

Kamsky,Gata
-Seirawan,Yasser
 2012 U.S. Championship (9.2)05.2012
 [A.J. Goldsby I]

B19
2741
2643

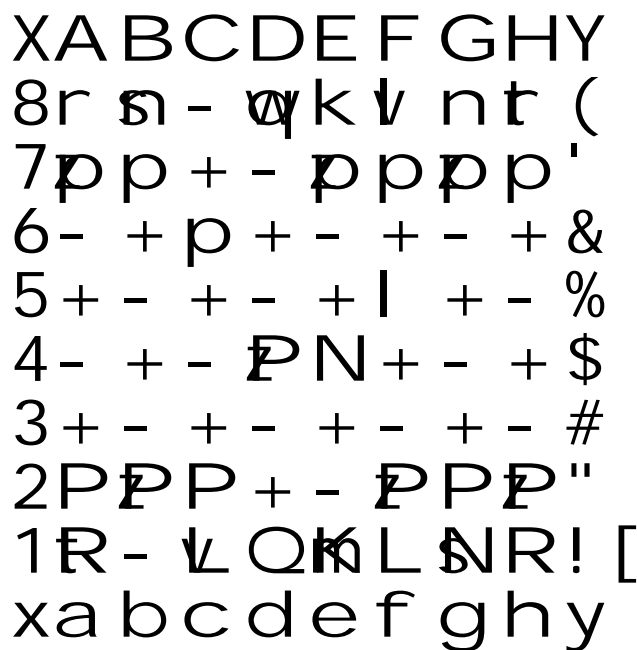
ChessBase has some nice reports on the 2012 U.S. Championship ... the following link has a nice video (by IM D. King); with some cursory analysis of several of the games:
[http://www.chessbase.com/newsdetail.asp?newsid=8173.](http://www.chessbase.com/newsdetail.asp?newsid=8173)

GOTM / May, 2012.

GM H. Nakamura won the 2012 U.S. Championship this year ... hands down. (Congrats to GM Nakamura.) However, easily one of the best and most entertaining games of this whole event was Kamsky's win over GM Y. Seirawan; and this is my choice for my May column for this month. (Editor's note: I had a minor stroke in 2012 ... among many other problems. Because of all of this, I was unable to complete the web page for this game in a timely manner.)

(The first 10-12 moves are all well-known to opening theory; and do not really require any overall commentary.)
1.e4 c6 ; 2.d4 d5 ;
3.Nc3 dxe4 ; 4.Nxe4 Bf5 ;
 The older "main line"

The game begins as the main line of the "old style" (classical) Caro-Kann; which features the older move, 4...Bf5. (4...Nd7 is the more modern version of this opening.)



This is a position that is literally over 150 years old, there are

games in the database that date back to the mid/late 1800's!!!!

.
The next series of moves are all "book" ... and also the main line here ... see MCO-15. (And also the latest PB.)

5.Ng3 Bg6 ; 6.h4 h6 ; 7.Nf3 Nd7 ; 8.h5 Bh7 ; 9.Bd3 Bxd3 ; 10.Qxd3 e6 ; 11.Bd2 Ngf6 ; 12.0-0-0 Be7!? ;

This is a new/modern line ... but it has been played before. [I remember when it was first played, the line caused something of an uproar in master chess. Prior to about 1980, it was always assumed by opening theory that it was very bad for Black to castle on the King-side. ---> See the important contest: GM R. Huebner - GM B. Larsen; Tilburg, 1980.]

[The "classical" (normal) main line of the Caro-Kann would be: RR12...Qc7 ; 13.Ne4 Nxe4 ; 14.Qxe4 Nf6 ; 15.Qe2 Bd6 ; 16.g3 0-0-0 ; 17.c4² , "+/=" when White has a small (but persistent) edge.

.
[See MCO-15, pages # 174 through # 180, columns #1 through column # 12 ...

and all the applicable notes.]

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For a relatively recent example of this opening line, see the following contest:

GM S. Ganguly (2625) - IM M. Mahjoob (2498); [B19] 8th Asian Continental Open Subic Bay, PHI; (R#5) / 17,05, 2009.

{White won a strange game, (maybe on time); 1-0 in a total of around sixty moves.}]

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.
13.Ne4 Nxe4 ; 14.Qxe4 Nf6 ; 15.Qd3! , (centralization)
According to Kamsky, this is the best move here for White, which is odd ... I always thought that the WQ belonged on e2.

.
[Also possible was:
RR15.Qe2 Qd5 ; 16.c4 Qe4 ; 17.Qxe4 Nxe4 ; 18.Be3 0-0 ; 19.Ne5² , (with an edge.) when White is only slightly better here, but the Queens have come off, and a draw is fairly likely.

.
However, in the following chess battle royale, White won a very nice game:
GM Viswanathan Anand (2803) -

GM Ruslan Ponomariov (2738);
 [B19]
 2nd (annual) "M-Tel Masters"
 Round Four (R#4)
 Sofia, BUL / 14,05,2006.
 {1-0 in 56 moves - I don't
 think draws - by agreement -
 are allowed in these events.}]

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XABCDEFGHIY
8r + - ♔k + - ♚ ( {
7p p + - ♜ p p - '
6- + p + p ♗ - ♘ &
5+ - + - + - + ♙ %
4- + - ♚ - + - + $
3+ - + Q + N + - #
2P ♙ P ♘ - ♙ P + "
1+ - ♚ R + - + R!
x a b c d e f g h y

```

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 This is the current position that
 we have on the chessboard here.

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 .
 .
15...0-0 ; (Dev; K-safety)
 Again - with this modern line -
 Black foregoes castling on the
 Q-side, and sharper play is
 invariably the result.

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White's next move is standard in
 many lines of the CK, (and also
 the Sicilian); where Black has
 castled K-side, and White has
 placed his King on the Q-side.
 {The main idea is to make the
 WK a little safer before beginning
 any middlegame operations.}

16.Kb1 c5 ; (hits the d4-square)
 Black makes his standard Pawn
 break ... which challenges the
 first player's hold on the center.

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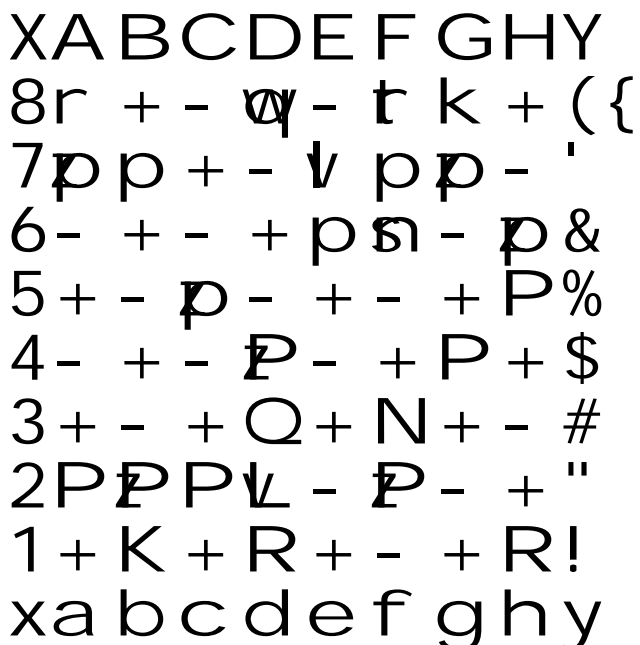
XABCDEFGHIY
8r + - ♔ - ♚ k + (
7p p + - ♜ p p - '
6- + - + p ♗ - ♘ &
5+ - ♙ - + - + ♙ %
4- + - ♚ - + - + $
3+ - + Q + N + - #
2P ♙ P ♘ - ♙ P + "
1+ K + R + - + R! [
x a b c d e f g h y

```

.
 I watched this game live -
 via, of course, the Internet -
 and I was thinking that a
 quick draw was the likely
 result here.

17.g4! , (line opening)
 White sacrifices a Pawn,
 obviously just to open lines
 for a King-side assault.

[RR17.Bc3 Qc7 ; 18.dxc5
 Rfd8÷]



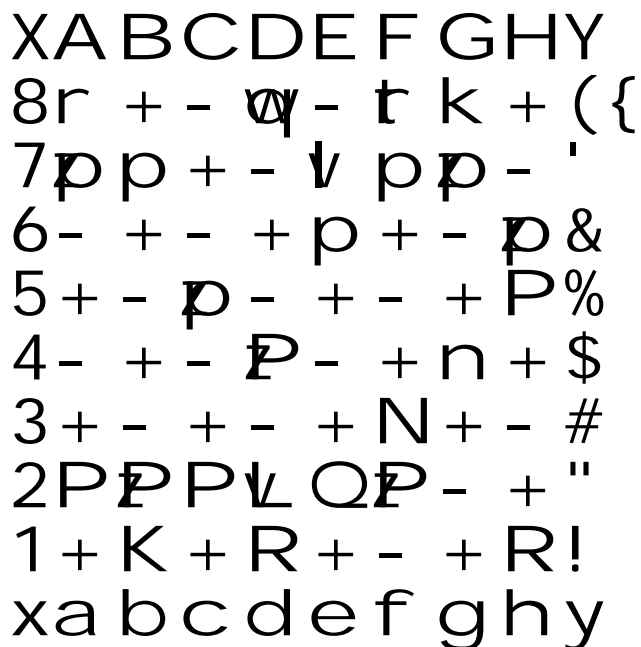
Meanwhile, Black cannot decline
 the offer, as Rdg1 and g4-g5 is
 just too strong and too easy for
 White to be able to play.

[Of course, 17.g4!, is far from
 being a new move, it was first
 played in the contest:

GM Murray G. Chandler (2485) -
 GM Eric Lobron (2480); [B19]
 OHRA / Amsterdam, NED; 1983.
 {White won a Pawn, and then won
 the ending, 1-0 in 57 total moves.}

17...Nxc4 ; 18.Qe2™ , (forced)
 White really had no choice, as
 Black was threatening to capture
 on the f2-square.

[But not: < 18.Rdg1?! f5!³ ;
 and Black holds the upper hand.]



Now we have reached a critical
 position, and Black has to decide
 on what continuation to choose
 from here.

18...Kh8!? ; (hmmm)
 Black decides to hide his King in

the corner. This is not a terrible move, (about equal, according to all of the engines); however, it is far from being the critical continuation.

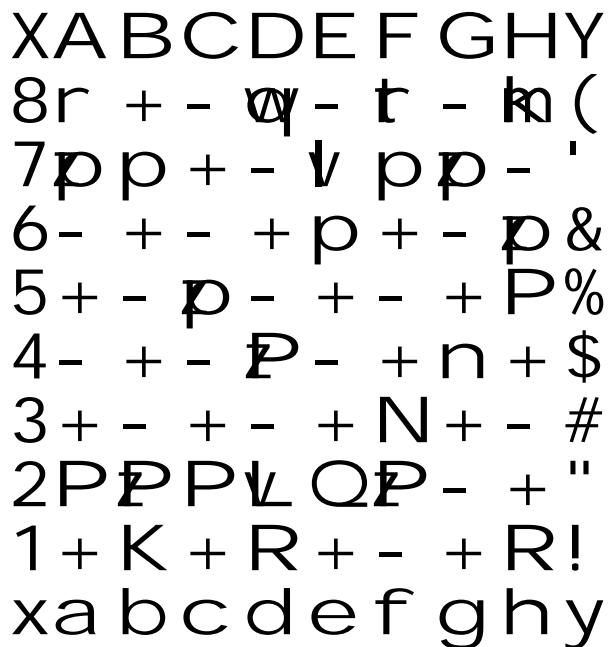
[Theory shows that the move of: >/= 1 18...Qd5!,, ; cntrplay (Black has good piece play.) is the most important variation.

See the interesting slugfest: GM Gennadij Ginsburg (2483) - GM Daniel Fridman (2592); [B19] 27th Masters Open ("A" section) Zuerich, Switzerland; (R#3) / 2003. {Black won a tough game, 0-1 in a total of 62 moves.}]

(Diagram)

Now White has an easy game ...

The next few moves are correct, the engines give them their stamp of approval, and the moves all look very natural,



as well.

19.Rhg1 Nf6 ; 20.dxc5 Qc7 ; 21.Ne5 Bxc5 ; <equal?>

(Keeping the balance.)

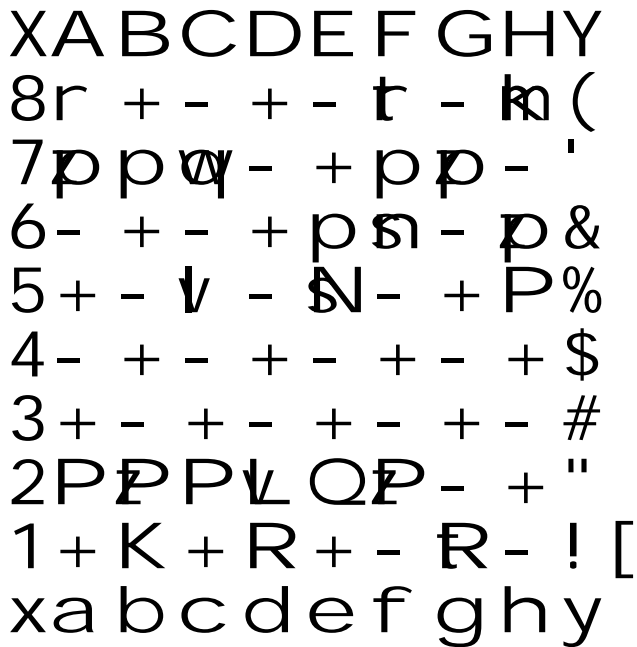
Thus far, it looks like we have a relatively normal position ...

(Diagram)

At first glance, Black seems to have a solid set-up, further, he is up a Pawn ... and is looking forward to the endgame.

22.Bxh6!! , (What a shot!!!!!!)

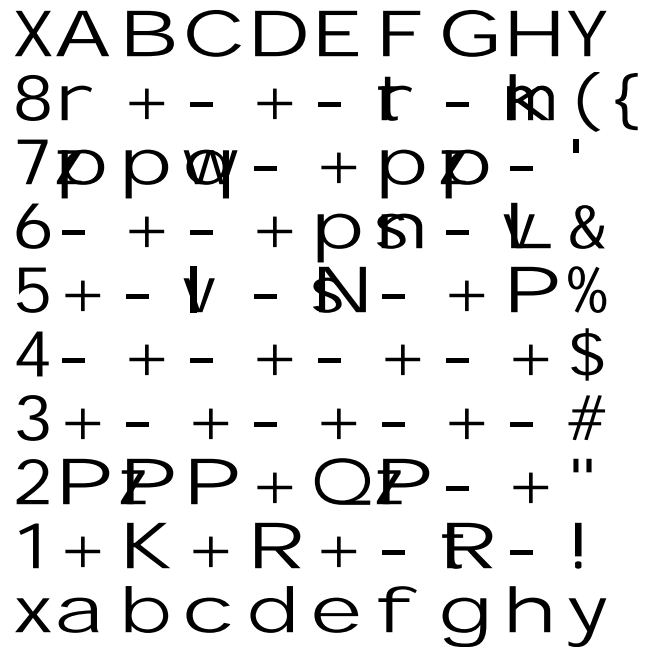
This is easily the best move of the U.S. Championships ... it might even be one of the best moves of the whole year!



(And perhaps one of the best plays in several decades ...)
 Not even the engines find this move, and not right away!

[The following continuation was not nearly as convincing as what was played in the actual game:
 RR22.Bc3 Rfd8 ; 23.Nd7 Rxd7 ; 24.Rxd7 Qxd7 ; 25.Bxf6 Rg8 ; This was (more or less) forced. (<25...gxf6?? ; 26.Qg4+-). 26.Rd1 Qc6 ; 27.Qd2 Kh7÷ ; when White has strong play for the sacrificed Pawn ... but nothing really more than that.]

(Diagram)



However, I am almost sure that Kamsky probably found this move - at home, with a computer - during his pre-tournament prep. (Kamsky played the first part of this game very rapidly, not using much time on his chess clock. Seirawan even saw this move ... over the board, as the game was being played.)

22...gxh6™ ; (Completely forced.)
 Black has no choice ...

[<22...Rad8?? ; 23.Bxg7+ Kh7 ; 24.Bxf6+-]

[. ***** <22...Rg8?! ; 23.Bf4 Qe7 ;

24.h6 g6™ ; 25.Bg5 Bd6!?! ;
 (The only move that is given bt Fritz here.)
 26.Rxd6 Kh7 ; (What esle?)
 (Of course not: </= <26...Qxd6?? ; 27.Nxf7+ , '+-' and Black loses the Queen.).
 27.Qd3! Rad8 ; 28.Rxd8 Rxd8 ;
 29.Qf3 , '+-'
 Black can resign, he is about to lose a second pieces here.]

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XABCDEFGHIY
8r + - + - t - m (
7p p w - + p + - '
6- + - + p n - p &
5+ - v - N - + P %
4- + - + - + - + $
3+ - + - + - + - #
2P P P + Q P - + "
1+ K + R + - R - ! [
x a b c d e f g h y

```

Not taking leads to a disaster, see the lines given {below} for some idea of what I am talking about.

23.Rd7! , (Maybe even - '!!')

This is sublime ... and it is also the play that Black missed here.

[Less convincing was:
 <23.Qd2 Qxe5 ; 24.Qxh6+ Nh7-+ ;
 when BLACK is winning ...]

```

XABCDEFGHIY
8r + - + - t - m ( {
7p p w R + p + - '
6- + - + p n - p &
5+ - v - N - + P %
4- + - + - + - + $
3+ - + - + - + - #
2P P P + Q P - + "
1+ K + - + - R - !
x a b c d e f g h y

```

The main idea is to divert the Black Queen from its current square ... the c7-spot is as close to an ideal square you can get.

23...Qxd7™ ; (Forced?)

Black has no choice ... most of the other tries will allow White to give mate within 5-10 moves.

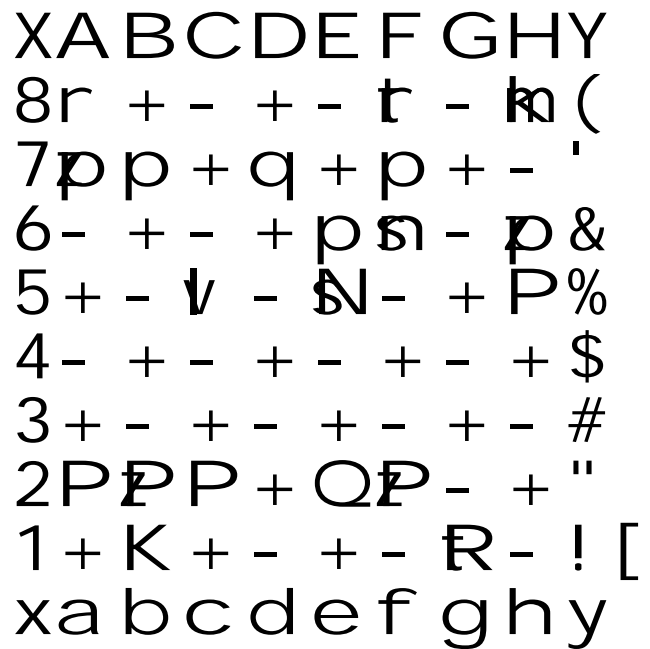
[Black gets mated after:
 < 23...Nxd7? ; 24.Qd2! , Best.
 (But not: < 24.Qg4? Qxe5-+ ;
 and Black has an easy win.).
 24...Kh7 ; 25.Ng4! f5!? ;
 There is nothing here that is
 substantially better. (Black can
 last many moves longer, but
 he has to play an ardent game
 of "give-away," most humans
 will resign before resorting
 to such silly and desperate
 measures.)

26.Qxh6+ Kg8 ; 27.Ne5#]
 [.
 *** **

Black also loses after: < 23...Qb8!?
 ;
 24.Rg6!! , Another brilliant shot.
 (White can win with the
 mundane play of: 24.Nxf7+ ,
 but it might allow Black to
 struggle on for some time.).
 24...Ng8 ; 25.Qe4! Qe8 ;
 26.Nxf7+!!

A) Black gets mated if he
 captures
 with the Rook here: < /=
 < 26...Rxf7? ; 27.Qe5+ Nf6 ;
 This is as good - or as bad -
 as any other move here.
 (White gets a nice dual Rook
 mate in the following variation:
 < 27...Kh7!? ; 28.Qg7+ Rxf7 ;

29.Rgxg7+ Kh8 ; 30.Rh7#).
 28.Rxh6+ Kg8 ; 29.Qg5+ Kf8 ;
 30.Rh8+ Ng8 ; 31.Rxg8# ;
B) 26...Qxf7 ; (Forced.)
 Again, Black had no choice.
 .
 .
 .
 27.Rxf7 Rxf7 ; 28.Qe5+ Kh7 ;
 29.Qxc5+- , "+/-" (material)
 and White wins ... and this line
 is somewhat similar to what
 occurred in the actual game.]

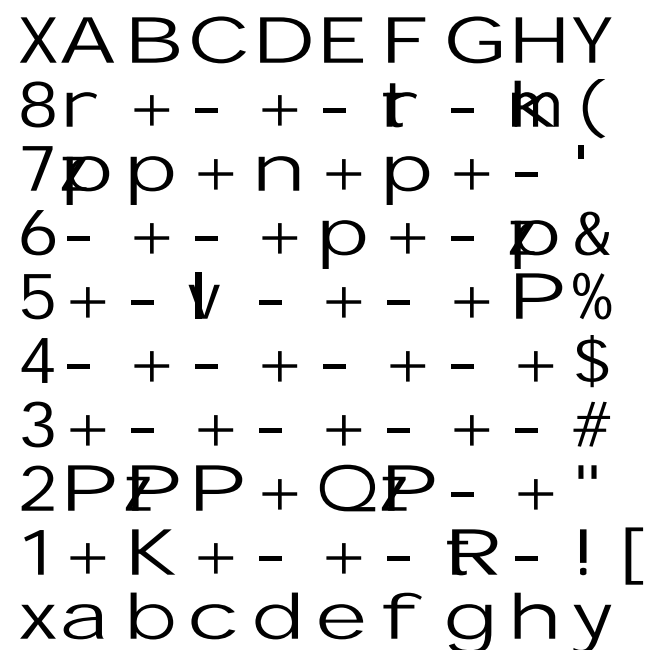


.
 At first, it looks like Black
 might be OK, as he gets a Rook
 AND two minor pieces for the
 lost Queen

24.Nxd7 Nxd7 ;

(material imbalance)

Black ... at least, temporarily ...
has a material advantage.

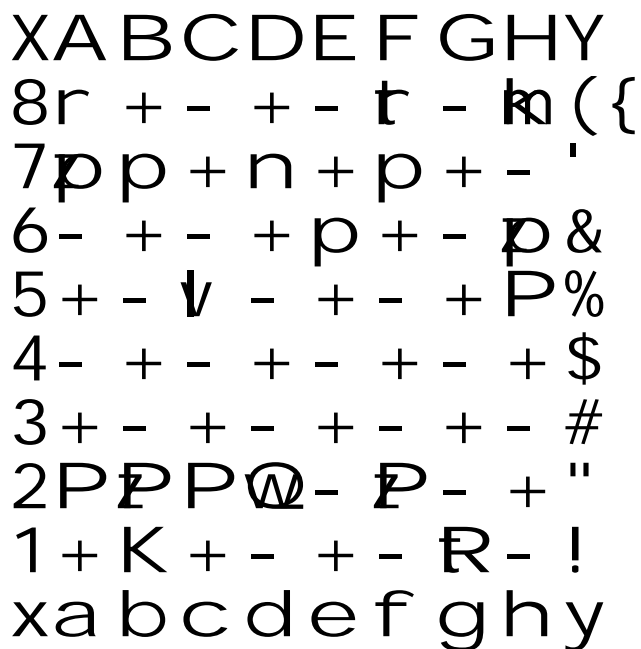


The only problem is that it is
White's move in this position.

25.Qd2 , (Dbl. jeopardy!)

Now White threatens a capture
on d7, however, Black is unable
to save his Knight, as this would
allow White to simply play,
QxP/h6#, (checkmate).

[But not: < 25.Qg4?? Rg8-+ ;
and Black is the one who
(now) has a won game.]



With two threats at once, Black
is lost ... I would not have blamed
Seirawan if he had resigned here.
(However, he fights on for a few
more moves from here.)

25...Kh7 ; 26.b4!? , (hmmm)

White - perhaps concerned with
his King not having any escape
squares - tries to kick the Black
Bishop before capturing on d7.

[The machine prefers:

- RR26.Qxd7 Bxf2 ; 27.Qd3+ Kh8
- ;
- 28.Qc3+ e5 ; 29.Rf1 Bd4 ;
- 30.Qd2 Kg7 ; 31.c3 Bb6 ;
- 32.Qg2+ Kh7 ; 33.Qxb7 Kg8 ;

34.Rxf7! Rxf7 ; 35.Qxa8+
 , "+/-"
 when White has a relatively
 simple "technique win" here.]

```

XABCDEFGHIY
8r + - + - t - + ( {
7p p + n + p + k '
6- + - + p + - p &
5+ - v - + - + P %
4- P - + - + - + $
3+ - + - + - + - #
2P + P W - P - + "
1+ K + - + - R - !
x a b c d e f g h y
    
```

This appears unnecessary ...
 the box shows that the immediate
 capture on d7 was good for White.
 (See the analysis - just below.)

The rest of the game really requires
 no comment, the WQ runs around
 and eats a few hanging buttons ...
26...Rad8 ; 27.bxc5 Nf6 ;
28.Qf4 Ne8 ; 29.Qe4+ Kh8 ;
30.Qxb7 Ng7!? ; **31.Qxa7 Rc8 ;**
32.Rd1 Nf5 ; 33.Rd7 Kg7 ;
34.a4 Kf6 ; 35.a5 , "+/-" (Resigns.
)

White has a pretty easy win
 from here, so Seirawan decides
 that it is the right time to raise
 the White flag of surrender.

```

XABCDEFGHIY
8- + r + - t - + ( {
7W - + R + p + - '
6- + - + p m - p &
5P - P - + n + P %
4- + - + - + - + $
3+ - + - + - + - #
2- + P + - P - + "
1+ K + - + - + - !
x a b c d e f g h y
    
```

The final position tells the
 whole story, one of the most
 scintillating combinations of
 the last 10-20 years
 and perhaps one of the best
 ever ...
 in U.S. Championship play!!!

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