

2002 US Championships

Mark Donlan

The U.S. Championships took place January 5th-13th, 2002 in Seattle. It was again hosted by the Settle Chess Foundation. There were 56 players in the event and for the first time in history, men and women competed in one group for their titles.

Twenty players, 12 men and 8 women, including the 2000 U.S. Champions and 2000 U.S. Junior Champion, were automatically seeded into the event.

Three other events served as qualifiers: The U.S. Open, the American Open and the National Chess Congress. From which 36 additional players, 32 men and 4 women, rounded out the competition.

The prize fund was \$200,000 with championship rings awarded to the overall winner and the highest-ranking female player.

In addition there were cash prizes for brilliancy games, donated by Mr. Paul Albert Jr., in the amounts of: \$1000 (Seirawan-I. Ivanov, 1-0), \$700 (Shabalov-Fishbein, 1-0), \$400 (Mulyar-Kudrin, 1-0), \$250 (Christiansen-Foygel, 1-0), and \$150 (Ariel-Altounian, 1-0).

The Championship was played as a nine-round Swiss System, with a tiebreak after the last round to determine the ultimate winner and prize money distribution if there was no clear winner.

The time control was 40 moves in 100 minutes, then 20 moves in 50 minutes. After 60 moves, 10 more minutes were added to the clock for all remaining moves. In addition, the clock automatically added 30 seconds per move.

Larry Christiansen won the US Championships and \$15,000 after a five game blitz playoff against Nick

Material for this article was culled from the official web-site, www.seattlechessfoundation.org.

De Firmian, who pocketed \$11,000 for his efforts.

Jennifer Shahade captured the women's title with 5/9 and \$9,500. She was the only woman to finish with a plus score, even though six of her nine opponents were GMs.

Plus she scored an IM norm and a WGM norm; further norms were achieved by Boris Kreiman (GM), Igor Foygel (IM), and Dmitry Schneider (IM).

The official site is www.seattlechessfoundation.org, where you can download a PGN file of the games for each round and access game of the day annotations by IM Jeremy Silman and FM William Schill.

Here's the game that won Larry a brilliancy prize. It was reported that, "White's Rook sacrifice was a true sacrifice - not a combination. Not being able to work everything out to the end, Larry showed great courage and creativity."

Notes by Christiansen

White: Christiansen, L (2571)

Black: Foygel, I (2474)

[B15] ch- USA Seattle USA (2), 06.01.2002

1 e4 g6

This came as a bit of a surprise to me. I expected Igor to play a Paulsen Sicilian.

2 d4 Bg7 3 Nc3 c6 4 Nf3 d5 5 h3 Nf6

A moment of decision for me. White has a choice between the wild complications stemming from 6 e5 or the quieter path 6 Bd3. A promising line for White here is 6 e5 Ne4 7 Nxe4 dxe4 8 Ng5 c5 9 e6! Bxe6 10 Nxe6 fxe6 11 dxc5 Qd5 (the ending after 11...Qxd1+ 12 Kxd1 is dreadful) 12 c3! followed soon by Be3 and Qb3.

6 Bd3 dxe4 7 Nxe4 Nxe4 8 Bxe4 Bf5

Also possible here is 8...0-0 9 0-0 Nd7 though I like White after 10

Bg5.

9 Bxf5 Qa5+ 10 c3 Qxf5 11 0-0 Nd7

During the game I was trying to assess the possibility 11..0-0 12 Re1 e6 13 Re5!? Bxe5 14 dxe5, with good comp for White until Igor played this more flexible continuation.

12 Re1 e6 13 Qb3 Qb5



13...0-0-0 is possible, though White should hold a small edge thanks to his superior center and freer hand.

Not good is 13...b6 14 Qa3! temporarily denying Black the castling privilege. Black can answer with 14...Bf8 but then 15 Qa4 Qb5 16 Qc2 gives White the edge.

Another important moment. At first I considered 14 Qxb5 cxb5 15 d5 e5 16 Nxe5 Nxe5 17 f4, but 17...0-0-0 is a strong answer.

Then I looked at 14 Qxb5 cxb5 15 a4 bxa4 16 Rxa4 0-0 17 Bf4 but that did not look too promising against a player as solid as Igor Foygel.

My attention eventually turned to the sacrifice on e6. I was rather skeptical at first. "Can Black be punished in this way without violating any basic principles?"

Finally, based on both intuition and hard calculation I came to the decision. Let's do it. The key factor for me was the nice inclusion of the luft-move 5 h3, which somewhat restricts Black's counter-attacking possibilities.

Also, I rationalized that it was early in the tournament and so a

fizzled roll of the dice would give me easier pairings for the next few rounds. Objectively, the sacrifice should lead to a draw.

14 Rxe6+ fxe6 15 Qxe6+ Kd8 16 Bg5+

The primitive 16 Ng5? lets the attack evaporate after 16...Kc8 17 Nf7 Qd5!

16...Kc8 17 Re1



White threatens now 18 Qf7, dominating the Black bishop. 17 Qf7 did not look good to me on account of 17...Rf8 18 Qxg7 Rxf3 19 Be7 (the only try) Rxf2 20 Qg8+ Kc7 21 Qxa8 Rxf2+ with at least a draw for Black.

Black has another defense to 17 Qf7, namely 17...Bf6 18 Bxf6 Qf5 19 Ne5 Nxf6 20 g4 Nxf4 21 hxf4 Qxf7 22 Nxf7 Rf8 23 Ne5 with White struggling with only a pawn for the Exchange in an ending.

I now expected either 17...Qf5 or 17...Qd5. I calculated some lines like 17...Qf5 18 Qd6 Qd5 19 Qe7 Rg8 20 Bf4 threatening mate with 21 Qe8+ and 17...Qf5 18 Qd6 Bf6 19 Bf4 Bd8 20 Re7! when Black is paralyzed.

There was at least one flaw in this calculation. After 17...Qf5 18 Qd6 Qd5 19 Qe7 Rg8, White has the crushing 20 Re6! (instead of my intended 20 Bf4) which wins in all variations, e.g. 20...Qf5 21 Rd6 (threatening 22 g4) Kc7 22 Bf4! Qxf4 23 Rxd7+ Kc8 (23...Kb6 24 Qb4+ Ka6 25 Qxb7+ Ka5 26 b4+ Ka4 27 Qa6 mate) 24 Qe6! and wins.

I was on the right track in the line 17...Qf5 18 Qd6 Bf6 19 Bf4 Bd8

20 Re7—Black must return some material with 20...Qd5 to fend off the attack.

The best defense is one I hardly considered—17...Qd5 18 Qe7 Qg8!—Black secures his bishop on g7 and guards his back-rank. White can force a draw after 19 Qd6 Qd5 20 Qe7 but can he play for more?

The best try is 19 d5! Qf8 (20...cxd5 21 Qd6 is strong) 20 dxc6 bxc6 (20...Qxe7? 21 cxb7+ Kxb7 22 Rxe7 is better for White) 21 Qe6 Kc7 22 Be7 Qf5 23 Bd6+ Kc8 (23...Kb7 24 Qb3+ Qb5 25 Re7 is too strong) 24 Qc4 Qb5 25 Qf7! Bf6 26 Re6 and Black is in major difficulties.

After long reflection, Igor found what looked like a solid, logical defense. Unfortunately, there was a hole in it.

17...Rf8? 18 Qe7 Kc7

The alternative 18...Rg8 loses to 19 Re6! with a decisive attack (see above for similar variations).

19 Qxg7 Rxf3 20 Re5! Qxb2

19...Qd3 20 gxf3 Qxf3 21 Re7 Rd8 22 Rf7 wins

21 gxf3 Black Resigns

There is no escape after 21...Qxc3 22 Bf4!

A key game for Christiansen came in round five when he defeated then tournament leader Alexander Shabalov. Mike Franett reported on the ChessCafe that the crucial point came when Shabalov “played the lemon 28.Kg1? allowing the winning shot 28...Nxf2!.” While 28.Rxc5 Nxc5 “would have left the game more or less equal.”

Notes by Christiansen

White: Shabalov, A (2606)

Black: Christiansen, L (2571)
[E12] ch- USA Seattle USA (5), 09.01.2002

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 Nc3 Bb7 5 a3 d5 6 cxd5 exd5

Stodgy compared to 6...Nxd5, but I wanted to reduce Shabba’s attacking potential.

7 g3 Bd6 8 Bg2 0-0 9 0-0 Nbd7



Photographer: Cortizas

Igor Foygel

White should probably play 10 Nb5 Be7 11 Bf4 c6 12 Nd6 Bxd6 13 Bxd6 Re8 14 Rc1 with a slight edge, though the Lithuanian GM Rosentalis has done OK with Black in this line. Shabalov plays to unbalance the position.

10 Bf4!? Bxf4 11 gxf4 c5

Black cannot sit around and wait for White to build up an attack based on his e5 strongpoint and open g-file.

12 e3 Rc8 13 Rc1 Ne4 14 Ne2 Qe7 15 Ng3 Rfd8

I did not want to weaken myself with 15...g6. I wanted that square for my knight. Anyway, knight jumps into f5 are not dangerous at this stage.

16 Bh3

White was apparently hoping to cause discoordination in the Black camp with this move.

16...Rc7 17 Qe2 Nf8

The knight heads toward the kingside via g6.

18 Rfd1 Bc8! 19 Bg2

White needs to keep this important piece, lest his light squares become too weak.

19...Bg4 20 dxc5 bxc5 21 Qc2

White is hoping for an exchange of knights which will straighten out his pawn formation. That would be too accomodating. I preferred to play actively.

21...Rd6!? 22 Re1 Ng6 23 b4?!

see next diagram



Shabalov overreaches with this. The position is roughly equal after 23 Nxe4 Qxe4 (23...dxe4? 24 Ng5 f5 25 Qb3+ Kh8 26 Rxc5! wins) 24 Ne5 (24 Qxe4 dxe4 25 Ng5[25 Nd4? cxd4 26 Rxc7 d3 wins] f5 26 h3 Bh5 favors Black who is ready for ...h6 and ...Nh4) Nxe5 25 fxe5 Rd8.

23...h6!

This rules out Ng5 and provides back-rank relief. During the game, I examined the variation 24 Nxe4 dxe4 25 Nd2 (25 Nd4? cxd4 26 Qxc7 Qxc7 27 Rxc7 d3 wins) Nh4 26 Bxe4 but missed that 26...Rxd2 27 Qxd2 Qxe4 28 Qd8+ Kh7 29 Qxh4 probably wins for White.

Much better is 26...Rcd7! 27 Nc4 Nf3+ 28 Bxf3 Bxf3 with a tremendous attack in the works—e.g. 29 Ne5 Qe6! 30 bxc5 (30 Qxc5 Qh3 31 Nxf3 Qg4+ wins) Rd2 31 Qc4 Rd5! and there is no answer to 32...Rxe5, or 29 Nxd6 Rxd6 30 Qf5 Rg6+ 31 Kf1 Qd6! and wins. **24 Nd4**



I was ready for this move. Black answers the threat of 25 Nb5 with counter-attack. **24...Nh4!**

The main ideas are: 1) 25 Nxe4 dxe4 26 Bxe4 cxd4! and wins; 2) 25 Nb5 Qh4 (25...Nf3+ 26 Bxf3 Bxf3 27 Nxd6! Qxd6 28 bxc5 favors White) 26 f3! (forced—26 Kg1 Bf3 27 Nd4 cxd4 28 Qxc7 Rd8 wins) Qh3+ 27 Kg1 Bxf3 28 Rf1! cxb4! 29 Nxc7 Rc6! 30 Rxf3 Rxc2 31 Rxc2 b3 32 Qb2 Qd7 33 Nxe4 dxe4 34 Rf1 Qxc7 35 Rxb3 a5 with a clear plus for Black.

Now, in the unacustomed role of defender, Shabalov starts to lose the thread.

25 bxc5 Rxc5 26 Qd3 Nxc2 27 Kxg2 Qh4 28 Kg1?

Shabalov does not miss 2-movers very often. White must try 28 Rxc5 Nxc5 29 Qb5 Ne6 30 Nxe6 fxe6 31 Rc1 although he faces continuing pressure on the light squares. **28...Nxf2! 29 Qf1 Rxc1 30 Rxc1 Ne4**

Black enjoys an extra pawn and a powerful attack.

31 Nxe4 dxe4 32 Qf2 Qh5 33 f5 Kh7?!

Playing it a bit too safe. The straightforward 33...Rd5 cleans house.

34 Qf4 Rf6 35 Rf1?

More struggle was offered by 35 Rc5 g6 36 fxg6+ Qxg6 37 Qg3 but Black should win with careful play.

35...Bh3 36 Rc1 Bxf5 37 Nxf5 Rxf5 0-1

Notes by Ivanov

White: Ivanov, A

Black: Browne, W

[B23] ch- USA, Seattle USA Seattle (5), 09.01.2002

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 d6 3.Nge2 Nf6 4.g3 b5!?

This came as a surprise to me, more common is 4...a6 or 4...Nc6 or 4...e5

5.Bg2 Bb7 6.d4 b4

6...cxd4 7.Nxd4 (7.Qxd4 Nc6 8.Qd2 a6÷) 7...b4 8.Nd5 e5 (8...Nxd5?! 9.exd5 e5 10.Nc6!)



Photographer: Cortizas

Larry Christiansen lectures at the Boylston Chess Club

9.Nf5 (9.Nxf6+ Qxf6 10.Nf5 d5 11.Ne3 dxe4 12.Nd5 Qd6 13.Bxe4 Nc6) 9...Nxd5 10.exd5 g6 11.Nh6, ; 6...Nbd7!? 7.0-0 b4 8.Nd5 Nxd5 9.exd5 g6÷ **7.Nd5 Nxd5 8.exd5 g6 9.Be3**

After the game W.Browne suggested 9...Nd7 as a possible improvement.

9...Bg7?!

Both opponents saw that after 9...Nd7 White can capture on c5 twice and then play Qd4, but the position arising from the following complications is far from clear since the White Queen can get trapped on h8.

9...Nd7!? 10.dxc5 dxc5 11.Bxc5 Nxc5 12.Qd4 Nd7 13.Qxh8 Nf6÷ 14.0-0 Qd6 ...15.c4 0-0-0 16.c5 Qe5 17.c6 (17.Bh3+ Kc7 18.d6+ exd6 19.cxd6+ Qxd6 20.Rac1+ Kb8) 17...Ba6 18.c7 Re8! (18...Kxc7 19.Rfc1+ Kb8 20.Nf4) 19.Rac1 Bh6 20.Bh3+ e6 21.dxe6 Rxh8÷

10.dxc5 dxc5 11.Bxc5 Na6



11...Qa5? 12.Bd4 Bxd5 13.Bxg7

2002 U. S. Championships — Standings

#	Name	Rtng	Rd1	Rd2	Rd3	Rd4	Rd5	Rd6	Rd7	Rd8	Rd9	Total
01	GM Larry Christiansen	2664	W40	W25	D3	W20	W4	L5	W19	D2	D6	6.5
02	GM Nick de Firmian	2653	W50	D11	D15	W26	D9	D6	W7	D1	W5	6.5
03	IM Boris Kreiman	2551	W42	W9	D1	W7	D5	D4	D6	D10	D12	6.0
04	GM Alexander Shabalov	2672	W31	W33	W19	W10	L1	D3	D5	L6	W17	6.0
05	GM Alex Yermolinsky	2634	W38	D24	W27	W18	D3	W1	D4	D12	L2	6.0
06	GM Joel Benjamin	2678	D28	W53	D11	W25	D17	D2	D3	W4	D1	6.0
07	GM Alex Stripunsky	2640	W34	W26	D18	L3	W24	D9	L2	W35	W16	6.0
08	GM Alexander Ivanov	2656	W36	L18	W29	D11	W14	L19	W23	D17	W21	6.0
09	GM Gregory Kaidanov	2694	W23	L3	W33	W24	D2	D7	D17	D14	D13	5.5
10	GM Boris Gulko	2704	W37	D20	W32	L4	D18	D17	W15	D3	D14	5.5
11	IM Igor Ivanov	2527	W44	D2	D6	D8	D28	W21	L12	D22	W29	5.5
12	GM Yasser Seirawan	2707	D29	D35	D16	W37	D19	D23	W11	D5	D3	5.5
13	GM Sergei Kudrin	2615	W21	D16	L24	D28	W26	D18	D35	W19	D9	5.5
14	GM Walter Browne	2524	L54	W45	D34	W30	L8	W37	W18	D9	D10	5.5
15	FM Dmitry Schneider	2524	D48	W49	D2	L17	W34	D16	L10	W37	W28	5.5
16	WIM Jennifer Shahade	2352	W39	D13	D12	L19	W27	D15	D20	W33	L7	5.0
17	GM Gregory Serper	2613	D30	D29	W36	W15	D6	D10	D9	D8	L4	5.0
18	IM Igor Khmelnitsky	2521	W52	W8	D7	L5	D10	D13	L14	D40	W35	5.0
19	GM Alexander Fishbein	2589	W45	W54	L4	W16	D12	W8	L1	L13	D22	5.0
20	GM John Fedorowicz	2585	W22	D10	W35	L1	D23	D28	D16	D24	D25	5.0
21	FM Donny Ariel	2400	L13	L39	W52	W29	W47	L11	W31	W32	L8	5.0
22	IM Guillermo Rey	2391	L20	D37	W46	D27	W33	D32	D25	D11	D19	5.0
23	IM Jesse Kraai	2476	L9	D42	W53	W54	D20	D12	L8	D26	W41	5.0
24	IM Michael Mulyar	2491	W56	D5	W13	L9	L7	D31	W36	D20	D27	5.0
25	FM Igor Foygel	2561	W43	L1	W38	L6	W31	D35	D22	D29	D20	5.0
26	IM Eugene Perelshteyn	2522	W51	L7	W55	L2	L13	D38	W43	D23	W40	5.0
27	FM Vladimir Strugatsky	2513	D55	W48	L5	D22	L16	W45	W50	D28	D24	5.0
28	IM William Paschall	2476	D6	D47	W39	D13	D11	D20	D32	D27	L15	4.5
29	FM Yury Lapshun	2489	D12	D17	L8	L21	W46	W49	W30	D25	L11	4.5
30	WIM Camilla Baginskaite	2400	D17	L32	W48	L14	W54	D41	L29	W50	D39	4.5
31	IM Mladen Vucic	2475	L4	D46	W42	W41	L25	D24	L21	W45	D32	4.5
32	FM Levon Altounian	2549	D49	W30	L10	D35	W36	D22	D28	L21	D31	4.5
33	Armen Ambartsoumian	2523	W46	L4	L9	W50	L22	W34	D40	L16	W43	4.5
34	Aaron Pixton	2407	L7	W51	D14	D47	L15	L33	D49	W48	W46	4.5
35	IM Larry Kaufman	2416	W41	D12	L20	D32	W39	D25	D13	L7	L18	4.0
36	FM Slava Mikhailuk	2441	L8	W52	L17	W45	L32	W39	L24	L41	W50	4.0
37	FM Stanislav Kriventsov	2480	L10	D22	W44	L12	W43	L14	W48	L15	D38	4.0
38	FM Alex Kaliksteyn	2401	L5	W56	L25	D44	D53	D26	D41	D39	D37	4.0
39	GM Gennady Sagalchik	2570	L16	W21	L28	W49	L35	L36	W53	D38	D30	4.0
40	WGM Elena Donaldson	2455	L1	D43	L49	W55	D44	W53	D33	D18	L26	4.0
41	GM Dmitry Gurevich	2646	L35	D55	W43	L31	D49	D30	D38	W36	L23	4.0
42	WIM Tsagaan Battsetseg	2259	L3	D23	L31	L43	W56	D54	L46	W44	W53	4.0
43	Matthew Hoekstra	2318	L25	D40	L41	W42	L37	W44	L26	W49	L33	3.5
44	WIM Esther Epstein	2199	L11	W50	L37	D38	D40	L43	D47	L42	W54	3.5
45	IM Anthony Saidy	2392	L19	L14	W56	L36	W51	L27	W54	L31	D47	3.5
46	Vladimir Lipman	2168	L33	D31	L22	D56	L29	W51	W42	D47	L34	3.5
47	IM John Donaldson	2534	D53	D28	D54	D34	L21	L50	D44	D46	D45	3.5
48	WFM Olga Sagalchik	2170	D15	L27	L30	L51	W52	W55	L37	L34	W56	3.5
49	FM Josef Friedman	2243	D32	L15	W40	L39	D41	L29	D34	L43	D52	3.0
50	IM Mikhail Zlotnikov	2417	L2	L44	W51	L33	W55	W47	L27	L30	L36	3.0
51	Elina Groberman	2140	L26	L34	L50	W48	L45	L46	D52	W56	D55	3.0
52	Chouchanik Airapetian	2080	L18	L36	L21	L53	L48	W56	D51	W55	D49	3.0
53	WIM Anna Hahn	2227	D47	L6	L23	W52	D38	L40	L39	D54	L42	2.5
54	WFM Cindy Tsai	2179	W14	L19	D47	L23	L30	D42	L45	D53	L44	2.5
55	Anna Levina	2078	D27	D41	L26	L40	L50	L48	W56	L52	D51	2.5
56	Hana Itkis	1854	L24	L38	L45	D46	L42	L52	L55	L51	L48	0.5

Bxg2 14.Rg1 Rg8 15.Rxg2 Rxg7
16.Qd4 e5 17.Qe4+-
12.Be3

12.Bd4?! Bxd5 13.Bxg7 Bxg2
14.Rg1 Rg8,,

12...Nc7 13.c4 bxc3 14.Qa4+!

14.Nxc3 0-0 15.Bd4 Bxd4
16.Qxd4 e6 17.0-0-0 Nxd5
18.Nxd5 Bxd5 19.Bxd5 exd5
20.Qxd5 (20.Kb1 Re8) 20...Qf6©
14...Kf8

14...Qd7 15.Qxd7+ Kxd7
16.Nxc3 Bxc3+ 17.bxc3 Bxd5
18.0-0-0 Ke6 (18...Kc6 19.Rxd5
Nxd5 20.c4±) 19.Bh3+ Kf6
20.f4!±

15.Nxc3 Nxd5 16.0-0-0!



Now White is clearly better.
16.Rd1? Nxc3 17.Rxd8+ Rxd8
18.bxc3 Bxg2©

16...Bxc3

16...Nxc3? 17.Rxd8+ Rxd8
18.Qa5!+- ; 16...Rc8? 17.Qb5!
Bxc3 18.bxc3 Rxc3+ (18...Qc7
19.Bxd5 Bxd5 20.Rxd5 Qxc3+
21.Kb1 Qc2+ 22.Ka1+-) 19.Kb2
Qc7 20.Bxd5 Bxd5 21.Rxd5 Rc2+
22.Kb1+- ; 16...e6!/? 17.Nxd5
Bxd5 18.Bxd5 exd5 19.Kb1±
**17.bxc3 Qc7 18.Bxd5 Bxd5
19.Rxd5 Qxc3+ 20.Qc2**

I spent a lot of the remaining time
looking for a forced win in the lines
below, but, perhaps the simple move
made in the game is the best.

20.Kd1 Qa1+ 21.Ke2 (21.Bc1
Rc8 22.Qa3 Qb1 23.Rd2!/?
(23.Qb2? Rxc1+ 24.Qxc1 Qe4!))
21...Qxh1 22.Bh6+ (22.Qc6? Kg7
23.Bd4+ f6 24.Bxf6+ Kf7!)
22...Kg8 23.Qd4 f6 24.Rd8+ Rxd8
25.Qxd8+ Kf7 26.Qxh8 Qe4+
27.Be3 Qc4+ 28.Ke1 Qb4+!

29.Kf1 Qb1+ 30.Kg2 Qe4+
**20...Qa1+ 21.Qb1 Rc8+ 22.Kd2
Qc3+ 23.Ke2 Qc4+ 24.Rd3+-**

White is winning now. The
remaining moves can be explained
by the mutual time shortage.

**24...Qg4+” 25.f3 Qh3 26.Kf2
Kg7 27.Rd2 Rc6 28.Qf1 Qe6
29.Qd3 Ra6 30.Qb3 Qh3 31.Qb7
Re6 32.Qxa7 h5 33.Qd4+ f6 34.a4
Ra8 35.Ra2 Ra5 36.Qh4 Qf5
37.Qf4 Qd5 38.Rd2 1-0**

Black resigned since it became
clear that White would make the
time control.

Notes by Silman

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White: Christiansen, L (2571)

Black: Fedorowicz, J (2517)

[E12] ch-USA Seattle USA (4),
08.01.2002

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.a3

Larry employs the Petrosian
Variation. The odd looking 4.a3
fights for the e4-square by
preparing Nc3 (hitting e4) and
stopping ...Bb4 (pinning the
Knight).

Of course, the most common
move for White is 4.g3, but 4.a3 has
a following among players that like
to sharpen the battle.

4...Ba6

One line of many. Also common
is 4...Bb7 followed by ...d7- d5.

5.Qc2 c5 6.d5 exd5 7.cxd5 g6

7...Nxd5?? 8.Qe4+ Ne7 9.Qxa8.
8.Nc3 Bg7 9.g3 0-0 10.Bg2 d6



11.0-0 Nbd7 12.Re1

The plans for both sides are clear:
White will try and utilize his central
pawn majority and eventually force
through a e2- e4- e5 advance.

Black will do everything he can
to prevent this, while also making
use of his own pawn majority on
the queenside.

12...Re8

The active looking 12 ..b5 isn't a
good idea. White has several good
replies. 13 b4 Probably not best
here, but it does illustrate a common
and useful idea—White freezes
Black's b- pawn and would love to
see ...c5- c4 since that would allow
White to leap into c6 via Nf3- d4-
c6. Simpler moves are 13.h3 and
13.Bf4.

13.Bf1

Trying to prepare the e2- e4
advance by safeguarding the d3-
square. After the game Larry
queried this move, instead
preferring 13.Bf4.

**13...Ne5 14.Nxe5 Rxe5 15.Bf4 Re8
16.Rad1 Qe7 17.h3 Rad8 18.Qa4
Qb7 19.e4**



White finally begins to make use
of his central pawn majority. Will
he achieve the dreamed of e4- e5
advance?

**19...Bxf1 20.Kxf1 Nh5 21.Bg5
Rb8 22.Qc6 Be5**

Black didn't want to capture
White's Queen since that would
give White a strong passed pawn on
c6, and would also open the d-file
for White's Rook (not to mention
giving the d5-square to his Knight).
**23.Kg2 b5 24.f4 Bxc3 25.bxc3 f6
26.Bh6 Qe7 27.e5**

The thematic pawn break is finally actualized, making it clear that Black has gone wrong somewhere earlier.

27...fxe5 28.fxe5 dxe5 29.d6

The weakened Black King and the enormous power of the passed d-pawn makes the Black position very bleak.

29...Qb7 30.Qd5+ Qxd5+ 31.Rxd5 Rbd8 32.Bg5 Rd7 33.Be7 Ng7 34.g4

A simple but nice move, taking away the f5 and h5 squares from the Black Knight. 34...Rxe7 A blunder that falls into a pretty trap. **34...Rxe7 35.dxe7 Rxd5 36.Rf1 Rd2+ 37.Kg1 1-0**

White threatens 38.Rf8 mate. 37.Kg1 h6 (37...Ne8 38.Rf8+ Kg7 39.Rxe8 Kf7 40.Rd8) 38.Rf8+ Kh7 39.Rf7. Thus, Black gave up.

Nick de Firmian squeezed into the playoff when Yermolinsky walked into mate in an endgame after missing several drawing chances.

Black: De Firmian, N (2536)

Black: Yermolinsky, A (2574)

[B19] ch-USA Seattle USA (9), 13.01.2002

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5 5.Ng3 Bg6 6.h4 h6 7.Nf3 e6 8.Ne5 Bh7 9.Bd3 Bxd3 10.Qxd3 Nd7 11.Bf4 Ngf6 12.0-0 Be7 13.Qf3 0-0 14.c4 Qb6 15.Nxd7 Nxd7 16.Nh5 Kh8 17.Kb1 c5 18.Be3 e5 19.Qg4 Qg6+ 20.Qxg6 fxg6 21.dxc5 Nxc5 22.Ng3 Rad8 23.Rxd8 Rxd8 24.Bxc5 Bxc5 25.Ne4 Be7 26.f3 Kg8 27.Kc2 Kf7 28.a3 Ke6 29.b4 b6 30.Kc3 a5 31.g3 axb4+ 32.axb4 Rf8 33.Rf1 Kd7 34.Rd1+ Kc7 35.Rd3 g5 36.hxg5 Bxg5 37.c5 Be7 38.Kc4 bxc5 39.bxc5 Ra8 40.Rb3 Rd8 41.Ra3 Kb7 42.Rb3+ Kc7 43.Rb6 Rd4+ 44.Kb5 Rd3 45.Ra6 Rxf3 46.Ra7+ Kd8 47.Kc6 Ke8 48.Kd5 Kd8 49.c6 Bf8 50.g4 Kc8 51.Kxe5 Kb8 52.Rd7 Kc8 53.Rb7 Rf1 54.Nc3 Rc1 55.Kd4 Bc5+ 56.Kd3 Bd6 57.Rf7 Be5 58.Nb5 Rc5 59.Rf8# 1-0



Photographer: Cortizas

2002 US Women's Champion Jennifer Shahade

White: Ambarcumjan, A (2388)

Black: Shahade, J (2302)

[D94] ch-USA Seattle USA (8), 12.01.2002

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.e3 0-0 6.Bd2 c5 7.dxc5 Na6 8.cxd5 Nxc5 9.Bc4 Bf5 10.0-0 Rc8 11.Qe2 Nfe4 12.Nxe4 Bxe4 13.Bb4 Na4 14.Ba3 Nxb2 15.Bxb2 Bxb2 16.Qxb2 Rxc4 17.Ne5 Rc5 18.Qd4 Qxd5 19.Nd7 Qxd4 20.exd4 Rg5 21.Rfe1 Rxg2+ 22.Kf1 Rxh2 23.f3 Rd8 0-1

Notes by Schill

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White: Shahade, J (2302)

Black: Strugatsky, V (2431)

[C06] ch-USA Seattle USA (5), 09.01.2002

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2

Begins the Tarrasch variation of the French defense. This was very popular while Karpov was world champion, but mostly because of the lines where black replies 3...c5. **3...Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.c3 c5**

Black has played the most aggressive set-up and white had a choice between 5.c3 and 5.f4 I think that f4 hoping to transpose into the variation (3.Nc3 Nf5 4.e5 Nfd7

5.Nce2 c5 6.f4) Anand played against Shirov recently promises white more.

6.Bd3 Nc6 7.Ne2 cxd4 8.cxd4 f6

If you were away from chess as long as I was you may be surprised by how black plays f6 in nearly every type of French defense.

John Watson has an interesting discussion of this in his book *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy*. **9.exf6 Nxf6 10.Nf3 Bd6 11.0-0 Qc7 12.Bg5 0-0 13.Bh4 Nh5**

Jennifer plays into a sharp line where black's upcoming exchange sacrifice was thought to give dynamic equality. An older line which used to give white a very small edge is 13.Rc1, this may be out now, I am without a database! **14.Qc2 h6 15.Bg6 Rxf3 16.Bxh5 Rf8**



The rook can be captured but white's plan of keeping control of e5 certainly looks appealing too.

17.Bg3 Bd7 18.Rad1 Rac8 19.Qd2 Rf6 20.Bh4 g5 21.Bg3 Bxg3

I do not think that giving white an extra g-pawn in this position is a good idea. Black needs to find a plan, without one he is soon getting outplayed.

22.hxg3 Be8 23.Bg4 Qg7 24.Nc3 Rd8 25.Rfe1 Bf7 26.Re3 h5 27.Be2 Bg6 28.Bb5 Rdf8

Shahade's black squared bishop made half a dozen moves before being exchanged for its counterpart and now the white squared one makes even more before meeting the same fate, and yet the maneuvering impresses.

29.Re2 Bf5 30.Qe3 Ne7 31.Bd3 Rh6

I think some part of this (overly) optimistic plan by Strugatsky is where his real troubles begin.

32.Bxf5 Rxf5 33.Qd3 h4 34.g4 Rf4

That extra g-pawn is really causing troubles and black never really makes a serious threat.
35.Rde1 Kf7

King moves between moves 35-40 that end up losing material are familiar to any of us time pressure addicts.

36.Nb5 Rff6 37.Nd6+ Kg8 38.Ne8 Qf7 39.Nxf6+ Rxf6



So white is a clear exchange ahead, and yet the play is worth watching if you have ever had trouble converting an advantage into a win.

A sharp eye for tactics, and even more importantly not falling into passive play serve Jennifer well and she soon polishes off her much higher rated opponent.

40.Qd2 Rf4 41.Rxe6 Nc6 42.b4 Rxc4 43.Qe2 Rf4 44.b5 Nxd4 45.Re8+ Kg7 46.Qe7 Kg6

Simply trading into the best situation, rook versus knight, is better then chasing elusive mates with your clock running.

47.Qxf7+ Rxf7 48.a4 h3 49.Rg8+ Kf6 50.Rd1 Ne2+ 51.Kf1 Nc3 52.Rd3 hxg2+ 53.Kxg2 Ne2 54.Kf3 Nf4 55.Rd1 Kf5 56.Rg1 Ne6 57.Ke3 b6 58.Kd2 Ke5 59.Re1+ Kf5 60.Re8 Nc5 61.R8e7 Rxe7

It took a little while, but getting that last black rook off is winning.

62.Rxe7 Nxa4 63.Rxa7 Nc5 64.Ra6 Nd7

Offers the rook once, next time will do the job.

65.Ke3 Ke5 66.Ra7 Nc5 67.Re7+ Kd6 68.Rg7 Ne6 69.Rg6 Ke5 70.Rxg5+ 1-0

A last combination leading to a winning King and Pawn ending. So Jennifer Shahade has passed the halfway mark with an impressive 3-2 score against opponents averaging over 2550.

White: Shahade, J (2302)

Black: Seirawan, Y (2644)

[B14] ch- USA Seattle USA (3), 07.01.2002

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Bg5 e6 7.c5 Be7 8.Bb5 Bd7 9.Bxc6 Bxc6 10.Nf3 Ne4 11.Bxe7 Qxe7 12.Qc2 e5 13.Nxe4 exd4 14.0-0 dxe4 15.Nxd4 0-0 16.Nxc6 bxc6 17.Rfe1 f5 18.Rad1 Rad8 19.b4 Qe6 20.a4 a6 21.Qe2 Qb3



22.Rxd8 Rxd8 23.Qxa6 Qxb4 24.Rc1 Qa3 25.Qc4+ Rd5 26.h3 h5 27.Rc3 Qb2 28.Rc2 Qe5 29.Rd2 e3 30.Rxd5 cxd5 31.Qe2 f4 32.fxe3 fxe3 33.c6 Qc3 34.a5 d4 35.a6 Qc1+ 36.Kh2 Qxc6 37.Qa2+ Kh7 38.a7 e2 39.Qxe2 Qc7+ 40.g3 Qxa7 41.Qxh5+ Kg8 42.Qe8+ Kh7 43.Qh5+ Kg8 44.Qe8+ Kh7 45.Qh5+ 1/2-1/2

The top brilliancy prize of \$1000 went to yasser Seirawan for his Round 7 victory over Igor Ivanov.

“A smooth and pleasing positional crush, very much in Yasser’s

style. His 14. Ng5 showed a deep understanding of the needs of the position.”

White: Seirawan, Y (2644)

Black: Ivanov, I (2470)

[A56] ch- USA Seattle USA (7), 11.01.2002

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.Nc3 d6 5.e4 Be7 6.Bd3 0-0 7.h3 Ne8 8.Nf3 g6 9.g4 Ng7 10.Qe2 Kh8 11.Bd2 Nd7 12.0-0-0 Nf6 13.Rdg1 a6



14.Ng5! Nxd5?? 15.Nxf7+ Rxf7 16.exd5 Bg5 17.Be3! Bxe3+? 18.fxe3 Bd7 19.Rf1 Rxf1+ 20.Rxf1 Qe7 21.Qf3 Ne8 22.Qf7 Qxf7 23.Rxf7 Rd8 24.Ne4 Kg8 25.Re7b5 26.cxb5 axb5? 27.Rxd7! Rxd7 28.Bxb5 1-0

White: Paschall, W (2422)

Black: Ivanov, I (2470)

[D41] ch- USA Seattle USA (5), 09.01.2002

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.c4 d5 4.Nc3 c5 5.cxd5 cxd4 6.Qxd4 exd5 7.e4 Nc6 8.Bb5 Nxe4 9.Nxe4 dxe4 10.Qxe4+ Qe7 11.Qxe7+ Bxe7 12.Ne5 0-0 13.Nxc6 bxc6 14.Bxc6 Rb8 15.0-0 Bf6 16.Be3 Bxb2 17.Bxa7 Ba6 18.Bxb8 Bxf1 19.Rxf1 Rxb8 20.g3 Ba3 21.Rd1 Rc8 22.Rd3 Rxc6 23.Rxa3 h5 24.Rd3 Ra6 25.a3 g5 26.h3 Kg7 27.Kf1 g4 28.hxg4 hxg4 29.Ke2 Kg6 30.Ke3 f5 31.Kd4 Ra8 32.Kc4 f4 33.gxf4 Kf5 34.Kb3 Rb8+ 35.Ka2 Rh8 36.Rd2 Rh2 37.Rb2 Kxf4 38.a4 Kf3 39.a5 Rh5 40.Rb3+ Kxf2 41.a6 g3 42.a7 Ra5+ 43.Ra3 1/2-1/2