



INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE CHESS FEDERATION

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Press Release

Wieland Belka Earns the ICCF IM Title (revised)

Wieland Belka has earned the title of Correspondence International Master (IM). His Medal and Title Certificate were awarded on July 23, 2013 at the ICCF Congress in Kraków, Poland. Wieland achieved his two requisite norms in the Chessfriends Rochade 5171 - 20 Years Team Tournament on board 7 and in the 35th World Correspondence Chess Championship Semifinal #13 events. In the category VI Rochade tourney he scored 9 points, exceeding the IM standard by ½ point. In the category VIII WCCC Semi, he scored 8 points, 1-½ points above IM level and, in fact, exceeding the SIM norm of 7-½ points by ½-point. Of special note is the fact that the Rochade chess club is one of Germany's largest, and has sponsored prestigious team tournaments for the club's 15th and 20th anniversaries. Ten member ICCF-US and North American Postal Zone (NAPZ) teams have competed in each of these events, and Wieland's win is the only first place finish for an ICCF-US player. His tie for first in the WCCC Semi, qualifies him to ascend to the next level toward the World Correspondence Chess Championship. In his two title qualifying events, he played against 19 titled opponents: one GM, eleven SIMs and seven IMs, finishing with an undefeated record of 8 wins and 18 draws. The links to the crosstables of the cited tournaments are as follows:

<http://www.iccf-webchess.com/EventCrossTable.aspx?id=19631>

and

<http://www.iccf-webchess.com/EventCrossTable.aspx?id=25976>

Wieland currently resides in Cottbus, Germany but plays under the USA federation. He first learned chess at age 11 from his father using his father's 1956 chess book and his grandfather's board and set from the 1930's. By the next year he was beating his father. He then played at a local chess club and soon became one of the strongest club players. At age 17 Wieland left his home town to attend a trade school, followed by military service and studies at the Technical University in Dresden where he earned an academic degree. Coupled with the fact that he was married with a young son and his continued studies at another university he found correspondence chess fit his schedule but he limited his play to only international private games. He entered his first national tournament in 1975. It would be another 14 years until he would enter his first ICCF international tournament. In the 1990's he took another sabbatical from chess. Wieland returned to the game around 2000 playing on small servers. In 2006, reinvigorated, he once again joined ICCF play. He entered the international Open "60 years BdF" tournament and finished second in the preliminaries, qualifying for the semis. He tied for first in his semifinal section, just falling short of an IM Norm by ½-point. In the final he finished tied for 4th. Wieland's immediate chess goals are to achieve his second norm for the international SIM title and to play 'satisfying' chess in his section of the 33rd World Championship Candidates tournament this year.

For Immediate Release 8:00 p.m. EDT, September 10, 2013 more

Here is a game <http://www.iccfus.com/gameofthemonth/games/belka.htm> annotated by Wieland. It is from the 35th World Correspondence Chess Championship Semifinal #13 tournament which helped earn the IM title. In this game he surprises SIM Valery Myakutin with a novelty in a line favored by the Russian. It had recently been successfully employed by SIM Buse in the 2011 GER-RUS Friendly match, <http://www.iccf-webchess.com/MakeAMove.aspx?id=311889>, but was, as of then, unpublished in any database. Follow Wieland's thought processes as he skillfully manages his exchange sacrifice, converts into a queenside pawn majority and finally a deadly passer.

[ECO "B33]

[Opening "Sicilian Sveshnikov"]

[Event "WCCC SF 13"]

[Site "ICCF"]

[StartDate "2011"]

[White "Belka, Wieland (USA)"]

[Black "SIM Myakutin, Valery Igorevich (RUS)"]

[Result "1-0"]

[WhiteElo "2440"]

[BlackElo "2423"]

I prepared for this WCCC SF tournament by carefully searching for my opponents' favored openings and lines. I knew my opponent is a Sicilian Lasker line player but that covers a large field. Every now and then I have a look at the top 20 live games offered via ICCF website. The huge Friendly Match Germany vs. Russia was on-going; most top boards were running yet but a single game was won: SIM Buse – GM Kochemasov in favor of GM Buse. That was interesting of course, and what a surprise: It was a Sicilian Lasker game! And even more surprising: SIM Buse played an unknown sacrificing move early in the opening! I must confess I love wild and exciting chess, and this game inspired me a lot ... **1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6** [2...d6 ... was Myakutin's second favorite choice in the past] **3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 e5 6.Ndb5 d6 7.Bg5 a6 8.Na3 b5** ... in all reference games played by Myakutin up to 2010. At this point both sides followed a well-known book line but now I had to make a first decision: 9.Nd5... or 9.Bxf6... ? **9.Bxf6** ... just a 2nd favored book move but my favored move after a deep analysis, and staying in the Buse game. [9.Nd5 ... favored book move 9...Be7 10.Bxf6 Bxf6 11.c3 0-0 (11...Ne7 12.Nxf6+ gxf6 13.Be2; 11...Bg5 12.Nc2 Rb8 13.a4 bxa4 14.Nce3) 12.Nc2 Bg5 13.a4 bxa4 14.Rxa4 a5 15.Bc4 Rb8 (15...Bd7; 15...Ne7)] **9...gxf6 10.Nd5** ... book move **10...f5** ... my opponent remained true. Now came the critical decision: to follow the book thus leaving Myakutin's games played so far, or to follow his prior games? My desire to reach that exciting Buse position, sacrificing a knight, was the deciding factor so I deviated from book ... **11.c3** ... the second most popular book move but most importantly remaining in the Buse – Kochemasov game. [11.Bxb5 ... another 2nd favored book move 11...axb5 12.Nxb5 Ra4 13.Nbc7+; 11.Bd3 ... favored book move but no Myakutin reference games 11...Be6 12.c3 Bg7 13.Nc2 Bxd5 14.exd5 Ne7] **11...Bg7 12.Bd3** ... at least equal to the alternative, and remaining in the Buse – Kochemasov game. At this point no Myakutin reference games exist. [12.exf5 ... is book 12...Bxf5 13.Nc2!? ... Jacob Aagaard's recommendation in 'Experts vs. the Sicilian'. One last Myakutin game remained. 13...0-0 ... Myakutin's choice so far 14.Nce3 Be6] **12...Be6** ... wow, I achieved the position I was aiming for! Since the game Buse – Kochemasov game had not yet been included in the ICCF games archive, this was a true chance to surprise my opponent! **13.Nxb5!?** ... and here we go, a very daring and very long-term quality sacrifice! Up to here I had already analyzed very widely and deeply, but with slightly better results for the alternatives. [13.Nc2; 13.0-0] **13...Bxd5?!** ... my opponent replied only after a long think--I surprised my opponent entirely! And unbelievably he replied with a move which deviated from all analysis and from my stem game! Now I am on my own already, the battle starts ... [13...axb5 14.Bxb5 Bd7 15.exf5] **14.exd5 Ne7 15.Na3 0-0 16.0-0 e4 17.Bc4** [17.Be2 f4 18.Nc4] **17...Ng6 18.Re1 Qg5** ... a move which I had overlooked but which subsequent analysis convinced me was his best! **19.Bf1** [19.Qc1 Qh4 20.g3 Qe7] **19...Ne5** [19...Rfe8 20.Nc4 Ne5; 19...Rfb8 20.Rb1 Ne5 21.Re3 h5] **20.Re3** ... a committing move **20...Rfc8** [20...Rab8 21.Rb1 Rfe8 22.Be2] **21.Rg3** ... the logical consequence **21...Qf6 22.Rh3 Qg5** ... his idea seems to be clear: repetition of moves?! **23.Rg3** ... a second repetition [23.Qh5!? ... in retrospect was perhaps the better chance? 23...Qg6 24.Nc2 Nf3+ 25.Kh1; 23.Nc2] **23...Qf6 24.Nc2** ... a liberating move eschewing repetition **24...Rcb8** ... for the last few moves my opponent replied with what I felt was his best line so he apparently analyzed as deeply as I did **25.b4!?** ... a move only found after several days of analysis and pointing to the future [25.Rb1 f4 26.Rh3 Qg6; 25.Qc1 f4 26.Rh3 Ng4] **25...f4** ... decided after another long think **26.Rh3 Qg6 27.Rc1 Re8 28.c4** ... playing aggressively: the white pawn majority will be quickly brought to bear! Black is now in some difficulty to develop a plan. **28...Nf3+?!** ... maybe not the best [28...Rac8 29.Nd4; 28...f3 29.c5] **29.Rxf3!? exf3 30.Qxf3** ... a double-edged position: what is the correct long-term continuation? **30...Rac8** [30...a5 ... an aggressive attempt to exchange the weak pawn! 31.b5] **31.a4** ... instinctively the promise of a pawn storm on the queenside must be worth something! Black has maintained material equality but suffers significant weaknesses in pawn structure and Rooks are not good defenders. **31...Qe4** ... after another long think my opponent surprises me for a second time with a move I have not considered. **32.Qd1!?** [32.Qxe4?! Rxe4 33.Ne1 (33.b5 axb5 34.axb5 Ra8) 33...Bc3 34.Nc2 Bg7] **32...Bc3 33.Rb1 Kh8?!** I looked at 12 possible

replies but not this one – a move I still do not understand. **34.Bd3 Qe5** ... immediately replied **35.Qf3 f6?! [35...Rg8 36.Rb3 f6 37.a5]** **36.g3** a key subtle move which has opened up a small window for more than a draw! **36...Bd2?! ...** after a long reflection a weak response; White would build his advantage slowly by ... [36...Rc7 37.Qxf4 Qxf4 38.gxf4] **37.Rd1 Qc3** ... as expected **38.Kg2 Re5 [38...Rc7 39.c5 dxc5 40.d6]** **39.a5 Rg8?** ... this time a relatively quick reply with a weak move but is this a result of despair? [39...Ra8 40.c5 dxc5 41.bxc5 Qxc5 42.Rxd2 Qxd5 43.Bc4] **40.b5** ... this is the pawn storm on the queenside envisioned by the move 13 sacrifice. **40...axb5?! ...** after one day this response was not best [40...Ree8 41.bxa6 Rg7 42.Rb1; 40...Rg7 41.bxa6 Re8 42.Rb1; 40...Re7 41.bxa6 Rf8 42.c5] **41.cxb5 Qxa5 42.Ra1!** .. after six or seven days of analysis I opted over the alternative 42.Nd4 whereby I would be merely a pawn to the good in an unclear opposite colored bishop endgame. [42.Nd4 Qc3 43.Nf5 Rxf5 44.Bxf5 fxg3 45.fxg3] **42...Qc7 43.Nd4** ... Black has held material equality but now he might have to sacrifice material in order to maintain the balance **43...Be3?! there may not be much better alternatives [43...Ree8 44.Ne6 (44.Ra6 Qc3 45.Ra7 Rg7 46.Ra4) 44...Qf7 45.Ra2]** **44.fxe3 Rxe3** ... immediately replied **45.Qf1 Qf7 46.Ne6 fxg3 47.h4** ... the pawn becomes vulnerable but secures the g5 square for the knight! **47...f5 48.Qc1 Qf6 49.Qxe3 Qxa1 50.Be2 Qf6?** ... a catastrophic failure. He must have completely overlooked b6 for whatever reason ... Now it should go pretty fast ... [50...Rb8 51.Kxg3 Qf6] **51.b6!** the path to the end is now quite clear **51...f4 52.Qc1** ... this should win the fastest **52...h6** ... black is in agony **53.b7! Qe5 54.Bf3 h5** ... my opponent delays the game but I understand his situation: it's hard to admit defeat. **55.Qc2** ... targeting the black king and the h7 square **55...Qa1 56.Bxh5** ... and finally my opponent threw in the towel. Myakutin wrote: "Thank you for the interesting game and congratulations to your win. All the best for you in the future." – This was indeed a hard battle for both sides. Both players invested a lot of time and effort in this game. But my tactics worked: Play sharply and surprisingly! **1-0 [Belka]**