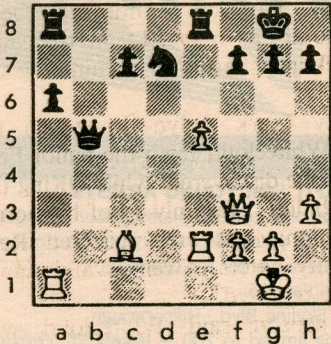




By Frisco Del Rosario
DE FIRMIAN-BENJAMIN
 White to play and win.



CORRECTION

Move 32 in last week's Cramling-Shamkovich game should read 32. Qb4 Kh8.

TWO SHARE TOP PEOPLE'S PRIZE

Grandmaster Nick de Firmian and international master Vince McCambridge each scored 5-1 to tie for first place at the 17th People's Chess Tournament held Feb. 18-20 at UC Berkeley, Calif. Each earned \$425.

De Firmian defeated master and Burlingame Chess Club member Peter Thiel in round two in a theoretical discussion.

Berkeley 1990

White: Peter Thiel
 Black: Nick de Firmian
 Sicilian Defense

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. e4 c5 | 20. ed Qb6 ⁴ |
| 2. Nf3 d6 | 21. Bg2 ⁵ Rg7 |
| 3. d4 cd | 22. Ne4 Ne4 |
| 4. Nd4 Nf6 | 23. Qe4 Qa7 |
| 5. Nc3 a6 ¹ | 24. Nc6 Bc6 |
| 6. Bg5 e6 | 25. Qc6 Kb8 |
| 7. f4 Be7 | 26. a4 Rg5 |
| 8. Qf3 Qc7 | 27. ab ab |
| 9. O-O-O Nbd7 | 28. Kb1 Rc5 |
| 10. g4 b5 | 29. Qf3 Rd7 |
| 11. Bf6 Nf6 | 30. Rd3 Rf5 |
| 12. g5 Nd7 | 31. Qg4? ⁶ Qg1 |
| 13. f5 Nc5 ² | 32. Ka2 Qb6 ⁷ |
| 14. f6 ef | 33. Qg8 Rd8 |
| 15. gf Bf8 | 34. Qg3 b4 |
| 16. Rg1 ³ Bd7 | 35. d7 Ka7 |
| 17. Rg7 Bg7 | 36. Rd6 b3 |
| 18. fg Rg8 | 37. Kb1 ⁸ Qg1 |
| 19. e5 O-O-O | 38. Resigns |

NOTES:

- The Najdorf Variation is a sharp counterattack against 1. e4. Among its loyal adherents are ex-world champion Fischer, six-time U.S. champion Browne, and ex-U.S. champion de Firmian. Black can find counterplay anywhere, most often playing ...b5 and along the c-file, but also striking in the center with ...e5 and even playing on the kingside with ...h6 and ...g5, securing an outpost on e5. White mostly rushes the kingside.
- The theory of this line is so well developed that annotators quit mentioning around 1971 that it's too time-consuming for Black to capture the pawn on g5.
- This move was brought to life by Hungarian IM Perenyi. It prepares a sacrifice on g7 and prevents ...Rg8, which is Black's good reply to 16. Qh5.
- Show and tell time. Many consider 20...Qb7 to be the only move since IM Wolff beat GM Browne with 20...Qb6 21. Ne4! Ne4 22. Qe4 at the 1987 World Open. De Firmian obviously has an improvement.
- De Firmian's discovery is secret for a bit longer.
- The losing move, according to Thiel. Better, he said, was 31. Qe4 or 31. Qc6, intending Ra3.
- The only move to prevent Qg8. If 32...Rd8 33. Ra3 Kc8 34. Bb7. Also, if 32...Qc5 33. Qg8 Qc8 (33...Ka7 34. Ra3 Kb6 35. Qb8) 34. Ra3! wins (34...Qg8 35. Ra8#; 34...Ra7 35. Qc8 Kc8 36. Ra7).
- Makes Black's win easier, but it can be worked out after 37. cb Ra5 38. Kb1 Qg1 39. Kc2 Rc5 etc.

The Najdorf is popular at the club level, too.

Burlingame 1989

White: Peter Thiel
 Black: Frisco Del Rosario
 Sicilian Defense

- | | |
|------------|---------------------------|
| 1. e4 c5 | 9. fe Qc7 |
| 2. Nf3 d6 | 10. ef Qe5 |
| 3. d4 cd | 11. Be2 Qg5 |
| 4. Nd4 Nf6 | 12. Qd3 Qf6 |
| 5. Nc3 a6 | 13. Rf1 Qe5 |
| 6. Bg5 e6 | 14. Rd1 Be7? ¹ |
| 7. f4 b5 | 15. Qf3! Resigns |
| 8. e5 de | |

NOTE

- 14...Ra7 is required. Matulovic-Bogdanovic (Sarajevo 1976) also finished suddenly: 14...Bb7? 15. Nc6! Qd6 16. Qf3! Resigns (16...Qc7 17. Qf7 Qf7 18. Rd8#).

SOLUTION: 1. Ba4 Qa5 2. e6 fe (2...Nf6 3. ef Kf7 4. Bb3) 3. Ree1! (threatening Bd7) wins (3...Qd5 4. Qd5 ed 5. Bd7).