

Remembering Steve Henderson

by Tim Stevens

Steve Henderson was active in Colorado chess in the 1970s and 1980s before moving away to the West Coast. He was best known for winning the 1980 Denver Open. Steve also represented us in tournaments in the surrounding states. We lost a long-time member of our chess community when Steve passed away this past February.



Steve had a real mind for games. Later in life Steve used his game strategy skills to earn a living as a day trader. He would get up early in California, as the stock market opened at 9:30 AM East Coast time. He had two computer monitors plus watched a financial channel on TV. He understood how a news event could affect a certain industry or company and then would invest to make gains. Numerous non-traders thought his job sounded easy--just watch screens and make trades according to your trading system. If they showed interest and asked Steve about doing day trading, he would loan them a book called Market Wizards, and after reading it they would no longer be interested.

In 1989 Steve moved to the Oregon coast to teach workshops on cognitive self-help techniques at the Ken Keyes Center. There he met Linda Seeley, his life partner from then on. In 1996, they moved to the San Francisco area where he joined a group that day-traded stocks. Later he and Linda moved to Southern California where he traded on his own.

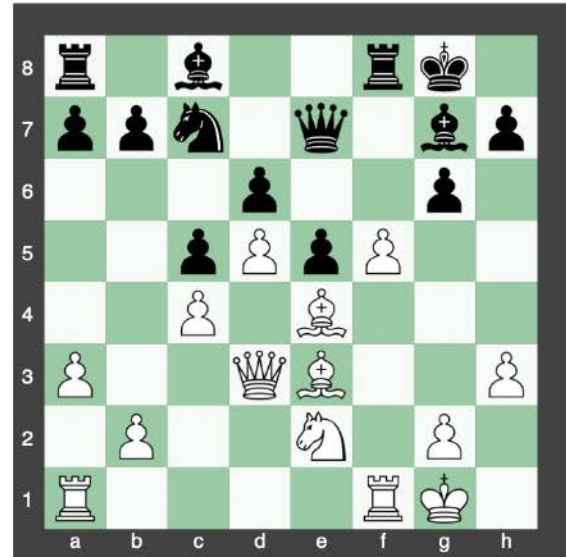
Here is Steve's win in the 1972 Colorado Open as an A-player over much higher rated master Robert Wendling.

White: Steve Henderson, 1882

Black: Robert Wendling, 2240

Colorado Open, Denver Colorado, September 1972

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 g6 4.Nc3 Bg7 5.e4 d6 6.Bd3 O-O 7.Nge2 e5 8.O-O Nh5 9.Be3 f5 10.f4 Nf6 11.h3 fxe4 12.Nxe4 Nxe4 13.Bxe4 Qe7 14.Qd3 Na6 15.a3 Nc7 16.f5



This aggressive move is actually a mistake due to a Black tactic of an intermediate move of ...e4. Either 16.fxe5 or 16.Rae1 would have retained White's advantage. Wendling uncharacteristically missed this tactic so this worked out well for Steve. Example lines are 16...gxf5 17.Bxf5 Rxf5 18.Rxf5 e4 19.Qb3 Bxf5 -+ or 16...gxf5 17.Ng3 fxe4 18.Rxf8+ Qxf8 19.Qxe4 -+.

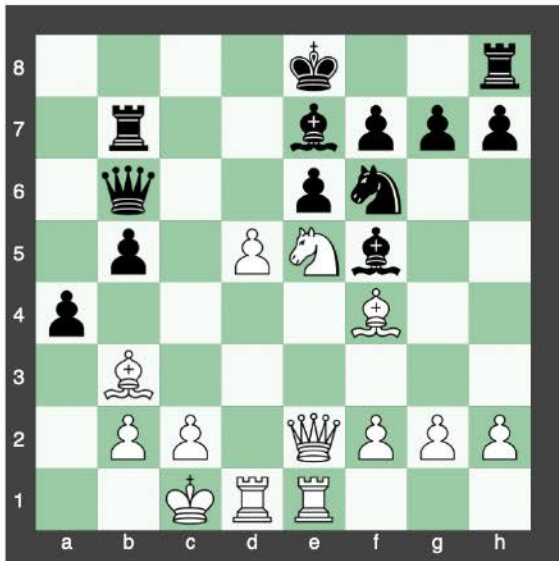
16...gxf5 17.Bxf5 Bxf5 18.Rxf5 Rxf5 (18...e4 19.Rxf8+ Rxf8 20.Qd2 b5 =) 19.Qxf5 Rf8 20.Qg4 b5 21.b3 bxc4 22.bxc4 Rb8 and now Steve finishes nicely 23.Rf1 Kh8 24.Ng3 Ne8 25.Bg5 Bf6 26.Rxf6 Nxf6 27.Qh4 Qf7 28.Bxf6+ Kg8 29.Nf5 Qc7 30.Qg5+ Kf8 31.Ne7 Ke8 32.Qg8+ Kd7 33.Qe6+ Ke8 34.Ng6+ 1-0.

Steve and three others once took a term off from Colorado State University and drove to Las Vegas to seek their fortunes by using their game strategy skills. While trying to open bank accounts, they were accused of robbing the bank and detained, with Vegas police pointing guns at them as they were lying on the pavement. Fortunately the FBI arrived, talked to each of them, could see they hadn't done anything and let them get up and leave.

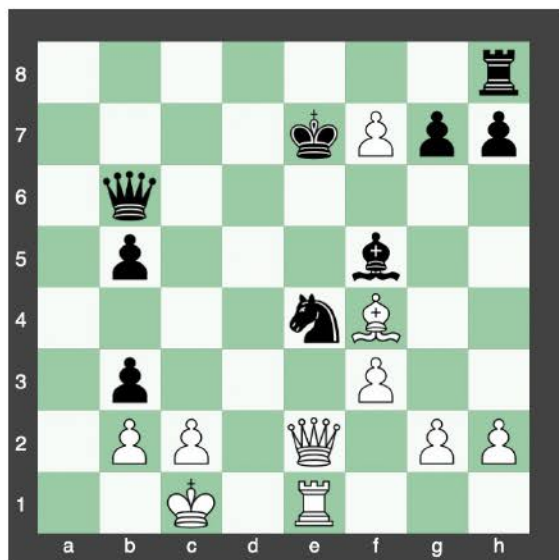
Here is a game of Steve's from the 1971 Colorado Open. A special brilliancy prize was given to both players for a sharp-on-sharp draw by repetition.

White: Robert O'Donnell age 20, 1971
 Black: Steve Henderson age 16, 1662
 1971 Colorado Open, Denver Colorado, September 1971

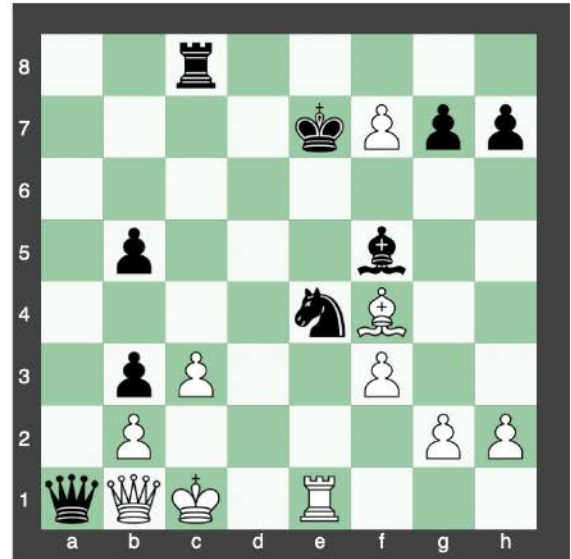
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Bc4 Ngf6
 6.Nxf6+ Nxf6 7.Bf4 Bf5 8.Nf3 e6 9.Qe2 Be7 10.O-O-
 O b5 11.Bb3 a5 12.a4 (better is 12.d5 Nxd5 13.Bxd5
 cxd5 =) Qb6 13.Rhe1 Ra7 (better is 13...bxa4
 14.Bxa4 Nd5 15.Qc4 O-O -+) 14.Ne5 Rb7 15.axb5
 cxb5 (15...a4) 16.d5 (16.g4) 16...a4



17.dxe6 axb3 18.exf7+ Kf8 19.Nd7+ Rxd7 20.Rxd7
 Ne4 21.Rxe7 -+ (21.Be3 Qc6 22.Ra7 Kxf7 =) Kxe7
 22.f3



22...Rc8 (22...Ra8 would be crushing after 23.Bg5+
 Kxf7 24.fxe4 Be6 25.Qe3 Qc6 26.Qd3 bxc2 27.Qc3
 Ra1+) 23.c3 Qa6 24.Qd3 Qa1+ 25.Qb1



25...Rxc3+ (Black could retain advantage with 25...
 Qa5 26.fxe4 Be6 27.Kd2 b4 28.Qa1 bxc3+ 29.bxc3
 Qd8+ 30.Ke3 Qb6+ 31.Kf3 Kxf7) 26.bxc3 Qxc3+
 27.Kd1 Qd4+ 28.Kc1 Qc3+ (a last try is 28...Qc4+
 29.Kd1 Kxf7 30.fxe4 Bg4+ 31.Kd2 Qd4+ 32.Qd3
 Qf2+ 33.Kc3 Qxe1+ however likely a draw) 29.Kd1
 Qd4+ draw.