

TAI

by Paul Linxwiler

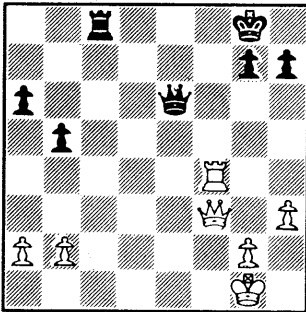
Much has been written about the young Oliver Tai in recent chess publications, and with good reason. His talent for the game is genuinely extraordinary. His resume' of tournaments and titles won is as long as it is impressive. Oliver has been the "defacto king" of scholastic chess in Memphis for years, and he has at least tied for first (if not outright **WON**) all of the different sections at the rigorous Crossville Scholastics. Only the Tennessee High School State Championship has eluded his conquering of regional scholastic events.

Oliver won the 1983 National Primary Championship in Albany, N.Y., the 1987 National Junior High School Championship in Los Angeles, CA, and in a massive nine-way tie for first, took home a piece of the 1988 National High School Championship in Albuquerque, NM.

Tai, having just celebrated his twelfth birthday (!), enjoys a 2114 USCF rating. Many have questioned if this rating realistically reflects his playing strength since many of his rating points have been earned against scholastic players, a group whose ratings are notoriously over-inflated. Tai himself has put many of these doubts to rest by successfully qualifying for the Memphis City Championship (usually an all-adult field) for two years in a row. More astonishingly, Oliver has defeated the last three Masters he has encountered in O-T-B play.

Although Oliver recently failed in his bid to win consecutive National Junior High School titles (he fell a ½ point short of the winners in Memphis), he is someone who will undoubtedly continue to add to his already unbelievable list of titles. We in the chess community will doubtless hear much about him in the future.

Now, an opportunity to see for yourself:

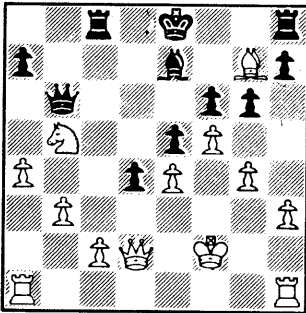


W: Paul Harless (2297)

B: Oliver Tai (2093)

'88 Memphis City Championship (Sicilian: Smith-Morra)

1. e4 c5 2. d4 cxd4 3. c3 dxc3 4. Nxc3 e6 5. Nf3 Nc6 6. Bc4 Bc5 7. O-O a6 8. Qe2 Nge7 9. Bf4 b5 10. Bb3 Ng6 11. Bg3 Qe7 12. Rfd1 d6 13. Rac1 O-O 14. e5 d5 15. Bxd5 Bb7 16. Ne4 Bxf2+ 17. Kxf2 exd5 18. Rxd5 Nd8 19. Rd2 Bxe4 20. Qxe4 Ne6 21. h3 Rfe8 22. Kg1 Ng5 23. Qg4 Nxf3+ 24. Qxf3 Nxe5 25. Bxe5 Qxe5 26. Rd7 Rf8 27. Rcc7 Qe6 28. Rxf7 Rxf7 29. Rxf7 Rc8 30. Rf4 (diagram A) 30. . . Qxa2 31. b3 Qa1+ 32. Kh2 Qe5 33. Qg3 Re8 34. h4 a5 35. Kh3 Qe1 36. Qf3 Qe6+ 37. Kh2 h6 38. Kg3 Qe1+ 39. Kh3 Re3 White resigns 0-1.



W: Curt Jones (2431)

B: Oliver Tai (1996)

'87 Bluff City Open (Closed Sicilian)

1. e4 c5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. g3 d6 4. Bg2 Nf6 5. d3 Nd4 6. h3 e5 7. Be3 b5 8. f4 Qa5 9. Qd2 Be7 10. Nf3 Nh5 11. Kf2! f6 12. f5 g6 13. g4 Ng7 14. a4! Bb7 15. Nxb5 Qb6 16. b3?! d5! 17. Nfxd4 cxd4 18. Bh6 dxe4 19. Bxe4 Bxe4 20. dxe4 Rc8! 21. Bxg7 (diagram B) Rxc2!! 22. Qxc2 d3+ 23. Kf3 dxc2 24. Bxh8 a6! 25. Rhc1 axb5 26. Rxc2 bxa4 27. Rb1 Qd4 28. Rbb2 axb3 29. Rd2 Qc3+ 30. Kg2 Ba3 White resigns 0-1.