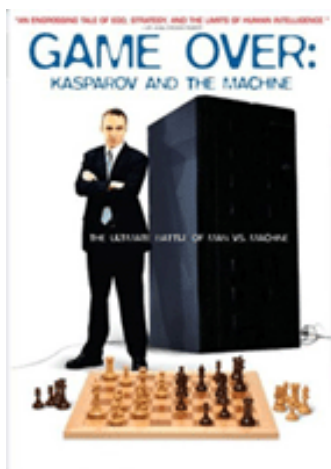




## SKITTLES ROOM

### *From the Archives*

Hosted by  
Mark Donlan



## From the Archives...

Since it came online many years ago, [ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com) has presented literally thousands of articles, reviews, columns and the like for the enjoyment of its worldwide readership. The good news is that almost all of this high quality material remains available in the [Archives](#). The bad news is that this great collection of chess literature is now so large and extensive – and growing each week – that it is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate it effectively. We decided that the occasional selection from the archives posted publicly online might be a welcomed addition to the regular fare.

Watch for an item to be posted online periodically throughout each month. We will update the [ChessCafe](#) home page whenever there has been a “new” item posted here. We hope you enjoy *From the Archives*...

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## Gunfight at the Silicon Corral

by Glenn Budzinski

The 1997 challenge match between World Champion Garry Kasparov and the latest iteration of the Deep Blue computer was held at the Equitable Center in midtown Manhattan, New York City. The Equitable building is a large skyscraper with an impressive atrium, typical of many NYC office towers. With notepad in hand, I went to take a first-hand look at games one and five.

Arriving for the first game, I made my way to the press room on the 49th floor. The usual collection of grandmasters, journalists and photographers were present, all crowded into a relatively small area (not unusual for press facilities at a chess event). I quickly decided that this was not the place to be if I intended to quietly observe the game, so I made my way back downstairs to the atrium, in search of the auditorium.

The auditorium, which I was told seated several hundred people, was 75% full when I arrived approximately one hour after play began. I expected to see the two combatants somewhere on stage behind a glass panel, similar to the Kasparov-Anand match held in the World Trade Center, but I was mildly surprised to be confronted by a stage containing a podium and three large projection screens in the background. One screen focused on Kasparov and the

Deep Blue operator, Dr. Feng-Hsiung Hsu, who, apparently, were playing in another part of the building. A second projection was of a computer database being used for analysis, which I later learned was Fritz. And the third projection was an awkward, horizontal view of the board containing the current position. The podium area, for the moment, was being occupied by GM Yasser Seirawan, and IMs Maurice Ashley and Mike Valvo, the latter being well-known for his long-term association with computer chess.

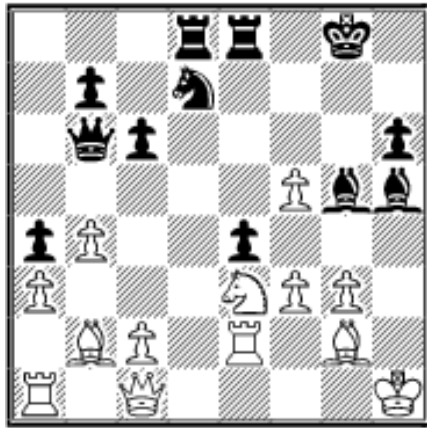
The serenity of the auditorium environment was definitely the better choice for watching the game, as opposed to the clamor of the press room. I also had the good fortune of finding a seat next to Yuri Dokhoian, Kasparov's principal second who, it seemed, also preferred to escape the 49th floor.

However, there were certain annoyances here as well. For a late arrival like me, just determining the current game position proved to be something of a challenge. Comprehending the position on the projection required contortionist head movements because of the horizontal view of the board that was presented. It also wasn't clear whether the position shown on the Fritz projection was the current one or merely analysis.

I quickly discovered why there were no seats available in the lower half of the auditorium: the farther back one sat, the harder it was to read the moves of the game as shown on Fritz. (Somehow, I knew missing my last eye examination would come back to haunt me.)

Commentary duties were shared by Seirawan, Ashley and Valvo, with occasional guest appearances by Frederic Friedel, who was the developer of Fritz and a member of Kasparov's contingent, or members of the IBM Deep Blue team, among others. Seirawan was clearly the best of the bunch. He was articulate, kept things moving along and showed stage presence. Perhaps more importantly, he seemed to be the only one who had any idea what was going on in the game. Valvo was nearly mute, at least during the time that I was present, and Ashley, as usual, was doing his best game-show host routine.

More often than not, Ashley seemed so intent on entertaining the audience that he didn't appear to take even a few seconds to contemplate the position at hand. For instance, at perhaps the critical point of game one, after Deep Blue's 28...f5 (it must have been critical because Dokhoian suddenly began intently staring at the projection screens), Ashley analyzed 29 exf5 e4 as being very strong for Black, which is true if one does not carry out the line a few moves farther.



Upon seeing these moves played in the game, Ashley, in his usual state of bewilderment, could offer no response for White and pronounced Kasparov to be virtually dead lost. Even I, a mere 2100 player, almost immediately saw that Garry's only viable continuation was to sacrifice the exchange, which is exactly what he did by 30 f4 Bxe2 31 fxg5 Ne5 32 g6. Why couldn't Ashley, an IM rated 2500 and a very strong blitz player, see this at least as quickly as I did?

Fortunately for all of us in the audience, Seirawan returned to the stage and shortly thereafter demonstrated several winning lines for Kasparov. So it was 1-0 in favor of the champion and, similar to his previous computer matches, many of us were already contemplating the size of Garry's victory here, too.

But, by the time game five rolled around, the anticipation of match victory had long since been replaced by a concern of possible defeat fostered by Kasparov's ragged and often unrecognizable play in the prior three games. The fifth game looked to be the critical one of the match, given that the score was tied and it was Garry's last chance with the white pieces.

For a change, I actually arrived early and proceeded to the press room, but was directed to more spacious quarters, one flight up. While more comfortable than the earlier arrangement, the small television screens once again made viewing more difficult than in the auditorium. So, back downstairs I went.

This time, however, I found a full house awaiting me and was forced to retreat to the rear for seating. As in game one, Seirawan, Ashley and Valvo provided running commentary on stage. And, also similar to the first encounter, Kasparov opened with a Reti/King's Indian Reversed formation.

### *Kasparov – Deep Blue*

New York (5) 1997

**1 Nf3 d5 2 g3 Bg4 3 Bg2 Nbd7 4 h3 Bxf3**

The first surprise: Deep Blue chooses to give up its bishop for a knight, a trade it has not been prone to make.

**5 Bxf3**

Played after several minutes of thought.

**5...c6 6 d3 e6 7 e4**

Seirawan liked Kasparov's position here.

**7...Ne5 8 Bg2 dxe4 9 Bxe4 Nf6 10 Bg2 Bb4+ 11 Nd2 h5**

Valvo reported that even the IBM people were taken aback by this anti-positional move.



**12 Qe2 Qc7 13 c3 Be7 14 d4 Ng6 15 h4**

The crew on stage still considered this position to be “+–.”

**15...e5**

And suddenly, Deep Blue breaks open the game. Seirawan expressed his concern about playing open positions against a computer. But Garry did just that in game one and outplayed it, didn't he?

**16 Nf3 exd4 17 Nxd4 0-0-0**

Here Yasser analyzed a variation where White would actually win a piece: 18 0-0 Ng4 19 Nf5 Bxh4 20 Nxh4 Nxh4 21 Bf4 and gxh4 next. Instead, Kasparov tried castling long.

**18 Bg5 Ng4 19 0-0-0 Rhe8 20 Qc2 Kb8 21 Kb1 Bxg5 22 hxg5 Nge5**

An even game, according to Ashley.

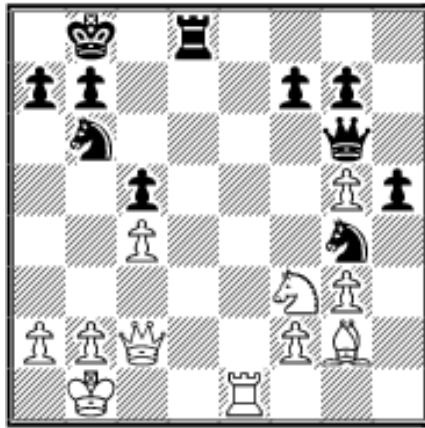
**23 Rhe1**

Seirawan offered 23 Rxh5 c5 24 Nb3 Rxd1+ 25 Qxd1 Nxf2.

**23...c5**

Women's World Champion Susan Polgar was introduced hereabouts.

**24 Nf3 Rxd1+ 25 Rxd1 Nc4 26 Qa4 Rd8 27 Re1 Nb6 28 Qc2 Qd6 29 c4 Qg6**



A real shocker to everybody – Deep Blue voluntarily submits to a fractured pawn structure, when 29...Qd3 would've accomplished the queen trade and left the kingside pawns intact. Although the commentators thought it was an outright mistake by the machine, my own intuition, for whatever that's worth, told me that there was more here than met the eye.

**30 Qxg6 fxc6 31 b3 Nxf2+ 32 Re6 Nb5 33 Rg6 Rd7 34 Nh4 Nc8 35 Bd5 Nd6 36 Re6**

**Nb5 37 cxb5 Rxd5 39 Rg6 Rd7**

Seirawan prophetically suggested that Black should begin looking for a draw with 38...Ne4 39 Rxc7+ Kb6 40 Re7 Nc3+ etc. The general consensus was that Deep Blue was about to be deep-sixed.

**40 Nxg7 Rd1+**

As predicted by Yasser.

**41 Kc2 Rd2+ 42 Kc1 Rxa2 43 Nxh5 Nd2 44 Nf4 Nxb3+ 45 Kb1**

In light of what follows, perhaps Garry should have tried 45 Rd1.

**45...Rd2 46 Re6 c4 47 Re3 Kb6 48 g6 Kxb5**

Now everybody saw Deep Blue's idea.

**49 g7 Kb4 1/2-1/2**

Kasparov offered the draw, which was accepted by the machine's operator. Despite his protestations to the contrary, Garry clearly looked shocked at the board for the last move or two. Maybe he *did* see the forced draw at move 40 as he claimed afterwards, but if he did, it wasn't discernible in his expressions at the time.

Yet, the real story of this match is not the mundane details. The real story is Garry himself. During his post-game five comments, the usually supremely confident chess champion of the world stated he, "wasn't afraid to admit that [he] was afraid of the machine," which clearly indicated that something had gone radically wrong, not only with his match strategy, but with Kasparov himself. For whatever reason, we had witnessed a broken man, the best chess player in the world who was psychologically beaten by a computer.

To me, Garry's quick defeat in the sixth game was no surprise. One should probably view the results of this match more in terms of a Kasparov loss than a

Deep Blue victory. Garry could've and probably should've won the match. Perhaps the only remaining question concerns the effect that this psychological demise will have on his future play, regardless of whether the opponent is man or machine.



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