

# Canadian master comes out sharp

By Kevin Burnett  
National Master

Two Grandmasters and five International Masters headed a field of 390 players in the 17th annual American Open held last weekend at the Sheraton-La Reina Hotel in Los Angeles. In a reversal of form, the IMs led the way, ahead of their more illustrious GM brethren. Fastest out of the starting gate was IM Igor Ivanov of Canada. He scored a perfect 4-0 in the first half of the tournament. Then, in Round Five, he demolished top-rated GM Walter Browne to stand alone at 5-0. A quick draw in the sixth round with GM James Tarjan set the stage for a seventh-round show-down with co-leader Nick deFirmian, an IM from Berkeley.

Ivanov evidently considers possession of the white pieces a license to lunge for his opponent's jugular. He proved it against Browne and was well on his way to making deFirmian a believer too. Then, as he tried to conclude his attack, he blundered away material, enough to turn the tables and make deFirmian a very relieved winner.

With that stroke of fortune, deFirmian entered the final round in a position to win it all, having 6½ points and White against Browne (6 pts.). He went all out, playing a sharp line against Browne's Najdorf Sicilian, and succeeded in weakening his opponent's K-side. He looked to have a sizeable positional advantage, but Browne held an edge in space and used it to construct a fluid defense along his second rank. The two then agreed to a draw, guaranteeing deFirmian a share of first place, with a 7-1 score.

The battle to decide the co-winner was raging on Board Two between IMs Kamran Shirazi (White) and John Watson. Shirazi, who likes to play the opening "creatively" (as he puts it), went a bit overboard against Watson's solid French Defense. Watson stopped Shirazi from castling, then sacked his backward KP to open lines of attack. Shirazi was inventive, as usual, in defense, but was unable to augment his growing reputation for "great escapes" and eventually lost.

So Watson, whose only defeat came when he tried a "creative" opening himself against Tarjan, was able to join deFirmian in the winner's circle. Each won \$1,250, with deFirmian taking the championship trophy on tie-breaks. One half-point back, at 6½-1½ and sharing \$1,400, was a trio of familiar names — Browne, Tarjan, and Ivanov — along with an unknown interloper, Master Dan Durham. Durham, rated several hundred points below the others, crashed the party by going undefeated, drawing three strong Masters, and surging at the finish with victories over two Senior Masters.

The top Expert, John Hillery, had a fine tournament as well. He finished with six points, worth \$600 and a trophy, by drawing IM David Strauss and beating two Masters. Jammed at 5½ points (\$86 each) were Experts Paul Heinrich, Richard Koepcke, Lev Spivak, Steven Levine, Arthur Spiller, Charles Johnson, and Gerry Schain.

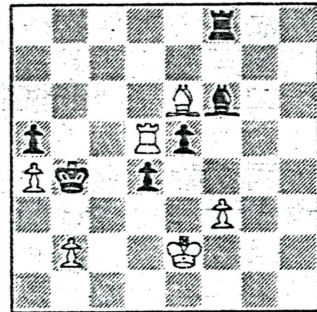
Michael Manasse was the best Category I player, winning \$600 and a trophy for his 5½-2½ total. Next came Darrell Yap, Bill Richards, Tom Tucker, Jose Chavez, and Charles Brunton, winning \$120 each. The \$200 Category II prize was shared by Richard Goldie (trophy), Warren Ormsby and Michael Elliot, all with 3½ points.

The Amateur (under 1800) section saw an American Open first — a perfect 8-0 score. Richard North was the reluctant pioneer, winning \$600 and a trophy. Reluctant because he offered his last-round opponent an early truce, was spurned and then bestirred himself to win. Second was Keigh Edwards at 7-1, winning \$400. Tied at 6½ points and sharing \$600 were Dan Sherman, Charles Creekmur, and Hans Dirks. The top women, Colette McGruder and Maglene Matos, won \$50 each and also tied for sixth place overall at 6-2 with William Evans, Rick White and Anthony Zaldua.

Tops among the Category III players were Daniel Aranda and Ricardo Serrano, splitting \$800 with 6-2 scores. Gino Cheng and Randal Baker were next with 5½-2½ results, worth \$150 each. Also at 5½ points was the best Category IV player, James Chen, winning \$300 plus trophy. James Mason was second at 5-3, \$150. Tied for third with 4½ points were James Parker and David Brown, winning \$50 each.

Cris Jaliu won \$250 and a trophy for his 7-1 result, best among the unrated players. Isabelo Mariano was second at 6-2, \$100, with Stephen Ginsburg winning \$50 for third place.

Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 12-13, Labate's Chess Centre will hold its fourth monthly Grand Prix tournament. The five-round event features a \$1,200 guaranteed prize fund. There are three sections: Open (entry fee, \$27), Reserve (under 2000, \$24) and Amateur (under 1600, \$21). Play begins Saturday at 10 a.m. at the centre, 10222 Lakewood Blvd., Downey 90241 (just south of I-5). Call 213-861-3371 for further details.



Selivanovsky-Yaroshevsky (1958) White to play and win (solution below)  
**Castling into it**

White-Velimirovich ... Black-Raikovich ... Skopje 1971 ... Pirc Defense ... 1 P-K4 P-Q3 2 P-Q4 N-KB3 3 N-QB3 P-KN3 4 P-B4 B-N2 5 N-B3 P-B4 6 ... KN-Q2 7 B-B4 0-0? (Banking on a false resource. 7 ... PxQP 8 QxP 0-0 was necessary.) 8 P-K6 N-N3 9 PxP+ K-R1 10 P-KR4!! (Black just assumed that the White B had to retreat. Then he would capture on Q5 and B2 with good play. But White ignores the threat to his B and attacks on the KR-file. If now 10 ... NxP, then a possible sequel is: 11 P-R5 RxP 12 N-KN5! R-B3 13 PxNP B-B4 14 N-Q5! BxNP 15 NxR PxN 16 RxP+ K-N1 17 RxB+! and wins the Q. So Black lets the piece stand and tries to hold the fort on the KR-file.) 10 ... B-N5 11 P-R5! PxRP (After 11 ... BxRP, 12 RxB! PxR 13 N-KN5 is crushing. The piece is still taboo: 11 ... NxP 12 PxNP P-KR4 13 Q-Q3 N-N3 14 RxP! BxR 15 Q-B5 and wins.) 12 B-K2 Q-Q2 (On 12 ... RxP, comes 13 N-KN5! 13 N-KN5 P-KR3 14 BxB QxB 15 Q-Q3! 15 ... PxN 16 Q-N6 P-R5 17 N-K4! (Now it's all too clear to Black. The threats of 18 NxNP and even 18 N-B2 are too much. He must part with a R or resign.) 17 ... RxP 18 NxNP! (White has it all worked out. There's no perpetual check.) 18 ... Q-N6+ 19 K-B1 RxP+ 20 BxR QxB+ 21 K-K2! Q-N5+ 22 K-K1 Q-N6+ 23 K-Q1 Q-N5+ 24 K-B1 Q-B5+ 25 K-N1 QxN 26 QxQ QN-Q2 27 RxP+ K-N1 28 R-N4 Black resigns.

Solution: 1 R-N5+ KxP 2 R-N7! and 3 B-N3 mate! I love quiet moves.