

# New Mexico Chess Champions

## Ronald Kensek

Ronald Kensek won the New Mexico Championship in 1993 and finished second behind Jesse Kraai in 2004. His high over the board rating was 2361 in 1994. He has a correspondence rating of 2797!

Though he has not been very active playing in tournaments in recent years, he has been active in promoting scholastic chess and is The Albuquerque Schools Chess League Director.

The following is a very impressive positional game against GM Sergey Ivanov. Coming out of the opening Ivanov seems intent on developing an attack against Kensek's king, when he should have been content to build a strong position and wait for an opportunity. Kensek, on the other hand is content to play solid moves and take advantage of the positional weakness of Ivanov's position. The game eventually reaches a two rook endgame with Kensek a pawn up. It likely would have been drawn with best play, but Ivanov shoots himself in the foot and allows Kensek a nice mate.

**Ivanov, Sergey - Kensek, Ronald, 0-1**  
**Michigan Open Championship**  
**Ann Arbor Michigan, 1983**

**Sicilian Defense, Najdorf Variation**

**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6** The dreaded Najdorf! At my level my experience is that both players play book for 10 or 12 moves, then both players start blundering. You have to be a Grandmaster to play this. Ivanov is a Grandmaster; Kensek plays like a grandmaster in this game. **6. Be2** One of the less aggressive lines against the Najdorf.

[The following are all more aggressive: 6. Bg5;

6. Bc4;

6. f4]

**6... e6**

[Black in turn could play more aggressively with 6... e5 7. Nb3 Be7 8. O-O O-O=]

**7. Be3 Be7 8. f4 Qc7 9. O-O Nc6 10. Qe1 Bd7 11. Qg3 O-O** Up to here, this is all normal stuff. White has a small edge due to his space advantage.



**12. Nxc6!?** But this is unusual. White trades off his centralized knight and at the same time activates Black's queen bishop. Why?

[Former World Champion, Anatoly Karpov, does a number on GM Ljubomir Ljubojevic. 12. Kh1 Kh8 13. Bf3 Rac8 14. Rad1 b5 15. a3 Nxd4 16. Bxd4 Bc6 17. Rd3 Qb7 18. b4 Rg8 19. e5 Ne4 20. Nxe4 Bxe4 21. c3 Bxf3 22. Rdx3 Qe4 23. Re3 Qd5 24. Qh3 Rc4 25. f5 Bg5 26. Rg3 Bh6 27. fxe6 fxe6 28. exd6 Qxd6 29. Qh5 Rxd4 30. cxd4 Qxd4 31. Rgf3 Qd6 32. Rf7 Be3 33. Qf3 Bd4 34. Rf8 Bf6 35. Rxg8 Kxg8 36. Rd1 Qb6 37. Qa8 Kf7 38. Rd7 Kg6 39. Qe4 Kh6 40. Rd3 Qf2 41. Rh3 Kg5 42. Rg3 Kh6 43. Rh3 Kg5 44. Rf3 Qd2 45. h4 Kh6 46. Qxe6 1-0, Karpov Anatoly (RUS) 2780 - Ljubojevic, Ljubomir (SRB) 2580 , Buenos Aires 1994 Tournament (thematic);

Ljubojevic in turn does a number on GM Ulf Andersson. 12. e5 dxe5 13. fxe5 Nxe5 14. Bf4 Bd6 15. Rad1 Qb8 16. Rd3 Ne8 17. Ne4 Bc7 18. Rc3 Nc6 19. Bxc7 Nxd4 20. Bd3 Qa7 21. Nc5 Bb5 22. Be5 Nc6 23. Bxh7 Kxh7 24. Rf4 f6 25. Rh4 Kg8 26. Qh3 Nd8 27. Bd4 b6 28. Nxe6 Nxe6 29. Qxe6 Qf7 30. Qe4 g5 31. Rh6 Ra7 32. Rch3 Qg7 33. Rg6 Raf7 34. c4 1-0, Ljubojevic Ljubomir (SRB) 2620 - Andersson Ulf (SWE) 2585 , Wijk aan Zee 1976 It]

**12... Bxc6 13. e5!?** Apparently White's previous move was motivated by a desire to get in this move, but as is demonstrated by the game above, he could have played e5 immediately.

[Completing his development before trying anything active looks better. 13. Bd4 b5 14. a3 Rfd8 15. Bd3 Qb7 16. Rae1]

**13... dxe5 14. fxe5 Ne4 15. Nxe4 Bxe4 16. Bd3** White is hoping for a kingside attack, but Black's position is too solid. Meanwhile the isolated e-pawn is weak. **16... Bg6 17. Bxg6 hxg6 18. Bg5?** White is so intent on his attack against his lower rated opponent, he is willing to give up a pawn.

[He should be thinking in terms of a draw. Better is 18. c3 Rad8 19. Bd4 Bc5 20. Qf2 Black is better due to the weak e-pawn]

**18... Rad8?!** But Black is scared off by his illustrious opponent.

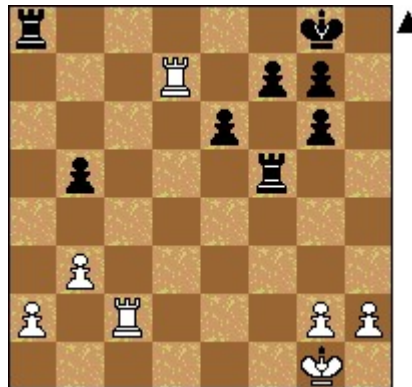
[After 18... Bxg5 19. Qxg5 Qb6 20. Kh1 Qxb2 21. Rab1 Qxc2 22. Rxb7 Rab8 White has nothing for the pawn]

**19. Bxe7 Qxe7 20. Qe3 Rd5 21. c4!?** Again, Ivanov would rather give up a pawn than play defensively.

[He holds the pawn with 21. Rad1 Rfd8 22. Rxd5 Rxd5 23. c3 Qc7 24. Re1 but White is tied to the defense of the e-pawn and Black's pieces are more active]

**21... Qc5!** This time Kensek goes for the pawn. **22. Qxc5 Rxc5 23. b3 Rxe5 24. Rad1** This was

the point of White's 21st move - he controls the open file and gets his rook to the seventh rank. But is it enough for the pawn? 24... b5 25. cxb5 axb5 26. Rd7 Rf5 27. Rc1 Ra8 28. Rc2



28... Kh7! A very sly move; he takes a defender off of f7, inviting White to double his rooks on seventh. The trouble is White's own king will be vulnerable. 29. Rb7 f6 30. g4 Rd5 31. Kg2 Rad8 32. Rcc7?! White finally takes the bait. Since this allows Black a perpetual check, apparently the GM is no longer playing for a win. But I am sure he was still hoping the master would do something stupid.

[He still has good drawing chances after 32. h4 Kh6 33. Re2 e5 34. Kf3]

32... Rd2 33. Kf3 R8d3



34. Kf4?? Disaster! Black now has a forced mate.

[Though down a pawn, White would still have drawing chances after 34. Ke4 (By keeping one of the rooks under attack, he doesn't allow Black to go for mate) 34... f5 35. Kf4 Rd4 36. Kf3 Rxd3 37. Rxd3 Kh6 38. Rge7]

34... Rf2!! He allows the capture on g7!

[Ivanov no doubt thought that to prevent the capture on g7, Kensek would play 34... Rd4 35. Kf3 R4d3 36. Kf4 Rd4 37. Kf3 R4d3 Draw]

35. Ke4 Rff3! 36. Rxd3 Kh6 37. h4 "Maybe he will allow me to mate." 37... Rfe3 "Sorry." Black mates on the next move. White resigned. [0:1]

# New Mexico Chess Champions

## Ronald Kensek

Yes, you have already seen an article on Ronald Kensek last month. However, Ron recently wrote to me and pointed out that the Chess Assistant database I am using misidentified his opponent in this game. In fact Ronald's opponent was Expert Simeon Ivanov, not Grandmaster Sergei Ivanov. So I have corrected that below and edited the comments accordingly. Ronald also kindly sent some comments on his development as a player.

"I grew up in Buffalo, New York. My oldest brother taught me to play by reading (most of) the rules from a box. I could beat friends of my older brothers, so I thought I was pretty good. In the summer between 8th and 9th grade, chess was in the news and I joined a local public chess club. I lost every game I played. Near the end of the evening, I even found a little kid figuring I needed to start somewhere. As I said, I lost every game I played. I couldn't wait to go back (I could imagine different people reacting differently).

"I stuck to scholastic events (which were unrated in those days) since state fees + USCF fees + entry fees seemed enormous. But the New York State Championships were held in Buffalo (almost unheard of) the next year, so how could I not play? I won all my games in the D-E-Unrated section and started with a 1648 rating.

"It was generally a supportive community. I never hired a chess coach. We ran our chess club during high school (finding a teacher to agree to be sponsor). The players either inspired or pushed each other forward. I can easily think of 6 other native Buffalonians from that period who went on to earn their master certificate."

Ronald Kensek

Here is Ronald's explanation for his high postal rating of 2797.

"Yes, I have a silly high postal rating— though I don't know why it doesn't show up as provisional as it is based on something like three or four games. Oren Stevens arranged two New Mexico vs Missouri matches many years ago. Since postal games can take a year or more to finish, they are rated as they are finished (one game at a time, instead of an average over an event) which creates a greater possibility of outliers. My first game to finish in my first match was against Montgomery Smith who at the time had a postal rating of 2300+. The algorithm was to add 400 points to your opponent's rating (to determine an unrated's first rating) so, presto, I received a 2700+ postal rating. By the way, the same thing had happened to Montgomery. He had had an enormous rating, and I caught him on his way down when we happened to meet. I did manage victories against one long-time postal chess master (Richard Verber? – I would need to check) and an over the board master, David Heurung. In the latter I didn't like my game out of the opening – and I noticed I was having difficulty keeping that game out of my head. Having a job

where thinking is important, I knew I could not continue in this form of chess though the educational opportunities were fantastic. I did finish the game (and managed to pull it out) but my exposure to postal chess was quite brief."

Ronald Kensek

Ronald Kensek won the New Mexico Championship in 1993 and finished second behind Jesse Kraai in 2004. His high over the board rating was 2361 in 1994.

Though he has not been very active playing in tournaments in recent years, he has been active in promoting scholastic chess and is The Albuquerque Schools Chess League Director.

The following is a very impressive positional game against Expert Simeon Ivanov. Coming out of the opening Ivanov seems intent on developing an attack against Kensek's king, when he should have been content to build a strong position and wait for an opportunity. Kensek, on the other hand is content to play solid moves and take advantage of the positional weakness of Ivanov's position. The game eventually reaches a two rook endgame with Kensek a pawn up. It likely would have been drawn with best play, but Ivanov shoots himself in the foot and allows Kensek a nice mate.

**Ivanov, Simeon - Kensek, Ronald, 0-1**  
**Michigan Open Championship**  
**Ann Arbor Michigan, 1983**

**Sicilian Defense, Najdorf Variation**

**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6** The dreaded Najdorf! At my level, my experience is that both players play book for 10 or 12 moves, then both players start blundering. You have to be a Grandmaster to play this. Kensek plays like a grandmaster in this game. **6. Be2** One of the less aggressive lines against the Najdorf.

[The following are all more aggressive: 6. Bg5;  
6. Bc4;  
6. f4]

**6... e6**

[Black in turn could play more aggressively with 6... e5 7. Nb3 Be7 8. O-O O-O=]

**7. Be3 Be7 8. f4 Qc7 9. O-O Nc6 10. Qe1 Bd7 11. Qg3 O-O** Up to here, this is all normal stuff. White has a small edge due to his space advantage.



**12. Nxc6!?** But this is unusual. White trades off his centralized knight and at the same time activates Black's queen bishop. Why?

[Former World Champion, Anatoly Karpov, does a number on GM Ljubomir Ljubojevic. 12. Kh1 Kh8 13. Bf3 Rac8 14. Rad1 b5 15. a3 Nxd4 16. Bxd4 Bc6 17. Rd3 Qb7 18. b4 Rg8 19. e5 Ne4 20. Nxe4 Bxe4 21. c3 Bxf3 22. Rdx3 Qe4 23. Re3 Qd5 24. Qh3 Rc4 25. f5 Bg5 26. Rg3 Bh6 27. fxe6 fxe6 28. exd6 Qxd6 29. Qh5 Rxd4 30. cxd4 Qxd4 31. Rgf3 Qd6 32. Rf7 Be3 33. Qf3 Bd4 34. Rf8 Bf6 35. Rxg8 Kxg8 36. Rd1 Qb6 37. Qa8 Kf7 38. Rd7 Kg6 39. Qe4 Kh6 40. Rd3 Qf2 41. Rh3 Kg5 42. Rg3 Kh6 43. Rh3 Kg5 44. Rf3 Qd2 45. h4 Kh6 46. Qxe6 1-0, Karpov Anatoly (RUS) 2780 - Ljubojevic Ljubomir (SRB) 2580 , Buenos Aires 1994 Tournament (thematic);

Ljubojevic in turn does a number on GM Ulf Andersson. 12. e5 dxe5 13. fxe5 Nxe5 14. Bf4 Bd6 15. Rad1 Qb8 16. Rd3 Ne8 17. Ne4 Bc7 18. Rc3 Nc6 19. Bxc7 Nxd4 20. Bd3 Qa7 21. Nc5 Bb5 22. Be5 Nc6 23. Bxh7 Kxh7 24. Rf4 f6 25. Rh4 Kg8 26. Qh3 Nd8 27. Bd4 b6 28. Nxe6 Nxe6 29. Qxe6 Qf7 30. Qe4 g5 31. Rh6 Ra7 32. Rch3 Qg7 33. Rg6 Raf7 34. c4 1-0, Ljubojevic Ljubomir (SRB) 2620 - Andersson Ulf (SWE) 2585 , Wijk aan Zee 1976 It]

**12... Bxc6 13. e5!?** Apparently White's previous move was motivated by a desire to get in this move, but as is demonstrated by the game above, he could have played e5 immediately.

[Completing his development before trying anything active looks better. 13. Bd4 b5 14. a3 Rfd8 15. Bd3 Qb7 16. Rae1]

**13... dxe5 14. fxe5 Ne4 15. Nxe4 Bxe4 16. Bd3** White is hoping for a kingside attack, but Black's position is too solid. Meanwhile the isolated e-pawn is weak. **16... Bg6 17. Bxg6 hxg6 18. Bg5?** White is so intent on his attack that he is willing to give up a pawn.

[He should be thinking in terms of a draw. Better is 18. c3 Rad8 19. Bd4 Bc5 20. Qf2 Black is better due to the weak e-pawn]

**18... Rad8?!** But Black is scared off.

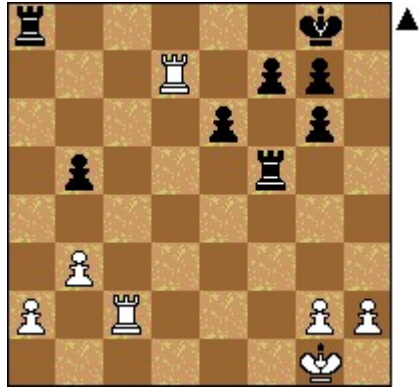
[After 18... Bxg5 19. Qxg5 Qb6 20. Kh1 Qxb2 21. Rab1 Qxc2 22. Rxb7 Rab8 White has nothing for the pawn]

**19. Bxe7 Qxe7 20. Qe3 Rd5 21. c4!?** Again, Ivanov would rather give up a pawn than play defensively.

[He holds the pawn with 21. Rad1 Rfd8 22. Rxd5 Rxd5 23. c3 Qc7 24. Re1 but White is tied to the defense of the e-pawn and Black's pieces are more active]

**21... Qc5!** This time Kensek goes for the pawn. **22. Qxc5 Rxc5 23. b3 Rxe5 24. Rad1** This was the point of White's 21st move - he controls the open file and gets his rook to the seventh rank.

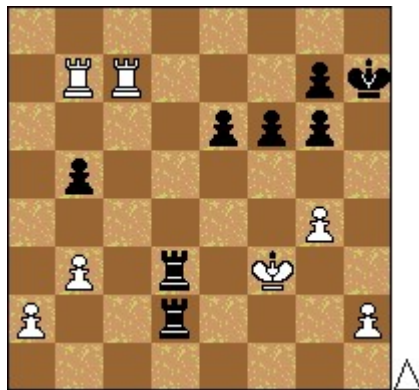
But is it enough for the pawn? 24... b5 25. cxb5 axb5 26. Rd7 Rf5 27. Rc1 Ra8 28. Rc2



28... Kh7! A very sly move; he takes a defender off of f7, inviting White to double his rooks on seventh. The trouble is White's own king will be vulnerable. 29. Rb7 f6 30. g4 Rd5 31. Kg2 Rad8 32. Rcc7?! White finally takes the bait. Since this allows Black a perpetual check, apparently he is no longer playing for a win.

[He still has good drawing chances after 32. h4 Kh6 33. Re2 e5 34. Kf3]

32... Rd2 33. Kf3 R8d3



34. Kf4?? Disaster! Black now has a forced mate.

[Though down a pawn, White would still have drawing chances after 34. Ke4 (By keeping one of the rooks under attack, he doesn't allow Black to go for mate) 34... f5 35. Kf4 Rd4 36. Kf3 Rxd4 37. Rxd4 Kh6 38. Rge7]

34... Rf2!! He allows the capture on g7!

[Ivanov no doubt thought that, to prevent the capture on g7, Kensek would play 34... Rd4 35. Kf3 R4d3 36. Kf4 Rd4 37. Kf3 R4d3 Draw]

35. Ke4 Rff3! 36. Rxd7 Kh6 37. h4 "Maybe he will allow me to mate." 37... Rfe3 "Sorry." Black mates on the next move. White resigned. [0:1]