

NM Chess Champions

Chad Schneider

Chad Schneider was one of the best liked players and organizers in recent New Mexico chess. He was one of the four players who tied for first in the 2009 New Mexico Open. But he is best remembered in New Mexico chess circles for the tournaments he ran. Chad organized and ran dozens of tournaments between 2009 and 2012, when he moved to Colorado. His Southern Rocky FIDE Open tournaments in 2011 and 2012 were probably the best tournaments ever run in New Mexico. Chad, come back and organize some more tournaments for us!

This third round victory in the 2009 New Mexico Open Championship over one of the chief contenders was key to Chad Schneider securing a share of the New Mexico Championship. Ben Coraretti as Black establishes a superior position coming out of the opening. Chad has some attacking chances against Ben's castled king on the queenside, but meanwhile his position crumbles in the center and kingside. Ben seems to be cruising toward victory but is hit with a shocker on the last move! This game demonstrates three important lessons for chess (and life): "Nobody ever wins by resigning"; "Persistence pays off"; and "Don't count your chickens until they are hatched."

Schneider, Chad A - Coraretti, Benjamin, 1 - 0
New Mexico Open, Open Section, Round 3
Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2009/10/24

French Defense, Exchange Variation

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. exd5 White is satisfied with a simple symmetrical game. 3... exd5 4. Bd3 Black plays to immediately put White on the defensive, but he does so at the cost of taking away the options of c6 or c5. 4... Nc6

[More common and good enough for equality is to simply continue the symmetry. 4... Bd6 5. Nf3 Nf6 6. O-O O-O 7. Bg5 Bg4 8. Nbd2 Nbd7 9. c3 c6 10. Qc2 Qc7 11. Rfe1 Rfe8]

5. c3 Bd6 6. Ne2 Played to leave f3 open for the queen knight. 6... Qh4!? This looks strong, but inevitably White will play his queen knight to f3 and chase the queen off. 7. Ng3 Nge7 8. Qc2!? White should keep the queen on d1 defending the f3 square at least until he has played his queen knight to f3.

[8. Nd2 Bg4 9. Nf3 Qf6 10. Be2 O-O 11. O-O Due to Black's exposed queen and his blocked c-pawn, White is slightly better]

8... g6 He has the right idea in going for a kingside attack, but...

[8... f5! looks even stronger]

9. Nd2 Bg4 10. Nf3?! The wrecking of his kingside pawn structure following this move "should" have cost White the game. Yes, White gets the bishop pair and some queenside attacking chances, but it isn't enough.

[10. O-O f5 11. f3! Bh3! 12. f4! Bg4=]



10... Bxf3 11. gxf3 O-O-O 12. Bd2 f5 13. O-O-O f4 14. Ne2 Rdf8 15. b4!? White commits himself to the counter attack.

[Trying to hold the kingside just gets him tied in knots. 15. Rdf1 Qh5 16. Ng1]

15... Qxf2 16. Rdf1 Qh4 17. Qa4 Kb8 18. b5 Nd8 19. Qb3!? He wants to bring up his a-pawn to open up the position in front of Black's king, but it takes a lot of time.

[When attacking on opposite wings time is of the essence. With that in mind, 19. c4 dxc4 20. Qxc4 makes more sense]

19... Ne6 20. Kc2 Ng7 21. a4 Ngf5 22. Rb1?! White still pursues the same plan and it is still too slow.

[22. c4 dxc4 23. Qxc4 still looks better since it gives White's pieces immediate activity]

22... Ne3 23. Bxe3 fxe3 24. a5 b6!? This may not be objectively bad, but when faced with a head on attack on your king, it is generally not a good idea to move the pawns in front of it.

[Black was worried about the threat of b6, but he can grab the pawn and still hold his castled position. 24... Rxf3 25. b6 cxb6 26. axb6 a6 27. Qa4 (Not 27. Bxa6? bxa6 28. Qa4 Qe4 29. Kb2 Qd3 30. Qd7 Qb5 31. Qxb5 axb5) 27... Qh3 28. Bxa6 (or 28. Ra1 Qc8 Black is two pawns up and everything holds) 28... bxa6 29. Qxa6 Qd7 30. b7 Nc6 31. Qa8 Kc7 32. Qxh8 Rf8! White's unfortunate queen is trapped. 33. Qxf8 Bxf8 The position is messy, but Black should win]

25. Ra1 Qh5 26. Qb2? This move seems one off, maybe even two off. In sharp positions like this every move has to count. I don't know what this move does either offensively or defensively.

[Granted it is hard to say what White should do here. One possibility is 26. f4 At least it forces Black to exchange his bishop for a knight if he wants to win the f-pawn]

26... Nc8? At least this move has a point - defending the a-pawn.

[But there is no good reason not to simply grab the pawn and continue the attack. 26... Rxf3 27. Kb3 Rhf8 White has nothing to show for the two pawns]

27. axb6 cxb6 28. c4!? White desperately tries to find a way to get to Black's king.

[He could play to hold the kingside, but it gets him tied in knots again. 28. Ng1 Rf4 29. Kb3 Rh4 30. Qg2 Rf8]

28... Rxf3! Finally! 29. c5 bxc5 30. b6 c4 31. bxa7 Ka8 32. Qb5 Ne7 33. Qa6? There is no doubt this is a mistake, but White has run out of good options. Perhaps Chad's point in making this move was precisely to sucker Ben into the mistake that follows.

[The obvious continuation is best, but, with best play, Black wins anyway. 33. Rab1 cxd3]

34. Kb3 Qf5 35. Ka2 Qc8 36. Rhc1 Bc7 37. Qxd3 Rd8 38. Qa3 (38. Rb8 Bxb8 39. Rxc8 Rxc8 40. axb8=Q Kxb8 White is down two rooks and two pawns for his queen and all he has to show for it is a few checks) 38... Qd7 39. Qa6 Bxh2 40. Rb8 Rxb8 41. axb8=Q Kxb8 42. Rb1 Kc7 43. Rb7 Kd8 44. Rxd7 Kxd7 The rook, bishop and three pawns are certainly worth more than the queen, but White might have some practical chances]

33... Rc8 34. Kb2 Rc6??? This certainly looks strong. White cannot ignore the attack on his queen. However, Black has missed an important point.

[White's queen threatened nothing. There is no reason why Black could not simply continue with his own attack and mop up. 34... cxd3 35. Rhc1 Rff8 36. Rxc8 Rxc8 37. Qxd3 Qf5 Black is a bishop and pawn up and White's attack is spent]



35. Qb7!!! Black resigns. The important point Black missed with his last move is that he removed the last defender for his back rank. [...]

[White has a forced mate. 35... Kxb7 36. a8=Q Kb6 (36... Kc7 37. Ra7 Kb6 38. Qb7#) 37. Qa7 Kb5 38. Qa5#]

[1:0]

Matt Grinberg, 9/30/2016