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Fields of Friendly Strife on 64 Squares

By vwest | February 2, 2017 | News



General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, the 31st Superintendent of the United States Military Academy is famously quoted as saying:

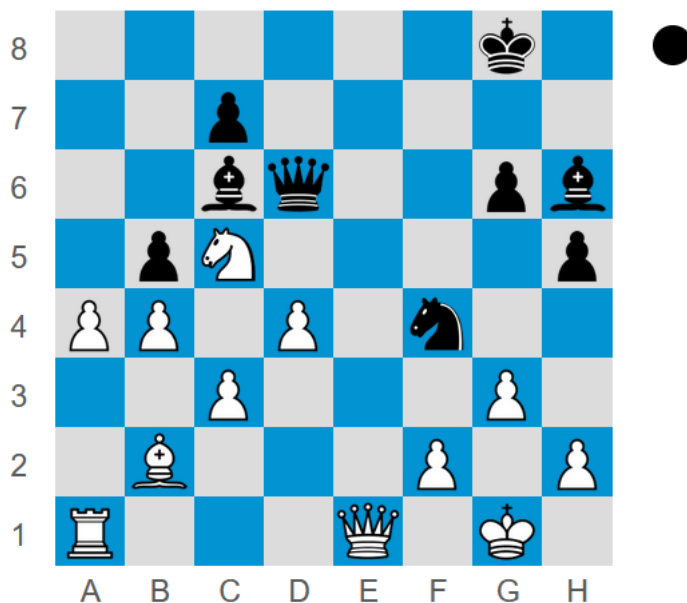
“On the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that on other days, on other fields, will bear the fruits of victory.”

MacArthur was a strong proponent of athletics believing that athletic training made cadets into better officers and ultimately contributed to victory on the battlefield. During his time as Superintendent he initiated an exchange program with the Royal Canadian Military Academy (RMCC) that is centered on hockey and a few other athletic competitions. The exchange program is still a significant event on both schools calendars and, today, chess is one of the competitive events. It is only fitting that war on the 64 squares now fits into the development of cadets! The format of the chess competition has varied from year to year. Most years it has been a Swiss with the top scores determining which school wins. The number of scores that count has varied from year to year and sometimes the swiss tournament has been open to other military members, though their scores would obviously not count for the competition

between the schools. This year it was decided to have a fixed board competition with six boards playing in board order one game with white and one with black.

This is the fifth year of the chess competition. West Point (USMA) has won the first four. At the outset, I thought the fixed board competition would give RMCC more of a chance since the bottom boards tend to be more evenly matched. If RMCC could pull out a few victories on the bottom boards, they could win the match. RMCC had a tough task this year as they were the visiting team. Typically, the visiting team does not bring as many players. Also, RMCC has an enrollment of about 900 while West Point has about 4400. With a bigger pool to draw from, West Point has a significant advantage. Before the main competition began, there was a blitz competition. It was just one game, and West Point won the match, but it was close 5-3. Maybe it should not have been that close: I was asked to play because there was an extra RMCC cadet. I was higher rated by several hundred points and was cruising to an easy win when I hung my queen! At any rate, the blitz tournament result certainly looked like the match would be competitive, and it did start that way. When the first round started, I looked at the games at about move ten, and they were all relatively balanced and most of the opening play was at least reasonable. There were no completely beginner games, even on the bottom boards. Unfortunately for RMCC, the match did not stay balanced for very long. West Point wound up winning on all 6 boards! On board six, Cadet Chirag Jain from RMCC was completely winning and then allowed West Point cadet Morgan Landers to generate a counterattack. In this position, can you find the continuation that led to the West Point victory?

Chiang vs. Landers



Black to move.

The cadet in charge of the West Point Chess Club is Cadet Nicholas Oblak. Nick is a Firstie (senior) and has played in this event all four years and has not lost a game. He continued his winning ways this year against RMCC's first board Cadet Owen Murphy who is junior and

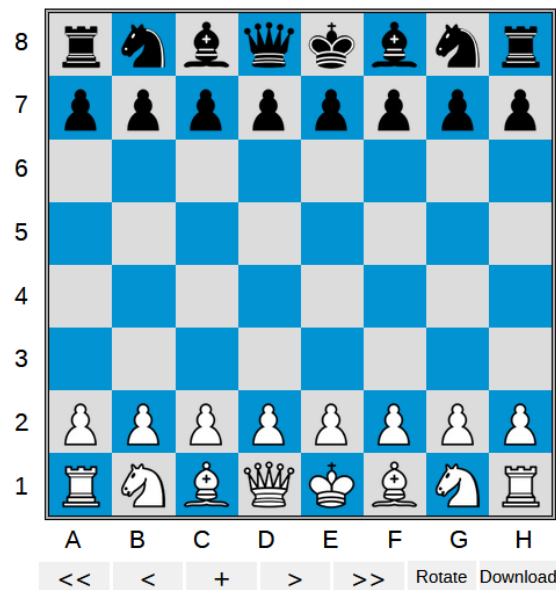
has played in this event every year. Nick will graduate in June and will be commissioned a Finance Second Lieutenant. He will also be playing on the USA NATO chess team in Budapest, Hungary in March. Here is his win from round one.

USMA RMCC MATCH (1.1)

2017.01.21

☐ Murphy, Owen

■ Oblak, Nicholas



1. d4 ♗f6 2. ♗f3 g6 3. ♗c3 ♖g7 4. g3 d5
 5. ♖g2 c6 6. O-O O-O 7. e3 ♖g4 8. ♗d3
 ♗f5 9. ♗d2 ♗c8 10. ♗e1 ♗a6 11. a3 ♗c7
 12. ♗h4 ♗h3 13. e4 ♖g2 14. ♗g2 de4
 15. ♗e4 ♗d8 16. ♗c5 b6 17. ♗b3 ♗e6
 18. ♗b4 c5 19. dc5 bc5 20. ♗h4 c4
 21. ♗d2 c3 22. ♗f3 cb2 23. ♗b2 ♗c2
 24. ♗f6 ♗f6 25. ♗h6 ♗a1 26. ♗e6 ♖g7
 27. ♗e3 fe6 28. ♗e6 ♗h8 29. ♗f4 ♗f5
 30. ♗e7 ♗e8 31. ♗b7 ♗e4 32. ♗e4 ♗e4
 33. ♗g5 ♗e1 34. ♗g2 ♗g8 35. ♗ge6 g5
 36. ♗g5 ♗h6 37. ♗f3 ♗f4 38. ♗e1 ♗d2
 39. ♗d3 ♗c8 40. a4 ♗c4 41. f4 ♗a4 42. f5
 ♗g7 43. h3 ♗f6 44. g4 a5 45. ♗c5 ♗a2
 46. ♗f3 ♗b4 47. ♗d7 ♗e7 48. ♗e5 ♗a3
 49. ♗e4 ♗h3 50. ♗c6 ♗f6 51. ♗f4 ♗d2
 52. ♗e4 a4 53. ♗d4 ♗e3 54. ♗d5
 ♗d3 **0-1**

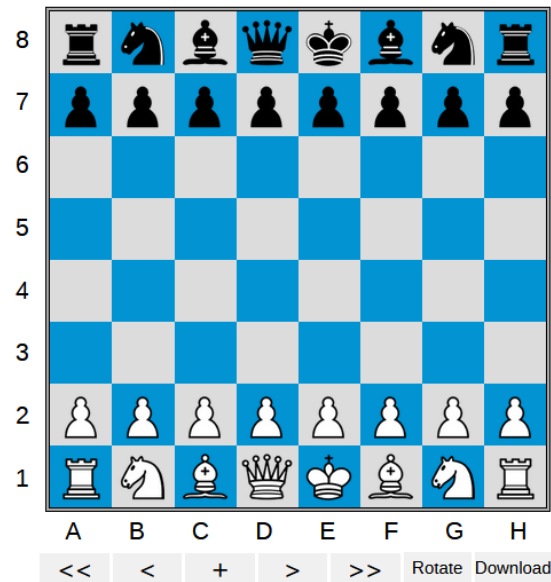
Nick has transitioned his duties as cadet in charge of the West Point Chess Club to Cadet Zade Koch. Zade is a yearling (Sophomore) at West Point and is expected to lead the club for the next two years. Here he plays RMCC's Cadet Laine Sippola, who will be on Canada's NATO team in Budapest.

USMA RMCC MATCH (1.3)

2017.01.21

□ Sippola, Laine

■ Koch, Zade



1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 ♜g7 4. ♗f3 d6
5. ♜g5 O-O 6. e4 c5 7. d5 ♜g4 8. ♜e2
♗bd7 9. O-O ♜f3 10. ♜f3 ♗e5 11. ♜f4 ♗c4
12. b3 ♗b6 13. ♞d3 ♗fd7 14. ♞ad1 ♗e5
15. ♜e5 ♜e5 16. ♜e2 c4 17. ♞e3 cb3
18. ab3 ♜c3 19. ♞c3 ♗d7 20. f4 ♞b6
21. ♞f2 ♞fc8 22. ♞g3 ♗c5 23. ♜d3 ♞b3
24. ♞fd2 ♗d3 25. ♞d3 ♞b6 26. ♜h1 ♞c2
27. ♞c3 ♞c8 28. ♞c8 ♞c8 29. h3 ♞c2
30. ♞f1 ♞b5 31. ♜g1 ♞c5 32. ♜h1 b5
33. f5 ♞c1 34. ♞c1 ♞c1 35. ♜h2 b4 36. fg6
hg6 37. h4 ♞c3 38. ♞g4 b3 39. h5 ♜g7
40. ♞g5 ♞e5 41. ♞e5 de5 **0-1**

After jumping to 6-0 in round one, the match was pretty much over. The West Point cadets though did not let up and scored 6-0 in round two. Cadet Koch defeated Cadet Sippola in round two when Sippola mishandled the opening. It gets a little crazy, but all the lines favor white.

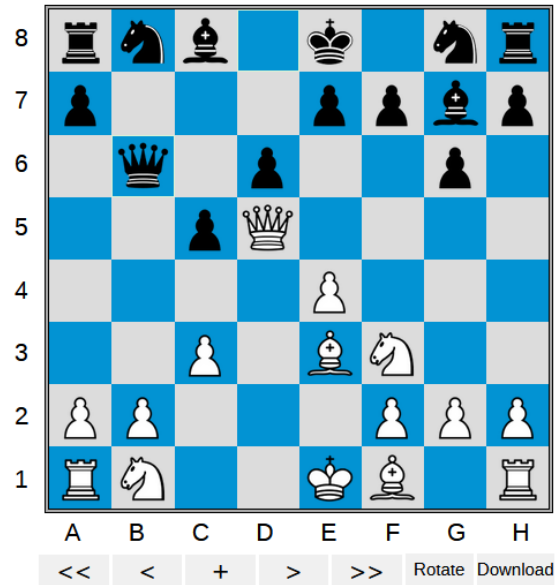
USMA RMCC MATCH (2.3)

2017.01.21

☐ Koch, Zade

■ Sippola, Laine

Annotated by Hater, David



1. e4 c5 2. c3 g6 3. d4 ♔g7 4. dxc5 is ok for white, but black can play ♘c6 and white has no significant advantage 4. ♘f3 d6 Now dxc5 leads to an advantage for white. Black needs to sac a pawn, but his lead in development does not quite compensate. 5. ♔e3 b6 6. dc5 Finally white captures on c5 which will lead to an advantage. Black has to play dxc5, but is significantly worse after ♔b5+ 6... bc5 7. ♗d5 Black is now lost. The next few moves are forced and while the position gets a bit wild, all the lines favor white. 7... ♗b6 ♘c6 is possible but after ♗xc6 ♔d7 white is just up a piece and the position is pretty simple. Even though the complications with ♗b6 don't work, it

might be a better try 8. ♖a8 ♜b2 9. ♙c4
 A "normal" move like ♙d2 may allow
 black to untangle and get back in the
 game. ♙fd2 is also winning, but ♙c4 is
 very accurate. [9. ♙d2 ♙f6 10. ♙c4
 ♙fd7 (10... O-O 11. O-O ♙g4 (11... ♙d7
 12. ♖a7 ♙c6 13. ♖a6 ♙b8) 12. e5 de5
 13. ♙g5 e6 14. h3 ♜b6 15. hg4 ♙c6
 16. ♖f8 ♙f8) 11. O-O ♖a1] 9... ♙c3
 10. ♙d2 Simple moves work. Other
 moves are also good, but there are
 complications. [10. ♙fd2 ♙f6 11. ♙b5
 ♖b5 12. ♙c3 ♜b2 13. ♙b1] [10. ♙d1 ♙f6
 11. ♙d2 ♙d7 12. ♙c3] 10... ♖c1 A cute
 move but white is fine. The
 complications are now starting to clarify
 and they are all in white's favor 11. ♙e2
 ♖h1 12. ♖b8 Now white wins easily
 12... ♙f8 13. ♖c8 ♙g7 14. ♙c3 ♙f6
 15. ♖h3 ♖c1 16. ♙b3 ♖f4 17. ♙bd2 e5
 18. ♖g3 ♖h6 19. ♖g5 ♖g5 20. ♙g5 ♙d8
 21. ♙f7 1-0

So, the final result was 12-0 in favor of the West Point Black Knights, though the match was not nearly as lopsided as the score suggests. RMCC definitely had some chances to score points. The participants of the match were:

USMA vs. RMCC Match

Table

	USMA	Score	RMCC
Board 1	Cadet Nick Oblak, Class of 2017	2-0	Cadet Owen Murphy, Class of 2018
Board 2	Cadet T.J. Killculen, Class of 2020	2-0	Cadet Greg Garber, Class of 2019
Board 3	Cadet Zade Koch, Class of 2019	2-0	Cadet Laine Sippola, Class of 2019
Board 4	Cadet Riaz Lane, Class of 2020	2-0	Cadet Amy Maas, Class of 2019
Board 5	Cadet Riley Dosh, Class of 2017	2-0	Cadet Seth Buren, Class of 2020
Board 6	Cadet Morgan Landers, Class of 2019	2-0	Cadet Chirag Jain, Class of 2020

While we are certainly focused on the chess, the main event of the exchange weekend is the hockey game. This was the 81st game in the series. The West Point cadets have a slight lead in the series having won 44 of the previous 80 games. An interesting trivia fact is that the Riley family accounts for 41 of the 44 victories by the West Point hockey team. Current coach Brian Riley is in his 13th year at West Point. Riley's father John Patrick Riley Jr. coached West Point hockey for 36 years and retired with the second highest amount of hockey coach wins in NCAA history. Riley was also the head coach of the USA Olympic team and directed that squad to its first gold medal. Brian's brother Rob was also the head coach at West Point from 1985 to 2004. The Riley family has been the head coach of West Point hockey since 1951! This year is an up year for the West Point cadets as they are currently leading their Division in the Patriot League at 12-8-3. RMCC is having a down year at 4-18-0 so the West Point cadets entered this contest heavily favored. They did not disappoint as they won by a score of 5-3. The West Point cadets also won debate, crew and judo to sweep the weekend's events. Next year, West Point will be the visiting team at RMCC and will be looking to retain the Challenge Cup!