



## Boxing the Compass

David Vigorito

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## New England Nor'easters Week Four

Entering Week 4 of the USCL, the Nor'easters found themselves top of the Eastern Division with a 3-0 start – not bad for a rookie team. We won each match 2½-1½; however, this was not too alarming as it is a normal result for such a balanced team. This week saw the highly anticipated (by some) match between the New England Nor'easters and the Boston Blitz. We approached this like any other match – we would try to put out a line-up that would give us our best chance of winning. The Boston team is very strong and boast the only two GM's in the area that play in the league – Christiansen and Perelshteyn. They also have "might as well be an IM" Denys Shmelov who I figured would be playing on board two or three. Since the players on both team inhabit the same region, there is a certain degree of familiarity between the players. The main problem for us was that Denys – despite being currently Boston's fifth highest rated player – has given most members of the Nor'easter fits in the past. One of our players stood out, however, because Hungaski had always somehow beaten Denys. For this reason combined with Robert's low league rating, he was certain to be playing in the match.

The line-ups were as follows:

- **Board One**  
GM Larry Christiansen (Boston) – IM Sam Shankland (New England)
- **Board Two**  
IM Robert Hungaski (New England) – Denys Shmelov (Boston)
- **Board Three**  
WGM Anya Corke (Boston) – FM Christopher Chase (New England)
- **Board Four**  
Alex Cherniack (New England) – Ilya Krasik (Boston)

I had expected a stacked line-up with Christiansen, Perelshteyn, and Shmelov, but fielding this kind of line-up is not always possible, because players are not always available. We felt that Sam was our best chance to hold off Larry. Robert against Denys was kind of what we had in mind, but we were also wary as Denys is a very strong player and we did not think Robert could keep up his record forever. This game was also a concern because Robert had classes all day and had to drive two hours to the match. On board three, Anya had been playing tremendously for the Blitz, so despite Chris's rating advantage we thought that game was a toss up. It was only on board four that we felt very confident, as we had Cherniack with white against Krasik.

Nothing in this match began the way we had hoped it would. Sam got into trouble quickly when Larry played a surprising novelty.

**Christiansen, Larry (2665) – Shankland, Sam (2567)**

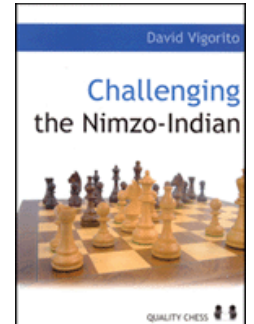
USCL Boston vs. New England (4), 15.09.2010

Caro-Kann Defense [B12]

Notes by Vigorito

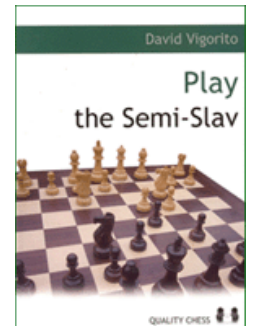
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 Bf5 4.Nf3 e6 5.Be2 c5 6.Be3 cxd4 7.Nxd4 Ne7 8.Nd2 Nbc6 9.N2f3 Be4 10.0-0 Ng6

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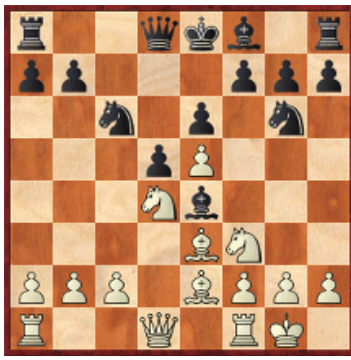
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[FEN "r2qkb1r/pp3ppp/2n1p1n1/3pP3/3Nb3/4BN2/PPP1BPPP/R2Q1RK1 w kq - 0 11"]

### 11.Ng5!?

An novelty that is probably good - but for just one game. Normal is 11.Nxc6.

### 11...Ngxe5 12.f4 Nxd4?

This natural move is refuted in an elegant way. It seems the best try is 12... Bc5 13.Ngxe6 (not 13.fxe5? Bxd4 14.Bxd4 Qxg5-/+ ) 13...fxe6 14.fxe5 Bxd4 15.Bxd4 Qg5 looks OK for Black - he can always castle long. (15...Bxc2 16. Qxc2 Nxd4 17.Qa4+ Nc6 18.Bb5 is also possible, but it looks a bit risky).

### 13.fxe5! Nxe2+ 14.Qxe2 Bg6



[FEN "r2qkb1r/pp3ppp/4p1b1/3pP1N1/8/4B3/PPP1Q1PP/R4RK1 w kq - 0 15"]

### 15.Nxf7! Bxf7 16.Qb5+ Qd7 17.Qxd7+ Kxd7 18.Rxf7+ Kc6

If Black could untangle, he would be OK, but it proves to be too difficult to get developed properly.

### 19.c3 Re8 20.Raf1 a6 21.a4 Rg8 22.b4 Be7 23.g4 Kd7 24.Kg2 Kc8 25.b5 axb5 26.axb5 Kd8 27.Bb6+ Kd7 28.Bc5 Kd8 29.Ra1! 1-0

An elegant finish.

On board four, things were just as bad. Cherniack dropped a pawn for nothing.

**Cherniack, Alex (2288) – Krasik, Ilya (2253)**  
USCL Boston vs. New England (4), 15.09.2010



[FEN"2rqr1k1/pp3n1p/2n2ppb/3p1b2/1P1P4/P4N1P/1B1NBPP1/2RQR1K1 w - - 0 17"]

Cherniack has not managed to do anything at all with the white pieces, but his next move drops a pawn.

**17.Qb3? Bxd2!**

This is stronger than the tempting 17...Nxd4 18.Nxd4 Bxd2 19.Rxc8 Qxc8 (or 19...Bxc8 20.Rd1 with the idea Bf3)) 20.Rd1 Rxe2!? 21.Nxe2 Bc2 22.Qxd5 Bxd1 23.Qxd2 Bxe2 24.Qxe2 and White is better.

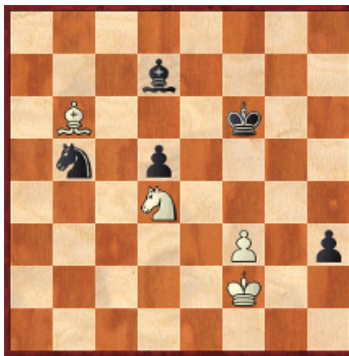
**18.Nxd2 Rxe2! 19.Rxe2 Nxd4 20.Rxc8**

20.Bxd4 Rxc1+ is not much better.

**20...Nxe2+ 21.Kf1 Qxc8 22.Kxe2 Qe6+**

We knew the best we could get was a draw here, but we were all confident that Alex would hold. Eventually he did.

**23.Qe3 Ne5 24.Kf1 b6 25.g4 Nd3 26.Qxe6+ Bxe6 27.Bxf6 Nf4 28.b5 Nxh3 29.f3 Bd7 30.a4 Nf4 31.Nb3 h5 32.gxh5 gxh5 33.Be5 Nd3 34.Bb8 Nb2 35. Bxa7 Nxa4 36.Nd4 Kf7 37.Kf2 h4 38.Ke3 Kf6 39.Bb8 Nc3 40.Bc7 h3 41. Kf2 Nxb5 42.Bxb6**



[FEN"8/3b4/1B3k2/1n1p4/3N4/5P1p/5K2/8 b - - 0 42"]

**42...Nd6?!**

The pure opposite bishop ending was what scared us the most: 42...Ke5 43. Nxb5 Bxb5 44.Kg3 (44.Ke3 d4+ 45.Bxd4+ Kd5 is an amusing line we found while kibitzing - with a bishop and pawn each, White can resign) 44...Bd7 45. Bg1 d4 46.Kf2 Kd5 47.Ke2 Kc4 48.Kd2 Bc6 49.f4 Be4 50.Bh2 Bf5 51.Bg1 d3 is one possibility analysed by Charles - White is in zugzwang and Black will invade either via Kc4-c3, if the white king moves, or via Kc4-d4-e4-f3 if the white bishop moves to h2.

**43.Ne2**

Now the worst is over.

**43...Nf5?! 44.Nf4**

Now White wins back the pawn and the game is drawn.

**44...Ne7 45.Bc5 Ke5 46.Nxh3 Bxh3 47.Bxe7 ½-½**

Chris's game against Anya had been drawish all along, so we knew it would come down to Robert's hex over Denys to salvage a drawn match.

**Hungaski, Robert (2520) – Shmelov, Denys (2471)**

USCL Boston vs. New England (4), 15.09.2010

Nimzo-Indian Defense [E54]

*Notes by Hungaski*

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 0-0 5.Bd3 c5 6.Nf3 cxd4 7.exd4 d5 8.0-0 dxc4 9.Bxc4 b6 10.Bg5 Bb7**



[FEN"rn1q1rk1/pb3ppp/1p2pn2/6B1/1bBP4/2N2N2/PP3PPP/R2Q1RK1 w - - 0 11"]

This typical *tabiya* can also arise from the Caro-Kann.

**11.Qd3**

Probably not the most accurate. 11.Re1 and 11.Qe2 are normal.

**11...Bxc3 12.bxc3 Nbd7 13.Rfe1!**

White must keep control of the e4-square. 13.Rad1 Qc7 14.Bb3 Be4 15.Qe3 Qb7 16.c4 Rfe8 17.Rfe1 Rac8 looks fine for Black in Gluzman,M-Rogers,I/Melbourne 1998.

**13...Qc7**

White's main reason for concern is the vulnerable position of his queen. If he is able to play Bb3, c4 and Rad1 then he will have a slight yet durable advantage. Therefore Black must play energetically: 13...Rc8!? 14.Ne5 (14.Bb3 Nc5 15.Qe3 Nce4 16.c4 Nxc5 17.Nxc5 h6 18.Nh3 Qd6=+/+ where White's hanging pawns are starting to look more like a liability than an asset. ½-½, Diamant,A-Pedersen,S/Beijing 2008.; 14.Bb5!?) 14...Nxe5 15.Rxe5 Qc7? 16.Bxf6! gxf6 (16...Qxc4 17.Qg3 g6 18.Qf4 Qxc3 19.Rae1+-) 17.Rh5 f5 18.Qe3+/-.

**14.Bb3 Rac8**

14...Ng4? 15.h3+/-.

**15.c4 Qd6**

15...Rfd8 with the idea ...Nc5 16.Qe3+/-.

**16.Rad1+/-**



[FEN"2r2rk1/pb1n1ppp/1p1qpn2/6B1/2PP4/1B1Q1N2/P4PPP/3RR1K1 b - - 0 16"]

This is the position I was aiming for. It seems that White has a good grip.

**16...Rfe8 17.h3**

17.Ne5 Nxe5 18.dxe5 (18.Rxe5? Ng4-/+ ) 18...Qxd3 19.Rxd3 Ne4 20.Be3 Nc5 21.Bxc5 Rxc5 22.Rd7 Ba6 23.Re4 Ra8! =.

**17...Ba6?!**



[FEN"2r1r1k1/p2n1ppp/bp1qpn2/6B1/2PP4/1B1Q1N1P/P4PP1/3RR1K1 w - - 0 18"]

This allows White to head into an ending with a slight but durable advantage. 17...h6 18.Bc1! (18.Bh4 Nh5) 18...Ba6 19.Bb2 Nh5 20.Rc1 Nf4 21.Qe3+/-.

**18.Ne5! Nxe5 19.dxe5 Qxd3 20.Rxd3 Nd5**

Despite the absence of queens, White has a strong attack after 20...h6? 21. Bxf6 gxf6 22.exf6 Bxc4 23.Rg3+ Kh8 (or 23...Kf8 24.Re4 Bxb3 25.Reg4+-) 24.Re4! Bxb3 25.Rh4 Bc2 26.Rxh6+ Bh7 27.Rg7+-.

**21.Re4**

Bad is 21.cxd5? Bxd3 22.d6 Bb5-/+; while 21.Rxd5 exd5 22.cxd5 h6 (22... Bc4 23.d6 Bxb3 24.axb3 f6) 23.Bh4 g5 24.Bg3 Bc4 25.d6 Red8 also does not lead to anything for White.

**21...Rc7 22.Red4**

But here 22.Rxd5!? exd5 23.cxd5 h6 24.Be3, with compensation, was worth considering.

**22...Nb4 23.Rd8 Rc8 24.Rxe8+ Rxe8 25.Rd7 h6 26.Be7**

A tough decision. Perhaps it was better to play 26.Be3! Nc6 27.f4+- (or even 27.Ba4!? Rc8 (27...Nxe5? 28.Rxa7+-) 28.Bb5 Bxb5 29.cxb5 Nxe5 30.Rxa7 Nc4 31.a4+-).

**26...Nc6 27.Bd6 Rd8 28.Rxd8+ Nxd8 29.c5**



[FEN"3n2k1/p4pp1/bp1Bp2p/2P1P3/8/1B5P/P4PP1/6K1 b - - 0 29"]

**29...bxc5?**

Exchanging pawns is natural, but a better try was 29...b5! 30.f4 Bb7 31.g4 Nc6 32.Kf2 (32.f5 Nd4) 32...Nd4 33.Bd1 Bd5 34.Ke3 Nc6 35.a3 a5 when Black has some potential counterplay.

**30.Bxc5 Nc6 31.f4 Bb7 32.a3!**

32.g4 Na5 33.Bd1 Bd5 34.a3 Nc4.

**32...a6 33.Kf2 g5 34.g3 Kg7?**

A big mistake. Better chances to defend were offered by 34...gxf4 35.gxf4 Kg7.

**35.Ke3**



[FEN"8/1b3pk1/p1n1p2p/2B1P1p1/5P/PB2K1PP/8/8 b - - 0 35"]

**35...gxf4+ 36.Kxf4! f6 37.exf6+**

This keeps the better chances, but 37.Bxe6! looks quite strong. One possible line is 37...fxe5+ (37...Nxe5 38.Bd4 Ng6+ 39.Ke3 Ne5 40.g4+/-) 38.Kf5 Nd4 + 39.Bxd4 exd4 40.Bc4 Bc8+ 41.Ke5 Bxh3 42.Bxa6 Bd7 43.Kxd4 Kf6 44.Kc5+- Ba4 (44...Kg5 45.Bb5 Bc8 46.a4 Kg4 47.Kb6 Kxg3 48.Kc7 Bf5 49.a5 h5 50.a6 Be4 51.Bc6 Bxc6 52.Kxc6 h4 53.a7 h3 54.a8Q h2 55.Kc5+-) 45.Bb5 Bd1 46.a4 Bxa4 47.Bxa4 Kg5 48.Bd7 h5 49.Bh3+- We were both playing on the increment here, so there was limited time for long calculations.

**37...Kxf6 38.g4 e5+ 39.Ke3 Nd8?**

Better chances were offered by 39...Kg5! with the idea ...Kh4 and/or ...h5 40.Kf2 (40.Bc4 Kh4 41.Bf1 h5 42.gxh5 Kxh5) 40...Nd4 41.Be7+ Kf4.

**40.Bf8 Bg2 41.h4 Nf7 42.Bc4**

The opposite-colored bishop ending should win, but it is hard to make such a decision with such limited time. 42.Bxf7 Kxf7 43.Bxh6 Kg6 44.Kf2 Bh3 45.Kg3 Bf1 (45...Bxg4 46.Kxg4 Kxh6 47.Kf5 Kh5 48.Kxe5 Kxh4 49.Kd5 Kg5 50.Kc6 Kf6 51.Kb6 Ke6 52.Kxa6 Kd6 53.Kb6+-) 46.Bd2 Bd3 47.Bc3 e4 48.

h5+ Kh7 49.Bd4+-.

**42...Bb7 43.a4 a5**

43...Bc8 44.Kf3 Bb7+ 45.Kg3 Bc8 46.a5+/-.

**44.Bc5 Bc8 45.Be2 Bd7 46.Bd1 Nd8 47.Bf8 Nf7 48.Kf3 Bc6+ 49.Kg3 Bd7  
50.Bc5 Nd8 51.Bb6 Nc6 52.Bc7 Ke6 53.Bb6 Kf6 54.Kf2**



[FEN"8/3b4/1Bn2k1p/p3p3/P5PP/  
8/5K2/3B4 b - - 0 54"]

**54...e4?**

Positional capitulation, but Black probably cannot hold the game any more.  
54...Ke6 55.Ke3 Kf6 (55...Kd5 56.h5) 56.Ke4 Be6 57.Be3 Kg7 58.Be2 Kg6  
59.Bb5 Bd7 60.h5+ Kg7 61.Bd2+-.

**55.Ke3 Ke5 56.h5!+- Nb4 57.Bc7+ Kf6 58.Bxa5 Nd3 59.Bb6 Ke7 60.a5  
Kd6 61.Kxe4 Nb4 62.Be2 Nd5 63.Bd4 Ne7 64.a6 Bc6+ 65.Kf4 Nd5+ 66.  
Kg3 Ne7 67.Be3 1-0**

So this was the first match we failed to win, but at least we did not lose. We  
still kept in first place with 3½-½, and the tie dropped Boston to 2½-1½. We  
face Philadelphia Monday night this week.

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