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CHESSLIFE

FEBRUARY 2025 ■ USChess.org

IM Carissa
Yip on her
U.S. Women's
title and
run at the
Fischer Prize



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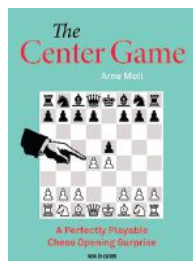


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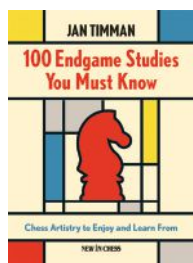
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The Center Game

Arne Moll

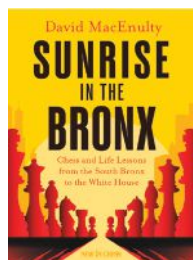
A great opening for club players. White starts with a center push, develops quickly, looks for opposite castling, and launches an attack. The setup will feel familiar in no time. The engines show that it is both sound and correct, and at least as good as the Ruy Lopez and the Italian. You'll get a position that you know well, but quite often will be new to Black.



Chess artistry to enjoy and learn from

Jan Timman

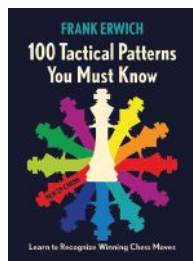
Perhaps the greatest beauty in chess can be found in endgame studies. Delightful twists and turns on the board are combined into true works of art. Chess is distilled to its purest form, with all pieces making only the essential moves. Jan Timman guides you through masterpieces of increasing difficulty. You will be amazed at the possibilities of chess and inspired to add more finesse to your own endgame play.



Chess and Life Lessons

David MacEnulty

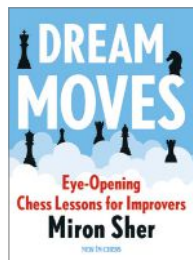
David MacEnulty dared to dream big. In the 1990s he became a pioneer of chess in the public schools of the Bronx. The obstacles were formidable – poverty, crime, racism, and ignorance. Yet, MacEnulty and his students defied all expectations. In *Sunrise in the Bronx*, MacEnulty describes his transformative journey from fumbling substitute teacher to legendary chess coach.



100 Tactical Patterns You Must Know

Frank Erwich

The long-awaited middlegame companion to the bestseller *100 Endgames You Must Know*. Experienced chess trainer Frank Erwich teaches the most frequent and easy-to-learn tactical patterns. The book offers clear, concise, and easy-to-follow chess tactics instruction, ideal for post-beginners, club players, and candidate masters.



Eye-Opening Lessons for Improvers

Miron Sher

Legendary chess coach Miron Sher, who trained GMs Robert Hess and Fabiano Caruana, collected hundreds of instructive positions for his students. This book focuses on five topics that Sher considered important for chess improvement, including Dream Moves. If you can dream about the final, decisive move that leads to a winning position, you will find your way there.

King's Anti-Sicilians for Black

Daniel King

This manual completes the Black repertoire that uses the Sicilian Kalashnikov. But everyone playing 1...c5 has to be ready when White avoids the Open Sicilian. King gives you the answer to all of the Anti-Sicilians, including the Rossolimo, the Alapin and the Grand Prix Attack. Less frequent variations such as the Morra and the Wing Gambit, are covered as well.

A complete and easy-to-learn guide

Christof Sielecki

A compact and easy-to-learn opening repertoire for White, starting with 1.e4 and a similar repertoire for Black. For beginners and improvers, there is probably no better guide than Christof Sielecki, who has already published four opening books and more than a dozen courses on the Chessable platform. He knows exactly what his students need and has indeed received thousands of five-star ratings.

Valuable lessons for every chess player

Jesús de la Villa

Jesús de la Villa (1958), the author of the international bestseller *100 Endgames You Must Know*, loves this quote from the American First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt: 'Learn from the errors of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.' For his new book, he has carefully selected the 50 mistakes every player should be aware of – so the mistake can be avoided.

Capablanca's endgame technique

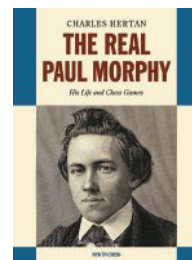
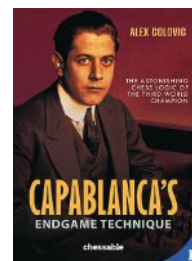
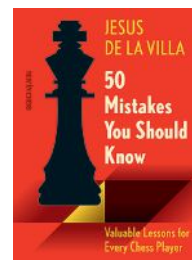
Alex Colovic

Although José Raúl Capablanca was the World Chess Champion a century ago, his games remain among the most interesting to study. The clear logic and simplicity of his moves inspired other great players such as Mikhail Botvinnik and Bobby Fischer. And the clarity of his play will boost the confidence of any chess student.

Life and games of Paul Morphy

Charles Hertan

A comprehensive modern biography that delves deep into Morphy's fascinating career, unearthing new information about his origins, intertwined with an in-depth exploration of his games, often overturning more than 160 years of previous analysis. Hertan uses his experience as a professional psychotherapist to shed new light on Morphy's tragic mental deterioration and also examines the state of chess before Morphy.



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CHESSLIFE

February

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Clean Sweep

Americans take every medal at North American Junior Chess Championships
BY IM JASON LIANG

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SHORT OF A SWEEP BUT STILL SMOOTH

IM Carissa Yip on her U.S. Women's Championship victory

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GM Robert Hübner
1948-2025

BY JOHN HARTMANN AND RICK MASSIMO



ON THE COVER

Today's chess champions are getting younger and younger. They must multitask at tournaments — even the most important of them! This month we learn how IM Carissa Yip balanced responsibilities on her way to the title. Next month, GM Awonder Liang fills us in on how he managed the U.S. Championship.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRYSTAL FULLER



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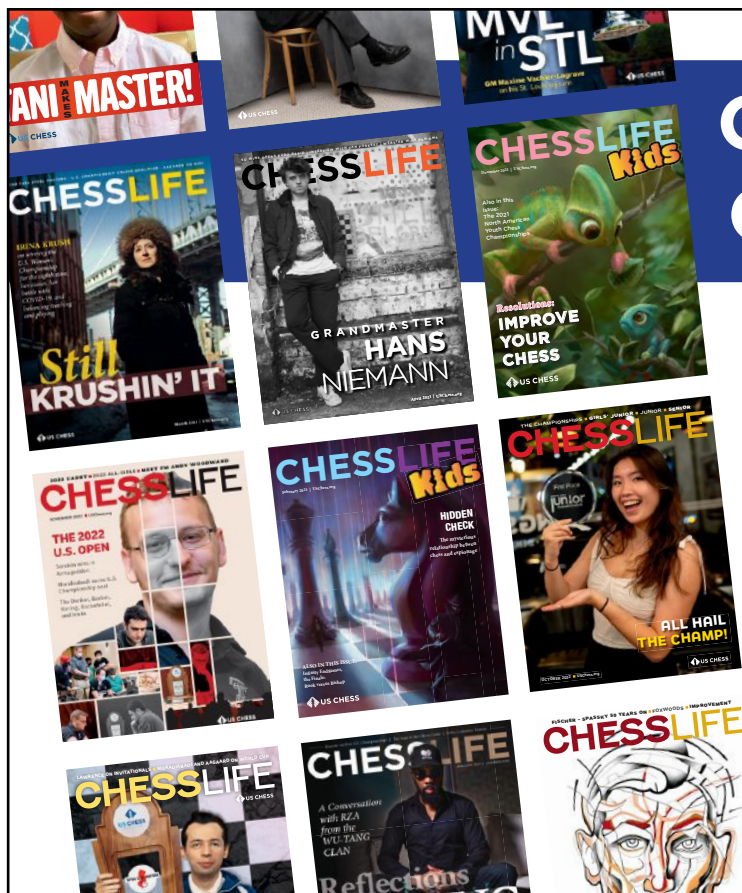
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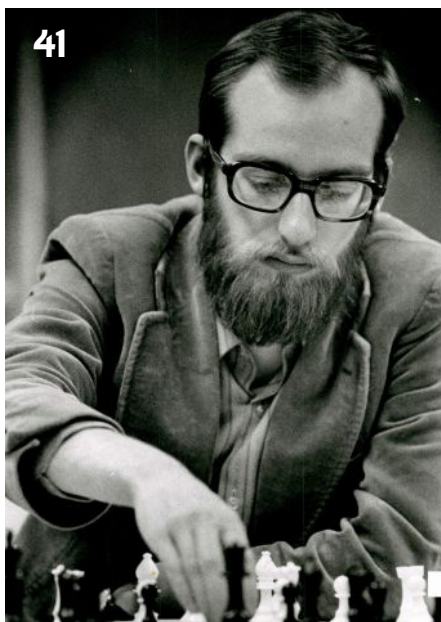
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IM CARISSA YIP

(U.S. Women's Championship) is a three-time U.S. Women's Champion. Originally from Andover, Massachusetts, she was also a three-time U.S. Girls' Junior

Champion and is currently a student at Stanford University. Find her on Twitter at [@carissayipchess](https://twitter.com/carissayipchess).



IM JASON LIANG

(NAJCC) is the 2022 Grand Prix winner, with victories at multiple youth and scholastic championships.

He has two GM norms to his name, and with a peak FIDE rating of 2530, he is looking forward to earning his third and final norm in 2025.



VLADIMIR LIONTER

(Armed Forces Open) is a journalist and chess enthusiast based in New York.

His interests include exploring the connections between strategy, education and culture, as well as photography.



JOHN HARTMANN

(Hübner) is the editor of *Chess Life* and *Chess Life Kids*. He will be dropping a new podcast series for US

Chess in 2025, and he is excited to return to USATE this month. In his "free time" he is learning to play the piano.



RICK MASSIMO

(NATO, Hübner) is the assistant editor for US Chess publications. He's the author of two books; he's

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

2025

World Amateur Team & U.S. Amateur Team Championship East

Welcome to the country's
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February 15-17

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Open to four-player teams with one optional alternate. Team average must be under 2200 (four highest ratings from 2025 January rating list used for ALL players — no exceptions). Teams rated over 2000 average — no more than 1000 points between boards 3 and 4. No more than two GMs on a team.

Time Control: 6SS, 40/100, SD/30 delay 5. **Rds.:** 1-7:30 Sat., 11-6 Sun., 9-3:30 Mon.

Registration: Online registration opens December 1st at official website www.njscf.org. Advance registration only — no on-site registration.

EF: \$275 online only by 1/15/25; ALL \$335 after. All teams: any changes at site or after entering — \$30 charge. **ENTRY MAXIMUM IS 325 TEAMS.** Enter early!

TEAM PRIZES: 1-5th place teams, plaque and 4 digital clocks; Top team (Denis Barry Award) U2100, 2000, 1900, 1800, 1700, 1600, 1500, 1400, 1300, 1200, 1000, each plaque and 4 digital clocks; Top college (same school), 4 digital clocks & plaque; Top high school (grades 9-12 same school), Top middle school (grades 5-9 same school), Top elementary school (grades K-6 same school), Top 2 scholastic teams (mixed schools okay) (Collins Award), Top mixed doubles (2 males, 2 females, no alternates), Top seniors (all players over age 50), Top military, each plaque & 4 digital clocks; Top company (full time only, same employer, noneducational), Top coaches (educational), Top all female, Top family (4 family members), Top

state (CT, DE, MD, MA, NJ, NY (Benjamin Award), PA, VA), each plaque; Top future team (all players under age 10), Top military college, Top parent/child (2 pairs, one parent, one child), each special plaque.

ADDITIONAL PRIZES: Best Player 1-4 and top alternate, all 6-0 scores, each digital clock. Biggest individual upset each round, engraved Cross pen. Entry fee refunded Sunday night to team with best "chess related" name. Best "chess related costumes or gimmick," 1st — gourmet dinner for 4. 2nd — gourmet dinner for 4. Surprises and special giveaways each round.

HR: See link to reserve room at www.njscf.org. Chess rates expire 1/17/2025.

Tournament Director NTD/IA:

E. Steven Doyle (50 years)

Sunday night: Bughouse \$25 per team. Cash prizes.



For help forming teams contact
Worldamateurtteam@njscf.org

Visit new.uschess.org/2025-world-amateur-team-us-team-east for more details.





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



COUNTERPLAY



Revisionist history

Surprised and saddened to see Gukesh on the cover of the January 2025 *Chess Life*. Not because he doesn't deserve it — he won the world championship title by going through the process.

Rather, it is the description of him as #18 that is concerning. Apparently, US Chess and FIDE and ChessBase think that if they announce a falsehood enough times, the older folks will die off and everyone will believe it.

Gukesh is the 22nd world champion, not the 18th.

US Chess spent a lot of time and money sending players to world championship cycles that somehow you no longer recognize.

The winners of those cycles spent a lot of time explaining that yes, indeed, they were world champion. Khalifman in particular explained over and over that although he was not the strongest player in the world, he was the world champion. And he demanded that he be respected as such.

Process matters.

Of course, if the NFL can erase the Pottsville Maroons and decide to give their 1925 title to the Chicago Cardinals (because the Maroons dared

to disobey the commissioner) ... well, anything is possible.

Eric C. Johnson
Via email

John Hartmann responds:

I subscribe to the "Ric Flair theory" of world champions and their succession: To be the man, you've got to beat the man.

The 1993 schism between FIDE and Kasparov, and what followed, was lamentable and fully avoidable. FIDE's reasons for creating their own world championship cycle were reasonable, and were I one of the players who won a knockout title, I'd certainly consider myself a world champ.

But so long as matches continue to determine the world championship, I will believe that it is the unbroken chain of champions that runs through Kasparov, Kramnik, and Anand that is most legitimate. Gukesh is 18th in that line. Congratulations to him.

Where is it?

I renewed my membership on November 20 — it was set to expire on November 30 — and paid the print add-on fee. I didn't get a December issue. Why? I hope you can help straighten this out, as I have nothing new to look at while I eat my lunch each day!

Walter High
Via email

John Hartmann responds:

Technology has been a boon to many fields, including publishing. But we still need plenty of lead time to create mailing lists and get issues printed.

This is why it is critical that readers renew their memberships six weeks ahead of time if they want to make sure their subscriptions do not lapse. The good news is that a November 20 renewal got you on the January list, and we'll send you a December from the office.

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

Seeing It Happen

The enduring allure of live chess was on full display during the World Championship in Singapore.

BY **CHRISTOPHER M. SECK**



LAST NOVEMBER, I TOOK A 21-hour connecting flight from my hometown of New York City to Singapore to attend the first few games of the World Chess Championship between Gukesh Dommaraju and Ding Liren. I was an honorary member of the organizing committee, but even so the 10 VIP tickets I bought for the first few rounds cost about \$2,500 USD.

In an age where chess thrives as basically an e-sport, broadcast globally with expert commentary and omniscient engine analysis, one might ask: Why go through all this to attend a live match? The answer lies in inspiration, connections, and atmosphere.

INSPIRATION: CHESS AS HISTORY

Standing amidst a cosmopolitan crowd, mere meters from Gukesh and Ding at the opening ceremony and in the playing hall, I

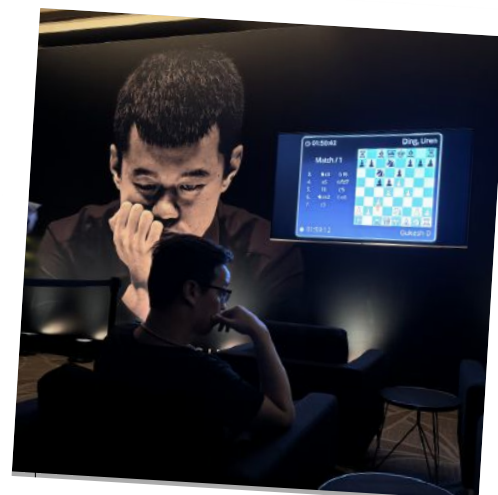
was struck by the quiet aura of greatness surrounding them. Neither man is physically imposing — each stands perhaps around 5'7" — yet they both stand tall in the chess world.

Chess, at its core, is a meritocratic battleground. It does not discriminate by age, race, or gender; it rewards those who dedicate themselves to mastering its complexities. This purity of competition, where talent and preparation reign supreme, is what makes chess timeless, attracting players and fans across the globe.

Gukesh, at just 18, carried himself with remarkable composure as he stood on the cusp of history. Ding, who came in as champion, has inspired millions by openly discussing his struggles with depression. Observing their poise and focus in person underscored the magnitude of their achievements and filled me with inspiration. It's a bit like the difference between sitting in the Supreme Court to watch oral arguments versus watching a television recap: Being present makes it easier to absorb the energy firsthand.

CONNECTIONS: CHESS AS COMMUNITY

In Singapore I had the chance to interact with the remarkable community around the championship — a who's who of the chess world. I had the privilege of meeting and taking photos with various famous players, including grandmasters Viswanathan Anand, Boris Gelfand, and Alexandra Kosteniuk. These interactions can transcend casual conversation, deepen your connection to the game, and provide a camaraderie



that's difficult to replicate online.

Perhaps most special for me was my encounter with GM Xie Jun, former Women's World Champion. Playing against her in a 10-board simultaneous exhibition was an honor. She was a relentless attacker; I managed to escape with a draw, but that was a testament more to my luck than my skill.

I invited various distinguished guests, including professionals from journalism, banking, government, and law, to join me at the match; even though most of them weren't chess players, they found the event captivating because of the atmosphere of intellectual greatness. During a lull in the VIP reception room, a prominent banking executive asked me, "Who is that gentleman surrounded by fans in the center of the room?"

It was Anand, and I gave the banker a five-minute summary of the former world champion's achievements. Seeing an opportunity to connect two individuals from different worlds, I introduced them. The brief exchange concluded with a photograph, capturing a moment of mutual respect between two luminaries in their respective fields.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY SECK



ATMOSPHERE: CHESS AS MENTAL SPORT

In the playing hall, Gukesh and Ding played behind a glass wall, insulated from the audience's gaze. Spectators could sit on seats near the glass wall and watch the action on large display boards flanking the players. Unlike the online experience, where grandmaster commentary and engine evaluations frame your understanding, watching live strips the game to its essence — a visceral struggle of intellect and will.

We probably all remember how in Game 1, Gukesh opted for an uncommon response to the French as White, and Ding mulled over his seventh move for almost a half-hour. Outside the glass box, the spectators buzzed with tension: What was Ding thinking? Was he freezing? Was he comparing 7. ... Qb6 and 7. ... Be7? Without the noise of online commentary, I had nothing to do but independently ponder over the raw position and the players' expressions. Finally, Ding surprised everyone with the ambitious 7. ... a5.

By move 24, the tables had turned, and the players' body language had shifted as Gukesh fell into time trouble (a reversal of the time situation for most of the match). The audience collectively gasped as Gukesh scrambled to reach his 40th move. He made it with seconds to spare, eliciting audible sighs of relief from the spectators. Gukesh resigned shortly after, but the room erupted into applause, honoring both players for their courage.

By contrast, in Game 2, the audience's mood was generally subdued. Ding, with a slightly better position as White, left the room after playing the subtle 12. b3, offering a queen trade on the only open file. After the queen trade, the audience sensed that the position was dry; after Gukesh offered a rook trade on move 13, some spectators

next to me audibly yawned as Ding pondered his next move for roughly 10 minutes. But Ding's subsequent 14. Rdc1 — a deep positional move with ideas of Ne1-d3 to attack Black's weak c5-pawn — elicited murmurs of surprise from the audience as suddenly, the game didn't seem so dry. Such moments highlighted the complexity of elite chess.

THE INDELIBLE MAGIC OF LIVE CHESS

As a Big Law litigation attorney, I reflected on how sitting in the spectator box taught me not just about chess but law. Both endeavors involve battles of wits and wills; both involve not just careful preparation but perseverance, fighting spirit, and objective judgment under extreme pressure. These are lessons I carry into chess games and the courtroom.

I left Singapore with memories of the games and with a deeper appreciation for the spirit of chess. The intensity of the playing hall, the audience reactions, the dignified applause after each game — all these moments underscored the richness of live chess, even as the game rightfully evolves in the internet age. ♠



Crowds turned out for the opening ceremony.

The 2025 Scholar Chess Player Awards

IF YOU ARE A CURRENT US CHESS MEMBER and a high school junior or senior, you are eligible to apply for one of the following two awards:

- 2025 National Scholar Chess Player Award — total of five \$1,500 scholarships awarded.
- 2025 The Scholar Chess Player Ambassador Award for players rated under 2000 — total of one \$1,500 scholarship awarded.

The scholarships are provided by the US Chess Trust, with a generous supporting contribution from the National Scholastic Chess Foundation (NSCF), to recognize and encourage outstanding high school students who promote a positive image of chess. Award winners will be announced at www.uschesstrust.org and they will be receiving their award in person at the SuperNationals VIII in Orlando, Florida.

The US Chess Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization supporting its vision 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.

To be considered for these awards, you must show that you have met the following criteria:

- You played in at least 25 regular-rated US Chess or FIDE games held from dates January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024. Games with a time control less than G/30,d0 do not count toward the 25-game requirement.
- You have shown outstanding achieve-

ment in academics and chess.

- You have completed at least one year of chess-related and other community service since you started the ninth grade.
- You can demonstrate in an essay (of 500 words or less) how your being selected as a 2025 Scholar Chess Player enables you to further your education, improve your chess, and continue contributing to the chess community for the next five years of your life.
- For the Scholar Chess Player Ambassador: You have shown outstanding community service and leadership by being an exemplary ambassador of the game of chess.

Previous recipients of this award are not eligible.

Applications should be submitted using the online form available at new.uschess.org/news/2025-scholar-chess-player-awards. Documents (.docx, .pdf and other usual extensions) can be uploaded to your application via this form.

Your completed application must include the following:

- Submitted application form via the online form available at new.uschess.org/news/2025-scholar-chess-player-awards.
- Your uploaded high school transcripts showing all courses and grades.
- Your SAT or ACT scores.
- Evidence, listed in the form or uploaded separately, that you have played at least 25 US Chess or FIDE qualifying

rated games held from dates January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.

- A list and brief description of your best chess and academic accomplishments.
- Examples of your chess-related and other community service since ninth grade or later.
- A letter of recommendation from a teacher in a current or former school you have attended in ninth, 10th, 11th, or 12th grade.
- A letter of recommendation from a chess coach or tournament director.
- A letter of support from someone other than a parent or guardian, bearing witness to the nature, duration and impact of your chess-related community service. We also encourage you to submit newspaper articles or web-based stories as evidence.
- Your essay uploaded in the application form of no more than 500 words describing how your being recognized as a Scholar Chess player would help you continue contributing to the greater US Chess community over the next five years. Your essay should follow standard MLA formatting.
- A recent color photograph of yourself, either a headshot or full-length.

The deadline for submitting the application is April 1st, 2025, at 11:59PM Pacific time. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed by the selection committee. ♠

2025 US Chess Federation All-America Chess Team Announced

THE UNITED STATES CHESS FEDERATION is pleased to announce the 2025 All-America Chess Team. Team members will receive team jackets and plaques by mail.

The All-America Chess Team was created in 1987 to honor the very best players ages 18 and under. The team, one of the highest national honors attainable by a young

chess player, is selected on the basis of age, rating, and chess activity during that year, similar to the selection process of “all-conference” sports teams. This year’s candidates were selected based on their age as of January 1, 2024, and their peak post-tournament rating from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. Since this award is

a “post-season” selection, the minimum rating limits in each age group are reviewed annually by US Chess staff and the US Chess Scholastic Council.

The United States Chess Federation wishes to congratulate each of the 58 members of this year’s All-America Chess Team for receiving this outstanding award! ♠

REGISTER TO VOTE: 2025 US CHESS ELECTIONS

US CHESS WILL HOLD AN ELECTION in 2025 for four at-large positions on the US Chess Executive Board. For full details, please refer to the Call for Nominations published in the October and December 2024 issues of *Chess Life*. (Note: The nominating deadline was Dec. 31, 2024.)

If you are a US Chess member 16 or older (active as of June 1, 2025) whose membership expires on or after June 30 of the election year, you are eligible to vote in the election for Executive Board members. You must also have a US Chess membership of at least one year's duration. To vote, you must first register by June 1, 2025.

Visit new.uschess.org/registered-voters to see whether you are registered to vote, or log in to the US Chess website, where your voter status is easily seen on your profile dashboard.

To register to vote, log into your US Chess member dashboard and click on the blue Register to Vote button (located within your profile information between your membership expiration date and the line for TD Level). Please note that the postal ballot option is no longer available; voting is by online ballot only.

A Voter Registration line only appears if we have your birth date so that we can verify that you are over 16 years of age. You can either provide us with your birth date or email governance@uschess.org to request any changes to your voter status.

Your voter registration must be completed by June 1, 2025 (11:59 p.m. CT) to be eligible for the 2025 Executive Board election.

If you do not have an account linked to the US Chess homepage (uschess.org) via the Member Site Login (new.uschess.org/login) in

the upper right corner, visit and follow the prompts for a first time login below the User Account login box. You will need your US Chess ID and an email address unique to your US Chess membership to set up an account. Your account is your gateway for accessing your full range of US Chess benefits.

If you are unable to set up an account and register to vote online, you may also request to be registered to vote by sending your US Chess ID number to governance@uschess.org. Our staff will register you.

US Chess will be using Election Buddy to conduct the election, with oversight by the US Chess Election Committee. We will email you a link to participate in the election around June 10. That email will come from US Chess (invitations@mail.electionbuddy.com) and will have the subject "Vote now: US Chess – 2025 Executive Board Election."

2025 US CHESS ALL-AMERICA CHESS TEAM

AGE 18 (Min. Rating 2500)

JUSTIN WANG (TX)
BALAJI DAGGUPATI (CA)
ANTHONY B. HE (WA)
ROBERT SHLYAKHTENKO (CA)
MAXIMILLIAN LU (CT)

AGE 17 (Min. Rating 2475)

ARTHUR GUO (GA)
JASON WANG (OH)
KIRK GHAZARIAN (CA)
SHARVESH R. DEVIPRASATH (TX)
NICO WERNER CHASIN (NY)

AGE 16 (Min. Rating 2450)

JASON S. LIANG (NY)
VYOM VIDYARTHI (CA)
EVAN PARK (PA)
SANDEEP SETHURAMAN (AZ)
JOSEPH LEVINE (WA)

AGE 15 (Min. Rating 2425)

DIMITAR MARDOV (IL)
ERICK ZHAO (PA)
LIAM HENRY PUTNAM (NY)
BACH NGO (FL)

AGE 14 (Min. Rating 2400)

ABHIMANYU MISHRA (NJ)
BREWINGTON HARDAWAY (NY)
ALICE TERESA LEE (MN)
ERIC CHANG LIU (TX)
HARSHID KUNKA (TX)

AGE 13 (Min. Rating 2350)

ANDY AUSTIN WOODWARD (TX)
RYO WENYU CHEN (TX)
TANITOLUWA ADEWUMI (NY)
HENRY DENG (CA)
BREJESH CHAKRABARTI (FL)

AGE 12 (Min. Rating 2300)

RYAN SUN (MA)
LUCAS JIANG (CA)
BRYAN ENMING LIN (NY)

AGE 11 (Min. Rating 2225)

PATRICK PEIJUN LIU (CA)
MEGAN ALTHEA PARAGUA (NY)

AGE 10 (Min. Rating 2150)

SHARATH RADHAKRISHNAN (OH)

ETHAN GUO (CA)
TED WANG (WA)
KYLE Q. DONG (NJ)
KEVIN WANG (DE)
TARIQ YUE (PA)

AGE 9 (Min. Rating 2050)

LINXI ZHU (NY)
LEV SHANGIN (NY)
CHENXUAN LING (NY)
SANTHOSH AYYAPPAN (NJ)
ALEXANDER JASINSKI (FL)
JOSHUA XIA (CA)
AIMEE YANG (PA)
LERUI ZHENG (MI)
ROCKY WANG (MI)
ARIV DEBMISRA (PA)
AAKASH JANI (FL)

AGE 8 & UNDER (Min. Rating 1950)

AIDEN LINYUAN LI (IL)
AAYANSH GUNTAKA (AZ)
REYANSH PARAGIRI (CA)
AAYANSH PRAMANIK (NJ)
HARDY GU (VA)
YI SHA (FL)
MATTHEW YU (IL)

That Annoying Metaphor

It's time to turn a claim around.

BY GM ANDY SOLTIS

Y

OU HEAR AN ANNOYING claim everywhere these days. "It's a chess game!" the TV announcer says about a football game, an election, or an international crisis. Or you read how someone is being called a genius: "He is playing 4-D chess, when everyone else is playing checkers!"

Chess is being exploited by hyped comparisons. In the winter Olympics, curling is called "chess on ice." In the summer Olympics, fencing is "chess with swords." Golf is "a physical chess match," Tiger Woods says. "I play chess on the floor," the NBA's LeBron James assures us.

The metaphor has as many variations as the Sicilian Defense. "Drawing is rather like playing chess," artist David Hockney said. "Your mind races ahead of the moves that you eventually make." Luciano Pavarotti claimed that singing opera "is a chess game" because "you don't have an excuse" if you perform badly.

If you're as annoyed by all this, it's time we turned the metaphor around:

Instead of people saying "X is chess," we should promote it by saying "Chess is X." For example, we could claim:

Chess is science – only harder: Even scientists say so. After physicist Richard Feynman tried and failed to become a master, he said chess becomes "complicated as you go along. But in physics when you discover new things, it becomes more simple."

Another science icon, Norbert Wiener, was a grandfather of AI. He said, "The research scientist has all the time in the world to carry out his experiments ... his work is governed by his best moments."

But chess is harder. "A chess player cannot make one mistake without finding an alert ad-

versary ready to take advantage of it," he said.

Chess is like a courtroom drama: Edward Lasker, a world-class player a century ago, said a master is like a brilliant lawyer who anticipates every move by his opposing counsel. The preparation, planning, and timing of a successful trial attorney is what winning chess players do to win.

Here is how Gerald Abrahams, an English barrister, anticipated a fellow master who was a noted legal scholar.

KING'S INDIAN ATTACK (A07)

Theodore Henry Tylor
Gerald Abrahams
British Championship, Hastings,
08.14.1953

1. Nf3 d5 2. g3 g6 3. Bg2 Bg7 4. O-O Nh6

This might be called the Abrahams Variation, but there already is one in the Queen's Gambit. Black's move is a forgotten novelty, designed to target a White d4-pawn after 5. c4 c6 6. cxd5 cxd5 7. d4 Nc6 8. Nc3 Nf5.

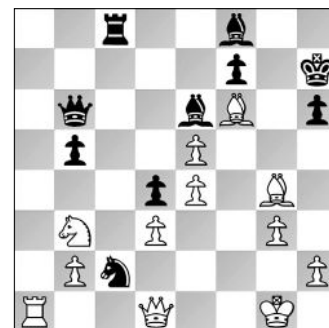
5. c4 c6 6. cxd5 cxd5 7. Nc3 O-O 8. d3 d4 9. Nb5? Nc6 10. e3 Nf5 11. e4 a6! 12. Na3 Nd6 13. Nd2 e5 14. Nac4 Nxc4 15. Nxc4 b5 16. Nd2 g5? 17. a4 Rb8 18. axb5 axb5 19. Nb3 Kh8 20. Bd2 Rg8? 21. Qc1! Qb6 22. Bxg5 Nb4 23. Qd2 Bf8 24. f4 h6 25. Bh4 Rg6 26. fxe5 Be6

Now 27. Nc1! would begin a winning transfer of the knight to f4 via e2.

27. Rf6 Rxf6 28. Bxf6+ Kh7 29. Qd1 Rc8

White would still be winning after 30. Qh5 and 31. Bh3!.

30. Bf3?? Nc2! 31. Bg4!



31. ... Ne3!? 32. Bxe6! Qxe6!

Not 32. ... Nxd1 33 Bf5+ Kg8 34 Bxc8 with a likely draw. By the way, this was played in a British Championship that was won by another lawyer, Daniel Yanofsky.

33. Qh5 Qxb3 34. e6 Qxe6 35. Bxd4 Nc2 36. Ra6 Qd7 37. Bf2 Bg7 38. Rd6? Qxd6 39. Qf5+ Qg6 40. Qxc8 Nd4 41. Qc5 Qf6 42. Kf1 Nf3 43. Qc3 Nxb2+, White resigned.

Another attorney, Daniel Kornstein, presented further evidence of the connection of law to chess in a *New York Law Journal* article. He detailed legal tactics that are comparable to a chess sacrifice or exploiting an overloaded piece. "Zugzwang," he said, "could describe the predicament of a trial witness confronted on the stand with a damaging prior inconsistent statement. Whatever the witness says, he loses."

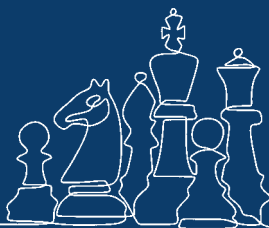
Chess is making a movie: Milos Forman, the chess-loving, Oscar-winning director, said before he started work on a film he tried "to play it" in his mind. He visualized the scenes the way a master mentally plays over the moves of a game.

But, he told his friend GM Lubosh Kavalek in a *Chess Life* interview, a director never

QUIZ FOR FEBRUARY

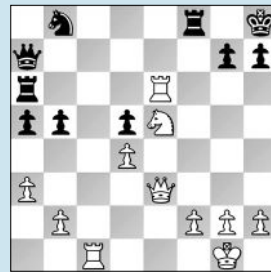
FIRST ROUNDS IN SWISS

System tournaments are often short and predictable. Underdogs get crushed by higher-rated overdogs. But in the biennial Olympiad team tournament the opening round is also the time when you are most likely to see sparkling finishes and clever forced checkmates. This month's quiz features six positions from the 100th-anniversary Olympiad held last year in Budapest. You are asked to find the quickest way to win in each diagram. Hint: There are at least three forced mates to find. For solutions, see Page 63.



PROBLEM 1

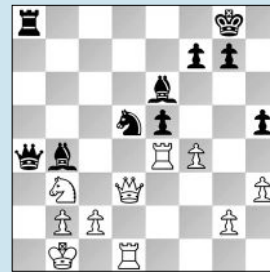
IM Tarun Kanyamarala
CM Ronald Terubea



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2

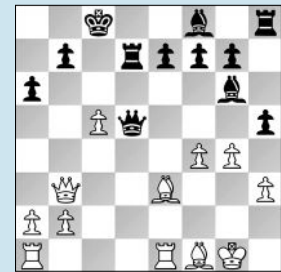
Yash Krishen Maharaj
IM David Fitzsimons



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3

FM Ruslan Sezdebekov
Nigel Francis



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4

GM Daniele Vocaturo
FM Ursus van Bemmelen



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5

CM Charles Eichab
GM Tiger Hillarp Persson



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6

GM Johan-Sebastian
Christiansen
IM Jun Hyeok Lee



WHITE TO MOVE

knows how a movie will turn out until it's done. "It is the same with chess," he said. "You can't know what will happen in an actual game. You can only judge it after it is finished."

Tournament chess is a horse race: This is what Reuben Fine claimed in his book *The World's a Chessboard*. "For months in advance, the contestants groom themselves. They are in serious training, blind to everything else. The bookmakers study their records carefully, and know where they finished a half-length ahead and where they were nosed out, what kind of track they like to run on.

"Yet until the last moment, no one knows what will happen," Fine concluded.

Chess is a reality TV show: After GM Anish Giri won a super-tournament, Wijk aan Zee 2023, he joked that the players were forced to follow a brutal script.

They played very long games in a tournament site "as windy as possible," with "as little possible food," and under "as much pressure as possible."

"They call it Wimbledon of Chess!" but "It is a reality show, and it is meant to break people," Giri said. And speaking of Wimbledon ...

Chess is tennis: The two games are very

similar, according to the youngest-ever world chess champion, Garry Kasparov, and the youngest-ever Wimbledon champion, Boris Becker.

"The common denominator" is geometry, Becker said. "Chess and tennis have the same basic mechanism, which is to impose pressure on a particular point of the court," Kasparov said.

And if both players are well prepared, the result is long volleys that can turn either game into a marathon that lasts five hours.

PARHAM ATTACK (C20)

Boris Becker

GM Garry Kasparov

Internet exhibition game, 03.15.2000

1. e4 e5 2. Qh5 Nc6 3. Qf3? Nd4 4. Qc3? Nf6

But if there is an unforced blunder or two, the point is scored immediately.

5. f3 g6 6. Ne2 c5 7. Nxd4 cxd4 8. Qb3 Bg7 9. Bc4 O-O 10. c3 d5!

(see diagram top of next column)



POSITION AFTER 10. ... d5

So that 11. Bxd5 Nxd5 12. Qxd5 Qh4+ begins to look ugly: 13. g3 Qh3 or 13. Ke2 Be6.

11. Be2 d3 12. Bxd3 dxe4 13. Bxe4 Nxe4 14. fxe4 Qh4+ 15. Kd1 Qxe4 16. Re1? Bg4+ 17. Re2 Qxe2+ 18. Kc2, and White resigned.

The final word goes to an amateur who tried hard to master our game, Woody Allen. His metaphor is a bit strange.

Chess is like ballet: "Except there's no music, no choreography, and the dancers kill each other." ♦

Backward knight moves

Backward jumps can be hard to see, but powerful in practice.

BY **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**

L

AST MONTH I DISCUSSED backward moves and the difficulty players have in finding them for themselves and their

opponents. But one kind of backward move can be particularly challenging to spot: backward moves by knights.

Bishops can be just as good on the edge of the board as in the center, but the knight is a short-range piece, limited to its surroundings. Therefore, our instinct is to centralize the knight in order to activate it; moving them backward — like putting a knight on f8 to fend off an incoming attack against the castled king — feels like a sign of defense. Even with their shortcomings, the knights can be very flexible pieces, and we should remember the lesson from last month: Just because we placed a piece on a good square a few moves ago, that doesn't mean it's destined to stay there forever.

THE POSITIONAL RETREAT

One of the best examples of improving the knight by moving it back to its original square was played by none other than the master of positional play.

A CLASSIC

GM Anatoly Karpov
GM Boris Spassky
Candidates Match (9), Leningrad,
05.03.1974



WHITE TO MOVE

24. Nb1!

The knight was pretty useless on c3 — the e4-square is occupied by White's pawn and the c6-pawn controls both b5 and d5 — so it's headed somewhere better.

24. ... Qb7 25. Kh2 Kg7 26. c3

Another benefit of moving the knight from c3: White can now kick away the annoying b4-knight.

26. ... Na6 27. Re2 Rf8 28. Nd2

The knight rejoins the game.

28. ... Bd8

The bishop would be forced to move away once the knight gets to f3 anyway.

29. Nf3 f6 30. Rd2 Be7 31. Qe6 Rad8 32. Rxd8 Bxd8

If 32. ... Rxd8 33. Nxe5.

33. Rd1 Nb8

The defensive backward knight move! However, this retreat won't do much for Black's crumbling position.

34. Bc5 Rh8 35. Rxd8, Black resigned.

If 35. ... Rxd8 36. Be7 and White will collect the kingside.

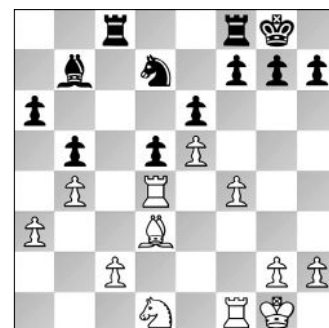
Karpov had the rest of his pieces placed on good squares. He needed one more piece in order to break through. Once the knight joined the action on the other side of the board and kicked away the black bishop, we saw how quickly Spassky's position fell apart.

THE TACTICAL RETREAT

I was quite proud to have found a nifty backward knight move in one of my games last year.

TRAPPING TIME

Elijah Platnick (2116)
WGM Tatev Abrahamyan (2390)
Chicago Open (1), Chicago, 05.23.2024



BLACK TO MOVE

The rook on d4 is unfortunately placed, with no squares at all. But the only piece that can attack it is the knight.

19. ... Nb8!

It looks optically better to head for c4 by playing 19. ... Nb6, and this would have been a logical maneuver for the knight if not for the tactical idea.

20. f5

White has to find a way to create some squares for the trapped rook, and 20. Be2 Rxc2 looks very sad.

20. ... Nc6 21. Rdf4 Rce8

Avoiding the trap 21. ... Nxe5 22. fxe6 fxe6? (22. ... f6 is still fine for Black) 23. Bxh7+.

22. fxe6 Rxe6 23. Bf5 Rxe5

Thanks to my knight maneuver, I managed to win a pawn and eventually the game.

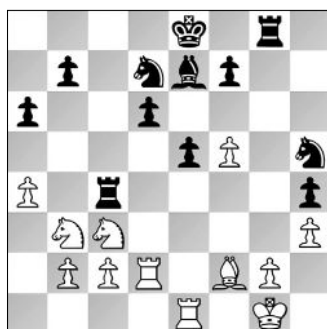
24. Nf2 g5 25. Rf3 Nd4 26. Ng4 Nxf3+ 27. Rxf3 Re2 28. Rh3 d4 29. g3 Bf3 30. Nf6+ Kg7 31. Nd7 Rh8 32. g4 Be4 33. Kf1 Bxf5, White resigned.

The idea was direct — I noticed that my opponent's rook was misplaced and actively looked for moves to attack it.

It is important for us to maintain flexibility in our thinking — just because a piece makes a good move in a certain direction, that doesn't mean it can't change course very soon after.

UP AND BACK

IM Gulrukhbegim Tokhirjonova (2385)
GM Robby Kevlishvili (2556)
U.S. Masters (9), Charlotte, 12.01.2024



WHITE TO MOVE

25. Na5!

A double attack on the rook and the b7-pawn.

25. ... Rb4 26. Nd5 Rxb2

White's winning after 26. ... Rxa4 27. Nxb7 — the black rook is still very poorly placed and might get trapped, and Black's center is starting to crumble as the d6-pawn is now a major target.

27. Nc4!

The knights return!

27. ... Ra2 28. Nc3

The rook is trapped.

28. ... d5

Black attempts to muddy the waters, because there's no saving the rook.

29. Nxd5

Begim must have thought this was good enough and didn't want the difficulty of converting the Exchange. Black had too many weaknesses to hold the position together after 29. Nxa2 dxc4 30. Red1 Nc5 31. Nc3, but I can see how allowing Black to activate his pieces is not appealing.

29. ... Bg5 30. Rde2 Nf4 31. Nxf4 Bxf4 32. Bxh4 Rxa4 33. Re4 Kf8 34. Rd1 Rh8 35. Bd8 Rh6 36. Rxd7 Rc6 37. Rc7 Rxc7 38. Bxc7 b5 39. Nd6 Ra2 40. g3 Bxg3 41. Re2 Bf4 42. f6 Ra3 43. h4 Rc3 44. Bd8, Black resigned.

The perfect demonstration of flexibility — in thinking and in the journey of knights.

COMBINING POSITIONAL AND TACTICAL IDEAS

In a similar structure to my game, Ivanchuk executes an even more involved version of the same idea in order to take advantage of White's weaknesses.

ALL THE WAY BACK

GM Veselin Topalov (2767)
GM Vassily Ivanchuk (2740)
MTel Masters (2), Sofia, 05.09.2008

(see diagram top of next column)

The b3-pawn is completely controlling the b6-knight. At the same time, the b5-pawn is extremely weak. Ivanchuk finds a solution to both problems.

19. ... Nd7!



BLACK TO MOVE

Black attacks the c2-pawn while tactically defending the b5-pawn.

20. Ra2

Not 20. Bxb5 Qa5+ picking up the bishop.

20. ... Nb8!

The knight goes all the way back to its initial spot on its way to c6, where it will kick the queen away from d4 and Black can start attacking the vulnerable a3-pawn.

The knight might look better after 20. ... Nc5 but it's far less effective. After 21. 0-0 Ne4 22. Bd3 the bishop has rejoined the game. Sometimes optically better-looking moves don't actually help the position.

21. 0-0 Nc6 22. Qd2

It may look like c5 is a better square for the queen, but Black has a nice tactical idea: 22. Qc5 b6 and White has to offer a queen exchange with 23. Qd6 because after 23. Qxb5 Ra5 24. Qd3 Nb4!! Black wins material.

22. ... Qb6+ 23. Kh1 Qa5

Now that the knight has improved its position, Ivanchuk trades queens and pressures the a3-pawn.

24. Qxa5 Rxa5 25. Raa1 Rca8 26. Rad1 Rxa3 27. Bxb5 Nb4 28. c4 R8a5

An inaccuracy. Black could have kept a big advantage with 28. ... Nc2! 29. Rd3 d4.

29. f5 exf5 30. g4 Rxb3 31. gxf5 Re3 32. Rb1 Nd3 33. e6 d4 34. Be8

White misses the amazing resource 34. Bc6!, taking advantage of Black's back-rank issues.

34. ... Nc5 35. Bxf7+ Kf8 36. f6 gxf6 37. Rxf6 Ke7 38. Rh6 d3 39. Rxh7 d2 40. Rg1 Re1 41. Bh5+ Kxe6 42. Rhg7 Ne4 43. R7g6+ Ke5, White resigned.

Even the best of the best can miss this idea,

(continued on page 50)

Fine Finessing

Reuben Fine could maneuver, but when the tactics were there he took them.

BY **BRUCE PANDOLFINI**

R

EUBEN FINE (1914-1993) WAS one of America's outstanding players throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Probably his greatest achievement was tying for first with Paul Keres at the 1938 AVRO tournament, which then featured the eight best players in the world. Fine's style could seem dull and uninspired, but actually it was replete with subtlety, nuance and fine position play, bolstered by accurate tactics and calculation. In this month's offering, a game played against Sam Cohen (White) in the 1938 U.S. Championship, we see Dr. Fine's exquisite combination of maneuvering and tactical flair at work.

CARO-KANN DEFENSE, CLASSICAL VARIATION (B18)

Samuel Cohen

Reuben Fine

U.S. Championship (11), New York, 1938

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 dxe4 4. Nxe4 Bf5
5. Ng3 Bg6 6. Nh3 Nd7 7. Nf4 e5



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. **

8. Nxg6

White follows through, exchanging knight for bishop. In turn, Black gets use of the h-file. **

8. Par Score 4 hxg6

As expected, Black takes back toward the center, activating the h8-rook.

9. dxe5

By opening the d-file, White hopes to trade queens and play for an ending. **

9. Par Score 5 Qh4

A more natural reply would have been 9. ... Qa5+ (*full credit*), but Fine's counter is just as good and takes White into less-charted waters.

10. e6

Thinking the e-pawn is not reasonably supportable, White gives it up to create a possible target of attack. **

10. Par Score 5 fxex6

11. Qe2

This zeroes in on e6, while facilitating queenside castling. The drawback is that it obstructs the f1-bishop. **

11. Par Score 7 0-0-0

Rather than trying to defend the e6-pawn, Black opts for king safety and further development.

12. Bd2

This modest development shields the d-file and prepares queenside castling. **

12. Par Score 6 Ngf6

Black continues to get out his pieces.

13. 0-0-0

White follows through on his idea of castling queenside. **

13. Par Score 6 Bc5

A natural developing move, though you may accept *full credit* for 14. ... Nc5, which would also guard e6.

14. Be3

White attempts to neutralize Black's bishop, but the undeveloped kingside remains a problem. **

14. Par Score 6 Ng4

The pressure is clearly mounting after this pesky intrusion.

15. Bxc5

White hopes to relieve some of that pressure by this exchange. **

15. Par Score 3 Nxc5

16. c3

A further weakening. Perhaps it would have been better to play 16. Rxd8+ Rxd8, though Black's superior development, coupled with White's kingside awkwardness, would give Fine an advantage. **

16. Par Score 6 Rxd1+

Fine forces White to expose his king to Black's forces.

17. Kxd1

Obviously, 17. Qxd1 Nxf2 was totally hopeless. **

ABCS OF CHESS

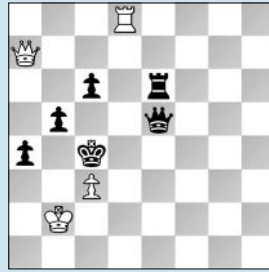
THESE PROBLEMS ARE ALL related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 63.

FEBRUARY EXERCISE:

Players tend to study opening lines until they've reached playable middlegames. In learning these opening lines, try to absorb the typical middlegame setups likely to result. Furthermore, think about the kinds of endgames usually arising from your openings and study them as well. It's helpful to view a game of chess as an organic whole, where the opening leads to certain middlegames that veer toward familiar types of endgames.

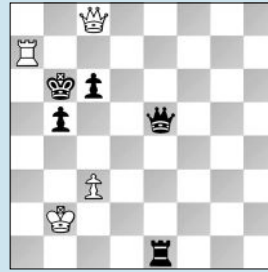
PROBLEM 1

Mating net



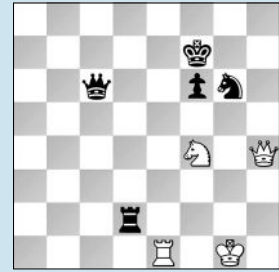
PROBLEM 2

Mating net



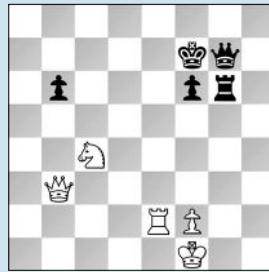
PROBLEM 3

Mating net



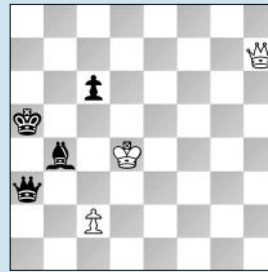
PROBLEM 4

Mating net



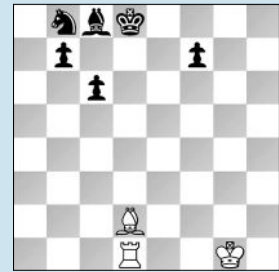
PROBLEM 5

Mating net



PROBLEM 6

Mating net



17. Par Score 5 Rd8+
Black grabs the d-file with a gain of time. You may accept **full credit** for playing 17. ... Rf8 first: After 18. f3 Rd8+, White has incurred further weakness.

18. Kc2
The response 18. Kc1 wouldn't have been any better — both 18. ... Qg5+ or 18. ... Nd3+ would have been more than adequate rejoinders. **

18. Par Score 8 Nxf2
A nice shot indeed. If 19. Qxf2, then 19... Qa4+ 20. b3 (on either 20. Kc1 or 20. Kb1 Black can mate with rook or queen at d1) 20. ... Qxa2+ 21. Kc1 Nxb3 mate. Take **1 bonus point** if you saw all this — and accept **1 bonus point** more if you played 18. ... Ne3+, which is even more compelling.

19. b4
White countertacks and blocks the Black queen's path to a4. Nevertheless, Black is clearly winning. **

19. Par Score 5 Nxb1
Fine decides to take the material he has earned.

20. Nxb1
On 20. bxc5 Qa4+, White's future would continue to look quite bleak. **

20. Par Score 5 Ne4
The main threat is 21. ... Rd2+.

21. Qe3
White saves his queen and clears the way for his bishop to come out. **

21. Par Score 6 Qg4
Fine threatens to invade on d1. Now if 22. Be2, then 22. ... Qxg2.

22. Kb2
White tries to flee with his king, but there's no place to hide. **

22. Par Score 8 Qd1
This is the strongest continuation, but you may accept **full credit** for 22. ... Rd2+, which also wins.

23. Qxe4
A dying man can eat anything (a saying I'd often hear at the Marshall Chess Club in the old days). **

23. Par Score 5 Rd2+
The end is near.

24. Ka3 **

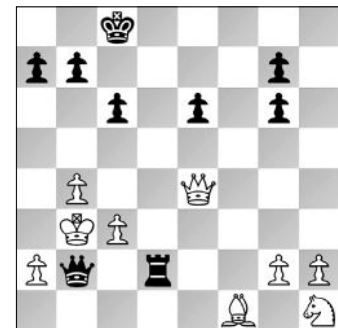
24. Par Score 5 Qc1+

25. Kb3

On 25. Ka4 there would follow 25. ... Rxa2+ 26. Kb3 Ra3+ 27. Kc4 Qxc3 mate. **

25. Par Score 5 Qb2+
This ends things rather nicely. Now after 26. Kc4 (26. Ka4 Qxa2 mate) 26. ... Qxa2+ 27. Kc5 Rd5+ 28. Qxd5 Qxd5 is checkmate.

26. White resigned.



POSITION AFTER 25. ... Qb2+

A concisely conducted attack by the methodical Reuben Fine. ♠

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Fig 1: Franz Bergman, Pig Set, Late 19th or early 20th century, Collection of Jon Crumiller; Fig 2: Unknown Japanese artist, Bird Set, c. 1900, Collection of Jon Crumiller; Fig 3: Franz Bergman, Dog Set, Late 19th or early 20th century, Collection of Jon Crumiller; Fig 4: Jordan, Pandas' World, c. late 1990s or early 2000s, Collection of the World Chess Hall of Fame, formerly collection of Israel and Remi Raphaelli, Carden State Chess, NJ USA; Fig 5: Artist unknown, Animalier Chess Set, Early to mid-20th century, Collection of Jon Crumiller; Fig 6: Artist unknown, Dogs vs. Cats, Date unknown, Collection of the World Chess Hall of Fame; Fig 7: Rachel Brennan, Sea Life Chess Set, 2024, Courtesy of Rachel Brennan



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THROUGH AUG 31, 2025**

Paws and Pawns: Exploring Animal Chess Sets displays a menagerie of animal-themed chess sets from around the world, demonstrating the enduring appeal of the animal kingdom to chess artists. Many of these are from the collection of the World Chess Hall of Fame, while others are on loan from artists, members of Chess Collectors International, and local collectors.

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GRAND CHESS TOUR

2025 Calendar

Superbet Rapid & Blitz Poland

April 24 - May 1, 2025 in Warsaw, Poland

Superbet Chess Classic Romania

May 5 - 17, 2025 in Bucharest, Romania

SuperUnited Rapid & Blitz Croatia

June 30 - July 7, 2025 in Zagreb, Croatia

Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz

August 9 - 16, 2025 in Saint Louis, USA

Sinquefield Cup

August 16 - 29, 2025 in Saint Louis, USA

2025 GCT Finals

Dates and Location TBC

CLEAN SWEEP

Americans take every medal at North American Junior Chess Championships

BY IM JASON LIANG



HERE WERE NO CLEAR favorites going into the North American Junior Chess Championship, held Aug. 14-18 in Calgary, Alberta. In the end, after some last-round drama, the Open section had a wire-to-wire winner, while the entire Girls podium came down to tiebreaks.

The tournament, open to players under 20 years old from Canada, the U.S.A., Mexico, and The Bahamas, drew 126 players (30 titled players, including four IMs and 12 FMs) in the Open section and 37 (with five WFMs and six WCMs) in the Girls section.

OPEN

By round 7, IM Ming Lu stood alone on top, leading the field by a full point with a perfect score. After losing in round 4 against FM Don-

ald Johnson, I had hoped to level the standings with a win against the leader, but I made a strategic error in the early middlegame that left him with a permanent advantage.

FRENCH DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (C02)

IM Jason Liang (2398)

IM Ming Lu (2248)

North American Open Junior Championship (7), Calgary, 08.17.2024

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3 Nc6 5. Nf3 Bd7 6. Be2 Nge7 7. Na3 cxd4 8. cxd4 Nf5 9. Nc2 a5 10. 0-0 a4 11. Bd3

This is a typical move, but Black's response is obvious. It would have been better to stay noncommittal with 11. Rb1.

11. ... Qb6



12. Bxf5?

I wasn't happy about this decision, but I managed to convince myself it was correct. I saw 12. Rb1 Nfxd4 13. Nfxd4 Nxd4 14. Be3 Bc5 15. b4 axb3 e.p. 16. Nxd4 Bxd4 17. Rxb3 Qa7 18. Bxd4 Qxd4 19. Rxb7 Qxe5 and thought Black would be fine after a quick ... Qe5-d6 and 0-0, but after 20. Qb1 (or 20. Qb3) 20. ... Qd6 21. Bb5! Black doesn't get to castle after all.

I could have also played 12. Kh1 which actually defends the d4 pawn: 12. ... Nfxd4 13. Ncxd4 Nxd4 14. Be3 Bc5 15. Rc1! and Black loses material.

12. ... exf5 13. Bf4

My thinking was I could bring my knight to e3 and my queen to d3 to provoke ... g7-g6, after which the dark squares on the kingside are tender. But Black can delay castling to support g5. I needed to be consistent and play against the structure with 13. Nfe1 Be7 14. Nd3 Be6.

13. ... h6 14. h4 Be7 15. Ne3

Black also gets a slight edge after 15. Qd2 Nd8.

15. ... Be6 16. Qd2?!

The better move order was 16. Qd3 Qa6 17. Qd2, though Black remains on top.



16. ... Qd8!

A brutal blow — after this, I don't have any way to make sense of my position.

17. h5 g5 18. hxg6 e.p. fxg6 19. Qd3 g5 20. Bh2 Qd7 21. Nd1 0-0 22. Nc3 Kg7 23. Nb5 g4

It was even stronger to play 23. ... f4.

24. Ne1 f4 25. Qd1 Nb4

Black could have won right away with 25. ... Nxe5 26. Qe2 Ng6 27. Nc7 Qxc7 28. Qxe6 g3.

26. Nd6

I had a better try in 26. Nc3, when Black still has to find a way forward.

26. ... Bxd6 27. exd6 Qxd6 28. Nd3 Nxd3 29. Qxd3 Bf5 30. Qa3 Qxa3 31. bxa3 Bg6 32. Rfe1 h5 33. Re7+ Kh6 34. Rc1 h4

(see diagram top of next column)

The bishop is about to be entombed.

35. Kf1 g3 36. Bg1 Rfe8 37. Re5 Rac8 38. Rxc8 Rxc8 39. fxg3 hxg3 40. Ke2 Rc1 41.



POSITION AFTER 34. ... h4

Be3 fxe3 42. Rxe3 Rc2+ 43. Kf3 Be4+ 44. Kxg3 Rxg2+ 45. Kf4 Rxa2 46. Rg3 Rb2 47. Rg8 Rb3 48. Rb8 Kg6 49. Ke5 Kg5 50. Rg8+ Kh4 51. Rg7 b6 52. Rb7 Kh3 53. Kd6 Kg3 54. Kc6 Kf3 55. Ra7 Rxa3 56. Kxb6 Rb3+ 57. Kc5 a3 58. Ra5 Ke3, White resigned.

It looked grim for the rest of the field as Ming was now a point and a half ahead. Could anyone stop him in his tracks?

After an early loss against CM Carter Ho in round 3, FM Samrug Narayanan needed a string of victories to have a shot at the top spots. In a sharp position, Samrug handled the tactics better to come out with a victory.

ENGLISH OPENING (A13)

IM Ming Lu (2248)

FM Samrug Narayanan (2389)

North American Open Junior Championship (8), Calgary, 08.17.2024

1. c4 e6 2. g3 Nf6 3. Bg2 d5 4. Nf3 d4

Needing a win, Samrug chooses the most ambitious way of playing.

5. e3 c5 6. exd4 cxd4 7. d3 Nc6 8. 0-0 Bd6



9. Na3 0-0 10. Nc2 e5 11. b4 Re8 12. Re1 a6 13. Bg5 Bf5 14. c5 Bf8 15. a4 h6 16. b5 axb5?!

It was better to keep the a-file closed with 16. ... Na5 17. Bxf6 Qxf6 18. Nh4 (or 18. bxa6 bxa6 19. Nh4 Rab8) 18. ... Bh7 when Black

has a slight advantage.

17. axb5 Rxa1 18. Qxa1 Nb8

White would also be fine after 18. ... hxg5 19. bxc6 Bxd3 20. Nb4 Be4 21. Nxe5, although it's complex.

19. Bxf6 Qxf6 20. Ncxd4 Bxd3 21. Nb3

White still has a good game after 21. Qc3! e4 22. Nd2 Nd7 23. c6.

21. ... Bc4 22. Na5

It may seem hard to play 22. Nfd4, but White needs to retain the b5-pawn.

22. ... Bxb5 23. Nxb7 Nc6 24. Nd2 Nd4

25. Ne4 Qg6 26. Qb2!?

I'm not sure why Ming didn't play 26. Ned6 keeping the line open for his strong bishop on g2.

26. ... Bc6 27. Nbd6 Ra8 28. f4 Qh5 29. fxe5

(see diagram next page)

29. ... Qxe5? 30. Qf2



IM Jason Liang



POSITION AFTER 29. fx e5

White would win the knight after 30. Nc4. The best Black has is 30. ... Nf3+ 31. Bxf3 Bxc5+ hoping for 32. Kg2? Qxb2+ 33. Nxb2 Ra2 34. Re2 Bd4, but White can just play 32. Kh1.

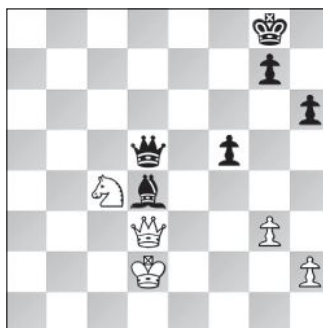


FM Samrug Narayanan

30. ... f5 31. Nc4 Qc7 32. Ned6

Or 32. Qxd4 Bxe4 33. Nd6 keeping the f8-bishop at bay.

32. ... Bxg2 33. Qxg2 Qxc5 34. Qxa8 Nf3+ 35. Kg2 Nxe1+ 36. Kf1 Nd3 37. Ke2 Nc1+ 38. Kd2 Nb3+ 39. Kc3 Nd4 40. Qe8 Qd5 41. Qe3 Bxd6 42. Qxd4 Qf3+ 43. Qe3 Be5+ 44. Kd2 Qd5+ 45. Qd3 Bd4



46. Qe2?

White could stay in the game with 46. Kc2.

46. ... Bg1+ 47. Kc2?

Black is still winning after 47. Kc3, but now White loses the h2-pawn.

47. ... Bxh2 48. Qxh2 Qxc4+ 49. Kb1 Qd3+ 50. Ka1 Kh7 51. Qf2 Qa3+ 52. Kb1 Qb3+ 53. Ka1 Kg6 54. Qf4 Qd5 55. Qe3 Qe4 56. Qb6+ Kh5 57. Qc7 Qd4+ 58. Ka2 Kg4 59. Qf7 g5 60. Qe6 Qf2+ 61. Ka1 Kxg3 62. Qxh6 Qg1+, White resigned.

The last round was a bloodbath, with the eventual top six finishers winning their final games. Samrug set the precedent, winning

his game fairly quickly against Canadian IM Nicholas Vetteese.

RUY LOPEZ, BERLIN DEFENSE (C65)

FM Samrug Narayanan (2389)

IM Nicholas Vetteese (2333)

North American Open Junior Championship (9), Calgary, 08.18.2024

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. d3 Bc5 5. Nbd2 d6 6. c3 0-0 7. 0-0 a6 8. Ba4 Ba7 9. h3 Ne7 10. Re1 Ng6 11. Nf1



11. ... Nh5

Spirited, but perhaps too ambitious. Black doesn't want to get stuck in passivity, but 11. ... h6 12. Ng3 c5!? makes a lot of sense.

12. Bg5 f6 13. Be3 Nh4 14. d4 Kh8 15. Ng3 c6 16. Bc2 Be6 17. Ne2 Nh5?

Black is provoking White in the hopes of generating some kingside play, but White is more prepared for the game to open up, with more central space and harmonious development. White only has a slight advantage after 17. ... Nxe2+ 18. Qxe2 Qc7.

18. g4 Nh4 19. Bxf4 exf4 20. Qd2 Qd7



How does White stop the threat of ... Be6xg4? He doesn't!

21. Nxf4 Bxg4 22. Nxg6+ hxg6 23. hxg4 Qxg4+ 24. Kh2 d5

White wins the queen after 24. ... Qxf3 25. Bd1.



IM Ming Lu

25. Rg1!

Based on more tactics against the black queen.

25. ... Qe6

Black loses the queen after 25. ... Qxf3 26. Rg3 Bb8 27. e5 Qh5+ 28. Rh3; If 25. ... Bb8+ 26. Ne5 and Black stays down material after 26. ... Qh5+ 27. Kg3 fxe5 28. Rh1.

26. e5 fxe5 27. Rxg6 Rf6 28. Nxe5 Raf8 29. f4 Kg8 30. Rag1 Rxg6 31. Rxg6 Qe7 32. Rg4 c5 33. Qd3, Black resigned.

This result put immense pressure on Ming, as a draw would give Samrug the tournament win on tiebreaks, but he came through:

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS VARIATION (D52)

FM Ryan Amburgy (2230)

IM Ming Lu (2248)

North American Open Junior Championship (9), Calgary, 08.18.2024

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. Nc3 e6 5. Bg5 Nbd7 6. e3 Qa5 7. cxd5 Nxd5 8. Rc1 Nxc3 9. bxc3 Ba3 10. Rc2 b6 11. Be2 Ba6 12. 0-0 Bxe2 13. Qxe2 0-0 14. e4 e5 15. Rd1 Rfe8 16. h3 Bf8 17. Bh4 exd4 18. cxd4 White could have also played 18. Nxd4. It's not the most natural, but with the c6-pawn hanging and f2-f4 on tap, Black would face some problems.

18. ... c5 19. Ng5 Be7



20. Qg4

Ryan missed 20. Nxf7!. Maybe he rejected it seeing that 20. ... Kxf7 21. Qh5+ Kf8 22. Qf5+ Bf6 23. e5 cxd4 leads to equality, but instead 23. dxc5! Rad8 24. Rcd2 Qxc5 25. Bxf6 Qxf5 26. exf5 gxf6 27. Rxd7 Re1+ 28. Rxe1 Rxd7 wins a pawn, although Black keeps great drawing chances.

20. ... Nf6

Black could equalize with 20. ... Qa4.

21. Qf5 g6?

Too weakening. The tactics come naturally for White after this. Black can still equalize after 21. ... cxd4 22. e5 Qd5 23. g4 h6 24. exf6 Qxf5 25. gxf5 hgx5 26. fxe7 gxh4.

22. Qf3 cxd4 23. Qb3 Rf8



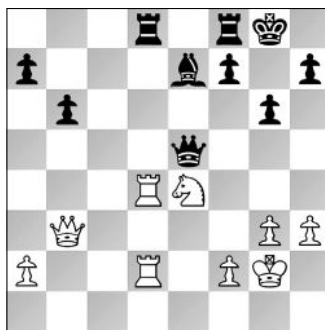
24. Rxd4??

Letting the advantage slip. It's hard to believe, but Black is lost after 24. Nf3!! due to the pin, the stranded queen and an overall lack of coordination. For example, 24. ... Rae8 25. Rxd4 b5 26. Bg5.

24. ... Nxe4 25. Nxe4

It doesn't work to play 25. Nxf7 Qe1+ 26. Kh2 Rxf7 27. Bxe7 Nxf2 28. Bf6 Ne4 29. Rc7 Qg3+ with equality, but simply playing a pawn down is not the way.

25. ... Bxh4 26. g3 Rad8 27. Rcd2 Be7 28. Kg2 Qe5

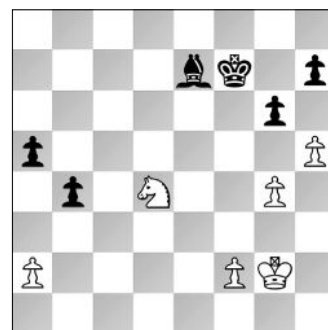


The more rooks that are traded, the easier Black's task becomes.

29. Rxd8 Rxd8 30. Rxd8+ Bxd8 31. Qd3 Be7 32. Nc3 Bc5 33. Ne4 Qd4 34. Qf3 Kg7 35. g4 Qe5 36. Qd3 Be7 37. Nd2 b5 38. Nf3 Qc5 39. h4 Qc4 40. Qd7 Qe6?!

In general, queen trades make the win easier, but isolating a pawn to accomplish that feat is unnecessary, since Black's king is safe. He could have just played 40. ... Bc5.

41. Qxe6 fxe6 42. Nd4 b4 43. Nxe6+ Kf7 44. Nd4 a5 45. h5



45. ... g5?!

Losing a valuable tempo. Black wins more easily with 45. ... gxh5 46. gxh5 a4.

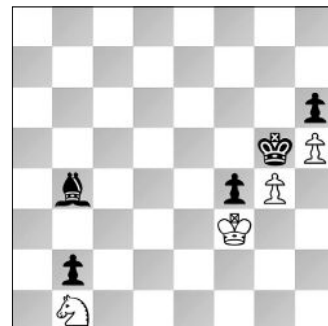
46. f4?

Returning the favor. White has chances to draw after activating the king with 46. Kf3 a4 47. Ke4 Bc5?! 48. Kd5!. For example, the pawn endgame after 48. ... Bxd4 49. Kxd4 Ke6 50. Kc4 is a draw.

46. ... gxf4 47. Kf3 Bd6 48. Ke4 a4 49. Kd5

The best try was 49. g5 hoping for 49. ... Bc5 50. Nf3, but the easiest winning idea is 49. ... Kg8 giving the move to White with 50. Kd3 Be7 51. Nf3 Kf7.

49. ... Kf6 50. Ke4 Kg5 51. Kf3 Be5 52. Nb5 b3 53. axb3 axb3 54. Na3 b2 55. Nb1 Bd6 56. Nd2 Bb4 57. Nb1 h6, White resigned.



A picturesque finish!

Congratulations to Ming Lu for earning his first GM norm and to Samrug Narayanan for earning his second IM norm (since then, Samrug has earned his 3rd IM norm and crossed the 2400 rating threshold!).

I took bronze on tiebreaks ahead of a group of Canadian talents — in tiebreak order, FM Aaron Reeve Mendes, IM Jonathan Han, and CM Max Chen. Meanwhile, Donald Johnson, who had had an impressive event so far, would've joined Samrug at 7½/9 with

a win. However, a loss in the final round let his opponent, 12-year-old FM Aaron Reeve Mendes, and three other players leapfrog him in the standings.

GIRLS

Despite the smaller overall size of the playing field, the girls' section remained tight at the top leading up to the penultimate round.

Then came the fireworks: Co-leader WFM Chloe Gaw had a smooth victory against pre-tournament rating favorite WFM Laurie Qiu.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED (D36)

WFM Chloe Gaw (1981)

WFM Laurie Qiu (2036)

North American Girls Junior Championship (8), Calgary, 08.17.2024

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. cxd5 exd5 5. Bg5 Be7 6. e3 h6 7. Bh4 0-0 8. Bd3 c6 9. Nge2 Nbd7 10. Qc2 Re8 11. 0-0 Ne4 12. Bxe7 Qxe7 13. Bxe4 dxe4 14. Rfd1 Nf6 15. d5



15. ... Qc5?!

Black's position is very tough to play. Giving White a central passed pawn does not look appealing, but was probably best: After 15. ... c5 16. d6 Qe5 17. Nb5 Rd8 18. h3 a6 19. Nc7 Rb8 you could make a case that the d6-pawn is overextended.

16. Rac1?!

White's better after 16. dxc6 Qxc6 17. h3 Be6 18. Rd4 when the e4-pawn is overextended and White has complete control of the d4-square.

16. ... Bg4?

Black is OK after 16. ... Nxd5 17. Nxd5 Qxc2 18. Rxc2 cxd5 19. Rxd5 (19. Nc3 Rd8 20. Rd4 Be6 21. Rcd2 f5 22. Nxd5 Kf7 is also solid for Black) 19. ... Be6 20. Rb5 Bxa2 21. Rxb7 Reb8

followed by pressuring the b-pawn.

17. h3 Bh5 18. Qb3 Qb6 19. dxc6 bxc6

Black had to create some kind of imbalance: After 19. ... Qxb3 20. axb3 bxc6 21. Rd6 Rab8 White is still better, but Black has something to play against.

20. Qxb6 axb6 21. g4! Bg6 22. Rd6

After a precise string of moves, White wins at least a pawn.

22. ... b5

It's even more miserable after 22. ... Rac8: White gets great squares for the knights after 23. Nd4 c5 24. Nc6 Rc7 25. Nb5 Rb7 26. Rcd1 and Black is totally tied up.

23. b3 Rec8 24. Nd4 b4 25. Na4 c5 26. Nb6 Rd8 27. Rxd8+ Rxd8 28. Rxc5 Rb8 29. Rb5 Ne8 30. Rxb4



The conversion is straightforward from here.

30. ... f6 31. Nd5 Rxb4 32. Nxb4 Bf7 33. a4 Nc7 34. Nbc6 Kf8 35. b4 Ke8 36. Kf1 Kd7 37. Ke1 Bc4 38. Na5 Bd3 39. Nb7 Bc4 40. Nc5+ Kc8 41. Nxe4 Bd5 42. Nc3 Bc4 43. Ncb5 Bxb5 44. Nxb5 Nd5 45. Nd6+ Kd7 46. Nf5 g6 47. Nh4 g5 48. Nf5 Nxb4 49. Nxh6 Nd3+ 50. Ke2 Nc5 51. a5 Kc6 52. Ng8 Nd7 53. Kd3 Kb5 54. Ke4 Kxa5 55. Kf5 Nc5 56. Nxf6 Nd3 57. f4 gxf4 58. exf4 Kb5 59. g5 Nb4 60. g6 Nc6 61. g7 Kc5 62. Ke6 Nd4+ 63. Kd7, Black resigned.

But co-leader WFM Sahana Aravindakshan's game was a roller coaster ride:

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E92)

Hanxi (Hancy) Jiang (1957)

WFM Sahana Aravindakshan (2003)

North American Girls Junior Championship (8), Calgary 08.17.2024

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. h3 0-0 6. Be3 Nbd7 7. Nf3 e5 8. d5 Nc5 9. Nd2 a5 10. g4 c6 11. Be2 a4



12. h4?!

Generally a great move, but mistimed here. White would get a better version of the game with 12. g5 Nfd7 13. h4 Qa5 14. h5 a3 15. b4 Qxb4 16. Rc1 as the e4-pawn is not in need of protection.

12. ... Qa5! 13. f3 a3 14. b4 Qxb4 15. Rc1

It's hard to trade queens when you're down a pawn, but 15. Qc1 might have been more precise. It's unclear after 15. ... Qb2 16. Rb1 Qxc1+ 17. Rxc1.

15. ... h5

Here White has to make a difficult choice — close the position with g4-g5 or keep the tension?

16. Kf2?

An aggressive idea, trying to keep the rook on h1 for a future attack, but White's king immediately gets into trouble. It's really hard to play 16. 0-0! when you've already pushed all your kingside pawns, but it was the safest option — despite the optics, Black doesn't actually have any tactics here to worry about.

16. ... Qa5?

Black takes over after 16. ... hxg4 17. fxg4 Bxg4! (the simple 17. ... cxd5 is also very strong: if 18. Nxd5 Nxd5 19. cxd5 b5! 18. Bxg4 Nd3+ 19. Kg3 Nxc1 20. Qxc1 cxd5 21. exd5 Nxg4 22. Kxg4 e4 when the openness of the position favors the rooks.

17. Nf1?

White insists on going all in, but again, with the White king on f2 lined up with Black's rook on f8, an ... f7-f5 break would be killer. White is OK after 17. Nb3.

17. ... hxg4 18. Ng3 Na4 19. Nxa4 Qxa4

20. Qd2 cxd5 21. exd5 gxf3 22. Bxf3 Nh7?

It makes sense to play for ... f7-f5, but this move gives White time to create counterplay. The more active and direct 22. ... Ng4+ leads to a huge advantage for Black: 23. Bxg4 Bxg4 24. h5 f5 25. Bh6 f4 26. Bxg7 Kxg7 27.

Ne4 (27. h6+ Kh8 28. Ne4 Qa7+ 29. Kg2 Qe3 wins) 27. ... gxh5.

23. h5 g5?

Going in the wrong direction. 23. ... Qd7 keeps some advantage.

24. Bxg5 Qa5 25. Qxa5 Rxa5 26. Be7 Re8 27. Bxd6



All of a sudden White is the one with more activity!

27. ... Ra6 28. Bc7?

Time is of the essence! White is on top after 28. c5 threatening h5-h6 and Bf3-e2 with great play.

28. ... f5 29. c5 Bd7

Black needed to block the h-pawn with 29. ... Rh6.

30. Be2?

White has a big advantage after 30. c6 bxc6 31. dxc6 Be6 32. h6 Bf6 33. Nh5 Bxa2 34. Nxf6+ Nxf6 35. h7+ Nxh7 36. Rhg1+ Kh8 37. Rc5 and the bishops go to work.

30. ... Rf6 31. Rb1 e4

Black needs piece activity. After 31. ... Ng5 White is only slightly better. If 32. Rxb7? f4 Black is back on top.

32. Bf4 Rf7 33. Ke3?

Too prophylactic. The c5-d5 pawn mass looks nice, but they can't stay there forever. White has a crushing position after 33. Rxb7 Bd4+ 34. Kg2 Bxc5 35. Rc1 Rc8 36. d6 with Be2-c4 coming up.

33. ... Bb2 34. h6 Nf6 35. Bc4 Ng4+ 36. Ke2 Kh7

(see diagram top of next column)

37. Nf1??

Another grave error. Backward knight moves are seldom good, and once again the key was activity. After 37. c6! bxc6 38. dxc6 Be6



POSITION AFTER 36. ... Kh7

39. Bxe6 Rxe6 40. Rhc1 Bxc1 41. Rxc1 Re8 42. Rc5 White survives.

37. ... Ne5! 38. Ne3 Nxc4 39. Nxc4 Bb5 40. Rhc1 Bxc1 41. Rxc1 Rc8 42. Ke3 Rxc5 43. Kd4 Rxc4+ 44. Rxc4 Bxc4 45. Kxc4 e3 46. Bxe3 f4 47. Bf2 Kxh6 48. d6 Kg5 49. Kd5 Kf5 50. Bc5 f3 51. Be3 Rd7 52. Bf2 Rh7 53. Kc5 Ke6 54. Bg3 Rh3 55. Bf2 Rh2 56. Bg3 Rxa2, White resigned.

Both Chloe and Sahana entered the last round a full point ahead of the field. It looked like a two-horse race for first place, but their rivals were hungry for victory.

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B67)

WCM Avery Yu (1898)

WFM Chloe Gaw (1981)

North American Girls Junior Championship (9), Calgary, 08.18.2024

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Bg5 e6 7. Qd2 a6 8. 0-0-0 Bd7 9. Kb1 b5 10. Nxc6 Bxc6 11. f3 Qc7 12. Ne2 Rc8 13. Nd4 Be7 14. h4 h6 15. Be3 Nd7 16. g4 Ne5 17. Be2 Bb7

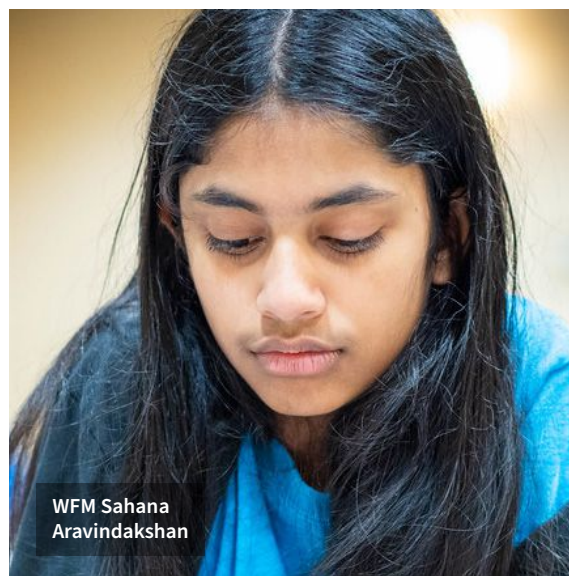


18. Rdg1?!

The alternative 18. Rhg1, stepping off the a8-h1 diagonal, would've avoided a lot of the tactics that arise in the game: After 18. ... d5 19. g5 dxe4 20. gxh6 gxh6 21. fxe4 Bxe4 22. Bh5 Black is still basically OK.



WCM Avery Yu



WFM Sahana Aravindakshan



WFM Chloe Gaw

18. ... d5! 19. g5 dxe4 20. g6

The point of White's choice of rook on move 18, but with one good defensive move, there would be no attack. If 20. gxf6 gxf6 21. fxe4 Bxe4 White has to lose time defending the h1-rook.

20. ... exf3?

Playing with fire. This doesn't lose for Black, but the path to survival is narrow. It was much simpler to just play 20. ... Bf6 and after 21. gxf7+ Qxf7 or 21. ... Kxf7, the bishop on f6 prevents any Rxf7+ tactics and exerts pressure on the center. Black is close to winning.

21. gxf7+ Nxf7

Black would've had a cold shower after 21. ... Kxf7 22. Rxf7+.

22. Nxe6

What now? White is crashing through, so keeping the status quo isn't going to work.

22. ... Qd6??

When your king is in danger, look for ways to trade queens: 22. ... Qxc2+!! 23. Qxc2 Rxc2 24. Kxc2 fxe2 25. Rh2 Bf3 26. Nxf7+ Kd7 and the two bishops outclass the rooks. But now White's just winning:

23. Nxf7+ Kf8 24. Bd3! f2 25. Rg6 Bxh1 26. Rxd6 Bxd6 27. Qxf2 Kxf7 28. Qg1+ Kf8 29. Qxh1 Re8 30. Bd2 Rg8 31. h5 Rg4 32. a3 Kg7 33. Qh3 Rg1+ 34. Ka2 Kf8 35. Bg6 Re7 36. Qf5 Kg7 37. Bxf7 Rxf7 38. Qd5 Bh2 39. Bxh6+ Kg8 40. Be3 Rg3 41. Qe6 Bg1 42. Bh6 Bc5 43. Qe8+ Bf8 44. Bxf8 Rxf8 45. Qe6+ Rf7 46. Qe8+ Rf8 47. Qe6+ Rf7 48. h6 Rgf3 49. Qg6+ Kh8 50. Qxa6 R3f5 51. a4 bxa4 52. Qxa4 Kh7 53. Qa6 R5f6 54. Qd3+ Kxh6 55. b3 Kg7 56. b4 Ra7+ 57. Kb3 Rfa6 58. Qd4+ Kf7 59. c3 Ke7 60. Qc5+ Kd7 61. b5 Ra5 62. Qc6+ Kd8 63. b6, Black resigned.

With this victory, Avery caught up to Chloe with 6½/9. Could Sahana clinch the title with a draw?

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B40)

Irene Xie (1804)

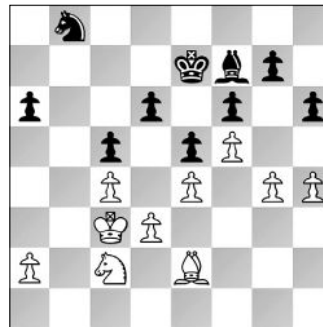
WFM Sahana Aravindakshan (2003)
North American Girls Junior Championship (9), Calgary, 08.18.2024

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. g3 Nc6 4. Bg2 Nf6 5. d3 e5 6. c4 d6 7. Nc3 Be7 8. Be3 0-0 9. 0-0 a6 10. Ne1 Ng4 11. Nc2 Rb8 12. h3 Nxe3

**13. Nxe3**

White could have played 13. fxe3 controlling the d4-square and planning Kh1-h2, h3-h4 and Bg2-h3, aiming for a good knight vs. bad bishop situation.

13. ... Bg5 14. Ncd5 Bxe3 15. Nxe3 Be6 16. Qd2 b5 17. b3 Qc7 18. f4 f6 19. f5 Bf7 20. g4 bxc4 21. bxc4 Qa5 22. Qxa5 Nxa5 23. Rab1 Nc6 24. Nc2 Rfd8 25. Bf3 Kf8 26. Kf2 Ke7 27. Ke3 Kd7 28. Kd2 Kc7 29. Rg1 h6 30. h4 Kd7 31. Be2 Ke7 32. Kc3 Rxb1 33. Rxb1 Rb8 34. Rxb8 Nxb8



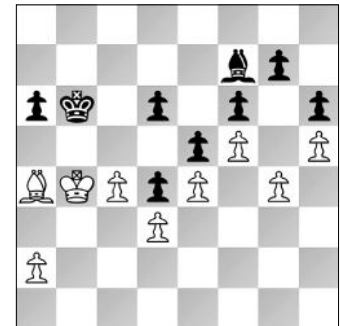
The dust has settled, and neither side should be able to make progress.

35. Ne1 Nc6 36. Nf3 Kd7 37. Bd1 Kc7 38. Ba4 Nd4 39. Nxd4 cxd4+ 40. Kb4 Kb6 41. Bd7 Kc7 42. Ba4 Kb6 43. h5

(see diagram top of next column)

43. ... Kc7??

Giving up a crucial square to White's king. White has nothing after 43. ... a5+ 44. Ka3

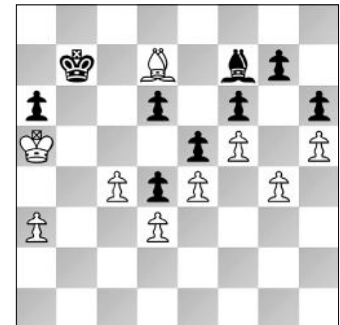


POSITION AFTER 43. h5

Kc5 45. Bd7 Kb6 46. Ka4 Ka6 47. a3 Kb6 48. Bb5 Bg8 49. Be8 Ka6 because Black can always shuttle ... Kb6-a6 or ... Bf7-g8 and won't be put in zugzwang.

44. Ka5 Kb7 45. a3 Ka7 46. Bc6 Bg8 47. Be8 Kb7 48. Bd7 Bf7 49. Ba4 Bg8 50. Be8 Ka7 51. Bd7 Bf7 52. Ba4??

The win is there with 52. Bc8!.

52. ... Kb7 53. Bd7**53. ... Ka7??**

There's an incredible draw with 53. ... Kc7!! 54. Be6 Be8 and taking the a6-pawn loses: If 55. Kxa6 Ba4 threatening to head to c2. If 56. c5 dxc5 57. Bc4 Bd1.

54. Be6 Be8 55. Bc8 Bc6 56. Bxa6 Ba8 57. Bb5 Bb7, and Black resigned.

It was a shocking loss, leaving three players tied for first. In the end, Aravindakshan took the gold on tiebreaks, earning her WIM title and a WGM norm; Gaw took silver, clinching a WIM norm, and bronze went to WCM Avery Yu, who received the WFM title and a WIM norm. And every medal, Open and Girls, went to an American player! ♠

For up-to-date chess news and information, check out **Chess Life Online** at [uschess.org/clo](https://www.uschess.org/clo) on a regular basis.

MAKE YOUR MOVE

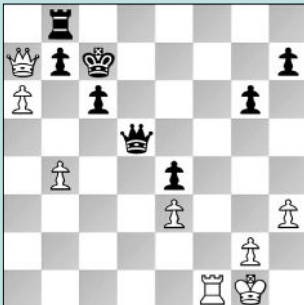
BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM GAMES PLAYED IN events in Charlotte, N.C., and St. Louis, Mo., in late 2024.

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.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 2.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 3.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 4.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 5.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 6.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 7.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 8.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



BLACK TO MOVE

Position 1: WIND THROUGH OPEN DOORS

Position 2: OUT OF SPACE

Position 3: UNWELCOME INTRUSION

Position 4: HOW MANY POSSIBLE CAPTURES?

Position 5: A PUNCH IN THE GUT

Position 6: SUBTLE MOVES

Position 7: ISOLATE THE WEAKNESS

Position 8: UNCOMMON LOOSENESS

Position 9: POWER BLASTER

Comrades in ARMS

The Armed Forces
Open draws 96 players.

BY **VLADIMIR LIONTER**



A RECORD 96 PLAYERS CAME TO the United States Naval Academy, in Annapolis, Maryland, Oct. 12-14 to compete in the largest Armed Forces Open in recent memory.

The five-round FIDE-rated Swiss brings together current and former members of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, Space Force, and National Guard

and Reserve, and lets military personnel compete against peers, bond over chess, and foster camaraderie and community. As chess continues to thrive within the armed forces, events like these celebrate individual achievements and strengthen the sense of community and pride among military chess players.

FM Christopher Shen, an Air Force ROTC cadet from Harvard, took first place with a perfect 5/5 score. Andrew Peraino, a

naval petty officer first class and the 2020 champion, took second on tiebreak over Army Cadet Addison Lee and Navy Petty Officer First Class Enrico Balmaceda, all with 4½.

This was Shen's first Armed Forces championship. He appreciated the setting of the Naval Academy, and of the "gorgeous" city of Annapolis.

"You walk into the room and there's a different kind of atmosphere" at the Armed

Forces championship, Shen said. “There’s a great sense of pride to be sitting down with [fellow military members] enjoying a game, regardless of what the result is.”

That might be true, but the results went pretty well for Shen. And while that might come as no surprise, given that he was nearly 300 points clear of the second seed, it comes with its own kind of pressure:

ENGLISH OPENING (A17)

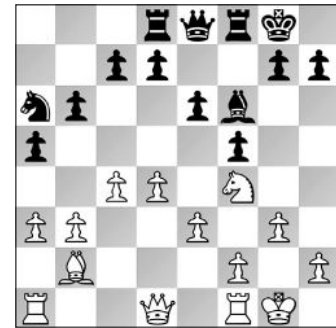
FM Christopher Shen (2430)

Larry Larkins (2050)

US Armed Forces Open (4), Annapolis, 10.13.2024

Annotations by FM Christopher Shen

1. c4 b6 2. Nf3 Bb7 3. g3 e6 4. Bg2 f5 5. 0-0



POSITION AFTER 16. Nf4

only slightly better after 17. Nd3 d6 18. Qf3 Nb8 19. b4 Nc6 20. b5 Ne7.

17. Qe2 c5 18. h4 Bh8 19. Rad1 Qf7 20. Rd2 Bf6 21. Rfd1 Qg7 22. Qf3

Improving White’s position. The threat of Qf3-b7 forces Black into more maneuvering.

22. ... Rb8 23. a4!

I couldn’t move the d-pawn without addressing Black’s pressure on the a1-h8 diagonal, so the b2-bishop must find a new home!

23. ... Rfe8 24. Ba3 Red8 25. Ne2 Kh8 26. e4 fxe4?!

Black was better off with 26. ... cxd4 even though White has an advantage after 27. Nxd4 Nc5 28. e5! Be7 (not 28. ... Bxe5? 29. Bxc5 bxc5 30. Nxe6!) 29. Ne2 Kg8 30. Nf4.

27. Qxe4 Be7 28. d5 exd5 29. Rxd5

Now the d7-pawn is a permanent weakness.

29. ... Bf6 30. Qg4



30. ... h5

Black’s best option, but it creates a new weakness on g6.

31. Qe4 Nc7

If 31. ... Re8 32. Qc2 Red8 33. Nf4, hitting g6 and threatening a fork on e6.

32. Rd6 Ne6 33. Bc1 Nd4 34. Nxd4 cxd4 35. Bg5, Black resigned.



“That’s one of the biggest concerns higher-rated players have,” he said; “I did feel that, especially since I haven’t been playing lately.” (In the last few years, he’s limited himself to the Pan-Am Intercollegiate Team Championship.)

He felt that even more strongly when he was “completely losing” to a 1900 player in the third round, but he managed to turn it around — “chess is such a brutal game” — and “get serious” in the last two rounds.

Nf6 6. b3 Be7 7. Bb2 0-0 8. d3 a5 9. Nc3 Na6 10. a3 Qe8 11. e3 Rd8 12. d4 Ne4 13. Nxe4 Bxe4 14. Ne1 Bxg2 15. Nxb2 Bf6 16. Nf4

(see diagram top of next column)

16. ... g6?!

This gives White the room needed to start squeezing. Black had to hit back with 16. ... g5!? when 17. Nh5 Bh8 18. Rb1 d6 19. g4 leads to an unclear position and White is

In the last round, he had to wait to find out the result of the Lee – Peraino game, but when that petered out into a draw, the title was his.

Shen, a junior from Columbus, Ohio, graduates in 2026 and will be on active duty in the Air Force. He wants to study statistics and government before heading to either law or business school. And as part of the military chess community, he's hoping to play at the NATO team championship next

year as well as come back to defend his U.S. Armed Forces title: "It was a wonderful experience."

One of the standout moments of the competition came from David Cason, a 1700-rated Marine veteran who beat two experts, including National Master Mitch Vergara, in the Veterans section.

Chloe Wawerek won the Top Woman award with 1 point. She was the only woman in the tournament, a reminder that we need

to do more to promote chess among women.

In addition to the main tournament, Saturday evening featured the Blitz Championship, offering fierce competition, free pizza and camaraderie, as players showcased their tactical acumen. Peraino emerged as the winner, scoring 8/8.

Organizer Robert Getty and tournament director Mike Hoffpauir ensured the event ran smoothly, culminating in memorable performances across the board. ♠



Previous page: a record-breaking event requires a group photo! This page: scenes from Annapolis, including the author winning his plaque for top Reservist / National Guard finisher. All photos are courtesy of Midshipman 1/C Greyson Gravitt, except for the photo of Lionter, which is provided courtesy of the subject.

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U16, & U18

Friday: Round 1

Saturday: Rounds 2, 3, & 4

Sunday: Rounds 5 & 6



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\$175 by 3/24, \$225 by 4/3



SIDE EVENTS ON 4/4

Blitz: 5 double Rounds, G/3 +2

Bughouse: # Rds TBD, G/5,d0



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For Team and Country

Service members gather in Greece for the NATO Championship.

BY RICK MASSIMO

T

HE 34TH NATO CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP brought 118 service members representing 18 countries to the Greek island of Rhodes Oct. 20-24, competing for individual and team honors.

It's a uniquely structured tournament: Each country can bring up to six players, a team captain and an official, for a total of eight. They can also send up to four "lifetime members," those who have played in at least eight previous NATO championships. It's an individual tournament, but players from the same country aren't paired. The top four players count for each country's team score; the others are grouped into NATO and NATO LTM teams irrespective of nation.

There wasn't a real surprise at the top of the crosstable: IM Dimitris Alexakis, of host nation Greece, outrated the field by 100 points and won comfortably with 6½/7, powering his team to the title with 24 of a possible 28 game points.

The German team, led by second-seeded FM Robert Stein, and Poland tied for 2nd-3rd with 20 points, while the American team finished fourth with 18½.

The U.S. team was paced by two 5/7 scorers: FM Patrick Emilio Aizpurua and the surprising Andrew Jeselson, who came into the tournament seeded 78th.

Jeselson, a civilian program manager at Hanscom Air Force Base, in Massachusetts, called the NATO Championship the best tournament of his life after gaining more than 70 rating points and pushing his FIDE rating over 1900.

It's a "very different" tournament, Jeselson said, adding that "you can't let your teammates down." Despite the nationalistic aspect, he was able to meet and get to know

players from other countries and learn about their military experiences: "It's good to know who we're partnered with."

As for his own play, Jeselson credited his coach, IM Alan-Safar Ramoutar, with keeping him prepared not only chessically but psychologically: "I felt focused — in the zone. ... I was more stoic, and less controlled by my emotions or ego or desire to play a beautiful attack."

Here's Jeselson's best game, and one from Aizpurua:

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B31)

Andrew Jeselson (1858)

Diederick Casteleijn (2128)

NATO Championship (4), Rhodes, 10.27.2024

Notes by Andrew Jeselson

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. Bxc6 dxc6 5. d3 g6 6. h3 Bg7

Black could play for ... e7-e5, which White can counter with the idea of b2-b4: 6. ... Qc7 7. 0-0 e5 8. Be3 b6 9. Nbd2 Bg7 10. a3 a5 11. b4

7. Nc3 0-0 8. 0-0 b6 9. Bf4

Seeing as how Black hasn't played ... e7-e5, I decided to start taking e5 under control.

9. ... Ne8 10. e5 Nc7 11. Re1 Ne6 12. Qd2!

A concept I learned from GM Gajewski's Chessable repertoire. The bishop can be traded and White can still generate some kingside threats, I believe. At minimum, the e5-pawn restricts Black's pieces.

12. ... Nd4

I do not believe Gajewski had this in his

course, but in his video he said 12. ... Nxf4 would be good for White. I was looking at ideas of Qf4-h4 and Nf3-g5. Of course, concrete variations are very difficult to visualize. I just know the e5-pawn is a nuisance, and ... f7-f6 would weaken Black's king and possibly the e7-pawn. 13. Qxf4 Qc7 14. Qh4 Re8 15. Ng5 h6 16. Nf3 is one possible line.

13. Nxd4 cxd4 14. Ne4 Qd5 15. Ng3 c5 16. b3 Bb7 17. f3 Rfe8



With this move we had reached the end of my theory. The training wheels are removed, and now I had to think and come up with a plan. I last remembered Gajewski had some diagram with Re1-e2 and h3-h4, so play on the h-file was the plan for this game.

On 17. ... h5 18. Bh6 was the plan, just trying to get rid of the bishop pair, though I was afraid of the Exchange sac ... Bg7xe5. So I was also looking at the slow plan of h3-h4, followed by Ng3-h1-f2-h3 and then to f4 or g5.

18. h4

I thought about 18. a4 but I think it actually helps Black. It lets them open the queenside with ... c5-c4 quicker, or Black can get the

a-file after ... a7-a6 and ... b6-b5. Play could go 18. ... Rad8 19. a5 b5 20. a6 Bc6 21. Qa5. I visualized this setup in the game and it leads nowhere.

18. ... b5 19. h5

I knew this wasn't reckless, because it's really the only plan in the position.

19. ... c4 20. Re2

Staying consistent with what I know: The rooks don't play on the queenside; they defend the entry points, and ideally work on the h-file.

20. ... Rac8 21. Rae1

Protecting e5 and just being ready for potential tactics on the e-file. I wanted to free up my bishop to play Bf4-h6 without allowing ... Bg7xe5.

21. ... cxd3 22. cxd3 Rc6

I think 22. ... Qe6 would have been solid, but it wasn't on my radar during the game. I would probably stay consistent with 23. Bh6 Bh8 24. Qf4 a5 25. Qh4 Rc6 26. Bg5, pressuring the e7-pawn Karpov-style.

23. Bh6 Rec8 24. Bxg7 Kxg7 25. Qg5

I played this move quickly, unlike my other moves, and sure enough, even though there is a strong threat of Ng3-f5+, it's not best.

25. ... Qe6 26. hxg6 fxg6

26. ... hxg6 fails to 27. f4.

27. Kf2?!

I saw 27. Nh5+ and tried hard to make it work, but it wasn't clear. Also our clocks were getting lower, and I was letting the nerves get to me a little bit. But it works: 27. ... Kg8 28. Nf4 Qf5 and here I would have played 29. Qxf5? gxf5 30. Kf2 with a slight advantage, But actually 29. Qxe7! Qxf4 30. Qxb7 is best. I saw that, but I misjudged it -- I was nervous about my king safety and counterplay on the c-file, and I underestimated the passed e-pawn.

27. ... h6 28. Qh4 Rd8

It is difficult to choose to sacrifice the d4-pawn, but Black could have gotten some play with 28. ... a5 29. Qxd4 R6c7 30. Qf4 b4 when the rooks are active on the c-file.

29. Ne4?!

Also not the best. After 29. Rh1! g5 I was afraid to play 30. Qe4 but my coach Alan said after the game that there were no good discoveries for Black. For example, 30. ... Rc7 31. Nf5+ Kf8 32. Qg4 Bc8 33. Nxe6 Qxg4

34. fxg4. I was trying to play like Karpov, but this is more of a dynamic position.

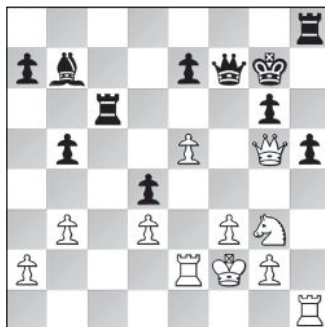
29. ... Rf8

Black missed his chance to equalize with 29. ... g5! Black weakens the light squares, but without e4 to go to, my queen is getting boxed in.

30. Rh1 h5 31. Ng3 Qf7

The attack would have been much harder to press after 31. ... Rf7, reducing the load on the black queen. Still, this is difficult to find in time pressure.

32. Qg5 Rh8



Now Black cannot avoid losing material.

33. Rxh5

Not bad, but I missed 33. e6! Rxe6 (33. ... Qf6 34. Nxe5+ Rxe5 35. Rxh5 Qxg5 36. Rxg5 a6 is just losing) 34. Rxe6 Qxe6 35. Re1!.

33. ... Rxh5 34. Nxe5+ Kg8 35. Ng3 Rc3

36. Rd2

Just defending. I am a pawn up and I will start attacking the d4-pawn next. I tried it earlier but I got bribed by the h-pawn.

36. ... a5 37. Qh4 Qd5 38. Qxe7 Rc8 39.

Ne4 Qf7 40. Qxf7+, Black resigned.

White wins easily after 40. ... Kxf7 41. Nd6+.

TROMPOWSKY OPENING (D00)

Alexander Flaata (2040)

FM Patrick Emilio Aizpurua (2322)

NATO Championship (7), Rhodes,
10.25.2024

1. d4 Nf6 2. Bg5 d5 3. e3 c5 4. Bxf6 gxf6
5. dxc5 e6 6. Nf3 Qa5+ 7. c3 Qxc5 8. Be2
Nc6 9. 0-0 Bg7 10. Nbd2 f5 11. c4 dxc4
12. Nxc4 0-0 13. Rc1 Rd8 14. Qb3 Qb4
15. Rfd1 Qxb3 16. Rxd8+ Nxd8 17. axb3
Bf8 18. Nd4 Bd7 19. Ne5 Be8 20. Bf3 Bd6
21. Nd3 Bd7 22. g4 fxg4 23. Bxg4 Rc8 24.
Rxc8 Bxc8 25. f4 Kf8 26. Kf2 Ke7 27. Bf3
f6 28. Be4 h6 29. Ke2 Bd7 30. Kf2 a5 31.
Kg3 Be8 32. Kh4 Kd7 33. Nb5 Be7 34. f5
Kc8 35. Nd4 e5 36. Nc2 Bf7 37. Nc1 b6 38.
Kg3 Nb7 39. Bxb7+ Kxb7 40. Kf2 Bd5 41.
Ne1 Be4 42. Ne2 Bxf5 43. Ng3 Be6 44. Nf3
Bxb3 45. Nf5 Bf8 46. N3h4 Bf7 47. Ke2
Kc6 48. Kd3 Kd5 49. e4+ Kc5 50. Ne3 h5
51. Nhf5 b5 52. Kc2 a4 53. Kd2 Ba2 54. h4
b4 55. Kc1 Be6 56. Kb1 b3 57. Kc1 Kc6 58.
Kb1 Bc5 59. Ng7 Bf7 60. Nef5 Bf8 61. Ka1
Kd7 62. Kb1 Bg6 63. Ka1 Bxg7 64. Nxg7
Ke7, White resigned. ♠



Andrew Jeselson

COVER STORY U.S. Women's Championship

Short of a **SWEEP,**



but Still
SMOOTH

IM Carissa Yip on her U.S. Women's Championship victory

BY IM CARISSA YIP



N A D R E A R Y
October night after the fourth round of the U.S. Championships in St. Louis, GM Sam Shankland, GM

Awonder Liang, and I nursed various liquids at the hotel bar and discussed fascinating topics such as baseball, the stock market, and yogurt.

I was fresh off a win against GM Irina Krush, sitting at 4/4 and feeling good about my chances at the title. I was quietly enjoying the conversation but mostly focused on my tall glass of water when suddenly Awonder broke the unspoken “no chess” rule of our discussion.

“Carissa’s going to go 11 out of 11,” he insisted; “I’m calling it right now.” Sam, ever the optimist, was not buying it, and whipped out his phone to calculate the probabilities. (The odds were not in my favor.) I, ever the realist, tried my best to dissuade Awonder of this crazy notion, but the boy might have felt a bit too positive after his beers: Despite my valiant efforts, by the time we left the bar that night Awonder and Sam had bet \$100 on whether I’d win the Fischer Prize, a \$64,000 bonus for repeating Bobby Fischer’s perfect score in the 1964 championship.

There hadn’t been a clean sweep in either the open or women’s section in 60 years, and it was looking even less likely: With each passing year, the tournament only gets stronger.

The 2024 U.S. Chess Championships featured 24 of the top players in the country. In the Open section, GMs Fabiano Caruana, Wesley So, Leinier Dominguez, and Levon Aronian were the favorites, all with very decent chances of winning. Meanwhile, in the Women’s, the rating gap was even narrower, with Krush and IMs Begim Tokhirjonova, Alice Lee, and myself all looking toward the title.

I’d just come fresh off a decent tournament at the 2024 Chess Olympiad, which had concluded only two weeks prior to the Championships. Afterward, I went straight to school and spent two weeks focused on academics, ensuring I would not fail. This did not go so well, but I was still feeling quite optimistic about my chances at defending my 2023 title — especially since I got to finish up some last-minute homework at the opening ceremony.

Once the tournament started, though, I got ultra-serious. I didn’t bring homework to do during the round, instead leaving the scintillating activities to the remaining waking hours of the day.

In Round 1, I faced off against St. Louis native WGM Thalia Cervantes. I was hoping to avoid theory, and caught her off-guard in the opening with an unexpected first move.

QUEEN’S GAMBIT DECLINED, TARRASCH DEFENSE (D34)

IM Carissa Yip (2505)

WGM Thalia Cervantes (2371)

U.S. Women’s Championship (1), St. Louis, 10.11.2024

1. c4 e6 2. g3 d5 3. Bg2 Nf6 4. Nf3 c5 5. 0-0 Nc6 6. d4

White can also try to keep the tension with 6. b3 Be7 7. Bb2 0-0 8. e3 b6 9. Nc3 Bb7 10. cxd5 Nxd5 11. Nxd5 Qxd5 12. d4.

6. ... Be7

This didn’t feel too logical to me; Black loses a tempo once White takes on c5.

7. cxd5

Another option is 7. dxc5 Bxc5 8. a3. If (a) 8. ... 0-0, after 9. b4 Be7 10. Nbd2 this kind of position doesn’t look like much at first glance, but White just has immense amounts of pressure.

To begin with, White controls a ton of space on the queenside, and Black can never take satisfactorily on c4. Meanwhile, development is easy for White: Bc1-b2, Qd1-c2, and maybe even ideas of e2-e4. The c8-bishop is a source of frustration for Black, as it’s trapped behind the pawns without many great squares. Black also has to watch out for some combination of c4xd5 and e2-e4 on every move. White gets a great game after 10. ... b6 (or 10. ... Ne4 11. Bb2 Bf6 12. Bxf6 Nxf6 13. Qc2 Bd7 14. Rfd1 Rc8 15. e4) 11. Bb2 Bb7 12. cxd5 Nxd5 13. e4 Nf6 14. Qe2.

If instead Black plays (b) 8. ... dxc4 9. Qxd8+ Nxd8 10. Ne5 0-0 11. Nd2, they’ll have trouble developing the queenside. After 11. ... Rb8 12. Ndx4 Nd5 (or 12. ... b6 13. Bf4) 13. Rd1 b5 14. Na5 White has all kinds of ideas up in the air — b2-b4, Bg2xd5, e2-e4/Bc1-f4. The main problem, however, is that Black’s light-squared bishop is stuck on c8.

7. ... exd5 8. dxc5 Bxc5

I’d thought this position was decent while I was calculating, but once it appeared on the board, I became less sure. Black’s pieces are active enough to balance out the isolated pawn.

9. Bg5

It might have been helpful to insert 9. a3, provoking ... a7-a5 and allowing the queen



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WGM Thalia Cervantes

to come to c2 without fear of ... Nc6-b4. Play could go 9. ... a5 10. Bg5 0-0 11. Qc2 Be7 12. Rd1.

9. ... 0-0 10. Nc3 d4 11. Bxf6

I could have gone for 11. Ne4 Be7 12. Bxf6 Bxf6 13. Nxf6+ Qxf6 14. Qd2, forcing the black queen to f6 instead of b6, where it ends up. I'd opted against it because I thought the queen would be happier on f6, closer to the action along the center files. Turns out, it's slightly more accurate to put Black's queen on b6, though I didn't play the most precisely to take advantage of it!

11. ... Qxf6 12. Ne4 Qe7 13. Nxc5 Qxc5 14. Rc1 Qb6



At this point, I wasn't too pleased with how the opening had turned out. Black controls more space and is quite comfortable. The only plus for White is that the d-pawn is isolated, but on d4 it is more to Black's advantage than anything else. Still though, the game is far from decided, and there's much chess left to be played!

15. b3 Re8 16. Qc2 h6 17. Rfd1 Bg4 18. Rd2 Rad8

All the moves have been quite natural thus far. If White is trying to generate play against the d4-pawn, then Black will seek play against e2. White would love to put the king on f1, but it's a bit too awkward with the queens still on the board. So ...

19. Qc5

Finally getting a piece beyond my half of the board! With the queens off, it's easier for White to defend the weakness on e2, because Kg1-f1 will be an option if we enter the endgame, and White could also try expanding on the kingside with h2-h3 and g3-g4.

19. ... Qxc5 20. Rxc5 Re7

Surprisingly, Black has to be careful here already, and this is a mistake.

The only move to keep equality is 20. ...

d3. Play could go 21. e3 (not 21. exd3?? Nd4 and White either loses a knight or gets back-ranked; 21. Rxd3 Rxe2 22. Rxd8+ Nxd8 23. h3 Be6 24. Nd4 Rxa2 and everything gets traded off) 21. ... Rc8 22. Ne1 Nb4 23. Rc4 Rxc4 24. bxc4 Be6 25. Nxd3 Nxd3 26. Rxd3 Bxc4 27. Ra3 Ba6 with equality.

21. h3 Be6 22. Ne1

Now Bg2xc6 is a huge threat, and it's already difficult to defend against.

22. ... Red7?!

Black could not allow the minor piece exchange, even though after 22. ... Nb4 23. Rb5 Nc6 24. g4 a6 25. Rc5 Na7 26. f4 White is clearly pushing.

23. Bxc6 bxc6 24. h4

White is already winning here. Black's dark squares are simply too weak, and the rook on c5 is far too annoying.

24. ... Rd6 25. Nd3 Rb8 26. Ne5

I could have just slowly improved with 26. Ra5, because the knight is well placed on d3. After 26. ... Rb7 27. f3 f6 28. Ra4 (28. Kf2 Bf7) 28. ... Bf5 29. Nc5 Re7 30. Kf2 Re5 31. Ra5 White is winning, as b3-b4 is coming.

26. ... Bd5

After 26. ... Rb6 White wins a pawn with 27. Nf3 Rd5 28. Rxd5 Bxd5 29. Nxd4.

27. Ra5 Rb7 28. Nd3

Rerouting the knight to c5. It looks like White also wins with 28. Rxd4 Re6 29. e4 Rxe5 30. exd5 cxd5 31. Raxd5 Rxd5 32. Rxd5, but I wasn't too sure about this during the game, so I thought it wiser to keep the minor pieces on.

28. ... g5 29. f3



White wants to bring the king out to f2, defending the e2-pawn and threatening Nd3-c5 and Rd2xd4.

29. ... f6



GM Irina Krush

Loses material by force, though of course it is already very unpleasant for Black here.

30. Nc5 Re7

White also wins after 30. ... Rb5 31. Rxb5 cxb5 32. Rxd4, or 30. ... Rb4 31. Rxa7.

31. Kf2

Now Rd2xd4 is a big threat, and Black has no way to stop it.

31. ... f5

If 31. ... Bf7 32. Ne4 and the rook cannot defend both d4 and f6.

32. Rxd4

Now it's all technique.

32. ... Rf6 33. Rda4 Rff7 34. Nd3 f4 35. gxf4 gxf4 36. e4 Be6

Black could try 36. ... h3, but it doesn't work out: 37. exd5 Rg7 38. dxc6 h2 39. Rh5.

37. f5 Bc8 38. Ne5 Rf6 39. Ng4 Rd6 40. Rxa7 Rd2+ 41. Ke3 Rxa7 42. Rxa7 Rd8

Neither does 42. ... h5 43. Nf6+.

43. Nxh6+ Kf8 44. Rh7, Black resigned.

My biggest challenge came in Round 4. Irina and I have played many times, and she is always formidable. I was a full point ahead, so I was quite fine taking a draw with the black pieces. But the game didn't quite go as either of us had planned. (This game is annotated in *New in Chess*, but you can also find it in the online version of this story. ~ed.)

The fourth round finished the evening before the first rest day, and Awonder was feeling a bit down after his game, so I suggested the bar, which is where the bet with Sam began.

On the day off, I spent my free time doing exactly what I had been doing every day and would continue doing every day: homework. Hallelujah.

My fifth-round game was against IM Begim Tokhirjonova, whom I expected to be my biggest competition. Begim is a very strong player — she played admirably on board one at the Olympiad, scoring key victories for our team. I was a full point ahead of the field, but she was hot on my heels, and I knew she would be gearing up for a bloodbath.

Typically, I would be fine with a draw in this situation: I was halfway through the tournament with a sizeable lead on the rest of the field and facing one of my main competitors. But since I had to prove the haters (Sam) wrong, I also prepared for a fight.

KING'S INDIAN ATTACK (BY TRANSPOSITION) (A08)

IM Carissa Yip (2505)

IM Gulrukhbegim Tokhirjonova (2459)

U.S. Women's Championship (5), St. Louis, 10.16.2024

1. e4 e6

An immediate surprise! I spent quite a bit of time figuring out the setup I wanted, and eventually settled upon my usual.

2. d3 d5 3. Nd2 c5 4. g3

A King's Indian fianchetto setup, from the White side.

4. ... Nc6 5. Bg2 Nf6 6. Ngf3 dxe4 7. dxe4 e5

I was a bit surprised at this choice. White just gets a very nice long-term advantage: the d5-square.

8. 0-0 Be7 9. c3 0-0

(see diagram top of next column)

10. Qc2

It was more accurate to just play 10. Nc4, because the e4-pawn is close to untouchable: 10. ... Nxe4 11. Nfxe5 Qxd1 12. Rxd1 Nxe5 13. Nxe5 Nf6 14. a4 and White has good pressure because Black cannot develop her queenside.



POSITION AFTER 9. ... 0-0

Instead, Black should play 10. ... Qc7, but still, once the knight gets to e3, White is very happy: 11. Ne3 Rd8 (11. ... Be6 12. Ng5) 12. Nd5.

10. ... b5 11. a4 b4 12. Rd1 Be6 13. Nc4 Qb8

Black's alternative, 13. ... b3, was a must-calculate. Black forces an endgame where the c2-pawn can become either an asset or a weakness. After 14. Rxd8 bxc2 15. Rxa8 Rxa8 there are a variety of tries here.

One try is (a) 16. Na3 Bb3 17. Ne1 (Black wins after 17. Nd2?? Na5 as White's queenside is totally tied up) 17. ... Rd8 18. Nxc2 Rd1+ 19. Bf1 Nxe4 20. f3 Nd2 (after 20. ... Nf6 21. Ne3 Rd8 22. Nac4 Black's pawns are weak and White's knights are very happy dominating the light squares) 21. Ne3 Nxf3+ 22. Kf2 Rxf1+ 23. Nxf1 e4 and surprisingly,



Black can get enough counterplay with ... g7-g5 and ... f7-f5 to keep the balance;

I suspect Begim discarded 13. ... b3 because of (b) 16. Nfd2 Rd8 17. Ne3 Na5 18. Nxc2, but Black has 18. ... c4.



POSITION AFTER 18. ... c4

This last move is the key, and perhaps also the hardest to see and evaluate. White's pieces are far too uncoordinated, and Black is fine with giving up a pawn to keep them that way.

14. Qe2 h6 15. Bd2 Rd8 16. Be1 Rxd1 17. Rxd1 bxc3 18. bxc3 Qc7

The other tempting move here was 18. ... Qb3. After 19. Nfxe5 Nxe5 20. Nxe5 Qxa4 the key move is 21. c4, ensuring Black cannot play ... c5-c4 herself and activate the dark-squared bishop. I had planned to follow this up with Be1-c3 hoping for some kingside play, perhaps with f2-f4 coming, but it would

take time to set up and make work, while Black's a-pawn will move fast. It's a complicated position, and the engine calls it equal, but I was optimistic about my chances here.

19. Nfd2 Rd8 20. Ra1

Now for some slow improvement.

20. ... Na5 21. Bf1

Fortifying the hold on the light squares.

21. ... Nxc4 22. Nxc4



22. ... Bc8

Embarking upon the wrong plan.

Black's main focus should be disrupting White's hold on the c4-square. Another way to think about it: White's best piece is the knight, and one of Black's worst pieces is the knight. So 22. ... Ne8 may seem

slow, but White is not quite in a position to break through, and Black has time to put the knight on d6 and the bishop on f6. After 23. Rb1 Bf6 24. a5 Nd6 Black is feeling much better with the knights off the board.

23. f3 Ba6 24. Qa2 Bf8 25. Rb1 Bc8

Already, it's quite unpleasant for Black. There are simply no good plans. She never wants to make the exchange 25. ... Bxc4 26. Bxc4; the f7-pawn is too weak, and White will slowly squeeze on the queenside with a4-a5-a6.

26. a5

White has made a lot of progress in the last few moves, while Black hasn't been able to do much but shuffle. Now, the plan is a5-a6 followed by Qa2-a5 with a completely winning endgame. The a7-pawn will be fixed as a perpetual weakness, and White has full control of the b-file.

26. ... Nh7 27. h4

White is much better after 27. a6 Ng5 28. Kf2 — the king looks a bit silly and perhaps overexposed on f2, but Black cannot do anything about it, and Qa2-a5 is coming. Black can try 28. ... Nh3+, but it doesn't quite work: 29. Bxh3 Bxh3 30. Rb7 and once again the f7-square is a fatal weakness.

27. ... Kh8 28. a6 g5 29. h5??

Here, I totally hallucinated. Strategically, this move makes no sense because the h4-pawn is doing good work in ensuring Black's knight stays on h7.

I wanted to play 29. Qa5!, but I did not see a knockout blow. I didn't see a sufficiently convincing way to defend the a6-pawn after 29. ... Qxa5 30. Nxa5 Rd6 but it turns out I don't have to: I can play 31. Nc4! Rxa6 (31. ... Re6 32. Bh3) 32. Nxe5 Rf6 33. Rb8 Be6.



POSITION AFTER 33. ... Be6

I had calculated this far, and deemed it insufficient because material was still equal and I'd lost my main trump in the position, the a-pawn. However, I missed the next move and did not properly evaluate the following position. White can now play 34. c4!.



Competitors over the board, but friends away from it!

At first this all still looks normal enough, but if one takes the time to really examine the position, it's evident White is winning through complete domination. Black's rook is in a truly unpleasant position, and it cannot be freed up because the knight is dominating it. The light-squared bishop has no possible squares; the dark-squared bishop is pinned; the knight is cornered and stuck to the bishop's defense. Even though material is currently equal, Black will soon be forced into *zugzwang*. The lack of coordination means the loss of material is imminent; for instance, 34. ... Kg8 35. h5 and none of Black's pieces can move! After 35. ... a6 36. Ba5 the only way Black can avoid immediate material loss is to put the king on the long diagonal, and then the bishop jumps back to c3: 36. ... g4 37. f4 Kg7 38. Bc3 and White's winning.

After 34. c4! Black can try freeing up some squares with 34. ... gxh4, but it still doesn't work: 35. gxh4 Rf4 36. Kg2 (protecting the f-pawn and threatening either Ne5-d3 or Kg2-g3) 36. ... Kg7 (if 36. ... Kg8 37. Kg3 Rf6 38. Bc3 the rook is trapped, and Black will soon be out of moves: 38. ... h5 39. Nc6 with the devastating threats of Bc3xf6 and Nc6-e7) 37. Nd3 Rf6 38. Bc3.

29. ... g4 30. fxxg4

I'd thought that even though the knight gets to hop back in the game, I'm at least up a pawn. Unfortunately, Black gets to have it all with her next move.

30. ... Nf6

And now it's also very difficult to defend the e-pawn! Not 30. ... Bxg4?? 31. Rb7 and White wins.

31. Qa5

I'd considered 31. Ne3 Nxe4 32. Bg2 Ng5 33. c4 but it was very risky: Black gets the d4-square; her king is not actually unsafe, and the a6-pawn could soon become a weakness.

31. ... Bd6

Keeping things very solid.

Black really should avoid the endgame that arises after 31. ... Qxa5? 32. Nxa5 Nxe4 (or 32. ... Nxg4 33. Be2 covering the d1-square: 33. ... Nf6 34. Rb8) 33. Nc6 Rd6 34. Bg2 and if the knight moves, Rb1-b8 is coming. Black has to play 34. ... Rxc6 and White is back to being a happy camper after 35. Bxe4 Rc7 36. Rb8.

32. Be2 Nxe4 33. Qa4 Bd7 34. Qc2 Bc6 35. Rd1 Be7

Not 35. ... Ng5 36. Qf5 when White has some pressure.

36. Rxd8+ Bxd8 37. Qd3 Be7 38. Bf3 Ng5

39. Bxc6 Qxc6 40. Nxe5 Qe6

After a flurry of moves, both players have reached time control. Black can still hold, but all the tactical ideas work out in White's favor.

41. Qf5 Qa2

Black loses after 41. ... Qxe5 42. Qxe5+ because the check means Black has no time for ... Ng5-f3+; it's also a loss after 41. ... Bf6 42. Qxe6 fxe6 43. Nc6, and 41. ... Qd5 would be dangerous if it weren't for 42. Ng6+.

42. Nf3 Nxf3+ 43. Qxf3 Kg7 44. Qb7

White is up a pawn and looks to win the a7-pawn as well, and the only reason Black can keep the balance is because White's king is open as well. But it's practically very difficult. This is one such critical moment: Where should the bishop go?

44. ... Bd6

Black has multiple paths to a draw.

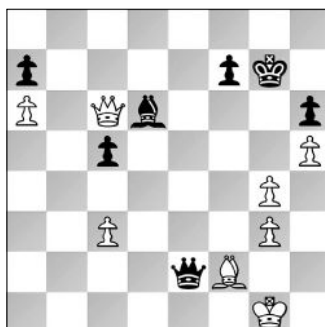
I thought the easiest was (a) 44. ... Bg5 45. Bf2 (not 45. Qxa7?? Be3+ 46. Kh1 Qe2) and now there are three moves to consider. After (a1) 45. ... Qe2 46. Qd5 Qxa6 47. Qxc5, Black should be holding with best play. (a2) If 45. ... Qa1+ 46. Kg2 Qxc3 47. Qxa7 Be3! is the only move, but good enough to force a perpetual. (a3) After 45. ... Qd2 46. Qf3 (46. Qxa7 Be3) 46. ... Qd6 47. Qe2 White could keep trying here, but Black is very solid.

Black can also hold with (b) 44. ... Bf6, but it requires a bit more precision. In many lines, Black isn't even truly threatening to take on c3, so the bishop on f6, even though it looks nice, is not doing much at all.

45. Bf2 Qe2

It's important to know that every time White can take on a7 and Black doesn't have an immediate draw, it's completely winning. So 45. ... Qa1+ 46. Kg2 Qxc3 47. Qxa7 and White wins. This is a repeated theme.

46. Qc6



46. ... Qd1+??

Surprisingly, this is the losing move. Black should wait with 46. ... Bf8 or 46. ... Be7.

47. Kg2

Now, every move Black makes will lead to a concession. Because of Black's 46th move, White is threatening c3-c4, gaining control over the d5-square, and then Qc6-d5 will be devastating for Black to deal with. If Black moves the bishop, g4-g5 breaks through.

47. ... Qd3

Now if 47. ... Be7 48. g5 disrupts Black's coordination. After 48. ... hxg5 the bishop must stay guarding the c5-pawn (48. ... Bxg5 49. Qxc5 Bf6 50. c4 covers the check on d5 and a7 will fall), but after 49. h6+ Black's king has nowhere to go to avoid losing material! After 49. ... Kh7 (49. ... Kg8 50. Qe8+; 49. ... Kf8 50. Qc8+ Qd8 51. Qxd8+ Bxd8 52. Bxc5+ Kg8 53. Bxa7) 50. Qe4+.

White has a similar breakthrough after 47. ... Bf8 48. g5 even though the bishop is more protected: 48. ... hxg5 49. h6+ Kh7 (or 49. ... Kg8 50. Qa8 Qe2 51. Qxa7) 50. Qf3! Qd7 (after 50. ... Qxf3+ 51. Kxf3 Kxh6 52. Ke4 we reach an endgame where White has given up two pawns but Black has no hope: The king is running to b7, picking up a7, and promoting) 51. Qb7 Qe6 52. Qxa7 and White wins.

48. c4!!

The only winning move, and it's geometrically very nice. The queen is cut off from the a6-pawn; White gets all the light squares, and most importantly, Qc6-d5 is a big threat.

48. ... Be7 49. Qb7 Bf8 50. Qxa7 Qe4+

51. Kg1 Qb1+ 52. Kh2 Bd6

If 52. ... Qc2 53. Qb7 Qxf2+ 54. Qg2 and Black has no way to stop the a-pawn.

53. Bd4+

Gets the job done, although the most logical choice is 53. Qb7 Qf1 (or 53. ... Qa2 54. Kg1) 54. Qb2+. I missed this one, but it's very nice. White gives a check to protect the bishop and cover the a1-square — after the king moves, White pushes the pawn.

53. ... cxd4 54. Qxd4+ Kh7 55. Qxd6

White is just up too many pawns, and the king is safe from checks.

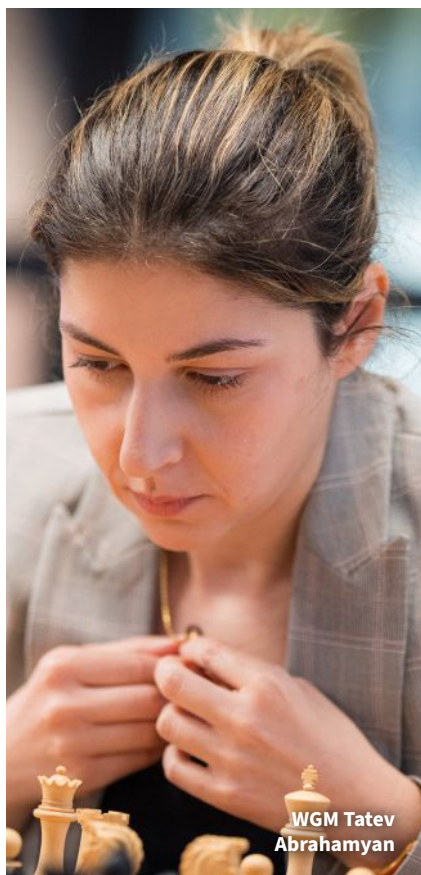
55. ... Qc2+ 56. Kh3 Qxc4 57. Qf6

Covering f1.

57. ... Qa2 58. Qf5+ Kg7 59. Qe5+ Kh7

60. Qe4+ Kg8

Or 60. ... Kg7 61. Qd4+ Kh7 62. a7.



WGM Tatev Abrahamyan

61. Qb7 f5 62. Qc8+ Kg7 63. Qd7+ Kg8 64. a7 fxc4+ 65. Qxc4+ Kh7 66. Qe4+, Black resigned.

Begin had been my closest rival, and she was now two points behind. But next up was WGM Tatev Abrahamyan, who stood second in the standings. I knew I couldn't let my guard down, especially against such a resourceful and tactical player. It was only after I won that game that I really started thinking about the Fischer Prize. If I could win six games in a row, I could surely do it again with five games? After a win over IM Nazi Paikidze in Round 7, I hoped that Sam was at least a bit worried about his money. Then came a win in Round 8:

MODERN DEFENSE (B06)

IM Atousa Pourkashiyani (2356)

IM Carissa Yip (2505)

U.S. Women's Championship (8), St. Louis, 10.19.2024

1. e4 g6

I was hoping to catch Atousa by surprise with this, though her husband said on stream that he had predicted the Modern!

2. d4 Bg7 3. Nc3 a6 4. f4 d6 5. Nf3 Nd7 6. Bd3 c5 7. Be3 Ngf6 8. dxc5 Ng4 9. Bd4 Bxd4

Black could play 9. ... e5 when White could drop back with 10. Bg1 exf4 11. cxd6 Nde5, or after 10. fxe5 dxc5 11. Bg1 Ngxe5 Black is a bit better thanks to the outpost on e5 and a slightly superior pawn structure.

10. Nxd4 Nxc5 11. Qe2 0-0 12. h3 Nf6 13. 0-0-0 b5



White has made very natural moves so far, but Black has already equalized.

14. Nb3

Black doesn't need to worry after 14. e5: After 14. ... Nh5 15. Qe3 Bb7 Black is a happy camper.

14. ... Na4

It might have been more accurate to play 14. ... b4, forcing White into an undesirable structure: After 15. Nd5 Nxd5 16. exd5 Nxd3+ 17. Qxd3 a5 the pawns are simply rolling too quickly.

15. Nb1

Or 15. Nd5 e6 16. Ne3 (or 16. Nxf6+ Qxf6 with the same idea) 16. ... Nh5 17. Qf2 Qf6 and again, both f4 and b2 are coming under fire.

15. ... Qb6 16. g4 Bb7 17. h4 Nc5 18. Nxc5

Black's attack also moves fast after 18. N1d2 Nxd3+ 19. cxd3 a5.

18. ... dxc5 19. e5?



Tactically, this doesn't work; the calm 19. c3 was better. I had planned 19. ... Qe6 eyeing up a2, e4, and g4. The computer calls it even after 20. f5 Qe5 (it gets double-edged after 20. ... Qxa2 21. h5 g5) 21. Nd2 Rad8, but I was looking forward to this position: Black has a good grip on the dark squares, and all of White's pieces must focus on defending e4.

19. ... c4

The engine says I can take the rook right away, but this is a good in-between move, wiping one of White's attackers off the board.

20. exf6 cxd3 21. Qxd3 Bxh1 22. fxe7 Rfe8 23. Rxh1 Rxe7 24. Nc3 Rae8

I'd also considered 24. ... Qf2, trying to force things. Play could go 25. Rd1 Qxf4+ (or 25. ... Re1 26. Nd5) 26. Kb1 Qxg4 27. Nd5 Re6 28. Nc7, but I'd missed the very nice resource 28. ... Re3, when Black gets to keep the Exchange, along with all the pawns!

25. Rd1 Re1 26. Nd5 Qe6 27. g5 Rxd1+ 28. Qxd1 Kf8!

The only move to keep the advantage. Now the threat is ... Qe6-e1.

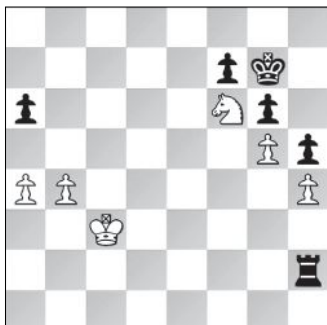
29. c4 bxc4 30. Nf6 Qe3+ 31. Kc2 Qf2+ 32. Kc3



IM Nazi Paikidze

Attempting to keep things complicated, but White cannot avoid going into the endgame.

32. ... Re3+ 33. Kxc4 Qxf4+ 34. Qd4 Qxd4+ 35. Kxd4 Re2 36. Kc3 Kg7 37. a4 h5 38. b4 Rh2



39. Ne8+

It might seem a bit scary, but Black has time to take on h4 and swing the rook back around to handle the b-pawn: 39. b5 Rxh4 40. bxa6 Rxa4. If White pushes instead with 40. b6, Black has 40. ... a5 41. Nd5 (41. b7 Rb4) 41. ... Re4 42. b7 Re8.

39. ... Kf8 40. Nc7 Rh3+ 41. Kd2 Rxh4 42. Nxa6 Rg4 43. a5
Or 43. b5 Rxa4.

43. ... h4 44. b5 h3 45. b6 h2 46. b7 Rd4+ 47. Kc3 Rd8

And now the promotion is inevitable.

48. Nc5 h1=Q 49. a6 Qc6 50. Kc4 Qb6, White resigned.

Before the last three games came the second rest day. I felt immense pressure at this point, but I attempted to keep my mind off everything. The evening after Round 8, I went out to dinner with some friends, played card games with some other friends, called some other other friends. On the actual rest day, I spent hours doing homework (again!) and as a reward for finishing everything, bought myself some yogurt. Hurrah.

Everyone at the tournament had heard about the infamous bet between Awonder and Sam by now, and as we joked around waiting for the ninth round to start Wesley So was trying to get in on the action. Mere minutes before the game, Awonder and Wesley shook hands on a second bet, with another \$100 on me winning the last three games. I sat down laughing at the board, though my good mood soon dissipated.

To be honest, despite all the jokes I've been making, after losing to IM Megan Lee in Round 9 I really was quite devastated.

It wasn't even so much about the prize itself, but the chance to do something truly historic.

I have learned, however, that you really can lose yourself in all the ways things could have gone differently. Regrets are a funny thing, because in the end, this is the situation you have. Thinking about all the what-ifs is a natural and human instinct, but it rarely goes anywhere truly productive.

Of course, this was all easy for me to say, but much harder to actually put into action. I wish now that I could've understood at the time that I was still at 8/9, that I'd played a fantastic tournament anyway, that there were still two games to go.

But because I am young and foolish and prone to being deeply moved by my emotions, I couldn't quite do it. I curled up in a ball on my bed, drowned my sorrows in carbs at Shake Shack, called my friends. None of it helped too much. It would have made a great story if I'd bounced back and finished strong with two wins. It didn't pan out that way, though, and that's OK. Some things hurt more than others, and we are all only human.

Many chess players struggle with resilience, and unfortunately this trait is primarily built by painful experience. I have lost plenty of bad games and spent plenty of hours of life upset over chess, but it has all made me a better player. Resilience doesn't come naturally to me, and I suspect it doesn't

for almost everyone who cares very deeply about chess. But we can get better and better at it if we put ourselves into situations that demand mental fortitude. I know that the next time I lose a bad game, I'll be a little bit better at bouncing back, because of this experience.

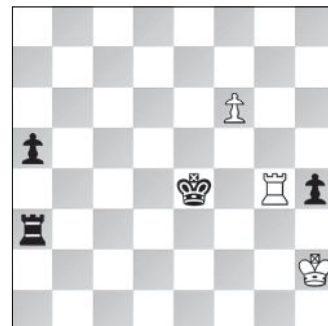
Life goes on anyway! In Round 10, Anna played a very nice game to emerge victorious in our matchup; however, Alice won over Begim to clinch the championship for me with a round to spare!

A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

IM Alice Lee (2487)

IM Gulrukhbegim Tokhirjonova (2459)
U.S. Women's Championship (10), St. Louis, 10.22.2024

Annotations by WGM Katerina Nemcova



BLACK TO MOVE



45. ... Ke5??

Seems logical, but it's the losing move. Still, it requires a problem-like move to win.

The only, but sufficient, way to draw was 45. ... Kd5! followed by sacrificing the rook. After 46. Rf4 Rb3 47. f7 Rb8 48. f8=Q Rxf8 49. Rxf8 Kc4 50. Ra8 Kb4 51. Kh3 (or 51. Kg2 a4 52. Kf2 h3 53. Rh8 a3 54. Rxh3 a2 55. Rh1 Kb3 56. Ke2 Kb2) 51. ... a4 52. Kxh4 a3



A happy champ!

53. Kg4 Kb3 54. Kf4 a2 55. Ke3 Kb2 it's a draw.

46. Rf4!!

White forces Black to block the f-file.

46. ... Kxf4 47. f7! Kg4 48. f8=Q

This position is won for White, and Lee shows very good technique. The a-pawn will easily fall into White's hands, because the rook has to stay close to the king or else there will always be opportunities for a double attack.

48. ... Rg3 49. Qc8+ Kh5 50. Qe8+ Kg4 51. Qa4+ Kh5 52. Qxa5+

The first goal is accomplished. Now for the other pawn ...

52. ... Kg6 53. Qd8 Kh5 54. Qe8+ Kg5 55. Qe4 Kh5 56. Qf4 Rg5 57. Qf7+ Kg4 58. Qc4+ Kh5 59. Qe2+ Kg6 60. Kh3!

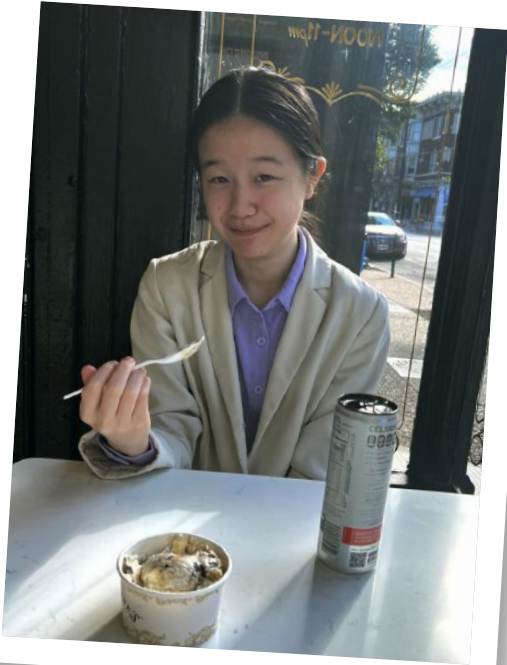
Now that the king has been forced to move away, White's king can head for the last pawn. When Black tries to defend it, there will again be options for a double attack.

60. ... Rh5 61. Qe6+ Kg7 62. Kg4 Rh6 63. Qe7+ Kg6 64. Qe8+ Kf6 65. Qf8+ Kg6 66. Qg8+, Black resigned. If 66. ... Kxf6 67. Qg5+.

After this — as seen at right — I absolutely had to buy Alice a scoop or

two of ice cream.

In the end, all was well. I'd played good chess; I'd defended my title; I'd been compared to Bobby Fischer (for the right reasons!). It's true that sometimes things don't work out. But they turn out pretty well anyway, and I really do believe this is one of the most important lessons life has to offer. As always, my gratitude and love to all my supporters, friends, and family. ♡



2024 U.S. Women's Championship

ST. LOUIS, OCT. 11-24, 2024

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1	IM Carissa Yip	2505	*	1	½	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	8½/11
2	IM Gulrukhbegim Tokhirjonova	2459	0	*	0	1	1	½	1	1	1	0	1	1	7½/11
3	IM Alice Lee	2487	½	1	*	0	½	1	1	½	½	1	½	½	7/11
4	FM Megan Lee	2318	1	0	1	*	0	½	0	½	1	½	1	1	6½/11
5	WGM Thalia Cervantes	2371	0	0	½	1	*	1	0	½	1	½	½	½	5½/11
6	WGM Jennifer Yu	2371	0	½	0	½	0	*	1	½	1	½	½	1	5½/11
7	GM Irina Krush	2466	0	0	0	1	1	0	*	½	1	½	½	1	5½/11
8	IM Anna Zatonskih	2366	1	0	½	½	½	½	½	*	0	½	½	0	4½/11
9	WGM Tatev Abrahamyan	2406	0	0	½	0	0	0	0	1	*	1	1	1	4½/11
10	WGM Atousa Pourkashiyan	2356	0	1	0	½	½	½	½	½	0	*	½	0	4/11
11	IM Nazi Paikidze	2404	0	0	½	0	½	½	½	½	0	½	*	½	3½/11
12	FM Rose Atwell	2277	0	0	½	0	½	0	0	1	0	1	½	*	3½/11

PHOTOS: COURTESY SLCC / OOTES (VIP), COURTESY AUTHOR (LEE)



GM Robert Hübner

1948-2025

BY **RICK MASSIMO**

The German grandmaster Robert Hübner passed away Jan. 5, 2025.

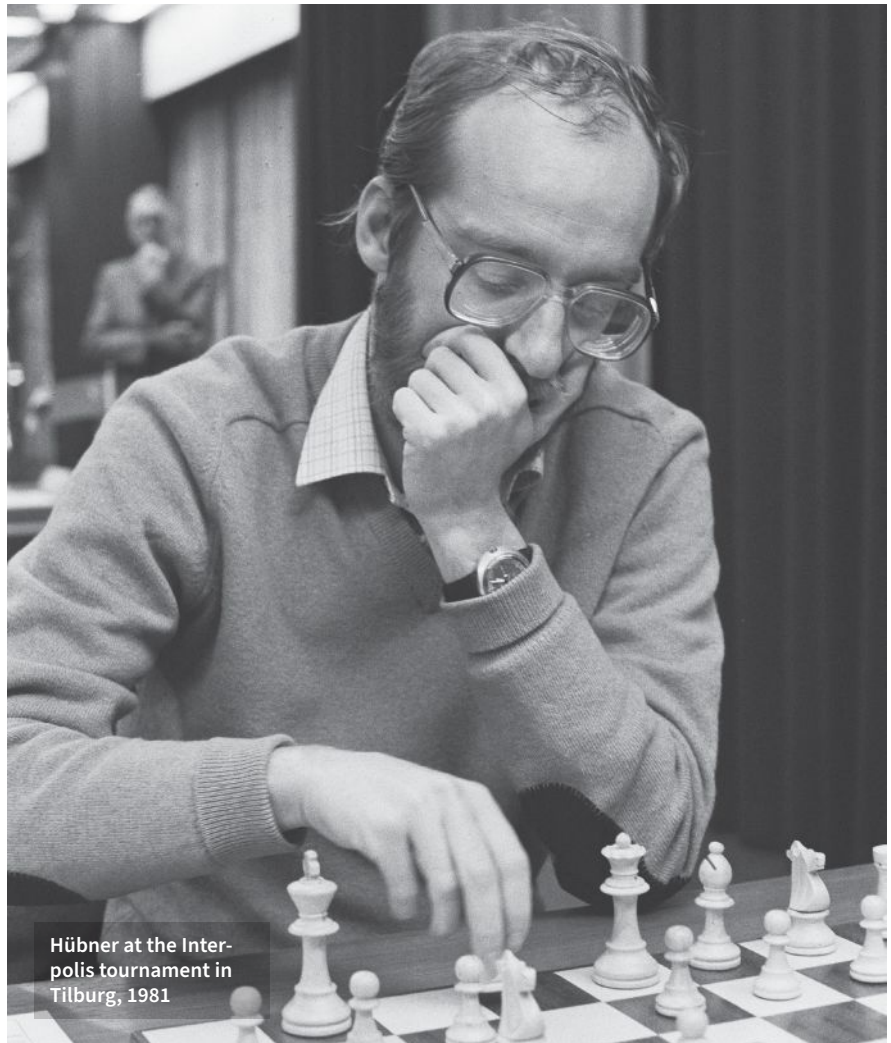
Hübner was a young star by the standards of the day — he became a GM and qualified for his first Candidates Match at age 22 with a second-place finish in the 1970 Palma de Mallorca Interzonal. He reached the Candidates Final in 1980-81 against GM Viktor Korchnoi and reached No. 3 in the world on FIDE's July 1981 rating list. He represented his country in 11 Olympiads between 1968 and 2000, and won gold medals on his board in 1972 and 1990.

In the U.S., Hübner was probably best known for his extensive and conscientious game annotations. His 1992 examination of the Immortal Game — Anderssen – Kieseritzky, London 1851 — for the *American Chess Journal* covered 25 pages, including annotations (one of which was numbered C3643) and an examination of the evolution of annotators' appraisals ("It is clear to me that Reti does not understand anything about the position").

In 1975, he annotated one of his games from the Houston 1974 tournament, in which he placed first, for *Chess Life and Review*. Two months later, he sent in a correction to one of his notes — 10 moves deep into an unplayed variation. His book *25 Annotated Games* ran more than 400 pages, and one of his books is titled *55 Egregious Errors Committed and Discussed* by Robert Hübner.

"By definition you cannot change a chess game once it's over," Hübner told *New in Chess* in a rare interview in 1997. "But you can always polish an analysis. ... It's an attempt to improve the game in hindsight, to take this imperfect piece of work a bit closer to perfection."

When interviewer Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam asked whether he was merciless on himself in this way, Hübner replied, "I don't think it was a matter of mercy or lack of



mercy. I did what I could and by doing so I have seen that I do not understand too much of chess."

And while those annotations could be hard to get through, Hübner said, "Understanding chess positions is difficult work. You have to make a real effort to find out the truth. In chess journalism there are too many people who write things like 'now the bishop has a nice view along the long diagonal,' or 'Excellent seen by the white player.' They create the impression that mastering chess is not much of a difficulty and that everyone who learns some tricks can make a good player. ... I want to demonstrate that it is necessary, and perhaps also worth your while, to put in some effort. It doesn't come all by itself."

Asked whether he thought "this hint is understood," Hübner replied, "I don't know. I don't care either."

Some of the highest-profile moments in Hübner's competitive chess career included with *The New York Times* once called "high-strung, temperamental antics," but to hear Hübner explain it, he simply did what he thought was right: "The question people care about when they say something is not: 'Is this right? Is this correct? Can I live with this?,' but the question 'What will it bring me in money or economic profit?'" he told *New in Chess*. "... This is a phenomenon I find difficult to cope with."

He resigned his first Candidates Match, against GM Tigran Petrosian in 1971, while trailing 4-3 with five games to go because

of the conditions under which they were playing. At the World Student Championship of 1972 Hübner, objecting to the workload his captain had placed on him, played 1. c4 against the American Ken Rogoff and offered a draw; Rogoff accepted, but the arbiters demanded they play a real game. After several fanciful attempts to construct a game, Hübner was forfeited.

He also resigned his Candidates Final against Korchnoi for reasons that were never fully explained. And after his Candidates match against GM Vassily Smyslov in 1983 finished tied and remained equal after the first tiebreaker, they went to the casino and settled the match with a spin of the roulette wheel (Smyslov won).

Even as world No. 3, Hübner “never felt a strong emotional attachment to this situation. I was always a bit odd in these matters.” While Fischer reportedly complimented Hübner’s play at Palma de Mallorca, Hübner told ten Geuzendam, “I would not care a bit if Fischer had said something or someone else had; that is not important. ... In fact it was a bit of a disappointment to have this big success in Palma de Mallorca so soon.” The real tribute, which Hübner could not have missed, came when Fischer played the Hübner System in the Nimzo-Indian to score a smashing win over Boris Spassky in Game 5 of the 1972 World Championship match.

Hübner never considered himself a chess professional: He held a Ph.D. in philology, the historical and comparative studies of languages, and specialized in the translation of ancient papyri. (He also studied the Finnish language, publishing the German translation of the Finnish satirist Olli.) Estimates of the number of languages he spoke vary widely, but six is the consensus minimum.

“With chess man has created a separate world,” Hübner told *New in Chess*; “in philology you deal with many facets of life.”

Hübner may have come off as a dour ascetic, but his many friends praised his dry sense of humor. “When I was playing chess I longed for my philological work and vice versa. This is a perfect way to remain dissatisfied,” he told *New in Chess*.

“The last time I spoke to him,” GM Nigel Short posted on Facebook, “he was calm and philosophical about his impending death. That is not to say he embraced it, but he didn’t fear it either. He was an exceptionally brilliant man, austere on the outside, but privately very funny. I will miss him greatly.”

“For me a game, once it is finished, has always been a piece of work,” Hübner told

New in Chess. “I want to hand in a good piece of work. That is the most important aspect of playing chess for me.”

Asked what was the measuring stick for a good piece of work, Hübner replied, “My own analysis, and the impression that I have.”

GAMES AND WRITINGS

BY JOHN HARTMANN

Robert Hübner is widely quoted as having said, “Those who say they understand chess, understand nothing.” I can’t find a primary source for that, but his entire career as a player and writer makes that case.

It sounds like something Socrates would have said if he were a chessplayer: When the Delphic oracle said Socrates was the wisest man in Athens, Socrates understood that to mean that he was the only one who recognized just how little he knew.

I have no doubt that Hübner was aware of that echo. Hübner was a polyglot by choice and a philologist by training. It was a profession he was born to — his father was a teacher of Latin and Greek. After completing a doctorate in philology, he worked for a decade as a researcher at the University of Köln, the city of his birth and death. His love of Greek never left him: Hübner is said to have told the crowd at the German Senior Championship in 2023 that “ancient Greek texts are a hundred times more fun” than chess.

Reading through his published work and

interviews, I can’t help but see more than a bit of the gadfly in Hübner, who appears to have been as complex a character as Socrates. As Rick Massimo’s obituary relates, he was a man who chose principle over practicality. This is especially reflected in his writing, legendary for its obsessive detail and depth.

Hübner’s *Twenty-five Annotated Games* uses more than 400 pages to dissect just 25 games, with some analyses running upwards of 20 pages. The longest — Hübner – Portisch, Tilburg 1981, runs for more than 50 pages. Hübner lost.

Perhaps influenced by his training, Hübner’s chess analysis patiently tried to peel back positions to find their *eidōs* — Greek for that which is essential and true. His historical work — here the analysis of the Anderssen – Kieseritzky “Immortal” game and Tal – Keller, Zurich 1959, come to mind — sifted through source after source to see what previous commentators got right and what they overlooked.

Of his books, only *Twenty-five Annotated Games* is available in English. To my knowledge there are four others in German: *Fünfundfünfzig Feiste Fehler* (1990), featuring 55 fragments and “fat-fingered mistakes” from Hübner’s career; *Materialien zu Fischers Partien* (2004), an analysis of Fischer’s games with a focus on errors in *My 60 Memorable Games*; *Der Weltmeisterschaftskampf Lasker – Steinitz 1894* (2008), a study of the 1894 World Championship match along with some remarks on Lasker’s games leading up to the match and the 1910 title match against Schlechter; and *Büsum 1968: Erinnerungen von Robert Hübner*, which focuses on one of Hübner’s first tournament successes.



Hübner takes on Petrosian at Wijk aan Zee, 1971

PHOTO: BERT VERHOEFF / ANEFO

Some of this material was also published in ChessBase databases. Hübner was a regular contributor to ChessBase Magazine (CBM) beginning with its first issue in 1987; he chose to call his CBM column “Abfall,” or “garbage,” a bit of a misnomer given the quality of the work but fully resonant with his overwhelming humility. Hübner’s analysis was also a mainstay of early *Informants*, with some games taking up multiple pages despite the languageless format of the series.

This is not to say that Hübner was without mirth. Indeed, many of the tributes after his death take pains to describe his humor. I liked FM Mark Pinto’s comments at *chessbase.com*, recalling how Hübner once told him that he was the world’s third-best expert in Ancient Greek, but (alas) the world required just two.

For all of his successes as an author, Hübner made his name as a player. In the years after Fischer abdicated the world championship, as Larsen fell from the world’s elite, and before Timman came to full strength, he was (perhaps with Henrique Mecking) the best player in the West. It does not seem a stretch to say that, after Lasker, he was the strongest German-born player in history.

Hübner’s style was difficult to describe. I concur with what GM Mihail Marin had to say about it in CBM 205: Despite his reputation as a positional player, “deep in his soul he [was very] concrete.” I have chosen games that seemed to embody that style — there are some pretty miniatures, but the preponderance feature long, hand-to-hand struggles where he could (and did) outstrip the best players in the world.

GAMES

FRENCH DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (C02)

Viktor Kupreichik

IM Robert Hübner

Ivan Parcetic Memorial (2), Sombor, 08.04.1970

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3 Nc6 5. Nf3 Qb6 6. Be2 cxd4 7. cxd4 Nh6 8. Nc3 Nf5 9. Na4 Qa5+ 10. Bd2 Bb4 11. Bc3 a6 12. g4 Nfe7 13. Qb3 h5 14. gxh5 Rxh5 15. a3 Bxc3+ 16. bxc3 Rb8 17. Nb6 Bd7 18. h4 Nd8 19. Rg1 Bb5 20. a4 Bxe2 21. Kxe2 Nc8 22. Nxc8 Rxc8 23. Kd3 Rf5 24. Nd2 Rxf2 25. Rxg7 Rh2 26. Rf1 Rxh4 27. Rg8+ Kd7 28. Qa3 Rh3+ 29. Ke2 Rxc3 30. Rxd8+ Qxd8 31. Rxf7+ Kc6 32. Qb4 b6 33. Rf8



Qc7 34. Re8 Rh2+ 35. Kd1 Kb7 36. Nb3 Rc1+, White resigned.

Hübner’s draw with Fischer was a springboard to a strong second-place finish at the 1970 Palma de Mallorca Interzonal. Writing for *Chess Life* in 1971, GM Larry Evans lamented Fischer’s “dropping a piece” and presumably a half-point, but the reality is that White likely lacked real winning chances even before the move 32 inaccuracy.

CARO-KANN DEFENSE (B10)

GM Bobby Fischer

IM Robert Hübner

Interzonal (1), Palma de Mallorca, 11.09.1970

1. e4 c6 2. d3 d5 3. Nd2 g6 4. Ngf3 Bg7 5. g3 e5 6. Bg2 Ne7 7. 0-0 0-0 8. Re1 d4 9. a4 c5 10. Nc4 Nbc6 11. c3 Be6 12. cxd4 Bxc4 13. dxc4 exd4 14. e5 Qd7 15. h4 d3 16. Bd2 Rad8 17. Bc3 Nb4 18. Nd4 Rfe8 19. e6 fxe6 20. Nxe6 Bxc3 21. bxc3 Nc2 22. Nxd8 Rxd8 23. Qd2 Nxa1 24. Rxa1 Kg7 25. Re1 Ng8 26. Bd5 Qxa4 27. Qxd3 Re8 28. Rxe8 Qxe8 29. Bxb7 Nf6 30. Qd6 Qd7 31. Qa6 Qf7 32. Qxa7 Ne4! 33. f3 Nd6 34. Qxc5 Nxb7 35. Qd4+ Kg8 36. Kf2 Qe7 37. Qd5+ Kf8 38. h5 gxh5 39. Qxh5 Nc5 40. Qd5 Kg7 41. Qd4+ Kf7 42. Qd5+ Kg7 43. Qd4+ Kf7 44. Qd5+, draw.

Hübner is not the inventor of the Hübner Variation of the Nimzo-Indian — that honor goes (so far as I can tell) to GM Lajos Portisch. But it was Hübner who made it a se-

rious weapon, one used by Fischer to great effect in the fifth game of the 1972 World Championship match. You’ll find three games in this variation in this list, including this battle with American IM William Addison from the 1970 Interzonal.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE, HÜBNER VARIATION (E41)

IM William Addison

IM Robert Hübner

Interzonal (6), Palma de Mallorca, 11.15.1970

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 c5 5. Bd3 Nc6 6. Nf3 Bxc3+ 7. bxc3 d6 8. Nd2 e5 9. d5 Ne7 10. 0-0 0-0 11. Qc2 g6 12. f4 exf4 13. exf4 Bf5 14. Bb2 Qd7 15. Rae1 Rae8 16. Rf2 Bxd3 17. Qxd3 Qf5 18. Qxf5 Nxf5 19. Rfe2 Rxe2 20. Rxe2 h5 21. g3 Kg7 22. Kg2 h4 23. Nf1 Rh8 24. Bc1 Kf8 25. Rb2 b6 26. Re2 hxg3 27. hxg3 Ng4 28. Bd2 Ng7 29. Re1 f5 30. a4 Kf7 31. a5 bxa5 32. Ra1 Ra8 33. Rxa5 a6 34. Kf3 Ne8 35. Ra1 Nc7 36. Rb1 Ke7 37. Ne3 Nxe3 38. Bxe3 Rh8 39. Bg1 Kd7 40. Bf2 a5 41. Ra1 Ra8 42. g4 a4 43. gxf5 gxf5 44. Ra3 Ra6, White resigned.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE, HÜBNER VARIATION (E41)

GM Miguel Najdorf

GM Robert Hübner

Wijk aan Zee (7), 01.19.1971

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 c5 5.

Bd3 Nc6 6. Nf3 Bxc3+ 7. bxc3 d6 8. e4 e5 9. d5 Ne7 10. g3 h6 11. Nh4 g5 12. Ng2 Qa5 13. Qb3 Bh3 14. 0-0 0-0 15. Rb1 Qc7 16. f3 Kb8 17. Rf2 Rhg8 18. Ne3 Bc8 19. Kf1 Rdf8 20. Ke1 Ne8 21. Nf5 Nxf5 22. exf5 f6 23. g4 Rh8 24. Be3 h5 25. Bf1 Rf7 26. h3 Qd7 27. Kd2 Nc7 28. a4 Re7 29. Re1 Na8 30. a5 Qd8 31. Qa3 Rhh7 32. Rb1 b6 33. Bd3 Rb7 34. axb6 Nxb6 35. Ra1 Qh8 36. Kc2 hxc4 37. hxc4 Bd7 38. Qa2 Rh2 39. Kd2 Rxf2+ 40. Bxf2 Qh2 41. Ke2 Na4 42. Qd2 Be8 43. Rb1 Rxb1 44. Bxb1 Qf4 45. Bd3 Qxd2+ 46. Kxd2 Nb6 47. Kc1 Ba4 48. Bc2 Bd7 49. Bd3 Kc7 50. Kb2 Bc8 51. Kb3 Ba6 52. Be3 Nxd5, White resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, SOZIN ATTACK (B89)

GM Robert Hübner (2590)

GM Vlastimil Hort (2605)

European Team Ch (3), Bamberg, 03.1972

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. Nc3 d6 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Bc4 Be7 8. Qe2 a6 9. 0-0-0 Qc7 10. Bb3 b5 11. Nxc6 Qxc6 12. Bd4 Bb7 13. Rhe1 Rc8 14. f4 0-0 15. Nd5 Qe8 16. Nxf6+ gxf6 17. f5 e5 18. Qh5 Kh8 19. Rd3 Rg8 20. Bxf7 Qf8 21. Bxg8 Qxg8 22. Bc3 d5 23. Rg3 Qe8 24. Qxe8+ Rxe8 25. exd5 Bxd5 26. Rxe5, Black resigned.

As mentioned above in the obituary, if Hübner didn't agree with the conditions he was playing under, he was very unlikely to change his mind. This is the "game" he played when he was peeved at having to play so many rounds in a row in a team event:

ENGLISH OPENING (A15)

GM Robert Hübner (2590)

Kenneth Rogoff (2430)

World Student Team Ch (8), Graz, 07.28.1972

1. c4 Nf6 2. Nf3 g6 3. Ng1 Bg7 4. Qa4 0-0 5. Qxd7 Qxd7 6. g4 Qxd2+ 7. Kxd2 Nxg4 8. b4 a5 9. a4 Bxa1 10. Bb2 Nc6 11. Bh8 Bg7 12. h4 axb4, draw.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, KAN VARIATION (B42)

GM Anatoly Karpov

GM Robert Hübner

Interzonal (2), Leningrad, 06.04.1973

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 a6 5. Bd3 Nf6 6. 0-0 Qc7 7. Qe2 d6 8. c4 g6 9.

Nc3 Bg7 10. Be3 0-0 11. Rac1 Nc6 12. Nxc6 bxc6 13. f4 c5 14. Rfd1 Bb7 15. a3 Bc6 16. b4 cxb4 17. axb4 Qb7 18. e5 dxe5 19. fxe5 Nd7 20. b5 axb5 21. cxb5 Bd5 22. Bd4 Qb8 23. Re1 Bb7 24. b6 Rd8 25. Bb5 Ra5 26. Qe3 Qa8 27. Qf2 Ba6 28. Rb1 Bxb5 29. Rxb5 Rxb5 30. Nxb5 Qa5 31. Nd6 Nxe5 32. Bxe5 Rxd6 33. Bxg7 Kxg7 34. Rb1 Rd8 35. Qb2+ Kg8 36. b7 Rb8 37. Qc2 Kg7 38. Qc8 Qa2 39. Qc3+ Kg8 40. Ra1 Qd5 41. Qc8+ Kg7 42. Qxb8 Qd4+ 43. Kf1 Qxa1+, draw.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE, YUGOSLAV VARIATION (E66)

GM Jan Smejkal

GM Robert Hübner

Interzonal (12), Leningrad, 06.19.1973

1. c4 Nf6 2. Nf3 g6 3. d4 Bg7 4. g3 0-0 5. Bg2 c5 6. 0-0 Nc6 7. Nc3 d6 8. d5 Na5 9. Nd2 e5 10. e4 Ne8 11. b3 a6 12. Bb2 Rb8 13. Qc2 f5 14. exf5 gxf5 15. Rae1 b5 16. Nd1 Rb7 17. f4 e4 18. Bxg7 Rxg7 19. Qc3 h5 20. Ne3 b4 21. Qa1 Nb7 22. Rf2 a5 23. Ndf1 Bd7 24. Bh3 a4 25. bxa4 Na5 26. Rc1 Rg6 27. Kh1 Qf6 28. Qxf6 Rgxf6 29. Ng2 Nc7 30. Rb2 Na8 31. Nd2 Nb6 32. Ne3 Nxa4 33. Rbc2 R6f7 34. Nb3 Ra8 35. Nd1 Nb6 36. Ne3 Kg7 37. Bf1 Kg6 38. Be2 Be8 39. Re1 Rfa7 40. Nc1 Nb7 41. Kg2 Ra3 42. Kf2 Na4 43. Nd1 Nc3 44. Nxc3 bxc3 45. h3 Ba4 46. Nb3 Na5 47. g4 Bxb3 48. axb3 Nxb3 49. gxh5+ Kh7 50. Rxc3 Nd4 51. Rxa3 Rxa3 52. Bd1 Rc3, White resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, SOZIN VARIATION (B89)

GM Robert Hübner

Fernando Visier Segovia

Maspalomas Team Tournament, 1974

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. Nc3 Nc6 4. d4 cxd4 5. Nxd4 d6 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Bc4 Be7 8. Qe2 a6 9. 0-0-0 Qc7 10. Bb3 0-0 11. Rhg1 Na5 12. g4 b5 13. g5 Nxb3+ 14. axb3 Nd7 15. Rg3 Bb7 16. f4 b4 17. Nd5 exd5 18. Nf5 Nc5 19. Bd4 Nxe4 20. Nxg7 f6 21. gxf6 Nxg3 22. Qg4 Ne2+ 23. Kb1 Bc8 24. Nf5+ Kf7 25. Qh5+ Ke6 26. fxe7 Bd7 27. exf8=N+, Black resigned.

It's not often that Ulf Andersson was "out-Andersson'd," but Hübner managed it.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E56)

GM Robert Hübner (2600)

GM Ulf Andersson (2565)

Tilburg (5), 09.28.1977

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 c5 5. Bd3 d5 6. Nf3 0-0 7. 0-0 dxc4 8. Bxc4 Nc6 9. a3 Ba5 10. Qd3 a6 11. dxc5 Qxd3 12. Bxd3 Bxc3 13. bxc3 Rd8 14. Bc2 Bd7 15. a4 Na5 16. Ne5 Be8 17. Ba3 Rd5 18. f4 Rdd8 19. Bb4 Nc6 20. Nc4 Nd5 21. Rab1 Rab8 22. Rfc1 Kf8 23. Kf2 f6 24. g3 Bg6 25. Bxg6 hxc6 26. e4 Nde7 27. Ba3 Rd7 28. Rc2 Kg8 29. Ke2 Nc8 30. Rcb2 Kh7 31. h4 Kg8 32. Ke3 Kh7 33. g4 Kg8 34. Rg2 N8e7 35. h5 Rbd8 36. Nd6 Na5 37. Kf3 gxh5 38. gxh5 Nc8 39. Bb4 Nc6 40. h6 Nxd6 41. cxd6 Kh7 42. hxc7 Rxg7 43. Rxg7+ Kxg7 44. c4 e5 45. c5 Rd7 46. Bc3 Kf7 47. f5 Ke8 48. Rh1 Rf7 49. Rh6 Nb8 50. Be1 Nd7 51. Bf2 Nf8 52. Ke3 Kd7 53. Bh4 Nh7 54. Kd3 Kc6 55. Kc4 b6 56. cxb6 Kxd6 57. Kb4, Black resigned.

Hübner is not often thought of as a tactician, but this slugfest with Hort might make one think otherwise. The tripled pawns are striking!

SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF POISONED PAWN (B97)

GM Robert Hübner (2595)

GM Vlastimil Hort (2600)

Match (5), Hamburg, 09.05.1979

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Bg5 e6 7. f4 Qb6 8. Qd2 Qxb2 9. Rb1 Qa3 10. f5 Nc6 11. fxe6 fxe6 12. Nxc6 bxc6 13. e5 dxe5 14. Bxf6 gxf6 15. Ne4 Be7 16. Be2 h5 17. 0-0 f5 18. Rb3 Qa4 19. c4 fxe4 20. Kh1 Bd7 21. Qc3 Rf8 22. Bxh5+ Kd8 23. Rd1 Kc8 24. h3 Qxa2 25. c5 a5 26. Rdb1 Bd8 27. Qc4 Bc7 28. Rb8+ Rxb8 29. Qxa2 e3 30. Be2 Rf4 31. Ba6+ Kd8 32. Rxb8+ Bxb8 33. Qxa5+ Bc7 34. Qc3 Ra4 35. Be2 e4 36. g4 Kc8 37. g5 Bf4 38. g6 Kc7 39. g7 Ra8 40. Qb2, Black resigned.

Korchnoi was Hübner's second most-frequent opponent; only Timman faced him more often. Their score was fairly equal: MegaBase puts their lifetime tally at 28½/56 in favor of Hübner. The next game is a beauty from their 1980 Candidates Final. It is striking for White's clarity of play and technique.

CARO-KANN DEFENSE, CLASSICAL VARIATION (B19)

GM Robert Hübner (2600)

GM Victor Korchnoi (2695)

Candidates (1), Merano, 12.20.1980

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 dxe4 4. Nxe4 Bf5 5.

Ng3 Bg6 6. h4 h6 7. Nf3 Nd7 8. h5 Bh7 9. Bd3 Bxd3 10. Qxd3 Qc7 11. Bd2 Ngf6 12. 0-0-0 e6 13. Ne4 Be7 14. Kb1 c5 15. Nxf6+ Nxf6 16. dxc5 Bxc5 17. Qe2 0-0 18. Ne5 Rfd8 19. f4 Rac8 20. g4 Bb6 21. Bc1 Nd7 22. Nxd7 Rxd7 23. g5 Rxd1 24. Rxd1 Qc4 25. Rd3 hxc5 26. fxg5 e5 27. g6 fxg6 28. hxg6 Rc6 29. Qg2 e4 30. Rg3 Rf6 31. Rg4 Qe6 32. Rxe4 Rxc6 33. Qe2 Qh3 34. Qc4+ Kf8 35. b3 Rc6 36. Ba3+, Black resigned.

RUY LOPEZ, ZAITSEV VARIATION (C92)

GM Robert Hübner (2640)

GM Lajos Portisch (2650)

Tilburg (1), 10.01.1981

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 0-0 9. h3 Bb7 10. d4 Re8 11. a4 h6 12. Nbd2 Bf8 13. Bc2 exd4 14. cxd4 Nb4 15. Bb1 Qd7 16. Ra3 Rad8 17. axb5 axb5 18. Rae3 c5 19. d5 g6 20. Nf1 Bg7 21. Bd2 Na6 22. Ng3 b4 23. Nh4 Kh8 24. Ngf5 gxf5 25. Nxf5 Rg8 26. Rg3 Nc7 27. Ree3 Nce8 28. Ref3 Ra8 29. Qc1 Ra1 30. Bxh6 Nh7 31. Nxc7 Nxc7 32. b3 Qe7 33. Kh2 f6 34. Rg4 Nh5 35. Rh4 Qe5+ 36. g3 Bc8 37. Qc2 c4 38. bxc4 Ra3 39. Rb3 Rg6 40. Bc1 Rxb3 41. Qxb3 Kg8 42. Bc2 Bd7 43. Bb2 Qg5 44. Qd3 Rh6 45. Bd4 b3 46. Bxb3 Nf4 47. Qf3 Nxc3 48. Ba4 Rxh4 49. Bxd7 Ng1+, White resigned.

Hübner had very kind words for Bill Martz in 25 *Annotated Games*, calling the American IM a “fine friend” lost too early. The Wisconsin Chess Association has recently republished a 1982 interview with Martz where Hübner

was present. You can find it at wischess.org.

ENGLISH OPENING (A34)

IM Bill Martz (2405)

GM Robert Hübner (2620)

Chicago International (1), 04.09.1982

1. c4 Nf6 2. Nc3 c5 3. Nf3 e6 4. e3 Be7 5. d4 0-0 6. d5 exd5 7. cxd5 d6 8. Bd3 Bg4 9. h3 Bh5 10. e4 Nfd7 11. Bf4 Na6 12. g4 Bg6 13. h4 c4 14. Bb1 h5 15. Nd2 Rc8 16. gxf5 Bh7 17. Rg1 Bf6 18. Bxd6 Re8 19. Kf1 Qb6 20. Ba3 Qa5 21. e5 Bxb1 22. Rxb1 Bxe5 23. Qg4 Nb6 24. Nde4 Nxd5 25. Nd6 Nxc3 26. bxc3 Qxa3 27. Nxc8 Qxc3 28. Rd1 Qc2 29. Qd7 Re6 30. h6 Nc5 31. Qd8+ Kh7 32. hxg7 Bxg7 33. Qd2 Qxd2 34. Rxd2 c3 35. Rc2 a6 36. Rxg7+ Kxg7 37. Rxc3 Ne4 38. Rd3 Rc6 39. Ne7 Rc2 40. Nf5+ Kg6 41. Nd6 Rxf2+ 42. Ke1 Rf4 43. Nxb7 Rxh4 44. Ra3 Kg5 45. Nd8 Rh1+ 46. Ke2 Rh2+ 47. Ke1 f5 48. Rxa6 Kg4 49. Ra4 Rh6 50. Nf7 Re6 51. Nd8 Re8 52. Nc6 f4 53. Ra7 f3 54. Re7 Rxe7 55. Nxe7 f2+ 56. Ke2 Kg3 57. Nf5+ Kg2 58. Nh4+ Kh3 59. Nf5 Kg2, draw.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE, HÜBNER VARIATION (E41)

GM Svetozar Gligoric (2535)

GM Robert Hübner (2620)

Bugojno (10), 05.20.1982

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 c5 5. Bd3 Nc6 6. Nf3 Bxc3+ 7. bxc3 d6 8. e4 e5 9. d5 Ne7 10. Rb1 h6 11. Ng1 Qc7 12. g3 Bd7 13. f4 exf4 14. gxf4 0-0-0 15. Nf3 Bg4 16. 0-0 Nd7 17. Qb3 b6 18. Qc2 f6 19. Kh1

g5 20. Ng1 Rdg8 21. Be2 h5 22. Nf3 gxf4 23. Nh4 Ng6 24. Nf5 Nde5 25. Bxg4 hxg4 26. Bxf4 Nxf4 27. Rxf4 Nf3 28. Rb2 Rh3 29. Qg2 Qh7 30. Ne3 Nxc2 31. Qxh2 g3 32. Nf1 gxf2, White resigned.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE, SAEMISCH VARIATION (E24)

GM Boris Spassky (2625)

GM Robert Hübner (2620)

Turin International (1), 06.04.1982

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. a3 Bxc3+ 5. bxc3 c5 6. f3 Nc6 7. e4 d6 8. Ne2 b6 9. Ng3 Na5 10. f4 0-0 11. e5 Ne8 12. Be3 Ba6 13. Bd3 Bxc4 14. 0-0 f5 15. exf6 e.p. Nxf6 16. Qe2 Bxd3 17. Qxd3 Qd7 18. Rae1 Rae8 19. Bc1 Nc6 20. f5 exf5 21. Nxf5 Rxe1 22. Rxe1 cxd4 23. cxd4 d5 24. Qh3 Kh8 25. Rf1 Ne4 26. Rf3 Rf6 27. g4 Ne7 28. Nh4 Qa4 29. Rxf6 Qxd4+ 30. Be3 Qxf6 31. g5 Nxc3 32. Qd7 Ne4 33. Kg2 Nc5 34. Qc7 Ne6 35. Qb8+ Ng8 36. Nf3 Qg6+ 37. Kh3 Qe4, White resigned.

ENGLISH OPENING (A20)

GM Mihai Suba (2525)

GM Robert Hübner (2620)

Olympiad (4), Thessaloniki, 11.22.1984

1. c4 e5 2. g3 Nf6 3. Bg2 c6 4. d4 exd4 5. Qxd4 d5 6. Nf3 Be7 7. cxd5 cxd5 8. 0-0 Nc6 9. Qa4 0-0 10. Be3 Bd7 11. Nc3 Na5 12. Qc2 Rc8 13. Rad1 Bg4 14. Ng5 h6 15. Nh3 Bc5 16. Bxc5 Rxc5 17. Nf4 d4 18. h3 Bf5 19. Qa4 Rc4 20. Qa3 Nc6 21. Nb5 Bc2 22. b3 Bxd1 23. bxc4 Bc2 24. Nd5 Re8 25.



Karpov makes his move against Hübner at Tilburg, 1979

Nd6 Rxe2 26. Nxb7 Qc8 27. Nf4 Re5 28. Nd6 Qd7 29. Nb5 d3 30. Bxc6 Qxc6 31. Nxd3 Re4 32. Nb2 a6 33. Qd6 Qb7 34. Qc7 Re7 35. Qd8+ Re8 36. Qd2 Bf5 37. Nd6 Rd8 38. Qf4 Rxd6 39. Qxf5 Qxb2 40. c5 Rc6 41. Rb1 Rxc5 42. Qd3 Rc1+ 43. Rxc1 Qxc1+ 44. Kg2, and White resigned.

RUY LOPEZ, ZAITSEV VARIATION (C92)

GM Robert Hübner (2620)

GM Lajos Portisch (2605)

OHRA-A (9), Brussels, 12.1986

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 0-0 9. h3 Bb7 10. d4 Re8 11. Nbd2 Bf8 12. a4 Qd7 13. d5 Ne7 14. c4 Ng6 15. Bc2 c6 16. b3 b4 17. Nh2 Qc7 18. Ng4 Be7 19. Nf1 cxd5 20. cxd5 Nxc4 21. hxg4 Bc8 22. Ne3 Bg5 23. Nf5 Bxc1 24. Rxc1 Qd8 25. Bd3 Ne7 26. Qd2 Rb8 27. Rc2 Nxf5 28. gxf5 f6 29. Rec1 Re7 30. Rc6 Ra7 31. Qe2 a5 32. Bb5 Bb7 33. Rc7 Rc8 34. Qc4 Raa8 35. f3 Kf8 36. Kf2 Rab8 37. Ke3 g6 38. Bd7 Rxc7 39. Qxc7 Qxc7 40. Rxc7 Ba6 41. Be6 Rb7 42. Rc6 Bf1 43. Rxd6 Bc4 44. Rd8+, Black resigned.

Kasparov appears to have been a tough opponent for Hübner. After a loss to him at Tilburg in 1981 and two draws, he was crushed (4½-1½) in a short 1985 match. This draw from the Skelleftea World Cup in 1989 sees Hübner conjure a fortress out of nothing and resist all of Kasparov's attempts at breaking in.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED (D20)

GM Garry Kasparov (2775)

GM Robert Hübner (2605)

World Cup (3), Skelleftea, 08.1989

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. e4 e5 4. Nf3 exd4 5. Bxc4 Bb4+ 6. Nbd2 Nc6 7. 0-0 Nf6 8. e5 Nd5 9. Nb3 Nb6 10. Bg5 Be7 11. Bxe7 Qxe7 12. Bb5 Bd7 13. Bxc6 Bxc6 14. Nfxd4 Bd5 15. Qg4 g6 16. Rfe1 0-0 17. Nf5 Qd7 18. Nh6+ Kg7 19. Qg5 f6? 20. exf6+ Rxf6 21. Re7+ Qxe7 22. Nf5+ Rxf5 23. Qxe7+ Rf7 24. Qe5+ Kg8 25. Nc5 c6 26. b3 Nd7 27. Nxd7 Rxd7 28. Rd1 a5 29. h4 Rf7 30. Rd4 Rf5 31. Qe1 b5 32. Rd3? a4 33. Re3 axb3 34. axb3 Raf8 35. f3 h5 36. Kh2 R5f6 37. Kg3 Rf5 38. Qd2 Kg7 39. b4 R5f7 40. Qd4+ Kg8 41. Qb6 Kg7 42. Kf2 Kh7 43. Kg3 Kg7 44. Qd4+ Kg8 45. Ra3 Kh7 46. Ra6 Kg8 47. Rb6 Kh7 48. Kh2 Rf4 49. Qe3 R4f7 50. Qc3 Rf4 51. Kg3 R4f7 52. Ra6 Rf5 53. Ra1 R5f7 54. Re1 Rf5 55. Re3 R5f7

56. Qc5 Kg7 57. Kf2 Rf5 58. Qd4+ Kh7 59. Re7+ R5f7 60. Re5 Rf5, draw.

Here's one of the most memorable wins in Hübner's career. He takes the battle straight to a Kasparov at the height of his powers and outduels him.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE, FIANCHETTO VARIATION (E69)

GM Robert Hübner (2615)

GM Garry Kasparov (2780)

Dortmund (6), 04.23.1992

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 Bg7 4. Bg2 0-0 5. Nc3 d6 6. Nf3 Nbd7 7. 0-0 e5 8. e4 c6 9. h3 Bb6 10. c5 dxc5 11. dxe5 Ne8 12. Na4 Qa6 13. Bg5 b5 14. Nc3 Nc7 15. Be7 Re8 16. Bd6 Ne6 17. a4 b4 18. Ne2 Qa5 19. Nd2 Ba6 20. f4 c4 21. Kh2 Rad8 22. Qc2 Nb6 23. Rfd1 Bf8 24. Nf3 c3 25. Ned4 Nxd4 26. Nxd4 cxb2 27. Qxb2 Nc4 28. Qb3 Qb6 29. a5 Qb7 30. Bxf8 Kxf8 31. e6 c5 32. e5 Qc7 33. exf7 Qxf7 34. Nc6 Rxd1 35. Rxd1 Nxe5 36. Bd5 Bc4 37. Qc2 Ng4+? 38. hxg4 Re2+ 39. Qxe2 Bxe2 40. Bxf7 Bxd1 41. Bc4 b3 42. Nxa7 b2 43. Ba2 Be2 44. Kg2 Bd3 45. Kf3 Ke7 46. Ke3 b1=Q 47. Bxb1 Bxb1 48. Nb5 Kd7 49. a6 Kc6 50. f5, Black resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, RICHTER-RAUZER VARIATION (B66)

GM Robert Hübner (2610)

GM Christopher Lutz (2595)

Münich (10), 06.01.1994

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Bg5 e6 7. Qd2 a6 8. 0-0-0 h6 9. Be3 Be7 10. f4 Bd7 11. Kb1 b5 12. Bd3 Qc7 13. Rhe1 b4 14. Nce2 0-0 15. h3 e5 16. Nf5 Bxf5 17. exf5 e4 18. Bc4 d5 19. Bb3 Na5 20. g4 Nc4 21. Bxc4 dxc4 22. Bd4 c3 23. Qe3 cxb2 24. g5 Rfc8 25. Qb3 hxg5 26. fxg5 Ne8 27. f6 Bf8 28. fxg7 Nxg7 29. g6 Qc4 30. gxf7+ Qxf7 31. Qxb2 Rc6 32. Rf1 Qe8 33. Rg1 Rd8 34. Rdf1 Rd7 35. Rg4 Rg6 36. Qb3+ Kh7 37. Nf4 Rxg4 38. hxg4 Rxd4 39. Rh1+ Nh5 40. Nxh5 Kg6 41. Qg8+, Black resigned.

CARO-KANN DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (B12)

GM Robert Hübner (2605)

GM Lucas Brunner (2525)

Olympiad (7), Moscow, 12.08.1994

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 Bf5 4. Nf3 e6 5. Be2

c5 6. c3 Nc6 7. 0-0 cxd4 8. cxd4 Nge7 9. Be3 Nc8 10. Nbd2 Be7 11. Nb3 a5 12. Rc1 N8a7 13. Nc5 b6 14. Na4 0-0 15. Nd2 Rb8 16. f4 Bg6 17. a3 Qd7 18. Rf2 Rfc8 19. Nf1 Nd8 20. g4 Rxc1 21. Bxc1 f6 22. Be3 Qc8 23. Nc3 fxe5 24. dxe5 Bc5 25. f5 exf5 26. Nxd5 Ndc6 27. b4 axb4 28. axb4 Bxe3 29. Nfxe3 f4 30. Nxf4 Be4 31. Qb3+ Kh8 32. Qc4 Bb1 33. Rf1 b5 34. Qd5 Ne7 35. Qf7 Qc3 36. Nfd5, Black resigned.

GRÜNFELD DEFENSE, NEO-GRÜNFELD VARIATION (D77)

GM Robert Hübner (2595)

GM Judit Polgar (2665)

Dortmund (1), 07.05.1996

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 g6 3. g3 Bg7 4. Bg2 0-0 5. 0-0 d5 6. c4 Nc6 7. Ne5 dxc4 8. Nxc6 bxc6 9. Nc3 Rb8 10. Bxc6 Bb7 11. Bf3 Bxf3 12. exf3 Nd5 13. Qe2 Nb4 14. Qxc4 Nc2 15. Rb1 Rb4 16. Qd5 Nxd4 17. Be3 e6 18. Qxd8 Rxd8 19. Kg2 Rdb8 20. Rfd1 h5 21. Ne4 Nf5 22. Bxa7 Ra8 23. Bc5 Rxb2 24. Rxb2 Bxb2 25. Rd2 Ba3 26. Bxa3 Rxa3 27. Rc2 c6 28. f4 Kf8 29. Rxc6 Rxa2 30. Rc8+ Kg7 31. Rc7 Kg8 32. Rd7 Ne3+ 33. Kf3 Nd5 34. Ng5 Nf6 35. Rxf7 Ng4 36. h3 Rxf2+ 37. Ke4 Nh6 38. Ra7 Re2+ 39. Kf3 Re1 40. Kf2 Rb1 41. Nxe6 Nf7 42. g4 hxg4 43. hxg4 Rb6 44. Re7 Rb3 45. Ke2 Ra3 46. g5 Rb3 47. Ra7 Rb6 48. Nc5 Nd6 49. Kd3 Rb1 50. Ra6 Rd1+ 51. Ke2 Rd4 52. Kf3 Kf7 53. Ra7+ Ke8 54. Nd7 Nf7 55. Nf6+ Kf8 56. Nd7+ Ke8 57. Ne5 Nxe5+ 58. fxe5 Kf8 59. Ra6 Kf7 60. Rf6+ Kg7 61. e6 Rd1 62. Rf7+ Kg8 63. Ke4 Rg1 64. Rf3 Re1+ 65. Kd5 Kg7 66. Rf7+ Kg8 67. Kd6, Black resigned.

Like many of his day, Hübner played extensively in national team events. After the mid-1990s, when his invitations to elite round-robins began to wane, team events became one of Hübner's main arenas. He played for three teams — SG Porz, Bayern Munich, and OSG Baden-Baden — in the Bundesliga.

FRENCH DEFENSE, WINAWER VARIATION (C19)

GM Peter Enders (2493)

GM Robert Hübner (2599)

Bundesliga (13), Germany, 03.21.1999

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 Ne7 7. Qg4 0-0 8. Bd3 Nbc6 9. Nf3 f5 10. exf6 e.p. Rxf6 11. Bg5 e5 12. Bxh7+ Kxh7 13. Qh5+ Kg8 14. Bxf6 gxf6 15. dxe5 Qf8 16. exf6 Qxf6 17. Qg5+ Qg7



Hübner in 2018

18. 0-0-0 Bg4 19. Rd3 Rf8 20. Qxg7+ Kxg7 21. Nh4 Ne5 22. Re3 N7c6 23. Rhe1 Rh8 24. g3 Nc4 25. Rd3 Rd8 26. h3 Bc8 27. f4 Nxa3 28. g4 Nc4 29. Nf3 b5 30. h4 b4 31. Nd2 Nxd2 32. Kxd2 c4 33. Rg3 a5 34. f5 d4 35. cxd4 c3+ 36. Kc1 a4 37. Re4 Nxd4 38. Rd3 Nb3+ 39. cxb3 Rxd3 40. Rxb4 a3 41. Ra4 Rg3 42. Kc2 a2 43. Rxa2 Rg2+ 44. Kb1 Rxc4 45. Rf2 Kf6, White resigned.

BENKO GAMBIT, ACCEPTED (A58)

GM Robert Hübner (2604)
IM Thies Heinemann (2426)
Bundesliga (15), Germany, 04.25.2004

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 g6 3. c4 c5 4. d5 b5 5. cxb5 a6 6. bxa6 Bg7 7. Nc3 Bxa6 8. g3 d6 9. Bg2 Nbd7 10. 0-0 Nb6 11. Re1 0-0 12. e4 Nfd7 13. Qc2 Nc4 14. Bf1 Qa5 15. Bxc4 Bxc4 16. Bf4 Nb6 17. Re3 Bd4 18. Ree1 Bg7 19. Qd2 Rfd8 20. Bh6 Ba6 21. Bxg7 Kxg7 22. e5 Nc4 23. Qc2 Qc7 24. exd6 exd6 25. Ne4 f6 26. Qc3 Ne5 27. Nd4 Bc8 28. f4 Ng4 29. h3 Nh6 30. Nxf6 Qf7 31. Nc6 Qxf6 32. Re7+ Nf7 33. Nxd8 Qxc3 34. bxc3 Bxh3 35. Nxf7, Black resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, TAIMANOV VARIATION (B47)

GM Robert Hübner (2602)
IM Nedeljko Kelecevic (2316)
Swiss Team Ch (5), 06.14.2009

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Qc7 5. Nc3 e6 6. g3 a6 7. Bg2 Nf6 8. 0-0 Be7 9. Re1 Nxd4 10. e5 Nc6 11. exf6 gxf6 12. Qg4 Ne5 13. Qg7 Ng6 14. h4 h5 15. Nd5 Qd8 16. Be4 Bf8 17. Nxf6+ Ke7 18. Nd5+ Kd6 19. Qxf7 exd5 20. Bxg6, Black resigned.

Some players drop precipitously in strength as they age, but Hübner kept his level remarkably high as he passed 60. In these final games, played mostly in team competitions on first board, he forces a still-improving Caruana to fight for a draw, and shows his attacking chops against younger competitors.

RUY LOPEZ (C60)

GM Fabiano Caruana (2682)
GM Robert Hübner (2608)
Swiss Team Ch (8), 10.20.2012

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. 0-0 d6 5. Re1 Bd7 6. c3 g6 7. d4 Bg7 8. Nbd2 0-0 9. Bd3 Nh5 10. Nb3 Bg4 11. Be2 h6 12. h3 Bc8 13. Be3 Nf4 14. Bxf4 exf4 15. Nc1 g5 16. Nd3 Ne7 17. Nd2 b6 18. e5 d5 19. Bg4 Be6 20. a4 a5 21. b4 Qd7 22. Ra2 Nc6 23. Nb3 Rfe8 24. Bxe6 Qxe6 25. Rc2 Bf8 26. b5 Ne7 27. Qh5 c6 28. bxc6 Nxc6 29. Nd2 Rac8 30. Rb2 Ne7 31. Rb3 Rc6 32. Nb2 Rec8 33. Qf3 R8c7 34. Nd1 Qf5 35. Rb2 Rg6 36. Re2 Bg7 37. Nf1 Rc4 38. Ra2 Qd7 39. Nb2 Rc8 40. Ra3 Qf5 41. Rb3 Qd7 42. Rb5 Qc6 43. Rc2 f6 44. exf6 Rxf6 45. c4 Qd7 46. Qb3 Rfc6 47. Rxb6 Bxd4 48. Rxc6 Qxc6 49. c5 Bxc5 50. Nd3 Qb6 51. Qa2 Rc7 52. Re2 Bd4 53. Nd2 Bf6 54. Nf3 Rc3 55. Nde5 Rc1+ 56. Kh2 Qb1 57. Qxb1 Rxb1 58. Ng4 Kg7 59. Re6 Ng8 60. Ra6 Bc3 61. Ra7+ Kg6 62. Rc7 Rb3 63. Rd7 Ra3 64. Rxd5 Rxa4 65. h4 Nf6 66. Rd6 Ra1 67. Rc6 Bb2 68. h5+ Kg7 69. Rc7+ Kf8 70. Nxf6 Bxf6 71. Kh3 a4 72. Kg4 a3 73. Rc6 Bg7 74. Ra6 Ke7 75. Kf5 Bb2 76. Rxh6 Rh1 77. Ra6 Rxh5 78. Nxc5 Rh2 79. Kxf4 Rxc2 80. Ne4, draw.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED (D20)

GM Robert Hübner (2581)
GM Mikhail Zaitsev (2515)
Bundesliga 2 (5), Germany, 01.13.2013

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. e3 e5 4. Bxc4 exd4 5. exd4 Nf6 6. Nf3 Bd6 7. 0-0 0-0 8. Bg5 Nc6 9. h3 h6 10. Bh4 Be7 11. Nc3 Nd5 12. Bg3 Nxc3 13. bxc3 Bd6 14. Bh4 Be7 15. Bxe7 Qxe7 16. Re1 Qf6 17. Bd5 Bf5 18. Qb3 Rab8 19. Re3 Ne7 20. Rae1 Nxd5 21. Qxd5 Be6 22. Qa5 b6 23. Qxa7 Qd8 24. Qa6 Ra8 25. Qd3 Rxa2 26. c4 Qf6 27. d5 Bf5 28. Qd4 Qd6 29. Ne5 Raa8

30. Nc6 Kh8 31. Rg3 f6 32. Ne7 Bh7 33. Re6 Qd7 34. Qg4 Rf7 35. Rge3 Raf8 36. Qg3 b5 37. cxb5 Qxb5 38. Qxc7 Bf5 39. Rb6 Qa4 40. Rb8 Bh7 41. d6 Qf4 42. g3 Qd4 43. d7 Be4 44. Rxe4, Black resigned.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED (D37)

GM Robert Hübner (2583)
GM Michael Prusikin (2528)
Swiss Team Ch (3), 05.22.2016

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 d5 3. c4 e6 4. Nc3 Be7 5. Bf4 0-0 6. e3 c5 7. dxc5 Bxc5 8. a3 Nc6 9. cxd5 Nxd5 10. Nxd5 exd5 11. Bd3 Bb6 12. 0-0 Bg4 13. h3 Bh5 14. b4 d4 15. b5 Na5 16. exd4 Qd5 17. Re1 Rfe8 18. Rxe8+ Rxe8 19. Rc1 Bxf3 20. Qxf3 Qxf3 21. gxf3 Nb3 22. Rc3 Nxd4 23. Kg2 Ne6 24. Bg3 g5 25. Rc4 Rd8 26. Be4 Nf4+ 27. Bxf4 gxf4 28. Bxb7 Rd2 29. Rxf4 Rxf2+ 30. Kg3 Bc7 31. Kxf2 Bxf4 32. Ke2 Kf8 33. Kd3 Ke7 34. Ke4 Bd2 35. Kd5 h6 36. Bc8 Kd8 37. Bg4 Ke7 38. Kc6 Ba5 39. a4 Bb6 40. Bh5 f6 41. Bg4 Ba5 42. h4 Bb6 43. h5 Ba5 44. Bh3 Bb6 45. Bf5 Ba5 46. Bh3 Bb6 47. Bg4 Ba5 48. f4 Bb6 49. Bh3 Be3 50. Kb7 Kd6 51. a5 Kd5 52. Bg2+ Kc4 53. b6 axb6 54. a6 b5 55. Bf1+ Kd5 56. Bd3 b4 57. Bb1 b3 58. a7 Bxa7 59. Kxa7 Kd4 60. f5 Ke5 61. Kb6 Kf4 62. Kc5 Kg5 63. Kc4 b2 64. Kc3 Kxh5 65. Kxb2 Kg4 66. Kc3 h5 67. Kd4 h4 68. Kd5 Kf4 69. Ke6 h3 70. Ba2, Black resigned.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED (D26)

GM Robert Hübner (2569)
GM Mihajlo Stojanovic (2509)
Swiss Team Ch (1), 03.19.2017

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. e3 e6 5. Bxc4 c5 6. 0-0 Nc6 7. Qe2 cxd4 8. Rd1 Be7 9. exd4 0-0 10. Nc3 Na5 11. Bd3 b6 12. Bg5 Bb7 13. Ba6 Bxa6 14. Qxa6 Qc8 15. Qe2 Qb7 16. d5 exd5 17. Bxf6 Bxf6 18. Nxd5 Bd8 19. Rd2 Rc8 20. Rad1 b5 21. h4 Nc4 22. Rd4 Nd6 23. Qe5 Nc4 24. Qe4 Nd6 25. Qf4 Nc4 26. Ng5 h6 27. Qe4 hxg5 28. Nf6+ Bxf6 29. Qxb7 gxh4 30. Qxb5 Bxd4 31. Rxd4 Nb6 32. Rxh4 Rfd8 33. Qh5 f6 34. Qf3 Rc1+ 35. Kh2 Rdd1 36. Qb3+ Nd5 37. Qb8+ Kf7 38. Qxa7+ Rc7 39. Qa4 Rcc1 40. Rc4, Black resigned. ♠

For up-to-date chess news and information, check out **Chess Life Online** at usChess.org/clo on a regular basis.

Should I Have Won?

Prosecuting small advantages can go in many directions.

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN

W

ALL ADMIRE THE WAY Magnus Carlsen squeezes out small advantages for wins with great regularity. I'm no Mag-

nus, but I've often been in the position of grinding away with seemingly little to work with. I'm proud of the wins I was able to pull off, while I lament the times I didn't create enough problems for my opponent.

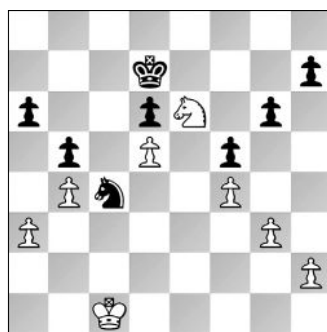
In our first game, I struggled to find ways to keep the pressure on against my talented teenaged opponent.

FRESHLY SQUEEZED

FM Aaron Pixton (2449)

GM Joel Benjamin (2587)

U.S. Championship (3), Seattle,
01.11.2003



BLACK TO MOVE

I have the opportunity to win a pawn, but can I hold it?

44. ... Nxa3 45. Kd2

After 45. Nf8+ Ke7 46. Nxh7 Nc4 Black wins a pawn in a more meaningful way.

45. ... Nc4+ 46. Kd3 Nb6

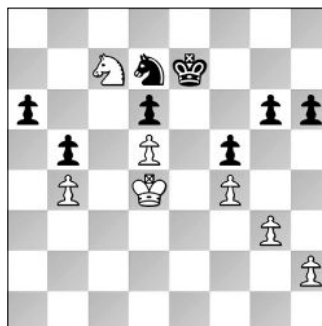
I have to hunker down as 46. ... a5 47. bxa5 Nxa5 48. Kc3 Nc4 49. Kb4 Ne3 50. Nf8+ Ke7

51. Nxh7 Nxd5+ 52. Kxb5 Ne3 53. Ng5 peters out.

47. Kd4 Ke7 48. Ng5

Since White is in time-killing mode anyway, it's smart to force Black to commit the h-pawn and weaken g6. We see one of the recurring themes of the position after 48. Nc7 Nd7! — the knight becomes trapped after 49. Nxa6? Kd8.

48. ... h6 49. Ne6 Nd7 50. Nc7



Black is so passively placed it seems not much can be done, but a strange triangulation keeps the action going.

50. ... Kd8 51. Ne6+ Ke8! 52. Nc7+ Ke7

Now White has to play a move he doesn't like. It won't necessarily be enough to change the result, but when you have to choose between unpleasant moves, you might make the wrong call.

53. h3?

White's pawn structure is seriously compromised after this move, which seems to give Black a winning advantage. Backing up the king was certainly the lesser evil: 53. Kd3 Nf6 54. Kd4 Kd7 (54. ... Ng4 55. h3 goes nowhere) 55. Ne6 Nh7 56. Kd3 Kc8 57. Kd4 h5 (Black continuously aims for mini-zugzwangs)

58. h3! (58. Kd3 Nf6 59. Kd4 Ng8 produces a decisive reorganization, as we shall see later) 58. ... Kb7 59. Nd8+ Kb6 60. Nc6 Nf6 61. Na5! Ne4 (I don't see another idea) 62. g4 Nf2 63. g5 and White now has a fortress.

53. ... Kd8 54. Ne6+ Ke8 55. Nc7+ Ke7 56. g4?

This helps Black's cause even more; outside passed pawns are especially significant in knight endings. Two other choices also fail to resist: (a) 56. Ne6? Nf8 57. Nc7 Kd7 58. Nxa6 Kc8 wins the knight, and (b) 56. h4? h5! (56. ... Kd8? 57. Ne6+ Ke8 58. h5) is also bad for White because he can never capture the pawn on g6 without getting the knight trapped. 57. Ne6 Nf6 58. Nc7 (58. Ng5 Kd7 is another zugzwang) 58. ... Kd7 59. Ne6 Ne4 60. Nf8+ Ke7 61. Ne6 (61. Nxg6+ Kf7 kills the knight) 61. ... Nxg3 62. Nc7 Kd7 63. Ne6 Ne4 64. Nf8+ Ke7 65. Ne6 Nd2 66. Ke3 Nc4+ 67. Kd4 a5, etc.

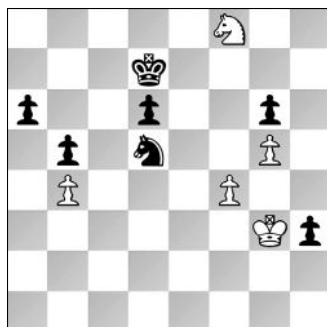
Thus (c) 56. Kd3! is again the best option, though here it does seem insufficient: 56. ... Nf6 57. Kd4 Kd7 58. Ne6 Nh7 59. Kd3 Kc8 60. Ke3 (60. Kd4 h5) 60. ... Nf6 61. Kd4 Ng8 62. Kd3 Ne7 63. Kd4 h5 64. Ng5 Kb7 (with the kingside securely defended, Black's king can finally roam) 65. Ne6 Ka7 66. Ng5 (or 66. Nd8 Kb6 67. Nf7 Nc8 68. Nh8 a5 69. bxa5+ Kxa5 70. Nxg6 Ka4 71. Nh4 Ne7 72. Nf3 Ka3 73. Nd2 Kb2 74. h4 Kc2 75. Nf3 Nc8, winning) 66. ... Kb6 67. Nf7 Nc8 68. Nh8 a5 69. bxa5+ Kxa5 70. Nxg6 Ka4 71. Nh4 Ne7 (from here there are usually multiple winning moves) 72. Nf3 Ka3 73. Nd2 Ka2 74. h4 b4 75. Kc4 Ka3 76. Nb1+ Ka4 77. Nd2 Nc8 and the b-pawn is decisive.

56. ... fxg4 57. hxg4 h5

Now Black is clearly winning without more mistakes.

58. g5 h4 59. Ke4 Nb6 60. Kf3 h3 61. Kg3

Kd7 62. Ne6 Nxd5 63. Nf8+



63. ... Ke7

The computer tells me 63. ... Ke8 64. Nxc6 Nxb4 is an easy win, and while I won't dispute the evaluation, it looked too messy for my taste. I preferred to completely neutralize White's counterplay, certain I would always have enough pawns left to win.

64. Nxc6+ Ke6 65. Kxh3 Kf5 66. Nh4 Kxf4

67. g6 Ne7 68. g7 Kg5 69. Nf3+

69. Kg3 Kf6 70. Kf3 Kxg7 71. Ke4 Kf6 72. Nf3 is just a different form of a lost ending.

69. ... Kf6 70. Nd4 Kxg7 71. Ne6+ Kf6 72.

Nc7 Ke5 73. Nxa6 Kd5 74. Nc7+ Kc4

Two pawns is two pawns. By dominating his knight I avoid any technical problems.

75. Kg2 Kxb4 76. Kf2 Kc4 77. Ke2 b4 78.

Kd2 Nf5 79. Kc2 d5 80. Na8 Ne3+ 81. Kd2

b3 82. Nb6+ Kb5, White resigned.

By giving my opponent chances to go wrong I was able to win in the end, but in the next game I lost my chances for a similar squeezing operation with a hasty move. Unfortunately, it had to come in one of the biggest games in my career!

TAKE YOUR TIME, DO IT RIGHT

GM Nick de Firmian (2605)

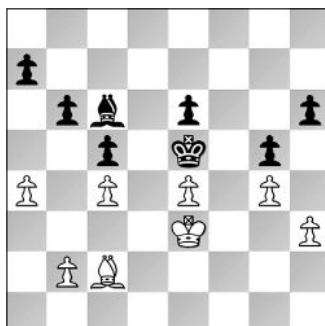
GM Joel Benjamin (2595)

U.S. Championship Final (4), Denver, 11.18.1998

(see diagram top of next column)

This was a do-or-die game for me; I needed a win to send the final into overtime. On the cusp of a big payday, Nick played nervously and allowed me to sniff some winning chances out of absolute nothingness. Both players were in time pressure with a handful of moves to reach the second time control.

37. ... a6??



BLACK TO MOVE

This is a rookie mistake unworthy of the defending U.S. Champion. The old saying of the Soviet school, translated as "do not hurry" (or something similar), is well entrenched in the literature. In the heat of the moment I got caught up in trying to induce a blunder from my opponent in the next few moves, only to victimize myself. Pawn moves cannot be retracted and therefore must be carefully thought out. It turns out that this careless move destroys the only plan in the position for Black.

The correct course of action was to make a few random bishop moves to get to the time control and work out the next steps. The game was swiftly drawn after

38. b3 b5 39. a5!

Oops, I whiffed on this move!

39... bxc4 40. bxc4 Be8 41. Bd1 Bc6 42. Bc2

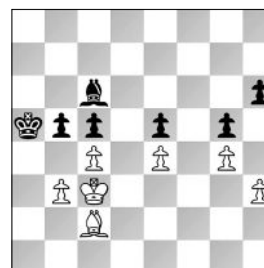
Ba8 43. Bd3 Bb7 44. Bb1 Bc8 45. Bc2 Bd7

46. Bb3 Kf6 47. Bc2 Bc6 48. Bd1, draw.

Returning to the diagram, we learn after sober assessment that Black's king looks great but accomplishes little on e5. Black's one chance is to transfer the king to the queenside: 37. ... Kd6 38. b3 e5 (if Black doesn't block the center, 38. ... Kc7 39. e5 is a clear draw, though there is a nice trap after 39. ... Kb7 40. Be4?? Bxe4 41. Kxe4 Ka6 42. Kd3 Ka5 43. Kc3 a6 44. Kc2 Kb4 45. Kb2 b5 46. axb5 axb5 47. cxb5 Kxb5 48. Kc3 Kb6 49. Kd3 and now it is time for triangles: 49. ... Kc7 50. Kc3 Kb7 51. Kd3 Kb6 and wins. But a simple move like 40. Bg6 leaves Black tied down to defending the e6-pawn) 39. Kd3 Kc7 40. Kc3 Kb7 41. Bd3 Ka6 42. Bc2 Ka5 43. Bd3 a6 (Black can maneuver longer and try to advance ... h6-h5-h4; this might make a difference but I haven't found a win anywhere) 44. Bc2 b5 45. axb5 axb5.

(see diagram top of next column)

White needs a waiting move but only one



POSITION AFTER 45. ... axb5

will do. Here (a) 46. Bd3? loses by force: 46. ... bxc4 47. bxc4 (47. Kxc4 Bb5+ 48. Kc3 Bxd3 49. Kxd3 Kb4 50. Kc2 c4 wins) 47. ... Ka4 48. Bc2+ Ka3 49. Bd3 Ba4 50. Be2 Ka2 and White can no longer control both black marauders: 51. Bd3 Bd1 52. Kd2 Bf3 53. Ke3 Bh1 54. Kf2 Kb3 55. Kg1 Kc3 and 51. Kd2 Kb2 52. Bd3 Kb3 53. Be2 Kb4 54. Bd3 Bb3 are both decisive.

So White has to find (b) 46. Bb1! with the point that 46. ... bxc4 can be answered by 47. Kxc4. Black can try to maneuver but White can hold: 46. ... Be8 47. Bc2 Bf7 48. cxb5 48. ... Kxb5 49. Bd3+ Ka5 50. Bc4 Be8 51. Bd5 h5 (51. ... Bb5 52. Bc4 Bc6 53. Bd5! Bxd5 54. exd5 Kb6 55. Kd3 Kc7 56. Ke3! and White avoids zugzwang) 52. Kc4 Kb6 53. Be6 Kc6 54. gxh5 Bxh5 55. b4 Kd6 56. Bg4 Bf7+ 57. Kc3 and White maintains a fortress.

While there seems to be no win, White would have to play exactly under a lot of pressure. I'm happy for Nick, but it still burns a little that I didn't put him to the test.

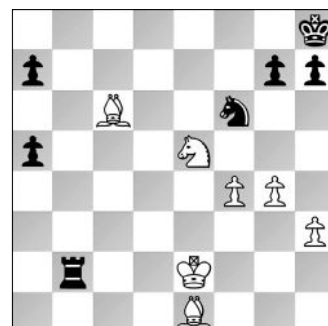
The final game is an out-and-out swindle, played at blitz tempo in the late great U.S. Chess League.

LAST PAWN STANDING

GM Alexander Ivanov (2528)

GM Joel Benjamin (2545)

U.S. Chess League (2), Internet Chess Club, 2015



WHITE TO MOVE

I've tried a little too hard to win and now I've gotten myself into some trouble.

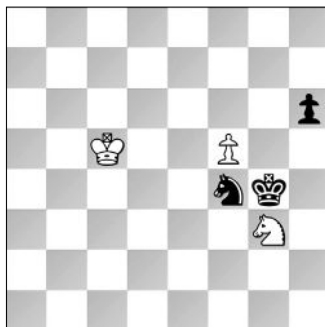
45. Bd2? a4 46. Bxa4 Ne4

Unfortunately, this sweet cheapo is only good enough for a draw.

47. Nc4 Rxd2+ 48. Nxd2 Nc3+ 49. Kd3 Nxa4 50. Kc4

White can also centralize the king and hold the a-pawn with the knight to hold the draw..

50. ... Nb2+ 51. Kb5 Nd3 52. f5 Nf2 53. g5 Nxb3 54. Ne4 h6 55. gxh6 gxh6 56. Ng3 Nf4 57. Ka6 Kg7 58. Kxa7 Kf6 59. Kb6 Kg5 60. Kc5 Kg4



I did say rook pawns were annoying for knights, didn't I? But the pawn is so far back and White's king isn't that far away.

61. Ne4

Fine, as is 61. Nf1 Kxf5 62. Kd4.

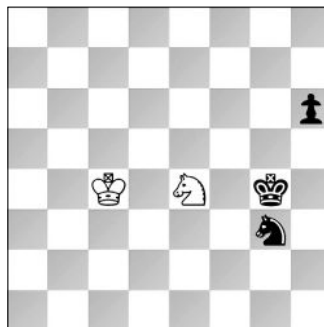
61. ... Kxf5 62. Ng3+

The firmest draw is achieved by bringing the king back immediately with 62. Kd4.

62. ... Kg4 63. Ne4?!

Now I'm able to complicate a bit. 63. Nf1 would allow the king back faster.

63. ... Ne2! 64. Kc4 Ng3



This would be a good place for an ambitious reader to practice their calculation. How should White continue?

65. Nf2+??

We've reached the point where White has to play something a bit counterintuitive.

As it turns out, 65. Nf6+! is the only drawing move. By going up the board, the knight draws Black's king backward, opening up a lane for his own king. After 65. ... Kg5 (on 65. ... Kf5, 66. Ne8 draws as well) 66. Nd5 (other knight moves draw, but this is most logical) 66. ... h5 67. Kd3 h4 68. Ke3 h3 69. Nf4 h2 (69. ... Nf1+ 70. Kf2 h2 71. Nh3+ [or 71. Kg2] 71. ... Kg4 72. Kg2) 70. Nh3+ Kf5 71. Nf2 White is in the nick of time.

65. ... Kf3 66. Nh3?

The knight on the rim gets a quick trim, but resistance is already futile, e.g. 66. Nd3 h5 67. Ne5+ Ke4! 68. Ng6 Nf5 69. Kc3 Ne7! 70. Nh4 (It's a touchdown after 70. Nxe7 h4) 70. ... Kf4 71. Ng2+ Kf3 and the path for the h-pawn is again cleared.

66. ... Nh5!, White resigned.

His knight is trapped. ♠

Getting to Work

(continued from page 13)

or crumble when facing it. We saw two consequential backward knight moves in the 2024 World Championship. After losing the first game, Gukesh took Game 3 with some precise calculation that involved a backward knight move; in Game 11, Gukesh's backward knight move was more of a practical decision rather than a concrete one: After move 25, Ding was down to seven minutes for 15 moves, with no increment. And we probably all know what happened:

JUMPING IN

GM Gukesh Dommaraju (2783)

GM Ding Liren (2728)

FIDE World Championship (11), Singapore, 12.08.2024

(see diagram top of next column)

25. Na1!?

The knight is headed to c5.

25. ... Rb8 26. Nb3 e6 27. Nc5



WHITE TO MOVE

The jumping knight has rejoined the game in the most annoying way possible for Black.

27. ... Re7 28. Rdb1

It would have been fitting for the knight to deliver the final blow! After 28. Nxb7! Rxb7 29. Qxc6 Qxc6 30. Bxc6 the endgame is very good for White even with the opposite-colored bishops. The game ended on a blunder instead:

28. ... Qc8?? 29. Qxc6, Black resigned.

If 29. ... bxc6 30. Rxb8 and White will remain up a piece.

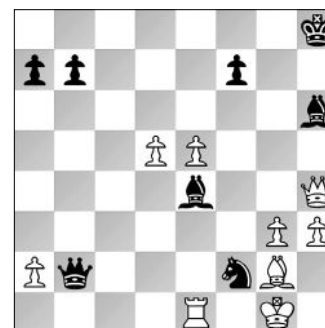
Gukesh explained after this game, "The knight jumps are always so tricky to calculate." Here's one last position where Giri missed a backward jump against no less than Gukesh, played right as we went to press.

SHOULD HAVE READ TATEV

GM Gukesh Dommaraju (2777)

GM Anish Giri (2731)

Tata Steel (1), Wijk aan Zee, 01.18.2025



BLACK TO MOVE

Here Giri played 35. ... Qb6?, handing White the game. But the backwards leap 35. ... Ng4! wins on the spot! ♠

The ChessBase Conundrum

ChessBase 18 is out. Upgrade or stand pat?

BY **IM JOHN WATSON**

IF YOU WERE TRYING TO list the most influential changes in chess in recent decades, the universal availability of increasingly powerful chess engines would be an obvious choice, as would the introduction and massive expansion of online play. But we shouldn't underestimate the impact of chess database programs such as ChessBase, with their instant access to the vast majority of master games past and present, as well as their function as a place to preserve and study one's own games. The influence of these database programs has been vastly amplified by the inclusion of imbedded engines with which to analyze every position, as well as the ability to preserve all analysis and publish it or convey it rapidly to anyone in the world.

These functions have revolutionized the chess world, and they are only a fraction of what ChessBase, the database used by the vast majority of tournament players, can do. Chess research and preparation, for example, has improved by leaps and bounds with ChessBase's complex search functions. Similarly, chess publishing has been dramatically improved, thanks to error-checking and direct output to publishing programs, in addition to the ability to put games on websites, texts, emails, and the like at the press of a button.

I didn't start using ChessBase seriously until the mid-1990s, but from then on almost every part of my teaching, writing projects, and preparation has been tied in

with the program. I have long encouraged all of my students to use it and in fact don't know any over-the-board tournament players who don't. (That doesn't apply to many who play exclusively online, of course, but my guess is that the majority of *Chess Life* readers own a copy of the program.) Many players, including myself, haven't learned how to use all of the program's specialized features, but have become expert at certain functions. For example, I still create and use custom opening keys, a now-rare practice which still fits perfectly with my research and writing.

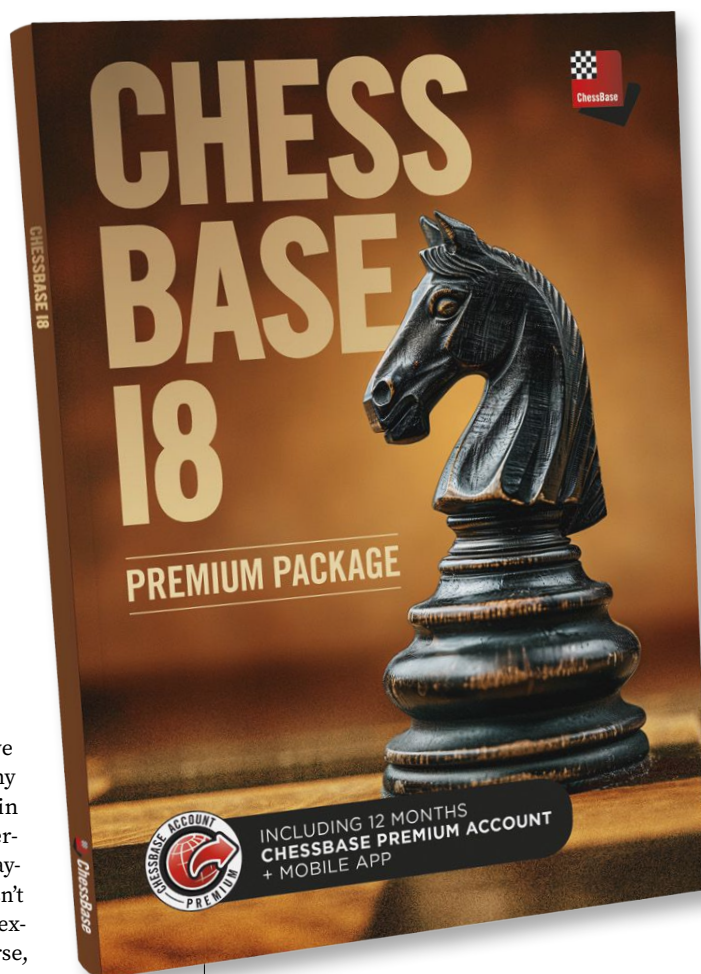
It's not possible to "review" such a complex and multifaceted program as ChessBase 18 in the sense of describing and assessing all its functions, so I'll talk about some of the new and recent features and limit myself to some general observations. The program itself offers extensive online help, and numerous ChessBase tutorials on YouTube provide instruction for everyone from new to sophisticated users.

Matthias Wuelkenweber, the CEO of ChessBase and one of its founders, points out that many of the new features in ChessBase 18 have an emphasis on player preparation. That includes the analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, and styles of any player — a famous champion from the past, your next opponent in a tournament, or yourself. The "Style Report," for example,

takes a collection of a particular player's games and generates a strategical profile. It makes general observations about a player's style, such as "keeps queens on," "enjoys sacs," "attacks king," etc., combined with scored evaluations in categories such as "Theoretical," "Tenacity," "Aggressiveness," "Risk," and "Positional Play."

When I input a selection of my own games played from my youth up to about 20 years ago, my style report assessed me as extremely aggressive and way-off-the-charts on the Risk scale. But a different database of my online rapid games from the past five years showed greatly reduced (although still high) aggressiveness and risk-taking scores, with an enormous increase in "positional play." Seems about right: I'm getting older and, predictably, more cautious.

Following these stylistic summaries, there are 30 strategic categories ("themes") to delve into. The program sorts and selects games with, for example, "king's attack," "sacrifice," "closed position," "space advantage," "weak pawns," "backward pawns," "fianchetto," and "strong knight/bishop." These are separated into games as White and Black.

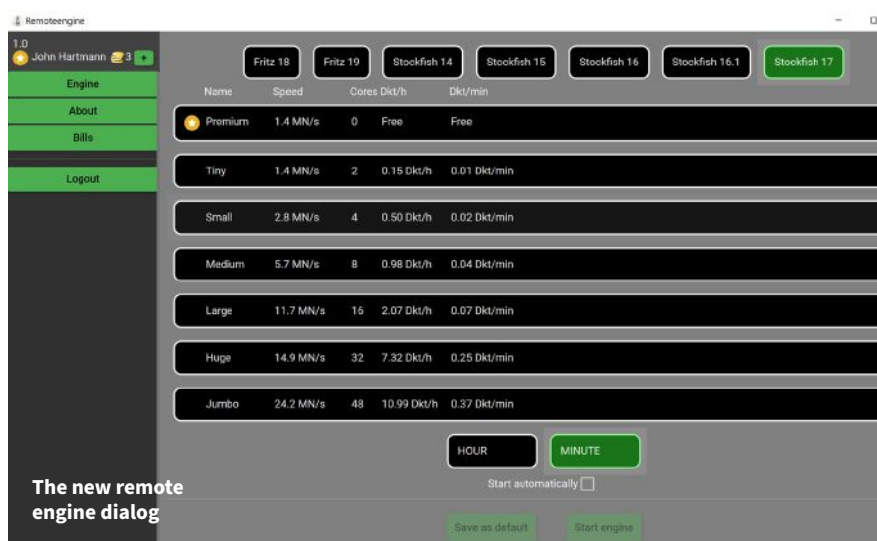


For each of the lists, you can play through individual games. In this way, you might spot your next opponent's weaknesses and can familiarize yourself with how they play diverse types of positions. Perhaps more importantly, if you're willing to put some time in, you can use this function to see which parts of your own game need work, and adjust your study routines accordingly.

The "Error Report" is generated much more slowly than the Style Report and has a simpler output; still, this is also a potentially very useful feature. For any set of games by a player, you get a "Blunder ELO," which is handy to compare against the player's ELO, and a magnitude distribution, which shows how bad the blunders are. This and other results are compared with those of a group of average GMs, which uses a large-enough sample of GMs to be quite trustworthy. It generates charts which assess factors such as "Magnitude [of errors] vs. Complexity," "Impact [of errors] on Result," and "Blunder Context" (what part of the game the error occurred, whether the player was under attack, etc.).

I tried this on my own games and some student games, and it's revealing to see when and in what context one's errors occur. It turns out that I make fewer errors than the average GM in positions where I stand better, but err much more often when I stand worse, and in particular when my errors can still affect the result. Also, my "tenacity" scores, which used to be high, have fallen dramatically with age.

Another nice feature (initially introduced in ChessBase 17, but of which I was unaware) involves finding beauty in games. You can take any database games list and select "Set Beauty," and ChessBase generates a



new column assigning 0, 1, 2, or 3 beauty icons for each game; essentially, the game is analyzed as having various degrees of sacrificial tactical content. I had fun with recent tournament databases locating exciting games in this way. It doesn't take too long to run the process on a small database of personal games, for example, although it can take hours when applied to a database with millions of games.

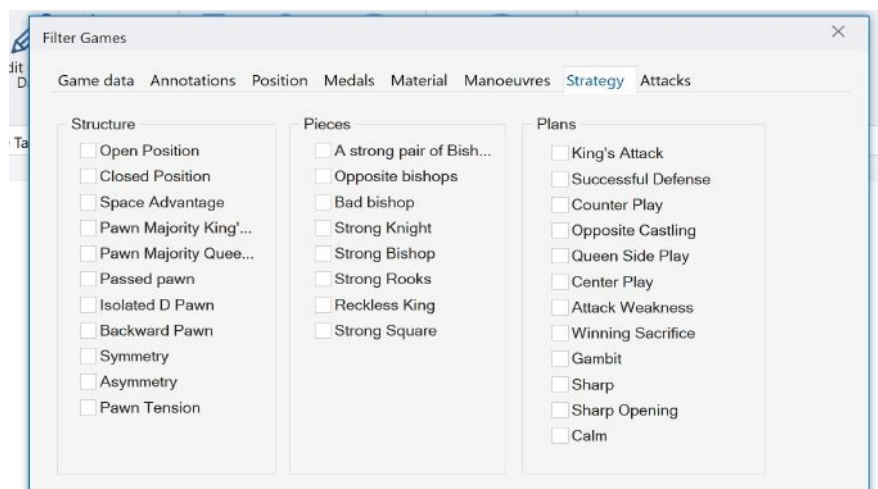
One caution here: The beauty search only works on databases that were created with the newer .2cbh format (introduced with CB17). So if you have an old .cbh database of your games, for example, you can create a new empty database with the .2cbh format, copy your games into it, and then use the "Set Beauty" function. Sometimes you'll be surprised to find that your games are more interesting, and your ideas more attractive, than you'd realized!

A considerable number of other new features come with ChessBase 18, some functional and others matters of convenience or efficiency. Many players will be interested in using the powerful remote engines ChessBase offers. In contrast to the cloud engines available in previous editions, here ChessBase offers remote access to engines of varying speeds directly within the engine dialog.

The first tier of remote engines is free to use if you have a premium account; for faster speeds, you can buy "ducats" (10 ducats cost one euro) and rent access by the minute or hour. Interested parties can also download a remote access plugin for previous editions of ChessBase (or, in theory, any program using UCI engines) at remoteengine.chessbase.com.

Preparing for opponents in the online age has been simplified in CB18. Instead of scouring websites and downloading individual .pgns, you are now able to access and download games from Lichess and Chess.com directly via ChessBase. If you don't know a player's online username, you can have the program perform some sleuthing to try to discover it; at worst, you'll end up with games played online by someone with a similar style, which could be useful.

Another topical feature is the new ChessBase mobile app, which you can access from any browser at app.chessbase.com. This will soon be released as a freestanding app for mobile phones. If you want to send an annotated game to someone, you can create a QR code for any game in CB18 and send it to someone who can then open it in the mobile app, which is more convenient than creating and archiving databases and then sending them by email. These are a few new features which illustrate how ChessBase programmers strive to keep up with the



Above: CB18 allows you to easily search games for specific positional structures and themes.

Below: The native online game search box.

evolving technology.

The companion product MegaBase 2025 is a high-quality database published by ChessBase with more than 11 million games. There are plenty of other databases and sources of games to use with the ChessBase program, but if the extra money isn't a major concern, it has some features worth noting. For one thing, MegaBase 2025 has more than 120,000 games with master annotations not found in other databases. Also, the price includes an update service that supplies about 5,000 games a week for one year; you could try to replace these with games from other sources on the web, but that's at best time-consuming. Finally, a "player lexicon" is included, with 1.4 million player names and more than 44,000 player photos (these are only compatible with CB16, CB17, and CB18). For players with limited budgets, MegaBase 2025 is a bit of a luxury, but I suspect most ChessBase users will want to have it.

ChessBase 18 comes in different packages at different prices, ranging from the program alone (with access to the online database) to the premium package, which has extras such as Mega Database 2025, ChessBase Magazine, the ChessBase Correspondence Database, and ducats to spend on various ChessBase features, including renting the most powerful engines for analysis. I should note that for owners of CB17, the upgrade to CB18 is 150 euros on the ChessBase site, indicating that once you're a user, the expense of upgrading every few years is not as intimidating as the initial investment.

I would argue that ChessBase is practically a necessity for advanced players and regular tournament participants. While you needn't update with every iteration, there are enough attractive features in each

new version that you shouldn't skip more than one or two upgrades. In the case of ChessBase 18, I find the player preparation features particularly attractive, both for preparing for opponents and examining one's own play, and the ability to search for online games within the program feels like a game-changer.

To be sure, many casual online players will understandably not feel the need for such a powerful tool, but anyone serious about significantly improving their chess will almost certainly benefit from this program. It will not only accelerate your development but also allow you to keep up with your competition, who are more than likely using ChessBase to prepare for your next encounter.

ChessBase 18 is available at uscfsales.com.

Chess Life and Chess Life Kids

Included with your US Chess membership!



Evaluations

Score	Medium	58%
Theory	Very High	93%
Decided Games	Very High	129%
Tenacity	High	68%
Aggressiveness	Very High	127%
Risk	Very High	236%
Positional Play	High	68%
Endgame Affinity	Low	0%

Observations:

- Very few short draws. Many quick wins.
- Strong Openings. **Clear Opening Advantage White.** Narrow Repertoire for Black. Few Modern Mainlines. Plays gambits as White.
- **Never Simplifies. Keeps Queens on Board. Enjoys Asymmetric Material.**
- **Really loves sacrifices. Not worried about king safety.**
- **Attacks the king.** Risky and sharp play. All-round player. Active piece play as White. Active piece play as Black. Likes the bishop pair. Strong with passed pawns.

Evaluations

Score	High	72%
Theory	Very High	102%
Decided Games	Very High	81%
Tenacity	Very High	84%
Aggressiveness	Very High	89%
Risk	Very High	117%
Positional Play	Very High	87%
Endgame Affinity	Low	0%

Observations:

- Strong as White. **No quick draws.** Many quick wins.
- Strong Openings. **Clear Opening Advantage White. Equalizes Well.** Narrow Repertoire for Black. Few Modern Mainlines. No gambits as Black.
- Avoids Exchanges. **Keeps Queens on Board.** Enjoys Asymmetric Material.
- Frequent castling queenside as White.
- **Attacks the king. Very brave.** All-round player. Active piece play as White. Likes the bishop pair. Often against Black's isolated d-pawn.
- Defends worse endgames well.

Above: Watson's style evaluations for games through 1999 (top) and online after 2020 (bottom).

TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL EVENTS & BIDS NOW ON USCHESS.ORG Effective with the November 2020 *Chess Life*, we have removed the National Events and Bids page that has traditionally been part of our TLA section. This information continues to be available here:

new.uschess.org/national-events-calendar

For complete details on individual events, please visit [new.uschess.org/node/\[TLA ID\]](http://new.uschess.org/node/[TLA ID]). You will find the event's unique five-digit TLA ID at the end of each TLA.

Nationals

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • HERITAGE EVENT

2025 World Amateur Team & U.S. Team East

FEBRUARY 15-17, 2025, NEW JERSEY

Event site: Parsippany Hilton **Address:** 1 Hilton Ct., Parsippany, N.J. 07054 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** New Jersey Chess Federation **Email:** Worldamateurtteam@njscf.org **Phone:** n/a **Website:** <http://njscf.org> **TLA ID:** 45828

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 U.S. Amateur Team North

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025, ILLINOIS

Event site: Hyatt Regency Schaumburg **Address:** 1800 E. Golf Rd., Schaumburg, Illinois 60173 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Chess Weekend Inc. **Email:** glenn@chessweekend.com **Phone:** n/a **Website:** <https://www.chessweekend.com/> **TLA ID:** 46274

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 KCF All-Girls National Championships

APRIL 4-5, 2025, ILLINOIS

Event site: Hyatt Regency McCormick Place **Address:** 2233 S Dr Martin Luther King Jr Dr, Chicago, IL 60616 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** David Heiser **Email:** david.heiser@renais-sanceknights.org **Phone:** n/a **Website:** <https://allgirls.knights.org/> **TLA ID:** 45885

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

SuperNationals VIII

MAY 8-11, 2025, FLORIDA

Event site: Orange County Convention Center - West Concourse **Address:** 9800 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** US Chess Federation **Email:** nationalevents@uschess.org **Phone:** n/a **Website:** <http://www.uschess.org/tournaments/2025/sn8> **TLA ID:** 47674

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2025 National Open

JUNE 4-8, 2025, NEVADA

Event site: Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino **Address:** 3555 S Las Vegas Blvd, Las Vegas NV 89109, Las Vegas, NV 89109 **Overall prize fund:** \$125,000 **GP Points:** 200 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** Y **Organizer:** Vegas Chess Festivals **Email:** vegascchess@gmail.com **Phone:** 702-930-9550 **Website:** <https://vegascchessfestival.com> **TLA ID:** 47460

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

2025 U.S. Women's Open

JUNE 4-5, 2025, NEVADA

Event site: Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino **Address:** 3555 S Las Vegas Blvd, Las Vegas NV 89109, Las Vegas, NV 89109 **Overall prize fund:** \$3,500 **GP Points:** 50 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** Y **Organizer:** Vegas Chess Festivals **Email:** vegascchess@gmail.com **Phone:** 702-930-9550 **Website:** <https://vegascchessfestival.com> **TLA ID:** 47549

Grand Prix

The Grand Prix point totals reflect all rated event information as of Jan. 16, 2025, for the 2024 Grand Prix.

UNOFFICIAL 2024 GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

As we got to press, the apparent winner is:

GM JIANCHAO ZHOU

	Name	State/Ctry	Pts
1.	GM JIANCHAO ZHOU	MA	684.89
2.	GM FIDEL CORRALES JIMENEZ	NY	327.27
3.	GM AWONDER LIANG	WI	198.33
4.	GM MIKHAIL ANTIPOV	MO	192.99
5.	GM ROBBY KEVLISHVILI	--	176.38
6.	IM JOHN D. BRYANT	CA	164.75
7.	GM ARMAN MIKAELIAN	CA	147.96
8.	GM JOHN MICHAEL BURKE	NJ	145.75
9.	GM SEMEN KHANIN	--	145.70
10.	EMMANUEL CARTER	NC	136.00

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.

2024 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 2025. For information visit new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Barber Day Grand Prix

FEBRUARY 1, 2025, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall prize fund:** \$764 **GP Points:** 10 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Dragon Knight Chess **Email:** jon@dragonknightchess.com **Phone:** 919-422-2535 **Website:** DragonKnightChess.com **TLA ID:** 46824

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Global Movie Day Grand Prix

FEBRUARY 8, 2025, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall prize fund:** \$764 **GP Points:** 10 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Dragon Knight Chess **Email:** jon@dragonknightchess.com **Phone:** 919-422-2535 **Website:** DragonKnightChess.com **TLA ID:** 46825

GRAND PRIX

2nd Annual Presidents' Day Open

FEBRUARY 13-17, 2025, VIRGINIA

Event site: Washington Dulles Marriott Hotel **Address:** 45020 Aviation Dr, Dulles, VA 20166 **Overall prize fund:** \$10,500 **GP Points:** 40 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Atlantic Chess Association **Email:** director@atlanticchessassociation.com **Phone:** n/a **Website:** atlanticchessassociation.com **TLA ID:** 47296

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

16th Annual Southwest Class Championships

FEBRUARY 13-17, 2025, TEXAS

Event site: Westin Hotel Dallas Fort Worth Airport **Address:** 4545 W John Carpenter Freeway, Irving, TX 75063 **Overall prize fund:** \$35,000 **GP Points:** 200 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chessstour.com **TLA ID:** 45893

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight World Pangolin Day Grand Prix

FEBRUARY 15, 2025, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall prize fund:** \$764 **GP Points:** 10 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Dragon Knight Chess **Email:** jon@dragonknightchess.com **Phone:** 919-422-2535 **Website:** DragonKnightChess.com **TLA ID:** 46826

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

9th annual Southwest Class Blitz Championship

FEBRUARY 16, 2025, TEXAS

Event site: Westin Hotel Dallas Fort Worth Airport **Address:** 4545 W John Carpenter Freeway, Irving, TX 75063 **Overall prize fund:** \$500 **GP Points:** 10 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chessstour.com **TLA ID:** 47201

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

9th annual George Washington Open

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025, VIRGINIA

Event site: Washington Dulles Marriott Hotel **Address:** 45020 Aviation Dr, Dulles, VA 20166 **Overall prize fund:** \$17,000 **GP Points:** 120 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chessstour.com **TLA ID:** 45891

GRAND PRIX

3rd Annual Music City Open

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025, TENNESSEE

Event site: Millennium Maxwell House Hotel **Address:** 2025 Rosa L Parks Blvd, Nashville, TN 37228 **Overall prize fund:** \$10,000 **GP Points:** 60 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Nashville Chess Center **Email:** director@nashvillechess.org **Phone:** 6292544737 **Website:** https://nashvillechess.org/content.aspx?page_id=4091&club_id=16484&item_id=2365098 **TLA ID:** 46248

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Big February Dragon Knight Grand Prix

FEBRUARY 22, 2025, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall prize fund:** \$1,124 **GP Points:** 15 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Dragon Knight Chess **Email:** jon@dragonknightchess.com **Phone:** 919-422-2535 **Website:** DragonKnightChess.com **TLA ID:** 47381

GRAND PRIX

\$2,500 March Championship

MARCH 7-9, 2025, TEXAS

Event site: The Houston Chess Studio **Address:** 250 Patton St, Suite H, Houston, TX 77009 **Overall prize fund:** \$2,500 **GP Points:** 15 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Edgar Acosta **Email:** poisonpawnschessclub@gmail.com **Phone:** 2818444139 **Website:** <https://www.poisonpawns.club> **TLA ID:** 47035

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 Indiana Chess Congress

MARCH 7-9, 2025, INDIANA

Event site: La Quinta Inn & Suites Indianapolis South **Address:** 5120 Victory Dr, Indianapolis, IN 46203 **Overall prize fund:** \$15,000 **GP Points:** 30 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Indiana State Chess Association **Email:** president@indianachess.org **Phone:** (317) 283-9976 **Website:** <http://indianachess.org/> **TLA ID:** 45655

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

32nd annual Western Class Championships

MARCH 7-9, 2025, CALIFORNIA, S.

Event site: Hilton Hotel Orange County Airport **Address:** 18800 Macarthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612 **Overall prize fund:** \$20,000 **GP Points:** 120 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chessstour.com **TLA ID:** 45892

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

22nd annual Southern Class Championships

MARCH 7-9, 2025, FLORIDA

Event site: Delta Hotels Orlando Celebration **Address:** 2900 Parkway Boulevard, Kissimmee, FL 34747 **Overall prize fund:** \$17,000 **GP Points:** 80 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chessstour.com **TLA ID:** 46246

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

10th annual Western Class Blitz Championship

MARCH 8, 2025, CALIFORNIA, S.

Event site: Hilton Hotel Orange County Airport **Address:** 18800 Macarthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612 **Overall**

prize fund: \$500 **GP Points:** 10 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chess.tour.com **TLA ID:** 47202

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

Delaware State Open Chess Championship

MARCH 8-9, 2025, DELAWARE

Event site: Ramada Inn **Address:** 260 Chapman Road, Newark, DE 19702 **Overall prize fund:** \$4,000 **GP Points:** 20 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** CDelaware Chess Association **Email:** connect@delawarechessassociation.org **Phone:** 302-593-3752 **Website:** <http://delawarechessassociation.org> **TLA ID:** 47382

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Genealogy Day Grand Prix

MARCH 8, 2025, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall prize fund:** \$764 **GP Points:** 10 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Dragon Knight Chess **Email:** jon@dragonknightchess.com **Phone:** 919-422-2535 **Website:** DragonKnightChess.com **TLA ID:** 47398

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

New York State Senior Championship (With Young Adult/Middle Age Section), out of state welcome!

MARCH 15-16, 2025, NEW YORK

Event site: Saratoga Hilton Hotel **Address:** 534 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 **Overall prize fund:** \$4,200 **GP Points:** 40 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chess.tour.com **TLA ID:** 46836

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

29th annual Mid-America Open

MARCH 21-23, 2025, MISSOURI

Event site: Clayton Plaza Hotel, St. Louis-Clayton **Address:** 7750 Carondelet Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105 **Overall prize fund:** \$20,000 **GP Points:** 120 **FIDE Rated:**

Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chess.tour.com **TLA ID:** 46238

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 Texas Senior State Championship

MARCH 22-23, 2025, TEXAS

Event site: The Houston Chess Studio **Address:** 250 Patton St, Suite H, Houston, TX 77009 **Overall prize fund:** \$750 **GP Points:** 15 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Edgar Acosta **Email:** poisonpawnschessclub@gmail.com **Phone:** 2818444139 **Website:** <https://www.poisonpawns.club> **TLA ID:** 46042

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 Pennsylvania Quick Chess Championship

MARCH 28, 2025, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Red Lion Hotel Harrisburg Hershey **Address:** 4751 Lindle Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111 **Overall prize fund:** \$750 **GP Points:** 6 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Tom M. Martinak **Email:** martinak_tom_m@hotmail.com **Phone:** 412-908-0286 **Website:** <http://pscfchess.org/pascholasticchamp/> **TLA ID:** 47340

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 Ira Lee Riddle Memorial Pennsylvania State Championship & Pennsylvania Collegiate Championship

MARCH 29-30, 2025, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Red Lion Hotel Harrisburg Hershey **Address:** 4751 Lindle Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111 **Overall prize fund:** \$1,875 **GP Points:** 10 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Tom M. Martinak **Email:** martinak_tom_m@hotmail.com **Phone:** 412-908-0286 **Website:** <http://pscfchess.org/pascholasticchamp/> **TLA ID:** 47341

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 PA State Game/29 Championship - West

APRIL 12, 2025, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: O'Hara Student Center, Univ. of Pittsburgh **Address:** 4024 O'Hara St., Pittsburgh, PA 15213 **Overall**

prize fund: \$690 **GP Points:** 6 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Tom M. Martinak **Email:** martinak_tom_m@hotmail.com **Phone:** 412-908-0286 **Website:** <http://www.pscfchess.org/clearinghouse/> **TLA ID:** 46821

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

The Princeton Open

APRIL 16-20, 2025, NEW JERSEY

Event site: Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village **Address:** 201 Village Blvd., Princeton, NJ 08540 **Overall prize fund:** \$60,000 **GP Points:** 200 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chess.tour.com **TLA ID:** 46241

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

6th Colonial Open

APRIL 17-20, 2025, VIRGINIA

Event site: Executive Conference and Training Center **Address:** 22685 Holiday Park Dr Ste 60, Sterling, VA 20166 **Overall prize fund:** \$10,000 **GP Points:** 50 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Anand Dommallapati **Email:** co2025@capitalareachess.com **Phone:** 1-703-627-5314 **Website:** <https://www.capitalareachess.com/ColonialOpen> **TLA ID:** 47162

GRAND PRIX

12th Annual Reno Larry Evans Memorial Open

APRIL 18-20, 2025, NEVADA

Event site: J Resort Casino Hotel **Address:** 345 N. Arlington Avenue, Reno, NV 89501 **Overall prize fund:** \$27,500 **GP Points:** 150 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Jerome V. Weikel **Email:** wackyvk@aol.com **Phone:** 775-747-1405 **Website:** <https://www.renochess.org> **TLA ID:** 46828

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

5th annual Niagara Falls Open

MAY 2-4, 2025, NEW YORK

Event site: Sheraton Niagara Falls Hotel **Address:** 300 3rd St, Niagara Falls NY 14303 **Overall prize fund:**

\$10,000 **GP Points:** 80 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chess.tour.com **TLA ID:** 47243

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

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival

MAY 2-4, 2025, FLORIDA

Event site: Hilton Melbourne at Rialto Place **Address:** 200 Rialto Place, Melbourne, FL 32901 **Overall prize fund:** \$20,000 **GP Points:** 100 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Space Coast Chess Foundation, Inc. **Email:** suresh231975@gmail.com **Phone:** 6168811094 **Website:** <https://www.spacecoastchessfoundation.org/event/spacecoastopen> **TLA ID:** 46260

HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

34th annual Chicago Open

MAY 22-26, 2025, ILLINOIS

Event site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 North Milwaukee Ave., Wheeling, IL 60090 **Overall prize fund:** \$100,000 **GP Points:** 200 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chess.tour.com **TLA ID:** 46255

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

18th annual Philadelphia International

JUNE 26-30, 2025, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia PA 19103 **Overall prize fund:** \$20,000 **GP Points:** 200 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chess.tour.com **TLA ID:** 46651

HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections)

JULY 2-6, 2025, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown **Address:**

The PRINCETON OPEN – A New CCA Event!

April 16-20, 17-20 or 18-20, 2025 - New Site For Easter Weekend!

All sections are 9 rounds with new schedules and \$65,000 Guaranteed!

Note Changes: 9-SS, 40/80, SD/30; d30 (4-Day option, rds. 1-2 G60, d10; 3-day option only for Under 1100 Section, G60, d10).

Westin Princeton Hotel at Forrestal Village, about halfway between New York City and Philadelphia, near Princeton University in NJ. Free parking.

\$5,000 Increase In Prize Fund!

In 7 sections:

Open (5-Day only): \$5000-3000-2000-1000-800-600-500-400, clear or tiebreak 1st \$200 bonus, top FIDE 2250-2399 \$2000-1000, top FIDE U2250/Unr \$2000-1000. GM & IM norms possible. 200 GPP.

U2200, U2000, U1800: Each \$3500-2000-1000-700-500-400-300-300. U2200 & U2000 also FIDE-rated (except for rds. 1-2 of 4-Day).

U1600, U1400: Each \$2500-1500-800-600-500-400-300-300.

U1100 (3-Day Only): \$1000-700-500-400-300-200-200.

FIDE ratings used in Open, Apr. official USCF in others (USCF unofficial or Online Regular ratings usually used if otherwise unrated).

Mixed Doubles: male+female 2-player teams among all sections: \$1000-600-400 (limit \$400 to teams with an unrated). Team average U2200, may play different sections, register before both begin round 2.

If under 26 games rated by Apr. 2025 list, limit \$600 U1100, \$1000 U1400, \$1400 U1600, \$1800 U1800.

Unrated limits: \$200 U1100, \$400 U1400, \$600 U1600. \$800 U1800.

Cannot play below Online Regular Rating-100 points. If any post-event Regular OTB or Regular Online rating posted 4/14/24-4/14/25, or current Online Regular Rating, was more than 40 points over section max., prize limit \$500.

Entry fee: \$228 online by 4/14, \$250 later or at site. \$500 more to play in Open Section for US players U2200/Unr USCF and U2100/Unr FIDE. GMs, foreign IMs/WGMs in Open: free. US IMs/WGMs & FIDE foreign in Open: \$100 less. U1100 section, \$80 less. Seniors 65/over in U1400/up: \$80 less. No mail entries.

5-day reg. ends Wed 6 pm, rds Wed 7 pm; Thu-Fri 11 & 5; Sat-Sun 10-4. No 5-Day U1100 Section.

4-day (U2200-U1400 only) reg. ends Fri 10 am, rds Thu 11, 2, 5; Fri 11 & 5; Sat-Sun 10 & 4.

3-day (U1100 only) reg ends Fri 10 am, rds Fri 11, 2 & 5; Sat-Sun 10-1-4.

Half-point byes: OK all, limit 4 (limit 2 in last 4 rds). must commit before rd 3. \$15 charge for refunds

See chessevents.us for details, rules, prize restrictions, etc.

Foreign titled players: see chessevents.us for minimum prizes.

Bring set, board, clock if possible- none supplied.

Hotel Chess rate: \$165-165-165, use link at chessevents.us (or call 609-452-7900); reserve by 3/26 or rate may increase.

Enter online (plus list of entries): chessaction.com.

Email: director@chess.us

Blitz tournament Sat 9:30 pm, register onsite Sat by 8:45 pm.

201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia PA 19103 **Overall prize fund:** \$208,000 **GP Points:** 300 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@ches.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 46655

GRAND PRIX

12th Annual Washington International

AUGUST 9-13, 2025, MARYLAND

Event site: Rockville Hilton **Address:** 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852 **Overall prize fund:** \$45,725 **GP Points:** 150 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Michael W Regan **Email:** mregan@stsci.edu **Phone:** 4104195130 **Website:** <https://mdchess.com> **TLA ID:** 47444

Regional

ALABAMA

HERITAGE EVENT

Tom Nard Memorial XI

FEBRUARY 22, 2025

Event site: Evangel Church **Address:** 23975 Vaughn Rd, Montgomery, AL 36106 **Overall prize fund:** \$1,400 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Doug Strout **Email:** evangelchess@yahoo.com **Phone:** n/a **Website:** <http://www.facebook.com/evangelchessclub> **TLA ID:** 47147

MARCH 7-9, 2025

22nd annual Southern Class Championships (FL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

ALASKA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

AMER. SAMOA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

ARIZONA

MARCH 7-9, 2025

32nd annual Western Class Championships (CA-S)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025

2025 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

ARKANSAS

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

CALIFORNIA

MARCH 7-9, 2025

32nd annual Western Class Championships (CA-S)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MARCH 8, 2025

10th annual Western Class Blitz Championship (CA-S)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 4-8, 2025

2025 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

COLORADO

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

CONNECTICUT

MARCH 15-16, 2025

New York State Senior Championship (With Young Adult/Middle Age Section), out of state welcome! (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 16-20, 2025

The Princeton Open (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

DELAWARE

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DIST. OF COLUMBIA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

FLORIDA

MARCH 7-9, 2025

22nd annual Southern Class Championships (FL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

34th annual CHICAGO OPEN

May 22-26, 23-26, 24-26 or 25-26, 2025 Memorial Day weekend- see chessevents.us

8 sections, prizes \$100,000 unconditionally guaranteed!

Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel, Wheeling IL - Free GM lectures and game analysis!

Open section, 5/22-26, 9 rounds, 40/80, SD/30; d30.

U2300 through U1300 sections: 5/23-26 or 24-26: 7 rounds, 40/80, SD/30; d30 (3-day option, rds 1-2 G/60, d10). All merge & play for same prizes within the section.

Under 1000 Section, 5/25-26: 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 5/21/24-5/21/25, 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 3/21, \$227 by 5/21, \$250 online or at site until 1 hour before round 1. \$500 more for US players to play Open Section if U2300/Unr USCF & U2100/Unr 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 5/21, \$120 online or at site until 9 am 5/25.

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 5/8, 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.

MARCH 8, 2025

Milan Vukadinov Memorial

Event site: Saint Petersburg Chess Club Address: 540 4th Avenue N., Saint Petersburg, FL 33701 Overall prize fund: \$1,200 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Terry Coulombe Email: coulom1@gmail.com Phone: (508)622-5388 Website: 8134803106.tla.id TLA ID: 47455

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

GEORGIA

MARCH 7-9, 2025

22nd annual Southern Class Championships (FL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MARCH 14-15, 2025

4th Annual Bolivar Morales Memorial Winterville Chess Club Championships

Event site: Winterville Cultural Center Address: 371 North Church Street, Winterville, GA 30683 Overall prize fund: see online TLA GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N

Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Tomas Ramirez Email: tram110@verizon.net Phone: 401-440-7416 Website: <https://www.wintervillecenter.com/> TLA ID: 47400

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 2-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

GUAM

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

HAWAII

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

IDAHO

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025

2025 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

ILLINOIS

FEBRUARY 8, 2025

2025 Greater Chicago K-12 Championship

Event site: McCormick Place Address: 2301 S Dr Martin Luther King Jr Dr, Chicago, IL 60616 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: David Heiser Email: david.heiser@renaissance-knights.org Phone: n/a Website: <https://greaterchicago.knights.org/> TLA ID: 45884

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

2025 US Amateur Team North (IL)

See Nationals.

MARCH 21-23, 2025

29th annual Mid-America Open (MO)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

INDIANA

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

2025 US Amateur Team North (IL)

See Nationals.

MARCH 21-23, 2025

29th annual Mid-America Open (MO)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

IOWA

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

2025 US Amateur Team North (IL)

See Nationals.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

2025 WORLD OPEN IN PHILADELPHIA!

9 rounds, Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown - \$225,000 GUARANTEED PRIZES!

Open Section: July 2-6, GM & IM norms possible

Under 2200 to Under 1400 Sections: July 2-6, 3-6 or 4-6

Under 1200, Under 1000 Sections: June 27-29

OPEN: all 40/90, SD/30; d30

U2000 TO U1400: 40/90, SD/30; d30; **4-day option:** rds 1-2 G/60, d10; **3-day option:** rds. 1-5 G/35, d10

U1200, U1000: all G/60, d10

Schedule options in U2200 to U1400 merge and compete for same prizes in section. Top 3 sections are also FIDE rated (except G/60 & G/35 games). Also **Philadelphia Open** June 27-29, **Philadelphia International** June 26-30, many other events. See chessevents.us.



CHESS LIFE AND CHESS LIFE KIDS

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US CHESS
Membership!

KANSAS

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

KENTUCKY

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

LOUISIANA

FEBRUARY 13-17, 2025

16th annual Southwest Class Championships (TX)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MARCH 29-30, 2025

The 2025 Louisiana Pro - Am

Event site: New Marigny Theater Address: 2301 Marais St, New Orleans, LA 70117 Overall prize fund: \$1,500 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Downriver Chess & Louisiana Chess Association Email: info@downriverchess.com Phone: 202.656.9754 Website: <https://www.downriverchess.com/> TLA ID: 47286

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAINE

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MARYLAND

MARYLAND CHESS TOURNAMENTS (NORTH PENN CHESS CLUB)

Maryland Chess runs 21+ annual K-12 tournaments every other Saturday from September through June & 12+ annual 1-day or multi-day open tournaments for adults & K-12 players on weekends. See www.MDChess.org for tournament announcements, registration for tournaments, updated wallcharts, live standings, sign up for K-12 & open e-newsletters, lists of coaches & clubs, camp announcements, & news. K-12 MD players who compete in the Varsity section (for players rated 1600+) of 1 of 8+ annual MD-Sweet-16 Qualifiers can qualify for the \$48,000+ scholarship to the University of Maryland, Baltimore County awarded annually. UMBC is a perennial top-10 contender for the collegiate national chess championship.

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

9th annual George Washington Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 8-9, 2025

Delaware State Open Championship (DE)

See Grand Prix.

APRIL 16-20, 2025

The Princeton Open (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-30, 2025

18th annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MASSACHUSETTS

JANUARY 1, 2025-WEEKLY ON SUNDAY, TUESDAY, AND SATURDAY

FMCA

Event site: Clock Tower Center, Future Masters Chess Academy Address: 200 Homer Avenue, Mezzanine Level, Suite 200, Ashland, MA 01721-1716 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Future Masters Chess Academy Email: info@FutureChessMasters.com Phone: (508)622-5388 Website: <https://futurechessmasters.com/> TLA ID: 47199

MARCH 8-9, 2025

57th annual New York State Scholastic Championships (out of state welcome)--OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY

See New York.

MARCH 15-16, 2025

57th annual New York State High School Championship, GRADES 9-12 (grades 6-8 also permitted but with prize restrictions)

See New York.

MARCH 15-16, 2025

New York State Senior Championship (With Young Adult/Middle Age Section), out of state welcome! (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-30, 2025

18th annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

MICHIGAN

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

2025 US Amateur Team North (IL)

See Nationals.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MINNESOTA

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

2025 US Amateur Team North (IL)

See Nationals.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MISSISSIPPI

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MISSOURI

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

2025 US Amateur Team North (IL)

See Nationals.

MARCH 21-23, 2025

29th annual Mid-America Open (MO)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MONTANA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

NEBRASKA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

NEVADA

MARCH 7-9, 2025

32nd annual Western Class Championships (CA-S)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

NEW JERSEY

JANUARY 18, 2025-WEEKLY ON SATURDAY

New Jersey Chess Club Morristown Quads

Event site: Morristown Masonic Center Address: 39 Maple Ave, Morristown, NJ 07960 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Vince Alize Email: info@njchess.club Phone: 908.798.7185 Website: <https://www.njchess.club> TLA ID: 47396

FEBRUARY 23, 2025

2025 New Jersey Elementary and Junior High School Championships

Event site: Brookdale Community College - Student Life Center Address: Arena Dr, (Park in lot #7), Lincroft, NJ 07738 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: New Jersey State Chess Federation Email: tournaments@njscf.org Phone: n/a Website: <https://njscf.org/> TLA ID: 46692

MARCH 8-9, 2025

57th annual New York State Scholastic Championships (out of state welcome)--OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY

See New York.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 8-9, 2025

Delaware State Open Championship (DE)

See Grand Prix.

MARCH 15-16, 2025

57th annual New York State High School Championship, GRADES 9-12 (grades 6-8 also permitted but with prize restrictions)

See New York.

MARCH 15-16, 2025

New York State Senior Championship (With Young Adult/Middle Age Section), out of state welcome! (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 16-20, 2025

The Princeton Open (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 2-4, 2025

5th annual Niagara Falls Open (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 2-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 26-30, 2025

18th annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

NEW MEXICO

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025

2025 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

NEW YORK

JANUARY 18, 2025-WEEKLY ON SATURDAY

New Jersey Chess Club Morristown Quads (NJ)

See New Jersey.

FEBRUARY 23, 2025

2025 New Jersey Elementary and Junior High School Championships (NJ)

See New Jersey.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 8-9, 2025

Delaware State Open Championship (DE)

See Grand Prix.

HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • JUNIOR

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 8-9, 2025

57th annual New York State Scholastic Championships (out of state welcome)--OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY

Event site: Saratoga Hilton Hotel, Saratoga City Center and Saratoga Courtyard by Marriott Address: Lower 8

sections for grades 5 and below at Saratoga Hilton (and adjacent Saratoga City Center), 534 Broadway, Middle School (K-8) Sections at Courtyard By Marriott, 11 Excelsior Ave, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 46314

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

MARCH 15-16, 2025

57th annual New York State High School Championship, GRADES 9-12 (grades 6-8 also permitted but with prize restrictions)
Event site: Saratoga Springs Courtyard Hotel by Marriott
Address: 11 Excelsior Ave, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
Overall prize fund: \$2,000 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N
Organizer: Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 46315

MARCH 15-16, 2025

New York State Senior Championship (With Young Adult/Middle Age Section), out of state welcome! (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 16-20, 2025

The Princeton Open (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 2-4, 2025

5th annual Niagara Falls Open (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 2-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 26-30, 2025

18th annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

◆ NORTH CAROLINA

FEBRUARY 1, 2025

Dragon Knight Barber Day Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

FEBRUARY 8, 2025

Dragon Knight Global Movie Day Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

FEBRUARY 15, 2025

Big February Dragon Knight Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

FEBRUARY 22, 2025

Dragon Knight World Pangolin Day Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

MARCH 8, 2025

Dragon Knight Genealogy Day Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 2-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

◆ NORTH DAKOTA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

◆ NO. MARIANA ISL.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

◆ OHIO

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

2025 US Amateur Team North (IL)

See Nationals.

MARCH 21-23, 2025

29th annual Mid-America Open (MO)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 2-4, 2025

5th annual Niagara Falls Open (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

◆ OKLAHOMA

FEBRUARY 13-17, 2025

16th annual Southwest Class Championships (TX)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

◆ OREGON

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025

2025 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

◆ PENNSYLVANIA

North Penn Chess Club

Main & Richardson • St. John's UCC, 500 West Main St., Lansdale, PA 19446. See www.northpennchessclub.org for schedules & info or 215-699-8418

JANUARY 18, 2025-WEEKLY ON SATURDAY

New Jersey Chess Club Morristown Quads (NJ)

See New Jersey.

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

9th annual George Washington Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FEBRUARY 23, 2025

2025 New Jersey Elementary and Junior High School Championships (NJ)

See New Jersey.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 8-9, 2025

Delaware State Open Championship (DE)

See Grand Prix.

MARCH 15-16, 2025

New York State Senior Championship (With Young Adult/Middle Age Section), out of state welcome! (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MARCH 28, 2025

2025 Pennsylvania Quick Chess Championship (PA)

See Grand Prix.

HERITAGE EVENT • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 29-30, 2025

2025 Pennsylvania State Scholastic Championships

Event site: Red Lion Hotel Harrisburg Hershey Address: 4751 Lindle Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Tom M Martinak **Email:** martinak_tom_m@hotmail.com **Phone:** 412-908-0286 **Website:** <http://pscfchess.org/pascholasticchamp> **TLA ID:** 47342

HERITAGE EVENT • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 29-30, 2025

2025 Ira Lee Riddle Memorial Pennsylvania State Championship & Pennsylvania Collegiate Championship (PA)

See Grand Prix.

APRIL 16-20, 2025

The Princeton Open (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 2-4, 2025

5th annual Niagara Falls Open (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 2-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 26-30, 2025

18th annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections

JUNE 27-29, 2025, PENNSYLVANIA
Event site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia PA 19103 **Overall prize fund:** \$17,000 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 46653

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

◆ PUERTO RICO

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

◆ RHODE ISLAND

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

◆ SOUTH CAROLINA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 2-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)

See Grand Prix.

◆ SOUTH DAKOTA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

◆ TENNESSEE

MARCH 21-23, 2025

29th annual Mid-America Open (MO)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

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MARCH 21-23, 2025

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APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 4-8, 2025

2025 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

U.S. MIN. OUT. ISL.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

UTAH

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025

2025 National Open (NV)
See National Events.

VERMONT

MARCH 8-9, 2025

57th annual New York State Scholastic Championships (out of state welcome)--OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY
See New York.

MARCH 15-16, 2025

57th annual New York State High School Championship, GRADES 9-12 (grades 6-8 also permitted but with prize restrictions)
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APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

VIRGIN ISL., U.S.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

VIRGINIA

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

9th annual George Washington Open (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 7, 2025

2025 Virginia Scholastic & College BLITZ Championships

Event site: Monticello High School **Address:** 1400 Independence Way, Charlottesville, VA 22902 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Mike Hoffpauir, NTD/IA **Email:** mhoffpauir@aol.com **Phone:** 757-846-4805 **Website:** <https://www.vachess.org> **TLA ID:** 47698

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 8, 2025

2025 Virginia College Chess Championships

Event site: Monticello High School **Address:** 1400 Independence Way, Charlottesville, VA 22902 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Mike Hoffpauir, NTD/IA **Email:** mhoffpauir@aol.com **Phone:** 757-846-4805 **Website:** <https://www.vachess.org> **TLA ID:** 47699

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 8-9, 2025

2025 Virginia Scholastic Chess Championships

Event site: Monticello High School **Address:** 1400 Independence Way, Charlottesville, VA 22902 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** Y **Organizer:** Mike Hoffpauir, NTD/IA **Email:** mhoffpauir@aol.com **Phone:** 757-846-4805 **Website:** <https://www.vachess.org> **TLA ID:** 47701

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MARCH 8-9, 2025

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See Grand Prix.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 26-30, 2025

18th annual Philadelphia International (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

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See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)
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AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International (MD)
See Grand Prix.

WASHINGTON

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025

2025 National Open (NV)
See National Events.

WEST VIRGINIA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

WISCONSIN

HERITAGE EVENT

FEBRUARY 15, 2025

Waukesha Memorial (42nd Annual)

Event site: Country Inn & Suites **Address:** 1250 South Moorland RD, Brookfield, WI 53005 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Waukesha Chess Club **Email:** jnickell@wi.rr.com **Phone:** (262) 544-6266 **Website:** <https://www.WaukeshaChessClub.com> **TLA ID:** 46873

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

2025 US Amateur Team North (IL)
See Nationals.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)
See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (Open through Under 1400 Sections) (PA)
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WYOMING

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.



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FORMAT: Players play 6 games as single round robin, groupings based on ratings. **ENTRY FEE:** \$5 per entry. **PRIZES:** 1st place receives a signed certificate.

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PAGE 11 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. 23. Qf3 (or 23. Qf4) 23. ... Kg8 24. Qxf8+! Kxf8 25. Rc8+ and mate. Also 23. ... Rg8 24. Ng6+ hgx6 25. Qh3 mate. **PROBLEM 2.** White resigned after 27. ... Qa2+ in view of 28. Kc1 Qa1+! and mate next. **PROBLEM 3.** 25. c6! Qxc6 26. Rac1 wins the queen, while 25. ... Qxb3 26. cxd7+ wins a rook, and it's mate very soon after 25. ... bxc6 26. Bxa6+. **PROBLEM 4.** Black resigned after 21. e6! fxe6 22. Qe5! before White could play Qe5-h8+. **PROBLEM 5.** The only move is 27. ... Ne5+! with the idea 28. fxe5 Qxg4 mate. The game ended 28. Kxe4 Qg6+ 29. f5 Qxg4+, White resigned, because of 30. Rf4 Qg2+ 31. Rf3 Qxf3, mate. **PROBLEM 6.** 25. Bd3+ Kh5 26. h3! threatens 27. g4 mate. Black resigned after 26. ... fxe6 27. f4! in light of 27. ... hgx5 28. Rh8 mate.

PAGE 15 ABCS OF CHESS

PROBLEM 1. Mating net: White mates in 2: 1. Rd4+ Qxd4 2. Qxd4 mate. **PROBLEM 2. Mating net:** White wins in 2: 1. Ra6+ Kc5 2. Qxc6 mate. **PROBLEM 3. Mating net:** Black goes down in 2: 1. Qh7+ Kf8 2. Nxc6 mate. **PROBLEM 4. Mating net:** Black is mated in 2: 1. Nd6+ Kf8 2. Re8 mate. **PROBLEM 5. Mating net:** It's over in 2 for Black: 1. Qa7+ Kb5 2. c4 mate. **PROBLEM 6. Mating net:** White mates in 2 starting with 1. Bg5+; if 1. ... Ke8, then 2. Rd8 mate, and if 1. ... Kc7, then 2. Bd8 mate. This is reminiscent of Réti – Tartakower!

PAGE 25 MAKE YOUR MOVE

TACTIC 1. 35. b5 Qd6 Nothing else works, e.g., 35. ... cxb5 36. Rc1+ or 35. ... c5 b6+ or 35. ... Qxb5 36. Rf7+ and in each case White wins. 36. Rf7+ Kd8 37. Rf8+ Qxf8 38. Qxb8+, Black resigned. Saric - Kantor, Saint Louis Masters 2024. **TACTIC 2.** 30. Qe1! Ouch. The black queen is in a trap, and the nasty threat g2-g4 closes the door once and for all. 30. ... f6 Black doesn't have a choice. 31. exf6 Re8 Or 31. ... gxf6 32. Qe7 Rf8 33. Rf4 Qf7 34. Qe1 Kh8 35. Re4 Nc7 36. Rh4 and Black can resign. 32. Qg3 Qf7 33. fxc7 Qxc7 34. Qd3 Nc3 35. f6, Black resigned. Durarbayli - Juksta, U.S. Masters 2024. **TACTIC 3.** 30. Rh7 Rdc8 The alternatives are no better: 30. ... Rxd4 31. Rxc7+ Kxc7 32. Qf6+ Kg8 33. Rh1 or 30. ... exd4 31. Rxc7+ Kxc7 32. Qxa5 or 30. ... Qd5 31. Rxc7+ Kxc7 32. Bxe5+ Kg8 33. Bxc7 or 30. ... Qa6 31. Rxc7+ Kxc7 32. Qxe5+ Kf8 33. Qh8+ Ke7 34. Bf6+. 31. Rxc7+ Kxc7 32. Bxe5+, Black resigned. The decisive threat is 32. Bxe5+ Kg8 33. Qf6 and Black has no defense. Atanasov - Woodward, U.S. Masters 2024. **TACTIC 4.** 26. ... Nd5! 27. Bd3 The knight is untouchable, and the refutation of 27. Bxd5 is particularly nice: 27. ... Nb3+!! (boom!) 28. axb3 Qb1 mate. If 27. Nxd5 Qb1 mate; if 27. Rxd5 Qc2 mate. 27. ... Nxd3+ 28. Rxd3 Qg5+ Even better, 28. ... Ne3 29. R1d2 Nc4 and White can resign. 29. f4 Or 29. R3d2 Qf5 30. Re2 Ne3 and Black wins. 29. ... Nxf4 30. Bxf4 Qxf4+ 31. R3d2 Rab8 32. Re1 Or 32. Qa5 Qg5! 33. Qa3 (if 33. Qxc5, then 33. ... Rxc3+ 33. ... Qe3 and White cannot meet the threat of ... Rc8xc3+. 32. ... Rd8, White resigned. Stefanov - Durarbayli, US Masters 2024. **TACTIC 5.** 18. Rxd6!! BOOM! In the

game, White continued 18. Nb4 Ra7 19. g4 Bb7? (Black should have played 19. ... h6 20. Rhg1 Qg5+ 21. Qxc5 hxc5 22. Rxd6 Nc4 and Black is still alive) 20. g5 Qd8 21. Bc6+ Kf8 22. f6 (White was winning) 22. ... Rg8 23. Bxb7 Rxb7 24. Nc6 Qd7 25. Ne7 Qe6 26. Qxh7 Rxe7 27. fxe7+ Qxe7 28. Qf5 g6 29. Qg4 d5 30. Rhe1 Kg7 31. Qg3 Re8 32. h4 Qe6 33. Rf1 Qe7 34. Rf6 Qc7 35. Rdf1 Re7 36. h5 Nc4 37. hxc6 Qa5 38. gxf7 Kf8 39. Qh2, Black resigned. Kunka - Han, Charlotte Fall GM Open 2024. 18. ... Qxd6 19. Rd1 Qf6 20. Rd8+ Qxd8 21. Nxd8 Kxd8 Or 21. ... Ra7 22. Ne6 Bxe6 23. fxe6 Re7 24. Bc6+ Kd8 25. Qxe5 and White wins. 22. Qg5+ Kc7 23. Qe7+ Bd7 24. Qc5+ and White is winning. **TACTIC 6.** 11. Bd1!! This little retreat carries the threat of Bd1-a4+ with devastating effects. It is stronger than 11. Bh5 g6 12. Bd1 Bg7 13. Ba4+ Kf8 14. Be3 Ndf5 15. Rd1 Qe7 16. Bc1 Bxe5 17. Qxe5 f6 18. Qe2 Nf7, when Black is still alive. 11. ... f6 Or 11. ... Nc6 12. Nxc6 bxc6 13. Ba4 Bd7 14. Be3 Qa5 15. 0-0-0 and White is decisively better. 12. Ba4+ Ke7 Or 12. ... b5 13. Qxd4! and White is winning. 13. Be3 The game continued 13. Nf3?! Nhf5 14. Nxd4 Nxd4 15. Be3 e5 (or 15. ... Nf5 16. Rd1 Qa5 17. c5 Kf7 18. b4 g5 19. Qxf5 Qxa4 20. Qf3 and White is winning) 16. Qe4 Kf7 17. f4 (17. 0-0-0!) 17. ... Nf5 18. fxe5 Nxe3 19. Qxe3 Qb6 20. Qf3 Qd4 21. exf6 Bb4 22. Rf1 gxf6 23. Rd1 Qe5+ 24. Kd2 Rd8+ 25. Kc2 Rxd1 26. Rxd1 Qf5+ 27. Kb3 Qxf3 28. gxf3 Bxc3 29. Kxc3 Be6 30. Bd7 Rg8 31. Rd6, Black resigned, Stremavicius - Fernandez, Charlotte Fall GM Open 2024. 13. ... g5 14. Qe4 Bg7 15. 0-0-0! fxe5 16. Bxc5+ Bf6 17. Qxe5 and Black cannot defend. **TACTIC 7.** 17. Qb1! This nasty little move threatens the lethal Be3-d2. 17. ... Nc8 Or 17. ... Nd5 18. Bd2 b6 19. Bxa5 bxa5 20. d4 Nf4 21. dxe5 Kf8 22. Qc1 fxe5 23. Nxe5 Qf5 24. Ng3 Qg5 25. Re4 Nd5 26. Qe1 and White is winning. 18. Bd2 b6 Black saves the knight but is left with a disastrous structure. 19. Bxa5 bxa5 20. d4! The decisive breakthrough; Black's position rapidly crumbles. 20. ... Kg8 Or 20. ... exd4 21. Neg5+ Kg8 22. Ne6 and Black can resign. 21. dxe5 fxe5 22. Nxe5 Qd5 23. Nc6 Black loses material. 23. ... Rd7 24. c4 Qf5 25. Qb3 Rf8 26. Ra2 Kh8 27. Rae2 Bc5 28. g4, Black resigned. Caruana - Can, U.S. Masters 2024. **TACTIC 8.** 18. ... Qd7!! The game continued 18. ... Ng6? 19. Qd3 Qd7 20. Re1 Nb4 (20. ... Rad8 21. Rxe8 Rxe8 22. Re1 Rxe1+ 23. Bxe1 Nce7 with a clear advantage for Black) 21. Bxb4 Bxg2 22. Kxc2 Qb7+ 23. Kf2 Qxb4 24. Nc2 Qb6. Black was clearly better, and eventually won, but there was still a lot of work to be done in Paragua - Caruana, U.S. Masters 2024. 19. fxe5 Or 19. g4 d3 20. Qa4 Ng6 21. Re1 h5 22. Bd5 hxc4 23. hxc4 Nge7 and Black is winning. 19. ... Rxe5 20. g4 Re2! The threat of ... Re2xc2+ is a hammer blow. 21. Bd5 Nb4 22. Qb3 Nxd5 23. cxd5 Bxd5 and White can resign. **TACTIC 9.** 18. ... Bc6! This is much stronger than 18. ... Bxf3 19. Qxf3 Nxf4 20. Qg4 Qc6, when Black is better but it isn't anything special. 19. fxc6? It was relatively better to play 19. h5, even though Black is clearly better after 19. ... Ne7 20. Nh4 Qe8 21. h6 g5 22. Qg4 Qh5. 19. ... Nh3+! 20. Kf1 White doesn't survive capturing the knight either; e.g., 20. gxc3 Bxf3 21. Bf5 Rxf5 and Black wins. Or 20. Kh2 Bxf3 21. gxf3 Nxf2, and Black threatens both the

queen and strong attack, starting with ... Qd7-h3+. 20. ... e4 21. Ba4 If 21. gxc3 Qxc3+ 22. Ke2 Qxf3+ 23. Kd2 Qxf2+ 24. Qe2 Bxe3+ and Black is obviously winning. 21. ... b5 There was nothing wrong taking the bishop; for instance, 21. ... Bxa4 22. Qd5+ Kh8 23. Qxe4 Bc6 24. Qg4 Bb5+ and White will not survive. 22. Bb3+ Kh8 23. Bd5 White finally manages to blunt the power of the beast on c6, but it is too little, too late. 23. ... Bxd5 24. Qxd5 exf3 25. Nd1 Or 25. gxf3 Nf4 26. Qg5 Qh3+ 27. Kg1 Nd3 and Black wins. 25. ... fxc2+ 26. Kxc2 Qg4+, White resigned. Antipov - Kantor, Saint Louis Masters 2024.

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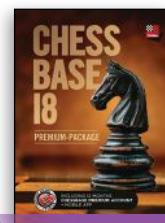
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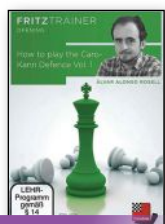
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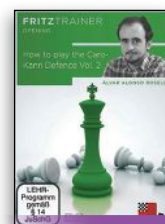
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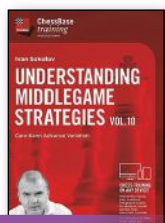
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