



## Boxing the Compass

David Vigorito



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## New England Nor'easters Week Five

Week Five saw us needing a win against our frenemies on the Boston Blitz. Last week they also lost their match, so this was a bit of a must-win for them, too. Last year, our readers will recall, we drew Boston twice and went 11-0 against everyone else. This year we suffered our first loss ever at their hands, and we had not recovered since. This time around things went our way, and instead of a 2½-1½ loss, we scored a resounding 3½-½ victory for our first win of the season.

The line-ups were as follows:

- **Board One**  
 GM Sam Shankland (New England) – SM Jorge Sammour Hasbun (Boston)
- **Board Two**  
 IM Marc Esserman (Boston) – IM David Vigorito (New England)
- **Board Three**  
 NM Alex Cherniack (New England) – NM Vadim Martirosov (Boston)
- **Board Four**  
 NM Ilya Krasik (Boston) – NM Ben Goldberg (New England)

The match started pretty well. Sam had a good position against Jorge's surprise Benko Gambit, and I equalized easily with black against Marc with my King's Indian. Alex was also doing pretty well against Vadim, but Ben was suffering against Ilya.

At some point I felt I had a clear advantage in my game, but I could not find a good plan. I started to get low on time and Marc offered a draw. Suddenly Ben was turning things around against Ilya, so with good positions on the other three boards, taking the draw seemed to be the most sensible decision.

Sam ended up winning very nicely against Jorge, who was the leading MVP candidate for the league.

**Shankland, Sam (2553) – Sammour-Hasbun, Jorge (2460)**  
 USCL, 26.09.2011  
 Benko Gambit [A58]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5

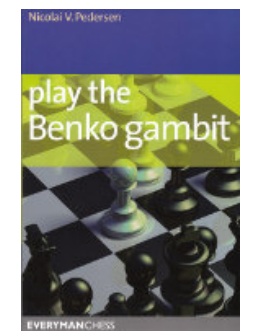
Certainly not what I was expecting.

4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6 g6 6.Nc3 Bxa6 7.Nf3 Bg7 8.g3 d6 9.Bg2 Nbd7 10.Rb1 Nb6 11.b3 Bc8 12.Nh4 h6 13.Qc2 Qd7

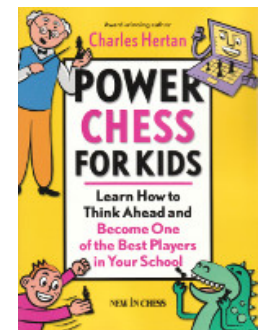
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[FEN "r1b1k2r/3qppb1/1n1p1npp/2pP4/7N/1PN3P1/P1Q1PPBP/1RB1K2R w Kkq - 0 14"]

#### 14.0-0??

A colossal error of mixing up move orders. This could have had dire consequences. 14.Bb2 g5 15.Nf3 Qf5 (15...Nfxd5? 16.Nxd5+-) 16.e4 Qg6 17.0-0 transposes.

#### 14...g5 15.Nf3 Qf5??

Ironically, my opponent was using tons of time (thirty minutes) in completely mainline theory that I'm sure was in his preparation, but the one move he didn't needlessly run his clock down on was the one that could have changed the course of the game. With 15...Nbx5=+, White has a very unpleasant position.

#### 16.e4 Qg6 17.Bb2 0-0 18.Rfd1

18.Rfc1 Nfxd5 19.exd5 Bf5 20.Qd1 Bxb1 21.Rxb1 Bxc3 22.Bxc3 Rxa2 looked less clear.

#### 18...Bg4 19.h3



[FEN "r4rk1/4ppb1/1n1p1nqp/2pP2p1/4P1b1/1PN2NPP/PBQ2PB1/1R1R2K1 b - - 0 19"]

#### 19...Bd7?

19...Bxf3 was logical and would have justified 18...Bg4. 20.Bxf3 h5 21.a4 g4 22.hxg4 hxg4 23.Be2 Nfd7 Black will install a knight on e5 and have some compensation, but certainly not enough for equality.

#### 20.Qe2+/- Rfe8 21.a4 e6?!

Black understandably did not want to sit around and wait, but this seems to basically lose by force. I don't really know what else he can do though; it looks like White is just up a healthy pawn. 21...h5; 21...c4.

#### 22.dxe6 Rxe6 23.Qf1

23.e5 The computer is very enthusiastic, but this looked messier than I cared for, while 23.Qf1 looked like just a simple extra pawn. 23...Rae8 (23...dxe5 24.Nxe5) 24.a5 Na8 25.Rbc1 dxe5 26.Nd5 winning.

### 23...Bc6



[FEN "r5k1/5pb1/1nbprnq/2p3p1/P3P3/1PN2NPP/1B3PB1/1R1R1QK1 w - - 0 24"]

### 24.Nd2

24.Rxd6! was a very strong alternative that I did not even consider 24...Rxd6 25.Ne5 Qh7 26.Nxc6 Rxc6 27.e5, and White seems to be winning.

### 24...Nfd7 25.Nd5 Bxb2 26.Rxb2 Bxd5 27.exd5 Ree8 28.Qb5

Despite not finding the most incisive continuations on a couple of moves, by now its clear White has consolidated his extra pawn and should be easily winning. I was very happy with the next sequence of moves I played.

### 28...Red8

28...Nxa4 29.bxa4 Reb8 30.Qxd7 Rxb2 31.Ne4+-.



[FEN "r2r2k1/3n1p2/1n1p2qp/1QpP2p1/P7/1P4PP/1R1N1PB1/3R2K1 w - - 0 29"]

### 29.a5+- Nc8 30.Nc4 Rb8 31.Qc6 Qf6 32.Qc7 Ra8 33.Re2 Ra7 34.Qc6 Nb8 35.Qb5 Na6 36.Rde1 Nc7 37.Qc6 Kg7 38.Re3 Na6 39.Rf3 Qd4



[FEN "2nr4/r4pk1/n1Qp3p/P1pP2p1/2Nq4/1P3RPP/5PB1/4R1K1 w - - 0 40"]

### 40.Ne3?

40.Re8 This was my original plan, and it is completely winning. I have no

idea why I didn't do it. 40...Nb4 41.Rxd8 (41.Qb5) 41...Nxc6 42.dxc6 I correctly assessed this position as winning for White, but then my rational side told me, "Hey, why sacrifice the queen if you can keep things simple?" My response was to play 40.Ne3, instead of the ultra-easy 41.Qb5. My own stupidity never ceases to amaze me!

#### 40...Ne7 41.Qb6 Rdd7

I somehow missed this move. I had looked at Rad7, Rda8, and Raa8, and decided all of them were losing (which they are) but I somehow missed the last Ra8/d7 possibility.

#### 42.Rd1 Qe5



[FEN "8/r2rnpk1/nQ1p3p/P1pPq1p1/8/1P2NRPP/5PB1/3R2K1 w - - 0 43"]

#### 43.Bf1?

43.Qb5 was really easy, I forgot Nc7 was impossible on account of Qxd7. 43...Nc7 (43...Rdb7 44.Qe8; 43...Nb4 44.Nc4 Qe2 45.Rxf7+ Kg6 46.Bf3) 44.Qxd7.

#### 43...Nb4??

43...Qe4! was the last chance. I had seen this and realized Black might draw, but I felt that at this point I had somewhat lost control of the game and getting to a position where I could apply pressure in a risk free way would have been perfect, in particular in my opponent's time trouble and with my teammates doing well. 44.Kg2 (44.Bg2 Qg6) 44...Nb4 45.Bb5! Nxd5 (45...Rab7 46.Bxd7 Rxb6 47.axb6+-) 46.Nxd5 Nxd5 47.Rxd5 Qxd5 48.Bc6 Qe6 49.Re3 Qf5 50.g4 Qf6 51.Bxd7 Rxd7 52.b4+/- If Black walks the tightrope well enough to get here (any other move along the sequence would lead to an immediate loss), he has the right to struggle for a long time in this endgame.

#### 44.Nc4+- Qe4 45.Re3

45.Rxf7+! was even easier 45...Kxf7 46.Qxa7.

#### 45...Qc2?

45...Qg6 was relatively best, but after 46.Rxe7 Rxe7 47.Nxd6 it is hard to believe Black can resist for long.



#### 46.Nxd6! Qxd1

46...Nbx d5 47.Ne8+ Kh7 A) 48.Nf6+ Nxf6 49.Rxd7 Rxd7 (49...Nxd7 50.Qxa7) 50.Qxf6; B) 48.Bd3+ Qxd3 49.Rexd3 Nxb6 50.Nf6+; 46...Nexd5 47.Ne8+ Kh7 48.Nf6+ Nxf6 49.Rxd7 Rxd7 (49...Nxd7 50.Qxa7) 50.Qxf6; 46...Rxd6 47.Qxd6 Qxd1 48.Rxe7.

#### 47.Ne8+

47.Rxe7 Qc2 (47...Rxe7 48.Nf5+ Kg8 49.Qf6).

#### 47...Kh7

47...Kf8 48.Qxh6+ Kxe8 49.Qh8#; 47...Kg8 48.Qxh6 Qd4 49.Nf6+.

#### 48.Qf6 Qd4 49.Qxf7+ Kh8 50.Nf6 1-0

That left us up 1½-½. Alex soon cashed in as well, so the match was won.

#### Cherniack, Alex – Martirosov, Vadim

USCL (5), 26.09.2011

Ruy Lopez [C67]

#### 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6

Out of my preparation already. I expected a Philidor with 2...d6.

#### 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.0-0 Nxe4 5.d4 Be7 6.dxe5

The classical way to play against this is 6.Qe2 Nd6 7.Bxc6 bxc6 8.dxc6 Nb7 9.Nd4. But the direct approach in the center isn't bad either – it has a high success rate in the databases.

#### 6...0-0 7.Qd5 Nc5 8.Be3 d6 9.Bxc5 dxc5 10.Bxc6 bxc6



[FEN "r1bq1rk1/p1p1bppp/2p5/2pQP3/  
8/5N2/PPP2PPP/RN3RK1 w - - 0 11"]

This position has been reached twice before in a junior tournament in 2004. In both games White played 11.Qe4, preferring to leave Black with tripled c-pawns. S.Zhigalko-D.Lintchevski continued 11...Rb8 12.b3 Qd5 13.Qf4 Qe6 14.c4Qg4 15.Qe3 Bf5, and D.Howell-D.Lintchevski continued 11...Qd5 12.Qe3 Bf5 13. Nc3 Qe6 14.Rac1 Rfd8 15.b3 Qg6, with roughly equal games. I took the pawn on c6, because I wanted to play Nb1-c3-d5.

#### 11.Qxc6 Rb8 12.Nc3 Bb7 13.Qa4 Bxf3 14.gxf3 Rb4 15.Qc6



[FEN "3q1rk1/p1p1bppp/2Q5/2p1P3/1r6/2N2P2/PPP2P1P/R4RK1 b - - 0 15"]

### 15...Rh4?

Vadim goes for the jugular, but it proves to be too slow. After 15...Rxb2 16. Rad1 Qe8 17.Qe4 c6 18.Rfe1 Qc8 19.a3 Qe6, all the pawn weaknesses offset each other, with an unclear game.

### 16.Rad1 Qc8 17.Rd7

Tempting but inferior was 17.Qd7 Qa6 18.Ne4 (18.Qxe7? Qg6+ 19.Kh1 Qh5 and now giving up the queen with 20.Qxh4 is forced with a dreary defense ahead) 18...Qh6 19.Ng3 Rxh2 20.Rfe1 c4 21.e6 22.exf7+ Rxf7 23.Qxh3 Rxh3 24.Re4, with a slight advantage at best.

### 17...Rh6 18.Qxc7 Qa6



[FEN "5rk1/p1QRbppp/q6r/2p1P3/8/2N2P2/PPP2P1P/5RK1 w - - 0 19"]

### 19.Ne4

Black was threatening mate in two with 19...Rg6+ 20.Kh1 Qxf1. However, after this move Black is two pawns down, and has a hard time finding a good square for the attacked bishop.

### 19...Rg6+ 20.Ng3 Bg5 21.Qxc5 Qxa2 22.b3 Qb2 23.Rfd1

23.Rd6 immediately runs into 23...Be7 losing the exchange.

### 23...h5 24.R1d6 Qc1+ 25.Kg2 h4 26.Rxg6 fxc6





[FEN "5rk1/p2R2p1/6p1/2Q1P1b1/7p/1P3PN1/2P2PKP/2q5 w - - 0 27"]

27.Qc7!

If not for this resource, Black would have had real counterplay. 27.Ne4 h3+ 28.Kxh3 Qf1+ 29.Kg4 Qg2+ 30.Ng3 Qf3+ 31.Kh3 Rf4 32.Qd5+ also works, but I would have not had the nerve to play it in the game.

**27...Bh6 28.Qc4+ Kh7 29.Qxh4 Qxc2 30.Qc4 Qxc4**

Otherwise the e-pawn is unstoppable: 30...Qb2 31.e6 Qf6 32.e7! Qxf3+ 33.Kh3 Rf5 34.Qg4 Qxg4+ 35.Kxg4 Re5 36.f4 Re3 37.f5 gxf5+ 38.Nxf5 Re4+ 39.Kf3 Re4+ 40.Kg2 Re4 41.Nd6.

**31.bxc4 Re8 32.Rxa7 Rxe5 33.Ne4 Bf4**

This puts Black out of his misery. 33...Kg8 was forced, but the passed c-pawn and the doubled g-pawns guarantee White a won ending.

**34.Nf6+ 1-0**

Ben completed his comeback, and thus we managed to beat Boston – the one team we had faced but never beaten – by a convincing 3½-½ score.

We can hardly rest on this victory, as we are still out of the playoff picture as things stand now. Next week our tough schedule continues as we have a rematch from last year's Finals against the Miami Sharks.

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