



SKITTLES
ROOM

From the Archives

Hosted by
Mark Donlan



Chess Mazes
by Bruce Alberston

From the Archives...

Since it came online over eight years ago, [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 at least once each week, usually on Thursday or Friday. We will update the [ChessCafe](#) home page whenever there has been a “new” item posted here. We hope you enjoy *From the Archives*...

Tournament Chess for the Rest of Us

by Glenn Budzinski

Okay, you're busy with the family, work and a myriad of other matters of daily life that occupy one's time, but you still want to remain a part of the tournament chess scene, at least once in a while. You want to play in one weekend tournament a year, but the question is – which one? This writer's vote gets cast for the annual U.S. Amateur Team Tournament, organized by the U.S. Chess Federation.

Actually a group of four separate tournaments, held concurrently in the eastern, southern, midwest and western parts of the U.S., the event normally occurs on or near the three-day President's Day holiday weekend in February. A genuine rarity in today's tournament environment of one- or two-day Swisses usually played at quick time controls, the U.S. Amateur Team features six games of slow chess over a three-day period, with only clocks and plaques awarded to the winners. Perhaps the most unusual feature of all, however, is that one gets the opportunity to play as a member of a four-player team.

Consistent with the name of the tournament, each team must not exceed an average USCF rating of 2200, the cutoff point for master class. Of course, what makes things dicey is that other than keeping the team average below 2200,

there are few restrictions to the composition of a team. Although teams that produce the best results tend to be top heavy with GMs (yes, even grandmasters participate in this event, despite the lack of cash prizes) and senior masters, offset by a considerably weaker board 4 (e.g., A hypothetical team of players rated 2500, 2400, 2300 and 1300 equal a team average of 2125, well below the 2200 threshold), this is a tournament that features innumerable combinations of players, skills and associations.

There are scholastic teams, college teams (teams from West Point and the Naval Academy, both in full dress uniforms, squared off against each other last year in the U.S. Amateur Team East), company teams (aerospace companies such as Northrop Grumman,

Boeing and Sikorsky regularly field contingents), teams of players representing the same state, teams of state troopers, mixed doubles teams (2 men and 2 women) and, quite often, teams of just friends. The U.S. Amateur Team is nothing if not a tournament of diversity. From round to round, it is a guessing game against whom a team might be paired.

In addition to the camaraderie, there is also a lot of serious chess being played by a lot of serious players. For example, at this year's East tournament, played in Parsippany, NJ, during which this writer was a participant, a couple of dozen GMs and numerous senior masters and Masters could be counted among the over 1,000 players. There was even a guest appearance by the three Polgars: the diminutive GM Judit, attractive IM Sofia and Women's World Champion Susan, who runs a chess school in nearby queens, New York.

Already the world's largest chess team tournament, the 1998 U.S. Amateur Team East set yet another new record with its 264 teams, helped no doubt by the participation of FIDE World Champion Anatoly Karpov, who played board one for his World Wide Web Chess Store team. Also in Karpov's contingent were GM Ron Henley, normally his second; NM Irina Krush and a youngster selected by Karpov based on an essay contest. For the record, the World Champion did finish 6-0.

One of the nice things about the U.S. Amateur Team is that if one is an infrequent tournament player, there is a plethora of chess activity to keep one busy for virtually the entire three days. At this year's East event, there were after hours blitz tournaments, lectures, videos, a Karpov book signing, best team costume and name contests and last day giveaways by the organizer, Steven Doyle. It all sort of gets intoxicating, after a while. Even this stodgy writer began to reach for his driver's license, secretly hoping that Doyle would announce a giveaway to the "first person who can get to the podium born before 1956." While some people may win more than others, there are no losers at the U.S. Amateur Team.

Although it is an infrequent visitor at the GM and IM levels, the Vienna Game is still a popular choice in tournaments played by the rest of us. At this year's U.S. Amateur Team East, this writer had a chance to explore the Black side of

the Vienna in a relatively instructive game against the young Massachusetts master, Bobby Seltzer.

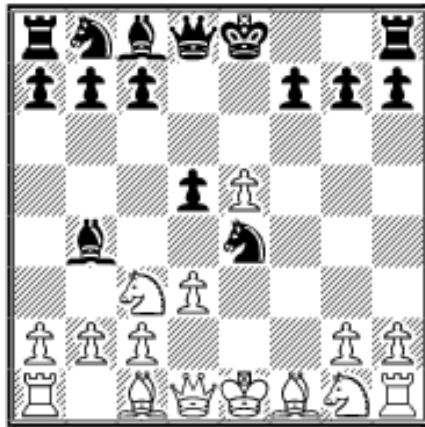
B. Seltzer - G. Budzinski

U.S. Amateur Team East, Parsippany, 1998
Vienna Game

1 e4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 f4 d5 4 fe5 Ne4 5 d3

The other choice here is 5 Nf3.

5...Bb4



Believe it or not, this is probably the most sedate of the options open to Black at this point. The more obvious 5...Nxc3 and 5...Qh4+ lead to wild and unclear positions, ideal for correspondence play, but nightmares for over the board competition. According to Konstantinopolsky & Lepeshkin in their *Vienna Game* monograph from 1986, 5...Nxc3 can lead to 6 bc c5 7 Nf3 Be7 8 Be2 Nc6 9 0-0 0-0 10 Rb1 Qa5 11 Qe1 f6 12 ef Bf6 13 Bd2 Qa2 14 Qf2 with a “very sharp position”, while 5...Qh4+

6 g3 Nxc3 7 Nf3 Qh5 8 Nxd5 Bg4 9 Bg2 Nxe1 10 Nxc7+ Kd7 11 Nxa8 Nc6 is hardly any clearer.

6 de4 Qh4+ 7 Ke2 Bc3

7...Nc6 is also probably okay.

8 bc3 Bg4+ 9 Nf3 de4 10 Qd4 Bh5

Of course, 10...ef3+?? 11 gf3 keeps White a piece to the good since the black queen gets caught in a pin.

11 Kd2 Qg4

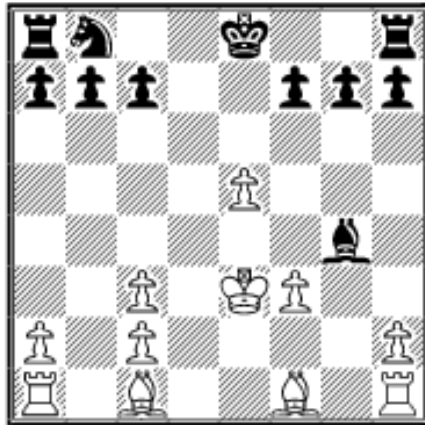
11...Qf4+?! isn't too promising for Black after 12 Ke1 Qf5 13 Nd2 Nc6 14 Qe4 and White is consolidating with his extra piece.

12 Ke3

The first deviation from standard theory. Normal is 12 h3, which has been known to give White a minimal advantage after 12...Qf4+ 13 Ke1 Qg3+ 14 Qf2 Qf2+ 15 Kf2 ef 16 gf Nd7 17 f4 Nc5 18 Bg2 Bg6 19 Ba3 Ne4+ Ke3, as in the 1979 correspondence game Pfretzschner - Kunad. However, both K & L and

ECO cite 12...Qf5 as a possible improvement.

12...ef3 13 Qg4 Bg4 14 gf3



Looks can be deceiving. With his two bishops and open position, one is tempted to argue that White has good chances. Such is illusory, however. Given the diminished material and lack of weaknesses, Black can hold the game with relative ease.

14...Be6

White's Bc4 must be prevented.

15 Rg1 g6

If there's such a thing as a "good evil," this just might be it. Black's dark-squared weakness is irrelevant since White doesn't have the necessary resources remaining to take advantage of it.

16 Kf2 Nd7 17 Bf4 0-0-0 18 h4 h5 19 a3 Nb6 20 Bd3 Nd5 21 Bd2 Rd7 22 Rab1 Nb6

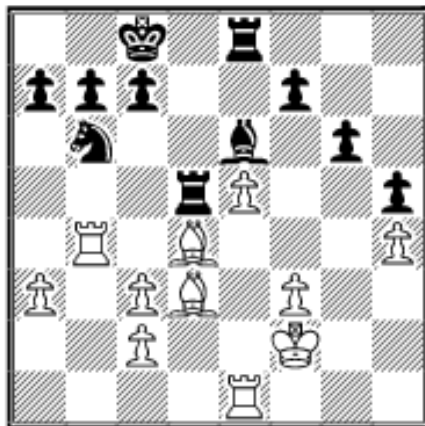
23 Bf4 Nd5 24 Bd2 Nb6

Both of us were trying to gain a little clock time, although the position is drawish, anyway. Note how carefully Black refrains from pushing a queenside pawn.

25 Be3 Nd5 26 Bd4 Re8

Black has set up an impregnable fortress on the white squares.

27 Rge1 Nb6 28 Rb4 Rd5!



Threatening the powerful c5 and activating the rook at the same time.

29 Rb5 Rb5 30 Bb5 Rd8 31 Bd3 Nc4 32 Rb1 Na5 33 f4 Nc6 34 Bc5 Rd5 35 Be3 Ra5

Black is going on the offensive after White's weak a-pawn.

36 Ra1 Ne7 37 Ke2 Nf5

Forcing White to part with a bishop.

38 Bf5 Bf5 39 Kd2 a6

Finally, Black pushes a queenside pawn and even this may be premature. The other idea is 39...Rd5+ trying to make progress on the d-file, but I preferred to focus on White's weak a- and c-pawns, instead.

40 c4 Ra4

The rook is in no danger of being trapped.

41 Kc3 Be6 42 c5 Rc4+ 43 Kd3 b5! 44 cb6 cb6 1/2-1/2

At this point, my opponent offered a draw, which I accepted. The result looks to be inescapable since neither side can make much headway after 45 Rb1 b5 46 Rb2 Bf5+ 47 Kd2 Ra4 48 Rb3.



[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2005 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

"The Chess Cafe®" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.