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WEST-SIDE CHESS

A West Michigan Chess Newsletter

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A NOTE TO OUR READERS

by Editor Michael Brooks

The purpose of this publication is to promote chess in West Michigan. The West Michigan Chess scene is filled with talent, scholastic programs, experienced coaches and even some local events. We have a lot of players from the area that enjoy this great game.

This publication has two primary objectives that we believe will encourage and promote chess in the area. First, we want to offer chess content that is local and relevant to the players from the area. Our goal is to create a resource that is educational and engaging. Second, we want to offer the opportunity for local players to be able to use their abilities and love for the game to help players of all ages improve and grow through writing for this publication.



Spencer St. Chess Club Chess. Coffee. Community

A New Place to Call Home by Michael Brooks

I have been a chess player all my life. Growing up, my family moved many times around the country which means I was able to see a variety of chess clubs and experience various approaches. I have always enjoyed a great local chess club. With the support of my wife (and even the originator of the name!) and the space provided by my church, New City Church, I was excited to launch the Spencer St. Chess Club.

The Vision

When I set out organizing this chess club I had a vision and an opportunity. The opportunity arose because my church resides in a building with a great space to play chess. It is located just north of downtown Grand Rapids in the Plainfield corridor and offers free parking and easy access. Along with the opportunity I had a vision for a chess club in Grand Rapids. I wanted to offer a place to play for the city of Grand Rapids and the greater Grand Rapids area that was well-organized, fun, and accessible to experienced and new players alike. Inside of this vision I wanted to offer the opportunity for USCF rated events to be played at different times because of the lack of Grand Rapids rated events being organized anymore. My desire was to see a chess club that would be a hub for Grand Rapids and West Michigan Chess.

The Format

The weekly format of the club is designed to easily integrate new players, experienced players and those that enjoy speed chess, or those that enjoy a little time to think. The format is a 4-round G/10 swiss paired fun tournament. This is NOT USCF rated and is just a fun time for all to come and play. This allows for players experienced with the clock and not that experienced the ability to play without the clock being the major factor. It also allows for a higher quality of chess but still at a quicker pace. This keeps the atmosphere fun, casual, but also organized. Along with the organized event there is time before the event and after to play and enjoy games which makes for a great experience.

Spencer St. Chess Club is intended to be a place to play that offers a laid-back environment but also fosters great competition. For players new to the game, the club should be welcoming and even be a place where the more experienced players can help the newer players. This atmosphere has been largely achieved and I am very excited to see it continue to grow!



Offering USCF Events

One of the challenges in growing West Michigan Chess is that there is a lack of USCF rated events in Grand Rapids. Dan Manning had done a great job in offering events that lasted whole Saturdays but now due to a schedule change he cannot do that any longer. I wanted to be able to offer USCF rated events throughout the year. This will be done by playing one rated game over a series of Tuesday nights. A few weeks after launching the club I had enough interest to try doing a USCF rated event.

Starting October 17th and lasting until November 21st, Spencer St. Chess Club offered our first ever USCF rated event, our 2017 Fall Swiss. We had 14 players participate which is a really solid number. Our strongest player was rated at just over 1900 and we had players that spanned the entire range, even to those that were brand new to USCF rated chess. This made for a well-balanced event.

The rated event was a huge success but even as many of our most regular attendees were playing more serious rated games we still have been drawing several new players. On the 17th of November we got 26 players! It was a great night with lots of chess players enjoying the game and each other. The cross table for the event can be found [here!](#)



Players like Patrick Boomstra, Henry Rankin, Isaac Zylstra, Larry Waite, Arie Lyles, Don Brooks, Chendall Brooks, Tony Palmer and many more are some of the many reasons Spencer St. Chess Club has been such a success. If you are looking for a new place to call “home” or have not had a chess “home” before I encourage you to check us out. We have a lot of great people that have made Spencer St. Chess Club such an enjoyable time for me and for anyone else who has enjoyed an evening of chess, coffee & community.

Location

We play in the New City Church Building. It is located at 214 Spencer St. NE in Grand Rapids. Our doors open at 6:30 and the G/10 events usually start at 7:00. There is a sign in front of the door to the playing area. If you are interested in playing chess regularly and need a new “chess home” we welcome you to come and play!

If you have any questions about the schedule or the chess club in general please contact me, Michael Brooks, at michaelforwinterpromise@gmail.com.



Spencer St. Goes to Action Michigan Action Championship December 2nd, 2017

by Michael Brooks

One of the enjoyable aspects of having a chess club with regular members is that you can go as friends together and feel like you are going as a team.

This year, myself, Isaac and Alec all went to the Michigan Action Championship together. This took place in Ann Arbor, on the University of Michigan campus. It was a great event to attend and was successful for all of us.

There were 79 players that competed in this event. It was a G/30 with 5-second delay and would be 6 rounds. It was a single-section Open event. Players from as low as 300 rated to as high as 2400 were playing. To avoid huge mismatches they did "accelerated" pairings which did make a difference and it never felt like you were playing someone so far out of your rating range that it was unfair or no fun.

We all rode together and arrived in plenty of time for the event. Although it was difficult to find the playing location we had given ourselves plenty of time to settle in before it started.

Isaac and I both have lots of tournament experience which helped in this kind of event. Alec on the other hand, who is newer to playing rated events, was playing in only his 3rd rated event ever. This was going to be the largest event he ever played in and certainly the most taxing! It is exciting to watch new players grow and experience the world of USCF rated chess.

One of the challenges of the event is that you are playing a time control that is slow enough to allow you some time to think but not slow enough to really dig into positions and find the

the best moves and themes of the position. In a G/30, you need to manage your own time well, and use it as an asset for key moments in the game.

Although I have played a lot of tournament chess I had not played in an event like this for a few years, and before the last one it had been several years prior that I had played any meaningful chess. This meant lots of jitters in the first round.

All of us in this event played good chess! Alec, who was rated in the middle performed very well and scored 3/6! I was proud to see how Alec played as he was consistently playing much higher rated opponents.

Isaac had a good event as well and maintained his rating scoring 4.5/6, a very good score! I was very happy with my tournament and ended with a 4.5/6.

It is fun to be able to compete in an event with fellow chess club members there to support you. I would encourage you if you are ever able to join up with other players from your chess club and travel together, do it!

2017 Michigan Women's Champion Clara McGrew



November 10-12, 2017
Game Annotated by Tim McGrew

The Michigan Women's Championship was a fun and interesting experience. Coming into the tournament, I felt that it was not going to be an easy one to win, and this did prove to be the case. All of my games were very interesting, but they were also very intense.

In the first round, I played against Charisse Woods. Before the game, I had heard that Charisse Woods had defeated some very strong players in some other tournaments and played well above her rating. Therefore, I took her very seriously and decided on a positional approach, in the hope that I would avoid getting into a complicated position where I might slip and fall. However, the game got complicated anyway, and at a certain point, it almost looked like Charisse was weaving a mating net around my King. Fortunately, I calculated everything accurately, and I realized that she was not actually mating me! Thus, I was able to wind my way through the complications and take home the full point.

Probably my most convincing win of the tournament was my second round against Jada Hamilton. I got a pleasant position out of the opening, and as a result, I was able to build a nice Kingside attack. At a certain point, I broke through, sacrificing the exchange in order to do so. A few moves later, I was able to mate her.

In the third round, I had to play against Sasha Konovalenko. This was definitely my toughest game of the event. In the opening, I was able to trade one of my Knights for one of her Bishops, which meant that I got the advantage of the Bishop pair. For a long time, that was what the game was about: the Bishop pair. I was maneuvering around, trying to find the right moment to capitalize on my advantage. Unfortunately, a

bad slip on my part enabled Sasha to get a lot of counterplay. Suddenly, the position became chaotic, and I was actually losing at one point. However, we were both in severe time pressure, and in the time scramble, I was able to get rid of all the pawns from the board, making it come down to Rook and Bishop vs Rook and Knight. With only seconds left for both of us, we decided to agree to a draw. Phew!

In the final round, I played against Lauren Bradford. Going into the round, both Sasha and I were leading the tournament with 2.5 points. Sasha won her final game quickly, which meant that I had to press hard for a win in my game in order to have chances for first place. My game against Lauren Bradford was a long, tough fight. However, I am happy to say that I was able to keep control of the game and not mess up at any point. In the end, I won after 72 moves. As it turned out, this meant that I won the tournament on tiebreaks.

All in all, the Michigan Women's Championship was a fun tournament, and I definitely learned a lot along the way.

Clara McGrew

From the editor: Here is one game from the Championship that was quite the battle and a highlight game for Clara. This game is annotated by Tim McGrew a NM, Clara's father and a renowned West Michigan player. Both live in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Hamilton, Jada vs. McGrew, Clara
Michigan Women's Championship
November 17, 2017 - Notes by Tim McGrew

There is an interesting back story to this game. Over a year ago, at the Michigan Junior Club Championships, these two players were paired, with the same colors as in this game. In a time scramble, Clara wound up with a Rook and a King against Jada's bare King, but somehow, Clara's flag fell before she could deliver mate. It turns out that the clock had not been set with a 5 second delay; but Clara, unaware of this fact until late in the time scramble, did not make a protest until her flag had fallen, and the game was declared drawn. Clara isn't one to hold a personal grudge, and it still isn't clear why the clock was misset. But she had not forgotten what happened there. She was very careful to use her own clock this time -- properly set! -- and she was not in a mood to take prisoners.

1. d4 e6

Black offers to enter a French Defense.

2. c4

White declines. Now Black has a fairly wide range of options, including 2...d5 (going into a Queen's Gambit), 2...Nf6 (which might take us into a Nimzo-Indian), and 2...c5 (which could give the game a Benoni flavor or might transpose into an English Opening after 3. Nf3).

2...f5

Black chooses the Dutch Defense, a fighting opening suitable for a must-win game.

3. Nc3

White proceeds with a natural, well-balanced setup: Knights at c3 and f3, a pawn at e3, and quick kingside castling. This line is not highly theoretical, but it is a completely respectable way to get one's pieces out.

3...Nf6

Black, meanwhile, is pursuing a light square strategy based on taking over the e4 square.

4. Nf3 Bb4

All part of the strategy to dominate e4. White's Knight, which is presently the only White piece fighting for that square, must be neutralized.

5. Bd2 0-0 6. e3 b6

More lightsquare strategy: the Bishop will join in the fight for e4.

7. Be2

In hindsight, this piece might be better placed on d3 where it could lend some defense to the e4 square.

7...Bb7 8. 0-0 Bxc3 9. Bxc3 Ne4

Black's first strategic goal is accomplished, and it is doubtful whether White can now claim any advantage.

10. d5!?

With this aggressive central push, White cuts off Black's Bishop from the control of e4 and allows Black the dubious privilege of straightening out White's pawns by an exchange. But as Bobby Fischer famously noted, to get squares, you have to give squares. Now that there is no pawn on d4, White lacks control of c5, and Black quickly pounces on this point.

10...Nxc3!

Yes, the proud Knight looked nice on e4, but one of the benefits of having your pieces on good squares is that you can trade in their placement for long-term advantages. At one stroke this exchange gets rid of White's potentially dangerous Bishop (which was looking at g7), doubles White's c-pawns (which might later become weak), and drags the pawn from b2 to c3 where it will never again have the chance to fight for control of c5. This square is at the

heart of Black's new plan: c5 will become an outpost for the other Knight.

11. bxc3 Qe7 12. Qd3 e5

Black gradually rolls forward in the center, threatening ...e4.

13. e4 f4

The extra kingside space this pawn gives to Black is a good clue to the future course of the game -- Black will be attacking on that side of the board with the help of all this extra space.

14. h3 d6

The pawn structure is completed, and it favors Black's remaining Bishop.

15. Nh2?!

In a slightly uncomfortable position, White begins to lose the thread of the game. If the Knight must go somewhere, perhaps b3 would be a better idea, where it could challenge Black's own Knight. But decisions like this are always much harder to make during a game than afterward in an analysis session!

15...Nd7

Now the Knight heads for c5, a fine outpost that virtually screams for occupation.

16. Bf3 Nc5 17. Qe2 Bc8

Black's Bishop has nothing useful left to do on b7, so it shifts over to a more meaningful diagonal as Black's attention shifts toward the King.

18. Kh1?!

Another small step downhill. Perhaps White is thinking of the well-known tactical pattern with ...Qg5 and ...Bxh3. But curling up into a ball turns out not to be a great way to defend the kingside.

18...Qh4

Black's pieces begin to flow to the critical part of the board.

19. Rg1 Rf6 Preparing to use the Rook on the g-file.

20. Bg4?

This move is positionally well motivated, since White's Bishop is bad and Black's is good. But it has a tactical flaw that both players overlook.

20...Bxg4?!

This move is not bad, and it works beautifully in the course of the game. But Black could have won a pawn here with a very nice tactic.

20... Nxe4! 21. Qxe4 Bxg4 22. Nxe4 Qxe4! and White cannot recapture the Queen because of 23...Rh6# Notice how White's Kh1 and Rg1 have created a mobility problem for the monarch.

21. Nxe4 Rg1

Now Black threatens both 22...Nxe4, as in the last note, and 22...f3 with the idea 23. Qxf3 Raf8 when Black's pieces dominate the board.

22. f3 Meeting both threats.

22...h5 Black begins to drive White's forces backward.

23. Nf2

In hindsight, this turns out to be a poor square for the Knight. But that fact was difficult to foresee!

23...Rg3

Black's attacking idea is evident now: ...g5-g4 will open some lines, and if that does not give Black a sufficient advantage, the other Rook can join the attack. White's problem is that there is a traffic jam on the kingside,

with pieces standing in one another's way. This kind of congestion makes it very difficult to organize the defense.

24. Kh2

In a way, this move shows White's recognition of the ...g5-g4 plan. But it is not enough to see what is coming; one must also prepare to meet it in the right way. White sees that Black's Rook on g3 will lack retreat squares. Unfortunately, the possibility that the Rook might be trapped is something Black has already taken into account.

24...g5!

When you are attacking, there almost always comes a point where you must trust your calculation and perhaps your intuition as well. Black realizes that the Rook is trapped, but she has calculated accurately that the attack will be unstoppable after an exchange sacrifice.

25. Nh1 Springing the trap -- but who is being trapped here?

25...g4! Forward! There is no way back now.

26. Nxc3?

White carries out her plan consistently, but Black's accurate play reveals that it was a bad plan.

26...fxg3+!

It is very important that Black be able to drive this pawn wedge into the White position. Capturing on g3 with the Queen would give away all of the tactical advantages Black derives from the exchange sacrifice.

27. Kh1 gxh3!

Open lines! Black must put White under the maximum possible pressure. The pawn on h3 cannot be taken on pain of immediate checkmate. So what is the threat? And what is White to do? The threat here is 28...Nd3!

This move, threatening ...Nf2+, quickly overwhelms White's defenses.

28. Rge1

This move allows Black to uncork a pretty checkmate, but it is almost a pity that we did not get to see the even more dramatic winning idea that could have arisen if White had chosen to bring the other Rook over to keep Black's Knight out of d3.

28. Rad1 Nxe4!! White's Queen cannot give up the control of the f2 square, so there is only one way to take this upstart Knight. But ... 29. fxe4 Rf8!!-+ Black's Rook takes over the f-file, making it impossible for White's King to flee the bomb that is about to be detonated on g2.

28...hxg2+

Black had to foresee this combination back when she sacrificed the Rook. Now everything clicks and we get to see a pretty mating pattern.

29. Kxg2 Qh2+ 30. Kf1 Qh1#

To view this game online in PGN format click the following link: <https://chess24.com/en/analysis/michaelbrooks/session/anlz0CGJDNcK-R6qsrldGoZ2KWg>



Clara McGrew holding her trophy!



Chess: Principles vs. Practice

A Prank on the Flank - A Flank Attack Fails

by Henry Rankin



Let us, my reader and I, begin our journey together. This column is designed to explore the tension between theory and practice. My hope is that it will be fun and informative, and perhaps a little mind-stretching.

By way of introduction, I started playing chess in 1966, with one of those plastic hollow sets you could get at Woolworths. My first set, like Woolworths, is long gone. I tested myself playing tournaments in 1978, stopped for a while, and played well into 1990. I was a highly rated "A" player then. A daughter was born in early 1990, I dropped 160 rating points almost immediately, and I stopped playing. I am back now after a 27 year absence.

Observing games and players over the years, I have been often struck by how chess instructors try to teach principles and tactics. It seems that we stuff chess principles into young minds like we are force feeding mushed lima beans to a 2 year old. That is to say we really do not explain that much, we just stuff the lima beans. The purpose of this column will be explore a game, and then try to show seeming contradiction to the principle, with analysis to enable the reader to think more clearly how chess principles and tactics complement and support each other

Here is a well-known flank attack by Bobby Fisher.

The following is from Fisher-Larsen, Portoroz Interzonal 1958



Diagram after 18. h5.

This game has set the tone for flank attacks for many years. Play continued,

18. .. Rfc8 19. hxg6 hxg6 20. g4 a5 21. g5 Nh5 22. Rxh5 gxh5 23. g6 e5 24. gxf7+ Kf8 25. Be3 d5 26. exd5 Rxf7 27. d6 Rf 28. Bg5 Qb7 29. Bxf6 Bxf6 30. d7 Rd8 31. Qd6+ 1-0

With this game, the construction of the attack is clear. White has castled, put his pieces on optimal squares, and connected his Rooks, achieving complete development before undertaking an attack.

Do all flank attacks work? Of course, not all of them work. They require planning. Given the popularity of them in recent years, it is instructive to examine one that did not succeed to appreciate the battle of practice versus principle.

The following is a game between Alex Ethelontis and Robert Eames. The game is from a 2012 match between the Barnet and Chingford teams, which play in the North Circular Chess League in the United Kingdom. Eames, who has played at the Hastings Christmas Tournaments in the past, has FIDE mater norms. Ethelontis had not played in a FIDE tournament at the time of the game. Most of the games from the UK chess leagues never see print. I feel fortunate to have found this one as it is a gem.

Without further fanfare, here is the game.

Ethelontis –Eames 2012
ECO A2) (English Opening, 2.g3)

1.c4 e5 2.g3 (Diagram)



White wants to control the e5 and d4 squares. That is a typical plan in the English Opening. C4 initiates a plan of light square control. By playing Nc3 strengthens White's hold on e5 and d4 in a more direct fashion. When Bg2 is played, White will exert pressure on the light squares on the h1 to a8 diagonal. White's further play on the b file will reflect the utilization of this pressure. White will attempt to avoid committing his pieces and try to force Black to commit first.

2...h5



Black is all in on his attack. Is this too early? The English opening lends itself to a number of variations that have been tried against the Sicilian defense. Given that White is often playing a Sicilian Dragon with the colors reversed in the fianchettoed English, it is no surprise that Black's ventures a Grand Prix inspired attack against the English opening. Black's play reminds one of a Bull pawing at the dirt just before he charges.

3. h3



A playful flurry of pawn moves, but what about the pieces? What about the Knight development that has not happened? White's h3, a seemingly crazy move, prepares both offensive and defensive possibilities. A later Nf3, then Nh2, would provide defense against h4. Still, White must be careful and play with precision. An unprepared h4 by White could allow a break at g4 for Black. Also there now is breaks such as Black's h4, followed by a White g4, followed by a Black f5 to blow open the kingside of the board.

In short, White and Black are creating the pawn structure, then fitting piece placement as a counter to opponent piece placement. Given that there are no have open or open files yet, our protagonists can bask in the comfort of knowing that piece placement can be denied, but not much longer, all the while violating opening principles telling players to minimize pawn moves.

3...Nc6 4. Nc3

At last! Black, by posting Sir Galahad, his trusty knight on c6, defines the center. Notice that after the tandem of knight moves, Black exerts pressure on e5 and d4, while White clutches d5 and e4. One side has a stronghold on the dark squares. The other side possesses a stronghold on the light squares.

4...Bc5 5. Bg2 a6 6. Nf3 d6 7. d3 Nge7 8. a3 f6!?

(Diagram Below)



(After 8...f6)

8...f5 f4 is more forcing, potentially.

9.e3 Nf5 10. b4 Ba7 11. b5 axb5 12. Nxb5



Our first pawn exchange. The a and b files are half open. White's half open b file is more navigable than Black's a file. The b file has five squares a rook can be placed without threat of capture, Black has none due to bishop placement. If Black's Bishop were on c5, he would have four. By the way, 12..d5, an attempt to wrest control of the square from White by Black would be a fatal blunder.

12..d5?? 13 cxd5 Qxd5 14. Nxc7+!!

(Analysis Diagram)



8...f5 f4 is more forcing, potentially.

The game resumed. **12..Bb6 13. O-O g5**



Tally ho!! The dogs have been released!

14. Nh2 !

If Black charges with 14... g4, then 15. hxg4, hxg4 followed by 16. Nxc7 stops the pawn storm. This move reveals the long term planning contained in an early h3. With the White king's knight on e2 for example, a defense against Black's pawn storm would have been very difficult.

14...Be6 15. Nc3 Prepares 16. Rb1 **15...Na5 16. Rb1**

Rb1 is one of the thematic moves of the English opening. The b and c-files often have tasty targets which is tempting for White's forces.

c6 17. Na4 Bc7 18. Bd2 Simple, but good. **18... Rh7**



18... h4 19.g4 Ne7 20.Nf3 Kf7 21.Nc3 Ke8 produces near equality.

19.Be4

If 19... Qe7, then 20.g4 Nh4 21.Bxh7 Qxh7 22. e4

19...d5 20.cxd5 cxd5 21.Nc5!!



What a position! Note that Black's Bishop on e6 is a Knight move away from the Bishop on c7, which is a Knight's move from the Rook on a8. Further, if Black's Rook on h7 leaves the h-file then Qh5+ is possible. Also possible right now is Qa4+.

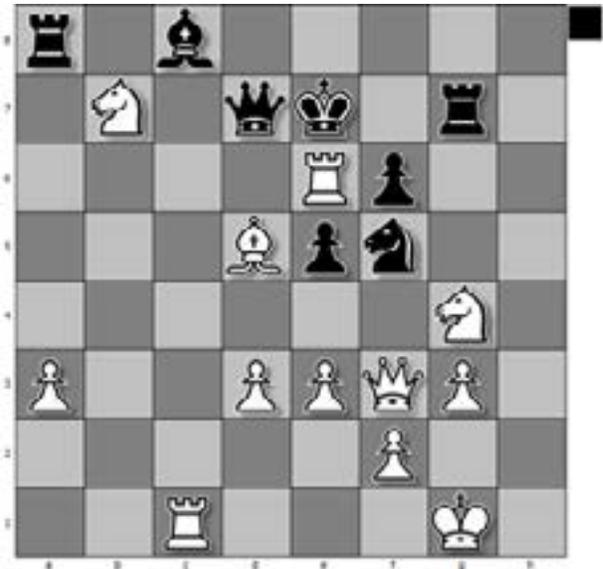
The following line looks good for white:
21...Qd6 22.Qa4+ Kf8 23. Nxb7 Qd7 24.Qxd7 Rxd7 25. Nc5 dxe4 26. Nxe6+ Kf7 27. Nxc7 Rxc7

21...Bc8 Not 21...dxe4 22.Bxa5 Bxa5 23.Nxe6 Qd6 24.Qb3 exd3 25.Nc5 Nh6 26.Nxb7 Qd7 27.Nc5 Qd6 28.Qb5+ Kf8 29.Nb7 with an advantage for White.

22.Bxa5 Bxa5 23. Nxb7 Qc7 If not 23... Qc7, then 23...Rxb7 24. Rxb7 Bxb7 25. Qxh5+ Ke7 26. Qh7+ Kd6 27.Bxf5 Qe7 28. Qg6 Bc3 29. Nf3 Rxa3 30.Nxg5

24.Bxd5 Bb6 25. Qf3 g4 25...Bxb7 26.Bxb7 Qxb7 27. Qxf5 Rxa3 28. Qe6+ Re7 29. Qxf6 Ra7 30. Rxb6 Qd5 31.Rc1, this variation is crushing.

26.hxg4 hxg4 27.Nxg4 Ke7 28.Rfc1 Qd7 29.Rxb6 Rg7 30.Re6+ 1-0



What principles are usually taught and what were broken in this game? Here is my list of chess principles.

My personal list for the opening is:

- 1) Occupy the Center
- 2) Pawn moves are not development, merely aids to it so avoid them
- 3) Develop pieces toward the center
- 4) Develop Minor Pieces(Knights and Bishops) first
- 5) Develop Knights before Bishops
- 6) Do not move the Queen early
- 7) Do not move a piece twice in the opening
- 8) Castle Early (before move 12)
- 9) Connect the Rooks
- 10) Develop all of your pieces

My personal list for the middle game is:

- 1) Coordinate your pieces and play with a plan.
- 2) Avoid exchanging pieces. They are needed for attack and defense.
- 3) When your opponent's development is poor, look for tactics and combinations
- 4) When you see a good move, look for a better one
- 5) Attack backward, isolated, and doubled pawns.
- 6) Exchange bad pieces.
- 7) Bishops are worth more than Knights
- 8) Never give up an open file without a fight
- 9) Don't launch a flank attack without controlling or securing the center.
- 10) When ahead in material exchange pieces, not pawns.
- 11) Tempos, the moves themselves, are the fuel of the chess struggle. Make each move useful.
- 12) Avoid locating pieces where they can easily be dislodged

By move three, both players have violated **opening principle 2**. After move three, both players have violated **middlegame principle 9**. **White does not castle until move 13**, violating opening principle number eight. Black never castles. Black's position remains vulnerable due to the fact the **Rooks were not connected violating opening principle move nine**. White's play does not create coordinated and connected Rooks until move 25. Although not stated in my list of principles above, the need to centralize knights always points towards them being off the edges of the board. Note that after move 17, both of White's Knights are on the rim of the board.

That's a lot of violations. Should we arrest both of them and haul them into "Chess Court"?

What games like this do is to remind us that principles guide, but don't bind our play. When one side breaks a principle, such as not developing pieces early, the opponent gains some leeway in his conduct of the chess struggle because the degree and manner of central square control, for example, at that given point of the game is different from what one would expect. The central feature of this game is the manner that both sides refrained from making piece placement commitments as long as possible until the resulting position dictated optimal minor piece placement.

This leads to a distillation of an implied principle: **the chess position on the board itself must always take precedent to any other concern or principle as the position modifies the value of pieces and squares in chess**. That is why tactics work That is why some endgames are won, some are lost and some are drawn.

This was a very entertaining game that I could have easily done extended notes on every move. Hopefully, you enjoyed this game as much as I have.

Henry Rankin

Spencer Street Tactics

Tactics from Spencer Street Chess Club Games
Solutions: Next Page
by Tony Palmer

Henry-Bryan after 30...f5



1) White to play

Chendall-Patrick after 35. Ke2



4) Black to play

Nathan-Savanna after 7...Qb6



7) White to play

Alec-Henry after 12. Qxd5



2) Black to play

Michael-Nathan after 32...Nh6



5) White to play

Scott-Tony after 26. Qc2



8) Black to play

Tony-Don after 17...Qd8



3) Black to play

Noah-Larry after 16. Qc3



6) Black to play

Michael-Nathan after 29...Be6



9) White to play

Spencer Street Tactics

Solutions

- 1) **31. Re5** (Fork)
- 2) **12 ... Bxc3+ 0-1** (13. bxc3 Qxd5) (Remove the Guard)
- 3) **18. Nxc6** (Knight Fork)
- 4) **35 ... Rc2+ 36. Qd2** (36. Kd3 Qd1#) **Qxe4+** (Remove the Guard)
- 5) **33. Qe3+** (Fork)
- 6) **16 ... Nd5 17. Qc2** (17. Qd4/Qd2/Qc1 Nb3; 17. Qe5 Bb8) **Nxf4** (Knight Fork)
- 7) **8. Nc7+** (Knight Fork)
- 8) **26 ... Rd2! 27. Nxd2 Qxf2+0-1** (Fork/Mate)
- 9) **30. Rxe6+! Kxe6 31. Bf5+! gxf5 32. Qxd4** (Discovery)

Clara's Corner

Game Analysis by Clara McGrew

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

Clara will be contributing analysis of her games as we watch her career progress! She is a very talented chess player and the reigning 2017 Michigan Women's Champion. See an article on pages 4-7 for more on that event.

Event "Michigan Women's Championship"

Date "2017.11.11"

Round 1

McGrew, Clara - Woods, Charisse

ECO "B23", Annotator "Clara McGrew 2018"

The Michigan Women's Championship was a great experience for me, and I hope to play in it again at some point. Although I was the highest rated player in the event, it was very competitive, and I had to fight hard every game. In the first round, I was paired against Charisse Woods. Although her rating was lower-rated than mine (in the 1600s), I knew that I had to take her seriously because I heard that she was known for giving strong players tough games. This game was certainly a tough one for me, but I am happy to say that not only was I able to win it, but I was also able to play a good game.

1. e4 c5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. Bb5 e6

Allowing me to double my opponent's pawns. 3... Nd4 is the main move here.

4. Bxc6 bxc6 5. d3 d5 6. f4 g6 7. Nf3 Bg7 8. O-O Ne7 9. Qe1 O-O 10. e5

I was very happy with my position at this point. Due to Black's doubled pawns, I thought that I should be doing well here. However, it's one thing to have an advantage, and it's another thing to keep it.

10... f6 Trying to get some play.

11. b3 fxe5 12. fxe5 Nf5 13. Ba3 d4 14. Nd1

White is still better after this move, but this is a passive location for White's Knight. I should have played 14. Ne4 not worrying about 14...Ne3 because White can just play 15. Bxc5 Nxf1 (15... Rf5 16. Rf2 With the threat of Nxd4. 16...Bxe5 17.Nxe5 Rxe5 18. Rf8+) 16. Bxf8 Qxf8 17. Qxf1

14... Qb6 15. Nd2

Trying to get the Knight into the c4 square.

15...Ba6 16. g4

There is nothing objectively wrong with this move, but it enables Black to get some counterplay.

16...Nh6 17. Rxf8+ Rxf8 18. Nf2 Rf4 19. h3 Nf7 20. Nfe4 Qa5 21. Nc4

Trading Queens, but this was possibly not the best option. I could have played 21. Bxc5 but I was feeling a bit nervous at this point. I thought that if I got Queens off, I could lessen Black's counterplay. It turned out to be the opposite.

21...Qxe1+ 22. Rxe1 Bxc4 23. bxc4 Nxe5 24. Kg2 Nf3 25. Rb1 Be5 26. Bxc5 Nh4+ 27. Kg1 Nf3+ 28. Kh1 Nh4 29. g5

I felt like storm clouds were gathering around my King, and I wanted to get rid of one of my opponent's pieces. Unbelievably enough, however, this move actually throws away White's advantage. I could have played 29. Bxa7

If 29...Rf3 I just have 30. Ng5 defending it all. If 30... Rf2 31. Bb8 Rh2+ 32. Kg1 Rg2+ 33. Kf1 Rh2 34. Rb7 And unbelievably enough, Black has nothing.

But this is hard to see in a game, especially with the clock ticking down.

29... Rf3 30. Nf6+ Bxf6 31. gxf6 Rxh3+ 32. Kg1

I thought that I had escaped the worst here, but incredibly enough, Black has a saving resource.

32...Rg3+

This move, however, loses and I am thankful that I was able to be confident and calculate everything accurately from this point onwards. Black could have played...

32... e5! And incredibly enough, the position is a draw. The reason is that after 33. Rb7 Rg3+ 34. Kh2 Rf3 can be played. If White plays 35. Be7 to defend the pawn on f6, Black can play 35...Nf5 And the Bishop blocks White's access to the seventh rank.

33. Kh2 Rg2+ 34. Kh3 g5 35. Rb7

It looks dangerous for White's King, but Black has nothing. If anyone's King is in danger, Black's is.

Rf2 36. Rg7+ Kh8 37. Rxc5 Ng6 38. Bxd4 Rf3+ 39. Kg2 Rf4 40. f7+ e5

40... Rxd4 41. Rxc6

41. Bxe5+ Nxe5 42. Rg8# 1-0

All in all, a very interesting game. It was definitely a fight, but that was a good thing. It showed me that even though I was the highest rated player in the event, I shouldn't expect to win all my games easily. I have to earn each step of the way.



West-Side Chess

Calendar Looking Ahead

February 20th - February Rapid Event (USCF Quick-Rated Event)

Hosted at Spencer St. Chess Club, this will be a fun event! It will be a 3-round G/15 event. The entry fee will be \$3. This event will be USCF rated which means you will need a USCF ID. It will be played in either Quads, or a 3-round Swiss. The winner of the event gets 50% of either the Quad they win or 60% of the Swiss tournament entry fees as a whole.

March 17th - Holland Junior Open (Scholastic USCF Rated Event)

This annual scholastic event is organized by Tony Palmer and the scholastic academy he runs. Information can be found on grandrapidschess.com or on Facebook @Hollandchess.com

March 20th - March Rapid Event (USCF Rated Event)

Hosted at Spencer St. Chess Club, this will be a fun event! It will be a 3-round G/15 event. The entry fee will be \$3. This event will be USCF rated which means you will need a USCF ID. It will be played in either Quads, or a 3-round Swiss. The winner of the event gets 50% of either the Quad they win or 60% of the Swiss tournament entry fees as a whole.

May - SSCC Spring Swiss (USCF Rated Event)

We will run another 4-week Swiss event! \$5 per player. Byes are allowed as long as they are scheduled before the round. Games will be played at the G/55 d/5. (55 minutes with a 5-second delay). One round a week for four weeks! Winner receives 60% of entry fees.

Grand Rapids Open - Summer (TBD, USCF RATED)

With the support of another organizer we will be hosting a local 3 or 4-round swiss event in the area. This will take place on a Saturday in June or August. Details forthcoming.