

FIVE TO FIVE

UT Dallas defeats University of Belgrade, ties decade-long Svetozar Gligoric Transatlantic Cup

By **DR. ALEXEY ROOT, WIM**

THE NOVEMBER 6, 2015 OPENING CEREMONY FOR THE 10TH ANNUAL SVETOZAR GLIGORIC Transatlantic Cup match between The University of Texas at Dallas (UT Dallas), located in the city of Richardson, and the University of Belgrade, located in Serbia, began politely enough at 12:30 p.m. Through video and audio feeds, dignitaries shared pleasant thoughts about chess and their international opponents. The UT Dallas President *ad interim* Hobson Wildenthal stated, “[Chess is] a sport, a real sport, but no traumatic brain injuries associated with it.”

Referring to the 5-4 series score in favor of his team, the University of Belgrade team captain IM Ivan J. Markovic said, “Thank you for constantly pushing us to our limits.” Grandmaster Ljubomir Ljubojević, a special guest at the University of Belgrade, said the annual match was great but even better would be to have it twice a year and to also develop a “world league of universities.” Ljubojević said that more college chess competitions would be “healthy for the publicity of chess and of studying.”

Then the opening ceremony morphed into a pre-game rally that sounded and looked like a tailgate for one of those brain-injury sports Wildenthal referenced. The Mayor Pro Tem of Richardson, Mark Solomon, boasted, “We prevail in everything that we do,” adding that today UT Dallas would even the series score to 5-5. Milos Srecko Nedeljkovic, mechanical engineering faculty member at the University of Belgrade, shot back, “Maybe you will, because your first board is from Serbia.” The UT Dallas spectators murmured about trash-talking. The mascot and cheerleaders danced and chanted, which elicited “whoosh” gestures and cheering from the UT Dallas spectators. Nedeljkovic responded that the cheers transmitted from Richardson had fired up his Belgrade team. He suggested a five-minute break, which would begin the games earlier than their scheduled start at 1:00 p.m. The UT Dallas Chess Program Director Jim Stallings confidently replied, “Let’s make the break shorter and start the match.”

I retreated from the playing hall’s charged atmosphere to the VIP room, where Grandmasters Nadezhda Kosintseva and Valentin Iotov provided commentary. One of my ED 4358 (“Using Chess in Elementary Schools”; offered online via UT Dallas eLearning) students asked the grandmasters, “Why aren’t you playing?” Kosintseva replied that they were too old. Stallings clarified, “No titled player over 26 years of age can play.”

UT Dallas Chess Advisory Board President Rodney Thomas acted as the VIP room emcee, often asking Iotov about positions displayed on a giant screen from the Internet Chess Club feed, “Is this position pleasant or unpleasant for the UT Dallas player?” Iotov usually answered, “It is too early in the game to tell.”

The VIP room grandmasters showed a position from one game, discussed it, and then rotated through the other games. By the time the grandmasters returned to the first game, it had completely changed. The time control of game in 40 (with a five-second increment) meant that the games progressed very quickly. It was impossible to follow all 16 games. Sometime after the match ended, the VIP room crowd learned that UT Dallas had won by a score of 9 to 7.

Grandmaster Aleksandar Indjic, who played first board for UT Dallas, and Grandmaster Sahaj Grover, board six, were both enrolled in my ED 4358 course in the fall semester of 2015. Their extra credit assignment was to annotate their games from the match:



The University of Belgrade Team in Serbia competing against the University of Texas at Dallas. The University of Belgrade is the oldest and largest university in Serbia, founded in 1808 as the Belgrade Higher School. The school seal is in the right corner of the photo.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E21)

GM Aleksandar Indjic (2564, SRB)

IM Nikola Nestorovic (2457, SRB)

Notes by Indjic.

This game was not easy for me because I am from Serbia, so I know all the players who represented the University of Belgrade. It is never easy when you are supposed to play against your friends. Nikola is a very good friend of mine and a very strong chess player too.

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6 3. c4 b6 4. Nc3 Bb4 5. g4

An interesting move, but suspicious. The point of 5. g4 is to create a highly nonstandard position with a lot of complications. I am the only one playing this variation, probably for good reason. The objective value of my move is not good, but it has surprise value. 5. Bg5 is more frequently played.

5. ... Bb7 6. Qd3 d5 7. cxd5 exd5 8. Bg5 0-0 9. h4 Nbd7

Nikola reacted very well to my provocative fifth move. His position is safe and he can start taking advantage of my irregular play.

10. a3 Be7

The other option for Black is 10. ... Bxc3+, followed by 11. bxc3 Re8 12. Nd2 h6 13. Bxf6

Qxf6 14. g5 which is unclear.

11. Bf4 c5

I wanted him to take the g4-pawn to open the g-file. That variation would give me strong compensation for my sacrificed g-pawn leading to unclear play after 11. ... Nxg4 12. Rg1 Ndf6 13. Ng5.

12. Bg2?

The follow-up 12. g5 was the better option 12. ... Ne4 13. Bh3 Re8 14. 0-0 with an almost equal game but probably slightly preferable for Black.



12. ... Re8?!

Black is better after 12. ... Nxg4 13. Ng5 Ndf6 (The position is equal after all the fireworks 13. ... Ngf6? 14. Nxd5! Deflection! 14. ... Bxd5 15. Bxd5

Ne5 16. Bxe5 Qxd5 17. Bxf6! Qxh1+ 18. Kd2 Qxh4 19. Bxe7 Rae8! [19. ... Rfe8 20. Qf3! Qxd4+ 21. Ke1 and White is slightly better] 20. Qxh7+ Qxh7 21. Nxh7 Rxe7 22. Nxf8 Kxf8 23. dxc5 bxc5).

13. Ng5?

Here I got carried away by the possibility of an attack. Safer and better is 13. g5 Ne4 14. 0-0.

13. ... Nf8?!

The line 13. ... cxd4! 14. Nxd5 Bxd5 15. Bxd5 was my initial idea when I jumped on g5 with the knight. 15. ... Ne5!! I didn't see this fantastic move. If he plays something else then he has the worse position. Then, after 16. Bxe5 Qxd5 17. Nf3 Nxg4 18. Bxd4 Bc5 and my position is very bad.

14. dxc5 Bxc5 15. 0-0-0 Qe7!

Nice move! During the game he was using a very effective strategy. He was always avoiding conflict. Because his position is stronger, eventually I am not going to have any useful moves.

16. Nxd5

I had to play 16. Nxd5, otherwise my position will collapse soon.

16. ... Bxd5 17. Bxd5 Nxd5 18. Qxd5 h6 19. Nf3 Rad8 20. Qb3 Qxe2 21. Rxd8 Rxd8 22. Ne5 Ne6 23. Be3 Bd6?



Back row, left to right: UT Dallas Chess Coach Rade Milovanovic (native of Serbia), GM Aleksandar Indjic (first board in the match for UT Dallas, native of Serbia), GM Denis Kadric (UT Dallas player, native of Bosnia Herzegovina); front row, left to right: Snjezana Milovanovic (Rade's wife, native of Bosnia Herzegovina) and Katarina Djakovic, UT Dallas grad student (not on chess team, parents are from Serbia).



Until this moment Nikola played almost a perfect game. Now both of us were in time trouble so we had to play the rest of the game instinctually.

24. Qd3 Qxd3 25. Nxd3 Bxa3 26. Kc2

I am a pawn down in the endgame. I think the chances of my getting a draw are similar to his chances to win this position.

26. ... Bd6 27. Ra1 Bb8 28. Ra4 Kf8 29. Re4 g5 30. hxg5 hxg5 31. b4 Rd5 32. Kc3 Rd8 33. Kc4 Bd6 34. Kb5 Be7 35. Ne5 Rd1 36. Nc6

He has lost control over the position. Black is not better anymore.

36. ... Nc7+ 37. Ka4?

We were both in time trouble and making serious mistakes. 37. Kc4 would have given me an equal position.

37. ... Bf6 38. Kb3?? Ra1?

The move 38. ... Rd3+! was a winning continuation as after 39. Ka2 Nb5 I am losing material.

39. Bd4 Bxd4 40. Rxd4 a5 41. Rd7 Ne6 42. Ne5 Rb1+ 43. Kc2 Rxb4 44. Rxf7+ Kg8 45. Re7 Nc5 46. f3 a4 47. Ra7 b5 48. Kc3 Rf4 49. Kc2 b4?! 50. Ra5



50. ... b3+?

Best is 50. ... Ne6! and it turns out the a-pawn is untouchable because of 51. Rxa4 b3+ 52. Kxb3 Nc5+ with a winning advantage to Black.

51. Kb2 Ne6 52. Ra6 Nc5 53. Rc6 a3+ 54. Kxa3 Nb7?

The continuation 54. ... Ra4+ 55. Kb2 Ra2+ 56. Kb1 Na4 57. Rc4 would lead to an equal position.

55. Rc8+ Rf8 56. Rc7 Nd6 57. Kxb3

The situation has changed completely and I'm on top now. We are both playing with seconds on our clock here.

57. ... Rb8+ 58. Kc2 Rb5 59. Nd3 Rd5 60. Rc5 Rxc5+ 61. Nxc5 Kf7 62. Kd3

This endgame with a pawn down for Black is hard, especially when you are playing using the increment of five seconds after every move.

62. ... Kg6 63. Kd4 Nb5+ 64. Ke5 Na3 65. Nd7 Nc4+ 66. Ke6 Nd2 67. Ne5+ Kh6 68. Kf6, Black resigned.

Black resigned because he will lose the pawn on g5. At the end I can say this game was full of unexpected turns. Eventually I succeeded in winning it with some luck for sure.

FRENCH DEFENSE, CLASSICAL SYSTEM (C13)

IM Vladimir Lukovic (2439, SRB)
GM Sahaj Grover (2498, IND)
Notes by Grover.

1. e4 e6

I am always comfortable playing the French Defense, one of my main weapons.

2. d4 d5 3. Nc3

This is one of the main lines against the French Defense. Other popular lines include the Advance Variation (3. e5) and the Tarrasch Defense (3. Nd2).

3. ... Nf6 4. Bg5 dxe4!?

The moves 4. ... Be7 and 4. ... Bb4 are two other ways to continue in this variation.

5. Nxe4 Be7

This line has gained a lot of popularity recently.

6. Bxf6 gxf6

Black damages his own pawn structure for the pair of bishops. The resulting position is double-edged. The most current theory in this line seems to prove that Black is fine.

7. Nf3 f5 8. Nc3!?

The move 8. Ng3 instead seems more logical and something most people would play, but it isn't optimal because of 8. ... c5!?. Now White doesn't have d4-d5, which would have been possible had the knight been on c3.

8. ... a6 9. g3 b5 10. Bg2 Bb7 11. O-O c5 12. d5!?

This is something I didn't expect during the game, as before the game I had prepped mainly for 12. dxc5.

12. ... b4 13. dxe6 bxc3 14. exf7+ Kf8

(see diagram top of next column)

This position seems like it's easy for Black, who is just a piece up, but practically it's very difficult for Black to continue as most of his pieces are on



their original squares. Development always comes first! 14. ... Kxf7? is losing for Black as 15. Ne5+! Kg7 16. Bxb7.

15. Qe2 Bf6!?

The computer's first suggestion, and a somewhat safe move. I basically wanted to put my queen on e7, and the bishop on b7 to e4, so that I can defend my position.

16. bxc3 Qe7 17. Qc4 Nd7

Never too late to develop pieces!

18. Qf4 Be4 19. Rfe1!

I think this move was pretty good as White is setting up a trap, which I fell for.

19. ... Bxc3?

I thought my position was completely winning as both white rooks are attacked. Since White is already a piece down, taking the rook means I would be a rook up, which is just too much material.

20. Rad1!



Now I understood White's motif, I cannot take the rook on e1 as 20. ... Bxe1? 21. Qh6+! Kxf7 22. Rxd7 Qxd7 23. Ne5+ Ke8 24. Qh5+ Kd8 25. Nxd7 Kxd7 26. Bxe4 fxe4 27. Qd5+ Kc7 28. Qxc5+ Kb7 29. Kf1! when I do not have enough compensation for my queen.

20. ... Ra7?

Suddenly I have to save my position, which in this time control was difficult to do.

21. Re2!

He was playing very well so far. I had begun to realize that soon enough I may have big problems.

21. ... Qf6!?

Most of my pieces were paralyzed, so I decided to advance my queen and make some space in general. 21. ... Qxf7? is bad due to 22. Ng5! and White is winning; 21. ... Kxf7? is also a blunder as 22. Rxe4 Qxe4 23. Ng5+ is winning.

22. Ng5 h6 23. Nxe4 fxe4 24. Qxe4 Qxf7

I had already realized that this position is almost



1950: Yugoslavia defeats USA

In 1950, Yugoslavia defeated the United States of America in a 10-board, four-day "radio match." **Steve Pejovich** (photo, center left) was then a high school senior in Belgrade. Before he left Yugoslavia in 1957 for a career culminating as professor emeritus at Texas A&M University, Steve was known by his given name of Svetozar. Svetozar Pejovich and other Belgrade high school chess players volunteered as match assistants. Pejovich remembers, "We got permission to miss four days of school" to relay the moves that one of his fellow volunteers recalled were "radio-received." Three volunteers were assigned to each game. A first volunteer took each move from the radio room to a second volunteer, who sat across from the Yugoslavian player. That second volunteer made the American's move on the board and started the Yugoslav's clock. Pejovich was a third volunteer. His job was to update his assigned game's demonstration board. I asked Pejovich if he remembered who played that game. He said that Ivkov played for Yugoslavia and asked, "A fellow named Bisguier played for the American side. Is he still alive?" I assured Pejovich that Grandmaster Arthur Bisguier (born 1929) is still alive. Bisguier's opponent, Grandmaster Borislav Ivkov (born 1933), is also alive. Pejovich could not remember the result of the two games between Ivkov and Bisguier, but the Yugoslavians defeated the Americans 11½ to 8½. (*Bisguier defeated Ivkov in their first game; they drew their second game. -ed.*) ~Alexey Root



UT Dallas cheerleaders with (left to right) Rodney Thomas (UT Dallas Chess Advisory Board President), Mark Solomon (Richardson, Texas Mayor Pro Tem), Will Brugge (UT Dallas Chess Advisory Board Member), Jim Stallings (UT Dallas Chess Program Director).

losing for me. I was also low on time. From this moment onward, I was 110 percent focused on defending my position.

25. Bh3 Nf6!? 26. Qf3 Ba5

The move 26. ... Bd4? just loses a piece because of 27. c3!

27. Be6 Qg6 28. Bf5 Qf7 29. Be6 Qg6

I was ready to take the draw here as this is nearly losing for me, but deep inside I knew that my opponent will not repeat such a position three times.

30. Qc6! Qh5

Protecting the c5-pawn.

31. g4! Qg5

The only move, as 31. ... Nxg4? loses to 32. Qc8+! Kg7 33. Rd7.

32. h4?

My opponent is now in time trouble and this is the first of his several inaccuracies which lead to me having a winning position. The most effective (and winning) continuation is 32. f4! Qxf4 33. Qxc5+ Re7 34. Rf1.

32. ... Qxh4 33. Qxc5+ Re7 34. Qxa5 Rxe6 35. Rd8+??

And here is White's blunder! 35. Qc5+ Kg7

36. Qc7+ Kg6 37. Rxe6 Qxg4+ 38. Qg3 was winning for him, and it's forced as well. But when it comes to a matter of seconds it's difficult to make the best choice.

35. ... Kf7 36. Qc7+ Kg6 37. Rxe6

And now I missed a winning opportunity. I encourage the readers of *Chess Life* to think about how Black can continue.

37. ... Qxg4+??

In time pressure, I missed 37. ... Rxd8! 38. Qxd8 Qxg4+ 39. Kf1 Qxe6 and White can resign.

38. Kf1 Qh3+

Now it's not possible for Black to play as he did in the previous line as 38. ... Rxd8 39. Rxf6+! Kxf6 40. Qxd8+ and it's White who will play for a win.

39. Kg1 Qg4+ 40. Kf1 Qh3+, Draw agreed.

So I decided to just repeat the moves and take a draw. This was a difficult game for me. I could have improved in the opening and could have been more prepared for it. Our team nevertheless won 9-7, which is pretty awesome. The Gligoric Cup was a great experience for me! ♠

See more information about the Gligoric Cup at chessclub.com and www.chessdom.com/10th-annual-svetozar-gligoric-transatlantic-cup/.

GLIGORIC TRANSATLANTIC CUP MATCH HISTORY

Year	Winning Team	Final Score
2006	Belgrade	8½-7½
2007	Dallas	11-5
2008	Dallas	12½-3½
2009	Dallas	8½-7½
2010	Belgrade	11½-4½
2011	Belgrade/Dallas	8-8
2012	Belgrade	9½-6½
2013	Belgrade	9-7
2014	Belgrade/Dallas	8-8
2015	Dallas	9-7

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