

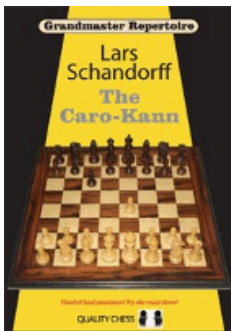


Boxing the Compass

David Vigorito

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New England Nor'easters The Finals

We headed into the finals with an unprecedented 11-1 record. We faced the Miami Sharks, who had made a remarkable run after starting the season 0-3. The Sharks made it to the play-offs and then beat the Chicago Blaze and Arizona Scorpions to reach the finals.

The line-ups were as follows:

- **Board One**
IM Sam Shankland (New England) – GM Julio Becerra (Miami)
- **Board Two**
FM Marcel Martinez (Miami) – IM Robert Hungaski (New England)
- **Board Three**
FM Chris Chase (New England) – FM Charles Galofre (Miami)
- **Board Four**
Nicholas Rosenthal (Miami) – NM Alex Cherniack (New England)

We played the same line-up as we did in the first two rounds of the play-offs. Oddly enough, we used ten different line-ups in the ten weeks of the regular season, and the same line-up for every round of the play-offs, which (funny enough) was the only line-up that did not win in the regular season! We had many possibilities, but we decided to stick with the "hot hands."

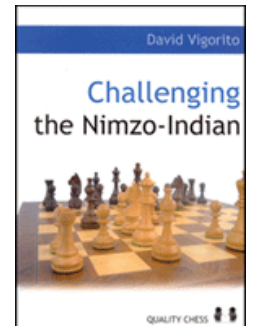
Miami was led by the current and three-time MVP, Julio Becerra. They were, however, without GM Renier Gonzales. Martinez moved up a board and Galofre played (well, did not play) Board Three. Their fourth board was the young upstart Nicholas Rosenthal, who had already scored some noticeable upsets in the play-offs. The substitute of Galofre for Gonzales was obviously favourable for us, but as the astute reader knows, we relish our normal role as the underdog. Not this time.

This was a strange match. Thirty minutes went by, and Galofre had not shown up. Alex, who had been an absolute rock, was in all kinds of trouble against the lower-rated Rosenthal. Everything was fine on Boards One and Two, but it was still early. A little over thirty minutes into the match, the USCL commissioner called and said that Galofre was having car trouble. They could get him, but the only person available was Miami's TD. I was told that we would have to approve him leaving, which of course was fine. I know the Miami guys and was hardly worried about the lack of the TD. Unfortunately, they just could not get him there in time. So we got a forfeit win. We were not exactly happy about this – no one wants to win this way. It was just a bad situation. Now if we won the match 2½-1½, it would be the forfeit that decided the match.

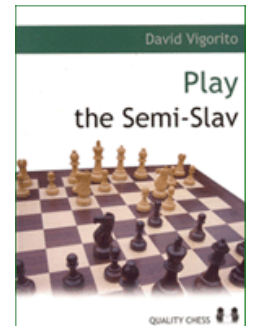
Alex went down quickly, but Sam was pressing and Robert was doing well too – he even turned down a repetition of moves. I made my usual coffee run, and soon after we were winning on both boards. Thus we won the match 3-1, and won the USCL Championship in our very first season!

The whole forfeit thing was annoying, as this was not the way we planned on winning Still, we scored 2/3 on the boards that actually played, so we will not feel too badly about it. And as we won on both Boards One and Two, I certainly believe that we won the match.

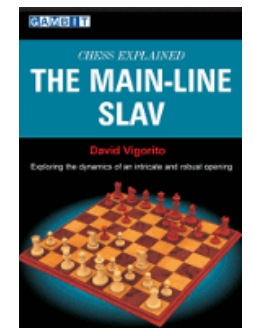
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While Galofre is a dangerous player, we can hardly assume he would have won with black against a higher-rated player. In the end, we scored 12/13, and broke all kinds of records. Some kibitzers will always make excuses for other teams and why the Nor'easters beat them, but the Nor'easters *never* had to make excuses. All we could really do was show up, play, and win. And win we did!



From left: FM Braden Bournival, IM Sam Shankland, IM David Vigorito, NM Carey Theil, IM Robert Hungaski, NM Alex Cherniack, FM Charles Riordan, IM Jan van de Mortel, and FM Christopher Chase

We will have one final column with games from the championship match and some highlights of the season. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to our friends at ChessCafe.com for their support. None of this would have been possible without their help!

2010 USCL Champion New England Nor'easters

- IM David Vigorito (manager)
- FM Charles Riordan (assistant manager)
- IM Sam Shankland
- IM Robert Hungaski
- IM Jan Van de Mortel
- FM Braden Bournival
- FM Chris Chase
- NM Alex Cherniack
- NM Carey Theil

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