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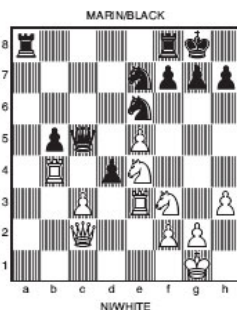
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CHESS

Players Busy Over the Holidays With a Flurry of Tournaments

By DYLAN LOEB McCLAIN
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For many people, the holidays were spent with family and away from work. For others, the break was a time to play chess.



White	Black	White	Black
Ni	Marin	Ni	Marin
1 e4	e5	22 ab5	ab5
2 Nf3	Nc6	23 Rb1	Qc5
3 Bb5	a6	24 Rb4	d4
4 Ba4	Nf6	25 Ne4	Qb4
5 O-O	Ne4	26 cb4	de3
6 d4	b5	27 fe3	h6
7 Bb3	d5	28 Nd4	Ra3
8 de5	Be6	29 Qf2	Ng6
9 Nbd2	Nc5	30 Qf5	Nd4
10 c3	Bg4	31 ed4	Ra2
11 Bc2	Ne6	32 Qg4	Re6
12 Re1	Bc5	33 Nd6	Re6
13 Nf1	Ne7	34 h4	Ra1
14 h3	Bh5	35 Kh2	Rf1
15 Ng3	Bg6	36 g3	Rb1
16 b4	Bb6	37 Qf5	Rb2
17 a4	O-O	38 Kh3	Re7
18 Be3	Be3	39 Nf7	Nf6
19 Re3	Bc2	40 Nd8	Rd7
20 Qc2	c5	41 e6	Ra7
21 bc5	Qc7	42 Nc6	Resigns

More than 600 people competed in the [18th North American Open](#) in Las Vegas from Dec. 26-29. The Continental Chess Association, which organized the event, noted on its Web site that the tournament is always held on those dates, "regardless of the days of the week."

[Giorgi Kacheishvili](#), a Georgian grandmaster, won the tournament, finishing ahead of a field that included 10 other grandmasters.

In Washington, more than 200 players played in the [35th Eastern Open](#) from Dec. 27-30, with [Alex Yermolinsky](#), a grandmaster, coming out on top.

Students from 21 colleges and universities, meanwhile, competed for glory at the [Pan American Intercollegiate Chess Championships](#) from Dec. 27-30 in Fort Worth, Tex. The tournament is always held over winter break.

Two perennial powerhouses, the University of Texas at Dallas and the [University of Maryland, Baltimore County](#) tied for first, with the University of Texas at Brownsville and Stanford finishing close behind.

Chess activity in the United States paled in comparison with Europe, home of the two of the oldest holiday tournaments.

The [Hastings International Chess Congress](#) in England has been held every year since 1920-21, except during World War II. It has a rich tradition, although it no longer is as prestigious as it was.

This year's tournament, which included 13 grandmasters, began Dec. 28 and ended Monday. The winner was [Igor Kurnosov](#) of Russia.

In Italy, the [Reggio Emilia tournament](#), named for the town in which it is held, has been an annual attraction since 1958. It once lured world-class players, and [Viswanathan Anand](#), the current world champion, made his breakthrough there in 1991.

The tournament is no longer considered as elite, but this year's event, which began Dec.

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27 and ended Sunday, included [Ni Hua](#) of China, No. 26 in the world, who easily ran away from the field.

•

Ni finished at Reggio Emilia with a nice final round victory against [Mihail Marin](#) of Romania.

In the opening, both players engaged in an elaborate dance for control of key squares, in particular f5.

Marin's 25 ... Qb4 seemed logical, as two rooks are often worth more than a queen, but Black could not coordinate his pieces. Instead, 25 ... Qc7 26 Nd4 Ra1 27 Kh2 Nd4 28 Rd4 Qe5 29 Ng3 Qc7 30 Qd3 Nc6 31 Rd7 Qf4, and Black is fine.

Marin's 29 ... Ng6 was a mistake. He should have tried 29 ... Nc7, although after 30 Nd6 Ra4 31 Qd2, White is better.

Marin gave up because in the final position he cannot stop White's e pawn.

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