

WEST-SIDE CHESS

A WEST MICHIGAN CHESS PUBLICATION

ISSUE #4

WINTER 2018/2019





West-Side Chess
A West Michigan Chess Newsletter

Editors:
Michael Brooks

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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 a growing amount of 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 Update

by Michael Brooks



As we begin 2019, I am excited for our future. We continue to see new faces stop by to visit and many return to us! Our growth has been largely with newer adult players but we have also seen some growth in more experienced online players finding a place to play regularly and really enjoying it.

At this point we have established a calendar that has seemed to really strike

an important balance between being attractive to casual players, players looking to get serious and improve, and the experienced tournament veteran. This year we will expand how many times we do our casual fun G.10 events are run as they have been very well-attended and are enjoyed by all.

Our quarterly (almost) month-long swiss events will continue to be a cornerstone to introducing players to USCF rated chess as well as keeping regular tournament players in "tournament shape."

I would love to see more elementary age players, middle schoolers and high schoolers attend our events and grow our club. We will also be hosting more classes at the club for newer players to help provide a path to improvement for players that are new to the game.

To see Spencer St. Chess Club thrive and become a hub for chess in the greater-Grand Rapids area is my goal and I believe we are strongly moving in that direction.

Michael Brooks was Vermont High School Champion in 2009. Has played competitive chess since he was 6 years old. He is organizer of Spencer St. Chess Club, started the West Michigan Chess Network and hosts local tournaments and events.



West Michigan Legend Ratko stopped by to play in one of our fun, free G/10 nights!

My Journey: Adam Parada

by Adam Parada

I was taught the basics of chess as a youth by my dad, whom I rarely play with anymore, but will still enjoy the occasional game of euchre or cribbage with on family getaways. I became involved in a summer program at the local community college which allowed kids to select from a variety of learning-focused activities, mine being chess, and this is where I was exposed to some of the more nuanced parts of the game, along with tournament play.

Unfortunately, after I was accepted to college in Ann Arbor, my university studies took precedence over my chess play (as well as a single chess club meeting with high-level players that destroyed my confidence), and I took an extended break from the game. However, once I moved to Grand Rapids in 2015, I rediscovered online play and began building up my chops again. Once I regained an acceptable level of play, it made sense for me to seek out a local group to play more over-the-board games and continue my journey towards personal improvement.

After a relatively quick online search at the beginning of 2018, I came across the Spencer Street Chess Club. This turned out to be fortuitous timing, as they were about to have their annual Spring Classic tournament. Not only did I have the chance to play some nerve-racking games against tough competitors, but I also could watch some of the best players in Southwest Michigan compete. I was definitely hooked after this event, along with the amiable SSCC members that made me feel welcome to the scene.

2019 began with a suggestion from club leader Michael Brooks to compete in the Michigan Class Championships. As I had never been apart of a large tournament before (let alone travel to play chess), I was hesitant at first to enter, especially since I would be competing in the bottom of my section. After some thought, I decided it would at the very least be a new and educational experience, and that I would be better off regardless of my result. So onto Lansing!

After two days, five long games, and many slices of Domino's pizza, I walked away tied for second with 3.5/5, as well as the top player rated under 1700. A more than pleasing result! I was mostly satisfied with my play; even in my first game, which I lost in a time scramble after being up at least half an hour on the clock, I learned some valuable aspects of time management. My other four games saw three wins and a draw to cement my finish. I will describe my 4th round game against Bradley Shaw.

Adam Parada - Bradley Shaw
2019 Michigan Master/Expert & Class Championships
Lansing, MI 1/13/19
[Adam Parada]

1. d4 d6 2. Nf3 g6 3. Bf4 Nf6 4. e3 Bg7 5. Nbd2 Nh5 6. Bg3 Nxc3

After opening with the Queen Pawn, White goes for a London System type set-up while black fianchettoes his dark-squared bishop. Instead of allowing Black to capture White's "bad" bishop right away with 6. Bg3, he can instead play Bg5, temporarily preserving the bishop and forcing White to move several pawns in front of his kingside before a capture on g3 (6. Bg5 h6 7. Bh4 g5 8. Bg3 Nxc3).

White's bishop is captured and Black's knight recaptured, opening up the h file for White's rook.

7. hxg3 c5 8. Nb3 cxd4 9. Nfxd4 a6

Black undermines White's center by taking on d4 and becomes closer to opening up his fianchettoed bishop towards White's queenside. Recapturing with the knight instead of the pawn is slightly more risky according to Stockfish due to eventually being challenged by e5, but Black first opts for a6 to prevent a bishop check.

10. Qd2 e5 11. Nf3 Be6 12. O-O-O d5

White moves his queen up and is prepared to castle queenside and Black does play e5. White should retreat his knight to a safer square like e2 instead of f3, but instead of continuing to push his e pawn, Black develops his light-squared bishop, a slight inaccuracy in the engine's eyes. It prefers the continuation 11. Nf3 e4 12. Nfd4 O-O 13. O-O-O Nd7, emphasizing king safety over creating an attack on White.

13. Nc5 Nd7 14. Nxe6 fxe6

Black completes his minor piece development with Nd7, allowing White to capture his white-squared bishop and double his pawns on the e file. The computer evaluates this position as close to even, but considering Black still hasn't castled and White's queen/rook battery, I would prefer White.

15. e4 h5? 16. Kb1 Nc5

When the other side hasn't castled, continue to open the position! e5 allows White more queen mobility and impedes Black's influence down the a1-h8 diagonal. Black changes his plan with h5 to reroute his bishop to the c1-b6 diagonal, but this further weakens his kingside and makes for a fairly unpleasant pawn structure. White preemptively sidesteps the pin with Kb1, and his king is enjoying a much cozier home than Black's.

17. exd5 Ne4 18. Qe1 exd5 19. Bd3 Qc7 20. Bxe4 dxe4

Black makes the first blunder of the game by infiltrating White's camp with his knight prematurely, but White does not take full advantage of his rook opposing Black's queen with the sample line 18. Qe3 exd5 19. Bc4! Qc7, causing Black to move off of the d file and with White's bishop involved in the attack as well. While Bd3 is weaker, it still wins a pawn after capturing the knight on e4.

21. Qxe4 Rd8?? 22. Qxg6+ Kf8

After the White queen captures the pawn on e4, Black has little going on for him. His king is still exposed in the middle of the board, and neither of his rooks are involved in the action. However, before he can develop either of his rooks, he must protect his pawn on g6 with a move like Qc6. He does not, and after Rd8, Stockfish announces checkmate in 14 moves.

23. Qf5+ Kg8 24. Rxd8+ Qxd8 25. Nxe5 Qf6 26. Qxf6 Bxf6

White does not see the mating continuation and settles for trading off most of the remaining pieces to a rook-and-knight vs. rook-and-bishop endgame. With White's six remaining pawns to Black's three,

White should be able to escort his majority up the board for promotion without much trouble.

27. Nd3 Rh7 28. Re1 Bd4 29. Re4 Bf6 30. a3 Rd7 31. f3 Kg7 32. Ka2 Kh6 33. Re6 Kg7 34. Nf4 1-0

In this position, Black resigned the game. The position is very difficult to hold being down a few pawns, and White's coordination prevents much of any counterplay.

This game is descriptive of my style in several aspects: being slightly wayward in the opening, garnering an advantage in the middlegame, and missing a mating sequence and simplifying down to an endgame instead! I did have better time management in this game, so thankfully I did not have to prove my advantage with little time on the clock.

Tournament play has been very instructive and gratifying for me. I've been able to stray away from wayward intuition and work towards becoming a more well-rounded player with a plan, and I'm looking forward to the next challenges that lay before me!

Adam Parada is a musician, playing the Piano in a band as well as a teacher. He is a consistent member of the Spencer St. Chess Club as well as up-and-coming tournament player!

Inaugural West Michigan Invitational by Michael Brooks



Players were gathered for round two at the Inaugural 2019 West Michigan Invitational!

I have always desired to host a special event on our family's property in the Croton Dam/Newaygo area. We have a large facility which is a home and hosts a private christian school they started on the same property. This year, I was able to organize the first inaugural West Michigan Invitational tournament.

My vision is to invite players with similar ratings across the spectrum that will compete against each other in longer time controls. This is not so unique. But, alongside of that a special meal will be hosted for the participants to enjoy together as a break from the competition. My desire is that this event will help grow the community of West Michigan Chess as well as provide enjoyable competition.

We hosted 10 players and formed two sections. The original intent was three quads but two players were unable to attend meaning we created two sections. One was a 6-player swiss and the other was our top section with four players competing in a quad.

I believe the event was a great success and from the reaction of the players we will continue to do this in the future. I am thankful for the wonderful community and players we have here in West Michigan who has been playing great

Michigan. In our top quad Stan Jarosz, the top seed, won in a very competitive quad. He won ahead of Nick Shwerin (who placed 2nd), Adam DeHollander (3rd), and myself Michael Brooks (4th). Congratulations Stan! He was playing very good chess and impressed all with his victories.

The combined swiss the event was very interesting. The young Hunter Reed who has been playing great chess over the past few months and is ready to climb up the ranks again, won section. He won the swiss with a clear 3/3. Ahead of Scott Stapel (2nd), Henry Rankin (3rd), Charlie Reese (4th), Don Brooks (5th), and Nathan Wohlgamuth (6th).

You can see the full cross table by [clicking here](#).

I want to thank all of the participants for making the event such a enjoyable time. It is because of you that we can participate in such a positive and enjoyable chess community here in West Michigan.

Here is an annotated game from the winner of the top quad, Stan Jarosz. .

Schwerin, Nick - Jarosz, Stan
West Michigan Invitational
Annotated by Stan Jarosz
Group 1, Game 3. Queens Gambit Declined.

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Be7 (Preventing an early Bg5 before white plays Nf3.) 4. Nf3 Nf6 5. Bg5 h6 (Forcing a decision on the Bishop and protecting the h-pawn later on.) 6. Bh4 0-0 7. e3 b6 (Allowing a possible h1-a8 access for Bishop and c5.)

8. cxd5 Nxd5 9. Bxe7 Qxe7 10. Bd3

10. Nxd5 (diagram below) is often played here creating a position where Black had hanging pawns after c5. The only way to prevent the c pawn from becoming backward.



10. Nxc3 (Now White will have a majority in the center and Black a majority on the queenside.)

11. bxc3 Bb7 12. 0-0 c5 13. Qe2 cxd4 14. cxd4 Nc6 15. Rac1 Nb4 16. Bc4 (The Bishop cannot leave the f1-a6 diagonal because of Ba6.)

16...Rac8 17. a3 Nd5 18. Qd3 Rc7 19. Ba2 (Be4 may be a better choice, looking to play d5.)

19...Rfc8 20. Bb1 Nf6 21. Rxc7 Qxc7 (Gaining control of the c-file.)

22. h3 Be4 23. Qb3 Bxb1 24. Rxb1 Qcx2 25. Ne5 Ne4 26. Qxc2 Rxc2 27. f3 Nc3 28. Rb3 Nd5 29. Kf1 f6 (Forcing the Knight to retreat before forcing a Rook trade and gaining a pawn.)

30. Ng4 Rc3 31. Rxc3 Nxc3 32. Ke1 Nb5 (Both a5 and Nb1 are better and allow winning the a pawn while keeping connecting passed pawns. On 32 ... Nb1 33. A5 a5. And the White king cannot use the d2 square to prevent 34.... Nc3. On 32... a5 the White King cannot move to and Kd2 allows Nb1+ winning the pawn)

33. a4 Nc3 34. a5 bxa5 (The two passed a pawn are good enough to win. The white King will be out of

play guarding against the a pawns promoting. (Diagram below)

35. Kd2 Nd5 36. Nf2 Kf7 37. Nd3 Ke7 38. e4 Nb6 39. Kc3 h4 40. g4 h5

Locking down the king side pawns for attack later.

41. f4 g5 42. fxf5 fxf5 43. Ne5 Kf6 44. Nc6 a5 45. Ne5

Nxa2 allows a6 followed by Nc4 allowing the black Knight to reach the king side. During the next few moves White attempts to prevent the black Knight for reaching the King side.

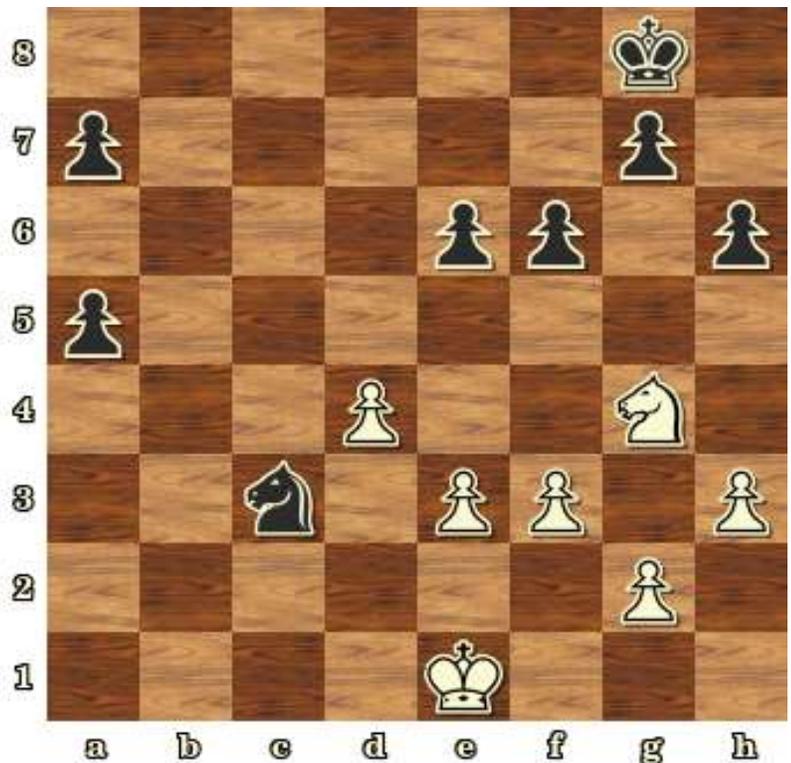
45... Nc8 46. Nc4 Ne7 47. Ne5 Ng6

Now after 48. Nxf6 Kxf6 49. Kb4 Kf7 50. Kxa4 51. Ke7 52. Kb5 Kd7 53. Ka6 Kc6 54. Kb5 The Black King beats the White King to the King side.

48. Nd3 Nf4 wins.

Now after 49. Nxf4 gxf4 50. e5 exd5 51. exd5 f3 52. d6 f2. 53. g4+ Ke6 wins.

49. Nf2 Ne2+ 50. Kc4 a3 51. e5+ Ke7 52. Kb3 Nxd4+ 53. Kxa3 Nf6 (The Black Knight can now protect the g pawn and later attack White's pawns.) 54. Ne4 Kd7 55. Nc5+ Kc6 56. Nxe6 Kd5 57. Ng7 Kxe5 58. Nh5 Ke4 59. Kb4 Ke3 60. Kc3 Ng1 61. Nf6 Nxh3 White Resigns, 0-1



After 34...bxa5
A winning endgame.

Principles vs. Practice: Episode IV

O, give me a Home?—Is Castling always the best move?

by Henry Rankin

A point of review the principles being considered in this series for the opening are:

- 1) **Occupy the Center**
- 2) **Pawn moves are not development, merely aids to it. 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**

We will explore principle 8, “Castle Early (before move 12)”. Uncastled positions are possible to defend and even permits Black to survive and even prosper.

In episode one, we looked violations of principles 1 and 2. Later, we have reviewed the isolated queen pawn, which seems to be a violation of middle game principles listed in episode one. The defense of f7 is very important, and is the bedrock upon which the evolution of opening theory rests. The first fact to consider is obvious. White moves first. Given that, White has an advantage presuming that there are weaknesses inherent in the original setup. That leads us to consider, is there a weakness?

Let’s examine the initial setup (diagram 1). Black’s rook pawns are each defended once by his rooks. Each knight defends 1 pawn. Each bishop defends 2 pawns. The queen defends 3 pawns. The king defends 3 pawns. One obvious point of attack for White is f7. To clarify the situation, here is another diagram (diagram 2). So it seems that in chess, an attack on f7 must come under consideration.



Diagram 1



Diagram 2

This observation would initially lead to consider an attack on f7 by white. The Scholar's Mate, a variation from the Bishop's Opening goes like this:

1. e4 e5 2.Bc4 Nc6 3. Qh5 Nf6?? 4. Qxf7 mate. Obviously Black can defend better.

Later on, other extended attacks on f7 were developed such as the King' Gambit (1. e4 e5 2. f4 exf4), the Vienna Gambit; an evolutionary fork from the King' Gambit, the Vienna Game; an evolutionary fork from the Vienna Gambit, the Two Knight's Defense; with the Fried Liver Attack featuring pressure on f7, and many others. In the constant military escalation prosecuted in tournament halls, park benches, and coffee houses throughout the world, the Italian Game (i.e. Giuoco Piano) gives additional tries against f7 in the Max Lange Attack and the Evans Gambit. From the Giuoco Piano a variation developed that gave Black roughly equality, Giuoco Pianissimo. One such line might be:

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.O-O Nf6 5.d3 O-O 6.h3 h6 7.Re1 d6 8.c3 a6 (diagram 3)



Diagram 3

White can precede with a4, b4, or Nbd2. While White's has good prospects for his bishops, Black has resources. Black has protection of his position. The Greco Bishop Sacrifice (Bxh7), AKA the Greek Gift sacrifice is not in order. It can be said that castling has been an aid to Black's game.

What are the advantages of castling?

Increases the dynamic potential of the position. Both rooks are now more usable than before. Connecting both rooks by clearing the back rank of all pieces except the rooks and the king strengthens the rooks and the position overall.

1. **Increased king Safety.** Generally, there is more "blasting"

required assaulting the King position when attacking the castled King, Siege operations require more planning, more moves, and more pieces. Having a castled king reduces the lines of attack to the king and escalates planning requirements by the attacker.

2. **Use of e1(White) or e8(Black) for more attack or defense.** Many strategic battles are conducted to control the d and e files. Getting forces quickly on them often confers a lasting advantage.

What are the disadvantages of castling?

1. **The King's "Home Address" is known.** Once a King is castled, a sense of permanency is added. Given that the move is irrevocable, the King, as a rule, will stay on the side on which it has castled.

2. **Castling establishes a focal point for an attack.** Before castling, the king has three courses of action: stay in the center, castle to the left, or castle to the right. While the king might be safer, it has committed itself to one area of the board.

3. Reduced flexibility in complex positions. A castled king still must become a major participant in the aggression and maneuvering in endgame positions. While one must survive the opening and the middle game to reach the ending, if a king is placed behind connected and locked pawn chains around d7 for example, the king might be safe in some positions.

Let us reconsider defensive issues at f7. Can f7 be protected in some other fashion? Will some other method of protection provide dynamism in the position? In addition to the more direct approaches to the defense and attack of f7, others means have been deployed that give chances to Black. One must remember that there is no free lunch, and that to get something one must give something in return. How does that apply to chess?

In the 1st quarter of the 19th century the French Defense appeared. It rose to respectability in the early part of the 20th century and has remained so into the beginning of present-day 21st century. Let's take a look at the starting position.



As one can see, the a2 to g8 is clogged with black pawns, making the bishop sacrifice on f7 impossible at the start of the defense. Other hand, black has paid for his defensive position by hemming in his light squared bishop. The deployment of the g8 knight to the logical square f6, will prompt e5 or Bg5 by white. This would force moves like Be7 and Nfd7, cramping black's position, and seemingly neutralizing black's dark squared bishop, as well as leaving setting the possibility of the Greek Gift Sacrifice on h7. Black's long range counter are using pawn leverage, such as c7-c5 and/or f7-f6 at an opportune moment.

Let's look what such a defense might look like in practical play. Here is an instructive game by Alisher Rustamov versus Sergey Vulkov from 2014 . Neither player castles in this game. Vulkov is just shy of 2600 FIDE when this game was played and peaked 2 or 3 points shy of 2700 FIDE. His opponent was roughly 2200 FIDE when this game is played. Very few of Vulkov's games ever get published, yet in the Classical French lines, especially the McCutcheon, he is one of the very best. One should also take note of Vulkov's fine defensive skill displayed throughout this game. This, so far, is my favorite game of the 21st century. The reader should take note of how exquisitely black defends the f7 square.

Rustamov, Alisher – Vlokov, Sergey
8th Agzamov Memorial
Tashkent 2014
ECO C12
French Defense: McCutcheon, (8.Qg4 Kf8 9.Bd3)

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 (right diagram)
 (Position after 3...Nf6)



Vulkov eschews the invitation to play 4...Bb4 to avoid that well known tactical and theoretical sticky wicket, the Winawer variation, which would have been 4. e5, gaining space and hoping to show that Black's b4-bishop is misplaced, then 4...c5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3, where white has procured the bishop pair at the price of doubled pawns and a wild and sharp siege to follow by either or both players. **4. Bg5 Bb4** another choice for black here was 4...Be7, with 5.e5 Nfd7 leading to other lines in the Classical French

5. e5

What is black to do? That pin looks impressive? This is just a case where fear has big eyes. Visually the pin maintained on the f6 Knight indeed appears to be impressive. A resource is available in this position. It is the following resource upon which the entire McCutcheon variation rests.

I usually do not give exclamation marks for well-known opening lines but here goes. **5...h6!**

So how does white proceed? **6. exf6 hxg5 7.fxg7 Rg8 8.Qg4 Qf6** looks kind of even. **6. Be3** looks even.

That leads us to consider 6.Bd2 Play continues with the sturdy bishop move

6. Bd2 Bxc3 7. bxc3

Black will continue with 7... Ne4 which solves the pin, but raises another question. Why doesn't white play 7.Bxc3 to try to preserve the bishop pair? Well with 7.Bxc3 Ne4 8.Bb4 c5 9. dxc5 gives us this position. Here Black plays the startling 9...Nxf2+ 10. Kxf2 Qh4+ 11. g3 Qxb4, with the black queen attacking both the b2 and c5 pawns. But wait, what about 7. Bxc3 Ne4 8. Bb4 c5 9. Bxc5 Nxc5 10. dxc5 Nd7 forking both the e and c pawns? 11 Qd4 looks like the best attempt to hold onto both pawns, but after 11... Qc7, it is apparent that such a hope is a pipe dream. Black will net one of them. 11 Bb5 is an outright mistake and holds only the promise of loss for White.

Here 11...Qa4+ with Qxb4 is crushing. White extricates himself from the check at the cost of his light-squared bishop. The position has some sharpness to it, with its demure appearance clearly misleading the dueling protagonists. Once again, complications are just bubbling beneath the surface.

7..Ne4 8. Qg4 Kf8

Black protects his f pawn with his king. He has lost his castling privileges.

Note that Black has some defensive challenges. Black will have to use his rook to defend g8. The defense of f7 will have to be beefed up as a potential rook on f3, knight on h3 and tours maybe to f4 could be a very serious problem. **9. Bd3 Nxd2 10. Kxd2** White has lost his castling privileges and **both queens** are on the board. This is a fairly unique feature of this position. Note that white continues to pressure black. Will Black crack? **10...c5 11. h4 Nc6 12. Rh3 c4 13. Be2 b5.** Black begins his queenside pawn advance. The black king is the only protection for g7 right now but the rook will soon be on g8.

14. Rg3 Rg8 15. Qf4 Bd7 16. Bh5 Be8

17. Ne2 a5 Black moves up the a pawn. 18. Qf3 b4 Black's queenside pawns are now engaged. **19. Nf4 Ke7** Black now has a queen side attack and the pawns are becoming strong and the white a pawn is, and will remain, weak. White defend b1. Black will counter with Rb8. **20. Rb1 Rb8 21. Rd1!?** Why didn't White put the rook here is the first place? bxc3+ 22. Qxc3 Qb6 Black obtains control of the b file.

23. Ne2 Qb4 24. f4 Bd7 25. Bf3 g6 26. h5 gxh5 27. Rh3 Na7 28. a3 Qa4 29. f5 Nb5 30. Qe3 Nxa3 31. f6+ Kd8. 32. Rc1 Rb2 33. Qc3 Black has a tactical combination . Can you see it? (Diagram)



33...Qb4?

Black should have played 33...Rxc2+! 34. Rxc2 Nb1+! forking both the king and queen.

34. Rxh5 Ba4 35. Qxb4 axb4 36. Ke1 Nxc2+ 37. Kf1 c3 38. Rxh6 Bb5 39. Rh7 Rf8 40. Kg1 Bxe2 41. Bxe2 Nxd4

Black now has three passed pawns. **42. Bh5 c2 0-1.**

An example is Predke- Volkov 2013. This is worth study.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Bb4 5.e5 h6 6.Bd2 Bxc3 7.bxc3 Ne4 8.Qg4 Kf8 (a very interesting king walk starts here) 9.Bd3 Nxd2 10.Kxd2 c5 11.h4 Nc6 12.Rh3 c4 13.Bf1 Rg8 14.Ne2 Ke7 15.Nf4 Qf8 16.Be2 Kd8 17.Nh5 Bd7 18.Qf4 Kc7 (the king walk stops here) 19.g4 Qa3 20.Qe3 b5

21.f4 Rab8 22.Rhh1 a5 23.Rhf1 b4 24.f5 Qb2 25.Rfb1 Qa3 26.Nf4 g5 27.fxg6 fxg6 28.cxb4 Qxe3+ 29.Kxe3 g5 30.Nh5 axb4 31.Nf6 Rgc8 32.a3 b3 33.cxb3 cxb3 34.hxg5 hxg5 35.Rh1 b2 36.Rab1 Rb3+ 37.Kd2 Nxd4 38.Bd1 Rb6 39.Rh7 Rd8 40.Rg7 Kc8 41.Rxg5 Ba4 42.Rh5 Bxd1 43.Kxd1 Nf3 44.Kc2 d4 45.Rhh1 d3+ 46.Kc3 d2 47.Rhd1 Nxe5 48.Rxb2 Rd3+ 49.Kc2 Rxb2+ 50.Kxb2 Nc4+ 51.Kc2 Rf3 52.Ne4 Ne3+ 53.Kxd2 Nxd1 54.Kxd1 Rf4 55.Nc5 Rd4+ 56.Ke2 Rc4 57.Nd3 Rxc4 58.Kf3 Rc4 59.a4 Kc7 60.a5 Kd6 0-1

In closing, castling is a move that may provide benefits when it happens early as it provides additional safety often, but not always. In the end, one should castle because it provides concrete benefits, not just to employ idle hands.

Henry Rankin is a regular contributor to West-Side Chess. He has over 40 years of chess study and competition in his experience. He attends the Spencer St. Chess Club and regularly competes in local and state tournaments.

Chess Opens Doors

by Dan Hronchek

Chess Opens Doors

When you go to school for business and come out as a chess teacher, an argument can be made that something has gone wrong. That is, until the argument reaches the moment where chess becomes a universal platform to open doors locally and across cultures. Not many things can do that quite the same way as our beloved 64 square grid.

Just to give the reader a small taste of what I mean: The day I am writing this, I will be hosting a family from Nigeria that is interested in taking the game back to the northern part of their country as a teaching tool. Among other things, the family will be taking on the responsibility of teaching children orphaned by ISIS.

Some of the more jaw dropping experiences come as I talk to students by phone. Back in 2014, I was talking to a Ukrainian student the day the Crimean peninsula was invaded by Russia. I actually didn't know what to do or say, so I just asked him if he was safe. His reply was a nonchalant, "Oh don't worry, this has happened before." Holy mother of pearl!

In my opinion, opening doors and creating opportunities locally are the most impactful. To that end I've begun to re-create the Bloomington Experiment in Holland, MI. For those that are reading this who have never had the opportunity to talk about my work with chess in Bloomington Indiana, I've added a little background on it below. Over the course of 5 years, the plan is to create at least five different scholastic chess clubs in or around Holland that can begin to have inter-club competitions. Honestly, I could use a little help. If you find your interest peaked even a little, please download and view the free chess resources at the end of this article. Then, get in touch with me by email at Dan.Hronchek@gmail.com.

The Bloomington Experiment

I started teaching chess at an elementary school in Bloomington Indiana in 2003. There were no other chess programs in the city. We, myself and one of the Bloomington city councilmen, advertised the program as an after school activity and charged a \$10 entry fee for ten weeks of chess. Over seventy students signed up! The ten weeks that ensued were more of a crash course in classroom management than a chess club, but we eventually figured some things out. The program was so successful that some other schools in the district reached out to us - and the next year we added two more programs. By the third year, I had to bring in help, as there were too many programs, sometimes meeting simultaneously in different parts of the city.

I should probably mention that I was a newly minted chess player at the time. I had learned chess several months before, and had tried my luck at one local chess tournament and then one very large tournament in Chicago. The verdict was that I was probably slightly above average - somewhere in the 1300's USCF.

The chess programs in Bloomington started to die out a few years into the experiment. As the original kids aged out of the program, I noticed that very few were sticking with the game past 6th or 7th

I can suppose that it became less cool as other activities and sports became available to them at that age. However, at the 3rd-5th grade levels, the game thrived and the players and their families were hungry for more opportunities, so we started a city tournament for them. Shortly after that, several of the clubs formed their own open tournaments. The game became visually accessible to the city when the newspaper started to report tournament results. The local library even kicked off it's own version of a city-wide chess club that was fully inclusive. By the end of year 5, there were more than 1,500 new chess players in a city of 85,000 people (35,000 of which are University students). As of this writing in 2019, many of the programs in Bloomington Indiana are still thriving.

In 2014, I authored a resource to help non-playing adults teach the game of chess to young players. I have to admit that the endeavor was a fairly large failure in terms of financial resources. However, the bright side is that the idea worked! A few school administrators in the U.S. (not in West Michigan) picked up the resource and used it to start chess programs within their respective schools.

So here it is: maybe the biggest project that I will work on in the chess community in West Michigan - a resource that needs people to pick it up and teach the game. It could be a parent, a teacher, or any responsible adult really. All west Michigan needs to reproduce the Bloomington experiment is willingness and enthusiasm. The teaching resource is freely available at www.homeromchess.org. Please download and print at will. Happy chassing!

Dan Hronchek is an internet chess coach based in Holland Michigan. You can read more about his coaching and biography at <https://lichess.org/coach/DrHack>.



West-Side Chess Calendar Looking Ahead

May 18 - 2nd Annual Grand Rapids Spring Classic

West Michigan Chess is organizing the 2nd Annual Grand Rapids Spring Classic hosted by the Spencer St. Chess Club. Join us May 18th for a great day of chess action divided across three sections.

Location: Spencer St. Chess Club, 214 Spencer St. NE, Grand Rapids.

There will be three sections: CHAMPIONSHIP, U1500, and U1000.

The entry fee is \$30 on-site, and \$25 if you pre-register. To preregister please email Michael Brooks at michaelforwinterpromise@gmail.com

Schedule:

8:15-8:45 - Registration & Check-In

9:00 - Round 1

11:00 - Round 2

1:00 - Round 3

3:00 - Round 4

Prizes:

CHAMPIONSHIP - 1st Place: \$75, 2nd Place: \$50

U1500 - 1st Place: \$75, 2nd Place: \$40

U1000 - 1st Place: \$50

This will be USCF-rated therefore you must have an active USCF membership.

2019 Castle Defenders Chess Camp

For the second year in a row Michael Brooks will be organizing the Castle Defenders Chess Camp. Last year we had about sixty kids over two days playing chess, having fun, running around, learning from amazing teachers, and creating friendships. We are set to have another great year this year.

The camp will take place July 12-13 from 10:00 - 4:00. For more information please email michaelforwinterpromise@gmail.com.