



THE OUTPOST

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THE CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION

2019 SPBCC CHAMPIONSHIP

by Jon McClenahan

The SPBCC Championship Round-Robin has finished, and we have crowned a new Club Champion for 2019! Here's how it happened:

After four rounds of qualifiers (two rounds each on March 1st and March 8th), the top point-scorers were: **Dylan Mounts** and **Matt Pratt** tied with 3½ points and then **Jared Bray**, **Roger Pagel**, and **John Last** with 3 points. As only four players go to the Round-Robin, tie-breaker criteria (average rating of opponents) were applied and Mr. Last was, well, last of the five (better luck next year, John).

The Round-Robin was played concurrent with Ladder play: one round each over the three weekends of March 15th, March 22nd, and April 5th (March 29th was Blitz Night). Time controls were G90/d5.

Round 1 games: Pagel (White) vs. Bray (Black); Pratt (White) vs. Mounts (Black). See pages 2, 3, and 4.

Round 2 games: Bray (White) vs. Pratt (Black); Mounts (White) vs. Pagel (Black). See pages 4, 5, and 6.

Round 3 games: Mounts (White) vs. Bray (Black); Pagel (White) vs. Pratt (Black). See pages 6, 7, and 8.

Standings at the end of Round 3:

Jared Bray	2.0
Dylan Mounts	2.0
Roger Pagel	1.0
Matt Pratt	1.0

And so, according to the rules, the championship title had to be decided by best-of-three 20-minute tie-breakers! Mr. Bray won the first two games and was crowned SPBCC Club Champion for 2019! Congratulations to Mr. Bray!



Jared Bray studies his board

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DON'T BE SO TOUCHY!

by Jon McClenahan

Springfield Park Board Chess Club does not have 'special rules' with regard to the playing of the game of chess, or the peripheral rules or traditions of chess; we abide by standard Chess Tournament Rules. But with so many new members this year, it makes sense to review them.

First, some of our newer members are getting used to playing **timed games**. It's a new skill to master!

Secondly, a few notes about "**Chess Etiquette**." The general theme is to be a good sport and to be respectful of other players; your opponent and others playing in the room.

- 1) Start and end each game with a handshake.
- 2) Don't talk.
- 3) Don't distract your opponent.
- 4) Abide by the "Touch-Move Rule" (see below).
- 5) Check with your Tournament Director about illegal moves.

The "**Touch-Move Rule**" is stated as follows by Chess.com: "If a player touches one of their own pieces they must move that piece as long as it is a legal move. If a player touches an opponent's piece, they must capture that piece. A player who wishes to touch a piece only to adjust it on the board must first announce the intention, usually by saying 'adjust'."

Nobody ever wants to call out an opponent for an infraction – who wants to be an "A-Hole" about it? But chess is a great game requiring the development of many disciplines. Here at *The Outpost*, We want to do our best to help you master them all!

Round 1: Pagel-Bray

Roger Pagel – Jared Bray
 SPBCC Championship, Round 1
 March 15, 2019

Queen’s Gambit Declined:
 Exchange Variation

Both players did some preparation for this battle, having played each other many times in the past. As White, Roger chose the English Opening: “White used to play the English a lot in the ‘90s and prepared lines hoping for a long strategic battle where the clock might possibly affect the outcome. The key is holding the center together locking it up with flank maneuvers directed at Black’s king.” Said Mr. Bray, “This game is a bit uncharacteristic for either of us, and the plans we came up with showed this.”

1. **c4 e6**

1. ... e6 is the Agincourt Defense. “I suspected Roger had prepared some lines in the English and I thought this would have been a bit off his radar. It can lead to solid positions for Black.” JB

2. **Nc3 d5**
 3. **cd ed**
 4. **Nf3 Nf6**
 5. **d4 ...**

With this move the game transposes to the QGD.

5. ... **Bd6**
 6. **Bg5 c6**
 7. **e3 O-O**
 8. **Qc2 h6**
 9. **Bh4 Re8 (1)**

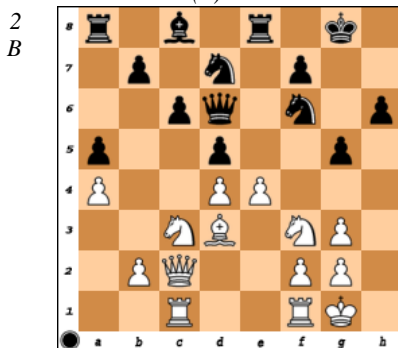


A position that promises a terrific struggle. The players are still sizing each other up.

10. **Be2 Nbd7**
 11. **O-O Qc7**
 12. **Rac1 Qb8**
 13. **Bd3 ...**

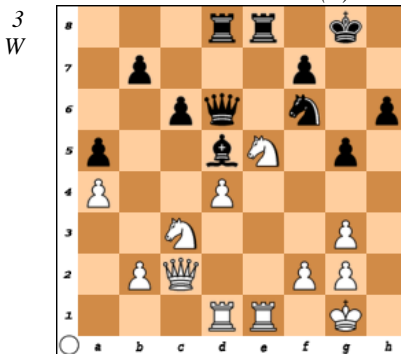
“The bishop move was a must! Black threatened Ne4! – making sense out of the clutter.” JB

13. ... **a5**
 14. **a4 g5**
 15. **Bg3 Bxg3**
 16. **hxg3 Qd6**
 17. **e4?! (2) ...**



Neither player had much to say about this move, but Fritz suggests it may have started White’s ball rolling downhill. The immediate preparatory move – 17. Rfe1 (played two moves later) – here could’ve made things easier for White before making this push.

17. ... **de**
 18. **Bxe4 Nb6**
 19. **Rfe1 Be6**
 20. **Rcd1 Nbd5**
 21. **Bxd5 Bxd5**
 22. **Ne5 Rad8 (3)**



23. **Qd2?? ...**

Much (and I mean MUCH) has been written about this move ... by both players; it sparked the front-page article of last month’s newsletter (*The Outpost* Vol. 4 Issue 4, April 2019:

2019 SPBCC MEMBERSHIP

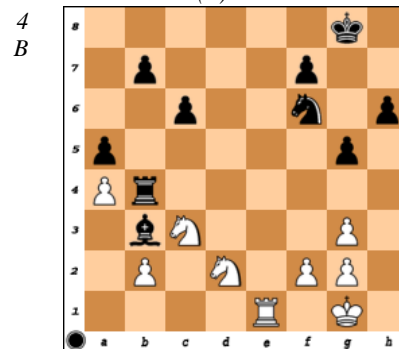
Daniel Bao	James Latham
Ben Berger	Mike Little
Jared Bray	Brayden Miao
Jim Baumlin	Spencer Manchester
John Cardoza	Jon McClenahan
Afzal Chowdhury	Vince McClenahan
Travis Dooly	CJ Moeller
Isaac Drum	Roger Pagel
Stephanie Dugan	Marty Phillips
Ben Elliott	Matthew Pratt
Quentin Fitzpatrick	Brian Rude
Jeff Fuzzell	Ethan Stech
Matt Hammonds	Billy Tropepe
Peter Hansen	Adam Whitaker
Stan Horton	Cody Whittington
John Last	Sam Whittington

“Psyched for the Game?”). Mr. Pagel flat out called it “the losing move,” but of course Mr. Bray was correct in saying, “a winning position is only that when won” ... and if in fact it’s the “losing move,” it takes Black 20 moves to prove it. There’s little doubt that 23. Nxd5 was better for White. In any case, Black played his next move before the 5-second delay had expired.

23. ... **Bb3!**

Opens the line of attack on White’s IQP and simultaneously attacks one of its key defenders.

24. **Rc1 Qxd4**
 25. **Qxd4 Rxd4**
 26. **Nf3 Rxe1+**
 27. **Rxe1 Rb4**
 28. **Nd2 (4) ...**



28. ... **Bxa4**

Black’s endeavors have yielded a two-pawn advantage.

29. **Re5 b6?!**

After 29. ... Rxb2 30. Rxa5 Rxd2 31. Rxa4, we’re closer to a conclusion, especially since Black has two connected passed pawns.

30. **f4 gf**
 31. **gf Rxf4**
 32. **b3! ...**

This gets a pawn back ... but Black is still in control.

(continued on page 3)

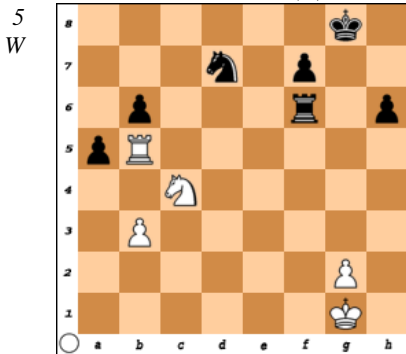
Round 1: Pagel-Bray

(continued from p. 2)

32. ... Bb5
 33. Nxb5 cxb5
 34. Rxb5 Nd7

Interesting to note in their post-game analyses, the players had polar-opposite views on this move. Mr. Pagel felt it “*seals the deal*”, limiting White’s options, but Mr. Bray said he had “*squandered a massive advantage*.” If instead 34. ... Rb4 35. Rxb4 axb4, Black’s game solidifies despite doubled pawns.

35. Nc4 Rf6 (5)



36. g3? ...

There was a tactic in this position. Mr. Bray points out, “*After 36. Rd5, Roger is back in the game; if 36. ... Nc5 then 37. Nxa5! I had only considered 37. Nxb6 Nxb3 ... and the outside passed pawn would be too strong to contend with.*”

36. ... Kf8!
 37. Kg2 ...

White’s last two have been “*waiting-hoping moves.*” (RP)

37. ... Ke7
 38. g4 Kd8

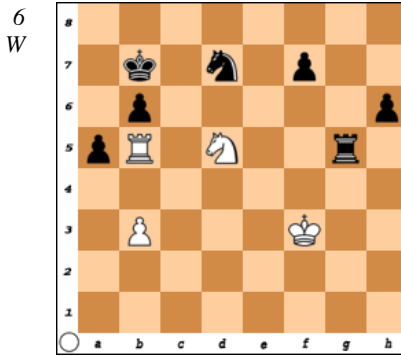
Preventing a fork (39. Ne3 followed by 40. Nd5).

39. Ne3 Kc8
 40. g5? ...

40. Rh5 might’ve kept Black’s diminishing chances alive.

40. ... Rg6
 41. Kf3 Rxb5
 42. Nd5? Kb7! (6)

(diagram next column)



The Black king is an irresistible force in the equation. Trades will be forced. Here, best for White is probably 43. Nc3 and whereas a straight-out exchange of rooks is bad for White, Black can make it even less palatable with 43. ... Rc5. Mr. Pagel resigned.

0-1

“*Before we work on artificial intelligence why don’t we do something about natural stupidity?*”
 Steve Polyak



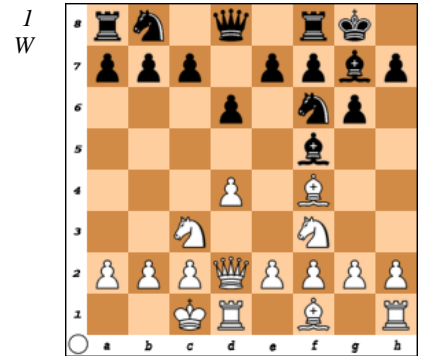
Matt Pratt – Dylan Mounts
 SPBCC Championship, Round 1
 March 15, 2019

King’s Indian – London System

Dylan Mounts has just recently returned to regular play in the club, and veritably sailed through the qualifier rounds. Now in the first round of the Championship Round-Robin, he found himself paired off with our old friend from Joplin, Matt Pratt. In this short but very sharp game, opening round jitters got the best of both players ... but one of the blunders couldn’t be recovered from.

1. d4 Nf6
 2. Nf3 g6
 3. Bf4 Bg7
 4. Nc3 O-O
 5. Qd2 d6
 6. O-O-O Bf5 (1)

(diagram next column)

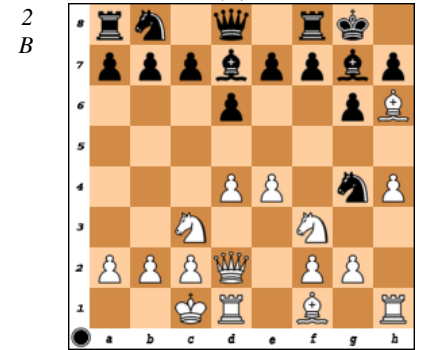


Highly efficient development thus far: only three pawn moves total. An interesting blend of King’s Indian Defense used against a London System. Of interest to chess students is that after White’s 6th move (castling long) his queenside pieces never budge for the rest of the game; all resources will be poured into the kingside attack that follows. As it stands here, the position is somewhat favorable to White, but it’s early going.

7. h4 Ng4
 8. e4! ...

A terrific dual-purpose move, simultaneously attacking the Black bishop and protecting against the fork.

8. ... Bd7
 9. Bh6?? (2) ...



As the poet said: “*Out of the blue, like a clap of thunder; ‘dis here move is a heck of a blunder!*” White somehow missed that his bishop is attacked twice on this square ... even more complicated when you consider that after the capture, the White queen is pinned to her king! Said Mr. Pratt: “*I would go as far as to say that Bh6 deserves a special place in Springfield Chess Championship history.*” 9. h5 could’ve been better (well, just about anything could’ve been better).

(continued on page 4)

Round 1: Pratt-Mounts

(continued from p. 3)

9. ... Bxh6

10. Ng5 ...

Best under the circumstances.

10. ... Nf6?

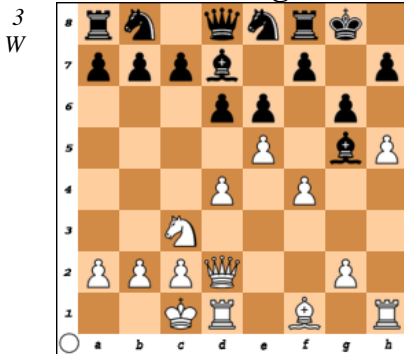
“Somehow my opponent is convinced that (White’s 9th move) was an ‘opening trap.’” MP. It’s an extremely sharp situation, but yes, there is a better way to capitalize on White’s 9th move. First, if Black plays the immediate 10. ... f6, White can minimize his losses with 11. f3 (and the Black knight is trapped). So Black must grab a pawn while he can: 10. ... Nxf2 11. Qxf2 and now 11. ... f6, leaving Black in the driver’s seat.

11. e5 Ne8

Mr. Mounts opined: “I failed to capitalize properly and gave the advantage right back to White. 10. ... Nf6? is passive and 11. ... Ne8?? needs to be 11. ... Nh5.” Here Fritz agrees that 11. ... Nh5 might be a better choice, but still assesses Black’s chances as very good, even after the text move.

12. h5 e6

13. f4 Bxg5? (3)



There’s a kingside storm brewing, and you can’t blame Black for wanting to batten down the hatches, per se. The unfortunate consequence of this move is that it will leave a fatal weakness on f6. The computer gave no suggestions, but here is a possible continuation that, albeit hard to foresee, would work out better for Black: 13. ... f6?! (attacking the pesky knight) 14. hg (attacking the pesky bishop) 14. ... fxc5 (removing the pesky knight) 15. ... gf 16. gh+ Kh8 and now maybe 17. Bd3 Ng7, leaving

a wild position hanging by a thread.

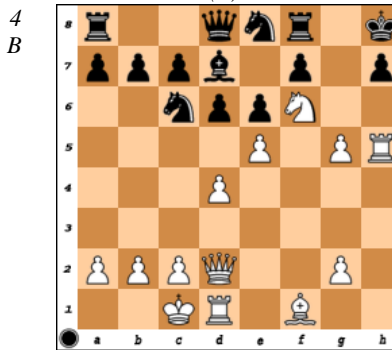
14. fxc5 gh

15. Ne4! Nc6

It’s subtle – the implications are beyond this writer’s ability to comprehend – but this move is the ultimate downfall of Black’s game. Heading into White’s 15th move, Black, being a knight and a pawn up in material, has a good, if not winning, advantage. After that move, Fritz assessed the game close to EVEN, but eventually decided White was up – +9.66 to be exact! Considering how long it took the computer to figure it out, this writer won’t assign question marks (and the computer didn’t either).

16. Nf6+ Kh8

17. Rxc5 (4) ...



Black resigned – there’s nothing left. A powerful attack by Mr. Pratt!

1-0

Standings at the end of Round 1:

Jared Bray 1.0
Matt Pratt 1.0
Dylan Mounts 0.0
Roger Pagel 0.0

Round 2: Bray-Pratt

Jared Bray – Matt Pratt
SPBCC Championship, Round 2
March 22, 2019

Slav Bishop’s Game

Round Two. This game highlights the imaginative play of the two highest rated players in the tournament, and features an epic queenside contest.

1. d4 d5

2. Nf3 Bf5

An early surprise for Mr. Bray. “I wonder if Matt had secret dreams of playing in the manner of GM Nepom-

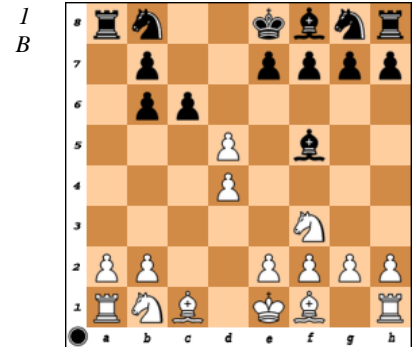
niachtchi, who is one of the few top players in the world to utilize this move order.” JB

3. c4 c6

4. Qb3 Qb6

5. Qxb6 axb6

6. cd (1) ...



6. ... Bxb1?!

A surprising move that will result in balanced material, with an outside chance of un-doubling Black’s b-pawns. However, it casually disposes of the bishop pair.

7. Rxb1 Rxa2

8. Bf4 Nd7

9. e3 Ngf6

10. dc bc

So Black’s pawns are un-doubled ... but in light of White’s *isolani* on the same file, this was possibly not as much of a problem as Black imagined.

11. Bc4 Ra8

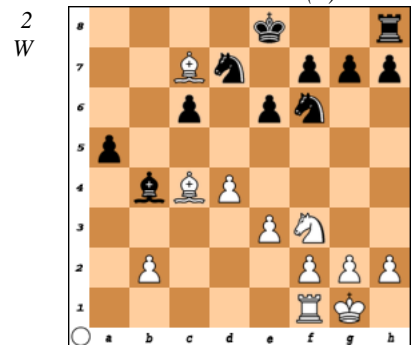
12. O-O e6

13. Ra1 Ra5

White felt challenging control of the a-file was important, and if Black were to relinquish it (e.g. 13. ... Rd8) it would require the utmost in accurate play to forego disaster (14. Ra7 forces 14. ... Nd5 or else the White bishops make a deep & deadly invasion).

14. Rxa5 bxa5

15. Bc7 Bb4 (2)



(continued on page 5)

Round 2: Bray-Pratt

(continued from p. 4)

The Black bishop is pretty well posted – and the remainder of the game revolves around the battle to remove it – and then the fallout from that battle.

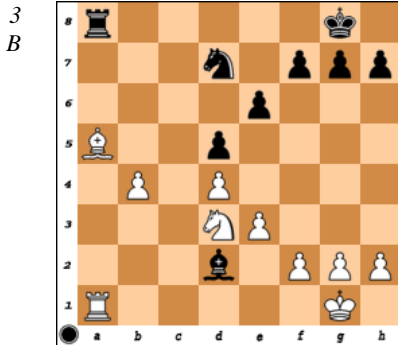
16. Ra1 O-O
17. Ne1 Nd5
18. Bxd5! ...

The alternative is the passive 18. Bg3 or the reckless 18. Bxa5? leading to 18. ... Ra8! 19. Bxb4 Rxa1 and the pendulum will have swung in Black's favor.

18. ... cxd5
19. Nd3 Bd2

Seeking temporary shelter while Black's reserves make their way to the battleground.

20. Bxa5 Ra8
21. b4 (3) ...



21. ... Nb6!

The knight is of course untouchable.

22. Rb1 Nc4
23. Bc7 Ra3
24. Nc1 Rc3?!

Looking for tactics that cannot eventuate. Black had two better options along similar lines: A) 24. ... Bxc1 25. Rxc1 Rb3 or B) 24. ... Ra4 25. b5 Na3 26. Ra1 Bxc1 27. Rxc1 Nxb5. In either case Black gets the pawn back.

25. Ne2 Rc2
26. b5 Na3?

Mr. Pratt may have envisioned 27. b6 as White's response, and then 27. ... Nxb1 28. b7 Rb2 29. b8=Q+ Rxb8 30. Bxb8 and when the dust clears, the game is even. However, Mr. Bray took the bull by the horns.

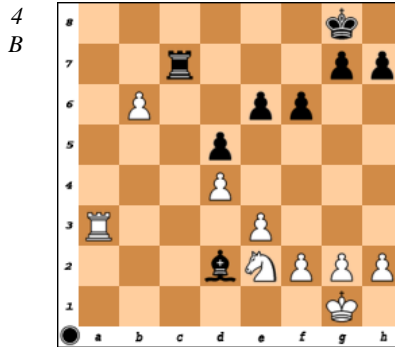
27. Ra1! Rxc7

Of course not 27. ... Nxb5 28. Ra8#.

28. Rxa3 f6??

That 28. ... g5 was the superior alternative will be clarified momentarily.

29. b6! (4) ...



White pronounces the death sentence.

29. ... Rb7

30. Ra8+ Kf7

31. Ra7 ...

And Black resigned. That f7-pawn would've been a handy sandbag in this situation, wouldn't it?

1-0

"When you don't know what to do, wait for your opponent to get an idea – it's sure to be wrong."

Siegbert Tarrasch

Dylan Mounts – Roger Pagel
SPBCC Championship, Round 2
March 22, 2019

Alekhine's Defense – Vitolin's Attack

Both players were coming off first-round losses, and the result was a hard-fought game that went down to the theoretical wire.

1. e4 Nf6

Alekhine introduced his opening to the world in 1921, but it was a while before it became regarded as sound. The 1925 edition of *Modern Chess Openings* gave it a begrudging endorsement: "... Black allows his King's Knight to be driven about the board in the early stages of the game, in expectation of provoking a weakness in White's centre pawns." And yes, Mr. Pagel has been known to play it from time to time ...

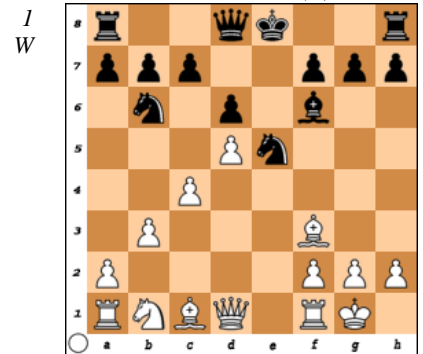
2. e5 ...

The alternative to chasing the knight is 2. Nc3, which often transposes to a Vienna Game or Four Knights Game. Mr. Mounts chose the classical line.

2. ... Nd5
3. d4 d6
4. c4 Nb6
5. Nf3 Bg4
6. Be2 Nc6
7. ed ed
8. O-O Be7
9. d5 Bxf3

All by the book. And now ...

10. Bxf3 Ne5
11. b3 Bf6 (1)

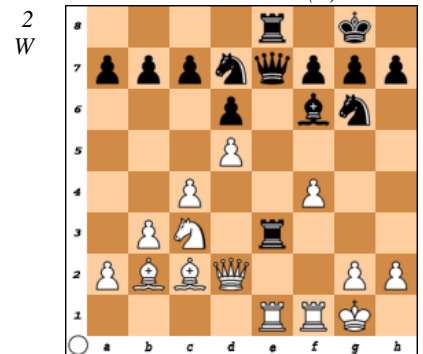


Black has the initiative and better development. The immediate threat is Nxf3+. White responds competently.

12. Nc3 O-O

Another possibility was 12. ... Nexc4!? 13. Re1+ (if 13. bxc4 Bxc3) 13. ... Ne5. The text move gives White the chance to equalize.

13. Bb2 Nbd7
14. Be4! Re8
15. f4 Ng6
16. Bc2 Re3
17. Qd2 Qe7
18. Rae1 Re8 (2)



(continued on page 6)

Round 2: Mounts-Pagel

(continued from p. 5)

Black's got the heavy guns ... but White's position is more or less bullet-proof at the moment. That's all about to change.

19. Bxg6?? ...

19. Rxe3 Qxe3+ 20. Qxe3 Rxe3 21. Bf5 Bxc3 22. Bxc3 Rxc3 23. Bxd7 keeps it a tight game. The text allows Black to run away with the game

19. ... hxg6??

But what about that powerful battery? 19. ... Rxe1 20. Rxe1 Qxe1+ 21. Qxe1 Rxe1+ 22. Kf2 Bxc3 23. Bxc3 Rcl and Black emerges up the exchange.

20. Kf2? ...

Again, White needs to diffuse that Black battery: 20. Rxe3 Qxe3+ 21. Qxe3 Rxe3 and White has equalized.

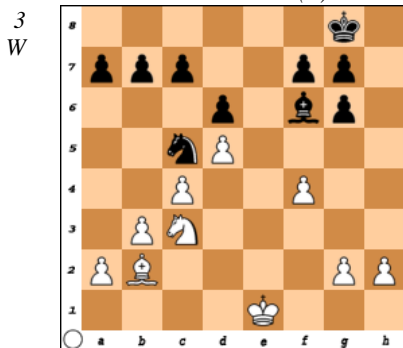
20. ... Rxe1??

Here Black had the chance to play 20. ... Bd4! and after 21. Qxd4 Rxe1 and Black seizes control. Said Mr. Mounts, "The rare Quadruple Blunder ... indeed, an impressive feat!" After all this, the game is still even.

21. Rxe1 Qxe1+

22. Qxe1 Rxe1

23. Kxe1 Nc5 (3)



Although the board – and the nature of the game – has changed much in the last five moves, it's still a pretty even match.

24. Ke2 a6

25. b4 Nd7

26. a4?! Bxc3

Black sees a way to win a pawn, and so puts his money on his knight's versatility in pawn-wrangling duties.

27. Bxc3 Nb6!

28. Kd3 Nxa4

In his post-game analysis Mr. Pagel remarked that now "this knight needs to retreat to b6 – and not worry about the doubled pawns – to stay in the game." White will now endeavor to trap the knight.

29. Bd4 f6

30. g4 Kf7

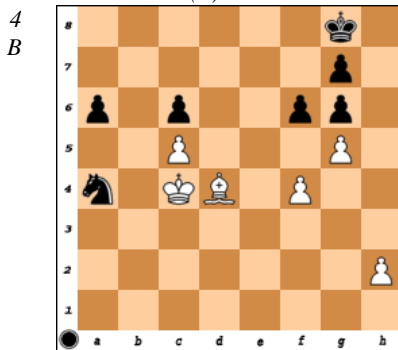
31. g5 c5

32. dc (e.p.) bc

33. c5 dc

34. bc Ke6

35. Kc4 (4) ...



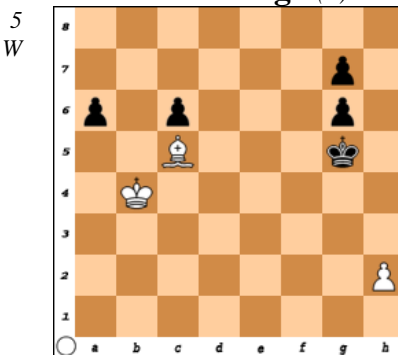
Despite the fact that Black's knight is a goner, he can wiggle his way to a draw with 35. ... a5 36. Kb3 Kd5! 37. gf gf 38. Bxf6 Nxc5+. Instead ...

35. ... fg?

36. fg Kf5

37. Kb4 Nxc5

38. Bxc5 Kxg5 (5)



Before White replied, Black resigned. "Even after 38. ... Ke4 39. Ka5 Kd5 40. Ba3 c5 41. Kxa6 c4 42. Kb5 c3 43. Kb4 Kd4 the rest is academic," said Pagel. The White bishop is surprisingly effective in this late stage, so that after the reply 39. Ka5 Kf4 40. Kxa6 Ke4 41. Bf8 g5 42. Bxg7 Kf3 43. Kb6 g4 44. Be5, it's clear that Black's remaining pawns will fall, and White's king and bishop will provide sufficient escort for White's h-pawn. Mr. Mounts declared, "It was certainly not the cleanest game for either of us, but so it goes."

1-0

Standings at the end of Round 2:

Jared Bray 2.0

Dylan Mounts 1.0

Matt Pratt 1.0

Roger Pagel 0.0

Round 3: Pagel-Pratt

Roger Pagel – Matt Pratt
SPBCC Championship, Round 3
April 5, 2019

The Orangutan

Coming into the last round of the championship round-robin, Matt Pratt had an outside chance to tie for first with a win, in the unlikely event that Jared Bray lost against Dylan Mounts. Roger Pagel, on the other hand, having lost the first two rounds, had nothing to lose.

1. b4 ...

The Orangutan, aka the Sokolsky or Polish Opening.

1. ... e5

2. Bb2 Bxb4

3. Bxe5 (1) ...



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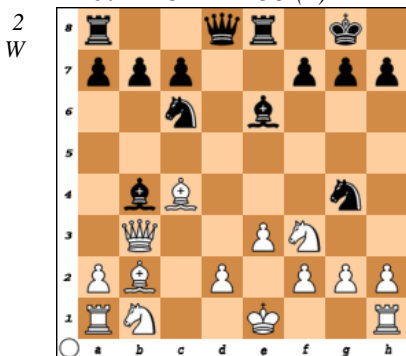
Brian Rude

Round 3: Pagel-Pratt

(continued from p. 5)

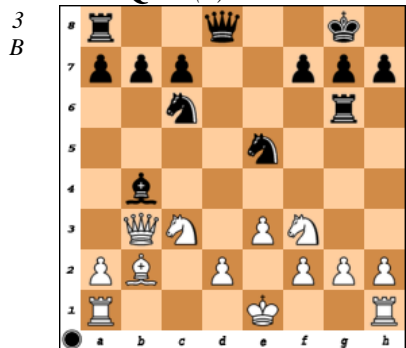
An unusual position ... from an unusual opening. Both players now set about bringing pressure to the center.

3. ... Nf6
 4. Nf3 O-O
 5. e3 d5
 6. c4 Nc6
 7. Bb2 Re8
 8. Be2 Ng4
 9. Qb3 dc
 10. Bxc4 Be6 (2)



Black seems to have diffused the a2-g8 diagonal for the time being.

11. Bxe6 Rxe6
 12. Qc4 Rg6
 13. Nc3 Nge5!
 14. Qb3 (3) ...



This writer remembers strolling past the board just before this move was played (his own non-championship game had ended) and thought, "Hey, White wins the bishop!" However, what both Mr. Pratt and Mr. Pagel saw was that this was a deadly trap: 14. Nxe5 Nxe5 15. Qxb4?? and then 15. ... Nd3+! forking the White queen. There are other sharp possibilities here too. As it happens, back in reality, White made a solid move, but Black likes that check anyway.

14. ... Nd3+

15. Ke2 Rxc2

Winning the pawn and opening a file. This is what they call "a mixed blessing."

16. Ne4 Nxb2

17. Qxb2 Rg6

18. Rhg1 Qe7

19. d3 Rd8

20. Rxc2 hxc2

21. Rg1 b6

A bit of housekeeping. If White chases the Black bishop, the b-pawn will otherwise fall.

22. Qb3 Na5

The queen had to be chased from that diagonal, or else Rxc2.

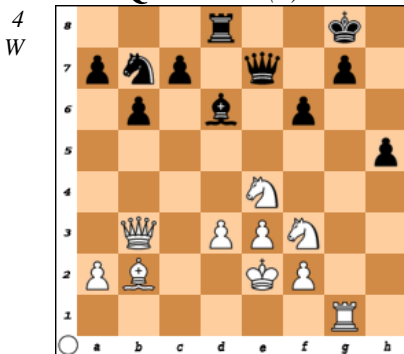
23. Qc2 Bd6

24. h4 Nb7?!

24. ... Qe6 may have been worth consideration, but Black's re-routing of his knight pays some strong tactical dividends later. At the same time, White continues his kingside attack.

25. h5! gh

26. Qb2 f6 (4)



Due to White's heavy crossfire, the f6-pawn is just a decoration. In hindsight, 26. ... f5 might've worked out better, after which 27. Nf6+ Kh8 28. Nxe5 Nc5 29. Rxc2 Nxd3 (and the White king can't touch it).

27. Nxf6+ Kh8

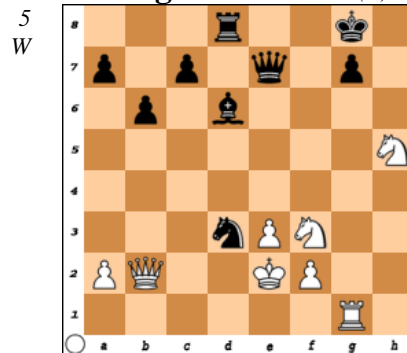
28. Nxe5 Nc5

29. Rh1 ...

Said Pagel: "Done to counter his knight-take on d3 so I could check his king and pick up his knight if he tried it." Another angle: 29. Nh4 Nxd3 (the aforementioned trap) 30. Rxc2 and now if 30. ... Nxb2 31. Ng6#.

29. ... Kg8

30. Rg1 Nxd3?? (5)



But this tactic no longer works after ...

31. Qb3+! ...

It's a losing situation for Black, compounded by the fact that Black touched his queen in order to interpose (31. ... Qf7 is met with 32. Rxc2+ and mate in three. See our "Touch Rules" article on page 1). So instead, Black resigned here. Pagel's final remark: "At least I didn't get skunked!"

1-0

Dylan Mounts – Jared Bray
 SPBCC Championship, Round 3
 April 5, 2019

French Defense: Exchange Variation

Mr. Bray needed only a draw to wrap up the championship, and the expectation of most club members was that we would crown him champion at the end of the night. But so far, White has won 3 out of 4 championship matches ... would that trend do Mr. Mounts any good? Well the only one to win with Black so far has been ... Jared Bray. No, as Bobby Fischer summed it up: "All that matters on the chess board is good moves."

1. d4 ...

Mr. Bray noted this was the first time he had faced the 1. d4 opening move in the championship cycle. Nonetheless it transposes into a French Defense.

2. ... e6

2. e4 d5

3. ed ed

4. c4 ...

Mr. Bray: "Another surprise! I ... found it odd that White would willingly go for the isolated pawn." Mr. Mounts however, put it to good use throughout.

(continued on page 8)

Round 3: Mounts-Bray

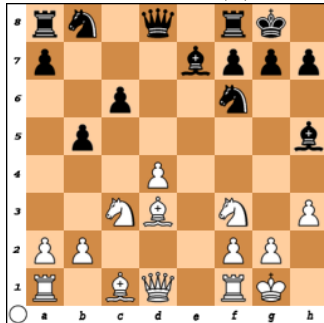
(continued from p. 7)

4. ... Nf6
 5. Nf3 Be7
 6. Nc3 O-O
 7. Be2 dc
 8. Bxc4 c6
 9. O-O b5?!

Mr. Mounts remarked, "This creates a backwards pawn that Black has to deal with for the rest of the game." Why? Because of that isolated queen pawn. Mr. Bray admits the immediate 9. ... Bg4 would've served him better.

10. Bd3 Bg4
 11. h3 Bh5(1)

1
W



12. g4! ...

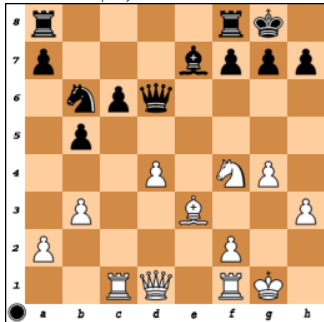
Some computers don't like this move ... but ... "I needed a win and I was playing for one." DM

12. ... Bg6
 13. Be3 Nd5
 14. Nxd5 Qxd5
 15. Ne5 Bxd3
 16. Nxd3 ...

Mr. Mounts points out: if 16. Qxd3?? f6.

16. ... Nd7?!
 17. Nf4 Qd6
 18. Rc1 Nb6
 19. b3 (2) ...

2
B



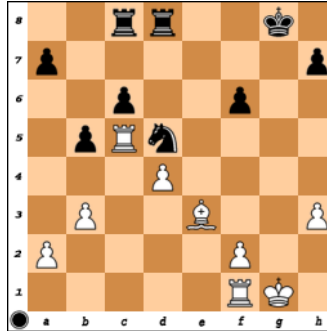
"Nc4 looked too scary to allow." DM

19. ... Rfd8
 20. Qf3! Rac8

21. Nd3 Nd5
 22. Ne5 Bf6
 23. Nxf7!? Kxf7
 24. g5 Kg8
 25. gxf6 Qxf6
 26. Qxf6 gxf6
 27. Rc5! (3) ...

White will regain the piece momentarily.

3
B



The White rook has a solid outpost.

27. ... Kf7
 28. Kg2 Ke6
 29. Rfc1 Kd7
 30. a3 Re8
 31. Kf3 f5
 32. b4 f4
 33. Bd2 ...

Of course, not 33. Bxf4 Rf8.

33. ... Re6 (4)

4
W



The Black rook lifts to a rank where it has more lateral scope. White must put a plan into motion, and he sees opportunities on the queenside.

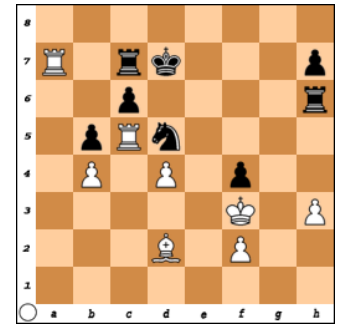
34. a4! ...

Now if 34. ... ba 35. Ra5 Rc7 and the character of the game radically shifts. Black prefers to hunker down.

34. ... a6
 35. ab ab
 36. Ra1! Rh6
 37. Ra7+ Rc7? (5)

(diagram next column)

5
W



Black's best chance here was 37. ... Ke6. Now – can you find White's winning move?

38. Rxc7? ...

"The winning tactic is not hard to find ... I did find it a move later." DM

38. ... Kxc7?

Now White has a second chance ...

39. Rxd5! ...

There it is! As Mr. Mounts points out, now if 39. ... cxd5 40. Bxf4+ and wins the rook and the game. "With my clock running lowI vainly hoped to gain a passed pawn." JB

39. ... Rxh3+

40. Kg4 Rb3

"I had over 40 minutes left, and played very deliberately from here, while he was forced to play blitz. Black still has plenty of drawing opportunities if I'm not careful." DM

41. Rh5 f3

42. Rxh7+ Kd6

43. Rf7 Rd3

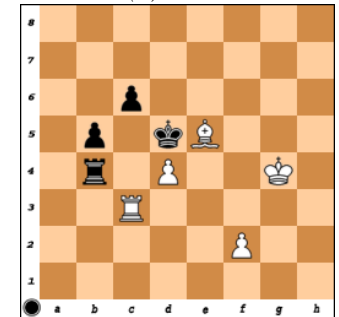
44. Bf4+ Kd5

45. Be5 Rb3

46. Rxf3 Rxb4

47. Rc3 (6) ...

6
B



At this point Black's flag fell. Although there's a fair bit of work yet to be done, White has a winning position. Mr. Mounts had won the game and tied for first place!

1-0