

Alberta Chess Report



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Alberta organizes two more international tournaments in 2015



ACA holds the 2016 Alberta Chess Challenge in Red Deer



Bitan Banerjee wins the 2016 Alberta Championship in Edmonton



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2015 Alberta Invitational Norm Tournaments

The 2015 chess calendar in Alberta got unexpectedly augmented by two more international tournaments, thanks to the support of FIDE (International Chess Federation) and the Chess Federation of Canada. Each tournament was a 10-player round-robin event with IM (International Master) norm opportunities.

The first tournament was organized by Vlad Rekhson in Calgary, October 29 – November 4. The top invited players were GMs Enrico Sevillano (USA) and Tejas Bakre (India). Six Albertans participated: FMs Dale Haessel and Ian Findlay, Daniel Kazmaier, Gary Ng, Diwen Shi and Jeff Wang. FMs Kostya Kavutskiy (USA) and Michael Langer (USA) completed the roster.

Both invited GMs proved their strength and finished undefeated although Gary Ng came eerily close to getting a GM scalp.

Ng, Gary (2182) – Bakre, Tejas (2438) [A38]

2015 Calgary Invitational (8), 03.11.2015

1.♠f3 c5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g3 d6 5.d4 cxd4 6.♘xd4 g6 7.♙g2 ♙d7 8.♘c2 ♙g7 9.0-0 0-0 10.b3 a6 11.♙b2 ♙a5 12.♘d5 ♘xd5 13.♙xg7 ♘c3 14.♙xc3 ♙xc3 15.♘e3 ♙e6 16.♙c1 ♙e5 17.♙d1 White has obtained a fairly standard pleasant position out of the English opening. At this point Black must decide where to put his rooks. 17...♙fc8 Apparently, intending a quick b7-b5. As it often happens, the computer advocates 17...♙ac8!? instead. 18.♙d2 A good move provoking 18...b5?! – Black must have underestimated the opponent's reply. 19.♙ac1 Now the pinned c6-knight creates tactical problems. For example, 19...bxc4 20.♘xc4 ♙xc4 21.♙xc4 ♘a5 22.♙e4 and Black loses material. 19...♙d7? This makes the situation worse. Unpinning the knight by means of 19...♙ab8 may be the lesser evil. 20.c5! Natural and strong. Black is in serious trouble. 20...♙ab8 21.cxd6 e6? A desperate attempt to muddy the waters. After 21...exd6 22.♙xd6 ♙xd6 23.♙xd6 White's material and positional advantage in the endgame is decisive. 22.♘g4 ♙g7 23.♙xc6 The simplest continuation clearing the way for the

passed pawn. 23...♙xc6 24.♙xc6 ♙xc6 25.d7 ♙d8



The critical position of the game. So far White has played with great energy and is very close to a win.

26.♙a5? What a pity!

White just needed a slight finesse: 26.♘h6+! ♘h8, then 27.♙a5 wins on the spot. Black has nothing better than 27...♙xd7 28.♙d8+ ♙xd8 29.♙xd8+ ♙f8 30.♙xf8+ ♘g7 31.♙c8 when White ends up being up a whole rook.

26...♙xd7 27.♙d8+ ♙xd8 28.♙xd8+ ♙f8 29.♘f6+ ♘g7 30.♙xf8 ♘xf8 31.♘h7+ Now White is up a measly pawn but his misadventures are not over yet. 31...♘e7 32.♘g5 f6 33.♘f3 ♘d6 The black king has become active, and White faces difficult decisions. 34.a3 This doesn't prevent the king from penetrating; now White is suddenly forced to play precisely to hold equality. The computer recommends 34.♘e1 ♘c5 35.♘d3+ which slows Black's counterplay down. After 35...♘d4 36. h4 the threat of quickly creating a passed pawn on the king-side keeps White's winning hopes alive. 34...♘c5 35.♘f1 b4 36.a4?



Unfortunately, the losing move.

Correct is 36.axb4+ ♘xb4 37.♘d2 ♙d5 38.h4 which leads to almost the same queen endgame except that the number of pawns is even: 38...a5 39.g4 ♙xb3 40.♘xb3 ♘xb3 41.h5 gxh5 42. gxh5 a4 43.h6 a3 44.h7 a2 45.h8 ♙a1 ♙+ After 46.♘g2 a handshake is in order.

36...♙xf3! GMs don't miss chances like this. 37.exf3 ♘d4 38.h4 ♘c3 39.g4 ♘xb3 40.h5 gxh5 41.gxh5 ♘xa4 42.h6 b3 43.h7 b2 44.h8 ♙b1 ♙+ 45. ♘g2 ♙g6+ 46.♘h2 a5

The game lasted 100 moves but Black's extra pawn eventually decided the outcome. 0-1

The tournament featured several opening catastrophes.

Shi, Diwen (2151) – Kazmaier, Daniel (2220) [C11]

2015 Calgary Invitational (5), 01.11.2015

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.♘f3 c5 6.♙g5 This quick developing move has a mediocre reputation but no direct refutation. Diwen plays it regularly and this game is an excellent illustration of what White wants.

6...♙b6 7.dxc5 ♙xc5 8.♙d2! ♙xf2+ Looks tempting but the following forced sequence ends up well for White. 9.♙xf2 ♙xb2 10.♘d2 ♙xa1 11. ♙b5 ♙xh1 12.♙c5 ♙xg2+ 13.♘c1



White's threats are so strong that Black is obligated to return all his extra material. 13...♘c6 14.♙xc6 ♙xg5+ 15. ♘xg5 bxc6 16.♙xc6 ♙b8 17.♘xd5 So far White has scored 9.5/10 from this position. 17...0-0? Now the game is essentially over.

17...exd5 is a must although after

18.e6 f6 19.♖d6 ♖b6 20.exd7+ ♕xd7 21.♗xd5 ♜f8 22.♜e4 White has all the winning chances.

18.♜e7+ ♖h8 19.♜xc8 ♜xe5 20.♗e4! f5 21.♗xe5 ♖bxc8 22.♜xe6 ♜f6 23.♜f4 The rest is a matter of technique.

23...♖cf8 24.h4 ♖g8 25.♗d5+ ♖h8 26.h5 ♜e8 27.♗d7 ♜ef8 28.♜e6 ♜xe6 28...♖g8 doesn't prevent 29.♜xg7! in view of 29...♖xg7 30.♗d8+ 29.♗xe6 f4 30.♗e7 ♖g8 31.♗xa7 f3 32.♗f2 h6 33.a4 g5 34.hxg6 ♖g7 35.a5 ♖xg6 36.a6 ♖g5 37.♗c5+ ♜f5 38.♗f2 ♖g4 39.a7 ♜f8 40.♗d4+ ♖h3 41.♗g7 1-0

Ng, Gary (2182) –

Haessel, Dale (2195) [A34]

2015 Calgary Invitational (3), 31.10.2015

1.♜f3 ♜f6 2.c4 c5 3.♜c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♜xd5 5.d4 cxd4 6.♗xd4 ♜xc3 7.♗xc3 ♜c6 8.e4 ♕g4 9.♖b5 This whole line looks good for White who achieves an excellent score in the database. Black, however, is not obligated to lose quickly. 9...♖c8 10.0-0 a6 11.♜e5



2015 Calgary Invitational. Left to right: Organizer and TD Vlad Rekhson, FM Kostya Kavutskiy, GM Tejas Bakre and GM Enrico Sevillano

This move must have come as a surprise for Black. Here 11.♕a4 is a normal continuation. 11...♕d7?? It's hard to believe but now the game is essentially over. 11...axb5 is a must. After 12.♜xg4 e6 Black doesn't have much to worry about, which doesn't speak very highly of the merit of 11. ♜e5.

12.♕xc6! ♕xc6 13.♗f3 Black is simply defenceless, and the rest of the game is a massacre. 13...f6 14.♗h5+ g6 15.♜xg6 hxg6 16.♗xh8. [Or 16.♗xg6+ ♜d7 17.♖d1+ ♜c7 18.♜f4+ ♜b6 19.♖xd8 with a decisive advantage.] 16...♕xe4 17.♕h6 ♜f7 18.♗h7+ ♜e6 19.♖fe1 1-0

Calgary Invitational Standings

| # | Player | Rating | Federation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Total |
|----|---------------------|--------|------------|-----|-----|-----|---|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-------|
| 1 | GM Enrico Sevillano | 2463 | USA | | 0.5 | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | 7 |
| 2 | GM Tejas Bakre | 2438 | India | 0.5 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| 3 | FM Kostya Kavutskiy | 2349 | USA | 0.5 | 0 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6.5 |
| 4 | FM Ian Findlay | 2293 | Canada | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 5 | Daniel Kazmaier | 2220 | Canada | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| 6 | FM Dale Haessel | 2195 | Canada | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 0 | 0.5 | 1 | 5.5 |
| 7 | FM Michael Langer | 2190 | USA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 3.5 |
| 8 | Gary Ng | 2182 | Canada | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.5 | | 1 | 1 | 5.5 |
| 9 | CM Diwen Shi | 2151 | Canada | 0 | 0.5 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | | 1 | 4 |
| 10 | Jeff Wang | 1746* | Canada | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 |

*Counts as 2050 for norms purposes. IM norm requirement: 7/9

The crosstable summarizes the results of the tournament. GM Bakre took clear first with an excellent score of 8/9, GM Sevillano finished second (7/9), while FM Kavutskiy came very close to making an IM norm but missed it by just half a point. The best Albertans FM Dale Haessel and Gary Ng tied for fourth with 5.5/9.

The second invitational tournament was organized by Dustin Koperski and took place in Edmonton immediately after the conclusion of the Calgary Invitational (November 6-11). Apart from GMs Tejas Bakre and Enrico Sevillano, the GM crew was enhanced by Jesse Kraai (USA). FM Steven Breckenridge (USA) was the fourth invited player, while the other six participants were Albertans. To the best of my knowledge, Nicolas Haynes, Vlad Rekhson and David Miller participated in a round-robin tournament with IM norms for the first time in their career.

I have written a large article about the Edmonton Invitational for Chess Canada, the electronic Newsletter of the CFC. The article has yet to be published so I won't be able to include the same annotated games here.

As can be seen from the crosstable below, the three GMs tied for first with 7.5/9, while the best Albertan was FM Dale Haessel (5/9). The player of the tournament, however, turned out to be the lowest rated participant, Vlad Rekhson. Most importantly, he managed to get his first GM scalp by upsetting Jesse Kraai, the highest rated player of the tournament! Moreover, Vlad was very close to defeating GM Sevillano as well but got a little unlucky right after the time control and lost. No other participant came close to



2015 Edmonton Invitational. Left to right: GM Tejas Bakre, GM Jesse Kraai, Organizer and TD Dustin Koperski and GM Enrico Sevillano.

upsetting a GM although Rob Gardner missed his chance in the following game.

Gardner, Robert (2160) – Sevillano, Enrico (2464) [A65]

2015 Edmonton Invitational (6), 09.11.2015



After a tense middlegame battle Black achieved a better position thanks to his strong passed pawn. His problem is a passive light-squared bishop; with his last move (33...♖e8) Black intends to take the d5-pawn and to bring the problem bishop to life. 34.♖a6 White ignores the threat and tries to create his own play. 34...♙xd5 35.♖xd6 ♙f7 36.♙f1?! With a threat of taking on f5 but Black can easily parry it. More natural is 36.♙c3 protecting the important b4-pawn.

36...♙f8 Black is tempted by the b4-pawn but the bishop excursion gives White a sudden resource. Instead, 36...♙f4! deserves serious attention. The idea is to exchange queens after 37.♖b6 ♖b8! with a large advantage in the endgame.

37.♖b6 ♙xb4? As planned. Nevertheless, correct is 37...♖d7 maintaining a

Edmonton Invitational Standings

| # | Player | Rating | FED | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Total |
|----|------------------------|--------|--------|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| 1 | GM Jesse Kraai | 2506 | USA | | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 7.5 |
| 2 | GM Enrico Sevillano | 2464 | USA | 0 | | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 7.5 |
| 3 | GM Tejas Bakre | 2438 | India | 0.5 | 0.5 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 7.5 |
| 4 | FM Steven Breckenridge | 2330 | USA | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 5 | FM Vladimir Pechenkin | 2327 | Canada | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | | 0.5 | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 0.5 | 4.5 |
| 6 | FM Dale Haessel | 2204 | Canada | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.5 | | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| 7 | Nicolas Haynes | 2177 | Canada | 0 | 0 | 0.5 | 0 | 0.5 | 0 | | 1 | 0.5 | 1 | 3.5 |
| 8 | Robert Gardner | 2160 | Canada | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.5 | 0 | | 1 | 1 | 2.5 |
| 9 | David Miller | 2114 | Canada | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0.5 | 0 | | 0 | 1.5 |
| 10 | Vladislav Rekhson | 2078 | Canada | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | | 3.5 |

IM norm is 7/9 for FM Breckenridge and Pechenkin and 6.5/9 for others.

firm grip on the position. 38.exf5 gxf5 39.♖h6! Quite an unpleasant move to see right before the time control. 39...♙g6 There is nothing else.



40.g4? White has the right idea but the execution gives the opponent a crucial tempo to organize the defence.

During the game both players either missed or underestimated 40.♘h3! but the strength of this move became obvious in the post-mortem analysis. Black's best is 40...♙h7! while the other continuations are unsatisfactory. (For example, 40...♙f8 41.♖h8+ ♔f7 42.♘g5+ ♔e7 43.♖e5+ ♔d7 44.♖xb5+ ♔d6 45.♖c5+ ♔d7 46.♖xc4 and the black king is in big trouble.) White can continue his attack with 41.♘f4! ♖d7 42.♖g5+ ♔f8 43.♘e2 with play for all three possible results.

40...hxg3 41.hxg3 ♙f8! The key defensive resource. The bishop is back, and White's attack is repelled.

42.♖h8+ ♔f7 Black is going to consolidate soon, and GM Sevillano gradually converted his advantage into a full point. 43.♘h3 ♙e7 44.♖e5 ♖d7 45.♙f2 ♙f6 46.♖c5 ♔g7 47.f4 ♘xg3 48.♙g2 ♘e4 49.♙xe4 fxe4 50.♘g5 c3 51.♔h2 ♙f5 52.♙e3 ♙g6 53.♔g3 ♙f5 54.♔f2 ♙h7 55.♔g3 ♙g6 56.♔f2 ♖f5 57.♖c7+ ♔h6 58.♔e1 ♔h5 59.♖c6 b4 60.♖c4 ♖g4 61.♘xe4 ♙xe4 62.♖xe4 ♙h4+ 63.♔f1 ♖d1+ 64.♔g2 ♖e2+ 65.♔h1 ♔g4 66.♖e6+ ♔g3 67.♖g6+ ♔f3 68.♙g1 ♖e4 69.f5 ♙g3 0-1

Ultimately, nobody managed to get close to the coveted IM norm but the participants' overall impression of the tournament was quite positive. If possible, more events like this one should be organized in the future to give more Albertans a chance to compete against strong opposition.

Belsar Valencia dominates 2016 Northern Alberta Open

The Edmonton Chess Club hosted the last qualifier for the 2016 Alberta Championship on February 27-28 this year. The tournament attracted 44 participants, including eight rated over 2200 CFC. A fierce competition for the first place was expected; just as last year, however, one of the rating favourites (Belsar Valencia) scored a perfect 5/5 and made it look easy. His biggest test occurred in the last round. WIM Agnieszka Matras-Clement was trailing Belsar by half a point and had a chance to leapfrog him in the standings in case of a win.

Matras-Clement, Agnieszka (2309) – Valencia, Belsar (2358) [B46]

Northern Alberta Open (5), 28.02.2016

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.♘c3 ♖c7 The game begins as a classical Sicilian Kan. 6.♙d3 ♘c6 Now Black transposes to the Taimanov. 6...♙f6 remains on Kan territory. 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.0-0 ♙f6 9.♖e2 d6 10.f4 ♙e7 11.♔h1 This standard prophylaxis looks too slow here. Immediate 11.e5! deserves serious attention. For example, 11...♙d5 12.exd6 ♙xd6 13.♘e4 with initiative. In this line White is ready to sacrifice the f4-pawn to speed up development.

11...d5 12.f5 After this novelty Black obtains a comfortable position in the center. Instead, 12.b3!? 0-0 13.♙b2 maintains the central tension for the time being.

12...e5 13.♙d2 ♙b7 14.♖ae1 d4



Black has equalized. 15.♘a4 c5 16.b3 c4! An excellent resource preventing the enemy knight from occupying the c4-square. 17.♙xc4. The other capture 17.bxc4 is better but after 17...♙c6 18.♘b2 ♖b8 19.♘d1 0-0 Black has full compensation for the pawn.

17...♘xe4 18.♙c1 ♙d6? This should have cost Black a pawn. 18...♙f6 looks dangerous because of 19.♙a3 preventing short castling. Instead, the computer recommends 18...♖c6!?



Round 3 of the Northern Alberta Open. Foreground: Cyril Nerubenko – Belsar Valencia. Background: WIM Agnieszka Matras-Clement – Behrooz Ebrahim-Shirazi.

eyeing the g2-pawn. 19.♔d3? After 19.♖g4 Black has nothing better than 19...♟f6 White can safely grab a pawn 20.♖xd4 with advantage.

19...♟f6 Now the game returns to normal. 20.♔g5 0-0 21.♔xf6 gxf6 22.♟b2 Here was a good opportunity to get rid of the backward c2-pawn by means of 22.c3! It looks like a pawn sacrifice but it's a temporary one: if 22...dxc3 then 23.♖c1 and 23...♟b4?? is impossible in view of 24.♖g4+ The importance of this will become clear towards the end of the game.

22...♟h8 23.♔e4 ♖g8 24.♟c4 ♔xe4 25.♖xe4 ♟b4 26.♖e2 ♖ac8 27.♖f3 ♟f8 28.♖h4 ♖c6 29.♖h3 h6 White's position may look very formidable but she doesn't really have tangible threats.

30.♖e4 The computer advocates 30.♟a5 ♖d6 31.♟c4 offering a repetition of moves but I am sure that White wasn't even thinking about it.

30...♔g5 31.♖g4 ♟g8 32.♖hg3 ♔g7 Black's fortress on the dark squares is unbreakable. 33.h3 ♖e8 34.♟h2?

Once again, it was necessary to split the opponent's central pawn duo by means of 34.c3!

34...♟f8? One defensive move too many. Black had a chance to play 34...e4! This pawn is very hard to stop.



The critical moment of the game.

35.♟d2? White's desire to bring the knight to the attack is understandable but the price paid is too high.

Again, correct is 35.c3! dxc3 36.♖xc3 when White's position may actually be slightly better. Here 36...♔xf5?? is impossible because of 37.♟e3 ♖xc3 38.♟xf5 and wins.

35...♖xc2! Black correctly evaluates the position reached after the following sequence. 36.♟e4 White must have

counted on this resource but Black can simply sacrifice an exchange.

36...♟e7! 37.♟xg5 fxg5 38.♖h5 ♖xf5 The passed pawns will soon prove to be unstoppable. 39.h4 ♖g6 40.♖xg6 fxg6 41.hxg5 h5 42.♖e4 ♟d6 43.♖f3 ♟d5 44.♖e1 e4 45.♖f7 ♔e5+ 46.♟g1 e3 47.♟f1 ♟e4 48.♖f3 ♖c8 49.a3 ♟f4 0-1

With this win Belsar achieved a perfect score at the Northern Alberta Open and guaranteed a spot in the 2016 Alberta Championship. Robert Gardner, Nicolas Haynes and David Miller tied for second with 4/5.

I have also included the following dramatic but entertaining game in this report.

Hughey, Leah (1715) –

Briones, Dante (2012) [B22]

Northern Alberta Open (4), 28.02.2016

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 ♟c6 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 ♖xd5 5.♟b5?! The fact that White scores less than 20% from here says everything about the quality of this continuation. 5.d4 is a normal move.

5...♔g4 6.d4 cxd4 7.♔xc6+ ♖xc6 8.cxd4 ♟xf3 9.gxf3 Black is clearly better due to the opponent's terrible pawn structure. 9...0-0-0? However, after this overly optimistic move the pawn structure becomes irrelevant.

Correct is 9...e6 10.♟c3 ♟f6 with play against White's weaknesses.

10.♟f4! Black is going to have problems along the c-file and his next move only makes things worse.

10...♖b6? Instead, 10...♖e6+!? 11.♟f1 ♖h3+ 12.♟g1 e5 13.♔xe5 ♟d6 with an unclear position.

11.♟d2! ♖d7 12.♖c1+ ♟d8 13.♖c2 13.0-0!? increasing the lead in development looks good.



13...e6 Black misses 13...♖c6! with a chance to either get the queens off the board or slow the attack down. Now White's attack becomes irresistible.

14.♖c8+ ♟e7 15.♖c7 ♖xc7 16. ♔xc7 ♖xd4 17.♟c4! ♟h6 18.♔d6+ ♟f6



19.♔e5+?? What a pity! This natural move turns out to be a blunder.

Correct is 19.♖d8+ ♟f5 20.♟e3+ ♔g6 21.♖g1+ and Black can resign.

19...♖xe5+ 20.♟xe5 ♟b4+ Unfortunately, Black gets his queen back with interest. 21.♖c3 ♔xc3+ 22.bxc3 ♟xe5 0-1

Behrooz Ebrahim-Shirazi wins the 2016 March of Kings

This year 33 players participated in the annual March of Kings tournament that took place at the Calgary Chess Club on March 12-13. Frank Kluytmans organized and directed the event. The 5-round Open Swiss was won by the fourth seed Behrooz Ebrahim-Shirazi with a score of 4.5/5.

Behrooz took a half point bye in round 3 but managed to win all his other games. The rating favourite David Miller and Jeff Wang tied for second with 4/5.

Dustin Rogers finished with 3.5/5 and took the Best Under 2000 class prize. The other class prizes were shared by a few players.

Best Under 1800: Arthur Milne, Brian Timmerman, Gerald Pfeffer and Ian Zhao. Best Under 1400: Luth Gallemaso, Anand Chandra, Andrew Chen, Arul Papneja and Vishruth Sharma (all juniors).

The Tournament Director would like to thank all the participants, including the following three players who made a trip from Saskatchewan to play in the March of Kings: Tyler Janzen, Douglas Nechio and Tyson Menard.

Transition to Pawn Endgame

Not so long ago I happened to reread an old article about rook endgames written by the great Alexander Alekhine (published in 1927 before his epic match with Jose Raul Capablanca). One of the points made by the fourth world champion is that the complexity of such endgames is partially due to the fact that possible transitions to pawn endgames are aplenty and have to be thoroughly calculated. Thus, skilful rook endgame play implies an excellent understanding of pawn endgames as well.

When preparing the material for this edition of the Alberta Chess Report, I ran into several examples from recent tournaments in the province that featured a common theme: a misjudged or miscalculated transition into a pawn endgame. I am going to present three of such games below. Actually, none of them featured a rook endgame but all three examples confirmed Alekhine's observation: assessing the resultant pawn endgames can be very challenging, indeed.

Haessel,Dale (2195) – Kazmaier,Daniel (2220) [A91]

2015 Calgary Invitational (2), 30.10.2015



The position looks like a dead draw but play continued: 47.♔e3 h5? A mistake that is hard to explain.

The simplest way to draw is 47...♖h3 keeping the queens on the board and reminding White about the g3-pawn.

48.♖e4! White seizes his chance to get the queens off the board obtaining a winning pawn endgame. However, the adventures are far from being over.

48...♖g6 Relatively best is 48...♔g6 but here White can change his mind and simply grab both queenside pawns: 49.♖xc6+ ♔f7 50.♖xb6 etc.

49.♔d4? After this mistake Black can get a surprising draw with precise play. White has several winning moves here; the most accurate one is 49.a4! preparing to create a passer on the queenside. White may have been afraid of 49...c5 but he has a relatively simple forced win: 50.♖xg6+ ♔xg6 51.♔e4 ♔f6 52.♔d5 ♔f5 53.♔c6 ♔g4 54.♔xb6 ♔xg3 55.a5 h4 56.a6 h3 57.a7 h2 58.a8♖ etc.

49...c5+! 50.♔d5 ♖xe4+ 51.♔xe4



The last critical moment of the endgame. 51...♔g6? What a pity!

51...♔h6!! intending quick g7-g5 saves a crucial tempo along with half a point. White's best try is 52.♔f5 (52.♔e5 g5 also gives Black sufficient counterplay; 52.♔d5 g5 53.fxg5+? actually loses as Black queens first: 53...♔xg5 54.♔c6 ♔g4 55.♔xb6 ♔xg3 56.a4 h4 etc.) which is met by 52...h4!! 53.gxh4 ♔h5 with an inevitable draw.

52.a4 Now the game has transposed to the line given above. 52...♔f6 53.♔d5 g5 54.fxg5+ ♔xg5 Black resigned; the game could have concluded 54...♔xg5 55.♔c6 ♔g4 56.♔xb6 ♔xg3 57.a5 h4 58.a6 etc. 1-0

Findlay,Ian (2275) – Matras-Clement,Agnieszka (2327) [C70]

Northern Alberta Open (4), 28.02.2016

As in the previous example, the position (on the next diagram) looks completely drawish. 41.♔d3

The most reliable way to secure a draw is 41.♔c7 ♔e6 (Black gets in trouble after 41...♔e5? 42.♔xa5 ♔xh2 43.♔d2!) 42.♔d3 ♔e1 43.♔c4 ♔d7 44.♔b6 ♔c6 45.♔d4 and neither side can make any progress.

41...♔e5 Now White faces a rather



Findlay – Matras-Clement; before 41. ♔d3

difficult choice. 42.♔xe5+? The losing move.

42.f4 looks awful but is actually OK. For example, 42...♔d6 43.♔c4 ♔e6 44.♔b5 ♔b4 45.f3 ♔d5 46.♔f2 ♔d2 47.h3 ♔xf4 48.♔xa5 and the passed pawn guarantees White a draw.

The only other way is 42.♔e3 which allows White to establish control over the key f4-square and get the opposition in the upcoming pawn endgame. After 42...♔e6 43.♔xe5 ♔xe5 44.f4+! ♔d5 45.♔d3 g5 46.fxg5 hxg5 47.f3 ♔e5 48.♔e3 a draw is inevitable.

42...♔xe5 43.♔c4 White chooses the lesser evil but it's not enough to save the game. It's too late now for 43.♔e3 f4+ 44.♔d3 ♔d5 45.h3 g5 46.♔c3 ♔c5 followed by a decisive penetration.

43...♔f4 44.♔b5 ♔xf3 45.♔xa5 ♔xf2 46.♔b4 f4 47.a5 f3 48.a6 ♔g1 49.a7 f2 50.a8♖ f1♖



After a forced sequence of moves it turns out that White can't save his h-pawn. 51.♖e4 g5 52.♖d4+ ♔xh2 53.♖d2+ ♔g3 54. ♖e3+ ♔h4 Black is up two pawns and duly converts.

55.♖e6 h5 56.♔a4 g4 57.♖e7+ ♔h3

58.♖g5 h4 59.♗d5 g3 60.♗e6+ ♔h2
61.♗e5 h3 62.♗d6 ♖c4+ 63.♔a5 ♗e4
64.♔b5 ♗e2+ 65.♔a5 ♔g2 66.♗d5+
♔g1 67.♗c5+ ♗f2 68.♗c1+ ♔h2 69.
♗c7 ♔h1 70.♗c1+ ♗g1 71.♗c3 ♗a7+
72.♔b5 ♗d7+ 73.♔a5 g2 74.♗f3
♗c7+ 75.♔a6 ♔h2 76.♗e2 ♗f4 0-1

**Shevchenko, Oleksii (1632) –
Kadavil, Suresh (1702) [A47]**

WBX Team Tournament (5), 13.12.2015



With his last move White attacked the opponent's bishop. In response, Black suddenly offered a transition to a pawn endgame: **33...d4?** Instead, Black should simply retreat the bishop: **33...♗e5** with a nice endgame advantage. **34.♔xc3 ♗xc3**

34...dxc3 is worse. After **35.f4** the black rook is tied up to defence of the c3-pawn and White can improve at leisure.

35.♗xc3 dxc3 36.♔g1 ♔d5 37.♔f2



The critical position of the endgame.

37...♔d4? Surprisingly, the losing move. **37...f4!** is the only but a relatively easy way to draw. After **38.♗e2 ♔d4** White can't make progress.

38.g3? White gives the opponent another chance.

Correct is **38.f4** clearing the key f3-square for the king. Play may continue **38...h6 39.h4 ♗e4 40.g3 ♔d4 41.♔f3** The black king will have to retreat sooner or later: **41...a5 42.♗e2 ♗e4 43.♔f2 ♔d4 44.♔f3 h5 45.♗e2 ♗e4 46.♔f2 ♔d4 47.♔f3 ♔c5 48.♗e3** etc.

38...a5? Not that pawn.

Correct is **38...g5** followed by **f5-f4**.

39.♗e2? One more chance for Black.

Again, **39.f4** is the winning move.

39...g5! 40.h3 g4? Objectively, the losing move although Black could have played far more tenaciously later.

40...f4 41.g4 h6! is sufficient to draw as the white king can't advance.

41.hxg4 fxc4 42.fxc4 ♗e4 43.g5 ♔d4 43...♔f5 44.♔d3 ♔xg5 45.♔xc3 ♔g4 46.♔d4 ♔xg3 transposes to the line below.

44.♔f3 ♔c5 Now White wins easily.

The best chance is **44...♗e5 45.♗e3 ♔f5 46.♔d3 ♔xg5 47.♔xc3 ♔g4 48.♔d4 ♔xg3 49.c4 h5 50.c5 h4 51.c6 h3 52.c7 h2 53.c8♖ h1♗** This position looks like a draw but White has an amazing sequence beginning with **54.♗c7+** that leads to an exchange of queens and another won pawn endgame. For example, **54...♔f2 55.♗c2+ ♔g3 56.♗g6+ ♔f4 57.♗d6+ ♔g4 58.♗e6+ ♔g3 59.♗e5+ ♔g4 60.♗e4+** etc.

45.♗e3 ♔b5 46.♔d4 ♔b4 47.♔d3 a4 48.bxa4 ♔xa4 49.♔xc3 ♔b5 50.♔d4 1-0

FM Ian Findlay is perfect at the 2016 Lethbridge Open

The 2016 edition of the annual Lethbridge Open was for the first time organized by Jerry Mikusek. The tournament was held at the Canadian Polish Association on April 2-3 and featured a good turnout of 28 players. FM Ian Findlay from Banff was a clear rating favourite and matched the expectations by finishing first with a perfect score. His most challenging game actually occurred in round 1 (against Tyson Menard) when Ian had to go through some anxious moments. John Quiring from Edmonton scored 4/5, which turned out to be good enough for clear second. Six players ended up in a tie for the third place with 3.5/5.

I have included the most interesting end-

game of the tournament in this report.

**Robertson, Trevor (1567) –
Panteluk, Steven (1868) [D37]**

2016 Lethbridge Open (1), 02.04.2016



It looks like White should win easily but the remainder of the game will feature some unexpected twists and turns.

42.♔f7 This should be sufficient for a full point. **42...♔d5**

After **42...♔xg4 43.♔d6+ ♔d3 44.♔xb5** the b-pawn becomes dangerous.

43.h6 This is still OK but now White must play precisely. A simpler approach is to improve the king **43.♔g3** since **43...♔c4?** is met by **44.♔d6+ ♔b3 45.♔xb5**.

43...gxf6 44.♔xf6 ♔c4 45.♔e1 ♔c2 45...♔f3!? is a better practical chance since after **46.♔d2 ♔b3 47.g5 ♔h5** White has to find **48.♔f5!!** with the idea **48...exf5 49.d5 ♔e8 50.d6 ♔xa3 51.g6** etc.

46.♔d2 ♔b3 47.d5 Perhaps, a little early. A better way to win the b5-pawn is **47.♔f7 ♔h7 48.♔d6 ♔xa3 49.♔c3 ♔a2 50.♔xb5**.

47...exd5 48.♔f5 ♔e4 49.♔d4+ ♔xa3 50.♔c3! ♔a2 51.♔xb5 a3



The critical moment of the endgame.

52.♖xa3? The only winning move is 52.g5 although it's not so hard to find. Since Black has nothing better than a waiting move like 52...♟f5 White gains a crucial tempo. Now 53.♖xa3 ♜xa3 54.b5 ♜a4 55.b6 wins easily.

52...♜xa3 53.b5 ♜a4 54.b6 ♜a5? The last mistake in this endgame.

Correct is 54...♜b5! 55.b7 d4+ 56.♜xd4 ♟xb7 In this line the black king is closer to the passed pawns, which turns out to be sufficient for a draw. For example, 57.g5 ♜c6 58.g6 ♜d6 59.g7 ♟d5 and a handshake is in order.

55.b7 d4+ 56.♜xd4 ♟xb7 57.g5 Now the pawns are unstoppable. **57...♟c6 58.g6 ♟e8 59.g7 ♟f7 60.♜c5 ♜a6 61.♜c6 ♟e8+ 62.♜d6 ♟f7 63.e4 ♜b7 64.♜d7 ♜b6 65.e5 ♜c5 66.e6 ♟g8 67.e7 ♜d5 68.e8♖ 1-0**

Brad Booker and FM Ian Findlay tie for first at the 2016 Alberta Seniors Championship

The 2016 edition of the Alberta Seniors Championship took place at the Calgary Chess Club on April 23-24. Just as last year, the competition featured a single section 50+, the winner receiving a \$1,000 travel grant to represent Alberta at the Canadian Seniors Championship in Surrey, BC. 17 players participated this year, including 3 rated over 2200 CFC.

The outcome of the tournament was decided in the last round on board 1, in the game between the two leaders: Brad Booker–FM Ian Findlay. Somewhat surprisingly, a draw was agreed on move 30 in a position where Black could have certainly played on. As a result, both players finished with 4/5 but the tie-breakers slightly favoured Brad, who thus won the title and the travel grant. The third place went to Jim Daniluk who scored 3.5/5. Paul Usselman won the “Best Over 65” prize with a result of 2.5/5.

In my opinion, the best game of the tournament was the following one.

Findlay, Ian (2293) –

Peter, Steven (2229) [B82]

2016 Alberta Seniors (4), 24.04.2016

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♖xd4 ♟f6 5.♖c3 d6 6.f4 a6 7.♖f3 ♖c7 8.♟e3 b5 9.♟d3 ♟b7 10.g4 b4 11.



Round 5 of the Alberta Seniors Championship. Foreground: Steven Peter – Jim Daniluk. Background: Brad Booker – FM Ian Findlay. Both games ended in a draw.

♟ce2 d5 12.e5 ♖fd7 More to the point is 12...♟e4!? utilizing Black's previous move. **13.0-0-0 ♖c6 14.♖xc6** In such positions 14.♜b1 is played almost automatically. White tries a different move order that works out well for him due to the opponent's inaccurate reply.

14...♖xc6?! This recapture is the root of all subsequent Black's problems. Correct is 14...♟xc6 intending to meet 15.♖d4 with 15...♟b5! White should refrain from opening up the a-file and spend a move on prophylaxis: 16.♜b1 Then after 16...♟c5 Black achieves a satisfactory position.

15.♖d4 ♖c7 16.♜b1 Now White is up two tempi in comparison with the line above. The significance of this factor will be demonstrated shortly. **16...♖c8 17.h4** [17.♖hf1!? preparing a quick f4-f5 looks even stronger. After 17...♟c5 White can play 18.♖h3 preventing the opponent from castling.]

17...♟c5 18.h5 0-0 This doesn't look right but it's not easy to find a good move for Black. **19.g5 ♟xd4 20.♟xd4**

♟c5 Black is hoping to exchange a few pieces but White's attack is already irresistible. A major reason is the difference between the light-squared bishops. Because of the loss of time on moves 14-15 Black is unable to trade them off.



21.♟xc5! ♖xc5 22.f5 ♖c7 23.♖f4 exf5. Also hopeless is 23...g6 24.fxg6 fxg6 25.♖g4.

24.♖xf5 g6 25.♖h3 d4 26.♖h2 ♖e7
27.hxg6 fxg6 28.♙xg6 1-0

An superb attacking game by FM Findlay!

2015 Edmonton Fall Sectional

This time the annual event was held at the Edmonton Chess Club on November 6–8, alongside the Edmonton Invitational. As usual, participants were slotted into groups of 6 according to ratings, then each group played their own round-robin tournament.

Mike Zeggelaar demonstrated a solid performance in Section A and finished undefeated with 3.5/5. Butch Villavieja also scored 3.5/5 and got a share of the first place. The two winners actually met in the very first round and played a long see-saw game.

Zeggelaar, Mike (2069) – Villavieja, Butch (2172) [B06]

Edmonton Fall Sectional A (1), 06.11.2015



In this complex position Black has strong initiative on the kingside, and he could have increased the pressure by means of 34...♖h5! 35.♗ce3 ♗g3! 36.♖e1 (36.hxg3 ♖xg3 37.♖h2 ♖xe3 38.♗xe3 ♗xe3 is even worse) 36...♗e4 with various threats.

Instead, 34...♙c1? gave the opponent a chance to exchange pieces and obtain a satisfactory position. 35.♗de3 ♙xe3 36.♗xe3 ♗g3? It is tempting for Black to open up the h-file and to create threats against the enemy king. Objectively, however, this piece sacrifice is unsound. There is nothing wrong with 36...♗xe3 37.♖xe3 ♖h7 when the position is equal.

37.hxg3 hxg3 38.♖f6 ♖d3 39.♖1f3 ♖h7 Black was clearly not satisfied

with 39...♖xc3 40.♗f5 ♖d2 41.♗xg7 ♖xd4+ 42.♗h1 ♖xg7 43.♖xg3 ♖xg3 44.♖xg3 with a rook less although after 44...c3 his passed pawns give him practical chances.



40.♖h6? It's hard to award a question mark to this natural move but it does give Black a chance to pick up a couple of pawns and to get back into the game. Actually, White had a great defensive intermezzo 40.♗f1!! winning on the spot. After 40...♖b1 41.♖h6 Black has absolutely nothing to show for the piece.

40...♖gh8? Black is probably still hoping to get something going along the h-file. Mistakes on move 40 are understandable though as both players must have been very short of time.

Correct is 40...♖xh6 41.♖xh6 ♖xc3 and the battle begins anew. Black may be able to pick up more pawns and his c4-passer is strong.

41.♗g4? On the other hand, mistakes on move 41 are not so easily excusable. After 41.♖xh7! ♖xh7 42.♖xg3 Black can resign as the c3-pawn is taboo because of a cheque on g8.

41...♖xh6 42.♗xh6 ♖d1+ 43.♖f1 ♖d2 44.♖xg3 ♖xh6 45.♖xf7 ♖h1+ 46.♗f2 ♗a7 Black took full advantage of the opponent's mistake on move 41. White's extra pawn is insufficient to win because of his exposed king and a weak c3-pawn. 47.♖g5 ♖h5? A grave error as White achieves an exchange of rooks under favorable circumstances. The computer indicates that Black has a lot of moves maintaining equilibrium including 47...♖b8. The most curious line though is 47...♖a1 48.♖xb7+ ♗a8! and White is somehow unable to avoid a perpetual check.

48.♖e7 ♖f5+ Black correctly keeps the

queens on the board and hopes for a perpetual check. 48...♖h4+ 49.♖xh4 ♖xh4 50.♖f6 is completely lost.

49.♖xf5 exf5 50.♖c5+ ♗b8 51.♖f8+ ♗a7 52.♖xf5 ♖d1 53.♖f3 ♖d2+ 54.♗g3 ♖g5+ 55.♗h3 ♖h6+ 56.♗g4 ♖g6+ 57.♗f4 ♖h6+ 58.♗f5



58...♖h7+? The final mistake.

After 58...♖f8+ White's win is far from obvious. 59.♗g5 ♖g7+ 60.♗h4 ♖h6+ 61.♖h5 looks like the best way to continue. However, Black may be able to win a c3-pawn creating counterplay.

59.♗f6 Now the game is over.

59...♖h6+ 60.♗e7 ♖g7+ 61.♖f7 ♖xg2 62.♗d6 ♖d2 63.♖xd5 ♖xc3 64.♖c5+ ♗a8 65.♗c7 After 65.♖c8+ ♗a7 66.

♗c7 a checkmate in one is inevitable but it doesn't matter.

65...♖f3 66.♖xc4 ♖f8 67.♖e6 1-0

An extremely tense battle!

Mike has also won a nice game in round 2. The fact that the first 15 moves can be found in the database doesn't really make Black's tactical sequence less impressive.

Briones, Dante (1996) – Zeggelaar, Mike (2069) [B74]

Edmonton Fall Sectional A (2), 07.11.2015

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♗f6 5.♗c3 g6 6.f4 ♗g7 7.♗e2 0-0 8.♗e3 ♗c6 9.♗b3 a5 10.a4 ♗e6 11.

0-0 ♗xb3 This is possible but I'd rather keep the bishop pair for the time being. The most popular continuation here is 11...♖c8, which makes a lot of sense.

12.cxb3 ♖c8 13.♖d2 The natural 13.♗c4 establishing control over the light squares looks good for White.

13...♗b4 14.♖fd1? Hard to believe but it's a serious mistake. White should prefer 14.♗f3 reinforcing the center.



14...♖xc3! Black is always on a look-out for this typical exchange sacrifice in the Sicilian. In this case it turns out that the sacrifice is only temporary.

15.♗xc3 Even worse is **15.bxc3 ♜xe4** **16.♗c1 ♜xc3** and Black wins material.

15...♞fd5 16.exd5? The queen sacrifice is unsound.

White has to play **16.♗d2 ♜xe3 17.♗xe3 ♜c2 18.♗f3 ♜xa1 19.♖xa1 ♙xb2** He is down a pawn but the opposite color bishops give him decent drawing chances.

16...♙xc3 17.bxc3 ♜c2 The rest of the game requires no comments.

18.♙d4 ♜xa1 19.♖xa1 e5 20.fxe5 dxe5 21.♙c5 ♗xd5 22.b4 ♖c8 23.♙b6 axb4 24.cxb4 ♗d2 0-1

Tristan Tran-Ly and Kim Nguyen shared the third place in Section A with 2.5/5.

The winner of Section B Douglas Nechio also scored 3.5/5 but in this case it was actually sufficient for clear first. Len Steele, Arnold McKay and Rick Pedersen tied for second with 3/5.

In Section C Logan McLeod and Bhavik Dave scored 4/5 and shared the first place. Matthew Zita and Cristian Ivanescu finished with 3/5.

Finally, Section D featured a curious three-way tie for the first place among Mark Ivanescu, Leonard Relling and Prayus Shrestha with a score of 4/5. Thus, the winners took 100% of the points from the rest of the group.

A special thanks to Dustin Koperski for directing this tournament.



Round 3 of the 2015 WBX Team Tournament: Butch Villavieja – Kim Nguyen

2015 WBX Team Tournament

The traditional annual team competition took place at the Edmonton Chess Club on December 12-13. Just as last year, each squad consisted of 3 players plus an optional substitute, and the average rating of the team players was not to exceed 2000 in any round. A total of six teams registered thus making the tournament a round-robin event. The organizer and TD Terry Seehagen once again did an outstanding job in putting the teams together and finding substitutes when necessary. It was especially challenging this time because of a number of last-minute dropouts. In 2016 the registration process may be changed to discourage such dropouts and to make the organizer's task easier.

After 5 rounds of play the team composed of Belsar Valencia, Joseph Young and Suresh Kadavil scored 9.5/15 and finished clear first. Belsar also won the Top Board 1 prize with 4.5/5. Kim Nguyen's team (Mohamad Fellah, Dave Bhavik) took clear second (8.5/15), while the third place went to Tristan Tran-Ly's squad (David Yao, Dustin Koperski) - 8/15. Dustin also achieved the best result on Board 3 (4.5/5). Finally, the Top Board 2 prize was shared by Dante Briones and Joseph Young.

I have decided to include the following fragment in this report, demonstrating a well known power of a queen plus knight attacking tandem.

Villavieja, Butch (2179) – Nguyen, Kim (2100) [B94]

2015 WBX Tournament (3), 12.12.2015



The position looks equal. However, it turns out that if Black manages to carry out e5-e4, he will be able to create threats against the enemy king and to obtain winning chances. **28.♗c2!** White prevents e5-e4 for the time being. **28...♗e6 29.♗c4 ♗f5** Correct.

29...♙xb4 30.♗xb4 e4 31.fxe4 ♜xe4 **32.♙e3** is insufficient for advantage.

30.♗c2 Same idea as before but now Black has a strong reply.

30.♗xa6 doesn't win a pawn in view of **30...♗b1+ 31.♗f1 ♗xb3** In fact, White is likely to lose the a3-pawn as well.

30...e4! 31.♜xa6 ♗e5 threatening checkmate **32.♙c5?** This natural at-



tempt to trade off pieces to lessen the opponent's attack doesn't work here. The computer advocates 32.♖c8+ ♔h7 33.♖c1 preventing e4-e3. Nevertheless, after 33...exf3 34.gxf3 ♖f5 35.♖e3 ♔xa3 Black restores material equality and can play on for a win.

32...e3 A very tempting continuation but Black can develop a lethal attack instead.

After 32...exf3! 33.gxf3 ♔xc5+ 34.♔xc5 ♖e1+ 35.♔g2 ♔d5 the queen plus knight tandem turns out to be deadly. For example, 36.♖f2 ♔f4+ 37.♔g3 ♖e5 38.h4 ♔e6+ winning a piece.

33.♔f1 ♔xc5 34.♖xc5? Bringing the knight back into play 34.♔xc5 is necessary. Certainly, 34...♖xh2 looks uncomfortable for White but he may be able to hold after 35.♖c4!



34...♔d5! 35.♖c8+ ♔h7 36.♖c2+ g6 37.g3 ♖f6 38.♖e2 ♖d4 39.♔b4 ♔c3 40.♖e1 e2+ This is enough for a win. However, 40...♖d2! would seal the deal immediately.

41.♔g2 ♖e3 42.♔c2 ♖d3 43.♔b4 ♖d1 44.♔f2 ♖xb3 45.♔d3 ♖xa3 46.♔g2 ♖b3 White can't hold this position for long as Black has too many various threats. **47.h4 ♖c2 48.♔f2 ♔d1 49.♔g4 h5 50.♔f6+ ♔g7 51.♔e4 f6 52.♔d2 ♖d3 53.♔e4 ♖e3 54.♔d2 ♔b2 0-1**

Red Deer Chess Club

Dawe Centre Library

Monday nights, 5 pm-6 pm Junior program, after 6 pm open play.

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Decisive games of the Alberta Active Championship.
Foreground: Nicolas Haynes – Omid Malek. Background: Ian Findlay – Tristan Tran-Ly.

FM Ian Findlay and Nicolas Haynes tie for first at the 2016 Alberta Active Championship

The Red Deer Lodge once again hosted the provincial active championship, this time on February 6. The tournament was organized by Alexey Taranik and directed by David Miller. The time control was Game in 25 minutes with a 5-second increment, allowing 5 rounds to be played in a single day. 16 players participated including FMs Ian Findlay and Dale Haessel.

The most impressive performance of the event was demonstrated by Omid Malek from Calgary. Omid drew FM Ian Findlay in round 2, defeated Siarhei Leuchanka in round 3, then managed to outlast FM Dale Haessel in round 4. Dale's loss on time gave Omid the sole lead.

In round 5 Nicolas Haynes, who was in a must-win situation, sacrificed a couple of pawns but obtained strong initiative in exchange. Omid's position looked defensible but Nic skilfully kept the pressure on and ultimately capitalized on the opponent's mistakes. Thus, Nic finished the tournament with 4/5 sharing the first place with FM Ian Findlay, who in his turn defeated Tristan Tran-Ly in round 5. The photo above shows an early stage of both decisive games. Omid Malek and FM Dale Haessel tied for third with 3.5/5.

2015 Southern Alberta Open

The second qualifier for the 2016 Alberta Championship was held at the Calgary Chess Club on November 28-29, 2015. Frank Kluytmans organized and directed the event that attracted a total of 30 players. For the third straight year the 5-round Open Swiss tournament was won by the same player with the same score: Gary Ng finished clear first with 4.5/5 qualifying for the 2016 Alberta Championship. Kris Boehmer took clear second with 4/5, and there was a 5-way tie for the third place among the following players: Bong Galle-maso, Kim Nguyen, Mike Zeggelaar, Mohamad Fellah and Jim Daniluk (3/5 points each).

2016 Red Deer Open

The Red Deer Lodge hosted another ACA tournament this year, namely the Red Deer Open. The time control was regular so 5 rounds were played over two days, April 16-17. David Miller started 4/4, then took a 0-point bye in the last round as he already guaranteed clear first. Stephen Moreau finished with 3/5, which turned out to be enough for clear second. Dustin Koperski, Alexey Taranik and Mike Scholz tied for third with 2.5/5. Thanks to Alexey Taranik for organizing and to David Miller for directing.

2016 Alberta Chess Championship

The 2016 edition of the provincial championship was held at the Edmonton Chess Club on March 25-27. The event was organized by Micah Hughey and directed by Richard Pua. As in previous years, the tournament format was a 6-player round-robin. Three participants qualified by virtue of winning a qualifying event, while the other three were selected by rating. More specifically:

1. FM Dale Haessel – the winner of the 2015 Alberta Open;
2. Gary Ng – the winner of the 2015 Southern Alberta Open;
3. Belsar Valencia – the winner of the 2016 Northern Alberta Open;
- 4-6. Bitan Banerjee, FM Vladimir Pechenkin and WIM Agnieszka Matras-Clement – qualified by rating.

The course of the weekend demonstrated that Bitan and Gary were better prepared and more motivated than the rest of the pack; it is therefore little surprise that the two of them occupied the top of the pedestal. FM Dale Haessel showed great fighting spirit and finished third. Perhaps, he could have done better had he not lost the most incomprehensible game of the tournament in the very first round.

Haessel,Dale (2212) – Ng,Gary (2228) [E12]

2016 AB Championship (1), 25.03.2016

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3 ♙a6 5.♗c2 ♙b7 It seems that Black has simply lost a tempo but the point of his play will be revealed soon. 6.♘c3 c5 That's the point. Now a generally desirable 7.d5 implies a pawn sacrifice as the white queen no longer controls the d5-square. 7.e4 cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♙c5 This position occurred many times in practice; 9.♘b3 looks like the only try for an opening advantage. 9.♘f3 ♘c6 Here Black could have tried 9...♘g4!? 10.h3 ♘xf2 11.♗h2 f5 12.b4 ♘xe4 13.bxc5 0-0 with a highly unbalanced and an unclear position. 10.♙d3 ♗b8 11.0-0 ♘g4 Black unambiguously signals his intention to attack on the kingside and sets up a small trap in the meantime. He has won the opening battle. 12.♘e2 White sensibly covers the d4-square. Certainly not 12.h3? ♘d4 winning on the spot. 12...♙ce5 13.♘xe5 ♗xe5 14.♙f4 ♗f6 15.♙g3 h5 16.h4 g5! Logical and



The first round of the 2016 Alberta Championship has just started. The future champion Bitan Banerjee awaits his opponent, WIM Agnieszka Matras-Clement.

strong. Black seizes the initiative and opens up lines for his attack. 17.hxg5 ♗xg5 18.b4 ♙e7



Positional considerations may now be thrown out of the window. The situation on the board is such that it is very hard to figure out what's going on and what each opponent should be doing. I'll simply state that Black's attack is quite dangerous; White will try to create counterplay against the enemy king with his next few moves. 19.c5 bxc5 20.bxc5 e5 A useful move taking the f4-square under control. Now Black is ready to push the h-pawn. However, 20...♙c6!? preventing White's next may be stronger.

21.♙b5 ♗c8 A good practical decision. 21...h4 leads to some wacky variations after 22.♙xd7+ ♘xd7 23.♗a4+ ♙e6 24.f4! A sample line is 24...♙xc5+ 25.♙f2 ♙xf2+ 26.♗xf2 ♗e7 27.fxe5 ♘f2 28.♗b3+ ♘xe5 29.♗b2+ ♘d6 30.♗d4+ ♘c7 31.♗c1+ ♙c6 32.♘c3 ♗hd8

33.♘d5+ ♗xd5 34.exd5 ♘e4 35.♗xc6+ ♘d7 36.♗a4 ♘d8 37.♗d4 ♘d6 38.♗xd6+ ♗xd6 39.♗h8+ ♙e7 40.♗xa8 resulting in an equal queen endgame. 22.♗fd1 ♙c6 23.♗d3 ♘f6 24.♙xc6 ♗xc6 25.♗ab1 0-0! It's time to get the king to safety; Black will soon pick up the c5-pawn and will continue his own attack.



26.♗b7? This is overly optimistic and leads to a quick catastrophe.

Correct is 26.f3! ♙xc5+ 27.♙f2 defending against immediate threats.

26...h4 27.♙h2 ♙xc5 White is defenceless against a multitude of the opponent's threats. 28.♘c3 ♙xf2+ The outcome of the game is decided.

29.♙f1 [Or 29.♙xf2 ♗xc3 etc.]

29...♘g4 30.♘d5 ♙c5 31.♙g1 f5 32.♙e2 ♙xg1 33.♗xd7

33.♗xg1 leads to a quick checkmate after 33...fxe4 34.♗xe4 ♗f2+.

33...♙c5 Black is simply up a piece; White could have safely resigned at

this point. 34.♖b3 ♘h8 35.♖b7 ♘h6 36.♟f7 ♟xf7 37.♟xf7 ♖h5 38.♟xf5 ♟xf5 39.exf5 ♙xa3 40.♖b1 ♙a6 41.♘h1 ♘h6 42.♖b1 ♘d6 43.♙c3 ♘d7 44.♙e4 ♙e7 45.♙f3 ♙f6 46.♙g5 ♘d3+ 47.♙e2 ♟g3 48.♙f7+ ♙g7 49.♙xe5 ♟xg2+ 50.♙f1 ♟g5 0-1

The head-to-head encounter between Gary and Bitan occurred in round 4. Gary was trailing by a full point and was essentially in a must-win situation.

Ng, Gary (2228) –

Banerjee, Bitan (2320) [E68]

2016 AB Championship (4), 27.03.2016

1.d4 ♙f6 2.c4 g6 3.♙f3 ♙g7 4.g3 0-0 5.♙g2 d6 6.0-0 ♙bd7 7.♙c3 e5 8.e4 exd4 9.♙xd4 ♙c5 10.♙e1 ♙e8 11.h3 So far the game has followed a well trodden path; Black's next waiting move is less common though. 11...h6 12.♖b1 White can try to exploit the slowness of the opponent's approach with 12.♙b3!?

12...a5 13.♙f4 Here 13. ♙db5!? preventing c7-c6 deserves attention.

13...♙d7 14.♙h2 a4 15. ♙db5 h5 An idea tested in Moradiabadi – Ganguly, 2011. 16.♖c2 The aforementioned game continued 16.♖d2 which turned out to be better for White. 16...h4 17.g4 ♙c6 18.♖bd1 g5 19.♙c1 Correct.

19.♙xg5 looks unnecessarily risky: 19...♙xg4+ 20.hxg4 ♟xg5 21.♙xc7 ♟xg4 with a messy position.



19...♙xb5 Black voluntarily parts with the bishop pair which cannot be recommended.

There is nothing wrong with 19...♙fd7 intending to occupy the e5-square with one of the minor pieces. Here 20.♙d5 may be answered by 20...♙e6.



Round 1 of the 2016 Alberta Championship: Gary Ng is waiting for FM Dale Haessel

20.♙xb5 ♙h7 Black anticipates the opening of the f-file after which this knight may occupy an excellent g5-square.

21.♙d4 Surprisingly, the knight jump to f5 doesn't give White much; this is probably the point where he should look for improvement.

Another plan is 21.f4 gxf4 22.♙xf4 ♙e5 23.♟f1 intending to create pressure along the f-file. However, after 23... ♙g5 24.♙h1 ♙xf4 25.♟xf4 ♙e5 26.♟df1 ♟e7 27.♙c3 c6 White doesn't have a clear way of strengthening his position further.

21...♙e5+ 22.♙g1 ♟f6 23.♙f5 ♙f8 24.b4 axb3 25.axb3 ♙ce6 As a result, the knight looks good on f5 but it doesn't cooperate well with the rest of the white army. 26.♙e3 ♙d7 27.♖b1 ♙a3 28.b4 b6 29.♖c1 White doesn't have an obvious plan and Black begins taking over. 29...♙a2 30.♙f1 ♙ea8 31.c5 Correct. White should try to mix things up. 31...bxc5 32.♙b5 ♙a1 33.♖c2 Certainly not 33.♙xd7? ♟xb1 34.♖xb1 ♙a1 and wins.

33...♙8a2 34.♖d3 ♙b6 With the benefit of hindsight, Black would have preferred 34...♙a3 35.♖f1 ♟xb1 keeping a pair of rooks on the board.

35.♙xa1 ♙xa1 36.♙xa1 ♙xa1 37.bxc5 dxc5

The exit of all four rooks has brought White some relief. He may be able to hold despite a small material deficit. 38.♙c4 As I have said before, parting with the bishop pair voluntarily cannot be recommended.

Understandably though, White did not want to resort to waiting moves like 38.♙d2 advocated by the computer.

38...♙xc4 39.♖xc4 ♙d4 40.♙d2 Correct. 40.♙xd4? cxd4 is completely lost.



40...♙g7 This is too committal for a move right before the time control.

Instead, Black can play something neutral like 40...♖e5, get an extra 30 minutes on the clock and then think about the position thoroughly.

41.♙xd4 cxd4 As a result, Black immediately parts with his extra pawn for nothing.

41...♖xd4 is an interesting try for a win: after 42.♖xd4 cxd4 43.♙xg5 ♙e6 White regains his pawn at a cost of giving the opponent two dangerous connected passers. Given the tournament situation, however, Black may have judged this continuation to be unnecessarily risky.

42.♖xc7 ♙e6 43.♖c8+ A curious moment. The computer gives 43.♖b8+ ♙g7 44.♖b5 as being completely equal. After the text move, however, Black has 43...♙g7 44.♙g2 (to cover the f3-square) 44...♖e5 45.♖c6 ♙c5 winning

the e4-pawn. The computer then asserts that 46. ♖b5 ♜xe4+ 47. ♔g1 saves White half a point in all the lines but proving it over the board would have been far from easy. In any case, a draw was agreed immediately. ½-½

Thus, Bitan Banerjee needed just a draw in the last round to guarantee clear first. Here is how he achieved this goal.

Banerjee, Bitan (2320) – Haessel, Dale (2212) [D91]

2016 AB Championship (5), 27.03.2016

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.♟c3 d5 4.♟f3 ♟g7 5.♟g5 ♟e4 6.♟h4 ♟xc3 7.bxc3 c5 Overall, the whole line looks pretty good for White, and the current game doesn't change this assessment.

7...dxc4 is a superior alternative from both the computer and the database perspective.

8.cxd5 ♜xd5 9.e3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♟c6 11.♟e2 e5 Striving for an endgame but White's advantage persists. 12.dxe5 ♜a5+ 13.♜d2 ♜xd2+ 14.♟xd2 0-0 15. ♜ab1 ♟xe5 16.♟d4 ♟d7 This move was once played by GM Alexei Shirov but it doesn't change the character of the position. Black is behind in development, while White has an easy game and strong queenside pressure. 17.♟f3 ♟b6 18.♜hc1 f5 19.a4! ♟xa4



20.♜b4?! Too slow.

Instead, after 20.♟d5+ ♟h8 21.♟e7 ♜e8 22.♜c7 Black is paralyzed. If 22...♟b6 then 23.♟f7 and White wins an exchange. 23...♟e5 doesn't help in view of 24.♟f3! and the white rook is taboo because of a checkmate in one.

20...♟b6 21.♜a1 White has created an obvious threat but it can be parried.

21...♟f6 22.♟g3 ♟d7 The computer

advocates 22...♟d8!? with an idea to push the a-pawn under favorable circumstances. 23.♟d6 ♜d8 24.♟d5+ ♟h8 25.♟xb7 It's time for White to restore material equality although Black is happy to exchange his passive light-squared bishop. 25...♟xb7 26.♜xb7 ♟e5 27.♟xe5 And here White has decided to offer a draw to secure the title. Indeed, after 27...♟xe5 28.♜axa7 ♜xa7 29.♜xa7 ♟xd4 30.exd4 ♜xd4+ there is nothing to play for.

Under different tournament circumstances he would have tried 27.♟c7 ♜d5 28.♜a6 ♟d7 29.♜d6 ♜xd6 30. ♟xd6 with chances to win the a-pawn and to play for a win with no risk. ½-½

Thus, Bitan ended the tournament with 4/5 and became 2016 AB champion. Gary Ng finished clear second (3.5/5). The third place went to FM Dale Haessel (2.5/5).

Butch Villavieja wins 2016 Alberta Reserves

A total of 24 players participated in the 2016 Alberta Reserves that was held as 5-round Swiss on March 26-27, alongside the main event. The rating favourite Rob Gardner started the tournament with a commanding 3/3 but then unexpectedly lost a key game to Butch Villavieja in round 4. In a slightly better endgame position Rob committed an unfortunate blunder that cost him the full point immediately.

In round 5 Douglas Nechio held Rob to a draw, thus clearing Butch's way to the pedestal. Omid Malek was the only other player who had a shot at the first place but he needed to defeat Butch with Black. That game was agreed drawn in a position that optically looked equal. The computer, however, indicates that Omid could have played on. In any case, Butch Villavieja scored 4/5, which turned out to be enough for clear first. Rob Gardner, Omid Malek, Douglas Nechio and Dante Briones shared the second place with 3.5/5.

I have decided to include the following wild game from round 5 in this report.

Briones, Dante (1999) – Dave, Bhavik (1859) [C38]

2016 Alberta Reserves (5.3), 27.03.2016

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♟f3 g5 4.d4 ♟g7 5.♟c4 ♟c6 6.c3 h6 7.0-0 ♟ge7 So far

both the computer evaluation and the statistics favor Black heavily. 8.g3 g4 A tempting move but White has a strong reply. Instead, 8...♟a5!? deserves attention.



9.♟h4 f3 10.♟xf3! Such piece sacrifices are a common theme in the King's gambit. 10...gxf3 11.♟xf7+ Another spectacular sacrifice that guarantees White at least a draw.

Nevertheless, more interesting is 11. ♜xf3 0-0 12.♟xf7+ ♟h8 13.♟g5! The key move that keeps the position complicated, with all three results being possible.

11...♟xf7 12.♜xf3+ ♟g8 13.♜f7+ ♟h7 14.♜f6 White is threatening a checkmate in one; Black has the only but sufficient defence: 14...♟f5 15. ♜g6+ ♟g8 16.♜f7+ ♟h7 17.♜g6+ ♟g8 18.♜xf5?! Objectively, White should accept a draw by perpetual but he understandably wants more.



18...d6? The decisive mistake although it's hard to criticize Black for not finding the right move.

18...♜e7! covers f7 and gives Black time to organize his defence. For ex-

ample, 19.♔e3 d6 20.♖f4 ♕d7 21.♘d2 ♖e8! with an unavoidable exchange of queens.

19.♖f7+ ♔h7 20.♖h5! The threat of ♖xh6 is lethal, and Black is forced to part with his queen. 20...♖f6 21.♖xh6+! ♖xh6 22.♕xh6 ♔xh6 Material is almost even but the exposed position of the black king gives White a winning advantage. 23.♖xc7 ♕f8 24.♖f7 ♕e7 25.♘d2 ♖f8 26.♗d5 ♕h3 Now White just needs to put his knight to e3. 27.♘f1

A better way to do it is 27.♘c4!? attacking the d6-pawn in the meantime. After 27...♖ad8 28.♘e3 the knight's jump to f5 is going to be very unpleasant for Black.

27...♖f3 28.♘d2 ♖f6 Now White faces some difficulties but finds a creative way to overcome them. 29.g4 ♕xg4 30.♘f1 ♖af8 31.♘g3 ♕f3 32.♖b5 ♖g8?

More tenacious is 32...♖6f7 defending the b7-pawn indirectly. Here 33.♖xb7? runs into 33...♕g5 winning the white queen in all the lines. For example, 34.♖b3 ♕e3+ 35.♔f1 ♕d1+ etc.

33.♖f1! ♖gf8. 33...♕xe4? loses more material in view of 34.♖xf6+ ♕xf6 35.♖h5+ ♔g7 36.♘xe4 etc.

34.♖xb7 White's material advantage becomes overwhelming. 34...♘a5 35.♖xe7 ♘c4 36.♘f5+ ♔g5 37.♖xf3 1-0

The move of the tournament could have been played in the following game.

Usselman,Paul (1880) – Zeggelaar,Mike (2084) [E90]

2016 Alberta Reserves (2.2), 26.03.2016



2015 Alberta Junior Championship

In 2015 the Alberta Junior Championship cycle was essentially the same as in 2014. First, two regional junior tournaments took place in Edmonton and Calgary.

The Edmonton Junior Regional was held at the Edmonton Chess Club on October 1-2, 2015. The event featured three sections: Open, Under 1300 and Girls. The winner of the Open section guaranteed a spot in the Championship section of the Alberta Junior in Calgary, along with a \$300 travel grant from the ACA. The competition for the first place was fierce and resulted in a somewhat surprising champion: Matthew Zita defeated both rating favourites (David Yao and Sean Mah) and finished clear first with 4/5. Sean had to settle for the second place (3.5/5), while David Yao shared the third place with Andi Superceanu (2.5/5).

The Under 1300 section was won convincingly by Mark Ivanescu with a score of 4.5/5. Lucy Chao took clear second (4/5), while the third place went to Brendan Tan. In the Girls section Lucy Chao defeated Sydney Mah in a match and claimed the trophy.

The Calgary Junior Regional was held at the Calgary Chess Club on October 24-25. The event was organized by the Calgary Junior Chess Club President Guoliang Wu and directed by Vlad Rekhson. The tournament featured four sections: Open, Under 1300, Under 800 and Girls.

The Open section was won by Jeff Wang (4/5), who thus guaranteed a spot in the Championship section of the Alberta Junior. Patrick Angelo Tolentino finished undefeated with 4/5 to take clear second. There was a three-way tie for the third place; after an additional playoff tournament Chenxi Wu claimed the trophy.

In the Under 1300 section the top three places were decided without playoffs. Dhruv Jindal won the tournament with 6/7, Jerry Li finished second (5.5/7), and the third place went to Daniel Chang (5/7).

The Under 800 section was won by Akshara Nagaruru from Lethbridge (6/7). Three players ended up tied for second with 5/7, and an additional playoff tournament was held to distribute the trophies. As a result, the second place went to Maxim Bryuzgin, and the third – to Ammar Abdurashidov.

The Girls section was a round-robin tournament of three players. Shekinah Munoz claimed the title with 2/2, while Tanushka Jindal finished second (1/2).



Alberta Junior Championship section players: Matthew Zita, Chenxi Wu, Nimai Koneru, Jeff Wang, Guoliang Wu (organizer and CJCC President) and Patrick Angelo Tolentino.

The winners of all sections, as well as runners-up in the Open section, have received coaching grants from the ACA.

Finally the 2015 Alberta Junior took place at the Calgary Chess Club on November 14-15. This event was organized by Guoliang Wu and directed by Giridhar Koneru. A total of 46 players participated in the tournament with 5 sections: Championship, Open, Under 1300, Under 800 and Girls.

The Championship section was a 6-player round-robin with two regional qualifiers (Matthew Zita from Edmonton and Jeff Wang from Calgary) as well as four other invited players. Diwen Shi was a big rating favourite and ended up winning the section with a result of 3.5/5. The victory didn't come easily, however, as the outcome of the tournament remained unclear until the very last round. Apart from the title and the trophy, Diwen won a \$1,000 travel grant from the ACA to participate in the Canadian Junior Championship. Jeff Wang and Nimai Koneru finished with 3/5, Jeff taking the second place by virtue of winning the head-to-head encounter.

In the Open section Andre Angelo Tolentino and Ian Zhao finished with 4.5/5, then Andre ended up winning a playoff match to claim the title. The third place went to Prayus Shrestha who scored 3/5.

The Under 1300 section was dominated by

Arul Papneja, who took clear first with 6.5/7, a full point ahead of the second place finisher Andrew Chen. Daniel Chang got another third-place trophy, this time with a score of 4.5/7.

The Under 800 section featured another tie for the first place: Stephen Chang and Terry Fu finished the tournament undefeated with 6/7. Stephen then ended up winning a tie-breaking match and claimed the first-place trophy. Maxim Bryuzgin took third with a result of 5/7.

The Girls section was a round-robin event featuring five players. Lucy Chao prevailed once again with 3.5/4 and took the first-place trophy home. Tanushka Jindal also finished undefeated with 3/4 and took clear second. The third place went to Shekinah Munoz (2/4).

All section winners (except for Diwen Shi) received coaching grants from the ACA.

The 2016 AB Junior Championship cycle will have the same structure as in 2015.

Medicine Hat Chess Club

Gas City Kiwanis Centre

Room 5, 826 – 11th Street S.E.

Wednesdays

7:00 pm to 10:30 pm

mid-September to mid-June

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2016 Alberta Chess Challenge

A new junior event appeared on the ACA calendar this year: Alberta Chess Challenge. The competition was held in 12 sections to determine 12 provincial champions by grade. Also, the section winners earned the right to represent Team Alberta at the 2016 Canadian Chess Challenge in Regina, Saskatchewan.

The tournament took place at the Lindsay Thurber Comprehensive High School in Red Deer on April 9. The time control was Game in 20 minutes with a 5-second increment. Thus, depending on the size of the section, every participant played 3, 4 or 5 games.

Volunteer participation was crucial to ensure the success of the event; the ACA would therefore like to thank everyone who helped organize and direct the tournament: Alexey Taranik (head organizer and arbiter), David Miller (chief arbiter), Paul Gagne, Angelo Tolentino, Cristian Ivanescu, Guoliang Wu, Jackie Mah, Vera Li and others.

The action started shortly after 11 am. By 4 pm the dust has settled, and the following players claimed the titles as well as their spots on Team Alberta.

In grade 1 Colton Rostoker (Calgary) defeated Yijia Guo in a match.

In grade 2 Anand Rishi Chandra (Calgary) won a round-robin tournament of six players with a perfect score.

In grade 3 three players ended up in a tie for the first place so an additional tie-breaking tournament was required. In the end, Vishruth Sharma (Calgary) emerged victorious.

Grade 4 was a round-robin tournament of six players and turned out to be one of the tensest sections of the event. Paul Wang (Calgary) ended up winning with a perfect score (5/5).

On the contrary, grade 5 featured a relatively easy win by Andi Superceanu (Edmonton), also with a perfect score.

Grade 6 featured another round-robin of six players; Ian Zhao (Calgary) took the title fairly convincingly with 4.5/5.

Grade 7 was the largest section of the event (8 players); Andrew Xu (Calgary) claimed the title with a score of 3.5/4.

Jeff Wang (Calgary) finished clear first in grade 8 with a result of 3.5/4.

Chenxi Wu (Calgary) dominated grade 9 taking first with a perfect score (4/4).

Grades 10 and 11 were combined. Raphael Libre (Calgary) and Diwen Shi (Calgary)



Alberta Chess Challenge: playing hall during round 1

earned the right to represent Team Alberta in grades 10 and 11, respectively.

Finally, David McCullough (Sherwood Park) defeated Elvin Limpin in a match to win grade 12.

As mentioned above, the national championship took place in Regina during May long weekend. A total of 10 Canadian

provinces were represented; thus, every member of Team Alberta played 9 games against opponents from the same grade. All 12 individual results were combined to yield the over all team score.

Traditionally, teams from Ontario and Quebec dominated the Canadian Chess Challenge, and this year was no exception. Both teams won all their matches except



Foreground: Diwen Shi (Grade 11) – Raphael Libre (Grade 10). Background: Elvin Limpin – David McCullough. Three of these players made Team Alberta in 2016.

for the head-to-head encounter in the last round, which ended in a tie. British Columbia took third with 7/9 team points.

Team Alberta lost to the top three seeds but crushed everybody else and finished fourth with 6/9 team points. The best individual result was achieved by Vishruth Sharma (grade 3) – 7/9 points.

The ACA would like to thank the team coordinator Guoliang Wu and the team captain Raphael Libre.

2016 Alberta Youth Chess Championship

In 2016 the most prestigious junior event in the province took place at the Delta Calgary Downtown hotel on February 20-21. The head organizer was Guoliang Wu, the president of the Calgary Junior Chess Club, while Vlad Rekhson was the head arbiter. A total of 82 players participated in the tournament that featured six age groups: Under 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18. As usual, each section winner received a \$1,000 travel grant from the ACA towards a trip to the 2016 Canadian Youth Chess Championship in Windsor, Ontario.

The competition for the first place was very tight in most of the sections, three of the provincial champions being determined by a tie-breaking match or a tie-breaking tournament.

The Under 8 section ended in a tie for the first place between the defending champion Ron Offengenden from Edmonton and Anand Rishi Chandra from Calgary. The winners drew each other in round 4 and won the rest of their games thus finishing with 4.5/5. A tie-breaking match to determine the champion was in order, and Ron managed to emerge victorious. The third place went to Bastian Benner who scored 4/5.

In the Under 10 section Paul Wang from Calgary started with 4/4 and seemed to be in the driver's seat. However, in the last round Mark Ivanescu (Edmonton) managed to defeat the leader, which resulted in a three-way tie for the first place among Paul, Mark and Manish Shetagar from Fort McMurray. A tie-breaking round-robin tournament was necessary to determine the champion. Mark seized his chance and claimed the title, the second place went to Paul.

The Under 12 section featured essentially the same scenario as the U8: Sean Mah (Edmonton) and Ian Zhao (Calgary) finished the tournament undefeated with



Foreground: David Yao – Kaixin Wang. Background: Prayus Shrestha – Matthew Zita. The photo is taken at the 2016 Edmonton Regional Youth Championship in February.

4.5/5 drawing each other in the process. Ian then went on to win the tie-breaking match and took the title. Ryan Zang finished clear third with a score of 4/5.

The Under 14 section was the first one to produce a clear winner: Kaixin Wang from Edmonton scored 4.5/5 and took the trophy home. Nimai Koneru from Calgary also finished the tournament undefeated with 4/5, which turned out to be enough for clear second. Jeff Wang and David Yao tied for third with a score of 3.5/5.

The Under 16 section was the first one with a clear favorite, Mohamad Fellah from Calgary. Nevertheless, the tournament wasn't so easy for him as he conceded a draw to Prayus Shrestha in the very first round. The key game to determine the champion turned out to be Mohamad's win over Andre Angelo Tolentino in round 3. Both players ended up with 4/5 but Mohamad claimed the title by virtue of winning the head-to-head encounter. Chenxi Wu and Johnny Burn shared the third place with a score of 3/5. And last but not least, Diwen Shi from Calgary dominated the Under 18 section achieving a perfect score of 4/4. The second place went to Brian Timmerman (2.5/4), while Elvin Limpin took clear third with a result of 2/4.

Sydney Mah will play in the 13th Susan Polgar Foundation Girls' Invitational

On May 21-22 the Calgary Chess Club hosted an interesting event called Alberta Susan Polgar Invitational Qualifier. Only Alberta girls born after July 22nd, 1997, were allowed to participate, and the winner received the right to represent Alberta at the 13th Annual Susan Polgar Foundation Girls' Invitational in St. Louis, Missouri. This is the most prestigious all-girls tournament in the USA that was founded in 2003. The ACA provided a \$500 travel grant to cover the cost of transportation to St. Louis, while accommodation and meals will be paid for by the organizers.

A total of 17 girls participated in the Alberta Qualifier that was held as a 5-round Swiss. There was no clear rating favourite though, so the winner was hard to predict.

After 3 rounds of play Michelle Mo and Luth Gallemaso were leading the tournament with a perfect score. Sydney Mah started with 2/2 and took a bye in round 3 so she was right behind with 2.5/3.

In round 4 Michelle won again thus taking a sole lead. Sydney was clear second with 3.5/4. The outcome of the tournament was decided in round 5 on board 1. Shortly after the opening Michelle's bishop got suddenly trapped, and she was unable to overcome the material deficit despite heroic effort. Thus, Sydney finished clear first with 4.5/5. Congratulations! Michelle shared the second place with Tanushka Jindal and Shaira Munoz (4/5 each).

2016 Battle of Alberta

Date: September 10, 2016

Venue: Red Deer Lodge

Address: 4311 49 Ave, Red Deer, AB T4N 5Y4

Tournament Arbiter: Alexey Taranik

email: taranik1978@yahoo.ca



Sponsored by the Alberta Chess Association

Battle Regulations

North battles South. Dividing line: Red Deer river or 52°16'05"N elsewhere in the province.

Each team must field 12 players arranged according to their ratings in a descending order. The higher of each player's CFC and FIDE rating is used to determine the board order.

Two rounds are played against the same opponent, one game with White, the other with Black. Drawing of lots for colours will be done immediately before the start of round 1.

Team North Captain: Micah Hughey

Email: mhughe@rocketmail.com

Team South Captain: Daniel Kazmaier

Email: dan.kazmaier@gmail.com

The winning team gets the Battle of AB trophy. If the match ends up in a 12-12 tie, the defending champion *North* keeps the trophy.

CFC and FIDE rated. CFC Membership is required and may be purchased on site. All expired CFC memberships must be renewed prior to round 1.

Time control: Game in 90 minutes with a 30-second increment

Round times: 11:30 am and 3:30 pm

Every player is guaranteed a 30-minute break between games.

Default late time: 60 minutes unless the Arbiter decides otherwise.

Final roster/board order announcements must be made by **noon, Wednesday, September 7th**. The CFC/FIDE rating lists published on **September 1st** will be used to determine players' ratings.

History: The Battle of Alberta was first introduced in 1996. The score since that time is 11-9 in favour of Team North. In 2015 North won the match with a score of 17.5:6.5 repeating the biggest point difference in the history of the Battle.

TOP 40 CFC RATED ALBERTANS

As of July 6, 2016

| | | |
|----|---------------------------|------|
| 1 | Hansen, Eric | 2626 |
| 2 | Porper, Edward | 2468 |
| 3 | Banerjee, Bitan | 2420 |
| 4 | Wang, Richard | 2411 |
| 5 | Yam, Alex | 2378 |
| 6 | Arruebarrena, Rafael | 2352 |
| 7 | Ng, Gary | 2351 |
| 8 | Valencia, Belsar | 2344 |
| 9 | Pechenkin, Vladimir | 2339 |
| 10 | Reeve, Jeff | 2329 |
| 11 | Matras-Clement, Agnieszka | 2308 |
| 12 | Haessel, Dale | 2304 |
| 13 | Laceste, Loren Brigham | 2301 |
| 14 | Findlay, Ian | 2285 |
| 15 | Haynes, Nicolas | 2283 |
| 16 | Kazmaier, Daniel | 2281 |
| 17 | Gardner, Robert J. | 2252 |
| 18 | Miller, David | 2246 |
| 19 | Grumic, Sasa | 2227 |
| 20 | Booker, Brad | 2221 |
| 21 | Shi, Diwen | 2220 |
| 22 | Peter, Steven | 2217 |
| 23 | Robichaud, Martin | 2202 |
| 24 | Rekhson, Vladislav | 2198 |
| 25 | Leuchanka, Siarhei | 2193 |
| 26 | Boehmer, Kris | 2191 |
| 27 | Hughey, Micah | 2164 |
| 28 | Tam, Erik | 2142 |
| 29 | Ebrahim-Shirazi, Behrooz | 2139 |
| 30 | Malek, Omid | 2106 |
| 31 | Nguyen, Kim | 2103 |
| 32 | Abdelrhman, Hamid | 2087 |
| 33 | Kostadinov, Georgi | 2054 |
| 34 | Tran-Ly, Tristan | 2039 |
| 35 | Briones, Dante | 2032 |
| 36 | Adagha, Ovo | 2025 |
| 37 | Nechio, Douglas | 2010 |
| 38 | Pivovarov, Juraj | 1991 |
| 39 | Thiel, Rodney | 1987 |
| 40 | Zeggelaar, Mike | 1973 |

TOP 10 FIDE RATED ALBERTANS

As of July 1, 2016

| | | |
|----|------------------------|------|
| 1 | GM Hansen, Eric | 2582 |
| 2 | IM Porper, Edward | 2411 |
| 3 | Banerjee, Bitan | 2368 |
| 4 | IM Wang, Richard | 2340 |
| 5 | FM Yam, Alex | 2294 |
| 6 | FM Pechenkin, Vladimir | 2292 |
| 7 | Laceste, Loren Brigham | 2286 |
| 8 | Valencia, Belsar | 2268 |
| 9 | Arruebarrena, Rafael | 2264 |
| 10 | Reeve, Jeff | 2262 |

Road Warrior Update



On January 24, 2016, the ACA Board of Directors changed the structure of the Road Warrior program. A randomly selected eligible out-of-town player will be awarded \$50 at every Road Warrior event in 2016. The only eligibility requirement is to travel at least 75 km (one way) to participate in the tournament. The winner must also solve a chess related problem to claim the prize.

Airdrie Chess Club

Airdrie Public Library
111-304 Main Street SE
Thursdays 6:30 pm to 8 pm
Contact: Susanne Rempel

Calgary Chess Club

#274 3359 27th Street NE
Parma Tech Centre, North Building
Tuesday nights from 6:30 pm to 11 pm
Thursday nights from 6:30 pm to 11 pm
Saturday from 12:30 to 5 pm
phone: (403) 264-9498
website: www.calgarychess.com

Calgary Junior Chess Club

Contact: Guoliang Wu
email: wuguoliang@hotmail.com
website: www.calgarychess.com

University of Calgary Chess Club

Macewan Student Centre
email: chess.calgary@gmail.com
web: www.facebook.com/UofCChessClub/

Edmonton Chess Club

#204-10840 124 Street
Mondays and Thursdays 6:30 pm to 11 pm
Saturdays 1 pm to 5 pm
phone: (780) 424-0283
website: <http://www.facebook.com/TheEdmontonChessClub/>

Grande Prairie Chess Club

Contact: Tim Pradzinski
phone: (780) 518-2281
email: database@telusplanet.net
website: www.gpchessclub.com

La Crete Chess Club

Wednesday: 7 pm to 9:30 pm
Contact: Chris White
phone or text: (780) 821-0044 (Cell)
email: cwnlca@gmail.com

Portage College (Lac La Biche)

Contact: Leslie Boake
phone: (780) 623-5686
email: leslie.boake@portagecollege.ca

2016 ACA Tournament Schedule

All tournaments subject to change by the ACA and/or the Organizer.
For updated info, please visit our website:

www.albertachess.org/

Tournaments marked with a star are

Road Warrior events



| Date | Event | Organizer | Location |
|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Jul 27-Aug 1 | 9th Calgary International* | Vlad Rekhson | Calgary |
| Aug 27-28 | AB Women's Championship | Vladimir Pechenkin | Edmonton |
| Aug 27-28 | Over/Under 1800* | Micah Hughey | Edmonton |
| Sep 10 | Battle of AB | Alexey Taranik | Red Deer |
| Sep 17-18 | Calgary Jr. Regional | Guoliang Wu | Calgary |
| Sep 24-25 | 22nd Medicine Hat Open* | Dr. Bill Taylor | Medicine Hat |
| Oct 1-2 | Edmonton Jr. Regional | TBD | Edmonton |
| Oct 8-10 | Alberta Open* | Jim Daniluk | Calgary |
| Oct 28-30 | Edmonton Fall Sectional* | Micah Hughey | Edmonton |
| Nov 11-13 | Banff Open* | Ian Findlay | Banff |
| Nov 19-20 | AB Jr. Championship | TBD | Edmonton |
| Nov 26-27 | Southern AB Open* | Frank Kluytmans | Calgary |
| Dec 10-11 | WBX Team Tournament* | Terry Seehagen | Edmonton |

Lethbridge Chess Club

Pemmican Lodge 102 5th Avenue South
(on the second floor in the games room)
6 pm until 9 pm or 10 pm
Contact: Paul Viminiz vimip0@uleth.ca

University of Lethbridge Chess Club

email: martin.heavyhead@uleth.ca

Fort McMurray Chess Club

Westwood Family YMCA, 221 Tundra Drive
Thursdays: 7 pm to 9:30 pm
phone: (780) 790-1008
email: fmchessclub@hotmail.com
web: www.fmchess.com

Medicine Hat Chess Club

Room 5, 826 - 11th Street S.E.
Wednesdays 7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.
Contact: Bill Taylor phone: (403) 526-5484
email: taylormw@shaw.ca
web: www.mhchess.com

Sherwood Park

Strathcona County Library, 2nd Floor
Wednesdays from 4 pm to closing
Contact: Les Jones
phone: (780) 467-7393

University of Alberta

All skill levels welcome to attend!
Blitz once each month in CAB 373 or 369
Email uachess@ualberta.ca for info
web: <http://uachess.wikifoundry.com/>

Red Deer Chess Club

Dawe Centre Library, 56 Holt Street
Mondays beginning at 4:30 pm
Contact: Alexey Taranik
phone: (403) 872-1062
email: taranik1978@yahoo.ca

Okotoks Chess Club

Okotoks Library, 7 Riverside Drive West
Wednesdays 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
Contact: Richard Bradley
phone: (403) 938-2220
email: richard.bradley@shaw.ca

Lethbridge Junior Chess Club

Family Centre, Suite 225
200 - 4th Avenue South, Lethbridge Centre
Towards a Brighter Future
Presentation Room.
Fridays 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm
Contact: Peter Davis-Imhof
phone: (403) 320-4232
website: <http://www.famcentre.ca/>
email: peter.davisimhof@gmail.com

Medicine Hat Junior Chess Club

Earl Kitchener School, Community Room
211 4th Street S.E.
End of October to early March
Saturdays 1:30 pm to 4 p.m.
Contact: Dr. Bill Taylor
phone: (403) 526-5484
email: taylormw@shaw.ca

9th Annual Calgary International Grandmaster Chess Camp

Dates August 2 - 5, 2016

Time 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Location Renert School
14 Royal Vista Link NW
Calgary, AB

Featuring two-time
Calgary International Champion
and current Israeli champion
Victor Mikhalevski



Join us for an exciting week of strategy and fun! Camp participants will spend their mornings learning from expert chess players, while afternoons will be devoted to competitions and other activities. The Grandmaster Chess Camp is open to children aged 6 to 16, and all participants must have full knowledge of the rules of chess. Optional before and after care is available, and discounts are offered for siblings!

Registration includes:

- Chess instruction from Grandmaster Mikhalevski
- Rated competition games
- Simultaneous matches
- Daily snacks
- Jungle gym time and other fun activities!



For more information or to register, visit
www.renertonline.com



The Alberta Chess Association
An Affiliate of the Chess Federation of Canada



9^h Calgary International Chess Classic

July 27-August 1, 2015

Calgary Chess Club

#204-3359 27th St. NE

www.calgary-international.com

Contact: Vlad Rekhson

vrehkson@yahoo.ca



Lecture/Simul/Camp

TBA

Calgary International Blitz Championship

Aug 1, 2016



9th Calgary International

Open to all

July 27-Aug 1

Open Swiss

CFC & FIDE rated

GM/IM norm opportunities

Top games will be broadcast live

Calgary International Qualifier/Fundraiser

June 4,5 2016

Open and U/1400 sections.

Calgary-international.com/sideevents.php



Featured players include:

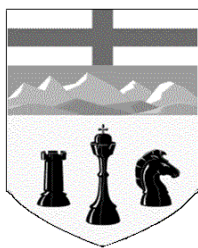
GM Kayden Troff (USA)

GM Victor Mikhalevski (Israel)

And more to come...



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Dale Haessel, President

"The first and last name in Software
Development"



Calgary Chess
Club

www.calgary-international.com