

The Pittsburgh Chess Club's  
**TUESDAY NIGHT BULLETIN**

Vol. I, No. 2: Richard Abrams Memorial, 2008, Round 2  
 (edited by Federico Garcia)

An intricate position

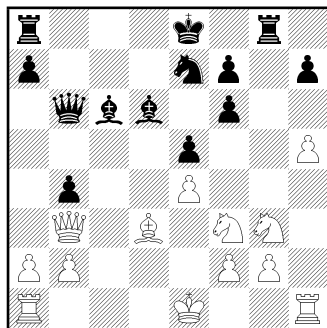
I cannot tell with absolute certainty, but from what I've been able to witness in these first two rounds, the position analyzed below must be among the most interesting of the tournament so far. It comes from one of the two upsets that occurred in round 2, so all the more reason to feature it.

□ Medrano, Hal (1950) Pittsburgh 2008  
 ■ Holsinger, Mike (1555) Chigorin Defense – D07

The first moves are provided with scant commentary, derived from Medrano's post-game research.

1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 dxc4 4 ♘f3 ♙g4?! [×d5  
 △4... ♘f6 5 e4 ♙g4 6 ♙e3 e6 7 ♙xc4] 5 e3?! [5 d5! ♙xf3  
 6 exf3! ♘e5 7 ♙f4 ♘g6 8 ♙xc4!± (8 ♘xf4? ♙b5+ 9 c6  
 dxc6+-) Tukmakov-Vincent, Lugano 1986 (Keene)] 5...  
 e5 6 d5 ♘ce7 7 ♙a4+ [7 ♙xc4] 7... ♙d7 8 ♙xc4 ♘g6  
 9 h4!? [9 e4 ♘f6 10 ♙e2 ♙d6 11 ♙b3] 9... ♙d6 10 h5  
 ♘6e7 11 ♙d3 ♘f6 12 e4?! [△12 h6] 12... c6!? [12...  
 h6] 13 ♙g5 b5!? 14 ♙b3 b4 15 dxc6 ♙xc6 16 ♙xf6?  
 [16 ♘b5! ♘xe4? 17 ♙xe4 ♙xe4 18 ♙d1+-] 16... gxf6  
 17 ♘e2 ♙g8 18 ♘g3?! ♙b6! (D)

Holsinger



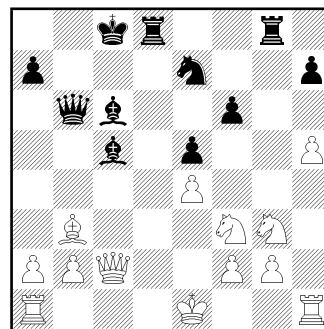
Medrano

18... ♙b6!

So, after a spicy opening, with mutual skirmishes well before development could be completed, the position is wide open, and both kings are in the center. That is the underlying difference between White's last move and Black's. It's hard to suggest that White should have castled either side—but the development of the game shows it would probably have been good. Black's last, on the other hand, is a great move: it not only prepares Black's own castling (a daring one, to be sure, but probably correct), but prevents White's, since now 19 0-0? allows 19... ♙xg3. White now tries some counterplay, but there's no time—Black will get there first!

19 ♙c4 0-0-0! 20 ♙xf7 ♙c5! 21 ♙c2□ [21 ♙xg8  
 ♙xf2+ 22 ♘f1 ♙xg3 (△♙f2#) 23 ♙c2 ♙d2!! 24 ♙xd2  
 ♙b5+ 25 ♙e2 ♙f2#] 21... b3! 22 ♙xb3?! (D)

Holsinger



Medrano

22 ♙xb3

And now all is set for the final pounce. The basic idea is the following variation: 22... ♙b4+! 23 ♘f1? ♙xg3! 24 fxg3 ♙b5+ and White will be mated or lose the queen. (Incidentally, that's why 22 ♙xb3 wasn't best: 22 axb3 ♙b4+ 23 ♘f1 ♙xg3! 24 fxg3 and now the check can be blocked at c4. Black's task would then have been much harder—he would have had to find 24... ♘d5!! 25 ♙xd5 and then 25... ♙xd5!+-.)

However—and this is the hard part—after the original check 22... ♙b4+ White has 23 ♙c3, which seems to halt Black's attack. There's a draw in sight with 23... ♙b6 24 ♙c2□, but is this all Black is going to get?

Checking instead with 22... ♙a5+ 23 ♘f1 (23 ♙c3?? ♙b4) doesn't work in view of 23... ♙xg3? 24 fxg3 ♙b5+ 25 ♙c4. No: the check has to be 22... ♙b4+ and White has to block with 23 ♙c3. One then tends to look for a way to force mate, to remove the threat of the queen trade, to do something immediately useful... but one will fail. The key is again the subtle 23... ♙xg3!!, which doesn't mate but does win a piece and large advantage! Since 23... fxg3 loses to 24 ♙xe4+ ♘f1 25 ♙b5+, the game would probably continue 23... ♙xb4 24 ♙xb4+ ♘f1 25 ♙b5+ ♘g1 26 ♙g4 and Black is on the road to win.

(Once again, the more accurate 22 axb3 wouldn't have avoided the loss, but it would have made it harder to find: 22... ♙b4+ 23 ♙c3 ♙xg3!! 24 fxg3 ♙xe4+ 25 ♘f1 ♙b5+!—this time *not* 25... ♘d5?? 26 ♙xc5+-— 26 ♙c4 ♙d3!!+-.)

Alas, in the diagram Black opted for a similar idea, 22... ♙b4+? 23 ♘f1 ♙xg3? 24 fxg3—except that now the ♙c6 is pinned and can't check!

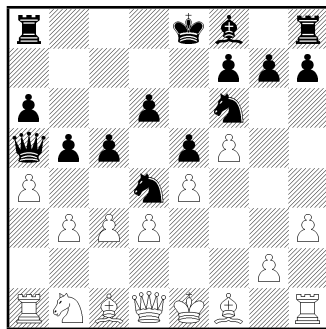
This inaccuracy allowed White to emerge with a material advantage that should have given him the game, but after further complications (also ultimately due to lack of

castling and disconnected rooks), the balance was tipped in Black's favor. Holsinger won, 0–1, at move 39.

## From round 1

The following position arose in the game between Don Meigs and Mike Kobily, who found a clever way of continuing development without having to retreat his slightly overextended pieces. After all, White has some overextended pawns...

Meigs–Kobily



12...?

**12... ♔e7!?** Now White faces the temptation to break the pin and win a piece with 13 b4. The crucial factor, of course, is that **13 b4 ♖×e4!?** and the mate threat on h4 means White cannot take the queen. But there are other pieces to take—can Black really get away with this? Let's see:

- 14 cxd4 ♖×b4+! (the immediate 14... ♔h4+ runs into 15 ♖f2 ♖g3+ 16 ♖f3 ♖×b4 17 axb5+-) 15 ♔d2 (15 ♖e2 ♖g3+△♖×h1) 15... ♔h4+ 16 g3 (16 ♖e2 ♖g3+ 17 ♖f3 ♖×d4, hitting two rooks) 16... ♖×d4 17 dxe4 ♔×g3+ 18 ♖e2 ♖×e4+ 19 ♔e3 ♖×h1+-
- 14 dxe4 ♔×h4+ 15 ♖d2 ♔g5+ and Black (outrated by almost 400 points) has a draw because 16 ♖d3?? c4#!
- White can also try delaying the capture (since Black won't have time to save three pieces), but it doesn't work: 14 g3 cxb4 15 cxd4 ♖×g3! and now all of White's options are good for Black:
  - 16 ♖f3 ♖c8 17 ♖×g3 ♖×c1+ 18 ♖d2 ♖c7+
  - 16 ♔g2 ♖c8 17 ♖g1 ♖×f5 (with the renewed threat on h4) 18 ♖f1 ♖c7+
  - 16 ♖g1 ♖×f5 17 ♖f3 ♖c8 18 ♔b2 ♖c7+

Meigs, therefore, was correct in avoiding the trap and playing the prophylactic **2 ♖f2**. He eventually won the game.

## The openings

A bad day for off-beat openings. With the exception of a successful Chigorin defense (1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♖c6, scoring an upset), attempts at either surprising opponents with

strange moves, or postponing the fight with non-committal setups, fared badly. English and Orangutans lost, and the Alapin Sicilian got a draw (a meritorious one, though, overcoming a 400 rating point difference—the other Sicilian in the round was won by Black).

## Opening break-up: Round 2

### 1 e4: 7 games

- ↳ Double King's Pawn: 2 games
  - ↳ Three knights: 1 game (1–0)
  - ↳ Italian: 1 game (1–0)
- ↳ Sicilian: 2 games
  - ↳ Closed: 1 game (0–1)
  - ↳ Alapin: 1 game (½\*)
- ↳ French: 1 game
  - ↳ Advance: 1 game (1–0)
  - ↳ Steinitz: 1 game (1–0)
- ↳ Pirc: 1 game (1–0)

### 1 d4: 4 games

- ↳ Queen's Gambit Declined: 2 games
  - ↳ Exchange: 1 game (1–0)
  - ↳ Chigorin: 1 game (0–1\*)
- ↳ Indian defenses: 2 games
  - ↳ Benoni (by tr.): 1 game (0–1)
  - ↳ King's Indian: 1 game (1–0\*)

### 1 c4: 2 games

- ↳ Reversed Closed Sicilian: 1 game (0–1)
- ↳ Symmetric: 1 game (0–1)

### 1 b4: 1 game (0–1)

\* Upset (incl. draws with rating difference over 200 pts.)

## Opening statistics

Class	<i>n</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>H</i> : <i>L</i>
Round 2			
DKP	2	100%	2:0
KP defenses	5	70% (+3-1=1)	3:2
DQP	2	50% (+1-1)	2:0
Indians	2	50% (+1-1)	0:2
English	2	0%	0:2
Others	1	0%	0:1
Cumulative			
DKP	5	60% (+3-2)	4:1 (80%)
KP defenses	10	55% (+5-4=1)	5:5 (50%)
DQP	4	75% (+3-1)	4:0 (100%)
Indians	2	50% (+1-1)	0:2 (0%)
KBF/English	6	33% (+2-4)	1:4 (20%)
Others	1	0%	0:1 (0%)

**DKP** Double King's Pawn

**KP defenses** Defenses to 1 e4

**DQP** Double Queen's Pawn

**KBF** King's Bishop Fianchetto

*n* number of games

*P* performance for White

*H* : *L* rating ratio: number of games where White was higher rated to number of games where Black was.