players influenced the ACC Board’s decision to add an extra \$400 prize for the top woman player, a week before the start of the tournament. That brought the prize fund to a total of \$9,200. International titled players played under the flags of China, Iran, India and the United Kingdom.

Amazingly, the event also included 36 unrated players in the U1800 and U1400 category who were participating in their first chess tournament. To assist those newbies, online links to videos and text of chess rules and etiquette were provided on the Tournament registration page. The field also included 60 juniors. The large number of junior and unrated players in the tournament is proof that over-the-board chess is alive and well in Toronto.

The Sponsors

Money was the next challenge. Salim (an entrepreneur and businessman) and I (a CPA, CA), both from the ACC Board, understood well that some sponsorship monies would be required to cover extra costs associated with the venue, and to supplement the prize fund due to reduced revenue resulting from free entry to titled players and the rapid sellout of player spots at discounted prices.

So, together, we devised and implemented a strategy to collect tournament sponsorship funds by tapping into our network of small and medium-sized business clients. Eight different corporations, non-profits and individuals were brought to the sponsorship table over a two-month period.

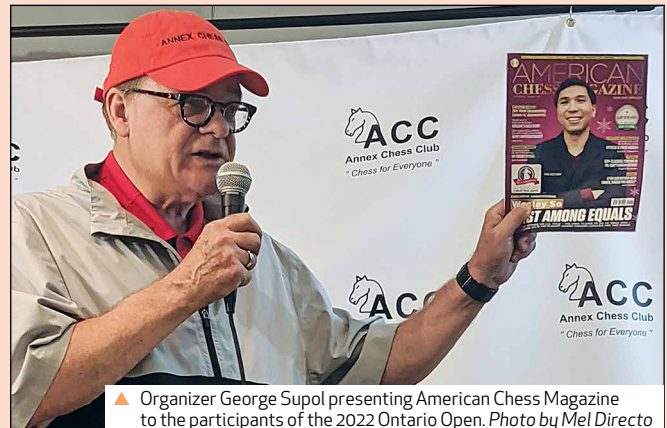
The entrepreneurs and key managers supporting these organizations all agreed that learning and playing chess is a wonderful pursuit for people of all ages, and their businesses and philosophies aligned nicely with the “We support chess!” proposition. In each case, there was already a high level of interest in chess, as the underlying supporter either had family members or key employees who were active in chess or who were already involved in promoting and supporting chess education.



Immediately before Saturday’s Round #3, Salim and I explained to all the players the nature and support of each sponsor and personally thanked them for their generous financial help with the tournament.

In short, I believe that we successfully focused our time and energy where it would have the greatest impact on the overall success of the Tournament. Time will tell if we have succeeded in developing a new “Canadian grassroots support model for chess sponsorship” or whether this was just a one-off scenario. I guess the operative question is: Could we do it again with a different group of sponsors? My answer: Yes, I believe we could.

American Chess Magazine was also kind enough to provide us with free copies of ACM and other swag to hand out to players. In addition, ACM provided a couple of free ACM subscriptions as a brilliancy prize for the tournament.



▲ Organizer George Supol presenting American Chess Magazine to the participants of the 2022 Ontario Open. Photo by Mel Directo



2022 Ontario Open

Lining up 25 titled players in the Crown section, the tournament boasted a very strong open section by Canadian standards. With multiple GMs, IMs, WGMs and WIMs involved, few were expecting an easy tournament, and none had one.

The favorites going in were GM Bator Sambuev, the recent winner of a very strong Capablanca Memorial Open in Havana, GM Razvan Preotu and IM Nikolay Noritsyn, known to play at GM level.

The standings before the last round saw English IM Ameet Ghasi in the lead with 4½ points from 5 games, followed by a trio: Noritsyn, Mark Plotkin and Koosha Jaferian, a CM from Iran. Eventually, IM Nikolay Noritsyn was able to win his game versus Ghasi on board one, while Plotkin and Jaferian drew their game on board two.

B07

Nikolay Noritsyn	2481
Ameet Ghasi	2476

Ontario Open, Toronto 2022
Notes by IM Nikolay Noritsyn

Last round – playing the leader and the only result to be content with my tournament is a win. Moreover, I am lucky to have White again, due to an unintentional ‘swiss gambit’ in round 2. In two months time at the Chennai Olympiad, I am sure Victor will have many good mathematical reasons to give me many games as Black, but I continue to believe in the first move advantage. However the present game is not a good game. There are mistakes, even blunders, misunderstanding of the position, bad time management (surprise! this time, mostly, not by me). But it’s a good example of fighting chess, where two players do all they are capable of at this given moment. Chess is a sport, and that is also beautiful.

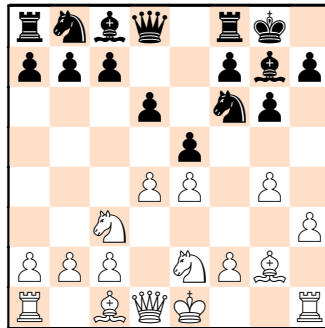
1.e4 Preparation in two rounds per day events is simple – eat, rest and think of an opening or line that your opponent might not like.

1...d6 2.d4 2.f6 3.2c3 g6 4.h3 In a five-minute review of my opponent’s games in the database, I found none with this system, which is my attempt at

emulating Karpov – Timman, Montreal 1979, but saving a tempo by playing h2-h3 and g2-g4 instead of g2-g3, and then h2-h3 followed by g3-g4.

4...2g7 5.g4 0-0 If anything, a 20-minute time advantage is a solid opening success. I also think the position is easier to play for White. **5...c5 6.dxc5 6.a5 7.2g2** leads to a Sicilian type position – however it feels like White should be up a tempo or two compared to usual Sicilian developments.

6.2g2 e5 7.2ge2

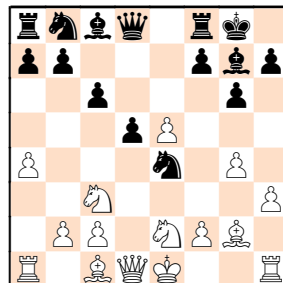


7...c6 I prefer **7...2c6!**?, after which White has many ways of playing, including plans with or without d4-d5, castling kingside or queenside. **8.d5 (8.2e3) 8...2d4 (8...2e7).**

8.a4 Stopping the possible ...b7-b5. Ameet was taking a lot of time on every move, so I had a feeling something unusual was coming – I didn’t see why I should be worried about ...d6-d5 though, so I allowed it without much thought.

8...d5 I had a feeling my opponent did not want to play this Philidor type position with less space, and was willing to go for a statically worse position.

9.exd5 As often happens when calculation is involved, I got lazy and went for the safe and simple choice. However after **9.dxe5 2xe4**



10.2xe4! in the ensuing endgame,

The Weather Challenge

Saturday was the first day of the Tournament and we experienced some excitement with the weather due to very high winds. Part of a large tree was brought down just outside the venue. A glass window in the skittles room was also blown out (see pic above) but luckily no one was injured, just a little shaken up.

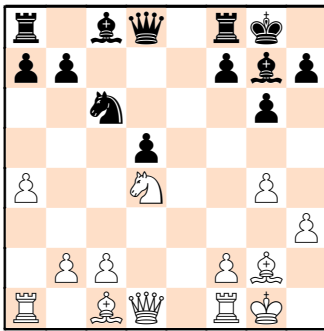
As it was quite humid outside, it was getting warm in the Blue Room. There was no air conditioning, although the fans we purchased specially did help. During the second and third days, the temperature and humidity dropped to more comfortable levels, while we continued to use the fans inside the playing area. We also picked the right kind of supplementary lighting, so as to provide the best possible playing conditions, regardless of issues with the weather.





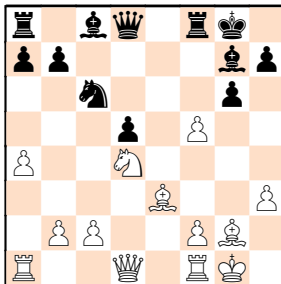
the knights will be more mobile. 10...dxe4 11.♖xd8 ♜xd8 12.♗xe4 I underestimated this simple move while calculating the lines. (12...♗g5 is not as strong, due to 12...♜e8 13.♗xe4 ♜xe5) 12...♗xe5 13.♗g5 ♜e8 14.0-0 It seems very difficult for Black to develop his pieces. Still, missing something in these positions implies giving up the space advantage and, as happened in the game, the better pawn structure. 14...♗d7 15.♗2c3 f6 16.♗h6 ♔f7 17.f4 ♗c7 18.♞he1 ♗b6 19.♗xf6!+-.

9...exd4 10.♗xd4 ♗xd5 11.♗xd5 cxd5 12.0-0 ♗c6



Karpov would certainly love to play White, and I share this feeling. It's a simple, pleasant advantage. The only thing that could bother White (or Black) is that the pawn is on g4 and not on g3. It should not make much of a difference though...

13.♗e3 a6 Or 13...f5 14.gxf5



A) 14...♗xd4 15.♗xd4 ♗xf5 (15...♞xf5 16.♞a3) 16.♗c5;

B) 14...♗xf5 15.♗xf5 ♞xf5 16.c3 d4? 17.♞b3+.

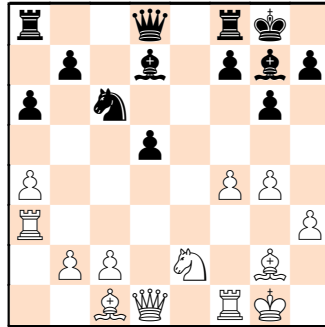
14.♞a3 Choosing between an approach by Karpov or Tal, I took Tal. After 14.c3 White is significantly better in a static position. 14.♞d2 was another solid option.

14...♗e5 15.♗c1 ♗d7 Very inventive

play by my opponent. 15...♗c6 is met by 16.♗e2. Or if 15...♗c4, then 16.♞d3.

16.f4 I just couldn't help myself. I didn't even look for ways to possibly win the d5 pawn, and it seems they don't exist - Black is okay. Things just lined up so well to make use of my g-pawn. Black being low on time by this point helps too, theoretically anyway.

16...♗c6 17.♗e2



17...♞e8 Black put a lot of effort into convincing me to abandon the attack, win a pawn and steal the initiative - with some success. Once again, I did not consider if taking on d5 is even an option. After 17...d4 18.f5 I have a feeling both of us thought that the ensuing positions are favorable for White. The rook comes from a3 to f3, the knight can be rerouted via f4 to d3/d5, etc. Engines disagree completely, and it seems objectively Black is better and will continue to be better during this phase of the game. Objective computer evaluation is not always important in human practice, however. My evaluation was that it is easier to play for White.

18.f5 ♗e5 19.♗f4 19.♞xd5 is perfectly reasonable though.

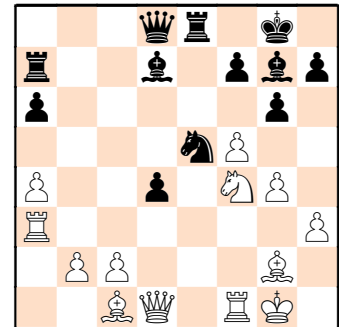
19...d4! With only 22 minutes left on the clock, Ameet is playing very creatively. One of the positional ideas of White's 18.f5 was to block Black's light-squared bishop. This was very naive of me, since Black does not mind sacrificing a pawn to activate it, as the last few moves show. In an open game, Black's king is safer and his pieces are now better placed.

20.♗xb7 Change of plans - the attack is over, Black's bishop is coming to c6. If I'm going to suffer, at least I have got an extra pawn to hold in hand. 20.♗d3 g5 (20...♗c6) 21.♗xe5 ♗xe5 22.♗xb7 ♞b8.

20...♞a7 Once again, I am not even sure if this is better than the more normal

looking ...♞b8 - but one has to admire the creativity Ameet is displaying.

21.♗g2

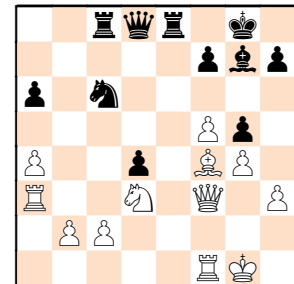


21...♗c6 Interesting was 21...♞c8 with the idea of ...♞c7. Then, after 22.♗h1, the reply 22...♞c7 looks quite strong. However, it seems both of us thought Black needs to be careful and take squares like d5 under control.

22.♗xc6 ♗xc6 23.♗d3?! Logical, but now the rook on a3 suffers. 23.♞g3 ♗e5 24.♗d3 (24.b3 This simple prophylactic move got out of my sights. Really?) 24...♗c4.

23...♞c7 Black should have full compensation for the pawn if he finds some good ideas - which is quite difficult. Once more, the computer evaluation is equal-better for Black, but again it is easier to play for White... Most likely, we both thought White was objectively better. I certainly did.

24.♗f4 ♞c8 25.♞f3 ♗a5 25...g5!



26.♗d2 h6 27.♞aa1 ♗e5 It's incredible how much better Black is after rather simple play, regardless of being down a pawn. I had some ideas to meet 25...♗e7, but I simply missed the text. I'll need to be more careful when examining candidate moves!

26.♞f2 ♞d7 Here was Black's last chance to play 26...g5, which is a very strong positional move.



▲ Ameet Ghasi - Nikolay Noritsyn.

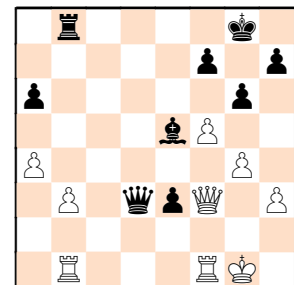
Photo by Ken Remark

Brave Like Ukraine”, sitting at the board for four hours I wished this to be over faster...

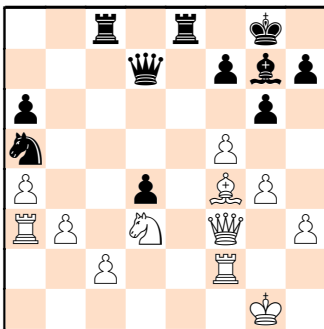
34...dxe3 35.♟ff1 ♖xd3 36.♟f3? At first I planned to go for 36.♟fd1 ♖c3 37.♟e4 centralizing my queen, but then I hesitated for some reason and sank into thought. Warning: Do not repeat my mistakes!

36...g5 After this White wins easily. Some pieces will be hanging, but nothing more than 1-2 moves to calculate on each turn. I'm very proud to have avoided any blunders for the rest of the game.

Black's best practical chance was 36...♟e5!



27.b3



27...♟c6 27...gxf5 would be welcomed, since the initiative will then return to White. No such presents are given by Ameet. 28.gxf5 ♟xf5 29.♟a1 ♟c6 30.♟g2.

Black had a very powerful 27...♟e3!, which is what he needs to display in such positions in order to retain his compensation for the pawn. For example,

A) 28.♟g2 g5! 29.♟xe3 (29.♟xg5? ♟d6 30.♟a1 ♟g3-+) 29...dxe3 30.♟f1 ♟e7 31.♟a2 ♟c3 looks more than fine for Black.

B) 28.♟xe3 dxe3 29.♟xe3 ♟d4 30.♟f4 ♟xc2 is equal.

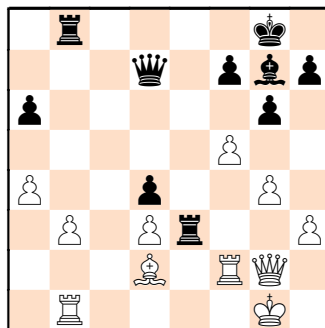
28.♟a1 ♟e3 It's a lot different now than

on the previous move, as White's rook is on a1 instead of a3.

29.♟g2 ♟e5 30.♟d1 The position has finally stabilized. White is better, maybe even winning in the long term. But more precise here was 30.♟b4, when after 30...♟ec3 (30...d3? 31.♟xe3+-) 31.♟af1 White is better.

30...♟xd3 31.cxd3 ♟ee8 32.♟d2 ♟b8 Black missed 32...♟c3! 33.♟xc3 dxc3 with compensation.

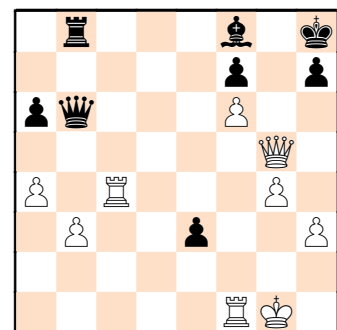
33.♟b1 ♟e3



Black does not believe in his position long term, which is quite understandable.

34.♟xe3 There was no reason indeed not to play it safe with 34.♟f3 However, with 14 minutes left on my clock opposed to 1 minute left for Ameet, "Be

Then, after 37.fxg6 hxg6!! (not 37...fxg6 38.♟f7+ ♟h8 39.♟e7 and White checkmates faster) 38.♟xf7+ ♟h8 who knows how the day will end. Maybe with mate on h2 or a promotion on e1?! **37.f6 ♟f8 38.♟f5 ♟c3 39.♟bc1 ♟d4 40.♟c4 ♟b6 41.♟xg5+ ♟h8**



42.♟e4 h6 43.♟f4 e2+ 44.♟f2 ♟d8 45.♟g2 ♟d1 46.♟exe2 ♟xb3 47.♟e8 ♟g8 48.♟e4 ♟b1 49.♟e2 ♟b4 50.♟xb4 ♟xb4 51.♟c2

Black resigned

With this win Nikolay Noritsyn became the Ontario Open 2022 Champion. Both Mark Plotkin and Koosha Jaferian tied for second place alongside Ameet Ghasi.

**TORONTO, ON**

May 21-23, 2022

Ontario Open (6 rounds)

1. Nikolay NORITSYN **5**
 2-4. Mark PLOTKIN, Ameet GHASI (ENG),
 Koosha JAFERIAN (IRI) **4½**
 5-8. Shiyam THAVANDIRAN, Olivier Kenta
 CHIKU-RATTE, Rohan TALUKDAR,
 Maili-Jade OUELLET **4**
 9-13. Razvan PREOTU, Victor PLOTKIN,
 Eduardo TEODORO IV, Geordie
 DERRAUGH, Yunshan LI (CHN) ... **3½**

If Round 1 comforted the favorites in their standings, the first big upsets were delivered in Round 2. GM Razvan Preotu lost to FM Victor Plotkin, the Captain of the Canadian National Team, while the tournament winner IM Nikolay Noritsyn suffered his only loss against WGM Maili-Jade Ouellet.

Round 3 saw one of the most emotional games of the event when IM Mark Plotkin played and defeated his father FM Victor Plotkin, just a few hours before he handed him the 2020 Jacques Katz Spirit of Chess Award for his outstanding contribution to the Toronto chess community.

BO6

Victor Plotkin	2240
Mark Plotkin	2350

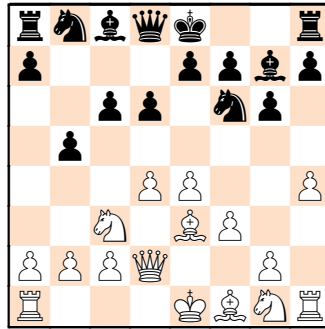
Ontario Open, Toronto 2022
 Notes by IM Mark Plotkin

It's always fun to play my father. I believe that going into this game, my dad had beaten me three times, and I had only defeated him twice. Time for me to even the score. We might have gone for a quick draw had it not been for the fact that there was a huge storm and quite a few trees fell over, destroying the wires near our house, so we had no electricity for two and a half days!

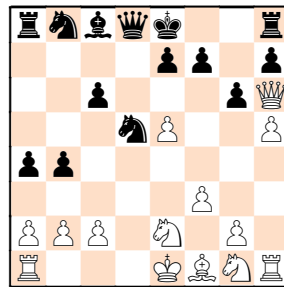
1.e4 g6 My pet opening. It's a horrible move though.

2.d4 ♗g7 3.♖c3 d6 4.♙e3 ♘f6 5.f3 When my dad and I used to play blitz against each other two years ago, at the beginning of the pandemic, we would often get this position, but I would always play ...a7-a6. This time I decided to switch it up.

5...c6 6.♙d2 b5 7.h4



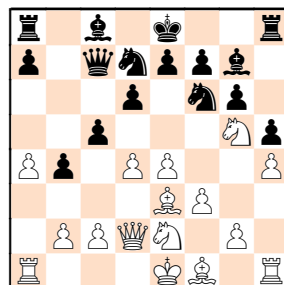
7...h5?! This move was unnecessary. It would have been better for me to continue my initiative on the queenside. Here's a sample fun line: **7...a5 8.♙h6 ♗xh6 9.♙xh6 b4 10.♘ce2 a4 11.e5 dxe5 12.dxe5 ♘d5 13.h5**



13...g5!! 14.♙xg5 ♙a5 with an unclear position.

8.♘h3 ♘bd7? This is not a bad move per se, but it's too slow. After **8...♙xh3 9.♙xh3 ♘bd7 10.0-0-0 ♖c7**, the position would quickly become double-edged – my favorite type of game.

9.♘g5 ♖c7 10.a4 b4 11.♘e2 a5? A huge mistake after which White is much better, almost close to winning. In the Modern Defense, it is very important to find counterplay in the center and put pressure on White. Correct was **11...c5!**



Here, after **12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13.♙xb4 (13.♘f4 0-0 14.g4 e5 15.♘d5 ♘xd5 16.♙xd5 ♙b7 17.♙c4 hxg4 18.h5 gxh5 19.♙xh5 ♙a6)** is another example of an unclear position that favors Black due to his piece activity.) **13...♙b8 14.♙c3 0-0 15.♘d4 ♙d7** and Black has close to full compensation for the pawn.

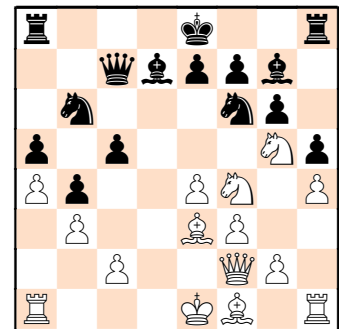
12.♘f4 Now any knight jump to e6 is a huge threat.

12...♘b6 Not **12...0-0?** **13.g4 hxg4 14.h5 gxh5 15.♘xh5 ♘xh5 16.♙xh5 ♘f6 17.♙h2!! ♙a6 18.♙xa6 ♙xa6 19.0-0-0 c5 20.♙h1+-;**

nor **12...e5 13.♘f6 fxe6 14.♘xe6 ♙b8 15.♘xg7+ ♘f7 16.♘xh5 gxh5 17.0-0-0+-** I generally wanted to avoid these kinds of positions as White will have an easy time attacking my weak king while Black has barely any play.

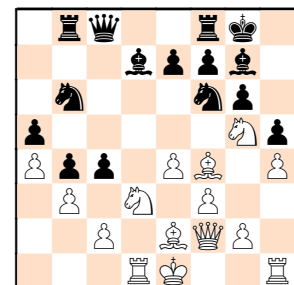
13.b3 ♙d7? Too slow once again. **13...c5! 14.dxc5 dxc5±.**

14.♙f2 c5 15.dxc5 dxc5



16.♙d1 White escapes all the threats of ...♘xe4 followed by ...♙xa1 or ...♙c3+ and Black is much worse due to the huge weakness on c5. **16.♙xc5?? ♙xf4 17.♙xb6 ♘g4 18.fxg4 ♙c3+ 19.♘d1 ♙xg4+ 20.♘f3 ♙xa1.**

16...0-0 17.♙e2 ♙ab8?? 18.0-0? **18.♘d3!** Introducing the double threat of ♙xc5 and ♙f4 with a skewer. **18...c4 19.♙f4 ♖c8**





▲ Mark Plotkin - Victor Plotkin.

Photo by Mel Directo

Special Awards

The **Jacques Katz Spirit of Chess Award** was presented at the tournament immediately prior to the start of Round 4 on Sunday afternoon. This award is normally handed out on an annual basis by the management of two organizations – Annex Chess Club and Chess Institute of Canada.

The award recognizes the great work done by the recipient in making a meaningful contribution to the advancement of chess in Toronto while demonstrating the highest and best spirit associated with the game of chess. Through this award, we honour the life and contributions of Jacques Amir Katz, an Annex Chess Club member who died in 2017. Previous recipients of the award were Ted Winick (2018) and Alex Ferreira (2019). The award winners in 2022, for 2020, 2021 and 2022 were as follows: 2020 – Victor Plotkin (see below); 2021 – Marcus Wilker (past President of ACC and a manager at Chess Institute of Canada); and 2022 – Michael Barron (of the Greater Toronto Chess League). It was important to keep these awards going and no longer allow the pandemic to be the overall master of our collective destiny.

A poignant moment was when International Master Mark Plotkin, presented the award to his father, FIDE Master Victor Plotkin, for his many accomplishments in Canadian chess, including being Canada's Team Captain multiple times in the Chess Olympiad – including 2016, where the team achieved an 11th place standing. Remarkably, during Round 3 of the Tournament, Victor (White) played Mark (Black) with Mark winning for the 4th time in their 7-game history of father-vs-son competitive chess matches.



Photo by Mel Directo

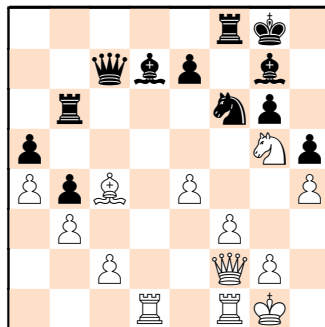
A) Not 20... xb8? cxd3 21. Wxb6 (21... xd3 Wxb8+-) 21... Wc3+ 22. cf2 $\text{d}g4+$ 23. fxg4 $\text{d}d4+-+$;

B) Instead, after 20... $\text{d}c5!$ Ea8 21.0-0+- White has a huge space advantage.

18... c4? I'm creating "play" at the wrong time. I'm simply allowing my father to get all his pieces active and create even more threats than before. 18... $\text{d}h7$ 19. $\text{d}xh7$ $\text{cf}xh7$ 20... $\text{d}d3$ c4 21... $\text{d}c5$ $\text{d}c8\pm$. Here, the position isn't entirely hopeless, and Black can maneuver and soon activate his pieces after the ... f7-f5 break!

19... xb6 $\text{E}xb6$ 20... $\text{d}xg6??$ Throwing away the game. 20... e5! Wxe5 (20... $\text{d}e8??$ 21... $\text{d}d5+-$) 21... $\text{d}xg6$ fxg6 22... $\text{d}xc4+$

$\text{cf}h8$ 23... Wxb6+- .
20... fxg6 21... $\text{d}xc4+$



He later told me in the game that he missed my next move.

21... e6 Naturally, 21... $\text{cf}h8?$ would transpose to the above mentioned favorable line for White, after 22... e5 Wxe5 (22... $\text{d}e8$ 23... $\text{E}xd7$ Wxd7 24... Wxb6+- ; Or 22... f5 23... exf6 exf6 24... $\text{d}e4$, when White is much better.) 23... Wxb6+- .

22... $\text{E}xd7$ 22... e5 $\text{d}d5+-$ Even if White gets three pawns for the piece, Black's pieces will be too active.

22... $\text{d}xd7$ 23... $\text{d}xe6$ The rest is an easy conversion.

23... $\text{E}xe6$ 24... $\text{d}xe6+$ $\text{cf}h7$ 25... $\text{E}d1$ $\text{d}c5$ 26... $\text{d}d5$ $\text{W}e7$ 27... g3 $\text{d}d7$ 28... $\text{cf}g2$ $\text{d}e5$

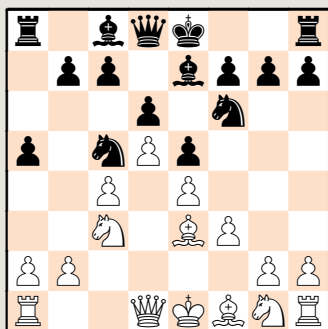
AMERICAN
CHESS MAGAZINE

BRILLIANCY PRIZE

A53

Maili-Jade Ouellet 2193

Shiyam Thavandiran 2399

Ontario Open, Toronto 2022
Notes by WGM Maili-Jade Ouellet1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 d6 3.♗c3 ♗bd7
4.e4 e5 5.d5 ♗c5 6.f3 a5 7.♙e3
♙e7

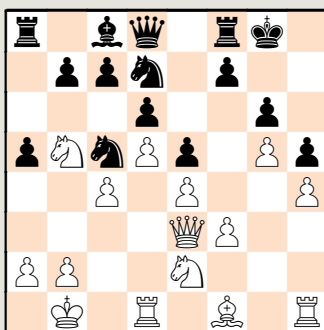
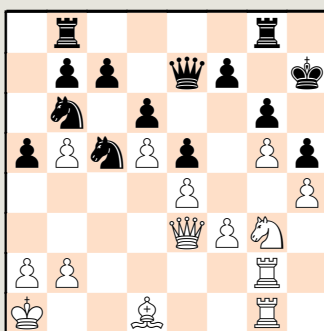
Generally, according to engines such as Stockfish, White is always considerably better in these types of pawn structures due to having a significant space advantage. However, it usually does



▲ Shiyam Thavandiran

Photo by Ken Remark

not reflect the actual human evaluation since these positions are hard to convert into ones that are winning.

8.♗ge2 ♗h5 9.♖d2 h6 10.0-0-0
♙g5 Black's dark-squared bishop is inferior to White's bishop, so this is a good trade for Black. The downside is that White has the opportunity to gain more space and possibly develop an attack on the kingside.11.g4 ♙xe3 12.♗xe3 ♗f6 13.h4
White should have been more patient and played 13.♗b1 to see what Black's plan is, since castling on both sides is still possible.13...h5 14.g5 ♗fd7 15.♗b5 g6
16.♗b1 0-017.♗g3 ♗b6 18.♙e2 ♙d7 19.♙hg1
♙xb5 20.cxb5 ♖e7 21.♙g2 ♗h7
22.♙dg1 ♙g8 23.♙d1 ♙ab8? Black would be better off leaving the rook on a8 to attack White's king. Better options for Black were both 23...a4 and 23...♙g7.
24.♗a1

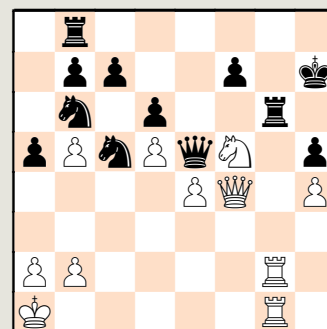
24...♖d7?? Removing the pressure exerted on the e-file and taking away the important d7 square from defending the king with the black knights. Again, 24...a4 would have been a better move.



▲ Maili-Jade Ouellet.

Photo by Ken Remark

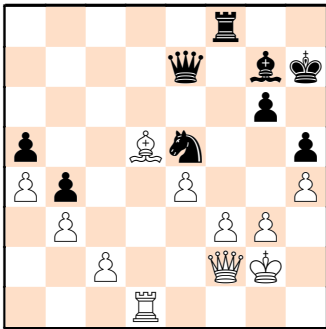
25.f4 Now that the black queen does not attack the e4 pawn, and can no longer counter this break with moves such as ...♗bd7, it is time to open up the d1-h5 diagonal for the bishop.

25...exf4 26.♗xf4 ♖e7 27.♙xh5
gxh5 28.♗f5?? The intention was to play g5-g6+ and introduce some ♗h6+ ideas. However, I forgot that the e4 pawn was hanging. Both 28.♗xh5+ and 28.♗f3 were good enough to maintain a decisive advantage.28...♖e5?? My opponent was low on time and probably forgot the e4 pawn was hanging, since it had been well protected during the whole game. 28...♗xe4 29.g6+ ♙xg6!+-
29.g6+ ♙xg6 29...fxg6?? 30.♖h6 mate.

30.♖g5!! Brute force on display. White is winning in all lines.

30...♙xg5 30...♗g8 is met by 31.♖h6!, whereas 30...♙h8 ends up in a checkmate after 31.♖h6+ ♙xh6 32.♙g7+ ♗xg7 33.♙xg7 mate.

31.♙xg5 ♖xf5 32.♙xf5 ♗h6
33.♙f6+ ♗h7 34.♙xf7+ Black resigned because checkmate is inevitable. 34...♗h8 35.♙f5 followed by 36.♙h5 mate; or 34...♗h6 35.♙fg7 followed by 36.♙1g6 mate.



29.f4 ♖g4 30.♖b6 ♜c8 31.♞d2 ♞c5 32.♞xc5 ♜xc5 33.♙f3 ♜c3+ White's pawns aren't able to get active in time, and Black has his pieces placed perfectly. 34.♙e2 ♜e3+ **White resigned**

The idea of ...♜e3+ is to take the pawn on g3 and then go ...♙e3+ to take the bishop on d5 too. Sadly for White, he is unable to create any threats.

Now, my father and I have an equal score. It's obviously a fantastic result given my horrible opening. However, I'll always be indebted to my dad for his sacrifice to enable me to become an IM.

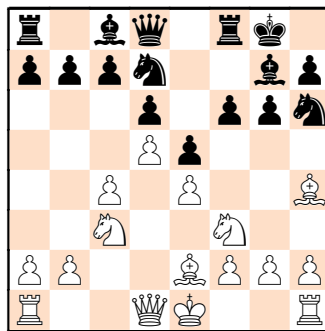
Round 4 provided a new upset when GM Bator Sambuev was defeated by IM Ameet Ghasi who would go on to have a great tournament, also finishing on a shared second place.

E91

Bator Sambuev	2512
Ameet Ghasi	2476

Ontario Open, Toronto 2022
Notes by FM Michael Humphreys

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.♗f3 0-0 6.♙e2 ♗bd7 7.♙e3 e5 8.d5 ♗g4 9.♙g5 f6 10.♙h4 ♗h6



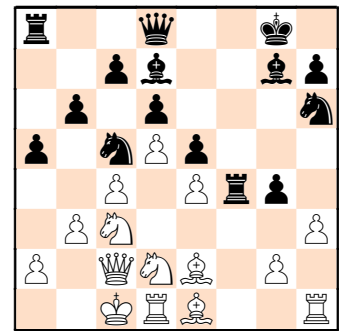
11.♞c2 As far as I can tell, this is a novelty. GM Sambuev has a considerable amount of experience with the KID for both sides, so he certainly knows how to pose new and interesting problems for his opponents. The way that the play

develops looks something like a hybrid between the Samisch and Petrosian variations.

11...a5 12.0-0-0 ♗c5 13.♗d2 g5 14.♙g3 f5 Despite the situation with opposite side castling, it is still correct for Black to carry out this typical kingside advance. Black's space advantage lies on the kingside so it is right to play on this part of the board. 15.f3 b6 16.h3 ♙d7 17.b3?! Perhaps White could look here for improvements.

17...fxe4 18.fxe4 ♜f4!/? This is a typical exchange sacrifice in the King's Indian Defense. Capturing on f4 would not work out well for White as Black then recaptures with the e-pawn and the power of the dark-squared bishop on the long diagonal would give Black more than enough compensation. This outlines one of the downsides of the move 17.b3. If White could "J'adoube" the pawn back to b2, capturing on f4 would be much more appealing as White would have more stability on the long diagonal.

19.♙e1 g4



20.g3?! After this move White will be worse for the rest of the game.

20...♜f7 The problem for White is that there is no longer a favorable way to resolve the tension between the pawns on h3 and g4.

21.h4 Unfortunately for White, this move seems to be forced. White would like to open the h-file for an attack, but after 21.hxg4 ♗xg4, there isn't a good way to defend against ...♗g4-e3. Since White no longer has any attacking chances on the kingside, Black has a stable advantage.

21...♗h8! Black's knight on h6 is not doing much, so Black finds a way to redeploy it.



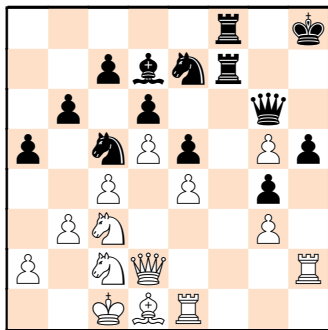
▲ Bator Sambuev. Photo by Ken Remark



▲ Ameet Ghasi. Photo by Ken Remark

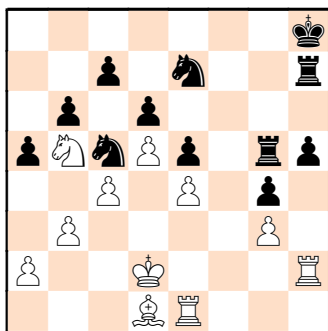


22. ♖f1 ♜g8 23. ♙d2 h5?! This move lets Black's advantage slip somewhat. It's certainly natural that Black wishes to defend the g4 pawn, but this turns out to be unnecessary. Stronger would have been 23... ♗f8 in order to prepare the exchange of dark-squared bishops with ... ♙g7-h6. Then, after 24. ♜e3 ♙h6 25. ♜xg4 ♙xd2+ 26. ♗xd2 ♗g7 Black recovers the pawn with a big advantage. 24. ♙g5 ♙f6 25. ♗d2 ♗f8 26. ♜e3 ♗g7 27. ♖h2 ♖af8 28. ♖e1 ♜e7 29. ♜c2 ♗g6 30. ♙d1 ♙xg5 31. hxg5



31... ♖h7? Black overprotects the h5 pawn and under certain circumstances prepares ...h5-h4. However this overlooks a much stronger move; Black could make immediate use of the f-file with 31... ♖f2!, when the rook is protected tactically due to the fork on d3 at the end.

32. ♜a3 ♖g8 33. ♜ab5 ♗xg5 34. ♗xg5 ♖xg5 35. ♜d2 ♙xb5 36. ♜xb5

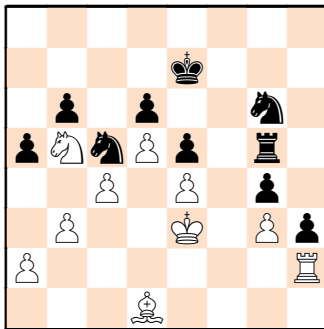


36... ♜g6?! Perhaps now would have been a good moment to target the e4 pawn with the maneuver ... ♜e7-g8-f6.

37. ♜e3 ♜g8 38. ♖f1 h4 39. ♖g1 h3 Black's advantage should certainly be decisive. It's worth extending the analysis just a bit further to see Black's brilliant 43rd move.

40. ♖f1 ♖f7 41. ♖xf7 ♜xf7 42. ♜xc7

♜e7 43. ♜b5



43... ♜f4!! Of course Black had several alternatives which were also winning, but this is by far the prettiest!

44. gxh4 exf4+ 45. ♜xf4 g3 46. ♖xh3 46. ♜xg5 g2!

46... g2 47. ♜xg5 g1 ♗+ Black is now easily winning and the rest of the game can be given without further comment.

48. ♙g4 ♜xe4+ 49. ♜f4 ♜f6 50. ♖e3+ ♜f8 51. ♙f3 ♗h2+ 52. ♜g5 ♗g3+ 53. ♜f5 ♜g4 54. ♖c3 ♜e5 55. ♜e4 ♗e1+ 56. ♜f4 ♗d2+ 57. ♜e4 ♜e7 58. a4 ♜f6 59. ♖e3 ♗c2+ 60. ♜d4 ♗f2 **White resigned**

IM Mark Plotkin continued his perfect 4-0 streak by defeating IM Olivier-Kenta Chiku-Ratte. And WGM Maili-Jade Ouellet scored yet again another important victory, this time against her future Olympiad Coach IM Shiyam Thavandiran in a game which eventually won the Brilliance Prize of the tournament.

Round 5 was quite exciting, with IM Nikolay Noritsyn defeating GM Bator Sambuev in a game between favorites. IM Ameet Ghasi put an end to IM Mark Plotkin's domination on board 1 with a win, and GM Razvan Preotu climbed back into contention by beating WIM Svitlana Demchenko. In a battle between surprise outsiders on board 2, CM Koosha Jaferian defeated WGM Maili-Jade Ouellet to tie for second place prior to the last round.

Honorable mention is made of WGM Anna Burtasova who played only 4 games, winning 2, and who returned to competitive play after a seven-year absence and the recent birth of her new son.



▲ Nathan Hilker

Photo by Mel Directo

So, despite all the uncertainty and complications, we had a chess-seeking public that was hungry to play over the board again; a great ACC Board that was strongly motivated to make this tournament successful; some great planning and logistics; and a bit of luck. And most importantly, some great chess was played in the tournament as illustrated by the games saved.

In the end, we're sure that all the players who participated had a great time, and isn't that the most important thing? That's what they told us.



▲ WGM Anna Burtasova

Photo by Ken Remark



A PERFECT-SCORE WINNER IN THE U1400s

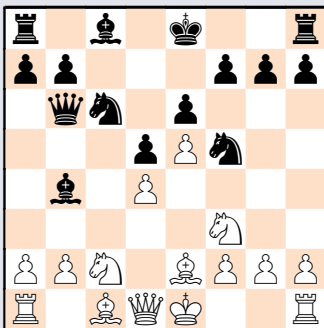
Nathan Hilker did a great job by winning the U1400 Section with a perfect score. His last-round game was the decisive encounter since both Nathan and his opponent were sitting on 5-0 score. In addition, this game was entered for the Brilliancy Prize contest.

CO2

Nathan Hilker	1143
Christopher Charles	1260

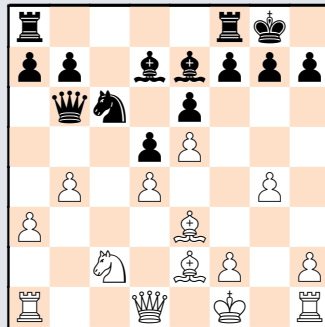
Ontario Open U1400, Toronto 2022
Notes by Nathan Hilker

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6
5.♗f3 ♗ge7 6.♙e2 ♗f5 7.♗a3
Rerouting the knight to c2, adding more defense to the critical d4 square.
7...♖b6 8.♗c2 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♙b4+

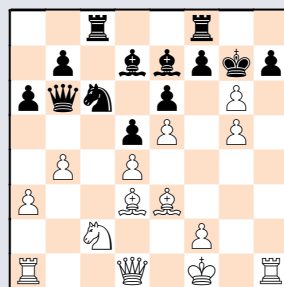


10.♔f1 A typical idea in the Advance French. White will eventually create luft for the king on g2, and Black will have to waste some tempi since White wants to play a2-a3 and b2-b4.
10...♙e7 11.a3 0-0 12.b4 Clamping down on the queenside before initiating the ultimate goal of a kingside attack. It is difficult for Black to achieve the pawn break 12...a5 because of 13.b5! 12...♙d7 12...a5? 13.b5 ♗a7 14.a4 is strategically winning for White.
13.g4 13.h4 is another interesting idea, with the threat of 14.g4 ♗h6 15.♙xh6. However, Black can shut

it down with 13...h5.
13...♗h4 14.♗xh4 ♙xh4 With the queen and bishop both eyeing f2, the threat of ...♗xe5 must be stopped.
15.♙e3 ♙e7?

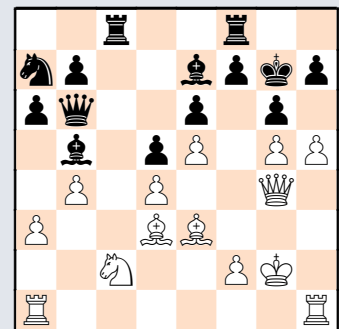


This retreating move allows a very annoying response from White.
16.g5! Stopping Black's primary pawn break ...f7-f6 and opening the d1-h5 diagonal for the queen.
16...a6 17.♙d3 g6?! Black blunts the b1-h7 diagonal, but at the same time creates weaknesses around his king. Now, the plan of h4-h5 naturally presents itself.
18.h4 ♖ac8 19.h5 ♔g7 Perhaps this position belongs in a textbook on attacking chess. At first glance it appears White should spend time coordinating his forces prior to opening the h-file, but Black's king lacks defenders.
20.♖g4 Improving White's position before choosing to open the h-file. With the position closed, White has grand dreams of even setting up an 'Alekhine's Gun' of sorts with ♖h4, ♖h3, ♔g2, and ♖h1. 20.hxg6! leads to some beautiful lines.



20...hxg6 (20...fxg6 21.♖xh7+! ♔xh7 22.♖h5+ ♔g7 23.♖xg6+

♔h8 24.♖h7 mate.) 21.♖h7+ ♔xh7 22.♖h5+ ♔g7 23.♖h6+ ♔g8 24.♔g2!! with the unstoppable threat of ♖h1 and mate along the h-file.
20...♗a7 Black is intending ...♙b5 to trade pieces and attempt to infiltrate the queenside along the c-file.
21.♔g2 ♙b5



A move such as 22.♗e1 suggests itself in this position, but after investing in the improving moves ♖g4 and ♔g2, White decides to strike immediately!
22.hxg6! hxg6 22...fxg6 23.♖xh7+! ♔xh7 24.♖h5+ ♔g7 25.♖xg6+ ♔h8 26.♖h7 mate;
22...♙xd3 23.♖xh7+ ♔xg6 (23...♔g8 24.♖ah1+-) 24.♖h5+ ♔f5 25.g6+ ♙g5 26.♖xg5+ ♔e4 27.♖f4 mate.
23.♖h7+! The shocker! White must attack forcefully to prevent Black from challenging the h-file with ...♖h8.
23...♔xh7 24.♖h4+ ♔g7 25.♖h6+ ♔g8 26.♖h1 f5 27.♖h7 mate.

TORONTO, ONTARIO

May 21-23, 2022
ONTARIO OPEN U1400 (6 rounds)

1. Nathan HILKER	6
2-3. Christopher CHARLES, Ester TSENTER.....	5
4-10. Umid ALLAHVERDI (AZE), Chenxuan Su JAYDEN, James CAWSE, Jonah MICKELSON, Stephen KUZIN, Sean LIU, Cansin VAROL.....	4½