

West Chester Chess Club - West Chester, PA

Established in 1974

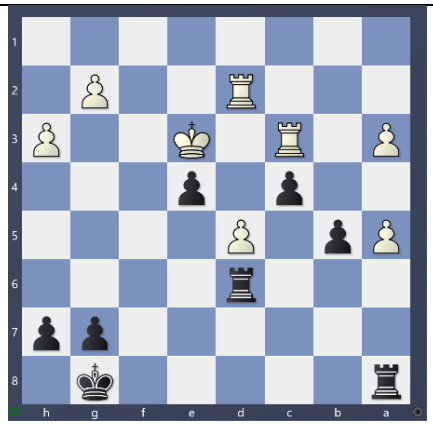
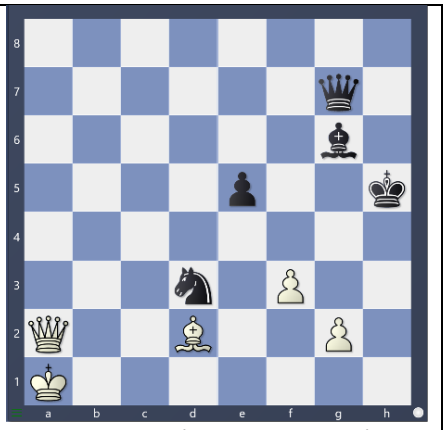
Over 50 Years of Great Chess!

The West Chester Chess Club plays USCF-rated OTB chess on Thursday evenings for players 16 years of age or older. Details and contacts are here. For newsletter-related questions, please reach out to wcccnewsletter1974@gmail.com. Current and previous editions of this Newsletter are stored here.

Newsletter – October 2026

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- "That's why you don't solve puzzles, kids"
- Study Corner: It's 1925 (solution)
- When 20 minutes of calculating variations did not help (solution)

 Is it OK for White to take on d5 with the knight? How about taking d5 with the bishop? (Solution in "When 20 minutes of calculating variations did not help")	 Black protected the e4-pawn with Re8. What devilish response had Tony prepared? (Solution in the game Tony – Subhang)	 This is a study (White to move) by 14-year old Michail Botvinnik. (Solution in: "Study corner: It's 1925")

West Chester Chess Club Member Profile: Lou Gotlib

By Ed Snyder

==========

Lou Gotlib is one of the West Chester Chess Club's most faithful members. His consistent attendance on Thursday evenings to play chess shows a true love for the game and the club. He also unselfishly volunteers many times to take the bye so others can play.

Lou was raised in Bangor, Maine, where he played chess a lot while growing up including in high school. He also played tennis and enjoyed debating. These were the only three activities he could find where he would not come into physical contact with his opponents. While in high school an Army recruiter tried to convince Lou that he would love West Point and even took him out to dinner a couple of times. Lou realized that this wasn't going to be a good fit for him so he declined the offer.



After high school he attended Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, where he studied biochemistry and molecular biology. He then earned a Master's degree at the University of North Carolina.

Lou taught school in North Carolina for eleven years and in 1990 was named "Teacher of the Year." That is quite an honor. Due to his wife's job, they moved to Pennsylvania where he taught high school chemistry and a bit of forensics for another 26 years before retiring four years ago.

Then around 2005 a student of Lou's mentioned that he played chess and was close to reaching Master level. This student, Josh Bowman, did become a Master causing Lou to think that maybe his chemistry classes helped, but admits that's probably not the case. Lou joined USCF about this time.

Lou once played GM Joel Benjamin's mother at a team tournament so he can honestly say he beat "Benjamin." At another team tournament Lou won a book by Joel Benjamin. He was gracious enough to sign it writing, "I forgive you for beating my mother." The WCCC sent a team to these tournaments for a number of years and our team was organized by Michael Bury. When Lou mentioned to Joel that he, Joel, had played Michael Bury in an earlier tournament, Joel responded, "Yes, it was a Ruy Lopez and he shouldn't have moved his bishop." This was five years after they played. This is why most of us are not Grand Masters.

Lou's other interests include stamp collecting, especially Private Die Proprietary Stamps, which were Revenue (tax) stamps. The largest group of these were for patent medicines and often have great stories behind them.

He also has a collection of slide rules and other calculating devices. These number about 1,600 pieces with most in storage and some on shelves in his basement. Lou's favorite device is a Curta, a mechanical calculator, which was given to him by his friend Aaron Lerner who discovered melatonin. Aaron was also a collector and he and Lou became great friends.

Lou is also a big reader and in particular enjoys biographies of chemists and physicists. He also likes Scandinavian mysteries and science fiction. His favorite book of all time is *Gravity's Rainbow*, but doubts that he could work his way through it today due to its complexity and numerous characters.

Lou's favorite quote is "Never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity." Having dealt with bureaucracies and administrations for decades he has found this quite useful. He believes this quote has many attributions, but he first heard it as a Russian proverb. He recently learned that it is known officially as "Hanlon's Razor."

He also enjoys "Wordle," wandering around West Chester for iced coffee, walking his dog Mookie (named after Red Sox right fielder Mookie Betts), and doing the New York Times crossword puzzles. Lou told me once that he does these in ink. I love crosswords but this is beyond me. For several years he wrote and edited study guides related to chemistry. He also worked on books for GRE, SAT subject tests, AP tests, and the MCAT.

WCCC picture gallery!

By Ed Snyder

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Denis Markov



Todd Guay



Dan Newman

WCCC Meteor Shower Quad: Bob Flanagan – Donald Anderson

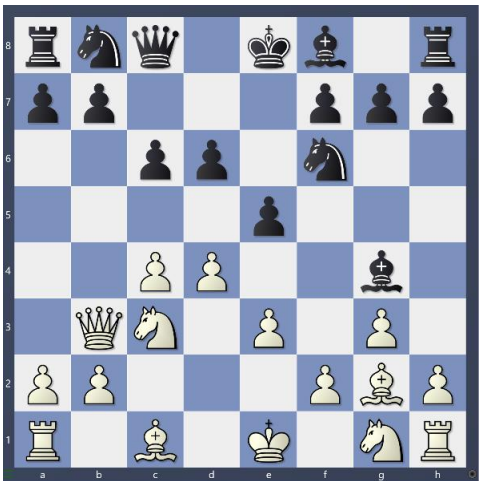
By John Helmbrecht

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Bob Flanagan - Donald Anderson
Meteor Shower Quad, 8/6/2026

I wonder how many times these two veterans of the club have faced each other! This game was played this summer in the August Quad.

1.c4 **e5**
2.Nc3 **Nf6**
Shaping up as a Reversed Sicilian
3.g3 **c6**
4.Bg2 **d6**
5.e3 **…**
Nf3 or d4 are most commonly played here.
5... **Bg4**
6.Qb3 **Qc8**
7.d4= **…**



7.... **exd4?**

My engine prefers 8...Be7 or Na6 or even Be6!? over the text move. The reason is that Black by exchanging their e5 pawn is giving up control over d4 and f4. As a result, one of White's knight in a few moves will be able to land on f4.

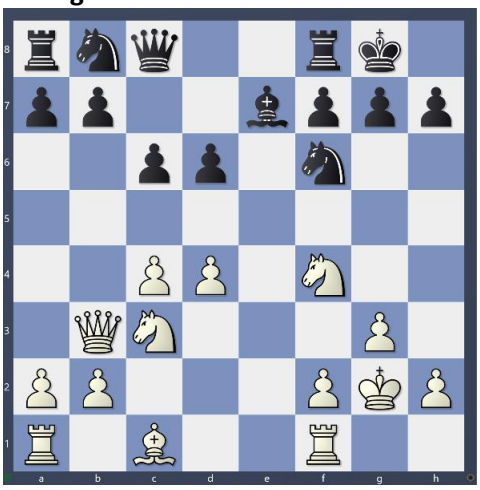
8.exd4 += **Be7**

9.Nge2 **0–0**

10.0–0 **Bh3**

11.Nf4 **Bxg2**

12.Kxg2



12... **h6**

13.d5?! **…**

This opens up e5 for a black knight.

13... **Qc7**

14.Bd2 **Nbd7**

15.Qd1 **Ne5!**

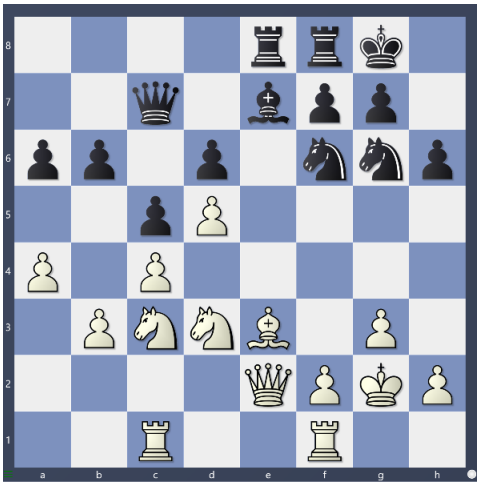


Black has improved their position with this well placed knight.

16.b3 **a6**
17.Be3 **c5**
18.Rc1 **Rab8**
19.Nd3 **Ng6**
20.a4= **…**

The position continues to be equal.

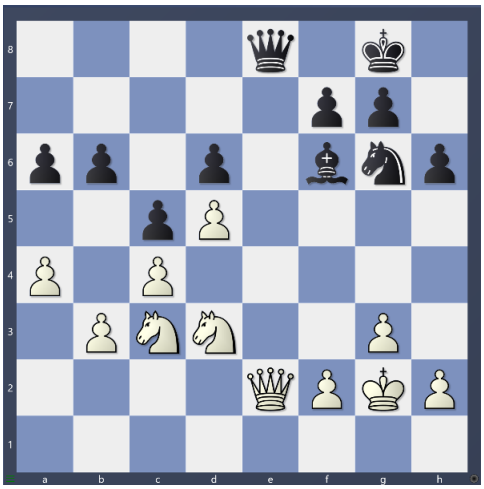
20... **b6**
21.Qe2 **Rbe8**



22.Qd2 **…**

22.Nf4 Nxf4+ 23.Bxf4 Nh7 24.Qf3 Bg5 25.Rce1=

22... **Ng4**
23.Rce1 **Nxe3+**
24.Rxe3 **Qd7**
25.Rfe1 **Bf6**
26.Rxe8 **Rxe8**
27.Rxe8+ **Qxe8**
28.Qe2 **…**



28... **Qd7**

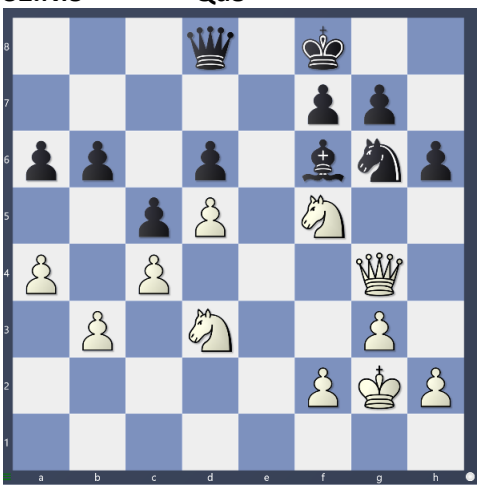
28...Qxe2 29.Nxe2 Ne5 30.Nxe5 Bxe5 31.f4 Bf6=

29.Nd1 **Kf8**

30.Ne3 **Qe7**

31.Qg4 **Qe8**

32.Nf5 **Qd8**

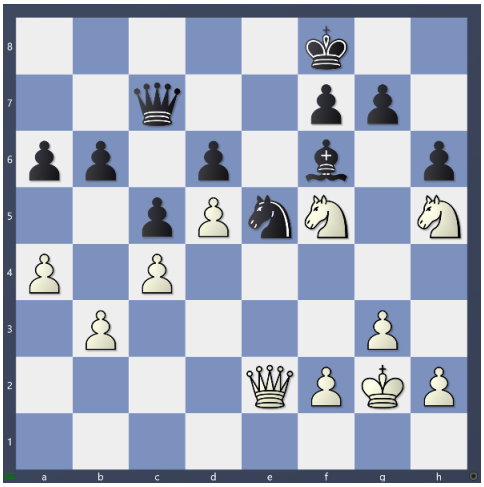


33.Nf4 **Ne5**

34.Qe2 **Qc7?**

34...Qd7 is much better

35.Nh5 **...**



35...g6?

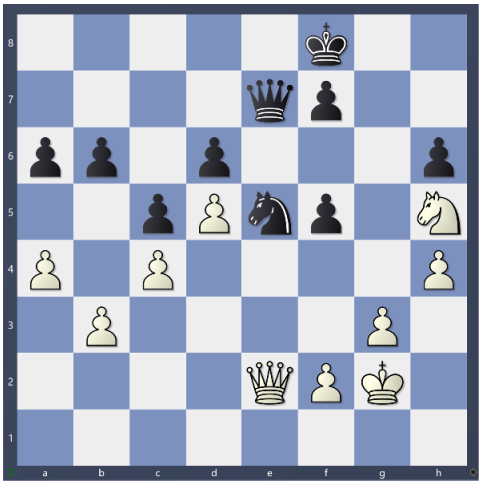
Under time pressure, Black makes a very natural looking move but it loses the game. Much better is 35...Qd7 or even 35...Qd8.

36.Nxf6 gxf5

37.Nh5

37.Qh5 Kg7?? *(37...Ke7 38.Qxh6 b5 39.axb5 axb5 40.cxb5+–)* 38.Ne8+ and White wins.

37...Qe7 38.h4



and Black loses on time. The position is won for White because they will attack the weakened pawns on the kingside and win at least one pawn. For example: 38...Kg8 39.Qd2 Kh7 40.Qc2 Kg6 41.f3 Qd7 42.g4 f6 43.Ng3

1–0

WCCC Autumnal Equinox Swiss: John Helmbrecht – Jim Larsen

By Dirk Troltenier

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Larsen, Jim (2003) - Helmbrecht, John (1818) [B13]
Autumnal Equinox Swiss West Chester Chess Club, 24.09.2026

1.e4	**c6**
2.d4	**d5**
3.exd5	**cxd5**
4.c4	**Nf6**
5.Nc3	**Nc6**
6.Nf3	**a6**
7.c5	**b6**
8.b4	**e6**
9.Bf4	**Be7**



10.h3? **…**

Maybe White was afraid of Nh5, wanted to keep his bishop on the wonderful diagonal h2–b8 and hence created the hiding place on h2? Better was to act proactively and slow down Black's attack on the d4/c5 pawn chain by playing Rb1 (covering b4) or Bd3 (preventing Ne4). In the next couple of moves Black very logically aims at undermining the d4/c5 pawn chain:

10... **0–0**

threatens to take on b4

11.Rb1 **Ne4**

White cannot take because they would lose d4.

12.Qc2 **Bf6**

So far so well played by Black. However, this direct attack on d4, while strategically correct, loses an important pawn. Better was:

12...a5 13.Nxe4 Nxb4! 14.Rxb4 axb4 15.Ned2 bxc5 16.dxc5 Qa5 17.Bd3 Qxa2 with a slight advantage for Black.



13.Be5? **…**

13.Nxe4! dxe4 14.Qxe4 Bb7 15.Bd3 g6 16.Bd6 and there is no good discovery for the Nc6. White is a pawn up and Black attack on the d4/c5 pawn chain is stopped. White is much better.

13... **Nxc3?**

That's a mistake. Black had to continue fighting against the d4/c5 chain. One way to do that was 13...Bxe5 14.dxe5 Ng5 with a clear advantage for Black.

14.Bxf6 **Qxf6**

15.Qxc3 **…**



15… **Bb7?**

Again, Black had to address d4 by playing 15....e5 with an equal position. Now White is clearly better.

16.Be2 **Qd8**

17.0–0 **f6**

18.Rfd1 **Re8**

19.a4 **bxc5**



20.dxc5! **...**

Very good judgment by White! His queenside pawns are faster than Black's attempts to get something going in the center.

20... **Qc7**
21.b5 **Ne5**
22.Nd4 **axb5**
23.axb5 **Nd7**



24.b6 **...**

Even better was placing a rook on the c-file thus protecting the queen and then advance the pawns. There is not much Black can do about the advance of the two passed pawns.

24... **Qxc5**
25.Rdc1 **Rac8**
26.Qb2 **Qe7**
27.Bb5 **Rxc1+**
28.Rxc1 **Rc8**
29.Rxc8+ **Bxc8**
30.Bc6 **Nb8**
31.b7 **Bd7**
32.Bxd7 **Qxd7**
33.Qb6 **Kf7**
34.Nxe6 **Ke7**
35.Nxg7 **d4**
36.Nh5 **Qc6**
37.Qxd4 **Qxb7**
38.Qxf6+ **Kd7**
39.Qg7+ **Kc6**

40.Qxb7+ Kxb7
41.Nf6

1–0

WCCC tournaments: Two victories for Anthony Bowden

By Dirk Troltenier

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Tony recently scored two nice wins in tough games and against strong resistance. Here are the games:

Anthony Bowden – Subhang Nettem [D55]
WCCC Autumnal Equinox Swiss Rd. 4
1.d4 d5
2.c4 e6
3.Nc3 Nf6
4.Bg5 Nbd7
5.Nf3 Be7
6.e3 0–0
7.Bd3 c5
8.cxd5 exd5
9.0–0 b6
10.Re1 Bb7
11.h3 Ne4



Black has achieved full equality in a Queens Gambit Declined

12.Bxe7 Qxe7
13.Bb5 Ndf6
14.Rc1 Rac8

Black could have tried 15...c4 to make it difficult for the white bishop to get back into the game. Even then the game would have been about equal

15.a3 **Bc6**
16.Qa4 **Nxc3**
17.Rxc3 **Bxb5**
18.Qxb5 **Ne4**
19.Rc2



19. **Qd6**
Black could also have tried to leverage his queenside pawn majority with: 19...Nd6 20.Qa4 c4 21.Qb4 b5

20.Rec1
The position is still equal. Strategically speaking, Black should shut down the queen side by playing c4 and White should try to create hanging pawns for Black (with dxc5) followed by attacking the exposed pawn on c5 (e.g. by exchanging the knights, starting with Nd2).

20... **Rc7**

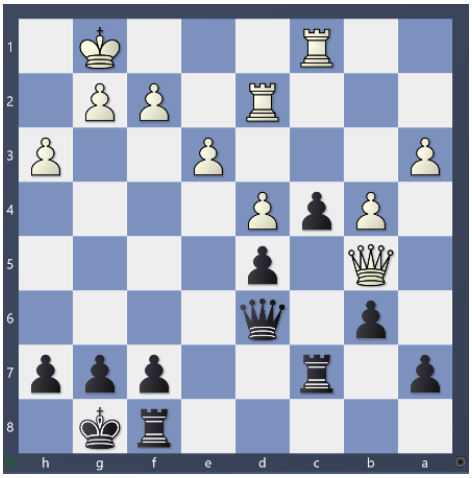


21.b4?
This is the first real mistake in this game.
21... **c4!**

Now Black has a clear advantage because of the protected passed pawn

22.Nd2 **Nxd2**

23.Rxd2



23... **Qc6?**

This is a mistake as it will help White attack the root of the pawn chain d5/c4, thus weakening the passed pawn on c4. Black should keep the position static, preventing e4 with f5, e.g. 23...f5 24.Re1 Re7 25.f3 Rc8

24.Qxc6 **Rxc6=**

25.Rc3 **b5**

26.f3 **f5**

27.Kf2 **a5**

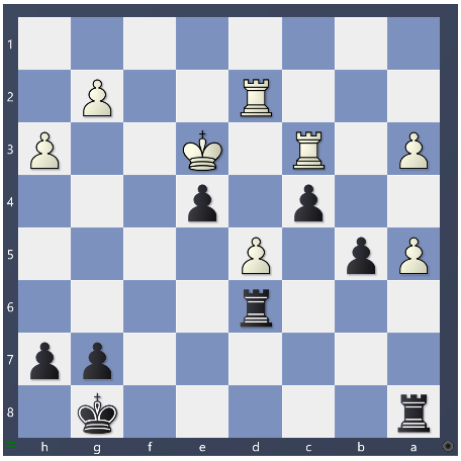
28.bxa5 **Ra8**

29.e4 **fxe4**

30.fxe4 **dxe4**

31.d5 **Rd6**

32.Ke3



32... **Re8??**

This move saves the pawn on e4 (for now) but turns an equal position into a lost position, because plays

33.a4!!

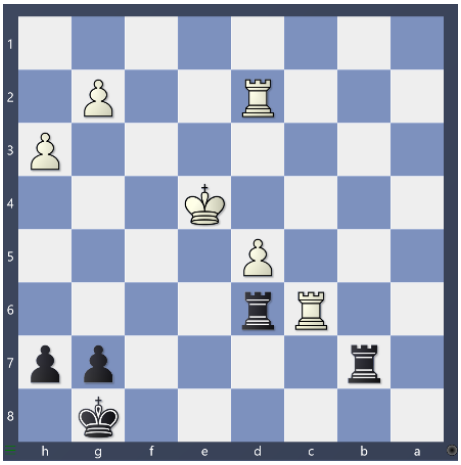
which undermines the c4 pawn and allows White's rooks to become active.

33. **Ra8**

34.axb5 **Rxa5**

35.Rxc4 **Rxb5**

36.Kxe4 Rb7
37.Rc6



White is only one pawn up but the active positions of his king and rooks ensure that the passed pawn can advance to the promotion square.
37...Rbd7 38.Rxd6 Rxd6 39.Ke5 Rd8 40.Ke6 Kf8 41.Rf2+ Kg8 42.d6 Re8+ 43.Kd7 Re1 44.Kd8 Rd1 45.d7 h6 46.Re2 Kf7 47.Re7+ Kf8 48.Re8+ Kf7 49.Kc8 Rc1+ 50.Kb7 Rb1+ 51.Ka6 Ra1+ 52.Kb5 Rb1+ 53.Kc4 Rc1+ 54.Kb3
1–0

And here is the second game – with lots of good ideas from both players!

Richard Neal – Anthony Bowden [D02]
WCCC Founder's Swiss Round 3
1.d4 Nf6
2.Bf4 d5
3.Nf3 Bf5
4.e3 e6
5.Bd3 Bb4+
6.c3 Bxd3
7.Qxd3 Bd6
8.Bg3



White could have won a pawn but would to allow black activity which compensates for it: 8.Qb5+ Nbd7 9.Bxd6 cxd6 10.Qxb7 Rb8 11.Qxa7 Rxb2 12.0–0

8... **c6**
9.Ne5 **0–0**
10.Nd2 **Qc7**
11.Ndf3 **Nbd7**
12.Nxd7 **Nxd7**
13.e4 **dxe4**
14.Qxe4 **Nf6**
15.Qc2 b5



16.Be5

So far no mistakes by either player in this game. With 16.Be5 White is trying to get a small advantage from the opening. Short-castling instead would have been also good. Either way the position remains equal.

16... **Ng4**

16...Bxe5 17.dxe5 Nd5 18.0–0 h6 19.Rfd1 with an equal position

17.Qe4 **Nxe5**
18.dxe5 **Be7**

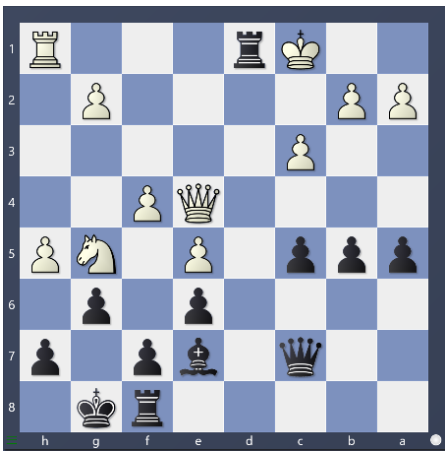


19.0–0–0

Long castling is risky as Black has already advanced his queen side pawns to fight White's.

19... **c5**
20.h4 **a5**
21.Ng5 **g6**
22.f4 **Rad8**

23.h5 **Rxd1+**



24.Kxd1?

White wants to leave in place his fire power for the attack on the white king, but by taking with the king allows Black to control the d-file and intrude.

24... **Qd7+**

25.Kc2



25...Rd8??=

Surprisingly, this move is a serious mistake as it allows a difficult-to-see counterstrike:

26.Nf3?

After this retreat, things are back in order for Black and he continues with his kingside attack in a superior position. White had equal chances by playing: 26.Nxh7 Qd2+ 27.Kb1 Qd3+ 28.Qxd3 Rxd3 29.Nf6+ Bxf6 30.exf6 Kh7

26... **b4**

27.hxg6 **Qa4+**

28.Kc1 **hxg6**



29.Qb1?

with 29.Qc4 could have tried another and more active way to protect a2. Now Black wins easily.

29...	**bxc3**
30.bxc3	**Qxf4+**
31.Kc2	**Qe4+**
32.Kc1	**Qe3+**
33.Kc2	**Qe2+**

0–1

When 20 minutes of calculating variations did not help (puzzle question)

By Dirk Troltenier

==========

The following position appeared in a variation, not in the actual game Ariv DebMisra – Dirk Troltenier:



It seems that White can sacrifice a piece on d5. What do you think, would taking with either knight or bishop on d5 be good for White? Write down the mainlines for these two variations and check out the solution on the last page.

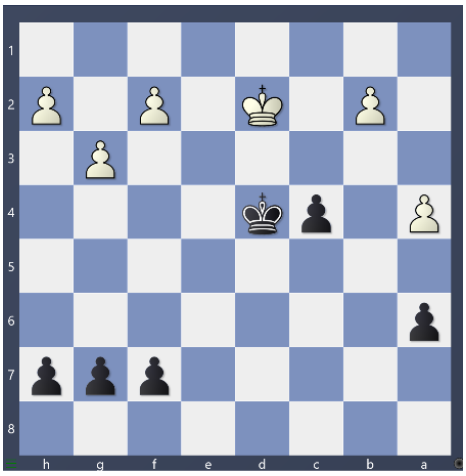
FYI: Ariv and Dirk each thought for about 20 minutes about this position, neither of them came up with the correct solution 😊

Every single pawn move is critical!

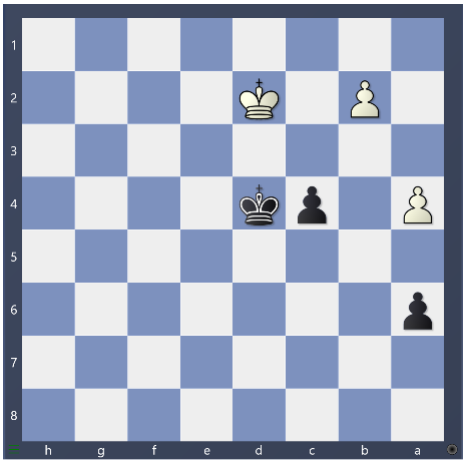
By Dirk Troltenier

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At the Mock Ira Lee tournament on August 22 &23, in the game Arian Roy – Dirk Troltenier, we got to this this position with Black to move:



The engine says Black is winning, but that is not so easy to see. So, let's simplify things and only look at the dynamics on the queen side:



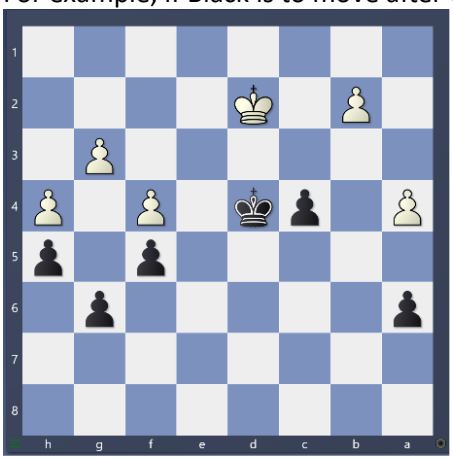
With Black to move, there are two key variations:

The “obvious variation” (which I saw in the game), winning black a pawn:
1. Kc5
2.Kc3 a5
This is the key move! Black has an extra tempo and White has only one square from where they can attack the c4 pawn (d4, b4, d3, b3 etc) are not accessible to White. Hence Zugzwang kicks in and black wins the a4-pawn:
3.b3 cxb3
4.Kxb3 Kd4
5.Ka3 Kc4
6.Kb2 Kb4
7.Ka2 Kxa4

Unfortunately (for me in the game, since I did not see the idea), there is another way for White to play where the white king takes a detour:
1. Kc5
2.Ke3 Kb4
3.Kd4 a5
This is the key moment for this variation: White now has 2 squares to attack the c4 pawn (d4 & d5) and the extra tempo for Black (a4-a5) is useless.
4.Kd5 Kxa4
5.Kxc4

The conclusion is that Black – in the original, i.e. game, position – shall not allow White to go to d4, so that the advantage of the extra tempo can be leveraged. How do you do that? You have to advance the pawns on the king side in such a way that White cannot access e4 and that’s why
1… f5!!
is the winning move. As long as the pawn stays on f5, blocking e4, it does not matter who is to move after the h- ang g- pawns mustered forward and blocked each other.

For example, if Black is to move after the king side pawns are blocked we get:

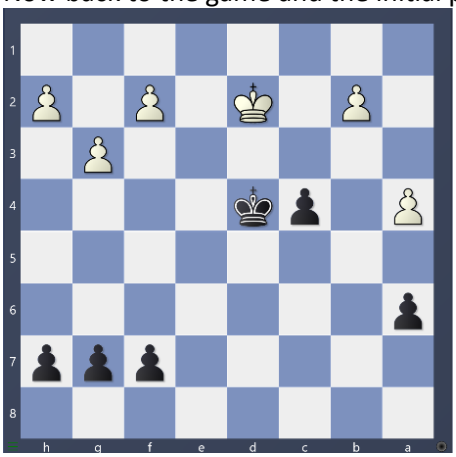


35…Kc5 34.Ke3 a5 35.Kd2 Kb4 36.Kc2 Kxa4 and Black is winning.

And if White were to move in the above position we’d have:

35.Kc2 Kc5 36.Kc3 a5 37.b3 cxb3 38.Kxb3 Kd4 and Black is winning.

Now back to the game and the initial position we looked at.



During the game I did not see the white king's journey via e3 to d4 and I only drew the game:

30…	**g5?? =**
31.g4=	**Kc5**
32.Ke3	**Kb4**
33.Kd4	**Kb3**
34.a5	**Kb4**
35.f3	**h6**
36.h3	**Kb5**
37.Kd5	**Kb4**
38.Kc6	**f6**
39.Kd5	**Kxa5**
40.Kxc4	**Kb6**
41.Kb4	**a5+**
42.Ka4	**Ka6**
43.b4	**axb4**
44.Kxb4	**Kb6**
45.Kc4	**Kc6**
46.Kd4	**Kd6**
47.Ke4	**Ke6**
48.f4	**f5+**
49.gxf5+	**Kf6**
50.Kf3	**Kxf5**
51.fxg5	

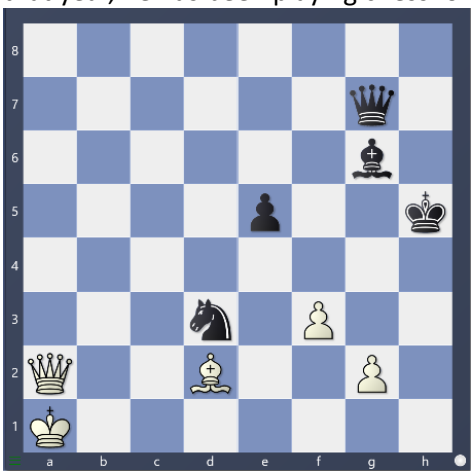
½–½

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Study Corner: It's 1925

By Dirk Troltenier

It's 1925, Calvin Coolidge is President, the Scopes Trial takes place in TN, and Walter Chrysler starts his automobile corporation. On the other side of the world, in the Soviet Union, Michail Botvinnik turns 14 that year, he has been playing chess for 2 years and composed the study below:



White to move: What shall they do? The solution is at the end of this Newsletter.

"This is why you don't do puzzles, kids"

By Dirk Troltenier

Recently I read in one of GM Noel Studer's free weekly newsletters a quote from Magnus Carlsen: "This is why you don't do puzzles, kids". Disregarding his blatant age insensitivity – I guess he is just too young – Magnus has a really good point: Knowing not only that there is a tactic, but also that there is a tactic that works makes it much easier to analyze a position and find a solution: A regular puzzle does not reflect the uncertainty we all face in a real game situation. Hence, while learning tactical patterns by solving traditional puzzles is great, it's not a good simulation of a real game.

To get better at playing chess you (also) need to study positions where you don't know who is better and if there is a tactic or not. There are several very good books out there that address this need like, e.g. "The Best Move" by V Hort and V Jansa, and "Grandmaster Preparation: Calculation" by J Aagaard. (BTW: If you want to have a look at these books, you can download the pdfs of their early editions for free from the internet. If you can't find them, reach out to wcccnewsletter1974@gmail.com.)

In this spirit of uncertainty, here are 2 puzzles with a "real game" feel:

1) White played 1.exf6 in this position. Was that a good or a bad move? Why?



2) In this position, from J Kulka – J Mucerino, WCCC 2026,



White decided to take on c6, winning a pawn with:

9. Bxc6 bxc6

10.Qxc6

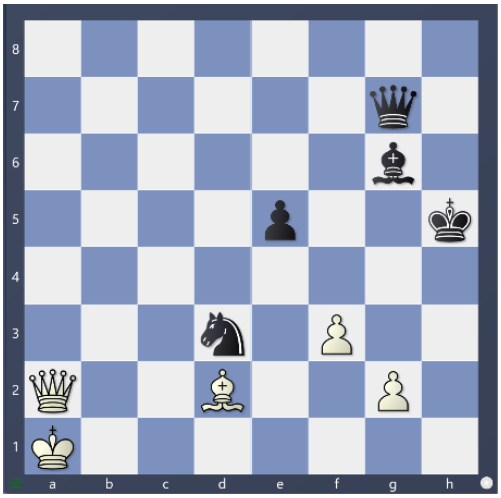
and a double attack on the rook on a8 and the bishop on c5.

What is your assessment of the above position: Is anyone better? Why? What variation supports your assessment?

Send the results of your analysis to wcccnewsletter1974@gmail.com and your WCCC Newsletter team will review and send you the solutions.

Study Corner: It's 1925 (solution)

By Dirk Troltenier



1.g4+ **Kh4**
2.Bh6 **Qxh6**
3.Qh2+ **Kg5**
4.Qd2+ **Nf4**
4...Kf6 5.Qxh6
5.Qd8#

Nice study! 😊

When 20 minutes of calculating variations did not help (solution)

By Dirk Troltenier



After thinking for 20+ minutes I avoided the above position because I thought White would play:
16.Bxd5+ **cxd5**
17.Nxd5 **Bxd4**

18.Nxc7 …



which seemed terrible for Black: There is a knight fork, Black cannot take on c7, and exchanging rooks on e1 does not seem to help. So I stopped looking further into this position.

"Too early!" said my friend S. Ilicon when I was back home as he kindly shared that Black is winning now:

18... Bxf2!+
19.Kxf2 Qd4+

And there are numerous nice variations for Black to win, one of which is:

20.Kg2 Qd2+
21.Kf1 Rxe1+
22.Rxe1 Bh3+
23.Qxh3 Rf8+
24.Kg1 Qxe1+
25.Qf1 Qxf1#

Now what about the other variation in the initial position, sacrificing the knight first?



16.Nxd5 cxd5
17.Bxd5+ Kh8
18.Be4 h6
19.Qg6 Rxe4
20.Rxe4 Bxd4
21.Rae1 Bh3

And with 3 minor pieces for the rook Black should be winning.