

The Longest Continuous Master Game in United States History

Revisiting the 1995 Colorado Open

BY NM TODD BARDWICK
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Thirty years ago in 1995, the Colorado Open (which is always held over Labor Day weekend) took place on September 2-4, at the Holiday Inn at 4040 Quebec St. near the old Stapleton Airport, just south of I-70 off Quebec St.

In those days, the tournament was six rounds; two Saturday, two Sunday, and two Monday. The standard time control was 40/2, 20/1 (40 moves in two hours and then 20 moves in one hour repeating).

Colorado chess was by far the strongest back in the late 1980s to mid-1990s and as a teenager in those years, Michael Mulyar (16 years old at the time of the 1995 Colorado Open) dominated the tournament scene and won the 1995 Colorado Open for the third time in four years; David Lucky interrupted his streak by winning the Colorado Open in 1994.

Both Michael and David were strong 2400+ rated players...David had tied for second in the 1995 US Open two weeks earlier which included a win against GM Walter Browne; Michael would achieve the IM title in 2001 and tie for first at the US Open in both 1999 and 2007.



Michael Mulyar

In the January 1996 *Colorado Chess Informant*, I wrote an article “A Long Day’s Journey Into Knight (& A Long Knight’s Journey into Day)” about my Round 4 game, a 12-hour marathon, against David Lucky. Literary expert and 1970 Denver Open champion Vance Aandahl suggested the title from Eugene O’Neill’s famous play entitled *Long Day’s Journey into Night*.

In rewriting that game today, I discovered how far computers have come in the last 30 years. In 1995, I checked my analysis with an engine that was probably about 2500 at that time...today Stockfish’s strength is over 3600. Some of the top moves chosen by the computer in 1995 aren’t even in the top three computer moves today!

David moved from Southern California to Colorado right before winning the 1994 Colorado Open. He and I met the Monday morning of that tournament before his 5th round victory over (now GM) Jesse Kraai of New Mexico.

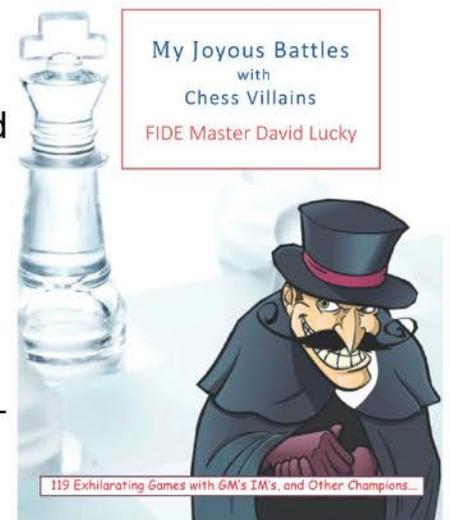
We later discovered we both played in the 1979 US Open in Chicago. (DCC President Haynes Hendee chaperoned high school students Yury Oshmyansky, Dan Wilkinson, and myself to the tournament in Chicago.)

Since the 1995 Colorado Closed, David had been playing excellent chess as he had 28 wins and only one draw (to Michael Mulyar) in his last 29 Colorado games, prior to the 1995 Colorado Open.

Besides OTB chess, Senior Masters are also excellent blitz players. One day I went up Boulder to see David where we visited several cafes where chess players hung out, finishing at the CU Chess Club. David played a dozen or so games against 2100 rated players, giving them 5 minutes to his 30 seconds. Before watching him play, I would have bet on the experts to beat him with those time odds...after all, 30 seconds for the game means he would run out of time in 30 moves if he spent one second per move. He won all the games easily, never using more than 20 seconds on his clock!

In 2020, David published "My Joyous Battles with Chess Villains" containing 119 of his wins and draws against many masters, IMs, and GMs. Included are wins against Colorado players Brian Wall, Brad Lundstrom, and myself.

Up through 2003, all of David's games, articles, and crosstables identified him as David Gliksman, while after 2003 he appears as David Lucky. Both Gliksman and Lucky are basically same name – Gliksman is derived from a native German spelling and Lucky is rooted in English.



Here is my journey playing 26.5 hours (against opponents with an average rating of 2321) with only two hours of sleep!



Mikhail Ponomarev

On Sunday, September 3, I woke up at 7:00 a.m. I played White in my Round 3 game against Mikhail Ponomarev (2272), starting at 9:00 a.m. It was one of my more interesting and better played games which ended in a victory about 1:30 pm in the afternoon.

I didn't get my normal afternoon nap – which I sure could have used – not knowing that September 3-4 would be the longest chess-playing stretch in my life.

After lunch and the annual CSCA Membership Meeting that afternoon, the 4th Round began at 5:00 pm. I had the Black pieces against David.

Little did David or I know that we would fight past midnight and well into the morning. I finally achieved a draw on move 143 by claiming a 50-move draw at 5:00 a.m. on September 4 (only 12 hours later!), the only 50-move draw in my life.

Although the endgame with R+N vs. R is a theoretical draw (in most cases!), David had no losing chances and opted to play into the wee hours of the morning. He had an earlier draw in the tournament and couldn't afford another one if he realistically was going to successfully defend his state title.

Fortunately for me, the tournament time control was not sudden death (where I would have been hard pressed to defend such a position under a time constraint). We played into the 7th time control - 20 moves in an hour, repeating. David was familiar with a well-publicized game earlier in the year where GM Walter Browne won a R+N vs. R endgame against SM Thomas Wolski in a sudden death game. The ending is difficult for the weak side, but drawable. David chose to test my endgame play and endurance.

This game not only holds the Colorado record for the longest game between masters, but is also the longest continuous game (without an adjournment) between masters in the United States. With digital clock technology and delay and increment time controls, it is unlikely this record, or the world record for longest game, will ever be broken.

In the Guinness Book of Records, the world record for the longest master game ever went 269 moves and took 20 hours and 15 minutes! It was a draw between Ivan Nikolic and Goran Arsovic in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, on February 17, 1989.

Another interesting aspect of this game is David first moved his g1 knight on move 43 ... which may be the latest a player of his strength ever developed the knight!

The beneficiaries of this game were our 5th round (Mulyar for me and James McCarty for David) and our 6th round opponents. David later told me that he played his last round games like a blitz game, where he made moves that made sense, but was too tired to analyze them and hoped for the best!

I arrived home the morning of September 4 at 5:30 am, set my alarm clock for 7:30, and returned back to the hotel to play Black in my 5th round game against SM Michael Mulyar on Board 1 at 9:00.

When I arrived at the hotel, there was a pot of coffee outside the tournament room beckoning to me, so not caring if I slept all day Tuesday, I downed the coffee to stay awake. Sounded like a good idea at the time, but not being a coffee drinker, it gave me diarrhea, resulting in trips to the bathroom every 20 minutes or so during the game against Michael!

Five months earlier in the last round of the Colorado Closed, I played Black against Michael and after achieving a terrible position out of a Stonewall Dutch, somehow managed to come back and win. This time I improved my opening position out of the Stonewall.

Michael won the six-hour game, where at times knights were sometimes moving two squares diagonally like bishops in my head.

My 6th round game started right away at 3:00 against Colorado Springs Expert Chris Brunt. I drew Chris with the White pieces in a 4-hour game where I fell asleep in time pressure. Chris was kind enough to wake me up!



White: David Gliksman (Lucky) (2459)
Black: Todd Bardwick (2210)

French Defense, Tarrasch Variation

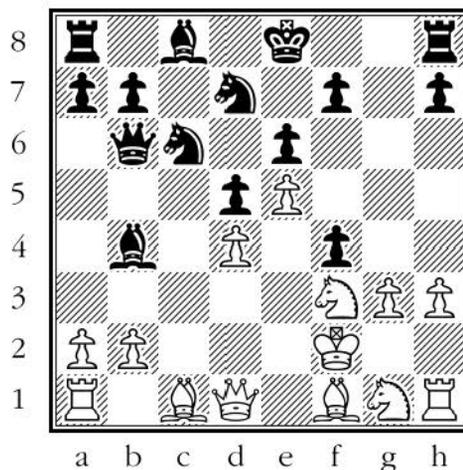
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.f4

This was a favorite variation of Colorado expert Martin T. "Tuna" Deschner. "The Tuna" was a fixture on the Denver chess scene since the late 1960s; sadly he passed away in 2018.

5...c5 6.c3 Nc6 7.Ndf3 Qb6 8.g3 cxd4 9.cxd4 Bb4+ 10.Kf2 g5!?

This move first made its appearance in 1984 between Yudasin and Kaplun. The more common line, 10...f6, had fallen out of favor at that time. Soon after this game, I talked to IM John Watson who was writing a new book on the French Defense which would be available in early 1996. John said that this line had become popular at the GM level and he has devoted appropriate space for it in his book. John also told me that, in his estimation, about half of the top 50 players in the world at that time used the French Defense as their favorite weapon against 1.e4.

11.h3 gxf4



12.Bxf4 f6 13.Kg2 Be7

Another idea for Black in these types of positions is ...Bf8, ...Bg7, and ...0-0.

14.Rh2 Nf8

Better is 14...fxe5 15.dxe5 Nc5. Accepting the pawn sacrifice with 14...Qxb2+ 15.Kh1 gives White active piece play for the pawn. David is a tactical wizard and after his long think on 14.Rh2, I decided to trust his analysis and declined the pawn.

15.Kh1 Bd7 16.exf6 Bxf6 17.Rd2 O-O-O?

Black should play 17...Ng6 to chase the bishop off the h2-b8 diagonal. Black's king is now stuck in the center of the battle on the open c-file.

18.Rc1?!

18.b4! is much stronger.

18...Be8?!

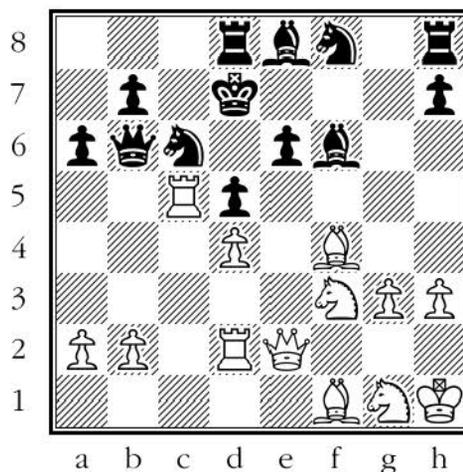
Trying to improve the bad light-squared French bishop. 18...Ng6 is clearly best here. A possible continuation is then 19.Bd6 Be7 20.Bxe7 Nxe7.

19.Rc5

Threatening 20.Rb5. Lifting the other rook with 19.Rd3 with the idea of 20.Rb3 is stronger.

19...a6 20.Qe2 Kd7?!

20...Be7 attacking the rook with the idea of moving the bishop to d6 is best, although White has control of e5, active pieces, and possible exchange sacrifices on c6. I knew this move was a crazy idea at the time, but was imagining variations where after exchanges on e5 my king might live peacefully on d6.



21.Ne5+ Bxe5 22.Bxe5 Nxe5 23.Qxe5 Ng6 24.Qg7+ Kd6 25.Bg2

25.h4 with idea of 26.Bh3 is another way to develop the bishop. After 25.h4, 26.h5 is also possible.

25...Rd7?

25...Bc6 blocking the c-file with the idea of ...Qc7 or ...Rd7 is a better try in a bad position.

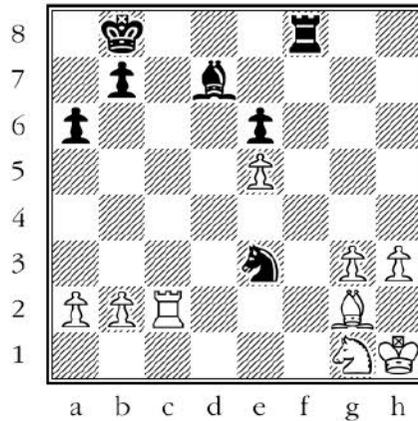
26.Qf6

Pinning the e-pawn to Black's king. This pin is the threat I missed when I played 20...Kd7. I was hoping to trade pieces or attack on the kingside after chasing the White queen away with my rook. White has an abundance of riches and could have also played 26.Qh6 or 26.Rxd5+ exd5 27.Qf6+ Kc7 28.Rc2+ Qc6 29.Rxc6+ with an advantage.

26...Rf8 27.Rxd5+ Kc7 28.Rxd7+ Bxd7 29.Rc2+ Kb8 30.Qg7

Unfortunately the h7 pawn also falls.

30...Qd6 31.Qxh7 Ne7 32.Qe4 Nd5 33.Qe5 Qxe5 34.dxe5 Ne3



35.Rd2 Bb5 36.g4 Kc7 37.b3 a5

In a losing position, Black is trying to create counterplay on the queenside and hopefully centralize his king quickly.

38.a4 Nxg2 39.axb5

39.Kxg2 activating the king is more accurate. Both players are in time pressure.

39...Ne3 40.Rd3 Nd5

(end of first time control: 5:55, 5:57)

41.Rf3 Rb8 42.Rf7+ Kb6 43.Nf3!

The g1 knight enters the game for the first time!

43...Rc8 44.g5 Rh8 45.h4 Ne3 46.Kh2 Nf5 47.Kh3

White missed sacrificing the exchange with 47.Rxf5! exf5 48.Kg3 and Black can't stop White's passed pawns.

47...Kxb5 48.Rxb7+

David suggested later that 48.g6! is easily winning for White as he rushes to advance his passed pawns before Black's king can return to the kingside.

48...Kc6 49.Rf7 Kd5 50.g6 Ke4 51.Rh7?

Considerably helping Black's drawing chances. 51.Kg4 is easily winning as the White king helps the pawns advance. A sample line is 51...Nh6+ 52.Kg5 Nxf7+ 53.gxf7 Kxf3 54.Kg6.

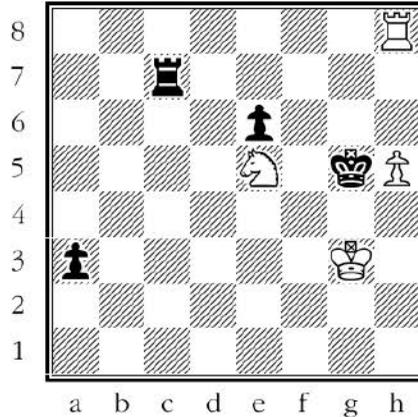
51...Rg8 52.Ng5+ Kxe5 53.h5 Rb8 54.Nf3+ Kf4 55.Nd2 Rd8 56.Nc4 Rd3+ 57.Kh2 Rxb3

Black has managed to capture White's last queenside pawn. Now with the superior king position, all Black has to do is stop the g- & h- pawns to draw.

58.Rf7 Kg5 59.g7 Nh6 60.Rf8 a4

(end of second time control: 6:56, 6:59)

61.Rh8 Rb7 62.Rxh6 Rxg7 63.Rh8 Rc7 64.Ne5 a3 65.Kg3



65...a2?!

65...Ra7 is a much easier draw which would have given both of us a lot more sleep since the knight must be sacrificed for the a-pawn, avoiding the R + N vs. R ending. I debated for a while about which move to play and picked the wrong one...it's getting late!

66.Nf3+ Kf6 67.Ra8 Rc5 68.h6

It is now midnight and the other long game, Zupa vs. Morrow, just ended. They had an exciting 2 rook and pawn endgame with each side's pawns close to promoting. We are sad to see them leave as now there are no other games left in the room to watch. The tournament room is really quiet. Only David, TD Ron MacRall, and I remain. Ron had to stay up all night with us and didn't complain too much. Afterwards, Ron announced that he would only direct sudden-death tournaments in the future!



TD Ron MacRall

68...Kg6 69.Rxa2 Kxh6

This starts the first 50 move draw count for Black.

70.Kf4 Rf5+ 71.Kg4 Kg7 72.Re2 Kf6 73.Nd4 Re5 74.Rf2+ Kg6 75.Nf3 Re4+ 76.Kg3 Ra4 77.Ne5+ Kg5 78.Rf8 Rb4 79.Kf3 Ra4 80.Ke3 Rb4

(end of third time control: 7:20, 7:58)

81.Nf3+ Kg6 82.Nd4 Rb1 83.Kf4 Rf1+ 84.Nf3 Kg7 85.Ra8 Kf6 86.Ra6 Rb1 87.Nd2 Rb7 88.Ne4+ Ke7 89.Nc5 Rb1 90.Ke5 Re1+ 91.Ne4 Kd7 92.Rd6+ Ke7 93.Rxe6+

This move starts a new 50 move draw count. Rook + knight vs. rook is a theoretical draw, but not an easy one. Every couple years or so a GM loses this ending. I put a star on my scoresheet and ran through the math calculation of what time in the morning the 50-move count would end. I was thinking it would be interesting if we were still playing when the other players started showing up for Round 5!

If I can hold the draw, I would play Black the next morning against Michael Mulyar on Board 1. I figured Michael is now snug in his bed getting a good night's sleep!

93...Kd7 94.Rh6 Kc7 95.Kd5 Rd1+ 96.Kc4 Kd7 97.Rg6 Ke7 98.Ra6 Kf7 99.Nc3 Rd2 100.Nd5 Rd1

(end of fourth time control: 7:37, 8:32)

101.Rd6 Kg7 102.Kc5 Rd2 103.Re6 Kf7

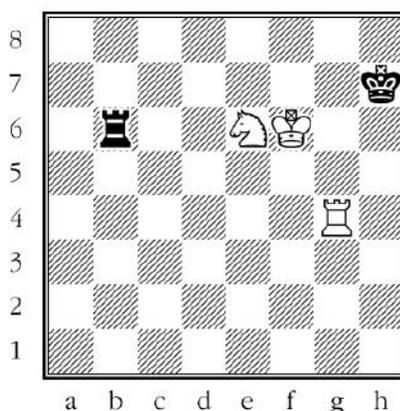
Staying as far away as possible from White's king.

104.Kd6 Rd1 105.Re2 Kg6 106.Ke6 Rg1

Thirteen moves are burned off the 50-move count; Black now has to be extra careful not to get checkmated or forked by the knight.

107.Nf4+ Kg7 108.Ke7 Rg4 109.Re4 Rg1 110.Re6 Rg5 111.Rf6 Ra5 112.Rg6+ Kh7 113.Rg4 Ra7+ 114.Kf6 Ra6+ 115.Ne6 Rb6

A strategy for Black is to keep the knight pinned to the king so it can't help form a mating net. If the White king breaks the pin, Black will annoy the king with checks. Black also strives to keep his rook and king far apart to avoid potential knight forks.



116.Rh4+ Kg8 117.Ra4 Kh7 118.Ra8 Rd6 119.Ra1 Rb6 120.Ra2 Rd6 Fortunately for Black, he always has one square available for the king to avoid mate. (end of fifth time control: 8:51, 9:43)

121.Rh2+ Kg8 122.Rh6 Ra6 123.Kf5 Ra5+ 124.Kg6 Ra6 125.Kh5 Ra1 126.Rf6 Rh1+ 127.Kg6 Rg1+ 128.Ng5 Rg2

A similar position as occurred on move 115. This position is rotated 90 degrees with the knight pinned one file from the edge of the board instead of 2 files.

129.Re6 Kf8 130.Re1 Rg4 131.Re3 Rg1 132.Kf6 Rf1+ 133.Nf3 Ra1 134.Nd4 Rf1+ 135.Nf5 Rf2

We have seen this position's cousin before!

136.Ra3 Ke8 137.Rd3 Rf1 138.Rd2 Rf4 139.Ke5 Rf1 140.Nd6+ Ke7

(end of sixth time control: 9:33, 10:23)

141.Ra2 Re1+ 142.Ne4 Kf7 143.Ra7+ Kg6 Draw!

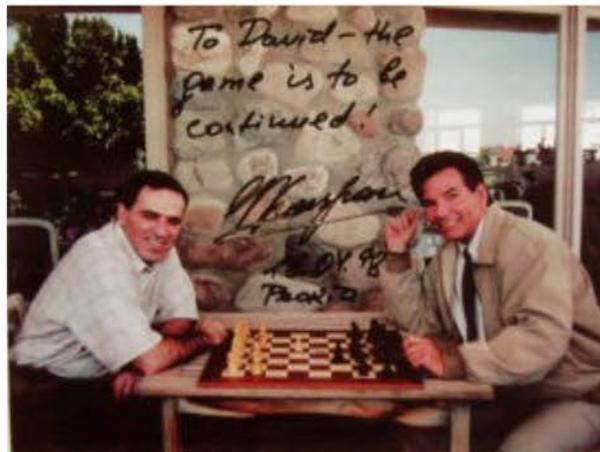


Thanksgiving 2017

1995 Colorado Open – Open Section

Pair Num	Player Name USCF ID / Rtg (Pre->Post)	Total Pts	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6
1	MICHAEL A MULYAR CO 12524770 / R: 2434 ->2438	5.0	W 21	W 11	W 6	D 2	W 5	D 3
2	JAMES M MC CARTY CO 12157520 / R: 2318 ->2343	5.0	W 29	W 20	D 10	D 1	W 4	W 7
3	MIKHAIL PONOMAREV CO 12540474 / R: 2272 ->2284	4.5	W 16	W 14	L 5	W 19	W 10	D 1
4	DAVID LUCKY CA 10462967 / R: 2459 ->2441	4.0	W 15	D 19	W 8	D 5	D 2	D 9
5	TODD A BARDWICK CO 10406137 / R: 2210 ->2231	4.0	W 12	W 13	W 3	D 4	L 1	D 8
6	BRUCE A MONSON CO 12455259 / R: 2218 ->2205	4.0	W 33	W 28	L 1	L 11	W 17	W 15
7	BRAD LUNDSTROM CO 10410347 / R: 2128 ->2132	4.0	D 23	W 27	D 19	W 22	W 11	L 2
8	CHRIS L BRUNT CA 12523693 / R: 2121 ->2131	4.0	D 17	W 23	L 4	W 12	W 20	D 5
9	MICHAEL P SHEDD CO 11143113 / R: 2066 ->2096	4.0	H 0	H 0	D 12	W 28	W 18	D 4
10	RICHARD W BUCHANAN CO 10273030 / R: 2103 ->2103	3.5	W 24	W 31	L 2	W 21	L 3	D 11
11	ALLEN M DERMAN CO 10936071 / R: 2086 ->2101	3.5	W 26	L 1	W 15	W 6	L 7	D 10
12	PETER DAW IL 12567514 / R: 1964 ->1989	3.5	L 5	W 32	D 9	L 8	W 23	W 19
13	TOBIAS A MYERS WI 12621781 / R: 1866 ->1915	3.5	W 18	L 5	L 20	D 14	W 28	W 21
14	CRAIG D WILCOX CO 12418845 / R: 2056 ->2007	3.0	W 30	L 3	L 17	D 13	D 25	W 27
15	YUVAL LAOR CO 20033521 / R: 1900 ->1918	3.0	L 4	W 25	L 11	W 30	W 22	L 6

16	VANCE S AANDAHL	3.0	L	3 L	30 W	23 H	0 W	24 D	17
CO	10407842 / R: 1905	->1900	N:2						
17	GARY BAGSTAD	3.0	D	8 D	22 W	14 H	0 L	6 D	16
CO	10924031 / R: 1800	->1846	N:1						
18	HANS M MORROW	2.5	L	13 W	33 W	29 D	20 L	9 U	0
UT	10413818 / R: 2133	->2104	N:2						
19	JAMES HAMMERSMITH	2.5	W	25 D	4 D	7 L	3 D	21 L	12
CO	12498634 / R: 2096	->2078	N:1						
20	DAOUD ZUPA	2.5	W	32 L	2 W	13 D	18 L	8 U	0
CO	12407991 / R: 2016	->2018	N:1						
21	LES HAYNES	2.5	L	1 W	24 W	30 L	10 D	19 L	13
AZ	10375517 / R: 1963	->1949	N:2						
22	BRUCE GERALD DRANEY	2.5	D	27 D	17 W	31 L	7 L	15 H	0
NE	10374545 / R: 1999	->1948	N:3						
23	TOM ROODE	2.5	D	7 L	8 L	16 W	31 L	12 W	28
CO	12437957 / R: 1829	->1826	N:2						
24	LARRY ALAN DUKE	2.5	L	10 L	21 W	26 H	0 L	16 W	31
CO	11484743 / R: 1836	->1820	N:3						
25	ROLAND C MOMBELLI	2.5	L	19 L	15 B	0 W	29 D	14 U	0
CO	12609426 / R: 1769	->1787	N:2						
26	KENNETH E SCHWARTZ	2.5	L	11 L	29 L	24 W	32 W	34 H	0
CO	12611184 / R: 1710	->1704	N:4						
27	PAT BRUNO	2.5	D	22 L	7 H	0 H	0 W	31 L	14
CO	12619759 / R: 1526	->1549	N:3						
28	NADIR S ZULQERNAIN	1.5	B	0 L	6 H	0 L	9 L	13 L	23
WA	12602600 / R: 1716	->1690							
29	DAVID MURRAY III	1.0	L	2 W	26 L	18 L	25 U	0 U	0
AZ	12079470 / R: 1914	->1900							
30	MARCEL E COLE	1.0	L	14 W	16 L	21 L	15 U	0 U	0
CO	12566239 / R: 1500	->1522							
31	TODD LITTELL	1.0	B	0 L	10 L	22 L	23 L	27 L	24
CO	12592085 / R: 1424P14->1433P19								
32	JEFF S WESTMORELAND	0.5	L	20 L	12 H	0 L	26 U	0 U	0
CO	11091601 / R: 1672	->1648							
33	DANNY KAISER	0.0	L	6 L	18 U	0 U	0 U	0 U	0
CO	12641954 / R: 1782	->1776							
34	JESSE D GROVES	0.0	U	0 U	0 U	0 U	0 L	26 U	0
CO	12645406 / R: 1035P15->1052P16								



Garry Kasparov (left) and David Lucky