

By Matthew K

The SuperNationals this year were held in Nashville, Tennessee in the Gaylord Opryland Resort Convention Center. To any tourist, the theme of the resort was unmistakably chess, as you could see kids playing blitz games or analyzing positions at all corners of the complex. Lectures and simuls were being held by premier players, while a record 5230 players from across the United States competed in the third SuperNationals.

The sun rose on the magnificent resort on April 10th, signaling the final day of the 2005 edition of the SuperNationals. I had concluded the previous evening with a win, giving me 4 points out of 5 rounds. In order to obtain any kind of score that competed for first place, I would have to emerge victorious in the final two rounds: the 6th with the white pieces and the final with the black. The moves from the morning round are as follows.

1. d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.f3 d5 5. a3 Bxc3 6.bxc3 b6 7.cxd5 exd5 8.e3 Bb7 9.Bd3 0-0 10.Ne2 Nbd7 11.Ng3 Re8 12.0-0 c5 13.Ra2 A common move in these positions, with the idea of transferring the rook to the more active e- or f- files where it will aid in the kingside attack, i.e. the advance of e3-e4. 13...Qc7 14.Re2 h5? An unnecessary move that weakens the kingside. 15.Bd2 c4?? As I returned to board from refilling my water cup, a sudden sense of relief blanketed my conscience as I knew that I had now obtained a decisive advantage. In this pawn structure, black usually tries to put as much pressure on white's attractive-looking center, trying to prevent any kingside attack. By pushing the c-pawn instead of exchanging it at the right moment, black resigns to the fact that white's center can no longer be stopped from advancing due to the support of the c-pawn for its colleague on d4. This move decided the outcome. 16.Bb1 Qd6 17.e4 Giving up a pawn in order to commence the marching of the kingside pawns. See Botvinnik-Capablanca, 1938. 17...h4 18.e5 Qxa3 19.Nf5 Nh7 20. Nd6 Bc6 21.Bxh7+ Kxh7 22.Qc2+ Kg8 23.Nxe8 Rxe8 24.f4 Qe7 25.f5 Ra8 26.Rf4 a5 27.Re1 a4 28.f6 The wedge is in! Qa3 [gxf6 29.Rg4+ Kf8 30.Qh7 Qa3 31.exf6 Nxf6 32.Qh8+] 29.Rxh4 g6 30.Bc1 Qf8 31.Bh6 Black resigned in view of 31. Bh6 Qa3 32.Bg7 or giving up his queen for no counterplay.

I felt most proud about this game and it gave me enough confidence to withstand an attack in the final round to achieve the second necessary win. In conclusion, I ended the tournament with 6 points out of 7, and tied for 1st-9th place.