

September 28, 2008

CHESS

McCain Economics Adviser Has a Grandmaster's Rank

By DYLAN LOEB MCCLAIN

Could a grandmaster become a member of the next administration? Possibly. Kenneth S. Rogoff, a professor at Harvard, is an economics adviser to the Republican presidential nominee, Senator [John McCain](#). Rogoff is also a grandmaster.

[Rogoff](#) said that he has known McCain since meeting him at an economics conference years ago. "One of the reasons that I think I got along with him was that I felt like I could say what I wanted even if it was not what he wanted to hear," Rogoff said.

He described his role in the presidential campaign as a fairly limited one. "I speak to the other economic advisers once every week or two," Rogoff said. "Occasionally I send in my ideas if I feel strongly about something."

Rogoff said he was not "a political animal" or tied to one party. "I have never associated myself with a candidate or administration before," he said, but "I see Senator McCain as making important changes where change is needed." In the months before the current financial crisis came to a head, Rogoff gave speeches and wrote [articles](#) in which he argued that the financial system in the United States had become bloated and that it was inevitable, even necessary, that some big banks would fail.

Rogoff said an understanding of chess helped him learn economics: "The whole logic of game theory, which is a big part of economics, came easily to me."

He also said his knowledge of chess had helped him in his career. "I was the chief economist of the [International Monetary Fund](#) from 2001 to 2003, and you are involved in a lot of high-stakes negotiations," he said, "and chess teaches you to think about what the other person is thinking."

He stopped playing competitively in 1980 because he found it too demanding to balance his chess schedule and his studies, and he had to make a choice. "First, I wanted to do something more important with my life," said Rogoff, who is now 55. "Second, I thought I was traveling too much playing chess. Third, I wanted to have a better social life."

Yet, he said, he is traveling more than ever, and his social life is no better than when he was playing. "I eventually realized it was me," Rogoff said. "I could have had a perfectly reasonable life in chess."

Rogoff was at one time one of the country's [most promising players](#). He helped lead the United States to the World Student Team Championship and placed second in the national championship. That finish earned him a spot in the Interzonal Tournament in Biel, Switzerland, in 1976, an important qualifier on the road to the

world championship.

Although he failed to get past the Interzonal, he said the game he played there against the Czech grandmaster Jan Smejkal was one of his favorites.

He said that Smejkal outplayed him in the opening. After 14 ... ed, he could not take the pawn with 15 Qd4 because 15 ... Ng4 wins his queen. White's pieces soon found themselves on awkward squares, but then Black became overly ambitious, recklessly pushing his kingside pawns forward .

Smejkal must have missed the point of 24 c5, freeing up the c4 square for White's knight. After 26 Nc4, 26 ... Bc1 27 Nd6 Qg6 28 Nc8 Rc8 29 Qc1 would have yielded White a nice advantage.

White was better anyway after 30 Qd2, but then Black made a mistake with 30 ... Kh7, putting his king on the wrong diagonal, and Rogoff took advantage of Black's overloaded queen with 31 d7.

Smejkal resigned because he could not stop mate (36 ... Rd7 37 Qh8).

Although he said he would consider taking a job in the administration if McCain is elected, Rogoff said: "I really am very happy with what I am doing. For the foreseeable future, I think I want to stay in academics."

Then, echoing Senator McCain's catchphrase, he added that he was not sure he would fit in at the White House. "I am way too much of a maverick."

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Position after 30 ... Kh7

SYMMETRICAL ENGLISH

White Rogoff	Black Smejkal	White Rogoff	Black Smejkal
1 c4	Nf6	19 Na3	g4
2 Nc3	c5	20 Hg	hg
3 g3	g6	21 b4	Bd3
4 Bg2	Bg7	22 Re1	Qf5
5 e3	0-0	23 Kg1	Bf6
6 Nge2	Nc6	24 c5	Ng5
7 0-0	d6	25 Bg5	Bg5
8 d4	cd	26 Nc4	Rd8
9 Ed	Bf5	27 Nd6	Rd6
10 h3	h5	28 Cd	Bc1
11 Bg5	Qd7	29 Qc1	Re8
12 Kh2	e5	30 Qd2	Kh7
13 d5	Nd4	31 d7	Rd8
14 Nd4	ed	32 Re7	Kg6
15 Nb5	Rfc8	33 d6	Kf6
16 Rc1	Nh7	34 Qh6	Qg6
17 Bf4	g5	35 Qh4	Kg7
18 Bd2	a6	36 Re8	Resigns