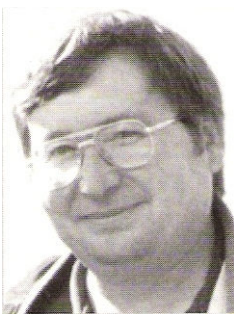




The Check Is in the Mail

May 2007

John Knudsen wins Iowa Title



Scoring an undefeated 7-1, John Knudsen powered his way to win the 2006 Iowa State Correspondence Championship. Other positions were undecided at press time. John, playing from Germany, powerfully marked his return to domestic play after achieving an SIM title.

GAME OF THE MONTH

SIM John Knudsen shows his form in the Iowa Championship. White's 32nd and 33rd moves are crushing.

FRENCH DEFENSE (C18)
White: John Knudsen (2356)
Black: Shawn Kmetz (2016)
Iowa State CC, 2007

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Ne7 7.Qg4 0-0 8.Bd3 f5

9.exf6 Rxf6 10.Bg5 Rf7 11.Qh5 g6 12.Qd1
Knudsen has played this line twice as Black with 12...Nbc6

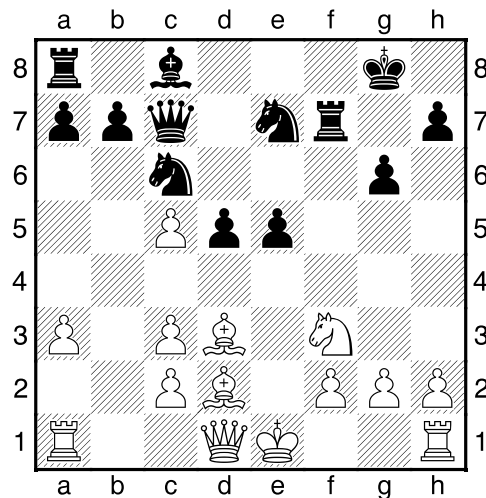
12...Qa5

Kinderman's move, easier and more fun than the also-satisfactory line with 12...Nbc6 13. Nf3 Qf8 (Watson) The 12...Qa5 line is played a lot more by postal than OTB, for whatever reason.

13.Bd2 Nbc6 14.Nf3 Qc7 15.dxc5

White willingly takes on a shattered queenside to keep the Bishops in open lines. If Black could play ...c4 here, he would have some chance for an advantage After 15. 00 e5, the game was quickly drawn in Offenbom-Koetsler, Corres. 2001.

15...e5



Black's center looks fierce, but now Knudsen shows what the M in IM stands for as he undermines Black's center leaving him with scattered pieces.

16.Ng5 Rf8 17.c4 e4 18.cxd5 exd3 19.d6!

This is much better than taking the c6 Knight -- 19. dxc6 Qe5+ 20. Kf1 dxc2 21. Qe1 Nxc6 22. Qxe5 Nxe5 with advantage to Black.

19...Qd7 20.dxe7 Qxe7+ 21.Be3 Rf5

More common is 21...h6 22. Nf3 Kh7 as in Carroll-Neven, corres. 2005 The text is designed not to weaken the kingside.

22.Nf3

An alternative idea is 22. h4!? h6 23. Nf3 Be6 and now cxd3 or Qxd3.

22...dxc2?!

In PLAY THE FRENCH by Watson, 22...Be6 23. 00 Bd5 24. Nd2 Rh5! is given. Black's choice looks too greedy.

23.Qxc2

Black's beautiful center has evaporated and his only compensation is his active pieces. White will now consolidate and use his extra Pawn.

23...Be6 24.0-0 Bd5 25.Nd2 Qh4

The problem facing Black is that there is no sign of weakness in the White formation, and so his active pieces have little to do. Kmetz does the best he can, threatening 26 ...Rh5 27. h3 Bxg2!

26.Rfe1 Rh5 27.Nf1

White has defended h2 without weakening his King's position. Undaunted, Kmetz summons more pieces toward the White King.

27...Ne5 28.f3

White has to move a King-shield Pawn, but it is the f3 Pawn

28...Rf8

Black brings in his entire army and avoids the tempting, but unsound, 28...Bxf3?! 29. Qb3+ Kf8 30. Nf2 Qg4 31. Ng3 Bc6 32. Qd1! Qxd1 33. Rxd1 Rg5 34. h4 with a winning ending.

29.Qf2

The White King simply has too many friends around him for Black's attack to succeed. Black's attack has reached its height, and now comes the painful retreat.

29...Qc4 30.Qe2 Qa4 31.Qd2 Nc4

The tempting 31...Bxf3 is met by 32. Ng3! with a big edge to White, but Black's choice is no better.

32.Qd4 Bc6 33.Bh6!

Beautiful! With the bulk of Black's army clumped on the queenside, suddenly White's counterattack becomes operative and the initiative passes to White.

33...Rxb6 34.Re7 Rf7 35.Rxf7 Kxf7 36.Qf4+ Kg7 37.Re1

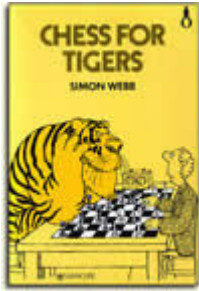
Black has no good answer to the threat of Re7+ The rest is just a death throe.

37...Ne3 38.Qe5+ Kg8 39.Nxe3

White's army is strategically centralized. Black's is not, which is why the game now ends abruptly.

39...Rh5 40.Qe6+ Kg7 41.Qe7+ Kg8 42.Ng4 1-0

Simon Webb Tournament Started



Simon Webb, Correspondence Chess Grandmaster, was born on June 10, 1949. He died on March 14, 2005, aged 55. Perhaps Webb is most famous for his

excellent book *Chess for Tigers* which is about psychological preparation. If you are not familiar with this book, buy it! It may well help your game, both OTB and correspondence.

The participants include some real tigers – or perhaps thirteen heffalumps – of the correspondence jungles. The USA is represented by former World Champion Vytas (Victor) Palciauskas. Canada is represented by the highest-rated participant, Wolfram Schhon at 2685. Another former World Champion, Grigory Sanakoev is representing Russia. The vanquisher of the computer Hydra, Arno Nickel (2602) represents Germany as does Frank Gerhardt. There are three British representatives, as benefits the host country. GM Ian Brooks is known to readers of this column. Peter Coleman and the lone non-GM, SM John Pugh make up the rest of the Brit trio. Other 2600+ rated GMs include Raymond Boger (Norway) Conny Persson (Sweden) Roman Chytilek (Czech Republic) and Guillermo Toro Solis de Ovando (Chile). Michiel Plomp at 2597 plays for the Netherlands. It is quite a tournament and interested viewers can follow the games at www.iccf.com

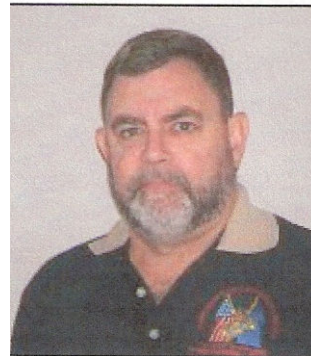
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Hi, Alex,

I have been away from correspondence chess for a while. This new email chess [Walter Muir eQuads] on a webserver is the bomb! So wonderful to practically cut out annoying errors and focus on playing chess.

Ray Sollars

2005 ABSOLUTE TOURNAMENT



IM Keith Rodriguez will be a hard man to catch in the 2005 Absolute. Keith has finished his schedule with a 9-4 score, 6 wins, six draws, and one loss (to Corky Schakel). Not too many other contestants can overtake Keith in this classic battle.

Incidentally, the 2004 Absolute is still too close to call.

It may be too early to celebrate a Rodriguez victory, but it is not too early to take a look at one of his six victories from the 2005 Absolute.

IM Rodriguez demonstrates how a mobile Queen (and three passed Pawns) can defeat a Bishop, Knight and a Rook that trip over one another.

RAT OPENING (B06)

White: IM Keith Rodriguez (2331)

Black: Boris Ratner (2407)

2005 Absolute, 2007

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.f4 a6 5.Nf3 b5 6.Bd3 Nd7 7.e5 c5 8.Be4 Rb8 9.0-0 cxd4 10.Nxd4 Bb7 11.exd6 Qb6 12.Be3 Qxd6 13.Bxb7 Rxb7 14.Re1 Ngf6 15.Qf3 Rb6 16.Rad1 Qc7 17.Bf2 e6 18.f5 e5 19.Qa8+ Nb8 20.Ndx5 Rxb5 21.Nxb5 axb5 22.Re3 b4 23.Rxe5+ Qxe5 24.Re1 Qxe1+ 25.Bxe1 0-0 26.Bxb4 Re8 27.Bc3 gxf5 28.Bxf6 Bxf6 29.b4 Bd4+ 30.Kf1 Kf8 31.b5 Be5 32.Qa3+ Re7 33.c4 f6 34.c5 Nd7 35.Qa8+ Kg7 36.Qd8 1-0

THE RATINGS ARE HERE!

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On Friday, 13 April, the Correspondence Chess ratings were finally online at www.uschess.org The USCF programmer has informed me that ratings on Chess Life labels are not far behind. There are also plans for possibly postcards to be sent out for those without email, and for those with email, notification of your new ratings may soon be in your mailbox.

Here, then, are the top 25 rated USCF postal players as of 1 January 2007 with established ratings. I have to omit Kennedith Martin-el at the top of the list with 2535 based on 2 games (Keep that rating up, Kennedith !) John Ward at 2492 based on 11 games and John Gragg 2404 based on 9 games, John Valentine 2359/12, James Guymon 2349/9, Stewart Gissin 2344/10, Mario Carines 2308/1, Donald Smith 2301/10

USCF TOP 50 FOR 2006

John Burton	2493
Donald Cotton	2474
Wesley Brandhorst	2467
Douglas Walls	2462
Chuck Cullum	2452
Chris O'Connell	2450
Edward Duliba	2444
Richard Title	2440
Corky Schakel	2439
Gino Figlio	2434
Joseph Schwing	2428
John Menke	2422
Randy Cook	2411
Boris Ratner	2408
Ciaran O'Hare	2405
Bleys Rose	2405
Robert Keating	2405
Lawrence Coplin	2402
Walter Brower	2399
William Gray	2397
David Greene	2395
Robert Jacobs	2384
David Novak	2382
Hugo Concha	2378
Abe Wilson	2372
Edgardo Limayo	2371
William Boucher	2366
Mark Robledo, Sr.	2365
Peter Cullen	2364
Peter Swan	2364
Joel Levine	2362
Keith Rodriguez	2357
Gordon Everitt	2356
Gary Adams	2356
William Schlifke	2354
John Knudsen	2350
Kristo Miettinen	2349
Guido Stueber	2342
Wesley Gales	2342
Gardner Johnson	2331
Gerald Weiner	2330
Dana Daves	2328
James Tracz	2326
Patrick Ryan	2326

Donald Schultheis 2319
Thomas Langland 2314
Eric Fischvogt 2307
Joseph Shipman 2307
Sanford Greene 2303
Roy Tate 2301

APRIL WINNERS

JOHN COLLINS

Maya Kovalenker 04CC50 5-1
Lonnie Mosley 05CD21 4½-1½

VICTOR PALCIAUSKAS

Robert Kelo 06P01 6-0

TROPHY QUAD

Thomas Langland 04QM29 5½-½
Chris Hunt 05Q28 5 ½-½

EXPRESS TOURNAMENT

Ron Manis 06ET06 6-0
A. J. Kain 07ET01 6-0

WALTER MUIR

David Sky 07W02 5 ½-½

SWIFT QUAD

Anthony Ragan 06SQ10 6-0
Herbert Vaughn 07SQ01 5 ½-½
Wilbur Tseng 07SQ02 5 ½-½

WEB WATCH

I would like to recommend you visit a pleasant site for playing free webserver chess. www.chessbymessage.com
George Bailey of Australia was

free email chess server motivated to build Chess by Message because many free email servers are both visually unpleasant and limited in features. George's announced goal is to create and maintain the most fully featured email chess server on the Internet.

At the moment Chess by Message is easy to use, relying on a mouse click and drag to move the pieces. It has replay ability and you can download your game in PGN format.

George has announced he plans some new developments shortly – a listing of registered opponents looking for games, optional game time limits (e.g. 30 days per game) player ratings are among his major plans. Chess by Message has been online for only a few months, and George has already moved to a bigger and better ISP. I played both on the old system and the new one without any difficulties other than the struggle my opponent put up.

Check this site out!

www.chessbymessage.com

Quote: “Members are requested NOT (repeat NOT) to submit games for publication in the Algebraic Notation. We have to empty our wastebaskets twice a week as it is.” Chess Correspondent, May 1973.

CLASSIFIED ADS

LEARN CHESS BY MAIL ! Lessons given by mail, telephone, ICC – many different ways. I specialize in players rated 800-2100 who would like to improve their game. Contact me for information. Alex Dunne, 324 West Lockhart St., Sayre, PA 18840 or alex.dunne@cqservices.com

MASTER CERTIFICATES

Now that the ratings have been brought up to date, there are probably a lot of first-time Masters in our list. If you are one of the first-time Masters and would like the appropriate Master certificate, drop me a line and I will be glad to send you the certificate.

Robert Fass shows some strong technique in this win. The breakthrough at the end is elegant if unplayed – 37. Be4 b3! 38. axb3 a3 39. Kxc3 a2 40. Kxc4 a1(Q) will win.

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B20)

White: John Stopa (2088)

Black: Robert Fass (2253)

2006 Electronic Knights

1.e4 c5 2.Na3 a6 3.g3 Nc6 4.Bg2 Nf6
5.Ne2 e5 6.0–0 h5 7.Nc4 d6 8.d3 Be7
9.Bg5 b5 10.Ne3 Ng4 11.Bxe7 Nxe7
12.Qd2 h4 13.f3 Nxe3 14.Qxe3 Nc6
15.c3 Be6 16.d4 cxd4 17.cxd4 Bc4
18.dxe5 Bxe2 19.Rfc1 Bc4 20.b3 Nxe5
21.bxc4 Nxc4 22.Qd4 hxg3 23.hxg3
Qg5 24.Kf2 Rd8 25.Rh1 Rxh1 26.Rxh1
Qc5 27.Rd1 Ke7 28.Bf1 Na3 29.Qxc5
dxc5 30.Rxd8 Kxd8 31.Ke3 a5 32.e5 a4
33.f4 b4 34.Kd2 c4 35.Bg2 c3+ 36.Kd3
Nc4 0–1

There is a certain fatalistic inevitability about this game, as if Black were predestined to lose after Move 5.

ENGLISH OPENING (A37)

White: Walter Brower (2390)

Black: Jeffrey Sellers (2034)

2006 Electronic Knights 2007

1.c4 c5 2.g3 g6 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.Nc3 Nc6
5.a3 d6 6.Rb1 a5 7.Nf3 e5 8.0–0 Nge7
9.d3 0–0 10.Bd2 Rb8 11.Re1 h6 12.Qc1

Kh7 13.b3 Be6 14.Nh4 Qd7 15.Nd5 g5
16.Nf3 f5 17.Bc3 b6 18.Nd2 Bf7
19.Nxe7 Nxe7 20.b4 axb4 21.axb4 f4
22.bxc5 bxc5 23.Ra1 Nf5 24.Ra6 Bh5
25.Qa1 Kh8 26.Bh3 g4 27.Bg2 fxg3
28.hxg3 Nd4 29.Bxd4 exd4 30.Ne4 d5
31.Rd6 Qf7 32.Rxd5 Bg6 33.Rf1 Qe7
34.Qa3 Bxe4 35.Bxe4 Rbc8 36.Qa6 Bf6
37.Rh5 Kg7 38.Kg2 Rcd8 39.Rfh1 Rd6
40.Qa5 Be5 41.R1h4 Rdf6 42.Rxg4+
Kf7 43.Qb5 Rd8 44.Rxe5 1–0

This is how they must have played chess in the days of the wild west, or, perhaps, how the first manned expedition to Mars will play the game.

DUTCH DEFENSE (A85)

White: Bernard Miller (1890)

Black: Corky Schakel (2402)

2007 Electronic Knights

1.d4 f5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.g3 Bb4
5.Bd2 0–0 6.Bg2 d6 7.Qb3 c5 8.e3 Nc6
9.dxc5 Bxc5 10.Na4 Ne4 11.Qd3 Ne5
12.Qc2 Nxd2 13.Kxd2 Bb4+ 14.Ke2
Bd7 15.Nf3 Bc6 16.Nxe5 Bxg2 17.Rhg1
Be4 18.Nd3 Qg5 19.a3 Qg4+ 20.Kf1 f4
21.exf4 Rxf4 22.b3 Qh3+ 23.Ke2 Bf3+
24.Ke3 Re4+ 25.Kxf3 Rf8+ 26.Kxe4
Qf5+ 27.Ke3 Qf3+ 28.Kd4 e5+ 29.Nxe5
dxe5+ 30.Kxe5 Re8+ 31.Kd4 Qg4+
32.f4 Qd7# 0–1