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Press Release

Liam Fuller Earns the ICCF IM Title

William (Liam) E. Fuller has earned the title of Correspondence International Master (IM). His Medal and Title Certificate will be awarded at the 2014 ICCF Congress to be held from October 11th through 18th in Sydney, Australia. Liam achieved his two requisite norms in the World Correspondence Chess Championship 36, Preliminary Section 4 (WCCC36PR04) and in the WebServer MasterNorm 89 (WS/MN/089) events. In WCCC36PR04 his score of 10.0 in the Category III tournament with 15 players equaled the IM Norm standard. In WS/MN/089 his score of 8.0 in the Category IV event with 13 players equaled the IM Norm threshold and was good enough for first place. Liam was pitted against titled players in 8 of his 26 games. He tallied 2 wins and 4 draws vs. IMs and 2 draws vs. Senior International Masters (SIMs) in these tournaments. His overall record was 10 wins, and 16 draws without a loss. The links to the crosstables of the cited tournaments are as follows:

http://www.iccf-webchess.com/EventCrossTable.aspx?id=29265
and
http://www.iccf-webchess.com/EventCrossTable.aspx?id=31306

Liam only started playing chess at the relatively old age of 21! He entered his first tournament when he was 24 sporting an over the board (OTB) provisional rating of 1700. His rating improved rapidly and in one year he was at playing at an Expert level. He is currently a high Expert, having reached a peak rating of 2198 in the mid-1990's. His best OTB results included a tie for 1st in the 1995 Amateur North (5.5/6.0), a tie for 1st in the 1996 Amateur North (5.5/6.0), outright 1st in the 1996 Midwest Class Championship (4.5/5.0) and 2nd in the 2013 Kentucky Open (4.0/5.0). After 1998 he played very infrequently, more recently taking up the game in earnest again in 2009. That is also when he discovered correspondence chess. His correspondence rating has increased for 14 consecutive ICCF rating notices since 2010/3 rising from 2221 to his current forecast of 2398.

Liam has worked for the past four years at Infinity Chess http://www.infinitychess.com/ and for the past two years as an Administrator in the Engine Room at ChessBase http://en.chessbase.com/ so there is a good chance that he knows much about the strengths and weaknesses of those engines! This hypothesis might be best evidenced by the game http://www.iccfus.com/gameofthemonth/games/Fuller.html that Liam chose to share with us from one of the tournaments which earned him the IM title. See if you can decide where black went astray.

[ECO "B80"]
[Opening "Sicilian Scheveningen, English Attack"]
[Event "WC36/pr04"]
[Site "ICCF"]
[StartDate "2012"]
[White "Fuller,William E (USA)"]
[Black "IM Auzins,Maris (LAT)"]
[Result "1-0"]
[WhiteElo "2297"]
[BlackElo "2394"]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 e6 a bit passive, e5 is more dynamic! **7.f3 b5 8.Qd2 Nbd7 9.a3 Bb7** [a solid alternative is 9...h5 10.0-0-0 Bb7=] **10.g4 Nb6 11.0-0-0 Rc8 12.Kb1 Nfd7 13.Rg1 Be7?!** [Houdini 3 shows Be7 as = but in practice black has not scored well. After 13.Rg1 only 13...h6 or; 13...Qc7 give black his best chance of drawing.] **14.g5 0-0** now white will throw everything at the black kingside! **15.f4 Nc5** [15...d5 16.exd5 *(16.f5 b4 17.Nxd5 exd5 18.f6 Bc5 19.fxg7 Re8 20.axb4 Nc4 21.Bxc4 Bxd4 22.Bxd4 Rxc4 23.exd5 Bxd5)* 16...Nxd5 17.Nxd5 Bxd5 18.f5 Ne5 19.fxe6 fxe6 20.Bh3 Nf3 21.Nxf3 Rxf3 22.Bg2 Rf5 23.Qe2 Qe8 24.Bd4 Bf8 25.Bxd5 exd5 26.Qd2 Qf7 27.Qg2 Rc4 28.c3 g6 29.Rgf1 Bg7 30.Bxg7 Kxg7 31.Rxf5 Qxf5+ 32.Ka1 Re4 33.Qg1 Rf4 34.Qa7+ Qf7 35.Qxf7+ Kxf7 36.Rxd5 Ke6 37.Rd8 Kf5 38.Rd6 Kxg5 39.Rxa6 h5 40.Ra5 Rf5 41.b4 Kf6 42.Ra6+ Kf7 43.a4 bxa4 44.Rxa4 g5 45.Ra7+ ½-½ Noble,M (2425)−Laghetti,G (2392)/Lechenicher SchachServer 2010 Corr] **16.f5 e5** [16...Nxe4 17.Nxe4 Bxe4 18.f6 *(18.fxe6 fxe6 19.Bd3 Nc4 20.Qe2=)* 18...e5 transposes to the game line] **17.f6 Nxe4** [17...exd4 18.Qxd4±] **18.Nxe4 Bxe4 19.Bg2 Nc4 20.Qe2±** 1-0 in 41 moves IM Johnson,B (2413)−Bucsa,I (2172)/ICCF 2009 [20.Qf2 exd4 21.Bxe4 dxe3 22.Bxh7+ Kxh7 23.Qh4+ Kg8 24.fxg7 f5 25.Qh6 Kf7 26.g6+ Ke6 27.gxf8Q Bxf8 28.g7+ Kd7 29.Qh7 Bxg7 30.Rxg7+ Kc6 31.Qxf5 1-0 Santamaria Perez,T (2320)−Marti Pericot,J (2477)/ICCF 2011] **20...Bxg2** [if 20...exd4?? then 21.Bxe4 dxe3 22.Bxh7++−] **21.Nf5 Bxf6??** black is totally lost [better but not sufficient is 21...Be4 22.Nxe7+ Kh8 23.Bc1 d5 24.Rg4] **22.gxf6 Qxf6 23.Qxg2 g6 24.Qh3 Nxe3 25.Nxe3 Kh8 26.Rgf1 Qe7 27.Nd5 Qe6 28.Qxe6 fxe6 29.Rxf8+ Rxf8 30.Nc7 Rf2 31.Nxa6 Rxh2 32.Nc7 g5 33.Nxb5** tactically rich positions occur in B80's with many quick wins for white! The main lesson is not to blindly trust engine evaluations! **1-0** *[Fuller]*