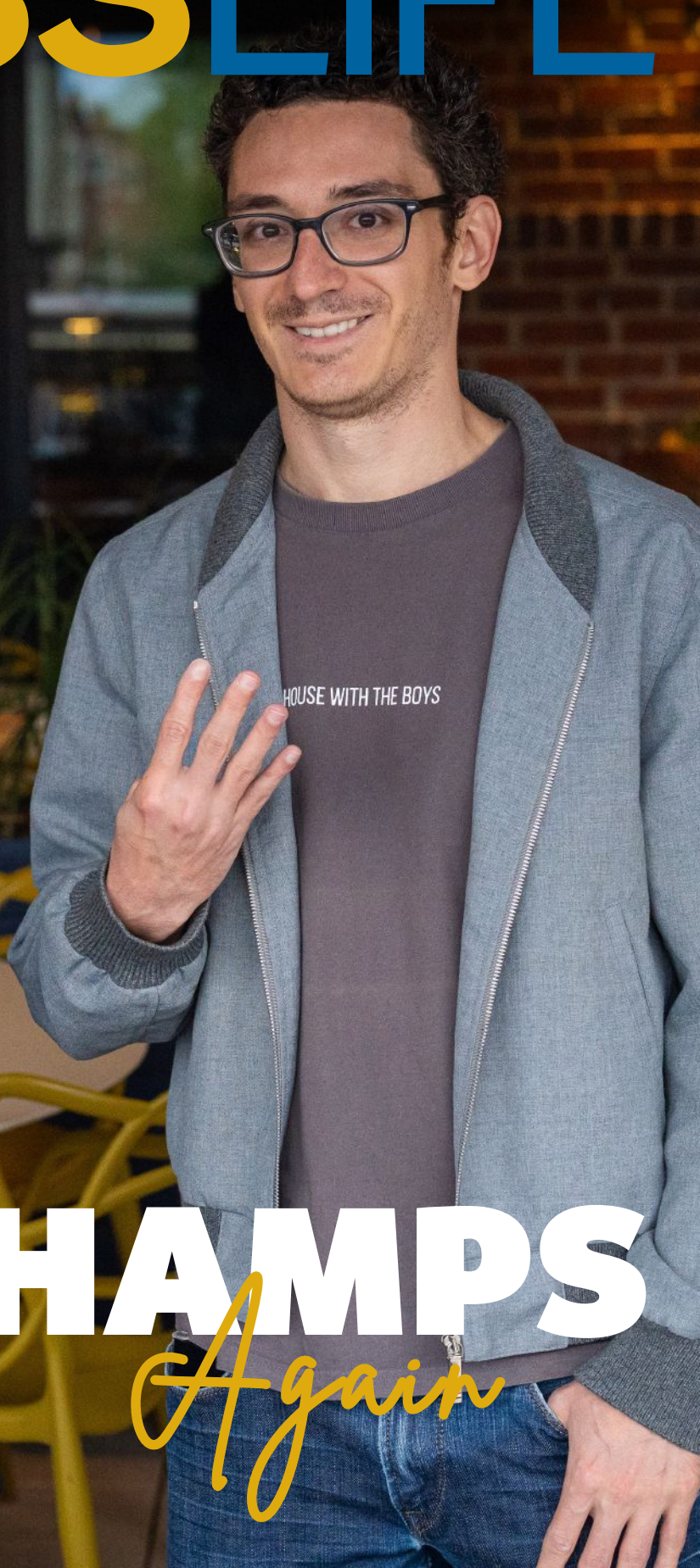


FRENCH FINALE ■ GM JAN TIMMAN 1951-2026 ■ INVATIONALS

CHESSLIFE

MARCH 2026 ■ USChess.org



THE CHAMPS

Again

Find your winning match: 3 stunning combination deals

The Club Series Chess Set, Box, & Board Combination

CLUBCOMB02

Starting at

\$239.00

**TOURNAMENT-READY
AND BUILT TO LAST**

- Heavily-weighted
- Superior playability and portability
- Perfect for competitive play



The Grandmaster Chess Set, Box, & Board Combination

GRANDCOMB02

Starting at

\$269.00

**PREMIUM CRAFTSMANSHIP
WITHOUT THE PRICE TAG**

- Hand-carved from premium woods
- Top-tier design
- Meticulous attention to detail



The B.H. Wood Tournament Series Wood Chess Set, Box, & Board Combination

BHWCOMB02

Starting at

\$299.00

**CLASSIC MID-CENTURY
DESIGN WITH MODERN
REFINEMENTS**

- Vintage-inspired pieces
- Premium materials
- A tribute to chess history



Included:

Each combination features 34 hand-carved pieces (including 2 additional queens for pawn promotion), a wooden tournament mahogany/maple chess board, and a slide-top chess box.

Free Ground Shipping On All Orders Over \$100.00
Excludes Clearance, Shopworn and Items Otherwise Marked

Scan to
shop now





ON THE COVER

IM Carissa Yip won her fourth U.S. Women's Championship (third consecutive) last October, while GM Fabiano Caruana won his fourth consecutive U.S. Championship title and fifth overall. Both feats get a four-finger salute in this photo from Lennart Ootes, and I can't help but wonder: How long until Caruana and Yip run out of fingers?

PHOTOGRAPH BY LENNART OOTES

CHESSLIFE

March

14 IN PASSING

GM Jan Timman 1951-2026

BY RICK MASSIMO

20 THEORY THE FRENCH DEFENSE

The Other Lines

BY ICCF IM NIKOLAOS NTIRLIS

24 EVENTS THE INVITATIONALS

Battle of the Champions

BY RICK MASSIMO AND JJ LANG;
ANNOTATIONS BY FEI, FISHBEIN,
NGO, PUTNAM, AND RACHELS

32 COVER STORY

ROUGH ROADS TO REPEATS

Caruana and Yip retain titles, but take different paths

BY JOHN HARTMANN;
ANNOTATIONS BY LANG,
MORADIABADI, SHLYAKHTENKO,
WOODWARD

43 EVENTS PAN-AMERICAN INTERCOLLEGIATE TEAMS

Adding Some SPICE

BY IM JASON LIANG



The Saint Louis Chess Conference

Education | Research | Community

October 22 - 24, 2026

Experience the premier Saint Louis Chess Conference exploring the educational and social research of chess! Join global scholars, coaches, and enthusiasts at the historic Royal Sonesta Chase Park Plaza, October 22-24, 2026.

Submit a proposal by Friday, April 3rd, 2026.

Learn from keynote speakers and visit the Saint Louis Chess Club's newly expanded facilities.

Secure your Early Bird rate until April 30th, 2026.

REGISTER NOW: [STLCHESSCONFERENCE.ORG](https://stlchessconference.org)



COLUMNS

10 CHESS TO ENJOY

Overperforming

BY GM ANDY SOLTIS

12 GETTING TO WORK

Getting Out of Dodge

BY IM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN

46 SOLITAIRE CHESS

Friendly Blitz?

BY BRUCE PANDOLFINI

48 ENDGAME SCHOOL

Opposites Attract

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN

50 BOOKS AND BEYOND

Fischer's Published Legacy

BY IM JOHN WATSON

53 PUZZLES

Make Your Move!

BY FM CARSTEN HANSEN



DEPARTMENTS

5 COUNTERPLAY

READERS RESPOND

6 FIRST MOVES

CHESS NEWS FROM AROUND THE U.S.

8 US CHESS AFFAIRS

NEWS FOR OUR MEMBERS

54 TOURNAMENT LIFE

62 CLASSIFIEDS

63 SOLUTIONS

CONTRIBUTORS



JOHN HARTMANN

(Cover Story) is the editor of *Chess Life* and *Chess Life Kids*. He still hopes to drop a new podcast series for US Chess “when things slow down” this summer. In his “free time” he is learning to play the piano.



RICK MASSIMO

(In Passing, Invitationals) is the assistant editor for US Chess publications. He's the author of two

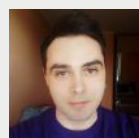
books; he's also working on a novel about a fictional ex-Soviet master, and he lives in Washington, D.C.



JJ LANG

(Invitationals) is the current US Chess Digital editor; if it's on our website, it's usually his doing. He is

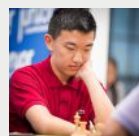
also a US Chess rated expert and a sometimes podcaster — check out the Chess-Feels podcast (co-hosted with Julia Rios) for the occasional *bon mot*.



ICCF IM NIKOLAOS NTIRLIS

(French Defense) is an ICCF IM and the author of multiple critically acclaimed

opening books with Quality Chess. By day he serves as partnership manager at Databox. Follow him online at x.com/nikolaosntirlis.



IM JASON LIANG

(Pan-American Intercollegiate Team) is the 2022 Grand Prix winner, with victories at multiple youth

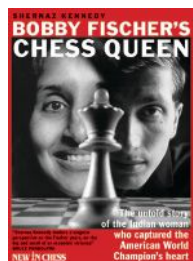
and scholastic championships. He has two GM norms to his name, and with a peak FIDE rating of 2530, he is looking forward to completing his title quest in 2026.



888.51.CHESS (512.4377)

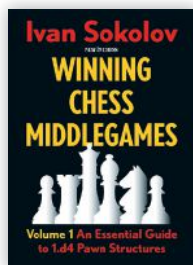


www.USCFSales.com



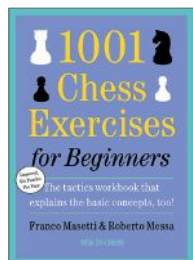
Bobby Fischer's Chess Queen
Shernaz Kennedy

When a young woman from India moves to America and reaches out to Bobby Fischer, it sparks a lifelong bond few ever knew existed. *Bobby Fischer's Chess Queen* is a true story of friendship, resilience, and the hidden heart of a genius. Discover the love that defied distance and fame.



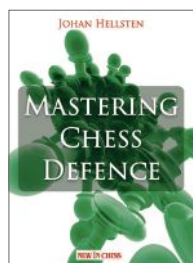
Winning Chess Middlegames – Revised Edition
Ivan Sokolov

Ever wondered why grandmasters take only seconds to see what's really going on in a chess position? It's all about structures, as Ivan Sokolov explains in this groundbreaking book. It addresses the often ignored but extremely important topic of pawn structures, divided into four main types: doubled pawns, isolated pawns, hanging pawns and pawn majorities.



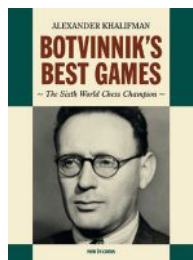
1001 Chess Exercises for Beginners
Franco Masetti & Roberto Messa

There are two types of books on tactics: those that introduce the concepts followed by some examples, and workbooks that contain numerous exercises. This tactics book does both: the authors explain the basic tactical ideas *and* provide an enormous amount of exercises for each different theme.



Mastering Chess Defence
Johan Hellsten

All chess players know that they need to study tactics, calculation, and openings, but when it comes to defense, far too many wait until they're under pressure. The truth is that more games are lost because of defensive mistakes than strategic ones. This book offers the training you need to be prepared and defend.

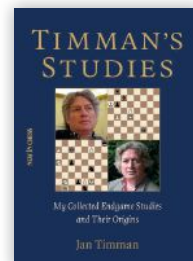


Botvinnik's Best Games
Alexander Khalifman

Mikhail Botvinnik is widely regarded as one of the greatest chess players ever. He was the World Champion from 1948 until 1963, with two short interruptions. For this modern biography, the Russian grandmaster Alexander Khalifman has selected and annotated more than fifty of Botvinnik's best games.

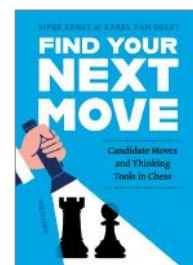
Timman's Studies
Jan Timman

In *Timman's Studies*, Jan Timman presents 160 of his finest endgame compositions, revealing their origins and creative process. A unique glimpse into the mind of a grandmaster who found artistry and inspiration in endgame studies.



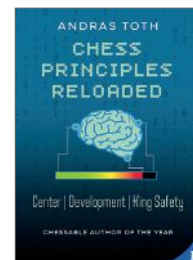
Find Your Next Move
Sipke Ernst and Karel van Delft

The candidate move is perhaps the most elusive concept in chess theory. It seems straightforward and methodical enough: when considering a move, you make a list of 'candidates' in your mind, compare their merits, and make your choice. But how do you determine what a candidate move is, and how do you proceed from there?



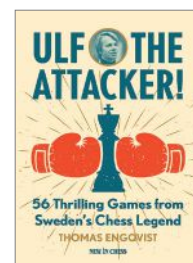
Chess Principles Reloaded
Andras Toth

IM Andras Toth's coaching experience has taught him that a common weakness among ambitious improvers, club players, and even seasoned experts is their failure to fully grasp some basic chess principles or their tendency to neglect them. This book will help make you more confident in your decision-making by reviving the most essential principles of the game.



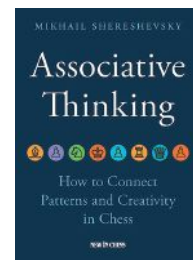
Ulf – The Attacker!
Thomas Engqvist

Swedish chess legend Ulf Andersson was a positional genius with a crystal clear style. The former world number 4 rarely lost a game and consistently scored victories from quiet positions. But he could also be a fierce attacker. This book offers 56 thrilling games, both entertaining and instructive.



Associative Thinking
Mikhail Shereshevsky

One of the most respected chess trainers in the world introduces an important but little-explored topic: associative thinking. It is not about specific pawn structures, but about more abstract things. For example, what is the best interaction between knight and pawn?.



Free Ground Shipping On All Books, Software and DVDS at US Chess Sales
\$25.00 Minimum - Excludes Clearance, Shopworn and Items Otherwise Marked



EDITORIAL

CHESS LIFE/CLK EDITOR **John Hartmann** (john.hartmann@uschess.org)

ART DIRECTOR **Natasha Roberts**

ASSISTANT EDITOR **Rick Massimo**

TECHNICAL EDITOR **IM Ron Burnett**

EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT **Kevin Pryor** (president@uschess.org)

VICE PRESIDENT **John Fernandez** (vp@uschess.org)

VICE PRESIDENT OF FINANCE **Daniel Serna** (vpfinance@uschess.org)

SECRETARY **John Rockefeller** (secretary@uschess.org)

MEMBER AT LARGE **Leila D'Aquin** (chessnola@gmail.com)

MEMBER AT LARGE **Anand Dommalapati** (adommalapati@yahoo.com)

MEMBER AT LARGE **David Hater** (dhater1@aol.com)

MEMBER AT LARGE **Lakshmana "Vish" Viswanath** (vish@viswanath.us)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **Fred Abouseleman**

(fred.abouseleman@uschess.org)

Contact membership@uschess.org or call 1-800-903-8723 for assistance and see uschess.org for the full staff listing.

CHESS LIFE IS THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE US CHESS FEDERATION

U.S. CHESS TRUST

Youngest-Ever USA
Female to Earn the IM Title!

Alice Lee

"I'd like to thank the U.S. Chess Trust for their support in my chess career. I have had the honor of receiving the prestigious Samford Fellowship, which has given me encouragement and support for my chess."



The Trust is a separate 501(c)(3) organization operating independently of US Chess.

US CHESS TRUST
www.uschesstrust.org

LOOKING AHEAD TO APRIL

▶ IN HIS BEST PERFORMANCE TO DATE, GM ANDY WOODWARD stormed to a first-place finish at the Tata Steel Challengers. He tells us all about it in our April cover story.

Also scheduled for April: WGM Jennfier Yu on the World Rapid and Blitz, John McCrory on George Henry Mackenzie, and all your favorite columnists.



Send your letters to letters@uschess.org. Letters are subject to editing for style, length, and content.

Keeping Girls In The Game

A different kind of battle in chess

BY **MARK E. GLICKMAN** AND **CHRISTOPHER F. CHABRIS**



WALK INTO ANY OPEN CHESS tournament and you'll see a familiar pattern: row after row of boys and men, and far fewer girls and women. The imbalance is hard to miss, and it shows up in the ratings, too.

There are no women among the top 100 players in the world, and just a few among the top 1,000.

For years, players and researchers have wondered why this gap exists and why it persists. Because the result of every rated game is recorded and every player's performance is tracked over time, there's a clear window to study these questions in detail. In a recent article published in *CHANCE*, we analyzed nearly 30 years of US Chess data to uncover what's behind the difference, and what might help close the gap.

The Landscape of Competitive Chess

Data from more than 680,000 players from 1992 through 2019 confirm the extent of the gender imbalance: Men outnumber women in competitive chess by roughly 10 to 1. That imbalance begins early, with many more boys than girls entering tournaments, and it widens as players grow older.

Participation among girls has grown steadily, especially since the early 2000s. But despite that progress, the overall gender gap in tournament activity has hardly narrowed. Even as more young girls are discovering chess, many of them stop competing before adulthood. Understanding why they leave the game early may be the key to making chess more inclusive in the long run.

How Ratings Tell the Story

Chess ratings provide a clear record of how players perform and progress throughout their careers. Our analysis first showed that men's ratings are typically higher than women's, and this has been true for decades. But when we looked more closely, following players as they entered and developed within the system, a more interesting and nuanced picture emerged.

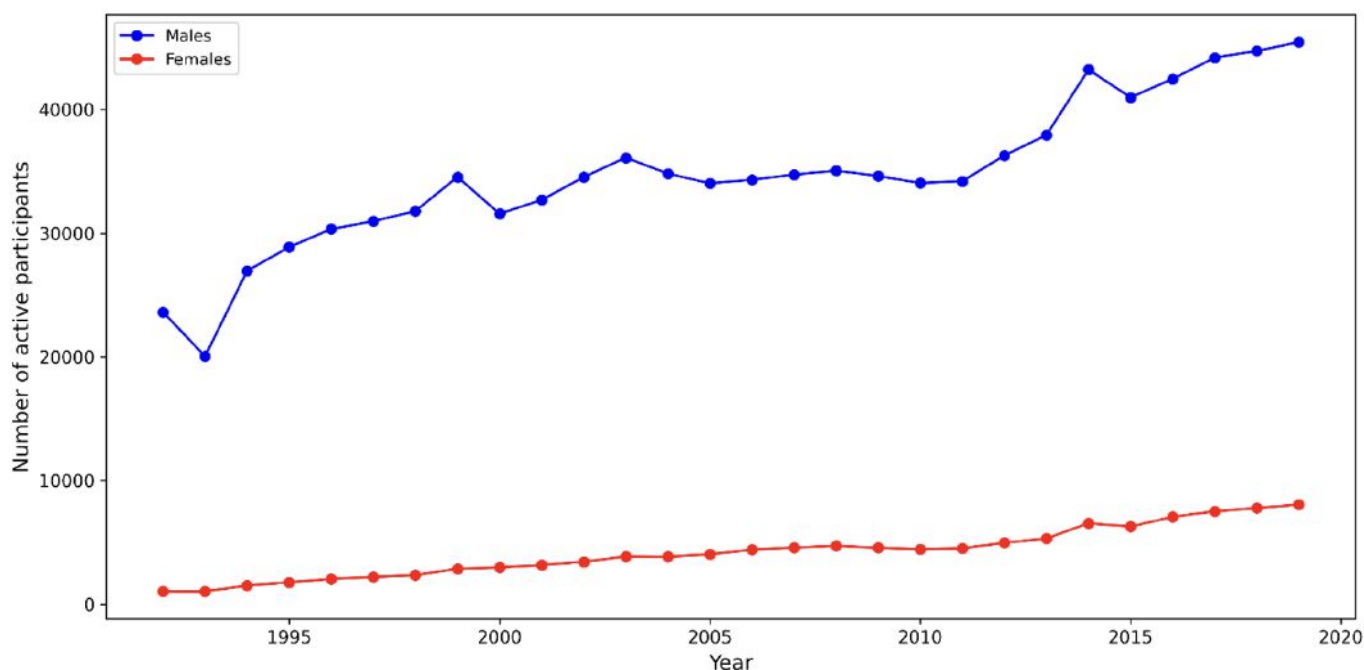
Boys and girls improve significantly over their first several years of competition, often adding hundreds of rating points rapidly as they gain experience. On average, boys begin with ratings about 200 points higher than girls, and they maintain roughly that same advantage over time. But the difference doesn't appear to widen dramatically; it simply persists.

That stability raised an important question: Could the rating gap be less about ability and more about who sticks around?

Who Stays in the Game

To answer that, we studied dropout rates among players who began competing be-

Below: Number of active participants by gender, 1992-2019.



GRAPHS: COURTESY ASA / CHANCE

tween 2000 and 2010. The results were striking: After five years, only about 1 in 5 players was still active. After nine years, fewer than 1 in 10 remained. But girls dropped out at a noticeably faster rate than boys.

When we compared boys and girls who began at the same age, in the same year, and with similar starting ratings, their paths looked almost identical. They improved at the same rate and stopped playing at nearly the same pace. So when the starting conditions were equal, so were the outcomes.

This finding suggests that much of the sex difference we see in chess ratings may be rooted not in inherent ability but in patterns of participation. These patterns include when players enter the system, how much they play, and how long they stay.

The Importance of Context

We linked our data to geographic information to see how local participation environments shape outcomes. Some areas of the United States have far higher proportions of girls entering chess than others, and in those places, the rating gap between boys and girls at the start is noticeably smaller.

That pattern implies that social environ-

ments matter a lot. When girls are surrounded by more female peers, mentors, and role models, they may feel more encouraged to compete, stay active longer, and start out on closer footing with boys. These regional differences highlight how cultural and social factors can shape competitive outcomes, even in a game as seemingly objective as chess.

Lessons for the Chess Community

What can we take away from all this? First, the persistence of the gender gap doesn't mean it's inevitable. Boys and girls who begin chess under the same conditions (same age, same initial rating) show nearly identical progress. The challenge lies in getting more girls to enter the system in the first place, and to stay engaged long enough to reach their potential.

Second, in communities where more girls join and keep playing, the rating gap between boys and girls tends to be smaller. When girls see and learn from others like themselves in chess, they're more likely to keep playing and grow stronger.

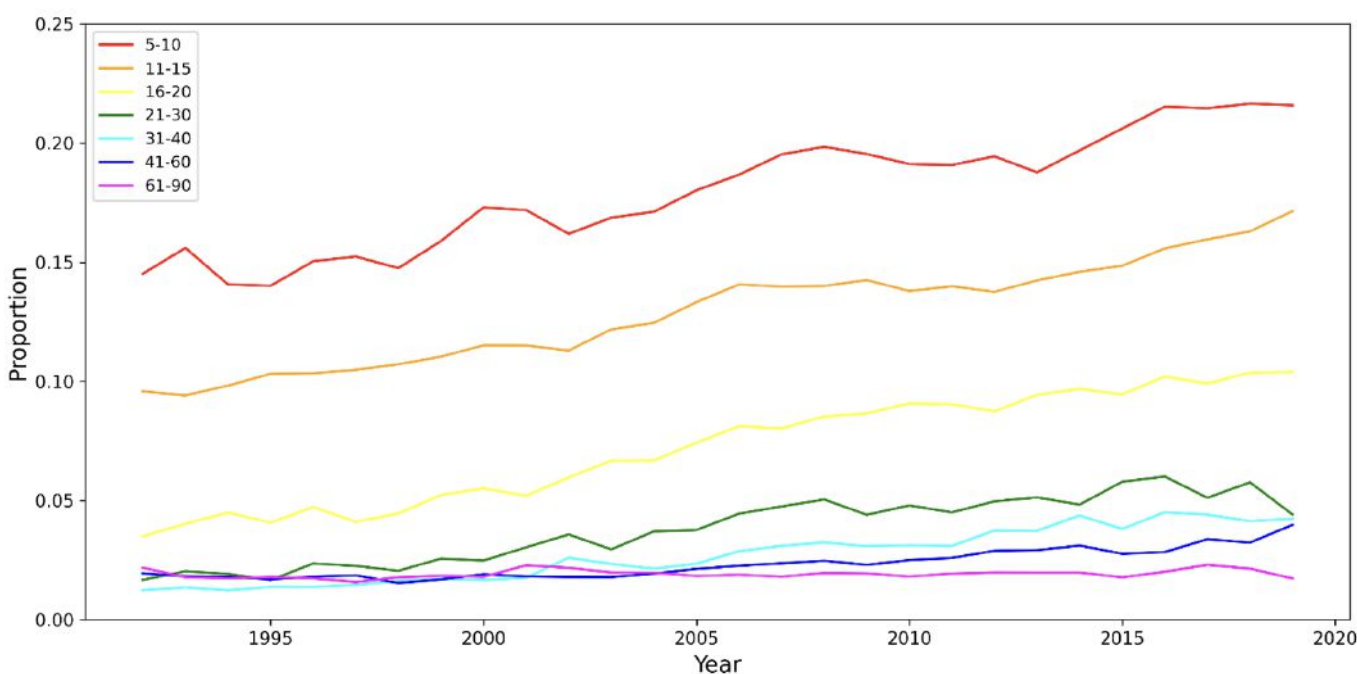
Finally, we think that encouraging long-term engagement among young girls may have benefits beyond the gender balance in tournament halls. It could reshape how chess evolves, who rises through its ranks, and how the next generation of players sees the game itself.

Chess prides itself on fairness: Male or female, each player starts each game with the same pieces, board, and options. Our research suggests that circumstances off the board matter too. By creating environments that welcome and retain more girls in chess, we can make the game not only more inclusive, but also more competitive, diverse, and vibrant for everyone. ♠

Li, A., Glickman, M. E., & Chabris, C. F. (2025). Across the Board: Sex, Ratings, and Retention in Competitive Chess. *CHANCE*, 38(3), 11–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09332480.2025.2560279>.



Below: Proportion of active female participants by age group, 1992–2019.



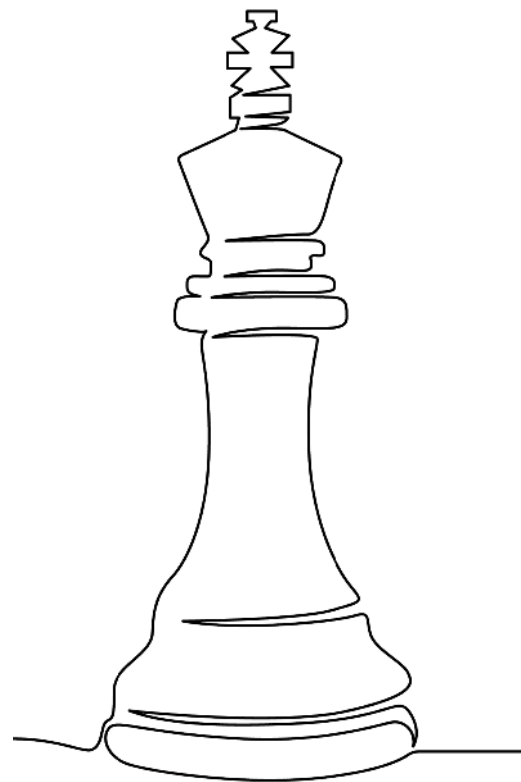
Chess Club of the Year Award Nominations

▶ EACH YEAR, THE U.S. CHESS FEDERATION honors clubs that go above and beyond in promoting the game and serving their communities through the Chess Club of the Year Awards. Three clubs are recognized each year in the large, medium, and small club categories so that clubs of all sizes have the chance to be celebrated. Large clubs have 51 or more members; medium clubs have 16 to 50 members, and small clubs have 3 to 15 members. Membership numbers should be based on either average attendance or an annual membership list.

Winners are chosen based on several factors, including community outreach,

membership growth, innovation and creativity, player and director development, and overall organization and leadership. The recipients are announced each summer during the U.S. Open.

The nomination period for the 2026 awards opened Jan. 1 and closes April 2. Clubs may self-nominate or be nominated by their state chapters. Clubs are encouraged to submit details about what makes their club special and why they should be considered for Club of the Year. If you think your club is deserving of this honor, reach out to Paul Covington, chair of the Clubs Committee for US Chess, at paul@covingtoncomputers.com.



HEAVY WEIGHT LIGHT TRAVEL

QUAD-WEIGHTED PRECISION !!

Featuring a tournament-standard 3.75" King, each piece is quadruple-weighted for exceptional stability and the substantial feel of luxury wooden sets—fully compliant with FIDE regulations.

PRO-GRADE SILICONE SURFACE !!

Engineered to lie perfectly flat every time. This premium, 100% crease-free silicone board is ultra-durable and simply wipes clean. Roll it. Fold it. Play anywhere.

THE PROFESSIONAL'S TRAVEL CASE !!

Protection, simplified. This sleek, compact case is engineered for the competing player, securing and organizing your gear seamlessly between rounds.



A&A CHESS
EVERY PAWN IS A POTENTIAL QUEEN

Explore the collection at
www.aa-chess.com
or scan the QR code for details
Your Move !!



amazon store



official site



ART: FREEPIK

JOIN THE FUN

Open to all girls under 18 as of 1/1/26. This prestigious event is your chance to shine and connect with your peers



Hyatt McCormick Place
2233 S. Dr Martin Luther King
Jr Dr, Chicago, IL 60616



Main Event

6-SS, G/90,d5

Sections: U8, U10, U12, U14, U16, & U18

Friday: Round 1

Saturday: Rounds 2, 3, & 4

Sunday: Rounds 5 & 6



Entry Fee

\$100 by 2/23, \$130 by 3/16,
\$180 by 3/30, \$230 by 4/9



Side Events on 4/10

Blitz: 5 double rounds, G/3 +2,
EF \$50 by 3/30, \$65 after

Bughouse: # Rds TBD, G/5,d0,
\$50 per team



Hotel Reservations

single-quad: \$195 + tax
reserve early hotel may sell out



**APRIL
10-12
2026**



The Champion in each age category qualifies to represent the USA at the World Cadets and World Youth Championships

Details / Registration: www.allgirls.rknights.org

www.kasparovchessfoundation.org

Overperforming

Being erratic pays.

BY **GM ANDY SOLTIS**



Let's imagine two players with roughly the same level of playing strength and tournament activity, but with one major difference.

The first player's results are predictable. Their score in every weekend Swiss is more or less the same. Their rating never fluctuates. (I told you this was imaginary.)

The second player is also predictable — predictably erratic. They alternate between great tournaments and awful ones. When they gain rating points, they always lose them back.

Which of these two players would you prefer to be?

It's not an easy question for many people to answer.

Consistency is reassuring. Your results say you are playing as well as you can. But consistent results can be boring.

Erratic results are never boring. They mean rating surges and the thrill of victories. But every erratic player knows about that other catchphrase, the agony of defeat.

People who don't play chess think we are all like the first player — paragons of intellectual consistency. People who play chess know we are definitely not.

"A player has good days and bad, good tournaments and bad," is the way Arpad Elo put it. Many others have said this. But Elo made it a key to his rating system.

Each tournament result can be measured objectively and turned into a number, he said. Elo called it a performance rating. For example, Fabiano Caruana's spectacular Sinquefeld Cup 2014 registered a performance rating well over 3000.

A performance rating determines whether you gain or lose rating points from a tournament. "The performance rating formula

is the first equation of the Elo system," Elo wrote in his seminal book *The Rating of Chessplayers, Past and Present*. Some performances are exceptional, as in the case of a certain 13-year-old:

SICILIAN DEFENSE, POISONED PAWN VARIATION (B97)

IM Magnus Carlsen (2484)

GM Valerij Popov (2580)

Wijk aan Zee, Group C, 01.14.2004

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 a6 6. Bg5 e6 7. f4 Qb6 8. Qd2 Qxb2
9. Rb1 Qa3 10. f5 Nc6 11. fxe6 fxe6 12.
Nxc6 bxc6 13. e5 Nd5

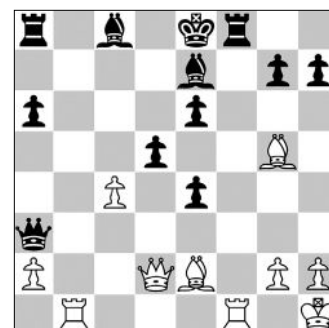


Magnus Carlsen's pre-tournament rating indicated he should finish no higher than 10th place in this, his first major international. His grandmaster opponent, one of the favorites, steered away from the once-trendy 13. ... dxe5.

14. Nxd5 cxd5 15. Bd3 dxe5 16. O-O

Black's king is trapped in the center. Its survival depends on how long his three center pawns shield it, and how well 16. ... Ra7 would defend key squares such as f7.

16. ... Be7? 17. Kh1 e4 18. Be2 Rf8 19. c4!



Now 19. ... Bxg5 20. Qxg5 Qe7 would invite decisive domination of the center: 21. Rxf8+ Kxf8 22. Rf1+ Ke8 23. Qh5+ g6 24. Qe5!.

19. ... dxc4 20. Rxf8+ Kxf8 21. Qf4+ Ke8 22. Rf1

So that 22. ... Bxg5 is met with 23. Qf7+ Kd8 24. Rd1+.

24. ... Ra7 23. Qf7+ Kd7 24. Rd1+ Kc6 25. Qe8+ Kb6 26. Qxc8, Black resigned.

Carlsen won the tournament with a performance of 2640. When that was factored into Elo's formula, his rating jumped more than 50 points.

That's impressive. But there's another metric that tells us how impressive:

You take Magnus's final score. Then you subtract his expected result — the score his rating says he should have gotten.

The result is an *overperformance*.

Carlsen's overperformance was nearly four points. That is, he scored 10½-2½ instead of the expected 6½-6½.

He would go on to win many great tournaments. But he rarely approached his Wijk aan Zee 2004 overperformance.

QUIZ FOR MARCH

OPENING VARIATIONS are typically named after either famous players or historic tournaments. This makes Semmering 1926, played 100 years ago this month, particularly memorable.

Twelve of the 16 players' names were eventually attached to opening lines. Some are major openings, like the Alekhine, Réti, and Grünfeld. There is also a Semmering Variation of the Queen's Gambit Declined. Rudolf Spielmann took clear first prize in what was by far the strongest event of the year. In each of these six positions from Semmering 1926 you are asked to find the fastest winning line of play. Solutions are on page 63.

PROBLEM 1

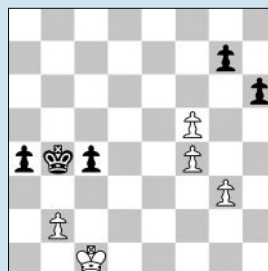
Richard Réti
Milan Vidmar



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2

Stefano Rosselli del Turco
Ernst Grünfeld



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3

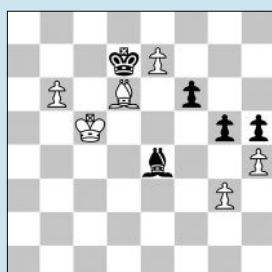
Rudolf Spielmann
F.D. Yates



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4

Aron Nimzovich
Stefano Rosselli del Turco



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5

Ernst Grünfeld
Hans Kmoch



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6

F.D. Yates
Karel Treybal



BLACK TO MOVE

In everyday life, we like people to be consistent. We prefer doctors who always treat us at the same professional standard, rather than doctors who have great days but also awful days.

But in chess, inconsistency pays better.

An erratic player is more likely to win a class prize than a consistent player. An erratic master is more likely to gain an international title with overperformance norms.

And an erratic grandmaster has a better chance of winning a Candidates Tournament and becoming world champion, as Gukesh Dommaraju showed in 2024.

One of his great predecessors, Mikhail Tal, was erratic at age 22. He overperformed by an amazing 4.4 points in the 1959 Candidates tournament, according to *Chessmetrics.com*. But a few weeks later he underperformed by nearly two points.

Many of Tal's up-or-down results were attribute to his feast-or-famine playing style. Here is evidence from that year:

A MORTAL TAL

GM Mikhail Tal (2610)

GM Ratmir Kholmov (2600)

Team match, Vilnius, 04.04.1959



WHITE TO MOVE

Tal might have held an endgame after 24. Rxd5 Nxd5 25. Qa3! followed by moving the knight and trading queens, because Black loses after 25. ... Qxd6?? 26. Qxd6 Rxd6 27. Rc8+.

Instead, he went for 24. Qxb6 axb6 25. Rxd5, aiming for an impregnable fortress. If he gets his other rook to d4, his a-pawn to a4 and his knight to b5, it may be impossible for Black to break through.

Tal was hailed as a genius for finding the best chance, but it was a chimera. After 25. ... g6 26. Rcd1 Ra8 27. R1d2 Ra5 28. e4 Qc7 29. g3 Rxd5 30. Rxd5 Qc2 31. a3 f5! White was losing.

Style doesn't always explain consistency.

When Garry Kasparov was at his peak 30 years ago, he won one elite event after another with final scores that were generally in line with his rating.

At that time the world's second-ranked player was former champion Anatoly Karpov. He had a quieter, more positional style. Did this make him more consistent than Kasparov?

No. Karpov became erratic. He won the super-tournament Linares 1994 with a dazzling 3.4-point overperformance. But that was followed by two indifferent results and an embarrassing minus 1.6-point underperformance at Dortmund 1994.

We know how hard it is to change our playing styles. Can a player intentionally change his predictability? The current world champion may give us an answer this year.

Gukesh had a highly unpredictable 2025. A tie for first place at Wijk aan Zee was followed by an even score at Norway Chess. Then he suffered a minus score at the Superbet Classic and some blitz chess disasters.

Will he try to defend his title in 2026 by becoming a more reliable, Kasparov-like champion? Or will he need another overperformance in the upcoming world championship match? Stay tuned. ♠

Getting Out of Dodge

Sometimes, booking it is the better part of valor.

BY IM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN

D

EVELOPING A GOOD SENSE OF danger is an essential skill for chessplayers. It helps us anticipate our opponent's threats

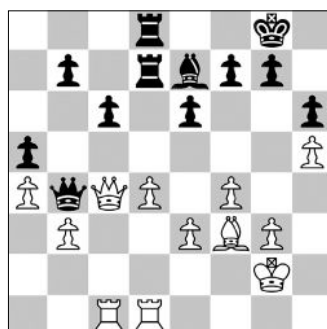
and come up with defensive resources before it's too late. Sometimes an incoming attack cannot be met through usual defensive means, and the only way for a king to survive it is to flee to the other side of the board. In this column, we will examine king marches in anticipation of an attack.

BEFORE THEY MAKE ME RUN

GM Wang Hao (2727)

GM Levon Aronian (2783)

Tal Memorial (2), Moscow, 11.06.2010



BLACK TO MOVE

At first glance, the position may look completely harmless, and the engine evaluation more or less agrees. What we should think about is who has the potential to create problems for their opponent. Black's position is solid; he has no weaknesses and all his pieces are well placed. However, Black does not have any pawn breaks or ideas of his own except for shuffling. White is the

one with the idea of playing Bf3-e4, Kg2-f3, and g3-g4-g5, opening the kingside. Because White has a good grip on the center, his king's safety won't be compromised. And if White manages to execute his plan, then he will be in control of the timing of the opening of the kingside.

30. ... Kf8

Understanding his opponent's idea, Aronian decides that his king would be safer on the queenside.

The queen trade 30. ... Qxc4 31. bxc4 favors White, as he now also gets the open b-file. Black can try to shut it down with 31. ... Bb4, but now that the bishop has abandoned the kingside, White can shift his attention to that side: 32. g4 with the idea of Kg2-f2, Rd1-g1 and g4-g5. White can play on both sides of the board if the bishop leaves the b4-square. Black does not really have ideas of his own because he does not have any pawn breaks of his own.

31. Be4 Ke8 32. Kf3 Rc7 33. g4 Qb6

Defending the c7-rook. The immediate 33. ... Kd7 runs into 34. d5, taking advantage of the pin on the c-file as ... c6xd5 is not an option.

34. Qc2 Kd7 35. Bd3 Kc8

Now that the black king has successfully made his way to the queenside, it doesn't make any sense for White to continue playing on the kingside with g4-g5, which would completely undermine the safety of his own king. The game ended in a draw shortly, as neither side could make any progress.

36. Bc4 Qb4 37. Qd2 Qb6 38. Qc2 Qb4
39. Qd2 Qb6, draw.

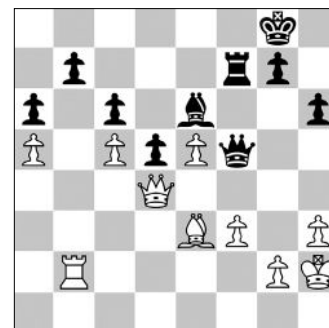
In Game 4 of the 2016 World Championship match, GM Sergey Karjakin found himself in an uncomfortable position against the worst kind of opponent: one who enjoys a long grind and squeezing out wins from any positions. His king march almost helped him score a crucial point.

TOP LEVEL

GM Magnus Carlsen (2853)

GM Sergey Karjakin (2769)

World Ch (5), New York, 11.17.2016



BLACK TO MOVE

Black has one major weakness in the position — the b7-pawn. He will have no trouble defending this pawn even if White doubles on the b-file, as the bishop can simply slide back to c8. The big worry for Black is, again, the potential plans for each side. Black does not have any pawn breaks or big ideas of his own. On the other hand, if Black simply shuffles back and forth, White can start advancing his kingside pawns with g2-g4 and f3-f4, threatening a pawn break on f5 that would make the black king extremely vulnerable — and

the opposite-colored bishops would only exacerbate the problem.

32. ... Kf8

The king is headed to the queenside, where it will be much safer behind his pawns. From c8, the king will also defend the b7-pawn, which will then free Black's pieces.

33. Qc3 Ke8 34. Rb4 g5

Black creates his own play instead of waiting for White and trying to build a fortress with ... g7-g6 and ... h6-h5.

35. Rb2 Kd8 36. Rf2 Kc8 37. Qd4 Qg6

Now that the king is on the queenside, Black is getting ready to push his kingside pawns.

38. g4

A committal decision, but Carlsen is still trying to look for ideas and future pawn breaks with f3-f4.

38. ... h5 39. Qd2 Rg7 40. Kg3 Rg8

41. Kg2 hxg4 42. hxg4 d4!

A pretty typical sacrifice, freeing a bishop that is locked behind a pawn chain. Once the bishop gets to d5, the white king will be the vulnerable one.

43. Qxd4 Bd5?

Surprisingly, this is an inaccuracy; 43. ... Rh8 with the idea of doubling on the h-file would have been stronger. After 44. Qe4 Qh6 45. Kf1 Qh1+ 46. Ke2 Bd5 the white king would have had some serious problems.

44. e6!

Carlsen frees his own bishop with the same idea.

44. ... Qxe6 45. Kg3 Qe7 46. Rh2 Qf7

If 46. ... Rf8 47. Rh8 and once the rooks are traded off the white king can breathe easy.

47. f4 gxf4+ 48. Qxf4 Qe7 49. Rh5 Rf8

50. Rh7 Rxf4 51. Rxe7 Re4, draw.

The final example is the most intriguing one. Things look bleak for the black king, as the attack is coming the very next move. He needs to make a judgment call about what to do with the king.



BLACK TO MOVE

24. ... Kd8!

Objectively Black is still in a lot of trouble, but L'Ami correctly assessed the chances of his king's survival. It might appear that the king is worse off on the queenside, as the b-file is open, but once the h-file opens the king would have no defensive pieces around him. Not only is the king better off on this side of the board, but now White's attack won't flow so easily, and he will be forced to make some concrete decisions.

25. h5 gxh5 26. Bxh5 Rf8 27. Bg4

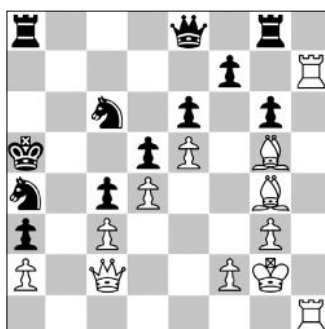
Missing 27. Ng5 Bxg5 28. Bxg5+ Kc7 29. Bc1! when the two bishops will prove to be a nuisance for Black. After 29. ... Qe7 30. Be2 with the idea of Rh1-h7, Black will have too many weaknesses to defend soon, especially compared to the game.

27. ... Kc7 28. Rh7 Rg8 29. Bh5 g6 30.

Bg4 Qe8 31. Rbh1 Kb6!?

The king walk is not over yet!

32. Ng5 Bxg5 33. Bxg5 Ka5



The king looks funny on a5, but he is surrounded by his own pieces and is no longer on the rank where the white rook is right now. Although the b-file is wide open, there are not enough entry squares to checkmate the king.

34. Rb1 Rh8 35. Rxh8 Qxh8

Of course, Black is thrilled to have traded

off his opponent's attacking pieces.

36. Rb7

Already, White has to be concrete to maintain his advantage. After 36. Bd1 Nb2 37. Bc1 Nxd1 38. Bxa3 Nxf2 39. Qxf2 the black king looks more vulnerable; the dark-squared bishop is now very powerful, and Black has some other weaknesses to worry about, such as the f7-pawn. Perhaps Efimenko didn't want to go for this because now suddenly his own king is also weak. Even so, White has more control of the position as f7 is immediately hanging and the white rook is ready to go to h1.

36. ... Qf8 37. Qc1

If 37. Qb1 Nb2! denying entry to the queen.

37. ... Ka6 38. Rc7 Kb6 39. Rd7 Qe8 40.

Rd6

The rook is actually trapped here; all Black needs to do is attack it with a knight. Already, Black is doing quite OK, especially compared to where we started.

40. ... Nb2 41. Bd1?

Now the game is starting to slip away. Black has a straightforward plan of playing ... Kb6-c7 and ... Nc6-a5-b7, snaring the trapped rook. White needs to find ways to fight against it.

White's best was 41. Qf4 with the idea of Qf4-f6 and sacrificing on e6. After 41. ... Na4 Black can force a repetition or play for more with 42. Qc1 Nb2 43. f4 Ra4.

41. ... Kc7 42. Bc2 Na5 43. Bf4 Nb7

The rook is trapped and Black went on to win.

44. g4 Nxd6 45. exd6+ Kc6 46. Bg3 Qd8

47. Qh6 Na4 48. Qe3 Nb6 49. Bd1 Nc8

50. Bf3 Nxd6 51. Qc1 g5 52. Qb1 Qa5 53.

Bxd6 Kxd6 54. Qb7 Qa7 55. Qb4+ Kd7

56. Bd1 Qa5 57. Qb7+ Ke8 58. Qc6+ Ke7

59. Qb7+ Kf8 60. Bc2 Kg7 61. Bb1 Qd8,

White resigned.

In what looked like a hopeless position, L'Ami's king run put up enough resistance for him to be able to turn the game around completely. The key in all of these examples was sensing the danger early and running with the king before the attack arrived. Sometimes the best defense is running away. ♠

For more instruction from IM Tatev Abrahamyan, check out our Chess Life Digital Archives at uschess.org.

WRIGGLING OUT

GM Zahar Efimenko (2660)

GM Erwin L'Ami (2600)

European Ch (9), Plovdiv, 04.30.2008

The TITAN



GM Jan Timman achieved greatness in many areas of the game.

BY **RICK MASSIMO**



WHEN GM JAN TIMMAN died Feb. 18, the chess world lost one of its strongest players and one of its most versatile writers and creators.

Born in Amsterdam, Timman first made his mark at age 15, finishing third in the World Junior Championship. He became the Netherlands' third grandmaster in 1974.

By the 1980s, he was often referred to as the "Best of the West," winning international tournaments alongside the Soviets' top players. Some of his most impressive results included first places in the IBM tournament of 1981; the Wijk aan Zee tour-

naments (now known as Tata Steel) in 1981 and 1985, and the 1988 edition of the Linares supertournament.

He also won two interzonals — Taxco in 1985 and Tilburg in 1987. He was second on the January 1982 FIDE rating list to World Champion Anatoly Karpov.

Timman remained a strong player for years after that: He won the 1991 Immopar knockout rapid tournament, taking out GM Gata Kamsky and past, reigning and future world champions Karpov, Garry Kasparov and Viswanathan Anand along the way. He also reached the Candidates final in 1993; when Kasparov and challenger GM Nigel Short split with FIDE and contested a match under private auspices in London,



PHOTOS: OOTES (L), US CHESS ARCHIVES (R)

Timman and Karpov played for the FIDE World Championship.

He represented the Netherlands in 13 Olympiads, winning the Board 1 gold medal in 1976. Timman also played on the gold medal-winning team in the European Team Championships in 2005; he played in the Dutch Championship in 2024, and appears to have last played in a Dutch team tournament last year.

"I will play until I feel that I don't play well anymore," Timman told *Chess.com's* Peter Doggers in 2012. "Of course I will sometimes play a bad game; this will happen for sure. If you're getting older, you'll have bad days more and more. But as long as I can play good games, I will certainly enjoy doing this."

Timman was known for having said in recent years that if he were young today he would not have become a professional chess player. He told the Dutch newspaper *NRC* in 2023 that the influx of information had sapped the fun from the game.

Young players "just sit behind computers all day," Timman said. Perhaps ironically, the work that computers do actually created more work for the professional player. "It's not just traveling around and having a fun life, like I did. It was a hippie life, but with a purpose."

The Writer

If Timman's playing was a testament to his strength, his writing bore witness to how deeply he loved and thought about the game. Timman was an editor of the essential Dutch magazine *New in Chess*. His first book, 1980's *The Art of Chess Analysis*, was a collection of grandmaster games, including some of his, with his dense notes — all written while he was growing in strength and published while he was still becoming one of the world's top players. For an amateur at the time, the book's lack of positional generalizations and easy-to-remember principles served as a sobering indication in the pre-computer age how deeply strong players analyzed positions both at the board and after the game.

Some of Timman's best work was on his own games: *Chess the Adventurous Way* (1994); *Studies and Games* (1996; translated from the 1983 *Schaakwerk*); and *Timman's Triumphs: My 100 Best Games* (2020).

But if you want to get the full sweep of Timman's powers as a player, an analyst,

and a lover of chess, you probably can't do better than *Timman's Titans: My World Champions* (2016). In addition to analyzing games, including his own matchups, Timman, in keeping with the subtitle, wrote his personal impressions and analyses of world champions from Alekhine to Kasparov with the flair and detail of a memoirist and a novelist:

- Alekhine died five years before Timman was born, but Timman recounts his experiences in Lisbon, the city where the former champion died, complete with the experience of finding a photo of Alekhine in a second-hand book and listening to locals' conspiracy theories about his death.

- Of all the paragraphs and pages written about Max Euwe, can anyone sum him up more succinctly than "In his apartment, I took great care to put my coffee cup down in the right place"?

- Timman recalls Mikhail Tal interrupting an interview to tell him "Jan, don't tell them about our lives."

- Petrosian told Timman he had just been bitten by a dog — one who knew him, no less — and that dogs don't bite healthy people. Timman scoffed, but Petrosian died within the year at age 54.

- Spassky told Timman he was so tired after beating Petrosian for the title that "nothing went through my head." He won Linares 1983 undefeated and said he would rather have drawn all his games.

- After a game with black against Anand, Karpov pronounced himself better in a middlegame position; reminded that he had won with white from an almost identical position years earlier, Karpov replied, "Yes, it is true that White is slightly better. But play a few more moves, and I will be slightly better."

- During a sharp last-round game of Timman's that was crucial to Kasparov's chances at Linares, the champ asked him at the line of urinals "Did you prepare everything?" And while Timman decries Kasparov's "utter contempt for democratic rules" during their time with the abortive Grandmasters Association, he relays his delight when, years after Kasparov's retirement from active play, the champ sent him proof that four knights beat a queen.

Chess Life's now-editor John Hartmann wrote in his 2018 review that *Timman's Titans* was equal parts a memoir and an elegy for a lost time. Following Samuel Taylor Coleridge's definition, Hartmann wrote, "As with most elegies, it reveals equally the greatness of its subjects and its author."

Other titles included *Fischer World Champion!*, a recounting of the 1972 World Championship; *Curaçao 1962: The Battle of Minds That Shook the Chess World*, about the infamous 1962 Candidates Tournament that led Fischer to write the earthshaking piece "The Russians Have Fixed World Chess," and *Botvinnik's Secret Games*, which unearthed a trove of games from private training matches the Soviet legend played as world champion. He also wrote a collection of games of former World Champion Max Euwe, who is considered to be Timman's great predecessor in Dutch chess.

The Composer

Timman's appreciation of the game included the artistry of chess: He was one of the strongest players to become a serious chess composer, gaining the title of FIDE Master of Chess Composition in 2022, and wrote several books on chess problems and studies. His first, *Studies and Games*, came out in 1996, written just a few years after his match with Karpov. His works also included *The Art of the Endgame: My Journeys in the Magical World of Endgame Studies* in 2011 and *100 Endgame Studies You Must Know* in 2022. His final book, *Timman's Studies: My Collected Endgame Studies and Their Origins*, came out late last year. All told he authored or co-authored more than 450 studies.

While Timman was obviously a strong and practical player, his deep analysis and love of composition spoke to a desire to seek the absolute truth about a position, and the maximum beauty from the pieces. "I think I am a good fighter," he told Doggers, "but I'm also fascinated by perfection." He told the *New in Chess* podcast last year that *Timman's Studies* included improvements on studies he had already won prizes for.

For all of this, Timman was inducted into the World Chess Hall of Fame last October. He wasn't at the ceremony.

"I can't complain," Timman told Doggers in 2012. "I was very successful in the World Championship cycle; I reached high positions in the world rankings ... it's fine. I think I got all, or almost all, there was to get out of my career." ♦

Timman's Games

GM Jan Timman wasn't afraid to play lots of different openings, often from both sides, and it wasn't because he fanatically studied everything (not by GM standards anyway), but because he wasn't afraid to let fly and make each game different and interesting. The other thing you'll notice in this selection is how many world champions, as well as past and future champs, he beat. (He also notched wins over Boris Spassky and a young Magnus Carlsen). In his best period, Jan Timman could go toe-to-toe with the best in the world. Here's just a sample of his games and his genius.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE, SÄMISCH VARIATION (E24)

Terry Fox
Jan Timman
Islington, 1970

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. a3 Bxc3+ 5. bxc3 c5 6. e4 Qa5 7. e5 Ne4 8. Bd2 Nc6 9. Nf3 Nxc3 10. Qc2 cxd4 11. a4 b6 12. Be2 Ba6 13. Kf1 Rc8 14. g3 Nxe5! 15. Nxd4



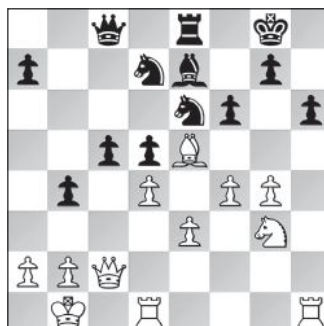
15. ... Nxe2! 16. Bxa5 Nxd4 17. Qb2 Rxc4 18. Kg2 Bb7+ 19. Kh3 Nd3 20. Qd2 Nf3 21. Qe3 Ng5+, White resigned.

This was his first win over Karpov:

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, EXCHANGE VARIATION (D35)

GM Jan Timman (2585)
GM Anatoly Karpov (2725)
Bugojno (5), 03.03.1978

1. c4 e6 2. Nc3 d5 3. d4 Be7 4. cxd5 exd5 5. Bf4 Nf6 6. e3 0-0 7. Qc2 c6 8. Bd3 Re8 9. Nf3 Nbd7 10. 0-0-0 Nf8 11. h3 Be6 12. Kb1 Rc8 13. Ng5 b5 14. Be5 h6 15. Nxe6 Nxe6 16. g4 Nd7 17. h4 b4 18. Ne2 Bxh4 19. f4 c5 20. Ba6 Be7 21. Bxc8 Qxc8 22. Ng3 f6



POSITION AFTER 22. ... f6

23. Rxh6 Nef8 24. Rh3 c4 25. Nf5 fxe5 26. fxe5 Qc6 27. Rdh1 Ng6 28. Nd6 Ndf8 29. Nxe8 Qxe8 30. Rh5 Qc6 31. Qf5 a5 32. e6 Qxe6 33. Qxd5 a4 34. Rc1 c3 35. bxc3 bxc3 36. Rxc3 Qxd5 37. Rxd5 Ne6 38. Kc2 Kf7 39. Ra5 Ng5 40. Rc6 Ne4 41. Rxa4 Nf6 42. Ra7 Nd5 43. Rxg6 Kxg6 44. e4 Nb4+ 45. Kb3 Bf8 46. Rb7, Black resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, SCHEVENINGEN VARIATION (B82)

GM Jan Timman (2600)
GM Bent Larsen (2590)
London, 1980

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 d6 6. f4 Nc6 7. Be3 Qc7 8. Qf3 Bd7 9. 0-0-0 a6 10. g4 Nxd4 11. Rxd4 Bc6 12. g5 Nd7 13. Bh3 g6 14. Rhd1 b5 15. Qg3 Bg7 16. Rxd6 b4 17. f5 bxc3 18. Rxe6+ Kd8 19. Rxc6, Black resigned.

QUEEN'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E12)

GM Jan Timman (2620)
GM Ulf Andersson (2610)
Wijk aan Zee (13), 02.01.1981

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 b6 4. a3 Bb7 5. Nc3 Ne4 6. Nxe4 Bxe4 7. e3 Be7 8. Bd3 Bxd3 9. Qxd3 d5 10. 0-0 0-0 11. e4 dxe4 12. Qxe4 Nd7 13. Qc6 Nf6 14. Bf4 Qd7 15. Qxd7 Nxd7 16. Rad1 c6 17. Rfe1 Rfe8 18. d5 cxd5 19. cxd5 exd5 20. Rxd5 Nf8 21. Kf1 Bf6 22. Rxe8 Rxe8 23. Nd4 Ng6 24. Bd2 Ne5 25. b3 h6 26. h3 Rc8 27. Ke2 Nc6 28. Nxc6 Rxc6 29. Rd7 a6 30. Kd3 Kf8 31. a4 Ke8 32. Rb7 Rd6+ 33. Ke2 Bd4 34. Be3 Re6 35. b4 Bxe3 36. fxe3 h5 37. Kd3 h4 38. Ra7 b5 39. a5 Rc6 40. Kd4 Kf8 41. Kd5 Rg6 42. e4 Ke8 43. Kc5 Re6 44. Rb7 Rxe4 45. Kb6 Rxb4 46. Kxa6 Rb2 47. Kb6 Rxe4 48. a6 Ra2 49. a7 g5 50. Kc5 f5 51. Rb8+ Kf7 52. a8=Q Rxa8 53. Rxa8 g4 54. Kd4 gxh3 55. Rh8, Black resigned.

BOGO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E16)

GM Jan Timman (2620)
GM Viktor Korchnoi (2650)
Las Palmas, 1981

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 Bb4+ 4. Bd2 a5 5. g3 b6 6. Bg2 Bb7 7. 0-0 0-0 8. Bf4 Be7 9. Nc3 Ne4 10. Qc2 Nxc3 11. Qxc3 d6 12. Qd3 f5 13. Qe3 Qd7 14. Bg5 Re8 15. Rad1 Bf8 16. Qc3 Be4 17. d5 exd5 18. cxd5 Qf7 19. Be3 h6 20. a3 a4 21. Nh4 Ra5 22. Bxe4



Timman prepares to play IM Zhansaya Abdumalik in 2019

Rxe4 23. f3 Re5 24. Bd4 Rxe2 25. Qd3 Re8 26. Bc3 Ra8 27. Nxf5 Nd7 28. g4 g6 29. Nh4 Kh7 30. f4 Nc5 31. Qf3 Re4 32. f5 g5 33. Ng2 Rae8 34. Rfe1 Kg8 35. h4 Bg7 36. f6 gxh4 37. Rf1 Bf8 38. Nxh4 Re3 39. Qg2 Ne4 40. Nf5 Nxc3 41. Nxe3 Nxd1 42. Nxd1 Re5 43. Nc3



43. ... Qg6? 44. f7+ Kh7 45. Ne2! h5 46. Nf4 Qxg4 47. Qxg4 hxg4 48. Ne6 Be7 49. f8=Q Bxf8 50. Rf7+ Kg6 51. Rxf8 Re1+ 52. Kg2 Rc1 53. Rf2 c6 54. dxc6 Rxc6 55. Kg3 Rc4 56. Rf4 Rxf4 57. Nxf4+ Kf5 58. Nd5 b5 59. Nc3 d5 60. Nxb5, Black resigned.

His first victory over Kasparov:

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E66)

GM Jan Timman (2620)
GM Garry Kasparov (2630)
Tilburg (4), 10.05.1981

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 Bg7 4. Bg2 0-0 5. Nf3 d6 6. 0-0 c5 7. Nc3 Nc6 8. d5 Na5 9. Nd2 a6 10. Qc2 Rb8 11. b3 b5 12. Bb2 bxc4 13. bxc4 Bh6 14. Ncb1 e5 15. Bc3 Bd7 16. Na3



16. ... Rb4 17. Bxb4 cxb4 18. Nab1 Qc7 19. e3 Bf5 20. Ne4 Bxe4 21. Bxe4 Nb7 22. Nd2 Nc5 23. Bg2 Rb8 24. Rfb1 a5 25. a3 e4 26. axb4 axb4 27. Bh3 Bg7 28. Ra2 h5 29. Nb3 Nd3 30. Rd1 Ne5



31. c5 Nd3 32. cxd6 Qxd6 33. Bf1 Ne5 34. Ra6 Qd7 35. Rxf6 Bxf6 36. Qxe4 Rc8 37. Qxb4 h4 38. Qf4 Kg7 39. gxh4 Qd6 40. Nd2, Black resigned.

RUY LOPEZ, OPEN VARIATION (C81)

GM Jan Timman (2655)
GM Mikhail Tal (2605)
Wijk aan Zee (13), 01.31.1982

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Nxe4 6. d4 b5 7. Bb3 d5 8. dxe5 Be6 9. Qe2 Be7 10. Rd1 0-0 11. c4 bxc4 12. Bxc4 Bc5 13. Be3 Bxe3 14. Qxe3 Qb8 15. Bb3 Na5 16. Nbd2 Qa7 17. Nxe4 Qxe3 18. fxe3 Nxb3 19. axb3 dxe4



Who cares about your pawn structure when you're playing Tal?

20. Nd4 Rab8 21. Rdc1 Bxb3 22. Rxc7 Rb6 23. Ra7 Bd5 24. b3 Rbb8 25. Ra3 Rfe8 26. R7xa6 Rxe5 27. Rd6 f6 28. Ra7 Rb7 29. Rxb7 Bxb7 30. b4 Rd5 31. Rxd5 Bxd5 32. b5 Kf7 33. Kf2 g6 34. Kg3 Ke7 35. Kf4 Kd6 36. Ne2 Kc5 37. Nc3 Ba8



38. Nxe4+ Kxb5 39. Nxf6 Bxg2 40. Nxh7 Bf1 41. Nf8 Kc6 42. Nxg6 Kd6 43. Kf5 Bh3+ 44. Kf6 Bg4 45. Nf4, Black resigned.

When pressed to choose, Timman said this was his best game. Eight pages of notes in *Studies and Games* are updated and checked in *Timman's Titans*:



Timman at Wijk aan Zee, 1981

SICILIAN DEFENSE, KERES ATTACK (B81)

GM Anatoly Karpov (2720)

GM Jan Timman (2655)

Mar del Plata, 1982

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 d6 6. g4 h6 7. Rg1 Be7 8. Be3 Nc6 9.
Be2 a6 10. Qd2 Nxd4 11. Qxd4 e5 12. Qd2
Be6 13. Bf3 Nd7 14. Nd5 Bg5 15. 0-0-0 Rc8
16. Kb1 Bxd5 17. exd5 Nc5 18. Rh1 Qf6 19.
Bg2 Bxe3 20. fxe3



20. ... Qh4 21. Bf3 0-0 22. Qe1 Qd8 23.
e4 Qb6 24. Qe3 Qb5 25. h4 Na4 26. Qb3
Rc5 27. Rh3 Rfc8 28. c3 R8c7 29. Ka1
Qd7 30. Be2 b5 31. a3 a5 32. Kb1 Rb7 33.
Rg3 g6 34. g5 h5 35. Bf1 Rcc7 36. Qc2 b4
37. axb4 axb4 38. c4 b3 39. Qg2 Rb4 40.
Qh3 Qxh3 41. Rxh3 Nc5 42. Kc1 Nxe4 43.
Re3 Nc5 44. Kd2 Na4 45. Rc1 Nxb2 46.
c5 Rd4+ 47. Ke2 Rxc5 48. Rxc5 dxc5 49.

**Rxb3 Nc4 50. Rc3 Rxh4 51. Ke1 Re4+,
White resigned.**

QUEEN'S PAWN GAME (D04)

GM Vlatko Kovacevic (2555)

GM Jan Timman (2610)

Bugojno (7), 06.01.1984

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 d5 3. Nbd2 Bg4 4. e3 Nbd7
5. h3 Bh5 6. c4 e6 7. Qb3 Rb8 8. cxd5 exd5
9. Bd3 c6 10. Qc2 Bg6 11. Bxg6 hxg6 12.
b3 Bd6 13. Bb2 Qe7 14. a4 0-0 15. 0-0 Rfe8
16. Qc1 Rbc8 17. Ba3 c5 18. Qb2 b6 19.
Rfd1 Nf8 20. Rac1 Ne6 21. Qa1 Ne4 22.
Nxe4 dxe4 23. dxc5



23. ... exf3! 24. cxd6 Qg5 25. g4 Nf4!! 26. Rxc8 Nxb3+ 27. Kh2 Qh4 28. Rxe8+ Kh7 29. Qxg7+ Kxg7 30. Bb2+ f6 31. Re7+ Kh6 32. Bxf6 Oxf2+, White resigned.

Kasparov's first loss as world champion:

RUY LOPEZ, ZAITSEV VARIATION (C93)

GM Jan Timman (2640)

GM Garry Kasparov (2700)

Match (3), Hilversum 12.17.1985

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6
5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 0-0 9.
h3 Bb7 10. d4 Re8 11. Ng5 Rf8 12. Nf3 Re8
13. Nbd2 Bf8 14. a3 h6 15. Bc2 Nb8 16.
b4 Nbd7 17. Bb2 g6 18. c4 exd4 19. cxb5
axb5 20. Nxd4 c6 21. a4 bxa4 22. Bxa4
Qb6 23. Nc2 Qc7 24. Bb3 Ba6 25. Rc1 Bg7
26. Ne3 Bb5 27. Nd5 Nxd5 28. Bxg7 Kxg7
29. exd5 Ne5 30. Nc4 Nd3 31. Qd2 Ra3 32.
Nf6 Rxe1+ 33. Rxe1 Kxf6 34. Qc3+ Ne5 35.
f4 Ba4 b6. fxe5+ dxe5



37. d6 Qxd6 38. Qf3+ Ke7 39. Qxf7+ Kd8
40. Rd1 Ra1 41. Of6+, Black resigned.

SLAV DEFENSE, EXCHANGE VARIATION (D10)

GM Boris Gulko (2610)

GM Jan Timman (2610)

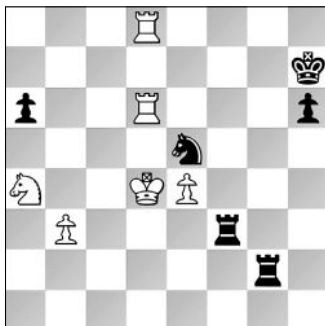
Linares, 1989

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. Bf4 Nc6 5. e3 e6 6. Nc3 Bd6 7. Bxd6 Qxd6 8. Bd3 Nf6 9. f4 0-0 10. Nf3 Nb4 11. Bb1 b6 12. a3 Nc6 13. Bd3 Bb7 14. 0-0 Ne7 15. Nb5 Qd8 16. Rc1 a6 17. Nc3 Ne4 18. Qe2 Nf5 19. Rc2 f6 20. Nd2 Ned6 21. Rfc1 R8d2 22. Nf3 Nc4 23. Nd1 b5 24. a4 bxa4 25. Bxc4 dxc4 26. Rxc4 Qa5 27. Qd2 Qxd2 28. Nxd2



Kasparov, Karpov,
and Timman in
Amsterdam, 1987

28. ... e5! 29. dxe5 fxe5 30. Rxa4 Rad8 31. Nf3 Bxf3 32. gxf3 Nh4 33. fxe5 Nxf3+ 34. Kg2 Nxe5 35. Rd4 Rb8 36. Rc2 Re6 37. Rf2 h6 38. Kf1 Rc8 39. Re4 Rc1 40. Ke2 Rc2+ 41. Kf1 Rc5 42. Nc3 Rb6 43. Rd2 Nc4 44. Rd8+ Kh7 45. Na4 Rf5+ 46. Ke2 Rc6 47. b3 Ne5 48. h4 Rcf6 49. Kd2 Rc6 50. Ke2 g5 51. hxg5 Rxg5 52. Red4 Rg2+ 53. Kd1 Rg1+ 54. Ke2 Rg2+ 55. Kd1 Rg1+ 56. Ke2 Rcc1 57. e4 Rce1+ 58. Kf2 Ng4+ 59. Kf3 Ref1+ 60. Ke2 Rf2+ 61. Kd3 Ne5+ 62. Ke3 Rgg2 63. R4d6 Rf3+ 64. Kd4



64. ... Nc6+! 65. Rxc6 Rd2+ 66. Kc4 Rxd8 67. Nc5 Rf1 68. b4 Rc1+ 69. Kb3 Rb8 70. Rc7+ Kg6 71. Rc6+ Kh5 72. Nxa6 Rxc6 73. Nxb8 Rc7 74. b5 Rb7 75. Nc6 Rxb5+ 76. Kc4 Rb1 77. Kd5 Kg5 78. e5 h5 79. e6 Kf6 80. e7 Re1, White resigned.

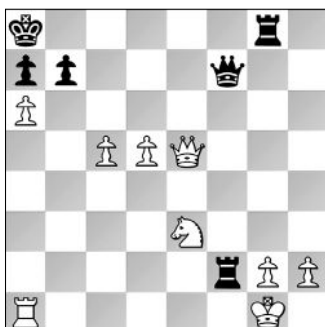
CARO-KANN DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (B12)

GM Viswanathan Anand (2650)

GM Jan Timman (2630)

Paris rapid, 1991

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 Bf5 4. Nf3 e6 5. Be2 Nd7 6. 0-0 h6 7. c3 Qc7 8. a4 g5 9. Na3 f6 10. Bd3 Bxd3 11. Qxd3 0-0-0 12. exf6 Ngxf6 13. Re1 Re8 14. c4 Ne4 15. Nd2 Bb4 16. Rxe4 dxe4 17. Nxe4 Rd8 18. Nc2 Be7 19. Be3 Nf6 20. b4 Rhf8 21. Nxf6 Bxf6 22. Qe4 Kb8 23. a5 e5 24. d5 cxd5 25. cxd5 Qd7 26. Bc5 Be7 27. Ne3 Rf4 28. Qg6 Bxc5 29. bxc5 Qf7 30. Qxh6 Rxf2 31. Qxg5 Rg8 32. Qxe5+ Ka8 33. a6



33. ... Re2 34. axb7+ Qxb7 35. g3 Qb3 36. d6 Qxe3+ 37. Qxe3 Rxe3 38. c6 Rc3 39. d7 Kb8 40. Ra6 Rc2 41. Kf1 Kc7 42. h4 Rb8 43. Rxa7+ Kxc6, White resigned.

RUY LOPEZ, ZAITSEV VARIATION (C92)

GM Jan Timman (2595)

GM Jeroen Piket (2625)

Match (2), Amsterdam, 09.23.1995

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 0-0 9. h3 Bb7 10. d4 Re8 11. Nbd2 Bf8 12. a4 h6 13. Bc2 exd4 14. cxd4 Nb4 15. Bb1 c5 16. d5 Nd7 17. Ra3 f5 18. Nh2 c4 19. Rf3 Re5 20. Rg3 Nf6 21. b3 c3 22. Rxc3 fxe4 23. Nxe4 Nxe4 24. Bxe4 Rxe4 25. Rxe4 Nxd5 26. Rg3 Nc3 27. Rxc3 Bxe4 28. Ng4 h5



29. Nh6+! gxh6 30. Rg3+ Kf7 31. Qxh5+ Ke6 32. Qg4+ Kd5 33. Re3 Qe7 34. f3 Bg7 35. Rxe4 Be5 36. Re1 Qh7 37. Rd1+ Kc6 38. f4, Black resigned.

RÉTI OPENING (A06)

IM Tomi Nyback (2430)

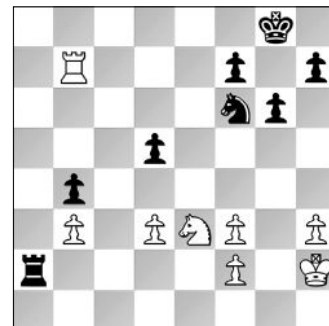
GM Jan Timman (2600)

Reykjavik (4), 10.27.2001

1. Nf3 d5 2. b3 Bg4 3. e3 Nd7 4. Bb2 Ngf6 5. Be2 e6 6. d3 Bd6 7. h3 Bxf3 8. Bxf3 c6 9. Nd2 Qe7 10. c4 Ba3 11. Qc1 Bxb2 12. Qxb2 a5 13. a3 0-0 14. 0-0 b5 15. cxb5 cxb5 16. Rfc1 b4 17. e4 Rfd8 18. exd5 exd5 19. axb4 axb4 20. Rxa8 Rxa8 21. Qd4 Nf8 22. Nf1 Ne6 23. Qe5 Qa7 24. Ne3 Qd4 25. Qxd4 Nxd4 26. Rc7 Ra1+ 27. Kh2 Nxf3+ 28. gxf3 g6 29. Rb7 Ra2

(see diagram top of next column)

30. Rxb4? Rxf2+ 31. Kg3 Re2 32. Ng2 Nh5+ 33. Kh2 Rd2 34. Rd4 Ng7! 35. Rxd5 Ne6 36. Rb5 Nf4 37. Rg5 f5! 38. h4 h6 39. Rg3 Kf7 40. b4 Ne2 41. Rh3 f4 42. Ne1 Ke6 43. Kg2



POSITION AFTER 29. ... Ra2

Ng3+ 44. Kg1 Rd1 45. Kf2 Kd5 46. Ng2, and White resigned.

CARO-KANN DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (B12)

GM Jorden Van Foreest (2548)

GM Jan Timman (2562)

Hoozeveen (3), 10.20.2015

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 Bf5 4. Nf3 e6 5. Be2 Nd7 6. 0-0 Ne7 7. Nbd2 h6 8. c3 Qc7 9. Re1 c5 10. Nf1 Nc6 11. Ng3 Bg6 12. Be3 Be7 13. a3 c4 14. Nd2 0-0-0 15. f4 f5 16. Rb1 Nb6 17. Ngf1 Kb8 18. Bf2 Be8 19. Ne3 g5 20. g3 Na5 21. Bf3 Ba4 22. Qe2 Rdg8 23. fxg5 hxg5 24. g4



24. ... f4 25. Nef1 Be8 26. Qd1 Bg6 27. Ra1 Bd8 28. Qc1 Rh6 29. Kh1 Rgh8 30. Bg1 Qh7 31. Re2 Rh3 32. Bg2 Rh4 33. Bf3 Rh3 34. Bg2 Bd3 35. Rf2 Nb3 36. Nxb3 cxb3 37. Qd1 Nc4 38. Qxb3 Ne3 39. Qb4 Nxf1, White resigned. ♠

There have been many obituaries for, and appreciations of, Jan Timman since his passing. Two you should check out: Peter Doggers' obituary for Chess.com, available at www.chess.com/news/view/jan-timman-obituary; and Hans Ree's remembrance of his friend, available at the Russell Enterprises website: web.archive.org/web/20260302214056/https://www.russell-enterprises.com/dutch-treat/jan2018.

The Other Lines

The trials and tribulations of the French Defense, Part III

BY ICCF IM NIKOLAOS NTIRLIS

W

HITE PLAYERS HAVEN'T SAT idle in recent years while someone found a half-idea against the Winawer; they've tried their luck in other lines as well. They're not as theoretically challenging, but there are some interesting moves Black should know.

The Advance Variation

For a time, the Advance was one of the hottest alternative variations. But here, Black players recently found a surprising supporter: Magnus Carlsen recently showed us how to play against the Advance with a nice-looking idea which has now acquired main-line status.



ICCF IM
Nikolaos Ntirlis

FRENCH DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (C02)

GM Sergei Zhigalko (2572)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2833)

Chess.com, 03.11.2025

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3 Nc6

4. ... Qb6 5. Nf3 Bd7 has been seen in my own correspondence practice, and I think that's fine as well.

5. Nf3 Bd7



This is the move order I endorsed in *Playing the French*, and it's the trendy move nowadays.

The traditional main line is 5. ... Qb6, but White is doing well with 6. Bd3! cxd4 7. 0-0! A recent example: 7. ... Bd7 8. Re1 Nge7 9. h4 a6 10. Nbd2 dxc3 11. bxc3 Ng6 12. Nb3 Qc7 13. Qe2 f6 14. exf6 gxf6 15. Rb1 and the position is dangerous for Black, as White is threatening to open up the position with c3-c4 (Grandelius – Bacrot, FIDE World Cup, Goa 2025). We'll look at 6. Bd3 in this position in the next game. It's an interesting pawn sacrifice, but it's important to know that it doesn't work as well when the queen is on d8 and the bishop is on d7.

5. ... Nge7 has been trendy lately. It leads to a position that I've always hated for Black, but some players seem to be disagreeing with

me: After 6. Bd3 cxd4 7. cxd4 Nf5 8. Bxf5 exf5 I don't like this structure. The engines are calling it OK, but I don't see myself changing my mind anytime soon. In a 2023 game between the Stockfish and Clover engines, Stockfish gave us a lesson on piece coordination: 9. Nc3 Be6 10. Ne2 (a key concept for White, as this knight may later go to f4) 10. ... Be7 11. Kf1!, with h2-h4, Kf1-g1 and Nf3-g5 coming up.

6. Be2!

If 6. a3 c4! with ... f7-f6 up next.

6. ... cxd4 7. cxd4 Nge7 8. Na3

Another line is 8. Nc3 Nf5 9. 0-0. Here Black plans to play ... Qd8-b6, but Nc3-a4 in response may lead to a repetition, so another good idea is 9. ... a6, with a sample line being 10. Bg5 Qb6 11. Na4 Qa7 12. Be3 b5 13. Nc3 Nxe3 14. fxe3 Be7, Gómez-Galán Areense – Maître, ICCF 2017.

8. ... Nf5 9. Nc2 Be7 10. 0-0 0-0 11. Bd3

Typically, if White manages to take on f5 in these positions, they enjoy a small edge. But here's the new idea:

11. ... f6! 12. Bxf5 exf5 13. Bf4 g5 14. exf6 Bxf6 15. Be5

This game is a perfect illustration of why this line works for Black.

15. ... f4 16. Re1 Bf5 17. Qd2 Be7!

(see diagram top of next page)

Black can completely work around the bishop on e5! A fantastic concept which is important for this line, and which and the world #1 demonstrates beautifully in this game.

18. h3 Qd7 19. a3 Be4 20. Nh2 a5 21. f3 Bg6 22. Kh1 Rae8 23. Re2 h5 24. Rae1 Qf5



POSITION AFTER 17. ... Be7

25. b4 Qxc2 26. Qxc2 Bxc2 27. Rxc2 axb4
28. axb4 Bf6 29. Rce2 Nxd4 30. Bxd4 Rxe2
31. Rxe2 Bxd4 32. Rd2 Be3 33. Rxd5 Rc8
34. Rxc5+ Kf7 35. g4 Rc1+ 36. Kg2 Rg1
mate.

FRENCH DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (C02)

GM Rauf Mamedov (2656)

GM Richard Rapport (2763)

Gashimov Memorial Rapid (5), Baku,
12.20.2021

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3 Nc6 5. Nf3
Bd7 6. Bd3!?



This is the perfect place for the bishop. If White were somehow handed a tempo here, they'd play a2-a3, so that after Black exchanges pawns White could preserve the d4-pawn by retreating to c2. But White's problem is that if Black plays correctly, they cannot keep the bishop on the perfect diagonal and protect their d4-pawn at the same time.

This information seems like it would be useless in practice, but in fact this isn't the case! There are numerous GM games in my database that reached this position with an extra tempo for White: some come from 1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 followed by ... e7-e6, and some from 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c6?! (a frequent mouse slip!) and then ... c6-c5. So if this ever happens to you, you know where

you should put your bishop!

6. ... cxd4 7. 0-0

This is the trendy way to play this position, but it works much better in the 5. ... Qb6 move order. With 5. ... Bd7, we have a more flexible position to meet this idea.

Some players try the traditional pawn sacrifice 7. cxd4 Qb6 from time to time, which also arises after the 5. ... Qb6 move order. Play can go 8. 0-0 Nxd4 9. Nbd2 and here, a nice antidote is 9. ... Nxf3+ 10. Nxf3 Bb5 11. Be3 Qa6 12. Bxb5+ Qxb5 13. Nd4 Qd7, which scores a miserable 37 percent for White.

7. ... dxc3

French players should take a central pawn if they are allowed to! Generations of legendary French players such as Korchnoi, Seirawan, and every Armenian GM French-playing expert I can think of made a living out of eating such pawns. "Eat and digest" is a Greek saying which doesn't sound so beautiful in English, but you get the idea.

8. Nxc3

White has beautiful development, but chess isn't an art; it's a fight. (This, at least, is applicable in French.) So we deploy the g8-knight to not such a pretty square, planning to attack, eat and digest the pawn on e5 as well!

8. ... Nge7

Headed for g6.

9. Bg5

The only good move. Black is much better after 9. Re1 Ng6 10. g3 a6 11. h4 Qc7 12. Qe2 Bc5 13. h5 Nge7 14. a3 (14. h6 gxh6!) 14. ... Nd4, as in Sharapova – Davidov, Serbia Open, Belgrade 2025. If 9. Nb5, just 9. ... Ng6.

9. ... Qb8

Unpinning the queen is a good practical approach. There are still dangers for Black: 9. ... h6? is met by 10. Nb5 as in Yoo – Sydykov, Chess.com, 2024.

10. Re1 Ng6 11. Rc1

The idea is to tuck the bishop back on b1, but it's too late! White has to play the sad move 11. Bxg6 to be close to equal.

11. ... h6

The e5-pawn is gone next anyway.

12. Be3 Ngxe5 13. Nxe5 Nxe5



POSITION AFTER 13. ... Nxe5

Our bishop is coming to d6. The engines still say 0.00, but good luck proving this with White: Two pawns are two pawns! We can even give one back and still be up a pawn. (This isn't a silly, obvious description; it's the essence of many of these French Advance gambit lines.)



GM Magnus Carlsen

14. Bb5

If 14. Nxd5? Bd6! (I told you so!) 15. Bd4 Bc6 16. Qh5 Nxd3 17. Rxe6+ Kf8. (This is Clarke – Cornette, Reykjavik 2022.) Black gave material back, but is still a pawn up and in a winning position.

14. ... Bd6 15. Bd4 Nc6 16. Nxd5 Kf8

There were a few other options in the last couple of moves for Black, but this is the standard human approach. Black is “just” a bit better according to the engines, significantly better for humans.

17. Nc3 Nxd4 18. Qxd4 Bxb5 19. Nxb5 Bxb2+ 20. Kh1 a6 21. Qc5+ Kg8 22. Nc7 Bxc7 23. Qxc7 h5 24. Red1 Rh6 25. Rd7 Rf6 26. f3 Qxc7 27. Rxc7 b5 28. Kh2 g6 29. Rd6 Rf5 30. Rdd7 b4 31. b3 Rb8 32. Rc6 a5 33. Ra6 Rc8 34. Rda7 Rc2 35. Rxa5 Rxf3 36. Rg5 Kg7 37. Ra4 Rf4 38. a3 h4 39. Rxb4 Rxb4 40. axb4 f5 41. Kh3 Rc3+ 42. Kxh4 Rxb3 43. Rg3 Rxb4+ 44. Kh3 Kf6 45. Ra3 e5, White resigned.

Tarrasch Variation

This calmer approach has always been White's try when the theoretical situation of the sharp lines wasn't promising. It is no surprise that it's recently become essentially the main line on top level! White's latest resource might have been neutralized by Kramnik's novelty in an infamous recent match.

FRENCH DEFENSE, TARRASCH VARIATION (C07)

GM Jose Eduardo Martinez

Alcantara (2612)

GM Vladimir Kramnik (2753)

Clash of Claims (2), Madrid, 06.07.2024

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2



3. ... c5 4. Ngf3

This is how White plays these days. The old main line was 4. exd5 Qxd5 5. Ngf3 cxd4 6. Bc4 and Black has been doing well after almost all the queen retreats, even the most exotic one: 6. ... Qh5 7. 0-0 Nc6! and probably the best White can do is 8. Ne4 (8. Nb3 Nf6 9. Nbx4 Nxd4 10. Nxd4 Qxd1 11. Rxd1 Bd7 is fine) 8. ... Nf6 9. Nxf6+ gxf6 10. Nxd4 Qxd1 11. Rxd1 Nxd4 12. Rxd4 Bd7 and I cannot believe that Black can face big problems holding this easily. Matrisch – Just (ICCF, 1996) was drawn after 13. Be3 Bc6 14. Rh4 f5 15. g3 Be7 16. Rh6 Bf8 17. Rh3 Bg7 18. c3 Bf3 19. Bb5+ Ke7 20. Rh4 a6 21. Rf4 Be4 22. Be2 Bf6 23. Bf3 Bxf3 24. Rxf3 Rhd8 25. Re1 Rd5 26. Rf4 Rad8 27. Rc4 Kd7 28. Bb6 Rc8 29. Rxc8 Kxc8 30. Be3 Kd7 31. Kf1 Kc6 32. Ke2 Be7 33. Rd1 Re5 34. b3 Bc5 35. c4 Bxe3 36. fxe3 Ra5 37. a4 b5 38. cxb5+ axb5 39. Rd4 f6 40. Rh4 bxa4 41. bxa4 Ra7 42. Kd3 Kd5 43. Kc3 Kc5 44. Rd4 Ra8 45. Kb3.

4. ... cxd4 5. Nxd4 Nc6 6. Bb5 Bd7 7. Nxc6 bxc6

The modern main line. Black used to play 7. ... Bxc6 8. Bxc6+ bxc6, but in the last 10 years White has discovered that they can put on some pressure after 9. c4 followed by Qd1-a4.

8. Bd3 Bd6 9. Qe2 e5 10. c4

This was the main line, but Kramnik showed excellent prep in this weird match, where the main point was (I guess) to prove whether the promising Martinez Alcantara was cheating or not? If you are interested what the stats show for this match, I wrote an article in *New In Chess* analyzing them: no controversy whatsoever. In any case, Black's novelty here is very important.

10. ... Nf6

Before, the main direction was 10. ... d4, but many White players discovered the promising pawn sac 11. c5!.

11. 0-0 0-0 12. cxd5 cxd5 13. exd5 Re8



Black has good compensation here and

relatively easy play. 13. ... Qe7!? might be even better.

14. Nc4 Bg4

14. ... Bc5!? is also possible.

15. Qe3 Bc7 16. d6 Bxd6 17. Nxd6 Qxd6 18. Bc4

White doesn't play like an engine (what a surprise!) and loses any chance of a small, symbolic edge — although he eventually won after mutual mistakes.

18. ... Be6 19. Be2 Nd5 20. Qg3 Nf4 21. Bf3 Rab8 22. b3 a5 23. Rd1 Qc7 24. Be3 Rbd8 25. Rdc1 Qb8 26. h4 h6 27. Rd1 Qb4 28. Kh2 Ng6 29. h5 Nf4 30. Qh4 Qb8 31. Ba7 g5 32. hxg6 e.p. Nxc6 33. Qf6 Rxd1 34. Bxb8 Rxa1 35. Bxe5 Nxe5 36. Qxe5 Rxa2 37. Qf4 Kg7 38. Qd4+ Kg8 39. Qe3 Kg7 40. Bc6 Rc8 41. Qg3+ Kf8 42. Qd6+ Kg7 43. Be4 Re2 44. Bf3 Rec2 45. Qe5+ Kg8 46. Qxa5 R2c5 47. Qd2 Bxb3 48. Qxh6 Be6 49. Qe3 R8c7 50. Be4 Kg7 51. f4 Rh5+ 52. Kg1 Kf8 53. Qa3+ Kg8 54. f5 Bxf5 55. Bxf5 Kg7 56. Qg3+, Black resigned.

Exchange Variation

Many books have recommended this approach for White in the last decade, and I get it: We have a symmetrical position with White up a tempo. You can find quite a bit of specialized literature on how to play symmetrical positions — how you can fight for the central square that is covered by your pawn (in this case, e5 for White and e4 for Black), how you can try to win space on the flanks, etc. I won't go into that in detail here, but I wanted to show a really cool idea that can surprise your opponents, played by one of the all-time heroes of the French Defence, GM Alexander Morozevich.

FRENCH DEFENSE, EXCHANGE VARIATION (C01)

GM Artyom Timofeev (2548)

GM Alexander Morozevich (2655)

Sochi blitz (8), 10.17.2024

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. exd5 exd5 4. Nf3

White is already fighting for the e5-square. 4. c4 is best met by 4. ... Bb4+ and Black usually develops the knights to c6 and f6 with a great position. On the other hand, 4. ... dxc4 5. Bxc4 Bd6 6. Nf3 Nf6 7. Qe2+ is a bit annoying for Black, because White has the initiative. For example: 7. ... Qe7 8. Qxe7+

Kxe7 9. 0-0 Re8 and now White has a good advantage after 10. Ng5!. Remember this!

4. ... h6



Whaaaaat? Believe it or not, this is an awesome move. First, it is useful in any setup (with the g8-knight on f6 or on e7); secondly, it waits to see what White is up to and react accordingly.

If 4. ... Bd6 5. c4!. I need more space than my editor will allow to explain why this is a good move, but trust me: This is the main line and it is good for White.

5. h3

When I show the move 4. ... h6 in my lectures, I always say "So, what? What if White plays h2-h3?" That's why I have this as the main line.

5. Bd3 is the most logical move and it can be met with 5. ... Bd6! 6. 0-0 Ne7 followed by ... Bc8-f5 with equality, as Hirneise – Bluebaum, Magdeburg blitz 2021.

5. Nc3 allows 5. ... Bb4 6. Bd3 Nf6, which is also equal. This position, by the way, can also arise from a Winawer move order (3. Nc3 Bb4).

If 5. c4 Bb4+! is still strong.

5. ... Bd6 6. Bd3

6. c4 is another logical try, but now Black can safely take: 6. ... dxc4 7. Bxc4 Nf6 8. 0-0 (8. Qe2+ is safe for Black now: 8. ... Qe7 9. Qxe7+ Kxe7 10. 0-0 Re8 and now White's knight can't get to g5 thanks to 4. ... h6!) 8. ... 0-0 9. Nc3 Nc6 10. Re1 Re8 11. Rxe8+ Qxe8 12. Be3 Bf5 with equality, as in Aronian – So, American Cup elimination, St. Louis 2023.

6. ... Ne7 7. Nc3 c6 8. Ne2 Qc7 9. c3 Nd7 10. Be3 Nf6 11. Qc1 Bf5 12. Bxf5 Nxf5 13. Bf4 0-0-0 14. Bxd6 Nxd6 15. Qc2 Nfe4 16. Rf1

This is a perfect French Exchange for Black.

16. ... Qa5 17. a3 Rhe8 18. 0-0-0 Nc4 19. Nf4 Re7

Or 19. ... g5 20. Nd3 f6 with an advantage.

20. Nd3 Rde8 21. Nfe5 f6

Missing 21. ... Nxa3!. Black went on to win.

King's Indian Attack

The last game shows that creative ideas in chess will pop up all the time.

FRENCH DEFENSE (C00)

Ayyachamy Kumaresh (2048)

IM Alexandros Papisimakopoulos

(2379)

Chess.com, 11.19.2024

1. e4 e6 2. d3 d5 3. Nd2 c5 4. g3 Nf6 5. Bg2

A fairly standard position, known for decades and made somewhat popular for White due to some beautiful old games by the great Fischer. I wonder what he would think if he saw the next move played against him.

5. ... h6

What's that?

6. Ngf3 Nc6 7. 0-0 Be7 8. Re1 b5 9. e5 Nh7



This is what 5. ... h6 was about. White planned to play the usual full kingside attack with h2-h4, Nd2-f1-h2-g4, Bc1-f4, Qd1-d2, etc. With the knight on d7 this attack is dangerous; with the knight on h7 there is no attack!

10. Nf1 0-0 11. h4 a5 12. N1h2 b4 13. Ng4 Re8

Black doesn't need to put the bishop on f8, but this just totally secures Black from any hint of sacrificial attempt that makes any sense.

14. Bf4 Bf8



AFTER 14. ... Bf8

No attack. Nada, nich, gone. And guess who is better on the other side of the board?

15. Qd2 Ra7 16. Rad1 a4 17. Ngh2 b3 18. axb3 axb3 19. c3 Ra2 20. g4 d4 21. g5 h5 22. Nf1 Qa5

There were many blitz adventures from here. Black went on to win in a long endgame.

What's next?

Predicting White's next major breakthrough in the French Defense isn't easy. Most of the established main lines have already been pushed to extraordinary depth, where only small, almost invisible details remain unexplored. If a new idea does appear, it will probably emerge either as a subtle refinement buried deep within a known main line, or from a seemingly harmless sideline — one of those quiet systems that may be objectively equal but still offer practical chances over the board. That's what I tried to do in my book *Reimagining 1. e4*. The landscape is stable, but not static, and the next spark could come from anywhere. ♠

GM Alexander Morozevich



Battles of the CHAMPIONS

The tournaments of state champions went down to the wire.

BY **RICK MASSIMO** AND **JJ LANG**

WITH ANNOTATIONS BY **IM BACH NGO**, **IM LIAM PUTNAM**, **IRENE FEI**, **GM ALEX FISHBEIN**, AND **IM STUART RACHELS**



WHILE THE U.S. OPEN CONTESTS its rounds in the seven-day schedule in the evening, the daytimes of the first few days are reserved for the Invitationals — the tournaments of state champions that bring together top players in different divisions from all over the country.

One of the five 2025 Invitationals, held in Middletown, Wisc., last July 28-31 along with the U.S. Open, went into the last round with a tie for first; the other four had a leader only a half-point ahead of the field, in position to wrap up solo first place with a win. How did they make out? We've got annotated games from some of the winners.

The Denker

It took a long time for the top of the 41st GM Arnold Denker Tournament of National High School Champions to clarify in the last round, but in the end IM Bach Ngo (Fla.) took the title on tiebreaks over IM Liam Putnam (N.Y.)

Ngo entered the last round alone in first, but drew fairly quickly with FM Isaac Wang (Southern Calif.) to finish with 5/6, and awaited the other results.

He had to wait quite a while: Steve Wongso (Ariz.) put up tremendous resistance against Putnam and after a marathon endgame was on the verge of a draw when he

blundered on Move 76, handing Putnam a share of first place.

Ngo took the title as well as a \$5,000 scholarship; Putnam won a \$4,000 scholarship, and the two won \$650 in cash each. Three players tied for 3rd-5th: in tiebreak order, Wang (a \$3,000 scholarship), FM Vishnu Vanapalli (N.C.) (a \$2,000 scholarship), and IM Eric Liu (Texas) (a \$1,000 scholarship). They each also earned \$300 in cash.

Wang also won the \$500 Ursula Foster Memorial Award as the top-finishing player under age 16. Ty Dutoit (Hawaii) won the \$100 class prize as the top player rated under 2000, finishing with 3½/6.

Here are the winners' choices for their best games:

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED (D37)

IM Bach Ngo (2448)

IM Evan Park (2524)

Denker Invitational (5), Middleton, 07.30.2025

Annotations by IM Bach Ngo

Heading into this penultimate round, I knew I would need to press hard for the win with the white pieces in order to preserve my lead. I was happy to see I was paired against IM Park, as all our prior meetings had been great fighting games.

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6 3. c4 h6!?

A very modern approach versus the Nf3 Queen's Gambit. Basically, Black is claiming that the tempo spent on the waiting move



The field for the 2025 Haring

... h7-h6 will become useful sometime later in the game. It came as a small surprise, as Evan typically plays 3. ... d5, transposing into one of the main lines.

4. e3

If 4. Nc3 Bb4. Black wants to get a position like this, which is very similar to certain lines of the Nimzo.

4. ... d5 5. Nc3 Be7 6. b3 0-0 7. Bb2 b6 8. Bd3 Bb7 9. 0-0 Nbd7 10. cxd5

This change in pawn structure is a permanent decision, so I spent 16 minutes on it.

10. ... exd5

We have entered a Colle-Zukertort sort of setup, where White is looking for an attack on the kingside and Black is hoping to perhaps create something with a well-timed ... c7-c5 break. White's play is now slightly more comfortable, especially because the tempo spent on 3. ... h6 has not yet proved to be useful.

11. Ne2 Re8 12. Ne5 c5 13. Ng3 a5

Looking for a majority attack on the queenside with ... a5-a4.

14. Nf5 Bf8 15. Nxd7 Nxd7

Not 15. ... Qxd7? 16. dxc5! bxc5 17. Bxf6 gxf6 18. Qg4+.

16. dxc5 Nxc5

Black would love to avoid the isolated pawn, but 16. ... bxc5? is met with 17. Nxh6+! gxh6 18. Qg4+ Qg5 19. Qxd7.

17. Bb5 Re6 18. Bd4



Blockading the isolated pawn. White's potential kingside attack has simmered down, so I decided to switch plans and try to trade pieces in order to properly target the weakness on d5.

18. ... Qg5 19. Qf3 g6 20. Ng3 Bd6 21. Ne2 h5 22. Rfd1 Rf8 23. Rac1 Ba8

It is a slow maneuvering game, and Black



The field for the 2025 Rockefeller



The field for the 2025 Barber



The field for the 2025 Denker



IM Bach Ngo



IM Liam Putnam



Fei (L) versus Ismayilova (R) in Round 6

has run out of useful moves. The pawn ram ... f7-f5-f4 is beginning to seem like a threat though.

24. Nf4! Re4 25. Nh3 Qd8 26. Qf6!

I was quite pleased to find this sequence. Forcing off the queens means my advantage is now completely stable, as it becomes very difficult for Black to generate any counterplay at all.

26. ... Qxf6 27. Bxf6 Rb4 28. Be2 Ne4?



29. Bb2!

My opponent likely missed this and only considered 29. Bd4. Now, though, the rook on b4 suddenly seems very misplaced.

29. ... Nc5 30. Bc3 Re4 31. Bf3 Re7 32. Bxd5

The isolated pawn on d5 falls. Positional weaknesses are always extremely difficult to defend, especially under time pressure.

32. ... Bxd5 33. Rxd5 Bb8 34. Ng5

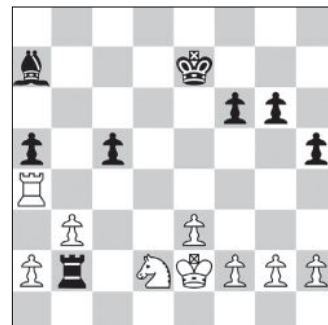
Finally routing the knight back into the game.

34. ... f6 35. Nf3 Kf7 36. Bd4 Ba7 37. Rd6

Re6 38. Bxc5 bxc5 39. Rd7+ Re7 40. Rxe7+ Kxe7 41. Rc4

Blockading this new isolated pawn weakness.

41. ... Rd8 42. Kf1 Rd1+ 43. Ke2 Rb1 44. Nd2 Rb2 45. Ra4!



Not only is a5 weak, but the rook on b2 is actually extremely close to being trapped. The white king is coming to c1 very quickly.

45. ... c4 46. Rxc4 Bb8 47. a4 Bd6 48. Kd3 Bxh2

A good shot by Black — it's the only hope of generating any counterplay.

49. f4 Bg3 50. Rc2 Rxc2 51. Kxc2 Ke6 52. Kd3 Kf5 53. b4!

Unfortunately for Black, their pieces are simply too far away to get back in time and stop the a-pawn.

53. ... g5 54. bxa5 gxf4 55. a6 f3 56. Nxf3, Black resigned.

This result placed me in the sole lead going into the last round, where a draw would be enough to secure victory. This was an extremely positional game with some dynamic undertones, and the isolated pawns simply proved



Irene Fei

too weak for Black to successfully defend. Pawn structure is an integral part of chess.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B94)

IM Liam Putnam (2570)

IM Eric Li (2447)

Denker Invitational (5), Middleton, 07.30.2025

Annotations by IM Liam Putnam

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Bg5 Nbd7 7. Bc4 Qb6 8. Bb3 e6 9. Bxf6

A venomous sideline that is often overlooked. The main line is 9. Qd2 Be7 10. 0-0-0, when White looks for a quick kingside expansion with f2-f3 and g3-g4.

9. ... Nxf6 10. Qd2 Nd7 11. 0-0-0 Nc5

So far he's following the main line, but I believe here is where the surprises started.

12. Rhe1!? Bd7



13. Nf5!

This tends to be a common motif in the Najdorf, but it seems to come out of nowhere here. There is a jungle of theory, and often White gets a pawn or two and an attack in return for the piece, but the player who is more familiar should be the favorite in such a position.

13. ... 0-0-0

The most human solution, which leads to a very forcing continuation where Black must be precise.

14. Nxd6+ Bxd6 15. Qxd6 Nxb3+ 16. axb3 Qxf2 17. Rf1 Qe3+ 18. Kb1 Bb5 19. Nxb5! Rxd6 20. Nxd6+ Kb8 21. Rxf7 Rd8 22. Ka2! A clever move to avoid any tactics and get the king to safety behind a wall of pawns before continuing the attack.

22. ... Qe2

The defensive move Black must find to

equalize is 22. ... Ka8! and it has only been found once, in Ignatiev – Kotelva, St. Petersburg 2025.

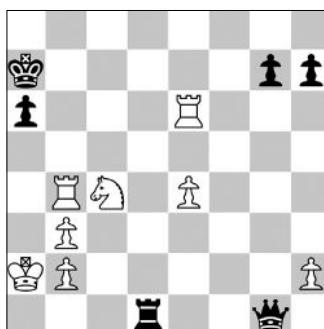
23. Rd4

This was where my prep finally ended.

23. ... Qxc2

It was Black's last chance for 23. ... Ka8. It's unclear after 24. Nb5 Rb8 25. Nc7+ Ka7 26. Nxe6 Qxg2.

24. Rxb7+ Ka8 25. Rb6 Ka7 26. Rdb4 Qxg2 27. Nc4 Qg1 28. Rxe6 Rd1



The following sequence was very nice, and I saw almost all of it in advance. If this did not work I would have had to bail out with a perpetual, so I was very careful to double-check everything!

29. Re7+ Ka8 30. Nb6+ Kb8 31. Nd5+ Ka8 32. Nc7+ Ka7 33. Nb5+ Kb6 34. Na7+! Kc5 35. Rc4+ Kb6 36. Rc6+ Ka5 37. Re5+, Black resigned.

Certainly my best game of the tournament and one of my best displays of preparation.

The Haring

The 13th Annual WIM Ruth Haring National Tournament of Girls State Champions went in the opposite direction from the Denker: There was a tie at the top going into the last round, but a clear winner at the end.

FM Megan Paragua (N.Y.) and WIM Omya Vidyarthi (Northern Calif.) were in first on 4½/5 headed into the decisive Round 6. They drew in 12 moves, while Irene Fei (Iowa) and WCM Khanim Ismayilova (Va.) battled. Fei, who also had 4½, would take clear first with a win; Ismayilova, on 4, would join Paragua and Vidyarthi at the top if she won.

For a long time, that looked like the most likely result. But in time trouble, Ismayilova gave way, and Fei leapt to the top of the crosstable:

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, SEMI-SLAV DEFENSE (D46)

Khanim Ismayilova (2130)

Irene Fei (2090)

Haring Invitational (6), Middleton, 07.31.2025

Annotations by Irene Fei

1. c4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e3 Nf6 4. Nc3 e6 5. Nf3 Nbd7 6. Qc2 Bd6 7. b3 0-0 8. Bd3 Qe7 9. Bb2 Re8 10. h3 dxc4

The idea is to prepare to play ... e6-e5 without having to worry about getting an isolated pawn on d5.

11. Bxc4 b5

Thematic, expanding on the queenside with tempo.

12. Be2 e5!?

12. ... Bb7 is also good, but I decided to break in the center immediately.

13. dxe5 Nxe5 14. 0-0 Bb7 15. Nd2 Rad8

16. Nde4 Bb8 17. Nxf6+ Qxf6 18. f4

Aggressive, but it also weakens the e3-pawn.

18. ... Ng6 19. Rad1 Qe7 20. Qe4 Bc7



The endgame is equal-ish, but I did have a big time advantage at this moment.

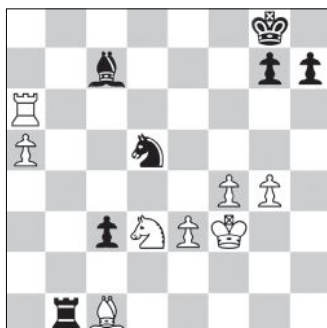
21. Qxe7 Rxe7 22. Rxd8+ Bxd8 23. Nd1 Bb6 24. Bc1 a6 25. Kh2 c5 26. Kg3 f5 27. Bf3 Bxf3 28. Kxf3 c4?

This is a mistake. My intention was to open up my dark-squared bishop, but this greatly weakens my queenside. I should've played 28. ... Rd7 to occupy the open d-file immediately.

29. bxc4 bxc4 30. g4 fxg4+ 31. hxg4 Ba5 32. Nf2 c3?!

My last chance to occupy the open d-file. Her counterplay is fast and almost deadly.

33. Rd1 Rb7 34. Rd6 Rb1 35. Nd3 Ne7 36. Rxa6 Bb6 37. a4 Nd5 38. a5 Bc7



POSITION AFTER 38. ... Bc7

39. Ba3?

A serious mistake from my opponent that gave me hope to equalize.

39. ... c2 40. Ra8+ Kf7 41. Rc8??

A terrible blunder by my opponent, possibly due to time trouble.



GM Alexander Fishbein

41. ... Rb3 42. Rf8+ Kg6 43. f5+ Kg5 44. Rf7 Rxa3 45. Nc1 Rxe3+ 46. Kf2 Bg3+ 47. Kf1 Re1+ 48. Kg2 Rxc1 49. Rxc7+ Kf6 50. Rxh7 Rg1+, White resigned.

A very rocky and tense game which made me the Haring champion. We both had chances to win.

Fei won a \$5,000 scholarship and \$800 cash; Paragua and Vidyarthi each won \$450 in cash, while Paragua won a \$4,000 scholarship on tiebreaks, Vidyarthi earning a \$3,000 scholarship.

Yangyang Shen (Texas) and Rebecca Cortez (Ill.) finished 4th-5th with 4½/6, earning \$250 each. Shen finished fourth on tiebreaks, winning the \$2,000 scholarship, while Cortez won a \$1,000 scholarship for fifth.

Diya Balamurgan (S.C.) won the \$500 Ursula Foster Memorial Award as the top player under age 16, finishing on 3/6. Mansi Adduri (Neb.) won \$100 as the top player rated under 1600.

The Barber

In the 15th Annual Dewain Barber National Tournament of Middle School Champions, the leader going into the last round put it away, as Siddharth Singh (Texas) won with black over Elliott Goodrich (N.Y.) to finish with 5½/6. That last game was also crucial to the team title — Texas nipped New York by a half-point in the race for the highest aggregate score by a state's five Invitationals participants.

Singh earned \$800 cash for his victory on top of a \$5,000 scholarship. Andrew Wu (N.C.) outlasted Oscar Izzy Williams (Fla.) to

take clear second with 5/6, earning \$500 cash and a \$4,000 scholarship. Kyle Zhuang (Va.) and John Abraham (Ky.) finished third and fourth in tiebreak order, each winning \$350 cash with Zhuang also winning the \$3,000 scholarship to Abraham's \$2,000. Eight players tied for fifth, each winning \$100 cash. Bobby Qian (N.J.) won the \$1,000 scholarship on tiebreaks.

The Rockefeller

FM Ted Wang (Wash.) came into the last round of the 6th Annual John D. Rockefeller III National Tournament of State Elementary School Champions on 4½/5, but with no fewer than seven players nipping at his heels, a mere half-point behind. It was all Wang could do to draw Shawn Xu (Mass.) in Round 6 and wait to see who could join him at the top.

After a tumultuous last round, FM Linxi Zhu (N.Y.), Santhosh Ayyappan (N.J.), and WFM Aimee Yang (Pa.) won out to join the crowd on 5/6. Zhu took the title and the \$5,000 scholarship on tiebreaks, followed in order by Wang, Ayyappan and Yang, who won \$4,000, \$3,000, and \$2,000 scholarships. They each took home \$500 cash as well.

Xu and Aiden Linyuan Li (Ill.) scored 4½, each earning \$100 cash, with Xu winning the \$1,000 scholarship on tiebreaks.

The Irwin

The 8th Annual John T. Irwin National Tournament of Senior State Champions ended up in a tie when IM Stuart Rachels (Ala.) caught up with GM Alex Fishbein (Tenn.) at the wire, with Fishbein taking the title on tiebreaks. (Unlike the scholarships in the scholastic sections, the prize money for the Irwin was split.)

Fishbein drew with FM Robby Adamson (Ariz.) in the last round to finish with 5/6, while Rachels took out FM Gregory Markzon (N.J.) to join Fishbein at the top.

FRENCH DEFENSE, TARRASCH VARIATION (C10)

IM Stuart Rachels (2505)

FM Gregory Markzon (2200)

Irwin Invitational (6), Middleton, 07.31.2025

Annotations by IM Stuart Rachels



IM Stuart Rachels

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 Be7

An unusual move — so, naturally, I forgot what to do against it.

4. Ngf3 Nf6 5. Bd3 dxe4 6. Nxe4 Nbd7 7. Nxf6+

I once played a friendly blitz game against Yasser Seirawan — who was then ranked 10th in the world — that went 7. Qe2 Nxe4 8. Bxe4 Nf6? 9. Bxb7, winning a clean pawn (if 9. ... Bxb7 10. Qb5+). Yasser was astonished. Even Paul Keres, as White, once overlooked this tactic.

7. ... Nxf6 8. Qe2 a6 9. Bd2 b6 10. 0-0-0 Bb7 11. Kb1 Qd6

Black's development scheme is odd. It looks like he's preparing to castle queenside, but ... 0-0-0 will drop the pawn on a6.

12. Ne5!? Qxd4

What's this? I thought he couldn't do that.

**13. Bh6**

Threatening both 14. Bxg7 and 14. Bb5+. How could I resist playing such a move? Yet 13. Rhe1, building up the pressure, was much better.

13. ... Qc5 14. Bxg7 Rg8 15. Bxf6!?

Trying to prove that 12. ... Qxd4 was a mistake. 15. Bh6?! Rxg2 is equal.

15. ... Bxf6 16. Bxh7 Rxg2?

Black is fine if he sacrifices the Exchange with 16. ... Qxe5 17. Qxe5 Bxe5 18. Bxg8 Ke7.

17. Nd7! Qxf2 18. Qc4 0-0-0!

Yes, this move is legal!

19. Be4

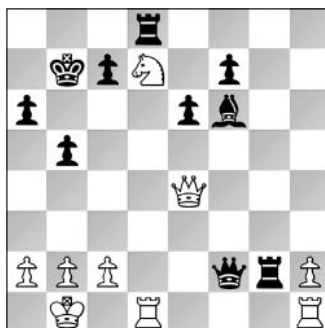
Menacing Black's rook, but the biggest threat is 20. Rhf1, winning the bishop on f6.

19. ... b5

I didn't consider this move until Black played it. Of course I was hoping for 19. ... Bxe4 20. Qxe4 Rxd7 21. Qa8 mate, and on 19. ... Be7?! 20. Rhf1 Qe3 21. Bxg2 Bxg2 22. Qxa6+ Bb7

23. Qa7 Rxd7 24. Rxd7 Kxd7 25. Qxb7 Black is simply down the Exchange.

Black's best bet, again, is to sacrifice the Exchange, with 19. ... Rxd7 20. Bxb7+ Kxb7 21. Rxd7. This time, however, White is nearly winning after 21. ... Rg1+ 22. Rd1 Rxd1+ 23. Rxd1 Qxh2 24. Qe4+ Ka7 25. Qf3.

20. Bxb7+ Kxb7 21. Qe4+

At the board, I saw that 21. ... Ka7 22. Qc6? allows 22. ... Rxd7 23. Rxd7 Rg1+ 24. Rd1 Qd4!!, which threatens mate on d1 and b2 and obliges White to take a perpetual on c7 and c8. But after 22. a3, calmly making *luft*, Black must succumb to White's attack.

21. ... c6 22. Rhf1 Qe2 23. Qxe2 Rxe2

TO ALL WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE

▶ THE FIRST INVITATIONAL WAS THE GM Arnold Denker Tournament of High School Champions, which crowned its first winner in 1985. In 2011 the Dewain Barber Tournament of Middle School Champions was established, followed by the National Tournament of Girls State Champions in 2013. (It was renamed in honor of WIM Ruth Haring in 2019.)

This was followed by the National Tournament of Senior Champions, for players over the age of 50, in 2018. The Senior was renamed in honor of John T. Irwin in 2020 as part of John D. Rockefeller V's endowment. Among the other elements of this endowment were the start of the John D. Rockefeller III National Tournament of Elementary School Champions, the FM Sunil Weeramantry National Blitz Tournament of State Champions, and several other initiatives, including additional funding for the senior event.

24. Rxf6, Black resigned.

Black's f-pawn is falling, and there is no way to exploit White's weak bank rank: If 24. ... Rxd7 25. Rxd7+ Kc8 26. Rd1!. Despite this last-round loss, Markzon won the prize for best score by a player 75 or older.

Fishbein sends us his best game, a sacrificial masterpiece that wiped out IM Alexander Matros (S.C.).

BENKO GAMBIT (A58)

IM Alexander Matros (2363)

GM Alexander Fishbein (2487)

Irwin Invitational (4), 07.30.2025

Annotations by GM Alexander Fishbein

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 b5 4. cxb5 a6 5. bxa6 e6

This is called the "Volga Gambit." The Benko Gambit with 5. ... g6 is not well regarded by computer engines, although apparently it was recently proven that it does not lose.

6. Nc3 exd5 7. Nxd5 Bxa6

The main lines here are 7. ... Be7 and 7. ... Nxa6.

8. Bg5?!

All scholarships and awards are funded through generous contributions from US Chess, The U.S. Chess Trust, Dewain and Susan Barber, John D. Rockefeller V, the Internet Chess Club (ICC), and US Chess Sales. US Chess expresses special thanks to Dwight Barber, the Ursula Foster Family, Jon Haskel, and a number of anonymous sponsors for their support.



This move only helps me. White should prioritize developing the kingside.

8. ... Be7 9. Nxe7 Qxe7 10. e3 Bxf1 11. Kxf1 h6 12. Bxf6

After 12. Bh4 the bishop would be in danger of getting trapped if White plays the logical g2-g3.

12. ... Qxf6 13. Qd2?!

A bit careless. White wants to play g2-g3 at some point, so the white queen should cover the f3-square to protect the knight that will eventually go there. For example, it's equal after 13. b3 Nc6 14. Nf3 Nb4

15. g3 Rxa2 16. Rxa2 Nxa2 17. Kg2. As the game goes, White's king never gets out of the center.

13. ... 0-0 14. Ne2 d5 15. f3?! Nc6 16. Qxd5?



An extremely risky move. White is trying to complicate the game in the hope that I will get confused and spend too much time thinking. The safe continuation is 16. Kf2 and White can survive.

16. ... Rfd8!

I did think for a long time. It took me a while to accept the fact that the position requires me to play for an attack, rather than recovering the sacrificed pawns. I calculated a long variation with a rook sacrifice, not quite correctly at first. Not 16. ... Qxb2? 17. Kf2 Nb4 18. Qb3 Rxa2 19. Qxb2 Rxb2 20. Rhb1! when a draw would be likely.

17. Qxc5 Ne5!

The king cannot go to f2.

18. Nd4 Rac8 19. Qa7

I had mostly considered 19. Qb5.



POSITION AFTER 19. Qb5

White's pieces are so undeveloped that the attack plays itself. As GM Elshan Moradiabadi pointed out in our post-mortem, I didn't really have to calculate much — for just one example, 19. ... Ng4 20. Qd3 Nxe3+ 21. Qxe3 Rxd4 22. Rc1 Rcd8 and the king cannot escape.

I had been looking at 19. ... Rxd4!? 20. exd4 Nxf3! 21. gxf3 Qxf3+ 22. Kg1, and here

I first only considered 22. ... Rc2?, but after 23. Qb8+! Kh7 24. Qg3 White survives. Then I saw that I would need to grab that b8-h2 diagonal, so instead Black has 22. ... Qe3+! 23. Kf1 Qf4+! 24. Kg1 Rc2 25. Qe8+ Kh7 26. Qe1 Qxd4+ 27. Kf1 Qd5! and mate is imminent. But like I said, there were easier ways, such as 19. ... Ng4.

With the game move, White's queen strays far from the action, and the rest is easy.

19. ... Qg6 20. h4 Qd3+ 21. Kf2



21. ... Rxd4!

The white king faces the black attacking forces alone.

22. exd4 Rc2+ 23. Kg3 Qg6+

23. ... Rxg2+ 24. Kxg2 Qe2+! also leads to mate.

24. Kf4 Nd3+ 25. Ke3 Qe6+ 26. Kxd3 Qe2 mate.

Adamson took third on tiebreak with 4½ over (in tiebreak order) IM Timothy Taylor (Northern Calif.), Matros, GM Melikset Khachiyan (Southern Calif.), and IM Oladapo Adu (D.C.). Each took home \$380.

The Weeramantry

The event wrapped up with the 6th Annual FM Sunil Weeramantry Blitz Tournament of State Champions, which includes all the Invitationals players. Putnam and Nehanraj Ramesh (Iowa) tied for first with 7/8.

All the Invitationals will be back this summer at the U.S. Open in Grand Rapids, Mich., along with a new one — the GM Maurice Ashley Tournament of State K-3 Champions. ♠

For more on the 2025 Invitationals, check out our event website: new.uschess.org/2025-us-open. You can also visit revisit the livestreams: www.youtube.com/@USChessFederation.



MARCH 3 - 12

SLC Saint Louis
CHESS CLUB



THE AMERICAN CUP ★ 2026

WATCH LIVE

[SAINTLOUISCHESSCLUB.ORG](https://saintlouischessclub.org) | [YOUTUBE](#) | [TWITCH](#)

OPEN FIELD

GM Fabiano Caruana
GM Wesley So
GM Leinier Dominguez
GM Levon Aronian
GM Awonder Liang
GM Sam Sevian
GM Ray Robson
GM Abhimanyu Mishra

WOMEN'S FIELD

IM Carissa Yip
IM Alice Lee
GM Irina Krush
IM Tatev Abrahamyan
IM Anna Sargsyan
WGM Zoey Tang
IM Anna Zatonskih
WIM Rachael Li

It is the mission of the Saint Louis Chess Club, an educational organization, to maintain a formal program of instruction to teach the game of chess and to promote and support its educational program through community outreach and local and national partnerships to increase the awareness of the educational value of chess.

The Saint Louis Chess Club does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, citizenship, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, pregnancy, disability, and any other category protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws or regulations in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and grant programs, events, programs, or activities.

Rough Roads to

Neither GM Fabiano Caruana nor IM Carissa Yip ran away with the U.S. Championships, but they were on top when it counted.



With the expansion of the Saint Louis Chess Club completed, the 2025 U.S. Championships had that “new car” smell. Back at the club for the first time in three years, and with spectators allowed in the expanded playing halls for the first time since COVID, there was a spring in the steps of players and staff alike.

But the more things change, the more they also stay the same: In the end, GM Fabiano Caruana and IM Carissa Yip claimed the 2025 Open and Women’s championships, the fourth consecutive title (and fifth overall) for Caruana and third consecutive (fourth overall) for Yip. Their paths to the podium were different, as we’ll see, but ultimately the returning champions would not be denied. Here’s how it all went down.

Take me out to the Ballpark

The Saint Louis Chess Club spares little expense when it comes to marquee events. The conditions are great; the prizes are large, and the technical meetings come with cake.

This year’s opening ceremony was held in the 703 Club at Busch Stadium in downtown St. Louis. Along with the drawing of lots and a reminder of rules and regulations from event arbiter IA Chris Bird, attendees ate and drank as the newest inductees to the World Chess Hall of Fame and U.S. Chess Hall of Fame were introduced.

The 2025 class for the World Chess Hall of Fame consisted of GM Pia Cramling, who sent a heartfelt video; GM Vlastimil Hort, who learned of his induction before his death in May 2025, and GM Jan Timman, who could not make the trip. As you will read elsewhere in this issue, he died just before we went to press.

This year’s American inductees were Bruce Pandolfini and GM Irina Krush. The long-time *Chess Life* columnist could not attend, but Krush was on hand to accept the honor, and in an emotional speech she thanked her father and the many others who helped her achieve her dreams.

It’s hard to quantify the effect Krush has had on American chess. Currently the only American woman to earn the GM title, she has been U.S. Women’s Champion eight times across four decades and led numerous women’s teams in international competition. You could feel the respect her peers have for her as she spoke, but this was no retirement party: The new hall-of-famer placed third in this year’s Women’s Championship.

Repeats

BY **JOHN HARTMANN** WITH
ANNOTATIONS BY **JJ LANG, GM**
ELSHAN MORADIABADI, IM
ROBERT SHLYAKHTENKO,
AND GM ANDY WOODWARD

In the Club

There have been many splendid clubs in American chess history: the Franklin Mercantile, the Manhattan, the Marshall, the Mechanics. With its opening in 2008, the Saint Louis Chess Club offered a new model, marrying teaching and tournaments with top-level play in a welcoming environment.

But success soon encountered limits. The original club layout was essentially two three-level row houses — two playing halls on the top floors, club space at street level, studios and offices below. The playing halls were a particular issue: With space taken by spectators and cameras, there was a natural cap on how many players could be accommodated in elite events.

After a multi-year expansion and renovation project, the club has essentially taken over the entire building. The entrance has moved towards the corner of Euclid and Maryland avenues, and with five row houses used for club space and playing halls plus expansion on the back of the building, total space has expanded to around 30,000 square feet. This allows the club to host bigger events in-house: February's Saint Louis Masters, for example, drew 70 participants.

Modern chess fans are fortunate that top-level events are livestreamed with GM commentary, but there's nothing like seeing your favorite players in the flesh. I was fortunate to be on-site for the first two rounds of the Championships, and it gave me an entirely new perspective on the event.

Without being there, for example, I would not have seen GM Awonder Liang chuckling as he danced his knight around the board in a long ending against GM Levon Aronian. Afterwards I asked him what was so funny: "I was wondering if I would break the record for most consecutive knight moves." Well, readers, if you know of games with more than 40 knight moves in a row, send them to letters@uschess.org!

Nor would I have seen how attentive club staff are to detail. IM Alice Lee turned 16 during the tournament, and the players' lounge was decked out for the occasion with a sign and fancy cupcakes.

Amenities are nice, but the play — as Shakespeare said about something else — is the thing. The 2025 Championships were the first large event held in the reopened Saint Louis Chess Club, and the players marked the occasion with plenty of fighting chess. Caruana and Yip may have held on to their titles, but their roads weren't easy.



Game Theory

Fabiano Caruana's title defense began with an interesting conundrum: GM Gregory Oparin is Caruana's trainer. They play practice games and share opening files. So how do you go for the win against someone who knows all your secrets?

Caruana's answer: Find a move that is so ugly that it just might work.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E36)

GM Fabiano Caruana (2865)

GM Grigoriy Oparin (2729)

U.S. Championship (1), St. Louis,
10.12.2025

Annotations by GM Elshan Moradiabadi

Fabi's performances at the U.S. Championship always seem fresh and surprisingly effortless. He started his campaign for a fourth title with a theoretical win over one of his seconds.

**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Qc2 d5
5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3!?**

Going for complications. The engine's top choice is 6. Qxc3, but the position after 6. ... 0-0 is heavily studied, and I am sure Oparin knows at least three ways to make a draw from here.

The idea behind recapturing with the pawn is to play for a Sämisch where Qd1-c2 isn't totally without merit. I think this is truer in the positions where Black plays ... d7-d5.

6. ... c6?!

The engines are fine with this move, but I do not like it. It gives White's dark-squared

bishop a lasting presence.

In the next round, Oparin had white and here (after some transpositions) Niemann tried 6. ... 0-0 but was in some trouble after 7. Nf3 c5 8. e3 Nc6 9. dxc5 e5 10. a4 Bg4 11. Ba3 Re8 12. 0-0-0 e4 13. h3 Be6 14. cxd5 Nxd5 15. c4 Qf6 16. Bb2 Ndb4 17. Bxf6 Nxc2 18. Kxc2 gxf6 19. Nd4 Ne5 20. Kc3. The game eventually ended in a draw, though.

7. Nf3 b6 8. Bg5 h6 9. Bh4 Nbd7 10. e3

White could also play 10. Nd2, with the idea of going directly for e2-e4.

10. ... 0-0 11. g4



Thematic. Caruana may or may not have seen this position in his preparation, but you don't need preparation to choose such a natural move.

11. ... Qe8

Not 11. ... g5?? 12. Bg3 Nxg4, when White simply plays 13. h4 f5 14. hxg5 hxg5 15. cxd5 cxd5 16. Bb5 and raids the weakened shelter of Black's king.

12. g5 hxg5 13. Nxg5 e5?

The wrong pawn push. Oparin's idea is

logical — close down the center to restrict White's queen — but it costs two tempi and yields too much power and time to White's pieces. He had to go for the messy position after 13. ... c5 14. cxd5 Bb7 15. Rg1 cxd4 16. cxd4 Rc8 17. Qb2 e5.

14. cxd5 cxd5 15. Bb5 e4 16. Rg1 Bb7

17. Nh3!

Strong and simple. The game is almost decided; White's attack along the g-file is hard to resist.

17. ... Nh7 18. Qe2 Qc8 19. Kd2 Nc5

20. dxc5 Qxh3 21. Qh5 g6 22. c6 Bc8



**23. Rxg6+ fxg6 24. Qxg6+ Kh8 25. Rg1 Bg4
26. Rxg4 Rf7 27. Bg3, Black resigned.**

Caruana drew his next three games, including a fascinating Round 2 battle against Championship debutant GM Andy Woodward — see our coverage in the February *Chess Life Kids* for that game. After four rounds he joined GMs Levon Aronian and Hans Niemann in a tie for second place, a half-point behind GM Wesley So. The informal Minnesotan notched two wins in four games to take the early lead, including this time-trouble tussle against GM Ray Robson.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED (D24)

GM Ray Robson (2733)

GM Wesley So (2823)

U.S. Championship (2), St. Louis,
10.13.2025

Annotations by GM Elshan Moradiabadi

Wesley So is the Capablanca of the 21st century. The master of "simple chess" had an almost-flawless performance in this event, and if it weren't for missing his winning chances in the final round against Oparin, we could have seen a tiebreak between him and Caruana. Wesley netted four wins, three of which were excellent technical wins. I chose this game for its educational value.



Caruana takes on
Oparin in Round 1

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. Nc3 dxc4 5. e4 b5

Ten years ago this would have been a “wild” try, but no more, given how deep theory goes.

6. e5 Nd5 7. Nxb5 Nb6 8. Be3 Nc6 9. a3 Qd7 10. Nc3 Bb7 11. Qc2 Be7 12. Rd1 Na5 13. Be2 f5 14. exf6 e.p. gxf6



After some transpositions, we have arrived at the *tabiya* of this opening.

15. 0-0 Rg8 16. Ne4?!

The established continuation is 16. g3 0-0-0 17. Nd2 f5 18. Bf3. Robson's choice lets Black simplify into a slightly better endgame.

16. ... Qa4! 17. Qxa4+?

A losing mistake, both positionally and practically. White needs to keep the queens on the board to maintain tension for his minor pieces, which other than the knight on e4 are passively placed. And anyway, handing over such a technical position to Wesley So is like giving him 100 more points of strength.

17. ... Nxa4 18. Nc5 Nxc5

Right after my comment on Wesley's power in simple positions, he makes a critical error. After 18. ... Bxc5 19. dxc5 Bd5 20. Bd4 Kf7 21. g3 Nb3 Black will start picking up the pawns on the queenside.

19. dxc5 Rb8 20. g3 Bd5 21. Nd4 Rxb2 22. Bh5+



22. ... Rg6!

Profound! Also the only move! Not 22. ... Kd7?? 23. Nxe6 Kxe6 24. Rfe1 and with all the discovered attacks, forks and skewers, all hell breaks loose and White wins.

23. Rb1 Rxb1?!

Another mistake, but the right move here wasn't simple chess: 23. ... c3! 24. Ne2 Be4 25. Rbe1 Bd3 26. Nxc3 Nc4 27. Bf4 Bxf1 28. Kxf1 Rb3 and Black is slightly better. The moves may seem simple, but there were a number of nuances to consider before

choosing to go for this position.

24. Rxb1 Nb3 25. Nxb3 cxb3 26. Bd1 Kd7 27. Bxb3 Bxb3 28. Rxb3 Kc6

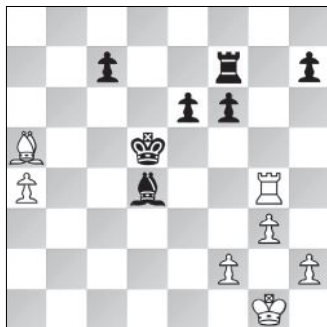
They say “The third time is a charm.” Wesley begins his third round of outplaying his opponent.

29. Rb4 a5 30. Ra4 Kb5 31. Rh4 Rg7 32.

a4+ Kc6 33. Bd2 Bxc5 34. Rf4?! Rf7

34. ... Kd5 could have created more practical problems.



35. Bxa5 Kd5 36. Rg4 Bd4**37. Rg8?**

The position is already difficult, and may be losing from a practical standpoint, although the engine shows some miraculous draws after 37. Kf1 f5 38. Rh4 e5 39. Ke2 Kc4 40. Bd2 c5 41. a5 Rb7 42. a6.

37. ... c5 38. Bb6 e5?

Black must be winning after 38. ... Rd7 39. Kf1 c4 40. Ba5 (40. Bxd4 Kxd4 41. Ke2 Ra7!) 40. ... Rb7.

39. Rd8+??

Now it is over.

39. ... Ke4 40. Rc8 Kf3 41. Bxc5 Rb7 42. h3 Rb1+ 43. Kh2 Rc1 44. Bxd4 Rxc8 45. Bb6 Rc1 46. g4 Ra1 47. Bd8 Ra2, White resigned.

Why do I give Wesley So this much praise when he let go of his advantage many times? Because our measurement should be the practical aspect of his play and not pure

engine evaluations. Maybe I will explain this point in a future article!

Here Caruana stepped on the accelerator. Beginning with a Round 5 victory over GM Dariusz Swiercz, he jumped to the top of the leaderboard and never looked back, notching four wins in six games — including three with the black pieces. His Round 7 win over GM Hans Niemann, who was co-leader at the time, was pivotal.

HUNGARIAN DEFENSE (C50)

GM Hans Niemann (2817)

GM Fabiano Caruana (2865)

U.S. Championship (7), St. Louis, 10.19.2025

Annotations by GM Elshan Moradiabadi

Another seemingly effortless win for Caruana which paved the way to his title. His sharp choices and opening preparation once more proved effective, educational, and, in this particular game, pretty fun!

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 d6!?

Provoking the excitable Hans!

4. c3 f5 5. d3 Qf6 6. 0-0?!

A positional error. White had an edge after 6. Ng5!? Nh6 7. f4 Bd7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. exf5 exf4 (9. ... Nxf5 10. Na3) 10. Bxf4 in Fedoseev – Dubov, Moscow 2020.

The engines claim 6. exf5 is the best response for White, and I tend to agree: White must take action against Black's space-grab-

bing strategy on the kingside. After 6. ... Nge7 (not 6. ... Bxf5?? 7. Qb3, or 6. ... Qxf5 7. 0-0 Nf6 8. Re1 Be7 9. Nbd2 when Black's king cannot find safety) White gets a slight advantage with 7. 0-0 d5 8. Bb3! Bxf5 9. Bg5 Qe6 10. c4!.

6. ... f4 7. b4?!

Good or bad, White needed to play 7. d4 and open the center.

7. ... Nge7**8. a4?!**

Niemann ignores Black's attack, but it is far more dangerous than a typical King's Indian-style kingside initiative.

8. ... g5 9. b5 Nd8 10. d4 g4 11. Ne1 h5 12. Na3 Ne6?!

This gives White a good chance to get back in the game. After 12. ... Be6 13. Qb3 Bg7 14. a5 0-0 15. Nd3 Kh7 Black's initiative would soon become too dangerous.

13. b6! c6 14. Ba2?

White needs some open lines to work with on the queenside. 14. bxa7 was a must.

14. ... Ng5?

After 14. ... a5! 15. Nc4 Ng6 16. Ba3 Ng5 the queenside is almost sealed, and Black's kingside attack is hard to hold off.

15. Nd3?

A decisive loss of time. This allows Caruana to achieve the perfect setup, after which the game is practically over. White could have kept the balance with 15. Nc4 Ng6 16. bxa7 Rxa7 17. Nb6.

15. ... Ng6 16. Nc4 Be6 17. Ba3



17. ... Bxc4

One of many ways to win the game. Caruana's technique is more than sufficient from here.

18. Bxc4 f3 19. g3 h4 20. Qc2 axb6

21. Rae1 Rd8!

"Bringing the last dude to the party."

22. d5 Rd7 23. dxc6 bxc6 24. Bc1 Rdh7 25. Bxg5 Qxg5 26. Qb3 hxg3 27. Qxb6 Qh4 28. Qb8+ Ke7, White resigned.

While Caruana and So led the way, Aronian lurked just off the lead. He made his move in a difficult Round 8 (see Danya sidebar ~ed.), defeating GM Sam Shankland to get to 5/8 and clear second behind Caruana and So at 5½. This left Aronian, Caruana, and So as the only players above 50% after eight rounds.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, SCHEVENINGEN VARIATION (B84)

GM Levon Aronian (2792)

GM Sam Shankland (2719)

U.S. Championship (8), St. Louis,

10.20.2025

Annotations by IM Robert Shlyakhtenko

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Be2 e6 7. Be3 Nbd7 8. g4

One of White's most dangerous tries.

8. ... h6 9. f4 b5

This move was an invention of six-time U.S. Champion GM Walter Browne, but it has been rarely repeated in grandmaster practice since his days. Shankland brings a new idea to the table. 9. ... g5 is most common.

10. g5 hxg5 11. fxg5 Rh3! 12. Bf2



12. ... Ng8!

Browne played 12. ... Rxc3? 13. gxf6 Rh3 and now 14. Nxe6! Qa5+ 15. c3 fxe6 16. fxg7 Bxg7 17. Qxd6 gave White a decisive attack in Tseshkovsky – Browne, Manila 1976.

13. g6 Qf6 14. Bh5

Undoubtedly, Shankland analyzed the consequences of 14. gxf7+ Qxf7 15. Rf1 b4! beforehand.

14. ... fxg6 15. Bg4 Rxc3! 16. bxc3 Ne5

Black has fractured White's pawn structure and holds a firm grip over the dark squares.

This together with the surprise factor provide sufficient compensation for the Exchange, but Aronian does not lose his way.

17. Bh3 g5 18. a4!

The best plan, reminding Black that he too has weaknesses.

18. ... Qh6 19. Bf1 Nf6?

Too ambitious. After 19. ... bxa4! 20. Rxa4 Nf6 There is a lot here that might scare a human player — Nd4-b5, Bf1-b5+, and so on — but all of these turn out to be illusions. Black is fine.

20. axb5 Nxe4 21. bxa6?

21. Qe2! Nxc3 22. Qe3 Nd5 23. Qg3 is much stronger, harmonizing White's pieces.

21. ... g4?!

Shankland continues his maximalist approach, perhaps underestimating White's response. The c3-pawn actually played an important role in securing White's dark squares: After 21. ... Nxc3! 22. Qd2 Ne4 23. Qe3 d5 24. Bb5+ Kf7 25. 0-0 Kg8 Black has full compensation.

22. Qc1!

The best decision, both practically and objectively. White is willing to give up the pride of his position (the a6-pawn) for the safety of a better ending.

22. ... Qh7?

Too much. 22. ... Qxc1+! 23. Rxc1 Bxa6 was a must. White is certainly better here, but



with the knight on e5, Black's position is inherently very solid.

23. Bb5+ Kf7 24. 0-0 Kg8 25. Bg3

Now White has completed his development, and Black's compensation should be fleeting. However, Aronian gave his opponent one more chance.

25. ... Be7 26. Bxe5 dxe5



27. Bd3?

White tries to trade another pair of pieces using combinational means, but there's a significant tactical flaw. The right move order was 27. Qe1! exd4 28. Bd3, intending 28. ... Bd6 29. h4! Bg3 30. Qxe4 Qxh4 31. Qh1!.

27. ... g3?

27. ... Qh4!! would save Black: 28. Qe1 g3 29. Nf3 Qh3 and the threat of ... Be7-c5+ leaves White unable to capture on e4. The only move is 30. Ra5!, and after 30. ... Bc5+ 31. Rxc5 Nxc5 the complications continue, but Black is clearly on the verge of escaping.

28. hgx3 Qg6 29. Qe1 Qxg3+ 30. Qxg3 Nxx3 31. Rfb1! exd4 32. a7 Bd6 33. cxd4



The endgame is easily winning; Black can't do anything to oppose White's passed pawns.

33. ... Kf8 34. Kf2 Ke7 35. c4 Kd8 36. Rg1 Bb7 37. c5 Bf4 38. Rxx3 Bxx3+ 39. Kxx3 Kc7 40. Be2 Rf8 41. Rf1 Rf6 42. Rxf6 gxf6 43. Bc4 Kd7 44. Kf4 Ba8 45. Ke3 Bb7 46. Kd2 Ba8 47. Kc3 f5 48. Kd2 f4 49. Ke2 Ke7 50. Kf2 Kf6 51. Be2 e5 52. dxe5+, Black resigned.

So it came down to a three-man race: Who

would claim the title? Two more wins for Caruana, coupled with a win and a draw for So and two draws for Aronian, left the returning champ in pole position heading into the final round and So just a half-point behind.

Trailing by a point and a half, and without hopes of winning the tournament, Aronian allowed Caruana to earn a quick (but showy) draw. The upshot: So could catch Caruana with a final round win over Oparin, but "Team Caruana" held: Oparin defended his position and his boss to earn a 60-move draw.

This gave Caruana his fifth U.S. Championship, and fourth in four years. With this he matched Bobby Fischer's streak of four consecutive wins in 1962/3 through 1966/67; with a fifth victory in 2026, Caruana would make the record his own.

Started from the Bottom

When Carissa Yip gets hot, there's no stopping her. Good thing, because after her start at the 2025 U.S. Women's Championship, she needed to heat up fast.

A first-round loss to WGM Atousa Pourkashiyan followed by three draws left Yip two full points off the pace after four rounds. That pace was being set by a newcomer: IM Anna Sargsyan, fresh off a transfer from the Armenian Chess Federation and studying at Webster University, got off to a tremendous start in her women's championship debut, scoring 3½/4 to vault into first place and remaining in contention throughout.



GM Irina Krush is inducted into the U.S. Chess Hall of Fame



Yip studies the board against Krush

The first rest day in this year's championships came after the fourth round, and whatever Yip did to recover, it worked. Beginning with Round 5, she reeled off six wins in seven games, including four in the final four rounds, to fight her way back up the leaderboard. Her Round 6 win over Krush was a key step forward.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E92)

GM Irina Krush (2462)

IM Carissa Yip (2533)

U.S. Women's Championship (6), St. Louis, 10.18.2025

Annotations by GM Elshan Moradiabadi

On the way to her third consecutive women's title, and fourth in all, Carissa delivered another chain of victories after a turbulent start. Her win against eight-time champion GM Irina Krush is where her streak took off.

1. c4 g6 2. d4 Bg7 3. e4 d6 4. Nc3 Nf6 5. Be2 0-0 6. Nf3 e5

Nothing surprising so far. Both players have played these moves on numerous occasions.

7. d5 a5 8. h3 Na6 9. Bg5 Qe8 10. Nd2 Nd7 11. g4 Ndc5 12. Rg1 Kh8



13. Nf1?!

Overly ambitious. The critical continuation is 13. Nb3 Nxb3 14. Qxb3 f5 15. gxf5 gxf5 16. Qd1 Nc5 17. Bh5 Qd7 18. Be3, which is harder to play as Black. For instance, after 18. ... Nxe4 19. Nxe4 fxe4 20. Bg4 Qe7 21. Qc2 followed by 0-0-0, Black needs to be careful not to succumb to White's buildup on the kingside.

13. ... f5 14. Qd2?

This is too much. White could have kept the balance with 14. gxf5 gxf5 15. Kd2 Nxe4+ 16. Nxe4 fxe4 17. Be3 Nc5 18. Ng3.

14. ... Nb4?

A miss from Black. There was a big edge to be had with 14. ... Bd7! 15. gxf5 gxf5

16. Ng3 Nb4 17. Nh5 Nbd3+! 18. Bxd3 Nxd3+ 19. Qxd3 Qxh5.

15. Be3 Nxe4 16. Nxe4 fxe4 17. Ng3
Now White is safe.

17. ... Nd3+ 18. Bxd3 exd3 19. Qxd3



19. ... e4!

A strong practical move. White never likes to see that long diagonal open up!

20. Nxe4 Qe5 21. Rb1 Bd7

Carissa is building up to eventually crack down on White's king, and it's hard to suggest a clear plan for White.

22. Ke2??

This loses, but you can't really blame Krush for dismissing 22. f4 or 22. Rg3, both of which the engine likes but are not easy to commit to.

22. ... Rae8 23. f3 Qh2+ 24. Nf2 Bh6 25. Qd4+ Kg8 26. g5 Bg7 27. Qh4 Bf5 28. Rbd1 Qe5 29. Ne4 Bxe4 30. fxe4 Qxb2+ 31. Rd2 Qc3 32. e5 Qxe5 33. Rg3 Rf4, White resigned.

Five players had chances to qualify for a playoff entering the last round: Yip led at 7/10, with Krush, Lee, and Sargsyan at 6½ and IM Anna Zatonskih at 6. Longtime rivals Krush and Zatonskih split a fairly bloodless point, but Sargsyan, who had faded in the middle rounds, capped a stellar debut with her second straight win.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, RAGOZIN DEFENSE (D38)

IM Alice Lee (2490)

IM Anna Sargsyan (2437)

U.S. Women's Championship (11), St. Louis, 10.24.2025

Annotations by GM Elshan Moradiabadi

IM Anna Sargsyan had a fantastic first U.S. Women's Championship, and in this game

she showed the necessary patience to take advantage of Alice's premature onslaught.

1. Nf3 d5 2. d4 e6 3. c4 Nf6 4. Nc3 Bb4 5. Qa4+ Nc6 6. e3 0-0 7. Bd2 a6 8. Qc2 dxc4 9. Bxc4 Bd6 10. 0-0 e5 11. dxe5 Nxe5 12. Nxe5 Bxe5 13. f4 Bd6

13. ... Bd4! is more accurate. If 14. exd4 Qxd4+ Black gets the piece back and wins a pawn in the process.

14. Bd3 h6?!



Playable but unnecessary. After 14. ... b5 15. Ne4 (White's in big trouble after 15. e4? Bc5+ 16. Kh1 Ng4) 15. ... h6 16. Nxd6 Qxd6 17. Bc3 Re8 18. Rad1 Qe7 19. Bd4 Bb7 the game is balanced.

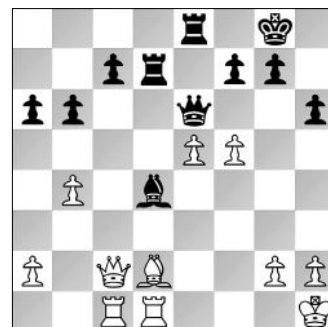
15. Ne4?!

The critical continuation was 15. h3, when after 15. ... b5 16. e4 Bc5+ 17. Kh1 Black needs to find a difficult move: 17. ... Qd7!, planning to respond to a future e4-e5 with ... Rf8-d8.

15. ... Nxe4 16. Bxe4 Re8 17. Bf3 Qe7 18.

Rac1 Rb8 19. e4 b6 20. e5 Bc5+ 21. Kh1 Bd7 Black is safe. White has some symbolic spatial advantage, but that is about as much she can get. However, Alice decided to go on an ill-fated journey.

22. Rfd1 Rbd8 23. b4 Bd4 24. Bc6 Qe6 25. Bxd7 Rxd7 26. f5



26. ... Qd5



The first moves of the critical Cervantes Landeiro – Yip battle

Cervantes Landeiro, the champ ground her way to victory.

FULL POINT

WGM Thalia Cervantes Landeiro (2369)
IM Carissa Yip (2533)
U.S. Women's Championship (11), St. Louis, 10.24.2025
Annotations by JJ Lang



WHITE TO MOVE

Of course 26. ... Qxe5 fails to 27. Re1, but now White doesn't really have an attack.

27. Bf4 c5 28. f6

White's pieces are too far from Black's king.

28. ... Qe6 29. bxc5 bxc5 30. fxg7 Rb7
31. Qe4 Rb2 32. h3 Reb8 33. Be3 Re2 34. Re1??

A time-pressure blunder. The engine calls it even after 34. Rd3 Bxe5 35. Qf3 Rbb2 36.

Rg1, but even so it's annoying for White.

34. ... Bxe3

White forgot about the rook on c1.

35. Rf1 Rbb2 36. Rf6 Qxh3+, White resigned.

This meant that Yip needed to win to retain her title outright. After taking the advantage the early middlegame against WGM Thalia

17. Nb5?!

17. Nxe5 was a good opportunity to remove a strong attacker from the board. After 17. ... Qxe5 (17. ... dxe5 18. Qf2 is very nice for White) 18. Qd2 White has great play against the weakened dark squares around Black's king.

17. ... Rf7 18. Nxe5 Qxe5

2025 U.S. Championship

ST. LOUIS, OCTOBER 12-24, 2025

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1	GM Fabiano Caruana	2865	*	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	½	1	1	1	8/11
2	GM Wesley So	2823	½	*	½	½	1	½	½	½	1	1	½	1	7½/11
3	GM Levon Aronian	2792	½	½	*	½	1	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	6½/11
4	GM Samuel Sevian	2767	½	½	½	*	0	1	½	1	½	½	½	½	6/11
5	GM Andy Woodward	2695	½	0	0	1	*	1	½	0	½	½	½	1	5½/11
6	GM Hans Moke Niemann	2817	0	½	½	0	0	*	1	½	½	1	1	½	5½/11
7	GM Awonder Liang	2779	½	½	½	½	½	0	*	½	1	½	½	0	5/11
8	GM Grigory Oparin	2729	0	½	½	0	1	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	5/11
9	GM Ray Robson	2733	½	0	½	½	½	½	0	½	*	½	½	½	4½/11
10	GM Sam Shankland	2719	0	0	0	½	½	0	½	½	½	*	1	1	4½/11
11	GM Abhimanyu Mishra	2747	0	½	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	0	*	½	4/11
12	GM Dariusz Swiercz	2659	0	0	½	½	0	½	1	½	½	0	½	*	4/11

Compare this position to those after the immediate 17. Nxe5: Here the e4-square is much weaker after Nc3-b5 and there's no time to start attacking the dark squares.

19. Bd4?!

Or is there?

19. ... Qxe4 20. Qd2

What compensation does White have for the pawn? Black's queen looks close to being trapped in the center, but trapping it is another matter entirely.

20. ... Ba6

Defending the back rank and preparing a favorable trade of White's knight, which is the only piece really troubling the weakness on c7.

21. Rad1?

21. Nc3 tries to limit the damage, but Black is much better after 21. ... Qd3! 22. Qxd3 Nxd3 23. b3 Re8.

Meanwhile, 21. Rae1? is also met with 21. ... Qd3 and now White must either trade queens or risk losing another pawn on b5 after 22. Qc3 Bxb5 23. cxb5 Qxb5.

21. ... Bxb5! 22. Rfe1 Qd3! 23. cxb5 Qxd2

24. Rxd2 Ne4

Black is up a clean pawn. Her only weakness is the c7-pawn, but White's bishop isn't getting near it any time soon.

25. Rc2 a4 26. Rec1 Nc5 27. Bxc5 dxc5

This double rook ending, and the single rook ending that follows, are objectively winning for Black. Yip never falters.

28. Re1 Rd7 29. Re6 Ra5 30. Rc6 Rxb5

31. h4 Rb4 32. h5 Kf7 33. hxg6+ hxg6 34.

Re2 Re4 35. Kf2 Rxe2+ 36. Kxe2 g5 37. a3

Ke7 38. d6+ cxd6 39. Rxb6 Ra7 40. Kd3

Ke6 41. Rb8 Ke5 42. g3 Rh7 43. Re8+ Kf6

44. Rf8+ Ke6 45. Rg8 Rh2 46. Rg6+ Ke5

47. Rxg5 Kf6 48. Rg8 Rxb2 49. Ke3 Rb3+

50. Kf4 Rxa3 51. Rf8+ Ke6 52. Re8+ Kd5

53. Rf8 Ra1 54. Ra8 c4 55. Kxf5 c3, White

resigned.

With this win Yip claimed her fourth U.S. women's title and third in three years. Now playing professionally while on leave from her studies at Stanford, you wouldn't bet against her winning again in 2026. In that case she would tie Irina Krush and Gisela Kahn Gressler for the most consecutive women's championship with four.

Next-Gen

It feels like the top players are getting younger every year. This year's championships featured a number of teen talents: An out-of-form GM Abhimanyu Mishra played in his second U.S. Championship, while IM

Alice Lee and FM Rose Atwell more than held their own in the women's event. And at age 12, FM Megan Paragua made her Championship debut and finished strong after a period of acclimation.

Perhaps GM Andy Woodward made the biggest splash. The 15-year-old is one of America's top young talents, but after some outstanding results — +2 at the Sharjah Masters, +3 at the FIDE Grand Swiss, and a 2025 U.S. Junior title — he told me he was a little nervous to be playing such a strong tournament.

He needn't have been. After getting his sea legs in the first four rounds, including that imaginative draw against Caruana in Round 2, Woodward scored 4½/7 to round out his first U.S. Championship. He sent his Round 5 game against GM Sam Sevian for this article.

ENGLISH OPENING (A20)

GM Samuel Sevian (2767)

GM Andy Woodward (2695)

US Ch (5), St. Louis, 10.17.2025

Annotations by GM Andy Woodward

1. c4 e5 2. g3 Nf6 3. Bg2 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5

5. Nf3 Nc6 6. 0-0 Nb6 7. b3 Be7 8. Bb2 f6

9. Na3

I had never seen this move before, but it is very interesting. I failed to see the idea and got under huge pressure really fast.

2025 U.S. Women's Championship

ST. LOUIS, OCTOBER 12-24, 2025

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1	IM Carissa Yip	2533	*	1	1	½	½	½	1	1	½	1	1	0	8/11
2	IM Anna Sargsyan	2437	0	*	1	1	1	½	0	1	½	1	1	½	7½/11
3	GM Irina Krush	2462	0	0	*	½	1	0	½	1	1	1	1	1	7/11
4	IM Anna Zatonskih	2379	½	0	½	*	1	½	1	½	½	½	½	1	6½/11
5	IM Alice Lee	2490	½	0	0	0	*	1	1	½	1	½	1	1	6½/11
6	WGM Jennifer Yu	2357	½	½	1	½	0	*	0	½	½	1	1	½	6/11
7	IM Nazi Paikidze	2388	0	1	½	0	0	1	*	½	1	½	½	1	6/11
8	FM Rose Atwell	2414	0	0	0	½	½	½	½	*	½	1	1	1	5½/11
9	IM Tatev Abrahamyan	2474	½	½	0	½	0	½	0	½	*	1	½	1	5/11
10	WGM Thalia Cervantes Landeiro	2369	0	0	0	½	½	0	½	0	0	*	½	1	3/11
11	FM Megan Paragua	2330	0	0	0	½	0	0	½	0	½	½	*	1	3/11
12	WGM Atousa Pourkashiyan	2362	1	½	0	0	0	½	0	0	0	0	0	*	2/11

9. ... Be6 10. Nc2 Qd7?!

Best is 10. ... 0-0! 11. e4 Qd3 12. Re1 Bg4 13. Ne3 Bxf3 14. Qxf3 Qxd2 15. Re2 Qa5 16. a3 g6 and the line goes on.

11. e4 Bc5?!

Black should just admit the mistake and play 11. ... Bg4!. It's unclear after 12. Ne3 Be6 13. d4 exd4 14. Nxd4 Nxd4 15. Bxd4 Rd8.

12. d4 exd4 13. Ncxd4 Nxd4 14. Nxd4 Bg4 15. Nf3 0-0?!

I knew this was a bit dubious, but I also knew that in the endgame after 15. ... Qxd1 16. Rfxd1 c6 I would be fighting for a draw, so I decided to at least try to pose some practical problems.

16. Qc2 Bd6 17. a4 a5**18. Rfe1?**

I didn't really understand this move. White's just better after 18. Rad1 Qe7 19. h3 Bh5 20. Rd3!.

18. ... Bb4! 19. Red1?!

White's still better after 19. Bc3 Bxc3 20. Qxc3 c6 21. h3!.

19. ... Qe7

Now Black is completely fine.

20. h3 Bh5 21. g4 Bf7 22. Nd4 Rad8**23. Qe2 Qe8?!**

Apparently 23. ... g6! was quite strong, simply guarding f5. Black is slightly better after 24. Qe3 Nd7! 25. h4 Nc5 26. g5 f5.

24. Qe3 Qe5!

After 15 minutes, I came up with this fascinating resource. It's possible now that the white queen doesn't guard b2. White is already forced to repeat with 25. Qe2.

25. f4??**25. ... Nd5!!**

From here, the rest is simple.

26. Qf2 Nxf4 27. Nc6 Rxd1+ 28. Rxd1 Qxe4!

Cherry on top.

29. Nxb4 Nxc2 30. Rd4 Qb1+ 31. Kxg2 axb4 32. Qd2 c6 33. Rd7 Re8 34. g5 Bd5+ 35. Rxd5 Qe4+ 36. Kf2 Qxd5, White resigned.

Look for a report from Andy on his big win at the 2026 Tata Steel Challengers in next month's issue. ♡

DANYA

► NEWS OF GM DANIEL NARODITSKY'S death started trickling out on Oct. 20 just as Round 8 was to start. Faced with an impossible situation, IA Chris Bird informed the players of their colleague's passing in his pre-round announcements, but the games went on.

It's a testament to the players, many of whom had repeatedly battled Danya over the years, that they were able to complete the round and the tournament. Multiple players shared their shock, and their trouble concentrating after hearing the news, in post-game interviews.

Tournament photographers marked Naroditsky's death by converting all photos from Round 8 to black and white as a sign of mourning.



Adding Some SPICE

Webster's SPICE chess team wins its 10th Pan-Ams title.

BY **IM JASON LIANG**



WITH MOST COLLEGES still on winter break, 86 teams used Jan. 2-5 to catch one last break before school resumed, by playing at the Pan-American Intercollegiate Championship.

The tournament encompassed all playing levels, ranging from all-unrated teams to all-grandmaster teams. For many players, this was their first time being in the same room with so many titled players. This would not be possible without the rich history of collegiate chess. Rhode Island College was the first U.S. college to offer scholarships to talented players; schools such as the University of Texas at Dallas and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, were thus inspired to offer generous assistance to recruit titled players.

Since then, many other universities, espe-

cially in Missouri and Texas, have followed suit and grown to become chess powerhouses themselves. Additionally, with the advent of the online Collegiate Chess League, colleges have had numerous chances to organize competitive chess teams from the comfort of their home campuses.

The day before the event started, players were already filling the lobby at the Hilton Chicago/Oak Brook Hills Resort with chess games and analyses. Tucked away among greenery and water, the hotel's relatively remote location made it hard to see downtown Chicago. Consequently, the hotel restaurant was the go-to hangout spot for chessplayers after games. Many of my Georgia Tech teammates and I opted to traverse the long, icy paths to reach Zazzo's Pizza, where we had Chicago's famous deep-dish pizza.



Awonder Liang and Gleb Dudin do battle on Board 1

The critical matchup came in Round 5 between the last two teams with perfect scores: Webster A and University of Texas Rio Grande Valley A. UTRGV came in as the defending champions, but Webster, who had already won the event nine times, including every year from 2012 to 2018, were determined to have something to say about that. Their Board 1, GM Awonder Liang, was the highest-rated player in the event, but had been held to draws by UTD A's GM Aditya Samant and Mizzou A's GM Aryan Tari in the preceding rounds. Unfortunately for UTRGV's top board, GM Gleb Dudin, one mistake was all it took for the game to swing into Awonder's hands.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B92)

GM Awonder Liang (2777)

GM Gleb Dudin (2646)

Pan-American Intercollegiate (5),
Chicago, 01.04.2026

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 a6 6. Be2 e5 7. Nb3 Be7 8. Be3 Be6
9. 0-0 0-0 10. Nd5 Nbd7

The most solid choice, although 10. ... Nxe4 11. Bb6 Qd7 12. Nc7 Nc6 is a decent alternative.

11. Qd3 Bxd5 12. exd5 Rc8 13. c4 a5
14. Kh1 Re8 15. a4

White makes his intentions clear: He wants to shut down the queenside and focus on the kingside.

15. ... b6 16. Rae1 Nc5 17. Nxc5 bxc5 18.
Bd2 Rb8 19. Bc3 g6 20. Bd1 Nd7 21. b3



White is waiting for Black to play ... f7-f5, after which either f2-f4 or g2-g4 will break up the structure.

21. ... Bf6 22. Qd2 Bg5 23. Qc2 Ra8 24. g3
Bh6 25. Rg1 Ra7 26. Rg2

Slightly mysterious at first glance.

26. ... Ra8?!

It's possible Black didn't see any ideas for White, but White's next move shows why 26. Rg2 was so cunning! Now would've been a good moment for Black to play actively with 26. ... f5 while White's rook on g2 and bishop on d1 are making strange impressions.

27. h4

Suddenly, White will open the h-file, and it is not easy for Black to respond.

27. ... Bg7 28. Bd2 Qe7 29. h5 e4!

Black correctly gains some space for his own pieces.

30. hxc6 hxc6 31. Rh2 f5 32. g4 Be5 33. Rh3



33. ... f4??

Giving up a pawn to alleviate White's attack, but now Black will be left without any counterplay.

At first glance, 33. ... Nf6 looks horrible with the g-file opening up, but after 34. gxf5 comes 34. ... Qd7!! If Black can capture on f5 with the queen, they will have the better position, with strong central control. The engine gives the best line as 35. Rxe4 Nxe4 36. Qxe4 Qxf5 37. Qh4 Ra7 38. Bg4 Qb1+ 39. Kg2 Qe4+ with a perpetual.

34. Qxe4 Qg5 35. Kg2 Bc3?

This loses immediately, but I don't blame Black for not wanting to sit and hope White wouldn't be able to make progress.

36. Qxe8+ Rxe8 37. Rxe8+ Kf7 38. Re6! Bxd2 39. Rh7+ Kf8 40. Rxd7 f3+ 41. Bxf3 Bf4 42. Rh7 Be5 43. b4!

Black cannot stop White's pawns.

43. ... cxb4 44. c5 dxc5 45. d6 Bxd6

46. Rxd6 c4 47. Ra6, Black resigned.

GM Yasser Quesada Perez also won a nice game on Board 2 to cement a 3-1 match victory for Webster A. With the next closest teams having 4/5, Webster just needed a tie in the last round to clinch the tournament.

Even so, UTRGV A and the other top-contending teams still had much to play for. The top four teams from this event would qualify for the President's Cup, where the U.S. National College Champion will be crowned. This made for some pivotal last-round matchups, one of which was between Mizzou A and UTD B. UTD's chess team runs miles deep: In addition to an all-GM A team, their B team consisted of two GMs and two IMs and managed to score more match points than the A team! Mizzou's Board 1, Tari, had been showing great form throughout the event, though, and masterfully converted an attack into a pawn-up endgame against GM Rahul Srivatsav Peddi.

FRENCH DEFENSE (C13)

GM Aryan Tari (2511)

GM Rahul Srivatsav Peddi (2533)

Pan-American Intercollegiate (6),
Chicago, 01.05.2026

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bg5 dxe4
5. Nxe4 Be7 6. Nxf6+ Bxf6 7. Bxf6 Qxf6 8.
Nf3 b6 9. Qd2 0-0 10. Bd3 Bb7 11. Ng5 g6
12. 0-0-0

Objectively Black is doing fine, but already White has a huge initiative, with natural moves such as h2-h4 and Ng5-e4 coming up.

12. ... Nc6



SLU B was the top female team



Mizzou finished in third place



The second-place UTRGV team



The first-place Gorloks from Webster University

The engine recommends 12. ... Nd7 13. h4 Bxg2 14. Rh2 Bf3, though it's hard to play when you see h4-h5 and Rd1-h1 coming.

13. c3 Ne7 14. h4



14. ... h5?!

A good rule of thumb is to not play pawn moves on the side where you are worse. Black needed to go for counterplay at this point with 14. ... Rad8. Play could go 15. f3 (or 15. h5 h6 16. Ne4 Bxe4 17. Bxe4 g5) 15. ... c5 16. h5 h6 and now White can sacrifice the knight for a few pawns, but it looks like Black survives in all variations. For instance, 17. Nxe6 fxe6 18. hxg6 cxd4 19. Qxh6 Qf4+.

15. f3 Nf5?

Once again, Black's only hope for counterplay is 15. ... Rad8, going for the ... c7-c5 break.

16. Ne4 Bxe4 17. fxe4 Ne7 18. e5 Qg7



19. g4!

Of course!

19. ... hxg4 20. h5 f5 21. exf6 e.p. Rxf6 22. hxg6 Nxg6 23. Qg2 Rd8 24. Qxg4 Nf4 25. Qxg7+ Kxg7 26. Rh7+ Kf8 27. Rxc7 Nxd3+ 28. Rxd3 Rf7 29. Rxf7+ Kxf7 30. Rh3!

Very precise. If Black's king steps to the g-file to keep the rook out of h7, White can cut it off decisively by putting the rook on f3.

30. ... e5 31. Rf3+ Ke6 32. Re3 Rd5 33. Kc2

Kd6 34. Rxe5 Rxe5 35. dxe5+ Kxe5 36. Kb3 Kd5 37. Kb4 Kc6 38. a4 a6 39. Kc4 Kd6 40. Kd4 Kc6 41. b4 Kd6 42. c4 Kc6 43. Ke5 Kd7 44. Kd5 Kc7 45. Ke6 Kc6 46. b5+ axb5 47. axb5+, Black resigned.

It wasn't solely chess schools vying for a spot in the Final Four, though: UTRGV A faced Harvard, whose team's average rating of 2486 made them just as strong as schools with chess scholarships. With draws on the top three boards, it all came down to Board 4.

CATALAN OPENING (E01)

FM Christopher Shen (2425)

GM Shawn Rodrigue-Lemieux (2562)

Pan-American Intercollegiate (6),

Chicago, 01.05.2026

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. g3 dxc4

5. Qa4+ Nbd7 6. Qxc4 a6 7. Qb3?!

Not a great square for the queen, as we will see. Probably White's best is 7. Bg2 b5 8. Qc6 Rb8 9. Bf4, so as not to give Black a free hand.

7. ... b5 8. a4 Bb7 9. Bg2 c5 10. axb5 c4!



Using the fact that the c1-bishop can be skewered.

11. Qd1

Not 11. Qxc4?? Rc8.

11. ... axb5 12. Rxa8 Qxa8 13. 0-0 Be7

14. b3 cxb3 15. Qxb3 b4

Now Black simply has an outside passed pawn for free.

16. Ne1 Bxg2 17. Nxg2 0-0 18. Nf4 Rc8

19. Bb2 Nb6 20. Nd2?!

White had something more resilient with 20. Nd3, attacking the b4-pawn and preparing to bring the rook to c1.

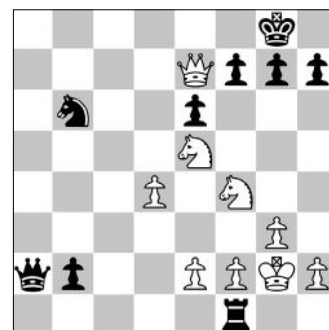
20. ... Ne4! 21. Nf3 Nc3 22. Bxc3 Rxc3

23. Qb1 b3 24. Ne5

White tries for some trickery, but Black plays flawlessly from here.

24. ... Qa2 25. Qe4 b2 26. Qb7 Rc1!

27. Qxe7 Rxf1+ 28. Kg2



28. ... Qa8+!

Great geometry! The queen gains a tempo to save Black's own king.

29. d5 Qf8 30. d6 b1=Q, White resigned.

With the victory, UTRGV A joined Mizzou A at 5/6. Webster A and St. Louis University A drew all their games, allowing Webster to clinch clear first with 5½/6, while UTRGV A and Mizzou A finished second and third on tiebreaks, respectively.

Meanwhile, the shocker of the last round came when University of Toronto A took down UTD A. This allowed Toronto to join SLU A at 4½/6 points, though SLU took the fourth spot in the President's Cup on tiebreaks. That just goes to show that although universities with chess scholarship programs have dominated Pan-Ams in recent years, other schools can still give them a run for their money.

Other Sections

UTD had better luck in the Under 2000 section, with their D team taking first with 5½/6. University of the Pacific took first in the Under 1400 section, also with 5½/6.

I think the Pan-American Intercollegiate Championships will only grow in popularity in the coming years. Whether a university sends six teams or throws together one team of people at the last minute, everyone has something to play for. The recent addition of the Under 2000 and Under 1400 sections has created spaces for teams that may not have higher-ranked players to become more competitive. ♠

For more games from the 2026 Pan-American Intercollegiate Championship, visit the organizer's website: www.chessweekend.com/results.

Friendly Blitz?

When no one was looking, these two giants let it rip.

BY **BRUCE PANDOLFINI**

G

RANDMASTERS PAUL KERES (1916-1975) and David Bronstein (1924-2006) were two of the all-time greats, and the record shows these icons contesting something like 30 competitive, serious games against each other over the years. But what we don't know is how often they played fun blitz against each other as they sat around between rounds at world-class events.

We do have a score of one such encounter — a wild, possibly rare blitz game which certainly ends in fireworks.

KING'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED (C33)

GM Paul Keres

GM David Bronstein

Blitz game, Zurich, 1965

1. e4 e5 2. f4 exf4 3. Nc3 Qh4+ 4. Ke2



Now ensure that the position above is set up on your chessboard. As you play through the remaining moves in this game, use a piece of paper to cover the article, exposing Black's next move only after trying to guess it. If you guess correctly, give yourself the par

score. Sometimes points are also awarded for second-best moves, and there may even be bonus points — or deductions — for other moves and variations. Note that ** means that Black's move is on the next line. **

4. Par Score 6 d5
This active counter is the best move. Black hopes to take advantage of White's precarious looking king.

5. Nxd5
By taking with the knight, White keeps the e-file closed and threatens a forking check. **

5. Par Score 5 Nf6
Not the best, though fits in with Bronstein's active sensibility. Accept *full credit* for either 5. ... Bg4+ or 5. ... Nc6.

6. Nxf6+
Keres opts to trade down, hoping to defuse Black's planned assault. But 6. Nxc7+ was certainly reasonable. **

6. Par Score 4 gxf6
Once again, this is simply Bronstein being Bronstein. Objectively, 6. ... Qxf6 was more prudent and earns *full credit*.

7. Nf3
An expected development. White attacks Black's queen. **

7. Par Score 5 Bg4
For the moment, the pin avoids having to move the black queen.

8. d3
White might have tried 8. Kd3, with the idea

of following it up by c2-c3. **

8. Par Score 5 Bh6
You may accept *full credit* for 8. ... Nc6.

9. Qe1
To be sure, White would love to trade queens, with decent endgame possibilities. **

9. Par Score 5 Qh5
Black retains his queen for the attack.

10. Qb4
White wants to activate his queen, but this move is risky. Safer would have been 10. Kd1. **

10. Par Score 5 Nc6
Bronstein gains a tempo on the queen, with an eye on the center.

11. Qxb7
The a8-rook now hangs with check. A unclear position has emerged, with both sides menacing mayhem. **

11. Par Score 5 Bxf3+
This capture makes sense, fixing a target at f3.

12. gxf3 **

12. Par Score 5 Nd4+
And now Black zones in on that f3-weakness.

13. Kd2
Keres hopes to find refuge on the queen-side. **

13. Par Score 5 Nxf3+

ABCS OF CHESS

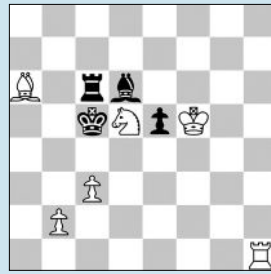
THESE PROBLEMS ARE all related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 63.

MARCH EXERCISE:

It's your move. Your opponent presents you with a menacing position. You come up with a move that seems to deal with the impending threats. And your move does work. But unless you have no time left, don't play it without looking for another move that does as much or even more. The great champion Emanuel Lasker advised us: "When you see a good move, look for a better one."

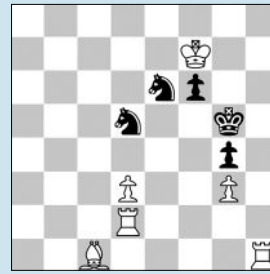
PROBLEM 1

Mating net



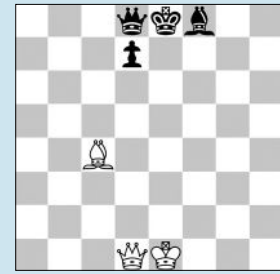
PROBLEM 2

Mating net



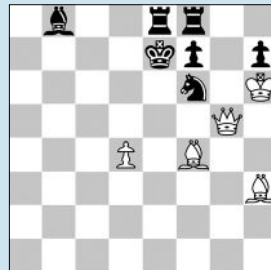
PROBLEM 3

Mating net



PROBLEM 4

Mating net



PROBLEM 5

Mating net



PROBLEM 6

Mating net



14. Kc3

We can't say that White boldly goes where no man (or King) has gone before, but it is seeming more and more like the final frontier. **

14. Par Score 5

Qc5+

Again, White's move is forced.

15. Kb3 **

15. Par Score 4

Nd4+

The king hunt continues, and White's move is once again forced. Even stronger is 15. ... 0-0, threatening to bring either rook to b8 (2 bonus points), but we shouldn't be too critical of a blitz game.

16. Ka4 **

16. Par Score 6

0-0

This is stronger than 16. ... Qxc2+ (4 points partial credit).

17. c3

White guards against 17. ... Qxc2+. Here 17. Rg1+ doesn't really change much. **

17. Par Score 7

Qb6

Now it's Black seeking a queen trade — but this time with an attacking idea!

18. Qxb6

On 18. Qd5, there follows 18. ... Qa6+ 19. Qa5 Qc6+ 20. Ka3 Nc2+ (1 bonus point). **

18. Par Score 5

axb6+

Black opens the a-file for attack against the white king.

19. Kb4 **

19. Par Score 8

Ra4+

What? You may accept 5 points partial credit for the pedestrian 19. ... Nc2+, which clearly wins after grabbing the Exchange. Bronstein, on the other hand, had another idea in mind.

20. Kxa4 **

20. Par Score 5

Ra8+

What? Weren't we just here, with another rook still on the board?

21. Kb4 **

21. Par Score 5

Bf8+

So this is the point. Bronstein wanted to clear f8 for a bishop check without losing time.

22. Kc4 **

22. Par Score 5

b5+

Wow! This check forces mate. Whether White plays 23. Kxd4 or 23. Kd5, Black has 23. ... Rd8 mate. So ...

23. White resigned. ♠



POSITION AFTER 22. ... b5+

SOLITAIRE CHESS SCORING:

Total your score to determine your approximate rating below

Total Score	Approx. Rating
95+	2400+
81-90	2200-2399
66-80	2000-2199
51-65	1800-1999
36-50	1600-1799
21-35	1400-1599
06-20	1200-1399
0-05	under 1200

Opposites Attract

Opposite-colored bishop endgames abounded at the U.S. Championship.

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN



WE SEE A OPPOSITE-COLORED bishops a lot in games where the players trade a lot of stuff and don't make anything inter-

esting happen. But the 2025 U.S. Championship saw a lot of opposite-colored bishop endings where the result was very much in doubt.

In our first game, a slightly different way of liquidating could have made a big difference.

FAIREST TRADE

GM Awonder Liang (2779)

GM Abhimanyu Mishra (2747)

U.S. Ch (1), St. Louis, 10.12.2025



WHITE TO MOVE

The presence of extra pieces complicates the issue.

33. h4?

Making luft is useful but a bit too slow here. Awonder might well have rejected 33. Bc4! because after 33. ... Ne6! (not 33. ... Rf5 34. Rd7 and Black is all tied up) Black forces a trade of rooks, which is not necessarily fa-

vorable for White. But after 34. Bxd5 Nxc7 35. Bc4 the Black knight is much more passive than before, leaving White with great hopes of steadily improving his position.

33. ... Re5 34. Rd7

The computer advocates regrouping with 34. Rc1, which is not at all intuitive!

34. ... Re7! 35. Rxe7

Trading knights would be illogical, as their presence can mitigate the drawish effects of the opposite-colored bishops. After 35. Rxd4 Rxa7 Black will neutralize the queenside and perhaps organize an attack on f2 as well.

35. ... Bxe7 36. Nc8

In this case it is White's knight that struggles to get free.

36. ... Bd8 37. a4 Kf8 38. Bc4 Nc6 39. b5 Ne5 40. Bd5 Nd3 41. Be4 Nc5 42. Bc2 Ke8 43. g3 Nb7!?

Quite a clever way to remove any danger. White's knight will be trapped into an exchange.

44. Na7 Na5 45. Be4 Bc7 46. f4 Bb8 47.

Nc6 Nxc6 48. bxc6 Ke7 49. Kg2 Bc7 50. h5 White has nothing to work with. One dramatic drawish path is 50. Kf3 Kd6 51. g4 f5 52. gxf5 gxf5 53. Bxf5 Kxc6 54. Bxh7 b5 55. Be4+ Kc5 56. axb5 Kxb5 and Black's king heads back the other way.

50. ... f5 51. Bd5 gxh5 52. Kh3 Bd8 53. Bg8 h6 54. Bc4 Kd6 55. Bb5 Bf6 56. Bd3 Kxc6 57. Bxf5 Kd6 58. Bb1 Ke7 59. Bc2 Kf8 60. Bb1 Kg7 61. Bc2 Kf8 62. Bb1 Kg7 63. Bc2 Kf8 64. Bb1 Kg7, draw.

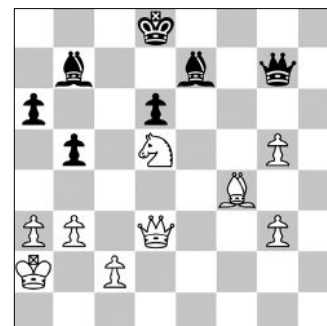
Awonder would have better fortune converting toward the end of the tournament.

TOO MANY PAWNS

GM Awonder Liang (2779)

GM Ray Robson (2733)

U.S. Ch (10), St. Louis, 10.23.2025



WHITE TO MOVE

One should be wary of trading minor pieces for an endgame with bishops of opposite colors, but here it's the most straightforward way; White will just have too many pawns.

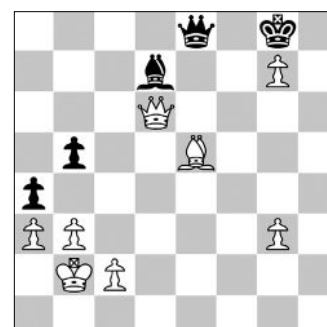
50. Nxe7! Qxe7 51. g6!

Awonder passes on further liquidation, though 51. Qxd6+ Qxd6 52. Bxd6 Be4 would only be a temporary blockade. With the g-pawn so advanced, Ray has to jump through hopes to keep the game going. White can probably trade queens later under even more favorable circumstances.

51. ... Ke8

After 51. ... Kd7 52. g7 wins on the spot.

52. Bxd6 Qe4 53. g7 Kf7 54. Qc3 Kg8 55. Qc7 Bc6 56. Kb1 Qe8 57. Be5 Bd7 58. Kb2 a5 59. Qd6 a4



60. bxa4!?

60. Qd5+ was a bit more straightforward, as 60. ... Be6 (if 60. ... Qe6 61. Qxe6+ Bxe6 62. bxa4) 61. Qh1 would be conclusive. Awon-

der's method works just as well: He calmly creates another passed pawn, confident that Black can never get a checking angle on his king with the g7-pawn demanding defense from Black's pieces.

60. ... bxa4 61. c4 Be6 62. Kc3 Qf7 63. Qd8+ Kh7 64. Qf6 Qd7 65. c5

Forcing mate with 65. g4! would have been an aesthetic finish.

65. ... Bg8 66. Bf4 Qh3 67. Qh4+, Black resigned.

White's passed pawns are way too far apart for a successful blockade.

Technically Correct

Our featured game is a technical masterpiece from a young grandmaster who is moving swiftly up the ranks.

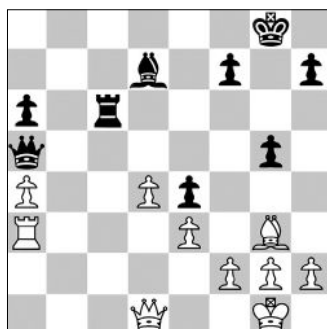
QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED (D35)

GM Andy Woodward (2695)

GM Hans Moke Niemann (2817)

U.S. Ch (8), St. Louis, 10.20.2025

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 e6 3. c4 d5 4. Nc3 Nbd7 5. Bf4 Bb4 6. cxd5 exd5 7. e3 c5 8. Bd3 c4 9. Bc2 Qa5 10. 0-0 0-0 11. a4 a6 12. Ne5 Bxc3 13. bxc3 Qxc3 14. Nxd7 Bxd7 15. Qb1 Qa5 16. Qxb7 Rfc8 17. Rfb1 Qc3 18. Qb2 Ne4 19. Qc1 Qa5 20. Rb7 Bc6 21. Rb2 c3 22. Rb3 Bd7 23. Raa3 g5 24. Bg3 Rc6 25. Bxe4 dxe4 26. Rxc3 Rac8 27. Rxc6 Rxc6 28. Qd1



This one is especially dynamic with queens and rooks on the board. White has a solid extra pawn, but Black has excellent potential for a blockade. The pawn on g5 signals some danger for the Black king, though in the short term White has some tidying up to do.

28. ... Bg4!

Hans takes aim at the weak back rank.

29. f3 Bf5?

But this is the wrong follow-up, seriously complicating Black's defense. White could advance unfettered in the center after 29. ... exf3 30. gxf3, but opening up White's king would provide real counterplay. In queen and bishop endings, the more vulnerable king can be a major factor.

30. h3! Qd5

The ship has sailed for 30. ... exf3, as White has 31. Qxf3.

31. f4!

Andy prevents any play on the central light squares for Black, while retaining his own possibilities on the dark squares.

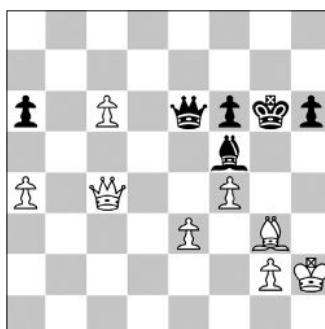
31. ... h6 32. Rb3 Kg7 33. Rb8 Qd6 34. d5 f6 35. Kh2!

The threat of 36. fxg5 forces Black's hand, creating a more dangerous distant passed c-pawn.

35. ... Qxb8 36. dxc6 Qc8 37. Qd6 g4?

Perhaps played out of desperation, as this costs another pawn. Black needed to wait with a move like 37. ... Qe6. White cannot afford to swap queens yet, but after 38. Qc5 White should be able to combine the advance of his c-pawn with threats to the kingside after maneuvering his bishop to c3.

38. hxg4 Bxg4 39. Qe7+ Kg6 40. Qxe4+ Bf5 41. Qc4 Qe6



42. Qxe6!

The upshot of winning the e4-pawn was that the presence of queens may have given Black potential to attack on the long diagonal. But White now has potential for two passed pawns, and Woodward correctly works out that Black will not be able to blockade them.

42. ... Bxe6 43. e4 f5

Black fights for space. After 43. ... Bc8 44.

f5+ Kf7 45. a5 Black is just waiting for the ax to come down.

44. exf5+!

More straightforward than 44. e5. Protected passed pawns are lovely, but in opposite-colored bishop endings, separating your pawn majorities is often the best strategy.

44. ... Kxf5 45. Kh3! Bd5 46. c7 Be6 47.

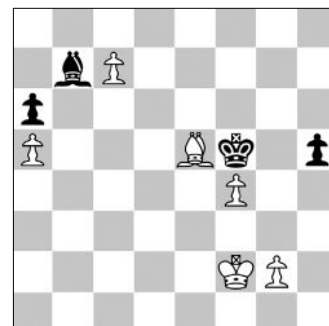
Kh4 Kg6 48. Bf2 h5 49. Bd4 Bc8 50. Be5

With the bishop in a good location protecting everything, White just needs to infiltrate with his king.

50. ... Bf5 51. a5 Bc8 52. Kg3 Bb7

52. ... Kf5 53. Kf3 Bb7+ 54. Ke3! would be the same.

53. Kf2 Kf5



54. Ke3!

Planning is critical in endgames. Delaying king activation to safeguard the pawn first would have dire consequences — 54. g3?? Ke4! would be a rude awakening, as Black will be able to permanently wall off the opponent's king.

54. ... h4 55. Kd4 Ke6 56. Kc5 Kd7 57. f5

Bxg2

The passed h-pawn will not be much help, with White's bishop ideally placed for attack and defense.

58. f6 Bh3

Or 58. ... Bb7 59. Kb6 Bc8 60. Ka7 Ke6 61. Kb8 Bd7 62. c8=Q Bxc8 63. Kxc8 h3 64. Bc7 Kxf6 65. Kb7 when White wins with the "wrong" rook pawn.

59. c8=Q+!, Black resigned.

59. ... Kxc8 60. f7 promotes. Not the last time we will see Andy Woodward's iron technique in these pages! ♠

For more on the U.S. Championship, visit new.uschess.org/2025-us-championship-and-us-womens-championship.

Fischer's Published Legacy

Donaldson's latest focuses on the champ's writing.

BY IM JOHN WATSON

INTERNATIONAL MASTER John Donaldson has filled a wide variety of roles in the chess world — chessplayer, lecturer, researcher, historian, member of the USCF Policy Board, director at the San Francisco Mechanics Chess Club, U.S. team trainer and captain for the Olympiad (15 times) and the World Team Championship, and more. For all that, he is probably best known as a chess writer, having authored an impressive number of theoretical and biographical books going back to the 1980s.

One of John's specialties is the life and career of Bobby Fischer, about whom he has written numerous books, notably *A Legend on the Road* (1994), which covers Fischer's 1964 simultaneous tour, and *The Unknown Bobby Fischer*, with Eric Tangborn (1999). The July 2021 issue of *Chess Life* (available for free in the digital archives at uschess.org) has a large amount of material by and about John, along with excerpts from his masterpiece, *Bobby Fischer and his World* (2000). I consider that book the best and most important book written about the American world champion. I admit that to some extent that's a prejudiced view, because the book is full of references to the American chess scene with which I grew up and has a nostalgic element that younger readers may not relate to. Nevertheless, no other Fischer book combines well-annotated games with so much biographical detail and historical context.

Fischer fans and lovers of chess history will be delighted by Donaldson's new work, *Inside the Mind of Bobby Fischer: Revisiting His Writings and Annotations*. The book's primary purpose, in Donaldson's words, is to "gather all of Fischer's articles, annotations, and

miscellaneous writings in one place" and to "take a fresh look and critically examine Fischer's writings." The book does that by presenting 116 games, the vast majority annotated by Fischer, with limited, judicious commentary by Donaldson, who might update a variation's status or note analytical improvements when they are important. It could be very valuable for a young player to study these games both to understand how a great player thinks, and to be exposed to a broad set of positions that are still usable though not currently fashionable.

John also includes a trove of details about Fischer's life and circumstances, with letters, notes, and accounts by Bobby and his friends, helpers, and rivals. There are also plentiful short sketches of his opponents, acquaintances, and other contemporaneous figures from the chess community. Donaldson gives detailed descriptions of leading players of the time, many of whom are nearly forgotten now; in Chapter 3 alone, for example, he talks about Arthur Feuerstein, Herbert Seidman, Sidney Bernstein, Hans Berliner, George Kramer, Attilio di Camillo, Abe Turner, and others.

Supplying historical context in this way is something that Donaldson also did, to an even greater degree, in *Bobby Fischer and his World*; it gives these books a human touch that complements his extensive research work. Much of Fischer's writing is previously unpublished, and the stories, interviews, and trivia that Donaldson unearths also supplement the historical record.

Fischer's writings were mainly limited to the period 1958-1971 — for example, his magazine columns, and the books *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess* (1959), *Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess* (1966), *My 60 Memorable Games*

(1969), and *Chess Meets of the Century* (1971), so the material is largely, but not exclusively, concentrated in this time period.

The magazine columns serve as a reminder of a past era. Donaldson comments that "Today it seems hard to believe how many national chess magazines were published in the United States in the early 1960s. Despite the U.S. Chess Federation having only around 5,000 members there was room for *Chess Life* (the USCF house organ), *Chess Review* (Al Horowitz's magazine), *The American Chess Bulletin* (Herman Helms' publication that started in 1904!), *Leaves of Chess*, *The Chess Correspondent* (devoted primarily to correspondence chess), the excellent but short-lived *Chess World*, Larry Evans' *American Chess Quarterly*, and a number of regional and state publications." Fischer wrote articles for most of these; his two regular columns were written for *Chess Life* from June 1963 thru December 1964, and for *Boys' Life* from December 1966 to January 1970.

Fischer's famous article "A Bust to the King's Gambit" was published in *American Chess Quarterly* in 1961. I had never read the original article; I found it eye-opening. Donaldson puts Fischer's analysis under a modern microscope. In the following analytical excerpt, commentary without quotation marks (or marked 'jw') is my own.

1. e4 e5 2. f4

Fischer: "The King's Gambit has lost popularity; but not sympathy. Analysts treat it with kid gloves and seem reluctant to demonstrate an outright refutation ... To this day the opening has been analyzed romantically-not scientifically. Moderns seem to share the same unconscious attitude that caused the old-timers to curse stubborn

Steinitz: ‘He took the beauty out of chess.’”

This is an insightful diagnosis of decades of writing about 2. f4. Fischer is certainly correct. Judging from his other writing, I suspect that his original prose was edited by the magazine; at any rate, the thoughts are spot-on.

2. ... exf4 3. Nf3 d6!

Fischer: “This is the key to a troublesome position, a high-class ‘waiting move.’” He goes on to explain why 3. ... g5 and 3. ... h6 are less accurate.

4. Bc4

Donaldson notes that John Shaw in his massive King’s Gambit tome suggests 4. d4 g5 5. g3!, not considered by Fischer. Then 5. ... g4 6. Nh4 f3 has scored about evenly in practice, with a typical line being 7. h3 (7. Nc3!?) 7. ... h5 8. Nc3 Be7 9. Be3 Bxh4 10. gxh4 Qxh4+ 11. Kd2, a position which has led to two draws.

4. ... h6!



5. d4

5. h4 is the modern move, played by today’s top players but not mentioned by Fischer. I see at least six games by Nepomniatchi as White (who would think it?). One critical line is 5. ... Nf6 6. Nc3 Nc6 7. d4 Nh5 8. Nd5 (Nepo has also played 8. a3) 8. ... Be6 9. Qd3. This is very unclear after, for example, 9. ... g5 10. hxc3 hxc3 11. Bd2 g4! 12. Ng5! Bg7! 13. Nxe6 fxe6 14. Nxf4 Nxf4 15. Rxh8+ Bxh8 16. Bxf4 Bxd4 17. Bxe6 Qh4+ 18. Qg3 Qxg3+ 19. Bxg3 Bxb2 20. Rb1 Bc3+ 21. Kf2.

5. ... g5 6. 0-0

Black has an edge after 6. h4 Bg7 7. Nc3 Nc6! 8. Qd3 Bg4.

6. ... Bg7 7. c3?!

Fischer: “Necessary to protect the queen pawn. 7. g3 is always met by ... g4.” That’s not bad at all, but engines show that 7.g3 is even better met by 7. ... Bh3! 8.Rf2 Nc6! with a clear advantage for Black.

7. ... Nc6

A very strong move. Fischer offers another suggestion: “I think 7. ... Ne7 is best because there is no reason why Black should not strive to castle K-side, e.g., 8. g3 d5! (jw: or 8. ... Bh3 9. Rf2 Nd7) 9. exd5 fxc3 10. hxc3 0-0 (jw: ? 10. ... Nxd5! with a clear advantage) 11. Qb3 (jw: ? 11. Nbd2! is equal, according to my engine) 11. ... Qd6 12. Kg2 Nf5 wins.”

8. Qb3 Qe7

8. ... Qd7! is also strong.

9. h4 Nf6

Or 9. ... g4 10. Nh2 f3! 11. gxf3 g3, winning.

10. hxc3 hxc3 11. Nxc3

Here, rather than Fischer’s 11. ... Nxe4?, when Donaldson gives 12. Nxe4 Qxe4 13. Bxf7+ Kd8 14. Qd5 leading to a draw in one game, John suggests the following blow:

11. ... Nxd4! 12. cxd4 Nxe4

And Black’s position is simply overwhelming.

All things considered, a truly remarkable piece of work by the 18-year-old, which has influenced King’s Gambit theory to this day. It’s especially impressive that Fischer had the understanding and imagination to realize that the almost unknown 3. ... d6! would solve the particular problems that arise in the far more popular 3. ... g5 lines, as well as in those after 3. ... h6.

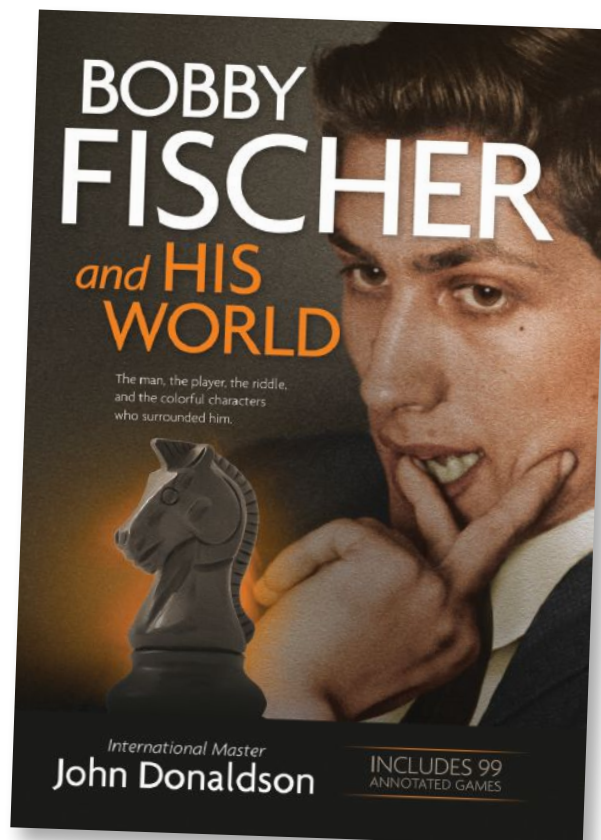
Donaldson carefully reviews each game, and we find theoretical surprises in many lines, but especially in the 19th- and early 20th-century openings that Fischer was fond of (particularly during his early years when he was doing his writing). Most authors would surely have ignored the opening of the following game, which Donaldson shows is still relevant (the notes are mine unless otherwise stated):

PHILIDOR DEFENSE (C41)

Robert J. Fischer
William Lombardy
West Orange, 1956

1. e4 e5

My generation grew up thinking that the (only?) way to get to the Philidor main lines



was 1. ... d6 2. d4 Nf6 3. Nc3 e5 4. Nf3 Nbd7 5. Bc4 Be7 6. 0-0 0-0, which Carlsen as Black played recently against Caruana and Vachier-Lagrave. Other leading grandmasters, such as Gukesh, are using the line frequently these days.

2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 Nd7 4. Bc4 c6

Trying to get to the classical Philidor. Much weaker are 4. ... Ngf6? 5. dxe5 Nxe5 6. Nxe5 dxe5 7. Bxf7+ and 4. ... Be7?? 5. dxe5 dxe5 (5. ... Nxe5 6. Nxe5 dxe5 7. Qh5) 6. Qd5!.

5. Nc3 Be7 6. 0-0!?

Allowing the main-line Philidor. Here the established solution for a century or so has been 6. dxe5! dxe5 (6. ... Nxe5? 7. Nxe5 dxe5 8. Qh5) 7. Ng5! with White coming out on top. The eagle-eyed Donaldson decides to look further and analyzes 7. ... Nh6!



This is hardly ever played. Instead, the normal 7. ... Bxg5 8. Qh5 Qe7 9. Qxg5 may be a bit better for Black than traditional theory indicates, but White will retain two bishops and a lasting advantage. After 7. ... Nh6!, 8. Ne6 is the supposed refutation, usually given '!' (8. Qh5 0-0 9. a4! is arguably White's best try, but it's just a small edge at best). Donaldson analyses 8. ... fxe6 9. Bxh6 Nb6! 10. Qh5+ Kf8 11. Bb3 gxh6 12. Rd1 Qc7 13. Qxh6+ Ke8 and here, with ... Be7-f8 in the air, White has nothing better than 14. Qh5+ Kf8 15. Qh6+. Maybe the move order 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 d6 is alive after all!

6. ... h6!?

This probably deserves a '?!', but it served to gain a point against young Bobby. One idea is to play ... g7-g5 if the opportunity arises. 6. ... Ngf6 is the main line.

7. h3

Donaldson points that 7. dxe5! dxe5 8. Nd5! aims to win the two bishops. This favors White, since 8. ... cxd5 9. Qxd5 is too strong.

7. ... Qc7 8. a4 Nf8 9. Qe2 Ng6 10. Be3 Nf6

11. Ne1?! 0-0 12. dxe5 dxe5 13. Nd3 Bd6 14. Rfd1 Qe7 15. f3 Nh5 16. a5 Nhf4 17. Nxf4 Nxf4

Here, rather than the strong 18. Qf2!, Fischer played 18. Bxf4? and after 18. ... exf4 Black had a large advantage due to the bishop pair and White's weak dark squares and somewhat vulnerable king. Lombardy went on to win.

The final few chapters of the book offer a variety of material not published elsewhere. There are two interviews which Fischer gave about six months before the 1972 Spassky match, one by Victor Bronsd and one by Lubosh Kavalek. In the latter, Fischer reveals his tastes in music (and chess books), and in both he appears supremely confident that he will win the match. In contrast, Donaldson intersperses a 1979 letter from Spassky to Nathan Divinsky in which Spassky describes having been surprised in 1971 to find that he was playing more weakly than just a few years earlier, when he won the championship. Donaldson unearths assorted interesting details about Fischer's thorough preparation for Spassky. There are letters and notes by Fischer himself, as

well as those by friends and chess officials.

Inside the Mind of Bobby Fischer will be a must-read for fans and students of Fischer, as well as those interested in the story of chess in the Fischer era. I think that study of games collections has taken on greater importance in the age of engines, databases, and electronic products. When young players study games collections, they will understandably choose books by or about leading contemporary players, and that is as it should be. But they can also get a unique insight from investigating the games of players from the past, and this book might give a different and useful perspective to those who have grown up with modern play. ♠

Donaldson, John. Inside the Mind of Bobby Fischer: Revisiting His Writings and Annotations. Siles Press, 2025. 402 pp.; ISBN 9781890085285. \$26.95, USCF Sales Product Code B0011SI.

Donaldson, John. Bobby Fischer and His World. Siles Press, 2020. 645 pp.; ISBN 9781890085193. \$29.95; USCF Sales Product Code B0009SI.

2026 National Elementary K-6 Championships

US CHESS May 1-3, 2026 | Baltimore, MD



2026 National Middle School K-8 Championship

US CHESS May 15-17, 2026 | Round Rock, TX



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

2026 National High School K-12 Championship

US CHESS March 27-29, 2026 | Chicago, IL



MAKE → YOUR → MOVE

BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

▶ THIS MONTH'S PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM GAMES PLAYED at the World Rapid Championship, in Doha, Qatar, in December 2025. Take your time and don't get discouraged if you fail to find the right moves right away.

The puzzles start off easy and gradually become more difficult. It is worth noting that "easy" is a relative term. If you are new to the game, the easy ones can also represent a challenge.

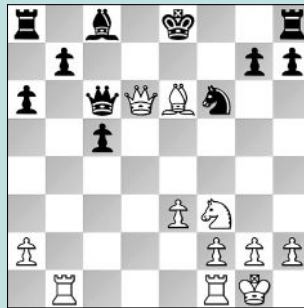
Try first to solve the puzzle before reading the text at the bottom of the page. If you're unsuccessful, play through the solution, but return to the puzzle in a week or two to see whether you can now solve it. That way, you expand your tactical vision and you'll be more likely to spot tactics as they occur in your own games. Whatever you do, do not use an engine to solve the puzzles; you will only cheat yourself out of improving your game. Solutions are on page 63. ♠

TACTIC 1.



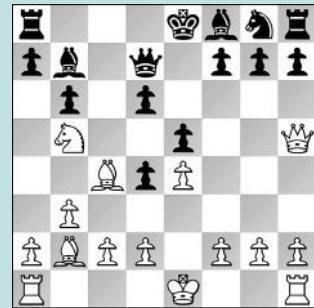
WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 2.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 3.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 4.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 5.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 6.



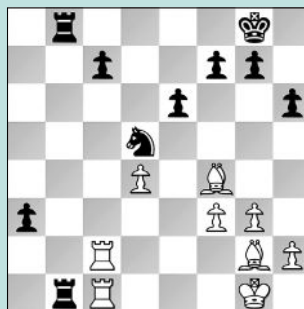
WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 7.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 8.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



BLACK TO MOVE

Position 1: ROYAL ATTRACTION

Position 2: SHORT MOVES MATTER

Position 3: UNFORTUNATE COORDINATION

Position 4: OPEN DOORS

Position 5: FORGET PROTECTION

Position 6: DELIBERATE ASSAULT

Position 7: ATTACK LIKE YOU DON'T CARE

Position 8: SAVE YOURSELF

Position 9: DEEP STAB!

TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL EVENTS & BIDS NOW ON USCHES.ORG Effective with the November 2020 *Chess Life*, we have removed the National Events and Bids page that has traditionally been part of our TLA section. This information continues to be available here:

new.uschess.org/national-events-calendar

For complete details on individual events, please visit [new.uschess.org/node/\[TLA ID\]](http://new.uschess.org/node/[TLA ID]). You will find the event's unique five-digit TLA ID at the top of each TLA.

Nationals

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

21st Annual KCF All-Girls National Championships

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — IL TLA# 52639
Site: Hyatt Regency McCormick Place Address: 2233 S Dr Martin Luther King Jr Dr., Chicago, IL 60616 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Renaissance Knights Chess Foundation • david.heiser@renaissanceknights.org • allgirls.knights.org

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2026 National Open

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540
Site: Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino Address: 3000 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, NV 89109 Overall Prize Fund: \$125,000 GP Pts: 200 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Vegas Chess Festival • vegaschess@gmail.com • 702-930-9550 • vegaschess-festival.com

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

2026 U.S. Women's Open

JUNE 10-11, 2026 — NV TLA# 53257
Site: Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino Address: 3000 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, NV 89109 Overall Prize Fund: \$5,000 GP Pts: 60 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Vegas Chess Festival • vegaschess@gmail.com • 702-930-9550 • vegaschess-festival.com

Grand Prix

The Grand Prix point totals reflect all rated event information as of February 27, 2026, for the 2026 Grand Prix. These standings are updated regularly, but should be considered unofficial. Visit ratings.uschess.org/grand-prix/standings for up-to-date information.

2026 US CHESS GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

Name	State/Ctry	Pts
1. GM JIANCHAO ZHOU	MA	72.00
2. GM JOSE GABRIEL CARDOSO	FOR	64.00

3. GM FRANCESCO SONIS	FOR	48.00
4. IM ERIC CHANG LIU	TX	34.00
5. EMMANUEL CARTER	NC	31.00
6. GM VLADIMIR BELOUS	FOR	29.00
7. SULLIVAN MCCONNELL	CO	28.00
8. GM MARK HEIMANN	CA	28.00
9. GM NEURIS DELGADO RAMIREZ	FOR	26.00
10. ANSH SHAH	NJ	24.00

Address: 2900 Parkway Boulevard, Kissimmee, FL 34747 Overall Prize Fund: \$17,000 GP Pts: 80 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

3rd Annual Dragon Knight Chess St. Patrick's Grand Prix

MARCH 15, 2026 — NC TLA# 54230
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,228 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

30th annual Mid-America Open

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO TLA# 52913
Site: Clayton Plaza Hotel St. Louis-Clayton Address: 7750 Carondelet Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105 Overall Prize Fund: \$20,000 GP Pts: 120 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX

2026 Spring Southeastern FIDE

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — NC TLA# 54030
Site: Hilton Garden Inn - Southpark Address: 4808 Sharon Road, Charlotte, NC 28210 Overall Prize Fund: \$5,000 GP Pts: 30 FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Charlotte Chess Center • events@charlottechesscenter.org • charlottechesscenter.org/events

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

12th annual Mid-America Open Blitz Championship

MARCH 21, 2026 — MO TLA# 52947
Site: Clayton Plaza Hotel St. Louis-Clayton Address: 7750 Carondelet Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105 Overall Prize Fund: \$500 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess National Goof Off Day Grand Prix

MARCH 22, 2026 — NC TLA# 54859
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,228 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess World Piano Day Grand Prix

MARCH 29, 2026 — NC TLA# 54860
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall

2026 Awards

\$12,500 in cash prizes

First Prize \$5,000

2nd: \$2,500	3rd: \$1,000
4th: \$900	5th: \$800
6th: \$700	7th: \$600
8th: \$500	9th: \$300
10th: \$200	

The Grand Prix continues in 2026. For more information visit new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program.

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

33rd annual Western Class Championships

MARCH 6-8, 2026 — CA-S TLA# 52914
Site: Hilton Orange County Airport Hotel Address: 18800 Macarthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612 Overall Prize Fund: \$20,000 GP Pts: 120 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

10th annual Western Class Blitz Championship

MARCH 7, 2026 — CA-S TLA# 52915
Site: Hilton Orange County Airport Hotel Address: 18800 Macarthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612 Overall Prize Fund: \$500 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess Start of Daylight Savings Grand Prix

MARCH 8, 2026 — NC TLA# 54229
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,228 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

23rd annual Southern Class Championships

MARCH 13-15, 2026 — FL TLA# 54208
Site: Delta Hotels By Marriott Orlando Celebration

2026 - 13th Annual Reno-Larry Evans Memorial Open

Apr 3-5 & Apr 4-5 (3-day & 2-day schedules)

6SS; 6 Sect; Open-FIDE Rated; A Weikel Tourney

NEW LOCATION: J RESORT CASINO HOTEL, RENO, NV

Hotel Rates: Sun-Thu. \$92.66; Fri-Sat. \$149.41

Hotel Reservation: 1-866-386-7829, Group Code CHESS 42026

PRIZE FUND \$27,500 (b/275) Gtd. \$17,000

A great tournament - Yes!... But so much more...

IM John Donaldson: "A Weikel Tournament is like a chess festival!"

Just Look! Wed.: GM Kudrin Clock Simul/Analysis! (only \$30)

Thu.: 6-7:15P Premier Chess Lecturer IM Donaldson (FREE)

7:30P GM TBA - Simul (\$20); 7:30P Blitz Tourney (\$25)

Sat.: 3-4:30P IM Donaldson FREE Game/Position Analysis

Plus: Trophies, Sets & boards provided, Wall charts,

5 Demo boards, Entry under \$195!

Player: "I've played all over the US; this is the best organized

chess tournament I've seen."

INFO: Email wackyykl@aol.com or Web: www.renochess.org

SEE TLA on page 56

PLEASE NOTE

DEADLINE FOR PRINT TLA SUBMISSIONS

TLAs appearing in *Chess Life* must be uploaded online on the 10th, two months prior to the issue cover date in which the ad is to appear. (For example, October TLAs must be uploaded no later than August 10th.) TLAs uploaded past this deadline cannot be published without special approval by US Chess.

The Atlantic City Open— A New CCA Event!

April 1-5, 2-5 or 3-5, 2026 (Easter Weekend), Tropicana Casino & Resort

\$40,000 Guaranteed Prizes with GM and IM norms possible!

Open Section: 9 rounds, Apr 1-5, 40/80, SD/30, d30, FIDE rated.

Other sections: 7 rounds, Apr 2-5 or 3-5, 40/80, SD/30; d30 (3-day option, rds 1-2 G/60 d10). U2200 & U2000 Sections also FIDE rated.

Tropicana Casino And Resort Hotel, 2831 Boardwalk, Atlantic City, NJ 08401. Free self-parking.

In 7 sections:

Open: \$5000-2500-1500-1200-1000-800-500, clear or tiebreak 1st \$200 bonus, top FIDE U2300/Unr \$2000-1000. 200 Grand Prix Points.

Under 2200, Under 2000, Under 1800 Sections: each \$2000-1000-600-500-300-200.

Under 1600 Section: \$1600-800-500-300-200-100.

Under 1400 Section: \$1200-600-400-300-200-100.

Under 1100: \$800-400-300-200.

FIDE ratings used in Open, Apr. **official USCF** in others. Unofficial or USCF Online Regular ratings usually used if otherwise unrated in Under 2200/below. USCF memb. required: see chessevents.us for special rates.

Mixed Doubles Bonus Prizes: Best male+female combined 2-player team scores in Rounds 1-7 among all sections: \$1200-600-400-300. Teams must average under 2200, may play in different sections, register before both begin round 2.

Unrated limits: \$200 U1100, \$400 U1400, \$500 U1600. \$800 U1800. **Cannot play** below USCF Online Regular Rating - 100 points **Reentry** \$100, except Open.

U1400 through U2200 Section EF: \$188 at chessaction.com by 3/30, \$210 later or at site until 1 hr before rd 1. **U1100 Section** \$80 less.

Open Section EF: \$218 online at chessaction.com by 3/30, \$240 later or at site until 6 pm Wed (\$500 extra in Open Section unless 2200+ USCF or 2000+ FIDE). US IMs/WGMs, foreign FIDE 2000+ in Open: \$100 less, GMs, foreign IMs/WGMs in Open: **free**.

Seniors 65/over in Under 1400/up: \$50 less. No mail entries

Foreign titled minimum prize guarantees: see chessevents.us.

5-day Schedule (Open Section only). reg. ends Wed 6 pm, rounds Wed 7 pm, Thu 1 pm & 7 pm, Fri 11 & 5, Sat 10 & 4, Sun 10 & 3:30.

4-day (no Open Section). reg. ends Thu 6 pm, round Thu 7 pm, Fri 11 & 5, Sat 10 & 4, Sun 10 & 3:30.

3-day (no Open Section). reg. ends Fri 10 am, rds Fri 11, 2 & 5, merges with 4-day Fri at 5 pm.

Half-point byes: OK all, limit 3, must commit before rd 3.

See chessevents.us for more rules. No checks, credit cards OK.

Bring set, board, clock if possible- none supplied.

Special Chess Hotel Rates: Sun-Thu \$59, Fri \$149, Sat \$209, \$25 extra for 3-4 in room, \$10/night additional resort fee. Reserve by 3/17 or rate may go up (see chessevents.us) or 609-340-4000.

Email: director@chess.us.

Enter online (and see advance entry list) at: chessaction.com. \$15 charge for refunds.

Blitz tournament Sat 9:30 pm, enter at site Sat. by 8:45 pm.

35th annual CHICAGO OPEN

May 21-25, 22-25, 23-25 or 24-25, 2026 Memorial Day Weekend- see chessevents.us

8 sections, prizes \$100,000 unconditionally guaranteed!

Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel, Wheeling IL - Northwest of Chicago

Open section, 5/21-25, 9 rounds, 40/80, SD/30; d30.

U2300 through U1300 sections: 5/22-25 or 23-25: 7 rounds, 40/80, SD/30; d30 (3-day option, rds 1-2 G/60, d10). All merge and play for same prizes within the section.

Under 1000 Section, 5/24-25: 7 rounds, G/60, d10.

Open: \$10000-5000-2500-1300-1000-800-600-500-400-400, clear or tiebreak first \$300 bonus, top FIDE U2400/unr \$2000-1000. FIDE rated, GM and IM norms possible.

U2300, U2100, U1900, U1700 Sections: Each \$5000-2500-1200-800-600-500-400-300-300-300. U2300 & U2100 sections are FIDE rated.

U1500: \$4000-2000-1000-700-500-400-300-300-300-300

U1300: \$3000-1500-1000-700-500-400-300-300-300-300.

U1000: \$1500-800-600-400-300-200-200-100-100-100

FIDE ratings used for Open, May official USCF for others (In U2300 & below, unofficial USCF or USCF Online Regular ratings usually used if otherwise unrated; **cannot play** below USCF Online Regular rating - 100 points).

If any post-event Regular OTB or Regular Online rating posted 5/20/25-5/20/26, or current Regular Online rating, is more than 40 pts over section maximum, prize limit \$800.

Under 26 games prize limit as of May list: U1000 \$500, U1300 \$1000, U1500 \$1500, U1700 \$2000, U1900 \$2500.

Unrated prize limits: U1000 \$200, U1300 \$300, U1500 \$400, U1700 \$600, U1900 \$800, U2100 \$1200.

Mixed Doubles: \$2000-1000-500-400-300.

Entry fee: \$207 at chessaction.com by 3/19, \$227 by 5/19, \$250 online or at site until 1 hour before round 1. \$500 more to play in Open Section unless 2300+ USCF or 2000+ FIDE. Senior 65/up in U1300 & above, \$100 less, Online EF \$5 less to ICA members (il-chess.org). Titled entry: see chessevents.us. Refunds, \$15 service charge.

Under 1000 Section: \$97 at chessaction.com by 5/19, \$120 online or at site until 9 am 5/24.

Open titled minimum prizes: see chessevents.us.

5-day schedule (Open only): enter Thu to 6 pm, rds Thu 7 pm, Fri 1 & 7, Sat 11 & 5, Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 4.

4-day schedule (U2300 to U1300): enter Fri to 6, rds Fri 7, Sat 11 & 5, Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 4. No 4-Day Open.

3-day schedule (U2300 to U1300): enter Sat to 10 am, rds Sat 11, 2 & 5; Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 4. No 3-Day Open.

2-day schedule (U1000 Section only): enter Sun to 9 am, rds Sun 10, 1, 4, 7, Mon 10, 1 & 4.

1/2-pt byes: limit 3 (2 last 4 rds); must commit before rd 3.

Hotel rates: 1-4/room \$138, see chessevents.us (or 800-937-8461, 847-777-6500), reserve by 5/7, may sell out before.

USCF membership required, see chessevents.us.

Bring set, board, clock if possible- none supplied. No cellphone possession during play (in bag near table OK). **See chessevents.us** for more rules, details and prize restrictions.

Enter online: chessaction.com. No mail entries.

\$2500 guaranteed Blitz tournament, Sunday 10 pm.

Prize Fund: \$1,228 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)

APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52908
Site: Tropicana Casino And Resort Hotel **Address:** 2831 Boardwalk, Atlantic City, NJ 08401 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$40,000 **GP Pts:** 200 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chess.us • chestour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

7th Colonial Open

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535
Site: Executive Conference and Training Center **Address:** 22685 Holiday Park Dr Ste 60, Sterling, VA 20166 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Anand Dommalapati. • ca02026@capitalareachess.com • 703-627-5314 • capitalareachess.com/colonialopen

GRAND PRIX

13th Annual Reno - Larry Evans Memorial Open

APRIL 3-5, 2026 — NV TLA# 54080
Site: J Resort Casino Hotel **Address:** 345 N. Arlington Avenue, Reno NV 89501 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$27,500 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Jerome V. Weikel. • wackykl@aol.com • 775-747-1405 • <https://sites.google.com/site/renochessclub/>

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Atlantic City Open Blitz Championship!
APRIL 4, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52910
Site: Tropicana Casino And Resort Hotel **Address:** 2831 Boardwalk, Atlantic City, NJ 08401 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$500 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chess.us • chestour.com

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2026 PA State Game/29 Championship - West

APRIL 4, 2026 — PA TLA# 53599
Site: William Pitt Union, Univ. of Pittsburgh **Address:** Room 548, 5th Floor, William Pitt Union, Univ. of Pittsburgh, 5th Ave. & Bigelow Blvd., Pittsburgh PA 15213 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$690 **GP Pts:** 6 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Tom M Martink • martink_tom_m@hotmail.com • 412-908-0286 • psfchess.org/clearinghouse/

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess Easter Sunday Grand Prix

APRIL 5, 2026 — NC TLA# 54861
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,228 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

5th Stephen Sosnick Memorial Chess Festival Saturday Action Chess

APRIL 11, 2026 — CA TLA# 54197
Site: UC Davis Conference Center **Address:** 550 Alumni Lane, Davis, CA 95616 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,560 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Michael Aigner • michael@pawn.com • sosnickchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess National Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day Grand Prix

APRIL 12, 2026 — NC TLA# 54862
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,228 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

5th Stephen Sosnick Memorial Chess Festival Sunday Rapid Chess

APRIL 12, 2026 — CA TLA# 54199
Site: UC Davis Conference Center **Address:** 550 Alumni Lane, Davis, CA 95616 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,560 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Michael Aigner • michael@pawn.com • sosnickchess.com

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

Florida State Women's Chess Championship

APRIL 18-19, 2026 — FL TLA# 52264
Site: Spanish River Library **Address:** 1501 Spanish River Blvd, Boca Raton, FL 33431 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$600 **GP Pts:** 6 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Vero Beach Chess Club • kingsgambit50@earthlink.net • 7027430305 • verobeachchess.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

31st Space Coast Open Chess Festival
APRIL 24-26, 2026 — FL TLA# 53028
Site: Hilton Melbourne at Rialto Place **Address:** 200 Rialto Place, Melbourne, FL 32901 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Space Coast Chess Foundation, Inc. • jon@bocachess.com • 561-302-4377 • spacecoastchessfoundation.org/event/spacecoastopen

GRAND PRIX

2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
Site: Bridges Conference Center, Bridges Campus **Address:** 13 Lane Lane, Sheridan, WY 82801 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$9,000 **GP Pts:** 100 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Brian Kuehl • admin@sheridan-chess.com • 202-679-6779 • SheridanChess.com

HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

35th Annual Chicago Open
MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431
Site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 North Milwaukee Ave, Wheeling IL 60090 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$100,000 **GP Pts:** 200 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chess.us • chestour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

13th Cherry Blossom Classic

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
Site: Executive Conference and Training Center, **Address:** 22685 Holiday Park Dr, Ste 60, Sterling, VA 20166 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$25,000 **GP Pts:** 200 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** IA/IO Anand Dommalapati • cbc2026@capitalareachess.com • 1-703-627-5314 • capitalareachess.com/cherryblossom

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

15th Annual Chicago Open Blitz Championship!

MAY 24, 2026 — IL TLA# 53432
Site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 North Milwaukee Ave, Wheeling IL 60090 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,500 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chess.us • chestour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

13th Annual Summer Solstice Open

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211
Site: Fort Lauderdale Marriott North **Address:** 6650 N. Andrews Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,600 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Boca Raton Chess Club • jon@bocachess.com • 561-302-4377 • bocachess.com

GRAND PRIX

Walter Browne Memorial National Open Blitz Championship

JUNE 13, 2026 — NV TLA# 52998
Site: Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino **Address:** 3000 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, NV 89109 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$5,000 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Vegas Chess Festival • vegaschess@gmail.com • 702-930-9550 • vegaschess-festival.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

30th annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — NY TLA# 54808
Site: Tiki Resort **Address:** 2 Canada St., Lake George, NY 12845 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3,300 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chestour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

4th annual DC International (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)

JUNE 25-29, 2026 — DC TLA# 53620
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel **Address:** 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 200 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chestour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel **Address:** 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$208,000 **GP Pts:** 300 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chestour.com

GRAND PRIX

13th Annual Washington International

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
Site: Rockville Hilton **Address:** 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$51,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Michael W Regan • mregan@stsci.edu • 4104195130 • mdchess.com

Regional

ALABAMA

MARCH 13-15, 2026 — FL TLA# 54208

23rd annual Southern Class Championships

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic

See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211

13th Annual Summer Solstice Open

See Grand Prix.

ALASKA

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic

See Grand Prix.

AMER. SAMOA

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic

See Grand Prix.

ARIZONA

MARCH 6-8, 2026 — CA-S TLA# 52914

33rd annual Western Class Championships

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295

2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open

See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540

2026 National Open

See Nationals.

JUNE 10-11, 2026 — NV TLA# 53257

2026 U.S. Women's Open

See Nationals.

JUNE 13, 2026 — NV TLA# 52998

Walter Browne Memorial National Open Blitz Championship

See Grand Prix.

ARKANSAS

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic

See Grand Prix.

CALIFORNIA

MARCH 6-8, 2026 — CA-S TLA# 52914

33rd annual Western Class Championships

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MARCH 7, 2026 — CA-S TLA# 52915

10th annual Western Class Blitz Championship

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 11, 2026 — CA TLA# 54197

5th Stephen Sosnick Memorial Chess Festival Saturday Action Chess

See Grand Prix.

APRIL 12, 2026 — CA TLA# 54199

5th Stephen Sosnick Memorial Chess Festival Sunday Rapid Chess

See Grand Prix.

APRIL 18-19, 2026 — CA TLA# 54801

2025-26 CalChess Super States: K-3 & K-8 Championship and K-12 Sections

Site: Sonesta Silicon Valley Event Center **Address:** 1800 Barber Ln, Milpitas, CA 95035 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** BayAreaChess • events@bayareachess.com • bayareachess.com

APRIL 25, 2026 — CA TLA# 54858

USC Invitational Chess Tournament, Joseph D. Atkinson III Memorial

Site: University of Southern California **Address:** Tutor Campus Center 350/351/352, 3607 Trousdale Pkwy., Los Angeles, CA 90089 **Overall Prize Fund:** see online TLA **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Ben Eubanks, USC '78 • ben.eubanks@alumni.usc.edu • (310) 968-4459

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295

2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open

See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431

35th Annual Chicago Open

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540

2026 National Open

See Nationals.

JUNE 10-11, 2026 — NV TLA# 53257

2026 U.S. Women's Open

See Nationals.

JUNE 13, 2026 — NV TLA# 52998

Walter Browne Memorial National Open Blitz Championship

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577

54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections

See District of Columbia or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

COLORADO

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 10-11, 2026 — NV TLA# 53257
2026 U.S. Women's Open
See Nationals.

CONNECTICUT

MARCH 7-8, 2026 — NY TLA# 52923
58th annual New York State Scholastic Championships, OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY
See New York.

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535
7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211
13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577
54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See District of Columbia or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

DELAWARE

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535
7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577
54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See District of Columbia or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

DIST. OF COLUMBIA

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535
7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 25-29, 2026 — DC TLA# 53620
4th annual DC International (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577
54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel Address: 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 Overall Prize Fund: \$17,000 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](#) • [chesstour.com](#)

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

FLORIDA

MARCH 13-15, 2026 — FL TLA# 54208
23rd annual Southern Class Championships
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535
7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 11, 2026 — FL TLA# 52390
2026 FSCL Super Championship Tournament
Site: Hialeah Gardens High School Address: 11700 Hialeah Gardens Blvd., Hialeah Gardens, FL 33018 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Florida Scholastic Chess League • [liz@fscchess.org](#) • 786-755-FSCL (3725) • [fscchess.org](#)

APRIL 24-26, 2026 — FL TLA# 53028
31st Space Coast Open Chess Festival
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431
35th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211
13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 25-29, 2026 — DC TLA# 53620
4th annual DC International (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577
54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See District of Columbia or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

GEORGIA

MARCH 13-15, 2026 — FL TLA# 54208
23rd annual Southern Class Championships
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

MARCH 27-28, 2026 — GA TLA# 54728
5th Annual Bolivar Morales Memorial Winterville Chess Club Championships
Site: Winterville Cultural Center Address: 371 North

Church Street, Winterville, GA 30683 Overall Prize Fund: see online TLA GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Tomas Ramirez • [tram110@verizon.net](#) • 401-440-7416 • [wintervillecenter.com](#)

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535
7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 24-26, 2026 — FL TLA# 53028
31st Space Coast Open Chess Festival
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211
13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 25-29, 2026 — DC TLA# 53620
4th annual DC International (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577
54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See District of Columbia or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

GUAM

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

HAWAII

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

IDAHO

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

ILLINOIS

MARCH 1, 2026 — IL TLA# 54896
7th Habilis U19 Play & Learn!
Site: Signature by Regus Address: 222 South Prospect, Park Ridge, IL 60068 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Caveman Chess LLC • [kevin.bachler@cavemanchess.com](#) • (224) 985-5245 • [register.cavemanchess.com/](#)

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO TLA# 52913
30th annual Mid-America Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

MARCH 28, 2026 — IL TLA# 53810
Springfield March Checkmate Open
Site: Southern View Village Hall Address: 3410 South 5th St., Springfield, IL 62703 Overall Prize Fund: \$400 b/30 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: David Long • 217-726-2584 • [springfieldchess-club.com](#)

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431
35th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 24, 2026 — IL TLA# 53432
15th annual Chicago Open Blitz Championship!
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211
13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577
54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See District of Columbia or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

INDIANA

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO TLA# 52913
30th annual Mid-America Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

APRIL 18, 2026 — KY TLA# 54521
The Emory Tate Chess Classic
See Kentucky.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431
35th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 24, 2026 — IL TLA# 53432
15th annual Chicago Open Blitz Championship!
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

IOWA

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

KANSAS

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

KENTUCKY

APRIL 18, 2026 — KY TLA# 54521
The Emory Tate Chess Classic
Site: Roots-101 Museum Address: 124 North 1st Street, Louisville, KY 40202 Overall Prize Fund: see online TLA GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Kentucky Chess Ambassadors • [urban-louisvillechess@yahoo.com](#) • 5023656369

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

LOUISIANA

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAINE

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

◆ MARYLAND

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MD TLA# 54729
5th Annual Old Line Open
Site: Rockville Hilton **Address:** 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 208526 **Overall Prize Fund:** see online
TLA GP Pts: n/a **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Michael W Regan • mregan@stsci.edu • 4104195130 • mdchess.com

APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52908
Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535
7th Colonial Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211
13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 25-29, 2026 — DC TLA# 53620
4th annual DC International (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577
54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
 See District of Columbia or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

◆ MASSACHUSETTS

JAN. 1, 2026-WEEKLY — MA TLA# 47199
FMCA
Site: Clock Tower Center, Future Masters Chess Academy **Address:** 200 Homer Avenue, Mezzanine Level, Suite 200, Ashland, MA 01721-1716 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Future Masters Chess Academy • Info@FutureChessMasters.com • (508)622-5388 • futurechessmasters.com

MARCH 7-8, 2026 — NY TLA# 52923
58th annual New York State Scholastic Championships, OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY
 See New York.

MARCH 21-22, 2026 — MA TLA# 53781
BCF Spring Festival
 See Grand Prix.

APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52908
Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535
7th Colonial Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211
13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — NY TLA# 54808
30th annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 25-29, 2026 — DC TLA# 53620
4th annual DC International (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

◆ MICHIGAN

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431
35th Annual Chicago Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 24, 2026 — IL TLA# 53432
15th annual Chicago Open Blitz Championship!
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

◆ MINNESOTA

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431
35th Annual Chicago Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

◆ MISSISSIPPI

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

◆ MISSOURI

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO TLA# 52913
30th annual Mid-America Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MARCH 21, 2026 — MO TLA# 52947
12th annual Mid-America Open Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535
7th Colonial Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431
35th Annual Chicago Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

◆ MONTANA

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

◆ NEBRASKA

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

◆ NEVADA

MARCH 6-8, 2026 — CA-S TLA# 52914
33rd annual Western Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 3-5, 2026 — NV TLA# 54080
13th Annual Reno - Larry Evans Memorial Open
 See Grand Prix.

APRIL 11, 2026 — CA TLA# 54197
5th Stephen Sosnick Memorial Chess Festival Saturday Action Chess
 See Grand Prix.

APRIL 12, 2026 — CA TLA# 54199
5th Stephen Sosnick Memorial Chess Festival Sunday Rapid Chess
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540
2026 National Open
 See Nationals.

JUNE 13, 2026 — NV TLA# 52998
Walter Browne Memorial National Open Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix.

◆ NEW HAMPSHIRE

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535
7th Colonial Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

◆ NEW JERSEY

MARCH 7-8, 2026 — NY TLA# 52923
58th annual New York State Scholastic Championships, OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY
 See New York.

MARCH 28, 2026 — NJ TLA# 54712
Hamilton Chess Club Quads
Site: Edward McManimon building **Address:** 320 Scully Ave., Hamilton, NJ 08610 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$25 per quad **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Edward J Sytnik • edmondou@aol.com • 6093512437 • hamiltonchessclub.com

APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52908
Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535
7th Colonial Open
 See Grand Prix.

APRIL 3-5, 2026 — PA TLA# 51915
2026 World Chess Festival - Malvern
 See Pennsylvania.

APRIL 4, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52910
Atlantic City Open Blitz Championship!
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431
35th Annual Chicago Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211
13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — NY TLA# 54808
30th annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 25-29, 2026 — DC TLA# 53620
4th annual DC International (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577
54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
 See District of Columbia or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

◆ NEW MEXICO

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

◆ NEW YORK

HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 7-8, 2026 — NY TLA# 52923
58th annual New York State Scholastic Championships, OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY

Site: Saratoga Hilton Hotel and 3 other nearby locations **Address:** Hilton Hotel: 534 Broadway; Saratoga City Center: 522 Broadway; Saratoga Courtyard Marriott: 11 Excelsior Ave, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chessour.com

APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52908
Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535
7th Colonial Open
 See Grand Prix.

APRIL 3-5, 2026 — PA TLA# 51915
2026 World Chess Festival - Malvern
 See Pennsylvania.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431
35th Annual Chicago Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211

13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — NY TLA# 54808

30th annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 25-29, 2026 — DC TLA# 53620

4th annual DC International (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577

54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565

54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236

13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

NORTH CAROLINA

MARCH 8, 2026 — NC TLA# 54229

Dragon Knight Chess Start of Daylight Savings Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

MARCH 15, 2026 — NC TLA# 54230

3rd Annual Dragon Knight Chess St. Patrick's Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

MARCH 22, 2026 — NC TLA# 54859

Dragon Knight Chess National Goof Off Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

MARCH 29, 2026 — NC TLA# 54860

Dragon Knight Chess World Piano Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535

7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 5, 2026 — NC TLA# 54861

Dragon Knight Chess Easter Sunday Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 12, 2026 — NC TLA# 54862

Dragon Knight Chess National Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211

13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 25-29, 2026 — DC TLA# 53620

4th annual DC International (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577

54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565

54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

NORTH DAKOTA

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295

2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

NO. MARIANA ISL.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

OHIO

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO TLA# 52913

30th annual Mid-America Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

MARCH 21-22, 2026 — OH TLA# 54671

2026 Midwest Open Team Chess Festival (MOTCF)
Site: Cherry Valley Hotel Address: 2299 Cherry Valley Rd SE, Newark, OH 43055 Overall Prize Fund: \$3,500 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Kathy Lin • info@columbuschessacademy.org • 6147467682 • columbuschessacademy.org

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535

7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431

35th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577

54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565

54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236

13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

OKLAHOMA

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

OREGON

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295

2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540

2026 National Open
See Nationals.

PENNSYLVANIA

APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52908

Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535

7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 3-5, 2026 — PA TLA# 51915

2026 World Chess Festival - Malvern
Site: Desmond Malvern by Hilton Hotel Address: 1 Liberty Road, Malvern, PA 19355 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Joe Hanley • hanleychessacademy@gmail.com • hanleychessacademy.com/2026WCFMalvern.html

APRIL 4, 2026 — PA TLA# 53599

2026 PA State Game/29 Championship - West
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431

35th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211

13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 25-29, 2026 — DC TLA# 53620

4th annual DC International (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577

54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565

54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236

13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

PUERTO RICO

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211

13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

RHODE ISLAND

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535

7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

SOUTH CAROLINA

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535

7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

SOUTH DAKOTA

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295

2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211

13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

TENNESSEE

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO TLA# 52913

30th annual Mid-America Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535

7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565

54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

TEXAS

MARCH 13-15, 2026 — TX TLA# 54213

2026 Lone Star Open
See Grand Prix.

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO TLA# 52913

30th annual Mid-America Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431

35th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211

13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540

2026 National Open
See Nationals.

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577

54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565

54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236

13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

U.S. MIN. OUT. ISL.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

UTAH

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295

2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540

2026 National Open
See Nationals.

JUNE 10-11, 2026 — NV TLA# 53257

2026 U.S. Women's Open
See Nationals.

JUNE 13, 2026 — NV TLA# 52998

Walter Browne Memorial National Open Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix.

VERMONT

MARCH 7-8, 2026 — NY TLA# 52923

58th annual New York State Scholastic Championships, OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY
See New York.

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535

7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — NY TLA# 54808

30th annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

VIRGINIA

APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52908

Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535

7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431

35th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211

13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 25-29, 2026 — DC TLA# 53620

4th annual DC International (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577

54th Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565

54th Annual World Open (Open

through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

VIRGIN ISL., U.S.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

WASHINGTON

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295

2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540

2026 National Open
See Nationals.

WEST VIRGINIA

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

WISCONSIN

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

APRIL 11, 2026 — WI TLA# 54741

2026 Wisconsin Rapid and Blitz State Championships

Site: Courtyard by Marriott Madison West Address: 2266 Deming Way, Middleton, WI 53562 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,630 b/120 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Mike Nietman • mike.nietman@charter.net • 6084678510 • wisches.org

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431

35th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 24, 2026 — IL TLA# 53432

15th annual Chicago Open Blitz Championship!
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211

13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565

54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

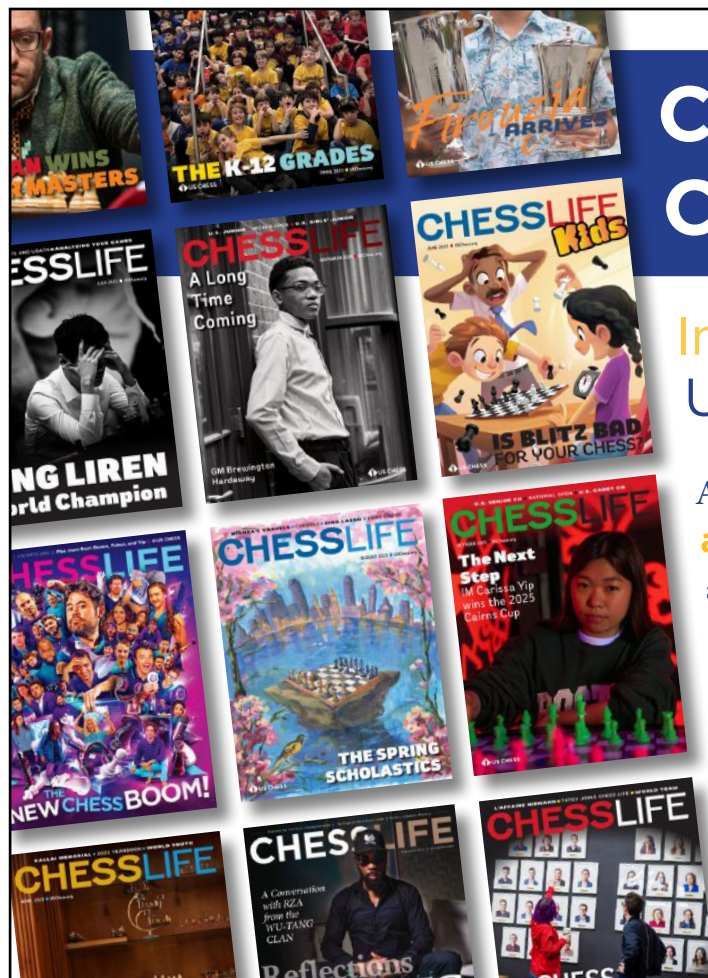
WYOMING

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295

2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.



Chess Life and Chess Life Kids

Included with your US Chess membership!

All US Chess members have **free access** to digital editions of US Chess' award-winning magazines, **Chess Life** and **Chess Life Kids**.

Printed copies of **Chess Life** or **Chess Life Kids** can be added on to any membership for a nominal fee, currently \$12/year (12 issues) for *Chess Life* and \$6/year (6 issues) for *Chess Life Kids*.



Gold & Silver Affiliates



US CHESS would like to recognize and thank
all of our Affiliates for their commitment and hard work.

US CHESS GOLD AFFILIATES

Bay Area Chess

San Jose, CA
408.409.6596
www.bayareachess.com

CHESSanity

Jericho, NY
917.678.2077
www.chessanity.org

King Registration

Chicago, IL
773.317.8347
www.kingregistration.com/

San Diego Chess Club

San Diego, CA
619.752.4377
www.sandiegochessclub.org

Berkeley Chess School

Berkeley, CA
510.384.1507
www.berkeleychessschool.org

Continental Chess Association

Pelham, NY
201.347.2269
www.chesstour.co

Marshall Chess Club

New York, NY
212.477.3716
www.marshallchessclub.org

Saint Louis Chess Club

Saint Louis, MO
314.361.CHESS (2437)
saintlouischessclub.org/

Capital Area Chess

Centerville, VA
703.627.5314
www.capitalareachess.com

Dirigo Chess Club

Falmouth, ME
207.318.4630
www.dirigochessclub.org/

New York State Chess Association

New York, NY
646-232-3155
<https://nysca.net/>

Washington Chess Federation

Redmond, WA
206.769.3757
www.wachess.com

Caveman Chess

Park Ridge, IL
224.985.5244
www.cavemanchess.com

Florida Scholastic Chess League

Hialeah, FL
786-755-FSCL (3725)
www.fslchess.org/

Ocean State Chess Association

Riverside, R.I.
401.212.1335
oceanstatechess.com/

Charlotte Chess

Center
Charlotte, NC
980.265.1156
www.charlottechesscenter.org

Hamden Chess Club

Hamden, CT
203.680.8456
www.playmorechess.com/

PaperClip Pairings

Brownsville, TX
956.621.0377

US CHESS SILVER AFFILIATES

Boca Raton Chess Club (FL)

www.bocachess.com

Downriver Chess Club (LA)

www.downriverchess.com

Michigan Chess Association (MI)

www.michess.org

CDA Collin County Chess Club (TX)

www.coramdeoacademy.org/chess

Evangel Chess Club (AL)

evangelchurch.me

Rochester Chess Center (NY)

www.chessset.com

ChessPalace (CA)

www.chesspalace.com

Little House of Chess, Inc. (NY)

littlehouseofchess.org

Texas Chess Center (TX)

www.texaschesscenter.com

Cincinnati Scholastic Chess (OH)

www.chesscincinnati.com

TLA CHESS (VA)

jack.scheible@verizon.net

For all information on becoming a Gold or Silver Affiliate, please visit <https://new.uschess.org/gold-and-silver-affiliates>.

CORRESPONDENCE CHESS

Check out these US Chess Rated Events!

ICCF
Server

7-Player Championship Events

2026 Golden Knights (Postal) | 2026 Electronic Knights

FORMAT: Players play 6 games as single round robin, groupings based on order entries received. Players start in Preliminary round and qualify for Semi-final and then Final rounds based on scores in previous round. **ENTRY FEE:** \$35 per entry. Players can enter up to a maximum of 10 times per event. **PRIZES:** Prize fund of \$2300 based on 200 entries. \$15 correspondence chess gift certificate to players knocked out in Preliminary round.

7-Player Round Robins

Victor Palciauskas Tournament (ICCF Server)

FORMAT: Players play 6 games as single round robin, groupings based on ratings. **ENTRY FEE:** \$5 per entry. **PRIZES:** 1st place receives a signed certificate.

4-Player Quads

John W. Collins Memorial (Postal) | Walter Muir E-Quads (ICCF Server)

FORMAT: Players play 6 games as double round robin, groupings based on ratings. **ENTRY FEE:** \$10 per entry. **PRIZES:** 1st place receives \$25 correspondence chess gift certificate and signed certificate.

2-Player Matches (Postal or Email)

FORMAT: Players play either 2, 4, or 6 games against the same opponent. Selecting multiple options may facilitate faster pairings. Pairings based on ratings or players may name their own opponent.

ENTRY FEE: \$5 per entry. **PRIZES:** None.

Two ways to enter:

- Visit us online at uschess.org
- Mail in the form below

GENERAL INFORMATION

- US Chess membership must remain current for the duration of all events.
- Postal events are open only to US Chess members who reside on the contiguous USA, Alaska, Hawaii or have an APO/ FPO postal address.
- Email events are open to all US Chess members with an accessible email account.
- ICCF Server events are open to all US Chess members with access to the ICCF internet based correspondence chess server and an ICCF account (free to create) in good standing.
- For events with groupings based on ratings, the following rating classes will be used:

o Class A: 1800 and above	o Class C: 1200-1699
o Class B: 1500-1999	o Class D: 1399 and below
- If you do not have an existing correspondence rating, please estimate your playing strength when submitting your entry.
- Correspondence chess gift certificate prizes can be used on correspondence chess entries only. They cannot be used for membership renewals or at US Chess Sales.

Online entry and payment by credit card is available at new.uschess.org/correspondence-chess

Name _____ USCHESSID# _____ Est. Rating _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ E-mail _____

- ☐ Golden Knights EF: \$35
 ☐ Palciauskas ICCF EF: \$5
 ☐ Muir ICCF Quad EF: \$10
 2-player matches, EF: \$5 per entry, see above for options
☐ Electronic Knights EF: \$35
 ☐ Collins Quad EF: \$10
 Postal Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐
 Email Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐
☐ Check here if you do not wish to have an opponent who is incarcerated (note that this may slow down your assignment).

Make checks payable to US CHESS and mail to: US Chess Correspondence Chess, PO Box 775308, St. Louis, MO 63177

Classifieds

Chess Life accepts classified advertising in these categories: Activities, For Rent, For Sale, Games, Instruction, Miscellaneous, Services, Tournaments, Wanted. Only e-mailed copy is accepted. For additional details, including rates and deadlines, visit new.uschess.org/about/advertise.

For Sale

WORLD'S FINEST CHESS SETS

***The House of Staunton** produces unquestionably the finest Staunton Chess sets. ***Pay-Pal and all Major Credit Cards accepted.** The House of Staunton, Inc., 288 Dunlop Blvd.; Building 400; Huntsville, AL 35824. ***Website:** www.houseofstaunton.com; phone: (256) 858-8070; email: sales@houseofstaunton.com

Wanted

* CHESS-PLAYER SCHOLARS *

in top 10% of high school class with USCF > 2000 and SAT (math + reading + writing) > 1400 for possible college scholarships to UMBC. Prof. Alan Sherman, Dept. of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering, Univ. of Maryland, Baltimore County, 21250. sherman@umbc.edu.

ADVERTISING DISCLAIMER: The products and services advertised and/or featured in this publication are paid promotions and do not constitute an endorsement or guarantee by US Chess. We are not responsible for the accuracy, claims, or content of any advertisement. Nor responsible for the quality, reliability, or performance of any products and/or services featured in our advertisements. Advertisers are solely responsible for their products and services. Readers should conduct their own research before making any purchasing decisions.

Do you **LOVE** getting a print copy of **CHESS LIFE** each month? Want to avoid any service disruptions?

Be sure to **renew** your US Chess membership **at least one month before your expiration date** to ensure continued delivery of your magazine. And don't forget to purchase the print add-on as part of your membership renewal!

Solutions

PAGE 11 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. 31. ... Ne5! threatens the bishop directly and the queen latently. White resigned after 32. Bf1 Bd7 33. Qd5 Qc8! in view of 34. ... Be6. **PROBLEM 2.** After the pawn-paralyzing 55. ... h5!, Black's simplest win is to queen the h-pawn: 56. Kc2 c3 57. bxc3+ Kc4 58. Kb2 a3+ 59. Kxa3 Kxc3, followed by eventually taking the g-pawn and promoting the h-pawn. **PROBLEM 3. 28. Rxe7 Qxe7 29. Nxf6+ gxf6 30. Qg4+** followed by 31. Qxc8(+). Or 29. ... Kh8 30. Qf5, and if 29. ... Kf8 30. Nh7+. **PROBLEM 4. 54. g4!** creates a second passed pawn, e.g., 54. ... hxc4 55. h5 g3 56. h6 g2 57. Bh2 followed by 58. h7 Bxh7 59. b7 or 58. b7 Bxb7 59. h7. **PROBLEM 5. 21. Rxh6!** Because 21. ... gxh6 22. Qg6+ Kh8 23. Qxh6+ Kg8 24. Rd5. The game went 21. ... Bf5 22. Qxf5 Rfd8 23. Qh7+ Kf8 24. Qh8+ Ke7 and Black resigned after 25. Re6+!. **PROBLEM 6. 44. ... Qc1+!**, e.g., 45. Qd1 Qe3 or 45. Rd1 Rh1+! 46. Qxh1 Qxd1+ 47. Kg2 Qe2+ 48. Kh3 Qf2 with the threats of 49. ... Qxg3 mate or 49. ... Qxf5+.

PAGE 47 ABCS OF CHESS

PROBLEM 1. Black is defeated in 2: 1. b4+ Kxd5 2. Rd1 mate. **PROBLEM 2.** Black is ruined in 2: 1. Rh5+ Kxh5 2. Rh2 mate. **PROBLEM 3.** Black is terminated in 2: 1. Qh5+ Ke7 2. Qe5 mate. **PROBLEM 4.** Black is annihilated in 2: 1. Qxf6+ Kxf6 2. Bg5 mate. **PROBLEM 5.** Black is Legalized in 2: 1. Bxf7+ Ke7 2. Nd5 mate. **PROBLEM 6.** Black's broken in 2: 1. Qa6+ Kxa6 2. Ra8 mate.

PAGE 53 MAKE YOUR MOVE

TACTIC 1. 24. Rd7+! Boom! **Black resigned** on account of 24. Rd7+ Qxd7 25. Nxe5+ Ke7 26. Bxc5+. Yip – Tarasenko, Women's World Rapid 2025. **TACTIC 2. 17. Bf7+!** Ouch! **Black resigned** on account of 17. Bf7+ Kxf7 18. Ne5+ Ke8 19. Nxc6. Mamedyarov – Sarana, World Rapid 2025. **TACTIC 3. 11. Be6!** Nasty! 11. ... **Qxe6** Black didn't have a choice — for instance, 11. ... Qe7 12. Nxd6+ Qxd6 13. Qxf7+ Kd8 14. Qxb7 Rb8 15. Qxa7, and White is winning. 12. **Nc7+ Kd7 13. Nxe6 fxe6 14. d3** White was winning and eventually converted. Bjerre – Abdusattorov, World Rapid 2025. **TACTIC 4. 19. ... Neg4!** Black sacrifices a piece to clear the path for the queen on c7 to join the attack; the bonus, of course, is that Black does so with tempo, attacking the queen on h6. 19. ... Nfg4 also works, but the text move is slightly more accurate. 20. **fxg4 Nxg4 21. Qh3** There are no good squares for the queen. 21. ... **Qe5+ 22. Kf1** On 22. Be3, Black has the wonderful 22. ... Rf4, and White is busted. 22. ... **Rhd8!** Adding more firepower to the attack. 23. **Qf3 Nxh2+! 24. Rxh2 Qxh2 25. Ke2** Or 25. Ke1 Rd1+ 26. Nxd1 Qg1+ 27. Ke2 Qxd1 mate. 25. ... **Qe5+!** The only winning move. 26. **Kf1 Rd3 27. Qe4 Rd1+ 28. Ke2 Re1+! 29. Kf3** Or 29. Kxe1 Qg3+ 30. Ke2 Qf2 mate. 29. ... **Rxe4 30. Nxe4 Rd3+, White resigned.** Iniyani – B. Jobava, World Rapid 2025. **TACTIC 5. 27. Rg3!** Boom! Sacrificing the queen! 27. ... **Qxd2 28. Nf6+ Kh8 29. Nf7 mate.** A beautiful mate! (28. **Rxg7+ Kh8 29. Nf7 mate** also works but this is

prettier.) Grischuk – Droin, World Rapid 2025. **TACTIC 6. 21. Bf6! Nxf6** Black really has no good response. Distracting White's queen doesn't help, e.g., 21. ... c2 22. Qxc2 Qd5 (Or 22. ... Qb4 23. Bxg7 Bxg7 24. Nf6+ Nxf6 25. exf6 and White is winning) 23. Bxg7 Bxg7 24. Nf6+ Nxf6 25. exf6 and White wins. 22. **Nxf6+ Kh8 23. Qh5** Threatening 24. Qxh6+. 23. ... **g6 24. Rxg6, Black resigned.** Indjic – Samunenkov, World Rapid 2025. **TACTIC 7. 14. Ng5!** White attacks the e6-pawn to exploit Black's poor coordination. 14. ... **Be7** Black's alternatives are not much better; for instance, 14. ... Rc8 15. Ncxe6, or 14. ... e5 15. Nxf7 Rxf7 16. Ne6 Rdf8 17. Ng5 b5 18. Be6, and White is winning. 15. **Ngxe6 fxe6 16. Nxe6 Kh8 17. Nxd8 Bxd8 18. Rac1** Black has two minor pieces for a rook and two pawns, but he is lost because of the poor mobility of his pieces. 18. ... **Be7 19. Bb5 Nc5 20. b4 Ne6 21. a3 Rc8 22. Rxc8 Bxc8 and Black resigned** in view of 23. Bxf6 Bxf6 24. Bd7. Samunenkov – Ganguly, World Rapid 2025. **TACTIC 8. 27. Bf1!!** In the game, White quickly lost after 27. Bd2?? Rxc1+ 28. Bxc1 Rb1 29. Bf1 Nb4. 27. ... **Rxc1 28. Bxc1 Nb4 29. Rxc7 Ra8 30. Rb7 a2 31. Bb2 Nd5 32. Ba1 Rc8 33. Rb2 Rc1 34. Rxa2 Ne3 35. Kf2 Nxf1** with a likely draw. Can – Andreikin, World Rapid 2025 (analysis). **TACTIC 9. 21. ... Nh2+!** A brilliant move that limits White's defensive possibilities. In the game, Black instead continued 21. ... Bxg3 22. fxe3! Qf6?? and lost. 22. **Rxh2 Re1+! 23. Kg2 Qe4+! 24. f3 Qg6**, and Black is winning. Xiao Tong – Smirnov, World Rapid 2025 (analysis).

THANK YOU TO OUR BENEFACTORS

Thank-you for
being the sustaining
force behind all our
initiatives, and for
making all of our
programs possible.

For a full list of
our Benefactors
please visit

<https://new.uschess.org/benefactor-members>



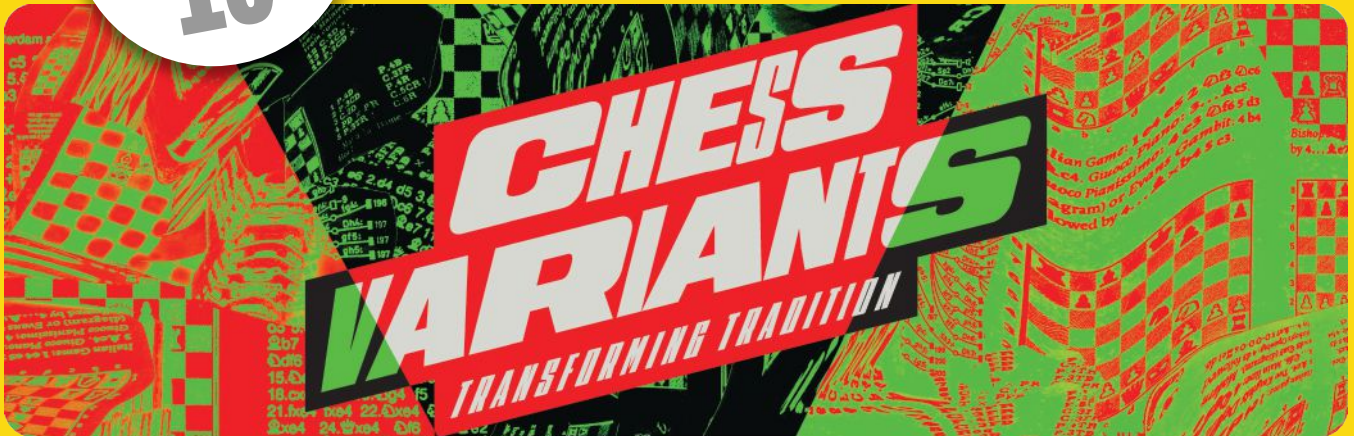
CHESS LIFE USPS # 102-840 (ISSN 0197-260X). Volume 80 No. 3. PRINTED IN THE USA. Chess Life, formerly Chess Life & Review, is published monthly by the United States Chess Federation, PO Box 775308, St. Louis, MO 63177-5308. Chess Life & Review and Chess Life remain the property of USCF. Annual subscription (without membership): \$112. Periodical postage paid at St. Louis, MO 63177-5308 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Chess Life (USCF), PO Box 775308, St. Louis, MO 63177-5308. Entire contents ©2024 by the United States Chess Federation. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise without the prior written permission of USCF. Note: Unsolicited materials are submitted at the sender's risk and Chess Life accepts no responsibility for them. Materials will not be returned unless accompanied by appropriate postage and packaging. Address all submissions to Chess Life, PO Box 775308, St. Louis, MO 63177-5308. The opinions expressed are strictly those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Chess Federation. Send all address changes to: U.S. Chess, Membership Services, PO Box 775308, St. Louis, MO 63177-5308. Include your USCF I.D. number and a recent mailing label if possible. This information may be e-mailed to addresschange@uschess.org. Please give us eight weeks advance notice. PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 41473530 RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO EXPRESS MESSENGER INTERNATIONAL P.O. BOX 25058 LONDON BRC, ONTARIO, CANADA N6C 6A8

**SEE THEM BEFORE
THEY'RE
GONE**

THROUGH
**APRIL
19**



**WORLD
CHESS
HALL OF
FAME
& GALLERIES**



READING
BETWEEN
THE
LINES



Chess and Literature

THROUGH
**APRIL
12**



THROUGH
**APRIL
5**

**Charles
Houska**
MASTER OF PLAY

worldchesshof.org @WorldChessHOF



The World Chess Hall of Fame & Galleries acknowledges Dr. Jeanne Cairns Sinquefeld and Rex Sinquefeld, whose generous support makes our exhibitions possible. The mission of the World Chess Hall of Fame & Galleries is to educate visitors, fans, players, and scholars by preserving, exhibiting and interpreting the game of chess and its continuing cultural and artistic significance. The World Chess Hall of Fame & Galleries admits people of any gender, race, color, nationality and ethnic origin. The World Chess Hall of Fame & Galleries complies with the Internal Revenue Service's guidelines regarding publication of its non-discrimination policy in its brochures, catalogs, advertisements and otherwise making it known to the general community.





The Ultimate Tournament Chess Set Combination

It's hard to find tournament gear that ticks all the boxes: meets the US Chess Federation and FIDE requirements for official use, has a refined design, and fits with the rest of your chess equipment. This special combination deal offers all of this and more at a spectacular price.

**TOURNAMENT ESSENTIALS AT
AN UNBEATABLE PRICE**



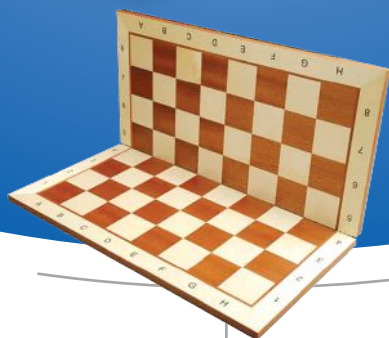
Starting at only
\$229.95

**\$327.95 if items
purchased
separately**



THE PIECES

The Championship Series chessmen took the stage at every major international chess event of the last decade, and for good reason. They're sturdy, heavily weighted, and hand-carved from the highest grade woods: the ideal tournament companions.



THE BOARD

The folding wooden chess board is a top-tier training tool. With 2.25" squares, it's ideally proportioned for the Championship Series chessmen, and the rank and file labels are perfect for rated play.



THE BAG

The deluxe chess tournament bag offers unmatched organization and safe-keeping. Its clean design enables lightning-fast access to your clock, scorebook, pencils, pieces, chess boards, and other accessories.

Free Ground Shipping On All Orders Over \$100.00
Excludes Clearance, Shopworn and Items Otherwise Marked

World's biggest open tournament!

54th Annual WORLD OPEN

*9 rounds, Omni Shoreham Hotel,
2500 Calvert Street, NW, Washington, DC*

Top 6 sections: July 1-5, 2-5 or 3-5, 2026

Under 1200, Under 1000 sections: June 26-28, 2026

GM & IM norms possible, Mixed Doubles prizes, GM lectures!

NEW SITE: WASHINGTON, DC!

The World Open visits Washington, DC at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. The National Zoo is an 11-minute walk, and the City is home to many historic and cultural landmarks, including the US Capitol, the White House, the Smithsonian, the National Gallery, National Mall, theaters, restaurants and world-class shopping.

Special room rates: \$169-\$169-\$169-\$169. Reservations link & parking info at chessevents.us.

U1200 & U1000 play separate dates.

SPECIAL FEATURES!

1) Schedule options. 5-day is most popular; 4-day & 3-day save time. All merge, play for same prizes. Open is 5-day only, U1200 & U1000 **3-day only**.

2) Play for norms & big money in Open: \$5000-2500-1500 to each of FIDE 2300-2449, 2200-2299, and U2200/Unr.

3) Prize limit \$1000 if post-event OTB or USCF Online Regular rating 6/29/25 - 6/29/26 (6/24/25-6/24/26 in U1200 & U1000) was more than 40 points over section maximum.

4) Provisional (under 26 games) and unrated prize limits: see chessevents.us.

5) Under 2200 & U2000 sections, as well as Open, are also FIDE rated.

6) DC International 6/25-29, DC Open 6/26-28, For World Open Under 13, Amateur, Senior Amateur, Women's Championship and other side events: see chessevents.us.

7) Free Grandmaster lectures: see chessevents.us!

\$225,000 GUARANTEED PRIZES!

OPEN SECTION: \$20000-10000-5000-2500-1300-1000-800-700-600-500, clear win or top 2 playoff \$500 bonus, top FIDE 2300-2449 \$5000-2500-1500, top FIDE 2200-2299 \$5000-2500-1500, top FIDE Under 2200/unrated \$5000-2500-1500. .

UNDER 2200: \$12000-6000-3000-1500-1000-800-600-500-400-400, top U2100 (no unrated) \$2000-1000. Unrated prize limit \$1500.

UNDER 2000: \$12000-6000-3000-1500-1000-800-600-500-400-400, top U1900 (no unrated) \$2000-1000. Unrated prize limit \$1000.

UNDER 1800: \$12000-6000-3000-1500-1000-800-600-500-400-400, top U1700 (no unrated) \$2000-1000. Unrated prize limit \$800.

UNDER 1600: \$10000-5000-2500-1300-900-700-600-500-400-400, top U1500 (no unrated) \$2000-1000. Unrated prize limit \$600.

UNDER 1400: \$7000-4000-2000-1200-900-700-600-500-400-400, top U1300 (no unrated) \$1600-800. Unrated prize limit \$500.

UNDER 1200: \$4000-2000-1000-800-600-500-400-300-300-300. Unrated prize limit \$400.

UNDER 1000: \$2000-1000-700-500-400-300-300-200-200-200. Unrated prize limit \$200.

MIXED DOUBLES: Top 6 sections \$2400-1200-700-500-300. Lower 2 sections \$500-300-200. Male+female teams averaging U2200.

Reserve hotel room early! Special chess rate \$169-169-169-169, link at chessevents.us or 202-234-0700, may sell out by early June.

July 2026 official USCF ratings used for U2200 to U1400, July FIDE for Open, June USCF for U1200 & U1000. Unofficial ratings usually used if otherwise unrated. Cannot play below USCF Online Regular Rating - 100 points. No mail entries.

Foreign player ratings: see www.foreignratings.com.

Unclaimed prizes usually paid by PayPal (may take around 3 weeks). For tax reporting, withholding info, see chessevents.us.

Entry fees, U1400-U2200 Sections: \$318 at chessaction.com by 5/15, \$328 by 6/29 (U1200 & U1000 by 6/23), \$350 online or at site until 90 min. before rd 1 (1 hr. in U1200/U1000 Sections).

Open Section: same, except \$500 more unless 2200+. USCF or 2000+. FIDE.

U1200 Section entry fees: \$100 less than U1400 to U2200 Sections. **U1000 Section entry fees:** \$200 less.

Seniors 65/up: entry fee \$100 less in U1400 & above.

Titled player entries: see chessevents.us

If any post-event USCF regular OTB or Regular online rating posted 6/29/25-6/29/26 (U1200 & U1000 6/24/25-6/24/26) or current Regular online rating is more than 40 points over section maximum, prize limit \$1000. **See chessevents.us for more rules.**

If under 26 regular OTB total games rated by July 2026 official list (June official for U1200, U1000), prize limit \$500 U1000. \$1000 U1200, \$2000 U1400, \$3000 U1600-U2000.

Entries posted at chessaction.com. **Refunds,** \$15 charge. **USCF membership required** (see special rates: chessevents.us).

Bring set, board, clock- none supplied.

5-day schedule: 7/1 7 pm, 7/2-3 11 am & 6 pm, 7/4-5 10 am & 5 pm.

4-day schedule: 7/2 11 am, 2:30 pm & 6 pm, merges with 5-day 7/2 6 pm.

3-day schedule: 7/3 11 am, 1:30, 3:30, 6 & 8:30 pm, merges with others 7/4 10 am..

U1200, U1000 schedule: 6/26 1, 4 & 7, 6/27 11, 2 & 5, 6/28 10, 1 & 4.

Half point byes OK all, limit 3 (limit 2 in last 4 rounds). Must commit before round 4.

PAST WINNERS

1973 Walter Browne **1974** Bent Larsen **1975** Pal Benko **1976** Anatoly Lein **1977** John Fedorowicz **1978** Peter Biyiasas **1979** Haukur Angantýsson **1980** Larry Christiansen **1981** Igor Ivanov **1982** Nick de Firmian **1983** Kevin Spraggett **1984** Joel Benjamin **1985** Maxim Dlugy **1986** Nick de Firmian **1987** Boris Gulko **1988** Maxim Dlugy **1989** Mikhail Gurevich **1990** Igor Glek **1991** Gata Kamsky **1992** Gregory Kaidanov **1993** Alex Yermolinsky **1994** Artashes Minasian **1995** Alex Yermolinsky **1996** Alex Yermolinsky **1997** Alex Shabalov **1998** Alex Goldin **1999** Gregory Serper **2000** Joel Benjamin **2001** Alex Goldin **2002** Kamil Miton **2003** Jaan Ehlovest **2004** Varuzhan Akobian **2005** Kamal Miton **2006** Gata Kamsky **2007** Varuzhan Akobian **2008** Evgeny Najer **2009** Evgeny Najer **2010** Viktor Laznicka **2011** Gata Kamsky **2012** Ivan Sokolov **2013** Varuzhan Akobian **2014** Ilya Smirin **2015** Aleks Lenderman **2016** Gabor Papp **2017** Tigran Petrosian **2018** Illia Nyzhnik **2019** Liem Quang Le **2020** P Niyan **2021** Hans Niemann **2022** Mikhail Antipov **2023** Fidel Corrales Jimenez **2024** Awonder Liang **2025** Bharath Subramaniam H