

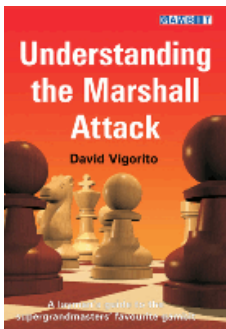


Boxing the Compass

David Vigorito

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New England Nor'easters Week Five

Week Five of the USCL saw the Nor'easters face off against the Philadelphia Inventors. Yet again we found ourselves facing a slightly depleted team – Philadelphia was without GM Magesh Panchanathan and IM Bryan Smith. We were also fielding a line-up slightly below par – I was playing on board one for the first time ever, and we could have played Chris Chase on board four (although playing Alex was not much of a "sacrifice" compared to Philly's top player two depletion).

The line-ups were as follows:

- **Board One**
IM David Vigorito (New England) – FM Tom Bartell (Philadelphia)
- **Board Two**
IM Jay Bonin (Philadelphia) – FM Charles Riordan (New England)
- **Board Three**
FM Braden Bournival (New England) – FM Karl Dehmelt (Philadelphia)
- **Board Four**
NM Elvin Wilson (Philadelphia) – NM Alex Cherniack (New England)

We felt pretty good about our line-up. I did not think much of my rating advantage on board one – Bartell is clearly IM strength and has been for years. He also has had a hot start in the USCL this year he had handed GM Gulko his first USCL defeat (and Tom won with black) and had also beaten Boston's strong Denys Shmelov (also with black). Still, I had white and because of our balanced line-up, I felt I could play a solid game. Charles was our only "underdog," but he is very solid and had played Bonin before, so I thought he would hold the game. My main source of confidence was on boards three and four, especially with Brad having white. As it turned out, our match strategy worked almost precisely as planned... Both Charles and Alex held. Both games had their uncertain moments, but the situations never seemed too scary. Brad won rather easily and I had a "free squeeze" through the game. I did not convert, however, and we won our fourth match by the score of 2½-1½.

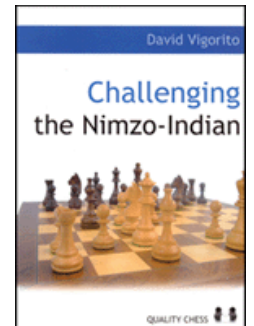
Bournival, Braden (2381) – Dehmelt, Karl (2308)
 USCL Philadelphia vs. New England (5), 20.09.2010
 Ruy Lopez [C89]
Notes by Bournival

I did not know what to expect coming into this game. Looking at the Dehmelt's rating history on uschess.org I saw he took about fifteen years off from chess, and had recently started playing again in 2009. All the games I found in the database involved 1.e4 e5, so I figured it would mostly likely be a Ruy Lopez and reviewed all my notes on it prior to the game.

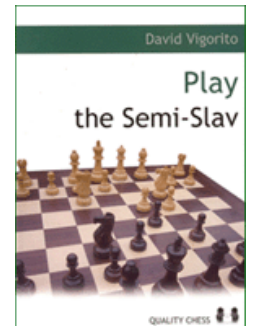
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 b5 6.Bb3 Be7 7.Re1 0-0 8.c3

Allowing the Marshall Attack. I was expecting him to play the main line Spanish with 8...d6, since he had played that in all the games in the database. But seeing his game against Irina Krush from week three of the US Chess League where Dehmelt played the Albin Counter Gambit, I figured there was

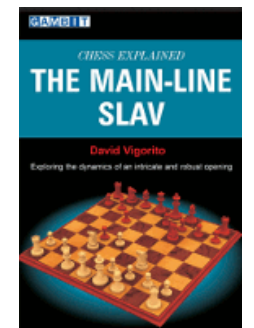
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 by David Vigorito

a good chance he might try some tricky line rather than play a normal solid opening.

8...d5

Going into the Marshall. I was not really pleased to see this, despite the fact that I'm very well prepared in these lines, Black does get the initiative and White has to play very accurately or else he can lose very quickly.

9.exd5



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/2p1bppp/p1n2n2/1p1Pp3/8/1BP2N2/PP1P1PPP/RNBQR1K1 b - - 0 9"]

9...e4?!

This line is not very good, but it can be very tricky if White is not familiar with it. Still, I was quite happy to see it, since I had briefly looked at it when reviewing my notes to the Marshall the night before. 9...Nxd5 is the main line Marshall.

10.dxc6 exf3 11.d4!

It's important for White to focus on developing his pieces rather than winning another pawn. Taking the pawn on f3 gives Black plenty of development and is quite dangerous. A sample variation is: 11.Qxf3 Bg4 12.Qg3 Bd6 13.Qh4 Re8 14.f3 Bf5 15.d4 Bxh2+! 16.Kxh2 Ng4+ 17.Kg3 Qxh4+ 18.Kxh4 Rxe1 19.fxg4 Rxc1 20.gxf5 Re8, and White's queenside is completely tied up.

11...fxg2

11...Bd6 12.Qxf3 Now that White has a fine square on d3 to put his queen, taking the f3- pawn is fine. 12...Bg4 13.Qd3+/-.

12.Bg5

12.Qf3 is also quite playable 12...Bg4 13.Qxg2 Re8 14.Bg5 Bf5 15.Nd2+/-.

12...Be6?

This move simply loses another pawn and the game. Other moves don't exactly look promising, but they offer more chances of survival; for instance, 12...Bg4 13.Qd3 Re8 14.Nd2 Nh5 15.Nf3! This was what I had prepared against this line when I looked at it years ago. During the game I vaguely remembered this Nf3 idea, but forgot exactly how it happens. My analysis ends here with a clear advantage to White; for instance, 15...Bxf6 (15...Bxg5?? 16.Rxe8+ Qxe8 17.Nxg5+- and the double attack on f7 and h7 is decisive.) 16.Rxe8+ Qxe8 17.h3! Forcing the bishop to make a decision. 17...Bxf3 (17...Bxh3? 18.Bxf6 Nxf6 19.Ng5 Be6 20.Nxe6 fxe6 21.Re1+-). While my opponent was thinking, I also considered 12...h6, when White should obtain a nice advantage after 13.Bxf6 (13.Bh4 is also very good for White.) 13...Bxf6 14.Nd2+/-.

13.Bxe6 fxe6 14.Qe2!



[FEN "r2q1rk1/2p1b1pp/p1P1pn2/1p4B1/3P4/2P5/PP2QPpP/RN2R1K1 b - - 0 14"]

Perhaps Black missed this move, not only does White still win the e6-pawn, but he's getting the queen to a very powerful square on e6. 14.Rxe6? is bad, because the rook is out of place on e6 and it does not contribute to White's development. 14...Nd5 15.Bxe7 Nxe7 16.Nd2 Ng6 17.Qg4 Nf4 with strong counterplay.

14...Bd6

14...Nd5 15.Qxe6+ Rf7 16.Bxe7 Nxe7 17.Nd2 Ng6 18.Re4! Stopping Nf4 and preparing to get the a1-rook into the game.

15.Qxe6+ Kh8 16.Nd2 h6

16...Re8 17.Bxf6! gxf6 (17...Rxe6 18.Bxd8 Rxe1+ 19.Rxe1 Rxd8 20.Re6+-) 18.Qxe8+ Qxe8 19.Rxe8+ Rxe8 20.Kxg2 Re2 21.Rd1 Bf4 22.Kf3 Rxd2 23.Rxd2 Bxd2 24.d5!+- The threat of d6 is decisive. I had seen this during the game, but didn't think it was likely Black would go into it.

17.Bh4 g5 18.Bg3 Bxg3 19.hxg3 Qe8

It's hard to suggest anything else for Black, not only is he down material, but it's difficult for him to move his pieces.

20.Qxe8 Raxe8 21.Kxg2 Kg7



[FEN "4r2/2p3k1/p1P2n1p/1p4p1/3P4/2P3P1/PP1N1PK1/R3R3 w - - 0 22"]

I spent a lot of time here trying to find the most efficient way to victory. I felt if I could get my knight to e5, it would be very easy, since from e5 the knight protects the vulnerable c6-pawn and controls many key squares. Also, White has to watch out for Ng4/Ne4 ideas attacking f2.

22.Rxe8

22.Nf3! is probably more efficient than what I played during the game, since it allows Black absolutely no counterplay. I did see this, but was worried that f2 would get a bit tender, but after 22...Ne4 23.Re2!, White will follow up with Rae1 and Ne5 and Black is just down two pawns for nothing.

22...Rxe8 23.Nf3 Re2

The only try for counterplay, if Black sits passively, White will simply play Ne5 next and have total command of the position.

24.Re1 Rxb2

24...Rxe1 This knight endgame offers no hope. 25.Nxe1 Kf7 26.Nd3 Ke7 27. Ne5+-.

25.Re7+ Kf8 26.Rxc7

Black has no good way to stop the c6-pawn from queening, still it's a bit scary for White, since Black is winning f2 and White's king becomes exposed. But in chess you must play concretely and from my calculations I couldn't see a way for Black to force a perpetual, since White's king can always run over to the queenside.

26...Ne4



[FEN "5k2/2R5/p1P4p/1p4p1/3Pn3/2P2NP1/Pr3PK1/8 w - - 0 27"]

27.Ne5!

It is important not to hang the knight, since then Black can give up his rook for the c-pawn and only be down an exchange: 27.Rd7? Rxf2+ 28.Kg1 Rxf3 29.c7 Rxg3+ 30.Kh2 Rxc3 31.Rd8+ Ke7 32.c8Q Rxc8 33.Rxc8=.

27...Rxf2+

27...Nxf2? 28.Rf7+ Ke8 29.Rxf2+-.

28.Kg1

28.Kh3 also wins, but it is a bit scary to put the king where Black could potentially weave a mating net with h5 and g4. So I decided to go to g1 instead to be safe.

28...Rc2 29.Rd7

29.Rf7+ Ke8 30.c7 Nd6 31.Rd7 is similar to the game.

29...Nxc3

29...Rc1+ 30.Kg2 Rc2+ 31.Kf3 and Black is already out of checks.

30.c7

Now the pawn can't be stopped without Black giving up his rook. The rest is easy.

30...Ne2+ 31.Kf1 Nxc3+ 32.Ke1 Nf5 33.Rd8+ Kg7 34.c8Q Rxc8 35.Rxc8 Nxd4 36.Ra8 1-0

Vigorito, David (2524) – Bartell, Tom (2429)

USCL Philadelphia vs. New England (5), 21.09.2010

1.Nf3

I decided to play somewhat conservatively rather than investigate what Black might have prepared in the 4.Qc2 Nimzo.

1...Nf6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 Bb7 4.Bg2 c5 5.Nc3 e6 6.0-0 Be7 7.d4 cxd4 8.Qxd4 d6 9.Bg5 a6



[FEN "rn1qk2r/1b2bPPP/pp1ppn2/6B1/2PQ4/2N2NP1/PP2PPBP/R4RK1 w kq - 0 10"]

10.Rfd1

We have reached a typical line of the Hedgehog. I had also considered 10. Bxf6 Bxf6 11.Qf4 (or 11.Qd3) 11...0-0 12.Rfd1 Be7 13.Ne4 Bxe4 14.Qxe4 Ra7 15.Nd4 when White can pretend to have a slight advantage. Over the board I made the decision to go for a sharper line.

10...Nbd7 11.Bxf6 Nxf6 12.Na4!

This is the point of White's play. The attack on the b6-pawn is slightly awkward for Black. I knew that this line was not so scary for Black theoretically, but there are many traps Black has to avoid and I thought this line would be a good practical choice.

12...Rb8

12...Bxf3 13.Bxf3 Rb8 14.c5! (sharpest, but 14.Bc6+ is also annoying for Black) 14...dxc5 (14...bxc5 15.Nxc5) 15.Qe5 Qc8 16.Rd6!



[FEN "1rq1k2r/4bPPP/pp1Rpn2/2p1Q3/N7/5BP1/PP2PP1P/R5K1 b k - 0 16"]

16...0-0 (16...Bxd6 17.Qxd6 Nd5 18.Bxd5 exd5 19.Nxb6 Rxb6 20.Qxb6 0-0 21.Rc1 is nice for White) 17.Rxb6 Rxb6 18.Nxb6 Qb8 19.Qxb8 Rxb8 20.Nc4 +/- when White enjoys a better pawn structure.

13.c5!



[FEN "1r1qk2r/1b2bPPP/pp1ppn2/2P5/N2Q4/5NP1/PP2PPBP/R2R2K1 b k - 0 13"]

Without this move White's play would be pointless.

13...bxc5?!

The critical line is 13...dxc5 14.Qe5 Bd5! 15.e4 Nxe4 16.Qxg7 Bf6 17.Qh6



[FEN "1r1qk2r/5p1p/pp2pb1Q/2pb4/N3n3/5NP1/PP3PPBP/R2R2K1 b k - 0 17"]

17...b5! 18.Ne5! (18.Ne1?! Miles-Wojtkiewicz, New York 1989 18...Nxf2!) 18...Bxe5 19.Bxe4 Qf6! (19...bxa4 20.Bxd5 exd5 21.Re1 is dangerous for Black) 20.Qxf6 Bxf6 21.Nxc5 Bxe4 22.Nxe4 Bxb2 23.Rab1 Be5 24.Rbc1 and White has enough activity for the pawn, but nothing more than that. Though I realized this position could arise, White is not worse and my opponent would have to be very well prepared (for a line I had not played before) or else find his way through the maze of variations.

14.Nxc5! 0-0

Black cannot take the piece. If 14...dxc5 15.Qa4+ Nd7 16.Ne5 Bd5 (or 16...Bc8 17.Nxd7 Bxd7 18.Rxd7! Qxd7 19.Bc6) 17.Bxd5 Rb4 18.Qc6 Rb6



[FEN "3qk2r/3nbPPP/prQ1p3/2pBN3/8/6P1/PP2PP1P/R2R2K1 w k - 0 19"]

19.Bxe6! (this move was actually part of my preparations) 19...Rxc6 20.Bxd7 + Kf8 (20...Qxd7 21.Rxd7+/-) 21.Nxc6 and while material is equal, White has a healthy initiative.

15.Nxb7 Rxb7

Black has defended well, but it has cost him some time. White's next shows that Black has not quite equalized yet.

16.Ne5 d5

Black loses a pawn after 16...Rc7 17.Nc6 Qd7 18.Nxe7+ Qxe7 19.Qxd6.

17.Nc6 Qd6 18.Rac1 Rc7!

A good defensive move.

19.Qb6



[FEN "5rk1/2r1bppp/pQNqpn2/3p4/8/6P1/PP2PPBP/2RR2K1 b - - 0 19"]

It felt a little funny walking into a couple of pins, but I calculated well enough to see that I could not get into any trouble. 19.Qa4!? was also possible. After 19...Rfc8 20.Nxe7+ Qxe7 21.Rxc7 Qxc7 22.Qxa6, we transpose to the note to White's twenty-second move.

19...Rfc8

I had been worried about 19...Kh8, but White can play 20.e4! here. In hindsight it becomes clear however that Black is OK: 20...Nd7! (I had also analysed 20...Rfc8 21.e5 Qd7 22.exf6 Rxc6 (22...Bxf6 23.Nb8! was a funny winning line I had found during the game) 23.Rxc6 Rxc6 24.fxg7+ Kxg7 25.Qd4+!/= and White is still a bit better) 21.Qxa6 Nc5 22.Qb5 Rxc6 (after 22...Rb7 23.Qf1! (better than 23.Qe2 Qxc6 24.exd5 exd5 25.Bxd5 Qb5!) 23...Qxc6 24.exd5 exd5 25.Bxd5 with some advantage) 23.b4 I had seen this far, but Black has a resource 23...Rb8! 24.bxc5 Qc7 with a likely draw.

20.Nxe7+ Qxe7 21.Rxc7 Qxc7 22.Qxc7

Considering the nature of the event, I decided to go for a safe continuation where I thought I could still press. Instead, 22.Qxa6 is possible, but after 22...Qc2 23.Rf1 (Brad's post-mortem suggestion of 23.Ra1! is also possible) 23...h5 I thought Black would have reasonable counterplay. My queenside pawns look impressive, but only my queen is active and Black can try to stir up some play on the kingside.

22...Rxc7 23.e4!

Without this move White would actually be worse.

23...Rc2

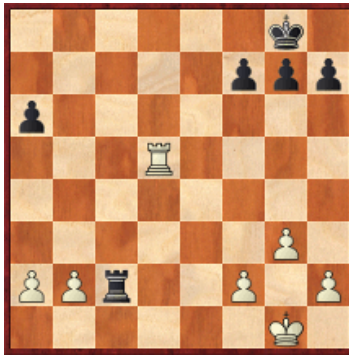
Instead, 23...Rc5 looks sturdy, but 24.b4 Rb5 25.a3 allows White to press: 25...a5?! 26.Bf1.

24.exd5 Nxd5?!

This was probably a difficult decision to make. Instead, 24...exd5 25.Bxd5 Rxb2 26.Bb3 threatens mate and both a6 and f7 are weak. Still, the possibility of playing ...Ne4 or ...Ng4 gives Black a source of counterplay.(26.Bf3 Kf8

27.a4 Rb4 leads nowhere).

25.Bxd5 exd5 26.Rxd5

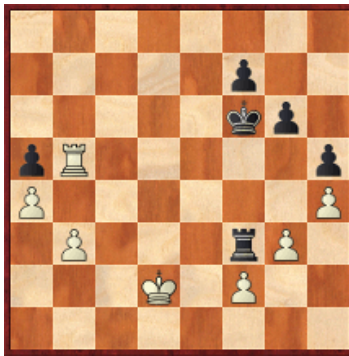


[FEN "6k1/5ppp/p7/3R4/8/6P1/PPr2P1P/6K1 b - - 0 26"]

26...g6 27.Rd8+

White can also play 27.Ra5 Rxb2 28.Rxa6 h5, but there is no rush to exchange pawns.

27...Kg7 28.Rb8 h5 29.h4 a5 30.a4 (30.a3!?) 30...Rc4 31.b3 Rc3 32.Rb5 Kf6 33.Kf1 Rd3 34.Ke2 Rc3 35.Kd2 Rf3



[FEN "8/5p2/5kp1/pR5p/P6P/1P3rP1/3K1P2/8 w - - 0 36"]

I thought that this would be an easy win (and perhaps it should be), but with my clock catching up and the spectre of the other games going on, I managed to confuse myself.

36.Kd1!?

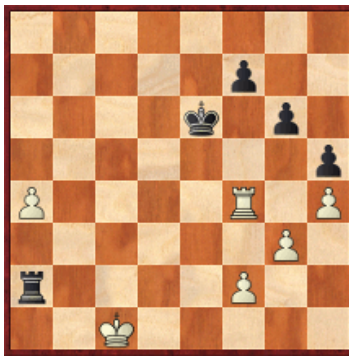
This looks very strange, but I still think it is a clever move. However, the amount of time spent on the move was not so clever perhaps.

36...Kg7

The king moves away from the queenside, but 36...Rxf2 37.Rxa5 Rf3 38.Rb5 is easy.

37.Rxa5

I move away from my original plans. I had intended 37.Kc1 Kf6 and now 38.Rxa5 is the most straightforward. (38.Kb2 was the "sharp" line I had looked at. After 38...Rxf2+ 39.Ka3 Rf3 40.Rxa5 Rxf3 41.Rc5 White must be faster, but the play is more complicated, and in my mind's eye it was possible to even lose such a position (it all seems so obvious after the game).) Herein was a point behind the move 36.Kd1, after 38...Rxb3 39.Rb5 Rf3 40.Rb2 Ra3 41.Rb4 Ra2 42.Rf4+! Ke6



[FEN "8/5p2/4k1p1/7p/P4R1P/6P1/r4P2/2K5 w - - 0 43"]

43.Kb1 White is able to chase the black rook away. Now 43...Rd2 44.a5 Rd6 45.Ra4 gets the rook behind the pawn. This should be winning for White. I saw this idea, but somehow "forgot" just a move later.

37...Rxb3 38.Rb5 Ra3 39.Rb4

Perhaps 39.a5 would be a better try.

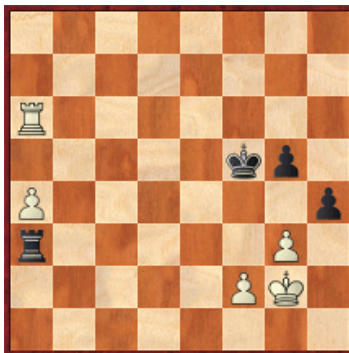
39...Ra2 40.Rf4 f6 41.Ke1

Getting fancy with 41.Kc1 g5 42.Kb1 Rd2 43.Rf3 gxh4 44.gxh4 allows Black to draw immediately: 44...Rd4 45.Ra3 Rxb4 46.a5 Rc4 47.a6 Rc8 48.a7 Ra8 49.Kc2 h4=.

41...g5 42.Rb4 Kg6 43.Kf1 Kf5 44.Kg1 Kg6 45.Kg2 Ra3 46.Rc4 Kf5 47.Rc5+ Kg6 48.hxg5 fxg5 49.Rc6+ Kf5 50.Rc5+ Kg6 51.Rc6+

I confess I was not sure where to put my rook. Maybe 51.a5 h4 52.Kh3 hxg3 53.fxg3 Ra4 54.g4 gives better chances.

51...Kf5 52.Ra6 h4



[FEN "8/8/R7/5kp1/P6p/r5P1/5PK1/8 w - - 0 53"]

53.gxh4

53.Kh3 hxg3 54.fxg3 Ra1 55.Ra5+ Ke6 56.Kg4 Ra3 57.Ra8 looks like a good try.

53...gxh4

Now Black holds easily.

54.Ra8 h3+ 55.Kh2 Kg4 56.a5 Ra2 57.Rg8+ Kf4 58.Ra8 Kg4 59.a6 Rxf2+ 60.Kh1 Rf1+ 61.Kh2 Rf2+ 62.Kg1 h2+ 63.Kh1 Kg3 64.Rg8+ Kh3 1/2-1/2

A couple of days later, the 4-0 Arizona Scorpions fell to the Chicago Blaze, and now our record is a league leading 4½-½ at the midway point of the season. Much thanks to our sponsors and all of our fans!

Next up the St. Louis Archbishops!

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