

# ***New Zealand Chess***

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*IM Bob Wade*

## ***Bob Wade Obituary***

## ***Queenstown Classic 2009 Report***



*IM David Smerdon*



*IM Anthony Ker*

**Plus**

***Dresden Olympiad Report***

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# IM David Smerdon Triumphs at Queenstown

## *2009 Classic will be hard to beat*

by Alan Aldridge

**F**rom whatever angle you look at it, the 2009 Queenstown Classic has to go down in New Zealand chess history as one of our 'Great' tournaments, arguably the best ever. It had everything. A stellar array of Grandmasters, International Masters and Women's Grandmasters. An unbeatable location. A friendly tournament on and away from the board. Fighting chess and a popular unexpected winner, Australian IM David Smerdon.

Murray Chandler, whose generosity made the tournament happen, was a late withdrawal but that hardly dented the tournament's playing strength, such was the quality of the field. Murray had enticed GM's from all corners. The lanky Israeli GM Victor Mikhalevski, at 2608 was the top seed, and centre of a minor if unexpected storm, which rippled over the tournament almost unnoticed by the players. Veteran activist John Minto wanted the Israeli to withdraw in protest over his country's actions in Gaza but, unsurprisingly, no protesters materialised.

Second seed was GM Eduardas Rozentalis from Lithuania. One of life's



**NZ Champion Anthony Ker and Major Open winner Gavin Marner**

naturally friendly characters, Eduardas was always smiling and relaxed. His trip was, like several of the overseas players, combined with a holiday. Two half point byes were available to overseas players before round seven. And a number tried the local treats, some even jumping off bridges and bouncing back unharmed for the next round.

Rounding out the top three was Greek GM Dimitrios Mastrovasilis who at 2580 was 40 points ahead of the rest of the GM pack. These three were the favourites. Of the remaining Grandmasters the young Englishman Gawain Jones stood out with third placing on tiebreak in the main event, first in the Rapid and first equal with GM

## Mastrovasilis in the Lightning.

In all the tournament contained nine Grandmasters and nine International Masters plus five Women's Grandmasters, 1 women's International Master, 6 Women's Federation masters and 10 Federation Masters. The field of 120 came from 20 different countries. Australia had 49 and New Zealand 40 players, the remainder came from: 7 UK, 5 Germans, 3 Dutchmen, 2 Danes and the rest one player from each of Brazil, Cyprus, France, Greece, Hong Kong, Israel, Jamaica, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Switzerland.

The one disappointing note was the unexpectedly low numbers of New Zealand players. Reasons for this will be debated but those who didn't come certainly missed an opportunity.

This was a good natured friendly tournament. The young Australian IM David Smerdon had a loyal following of a half dozen even younger aussie juniors who partied their way through the tournament in Queenstown's bars. From dancing on bar tabletops to more genteel barbecues the tournament was a success as a friendly social event, capped off by the last round evening buffet. There was even a David Smerdon organised soccer game, bringing back memories of the North Island vs South Island soccer games of times past. Murray Chandler when asked if he would participate said he thought not, noting that he had seen enough chess tournament 'friendly'

soccer matches to expect the 'score' to be counted in injuries rather than goals!



**Tournament sponsor Murray Chandler with Israeli GM Victor Mikhalevski**

In the face of so much strong overseas competition the New Zealanders were always going to be involved in what can be a swiss draw lottery to claim the Silver Rook and Major Open under 2000 trophy. The results likely to depend on who the leading contenders drew in the final round.

IM Anthony Ker was the standout kiwi performer. With two draws against Grandmasters he was the deserved winner, for the 10<sup>th</sup> time, of the New Zealand Champion title. Ker also won the New Zealand Rapid and Lightning titles. He was photographed at Queenstown airport, sitting waiting for

his flight, the floor littered with large impressive trophies, looking both contented and mildly bemused at such unexpected success! Puchen Wang is the only other player to have claimed all three trophies at the same tournament.

Ker's draw against the Australian GM Darryl Johansen summed up the fierce competitive spirit that is a hallmark of his play and, as it has nine times before, was rewarded with another NZ title. The game was in round 9, a crucial stage of the tournament, and lasted 117 moves. The position reached Rook and Bishop versus Darryl's Rook and Knight with blocked central pawns. Darryl tried to surround and win a vital pawn but his manoeuvres dragged on and after 42 moves he realised the pawn couldn't be captured before the 50 move draw rule would apply! Darryl in desperation tried sacrificing his Knight to get a pawn moving. But Anthony was able to block the breakout and the game was drawn.

So Anthony held on for a valuable half point against the odds at a crucial stage of the tournament in the longest game he had ever played. In round three he'd accepted a draw from German GM Klaus Bischoff on move 30, from a slightly stronger position. But all draws, at least on the top boards, were properly fought games under the 'highly discouraged' no draw under 30 move rule. Technically not outlawed, short draws would impact, organisers darkly hinted, on prize money allocation. A trick that appeared to work. The final round had seen the NZ title

very much in the balance. Anthony Ker and Mike Steadman led Nic Croad, Daniel Shen and John Duneas by a half point. Any one of these players could snatch the Silver Rook, they all played non kiwi opponents and all faced opposition rated around 2200. The arbiters, Bob Gibbons supported by Aussie Charles Zworestine and Craig Hall from Canterbury, had spent hours preparing the final round draw, apparently not prepared to leave fate entirely in the hands of Swiss Perfect.



Ker couldn't expect easy points playing Australian Matthew Drummond, 2236. Perennial battler Bob Smith, bouncing back from a poor Olympiad, had lost only one game going into the his final round encounter against Switzerland's Peter Hohler 2214. Daniel Shen, whose successful tournament was a shining light for kiwi junior chess, faced The Netherland's Sven Bakker 2233. Daniel, rated only 2098 had reached six points by beating two 2200 rated players and WGM Alina Motoc, 2358. Clearly he



**GM Eduardas Rozentalis**

has taken a big step forward and to have a shot at the title was an outstanding result. Nic Croad was playing the fast rising Australian junior Max Illingworth 2250. Nic had earned his place as a contender with draws against English GM Peter Wells, where he had saved a Rook and Pawn ending a Pawn down, and Norwegian GM Leif Johannessen. Mike Steadman faced Australia's Domagoj Dragicevic 2205.

These cards could have fallen in any permutation. But Ker seems to know how to win the big ones and he secured a draw, making him short odds for first equal at least. And that turned out to be enough. Smith almost pulled off a win, it was there on the board but a wrong choice of move order allowed Hohler to escape with a draw. The other contenders

also fell short. Steadman only needed a draw but he and Croad both lost while Shen's draw against another higher rated opponent was another big step but not enough.

Meanwhile the Major Open trophy was decided in similar but less chaotic fashion. Alan Aldridge came close to defeating Bosnian Mehemed Dizdarevic but missed the opportunity. This left fellow Wellingtonians Gavin Marner and Bill Forster playing each other for the title. Marner came through with a comfortable victory and his first Major Open title.

## **Queenstown's Winners**

Queenstown gave the impression of creating more winners than losers for players looking to advance their chess careers. Among the New Zealanders, youngster Daniel Shen was a standout improver with a performance rating of 2258, 200 points above his actual rating and a 30<sup>th</sup> tournament placing. And radar detectors in the lower North Island have already picked up on Alan Ansell. Aged just 11, Alan finished with a performance rating of 1987, a full 600 points above his rating. Anthony Ker's 17<sup>th</sup> placing was a very respectable showing against such a strong field. Paul Garbett was the next best kiwi, finishing 25<sup>th</sup>.

But it was the Australians who came away with the most to reasons to be happy. Apart from David Smerdon's tournament victory, Igor Goldenberg

gained a third IM norm and qualified for the title while junior Andrew Brown and Domagoj Dragicevic both won IM norms. In the future we can hope that Daniel Shen and Daniel Baider, now our two top resident juniors, will also be IM norm contenders.

## ***The Smerdon Express***

The big winner and story of the tournament was Australian IM David Smerdon. David's achievements included; winning his third GM norm, guaranteeing at least first equal with a round to spare, a performance rating of 2651, 200 points above his rating, and scoring 4.5/6 against GM opponents. If not for a final round loss to English GM Gawain Jones, he would have achieved the 2500 rating points required for his Grand Master title, which can't be far away.

Smerdon's dominant performance wasn't predictable from the early rounds, as the leading GM contenders racked up wins. Then in round seven, with his victory over second seed GM Eduardas Rozentalis, he appeared like a train headlight in the tunnel, rumbling ominously in the distance and growing louder, until with a piercing shriek of the whistle and deafening roar the Smerdon express was upon us, crashing through three Grandmasters in a row. Defeating and derailing the hopes of Rozentalis then Bischoff and then Mastrovasilis.

Up until then it was Rozentalis looking



**Klaus Bischoff and David Smerdon**

likely. In round six he had taken the outright lead with 5.5, conceding only a 'tourist bye'. In the Smerdon - Rozentalis game, Smerdon had an initiative against Rozentalis' Alekhine's Defence which he maintained as the pieces were swapped, until his Knight and Queen penetrated to create mating threats and a Queen fork won the Rozentalis Knight. Meanwhile Klaus Bischoff joined David Smerdon on 6/7 with a win over Australian Domagoj Dragicevic.

Round seven was also notable for junior success. Andrew Brown of Australia defeating Paul Garbett on his way to an IM norm and Daniel Shen winning a good Bishop versus bad Knight endgame, against England's Mark Lyell, 2287.

The round eight top board game saw eventual second place getter Germany's GM Klaus Bischoff looking to stop Smerdon's momentum. After Queens were swapped Smerdon appeared in big trouble with six isolated pawns - four of them doubled. But he fought hard to reach a more equal position, and crucially

one where Bischoff would have to take significant risks to win, and offered a draw. Bischoff chose to gamble for the win and played on. Perhaps in a case of 'decide in haste, repent at leisure'; his position deteriorated as Smerdon gained a passed c pawn in a double rook ending and went on to win. An important psychological victory for Smerdon in the hard fought comeback manner it was achieved and crucial for his tournament hopes.



In the penultimate round Smerdon, riding a wave of confidence, played another fine game against second seed Dimitrios Mastrovasilis. Sacrificing a pawn for initiative David threatened a middle game checkmate even though Queens were off the board. Mastrovasilis faced with giving away material to stop the mate resigned, guaranteeing Smerdon first equal at least with a round to spare.

Final round results favoured Smerdon even though he lost to Gawain Jones. In the Bischoff – Mikhalevski game both parties fought for the win but the game resolved into a draw, while Rozentalis had the worse of his game against Alex

Wohl, escaping with a draw. This left Smerdon alone on eight points with GMs Bischoff, Jones, Mikhalevski, Mastrovasilis and Leif Johannessen all on 7.5.

At the prizegiving Smerdon's loyal band of young aussie fans saluted him with a drinking song and in return David skulled a beer, something his friends had been doing every night, but which David had wisely avoided! In his acceptance speech David expressed the thoughts of many in thanking the organisers, Paul Spiller in particular and Murray Chandler especially for funding the event, and concluded that the tournament was the best he had ever played and he hoped it would be held again.

Murray Chandler has been quoted as saying he organised the Queenstown tournaments as a thank you to the NZ Chess community for the support they showed him when he was starting his career. Murray's initiative in organising both Queenstown tournaments and funding them is a thank you in spades. It was the hope of any participant who was asked that Queenstown 2009 is not the last.

## ***Rapid, Lightning and Junior Events***

English GM Gawain Jones put in a strong performance to win the Open Rapid, scoring 8/9, with wins over GM Victor Mikhalevski, GM Dimitrios

Mastrovasilis and GM Hans Hect plus a



draw with GM Eduadas Rozentalis. Gawain also came first equal in the Lightning tournament with Victor Mikhalevski. The only two New Zealand players to make the Lightning finals were Anthony Ker and Nic Croad. Nic scored 2.5/9 and Anthony 3/9, including a penultimate round win over Nic that secured Anthony the NZ Lightning Champion title. A name to watch in the near future is Max Illingworth. The aussie junior scored an impressive 7.5/11 in the final.

An innovation for a NZ Championship was a junior tournament, a six round event held in the morning. The tournament was won by former Australian under 12 champion Laurence Matheson with 5/6, a half point ahead of kiwi brothers Jeremy and Stephen Watson. 15 kiwi and 3 aussie juniors took part.

## **Annotated Games**

### **Jones,G (2540) - Smerdon,D (2463)**

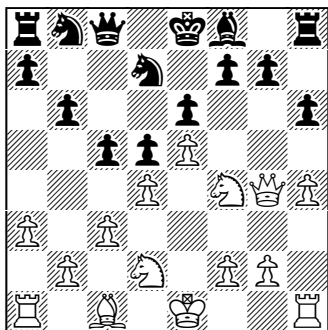
Queenstown Classic Queenstown NZL (10), 24.01.2009

Annotated by GM Jones

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 c5 4.Ngf3 Nf6 5.e5** transposing into the so called Universal System. **5...Nfd7 6.c3 Be7 7.Bd3 b6** David chooses a system with a solid reputation. I've had this position myself a few times before. The last couple of games went: 8.Qe2 a5 9.0-0 Ba6 10.c4 Nc6 11.cxd5 Bxd3 12.Qxd3 Nb4 (A later opponent tried *12...exd5*

*13.Re1 0-0 14.Qf5 cxd4 15.Nb3 Nc5 16.Nbxd4* Jones,G-Grigoryan,A/Yerevan 2007 (0-1 in 60) and White is slightly better although I overpressed and went on to lose) *13.Qe4 exd5 14.Qg4 0-0 15.Rd1 Kh8 16.Nf1 Nc2 17.Rb1 Nxd4 18.Nxd4 cxd4 19.Qxd4 Bc5 20.Qxd5 Nxe5 21.Be3 Qxd5 22.Rxd5 Bxe3 23.Nxe3 f6 24.f4* Jones,G-Hou Yifan/Liverpool ENG 2007 (1-0 in 57) and I was left in a very favourable ending due to more active pieces and the weakness of black's queenside pawns. I decided to deviate and came up with **8.h4** over the board. I decided not to worry about Black's plan of swapping off light squared bishops and instead start proceedings on the other wing. The move also had the advantage of deviating from any preparation David might have done before the game. **8...Ba6 9.Bxa6 Nxa6 10.a3** cutting out Nb4 ideas for Black which would target the c2 and d3 squares. The only previous game in this line ran: *10.h5 b5 11.h6 g6 12.Nf1 b4 13.Ne3 0-0 14.0-0 Nb6* Parligras,M-Rakhmanov,A/Athens GRE 2008 (1-0 in 43) which looked rather unclear but White went on to win. **10...Qc8** Maybe this plan is a little slow. Black's idea is to drop the knight back and then play Qa6 to activate the queen but maybe this is a little slow. *10...0-0* is the computer's recommendation but it looks risky with White's attack already started. However with light squared bishops traded the attack will not be as strong and I think Black should probably go into this. My plan was to still play *11.Ng5* as after *11...Bxg5 12.hxg5 Qxg5 13.Nf3* White has good compensation for the pawn.

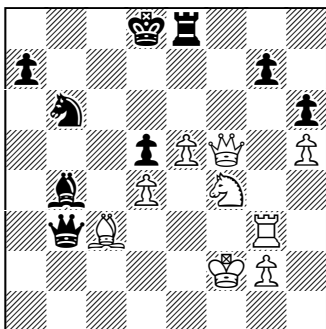
**11.Ng5 h6 12.Nh3** It might look illogical to move the knight from f3 to h3 but now the queen is free to come out to g4, the other knight can move to f3 if necessary and from h3 the knight can go to f4 and then perhaps to h5. Black has also created a weakness with h6 on his kingside. **12...Nab8 13.Qg4 Bf8 14.Nf4**



I was very happy with this position. White has more space and a developmental advantage but Black's position is solid and he will get counterplay on the queenside. However he also has to look out for knight sacrifices on e6. **14...cxd4** I don't much like this move and was happy to see it played. I think he should keep the tension with **14...Nc6 15.Ne2** (*15.Nf3 cxd4* and White has been forced to play *Nf3*.) **15...Qa6. 15.cxd4 Nc6 16.Ne2** And this is an odd looking move. I have now moved my g1 knight five times! Black's b8 knight though has moved three times and I did not want to play **16.Nf3** as this leaves the queenside a little vulnerable while White's plan is not so clear. Now I have the idea to play **f4,f5** breaking up his pawn structure and exposing his king.

**16...Qa6 17.Rh3!?** An unusual way of developing my rook but my king is fairly safe on e1 and now my rook defends the d3 square and is ready to shift across the third rank to either c3,f3 or g3. **17...Rc8 18.Rb1 18.f4 Nb4** is awkward to deal with so instead I just take time out to stop the threat. Black now has to come up with a plan. His main problem is that he cannot move the f8 bishop and so is playing without his rook and with his king stuck in the centre. Perhaps he should try h5 and g6 but this leaves the g5 square as a nice outpost and Black's king will never be totally safe. **18...Na5 19.h5 Nc4 20.f4** The f pawn starts its march! **20...Nxd2 21.Bxd2** Black's last few moves have not achieved much, he has simply swapped one of his few active pieces while helping White complete his development. **21...Qa4 22.Rc1!** Swapping off another of Black's active pieces which exacerbates the problem of Black's kingside pieces. **22.f5 Nxe5!** is Black's idea exploiting the queen being undefended. **22...Rxc1+ 23.Bxc1 b5 24.Rc3 Kd8** Not a move Black wants to play but **24...Nb6 25.f5** is hardly appealing either. **25.f5! b4 25...Nxe5 26.Qf4** allows White's queen into Black's position e.g. **26...Nd7 27.Qc7+ Ke8 28.fxe6 fxe6 29.Qc8+ Ke7 30.Rc7 b4 31.b3 Qb5 32.a4+- 26.Rg3** Black's centre is collapsing; his king is vulnerable and he still has to develop his kingside. **26.axb4 exf5 27.Qxf5 Bxb4 28.Qxf7** should also be winning and is probably more accurate. **26...Qc6 27.Bd2 Qc2 28.fxe6 fxe6 29.Qxe6 Nb6 30.axb4?!** **30.Bxb4** swapping dark squared bishops is more accurate but I'd got so used to the

bishop on f8 and I didn't want to let it develop and let him have even a sniff of counterplay. However his position would be basically resignation after 30...Bxb4+ 31.axb4 Qb1+ 32.Kf2 Rf8+ 33.Rf3+- Still, White's position should still be winning without too much difficulty. David plays well though to create some problems. **30...Qb1+ 31.Kf2 Qxb2 32.Bc3 Qb3 33.Qf5 33.Qf7 Bxb4 34.Rxg7 Rf8 35.Rg8+- 33...Bxb4 34.Nf4 34.Bxb4 Qxb4 35.Rxg7 Rf8 36.Rf7 Rxf7 37.Qxf7** Is winning for White but I was afraid of allowing any counterplay with Black's a pawn. **34...Re8!**



I had missed this move when I played 34.Nf4 Bxc3 35.Ne6+ Ke8 36.Qg6+ Ke7 37.Qxg7+ Kxe6 38.Qf6+ Kd7 39.Rg7+ Kc8 40.Qc6+ Kd8 41.Qc7+ Ke8 42.Qe7# was the line which inspired me to play 34.Nf4. I sunk into deep thought here trying to find a forced win. A few lines I looked at: 35.Rxg7 Qxc3 36.Ne6+ Rxe6 37.Qxe6 Qxd4+ when Black will have at least a draw; 35.Ne6+ Rxe6 36.Qxe6 (36.Bxb4 Qxb4 37.Qxe6 Qxd4+ doesn't look clear to me) 36...Bxc3 37.Qg8+ Kc7 38.Qxg7+ (38.Rxg7+ Nd7) 38...Kb8. I

eventually came to my senses and realised I still had a clear advantage and it wasn't necessary to go for broke. **35.Bxb4 Qxb4 36.Qd3 Qb2+ 37.Kf3 Qc1 37...Re7 38.Rxg7 Rxg7 39.Ne6+- 38.Rxg7 Rf8 39.g3** My position is back under control. I have to watch out for perpetual checks involving a rook sacrifice on f4 but it's winning for White. **39...Nc4 39...Rxf4+ 40.gxf4 Qh1+ 41.Kg4 Qg2+ 42.Qg3 Qe2+ 43.Kh4+-; 39...Qh1+ 40.Kg4 Rxf4+ 41.gxf4+- 40.Rxa7 Nd2+ 40...Rxf4+ 41.gxf4 Qh1+ 42.Kg4** and again the king escapes the checks.; 40...Qh1+ 41.Kg4 Rxf4+ 42.gxf4 Qg2+ 43.Kf5 **41.Kg2 Rxf4 42.Ra8+ Ke7 43.Qh7+** and mate in a few moves. 1-0

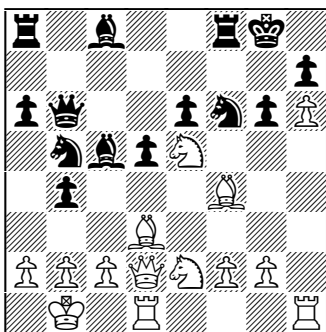
### Smerdon, David (2463) - Lukey, Stephen G (2247)

Queenstown Classic Queenstown (6.5),  
20.01.2009

Annotated by IM Smerdon

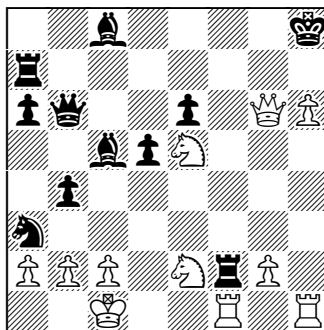
**1.e4** Stephen is one of those players who has the ability to play 300 points above or below his rating at any given moment! (Roger Nokes would say his rating has high standard deviation, see his column this month - Ed). My last game with Stephen was especially tough, and I was lucky to scrape a draw in the end. **1...e6 2.Nf3 d5 3.Nc3** The Two-Knights French was a favourite of GM Ian Rogers, which led to a wave of followers in Australia, including myself. **3...Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.d4 c5 6.dxc5 Nc6 7.Bf4 Bxc5** This variation leads to more open, free-flowing positions, than the alternative **7...Nxc5. 8.Bd3 f6 9.exf6 Nxf6 10.Qe2 0-0 11.0-**

0-0 A new idea in these positions. 11.0-0 leads to a more positional struggle, centred around the crucial e5-square. With his last move, white instead plays for a direct kingside attack - with the down-side being that his own king is more vulnerable. **11...Qa5 12.Kb1 a6 13.Ne5 Nd4!?** The symmetry of these two knights continues: both now occupy dominating positions and both will be instrumental in the opposing-wing attacks that follow. **14.Qd2 b5?!** I was more concerned about 14...Bb4 after which I planned 15.a3 (not 15.Bxh7+? *Kxh7 16.Qxd4 Bxc3!*) 15...Bxc3 16.Qxc3 Qxc3 17.bxc3 Nb5 18.Kb2 Now despite white's ugly pawn structure, the two bishops and the powerful e5 knight give white a slight edge. Still, I think this was black's best option. **15.h4 b4 16.Ne2 Nb5** 16...Nxe2 falls into a nice trick after 17.Qxe2 Ne4 18.Bxe4 Rxf4 19.Rxd5! **17.h5 Qb6 18.h6!** Based on a neat idea **18...g6**

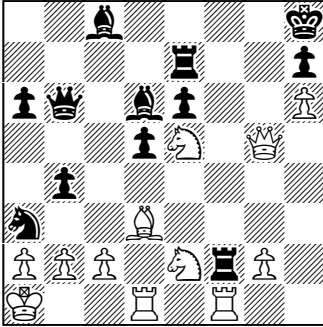


18...Nc3+ 19.Nxc3! bxc3 20.Qxc3 is nothing special **19.Bxg6!!** A rude shock. **19...Ra7** It was a shame I didn't get to play out the main idea, which was

19...hxg6 20.h7+!! Nxh7 21.Rxh7! Kxh7 22.Qd3 Rf5 23.Qg3 and black is mated! **20.Bg5** Offering the piece a second time; I was in the mood for blood. **20...Na3+** There are some nice variations after 20...hxg6 21.Bxf6 Rxf6 22.h7+ (The obvious 22.Qg5 is messier, for instance 22...Na3+ 23.Kc1 Rxf2 24.Qxg6+ Kh8 25.Rdf1



25...b3!! 26.axb3 (26.cxb3!) 26...Be3+ 27.Kd1 Nc4! 28.bxc4 Qa5! and it's white who must force a draw.) 22...Rxh7 (22...Kh8 23.Qg5 Be7 24.Nf4 is curtains) 23.Rxh7 Na3+ (23...Kxh7 24.Rh1+ Kg8 25.Qh6 Na3+ 26.Kc1) 24.Kc1 Rxf2 25.Rh3 and black's position is hopeless **21.Ka1 Bd6** Black's best was probably 21...hxg6 22.bxa3 Ne4 but after 23.Qd3! bxa3 24.Rb1 Qd6 25.f4 white keeps all his trumps, while the black attack has faded away. **22.Bxf6 Rxf6 23.Bd3 Kh8 24.Qg5 Rxf2 25.Rhf1 Re7**



**26.Ng4?** Missing the mating **26.Nf4!**, as pointed out after the game by Dr Nokes **26...Rxf1 27.Rxf1 Rb7 28.Bxh7 Qc7 29.Qg8# 1-0**

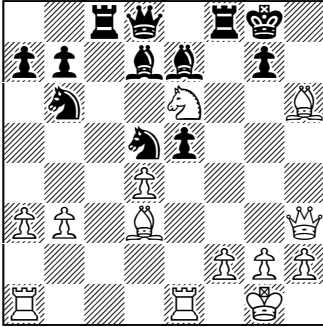
**Smerdon,David (2463) - Mastrovasilis,Dimitrios (2580)**

Queenstown Classic Queenstown (9.1), 23.01.2009

Annotated by IM Smerdon

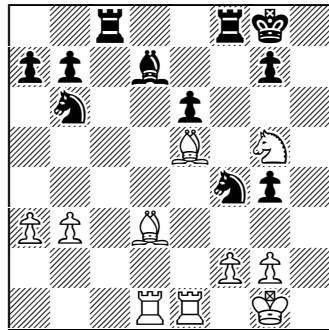
**1.e4** The last time I played Dimitri was in 2002 at the world junior championships in Goa, India. We were both long-haired teenagers back then, and that was reflected in a crazy game starting with **1.Nc3!?** and culminating in a chaotic middlegame where I had two queens to his one! **1...c5 2.c3** A more mature (sober?) opening than our last encounter. **2...Nf6 3.e5 Nd5 4.d4 cxd4 5.Nf3 e6 6.cxd4 d6 7.Bc4 Nb6** More usual is **7...Nc6**, leading to a complex middlegame in which I have played many games (see for example Smerdon-Jakovenko and Smerdon-McShane, both from the aforementioned 2002 world junior championship in Goa). Dimitri's move leads to an interesting variation

that he has a lot of experience in - black hopes to reach a favourable endgame after the simplifying **8.Bb3 dxe5. 8.Bd3 Nc6 9.0-0 Nb4 10.Be2!** Part of my preparation and, I believe, the best move. White moves his bishop for the third time in the opening...but black's made five knight moves in his first nine, so he's still ahead on opening-principle violations! **10...dxe5 11.Nxe5 Be7 12.Nc3 0-0 13.a3 N4d5** **13...Nc6** has also been played, with the idea that simplifying will ease black's defence. Well, this may be true, but it also negates black's slight pawn-structural advantage, so it's not an easy decision to make. The text is more aggressive, but naturally, riskier. **14.Bd3 Bd7 15.Ne4!** Preventing further exchanges - white keeps pieces on and starts directing them towards the black king, abandoned by his defensive steeds. **15...Rc8 16.Re1 Ba4!?** Interesting. Black provokes a weakening of white's queenside, as the natural **17.Qh5?!** is met by **17...Bc2!**. However, it's not so clear that black can exploit the newly weakened c3 square after the text. **17.b3 Be8 18.Qf3!?** Very aggressive, and practically strong, but possibly not best. **18...f6** Pretty much forced. With so many pieces aimed at the black kingside, Black has to take drastic measures. **19.Qh3!?** The first point **19...f5** Dimitri plays it safe, as we both thought white had fantastic compensation after **19...fxe5 20.Ng5 h6 (20...Bxg5 21.Qxh7+ Kf7 22.Bg6+ Ke7 23.Bxg5+ Nf6 24.Qxg7+ +-) 21.Nxe6 Bd7!?** **22.Bxh6!?**



with huge complications. But it turns out that 20...h5! holds for black in all variations, as my computer was quick to scream out after the game. **20.Nc5!** The second, and more subtle, point. White sacrifices his isolated queen's pawn for...positional compensation! In return, white gets the two bishops, an important outpost on e5 and constant, long term pressure against the weak e6 pawn and the weakened black kingside. Moreover, all of white's pieces easily find nice lines, particularly the dominant queen's bishop, while their black counterparts are smothered in defence. **20...Bxc5 21.dxc5 Rxc5 22.Bb2 Qg5 23.Nf3 Qg6** Black would of course like to trade queens, but he has to be careful that he doesn't lose a pawn in the process, as the grim outlook for the rest of the black pieces doesn't improve much in most endgames. For instance, 23...Qg4 24.Qxg4 fg 25.Ne5 is extremely pleasant for White. **24.Qh4!** Restricting the d5-knight further. **24...Rc7 25.Rad1 h6** So white has all the pressure he needs, but how to break through? Finally, I found the right idea... **26.Be5 Rc8 27.Bd6 Rf6 28.Be5 Rf8**

**29.Nd4 Bd7 30.h3!** Wasting time? No! White's pressure is so great, he can afford a slow build-up to the inevitable attack. My idea is to carefully play Kh2, Rg1 and eventually g4, finally crashing through. Remarkably, with almost his entire army on the board, Black is helpless to defend. **30...Qg5** Logical, but the resulting black pawn-structure will be too unstable to support without loss. **31.Qxg5 hxg5 32.Nf3 g4 33.hxg4 fxg4 34.Ng5 Nf4**



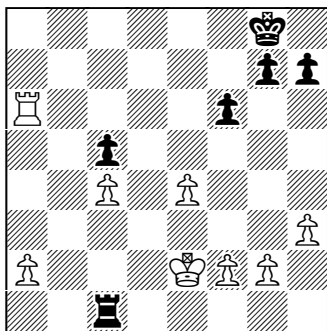
Allowing a nice finish, but Black is in trouble in any case. **35.Bh7+ Kh8 36.Re4 Nh5 37.Rxg4** Black is totally tied up and cannot meet white's threatened Rh4 without jettisoning material. **1-0**

### **Rozentalis, Eduardas (2590) - Jones, Gawain (2540)**

Queenstown Classic (6.1), 27.01.2009  
Annotations based on notes provided by GM Rozentalis

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Bxc6 dxc6 5.0-0 Bd6 6.d4 exd4 7.Qxd4 f6 8.b3 Ne7 9.h3 9.Ba3 Bg4 10.Bxd6 Bxf3 9...Ng6 10.Ba3 Nh4 11.Qe3** White must

avoid 11.Nxh4 Bh2+; and 11.Qc3 Nxg2 12.Kxg2 Bxh3+ 13.Kxh3 Qd7+ 14.Kh4 g5+ 15.Nxg5 fxg5+ 11...Nxf3+ 12.Qxf3 0-0 13.Rd1 Qe7 14.Bxd6 cxd6 Trading advantages - black no longer has the advantage of two bishops or the disadvantage of a crippled queenside majority - but a new disadvantage, a weak pawn on a half open file has appeared. 15.Qd3 Rd8 16.c4 Be6 17.Nc3 b5 18.Ne2 bxc4 18...d5 19.cxd5 cxd5 20.Nd4 dxe4 21.Qxe4 wins for white 19.bxc4 Qf7 20.Rac1 c5 21.Nf4 not 21.f4 f5 21...Rab8 22.Qc3 Rb4 23.Nd5 Bxd5 24.Rxd5 Qb7 25.Qd3 Rb8 Black prefers to seek counterplay rather than be tied up defending the weakness 26.Rxd6 Rb1 27.Rf1 Rxf1+ 28.Kxf1 Qb1+ 29.Qxb1 Rxb1+ 30.Ke2 Rc1 Better would be 30...Rb2+ 31.Rd2 Rb4 32.Kd3 Kf7 33.Kc3 Ra4 34.Kb3 31.Rxa6



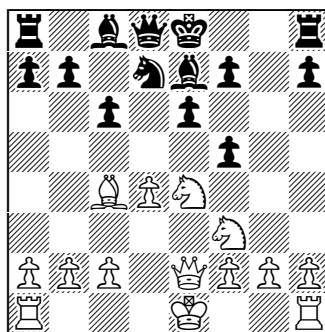
White's outside passer now proves too strong 31...Rxc4 32.Ke3 Rc2 33.a4 Rc3+ 34.Kd2 Ra3 35.a5 h5 36.f4 Ra4 37.Kd3 Ra3+ 38.Kc4 Ra4+ 39.Kxc5 Rxe4 40.Rc6 Rxf4 41.a6 Ra4 42.Kb6 Kh7 43.a7 Kg6 44.Rc5 1-0

## Van Riemsdijk, Herman Claudius (2398) - Goldsmith, Alan (2226)

Queenstown Classic Queenstown (8), 23.01.2009

Annotated by IM van Riemsdijk

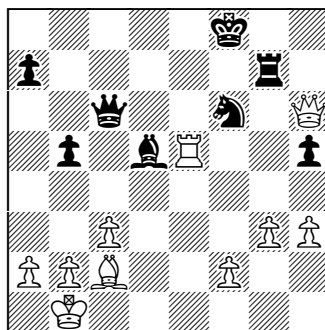
On my fourth visit to New Zealand I didn't play as well as I wished. No inspiration and a lot of struggling. The original and sharp play of my opponent forced me finally to play a decent game! 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 dxe4 5.Nxe4 Be7 6.Bxf6 gxf6 7.Nf3 Nd7 [Short favours this move trying an early ... c5. Here 7...b6 is very popular and I had faced it a couple of times.] 8.Bc4 c6 [8...c5 9.0-0 0-0 10.Re1 Nb6 11.Bf1 cxd4 12.Nxd4 Kh8 13.c3 e5 14.Qh5 introduced a brilliant win of Shirov over Short (Las Vegas 1999). This doesn't prove anything however as Nigel is probably Alexei's biggest client and almost anything does it for Alexei...] 9.Qe2 f5



This move is a novelty in the position. More 'normal' would be [9...Qc7 10.0-0-0 b6 transposing to well known lines. But in my preparation I had already found out that Goldsmith is an original thinker.

Some of his repertoire lines may be dubious but he plays them with clear strategic ideas.] **10.Ned2 Rg8 11.g3 Nf6 12.c3 b5** Another surprise. My opponent clearly shows that he'll play with his king on f8 and try to get counterplay attacking white's centre. **13.Bd3 Bb7 14.0-0-0 Qc7 15.Rhe1 Rd8 16.Kb1 Kf8** There it is. Black is ready to play on the queen side. I wasn't feeling comfortable at all. **17.h3** Hoping for Ne5 and g4 at some moment. **17...h5** [An unexpected move as so many already before. But I think that 17...Kg7 is better.] **18.Ne5** I took much longer than usual for this move and had already decided what to do against black's obvious reaction but [18.Qe3 Kg7 19.Nb3 Nd5 20.Qe5+ Qxe5 21.Nxe5 was much safer.] **18...c5 19.Nxf7** [In my thoughts somehow this sacrifice was forced. I was afraid of blows on e4 but long after the game I came to the conclusion that 19.dxc5 is best. After 19...Be4 20.Bxe4 Qxe5 21.Bc6 is probably better for white.] **19...Kxf7 20.Qxe6+ Kf8 21.Qxf5 Rg7?!** [Post-mortem analysis showed that 21...cxd4 would give black a slight edge. 22.cxd4 Rxd4 23.Nf3 Bxf3 24.Qxf3 is not clear at all.] **22.dxc5 Rd5 23.Qf3 Rf7 24.Qe3 Qxc5 25.Qh6+ Kg8 26.Bc2** [As the bishop is indirectly defended 26.g4 flashed through my mind but with not too much time left I decided to play for the b3 square.] **26...Re5** [Sacking the exchange with 26...Qxf2 27.Bb3 is a reasonable option but I was confident in my chances after 27...Qf5+ 28.Ka1 Bf8 29.Qe3 but I confess that it should be much harder than I had imagined.] **27.Nb3 Qc7 28.Nd4 Bd5 29.Nf5 Rxe1?**

[29...Bf8 30.Qg6+ Kh8 looks much more resistant. I hadn't decided yet if I would follow with 31 f4 or with 31 Nh6. Best is probably 31.Nh6 Bxh6 32.Qxh6+ Kg8 33.Qg6+ Kh8 34.Rxe5 Qxe5 35.f4 Qe6 (35...Qe7 36.Rxd5 Nxd5 37.Qxh5+ Rh7!? gives black practical chances.) 36.Ka1 and white has good chances to book the whole point.] **30.Rxe1 Bf8 31.Qg6+ Kh8 32.Nh6 Bxh6 33.Qxh6+ Kg8 34.Qg5+ Kf8** [I was more worried about 34...Kh8 35.Re5 Qc6 36.Qh6+ Nh7 37.Qxh5 Be6 but 38.Ka1 Qh1+ 39.Bb1 Qxh3 40.Qg6 looks very awful for black] **35.Re5 Qc6 36.Qh6+ Rg7**



**37.Rf5!** [37.Rxd5 Qxd5 38.Qxf6+ is also winning but less effective far uglier!] **37...Kf7** [37...Bf7 38.Rxf6 Qh1+ 39.Qc1 this is of course the point that makes white's 35th move work.] **38.Rxd5** [38... Qxd5 39.Bb3+] **1-0**



# The Phantom Chessplayer

by **Alistair Nicholls** (Thanks to Alan Aldridge for inspiring me to write this true story.) My first working day at EDS I felt like most people starting a new job, excited but also anxious and dreading what lies ahead.

I managed to get a great desk against the window with spectacular views of Lambton Quay. Next to my desk something that particularly caught my eye was a small travel Chess set. The board was open on top of shelving with very few pieces standing all scattered around.

Initially I thought nothing of this and I set the board up only as an ornament. A few weeks passed by, just business as usual until one day... I noticed someone had moved the white king pawn two squares forward. "Ok someone wants some fun, let's play.", I replied 1...e5. This game progressively became a famous office event and the player at the other end was known only by the name "Phantom". Although nobody owned up to who was playing the moves I knew it had to be some one around me. Some accused other teams of intervening, even other floors in the building. Some even believed it could be a janitor mathematician genius. I continued to play with the game turning into a variation of the Ruy Lopez.

It didn't take me long before I was itching my head over who the Phantom was. Even late at night it was on my mind. I decided I'd get some monitoring going around the board. I asked people around the floor to notify me of any "suspicious" Chess

activity. The fact that the game was taking forever was just making matters worse. At one stage a move hadn't been made for a couple of months!

Finally after around 5 months I spotted the Phantom red handed. I knew the game was lost for me quite some time ago but it wasn't until we finally met that it was really over. I was finished, checkmate in broad daylight right in the middle of the board!

The true identity of the Phantom turned out to be Andrew Grkow. We had a great laugh. Andrew suggested to me I should start an EDS Chess Tournament. I had around 20 acceptances which was 20 more than I thought I'd get. It was a real hit. I got sponsorship from EDS for supplies and trophies plus prizes. The tournament ran for 3 years. Fortunately and finally by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year I won the 1<sup>st</sup> place EDS GM Trophy.

I even convinced a few players from the Tournament to check out the Wellington Chess Club, and reignited chess interest in others, among them Ferdie Ang, Andrew Grkow, Romeo Rabina, Ping Wu, Karl Hess and Andrew Rayner. Eventually I started at the Wellington Chess Club and got very serious about the game once I started to understand the fundamentals. Like most Chess players I just got drawn into it. I now know what Garry Kasparov meant when he said "Chess seemed to choose me rather than the other way around". After a 24 year Chess sabbatical leave Andrew Grkow has also returned to the club. A Chess player will always be a Chess player. This is just one of the wonders of the incredible game of Chess.

# IM Bob Wade – A Chess Legend

by Bill Forster

**B**ob Wade's long and colourful career as a chess player, writer, editor, arbiter, organiser, administrator, teacher, coach and mentor ended in London, on 21 November 2008.

An outpouring of memorials, tributes and memories quickly followed online and in print media. Reading the reactions from those who knew him well it is clear that Bob was a kind, unselfish and generous figure who will be sorely missed.

Bob's achievements in chess extended well beyond the realm of competitive play, but he was none-the-less a formidable competitor even at the highest level. Bob won the New Zealand Championship three times and the British twice. He played in six Olympiads for England and one for New Zealand. He took the scalps of numerous world class players in a career that spanned eight separate decades (from the 1930s to the 2000s). Among the victims were Korchnoi, Uhlmann (twice), Benko, Portisch, Olafsson, Unzicker, Bernstein and Tolush. Bob was a living link to players of a bygone era including Bogolyubov, Tartakower and Bernstein.

Bob was the author of many theoretical opening variations and a minor opening



**Bob Wade plays Bill Forster Queenstown 2006 – Photo by Ameil Rosario**

(1.d4 d6 2.Nf3 Bg4) is often called the Wade defence. Activation or exchange of black's light squared bishop was a theme of many of Bob's opening contributions.

Bob played in innumerable international tournaments against formidable competition and joked with characteristic self deprecation that he had lost more tournament games than any other man alive. Away from the lofty heights of international tournaments Bob was a formidable stalwart for his club and county over many decades. He first played for Middlesex in the 1948-49 season and his last game was in the 2000-01 season. During that period his score was P145 W63 D54 L28, the losses were heavily concentrated towards the end of his career.

He was capable of strong chess to the end

of his life, winning an open tournament in Johannesburg in 1999 at age 78 and recently making chess headlines by playing in a strong grandmaster tournament at age 87. He competed well at Queenstown in 2006, drawing with two grandmasters and losing only one game. He was planning a return appearance in the 2009 tournament at the time of his death.

Bob received an OBE for services to chess in 1979 and the IM title from FIDE in 1950.

For a New Zealander it perhaps yields mixed feelings to reflect that Bob needed to leave his native land to make such a substantial impression on the world. Bob decided he wanted to devote his life to the game and so he became our first chess professional. Such a career was unthinkable at the time in New Zealand, and only somewhat less so in Britain where Bob settled in pursuit of his dreams.

In 1948 when Bob arrived Britain was itself something of a chess backwater relative to its traditional European rivals. No world class players had emerged since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the scene was dominated by talented amateurs. Many of the top players made their mark as brilliant practitioners in their other, professional, lives. Bob found a way to make a living as Britain's only chess professional at the time. He played, studied, wrote, edited and organised. He served as an arbiter at top events, and sat on the first FIDE rules committee to draft formal rules of competition. He travelled

throughout the country giving innumerable lectures and simultaneous exhibitions. He learned lessons from his many trips abroad and introduced Soviet training methods into Britain.

Bob accumulated a world class chess library, and his home became a beacon for enthusiastic and improving chess competitors and researchers. Bobby Fischer was apparently unimpressed when Bob co-authored "The Games of Robert J Fischer" at Batsford. He was concerned that this would present Boris Spassky with a superb basis for his preparation for the legendary World Championship match in Reykjavik in 1972. Fischer already knew and respected Bob after three meetings in serious competition, including a draw in the Capablanca memorial at Havana in 1965 (Fischer competed from New York by telex). Bob was prepared to help Fischer on a more private basis, preparing a dossier of all of Spassky's games using the Soviet sourced material in his library. Legend has it that Fischer was unimpressed by the horizontal presentation of the game scores in Bob's original delivery and in response Bob uncomplainingly rewrote the material in Fischer's preferred column format by hand!

Bob's admiration of Soviet chess culture and achievements, his willingness to travel behind the iron curtain, and stories of meetings with Stalin, Castro and Che Guevara (in the case of the latter as a player in a simultaneous) led many to the conclusion that Bob was himself a communist, but in fact this was not so.

In the decades after the second world war England's amateur chess culture was gradually transformed and during the 1970s a brilliant generation of players emerged to make England a chess powerhouse. The culmination of this was silver medals at two Olympiad in the 1980s. Of course at the time the Soviet Union was immune to serious threat as the number one chess power.

Of course Bob was not single-handedly responsible for this English chess revolution, but there is no question that he made a substantial contribution. Bob not only encouraged serious study amongst his pupils, but in his capacity as an editor at BT Batsford he encouraged the talented young masters that were emerging to express their burgeoning chess knowledge as authors of serious chess scholarship. Most chess players of a certain age harbour fond feelings for the specialist opening books produced by Batsford under Bob's direction starting in the 1970s. We have subsequently become somewhat desensitised by a flood of opening literature, so I was surprised to learn whilst researching this article that these books were essentially the first of this type to be originally published in the English language.

Although Bob was absent from his native land for nearly sixty years until his appearance in Queenstown, he was always linked to New Zealand in various ways. New Zealand chess players doing their "OE" would be made welcome after making the pilgrimage to Bob's London home just as aspiring English students would.

One particularly important contribution Bob made was to persuade the young Ortvin Sarapu to change his plans and choose New Zealand as his ultimate destination when fleeing post war Europe. In many ways this can be seen as Bob finding his own successor as a leader and teacher in New Zealand. A different kind of successor from a younger generation is our only grandmaster, Murray Chandler. Murray followed the trail blazed by Bob in pursuing a career as a chess professional in England. Indeed Murray was one of the strong grandmasters whose emergence defined the English chess revolution that Bob mentored. Just before publication we learned via Bob's sister in Dunedin of a more tenuous but still intriguing and surprising link Bob has with the latest generation of New Zealand chess talent. In 1947 during one of his tours Bob was 1<sup>st</sup>= in the Southwest Texas Open in Fort Worth. In 2008, IM Puchen Wang was 1<sup>st</sup>= in the Southwest Texas Open in Fort Worth.

English Chess historian Paul McKeown has been preparing a meticulous and encyclopaedic authorised biography of Bob Wade that he hopes to finish this year. Some material covering his early career has been circulated for feedback in New Zealand. I thank Paul McKeown for granting me permission to draw heavily on this material in the following paragraphs. This material describes a part of Bob's life that has understandably not been covered in detail in his other obituaries.

Bob learned chess from his father at nine, but his real chess journey began at age 15 when a school prize gave him membership of a society in Dunedin that harboured a chess group. He was soon avidly reading material at the Otago chess club's library. He made further strides after joining the Wellington chess club after taking up his first job as a public servant. He won his first tournament, the reserve section of the 1938-39 congress in Wanganui.

In those years Wellington had a thriving interclub scene, and there was regular telegraphic matches with other main centres. Bob was a member of multiple clubs, most of which no longer exist. Anton Reid has relayed the news that some recently rediscovered old Upper Hutt chess club documents reveal that Bob was elected as a life member of that club after winning his first New Zealand Championship. Bob played as many events as were possible. Perhaps surprisingly for a young, ambitious and rapidly improving player, he also volunteered for a variety of administrative duties as well. Some of the top Wellington players of the time whom Bob either competed with or learned from were Dyer, Gyles, Allerhand, Severne, Steele and especially the formidable Fedor Kuskop Kelling, the grand old man of New Zealand chess. Reading the material gathered by Paul McKeown, one is struck by the diversity and richness of the local chess scene at the time. This might well come as a surprise to a contemporary New Zealand player. There were many immigrants

from Europe who brought remarkable chess experiences with them. The winner of the NZ Championship in 1937-38 was a friend, classmate and chess rival of Nimzovich as a schoolboy in Riga. Bob's first Wellington Club Championships in 1939 was won by Knud Beyer, a Danish immigrant who had also crossed swords with Nimzovich, this time in serious tournament chess. As a young man Phillip Allerhand of the Wellington club frequented the Vienna chess cafes favoured by Reti, Maroczy and other immortals.

Bob came 9<sup>th</sup> in his debut appearance in the NZ Championship in 1939-40. He managed 1<sup>st</sup>= with Allerhand a year later, but lost a playoff to decide the NZ champion. Of course by now World War II was underway. Bob volunteered for the RNZAF but was found to be suffering from the early stages of tuberculosis, still a dreaded disease at that time. He was confined to a sanatorium in his home province of Otago. Undaunted Bob kept up his chess activity via correspondence chess. Bob returned to Wellington in 1943, this time working as a clerk at the new Dominion Physical Laboratory at Lower Hutt (the forerunner of the DSIR). Bob encountered Eleanor Roosevelt as a visitor to the facility, which performed important war-related research.

His breakthrough first NZ Championship came on his third attempt, in the 51<sup>st</sup> congress of 1943-44 in Wellington. Again he had come 1<sup>st</sup>=, this time with Severne, but on this occasion he won the playoff. The next year in Auckland Bob

successfully defended, this time scoring 10 from 11 (two draws) and comfortably avoiding any need of a playoff.

On the back of this powerful performance Bob was invited to play in the Australian Championships in Sydney in September 1945. This first overseas experience could easily have been a baptism of fire. The strong 16 player round robin included the legendary Australians Steiner, Purdy and Koshnitsky. Bob performed outstandingly finishing 2<sup>nd</sup>= behind only Steiner. A feature was a ruthless clean sweep of the bottom seven players in the field.

Bob lost a stone in weight. He received a congratulatory telegram from the NZ Council of Sport and on his return he was invited to Parliament and greeted by Prime Minister Walter Nash. How the world has changed !

No doubt this experience gave Bob a taste for bigger stages. He was invited to play in the British Championship in 1946. On that trip he travelled extensively in North America as well. On returning to New Zealand, he won a third New Zealand Championship, then soon after left for good.

For those who wish to read more about Bob's life online, the obvious destinations are [chessbase.com](http://chessbase.com), [chesscafe.com](http://chesscafe.com) and newspaper obituaries. Additionally I would highly recommend the following locations. One is a heartfelt and detailed tribute from a close friend and colleague, and the other is a forum

where Paul McKeown seeks help in completing his painstaking research into Bob's life.

[www.middlesexchess.org.uk/bob\\_wade.htm](http://www.middlesexchess.org.uk/bob_wade.htm)

[www.ecforum.org.uk](http://www.ecforum.org.uk) (go to the Chess History section)

## Book Reviews

### **The Flexible French by GM Victor Moskalenko Reviewed by Michael Whaley**

The Flexible French is the latest publication from New in Chess (NIC). Like all the other NIC publications I have seen this is a quality publication. The original script was written in Spanish and again the translation is very good. The writer has a somewhat humorous style and this comes through on numerous occasions throughout the book.

With 278 double column pages the book is no lightweight. The author sets out to present a number of repertoire options to White's main lines against the French. Each page has two or three position diagrams and there is the odd photo of better known champions of the French Defence and also a few players who could at best be described as thorns in the sides of our champions. Although the author says it is written with both sides of the board in mind it certainly has a bias towards "French Defenders"!

As to what the book contains it is divided

into five parts as follows:

Part 1, Advance Variation, Part 2 Tarrasch Variation, Part 3 Classical Variation Part 4 Winawer, 3 Part 5 Other Lines This covers White's less frequent response e.g Exchange, Kings Indian Attack etc.

The book also has a bibliography (important in opening books) and a good index.

Each chapter starts with some variation history followed by a review on the various strategies behind each. With GM Victor Moskalenko playing a number of the lines in the various repertoire options a lot of the strategy comments are very insightful, in particular those accompanying the Advance (e.g. his thoughts around the value of the various minor pieces and the g5 square ) and Winawer 6...Qa5 variations. It is also not surprising that 26 of the main games were played by the author.

In addition to the strategy pages there are 75 main games with supporting notes containing sub-variations to the main game, comment, recommendations and suggested improvements from the author. The bulk of these notes tend to be in the first 6-18 moves of each main game. Whilst there are a small number of older games most have been played recently including games and sub variations from as recent as 2008.

What I particularly like is that unlike a number of recent books that have presented what I would call the "weird and wacky" variations, GM Moskalenko has tended to present the reader with lines that have stood the test of time and that have been and continued to be supported by strong players. This would suggest an underlying soundness rather than a "hot theory but

gone tomorrow" repertoire. From this sound starting point one can utilise the guidance and suggested alternatives offered throughout the book to chart your own course to unsettle your opponent by creating complex and unbalanced positions where white may have some advantage but black has active and real counter play. Not something most players as white set out to allow !

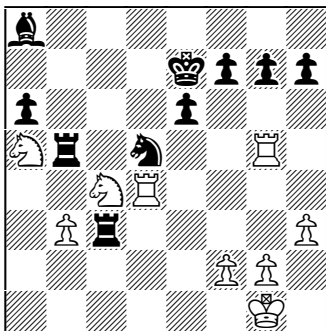
For players familiar with the French, The Flexible French is a must have. If you are thinking of joining the ranks of French players then this book is also going to be of tremendous help in understanding the complexities and strategies of this popular defence. I wish such a volume had been available when I started playing this opening 40 odd years ago. You do however, need to keep in mind that even though this is a repertoire book, the French is a popular opening and theory abounds, so despite its 278 pages the author has either had to or chosen to leave out some of the less important (white) alternatives against the recommended repertoire lines. Coverage outside the Advance, Tarrasch, Classical, Winawer and MacCutheon could be considered a little thin (e.g. although Moskalenko has a record of 12 wins, 15 draws and 3 losses against the exchange variation he uses just one game with notes to cover the variation). I am sure that this is a dilemma all modern authors face and this small deficiency should not detract from what is a well written and informative work on the French Defence.

As a French player this is a must have book and I recommend it to all serious or budding players of the French Defence, you can't help but enjoy and learn from it.

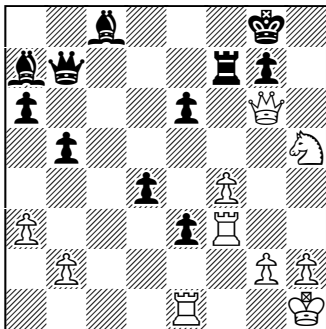
# Bill's Puzzles

by Bill Forster

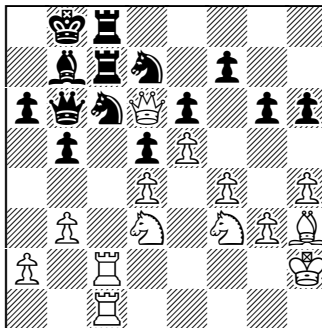
Identify the winning continuation. Player to move is in brackets. Solutions on page 34. Games from Queenstown 2009



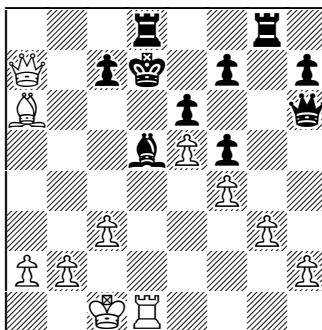
Nyberg – Anton (*B*)



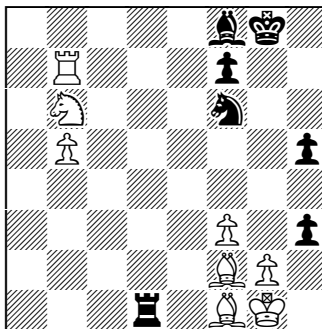
Guo – Armstrong (*W*)



Levi – Armstrong (*B*)



Tan – Baidier (*W*)



Van der Elburg – Brown (*B*)



# The 38<sup>th</sup> Olympiad, Dresden 2008

## ***Men's team defeats 30<sup>th</sup> ranked Bosnia – plays Ukraine on Board 5***

## ***Women's team's strong performance***

By Hilton Bennett

**G**ermany is no stranger to hosting chess Olympiads with the 2008 version being the seventh occasion that country has hosted Olympiad events before and after reunification. This is testimony to the strength of the German chess culture, as well as their organisation and resources. The country which has possibly the most extensive league structure for teams' chess anywhere is uniquely placed to hold a world teams' championship.

The city of Dresden itself, once described as 'Florence on the Elbe', is a superb location for such an event. The capital of the Saxony region has a long and complex history. It was a European centre of music, art, and literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with names such as Wagner, Schumann, Strauss, Tauber, Rachmaninov, Goethe, and Dostoyevsky all having associations with the city. Famed for its baroque architecture the city was heavily

destroyed in bombing raids in WWII and became part of the DDR in the Soviet bloc. Since reunification it has flourished as a centre for high tech industries and has been substantially rebuilt to its former baroque glory.

The venue for the tournament itself was the impressive and modern Congress Centre on the banks of the Elbe in the Altstadt (Old City). This excellent venue had ample space and facilities to accommodate the record number of teams participating in the event, the FIDE Congress being held concurrently, merchandising and shops, cafes, press centre, side events such as blitz, junior, and rapid tournaments, and commentary areas. Teams were accommodated in a number of hotels across the city, and evening meals for the nearly 1800 people involved were provided in the historic Town Hall. The city's modern tram system had modified timetables to move chess players from the hotels to the venue and meals, and team members had access to free public transport before, during and after the event. The logistics of hosting an event like this for 13 days are quite staggering and Dresden certainly rose to the occasion. Mention must be made of the way the city and its people became involved in the event. Shops and public buildings had chess displays in windows, and for those of us who come from countries where it is

almost impossible to find a chess set in a retail display set up correctly it was astonishing to find none set up wrongly! Media coverage was extensive and hundreds of people paid daily to come and follow the games live. The daily commentary sessions by German GM Klaus Bischoff, a recent visitor to the Queenstown tournament, were also filled to overflowing. The concept of a country having a chess culture is quite abstract and hard to define, but in Germany you do have a sense that chess is valued as a worthwhile activity with a high level of participation and interest at all levels.

The actual playing rules and arrangements

for the event fall under the control of FIDE, the World Chess Federation, and it was here that there were a number of significant changes from previous Olympiads. Some of these changes were quite contentious and are the subject of ongoing debate. Some key adjustments were:

- reduction from 14 to 11 rounds
- open teams stay at 4 players but reduced to 1 reserve, and women's teams

increased to 4 players from 3 with 1 reserve

- introduction of match points to replace game points
- changes to Swiss pairing rules including accelerated pairings
- ban on agreed draws before 30 moves unless approved
- zero tolerance on late arrival at the board longer time control

Without a doubt the rule change causing the greatest

agitation amongst

players was the

zero tolerance for

late arrival at the board.

Any player not seated at the board

when the bell sounded for the start of the round at

15:00

immediately

lost by

default. It did not matter if you were sprinting through the playing hall to get to your seat, same result. There was an overwhelming feeling from players and captains that while the previous 1 hour tolerance was too long, something like 15 minutes with a penalty would be more appropriate. While the objective of appearing professional to sponsors and spectators by having everyone seated and ready to play on time is a laudable one, there are simply too many things that can



go wrong in an event of this scale, with so many players spread out over a large city trying to get to the event on time.

Some of the other rule changes while more subtle had a collective impact on the Swiss pairings and draws which were not anticipated. This most likely affected some final placings in the event, and certainly impacted the NZ team outcome. The general feeling was that there were too many rule changes at once and that it was very difficult to determine exactly what was causing which effect.

The NZ teams in Dresden were accommodated in the 4 star Steigenberger Hotel, which is located about 10 km or 25 minutes by tram from the playing venue in central Dresden. While this was an attractive and comfortable hotel set in a backdrop of vineyards on hills above the Elbe, it did introduce logistical challenges in terms of transport and the extra time involved in getting to and from the venue daily. After a spectacular 'show on ice' opening ceremony it was time to get down to the serious business of playing chess.

For the 71<sup>st</sup> seeded Open team of GM Murray Chandler, IM Russell Dive, FM Bob Smith, FM Roger Nokes, and FM Stephen Lukey this was an event of definite highs and lows. With both Murray and Bob suffering from colds at the start of the event it was decided that Murray would sit out the first round against 11th seeds Trinidad and Tobago, in order to get some time to recover. On paper NZ were expected to win this

match but were surprised by opposition who played above their ratings to win 3-1, with only Roger Nokes scoring a win. Rounds 2 saw a resounding win 4-0 against lower seeded Macau, followed by a Round 3 win against an under-rated Ethiopian team by 3-1.

These wins saw NZ drawn against 28<sup>th</sup> seeded Slovenia in round 4, which turned out to be one of the low points of the team's Olympiad. With several players feeling unwell and Bob Smith having the misfortune to fall foul of the unforgiving 'late arrival default' rule when the tram option he took didn't stop where he expected it to, NZ plunged to a 4-0 loss against highly ranked opposition. Despite the disappointment the team recovered well the next day to record a very satisfying 3-1 result against a well coached and prepared team from the United Arab Emirates. This turned out to be an excellent result as the UAE team went on to record some good results later against strong opposition.

By the first rest day most players had recovered their health although Russell felt unwell and had several sleepless nights. In playing terms we had had several bad days and three relatively good days. Round 6 after the rest day was another good 3-1 victory against under-rated opposition Pakistan. Round 7 found NZ drawn against the strong Europeans Bosnia and Herzegovina, and producing one of the best team results in our Olympiad history. Murray defeated GM Nikolic, Russell lost to GM Predojevic, Roger drew with GM Saric,

and Stephen defeated IM Stojanovic, for a final result NZL 2.5 – BIH 1.5. This was a stunning and satisfying result featuring several attractive wins by NZ players. This result was also another turning point in the event for the team.

Because of the vagaries of the Swiss draw we now found ourselves on 5<sup>th</sup> board paired against the star studded 2<sup>nd</sup> ranked Ukraine team led by super GM Vassily Ivanchuk. While this was a tremendous thrill for the team we also had several players in reach of personal milestones with Roger needing only a half point from the next three rounds for an IM norm, and Stephen still a theoretical chance of a norm result. In addition several players who had a bad start to the event needed a positive result to turn around their fortunes. The four very tough rounds to the finish unfortunately made this difficult to achieve.

A 0-4 loss to Ukraine was followed by a similar result against the all GM Georgian team in round 9. Round 10 found us losing .5-3.5 against a higher ranked and strong Turkish team with Murray scoring the solitary half point. In round 11 we finished off with a 1-3 loss to Brazil with Murray again scoring the point after catching GM Darcy Lima in an opening trap. The final placing of 97<sup>th</sup> did not seem to be a fair reflection of the quality of the chess played by the team, and was probably unduly influenced by the patterns of a draw which saw us play few teams of a similar strength and seeding.

## Women's Team Exceed Ranking

The 76<sup>th</sup> seeded NZ Women's team of WFM Helen Milligan, WFM Sue Maroroa, Judy Gao, WCM Vivian Smith, and WFM Natasha Fairley, under the leadership of captain John McDonald, could be very pleased with a highly creditable 62<sup>nd</sup> placing. All players contributed to some fine match performances culminating in an excellent last round 3.5-.5 win over Wales. Viv Smith capped off a good Olympiad by achieving a deserved WFM result. Experienced international player Helen Milligan, playing for the first time under a NZ flag after a number of years representing Scotland, performed well on board 1 for a good result against a very strong field, while first time Olympian Judy Gao also scored well on board 3.

NZ started with a comfortable 4-0 win over Aruba in round 1, followed by two tough rounds against Estonia (lost .5-3.5) and England (lost 0-4) in rounds 2 and 3 respectively. A 2-2 draw against the higher seeded Dominican Republic in round 4 was followed by a .5-3.5 loss to the Philippines in round 5, and a 4-0 win over Yemen in round 6. Round 7 saw a .5-3.5 loss to a 41<sup>st</sup> seeded Luxembourg team, followed by an emphatic 3.5-.5 win over Iraq in round 8, and a 1-3 loss to Iceland in round 9. The event was finished with a 4-0 win over Libya and the afore-mentioned win over Wales. This was a very fine overall result and continues the trend of improvement in

performances by NZ women's teams in recent Olympiads.

Final placings in the Open tournament saw Armenia repeat their success from 2006, followed by Israel, USA, and Ukraine, with the highly fancied top seeds Russia in a disappointing 5<sup>th</sup> place. Our trans-tasman neighbours Australia finished in 59<sup>th</sup> place after trailing NZ for the first 8 rounds. In the overall Women's competition Georgia edged out 2006 winners Ukraine on tiebreak, followed by USA and Russia. The Australian women finished a place below NZ in 63<sup>rd</sup>.

## History of Chess

### '...Nor Iron bars a Cage'

#### **Chess in a POW camp**

**By George Trundle**

*On February 8 George Trundle became the first recipient of the new NZCF 'President's Award' for services to chess, receiving this well deserved recognition from NZCF President Paul Spiller. George has been a supporter of chess since he learnt to play in a World War 2 Prisoner of War Camp. George tells the story in the following article, which first appeared in 'NZ Chessplayer' in 1948 - Ed*

**D**uring our 500 mile march across Germany in the Spring of 1945, about the only personal possession I neither traded nor jettisoned on the road was a tattered exercise book, containing the records of chess games and tournaments played in Stalag VII A

Ten months previously I had no knowledge of the game and regarded it as a dull way of killing time. Came the day I insulted a chess player who bored me with his incessant chatter. "Show me how these thing move and I'll clean you up myself" I jibed. We played ten games without a break and just before "lights out" the same night I won my first victory. He never beat me again.

That morning I had risen as a miserable P.O.W. That night I went to bed as a chess player, no longer a prisoner. I had gained something that cannot be imprisoned.

Out of the 1000 British N.C.O.s in our camp at least 250 learned the game and played constantly. I have seen 'hard types' whom one would least associate with the game get up at 6am in the freezing Silesian winter to resume the battle. We had three matches with the French compound, drawing 5-5: in every case we lost the five top boards and won the rest. Playing top board was Bush Hooker, present champion of the Cambridge Chess Club.

One day I strolled into a Yugoslav hut

and sat down to a game with a Serb. He drew black but took the first move by playing both Rook's pawns one square each! Although dumbfounded, I kept my head. Seizing my two centre Pawns firmly I planted them simultaneously on K4 and Q4. The game then proceeded calmly, one move at a time – for 13 moves!

The camp champion was a Franco-Prussian, Antole Charovkine, of Paris, formerly of Odessa, an electrical engineer. He gave many fine simuls and blindfold displays and greatly encouraged beginners. I was fortunate in being his special protege.

*(George concludes with a game from the POW camp tournament, which is on the NZ Chess Website [www.nzchessmag.com](http://www.nzchessmag.com) - Ed)*

## From the Kingside

### ***The Ratings Myth***

By Roger Nokes

**C**hess ratings are wonderful things. They add order to our chess world. Those wonderful four digit numbers convey to me, and the world at large, just how good I am at the game. Club players beware. Grandmasters don't sweat it. Imagine

**participating in a chess tournament where ratings are absent. We would have no idea whether the 13 year old sitting across the board from us is a chess prodigy or a novice. We would have no way to judge, unless we had seen them play before, whether today's game should be a walk-over or a drubbing.**

What is it about the current age that has us so obsessed with numerical measures of everything, whether it is the approval rating of an unpopular US president, the economy rate of a one-day bowler, or the likelihood of having a car crash while talking on our cell-phone? We want numbers. We want certitude. This need is reflected in sports of all types - golf, rugby, cricket and of course our beloved chess. The published results of tournaments now often include the current rating of each player, their rating performance and the increase or decrease in rating that will result from their tournament performance. While FIDE publishes rating lists at regular intervals, there are websites that publish the ratings of the world's elite players on a game by game basis. One day Topalov is the world number one, a week later it is Magnus Carlsen. Numbers alone, are not enough. They must be the absolutely current!

Changes to the rating system were debated and agreed at the recent FIDE congress in Dresden. Changes to weighting factors are on the horizon that will ensure that the rating system is more responsive. In other words your rating will move up and down more rapidly on

the basis of good or bad tournament results. While such changes will affect those four digit numbers that appear to be so important to us, will they actually change the reality of how we play chess?

Actually it was at the recent Chess Olympiad in Dresden that I got to thinking more about the meaning of chess ratings. At this supreme chess festival there were hundreds and hundreds of games being played at once, and sure enough every round saw its share of “upsets”. Players losing to, or drawing with, opponents rated many tens or hundreds of points below them. Don't our ratings preclude such nonsense? Don't they tell us the logical outcome of a game? The answer, of course, is that they don't and never will. Chess ratings are a crude, single figure measure of our chess ability. They are as meaningful as attaching a single number to any complex human characteristic or activity.

It is fascinating to think about what information a chess rating does and does not convey. From a purely technical perspective your FIDE rating is an average measure of your chess performances over a given period. When two chess players meet, the difference in rating is designed to provide the probability of one player beating the other. But remember such probabilities are only meaningful over a large number of games. At the level of an individual game the result is unpredictable. Your rating is a statistical measure of your chess ability, and like any statistical quantity the average alone is not

sufficient. Another important statistical measure, known as the standard deviation, is the piece of information that explains the chess phenomenon of the “upset”. In non-technical terms it measures how much a statistical quantity varies about its average. From a chess perspective the standard deviation of your chess rating would indicate if you play like a 2000 player sometimes but like a 2400 player at others. Those players with a large standard deviation would demonstrate wildly fluctuating performances, and are much more likely to have the occasional upset over a much stronger player, while those with a very small standard deviation would be very consistent, always playing like a 2200 player for example. Wouldn't it be fascinating if this standard deviation was also published alongside the FIDE rating?

Even this idea has some interesting dimensions because chess is not like rolling a dice. For example your 2400 performances might correspond with you playing white while your 2000 performances occur with black. Such characteristics are common in chess folklore. Lajos Portisch, the great Hungarian Grandmaster who was a world championship contender in the 60s and 70s, enjoyed a reputation of being incredibly well prepared and almost invincible as white, while with black his performances were rather less impressive. Even at my level there are times when you just feel good with one colour. It might be a confidence thing, or it might be because you happen to have

your opening repertoire with one colour more sorted than that with the other. Of course there are other factors that affect the outcome of a particular game - is the position of a type at which you excel, is your opponent someone who you always beat, are the tournament conditions to your liking? The list, of course, goes on and on.

Perhaps this concept of the variability, or standard deviation, of your chess rating is worth more than a passing thought. I suggest it might be a way to assess and improve your chess performance. If there is some common thread to the games in which you play below your rating then this aspect of your game should be identified and routed out or improved. Likewise the common themes in your strong performances should provide you with guidance on what to strive for in future games. Of course this is something that we might do subconsciously but I wonder how many players in the amateur ranks do this conscious critique of their playing style and technique.

My games at the recent Kaikoura Chess International and the Dresden Olympiad have encouraged me (finally after 35 years!) to dig deep into the reasons for my defeats, or suboptimal, performances. This honest evaluation has led me to the conclusion, not universal but common enough to be valuable, that impatience in tense and slightly inferior positions is a serious flaw in my style. No doubt this can be attributed to my naturally active approach to the game. In any case it is something I am convinced that can be

rectified and will lead to the partial elimination of my below par performances. Roll on the next tournament! I suggest you might find such an analysis of your own games could lead to an important step forward in your chess development. Look at the games in any chess tournament and you will find examples of the “upset”. Recently while looking at the games in the annual Gibtelecom tournament in Gibraltar I came across the following. It would rate as an extreme example of the phenomenon and it would be intriguing to ask GM Kotronias what happened during the game that led to the surprise result. Was it simply overconfidence?

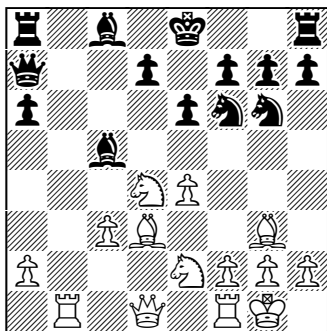
**Vasilios Kotronias (2603) - Olga Kozlov (2187) [B43]**

Gibtelecom Caleta ENG (9), 04.02.2009

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.Nc3 b5** I have had some unpleasant experiences with this variation of the Kan Sicilian. Black presents no immediate targets, neglects her development, and looks to mount pressure on the a7-g1 diagonal as well as on the e4 pawn. **6.Bd3 Qb6 7.Be3 Bc5 8.Nce2 Nc6 9.c3 b4 10.0-0** White's lead in development continues to grow and for the moment the pressure on the black diagonal is contained. White will receive an isolated pawn on the c file but at present it doesn't appear to be a serious weakness and it does provide White with some activity on the b file. However, having said that, to someone who likes playing the White side of the Open Sicilian, this position is not altogether to my taste. I would much to prefer to have some clear targets – a knight on f6 that will encourage

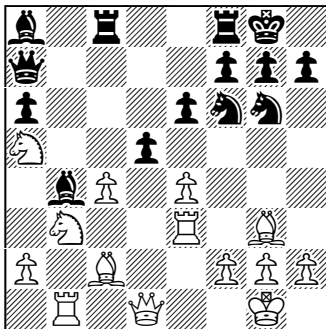


a pawn expansion on the kingside once Black has castled into this area, or a weak pawn on e6 that will provide a hook for the f4-f5 advance. Alas in this position these targets are absent and Black retains a certain flexibility in how she might respond to White's expansionist plans. This is not to say that Black is better, only that the White position is not to my taste. I suspect I would play it less well than other Open Sicilian positions. Perhaps the same can be said of Kotronias. **10...bxc3 11.bxc3 Ne5 12.Rb1 Qa7 13.Bf4 Ng6 14.Bg3 Nf6**



**15.Nc1?!** [This moved surprised me! Black's two knights on f6 and g6 now provide White with clear targets on the kingside so it would seem logical to prepare the f4 advance (or perhaps h4). Unfortunately the repositioning of the black squared bishop on g3 is rather awkward and the move played seems to have two aims. Firstly to simply stop a possible Nh5 thus eliminating the bishop in question, and secondly to redeploy the knight to b3 and perhaps a5 to disrupt the potential Black bishop pair stationed on the two key diagonals mentioned previously. The first aim seems reasonable, but the

second looks a little artificial. More natural moves would be 15.Nf4 or 15.Nb3] **15...0-0 16.Bc2?!** After this rather unambitious move any advantage White may have retained from the opening looks to have dissipated. After Black's next move it is White who lags in development and is suffering considerable pressure on those two key diagonals. In return White has little activity. An outpost for a knight on a5 seems measly compensation. What is Kotronias thinking? "I'm playing a 2100 player so I will win in the end"? **16...Bb7** [Perhaps it is more accurate to restrain the e5 advance with the modest move 16...d6 before completing her development.] **17.Re1 Rac8** [17...d5 is probably a more energetic continuation. A possible line is 18.Ncb3 Bb6 19.e5 Ne4 with a complex game ahead. Then 20.Bxe4 dxe4 21.Nd2 Rfd8 22.Nxe4 Bxd4 23.cxd4 Rxd4 looks better for Black.] **18.Ncb3 Be7 19.Na5 Ba8 20.c4** Perhaps this is the position Kotronias was contemplating when he chose to redeploy the knight from e2. He has been able to advance the c pawn so that it can help to restrain d5 and it in turn is supported by the virtually unassailable knight on a5. But in achieving these aims he has compromised his position in other ways. In particular the a7-g1 diagonal has been seriously weakened. The black squared bishop is now far away and the c3 pawn has neglected its duty of protecting d4. This game is about the control of this diagonal and Black's next reestablishes her dominance of this strategic factor. It seems to me that White's position is teetering, and even a 2600 GM must be feeling rather nervous even against a player rated over 400 points less than him. **20...Bc5 21.Ndb3 Bb4 22.Re3 d5!?**



[My silicon friend is understandably very enthusiastic about the move 22...e5! after which White finds himself in a terrible tangle. Look at the awkward positions of the two knights, and the inactivity of the bishop on g3. However one can understand Black's reticence in releasing control of d5 and the associated pawn break. The move played hopes to blast open the centre and take advantage of the inharmonious placements of the white pieces.] **23.exd5 exd5 24.Bf5?!** [This move is fine if Black is obliged to move the rook from c8. But due to tactical factors associated with the two white knights Black can simply ignore the threat. An improvement, but not by much, is to play 24.a3 first deflecting the bishop from b4 where it attacks the a5 knight. In that case Black wins a pawn and is at liberty to move the rook after 24...Bxa3 25.Bf5 Rce8] **24...dxc4 25.Bxc8 cxb3** Now White cannot avoid the loss of two minor pieces for a rook, and the compensation is non-existent. In fact the minor pieces dominate the board and the end is mercifully quick. **26.Rbxb3 Bxa5 27.Bb8 Qc5 28.Bxa6 Nd5 29.Rg3 Bb6** and White drops more material. What is the answer to the riddle here? How did Black,

a modest 2187 player, destroy a 2600 GM in only 29 moves with Black. We can't know the answer. It might in fact have been that Kotronias was ill or some other external factor affected his play. But it is important to note that he did not blunder in this game. He was simply, steadily outplayed by a much weaker opponent. Bravo for the fallibility of chess ratings!

0-1

## Bills Puzzles Solutions

**Nyberg – Anton) 1...Nf4!** Now black has two threats. In the game black defended with 1...g6 instead and eventually lost. **2.Rxb5 Ne2+ 3.Kh2** (If 3..Kf1 Nxd4 4.Re5 Rc1+ 5.Re1 Bxg2+) **3...axb5 4.Rd2 bxc4 5.Rxe2 cxb3** and Black has two extra pawns, including a strong advanced passer, and much more active pieces.

**Guo – Armstrong) 1.Nxg7!** The N is immune since if 1...Rxg7 2.Qe8 mates **1...Kf8 2.Nxe6+ Bxe6 3.Qxe6** White's material advantage and Black's exposed king are much more important than Black's advanced central pawns, white won quickly.

**Levi – Armstrong) 1...Nxe5!** White had just played his queen to an unfortunate square, this exploits this to win material **2.Qxc7+ Qxc7 3.Rxc7 Nxf3+ 4.Kg2 Nxh4+ 5.gxh4 Rxc7** Black has won an exchange and two pawns and went on to win easily

**Tan – Baider) 1.Bb5+! Kc8** (If 2...Ke7 3.Qc5+ Rd6 4.Qxc7+) **2.Rxd5** and black resigned in view of 3.Qa8# or 3.Ba6#

**Van der Elburg – Brown) 1...Rxf1+! 2.Kh2** (if 2.Kxf1 h2 queens) **Rxf2** and black soon exploited his extra piece.

# 2009 Queenstown Classic -Images



Top Left: Angelo Tsagarakis CL: NZ reps pose; BL: Gavin Marner and Mike Steadman; Top Right: Paul Spiller and junior; CR: Max Illingworth and Mum; BR: Gawain Jones, E Zicklebein, H Yeten, Alina Motoc at buffet.



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