



Boxing the Compass

David Vigorito



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New England Nor'easters Week Six

In the sixth week we faced the Miami Sharks, thus setting up a rematch of last year's USCL Finals. Neither team was doing so well this season, so we both needed to win.

The line-ups were as follows:

- **Board One**
GM Julio Becerra (Miami) – IM Robert Hungaski (New England)
- **Board Two**
IM Jonathan Yedidia (New England) – FM Joan Olivera (Miami)
- **Board Three**
FM Eric Rodriguez (Miami) – FM Charles Riordan (New England)
- **Board Four**
NM Alex Fikiet (New England) – NM Ernesto Alvarez (Miami)

The match did not start well. Robert's surprise opening backfired and it looked like he would be lucky to not lose a miniature against the three-time league MVP. Charles messed up his move order in the opening and did lose a miniature. The other boards were not so bad. Jonathan got very little with white, but Alex quickly achieved a huge position against the Modern Benoni and won rather handily.

Fikiet, Alex (2255) – Alvarez, Ernesto (2207)
USCL, 05.10.2011
Modern Benoni [A61]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nc3 g6 7.Qa4+



[FEN "mbqkb1r/pp3p1p/3p1np1/2pP4/Q7/2N2N2/PP2PPPP/R1B1KB1R b KQkq - 0 7"]

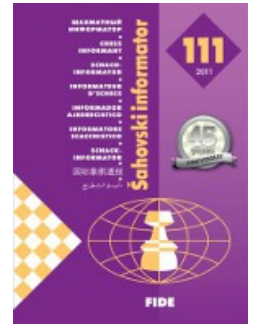
This relatively rare line is designed to interrupt Black's development and make the defense of his d6-pawn more difficult.

7...Bd7?!

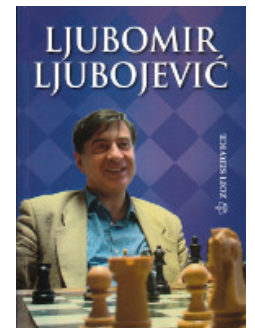
Already an inaccuracy. Black's bishop will end up being misplaced. 7...Nbd7 is better.

8.Qb3 Qc7 9.e4 a6 10.a4 b6 11.Bc4

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Although these moves were hardly forced, White has achieved a reasonable advantage. With my last move, I prepare to make a battery on the a2-g8 diagonal to help make the thematic break e4-e5 even stronger.

11...Bg7 12.Bg5

I had considered 12.e5!?, but I saw the position after 11...dxe5 12.d6 Qxd6 13. Bxf7+ Kf8 and decided to just continue my development. Briefly looking over the game afterward, I determined 14.Ng5, threatening Bxg6, gives white a large advantage. However, the computer shows that after 14...Nc6 15.Bxg6 Qe7 Black has a pretty reasonable position. His knight is going to d4, and the position becomes pretty irrational.

12...0-0 13.0-0 Bg4 14.Nd2 h6 15.Be3 Kh7 16.h3 Bc8 17.f4 Nbd7



[FEN "r1b2r2/2qn1pbk/pp1p1npp/2pP4/P1B1PP2/1QN1B2P/1P1N2P1/R4RK1 w - - 0 18"]

18.e5!?

This thematic break is not considered to be very good by Fritz, but I felt that the dominating positions my pieces would get was worth the pawn. My position is still good, and my opponent even helps me out a little.

18...dxe5 19.f5 gxf5 20.Rxf5 b5 21.axb5 Nb6 22.Rff1 Nxc4 23.Nxc4 Bb7 24. b6 Qe7 25.Rad1 Nh5 26.Qc2+ Kh8 27.Ne4+-



[FEN "r4r1k/1b2qpb1/pP5p/2pPp2n/2N1N3/4B2P/1PQ3P1/3R1RK1 b - - 0 27"]

White got nearly everything he could of dreamed of after 18.e5. Black's position has many weaknesses, and every white piece is superior to his counterpart. I shortly won a large amount of material after, and my opponent gave me even more to open up my king position and gain some swindling possibilities.

27...Rad8 28.Bxc5 Qh4 29.Bxf8 Rxf8 30.Ncd6 Nf4 31.Nxb7 f5 32.Ned6 e4 33.Qf2 Nxb3+ 34.gxh3 Qxh3 35.Qh2 (35.Nd8!) 35...Qg4+ 36.Kh1 f4 37. Nd8 e3 38.N8f7+ Kh7 39.Qc2+ Kg8 40.Nxh6+ Bxh6 41.Rg1 Qg7 42.Rxg7+ Bxg7 43.Rg1 Rf6 44.Nf5 1-0

So the match was tied. Robert was lost and seemed to just be dragging things out. Our 2010 team MVP was looking at a shocking 0-3 start. This was all the more surprising since his rating had increased to more than 2600 USCF.

Jonathan had been playing for a small edge, but suddenly his king was exposed and it looked like he would go down as well.

Charles and I decided it was time to go get some ice cream, and upon our return stage things started to happen.

Becerra, Julio (2640) – Hungaski, Robert (2621)
USCL, 05.10.2011



[FEN "3R4/8/2p1PK2/3b4/2p5/4r3/5R2/3k4 w - - 0 53"]

Robert was basically busted in a dozen move, but he fought on and made Becerra work hard. The practical chances that Robert created finally took their toll and White erred with **53.Ra8?**

Instead 53.e7 Re6+ 54.Kf7!+- would win, as there are no good discoveries. If 54...Re2+?, 55.Rxd5+.

53...Rxe6+ 54.Kf5 Ke1! 55.Rh2 Kf1!

Black defends against the mating ideas and the game is drawn.

56.Ra1+ Re1 57.Rxe1+ Kxe1 58.Ke5 Bf3 59.Kd4 Bd5 60.Kc3 Kd1 61.Rd2 + Ke1 62.Rh2 Kd1 63.Kd4 Ke1 1/2-1/2

Things still looked very bleak. Then Jonathan's opponent missed a win – which was not easy to see – and it looked as though we may even win the match.

Yedidia, Jonathan (2428) – Olivera, Joan (2399)
USCL, 05.10.2011



[FEN "Q7/6pk/1p6/p7/2P2r2/PP5q/4K1R1/8 b - - 0 52"]

52...Qe6+?

52...Rd4!, threatens ...Qd3+, and 53.Qf3 loses to 53...Rd2+.

53.Kd2 Rd4+ 54.Kc2 Qf5+ 55.Kb2 Qe5 56.Ka2 a4?

This just gives away a pawn.

57.Qxa4 Rd1 58.Rb2 g5?

Now two pawns.

59.Qa7+ Kh6 60.Qxb6+ Kh5 61.Qf2 g4 62.c5 Kg5 63.c6 g3 64.Qc2?

The position was difficult, especially with both sides low on time. White still had ways to win, but this was not one of them.

64...Qe1 65.Qc5+ Kg6 66.Rc2 Ra1+ 67.Kb2 Rb1+ 68.Ka2 Ra1+ 69.Kb2 Rb1+ 70.Ka2 Ra1+ ½-½

Game drawn by repetition.

Although in the last few minutes of the match, the victory slipped through our fingers, we realized we were fortunate to just draw. From here on out every match is a must-win. In Week Seven, we face a revitalized Manhattan team.

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