



The Official
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Federation

Alabama Chess Antics

Spring 2021

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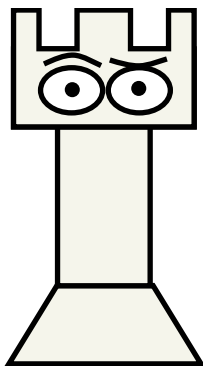
by Scott Varagona



He's back!! IM Stuart Rachels wins the 2021 Alabama Quick Championship and Blitz Championship.

(Photo by TD Doug Strout.)

Greetings from the Editor



Howdy, folks! Welcome to the Spring 2021 *Antics*. We have reports on just about all of the major recent happenings in Alabama chess—both in-person and online. It seems we got a little behind because the Winter *Antics* came out so late, but now we are finally caught up. Thanks to **Caesar Lawrence**, **Doug Strout**, **James Berrigan**, and **Gerald Squires** for their various contributions to this issue.

The biggest news, as you can see from the cover, is that IM Stuart Rachels played in the Quick and Blitz Championships. This was Stuart's first USCF tournament in over 25 years! Although Stu plans to stay retired as far as Regular rated chess tournaments are concerned, we do hope that he will come back to play in the occasional Quick or Blitz event.

Looking forward, as we cautiously watch the pandemic begin to abate, more and more traditional in-person tournaments have returned to the Alabama chess calendar on alabamachess.org. The Birmingham Classic, the Alabama Dual-Rated State Championship, and the Chris Bond Memorial are all on the horizon. I am told that plans are also in the works for an in-person Alabama State Championship in September, so be on the lookout for that.

The deadline for submissions for the Summer 2021 issue of the *Antics* is August 10. Submit photos, games (preferably in .pgn format), and articles via Alabama.Chess.Editor@gmail.com.

-Scott Varagona

ACF Membership

Any individual may become a **Regular Member** upon the payment of annual dues of **\$15.00**. Regular members may enter ACF tournaments and receive special publications or notices from ACF as they are issued. Any chess club seeking to become an **Affiliate** is required to file the Affiliate Information Form with the Secretary of the ACF and pay annual dues of **\$35.00**. Benefits of becoming an affiliate include the right to bid to host ACF-sanctioned events, such as the Alabama State Championship, and to receive advertising through the ACF for your tournaments.

Alabama Chess Leaderboard

Top 50 Regular Ratings (retrieved from uschess.org on 6/30/2021)

Only players with rating activity within the past year are listed.

1	MATTHEW PUCKETT	2305	26	VIKHRAM BALAGEE	1761
2	YURY A BARNAKOV	2283	27	KEN D KIRBY	1733
3	SCOTT VARAGONA	2270	28	ALADDIN S LATEEF	1707
4	BILL MELVIN	2200	29	JAMES R GRIFFIN	1697
5	STEPHEN J GRAVELING	2140	30	SHERWOOD DONG	1680
6	GERALD A LARSON	2133	31	JONATHAN SMITH	1657
7	BRENT INMAN	2095	32	GABRIEL T NOLAND	1654
8	AARON DECORD	2092	33	NATHANIEL B TILLMAN	1634
9	TEJAS V THORAT	2066	34	MARIANO RUNCO	1616
10	THOMAS J DENTON	2053	35	LAWRENCE D FISK	1600
11	ZACHARY ISAAC SNOW II	2045	36	SAMUEL G BASKARRAJ	1574
12	CHARLES L MEIDINGER	2036	37	CONSTANCE WANG	1568
13	MILES MELVIN	2031	38	CHARLES E CLARKE JR.	1558
14	MICHAEL W PORCELLI	2012	39	JOSHUA HUGH LIN	1555
15	WILLIAM DANIEL FOX	2012	40	TAYLOR A KENT	1552
16	OM BADHE	1969	41	LOGAN W MERCER	1551
17	KIRK D PETTY	1908	42	VICTOR LUNDY	1550
18	MICHAEL B GUTHRIE	1891	43	WILLIAM CHEN BAO	1546
19	JEFF TOBIN	1885	44	JENSON SCOTT WILHELM	1534
20	BRIAN C WIGGIN	1862	45	DOUGLAS STROUT	1520
21	TIM BOND	1818	46	SAMUEL J GILLILAND	1489
22	GARY W BAWGUS	1816	47	KRISTIAN K JORDAN	1483
23	XAVIER BRUNI	1808	48	BALAGEE GOVINDAN	1463
24	SARVAGNA VELIDANDLA	1802	49	STEVEN PAN	1456
25	JOSHUA WAKEFIELD	1781	50	JOSEPH S GRAVELING	1451

Alabama Online Grand Prix: Events 4-6

by NM Scott Varagona

The last three qualifying events of the Alabama Online Grand Prix on chess.com have now concluded. Here is a report on the Premier Section of each tournament.

Grand Prix Tournament 4 April 17, 2021

In an 11-player field, Jonathan Rasberry and Faruk Esat Ergin tied for first at 4/5 points, with Jonathan taking first on tiebreaks. I took third, with 3.5 points.

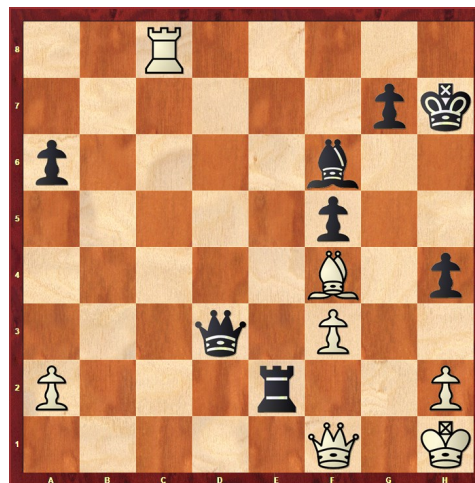
Jonathan had a strong tournament, holding me to a draw in round 4 and then defeating Bill Melvin in round 5. Meanwhile, Sherwood Dong had used Bird's Opening to beat me earlier in the tournament and was doing well, but he tragically blundered and lost at the tail end of his round 5 game against Faruk Ergin. This was a huge stroke of luck for Faruk, who ended up tying for first.

For me, round 5 was quite an oddity: instead of playing my usual 1.d4, I mouseslipped with 1.d3. Taken aback, I headed for a sort of Hippopotamus setup... and won. Could this be my new opening weapon?!

Grand Prix Tournament 5 May 22, 2021

This tournament ended with a three-way tie for first: Jonathan Rasberry, Sherwood Dong, and Om Badhe (at 4/5 points each), with Jonathan taking first on tiebreaks once again. There were 12 players.

Jonathan's Caro-Kann Defense was powerfully on display in a few games. The tactical finale of his fight with Miles Melvin in round 3 was very pleasing:



M. Melvin – J. Rasberry
Black to play.

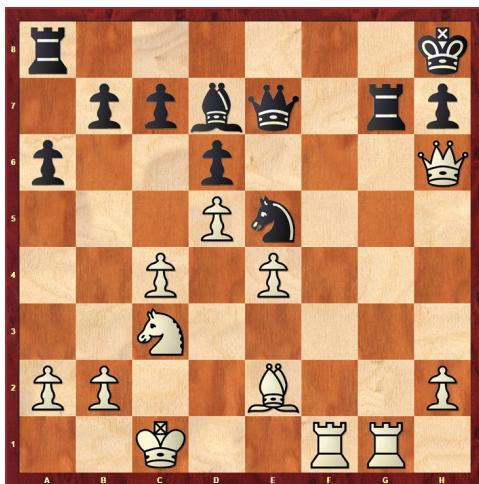
43...Rxf2+! 44.Kg1 Rh1+! 45.Kxh1
Qxf1+ 46.Kh2 Qf2+ 47.Kh1 Qxf3+ 0-1

The ACF president had won his first four games, but finally in round 5 he was stopped by Sherwood Dong, who outwitted him in an Alekhine's Defense. Om Badhe, who had lost to Jonathan in round 1, had bounced back to win four games in a row.

Grand Prix Tournament 6 June 19, 2021

There was a much lower turnout for this tournament than the previous ones, so chess.com reduced the number of rounds from 5 to 3 to account for the small pool of only 7 players. In the end, I won all three of my games to take clear first; tied for second were Joshua Varner, Om Badhe, and Tom Denton with 2/3.

My win against Om in round 3 had an interesting moment on move 24:



S. Varagona – O. Badhe
White to play.

White has an extra pawn, but Black's knight is far superior to my own. I decided to spice things up with **24.c5!**? Okay, so the computer dislikes this, but I have a few ideas. If Black doesn't take the pawn, someday I might push to c6 and undermine the defense of Black's a-pawn. On the other hand, I could trade on d6 and create a pawn weakness there. But what if Black simply takes? **24...dxc5?? 25.d6!** Out of the blue, Black is lost thanks to the devastating threat of Nd5. Black will not be able to save both his queen and his king unless he sheds a bunch of material: after **25...Nd3+ 26.Bxd3 Qe5 27.Qxg7+**, White soon won.

Now that all the qualifying tournaments are complete, the top players (according to various qualifying criteria) will be invited to the Grand Prix Invitational Championship in July. This online tournament will be a single elimination match play knockout format, and the ultimate winner will be crowned as Alabama's very first Online Grand Prix Champion. Stay tuned for a report on this final event in the next *Antics!* ■

Recent Tournament Results

from uschess.org; photos by Doug Strout



Quick Championship, Open Section.



Quick Championship, U1600 Section.



U1600 Quick Championship
Prizewinners.

Alabama Quick & Blitz Chess Championships 2021

(June 5; Montgomery; sponsored by Evangel Chess Club.)

Chief TD: Doug Strout

Quick Championship: Open Section

1st place: **IM Stuart Rachels**, 4.5/5

2nd place: Forest Chen, 4/5

Quick Championship: U1600 Section

1st place: **Sarvagna Velidandla**, 4.5/5

2nd place: Akhil R. Batchu & Alisher U. Khasanov, 4/5

Blitz Championship

1st place: **IM Stuart Rachels**, 5/5

2nd place: Forest Chen & Jonathan Rasberry, 4/5

Tom Nard VII Open

(February 27; Montgomery; sponsored by Evangel Chess Club.)

Chief TD: Doug Strout

Open Section

1st place: **Stephen Graveling & Isaac Snow**, 3.5/4

U1800 Section

1st place: **Taylor Kent**, 4/4

U1200 Section

1st place: **Matthew Hopper**, 3.5/4

2021 Alabama State Scholastic Individual Championship

(March 27; via chesskid.com; sponsored by ACF.)

Chief TD: Todd Patrick Guthrie

High School Championship

1st place: **Isaac Snow, Sarvagna Velidandla, Om Badhe,
Sherwood Dong, & Hartwell K. Forstman**, 3.5/5

Junior High Championship

1st place: **Samuel G. Baskarraaj**, 5/5

Elementary Championship

1st place: **Shawn Choi**, 5/5

Primary Championship

1st place: **Kylie Emily Zou**, 5/5

2021 Clarence Kalenian Classic

(June 26; Dothan; sponsored by Caesar Chess.)

Chief TD: Caesar Lawrence

Premier Section

1st place: **A.J. Goldsby**, 3.5/4

Reserve Section

1st place: **Derek J. Miller**, 3.5/4

More results and tournament crosstables may be found at alabamachess.org. ■

2021 Vulcan Tournament Report

With photos and crosstables by Caesar Lawrence; game submitted by James Berrigan



The winners of the 2021 Vulcan (as pictured above, left to right) were: Premier Section Co-Champions Aaron DeCord and James Berrigan (with James winning the trophy); Reserve Champion Noah Hamilton; Amateur Champion Chris Boothe.

A game from the co-champion:

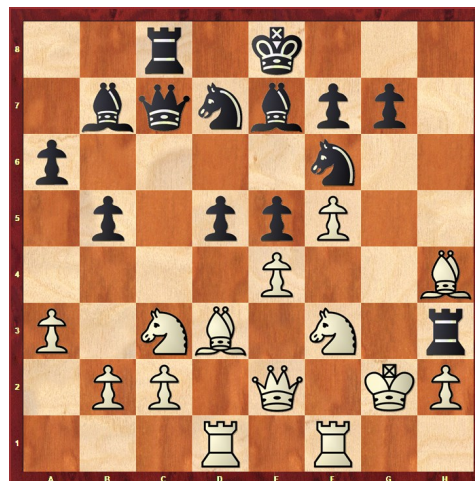
Michael Porcelli – James Berrigan

(2012) (2044)

Vulcan 2021 (Round 3)

Birmingham, AL; May 29, 2021

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6
5.Nc3 Qc7 6.Bd3 Nf6 7.0-0 d6 8.Be3
Be7 9.f4 b5 10.a3 h5 11.Kh1 Nbd7 12.f5
e5 13.Nf3 Bb7 14.Qe2 Rc8 15.Rad1 h4
16.Bg5 h3 17.gxh3 Rxh3 18.Bh4 d5
19.Kg2



19...Rxh4 20.Nxh4 dxe4 21.Nxe4 Nxe4 22.Bxe4 Qxc2 23.Rd2 Qxe4+
 24.Qxe4 Bxe4+ 25.Kg3 Bg5 26.Rd6 Bf4+ 27.Kf2 Rc2+ 28.Ke1 Rxh2 29.Nf3
 Rxb2 0-1

2021 Vulcan: 2021_V_PREMIERE -- Standings

#	Place	Name	Rating	Post	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Total
1	1-2	James Berrigan	2044	2067	D8	D6	W7	W3	3.0
2		Aaron Decord	2092	2103	W9	W5	L3	W8	3.0
3	3-5	Bill Melvin	2200	2191	D6	W4	W2	L1	2.5
4		Ryan Boyd Wu	1738	1804	B---	L3	W6	D5	2.5
5		Jonathan Rasberry	2098	2092	W7	L2	W9	D4	2.5
6	6-7	Charles Meidinger	2036	2030	D3	D1	L4	W9	2.0
7		Michael Porcelli	2012	1996	L5	W8	L1	B---	2.0
8	8	Nathan Yamaguchi	1749	1751	D1	L7	B---	L2	1.5
9	9	Kirk D Petty	1908	1884	L2	B---	L5	L6	1.0

2021 Vulcan: 2021_V_RESERVE -- Standings

#	Place	Name	Rating	Post	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Total
1	1	Noah Say Hamilton	1600	1649	W18	W12	W3	W4	4.0
2	2	Samuel Baskarraj	1574	1609	W10	W9	D7	W8	3.5
3	3-6	Kristian K Jordan	1483	1533	W11	W8	L1	W7	3.0
4		Saikarunya Kesireddy	880	1177	W16	W20	W13	L1	3.0
5		Douglas Strout	1520	1511	W19	L7	W10	W11	3.0
6		Cody Limbaugh Smith	unr.	1628	W22	L13	W12	W9	3.0
7	7	Sean P O'Hara	1052	1260	W20	W5	D2	L3	2.5
8	8-15	Robert Presswood	1610	1581	W15	L3	W18	L2	2.0
9		Joseph Graveling	1451	1444	W14	L2	W17	L6	2.0
10		Jonathan Kyler Gray	1283	1316	L2	W14	L5	W16	2.0
11		Michael Connally	1207	1296	L3	W15	W16	L5	2.0
12		Shawn Choi	1396	1392	W21	L1	L6	W19	2.0
13		Taylor Alden Kent	1552	1547	W17	W6	L4	U---	2.0
14		Lane Higgin Moore	993	1140	L9	L10	W22	W18	2.0
15		Shannon L Baker	1390	1366	L8	L11	W21	W17	2.0
16	16-20	Thomas Gilbreath	1424	1345	L4	W19	L11	L10	1.0
17		Akhil Redd Batchu	1229	1227	L13	W22	L9	L15	1.0
18		Kendall Lo Franks	1385	1333	L1	W21	L8	L14	1.0
19		Alisher Khasanov	1227	1223	L5	L16	W20	L12	1.0
20		Derek James Miller	1482	1385	L7	L4	L19	W21	1.0
21	21-22	Zach M Simmons	unr.	750	L12	L18	L15	L20	0.0
22		Raghavan Madabushi	1412	1335	L6	L17	L14	U---	0.0

2021 Vulcan: 2021_V_AMATEUR -- Standings

#	Place	Name	Rating	Post	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Total
1	1	Christopher Boothe	1143	1286	W26	W4	W3	W9	4.0
2	2	Mengdie Hu	1121	1135	D21	W23	W20	W8	3.5
3	3-6	Bruno Casalino	unr.	1244	W14	W15	L1	W11	3.0
4		Alton Summers	unr.	1202	W11	L1	W14	W12	3.0
5		Justin Carl Peifer	1140	1113	D16	D10	W17	W7	3.0
6		Owen Massey	unr.	1117	W12	L7	W22	W13	3.0
7	7-10	James Jeremiah Knoll	979	1027	W27	W6	D8	L5	2.5
8		Christopher McBride	unr.	1107	W22	W13	D7	L2	2.5
9		Bertin Margarito	1131	1098	D23	W16	W19	L1	2.5
10		Moranu Adedoyin	291	476	B---	D5	L11	W19	2.5
11	11-18	Indigo Masaai Daniels	1100	1067	L4	W21	W10	L3	2.0
12		Matthew Logan Woods	720	793	L6	W27	W15	L4	2.0
13		Bishop Herrington	1075	1040	W18	L8	W26	L6	2.0
14		Raj R Patel	872	866	L3	W24	L4	W27	2.0
15		Aditya Pippala	999	970	W24	L3	L12	W20	2.0
16		Neel A Patki	496	647	D5	L9	D23	W22	2.0
17		Otavio T Menezes	625	633	L19	W25	L5	W24	2.0
18		Forrest Brooks	unr.	735	L13	L22	W25	W26	2.0
19	19-21	Jeffrey D Talley	unr.	660	W17	D20	L9	L10	1.5
20		Whitney Wadsworth	959	904	W25	D19	L2	L15	1.5
21		John Kendall Gray	446	450	D2	L11	L24	B---	1.5
22	22-27	Daniel Wu	889	839	L8	W18	L6	L16	1.0
23		Garve Woo Ivey IV	485	496	D9	L2	D16	L25	1.0
24		Jonathan Ohlman	unr.	517	L15	L14	W21	L17	1.0
25		Luke Chatel	unr.	489	L20	L17	L18	W23	1.0
26		Taehyeon Eum	562	540	L1	B---	L13	L18	1.0
27		Mitchel Ray Jones	unr.	376	L7	L12	B---	L14	1.0

Editor's note: We are now trying to get back in the habit of including at least a few tournament crosstables in the *Antics*, just like in the pre-digital age. TDs, if you send me your tournament crosstables in PDF form (in a format very similar to those seen here) then I may print them in the *Antics*, if there is reasonable space to do so. I am particularly interested in printing crosstables from major tournaments, such as state championship events. Yes, these crosstables can be found on uschess.org anyway, but it would be nice to have a local record of them in the *Antics* as well. ■

“Searching for Stuart Rachels”

By NM Scott Varagona

With the pandemic starting to die down, live chess events have started rising again in Alabama. This spring, many players seized the chance to play in traditional OTB tournaments like the Queen of Hearts and the Vulcan Open.

Meanwhile, I continued to hide in my cave. Even though I was vaccinated some months ago, I still didn't feel ready to let go of my paranoia completely. I was considering playing in the 2021 Alabama Blitz Championship, though. I knew this tournament would be short, and the individual games would practically be “over before they started,” as the saying goes. This event would be a nice, safe way to ease back into in-person chess—although I still wasn't 100% sure I would actually go through with it.

Then I got a fateful message from Tom Denton. Miraculously, Tom had convinced the great Stuart Rachels to come out of his 25+ year retirement (well, at least to some degree) to play in the upcoming Blitz Championship and promote his new book, *the Best I Saw in Chess*.

This was a big deal.
A *really* big deal.

IM Stuart Rachels, the record-setting chess prodigy, the five-time consecutive Alabama State Champion—and, ultimately, the U.S. Co-Champion—was hands down Alabama's greatest player of the 20th century. (Possibly the greatest ever, but let's avoid getting into any arguments involving Paul Morphy's status as an Alabama player.) Stu retired from competitive chess in the mid-1990s; so, for him to suddenly reappear after all these years would be the Alabama equivalent of Bobby Fischer coming back!

I, for one, had always wished I would get the chance to play Stuart in a tournament—but I had thought that would never happen. My own chess career had started too late, and Stuart's retirement had always seemed so absolute. Yet now, out of the blue, there was a chance... Pandemic be darned: for an opportunity like this, I would crawl out of my cave after all.

The day of the tournament got off to a rocky start. I had decided to forgo playing in the Quick Championship that morning to concentrate on the Blitz in the afternoon, since the Blitz was where Stuart would be playing. A friend who was playing in the Quick texted me

that morning: as it turned out, unbeknownst to me, Stuart was playing in the Quick as well. Curses, curses, curses! Had I known, I would have played in the Quick also, to maximize my chances of playing him in at least *one* of the two tournaments. Oh well: I would just have to make the most of my chances in the Blitz. I departed for the Blitz two hours in advance, leaving plenty of time to meet Stuart before the tournament began.

But the sky really started to fall when, right away, I found myself in bumper-to-bumper traffic on I-65 South. There was no car accident or roadwork to speak of; it was just summertime travelers clogging up the

highway—and, no doubt, for utterly frivolous reasons! Didn't they understand that chess is a gazillion times more important than the beach? As I always say: 90% of life's problems are caused by other people... To make matters worse, my car's tire pressure warning signal suddenly went off. I had no choice but to stop my car and check everything out—all while the clock was still ticking. I was so aghast. How could departing two hours early *still* not be enough? It really did seem like Fate itself didn't want me to play Stuart Rachels. Maybe we were like Fischer and Karpov, I said to myself...

Mercifully, my tires were fine, the traffic finally thinned out, and I got



Photographic evidence that your Antics editor got to play the legend! Varagona (right, seated) faces IM Rachels at the 2021 Alabama Blitz Championship. Onlookers include Brent Inman (far left) and Aaron DeCord (far right). Photo by Tom Denton.

to Evangel Church in Montgomery in the nick of time. TD Doug Strout was just posting the first round's pairings when I arrived. Tom Denton brought me over to meet Stuart Rachels—at last, I was greeting the legend himself, after all these years! But there was hardly time for pleasantries: the tournament had begun.

Of course, I knew I would probably have to win my first three or four games in a row to earn the right to play Stuart. (But hey, no pressure...) My first two games were relatively straightforward; game three versus the tricky Brent Inman was a bit sketchier, but I pulled out a win when Brent got a little too far behind on the clock.

Then it happened: Doug Strout held up the pairing chart and said to me, "Is this what you came here for?" I had been paired with Stuart Rachels! I couldn't believe it: I had waited over twenty years for this moment—a moment that I had truly thought would never come. Yet here we were.

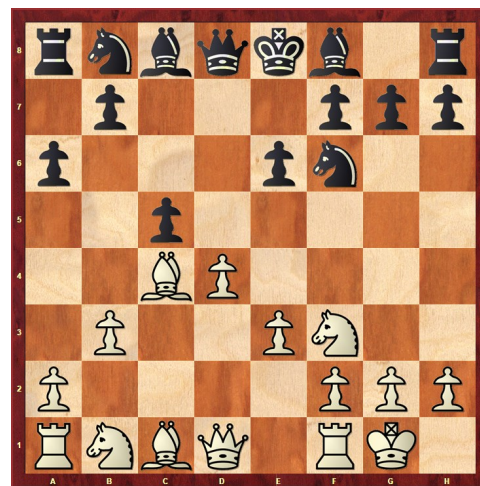
This may sound bizarre, but most of my preparation for the tournament had been geared towards *reaching* this game with Stuart. Now that I was there, my copy of *the Best I Saw in Chess* was duly autographed, and the clock was started, what would I do to try to *win* the game? To be honest, for perhaps the first time in my chess career, I really didn't care if I lost;

it would be a huge honor just to be able to say I had played a tournament game with Stuart Rachels. Still, if he played his usual Queen's Gambit Accepted like he did against the "big boys" at the U.S. Championship, then I had a pet line I wanted to try against him.

Since this was a blitz game, I couldn't write the whole thing down, but I can recall the first few moves and give a general sense of what happened:

Scott Varagona—IM Stuart Rachels
2021 AL Blitz Chess Ch. (Round 4)
Montgomery, AL; June 5, 2021

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 e6
5.Bxc4 c5 6.0-0 a6 7.b3.**



This quiet line is my favorite weapon against the QGA. The main point is a positional trap: Black is tempted to play 7...b5?! as in the usual

QGA lines, but here it is slightly suspect. Why? White can later play a4 and provoke Black into either taking on a4—which would reveal a vulnerable pawn on a6 after Rxa4—or pushing to b4. In both cases, Black will be left with weak squares on the queenside, and White will get the c4 square for a knight. In all my previous games with this line, Black dutifully fell for the trap and I went on to win.

After a few seconds of thought, Stu avoided 7...b5 and played 7...Nc6 instead. In fact, he never played ...b5 for the rest of the game. I soon realized that I didn't know the best plan for White if Black dodged the positional trap I mentioned. (Stuart thought White should try f2-f3 at some point.) At any rate, I began to flounder, my pieces' coordination became confused, and I was outplayed. I never even got the slightest chance for a blitz time pressure "swindle." Although I was ahead on the clock early on, in the end, I was the one who lost on time in a dead lost position. Gosh, I guess he is an IM for a reason. We chatted about the opening after the game; Stu made the point that when White plays this way, "Black can never win." I replied: "Well, *you* won!"

I was too starstruck and stressed to play my best in that game, but I am under no delusions: he probably would have beaten me regardless. Stuart was,

and is, a far more talented player than I am. Stuart became a National Master at age 11; I didn't get there until I was 28. That fact alone speaks volumes about the difference in our innate chess skill. But it was interesting for me to see the difference between us manifest itself on the board.

In the end, Stuart won all five of his games to sweep the 2021 Alabama Blitz Championship. He had won the Quick Championship earlier that day (with 4.5/5) as well. It was just like back in the 1980s, when the *Antics* used to say, "Rachels wins again!" For my part, it really was a dream come true: I finally got to face *the* Alabama chess legend in a tournament game.

P.S.: When Stu defeated me, the onlookers burst into thunderous applause. As I thought: it seems, in Alabama chess, Stu is universally beloved. (Or am I just universally despised?...) ■

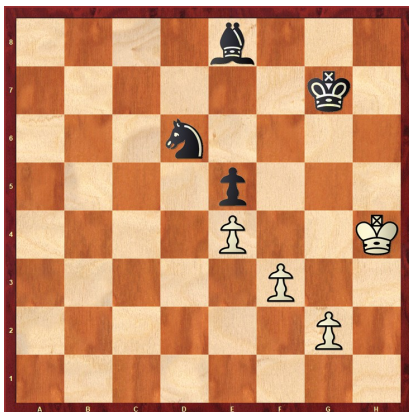
The KNB Endgame

By Doug Strout

What do you think of the king-knight-bishop versus king ending? It's both a theoretical winner and, in my opinion, a theoretical pain in the neck. I'll start by confessing that I am not proficient in the technique of winning this ending. On the bright side, in fifteen years of USCF-rated over-the-board play, I've never had cause to need the technique.

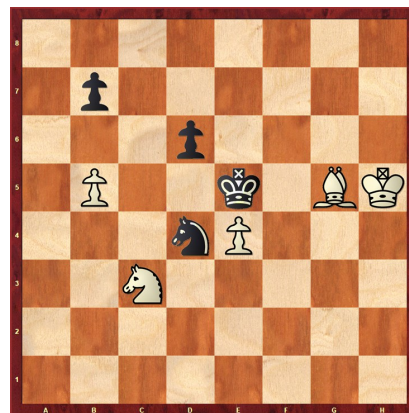
It has come to mind because players at Evangel Chess Club have been both discussing the execution of the technique and debating the real utility of it in games. My thought has been that, if I am approaching an endgame up two pawns, I could sacrifice one of the pieces to grab more pawns and move to a more easily won ending.

Then this happened to me in a recent daily game on chess.com (I'm on move playing black):



In an attempt to avoid the KNB ending, I played **1...Nxe4**. After that, the game finished like this: **2.fxe4 Kf6 3.Kg4 Bc6 4.Kf3 Kg5 5.g3 Bb7 6.Ke3 Kg4** White resigns (0-1). This is an example of how I would approach the KNB ending: see it coming, and avoid it if possible.

My views on the KNB ending are also influenced by this story from the 2015 Texas State Championship. I was playing an 1800-rated opponent, and I was losing (I'm on move playing black):



A. Ganesh – D. Strout, 2015.

I was thinking I was beaten, so I launched this sequence: **1...Nxb5 2.Nxb5 Kxe4 3.Nxd6+ Ke5 4.Nxb7 Ke4**. At that point, I put a little number "1" on my scoresheet as the beginning of the 50-move count, since we have

liquidated down to a KNB ending for my opponent. I was acknowledging defeat but trying to make it as painful as possible for my opponent. As it turns out, my opponent was not well-versed in the technique and spent the next fifty moves committing just enough inaccuracies to give my king room to roam. The final result was a ½ point for each of us.

I've always figured that, if I were to make an intensive study on a single technique, that I would spend the time on something other than the KNB ending. What do you say? Is working out the KNB ending worth the effort?

Editor's note: in Doug's first example, after 1...Nxe4, if White plays the routine 2.fxe4?

then White has no hope, since White's king has no way to approach and capture Black's last remaining pawn. However, after 1...Nxe4, White can play the much more tenacious 2.f4! exf4 3.Kg4, which will force the game into the dreaded K+N+B vs. K ending.

Like Doug, I have never had to win the notorious ending in my 23-year chess career. In the excellent book Silman's Complete Endgame Course, Jeremy Silman doesn't even cover this ending at all because it is so rare. Seirawan does cover it in Winning Chess Endings, however. At the very least, we should all remember Seirawan's key principles to win: you must escort the enemy king to a corner square that your bishop can attack, and you must use your bishop and knight to create a "wall" to stop the enemy king from escaping to one of the "safe" corners. ■

The *Antics* Preservation Project: An Update

By NM Scott Varagona

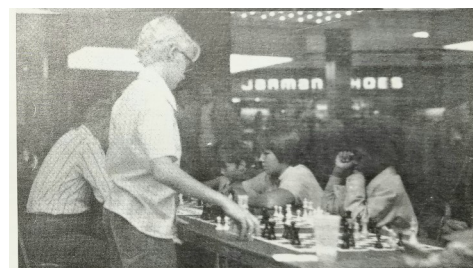
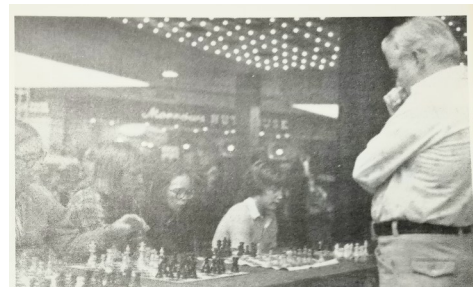
Just when I think we have all the old *Antics* that we are ever going to find, more of them suddenly come out of the woodwork! Great news: **Gerald Squires** has generously digitized eight *Antics* issues that had been missing. These issues are **April(?)**, **June**, **August**, & **November of 1976**, **January(?)** & **August of 1977**, **January 1979**, and **March 1989**. (The question marks are there because of publication dates being missing from the *Antics* themselves.)

As usual, I have removed personally identifiable information from these classic *Antics* and posted them in the archive. My “Summary of Contents” document has been updated as well. Eventually, we would like to see these *Antics* incorporated into the “Magazine” page of the new ACF website, but for now, they can be publicly accessed in this Google drive:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1F0JUoudhcz3Fx-iC3CRylmyE14162jCw>

I hope those with an interest in Alabama chess history will enjoy these newly rediscovered *Antics*. For now, let me just mention a few highlights that caught my eye:

- In **April(?) 1976**, there is a report on the 4th Queen of Hearts—which had an unbelievable turnout of 111 players. (Was this just an anomaly, or could this be the effect of the “Bobby Fischer Boom” in the ‘70s?) There is also a report on the Huntsville City Championship and the very first Space City Open.
- Various scholastics reports and E. L. Fesperman’s brief but valuable remarks about Alabama chess history can be found in the **June 1976** issue.
- **November 1976** includes reports on the



Above: Jack Gwin, the many-time Birmingham City Champion, at a National Chess Day Event. Does anybody know which Birmingham mall this was?...
Below: young Kyle Therrell. (*Antics* Jan. 1977, p. 11.)

Alabama Open (won by Steve Hudson) and the Birmingham City Championship (won by Jack Gwin).

- National Chess Day reports from around the state were featured in the **January (?) 1977** issue. There is also a report on the Montgomery Championship with a short biography of the legendary Tom Nard.
- Various tournaments, including the Vulcan Open and Alabama High School Championship, are discussed in **August 1977**. Also, Ken Goodman writes about a rudimentary chess program he developed as a high school student. (Ah, the days when computers could actually be beaten...)
- The final page of the **March 1989** issue has a Top 50 Alabama ratings list for 1988. Quite a few familiar names are there: see below. Remarkably, several of these players are *still* in Alabama's Top 50 list now; check page 3 of this Spring 2021 *Antics*. (Brent Inman even occupies the exact same spot!)

As always, if you have old issues of the *Antics* that you would be willing to let us digitize (or even digitize yourself), please let us know. We are currently pursuing yet another lead to find even more lost *Antics*, so stay tuned... ■

1988 ALABAMA CHESS - TOP 50

1. Stuart Rachels	2520	26. Richard H. Capp	1953
2. Charles Meidinger	2264	James T. Charles	1953
3. Dana A. Therrell	2216	28. John Daugherty	1950
4. Richard G. Price	2197	29. Alan Todd	1948
5. Bill Melvin	2163	30. Mark E. Zarembo	1940
6. Mark M.G. Walton	2153	31. Charles R. Downs	1934
7. Brent H. Inman	2145	32. Eddie C. Kemp	1925
8. Gerald A. Larson	2123	33. William A. McCray	1921
9. Tom J. Denton	2118	34. James H. Swinney	1920
10. Ronnie Nettles	2109	35. John J. Schuller	1919
11. Joseph Jurjevich	2107	36. Mercon A. Weeks	1911
12. Otis L. Daniel	2099	37. William C. Bomar	1902
13. Edwin Battistella	2091	38. Walter Schaetzle	1890
14. David L. Kittinger	2088	39. John Schweinsberg	1887
15. Jere E. Roland	2069	40. Chuck E. Singleton	1884
16. Robert F. Pruitt	2050	41. Charles H. Anthony	1880
17. Cpt. Anthony Crawley	2045	42. Osman F. Guner	1879
18. Ben L. Sides	2042	43. Kenneth W. Goodman	1876
19. David O. Martin	2040	44. Daniel I. Miller	1873
20. Larry Basenspiller	2035	45. James R. Gipson	1871
21. Alan J. Crist	2030	46. Dmatri Keselman	1868
22. George Wm. Holton	2008	47. Russell Freeman	1857
23. Frank E. Johnson	1993	48. Michael D. Lawson	1853
24. Jeffrey Rhinesmith	1970	49. James Rachels	1838
25. Jack P. Gwin	1963	50. John E. Carver	1828

Ratings from the 1988 USCF Annual Rating List - January 1989

ALABAMA
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Alabama Chess
Federation

Upcoming Tournaments

See www.alabamachess.org for updates on these and other events.

July 10	Birmingham Classic	Birmingham, AL
July 17	AL Online Grand Prix Invitational Ch.	chess.com
July 24	Alabama Dual-Rated State Ch.	Montgomery, AL
August 7	Chris Bond Memorial	Montgomery, AL

The **Alabama Chess Federation** (ACF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and the United States Chess Federation affiliate for the state of Alabama. Our goal is to promote chess in this area for the benefit of all Alabama players. Toward that end, we provide advertising and other assistance for rated tournaments, as well as support for scholastic chess programs around the state.

To submit articles, pictures and games to the *Antics*, email the *Antics* editor at

Alabama.Chess.Editor@gmail.com

Games in .pgn format are strongly preferred.

Please contact
jonathan.rasberry@alabamachess.org
if you are interested in helping with the Alabama Chess Federation.

All chess diagrams in this issue were produced using *Fritz*, a program by *ChessBase*.

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