

CTCA International Chess Open

Day 6

Round 5

The round started off very slowly. Marcus finished only after 2 hours of playing. After a good opening he managed to win a piece. In the endgame he tried to checkmate his opponent instead of just promoting his pawn. His opponent managed to take all his pawns while avoiding the checkmate and Marcus had to settle for a draw.

Gabriel had to face his co-leader, who was also undefeated so far. Knowing his preparation was solid, he confidently started the game. His opponent deviated from the preparation, but it didn't scare Gabriel. On the contrary, when his opponent left his queen too far out, Gabriel managed to trap it. The technical phase took a big longer than necessary, but the win was never in danger.



Gabriel beat tournament winner Andersen Yang

Boris' goal for today was to play more active chess. In his Fried Liver he sacrificed a pawn to get his pieces to active squares. When he spotted a battery, he opened the d-file for a long, forced exchange which left him a pawn up. His opponent was kind enough to add an extra rook, which was gladly taken by Boris.



Finding a way to beat James

The longest game of the day was between roommates James and Gerent. In the dreaded Catalan Gerent quickly grabbed the initiative. Slowly increasing his advantage, it seemed like a convincing game. What could go wrong with 2 pawns up in the endgame? Using the clock and his rook's activity, James manage to pose some difficulties for Gerent. The final position was so complicated that Gerent decided not to risk it and settle for a draw.

Round 6

After 5 long days everybody was getting tired, and it showed. Marcus got another good position from the opening. Instead of starting his attacking plan he tried to go for a "cheap trick", but weakening his kingside in the process. His opponent side-stepped his trick and exploited all the weaknesses. After 1.5 hours Marcus had to throw in the towel.

Gabriel also got everything he wanted out of the opening. At two moments he had the opportunity to win his opponents d-pawn. Instead, in a moment off chess-blindness, he blundered his bishop. His first loss allowed two competitors to catch up with him. With still 3 rounds to go, anything can happen.

Boris knew what he had to do: win, so he would be playing the rating favorite next morning. Claiming not to know the Benko-Gambit, he managed to find the right plan. When his opponent tried to win back the pawn on a2, Boris just simply trapped the bishop there. Boris knew he couldn't win the bishop immediately, but made sure that black had to invest so many resources into protecting it, that eventually he would be able to win on the rest of the board. A simple tactic decided the game. After the unfortunate loss in the second round, he is back at the top with 5/6.



Gerent had to play another HK-er, Nicholas Woo. The boys decided to close the whole position right after the opening. A couple more pieces were traded and the peace was signed.



This HK battle ended in a peaceful draw

James finally managed to finally finish early! He went for a Sicilian and quickly got his opponent “out of book”. He grabbed a pawn, traded off pieces while avoiding any counterplay and converted the extra pawn into a win. Like a professional.

With everybody finishing before dinner time, it was finally possible for the boys to play a game of “Saboteur”.



Saboteur: Can you spot the bad guys?

Day 7

Round 7

The round started off with a blast. In less than 20 minutes Marcus had checkmated his opponent. At one moment he could have played a bit more precise, but those were just details. A good game, bringing him back to the top boards.

Having brushed off last round's loss, Gabriel was all refreshed for the games today. Sacrificing a piece right out of the opening, he set the board on fire. His opponent was unable to deal with all the threats and quickly erred. Gabriel made no mistake and quickly finished it off.



Ready to go for it again!

The most anticipated game was the clash between Boris and Felix Xie (rated 1719!) from New Zealand. Felix managed to avoid the preparation by choosing a different plan. Boris got a decent position, but had to spend a lot of time. This was the time he wished he had at the critical moment. Instead of grabbing material and allowing an attack for white, with little time on the clock he chose the safe option. This led into a difficult rook endgame, which turned out to be impossible to defend with less than 5 minutes on the clock.

Gerent got his beloved exchange variation again. But this time his attack never really got off. He decided to sacrifice a pawn, but this didn't really help him either. His opponent just traded off all the pieces. After some inaccuracies in the endgame, he found himself in a losing position. Another mistake sealed his fate.

Of course James was the last to finish again. While the rest was having lunch already, James was still trying to win an endgame. Despite all his efforts, his opponent managed to avoid all the traps James laid out for him. With nothing left to try, James accepted the draw.

Round 8

The last bits weigh the most. The tournament has clearly worn out Marcus. In a very difficult game against one of the tournament leaders, he had been defending for most of the time. Bit by bit he got out from under the pressure but when it was finally time to think about attacking, Marcus blundered a rook.

7:03

2019 CTCA INTERNATIONAL CHESS OPEN



Marcus giving some tips to the GM

Gabriel played a game that could have been from a book. After the opening he found a combination to win a pawn. He skilfully traded off into a rook endgame. The rook endgame turned out to be more complicated than expected. He missed a couple of opportunities to walk in with his king and finally allowed his opponent to break free and trade off all the pawns. A draw was the result and with both co-leaders winning, he was now trailing by half a point.

Boris got out prepared. This resulted in a difficult position with a pawn down. He managed to win the pawn back eventually, but the biggest damage was on the clock. In an endgame with major pieces, he lacked the time to find the best moves and saw the game slowly slipping away from him.

Gerent had one simple assignment: Show his coach two more good games. He decided to use his London for the 8th round. It seemed like black was getting a lot of pieces towards his king, but Gerent had calculated everything. He grabbed a rook, but made sure his queen was back in the defence right on time. A convincing win.



Smiling before the game

We can all guess who was the latest to finish. Facing the girl who beat Gerent in the morning, James promised to avenge him. In the middlegame he seemed to be simply overrunning his opponent. A couple of wrong trades allowed her to escape into an endgame. James kept pressing, but she kept her defences closed. James didn't give up, and after 4.5 hours of playing she finally slipped up. James will go into the final round as the leader, having won the direct encounter against his co-leader.

Day 8

Decision day! Everybody was up bright and early to have a good breakfast and with good reason: All players still had a shot on getting a medal or trophy. Before the game parents and coach joked that all we needed was 5 points. It turned out to be a good prediction...



Breakfast of champions

Round 9

Marcus loves to go for opposite side castling, so when his opponent played the Sicilian Defense, he eagerly went for it. Marcus pushed his pawns forward and started targeting the black king. His opponent didn't have a proper response and soon her fate was sealed. The end result was 5.5/9 and definitely a top 8 spot. A great result for his first big tournament!

Second to come out was Gabriel. He was smilingly telling us how lucky he was. Overcome by nerves, he made a mistake right out of the opening. Trying to get back into the game, he went for a bad combination, which cost him even more material. He tried to keep his cool and noticed that his opponent's king was exposed. He distracted his opponent by pretending to go for some pawn snatching. His opponent reacted by protecting his pawns but suddenly got checkmated on the other side of the board. Indeed a lucky escape and with 7.5/9 Gabriel had to wait what the leaders would do.

Boris' dad asked him to play a quick game today and not to get into time trouble. Boris gladly obliged. In a for him well known variation, he tricked his opponent. Rather than giving up his knight, his opponent allowed a checkmate. 13 moves, I hope you're happy dad!

With 6 out of 9 Boris had a good tournament. We're wondering what would've happened if had actually converted all his good positions...



Go-karting

Gerent had one more good game to play, and so he did. Playing against James' co-leader, we expected a tough game. Gerent thought differently. He tricked his opponent, won an exchange and traded off into an easily won endgame. A good tournament, but like Boris some chances to score even more

James was begged to play a quick attacking game. It's not so easy though, when your opponent is just trying to trade off all the pieces. James knew what he had to do, only trade his opponent's active pieces and keep the rest on the board. He managed to launch an attack on the f-file and in less than 2.5 hours it was over. A convincing (tournament) win by James!

So, with 5 points in our pockets, we had to wait for the prize giving ceremony. We decided to go for a bit more sightseeing and go-karting.

Back at the hotel at 6pm, everybody had time to shower and make sure to look good for the ceremony. Parents and kids enjoyed a nice dinner during the ceremony.



Marcus 6th (5.5/9)



Gabriel 3rd (7.5/9)



Boris 4th (6/9)



Gerent 5th (6/9)



James 1st (7.5/9)

After the ceremony it was time to unwind at the "Love River" with and ice cold beer!



Time to unwind



Team Caissa!