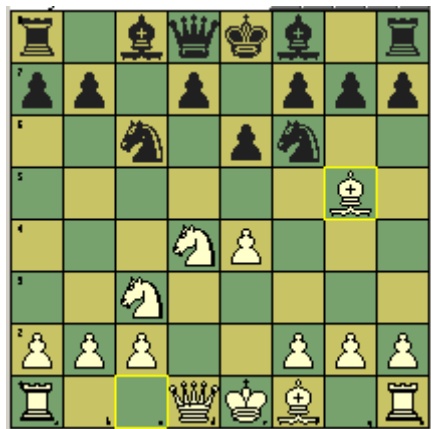


## Every now and then you play a game where Tal like moves are right at your finger tips!

In round three of the NC chess Invitational I faced Audrey Chumachenko the defending Invitational champion. Chumachenko and I have faced each other two other times and each of those games ended in draws. He is a very solid chess player with a Karpov style of play. The tournament format disclosed colors and opponents for each round in advance. You would think this would be an advantage to the better prepared.

Opening play went accordingly. But I was expecting the Sceshnikov Laker-Pelikan variation of the Sicilian. The position after move five is relatively normal for the most part with respect to the Taimanov variation or maybe the four Knight variation. So, there goes my preparation! In any case, whenever you're in a Sicilian you need to play with confidence. My thoughts were to play the most flexible move and 5.Bg5 appeared to fit. But, 5.Ndb5, 5.Nxc6, or 5.Be2 maybe better ideas.

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 e6 6. Bg5



Black to move

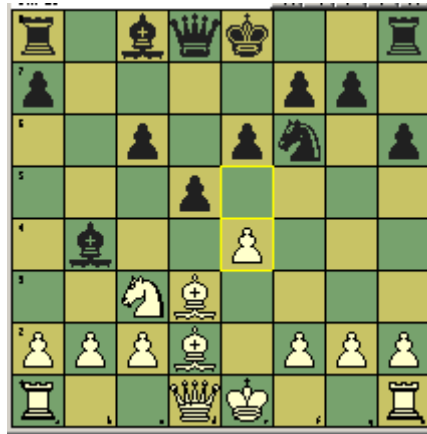
Black played 5....Bb4 and we are following a game from Chigorin Mem tournament in St Petersburg RUS, 2000 with Zhelnin,V (2462 vs Filippov,V (2593). In that game, White played 6.Nd-b5. I preferred exchanging the knights and developing my Bishop to d3. The onus would now be on black to define the course of play. Black played natural looking moves and we arrived at the following position after 9...d5. This move allows for white to play aggressively. It may have been better for black to protect the e5 square with 9...d6. Zeb Fortman, a long time friend found a game Krizannvic, Z-Rucher,D instanbul 2004 with the line 9... d6 10.O-O O-O 11. h3 e5 12. a3 Ba5 13. b4 Bc7 14. f4 a5 15. Qf3 exf4 16. Bxf4 Bb6+ 17. Kh1 Bd4 18. Bd2 Be6 19. Rae1 axb4 20. axb4 Nd7 21. Ne2 Bf6 22. Qg3 Bh4 23. Qxd6 Bxe1 24. Rxe1 .....0-1 many moves later.

Maybe Chumanchenko and I will explore this position again?

A word of advice when playing the Sicilian defense, “Be careful of the Natural looking moves!”

So, in many Sicilians positions, Black equalizes if d5 is achieved. But the following position begs for 10.e5 and I am favoring white’s position.

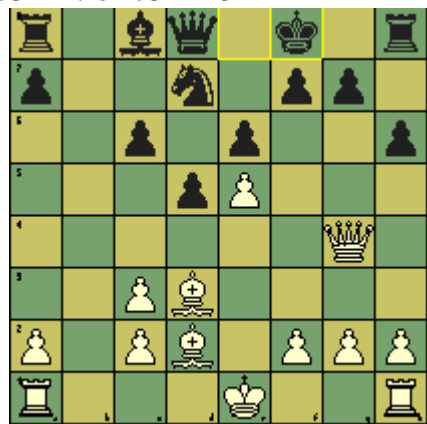
6.....Bb4 7. Nxc6 bxc6 8. Bd3 h6 9. Bd2 d5



White to move

The idea of playing 10.exd5 simply didn’t appeal to me. The game progresses to the following position and I really feel very comfortable after 12.....Kf8. Black could have played g6, but the dark squared weaknesses is jumping off the board.

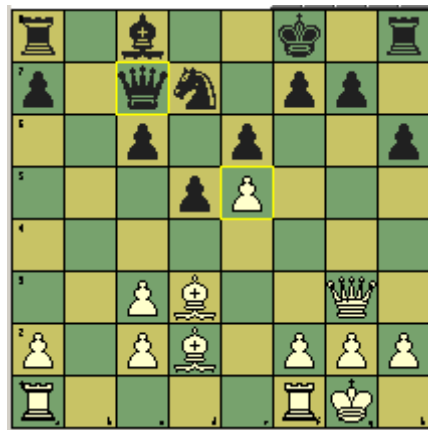
10. e5 Nd7 11. Qg4 Bxc3 12. bxc3 Kf8



White to move

The above position is much easier for white to play and White’s pawn weaknesses may be inconsequential.

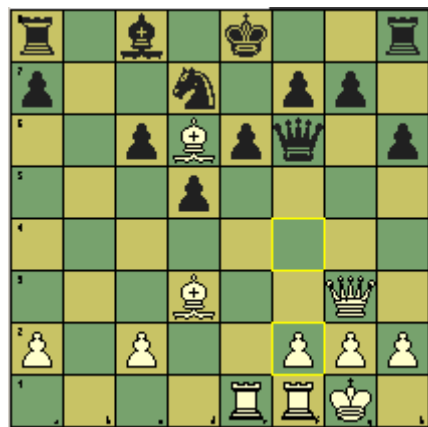
13. Qg3 Qc7 14. O-O



Black to move.

The point of no return now faces Black! Do you really want to win the pawn? If not then what is the plan? This is the type of position that challenges the materialist. Black will go up two pawns but the price is high.

Qxe5 15. Bf4 Qxc3 16. Bd6+ Ke8 17. Rae1 Qf6

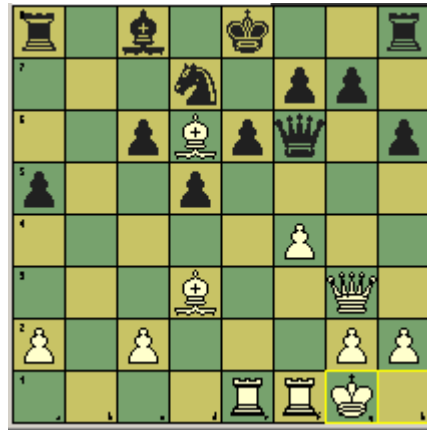


White to move.

This is the type of position that attacking player's dream of; Opponent's king stuck in the center, weak squares, uncontested Bishop, and Bishop pair! So what can I say, third game of the day, 30 minutes to make eighteen moves, excuses just don't seem appropriate. I missed the brilliant 17.Rxe6!! and Black will have to give up the Queen.  
e.g.: 18.Rxe6+ Qxe6 (18... fxe6 19. Bg6+ Qxg6 Forced (19....Kd8 20. Bc7+ Kd7 21.Qd6 mate.) 20. Qxg6+ Kd8 21. Qxg7 and Black is lost.) 19. Bf5 Qf6 20. Re1+ Ne5 21. Bxe5 Qxf5 22.Qxg7 Rh7 23. Bd4+ Kd7 24. Qf8 Qe6 25. Rxe6 fxe6 26. Be5

I played the natural looking move 18.f4 with the idea of bringing all of my pieces into the party.

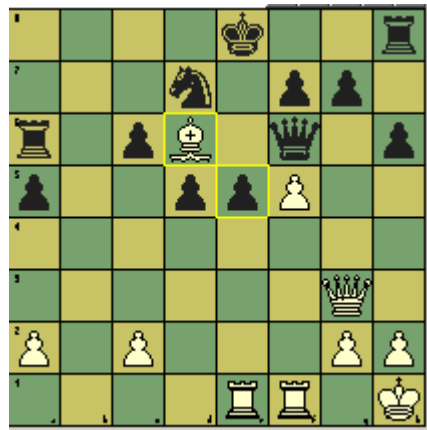
18. f4 a5



White to move

Now, 19.f5 is better. But again the natural idea of putting my king to a non checking square appealed to me. I am clearly not analyzing the position well.

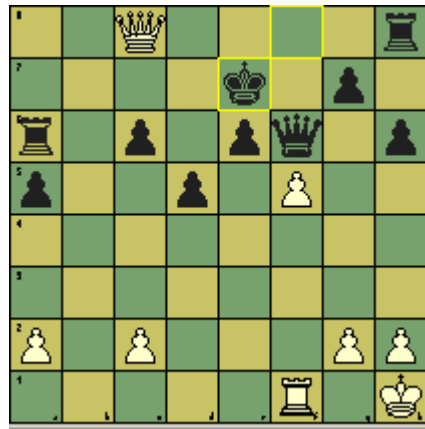
19. Kh1 Ba6 20. Bxa6 Rxa6 21. f5 e5



White to move

The thought here is to play: 22. Rxe5+ and White can celebrate victory –Zeb--, Nxe5 23. Bxe5 Qg5 24. Qb3 and let Fritz explain the rest. I will admit I am OK with not playing 22. Rxe5. I looked at it and I just couldn't justify the move. Fritz has the ability to make a chess player feel human.

22. Bxe5 Nxe5 23. Rxe5+ Kf8 24. Re6 fxe6 25. Qb8+ Ke7 26. Qc7+ Kf8  
 (Forced 26...Ke8 27. Rb1 and is in trouble.) 27. Qc8+ Ke7 28. Qc7+ Kf8  
 1/2-1/2



Draw agreed

The game ended with possibilities still available for me, but I just wasn't in tune with pressing on. Draw agreed.