

The Chess Column

Sacramento's Bid For Big Time

By R. E. Fauber with Frank J. Garosi
Special to The Bee

Sacramento's bid for big-time chess went glimmering last weekend when the Camellia Classic attracted only 27 players. It was not that outsiders did not come. Chico, alone, contributed six competitors, but there were only six Sacramentans in the event.

This is a great shame since success breeds success, and successful tournaments attract better competition. George Koltanowski puts it: "Sacramento used to be a strong chess center," and he emphasizes the past tense. If Sacramentans do not support their own tournaments, they will not get the opportunity to develop their skill to the fullest and will miss out on the higher delights in chess.

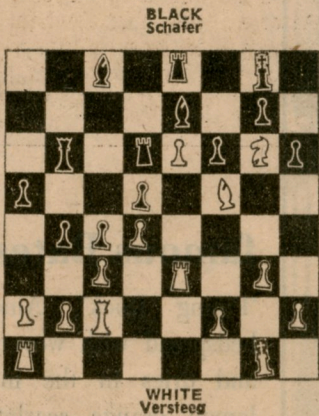
Tournament director Robert Haskell emphasized that it is much cheaper to pay the entry fee and play in Sacramento than it would be to travel elsewhere, pay a lower entry fee but put up in a hotel. As it is, Haskell put to rest the notion that tournament organizers are intent only on making a profit. He paid \$70 in prizes plus the book prizes he distributed to every contestant who finished his schedule. His fixed costs consumed all the rest and more. He lost money for the privilege of working countless hours to organize and direct a tournament.

One complaint we frequently hear about tournaments with big prize funds is that too much of it is offered as an inducement to a few masters, while the lower-rated players contribute the bulk of the prize fund.

Winners Of Tournament

Barry Nelson of Chico captured clear first in the Camellia Classic chess tournament with a 5-1 score. Tied for second and third were Hugh Noland and Mark Buckley with 4½. Buckley was also best B.

Winners of A prizes were Leon Cowen and Erwin Hamm with 4. Second B prize was split between Joe Morton and William Valine, each with 4. Robert Martin, David Tammer, and Louis Schafer were the leading C's with 3, and Mike Gellerman's 4 made him the best D-E/Unrated.



This seems ill-founded. To gain a high rating requires the investment of many hours of study and work. It is only right that a player who has won that rating in honorable combat ought to gain a commensurately higher reward. The fund is also an incentive to lower-rated players to get to work and sharpen their game so they can be serious contenders for high prizes too.

In that way the standard of chess in general progresses.

One of the persistent problems of lower-rated players is finding a way to develop their pieces so they coordinate well in attack and defense. Failure to do this means that you gradually get ground to bits by your more active opponent. Here is an illustration.

Reti Opening Versteeg vs Schafer

1. N-KB3, P-Q4; 2. P-KN3, P-QB4; 3. P-Q4, P-B5.

(This release of tension in the center bodes ill. Black's QB now may have trouble finding anything useful to do.)

4. B-N5, N-Q2.

(Both these moves have drawbacks. White's QB is in mid-air, simply 4. . . . , P-KR3 drives it away. Black for his part should play his N to QB3 so as not further to obstruct the QB.)

5. B-N2, KN-B3; 6. 0-0, P-KR3; 7. B-B4, P-K3; 8. P-B3, B-K2; 9. QN-Q2, 0-0; 10. Q-B2, P-QN4; 11. N-K5, N-R4.

(Simply 11. . . . , B-N2 is better, although Black

stands passively. In this kind of position where the P chains are locked, the N's are more useful than the B's.)

12. P-K3, NXB; 13. KPXN, B-N2.

(White's doubled KBP is not a weakness but a strength because it can be used to apply pressure to the open K-file. Best for Black was 13. . . . , NXN to keep the position as closed as possible. White would still stand better.)

14. N/2-B3, P-N5; 15. P-B5, P-QR4 (slow); 16. KR-K1, NXN; 17. NXN, R-R3; 18. B-R3, B-B1.

(It no longer matters. Black is strategically lost. The passivity of QB and the inability to apply pressure to White's center have sealed his fate. White conducts this phase of the game with thematic precision.)

19. R-K3, P-B3?; 20. N-N6, R-K1, 21. KBXP, R-Q3; 22. B-B5, Q-N3.

(See diagram.

(Now White could finish quickly with 23. N-B4 threatening 24. B-R7ch, K-R1; 25. N-N6ch, KXB; 26. N-B8ch, K-N1; 27. Q-R7ch, KXN; 28. Q-R8 mate. If 23. . . . , P-N4; 24. B-R7ch, K-B1; 25. Q-N6.)

23. Q-K2, P-R5; 24. R-K1, P-R6; 25. Q-R5, B-Q1.

(Black is totally helpless.)

26. P-K7, B-B2; 27. N-B8, Q-N4; 28. B-R7ch, K-R1; 29. Q-B7, B-K3; 30. RXB, RXN; 31. PXR/Qch, KXB; 32. QXP mate.