

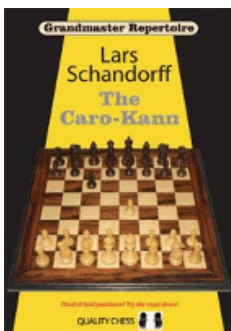


## Boxing the Compass

Charles Riordan

[\[Find us on Facebook.\]](#)

[Translate this page](#)



**CHESSTHEATRE**  
 Play through and download the games from [ChessCafe.com](#) in the [DGT Game Viewer](#).



**ChessCafe.com** is a proud sponsor of the [New England Nor'easters](#). Each Monday during the 2010 [U.S. Chess League](#) season we will bring you an annotated game or two of the week.

## New England Nor'easters Week Eleven

Week One of the playoffs of the USCL (which is Week Eleven overall) saw the Nor'easters face off against the New York Knights again. We had scored a big upset in Week Seven against New York, and even though this time they were fielding a somewhat weaker line-up, we were again considered underdogs. It is somewhat amusing that a team that finished with a record-shattering 9½-½ tally in the regular season is considered an underdog week after week! But when you look at the line-ups, it is clear that we were underdogs here.

One thing we had in our favor was that in the event of a draw, we would move through to the next round. This is of course a very nice advantage to have, but our record granted us this privilege; New York had backed into the playoffs with an underachieving 5.0-5.0 record. The match proved to be very exciting on every board, and the draw odds did not really play a part in our match strategy.

The line-ups were as follows:

- **Board One**  
IM Sam Shankland (New England) – GM Alex Lenderman (New York)
- **Board Two**  
GM Pascal Charbonneau (New York) – IM Robert Hungaski (New England)
- **Board Three**  
FM Chris Chase (New England) – FM Alex Getz (New York)
- **Board Four**  
NM Alex Ostrovskiy (New York) – NM Alex Cherniack (New England)

We did not feel too bad about Board One – Sam is clearly GM strength and he has a very good score against Lenderman. Board Two gave us greater cause for concern – Charbonneau is an ICC assassin, especially against other teams from the north-east. Still, Robert was undefeated in USCL play. Board Three looked like a toss up, but Board Four could be seen as trouble. Ostrovskiy was listed as 2289, but he had recently jumped to 2377 in a tournament that included a win over none other than New York's first board GM Lenderman. Alex had played a tremendous Board Four for us with an undefeated 5/6, so we still felt pretty good about our chances.

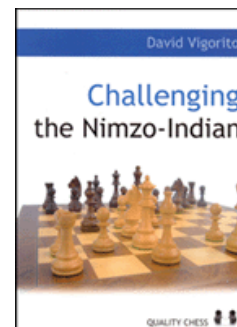
As the match developed, tension remained on all four boards. Alex was quickly behind on the clock, and it was clear he was caught in some preparation. Chris was under the weather, and he was quickly worse with the white pieces. On the top two boards, chances were fairly balanced.

The first game to finish was Robert's.

**Charbonneau, Pascal (2566) – Hungaski, Robert (2520)**  
 USCL New England vs. New York (11), 01.11.2010  
 Scandinavian Defense [B01]  
*Notes by Hungaski*

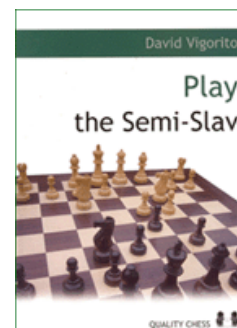
**1.e4 d5!**

Purchases from our [chess shop](#) help keep [ChessCafe.com](#) freely accessible:



[Challenging the Nimzo-Indian](#)

by David Vigorito



[Play the Semi-Slav](#)

by David Vigorito



[Chess Explained: Main-Line Slav](#)

by David Vigorito

Though this week Jan was not in the line-up, he made a spiritual appearance nonetheless!

**2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qa5 4.Rb1!?**



[FEN "rnb1kbnr/ppp1pppp/8/q7/8/2N5/PPPP1PPP/1RBQKBNR b Kkq - 0 4"]

**4...Nc6 5.Nf3 Nf6**

Usually the g8-knight can remain undeveloped for a few more moves. Black should have played the more accurate: 5...Bg4 6.Bb5 0-0-0 7.Bxc6 bxc6 8.h3 (8.b4 Qf5) 8...Qh5.

**6.Bb5! Bg4 7.b4 Qb6 8.h3**

8.a4!? a6 9.a5 Qa7 10.Bxc6+ bxc6 11.h3 Bh5 12.d3+/- and though the c-pawns are not particularly weak, Black will have trouble bringing his queen back into the game.

**8...Bxf3**

8...Bh5? 9.g4 Bg6 10.d3 (10.g5? Ne4 11.Nd5 Qxf2#) 10...0-0-0 11.Be3 Nd4 12.Nxd4 Rxd4 13.Qf3+/-.

**9.Qxf3 0-0-0**



[FEN "2kr1b1r/ppp1pppp/1qn2n2/1B6/1P6/2N2Q1P/P1PP1PP1/1RB1K2R w K - 0 10"]

**10.Bxc6 (10.0-0? Nd4) 10...Qxc6 11.Qxc6 bxc6 12.d3 Nd5 13.Ne4 e5 14.a3**

During the game I was most concerned with 14.b5 cxb5 15.Rxb5 a6 16.Rb3 Be7 17.Ba3! (17.0-0).

**14...a6 15.Bb2**

15.Be3 Be7 16.0-0 f5 (16...Rhe8!?) 17.Nc5 Nxe3 (17...f4 18.Bd2 Bxc5 19.bxc5+/- xe5) 18.fxe3 Bxc5 19.bxc5 g6 20.Rb4+/-.

**15...f6 16.0-0 Be7 17.Rfe1 Rhe8**

I also considered stopping the d4-break, but was reluctant to move my knight away from the queenside. 17...Nf4 18.Bc3 Rhe8 19.a4+/-.

## 18.d4 exd4 19.Bxd4



[FEN "2krr3/2p1b1pp/p1p2p2/3n4/1P1BN3/  
P6P/2P2PP1/1R2R1K1 b - - 0 19"]

## 19...Bf8

Taking the pawn looked a little too risky, but Black should be fine: 19...Nxb4 20.axb4 Rxd4 21.Nc5 Rd5! 22.c4 (22.Ne6 Bf8; 22.c3 Re5; 22.Ra1 Re5 23. Rxe5 fxe5 24.Nxa6 Rd8=+) 22...Re5.

## 20.c3 Re6

20...Nf4 21.h4! (21.Rbd1 Re6! 22.Nd2? Ne2+ 23.Kf1 Nxd4 24.cxd4 Rxe1+ 25.Rxe1 Rxd4-+) 21...Re6 22.g3 Rde8 (22...Nd3 23.Re3) 23.f3+/-.

## 21.Nd2 Rde8 22.Rxe6 Rxe6 23.Kf1 Nb6!



[FEN "2k2b2/2p3pp/pnp1rp2/8/1P1B4/  
P1P4P/3N1PP1/1R3K2 w - - 0 24"]

23...Nf4 24.h4 (24.Nc4!?) 24...Nd3 25.Nb3+/- and Black is unable to get rid of his doubled c-pawn.

## 24.c4?

White is not ready to make this advance. His pieces are poorly coordinated and his queenside full of weak squares that Black can easily invade. 24.Nb3 Na4+/- Though Black still lacks the conditions to free up his position with ... c5, the knight is very well placed on a4.

## 24...Rd6! 25.Be3

25.Bc5!? Rxd2 26.Bxf8 Nxc4 (26...g6!? is probably safest and best.) 27.Rc1! (27.Bxg7 Rd7 28.Rc1 Nd2+ 29.Ke1! (29.Ke2? Nb3 30.Rc3 Nd4+ 31.Ke3 Nf5 +++) 29...Nb3 30.Rc3 Rxd2 31.Rxb3 Rxd2=+) 27...Nxa3 28.Bxg7 with compensation.

## 25...Rd3 26.Ra1 Rc3 27.c5

27.Ke2 Nxc4 28.Nxc4 Rxc4 29.Kd3 Rh4-/+.

## 27...Nd5=+ 28.Ke2



[FEN "2k2b2/2p3pp/p1p2p2/2Pn4/1P6/P1r1B2P/3NKPP1/R7 b - - 0 28"]

**28...a5! 29.Ne4**

29.Bd4 Nf4+ 30.Kf1 (30.Kd1 Rd3 31.Be3 Nxc2) 30...Rc2 (30...Rd3 31.Be3 Nd5 32.Ke2=) 31.Be3 Nd5 32.Nb3 axb4 33.axb4 Kd7=/+; 29.g3 Nxe3! 30.fxe3 f5 (30...a4) 31.Nf3 g6-/+.

**29...Rb3!?**

29...Rc2+ 30.Kd3 Nxe3 31.Kxe3 Rb2 (31...a4? 32.Kd3 Rb2 33.Nd2).

**30.bxa5**

30.Nd2 Rc3 (30...Rb2 31.Bd4) 31.Ne4 Rc2+ 32.Kd3 Nxe3 33.Kxe3 Rb2 (33...a4 34.Kd3 Rb2 35.Nd2) 34.Kd3 (34.bxa5 f5) 34...axb4 35.axb4 Rxb4 36.Ra8 + Rb8.

**30...Nxe3**

My original idea was to bring my king into the game. 30...Kb7!? 31.Bd2 Ka6 32.f3 g6 (32...f5 33.Ng5) 33.a4 f5 34.Ng5 Bg7=/+.

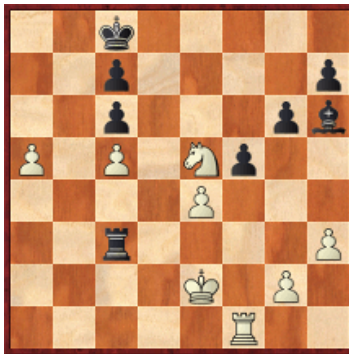
**31.fxe3 f5 32.Rf1 g6 33.Nd2**

33.g4 Bh6 34.g5 Bf8!.

**33...Rxa3 34.e4 Bh6 35.Nc4**

35.exf5 Ra2 36.Rd1 gxf5 37.Kd3 Rxa5 38.Nb3 Ra3 39.Kc4 Ra4+ 40.Kd3 Bg7-/+.

**35...Rc3 36.Ne5**



[FEN "2k5/2p4p/2p3pb/P1P1Np2/4P3/2r4P/4K1P1/5R2 b - - 0 36"]

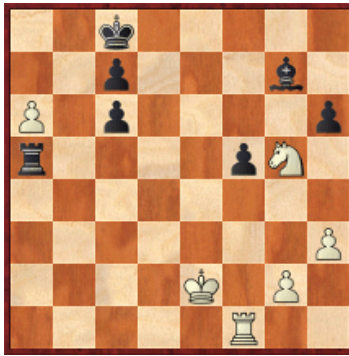
**36...Rxc5?**

The e-pawn is worth much more. After this move, White can seriously damage Black's kingside pawn structure, which should give him decent drawing chances. 36...Re3+! 37.Kf2 Rxe4 38.Nxc6 Be3+ (38...Kb7 39.Nd8+ Ka6 40.Re1) 39.Kf3 Kb7 40.Nd8+ Ka6-+.

37.Nf7 Bg7 38.a6

38.exf5 Rxf5? 39.Rxf5 gxf5 40.Ng5 with compensation.

38...Ra5 39.exf5 gxf5 40.Ng5 h6



[FEN "2k5/2p3b1/P1p4p/r4pN1/8/7P/4K1P1/5R2 w - - 0 41"]

41.Ne6??

41.Nf3 Rxa6 (41...Ra2+ 42.Kd3 Rxc2 43.Nh4 Rg3+ 44.Ke2 Rxc3 45.Nxf5 Be5 46.Rc1) 42.Nh4 Ra2+ 43.Kf3 f4 44.Ng6 (44.Kxf4 Ra4+) 44...c5=/+.

41...Re5+ 42.Kd3 Rxe6 0-1

42...Rxe6 43.Rb1 Rd6+ and 44...Bd4.

As it turned out, Chris turned the tables a bit on Board Three, and he even missed a win. Once the opportunity was gone, however, his position quickly went downhill. Alex defended like a champ and even took over the initiative. By the time he took a perpetual check, he was even winning. By that time Robert had won and Sam was up a couple of pawns, so Alex just took the draw to ensure at least a draw in the match. Sam's technique was good enough to notch up an important victory.

**Shankland, Sam (2498) – Lenderman, Alex (2537)**

USCL New England vs. New York, (11) 01.11.2010

Closed Catalan [E06]

*Notes by Shankland*

I was certainly lucky to win this game. I played poorly in a few spots (which I'd like to blame on the flu, but my mommy always said don't make excuses). This improves my score against Lenderman to 5½/7, although maybe if I get black someday (seven whites in a row is quite ridiculous) I won't be so fortunate.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Ne4



[FEN "mbqkb1r/pppp1ppp/4p3/8/2PPn3/5N2/PP2PPPP/RNBQKB1R w KQkq - 0 4"]

Confused.



4.g3 d5 5.Bg2 Be7 6.0-0 0-0 7.Qc2 Nd6 8.Nbd2 Nc6 9.b3 b6



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/p1p1bppp/1pnp3/3p4/2PP4/1P3NP1/P1QNPPBP/R1B2RK1 w - - 0 10"]

**10.Ba3?!**

In the post mortem, Alex and I decided that White's best set-up is Bb2 and a3, with a clear edge (sorry to all players who enjoy running the knight back and forth instead of developing).

**10...Bb7 11.Rac1 a5 12.cxd5?**

I completely missed how strong Nb5 was. 12.e3+/=.

**12...exd5 13.e3**



[FEN "r2q1rk1/1bp1bppp/1pnn4/p2p4/3P4/BP2PNP1/P1QN1PBP/2R2RK1 b - - 0 13"]

**13...Nb5!**

Without this move Black would be in trouble.

**14.Bxe7 Qxe7 15.a4 Nb4 16.Qb1 Nd6=**

Black has recovered from his opening follies.

**17.Rc3 Rac8 18.Rfc1 Ne4 19.Nxe4 dxe4 20.Nd2**



[FEN "2r2rk1/1bp1qppp/1p6/p7/Pn1Pp3/1PR1P1P1/3N1PBP/1QR3K1 b - - 0 20"]

## 20...f5

20...Nd5 probably a repetition. I can play Rc4, but then the rook is terribly placed; both of White's minor pieces need that square 21.R3c2 (21.Rc4 f5 I'd prefer to be black (21...Ba6? 22.Bxe4 Bxc4 23.Bxh7+ Kh8 24.Nxc4! (24.bxc4? Nxe3 with counterplay) 24...g6 25.Bxg6 fxg6 26.Ne5 White ends up with four connected passers for the knight and a clear advantage)) 21...Nb4 22.Rc3 (22.Rb2 Nd3).

**21.Bf1 Kh8 22.Nc4 Nd5 23.R3c2 Rf6 24.Ne5 Nb4 25.Rd2 Rd8 26.Bc4 g6 27.Qb2 Bd5 28.Rdd1 Kg7**

If this were a game played by 2700s in some super-tournament, they'd probably agree a draw around here.

**29.Rc3 c5 30.Rdc1**



37...fxg3 38.Rc7 Nd7 39.Qc8 gxf2+ (39...gxh2+ 40.Kh1+-) 40.Kf1+-.

### 38.gxf4!

Solidifying the knight on e5. The position is still complicated, but White is better now. 38.Rc7 Rd1+ 39.Kg2 f3+ 40.Kh3 Nd7 41.Qc8 (41.Nxd7 Rxd7 42.Rxd7 Qxd7+) 41...Qxe5.

### 38...Nd5?

38...e3 a la Rybka: 39.fxe3 Qb4 40.Nf3+/- (40.exd4 Qe1+=).

### 39.Rg8+ Kh6



[FEN "1Q4R1/4q2p/1p4pk/p2nN3/P2rp2/1P6/5P1P/6K1 w - - 0 40"]

### 40.Rxg6+!+- Kh5

40...hxg6 41.Qh8+ Qh7 42.Nf7+ Kh5 43.Qxh7+.

### 41.Nc6?

All the 1600 monkeys with their computers had a field day with me for this one. I was amazed how many of them sent me tells on ICC about it. Yes, Rg4 is a winner, and no I did not manage to correctly evaluate it. It can be harder playing a game than just turning on your computers. The obvious 41.Rg5+ allows a draw with 41...Qxg5+! 42.fxg5 Rd1+ 43.Kg2 Nf4+ 44.Kg3 Ne2+ 45.Kh3 Nf4+=; 41.Rg4! is winning, with the idea of swinging the queen to g8 or c8, but it looked very complicated (I don't even have a threat yet, while my king is still open) and I thought Nc6 forced the pawn up ending we reached in the game 41...Rd1+ (41...e3 42.Qe8+) 42.Kg2 Rd2 43.Kg3+-.

### 41...Rd1+

41...Qc5 42.Rg5+ (42.Nxd4 I thought this worked 42...Qc1+ (42...Kxg6 43.Qe8+ Kf6 44.Qe5+ Kf7 45.Qe6+ Kf8 46.Qxe4+- White is up two pawns and f4 is defended tactically 46...Qc1+ 47.Kg2 Nxf4+ 48.Qxf4+) 43.Kg2 Nxf4+ 44.Kg3 This looked to be completely winning, I had overlooked Black can conveniently play Nxc6, turning the tables 44...Nxc6) 42...Kh4 43.h3! I saw this and decided it was also winning, but the computer is telling me 43...Rd3 (covering the g3-square) is a draw.

### 42.Kg2 Qc5?





[FEN "1Q6/7p/1pN3R1/p1qn3k/  
P3pP2/1P6/5PKP/3r4 w - - 0 43"]

42...Ne3+ 43.fxe3 Rd2+ 44.Kf1 Qa3=.

**43.Qe5+!+-**

43.Rg8 Rg1+ 44.Kxg1 Qc1+ 45.Kg2 Nxf4+ 46.Kg3 Ne2+.

**43...Kxg6 44.Qg5+ Kf7 45.Ne5+ Ke8**

45...Ke6 46.Qg4+ Kd6 (46...Ke7 47.Qd7+ Kf6 48.Qf7#; 46...Kf6 47.Nd7+)  
47.Qd7#; 45...Kf8 46.Nd7+.

**46.Qh5+**

46.Qg8+ Qf8 47.Qe6+ Ne7.

**46...Kd8**

46...Ke7 47.Qf7+ Kd6 48.Qd7#.

**47.Qxd1**



[FEN "3k4/7p/1p6/p1qn3/P3pP2/  
1P6/5PKP/3Q4 b - - 0 47"]

**47...Kc7 48.Qg4 Kb7 49.Qf5 e3 50.Qxh7+ Ka6 51.Qd3+ Kb7 52.fxe3 Nxe3  
+ 53.Kf3 Nd5 54.h4 Nf6 55.Kg2 Qc1 56.Qf3+ Kc7 57.h5 Qc2+ 58.Kh3 Qf5  
+ 59.Kh4 Ne4 60.Ng4 Kd6 61.Qe3 Kc6 62.h6 Kb7 63.Qc1? Qg6?**

63...Nf6 makes white's task significantly harder.

**64.Qb2 Ka6 65.Qg7 Qd6 66.Qg8 Qe7+ 67.Kh3 Qb7 68.h7 Nd2 69.h8Q Qf3  
+ 70.Kh4 Qh1+ 71.Kg5 Nf3+ 72.Kf6 Qa1+ 73.Ne5 1-0**

Winning this game won us the match, so the draw odds did not come into play. Perhaps New York's players felt obliged to push a bit, but playing hard is always necessary when all four boards' results remain in doubt. A few little turns in this match and we could have lost; on the other hand, we could have even won 4-0. This victory increased our record-setting pace to 10½-½.

Next up: the semi-finals against the Boston Blitz!

Comment on this month's column via our [Contact Page](#)! Pertinent responses will be posted below daily.

---

Download this week's column:

- [Week One](#)
  - [Week Two](#)
  - [Week Three](#)
  - [Week Four](#)
  - [Week Five](#)
  - [Week Six](#)
  - [Week Seven](#)
  - [Week Eight](#)
  - [Week Nine](#)
  - [Week Ten](#)
  - [Week Eleven](#)
- 

 [TOP OF PAGE](#)

 [HOME](#)

 [COLUMNS](#)

 [LINKS](#)

 [ARCHIVES](#)

 [ABOUT THE CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)  
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[ChessCafe Archives\]](#)  
[\[ChessCafe Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#)  
[\[Contact ChessCafe.com\]](#)