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CHESSLIFE

SuperNationals VIII

A Preview

APRIL 2025 ■ USChess.org



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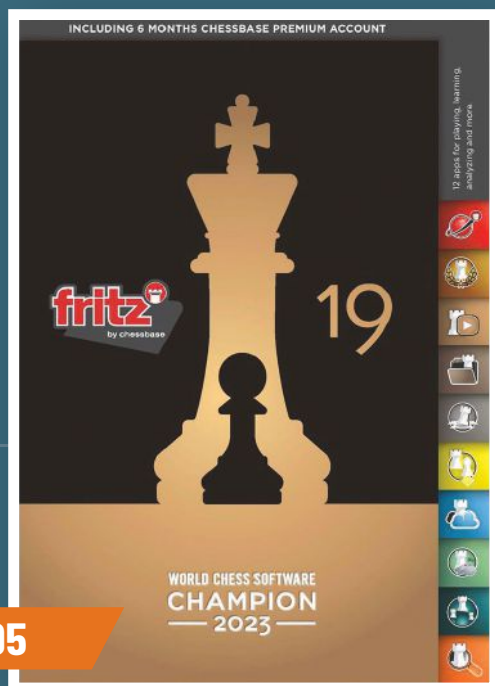


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CHESSLIFE

April

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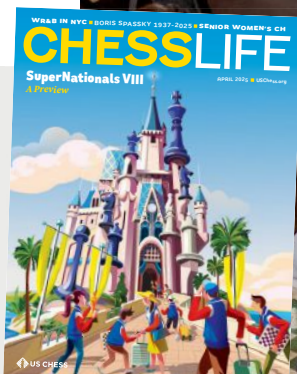
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Key wins on the way to the
Rapid title
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ON THE COVER

When one thinks of Orlando in May, what comes to mind? Sun, fun, and theme parks. This year, we can add chess to the list. SuperNationals VIII is going to be huge — maybe you'll be there? Our April cover offers a whimsical take on traveling to the Sunshine State, boards in tow.

ART BY WONMAN KIM



World's biggest open tournament!

53rd Annual WORLD OPEN

9 rounds, Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown

Top 6 sections: July 2-6, 3-6 or 4-6, 2025

Under 1200, Under 1000 sections: June 27-29, 2025



GM & IM norms possible, Mixed Doubles prizes, GM lectures!

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The **World Open** returns to the Sheraton Downtown, near many historic landmarks including Independence Hall, Franklin Institute, Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Liberty Bell, and restaurants, theaters, museums, shopping.

Special room rates: \$152-\$152-\$172-\$192. Reservations link & parking info at chessevents.us.

U1200 & U1000 play separate dates due to space limits.

SPECIAL FEATURES!

1) Schedule options. 5-day is most popular; 4-day & 3-day save time. All merge, play for same prizes. Open is 5-day only, U1200 & U1000 **3-day only**.

2) Play for norms & big money in Open: \$5000-2500-1500 to each of FIDE 2300-2449, 2200-2299, and U2200/Unr.

3) Prize limit \$1000 if post-event OTB or USCF Online Regular rating 6/30/24 - 6/30/25 (6/25/24-6/25/25 in U1200 & U1000) was more than 40 points over section maximum.

4) Provisional (under 26 games) and unrated prize limits: see chessevents.us.

5) Under 2200 & U2000 sections, as well as Open, are also FIDE rated.

6) International 6/26-30, **Philadelphia Open** 6/27-29, For World Open Under 13, Amateur, Junior, Senior Amateur, Women's Championship and other side events: **see chessevents.us**.

7) Free Grandmaster lectures: see chessevents.us!

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UNDER 2200: \$12000-6000-3000-1500-1000-800-600-500-400-400, top U2100 (no unrated) \$2000-1000. Unrated prize limit \$1500.

UNDER 2000: \$12000-6000-3000-1500-1000-800-600-500-400-400, top U1900 (no unrated) \$2000-1000. Unrated prize limit \$1000.

UNDER 1800: \$12000-6000-3000-1500-1000-800-600-500-400-400, top U1700 (no unrated) \$2000-1000. Unrated prize limit \$800.

UNDER 1600: \$10000-5000-2500-1300-900-700-600-500-400-400, top U1500 (no unrated) \$2000-1000. Unrated prize limit \$600.

UNDER 1400: \$7000-4000-2000-1200-900-700-600-500-400-400, top U1300 (no unrated) \$1600-800. Unrated prize limit \$500.

UNDER 1200: \$4000-2000-1000-800-600-500-400-300-300-300. Unrated prize limit \$400.

UNDER 1000: \$2000-1000-700-500-400-300-300-200-200-200. Unrated prize limit \$200.

MIXED DOUBLES: Top 6 sections \$2400-1200-700-500-300. Lower 2 sections \$500-300-200. Male/female teams averaging U2200.

Reserve hotel room early! Special chess rate \$152-152-172-192, link at chessevents.us or 215-448-2000, may sell out by early June.

July official USCF ratings used for U2200 to U1400, July FIDE for Open, June USCF for U1200 & U1000. Unofficial ratings usually used if otherwise unrated. Cannot play below USCF Online Regular Rating - 100 points. No mail entries.

Foreign player ratings: see www.foreignratings.com.

Unclaimed prizes usually paid by PayPal (may take around 3 weeks). For tax reporting, withholding info, see chessaction.org.

Entry fees, U1400-U2200 Sections: \$318 at chessaction.com by 5/15, \$328 by 6/28 (U1200 & U1000 by 6/24), \$350 online or at site until 90 min. before rd 1 (1 hr. in U1200/U1000 Sections).

Open Section: same, except \$500 more if rated U2200/Unr. USCF and U2000/unr. FIDE.

U1200 Section entry fees: \$100 less than U1400 to U2200 Sections. **U1000 Section entry fees:** \$200 less.

Seniors 65/up: entry fee \$100 less in U1400 & above.

Titled player entries: see chessevents.us

If any post-event USCF regular OTB or Regular online rating posted 6/30/24-6/30/25 (U1200 & U1000 6/25/24-6/25/25) or current Regular online rating is more than 40 points over section maximum, prize limit \$1000. **See chessevents.us for more rules.**

If under 26 regular OTB total games rated by July 2025 official list (June official for U1200, U1000), prize limit \$500 U1000. \$1000 U1200, \$2000 U1400, \$3000 U1600-U2000.

Entries posted at chessaction.com. Refunds, \$15 charge. **USCF membership required** (see special rates: chessevents.us).

Bring set, board, clock- none supplied.

5-day schedule: 7/2 7 pm, 7/3-4 11 am & 6 pm, 7/5-6 10 am & 5 pm.

4-day schedule: 7/3 11 am, 2:30 pm & 6 pm, merges with 5-day 7/3 6 pm.

3-day schedule: 7/4 11 am, 1:30, 3:30, 6 & 8:30 pm, merges with others 7/5 10 am..

U1200, U1000 schedule: 6/27 1, 4 & 7, 6/28 11, 2 & 5, 6/29 10, 1 & 4.

Half point byes OK all, limit 3 (limit 2 in last 4 rounds). Must commit before round 4.

PAST WINNERS

1973 Walter Browne **1974** Bent Larsen **1975** Pal Benko **1976** Anatoly Lein **1977** John Fedorowicz **1978** Peter Biyiasas **1979** Haukur Angantytsson **1980** Larry Christiansen **1981** Igor Ivanov **1982** Nick de Firmian **1983** Kevin Spraggett **1984** Joel Benjamin **1985** Maxim Dlugy **1986** Nick de Firmian **1987** Boris Gulko **1988** Maxim Dlugy **1989** Mikhail Gurevich **1990** Igor Glek **1991** Gata Kamsky **1992** Gregory Kaidanov **1993** Alex Yermolinsky **1994** Artashes Minasian **1995** Alex Yermolinsky **1996** Alex Yermolinsky **1997** Alex Shabalov **1998** Alex Goldin **1999** Gregory Serper **2000** Joel Benjamin **2001** Alex Goldin **2002** Kamil Miton **2003** Jaan Ehlfest **2004** Varuzhan Akobian **2005** Kamal Miton **2006** Gata Kamsky **2007** Varuzhan Akobian **2008** Evgeny Najer **2009** Evgeny Najer **2010** Viktor Laznicka **2011** Gata Kamsky **2012** Ivan Sokolov **2013** Varuzhan Akobian **2014** Ilya Smirin **2015** Aleks Lenderman **2016** Gabor Papp **2017** Tigran Petrosian **2018** Illia Nyzhnik **2019** Liem Quang Le **2020** P Iniyar **2021** Hans Niemann **2022** Mikhail Antipov **2023** Fidel Corrales Jimenez **2024** Awonder Liang

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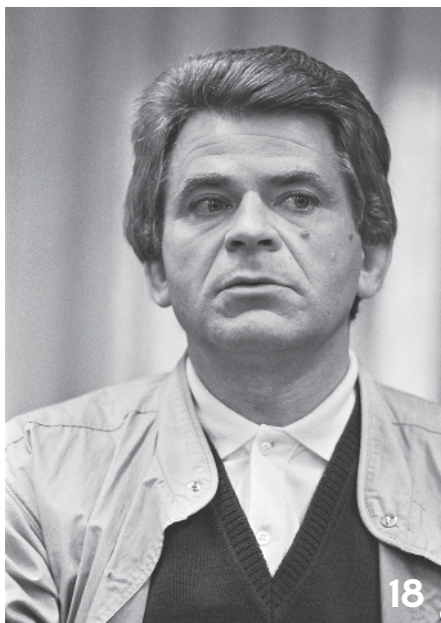
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DAN SHENK



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His *Chess Life* column "Chess to Enjoy" has
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longest-serving contributor.



JULIE O'NEILL

(Senior Women's Ch)
became the first woman
editor of *Chess Life* in 1989!

Originally from San Diego,
and now residing in Arizona, she has writ-
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fields you can imagine. She is delighted to
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the chess spotlight!



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invitational events. She graduated from
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GM HUMPY KONERU

(World Rapid & Blitz) was
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become a grandmaster at
age 15. Her career glitters

with gold won at Olympiads and individ-
ual championships, and she is a two-time
Women's World Rapid champion. This is
her first article for *Chess Life*.



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PREVIEW

LOOKING AHEAD TO MAY

WE COULD TALK ABOUT THE World Rapid and Blitz for months! And we will — we asked some of our top players for annotations and they came through! Check out the May and June issues for some wild games annotated by GM Wesley So, IM Alice Lee, and more.



ALSO IN MAY: We catch you up on some key events, including the Saint Louis Masters and a knight odds match between GM Joel Benjamin and Leela. (Spoiler: the GM won!) Plus: the latest news, event coverage, and all your favorite columnists!



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

The Room Where It Happens

A first-person look at the 2024 Delegates Meeting

BY **LAUREL ARONIAN**



HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO change a rule in a chess tournament? Would you like to build your connections and community? If I've sparked your interest, you're a candidate for US Chess governance.

Last summer, I had the opportunity to take part in the 2024 Board of Delegates Meeting, held in conjunction with the U.S. Open in Norfolk, Virginia. At this annual two-day gathering, state associations send representatives to confer on policy, making decisions that inform practically every aspect of the game.

I've been in chess since kindergarten, yet as a high school senior, I've wondered how to continue my involvement and expand my chess circle. And I'd always had questions about tournaments — time controls, event locations, and schedules (why are the blitz tournaments held around midnight, or, in the case of K-12 Nationals, on school-week Thursdays?). That's how I found myself drawn to serve as a New York State delegate.

Before arriving in Norfolk, I joined preliminary committee workshops, reviewed the advance agenda packet, and familiarized myself with Robert's Rules of Order.

The official weekend meeting began with roll call followed by the applications for the D.C. and Rhode Island chapters. The delegates voted for the DC Chess Association as the District's official chapter, while the Ocean State Chess Association secured the Rhode Island post. I was impressed by each organization's engagement and by the other states' delegates, who queued at the floor mics to offer their informed perspectives.

Day one also included reports from the directors of US Chess departments. I was amazed to learn from Director of Events Boyd Reed's presentation that US Chess sets

national tournaments 10 years in advance, in order to locate venues that will accommodate massive numbers of attendees (in the case of Nationals, 7,000). They even factor in the weather patterns of possible locations — something that was particularly important regarding this year's Nationals, since it will be held in Spokane, Wash., in December (a location chosen to meet an increasing demand for a Nationals west of the Mississippi).

Events spanning several days, such as the U.S. Open, also require immense prep. Going forward, however, the Open will be shortened from nine to seven days, thanks to the efforts of the Events Department and the U.S. Open Committee.

Nevertheless, Vice President of Finance Chuck Unruh emphasized the importance of grand tournaments, not for financial gain — revenue and expenses typically are within 5% — but as a form of promotion, which is probably working, since US Chess

membership just surpassed 100,000.

Maybe the most impactful over-the-board change came from the efforts of Scholastic Chair John Rockefeller, Vice Chair Danny Rohde, and the Scholastic Council, shortening of the time competitors in scholastic tournaments are required to wait for a missing opponent to show up. This decision, which reduces the wait time from an hour to 30 minutes, places more of a responsibility on the absent player.

A motion sought to address inclusivity concerns by revisiting the requirements and hurdles facing applicants to Executive Board positions. The delegates passed the motion, which DEI Committee Co-Chair and District of Columbia Delegate Robin Ramson indicated would help combat systemic barriers.

This year, the Delegates enabled the Executive Board to set membership dues, which Texas Delegate Caleb Brown said would facilitate future dues changes and Unruh said would be essential given increasing inflation.



PHOTOS: COURTESY AUTHOR

Chuck Unruh noted that US Chess' overall net worth has increased over a hundredfold from 2013 through 2024 thanks to work in the leadership and financial committees. These reports illuminate how single members' actions significantly impact the organization's overall well-being.

Executive Director Ranae Bartlett announced that US Chess would develop a new rating server and website improvements, set to come into effect this year. She also addressed Safe Play concerns and, on account of a policy change and proposed bylaws amendments to handle future issues, concluded post-meeting that the 2024 Delegates Conference was a "big step forward for Safe Play."

Finally, Senior Director of Communications Dan Lucas provided updates on US Chess' print magazines, website, media, and outreach. He also announced he would depart US Chess and return to his chess roots in Georgia, working with the chess instruction organization Kid Chess. I want to thank Dan for our many conversations and reintroductions, and for all the support he's shown me in chess journalism; he has been a role model of professionalism.

After the first policy day, I was invited to join my delegation for dinner, during which friends from neighboring states bantered while watching the sun set over the USS Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier homeported on the Elizabeth River.

On the second day, we covered the remaining motions — some seemingly small-scale (e.g., the images permitted on standard tournament boards), some concerning the organization's future mission. The fervor, thoughtful consideration, and readiness to stay hours overtime compelled me to seek out what drove these stalwart enthusiasts' dedication to the organization and chess.

Several delegates described their involvement as a means of serving a greater purpose; for instance, 10-year Arizona Delegate Michelle Martinez participates to spread the game's cognitive benefits, while Christina Mullinax, co-chair of the Chess in Education Committee and a Tennessee delegate, believes chess creates lasting friendships — not surprisingly, since Christina met her husband through the game, and both now serve in chess governance! Many also love governance for the "camaraderie it fosters," in the words of New Jersey Delegate Nick Carlson, a new friend I made at the event.

Many in chess leadership began as players, coaches, and parents, including Dewain and Dwight Barber and Ranae Bartlett. Some continue with competitive play, such as New

York Delegate FM Sunil Weeramantry, who competed in last summer's World Open, and US Chess President Kevin Pryor, who continues to work on his game and share it with his grandkids.

Ultimately, US Chess is run by people who know what it is like to be a player. Whether you're drawn to advocacy, organizing, or meeting fascinating people, I urge you to explore how to share your talent, input, and enthusiasm through chess governance. I would especially encourage scholastic players to participate. Attending as a high school senior provided an invaluable window into the professional world. Scholastic players comprise about 60% of active US Chess memberships, and their active and unique perspectives offer genuine value at the Delegates Meeting.

WIM Beatriz Marinello, president of the US Chess Trust and a former US Chess president, affirms what many delegates believe: "Other young people should get involved in leadership roles, with the understanding that good leaders must also be doers and good team players."

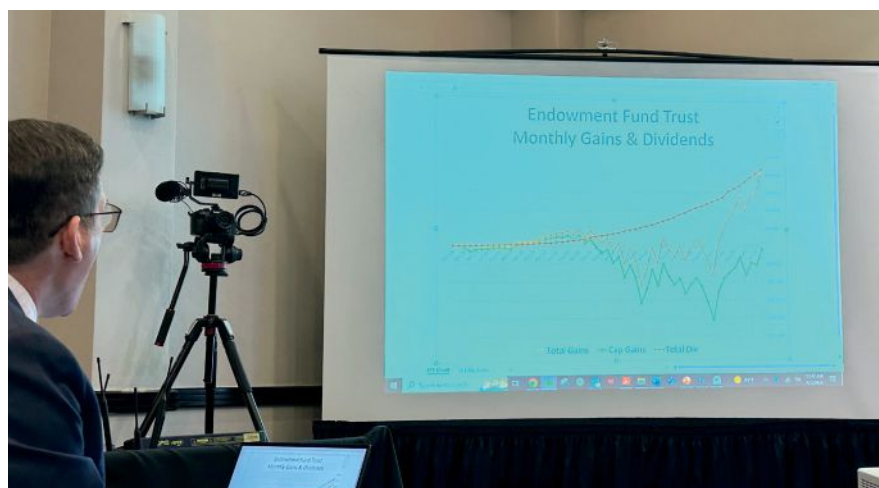
The Delegates Meeting has also inspired me to take action. Throughout the college application process, finding information on the chess clubs at different schools was challenging (social accounts were outdated, leaders changed hands, faculty advisors didn't reply to emails, etc.). The US Chess College Committee could potentially create a "point person" at each school, a US Chess member who would serve as a liaison for prospective students. US Chess could serve as a hub for all associated schools, providing contacts, upcoming events, and other information on their site. This initiative could kick off collegiate chess club/team recruitment as well.



Fundamentally, the US Chess Delegates Meeting strengthens US Chess by ensuring that it acts in players' best interests. Overall, I found it humbling to be in the mix of chess legends who tirelessly advocate for the game. I came away from the weekend with what felt like a year's worth of knowledge. Among other things, I learned why blitz tournaments are held late at night and on the Thursdays before nationals (the former because there's no other time; the latter, because if they were held Sunday night, everyone would leave!).

I hope to see you at the 2025 Delegates Meeting in Middleton, Wisc., which is sure to be a rewarding experience.

Video and minutes of the 2024 Delegates Meeting are available on the US Chess website at new.uschess.org/information-2024-annual-meeting-norfolk-virginia. 📺



Candidate Statements Available Online

STATEMENTS FOR THE CANDIDATES FOR election to the US Chess Executive Board are now available online.

After a change to US Chess Bylaws enacted at the 2024 Delegates Meeting, statements from candidates nominated for election to the Executive Board are no longer printed in *Chess Life*. Instead, each candidate is provided opportunity to publish their statements online. Each candidate will be provided space for a 150-word statement by April 10, followed by two 500-word statements no later than May 10 and June 10.

Five candidates — Anand Dommalapati, Alan Kantor, Kevin Pryor, John D. Rockefeller V, and Daniel Serna — are running for four at-large positions on the Executive Board. All candidate statements can be found at the US Chess elections page: new.uschess.org/2025-election-information. The direct link to the candidate statements is new.uschess.org/2025-candidate-statements.

A voting member for this election is any current US Chess member (active as of June 1, 2025) whose membership expires on or after June 30, 2025; who will be age 16 or

older as of June 30, 2025, and who registers to vote by June 1, 2025. Members with memberships of less than one year's duration at their start are not eligible to become voting members. The election will be conducted by electronic ballot; to vote, members must have an email address on file with US Chess.

Emails with voting instructions will be distributed around June 10, 2025, to voting members who are registered to vote as of June 1, 2025. Returned ballots will be counted in July. Terms of elected board members will begin at the conclusion of the 2025 Delegates Meeting.

12 Schools to Receive US Chess Title I Grants

US CHESS IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE 12 awards by the US Chess Title I Grant Program. With support from generous donors, US Chess annually offers grants to nonprofit affiliate members and chess programs that support students attending Title I schools and which aligns with US Chess' mission to "empower people, enrich lives, and enhance communities through chess." The 2025 grant recipients are:

- Board Room Chess (Baltimore, Maryland)
- Dr. Americo Parades Elementary (Brownsville, Texas)
- Edmonson Montessori (Detroit, Michigan)
- Hamilton K-8 School (Novato, California)
- IS 318 (Brooklyn, New York)
- John Marshall High School (Cleveland, Ohio)
- Julia R. Masterman Laboratory and Demonstration School (Philadelphia, PA)
- Lenoir City Intermediate School (Lenoir City, Tennessee)
- Newark School of Data Science and Information Technology (Newark, NJ)
- Normandy High School (St. Louis,

Missouri)

- Peoria Public Schools (Peoria, Illinois)
- Mark Bills Middle School
- Richwoods High School
- PS 031 Samuel F. Dupont (Brooklyn, New York)

Look for stories on *Chess Life Online* throughout the year about the work and impact of the dedicated people behind these names.

US Chess is committed to improving accessibility by reducing financial barriers and creating avenues to meet the needs of students who come from underserved communities. We thank all applicants to this program and encourage everyone to join in our efforts. ♠

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





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IN THE NEWS

BY JOHN HARTMANN



Pragg defeats Gukesh in Armageddon

Pragg wins at Wijk

Fresh off his victory in the 2024 World Championship, it looked like GM Gukesh Dommaraju was headed for another success at the 2025 Tata Steel Masters in Wijk aan Zee. He overtook the early leader, GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu, in Round 9 by defeating GM Leon Luke Mendonca while Pragg fell to GM Anish Giri.

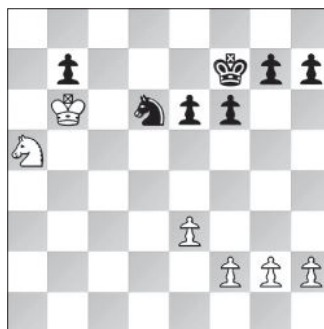
After a draw for Gukesh in Round 12 and a win for Pragg over GM Alexey Sarana, the two phenoms entered the final round a clear point ahead of third-place GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov. In a scene reminiscent of the 2013 Candidates, both leaders lost: Gukesh fell early to tailender GM Arjun Erigaisi (who defeated Abdusattorov in Round 12), while GM Vincent Keymer ground down Praggnanandhaa in a long endgame.

With Abdusattorov drawing against GM Pentala Harikrishna, Gukesh and Pragg went to a playoff to decide the title. They traded blitz blows before Pragg conjured a win in the Armageddon game for his first tournament victory at Wijk.

BLITZ TECHNIQUE

GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu (2741)

GM Gukesh Dommaraju (2777)
Tata Steel Masters Tiebreaks (3),
Wijk aan Zee, 02.02.2025



BLACK TO MOVE

35. ... Ne4 36. f3 Nc3 37. Kxb7 e5 38. Kc6 Nd1 39. Nc4 Ke6 40. e4 g6 41. Kc5 f5 42. Kb4 fxe4 43. fxe4 Nf2 44. Nd2 Kd6 45. Nc4+ Ke6 46. Nd2 Kf6 47. Kc4 Ng4 48. Nf1 Nf2 49. Kd5 Nd3 50. Ne3 Nf4+ 51. Kd6 Nd3? 52. Ng4+! Kg5 53. Nxe5 Kf4 54. Nxd3+ Kxe4 55. Nf2+ Ke3 56. Ng4+ Kf4 57. Nf6 h5 58. Ke6 h4 59. Kf7 Kf5 60. Kg7 g5 61. h3 Kf4 62. Kg6, Black resigned.

GM Thai Dai Van Nguyen won the Challengers tournament and will be invited to the 2026 Tata Steel Masters. GM Fabiano Caruana was the only American in either field; he finished in the middle of the Masters crosstable with a score of 6/13.

Our Man in Moscow

GM Hans Niemann continued to court con-

troversy when he traveled to Moscow in February for the 2025 Aeroflot Open. The lone American in the event, Niemann scored 6½/9 to finish in an eight-way tie for second place behind GM Ian Nepomniachtchi at 7/9.

After Nepomniachtchi forced a 13-move draw against Niemann in the penultimate round, Niemann took to Twitter / X and challenged the current World Blitz co-champion to a high stakes blitz match. To date there has been no response from Nepomniachtchi.

But Niemann did square off in Moscow with GM Daniil Dubov, who — as reported elsewhere in this issue — failed to appear for his game with the American at the World Blitz Championship, and then agreed to play a blitz match under the condition that Niemann answer one question while subject to a polygraph test. (The answer to that question is unavailable as we go to press.)

Niemann stumbled out of the gate, trailing 5½-3½ after the first day of action. He rallied on day two, tying the match at 8½-8½ with one game to play.

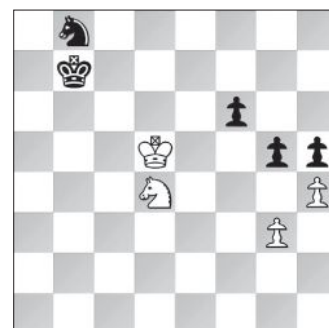
And then Dubov uncorked this move to win game 18, and the match along with it.

BREAKTHROUGH

GM Daniil Dubov (2701)

GM Hans Moke Niemann (2734)

Blitz match (18), Moscow, 03.08.2025



WHITE TO MOVE

64. g4!

A brilliant practical try for a win, especially in blitz.

64. ... hxg4?

The wrong capture.

It looks like White should win after 64. ... gxh4 65. gxh5 h3 66. Nf3! Nd7! 67. Ke6 (67. h6? Nf8) 67. ... Nf8+ 68. Kxf6 with

his better king placement, but Black holds and could even win if White isn't careful. To wit: 68. ... Kc7 69. Kg7 Ne6+ 70. Kf7?? Ng5+!.

65. h5 Nd7 66. Ke6 Ne5 67. Kxf6

White's knight can stop the g4-pawn, while Black's can't touch the h-pawn.

67. ... Nf3 68. Ne2 g3, Black resigned.

The loss to Dubov has not diminished Niemann's appetite for competition. He issued an open challenge via social media to the world's elite, with up to \$100,000 offered to players above 2750 for mixed time control matches. His DMs, he said, are open.

NYS Scholastic

New York turned out at the 2025 New York State K-8 Scholastics.

No fewer than 1,715 players made the trip to Saratoga Springs to compete in 11 sections on March 8-9. The 2024 New York Scholastics drew 1,724 per MSA records, but that field included three high school sections, making the 2025 edition the largest K-8 scholastic in state history. In years past such attendance would have made for a successful National High School event!

With three games a day and a time control of G/60,d10, time pressure was an omnipresent threat. Nowhere did it feature more prominently than in this decisive final-round battle between FM Bryan Lin and Elliot Goodrich.

TICK TOCK

FM Bryan Lin (2406)

Elliott Goodrich (2121)

NYS Middle School Ch (6), Saratoga Springs, 03.07.2025



BLACK TO MOVE

37. ... Qh5+? 38. Qh3??



IM Carissa Yip

38. Nxh5 is a clear win. But with just 12 seconds on the clock, Lin erred. Goodrich had just over a minute to find the refutation.

38. ... Bxf4+! 39. g3 Rd2+ 40. Kg1 Be3+, White resigned.

With this win Goodrich took top honors in the Middle School Championship at 5½/6. The Elementary title went to Linxi Zhu, also at 5½/6. Ian Singh and Thomas Egelhof shared first in the Primary section, each with a score of — you guessed it — 5½/6.

Full Time Player

Carissa Yip is going pro.

The 21-year-old IM announced in a March 3 press release from the Saint Louis Chess Club that she would be taking time away from her undergraduate studies at Stanford and moving to St. Louis to focus on chess.

Part of her inspiration, per the release, is the Cairns Chess Queens Award, launched by the Saint Louis Chess Club in 2024 to grow the ranks of American female grandmasters. The award promises \$100,000 to up to five women who earn the GM title in the next five years, and a move to the "chess capital of the world" will certainly provide opportunities for Yip to continue her journey to grandmaster.

New Titles

Congratulations to these Americans who received new FIDE titles between Aug. 9, 2024, and March 11, 2025.

■ CM: Glenn Bady, Aditeya Das, Matthew Diao, Peterson Chin Durias, William Ge, Cooper Ho, Jashith Karthi, Yash Jayesh Laddha, Chenxuan Ling, Steven Liu, Sharath Radhakrishnan, Anjaneya Rao, Sasha Schaefer, Logan C. Shafer, Alexander Sukhiashvili, Kannan Vaidyanathan, Luke Widjaja, Tariq Yue, Kevin Zhao

■ WCM: Alice Chovanec, Anagha Sinkar, Hema Vikas, Alice Wu, Elizabeth Xia, Stella Xin

■ FM: Aditeya Das, Eduard Hakobyan, Andrew Jiang, Andrew Jing, Avi Harrison Kaplan, Bryan Lin, Patrick Liu, Rohan Padhye, Narayan Venkatesh, Ted Wang, Stephen Willy, Ronen Wilson, Eugene Choi Yoo, Linxi Zhu

■ WFM: Irene Jiao Fei, Aradh Kaur, Sophie Li, Jenny Qi, Chloe Wang

■ IM: Eshaan Hebbar, Harshid Kunka, Eric Li, Eric Liu, Terry Luo, Akira Nakada, Samrug Narayanan, Liam Putnam, Joseph Zeltsan, Erick Zhao

■ WIM: Sahana Aravindakshan, Chloe Gaw

■ GM: Andy Woodward

■ NA: Peter Gaffney, Joseph Truelson, Allyson Wong

■ FA: Sarah Brauner, Jeffery Forbes, Miguel Garcia, Hal Sprechman, Ali Thompson

■ IA: Robert Getty, Grishmeshwar Prasad Sinha

■ IA-B: Brian Yang

■ IA-C: William Buklis, Judit Sztaray

The Pretty Test

Why is chess unlike other arts?

BY **GM ANDY SOLTIS**

T

HE WORLD'S BEST PLAYER and its best-known amateur both looked at this game and agreed it was pretty. So did

fans. And that points to something unusual about chess:

COLLE SYSTEM (D05)

Edgar Colle
John James O'Hanlon
Nice, 2.21.1930

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. e3 c5 4. c3 e6 5. Bd3 Bd6 6. Nbd2 Nbd7 7. O-O O-O 8. Re1 Re8 9. e4 dxe4 10. Nxe4 Nxe4 11. Bxe4 cxd4 12. Bxh7+ Kxh7 13. Ng5+ Kg6 14. h4! Rh8



15. Rxe6+!

The world champion, Alexander Alekhine, awarded this game the tournament's "beauty prize" because of variations such as 15. ... fxe6 16. Qd3+, which mates in six moves after 16. ... Kf6 17. Qf3+ or in five after 16. ... Kh6 17. Nxe6+.

More sparkling moves followed: **15. ... Nf6 16. h5+! Kh6** (16. ... Rxh5 17. Qd3+! is a quick mate) **17. Rxd6 Qa5 18. Nxf7+ Kh7 19. Ng5+ Kg6 20. Qb3+, Black resigned.**

The amateur was Marcel Duchamp. He was

one of the world's most famous artists but also the world's 129th-ranked chess player, according to retroactive ratings. He finished a creditable ninth in this tournament.

As an artist, Duchamp was controversial. He still is. If you asked 100 art lovers what they think of the work of Duchamp, or any modern artist, you would hear very different opinions — some adoring, others critical.

You might get the same sharp disagreement about the latest movies, music, dance styles — just about anything we could call art. We take it for granted that "there's no accounting for taste."

But chess is different. There is an odd esthetic sense that unites players, regardless of strength. We all recognize chess beauty.

We disagree about *how* beautiful. The move 15. Rxe6+! would not win a beauty contest if another contestant was, say, Frank Marshall's immortal 25. ... Qg3!! (against Stevan Levitsky, Breslau 1912). But it certainly passes the pretty test.

A game is pleasing to our eyes even if we later learn it is dubious to the computer. When Alekhine bestowed the prize on Colle, he overlooked that 12. Bxh7+ was second-best because Black could have defended with 13. ... Kg8! (14. Qh5 Qf6).

No matter. In chess we value flawed elegance over utilitarianism. Consider this candidate for prettiest game of the last year.

ENGLISH OPENING (A15)

GM David Navara
IM Vaclav Finek
Czech Ch, Ostrava, 04.30.2024

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 c6 3. Nc3 d5 4. e3 e6 5. b3 Bd6 6. Bb2 O-O 7. Be2 Nbd7 8. Qc2 Qe7 9. Rg1 e5 10. g4 Nb6 11. g5 Nfd7 12. cxd5 cxd5? 13. Nb5! Re8 14. a4 Nf8 15. a5 Nbd7

16. h4 d4 17. Rc1 Nb8



Those buzz-killing machines want White to grab a pawn with 18. Qe4, responding to 18. ... Nc6 with 19. Nxd6 Qxd6 20. Nxd4.

18. Qxc8!? Rxc8 19. Rxc8

But the engines gradually appreciate White's artistry on a tactical canvas. For example, 19. ... Bb4 can be met by 20. g6! (or the stronger-still 20. Bc4!) 20. ... hxc6 21. Bc4 with the idea of Nf3-g5 and a capture on f7. If 21. ... Qd7 22. Nxe5! Qxc8 23. Nxf7, with at least a draw by perpetual check.

19. ... Qd7? 20. Bc4! g6 21. h5!

Black is lost — if 21. ... Qxc8 22. Nxd6 Qc5 23. Nxe5! Qxd6 24. Nxf7 or 23. ... Qxe5 24. Nxf7 and wins. There was more to come:

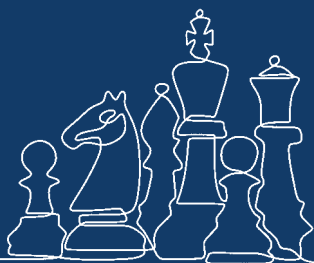
21. ... a6 22. Nxd6 Qxd6 23. hxc6 hxc6 24. Rh1! Qd7 25. Nxe5! Qxc8 26. Nxf7 Qxc4 27. Nh6+ Kh7 28. bxc4 Nc6 29. Nf5+ Kg8 30. Nxd4, Black resigned.

What makes a move or game beautiful? When the chess historian Isaak Linder questioned great players, they gave a gamut of answers.

Sacrifices and surprises, of course, they said. But also "the harmony of the pieces" (cited by Vasily Smyslov), "clarity" (Boris

QUIZ FOR APRIL

► **YEFIM GELLER WON MORE** classical games from world champions than any modern player. He is a candidate for the title of greatest player who never won the world title. This year we celebrate the 100th anniversary of Geller's birth, and this month's quiz features some of his shortest victories. Your task in each of the six diagrams is to find the fastest way to win. This will usually mean a forced path to a decisive advantage in material. For solutions, see Page 70.



PROBLEM 1

Yefim Geller
Alexey Suetin



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2

Yefim Geller
Paulos Papapavlou



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3

Yefim Geller
Stefan Kindermann



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4

Yefim Geller
Josif Vatnikov



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5

Yefim Geller
Alexander Kotov



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6

Lev Psakhis
Yefim Geller



BLACK TO MOVE

Spassky) and "logic" (David Bronstein).

Tigran Petrosian said beauty is different for players of different strengths. For a beginner, a simple knight fork is pretty, he said in Linder's Russian-language book, *Estetika Shakhmat* (Aesthetics of Chess).

Asked which game made a particularly strong esthetic impression on him, Bronstein named one from the 19th-century matches between Louis-Charles LaBourdonnais and Alexander MacDonnell. Mikhail Tal cited another golden oldie: Wilhelm Steinitz – Curt von Bardeleben, Hastings 1895.

Mikhail Botvinnik was an outlier. In keeping with the Marxist mindset, he condemned "art for art's sake." He was critical of "White to mate" problems with pieces on strange squares. Compositions must be realistic, like "Soviet realism" in painting. Any "abstract" art should be avoided. A composer's duty is to teach players how to play better, he said.

When Botvinnik ran a celebrated school for talented youngsters, he was appalled when one of them won a game with an unsound combination, rather than go into an endgame with an extra pawn.

"You broke José Capablanca's commandment," he told the winner, a future grand-

master. "You shouldn't play beautifully if it's possible to play simply."

In answer to Linder's question, Botvinnik said the game that made a great impression on him did not feature a sacrifice:

SELF-TRAPPING

GM Boris Spassky
GM Bobby Fischer
WCh (13), Reykjavik, 08.10-11.1972

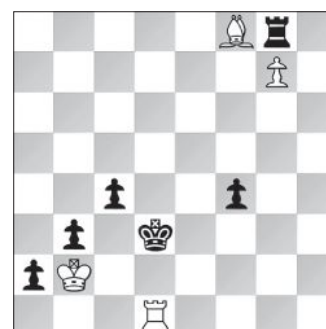


BLACK TO MOVE

Fischer "stalemated his own rook," Botvinnik said, with **59. ... h3! 60. Be7 Rg8 61. Bf8.**

Then his five passed pawns won after **61. ... h2 62. Kc2 Kc6 63. Rd1 b3+ 64. Kc3 h1=Q!.**

Well, you could call this a queen sacrifice, allowing Black's king to cross the d-file. Nevertheless, Fischer needed the help of a blunder to win: **65. Rxh1 Kd5 66. Kb2 f4 67. Rd1+ Ke4 68. Rc1! Kd3 69. Rd1+??.**



White could have drawn with **69. Rc3+! Ke2 70. Rxc4 f3 71. Rc1** and **Kb2xb3**. The game ended with **69. ... Ke2 70. Rc1 f3! 71. Bc5 Rxc7 72. Rxc4 Rd7 73. Re4+ Kf1 74. Bd4 f2, White resigned.**

Bobby didn't play simply in this game, but it was instructive — and, in its own way, beautiful. ♠

Hiding in Plain Sight

Nothing's really hidden on a chessboard, but here are some more possibilities that are harder to find than most.

BY **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**

IN MY LAST FEW COLUMNS, I've explored several of the limitations of our brains when it comes to finding certain moves. We've discussed the notoriously difficult backwards moves as well as the counterintuitive self-pin, but I am sorry to report that there are all kinds of other barriers we face when looking for moves! When our opponent's pieces are lined up on a file, a rank, or a diagonal, we know to look for pins or skewers. Things become more challenging when there are other pieces in the way. Turns out, it is particularly difficult to spot horizontal moves. The authors of *Invisible Chess Moves* call this the Horizontal Effect.

THE HORIZONTAL EFFECT

I have shown the position below to many of my students. After walking me through their thought process, most of them eventually found the answer, but I don't think it was anyone's first move.

CLEARING THE WAY

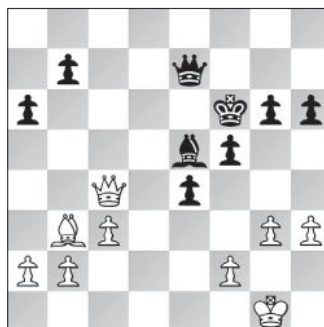
FM Marc Morgunov (2362)

IM Georg Froewis (2427)

Austrian Ch (9), Vienna, 07.29.2018

(see diagram top of next column)

White would love to play 39. Qh4+ with a skewer, but the e4-pawn is in the way and forcing it to move isn't such an easy task. If White plays 39. f3, Black is not forced to react and can do anything else. But White doesn't forget about the elusive *en passant*!



WHITE TO MOVE

39. f4!

Clearing the fourth rank by putting another piece on the rank is counterintuitive, but Black is forced to react as the bishop is attacked.

39. ... exf3 e.p.

Any bishop move loses a piece; for example, 39. ... Bd6 40. Qd4+ and there's nothing better than 40. ... Be5.

40. Qh4+, Black resigned.

He loses the queen after 40. ... Kg7 41. Qxe7+ or gets checkmated after 40. ... g5 41. Qxh6.

I had a similar idea in one of my games during the 2023 U.S. Women's Championship, but the idea didn't cross my mind. Combining the horizontal effect with *en passant* is no joke.

MISSING OUT ON ALL THE FUN

WIM Ruiyang Yan (2351)

IM Tatev Abrahamyan (2370)

U.S. Women's Ch (10) (analysis),

St. Louis, 10.16.2023



BLACK TO MOVE

The knight on g4 is trapped; that part registered in my brain. But I couldn't find a way to attack it. I played 24. ... Nc7 in the game and went on to win on move 65 in a hard-fought battle, but it turns out I could have simply attacked it!

24. ... h5 25. Qxh5 f5!!

This never crossed my mind. Turns out, there is an unusual pin along the fifth rank, so the pawn cannot be captured *en passant*.

26. Rxf5

Grabbing this pawn saves the knight but leads to all kinds of other problems. If 26. Rdf1 d3 the f2-rook is pinned. White will have to either give up the knight or let me capture on c2 with the pawn. The point, of course, is that 26. exf6?? e.p. Qxh5 shows off a spectacular pin!

26. ... d3+

I can say with confidence that this move I would have found.

27. Kh1 dxc2

The knight lives, but White has a new and bigger headache: the c2-pawn.

28. Rc1

There's another weird pin after 28. Rdf1: Black plays 28. ... c1=Q 29. Rxf8+ Qxf8! utilizing the pin on the first rank!

28. ... Rxf5 29. Qxf5 Qd4

All of Black's pieces are well defended, and the threats of 30. ... Qd1+ and 30. ... Qxb2 are too much to deal with.

30. Qf1 Qxg4

The knight falls after all.

I don't think I could have found the idea any other way except for pure determination to either get the knight or force the rook to move so I could advance my d4-pawn. I remember showing the game to some friends, including GM Yasser Seirawan, lamenting how impossibly difficult it was to spot the idea. I asked Yasser whether he would have spotted it, hoping for some kind of validation. Instead, I got a definite "Yes," followed by an explanation of how he would have noticed the pieces lined up on the rank. Ouch.

STRIKING THE STRONG SQUARE

Putting a piece on a well-guarded square is also counterintuitive, especially if it's just been defended. A hidden bonus of hanging out with Yasser, besides the great stories, is collecting material for my writing.

DOING IT ANYWAY

GM Yasser Seirawan (2635)
GM Viktor Korchnoi (2630)
FIDE Olympiad (1), Novi Sad,
11.17.1990



BLACK TO MOVE

The future of the rook on g2 looks hopeless. White is threatening to simply trap it with 18. Bf1 or 18. Kf1.

17. ... Nc5!

A backwards knight move! Black opens the path of the a-rook, looking to set up a skewer.

18. Bf1

The bishop slides back, trapping the g2-rook and keeping the d3-square under control.

White can't grab the knight with 18. bxc5?! because the g2-rook can now escape through tactical means: 18. ... Rxg3!, removing the defender with a skewer to follow. Black is slightly better after 19. hxg3 Ra1+ 20. Ke2 Rxh1 due to White's poor pawn structure.

18. ... Nd3+!!

The knight lands on d3 anyway, and Korchnoi finds the way to make the skewer idea work — forcing the bishop to move and reopening the line between the white king and the h1-rook.

After 18. ... Ra1+ 19. Ke2 the rook on h1 stays defended, and the best Black can do is give up the Exchange with 19. ... Rxg3 20. hxg3 Nxe4 21. Rxh7 when White has great chances to convert the advantage.

19. Bxd3

If White insists on grabbing the rook with 19. Ke2, there are devastating consequences: 19. ... Rxf2+! 20. Kxd3 Ra3+ and White doesn't have good coordination, as most of his pieces are on the kingside. Black picks up material after 21. Kd4 Rxc2 or 21. Rc3 Rf3+.

19. ... Rxg3

After removing the g3-knight, the rook on h1 is left undefended.

20. hxg3 Ra1+ 21. Kd2 Rxh1

Korchnoi managed to salvage his rook and a half-point.

22. Ra2 d6 23. Ra8 Kd7 24. Bc2 Rf1, draw.

When Yasser showed this game to a group of us, he expressed his surprise at seeing 18. ... Nd3+ on the board after having just moved his bishop. Even strong grandmasters have their blind spots.

MOVING THE SAME PIECE TWICE

One of the first lessons we learn in chess is not to move the same piece twice in the opening. As we get stronger, we realize that

rules can be broken and aren't set in stone. However, the thing about this rule is that moving the same piece two times in a row also just feels wasteful, so the thought of moving the same piece twice sometimes doesn't even cross our mind.

A TWO-STEP

IM Judit Polgar (2550)

IM Miroslav Lazic (2495)

Dortmund, 1990



WHITE TO MOVE

White has a great knight on e4 — a classic example of good knight vs a bad bishop. However, hanging on to the d5-pawn is a difficult task, so White has to counterattack the c7-pawn instead.

22. Rad1!

The more natural moves don't work out for tactical reasons. After (a) 22. Rfd1 Red7 23. Rac1 Rxd5 24. Rxd5 Rxd5 White doesn't have time to recapture on c7 because of the back-rank mate. And backwards knight moves aren't always good moves! After (b) 22. Nc3 e4 the bishop's diagonal is now open and it becomes a monstrous piece, while White's pawns will start to hang.

22. ... Red7 23. Rc1!

The rook moves again! White hangs on to the pawn by going after c7. The same rook that is attacking the d5-pawn is also defending the c7-pawn, and here White has no back-rank issues.

23. ... Rf7?!

Even so, 23. ... Rxd5 24. Rxc7 R5d7 would have kept the balance.

24. Rfd1 Rfd7 25. Kf1

Judit gets the same position she would have had by playing 22. Rfd1, except now the king is on f1 and there is no back-rank checkmate. White simply won a tempo! Judit went on to win on move 66. ♠

Dutch Treats

The Tata Steel Masters provided its share of interesting endgames.

BY **GM JOEL BENJAMIN**

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HE FIRST MAJOR EVENT OF 2025 produced its share of endings with deceptive subtleties. GM Praggnanandhaa

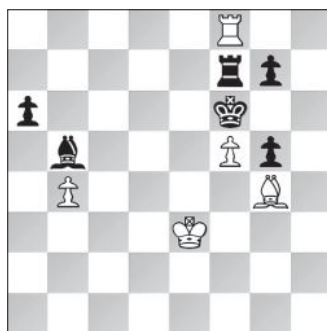
bested World Champion Gukesh in a play-off to take first place at Wijk aan Zee. Earlier he outdueled another countryman in an endgame.

THREE STRIKES, YOU'RE OUT!

GM Pentala Harikrishna (2695)

GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu (2741)

Tata Steel Masters (2), Wijk aan Zee, 01.19.2025



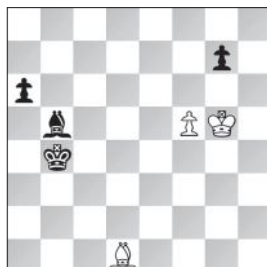
WHITE TO MOVE

As a rule of thumb, the presence of rooks tends to help the defender in endgames. In this specific case, it seems that Black's extra pawn could well become two in the bishop ending. But appearances deceived both players. White passed on three rook trades that would have saved the game.

42. Rb8

The rook trade leads to a draw: 42. Rxf7+

Kxf7 43. Bd1 Kf6 44. Bc2 Ke5 45. Kf3 Kd4 46. Kg4 Kc3 47. Bd1 Kxb4 48. Kxg5 ...



POSITION AFTER 48. Kxg5

Now after (a) 48. ... Be8, liquidating the king-side with 49. f6? is a fatal mistake, because rook pawns are not easy to sacrifice for: 49. f6? gxf6+ 50. Kxf6 a5 51. Ke5 Bf7 52. Kd4 Bb3 53. Bg4 a4 54. Bf5 a3 55. Bb1 Bc4 followed by marching the king to b2.

But 49. Bh5! Bxh5 50. Kxh5 a5 51. Kg6 a4 52. Kxg7 a3 53. f6 a2 54. f7 a1=Q+ 55. Kg8 is just in time for White — the ol' bishop pawn on the seventh rank draw.

So instead, Black can try (b) 48. ... Bd3 49. Kg6 a5, when 50. Kxg7? Bxf5 51. Kf6 Bd3 52. Ke5 Bc4 53. Kd4 Bb3 54. Bg4 a4 loses as we've seen before. But if White waits with 50. Kg5! the Black king has to take the long way around, giving White just enough time to hold: 50. ... Kc3 51. Kg6 Kd4 52. Ba4 Ke5 53. Kxg7 Bxf5 54. Be8 Bd3 55. Kh6!! Kd4 56. Kg5 Kc5 57. Kf4 Bb5 and White can draw with 58. Bxb5 Kxb5 59. Ke3, or even 58. Ke3 immediately — the ol' wrong bishop and rook pawn combination.

42. ... Rc7 43. Rb6+ Rc6 44. Rb7?

This miscalculation should be decisive. After 44. Rxc6+ Bxc6 45. Kf2 Ke5 46. Kg3 Bb5 47. Bd1 Kxf5 48. Bf3! the loss of the f5-pawn

makes no difference; even with two extra g-pawns Black cannot force progress. White eliminates all the pawns after 48. ... Ke5 49. Kg4 Kd4 50. Kxg5 Kc3 51. Bb7!.

44. ... Rc3+ 45. Kf2 Rd3

Pragg is getting overly technical. The win starts with 45. ... Rb3! 46. Bh5 Rxb4 47. Rf7+ Ke5 48. Bg6 (48. Rxg7 Rf4+ 49. Kg3 Rxf5 50. Bg4 Kf6 wins) 48. ... Rb2+ 49. Kg3 (49. Ke1 Bd3) 49. ... Rb3+ 50. Kg4 Be2+ 51. Kxg5 Rg3+ 52. Kh4 Kf4 and mating threats end the discussion.

46. Bh5 Rd7? 47. Rb8?

Last chance for the draw we've seen before with 47. Rxd7 Bxd7 48. Bf3 Kxf5 49. Kg3 Bb5 50. Bb7, etc.

47. ... Kxf5 48. Rf8+ Ke5 49. Bg6 Kd4

50. Rc8 Rd6 51. Bh5 Rc6 52. Rg8 Rc7 53. Kg3 Kc3 54. Bd1 Kxb4 55. Kg4 a5, White resigned.

Caruana must be thinking all rook endings are drawn after this one got away.

JUST TAKE THAT PAWN!

GM Pentala Harikrishna (2695)

GM Fabiano Caruana (2803)

Tata Steel Masters (10), Wijk aan Zee, 01.29.2025

(see diagram top of next column)

46. ... Rg3?

I'm not sure what Fabi didn't like about the obvious 46. ... Rf3. Black wins after 47. f5 exf5 48. gxf5 Rxf5 49. Re1 Kc4 50. Re3 (50. e6 fxe6 51. Rxe6 Kb3 heads for the Lucena position)



BLACK TO MOVE

50. ... Rf2+ 51. Kc1 Kd5 52. Kd1 (52. Rb3 Rf4 53. Re3 Rf5 54. Rb3 Kc4 55. Re3 Kd4 56. Rb3 Rxe5 57. Rxb4+ Kc3 wins) 52. ... Rf5 53. Rb3 Rf4 54. Re3 Kd4 55. Re1 Re4 56. Rf1 Rxe5 57. Rxf7 Kc3 and the b-pawn wins again.

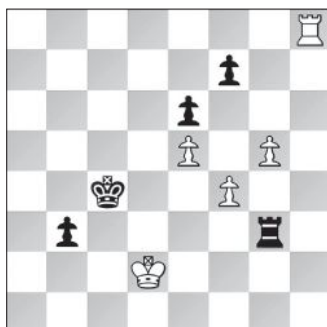
47. g5 b3

Now 47. ... Rf3 48. g6 fxg6 49. Rg1 liquidates Black's kingside pawns.

48. Rh1?

Harikrishna missed a surprising draw with 48. Rf1! Kc4 49. Kc1 Kc3 50. Kb1 and despite White's total passivity, Black has no breakthrough; e.g., 50. ... Kb4 51. Ka1 Ka3 52. Kb1 b2 53. Re1 Kb3 (Black can even lose with 53. ... Rc3 54. Rg1 Kb3 55. Rf1 Rc1+? 56. Rxc1 bxc1=Q+ 57. Kxc1 Kc3 58. f5) 54. Rf1 Rh3 55. Rd1 Rf3 56. Rg1, etc.

48. ... Kc4 49. Rh8



49. ... Rg1?

Again a fancy move costs Caruana when attacking pawns was the answer. After 49. ... Rf3 50. Rc8+ (50. g6 fxg6 51. Rc8+ Kd4 52. Rd8+ Ke4 53. Re8 b2 54. Kc2 Rb3 55. Kb1 Kxf4 56. Rxe6 g5 wins) 50. ... Kd4 51. Rb8 b2 52. Kc2 (52. Rb4+ Kc5 53. Rb8 Rf1! 54. Rxb2 Rf2+ 55. Kc3 Rxb2 56. Kxb2 Kd5 wins) Rf2+ 53. Kb1 Rxf4 54. Kxb2 Kxe5 Black has a much-improved version of the game. With some accurate moves, he can cut off the white king before it gets into position to hold: (a) 55. Kc2 Kf5! 56. Rg8 Rd4! 57. Rg7 e5 etc., or

(b) 55. Kc3 Rf2! 56. Rg8 Kf4 57. g6 (57. Kd3 e5) 57. ... fxg6 58. Rxxg6 e5.

50. Rc8+ Kd4 51. Rd8+ Kc4 52. Rc8+ Kd4

53. Rd8+ Ke4 54. Kc3 Rg4

Slightly more testing is 54. ... Rg3+ 55. Kb2 Rf3, but 56. Rf8! holds.

55. Kxb3 Rxf4 56. Rg8 Kxe5 57. Kc3

Black is one tempo short — if he could play ... Rf4-f2 AND ... Ke5-f4 he would win as before.

57. ... Ra4 58. Rg7 Ra3+ 59. Kd2 Ra7 60.

Kc3 Ra3+ 61. Kd2 Ra2+ 62. Kd3 Rf2 63.

Ke3 Rf1 64. Ke2 Rf5 65. Ke3 Kd6 66. Ke4

Rf1 67. Rh7 Rf5 68. Rg7 Ke7, draw.

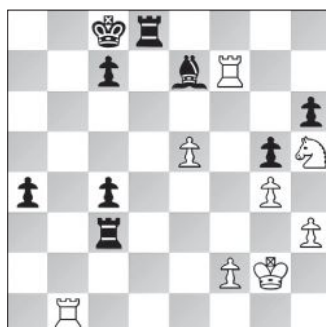
If there is anything I like as much as a liquidation into the pawn endgame, it's an endgame chock full of crazy tactics. The next game had a pretty lively finish, but the variations that didn't happen were totally crazy!

QUEEN FOR A MOVE

GM Anish Giri (2731)

GM Jorden van Foreest (2680)

Tata Steel Masters (13), Wijk aan Zee, 02.02.2025



BLACK TO MOVE

This Berlin endgame has gotten a bit out of hand for White, but after 33. ... Bc5 34. Rb5 Bd4 35. e6, he may have just enough counterplay. So van Foreest gambles on a quick touchdown:

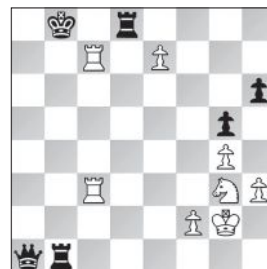
33. ... Rb3!? 34. Rc1 a3 35. Rxe7 c3 36. Ng7

This natural move, which brings White to a safe position, was probably an easy call for Giri. But there was another path in 36. Ng3 a2 37. e6!! (passive play is hopeless: 37. Ra1 c2 38. Ne2 Rd2 39. Nc1 Rb1 40. Rxa2 Rxc1 and Black wins).

After 37. e6, the pawn will have a surprisingly huge impact on the result. We consider

two variations:

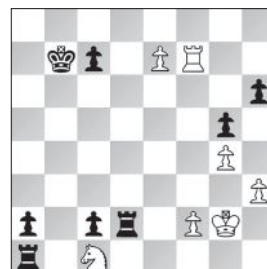
(a) 37. ... Rb1 38. Rxc3 a1=Q 39. Rexc7+ Kb8 40. e7 ...



POSITION AFTER 40. e7

Both 40. ... Re8 41. Rc8+ Rxc8 42. Rxc8+ Kxc8 43. e8=Q+ and 40. ... Qa8+ 41. Kh2 Qd5 42. exd8=Q+ Qxd8 should lead to a draw.

(b) 37. ... Kb7 38. Ra1! c2 39. Ne2 Rd2 40. Nc1 Rb1 41. Rf7!! Rxa1 42. e7 ...



POSITION AFTER 42. e7

Wow! Three possible continuations all lead to likely draws:

(b1) 42. ... Rb1 43. e8=Q a1=Q 44. Rf8!.

(b2) 42. ... Re2 43. Nxe2 Rg1+ 44. Kf3! a1=Q 45. e8=Q.

(b3) 42. ... Rxc1 43. e8=Q Rg1+ 44. Kh2! Rh1+ 45. Kg2, and queening either pawn leads to perpetual check.

36. ... a2 37. Ne6 Rb1 38. Rxc7+ Kb8

39. R7xc3 a1=Q 40. Rb3+! Rxb3 41. Rxa1

The position has petered out to equality and concluded in short order.

41. ... Rd5 42. Nf8 Rd8 43. Ne6 Rd5 44.

Rc1 Rb6 45. Nf8 Rd8 46. Nh7 Re6 47. Re1

Rd4 48. Nf6 Kc8 49. Re3 Kd8 50. Kg3 Ke7

51. Nh5 Rd5 52. f4 Kf7 53. Rf3 gxf4+ 54.

Nxf4 Rdx5 55. Nxe6+ Kxe6 56. Kh4 Ke7

57. Rf5 Re3 58. Rh5 Re6 59. Rf5 Re3 60.

Rh5 Re6, draw.

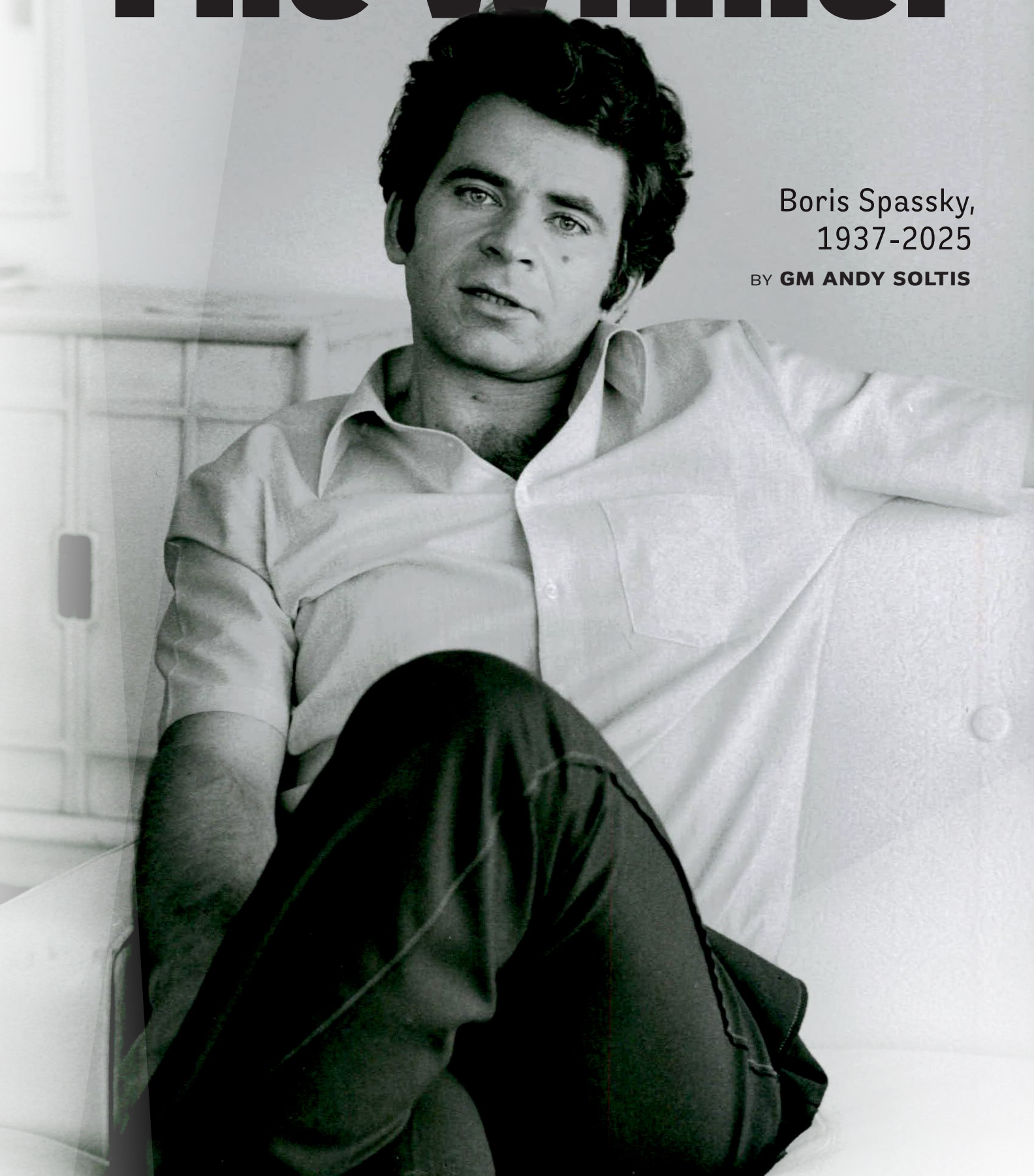
OK, you know what I *really* like? A liquidation into the pawn ending culminating in the application of a fundamental rule. It wasn't all played out on the board, but a trained eye can spot it, just the same.

(continued on page 59)

The Winner

Boris Spassky,
1937-2025

BY **GM ANDY SOLTIS**





TO PEOPLE WHO DON'T play chess — and, regrettably, to many who do — Boris Spassky is remembered for one thing: losing.

He lost his world championship title to Bobby Fischer in the most famous chess event in history. He also lost his comeback bids in Candidates matches with Anatoly Karpov and Viktor Korchnoi. Then he lost a humiliating so-called “championship rematch” with Fischer.

But you don't get to play those matches unless you win a lot. It is Spassky the remarkable winner who inspired generations of his fans.

“Boris Spassky was my first chess idol,” Garry Kasparov said in one of his *Great Predecessors* books. “1969, when I started to play chess, was precisely when he became world champion.” Kasparov's first chess book was a collection of annotated games of Spassky's defeat of Tigran Petrosian in that title match.

In fact, before facing Fischer, Spassky had amassed one of the greatest match records ever. But that is one of his many ironies. Among others:

- He hated communism, but had to play the role of Kremlin defender in the definitive Cold War chess event.

- He was depicted as an iron-willed fighter, but he struggled with bouts of self-doubt and depression. “The thing is I'm not a fighting player by character,” he said in one of his last interviews, with EuRuchess. “I had colossal chess strength but a rather weak character.” Before the Fischer match, he told Russian readers, “Do I fear him? I only fear myself.”

- He was known for his poker face at the board — what Petrosian called his “theatrical calm.” When Fischer included him on his list of the 10 greatest players of all time, Bobby cited his ability to play without revealing a hint of emotion: “Spassky sits at the board with the same dead expression whether he is mating or being mated.”

Yet Spassky, a natural performer, said his calmness was an act to conceal his chronic nervousness. The real Spassky emerged when the tension of a game was over. More than once he broke down in tears. One of the reasons he bonded with Bobby was that he sympathized when Fischer cried after losing their first game, at Mar del Plata 1960.

A beautiful game — even a loss — brought him joy. Who else would have joined the spectators to applaud Fischer after Spassky lost the best game of the 1972 match? “I'm emotional,” he said in another of his

last interviews, with *Vechernaya Moskva*. “When Judith Polgar brilliantly beat me, I was in ecstasy.”



Spassky grew up a survivor. At age 4 he, his brother, and thousands of other Leningrad children were evacuated after the Nazi invasion of Russia. Luftwaffe bombers attacked their fleeing trains. “We were incredibly lucky,” Spassky recalled to *Sovietsky Sport* in 2012, “because we were in the second echelon: The first and third were bombed.”

He reached a children's shelter in the Urals but nearly starved to death. When he was rescued by his parents, “I was like a sack of bones and couldn't get out of bed.” Then his father abandoned him, his brother, and his pregnant mother.

Back in war-ravaged Leningrad, he discovered a chess pavilion in a local park. He was fascinated with the tables, pieces, and boards. “A wild passion took possession of me,” he recalled. He began playing every day, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., in what he called a “fairytale world.”

His progress was astonishing, even by today's standard. “Spassky went from beginner to first category [about a 1900 rating] in one year!” his first trainer, Vladimir Zak, recalled in *Shakhmaty v SSSR* in 1973.

A newspaper photo of 10-year-old Spassky beating Mikhail Botvinnik in a simultaneous exhibition made him a Soviet celebrity. He was awarded a monthly government stipend, an extraordinary benefit that helped feed his impoverished family. “I was a professional at age 10,” he recalled.

Today it hardly seems impressive that he became a grandmaster at 18, but earning an international title at that time was very rare, and he was the youngest ever to do it: The previous record had been set by Petrosian at age 23. If Fischer hadn't come along, Spassky's record would have stood for 25 years, until shattered by 17-year-old Garry Kasparov.



What made Spassky's play special?

Even before Mikhail Tal, he understood the power of speculative sacrifice and the primacy of the initiative. Many of his colleagues felt a well-played game should be decided in the endgame. Spassky concentrated his energy on the middlegame. “I was king of the middlegame,” he often said.

Spassky did make important contributions to the opening. He revived the Marshall Gambit in the Ruy Lopez and the Tarrasch Defense in the Queen's Gambit Declined.

Both were considered dubious antiquies before he began winning with them.

But as with Petrosian, studying the opening was an onerous task for Spassky. He couldn't remember innovations he had prepared for months, Russian psychologist Victor Malkin said in *Shakhmatny Vestnik* in 1993. Spassky believed it was more important to have “a fresh head,” unburdened by dozens of memorized moves.

What distinguished Spassky most was his conviction that the outcome of a game was determined by two pivotal points. The first was when a player chooses a middlegame plan. The second, and more important, was what he called the “critical moment,” when finding the best move was absolutely essential. The player who recognizes that moment and finds that move will win.

“It's as if two players go up a hill and meet at the top,” he said. “The one who finds the right decision remains on top. So it is in life.”

His rival Viktor Korchnoi was deeply jealous of Spassky, going back to childhood. But he agreed with the “critical moment” theory: “Boris skillfully maintained the tension and made strong unexpected moves at decisive moments.”

Those moments were often when Spassky's opponent was vulnerable because of the position, the clock, fatigue, or emotions. Sensing vulnerability was a trait he developed early. “It's like [hockey] in Canada,” he said. “A boy of two is put on skates and they say: You shouldn't look at the ice, nor at the puck — but at the opponent.”



Spassky, like Fischer and Kasparov, was a teenager when he sensed his destiny. At 19 he was one of the world's top 10 players and still improving. “It was obvious I would become world champion sooner or later,” he told *Sovietsky Sport*.

But it was much later — 13 years — than sooner. Other young players, such as Bent Larsen, Yefim Geller, and Korchnoi, surged past him. Colleagues blamed his chronic idleness. He admitted he could be “a Russian bear. ... Someone who is very calm and lazy and finds it an effort to spend the time to stand up.”

“Spassky will never become world champion,” GM Miguel Najdorf said after seeing him sunbathing on a beach during a 1962 tournament in Cuba. “He loves life too much.”

In reality, Spassky's life was a mess during his early 20s. The first of his three failed marriages ended in divorce. So did the second of his three close relationships with a

trainer. “I ended up in the hospital because of nerves,” he said in a 2012 interview.

In addition, he had running battles with Soviet authorities. He often contradicted Moscow’s propaganda. When Soviet media said a high school dropout like Fischer could never become world champion, Spassky said his own college education was a fiasco. “I wasted five years,” he told the British journalist Leonard Barden in 1966.

Exasperated Soviet authorities wondered whether he was worth all the trouble he caused. Spassky didn’t seem to care. “The KGB has 100 files on me,” he said; “101 will make no difference.” He was eventually banned four times from traveling outside the USSR. He fell into periods of Dostoevskian melancholy.

“Life is the sort of opponent who makes unexpected moves that, no matter how much you want to, you can never think up a reply in advance,” he said.



Spassky’s rebirth in his mid-20s is one of the great comeback stories of chess history. He defeated top-ranked GMs Paul Keres, Tal, Korchnoi, Larsen, and Geller (twice) in Candidates matches in 1965 and 1968. Another critical step in his drive to the world championship title was winning the \$5,000 first prize at the 1966 Piatigorsky Cup in Santa Monica. He said that gave him a financial war chest that enabled him to pay for preparation and seconds for the 1969 title match victory over Petrosian.

Winning the highest title in chess led to another Spassky irony: It began what he often called “the most unhappy years of my career.”

He fought constantly with Soviet apparatchiks. He also disappointed fans, who expected him to play more, write more, and win more. He preferred field trips to explore remote USSR regions.

Although he was a college-trained journalist, he rarely wrote. “I don’t even enjoy writing about chess,” he had admitted to Barden. But he later wrote two book manuscripts, on the Candidates matches he lost to Karpov and Korchnoi, and sent them to a German publisher. They were rejected, he said.

His fragile relations with his government were all but severed when the Fischer match began. He had two opportunities to answer Bobby’s antics by abandoning the match. FIDE president Max Euwe wrote him, “Dear Boris, you can leave the match at any moment.” FIDE would continue to recognize him as world champion, Euwe said. But Spassky refused to leave Reykjavik, even

after a shouting match with a top Soviet official left him in nervous collapse.

After losing his title to Fischer, he wanted to get back his winning form in international tournaments. But Moscow banned him from traveling abroad. More changes followed. His second marriage collapsed; he remarried and decided to leave his homeland. After much more fighting with government officials, he and his new wife managed to go to France — although Spassky also considered America.

“Possibly if I had moved to the U.S. in 1976 I would have gotten rich,” he recalled in 2017. But he wanted peace and quiet: “In France, nobody bothers me.”

Not only was Spassky changing; so was chess. The opening preparation he shunned was becoming as important as his beloved middlegame. “It’s library versus library,” he sniffed.

His energy began to wane. He got an invitation to the 1990 Linares supertournament only after he promised organizer Luis Rentero he would play at least 40 moves in every game. By the tournament’s end, Spassky was near exhaustion. According to the book *Linares! Linares!* he went down on his knees before Rentero in a Linares bar and pleaded with him: “What is it you want? Do you want me to die?”

Through it all, he remained in off-and-on contact with Fischer. Bobby freed him of financial worries when he agreed to play the bogus “world championship” rematch in 1992. He lost again but pocketed a one-third share of the \$5 million prize money.

His explanation of what happened to it was typical Spassky: “French taxes ate a half a million. Then, I’m not at all interested dying in a grave with pockets of money. So I left [some] to family and with the remainder I bought eight houses for relatives and friends,” he told *Factov*.

“Fischer is my friend,” Spassky said in a 2001 EuRuchess interview. “You know he considers all [former Soviet] chessplayers to be officers of the KGB. I told him that when I receive the rank of colonel I will invite him to observe it in the best restaurant in Budapest. Bobby said, ‘Oh, good.’”

Spassky enjoyed several trips to the U.S., including playing in the 1987 New York Open and visiting his friend GM Lubosh Kavalek in Virginia. But he suffered a mild stroke in 2006 after an appearance at the Mechanics Chess Club in San Francisco. After a more serious stroke in 2010 he returned to Moscow, where he lived before dying in February at age 88.

Whenever he granted an interview in his final years, he was asked again about

1972. Why didn’t he just walk away with his title intact?

“As world champion I was obligated to play the match,” he said in 2012. In another interview, he added, “I was the chess king. I could not go back on my word.”

SELECTED GAMES

Boris Spassky played so many great games in his career it’s impossible to narrow them down, but here are some of his most famous games, as well as a few favorites personally selected by GM Andy Soltis and the staff of *Chess Life*.

KING’S INDIAN DEFENSE, AVERBAKH VARIATION (E74)

GM Yuri Averbakh

GM Boris Spassky

Soviet Ch Playoff (3), Leningrad, 02.15.1956

1. c4 Nf6 2. Nc3 g6 3. e4 d6 4. d4 Bg7 5. Be2 0-0 6. Bg5 c5 7. d5 Qa5 8. Bd2 a6 9. a4 e5 10. g4 Ne8 11. h4 f5 12. h5 f4 13. g5 Qd8 14. Bg4 Nc7 15. Bxc8 Qxc8 16. Nf3



16. ... Nc6!! 17. dxc6 bxc6 18. Nh4 Qe8 19. hxc6 hxc6 20. Qg4 Rb8 21. Nd1 Ne6 22. Ra3 Nd4 23. Rah3 Qf7 24. Bc3 Rfe8 25. R3h2 Qxc4 26. Nxc6 Re6 27. Bxd4 Rxc6 28. Qf5 Qe6 29. Qxe6+ Rxe6 30. Bc3 d5 31. f3 Rb3 32. Rh3 c4 33. Kd2 Rg6 34. Rg1 d4 35. Ba5 Bf8 36. Rg4 Rd6 37. Kc2 Rd7 38. g6 Rdb7 39. Be1 c5 40. Rgh4 Bg7 41. Ba5 c3 42. bxc3 Ra3 43. cxd4 exd4 44. Rxf4 Ra2+ 45. Kd3 Rb1 46. Rh1 Rxa4 47. Kc2 Rb5 48. e5 d3+ 49. Kxd3 Rxf4 50. Bc3 Rxf3+ 51. Ke4 Rg3 52. Kf4 Rxc6 53. Ne3 Rb8 54. Nf5 Rf8 55. Rh5 Re8 56. Ke4 Rg1 57. Rh4 Bf8 58. Kd5 Rd1+ 59. Ke4 Rc1 60. Kd5 Rd1+ 61. Ke4 Rd7 62. Nh6+ Bxh6 63. Rxh6 Rh7 64. Rg6+ Kf7 65. Rf6+ Ke7 66. Rc6 Kd7 67. Rxc5 Rh6 68. Kd5 Rb6 69. Ba5

Rb5 70. Rxb5 axb5 71. e6+ Rxe6 72. Kc5 Re5+ 73. Kb6, draw.

KING'S GAMBIT (C36)

GM Boris Spassky

GM David Bronstein

Soviet Ch (16), Leningrad, 02.20.1960

1. e4 e5 2. f4 exf4 3. Nf3 d5 4. exd5 Bd6 5. Nc3 Ne7 6. d4 0-0 7. Bd3 Nd7 8. 0-0 h6 9. Ne4 Nxd5 10. c4 Ne3 11. Bxe3 fxe3 12. c5 Be7 13. Bc2 Re8 14. Qd3 e2 15. Nd6 Nf8 16. Nxf7 exf1=Q+ 17. Rxf1 Bf5 18. Qxf5 Qd7 19. Qf4 Bf6 20. N3e5 Qe7 21. Bb3 Bxe5 22. Nxe5+ Kh7 23. Qe4+, Black resigned.

CARO-KANN DEFENSE (B18)

GM Boris Spassky

Alberto Foguelman

Mar del Plata (10), 04.09.1960

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 dxe4 4. Nxe4 Bf5 5. Ng3 Bg6 6. h4 h6 7. N1e2 Nf6 8. Nf4 Bh7 9. Bc4 e5 10. Qe2 Qxd4 11. 0-0 b5 12. Bb3 Bc5 13. Be3 Qd6 14. Rad1 Qe7 15. Bxc5 Qxc5 16. Nfh5 Nxe4 17. Nxe4 0-0 18. Qg4 g6 19. Rd3 a5 20. Rfd1 Ra7 21. Rd6 Kh8 22. Nf6 a4 23. Nxe7 axb3 24. Nxf8 bxc2 25. Nxe6+ fxg6 26. Rd8+ Kg7 27. Rg8+ Kxg8 28. Qxg6+ Rg7 29. Rd8+ Qf8 30. Rxf8+ Kxf8 31. Qxc2 Kg8 32. Qc5, Black resigned.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE, SÄMISCH VARIATION (E81)

GM Boris Spassky

GM Larry Evans

Olympiad Final A (10), Varna, 10.07.1962

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 c6 6. Be3 a6 7. Qd2 b5 8. 0-0-0 bxc4 9. Bxc4 0-0 10. h4 d5 11. Bb3 dxe4 12. h5 exf3 13. hxe4 hxe4 14. Bh6 fxg2 15. Rh4 Ng4 16. Bxe7 Kxe7 17. Qxe2 Nh6 18. Nf3 Nf5 19. Rh2 Qd6 20. Ne5 Nd7 21. Ne4 Qc7 22. Rdh1 Rg8 23. Rh7+ Kf8 24. Rxf7+ Ke8 25. Qxe6 Nxe5 26. Rf8+, Black resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B94)

GM Boris Spassky

GM Tigran Petrosian

World Championship (19), Moscow, 06.04.1969

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Bg5 Nbd7 7. Bc4 Qa5 8. Qd2

h6 9. Bxf6 Nxf6 10. 0-0-0 e6 11. Rhe1 Be7 12. f4 0-0 13. Bb3 Re8 14. Kb1 Bf8



15. g4 Nxg4 16. Qg2 Nf6 17. Rg1 Bd7 18. f5 Kh8 19. Rdf1 Qd8 20. fxe6 fxe6



21. e5 dxe5 22. Ne4 Nh5 23. Qg6 exd4 24. Ng5, Black resigned.

NIMZOVICH-LARSEN ATTACK (A01)

GM Bent Larsen (2650)

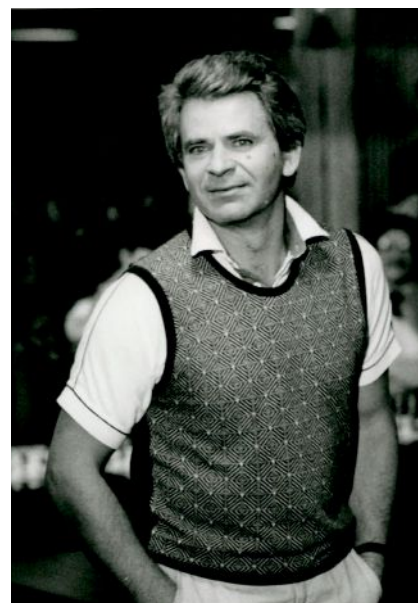
GM Boris Spassky (2670)

USSR vs. The Rest of the World (2), Belgrade, 03.29.1970

1. b3 e5 2. Bb2 Nc6 3. c4 Nf6 4. Nf3 e4 5. Nd4 Bc5 6. Nxc6 dxc6 7. e3 Bf5 8. Qc2 Qe7 9. Be2 0-0-0 10. f4 Ng4 11. g3 h5 12. h3 h4 13. hxg4 hxg3 14. Rg1



14. ... Rh1 15. Rxh1 g2 16. Rf1 Qh4+ 17. Kd1 gxf1=Q+, White resigned.



Spassky and Chess Life & Review editor Burt Hochberg in 1974



CATALAN OPENING (E07)

GM Boris Spassky
GM Dragoljub Ciric
IBM (5), Amsterdam, 07.18.1970

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. g3 Be7 5. Bg2 0-0 6. 0-0 c6 7. b3 Nbd7 8. Bb2 b6 9. Nbd2 Bb7 10. Rc1 Rc8 11. e3 c5 12. Qe2 Rc7 13. cxd5 Bxd5 14. e4 Bb7 15. e5 Nd5 16. Nc4 Qa8 17. Nd6 Bxd6 18. exd6 Rc6 19. dxc5 bxc5 20. Ng5 Rxd6 21. Rfd1 Ra6 22. Qe4 f5 23. Qc4 Qe8 24. Re1 Rxa2 25. Rxe6 Qa8 26. Bxd5 Bxd5



27. Qh4 h6 28. Qxh6 Nf6 29. Rxf6, Black resigned.

SICILIAN NAJDORF, POISONED PAWN (B97)

GM Boris Spassky (2660)
GM Bobby Fischer (2785)
World Championship (11), Reykjavik,
08.06.1972

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. Nb3 Qa3 10. Bxf6 gxf6 11. Be2 h5 12. 0-0 Nc6 13. Kh1 Bd7



14. Nb1!! Qb4 15. Qe3 d5 16. exd5 Ne7 17. c4 Nf5 18. Qd3 h4 19. Bg4 Nd6 20. N1d2 f5 21. a3 Qb6 22. c5 Qb5 23. Qc3 fxg4 24. a4 h3 25. axb5 hxg2+ 26. Kxg2 Rh3 27. Qf6 Nf5 28. c6 Bc8 29. dxe6 fxe6 30. Rfe1 Be7 31. Rxe6, Black resigned.

RUY LOPEZ, BREYER DEFENSE (C95)

GM Robert Byrne
GM Boris Spassky
FIDE Candidates Match (3), San
Juan, 1974

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 Nb8 10. d4 Nbd7 11. Nbd2 Bb7 12. Bc2 Re8 13. Nf1 Bf8 14. Ng3 g6 15. b3 Bg7 16. a4



16. ... d5! 17. dxe5 Nxe4 18. Bxe4 dxe4 19. Bg5 exf3! 20. Bxd8 Raxd8 21. axb5 Nxe5 22. bxa6 Rxd1 23. Rxd1 Ba8 24. gxf3 Nxf3+ 25. Kf1 Bxc3 26. Rac1



26. ... Nd2+ 27. Kg1 Ba5 28. b4 Nf3+ 29. Kf1 Nh2+ 30. Kg1 Nf3+ 31. Kf1 Bb6 32. Rc2 Nh2+ 33. Kg1 Nf3+ 34. Kf1 Kf8 35. Ne2 Nh2+ 36. Kg1 Nf3+ 37. Kf1 Be4 38. Ra2 Nh2+ 39. Kg1 Nf3+ 40. Kf1 Nh4 41. Nf4



41. ... Bf3 42. Rd3 g5 43. Ne2 Bg2+

44. Ke1 Nf3+ 45. Kd1 Ne5 46. Rc3 Bd5 47. Rd2 Bc4 48. Ra3 Ra8 49. f4 gxf4 50. Nxf4 Rxa6 51. Rxa6 Bxa6 52. Nd5 Bc4 53. Nxb6 cxb6 54. Rd6 b5 55. Kd2 Ng6 56. Ke3 h5, White resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B92)

GM Anatoly Karpov

GM Boris Spassky

Cand. Semif (1), Leningrad, 04.12.1974

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 e6 6. Be2 Be7 7. 0-0 0-0 8. f4 Nc6 9. Be3 e5 10. Nb3 a5 11. a4 Nb4 12. Bf3 Be6 13. Kh1 Qc7 14. Rf2 Rfd8 15. Rd2 Bc4 16. Nb5 Bxb5 17. axb5 a4 18. Nc1 d5 19. fxe5 Nxe4 20. c3 Nxd2 21. Bxd2 Qxe5 22. cxb4 Qxb2 23. Nd3 Qd4 24. Ra3 Qb6 25. Qe2 Re8 26. Bxd5 Bxb4 27. Bxf7+ Kxf7 28. Qf3+ Kg8 29. Bxb4 Qxb5 30. h3 Rad8 31. Bd2 Qd5 32. Qf2 b5 33. Ba5 Rd7 34. Nf4 Rf7 35. Rf3 Qc4 36. Bd2 b4 37. Qb6 b3 38. Kh2 Qc2 39. Bc3 Qe4 40. Qd6 h6 41. Bb2 Qc2 42. Qd5 Qf5 43. Qc6 Qd7 44. Qg6 Ree7 45. Qa6 Qb7 46. Qxa4 Re4 47. Qxb3 Rb4 48. Qe6 Rxb2 49. Rg3 Rb6 50. Qe8+ Kh7 51. Qe3 Rd6 52. Qc5 Qc7 53. Qb4 Qd7 54. Nh5 Rg6 55. Rxg6 Kxg6 56. Ng3 Qd3 57. h4 Kh7 58. h5 Rd7 59. Qc5 Rd4 60. Qe7 Rg4 61. Qe5 Rh4+ 62. Kg1 Qd1+ 63. Kf2 Qd4+, White resigned.

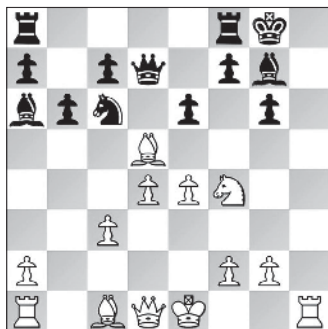
GRÜNFELD DEFENSE, EXCHANGE VARIATION (D86)

GM Boris Spassky (2610)

GM Jan Timman (2590)

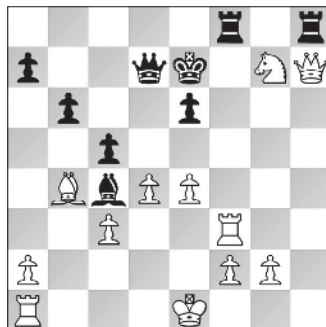
Match (3), Amsterdam, 1977

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5 5. e4 Nxc3 6. bxc3 Bg7 7. Bc4 0-0 8. Ne2 b6 9. h4 Nc6 10. Bd5 Qd7 11. h5 Ba6 12. hxg6 hxg6 13. Nf4 e6



14. Qg4 Rfd8 15. Bxe6 fxe6 16. Qxg6 Bc4 17. Qh7+ Kf7 18. Nh5 Rg8 19. Rh3 Raf8 20. Nxg7 Rh8 21. Rf3+ Ke7 22. Ba3+ Nb4

23. Bxb4+ c5



24. dxc5 Rxh7 25. cxb6+, Black resigned. ♠



MY LUNCH WITH BORIS

ON BOTVINNIK, TENNIS, AND HATING YOUR OPPONENT

During one of his U.S. visits, Boris Spassky readily agreed to a gossip lunch with two Americans he had never met.

It was my wife Marcy and me. After a simultaneous exhibition he gave in New York, Marcy simply approached him and invited him to a meal.

We met at a restaurant near Lincoln Center, where he chatted about various topics over one of his favorite meals — grilled steak and salad.

It was October 1984, and Garry Kasparov had just fallen three points behind World Champion Anatoly Karpov in their first title match.

Kasparov “is at a disadvantage,”

Spassky said, “because you can’t play well when you hate your opponent.”

Spassky smiled as he recalled other world championship match contenders. He said he urged champion Mikhail Botvinnik to make GM Yefim Geller his second in Botvinnik’s 1963 title defense.

No, Botvinnik said; “You don’t choose as your second a man who is under the shoe of his wife.”

At 47, Spassky looked as trim and athletic as the star high jumper he once was. He told us he now liked to play tennis — but against a wall, with himself. “I am not competitive,” he said.

That sounded bizarre coming from the winner of 10 matches against top-10 grandmasters.

“What would you be doing if you didn’t find chess as a profession?” Marcy asked.

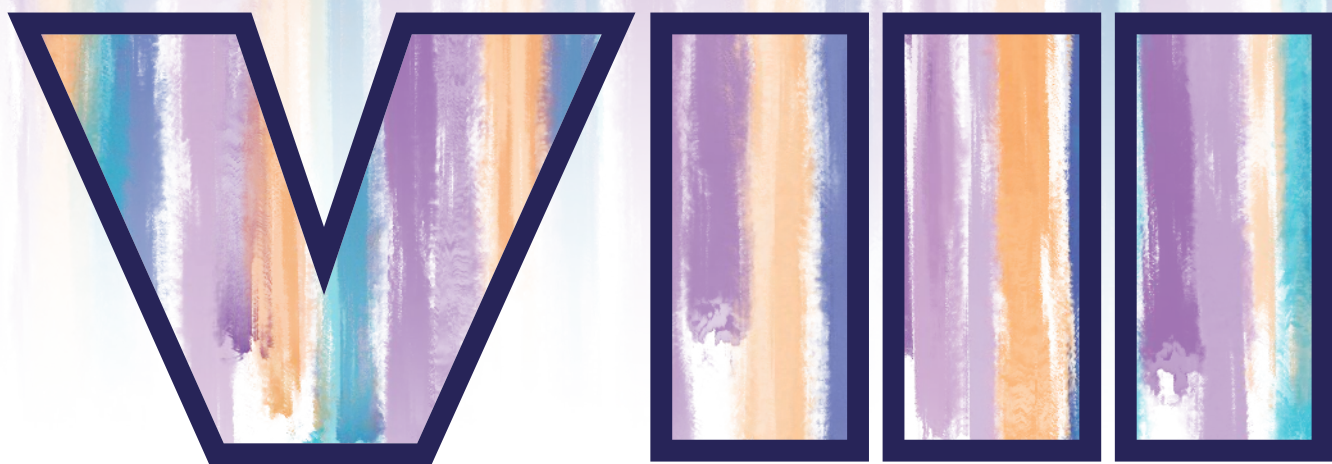
After a long pause, he said, “I don’t know. I would be a beggar.”

He was becoming the elite GM most willing to make a quick draw. The tournament grind had become an ordeal. When lunch ended, before we said our goodbyes, he told us:

“I very much love chess. But I hate my profession.”



SUPERNATIONALS



SWEEPS INTO FLORIDA

A look ahead to our biggest event of the year!

BY **RICK MASSIMO**

A LONG WEEKEND OF CHESS IN THE FLORIDA springtime awaits at SuperNationals VIII, set for May 8-11 in Orlando, Florida.

SuperNationals combines the national High School, Middle School, and Elementary School championships under one roof.

The chess begins before the championships do: On Thursday, May 8, SuperNationals kicks off with the bughouse championships at 11 a.m., followed by the US Chess National Puzzle Solving Championship, held in partnership with ChessKid, at 3 p.m. And the day finishes off with blitz championships in five sections — K-12, K-12 under 1800, K-8, K-6, and K-3 — starting at 5 p.m.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday, May 9-11, are given over to the championships, held in 26 class sections across three age divisions

(K-12, K-8 and K-6). Each section is a seven-round Swiss with a time control of G/90 and a 10-second delay per move. There are medals as well as national championships on the line in all 26 sections for individual players and teams.

The championships are accompanied by even more events. Each day will include a grandmaster lecture and all-comers blitz session, with special guests including U.S. Women's Champion IM Carissa Yip, GM Leinier Dominguez, and GM Awonder Liang among others. The Girls Club returns, with WGM Katerina Nemcova, WGM Atousa Pourkashian, and WIM Carolina Blanco on hand to analyze and instruct.

Adults can participate in a Friends and Family Tournament, or sit in on seminars such as "Building School Chess Programs that

SPECIAL GUESTS

Get ready for blitz battles and simultaneous exhibitions with some of America's top players! We are proud to have GM Leinier Dominguez, GM Awonder Liang, and IM Carissa Yip joining us in Orlando, and — *ssh!* — there might be more fan favorites attending!



PHOTOS: COURTESY SLCC / OOTES (LIANG, YIP), SLCC / C. FULLER (DOMINGUEZ)

GIRLS CLUB

► The Girls Club is one of the most popular rooms at any US Chess national scholastic tournament. It's a place where girls and their families can relax, socialize, and participate in plenty of fun activities! Hosted by the US Chess Women's Committee with assistance from DeVaughn Croxton, director of programs for US Chess, the Girls Club is open Thursday through Sunday in Room 109A.

Special guests for SuperNationals include WGM Katerina Nemcova, WGM Atousa Pourkashiyani, and WIM Carolina Blanco (seen left to right below). They'll be on hand to analyze games, offer lectures, and hold tandem simultaneous exhibitions.

Other activities include "human chess" games, where people act as the pieces on a life-sized board, on both Saturday and Sunday. There will be trivia contests, random raffles, and a station for making Mother's Day cards. (You did remember that SuperNationals runs on Mother's Day weekend, right?) Consider dropping by Room 109A to check the Girls Club out and see what all the fuss is about!



make a Difference: Community Impact, Instructional Innovation, and International Recognition," with Chair Jerry Nash and Abel Talamantez of the FIDE Education Committee.

There are four hotels connected to the tournament site, but rooms go fast. And of course you're not far from Walt Disney World, Universal Orlando and Sea World, among many other theme parks.

The last SuperNationals was the largest rated chess tournament in history, with 5,577 players. That broke the record held by — the previous SuperNationals, which drew 5,335.

For more information, including updates on additional grand-master lecturers, visit www.uschess.org/tournaments/2025/sn8. Contact nationalevents@uschess.org with hotel reservation questions and other concerns. ♣



STREAMS WITH SABINA

► The US Chess Twitch channel (twitch.tv/uschess) is back for SuperNationals VIII, featuring WGM Sabina Foisor as host and commentator. Tune in for live top-board coverage, expert analysis, and interviews. You can even submit your games from SN VIII for possible coverage! We'll be live at the start of each round, so be sure to tune in.



**THIS SCHEDULE IS CURRENT
AS OF MARCH 12, 2025.
CHECK THE UPDATED
VERSION AT [USCHESS.ORG](https://uschess.org)**

THURSDAY

BUGHOUSE CHAMPIONSHIP
All Sections
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

**US CHESS NATIONAL
PUZZLE CHAMPIONSHIP,
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
CHESSKID**
All Sections
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM



BLITZ CHAMPIONSHIP
All Sections
5:00 PM - 9:00 PM

FRIDAY

**TANDEM GM SIMULTANEOUS
EXHIBITIONS**
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM



**MY FIRST TOURNAMENT
SEMINAR**
9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

**SUPERNATIONALS VIII
OPENING CEREMONY**
11:00 AM - 11:30 AM

ROUND 1
High, Middle, and Elementary
Divisions
1:00 PM - 4:10 PM

ROUND 1
K-1 Sections
1:30 PM - 4:40 PM

**"ALL COMERS" GRANDMASTER
BLITZ**
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

**BUILDING SCHOOL CHESS
PROGRAMS LECTURE**
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

GRANDMASTER LECTURE
3:15 PM - 5:15 PM

ROUND 2
K-1 Sections
5:30 PM - 8:40 PM

ROUND 2
High, Middle, and Elementary
Divisions
6:00 PM - 9:10 PM

SATURDAY

ROUND 3
High, Middle, and Elementary
Divisions
9:00 AM - 12:10 PM

ROUND 3
K-1 Sections
9:30 AM - 12:40 PM

**PREPARING FOR
INTERNATIONAL YOUTH
EVENTS SEMINAR**
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

**FRIENDS AND FAMILY
TOURNAMENT**
Round 1 of 5
10:30 AM - 11:40 AM



GRANDMASTER LECTURE

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

**ROUND 4**High, Middle, and Elementary
Divisions

1:00 PM - 4:10 PM

ROUND 4

K-1 Sections

1:00 PM - 4:10 PM

SCHOLASTIC MEETING

1:45 PM - 2:45 PM

CHESSKID LECTURE

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

ROUND 5

K-1 Sections

5:30 PM - 8:40 PM

ROUND 5High, Middle, and Elementary
Divisions

6:00 PM - 9:10 PM

**ROUND 5 LIVESTREAM**

Top Boards

6:00 PM - 9:10 PM

SUNDAY**PRESENTATION OF SCHOLAR
CHESS PLAYER AWARDS**

8:50 AM - 9:00 AM

ROUND 6High, Middle, and Elementary
Divisions

9:00 AM - 12:10 PM

ROUND 6

K-1 Sections

9:30 AM - 12:40 PM

ROUND 6 LIVESTREAM

Top Boards

9:30 AM - 12:40 PM

GRANDMASTER LECTURE

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

ROUND 7

K-1 Sections

1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

ROUND 7High, Middle, and Elementary
Divisions

2:00 PM - 5:10 PM

ROUND 7 LIVESTREAM

Top Boards

2:00 PM - 5:10 PM

**"ALL COMERS" GRANDMASTER
BLITZ**

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

**THE WCHOF PRESENTS: POW!
CAPTURING SUPERHEROES,
CHESS & COMICS! FIND IT IN
HALL WA3.****AWARD CEREMONY**

K-1 Sections

Approximately 5:15 PM

**AWARD CEREMONY**

K-3 Sections

Approximately 6:00 PM

AWARD CEREMONYHigh, Middle, and Elementary
Divisions

Approximately 6:30 PM

Forging a **TRADITION**

Tsodikova wins U.S. Senior Women's Championship

BY JULIE O'NEILL



THE SECOND ANNUAL U.S. Senior Women's Championship, held last Dec. 13-15 in Murray, a suburb of Salt Lake City, allowed players and organizers to reflect on the past and embrace the future. The inaugural Senior Women's Championship was held in 2023 in Berkeley, California, but as Michael Mulford, chair of the US Chess Senior Committee, said, "It's really only an annual when it happens a second time."

This year, Maureen Grimaud and her

husband, David, were the organizers and sponsors. Maureen has been the chair and co-chair of the US Chess Women's Committee since 2015; David is president of the South Carolina Chess Association.

Maureen said she was inspired and motivated by Elizabeth Shaughnessy, organizer of the first Women's Senior. "I really wanted to recognize all of the ladies that have been legends in the chess industry and have not been recognized," Maureen said. "I know many of the ladies here. Everyone is so appreciative and it's such a pleasant experience."

Although this was a US Chess tournament, it followed FIDE rules, and the players' FIDE ratings were used to determine pairings and upset prizes. The time control was G/90 with a 30-second increment per move.

THE MAIN EVENT

WFM Natalya Tsodikova won the championship going away, clinching first place before the last round began and finishing with 4½/5.

There was no shortage of fighting spirit and excitement. In the first round, three of the six games had unexpected results: WCM Mary Kuhner drew with WFM Olga Sagalchik in a fairly symmetrical position; Carla Naylor had a short draw from the white side of a Pirc Defense with WIM Alexey Root, who offered the draw after just 12 moves, and Jayashree Sekar

scored the biggest upset, with a win as Black against WIM Shernaz Kennedy. Shernaz outplayed Jayashree in the middlegame, but in a critical position she missed a simple tactic that dropped a piece.

Personally, I had a very tense game against the top-rated player, defending champion WGM Anjelina Belakovskaia. After 22 moves the game was unbalanced but roughly equal, but I had a huge time advantage — 20 minutes to Anjelina's 6 seconds. I moved too fast in her time trouble, dropping a pawn at move 25, and was then outplayed.

The second round saw more upsets, including another by Sekar, the lowest-rated player in the event, who defeated WIM Beatriz Marinello. Both players blundered, but Beatriz made the final, fatal mistake.

Meanwhile, Tsodikova defeated Belakovskaia with the black pieces in a King's Indian Defense:

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE, SÄMISCH VARIATION (E84)

WGM Anjelina Belakovskaia (2231)

WFM Natalya Tsodikova (2138)

U.S. Senior Women's Ch, Murray,
12.14.2024

Annotations by NM Nicholas
Schoonmaker

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. f3
0-0 6. Be3 Nc6 7. Nge2 a6 8. Qd2 Rb8

This is the Sämisch-Panno variation of the



King's Indian Defense. Black prepares to strike on the queenside with ... b7-b5.

9. Rc1 Bd7 10. h4 h5 11. Nd1

An undeveloping move, but one that prepares to respond to an eventual ... b7-b5 with c4-c5.

11. ... Re8 12. Nf2 b5 13. c5 dxc5 14. Rxc5 e5 15. d5 Ne7



16. g4?

White can maintain an edge with 16. Qc1, increasing the pressure down the c-file.

16. ... hxg4 17. h5?

Too optimistic. White should have played either 17. Bg2 or 17. fxg4, though in either case Black would have an advantage.

17. ... gxf3 18. Ng3 Nxh5 19. Nxh5 gxh5 20. Bg5 Bg4

An attractive alternative for Black is 20. ... Rb6 in order to defend her kingside along the third rank.

21. Nxg4 hxg4 22. Rc6 Rb6 23. Rxb6 cxb6 24. d6 f6 25. dxe7 Qa8?

After the stronger 25. ... Qxe7 26. Be3 an interesting position would have arisen in which Black's extra pawns fully compensate for White's extra bishop.

26. Qc2

White would have a strong attack after 26. Be3 Qxe4 27. Rh4 with Bf1-d3 coming. Black's extra pawns do not compensate for the piece deficit.

26. ... Rxe7 27. Bd2 f5

(see diagram top of next column)

28. Rg1?

White stumbles here. After 28. Rh5 it would be approximately equal. But now the initiative returns to Black.

28. ... Bf6 29. Qb3+ Kh8 30. exf5??

The key pairing between Belakovskaia and Tsodikova



POSITION AFTER 27. ... f5

The losing mistake. After the stronger 30. Bd3 Bh4+ 31. Kd1 Qd8, Black is better but White's position is still playable. There's also 30. Rh1+ Kg7 31. Bh6+ Kg6 32. exf5+ Kxf5 33. Bd3+ e4, which looks scary but the engine calls equal.

30. ... Qe4+!, White resigned.

If 31. Kd1 Qb1+ 32. Bc1 Rd7+ leads to mate; if 31. Kf2 Bh4+, and if 31. Be3 Bh4+ 32. Kd2 f2.

WCM Natasha Christiansen got a successful attack against Shernaz with a Morra Gambit.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, MORRA GAMBIT (B21)

WCM Natasha Christiansen (1817)
WIM Shernaz Kennedy (1917)
U.S. Senior Women's Ch (2), Murray,
12.14.2024

1. e4 c5 2. d4 cxd4 3. c3 dxc3 4. Nxc3 e6 5. Nf3 Ne7 6. Bg5 a6 7. Bc4 Qc7 8. Bb3 Ng6 9. 0-0 h6 10. Be3 Nc6 11. Rc1 b5 12. Nd5 exd5 13. exd5 Bb7 14. Re1 Be7 15. Nd4 0-0 16. dxc6 dxc6 17. Qh5 Kh7 18. Nf5 Bf6 19. Bxh6 Rh8 20. Bf4+ Kg8 21. Qxh8+ Kxh8 22. Bxc7 Bxb2 23. Rc2 Rc8 24. Bxf7 Nf8 25. Re8 Rxc7 26. Rxf8+ Kh7 27. Rxb2 c5 28. h4 g6 29. Bg8+ Kh8 30. Bd5+ Kh7 31. Bxb7 gxf5 32. Bxa6 b4 33. Bc4 Kg6 34. Rd2 Rc6 35. Rd5, Black resigned.

This draw was the game Root called her favorite from the tournament:

SICILIAN DEFENSE, CLOSED VARIATION (B26)

WIM Alexey Root (2000)
WFM Olga Sagalchik (2118)
U.S. Senior Women's Ch (2), Murray,
12.14.2024

1. e4 c5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. g3 g6 4. Bg2 Bg7 5. d3 e6 6. Be3 d6 7. Qd2 Nd4 8. Nd1 Ne7 9. c3 Ndc6 10. Bh6 Bf6 11. Bg5 Bg7 12. Bh6 Bf6 13. Bg5 Ng8 14. Bxf6 Qxf6 15. Ne3 h5 16. h4 Nh6 17. Nc4 Qe7 18. Qg5 Ng4 19. Nh3 Nge5 20. Nxe5 Nxe5 21. Qxe7+ Kxe7 22. Nf4 Rb8 23. 0-0 b6 24. Rfd1 Ba6 25. d4 Ng4 26. a4 Rhc8 27. a5 cxd4 28. Rxd4 b5 29. Rad1 Rd8 30. R4d2 b4 31. Nd3 bxc3 32. bxc3 Bxd3 33. Rxd3 Rb2 34. R3d2 Rxd2 35. Rxd2 Rb8 36. Bf1 Rb1 37. Kg2 Ra1 38. a6 Rb1 39. Bd3 Rb6 40. Be2 Nf6 41. Rd4 Nd7 42. Rb4 Kd8 43. Rxb6 Nxb6



44. Bb5 Nd7 45. Kf3 Nc5 46. Kf4 f6 47. Ke3 Ke7 48. f4 e5 49. Be2 Kf7 50. f5 Kg7 51. fxg6 Kxg6 52. Bb5 Kh6 53. Be2 Ne6 54. Bc4 Nc7 55. Kf3 Kg6 56. Ke3 f5 57. exf5+ Kxf5 58. Be2 Kg6 59. Ke4 Kf6 60. Bxh5 d5+ 61. Ke3 Nxa6 62. g4 Nc5 63. Be8 Ne6 64. g5+ Ke7 65. Ba4 Nf4 66. Kf3 a5 67. Kg4 Ne6 68. h5 d4 69. cxd4 exd4 70. h6 Nf8 71. Kf4 Kf7 72. Ke4 Kg6 73. Kxd4, draw.

In the third round, Natalya pulled into the clear lead with a win as black over Jayashree, who dropped a piece for a pawn coming out of the opening. Anjelina bounced back with a win against Kuhner. After a slow start with two draws in the first two rounds, Sagalchik, one of the other top-rated players, won with white in a King's Indian Defense against Christiansen.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE, SÄMISCH VARIATION (E85)

WFM Olga Sagalchik (2118)

WCM Natasha Christiansen (1817)

U.S. Senior Women's Ch (3), Murray,
12.14.2024

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 0-0 6. Be3 e5 7. Qd2 Nh5 8. 0-0-0 Nd7 9. g4 Nh6 10. d5 a6 11. Bh6 b5 12. cxb5 axb5 13. Bxb5 Ba6 14. Bxa6 Rxa6 15. h4 Nc5 16. Kb1 Qb8 17. Be3 Nfd7 18. Qe2 Qb7 19. Rh2 Rfa8 20. Qc2 Ra3 21. Bxc5 Nxc5 22. Nge2 R3a6 23. Nc1 Bh6 24. g5 Bf8 25. Nd3 Nxd3 26. Qxd3 c6 27. dxc6 Qxc6 28. Rc1 Qb7 29. Qd5 Qb6 30. Qb3 Qxb3 31. axb3 Rb6 32. Nd5 Rxb3 33. Nf6+ Kg7 34. Rc7 h5 35. Rc3 Rxc3 36. bxc3 Be7 37. Nd5 Bd8 38. Rb2 Rc8 39. Rb7 Ra8

40. Rd7 Rb8+ 41. Kc2 Ra8 42. Kb3 Rb8+ 43. Kc4 Rc8+ 44. Kd3 Ba5 45. Rxd6 Kf8 46. Ra6 Bd8 47. Nb4 Bc7 48. Rc6 Rd8+ 49. Nd5 Bd6 50. c4 Ba3 51. c5 Bb2 52. Kc4 Bd4 53. f4 Bf2 54. fxe5 Bxh4 55. e6 Bxg5 56. exf7 Kxf7 57. Rc7+ Kg8 58. e5 h4 59. Nf6+ Bxf6 60. exf6 h3 61. Rg7+ Kf8 62. Rxg6 h2 63. Rh6 Rd2 64. Kc3 Rf2 65. Kd4 Kf7 66. Ke5 Re2+ 67. Kd6 Rd2+ 68. Kc7 Ke6 69. c6 Rf2 70. Kb7 Rb2+ 71. Kc8 Rc2 72. c7 Kf7 73. Kd7 Rd2+ 74. Kc6 Rc2+ 75. Kd6 Rd2+ 76. Ke5 Re2+ 77. Kd4 Re8 78. Rxh2 Kxf6 79. Rf2+ Kg7 80. Kd5, Black resigned.

In the fourth round, Natalya cemented her lead, winning with the white pieces in a Sicilian Defense against Olga, while Beatriz and Anjelina battled it out for 134 moves! Anjelina, playing black, had a king, knight, and pawn versus Beatriz's king and bishop. It was a drawn position, but mistakes can happen, so Anjelina pushed for a win but to no avail. When this game peacefully ended it meant that Natalya had clinched the tournament.

There was plenty of action in the other games as well.

GIUOCO PIANO (C54)

WCM Mary Kuhner (1711)

Jayashree Sekar (1600)

U.S. Senior Women's Ch (4), Murray,
12.15.2024

1. e4 Nc6 2. Nf3 e5 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. c3 Nf6 5. d3 d6 6. Nbd2 0-0 7. a4 a6 8. 0-0 Ne7 9. Nb3 Ba7 10. Be3 Ng6 11. Nbd2 Kh8 12. d4 Nf4 13. Bxf4 exf4 14. Qc2 Nh5 15. Bd3 g5

16. e5 g4 17. Ne1 f5 18. exd6 cxd6 19. Nc4 Bb8 20. Qd2 Qh4 21. g3 Qh3 22. gxf4 Be6 23. Ng2 Bd5 24. Nce3 Bf3 25. Rfe1 d5 26. Bf1 Bxg2 27. Bxg2 Qh4 28. Nxd5 Bd6 29. Re6 Rad8 30. Rae1 Bb8 31. Rh6 Kg7 32. Ree6 Rxd5 33. Bxd5 g3 34. fxg3 Qg4 35. Qe2 Nf6 36. Rhxf6 Qxe2 37. Rxe2 Rxf6 38. Re7+ Kh6 39. Rxb7 Bd6 40. Bg8 Kh5 41. h3 Rh6 42. Rxh7 Rxh7 43. Bxh7 a5 44. Bxf5 Be7 45. Kf2 Bd6 46. Ke3 Be7 47. c4 Bb4 48. c5 Be1 49. c6 Bxg3 50. c7, Black resigned.

In Round 5, Natalya played solidly as white in a French Defense against Beatriz before the players repeated positions and Natalya claimed the \$4,000 first prize.

SO MANY TO THANK

The tournament was directed by National Tournament Director and International Arbiter Karen Pennock, with assistance from her husband, NTD and IA Enrique "Kiki" Huerta, of Tucson, Arizona.

WGM Sabina Foisor was present throughout the event and conducted interviews and provided online commentary on the US Chess Twitch channel on the games during each round. There was also local news coverage of the tournament.

Mulford was present throughout the tournament, including the opening and closing ceremonies, and said, "The fighting chess I saw was amazing, but what I really was thrilled by was the camaraderie as well as the competition."



WFM Natalya
Tsodikova

Utah State Sen. Stephanie Pitcher greeted the players at the opening ceremony. Stephanie has been active in chess tournaments since she was a child and still actively competes. She recently played in the 2024 National Open, and says she recognizes that “certain things in chess carry over into politics, particularly strategic planning.”

US Chess Executive Director Ranae Bartlett was present for the first day of the tournament and attended the opening ceremony. She is an advocate for women and girls in chess and was instrumental in starting the first all-girls state chess championship in Alabama, which is now in its eighth year.

David Day, treasurer of the Utah Chess Association, and former member of the US Chess Executive Board, also attended the opening and closing ceremonies, and Matt Crossette supplied DGT boards for the tour-

namment. All the moves of each game were immediately electronically recorded, and are available online at Chess.com.

At the closing ceremony, checks were distributed to all the winners, and upset prizes of \$50 gift certificates to US Chess were donated by Michael Mulford.

Each player was given a hat, candy, beautiful jewelry, and a commemorative chessboard signed by all of the players.

Looking back, this wasn't one of my better tournaments, as I was distracted by eye issues and in the middle of moving. That said, I wouldn't have missed it for anything. The tournament is inspiring and creates a sense of community. Chess can be different things to many people, but these women all share a love of the game:

“Chess is in my blood!” — Shernaz Kennedy
“It's the pure struggle of ideas.” — Mary Kuhner

“I like to win and I love the hidden beauty of chess.” — Anjelina Belakovskaia

“I play for tactics.” — Jayashree Sekar

“I play chess for the pure excitement and thrill.”
 — Brenda Nardi

“It's been a part of my life since I was eleven. I've always loved the game.” — Natasha Christiansen

“I play chess for the intellectual challenge and for friendships with other players.” — Alexey Root

Recognition and gratitude was expressed for everyone involved, along with a strong desire to sustain the tournament in the coming years, ensuring ongoing support for women in chess.

For more on the 2024 U.S. Senior Women's Championship, including contemporaneous reporting from WIM Alexey Root, visit the [Chess Life Online](https://ChessLifeOnline.org) event page: new.uschess.org/2024-us-senior-womens-championship. ♦



The competitors for the 2024 U.S. Senior Women's Championship

2024 U.S. SENIOR WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP AT A GLANCE

DEC. 13-15, 2024 | MURRAY, UT

1ST: WFM Natalya Tsodikova, 4½/5. **2ND-3RD:** WGM Anjelina Belakovskaia, WCM Mary Kuhner, 3½. **4TH-5TH:** WIM Beatriz Marinello, WFM Olga Sagalchik, 3. **6TH-10TH:** WCM Natasha Christiansen, WIM Shernaz Kennedy, Brenda Nardi, WIM Alexey Root, Jayashree Sekar, 2. **11TH:** Carla Naylor, 1½. **12TH:** Julie O'Neill, 1.

History

ON WALL STREET



Perseverance, titles, and
drama abound
at the World Rapid & Blitz

BY **FM ALISA MELEKHINA**



THE USUAL HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF WALL Street was replaced with a new type of intellectual intensity and rigor last December as around 300 players from across the world converged in New York City to battle it out in the 2024 FIDE World Rapid & Blitz Chess Championships, held in North America for the first time.

The Rapid (G/15+10) and Blitz (G/3+2)

championships were held between Christmas and New Year's, Dec. 26-31. The Open sections were held in the iconic Cipriani 55 Wall Street building, in the heart of the financial district, while the Women's took place across the street in the cozier but more festive 48 Wall Street.

Sponsored by Freedom Holding Corp., the tournament fused the playbook of a world championship event with a unique



spectator experience. Strict coat and bag checks, as well as electronic Fair Play security screening measures, were in place for players and spectators.

When tickets weren't sold out, spectators could purchase per-round general admission rapid tickets or passes (\$60-\$220), or VIP admission (\$1,500-\$5,000), which let them be steps away from the top boards and enjoy

a VIP lounge with hors d'oeuvres, an open bar, and an up-close seat for interviews with top players led by IM Levy Rozman (a.k.a. GothamChess) for *Take, Take, Take*.

The Rapid Open section featured 13 rounds over three days; the Women's, 11. The field comprised a melting pot of players, including top-10 superstars and up-and-coming future stars, as well as local champions and popular content creators. It felt like the American Dream come to life — players of various strengths came in with their own experiences, and through grit and determination, all had a shot at vying for the top spots.

Personally, I took time out of my day job as a corporate litigator to throw my hat back into the ring. Most players partake in both the Rapid and the Blitz, but having grown up as purely a classical player, I opted to play only in the Rapid, since it was more in my comfort zone.

RAPID: A STORY OF GENERATIONS AND JEANS

The Women's section of the Rapid saw a major tie for first going into the last round, with seven players scoring 8/10. All the leaders drew in the final round, except one legend: GM Humpy Koneru, who won a theoretically drawn rook endgame against top Indonesian player IM Irine Kharisma Sukandar to clinch clear first.

Humpy almost sat out this event; she had recently had a string of bad tournaments where she finished last and revealed in the post-tournament press conference that she had lacked the motivation to compete and had even contemplated retiring. She noted that she had been "in a low state" and was contemplating whether she "deserved" to continue playing, a feeling many of us experiencing tournament downswings could relate to.

Her hesitations were compounded by the time and climate difference between India and America, and inevitable jet lag, and flagging with white against WIM Amina Kairbekova from Kazakhstan in the first round probably didn't help either. Humpy reflected that after this upset, she never thought she would be playing for first place by the end.

But at age 37, Humpy has added a second world Rapid title to her collection. She remarked that as one gets older, it gets more difficult to "keep that motivation and stay



sharp when required.” She added, “This victory was very special and gave me the boost to fight.” Her achievement cemented India’s dominance of 2024, following its Olympiad victory and 18-year-old GM Gukesh Dommaraju’s classical chess crown.

It was not only the year of India in chess, but the year of juniors: Another 18-year-old was turning heads in the Open Rapid. Russian GM Volodar Murzin, originally seeded 59th, finished at the top of the leaderboard with a formidable and undefeated 10/13. However, a top contender was conspicuously missing from the final battles.

Defending Rapid champion GM Magnus Carlsen had an uncharacteristically shaky start. Out of the first five rounds, Carlsen drew three (against GMs Awonder Liang, Gleb Dudin, and Aleksandr Shimanov) and lost to up-and-coming GM Denis Lazavik. He rebounded by scoring 2½ points in the first three rounds of the second day, putting him on 5/8 going into Round 9, the last round of the day.

Being in the bubble of the Women’s section across the street, it was not until the end of the day, when I picked up my phone from the long coat check line, that I saw the messages and headlines announcing what would later be known as “jeans-gate.” Magnus had worn jeans to his games that day, seemingly in violation of FIDE’s dress code, and was not paired for Round 9.

The head arbiter fined Magnus \$200 after

Round 7, asking him to change before Round 9 or be forfeited for a game. Magnus did not dispute the fine, but refused to change that day. In an interview for *Take, Take, Take* with Rozman, Magnus later explained his decision was “a matter of principle.” Although he agreed to change for the final day, the arbiter enforced the rule and Magnus was not paired.

Magnus could have continued in the Rapid tournament on the final day, but he withdrew. In the same interview, Magnus indicated he was pulling out of the Blitz championships as well — he wanted to leave NYC and go somewhere with nicer weather. Magnus ended his interview with choice words to FIDE. This turn of events would reverberate throughout the rest of the tournament and was picked up in the mainstream news, including a New Year’s Eve appearance on NPR’s *Here & Now* by *Chess Life* editor John Hartmann.

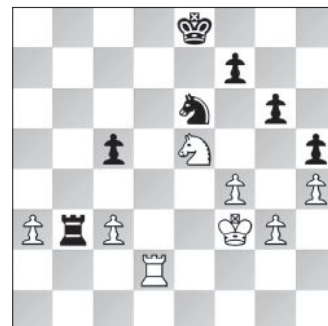
While the chess world contemplated what the future would hold without its mainstay of the last decade, the Rapid tournament continued with business as usual, and amid the confusion and speculation, Murzin quietly but surely paved his way, becoming the second-youngest World Rapid champion in history. Murzin had already defeated Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana in Round 2; in Round 9, he skillfully converted his advantage against GM Hikaru Nakamura in a long endgame.

A TWISTY ENDGAME

GM Hikaru Nakamura (2802)

GM Volodar Murzin (2664)

World Rapid (9), New York, 12.27.2024



WHITE TO MOVE

After prolonged maneuvering in a typical Italian middlegame, we reach this position where it seems that White is playing for two results.

48. Ra2

If 48. Ke4 Black can hold, but only after finding a sequence of precise and only moves: 48. ... Rxc3 49. Rd3 Rc1 50. Kd5 Nc7+! 51. Kd6 (or 51. Kc6 Ne6) 51. ... Nb5+ 52. Kc6 c4! 53. Nxc4 Nxa3!.

48. ... Rxc3+ 49. Kf2 c4 50. a4 Nc5 51. a5 f6 52. Nf3



PHOTOS, THIS PAGE: COURTESY FIDE / WALUZA ; PREVIOUS SPREAD, COURTESY FIDE (BLITZ), COURTESY MELEKHINA (WALL STREET)

White can go wrong if he tries too hard to win here: 52. Nxg6 Ne4+ 53. Kf1 Rf3+ 54. Ke1 Rxg3 55. a6? Rg1+ 56. Ke2 Rg2+ 57. Ke3 Rxa2 and Black wins.

52. ... Na6 53. Ke2 Kd7 54. Rb2 Ra3 55. Rb6 Ra2+ 56. Kd1 Nc5 57. Rb4?

It looks like 57. Rxf6 loses to 57. ... c3, but with 58. Rb6 covering the b3-square, White holds after 58. ... c2+ 59. Kd2.

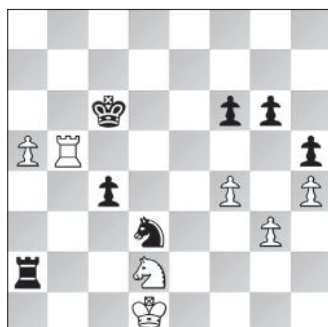
57. ... Nd3 58. Rb5

Not 58. Rxc4? Nb2+.

58. ... Kd6 59. Nd2

White had to find a knight maneuver to preserve drawing chances: 59. Nd4 c3 60. Nc2 Nf2+ 61. Kc1 Nd3+ 62. Kd1 looks uncomfortable, but White should be able to hold.

59. ... Kc6



There was a win for Black with 59. ... Nf2+ 60. Kc1 c3 61. Nc4+ Kc6 62. Rb6+ Kc5.

60. Rb8?

White still had hope with 60. Rb6+ Kd5 61. Nb1 trying to sacrifice his knight for the c-pawn while capturing the kingside pawns. A sample variation: 61. ... Kd4 62. Rxf6 Nb4 63. Rxg6 c3 64. Nxc3 Kxc3 and now 65. g4?? runs into 65. ... hxg4 66. Rxg4 Nd3 67. Rg8 Rd2 mate. But 65. a6! diverts the knight from d3 so White can play g3-g4 and force the exchange of Black's last pawn: 65. ... Nxa6 (or 65. ... Rxa6 66. Rxa6 Nxa6 67. Ke2 Kd4 68. Kf3 Nb4 69. g4 Nd5 70. gxh5) 66. g4 hxg4 67. Rxg4 Nb4 68. Rg8 Nd3 69. Rc8+ will eventually reach a theoretically drawn rook and knight versus rook ending.

60. ... Kc7!, White resigned.

Not 60. ... c3? 61. Rc8+ Kd5 62. Rxc3, but now there's no good way to stop the c-pawn.

In the post-tournament press conference, Murzin noted that his preparation for the Rapid included studying secondary and tertiary lines of lesser-known endgames. He

indicated that his strategy for rapid chess is to play solidly and induce his opponents to make mistakes, whereas in classical and blitz he might try to play more "aggressively."

I found this a mature and subtle take on preparation, and it certainly paid off. Rapid chess is a hybrid that presents its own challenges: The time control can provide a false sense of security regarding thinking deeply through lines, but the game will often abruptly transition into a time scramble. In the Swiss rapid format, where one cannot generally prepare specific opening lines and players tend towards middlegame positions they are comfortable in, it makes sense that games would be decided based on nuances in the endgame, when players simply don't have sufficient time to calculate through the complications. I noticed this trend in many of the decisive games throughout,

and I suffered several endgame misses in my own games.

Despite the ups and downs of my tournament, I at least came away with a game I could be proud of. I did not expect to execute such a rare checkmate-in-two motif in the middlegame in a world championship event.

BREAKING THROUGH

FM Alisa Melekhina (2176)

Svetlana Berezovska (1857)

World Women's Rapid (3), New York, 12.26.2024

(see diagram next page)

33. e5 Nf4 34. Rxf4

After a drawn-out attack, this Exchange sacrifice can be played without much thought,

FREE DAY AND CORPORATE CHESS

The format changes included a free day in between the World Rapid and Blitz championships. Sunday, Dec. 29, was allotted for a new chess-finance conference, the Wall Street Gambit.

The conference combined time-odds exhibition matches against headliners Vishy Anand, Magnus Carlsen (who returned in time to play), and Fabiano Caruana, along with keynotes and roundtables. GM Maurice Ashley and WGM Ketis Tsatsalashvili emceed the event.

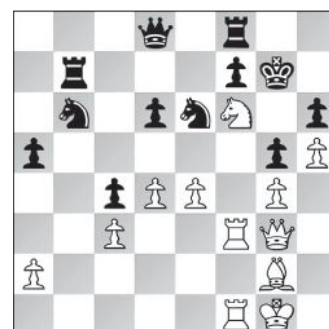
The overlap between chess, finance, economics, and AI was explored in engaging presentations by Kaggle CEO J.D. Sculley, Saba Capital founder NM Boaz Weinstein, and GM Kenneth Rogoff, professor of economics at Harvard. Rogoff summed up the influence of the game: "Chess taught me to think in a disciplined, strategic way, which is essential in economics and finance."

The conference was held in the same venue as the Open tournament, giving attendees a chance to play at the same tables as the greats. The venue is no stranger to corporate chess, as it was the site of the inaugural in-person finals of the 2024 FIDE World Corporate Team championships in June.

Before the afternoon conference, the NYC Corporate Chess League (NYCCL) hosted a holiday Blitz & Brunch. The informal tournament, sponsored by Kirkland & Ellis LLP, featured our core member teams. Finishing at the top were Google, Goldman Sachs, and Deutsche Bank.

Left: You never know who will show up at a NYCCL event! Right: What could be better than a holiday blitz and brunch with friends?





WHITE TO MOVE

given that Black's last defenses come crashing down.

34. ... gxf4 35. Qxf4 dxe5 36. Qxe5 Re7
37. Ne8+!
Double check!

37. ... Kg8 38. Qg7 mate.



BLITZ: UPS AND DOWNS, RETURNING AND SPLIT CHAMPIONS

On the free day, Magnus announced on *Take, Take, Take* that after discussions with FIDE he would be returning to play in the Blitz after all. Among the factors informing his change of mind, Magnus said, he was reminded that he "loves playing blitz" and wanted to give fans an opportunity to see him play: "If it's going to be the last time, who knows."

Also on the free day, FIDE released a statement to all Blitz participants with a slightly modified dress code: "The principle is simple: it is still required to follow the official dress-code, but elegant minor deviations (that may, in particular, include appropriate jeans matching the jacket) are allowed." Magnus availed himself of this new flexibility the next day when rushing into the first Blitz round against German GM Michael Bezold a minute late, and again wearing jeans. Despite being down a crucial minute on the clock and having the black pieces, Magnus won the game and resumed his ascent.

As the dust from jeans-gate settled, attention turned back to the chess. This year introduced a new two-day format: an initial



Top: A fan meets one of his heroes. Middle: Hardaway, Woodward, and Adewumi at the Rapid. Bottom: Our author in the VIP room!

PHOTOS: COURTESY FIDE / WALUZSA (DOMINGUEZ, VIP); COURTESY HARTMANN (JUNIORS)

Swiss qualifier followed by an eight-player knockout stage. The fast-paced blitz games highlighted the human elements of chess. Even 2700s and legends were not immune from time scrambles and wild evaluation swings. For example, in a heartbreaking game in Round 11, Ukrainian legend GM Vasyl Ivanchuk flagged against well-known commentator GM Daniel Naroditsky.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE, SÄMISCH VARIATION (E81)

GM Vasyl Ivanchuk (2630)

GM Daniel Naroditsky (2619)

World Blitz (11), New York, 12.30.2024

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. f3

This is often played as an anti-Grünfeld, but Naroditsky is known to be a King's Indian player so he allows the game to transpose to a KID Sämisch variation.

3. ... Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Be3 0-0 6. Nc3 a6

A useful move, anticipating the ensuing Benoni structure where Black typically aims for a ... b7-b5 break. However, if White prevents this by 7. a4, then Black may change his mind and point out the b4 weakness with 7. ... a5.

7. Bd3 Nfd7

This prepares the typical ... c7-c5 break against the Sämisch without having to sacrifice the pawn with the immediate 7. ... c5, which is also playable.

8. Nge2 c5 9. d5 Ne5

It also would have made sense for Black to get the pawn break in with 9. ... b5!? before White has a chance to prevent it with a2-a4. Black gets excellent Benko-style compensation after 10. cxb5 Ne5.

10. a4 Nbd7

Black had another pawn break to consider: 10. ... f5!?

11. b3

Without this additional protection of c4, White can't move the d3-bishop out of the way and also cannot get rid of Black's knight on e5 without creating further weaknesses. At the same time, White is not concerned about trading the light-squared bishop for the knight, and might even prefer this exchange given that the bishop is blocked in by its own pawns.

11. ... Nxd3+ 12. Qxd3 f5

Now that Black's ... b7-b5 break is stalled

for the time being, he turns to the kingside to open up the game, which benefits Black due to his two bishops.

13. Rd1?

Getting out of the pin, but perhaps 13. Ra2 would have been better as now Black achieves ...

13. ... b5!



Black strikes while the iron is hot — before White has castled.

14. cxb5 axb5 15. axb5

Not 15. Nxb5? Ne5 16. Qc2 fxe4 17. fxe4 (17. Qxe4 Bf5 18. Qh4 Bc2) 17. ... Ba6 and with the White king stranded in the center, Black is already winning with the usual Benko-style queenside play: 18. Nec3 Qa5.

15. ... Ne5 16. Qc2 fxe4 17. Nxe4 Qa5+ 18. N2c3 Nxf3+!

(see diagram top of next column)

Perhaps White could have consolidated given a few moves, but this powerful sacrifice forecloses castling.



POSITION AFTER 18. ... Nxf3+

19. gxf3 Rxf3 20. Kd2

It was more accurate to play 20. Ke2, but it is understandable that Ivanchuk didn't want to voluntarily walk into 20. ... Bg4. That said, even better is 20. ... Rf8! 21. Ra1 Qb4! 22. Rxa8 Bg4+ 23. Kd2 Rxa8 when Black is down a piece but winning, as White is completely tied down.

20. ... Bd4?

Missing the next move, which turns the tide in White's favor! Black needed to step the queen out of the way with 20. ... Qb4!, and White cannot prevent Black from winning back a piece (and the game) with ... Bc8-f5. For example, White is lost after 21. Ra1 Bxc3+ 22. Qxc3 Qxe4 23. Rxa8 Qxd5+! 24. Ke2 Qxa8.

21. Ra1! Bxe3+ 22. Ke2 Bg4

Black's pieces look threatening, but it isn't enough; White is now winning.

23. Rxa5 Rxa5 24. Kd3!

Seeking shelter for the king on c4! Impressively accurate and bold defense by Ivanchuk.



A dejected Ivanchuk after his loss to Naroditsky

24. ... Bd4+ 25. Kc4 Bf5

Although White is now better, Naroditsky does not make it easy for Ivanchuk to convert, especially with the seconds counting down.

26. Qd2 Bxc3 27. Nxc3 e5 28. Re1

White could win with 28. dxe6 Bxe6+ 29. Nd5 Rf5 30. Rd1 Bxd5+ 31. Qxd5+ Rxd5 32. Rxd5, but it admittedly is not easy to relinquish such a large material advantage. Perhaps White was concerned about opening another diagonal that could be used against his king, though it is quickly blocked by the knight.

28. ... Rf4+**29. Qxf4**

Thwarting the last of Black's threats by transforming the advantage into a still-winning ending, although 29. Ne4 was probably the best way to convert, because White's attack on the rook on a5 gives them enough time to play 30. Qxf4 followed by Ne4xd6.

29. ... exf4 30. Ne4 Bxe4 31. Rxe4 g5 32. b6 Ra8 33. Kb5

The plan for White — easier said than done — is to prevent Black's kingside pawns from advancing and push through on the queenside.

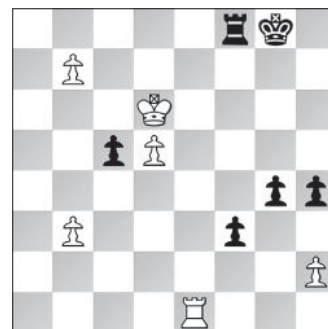
33. ... f3 34. Re1 g4 35. Kc6 h5

Again, Black poses problems for White to convert in an already pressurized situation.

36. Kxd6

White can win with 36. b7 Rf8 37. Rf1 or 37. Kxd6, but the natural 37. Kc7?? h4 38. b8=Q?? actually loses for White after 38. ... Rxb8 39. Kxb8 g3 40. hxg3 f2 41. Rf1 hxg3, which might be what caused Ivanchuk to try to consolidate before rushing to promote.

The simplest way, though, might have been 36. Rg1!?, holding up Black's h- and g-pawns: 36. ... Rf8 37. b7 f2 38. Rf1 h4 39. Rxf2 and White is winning.

36. ... Rf8 37. b7 h4**38. Rg1??**

Counterintuitively, moving the rook to the f-file prevents ... g4-g3 (i.e., 38. Rf1! g3 39. hxg3 hxg3 40. Rxf3), but moving to the g-file allows it!

38. ... f2??

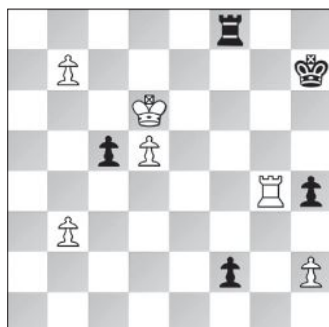
Black wins with 38. ... g3! 39. hxg3 f2! 40. Rf1 hxg3.

39. Rxc4+ Kh7

(see diagram top of next column)

A remarkable position! White is winning,





POSITION AFTER 39. ... Kh7

but only if he doesn't take the h4-pawn with check, which seems to be the obvious choice!

40. Rxh4+

Amazingly, White wins with 40. b8=Q, but only because the computer finds a series of only-moves to eventually thwart Black's checks and cash in on the pawn advantage in a complicated queen vs. rook ending. It is natural that any human would first take on h4 with check, which turns out to be an unfortunate error — apparently, White's queen and rook coordination is now disrupted if White queens. White wins after 40. ... f1=Q

41. Qc7+ Rf7 42. Qd8 Qa6+ 43. Ke5 Qe2+ 44. Re4 Qh5+ 45. Kd6 Qh6+ 46. Kxc5 Qc1+ 47. Rc4 Qa3+ 48. b4 Qa7+ 49. Kd6 Qa6+ 50. Rc6.

40. ... Kg6 41. Rg4+, White lost on time.

After a heartbreaking turn of events, White flagged in the course of making this move. He's losing after 41. ... Kf5, however, which allows Black to promote unencumbered.

White can promote, but the unforeseen difference from the previous line is that now White doesn't have a queen check on c7 to protect the f6-square in time: 41. b8=Q f1=Q 42. Qc7 (42. Rg4+ Kh5) 42. ... Qf6+ wins.

It was worth trying 41. Rf4 — Black would have to sidestep some landmines, but could eventually run the king to cover and remain up a rook: 41. ... Rxf4 42. b8=Q f1=Q 43. Qg8+ Kf5 44. Qe6+ Kg5 45. Qg8+ Kh5 46. Qh7+ Kg4 47. Qg6+ Kf3 (not 47. ... Kh3?? 48. Qg3 mate).

After 13 blitz rounds in the Open, 10 players separated themselves from the pack and tied with 9½ points. GM Fabiano Caruana had an impressive performance, creating buzz around the prospect of America's first World Blitz title.

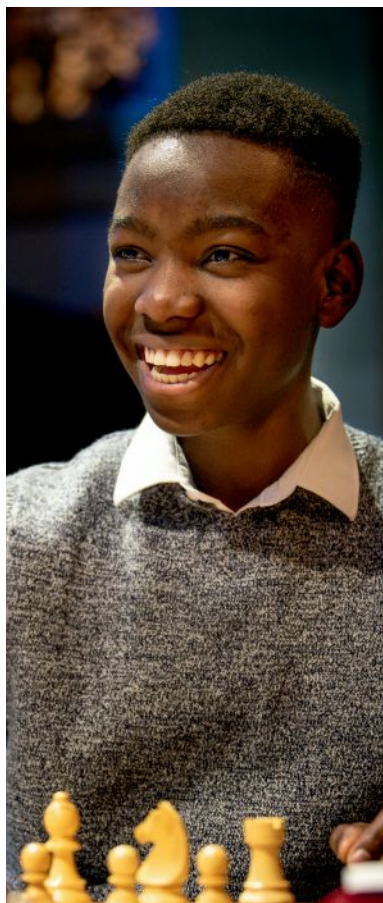
Naroditsky and GM Daniil Dubov narrowly missed the top eight on tiebreaks. Dubov's

tiebreaks were affected by his Round 10 forfeit against GM Hans Niemann. Dubov failed to show up to the game, purportedly due to oversleeping. In a later interview for *Take, Take, Take*, Dubov was cryptic: "When something like that happens, unless you're an idiot, you know what happened." He later said it was his first time in the U.S. "and it's hard to control the jet lag here — that's life."

Later on X, Dubov challenged Niemann to a 24-game blitz match on the condition he pass a lie detector test about cheating, while Niemann responded that he was "happy to play Dubov in a blitz match under ANY conditions." That match was played as we went to press, with Dubov narrowly winning.

The quarterfinals included the much-anticipated Carlsen-Niemann clash, as they faced each other over-the-board for the first time in this event since the notorious Sinquefeld Cup of 2022. After a draw in the first game, Hans was the first to strike in the second, mating Magnus in a complicated double-rook ending.

Left to right: Niemann, Nakamura, Yip, Naroditsky, So, Abrahamyan, Adewumi, and Benjamin.



SICILIAN DEFENSE (B30)

GM Hans Moke Niemann (2734)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2831)

World Blitz, New York, 12.31.2024

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 e5 4. Nc3 d6
5. Bc4

This position is typically reached with an extra tempo for White via the anti-Sveshnikov move order 3. Nc3 e5 4. Bc4 d6.

5. ... Be7 6. d3 Nf6 7. h3 0-0 8. Nh2 Be6
9. Ng4 Nd4 10. a4 a6 11. Nxf6+ Bxf6 12.
Nd5 b5?!



An inaccuracy; Black's queen is now overloaded.

13. axb5 Nxb5

Black had to recapture with the knight, because White is much better after 13. ... axb5 14. Rxa8 Qxa8 15. Nxf6+ gxf6 16. Bxe6 Nxe6 17. Bh6. But now he is left with a permanent weakness on a6.

14. Bd2 Bg5 15. Ba5 Qb8 16. 0-0 Kh8 17.
Qh5 Bd8 18. Bxd8 Qxd8 19. f4 f6 20. fxe5
dxe5 21. Kh2

White missed 21. Nxf6!, although it's understandable given the unusual motif. White's winning after 21. ... Rxf6 (21. ... gxf6 22. Bxe6) 22. Rxf6 Bxc4 (22. ... Qxf6 23. Bxb5) 23. Rfxa6 Rxa6 24. Rxa6 Qd4+ 25. Kh2 Bg8 26. Rb6.

21. ... Nd6 22. b3 a5 23. Nc3 Nxc4 24. dxc4
Qd2 25. Na4 Qxc2 26. Nxc5 Bf7 27. Qd1
Qxd1 28. Rfxd1 Rfb8 29. Ra3 Rc8 30. Nb7
Rab8?

**31. Nd6!**

It's possible Black was expecting 31. Nxa5, which would have allowed him to put pressure on the weaknesses on e4 and b3. It's unclear after 31. ... Bg6 32. Re1 h5 33. Kg3 Kh7.

31. ... Rc7 32. Rxa5 Kg8

Black can't take because of the back-rank problems: 32. ... Rxb3 33. Nxf7+ Rxf7 34. Rd8+ Rf8 35. Rxf8 mate.

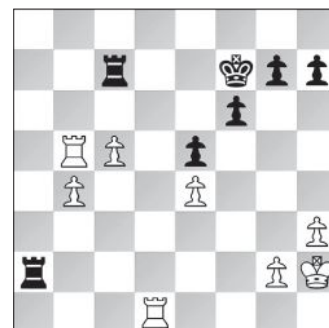
33. Rb5 Ra8 34. Nxf7

White opts to liquidate, but the computer finds it more efficient to simply push the pawns with 34. Ra1! Rd8 35. c5 Kf8 36. b4.

34. ... Kxf7 35. c5

Black doesn't have a lot of ideas other than doubling on the second rank, so 35. Rd2 would have been good prophylaxis.

35. ... Ra2 36. b4

**36. ... Rb2?**

It's not entirely clear how White makes progress after 36. ... Rc2.

37. Rb8

The win was there after 37. Rc1! Ke7 38. c6 g6 39. Rb8 Kd6 40. b5 f5 41. Rd1+ Kc5 (or 41. ... Ke6 42. Re8+ Kf7 43. Red8 Rxb5 44. R8d7+ Rxd7 45. cxd7) 42. Rb7 (42. Rd7 Rxc6!) 42. ... Rxb7 43. cxb7 Rxb5 44. Rd5+! Kc6 45. Rxb5 Kxb5 46. b8=Q+.

37. ... Rxc5 38. Rd7+

Not 38. bxc5 Rxb8 39. Rd7+ Ke6 40. Rxc7 Rc8 41. Rxh7 Rxc5 with a likely draw.

38. ... Ke6??

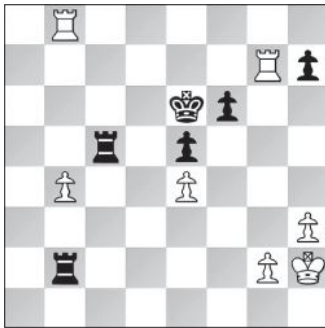
Black had to play 38. ... Kg6. After 39. Rbb7

Left: Carlsen and Nepomniachtchi "commence hostilities." Right: The papers are signed, and the title is split.



Rc4 40. Rxc7+ Kh6 41. Rxc7+ Kg5 Black's king lives to see another day.

39. Rxc7



Now Black has to suddenly contend with the threat of Rb8-b6 mate.

39. ... Rc6 40. b5 Rd6

Black can avoid immediate mate with 40. ... f5 41. Re8+ Kf6 42. bxc6, but the pawn will queen after 42. ... Kxc7 43. c7.

41. Re8 mate.

It's not every day that you see a checkmate on the board against a world champion.

Nonetheless, the defending champion came back to win his next two games to advance to the next bracket. In the meantime, GM Ian Nepomniachtchi knocked out World Rapid champion Murzin; Polish GM Jan-Krzysztof Duda eliminated Caruana and American GM Wesley So knocked out GM Alireza Firouzja.

After Nepo won his semifinal match with So and Carlsen knocked out Duda, the final pairing was a throwback to the 2021 classical World Championship. Magnus started with a commanding 2-0 lead, but Nepo mounted a strong comeback, putting fans on the edge of their seats, to even the score.

FRENCH DEFENSE, STEINITZ VARIATION (C11)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2831)

GM Ian Nepomniachtchi (2755)

World Blitz Final (3), New York, 12.31.2024

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6

The Classical system in the French has been making a comeback recently; it was Ding's weapon of choice in the 2024 World Championship.

4. e5 Nfd7 5. Nce2 c5 6. c3 Nc6 7. a3

One of Black's primary ideas in the French is to undermine White's pawn chain by

putting pressure on d4; this line reinforces a stronghold on the base of the chain.

7. ... a5 8. Nf3 a4 9. h4



Magnus and Nepo played this same setup in the final knockout of the Oslo Rapid, a mere 10 days earlier. There, Nepo castled kingside and was steamrolled by an attack in 23 moves. Clearly, he had something else in store if he chose to play the same line in this must-win situation.

9. ... Nb6

That Oslo game went 9. ... Qa5 10. Bd2 Qb6 11. Rb1 Be7 12. Be3, and after 12. ... 0-0 White broke through quickly with 13. Nf4 Qb3 14. Qc1 cxd4 15. cxd4 Na5 16. Bd3 h6 17. Rh3.

10. Nf4 Na5 11. Rb1 Bd7 12. Bd3 h6 13.

0-0 Qc7 14. Re1 Nbc4

In this opening rematch, Black's plan is to create a blockade on the queenside so that he may safely castle long.

15. Nh5 Bb5 16. dxc5! Qxc5 17. Nd4

This knight keeps an eye on the b3-square, which White needs in order to break through the blockade.

17. ... Bd7 18. Qg4 0-0-0 19. Qf4

The computer prefers 19. Nxc7!? Rg8 20. Bxh6, but it is understandable that White didn't want to voluntarily enter into a self-pin.

19. ... Qe7 20. b3

White achieves the critical breakthrough, but the resulting position is still dynamically equal.

20. ... axb3 21. Nxb3 Nxb3 22. Rxb3 Bc6

23. Be3



Black's last move offered a pawn sacrifice with 23. Bxc4 dxc4 24. Qxc4 Qc5, but it's worth it for Black to open up the light-squared bishop, which is usually locked up in French structures. In fact, Black's two bishops might give him a slight edge here.

If White were to enter this line, it's worth considering not taking right away, and instead playing 24. Rb4, winning the pawn without allowing the black queen to come to c5, although the engine still calls it equal after 24. ... g5 25. Qg4 Qc7 26. Rxc4 gxh4 27. Nf6 Be7.

23. ... g5!

This thematic break is well timed. Black needs to start creating counterplay on the



kingside before White creates deadly threats on the queenside.

24. Qd4 gxh4 25. Nf6 Bg7 26. Reb1 Bxf6

27. exf6 Qc7 28. Qa7

White goes all in on his queenside attack.

28. ... Rhg8 29. Bf4??



A natural continuation of the attack, but it ignores how quickly Black's pieces can come to life.

29. ... Qxf4 30. Rxb7 Rxb2+!!

White's king is left helpless, and all of Black's remaining pieces cooperate to deliver check-mate.

31. Kxg2



31. ... Ne3+!!, White resigned.

A beautiful finish in a key game! After 32. Qxe3 (it's mate after 32. fxe3 Rg8+ 33. Kh1 Qf3+ 34. Kh2 Qg2), 32. ... d4+ cleanly picks up the queen with the help of the light-squared bishop, which is typically Black's worst piece in the French but is the star of the show here: 33. Kf1 dxe3 and mate is coming up.

In the meantime, the Women's section, playing in the Open venue at Cipriani in front of a common group of spectators, was immersed in its own battle.

The finals whittled down to a battle of the Chinese superstars: classical Women's World Champion, and World Rapid silver medalist, GM Ju Wenjun against her countrywoman,

GM Lei Tingjie. Ju had overcome an early setback in the Swiss after blundering in Round 2 to U.S. Women's Champion and Stanford student IM Carissa Yip.

Both Blitz finals ended 2-2, triggering tiebreak playoffs. While in classical chess traditional tiebreaks might typically include an Armageddon game which would force a winner (given that Black generally gets draw odds), there were no decisive tiebreaks in the FIDE regulations. Instead, the tiebreaks included repeated blitz matches at the same time G/3+2 control with alternating colors "until the first game won by one of the players."

Ju won the second tiebreak game after Lei, in keeping with the fighting spirit of the match, tried the Tarrasch Gambit. It backfired, and Ju picked up her second world championship of 2024.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, TARRASCH DEFENSE (D32)

GM Ju Wenjun (2563)

GM Lei Tingjie (2549)

World Women's Blitz Final (3), New York, 12.31.2024

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 c5 4. cxd5 cxd4

(see diagram top of next column)

The Hennig-Schara (Tarrasch) Gambit, considered playable according to modern engines despite its perhaps dubious reputation.

5. Qa4+

This gets a slightly more favorable move order. White can also accept the gambit



POSITION AFTER 4. ... cxd4

straightforwardly with 5. Qxd4 Nc6 6. Qd1 exd5 7. Qxd5, but Black would have more options beyond transposing to the game with 7. ... Bd7, such as 7. ... Qc7.

5. ... Bd7 6. Qxd4 exd5 7. Qxd5 Nc6 8. Nf3 Nf6 9. Qd1

The alternative is 9. Qd3, with the idea of tucking away the queen on b1 after 9. ... Nb4.

9. ... Bc5 10. a3 a6 11. e3 0-0 12. Be2 Qe7 13. 0-0 Rfd8 14. Qc2 Rac8

As compensation for the sacrificed pawn, Black is much better developed.

15. Bd2 Ne5 16. Rfd1 Bc6 17. Qf5

(see diagram top of next column)

17. ... Ng6

Black needs to pose immediate problems for White with 17. ... Ng6 before she has a chance to consolidate. This leads to several lines where Black has the option to impose complications: 18. h3 g6 19. Qc2 and now



PHOTO: COURTESY FIDE / OOTES



POSITION AFTER 17. Qf5

(a) 19. ... Nxf2!? 20. Kxf2 Re8 with some compensation, or (b) 19. ... Rxd2!? 20. Qxd2 (White has to avoid 20. Rxd2 Nxf2 21. Kxf2 Qxe3+ 22. Ke1 Bxf3 23. gxf3 Qf2+ 24. Kd1 Qg1+ 25. Bf1 Qxf1 mate) 20. ... Nxe3 21. Re1 Rd8 22. Qc1 Nxe2 23. Kxe2 Qe5.

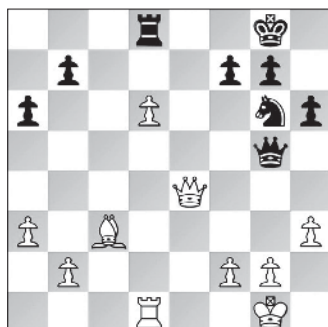
18. Rac1 Bd7 19. Qb1 Bc6 20. Be1

Now White has consolidated and is ready to exchange rooks on the d-file and start converting the pawn advantage.

20. ... Ng4 21. Nd4 Bd7 22. h3 Nf6 23. Bf3 Rb8 24. Ne4 Bxd4 25. Rxd4 Bf5 26. Nxf6+ Qxf6 27. Be4 Rxd4 28. exd4 Bxe4 29. Qxe4

White has successfully liquidated into a technically winning endgame.

29. ... Nf4 30. Bd2 Ne6 31. Be3 h6 32. d5 Nf8 33. Bd4 Qg5 34. Rd1 Rd8 35. Bc3 Ng6 36. d6



The pawn is unstoppable.

36. ... b5 37. d7 Nf4 38. Kh2 f5 39. Qf3 Ne6 40. Ba5 Rf8 41. Qd5 Qf4+ 42. Kg1 Qe4 43. Qxe4 fxe4 44. d8=Q, Black resigned.

After three Open tiebreak games ended in draws, the match paused while Magnus, set to have the white pieces, suggested something to Nepo and called the arbiter over. The audiences in the room and online, were brimming with anticipation; the initial speculation was that the players might have

This is why we love chess and why we come to these events. Neel met a lot of his heroes and got them to sign his book. #worldrapidblitz
@IM_Rosen @ChessbaseIndia



6:01 PM · Dec 28, 2024 · 4,735 Views

requested a longer break between games. But after several minutes, the news came to light: Magnus had proposed to split the world blitz title and Nepo agreed.

One more step remained, which was to obtain FIDE approval. After another 15 minutes, which felt much longer, it was confirmed that this proposal was approved by FIDE President Arkady Dvorkovich. The two longtime rivals and friends signed a document, and for the first time in history, the world Blitz title was split between two players. The players rang in New Year's Eve with an eighth World Blitz title for Magnus (his 18th title overall), and Nepo's first world championship.

Reactions were mixed, but everyone can agree that this was one championship to remember. Off the board, the event raised questions as to the integrity and enforceability of dress codes and tiebreaks, as well as the potential influence of top chess players on politics. On the board, the games celebrated a diversity of playing styles, personal triumphs and tribulations — every participant, whether a player or spectator, came away with their own story.

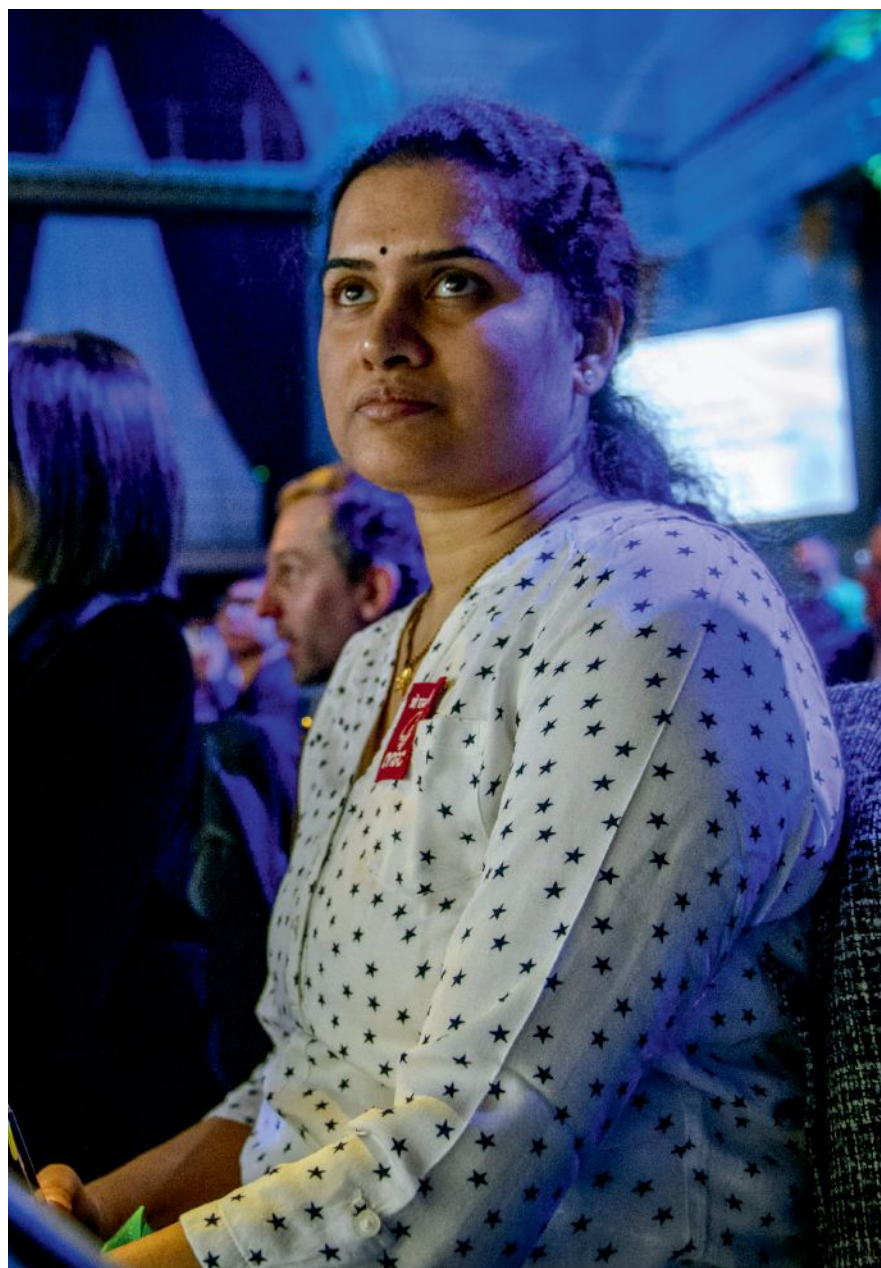
The World Rapid & Blitz will return to Doha, Qatar, at the end of December 2025. ♠



TWO from the CHAMP

Key wins on the way to the Rapid title

BY **GM HUMPY KONERU**



OLD INDIAN DEFENSE (A53)

GM Humpy Koneru (2431)

FM Jennifer Yu (2296)

World Women's Rapid (5), New York, 12.27.2024

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 d6

After a loss in the first round, I was very determined to score; my opponent is also in a fighting mood!

3. Nc3 Nbd7 4. e4 e5 5. d5 Be7

Black's plan in this structure is to exchange the dark-squared bishop and (after castling) play ... Nf6-e8 and ... f7-f5. White can choose from multiple setups.

6. Bd3 Nc5 7. Bc2 a5

A typical move to secure the knight by restraining b2-b4.

8. Nge2 0-0 9. Ng3

White can castle, but I delayed it, because I thought I might castle long instead!

9. ... Ne8

Black is planning ... Be7-Bg5, so ...

10. h4! g6

Of course Black can't take the pawn: 10. ... Bxh4?? is met with 11. Qh5.

11. Bh6 Ng7 12. h5

I considered 12. Qd2 to keep the dark-squared bishop from being traded; it felt playable as well. If 12. ... Bxh4 13. Nb5 Bd7 (13. ... Bf6 14. 0-0-0 Bd7 15. Kb1 a4 16. a3 Nb3 17. Bxb3 axb3 18. Rc1 is much better for White) 14. Nxc7 Rc8 15. Nb5 Bxb5 16. cxb5 a4 and it's unclear.

12. ... Bg5 13. Bxg5 Qxg5 14. Qd2

It's important to exchange Black's active queen, although 14. h6 Ne8 15. Qd2 would have been even smarter, as the next couple of moves will show.

14. ... Qxd2+

Black was better off playing the strategic move 14. ... h6!.

15. Kxd2

(see diagram top of next column)

My king is centralized; I have more space, and I'm ready to expand on the queenside.

15. ... g5

If her pawn were already on h6, I would



POSITION AFTER 15. Kxd2

recommend this (which is why I should have pushed on move 14). But in this structure I don't like it.

16. h6! Ne8 17. b3 b6 18. a3 Kh8 19. Rab1
There's actually a win with 19. b4 Na6 20. Ba4!! axb4 21. axb4 Nxb4 22. Bxe8 Rxa1 23. Rxa1 Rxe8 24. Ra7 Na6 25. Nh5.

19. ... Nf6 20. Nb5
Again I missed the idea 20. b4 Na6 21. Ba4, taking advantage of Black's cluttered pieces.

20. ... Na6 21. b4 Ng8 22. f3
I could demolish Black's pawn structure here with 22. bxa5 bxa5 23. c5!.

22. ... Ne7 23. Nf1
White can also take possession of the e4-square with 23. Nf5 Bxf5 24. exf5 f6 25. g4 Kg8 26. Nc3 Kf7 27. Ba4.

23. ... f5 24. Rh5 fxe4 25. Bxe4 Bf5
Black doesn't get much relief from 25. ... g4. One line could go 26. Ne3 gxf3 27. gxf3 Rg8 28. Rxe5 dxe5 29. d6 Nf5 30. Bxa8 Nxd6 31. Nxd6 Rd8 32. c5 bxc5 33. bxa5 Rxd6+ 34. Kc3 and White is much better.

26. Ng3 Bxe4 27. Nxe4 g4 28. fxg4 Rf4 29. Nbc3 Rxc4 30. g3 Rf8 31. bxa5 bxa5 32. Rb7 Ng6 33. Rh2 Rb8



There was no help in 33. ... Nc5 34. Nxc5 dxc5 35. Rxc7 Rxc4 36. Re2.

34. Rxb8+
White's pieces are so well placed that I can even win with 34. Ra7 Rb2+ 35. Ke3 Rxb2 36. Kf3, trapping the rook.

34. ... Nxb8 35. Ke3 Ne7 36. Rf2 Nd7 37. Rf7 Nb6 38. Rxe7
It's even quicker after 38. Nf6.

38. ... Nxc4+ 39. Kf3 Rg6 40. a4 Rxh6 41. Rxc7 Nb2 42. Rc6 Rh1 43. Nxd6 Rf1+ 44. Ke2 Rc1 45. Kd2 Rg1 46. Nf5, Black resigned.

GIUOCO PIANO (C50)

IM Irine Kharisma Sukandar (2354)

GM Humpy Koneru (2431)

World Women's Rapid (11), New York, 12.28.2024

This was played in the final round. We both had 7½ points, along with five other players. It was clear that whoever won the game would tie for first.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. d3 h6 5. a4 Nf6 6. Be3

It's understandable that she is playing the solid system. I drew in this setup earlier this year with Elizabeth Paetz.

6. ... Bxe3 7. fxe3 d6 8. 0-0 Be6 9. Nbd2 0-0 10. Qe1

Intending to play Nf3-h4-f5 and Qe1-g3. White can't play 10. Nh4? right away due to 10. ... Bxc4 11. Nxc4 Nxe4.

10. ... Nb4

I could have equalized simply with 10. ... Bxc4 11. Nxc4 Ne7 12. Nh4 Qd7, but I wanted to create some chances.

11. Rc1 c6

Another solid equalizing response is 11. ... a5, securing the knight on b4 and planning ... c7-c6 or ... b7-b6 later. Play could go 12. Bxe6 fxe6 13. Nc4 b6.

12. Kh1!?

I did not like this move over the board; White could have simply played 12. Bxe6 fxe6 13. Nc4, not allowing a ... d6-d5 break. After 13. ... a5 14. Qe2 b5 15. Ncd2 bxa4 16. c3 Na6 17. d4 White has good compensation for the pawn.

12. Bb3 is also good: 12. ... c5 13. Nh4 Kh7 14. Qg3 Nh5 15. Qf2 a6 with equality.

12. ... d5

I am happy to change the pawn structure.

13. Bb3 dxe4 14. Nxe4



Here come the tactics.

14. ... Nxd3!! 15. cxd3 Bxb3 16. Nc5

There's also 16. Nxf6+ Qxf6, when play could go (a) 17. Qb4 Be6 18. Qxb7 Rab8 19. Qxc6 (or 19. Qxa7 Rxb2 20. Qc5 Qg6 21. Rg1 Qxd3 22. Nxe5 Qe4) 19. ... Rxb2 20. Nd4 Rf2 with equality; or (b) 17. Nd4 Qxf1+ 18. Qxf1 exd4 and Black is doing fine with rook, bishop and pawn for queen. One line could be 19. e4 Bxa4 20. Rc4 Bb5 21. Rxd4 Rfd8 22. Qf2 Bxd3.

16. ... Be6 17. Nxe5

It's equal after 17. Nxe6 fxe6 18. Nxe5 Qd6 19. d4 Nd7.

17. ... Qe7 18. Qh4 Rfe8 19. d4 Ng4

It would have been even better to stop e3-e4 tactically with 19. ... Bd5!. For example, 20. Rfe1 (20. e4?? Nxe4) 20. ... b6 21. e4 (or 21. Ncd3 Rac8 22. b4 Qf8 and Black is slightly better) 21. ... bxc5 22. exd5 cxd5 23. dxc5 Qc7.

20. Qxe7 Rxe7 21. Nxg4 Bxg4

The position is equal.

22. Rfe1 Rae8 23. Rc3 Rd8

Threatening the d4-pawn.

24. h3 Bc8 25. Nd3 Bf5 26. Kg1 Bxd3 27. Rxd3

Here we were both under two minutes on the clock.

27. ... f5 28. Rc1 f4! 29. exf4 Re4 30. Rcd1 Rxf4 31. b3 Rd5 32. g3 Rf7

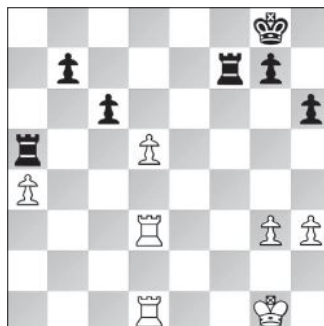
The idea is to play the classic way against

the isolated pawn, with ... a7-a5, ... Rf7-d7, and ... c6-c5.

33. b4

Planning a4-a5.

33. ... a5 34. bxa5 Rxa5 35. d5



I'm winning a pawn here, but this is still holdable for White. Rook endgames are tricky, though!

35. ... cxd5

White can hold after 35. ... Rxa4. One line could be 36. dxc6 bxc6 37. Rc3 Rf6 38. Rd2 Ra7 39. Rdc2 Rc7 40. h4 Kf7 41. Kg2 Ke7 42. Rc4 Kd7 43. Rd4+ Rd6 44. Rg4 g6 45. Rgc4.

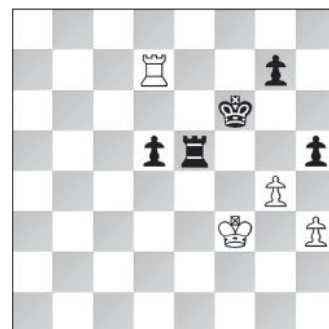
36. Rd4 Rf3 37. Kg2 Ra3 38. Rb1 R3xa4 39. Rxa4 Rxa4 40. Rxb7

White's rook is active and going behind the passed pawn.

40. ... Rd4 41. Kf3 Kh7 42. Ke3

This should draw, but it was also smart not to let the king centralize with 42. Rb6.

42. ... Re4+ 43. Kf3 Kg6 44. Rd7 Re5 45. Rd6+ Kf5 46. Rd7 Kf6 47. g4 h5



Only a few seconds left, and here's the losing mistake.

48. Kf4??

It's a draw after 48. gxh5 Rxh5 49. h4.

48. ... g5+!! 49. Kf3 h4

Now my king is free to roam around, the pawns on g5 and d5 are defended, and the white king is cut off!

50. Rd6+ Ke7 51. Ra6 Re6 52. Ra7+ Kd6

53. Ra6+ Ke5 54. Ra5

Black also wins after 54. Ra3 Rc6 55. Ke3 Rc3+ 56. Rxc3 d4+.

54. ... Rb6 55. Ra3 Kd4 56. Ra4+ Kc3 57.

Ra5 Rf6+ 58. Ke2 Re6+ 59. Kf2 Re5 60.

Rc5+ Kb4 61. Rc8 d4 62. Rb8+ Kc3 63.

Rc8+ Kd2 64. Ra8 d3 65. Ra2+ Kc3 66.

Ra3+ Kc2 67. Ra2+ Kb3, White resigned.

I found out I won the title outright when the arbiter congratulated me! ♡



Fans gather to watch the Sukandar - Koneru game!

MAKE → YOUR → MOVE

BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM GAMES PLAYED AT the traditional Wijk aan Zee tournament in January 2025. 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.

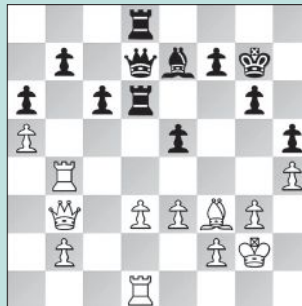
Try first to solve the puzzle before reading the text at the bottom of the page. If you're unsuccessful, play through the solution, but return to the puzzle in one or two weeks to see whether you can now solve it. That way, you gradually expand your tactical vision and you'll be more likely to spot tactics 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 71. ♠

TACTIC 1.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 2.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 3.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 4.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 5.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 6.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 7.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 8.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



WHITE TO MOVE

Position 1: OVERWORKED PIECES ...

Position 2: NO GUARDS

Position 3: CAN OPENER

Position 4: PUNCH IN THE FACE

Position 5: BACK DOWN

Position 6: NO CLOSED DOOR

Position 7: INTERFERENCE

Position 8: COUNTERATTACK

Position 9: MOUNTING THREATS

OUR HERITAGE 2024 US CHESS YEARBOOK

The information in this yearbook is substantially correct and current as of December 31, 2024. For the full yearbook, please see the community section at uschess.org. To notify US Chess of corrections or updates, please email john.hartmann@uschess.org.

US CHESS ANNUAL MEETINGS, MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS, AND FUND BALANCES

Year	U.S. Open Business Meeting	Membership (1)	Fund Balance (2)
2023	Grand Rapids, MI	107,232	\$4,373,842
2024	Norfolk, VA	113,442	\$5,514,325

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

US CHESS PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

President	Executive Director
2024-current Kevin Pryor	2024-current Ranae Bartlett

U.S. NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

U.S. CHAMPION

2023 Fabiano Caruana
2024 Fabiano Caruana
St. Louis, Missouri • October 2024

U.S. WOMEN'S

2023 Carissa Yip
2024 Carissa Yip
St. Louis, Missouri • October 2024

U.S. CADET

2023 Erick Zhao
2024 Tanitoluwa Adewumi
Lisle, Illinois • June 2024

U.S. JUNIOR

2023 Abhimanyu Mishra
2024 Christopher Yoo
St. Louis, Missouri • July 2024

U.S. GIRLS' JUNIOR

2023 Alice Lee
2024 Alice Lee
St. Louis, Missouri • July 2024

U.S. SENIOR

2023 Melikset Khachiyan
2024 Vladimir Akopian
St. Louis, Missouri • July 2024

U.S. SENIOR WOMEN'S

2023 Anjelina Belakovskaia
2024 Natalya Tsodikova
Murray, Utah • December 2024

OTHER NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

U.S. OPEN

2023 Andrew Tang*, Aleksey Sorokin
2024 Semen Khanin*, Jianchao Zhou
Norfolk, Virginia • July-August 2024

U.S. WOMEN'S OPEN

2023 Zijun Zhou
2024 Avery Yu, Olivia Smith
Las Vegas, Nevada • June 2024

U.S. JUNIOR OPEN

2023 **U8:** Siddharth Parthasarathyn;
U11: William Ahn; **U15:** Vidyuth Kamesh; **U21:** Nicholas Ladan
2024 **U8:** Emily Jiaying Tan; **U11:** Sarang Athreya Sankrithi, Angad Saran; **U15:** Ghanishth Prabhakar Awasthi, Dron Acharya Das, Nikhil Murugan; **U21:** Tugstumur Yesuntumur
Northbrook, Illinois • July 2024

U.S. SENIOR OPEN

2023 Jesse Kraai, Doug Eckert, Alexander Fishbein, Nikola Mitkov, Steven Szpisjak, Peter Gilruth
2024 Alex Fishbein*, Dmitry Gurevich
Northbrook, Illinois • July 2024

ARMED FORCES OPEN

(Individual* Team)
2023 Peter Jackson*, Army
2024 Christopher Shen*, Air Force
Annapolis, Maryland • October 2024

NATIONAL OPEN

Edmondson Cup winner*
2023 Illia Nyzhnyk*, Vasif Durarbayli, Yasser Quesada, Mikhail Antipov
2024 Vasif Durarbayli
Las Vegas, Nevada • June 2024

U.S. MASTERS

2023 Mikhail Antipov*, Gleb Dudin, Justin Wang, Bryce Tiglon
2024 Fabiano Caruana
Charlotte, North Carolina • November 2024

U.S. CLASS

2023 **Master:** Jianchao Zhou, Arman Mikaelyan, Sharvesh Deviprasath; **Expert:** Avery Yu, Max England, Neil

Bhaduri, Alaa Moussa; **A:** Yuqi Wang, Davit Gevorgyan; **B:** Ryan McCloskey, Noah McQueen; **C:** Mark Torosyan; **D:** Iniya Mathivanan; Nandha Rajesh
2024 Not Held

U.S. BLIND

2023 Alexander Barrasso
2024 Jessica Lauser
Northbrook, Illinois • July 2024

U.S. BLITZ

2023 George Li
2024 Avi Kaplan
Norfolk, Virginia • August 2024

U.S. GAME/10

2023 Not Held
2024 Not Held

U.S. GAME/15

2023 Jackson Wahl, Hersh Singh
2024 Robby Adamson, Julian Proleiko, Matthew Guo Diao
Norfolk, Virginia • August 2024

U.S. GAME/30

2023 Not Held
2024 Not Held

U.S. GAME/60

2023 Not Held
2024 Not Held

U.S. AMATEUR CHAMPIONS

2023 **East:** Timothy Xie
2024 **East:** Andrew Colin Chan

U.S. AMATEUR TEAM – NATIONAL PLAYOFF WINNERS*

2023 **East:** Bacon, Egg, and Cheese En Passant (Gus Huston, Nathaniel Shuman, Sumit Dhar, Ryan Peterson); **North:** UChicago B (Awonder Liang, Praveen Balakrishnan, Kapil Chandran, Will Eastwick, Runzhe Cui)*; **South:**

Deep Blue Devils (Kevin Wang, Eduard Shamilov, Zubin M. Baliga, Alexander Tong, Luke F. Triplett); **West:** UC Davis Team A (Derek Wu, Brandon Yang Xia, Manas Manu, Abhishek Handigol)

2024 **East:** Another Bacon, Egg, and Cheese, Please! (Gus Huston, Nathaniel Shuman, Ryan Peterson, Kevin Stern); **North:** UChicago C (Awonder Liang, Praveen Balakrishnan, Kapil Chandran, Bradley Li); **South:** Deviprasath's Domsayers (Bach Ngo, Marvin Gao, Aniket Shukla, Quintin Tanksley); **West:** Team 1 (Derek Wu, Rochelle Wu, Brandon Yang Xia, Jayden Xu)
February 2024 (E, N, S, W) • Playoffs: Not Held

STATE INVITATIONALS

JOHN T. IRWIN NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF SENIOR STATE CHAMPIONS

2023 Jesse Kraai, Nikoloz Managadze
2024 Nikoloz Managadze
Norfolk, Virginia • July-August 2024

GM ARNOLD DENKER NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONS

2023 Arthur Guo
2024 Sharvesh Deviprasath, Avi Kaplan, Sandeep Sethuraman
Norfolk, Virginia • July-August 2024

WIM RUTH HARING NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF GIRLS STATE CHAMPIONS

2023 Ruiyang Yan
2024 Zoey Tang
Norfolk, Virginia • July-August 2024

DEWAIN BARBER NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONS

2023 Erick Zhao, Brewington Hardaway, Jasmine Su
2024 Anjaneya Rao
Norfolk, Virginia • July-August 2024

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

2023 John Abraham, Andrew Jing, Harshin Jagirapu
2024 Vivan Mulay, Ted Wang
Norfolk, Virginia • July-August 2024

FM SUNIL WEERAMANTRY NATIONAL BLITZ TOURNAMENT OF STATE CHAMPIONS

2023 **Championship:** Terry Luo, Gus Huston; **1800-2199:** Eric Feng; **1400-1799:** Kushagra Bhargava; **Under 1400:** Varun Iyengar

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

SCHOLASTIC CHAMPIONS

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY (K-6)

2023 K-6: Nathan Yan; **K-5:** Sharath Radhakrishnan, Krishna Rallabandi, Anson Leong, Andrew Wu; **K-3:** Ted Wang, Lev Shangin; **K-1:** Asher Kirschbaum

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

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY (K-6) TEAM

2023 K-6: Anderson School (NY); **K-5:** Tag Young Scholars (NY); **K-3 and K-1:** The Speyer Legacy School (NY)

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

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY (K-6) BLITZ

2023 K-6: Vihaan Jammalamadaka; **K-3:** Linxi Zhu
2024 K-6: Vihaan Jammalamadaka; **K-3:** Albert Li
Columbus, Ohio • April 2024

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY (K-6) BLITZ TEAM

2023 K-6: Bates Academy (MI); **K-3:** The Greene School (FL)
2024 K-6: NYG008 (NY); **K-3:** P.S. 77 - Lower Lab (NY)
Columbus, Ohio • April 2024

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY (K-6) BUGHOUSE

2023 B. Lin-T. Yue
2024 Tommy Kozlek-Leon Li
Columbus, Ohio • April 2024

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

2023 Eric Chang Liu
2024 Nikash Vemparala, Eric Chang Liu
Atlanta, Georgia • May 2024

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL (K-8) TEAM

2023 Millburn Middle School (NJ)
2024 Columbia Grammar & Prep (NY), Speyer Legacy School (NY)
Atlanta, Georgia • May 2024

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL (K-8) BLITZ

2023 Brewington Hardaway

2024 Ethan Guo, Nikash Vemparala
Atlanta, Georgia • May 2024

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL (K-8) BLITZ TEAM

2023 Nicollet Middle School (MN), The Speyer Legacy School (NY)
2024 Speyer Legacy School (NY)
Atlanta, Georgia • May 2024

NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL (K-8) BUGHOUSE

2023 Ronen Wilson-Julian Colville
2024 Hunter Hong-Tommy Kozlek
Atlanta, Georgia • May 2024

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (K-12)

2023 Jason Wang, Sharvesh R. Deviprasath
2024 Jason Wang
Baltimore, Maryland • April 2024

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (K-12) TEAM

2023 The Dalton School (NY)
2024 The Dalton School (NY)
Baltimore, Maryland • April 2024

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (K-12) BLITZ

2023 Aarush Vinod, Nico Werner Chasin
2024 Nico Werner Chasin
Baltimore, Maryland • April 2024

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (K-12) BLITZ TEAM

2023 Columbia Grammar & Prep (NY)
2024 Columbia Grammar & Prep (NY), Speyer Legacy School (NY)
Baltimore, Maryland • April 2024

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (K-12) BUGHOUSE

2023 Leo Jiang-Kitana Olson
2024 Lucas Jiang-Kitana Olson, Gus Huston-Maximillian Lu
Baltimore, Maryland • April 2024

NATIONAL ONLINE SCHOLASTIC CHAMPIONSHIP

2022-23 K-3: Tariq Yue; **K-6:** Kishan Karthigeyan; **K-8:** Luke Widjaja, Alexander Zlodorev, Saharsh Darsh Shetty, Muhammad Rizky Nugraha; **K-12:** Sandeep Sethuraman
2024 Not Held

NATIONAL K-12 GRADE

2023 K: Mehmet Yilanli; **1:** Darren Wu, Mustafa Muhammad; **2:** Sriansh Katta, Samanyu Alluri; **3:** Sasha Schaefer; **4:** Linxi Zhu, Santhosh Ayyappan; **5:** Tariq Yue, Megan Paragua, Kyle Dong, Yuvraj Sawhney, Glenn Zhang, Derek Zhang, Phineas Weingarten; **6:** Kyle Wang; **7:** Aditeya Das, Bobby Qian, Andrew Jiang, Vihaan Saxena, Alexander Sukhiashvili; **8:** Eric Chang Liu; **9:** Brewington Hardaway, Aiden Reiss, Erick Zhao; **10:** Marvin Gao, Bach Ngo; **11:** Avi Kaplan; **12:** Gus Huston, Maximillian Lu

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

NATIONAL K-12 GRADE TEAM

2023 K: Oak Hall (FL); **1:** Oak Hall (FL); **2:** The Speyer Legacy School (NY); **3:** Oak Hall (FL); **4:** The Speyer Legacy School (NY); **5:** The Speyer Legacy School (NY); **6:** Collegiate School (N); **7:** Millburn Middle School (NJ); **8:** Hunter College Campus School (NY); **9:** Columbia Grammar & Prep (NY); **10:** American Heritage (FL); **11:** Columbia Grammar & Prep (NY); **12:** The Dalton School (NY)

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

NATIONAL JUNIOR CONGRESS

2023 6 & Under: Steven Yan, Chloe Dong; **8 & Under:** Winston Wu; **10 & Under:** Aashish Jagan; **12 & Under:** Wesley Luo; **14 & Under:** William Wu; **16/18 & Under:** Akshat Suresh
2024 6 & Under: Coeus Li; **8 & Under:** Owen Li; **10 & Under:** Daniel Brovman; **12 & Under:** Hanford Chong, Ayush Roy; **14 & Under:** Krrish Kaul, Aaron Marian, Musa Naushad; **16 & Under:** Advait Nair; **18/20 & Under:** Hersh Singh
Orlando, Florida • July 2024

KCF ALL-GIRLS NATIONAL

2023 Under 8: Elizabeth Xia; **Under 10:** Sophie Li; **Under 12:** Audrey Zhou, Anvitha Penagalapati, Anagha Sinkar; **Under 14:** Chloe Gaw; **Under 16:** Ellen Wang; **Under 18:** Nastassja Matus
2024 Under 8: Gracie Yan, Abigail Zhou; **Under 10:** Scarlett Kong, Chloe Liu, Miranda Meng; **Under 12:** Anisha Saha; **Under 14:** Nandini Prakesh; **Under 16:** Iris Mou; **Under 18:** Asha Kumar
Chicago, Illinois • April 2024

KCF ALL-GIRLS NATIONAL TEAM

2023 Under 8: Oak Hall (FL); **Under 10:** Speyer Legacy (NY); **Under 12:** Brearley (NY); **Under 14:** Success

TOP 50 FIDE-RATED AMERICANS

Active players from the January 2025 FIDE Rating List.

	Rtg.
1. Fabiano Caruana	GM 2803
2. Hikaru Nakamura	GM 2802
3. Wesley So	GM 2747
4. Levon Aronian	GM 2747
5. Leinier Dominguez Perez	GM 2741
6. Hans Moke Niemann	GM 2734
7. Samuel Sevian	GM 2692
8. Ray Robson	GM 2689
9. Awonder Liang	GM 2687
10. Sam Shankland	GM 2670
11. Grigoriy Oparin	GM 2660
12. Jeffery Xiong	GM 2636
13. Gata Kamsky	GM 2611
14. Abhimanyu Mishra	GM 2600
15. Vladimir Akopian	GM 2595
16. Christopher Woojin Yoo	GM 2588
17. Jianchao Zhou	GM 2582
18. John M Burke	GM 2580
19. Andrew Hong	GM 2579
20. Mikhail Al. Antipov	GM 2577
21. Lazaro Bruzon Batista	GM 2577
22. Larry Christiansen	GM 2571
23. Brandon Jacobson	GM 2570
24. Dariusz Swiercz	GM 2569
25. Varuzhan Akobian	GM 2564
26. Ruifeng Li	GM 2545
27. Andy Woodward	GM 2544
28. Fidel Corrales Jimenez	GM 2540
29. Jaan Ehvest	GM 2531
30. Patrick G Wolff	GM 2530
31. Bryce Tiglon	GM 2530
32. Andrew Tang	GM 2529
33. Justin Wang	IM 2527
34. David Brodsky	GM 2519
35. Arthur Guo	GM 2519
36. Gregory Kaidanov	GM 2513
37. Sergey Erenburg	GM 2510
38. Mark Heimann	IM 2508
39. Elshan Moradiabadi	GM 2504
40. Dimitar Mardov	IM 2504
41. Safal Bora	IM 2501
42. Steven Zierk	GM 2501
43. Brewington Hardaway	IM 2494
44. Praveen Balakrishnan	GM 2491
45. Igor Novikov	GM 2490
46. Kirk Ghazarian	GM 2489
47. Eugene Perelshteyn	GM 2487
48. Kayden Troff	GM 2484
49. Aleksandr Lenderman	GM 2480
50. Joshua Sheng	GM 2480

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

COLLEGE CHAMPIONS

PAN-AM INTERCOLLEGIATE INDIVIDUAL

2023 Kevin Shen Yang
2024 Josiah Stearman
McAllen, Texas • January 2024

PAN-AM INTERCOLLEGIATE TEAM

2023 Webster University-A
2024 University of Missouri-A
McAllen, Texas • January 2024

TOP 25 CORRESPONDENCE PLAYERS

(from the International Correspondence Chess Federation, January 2025)

	Rtg.
1. GM Tim Murray	2607
2. GM Stephen E. Ham	2581
3. GM Alik Samulovich Zilberberg	2563
4. GM Dan Perry	2562
5. GM Jon Ostriker	2561
6. GM Daniel M. Fleetwood	2554
7. GM Jon Edwards	2542
8. SIM Wolff Morrow	2540
9. SIM Bobby Johnson	2531
10. SIM Neil Kulick	2528
11. SIM Kenneth M. Reinhart	2522
12. SIM Wilbur Tseng	2517
13. GM Carl L. Siefing	2516
14. SIM Wieland Belka	2505
15. IM Larry Parsons	2494
16. IM Kyle Biedermann	2478
17. IM Matthew Tedesco	2474
18. IM Douglas Stewart	2471
19. CCM Jeff Reger	2469
20. IM Oliver Koo	2460
21. GM Jason Bokar	2458
22. SIM Thomas Biedermann	2456
23. IM Grayling V. Hill	2456
24. IM Thomas Williams	2453
25. IM Andrew Leonard	2453

THE PRESIDENT'S CUP (FINAL FOUR)

2023 Webster University
2024 University of Missouri
Richardson, Texas • April 2024

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE RAPID/BLITZ (INDIVIDUAL*, TEAM)

2023 Rapid: Grigoriy Oparin, Aram Hakobyan, Mikhail Antipov*, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, University of Missouri; **Blitz:** Benjamin Gledura, Andrew Hong*, Webster University
2024 Blitz, Open: FM Dachev Lin.
Blitz, U1800: Solon Grover, Jainil Trivedi.
Charlotte, North Carolina • January 2025

AMERICAN CLASSICS

AMERICAN OPEN

2023 Arman Mikaelyan*, Ehsan Ghaemmaghar, John Bryant
2024 John Bryant, Batchuluun Tsegmed
Garden Grove, California • November-December 2024

WORLD OPEN

2023 Fidel Corrales Jimenez
2024 Awonder Liang
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania • June-July 2024

NORTH AMERICAN OPEN

2023 Grigoriy Oparin
2024 Brian Escalante
Las Vegas, Nevada • December 2024

AMERICAN WORLD CHAMPIONS

2024 WORLD SENIOR TEAM, 50+

Jaan Ehvest, Alexander Shabalov, Melikset Khachiyan, Igor Novikov, Alex Yermolinsky
Krakow, Poland • July 2024

2024 WORLD SENIOR INDIVIDUAL, 50+

Alex Shabalov
Porto Santo, Portugal • November 2024

CORRESPONDENCE CHESS

U.S. CORRESPONDENCE

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

GOLDEN KNIGHTS

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

USCF ABSOLUTE

2010: Harry Ingersol; **2011:** John Menke; **2012:** John Menke; **2013:** Wilbur Tseng; **2014:** Tony Kain; **2015:** Kristo Miettinen; **2016:** Danny Horwitz; **2017:** Harry Ingersol; **2018:** Robert

Rizzo; **2020:** Mark Stephenson; **2021:** Daniel Horwitz; **2022:** Tim Corkum, John Walton; **2023:** John Millett

ELECTRONIC KNIGHTS

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

INTERNATIONAL TITLISTS

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

GRANDMASTERS (GM)

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

INTERNATIONAL MASTERS (IM)

Viktor Adler • Levon Altounian • Armen Ambartsoumian • Nilton Arias • Danial

Asaira • Joel Banawa • Thomas Bartell • John Bartholomew • Leonid Bass • Alexander Battey • Mikhail Baturyn • Salvijus Bercys • Gabriel Bick • Calvin Blocker • Andrei Blokhin • Michael Bodek • Jay Bonin • Safal Bora • Joseph Bradford • Michael Brooks • John Daniel Bryant • Ronald Burnett • Omar Cartagena • Teddy Coleman • Kapil Chandran • Nico Chasin • Ryo Chen • Alexander Costello • Richard Costigan • Kong Liang Deng • Dorsa Derakhshani • John Donaldson • Daniel Edelman • Teghsuren Enkhbat • Marc Esserman • Larry Evans • Joseph Fang • Ali Farahat • Florin Felecan • Andrei-Costel Florean • Edward Formanek • Igor Foygel • Sanjay Ghatti • Kirk Ghazarian • Dumitru Ghizdavu • Mark Ginsburg • Rusudan Goletiani • Aaron Grabinsky • Kyrn Griffith • Daniel Gurevich • Brewington Hardaway • Luke Harmon-Vellotti • Anthony He • Eshaan Hebbbar • Mark Heimann • Matthew Herman • Craig Hilby • Gus Huston • Dean Ippolito • Aaron Jacobson • Ladia Jirasek • Alexander Kaliksteyn • Albert Kapengut • Julio Kaplan • Alexander Katz • Konstantin Kavutskiy • Igor Khmel'nitsky • Keaton Kiewra • Erik Kislik • Jake Kleiman • Varun Krishnan • Nikhil Kumar • Harshid Kunka • Cyrus Lakdawala • Yury Lapshun • Matthew Larson • Alice Lee • Michael Lee • Joseph Levine • Ben Li • Eric Li • Zhaozhi Li • Jason Liang • Yian Liou • Eric Liu • Dimitri London • Maximilian Lu • Ming Lu • Daniel Ludwig • John Ludwig • Blas Lugo • Terry Luo • Josh Manion • Dimitar Mardov • Salvatore Matera • Vincent McCambridge • Eugene Meyer • Marlo Micayabas • Lev Milman • Rade Milovanovic • Alejandro Moreno • Walter Morris • Michael Mulyar • Sean Nagle • Akira Nakada • Samrug Narayanan • Bach Ngo • Yaacov Norowitz • Steven Odendahl • Georgi Orlov • Aleksandr Ostrovskiy • Nazi Paikidze • Vignesh Panchanatham • Evan Park • William Paschall • Advait Patel • Jack Peters • Joshua Posthuma • Vladimir Prosviriakov • David Pruess • Liam Putnam • Stuart Rachels • Vaski Rajlich • Vivek Rao • Kenneth Regan • Larry Remlinger • Daniel Rensch • Guillermo Rey • Bruce Rind • James Rizzitano • Douglas Root • Eric Rosen • Levy Rozman • Anthony Saidy • Erik Santarius • Justin Sarkar • Sam Schmakel • Dmitry Schneider • Jonathan Schroer • Sandeep Sethuraman • Gregory Shahade • Arthur Shen • Victor Shen • Joshua Sheng • James T. Sherwin • Atulya Shetty • Igor Shliperman • Robert Shlyakhtenko • Mikhail Shur • Sahil Sinha • Leonid Sokolin • Edward Song • Josiah Stearman • Alan Stein • David Strauss • Eric Tangborn • Timothy Taylor • Eddy Tian • Gulrukhbegim Tokhirjonova • Rostislav Tsodikov • Vyom Vidyarthi • David Vigorito • Alexander Velikanov • Kesav Viswanadha • Anish Vivekananthan • Mladen Vucic • Joshua Waitzkin • Annie

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

WOMEN GRANDMASTERS (WGM)

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

WOMEN INTERNATIONAL MASTERS (WIM)

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

INTERNATIONAL ARBITERS (IA)

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FIDE SENIOR TRAINER (FST)

Vladimir Akopian • Lev Albur • Armen

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

FIDE TRAINER (FT)

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

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G. Bieltvedt • Derick Bryant • Juan Cendejas • Maggie Chen • Chi Cheng • Molly Coy • Nick de Firmian • Paul Grossman • Jon Haskel • Eric Heiser • S.E. Henderson • Diego Hendricks • Harry Heublum • Alice Holt • Vikram Honmurgi • Rachel Levin • Yi-Ning Li • Shawn Martinez • Julio Mendoza • Dale Miller • Jaafar Mohsin • Season Moore • John Morgan • Alfred Munoz • Jerry Nash • Gregory Nichols • Medina Parrilla • Kevin Pryor • Jayashree Sekar • Judit Sztaray • Alexander Veksler • Benjamin Watanabe • Yvonne White • Noah Xu

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

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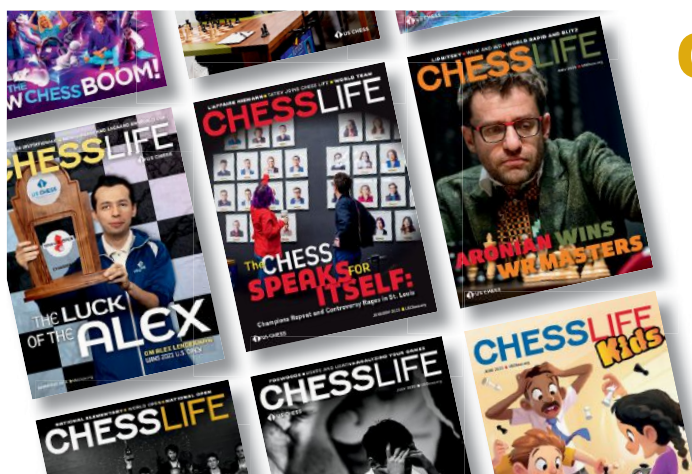
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CHESS LIFE AND CHESS LIFE KIDS

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Not Just a Journalist

I.A. Horowitz could attack with the best of them.

BY BRUCE PANDOLFINI

ISRAEL ALBERT HOROWITZ (1907-1973), better known as I.A. or simply AI, was an important figure in the realm of chess publishing. Several of his books, such as *The Golden Treasury of Chess*, *How to Think Ahead in Chess* (with Fred Reinfeld), and *Chess Openings: Theory and Practice*, are prominent in the canon of the game, and Horowitz is best-known for starting the magazine *Chess Review* with Isaac Kashdan in 1933, which in 1969 would be absorbed by *Chess Life*. He also was the chess columnist for the *New York Times*; for more than 10 years he published up to three columns a week.

But he could play a mean game as well: He was a leading player in the U.S. in the 1930s and 1940s, winning four U.S. Opens. In this 1943 encounter with Ward Mitchell (White), Horowitz was able to muster a blistering attack in no time on the way to a crushing win.

TWO KNIGHTS DEFENSE (C58)

Ward Mitchell
I.A. Horowitz
Syracuse, 1943

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. Ng5



Now ensure that the position above is set up on your chessboard. As you play through the remaining moves in this game, use a piece of

paper to cover the article, exposing Black's next move only after trying to guess it. If you guess correctly, give yourself the par score. Sometimes points are also awarded for second-best moves, and there may even be bonus points — or deductions — for other moves and variations. Note that ** means that Black's move is on the next line. **

4. Par Score 5 d5
This answer makes the most sense. Black deals with the threat to f7.

5. exd5 **

5. Par Score 6 Na5
Naturally, Black turns away from 5. ... Nxd5, when either 6. Nxf7 or 6. d4 gives White the attack.

6. Bb5+
White saves the bishop with a gain of time. **

6. Par Score 5 c6
Black gets good play after this move, but you may accept **full credit** for 6. ... Bd7. White would then obtain a slight advantage after 7. Qe2. **

7. dxc6
This enables White for now to keep the extra pawn. In exchange, Black gets the initiative and open lines for aggression. **

7. Par Score 5 bxc6
The capture 7. ... Nxc6 is perfectly playable (**full credit**), though 7. ... bxc6 keeps the initiative by attacking the b5-bishop.

8. Qf3
This is an old move, and Black has several ways to play here. **

8. Par Score 6 cxb5
Black opts for an Exchange sacrifice, hoping to obtain good attacking chances for

the material. You may accept **full credit** for either 8. ... Be7 or 8. ... Rb8.

9. Qxa8 **

9. Par Score 5 Bc5
Horowitz chooses to develop and guard the a7-pawn. You may accept **full credit** for either 9. ... Be7 or 9. ... Qc7. In all these variations, White must be alert to tactics against their queen.

10. Qf3
White wastes no time getting his queen back to civilization. **

10. Par Score 5 Bb7
This gains time at the queen's expense. But you may accept **full credit** for 10. ... 0-0, when White has plenty to watch out for.

11. Qe2
Two pawns are threatened (b5 and e5), but Black has a simple move that copes with the threats. **

11. Par Score 5 0-0
Black's position is looking promising. If White now continues 12. Qxb5, there follows 12. ... Bxf2+, when 13. Kxf2 is met by 13. ... Ng4+. And, of course, the e-pawn is immune: if 12. Qxe5? Re8.

12. c3
White looks to fork the minor pieces at a5 and c5, but he'd be better off starting to get out other pieces, say by either 12. d3 or 12. Nc3. **

12. Par Score 5 h6
Black pursues his own attack. You may accept **full credit** for 12. ... Bxg2. Horowitz perhaps didn't want to allow even a small possibility for counterplay starting with 13. Rg1.

13. Nf3

ABCS OF CHESS

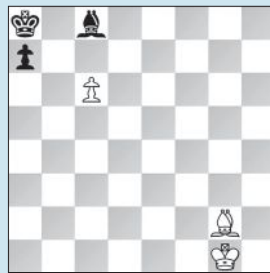
THESE PROBLEMS ARE ALL related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 71.

APRIL EXERCISE:

One method for solving composed mates relates to when the losing side has only a few possible moves. Ascertain where the defender is likely to move before deciding on your own first move. By determining the opponent's plausible tries, you can search for an all-purpose move that satisfies every contingency. This way you restrict your investigation to moves that are pertinent, instead of venturing wherever the befuddling markers on the chessboard lead you.

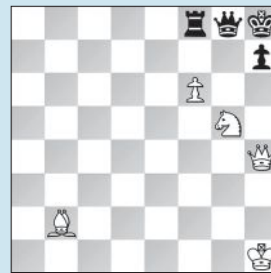
PROBLEM 1

Mating net



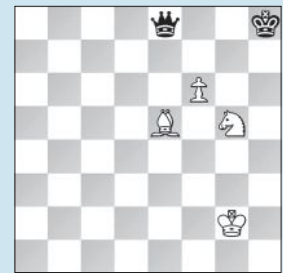
PROBLEM 2

Mating net



PROBLEM 3

Mating net



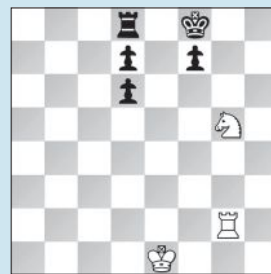
PROBLEM 4

Mating net



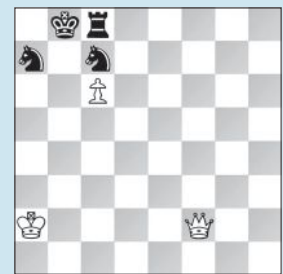
PROBLEM 5

Mating net



PROBLEM 6

Mating net



White saves his knight and g-pawn, while retaining the promise of a pawn fork at b4. **

13. Par Score 5 Nc4

It's natural to move this knight back into play. But you may accept **full credit** for 13. ... e4, with some menacing threats ahead.

14. b4

This feeble attack goes nowhere. More prudent was 14. 0-0, getting the king out of the center. **

14. Par Score 6 e4

To be sure, 15. bxc5 exf3 leaves White with an abysmal position.

15. Nd4

Rejecting the looks of both 15. Nh4 and 15. Ng1, White gives back the extra pawn, hoping to blunt Black's assault. **

15. Par Score 5 Bxd4

16. cxd4 **

16. Par Score 4 Qxd4

Finally, White is forced to develop his knight.

17. Nc3 **

17. Par Score 5 Ne5

Once again, Black can't be faulted for im-

proving the position of this knight, but you may accept **full credit** for 17. ... e3, when 18. fxe3 Nxe3 is clearly winning.

18. 0-0

As ugly as it is, 18. Kf1 is a little safer. **

18. Par Score 7 Nf3+

A crushing intrusion!

19. Kh1

Add **1 bonus point** if you analyzed 19. gxf3 exf3 20. Qe3 Qg4+ with mate next. **

19. Par Score 6 Ng4

Black's pieces are closing in.

20. Qxb5

Capturing this pawn is meaningless, but other moves didn't save the enterprise. For example, 20. d3 Qd6 21. g3 exd3 sets up a devastating discovery (**1 bonus point**), while 20. gxf3 exf3 21. Qe1 loses to either 21. ... Qd6 or 21. ... Qf4 (**1 bonus point**). **

20. Par Score 7 Qxf2

A nice move indeed! Obviously, 21. Rxf2 allows 21. ... Nxf2 mate. But accept **full credit** for 20. ... Nxf2+, which also wins.

21. Qe2

White tries his best to defend, but Black's rampage is now irresistible. **

21. Par Score 4 Qh4

Yes, mate at h2 is threatened. What can White do about it?

22. gxf3

White doesn't have many options. If 22. g3, there follows 22. ... Qh5 23. h4 Qe5, when 24. Rxf3 exf3 25. Qxe5 f2+ 26. Nd5 f1=Q is mate! Add **1 bonus point** if you calculated this. **

22. Par Score 4 exf3

The position is desperate. If 23. Rxf3, Black scores with 23. ... Bxf3+ 24. Kg1 Bxe2, when 25. Nxe2 allows 25. ... Qxh2+ 26. Kf2 Qf2 mate (or 25. ... Qf2+ 26. Kh1 Qxh2 mate). You may top off your score with **1 bonus point** for seeing either of the mates.

23. White resigned. ♠



POSITION AFTER 22. ... exf3

An Opening Book for the Computer Age

Reimagining 1. e4 takes on a big task.

BY IM JOHN WATSON

W

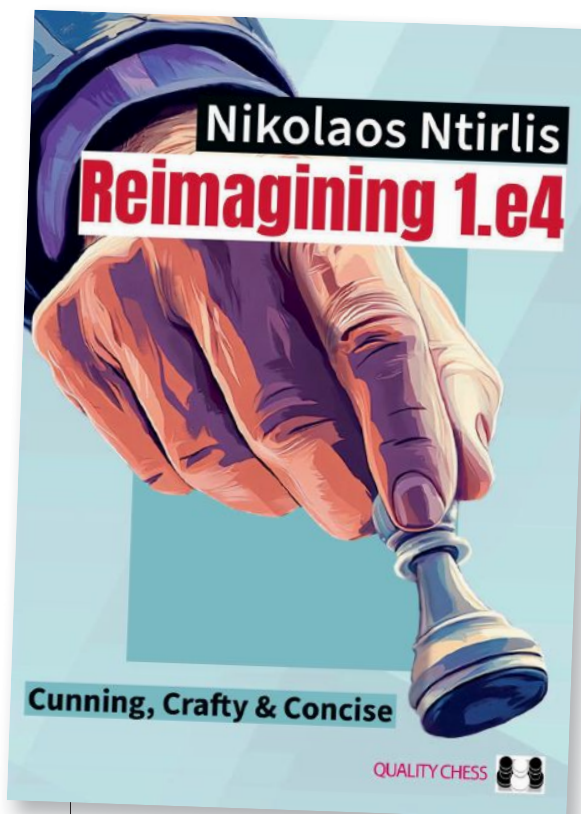
HEN I BEGAN WRITING, there were no engines or databases, and the best opening books were dis-

tinguished by thorough research and original ideas. Authors felt free to suggest an almost unlimited number of moves that players could explore on their own and use, without knowing whether those moves might ultimately be refuted or shown to be inferior. An important function of theoretical works was to point out interesting new paths, be they safe or speculative, leaving the reader to work out which lines would hold up in practice.

Those fun and adventurous times have given way to today's ruthless engines, which eliminate masses of fascinating but flawed moves, as well as by enormous databases, which ensure that any new idea, if not already tried, is instantly known to every player who searches for it.

So what is the role of opening books in our times? That depends upon the audience, of course, but for the serious tournament player, the author's selection of variations is of increased consequence.

Consider a White repertoire, such as ICCF IM Nikolaos Ntirlis constructs in *Reimagining 1. e4*. Everything has to be sound, but so many sound lines are not only equal but allow the opponent to find a solution that is drawish (or draws outright), so the best repertoire choice should guarantee that there is something to play for at the end of every variation. Ideally, even fully equal lines give



White better “practical chances,” or are “easier” or “more comfortable” to play for White.

These latter characterizations (“I’d rather be White here” is another) are increasingly and understandably common in books; I’ve used them myself. They are appropriate in principle, but be aware that almost every author will overreach a little and use them in positions where most players of Black would be equally “comfortable,” have “practical chances,” etc. Sometimes White simply has no advantage of any type, and you need

to be aware of the author’s desire to be a little more positive about his cherished line.

Basing a repertoire on 1. e4 is uniquely difficult. If you use established variations and try to be thorough, your book will require more space than most authors and publishers are comfortable with. Parimarjan Negi ended up with five volumes, totaling well over 2,000 pages, without covering 1. e4 e5! Other 1. e4 repertoire examples are Gawain Jones’ two-volume, 1,000-page work, and Justin Tan’s 1. e4! *The Chess Bible*, which used almost 500 pages without discussing 1. e4 e5 or 1. e4 c5. Christof Sielicki’s “simple” 1. e4 repertoire, which consciously avoids heavy theoretical lines, still stretches to 500 pages.

In *Reimagining 1. e4*, Ntirlis takes a sort of hybrid approach to limit the material to about 300 pages. He boldly chooses the main lines of the Ruy Lopez (more than 100 pages) and Open Sicilian (99 pages), so that 1. e4 e5 and 1. e4 c5 use 3/4 of the analytic content of the book. There’s not a great deal of room for the other defenses, several of which have mind-boggling amounts of theory attached to them. Ntirlis solves this by using a somewhat reduced repertoire versus the French (29 pages) and sidelines versus the Caro-Kann (14 pages), the Scandinavian, Pirc, Modern, Alekhine and others such as 1. ... b6 and 1. ... Nc6. For example, after 1. e4 d5 2. exd5 Qxd5, he chooses 3. h3 (not as slow as it looks, because preventing ... Bc8-g4 is so often desirable in the main lines

anyway). And against 1. e4 Nf6 2. e5 Nd5 3. d4 d6, he opts for 4. exd6. After 4. ... exd6 he goes with 5 Bd3; after 4. ... cxd6 5. Nf3 g6, the odd-looking 6. a4!?. These creative sidelines are part of the fun of the book, and recommended reading.

I was most impressed with his analysis of traditional 1. e4 e5 lines, particularly in view of how established theory is here.

**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 Na5**

The Chigorin Variation has been the most popular line in the Ruy Lopez for more than 100 years. Ntirlis' solutions to other main lines are practical and safe. Versus the Breyer Variation (9. ... Nb8 10. d4 Nbd7), he suggests 11. c4 c6 12. Qc2 Bb7 13. a3, which bypasses a lot of theory and has done well over the board. His main line goes 13. ... d5 14. cxd5 cxd5 15. exd5 Rc8 16. Nc3 Nxd5 17. Bxd5 Bxd5 18. Nxe5 Nxe5 19. dxe5 with an extra pawn versus two powerful bishops. Ntirlis says "I much prefer White," whose moves are "simpler to come up with," and suggests Qc2-f5, Bc1-e3, and Ra1-c1/d1.

Yes, the pawn is a definite advantage, but I suspect that Black is the one with the simpler play; e.g., 19. ... Bb7 20. Qf5 Rc4 21. Be3 Qa8 22. f3 Bc8 (or even 22. ... Qc8 23. Qxc8 Rfxc8) 23. Qd3 Rd8 24. Qe2 h6 25. Red1 Bf5 with active play and compensation for the pawn. It's a matter of taste.

10. Bc2 c5 11. d4 Qc7

The old main line, trusted by many of the greatest players in chess history.

12. d5



I was surprised to see that my two strongest engines have this as their top choice. For well over 100 years, 12. Nbd2 was practically automatic here, with innumerable legendary advocates. Until recently, it remained by far the most popular move, but just a few years ago that began to change, and last year is the first in which my database which shows

12. d5 catching up with 12. Nbd2.

12. ... Bd7

One interesting line goes 12. ... c4!? 13. b4! cxb3 e.p. 14. axb3 Bd7 and the knight on b1 turns out to be well placed. Now 15. Ba3 and 15. Bd2 have had great success, but Ntirlis' own suggestion is 15. Bd3!, intending the remarkably strong Re2-a2. This has a winning percentage over 80 percent, with more than a 500-point performance rating advantage!

13. b3!

Playing against the plan of ... Na5-c4-b6. Now Black's knight is very badly placed, and White has prospects on both wings. This system with 12. d5 is currently scoring spectacularly well for White and calls into question the practical value of Black's venerated Chigorin setup. A great choice by Ntirlis.

It's a real challenge to suggest anything useful against the notoriously sound Berlin Defense. Ntirlis gives an option that bypasses well worked-out lines and avoids simplification:

**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. 0-0 Nxe4
5. Re1 Nd6 6. a4**

Hardly ever seen for the first 150 years of practice, this move is still very rare compared to the near-automatic 6. Nxe5. In the past few years, however, it has caught the attention of some strong players.

6. ... Be7

Almost certainly the best move.

7. Nc3

Defending against 7. ... e4, which would be a good response to moves such as 7. Bf1.

7. ... a6 8. Bf1 e4

Black has a playable alternative in 8. ... f6 9. d4! Nf7, but even so 10. Bc4 d6 11. Nd5 gives White good attacking chances.

9. Nxe4 Nxe4 10. Rxe4 d5 11. Re1 Bg4

Or 11. ... d4, a decent alternative.

12. h3 Bh5 13. c3 d4!

Or else White plays 14. d4.

14. d3

This position has arisen a number of times. Ntirlis subjects it to serious analysis and shows that White has at least achieved an unbalanced position with mutual prospects. The position and the variation in general are fully equal, but it's a refreshing option to the exhaustively analyzed main lines.

Playing the Open Sicilian with 2. Nf3 and 3. d4 is a brave choice that few authors of one-volume 1. e4 repertoires make; it's simply too much work and violates the usual claims that the repertoire is "easy to learn" and/or "requires little memorization." Ntirlis' solution to the Sveshnikov Sicilian is a sterling example of making a lesser-known move into a practical weapon. In this case, Ntirlis himself was responsible for bringing grandmasters' attention to the idea; in the foreword, super-GM Anish Giri admits to lifting this solution for his own Chessable 1. e4 repertoire.

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6

The section on the Taimanov Sicilian is



creative and relatively straightforward for such a heavily analyzed variation: 2. ... e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. Nc3 Qc7 6. Ncb5!? (a good practical choice, and very fresh in practice) 6. ... Qb8 7. Bd3 a6 (or 7. ... Nf6 8. 0-0 Be7 9. b3 0-0 10. Bb2 Ne5 11. c4 b6) 8. Nxc6 bxc6 9. Nd4 e5 10. Ne2 Nf6 11. 0-0 Be7 12. c4 with a very minimal edge for White but plenty of play.

3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 e5 6. Ndb5 d6 7. Bg5 a6 8. Na3 b5 9. Nab1!?

A surprising retreat (because it's so slow), instead of the normal choices 9. Bxf6 and 9. Nd5. In my database, 9. Nab1 is played in only 0.5% of the games, well over half of those in the past two years because of Ntirlis' advocacy. White's simple idea is to play a2-a4 and weaken Black's queenside, which has had excellent practical results.



9. ... Be7

9. ... Ne7 has recently scored well. Ntirlis gives 10. Nd2 d5 11. exd5 Nexd5 12. Nde4! with a "small but pleasant advantage." Still, Black should hold easily in forcing sequences such as 12. ... Nxc3 (12. ... Bb4 is also good in view of 13. Bxf6 Bxc3+ 14. Nxc3 Nxf6 15. Qxd8+ Kxd8 16. 0-0-0+ Kc7 17. Re1 Re8) 13. Qxd8+ Kxd8 14. Nxc3 Bb7 15. 0-0-0+ Kc7 16. Bxf6 gxf6 17. Nd5+ Bxd5 18. Rxd5 h5 and the opposite-colored bishops should split the point, e.g., 19. Bd3 Bh6+ 20. Kb1 Kc6!? (20. ... Rhd8) 21. c4 Rad8 22. Be4! Rxd5 23. Bxd5+ Kc5 24. Bxf7 bxc4 25. Bxh5 Bf4. White might want to look at alternatives to 10. Nd2.

10. Bxf6 Bxf6 11. a4

A key position that has arisen often. Here Ntirlis brushes by an obscure dynamic option that I'll make the main line:

11. ... Nd4!?

You're more likely to encounter 11. ... b4 12. Nd5 0-0 13. Bc4 Be6 14. 0-0 Bg5, which may ultimately be playable for Black, but now 15. Qd3! gives White smooth play and arguably a small advantage. Another excellent Ntirlis suggestion.

12. Bd3

Ntirlis stops here and assesses the position as slightly better for White. The tactics after 12. axb5 Bg4! apparently lead to equality after 13. Be2! (Black is slightly better after 13. Qd3 axb5 14. Rxa8 Qxa8 and winning after 13. f3? Bh4+) 13. ... Nxe2 14. Nxe2 axb5 15. Rxa8 Qxa8 16. Qxd6 Bxe2 17. Kxe2 Qxe4+ 18. Kd1 Qxg2 19. Re1 Qf3+ 20. Re2 Qh1+ 21. Re1 Qf3+ etc.

12. ... b4 13. Nd5 Rb8 14. 0-0 0-0

This is Laddha – Poormosavi, Dubai 2024, a typically balanced Sveshnikov position. White shouldn't expect any advantage, but a complex game lies ahead and both sides can play for a win.

To meet the French Defense, Ntirlis again sticks to known theoretical lines for the most part, but less original ones than versus 1. ... e5 or 1. ... c5. His choice against the Winawer Variation is solid but a bit uninspiring:

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Nge2

This move has been used by masters since the Winawer first appeared. It has never disappeared from practice, but I don't believe any elite player has ever used it on a regular basis, and relatively few grandmasters have even made it their primary weapon against the French for more than a short period. Here we look at Ntirlis' suggestion in the most popular line.

4. ... dxe4 5. a3 Bxc3+

Black can also preserve the bishop pair with 5. ... Be7. Ntirlis gives 6. Nxe4 Nd7 7. N2c3 Ngf6 8. Bd3 as "plus-equal," when one simple idea is 8. ... 0-0 9. 0-0 e5 10. Nxf6+ (10. Be3 Nxe4 11. Bxe4 exd4 12. Bxd4 Nf6 with equality) 10. ... Bxf6 11. Ne4! exd4 12. Bf4 (or 12. Qh5 g6 13. Nxf6+ Qxf6, also with equality) 12. ... g6 13. Nxf6+ Qxf6 14. Bxc7 Nc5 15. Re1 Nxd3 16. cxd3 Bd7 17. Be5 Qg5 18. Bxd4 Rfe8 and the opposite-colored bishops neutralize White's chances. Of course, White has options such as 7. N2g3 and 7. Bf4, which are also equal but potentially more interesting.

6. Nxc3 Nc6 7. d5

7. Bb5 Nge7 has been played and analyzed for years and is proven to give equal chances.

7. ... exd5 8. Qxd5

(see diagram top of next column)

8. ... Be6

Two ideas that Ntirlis neglects are 8. ... Bg4 (discouraging 9. Qxd8+), as Nikolas Yap



POSITION AFTER 8. Qxd5

analyzes extensively in his 1. ... e6 repertoire book, and the wild (and rare) 8. ... Qxd5!? 9. Nxd5 Nd4!, which I first saw recommended in a Soviet publication over 50 years ago.

A fairly "natural" continuation is 10. Nxc7+ Kd7! 11. Nxa8 (11. Bf4 Nxc2+ 12. Kd2 Nxa1 13. Nxa8 Nb3+ 14. Kc3 Nc5! 15. Bb5+ Ke7 16. Rd1 Nd3!? 17. Bxd3 exd3 18. Rxd3 Bf5 heads towards an opposite-colored-bishops draw) 11. ... Nxc2+ 12. Kd2! Nxa1 13. Bc4 Kc6 14. Kc3 Be6 15. Bxe6 fxe6 16. Bf4 Ne7 17. Nc7 Rf8 18. Bg3 e5 with equality.

There's also 10. Bg5!? Nxc2+ (10. ... Ne6 is also possible) 11. Kd2 Nxa1 12. Nxc7+ Kf8 13. Nxa8! (13. Be3?? loses to 13. ... Rb8 14. Bxa7 Nb3+) 13. ... Nb3+ 14. Kc3 Nc5.

9. Qxd8+

Ntirlis' recommendation. 9. Qxe4 Nf6 usually leads to 10. Qa4 Qd4 (or 10. ... 0-0 11. Bd2! Bg4! 12. Be3 Bh5, which is more fun for both sides) 11. Bb5 Qxa4 12. Bxa4 0-0-0 13. Bxc6 bxc6, an ending which should be drawn but should be studied in advance.

9. ... Rxd8 10. Bf4!

If 10. Nxe4?! Nd4.

10. ... f5

In this position the performance rating of both players is dead even. Black can also play 10. ... Nf6, which is also satisfactory but more difficult: For example, 11. Bxc7 Rd7 12. Bf4 0-0 13. Bb5 Rc8 14. Bg5 Ng4! (Ntirlis gives 14. ... Ne8, which isn't as clear) 15. h3 Nge5 16. Bd2! a6 17. Bxc6 Nxc6 18. 0-0-0 (18. Nxe4?? Nd4) 18. ... f5, which must be drawn.

11. Bxc7

Black gets a slight advantage with 11. Nb5 Ke7 12. Bxc7?! (12. Nxc7 Bf7 is equal) 12. ... Rd7 13. Rd1 a6 14. Bd6+ Kf6.

11. ... Rd7 12. Bf4 Kf7 13. Rd1

Black also equalizes after 13. Bb5 Nge7, or 13. Na4 Nd4 14. 0-0-0 Nb3+! 15. cxb3 Rxd1+ 16. Kxd1 Bxb3+ 17. Kd2 Bxa4 18. Bc4+ Kg6.

13. ... Nd4 14. Rd2 Nf6 15. Nb5 Nxb5 16. Bxb5 Rxd2 17. Kxd2 Rd8+ 18. Kc1 Rc8 19. Be2 Bc4

This is equal. White's whole approach here is rather unambitious.

After 3. Nc3 Nf6, Ntirlis returns to main lines with the Steinitz Variation:

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. e5 Nfd7 5. f4 c5 6. Nf3 Nc6 7. Be3



I'll show just a couple of lines.

7. ... cxd4

Ntirlis suggests 7. ... Be7 8. dxc5 Bxc5 9. Qd2 Qb6 10. Bxc5 Nxc5 11. 0-0-0 0-0 (11. ... Bd7 12. Be2 0-0-0 is a solid alternative) 12.

Nd4, when White doesn't have much after 12. ... Rd8 with the idea of ... Nc5-e4, but it's a position with chances for both sides.

After the popular move 7. ... a6, he suggests 8. Be2 b5 (8. ... cxd4 9. Nxd4 Bc5 is a good option) 9. a3 Qb6 10. Bf2!, with sharp in-depth analysis.

He should probably mention 7. ... h6!?, which has done reasonably well, and give more details about 7. ... Qb6. Having devoted so much space to 1. e4 e5 and the Sicilian, you begin to see the effect of the reduced coverage in other openings.

8. Nxd4 Qb6

This is an extremely fashionable variation. Ntirlis' main line goes ...

9. a3! Bc5 10. Ncb5 Nxd4

Several games have shown that 10. ... a6 11. b4 axb5 12. bxc5 Qxc5 13. Qd3! (13. Nf5 d4! 14. Nxd4 Ra4!) is only slightly in White's favor after 13. ... Qe7 14. Nxb5 0-0 and 15. ... f6 next.

11. Bxd4 0-0 12. b4 Bxd4 13. Qxd4 f6 14. exf6 Rxf6 15. g3 a5! 16. Qxb6 Nxb6 17. Rb1

This is from Macieja – Luther, Bundesliga 2009. "White's position is the easier to play in practice," Ntirlis says, but I don't see that after, for example, 17. ... axb4 18. axb4 Bd7

19. Nd6 Ra7!? (or 19. ... Rb8) 20. Kd2 Kf8 21. Bd3 Ke7 22. Nb5 Bxb5 23. Bxb5 Ra8 (23. ... g5!?) 24. Rhe1 h6 25. h4 Rc8 26. Re2 Nc4+ 27. Bxc4 Rxc4.

I read *Reimagining 1. e4* from cover to cover and enjoyed it a lot. I'm not sure Ntirlis' suggestions against lesser variations are always optimal in a theoretical sense, but they are fascinating, practical, and often ingenious. To me, the lasting value of the book resides in the way he has found solutions in major openings that are both simpler to play and more challenging than heavily analyzed main lines. I think most of Ntirlis' suggestions have legs and will persist even after they have been played more. In these days of obsessive opening preparation, that's saying a lot. ♠

Ntirlis, Nikolaos. Reimagining 1. e4. Quality Chess, 2024. 304 pp. ISBN: 978-1784832438. [Available at uscfsales.com. Product Code B0251QT, \$32.95]

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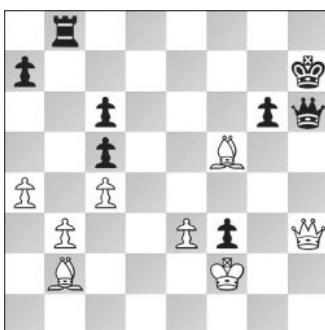
(Benjamin, continued from page 17)

SOMETHING ABOUT TRIANGLES

GM Arjun Erigaisi (2801)

GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov (2768)

Tata Steel Masters (12), Wijk aan Zee, 02.01.2025



WHITE TO MOVE

The suddenly former 2800 picked things up at the end after a nightmarish start.

42. Bxg6!

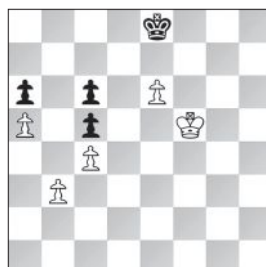
White can win without this tactic, but it definitely simplifies matters.

42. ... Kxg6 43. Qe6+ Kh5 44. Bf6!

This nice touch is the only game-winner. The tables would completely turn after 44. Qh3+ Kg6 44. Qg3??? Qg5.

44. ... Qh7 45. Qe5+ Kg6 46. Qxb8, Black resigned.

But why? Because queen endings can be tricky, but pawn endings have well-established, immutable rules, as we would have seen from the likely continuation 46. ... Kxf6 47. Qd6+ Kg5 48. Qf4+ Kg6 49. Qe4+ Kg7 50. Qxh7+ Kxh7 51. Kxf3 Kg6 52. Kf4 Kf6 53. a5 a6 54. e4 Ke6 55. e5 Ke7 56. Kf5 Kf7 57. e6+ Ke8!



POSITION AFTER 57. ... Ke8

Students of Endgame School should be familiar with this tried-and-true pattern. After 58. Ke4 Kf8 59. Kf4 Ke8 60. Kf5 Black is in zugzwang: 60. ... Kf8 61. Kf6 or 60. ... Ke7 61. Ke5. ♠

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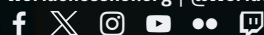


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new.uschess.org/national-events-calendar

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 • 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:** Y **Organizer:** US Chess Federation **Email:** nationalevents@uschess.org **Phone:** n/a **Website:** uschess.org/tournaments/2025/sn8 **TLA ID:** 47674

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • HERITAGE EVENT

8th Annual US Amateur East Individual MAY 25-25, 2025, NEW JERSEY

Event site: Delta Hotels Woodbridge **Address:** 515 US Highway 1 South, Iselin, NJ 08830 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Aaron Kiedes **Email:** akiedes@gmail.com **Phone:** n/a **Website:** njscf.org **TLA ID:** 48857

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:** vegaschess@gmail.com **Phone:** 702-930-9550 **Website:** vegaschessfestival.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:** vegaschess@gmail.com **Phone:** 702-930-9550 **Website:** vegaschessfestival.com **TLA ID:** 47549

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

125th Annual U.S. Open Championship JULY 28-AUGUST 3, 2025, WISCONSIN

Event site: Madison Marriott West **Address:** 1313 John Q. Hammons Drive, Middleton, WI 53562 **Overall prize fund:** \$60,000 **GP Points:** 300 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** US Chess Federation **Email:** nationalevents@uschess.org **Phone:** n/a **Website:** uschess.org/tournaments/2025/usopen **TLA ID:** 49051

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2025 US CHESS GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

Name	State/Ctry	Pts
1. GM JIANCHAO ZHOU	MA	116
2. THOMAS FANG	NC	52
3. GM FIDEL CORRALES JIMINEZ	NY	48
4. GM GLEB DUBIN	FOR	34
5. GM JOHN MICHAEL BURKE	NJ	34
6. GM AWONDER LIANG	WI	32.222
7. ANSH SHAH	NJ	30.4
8. IM SANDEEP SETHURAMAN	AZ	30
9. FM JULIAN COLVILLE	CA	26
10. EMIN OHANYAN	MO	24.5

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

The Grand Prix continues in 2025. For information visit new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program

GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

4th Stephen Sosnick Memorial Chess Festival Saturday Action Chess

APRIL 5, 2025, CALIFORNIA

Event site: UC Davis Conference Center **Address:** 550 Alumni Lane, Davis, CA 95616 **Overall prize fund:** \$750 **GP Points:** 15 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Sosnick Chess & Davis Chess Club **Email:** michael@fpawn.com **Phone:** n/a **Website:** sosnickchess.com **TLA ID:** 48189

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Big April Dragon Knight Grand Prix APRIL 5, 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:** 48221

GRAND PRIX

4th Stephen Sosnick Memorial Chess Festival Sunday Rapid Chess

APRIL 6, 2025, CALIFORNIA

Event site: UC Davis Conference Center **Address:** 550 Alumni Lane, Davis, CA 95616 **Overall prize fund:** \$750 **GP Points:** 15 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Sosnick Chess & Davis Chess Club **Email:** michael@fpawn.com **Phone:** n/a **Website:** sosnickchess.com **TLA ID:** 48193

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Slow Art Day Grand Prix APRIL 12, 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:** 48218

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

33rd Massachusetts G/60 Championship APRIL 13, 2025, MASSACHUSETTS

Event site: Westford Regency Inn & Conference Center **Address:** 219 Littleton Rd., Westford MA 01886 **Overall prize fund:** \$3,000 **GP Points:** 15 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Massachusetts Chess Association **Email:** info@masschess.org **Phone:** 603-891-2484 (day of the tournament call 603-557-1732) **Website:** masschess.org **TLA ID:** 48202

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:** chessour.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 Dommalapati **Email:** co2025@capitolareachess.com **Phone:** 1-703-627-5314 **Website:** capitolareachess.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:** renochess.org **TLA ID:** 46828

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Princeton Open Blitz Championship

APRIL 19, 2025, NEW JERSEY

Event site: Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village **Address:** 201 Village Blvd., Princeton, NJ 08540 **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:** chessour.com **TLA ID:** 48619

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Husband Appreciation Day Grand Prix

APRIL 19, 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:** 48874

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 Phillip O'Neal Taylor Georgia State Championship

APRIL 25-27, 2025, GEORGIA

Event site: DoubleTree by Hilton Atlanta Perimeter Dunwoody **Address:** 4386 Chamblee Dunwoody Road, Atlanta, GA 30341 **Overall prize fund:** \$10,000 **GP Points:** 80 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Thad Rogers **Email:** ltthadrogers@gmail.com **Phone:** n/a **Website:** georgiachess.org **TLA ID:** 48245

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Remembering Susan Kantor!

APRIL 26, 2025, ILLINOIS

Event site: Rock Springs Rotary Nature Center **Address:** 1428 East 3rd Street, O'Fallon, Illinois 62269 **Overall prize fund:** \$2,000 **GP Points:** 20 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Alan Kantor **Email:** carokantor05@yahoo.com **Phone:** (931) 200-9038 **Website:** n/a **TLA ID:** 48368

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 Texas Quick Chess Championship APRIL 26, 2025, TEXAS

Event site: The Houston Chess Studio **Address:** 250 Patton St, Suite H, Houston, TX 77009 **Overall prize fund:** \$387.50 **GP Points:** 6 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Edgar Acosta **Email:** poisonpawnschessclub@gmail.com **Phone:** 281-844-4139 **Website:** poisonpawns.club **TLA ID:** 48581

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

8th Massachusetts Senior Open APRIL 26-27, 2025, MASSACHUSETTS

Event site: Embassy Suites **Address:** 4123 Boston Post Road West, Marlborough, MA 01752 **Overall prize fund:** \$1,100 **GP Points:** 10 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Massachusetts Chess Association **Email:** info@masschess.org **Phone:** 603-891-2484 **Website:** masschess.org **TLA ID:** 48864

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:** chessour.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:** spacecoastchessfoundation.org/event/spacecoastopen **TLA ID:** 46260

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Big May Dragon Knight Grand Prix MAY 3, 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@dragoknightchess.com **Phone:** 919-422-2535 **Website:** DragonKnightChess.com **TLA ID:** 48877

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Windmill Day Grand Prix MAY 10, 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@dragoknightchess.com **Phone:** 919-422-2535 **Website:** DragonKnightChess.com **TLA ID:** 48876

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

12th Cherry Blossom Classic MAY 22-26, 2025, VIRGINIA

Event site: Executive Conference and Training Center **Address:** 22685 Holiday Park Dr, Ste 60, Sterling, VA 20166 **Overall prize fund:** \$27,000 **GP Points:** 200 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Anand Dommalapati **Email:** cbc2025@capitalareachess.com **Phone:** 1-703-627-5314 **Website:** capitalareachess.com/CherryBlossom **TLA ID:** 47970

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:** chessus.com **TLA ID:** 46255

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

93rd Massachusetts Open MAY 24-26, 2025, MASSACHUSETTS

Event site: Westford Regency Inn & Conference Center **Address:** 219 Littleton Road, Westford, MA 01886 **Overall prize fund:** \$7,500 **GP Points:** 50 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Massachusetts Chess Association **Email:** info@masschess.org **Phone:** 603-891-2484 **Website:** masschess.org **TLA ID:** 48865

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX

45th Annual Lina Grumette Memorial Day Classic MAY 24-26, 2025, CALIFORNIA, S.

Event site: Airtel Plaza Hotel **Address:** 7277 Valjean Ave, Van Nuys, CA 91406 **Overall prize fund:** \$17,000 **GP Points:** 60 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Randall Hough **Email:** randallhough@gmail.com **Phone:** 6262827412 **Website:** scchess.com **TLA ID:** 48885

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

14th annual Chicago Open Blitz MAY 25, 2025, ILLINOIS

Event site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 North Milwaukee Ave., Wheeling, IL 60090 **Overall prize fund:** \$2,500 **GP Points:** 30 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chessus.com **TLA ID:** 48873

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 Virginia Senior Open MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025, VIRGINIA

Event site: Country Inn & Suites by Radisson **Address:** 10358 Patriot Hwy, Fredericksburg, VA 22408 **Overall prize fund:** \$2,200 **GP Points:** 20 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Mike Hoffpauir, NTD/IA **Email:** mhoffpauir@aol.com **Phone:** 757-846-4805 **Website:** vachess.org **TLA ID:** 48327

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration of the 1975 U.S. Open MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025, NEBRASKA

Event site: Graduate Hotel **Address:** 141 N 9th St, Lincoln, NE 68508 **Overall prize fund:** \$10,000 **GP Points:** 150 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Bruce G Draney **Email:** bruceykins49@hotmail.com **Phone:** 4023126335 **Website:** kingregistration.com **TLA ID:** 48412

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

33rd Annual Eastern Class Championships JUNE 6-8, 2025, CONNECTICUT

Event site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel At Bradley International Airport **Address:** 1 Bradley Airport (visible at airport entrance), Windsor Locks CT 06096 **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:** chessus.com **TLA ID:** 47565

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

18th Continental Chess Cleveland Open JUNE 13-15, 2025, OHIO

Event site: Crowne Plaza Cleveland Airport Hotel **Address:** 7230 Engle Road, Middleburg Heights OH 44130 **Overall prize fund:** \$15,000 **GP Points:** 120 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chessus.com **TLA ID:** 48167

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2025 Chicago Summer Open JUNE 20-22, 2025, ILLINOIS

Event site: Hyatt Regency Schaumburg **Address:** 1800 E Golf Rd, Schaumburg, IL 60173 **Overall prize fund:** \$10,000 **GP Points:** 50 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** King Registration and Wilson Chess **Email:** info@kingregistration.com **Phone:** n/a **Website:** kingregistration.com/event/Chisummeropen25 **TLA ID:** 48866

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

29th annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur JUNE 20-22, 2025, NEW YORK

Event site: Tiki Resort **Address:** 2 Canada Street, Lake George, NY 12845 **Overall prize fund:** \$3,300 **GP Points:** 20 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chessus.com **TLA ID:** 48865

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:** chessus.com **TLA ID:** 46651

AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

19th annual Philadelphia Open JUNE 27-29, 2025, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia PA 19103 **Overall prize fund:** \$15,000 **GP Points:** 120 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chessus.com **TLA ID:** 47567

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.

GRAND PRIX

3rd Annual Independence Day Open

JULY 2-6, 2025, VIRGINIA

Event site: Washington Dulles Airport Marriott Address: 45020 Aviation Dr, Dulles, VA 20166 Overall prize fund: \$10,500 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Atlantic Chess Association Email: director@atlanticchessassociation.com Phone: n/a Website: n/a TLA ID: 47912

HERITAGE EVENT • 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: 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@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessour.com TLA ID: 46655

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

14th annual World Open Game/7 Blitz Championship

JULY 2, 2025, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Address: 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$1,500 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessour.com TLA ID: 48878

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

33rd annual World Open G/10 Championship

JULY 5, 2025, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Address: 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$2,200 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessour.com TLA ID: 48879

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

36th annual World Open Blitz Championship

JULY 6, 2025, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Address: 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$3,000 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessour.com TLA ID: 48880

GRAND PRIX

1st Greater Baystate Summer Open

JULY 12, 2025, MASSACHUSETTS

Event site: Auburn/ Webster Elks Lodge Address: 754 Southbridge Street, Auburn, MA 01501 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 50 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Greater Baystate Chess Email: greaterbaystatechess@gmail.com Phone: 4133560303 Website: greaterbaystatechess.com TLA ID: 49155

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

18th annual Chicago Class Championships

JULY 18-20, 2025, ILLINOIS

Event site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel Address: 601 N Milwaukee Avenue, Wheeling, IL 60090 Overall prize fund: \$30,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessour.com TLA ID: 48868

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

26th annual Pittsburgh Open

JULY 18-20, 2025, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Doubletree Green Tree Address: 500 Mansfield Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15205 Overall prize fund: \$13,000 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessour.com TLA ID: 48870

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

33rd Annual Southern Open

JULY 25-27, 2025, FLORIDA

Event site: Delta Hotels Orlando Celebration Address: 2900 Parkway Boulevard, Kissimmee, FL 34747 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessour.com TLA ID: 48867

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

30th Annual Bradley Open

JULY 25-27, 2025, CONNECTICUT

Event site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel at Bradley Airport Address: 1 Bradley Airport, Windsor Locks, CT 06096 Overall prize fund: \$15,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessour.com TLA ID: 48871

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: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Michael W Regan Email: mregan@stsci.edu Phone: 4104195130 Website: mdchess.com TLA ID: 47444

Regional

ALABAMA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025

33rd Annual Southern Open (FL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

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

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (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.

APRIL 26, 2025

Remembering Susan Kantor! (IL)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

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 Forrester 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): \$1000-700-500-400-300-300-200-200.

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.

CALIFORNIA

APRIL 5, 2025

4th Stephen Sosnick Memorial Chess Festival Saturday Action Chess (CA-N)
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 6, 2025

4th Stephen Sosnick Memorial Chess Festival Sunday Rapid Chess (CA-N)
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 24, 2025

MDC Scholastics**Event site:** Airtel Plaza Hotel **Address:** 7277 Valjean Ave, Van Nuys, CA 91406 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Randall Hough **Email:** randallhough@gmail.com **Phone:** 6262827412 **Website:** scchess.com **TLA ID:** 48886

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.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025

HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration of the 1975 U.S. Open (NE)
See Grand Prix.**CONNECTICUT**

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 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 6-8, 2025

33rd Annual Eastern Class Championships (CT)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 20-22, 2025

29th annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur (NY)
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.

JULY 12, 2025

1st Greater Baystate Summer Open (MA)
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025

30th Annual Bradley Open (CT)
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.**STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT**

MAY 3, 2025

Delaware State Scholastic Championship (DE)**Event site:** Bellevue Community Center **Address:** 500 Duncan Road, Wilmington, DE 19809 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** Y **Organizer:** Delaware Chess Association **Email:** connect@delawarechessassociation.org **Phone:** 302-593-3752 **Website:** delawarechessassociation.org **TLA ID:** 48790

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025

2025 Virginia Senior 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.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.**FLORIDA**

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.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (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.

JULY 25-27, 2025

33rd Annual Southern Open (FL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International (MD)
See Grand Prix.**GEORGIA**

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 25-27, 2025

2025 Phillip O'Neal Taylor Georgia State Championship (GA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 2-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (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.

JULY 25-27, 2025

33rd Annual Southern Open (FL)
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.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025

2025 National Open (NV)
See National Events.**ILLINOIS**

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 26, 2025

Remembering Susan Kantor! (IL)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 25, 2025

14th annual Chicago Open Blitz (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 20-22, 2025

2025 Chicago Summer Open (IL)
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.

JULY 18-20, 2025

18th annual Chicago Class Championships. (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International (MD)
See Grand Prix.**INDIANA**

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 26, 2025

Remembering Susan Kantor! (IL)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 20-22, 2025

2025 Chicago Summer Open (IL)
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.

JULY 18-20, 2025

18th annual Chicago Class Championships. (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.**IOWA**

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 26, 2025

Remembering Susan Kantor! (IL)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025

HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration of the 1975 U.S. Open (NE)
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 20-22, 2025

2025 Chicago Summer Open (IL)
See Grand Prix.

KANSAS

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025

HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration of the
1975 U.S. Open (NE)

See Grand Prix.

KENTUCKY

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

LOUISIANA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAINE

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JULY 12, 2025

1st Greater Baystate Summer Open (MA)

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.

APRIL 14, 2025

Chess Fest Tournament (MD)

Event site: American Brewery Building Address: 1701 N Gay St, Baltimore, MD 21213 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Kim Hicks Email: kim.hicks@theboardroomchess.org Phone: 4109628540 Website: theboardroomchess.org TLA ID: 48872

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 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025

2025 Virginia Senior Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-30, 2025

18th annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

19th annual Philadelphia Open (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

APRIL 13, 2025

32nd Massachusetts G/60
Championship (MA)

See Grand Prix.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 18, 2025

Greater Baystate Spring Classic (MA)

Event site: Northampton Center For the Arts - Flex Room Address: 33 Hawley Street, Northampton, MA 01060 Overall prize fund: \$3,675 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Greater Baystate Chess Email: greaterbaystatechess@gmail.com Phone: 4133560303 Website: greaterbaystatechess.com TLA ID: 47586

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 24-26, 2025

93rd Massachusetts Open (MA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 6-8, 2025

33rd Annual Eastern Class
Championships (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 20-22, 2025

29th annual New York State Open and
Senior Amateur (NY)

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

19th annual Philadelphia Open (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.

JULY 12, 2025

1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
(MA)

See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025

30th Annual Bradley Open (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International
(MD)

See Grand Prix.

MICHIGAN

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

APRIL 12-13, 2025

2025 Michigan Senior Championships (MI)

Event site: Twin Knights Gaming Address: 4955 Rochester Rd, Troy, MI, 48065 Overall prize fund: \$300 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Michigan Chess Association Email: jeffchess64@gmail.com Phone: 810-955-7271 Website: michess.org TLA ID: 48539

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

APRIL 26, 2025

Remembering Susan Kantor! (IL)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

JUNE 7-8, 2025

2025 Michigan Amateur

Event site: Hilton Garden Inn Grand Rapids East Address: 2321 E Beltline Ave SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Michigan Chess Association Email: jeffchess64@gmail.com Phone: 810-955-7271 Website: michess.org TLA ID: 47762

JUNE 13-15, 2025

18th Continental Chess Cleveland
Open (OH)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 20-22, 2025

2025 Chicago Summer Open (IL)

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.

MINNESOTA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025

HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration of the
1975 U.S. Open (NE)

See Grand Prix.

MISSISSIPPI

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

APRIL 5-6, 2025

2025 Mississippi Senior State
Championship (MS)

Event site: Nissan Training Center Address: 300 Nissan Dr., Gate 1, Canton, MS 39046 Overall prize fund: \$350 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mississippi Chess Association Email: mark@mcachess.org Phone: 615-631-3876 Website: mcachess.org TLA ID: 47442

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MISSOURI

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

APRIL 19, 2025

Columbia Open

Event site: Rockbridge High School Address: 4303 S. Providence Rd, Columbia, MO 65203 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Bob Howe Email: bdhowe@yahoo.com Phone: 636-234-7928 Website: mochess.org TLA ID: 49017

APRIL 26, 2025

Remembering Susan Kantor! (IL)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025

HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration of the
1975 U.S. Open (NE)

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.

MONTANA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

NEBRASKA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

NEVADA

APRIL 5, 2025

4th Stephen Sosnick Memorial Chess
Festival Saturday Action Chess (CA-N)

See Grand Prix.

APRIL 6, 2025

4th Stephen Sosnick Memorial Chess
Festival Sunday Rapid Chess (CA-N)

See Grand Prix.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JULY 12, 2025

1st Greater Baystate Summer Open (MA)

See Grand Prix.

NEW JERSEY

APRIL 19, 2025

Hamilton Chess Club Quads

Event site: Switlik Park Pavilion **Address:** Fisher Place/Joe Dimaggio Drive, Hamilton, NJ 08610 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Edward Sytnik **Email:** edmendou@aol.com **Phone:** 6097582326 **Website:** hamiltonchessclub.com **TLA ID:** 47748

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.

APRIL 19, 2025

Princeton Open Blitz Championship (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

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

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025

2025 Virginia Senior Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 6-8, 2025

33rd Annual Eastern Class Championships (CT)

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

19th annual Philadelphia Open (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.

JULY 6, 2025

36th annual World Open Blitz Championship (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.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025

2025 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

NEW YORK

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

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025

2025 Virginia Senior Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 6-8, 2025

33rd Annual Eastern Class Championships (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 13-15, 2025

18th Continental Chess Cleveland Open (OH)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 20-22, 2025

29th annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur (NY)

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

19th annual Philadelphia Open (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.

JULY 6, 2025

36th annual World Open Blitz Championship (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025

26th annual Pittsburgh Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-27, 2025

30th Annual Bradley Open (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025

12th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

NORTH CAROLINA

APRIL 5, 2025

Big April Dragon Knight Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

APRIL 12, 2025

Dragon Knight Slow Art Day Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

APRIL 19, 2025

Dragon Knight Husband Appreciation Day Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 2-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 3, 2025

Big May Dragon Knight Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 10, 2025

Dragon Knight Windmill Day Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025

2025 Virginia Senior 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.

NORTH DAKOTA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

NO. MARIANA ISL.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

OHIO

FEBRUARY 7, 2025-WEEKLY ON FRIDAY

Every Friday 6pm Quads at Greater Cleveland Chess Club & Center

Event site: Greater Cleveland Chess Center **Address:** 10060 Brecksville Rd, Brecksville, OH 44141 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Greater Cleveland Chess Club & Center **Email:** julie@greaterclevelandchess.org **Phone:** 3306037839 **Website:** greaterclevelandchess.org **TLA ID:** 48660

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

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 13-15, 2025

18th Continental Chess Cleveland Open (OH)

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.

JULY 18-20, 2025

26th annual Pittsburgh Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OKLAHOMA

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

APRIL 12-13, 2025

2025 Oklahoma Senior Open and Championship (OK)

Event site: Norman Chess Club **Address:** 3100 S Berry Suite 100, Norman, OK 73072 **Overall prize fund:** \$1,400 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Oklahoma Chess Association **Email:** joeveal2016@yahoo.com **Phone:** 405-215-1495 **Website:** oklahomachess.org **TLA ID:** 48472

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

OREGON

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (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

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.

APRIL 19, 2025

Princeton Open Blitz Championship (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

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

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 13-15, 2025

18th Continental Chess Cleveland Open (OH)
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

19th annual Philadelphia Open (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

JUNE 27-29, 2025

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections (PA)
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: chessstour.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.

JULY 2, 2025

14th annual World Open Game/7 Blitz Championship (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 5, 2025

33rd annual World Open G/10 Championship (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 6, 2025

36th annual World Open Blitz Championship (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025

26th annual Pittsburgh Open (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.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

JULY 12, 2025

1st Greater Baystate Summer Open (MA)
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.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

📍 SOUTH DAKOTA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025

HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration of the 1975 U.S. Open (NE)
See Grand Prix.

📍 TENNESSEE

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 26, 2025

Remembering Susan Kantor! (IL)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 24, 2025

Tri-Cities G/30 Swiss (TN)
Event site: The Philosopher's House Address: 117 W. Fairview Ave., Johnson City, TN 37615 Overall prize fund: \$150 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: David Fischler Email: dfischler@verizon.net Phone: 6189442892 Website: facebook.com/groups/1190356468262776 TLA ID: 48924

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 Pennsylvania.

📍 TEXAS

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (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.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025

2025 National Open (NV)
See National Events.

📍 VERMONT

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 3, 2025

Bennington Spring Open (VT)
Event site: Bennington Free Library Address: 101 Silver St., Bennington, VT 05201 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Andrew Palmer Email: palmera62@hotmail.com Phone: 8026815417 Website: n/a TLA ID: 48621

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 20-22, 2025

29th annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur (NY)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 12, 2025

1st Greater Baystate Summer Open (MA)
See Grand Prix.

📍 VIRGIN ISL., U.S.

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

📍 VIRGINIA

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025

2025 Virginia Senior Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-30, 2025

18th annual Philadelphia International (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025

19th annual Philadelphia Open (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.

📍 WASHINGTON

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (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.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

📍 WISCONSIN

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

APRIL 26, 2025

Remembering Susan Kantor! (IL)
See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MAY 17, 2025

2025 Wisconsin Rapid and Blitz State Championships (WI)
Event site: Courtyard by Marriott Address: 2266 Deming Way, Middleton, WI 53562 Overall prize fund: \$1,300 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mike Nietman Email: mike.nietman@charter.net Phone: 608-467-8510 Website: wischess.org TLA ID: 48207

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 20-22, 2025

2025 Chicago Summer Open (IL)
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.

JULY 18-20, 2025

18th annual Chicago Class Championships. (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

📍 WYOMING

APRIL 17-20, 2025

6th Colonial Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

12th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)
See Grand Prix.



GET READY

SUPERNATIONALS VIII

US CHESS NES + NMS + NHS
May 9-11, 2025 | ORLANDO, FL

2025 - 12th Annual Reno-Larry Evans Memorial Open

Apr 18-20 & Apr 19-20 (3-day & 2-day schedules)
6SS; 6 Sect; Open-FIDE Rated; A Weikel Tourney
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CORRESPONDENCE CHESS

Check out these US Chess Rated Events!

7-Player Championship Events

2025 Golden Knights (Postal) | 2025 Electronic Knights

FORMAT: Players play 6 games as single round robin, groupings based on order entries received. Players start in Preliminary round and qualify for Semi-final and then Final rounds based on scores in previous round. **ENTRY FEE:** \$35 per entry. Players can enter up to a maximum of 10 times per event. **PRIZES:** Prize fund of \$2300 based on 200 entries. \$15 correspondence chess gift certificate to players knocked out in Preliminary round.

7-Player Round Robins

Victor Palciauskas Tournament (ICCF Server)

FORMAT: Players play 6 games as single round robin, groupings based on ratings. **ENTRY FEE:** \$5 per entry. **PRIZES:** 1st place receives a signed certificate.

4-Player Quads

John W. Collins Memorial (Postal) | Walter Muir E-Quads (ICCF Server)

FORMAT: Players play 6 games as double round robin, groupings based on ratings. **ENTRY FEE:** \$10 per entry. **PRIZES:** 1st place receives \$25 correspondence chess gift certificate and signed certificate.

2-Player Matches (Postal or Email)

FORMAT: Players play either 2, 4, or 6 games against the same opponent. Selecting multiple options may facilitate faster pairings. Pairings based on ratings or players may name their own opponent. **ENTRY FEE:** \$5 per entry. **PRIZES:** None.

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- ☐ Golden Knights EF: \$35 ☐ Palciauskas ICCF EF: \$5 ☐ Muir ICCF Quad EF: \$10 | 2-player matches, EF: \$5 per entry, see above for options
☐ Electronic Knights EF: \$35 ☐ Collins Quad EF: \$10 Postal Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐ Email Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐
☐ Check here if you do not wish to have an opponent who is incarcerated (note that this may slow down your assignment).

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Solutions

PAGE 13 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. Fastest is 20. Bxf7+! followed by 20. ... Kf8 21. Rd8 mate or 20. ... Qxf7 21. Rd8+ Kxd8 22. Qxf7.
PROBLEM 2. White can win with 23. Rxg4 or 23. Bf5, but 23. Ne6! mates in two more moves (23. ... fxe6 24. Rxg4+ Nxg4 25. Qh7 mate). **PROBLEM 3.** White won with 21. Re3! (White could also play 21. Bd3 first). If 21. ... Bxe3 White piles up on the pinned knight with 22. fxe3 followed by 23. Qh4. Otherwise, he threatens 22. Rg3+ Bxg3 23. fxg3 and Bxf6+. Black resigned after 21. ... Qg4 22. Qxg4 Bxg4 23. Re4. **PROBLEM 4.** Much better than 15. Qxd8 Bxd8 16. e7 Bxf5 is 15. Nd5!. For example, the game went 15. ... Nd4 16. Ndx7+ Kh8 17. Ng6+! and 18. e7. **PROBLEM 5.** White mates after 27. Bxg7! Bxg7 28. Re8+ Bf8 29. Rxf8+! or after 27. ...

f6 28. Qh8+. **PROBLEM 6. 22. ... Rd8!** threatens 23. ... Rxd1+ and 23. ... Bd4. White resigned after **23. Nf2 Bd4 24. Qe1 Bxf2+** in view of 25. Kxf2 Qxb6+ 26. Qe3 Rd2+.

PAGE 47 MAKE YOUR MOVE

TACTIC 1. 21. Bxf6! Bxe4 Or 21. ... Bxf6 22. Rxe8+ Qxe8 23. Nxf6+, winning. **22. Bxd8 Rxe5 23. Qc3** Sidestepping all threats and pins, winning material. **23. ... Re6 24. Ba5 Bxc2 25. Qxc2 Bxd4 26. Bc3 Rae8 27. Kf1 Bc5 28. Re1, Black resigned.** Lu Miaoyi – Svane, Tata Steel Challengers, Wijk aan Zee 2025. **TACTIC 2. 30. ... Rf6!** No need to guard the b-pawn; the counterattack on the f-file is far more problematic for White. **31. Rxb7 Qf5** White's king seemed safe, but that turned out to be an illusion. **32. Be4 Qxf2+ 33. Kh3 g5, White resigned.** Warmerdam – Fedoseev, Tata Steel Masters, Wijk aan Zee 2025. The conclusion could have been 34. hxg5 (or 34. Bg2 gxh4 35. gxh4 Rg6) 34. ... h4 35. gxh4 Qxe3+ with a forced mate. **TACTIC 3. 32. ... Nxb3!** Removing the last defenders of White's king. **33. Rb1** The knight cannot be captured: 33. Bxb3 Rxc2+ 34. Bxc2 Rb2+ 35. Kxa3 Rxc2 and White's bare king will not survive for long. **33. ... Ba4 34. Bd3** Or 34. Qf2 Nd4 35. Ne7+ Rxe7 36. Rxb8 Rxb8 37. Qf4 Reb7 38. Bxf7+ Kh8 39. Bd5 Bxc2 40. Bxb7 Bb3+ 41. Kxa3 Rxb7 and Black is winning. **34. ... Nc5 35. Ne7+ Kh8 36. Rxb7 Qxb7 37. Ba6 Qxe7, White resigned.** Caruana – Praggnanandhaa, Tata Steel Masters, Wijk aan Zee 2025. **TACTIC 4. 35. Nxb6!** In the face! **35. ... Bxb6** Or 35. ... Qg6 36. Ng4+ Bh6 37. Rf7+ Ng7 38. Nxb6 Qxb6 39. Rxb7+ Kxb7 40. Rf7+ Kxf7 41. Qxb6 and White is winning. **36. Rf7+ Ng7** Or 36. ... Rg7 37. R1f6! Qxf7 38. Rxb6+ Kg8 39. Rh8 mate. **37. R1f6 Rg6 38. Rxb6, Black resigned.** There's no stopping the mate on the h-file. Gurel – Yakubboev, Tata Steel Challengers, Wijk aan Zee 2025. **TACTIC 5. 30. ... Rxc6! 31. Rxc6 Rc7!!** Boom! Due to issues on the back rank, White cannot capture the queen. **32. Bd7 Bxd4, White resigned.** The queen is still untouchable, and White stands to lose material. Yakubboev – Vaishali, Tata Steel Challengers, Wijk aan Zee 2025. **TACTIC 6. 22. Nxa6+!!** Boom! Black put the knight on b5 thinking the door was closed on White's queenside attack. After the sacrifice, the hinges come off that door. **22. ... bxa6 23. Rxc6 Rd7** Or 23. ... Bb7 24. Bxb5 axb5 25. Nf5! (25. Qxb5?? Qd7 throws away White's advantage) 25. ... Qd7 26. Rxf6 and White wins. **24. Nf5! Qd8 25. Bxb5 axb5** Or 25. ... Ka7 26. Rxc8! Qxc8 27. Bxd7 Nxd7 28. Qxd5, which also wins for White. **26. a6 Ra7 27. Qxb5+ Ka8 28. Nd6 Bd7 29. Qb7+!, Black resigned.** Praggnanandhaa – Sarana, Tata Steel Masters, Wijk aan Zee 2025. **TACTIC 7. 28. Be5!!** This clever move repositions to interfere with Black's attacking aspirations on the kingside. After **28. ... Kh7 29. Bg3 Qg5 30. Re1 h4 31. Bf4 Qg6 32. Re3** White is winning. The game, instead, continued in a rather terrible fashion for White: **28. h3?? Qg3 29. c6 Kh7 30. Qc5 Rg6 31. Rc1** White could have played 31. Qxb5+! Kg8 32. Bd4 Bxg2 (or 32. ... Re7 33. c7 Rxc7 34. Re1 Rf7 35. Rxe4 Rxf2 36. Re8+ Kf7 37. Qd5+ Kxe8 38. Bxf2 with an advantage for White) 33. Qxb6! Qxb6 34. Rxb2 and White is winning. **31. ... Qxb6, White resigned.** Mendonca – Keymer, Tata Steel Masters, Wijk aan Zee 2025. **TACTIC 8. 28. ... Ne4!** This

counterthreat launches Black's counterattack. **29. Qd1 Qb8** Threatening g3. **30. Kg1** If 30. Kg2, then 30. ... Bh6! 31. f4 Nxg3! and Black's attack crashes through. **30. ... Nxg3 31. Nc5 Nf5** Black is winning. The game finished **32. Qg4 Qe8 33. Nbd3 Nc6 34. Nf4 Bxd4, White resigned.** Warmerdam – Gukesh, Tata Steel Masters, Wijk aan Zee 2025. **TACTIC 9. 27. Bxg6!!** This surprising move allows White to mount sufficient threats to stop Black's attack. In the game, White instead blundered with the logical **27. b7?? a3!! 28. bxa8=Q Rxa8** when, despite White's extra rook, there's no stopping Black's attack. The game finished **29. Ra6 Rxa6 30. Bxa6 axb2 31. Kxb2 Qxa6 32. Qb3 Nc5 33. Qc2 d4 34. Rb1 Qa3 mate.** Lu Miaoyi – Bok, Tata Steel Challengers, Wijk aan Zee 2025. **27. ... hxg6 28. fs!!** The very-difficult-to-spot point behind the previous move and what allows White to stave off Black's attack. **28. ... Qb5** Or 28. ... exf5 29. Qh6 a3 30. Bf6 and White wins. Also, 28. ... gxf5 29. Bf6 decides the game in White's favor. **29. fxg6 fxg6 30. Qxe6+ Rf7 31. Qxg6+ Rg7 32. Qe6+** and Black will have to allow the perpetual check, as both 32. ... Kf8?? 33. b7! and 32. ... Kh8 33. Bf6 win for White.

PAGE 55 ABCS OF CHESS

PROBLEM 1. Mating net: Black gets mated in 2: **1. c7+ Bb7 2. c8=Q mate** (or 2. c8=R mate). **PROBLEM 2. Mating net:** White mates in 2: **1. f7+ Qg7 2. Qxh7 mate.** **PROBLEM 3. Mating net:** White wins with **1. f7+ Qxe5 2. f8=Q mate.** **PROBLEM 4. Mating net:** White triumphs in 2: **1. Qb8+ Rxb8 2. Nc7 mate.** It's prettier than 1. Qxd8+ Rxd8 2. Nc7 mate, although that works too. **PROBLEM 5. Mating net:** Black is done for in 2: **1. Nh7+ Ke7** (or 2. ... Ke8) **2. Re2 mate.** **PROBLEM 6. Mating net:** White ends it in 2: **1. Qb6+ Ka8 2. Qb7 mate.**

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66-80	2000-2199
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36-50	1600-1799
21-35	1400-1599
06-20	1200-1399
0-05	under 1200

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MY BEST MOVE

DAN SHENK

AUTHOR, COPY EDITOR,
CHESS COACH

M

Y BEST MOVE WASN'T PLAYED over the board. It's the key to a two-move mate I spent a dozen hours composing in 1978, one that has seen a many-splendored journey since.

DAN SHENK

Chess Life, 1980



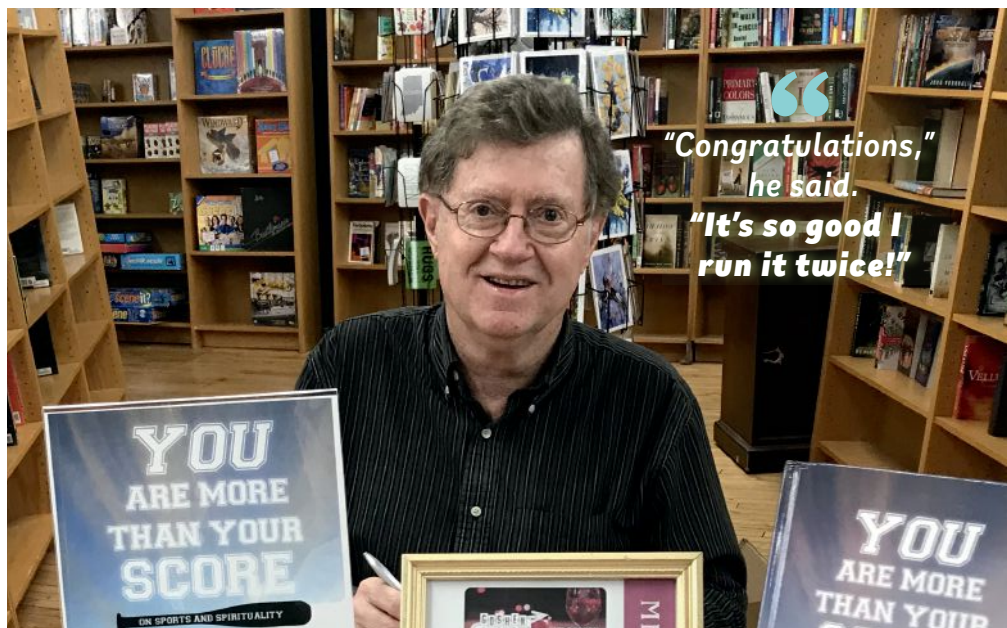
WHITE TO MOVE AND MATE IN TWO

I first submitted my problem to Benko's Bafflers, GM Pal Benko's *Chess Life & Review* column, from Goshen, Indiana, in May 1978, and my wife and I moved to Fort Dodge, Iowa, that summer. I waited 15 months for it to appear. No dice. So in August 1979 I resubmitted the puzzle from Iowa, this time with the solution.

The January 1980 issue of what was now called *Chess Life* saw paydirt: "D. Shenk, Ind." I was elated. But, lo and behold, there it was again in April: "D.W. Shenk, Iowa." Now I was ecstatic — and a tad contrite, for having inadvertently confused matters by sending the same composition from two states.

Four years later I entered the April 1984 New York Open. Thinking ahead like a chessplayer, I brought both 1980 *Chess Life* magazines with me from Cedar Falls, Iowa, surmising that grandmaster columnist might be present at such a prestigious, big-money event.

I spotted Benko exiting an elevator and approached the chess legend, magazines in hand. I complimented him on his column, then asked whether he knew he had repeat-



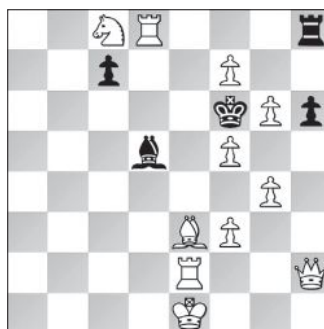
ed my two-mover, three months apart, back in 1980. I opened both editions to the proper pages and handed them to him.

Benko squinted at the two issues, looking back and forth for a few moments. He gave a philosophical shrug and smiled. "Congratulations," he said. "It's so good I run it twice!" What a gracious response. I told the 1984 story in "Counterplay" of the June 2012 edition of *Chess Life* in celebration of the 45th anniversary of "Benko's Bafflers." There's a mind-boggling postscript to all this.

In 2016 Joe Riegsecker, a longtime Hoosier chess cohort, was checking out a chess-problem database, and he came across the diagram below.

C.A. BOIVIN

Le Courier de Saint Hyacinthe, 1900



WHITE TO MOVE AND MATE IN TWO

The Boivin problem appeared 78 years be-

fore I created my two-mover. If you compare the two diagrams, you'll see that my problem is the precise mirror image of Boivin's, down to the last piece and pawn. Boivin's composition is on the kingside of the chessboard, while mine is on the queenside.

Had Benko been able to use a computerized database in late 1979 and early 1980, my puzzle probably would've been flagged for plagiarism. Yet as God is my witness, what I came up with — through many trials and errors — was and is totally original. Call them "simultaneous" inspirations ... 78 years apart!

Like Benko in 1984, Riegsecker in 2016 was philosophical: "Nothing new under the sun," he wrote when informing me of the surreal, uncanny confluence. I couldn't agree more.

Have you discovered **MY BEST MOVE** yet? If not, flip the page and find out which of 49 possible moves delivers checkmate in two. ♠

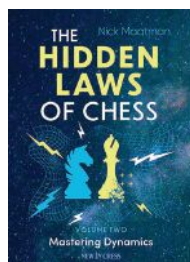
SOLUTIONS (1) Benko gives the laconic solution "1. Rh2! waiting," which means that this is a move designed to put Black into zugzwang. We see more details in the solution to Boivin. (2) Following the threat of 2. Qb2 mate. Other tries don't work: 1. Rxd5? Kg7! 1. Re8? Be6! 1. f4? c5! and 1. Bd2? (or 1. Bc1) 1. ... Be4! The only way to try and stop mate on the long diagonal would be to block it with ... Re8-e5, but there's a slight problem. 1. ... Re8 2. fxe8=N mate.



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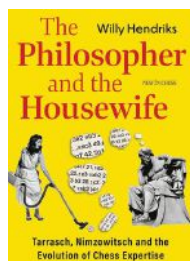


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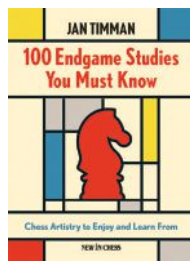
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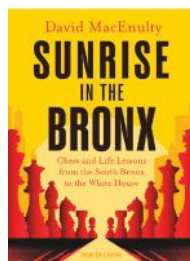
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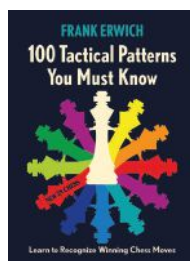
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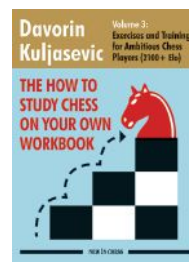


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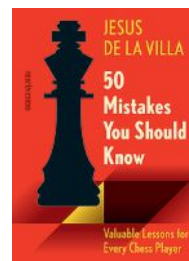
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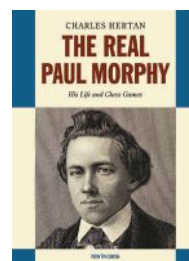
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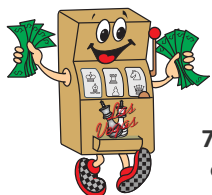
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