

Alberta Chess Report



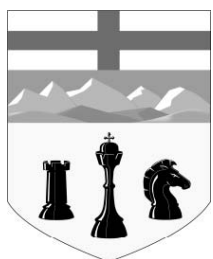
Publication of the Alberta Chess Association ♦ Jan 2018

New Titles, New Champions



Inside: The Southern Alberta Open, Alberta Open, WBX Team Championship, Alberta Junior Championship, Edmonton Fall Sectional, and Banff Open. Photos: (Upper left) Gary Ng, winner of the Fall Sectional and co-winner of the Alberta Open; (bottom left) Omid Malek, winner of the Southern Alberta Open; (top right) Ian Zhao, Alberta junior champion, and a peek at the playing venue at Banff. Photos by Steve Sklenka and Bhavik Dave.

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REPORT

The Alberta Chess Report is a quarterly publication. Submissions are due on the 10th of the month following the quarter: January 10th, April 10th, July 10th, & October 10th. Submissions can include photos, chess-related articles of interest, tournament reports, or game analysis. For other submissions, please contact the editor. Submissions welcome!

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The materials contained in this publication do not reflect the opinions of the Alberta Chess Association. All articles are written by the editor, Leah Hughey, unless otherwise credited.

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I am now taking submissions for the July 2018 edition of the Alberta Chess Report. Tournaments covered include the Edmonton International & Open, Lethbridge Open, Alberta Active Championship, Edmonton International Qualifier, Calgary International Qualifier, 35th Trumpeter, and the Alberta Seniors and Women's Championships. Submissions are due by Aug 31, 2018.



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The Alberta Chess Association is in partnership with the Recreation and Physical Activity Division of Alberta Culture and Tourism to enhance the quality of life of Albertans through a variety of chess related activities. The ACA gratefully acknowledges the support provided by Alberta Culture and Tourism, as well as the AGLC, which enables the association to deliver its programs.



Alberta Junior Championship

November 18-19, 2017—Calgary

ACA President Vlad Rekhson took on the challenge of organizing the Alberta Junior Championship in Calgary in late November. Fifty-three players participated over five different sections.

The top section was a six-player round robin held to determine the champion. The Edmonton and Calgary champions, Mark Ivanescu (1819) and Andre Tolentino (1768), took on the top four available players by rating—Ian Zhao (2055), Anand Rishi Chandra (1835), Patrick Tolentino (1755), and Vishruth Sharma (1671).

Calgary's Ian Zhao, who has been steadily rising in rating over the last few years, was the clear favorite going in, and he did not disappoint. He finished with 4.5/5, after reeling off four wins and then a final round draw with Andre Tolentino. As the 2017 Alberta Junior Champion, Zhao won a \$1,000 travel grant to the 2018 Canadian Junior Championship.

Mark Ivanescu placed second with 3/5, while third place was split three ways.

In the Girls section, Lucy Cao (1634) repeated as the Alberta Girls Champion with 3.5/4. She was held to a draw by the runner up, Prerana Manoj, who finished with 3/4. As the winner, Lucy qualified to the 2018 Susan Polgar Foundation Girls Invitational in St. Louis.

In the Open section, Aditya Raninga (1736) placed first with 4.5/5, and Paul Wang (1622) finished second with 4/5.

Dulguun Bayarsaikhan (Unr) posted a perfect 7/7 in the Under-1300 section. Second place went to Khino Tolentino (1015) with 5/7.

In the Under-800 section, Michael Garyayev went 6/7 for first, while Ben Swertz finished second with 5.5/7.

Thanks to Vlad Rekhson for organizing and directing, and to all the people who volunteered. Here is Zhao's winning game over Anand Rishi Chandra.

Chandra, Anand Rishi (1832) - Zhao, Ian (2055)
[C54] 2017 Alberta Junior Championship (2),
18.11.2017

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.d3 0-0 6.0-0 d6 7.h3 a6 8.Bb3 A common position among elite Grandmasters, who seem to prefer 8. a4 or Re1.



Photo: 2017 Alberta Junior Champion Ian Zhao.

8...Ba7 9.Re1 h6 10.Nbd2 Re8 11.Nf1 Ne7 The first substantial deviation from a standard position - Grandmasters overwhelmingly choose 11. ...Be6. **12.Bc2 c6 13.Ng3 Ng6 14.a3 Qc7 15.b4 Be6 16.Bb2 Nf4 17.d4 Rad8 18.Bb3 Qc8** [See diagram] Note that Black is well positioned to launch a kingside attack, while White's bishops are locked out on the queenside and unable to come to any defense. **19.c4??** White had to recognize the danger and defend against the following: **19...Bxh3** If





Photos, left: Organizer Vlad Rekhson with the second place finisher and Edmonton champion Mark Ivanescu. Right: Girls Champion, Lucy Cao, with some of the other winners.

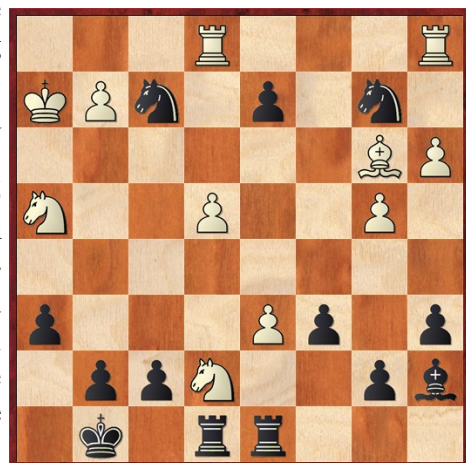
White takes the bishop, 20. Qxh3 is deadly. 20.Nh4 The best response, but Black wins material 20...Qg4



21.Qxg4 Bxg4 Black is only up a pawn, but White's positional problems continue. 22.f3 Nd3! [See diagram left] Notice the problems White will have along the a7-g1 diagonal if he loses his b2 bishop. 23.fxg4

Nxb2 24.c5 Attempting to complicate things. 24...exd4 25.cxd6 Nxd4 26.Ngf5 d3+ 27.Kh1 Nf2+ 28.Kh2 d2 29.Ne7+ This has been done well by

Black, who has by and large played the best moves, despite White complicating matters. [see diagram below] 29...Kh7 Not 29. ...Kf8, as there is a sneaky mate there: 29...Kf8 30.Neg6+ fxe6 31.Nxe6# Of course, Black could repeat after 30. Neg6+ and opt for a better square for his king the next time around. 30.Bxf7 dxe1Q 31.Rxe1 Ng4+ 32.Kh3 Ne5 Defending against any minor piece attack, allowing Black time to re-consolidate and play up a piece. 33.Be6 Rxd6 34.Bf5+ g6 Down a rook, with counterplay ended, and threatened with the loss of more material, White resigns. 0-1



Calgary Chess Club

#274, 3359 27 Street NE
(403) 264-9698
www.calgarychess.com

Tuesdays (7 PM—), Thursdays (7 PM—)
Saturday (10 AM—1PM; juniors)

Edmonton Chess Club

#204, 10840 124 Street NW
(780) 424-0283

Mondays (6:30 PM—): Active tournament
Thursdays (6:30 PM—): CFC rated tournament
Saturdays (1PM—5PM): Call for schedule.

2017 Edmonton Fall Sectional

October 27-29, 2017—Edmonton

Micah Hughey once again took over the task of organizing Edmonton's annual sectional tournament. He successfully recruited thirty-four players to the event, which was split up over six sections.

After excellent performances at the Alberta Open and Steinitz-Menchik Chess Classic earlier in October, Gary Ng was within striking distance of the 2300 FIDE rating threshold needed to claim the FM title. Ng went 5/5 in section A, including wins over visiting FM Javier Cortes-Orihuela and Peter Kalisvaart, who tied for second in the top division. The wins ensured Ng of the FM title.

In section B, Dante Briones was first with 4.5/5, and Alvin Guevarra was second, while in section C, Bhavik Dave was first, and Arnold McKay and Mark Ivanescu split second.

Mark Tuvera won section D, and second went to Andi Superceanu and James Windram. Yash Darvekar won section E, while second went to Reuben Miller. In section F, Steven Walter won first with 5/6, and Paul Le was second with 4/6.

Thanks to Mike Zeggelaar for directing, Micah Hughey for organizing, and the Edmonton Chess Club for hosting.



Above: Gary Ng and organizer Micah Hughey. Below, the section winners (left to right): Dante Briones, Bhavik Dave, Mark Tuvera, and Yash Darvekar. Photos by Bhavik Dave (mostly).



WBX Team Championship

Dec 16-17, 2017—Edmonton

CM Rafael Arruebarrena, Anuar Caldera, and Yash Darvekar won the late December team tournament. With some help from substitute Daryl Bertrand, the three combined for a score of 11/15. Second place went to Vladimir Pechenkin, Robert Brazeau, and Dustin Koperski with 10/15.

Rafael Arruebarrena was clear first on board one, posting a 5/5 score, including wins (both with black!) over FM Pechenkin and WIM Agnieszka Matras-Clement. Arruebarrena was the only person in any group to post a perfect score. Second place on board one went to Pechenkin and Hafiz Karmali, both with 3/5.

Board two was won by Anuar Caldera (with Bertrand contributing a half-point) with 4/5. Second went to Alvin Guevarra with 3.5/5.

Dustin Koperski won board three with 4.5/5, while Matras-Clement's various students combined for a 4/5 score--good enough for second.

Thanks to Terry Seehagen for organizing and directing, and the Edmonton Chess Club for hosting.



2017 Banff Open

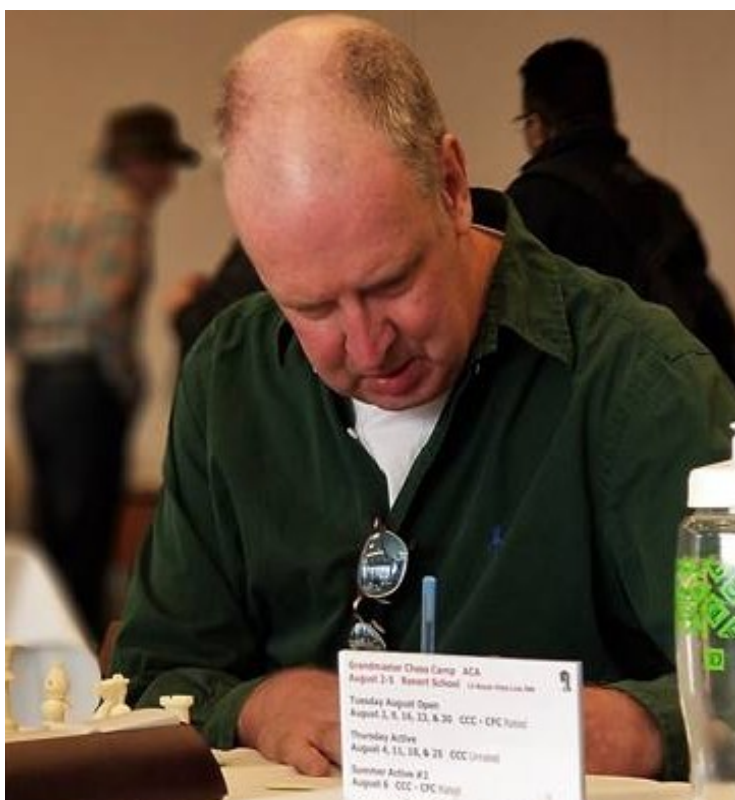
November 10-12, 2017—Banff

Over the November long weekend, the Banff Centre for the Arts hosted the Banff Open, a premier ACA tournament organized by Ian Findlay. Forty-one players participated, including two International Masters.

International Master Mark Ginsburg (2358) finished in clear first, going 5.5/6. There was a four-way tie for second between WIM Agnieszka Matras-Clement (2317), FM Ian Findlay (2224), Georgi Kostadinov (2142), and Jerry Kobalenko (2128), all with 4.5/6.

Many thanks to the sponsors—Ian Findlay, the Society of Chess Aficionados, and the Banff Centre, as well as director Dustin Koperski.

Left: the winner, IM Mark Ginsburg. Next page, top: the playing venue. Middle: (L to R): Director Dustin Koperski, Second place finishers Jerry Kobalenko, FM Ian Findlay (also the Organizer), WIM Agnieszka Matras-Clement, and Georgi Kostadinov. Bottom: the spread at the wine and cheese party. Photos by Bhavik Dave.





2017 Alberta Open

Oct 7-9, 2017—Edmonton

Ali Razzaq had the task of organizing the Alberta Open this year; he opted to hold it in the Chateau La-combe in downtown Edmonton. With a great location, \$3,000 in guaranteed prizes, and a spot in the 2018 Alberta Closed up for grabs, a nice turnout was guaranteed.

Fifty-two players participated in the event. The director was Mike Zeggelaar, who had the thankless task of getting all of the equipment and supplies to and from the location. The result was a great tournament, with quite a few of the top players in Alberta.

First place was split between Gary Ng and WIM Agnieszka Matras-Clement. The two came into the final round with 4.5/5—both having suffered draws to Brian Timmerman. They knew a quick draw would assure them of splitting first place, so they took it and split the prize money evenly. The automatic spot in the 2018 Alberta Closed went to Gary Ng on tiebreak.

Third place was split five ways—between FM

Below: co-winners WIM Agnieszka Matras-Clement and FM Gary Ng. Photos by Bhavik Dave.

Dale Haessel, FM Ian Findlay, Peter Kalisvaart, Daryl Bertrand, and Ian Zhao. The event also included an Under-1600 section, which was won by Yash Darvekar, with Paul Le finishing second and Joe Wong and Alex Han splitting third.

The highlight of the event was a wild opening round game between Brian Timmerman (2038) and Michelle Mo (1520). This game had everything—relentless attacks, a pawn storm, underpromotion, and sacrifices.

Timmerman, Brian (2038) - Mo, Michelle (1520)
[B81] 2017 Alberta Open (1), 07.10.2017

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.h3 An attacking move (immediately followed by g4) that is favored by top Grandmasters, particularly Caruana and Anand. **6...e6 7.g4 b5** Both sides attacking right from the start. **8.g5 Nfd7 9.Be3** 9. a3 is the overwhelming favorite among GMs. **9...Bb7 10.Bg2 Nb6 11.Qe2 N8d7 12.0-0-0** The computer favors Black, which has strong attacking chances with the advanced



a- and b-pawns and half-open c-file. However, White is about to go all in with his kingside pawns, which will make things messy and complicated. **12...Rc8 13.f4 Be7 14.h4 Nc5 15.a3 Nc4 16.h5 Qa5 17.g6 Nxa3** [See diagram below] Preferable was eliminating



one of White's attacking pawns, which are poised to cause trouble.

18.gxf7+ Kf8 19.h6 g6 20.f5 Nc4 21.Kb1

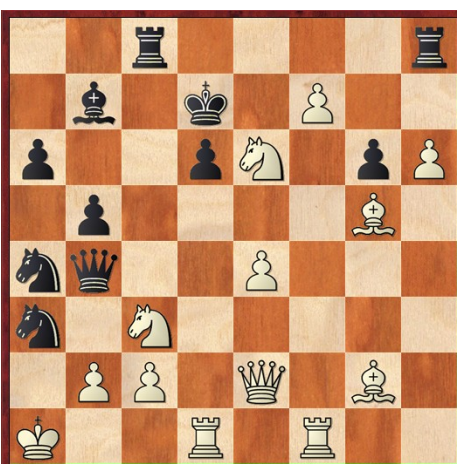
Forced, to make room for the bishop on c1. **21...Qb4?** The natural continuation, but White can defend every-

thing with Bc1, then attack at leisure. Instead of the text move, 21. ...Nxb2 would seem to lead to a draw. **22.Bc1 Na3+ 23.Ka1 Na4** [See diagram below] Despite the black

pieces massing around him, White has everything under control. **24.fxg6 hxg6 25.Rhf1** Black might be tempted to play 25. ...Rxb1 to deflect the c1 bishop, except that White would recapture on h6 with mate. **25...Bg5** Attacks the protective c1 bishop and h6 pawn while providing an escape square to the black king. Unfortunately it fails to the following: **26.Nxe6+ Ke7**



27.Bxg5+ Kd7 [See diagram left] Given the situation on b2, White must attack with check, defend the b2 square, or eliminate one of Black's attackers. He chose to attack with check...with style. **28.f8N+**



Rhxf8 29.Nxf8+ Rxf8 30.Rxd6+ Kxd6 31.Qd3+ Kc7 32.Bc1 32. Nxa4 or the clever **32. Rf7+** would have ended things quickly. **32...Rxf1 33.Bxf1 Nxc3 34.Qxc3+** Entering an endgame when White's h-pawn is unstoppable. **34...Qxc3 35.bxc3 Nxc2+ 36.Kb2 a5 37.h7 a4 38.Kxc2 Bxe4+ 39.Bd3 a3 40.Bxa3 Bc6 41.h8Q g5 42.Qg7+ Kb6 43.Qxg5 Kc7 44.Qe7+ Kc8 45.Bd6 Bd7 46.Bxb5 Bf5+ 47.Kb2 Bc2 48.Qc7# 1-0**

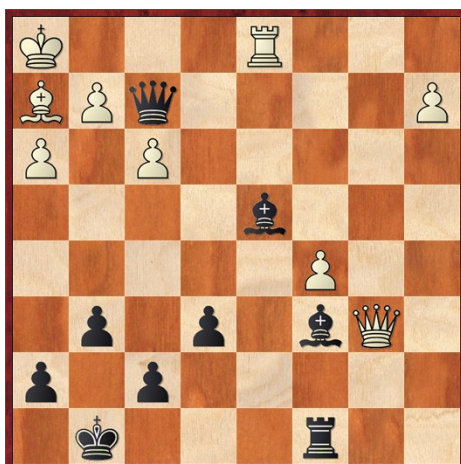
The end of Timmerman's game against Hayrapet Kalashyan is also worth a look.

Kalashyan, Hayrapet (1409) - Timmerman, Brian (2038) [A45] 2017 Alberta Open (2), 07.10.2017

Timmerman was in a winning position after **34. ...Bd4**, [See diagram] lining up his queen and bishops

for a big attack. Rather than play down, Kalashyan found the clever **35. Bg1**, to which there is only one winning response (everything is equal or favoring White.)

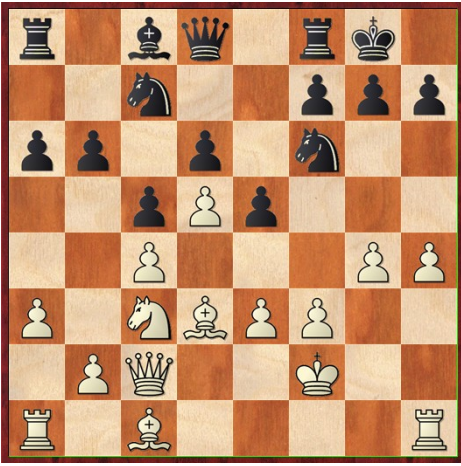
Timmerman finds the answer: **35. ...Qxf3**, sacrificing his queen for a beautiful double bishop mate. **36.gxf3 Bxf3+ 37.Kh2 Be5# 0-1**



Among the top boards, FM Dale Haessel and Omid Malek fought out this brutal game to a draw in round five.

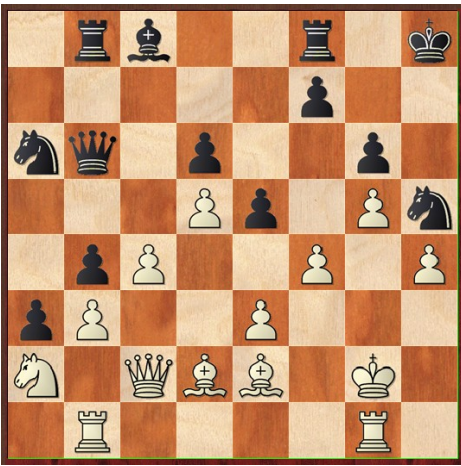
Haessel, Dale (2322) - Malek, Omid (2146) [E42] 2017 Alberta Open (5), 09.10.2017

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 b6 5.Nge2 c5 6.a3 Ba5 7.f3 The first sharp deviation from a fairly common position. 7. Rb1 or 7. Bd2 is the typical move here, but 7. f3 has been played by some lower-level GMs. **7...0-0 8.Kf2** Played once before, between two FMs in a game that ended in a draw. **8...Bxc3 9.Nxc3 d6 10.d5 e5 11.Bd3 Na6 12.Qc2 Nc7 13.h4 a6 14.g4** [See diagram next page] Despite White's disregard for king safety, the computer is giving White more than the benefit of the doubt, with a plus 1.5 score, likely due to the pressure on the h-file and h7 specifically. This game highlights some of the hallmarks of Haes-



sel's preferred positions - the bishop pair and an attacking game. **14...b5 15.b3 b4 16.axb4 cxb4 17.g5 Nh5 18.Na2 Rb8 19.Bd2 a5 20.Bxh7+ Kh8 21.Rhg1?** If Black plays 21. ...Qd7, then White's advantage has

evaporated and Black is on the attack. Black would be able to bring his queen to h3 (if White defends h3, Black can trap the bishop on h7 with g6, as Black is able to sacrifice his rook on f3 and corner White's king). However, instead the queen remains on d8 where she has no ability to penetrate into White's position. **21...Na6?** Black opts to play on the queenside instead. **22.Bd3**



a4 23.Be2 Qb6 24.Kg2 g6 25.Rab1 a3 26.f4? [See diagram] This opens up White's king when Black is prepared to jump his queen into the middle of the board. From here on out, the chances are nearly

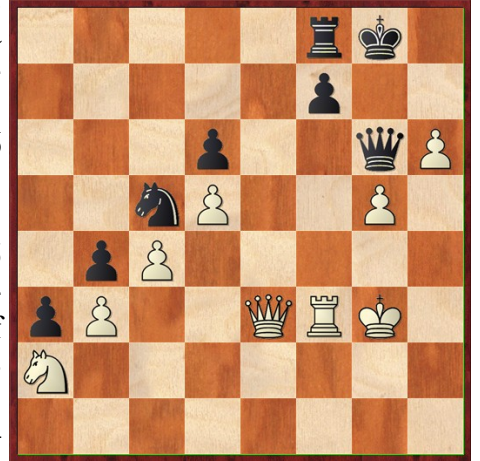
all with Black. **26...exf4 27.exf4 Qd4 28.Rbf1 Bf5 29.Qd1 Kg8** Getting out of line with the queen; otherwise, White could play Qa1, forcing the queens off while up a pawn. **30.Rf2 Rfe8 31.Re1 Be4+ 32.Bf3 Bxf3+ 33.Qxf3 Rxe1 34.Bxe1** [See diagram below]

White's position would fall apart if Black redeployed his pieces, with the rook going to e8, the h-knight transitioning to f5 via g7, and the a-knight heading to c5. With accurate play, this is a win for Black. **34...Ng7? Re8**



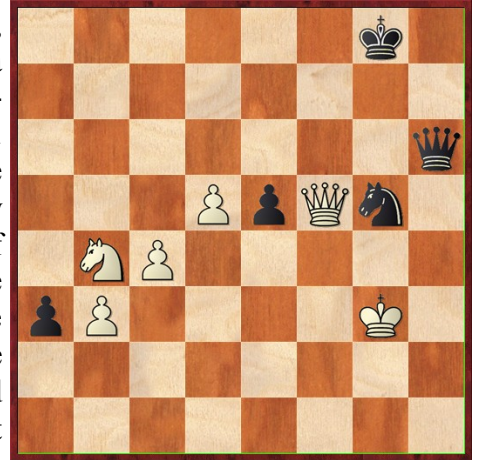
immediately was the forcing move. Now White has time to rearrange his pieces to prevent Black from getting too far into his territory. **35.Re2 Nf5 36.Bf2 Qh8 37.Kh3? Nd4?** Black's attack evaporates as White is able to trade pieces. Preferable was 37. ...Nc5, bringing that knight into the game. **38.Bxd4 Qxd4 39.f5 gxf5 40.Qxf5 Rf8?** Now the advantage has swung

back to White, who is still up a pawn - a passed h-pawn. **41.h5 Qd1 42.Qf3 Qb1 43.h6 Qg6 44.Qe3 Qh5+ 45.Kg3 Qg6 46.Rf2 Nc5 47.Rf3?** [See diagram right] If **47...Ne4+ 48.Kg4 Re8 49.Qf4 Re5 50.Nxb4 Rxc5+** White would have

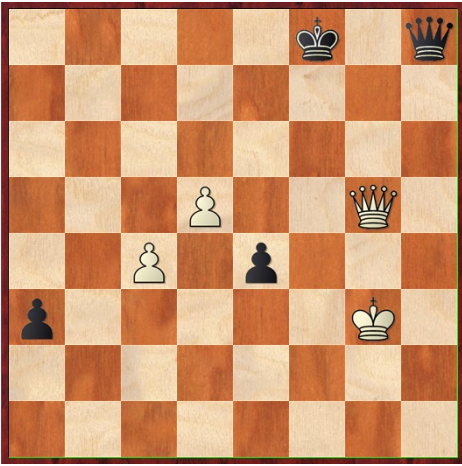


to give up his queen. **47. ...f5? 48.Nxb4 Re8 Ne4** is still good. **9.Qf4 Re5 50.Re3 Ne4+** Too late this time. The computer is showing a zero score. **51.Kh4 Nxc5 52.Rxe5 Qxh6+ 53.Kg3 dxe5 54.Qxf5** [See diagram right]

Though the score is still zero, this is obviously a tough, double-edged position. Black still has the pawn on a3, ready to cause trouble if it can get some backup, while White has triple connected passed pawns that just need to start rolling



to cause havoc. **54...Nf7 55.Qg4+ Kf8 56.Qc8+ Kg7 57.Qg4+ Kf8 58.Qe2 Qb6 59.Qd2 Qg1+ 60.Kf3 Ng5+ 61.Ke2 Qg4+ 62.Kd3 Qf5+** Black is starting to build his advantage again - he's gotten his pieces in prime positions, while White hasn't managed to do anything with his pawns. **63.Ke2 Qf3+ 64.Ke1 Qxb3 65.Qxg5 Qxb4+ 66.Kf2** With precise play, this is winning again for Black. **66...Qb2+ 67.Kf3 Qc3+ 68.Kg2 Qc2+ 69.Kf3 e4+ 70.Kg3 Qc3+ 71.Kh2 Qh8+ 72.Kg3** [See diagram next page] **a2??** Allows a perpetual. Trading queens leads to an eventual win. If **72...Qg7 73.Qxg7+ Kxg7 74.d6 Kf7 75.Kf4 a2**, etc. With the text move, Black has no way out of the



checks. **73.Qd8+**
Kg7 74.Qe7+
Kg8 ½-½

Many thanks to Ali Razzaq for organizing and Mike Zeggelaar for directing.

As is custom for the ACA, the Annual General Meeting was held in between rounds

on Sunday. ACA President Vlad Rekhson agreed to

return for another year, as no one was available to take over the position. However, the position of ACA President is expected to come open again during 2018.

Also joining the ACA board were three newcomers: From Edmonton, Jordan Rohatynski and Daryl Bertrand signed on for the first time, while Wojtek Kowalczewski joined from Calgary. Dale Haessel was reelected to a directorship position, as was Ali Razzaq as Treasurer. Directors who were not up for election for another year included Vice President Jim Daniluk, Secretary Ian Findlay, and Directors Terry Seehagen, Jina Burn, Brad Booker, and Giridhar Koneru.

Southern Alberta Open

November 25-26, 2017, Calgary

Not long after the Alberta Open came another qualifier for the 2018 Alberta Championship—the Southern Alberta Open. No one could catch Omid Malek, as long as he got a draw in the final round—which he did. He finished with 4.5/5, earning his first ever bid to the Alberta Championship.

Second place was split four ways—between Galbadrakh Enkhamar (2157), FM Dale Haessel (2312), Georgi Kostadinov (2155), and Ian Zhao (2085), all with 4/5.

Many thanks to the Calgary Chess Club for hosting, Wojtek Kowalczewski for directing, and Frank Kluytmans for organizing.



2018 ACA Tournament Schedule

All tournaments subject to change by the ACA and/or organizer. Tournaments with an * are *Road Warrior* events. For updated info, please visit our website: albertachess.org

Dates	Tournament	Organizer	Location
Jan 5-7	Schleinich Memorial*	Jim Daniluk	Calgary
Feb 3-4	University Battle of Alberta*	Jordan Rohatynski	Edmonton
Feb 10-11	Northern Alberta Open*	Ali Razzaq	Edmonton
Feb 24-25	AB Youth Chess Championship	Vera Li	Calgary
Mar 10-11	2nd Steinitz-Menchik Chess Classic*	Stefan Sklenka	Calgary
Mar 17-18	Edmonton Seniors Championship	Terry Seehagen	Edmonton
Mar 24	Alberta Chess Challenge	Cristian Ivanescu	Red Deer
Mar 30-Apr 1	Alberta Closed & Reserves*	Micah Hughey	Edmonton
April 7-8	Lethbridge Open*	Jerry Mikusek	Lethbridge
April 14	Alberta Active*	Alexey Taranik	Red Deer
May 5-6	Edmonton International Qualifier*	Jordan Rohatynski	Edmonton
May 12-13	Alberta Seniors Championship	Jim Daniluk	Calgary
May 12-13	Alberta Women's Championship	Wojtek Kowalczewski	Calgary
Jun 2-3	35th Trumpeter Classic*	Tim Pradzinski	Grande Prairie
Jun 9-10	Calgary International Qualifier*	Brad Booker	Calgary
Jun 19-24	13th Edmonton International & Open*	Rafael Arruebarrena	Edmonton
Jun 30-Jul 1	Fort McMurray Open*	Jina Burn	Fort McMurray
Aug 3-6	2018 Canadian Seniors Championship	Vlad Rekhson	Calgary
Aug 14-19	11th Calgary International & Open*	Vlad Rekhson	Calgary
Sep 1-2	Over / Under 1800*	Daryl Bertrand	Edmonton
Sep 8	Battle of Alberta	Alexey Taranik	Red Deer
Sep 15-16	Calgary Junior Regional	Vera Li	Calgary
Sep 15-16	Edmonton Junior Regional	Dustin Koperski	Edmonton
Sep 22-23	24th Medicine Hat Open*	Dr. Bill Taylor	Medicine Hat
Sep 29	Junior Battle of Alberta	Vlad Rekhson	Red Deer
Oct 6-8	Alberta Open*	Stefan Sklenka	Calgary
Oct 20	Alberta Blitz Championship*	Alexey Taranik	Red Deer
Oct 26-28	Edmonton Fall Sectional*	Micah Hughey	Edmonton
Nov 10-12	Banff Open*	Ian Findlay	Banff
Nov 17-18	Alberta Junior Championship	Dustin Koperski	Edmonton
Nov 24-25	Southern Alberta Open*	Wojtek Kowalczewski	Calgary
Dec 15-16	WBX Team Tournament*	Terry Seehagen	Edmonton