

FOREIGN REPORT ■ 2025 YEARBOOK ■ WORLD RAPID AND BLITZ

CHESSLIFE

APRIL 2026 ■ USChess.org

**Woodward
Wins at
Wijk aan
Zee**



World's biggest open tournament!

54th Annual WORLD OPEN

9 rounds, Omni Shoreham Hotel,
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Under 1200, Under 1000 sections: June 26-28, 2026



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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

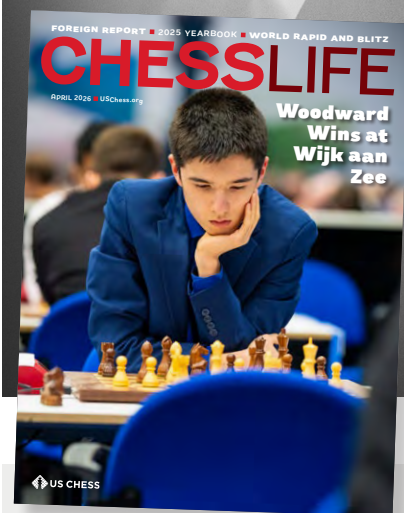
3-day schedule: 7/3 11 am, 1:30, 3:30, 6 & 8:30 pm, merges with others 7/4 10 am..

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 Ehvest **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 Subramaniyam H



ON THE COVER

With an interview in 2022 and regular annotations over the years, GM Andy Woodward has long been on *Chess Life's* radar. After holding his own at the 2025 U.S. Championship, the 15-year-old took a big step with his win at the 2026 Tata Steel Challengers in Wijk aan Zee. He tells us all about it in this month's cover story.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LENNART OOTES

CHESSLIFE

April

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WORLD RAPID AND BLITZ

Doubled Over

Carlsen wins the World Rapid and Blitz titles — again — while the Women's Rapid goes to a playoff and the Women's Blitz sees a familiar winner.

BY WGM JENNIFER YU

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MAKING IT TO THE MASTERS

On winning the Tata Steel Challengers

BY GM ANDY WOODWARD



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GM ANDY WOODWARD
 (Cover Story) is currently ranked 14th on the US Chess ratings list. After acclimating to elite events with his play at the U.S. Championship and Wijk aan Zee, he is

currently preparing to face off with Magnus Carlsen (among others) at the Tepe Sigeman tournament beginning May 1.



WGM JENNIFER YU
 (World Rapid and Blitz) is a two-time U.S. Women's Champion. After graduating from Harvard University in 2025, she has returned to active tournament play and is number 12 on the US Chess Women's rating list for March 2026.



MARK CROWTHER
 (Foreign Report) is the publisher of *The Week in Chess*, which he has authored weekly since 1994.

With this month's issue he joins our cast of monthly contributors. Please visit him at theweekinchess.com.



NAVIED MAHDAVIAN
 (The Scholar's Mate) is a *New Yorker* cartoonist and writer. He is the author and illustrator of the

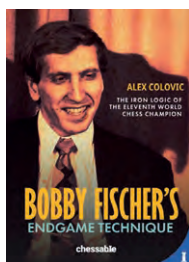
graphic memoir *This Country: Searching for Home in (Very) Rural America*, which was a NPR, New Yorker, and Barnes and Noble book of the year. He has spoken at TED and on The Moth Radio Hour. Before becoming a cartoonist, he taught fifth grade where he learned most of his jokes.



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Bobby Fischer's Endgame Technique

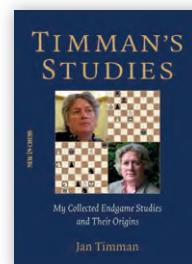
Alex Colovic

Discover Bobby Fischer's endgame secrets. Alex Colovic reveals how the 11th World Champion applied relentless pressure with engine-like precision. Learn through clear explanations and exercises to improve your chess at every level.

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.



Bobby Fischer's Chess Queen

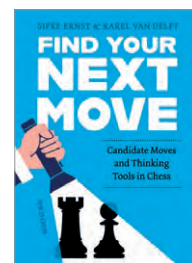
Shernaz Kennedy

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.

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?



Winning Chess Middlegames – Revised Edition

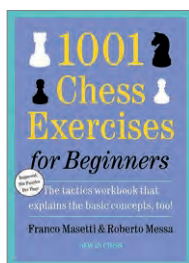
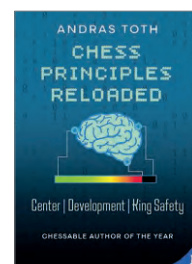
Ivan Sokolov

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.

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.



1001 Chess Exercises for Beginners

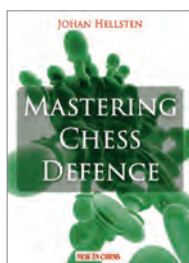
Franco Masetti & Roberto Messa

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.

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.



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.



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**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.



Gambit Accepted

Regarding Nathan Smith's February article "My Pandemic Gambit": what a brilliant, funny, and uplifting story! I dwell in the same low-rent Elo neighborhood, but I love the game and play every day. Smith speaks for many of us when he says "dignity is optional but enthusiasm is free." We all long to be the player who sees THE move. Well said, sir.

James Bell
via email

Play it Again

I absolutely loved the mini-memoir by Nathan Smith in the February 2026 issue of Chess Life. Thanks for giving it

a prime spot.

I'd also like to comment on the Kovner/Bogart game Andy Soltis presents in his consistently wonderful column. It's curious that Soltis focused on reconstructing the moves and history of the game, and not its broader symbolism. "Rick Blaine" played the French Defense. Nothing will persuade me that this choice was not calculated to tie in with the movie's plot!

Lewis Jenkins
via email

Made my Move

I write concerning Rapport – Supi – Tactic #1 in Carsten Hansen's February column. The solution is given as 27. Rc7, and if 27. ... Qxc7 then 28. Qxd5+.

I think it would have been worthwhile to point out that the defensive try 27. ... Qb5 is refuted by 28. Rc5!.

David Short
via email

John Hartmann responds:

So noted, but for what it's worth, 27. ... Qb5 28. a4! might be even better.

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

ANNUAL MEETING

THE 2026 US CHESS ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE Amway Grand Plaza in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The meeting begins with roll call at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 8, 2026.

Materials for the Annual Meeting are available online at new.uschess.org/2026-annual-meeting-information.

Advance delegate motions (ADMs) for the delegates' meeting at this year's U.S. Open are due before May 8, 2026. They can be mailed to Rose McMahon, c/o US Chess, P.O. Box 775308, St. Louis, MO 63177; or emailed to governance@uschess.org.





Navara with the
Lubosh Kavalek
Best Game prize

Prague International Festival

PRAGUE | FEB. 24 - MARCH 6, 2026

1st: GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov, 6/9. **2nd-4th:** GM Parham Maghsoodloo, GM Aravindh Chithambaram and GM Jorden van Foreest, 5. **5th-6th:** GM David Navara and GM Nodirbek Yakubboev, 4½. **7th-8th:** GM Vincent Keymer and GM Hans Moke Niemann, 4. **9th-10th:** GM Gukesh Dommaraju and GM David Anton Guijarro, 3½.

GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov won the 8th Prague Masters, held Feb. 24-March 6, with an undefeated 6/9. It's the third classical tournament win in a row for the 21-year-old Uzbek super-GM, after last December's London Chess Classic and the Tata Steel Masters in January and February.

Abdusattorov won against GM Aravindh Chithambaram in Round 1, World Champion Gukesh Dommaraju in Round 5, and GM David Navara in Round 8. He overtook Dutch GM Jorden van Foreest, who started with 4/5 but trailed off, losing to GM Aravindh Chithambaram and Parham Maghsoodloo in the final two rounds. The latter three finished in 2nd-4th with 5.

It was another rough tournament for Gukesh, who won his only game in the final round, against GM David Anton Guijarro, to catch him in a tie for last place with 3½.

The top seed, German GM Vincent Keymer, and fourth-seeded American GM Hans Moke Niemann barely did better, finishing with 4. Abdusattorov extended his lead in the FIDE Circuit with the victory, while the trio in second place also gained points.

Meanwhile, IM Vaclav Finek won the Challengers Tournament with 6½/9, edging out GM Daniil Yuffa by a half-point, while WCM Kaja Rzadzowska won the Futures Tournament with 7/9; WCM Christina Jordan placed second with 6½. And GM Krishnan Sasikiran won the 357-player Open tournament with 8/9 over IM Christian Gloeckler and FM Vladimir-Alexandru Cnejev, 7½.

RUY LOPEZ, BERLIN DEFENSE (C65)

GM Gukesh Dommaraju (2754)
GM Hans Niemann (2725)
8th Prague Masters (1), 02.25.2026

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. d3 Bc5 5. Bxc6 dxc6 6. 0-0 Nd7 7. Nc3 0-0 8. a4 Re8 9. Ne2 Bf8 10. Be3 a5 11. Nd2 b6 12. Kh1 Nc5 13. f4



13. ... Nxd3 14. cxd3 Qxd3 15. Bg1 Ba6 16. Nc1 Qd7 17. Nb1 Rad8 18. Qxd7 Rxd7 19. Rf3 exf4 20. Nc3 Bd6 21. Nd3 g5 22. Nf2 h5 23. Rh3 h4 24. Ng4 Be7 25. g3 fxg3 26. hxg3 Rd3 27. Ne5 Rxc3 28. bxc3 Bc8 29. Kg2 Bf6 30. Nxc6 Rxe4 31. Bd4 Bxh3+ 32. Kxh3 g4+ 33. Kh2 Bxd4 34. Nxd4 h3 35. Ra2 Kf8 36. Rd2 Ke7 37. Nb5 Rc4 38. Re2+ Kd7 39. Rf2 Rxa4 40. Rxf7+ Kc6 41. Na7+ Kd5 42. Rxc7 Ra2+ 43. Kh1 Rg2 44. Nc8 Ke4 45. Nd6+ Kd3 46. c4 Kd4 47. Rc6 a4 48. Rxb6 a3 49. Nb5+ Ke5 50. Nxa3 Rxb3 51. Nb5 Rd3 52. Ra6 Rd1+ 53. Kh2 Rd2+ 54. Kh1 g3 55. Ra1 h2 56. c5 Kf4 57. Nd6 Rc2 58. c6 Ke5 59. Nf7+ Kf5 60. c7 Rxc7 61. Kg2 Rxf7 62. Kxg3, draw.

Navara's Round 5 game against GM Nodirbek Yakubboev won him a best game prize named for Czech-American GM Lubosh Kavalek. It's an early candidate for game of the year.

CATALAN OPENING, CLOSED VARIATION (E08)

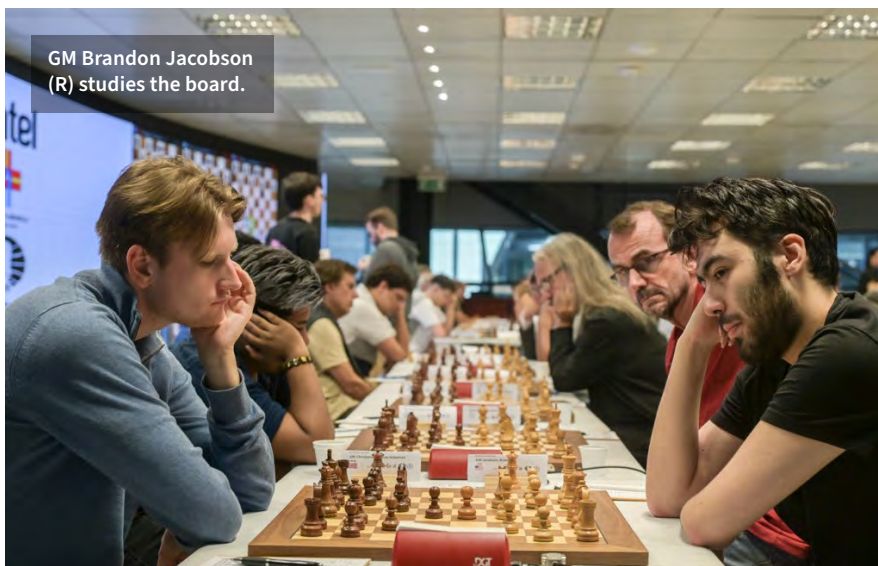
GM David Navara (2628)
GM Nodirbek Yakubboev (2691)
8th Prague Masters (5), 03.01.2026

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 d5 4. Bg2 Be7 5. Nf3 0-0 6. 0-0 Nbd7 7. Qc2 a5 8. Bg5 h6 9. Bxf6 Nxf6 10. Nc3 c6 11. Rfd1 b6 12. e4 dxc4 13. Ne5 Bb7 14. Nxc4 b5 15. Ne3 Rc8 16. Rac1 Qb6 17. e5 Nd5 18. Ne4



18. ... Nb4 19. Qe2 Nxa2 20. Ra1 Nb4 21. Nf6+ Bxf6 22. exf6 Qd8 23. fxg7 Kxg7 24. Ng4 Ra8 25. Qe5+ f6 26. Qxe6 Bc8 27. Qe2 Qd6 28. Ne3 Bd7 29. d5 c5 30. Qxb5 Nc2 31. Qc6 Qe7 32. Qc7 Nxe3 33. d6 Qe6 34. Re1 Ra6 35. Rad1 Qg4 36. h3 Qa4 37. b3 Qxb3 38. Qxd7+ Rf7 39. Qxf7+ Kxf7 40. d7 Nxg2 41. Re7+ Kxe7 42. d8=Q+ Kf7 43. Rd7+ Kg6 44. Qe8+ Kg5 45. Qe4 f5 46. Rg7+ Rg6 47. h4+ Kf6 48. Qe7 mate.

GM Brandon Jacobson (R) studies the board.



QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED (D37)

GM David Navara (2628)
GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov (2751)
8th Prague Masters (8), 03.05.2026

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. Nc3 dxc4 5. e4 b5 6. e5 Nd5 7. Nxb5 Nb6 8. Be2 Nc6 9. Be3 Be7 10. Nc3 0-0 11. a3 Bb7 12. Qc2 Na5 13. h4 Nd5 14. Ng5 g6 15. Nxd5 Bxd5 16. Ne4 c5 17. dxc5 Nb3 18. Rd1 Bxe4 19. Qxe4 Qa5+ 20. Kf1 Rad8 21. Qxc4 Rxd1+ 22. Bxd1 Nd2+ 23. Bxd2 Qxd2 24. Qc2 Qd4 25. c6 Rb8 26. b4 Rd8 27. c7 Rc8 28. g3 Qxe5 29. Qe2 Qxc7 30. Kg2 Bf6 31. h5 Bd4 32. Qe4 Qc6 33. Re1 Kg7 34. Qxc6 Rxc6 35. Re2 Rc3 36. a4 Ra3 37. hxg6 hxg6 38. f4 Bc3 39. b5 Ba5 40. Rb2 Rd3 41. Bf3 Kf6 42. Rc2 Ra3 43. Rc8 Bb6 44. Rb8 Kf5 45. Rf8 Kf6 46. Rb8 e5 47. fxe5+ Kxe5 48. Re8+ Kd6 49. Bd1 Kd7 50. Re4 f5 51. Rc4 Ra2+ 52. Bc2 Ke6



53. g4 Kd5 54. Rc3 Kd4 55. Rc6 Bc5 56. Rxc6 Rxc2+ 57. Kg3 fxc4 58. a5 Rb2 59. Rxc4+ Kc3 60. b6 Bxb6 61. axb6 axb6 62. Rf4 b5 63. Rf3+ Kb4 64. Kf4 Re2, White resigned.

3rd Al-Beruniy Masters

TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN
FEB. 13 - 21, 2026

1st: GM Aram Hakobyan, 5½/9.
2nd-5th: GMs Etienne Bacrot, Shant Sargsyan, Boris Gelfand and Volodar Murzin, 5. 6th-7th: GMs Shamsiddin Vokhidov and Abdimalik Abdusalimov, 4½. 8th-9th: GM Alexander Donchenko and GM Mukhiddin Madaminov, 4. 10th: WGM Afruza Khamdamova, 2½.

Armenian GM Aram Hakobyan, who has played for Webster University in Missouri, won the 3rd Al-Beruniy Masters with 5½/9, a half-point ahead of GMs Etienne Bacrot, Boris Gelfand, Shant Sargsyan, and Volodar Murzin.

GM Mittal Aditya won the Challengers with 6½/9, while IM Aldiyar Ansar won the Futures on tiebreak over IMs Artur Davtyan and Shiroghlan Talibov, all of whom finished with 6/9.

Azerbaijan Championships

The 80th Championships of Azerbaijan, held in Baku Feb. 8-20, were won by sixth-seeded GM Mohammad Muradli, who beat GM Shakhriyar Mamedyarov in the second game of the final to take the title when Mamedyarov was punished for a serious miscalculation on move 12. Muradli was undefeated,

as was Mamedyarov up until the final game. The women's title was won by the top seed, IM Ulviyya Fataliyeva.

CATALAN OPENING (E04)

GM Mahammad Muradli (2581)
GM Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (2727)
80th Azerbaijan Ch (5), Baku,
02.21.2026

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. g3 dxc4 5. Bg2 Bd7 6. Ne5 Bc6 7. Nxc6 Nxc6 8. e3 Qd7 9. Nd2 e5 10. 0-0 exd4 11. exd4 0-0-0 12. Nxc4



12. ... Nxd4? 13. Be3 Bc5 14. b4 Qb5 15. Rc1 Qxb4 16. Rb1 Qxc4 17. Bxb7+ Kd7 18. Rc1 Qb4 19. Rxc5 Qxc5 20. Bxd4 Qd6 21. Qc2 Qxd4 22. Rd1 c5 23. Rxd4+ cxd4 24. Qc5 Ke6 25. Bg2 g5 26. Qxg5 Nd5 27. Qg4+ f5 28. Qxd4 Rhe8 29. Qxa7 Nf6 30. Bf1 Rc8 31. Bh3 Kd5, and Black resigned.

Montevideo Open

MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY
JAN. 30 - FEB. 7

1st: GM Brandon Jacobson, 7½/9. 2nd-4th: GM Johan-Sebastian Christiansen, IM Bernardo Roselli Mailhe, and GM Leonardo Tristan, 7. 5th-8th: IM Pablo Ismael Acosta, IM Facundo Vazquez, IM Franco Villegas, and FM Cristian Sanhueza, 6½. 9th-14th: GM Gilberto Hernandez Guerrero, GM Carlos Horacio Garcia Palermo, IM Claudio Coppola, Ian Ocampos, FM Rafael Muniz, and FM Daniel Izquierdo, 6. 79 players.

American GM Brandon Jacobson started the 9th Montevideo Open with six straight wins and finished in first with 7½/9. The 22-year-old capped off his winning streak with an important victory against GM Johan-Sebastian Christiansen, who finished

8 APRIL 2026 ■ USCHESS.ORG


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Mysterious Shortcuts

A gut-feeling way of finding good moves

BY GM ANDY SOLTIS



LET'S CONDUCT AN EXPERIMENT. Take a look at this position for one minute.

Then choose the move you would play as White.

TAKE YOUR PICK

GM Magnus Carlsen (2837)

GM Wei Yi (2758)

Norway Chess (3), 05.28.2025



WHITE TO MOVE

This is not a "White to play and win" position with one solution. There are several good moves. Just pick the one that most appeals to you.

Once you've done that, take a look at the next diagram. It's a sharper position that comes from a very different opening, and there is more to evaluate.

LOOK IT OVER

GM Maxime Vachier Lagrave (2722)

GM Gukesh Dommaraju (2787)

Superbet Classic (4), Bucharest, 05.10.2025



WHITE TO MOVE

The kings are castled on opposite wings. White controls more space. But there are also tactics. Black may play ... Qg6xg2, for instance. Again, try to quickly choose the move you would play.

Once you've done that, take a look at the final example. What's your sense of the position?

DOUBLE-EDGED

GM Wesley So

GM Fabiano Caruana

Superbet Blitz (9), Zagreb, 07.05.2025



WHITE TO MOVE

White has good winning chances. But Black has kingside play with ... Ra8-f8 followed by ... Nh5-f4 or perhaps an Exchange sac on f3. You won't be able to calculate a lot in one minute. Try to do your best.

Once you've finished, go back to the first diagram. This time, take several minutes to examine it. Consider the alternatives to the move you initially liked. Calculate as much as you want. You may find yourself changing your mind about what move is best. Then reexamine the other two diagrams in the same way.

This isn't a test to see whether you can find the objectively best move. It's an attempt to see whether you have that mysterious quality called intuition.

A version of this was suggested years ago by Viktor Malkin, a Russian psychologist acclaimed for his chess insights. Players who don't change their mind when given more time to pick a move tend to rely on their intuition, Malkin said. Players who do change their mind rely on precise analysis.

For example, when you looked at the first diagram you may have been attracted by 20. Qh5. Or you may have liked 20. Qe2 or 20. Qf3 or 20. Rb1. They are all good. (Computers prefer 20. Qb1, the move Carlsen chose.) If you stuck with that first choice even after your longer look at the diagram, you are probably more intuitive than analytical. And you probably can't explain your intuition.

An intuitive player might like 12. f4 in the second diagram. They may end up playing it, even after taking a good look at 12. Bxb6 or 12. h4. "It just felt right," they may say.

Analytic players are better at explaining why they changed their mind. In the third diagram, they may see how after 20. Nb2 White threatens to take on c7. They might switch to 20. e5 and say later that 20. ... d5 21. Nb2! would positionally improve on their first idea.

Of course, the move that "felt right" can be a blunder. And you can become a very good player — even a great one — without strong intuition.

Mikhail Botvinnik was world champion for more years than Bobby Fischer, Mikhail Tal, Jose Capablanca, and Ding Liren combined. Yet Botvinnik "possessed poor intuition," said his former student GM Alexander Beliavsky.

Botvinnik warned another student, the young Garry Kasparov, that if he relied on intuition he might turn out to be a mere "move first, think later" GM, like Bent Larsen or Mark Taimanov.

But Magnus Carlsen may have the greatest-ever chess intuition. Like world champions Vishy Anand and Jose Capablanca,

QUIZ FOR APRIL

TOURNAMENTS CAN stand out for the number of master games that nourish tactical intuition. An excellent example was the 2022 World Rapid Championship, in Almaty. Although it was a speed event (15 minutes + 10-second increment) there were many sparkling finishes based on instructive patterns.

Your task is to find the fastest winning line of play in these six positions from the tournament. This will typically begin with a forcing move that reveals a recognizable pattern. The tournament was won by — who else? — Magnus Carlsen. Solutions are on page 63.

PROBLEM 1
FM Momchil Petkov
GM Alexei Fedorov



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2
GM Daniil Dubov
GM Nihal Sarin



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3
GM Valentin Dragnev
GM Ahmed Adly



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4
GM Johan-S. Christiansen
GM Vladimir Burmakin



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5
Abilmansur Abdilkhair
Elijah Everett



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6
GM Matthias Bluebaum
GM Mahammad Muradli



WHITE TO MOVE

he typically plays the first move that occurs to him.

"I usually know what I'm going to do after 10 seconds," Carlsen told the *Observer* newspaper in 2015. "If I study a position for an hour, then I'm usually going in loops and I'm probably not going to come up with something useful."

Some GMs believe you are either born with intuition or you aren't. Vassily Smyslov, a deeply religious world champion, called it a divine gift.

But scientists say it is a skill that can be learned. Nobel-winning economist Herbert Simon said it is "nothing more and nothing less" than recognizing a pattern on the board.

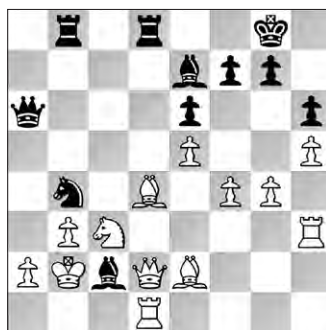
Nikolai Krogius, a grandmaster and psychologist, said this can be learned by the "conscious unremitting effort" of studying games.

SPOT IT

GM Hikaru Nakamura (2775)
GM Fabiano Caruana (2764)
Chessable Masters (4), 04.07.2023

(see diagram top of next column)

Black should win eventually if he moves his attacked queen to a safe square such as a5



BLACK TO MOVE

or a8. But a player who has mentally stored mating patterns will spot **27. ... Qa3+!**.

The pattern — 28. Kxa3 Nd3+ 29. Ka4 Rb4+ 30. Ka5 Ra8+ mates — is hidden. Other tries are 29. b4 Bxb4 mate and 29. Bc5 Ra8+ 30. Na4 Bxc5+ 31. b4 Rxa4 mate. Only a few of the 24 pieces and pawns are needed to make 27. ... Qa3+! work. (White resigned after 28. Ka1 Bxd1.)

This happened in a speed tournament (10 minutes plus 2 seconds increment). Masters have a natural advantage in such events because they spot patterns with baffling quickness — the way major league batters or tennis pros react well before the ball reaches them.

In their book *The Psychology of Chess* IM William Hartston and P.C. Wason cited an experiment in which strong players were shown positions from famous games and obscure games. The masters were asked to quickly determine which positions they recognized. They took an average of 0.8 seconds to answer correctly.

Many of today's young masters believe you can acquire intuition by clicking their way through software. But Ljubomir Ljubojevic, the world's No. 3-rated player in the Karpov-Kasparov era, suggested this is harmful. "The computer is killing intuition," he said on the *chess-news.ru* website.

When a talented young player looks at a computer screen they will see a move they like, Ljubojevic said. "But the computer corrects you: 'No, it's not a good move. It's better to play this way.' And the young man loses faith in himself."

Who is right? It's undoubtedly true that memorizing mating patterns will help you solve "White to play and win" quizzes.

But the vast majority of chess positions you face are like the diagrams that began this column; they lack distinct patterns. Yet Carlsen and his colleagues see something in them, and they do it quickly. How they do this remains a mystery. ♠

Hiding in Plain Sight

A king on the run can be safer than you think.

BY IM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN



LAST MONTH, WE EXPLORED the timely king march ahead of an opponent's attack. Ideally, the king would leave his home

for safety before the enemy army arrives, but in reality the king isn't always so lucky. If the attack has already arrived, the monarch might just have to run for his life instead of taking a dignified walk. In this column we will explore some examples of a king successfully running away from an attack.

Opposite-colored bishops

Many columns ago, we discussed how to launch an attack with opposite-colored bishops, as our opponent's bishop cannot defend the squares our bishop is attacking. On the flip side, if the king starts running on squares opposite in color to our bishop, that makes our bishop rather useless.

YOU CAN'T CATCH ME

IM Stephen Muhammad (2384)
FM Ray Robson (2368)
North American FIDE Open (2),
Chicago, 10.28.2007

(see diagram top of next column)

Objectively, Black is losing, but the position requires some precision from White, as we will see down the road. The black king is in a lot of trouble here, forcing the 13-year-old Ray Robson to make a hard decision.



BLACK TO MOVE

23. ... Kf8

He decides to make a run for it. If 23. ... Kh8 the simple 24. Qf3! hits both the f6-pawn and the undefended rook on a8. Remember: Loose pieces is how we lose material! After 24. ... Rg8 25. Qxf6+ Rg7 26. Rd1 White is up a pawn and the attack continues. Black has no counterattack along the g-file; White can stop all threats by simply playing g2-g3.

24. Qe4

Attacking the same loose rook to pick up the h7-pawn.

24. ... Rb8 25. Qxh7 cxd4 26. cxd4 Rb7 27. h4 Qa4 28. Rc1 Qd7

The queen goes back to stop the white rook coming to c8. Black can't really do much here, because the queen has to stay on d7 defending the f7-pawn. However, in order for White to keep advancing the h-pawn, the h5-bishop will have to move, thus relieving the pressure on the f7-pawn.

29. g3 Rb8 30. d5

White is trying to open some more files to

move his attack forward.

30. ... Be5

Not 30. ... exd5? when White wins with 31. Re1! (threatening 32. Qh8 mate) 31. ... Be5 32. Qh8+ Ke7 33. Qxb8.

31. Re1 Rb2 32. Qh8+

This is still good but White already has a tactical win here with 32. Rxe5 fxe5 33. d6!, taking away the escape square from the queen. The pawn cannot be captured as the queen has to defend the f7-pawn, and checkmate on h8 is now inevitable.

32. ... Ke7 33. Qg8 Qxd5 34. Qxf7+



34. ... Kd6

And thus the forced march of the king begins.

35. Qf8+

The quiet move 35. Rc1!, keeping the king boxed in the center and threatening mate on c7, would have sealed the deal.

35. ... Kc7 36. Rd1 Bd4

Life has significantly improved for Black. His king now has the defense of his army,

and we see how dangerous his dark-squared bishop is becoming, especially compared to White's bishop.

37. Rc1+ Kb6 38. Qb8+ Ka5

The king has finally arrived at a safe haven. With the exception of the queen, all of Black's pieces are on dark squares, helping him hide from checks. Even though the black king has run across the board and the white king is still sitting in his castled position, the black king has the safer home of the two.

39. Qc7+ Ka6 40. Rc6+?

The fatal Move 40 mistake. Of course White wants to keep attacking, but in reality he should have been more concerned about the safety of his own king. It's not always easy to sense when the advantage has slipped away from us and we need to backtrack, especially when we were on the better side for most of the game.

It was time for White to simply come back and defend with 40. Rf1!, then try to make progress with the h-pawn.

40. ... Bb6



The black king is perfectly safe, while the white king has no defenders.

41. Qc8+ Kb5 42. a4+?

It was really time for White to give up on the dream of hunting down the slippery king.

White's only chance at this point was to get rid of the menacing bishop with 42. Rxb6+!. After 42. ... axb6 43. Qc1 White has good compensation for the Exchange thanks to his passed h-pawn and the bishop.

42. ... Kb4 43. Qf8+ Kb3 44. Rxb6+

Realizing that he is about to get checkmated himself, White finally sacrifices the rook, but it is too late now.

44. ... axb6 45. Bg6 Qf3, White resigned.

The tables have completely turned — check-

mate is now inevitable for White.

While Ray was objectively losing for a large portion of the game, he managed to run his king to safety on the dark squares. At first the bishop on h5 was a great attacking piece, eyeing the f7-pawn and forcing the black queen to stay put defending it, but we saw how inefficient the bishop became as the king started running on the dark squares. White had several chances to seal the deal by boxing in the king, but instead let him find safety on the other side of the board.

In the next example, White starts down the Exchange, but we see a similar concept in action.

A HERO'S JOURNEY

GM Daniil Dubov (2720)

GM Vidit Santosh Gujrathi (2727)

Tata Steel (3), Wijk aan Zee, 01.17.2022



WHITE TO MOVE

The black king is quite exposed, but Dubov doesn't have enough attacking power to cause a lot of damage.

25. Rxe4 Rd1+!

A very important intermediate move. The immediate 25. ... Re5 is not accurate because Black won't have a good way of facing the check after 26. Qc6+ Kf8 (if 26. ... Rd7 27. Qg6+ Kd8 28. Qg8+ Qe8 29. Rxe5, taking advantage of the pin to pick up a piece) 27. Qxh6+ Ke8 28. Qh8+, picking up the rook next.

26. Kh2 Re5 27. Qc6+ Kd8!

The correct square for the king. 27. ... Kf8? would be the wrong direction, losing as in the previous note: 28. Qxh6+ and again the e5-rook will fall: 28. ... Ke8 29. Qh8+ Kd7 30. Qxe5.

28. Qa8+ Kd7 29. Bb5+ Ke6 30. Qc8+ Kf6

31. Qh8+ Kf5



POSITION AFTER 31. ... Kf5

The hero king is surviving. While the b5-bishop is playing an important role in the attack and taking away some squares from the black king, so far the king has managed to survive on the dark squares, and is now safe on f5 — the bishop cannot check it.

32. f3?

Just as in the previous game, White should have realized that there is no attack and taken the perpetual with 32. Qc8+ Kf6 33. Qh8+ Kf5 34. Qc8+.

32. ... Rxe4 33. fxe4+

Black is winning after 33. g4+ Kf4, when the king is safe and Black has too many pieces.

33. ... Kxe4 34. Qa8+ Ke3 35. Bc6

If 35. Qf3+ Kd2 36. Qf2+ Kc1, it looks like Black has castled queenside on the other side of the board! The king is perfectly safe here and White has no attackers. The white king is so exposed that it will either get attacked or Black will find a way to force a queen trade with checks.

35. ... Qe5+ 36. g3 g4

With the big threat of ... Qe5-h5-h1 mate. Black is completely winning here.

37. Qa7+ Kd2, White resigned.

In this game too, the black king found safety on the dark squares and White did not have enough attacking power to cause any real harm. As an attacking duo, the queen-and-bishop combination can be very effective when bishop covers one color and the queen takes over on the opposite color. In both of these examples, we saw that the king was actually much safer when it was out and about on the dark squares.

Not all king hunts end in a checkmate, and sometimes simply running away from the attack is the best survival method for the attacked king. ♠



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My father taught me how to play chess.

And that is called a checkmate.



A game I didn't win for a very long time.

His favorite thing to do was to beat me quickly using the Scholar's Mate, which he called—

The Napoleon!



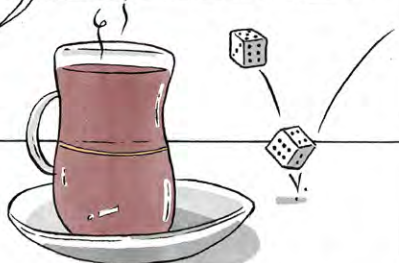
Eventually it stopped working.

Uh, knight to f6.



Over the years, we continued to play chess, though my father always preferred backgammon, which he grew up playing in Iran.

I swear, you're doing something fishy with those dice.



And which I could never beat him at.

The last time we played chess, I knew it would be our last game.

You can't move there, remember?



He had grown more and more forgetful.

I started to study chess seriously after he died.



Definitely not me just avoiding my grief.

I flew home to help my mom and sister sort through his room.

Mom, can I have his chess set?



I mostly play online now, where occasionally someone will attempt a Scholar's Mate. My first thought is—



My second thought is of my father.

Knight to f6.



Navied

MAKE → YOUR → MOVE

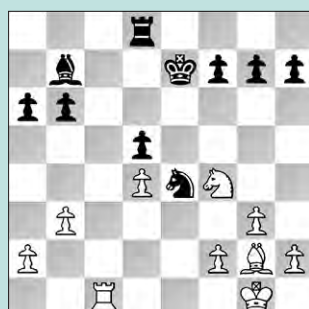
BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM THE ANNUAL Tata Steel Tournament in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands, in January. 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 gradually expand your tactical vision and you'll be more likely to spot tactics 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.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 3.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 4.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 5.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 6.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 7.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 8.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



WHITE TO MOVE

Position 1: HOUSE OF CARDS

Position 2: NO NEED FOR EXCHANGES

Position 3: OPEN THE DOORS

Position 4: RUDE CASTLE ENTRY

Position 5: POKE A HOLE WHERE IT HURTS

Position 6: FORCE REDIRECTION

Position 7: A SPANNER IN THE WORKS

Position 8: POWER THROUGH

Position 9: EXPLOIT DISCOORDINATION

Doubled Over

Carlsen wins the World Rapid and Blitz titles — again — while the Women's Rapid goes to a playoff and the Women's Blitz sees a familiar winner.

BY **WGM JENNIFER YU**



HUNDREDS OF THE world's best chess-players gathered once again between Christmas and New Year's for the World Rapid and Blitz Championships.

The 2025 edition brought players to Doha, Qatar; even though futuristic skyscrapers towered over the desert horizon, for five days all eyes were on the tournament that crowns four world champions.

This was my third World Rapid and Blitz, and the atmosphere in Doha felt noticeably different. For one thing, players were required to stay in official hotels, and the Open and Women's events were held in the same venue. That meant constantly running into world champions and top grandmasters throughout the day at breakfast, in hotel elevators, and on the shuttle ride to the playing hall. Over the board, clocks were slammed and adrenaline ran high, but minutes later, opponents could be found in the lounge relaxing, analyzing games, or joking with friends.

Speed chess thrives on volatility; blunders are inevitable in time scrambles and winning positions can collapse in seconds, and unlike in classical tournaments, there is almost no time to prepare between games. Losses must be processed not overnight but in minutes. Resilience is key in rapid chess. Momentum swings constantly, and the ability to reset mentally after a mistake becomes just as important as calculating moves. Even when the computer declares a position winning or losing, the reality over the board is far more complicated, and strong players can introduce complications and generate chances for their opponent to make mistakes. In that sense, players can often manufacture their own luck by continuing to pose practical problems.

The result is a tournament that reliably

PHOTOS: LENNART OOTES

produces some of the year's most dramatic moments, viral highlights, improbable comebacks, and controversies, from last year's infamous "jeansgate" to several unforgettable moments in Doha, many of which once again involved Magnus Carlsen, who took home both crowns. When the games finally began, the chaos of speed chess quickly lived up to its reputation.

OPEN RAPID

Carlsen captured his sixth World Rapid Championship with a score of 10½/13, one point clear of GMs Vladislav Artemiev and Arjun Erigaisi, who claimed the silver and bronze medals on tiebreaks over American GMs Hans Niemann and Leinier Dominguez Perez. The tournament was played over three days at a time control of G/15 with a 10-second increment.

Carlsen ultimately dominated the event with the highest World Rapid score of his career, but not without obstacles.

After the first day, five players shared the lead with 4½/5: Carlsen, Erigaisi, Artemiev, Classical World Champion Gukesh Dommaraju and GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave.

On the second day, Artemiev defeated Erigaisi and Carlsen in successive rounds to take the sole lead with 6½/7. His victories illustrated the unpredictability and quick-turn that characterize rapid chess: Artemiev was in a dire situation against Erigaisi, down material and nearly 10 minutes behind on the clock, but as Erigaisi burned time searching for a clean conversion, Artemiev generated enough practical counterplay to turn the game around and win. Against Carlsen, Artemiev was again dangerously low on time by the middlegame. However, Carlsen blundered, immediately losing an Exchange and the game. The loss produced the event's first viral moment when Carlsen pushed away a camera in exasperation as he left the board.

Despite the setback and his visible frustration, Carlsen's resilience proved decisive, as he won every game until the last round. Meanwhile, Artemiev bogged down, drawing the remainder of his games. Safe draws against Vachier-Lagrave and GM Alexey Sarana in the remaining rounds of Day 2 left the door open for the chasing pack, and Niemann ended the second day on 7½/9 to share the lead with Artemiev, a half-point ahead of Carlsen, Sarana, the 14-year-old Turkish prodigy GM Yağiz Kaan Erdogmus (the youngest player to cross 2600 earlier

this year), and GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov. Abdusattorov had staged a strong comeback with three consecutive wins, including a victory over Gukesh, after a devastating Move 10 blunder the previous day — a reminder that mistakes happen but do not have to define a tournament performance.

The final day of the Rapid began with a draw between co-leaders Artemiev and Niemann. Carlsen caught up to the leaders with a convincing win over Sarana, and a victory over Niemann in the following round then gave Carlsen the sole lead, while Artemiev's sequence of draws continued. Meanwhile, after drawing Abdusattorov and defeating Erigaisi, Erdogmus entered Round 12 just a half-point behind Carlsen, tied with Artemiev.

RUY LOPEZ, BREYER DEFENSE (C95)

GM Yagiz Erdogmus (2446)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2824)

World Rapid Ch (12), Doha, 12.28.2025

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 0-0 8. c3 d6 9. h3 Nb8 10. d4 Nbd7 11. Nbd2 Bb7 12. Bc2 Re8 13. Nf1 Bf8 14. Ng3 a5 15. Bd3 b4 16. Bd2

c6 17. Nf5 bxc3 18. bxc3 Ba6 19. Bxa6 Rxa6 20. Qc2 Qc7 21. Rab1 Rb6 22. dxe5 dxe5



After a relatively normal opening and middlegame, Carlsen slowly outplays his prodigy opponent positionally by using the weakness of the dark squares.

23. c4?!

Attacking the a-pawn, but also permanently weakening the d4-square. Carlsen seizes the initiative by bringing his knight to c5 to attack the e4-pawn and force Erdogmus' pieces backwards. It's equal after 23. Be3 Rxb1 24. Rxb1 Nc5 25. Nd2.

23. ... Rxb1 24. Rxb1 Nc5 25. Ng3 Nfd7 26. Be3 g6 27. Nf1 Ne6

Our author WGM
Jennifer Yu





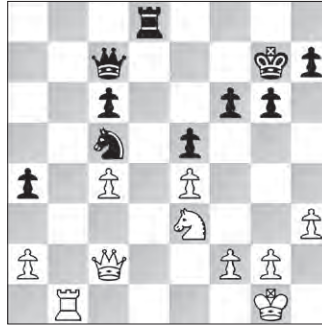
GM Leinier Dominguez

Positioning the knight to jump to d4 and to put the bishop on c5.

28. N1d2 Bc5 29. Bxc5 Ndx c5 30. Nb3 f6 31. Nxc5 Nxc5 32. Nd2 a4

An instructive move, preventing a challenge to the strong c5-knight with Nd2-b3.

33. Nf1 Rd8 34. Ne3 Kg7



35. Qc1?!

Erdogmus sacrifices his e-pawn in desperation to create play. But after 35. f3 Rd3 Erdogmus had a trick to maintain equality with 36. Kh2!, getting the king off the back rank and g1-a7 diagonal before Carlsen has a chance to infiltrate the d-file. Play could go 36. ... Qd6 (White's at least equal after 36. ... Rxe3?! 37. Qf2! Rd3 38. Qxc5 [or 37. ... Ra3?! 38. Qxc5 Rxa2 39. Rb6]) 37. Rd1.

35. ... Nxe4 36. c5 h5

White plans to double up on the b-file and infiltrate the seventh rank, so Carlsen creates *luft* for the king to escape to h6. But 36. ... Rd4! 37. Rb6 h5 was better, transposing to the game without allowing the possibility in the next note.

37. Rb6

Erdogmus had a chance to get his pawn back with a double attack: 37. Rb4! Rd4 38. Qb2 Rd2 (White's activity and Black's weak king is more than enough compensation for the pawn after 38. ... Qd8 39. Rb8 Qe7 40. Qb6) 39. Qc1 Rd4 40. Qb2.

37. ... Rd4

Defending the a4-pawn and stopping the previous idea.

38. Ra6 Qb7 39. Rb6 Qd7 40. Qb2 Rd2

41. Qb4

Too many white pawns are hanging after 41. Rb7 Rxb2 42. Rxd7+ Kh6.

41. ... Qd4!

Escaping the seventh-rank pin threat and absolutely dominating the position.

42. Rb7+ Kh6 43. Qc4 Qxc4 44. Nxc4 Rxa2 45. Nd6 Nxd6 46. cxd6 Rd2 47. d7 a3 48. Ra7 h4 49. Rxa3 Rxd7 50. Rc3 Rd1+ 51. Kh2 Rd6 52. Rc4 Kg5, White resigned.

Carlsen's victory effectively won the tournament: Entering the final round he led with 10/12, a full point ahead of Artemiev and Niemann, while a pack of nine players followed on 8½.

A rather peaceful final round ensued. Carlsen safely drew GM Anish Giri to secure the title with 10½, while Artemiev drew GM Wesley So and Niemann drew Vachier-Lagrave, leaving both on 9½. This meant players from the pack could reach the podium with a final-round victory and favorable tiebreaks. Erigaisi defeated GM Alexandr Shimanov while Dominguez beat Erdogmus, allowing both players to join the four-way tie for second place. On tiebreaks, Artemiev secured his second World Rapid silver medal, while Erigaisi claimed his first World Rapid medal with bronze.

WOMEN'S RAPID

GM Aleksandra Goryachkina, GM Zhu Jiner, and defending champion GM Humpy Koneru all finished with 8½/11, with Goryachkina and Zhu advancing on tiebreaks to a blitz playoff and Goryachkina capturing the title. Her victory felt quite fitting for a tournament in which she steadily climbed the standings — proof that even in rapid chess, slow and steady can sometimes win the race.

Zhu won all four games on the first day to take the lead but drew all three games on Day 2. After Round 6, a remarkable 16 players were clustered between 4½ and 5 points. The leaderboard became a push-and-pull for the rest of the day: Small groups of players would break ahead with wins while others drew, only for the chasing pack to catch up later.

Going into the last day, Zhu and Humpy shared the lead with 6½/8, while 10 players sat just a half-point behind. Many draws on the top boards were eventful, with several players once again showing resilience to escape difficult positions and remain in the title race. Goryachkina, for instance, narrowly held against Humpy in the final round of the day, while Humpy herself had earlier turned a lost position against IM Yana Zhapova into a win.

Goryachkina, Zhu, and Humpy entered the final round tied for first with 8/10, but



GM Magnus Carlsen



GM Aleksandra Goryachkina

as all three leaders had already played, the final pairings left the outcome completely uncertain.

PIRC DEFENSE (B07)

GM Aleksandra Goryachkina (2505)
WIM Bat-Erdene Mungunzul (2288)
World Women's Rapid Ch (10), Doha,
12.28.2025

1. e4 d6 2. d4 Nf6 3. Nc3 g6 4. Be3 a6
5. Nf3 b5 6. e5 Ng4

This is a rare line; at this point there are only seven games from this position, three of which are Goryachkina's! She completely dominates here with the crushing space advantage granted by Black's dubious opening choice.

7. Ng5

A strong idea, especially the way Goryachkina follows it up, immediately launching an attack.

7. ... f6 8. Qf3 c6



9. e6!

A killer move, securing the f7-square and preventing the black pieces from developing.

9. ... Nh6

Defending f7 and threatening to capture the white knight. If 9. ... Nxe3 10. fxe3 Qa5 11. Nf7; of course 9. ... fxe5?? 10. Qf7 is checkmate.

10. h4! Bg7

If 10. ... fxe5 11. hxe5 Nf5 (11. ... Bxe6 12. gxe6 and Black cannot develop the kingside, while White will soon have all her pieces out to attack) 12. d5 White is positionally winning and will soon get the piece back.

11. Bd3 fxe5 12. hxe5 Bxe6 13. gxe6 Bf6
14. Ne4

Removing the dark-squared bishop, which is crucial to the defense of the king.

14. ... Bd5 15. Nxf6+ exf6 16. Qg3 Kd7
Not 16. ... 0-0? 17. Bxg6!

17. 0-0

Goryachkina's plan is simple but crushing: develop all her pieces and attack the king stuck in the center.

17. ... Kc7 18. b3 Bf7 19. c4 Kb7 20. d5



Undermining the defense of the b5-pawn and opening up a path for White's dark-squared bishop. Goryachkina's following moves are natural and strong, wrapping up the game without giving Mungunzul a chance to breathe.

20. ... c5 21. cxb5 Qb6 22. a4 Bxd5 23. Rfd1 Rd8 24. a5 Qc7 25. bxa6+ Ka7 26. b4 Nd7 27. b5 Bb3 28. Rdb1, Black resigned.

The final round produced one of the most dramatic finishes of the championships. Although all three leaders ultimately drew their games, each encounter contained missed winning chances that could have decided the title outright.

Zhu appeared to be on the verge of victory after winning a pawn and obtaining a dominant position against GM Tan Zhongyi, but Tan sacrificed more material to generate counterplay and ultimately held despite being down two pieces at one point. Humpy also came agonizingly close to winning the tournament outright against IM Savitha Shri, but one inaccuracy in a winning opposite-colored bishop endgame allowed Shri to hold. IM Ekaterina Atalik outplayed Goryachkina in an endgame but grabbed a pawn too early, allowing Goryachkina's pieces to activate.

The playoff between Goryachkina and Zhu consisted of two 3+2 blitz games. In the first game, Goryachkina outplayed Zhu positionally in a Ruy Lopez, converting her advantage with excellent technique. Facing elimination, Zhu needed to win the second game but was unable to generate real chances. Goryachkina forced a perpetual

in a winning endgame to wrap up her first Women's World Rapid Championship title.

OPEN BLITZ

Carlsen defeated Abdusattorov to win the World Blitz Championship, securing his ninth Blitz title and 20th world championship across all formats. It's also the fifth time he has won both the Rapid and Blitz titles in the same year, further cementing his reputation as chess's GOAT. Abdusattorov took home silver while Erigaisi and U.S. Champion GM Fabiano Caruana shared bronze.

The blitz championship is essentially two tournaments in one: a 19-round Swiss (3+2) followed by a four-player knockout of four-game matches. With only four qualification spots, down from eight the previous year, the last Swiss rounds became especially tense.

The blitz proved far more turbulent than the Rapid: The standout performer of the Swiss was Erigaisi, while, after blunders and forfeits, Carlsen was in a must-win situation simply to qualify for the knockout.

As expected, the early rounds were full of surprises. GM Jorden van Foreest began the tournament with six consecutive wins, defeating both GM Alireza Firouzja and Erigaisi, who blundered a rook in one move.



GM Levon Aronian
and friends

Erigaisi quickly recovered and went on to score key victories over Carlsen and Abdusattorov, emerging as one of the leaders. Abdusattorov rebounded from an early upset with an impressive 6½/7 run to join the lead for a time, and Vachier-Lagrave also recovered from an early blunder to surge into contention.

While these players built momentum, one of the tournament's most viral moments came in Carlsen's game against Erigaisi: With only seconds on the clock, Carlsen's queen slipped from his hand and flew off the board, causing him to lose on time. The bizarre finish quickly circulated across social media, especially after Carlsen slammed the table in frustration. Just a few rounds later, Carlsen blundered an entire rook in a pawn-up endgame against Caruana. When the dust settled after the first day, Erigaisi, Vachier-Lagrave, and Caruana shared the lead with 10/13, while Carlsen stayed in striking distance with 9.

The following day brought even more drama for Carlsen. Against GM Haik Martirosyan, he knocked pieces over while scrambling and paused the clock before adjusting them, an infraction that resulted in a forfeit. At that point, Carlsen's chances of reaching the knockout appeared precarious. More troubling was the simplicity of his mistakes, which can be especially frustrating

and psychologically difficult to recover from.

Meanwhile, Erigaisi continued his dominant run, with four victories and two draws to finish the Swiss with 15/19, a full point ahead of the field. Caruana followed with 14, earning the second qualification spot.

Despite his earlier mishaps, Carlsen surged at the finish with four consecutive wins followed by a final-round draw against Abdusattorov to secure the third qualifying spot with 13½/19. Six players ultimately finished on 13/19: GMs Abdusattorov, Vachier-Lagrave, Wesley So, Nihal Sarin, 19-year-old Denis Lazavik, and Maxim Matlakov. Abdusattorov secured the final qualifying spot on tiebreaks.

KNOCKOUT

The Swiss standings determined the pairings: Erigaisi (1) faced Abdusattorov (4) while Caruana (2) played Carlsen (3). Other than that, every player's slate was wiped clean.

Despite Erigaisi's dominant Swiss performance, Abdusattorov controlled the match from the start. In the other semifinal, Carlsen and Caruana began with two fighting draws. Carlsen then outplayed Caruana in a complex endgame to take the lead before winning the final game with a powerful attacking performance, winning the match 3–1.

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B50)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2881)

GM Fabiano Caruana (2751)

World Blitz Ch semifinal (4), 12.30.2025

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3 Nc6 5. 0-0 e6 6. a4 Be7 7. Bb3 Na5 8. Ba2 0-0 9. Nbd2 b6 10. Re1 Ba6 11. Nf1 Rc8 12. c3 d5 13. e5 Nd7 14. Ng3 d4

Caruana offers an interesting sacrifice to activate his pieces and undermine White's center pawns. If 15. cxd4 Bb7 stopping d4-d5. Now if 16. dxc5 Bxf3 17. Qxf3 Nc6! Black has good compensation with control of the center.

15. h4!



A creative idea by Carlsen to launch a king-side attack out of seemingly nowhere. This



Caruana
versus Carlsen

anchors the g5-square for the white pieces and can create weaknesses in Black's kingside with h4-h5-h6.

15. ... Nc6

15. ... Bxh4? loses a piece to 16. b4! followed by 17. b5.

16. Re4

Defending the h4-pawn and preparing to develop the queen while possibly swinging the rook over to the kingside.

16. ... Bb7 17. Qe2 Kh8 18. Bd2 a6 19. Re1 b5

Carlsen's space advantage has become apparent over the last few moves, and after developing all his pieces, he is ready to act.

20. Ng5! h6



Caruana prevents one threat but allows a different tactical sequence.

If Black fails to respond to the threat with something like 20. ... bxa4, Carlsen's threat was 21. Nxh7! Kxh7 22. Qh5+ Kg8 23. Rg4 with a mating attack: 23. ... Ncxe5 24. Rxg7+! Kxg7 25. Qh6+ Kg8 26. Rxe5! Nxe5 27. Nh5!. A good demonstration of why developing all your pieces before attacking is necessary!

Exchanging the strong knight with 20. ... Bxg5 does not solve Black's problems, since it offers another concession by opening up the h-file: 21. hxg5 Qc7 22. Rh4 Ncxe5 23. Qh5.

21. Nxf7+! Rxf7 22. Bxe6 Ncxe5

If 22. ... Rf8? Black's king is too weak after 23. Bxh6! gxh6 24. Qh5.

23. Rxe5 Nxe5 24. Bxf7 Bf6

After 24. ... Nxf7 25. Qxe7 Qd5 26. f3 Black does not have enough counterplay and White is up a solid pawn with active pieces.

25. Be6 Rc6 26. Bf5 Bc8 27. cxd4

27. f4 also wins: 27. ... Bxf5 28. fxe5 Bxh4 29. Nxf5 Bxe1 30. Bxe1.

27. ... Bxf5

If 27. ... cxd4 28. f4! the black knight cannot move due to the back-rank mate, and the endgame is winning for White after 28. ... Bxf5 29. fxe5 Bxh4 30. Nxf5 Bxe1 31. Bxe1 as the minor pieces dominate the rook. Meanwhile, if 27. ... Qxd4 28. Bc3 followed by taking on e5.

28. dxe5 Bxd3 29. Qf3

The c6-rook and f6-bishop are attacked, and White wins a full piece.

29. ... Re6 30. exf6 Rxf6 31. Qe3 Rf8 32.

axb5 axb5 33. Bc3 Kh7 34. Qxc5 Rf7 35.

Rd1 Rd7 36. Qe3 Rd5 37. Nh5 Rxh5 38.

Qxd3+, Black resigned.

The final began with a bang when Carlsen pushed aggressively in an equal endgame and almost hung a knight as he grabbed his rook. Forced to defend with the rook by the touch-move rule, he was left in a losing position that Abdusattorov converted. Carlsen recovered immediately by winning a drawn knight endgame, creating chances from seemingly nothing. After a precise draw in Game 3, Abdusattorov cracked under mounting pressure and severe time trouble in the last game, allowing Carlsen to secure both the match and the championship.

WOMEN'S BLITZ

Similar to the Open, the tournament used a 15-round Swiss format, with the top four players advancing to a knockout stage, won by GM Bibisara Assaubayeva over GM Anna Muzychuk 2½-1½ in the final.

After the first day, 19-year-old Dutch IM Eline Roebers led the field with 8½/10, closing the day with six consecutive wins, including a victory over newly crowned Women's Rapid Champion Goryachkina. Roebers' performance was not entirely surprising: Earlier in the year she had achieved the highest-ever women's blitz rating on Chess.com.

Close behind were Goryachkina, WIM Umida Omonova, and GM Antoaneta Stefanova on 8/10. IM Song Yuxin and Assaubayeva were on 7½, while Muzychuk, GM Valentina Gunina, and IM Leya Garifullina were among a large group on 7.

The second day consisted of five rounds, and after nearly every one, a new leader emerged: Assaubayeva defeated Roebers, surging into the sole lead during a run of six consecutive wins; then Gunina, herself riding a seven-game winning streak, defeated

her to take over the tournament lead with 11/14 heading into the final round.

Meanwhile, GM Zhu Jiner had one of the most impressive comebacks of the tournament. After scoring 6/10 on the first day, she won all her games on the second day, including a crucial victory over Roebers in the penultimate round. That result left both players on 10/14, chasing the leaders alongside Stefanova, Song, Muzychuk, and Garifullina. With the top eight players paired against each other, the final round was guaranteed to be an entertaining showdown.

Zhu continued her surge by defeating Song, while Roebers took down Garifullina, bringing them to 11/15. Assaubayeva joined them on 11 after escaping from a losing position to draw against Stefanova.

Gunina obtained a winning position against Muzychuk — she was up a full piece and even declined a draw offer that would have guaranteed qualification. But she blundered under time pressure and lost, allowing Muzychuk to catch up with 11. Assaubayeva, Muzychuk, Roebers, and Zhu advanced to the knockout as Gunina finished a mere half a tiebreak point short.

KNOCKOUT

Assaubayeva quickly put the turbulence of the Swiss behind her and dominated the knockout stage. She defeated Zhu in the semifinal 3-0, controlling the match from start to finish and also securing the final Women's Candidates spot through the FIDE Women's Events series.

Muzychuk won the other semifinal against Roebers, 2½-1½, winning the last game with an excellent attack.





GM Wesley So



GM Hans Niemann



IM Carissa Yip

The final began with three tense draws; everything came down to the final game.

ENGLISH OPENING (A22)

GM Bibisara Assaubayeva (2428)

GM Anna Muzychuk (2397)

World Women's Blitz Ch Final (4),

Doha, 12.30.2025

1. Nf3 c5 2. c4 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. g3 d5
5. cxd5 Nxd5 6. Bg2 Nxc3 7. bxc3 e5 8. 0-0
Be7 9. d3 0-0 10. Rb1 Qc7 11. Nd2 Rb8
12. Nc4 Be6 13. Qa4 f6 14. Ne3

A standard idea to maneuver the knight to the d5-hole with support from c3-c4.

14. ... Rfd8 15. Re1

Assaubayeva may have wanted to avoid 15. c4 Nd4 16. Re1 b5 17. cxb5 Qd7.

15. ... Bf8

An interesting way to counter Assaubayeva's plan is with 15. ... a6 16. Bd2 (or 16. c4 Nb4 17. a3 b5 18. Qd1 Nc6 when Black gets ... b7-b5 in anyway and has a much better version of the game) 16. ... b5! 17. Qxa6 Rb6 18. Qa3 c4 19. Qb2 cxd3 with an active, playable position for both sides.

16. c4 Bd7 17. Nd5 Qd6 18. Qa3 b6 19. Bd2 Rbc8 20. h4



White begins her kingside attack, an especially strong idea with the short time control. Black struggles to defend and Assaubayeva quickly plays strong, natural moves to provoke weaknesses.

20. ... Bg4 21. Ne3 Bd7 22. h5 Kh8 23. Nd5 Bg4 24. h6 g6?! 25. Ne3?!

White could play 25. f4! opening up the f-file and the dark squares to break through Black's defenses. If 25. ... Rd7 26. fxe5 Qxe5 27. Bf4 Qe6 28. Qb2 with lots of pressure. Assaubayeva may have wanted to avoid this because of the scary-looking complications of 25. f4! Bxh6 26. fxe5 Qf8 27. Bxh6 Qxh6 28. exf6 Nd4 29. Qb2 Rxd5 30. Bxd5 Qe3+

31. Kg2, but the white king is defended and White will soon kick out the black queen and enjoy a material advantage: 31. ... Bxe2 32. f7 Qxd3 (32. ... Rf8 33. Qc1 Qxd3 34. Qf4) 33. Rbd1!.

25. ... Be6?!

Both players missed that the knight cuts off the defense of the h6-pawn, and so 25. ... Bxh6 26. Bxc6 Qxc6 27. Qxa7 Rd6 equalizes.

26. Nd5 Bg4 27. Be3 Rd7 28. Qa4 Nd4 29. Bxd4

Better was 29. f3! Bf5 30. g4 Be6 31. Nxf6 grabbing a pawn.

29. ... exd4 30. e3 Bxh6 31. exd4 cxd4 32. Re4 Bf5

Missing 32. ... f5 to activate the bishop: 33. Rxd4 Bg7 34. c5 bxc5 35. Rc4 and Black is slightly better.

33. Rxd4 Qe5 34. Rh4 Bg7?!



Black needs to defend actively with 34. ... Bg5. Assaubayeva punishes this retreat by neutralizing the strong f5-bishop, after which she can improve the rest of her pieces. This is the moment where she grabs the steering wheel and never lets go.

35. Be4! Rcd8 36. Bxf5 Qxf5 37. Re4

Taking over the e-file.

37. ... h5 38. Rbe1 Qf3 39. R1e3 Qf5 40. Qc6

Look at what has happened in the last five moves. Assaubayeva has put her pieces on all the best squares, and it is difficult for Muzychuk to find a move. The d5-knight dominates the center.

40. ... Kh7 41. Kg2 Rd6 42. Qc7 R6d7 43.

Qc6 Rd6 44. Qa4 R6d7 45. Re7 Kh6 46. Rf3 Qg5 47. Rxd7, Black resigned.

This is Assaubayeva's third World Women's Blitz title, at only 21 years of age. Muzychuk finished with silver, while Zhu and Roebers took bronze. ♡

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OUR HERITAGE 2025 US CHESS YEARBOOK

The information in this yearbook is substantially correct and current as of Dec. 31, 2025. For the full yearbook, please see the Community section at uschess.org. To notify US Chess of corrections or updates, please email john.hartmann@uschess.org.

US CHESS ANNUAL MEETINGS, MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS, AND FUND BALANCES

Year	U.S. Open Business Meeting	Membership (1)	Fund Balance (2)
2024	Norfolk, VA	113,442	\$5,514,325
2025	Middleton, WI	113,019	\$5,038,211

(1) Membership totals are given as of May 31. Totals exclude Junior Tournament Players and tournament members. (2) Figures enclosed in parentheses are deficits.

US CHESS PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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U.S. NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

U.S. CHAMPION

2024 Fabiano Caruana
2025 Fabiano Caruana
St. Louis, Missouri • October 2025

U.S. WOMEN'S

2024 Carissa Yip
2025 Carissa Yip
St. Louis, Missouri • October 2025

U.S. CADET

2024 Tanitoluwa Adewumi
2025 Tanitoluwa Adewumi
Schaumburg, Illinois • June 2025

U.S. JUNIOR

2024 Christopher Yoo
2025 Andy Woodward
St. Louis, Missouri • July 2025

U.S. GIRLS' JUNIOR

2024 Alice Lee
2025 Zoey Tang
St. Louis, Missouri • July 2025

U.S. SENIOR

2024 Vladimir Akopian
2025 Alex Fishbein
St. Louis, Missouri • July 2025

U.S. SENIOR WOMEN'S

2024 Natalya Tsodikova
2025 Natalya Tsodikova
Murray, Utah • November 2025

OTHER NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

U.S. OPEN

2024 Semen Khanin*, Jianchao Zhou
2025 Dariusz Swiercz
Middleton, Wisconsin • July-August 2025

U.S. WOMEN'S OPEN

2024 Avery Yu, Olivia Smith
2025 Rachael Li, Tsogetsai Khan
Saikhanchimeg
Las Vegas, Nevada • June 2025

U.S. JUNIOR OPEN

2024 **U8:** Emily Jiaying Tan; **U11:** Sarang Athreya Sankrithi, Angad Saran; **U15:** Ghanishth Prabhakar Awasthi, Dron Acharya Das, Nikhil Murugan; **U21:** Tugstumur Yesuntumur
2025 **U8:** Allen Weng, Atharv Upadrasta; **U11:** Anay Bhargava, Ekam S. Sardar, Ryder Wang; **U15:** Debarghya Das; **U21:** Evan Park, Jason Liang
Northbrook, Illinois • July 2025

U.S. SENIOR OPEN

2024 Alex Fishbein*, Dmitry Gurevich
2025 Jesse Kraai
Northbrook, Illinois • July 2025

ARMED FORCES OPEN

(Individual* Team)
2024 Christopher Shen*, Air Force
2025 Addison T. Lee*, Army
Kings Point, New York • October 2025

NATIONAL OPEN

Edmondson Cup winner*
2024 Vasif Durarbayli
2025 Viktor Matviishen*, Bilel Bellahcene, Jianchao Zhou
Las Vegas, Nevada • June 2025

U.S. MASTERS

2024 Fabiano Caruana
2025 Awonder Liang*, Andrew Hong
Charlotte, North Carolina • November 2025

U.S. CLASS

2024 Not Held
2025 **Master:** Eric Yuhan Li; Expert: Alex Nguyen; **A:** Rudy Goce Tia; **B:**

Stephen Zhu; **C:** Ishan Garg, Kaiyan Nageswaran; **D:** Calvin Dees; **E and Under:** Kuzey Dogruoz
Milpitas, California • October 2025

U.S. BLIND

2024 Jessica Lauser
2025 Jessica Lauser
Northbrook, Illinois • July 2025

U.S. BLITZ

2024 Avi Kaplan
2025 Daniel Naroditsky
Middleton, Wisconsin • July-August 2025

U.S. GAME/10

2024 Not Held
2025 Awonder Liang, Anjaneya Sripathy Rao
Madison, Wisconsin • December 2025

U.S. GAME/15

2024 Robby Adamson, Julian Proleiko, Matthew Guo Diao
2025 Roman Pyrih
Middleton, Wisconsin • July-August 2025

U.S. GAME/30

2024 Not Held
2025 Tim McEntee
Council Bluffs, Iowa • September 2025

U.S. GAME/60

2024 Not Held
2025 Tim McEntee, Rithvik Seetharaman
Council Bluffs, Iowa • September 2025

U.S. AMATEUR CHAMPIONS

2024 **East:** Andrew Colin Chan
2025 **East:** Siddharth Manikandan; **North:** Aaron Jing; **West:** Easwar Gnana Hari Sekar
East: Iselin, New Jersey, May 2025 • **North:** Brookfield, Wisconsin, April 2025 • **West:** Milpitas, California, September 2025

U.S. AMATEUR TEAM – NATIONAL PLAYOFF WINNERS*

2024 **East:** Another Bacon, Egg, and Cheese, Please! (Gus Huston, Nathaniel Shuman, Ryan Peterson, Kevin Stern); **North:** UChicago C (Awonder Liang, Praveen Balakrishnan, Kapil Chandran, Bradley Li); **South:** Deviprasath's Doomsayers (Bach Ngo, Marvin Gao, Aniket Shukla, Quintin Tanksley); **West:** Team 1 (Derek Wu, Rochelle Wu, Brandon Yang Xia, Jayden Xu)

2025 **East:** En-Passant Empire (Narayan Venkatesh, Maahir Patel, Sahana Aravandakshan, Vihaan Saxena); **North:** UChicago B (Awonder Liang, Praveen Balakrishnan, Kapil Chandran, Alexander Gordon); **South:** Sakamurian Disciples (Raghav Venkat, Marvin Gao, Aniket Shukla, Rushik Sakamuri); **West:** UC Davis* (Derek Wu, Brandon Yang Xia, Abishek Handigol, Jason Fu)
February 2025 (E, N, S, W) • Playoffs: August 2025

STATE INVITATIONALS

JOHN T. IRWIN NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF SENIOR STATE CHAMPIONS

2024 Nikoloz Managadze
2025 Alex Fishbein*, Stuart Rachels
Middleton, Wisconsin • July-August 2025

GM ARNOLD DENKER NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONS

2024 Sharvesh Deviprasath, Avi Kaplan, Sandeep Sethuraman
2025 Bach Ngo*, Liam Putnam
Middleton, Wisconsin • July-August 2025

WIM RUTH HARING NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF GIRLS STATE CHAMPIONS

2024 Zoey Tang
2025 Irene Fei
Middleton, Wisconsin • July-August 2025

DEWAIN BARBER NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONS

2024 Anjaneya Rao
2025 Siddharth Singh
Middleton, Wisconsin • July-August 2025

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER III NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONS

2024 Vivan Mulay, Ted Wang
2025 Ted Wang, Linxi Zhu*, Santhos Ayyappan, Aimee Yang
Middleton, Wisconsin • July-August 2025

FM SUNIL WEERAMANTRY NATIONAL BLITZ TOURNAMENT OF STATE CHAMPIONS

2024 Championship: Maximillian Lu, Terry Luo; **1800-2199:** Xavier Bruni, Lafayette Chen, John Drippe, Nehanraj Ramesh, Kevin Zhao; **1500-1799:** Roesh Carson, Rowan Emerick Foley, Sophia Sun; **1200-1499:** Ishaan Harsha; **U1200:** Ashot Hakobyan

2025 Championship: Liam Putnam, Nehranj Ramesh; **1800-2199:** Noah Van Vugt; **1500-1799:** Caleb Neff, Saadhanaa Ashok; **1200-1499:** Devie Coletta; **U1200:** Kūliaikapono Shiota-Kapalu
Middleton, Wisconsin • July-August 2025

SCHOLASTIC CHAMPIONS

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY (K-6)

2024 K-6: Artemii Khanbutaev; **K-5:** Ted Wang; **K-3:** Sasha Milo Schaefer; **K-1:** Devansh Vallanki, Ajay Beuria Sreenivasan, Mustafa Muhammad

2025 K-6: Tariq Yue; **K-5:** Sasha Milo Schaefer, Vivan Prakash Mulya; **K-3:** Lukas LeBakken; **K-1:** Mehmet Yilanli
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY (K-6) TEAM

2024 K-6: Speyer Legacy School (NY); **K-5:** P.S. 77 - Lower Lab (NY); **K-3:** Oak Hall (FL); **K-1:** Trinity School (NY)

2025 K-6: Speyer Legacy School (NY); **K-5:** P.S. 77 Lower Lab School (NY), Oak Hall (FL); **K-3:** Speyer Legacy School (NY); **K-1:** Trinity School (NY)
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY (K-6) BLITZ

2024 K-6: Vihaan Jammalamadaka; **K-3:** Albert Li

2025 K-6: Tariq Yue, Vivan Prakash Mulya; **K-3:** Ian Avery Singh
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY (K-6) BLITZ TEAM

2024 K-6: NYG008 (NY); **K-3:** P.S. 77 - Lower Lab (NY)

2025 K-6: Speyer Legacy School (NY); **K-3:** Speyer Legacy School (NY)
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY (K-6) BUGHOUSE

2024 Tommy Kozlek + Leon Li

2025 Aakash Jani + Tariq Yue
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL (K-8) (FORMERLY JUNIOR HIGH)

2024 Nikash Vemparala, Eric Chang Liu

2025 Nitesh Cherukuri
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL (K-8) TEAM

2024 Columbia Grammar & Prep (NY),

Speyer Legacy School (NY)

2025 Hunter College Campus School (NY)
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL (K-8) BLITZ

2024 Ethan Guo, Nikash Vemparala

2025 Oscar Izzy Williams
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL (K-8) BLITZ TEAM

2024 Speyer Legacy School (NY)

2025 Harker Middle School (CA)
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL (K-8) BUGHOUSE

2024 Hunter Hong + Tommy Kozlek

2025 Suyuan Gui + Ethan Guo
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (K-12)

2024 Jason Wang

2025 Joseph Levine, Eric Chang Liu, Brewington Hardaway, Isaac Wang, Nico Chasin, Tanitoluwa Adewumi, William Safraneck
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (K-12) TEAM

2024 The Dalton School (NY)

2025 Columbia Grammar & Prep (NY)
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (K-12) BLITZ

2024 Nico Chasin

2025 Nico Chasin
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (K-12) BLITZ TEAM

2024 Columbia Grammar & Prep (NY), Speyer Legacy School (NY)

2025 Columbia Grammar & Prep (NY)
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (K-12) BUGHOUSE

2024 Lucas Jiang-Kitana Olson, Gus Huston-Maximillian Lu

2025 Nico Chasin + Ian Avery Singh
Orlando, Florida • May 2025

NATIONAL K-12 GRADE

2024 K: Francis Zhou; **1:** Yicheng Zhang, Matthew Wang; **2:** Winston Chen; **3:** Aiden Li; **4:** Advik Manchanda; **5:** Ariv Debmisra, Lev Shangin, Lucas Yang, Shiv Dubey, Julian Ma, Jacob Wang, Samuel Le, Logan Freiman; **6:** Kyle Dong, Elliot Goodrich; **7:** Bryan Lin; **8:** Yiding Lu, Andrew Jiang, Kyle Zhuang, Oscar Izzy Williams; **9:** Nikash Vemparala; **10:** Erick Zhao; **11:** Evan Park, Liran Zhou, William Safraneck, Jed Sloan; **12:** Avi Kaplan, Arnab Gupta
2025 K: Zayn Shanmuganathan; **1:**

Baoshuo Yao, Lavin Donadi; **2:** Mehmet Yilanli, Dario Neshvadian, Matthew Wang, Aiden Huang, Dalton Gorczyca; **3:** Brian Ye, Taylor Liu, Max Mulholland, Jordan Kim; **4:** Alexander Joseph, Samanyu Alluri, Aayansh Samanta, Chase Wang; **5:** Aakash jani, Vivaan Pavuluri, Srihas Sai Sarvesh Maddipati, Jack Boyer-Olson; **6:** Liam Liu; **7:** Mason Jin Li, Vidip Kumar Kona, Sivavishnu Srinivasan, Ethan Guo, Elliott Goodrich, Phineas Hugo Weingarten, Anson Leong, Miransh Purven Vyas, Glenn Zhang, Tarun Sankar; **8:** Connor Wang; **9:** Aditeya Das, Nitesh Cherukuri; **10:** Sebastian Suarez; **11:** Erick Zhao; **12:** William Safraneck, Jed Sloan
Spokane, Washington • December 2025

NATIONAL K-12 GRADE TEAM

2024 K: Oak Hall (FL); **1:** Oak Hall (FL); **2:** Elizabeth M. Baker Elementary (NY); **3:** Speyer Legacy School (NY); **4:** P.S. 77 Lower Lab (NY); **5:** Speyer Legacy School (NY); **6:** Dalton (NY); **7:** Hunter College Campus School (NY); **8:** Millburn MS (NJ); **9:** Ardrey Kell HS (NC); **10:** The Frasier School (FL); **11:** American Heritage School (FL), Stuyvesant HS (NY), Livingston HS (NJ); **12:** Thomas Jefferson HS (VA)

2025 K: Oak Hall (FL); **1:** Oak Hall (FL); **2:** Somerset Elem (WA), Dalton (NY); **3:** P.S. 198 (NY); **4:** Dalton (NY); **5:** Success Academy Midtown West (NY); **6:** JHS 167 (NY); **7:** Dalton (NY); **8:** Success Academy Midtown West (NY); **9:** Millburn Sr HS (NJ); **10:** Success Academy HS Manhattan (NY); **11:** The Frazer School (FL); **12:** Stuyvesant HS (NY)
Spokane, Washington • December 2024

NATIONAL JUNIOR CONGRESS

2024 6 & Under: Coeus Li; **8 & Under:** Owen Li; **10 & Under:** Daniel Brovman; **12 & Under:** Hanford Chong, Ayush Roy; **14 & Under:** Krrish Kaul, Aaron Marian, Musa Naushad; **16 & Under:** Advait Nair; **18/20 & Under:** Hersh Singh

2025 6 & Under: Arjun Korukanti; **8 and Under:** Anay Vaddadi, Khesav Prabhu, Ammar Mahi Shafi Ibrahim; **10 & Under:** Reyansh Paragiri; **12 & Under:** Arnab Mythil; **14 & Under:** Swagatha Selvam; **16 & Under:** Luke Widjaja; **18 & Under:** FM Shaaketh Sivakumar; **20 & Under:** Eric Yuhann Li
Milpitas, California • January 2026

KCF ALL-GIRLS NATIONAL

2024 Under 8: Gracie Yan, Abigail Zhou; **Under 10:** Scarlett Kong, Chloe Liu, Miranda Meng; **Under 12:** Anisha Saha; **Under 14:** Nandini Prakesh; **Under 16:** Iris Mou; **Under 18:** Asha Kumar

2025 Under 8: Emily Tang, Irene Lin; **Under 10:** Melanie Liang; **Under 12:** Emma Yang; **Under 14:** Audrey Zhou; **Under 16:** Jasmine Su; **Under 18:** Megan Paragua, Iris Mou
Chicago, Illinois • April 2025

TOP 50 FIDE- RATED AMERICANS

Active players from the January 2026 FIDE Rating List.

	Rtg.
1. Hikaru Nakamura	GM 2810
2. Fabiano Caruana	GM 2795
3. Wesley So	GM 2753
4. Leinier Dominguez Perez	GM 2738
5. Levon Aronian	GM 2729
6. Hans Moke Niemann	GM 2725
7. Awonder Liang	GM 2713
8. Samuel Sevian	GM 2688
9. Grigoriy Oparin	GM 2658
10. Jeffery Xiong	GM 2656
11. Sam Shankland	GM 2651
12. Ray Robson	GM 2650
13. Abhimanyu Mishra	GM 2629
14. Andy Woodward	GM 2608
15. Christopher Woojin Yoo	GM 2607
16. Mikhail Al. Antipov	GM 2591
17. Jianchao Zhou	GM 2589
18. Andrew Hong	GM 2587
19. Brandon Jacobson	GM 2584
20. Dariusz Swiercz	GM 2579
21. John M. Burke	GM 2569
22. Larry Christiansen	GM 2563
23. Vladimir Akopian	GM 2553
24. Joshua Friedel	GM 2552
25. Andrew Tang	GM 2551
26. Varuzhan Akobian	GM 2549
27. Bryce Tiglon	GM 2548
28. Lazaro Bruzon Batista	GM 2546
29. Brewington Hardaway	GM 2544
30. Kirk Ghazarian	GM 2537
31. Alexander Goldin	GM 2537
32. Ruifeng Li	GM 2535
33. Jaan Ehlfest	GM 2532
34. Conrad Holt	GM 2532
35. Arthur Guo	GM 2525
36. Nico Chasin	IM 2524
37. Justin Wang	IM 2524
38. Fidel Corrales Jimenez	GM 2521
39. Mark Heimann	GM 2518
40. David Brodsky	GM 2511
41. Nicolas Checa	GM 2507
42. Dimitar Mardov	IM 2504
43. Maxim Dlugy	GM 2496
44. Elshan Moradiabadi	GM 2496
45. Safal Bora	GM 2496
46. Robert Hungaski	GM 2493
47. Joshua Sheng	GM 2492
48. Gregory Kaidanov	GM 2491
49. Steven Zierk	GM 2489
50. Praveen Balakrishnan	GM 2488

KCF ALL-GIRLS NATIONAL TEAM

2024 Under 8: The Speyer Legacy School (NY); **Under 10:** PS 77 - Lower Lab (NY); **Under 12:** The Speyer Legacy School (NY); **Under 14:** Hunter College HS (NY), Success Academy Hudson Yards (NY); **Under 16:** Stuyvesant High School (NY); **Under 18:** Columbia Grammar & Prep (NY)

2025 Under 8: The Speyer Legacy School (NY); **Under 10:** P.S. 77 Lower Lab (NY), The Speyer Legacy School (NY); **Under 12:** The Speyer Legacy School (NY); **Under 14:** Success Academy Midtown West (NY); **Under 16:** Hunter College HS (NY); **Under 18:** Columbia Grammar & Prep (NY)
Chicago, Illinois • April 2025

COLLEGE CHAMPIONS

PAN-AM INTERCOLLEGIATE TEAM

2024 University of Missouri-A
2025 University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley-A
Charlotte, North Carolina • January 2025

TOP 25 CORRESPONDENCE PLAYERS

(from the International Correspondence Chess Federation, January 2026)

	Rtg.
1. GM Tim Murray	2597
2. GM Stephen E. Ham	2577
3. GM Dan Perry	2561
4. GM Jon Edwards	2554
5. GM Daniel M. Fleetwood	2546
6. SIM Wolff Morrow	2541
7. GM Carl L. Siefring	2527
8. SIM Wilbur Tseng	2524
9. SIM Neil Kulick	2523
10. GM Jon Ostriker	2515
11. SIM Kenneth M. Reinhart	2511
12. SIM Bobby Johnson	2506
13. Shawn Dowling	2501
14. IM Larry Parsons	2497
15. IM Douglas Stewart	2496
16. SIM Wieland Belka	2484
17. IM Jeff Reger	2482
18. IM Kyle Biedermann	2476
19. GM Thomas Biedermann	2475
20. IM Matthew Tedesco	2474
21. IM Dennis M. Doren	2472
22. IM Edwin Meiners	2470
23. CCE Daniel Ryan	2464
24. SIM Oswaldo Olivo	2461
25. IM Oliver Koo	2459

THE PRESIDENT'S CUP (FINAL FOUR)

2024 University of Missouri
2025 Webster University, University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley
Richardson, Texas • April 2025

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE RAPID/BLITZ (INDIVIDUAL*, TEAM)

2024 Blitz, Open: FM Dachev Lin.
Blitz, U1800: Solon Grover, Jainil Trivedi

2025 Not held

Charlotte, North Carolina • January 2025

AMERICAN CLASSICS

AMERICAN OPEN

2024 John Bryant, Batchuluun Tsegmed
2025 Arman Mikaelyan
Garden Grove, California • November 2025

WORLD OPEN

2024 Awonder Liang
2025 Bharath Subramaniam H
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania • July 2025

NORTH AMERICAN OPEN

2024 Brian Escalante
2025 Santiago Avila Pavas, Jianchao Zhou, Aditya Sachin Samant, Eytan Rozen, Abdimalik Abdusalimov, Koustav Chatterjee, Ehsan Ghaemmaghami, Amilal Munkhdalai, Alexander Katz, Mukhammadali Abdurakhmonov
Las Vegas, Nevada • December 2025

AMERICAN WORLD CHAMPIONS

2025 WORLD SENIOR TEAM, 50+

Jaen Ehlvest, Gregory Kaidanov, Alexander Shabalov, Igor Novikov, Stuart Rachels
Prague, Czech Republic • February 2025

CORRESPONDENCE CHESS

U.S. CORRESPONDENCE

2007-2009: Thomas Biedermann, Lawrence Coplin; **2010:** Edward Duliba; **2011:** John Ballow; **2013:** Wolff Morrow, Carl Siefring; **2015:** Grayling Hill

GOLDEN KNIGHTS

2010: Michael Buss; **2011:** James Tracz; **2012:** Michael Buss; **2013:** Gary Adams; **2014:** Michael Buss; **2015:** Gary Adams; **2016:** Rick Johnson; **2017:** Michael Buss; **2018:** Michael Buss

USCF ABSOLUTE

2010: Harry Ingersol; **2011:** John Menke; **2012:** John Menke; **2013:** Wilbur Tseng; **2014:** Tony Kain; **2015:** Kristo Miettinen; **2016:** Danny Horwitz; **2017:** Harry Ingersol; **2018:** Robert Rizzo; **2020:** Mark Stephenson; **2021:** Daniel Horwitz; **2022:** Tim Corkum, John Walton; **2023:** John Millett

ELECTRONIC KNIGHTS

2013: Samir Alazawi; **2014:** Chris Lewis; **2015:** John Millett; **2016:** Tim Corkum; **2017:** Ferdinand Burmeister; **2018:** Tim Corkum; **2019:** Michael Buss; **2020:** Michael Buss; **2021:** Jeffrey Reger

INTERNATIONAL TITLISTS

FIDE awards titles for outstanding achievement in three areas of chess competition: Over-the-board play, correspondence play, and composition.

GRANDMASTERS (GM)

Varuzhan Akobian • Vladimir Akopian • Lev Alburt • Babakuli Annakov • Marc Arnold • Levon Aronian • Maurice Ashley • Praveen Balakrishnan • Julio Becerra Rivero • Joel Benjamin • Vinay Bhat • Peter Biyiasas • Safal Bora • David Brodsky • Michael Brown • Lazaro Bruzon Batista • John M. Burke • Fabiano Caruana • Akshat Chandra • Nicolas Checa • Larry Christiansen • Fidel Corrales Jimenez • Balaji Daggupati • Nick de Firmian • Maxim Dlugy • Leinier Dominguez Perez • Roman Dzindzichashvili • Jaen Ehlvest • Sergey Erenburg • John Fedorowicz • Daniel Fernandez • Benjamin Finegold • Alexander Fishbein • Joshua Friedel • Alexander Goldin • Renier Gonzalez • Boris Gulko • Arthur Guo • Dmitry Gurevich • Ilya Gurevich • Brewington Hardaway • Mark Heimann • Ron Henley • Holden Hernandez Carmenate • Robert Hess • Conrad Holt • Andrew Hong • Robert Hungaski • Alexander Ivanov • Zviad IZORIA • Brandon Jacobson • Gregory Kaidanov • Gata Kamsky • Lawrence Kaufman • Melikset Khachiyani • Jesse Kraai • Boris Kreiman • Irina Krush • Sergey Kudrin • Aleksandr Lenderman • Ruifeng Li • Awonder Liang • Abhimanyu Mishra • Mackenzie Molner • Elshan Moradiabadi • Hikaru Nakamura • Daniel Naroditsky • Hans Moke Niemann • Igor Novikov • Alexander Onischuk • Grigoriy Oparin • Semon Palatnik • Eugene Perelshteyn • Yuniesky Quesada Perez • Ray Robson • Kenneth Rogoff • Michael Rohde • Gennadij Sagalchik • Gabriel Schwartzman • Yasser Seirawan • Grigory Serper • Samuel Sevian • Enrico Seviliano • Alexander Shabalov • Tal Shaked • Sam Shankland • Joshua Sheng • Yury Shulman • Bryan Smith • Wesley So • Andrew Soltis • Alexander Stripunsky • Raven Sturt • Dariusz Swiercz • Andrew Tang • James Tarjan • Bryce Tiglon • Kayden Troff • Michael Wilder • Patrick Wolff • Andy Woodward • Jeffery Xiong • Darwin Yang • Alex Yermolinsky • Christopher Woojin Yoo • Gennadi Zaichik • Yaroslav Zhrebukh • Rashid Ziatdinov • Steven Zierk

INTERNATIONAL MASTERS (IM)
Tatev Abrahamyan • Tanitoluwa Adewumi • Viktor Adler • Levon Altounian • Armen Ambartsoumian • Nilton Arias • Danial Asaira • Joel Banawa • Thomas Bartell • John Bartholomew • Leonid Bass • Alexander Battey • Mikhail Baturyn • Salvijus Bercys • Gabriel Bick • Calvin Blocker • Andrei Blokhin • Michael Bodek • Jay Bonin • Safal Bora • Joseph Bradford • Michael Brooks • John Daniel Bryant • Ronald Burnett • Omar Cartagena • Teddy Coleman • Kapil Chandran • Nico Chasin • Ryo Chen • Alexander Costello • Richard Costigan • Kong Liang Deng • Dorsa Derakhshani • John Donaldson • Daniel Edelman • Tegshsuren Enkhbat • Marc Esserman • Larry Evans • Joseph Fang • Ali Farahat • Florin Felecan • Andrei-Costel Florean • Edward Formanek • Igor Foygel • Sanjay Gharti • Kirk Ghazarian • Dumitru Ghizdavu • Mark Ginsburg • Rusudan Goletiani • Aaron Grabinsky • Kyron Griffith • Daniel Gurevich • Brewington Hardaway • Luke Harmon-Vellotti • Anthony He • Eshaan Hebbat • Mark Heimann • Matthew Herman • Craig Hilby • Gus Huston • Dean Ippolito • Aaron Jacobson • Ladia Jirasek • Alexander Kaliksteyn • Albert Kapengut • Julio Kaplan • Alexander Katz • Konstantin Kavutskiy • Igor Khmelnitsky • Keaton Kiewra • Erik Kislik • Jake Kleiman • Varun Krishnan • Nikhil Kumar • Harshid Kunka • Cyrus Lakdawala • Yury Lapshun • Matthew Larson • Alice Lee • Michael Lee • Joseph Levine • Ben Li • Eric Li • Zhaozhi Li • Jason Liang • Yian Liou • Eric Liu • Dimitri London • Maximilian Lu • Ming Lu • Daniel Ludwig • John Ludwig • Blas Lugo • Terry Luo • Josh Manion • Dimitar Mardov • Salvatore Matera • Vincent McCambridge • Eugene Meyer • Marlo Micayabas • Lev Milman • Rade Milovanovic • Alejandro Moreno • Walter Morris • Michael Mulyar • Sean Nagle • Akira Nakada • Samrug Narayanan • Bach Ngo • Yaacov Norowitz • Steven Odendahl • Georgi Orlov • Aleksandr Ostrovskiy • Nazi Paikidze • Vignesh Panchanatham • Evan Park • William Paschall • Advait Patel • Jack Peters • Joshua Posthuma • Vladimir Prosviriakov • David Pruess • Liam Putnam • Stuart Rachels • Vasik Rajlich • Vivek Rao • Kenneth Regan • Larry Remlinger • Daniel Rensch • Guillermo Rey • Bruce Rind • James Rizzitano • Douglas Root • Grayson Rorrer • Eric Rosen • Levy Rozman • Anthony Saidy • Erik Santarius • Justin Sarkar • Sam Schmkel • Dmitry Schneider • Jonathan Schroer • Sandeep Sethuraman • Gregory Shahade • Arthur Shen • Victor Shen • Joshua Sheng • James T. Sherwin • Atulya Shetty • Igor Shliperman • Robert Shlyakhtenko • Mikhail Shur • Sahil Sinha • Leonid Sokolin • Edward Song • Josiah Stearman • Alan Stein • David Strauss • Eric Tangborn • Timothy Taylor • Eddy Tian • Rostislav Tsodikov • Vyom Vidyarthi • David Vigorito • Alexander Velikanov • Kesav Viswanadha • Anish Vivekananthan • Mladen Vucic • Joshua Waitzkin • Annie Wang • Issac Wang •

Jason Wang • Justin Wang • Kevin Wang • Philip Wang • Tiangi Wang • John Watson • Norman Weinstein • Cameron Wheeler • Justus Williams • Elliott Winslow • Jonathan Yedidia • Carissa Yip • Bryan Xie • Vitaly Zaltsman • Anna Zatonskih • Joseph Zeltsan • Liren Zhou • Jack Zhu • Dmitry Zilberstein • Mikhail Zlotnikov • Bernard Zuckerman

WOMEN GRANDMASTERS (WGM)

Tatev Abrahamyan • Anna Akhsharumova • Anjelina Belakovskaia • Sabina-Francesca Foisor • Anna Gershnik • Alla B. Grinfeld • Alice Lee • Irina Levitina • Yaniet Marrero Lopez • Katerina Nemcova • Atousa Pourkashiyani • Katerina Rohonyan • Jennifer Shahade • Anna Sharevich • Zoey Tang

WOMEN INTERNATIONAL MASTERS (WIM)

Sahana Aravindakshan • Naomi Bashkansky • Tsagaan Battsetseg • Sharon Burtman • Agata Bykvtseva • Rachel Crotto • Vesna Dimitrijevic • Esther Epstein • Ashritha Eswaran • Gina L. Finegold • Chloe Gaw • Akshita Gorti • Elina Groberman • Anna Hahn • Alena Kats • Shernaz Kennedy • Inna Koren • Megan Lee • Yuliya Levitan • Rachel Li • Simone Liao • Joanna Liu • Kelsey Liu • Beatriz Marinello • Iris Mou • Elizabeth Neely • Emily Nguyen • Viktorija Ni • Alexey Root • Diane Savereide • Zoey Tang • Dorothy O. Teasley • Cindy Tsai • Julia Tverskaya • Omya Vidarhi • Ruiyang Yan • Ellen Wang • Avery Yu • Evelyn Zhu

INTERNATIONAL ARBITERS (IA)

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FIDE SENIOR TRAINER (FST)

Vladimir Akopian • Lev Albur • Armen

Ambartsoumian • Boris Avrukh • John Donaldson • Jaan Ehlevest • Boris Gulko • Robert Hungaski • Gregory Kaidanov • Melikset Khachiyani • Michael Khodarkovsky • Elshan Moradabadi • Alexander Onischuk • Semon Palatnik • Boris Postovsky • Yasser Seirawan

FIDE TRAINER (FT)

Steven Abrahams • Robby Adamson • Michael Aigner • Mikhail Al. Antipov • Maurice Ashley • Kevin Bachler • Glenn Bady • Joel Banawa • Saul Barat • Tuvshintugs Batchimeg • Carolina Blanco • Michael Ciamarra • Fidel Corrales Jimenez • Dorsa Derakhshani • Eduard Duchovny • Alex Eydelman • Ali Farahat • John Fedorowicz • Sabina Foisor • Renier Gonzalez • Dov Gorman • Miguel Iniguez • Kostya Kavutskiy • Igor Khmelinsky • Sergey Kudrin • Aleksandr Lenderman • John MacArthur • Beatriz Marinello • Yaniet Marrero Lopez • Keith Martin • Lou Mercuri • Katerina Nemcova • Matan Prilleltensky • Vladimir Prosviriakov • Kevin Pryor • Cornelius Rubsamen • Allan Savage • Enrico Sevillano • Alexander Shabalov • Joshua Sheng • Jay Stallings • Paul Swaney • Bryan Tillis • Batsaikhan Tserendorj • Anna Zatonskih

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NATIONAL INSTRUCTOR (NI)

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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZERS (IO)

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If you would like more info on FIDE, please check their official website at FIDE.com.

CORRESPONDENCE GRANDMASTERS

Thomas Biedermann • Dr. Jason Bokar • Dr. Edward P. Duliba • Jon Edwards • Daniel M. Fleetwood • Stephen E. Ham • Timothy Murray • Jon Ostriker • V.V. Palciauskas • Dan Perry • Carl Siefring • John C. Timm • Alik S. Zilberberg

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Making it to the Masters

On winning the Tata Steel Challengers

BY **GM ANDY WOODWARD**

EVERY JANUARY, THE small Dutch seaside town of Wijk aan Zee becomes the center of the chess world as the Tata Steel tournament brings together the best players in the world, rising stars, and excited fans.

The event dates back to 1938, when it was first held as the Hoogovens Tournament. Often called the “Wimbledon of Chess,” legends such as Mikhail Botvinnik, Garry Kasparov, Viswanathan Anand, and Magnus Carlsen have come to Wijk aan Zee to battle over its boards and prove their greatness. So I gladly accepted my invitation to this year’s Tata Steel Challengers Tournament. My goal for the tournament was to win it, since the winner of the Challengers section gets a spot in the Masters section the following year.

I didn’t know when I was invited whom I

would be playing against, but I eventually learned that I wouldn’t be the only American there: IM Carissa Yip would also be in the Challengers, while GM Hans Niemann would play in the Masters section.

About three weeks before the event, the full list of players was released, and I found out I’d be competing against players including IM Faustino Oro, who is on track to become the youngest-ever grandmaster, as well as legends like GM Vasyl Ivanchuk. I was thrilled for the opportunity to test myself against strong players.

My mom and I had heard a lot about bad weather before our trip, so we were prepared for the worst and arrived in Wijk aan Zee the day before the drawing of lots. Instead, the weather pleasantly surprised us with occasional sunshine. I drew number 10, which meant I would have seven games with black and six with white.

Starting Off

I only realized during the technical meeting that the time control was the same as the Candidates Tournament: Players had two hours with no increment for the first 40 moves, followed by an additional 30 minutes with 30-second increment for the rest of the game.

I had never played or practiced at this time control, and that inexperience cost me in the first round against GM Bibisara Assaubayeva, the Women’s World Blitz Champion. Despite achieving a winning position, I had spent far too much time: Two hours sounds like a ton of time, but it can disappear quickly, especially when calculating deeply. I blundered away my advantage and then, with only seconds remaining, unnecessarily sacrificed my bishop. I managed to reach



PHOTOS: LENNART OOTES

the time control, but by then my position was completely lost.

This game was very painful, but it served as a huge wakeup call. It warned me that I needed to manage my time more carefully, a lesson that helped me throughout the rest of the tournament. It meant a lot that some of my friends messaged me afterward with encouragement, reminding me that there were still 12 games left, and my chances were not gone yet.

Fortunately, in Rounds 2-5 I managed to win some sharp attacking games as well as grinding out a few endgames. At 4/5, I was back in contention going into the first rest day.

CATALAN OPENING (E04)

GM Andy Woodward (2608)

IM Eline Roebers (2396)

Tata Steel Challengers (2), Wijk aan Zee, 01.18.2026

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

Black has lots of options in the Catalan, but here she surprised me with a slightly less-explored line.

4. ... dxc4 5. Bg2 a6 6. 0-0 b5!?

The main line is 6. ... Nc6, with lots of theory. White's main moves are 7. e3 and 7. Bg5.

7. Ne5 Nd5 8. e4 Nf6 9. a4 Bb7 10. axb5

axb5 11. Rxa8 Bxa8 12. Nc3 c6



The first critical position. This position has already been reached 250 times, and multiple different approaches have been tried. I didn't prepare against this line for this game, but I had previously checked this position and knew a couple of ideas.

13. h4!?

A novelty, simply aiming to gain space on the kingside.

13. ... Nbd7?!

Simple development with 13. ... Be7! is best. Black is basically fine after 14. h5 0-0 15. h6 g6 16. Bg5 Nbd7 17. Nxd7 Nxd7 18. Bxe7 Qxe7, with an extra pawn to compensate for the weak dark squares.

14. Nxd7 Nxd7 15. e5 c5?

15. ... b4! was the best way to continue. After

16. Ne4 c5 17. Re1 (not 17. dxc5?! Nxc5! 18. Nxc5 Qxd1! 19. Rxd1 Bxg2! 20. Nxe6 fxe6 21. Kxg2 Bc5 when White only has a slight advantage and Black is prepared to castle) 17. ... h6 Black is still under quite a bit of pressure, but it is playable with accurate calculation.

16. Bg5?

Honestly, the whole idea of 16. d5! completely escaped my mind for some reason. The only possible explanation is I couldn't see anything after 16. ... Nxe5 but 17. Nxb5 basically ends the game on the spot: White has ideas of Qd1-a4 and d5-d6 and Black's pieces are still undeveloped. If 17. ... Bxd5 18. Bxd5 exd5 19. Re1 picks up the pinned knight.

16. ... Be7



17. Bxa8!

It is important to capture this bishop first.



GM Andy Woodward

Black is very close to equality after 17. Bxe7? after some really fascinating lines, many of which I didn't see, but the engine brings the position to life.

After 17. ... Kxe7 18. d5 (18. Bxa8 Qxa8 19. dxc5 Rc8! 20. Qd6+ Ke8 21. Nxb5 Qc6 equalizes) 18. ... b4!:

(a) 19. dxe6 Nxe5 20. Qe2 (not 20. Qh5 f6 21. Rd1 Qe8!) 20. ... f6 21. Rd1 Qb6 and Black is OK.

(b) 19. Nb5 Bxd5! 20. Bxd5 (20. Qh5 h6 is good for Black) and 20. ... Nxe5! is the point. Black has way too many pawns for the piece and has equality after 21. f4 Qxd5 22. fxe5 Qxe5 23. Qf3 f5!.

(c) But if 19. d6+! Kf8 20. Ne4 Bxe4! 21. Bxe4 Nxe5 22. f4 (22. Qh5!? looks winning, but Black can equalize after 22. ... Qxd6 23. Ra1 Nd7! 24. Ra8+ Nb8 25. Ra7 Nd7) 22. ... Nd7 23. f5 exf5 24. Bxf5 g6!? 25. Be6! Nf6 26. g4 (26. Bxc4 Kg7 27. g4 Rf8) 26. ... fxe6 27. g5



POSITION AFTER 27. g5

Now 27. ... c3!! is surprisingly the only move to hold the balance. Black's main goal is to use the c-pawn as a distraction to trade for the d6-pawn. Play could go 28. bxc3 bxc3 29. Rxf6+ Kg7 30. Qf3 and now another only move: 30. ... Qd7!.

Here 31. Qxc3?! doesn't work because after

31. ... Qxd6 32. Rxc6+ Kxc6 33. Qf6+ Kh5 Black is winning, but 31. h5!? is the best try, setting a subtle trap: 31. ... gxh5 32. Qxc3, and now 32. ... Qxd6 runs into 33. Rg6+!! Kxc6 34. Qf6 mate, but 32. ... e5!! is the only saving move for Black, because 33. Qxe5 Qg4+ and now Black barely holds! 34. Kh2 (34. Kf2 is met by 34. ... Qd4+ trading the queens for a draw, and 34. Kf1 is met by 34. ... Qd1+) 34. ... Qh4+ 35. Kg2 Qg4+ 36. Kf1 Qd1+ 37. Kg2 Qg4+ 38. Kf2 Qd4+ 39. Qxd4 cxd4.

17. ... Qxa8 18. Nxb5 Qa5

The best try.

(a) Black is losing after 18. ... Qb8 19. Bxe7 Kxe7 20. Nd6! cxd4 21. Qxd4 Nxe5 22. Qxe5 Qxd6 23. Qg5+! This is the key; now Black doesn't have any good place for the king: 23. ... f6 loses to 24. Qxg7+; 23. ... Ke8 and 23. ... Kf8 both lose to 24. Ra1!, and 23. ... Kd7 24. Qxg7 Rf8 25. Rc1 wins for White.

(b) If 18. ... Qc6 19. Qa4! when Nb5-d6+ is coming and ... 0-0 is not possible due to the hanging bishop on e7.

19. Bxe7 Kxe7



20. dxc5!

The only winning move, one which White has to see before going into this line.

20. Nd6?? loses the advantage to 20. ... cxd4 21. Nxc4 (not 21. Qh5?? when 21. ... Nxe5?? loses to 22. Nxf7 but 21. ... Qxe5! wins for Black) 21. ... Qd5 22. Qd3 Nxe5 23. Nxe5 Qxe5 and already White is the one who needs to be a bit careful.

20. ... Nxe5

20. ... Qxb5 loses: 21. Qd6+ Kd8 22. Ra1 Qb8 23. c6! Qxd6 24. exd6 Nb6 25. Ra6 Nc8 26. Ra8 when Black needs to play ... e6-e5, ... h7-h5, and ... Rh8-h6, but in the time that takes, White will quickly bring the king to the queenside. After 26. ... e5 27. Kf1 h5 28. Ke2 Rh6 29. d7! Rxc6 30. dxc8=Q+ Rxc8 31. Rxc8+ Kxc8 32. Kd2 Kd7 33. Kc3 White will take the pawn, use the b-pawn as a distraction, and win on the kingside.

21. Qd6+ Kf6 22. Nc3?

I completely overlooked 22. f4!, and it seems to win on the spot. After 22. ... Ng4 (22. ... Qxb5 23. Qxe5+ Ke7 24. Qd6+ Kf6 25. f5 wins, or; 22. ... Nf3+ 23. Rxf3 Qxb5 24. f5) 23. f5! Black's king is getting mated. Notice, though, that 22. Nc7?? fails to 22. ... Qd2!!, which equalizes after 23. f4 (or 23. Qxd2 Nf3+! 24. Kg2 Nxd2) 23. ... Qe3+ 24. Kh1 Qe4+.

22. ... Qd8??

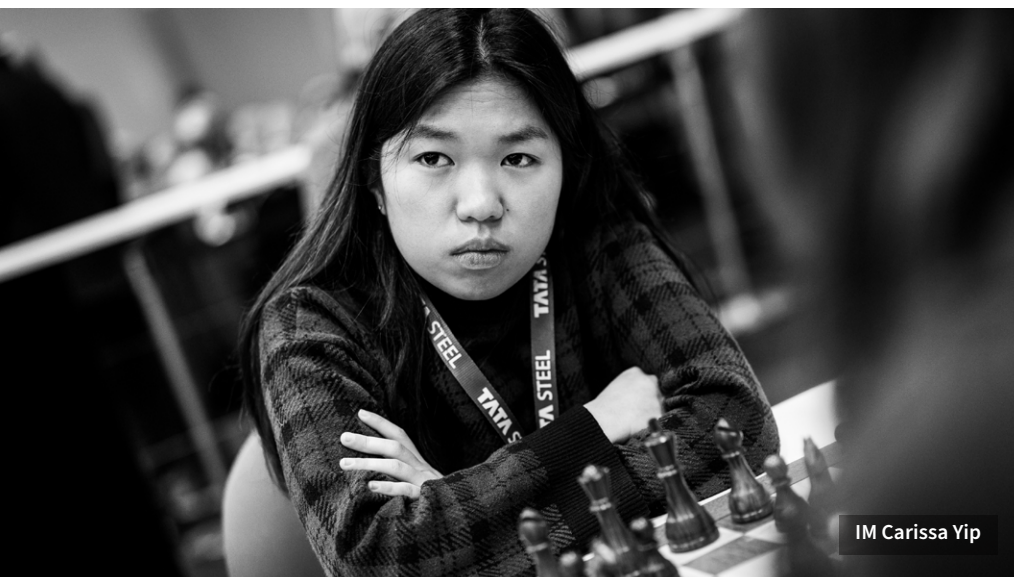


A very lucky moment for me, coming right after I realized 22. Nc3 had no sense to it.

I had assumed 22. ... Rd8! loses, but that was a complete hallucination. After 23. Nd5+ of course Black will play 23. ... Kg6! (and not 23. ... Kf5?? 24. Ne3+ Kf6 25. Qxe5+ Kxe5 26. Nxc4+). Now 24. Nf4+ Kf5 25. Qe7 h6! and Black is fine here. White has no more threats. Also, 24. Ne7+ Kf6 25. Qxe5+ Kxe7 looks equal, and 24. Qxe5 Rxd5 25. h5+ Kh6 26. Qf4+ Rg5 27. Qxf7 Qxc5 28. Qxe6+ g6! is only slightly better for White.

23. Nd5+ Kf5

If 23. ... Kg6 24. Qxe5 Qxd5 25. h5+ Kh6 26. Qf4+ Qg5 27. Qxc4 and the passed pawns on



IM Carissa Yip

the queenside decide.

24. g4+! Kxg4

24. ... Nxg4 loses to 25. Qf4+ Kg6 26. Qxg4+, while 24. ... Ke4 loses to 25. Re1+, and 24. ... Kg6 to 25. Nf4+ Kf6 26. Nh5+ Kg6 27. Qxe5.

25. Qxe5 exd5

White also wins after 25. ... Qxd5 26. Qxg7+ Kh3 (26. ... Kxh4 27. Qxh8 Qg5+ 28. Kh1 Qd5+ 29. f3) 27. Qg3 mate.

26. f3+ Kxh4 27. Kf2, Black resigned.

A nice finishing touch. 28. Rh1+ is unstoppable.

The break was refreshing. I heard that many players went to Amsterdam to explore the city or enjoy the comfort food. My mom had planned to buy tickets for a tour, since the weather was beautiful and sunny, but after five long games, I just wanted to rest at the hotel. A day later, the organizers announced that there would be a visit to the Max Euwe Center and a canal tour on the second rest day. This made it much easier to not regret skipping Amsterdam the first time.

The middlegame

Rounds 6-8 were especially tough, as I faced Carissa, GM Aydin Suleymanli, and Faustino. The game against Carissa reached a long queen endgame where I was up a pawn but didn't seem to have real advantage. It was heading toward a draw, but just two moves before the 50-move rule would have applied, she allowed me to push a pawn. In the final moments, she blundered, and I was able to secure the extra half-point. (You can see that game on page 46.) I felt bad afterward because I knew she was looking to achieve her final GM norm. It is always difficult to compete against friends, especially when a win could affect something so important, but that's part of competitive chess — and I knew I couldn't afford to lose half a point.

Here's a nice attacking game from Carissa:

SICILIAN DEFENSE, ALAPIN VARIATION (B22)

IM Carissa Yip (2466)

GM Max Warmerdam (2576)

Tata Steel Challengers (2), Wijk aan Zee, 01.18.2026

1. e4 c5 2. c3 Nf6

Here 2. ... d5 3. exd5 Qxd5 4. d4 is another

important line with loads of theory.

3. e5 Nd5 4. Nf3 d6 5. d4 cxd4 6. cxd4 e6!?

With this move Black aims to avoid mainstream theory and get a playable game. The main line is 6. ... Nc6 7. Bc4 Nb6 8. Bb5.

7. Bc4 Be7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. Qe2 a6 10. Nc3 dxe5 11. Nxe5 Nc6 12. Nxc6 bxc6 13. Rd1 a5 14. Na4

White prevents Black from pushing ... a5-a4 while preparing to continue to develop their pieces.

14. ... Bd6 15. Nc5

15. b3!? was an interesting way to approach the position, intending Bc1-b2 to play against the ... e6-e5 break. Play could go 15. ... Qf6 16. Bb2 Qg6 17. Rac1.

15. ... Re8

There was an interesting possibility in 15. ... e5!, but I think Black wanted to play for a more complex middlegame. It's kind of dry after 16. Ne4 Bb8 17. dxe5 Bxe5.

16. Ne4 Bf8 17. Bg5 Qb6 18. Rac1 a4 19. Qh5!?



The engine marks this move as a mistake, but from a practical standpoint, it is quite interesting. Black's only reply to avoid being worse is to accept the gambit.

19. ... Ba6?

After thinking for 38 minutes, Black came up with a very interesting idea, but it doesn't quite work in this position. The best move was 19. ... Qxb2! after which 20. Rb1 Qc2 (20. ... Qa3?? loses to 21. Rd3! trapping the queen) 21. Bd3 Qxa2 is unclear. Notice that 22. Nc3 fails to 22. ... g6! and White has nothing special.

20. Bxd5 Be2!

The point of Black's 19th move. They can't play 20. ... exd5?? 21. Nf6+! gxf6 22. Bxf6 h6 23. Qg4+ Kh7 24. Qf5+ Kg8 25. Rc3 when the threat of 26. Rg3+ wins at least the queen.

21. Qxe2 exd5



It may look like Black is equalizing, as he will win back the pinned knight, but White has a tactical sequence that ruins Black's kingside pawn structure.

22. Nf6+! gxf6 23. Be3

White has no weaknesses, while Black has a few targets as well as a weak king.

23. ... f5!

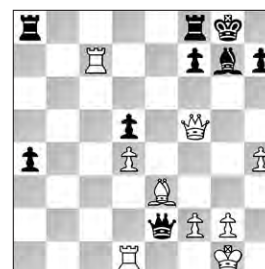
An important move, preventing 24. Qg4+.

24. Qh5 Qxb2 25. Rxc6 Bg7!

Good defense from Black, vacating the f8-square for the rook in case White puts a rook on c7. Not 25. ... Qxa2?, which loses after 26. Rc7! Be7 (or 26. ... Re7 27. Qg5+) 27. Bg5.

26. Rc7 Rf8 27. Qxf5 Qxa2 28. h4 Rab8??

Pretty much the losing move. Black's defensive idea with ... Qa2-b3 is simply too slow. The critical defensive resource is 28. ... Qe2!



POSITION AFTER 28. ... Qe2!

Black simultaneously defends the kingside with the queen and enables the a-pawn to run toward promotion. In the postgame interview Carissa mentioned that she had seen a beautiful variation that could have happened in the game: 29. Rb1 a3 (The only move is 29. ... Rae8!, the point being that 30. Rbb7 fails to 30. ... Rxe3! 31. Rxf7 Re7!! and White has nothing more than a perpetual after 32. Rfxe7 Qd1+ 33. Kh2 Rxf5 34. Rxg7+ Kf8 35. Rxh7) 30. Rbb7! a2 31. Rxf7! a1=Q+ 32. Kh2. Black is now up a full queen, but

the king is getting checkmated along the seventh rank: 32. ... Kh8 33. Qxh7+!! Kxh7 34. Rxg7+ Kh8 35. Rh7+ Kg8 36. Rbg7 mate! A beautiful and well-calculated combination.

29. h5 h6 30. Rc6?!

There was a beautiful win on the spot with 30. Bxh6!! Bxh6 31. Rc6! Bg7 32. h6! Bxd4 (32. ... Qe2 loses, but only to 33. Rd3! Qe4 34. Qg5) 33. Qg4+! (It's not too late for White to lose with 33. Rxd4?? Qa1+! 34. Kh2 Qxd4) 33. ... Kh7 34. Rxd4!. But it is difficult to play such moves in a winning position with a lot at stake.

30. ... Qb3 31. Ra1!

White chooses the right square for the rook.



GM Andy Woodward



IM Faustino Oro

Other moves give Black the opportunity to defend with ... Rb8-b6.

31. ... Qb5?

Black was already losing; for example, 31. ... Rb6?! 32. Rxb6 Qxb6 33. Rxa4, but this allows White to finish the game in style.



32. Rxh6!! Rfd8

If 32. ... Bxh6 33. Bxh6 and there is no way to stop mate along the g-file.

33. Rh7!?

Simple and good. The prettiest way was 33. Qh7+ Kf8 34. Bc1!!, when Black can't stop 35. Ba3. For example, 34. ... Bxh6 35. Ba3+ Ke8 36. Re1+ Kd7 37. Re7+ Kc6 (37. ... Kc8 38. Qc2+ Qc4 39. Qf5+ Rd7 40. Qxd7 mate) 38. Qxh6+ f6 39. Qxf6+ Rd6 40. Qxd6 mate.

33. ... Qd7 34. Rxg7+ Kxg7 35. h6+ Kf8 36. Qf6 Qe6 37. Qh8+ Ke7 38. Bg5+ Kd7 39. Bxd8, Black resigned.

After 39. ... Rxd8 40. Qg7, White will be up a pawn; in particular, the passed pawn on h6. A very beautiful game by Carissa, mixing complex positional ideas with subtle yet brilliant tactics.

After a relatively short draw against Aydin and this clean win against Faustino, I found myself tied for first with GM Marc'Andria Maurizzi at 6½/8 heading into the second rest day.

RUY LOPEZ, ARKHANGEL VARIATION (C78)

IM Faustino Oro (2516)

GM Andy Woodward (2608)

Tata Steel Challengers (8), Wijk aan Zee, 01.25.2026

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Bc5

One of the many ways to play against the Ruy Lopez.

6. c3 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. a4 Bb7 9. d3

Avoiding the main line 9. d4 Bb6 10. Bg5 h6 11. Bxf6 Qxf6 12. Bd5.

9. ... h6

This move is not necessary, but I like it; it prevents any Bc1-g5 ideas.

10. Re1 0-0 11. h3 Ne7 12. Nbd2 Ng6 13. Nf1 Re8 14. Ng3 d5!



The only way for Black to play in this position without ending up worse. Now it is already White who has to be a bit careful.

15. Be3?!

I assume he didn't go for 15. axb5!? because he wanted to win. It's one way to force a very dry position, especially after 15. ... axb5 16. Rxa8 Bxa8 17. d4 dxe4 18. Nxe5 Nxe5 19. dxe5 Qxd1 20. Rxd1 Rxe5 21. Bf4! Re8 22. Bxc7.

15. ... Bxe3 16. Rxe3 c5

Now, though, Black gets a very nice position with a space advantage in the center and on the queenside, while White doesn't have any clear plans or ideas.

17. Bc2 Qb6 18. Re1 Rad8 19. Qc1 Bc8?!

Too slow. White has the chance to regroup. 19. ... c4! was the way to go. It stops any ideas of Qc1-e3 and forces White to make a concession in the pawn structure. Black's better after 20. exd5 (or 20. dxc4 dxe4 21. Nxe4 Bxe4 22. Bxe4 Nxe4 23. Rxe4 f5) 20. ... Bxd5 21. Ne4 cxd3 22. Bxd3 Bxe4 23. Bxe4 Nxe4 24. Rxe4 f5 25. Re1 b4.

20. axb5 axb5 21. Qe3?!

What I missed was 21. d4! cxd4 22. cxd4 dxe4 23. Nxe4 Nxe4 24. Bxe4 exd4 25. Qc6!, completely equalizing.

21. ... Qc7 22. Ne2?!

It was better to threaten to double on the a-file with 22. Ra3!, and 22. ... b4 is met by 23. Ra1.

22. ... Be6 23. Nh2 d4?!

The best way to take control of the position

was 23. ... Nh5! when White can't stop a knight coming to f4. Black's much better after 24. Rac1 Nhf4 25. Nxf4 Nxf4.

24. cxd4 cxd4 25. Qd2 Ra8 26. Rec1 Qd6 27. Nf1 Nh4?!

Black threatens 28. ... Bxh3 29. gxh3 Nf3+, but White can easily stop it.

28. Kh1?!

This isn't the best way, though. That was 28. Rxa8 Rxa8 29. f4! Bxh3 30. fxe5 Qxe5 31. Qf4! Qxf4 32. Nxf4 Bg4 33. Bb3 with good compensation.



28. ... g5

The engine claims this move throws away the advantage, but in my opinion this was the move that gained the advantage. Black locks down the kingside and tries to restrict White's pieces.

29. Bd1 b4 30. Ng1 b3 31. Ra5 Nd7 32. Rca1?!

32. Bg4! was the way to go: 32. ... Bxg4 33. hxc4 Rac8 34. Ng3 is equal.

32. ... Rxa5 33. Qxa5

33. Rxa5 was better, keeping the queen centralized. After 33. ... Rc8 34. Ng3 Qc7 35. Ra1 Black still has pressure, but White is holding the queenside together.

33. ... Nc5 34. Be2 Ng6 35. Rc1?

A mistake, but not an easy one to spot at first. It is quite logical, as it puts pressure on Black's c5-knight, but in reality, the rook on c1 quickly becomes a target. After 35. Ng3 Nf4 36. Qd2 Black only has a slight edge.

35. ... Rc8! 36. g3 Kg7!

A nice waiting move, enabling some possible tricks with the knight.

37. Ra1?

Best was 37. Nd2!? Nb7 38. Qa1 Rc2 39. Rxc2 bxc2 40. Qc1 Qc6 and now with 41. Bg4! White retains some holding chances, but Black still has a quite big advantage after

41. ... f5! 42. Bf3 g4 43. exf5 gxf3 44. fxe6 e4!

37. ... Rc6

Threatening to recapture the a-file with ... Rc6-a6.

38. Qd2 Ra6 39. Qc1 Ra2!

White can't trade the rooks; the resulting pawn on a2 would be way too strong.

40. Rb1 Na4

We have now made the time control, and even though we have even material, White's pieces are stuck defending pawns while Black's are attacking, which gives me a winning advantage.

41. Nd2



41. ... Qc5?

The easiest win was 41. ... Qb4!, when White has no way to stop the sac on b2: 42. Kg2 Nxb2 43. Rxb2 Qa3 44. Rb1 Qxc1 45. Rxc1 Rxd2 wins.

42. Qxc5 Nxc5 43. Kg2 Na4 44. Bd1?!

44. Bg4 was a possible try. It's still losing after 44. ... Bxg4 45. hxc4 Nxb2 46. Ngf3 Nxd3 47. Rxb3 Nc5 48. Rb5 Rc2, but White at least can try to pretend there is a fortress while Black has to prove the extra pawn.

44. ... Nxb2 45. Bxb3 Bxb3 46. Nxb3 Nxd3

The position is now simplified, and Black is winning due to the extra passed d-pawn.

47. Rf1 Rb2 48. Na5 Rc2 49. Nf3 Nc5

50. Re1 f6 51. Kg1 h5 52. Nh2 d3 53. Kg2 Nxe4!, White resigned.

A nice finishing touch. 53. Rxe4 is impossible due to 53. ... d2 followed by promotion.

Many players had already visited Amsterdam during the first break. GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov and I were the only players at the Max Euwe Center on the second rest day. I enjoyed browsing the chess books and looking at old pictures, especially spotting some familiar faces from the U.S. Afterward,

Nodirbek set off on his own while the parents, arbiters, and I boarded an enclosed boat for a canal tour around Amsterdam. We learned more about the history of the city, and I really loved the experience. On the bus ride back to Wijk, my focus gradually shifted back to the tournament. I began thinking about my remaining five games — what openings I might choose and how I would approach each critical game ahead.

In Round 9, I had white against GM Daniil Yuffa and managed to play a strong positional game, capitalize on a mistake in the middlegame, and convert it into a full point. That win put me in sole first place for the first time in the tournament, with 7½/9, which gave me a big boost of confidence.

Then came Round 10, against the legendary Ivanchuk. I thought I had prepared well and felt confident going in, but shortly after the opening began I misremembered a key line. Trusting my "preparation," I quickly found myself in a losing position by Move 14. Ivanchuk calculated with incredible accuracy and confidence, earning a completely deserved victory.

The standings shifted dramatically over those two rounds. Aydin won both of his games to jump into clear place with 8/10, followed by Maurizzi and me at 7½, with Ivanchuk close behind at 7. With several of us still set to face each other, the tournament was wide open.

Fortunately, the third rest day arrived at just the right time. It gave me the opportunity to recover mentally from the disappointing loss and reset my mindset for the final crucial rounds. I also had a long chat with my dad and sister back home, catching up on everything. That helped me relax and refocus on what mattered most: giving my best effort in each game and leaving the results in God's hands.

Home stretch

In the last three rounds, I had white against Maurizzi, black against GM Velimir Ivic, and white against GM Erwin L'Ami. It was a very tough lineup, but I knew that if I wanted any real chance to win the tournament, I would need to score at least 2½.

The game against Maurizzi didn't start well. He surprised me with an aggressive idea in the opening that I didn't handle well, and within a few moves I found myself in a worse position. Things weren't looking good. Then I set a tactical trap. After thinking for a long time, he decided it was a bluff

— but it wasn't. Even so, he still had lots of counterplay, but he made an unfortunate blunder that allowed me to finish the game on the spot.

CATALAN OPENING (E06)

GM Andy Woodward (2608)

GM MarcAndria Maurizzi (2611)

Tata Steel Challengers (11), Wijk aan Zee, 01.30.2026

Going into this game, my opponent and I both knew we needed to win for any chance at first, so we were ready for an interesting fight.

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 d5 4. Bg2 Be7

5. Nf3 Ne4!?

A slightly dubious but aggressive way to play against the Catalan, but the tournament situation demanded something exciting. Black aims for a quick attack against the white king.

6. 0-0 f5 7. b3 Nc6 8. Ba3?!

I think this was the first small step in the wrong direction. White should first play something solid such as 8. Qc2.

8. ... Bf6 9. e3?!

The best and only way for White to fight for an advantage was 9. Bb2!. After 9. ... h5 10. Nc3 h4 11. Rc1! Kf7 12. e3 Black has a fine position, though I still prefer White.

9. ... h5 10. Nfd2?!

If 10. Qc2 h4?! leads to a slight advantage for White after 11. Nc3 a5 12. Rac1! Nb4 13. Qe2. And 10. ... a5! leads to an interesting engine line, but one that ends up with equality: 11. Nc3 Nb4 12. Bxb4 axb4 13. Ne2 h4 14. Ne5 hxg3 15. hxg3 Bxe5 16. dxe5 Qg5 17. cxd5 exd5 18. Qxc7 Qh5 19. Rfc1 Qxe2 20. Bxe4 fxe4 21. Qxc8+ Rxc8 22. Rxc8+ Ke7 23. Rxh8 d4 24. exd4 e3 25. Rh2 Qd2.

10. ... h4 11. Nxe4 dxe4 12. Nc3 hxg3

13. fxg3!?



The engine doesn't prefer this move, but I chose it because it sets up a trap, and it's practically more interesting, since it opens the f-file for the rook and sets up some sacrificial ideas regarding the e4-pawn.

13. ... Nxd4?

Calling the bluff. The non-human, computer move 13. ... Qd7! is the best. Black wants to put his queen on f7 and his bishop on d7, and then castle queenside. White must act fast otherwise he will be left with a strategically losing position. After 14. Nxe4! fxe4 15. Bxe4 Kd8 16. Qc2 a5! intending ... Nc6-b4, Black is slightly better although the game still has a lot of play.

14. Nxe4! fxe4 15. Qg4!

The point. White wants to play 16. Qg6+ and Black only has one way to defend against it. Here, Black spent a lot of time thinking, but after the game he told me he didn't understand why he thought for so long on a move that could be played in a few seconds. Black's winning after 15. exd4? Qxd4+! 16. Kh1 Qxa1 17. Qxa1 Bxa1 18. Rxa1 Bd7 19. Bxe4 Bc6 20. Bxc6+ bxc6.

15. ... Kf7

The only move: 15. ... Nf5? fails to 16. Qg6+ Kd7 17. Rxf5!, and after 15. ... Rh6?? 16. Bxe4 Nf5 17. Rad1 there are too many pieces attacking Black's king.

16. exd4 Qxd4+ 17. Kh1 e5 18. Qe2!



Definitely the most testing move.

18. ... Be6?

There are a lot of lines here!

First of all, (a) 18. ... Bf5?? fails to 19. Rxf5!, an important Exchange sacrifice. (Not 19. Rad1?!, which loses after 19. ... Rxh2+!! 20. Kxh2 Rh8+ 21. Bh3 Bxh3! 22. Rxf6+ gxf6 23. Rxd4 Bf1+ 24. Kg1 Bxe2 25. Rxe4 Bd3.) If 19. ... Qxa1+ 20. Rf1 Qd4 (20. ... Qc3 21. Qg4! Rad8 22. Bxe4 Rh6 and the nice retreating move 23. Bc1! finishes the game) 21. Rd1.

We both spent a lot of time in calculation

and postgame analysis on (b) 18. ... Qd3!?. After 19. Qe1! e3 20. Rd1 Qh7 21. h4! Bg4 and now play could go a few ways:

(b1) 22. Qb4 Rhe8! (22. ... e2?? 23. Qe7+! Kg6 24. Be4+ Kh5 25. Qf7+! g6 26. Qxf6!) 23. Rde1 e2 24. Rxe2!! and if 24. ... Bxe2?? 25. Bd5+! Re6 (25. ... Kg6 26. Be4+) 26. Qe7+!! wins.

(b2) After 22. Bd5+ Ke8 23. Qb4 e2! there's a funny way to force a draw with 24. Qe7+! (or 24. Qxb7 Qd3!! 25. Qxa8+ Kd7 26. Bc6+ Ke6 27. Bd5+ Kd7 28. Qc6+ Kd8 29. Qa8+ Kd7) 24. ... Bxe7 25. Bf7+ Kf8 26. Bg6+ with a repetition.

(b3) 22. Qxe3! Bxd1 and the crucial move that we missed in our analysis was 23. Qxe5!. White has too many threats: Bg2-d5+, Qe5-e7+, Qe5xc7+, etc.

After the game, we looked at all the options together without an engine and concluded that (c) 18. ... e3! was the best. Sure enough, it is! It both defends the pawn momentarily and opens up ideas such as ... Bc8-g4. The point is that in case of (c1) 19. Rae1! Bg4 20. Qxe3 Rad8 21. Bd5+ Kg6 22. Bc5 Qxe3 23. Bxe3 c6 24. Be4+ Kf7 25. Rf2 White is left with nothing more than a slightly more pleasant endgame.

Naturally there are other possibilities:

(c2) 19. Rad1!? is probably the most testing move: 19. ... Bg4! and now:

(c2a) 20. Rf3? forces Black to step into the discovery with 20. ... Qe4!, but he emerges better: 21. Rxf6+ Kxf6! 22. Rf1+ Ke6 23. Bxe4 Bxe2 24. Bd5+ Kd7 25. Rf7+ Kc8.

(c2b) 20. Rxf6+!? is an interesting try, hoping for 20. ... Kxf6?? 21. Qf1+; meanwhile, after 20. ... gxf6 21. Bf3! Bxf3+! (the previous idea with 21. ... Qe4?? doesn't work this time: 22. Rd7+! Kg8 [22. ... Ke6 23. Re7+ Kf5 24. Bxe4+; 22. ... Ke8 23. Re7+ Kd8 24. Qd1+ Qd4 25. Qxd4+ exd4 26. Bxg4; 22. ... Bxd7 23. Bxe4] 23. Bxe4 Bxe2 24. Bd5 mate) 22. Qxf3 e2 is just one way to equality.

(c2c) If 20. Bf3 Black has to find the only move 20. ... Qe4!! Now 21. Rd7+ (if 21. Rd3 Bxf3+ 22. Rxf3 Qc6) forces Black to find another only move: 21. ... Ke8! (because of 21. ... Ke6 22. Bxe4 Bxe2 23. Bf5 mate, or 21. ... Bxd7 22. Bxe4, or 21. ... Kg8 22. Bxe4 Bxe2 23. Bd5+ Kh7 24. Rxf6) and Black is OK after 22. Rxc7 Bxf3+! 23. Rxf3 Rd8 24. Bb4.

Other tries lead to equality:

(c3) 19. Rfd1!? Bg4 20. Rxd4 Bxe2 21. Rd7+ Ke6! 22. Rxc7 Rad8.

(c4) 19. Bf3? fails to 19. ... Qd2! forcing a queen trade and ensuring equality.

(c5) 19. Bd5+ Be6 20. Bxe6+ Kxe6 21. Qf3 Qd2!? (21. ... Rxh2+! 22. Kxh2 Rh8+ 23. Kg1 e2+ 24. Kg2 exf1=Q+ 25. Rxf1 Kf7 26. Rd1 e4 27. Qg4 Qb6) 22. h4! and of course the engine gives 0.00 but in general the position is unclear.

19. Bxe4



White is already close to winning, but here my opponent made a simple oversight.

19. ... Rxh2?? 20. Kxh2 Rh8+ 21. Kg2 Bh3+ 22. Kf3, Black resigned.

If 22. ... Qc3+ Black equalizes after 23. Bd3?? Bf5! and 23. Kf2?? Bxf1 24. Rxf1 Rh2+ 25. Bg2 Qd4+ 26. Ke1 Qa1+, or 23. Qe3?? Bg4+ even wins for Black. But he forgot about 23. Qd3!.

In that same round, Ivanchuk managed to win a crucial and fascinating battle with Suleymanli, tightening the standings once again and setting up a dramatic finish to the tournament.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B85)

GM Aydin Suleymanli (2628)

GM Vassily Ivanchuk (2605)

Tata Steel Challengers (11), Wijk aan Zee 01.30.2026

Both players wanted to win this game, which made it even more exciting!

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6

5. Nc3 a6

The Najdorf Variation, one of my personal favorite weapons for Black.

6. f4!?

An aim to take Black out of mainstream theory, deviating from main lines such as 6. Bg5, 6. Bc4, and 6. Be3.

6. ... Qc7

The engine doesn't appreciate this move at first, but it has a lot of sense to it. Black aims to continue developing via ... e7-e5, ... b7-b5, ... Nb8-d7, ... Bf8-e7, and ... Bc8-b7. The main move is 6. ... e5, but the game becomes quite positional after 7. Nf3 Nbd7 8. a4.

7. Be2

Perhaps the best way to play against Black's quiet reply is 7. f5!? and now either 7. ... b5 8. g4 or 7. ... g6 8. g4! b5 9. Bg2 b4 10. Nd5 Nxd5 11. exd5, with a small advantage in either case.

7. ... e6

From here through Move 12, both players develop their pieces normally.

8. Bf3 Be7 9. 0-0 0-0 10. Kh1 Nc6 11. Be3 Bd7 12. Nde2 b5 13. a3 Bc8!?

A novelty, although it was definitely not preparation. Black aims to redirect his bishop to b7, where it can target the semi-weak e4-pawn and leave the d7-square open for the knight. But 13. ... Rab8 14. g4 h6 was possibly a bit more precise.

14. g4!?

White shows a fighting spirit. This move can be successful, but only with precise justification.

14. ... Nd7 15. g5 Rb8

Delaying putting the bishop on b7 for a little while, keeping open the option of first playing ... b5-b4.

16. Bg2 a5 17. Ng3 Re8?!



This was the first critical moment. Black's last move was too slow, and White had the opportunity to take advantage of it.

18. f5?

A mistake in return. This gives Black enough time to consolidate.

With 18. Qe2! White attacks the b5-pawn, and Black would be faced with the unpleasant task of defending it without weakening their position. After 18. ... Qb7 (White's better after 18. ... Ba6?! 19. a4! b4 20. Qxa6 bxc3 21. bxc3 and 18. ... b4? 19. Nb5! Qb7?! 20. a4) comes 19. b4! preventing all Black's counterplay, and now White can proceed with a kingside attack — 19. ... axb4 20. axb4 Nxb4 runs into 21. Ba7! Ra8 22. Nxb5 Nc6 23. Be3 Rxa1 24. Rxa1.

18. ... Bf8 19. Qe2 b4 20. Nb5 Qd8 21. a4 Ba6 22. f6?!

This move looks good — it gains space and



Ivanchuk is a favorite for fans and interviewers alike!



Oro studies the game between Suleymanli and Ivanchuk.

forces Black to make a weakness on the kingside — but in reality it turns out only to close lines for White's own attack, which gives Black enough time to prepare counterplay on the queenside.

22. Rad1!? was probably the best practical choice. Play may continue 22. ... Nce5 23. Nh5 Qc8 24. Bd4 when White has a clear plan, but Black is left sitting without any ideas.

22. ... g6! 23. Rfd1?!

It was more in the spirit of the position to play 23. h4!. The engine suggests 23. ... Nde5 24. h5 d5 25. exd5 exd5 26. Bg1! when the position is dynamically balanced and anything could happen.

23. ... Nde5?!

The other knight was a better choice: 23. ... Nce5! After 24. Bd4 Qc8 the queen is coming to c6 and White has no attack.

24. Rd2?



24. c4! was mandatory, when it's equal after 24. ... bxc3 e.p. 25. bxc3. White will play c3-c4 on the next move, fortify his knight on b5 and then maybe double rooks on the d-file.

24. ... Rb7!

A very nice find by Ivanchuk, vacating the b8-square for the queen.

25. c4

White realizes this is necessary, but it is already one move too late.

25. ... bxc3 e.p. 26. bxc3 Qb8 27. Rb1 Rc8 28. Rdb2 Nd8?

28. ... Nd7! was the most precise, planning to put the knights on e5 and c5. Black would be close to winning.

29. Bd4 Nc4 30. Rb3 e5!

Probably the move Aydin underestimated. The knight on d8 is quickly coming to e6 and then f4, and White's position is collapsing. He makes a desperation try.

31. Bh3 exd4 32. Bxc8 Qxc8 33. cxd4 d5!

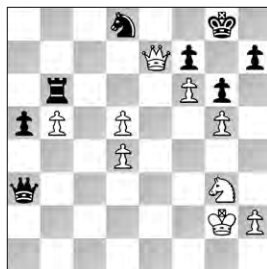
The simplest. Black supports the knight while opening up the line for the bishop.

34. exd5 Na3 35. Ra1 Rb6??

With less than five minutes on the clock, Ivanchuk makes a huge blunder which almost costs him the game. White had to not trust Black and calculate the last chance.

36. Ne4??

With a little under a minute on the clock, Aydin trusted Ivanchuk's calculation and missed the save: 36. Rbxa3! Bxb5 37. axb5 Bxa3 38. Rxa3 Qc1+ 39. Kg2 Qxa3 and now 40. Qe7!!.



POSITION AFTER 40. Qe7

A really cool way to use an outpost! Now it is Black who has to be precise, as he can find himself losing almost instantly: 40. ... Qa2+! is the only move! (40. ... Qd6?? 41. Ne4! and White wins.) Now 41. Kg1 Qa1+! 42. Kg2 Qa2+ and both sides have nothing more than a perpetual, as 43. Kh3?? runs into 43. ... Ne6! winning.

36. ... Nxb5 37. axb5 Bb7

Now the dust has settled and Black just has to make it to the time control.

38. Nc3 Re6 39. Qd3 Bb4 40. Kg1 Re8 41. h3 Qd7, White resigned.

White is down material and his attack is gone. A very tactical game with some important positional niceties which could have gone either way, and one that had a huge impact on the standings.

In round 12, I faced GM Velimir Ivic with black in a game turned out to be what I would call a typical "engine draw" — almost the entire game followed deep preparation from both sides, and once we were out of theory, neither of us had real winning chances and the remaining moves were straightforward. Meanwhile, Aydin won over Maurizzi to join me at 9/12, while Ivanchuk trailed just half a point behind at 8½. However, my tiebreaks were worse than both of theirs, so the situation was clear: In the

final round, I needed to push for a win and let the rest take care of itself.

GIUOCO PIANO (C50)

GM MarcAndria Maurizzi (2611)

GM Aydin Suleymanli (2628)

Tata Steel Challengers (12), Wijk aan Zee, 01.31.2026

This game was also crucial to the tournament standings. Going into this game, I had 8½/11; Aydin and Ivanchuk had 8, and Maurizzi had 7½.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. d3 Nf6 5. Bg5

A slight sideline, but nowadays all versions of Bc1-g5 are playable and interesting.

5. ... h6 6. Bh4 0-0 7. Nbd2 Be7!?

One of the ways to attempt to neutralize the pin. Black's primary goal is to trade the dark-squared bishops, so they want to play ... Kg8-h8 followed by ... d7-d6 and ... Nf6-h7.

8. a4

Part of the typical plan for White in these positions: expansion on the queenside. White wants to continue with a4-a5, and later support it with c2-c3 and either b2-b4 or Qd1-b3.

8. ... d6

8. ... Nh5 was also interesting, with equality after 9. Bg3!? Nxc3 10. hxc3 d6.

9. Bg3 Kh8 10. a5 Rb8!?



Black correctly realized that White's intention is to play a5-a6, so he played this intending to respond with ... b7-b5.

11. 0-0 Nh7 12. c3 g6?

This is a mistake for concrete reasons. Black's idea is to prepare ... f7-f5 and recapture with the pawn, but in this case it shouldn't work.

13. b4

The engine says the best reaction is 13. d4! The point is that after 13. ... f5 14. exf5! gxf5 15. d5 the knight is trapped, and White has a big edge after 15. ... f4 16. dxc6 bxc6 17. b4 fxd3 18. fxd3.

Another thematic way to thwart Black's plan is 13. Ne1!?, preparing to come to c2 and e3, while 13. ... f5 is met with 14. exf5 gxf5 15. f4! d5 16. Bb5 e4 17. Nc2 with an edge.

13. ... a6 14. b5?

This was the last chance for 14. Ne1!. White's better after 14. ... f5 15. exf5 gxf5 16. f4 Bf6 17. Nef3.

14. ... axb5 15. Bxb5 Bd7?

The number of mistakes made by Move 15 show how difficult these positions are for humans. Engines easily point out all mistakes from both sides, but the reasoning behind them is deep.

I think the reason Black didn't go for 15. ... f5!? is 16. a6!? f4 17. Bxc6 bxc6 18. a7 Ra8 19. Qa4 Bd7 20. Rfb1 c5 21. Qa5 fxd3 22. hxd3. Although Black is up a piece, White's play is simple and clear while Black has to do something about the a7-pawn. For engines it is quite simple to navigate such positions, but in a practical sense it is quite dangerous for Black.

16. Qa4?

A mistake in return. White had the resource 16. d4!, with the point that the tactical try 16. ... Nxd4!? can simply be met with 17. Bxd7 Nxf3+ 18. Nxf3 Qxd7 19. Nxe5 Qe6 20. Nd3. The e4-pawn is immune for now — 20. ... Qxe4?? 21. Re1 — and White has a slight advantage due to targets such as the b7-pawn.

16. ... f5?

Missing 16. ... Ra8! 17. a6 Qe8 18. Qc4 bxa6 19. Rxa6 Rxa6 20. Bxa6 Be6 with equality.

17. h3?

17. exf5! gxf5 18. d4! was again the right way to proceed. Both 18. ... e4 and 18. ... f4 are met by 19. d5, winning a piece. The variation continues in engine style, but in the end White is doing well: 18. ... Ra8 19. dxe5 Rxa5 20. Qc4 d5 21. Qxd5 Rxa1 22. Rxa1 f4 23. Bh4! Bxh4 24. Nxh4 Qxh4 25. Qxd7.

17. ... f4?!

The continuation 17. ... Ra8 18. a6 Qe8 was a bit more precise, not yet committing to ... f5-f4. After 19. Qc4 bxa6 20. Rxa6 Rxa6 21. Bxa6 f4! 22. Bh2 g5, Black is going to play ... h6-h5, and White is in danger.

18. Bh2 Ra8 19. a6 Qe8 20. Qc4?

We see the key difference with the previous note after 20. d4!. Here Black has already played ... f5-f4, so the e5-pawn is especially weak. After 20. ... bxa6 21. Bxc6 Bxc6 22. Qa5 White has full compensation for the pawn due to the targets on e5 and c7.

20. ... bxa6! 21. Bxa6?!

21. Rxa6 was the lesser evil: 21. ... Rxa6 22. Bxa6 g5 23. Bb7 h5 24. Ra1 and at least White has some counterplay on the a-file.

21. ... g5 22. d4 h5! 23. dxe5

Black didn't need to worry about White's queenside play: 23. d5? Nb8! 24. Bb7 Rxa1 25. Rxa1 g4 and Black is nearly winning.

23. ... dxe5 24. Bb5



24. ... Rxa1?!

Black keeps a big advantage with 24. ... Rd8!. The point is that Black wins after 25. Bxc6 (if 25. Ra6 Nb8 26. Ra5 Bd6 27. Bxd7 Nxd7 and Black is close to winning as the bishop on h2 is locked out of the game) 25. ... Bxc6

26. Nxe5 Bb5 27. Qe6 Rf6!.

25. Rxa1 Bf6 26. Ne1 g4 27. hxg4 hxg4 28. Nd3?!

28. Kf1!? was more precise. It looks a bit scary as it walks into potential discoveries and ideas along the a6-f1 diagonal, but in general it is a good defensive resource as Bh2-g1 and f2-f3 is a potential plan to hold the position together. For example, 28. ... Ng5 29. f3 gxf3 30. Nxf3 and for the moment the attack is gone. White is completely fine and in my opinion it is already Black who needs to be careful, as the queenside is quite shaky.

28. ... Ne7 29. Bxd7 Qxd7 30. Nb3 Rg8 31. Kf1?

There is nothing wrong with this move outside the fact that it is too slow in this position. It was better to play 31. Nbc5 Qe8 and now 32. Nxf4! is the point (and probably the move White missed). White sacrifices the piece to take away Black's attack and open up the bishop. The engine gives full equality after 32. ... exf4 33. Bxf4.

31. ... g3 32. fxg3 fxg3 33. Bg1 Qg4!

Black correctly judges that the queenside doesn't matter and the kingside is where all the pieces should go.

34. Nbc5?

The right move was 34. Nd2!, aiming to consolidate the kingside. Black's best is 34. ... Rf8! (the most human move is 34. ... Ng5 but then White has 35. Ne1! and if they can get a knight to f3, then the position is survivable:



35. ... Rf8 36. Nef3 is only slightly better for Black, if at all) 35. Ne1 Ng6 36. Nef3 and now 36. ... Qh5!? is difficult to spot from a human perspective, but the plan is clear: The queen goes to h1 and the knight goes to f4 or h4, and there is not much White can do other than run. After 37. Ke1 Nf4 38. Kd1 Nxg2 39. Kc2 White retains some holding chances as the g-pawn seems to be going nowhere.

34. ... Ng5!

Cutting off ideas of White's queen or knight coming to e6, while putting more pressure on the e4-pawn.

35. Ke1 Qh5!?

A little more precise was 35. ... Qh4!, but the reasoning is subtle. After 36. Nb4 Rd8! 37. Nd5, which is possible in the next note,

is now impossible due to the pin along the fourth rank, and Black is winning.

36. Nd7?



The final mistake. The last chance was to play 36. Nb4! Ng6 (36. ... Qh1? 37. Qf1! equalizes) 37. Nd5 Bg7 38. Kd2 and even though the attack goes on, White is still surviving.

36. ... Qh1!

An important inclusion. White had hoped for 36. ... Bg7? 37. N3xe5 Qh1 38. Qf1! equalizing, but Black would not go for this.

37. Kf1 Bg7

Now White's king is committed to defending g1 and g2, while the knight on d7 is stuck guarding against ... Rg8-f8. White's position is losing.

38. Qc5

Lots of moves win for Black after 38. Ra6!?, but the best is 38. ... Qh5!, threatening to come to d1. After 39. Ke1 Ng6 there is no way White can stop the knight coming to h4.

38. ... Ng6!

The only winning move, but an easy one.

39. Qe3 Qh4!

Again the only move, but it is logical, defending both the knight on g5 and the pawn on g3, while ... Ng6-f4 is still a threat.

40. Ra6 Nf4

The time control has been made with under two minutes for both players, but now that the extra time is added the rest is simple.

41. N3xe5 Bxe5 42. Nxe5 Rf8!

Black threatens all kinds of discovered checks, and White's position is paralyzed.

43. Qd4!?

A funny last try, pointing out that White has ideas of their own along the a1-h8 diagonal. Black managed to keep calm and calculate to the end.

43. ... Nfe6+! 44. Ke1

44. Nf7+ is met by 44. ... Kh7 and White is out of ideas, while 44. Ke2 allows 44. ... Nxd4+.

44. ... Qh1!

Not 44. ... Nxd4?? when 45. Ng6+ equalizes.

45. Qe3 Rf2, White resigned.

A nice finishing move, cutting off the defense of the bishop. White has no way to stop 46. ... Qg1+. This put Aydin in a first-place tie with me, with Ivanchuk a half-point behind, which meant anything could happen in the last round!

I spent much of the morning of the last round reviewing lines and pacing around the room, wondering what L'Ami might play. I finally told myself that it probably wouldn't matter all that much — more often than not, I'm the one who gets surprised in the opening anyway.

As soon as I entered the playing hall, I could feel the atmosphere of confident, excited players, all ready to give their best in one last hard-fought game to decide everything. The final announcements were made; the arbiters took their places, and then the ceremonial gong was struck, signaling the start of the games — and that the final chapter of the tournament was underway.

To my surprise, Erwin chose the Grünfeld Defense — something I had not prepared for. I decided to enter a sharp line with Ng1-f3 and h2-h4 which typically leads to decisive games. After the openings, things looked promising: I had sacrificed a pawn to reach a pleasant endgame with a space advantage and long-term compensation. Then the momentum started to shift: I got low on time, made a few inaccuracies, and the position



GM Hans Niemann



This king escaped mate during his Round 8 visit

simplified, but I felt I was the only one with realistic winning chances. Black's pawn structure was slightly weaker — four pawn islands versus my three — and that gave me something to play for.

By that point, the two other critical games had already finished: Ivic had convincingly defeated Suleymanli with black, while Ivanchuk had won with black against Yuffa. That meant everything depended on my game: If I won, I would wrap up the tournament; if not, Ivanchuk would take it. The position was drifting toward a draw when suddenly my opponent made a few mistakes in a row, perhaps due to fatigue. Out of nowhere, I found myself completely winning. A few moves later, he resigned. (You can see the game in Joel Benjamin's "Endgame School" on page 47.)

It was a thrilling feeling. I had secured qualification for next year's Tata Steel Masters, but at the same time, part of me felt for Ivanchuk, knowing that he wouldn't receive the automatic spot. I very much hope he still gets an invitation.

The Masters

The Challengers section was full of fighting chess, with only 30 draws out of 91 games — a clear sign of uncompromising play and

ambitious preparation from start to finish. The Masters section, on the other hand, was more solid overall, with 50 draws out of 91 total games. While the level of precision was incredibly high, the higher drawing percentage reflected the depth of preparation and resilience among the elite players.

The field featured reigning World Champion Gukesh Dommaraju, four participants in March's Candidates Tournament, and a mix of elite players of all ages rated 2650 to 2750. In the end, the event was dominated by the Uzbek players: GMs Nodirbek Abdusattorov and Javokhir Sindarov finished far ahead of the field, scoring +5 and +4 respectively. The player with the most decisive games was GM Vincent Keymer, who scored six wins against four losses in 13 games to finish at +2. That was good enough for shared third through fifth place along with GM Jorden van Foreest and GM Hans Niemann.

One of the standout performances came from 14-year-old GM Yagiz Erdogmus, who finished +1 with a performance rating of 2757, proving his strength against the very best. GM Matthias Bluebaum also delivered an outstanding showing, finally breaking through the 2700 rating barrier. There were countless fascinating and hard-fought games throughout the event, and the level of fighting spirit on display only builds anticipation for what promises to be an exciting Candidates Tournament.

When I got back to my room after the last round, I was happy to receive congratulations from many of my friends and coaches — including some I hadn't spoken to in a long time. That meant a lot to me and I'm truly grateful for their support.

Looking back on the tournament, one of the biggest lessons I take away is how much every single game — and even every single move — shapes the way you approach the next one. A painful loss can sharpen your focus; a lucky win can test your composure. Momentum shifts constantly, and learning how to reset mentally after each round is just as important as opening preparation. Even in the most disappointing moments, it's still possible to bring out your best chess, especially when you don't feel like you can, as long as you put in your best effort. The key is staying disciplined, trusting your work, and continuing to fight.

I would like to thank the organizers at Tata Steel for the invitation and for such a wonderful event. I'm also thankful for the fans who followed the games and sent encouragement throughout the tournament. Special thanks go to the coaches from the Kasparov Chess Foundation, who trained me and helped me prepare for this event, and to the Saint Louis Chess Club and the Samford Fellowship for their ongoing support. I hope to prepare well and bring my very best chess to the Masters section next year! ♠



This Time, Blindfolded

Paul Morphy could see a lot, even when he couldn't.

BY **BRUCE PANDOLFINI**



THE FIRST AMERICAN CHESS Congress, forerunner of the U.S. Chess Championship, was a knockout tournament held in 1857 in New York. Paul Morphy (1837-1884) won the finals over Louis Paulsen (1833-1891) 5-1, with two draws. After that event, Paulsen and Morphy (Black) played a fun blindfold game on the evening of Oct. 10, won by Morphy with a nicely executed kingside attack culminating in a forced mate.

THREE KNIGHTS OPENING (C44)

Louis Paulsen

Paul Morphy

Blindfold, 10.10.1857

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Bc5 4. Bb5



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 5** **d6**

You may accept **full credit** for 4. ... Nf6, when 5. Bxc6 dxc6 6. Nxe5 is met by 6. ... Bxf2+ 7. Kxf2 Qd4+ (**1 bonus point**).

5. **d4**

Paulsen opens the center. Since e4 is not attacked, White could also play 5. Na4, aiming to eliminate Black's dark-squared bishop. ******

5. **Par Score 4** **exd4**

6. **Nxd4 ****

6. **Par Score 4** **Bd7**

You may accept **full credit** for 6. ... Nge7. The kingside knight is often better placed at f6 in such positions.

7. **Nxc6 ****

7. **Par Score 5** **bx c6**

This recapture gains time, whereas 7. ... Bxc6 8. Bxc6+ bxc6 gives White the next free move.

8. **Ba4**

White could also have played 8. Bd3, overprotecting e4 and perhaps attacking along the d3-h7 diagonal if it opens later. ******

8. **Par Score 5** **Qf6**
Black prepares for kingside activity. You may accept **full credit** for either 8. ... Nf6 or 8. ... Ne7.

9. **0-0**

A natural move to defend against the mate threat. ******

9. **Par Score 5** **Ne7**

Less good is 9. ... Nh6, when 10. e5 dxe5 (10. ... Qxe5?? 11. Re1) 11. Ne4 causes Black some anxiety.

10. **Be3**

Not best. More prudent was 10. Bb3, or even 10. Kh1 unpinning the f-pawn. ******

10. **Par Score 5** **Bxe3**

11. **fxe3**

The opportunities along the half-open f-file do not justify accepting such weaknesses. ******

11. **Par Score 5** **Qh6**

The e3-pawn is hit immediately. You may accept **full credit** for 11. ... Qg5.

12. **Qd3**

A more promising defense of e3 was 12. Qf3. ******

12. **Par Score 5** **Ng6**

Black's knight is perched to land on the commanding square e5.

13. **Rae1**

White bolsters the puny e3-pawn. Maybe 13. Bb3 was better. ******

13. **Par Score 5** **Ne5**

A pivotal occupation of e5, but **full credit** would go to 13. ... 0-0 as well.

14. **Qe2**

The invasion 14. Qa6 was playable, but would have pulled the queen away from the main action. ******

14. **Par Score 5** **0-0**

Overall, Black has the sounder position.

15. **h3**

In guarding g4 Paulsen creates further weaknesses. It would have been more logical to reposition his knight toward the kingside with 15. Nd1 or 15. Nb1. ******

15. **Par Score 7** **Kh8**

A nice preparation. Morphy plans to open the g-file.

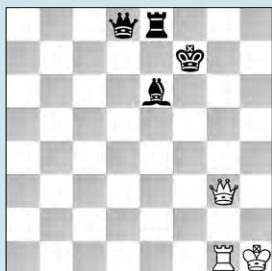
ABCS OF CHESS

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.

APRIL EXERCISE: You can improve your ability to "see" positions by analyzing in your head as often as possible. If you find it hard to resist touching the pieces once they're set up, never take them out in the first place. Try to work with diagrams. And don't be afraid to close your eyes and do some thinking and imagining without looking at anything — good players do this.

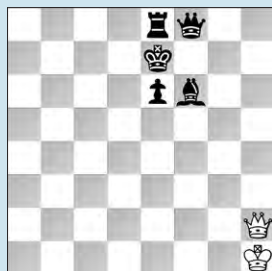
PROBLEM 1

Mating net



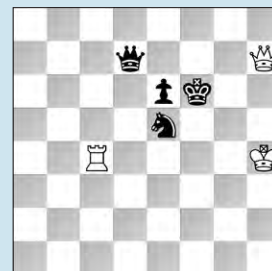
PROBLEM 2

Mating net



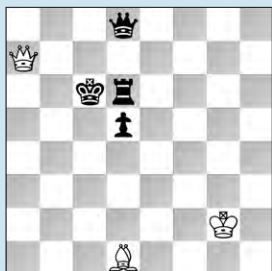
PROBLEM 3

Mating net



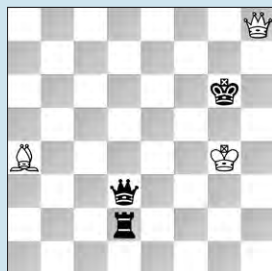
PROBLEM 4

Mating net



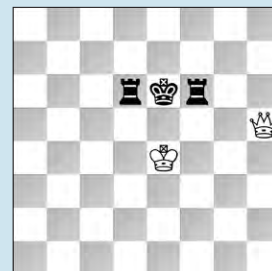
PROBLEM 5

Mating net



PROBLEM 6

Mating net



16. Nd1

But this idea is now too late. More useful was 16. Qf2. **

16. Par Score 7

g5

Battle lines are drawn. Morphy's attack now proceeds apace.

17. Nf2

White tries to fortify g4 and h3. **

17. Par Score 6

Rg8

Step by step, the Black forces are getting into place.

18. Nd3

Paulsen tries to get rid of the imperious black knight. He might have gotten more hope from 18. g4. **

18. Par Score 5

g4

Black's attack is clearly breaking through.

19. Nxe5 **

19. Par Score 5

dxh5

Deduct 5 points for the blunderous 19. ... gxh3, allowing 20. Nxf7+.

20. hxg4

Everything loses. **

20. Par Score 5

Bxg4

You may accept *full credit* for 20. ... Rxc4,

which in some lines is even better.

21. Qf2 **

White would love to trade queens and blunt Black's attack.

21. Par Score 6

Rg6

This prepares doubling on the g-file and safeguards against 22. Qf6+.

22. Qxf7

Nothing can save the day for White. **

22. Par Score 6

Be6

Morphy clears the g-file with a gain of time.

23. Qxc7

True or not, it's claimed that Morphy announced **mate in 5** here. Take a few minutes and try to work it out. **

23. ...



If you found 23. ... Rxc7+ 24. Kxc7 and now at least one of the following lines:

a) 24. ... Qh3+ 25. Kg1 (25. Kf2 Qh2+ 26. Kf3 Rf8+ 27. Qf7 Rxf7 mate) 25. ... Rg8+ 26. Qg7 Rxc7+ 27. Kf2 Rg2 mate (or 27. ... Qg2 mate), or

b) 24. ... Rg8+ 25. Kf3 Qh5+ 26. Kf2 Qh2+ 27. Kf3 Qg2 mate, add **2 bonus points**. ♦

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21-35	1400-1599
06-20	1200-1399
0-05	under 1200

Taken to the Woodward Shed

A young star is showing surprising maturity in his game.

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN



HAVE GOTTEN USED TO TEEN-agers frequently playing at a strong grandmaster level. Their energy, focus, and talent can make them formidable attack-

ing players. But fast-rising American junior GM Andy Woodward is scoring a lot of wins in the endgame, with impressive technique for one of any age. This month we shall see these skills in action from his superb first-place finish in the Tata Steel Challengers.

In our first game, Andy shows patience and determination in winning a marathon over another American star, IM Carissa Yip.

Incremental Advance

RUY LOPEZ, ARKHANGEL VARIATION (C78)

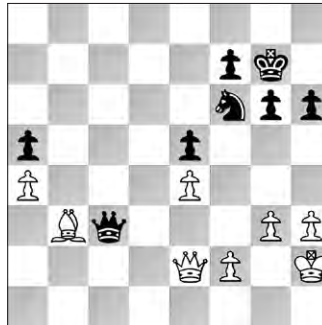
IM Carissa Yip (2466)

GM Andy Woodward (2608)

Tata Steel Challengers (6), Wijk aan Zee, 01.23.2026

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 b5 6. Bb3 Bc5 7. c3 d6 8. d3 h6 9. Re1 0-0 10. Nbd2 Ne7 11. a4 Rb8 12. Nf1 Ng6 13. Ng3 b4 14. d4 Ba7 15. h3 Re8 16. Bc2 c5 17. dxe5 dxe5 18. Be3 Qc7 19. cxb4 Rxb4 20. b3 Be6 21. Qe2 a5 22. Nd2 c4 23. Nxc4 Bxc4 24. bxc4 Bxe3 25. Qxe3 Nf4 26. Bb3 Reb8 27. Ra3 Ne6 28. Nf5 g6 29. Ba2 Nf4 30. Ng3 Rb2 31. Ne2 Rd8 32. c5 Rc2 33. Bb3 Nxe2+ 34. Rxe2 Rxe2 35. Qxe2 Qxc5 36. Qf3 Qc1+ 37. Kh2 Kg7 38. Ra2 Qb1 39. Rc2 Rd1 40. g3 Rc1 41. Rxc1 Qxc1

42. Qe2 Qc3



43. Bd5

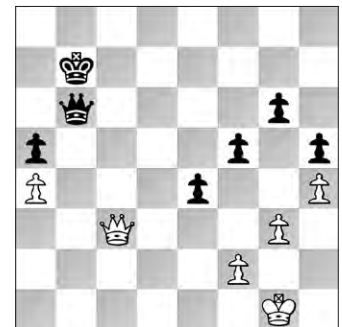
This is not strictly necessary, but with Black's queen and knight exerting pressure, White will likely have to give up a pawn eventually.

43. ... Nxd5 44. exd5 Qd4 45. Qa2 Qd3 46. Kg1 Kf8 47. h4 Ke7 48. Qb2 Qxd5

Cashing in on this pawn is a start, but Black's technical challenges seem insurmountable. The next part of the game is the type of long, seemingly random maneuvering typical at today's time controls, where every move provides a little more thinking time to find a path forward.

49. Qb8 h5 50. Kh2 Qc5 51. Kg1 Kf6 52. Qd8+ Kg7 53. Qb8 Qc3 54. Qe8 Qc7 55. Qb5 Kf8 56. Qd5 Ke7 57. Qb5 Qc3 58. Kh2 Kf6 59. Qe8 Qc5 60. Kg1 Qd5 61. Kh2 Kf5 62. Qc8+ Ke4 63. Qc3 Kf5 64. Qc8+ Kf6 65. Qa6+ Kg7 66. Qb5 Qd4 67. Kg1 Qc3 68. Qe8 Qc1+ 69. Kg2 Qc7 70. Qb5 e4 71. Qd5 f5 72. Qd4+ Kf7 73. Qd5+ Kf6 74. Qa8 Qb6 75. Qe8 Qa6 76. Kg1 Qd6 77. Kh2 Kg7 78. Kg2 Qc7 79. Kh2 Kh7 80. Kg2 Qg7 81. Kh2 Qf6 82. Qb5 Qd8 83. Qe5 Kg8 84.

Qe6+ Kg7 85. Qe5+ Kf7 86. Kg2 Qb6 87. Qd5+ Kf6 88. Qa8 Ke5 89. Qh8+ Kd5 90. Qc3 Qb4 91. Qf6 Qd6 92. Qc3 Qc5 93. Qf6 Qd6 94. Qc3 Qb6 95. Qd2+ Kc6 96. Qa2 Kd6 97. Qd2+ Ke6 98. Qh6 Kf7 99. Qh7+ Kf6 100. Qh8+ Ke6 101. Qh6 Kd5 102. Qd2+ Kc6 103. Qa2 Kb7 104. Qf7+ Ka6 105. Qc4+ Ka7 106. Qc3 Kb7 107. Qg7+ Ka6 108. Qc3 Qe6 109. Qc5 Qd7 110. Qc4+ Kb6 111. Qb3+ Ka7 112. Qe3+ Ka6 113. Qb3 Qc6 114. Kg1 Qc1+ 115. Kg2 Qc7 116. Qe6+ Qb6 117. Qc4+ Ka7 118. Qc3 Kb7 119. Kg1?!



With 119. Qg7+ Carissa almost certainly could have invoked the 50-move rule at Move 121. Andy now ends the count and keeps the torture going.

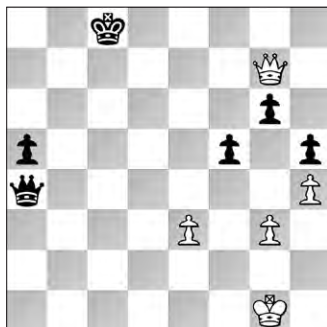
119. ... e3 120. fxe3

If 120. Qxe3 Qxe3 121. fxe3 Kc6 and Black scoops the a-pawn too quickly.

120. ... Qb1+ 121. Kh2 Qa2+ 122. Kg1 Qxa4 123. Qg7+ Kc8

(see diagram top of next column)

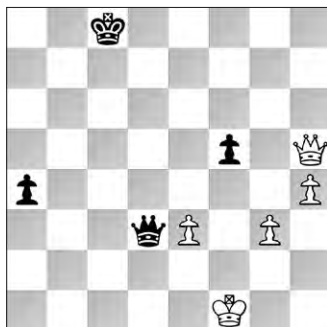
Black has a passed pawn to work with, but



POSITION AFTER 123. ... Kc8

his king is still terribly exposed. White might strike a slightly better deal with a few more checks, but her next move is still “zeroing out.”

124. Qxg6 Qd1+ 125. Kf2 Qc2+ 126. Kf1 a4 127. Qxh5 Qd3+



128. Kg2?

It's somewhat instinctive to advance the king, perhaps looking for shelter in the corner. But the king is exposed to more relevant checks here. After 128. Ke1 a3 129. Qe8+ Kc7 130. h5 Black will not be able to advance the pawn without allowing perpetual check.

128. ... a3 129. Qe8+

The only move to keep the game competitive is the unlikely 129. e4!! The point is to make Black use up the check on the long diagonal. Finding this move while playing on the increment is a tough ask for sure.

129. ... Kc7 130. Qf7+ Kc6 131. Qa2?

White is already doomed without this blunder: 131. Kh3 Qe4! 132. Kh2 Qc2+ 133. Kh3 a2 or 131. Qf6+ Kc5 132. h5 a2 would both be hopeless.

131. ... Qd5+, White resigned.

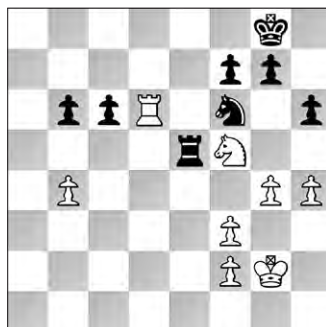
Andy's opportunistic nature was on display in Wijk aan Zee, as he was able to squeeze out endings with limited means.

Squeeze Play

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED (D30)

GM Andy Woodward (2608)
GM Max Warmerdam (2576)
Tata Steel Challengers (4), Wijk aan Zee, 01.20.2026

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 a6 4. Bg5 Be7 5. Bxe7 Qxe7 6. Nbd2 Nf6 7. g3 Nc6 8. Rc1 dxc4 9. Bg2 e5 10. Nxe5 Nxe5 11. dxe5 Qxe5 12. Qa4+ Qb5 13. Qa3 Be6 14. b3 a5 15. 0-0 Qb4 16. Nxc4 0-0 17. Qb2 a4 18. Ne5 axb3 19. axb3 Qb6 20. Qc3 Ra2 21. Bf3 c6 22. Nd3 Re8 23. Nc5 Bg4 24. Rfe1 Bxf3 25. exf3 Raa8 26. Qd4 h6 27. h4 Qc7 28. Kg2 Rxe1 29. Rxe1 Rd8 30. Qa1 b6 31. Ne4 Nd5 32. Nd2 Nf6 33. Nc4 Rd3 34. b4 Rd8 35. Ne3 Qc8 36. g4 Re8 37. Rd1 Qe6 38. Nf5 Qe5 39. Qxe5 Rxe5 40. Rd6



After many moves of flat equality, White is starting to establish winning chances.

40. ... h5

While this is acceptable, Black could have drawn more forcefully with 40. ... Re6 41. Rd8+ (41. Rxe6 fxe6 42. Ne7+ Kf7 43. Nxc6 Nd5 is even clearer) 41. ... Re8 42. Rxe8+ Nxe8 43. Ne7+ Kf8 44. Nxc6 Nf6 45. Kg3 Nd5 and the doubled pawns ensure White's extra pawn won't be realized.

41. Rxc6 hxc4 42. fxg4 Nxg4 43. Nd6 f5

This move stays in the drawing range, but Black's play will have to be quite precise. Better options include 43. ... Re2 44. Rxb6 (44. Kf3 Ne5+ or 44. Rc8+ Kh7 45. Kf3 Rd2) 44. ... Rxf2+ 45. Kg3 f5 46. Nxf5 Rxf5 47. Kxg4 Rd5.

44. Kg3 Rd5 45. Rxb6 g6?

This opens the door. 45. ... Nf6 would have held comfortably.

46. Nc8?

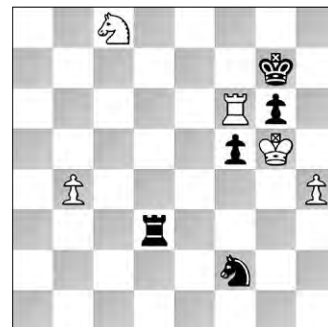
A rare misstep for Andy, though even here

the defense is tricky. The b-pawn would be a formidable presence after 46. b5 or 46. f3.

46. ... Rd3+ 47. Kf4 Kf7

Black had a flashy option in 47. ... Kg7 48. Ne7 (48. Kg5 Ne5 49. Rb7+ Nf7+) 48. ... Rd4+ 49. Kg5 Nf6!! 50. Nxf5+ (50. Rxf6 Rg4 mate) 50. ... gxf5 51. Rxf6 Rg4+ 52. Kxf5 Rxb4 53. Kg5 with a theoretical draw.

48. Kg5 Nxf2 49. Rf6+ Kg7?



This mistake is fatal. After 49. ... Ke8 50. Kxg6 Rd4 51. Nd6+ (51. b5 Rxh4 52. b6 Rh6+ 53. Kxh6 Ng4+ 54. Kg6 Nxf6 55. Kxf6 Kd7 draws) 51. ... Kd7 52. Nxf5 Rxb4 53. h5 Rg4+ 54. Kf7 Ne4 Black has time to stop the h-pawn.

50. Rxc6+ Kh7 51. Rb6 Ne4+ 52. Kxf5

With two solid pawns White is clearly winning.

52...Nc3 53. Ne7 Rd7 54. Nc6 Rd6

55. Rb7+ Kh6 56. Ne5 Rd5 57. Rb8 Rd4?

Black could still resist for a while with 57. ... Kg7.

58. Ng4+, Black resigned.

White will mate or queen the h-pawn after 58. Ng4+ Kg7 59. Rb7+ Kf8 60. h5.

The game that won Andy the tournament was a different type of endgame: GM Erwin L'Ami left too much material on the board, allowing a decisive initiative.

Endgame Ambush

GRÜNFIELD DEFENSE (D90)

GM Andy Woodward (2608)
GM Erwin L'Ami (2634)
Tata Steel Challengers (13), Wijk aan Zee, 02.01.2026

(continued on page 51)

The h-Pawn is Hip

An exhaustive look at how White can take the Winawer to the edge.

BY IM JOHN WATSON

G

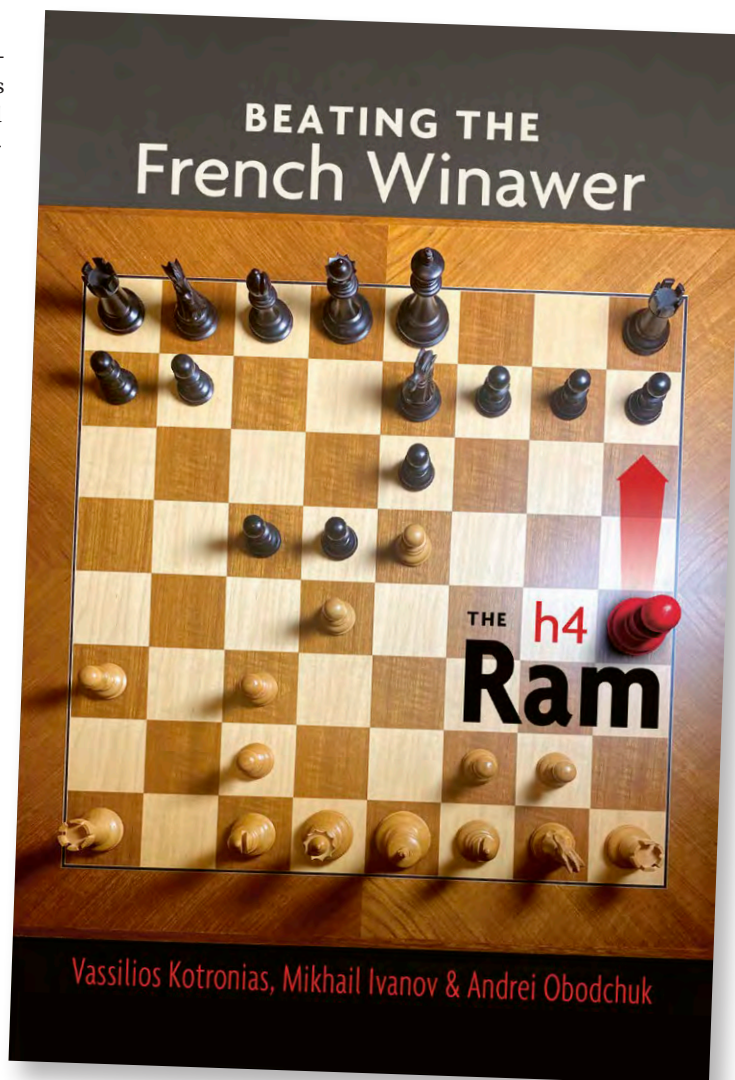
RANDMAS-
ters Vassilios
Kotronias and
Mikhail Ivan-
ov, in collab-

oration with International Master Andrei Obodchuk, have teamed up to produce a unique kind of opening book — one devoted to White's move h2-h4 against the Winawer Variation of the French Defense (1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Bb4).

The introduction (by Ivanov) and cover copy say that the work is 'devoted' to the move 7. h4 in the main line after 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 Ne7. This is meant to indicate that the Poisoned Pawn move 7. Qg4 isn't covered, but might lead the reader to think that 7. h4 is the only subject. In fact, one of the best features of this book is that it contains a deep analysis of many important h2-h4 moves in a wide variety of important Winawer variations. This includes extremely original analysis of lines that are currently enjoying popularity, such as the Armenian System with 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Ba5 and the controversial 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 Nc6.

These chapters will be invaluable to players forming a repertoire for White or, of course, players of Black who want to study the most dangerous lines that White can

BEATING THE French Winawer



Vassilios Kotronias, Mikhail Ivanov & Andrei Obodchuk

come up with. The reader is also given original ideas in lines such as 6. ... Qa5 7. Bd2 Qa4, 6. ... Qc7 7. h4, and in systems without ... c7-c5, such as 4. ... b6 and 4. ... Qd7 (both of which are answered by 5. h4!). In short, this work provides a comprehen-

sive anti-Winawer repertoire, and also consistently suggests invaluable ideas for Black in each variation.

Whenever I read a primarily analytical opening book I wonder about the role of such books in the age of databases, super-powerful engines, and ebooks. Today's players are increasingly learning openings from playing huge numbers of online games, using massive databases, and using e-book courses such as those from Chessable, Modern Chess, and Chessbase. All of these options are then open to further scrutiny by employing one's own personal engines and database programs. There is still ample room for opening books in this picture, of course, which at this point can still offer more detail and explanation of ideas. Furthermore, many players will prefer books for the reading experience, just as physical books continue to sell well at the same time as some prefer Kindle versions.

The value of *Beating the French Winawer: The h4 Ram* depends upon its analysis, so I'll concentrate on the analysis of some important variations. In order to compare existing theory, I want to include some analysis from

recent ebooks about the French that are published by Modern Chess (these are available at modern-chess.com). There have been quite a few of these about the French, and I've chosen two which have directly relevant material; these are products that I

can strongly recommend as worth owning.

Before I get to that, let me quote snippets about other Winawer Systems which are respectable but rather neglected in the literature. Here the authors (whom I'll refer to as 'KIO') are in their element, devoting lengthy chapters to each system. If annotators are not specifically indicated, the note is my own.

The Hook Variation

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 Qa5 7. Bd2 Qa4



This is William Hook's favorite line, played more than 50 years ago versus Fischer. It has always had a following.

8. h4!

Only the fourth-most popular move. A related line is 8. Qg4, when KIO analyze 8. ... Kf8 9. h4! (again, a relatively rare choice) 9. ... Nc6 10. h5 h6 11. Qd1! (11. Qf4 Qxc2 12. dxc5 Nge7 13. Ne2 Bd7 14. Nd4 Qe4+ 15. Qxe4 dxe4 is complicated, but according to extensive analysis by the authors, Black should hold) 11. ... b6! 12. Nf3 Ba6 13. Bxa6 Qxa6 14. dxc5 bxc5 15. Qe2! c4!! 16. a4! (Here they give deep analysis of 16. 0-0 Nge7 17. Nh4 Qa4!) 16. ... Nge7 17. 0-0 Kg8 18. Nh4 Kh7 19. g4 Rad8 20. f4 and White has good practical attacking chances, winning one correspondence game. Apparently Black has to play the unnatural 20. ... Rhg8! to keep White's advantage limited.

8. ... Ne7

After 8. ... Nc6, a practical solution is 9. Qg4 Kf8 10. h5 h6, transposing to the 8. Qg4 lines.

9. h5

The authors give lengthy analysis showing that 9. Nf3 Nbc6 10. Rb1! is also quite strong for White.

9. ... h6

After 9. ... b6 one of several routes to advantage is 10. h6 gxh6 11. Bxh6 Nbc6 12. Nf3 Nf5 13. Bd3 cxd4 14. Bxf5 exf5 15. cxd4.

10. Rh4! c4 11. Rg4 Rg8 12. Be2 Nbc6

13. Rf4! Rf8 14. Bg4 Bd7 15. Bh3 0-0-0

16. Qf3! Qxc2 17. Rxf7

Black is in big trouble.

The "Ugly" Variation

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 Nc6

This move has become much more popular over the past few years, and is played by a number of strong grandmasters (including Carlsen in blitz and rapid chess). The authors present a nice solution which players of Black would do well to study in depth.

7. Qg4 g6



It creates many dark-square weaknesses (hence 'Ugly'), but this is a currently popular move. Instead, 7. ... Nge7?! 8. Qxg7 Rg8 9. Qxh7 cxd4 resembles the Winawer Poisoned Pawn Variation, but here 10. Nf3! leads to a clear advantage.

8. a4!

It's interesting that 8. h4 has been recently been hotly contested, but the authors hold back on their beloved h-pawn advance and choose a less popular and likely better advance. They also dedicate three dense pages to 8. Bd2, feeling that Black keeps a balance with accurate play by both sides.

8. ... f5

The authors say that 8. ... Qa5 may be better than this, but their analysis is not encouraging, a main line going 9. Bd2 Bd7 10. h4 h6 11. Qd1! 0-0-0 12. Nf3 (or 12. Rb1) 12. ... Nge7 13. Qb1! Kb8 14. Qb5 with a large advantage.

9. Qd1! Qa5 10. Bd2 c4 11. h4! h6 12.

Rh3!? Nd8

White is practically winning after 12. ... Bd7 13. Ne2 0-0-0 14. Rg3 Nge7 15. Qc1.

13. Ne2 Nf7 14. Nf4 Ne7 15. Rg3 Rg8 16.

Bc1 Bd7 17. Ba3 Nc6

Here White has several good moves, but KIO show 18. Be2!! g5 19. Bh5; for example, 19. ... Rg7 20. hxc5 hxc5 21. Qd2 0-0-0 22. Bb4 Qb6 23. Bxf7 Rxf7 24. Rxc5 winning.

The Armenian Winawer

This arises from 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Ba5. I'll refer to Alexey Dreiev & Pier Luigi Basso's ebook *French Winawer: Play the Armenian Variation* to make a few key points. KIO recommend playing as follows:

6. b4 cxd4 7. Qg4

7. Nb5 Bc7 8. f4 Bd7 is another main line, played regularly over the past 50 years without a firm conclusion. The authors devote no fewer than 12 pages to it. This is invaluable as a study of the Armenian with either color, even if KIO's solution doesn't give White much. After 9. Nf3, they only consider 9. ... Bxb5, which isn't bad at all but arguably leaves White the easier game. Dreiev and Basso (henceforth 'D&B') prefer 9. ... Ne7 10. Nxc7+ Qxc7 11. Bd3 Ba4, transposing to this critical continuation: 9. Nxc7 Qxc7 10. Bd3 (D&B give a number of moves here, all satisfactory for Black) 10. ... Ba4 (D&B mention 10. ... a6 11. Nf3, when I feel 11. ... Bb5 will equalize) 11. Nf3 Ne7



POSITION AFTER 11. ... Ne7

12. 0-0 a6! 13. Nxd4 Nbc6 14. Nb3. KIO prefer White here after 14. ... Bb5, but D&B suggest 14. ... Nf5!, which I think is indeed better, for example, they give 15. Bxf5 exf5 16. Qxd5 Bxb3! 17. cxb3 (17. Qxb3 Nd4 18. Qd3 Nxc2) 17. ... Qb6+ 18. Kh1 Qd4 19. Qxd4 Nxd4 20. Bb2 Ne6! "Black lacks a pawn," they write, "but has a great knight and good compen-

sation, and no risk.”

7. ... Kf8 8. Nb5 Bb6 9. Nf3 Nc6 10. Bb2 Nge7



One of the rare serious omissions by KIO. Dreev & Basso give a convincing analysis of 10. ... f6(!), their main line being 11. Nbx4 Nxe5 12. Nxe5 fxe5 13 Nxe6+ Bxe6 14. Qxe6 Qf6!, when some thorough engine-assisted analysis ends in equality. I believe that is correct. 10. ... Nge7 offers a second sound way for Black to proceed.

11. Nbx4

11. Bd3 Ng6 12. Qg3 f6! 13. Bxg6 hxg6 14. Nbx4 15. Nxe5 fxe5 is a very well-known position which is considered completely equal after either 16. Qxe5 Rh5! 17. Nxe6+ Bxe6 18. Qxe6 Qe8! or 16. Nf3 e4 17. Ne5 Kg8!.

11. ... h5!

Played in dozens of games. The main line goes 12. Qf4! Ng6 13. Nxc6! bxc6! 14. Qg3 a5! 15. Bd3 Ba6! with equality. D&B extend their analysis much further without changing the assessment. The past 17 games in my database from this position have all been drawn.

You may be thinking that KIO haven't offered anything advantageous versus the Armenian Winawer. That's true, but keep in mind that there are 20 pages of alternatives and analysis. They think that the move 6. Qg4, for example, is more promising than other sources indicate; both sides would be well served to study these and other notes.

The Main Line with 7. h4

The current main line of the 7. h4 Winawer, and arguably of the entire variation, is **1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 Ne7 7. h4 Qc7 8. h5.**

Now 8. ... h6 is the most important defense. Before I get to that, a quick comment on 8. ... cxd4 9. cxd4 Qc3+ 10. Bd2 Qxd4 11. Nf3 Qe4+ 12. Be2 Nf5:



Black's last is necessary to prevent Rh1-h4 and discourage h5-h6. He has an extra pawn, but White has two bishops, space and the prospects of gaining time on Black's queen while developing. Despite being around for many years, this position hasn't been written about in any depth. The authors feature the most-played move, 13. Kf1, with four dense pages of complex variations which demonstrate a small White edge. Not satisfied, they also plunge into a fascinating and wildly unclear analysis of 13. 0-0 (five dense pages), one main line being 13. ... Nc6 14. Re1 0-0 15. Rb1 h6 16. Qc1! f6!, as well as eight maniacal pages on 13. Rb1 Nc6 14. Kf1 Nxe5.

I collect a lot of French Defense material, and almost none of this has been addressed in other sources. KIO explain that 13. Kf1 is their preference, but that the other two lines are presented “to let you get acquainted with motifs and strategies typical for both sides.”

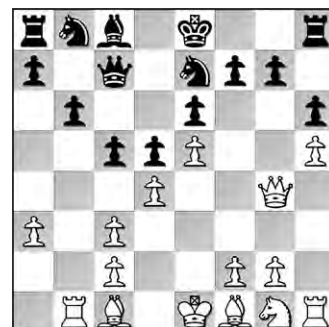
Instead of the risky 8. ... cxd4, the current main line is **8. ... h6 9. Rb1**. Other ninth moves have been played and analyzed in some detail, but 9. Rb1 is the most popular among strong players and analysts:

(a) 9. Nf3 blocks the queen off from g4 and so causes fewer problems; the authors cover the solution 9. ... b6 in depth.

(b) 9. Rh3 is one of the more interesting tries; for example, 9. ... b6 10. Qg4 Nf5 11. Ne2 Nc6 12. Qf4 '!' Ba6 (to me, 12. ... Nfe7 looks fine, for example, 13. Rf3 0-0 14. Ng3 Bd7 15. Qh4 f6! 16. exf6 cxd4 17. cxd4 e5! with equality) 13. Ng3, and KIO give 13. ... Bxf1?, but 13. ... Nxc3! is better, with the idea 14. Qxg3 (14. Bxa6 Ne4; 14. Rxg3 Bxf1 15. Kxf1 Ne7! 16. Rxg7?! Nf5) 14. ... Bxf1 15. Kxf1 cxd4 16. Qxg7 0-0-0 17. Bf4 Ne7! 18. cxd4 Nf5.

After 8. h5 h6 9. Rb1, Black has two particularly important moves:

A. 9. ... b6 10. Qg4



10. ... Rg8

KIO convincingly demonstrate that 10. ... Nf5 11. Bb5+ and 10. ... Kf8 11. Rh3! favor White.

But 10. ... cxd4, as recommended by Ntirlis in his superb Winawer survey in the January issue of *Chess Life*, looks better than previously thought and has done well. Skipping many details, play can go 11. Qxg7 Rg8 12. Qxh6 Qxe5+ 13. Ne2 dxc3 14. Bf4 (KIO also analyze 14. Qf4 Qxf4 15. Bxf4, when 15. ... Ba6 leads to equality after 16. Rb3 f6 or 16. ... Nd7 intending ... e6-e5 and ... f7-f6 or even 16. ... Bxe2 17. Bxe2 d4); Black also equalizes after 16. Nxc3 Bxf1 17. Kxf1 Nbc6) 14. ... Qf5 15. Nd4 (15. f3 Qxc2 16. Rc1 Qb2 is assessed as equal already, and 15. Nxc3 Ba6 equalizes too) 15. ... Qe4+ 16. Be3 Ba6 17. f3 Qe5 18. g4 Qg3+! (KIO give full analysis of 18. ... Bxf1 19. Kxf1 Nbc6 20. Rd1, with a small edge for White) 19. Bf2 Qe5+ 20. Qe3 (20. Ne2 Rh8) 20. ... Qxe3+ 21. Bxe3 Bxf1 22. Kxf1 Kd7 23. h6 e5 24. Nb5 f6 25. Nxc3 Nbc6 (25. ... d4? 26. Ne4) 26. Rd1 Ke6, a position which has led to two Leela – Stockfish draws.

11. Bb5+ Kf8! 12. Bd3

KIO try to improve this line with 12. dxc5!?, but Black has 12. ... Nd7! 13. cxb6 axb6 14. Nf3 Nxe5 15. Qg3 Nxf3+ 16. Qxf3, when KIO give 16. ... f6, but simpler might be 16. ... Ba6! 17. Bxa6 Rxa6 18. 0-0 f6 19. Re1 Kf7!.

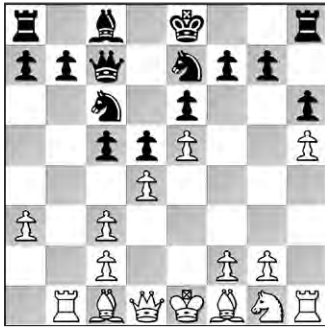
12. ... Ba6 13. dxc5! Bxd3

Black has a fully playable alternative in 13. ... Qxe5+ 14. Ne2 Bxd3 15. cxd3 Nd7 16. cxb6 axb6, although it's not easy.

14. cxd3 Nd7 15. d4! bxc5 16. Qd1!

KIO give 13(!) dense pages of analysis from this position. After 16. ... Qa5! 17. Bd2 Rb8 18. Ne2 Black seems to hold with perfect play. Kotronias believes that the less-analyzed 16. Ne2 may actually give better chances of an objective advantage, but I'm skeptical and we'll stop here.

B. 9. ... Nbc6!?

**POSITION AFTER 9. ... Nbc6**

Basso recommends this in his Chessable Winawer repertoire with Jobava. As always, there are masses of analysis, but I'll just show the entertaining main line:

10. Qg4 Rg8!

In a rare omission, 10. ... Nf5?! is the only move analysed by KIO. They give a deep analysis showing that 11 Bd3! leads to a significant advantage.

11. Bd3

(Benjamin; continued from page 47)

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. Nf3 Bg7 5. h4 dxc4 6. e4 c5 7. d5 b5 8. h5 Nxh5 9. Nxb5 Qa5+ 10. Nc3 Nd7 11. Bd2 Rb8 12. Rb1 Ba6 13. Be2 Qc7 14. Qc1 Bd4 15. Be3 Bxe3 16. Qxe3 Qf4 17. Kd2 Rb6 18. Rh4 Qxe3+ 19. Kxe3 Nh6 20. e5 g5 21. Nxe5 Nxe5 22. Nge4 Ned7 23. Bxc4 Rg8 24. Bxa6 Rxa6 25. g3 Nxe4 26. Rxe4 Rg5 27. Rd1 Rb6 28. b3 a6 29. Kf3 Rf5+ 30. Kg2 Rb4 31. Re2 Re5 32. Rc2 Nf6 33. Na4

**33. ... Nxd5?**

White will have good play against Black's king with all the rooks on the board, so here 33. ... Rxd5 34. Rxd5 Nxd5 35. Nxc5 Rb6 made much more sense, when White's position is just slightly more pleasant to play. Or 33. ... c4!? 34. Rxc4 Rxc4 35. bxc4 Re2 is less intuitive but also essentially equal.

A lovely variation goes 11. Nf3 c4!? 12. a4 Qa5 13. Kd2 (Petkov – Sturt, Arandjelovac 2021), and here Basso came up with the strong 13. ... b5!! 14. axb5 Rb8 15. Be2 Qa2! 16. Rb2 Qa1, eventually leading to an equal game.

11. ... c4 12. Bh7 Nxe5!! 13. Qg3

Black recovers the piece and has two extra pawns after 13. dxe5 Qxe5+ 14. Ne2 Rh8!, but White has enough play that the engines call it equal.

13. ... Nd3+! 14. cxd3 Qxg3 15. fxg3 Rh8 16. Be4!?

Black equalizes after 16. dxc4 Rxh7 17. c5 f6!? 18. Nf3 Rh8.

16. ... dxe4 17. dxe4 b6!

Basso continues the analysis further; Black is fully equal. It's interesting that this fashionable 8. h5 h6 9. Rb1 variation is the one which comes out reasonably for Black, which is a good sign for the Winawer. On the other hand, there are lots of possible improvements to search through.

34. Nxc5 Rb6 35. Nd3 Rg5 36. Rc8+ Kd7 37. Rf8**37. ... Rd6?**

Black had much better chances to resist with 37. ... Rf5 (actually, the rook should have gone here in the first place) 38. Nc5+ (38. Rc1 Rg6 39. Rcc8 might be more accurate) 38. ... Kc7 39. Rc1 Rg6! when White does not have a decisive discovered check.

38. Nc5+ Kc7 39. Rc1

Now the discovery will do damage: 39. ... Rc6 40. Nxa6+ Kb6 41. Rb8+ wins the Exchange.

39...Nf4+ 40. Kf3!

Black would stay in the game after 40. Kf1 Rh5!.

40. ... Ng6 41. Ne4+ Kd7 42. Rfc8 Rf5+ 43. Ke3 Rd1?

All told, I doubt that you can do much better as White than to play 3. Nc3 and use this book as your anti-Winawer bible. On the other hand, while players of 3. ... Bb4 can be encouraged by the main line, those who enjoy playing respectable Winawer sidelines as Black need to have this book, since it points out a number of serious problems to solve. ♠

Kotronias, Vassilios; Ivanov, Mikhail, and Obodchuk, Andrei. Beating the French Winawer: The h4 Ram. Russell Enterprises, 2025. 288 pp. ISBN 9781963885040. List price \$29.95.

Jobava, Baadur, and Basso, Pier Luigi. French Defense for Black: Play the Winawer Variation, Parts 1 & 2. Modern-Chess.com, 2025. 2 hours, 28 minutes and 3 hours, 32 minutes. List price €99.00 each.

Dreev, Alexey, and Basso, Pier Luigi. French Winawer: Play the Armenian Variation. Modern-Chess.com, 2025. 5 hours, 30 mins. List price €79.00.

On 43. ... Rb6 Stockfish proposes a subtle continuation of the attack with 44. R1c7+ Ke6 45. g4!? Rfb5 46. Nc5+ Kd5 47. f3! but I suspect Andy would have opted for 45. Rc6+ Rxc6 46. Rxc6+ Kd7 47. Rxa6 with a routine win.

44. R1c7+ Ke6 45. Rc6+ Kd7 46. Nc5+ Rxc5 47. Rxc5 Ne5 48. Rc1, Black resigned. ♠

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TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL EVENTS & BIDS NOW ON USCHESS.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 end 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.rknights.org

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • HERITAGE EVENT

2026 US Amateur East Individual

MAY 23, 2026 — NJ TLA# 55391
Site: Delta Hotels Woodbridge Address: 515 US Highway 1 South, Iselin, NJ 08830 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Aaron Kiedes • akiedes@gmail.com • njscf.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 • vegaschessfestival.com

Grand Prix

The Grand Prix point totals reflect all rated event information as of December 18, 2025, for the 2025

Grand Prix. These standings are updated regularly, but should be considered unofficial. Visit ratings.uschess.org/grand-prix/standings for up-to-date information.

2025 US CHESS GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

Name	State/Ctry	Pts
1. GM JIANCHAO ZHOU	MA	616.00
2. EMMANUEL CARTER	NC	145.00
3. THOMAS FANG	NC	112.00
4. GM FIDEL CORRALES JIMINEZ	CA	105.00
5. FM DANILA POLIANNIKOV	MA	105.00
6. GM ALEXANDER IVANOV	MA	97.00
7. GM AWONDER LIANG	WI	89.00
8. GM PRAVEEN BALAKRISHNAN	VA	82.00
9. BHARATH SUBRAMANIAM H	FOR	82.00
10. GM MIKHAIL ANTIPOV	MO	76.00

2025 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 information visit new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program

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 • chesstour.com

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 • chesstour.com

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 • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2026 Phillip O'Neal Taylor Georgia State Championship

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — GA TLA# 55493
Site: Courtyard by Marriott Atlanta Dunwoody Address: 4401 Chamblee Dunwoody Road, Chamblee, Georgia, 30341 Overall Prize Fund: \$10,000 GP Pts: 80 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Charles Hatherill • kingsgambit50@earthlink.net • 7027430305 • georgiachess.org

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

Bill Wright Saint Louis Open 2026

APRIL 17-19, 2026 — MO TLA# 55376
Site: Saint Louis Chess Club Address: 4663 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108 Overall Prize Fund: \$7,500 GP Pts: 60 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Saint Louis Chess Club • tournaments@saintlouischessclub.org • 3143612437 • saintlouischessclub.org

GRAND PRIX

ICA FIDE Championship

APRIL 18-19, 2026 — NJ TLA# 54201
Site: Community Church of Glen Rock Education Building Address: 354 Rock Road, Glen Rock, NJ 07452 Overall Prize Fund: \$2,000 GP Pts: 20 FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: International Chess Academy • chessdirector@icanj.net • 2017970330 • icanj.net

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

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess Go Fly a Kite Day Grand Prix

APRIL 19, 2026 — NC TLA# 55495
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

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 • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2026 Connecticut Open, \$5,000+ in Guaranteed Prizes!!

APRIL 24-26, 2026 — CT TLA# 55494
Site: Connecticut College Address: 270 Mohegan Avenue, Crozier Williams, New London, CT 06320 Overall Prize Fund: \$5,000+ GP Pts: 50 FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Connecticut State Chess Association • chess.CSCA@gmail.com • 8605930225 • ChessCT.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE Open

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
Site: The East End Address: 1200 E. Market St., Akron, OH 44305 Overall Prize Fund: \$5,000+ GP Pts: 30 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Kalanithi Bagley • kalanithi@discoverychess.org • 330 475 2964 • discoverychess.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight National Pet Parents Day Grand Prix

APRIL 26, 2026 — NC TLA# 55496
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

2026 Charlotte Spring Open

MAY 1-3, 2026 — NC TLA# 54881
Site: Hilton Garden Inn - Southpark Hotel Address: 4808 Sharon Road, Charlotte, NC 28210 Overall Prize Fund: \$5,500 GP Pts: 40 FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Charlotte Chess Center • events@charlottechesscenter.org • charlottechesscenter.org/events

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@sheridanchess.com • 202-679-6779 • SheridanChess.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

34th Massachusetts G/60 Championship

MAY 3, 2026 — MA TLA# 55484
Site: Renaissance Framingham Hotel and Conference Center Address: 1657 Worcester Rd., Framingham, MA 01701 Overall Prize Fund: \$3,000 GP Pts: 15 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Massachu-

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess World Laughter Day Grand Prix

MAY 3, 2026 — NC TLA# 55498
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

71st Annual Maryland Open

MAY 8-10, 2026 — MD TLA# 55406
Site: Rockville Hilton Address: 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852 Overall Prize Fund: see online TLA GP Pts: 30 FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Michael W Regan • mregan@stsci.edu • 4104195130 • mdchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess Mother's Day Grand Prix

MAY 10, 2026 — NC TLA# 55500
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 • 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 • chesstour.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 Domalapati • cb2026@capitalareachess.com • 1-703-627-5314 • capitalareachess.com/cherryblossom

GRAND PRIX

46th Annual Lina Grumette Memorial Day Classic

MAY 23-25, 2026 — CA TLA# 55550
Site: Sonesta Los Angeles Airport LAX Hotel Address: 5985 W. Century Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90045 Overall Prize Fund: \$20,000 GP Pts: 30 FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: SCCF • chucnglo@aol.com • 858-432-8006 • scschess.com

GRAND PRIX

Cohen Woodworking Rapid Open 2026

MAY 23, 2026 — MO TLA# 55377
Site: Saint Louis Chess Club Address: 4663 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,000 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Saint Louis Chess Club • tournaments@saintlouischessclub.org • 3143612437 • saintlouischessclub.org

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

94th Massachusetts Open

MAY 23-25, 2026 — MA TLA# 55489
Site: Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel Address: 181 Boston Post Rd, Marlborough MA 01752 Overall Prize Fund: \$7,500 GP Pts: 50 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Massachusetts Chess Association • info@masschess.org • 603-891-2484 • masschess.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

15th Annual Chicago Open Blitz Championship!

MAY 24, 2026 — IL

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 • chesstour.com

TLA# 53432

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

Edward Jones Classic 2026

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — MO TLA# 55382
Site: Saint Louis Chess Club Address: 4663 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108 Overall Prize Fund: \$5,000 GP Pts: 40 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Saint Louis Chess Club • tournaments@saintlouischessclub.org • 3143612437 • saintlouischessclub.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

15th Annual Hartford Open

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — CT TLA# 55518
Site: Sheraton Hotel Address: 1 Bradley Airport (visible at airport entrance), Windsor Locks CT 06096 Overall Prize Fund: \$10,000 GP Pts: 60 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

19th Continental Chess Cleveland Open

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — OH TLA# 55596
Site: Wyndham Independence Cleveland Hotel Address: 6200 Quarry Ln, Independence, OH 44131 Overall Prize Fund: \$15,000 GP Pts: 120 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.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 • vegashess@gmail.com • 702-930-9550 • vegashess-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 • chesstour.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 • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

2026 Chicago Summer Open

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — IL TLA# 55511
Site: Hyatt Regency Schaumburg Address: 1800 E Golf Rd, Schaumburg, IL 60173 Overall Prize Fund: \$10,000 GP Pts: 50 FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Wilson's Chess & King Registration • bill@kingregistration.com • kingregistration.com/event/Chisummeropen26

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

World Open Game/50 Championship

JUNE 25, 2026 — DC TLA# 55312

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: \$1500-800-600-400-300-200-100-100-100

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.

Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel **Address:** 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,200 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chessstour.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 • chessstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

The DC Open (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 54842
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel **Address:** 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chessstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

15th annual World Open Women's Championship

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55310
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel **Address:** 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,000 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chessstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

15th annual World Open Game/7 Blitz Championship

JULY 1, 2026 — DC TLA# 55315
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel **Address:** 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,500 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chessstour.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 • chessstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

34th Annual World Open G/10 Championship

JULY 4, 2026 — DC TLA# 55318
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel **Address:** 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,200 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chessstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

37th Annual World Open Blitz Championship

JULY 5, 2026 — DC TLA# 55320
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel **Address:** 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3,000 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chessstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

19th annual Chicago Class Championships

JULY 17-19, 2026 — IL TLA# 55299
Site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:**

601 N Milwaukee Avenue, Wheeling IL 60090 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chessstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

34th annual Southern Open

JULY 17-19, 2026 — FL TLA# 55402
Site: Holiday Inn Resort Kissimmee By The Parks **Address:** 3011 Mailing Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34747 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chessstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

27th annual Pittsburgh Open

JULY 17-19, 2026 — PA TLA# 55352
Site: Courtyard Marriott University Center Hotel **Address:** 100 Lytton Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$13,000 **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chessstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

31st Annual Bradley Open

JULY 24-26, 2026 — CT TLA# 55353
Site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel at Bradley Airport **Address:** 1 Bradley Airport, Windsor Locks CT 06096 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chessstour.com

GRAND PRIX

Kent Family Classic 2026

JULY 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383
Site: Saint Louis Chess Club **Address:** 4663 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$5,000 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Saint Louis Chess Club • tournaments@saintlouischessclub.org • 3143612437 • saintlouischessclub.org

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

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

31st annual Pacific Coast Open

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — CA TLA# 55399
Site: Hilton Orange County Airport Hotel **Address:** 18800 MacArthur Blvd, Irvine CA 92612 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chessstour.com

GRAND PRIX

Brennan's Rapid Open 2026

AUGUST 8, 2026 — MO TLA# 55388
Site: Saint Louis Chess Club **Address:** 4663 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,000 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Saint Louis Chess Club • tournaments@saintlouischessclub.org • 3143612437 • saintlouischessclub.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2026 Illinois Open

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
Site: DoubleTree by Hilton Lisle-Naperville **Address:** 3003 Corporate W Dr, Lisle, IL 60532 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Wilson's Chess & King Registration • bill@kingregistration.com • kingregistration.com/event/ILopen26

GRAND PRIX

Beckstead Family Classic 2026

SEPTEMBER 18-20, 2026 — MO TLA# 55384
Site: Saint Louis Chess Club **Address:** 4663 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,000 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:**

N Org: Saint Louis Chess Club • tournaments@saintlouischessclub.org • 3143612437 • saintlouischessclub.org

GRAND PRIX

Catherine McLaughlin Rapid Open 2026

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55387
Site: Saint Louis Chess Club **Address:** 4663 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,000 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Saint Louis Chess Club • tournaments@saintlouischessclub.org • 3143612437 • saintlouischessclub.org

GRAND PRIX

Thanksgiving Open 2026

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Site: Saint Louis Chess Club **Address:** 4663 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Saint Louis Chess Club • tournaments@saintlouischessclub.org • 3143612437 • saintlouischessclub.org

Regional

ALABAMA

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608

The FIDE Forum

See Florida.

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.

JULY 17-19, 2026 — FL TLA# 55402

34th annual Southern Open

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379

Thanksgiving Open 2026

See Grand Prix.

ALASKA

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379

Thanksgiving Open 2026

See Grand Prix.

AMER. SAMOA

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608

The FIDE Forum

See Florida.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic

See Grand Prix.

ARIZONA

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608

The FIDE Forum

See Florida.

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 23, 2026 — MO TLA# 55377

Cohen Woodworking Rapid Open 2026

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.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — CA TLA# 55399

31st annual Pacific Coast Open

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379

Thanksgiving Open 2026

See Grand Prix.

ARKANSAS

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic

See Grand Prix.

MAY 23, 2026 — MO TLA# 55377

Cohen Woodworking Rapid Open 2026

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — MO TLA# 55382

Edward Jones Classic 2026

See Grand Prix.

JULY 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383

Kent Family Classic 2026

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379

Thanksgiving Open 2026

See Grand Prix.

CALIFORNIA

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608

The FIDE Forum

See Florida.

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 — 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 23-25, 2026 — CA TLA# 55550

46th Annual Lina Grumette Memorial Day 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.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — CA TLA# 55399
31st annual Pacific Coast Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
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.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

📍 CONNECTICUT

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608
The FIDE Forum
See Florida.

APRIL 24-26, 2026 — CT TLA# 55494
2026 Connecticut Open, \$5,000+ in Guaranteed Prizes!!!
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 17, 2026 — MA TLA# 55442
3rd Greater Baystate Spring Classic
See Massachusetts.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211
13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — CT TLA# 55518
15th Annual Hartford Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — NY TLA# 54808
30th annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur
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 24-26, 2026 — CT TLA# 55353
31st Annual Bradley Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

📍 DELAWARE

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — VA TLA# 54957
2026 Virginia Senior & Adult Open
See Virginia.

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.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

📍 DIST. OF COLUMBIA

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — VA TLA# 54957
2026 Virginia Senior & Adult Open
See Virginia.

JUNE 25, 2026 — DC TLA# 55312
World Open Game/50 Championship
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# 54842
The DC Open (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

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55308
18th annual World Open Under 13 Championship
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel Address: 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,000 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55309
5th annual World Open Amateur Championship
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel Address: 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 Overall Prize Fund: \$3,000

GP Pts: n/a FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55310
15th annual World Open Women's Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55311
16th annual World Open Senior Amateur
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel Address: 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,000 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

JUNE 30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55313
13th annual World Open Action!
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel Address: 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 Overall Prize Fund: see online TLA GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

JULY 1, 2026 — DC TLA# 55315
15th annual World Open Game/7 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 4, 2026 — DC TLA# 55318
34th Annual World Open G/10 Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 5, 2026 — DC TLA# 55320
37th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

📍 FLORIDA

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608
The FIDE Forum
Site: Veteran's Park of Delray Beach (Indoor) Address: 802 NE 1st St, Delray Beach, FL 33483 Overall Prize Fund: \$3,275 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: 954Chess INC • 954chess@gmail.com • chessregister.com

APRIL 18-19, 2026 — FL TLA# 52264
Florida State Women's Chess Championship
See Grand Prix.

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.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — VA TLA# 54957
2026 Virginia Senior & Adult Open
See Virginia.

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# 54842
The DC Open (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 17-19, 2026 — FL TLA# 55402
34th annual Southern Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

📍 GEORGIA

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608
The FIDE Forum
See Florida.

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — GA TLA# 55493
2026 Phillip O'Neal Taylor Georgia State Championship
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.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — VA TLA# 54957
2026 Virginia Senior & Adult Open
See Virginia.

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 17-19, 2026 — FL TLA# 55402
34th annual Southern Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
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.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 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.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

ILLINOIS

APRIL 6, 2026-WEEKLY — IL TLA# 55620
Habilis 2026 April Monday 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: Kevin Bachler • kevin.bachler@cavemanchess.com • (224) 985-5244 • cavemanchess.com

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608
The FIDE Forum
 See Florida.

APRIL 24-25, 2026 — SD TLA# 55179
Upper Midwest Regional Girls K-12 Championship
 See South Dakota.

APRIL 24-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 55649
Caveman April 3x4 Open Avec Prix \$900/40
 Site: Signature Regus Address: 222 South Prospect, Floor R, Park Ridge, IL 60068 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Kevin Bachler • kevin.bachler@cavemanchess.com • (224) 985-5244 • cavemanchess.com

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE Open
 See Grand Prix.

APRIL 26, 2026 — IL TLA# 55650
12th Habilis U19 Play & Learn!
 Site: Signature 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: Kevin Bachler • kevin.bachler@cavemanchess.com • (224) 985-5244 • cavemanchess.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 23, 2026 — MO TLA# 55377
Cohen Woodworking Rapid Open 2026
 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 5-7, 2026 — MO TLA# 55382
Edward Jones Classic 2026
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — IL TLA# 55511
2026 Chicago Summer 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 17-19, 2026 — IL TLA# 55299
19th annual Chicago Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383
Kent Family Classic 2026
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
2026 Illinois Open
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

INDIANA

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE 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 23, 2026 — MO TLA# 55377
Cohen Woodworking Rapid Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 24, 2026 — IL TLA# 53432
15th annual Chicago Open Blitz Championship!
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — MO TLA# 55382
Edward Jones Classic 2026
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — IL TLA# 55511
2026 Chicago Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 17-19, 2026 — IL TLA# 55299
19th annual Chicago Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383
Kent Family Classic 2026
 See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
2026 Illinois Open
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

IOWA

APRIL 24-25, 2026 — SD TLA# 55179
Upper Midwest Regional Girls K-12 Championship
 See South Dakota.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 23, 2026 — MO TLA# 55377
Cohen Woodworking Rapid Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — MO TLA# 55382
Edward Jones Classic 2026
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — IL TLA# 55511
2026 Chicago Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383
Kent Family Classic 2026
 See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
2026 Illinois Open
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

KANSAS

APRIL 24-25, 2026 — SD TLA# 55179
Upper Midwest Regional Girls K-12 Championship
 See South Dakota.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 23, 2026 — MO TLA# 55377
Cohen Woodworking Rapid Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — MO TLA# 55382
Edward Jones Classic 2026
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383
Kent Family Classic 2026
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

KENTUCKY

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 23, 2026 — MO TLA# 55377
Cohen Woodworking Rapid Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — MO TLA# 55382
Edward Jones Classic 2026
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383
Kent Family Classic 2026
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

LOUISIANA

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

MAINE

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

MARYLAND

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 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 8-10, 2026 — MD TLA# 55406
71st Annual Maryland 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.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — VA TLA# 54957
2026 Virginia Senior & Adult Open
 See Virginia.

JUNE 25, 2026 — DC TLA# 55312
World Open Game/50 Championship
 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# 54842
The DC Open (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*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55308
18th annual World Open Under 13 Championship
 See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55309
5th annual World Open Amateur Championship
 See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55310
15th annual World Open Women's Championship
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55311
16th annual World Open Senior Amateur
 See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55313
13th annual World Open Action!
 See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 1, 2026 — DC TLA# 55315
15th annual World Open Game/7 Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 1-5, 2026 — MD TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 4, 2026 — DC TLA# 55318
34th Annual World Open G/10 Championship
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 5, 2026 — DC TLA# 55320
37th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

MASSACHUSETTS

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 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608
The FIDE Forum
See Florida.

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 3, 2026 — MA TLA# 55484
34th Massachusetts G/60 Championship
See Grand Prix.

MAY 17, 2026 — MA TLA# 55442
3rd Greater Baystate Spring Classic
Site: Northampton Center For the Arts - Flex Room
Address: 33 Hawley Street, Northampton, MA 01060
Overall Prize Fund: \$2,675 b/40 GP Pts: n/a FIDE:
N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Greater Bay-
state Chess • greater.baystate.chess@gmail.com •
4133560303 • [greaterbaystatechess.com](#)

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-25, 2026 — MA TLA# 55489
94th Massachusetts Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211
13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — CT TLA# 55518
15th Annual Hartford Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

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 24-26, 2026 — CT TLA# 55353
31st Annual Bradley Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

MICHIGAN

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE 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 23, 2026 — MO TLA# 55377
Cohen Woodworking Rapid Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

MAY 24, 2026 — IL TLA# 53432
15th annual Chicago Open Blitz Championship!
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — MO TLA# 55382
Edward Jones Classic 2026
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — OH TLA# 55596
19th Continental Chess Cleveland Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — IL TLA# 55511
2026 Chicago Summer 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](#).

JULY 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383
Kent Family Classic 2026
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
2026 Illinois Open
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

MINNESOTA

APRIL 24-25, 2026 — SD TLA# 55179
Upper Midwest Regional Girls K-12 Championship
See South Dakota.

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 23, 2026 — MO TLA# 55377
Cohen Woodworking Rapid Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — MO TLA# 55382
Edward Jones Classic 2026
See Grand Prix.

JULY 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383
Kent Family Classic 2026
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

MISSISSIPPI

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

MISSOURI

APRIL 17-19, 2026 — MO TLA# 55376
Bill Wright Saint Louis Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 18, 2026 — MO TLA# 55417
Columbia Open
Site: Rockbridge High School Address: 4303 S. Providence Rd. Columbia, MO 65203 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Bob Howe • bdhowe@yahoo.com • 6362347928 • [moChess.org](#)

APRIL 24-25, 2026 — SD TLA# 55179
Upper Midwest Regional Girls K-12 Championship
See South Dakota.

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 23, 2026 — MO TLA# 55377
Cohen Woodworking Rapid Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — MO TLA# 55382
Edward Jones Classic 2026
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](#).

JULY 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383
Kent Family Classic 2026
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

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.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NEBRASKA

APRIL 24-25, 2026 — SD TLA# 55179
Upper Midwest Regional Girls K-12 Championship
See 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.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NEVADA

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.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — CA TLA# 55399
31st annual Pacific Coast Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 2-5, 2026 — VA TLA# 53535
7th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NEW JERSEY

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 4, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52910
Atlantic City Open Blitz Championship!
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608
The FIDE Forum
See Florida.

APRIL 18-19, 2026 — NJ TLA# 54201
ICA FIDE Championship
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 25, 2026 — NJ TLA# 54714
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 • edmendou@aol.com • 6093512437 • [hamiltonchessclub.com](#)

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

APRIL 25, 2026 — NJ TLA# 55452
2026 NJ Senior State Championship
Site: International Chess Academy Glen Rock Address: CA within Community Church of Glen Rock Educational building, 2nd floor, 354 Rock Road, Glen

Rock, NJ 07452 **Overall Prize Fund:** see online TLA
GP Pts: n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N
Org: Diana Tulman • diana@icanj.net • njscf.org

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

APRIL 25, 2026 — NJ TLA# 55451
2026 NJ State Women's Championship
Site: International Chess Academy Glen Rock **Address:** CA within Community Church of Glen Rock Educational building, 2nd floor, 354 Rock Road, Glen Rock, NJ 07452 **Overall Prize Fund:** see online TLA
GP Pts: n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N
Org: Diana Tulman • diana@icanj.net • njscf.org

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE Open
 See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

APRIL 26, 2026 — NJ TLA# 55395
2026 NJ State Scholastic Qualifiers
Site: Crowne Plaza Princeton Conference Center **Address:** 900 Scudders Mill Road, Plainsboro, NJ 08536
Overall Prize Fund: n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N
Org: Anand Mishra • njscfqualifiers@gmail.com • njscf.org

MAY 8-10, 2026 — MD TLA# 55406
71st Annual Maryland Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 55431
35th Annual Chicago Open
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 55412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 23, 2026 — NJ TLA# 55392
2026 US Amateur East K-8 Scholastic
Site: Delta Hotels Woodbridge **Address:** 515 US Highway 1 South, Iselin, NJ 08830 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N
Org: Aaron Kiedes • akiedes@gmail.com • njscf.org

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211
13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — VA TLA# 54957
2026 Virginia Senior & Adult Open
 See Virginia.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — CT TLA# 55518
15th Annual Hartford Open
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — NY TLA# 54808
30th annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 25, 2026 — DC TLA# 55312
World Open Game/50 Championship
 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# 54842
The DC Open (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*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55308
18th annual World Open Under 13 Championship
 See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55309
5th annual World Open Amateur Championship
 See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55310
15th annual World Open Women's Championship
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55311
16th annual World Open Senior Amateur
 See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55313
13th annual World Open Action!
 See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 1, 2026 — DC TLA# 55315
15th annual World Open Game/7 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 4, 2026 — DC TLA# 55318
34th Annual World Open G/10 Championship
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 5, 2026 — DC TLA# 55320
37th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 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# 55412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

NEW YORK

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 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608
The FIDE Forum
 See Florida.

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 8-10, 2026 — MD TLA# 55406
71st Annual Maryland Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 17, 2026 — MA TLA# 55442
3rd Greater Baystate Spring Classic
 See Massachusetts.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 55431
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.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — VA TLA# 54957
2026 Virginia Senior & Adult Open
 See Virginia.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — CT TLA# 55518
15th Annual Hartford Open
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — NY TLA# 54808
30th annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 25, 2026 — DC TLA# 55312
World Open Game/50 Championship
 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# 54842
The DC Open (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*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55308
18th annual World Open Under 13 Championship
 See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55309
5th annual World Open Amateur Championship
 See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55310
15th annual World Open Women's Championship
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55311
16th annual World Open Senior Amateur
 See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55313
13th annual World Open Action!
 See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 1, 2026 — DC TLA# 55315
15th annual World Open Game/7 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 4, 2026 — DC TLA# 55318
34th Annual World Open G/10 Championship
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 5, 2026 — DC TLA# 55320
37th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 17-19, 2026 — PA TLA# 55352
27th annual Pittsburgh Open
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 24-26, 2026 — CT TLA# 55353
31st Annual Bradley Open
 See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us*.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

NORTH CAROLINA

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.

APRIL 19, 2026 — NC TLA# 55495
Dragon Knight Chess Go Fly a Kite Day Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE Open
 See Grand Prix.

APRIL 26, 2026 — NC TLA# 55496
Dragon Knight National Pet Parents Day Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 1-3, 2026 — NC TLA# 54881
2026 Charlotte Spring Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 3, 2026 — NC TLA# 55498
Dragon Knight Chess World Laughter Day Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 10, 2026 — NC TLA# 55500
Dragon Knight Chess Mother's Day Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 55412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211
13th Annual Summer Solstice Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — VA TLA# 54957
2026 Virginia Senior & Adult Open
 See Virginia.

JUNE 25, 2026 — DC TLA# 55312
World Open Game/50 Championship
 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# 54842
The DC Open (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*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55309
5th annual World Open Amateur Championship
 See District of Columbia or *chessevents.us*.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55310
15th annual World Open Women's 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 17-19, 2026 — FL TLA# 55402
34th annual Southern Open
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NORTH DAKOTA

APRIL 24-25, 2026 — SD TLA# 55179
Upper Midwest Regional Girls K-12 Championship
See 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.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NO. MARIANA ISL.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

OHIO

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE 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 5-7, 2026 — OH TLA# 55596
19th Continental Chess Cleveland Open
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 17-19, 2026 — PA TLA# 55352
27th annual Pittsburgh Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

OKLAHOMA

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
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.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

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 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE 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.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — VA TLA# 54957
2026 Virginia Senior & Adult Open
See Virginia.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — OH TLA# 55596
19th Continental Chess Cleveland Open
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# 54842
The DC Open (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.

JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55310
15th annual World Open Women's Championship
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See Grand Prix.

PUERTO RICO

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The FIDE Forum
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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.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

RHODE ISLAND

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

SOUTH CAROLINA

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.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — VA TLA# 54957
2026 Virginia Senior & Adult Open
See Virginia.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

SOUTH DAKOTA

APRIL 24-25, 2026 — SD TLA# 55179
Upper Midwest Regional Girls K-12 Championship
Site: Abiding Savior Middle School Campus Address: 308 W 37th St, Sioux Falls, SD 57105 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,600 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Elliott Neff • elliott.neff@chess4life.com • chess4life.com

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.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

TENNESSEE

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 23, 2026 — MO TLA# 55377
Cohen Woodworking Rapid Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 5-7, 2026 — MO TLA# 55382
Edward Jones Classic 2026
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.

JULY 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383
Kent Family Classic 2026
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

TEXAS

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608
The FIDE Forum
See Florida.

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 5-7, 2026 — MO TLA# 55382
Edward Jones Classic 2026
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 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383
Kent Family Classic 2026
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

U.S. MIN. OUT. ISL.

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608
The FIDE Forum
See Florida.

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.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

VERMONT

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13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

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NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

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 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE Open
 See Grand Prix.

APRIL 26, 2026 — VA TLA# 55339
MVP Chess K-12 Quads (FREE for US Chess Members)
 Site: Mount Vernon Rec Center Address: 2017 Belle View Blvd. Alexandria, VA 22307 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: MVP Chess • info@mvpchess.org • mvpchess.org

MAY 8-10, 2026 — MD TLA# 55406
71st Annual Maryland 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.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MAY 29-31, 2026 — VA TLA# 54957
2026 Virginia Senior & Adult Open
 Site: Country Inn & Suites by Radisson Address: 10358 Patriot Highway, Fredericksburg, VA 22408 Overall Prize Fund: \$4,500 + plaques & trophies GP Pts: n/a FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Mike Hoffpauir, NTD/IA • mhoffpauir@aol.com • 757-846-4805 • vachess.org

JUNE 25, 2026 — DC TLA# 55312
World Open Game/50 Championship
 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# 54842
The DC Open (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 53577
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18th annual World Open Under 13

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JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55310
15th annual World Open Women's Championship
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JUNE 29-30, 2026 — DC TLA# 55311
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NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

VIRGIN ISL., U.S.

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — FL TLA# 55608
The FIDE Forum
 See Florida.

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.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — CA TLA# 55399
31st annual Pacific Coast Open
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NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

WEST VIRGINIA

APRIL 25-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 55665
3rd Annual CHESS FOR CURE Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412
13th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — VA TLA# 54957
2026 Virginia Senior & Adult Open
 See Virginia.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

WISCONSIN

APRIL 24-25, 2026 — SD TLA# 55179
Upper Midwest Regional Girls K-12 Championship
 See South Dakota.

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 23, 2026 — MO TLA# 55377
Cohen Woodworking Rapid Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 24, 2026 — IL TLA# 53432
15th annual Chicago Open Blitz Championship!
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MAY 29-31, 2026 — FL TLA# 54211
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MAY 30-31, 2026 — WI TLA# 54742
2026 Arpad Elo Open
 Site: Courtyard by Marriott Madison West Address: 2266 Deming Way, Middleton, WI 53562 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,400 b/80 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Mike Nietman • mike.nietman@charter.net • 6084678510 • wisches.org

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Edward Jones Classic 2026
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JULY 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383
Kent Family Classic 2026
 See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
2026 Illinois Open
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

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.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

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www.wachess.com

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www.fsclchess.org/

Ocean State Chess Association

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oceanstatechess.com/

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Solutions

PAGE 11 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. White resigned after 31. ... Nf3+! (32. gxf3 Qxf3 and mates, or 32. Kh1 Nxe1). **PROBLEM 2. 18. Qh5!, Black resigned** (18. ... gxf5 19. Bxh7 mate). **PROBLEM 3. 29. ... Rg1+! 30. Kxh1 Qd1+, White resigned**, because of 31. Kg2 Qh1+ 32. Kg3 Rh3 mate. **PROBLEM 4. 25. Qh5!** (25. ... Qxh5 26. Rxf7+ Kh8 27. Rxf7+ Kg8 28. Rg7+ Kh8 29. Rg1+ mates). **PROBLEM 5.** A smothered mate pattern prompted Black to resign after 17. Nf6!. For example, 17. ... N8d7 18. Qe6+ Kh8 19. Nf7+ Kg8 20. Nh6+ Kh8 21. Qg8+! and 22. Nf7 mate. Or 17. ... Rf8 18. Qe6+ Kh8 19. Nf7+ and 20. Qxb6. And 17. ... exd6 is met with 18. Qe6+ Kh8 19. Qxc8+ Ng8 20. Re8. **PROBLEM 6. 24. Qxg7+!, Black resigned**, because of 24. ... Rxf7 25. Rxf7+ Kh8 26. f7! If 26. ... h6 27. Rd6 mates.

PAGE 17 MAKE YOUR MOVE

TACTIC 1. 26. Rc7+! Rd7 27. Rxb7! The winning combination. **27. ... Rxb7 28. Nxd5+ Kd6 29. Bxe4** White has won two minor pieces and a pawn for a rook, and the game soon ended: **29. ... Rb8 30. Ne3 g6 31. Kf1 Rc8 32. Nc4+, Black resigned.** Oro – Roebers, Tata Steel Challengers 2026. **TACTIC 2. 22. ... Rxf5! Boom! 23. gxf5** Or 23. Bc3 Rxc3 24. Qxc3 Rxf2 25. Rxf2 (If 25. Qxf6, then 25. ... Rxc2+ 26. Qf2 Rxf2 27. Rxf2 Bxg4 and Black wins) 25. ... Qxf2+ 26. Kh1 Bxg4, and White will get mated. **23. ... Ne5!** This was the first point behind the previous move: White's queen is sent to b3 to keep the c2-bishop protected (24. Qe4 would be met by 24. ... Rc4). **24. Qb3 Rxc2!** One more Exchange sacrifice. **25. Qxc2** Or 25. a5 Rxb2 26. Qg3 Bc5 27. Bc3 Rc2 28. Bxe5 dxe5 and Black wins. **25. ... Bxf5 26. Qc3 Be4** This was the real point behind all the previous moves: White is unable to defend against Black's attack on the kingside. **27. Qg3 Nf3+, White resigned.** Lu – Oro, Tata Steel Challengers 2026. **TACTIC 3. 32. ... Qxe3!** Much simpler and stronger than the game continuation. Play could go **33. Qxe3 Bxc2+ 34. Kxc2 Rxe3 35. Rd4 Ne4+** with a decisive advantage for Black. Panesar – Assaubayeva, Tata Steel Challengers 2026 (analysis). The game went 32. ... Nxb3?? 33. axb3 Qxe3 34. Bxe8?? (White could have survived after 34. Ka1!, e.g., 34. ... Bxc2 35. Bxe8 Rxe8 36. Qxe3 Rxe3 37. Rf1 Rf3, which the engines assess as equal) 34. ... Rxe8?? (Black missed 34. ... Qxb3+ 35. Ka1 Rxc2 36. Bf7+ Kf8 with mate in two) 35. Qc4?? (35. Qxe3 wins) 35. ... b5 36. Qb4 Rc8 37. Rc1?? (37. Rde1 Bxc2+ 38. Ka2 Qh6 would have been "equal.") 37. ... Bxc2+ 38. Rxc2 a2+ 39. Rxa2 Qd3+ 40. Kb2 Qe2+, White resigned. **TACTIC 4. 27. Rc7!!** Hello! Black's little queenside sanctuary proves to be a lot more vulnerable than he had hoped. **27. ... Kxc7 28. Qxa7+ Kd6 29. Qxb6+ Kd7 30. Bb5+ Kc8 31. Qa7! Rd6 32. 0-0!, Black resigned.** Fascinating that White castled this late, immediately forcing resignation. A possible continuation was 32. ... Nd2 33. Qa8+ Kc7 34. Rc1+ Nc4 35. Qxh8, and White wins. Ivic – L'Ami, Tata Steel Challengers 2026. **TACTIC 5. 32. Ncb5!** The only winning move. The other knight move looks similar but it doesn't work at all; for instance, 32. Ndb5 Qc4 33. Qb1 (Or 33. R1xf6 gxf6 34. Rxf6 Kg8 35. Qf2 Rg5 36. a4 Rc8 and Black wins) 33. ... Re6 34.

R1xf6 Rxf6 35. Rxf6 gxf6 36. Qc1 Qh4, and White's attack has run out of steam. **32. ... Qc4** If 32. ... Qd8, then 33. Nd6, threatening R7xf6, and if 33. ... Ng8 34. Ne6 Black can resign. **33. R1xf6 gxf6** Or 33. ... Re1+ 34. Kh2 gxf6 35. Rxd7 Qf1 36. Nf3 and White wins. **34. Qf2 Qc1+ 35. Kh2 Qg5** Black has prevented getting mated, but at the cost of material. **36. Rxd7 Re4 37. Nd6! Qe5+ 38. g3 Qxd4 39. Nxe4! Qxf2+ 40. Nxf2 Rc8 41. Rxb7 Rc2 42. Kg1 Rxa2 43. Ng4, Black resigned.** Abdusattorov – Bluebaum, Tata Steel Masters 2026. **TACTIC 6. 22. a3!** First, the queen needs to be sent to an unfortunate square. **22. ... Qxf4 23. Rd8+** Boom! Not 23. Qxa6?, as 23. ... 0-0! gives Black the advantage, e.g., 24. Rd1 Bg2 25. Qxe6+ Kh8 26. h5 Bxh3 27. Qxh3 Qxg5 28. hxf6 h6 29. Bd3 Rcd8 30. Re1 Rb8 31. Re4 Qg1+ 32. Ka2 Qxg6, and although White has a bit of compensation, Black is better. **23. ... Kf7** Or 23. ... Rxd8 24. Qxc6+ Kf7 (24. ... Rd7 25. Rf3 Qh2 26. Qxa6 wins for White) 25. Rf3 winning Black's queen and the game. **24. Rxh8 Bxh8 25. Qxa6 Rc7 26. Nxb5 Bxb5 27. Qxb5 e4 28. c3** White had a decisive advantage and eventually picked up the full point. Maurizzi – Assaubayeva, Tata Steel Challengers 2026. **TACTIC 7. 24. ... Nd3!! BOOM!** A nasty move that obviously took Bluebaum by surprise. **25. Rxd3** Or 25. Bxd3 Qxd2 26. Qa3 Rd8 27. Bb1 Qe2 28. Rg1 Rd2 with mate in a few moves. **25. ... Qxh3+ 26. Kg1 Qg3+ 27. Kh1 g5, White resigned;** he can only delay mate by giving up a lot of material. Bluebaum – Sindarov, Tata Steel Masters 2026. **TACTIC 8. 27. ... e4!** The decisive breakthrough. At first glance, it doesn't look that meaningful, but the idea is to open the g1-a7 diagonal for Black's dark-squared bishop. **28. dxe4 Ng5 29. Qxf5** If White doesn't capture the f5-pawn, things become unbearably passive and hopeless for White, e.g., 29. Qf4 fxe4 30. Qxf6 Rxf6, and now, for example, 31. b4 axb4 32. axb4 Bxb4 33. Re2 b5 34. Nd2 e3 35. fxe3 Rxe3 36. Rf2 d3 37. Bb3+ Kf8 38. Rxf6+ gxf6 39. Nf1 Re1 40. Rxe1 Bxe1 wins for Black. **29. ... Qe7 30. Qg6** White is up a pawn, but it is all downhill from here. The next move, of course, was the idea behind the ... e5-e4 pawn push: **30. ... d3 31. Bxd3 Bxf2+ 32. Kh1 Rf6** Evicting White's queen before it could harm Black's king, just in case. **33. Qh5 Bxe1 34. Rxe1 b5 35. Nxa5 Ref8 36. h4 Qe5 37. Rg1 Qg3, White resigned.** A possible continuation was 38. hxf5 Rf4 39. Qh3 Rh4 40. Bf1 Rf2 with mate to follow. Gukesh – Bluebaum, Tata Steel Masters 2026. **TACTIC 9. 17. Nd5!! BOOM!** Hello, what's going on here? It turns out that Black's pieces are just misplaced enough for White to take advantage. **17. ... exd5** Or 17. ... Qa7 18. Ne7+ Kh8 19. Nxc8 Rxc8 20. cxb6, and White wins material. Also, 17. ... Qd8 18. Nc4 Bb7 19. Ndx6 gives White a large, maybe even decisive, advantage. **18. Qxd5+ Rf7 19. cxb6 Qxb6 20. Nc4** The point: A fork of Black's queen and bishop wins back the sacrificed piece. **20. ... Bb7 21. Nxb6 Bxd5 22. Nxd5 Rxb2** The material balance has been restored, but Black's uncoordinated pieces and fractured pawn structure give White a large advantage. **23. Rc5 Rb5 24. Rfc1 Nd6 25. e3 Bd8 26. Rxb5 axb5 27. Bf1 g5 28. Rc5.** White is winning and eventually managed to convert the advantage to a full point. Fedoseev – Keymer, Tata Steel Masters 2026.

PAGE 45 ABCS OF CHESS

PROBLEM 1. Black is mated in 1: **1. Qg7 mate. PROBLEM 2.** White mates in 1: **1. Qc7 mate. PROBLEM 3.** White scores in 1: **1. Rf4 mate. PROBLEM 4.** Black loses in 1: **1. Ba4 mate. PROBLEM 5.** White slams Black in 1: **1. Be8 mate. PROBLEM 6.** Black is cornered in 1: **1. Qe8 mate.**

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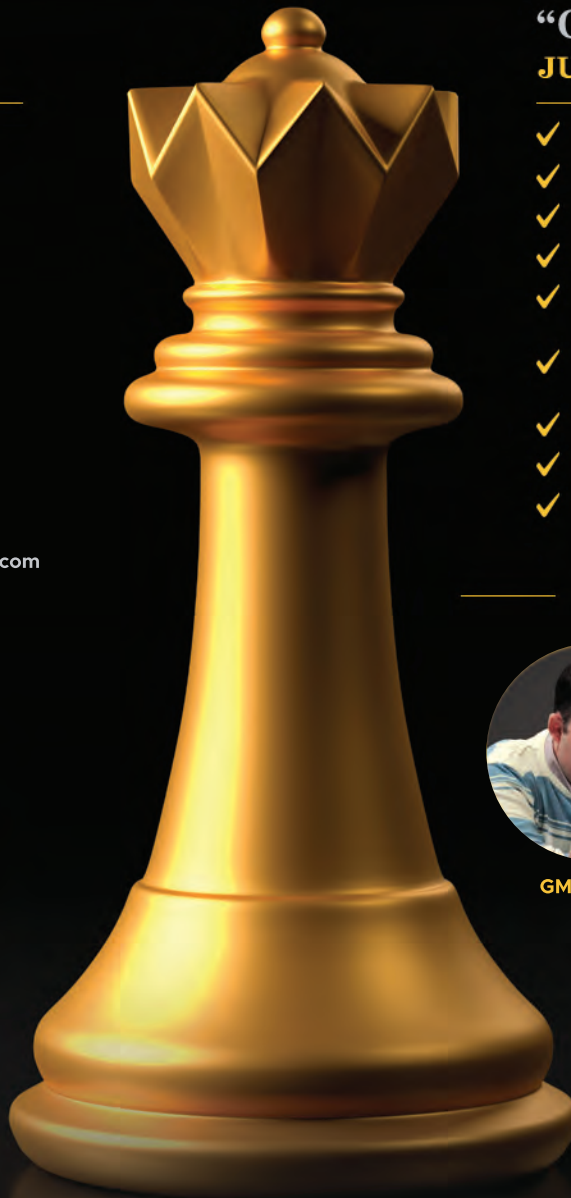
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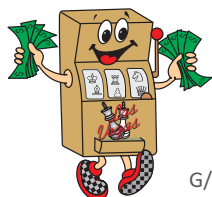


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