



# Check is in the Mail

by FIDE Master Alex Dunne

## Sweat Equity is the Key

Postal is hard work and takes time.

—Jeremy Silman

Keith Rodriguez learned chess at 11 years of age, and it has been a life-long interest since then having gained the titles of a Life Member of the USCF, a local USCF tournament director, a USCF Correspondence Master, and an ICCF Tournament Director. He rates his most notable achievements in correspondence play as 1) being a member of Postcards from the Edge, the 1996 USCF Correspondence Team Champions, 2) winning the Board 2 prize in the same team tournament, 3) winning his section in the XII World Cup Preliminary round and, 4) making the top-50 rating list of ICCF-US members. To these accomplishments, he can now add 5) being awarded the title of International Correspondence Chess Master. Keith has showed consistent strength, finishing second in the preliminary round of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> U.S. Championship, but he really flexed his muscles in the 30 Years of Correspondence Chess in Cuba Tournament where he scored an impressive 8.5 in the category VII event (average rating 2417) to earn his IM title, and a third-place finish in the recent 1st U.S. E-mail Championship Final.

He believes firmly in sweat equity: Putting the time and work into analyzing each position is what really counts. No matter what resources you may have at your disposal, it still comes down to your decision as to which path you take at any given point in that game, as in life.

### GAME OF THE MONTH

That "sweat equity" that Keith believes in may be translated into "Genius is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration." In this game the sweat is made into a work of art.

#### SICILIAN DEFENSE [B82]

W: IM Keith Rodriguez (2394)

B: Pedro Alzola Tovar (2313)

30 Years of CC in Cuba 2002

**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Qb6 5 Nb3 Nf6 6 Nc3 e6 7 Bd3 Be7 8 0-0 d6 9 Be3 Qc7 10 f4 a6 11 Qf3 0-0 12 a4 b6 13 g4**

White opts for all-out warfare across the board.

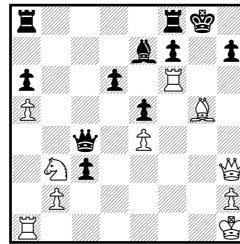
**13 ... Bb7 14 g5 Nd7 15 Qh3 Nb4 16 a5 Nxd3 17 cxd3 b5 18 f5 e5?**

And Black falters — after 18 ... exf5 19 exf5 Qd8 20 Qg3 Re8 it's anybody's game.

**19 f6 gxf6 20 gxf6 Nxf6 21 Bg5 b4 22 Rxf6!**

After 22 Bxf6 Bxf6 23 Rxf6 bxc3 allows Black to confuse the issue. Now if 22 ... Bxf6 23 Bxf6 and mate soon.

**22 ... bxc3 23 Kh1 Bxe4+ 24 dxe4 Qc4** (diagram)



after 24 ... Qc4

**25 Nc5!**

A gorgeous decisive move — e4 is guarded and the queen is deprived of either c8 or e4, in either case White's attack will be decisive.

**25 ... dxc5**

After 25 ... Qxc5 26 Be3 is a clear win.

**26 Qf5 Bxf6 27 Rg1 Qd4 28 Bxf6+ Qxg1+ 29 Kxg1 Rf8 30 Qg5+ Kf8 31 Qxe5 Rb7 32 Be7+ Ke8 33 Bg5+ Kd7 34 Qd5+ Kc7 35 Bf4+ Kc8 36 Qc6+, Black resigns.**

- My wife Colleen and I are now the administrators of the USCF Correspondence Division. I would like all my readers to wish us luck!

- Hans Berliner tells the story of how, in the months after he had won the 5<sup>th</sup> World Championship, he would wake up screaming because he dreamed he had entered the 6<sup>th</sup> World Championship while going to graduate school and didn't have time to make a move (Allan Savage's interview of Berliner in October 1997 Chess Mail).

- With the retirement of Josef Mrkvicka, the new ICCF Acting President is Max Zavanelli. We wish Max every success in his new post.

- The Absolute Project, an attempt to preserve the history of the USCF's strongest tournament, is progressing. To date there have been 28 Absolutes (1976-2003) totaling 2054 games, 737 of which we now have scores for (36%). The most active of the 140 different Absolute players have been 1) Ron Lifson (13 tournaments, 156 games), 2) Stephen Barbre (11 tournaments, 132 games) and, 3) N. Eric Pedersen (8 tournaments, 96 games). I would like to appeal to all Absolute players to send the scores of their games to me or e-mail them to Robert Rizzo to help complete the historical record.

- Helen and Jim Warren of the APCT have announced their retirement. We wish them a happy and long one. Their organization offered correspondence players financial incentives for many years.

- Patient defense slowly transforms into a decisive attack.

#### QUEEN'S INDIAN DEFENSE [E12]

W: Helmut Glaser (2490)

B: GM Robin Smith (2606)

ICCF 2003

**1 d4 Nf6 2 e4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 a3 Bb7 5 Nc3 d5 6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 Qc2 Nxc3 8 Qxc3 h6 9 Bf4 Bd6 10 Bg3 Nd7 11 e3 0-0 12 Bb5 Bxg3 13 hxg3 c6 14 Ba4 Qe7 15 Rh4 Rac8 16 Qd3 Rfd8 17 Bc2 Nf8 18 0-0-0? c5 19 Kb1 Rc7 20 Rd2 a6 21 Ne5 b5 22 Rf4 Qe8 23 Qe2 c4 24 e4 f6 25 Ng4 Qe7 26 Rf3 a5 27 Rc3 Ba6 28 e5 fxg3 29 Nxe5 b4 30 axb4 axb4 31 Rxc4 Bxc4 32 Nxc4 Qd7 33 b3 Qc8 34 Nb6 Qb7 35 Na4 Qd5 36 f4 Nd7 37 g4 Nf6 38 g3 Rc6 39 Rd1 Qa5 40 Kb2 Kf8 41 Bg6 Nd5 42 Qe5 Qa7 43 Ra1 Ne7 44 Be4 Ra6 45 Rd1 Ra5 46 Qxe6 Rxd4 47 Re1 Ra6 48 Qe5 Rad6 49 g5 Rd2+ 50 Bc2 Rc6 51 Kb1 Rxc2 52 gxh6 gxh6 53 Qf6+ Kg8, White resigns.**

- One of the rules of ICCF correspondence chess is that when a participant dies without completing half of his games in a tournament, all his scores are registered as zeroes, even if he had won or drawn. Master Robert Chalker died while the 15<sup>th</sup> USCCC Finals were being played. On the official record this game will be registered as a win for Black, for the rest of the world, here is an example of Robert Chalker's endgame skills.

RIP Robert Chalker.

#### NIMZOVICH DEFENSE [B00]

W: Robert Chalker (2393)

B: Alex Dunne (2306)

15 USCCC 2003

**1 e4 Nc6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 dxe4 4 d5 Ne5 5 Qd4 Ng6 6 Bb5+ Bd7 7 Bxd7+ Qxd7 8 Be3 Nf6 9 0-0-0 e5 10 dxe6 Qxe6 11 Nge2 Be7 12 Ng3 0-0 13 Ngxe4 Nxe4 14 Qxe4 Qxe4 15 Nxe4 Rfd8 16 Nc3 f5 17 g3 c6 18 Rxd8+ Bxd8 19 Rd1 Bf6 20 Rd7 b6 21 a4 Bxc3 22 bxc3 c5 23 Rd5 Rf8 24 a5 f4 25 gxf4 Rf6 26 Kb2 Nxf4 27 Rd8+ Kf7 28 Rd7+ Kg6 29 a6, Black resigns.**

- Many a Master game is lost because the losing side won a pawn. Ted Brandhorst gives an object lesson.

#### NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE [E32]

W: Richard Title (2435)

B: IM Ted Brandhorst (2448)

2003 Absolute Championship

**1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2**

0-0 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 c5 7 dxc5 Na6  
8 e3 Nxc5 9 Nge2 d5 10 0-0-0 Bd7  
11 cxd5 e5 12 Kb1 Rc8 13 g4 Na4  
14 f3 Qa5 15 Bxf6 Bxc3 16 Nxc3  
Rxc3 17 Qd2 Nxb2 18 Qxb2 gxf6  
19 e4 Rfc8 20 Bd3 Ba4 21 Rd2  
R8c5 22 Ka1 Bb3, White resigns.



**CORRESPONDENCE CHESS  
TOURNAMENT UPDATES  
FOR FEBRUARY 2005  
CONGRATULATIONS!  
TOURNAMENT WINNERS**

**TROPHY QUAD**

Martin Leutsschaft 03QC11 6-0

**JOHN COLLINS MEMORIAL CLASS**

Thomas Delahanty 03CM30 4½-1½  
Lewis L. Incze 02CB83 4½-1½

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**SWIFT QUAD**

Derrick C. Higgins 04SQ18 5½-1½



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XIV TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP (2005-2007)

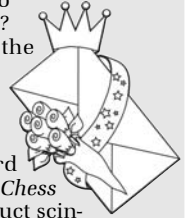
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Entries close 6/1/05, play starts 7/1/05

CCLA'S 95<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY JUBILEE EMAIL CHAMPIONSHIP  
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**POSTAL BEAUTY  
CONTEST**

Is it right that beauty is so often only its own reward? Surely not! And thanks to the generosity of Dr. Ronald Hames, the scales of justice have become more evenly balanced between how one wins and the hard fact of victory. For now in *Chess Life* the players who conduct scintillating games will receive the Hames Correspondence Game of the Year Awards. Resident postal editor Alex Dunne is the judge of a contest with prizes of \$100 for the best game by a master and \$100 for the best game by a non-master to appear in *Check is in the Mail* during a given year. What better reason, then, to send your postal brilliances to Alex Dunne?



You are invited to send me your comments, questions and correspondence games (with or without annotation). Because of the volume of mail, submissions cannot be returned, and personal replies are not possible.

**For Correspondence Chess Game Results, Time Complaints, Vacation notices, etc.** mail them to: Alex Dunne, PO Box 367, Sayre, PA 18840 or e-mail: [alex.dunne@cqservices.com](mailto:alex.dunne@cqservices.com)

**For Correspondence Chess Tournament Entries,** these **MUST** be mailed to: U.S. Chess Federation, Attn: Joan DuBois, 3068 US Rt. 9W, Suite #100, New Windsor, NY 12553

**CHECK OUT USCF'S CORRESPONDENCE CHESS RATED EVENTS**

**USCF's 58<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL**

2005 Open Correspondence Chess Golden Knights Championship

**\$1,500 First Prize**

(plus title of USCF's Golden Knights Champion and plaque)

• 2nd place \$800 • 3rd place \$600 • 4th place \$400 • 5th place \$200 • 6th thru 10th place \$100 each. **Entry fee: \$25.**

**The entry deadline is November 30, 2005.**

These USCF Correspondence Chess events are rated and open to all USCF members who reside on the North American continent, islands, or Hawaii, as well as those USCF members with an APO or FPO address. USCF members who reside outside of the North American continent are welcome to participate in e-mail events. Your USCF membership must remain current for the duration of the event, and entry fees must be paid in U.S. dollars. Those new to USCF Correspondence Chess, please estimate your strength: **Class A:** 1800-1999 (very strong); **Class B:** 1600-1799 (strong); **Class C:** 1400-1599 (intermediate); **Class D:** 1399 and below (beginner level). **Note:** Prize fund guaranteed (based on 400 entries) and will be increased or decreased proportionately per number of entries assigned.

**CORRESPONDENCE CHESS MATCHES (TWO PLAYERS)**

\* \$5 entry fee per person with two, four or six game options.

**WIN A CORRESPONDENCE CHESS TROPHY**

\* Four-player, double round-robin with class-level pairings. \* 1st place winner receives a trophy. \* **Entry fee: \$10.**

**VICTOR PALCIAUSKAS PRIZE TOURNAMENTS**

\* Seven-player class-level pairings, one game with each of six opponents. \* Players must have a USCF CC rating to enter. \* 1st-place winner receives \$130 cash prize and a certificate signed by Victor Palciauskas. \* **Entry fee: \$25.**

**JOHN W. COLLINS MEMORIAL CLASS TOURNAMENTS**

\* Four-player, double round-robin with class-level pairings (unrateds welcome). \* 1st-place winner receives a John W. Collins certificate. \* **Entry fee: \$7.**

**E-MAIL RATED EVENTS (NEED E-MAIL ACCESS):**

**LIGHTNING MATCH** \* Two players with two, four or six game option. \* **Entry fee \$5 per person.**

**Swift Quads** \* Four-player, double round-robin format. \* 1st-place prize merchandise credit of \$30. \* **Entry fee: \$10.**

**Express Tournament**

\* Seven-player events, one game with each of six opponents. \* Prizes: 1st place \$30 merchandise credit, 2nd place \$20 credit. \* **Entry fee: \$15.**

Please circle event(s) selected.



U.S. Chess Federation  
[www.uschess.org](http://www.uschess.org)



**USCF's 2<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL**

2005 E-mail Correspondence Chess

Electronic Knights Championship

(Seven-player sections, one game with each of six opponents.)

**\$1,500 First Prize**

(plus title of USCF's Electronic Knights Champion and plaque)

• 2nd place \$800 • 3rd place \$600 • 4th place \$400 • 5th place \$200 • 6th thru 10th place \$100 each. **Entry fee: \$25.**

**The entry deadline is November 30, 2005.**

These USCF Correspondence Chess events are rated and open to all USCF members with e-mail access. Your USCF membership must remain current for the duration of the event, and entry fees must be paid in U.S. dollars. Maximum number of tournament entries allowed for the year for each player is ten.

**Note:** Prize fund guaranteed (based on 400 entries) and will be increased or decreased proportionately per number of entries assigned.

**NOTE:** Except for Lightning Matches, Swift Quads and Express Tournaments, players will use post office mail, unless opponents agree to use e-mail.

To ENTER: 800-388-KING (5464) FAX 845-561-CHES (2437)

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 Check here if you do not wish to have an opponent who is incarcerated.  
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