

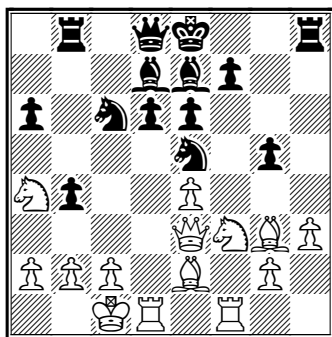
Vigorito on Chess

IM David Vigorito

2008 Boylston Chess Club Championship

For the second year in a row, I managed to win the Boylston Chess Club Championship. However, my play was a far cry from my convincing 2007 victory in which I scored 8½/9 against a strong field. This year I managed only 5/7 and was very fortunate to find myself in a three-way tie for first with Charles Riordan and Chris Chase. Oddly enough, the first round saw me paired against Chase, a repeat of the start of the 2007 tournament, although this time I had Black.

Chase, C - Vigorito, D
BCC ch (1), 15.09.2008



After an opening that was played inaccurately by both sides, an unclear middlegame was reached. Black has excellent center control and a nice outpost on e5, but his king is not completely comfortable. The white knight on a4 does not look so good, but if White is given time to play b3 and Nb2-c4 it will be right back in the thick of things.

18...Qa5 19.b3

Now White just needs to play Kb1, so he can get his knight back into play. I would like to be able to attack the knight with my d7-bishop, but it doesn't seem possible.

19...Nxf3!

This move would be bad if it were not for the follow-up, which I had calculated correctly.

20.Qxf3

Now what? White threatens Qxf7+ and 20...Ne5 can be met by 21.Bxe5. A lot of times in chess we see what we want to do, but can't because of some positional problem or tactic. It is important to double-check and make sure we can't make it work somehow anyway.

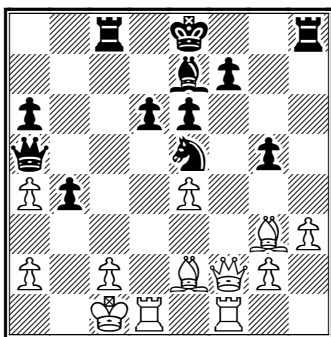
20...Ne5!

This looks impossible, but the check on f7 is hardly fatal.

21.Qf2

A prudent decision. After 21.Bxe5 Qxe5 22.Qxf7+ Kd8, White's knight is under attack and his king soon will be too. Black's king is actually pretty snug on d8, because of his uncontested control of the dark-squares. After 23.Nb2 (better is 23.Kb1 Rf8 24.Qh7 Rxf1 25.Rxf1 Bf6, when White must sack the exchange for too little compensation) 23...Rf8 24.Qh7 Bf6 25.Nd3 Qa1+ 26.Kd2 Qc3+ 27.Kc1 (27.Ke3 Bd4#) 27...Rc8, and Black has a very strong attack.

21...Bxa4 22.bxa4 Rc8!



This was a difficult move. Black cannot play 22...Qxa4 23.Bxe5, because recapturing allows mate on f7 now that the d-file is open. The text move takes aim at c2, while also preventing Bxe5, followed by Bc4, which White would like to play for both attack and defense.

23.Bxa6!?

After 23.Bxe5 Qxe5 24.Qxf7+ Kd8 (not 24...Kd7 25.Rxd6+! Kxd6 26.Rd1+ Kc6 27.Qxe7, with strong counterplay) Black's king is again safer.

23...Qxa6 24.Bxe5 Rh7!

This looks very awkward, but it is necessary. I had also seen a plan to bring the rook back into play.

25.Bf6

This is necessary. White's queen will be able to swing over to the queenside for defense.

25...Bxf6 26.Qxf6 Qxa4 27.Qb2 Ke7 28.Rf3

It is pointless to play 28.Qf6+ Kd7, because White would have to retreat with 29.Qb2. If 28.Rd4 Qb5 (28...e5 allows a draw with 29.Rxb4 Rxc2+ 30.Qxc2 Qxb4 31.Qc7+) 29.Rfd1 Qe2, leaves Black with some initiative.

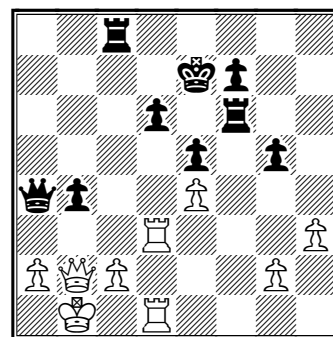
28...e5

This was my plan.

29.Rfd3 Rh6

From here the rook protects d6 and will come back into play on the f-file.

30.Kb1 Rf6



31.Qc1 Rc3 32.Qd2 Rc6 33.Rf3 Ra6 34.Qd5 Rf4 35.Rxf4 gxf4 36.Rd3?!

This allows Black to exchange queens into a winning endgame.

36...Qc6! 37.Kb2 Qxd5 38.Rxd5 Ke6

Even though White will win a pawn, the centralized black king and pawn mass give Black a winning position.

39.Rb5 f5 40.exf5+ Kxf5 41.Rxb4 d5

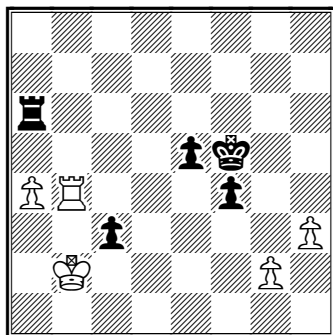
Now Black can swing the rook over to g6.

42.a4 d4

This is inaccurate. I had seen 42...Rg6 43.a5 Rxc2 44.a6 Rg8 45.a7 Ra8 46.Rb7, but was not sure if it was so easy to win. However, with a few accurate moves Black can convert: 46...Ke4 47.Kc1 Ke3 48.Kd1 Kf2+. Why didn't I do this? Well, I figured White couldn't push the a-pawn yet and he didn't have many moves, so why not further advance my pawn mass. The real problem was that I thought the win was pretty simple and was moving too quickly. Did I not even read my September column?

43.c3

I had seen this, but hadn't given it enough consideration. I just thought I could play 43...d3, but then 44.c4 is not so clear. A was already regretting passing up on 42...Rg6.
43...dxc3+??



Oh no. As mentioned above, 43...d3 is not so good, but there was still a win to be had with 43...Rg6 44.cxd4 Rxc3+ 45.Kc3 f3 46.Rb8 f2 47.Rf8+ Ke4. White cannot play 48.dxe5, because of 48...Rg3+, followed by 49...Rf3, when the f-pawn queens. Who would have known that my carelessness in this ending would decide the championship?

44.Kxc3 Rg6

This should win handily, or so I thought. I was in for a very rude awakening.

45.Rb2!

What?? White could simply protect his pawns. I did not see this at all and I suddenly felt sick. Instead of what should have been an easy win, I now had to struggle to draw. I honestly thought I was going to lose, and perhaps I should have...

45...f3

A very panicked reaction. Instead 45...Rc6+ 46.Kb4 Rb6+ 47.Ka3 Rd6 48.a5 e4 should give Black enough play to draw.

46.gxf3 Kf4 47.a5 Kxf3 48.Ra2

After 48.Rb6, I would be in for a rough defense.

48...Ra6 49.Kb4 e4 50.Kb5 Ra8 51.a6 e3 52.a7?! 1/2-1/2

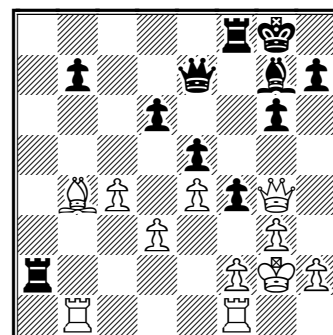
With this move Chase offered a draw and I accepted with a sigh of relief. After 52...e2, White actually must play 53.Rxe2 (53.Ra1? Rxa7 suddenly wins for Black!) 53...Kxe2 54.Kb6 Kf3, when the board will be cleared. White should have tried 52.Kb6 e2 53.Ra1 Kf2 54.a7, when Black has to find 54...Rh8 55.Kb7 Rh7+ with a draw, as White cannot escape the checks.

This setback would prove to be very important, but tournament favorites MacIntyre and Riordan lost convincingly to upstarts Theil and Warfield, respec-

tively, so I was not in such bad shape. It was clear that there weren't going to be any easy points in this tournament.

Vigorito, D - Theil, C

BCC (1), 22.09.2008



After a lackluster opening I had some positional advantage, but Black had counterplay against my king. This was not exactly my game plan against the aggressive and dangerous Theil.

22...Bh6

This is okay, but also possible was 22...fxg3 23.hxg3 Qf6 24.Be1 h5 with counterplay. With my next move I use a tactical trick to try to fight for the initiative.

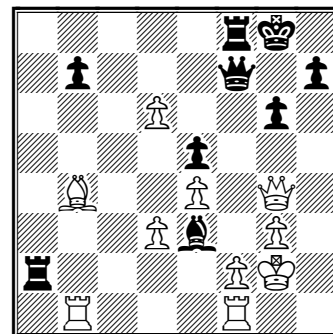
23.c5! fxg3

The point is that after 23...dxc5, White has 24.Bxc5 Qxc5 25.Qe6+ winning the rook on a2.

24.hxg3 Qf7

24...Be3 25.cxd6 Qf7 amounts to the same thing. I had seen that a check on f2 (like a check on f7 in the Chase game) would not be fatal.

25.cxd6 Be3!



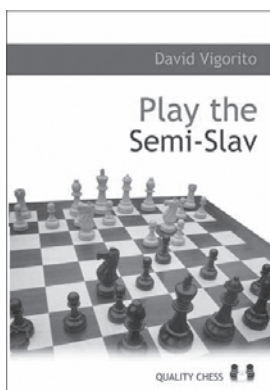
At first I was pleased to see this, but it is actually the best move. After 25...Rxf2+ 26.Rxf2 Qxf2+ 27.Kh3! (worse is 27.Kh1 Qc2 when White's king is more exposed) ...27...Qc2 28.Qe6+ Kh8, 29.Re1! wins.

International Master David Vigorito

2007 MA State Champion

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26.Kh1

This is one of my favorite defensive motifs. If you can't stop a check, move your king immediately. If your opponent makes the same move that would have been check, you may have new resources. I was lucky to not choose 26.d7?? (which I had considered) because of 26...Qxf2+! mating, as Theil pointed out to me after the game. Gulp!

26...h5

Instead 26...Bxf2 should lead to a draw after 27.d7 Rd8 28.Bc3 Qxd7 (28...h5 29.Qd1 Qxd7 30.Qb3+ Kh7 31.Qxb7 is also probably a draw) 29.Qxd7 Rxd7 30.Bxe5 Bd4=.

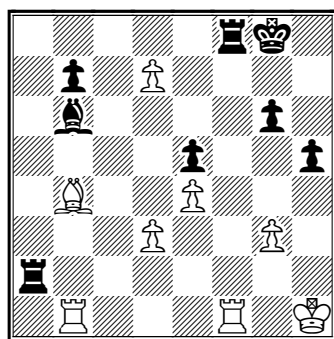
27.Qh3 Bxf2?!

Another misstep. 27...Rxf2 28.Rxf2 Qxf2 29.d7 Qf3+ 30.Qg2 Qxg2+ 31.Kxg2 Rd8 holds.

28.d7 Qf3+

Now 28...Rd8 29.Qg2 Rxd7 leaves Black in a decisive pin after 30.Be1

29.Qg2 Qxg2+ 30.Kxg2 Bb6+ 31.Kh1



Better would have been 31.Kh3, which will become clear in a moment.

31...Rd8?

We both missed 31...Rf7! 32.Rxf7 Kxf7 33.Bd6 Bd8 34.Bxe5 Ke6 35.Rxb7 Kxe5 36.Rb8 Bc7 37.d8Q Bxd8 38.Rxd8. This would be very difficult for White to win with his king on the first rank – thus 31.Kh3! would have been better when White would still have winning chances.

32.Bd6!

Now White wins material.

32...Ra6 33.Rxb6 Rxb6 34.Bc7

Let's not get cute with 34.Rf8+? because the tables would turn after 34...Kg7!±

34...Rxd7 35.Bxb6 Rxd3 36.Kg2 Rb3 37.Bc7 Re3 38.Rf6 Rxe4

A much better chance was 38...Kh7 39.Rb6 Rxe4 40.Kf3 Re1 41.Rxb7, when

the win is still not easy at all.

39.Rxg6+ Kh7 40.Rg5 Kh6 41.Rxe5 Rc4 42.Bd8 Rb4 43.Kh3 Kg6 44.Re6+ Kh7 45.Rb6 Ra4 46.Rxb7+ Kg6 47.Rb6+ Kg7 48.Bg5 Rg4 49.Bh6+ Kh7 50.Bf4 1-0

This sloppy victory was followed by a game that took me five minutes to lose...

Riordan, C - Vigorito, D

BCC ch (3), 29.09.2008

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.d4 d5 3.c4 c6 4.Nc3 dxc4

I had recently finished a book on this opening, *Chess Explained: The Main Line Slav for Gambit*, so I should know a little something, right?

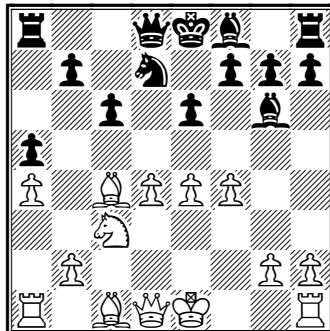
5.a4 Bf5 6.Ne5 Nbd7 7.Nxc4 Nb6

This game was hardly a must-win, so I chose this solid line instead of the more extreme 7...Qc7, intending ...e5.

8.Ne5 a5 9.f3 Nfd7 10.Nxd7 Nxd7 11.e4 Bg6 12.f4

This is a rare line, but I had actually chosen this line for a main game in my book!

12...e6 13.Bc4



This is essentially the point of White's play. After 13...Bb4 14.0-0! Bxc3 15.bxc3 Bxe4 16.Ba3!, Black's king is caught in the center and White has tremendous compensation. However, I was familiar with this and also knew of another idea for Black, so I kept moving quickly.

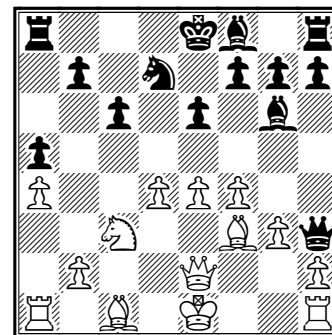
13...Qh4+?

Right idea, wrong execution. After the game I realized that Black should play 13...Nb6! 14.Bb3 (14.Bd3 hangs the d-pawn and after 14.Be2, Black can play 14...Bb4 much more confidently) 14...Qh4+ 15.g3 Qh3, when the black queen is annoying and the position is quite unclear.

14.g3 Qh3

This is probably wrong too, but I was still playing blindly. It occurred to me that White could even repeat the position, and that didn't seem familiar at all, so I already sensed that something was very wrong. Nice memory.

15.Bf1 Qh5 16.Be2 Qh3 17.Bg4 Qg2 18.Bf3 Qh3 19.Qe2!



After lengthy thought, Riordan finds a convincing refutation. For one, 20.f5 is threatened.

19...Nf6

Desperately covering the h5-square so that the bishop has somewhere to go, but White's last move also cleverly covered the g2-square.

20.e5 1-0

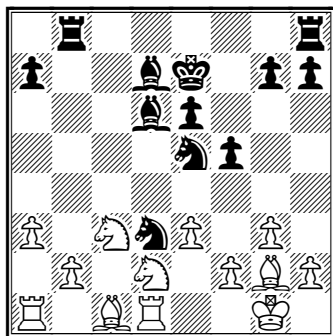
If the knight moves, 21.Bg4 will win the black queen. I used five minutes to play this game, although I "thought" for ten minutes here. I was mostly waiting for my opponent to come back to the board...

The next round paired me against familiar friend/foe Lawyer Times. LT has been hot lately, but I managed to cool him down and won. Next I played Simon Warfield, who as mentioned before had beaten Riordan with black. This would prove to be my most difficult game of the tournament.

Warfield, S - Vigorito, D

BCC ch (5), 08.10.2008

After a dull opening, I had made a ridiculous pawn sacrifice in order to get queenside "pressure." Although the sack looked reasonable at the time, it was completely unsound. I felt like I was just starting to get enough pressure when my opponent played a couple of accurate moves to dispel the illusion.



22.f4! Ng4

This looks good, but it was already time to get desperate and sack a piece with 22...Nxb2 23.Bxb2 Rxb2 24.fxg5 Bxe5 25.Nc4 (not 25.Rac1 Bxc3 26.Rxc3 Ba4!) 25...Bxc3 26.Nxb2 Bxb2 27.Rab1±.

23.Nc4 Nxc1 24.Raxc1!

Somehow this very obvious move escaped me. I had seen that 24.Nxd6? Nb3 25.Rab1 Nxe3 was no good, though I was worried about 24.Rxd6 Rhc8 25.Bf1 Rxc4 26.Rxd7+ Kxd7 27.Bxc4 Nb3 28.Rd1+ Ke7 29.Bxb3 Rxb3 30.Rd2, with the idea 30...Nxe3? 31.Rd3!, threatening the knight and 32.Nd5+.

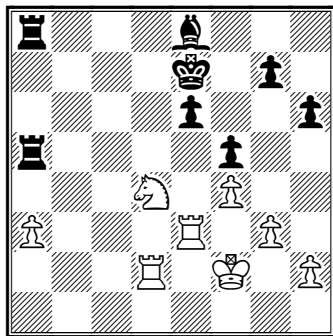
24...Bc5 25.b4?

A gift. For some reason Warfield thought I could not take the pawn. After 25.Rd3, White is up a pawn with a better position. My intended 25...Bc8?, with the idea ...Ba6, is quickly refuted by 26.Na4!.

25...Bxe3+ 26.Nxe3 Nxe3 27.Rd3 Nxc2 28.Kxg2 Rhc8

Suddenly Black is okay. The d7-bishop is not as bad as it looks and White's knight cannot really get to e5. Black winning this position though, is another matter entirely.

29.Rcd1 Be8 30.Kf2 h6 31.R1d2 a5 32.bxa5 Rc5 33.Ne2 Rxa5 34.Nd4 Rba8 35.Re3



White offered a draw here, which was pretty reasonable. I was exhausted and considered taking it, but felt that I was in a big enough hole in the tournament standings already.

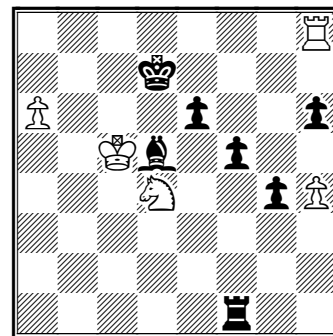
35...R8a6 36.Rdd3 g5 37.h4?!

This impatient move is not necessarily fatal, but it is a mistake. If "something happens" the g3-pawn will be much more vulnerable than the h2-pawn was. Now if the base (g3) falls, Black will also have a passed pawn immediately.

37...g4 38.Rc3 Rd6 39.Nc2 Rad5 40.Nb4 Rd2+ 41.Re2 Rd1 42.Re1 R1d4 43.Nc2?!

This is a real mistake. Suddenly Black whips up an attack out of nowhere.

43...Rd2+ 44.Re2 Bb5 45.Rxd2 Rxd2+ 46.Ke3 Re2+ 47.Kd4 Kd6!



Ugh. We were both tired and the game gets sloppy. I knew I had to be a little bit careful because White's king was so active, but I still messed up. 56...g3 57.Rg8 Rg4 58.Rxg4 fxg4 59.Ne2 g2 wins easily.

57.a7?

It is important to always stay alert. Here we both failed. My opponent only had a couple of minutes left in sudden death, else he surely would have found 57.Rh7+ Ke8 58.a7 Ra1 (58...g3 59.Nxe6!+-) 59.Nxf5! when it is Black who must be careful.

57...Rc1+

I have to chase the king away. 57...Ra1? 58.Rh7+ Ke8 59.Nxf5! This time I saw it.

58.Kb6 Ra1?

Sigh. 58...g3 is easy.

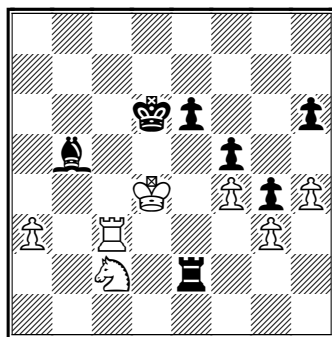
59.Nb5

59.Ne2 is a better chance.

59...g3 60.Rh7+ Kd8 61.Rh8+

White could still make things tricky with 61.Nc7 f4 62.Rg7, although after 62...h5! White is running out of moves. **61...Ke7 62.Nc7 Bf3 63.Rg8 g2 64.Na6 g1Q+ 65.Rxg1 Rxg1 66.Nb8 Kd6 0-1**

After this I had White against MacIntyre. I was not sure if I *had* to win this game because I did not know the standings – some results were wrong and not all of the contenders had played the same number of games. It was all very strange. I tried to work backwards and calculate how many points each player had dropped. I ended up playing poorly and had to equalize with white in less than ten moves. By move twenty I offered a draw and figured I'd hope for the best. Riordan ended up defeating Chase in a make-up game, so the three of us were all at "minus-two." I knew a last round win would give me at least a tie for first.



Now Black is threatening 48...Re4 mate!

48.Rc8

The only move. If 48.Ne3 Rd2+ wins instantly.

48...Rd2+ 49.Kc3

If 49.Ke3 Rg2.

49...Rd3+ 50.Kb4 Bc6!

Not 50...Bd7 51.Rc3, when White is fine.

51.a4

No better is 51.Rd8+ Bd7 and the g3-pawn falls.

51...Rxg3 52.a5

If 52.Nd4 Bd7 53.Nb5+ the simplest is probably 53...Bxb5 54.axb5 Rg1, which should win.

52...Kd7

I briefly considered the fancy 52...Rf3 53.Nd4 Rxf4? (53...Bd7), but came to my senses: 54.Rxc6+ Kd7 55.Rc4 g3 56.a6 would be embarrassing.

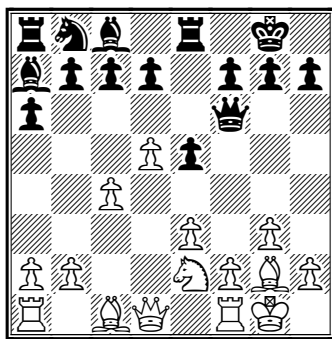
53.Rh8

A better try is 53.Rg8.

53...Rf3 54.Nd4 Rxf4 55.Kc5 Bd5 56.a6 Rf1?

Chess Horizons

Vigorito, D - Goldberg, B
BCC ch (8), 03.11.2008

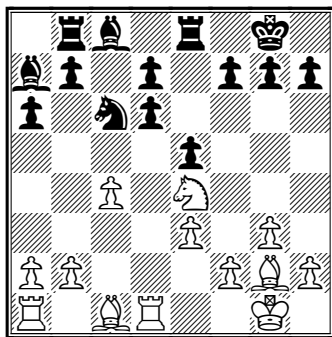


I had played Goldberg many times. Although I had been successful against him, I knew nothing could be taken for granted. For once I played the opening reasonably well in this tournament.

12.d6!

I wondered if sacking a pawn was “risky,” especially given the tournament situation. I decided to just try to play correctly. White gives up a pawn, but Black will have a lot of trouble getting developed. My real concern was whether or not Black could return it and get organized.

12...Qxd6 13.Qxd6 cxd6 14.Nc3 Nc6 15.Rd1 Rb8 16.Ne4!



Of course White would much rather capture on d6 with the knight.

Lauren and Barbara Goodkind are ranked among the top 100 females in the United States and they have posted a number of chess TV shows at <http://www.geocities.com/chessdiva.show/index.html>. Learn about some cool chess positions, watch them play five minute blitz, and learn what you need to know to play in a USCF tournament. They also discuss how to use the clock, good sportsmanship, and other basic rules.

The *Boston Herald* reported that the anti-poverty agency Action for Boston Community Development has honored Yasha Khibkin, 69, for his work as a foster grandfather who taught nearly sixty children chess and checkers. Khibkin, who emigrated from Uzbekistan in 1997, is quoted as saying, “the United States ... changed my life. Therefore, I must help my country ... We’re free here, you understand. No one understands like those who came from the Soviet Union.”

16...Bc5 17.Nxd6 Bxd6 18.Rxd6 b5 19.c5 e4 20.b3 f5 21.Bb2 Ne5 22.Bxe5 Rxe5 23.Rc1

It probably made more sense to just play 23.b4 immediately.

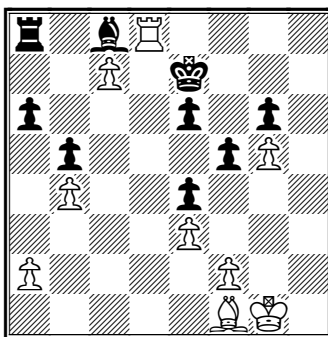
23...Kf7 24.b4 Ke7 25.Rcd1 Re6 26.R6d5 g6 27.h3 h5

Probably the decisive error. 27...Rb7 28.g4 fxe4 29.hxe4 Rc7 at least allows Black to develop his bishop to b7 and c6.

28.g4 hxe4 29.hxe4 Kf6 30.Bh3!+-

This starts a sequence that leads to an odd kind of zugzwang.

30...Re5 31.g5+ Ke6 32.Rd6+ Kf7 33.Rf6+ Kg7 34.Rdd6 Re6 35.Rfxe6 dxe6 36.Rd8 Kf7 37.c6 Ke7 38.c7 Ra8 39.Bf1



Black is not down any material and White does not have any threats yet, but Black can hardly move a thing.

39...e5 40.Be2 1-0

Riordan defeated Times, and Chase beat MacIntyre two weeks later to create a three-way tie for first. I also managed to become elected president of the Boylston Chess Foundation. I encourage all readers to visit our historic club, located at 240 Elm St, Suite B9 in fantastic Davis Square in Somerville!

David Vigorito elected president of Boylston Chess Foundation

At the annual meeting of the Boylston Chess Foundation in Somerville on October 21, David Vigorito of Lowell was elected president for the 2008-2009 term. Kent Leung of Lynn was elected vice president, while Robert Oresick of Norton was elected treasurer.

Chris Bird and Alex Relyea named FIDE arbiters

Two of New England’s most prominent tournament directors, Christopher Bird, 36, of Revere, Massachusetts, and F. Alexander Relyea of Bedford, New Hampshire, have been named FIDE arbiters by the World Chess Federation, according to published proceedings this past week from the FIDE Congress in Dresden, Germany.

Before moving to Massachusetts and organizing and directing the 2007 and 2008 New England Masters tournaments, Bird directed many events in the state of Nevada. He also has many other tournament credits, including more recently directing at the 2008 Chicago Open, 2008 Foxwoods Open, 2008 National High School Championship, 2008 National Junior High School Championship, 2007 North American Open, among others.

Relyea did most of his directing in the state of Oklahoma before moving to the Granite State. He was chief TD of the 2008 New England Open in Boxborough, Mass., and more recently has been organizing and directing tournaments in Manchester, N.H. as well as in Vermont. He currently serves on the MACA board of directors and is a member of its tournament committee.

Both Bird and Relyea are dedicated MACA members.