

BCCF E-MAIL BULLETIN #86

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Stephen Wright

[Back issues of the Bulletin are available on the above webpage.]

B.C. PLAYERS ABROAD

As the Christmas holidays tend to be a quiet time for chess in these parts, some of our players recently took the opportunity to participate in events south of the border. On December 17 Tanraj Sohal took part in the Skagit ChessFest in Washington, and placed first in the grade 4-6 division with a perfect score.

Skagit results: <http://mysite.verizon.net/kaech/fest05.html>

Tanraj also entered the North American Open in Las Vegas, along with B.C. players Lucas Davies, James Chan, Dragoljub Milicevic, Noam Davies, and Jack Cheng. This was held at Bally's casino and hotel, and attracted 658 players (including 20 grandmasters) who competed for over \$140,000 in prizes. Although no B.C. player won any big money, several had good results - see the crosstables at the link below.

North American Open results: <http://www.chesstour.com/nao05l.htm>

BACKTALK by Dan Scoones

As regular readers of this newsletter know, I like to find mistakes in published analysis. Actually, I should put that another way: I don't like to take anything on trust. Anyone who has read the marvelous article by Tigran Petrosian that appeared in *How to Open a Chess Game* (RHM, 1974) and in *Petrosian's Legacy* (Erebouni, 1990) cannot help but agree. It's important not to believe everything we are "told;" otherwise it would be impossible to refute our opponents' errors.

One of the better books on tactics to appear in recent years has to be *John Nunn's Chess Puzzle Book*, published by Gambit. In the introduction to this book, Dr. Nunn makes some general observations about the genre, including the following:

Another perennial irritation with puzzle books, particularly with those in the 'rate yourself' category, is the existence of alternative solutions. You find a solution, gain zero points because something else was intended, and when you check it with *Fritz* you find that your solution is just as valid as the one given in the book... I have carefully computer-checked all the positions in this book for precisely this type of problem. I am not guaranteeing that there are no analytical errors... but the level of accuracy should be high. As we are dealing with real-life

positions and not composed studies, there will often be alternative wins at some point, but if they are significant then they are mentioned in the solution.

These thoughts are well-expressed, but they also contain a challenge. As I worked my way through the book I carefully compared my findings with the solutions given by Nunn. Eventually I found a position with an unremarked alternate solution, and noted with some satisfaction that one of the doctor's own games was involved. Here is the position:



Rodgaard - Nunn, Thessaloniki (ol) 1988: Black to play

White's king is short of squares, and this gives Nunn the idea of carrying out a mating attack. The game continuation was **1...Rxd2! 2.Rxd2 Rxe3+ 3.Kh4 Kh6!** (threatening **4...g5#**) **4.g3 Nf4#!** Very nice.

Here is the alternate solution that I found: **1...f4+** **2.Kf3** (or **2.Kh3 Rxe3+ 3.Rxe3 Nf2+ 4.Kh4 fxe3 5.Nf3 Rd4+! 6.Rxd4** and Black wins) **2...Nc1 3.Rxc1** (3.Rf2 is refuted by **3...fxe3 4.Rf1** [or **4.Rxe3 Rf7+** followed by **5...Rxf2** and **6...Rxd2**] **4...e2** and wins) **3...Rxc1 4.fxe4 Rd7!** and Black is the exchange ahead with only minor technical problems to solve.

Okay, so it's not an improvement, much less an earth-shattering one. But it's still an alternate solution, and, I think, a significant one.

Let's get back on track with a position from my favourite sourcebook: Chess Informant. The following position appeared in the endgame section of volume 75:



Marin - Slovineanu, Romania 1999 (Inf. 75/E6): White to play

Endings with bishops of opposite colour and only one passed pawn are notoriously difficult to win unless the stronger side can create a second passed pawn, or win the opposing bishop, or both. Here it is difficult to see how White might break through since Black's b-pawn is well defended and queening the e-pawn seems out of the question. First, let us see the game

continuation: **1.Kc4 Be7 2.Kb5 Kg7 3.Bd3 h6!** After this simplifying move it is clear

that White cannot make progress and a draw was agreed immediately.

Later, in Chess Informant, Marin cited an analysis by Dorian Rogozenko demonstrating a win for White: **1.Kc6! Be7 2.b5** Getting White's b-pawn out of the range of Black's bishop. **2...Bc5 3.Kd7 Bb4 4.e6 Bc5 5.Bd3** The idea is to break with f4-f5 and expose Black's h-pawn as a target. **5...Be7 6.Be4 Bc5 7.f5 gxf5 8.Bxf5 Be7 9.Kc6 Bxg5** If 9...Bd8 then 10.Bxh7 (Rogozenko), while if 9...Bc5 10.Bxh7 Ke7 11.Bf5 Be3 12.g6 Bd4 13.Kc7 and White wins (D.S.). **10.Kxb6 Ke7 11.Kc6 Bf4 12.b6 h5 13.Kb7 Be3** If 13...Kd8 then 14.Ka8 wins. (Rogozenko.) **14.Kc7** White queens his b-pawn and wins easily (Rogozenko.).

Let's bust this analysis. Take another look at the position after White's 12th move:



Black to play and draw

Black obviously isn't going to be queening his h-pawn anytime soon, so why does Rogozenko make Black play 12...h5? There is a much stronger idea: **12...Kd8!** Stopping the b-pawn is priority number one. **13.Bxh7** White might as well capture the h-pawn since Black cannot improve his position. **13...Be5 14.Kb7 Bd4!**

Black's star move to draw the game. White would love to play 15.Kc7, but of course Black's king is preventing that (12...Kd8!). **15.Ka6** Please suggest something else for White. 15...Ka7 creates a self-pin, 15...Ka8 loses the b-pawn, and 15...Kc6 repeats the position. Now White is threatening 16.b7, so Black must respond with another star move. **15...Be5! 16.b7** If 16.Ka7 then 16...Bd4 pinning the pawn as in the previous note. **16...Ke7 17.Bf5** Of course if White lets his e-pawn go then Black doesn't need his bishop in order to draw. White is now threatening 18.Ka7, winning Black's bishop and with it the game. Black needs another star move: **17...Bb8!** Preventing the approach of White's king. **18.Kb6 Kd8 19.Kc6 Ke7** White can make no further progress and must agree to a draw.

After working out this defence I went looking in the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings* for a similar position, and this is what I found:



Berger - Kotlerman, USSR 1948 (ECE 5, #1345):
White to play

This is fundamentally the same position as in Marin-Slovincanu, but of course with colours reversed.

The game continued **1.Ke2 b3 2.Kd1! Kb4 3.Bh7 Ka3 4.Bg6 Kb2 (4...b2 Bb1!)=) 5.Bf7! Ka2 6.Be6 Ka3 7.Bf5!**, just as in our analysis above. The players agreed a

draw here.

Two concluding observations: 1. Every player, from beginner to grandmaster, is susceptible to error; 2. There is tremendous value in studying endgames!

SIXTY YEARS AGO

On considering B.C.'s involvement in international chess during the Cold War period, the event that immediately comes to mind is the 6-0 drubbing of Soviet G.M. Mark Taimanov by the American soon-to-be world champion Robert J. Fischer in Vancouver, 1971. However, Vancouver also hosted another international match at the very beginning of the cold war, a team match between members of the Vancouver Jewish Chess Club (V.J.C.C.) and Soviet naval officers who were stationed in North Vancouver.

The V.J.C.C. only came into existence in the fall of 1945. The club was founded by two ex-Winnipeggers, Dave Creemer (see Bulletin #31 for more on him) and Abe Helman, presumably using the Winnipeg Jewish Chess Club as a model. The catalyst was likely Helman, as Creemer had been living in Vancouver since 1942. A former Manitoba Champion, Helman arrived in Vancouver in 1945 and subsequently won the 1947 and 1948 B.C. Championships before his premature death in 1952 at age forty-four.

"The newly organized Jewish Chess Club will have the rare privilege to be host to a number of Russian Officers of the Red Fleet, who happen to be temporarily stationed in North Vancouver. A friendly chess match with seven players a side is arranged for Wednesday, December 26th, at 7:30 p.m., in the club rooms at the Community Centre. The following are the players of the Jewish team: A. Helman, D. Creemer, F. Atnicoff [sic - Atnikov], W. Sapiro, A. Braverman, W. Eisenstein. Visitors are very welcome." [*Jewish Western Bulletin*, Friday, December 21, 1945]



"A friendly chess match held between a team of Russian Naval Officers and the Vancouver [Jewish] Chess Club on December 26th, will long remain in the memory of the community as a very pleasant event. Over a hundred spectators followed with great interest and enthusiasm the progress of the games. The match ended with a score of 5-2 in favor [sic] of the V.J.C.C.

The chairman, Mr. D. Creemer, introduced Mr. A. Helman to welcome the Russian players. Mr. Helman reviewed briefly the progress of Soviet chess in the last twenty-five years, and stated that the aim of the newly organized Jewish club is to promote the royal game of chess in the city of Vancouver, and asked for moral support from the general public to assist in building a club that will be a proud asset to the Jewish community.

Refreshments were served after the match and a toast to the Russian team was made by Mr. Robinson. Lieutenant Glotoeunski replied on behalf of the Russians, thanking the club for the welcome extended to them and expressing the hope that there would be another chance for a return match. He stated that events of this nature help to strengthen the friendship between Canadian people and the Soviet Union." [Jewish Western Bulletin, Friday, January 4, 1946]

The lopsided victory is not surprising: Helman and Creemer were former Manitoba champions, while Frank Atnikov (another ex-Winnipeg - he played for Winnipeg in a telegraph match with Vancouver in 1927) was a former Winnipeg city champion. Ironically both Helman and Creemer were born in Russia, but emigrated to Canada in the early 1920s due to the pogroms and political upheavals in Eastern Europe after the First World War. During the Second World War the Soviet authorities were too occupied with the war to be thinking much about anti-Semitism, but this changed in 1948 with the fabricated conspiracy known as the 'Jewish Doctor's plot.' So the match

was fortunate to take place at just the right historical moment - after the world war but before the cold war and anti-semitism became too intense.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Junior Events

Jan. 8 Junior Open, Vancouver Bridge Centre
Jan. 8 Island Junior Open, University of Victoria
Jan. 15 Shawnigan Lake Tournament
Jan. 22 Annual Junior Open, BCIT
Jan. 28 Elementary School Team Championship, St. John's School
Feb. 5 Island Junior Open, University of Victoria
Feb. 12 Junior Open, Vancouver Bridge Centre
Feb. 25 School Team Championship Finals, WPGA
See <http://www.chess.bc.ca/juniorevents.html>
For full details for the events below, see www.chess.bc.ca

January Sunday Open

Date: January 8, 2006
Place: Vancouver Bridge Centre
Type: 3-round Swiss

UBC Tuesday Night Swiss

Date: Tuesdays - next cycle begins January 10, 2006
Location: Room 213, Student Union Building, UBC
Format: 5-round Swiss
Time control: 2 hours sudden death
Time: 6:30 sharp
Entry fees: \$20 for adults, \$15 for juniors and UBC club members, \$12 under 1100 (excluding unrated)
TD info.: Aaron Cosenza, 604 327-4714, xramis1@yahoo.ca

Vancouver Class Championships

Dates: January 13-15, 2006
Place: Vancouver Bridge Centre
Type: 5-round Swiss

Dan MacAdam Memorial

Dates: January 21-22, 2006
Place: University of Victoria
Type: 5-round Swiss

Kelowna Winterfest

Dates: February 11-12, 2006
Place: Best Western Inn, Kelowna
Type: 5-round Swiss

February Sunday Open

Date: February 12, 2006

Place: Vancouver Bridge Centre

Type: 3-round Swiss