

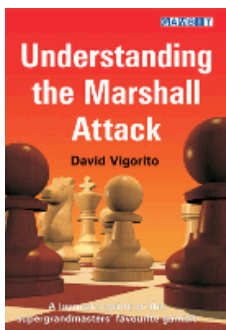


Boxing the Compass

David Vigorito



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New England Nor'easters Week Two

We entered Week Two in the unfamiliar position of having come off a defeat. Facing a strong NY Knights team meant this night would not be any easier.

The line-ups were as follows:

- **Board One**
IM David Vigorito (New England) – GM Georgi Kacheishvili (New York)
- **Board Two**
GM Pascal Charbonneau (New York) – IM Jonathan Yedidia (New England)
- **Board Three**
FM Charles Riordan (New England) – NM Leif Pressman (New York)
- **Board Four**
NM Justus Williams (New York) – NM Ben Goldberg (New England)

We were clear underdogs this week, a familiar position from last year. I was outrated by 100 points on Board One, but at least I had white. On Board Two we were at our most serious disadvantage. Charbonneau is a USCL monster and Jonathan was giving up plenty of rating points and had black in his USCL debut. On Board Three we had our only rating advantage, and Board Four was pretty even.

I got absolutely nothing with white, but Ben won with black in his first USCL game.

Williams, Justus (2239) – Goldberg, Ben (2230)

USCL, 06.09.2011

English Opening [A16]

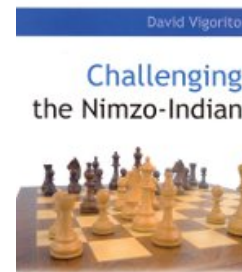
1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.dxc3



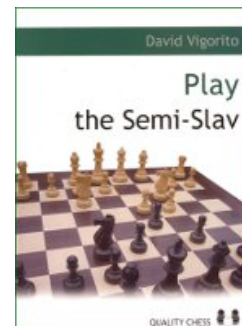
[FEN "rnbqkb1r/ppp1pp1p/6p1/8/4P3/2P2N2/PP3PPP/R1BQKB1R b KQkq - 0 6"]

A dry line where black can hardly hope for more than a draw with prudent play. My opponent showed up about thirty minutes late, and it looked like that would hardly be an issue given his choice of opening. I was told by my teammates after the game that the appropriate response is to play f6 and e5 after the queen trade.

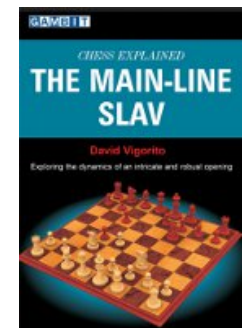
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6...Qxd1+ 7.Kxd1 Nd7

Not the best response. I was trying to find a creative way to hold the balance, but in doing so I ended up in a cramped position. The computer doesn't see anything wrong immediately, but I suspect the evaluation should tilt in white's favor over time.

8.Bf4 Nc5 9.Nd2 Ne6 10.Be3

At this point, I thought I would be in for a long, slow choke because of terminal lack of space.

10...Bg7 11.Kc2 0-0



[FEN "r1b2rk1/ppp1ppbp/4n1p1/8/4P3/2P1B3/PPKN1PPP/R4B1R w - - 0 12"]

12.h4 h5

I'm not sure if the inclusion of these last two moves helps White. Very soon I had the small solace of a grip on the kingside dark squares, though I am sure I still have to be worse somehow because of my lack of central space and the uncoordinated knight on e6.

13.f3 Rd8 14.Be2 Be5

I felt as though I was inching in the direction of equality, though my lack of space was still unpleasant. If he played Nc4, I intended Bf4, followed by maneuvering the c8-bishop to c6. If he moved the h1 rook, Bg3 would be a possibility. I was feeling more confident in my chances to equalize.

15.Bf2 Bd6

Hoping to contest the strong bishop with Bc5.

16.Nb3

I thought that White's moves were all with the intention of stifling any possible counterplay or attempt to trade pieces, but it may be at the cost of his own activity. Looking back at White's last four moves, it is hard to say what his plan is.

16...Bd7

With the sneaky idea of Ba4. In retrospect, a more prudent idea would have been Nf4, and if Bf1, then e5 and it is hard to believe I can be worse.

17.a4 Nf4 18.Bf1 e5



[FEN "r2r2k1/pppb1p2/3b2p1/4p2p/P3Pn1P/
1NP2P2/1PK2BP1/R4B1R w - - 0 19"]

19.g3

I was kind of surprised by this, I had been slightly alarmed by the possibility of Nc5 here. Bc6 isn't good because of g3, followed by doubled isolated e-pawns, so Bc8 would have been my move. (I doubt I'd have given up the bishop-pair with Bxc5, though maybe it's possible.) After a5 Ne6, I might still be OK, but once the white pawn reaches a6, I could have been tied to the threat of some kind of unpleasant piece sacrifice for a passed a pawn later down the road.

19...Ne6 20.Be3 a5

Now the white a-pawn might even become a liability.

21.Be2 Kf8 22.Rhf1 Bc6 23.Bc4 Ke7 24.Bd5

A committal choice, and an interesting one, since the pawn structure will now be altered and a draw is less likely. After the game, one of my teammates said he thought this might even favor me, as the white queenside pawns could be less fluid than Black's on the kingside.

24...Bxd5 25.exd5 Ng7



[FEN "r2r4/1pp1kpn1/3b2p1/p2Pp2p/P6P/
1NP1BPP1/1PK5/R4R2 w - - 0 26"]

With the idea of Nf5, I thought this was much more interesting than regrouping with Nf8.

26.g4

Just the move I sought to provoke. Now white's kingside pawn structure starts to get loose.

26...Rh8 27.Rae1 Kd7

As long as I'm cautious and dodge the tricks I should be in very good shape here. The h-pawn is not hanging yet because of Bg5, and moves like f4 could be dangerous with the king in the line of fire.

28.Bg5 Ne8

At first glance it might look like passive defense, but f6 followed by winning the h-pawn is a hard threat to deal with. Black is good here.

29.f4

Going for broke. Probably hoping for something like f6, fxe5 Bxe5, Nc5+ with murky complications. I had a simple response.

29...exf4 30.Bxf4 hxg4

The knight on e8 holds it all together! f7 and b7 will be valiantly protected. Black must be winning.

31.Bxd6 Nxd6 32.Nc5+ Kd8 33.Ne4 Nxe4 34.Rxe4 f5 35.Re6



[FEN "r2k3r/1pp5/4R1p1/p2P1p2/P5p/2P5/1PK5/5R2 b - - 0 35"]

35...Ra6

My favorite move of the game. The dormant and uncoordinated rook gloriously enters the fray, defending g6, and threatening to trade White's active rook. Though I am allowing my queenside pawn structure to be shattered, we transition to a winning rook ending where White cannot avoid the loss of another pawn.

36.Rxa6 bxa6 37.Rh1 Rh5 38.Kd3 g5 39.Ke3 Rxf4 0-1

I like this move even better than taking with the pawn, as the king and pawn ending would be hopelessly lost for White, and if the rook moves, Black's pawn mass prevents any activity from the black king, and the black rook maintains the initiative to start harrying the queenside while bringing the king into the action.

New York quickly evened things up as Pascal took care of the Berlin Wall.

Charbonneau, Pascal (2565) – Yedidia, Jonathan (2428)

USCL, 06.09.2011



[FEN "r1kn1b1r/pppb1pp1/7p/2p1P3/5N2/1P3N2/PBP2PPP/3RR1K1 w - - 0 16"]

Black has spent a lot of time dancing around with his knight, while White has been bringing his pieces to the center. Here Charbonneau played the thematic

16.e6! Nxe6 17.Ne5 Be8

The point is 17...Nxf4 18.Nxf7! The kibitzers had been looking at taking on d7. Now 18...Rg8? is met with 19.Re8+ Bxe8 20.Rd8#.

18.Nxf7 Bxf7 19.Nxe6 and White won a couple of pawns and wrapped things up with no trouble.

Vigorito, David (2547) – Kacheishvili, Georgi (2653)

USCL, 06.09.2011

My game has been relatively balanced, but then I became too ambitious.



[FEN "2b2r1k/2p3bp/p2qn3/2pBpp2/1rP5/2NPB1PP/1PQ2P2/2R2RK1 w - - 0 22"]

I had played Bg2–d5 and Ne2–c3, aiming for this position. Now, however, I realized that my intended 22.Bxe6 Bxe6 23.Na4



[FEN "5r1k/2p3bp/p2qb3/2p1pp2/NrP5/3PB1PP/1PQ2P2/2R2RK1 b - - 0 23"]

Would run into 23...Rxa4! 24.Qxa4 f4 when I immediately understood that Black's attack would be overwhelming. I was forced to retreat, but the tempi wasted left my position in tatters and I quickly lost.

So now we were down 2-1 and we needed Charles to tie the match. It almost happened, but his opponent had been defending well all game.

Riordan, Charles (2443) – Pressman, Leif (2381)

USCL, 06.09.2011



[FEN "8/3K1k2/8/3n1PBN/8/4b3/"]

Charles had played a good game, but then his opponent managed to complicate things. White's next move looks like it should lead to an easy win (I certainly thought it would), but the tablebases actually give it as a draw, despite White's two extra pawns!

58.Kd6 Bxg5 59.Kxd5 Bc1 60.Ke4 Bb2 61.Kf4 Bc1+ 62.Kg4 Bb2 63.Kg5 Bc3 64.h4?! Bb2 65.Ng3 Bc1+ 66.Kg4 Bd2 67.Ne4 Bc1 68.Kf3 Ba3 69.Kf4 Bc1+ 70.Ke5 Bb2+ 71.Kd5 Ba1 72.Nf2 Kf6 73.Ke4 Bc3 74.Kf4 Bd2+ 75.Kg4 Be1



[FEN "8/8/5k2/5P2/6KP/8/5N2/4b3 w - - 0 76"]

White can still play for a win, as defending this ending is not easy.

76.Nd3?

But not with this! 76.Ne4+ Ke5 77.Ng5! would allow White to keep trying, as 77...Bxh4? now fails to 78.Nf3+.

76...Bxh4

And the game was quickly drawn.

This was a disappointing match. Ben won with black and Jonathan faced the biggest rating disadvantage. Charles and I could only muster ½/2 with white, and it was too much to overcome.

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