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Sindarov's Symphony

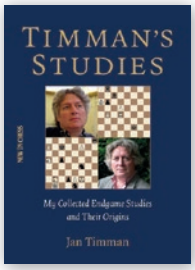
20-year-old wins 2026 Candidates

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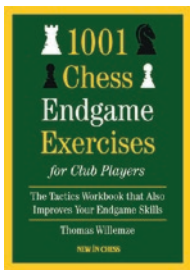


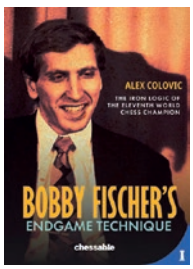
Timman's Studies
Jan Timman

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.

1001 Chess Endgame Exercises for Club Players
Thomas Willemze

Chess Master Thomas Willemze takes club players beyond the basics with 1001 endgame puzzles. Train advanced tactical patterns, sharpen calculation, and build the intuition and practical skills to win more games in club and tournament play.



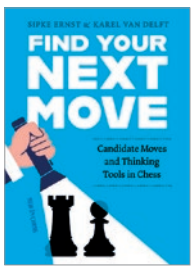


Bobby Fischer's Endgame Technique
Alex Colovic

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.

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?



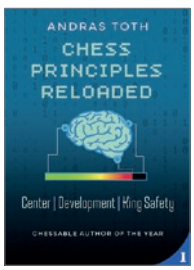


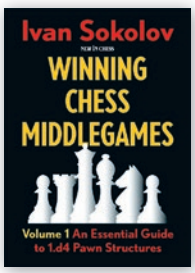
Bobby Fischer's Chess Queen
Shernaz Kennedy

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.

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.



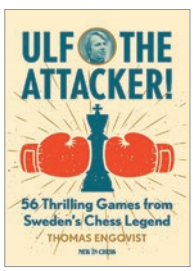


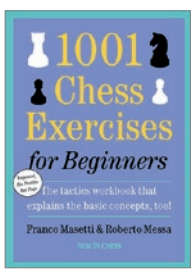
Winning Chess Middlegames – Revised Edition
Ivan Sokolov

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.

Ulf – The Attacker!
Thomas Enqvist

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.



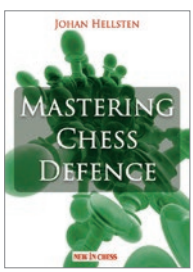


1001 Chess Exercises for Beginners
Franco Masetti & Roberto Messa

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

Mastering Chess Defence
Johan Hellsten

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



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May

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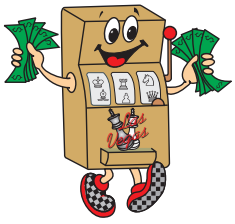
ON THE **COVER**

With his dominating performance at the 2026 Candidates, GM Javokhir Sindarov will challenge current champ GM Gukesh Dommaraju in what will be the youngest world championship pairing in history. Are we seeing the transition to a post-Carlsen world? Maybe not just yet, but youth is definitely on the march.

PHOTOGRAPH BY **MICHAL WALUSZA**

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WALTER BROWNE MEMORIAL BLITZ	SUNDAY
POKER TOURNAMENT	MONDAY

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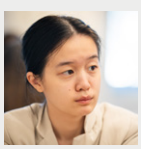
GM ELSHAN MORADIABADI (Candidates) is a chess grandmaster, coach, author, and advocate. Most recently he co-won the 2022 U.S. Open, as well as the 2022 Chess Journalist of the Year award for his contributions to *Chess Life* and other publications. He coaches players at all stages of their development. Find him at *gmelshan.com*.



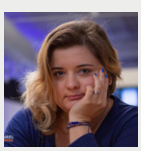
GM ALEX CHERNIN (Chernin's Lessons) has represented the Soviet Union and his adopted country of Hungary in international play. After many individual tournament victories, he has turned his attention to training and coaching, and has worked with some of today's best players.



GM WESLEY SO (American Cup) is a three-time U.S. Champion and the inaugural World Fischer Rapid Champion. Currently he is the seventh-ranked player in the world.



IM ALICE LEE (American Cup) is the second-ranked American woman on the April US Chess rating list. She has won three consecutive American Cups.



WGM SABINA FOISOR (NJSCF RR) was born in Romania to a chess-playing family. In 2008 she moved to the United States to begin studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and immediately saw success. The 2017 U.S. Women's Champion, she has represented the United States at the Olympiad and World Team Championships. Visit her teaching site, *www.chessevolve.com*, and her Twitch stream, *www.twitch.tv/sabinafoisor*.

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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."

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LOOKING AHEAD TO JUNE

CHESS IS A STRUGGLE ON AND OFF THE BOARD. IT'S HARD not to get wrapped up in the wins and losses, and to remember that our self-worth is not correlated with our results.

Learn more about chess and mental health in our June issue. We'll also have an interview with Sindarov's coach, IM Roman Vidonyak, along with all your favorite columns and authors.





The June issue will also marks an important transition here at *Chess Life* — it will be the first in more than 10 years without the contributions of Natasha Roberts, seen left with (left to right) former editors Dan Lucas and Melinda Matthews and current editor John Hartmann. We wish her well in her new venture and we know that her bookshop will be well stocked with chess books!



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

The Rate Stuff

75 Years of US Chess ratings

BY **RICK MASSIMO**

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO last November, an indispensable part of the tournament chess experience made its debut in *Chess Life*.

The first ratings appeared in the Nov. 20, 1950, issue; Reuben Fine topped the list at a "grandmaster" rating of 2817. But the idea of a rating system was years in the making. Earlier that year, U.S. Chess Federation Vice President William Ryland wrote to the membership that ratings "will provide the easiest possible method of — and incentive for — improvement and advancement to the aspiring player." He added that "It will finally solve the perplexing problem of which American players can properly be dubbed 'masters'."

Three-quarters of a century later, there are regular ratings, quick and blitz ratings, online ratings, ratings for variants — the application of an objective-looking numerical equivalent of chess strength is here to stay and has solved a lot of problems in terms of tournament organization.

The history

It's hard not to notice that the rise of the rating system basically coincides with the growth in popularity of the Swiss system ("it has become thoroughly naturalized and now has its final papers as an American citizen," Major wrote in 1949). Pairing a tournament that way before ratings could be unpredictable: Some tournament directors would play the strongest players against each other immediately; others would divide the field into roughly strong and weak halves, hopefully setting up last-round showdowns but also possibly precluding the top players from ever meeting.

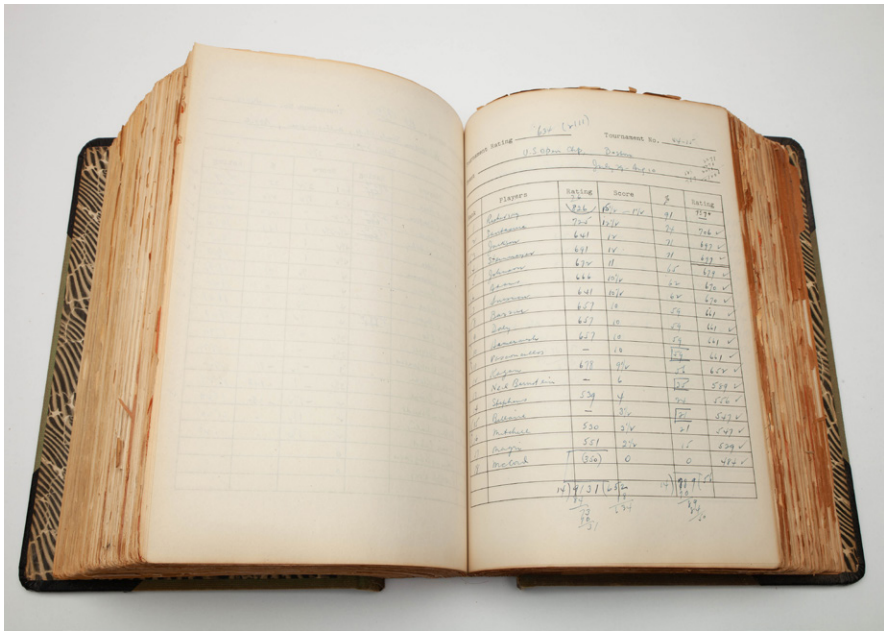
Bruce Bailey knows what it was like not to have a rating system. A retired programmer who grew up in Walla Walla, Washington, Bailey maintained the rating system for Northwest Chess for years, back when communications with the USCF offices in New York were spotty enough that he says the local ratings were generally considered more up to date.

Before ratings, clubs were run on a ladder system "in which the players in the club were listed best down to worst in general terms," Bailey says. From there, each player could challenge someone near them on the ladder — two or three rungs was considered the maximum — and you won to move up.

The list was based simply on "what's the current pecking order, but that's sort of what you found in the smaller areas out here on the West Coast," Bailey says. "The pairings were on the basis of the ladder, and that depended on the tournament director. There were no really fixed rules or established procedures here; it's just the way individual clubs decided to run things."

When starting a rating system, Bailey remembers, "You have to take the ladder, or whatever the local ladder equivalent is ... you translate it into the form you need for your system, and you start from there."

That's more or less what the early rating systems did — taking recent results and plotting players' strengths on a scale from 0 to 3000, seeking a curve whereby the most populous rating groups were at or near 1500



Left: the Harkness notebook, where Kenneth Harkness calculated the original US Chess rating system. This page shows data from the 1944 U.S. Open in Boston.

PHOTO: COURTESY WCHOF

and the line of the graph trailing downward the farther you got from the center.

And after some early hiccups — some tournament directors only sent in certain sections of tournaments to be rated; some others, seemingly missing the point entirely, sent in players' final scores with no indication of who had played whom — that's how the rating system rolled out, stabilized itself with more data, and with various tweaks to the formula, more or less continues to work today.

Running the numbers

Mark Glickman, chair of US Chess's Ratings Committee and a senior lecturer in statistics at Harvard University, describes the rating system as something akin to a living thing — it needs periodic updates to make sure results translate accurately and the distribution of ratings comes as close as possible to the ideal bell curve.

US Chess recently switched its membership and rating database to a platform run by Leago. Korey Kormick, US Chess's director of member services, says rank-and-file players are seeing the first real changes to their profile pages since 1991, with more of their "tournament history, statistics and milestone achievements" in one place. He adds that directors will see a complete restructuring of the TD/Affiliate Area: "It has been designed from the ground up to be more intuitive, to remove obsolete functions, and increase speed and ease of workflow for both experienced and beginner users alike."

Generally, the custodians of the rating system have to fight deflation — a lowering of the average rating — mostly caused by young players who improve so rapidly that the rating system can't track them fast enough. As a result, the players who play these rapid improvers see their games rated against a standard that doesn't really apply. It may only cost a few points, but in a rating pool of 100,000 players even a small change can really multiply.

Glickman is the first to agree that there should be other ways to measure chess strength. US Chess currently has a system of norms and titles for the different classes all the way down to Class E. Not many players or organizers pay a lot of attention to those statistics, and Glickman, despite being a ratings statistician, wishes that would change.



GM Reuben Fine, the top-rated player in November 1950

PHOTO: US CHESS ARCHIVES

"My contention has always been that US Chess should really heavily market the norm and title system," using it to determine class prizes and sections. "If it can get to that point, then people will care a lot less about ratings and much more about titles. And if you start caring more about titles, you're not going to have this sort of this craziness of people ... doing anything to manipulate their rating, and then ratings become this pure measure of how strong you are."

In a previous interview, Glickman summed up the strengths and weaknesses of ratings in one swoop: The accuracy of a rating corresponds with how close it is to a player's true strength. How do you know what a player's true strength is? You can't.

That kind of paradox is at the foundation of not only the rating system but of all statistical problems, Glickman says: "You don't know what the truth is, but you're gathering data to get a better estimate of what that truth is.". ♦

US Chess announced the launch of the new Member Uploads, Information, and Reporting (MUIR) system last fall to replace the separate Member Services Area (MSA) and Tournament Director and Affiliate Area (TD/A). This is part of our ongoing plan to modernize our digital infrastructure. MUIR is an entirely new platform that supports data uploads, rating reports, and member information management in one integrated system. Its potential is great, and we look forward to realizing it together.

Check out our new ratings page at ratings.uschess.org*, and don't forget to look for news and updates about MUIR at* Chess Life Online.

2026 Chess Journalists of America Awards

BY **JOSHUA ANDERSON**

THE CHESS JOURNALISTS OF America (CJA) calls for nominations for the annual Chess Journalists of America awards. The CJA Awards recognize the best in all facets of chess journalism, both in print and online. The best chess articles, columns, photojournalism, online writing, and social media are honored within their respective categories. Recognized annually by their peers, the public, and members of CJA, the prestigious awards showcase American works published in English between June 1, 2025, and May 31, 2026.

CJA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the study and knowledge of chess as a journalistic and scholarly endeavor. Membership is open to everyone at an annual membership fee of $10. Award winners will receive a printable online certificate and will be listed in CJA's magazine, *The Chess Journalist*, and on the CJA website and social media platforms.

CJA's annual awards are open to anyone. There is an entry fee of $15 for the first entry, which includes membership or renewal to CJA, and an $8 fee for each subsequent entry (unless otherwise noted). State organizations may submit three entries in the Cramer Awards for free. Additional award details can be found online at *chessjournalism.org*. Interested parties can also contact CJA Chief Judge Joshua Anderson at *joshuamiltonanderson@gmail.com*. Please use the QR code to go directly to our entry page. Award winners will be announced first at the annual CJA meeting during the U.S. Open, followed by a complete listing on the CJA website.

Submissions must be made by June 28, 2026.

2026 AWARDS TOP THREE CATEGORIES

(Open to print or online)

Chess Journalist of the Year
Best Story of the Year
Best Column

BEST CHESS BOOK

Best Book – Instruction
Best Book – Other
Best Self-Published Book

BEST VISUAL ARTS

Best Photojournalism Article
Best Single Chess Photo
Best Art
Best Single Chess Magazine Cover
Best Cartoon

BEST PRINT ARTICLES

(Open only to publications)

Best Regular Newspaper Column
Best Single Article of Local Interest
Best Feature Article
Best Interview
Best Tournament Report – National/International
Best Tournament Report – State/Local
Best Club Newsletter
Best Instructive Lesson
Best Review
Best Analysis
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Best Online Blog
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Best Online Article by a Junior
Best Personal Narrative by a Junior
Best Photo by a Junior
Best Online Website by a Junior

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Best State Championship Report
Best State Tournament Coverage
Best Scholastic Coverage in State (may be multiple articles)
Best Overall State Website
Best State Magazine/Newsletter – Print
Best State Magazine/Newsletter – Online
Best Personal Narrative
Best Photograph
Best State Magazine Photo
Best State Facebook Page
Best Multimedia Presentation

Scholar-Chessplayer Awards Announced

The US Chess Federation and the U.S. Chess Trust, both independent 501(c)(3) organizations, are pleased to announce six recipients of the 2026 Scholar-Chessplayer Awards. This includes the winner of the new category introduced in 2022, Scholastic Chess Ambassador, which acknowledges lower-rated but deserving chess scholars.

The Scholar-Chessplayer Awards recognize and encourage outstanding high school juniors and seniors who promote a positive image of chess while excelling in academics and leadership. A total of $9,000 in scholarship money is being awarded this year. Each recipient will receive $1,500.

All Scholar-Chessplayer Awards are funded through the U.S. Chess Trust, with a significant contribution from the National Scholastic Chess Foundation. The USCT's vision is that one day every American, from schoolkid to senior citizen, will have the opportunity to learn chess and enjoy its many mental and social benefits.

We extend our thanks to the US Chess Scholastic Committee members who reviewed and evaluated all the applications.

2026 Scholar-Chessplayers

- WFM Ananya Ananth (2034), 11th grade, Aldie, Virginia
- WIM Iris Mou (2312), 11th grade, New York, New York
- WGM Zoey Tang (2433), 12th grade, Portland, Oregon
- WIM Avery Yu (2091), 11th grade, Oak Park, California
- IM Erick Zhou (2536), 11th grade, Wexford, Pennsylvania

2026 Ambassador

- Nikhil Murugan (1960), 11th grade, Westfield, Indiana

To qualify, applicants must be US Chess members who:

- Have played at least 25 regular-rated US Chess or FIDE games during the current academic year;
- Show outstanding achievement in academics and chess (Scholastic Chess Ambassadors are not required to be highly rated);
- Have completed at least one year of chess-related community service since starting the ninth grade;
- Describe in an essay of 500 words how being selected as a Scholar-Chessplayer will enable the recipient to further their education, improve their chess, and allow them to continue contributing to the chess community.

Congratulations to all the 2026 Scholar-Chessplayers!

For more information on these awards, please visit *www.uschess.org*, *www.uschesstrust.org*, and *www.nscfchess.org*. The US Chess Trust is a separate 501(c)(3) organization operating independently of US Chess.

Samford Fellowship Applications

The Frank P. Samford Jr. and Frank Samford III Chess Fellowships are pleased to announce the 40th consecutive annual awards. The fellowships were created by the late Frank P. Samford Jr., of Birmingham, Ala., to advance the game he loved by identifying and assisting the most promising young chess masters in the United States.

Since its inception in 1987 the Samford, under the leadership of Frank Samford III, has been successful in promoting the chess careers of more than three dozen young Americans, many of whom have gone on to become grandmasters, members of the U.S. Olympiad Chess Team, and U.S. Champions. Four members of the 2024 bronze medal-winning U.S. Women's Olympiad team were current or former Samford Fellows.

The fellowships are open to American chessplayers under age 25 as of June 1, 2026, and have been permanent residents of the U.S. for at least one year before that. Leadership of the Fellowship program is provided by Frank Samford Jr's grandson, Paul Samford, of Atlanta, with the able help of Al Lawrence of the U.S. Chess Trust.

The 2026 Samford Chess Fellows will receive expense money for training by leading coaches, as well as chess books, computer equipment and other study materials, and opportunities to travel and compete in tournaments and matches at the highest levels. The yearly value of the fellowships is $70,000 and are given for a one-year term. Players may apply more than one year and are eligible for maximum funding up to, but not exceeding, $82,000.

The 2026 Samford Fellows will be selected by the Samford Chess Fellowship Committee, consisting of Paul Samford, GM Yury Shulman, and IM John Donaldson. Each applicant must be able to demonstrate talent, achievement, and commitment to chess. They must be willing to make the effort required to become a leading grandmaster and possible challenger for the world championship. For further details and an application form, write to John Donaldson, Secretary, Samford Chess Fellowship, 1623½ Martin Luther King Junior Way, Berkeley, CA 94709 or email *imwjd@aol.com*.

Completed applications for the 2026 Fellowship must be received no later than May 25, and the Committee expects to announce the winner by June 1. All decisions by the Committee will be final.

Annual Meeting and Delegates' Meeting

The 2026 US Chess Annual Meeting will be held at the Amway Grand Plaza, in Grand Rapids, Mich., in conjunction with the U.S. Open. The meeting begins with roll call at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 8.

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

Advanced Delegate Motions for the Delegates' Meeting, also to be held at the U.S. Open, are due before May 8. 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*.



Butterfly Effect

How Giuoco became Gucci

BY **GM ANDY SOLTIS**

IN ONE OF HIS LAST WORLD championship matches, Magnus Carlsen began two games with **1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5** and then **4. 0-0!?**.

This move was analyzed as far back as 1620, in one of the oldest published studies of any opening. But since then, there's been very little analysis of it or of the natural reply **4. ... Nf6**.

Fascinated fans wondered what Magnus had prepared for his most important games with white of the year.



Was it the sharp 5. d4? Or a daring, delayed Evans Gambit with 5. b4?

No. He continued **5. d3,** transposing into what has been known for centuries as the Giuoco Piano, or "Quiet Game."But nowadays White regularly plays several more quiet moves, such as Rf1-e1, Nb1-d2-f1-g3, c2-c3 and h2-h3. It's called the Giuoco Pianissimo — the "Very Quiet Game."

Even elite grandmasters have trouble explaining why such a boring opening is a good way to start a chess game.

"I used to be reluctant to play the Giuoco Piano," GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave once wrote, "because I had the feeling that I couldn't understand all the subtleties of the opening."

"Then I understood that nobody does," he added. There are few subtleties or tactics until the middlegame.

Yet this opening has become so fashionable among masters that it's earned a nickname: the Gucci Piano. Why is it so popular among masters? One explanation is something you can call the ecology of chess openings.

There are literally hundreds of openings, from the Abbazia Defense to the Zukertort Variation. They look very different.

But they form an organic whole. A new evaluation of one line can have a major impact on a distant relative.

The Giuoco fad can be traced to a reappraisal of an endgame in the Ruy Lopez (**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5**). The Lopez was the most popular 1. e4 e5 opening for more than a century, but it began to fall out of favor when Black adopted the Berlin Defense, **3. ... Nf6!**.

Books claimed White was comfortably better in a main line, **4. 0-0 Nxe4 5. d4 Nd6 6. Bxc6 dxc6 7. dxe5 Nf5 8. Qxd8+ Kxd8**. But masters discovered this advantage is more optical than real. Even machines can't seem to enlarge it. "In the Berlin, the computer is no help," as Garry Kasparov put it in 2004.

Well, if 3. Bb5 is no longer a sure path to an edge, what can White do? The answer — try 3. Bc4 instead — is what turned the tepid Giuoco into the trendy Gucci.

This is a chess version of what scientists call the Butterfly Effect. A slight change in something (e.g. evaluation of the Berlin endgame) can have a dramatic effect on something very different.

The name comes from the discovery of how seemingly trivial events can influence weather patterns hundreds of miles way. It prompted the claim that the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil might set off a tornado in Texas.

You can find traces of the Butterfly Effect in every chess tournament.

For example, a 1. e4 player begins a game with 1. ... e5 2. Bc4. Is it because they know of some bold new ideas in the Bishop's Opening?

No; it's more likely that a strong new move for Black was found in a Petroff Defense variation (after 2. Nf3 Nf6). Instead of trying to improve White's chances in the Petroff line, this 1. e4 player can just sidestep it with 2. Bc4!

On the board next to him, a **1. d4** player has a problem after their game begins **1. ... d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Nf3 c6**.

They used to go 5. Bg5 automatically. But there's been too much analysis of the super-sharp Botvinnik Variation (5. Bg5 dxc4 6. e4 b5).

So they play **5. e3** and end up in another very different opening that theory had long neglected — the Semi-Slav Defense.

The Butterfly Effect has turned other outdated openings into trendsetters. Games like this were responsible.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E41)
GM Mark Taimanov
GM Robert Hübner
Palma de Mallorca Interzonal, 11.13.1970

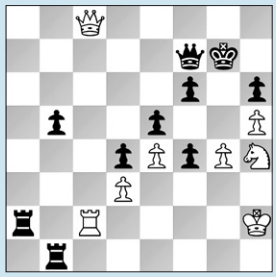
QUIZ FOR MAY

A CENTURY AGO JOSE Capablanca was waiting for someone to challenge him to a match for his world champion title. Among the chief contenders were the intense rivals Alexander Alekhine and Aron Nimzovich.

There was no such thing as a Candidates Tournament then, but Nimzovich strengthened his claim as Capa's most worthy challenger at an international tournament known as Dresden 1926. He won it a full point ahead of Alekhine.

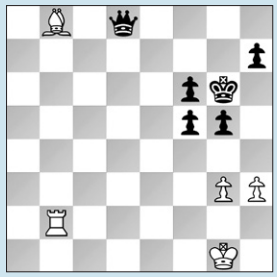
This month's quiz features six positions from the tournament. Your task is to find the fastest winning line of play. Focus on forcing ways to win material. Solutions are on page 63.

PROBLEM 1
Savielly Tartakower
Aron Nimzovich



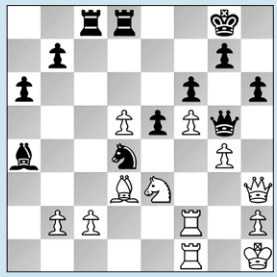
BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2
Walther von Holzhausen
Paul Johner



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3
Walther von Holzhausen
Friedrich Sämisch



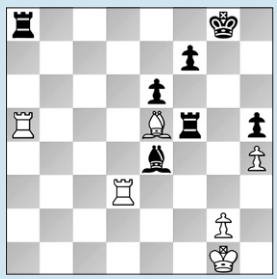
WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4
Paul Johner
Aron Nimzovich



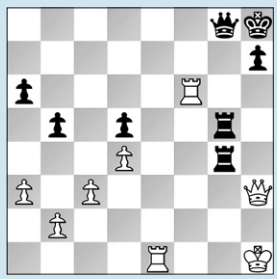
BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5
Paul Johner
Akiba Rubinstein



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6
Friedrich Sämisch
Akiba Rubinstein



BLACK TO MOVE

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 c5 5. Bd3 Nc6 6. Nf3 Bxc3+!



Mark Taimanov was the world's Nimzo-Indian authority. Like almost everyone else, he assumed Black should make this capture only *after* a2-a3.

But Black's idea in this game was to quickly build a pawn structure that controls the dark squares. If he does it with 6. ... d6 7. 0-0 e5?, he runs into an unfavorable 8. Nd5! or 8. Ne4!. Let's see how Hübner's concept unfolded.

7. bxc3 d6 8. O-O e5 9. Qc2 Qe7 10. Nd2 O-O 11. dxc5? dxc5 12. Ne4 g6 13. Nxf6+ Qxf6 14. f4 exf4 15. exf4 Bf5! 16. Bxf5 Qxf5 17. Qxf5 gxf5 18. Be3 b6



POSITION AFTER 18. ... b6

It's not obvious yet, but Black's pawn structure and minor pieces (... Nc6-a5 is on the way) give him the advantage. Hübner's 6. ... Bxc3+ approach became very popular — another Gucci opening. Thanks to its Butterfly Effect this had multiple effects:

(1) White revived other ways to counter the Nimzo-Indian, such as the long-neglected 4. Qc2;

(2) White also began playing 3. Nf3 instead of 3 Nc3. This breathed new life into the then-rare Queen's Indian Defense (3. Nf3 b6) and the nearly extinct Bogo-Indian Defense (3. Nf3 Bb4+);

(3) In turn, the sudden popularity of 3. Nf3 encouraged Black to transpose into a Queen's Gambit Declined (3. ... d5) or Modern Benoni Defense (3. ... c5) because White had committed the knight to f3, which is not always useful;

(4) And it prompted White to rediscover the Catalan Opening (3. g3), which had fallen off the theoretical radar.

Where will the butterfly land next? The possibilities are endless.

For example, suppose an important new idea turns up on the 20th move of the Sveshnikov Variation of the Sicilian (**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 e5**).

If it benefits Black, it could prompt White to take another look at the Rossolimo Variation (3. Bb5).

If it benefits White, it could lead Sicilian players to drop 2. ... Nc6 in favor of alternative Sicilians with 2. ... d6 or 2. ... e6.

Or it could encourage 1. e4 players to do what GM Alexey Shirov did years ago when the Petroff Defense seemed too strong.He switched to what he called the best anti-Petroff weapon: 1. d4!.

For more "Chess to Enjoy" from GM Andy Soltis, please check out the US Chess Digital Archives: new.uschess.org/chess-life-digital-archives.

An Epic King Walk

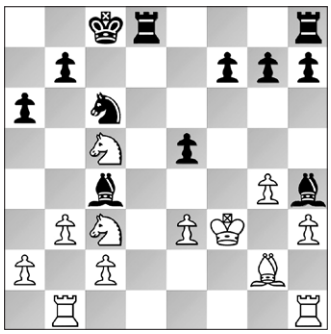
We finish our series with a masterpiece.

BY **IM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**

THUS FAR, WE HAVE SEEN king walks ranging from desperate flights to more dignified strolls. I still have a few examples left, but I couldn't fit them into one clear theme. The 2015 game between grandmasters David Navara and Radoslaw Wojtaszek is quite famous and has made its rounds in plenty of magazines and videos. I think it deserves a column of its own and is a suitable way to wrap up our series.

PROMOTING THE KING!?

GM David Navara (2724)
GM Radoslaw Wojtaszek (2733)
Biel (4), 07.23.2015



WHITE TO MOVE

21. Kf3!?

Quite a brave move by the white king!

The expected move is, of course, 21. Kg1. Objectively, Black's best follow-up would have been 21. ... Bg5 22. Kf2 Bh4+ with a threefold repetition. But not on Navara's watch!

21. ... e4+

This is why stepping up with the white king looks dangerous, although the engines say it's fine. Even without the queens on the board, Navara is walking his king into the lion's den. The pawn sacrifice by Black is logical, clearing the e5-square for his knight.

22. Kf4

Navara refuses the pawn sacrifice and bravely marches on. This is a mistake, but it's not so easy to refute over the board. We also shouldn't forget the human factor: Wojtaszek must have been shocked by this turn of events when just a few moves ago the game was petering out to a draw. When the enemy king walks into our camp with almost all the pieces on the board, of course our first instinct is to try to punish it with a checkmate.

If 22. N5xe4 it turns out Black has nothing better than a draw with 22. ... Ne5+ 23. Kf4 Ng6+ 24. Kf3 (*24. Kf5?? Be6 mate*) 24. ... Ne5+ 25. Kf4 Ng6+.

22. ... g5+ 23. Kf5

The only move. The pawn is untouchable now.

23. Kxe4?? invites all of Black's pieces into the action with tempi: 23. ... Rhe8+ 24. Kf3 Ne5+ 25. Ke4 Rd6! A rook lift in order to check from the f-file! The threat is 26. ... Nc6+ 27. Kf3 Rf6 mate, and if 26. Bf1 Rd2 threatening 27. ... Nd7+ 28. Kf3 Rf2 mate.

23. ... Rhe8!

A natural reaction by Wojtaszek, leaving his bishop *en prise* in order to centralize his rook and try to build a mating net around the white king.

24. Rhd1

White needs to fight for the d-file and prevent Black's rook from coming to d6.

Capturing the bishop would be disastrous after 24. bxc4?? Rd6! with the simple threat of 25. ... Re5 mate. White has to scramble to defend himself with 25. Nd3 but after 25. ... Ree6 threatening 26. ... Ne7 mate, White will be forced to give up too much material to survive in the long run.

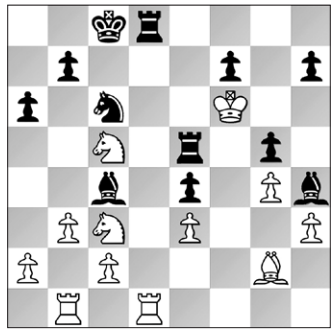
24. ... Re5+

Wojtaszek "misses" a win.

This game has been analyzed many times and it has been found that 24. ... Bd3! is winning for Black. The engines confirm this, but the lines are extremely difficult to understand and humanly impossible to calculate, especially over the board. I will provide the engine's main line but I don't see the point of going any deeper and trying to understand these lines, and the findings shouldn't take away from the beauty of the game.

If 25. cxd3 Ne7+ the king must continue to be brave with 26. Kf6 (if *26. Kxe4* the knight does what knights do best!: *26. ... Nd5+ 27. Kf5 Nxe3+ 28. Kf6 Nxg2 29. Rbc1 Bf2* and the bishop returns to the other side of the board. Compared to the other lines, the white king will find himself in more danger here, and according to the engine, Black has a decisive advantage). This is the part where the lines get very weird: 26. ... Ng8+ 27. Kg7 Bg3 28. Kxh7 Ne7 29. Kg7 (*29. dxe4 Be5* with an unstoppable mate threat on h8) 29. ... Be5+ 30. Kxf7 Nc6 and somehow Black is winning here because the white king is in a mating net and White has to start giving up pieces to survive.

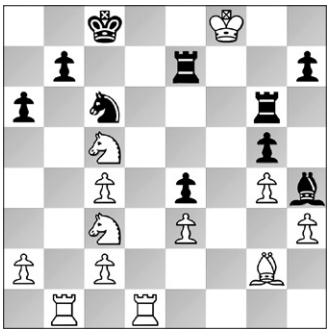
25. Kf6



25. ... Rg8

This is the more precise way of trying to make a draw. Black could also play 25. ... Rxc5 but perhaps Wojtaszek thought his position would come under some pressure after 26. Rxd8+ Nxd8 27. bxc4 Rxc4 28. Nxe4 Rxc2 29. Nd6+ Kc7 30. Be4 Rxa2 31. Nxb7 Rf2+ 32. Ke7.

26. bxc4 Rg6+ 27. Kxf7 Re7+ 28. Kf8

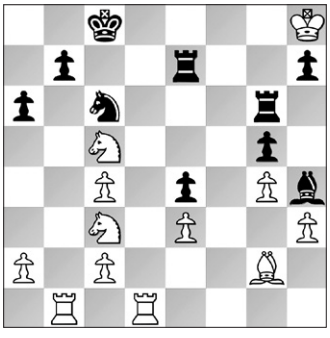


The march along the f-file is complete, as Navara has "promoted" his king. White is now up a piece. The king is still in great danger, but now the onus is on Black to show compensation.

28. … Rf6+

28. … Reg7 is a way to try to force a draw, as now the white king is boxed in and Black is threatening a perpetual with … Rg8+-g7+. Given how the game has unfolded so far, we can assume Navara would have avoided the draw with 29. Ne6 Rg8+ 30. Kf7 Ne5+ 31. Ke7 Nc6+ 32. Kd6! Re8 33. Kc5 Rgxe6 34. Nd5 and the game continues. The king is stuck on c5 and cannot return home via b4 or d4, but he does have the b6-square available and Black lacks a good way of continuing to check.

29. Kg8 Rg6+ 30. Kh8



The king is in a funny position: He has nowhere to go, but in order for Black to deliver checkmate, he has to move one of the pieces that are restricting the king. Wojtaszek must have been getting really frustrated at this point.

30. … Rf6

Alternatively, 30. … Bg3 with the threat of 31. … Be5 mate is met with 31. Rd5! Be5+ 32. Rxe5 Nxe5 33. Rxb7 and the rook comes in from the other side, forcing a trade: 33. … Rxb7 34. Nxb7.

And 30. … Ne5 doesn't actually create any threats, as 31. … Nf7+ would block the e7-rook's path. White's winning after 31. Nd5 Nf7+ 32. Kxh7.

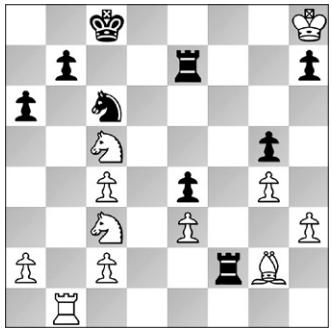
31. Rf1 Bf2

The main point behind Black's last few moves. The threat is 32. … Rf8 mate.

32. Rxf2

Black would be happy to draw after 32. Kg8 Rg6+ 33. Kh8 Rf6.

32. … Rxf2



33. Rf1!

An unexpected defensive resource. Otherwise, White would have to part ways with the bishop (*33. Kg8*) in order to defend against the checkmate.

33. … Rxg2?

Black had to play 33. … Re8+ first to prevent a check from White's rook on f8. After 34. Kxh7 Rxg2 35. N5xe4 the dust has settled, and White is down the Exchange but has three pawns for it. The g5-pawn is also not likely to survive for long, which will leave White with two connected passed pawns on the kingside. The white king will be an asset in helping those pawns march down the board. On the other hand, the white pawns on the queenside are weak and the rook should be able to scoop them, but it will take some time. Overall, I think White has better chances in this endgame, but it was still the correct way for Black to continue.

34. Rf8+ Kc7 35. Nd5+?

Navara returns the favor with a mistake of his own. Of course the fork is the most natural-looking move, but he could have gotten more with 35. N5xe4! when the attempt to hang onto the Exchange with 35. … Kd7 leads to the loss of all the pawns: 36. Nf6+ Ke6 37. Ncd5 Rf7 38. Re8+ Kd6 39. Nxh7 and the g5-pawn will fall while the black king and rook remain in a forking net.

35. … Kd6 36. Nxe7 Kxc5!

Capturing the correct knight and activating the king. It's easier for a king to be brave when there are so few pieces left on the board.

37. Rf5+ Kxc4 38. Nxc6 bxc6 39. Rxg5 Rg3

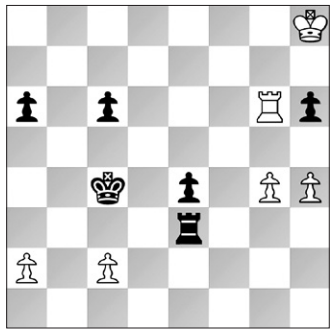
There was perhaps an easier path to a draw with 39. … Rxc2 40. Kxh7 Kd3 but as always, it is easier to make these judgment with the help of our silicon friend than at the board.

40. h4 h6?

The Move 40 blunder that has ruined so many games! Just as we get within reach of the extra 30 minutes, the collapse happens. At first glance, it looks like Black is saving time by attacking the rook and moving the pawn out from under attack, making White waste time capturing it. On the other hand, the g5-rook was blocking the path of the g-pawn and Wojtaszek has forced Navara to improve its position.

Every tempo counts in endgames with pawn races, and Black shouldn't waste any time capturing a pawn with 40. … Rxe3. Now comes 41. Kxh7 Rg3 42. h5 e3 43. h6 Kc3 44. Kg6 (if *44. Re5* Black gains an important tempo with *44. … Kd4,* and after *45. Re8 Rxg4* the white king is stuck on h7) 44. … e2 45. h7 e1=Q 46. h8=Q+ when White promotes with check, but the black king can hide on the first rank: 46. … Kxc2 47. Rc5+ Kb1 is a forced king walk! After 48. Qb8+ Ka1 the king is perfectly happy and the game should end in a draw via a perpetual by either player.

41. Rg6 Rxe3



42. Kg7!

The king returns from the march to grab some pawns. It's interesting how useful the king is proving to be in the resulting rook endgame.

42. … Rg3 43. Kxh6 e3 44. Kg5?

Rook endgames are not easy for anyone. Black wasted time on Move 40 and White wastes time here.

(continues on page 63)

FOREIGN REPORT

BY MARK CROWTHER

Reykjavik Open

REYKJAVIK, ICELAND | MARCH 25 – 31, 2026

1st: GM M. Amin Tabatabaei, 8/9. 2nd: GM Jianchao Zhou, 7½. 3rd-9th: GMs Vasyl Ivanchuk, Mads Andersen, Vahap Sanal, Matthieu Cornette, Tong Xiao and Abhijeet Gupta, and IM Irakli Akhvlediani, 7. 422 players.

GM Amin Tabatabaei dominated, starting with 7/7 before being held to a draw by GMs Matthew Wadsworth and Mads Andersen (the latter a game in which Tabatabaei missed a win). U.S. GM Jianchao Zhou placed second, a half-point behind. Legendary GM Vasyl Ivanchuk joined the third-place tie.

Four IM norms were earned, by Romanian FM Tamas Christian-Arrydan (2287), Kazakh WGM Liya Kurmangaliyeva (2319), Armenian FM Sergey Sklokin (2414), and the Chinese player Liu Bei (1963).

LONDON SYSTEM (D00)

GM M. Amin Tabatabaei (2700)
GM Mads Andersen (2562)
Reykjavik Open (9), 03.31.2026

1. d4 d5 2. Nc3 Nf6 3. Bf4 e6 4. Nb5 Na6 5. e3 Be7 6. Nf3 0-0 7. h4 c6 8. Nc3 c5 9. Bxa6 bxa6 10. 0-0 Bd7 11. Ne5 Be8 12. h5 h6 13. Nd3 cxd4 14. exd4 Qb6 15. Be3 Rc8 16. a4 a5 17. Qf3 Qb7 18. Rfc1 Rc4 19. Ne5 Rc8 20. Nd3 Rc4 21. Qe2 Rc8 22. Nb1 Ne4 23. Nd2 Nxd2 24. Qxd2 Qb6 25. b3 f6 26. Nf4 Bd6 27. Nxe6 Bb4 28. c3 Qxe6 29. cxb4 axb4 30. Rxc8 Qxc8 31. Rc1 Qf5 32. Qxb4 Bxh5 33. Rc7 a6 34. Qb7 Bf7 35. Qxa6 Qb1+ 36. Kh2 Qxb3 37. a5 Qd1 38. Rc1 Qa4



39. Rc8?

White wins after 39. Qa7 Be6 40. a6 Rc8 41. Qe7 Qxa6 42. Ra1!.

39. ... Rxc8 40. Qxc8+ Qe8 41. Qb7 Be6 42. f3 Bc8 43. Qxd5+ Qe6 44. Qa8 Kf7 45. Bf4 g5 46. Bc7 Qd7 47. Qb8 g4 48. f4 h5 49. Bb6 h4 50. Qc7 Qxc7 51. Bxc7, draw.

grenke Freestyle and Chess Open

FREESTYLE OPEN KARLSRUHE, GERMANY | APRIL 2-6, 2026

1st-2nd: GMs Vincent Keymer and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, 7½/9. 3rd-9th: GMs Magnus Carlsen, Ian Nepomniachtchi, Alexey Sarana, Jan-Krzysztof Duda, Leon Luke Mendonca, Nodirbek Abdusattorov, and Aryan Chopra, 7. 310 players.

The main event of the grenke Chess Open was the star-studded Freestyle tournament. German GM Vincent Keymer won his first six games before drawing his final three; French GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave caught up, and they drew in the final round, Keymer winning on tiebreak. GM Magnus Carlsen was the favorite to win, but he drew four games including a very quick draw in the final round against GM Aryan Chopra. American GM Hans Niemann started with five wins, but losses to Keymer and MVL scuppered his chances.

CHESS960 OPENING POSITION #131

GM Hans Niemann (2728)
GM Vincent Keymer (2762)
grenke Freestyle Open (6), Karlsruhe, 04.05.2026



1. c4 c5 2. g3 g6 3. Nc3 Nc6 4. b3 b6 5. 0-0 0-0 6. Nc2 Nc7 7. e3 e5 8. Nd5 d6 9. d4 exd4 10. exd4 Ne6 11. dxc5 dxc5 12. Re1 Bxa1 13. Rxa1 Kg7 14. Qd3 Ncd4 15. Nxd4 Nxd4 16. Re3 Bxd5 17. Bxd5 Re8 18. Rae1 Nf3+ 19. Rxf3 Rxe1+ 20. Kg2 f6 21. Qc3 Re5 22. Rd3 Qe7 23. a4 Rd8 24. Rd1 Re2 25. Qf3 Qe5 26. h4 Re1 27. Rd2 a5 28. Rd3 Qe2 29. Qf4 Qf1+ 30. Kh2 Rxd5 31. Qc7+ Kf8, White resigned.



GM Vincent Keymer

PHOTO: COURETSY GRENKE CHESS / DARIUSZ GORZINSKI

CHESS OPEN KARLSRUHE, GERMANY | APRIL 2-6, 2026

1st-3rd: IM Mukhammadzokhid Suyarov, GM Dominik Horvath and GM Chongsheng Zeng, 8/9. 4th-9th: GM Andrew Hong, IM Ruben Gideon Koellner, GM Jules Moussard, GM Pavel Eljanov, GM Vitaly Kunin, and GM Elham Amar, 7½. 998 players.

The conventional open drew almost 1,000 players. IM Mukhammadzokhid Suyarov edged out GMs Dominik Horvath and Chongsheng Zeng on tiebreak after they all scored 8/9. American GM Andrew Hong was in the big group a half-point behind. There were 9 IM norms earned.

KazChess Masters

SHYMKENT, KAZAKHSTAN | MARCH 21-29, 2026

1st: GM V Pranav, 7½/9. 2nd: GM Shamsiddin Vokhidov, 6. 3rd-4th: GMs Benjamin Gledura and Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara, 5. 5th: GM Alexey Sarana, 4½. 6th-7th: FM Danis Kuandykuly, IM Daniyal Sapenov, 4. 8th: IM Sauat Nurgaliyev, 3½. 9th: IM Meruert Kamalidenova, 3. 10th: IM Ergali Suleimen, 2½. 10 players.

GM V Pranav has enjoyed a good return to form and dominated the field here. There were no GM norms, but 13-year-old FM Danis Kuandykuly got the headlines as the best local finisher with 4 points.

GRÜNFELD DEFENSE, NEO-GRÜNFELD (D78)

GM Alexey Sarana (2683)
IM Sauat Nurgaliyev (2423)
KazChess Masters (5), Shymkent, 03.25.2026
Annotations by John Hartmann

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 c6 4. Bg2 d5 5. Qa4 Bg7 6. Nf3 0-0 7. 0-0 Ne4 8. Rd1 Nd7 9. cxd5 cxd5 10. Qb3 e6 11. Bf4 Nb6 12. Nc3 Bd7 13. a4!? Nxc3 14. bxc3 Qe8 15. Rdb1 Bxa4 16. Qb4 f6 17. Bd6 Rf7 18. Bc5 Bf8 19. Qa5! Bc2 20. Rxb6 axb6 21. Qxa8 Qxa8 22. Rxa8 bxc5 23. dxc5 e5 24. Nd2 Rd7 25. Bh3 Rc7 26. Be6+ Kg7 27. Bxd5 Rxc5 28. c4 b5 29. Ra7+ Kh6 30. Be4 Bd1 31. cxb5 Rxb5 32. Bd3 Rb4 33. h4 Bg7 34. f3 f5 35. Kf1 Ba4 36. e4 Rd4 37. Ke2 Bd7?



The infelicitous placement of the bishop is all Sarana needs to win the game. It's hard to describe what happens next: My original thought was to call it "domination," in the sense it's used in studies — the domination of the bishop gives White the advantage — but my friend and *CLO* editor JJ Lang suggested "infection," as it's used by GM Jan Markos in his book *Under the Surface*. Putting the bishop on d7 makes sense in that it defends f5, but combined with the overworked rook it inaugurates a rot that Black can't overcome.

Black would do better with 37. ... fxe4 38. Nxe4 Bc6 even in the face of 39. Nf2 with the idea of a devastating Nf2-g4+. 39. ... Rd7 40. Ra5! keeps pressing, though.

38. Nb3! Rd6
White wins after 38. ... Rb4 39. Rxd7 Rxb3 40. exf5.

39. Nc5! Bc8 40. Rc7!
Or 40. exf5 Bxf5 41. g4 Bxd3+ 42. Nxd3 with a clear advantage.

40. ... Rd8 41. exf5! gxf5
White wins after 41. ... Bxf5 42. Bxf5 gxf5 43. Rxg7!.

42. Rc6+ Kh5 43. Ne6! Bxe6 44. Rxe6 e4
If 44. ... f4 45. Re7! Rg8 46. Bc4.

45. Bb5 f4 46. Rxe4 fxg3 47. Be8+ Rxe8
Not 47. ... Kh6 48. Re6+.

48. Rxe8 Kxh4 49. Re7
Stunning simplicity and precision by Alexey Sarana.

49. ... Bf8 50. Rxh7+ Kg5 51. Rd7 Bh6 52. Rd6 Bg7 53. Ke3 Bf8 54. f4+ Kf5 55. Rd5+ Kf6 56. Ke4, Black resigned.

5th Menorca Open and Closed

CIUTADELLA DE MENORCA, SPAIN | APRIL 7-12, 2026

1st-4th: GMs Abhimanyu Mishra, Leon Luke Mendonca, Li Di and Tomas Sosa, 7½/9. 5th-11th: CM Alisher Abdsattar, IM Wu Yixing, GM Alexei Shirov, GM Pa Iniyan, GM Daniel Fernandez, GM Sankalp Gupta, and FM Danis Kuandykuly, 7. 394 players.

The Menorca Open saw American GM Abhimanyu Mishra follow directly on from his shared first place result in San Vicente by taking first on tiebreak from Leon Luke Mendonca, Li Di and Tomas Sosa on 7½/9.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B95)

GM Abhimanyu Mishra (2623)
GM Abdimalik Abdisalimov (2553)
Menorca Open A (8), 04.11.2026

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Bg5 e6 7. Qe2 h6 8. Bh4 Nbd7



9. f4 Qc7 10. 0-0-0 b5 11. e5! dxe5 12. fxe5 Qxe5 13. Qf3 Qb8 14. Bxf6 Bb7 15. Ne4! Nxf6 16. Nxf6+ gxf6 17. Qxf6 Rg8 18. Bxb5+ axb5 19. Rhf1, Black resigned.

Sosa won the brilliancy prize for this win over FM Imangali Akhilbay.

FRENCH DEFENSE, TARRASCH VARIATION (C07)

GM Tomas Sosa (2532)
FM Imangali Akhilbay (2342)
Menorca Open A (6), 04.10.2026

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 c5 4. exd5 Qxd5

5. Ngf3 cxd4 6. Bc4 Qd7 7. 0-0 Nc6 8. Qe2 a6 9. a4 Nf6 10. Rd1 Bd6 11. Nb3 0-0 12. Nbxd4 b6?! 13. Bg5! Nxd4 14. Rxd4 Qc7? 15. Bxf6! gxf6 16. Qd2 Rd8 17. Qh6 e5



18. Bd3! exd4 19. Bxh7+ Kh8 20. Bd3+ Kg8 21. Re1 Be5 22. Bh7+ Kh8 23. Nxe5 fxe5 24. Qf6+ Kxh7 25. Re4, Black resigned.

Meanwhile, GM Nihal Sarin won a very strong rapid (G/30+10) double round robin, beating World Champion Gukesh twice. Ruslan Ponomariov and Richard Rapport tied for second, a half-point behind, while American GM Leinier Dominguez Perez tied with Gukesh for fourth.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT, SLAV DEFENSE (D02)

GM Nihal Sarin (2723)
GM Gukesh Dommaraju (2732)
Menorca Closed rapid (3), 04.08.2026

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 d5 3. g3 Bf5 4. c4 e6 5. Nc3 c6 6. Nh4 Be4 7. f3 Bg6 8. Qb3 Qb6 9. c5 Qc7 10. Bf4 Qc8 11. e4 Be7 12. Bd6 Qd7 13. e5



13. ... Ng8 14. Nxg6 hxg6 15. 0-0-0 Bd8 16. h4 Ne7 17. Bh3 Nc8 18. f4 b6 19. Kb1 a5 20. Qc2 bxc5 21. dxc5 Na6 22. a3 Ne7 23. g4 Qb7 24. Bf1 Bc7 25. Ne2 Nb8 26. Nd4 Nd7 27. Bd3 a4 28. Rde1 Ra5 29. f5 Nf8 30. Rhf1 gxf5 31. gxf5 Rxh4 32. fxe6 Nxe6 33. Nxe6 fxe6 34. Qf2, Black resigned.

Niemann-Liang Match

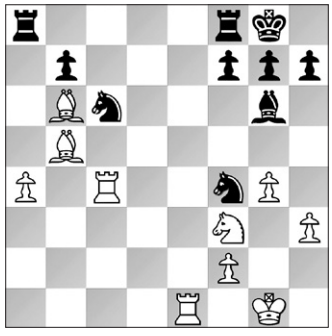
Hans Niemann beat GM Awonder Liang 7½-4½ in a match held April 10-15 at the Paris Blitz Society in Paris, France. Niemann won Game 3 (on the very late blunder of a piece by Liang), 8 and 9. The use of the fast classical time control of G/60+30 to play two games a day forced Liang, who was struggling with illness, to allow quick draws in three games with white to conserve energy.

Niemann has announced two more matches at this time control: a six-game match May 24-26 against GM Jorden van Foreest and an eight-game match May 29-June 1 against GM Ian Nepomniachtchi. Both matches will be held in Belgrade.

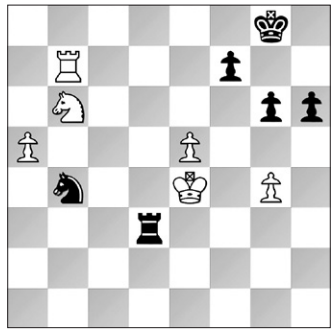
QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, TARRASCH DEFENSE (D32)

GM Hans Niemann (2728)
GM Awonder Liang (2718)
Match (3), Paris, 04.11.2026

1. c4 e6 2. Nc3 d5 3. d4 c5 4. cxd5 exd5 5. Nf3 Nc6 6. dxc5 d4 7. Na4 Bxc5 8. Nxc5 Qa5+ 9. Bd2 Qxc5 10. Rc1 Qb6 11. e3 Nf6 12. Bc4 dxe3 13. Bxe3 Qb4+ 14. Bd2 Qe7+ 15. Be2 0-0 16. 0-0 Bg4 17. h3 Bh5 18. Re1 Qd6 19. Be3 Rfd8 20. Qxd6 Rxd6 21. b4 Rdd8 22. Bc5 a6 23. a4 Nd5 24. b5 axb5 25. g4 Bg6 26. Bxb5 Nf4 27. Bb6 Rf8 28. Rc4



28. ... Nd5 29. Bc5 Rfc8 30. Rcc1 Nf4 31. Red1 Nxh3+ 32. Kh2 Nf4 33. Kg3 Ne6 34. Be3 Nb4 35. Rxc8+ Rxc8 36. Bd7 Ra8 37. Ne5 Bc2 38. Rc1 h6 39. Nc4 Rd8 40. Nb6 Bd3 41. a5 Nc2 42. Ba4 Nxe3 43. fxe3 Ba6 44. Bd7 Nf8 45. Rc7 Ng6 46. Bf5 Re8 47. Nd5 Ne5 48. Nb4 g6 49. Bc8 Nd3 50. Nd5 Re5 51. e4 Kg7 52. Kf3 Re8 53. Ke3 Ne5 54. Nb6 Rd8 55. Kf4 Nd3+ 56. Ke3 Ne5 57. Kf4 Nd3+ 58. Ke3 Nb4 59. e5 Kg8 60. Bxb7 Bxb7 61. Rxb7 Rd3+ 62. Ke4



62. ... Ra3? 63. Nc4 Rb3 64. Ne3, Black resigned.

10th Semana Santa Open

SAN VICENTE, SPAIN | APRIL 1-6, 2026

1st-3rd: GMs Igor Kovalenko, Abhimanyu Mishra, and Vasyl Ivanchuk, 7½/9. 4th-20th: FM Artyom Bogdanov, IM Liam Putnam, GM Adam Kozak, GM Sergey A. Fedorchuk, IM Christian Gloeckler, FM Erdene Baasansuren, GM Kacper Piorun, IM Vadym Petrovskiy, FM Saxena Apaar, IM Sugar Gan-Erdene, IM Lukas Dotzer, GM Li Min Peng, IM Francisco Fiorito, GM Savva Vetokhin, FM Sergio Trigo Urquijo, IM Joaquin Fiorito, and IM Ganzorig Amartuvshin, 7. 520 players.

GM Igor Kovalenko edged out 17-year-old American GM Abhimanyu Mishra and his Ukrainian countryman GM Vasyl Ivanchuk on tiebreak. None of the winners faced each other. IM Liam Putnam tied for fourth place.

ENGLISH OPENING (A21)

GM Igor Kovalenko (2685)
IM Liam Putnam (2492)
Semana Santa Open (9), San Vicente, 04.06.2026

1. c4 e5 2. Nc3 Bb4 3. Nd5 a5 4. e3 d6 5. a3 Bc5 6. Nf3 c6 7. Nc3 Nd7 8. d4 Ba7 9. b4 Ngf6 10. Be2 0-0 11. Bb2 Re8 12. d5 e4 13. dxc6 bxc6 14. Nd2 d5 15. cxd5 cxd5 16. Nb3 Ne5 17. Nb5 Bb6 18. bxa5 Bxa5+ 19. Nxa5 Qxa5+ 20. Bc3 Qb6 21. a4 Bg4 22. 0-0 Bxe2 23. Qxe2 Nfd7 24. Bd4 Qg6 25. Kh1 Rec8 26. Qd1 Nd3 27. Nc3 Ra5 28. Rb1 h5 29. Rb5 Rxb5 30. axb5 Qe6 31. Qxh5 N7e5 32. h3 Rc4 33. Qh4 Rc8 34. Qg3 f5 35. Ra1 Rf8 36. Ra6, Black resigned.

GAME PLAN

THE STRATEGY OF CHESS & SPORTS



Magnus Carlsen
World Number 1 & Former World Chess Champion

GM Magnus Carlsen Playing Soccer, 2019. Courtesy of Lennart Ootes

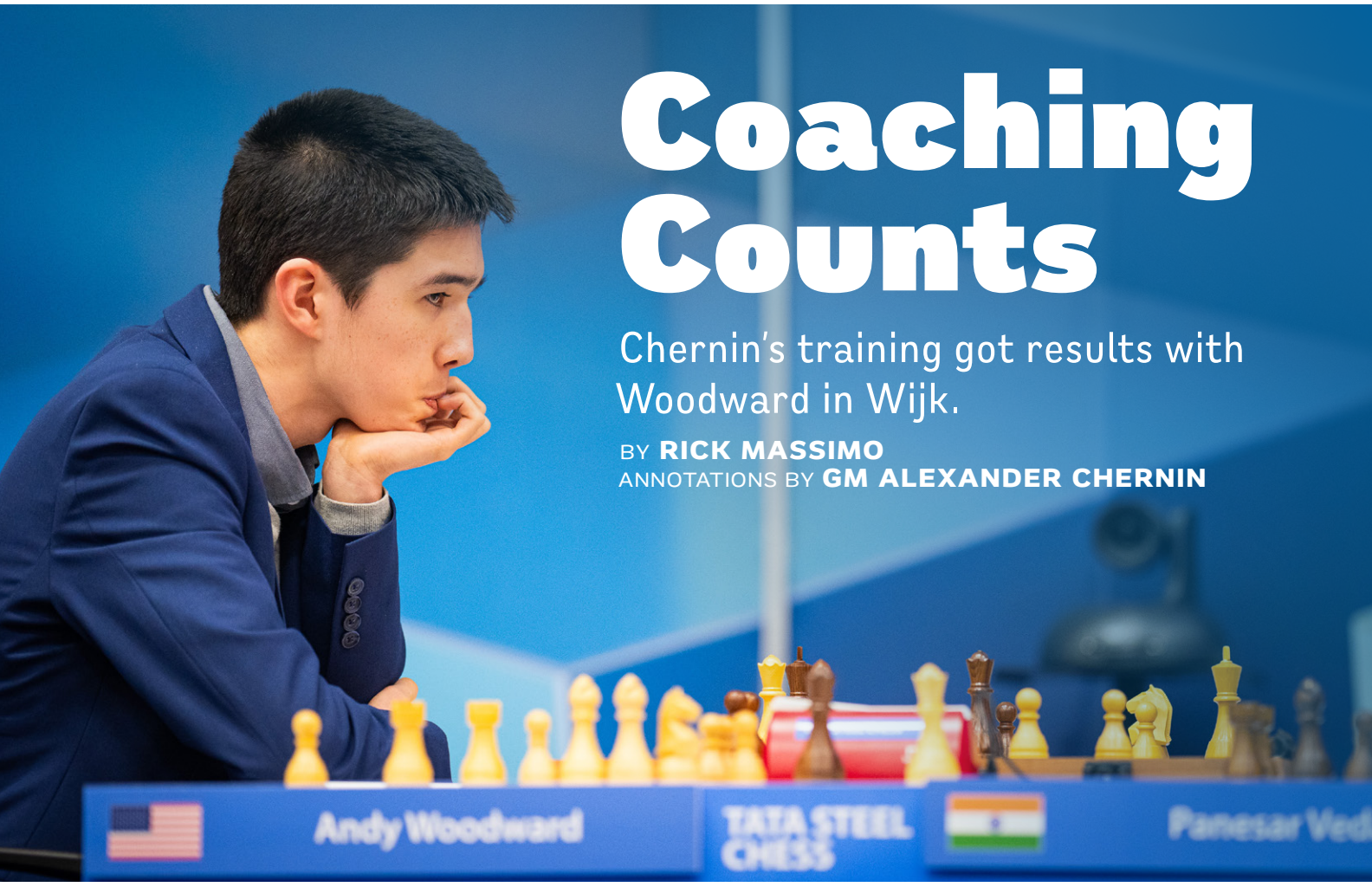
Guitong Li
Chess Boxer

Guitong Li Chess Boxing, 2023. Courtesy of Stev Bonhage

Game Plan: The Strategy of Chess & Sports is an expansive exhibition spanning three galleries that explores how discipline and strategy unite the physical and mental arenas of play. Discover how elite athletes use chess to sharpen their tactics, and how chess players participate in athletics to increase their mental focus and physical endurance. This year-long celebration also highlights hybrid sports like chessboxing, Missouri sports legends, and the dynamic Saint Louis chess scene fostered by Dr. Jeanne Cairns Sinquefield and Rex Sinquefield.

ON VIEW MAY 7, 2026 THROUGH APRIL 4, 2027

WORLD CHESS HALL OF FAME & GALLERIES



Coaching Counts

Chernin's training got results with Woodward in Wijk.

BY **RICK MASSIMO**
ANNOTATIONS BY **GM ALEXANDER CHERNIN**

GM ALEX CHERNIN SAYS HIS main task as a trainer is "work on chess, not just to prepare for a single tournament." But a whole lot of what he and GM Andy Woodward worked on together before the Tata Steel Challengers ended up on Woodward's board, and the young American star took full advantage.

Chernin started working with Woodward early last year as part of the Kasparov Chess Foundation's Young Stars Program; GMs Alexander Huzman and Alexander Motylev, shortly before and after that. (The team was selected by the KCF's Michael Khodarkovsky.)

Huzman and Motylev work online and mostly focus on openings; Chernin takes the old-school, face-to-face approach, and former world champion Garry Kasparov does two in-person sessions per year.

In their year together, Woodward has added more than 100 points to his FIDE rating; won the U.S. Junior Championship, and tied for fifth in the FIDE Grand Swiss in Samarkand, all leading up to his triumph in Wijk aan Zee.

Chernin's in-person, offline approach helps young players stay motivated, he says, and it's a critical factor in what he calls "playing mode" (see Page 22). He explains, "It's not like my work is, I give them an exercise and they give me an answer." In playing mode, the student plays out an exercise position against Chernin, or sometimes another student, under tournament conditions with the clock running.

This helps students with the practical problems of time management, Chernin says, as well as developing a sense for when "ultimate calculation" is possible and when it's not. "Human intention is to know everything. … It's a huge problem for many players. They spend unnecessary time for things they [can't] know."

Chernin knows the value of playing mode from his own experience: He was purely self-educated until he was 22, when he got to work with the legendary chess teacher IM Mark Dvoretsky.

Before that, he worked with chess books, but "nobody told me I should solve positions which I saw in chess books. So I read them massively, but I just read them. … I read them like fiction."

Like Dvoretsky, Chernin has a notebook of positions that he trains students on. Drawing the diagrams by hand — a habit passed down by Dvoretsky and also GM Yuri Razuvaev — helps with memorising the positions, Chernin says.

Woodward, like many strong young players, already had "intention to fight" and a "very active style," Chernin says. But, also like many strong young players, he needed more education in the classics.

Learning the classics gives you a base of knowledge that will never leave you, Chernin says. "It's not stable ground if it's only one source, the practice. And sometimes they have to produce something which is already very, very well known."

That's something else he learned from Dvoretsky, and it's something he passes on

to his students: "They use my positive experience in chess and avoid mistakes I made."

10 Themes

Chernin's work with Andy encompassed 10 major themes, and his game in Round 5 against FM Vedant Panesar utilized three in particular. Here's the key stretch of the game, as well as some of the corresponding training examples, all with Chernin's annotations.

TOUR DE FORCE

FM Vedant Panesar (2406)
GM Andy Woodward (2608)
Tata Steel Challengers (5), Wijk aan Zee, 01.21.2026



WHITE TO MOVE

19. Nxd5 Nxd5 20. e4 Qe6!
Black had an easy draw with 20. … Qc8 21. exd5 Bxe5 22. dxe5 Qc5+ followed by 23. … Rxd5, but Andy selected something more challenging — for his opponent, but for himself too! This is an indirect weakening maneuver; the aim is to provoke f4-f5, which undermines the knight on e5. The downside is that the position of the white pawn on f5 presents certain risks for Black, too.

21. f5
21. exd5? Qxd5 is just bad for White.

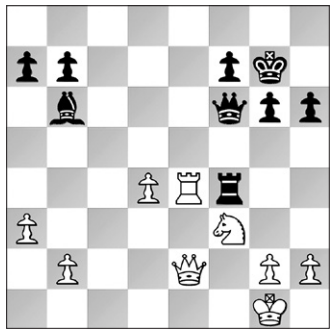
21. … Qf6 22. exd5 Bc7 23. Qb4?
Falling into the trap. White's best was 23. Re4 Rxd5 24. Ng4! when Black has to play 24. … Qg5, otherwise with queens on the board White's f5-f6 idea becomes very strong. After 25. Qxg5 hxg5 26. Ne3 White wins the c4-pawn, although Black is still solid enough to draw this. But now Andy's gamble pays off.

23. … Rxd5 24. Qxc4
Sad, but 24. Qxb7 Qd6 was even worse — if 25. Nf3 to save the d4-pawn, 25. … Rb8 26. Qxa7 Ra5 wins the queen.

24. … Qd6 25. Nf3 Rxf5
Black has taken the initiative.

26. Re5 Rf4 27. Rfe1 Bb6 28. R1e4 Qf6 29. Qe2 g6 30. Re8?
White wanted to ease the pressure by trading all the rooks, but we'll see that he missed a nuance.

30. … Rxe8 31. Rxe8+ Kg7 32. Re4



32. … Qf5!
An example of trading on our terms. White could hold on after 32. … Rxe4



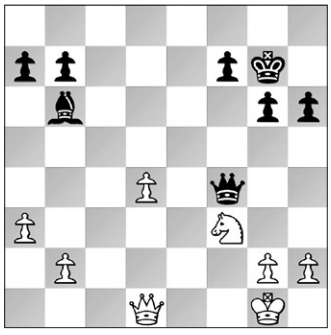
Left: Woodward at the board in Wijk aan Zee. Right: GM Alexander Chernin in Round 3 of the OHRA tournament in 1987.

PHOTOS: LENNART OOTES (FACING), ANEFO / ROB BOGAERTS (THIS PAGE).

33. Qxe4, but now the rook trade comes in a worse form for White.

33. Rxf4 Qxf4
Black's queen is on a dangerous square, eyeing c1 and d4.

34. Qd1



34. ... g5!
The decisive resource, dooming the d4-pawn, and an example of "from the king," which we'll see.

35. h3 h5 36. Kh1 g4 37. hxg4 hxg4 38. Nh2 f5 39. Qe1 Qxd4
And Black went on to win:

40. Qe7+ Kg6 41. Qe8+ Kg5 42. Qe7+ Kf4 43. Qe1 Qxb2 44. a4 Kg5 45. a5 Bc5 46. a6 bxa6 47. Nf3+ gxf3 48. Qg3+ Kf6 49. Qh4+ Ke6 50. Qc4+ Kd6 51. Qf4+ Kc6, White resigned.

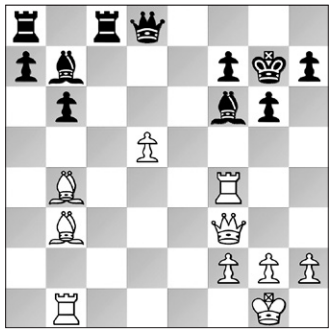
The three biggest moments in this example correspond to three of the many topics Andy and I worked on in training sessions in 2025 and a special session earlier this year: forcing a weakening pawn move, trading on our terms, and "from the king" (a favorite technique of Botvinnik's, where it's important to recognize when the king is safe from mate and the pawns in front of it can be used as weapons).

Here are some examples we used.

FORCE A WEAKNESS

GM Alexander Chernin (2615)
GM Semen Dvoirys (2590)
Podolsk, 1993

This is an example of indirect forcing of a weakening maneuver. We looked at this in a previous session.



WHITE TO MOVE

30. Bd2!
The threat of 31. Rxf6 Qxf6 32. Bh6+ forces a weakening.

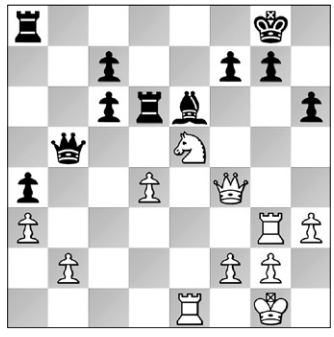
30. ... g5 31. Rf5 Rc7 32. Qg3 Rac8
Now White blew open the king's position in a standard way.

33. h4 Kh8 34. Bxg5 Bxg5 35. hxg5 Qe7 36. Re5 Qb4 37. Bc2 Qc3 38. Bd3 Qd4 39. d6 Rc3 40. Re3 Rd8 41. Qh3 Qg7 42. d7 Bc6 43. Bf5 Rxe3 44. Qxe3 f6 45. Rc1 Bxd7 46. Rc7 Re8 47. Qf3 fxg5 48. Rxd7 Qa1+ 49. Kh2 Qe5+ 50. g3 Re7 51. Be6, Black resigned.

STAY SOLID

GM Wang Hao (2722)
GM Nihal Sarin (2572)
Douglas Open (2), Isle of Man, 10.21.2018

Every exercise on a theme should include examples of prophylaxis against the same theme. This is an example of how to prevent a maneuver that forces us to make a weakening pawn move. White is threatening 29. Qxh6. What's the best way to prevent it: 28. ... Kf8, 28. ... Bb3, or 28. ... Ba2?



BLACK TO MOVE

28. ... Ba2?
This is what was played in the game, but it's the wrong way. The only way is 28. ... Kf8!. White's still better, but the other two moves allow a weakening maneuver. 28. ... Bb3 allows 29. Qg4 forcing the weakening 29. ... g6, and the game move was even worse:

29. b4
Since 29. ... axb3 *e.p.* loses to 30. Qxf7+ followed by 31. Qxg7 mate, why not improve the pawn structure first?

29. ... Rad8 30. Qg4 g6 31. Qh4 Kg7 32. Qe7 Qd5 33. Qxc7



Left: Former KCF Young Star IM Carissa Yip faces off with Woodward in Round 6 of the 2026 Tata Steel Challengers.

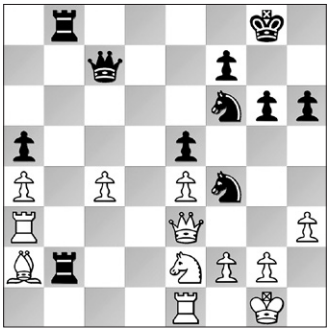
PHOTO: LENNART OOTES

White has won a pawn, and went on to win after some mutual mistakes.

Here's another example of Andy performing a weakening maneuver in Wijk, this one involving pieces. In Round 6 of the 2026 Tata Steel Challengers, Woodward faced another of America's top prospects, Carissa Yip, an IM with two GM norms and a former KCF Young Star.

ONE MOVE SOONER

IM Carissa Yip (2466)
GM Andy Woodward (2608)
Tata Steel Challengers (6), Wijk aan Zee, 01.23.2026



BLACK TO MOVE

31. … Rd8
A decent idea. Black prefers to wait to trade knights (the principle of trading on our own terms, which we'll see later), and he'd be happy to see 32. Nxf4, because 32. … exf4 just improves Black's position.

32. c5!
The only move. If Black plays … Rd8-d2, White needs to be able to respond with Ba2-c4.

32. … Rc2!
An indirect weakening maneuver affecting pieces! Black lures White's bishop to b3, where it blocks the rook's movement along the third rank.

33. Bb3?!
Black is only slightly better after 33. Kh2 Kg7 (not *33. … Rxc5?! 34. g3 Nxe2 35. Qxh6*) 34. Bb1 Rxc5 35. Rc3 Rxc3 36. Nxc3.

33. … Nxe2+
Black would have had a big advantage after 33. … Rxc5.

34. Rxe2 Rxe2 35. Qxe2 Qxc5
Black is only slightly better, but went on to win.

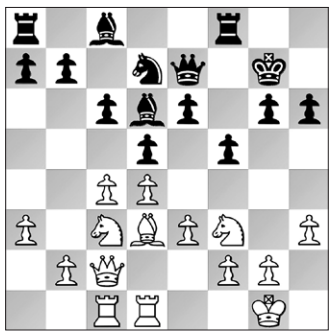
But later analysis showed the best version of the weakening maneuver Andy played on the next move would be to play it immediately from the diagrammed position: 31. … Rc2!! Play could go 32. Bb3 Rxe2 33. Rxe2 Nxe2+ 34. Qxe2 and now another weakening maneuver: 34. … Qc5! forcing 35. Qb2 Nxe4 36. Ra1 Qd4 37. Qxd4 exd4 38. Bc2 Nc5, winning.

If 31. … Rc2!! 32. Nxf4, there's a particularly beautiful line: 32. … exf4 33. Qd4 Rbb2! 34. Rb1 (*34. Rf1 Qe7! 35. Bb1 Rxf2 36. Rxf2 Rxb1+* followed by taking on a3) 34. … Rxb1+! 35. Bxb1 Rc1+ 36. Kh2 f3+ 37. g3 Qc8!! with the threat of … Qc8xh3+ and … Rc1-h1 mate. If 38. Rxf3 Nh7!! 39. Rb3 Ng5 40. g4 and then the final weakening maneuver: 40. … Rxb1!.

"FROM THE KING"

GM Bibisara Assaubayeva (2497)
GM Andy Woodward (2608)
Tata Steel Challengers (1), Wijk aan Zee 01.17.2026

This is an example from one of Andy's games in Wijk.



BLACK TO MOVE

Black should play the immediate 15. … g5, but the idea still works two moves later.

15. … b6 16. b4 Bb7 17. Qb3 g5
Here White erred.

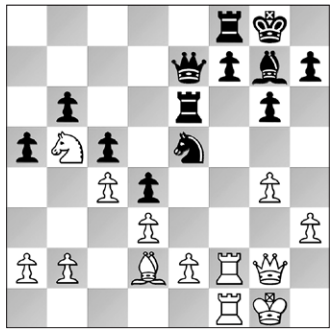
18. b5 c5 19. cxd5 g4 20. Ne1
Black would have been much better after 20. … cxd4 21. exd4 gxh3, but Andy played 20. … e5 and went on to lose.

Here's another example of "from the king" that we looked at:

OUTPOSTING

GM Mikhail Gurevich (2630)
GM Michael Adams (2615)
Ostend (6), 1991

Black's knight is on a safe square, but is there a better one?



BLACK TO MOVE

25. … g5!
With the idea of … Ne5-g6 and then to the outpost on h4 or f4.

26. Qh2
Sacrificing a pawn to try to prevent this idea.

If 26. h4 gxh4 eventually reaches an analysis position that we used in a different exercise — see below.

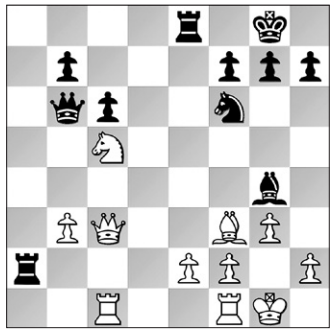
26. … h6 27. Rg2 Ng6
Setting up … Bg7-e5-f4, which seizes the f4-square for the knight.

28. Qc7 Rxe2 29. Qxe7 Rxe7 30. Nd6 Re6 31. Nf5 Kh7 32. a3 a4 33. b4 axb3 *e.p.* 34. Rb1 Rfe8 35. Rxb3 Be5 36. a4 Bf4 37. a5 Be3+ 38. Kf1 Nf4
And Black eventually won.

TRADE ON OUR TERMS

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

Before this game, Andy received wise advice from Alexander Huzman, who profiled his opponent and advised Andy to play any position to the end — the more boring, the better! Andy followed this recommendation.



WHITE TO MOVE

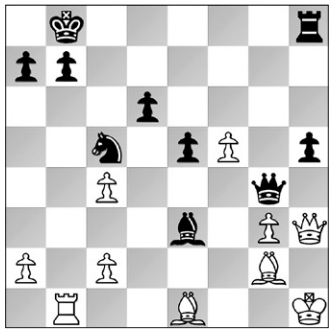
The bishops have to be traded, but Andy does it the best way:

24. Rfe1! Bxf3 25. exf3!
Keeping the knight out of g4. We also went over more than 25 examples of "voluntary doubling of pawns," largely from Botvinnik's games but also examples by Caruana and Carlsen. The engine says Black is equal here, but the character of the position has changed. Warmerdam began to make mistakes, and Andy went on to win.

Another example:

WHICH WAY TO TRADE?

GM Jonas Buhl Bjerre (2557)
GM Daniel Alsina Leal (2500)
Cattolica (7), 06.02.2021



WHITE TO MOVE

What's White's best defense? In the game Bjerre lost after 29. Kh2 30. Bb4 b6 31. f6 h4, but the best way was ...

29. Qh4!
If Black avoids the trade with 29. ... Qxf5, White gets great play with 30. Qe7. But now Black trades on White's terms, though this still isn't easy to calculate.

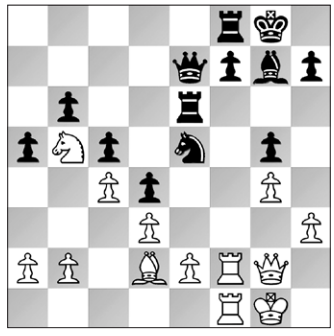
29. ... Qxh4+ 30. gxh4 Rf8 31. Bb4 Rxf5 32. Bxc5 Bxc5 33. Rxb7+ Kc8 34. Bh3!
White had to see this when playing 29. Qh4!.

34. ... Kxb7 35. Bxf5 Bf2 36. Kg2 Bxh4 37. Bg6
This is equal.

Let's go back to that game between Gurevich and Adams.

NOT SO FAST

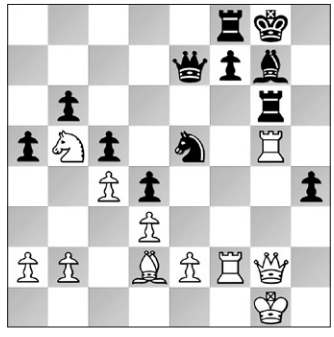
GM Mikhail Gurevich (2630)
GM Michael Adams (2615)
Ostend (6), 1991 (analysis)



WHITE TO MOVE

After 25. ... g5!, as we saw, White could have played:

26. h4 gxh4 27. Rf5 Rg6 28. g5 h6 29. R1f2 hxg5 30. Rxg5



And what is Black's best move here?

30. ... Bf6!
Trading on our terms! Black is much better after 31. Rxg6+ fxg6. ♦

Thanks to Al Lawrence and International Chess Academy Director Diana Tulman for making this report possible.

PLAYING MODE

CHERNIN LEARNED THE "PLAYING mode" training method from his work with IM Mark Dvoretsky. The idea is simple: By playing out a prepared position against a coach who has already analyzed key variations, the student gets to train calculation skills with the clock ticking, which also forces attention to time management.

Chernin differentiated two types of calculation in our interview. Some tasks require ultimate calculation, which requires deep analysis before making the first move in the solution. Some of his exercises can only be solved in this way. But more often, the correct choice of moves at the board is a matter of playing move by move in positions where you can't see all the way to an ultimate solution. Playing mode sessions are excellent for honing this kind of decision making, Chernin says.

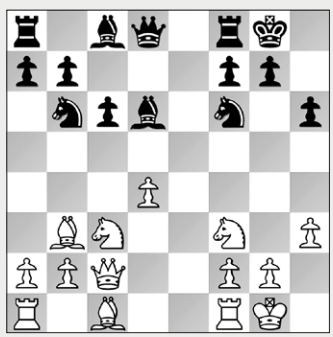
Playing mode was an important part of Chernin's training sessions with Woodward, as was what Chernin calls "mutual playing mode," something which can also be found in Dvoretsky's books on training: Two students play out a position against one another with 75 minutes on the clock. When one student makes a mistake, they change sides; after some discussion the right move is put on the board, and they continue the game.

Here's a position Chernin had Andy Woodward and Ukrainian GM Ihor Samunenkov play out:

SEMI-SLAV DEFENSE, MERAN VARIATION (D46)

GM Sergey Smagin (2495)
Nikolay Monin (2375)
USSR, 1986

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 c6 4. Nf3 Nf6 5. e3 Nbd7 6. Qc2 Bd6 7. Be2 0-0 8. 0-0 dxc4 9. Bxc4 e5 10. h3 exd4 11. exd4 Nb6 12. Bb3 h6



WHITE TO MOVE

Try playing this position out with a friend or an adjustable chess engine such as MaiaChess. We'll publish the complete game with Chernin's annotations next month, along with an account of the training game between Woodward and Samunenkov. ♦

GRAND CHESS TOUR

2026 Schedule of Events

Superbet Rapid & Blitz Poland
May 3 - May 10 in Warsaw, Poland

Superbet Chess Classic Romania
May 12 - May 24 in Bucharest, Romania

SuperUnited Rapid & Blitz Croatia
June 29 - July 6 in Zagreb, Croatia

Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz
July 31 - August 7, in Saint Louis, Missouri, USA

Sinquefield Cup
August 8 - 21, in Saint Louis, Missouri, USA

2025 GCT Finals
August 21 - 28, in Saint Louis, Missouri, USA

Saint Louis CHESS CLUB

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MINNESOTA NICE

Minnesotans GM Wesley So and IM Alice Lee were the winners at the American Cup.

ANNOTATIONS BY **GM WESLEY SO** AND **IM ALICE LEE**



GM Wesley So and IM Alice Lee

IT WAS A MINNESOTA sweep of the American Cup, held March 3-12 at the Saint Louis Chess Club: GM Wesley So won the Open Section for the first time and IM Alice Lee, who has made it to Women's Section final all five years the tournament has existed, won it for the third time in a row.

The American Cup is played under a unique format, which keeps more players in contention far longer than your average round robin or Swiss. The players in the Open and Women's sections start off in the Champions Bracket, ontesting two-game matches at G/90+30. If those matches ended in ties, they'd progress to blitz (G/3+2) playoffs.

But the American Cup is a double-elimination format: As each player loses a match, they're placed in the Elimination Bracket, where they play rapid matches with blitz playoffs; the loser of each match is out. Meanwhile, the undefeated players continue to play classical matches against each other in the Champions Bracket. In the end the winner of the Elimination Bracket faces off against the winner of the Champions Bracket in the Grand Final. Since the Champions winner is undefeated and the Elimination winner has a loss, the Elimination winner has to win two matches to take the American Cup, while the Champions winner needs only one.

So anyone who is still playing still has a chance to win it. Rematches are a big part of the American Cup gamut, and everyone will probably be tested in classical, rapid and blitz over the course of the week.

Open Section

From afar, it might have looked like GM So progressed smoothly through the tournament, but it all could have gone awry several times.

ALL PHOTOS, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED: COURTESY SLCC / LENNART OOTES

His first two matches, against GM Ray Robson and GM Sam Sevian, each went to blitz tiebreaks before So emerged victorious. His Champions Final match against GM Fabiano Caruana had an even more wobbly start: Caruana won with the white pieces in the first classical game, leaving So with a must-win game against the four-time U.S. Champion and World Championship Candidate. And yet he came through, taking the match to blitz tiebreaks. After a Game 1 draw, he capitalized on a Caruana error to make it to the Grand Final.

The loss to So dropped Caruana into the Elimination Bracket rapid final, where he faced GM Levon Aronian. Aronian had been dropped into the bracket from the beginning, after he blundered a rook against GM Awonder Liang in the first round. The two traded wins in the rapid portion of the match and headed to blitz; they started with a draw before Aronian capitalized on a late Caruana error to win with black and take the match.

In the final, So took the first game in fine attacking style; you can see the game with So's annotations on page 26. Aronian got nowhere in Game 2, and So took the title and $90,000 (including the Champions Bracket bonus). Aronian took home $55,000 for second, while Caruana won $30,000 for third and Liang $25,000 for fourth.

Women's Section

Lee's run of success in the American Cup is all the more impressive when you remember she's still only 16. She's benefited from the Cup format in the past, winning in 2024 despite having to fight through the Elimination Bracket.

This year, Lee's road to the title required playing not one, not two, but three matches against IM Carissa Yip, a three-time U.S. Women's Champion and a good friend of Lee's.

They both made it through the Champions Bracket before meeting in the final, Lee winning the match and the Champions Bracket bonus by taking the blitz 2-0 after two classical draws.

That gave Lee a day off and sent Yip to the Elimination Bracket, where she defeated IM Tatev Abrahamyan, last year's other Grand Finalist, to set up a rematch with Lee.

After two classical draws, the blitz tiebreaks provided the rollercoaster ride of the tournament: A Yip blunder gave Lee the first tiebreak game, but Yip won on demand with black to force another blitz match. Once again, Lee took the first game, while Yip saved herself in Game 2 to force an Armageddon game. Lee had white and an extra minute on the clock, but Yip had draw odds. She took control of the game, and won after Lee's must-win desperation led to errors.

That set up Lee-Yip III; this time, since they'd each lost a match, it was a rapid match, played under Elimination Bracket rules. Lee won a back-and-forth first game, which you can see with Lee's annotations on page 30. In Game 2, Yip tried for 117 moves but ran out of must-win magic, and Lee won the Cup and a total of $49,000 including the bonus.

Yip took home $30,000 for second, while Abrahamyan won $20,000 for third and IM Anna Sargsyan, fresh off a surprise second-place showing in her first U.S. Women's Championship, placed fourth, good for $15,000.

The Decisive Games

Winning the American Cup requires technique and perseverance in every game, but these are the games that put the two winners over the top, annotated and described in their own words.


GM Fabiano Caruana



So presses against GM Levon Aronian

GIUOCO PIANO (C50)

GM Wesley So (2835)
GM Levon Aronian (2801)
American Cup Grand Final (1), 03.11.2026
Annotations by GM Wesley So

This is the first game against my good friend and teammate GM Levon Aronian, who is of course a legendary player, having achieved a lot in chess and also ranked second in the world for a period of time. It is always a pleasure and an honor to play a match against him. I was nervous but also somewhat pleased and relaxed by this point of the event: I had made an improbable comeback against GM Fabiano Caruana in the previous match, gaining an extra $15,000 in prize money as well as the all-important rest day.

In contrast, Levon had to play a tense rapid/blitz match against Caruana in order to make it through to the Grand Finals. I think avoiding tiebreaks and having rest days are major factors in this tournament, as speed playoffs take a lot of mental energy. Two years ago the roles were reversed: Levon won the bonus and rest day, while I had to come back from the Elimination Bracket, winning a difficult match against Ray Robson. It's always easier on the nerves knowing that your opponent has to beat you two matches in a row in order to win the tournament.

1. e4

I didn't prepare much on the rest day, instead taking advantage of it by — actually resting! I got some some extra sleep and briefly followed the exciting Fabi-Levon match. Therefore, not as prepared as I might normally want to be, I decided to just play the trusty Italian Game, in which I have some experience with both colors. Usually, I am hesitant to play it against Levon, as he has a scary reputation with 1. e4 e5 as Black, but I had nothing else ready and since I am doing a new Chessable course on 1. e4 e5 for Black, I figured I should put my money where my mouth is.

1. ... e5

I was concerned Levon might play the French. He's been successful recently with 1. ... e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 and he has a very good memory for deep lines, such as the very concrete 4. e5 Nfd7 5. f4 c5 6. Nf3 Nc6 7. Be3 cxd4 8. Nxd4 Qb6 with the idea to take on b2. In correspondence games, where thought times are long and engine use is legal, Black makes a draw almost every game in this line.

2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4

Against 3. Bb5 Levon plays the Berlin, the Open Defense, the main line, and the Arkhangelsk. I thought 3. Bc4 was much more practical — I didn't want to stress out and over-prepare.



The field takes shape on the first day of play.

3. ... Nf6 4. d3 Bc5 5. 0-0 0-0



6. Nbd2

I played this move against GM Hans Niemann last year in the U.S. Championship, and Levon played it against me two years ago in the American Cup with colors reversed — a game I actually forgot about! The idea is to discourage Black from playing an early ... d7-d5, hoping to transpose to a more maneuvering positional variation with ... d7-d6, which is what Black played in both the above games.

The main line is **(a)** 6. c3 and Levon has played 6. ... d5 7. exd5 Nxd5 in a few games. Black has many options and is doing well here theoretically. The main line runs 8. Re1 (*8. a4* is the other main line, when Black has a wide choice of playable options) 8. ... Bg4 9. h3 Bh5 10. Nbd2 Nb6 11. Bb3 Qxd3 12. Nxe5 Qf5 13. Nef3, reaching a position that Levon and I have both played with both colors. Now Black can choose between 13. ... Rad8 or the very concrete 13. ... Rae8 14. g4, which involves sacrificing a piece for three pawns.

(b) White can also play 6. h3, which can also be met by 6. ... d5 7. exd5 Nxd5 8. Nbd2 (*8. Re1 Be6* indirectly defends the e5-pawn, since taking on e5 always runs into ... Bc5xf2+ followed by a ... Qd8-f6+ fork. Black wants to play ... f7-f6 next, and after *9. c3* [9. Nbd2 f6 10. c3 Re8 defends the bishop on e6 and prepares to drop the bishop back to f8 with equality] *9. ... Bb6 10. Nbd2* runs into *10. ... Nf4* when the pawn on d3 is very vulnerable) 8. ... a5 9. Ne4 (after *9. Re1* Levon's idea was 9. ... Nb6 when White's light-squared bishop lacks retreat squares) 9. ... Bb6 Black is ready to play ... f7-f6 next to defend his center. After 10. c3 f6 11. d4 exd4 12. Re1 Kh8 13. cxd4 Bf5 Levon had a comfortable position and even went on to win in the classical game Dominguez Perez – Aronian, Bucharest 2022.

(c) White can prevent ... d7-d5 with 6. Re1, but it allows 6. ... Ng4 7. Re2 Kh8 with the idea of an early ... f7-f5. Levon played this a few months ago with black, and it continued

PHOTO COURTESY SLCC / AUSTIN FULLER

8. h3 f5. Now taking the knight would clearly be way too dangerous now as f2 would come under attack, so instead White played 9. Bg5 Nf6 10. Nc3 d6 11. Nd5 fxe4 12. dxe4 Be6 13. Nxf6 Bxc4 (*13. ... gxf6!?* is preferred by the engines and leads to a complicated opposite-colored bishop middlegame) 14. Nxh7 Rxf3!. All these moves are forced! Now comes 15. Bxd8 Bxe2 16. Qxe2 Rxf2 17. Qxf2 Bxf2+ 18. Kxf2 Nxd8 19. Ng5 Kg8 with the idea of ... Nd8-f7 next. White looks to have a slightly better ending, but Black held without much problem in the game Robson – Aronian, U.S. Championship 2025.

(d) 6. Bg5 is of course very interesting and leads to a completely different kind of game after Black replies ... h7-h6 and ... g7-g5.

(e) Levon chose 6. Nc3 in this position against me the very next day. White's idea is to seize the bishop pair after 6. ... d6 7. Na4 Bb6 8. a3 and aim for a long-term advantage; Caruana played this against GM Andrew Hong just a couple of weeks earlier in the St. Louis Masters and won quite an impressive and long game.

I played 6. ... h6 7. h3 a6 8. Be3 d6 (If Black wants to avoid this pawn structure they can try instead *8. ... Bxe3 9. fxe3 d6 10. d4 b5 11. Bd3 Re8* when the position should be around equal, but White has some initiative along the f-file and I wasn't particularly excited to defend this against Levon) 9. Bxc5 dxc5 10. a4 b6 (*10. ... Re8* is more accurate here, defending the pawn on e5 first and trying to convince White to move the rook to e1, where it might be less effective than on f1. If *11. Nd5* I can simply take: *11. ... Nxd5 12. Bxd5 Ne7* and the pawn on e5 is well defended, and if instead *11. Re1* then Black has *11. ... b6 12. Nd5 Be6 13. Ne3 Bxc4 14. Nxc4 Qd7* with the idea of ... Ra8-d8 next, with a superior version of what I got in the game, since White's pieces are less coordinated and they cannot play g2-g3 yet).

The game in this match continued 11. Nd5 Be6 12. Ne3 Re8 13. Bxe6 Rxe6 14. g3 g6, and I didn't like my position at this point: White's pawn structure is superior and their knights are well placed. Here, instead of 15. b3, which Levon later on said he didn't like, he could have played for a quick f2-f4 with 15. Nh2 or 15. Nh4, applying some unpleasant pressure on my position. I would have had to defend a long middlegame with a slightly worse game.

6. ... d5

I was really surprised when Levon blitzed this out. I seem to remember he was the one who told me during the 2022 Olympiad that the idea of 6. Nbd2 is to avoid an early ... d7-d5.

7. exd5 Nxd5 8. Re1



I wanted to quickly attack the e5-pawn and see what my opponent's intentions are. Here he started thinking, trying to remember his analysis.

Another way to play is 8. Ne4, which is also fine. Black can play 8. ... Be7 (if *8. ... Bb6* the computer suggests the shocking but strong *9. b4* creating a powerful initiative; the idea is *9. ... Ndxb4 10. Ba3* with a dangerous pin along the a3-f8 diagonal — *10. ... Re8? 11. Nfg5* followed by Qd1-h5 would be a very quick way to win) when White should prevent an annoying pin on g4 with 9. h3 and play could go 9. ... Kh8 10. Re1 a5 11. a4 with a typical slightly better position for White.

8. ... Nb6

Black has a few alternatives here:

(a) If 8. ... Re8 9. Ne4 starts a powerful initiative, with threats of a piece jumping on g5. It's quite unpleasant for Black after 9. ... Be7 10. Ng3, as their pieces are still uncoordinated.

(b) Black can also play 8. ... Bg4, when White can play 9. h3 Bh5 10. Ne4 with the idea of Ne4-g3 breaking the pin and grabbing the bishop pair, which is similar to the game.

(c) 8. ... Nf6 has been played by Erdogmus and his coach Mamedyarov. It is quite a solid move and very playable: 9. h3 h6 10. c3 Re8 11. b4 (the computer suggests *11. Bb5 Qd5 12. Qb3* trying to win the e5-pawn) 11. ... Bd6 and we get a typical position where White is a little better (Pichot – Mamedyarov, World Rapid 2024).

9. Bb3

Obviously keeping the important light-squared bishop. White should avoid 9. Nxe5? because of 9. ... Bxf2+ 10. Kxf2 Qd4+ regaining the piece with advantage thanks to the exposed position of the white king.

9. ... Bg4

After the game I checked this line briefly and found out that 9. ... a5! is very playable here and might be best for Black. Inserting the moves ... a7-a5 and a2-a4 is almost always in Black's favor. Now comes 10. a4 Bg4 11. Ne4 (if *11. h3 Bh5 12. Ne4 Be7* compared to the game my bishop on b3 is much looser; if I play *13. c3* Black puts pressure on d3 with *13. ... Bg6* and it looks like they're equalizing) 11. ... Be7 12. c3. Apparently there are advantages to delaying h2-h3, as here Black can't put the bishop on g6.

Now play can go 12. ... Kh8 (*12. ... Bf5* is playable, when after *13. Be3* Black would need to spend an extra tempo putting the bishop on g6 later on) 13. h3 Bxf3 (if *13. ... Bh5 14. Ng3* hits the pawn on e5 and Black probably has to give up the bishop pair anyway) 14. Qxf3 f5 15. Nd2 (or *15. Ng3 Qd7* when in return for the bishop pair Black has coordinated pieces) 15. ... Qd6, when Black is ready to bring his queen's rook into the play and the position is merely unclear. White has the bishops but Black's initiative in the center is not to be underestimated. This is surely Black's best line against 8. Re1.

10. h3 Bh5 11. Ne4 Be7

I was expecting 11. ... Bd6, keeping the e5-pawn defended and allowing him to keep his light-squared bishop. After 12. Ng3 Bg6 the computer gives the powerful 13. Bg5 Qd7 14. a4!, threatening a4-a5 hitting the enemy knights. We see the point after 14. ... a5 15. Nh4 Nd4 16. Ba2 when White gets to keep the light-squared bishop. This position is quite unpleasant for Black to defend.

12. Ng3 Bxf3

Black has to give up the bishop, as he gets no compensation for the e5-pawn if he retreats.

13. Qxf3 a5

13. ... Nd4 14. Qxb7 is just winning, as Black cannot trap the enemy queen: 14. ... Nd7 15. Qa6 Rb8 16. Be3 and my queen can always escape to c4.

14. c3

The engine is brutal and gives 14. Qg4 as more accurate, threatening Bc1-h6. I remember looking at this move briefly; in the end I decided to just play simply, but if 14. Qg4 Kh8 15. Nf5 Bf6 16. a4 g6 17. Nh6 it turns out the knight is really powerfully placed on h6, attacking a lot of squares near the enemy king.

14. ... a4 15. Bc2 Kh8

Here I got excited for a minute, because Black's kingside lacks defenders. I saw some threats and looked at lines involving 16. d4. In the end I couldn't find anything so I just continued with normal moves.

16. Nf5

Very logical, preventing ... f7-f5.

I could have played 16. d4 exd4 17. Nf5 (*17. Bh6* was my first thought, threatening some mating ideas, but unfortunately Black can defend with *17. ... Ra5* securing the squares along the fifth rank and bringing his rook quickly to defend — I even thought about going for it with *18. Bxg7+ Kxg7 19. Nf5+ Rxf5 20. Qxf5 Rh8* when Black's king looks weak, but unfortunately there are too many defensive resources here: *21. Rad1 Bd6* followed by ... Qd8-f6 or ... Nc6-e7) and here 17. ... Bg5 is the only move that defends for Black, just like in the game, as we'll see!



16. ... Bf6?

He played this a little bit too quickly. This is probably the losing move, as Levon just miscalculated.

He told me later that he had planned 16. ... Bg5!, but he just forgot about the difference between the two moves. After 17. Qg4 (if *17. Qg3 Bf6 18. d4 exd4* not *19. Nxg7? Bxg7* when Black has ... f7-f5 to parry the attack along the b1-h7 diagonal) 17. ... Bf6 18. Ne3 headed to c4 next might be best, targeting the main defender of the a4-pawn (if *18. d4 exd4* the sacrifice on g7 never works: *19. Nxg7? d3;* and if *18. Ng3 g6* with the idea of ... Bf6-g7 is acceptable if a bit worse for Black), But now comes 18. ... Bg5!, because it is important for Black to try to trade off one of my bishops (*18. ... a3* is always met by *19. b4* when my bishops will become powerful soon). Then 19. Rb1 looks weird but defends the b2-pawn and prepares Ne3-c4 followed by taking on b6; Black can play 19. ... g6 20. Nc4 Bxc1 21. Nxb6 cxb6 22. Rbxc1 a3 23. b4 b5 and is looking quite all right here, having traded off some pieces and limited White's initiative.



Spectators of all ages enjoyed the event.

17. d4!

A very powerful move, quite typical in these positions with the bishops on c2 and c1.

17. ... g6

Black must have misassessed the position after 17. ... exd4 because 18. Nxg7 works here: 18. ... Bxg7 19. Qf5 Qh4 20. g3 and Black loses material by force thanks to the mate threat on h7. After 20. ... Ra5 21. Qxa5 Nxa5 22. gxh4 dxc3 23. Rb1 it looks like Black has some compensation for the Exchange, but their king's position is weak; my rooks can quickly become active, and the black knights cannot create immediate counterplay.

18. Bh6

The computer gives 18. Be4! as strongest, targeting c6, but I think it is an insane and inhuman move and I never considered it. It's true, though, that after 18. ... exd4 19. Bxc6 bxc6 20. Nxd4 Bxd4 21. cxd4 and Black has too many weaknesses. White is threatening the pawn on c6 and also looking to come to h6 with the bishop.

18. ... Rg8

Unfortunately for Levon, after 18. ... Re8 comes 19. Ne3 exd4 20. Ng4 and the rook on e8 only becomes a target for attack.

19. Ng3!

My first intention was 19. Ne3 exd4 20. Ng4 Bg7, but here Black is completely all right, as taking on f7 leads nowhere: 21. Qxf7 Bxh6 22. Nxh6 Rf8.

19. ... exd4 20. Ne4 Bh4?

I was quite surprised to see this move; the bishop is just badly placed on h4. I was expecting something solid like 20. ... Nd7, to be honest. The point of having the knight on e4 is that after 20. ... Bg7? 21. Ng5 Rf8 White has the fantastic 22. Qxf7!. I was quite happy to realize that this works!

The only defense for Black is 20. ... Be7!



POSITION AFTER 20. ... Be7



"So explain this double elimination system to me again ..."

Black covers the c5-square and prepares ... f7-f5. After 21. Qxf7 Black quickly swings the rook over to the kingside with 21. ... Ra5! 22. Rad1 Rf5 23. Qe6 Bf8 24. Bc1 Bg7 and at least the Black king is safe. White is still better after 25. Ng3 Rd5 26. Qe2 preventing ... d4-d3 and placing the queen on a safe, stable square, but Black is still fighting after 26. ... dxc3 27. bxc3, as long as they don't fall into 27. ... Bxc3 28. Be4 with ideas of Bc1-b2 later.

21. Rad1
I immediately understood that Levon's idea was to muddy the waters after 21. Qxf7 Ra5, when my queen is in a vulnerable spot. So I didn't even look at that line seriously, and just decided to activate my rook and pressure the enemy queen.

21. ... f5?
I didn't see this at all. I was expecting 21. ... Ra5! 22. cxd4 Rf5 to drum up some counterplay and quickly activate the rook. It was Black's best (if desperate) chance.

I wasn't sure where to place my queen yet, but there are many good squares to consider. I was going to play 23. Qa3, which looks very human, placing the queen on a safe square (although *23. Qc3 Nd5 24. Qd2* might be even stronger, just threatening to snatch up the a4-pawn, if nothing else). Now 23. ... Be7 runs into 24. Nc5 Rh5 25. Bc1 when Black's rook on the fifth rank is precariously placed and he has weak pawns. White wins after 25. ... Nxd4 26. Rxd4 Qxd4 27. Rxe7 Qxc5 28. Be3 with the threat of 29. Bd4+.

22. Nc5
Hitting the pawn on b7 as well as the light squares in the enemy camp. Now the bishop on h4 is really misplaced.

22. ... Re8
I assume 22. ... Qd5 was his idea, looking to trade queens, but after 23. Qxd5 Nxd5 24. Bxa4 Black has too many weaknesses to escape. If 24. ... Ra5 (*24. ... g5 25. Bxc6 bxc6 26. Rxd4 Rg6* and now if nothing else *27. Re6* ensures my bishop is well defended) 25. cxd4 keeps everything protected.

23. Nxb7
"Patzer sees a pawn, patzer takes a pawn" – Fischer, probably. In any case, it's hard to pass up on a free juicy pawn on b7, as now the knight on c6 lacks defenders.

23. ... Qf6
White can grab another pawn after 23. ... Qd7 24. Nc5 Qd6 25. Nxa4, as Black has numerous problems along the back rank.

24. g3
I also considered 24. Bf4 preserving my dark-squared bishop and threatening 25. g3, but it's much more complicated. This just works.

24. ... g5
Levon told me after the game that 24. ... Ne5 was his intention, but after 25. Rxe5 Qxe5 26. gxh4 Qe2 27. Qc6 his king on h8 is simply running into a mating attack. My bishops are simply too strong and Black has no compensation.

25. Qh5



Simply threatening Black's back rank. Around here I was 100% sure that I was winning, but you can never be too safe against Levon!

25. ... Rg8 26. gxh4 gxh4+ 27. Kh1
Any king moves are winning, but h1 is the safest square to hide the king.

27. ... Rg6
If 27. ... Ne5 28. Bxf5 and I can always defend against the checks along the h1-a8 diagonal.

28. Bxf5
There was nothing wrong with 28. Bf4, but I spent some time calculating the best way to take off pieces off the board and keep a direct win.

28. ... Rxh6 29. Re8+ Rxe8 30. Qxe8+ Kg7 31. Rg1+
Black's king comes under attack too.

31. ... Rg6 32. Bxg6 hxg6 33. Nc5!
The simplest, bringing my knight back into the game and into the attack.

33. ... Ne7
I missed this move from afar when calculating 28. Bxf5, but fortunately I'm still safe.

34. Re1
Maintaining all the threats and preparing to bring the knight to e6. Black doesn't have a perpetual check.

34. ... Nbd5 35. Ne6+ Kh7
It's the same after 35. ... Kh6 36. Nxd4 , as Black cannot take on f2 due to 37. Qh8+.

36. Nxd4 c5 37. Ne6
I also spent some time calculating 37. Re6, but it was totally unnecessary and might give my opponent some practical chances if my time gets low.

37. ... Qxf2 38. Ng5+ Kh6
If 38. ... Kg7 39. Rxe7+ Nxe7 40. Qxe7+ Kh6



IM Carissa Yip squares off with IM Alice Lee.

41. Nf7+ Kg7 42. Ne5+ Kg8 43. Qe8+ wins the g6-pawn with check.

39. Rg1
Black has no perpetual check and I keep everything defended while threatening 40. Qh8 mate.

39. ... Kg7
39. ... Qf6 40. Qf7 forces the trade of queens.

40. Ne6+ Kh7 41. Nf8+ Kg7
41. ... Kh6 42. Rxg6+ leads to mate.

42. Nxg6, Black resigned.
A very pleasing win! Levon is a tough opponent, extremely difficult to beat, so it is especially wonderful that I was able to do it in the finals!

The American Cup is in its fifth year, and I finished a disappointing second place in 2023 and 2024. This was a much-needed victory for me, vaulting me back to number 7 in the world. Since I also won the Tata Steel India Blitz in January, and then the opening-day blitz event here, all in all I feel I had a good start for 2026. I have 12 over-the-board tournaments left in my schedule this year, and it is good to go into them with some confidence.

CARO-KANN DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (B12)

IM Carissa Yip (2545)
IM Alice Lee (2494)
American Cup Grand Final, 03.12.2026
Annotations by IM Alice Lee

Carissa has been in fantastic form recently; she's very close to achieving the GM title. I knew that any match against her would be difficult to win. I started off with the black pieces, and my general strategy was to remain as solid as possible.

1. e4 c6
The trusty Caro-Kann! The decision to play it was not supremely thought out; it was a result of my opening wheel. I put different options on an online wheel and spun it. I've had good experiences with the Caro, defeating IM Tatev Abrahamyan in a must-win situation in the 2025 American Cup, so I wasn't too unhappy with the wheel's choice!

2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3!?
A less popular move than White's typical 4. dxc5. Carissa has played that, and she's also played 4. Nf3 here. But I did prepare a bit for the game move, as I'd seen GM Awonder Liang use it in his tiebreak match against GM Fabiano Caruana in the Open section a few days before.

4. ... Nc6 5. Bb5 cxd4 6. cxd4 Bf5 7. Nc3 e6 8. Nge2



At this point, I was out of book. However, because it was a rapid game, I knew I had to play relatively quickly, so I moved using my intuition.

8. ... Nge7
The engine prefers 8. ... Rc8 with ... a7-a6 coming up next, in which case White must decide whether she wants her bishop to go to a4 or d3. If it goes to d3, Black can trade and develop the knight to g6 or f5 — one line could go 9. 0-0 a6 10. Bd3 Nge7 11. Bg5 Bxd3 12. Qxd3 h6. In any case, once ... a7-a6 is played, Black will get clarity.

9. h4
White gets a pleasant game after 9. Ng3 for very concrete reasons: White wants to chase the black bishop around and gain control over the dark squares. One sample line is 9. ... Bg6 10. h4 h5 11. Bg5 Qb6 12. Qd2 a6 13. Ba4 Nf5?! 14. Nxf5 Bxf5 15. Rc1.

9. ... h6
Again, the engine likes 9. ... Rc8 because it's noncommittal but useful. White had some ideas of taking on c6 and responding to ... Ne7xc6 with Ne2-g3, so it would suit Black to make sure they can take back with a rook. Play could go 10. h5 a6 11. Bd3 f6 12. exf6 gxf6 with equality.

10. h5!
White will now consistently have g2-g4 and f2-f4 ideas.

10. ... a6 11. Bd3 Rc8 12. a3 Qb6 13. Na4 Qa7 14. b4
The ideal move was 14. Bf4!. After 14. ... Bxd3 15. Qxd3 Nf5 16. Rd1 Black can't play ... Bf8-e7 because of g2-g4. It would be impossible for Black to develop if she cannot trade off the bishop on f8.

14. ... Be4?



White is only slightly better after 14. ... Bxd3 15. Qxd3 Nf5 16. Bb2 b5 17. Nc5 Bxc5 18. bxc5 0-0 19. g4 Nfe7.

15. 0-0?!
Missing the incredibly clever 15. Kf1!. White's rook is very good where it is on h1, and I cannot play 15. ... Nf5 because of 16. Bxe4 dxe4 17. g4!. Now if the white king were on g1 or e1, 17. ... Nfxd4 would be possible because after 18. Be3 Black's knight can come to f3 with check. But here White would be winning after 18. ... Rd8 19. Nxd4 Nxd4 20. Nc3 threatening the devastating 21. Ne2.

15. ... Nf5 16. Bb2 Be7?



Again I need to trade the dark-squared bishop off with 16. ... Bxd3 17. Qxd3 b5 18. Nc5 Bxc5, although it's not completely trivial to equalize afterwards: After 19. bxc5 Black has to play 19. ... Qe7! as prophylaxis against g2-g4, which would be answered by ... Qe7-g5.

17. Rc1?
Missing 17. Bxe4 dxe4 18. d5! opening everything up. Black's uncastled king position and poor piece placement enables White to create a devastating attack after 18. ... b5 (*18. ... exd5?* loses straight away to *19. Qxd5 0-0 20. Qxe4*) 19. Rc1 bxa4 20. Rxc6 0-0 21. Nd4.

17. ... 0-0 18. Nc5 Bxd3 19. Qxd3 Bxc5
One plus to not having played any of those lines with ... b7-b5 is that now if White recaptures with a pawn, I can play ... b7-b6.

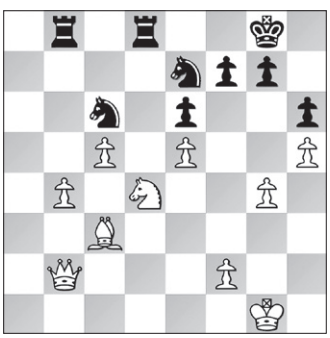
20. Rxc5 a5 21. g4 Nfe7 22. Qd2 axb4 23. axb4 Qa4 24. Bc3!?



24. ... b6!?
It's clear that her idea was Rf1-a1 followed by Ne2-c1, trapping my queen. Now, however, her rook is trapped, and I must decide whether I want to go into an endgame where I have two rooks and she has a queen and a pawn.

25. Ra1 Qxa1+ 26. Bxa1 bxc5 27. dxc5 Rb8 28. Bc3 d4!?
Of course, I could have tried to double rooks and pressure the b4-pawn, but I liked this because I didn't think my pawn on d5 was doing much. Now the d-file will be open and I have the d5-square for my knight. Practically, it seems quite strong. If 28. ... Rb7 29. g5 Nf5 30. gxh6 gxh6 31. Qf4 d4 32. Bd2.

29. Nxd4 Rfd8 30. Qb2??



White had to play 30. Nxc6!, although the road to equality is far from easy: 30. ... Rxd2 31. Nxe7+ (not *31. Nxb8? Rd8* chasing the knight away from protection of the pawn when it gets to c6: *32. Na6 Rd1+ 33. Kg2 Nd5* and funny enough, White's bishop is almost trapped, so I'll win a pawn whether she plays *34. c6 Rc1 35. Bd4 Rxc6* or *34. Bb2 Rb1 35. Bd4 Nxb4*) 31. ... Kf8 32. Bxd2 Kxe7 33. f4 Kd7 34. Kf2 Kc6 35. f5 Kd5. During the game, I had evaluated Black to be doing quite well due to her blockade over the passed pawns, although for concrete reasons, White should equalize after she plays f5-f6.

30. ... Rxd4! 31. Bxd4 Rxb4 32. Qc3 Rxd4
This is hopeless for White. My knights and rook are well coordinated; there's no perpetual, and all her pawns are falling.

33. f3 Nxe5 34. Kf2 N7c6 35. Ke2 Rd3 36. Qa1 Nd4+ 37. Kf2 Rxf3+ 38. Kg2 Rf4 39. g5 hxg5, White resigned.
Although the opening of this game was quite shaky, after I was able to get through fully developed, my position became pleasant. Ultimately, 30. Qb2 cost her the game, but it was already quite difficult.

In any case, with this win, I only needed a draw with white to clinch the match and the tournament, and I was able to make one. With that, I secured my third American Cup title. I do think that it easily could have gone the other way, but the volatility accurately reflected what happened in the 13 games I played with Carissa in this event.

To conclude, I'd like to shout out my fellow Minnesotan GM Wesley So, who won the Open Section in an incredible manner!

For more on the American Cup, visit our CLO event coverage: new.uschess.org/news/so-and-lee-are-2026-american-cup-champions.



GM Irina Krush


IM Anna Sargsyan



After 117 moves, the draw was agreed and Lee was the champ!

The Race That Never Was



GM Javokhir Sindarov runs away with the 2026 Candidates Tournament.

BY **GM ELSHAN MORADIABADI**

THE CANDIDATES TOURNAMENT in Cyprus was supposed to be the jewel of chess events in 2026 for many reasons.

Ever since Magnus Carlsen relinquished the crown, the meaning and stature of the classical world championship have been fiercely debated across the chess world. This tournament would determine the challenger for World Champion Gukesh Dommaraju in his first test since capturing the title in 2024 against a diminished Ding Liren, and the match set for later this year may tell us whether Gukesh, 19, can truly consolidate his reign — particularly as he has yet to win a supertournament since the 2024 Candidates.



The 2026 Candidates featured a fascinating blend of players from the generations that followed Carlsen (with one exception: American GM Hikaru Nakamura, who is in fact older than Carlsen).

Finally, the Candidates would test whether FIDE's World Championship cycle can preserve interest in classical chess — the oldest form of the game — in an era when long, sedentary competitions are no longer easily entertaining to modern audiences.

Before the tournament began, the prevailing view was that it would be the culmination of a tightly contested race; yet it quickly turned into a one-man show.

Uzbek GM Javokhir Sindarov, 20, took the lead in Round 4 with a win over American GM Fabiano Caruana and only got stronger from there, with wins over Nakamura and Chinese GM Wei Yi in Rounds 5 and 6 to take a 1½-point lead. He had 6/7 at the midpoint of the double round robin, led by two full points at one point and finished with a plus-6 score and won the tournament with a round to spare, finishing a point and a half ahead of the field.

Caruana jumped out to an early lead, beating Nakamura in Round 1 and winning quickly over against Wei Yi in Round 3. But Round 5 saw probably the defining moment of the tournament — Sindarov easily beat the newly minted father Nakamura in an opening disappointment where, according to the American, his team failed to consider an obvious move played by Sindarov in their prep. The defeat was particularly important since Caruana had bounced back from his loss to Sindarov by beating German GM Matthias Bluebaum, but remained a full point behind the lead. In his attempt to catch up, Caruana created a number of opportunities for himself, but nothing worked out, and he finished on +1.

Dutch GM Anish Giri started sluggishly, with a loss against GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu. But the Dutchman showed that he is much more than just a social media powerhouse: He gradually found his form and finished the tournament with a +3 score. On any other day, his score would qualify him for a fierce competition for the title — that score was good enough for GM Viswanathan Anand to win the Candidates in 2014 and GM Sergey Karjakin to win in 2016.

For Pragg and GM Andrey Esipenko, it was an event they should reflect on and move on from, and Bluebaum showed that he has the chess strength to crack 2700, should he work on his consistency.

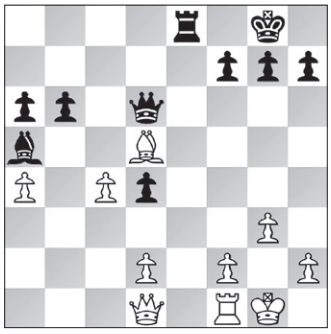
Now let's have a look at some games and see how the events of this tournament unfolded.

ENGLISH OPENING (A13)

GM Fabiano Caruana (2795)
GM Hikaru Nakamura (2810)
Candidates Tournament (1), Cyprus, 03.29.2026

1. Nf3 d5 2. c4 e6 3. g3 d4 4. Bg2 Nc6 5. 0-0 Bc5 6. e3 Nge7 7. Nxd4 Nxd4 8. b4 Bxb4 9. exd4 0-0 10. Qb3 Ba5 11. Nc3 Nf5

12. Ba3 Re8 13. d5 Nd4 14. Qa4 b6 15. Rae1 Bd7 16. Qd1 c5 17. Bb2 Rb8 18. a4 a6 19. dxe6 Bxe6 20. Nd5 Qd6 21. Bxd4 cxd4 22. Re4 Bxd5 23. Rxe8+ Rxe8 24. Bxd5



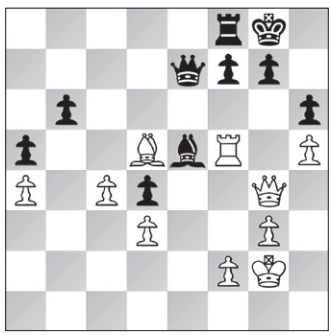
24. ... Bb4 25. h4 a5 26. d3
The engines scream 0.00 here, but it is far from trivial. White's bishop is a monster, while Black's is — well, a cookie monster.

26. ... Qf6
I'd prefer 26. ... g6 27. Qf3 Re7 28. h5 Qe5; we'll see why in a few moves.

27. Kg2 Qe5 28. Qf3 Qf6 29. Qg4 Bc5?
The engines may be able to hold this by a thread, but this is a serious mistake. Black needs to set up a defense with pawns on g6 and h5. For example, 29. ... g6 30. h5 Qf5! 31. Qxd4 Bc5 32. Qb2 Qe5! and Black's activity makes up for the missing pawn.

30. h5 h6 31. Rh1 Qg5 32. Qd1 Qe7 33. Bc6
White is completely winning now. Compare what happens here with Game 4 of the 1985 Karpov – Kasparov world championship match — White's pressure on the light squares is very similar. It's always good to know the classics!

33. ... Rc8 34. Re1 Qc7 35. Bd5 Kf8 36. Qg4 Rd8 37. Qe4 Kg8 38. Qf5 Qd7 39. Qf3 Rf8 40. Re5 Bd6 41. Rf5 Qe7 42. Qg4 Be5



43. Rf3
There are several ways for White to win, but to me the cleanest, most technical one is 43. Qe2! Bf6 44. Qxe7 Bxe7 45. f4! with the unstoppable threat of running the g-pawn to g6. After 45. ... Bf6 White expands with 46. c5! (don't rush — after *46. g4 Re8 47. g5? hxg5 48. fxg5 Re5!* White's advantage is greatly reduced) 46. ... bxc5 47. Bc4 and is clearly winning after 47. ... Rc8 48. g4 Rc7 49. g5 hxg5 50. fxg5 Bd8 51. g6.

43. ... Bf6 44. Rf4 Qd8 45. Be4 Re8 46. Rf5 Qd7 47. Qf4 Bg5 48. Qf3 Qc7 49. Rxf7 Qxf7 50. Bd5 Re6 51. Qg4 Kf8 52. Bxe6 Qe8 53. Bd7 Qa8+ 54. Kg1 Bf6 55. Qe6 Qd8 56. Bc6 Qe7 57. Qc8+ Qd8 58. Qb7 Be5 59. Bd5 Qc7 60. Qa8+ Ke7 61. Qg8 Kd6 62. Be4 Ke7 63. Bg6 Bf6 64. Qf7+ Kd6 65. Qd5+ Ke7 66. Bf5 Be5 67. f4 Bf6 68. Kg2 Qd6 69. Qb7+ Kf8 70. Kf3 Qe7 71. Qe4 Qxe4+ 72. dxe4 Be7 73. e5 Bb4 74. Bd3 Be1 75. g4 Ke7 76. Ke4 Bg3 77. f5 Kd7 78. Kd5 Bh4



79. f6??



Nakamura suffers in his loss to Caruana.

PHOTOS, THIS PAGE AND PREVIOUS: COURETSY FIDE / WALUSZA

It's hard to understand what went through Caruana's mind here, but of course it's easy to say that without a ticking clock! It's a win after 79. Kxd4 Be7 80. Kd5 Bg5 81. Be4 Be7 82. Bg2 Bd8 83. Bh3 Bg5 84. Bf1 Be7 85. c5 Bxc5 (or *85. ... bxc5 86. Bb5+ Kd8 87. Ke6*) 86. g5!.

79. ... gxf6 80. e6+ Ke7??
Returning the favor. It's a dead draw after 80. ... Kc7 81. Bg6 (or *81. e7 Kd7*) 81. ... d3 82. Bxd3 Bf2.

81. Kc6 Kxe6 82. Kxb6 Be1 83. c5, Black resigned.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED (D37)

GM Javokhir Sindarov (2745)
GM Andrey Esipenko (2698)
Candidates Tournament (1), Cyprus, 03.29.2026

The French biologist Louis Pasteur once said, "Chance favors the prepared mind." In chess and sports, we also say, "Better to be lucky than good." Both sayings applied to Sindarov in this game. After a suboptimal start, with his game on the verge of turning grim and cloudy, Sindarov emerged victorious thanks to his tactical sharpness.

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. Nc3 Be7 5. cxd5 exd5 6. Bf4 0-0 7. e3 c5
Black doesn't need to go for the Carlsbad setup with the thematic ... c7-c6, although it's perfectly all right.

8. Bd3 Nc6 9. 0-0
9. dxc5 Bxc5 10. 0-0 d4 is fine for Black, so Sindarov chooses a more complex path.

9. ... c4 10. Bc2 Nh5 11. Be5 f6 12. Bg3
12. Ng5 is interesting. It's unclear after 12. ... g6 13. Nxh7 fxe5 14. Nxf8 Bxf8 15. dxe5 Nxe5 (but not *15. ... Be6?? 16. Bxg6*, as in Olafsson – Einarsson, Reykjavik 1988) 16. Qd4 Qd6 17. Rad1 Be6 18. Nxd5.

12. ... f5 13. Be5
It's also balanced after 13. Ne5 g6 14. Ba4 Nxe5 15. Bxe5 a6.

13. ... Be6 14. b3 Qa5 15. Ne2 b5 16. Nf4?!



Inaccurate, in my view. The e5-bishop is strong, but more importantly it blocks White's potential pressure along the e-file. Knights, on the other hand, are great pieces on such outposts.

16. ... Nxf4 17. exf4 Qd8 18. Re1 Qd7 19. Re3 Rae8 20. h4 h6 21. g3?!
Not a losing or decisive mistake, but Sindarov is dillydallying more than he can afford.

21. ... a6 22. Kg2 Bf7 23. Qd2 Bb4 24. Qe2 Bh5 25. a4?
Opening a frontier for Black.



Sindarov won with a round to spare after this draw with Giri.

PHOTO: COURTESY FIDE / NIKI RIGA

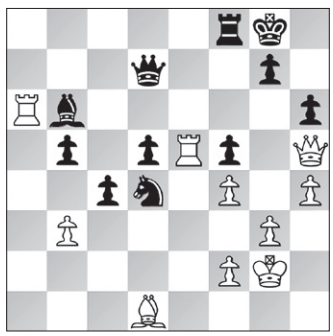
25. ... Ba5
Even better is 25. ... Bg4 26. axb5 axb5 27. Bd1 Ra8, when White will begin to wonder why they opened the a-file.

26. axb5 axb5 27. Bd1 Bxf3+?
This is not a blunder, but why let go of such a strong pin? After 27. ... Ra8 followed by putting the bishop on b4 or b6, White is far from safety.

28. Qxf3 Bb6?!
Now the momentum is in White's favor. Black could keep the game dynamically balanced in a healthier way with 28. ... Bd2 29. Re2 c3 30. Rxd2 cxd2 31. Qd3 Ra8. The bishop on e5 is yet again beautiful but useless!

29. Ra6 Nxd4
White is much better after 29. ... Bxd4? 30. Rxc6 Rxe5 (not *30. ... Bxe3?? 31. Rc7*) 31. Rxe5 Qxc6 32. Rxd5 Bf6 33. bxc4 bxc4 34. Bc2.

30. Qh5 Rxe5 31. Rxe5



31. ... Qc6??
A complete collapse in time pressure. The only move was 31. ... Bc7. After 32. Re3 Bd8 the bishop will head to f6 to keep the position together for Black, though the fate of the game remains unclear.

32. bxc4
From here on, Sindarov converted his advantage with impeccable technique.

32. ... bxc4 33. Ba4 Qc5 34. Qg6 Ba7 35. Re8 Rxe8 36. Qxe8+ Kh7 37. Qg6+ Kg8 38. Bd7 c3 39. Qe8+ Kh7 40. Qg6+ Kg8 41. Re6, Black resigned.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED (D37)

GM Praggnanandhaa R (2741)
GM Javokhir Sindarov (2745)
Candidates Tournament (3), Cyprus, 03.31.2026


GM Anish Giri


GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu

The key to Sindarov's success was the depth and practical approach of his opening prep. This game is the main demonstration of the benefits.

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Be7 4. Nf3 Nf6 5. Bf4 0-0 6. e3 c5 7. dxc5 Bxc5 8. a3 Nc6 9. Qc2 Re8 10. Bg5 d4 11. Bxf6 Qxf6 12. Ne4 Qf5 13. b4



13. ... Nxb4

Risky but playable. Other lines include:

(a) 13. ... Bf8 14. b5 Ne5 15. Nxd4 Qg6 16. g3 a6 17. Bg2 Bd7 18. bxa6 bxa6 19. c5 Rac8 20. Rc1 Red8 (or *20. ... Bxc5 21. Nxc5 Qxc2 22. Rxc2 Rxc5 23. Rxc5 Nd3+ 24. Kd2 Nxc5* with equality) 21. 0-0 f5 22. Nd2 Rxc5 with an unclear position;

(b) 13. ... Be7!? 14. b5 Ne5 15. Nxd4 Qg6 16. Nd2 (or *16. g3 b6 17. Bg2 Bb7 18. 0-0 Rac8* with counterplay) 16. ... Qxc2 17. Nxc2 Nd7! 18. Be2 Nc5 19. Nd4 a6 20. bxa6 Rxa6 21. 0-0 Kf8 22. Rfb1 Rd8 23. Ra2 Na4 24. Rc1 Nc5 25. Bf3 Bd7 and White cannot make much progress despite their extra pawn.

14. axb4 Bxb4+ 15. Kd1 dxe3 16. Bd3

If 16. fxe3 b5! 17. Ned2 Qf6 18. Rb1 a5 19. c5 Ba6 with good compensation.


Sindarov's Round 4 win over Caruana was key to his success.

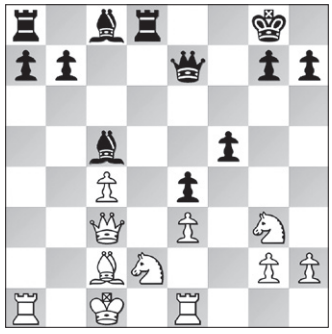
16. ... Qg6 17. fxe3 f5 18. Ng3 Bc5 19. Qc3?!

Pragg's first real mistake. Sindarov doesn't hesitate.

19. ... e5! 20. Bc2

Not 20. Nxe5?? Qf6.

20. ... e4 21. Nd2 Rd8 22. Kc1 Qg5 23. Re1 Qe7



24. Re2?

The beginning of the end. It's not a losing move, but it is where Pragg began to drift. I think White can hold with 24. Rd1 Bb4 25. Qb2, although in time pressure the position remains iffy in light of the practical complications.

24. ... Bb4 25. Qb2 a5 26. Nb3 Ra6 27. Nd4 Qg5 28. Kb1 h5 29. Ka2 h4 30. Nf1 Bd7 31. Rd1 Rc8 32. Nd2 Rb6

Praggnanandhaa is still holding his position together, but here Caïssa gave Sindarov the first of her lucky charms for the tournament.



33. c5??

Cracking under pressure.

33. ... Rxc5 34. Qb3+ Kh8 35. Qf7 Rxc2+ 36. Kb1

If 36. Nxc2 Be6+.

36. ... Rxd2 37. Rdxd2 Bxd2+ 38. Ka2 Bxe3 39. Qxd7 Bxd4 40. Qxd4 Qf6, White resigned.

PHOTOS: COURTESY FIDE / NIK RIGA (GIRI, PRAGG); FIDE / YOAV NIS (SINDAROV – CARUANA)

QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED (D26)

GM Javokhir Sindarov (2745)
GM Fabiano Caruana (2795)
Candidates Tournament (4), Cyprus, 04.01.2026

The defining game of the event. The two players arrived to this game with 2½/3. Sindarov's opening prep helped him secure this crucial victory and set him on the path to his +6 score. Caruana, on the other hand, never managed to make the necessary comeback, breaking even in the remainder of his games.



The new challenger for the world title

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 dxc4
A sign that Caruana considered Sindarov serious competition at this point, trying for a surprise in the Queen's Gambit Accepted.

4. e3 Nf6 5. Bxc4 c5 6. 0-0 Nc6 7. Qe2 a6 8. Nc3 b5 9. Bd3
A rare line, but totally playable.

9. ... Bb7 10. a4 b4?!
10. ... bxa4 11. Rxa4 Nb4 has been tried, with Black getting a good position in Adhiban – Van Foreest, Hoogeveen 2017.

11. Ne4 Na5 12. Nxf6+ gxf6
White is winning after 12. ... Qxf6 13. e4 cxd4 14. Bg5.

13. dxc5 Nb3 14. c6 Bxc6 15. Nd4!
OK, now my engine still has it at 0.00. Both players are probably still in their preparation.

15. ... Nxd4 16. exd4 Rg8 17. g3



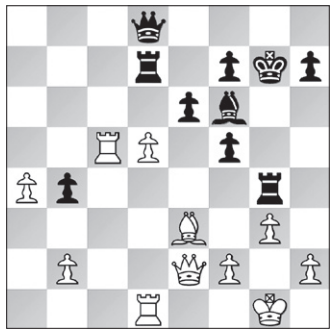
17. ... f5?!
White has many options after 17. ... Qxd4 18. Be3 Qd5 19. f3 f5, but Black is still OK. Maybe there was something that bothered Caruana in this position?

18. Bc4 Rg4?!
Black has an annoyingly bad endgame after 18. ... Qxd4 19. Bxe6 Qe4 20. Qxe4 Bxe4 21. Bb3, but this artificial move doesn't help.

19. Be3 Bd5 20. Rac1 Be7 21. Bxa6 Kf8 22. Bb5
White is technically winning, but there's work to do in the technical part.

22. ... Bf6?!
Caruana is not making it that hard; 22. ... Kg7 seems more natural.

23. Rfd1 Kg7 24. Bc6 Ra5 25. Bxd5 Rxd5 26. Rc5 Rd7 27. d5



The game's fate is sealed. Sindarov did not need to make even one critically optimal move to win this game.

27. ... exd5 28. Qf3 Bxb2 29. Rcxd5 Rxd5 30. Rxd5 Qe8 31. Rxf5 Rg6 32. h4 Bc3 33. h5 Ra6 34. Qg4+ Kh8 35. Bd4+ f6 36. Rc5, Black resigned.

FIDE Candidates

CYPRUS, MARCH 28-APRIL 16, 2026

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1	GM Javokhir Sindarov	2745	**	½½	1½	1½	1½	½½	11	1½	10/14
2	GM Anish Giri	2753	½½	**	½1	½½	½½	½1	01	1½	8½/14
3	GM Fabiano Caruana	2795	0½	½0	**	1½	10	1½	½½	½1	7½/14
4	GM Wei Yi	2754	0½	½½	0½	**	½½	½½	½½	11	7/14
5	GM Hikaru Nakamura	2810	0½	½½	01	½½	**	½½	½½	½½	6½/14
6	GM Matthias Bluebaum	2698	½½	½0	0½	½½	½½	**	½½	½½	6/14
7	GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu	2741	00	10	½½	½½	½½	½½	**	½½	6/14
8	GM Andrey Esipenko	2698	0½	0½	½0	00	½½	½½	½½	**	4½/14

PHOTO: COURTESY FIDE / WALUSZA



And Then There Was VAISHALI

The Indian grandmaster came through in a dramatic last round to win the Women's Candidates Tournament.

BY **GM ELSHAN MORADIABADI**

THE WOMEN'S CANDIDATES Tournament was a closer and tenser battle than the Open. The ups and downs began even before the tournament, when GM Humpy Koneru withdrew due to security concerns in the Middle East over the U.S. war on Iran.

Her replacement, GM Anna Muzychuk, became the sensation of the first half, leading with a healthy +2 score, with bottom-seeded GM Vaishali Rameshbabu in second a point behind. Meanwhile, Kazakh GM Bibisara Assaubayeva languished on 3/7, but that was about to change.

The second half of the event began with a painful loss by Muzychuk in a winning position against GM Divya Desmukh, which produced a five-way tie for the lead in the eight-player event among Muzychuk, Desmukh, Vaishali, top-seeded GM Zhu Jiner, and GM Kateryna Lagno.

The lead kept changing hands after that: Zhu and Vaishali emerged on top after Round 9; Vaishali had the lead to herself after Round 10 and extended it to a full point in Round 11; Zhu caught up to her by winning their head-to-head matchup in Round 12.

In Round 13, Zhu lost a shocker to GM Alexandra Goryachkina, while Vaishali held on against GM Tan Zhongyi. Meanwhile, GM Assaubayeva completed a 3½/4

PHOTO: COURTESY FIDE / WALUSZA

run by downing Muzychuk to join Vaishali in the lead.

Going into the last round, six players had theoretical chances to at least join a playoff for first place, but in the end Vaishali eliminated all doubt: While Assaubayeva drew with Desmukh, Vaishali defeated Lagno to win the tournament with 8½/14.

While her brother Praggnanandhaa finished next-to-last in the Open Candidates, Vaishali's fighting spirit helped her squeeze many points out of unpromising positions.

The tournament was disappointing for Zhu, who beat Vaishali twice but let many opportunities slipping through her fingers.

Let us have a look at some of the crucial moments.

VIENNA GAME (C28)

GM Kateryna Lagno (2508)
GM Vaishali Rameshbabu (2470)
Women's Candidates Tournament (6), Cyprus, 04.04.2026

This was Vaishali's best game of the tournament. Winning twice over Lagno was the biggest contribution to her success at the Candidates.

1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nc3 Nc6 4. d3 Bb4 5. Nf3 h6 6. 0-0 Bxc3 7. bxc3 0-0 8. Re1 d6 9. h3 Na5 10. Bb3 c5 11. c4 Nh7!
Now that the pawn is on c4, ... f7-f5 is an option.

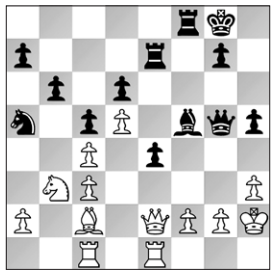
12. c3 f5 13. exf5 Bxf5 14. d4 e4 15. Nh2 b6 16. Qh5 Qf6 17. Be3 Rae8 18. Rad1 Be6



19. Qe2?
Letting go of the g6-square. It would still be equal after 19. Ng4 Qf5 20. Qxf5 Bxf5 21. Bc1.

19. ... Qf7
Even better was 19. ... Qg6 20. Kh1 Qf7 21. d5 Bc8 22. Nf1 Qf6 23. Rc1 Qh4 24. Kg1 Nf6.

20. d5 Bc8 21. Ba4 Re7 22. Nf1 h5 23. Nd2 Qf6 24. Rc1 Qh4 25. Bc2 Bf5 26. Nb3 Nb7?
A lapse, giving White new life. Black is much better after 26. ... Ng5 27. Nxa5 (Black wins after *27. Bxg5 Qxg5 28. Kh2*



POSITION AFTER 28. Kh2

28. ... Nxc4!! 29. Qxc4 Bxh3) 27. ... Nxh3+ 28. gxh3 Bxh3 29. Nc6 Ree8 with ... Rf8-f3 and ... Qh4-g4+ coming.

27. Bd1 g6 28. a4 Re5
28. ... Nd8!, headed for g5, was a better path.

29. Qd2
Black is only slightly better after 29. Bc2 Bxh3 30. Nd2 Bg4 31. Qf1 Ng5 32. Bxg5 Qxg5 33. Nxe4 Qf4.

29. ... Bxh3 30. Bh6 Rf7
30. ... Ng5 31. Bxf8 Bxg2 is more convincing.

31. Re3 Bg4 32. Bc2



32. ... Bf3!
A move befitting a challenger!

33. gxf3 exf3 34. Qd3 Rff5??
A blunder! It's all over after 34. ... Rxe3! 35. Qxg6+ Kh8 36. fxe3 Nf6!!.

35. Rxf3 Ng5 36. Bxg5 Rxg5+ 37. Rg3 Qh3 38. Qf1??
Inexplicable. White is much better after 38. Qf3 h4 39. Qg2.

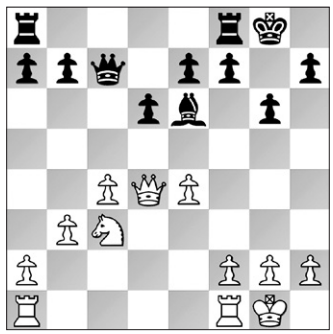
38. ... Rxg3+ 39. fxg3 Qxg3+ 40. Qg2 Qe3+ 41. Kh2 Rg5 42. Qh3 Qf4+ 43. Kh1 Rg3 44. Qe6+ Kg7 45. Qe7+ Kh6 46. Be4 Rg5 47. Bg2 Qh4+, White resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, ACCELERATED DRAGON (B36)

GM Anna Muzychuk (2522)
GM Divya Deshmukh (2497)
Women's Candidates Tournament (8), Cyprus, 04.07.2026

This game derailed Muzychuk's hopes. She was leading the tournament and had a winning position here, but after this loss she fizzled.

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 g6 3. c4 Nc6 4. d4 cxd4 5. Nxd4 Nf6 6. Nc3 d6 7. Be2 Nxd4 8. Qxd4 Bg7 9. Be3 0-0 10. Qd3 Ng4 11. Bxg4 Bxg4 12. 0-0 Be6 13. Bd4 Bxd4 14. Qxd4 Qc7 15. b3



White is better here. Black can't play ... b7-b5, while White has the clear plan of f2-f4-f5. White also can play Nc3-d5; if Black takes, White recaptures with the e-pawn and her structure will be better because of the pressure on e7.

15. ... Qc5 16. Qd3 Rfc8 17. Rfe1 a6 18. a4
R.I.P. to the ... b7-b5 idea.

18. ... Rc7 19. Re3 Rac8 20. Rae1 Qe5 21. h3 b6 22. Nd5 Bxd5 23. exd5 Qf6 24. Rf3 Qg7 25. h4
Right idea, but bad timing. White is in firmer command after 25. Re4.



GM Anna Muzychuk

PHOTO: COURTESY FIDE / NIKI RIGA


GM Tan Zhongyi

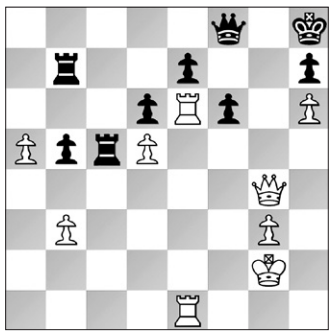

GM Bibisara Assaubayeva

25. ... f6??
Weakening the e6-square and consequently Black's king.

26. Qd4 Rb8 27. Rfe3 Rbb7 28. Re6 Qh6 29. g3 Qf8 30. h5 g5 31. Kg2 Qa8 32. Ra1 Qc8 33. Rae1 Qa8 34. f4 gxf4 35. Qxf4 b5 36. h6 Qf8 37. cxb5?
Unnecessary. White's winning after 37. Qg4+ Kh8 38. Qh5 bxc4 39. Rxf6!.

37. ... axb5 38. a5
Wasting another tempo. Again White's best is 38. Qg4+ Kh8 39. Qh5 with the threat of taking on f6.

38. ... Rc5 39. Qg4+ Kh8

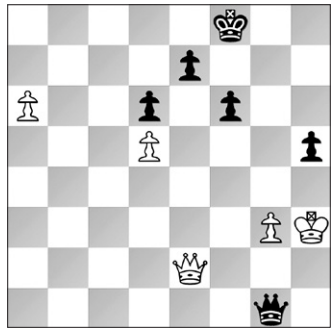


40. b4
Missing a simple winning endgame with 40. Qg7+ Qxg7 41. hxg7+ Kxg7 42. Rxe7+ Rxe7 43. Rxe7+ Kg6 44. a6 Rxd5 45. a7 Rd2+ 46. Kf3 Ra2 47. Ke4 and White's king marches to b7.

40. ... Rc4 41. R6e4 Rxe4 42. Rxe4 Rc7 43. Qe2?
Letting go of the valuable h6-pawn. White should still be able to gradually convert after 43. Qh5 Qg8 44. Re3 Qc8 45. Kf3.

43. ... Qxh6 44. Qxb5 Rc2+ 45. Re2 Qg6 46. Rxc2 Qxc2+ 47. Kf3 Qd1+ 48. Kf2 Qd2+ 49. Kf3 Qd1+ 50. Kf2 Qd2+ 51. Qe2
An irrational winning try.

51. ... Qxb4 52. a6 Qb6+ 53. Kg2 Qa7 54. Qb5 Kg7 55. Qa4 h5 56. Qa2 Kf7 57. Qe2 Kf8 58. Kh3 Qg1



Coming down to the wire, Muzychuk collapses.

59. a7??
White can keep the balance with 59. g4 hxg4+ 60. Kh4 Qh1+ 61. Kxg4 Qxd5 62. Kg3 Ke8 63. Qf3 thanks to the a-pawn.

59. ... Qxa7 60. Qxh5 Qe3 61. Qh8+ Kf7 62. Qh5+ Kg7 63. Qe8 Qe4 64. Kh2 Qe2+ 65. Kg1 Qe1+ 66. Kg2 Qd2+ 67. Kh3 Qe2 68. g4 Qf3+ 69. Kh2 Qe4 70. Kg3 Qe5+ 71. Kh3 f5 72. gxf5 Qxf5+ 73. Kg3 Qg5+ 74. Kf2 Kf6 75. Qh8+ Kf5 76. Qc8+ Kf6 77. Qh8+ Kg6 78. Qg8+ Kh6 79. Qh8+ Kg6 80. Qg8+ Kh5 81. Qf7+ Kh4 82. Qh7+ Kg4 83. Kf1 Qf5+, White resigned. ♦

FIDE Candidates

CYPRUS, MARCH 28-APRIL 16, 2026

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1	GM Vaishali Rameshbabu	2470	**	½½	00	½1	½½	11	½1	1½	8½/14
2	GM Bibisara Assaubayeva	2516	½½	**	11	½½	½1	01	0½	½½	8/14
3	GM Zhu Jiner	2578	11	00	**	½0	0½	½1	1½	½1	7½/14
4	GM Aleksandra Goryachkina	2534	½0	½½	½1	**	½½	½0	½1	½1	7½/14
5	GM Anna Muzychuk	2522	½½	½0	1½	½½	**	1½	½0	½½	7/14
6	GM Kateryna Lagno	2508	00	10	½0	½1	0½	**	½1	1½	6½/14
7	GM Divya Deshmukh	2497	½0	1½	0½	½0	½1	½0	**	½0	5½/14
8	GM Tan Zhongyi	2535	0½	½½	½0	½0	½½	0½	½1	**	5½/14

PHOTOS: COURTESY FIDE / NIKI RIGA (TAN), MICHAL WALUSZA (ASSAUBAYEVA)

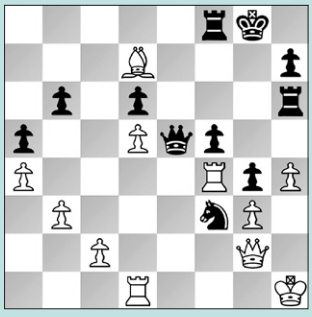
MAKE YOUR MOVE

BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM GAMES PLAYED at the American Cup, held in St. Louis in March. 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.

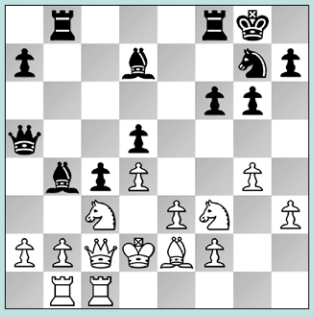
Try first to solve the puzzle before reading the text at the bottom of the page. If you're unsuccessful, play through the solution, but return to the puzzle in one or two weeks to see whether you can now solve it. That way, you gradually expand your tactical vision and you'll be more likely to spot tactics as they occur in your own games. Whatever you do, do not use an engine to solve the puzzles; you will only cheat yourself out of improving your game. Solutions are on page 63.

TACTIC 1.



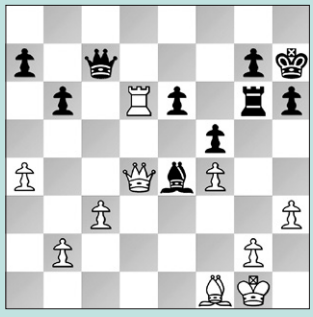
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TACTIC 2.



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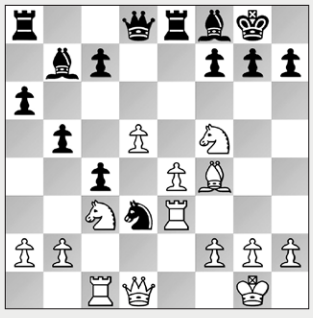
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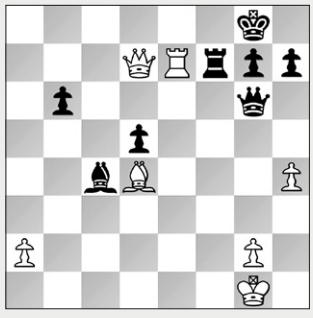
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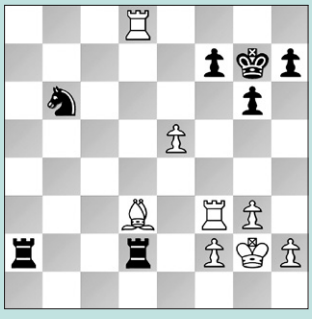
WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 6.



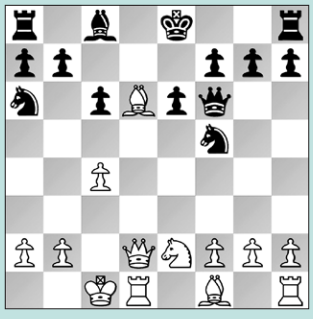
WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 7.



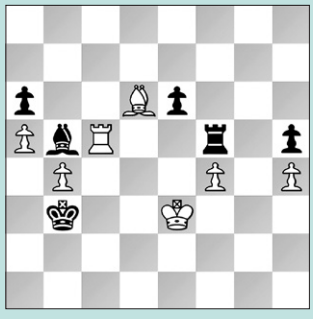
WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 8.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



BLACK TO MOVE

Position 1: TERMINATION
Position 2: PIN YOUR HOPES ON IT
Position 3: OVERWORKED DEFENDER
Position 4: DEEP, DARK PROBLEMS
Position 5: WHICH KNIGHT IS BETTER?
Position 6: GEOMETRIC PAIN
Position 7: A MAJESTIC STROLL
Position 8: COORDINATE THE EFFORTS
Position 9: THE RIGHT DISTANCE

A Legacy of Chess Culture

The NJSCF celebrates players who pass the game on.

BY **WGM SABINA FOISOR**

THE NEW JERSEY STATE CHESS Federation marked its 140th anniversary last October with a classical round-robin tournament that celebrated the federation's lasting impact and ongoing commitment to the game.

New Jersey has long been known for its rich chess culture and its tradition of organizing major events. The state has hosted numerous tournaments and is especially famous for the annual U.S. Amateur Team East, which consistently attracts a massive number of teams from the surrounding regions.

Over the decades, the federation has focused not only on organizing tournaments but on educational initiatives and programs that make chess more accessible to players of all ages, and the event brought together 10 distinguished grandmasters who have contributed to the development of chess in the state — whether through teaching, coaching, or inspiring the next generation of players.



GM Aleksandr Lenderman

The field featured GMs Oliver Barbosa, Maxim Dlugy, John Fedorowicz, Djurabek Khamrakulov, Aleksandr Lenderman, Mackenzie Molner, Mark Paragua, Michael Rohde, Alexander Stripunsky, and Andrew Tang. GM Leonid Yudasin was designated as the alternate, but did not play. The chief arbiter for the tournament, held Oct. 22-26 in the historic Masonic Lodge in Morristown, was IA E. Steven Doyle, a longtime figure in New Jersey chess, with organization led by Aaron Kiedes and Anand Mishra.

The format was a single round-robin with a time control of 40/90 followed by G/30, with a 30-second increment starting from move one. I had the pleasure of covering the event live on Twitch and was genuinely impressed by the fighting spirit and competitive energy at every board. Throughout the tournament, the games showcased sharp opening preparation, tense middlegame battles, and deeply calculated endgames befitting a field of this strength.

Throughout the event, the lead shifted among Dlugy, Tang, and Lenderman, but when the final round concluded, it was Lenderman who stood alone at the top. Below is my favorite game of his from the tournament.

Entering Round 8, Lenderman was tied for first with GM Dlugy, but his victory over GM Stripunsky gave him the clear lead.

CLOSED SICILIAN (B23)

GM Alexander Stripunsky (2580)
GM Aleksandr Lenderman (2560)
NJSCF GM Invitational (8), 10.26.2025

1. e4 c5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nd4 4. Nf3 a6 5. Bd3 g6 6. a3?!

Stripunsky played several inspiring positional games throughout the event. Although he chose less common lines in almost every round, his positional understanding remained impressive. In this game, however, his opening choice seemed a bit questionable — especially considering that Lenderman has an excellent feel for space.

6. ... d6

The natural choice might have been 6. ... Bg7, when Black has a good game after 7. 0-0 d6 8. Nxd4 cxd4 9. Ne2 d5. But Alex may have wanted to make sure ... Bc8-g4 was an option as well.

7. h3

I believe this was a must. If 7. Nxd4 cxd4 8. Ne2 d5 (if *8. ... e5 9. c3*) 9. exd5 Qxd5 10. 0-0 Bg7 11. Re1 with a balanced position where White could break in the center with c2-c3.

7. ... Bg7 8. Rb1

The a2-a3 and b2-b4 idea is typical in these positions, but in the game Black's ideas just seem to come to fruition more quickly. One other idea for White is 8. 0-0 Nf6 9. Nxd4 cxd4 10. Nd5 Nxd5 11. exd5 with equality.

8. ... Nf6 9. Nd5

The plan to create space is cut short by Black's precise prophylactic response, shutting down White's plans before they can begin.

9. ... Nd7

9. ... Nxd5 was a nice alternative, leading to a more comfortable position for Black after 10. exd5 e5 11. dxe6 *e.p.* Nxe6 12. 0-0 0-0 13. Be2 Bd7 14. d3 Qf6.

10. Be2?!

PHOTO: COURTESY SLCC / B. ADAMS

From here on, things started going badly for White. The trade 10. Nxd4 cxd4 11. Bc4 e6 12. Nf4 b5 13. Ba2 Bb7 14. d3 would have maintained some active prospects.

10. … e6
The idea behind 9. … Nd7 wasn't only to avoid simplifying the position but also to force the white knight to retreat, allowing Black to start building a comfortable spatial advantage.

11. Ne3 0-0 12. c3 Nxe2 13. Qxe2 b5 14. d3
The idea behind 10. Be2 was likely to maintain a closed pawn structure and put pawns on light squares to free up the bishop on c1. But the subsequent course of the game demonstrates how the loss of tempi and neglect of space in the opening can lead to disaster.

14. … Bb7 15. Ng4 f5!
The beginning of the space gain!

16. Ngh2
16. Nh6+ looks more active, but it fails to help White. Black is much better after 16. … Kh8 17. Bg5 Qc7 18. Nd2 c4! attacking White's weak light squares.

16. … Qe7
Lenderman could have played 16. … c4!? right away, but his positional instincts led him to prioritize development first. After 17. exf5 exf5 18. 0-0 Re8 19. Qd1 cxd3 Black is much better.

17. 0-0 Rae8
Following the same logic: It is essential to activate all your pieces whenever the opportunity arises and the position allows.

18. Re1 e5
The next part of the game offers an excellent lesson in positional mastery, making it both instructive and inspiring for players looking to improve.

19. Nd2 d5!

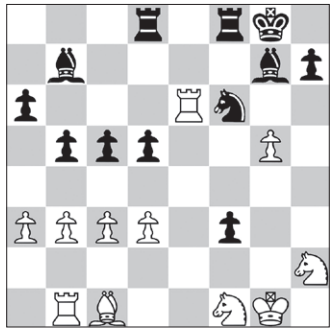


A fifth pawn has made its way to the fourth rank! That's not something we see every day from Black.

20. b3 Nf6 21. f3?
Unfortunately, there isn't much White can do in this position; any direct attack on the center can be easily met by Black. But a better attempt to create some activity might have been 21. c4 bxc4 22. bxc4 dxe4 23. dxe4 Nxe4 24. Bb2 Nd6, although Black is still for choice, a pawn up and with a bad pawn structure for White.

21. … Qd7 22. g4 Rd8 23. exf5 gxf5 24. Ndf1 fxg4 25. hxg4 e4! 26. g5
White tries one final attempt to gain activity, but Black's pieces are too well-coordinated. Converting the advantage is purely a matter of technique.

26. … exf3 27. Qe6+ Qxe6 28. Rxe6



28. … f2+!
The final blow. It's game over!

29. Kxf2 Ne4+ 30. Ke1 Nxc3 31. Rb2, and White resigned.
Lenderman's play here was just beautiful — every move showed patience, control, and a real sense of how to slowly dominate the board, exactly the kind of positional chess that's inspiring to watch and learn from.



The Godfathers of NJ chess, L to R: Lorimor, Mishra, Doyle, Carlson, DeMarche

PHOTO: COURTESY NJSCF

Out of Nowhere

Leonid Stein could make an attack from almost nothing.

BY **BRUCE PANDOLFINI**

THE UKRAINIAN GRANDMASTER Leonid Stein (1934-1973) was one of the game's elite players during the 1960s and early 1970s. Among his successes were extraordinary victories in two of the strongest tournaments ever up to that time — Moscow 1967 and Moscow 1971. While a sound positional player, he was also ingeniously creative in fashioning attacks. His fine sense for the initiative enabled him to infuse life into the driest positions, and he could mount winning campaigns seemingly out of nowhere.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E90)

Alexander Baglidze
GM Leonid Stein
Odesa, 1960

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 d6 4. Nc3 g6 5. e4



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.**

5. Par Score 6 Bg7
A natural move. Once you've begun a fianchetto, it makes sense to follow through on it.

6. Nf3
White starts to get out his kingside pieces, which will enable castling. **

6. Par Score 6 0-0
You may accept ***full credit*** for 6. ... a6, keeping in mind the plan of advancing the b-pawn at the right moment.

7. h3
This prevents the pinning move ... Bc8-g4, but 7. Be2 or 7. Bd3 were both better. **

7. Par Score 6 e5
Stein's move seems a bit illogical, in that it blocks the g7-bishop's diagonal. If White doesn't capture *en passant*, Black will have to play for an eventual ... f7-f5 or ... b7-b5 when and if feasible.

8. dxe6 *e.p.*
Baglidze opens the d-file, capturing *en passant*. He might have tried 8. Bg5 or even 8. g4. **

8. Par Score 6 Bxe6
You may accept ***full credit*** for 8. ... fxe6, which opens the f-file and keeps d5 less vulnerable. Stein has a different plan in mind.

9. Be2
White is poised to castle. **

9. Par Score 6 Nc6
Also OK are 9. ... Qb6 and 9. ... Re8, either of which will get you ***full credit***.

10. 0-0
A perfectly reasonable continuation. The position is about even. **

10. Par Score 6 Re8
An interesting try was 10. ... Nd4. On 11. Nxd4 cxd4 12. Qxd4, Black gets more than adequate play with 12. ... Nd5 (***1 bonus point*** if you saw that).

11. Re1
A logical development. Perhaps more to the point, however, was guarding d4 by 11. Be3.**

11. Par Score 6 Nd4
This line plays into the previous note. Black has excellent play.

12. Bf1
White could have also played 12. Bf4 or 12. Bg5. Nevertheless, the position is still about even. **

12. Par Score 6 Nxf3+
There are other consistent moves here. You may accept ***full credit*** for either 12. ... Nd7 or 12. ... Rc8.

13. Qxf3 **

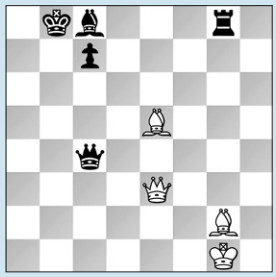
13. Par Score 6 Nd7
Accept ***full credit*** for 13. ... Qb6. Stein has deftly equalized.

ABCS OF CHESS

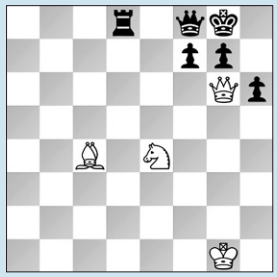
THESE PROBLEMS ARE all related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 63.

MAY EXERCISE:
In real games, you can't move the pieces around to see whether your intended moves work. Get into the habit of not moving pieces during practice, at least not without first attempting to do it in your mind. If you prepare in such a fashion, striving to be as tough as Botvinnik, you'll become much better equipped to analyze when it really matters.

PROBLEM 1
Mating net



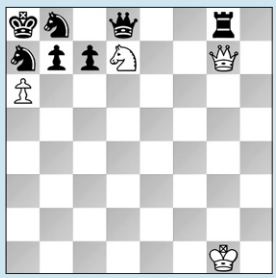
PROBLEM 2
Mating net



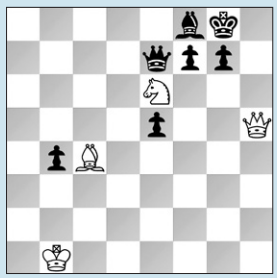
PROBLEM 3
Mating net



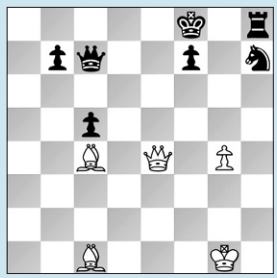
PROBLEM 4
Mating net



PROBLEM 5
Mating net



PROBLEM 6
Mating net



14. b3
This is a bit risky, since it weakens the a1-h8 diagonal, but White's position remains defensible. **

14. Par Score 6 Qh4
Black's queen enters the fray. But also worthy were 14. ... Ne5 and 14. ... Bd4. Either gets you ***full credit***.

15. Bb2
Naturally, White strengthens the long diagonal, though the c3-knight would be freer to move after 15. Rb1. **

15. Par Score 6 Bd4
An annoying intrusion. With sundry tactics in the air, Black now has the edge.

16. Na4
White seeks relief by trading off the the dark-squared bishops, but it may be too late for that. **

16. Par Score 6 Ne5
First, a word from our sponsor. White must tread carefully.

17. Qe2
To be sure, f2 needs to be upheld. Even though you're guessing Black's moves, ***deduct 5 points*** if you didn't see that the blunder 17. Qg3 loses the queen and worse because the f2-pawn is pinned. **

17. Par Score 7 Bg4
A sudden, devastating incursion. With his pieces stumbling over each other, White doesn't have many good answers.

18. Qd2
After 18. hxg3 Nxg4, mate can't be stopped, since even abandoning the queen with 19. Qxg4 fails to 19. ... Bxf2 mate (***1 bonus point*** if you saw it in advance). **

18. Par Score 8 Nf3+
Surprise surprise! White's position now falls apart.

19. gxf3
Otherwise, White's queen is a goner. **

19. Par Score 7 Qg3+
The bishop on d4 is sitting wonderfully in the catbird's seat.

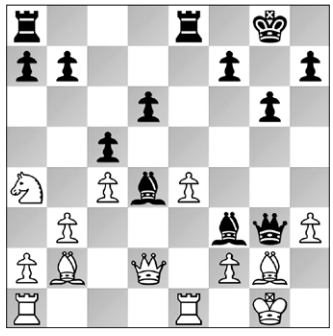
20. Bg2
No better is 20. Kh1 Bxf3+.**

20. Par Score 6 Bxf3

21. White resigned.

(see diagram top of next column)

And just like that, the game is over. A delightful attacking gem by Stein that's well worth your study. ♦



FINAL POSITION

SOLITAIRE CHESS SCORING:

Total your score to determine your approximate rating below

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

Titanic Struggle

My chessboard battle with a legend

BY **GM JOEL BENJAMIN**

DUTCH GRANDMASTER JAN Timman titled the book of his encounters with World Champions *Timman's Titans*. Though he never won the title himself (Anatoly Karpov, in particular, stood in his way), he was certainly a titan in his own right. His recent passing at the age of 74 compels us to consider the wide scope of his achievements.

He was a great player — arguably the top Western grandmaster for a good period. His literary contributions may be even more significant. He wrote great books and articles on many subjects (his *Unstoppable American: Bobby Fischer's Road to Reykjavik* was a bountiful source for my book *Bobby Fischer's Best Games*), but he was particularly known for his endgame studies.

While pondering the best way to represent Timman's body of work, I recalled that the game I played with him might fit the bill. I had sort of repressed the experience; I never wrote or lectured about the game. Perhaps it was because I was frustrated by both my poor result in the Donner Memorial and my failure to hold a draw in this endgame. Timman himself held the game in high enough regard to include it in *Timman's Triumphs*.

The overall play may not have been of the highest quality, but the rare, problem-like endgame we reached embodies the area of Timman's greatest fascination. In this respect we are kindred spirits.

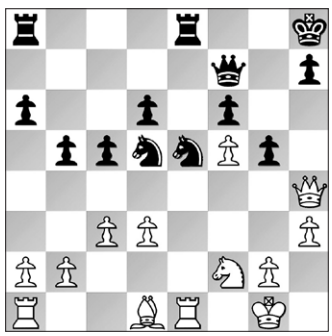
RUY LOPEZ (C90)

GM Joel Benjamin (2610)
GM Jan Timman (2635)
Donner Memorial-A (9), Amsterdam, 1994

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 0-0 9. d3

I can't explain why I played this line. I had pretty good success with the standard 9. h3, though at this point in my career I mostly played the Exchange Variation, as I essayed against GM Ivan Sokolov for my lone win in the tourney.

9. ... Na5 10. Bc2 c5 11. Nbd2 Nd7 12. Nf1 Nb6 13. Ng3 Nc6 14. h3 Be6 15. Nh2 Re8 16. Ng4 Bg5 17. Nf5 Bxc1 18. Qxc1 Bxf5 19. exf5 f6 20. f4 Qc7 21. fxe5 Nxe5 22. Nf2 Kh8 23. Bd1 Qf7 24. Qf4 Nd5 25. Qh4 g5!



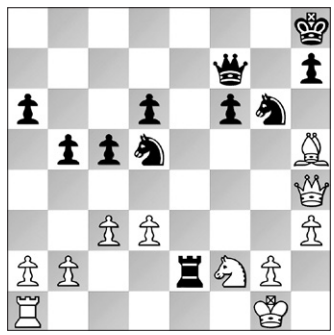
This wasn't a difficult move to find, but it's necessary to maintain a comfortable position for Black.

26. fxg6 *e.p.* Nxg6 27. Rxe8+?!

Looking at this now, I wonder why I didn't play 27. Bh5 right away. Timman suggested I feared 27. ... Nxh4 28. Bxf7 Rxe1+ 29. Rxe1 Nf4, not detecting 30. Re7 Nhxg2 31. Kh2 which would be OK for White. He added that knights that are stuck defending each other are not very active. True enough, but they certainly harassed me later in the game!

27. ... Rxe8 28. Bh5 Re2?!

Black maintains a slight initiative after 28. ... f5.



29. Qg3 Re5

Belatedly realizing 29. ... Rxb2 30. c4 hands White the initiative.

30. Bf3

I agree with Timman that 30. Bxg6 was a lot simpler. Maybe I was especially hungry to put a win on the board.

30. ... Ndf4 31. d4 cxd4 32. cxd4 Rg5 33. Qh2 Nxg2



Whoa. I'm not sure I saw this coming. White is objectively fine in the complications, but things get a whole lot more interesting.

34. Ne4

I saw this was playable and perhaps did not work out the viable alternative 34. Bxg2 Nh4. Now:

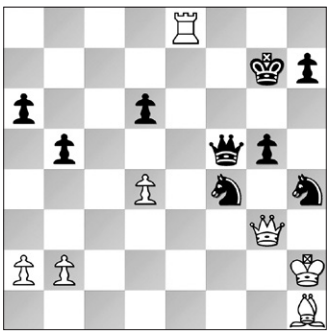
(a) 35. Ng4 h5 36. Qxd6 hxg4 37. Rc1 (*37. Be4* is also playable) 37. ... gxh3 38. Rc8+ Kg7 39. Rc7 Rxg2+ 40. Kh1 Nf5 41. Rxf7+ Kxf7 42. Qd5+ Kg6 43. Qg8+.

(b) 35. Kh1 Rxg2 36. Qf4 Ng6 (*36. ... Qd5 37. Ne4*) 37. Qf3 Rg5 38. Ne4 Rd5 39. Rc1 with a balanced position.

34. ... N2h4+ 35. Nxg5 fxg5 36. Bh1
Perhaps 36. Bg4 Nf4 37. Qc2 might have been easier.

36. ... Nf4 37. Re1 Qf5 38. Qg3
White has to give another pawn to create a safe square for the king.

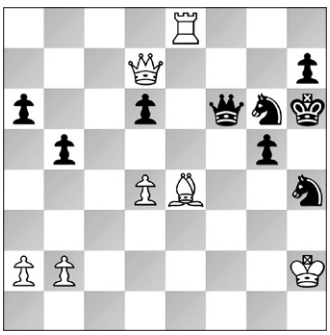
38. ... Nxh3+ 39. Kh2 Nf4 40. Re8+ Kg7



41. Be4
Technically the correct continuation was 41. Re7+ Kf8 42. Be4 Qf6 43. Rxh7 Qxd4 44. Qxg5 Qf2+ 45. Kh1 (*45. Bg2?? Nf3+*) when Black has to give a perpetual. I'm not sure whether I was able to calculate that during the game.

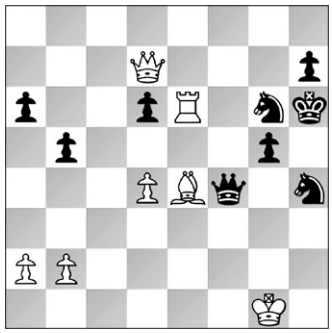
41. ... Qf6 42. Qg4?
Now I'm getting overextended. 42. Qe3 was the solid move to maintain equality.

42. ... Kh6! 43. Qd7 Nfg6
I'm in scramble mode now.



44. Re6 Qf4+?
Black can develop a lethal mating pattern with 44. ... Qf2+ 45. Kh1 g4!. After 46. Rxg6+ hxg6 47. Qxg4 Nf5 48. Bxf5 Qxf5! White can't even avoid a lost pawn ending.

45. Kg1

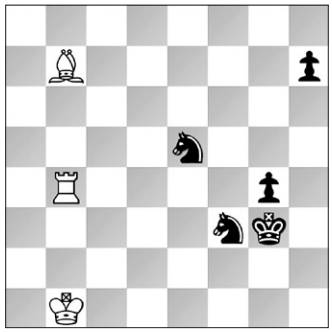


45. ... Qc1+?
It is certainly tempting to wipe out White's queenside pawns, but now my king reaches a strange kind of safety away from his knights. The more incisive approach was to add the king to the attack (like Short famously did once against Timman) with 45. ... Kh5!!. The king crowns off the attack after 46. Qxh7+ (*46. Bxg6+ hxg6 47. Re2!* puts up better resistance but should fail in the long run) 46. ... Kg4 47. Bxg6 (or *47. Rxg6 Nxg6 48. Bxg6 Qc1+ 49. Kf2 Qd2+ 50. Kf1 Kg3*) 47. ... Qg3+ 48. Kf1 Qg2+ 49. Ke1 Nf3+ 50. Kd1 Qd2 mate.

46. Kf2 Qxb2+ 47. Ke3 Qa3+ 48. Kd2 Qxa2+ 49. Kc1 Qc4+ 50. Kb1 Qb3+ 51. Kc1 Qe3+ 52. Kb1 Qxd4 53. Qxd6 Qxd6 54. Rxd6 g4
The knights don't help Black protect his outstretched queenside passers.

55. Rxa6 Kg5 56. Rb6 Nf3 57. Rxb5+ Kf4 58. Bb7
It turns out this move is forced. Yea me!

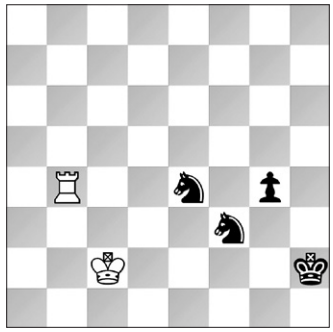
58. ... Nge5 59. Rb4+ Kg3



60. Rb5
Black's pieces look formidable, but he is hampered by the fact that two knights cannot force a checkmate, so all White has to do is give up two pieces for two pawns. The cleanest method is 60. Bc8 h5 61. Bxg4 Nxg4 62. Rb8.

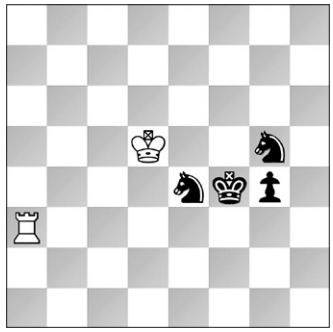
60. ... h5 61. Bc8 Kh2 62. Bxg4
Again there was a more forcing method: 62. Rb2+ Kg3 63. Bxg4 hxg4 64. Rb4 Nc4 65. Ka2 Nfe5 66. Rb8 etc.

62. ... hxg4 63. Rb8 Ng5 64. Rb5 Nef3 65. Rb4 Ne4 66. Kc2



It's possible that centralizing my king only creates potential tactical problems, but it was hard to know with the clock ticking down.

66. ... Nfg5 67. Rb3 Kg2 68. Ra3 Kf2 69. Kd3 Kf3 70. Kd4+ Kf4 71. Kd5 Nf3 72. Ra4 Nfd2 73. Ra3 Nf1 74. Kd4 Nfd2 75. Kd5 Nf3 76. Ra4 Nfg5 77. Ra3 Nf6+ 78. Kd6 Nge4+ 79. Ke6 Ne8 80. Kd5 Nc7+ 81. Kc6 Ne6 82. Kd5 N6g5



Timman has done a terrific job of keeping the game going. His knight tours have served the function of losing a tempo, which sets a trap that I plunged into.

83. Rb3??
After 83. Ra1! the pawn remains unable to advance.

83. ... Nf3 84. Rb2 Nfd2
The rook can't get to the first rank, which makes the pawn unstoppable.

85. Rc2 g3 86. Rc1 Nf3 87. Rc2, and White resigned.
The finish could be 87. ... Ned2 88. Rc8 g2 89. Rf8+ Kg4 90. Rg8+ Ng5. ⬖

Réti in the Video Age

A trio of ebooks on a rich, flexible opening

BY **IM JOHN WATSON**

I'VE MAINLY CONCENTRATED on reviewing books in this column, but readers are doubtless aware of the remarkable amount of chess material published in ebook format by ChessBase, Modern Chess, and Chessable, just to name a few. This month I want to look at a few video ebooks about the Réti Opening, featuring Felix Blohberger's *1. Nf3: A Réti-Grandmaster Course for Strategic Understanding and Flexibility*, a ChessBase publication.

ChessBase is producing ebooks at a moderate pace these days, having previously dominated the space. The ChessBase Shop lists 667 total videos, with some video courses in my own collection dating back to 2001. These used to be produced only in DVD format, but for some years now they have been available as downloads (and more recently, in web-based streaming format as "ChessBase books").

Blohberger's course is a repertoire for White that appeared in two parts in late 2024. It might seem dated by opening theory standards, but Blohberger recommends well-established lines that are stable and safe to play. He proposes mostly positional approaches, and tries to avoid unclear positions in which a novelty might have dramatic effect. In my opinion, this work is ideal for club and tournament players below master level. Blohberger doesn't claim advantages for White against best play; he wants to get the upper hand against inferior defensive play, but also to arrive at the middlegame with equality if the opponent plays at a high level. One attractive feature of the presentation is the way the author consistently points out ways to deviate from the main lines if desired. In this way a player needn't feel constrained into following a line in which they feel uncomfortable. With this kind of flexibility, even grandmasters might get a lot of value from this repertoire, although they would probably want to widen their preparation in order to be able to jump between different systems and keep opponents off balance.

I will compare a few examples of what Blohberger's course offers with some more recent Modern Chess ebooks which deal with the Réti. Remarkably, Modern Chess has released no fewer than 35 video books on the Réti complex (some covering the whole opening, others often dealing with one variation or another on the black side), and 14 of these have come out within the last 12 months. For the average player, it makes sense to begin with a very small selection of this rich offering, perhaps using specialized courses when they supply a complete repertoire for Black versus the Réti and/or variations for White that address particularly difficult defenses.

Let's take a look at some of Blohberger's analysis, starting with an unusually active line for Black:

1. Nf3 d5

The traditional response. Modern Chess offers various repertoire ebooks with defenses such as 1. ... b6, 1. ... Nf6 2 g3 g6, and 1. ... Nf6 2 g3 b5. These are all reasonably sound, and Blohberger includes practical solutions to each.

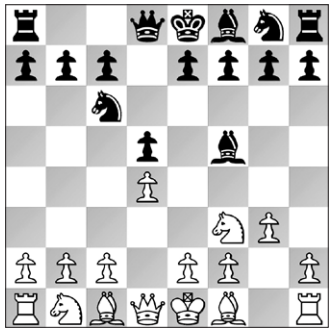
2. g3 Nc6

A recently popular anti-Réti system among strong grandmasters. Black aims for ... e7-e5 next. 2. ... c5, 2. ... Nf6, and 2. ... Bg4 are standard alternatives.

3. d4

Natural. 3. Bg2 e5 4. d3 is a reversed Pirc Defense. With White having an extra tempo, none of the more aggressive tries that White normally plays versus the Pirc will be successful. So you could play 4. d3, not to achieve a forced advantage, but just to play an even, unbalanced game.

3. ... Bf5



In his detailed Modern Chess repertoire ebook, Kushager Krishnater calls this the Jobava London Reversed (1. d4 d5 2. Nc3 Nf6 3. Bf4 is the Jobava London). Blohberger also gives various lines after the older sequence 3. ... Bg4 4. Bg2 Qd7 5. 0-0, e.g., 5. ... 0-0-0 (*5. ... Bh3?! 6. Bxh3 Qxh3 7. c4!*) 6. c3 f6 7. b4! e5 8. b5 Nb8 9. dxe5 Qxb5 10. Nbd2 and White stands clearly better.

4. c4

Many games have gone 4. Bg2 Nb4 5. Na3 e6 6. 0-0 Nc6 7. Nb1 Nb4 8. Ne1 Be7 9. c3 Nc6, when Black has held their own. But if White feels that the main line with 4. c4 doesn't offer enough, Blohberger mentions that they can play this line with 10. Nd2 or 10. Nd3 and obtain plenty of middlegame chances.

4. ... e6

4. ... Nb4? runs into 5. Qa4+.

5. Bg2 Nb4

Black has often played 5. ... Nf6 6. 0-0, but has scored poorly in lines such as 6. ... Be7 (*6. ... Nb4?! 7. cxd5 exd5 8. a3 Nc2? 9. Nh4!*

Nxa1 10. Nxf5 and White is winning) 7. Nc3 0-0 8. Ne5, when Blohberger points out that the knight on c6 is badly placed.

6. 0-0!
A sacrificial idea. 6. Na3 is of course also playable.

6. … Nc2 7. cxd5! Nxa1
Not 7. … exd5?? 8. Nh4.

8. e4!?
Krishnater analyses 8. dxe6 Bxe6 in depth, one main line going 9. e4 c6 10. Nc3 Bb4 11. d5 Bxc3 12. bxc3 cxd5 13. exd5 Bxd5 with equality. From a practical point of view, White has various options in this line that lead to balanced and interesting play.



8. … Bxe4 9. dxe6 fxe6 10. Nc3 Bxf3
Blohberger had a game with 10. … Bf5 11. Nh4, when his GM opponent blundered with 11. … Qd7?? (*11. … Nf6 12. Nxf5*) 12. Nxf5 exf5 (Blohberger – Petrosyan, Batumi 2018). Here the easiest course was 13. Re1+ Be7 14. Bd5! followed by Bd5-e6.

11. Bxf3 Qd7!?
11. … c6? loses to 12. Bg4 followed by Bg4xe6! and Rf1-e1, and it's awkward for Black after 11. … Nf6 12. Bxb7 Rb8 13. Bc6+ Kf7 14. Be3 Rxb2 15. Qxa1 Rb6 16. d5!.

12. Bxb7 Rb8 13. Bg2 Nf6 14. Bh3
Blohberger admits that the position is unbalanced but says that he would prefer White, who will pick up the knight on a1 and has compensation with ideas of Qd1-e2 and Bh3xe6. In his ebook about 2. … Nc6, Kushager Krishnater (a year or so later) is able to analyze this in great depth and conclude that Black has satisfactory play after this forcing main line:

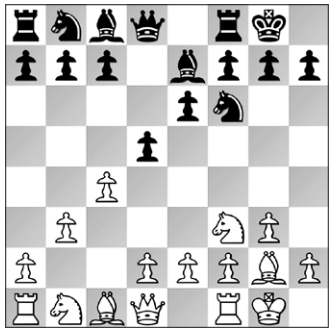
14. … Rb6! 15. Be3 c5! 16. dxc5! Qxd1 17. Rxd1 Rxb2 18. c6 Bb4! 19. c7 Ke7 20. Nb5 Nc2 21. Nxa7 Nxe3 22. Nc6+ Kf7 23. Ne5+ Ke7
With perpetual check.

What to say? The average player of White won't have to deal with such deep preparation, and if they did, Black would likely be a GM who wouldn't be thrilled with a draw anyway. If you have white and fear someone preparing all this, you have options such as 4. Bg2 or 8. dxe6.

More typically, play in the Réti is positional, and the tactically charged action arises only much later, if at all. For the following traditional line, I follow Blohberger and refer in the notes to Pavel Eljanov's Modern Chess course *English Opening According to Eljanov: 1. c4 e6 2. g3* (one of a 5-part series on the English). This time both authors are promoting White's cause, and, as above, the specialized Modern Chess course allows for lengthier analysis than Blohberger has room for, since his course is a complete repertoire for White against all defenses.



1. Nf3 d5 2. g3 Nf6 3. Bg2 e6 4. 0-0 Be7 5. c4 0-0 6. b3



Reti's famous double fianchetto setup introduced 100 years of high-level battles and a body of theory that is still unsettled today. It often arises via the order 1. c4 e6 2. Nf3 d5 3. g3 Nf6 4. Bg2 Be7 5. 0-0 0-0 6. b3.

6. … b6
6. … d4 is another important move. Both Blohberger and Eljanov like the sequence 7. e3 c5 8. Ne5! Qc7 9. f4. Then after 9. … Nfd7, Blohberger's 10. Nd3 Nc6 11. Na3 is one way to get a double-edged game, and Eljanov's 10. exd4 cxd4 11. Nd3 Nc6 12. Ba3, which he analyzes in depth, is likely to produce some positional pressure.

After the traditional main move 6. … c5, Blohberger likes the simplicity and safety of 7. cxd5 Nxd5 (or *7. … exd5 8. d4*) 8. Bb2 Nc6 9. d4 cxd4 10. Nxd4 Nxd4 11. Qxd4 Bf6 12. Qd2 Nf4! (otherwise White stands better) 13. gxf4 Qxd2 14. Nxd2 Bxb2 15. Rab1 (also *15. Rad1 Rb8 16. Nc4 Bf6 17. b4* keeps some pressure on) 15. … Bf6 16. Ne4 Be7 17. Rfd1 with ideas like Rb1-c1-c7 and Ne4-d6.

Objectively, Black should be able to defend such positions and split the point, so Eljanov suggests playing the terribly complicated old main line with 7. Bb2 Nc6 8. e3; compare the note to Move 8 below. He analyzes it at great length, convincingly demonstrating that White, while only slightly better, can retain good chances deep into the game in all lines.

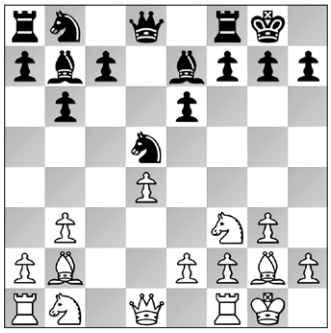
7. Bb2
One of those flexible options Blohberger points out is 7. Nc3 Bb7 8. d4 Nbd7 9. Bb2 c5 10. Ne1 with difficult play and equal chances.

7. … Bb7 8. cxd5
An increasingly popular choice as the years have gone on. It tends to lead to some early simplification, which fits with Blohberger's repertoire. The old, heavily analyzed main line here is 8. e3 c5 9. Qe2 Nc6 10. Rd1. White has ideas of c4xd5 followed by d2-4. This may be objectively equal, but it's a good practical line and sports a nice performance rating advantage.

8. … Nxd5
8. … exd5 9. e3 is very interesting: 9. … Nbd7 (*9. … c5 10. d4*) 10. Nc3 Re8 11. Rc1 a6 12. Re1

Bd6 13. Ne2, when Blohberger suggests that White intends Ne2-f4, d2-d4, and Nf4-d3. Another idea here is 13. d3, which gets a "!" according to Eljanov, who continues 13. … h6 14. Re2 Rc8 15. Rec2 c5 16. Ne1! Bc6 17. a4! "planning Ne2 and d4, once again with a better position." Both these lines won't achieve more than a small advantage versus precise defense, but White has good practical chances.

9. d4



9. … Nd7

The main line after 9. … c5 10. dxc5 Bxc5 11. Nbd2 is 11. … Nd7 (*11. … Nc6 12. a3 a5 13. Ne4 Be7 14. Rc1 Rc8 15. Rc2* favors White) 12. Ne4 Be7 (White wins after *12. … Ne3?? 13. Nxc5 Nxd1 14. Nxb7 Qe7 15. Rfxd1*) 13. Rc1. Both authors prefer White, and Eljanov takes advantage of his extra space to give a very deep analysis of this position.

10. Re1! c5 11. e4 N5f6 12. Nc3 cxd4 13. Nxd4 Bc5

13. … Ne5 14. Qe2! Bc5 (after *14. … Qxd4 15. Nd5 Qc5 16. Rac1 Qd6,* both *17. Nxe7+* and *17. Bxe5* give White the advantage) 15. Red1 Qe7 (*15. … Bxd4?! 16. Nb5*) 16. Na4 wins the bishop pair and mildly favors White.

14. Re2

"!", according to Blohberger. The idea of bringing the rook to d2 leads to simplification. Eljanov prefers 14. Ndb5, leading to a complex and potentially very tactical line which keeps more pieces on the board.

14. … Ne5 15. Na4! Bxd4 16. Bxd4 Nc6 17. Bb2 Qe7

Here Eljanov says that he didn't find an advantage (hence his preferred 14. Ndb5). But Blohberger continues with this line.

18. Qe1 Rfd8 19. Rd1 Rxd1 20. Qxd1 Rd8

Here I think 20. … b5! 21. Nc3 b4 22. Na4 e5 fully equalizes, but of course it's still a game.

21. Rd2 Rxd2 22. Qxd2

Blohberger likes White's bishops and justifiably gives the first player a slight edge.

These are only two variations out of dozens Blohberger presents, but hopefully they give an idea of the approach he takes in his sweeping repertoire and how that compares to the denser specialized analysis presented by Krishnater and Eljanov in their Modern Chess products. I am increasingly using these video ebooks to familiarize myself with both the state of theory and the choice of variations recommended by strong players. They will sometimes cover less total ground than a physical opening book, but are a fun and arguably more efficient way to keep up with theory.

Blohberger, Felix. 1. Nf3: A Réti-Grandmaster Course for Strategic Understanding and Flexibility, Vol. 1 & 2. *Run time 8 hr.; Chessbase, November 2024.*

Eljanov, Pavel. English Opening According to Eljanov — 1. c4 e6 2. g3. *Run time 2 hr. 43 min.; Modern Chess, January 2026.*

Krishnater, Kushager. Jobava London Reversed — Complete Repertoire for Black. *Run time 3 hr.; Modern Chess, February 2026.*





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]*. You will find the event's unique five-digit TLA ID at the end of each TLA.

Nationals

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 • *vegaschessfestival.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*

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • GRAND PRIX

2026 US Senior Open Championship!

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — IL **TLA# 56208**

Site: Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare Hotel and Conference Center **Address:** 5440 N. River Road, Rosemont, IL 60018 **Overall Prize Fund:** $13,100 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Caveman Chess, LLC • contact@cavemanchess.com • 224-985-5244 • *cavemanchess.com*

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

2026 US Junior Open Championship!

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — IL **TLA# 56187**

Site: Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare Hotel and Conference Center **Address:** 5440 N. River Road, Rosemont, IL 60018 **Overall Prize Fund:** $12,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Caveman Chess, LLC • contact@cavemanchess.com • 224-985-5244 • *cavemanchess.com*

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • GRAND PRIX

2026 U.S. G/30 & G/60 National Championship

SEPTEMBER 11-13, 2026 — LA **TLA# 55780**

Site: Lavin Bernick Center, Tulane University **Address:** 29 McAlister Drive, New Orleans, LA 70118 **Overall Prize Fund:** $6,000 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Downriver Chess & Tulane Chess • info@downriverchess.com • *downriverchess.com*

Grand Prix

The Grand Prix point totals reflect all rated event information as of March 22, 2026, for the 2026 Grand Prix. These standings are updated regularly, but should be considered unofficial. Visit ratings.uschess.org/grand-prix/standings for up-to-date information.

2026 US CHESS GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

	Name	State/Ctry	Pts
1.	GM JIANCHAO ZHOU	MA	184.00
2.	GM JOSE GABRIEL CARDOSO	FOR	64.00
3.	GM FRANCESCO SONIS	MO	64.00
4.	EMMANUEL CARTER	NC	52.00
5.	GM MARK HEIMANN	CA	48.00
6.	GM HARSHA BHARATHAKOTI	MO	45.00
7.	JASHITH KARTHI	CA	45.00
8.	GM NICK DE FIRMIAN	CA	36.00
9.	GM BHARATH SUBRAMANIYAM	FOR	34.00
10.	IM ERIC CHANG LIU	TX	34.00

2026 Awards

$12,500 in cash prizes
First Prize $5,000

2nd: $2,500 3rd: $1,000
4th: $900 5th: $800
6th: $700 7th: $600
8th: $500 9th: $300
10th: $200

The Grand Prix continues in 2026. For information visit new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program

PLEASE NOTE

DEADLINE FOR PRINT TLA SUBMISSIONS

TLAs appearing in *Chess Life* must be uploaded online on the 10th, two months prior to the issue cover date in which the ad is to appear. (For example, October TLAs must be uploaded no later than August 10th.) TLAs uploaded past this deadline cannot be published without special approval by US Chess.

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

OSCA 4th Annual Lou Giarrusso Memorial Cup Championship - $1,500+ Prizes

MAY 9, 2026 — RI **TLA# 56001**

Site: La Salle Academy **Address:** 612 Academy Ave, Providence, RI 02908 **Overall Prize Fund:** $1,500 **GP Pts:** 15 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Ocean State Chess Association • *frank@oceanstatechess.com* • (401) 212-1335 • *oceanstatechess.com*

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

DKC Take Your Parents to the Playground Day GP

MAY 17, 2026 — NC **TLA# 55969**

Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** $1,228 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • *jon@dragonknightchess.com* • (919) 422-2535 • *dragonknightchess.com*

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX •STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2026 Connecticut Hall of Fame Action Championship & Induction

MAY 17, 2026 — NC **TLA# 55787**

Site: Sacred Heart University **Address:** 5151 Park Avenue, Bowman Hall, Thaes Abby, Fairfield, CT 06825 **Overall Prize Fund:** $1,000 & Trophies **GP Pts:** 15 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Connecticut State Chess Association • chess.CSCA@gmail.com • 8605930225 • *ChessCT.org*

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• *cbc2026@capitalareachess.com* • 1-703-627-5314 • *capitalareachess.com/cherryblossom*

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

South Dakota Open

MAY 23-25, 2026 — SD **TLA# 55939**

Site: Huron Event Center **Address:** 501 Wisconsin Avenue S.W., Huron, SD 57350 **Overall Prize Fund:** $1,000 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** James F. Perry • *wellspryngе@protonmail.com* • *SoDakChess.miraheze.org*

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Louisiana Open 2026

MAY 23-25, 2026 — LA **TLA# 55998**

Site: Discovery Inn and Suitesr **Address:** 120 E Kaliste Saloom Rd, Lafayette, LA 70508 **Overall Prize Fund:** $1,600 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** **Tommy LeBlanc** • *337-981-1821* • *lafayettechessclub.org*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* • scchess.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 **TLA# 53432**

Site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 North Milwaukee Ave, Wheeling IL 60090 **Overall Prize Fund:** $2,500 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • *director@chess.us* • *chesstour.com*

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess Indy 500 Grand Prix

MAY 24, 2026 — NC **TLA# 55971**

Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** $1,228 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • *jon@dragonknightchess.com* • (919) 422-2535 • *dragonknightchess.com*

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Crossroads of America Open by Indy Chess (5ss, 90+30, FIDE)

MAY 29-31, 2026 — IN **TLA# 55747**

Site: Indiana Convention Center **Address:** 100 S Capitol Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46225 **Overall Prize Fund:** $7,500 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Indy Chess • *info@indychess.org* • *indychess.org*

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 • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

Orchard Lake XXVIII

MAY 30, 2026 — NC **TLA# 53724**

Site: Orchard Lake Campground **Address:** 460 Orchard Lake Rd, Saluda, NC 28773 **Overall Prize Fund:** $900 **GP Pts:** 6 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Kevin J Hyde • chess@achievementtesting.info • *achievementtesting.info/chess*

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess National Smile Day Grand Prix

MAY 31, 2026 — NC **TLA# 55972**

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*

35th annual CHICAGO OPEN

May 21-25, 22-25, 23-25 or 24-25, 2026 Memorial Day Weekend- see chessevents.us

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Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel, Wheeling IL - Northwest of Chicago

Open section, 5/21-25, 9 rounds, 40/80, SD/30; d30.

U2300 through U1300 sections: 5/22-25 or 23-25: 7 rounds, 40/80, SD/30; d30 (3-day option, rds 1-2 G/60, d10). All merge and play for same prizes within the section.

Under 1000 Section, 5/24-25: 7 rounds, G/60, d10.

Open: $10000-5000-2500-1300-1000-800-600-500-400-400, clear or tiebreak first $300 bonus, top FIDE U2400/unr $2000-1000. FIDE rated, GM and IM norms possible.

U2300, U2100, U1900, U1700 Sections: Each $5000-2500-1200-800-600-500-400-300-300-300. U2300 & U2100 sections are FIDE rated.

U1500: $4000-2000-1000-700-500-400-300-300-300-300

U1300: $3000-1500-1000-700-500-400-300-300-300-300.

U1000: $1500-800-600-400-300-200-200-100-100-100

FIDE ratings used for Open, May official USCF for others (In U2300 & below, unofficial USCF or USCF Online Regular ratings usually used if otherwise unrated; **cannot play** below USCF Online Regular rating - 100 points).

If any post-event Regular OTB or Regular Online rating posted 5/20/25-5/20/26, or current Regular Online rating, is more than 40 pts over section maximum, prize limit $800.

Under 26 games prize limit as of May list: U1000 $500, U1300 $1000, U1500 $1500, U1700 $2000, U1900 $2500.

Unrated prize limits: U1000 $200, U1300 $300, U1500 $400, U1700 $600, U1900 $800, U2100 $1200.

Mixed Doubles: $2000-1000-500-400-300.

Entry fee: $207 at chessaction.com by 3/19, $227 by 5/19, $250 online or at site until 1 hour before round 1. $500 more to play in Open Section unless 2300+ USCF or 2000+ FIDE. Senior 65/up in U1300 & above, $100 less, Online EF $5 less to ICA members (il-chess.org). Titled entry: see chessevents.us. Refunds, $15 service charge.

Under 1000 Section: $97 at chessaction.com by 5/19, $120 online or at site until 9 am 5/24.

Open titled minimum prizes: see chessevents.us.

5-day schedule (Open only): enter Thu to 6 pm, rds Thu 7 pm, Fri 1 & 7, Sat 11 & 5, Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 4.

4-day schedule (U2300 to U1300): enter Fri to 6, rds Fri 7, Sat 11 & 5, Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 4. No 4-Day Open.

3-day schedule (U2300 to U1300): enter Sat to 10 am, rds Sat 11, 2 & 5; Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 4. No 3-Day Open.

2-day schedule (U1000 Section only): enter Sun to 9 am, rds Sun 10, 1, 4, 7, Mon 10, 1 & 4.

1/2-pt byes: limit 3 (2 last 4 rds); must commit before rd 3.

Hotel rates: 1-4/room $138, see chessevents.us (or 800-937-8461, 847-777-6500), reserve by 5/7, may sell out before.

USCF membership required, see chessevents.us.

Bring set, board, clock if possible- none supplied. No cellphone possession during play (in bag near table OK). **See chessevents.us** for more rules, details and prize restrictions.

Enter online: chessaction.com. No mail entries.

$2500 guaranteed Blitz tournament, Sunday 10 pm.

19th annual Chicago Class

July 17-19 or 18-19, 2026 - Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel

$30,000 GUARANTEED PRIZES!

5 rounds, 40/80, SD/30; d30 (2-day option, rounds 1-2 G/60, d10), Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel, 601 N Milwaukee Ave, Wheeling IL 60090. Free parking.

In 7 sections. Unrateds allowed, but not in Master or Expert. No residence requirements. See peakrating.us.

Master (2100/up): $3000-1500-800-500, clear win or 1st on tiebreak $100 bonus, top USCF U2400 $1200-600. 150 Grand Prix Points (enhanced). FIDE rated. GMs free, $130 from prize.

Expert (1900-2199): $2000-1000-600-400. FIDE rated.

A (1700-1999): $2000-1000-600-400. FIDE rated.

B (1500-1799): $2000-1000-600-400.

C (1300-1599): $1700-900-500-300.

D (Under 1400): $1400-700-500-300.

E (Under 1200): $800-400-300-200.

Unrated prize limits: $100 E, $200 D, $300 C, $400 B, $500 A.

Cannot play below USCF Online Regular rating - 100 points. Players scoring 8 or more in 2026 World Open U2200 or below must play in higher section than World Open

Mixed Doubles: Best male+female 2-player combined score among all sections $1000-600-400-300. Must average under 2200, different sections OK, register (no extra fee) by 2 pm Sat.

Top 6 sections entry fee: $148 at chessaction.com by 7/14, all $170 at site, or online until 1 hour before round 1.

Class E Section entry fee: all $30 less than top 6 sections entry fee.

Re-entry (except Master): $60.

All: No checks, credit cards OK. Online entry fee $5 less to ICA members; join/renew at il-chess.org.

Special 1 year USCF dues with magazine, online at chessaction.com: see chessevents.us. **USCF membership required.**

3-day schedule: Reg. to Fri 6 pm, rds. Fri 7, Sat 11 & 5, Sun 10 & 3:30.

2-day schedule: Reg. to Sat 10 am, rds. Sat 11, 2 & 5; Sun. 10 & 3:30.

Half point byes OK all, limit 2, must commit before rd 2.

No mail entries. **Bring clocks, sets, boards** if possible-none supplied.

Hotel rates: $135-135, use link at chessevents.us or 847-777-6500, reserve by 6/26 or rates may increase.

July official ratings used; unofficial or Online Regular uschess.org ratings usually used if otherwise unrated.

Enter online: chessaction.com. Refunds, $15 service charge.

Email: director@chess.us (see also www.chesstour.com).

Entries posted at chessaction.com (click "entry list" after entering).

Blitz Sat 9:30 pm, enter Sat by 9:10 pm.

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 • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

3rd Annual Wilkins Cup

JUNE 6, 2026 — NE **TLA# 55861**

Site: Ovation Heartwood Preserve **Address:** 470 Maxwell PLZ, Omaha, NE 68154 **Overall Prize Fund:** $2,500 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Bruce Draney • bruceykins49@hotmail.com • 4023126335 • *kingregistration.com*

GRAND PRIX

2026 Rea Hayes: Chattanooga

JUNE 6, 2026 — TN **TLA# 55943**

Site: New Hope Presbyterian Church **Address:** 7608 Shallowford Rd., Chattanooga, TN 37421 **Overall Prize Fund:** $1,000 **GP Pts:** 6 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Travis Deere • tldeere@gmail.com • 4237856582 • *chattanoogachess.org*

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess NCSD Grand Prix

JUNE 7, 2026 — NC **TLA# 55973**

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 Carolinas Classic

JUNE 12-14, 2026 — NC **TLA# 54883**

Site: Hilton Charlotte University Place **Address:** 8629 JM Keynes Drive, Charlotte, NC 28262 **Overall Prize Fund:** $14,000 **GP Pts:** 100 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Charlotte Chess Center • *events@charlottechesscenter.org* • *charlottechesscenter.org/events*

GRAND PRIX

Walter Browne Memorial National Open Blitz Championship

JUNE 13, 2026 — NV **TLA# 52998**

Site: Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino **Address:** 3000 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, NV 89109 **Overall Prize Fund:** $5,000 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Vegas Chess Festival • vegaschess@gmail.com • 702-930-9550 • *vegaschessfestival.com*

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess National Kids Day Grand Prix

JUNE 14, 2026 — NC **TLA# 55974**

Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** $1,228 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • *jon@dragonknightchess.com* • (919) 422-2535 • *dragonknightchess.com*

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

CFCC 2026 Sunshine Open & Scholastic

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — FL **TLA# 55907**

Site: Delta Hotels Marriott Orlando Celebration **Address:** 2900 Parkway Boulevard, Kissimmee, FL 34747 **Overall Prize Fund:** $9,000 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Central Florida Chess Club (CFCC) • *storchnoi@gmail.com* • (407) 312-6237 • *centralflchess.org/cfcc-2026-sunshine-open-and-scholastic-weekend-tournament*

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

CFCC 2026 Sunshine Open Saturday Night Open Blitz

JUNE 20, 2026 — FL **TLA# 55908**

Site: Delta Hotels Marriott Orlando Celebration **Address:** 2900 Parkway Boulevard, Kissimmee, FL 34747 **Overall Prize Fund:** $500 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Central Florida Chess Club (CFCC) • *storchnoi@gmail.com* • (407) 312-6237 • *centralflchess.org/cfcc-2026-sunshine-open-and-scholastic-weekend-tournament*

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

World Open Game/50 Championship

JUNE 25, 2026 — DC **TLA# 55312**

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* • *chesstour.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* • *chesstour.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* • *chesstour.com*

GRAND PRIX

2026 Castle Chess Grand Prix

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — GA **TLA# 55085**

Site: Emory University – Emory Student Center **Address:** 605 Asbury Circle, Atlanta, GA 30322 20008 **Overall Prize Fund:** $12,000 **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Castle Chess • *tournament@castlechess.org* • *castlechess.org/grandprix*

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX

49th Annual Green Bay Open

JUNE 27-28, 2026 — WI **TLA# 55807**

Site: Oneida Casino Hotel **Address:** 2040 Airport Drive, Green Bay, WI 54313 **Overall Prize Fund:** $3,200 **GP Pts:** 15 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Luke A Ludwig • *lukealudwig@aol.com* • 9204659859 • *greenbaychess.net*

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* • *chesstour.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* • *chesstour.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* • *chesstour.com*

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX

28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship

JULY 3-5, 2026 — CA-N **TLA# 55950**

Site: Holiday Inn Express & Suites **Address:** 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821 **Overall Prize Fund:** $12,500 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** John McCumiskey • *sactochess@sbcglobal.net* • 916-524-9479 • *sacramentochessclub.org*

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* • *chesstour.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* • *chesstour.com*

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

19th annual Chicago Class hampionships

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* • *chesstour.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 Maingate Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34747 **Overall Prize Fund:** $20,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • *director@chess.us* • *chesstour.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* • *chesstour.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* • *chesstour.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-S **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* • *chesstour.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*

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

56th annual Continental Open

AUGUST 13-16, 2026 — MA **TLA# 55944**

Site: Hilton Boston/Woburn Hotel **Address:** 2 Forbes Road, Woburn, MA 01801 **Overall Prize Fund:** $30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • *director@chess.us* • *chesstour.com*

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

16th annual Central California Open

AUGUST 14-16, 2026 — CA **TLA# 55857**

Site: Doubletree Hotel **Address:** 2233 Cesar Chavez, Fresno, CA 93721 **Overall Prize Fund:** $10,000 **GP Pts:** 100 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • *director@chess.us* • *chesstour.com*

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

58th annual Atlantic Open

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC **TLA# 55858**

Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel **Address:** 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 **Overall Prize Fund:** $30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • *director@chess.us* • *chesstour.com*

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

21st annual Indianapolis Open

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — IN TLA# 55946

Site: Hilton Garden Inn Indianapolis Airport **Address:** 8910 Hatfield Drive, Indianapolis IN 4264 **Overall Prize Fund:** $15,000 **GP Pts:** 100 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • *director@chess.us* • *chesstour.com*

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*

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

148th annual New York State Championship– America's oldest annual tournament!

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — NY TLA# 55860

Site: Albany Marriott Hotel **Address:** 189 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12205 **Overall Prize Fund:** $18,000 **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • *director@chess.us* • *chesstour.com*

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

2026 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2026 — FL TLA# 53516

Site: Hilton Melbourne at Rialto Place **Address:** 200 Rialto Place, Melbourne, FL 32901 **Overall Prize Fund:** $16,000 **GP Pts:** 60 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Space Coast Chess Foundation, Inc. • *andrerea2@yahoo.com* • 412-418-1591 • *spacecoastchessfoundation.org/event/floridastatechampionship*

GRAND PRIX

Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953

Site: Holiday Inn Express & Suites **Address:** 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821 **Overall Prize Fund:** $4,800 b/60 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** John McCumiskey • *sactochess@sbcglobal.net* • 916-524-9479 • *sacramentochessclub.org*

GRAND PRIX

2026 Sacramento Senior Championship

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952

Site: Holiday Inn Express & Suites **Address:** 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821 **Overall Prize Fund:** $3,300 b/40 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** John McCumiskey • *sactochess@sbcglobal.net* • 916-524-9479 • *sacramentochessclub.org*

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# 55381

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*

GRAND PRIX

2026 Saint Louis Chess Club Championship

DECEMBER 18-20, 2026 — MO TLA# 55385

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*

Regional

ALABAMA

JUNE 6, 2026 — TN TLA# 55943

2026 Rea Hayes: Chattanooga
See Grand Prix.

JULY 17-19, 2026 — FL TLA# 55402

34th annual Southern Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381

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# 55381

Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

AMER. SAMOA

MAY 21-25, 2026 — VA TLA# 54412

13th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

ARIZONA

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 3-5, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55950

28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
See Grand Prix.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — CA TLA# 55399

31st annual Pacific Coast Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953

Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26
See Grand Prix.

31st annual PACIFIC COAST OPEN

July 31 - August 2 or August 1-2, 2026 - $30,000 guaranteed!

6 rounds, Hilton Orange County Airport (Irvine, CA)

6 rounds, 40/80, SD/30; d30 (2-day option, rds 1-3 G/35 d10), Hilton Orange County Airport, 18800 Macarthur Blvd, Irvine CA 92612. Chess parking $20/day.

Hotel rate: $184-184-184-184, use link at chessevents.us (or 949-833-9999) reserve by 7/9 or rate may increase.

7 sections (top 2 also FIDE rated).

Premier (2000/up; see peakrating.us): $3000-1500-1000-700, clear or tiebreak win $100 bonus, top USCF Under 2300 $1400-700.

Under 2100: $2000-1000-600-400.
Under 1900: $2000-1000-600-400.
Under 1700: $1600-800-500-300.
Under 1500: $1600-800-500-300.
Under 1300: $1600-800-500-300.
Under 1000: $1000-500-300-200.

Unrated prize limits: U1000 $150, U1300 $250, U1500 $350, U1700 $500, U1900 $700. Balance goes to next eligible player(s) in line.

Mixed Doubles Bonus Prizes: Best male+female 2-player team combined score among all sections: $1000-500-300-200. Team average under 2200; may play in different sections, schedues; register (no extra fee) before both players begin round 2); prize limits don't apply to team prizes.

Top 6 sections entry fee: $158 online at chessaction.com by 7/28, $180 later or at site until 1 hour before round 1 (no checks, credit cards OK).

Under 1000 section entry fee: All $20 less than top 6 sections fee.

Cannot play below USCF Online Regular Rating-100. Aug. official ratings used; unofficial or Online Regular USCF ratings usually used if otherwise unrated. Players scoring 8 or more in 2026 World Open U2200 or below must play in higher section than World Open.

USCF membership required. See chessevents.us for special rates.

Online entry $5 less to Southern California Chess Federation members. Join/renew at www.scchess.com.

3-day schedule: Reg. Fri to 11 am, rds Fri 12 noon & 6 pm, Sat 11 am & 5 pm, Sun 10 am & 3:30 pm.

2-day schedule: Reg. Sat to 9 am, rds Sat 10 am, 12:15 pm, 2:30 pm & 5 pm; Sun 10 am & 3:30 pm.

Half-point byes OK all (limit 2); must commit before round 3.

All: Bring set, board, clock if possible- **none supplied.** Re-entry (no Premier to Premier) $70.

Enter online: chessaction.com. $15 charge for refunds.

Email: director@chess.us (see also **chessevents.us**).

Blitz Sat 9:30 pm, enter by 9:10 pm.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952
2026 Sacramento Senior Championship
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

CALIFORNIA

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 3-5, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55950
28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
See Grand Prix.

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.*

AUGUST 14-16, 2026 — CA TLA# 55857
16th annual Central California Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953
Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952
2026 Sacramento Senior Championship
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

COLORADO

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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

CONNECTICUT

MAY 9-10, 2026 — NY TLA# 56075
New York Metro Area Scholastic Chess GRADE Championships (1st Annual)
See New York.

MAY 17, 2026 — NC TLA# 55787
2026 Connecticut Hall of Fame Action Championship & Induction
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.*

AUGUST 13-16, 2026 — MA TLA# 55944
56th annual Continental Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

DELAWARE

MAY 9-10, 2026 — NY TLA# 56075
New York Metro Area Scholastic Chess GRADE Championships (1st Annual)
See New York.

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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

DIST. OF COLUMBIA

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:** n/a **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.*

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC TLA# 55858
58th annual Atlantic Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

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.

MAY 29-31, 2026 — VA TLA# 54957
2026 Virginia Senior & Adult Open
See Virginia.

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — FL TLA# 55907
CFCC 2026 Sunshine Open & Scholastic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 20, 2026 — FL TLA# 55908
CFCC 2026 Sunshine Open Saturday Night Open Blitz
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 25-29, 2026 — DC TLA# 53620
4th annual DC International (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — DC TLA# 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.

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2026 — FL TLA# 53516
2026 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

GEORGIA

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 6, 2026 — TN TLA# 55943
2026 Rea Hayes: Chattanooga
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 25-29, 2026 — DC TLA# 53620
4th annual DC International (in cooperation with the DC Chess Association)
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

JUNE 26-28, 2026 — GA TLA# 55085
2026 Castle Chess Grand Prix
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 — 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# 55381
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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

IDAHO

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

JULY 3-5, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55950
28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953
Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952
2026 Sacramento Senior Championship
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

ILLINOIS

MAY 1-3, 2026 — IL TLA# 55651
2nd Sapiens Sapiens Tournament $5000 Prize!
Site: Signature Regus **Address:** 222 South Prospect, Park Ridge, IL 60068 **Overall Prize Fund:** $5,000 **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.

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — IN TLA# 55946
21st annual Indianapolis Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
2026 Illinois Open
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

INDIANA

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 — IN TLA# 55747
Crossroads of America Open by Indy Chess (5ss, 90+30, FIDE)
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 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.

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — IN TLA# 55946
21st annual Indianapolis Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
2026 Illinois Open
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

IOWA

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 6, 2026 — NE TLA# 55861
3rd Annual Wilkins Cup
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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

KANSAS

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 6, 2026 — NE TLA# 55861
3rd Annual Wilkins Cup
See Grand Prix.

JULY 24-26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55383
Kent Family Classic 2026
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
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.

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — IN TLA# 55946
21st annual Indianapolis Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

LOUISIANA

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

MAY 23-25, 2026 — LA TLA# 55998
Louisiana Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

MARYLAND

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.

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC TLA# 55858
58th annual Atlantic Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 9-10, 2026 — NY TLA# 56075
New York Metro Area Scholastic Chess GRADE Championships (1st Annual)
See New York.

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.

AUGUST 13-16, 2026 — MA TLA# 55944
56th annual Continental Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

MICHIGAN

MAY 21-25, 2026 — IL TLA# 53431
35th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

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

MAY 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# 55381
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# 55381
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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

MISSOURI

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.

JUNE 6, 2026 — NE TLA# 55861
3rd Annual Wilkins Cup
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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 18-20, 2026 — MO TLA# 55385
2026 Saint Louis Chess Club Championship
See Grand Prix.

MONTANA

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

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NEBRASKA

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

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NEVADA

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 3-5, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55950
28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
See Grand Prix.

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

AUGUST 14-16, 2026 — CA TLA# 55857
16th annual Central California Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953
Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952
2026 Sacramento Senior Championship
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NEW JERSEY

MAY 9-10, 2026 — NY TLA# 56075
New York Metro Area Scholastic Chess GRADE Championships (1st Annual)
See New York.

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 — 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.

MAY 30, 2026 — NJ TLA# 54715
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*

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.

AUGUST 13-16, 2026 — MA TLA# 55944
56th annual Continental Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC TLA# 55858
58th annual Atlantic Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NEW MEXICO

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

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NEW YORK

REGIONALS

MAY 9-10, 2026 — NY TLA# 56075
New York Metro Area Scholastic Chess GRADE Championships (1st Annual)
Site: New York Marriott Marquis, Times Square **Address:** 1535 Broadway, New York, NY 10016 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Official Chess • info@officialchess.org • *officialchess.org/discoverevents/*

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 — 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.

AUGUST 13-16, 2026 — MA TLA# 55944
56th annual Continental Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC TLA# 55858
58th annual Atlantic Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — NY TLA# 55860
148th annual New York State Championship– America's oldest annual tournament!
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NORTH CAROLINA

MAY 17, 2026 — NC TLA# 55969
DKC Take Your Parents to the Playground Day GP
See Grand Prix.

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

MAY 24, 2026 — NC TLA# 55971
Dragon Knight Chess Indy 500 Grand Prix
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.

MAY 30, 2026 — NC TLA# 53724
Orchard Lake XXVIII
See Grand Prix.

MAY 31, 2026 — NC TLA# 55972
Dragon Knight Chess National Smile Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 7, 2026 — NC TLA# 55973
Dragon Knight Chess NCSD Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 14, 2026 — NC TLA# 55974
Dragon Knight Chess National Kids Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NORTH DAKOTA

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

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NO. MARIANA ISL.

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

OHIO

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.

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — IN TLA# 55946
21st annual Indianapolis Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

OREGON

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 3-5, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55950
28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953
Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952
2026 Sacramento Senior Championship
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

PENNSYLVANIA

MAY 9-10, 2026 — NY TLA# 56075
New York Metro Area Scholastic Chess GRADE Championships (1st Annual)
See New York.

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
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 — 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.

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC TLA# 55858
58th annual Atlantic Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — NY TLA# 55860
148th annual New York State Championship– America's oldest annual tournament!
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

PUERTO RICO

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

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

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

RHODE ISLAND

MAY 9, 2026 — RI TLA# 56001
OSCA 4th Annual Lou Giarrusso Memorial Cup Championship - $1,500+ Prizes
See Grand Prix.

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

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

SOUTH DAKOTA

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

MAY 23-25, 2026 — SD TLA# 55939
South Dakota Open
See Grand Prix.

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

JUNE 6, 2026 — NE TLA# 55861
3rd Annual Wilkins Cup
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
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.

JUNE 6, 2026 — TN TLA# 55943
2026 Rea Hayes: Chattanooga
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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

TEXAS

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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

U.S. MIN. OUT. ISL.

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

UTAH

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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

VERMONT

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

JUNE 19-21, 2026 — NY TLA# 54808
30th annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

VIRGINIA

MAY 9-10, 2026 — NY TLA# 56075
New York Metro Area Scholastic Chess GRADE Championships (1st Annual)
See New York.

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
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.*

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC TLA# 55858
58th annual Atlantic Open
See Grand Prix or *chessevents.us.*

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https://new.uschess.org/benefactor-members

US CHESS

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

VIRGIN ISL., U.S.

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

WASHINGTON

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 3-5, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55950
28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
See Grand Prix.

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

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952
2026 Sacramento Senior Championship
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

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WEST VIRGINIA

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# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

WISCONSIN

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.

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* • *wischess.org*

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 27-28, 2026 — WI TLA# 55807
49th Annual Green Bay 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 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
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Solutions

PAGE 11 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. White resigned after **58. … Rc1!**. **PROBLEM 2. 48. … Qd4+! 49. Rf2 Qb6!** traps the bishop. **PROBLEM 3. 30. Qg3!** threatens to trap the queen with 31. h4. Black resigned after **30. … h5 31. h4** rather than play out the lost 31. … Qh6 32. g5 fxg5 33. hxg5 Qd6 34. Qh4 threatening 35. Qxh5. **PROBLEM 4.** Fastest is **32. … Bc8!**, threatening 33. … Qf5 and 34. … Qxh3 mate as well as 33. … Bxh3 34. Kxh3 Qf5+. This was perhaps Nimzovich's most famous game and it ended soon after 33. Qc2 Bxh3! 34. Bxe4 Bf5 35. Bxf5 Nxf5 36. Re2 h4. **PROBLEM 5.** Not 34. … Bxd3 35. Rxa8+, or 34. … Rxa5 35. Rd8+ Kh7 36. Rh8+ Kg6 37. Rg8+ with perpetual check. Black won with **34. … Rf1+!**, e.g., 35. Kxf1 Bxd3+ and 36. … Rxa5. The game went 35. Kh2 Rxa5 36. Rd8+ Kh7 37. Rh8+ Kg6 38. Rg8+ Kh6! and **White resigned** because of 39. Rh8+ Bh7!. **PROBLEM 6. 49. … Rg3!** pushed the queen away so that 50. Qh2 Rg2 51. Qh3 R5g3 wins (*52. Qh4 Rg1+! 53. Rxg1+ Rxg1+ 54. Kh2 Qg2 mate*).

PAGE 41 MAKE YOUR MOVE

TACTIC 1. 37. … Qxf4 Boom! Not the only winning move, but the most efficient one, forcing White's resignation. Obviously, after 37. … Qxf4 38. gxf4 Rxh4+, White gets mated. Yip – Lee, American Cup, St. Louis 2026. **TACTIC 2. 21. … Ba4!** Taking advantage of the pin on the c3-knight. White's response is forced: **22. b3 cxb3 23. axb3 Rfc8!** Boom! Piling on the pinned knight. **24. bxa4 Rxc3 25. Kd1 Rxc2, White resigned.** Krush – Hong, American Cup Blitz, St. Louis 2026. **TACTIC 3. 31. … Bd5! 32. Qe5** and here White either resigned or lost on time. The rook has to be protected, but the queen is distracted from the kingside, so Black wins easily after 32. … Qc5+! 33. Kh2 Qf2!. Sukandar – Celik, American Cup Blitz, St. Louis 2026. **TACTIC 4. 22. Bh6!** Obviously, the queen cannot be touched on account of the back-rank mate. **22. … Qd8** Or 22. … Rcd8, which runs into 23. Be3, winning material. **23. Re8+!, Black resigned.** A possible continuation was 23. … Qxe8 24. Qxd4 f6 25. Qxg4 and White wins. Gazik – Woodward, American Cup Blitz, St. Louis 2026. **TACTIC 5.** The knight on d3 looks very good, but it turns out the knight on f5 is much better in this position for a very concrete reason: **18. Nh6+!** Boom! Black's answer is forced. **18. … gxh6 19. Rg3+ Bg7** Because 19. ... Kh8 loses to 20. Qg4. **20. Bxh6 Qf6 21. Qd2!** The only move to win. In the game, White completely collapsed and lost after 21. Bxg7??. **21. … Nxc1 22. Bxg7 Qxg7 23. Rxg7+ Kxg7 24. Qxc1 Re5 25. Qe3 Rae8 26. a3** intending Qe3-d4, Qe3-c5, or f2-f4. White is winning. Lodici – Pranav, American Cup Blitz, St. Louis 2026 (analysis). **TACTIC 6. 32. Qc8+! Rf8 33. Qe6+!, Black resigned.** The point is that White wins after either 33. … Qxe6 34. Rxg7+ Kh8 35. Rg6+ Qf6 36. Bxf6+ Rxf6 37. Rxf6 or 33. … Kh8 34. Qd7 (Nice geometric approach!) 34. … Rg8 35. Rxg7 Qxg7 (or *35. … Rxg7 36. Qc8+* mates) 36. Bxg7+ Rxg7 37. Qd8+. Sevian – Dominguez Perez, American Cup, St. Louis 2026. **TACTIC 7. 33. Rb8! Nd7** After 33. … Nd5, White wins with 34. Rb7 Ne3+ 35. Kh3! Rxd3 36. Rfxf7+! (*36. e6!?* also wins) 36. ... Kh6 37. f4, and Black will have to sacrifice a rook to avoid getting mated. **34. e6!!** BOOM! A gorgeous and absolutely nasty move. **34. … Nxb8** Or 34. … fxe6 35. Rb7, winning the knight. **35. e7!** Yes; this little pawn was worth a rook because she is about to become a queen. **35. … Re2 36. Bxe2 Rxe2 37. Re3, Black resigned.** The e-pawn cannot be stopped. A beautiful concept and a fitting conclusion. Krush – Cervantes Landeiro, American Cup Blitz, St. Louis 2026. **TACTIC 8. 13. Be5! Qe7** The bishop cannot be touched due to the mate on d8. **14. Ng3!** Unseating Black's strong knight on f5 and messing up Black's defense. In the game, White, instead, went for the obvious 14. g4?! f6 15. Bc3 Nh4 16. f4 0-0 17. Ng3 e5 18. f5 Nc5 19. Bb4 with a clear advantage but lost in the end. **14. … Nxg3** Or 14. ... 0-0 15. Nxf5 exf5 16. Bd6 Qf6 17. Bxf8 Kxf8 18. Qd8+ Qxd8 19. Rxd8+ Ke7 20. Rg8, and White will win. **15. hxg3 f6 16. Be2!! g6** Black has no good responses; for instance, 16. … fxe5 loses to 17. Bh5+; 16. … 0-0 to 17. Bd6, and 16. … Rg8 to 17. Rxh7 fxe5 18. Bh5+. **17. Qd8+!** Ouch! **17. … Qxd8 18. Rxd8+ Kxd8 19. Bxf6+,** and White will win the endgame. Chirila – Aronian, American Cup Blitz, St. Louis 2026 (analysis). **TACTIC 9. 59. … Bf1!!** The only drawing move and not easy to spot. The idea is that the bishop has access to defend all the black pawns, and Black's king is free to move to a4 or c4, while White cannot move forward with the king and simultaneously threaten the bishop. For instance, 59. … Bc4?? wouldn't work on account of 60. Rxf5 exf5 61. Kd4 Be2 62. Ke5 Bd3 (or *62. … Bg4*) 63. b5! axb5 (*63. … Bxb5 64. Kxf5* also wins for White) 64. a6 b4 65. a7 Be4 66. Kf6 Kc4 67. Kg5, and White wins. In the game, Caruana blundered in a different way: 59. … Rxc5?? 60. bxc5 Kb4 61. Ke4 Kxa5 62. Ke5 Bc4 63. Be7 (Making room for the king to move to d6) 63. ... Kb5 64. Kd6 a5 (If *64. … Bd5 65. f5* wins) 65. c6 Bd5 66. f5 Bxc6 67. f6 Be8 68. Kxe6, Black resigned. **60. Rxf5 exf5 61. Kd4 Ka4!,** and now, the black king prevents White from playing b4-b5, while the bishop defends the kingside pawns, and White cannot make any progress. So – Caruana, American Cup, St. Louis 2026 (analysis).

PAGE 45 ABCS OF CHESS

PROBLEM 1. White mates in 2: **1. Qb6+ Bb7 2. Qxb7 mate. PROBLEM 2.** White mates in 2: **1. Nf6+ Kh8 2. Qh7 mate. PROBLEM 3.** White mates in 2: **1. Qh6+ Bxh6 2. Rg8 mate**. **PROBLEM 4.** White mates in 2: **1. Nb6+ cxb6 2. axb7 mate**. **PROBLEM 5.** White mates in 2: **1. Ng5 Qxg5** (anything else runs into *2. Qh7 mate*) **2. Bxf7 mate. PROBLEM 6.** White mates in 2: **1. Bh6+ Kg8 2. Qg6 mate.**

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Getting to Work (continued from page 13)

After 44. g5! Kc3 (White wins in a similar way after *44. ... Rg4 45. h5 Re4 46. Rxc6+ Kd5 47. Rb6 e2 48. Rb1 e1=Q 49. Rxe1 Rxe1 50. g6 Ke6 51. Kh7*) 45. Rxc6+. Unlike in the line where the rook was still on g5, White can capture an important pawn here. Now comes 45. ... Kd2 46. h5 e2 47. Rd6+ Kc1 48. Re6 Kd1 49. g6 and White will sacrifice the rook for the pawn, force the black rook to sacrifice itself for the g-pawn and then promote the h-pawn: 49. ... e1=Q 50. Rxe1+ Kxe1 51. g7 Kd2 52. Kh7 Kxc2 53. g8=Q Rxg8 54. Kxg8.

44. ... Kd5?

Again: Rook endgames are not easy for anyone!

It's very difficult to calculate, but the only path to a draw is 44. ... Kc3! 45. Rxc6+ Kd2 46. h5 e2 47. Rd6+ Kxc2 48. Re6 Kd2 49. h6 e1=Q 50. Rxe1 Kxe1 51. h7. Compared to the line in the previous note, White has lost time: Instead of pushing the pawn, he has brought his king to g5, and the black king is closer to the g-pawn. It's a draw after 51. ... Rh3 52. Kg6 Kf2 53. g5 Kf3 54. Kg7 Kg4 55. g6 Kg5.

45. Kf4 Rh3?

The final mistake. Black's last chance was 45. ... e2! Now Black wins after 46. Rg5+? Kd4 47. Re5 Rxg4+ 48. Kxg4 Kxe5, but instead White has a clever way of putting the rook behind the pawn: 46. c4+! Kxc4 47. Re6 Rh3 48. h5 Kd3 49. g5 Rh4+ 50. Kf3 Rxh5 with a draw.

46. h5 c5

46. ... e2 is too late now — White can put the rook behind the pawn without sacrificing the c-pawn: 47. Rg5+ Kd4 48. Re5 Rh2 49. Re6 Kc3 50. Kg3 picking up the e2-pawn.

47. Rg5+ Kd4 48. Re5, Black resigned.

What to make of this example? Navara's king walk was by no means safe or objectively sound, but his fighting spirit and willingness to keep the game going by any means must have put enormous pressure on his opponent, both on the board and psychologically. Wojtaszek seemed ready for a peaceful result, but with every step of White's king deeper into Black's camp, Navara forced his opponent to make a new decision instead of settling for the draw.

We shouldn't underestimate the tremendous pressure constant decision-making puts on our opponents. This was quite a memorable game by Navara and the heroic king walk is commendable.

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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 Angantysson **1980** Larry Christiansen **1981** Igor Ivanov **1982** Nick deFirmian **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 Ehlvest **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 Iniyan **2021** Hans Niemann **2022** Mikhail Antipov **2023** Fidel Corrales Jimenez **2024** Awonder Liang **2025** Bharath Subramaniyam H