

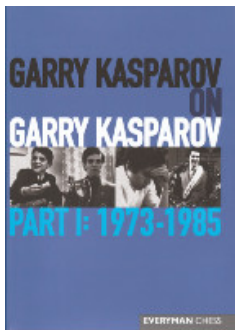


Boxing the Compass

David Vigorito



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New England Nor'easters Week Seven

Week seven brought the Nor'easters up against the Manhattan Applesauce (yes, the Applesauce). This was the team we beat last year to secure the top seed, but this year the Manhattan team has been having a good season, and they sat alone in third place. After last week's draw, it was clear that we would have to win this match to have any chance of making the playoffs after our poor start.

The line-ups were as follows:

- **Board One**
IM Lev Milman (Manhattan) – IM Robert Hungaski (New England)
- **Board Two**
IM David Vigorito (New England) – IM Eli Vovsha (Manhattan)
- **Board Three**
FM Farai Mandizha (Manhattan) – NM Alex Cherniack (New England)
- **Board Four**
NM Alex Fikiet (New England) – NM James Black (Manhattan)

The match looked about even on paper, but we felt like we were slight underdogs. Both Milman and Vovsha are very strong and experienced IMs, so we did not feel we had any edge here. On Board Three, Alex Cherniack would have his hands full with the high-rated Mandizha, while we would probably be considered slight favorites on Board Four. Fikiet got into some trouble early, but he managed to fight back.

Fikiet, Alex (2255) – Black, James (2184)
USCL, (7) 12.10.2011



[FEN "2k2b1r/pb3R2/4p2p/q1p1P1p1/1pp1N3/P1N3P1/1P2B1PP/3R3K w - - 0 20"]

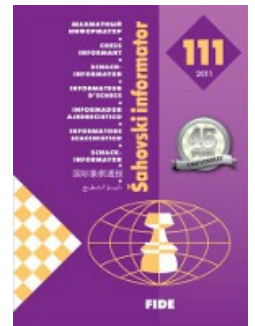
White is basically lost here, but with tremendous creativity, Fikiet manages to confuse matters.

20.Nb5! Bxe4

If 20...Qxb5, 21.Rxf8+! even wins for White.

21.Bxc4 a6?! 22.Na7+ Kb8 23.Bd5! Bxd5 24.Rxd5 Qb6

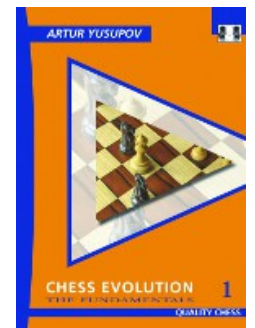
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If Black wanted to play for a win, he had to try 24...exd5 25.Nc6+ Kc8 26. Nxa5 bxa3 27.bxa3 c4.



[FEN "1k3b1r/N4R2/pq2p2p/2pRP1p1/1p6/P5P1/1P4PP/7K w - - 0 25"]

25.Rd8+! Qxd8 26.Nc6+ Kc8 27.Na7+ ½-½

This was a remarkable save, but with a rating advantage and white, we could have hoped for more. I also had white, but things went even worse for me as I played a strange opening, miscalculated something, and lost a piece for nothing in a mere twenty-three moves. So now we had ½/2 and had to win both of our games with Black.

Of course, two of the heroes of last year's magical season came though and bailed me out. Cherniack took down his higher rated opponent with Black in excellent style.

Mandizha, Farai (2494) – Cherniack, Alex (2319)

USCL, (7) 12.10.2011



[FEN "r4r2/pp4pp/3Nk3/4P3/3PpPb1/4B3/P6P/2R3K1 b - - 0 30"]

Alex had a great opening, but his opponent managed to make things very messy. Alex stayed very composed and fought for the initiative.

30...g5! 31.fxg5 Rf3 32.Re1 Kd5 33.Bf2 Bf5 34.Rc1 e3 35.Bxe3 Bh3! 36.Rc5 + Ke6 37.d5+ Kxe5 38.Nc4+ Kf5! 39.d6+ Ke4 40.Bf2

40.Nd2+ Kxe3 41.Rc3+ Kxd2 42.Rxf3 Be6+.



[FEN "r7/pp5p/3P4/2R3P1/2N1k3/

40...Rf5!

This quickly ends matters.

41.Nd2+ Kd3 42.Nb3 Rxc5 43.Nxc5+ Ke2 44.d7 Rf8 0-1

White forfeited on time.

This was a great victory, but we still needed Robert to win against Milman, and the position was looking drawish, at best. Robert did not have the best start this year, but he got angry, and the Robert of 2010 showed up. The hungry Hungaski simply willed the win.

Milman, Lev – Hungaski, Robert

USCL, (7) 12.10.2011

Scandinavian Defense [B01]

This being one of the few times I arrived to the game on time I asked the TD why my game had not yet started. I had overlooked the possibility that my opponent might be late for once. Lev arrived some twenty minutes late. I think I can get used to this.

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qa5 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3 c6 6.Bc4 Bf5 7.Bd2 e6 8. Nd5 Qd8 9.Nxf6+ gxf6 10.Bb3 Nd7 11.Qe2 Qc7 12.Nh4 Bg6 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.g3 Bd6 15.Nxg6 hxg6 16.h4 f5 17.h5



[FEN "2kr3r/ppqn1p2/2bbp1p1/5p1P/3P4/1B4P1/PPPBQP2/2KR3R b - - 0 17"]

This was one of the lines I had looked at during my preparation. However, white now usually plays 17.Bg5 so that black will have greater difficulties placing his knight on e4.

17...gxf6 18.Rxh5 Rxh5 19.Qxh5 Nf6 20.Qf3 Ne4 21.Be3 Rg8

Sooner or later I would have to deal with the threat of White playing g4. 21... Be7 22.Kb1 (22.g4 Ng5) 22...Rg8 (22...Bg5 23.g4!).

22.Kb1 Be7 23.c3 Bg5 24.Bc2 Bxe3 25.Qxe3 Nf6 26.Rh1 Qd8 27.c4 Ng4

27...Rh8 was the more accurate move.

28.Qf4 Qc7

I had first intended to play 28...Qg5, but white has the very annoying 29.Rh8! Kd7 30.Rxg8 Qxg8 31.d5. Of course not 28...Rh8? 29.Rxh8 Qxh8 30.Bxf5.

29.Qf3 Rd8 30.Rd1 Kb8 31.d5 a6!?



[FEN "1k1r4/1pq2p2/p1p1p3/3P1p2/2P3n1/5QP1/PPB2P2/1K1R4 w - - 0 32"]

A useful waiting move. Given the match situation, I had to avoid simplifications that would lead to a drawn ending. 31...Ne5 32.Qf4 cxd5 (32...Ng4 33.d6) 33.cxd5 Nc4 34.Qxc7+ Kxc7 35.dxe6 Rxd1+ 36.Bxd1 fxe6 37.Bb3=; 31...Nf6 32.Qc3.

32.dxc6 Rxd1+ 33.Bxd1 Ne5

33...bxc6 34.Qb3+ Ka7 35.Bxg4 fxg4 36.c5; 33...Qxc6 34.Qxc6 bxc6 35.Bxg4 fxg4 36.Kc2.

34.Qf4 Qd6!

34...Nxc6 35.Qxc7+ Kxc7 36.Kc2=; 34...bxc6 35.c5!.

35.Be2 bxc6 36.Kc2 c5 37.Qd2 Qc7 38.b4 Ka7

The resulting pin becomes very annoying for Black. 38...cxb4! 39.Qxb4+ Ka7, when White must be very mindful of his weak dark squares.

39.Qe3 Nd7 40.Bh5 Nf6 41.Bf3 Kb6 42.Qa3 cxb4 43.Qxb4+ Ka7 44.a4?



[FEN "8/k1q2p2/p3pn2/5p2/PQP5/5BP1/2K2P2/8 b - - 0 44"]

Now black seizes the dark squares and White's position collapses. I thought the position arising after c5 would at least be better for White and very hard for Black to create any winning chances: 44.c5! Ne4 (44...Nd7 45.c6 Nb6 46.a4; 44...e5 45.Qc4 e4 46.Be2 Kb8 47.Kd2) 45.Bxe4 fxe4 46.Kd2.

44...Nd7 45.Bg2 Qb6 46.Kc3 Nc5 47.a5

47.Qxb6+ Kxb6 48.Kd4 (48.Kb4 a5+ 49.Ka3 Nd3) 48...Nxa4 49.Ke5 Nc5 50.Kf6 a5.

47...Qd6 48.Qb1 Qe5+ 49.Kd2 Qd4+ 50.Ke1 Qc3+ 51.Kf1 Qxa5 52.Qb2



[FEN "8/k4p2/p3p3/q1n2p2/2P5/6P1/1Q3PB1/5K2 b - - 0 52"]

52...Qd8

I did not like 52...Qe1+? 53.Kxe1 Nd3+ 54.Kd2 Nxb2 55.Kc3, when White's king is becoming too active for my taste. Moreover, Bf3-h5 maneuvers are always present. With queens on the board, White had no chance of survival.

53.Bf3 Qd3+ 54.Kg2 Qxc4 55.Qf6 Kb6 56.Qxf7 Qd4 57.Qf8 Ka5 [57... Nd3] 58.Qb8 Nd3 59.Qc7+ Kb4 60.Qb7+ [60.Qe7+ Qc5] 60...Kc3 61.Qc7+ Kb2 62.Qb7+ Kc1 63.Qc7+ Qc5 64.Qc6 Kd2 65.Qxc5 Nxc5 66.g4 fxg4 67. Bxg4 a5 68.f4 a4 69.f5 exf5 70.Bxf5 a3 71.Bb1 Kc1 72.Ba2 Kb2 0-1

So we won our second match of the season. It's not over yet! Next week: the New Jersey Knockouts.

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