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Chess Horizons

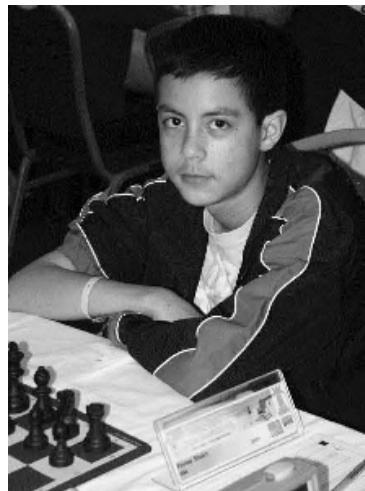
Edited by Max Sewell

World Youth Championship

by Stuart S. Finney, FIDE Candidate Master

I was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity in November 2009 to travel to Antalya, Turkey, on the Turkish Mediterranean coast, as one of 25 U.S. representatives in the World Youth Championships. And I have the stamp and visa sticker in my passport to prove it! I set up a blog to capture the highlights of the trip, and also want to share some of them with readers of *Chess Horizons*.

Antalya is a huge resort, as you would expect, to accommodate the more than 1,000 players plus parents, coaches and other interested spectators. They take their chess seriously in Turkey, also hosting this same tournament two years ago. And we took it quite seriously too, with an infrastructure of daily sessions with the coaches and postmortems after each game.



Stuart Finney at the World Youth Championship in Turkey

On the first day I played an unrated boy, Elizaffan Murage, from Kenya. It was not a difficult game, and it is always nice to make a good start. In the second round, I played a FIDE master from Russia and had the better of it for much of the game, but I got into time trouble, and was losing for a move before the game ended in a draw.

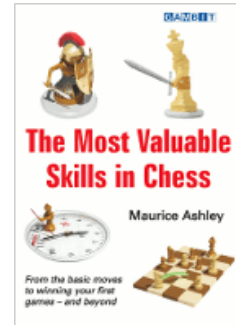
White: Stuart Finney (FIDE 2007)

Black: FM Konstantin Nikologorskiy (FIDE 2164)

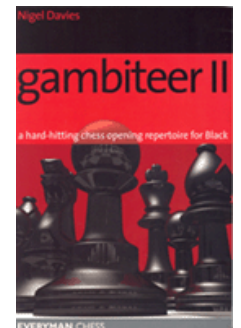
[B90] Sicilian Defense, Najdorf Variation

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 e5 7.Nb3 Be6 8.f3 Be7 9.Qd2 Nbd7 10.0-0-0 Rc8

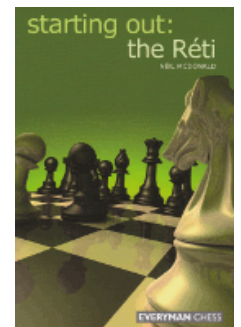
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by Neil McDonald

Up till now, I had prepared for this variation. However, his other games followed 10...b5 or the main line with 10...0-0.

11.g4 b5



[R.Byrne-Balashov, Moscow 1971, continued 11...Nb6 12.g5 Nfd7 13.Rg1 Qc7 14.Kb1 Nc4 15.Bxc4 Qxc4 16.h4 h5 - Ed.]

12.g5 Nh5 13.Kb1 Nb6 14.Qf2 Nc4 15.Bxc4 Rxc4 16.Bb6

[Ivanchuk-Gelfand, Monte Carlo 2006, continued 16.Nd5 Bxd5 17.Rxd5 0-0 18.Rhd1 Qc8 19.Qg2 f5 20.gxf6 Rxf6 21.c3 Rg6 - Ed.]

16...Qd7 17.h4 Nf4 18.Nd5 Nxd5 19.exd5 Bf5 20.Rd2 h6 21.Rg1 hxg5 22.hxg5 Rh5 23.Be3 Bd8 24.f4 e4 25.Nd4



At this point, White is slightly better.

25...Ba5 26.Rdd1 Rh3

The last two Black moves have made White's position much better, so that Rybka, the strongest chess engine in the world, gives White an advantage of around two pawns.

27.Rh1 g6 28.Rxh3 Bxh3 29.Qh4 Qg4 30.Qh8+ Kd7 31.Rg1 Qh5 32.Qg8 Ke7 33.Nc6+

A better move is 33.b3, as it gives the White king "luft," which would have given White an extra tempo later in the game. However, 33.Nc6+ still gives White a big advantage.

33...Rxc6 34.dxc6 Qe2 35.Bd4 Bf1 36.Bf6+ Ke6 37.Qe8+

b3 is good for White at any time. When Rybka is on your side it's easy to see why, but over the board it looked like Black could get serious counter-chances with Bd2.

37...Kd5 38.Qxf7+ Kxc6 39.Qe8+ Kd5 40.Qa8+

With this move I had another 30 minutes to think for the rest of the game.

40...Ke6 41.Qg8+ Kd7 42.Qf7+ Kc6 43.Qe8+ Kd5 44.Qa8+ Ke6 45.Qc8+ Kd5 46.Qb7+ Kc5



46...Ke6 loses immediately to 47.f5+.

47.b3 Bd2 48.Qc7+ Kd5 49.c4+

The right idea, but a move too early. 49.Kb2 is correct and Black cannot move his queen away from c4 to threaten checkmate because of c4+, winning for White. Now the ensuing endgame is equal.

49...bxc4 50.bxc4+ Qxc4 51.Qxc4+ Bxc4 52.f5 Bd3+ 53.Kb2 e3 54.fxg6 Bxg6 55.Bc3 Kc4 56.Rg4+ Kc5 57.Rg2

A losing move. 57.Ra4 is better for equality.

57...Be4

This throws away the winning position Black had for one move. 57...Bxc3+ followed by ...d5 is winning.

58.Bxd2 Bxg2 1/2- 1/2

The other rounds before the rest day were intense and, after losing in the second round against a 2194-rated Georgian, Iraldi Beradze, as Black, I felt a good deal of pressure to do well against my Round 4 Turkish opponent, Esat Baglan (FIDE rating: 1762), which I duly did. The day right before the rest day, when I played two rounds, I was busy and didn't have much time to prepare. In complications, I made a mistake and lost shortly thereafter. However, that afternoon I sacrificed the exchange against a 1929-rated Belgian, Reinaert Verstraeten, and although I missed a clearly winning move, I still got a lot of compensation and eventually won when my opponent made a mistake in the complex position that arose.

My strongest opponent of the tournament came in the seventh round, an Azerbaijani, FM Ulva Bajarani, rated 2342 and seeded fifth. Preparation was difficult, and he played a line which I was unfamiliar with. Eventually I made a mistake, got into a bad position, and duly lost. In the next round I played a Scot, Ian McDonald, rated 1635 going into the tournament, who played much better than his rating, as his final result reflects - he finished with 5 points. However, he let me build up a strong position as White against the Petroff's Defense after a few inaccurate moves, and after a nice rook sac on f7, I won the game shortly afterwards. In the ninth round, I played a Swiss guy rated 2098, and in the Sicilian sac'd on c3 giving me a good game, although it eventually ended in a draw.

White: Nico Georgadis (2098)

Black: Stuart Finney (2007)

[B85] Sicilian Defense, Scheveningen Variation

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be2 e6 7.0-0 Nc6 8.Be3 Be7 9.f4

At this point I looked over at the game next to me. The moves for that game were 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.Nc3 a6 4.d4 cxd4 5.Nxd4 Qc7 6.Be2 Nf6 7.0-0 Nc6

8.Be3 Be7 9.f4 and at the point Black played 9...d6. I looked up and the person playing White was one of my earlier opponents. I smiled, looked back at my board, and played 9...Qc7, reaching the same position by a completely different move order.

9...Qc7 10.a4 Bd7 11.Nb3 0-0 12.Kh1 Rac8



A bad move. I had meant to play 12...b6 [as was played in Ilya Gurevich-Jeremiah Donahue, U.S. Open, Boston 1988 - Ed.] to prevent a5 but completely blanked out, and now White has the better position.

13.a5 Qb8 14.Qe1 Rfd8 15.Qg3

Not the best move. My opponent missed my exchange sac idea, which frees my position and gives Black a good game.

15...Nb4 16.Rac1 Rxc3 17.bxc3 Nxe4 18.Qe1 Na2 19.Ra1 Naxc3 20.Bd3 d5 21.Bd4 Rc8 22.Rf3 Bf6 23.Bxf6 Nxf6 24.Bxh7+



Before going in for Bf6, I had calculated this variation and my original plan was to play ...Kxh7 so that my knight stays in a more active position. However, at reaching this position, my hand was just about to touch the king when I thought that my opponent could play 24...Kxh7 25.Qh4+ Kg8 26.Rh3 Kf8. I had already analyzed this previously, but this time I came up with a new idea for White: 27.Rxc3 Rxc3 28.Qh8+, which I thought would win my queen because I had missed that I could simply play.

24...Nxb7

While this is worse than ...Kxh7, it still leaves Black with a better position.

25.Rxc3 Rxc3 26.Qxc3 Qxf4 27.Nc5 Bc6 28.Nd3 Qg5 29.Ne5 Bb5 30.Nf3 Qd8 31.Qe5 Nf6 32.Nd4 Bc4 33.h3 Ne4 34.Rb1 Nc5 35.Rb6 Nd7 36.Qd6 Qc8 37.Rb1 g6 38.Re1 Nc5



My original idea had been to play 38...e5, but then I realized that after 39.Nf3 e4 40.Nd4, I would prefer my own knight on e4 instead of a pawn.

39.Nf3 Ne4 40.Qb6 Qb8 41.Kg1 Qg3 42.Qd8+ Kg7 43.Qh4 Qxh4

Slightly better may be 43...Qc7, at least, according to Rybka it is. I think Black probably wins the a5 pawn at some point after that.

44.Nxh4 Kf6 45.Nf3 e5 46.Rb1 Bb5 47.g4 d4 48.Re1 Bc6 49.Rf1 Ke6 50.h4 Nf6

For some reason, I completely missed that White could play his next move.

51.Ng5+ Ke7 52.h5 gxh5 53.gxh5 Nxh5 54.Rxf7+ Kd6 55.Rf5 Ng3



I think 55...Ng7 is better. I had thought trading the knights would be winning for me, but it isn't.

56.Rf6+ Kc5 57.Kf2 Ne4+ 58.Nxe4+ Bxe4 59.Re6 Kd5 60.Rb6 Bxc2 61. Ke2 e4 62.Rxb7 Bd3+

I still thought this was winning for Black. Shortly, I was to be shown otherwise.

63.Kd1 Bb5 64.Re7 e3 65.Ke1 Kc5 66.Re6 Kb4 67.Re5 Kxa5 68.Re4 d3 69. Rxe3 Kb4 70.Kd2 a5 71.Kc1 Kc3 72.Kb1 1/2-1/2

The problem is that White can sac his rook for the d-pawn and my bishop is the wrong color.

The next round was another good result, against a German, who played the Caro-Kann incorrectly and which I accordingly punished.

White: Stuart Finney (2007)

Black: Friedrich Wiede (2114)

[B19] Caro-Kann Defense, Classical Variation

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5 5.Ng3 Bg6 6.h4 h6 7.Nf3 Nf6 8.h5 Bh7 9.Bd3 Bxd3 10.Qxd3 e6 11.Bf4 Qa5+ 12.Bd2 Qc7 13.0-0-0 Be7 14. Ne4 Ng4

I do not think this is a good move.

15.Ne5 Nxe5 16.dxe5 Na6

He can't let me play Nd6. Even though ...Qxe5 is bad for him, he must play it, but after Bb4 Black is definitely worse.

17.Nd6+ Bxd6 18.exd6



This pawn becomes an annoying thorn for Black for the rest of the game.

18...Qd7 19.Bc3 Rg8 20.Qe3

Trying to limit the Black knight's play.

20...b6 21.Rh4 0-0-0 22.Ra4 Kb7 23.Be5 Nb8 24.Qf3

Continuing to prevent Black's knight from getting play.

24...f6 25.Bg3 e5 26.Qa3 Ka8 27.f4 exf4 28.Bxf4 Rge8 29.Qf3 Re6 30.Rd3 Qb7 31.Rda3 Re1+ 32.Kd2 Re6 33.Qg3 Re7 34.Kc1 Red7 35.Qf3 Re8 36. b4 a6 37.Re3 Rdd8 38.Qe2 Rxe3 39.Qxe3 b5 40.Ra3 Qa7 41.Qe4 Qf7 42. Kb2 Re8 43.Qd3 Qe6 44.g3 Kb7 45.Qg6 Qd7 46.Rd3 Re6 47.Kc3 Re1 48. Kd2 Re6 49.g4



My original plan at this point was to play Rd4 and bring the queen back to d3. Hence, my king dance. However, at this point I realized that if I did play Rd4, Black could equalize with ...f5. And so I make another kind dance back.

49...Re8 50.Rd4 Ka8 51.Kc3 Re1 52.Kb2 Re6 53.Qd3 Re8 54.Bg3 Kb7 55. Re4 Kc8 56.Qe3 Rxe4 57.Qxe4 Kd8 58.Kc3 Kc8 59.Qe7 Kb7 60.Kd4 Kc8 61.Kc5 Kb7 62.a3 a5 63.bxa5 Na6+ 64.Kd4 Kc8 65.Qe4 Qa7+ 66.Kc3 Qc5 + 67.Kb2 Qd5 68.Qxd5

The simple response. However, Qe8+ is slightly better according to Rybka, which two of my teammates told me means "little fish" in Russian.

68...cxd5 69.Kc3 Kd7 70.Kd4 Kc6 71.d7 Nc5 72.d8=N+ 1-0

The last move of the game is fitting. Black's most annoying pest for the entire game promotes and wins.

In the 11th and last round I played against the Sozin Attack and my 2174-rated French-Armenian opponent, Gary Giroyan, probably played inaccurately - as my coach later showed - but it was complicated and I lost. Overall, I finished with 6 points out of 11 and tied for 43rd out of 138, after going in ranked 60th I think that is respectable and solid, and the ELO report estimates a gain of 11 FIDE points for me. I beat four lower-rated opponents. And of the seven rated above me, I won one and drew two, and had the highest performance of the U.S. team in my section (Boys Under 14) - the 4th highest of the entire U.S. contingent. It is always nice to do better, but overall I am proud of how I performed.

I had a fun time, and I enjoyed and learned from the experience of mixing with people from all over the world. I played 11 players from 11 different countries. I got to know some of the other top American players much better, especially the ones from farther west whom I had not seen much of beforehand.

Although I was there for the chess, and mainly concentrated on performing my best, I did interact with the others socially and had plenty of amusement while I was there. All members of the American delegation seemed to be genuinely nice people, and my opponents were all courteous as well. I would like to thank the Massachusetts Chess Association (MACA), Rhode Island Chess Association (RICA), and Ashok Aaron for sponsoring my trip, and the Ng's, who kept an eye on me while I was there. I would also like to thank the various chess coaches who have helped me become the player I am today, most especially FIDE master David Griego of Providence, Rhode Island, who has been working with me for five years, and who went above and beyond in researching my opponents between rounds during the tournament.

[Stuart S. Finney, a MACA junior member, lives in Barrington, Rhode Island - Ed.]

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