



The Check Is in the Mail February 2009



MICHAEL PROOF – ICCM !

Michael Proof is our newest ICCM, having been awarded the title at the ICCF Congress in Mumbai. Michael has graciously shared some of his thoughts on achieving this title and correspondence chess.

Michael has been playing correspondence chess for about ten years and feels he still has much to learn and much to play. He loves reading about the lives of the players as much as the games they played, not just the greatest, but anyone bitten by the King bug, from Duchamp to Bogart.

Chess is the only game where the more he studies and learns, the more he realizes the less he knows.

Patience is not only a virtue, it is an absolute necessity. Only with his children has he developed more.

On Opening databases, he has discovered that creating his own specialized databases of high level recent games was more effective than using one or two large databases.

Michael observes a pet peeve in server play – the Dead Man’s Defense. He finds his opponent quick to respond with a favorable position, but when the reverse occurs, Michael often finds him taking four weeks (nearly the full time limit) for each move, just under the buzzer. The Dead Man’s Defense (so named because the offender hopes to win the game by having his opponent die) is alive and kicking.

While IM and SIM titles are hard to come by, Proof notes, the GM title is virtually unattainable. But he thinks this is how it should be. He believes that having the bar extremely high, as it is in CC, maintains its elite status.

GAME OF THE MONTH

Michael earned his final SIM norm in the 9th PanAm and has earned a spot on the US squad for the 18th Olympiad. Here is one example of how he did it against a player with a famous name.

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B81)

White: C. Revuelta Capablanca (2435)

Black: Michael Proof (2396)

9 PanAmerican Team 2007

**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6
5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 e6 7.g4 e5 8.Nf5 g6 9.g5
gxf5 10.exf5**

White has been having some success with this sacrificial line.

10...d5!?

But this may yet prove to be the antidote. Black uses his trump, the superior center, to offset White's development.

11.gxf6 d4 12.Bc4 Bxf5

Naturally an IM would avoid 12...dxc3? 13. Bxf7+! Kxf7 14. Qxd8 cxb2 (threat ...Bb4+)
15. Qd5+ and White wins.

13.Qh5 Qxf6 14.Nd5 Qg6 15.Qh4

This is a novelty in this position but it looks inadequate. White still has a lot of threats but Black's strong center is designed to keep White's pieces (especially his Rooks) out of the immediate fight. Now White's pieces have to tiptoe around the board while Black catches up in development.

15...Qc6 16.Nf6+ Kd8 17.Bd5 Qc5 18.Be4 Be6 19.Bd2 Be7

The threat of a discovered check is now stopped and Black has the better game.

20.0-0-0 Kc7 21.f4

White remains resourceful. He understands he must destroy Black's center before it can start to advance.

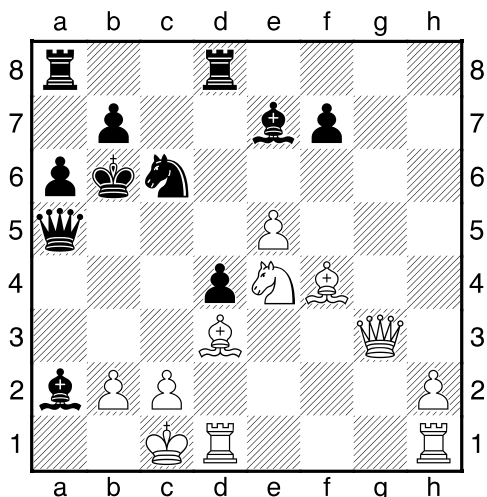
21...Bxa2 22.fxe5 Rd8 23.Bxh7 Nc6 24.Qg3

White has maintained material equality, but it is his King that is now unsafe and Black who has a lead in development.

24...Qb5!

Proof shows cheeky nerve in this game, twice allowing different discovered checks on his King, neither of which would help the White cause.

25.Bf4 Kb6 26.Bd3 Qa5 27.Ne4



White has brought his army to the center as his best defensive strategy. If Black wants the White King, he will have to fight his way through the center. White's h-Pawn has little bearing on the battle at this time, but if Black doesn't keep White busy, it will soon start to advance.

27...Nb4 28.Nd6!?

White has an interesting combinative idea here, but combinations flow from superior positions. Proof finds the flaw.

28...Bxd6 29.exd6 Bd5 30.d7 Rxd7 31.Bf5 Re8! 32.Rxd4

Too late White sees that 32. Bxd7 Na2+ 33. Kb1 Nc3+ 34. bxc3 Qa2+ 35. Kc1 Re2! leads to mate -- 36. Bc7+ Ka7 37. Bb6+ Ka8

32...Rde7 33.Rxb4+

White has to shed material -- 33. Rhd1 Qa1+ 34. Kd2 Re2+ 35. Kc3 Na2+ leads to mate.

33...Qxb4 34.Rd1 Qa4 35.Qf2+ Kc6 36.Qd4 Qxd4 37.Rxd4

Both Kings are now safe, but the endgame is lost for White. Black has only minor technical problems to overcome as the passed f-Pawn will prove decisive.

37...Kc5 38.Rd1 Re1 39.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 40.Kd2 Rf1 41.Be3+ Kd6 42.Bd3 Ra1 43.Bf4+ Ke6 44.c4 Bg2 45.Kc3 f5 46.c5 Bf1 47.Bc2 Bb5 48.Kd2 Rf1 49.Ke3 Bc6 50.Bd6 f4+! 51.Kd4 Rf2 52.Bd3 Rxb2 53.Bxf4 Rb4+ 54.Ke3 a5 55.Bg3 a4 0-1

TWO TIE IN 2006 ABSOLUTE

Walter Brower set the bar early (March) when he finished with an undefeated 8-4 score. As one player after another failed to match Walter's score, it looked as if it might be enough, but Laurence Anderson, at the beginning the lowest rated player, showed that race goes not only to the swift in chess, too. Laurence added four wins to his eight draws ("I keep being surprised how quickly these strong players offer a draw" – Anderson) to catch Brower and tie for first.

Ted Brandhorst finished all alone in third place with 7 ½-4 ½, his attempt at another first place Absolute finish squelched by a loss to Robert Jacobs.



Laurence Anderson of Foristell, MO

Joseph Shipman is one of the fiercest attackers on the absolute circuit. He is utterly fearless, an attitude that frequently brings him many points, but can also be exploited by careful positional players. Here Anderson defangs Black and wins the endgame.

SCOTCH GAME (C45)

White: Laurence Anderson (2231)

Black: Joseph Shipman (2283)

2006 Absolute

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4 Bc5 5.Nb3 Bb4+ 6.Bd2 a5 7.a3 Be7 8.Nc3 a4 9.Nc1 Nf6 10.Bb5 0-0 11.0-0 d5 12.exd5 Nxd5 13.Bxc6 bxc6 14.Nd3 Bf5 15.Re1 Bf6 16.Ne4 Re8 17.Qf3 Bxe4 18.Rxe4 Rxe4 19.Qxe4 Qb8 20.Re1 h6 21.c4 Nb6 22.Qxc6 Qd8 23.c5 Nc4 24.Bf4 Nxb2 25.Nb4 Rc8 26.Qb7 Nc4 27.Nd5 Rb8 28.Nxf6+ gxf6 29.Qe4 Nxa3 30.Qxa4 Qd3 31.h3 Rb1 32.Rxb1 Qxb1+ 33.Kh2 Nb5 34.Bxb5 Kh7 35.Be3 Kg7 36.Qg4+ Qg6 37.Qd7 Qb1 38.h4 Qb4 39.g3 1-0

Walter Brower, born November 19, 1948, learned chess at age 7 by his father. He took up postal chess in the early Eighties admits to being a weak OTB player. He notes he is impatient, and has difficulty seeing the obvious unless he can physically move the pieces around the board. Walter especially likes to seek "busts" and finding overlooked moves in lines that haven't been analyzed carefully, despite the symbols at the end of many ECO lines. Recently, Walter moved to Alabama where his family roots are. He used to umpire baseball but shifted to fast pitch softball a decade ago. He now umpires girls' and women's college games that move faster and have less arguments.

Brower shows the fine art of no-risk chess, slowly taking over the game one square at a time, one Pawn at a time, until at the end Black has nearly nothing left to fight with.

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 chesskinetics@stny.rr.com

An if-move sent in a game **Quote:** If 32. the Right Move, then 32. ...Resigns -- Tom McGrath

FLOWERS WINS COLLINS 07C24

Flowers	2159		11	=1	11	5½
Love	2060	00		11	11	4
Donaghy	2093	=0	00		11	2½
Stewart	2004	FF	FF	FF		0

ENGLISH OPENING (A16)

White: Geoffrey Love (2060)

Black: Brian Flowers (2159)

John Collins 2007

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.Nf3 Bg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Bg2 d6 6.0-0 Nbd7 7.d3 e5 8.Rb1 a5 9.b3 Nc5 10.Bb2 Nfd7 11.Nd2 f5 12.e3 Nxd3 13.Ba3 e4 14.Ne2 N7c5 15.Bxc5 Nxc5 16.Nd4 Re8 17.f3 Bxd4 18.exd4 e3 19.Re1 Nd3 20.Re2 f4 21.Ne4 d5 22.cxd5 Nb4 23.gxf4 Nxd5 24.Rc1 Bf5 25.Qf1 Nxf4 26.Rxe3 Qxd4 27.Qc4+ Qxc4 28.bxc4 Bxe4 29.fxe4 Nxc2 30.Kxg2 Rad8 31.Rc2 Rd4 32.e5 Re6 33.Kg3 b6 34.c5 b5 35.a3 Rd5 36.Kf4 Kf7 37.h4 Rc6 38.Rec3 Ke6 0-1

GARY WALTERS TAKES WALTER MUIR 07W47

Walters	2105		==	11	11	5
Serneels	2120	==		=1	=1	4
Flesher	2233	00	=F		1=	2
Plum	2004	00	=0	0=		1

Of the 58 moves made in this game, 27 of them are made on the e-file. It is, after all, the King of files.

PETROFF DEFENSE (C42)

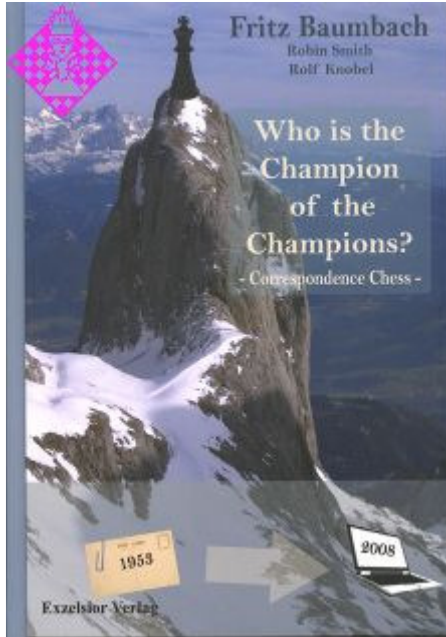
White: James Flesher (2233)

Black: Gary Walters (2105)

2007 Walter Muir

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nf3 Nxe4 5.Nc3 Nxc3 6.dxc3 Be7 7.Be3 0-0 8.Qd2 Nc6 9.0-0-0 Re8 10.Bd3 Bf6 11.h3 a5 12.Rhe1 a4 13.a3 Ra5 14.g4 g6 15.Bh6 Ne5 16.Nxe5 Raxe5 17.Rxe5 Bxe5 18.f4 Bg7 19.Bg5 Bf6 20.Bb5 Re6 21.h4 Bxg5 22.hxg5 Bd7 23.Bc4 Re7 24.Rg1 Qe8 25.Kb1 Re3 26.Bd3 Bc6 27.Qf2 Rf3 28.Qh2 Qe3 29.Rh1 Rxf4 30.Qxh7+ Kf8 31.Qh8+ Ke7 32.Rd1 Kd7 33.Qf8 Qe6 34.Rc1 Qe7 35.Qg8 Qe8 36.Qh7 Qe6 37.c4 b6 38.c5 bxc5 39.Ba6 Qe5 40.Qg8 Qe8 41.Qg7 Rxc4 42.Qc3 Rxc4 43.Qh3+ Qe6 44.Qh8 Ke7 45.Qb8 Qd7 46.Qh8 Re5 47.Qh4+ g5 48.Qg3 Qe6 49.Rf1 g4 50.Qf2 Re3 51.Bc4 g3 52.Qd2 g2 53.Rd1 Qe4 54.Qc1 Rh3 55.Bd3 Qe5 56.Rg1 Rh1 57.Rd1 Rxd1 58.Qxd1 Qe3 0-1

WHO IS THE CHAMPION OF THE CHAMPIONS ?



There is a new champion in the lists. Previously I had listed Sanakoev's World Champion at the Third Attempt as the best correspondence book ever. Now there is a new champion: Who is the Champion of the Champions? by Fritz Baumbach with Robin Smith and Rolf Knobel. This superb book is divided into five parts. Part One contains bios and games of the five deceased World Correspondence Chess Champions and one of their best games thoroughly analyzed. Part Two describes the Jubilee Tournament of the World Champions, arguably the strongest tournament ever, including both OTB and correspondence. The nine living World Champions describe selected games from this tournament. The games are incredible! The annotations are incredible! This chapter alone would make this book great! Part three gives bio and a game of the four World Champions after the 2001 Jubilee

Tournament began. There are photos of every Champion, and the analysis is first rate.

Die letzte Abteilung des Buches wird auf Deutsch geschrieben und zeigt einige hervorragende Spiele...Oops! Sorry about that. The last section of the book is written in German and features some outstanding games well annotated. It should have been translated for the monolingual English reading audience. Still, the games and notes are understandable without knowing German.

The Appendix gives crosstables of all the World Championship finals. The only other flaw in this outstanding book is that the authors could not come to an agreement as to who is the champion of the champions. They express their opinions and allow the reader to choose for himself. So, reader, buy this book! Read this book! Study this book! And then decide for yourself, Who is the champion of the champions

2009 ABSOLUTE STARTS

The 2009 Absolute has begun with a prize fund of \$500. Leading the rating pack is newcomer to the Absolutes, Steven Van Enk (2466) followed by Wesley Brandhorst (2442) Ciaran O'Hare (2442) Kristo Mietinnen (2418) Abe Wilson (2338) Gary Walters (2303) Laurence Anderson (2302) James Rhodes (2286) David Sogin (2280) Kenneth Poole (2267) Sandy Greene (2263) Johnny Ballow (2243) and Joseph Shipman (2235)