

NM Chess Champions

Max Burkett

Max Burkett won the New Mexico Chess Championship in 1960, 1961 and 1963. He has not played in over the board tournaments for at least 20 years. This game is from an internet tournament played in 2001. The tournament was organized by the Internet Email Chess Group (IECG), which apparently does not exist anymore.

Eric Benatar as Black plays the Sicilian Defense. Max counters with the Sozin Variation, a favorite of Bobby Fischer and sometimes called the Fischer Variation. Both sides complete their development by castling at move 10. Max launches a kingside attack and Eric counters with a queenside attack, typical of open Sicilian lines.

At move 15 Eric attacks one of Max's knights with a pawn. Instead of defending Max puts his other knight en prise! With brilliant play Max forces the Black king into the open. With his position shattered and his king on the run, Eric resigns at move 33.

Max Burkett – Eric Benatar, 1:0
IECG Tournament
Internet, 2001

Sicilian Defense, Sozin Variation

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 d6 6. Bc4 The Sozin Variation. 6... e6 7. Bb3 Be7 8. Be3 a6 9. Qe2

[Or White can play to get his queen to f3. 9. f4 O-O 10. Qf3 Nxd4 11. Bxd4 b5 12. O-O-O (12. e5?! dxe5! Make note, Jake! 13. Qxa8? (Better is 13. Bxe5 Ra7 14. O-O Rd7 15. Rad1 Qb6 16. Kh1 Rfd8 With the better center and his rooks doubled on the d-file, Black is better) 13... Qxd4 14. Qf3 exf4 15. Rd1 Qe5 Black has two pawns, the better center and the bishop pair for the exchange - way more than enough) 12... Bb7 13. Rhe1 White has more space and active pieces, but Black has the better center and a solid position]

9... Qc7 10. O-O-O O-O 11. Rhg1 White signals the start of his kingside attack. 11... Na5 Whilst Black goes for the queenside. 12. g4 b5 13. g5 Nxb3 14. axb3 Nd7 15. Qh5?! This is premature because the queen can be immediately chased away.

[GM John Nunn demonstrates the correct way to continue the attack. 15. f4 b4 16. Nf5 Nc5 17. Nxe7 Qxe7 18. e5 d5 19. Qf2 Nd7 20. Na4 a5 21. Nb6 Nxb6 22. Bxb6 Re8 23. Bc5 Qc7 24. Rd3 Bb7 25. Bd6 Qc6 26. Rh3 Rec8 27. f5 d4 28. fxe6 fxe6 29. g6 hxg6 30. Rf1 Qxc2 31. Qxc2 Rxc2 32. Kxc2 Bg2 33. Rhf3 1-0, Nunn John D M (ENG) 2620 - Arakhamia-Grant Ketevan (SCO) 2430, Wigan (England) 1997]

15... b4?! Or not. Generally it is better to pursue your own attack than to waste time defending against the opponent's attack. This position is an exception.

[15... g6! 16. Qh6 Re8 17. Rg3 Bf8 18. Qh4 Bg7 19. Rh3 Nf8 White's attack is stymied]

16. Nf5! What do you do when you have a knight en prise? You put the other en prise, of course! **16... Ne5?** You should always be cautious about taking a piece your opponent has left hanging. But sometimes you have to because the alternatives are worse.

[16... exf5 17. Nd5 Qd8 18. exf5 Bb7 19. f6 Bxd5 20. Rxd5 Nxf6 21. gxf6 Bxf6 22. Qg4 White has the initiative, but is it enough for a pawn?]

17. Rg3! He plays to get all of his pieces into the attack.

[The knight is better than the bishop. There is no good reason to trade it off. 17. Nxe7 Qxe7 18. Na4 Bb7=]

17... exf5 Better late than never. **18. Nd5 Qd8 19. Bb6 Qe8**

20. Nf6! White forces the position open. **20... Bxf6 21. gxf6 Ng6 22. Rh3 h6 23. fxe4**

[Taking the pawn is worse. 23... Kxg7 24. Qxh6 Kf6 25. Rxd6 Qe6 (25... Ke5 26. Rhd3 Be6 27. Qg7 Kf4 28. Bc7 fxe4 29. R6d5 Kg4 30. Rg3 Kh4 31. Qh7#; 25... Ke7 26. Bc5 Bd7 27. Qg5 f6 28. Rxf6 Kd8 29. Rxf8 Kc7 30. Rxe8 White wins) 26. Rxe6 White wins]

24. Rh4 Kxg7? The pawn still cannot be taken.

[The best try is 24... Qe5 25. Qxe5 dxe5 26. gxf8=Q Kxf8 27. Rxe4 White is an exchange up;

24... Nxe4? 25. Qxh6 f6 (25... Ng6 26. Bd4 Threatening 27. Qh8+! 26... f6 27. gxf8=Q Qxf8 28. Qxg6 Qg7 29. Qe8 Kh7 30. Qxe4 Bf5 31. Qxa8 White wins) 26. gxf8=Q Qxf8 27. Rg1 Kf7 28. Qh7 Ke8 29. Qxe4 Qe7 (29... Kf7 30. Qh7 Ke8 31. Re1 Be6 32. Rxe6 Qe7 33. Qxe7#; 29... Kd7 30. Qh7 Qe7 (30... Kc6 31. Qc7 Kd5 32. Qc4 Ke5 33. Bd4 Kf4 34. Be3 Ke5 35. f4 Kf5 36. Qd5#) 31. Rg7 Qxg7 32. Qxg7 White wins) 30. Rg8 Kd7 31. Rd8 Qxd8 32. Bxd8 Kxd8 33. Qxa8 White wins]

25. Qxh6 It is now a death march. **25... Kf6 26. Rxd6 Be6 27. Rf4 Ke7 28. Bc5 Qc8 29. Qg5 Ke8 30. Rxe4 Rg8 31. Rdx6!** fxe6 **32. Qf6 Qxc5 33. Qxe6** Black resigns. There is no viable defense. [...]

[33... Ne7 34. Qxg8 Kd7 35. Qxa8 White wins;

33... Qe7 34. Qxg8 Nf8 35. Rxe7 White wins;

33... Kd8 34. Qxg8 Nf8 35. Rf4 Kc7

a) 35... Rc8 36. Rxf8 Kd7 37. Rf7 Kd6 38. Qg6 Kd5 39. Rf5 Kd4 40. Qg4#;

b) 35... Kd7 36. Qf7 Kd6 37. Rf6 Ke5 38. Rf5 White wins;

c) 35... Ke7 36. Qf7 Kd8 37. Qxf8 Qxf8 38. Rxf8 Ke7 39. Rxa8 White wins;

d) 35... Ra7 36. Rxf8 Qxf8 (36... Kd7 37. Rf7 Kc6 38. Qc8 Kb5 39. Qxc5 Kxc5 40. Rxa7 White wins; 36... Ke7 37. Rf7 Kd6 38. Qg6 Ke5 39. Rf5 Ke4 40. Qg4#) 37. Qxf8 White wins;

36. Rc4 Kb6 37. Rxc5 White wins;

33... Kf8 34. Qf6#]

[1:0]

Matt Grinberg, 3/4/2016