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CHESSLIFE

May

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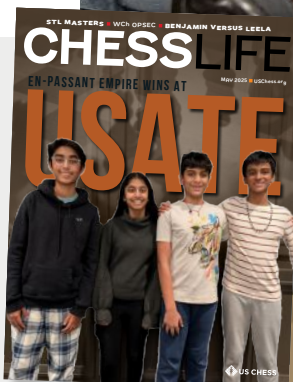
ANNOTATIONS BY BENJAMIN, HARDAWAY, SO, AND LEE



ON THE COVER

The Amateur Team East, or USATE, is one of the highlights of the American chess calendar, and it's all due to the hard work of organizer Steve Doyle and his crew. They've been giving teams like this year's winner En-Passant Empire the chance to shine for 50 years now. Thanks, Steve, and congrats, En-Passant!

PHOTO BY JOHN HARTMANN



IM Jay Bonin
at USATE



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FM DAVIS ZONG

(Cover Story) is the winner of multiple New York scholastic titles. He is a newly minted FIDE master and one of the co-founders of *Chess Connections* magazine. The first

board for the 2025 US Chess USATE team, he is wrapping up his first year at Yale University this spring.



GM PETER HEINE NIELSEN

(OPSEC at WCh) became a grandmaster in 1994. With a peak rating of 2700, he reached as high as #37 on the world ranking list. He is perhaps best known as an elite trainer and second, having assisted GM Viswanathan Anand and GM Magnus Carlsen in their world championship victories. Find him on X / Twitter at @PHChess.



GM LARRY KAUFMAN

(Benjamin versus Leela) is a grandmaster, computer chess researcher, and author. Over the years he has contributed to numerous chess engines, including Mac Hack, Socrates, and most recently, Komodo / Dragon. His newest book is *Chess Board Options: A Memoir of Players, Games and Engines*.



IM JOSIAH STEARMAN

(Saint Louis Masters) is a 21-year-old IM with three GM norms. He has earned degrees from UC Berkeley and the University of Missouri, and organized multiple norm events across the U.S. in recent years. Contact him for coaching via Lichess at lichess.org/coach/lezgo.



GM LUKA BUDISAVLJEVIC

(Saint Louis Masters) became a grandmaster in 2021, making him (at 16 years and 10 months) the youngest GM in Serbian history. Twice he won bronze at the World Junior Championship. He currently competes for the University of Missouri chess team.

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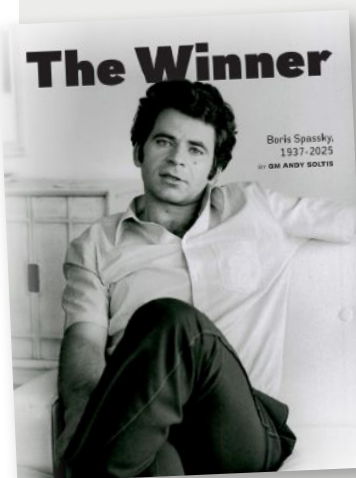
"I'd like to thank the U.S. Chess Trust for their support in my chess career. I have had the honor of receiving the prestigious Samford Fellowship, which has given me encouragement and support for my chess."



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COUNTERPLAY



It is nice to know that, in addition to all his other accomplishments, Spassky provided Hollywood with a fine example of chess mastery for the scene.

Nick Procyk
Via email

John Hartmann responds:

You are correct. We thought about adding a note to the game to reflect this, but time and space won out. You may want to have a look at Bruce Pandolfini's August 2022 column, where he discusses this game and how it inspired the Bond version. It's available in our Digital Archive.

From Kronsteen with Love

I just started my subscription to *Chess Life* and what a good decision it was! The April issue — my first — was excellent. The game analyses and puzzles were good, and the Spassky tribute article was very well done.

Spassky's game versus Bronstein (Leningrad, 1960) is presented in the games section of the obituary. I played it out, and when I neared the end I noticed that the board looked familiar — and it was. In fact, it was almost exactly the same as a position on the board in the James Bond movie *From Russia with Love*.

In an early scene from the movie, the Spectre villain Kronsteen is playing Canadian master McAdams in a championship match. When the scene opens, Kronsteen plays Nf7xe5+. This is the same as Spassky's 22nd move.

In response, McAdams plays ... Kg8-h7, just like Bronstein did in the game. Kronsteen then moves Qf4-e4+, and after this Black resigned both in the movie and in real life.

I took a picture of the board after I played through the Spassky – Bronstein game and compared it to a still from the movie. With the exception of two pawns on c5 and d4, the boards are identical.

Underrated

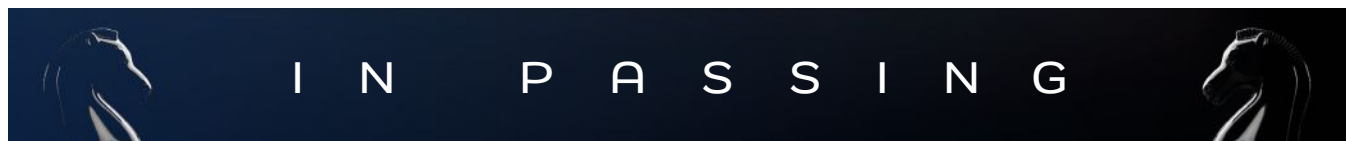
I would like to thank Andy Soltis for his excellent appreciation of Boris Spassky. I think Spassky was underappreciated and deserves to be remembered for more than just his 1972 World Championship loss to Fischer.

During his two runs at the world title in 1965 and 1968, Spassky faced a "murderers' row" of opponents in the Candidate Matches. He faced Keres, Geller (twice), Tal, Larsen, and Korchnoi, all players with multiple wins against Fischer to their credit. Spassky was at his peak in those matches: He lost only five times in 54 games, and along the way, he dominated Geller with six wins, 10 draws, and no losses.

Like Capablanca, Spassky was nearly unbeatable when he was focused on becoming world champion. Unfortunately, and also like Capablanca, once he got the title, he crumbled, becoming a shadow of his former self due to boredom or the pressure of wearing the crown. If the Spassky of 1969 were to play the Fischer of 1972, I have no doubt that Spassky would have won.

Sam R. Smith
Via email

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



Bill Williams

1939-2025

BY **MICHAEL WIERZBICKI**

▶ WILLIAM (BILL) WILLIAMS DIED FEB. 19 at 86. He grew up in Viroqua, Wisconsin, moved to Milwaukee in 1958 to attend the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and had been an active member of the Milwaukee chess scene ever since.

He was a fixture at local clubs for 65 years, playing regularly until just a few months before he died. He played in at least 500 tournaments from 1991 to 2025!

Bill was a Life Master, with a peak rating of 2320. He played in 30 Western Opens (Milwaukee's famous regional tournament), tying for first place three times, the last in 1999 when he was 60. Bill considered his best tournament performance to be a tie for second place (behind IM Michael Brooks) in the 1987 Western Open; Bill's 5-1 score against a field with an average rating of 2149 gave him a performance rating of 2480.

Bill also won or tied for the Wisconsin State Championship nine times between 1968 to 2002 — winning a state title in five different decades might be a record; it should be.

But Bill also served many terms as an officer for the Milwaukee Municipal Chess Association, the Milwaukee Chess Foundation, and the Wisconsin Chess Association. He taught chess to children in Milwaukee's nationally known playground instruction program, and to veterans at the local VA Hospital. He promoted chess by playing countless simultaneous exhibitions throughout the city.

He also founded *Badger Chess*, a magazine that ran from 1982 to 1999 reporting on local and state chess news as well as national and even international events. The magazine featured interviews with local notables such as Arpad Elo, Bill Martz, and Fred Cramer, as well as visiting celebrities such as GMs Viktor Korchnoi and Boris Gulko. *Badger Chess* won the Chess Journalists of America Award for Best Independent Chess Magazine in 1987.

Bill had wide-ranging interests, including history and literature. For several years,



he wrote the column "Art, Analysis, and Philosophy" in the *Wisconsin Chess News*. His chess commentary was sprinkled with a heavy dose of all three. In 2019, at age 80, Bill published a science fiction novel called *A Special Creation*. In it, he explored social and ethical issues in a futuristic setting.

Bill will also be remembered for his distinctive chuckle and self-effacing humor. I interviewed Bill about his chess career in 2023. During the interview, Bill asked whether I had seen his picture on the cover of *Chess Life*. I had not, and thought I must have overlooked one of his major results.

Check out the September 1961 issue of *Chess Life*: The cover features a picture of the finals of Milwaukee's all-city playground tournament. Hundreds of children are sitting on the grass, playing chess, with a dozen or so adults walking among them. In the upper left quadrant of the photo is a young man with a clipboard. That is Bill, who worked that summer as a playground chess instructor and assisted at the all-city finals. Yes, he made the cover of *Chess Life*!

Bill was a devoted father and grandfather

and is survived by one son and a large extended family. One of Bill's favorite stories concerned how his family came to this country in 1912: They had tickets for the Titanic, but, given the publicity about the ship's maiden voyage, ticket prices rose so much that his family sold their tickets at a profit and rebooked passage on a less expensive ship.

In 2013, Bill Williams received the US Chess Award for Special Services for his many contributions to Milwaukee and Wisconsin chess.

Here are games from two of Bill's nine state championships.

ENGLISH OPENING (A17)

Charles Weldon (2143)

Bill Williams (2075)

Wisconsin Ch (6), Madison, 05.29.1978

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 b6 4. Bg2 Bb7 5. Nc3 Bb4 6. Qc2 0-0 7. a3 Bxc3 8. Qxc3 d6 9. 0-0 Qe7 10. d3 c5 11. b4 Nbd7 12. Bb2

e5 13. Bh3 Nh5 14. Nh4 g6 15. f4 f6 16. Qd2 Ng7 17. e3 Rad8 18. d4 cxd4 19. exd4 Be4 20. Rae1 f5 21. fxe5 dxe5 22. d5 Ne8 23. Qf2 Rc8 24. Rxe4 fxe4 25. Be6+ Kg7 26. Qxf8+ Nxf8 27. Bxe5+ Kh6 28. Bf4+ Kh5 29. Bxc8 Nd6 30. Ba6 g5 31. Bxd6 Qxd6 32. c5 bxc5 33. Be2+ g4 34. Rf5+ Kh6 35. Bxg4 Kg7 36. Rg5+ Kf6 37. Rf5+ Ke7 38. Rf4 Qxd5 39. Nf5+ Kd8 40. Ne3



40. ... Qd3 41. Kf2 Ng6 42. Rf7 Qd2+ 43. Be2 Ne5 44. Rxa7 Nd3+ 45. Kg2 Qxe2+ 46. Kh3 Qh5+ 47. Kg2 Qf3+ 48. Kh3 Nf4+, White resigned.

RUY LOPEZ, CHIGORIN DEFENSE (C99)

Michael Wierzbicki (2318)
Bill Williams (2200)
Wisconsin Ch (5), Milwaukee,
09.02.2002

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 b5 6. Bb3 Be7 7. Re1 0-0 8. c3 d6 9. h3 Na5 10. Bc2 c5 11. d4 Qc7 12. Nbd2 Bd7 13. Nf1 cxd4 14. cxd4 Rfc8 15. Bd3 Nc6 16. Be3 exd4 17. Nxd4 Ne5 18. Rc1 Qb7 19. Bb1 Rxc1 20. Bxc1 Re8 21. Ne3 Nxe4 22. Nef5 d5 23. f3 Bxf5 24. Nxf5 Bc5+ 25. Be3 Bxe3+ 26. Rxe3 Nf6 27. Qd4 Qc7 28. Rc3 Nc4 29. Kf2 Qd7 30. b3 Qe6 31. Qd1



31. ... b4 32. Rc1 Ne3 33. Nxe3 Qxe3+ 34. Kg3 Qe5+ 35. Kf2 Nh5 36. Qd3 g6 37. Rd1 Qg3+ 38. Kf1 Nf4 39. Qd2 Qh2 40. Qf2 Nxh3, White resigned. ♖

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 or via the QR code below.

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.



ATTENTION VOTING MEMBERS

The US Chess Governance Office is preparing for the 2025 Election to determine the members of the Executive Board. As part of this process we work to ensure all registered voters have the chance to participate.

All ballots will be sent via email this year. Therefore, any voter must have a valid email address to participate.

Please visit your user dashboard to check your voter registration. Confirm that the email address is accurate, and, most importantly, that your email preferences allow you to receive messages.

Do not hesitate to contact governance@uschess.org if you have any questions or require further assistance. You may also call us at (931) 248-6064.

2025 Chess Journalist of America Awards

BY JOSHUA ANDERSON



THE CHESS JOURNALISTS OF America (CJA) calls for nominations for the annual Chess Journalists of America awards.

The CJA Awards recognize the best in all facets of chess journalism, both print and online. The best chess articles, columns, photojournalism, online writing, and social media are honored within their respective categories. Recognized annually by their peers, the public, and members of CJA, the prestigious awards showcase American works published in English between June 1, 2024, and May 31, 2025.

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

CJA's annual awards are open to anyone. There is an entry fee of \$15 for the first entry, which includes membership or renewal to CJA, and an \$8 fee for each subsequent entry (unless otherwise noted). State organizations may enter three entries in the Cramer Awards for free. Additional award details can be found online at chess-journalism.org. Interested parties can also contact CJA Chief Judge Joshua Anderson at joshuamiltonanderson@gmail.com. Please use the QR code to go directly to our entry



page. Award winners will be announced first at the annual CJA meeting during the U.S. Open, followed by a complete listing on the CJA website.

Submissions must be made by June 21, 2025.

2025 AWARDS TOP THREE CATEGORIES

(Open to print or online)

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

BEST CHESS BOOK

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

BEST VISUAL ARTS

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Best Art
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Best Cartoon

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Best Tournament/Match Coverage *(This may be a series of videos)*

JUNIOR

(Under 21 at time of writing)

Best Print Article by a Junior
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CRAMER AWARDS

Best State Championship Report
Best State Tournament Coverage
Best Scholastic Coverage in State (may be multiple articles)
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Best Photograph
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Ms. Five-Time

GM Ju Wenjun retained her Women's World Championship title in April, outclassing GM Tan Zhongyi by a score of 6½-2½. The match was held in Shanghai April 3-10, and moved to Chongqing April 13-16.

This was Ju's fifth world championship victory: She defeated Zhongyi in 2018 to first claim the title, and after retaining the title at a knockout tournament that same year, she defeated GM Aleksandra Goryachkina in 2020 and GM Lei Tingjie in 2023 before the rematch with Zhongyi this spring.

WGM Sabina Foisor analyzed all nine games of the match for *Chess Life Online* and the US Chess YouTube channel. Visit new.uschess.org/2025-fide-womens-world-championship to read more. Look for a recap from Foisor in a future *Chess Life* issue.

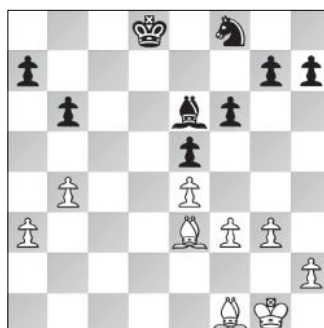


GM Ju Wenjun

Kavutskiy writes that Ivanchuk deemed his technique "excellent!" in this Round 4 endgame. It's also quite instructive.

A MODEL GRIND

IM Kostya Kavutskiy (2351)
Krishna Ravi (2100)
Reykjavik Open (4), Reykjavik,
04.11.2025



WHITE TO MOVE

27. a4 Kc7 28. a5 Nd7 29. h4 Nb8 30. h5 Nc6 31. Bd2 Nd4 32. Kf2 Kc6 33. h6 gxh6 34. Bxh6 f5 35. Bd3 bxa5 36. bxa5 fxe4 37. Bxe4+ Bd5 38. Ke3 Nb3 39. a6 Nc5 40. Bxh7 Nxa6 41. Bg7 Kd6 42. Bf8+ Kd7 43. Bf5+ Kc6 44. Bg7 Kd6 45. Bf8+ Kc6 46. g4 Nc7 47. g5 Ne6 48. Be7 Nd4 49. Be4 Kd7 50. Bc5 Bxe4 51. Kxe4 Ne6 52. Be3 Kd6 53. g6 Ng7 54. Bh6 Nh5 55. Kf5 e4 56. Bf8+ Kd7 57. fxe4 Ke8 58. Bb4 Ng3+ 59. Kf4 Nh5+ 60. Kg5 Ng7 61. e5 a6 62. Kh6 Ne6 63. Kh7 Ng5+ 64. Kh8 a5 65. Ba3 Nf7+ 66. gxf7+ Kxf7 67. Bb2 Ke6 68. Kg7, Black resigned.

CM Logan Shafer may have had the best tournament among Americans, picking up a whopping 98 rating points on the way to his 5½/9 finish. His Round 7 win over IM Alexis Tahay is emblematic of the 16-year-old's growing strength.

CATALAN OPENING (E10)

CM Logan Shafer (2193)
IM Alexis Tahay (2397)
Reykjavik Open (7), Reykjavik,
04.13.2025

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. g3 Bb4+ 5. Bd2 a5 6. Bg2 0-0 7. Qc2 Nbd7 8. 0-0 Be7 9. Bf4 c6 10. Rd1 Ne4 11. Nc3 g5 12. Be3 Nd6 13. b3 f5 14. Ne5 Nxe5 15. dxe5 Nf7 16. f4 Bd7 17. Kh1 b5 18. cxb5 cxb5



19. Nxd5!? exd5 20. Bxd5 Rc8 21. Qb2 Bc5 22. e6 Bxe3 23. exd7?

Logical, giving White a lot of activity, but perhaps not best. 23. exf7+ Rxf7 24. Qe5 is unclear, while 23. Rd3 Bxe6 24. Bxe6 Qb6 25. Qf6 gives White the initiative, though Black should survive with best play.

Reykjavik Open

Starting at around \$400, flights from New York to Reykjavik, Iceland, are plentiful and popular. Perhaps this is why so many Americans — 42, or just over 10% of the 419-person field — made the trip to compete in the 2025 Reykjavik Open, held from April 9-15. The tournament was dedicated to the memory of GM Fridrik Olafsson, the six-time Icelandic champion and former FIDE president who died on April 4 at the age of 90.

Iranian GM Parham Maghsoodloo finished at 7½/9 to take first place, a half-point ahead of 10 players at 7 points. Among them were American GMs Josh Friedel and Brandon Jacobson. Former world number three Vasyl Ivanchuk also finished at 7.

After struggles at the World Rapid and Blitz in December and a poor result in the Djerba Masters in February, the 56-year-old Ukrainian delighted chess fans around the world with a strong showing in Reykjavik.

IM and occasional *Chess Life* contributor Kostya Kavutskiy finished with +1, but he will likely remember the tournament for his time spent analyzing with Ivanchuk. Kavutskiy movingly recounts the experience, and how it made him rethink his relationship to the game, in a post for his Substack. Visit hellokostya.substack.com for more.

23. ... Qxd7 24. Qf6 Rfe8 25. Qxg5+ Kf8
26. Qh5 Kg7 27. Bf3 Qe6 28. Rd5 Rc5 29.
Rad1 Rec8 30. Kg2 R8c7 31. R5d3 Rc3 32.
Rd5 R7c5?

Black finally cracks after sustained pressure.

33. Rd7!

White threatens a mating attack in two ways: (a) 34. Rxf7+ Qxf7 35. Qg5+ Qg6 (35. ... Kf8 36. Rd8+) 36. Rd7+ and Black will be mated, or (b) 34. Qg5+ Kf8 (34. ... Qg6 35. Rxf7+ transposes to 34. Rxf7) 35. Rxf7+ Qxf7 36. Rd8+ Qe8 37. Qf6+ with mate to come.

33. ... Qg6 34. R1d6! Rc7

If 34. ... Qxh5 35. Bxh5 Rc7 36. Bxf7 Rxd7 37. Rxd7 leaves White two pawns up and Black bereft of threats.

35. Rxc6+ hxc6 36. Rxc7 Rxc7

36. ... gxh5 37. Rxc3 is hopeless.

37. Qh4 Bd4 38. g4! Nd6 39. Qd8, Black resigned.

For more on Reykjavik, including photos and games, visit www.reykjavikopen.com.

Chasin wins NYS HS

Last month we reported on the record-setting attendance at the 2025 New York State K-8 Scholastics. The high school kids reported to Saratoga Springs a week later.

With 17 players over 2200 in the Championship section, the path to the high school title was perilous. Only IM Liam Putnam managed to make it to the sixth and final round unscathed, with IM Nico Chasin and NM James Oh lurking a half-point back at 4½/5.

Oh's loss to IM Jason Liang meant a draw would have secured Putnam the title. But Chasin, a senior in his last year of scholastic eligibility, would not be denied.

ENGLISH OPENING (A20)

IM Nico Chasin (2514)

IM Liam Putnam (2507)

NYS HS Ch (6), Saratoga Springs,
03.16.2025

1. c4 e5 2. g3 Nf6 3. Bg2 Nc6 4. Nc3 Bb4
5. Nd5 a5 6. Nf3 0-0 7. 0-0 e4 8. Nh4 Re8 9.
e3 Bf8 10. f3 Nxd5 11. cxd5 exf3 12. Qxf3
Ne5 13. Qf2 f6 14. d4 Nd3?! 15. Qd2

The engine suggests the tricky 15. Qc2! with the idea that after 15. ... Nxc1 16. d6! causes Black some problems. If 16. ... Bxd6



IM Nico Chasin

17. Bd5+ Kh8 18. Ng6+! hxc6 19. Qxg6 and White will look to lift the f1-rook to the h-file.

15. ... Nxc1 16. Raxc1 d6 17. Rc3 Bd7 18.

Qc2 Rc8 19. Rc1 g6 20. Bf3 c5 21. dxc6

e.p. bxc6 22. Bxc6 Bxc6 23. Rxc6 Rxc6 24.

Qb3+! Kh8 25. Rxc6 Qa8 26. d5 Qb8 27.

Qc3 Qb5 28. Rc7



28. ... Bg7?

Black could have held with 28. ... Re5!. It may look like 29. Nf3? presents a problem, but Black turns the tables with 29. ... Rf5! and the advantage. Now White takes his chance to create a passed pawn.

29. Qc6! Qxc6

No better is 29. ... Rb8 30. Rc8+.

30. dxc6 Bh6 31. Ng2, Black resigned.

Chasin finished in clear first place in the Championship with 5½/6, while Putnam shared second with Liang and NM Kiren Nasta at 5. The Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School took top team honors, with Chasin, Oh, and IM-elect Tanitoluwa Adewumi leading the way.

Connor Galvez won the U1800 Championship with 5½/6, while Ryan Johari also scored 5½/6 to take the U1200 title. Brooklyn

Technical High School won both the U1800 and U1200 team championships.

New Titles

We knew it was coming, but now it's official: Brewington Hardaway is a grandmaster.

After cracking 2500 FIDE at November's NYC Fall GM Norm Invitational, the 15-year-old Hardaway's GM title was confirmed at the first 2025 FIDE Council Meeting. He becomes the second African-American to have earned the GM title; Maurice Ashley was the first in 1999. We will have more on Hardaway's achievement in an upcoming issue.

Hardaway is one of three Americans whose GM titles were confirmed in April. Safal Bora earned his third and final norm at the July 2024 NYC Chess Norms Invitational, while Mark Heimann capped a tremendous fall — documented in these pages — with his third norm at the 2024 Saint Louis Masters.

Congratulations to Brewington, Safal, and Mark, and to all of the Americans who received new FIDE titles between March 12 and April 20, 2025.

- GM: Safal Bora, Brewington Hardaway, Mark Heimann
- WGM: Zoey Tang
- IM: Grayson Rorrer
- CM: Luc Hoffman, Paul Powell
- AO: Carlos Alberto Chavez, Yuen Ng, Louis Reed, Judit Sztaray, Abel Talamantez
- FA: C.J. Armenta, Robert Jackson, Reka Sztaray
- IA-A: Chris Bird ♦

Get a Ruler

Why a Hypotenuse Matters

BY GM ANDY SOLTIS



ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS WE discover about chess is so simple we don't realize how deceptive it can be: The board is an 8-by-8 square.

When we learn how the king moves, we see how it can cross the board in as few as seven moves.

It's seven moves if the king crosses vertically (e1 to e8) or horizontally (a4 to h4). It is also seven in some zigzag route (b1 to c8) or on the longest diagonal.

But lurking in the back of our minds is a blind spot: Diagonal distance looks longer — because it is longer.

If you don't believe me, get a ruler. It's longer from a1 to h8 than it is from a1 to a8.

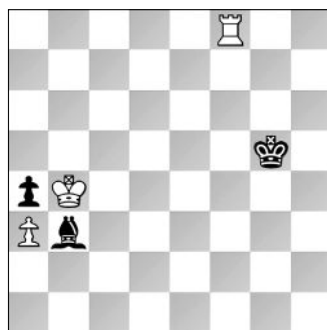
That blind spot can lead to blunders by even the world's best players.

THE LONG WAY

GM Alireza Firouzja (2744)

GM Vidit Santosh Gujrathi (2720)

SuperUnited Croatia Blitz, Zagreb,
07.14.2024



WHITE TO MOVE

This is all that was left after 173(!) moves. White's only winning plan is to sacrifice on a4. This creates a king and pawn versus

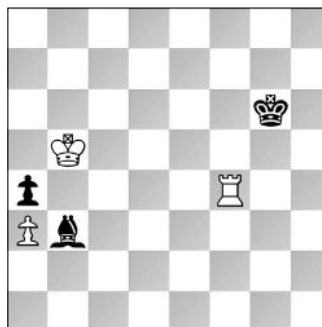
king endgame and a passed, queenable a-pawn.

But the direct attempt — 174. Ra8 Kf6 175. Rxa4 Bxa4 176. Kxa4 — will fail because Black's king can rush to a critical zone around c8 in time.

That is, 176. ... Ke7 177. Kb5 Kd7 178. Kb6 Kc8 and now 179. a4 Kb8 or 179. Ka7 Kc7 followed by ... Kc8-c7-c8.

So, the position in the diagram is drawn if Black plays the best moves. But there was still a best White try, **174. Kb5!**

Black replied **174. ... Kg6??**. It was a blunder because White's rook kept the enemy king at bay with **175. Rf4!**.



Now the winning plan succeeds: **175. ... Kg5 176. Rxa4! Bxa4+ 177. Kxa4 Kf6 178. Kb5 Ke7 179. Kc6! Kd8 180. Kb7!**, and **Black resigned** because there is nothing to stop the a-pawn from promoting.

There were three safe moves after 174. Kb5!. Two of them were by the bishop — 174. ... Bc2! or 174. ... Bd1!. But experienced blitz players are very reluctant to put a piece on an unprotected square.

So Black went for a king move. But 174. ... Kg4 looked wrong. It moves the king further away from the drawing zone.

It is further away — if you use that ruler. But it isn't longer on a chess board: 174. ... Kg4! draws after 175. Ra8 Kf5! 176. Rxa4

Bxa4+ 177. Kxa4 Ke6! 178. Kb5 Kd7 179. Kb6 Kc8!.

This lesson in geometry seems like elementary math, something chess players are supposed to be good at. When World Champion Mikhail Tal was asked about his experience in math classrooms, he said, "I solved algebra problems almost immediately."

However, in geometry lessons he was required to draw a right triangle. "As much as I tried, the cathetus always turned out longer than the hypotenuse."

Yeah, I had to Google it, too. The cathetus is one of the short sides of a right triangle.

What Wikipedia won't tell you is the greater length of a hypotenuse has been used in chess puzzles. A Russian, N. Zarkov, composed this one:

"What is the shortest game, ending in checkmate, in which both White and Black make the longest moves?"

The trick is realizing a knight move forms a right triangle. The hypotenuse of any knight move is longer than any pawn move. Therefore, the solution to the puzzle consists solely of knight moves.

If you can't solve it, here's another clue: The shortest game is six moves long. If you're still stumped, the solution is on page 63.

If you're like most players, your education about the board's geometry ended when you were told about "the rule of the square." You know, the one about how your king can catch an opponent's advancing pawn if it can stay within the pawn's imaginary four-sided square. It can race to the queening square along the hypotenuse.

But once again, the board can confuse us visually. Consider this example, where even a former world champion can get a bit crossed up.

QUIZ FOR MAY

► **PAUL KERES WAS “THE greatest player of the 20th century,”** according to no less an authority than Boris Spassky. A new four-volume compendium of Keres’ games and articles compiled by Jimmy Adams pays tribute to the strongest player never to win the world championship. In this month’s quiz you’ll find six winning positions from some of Keres’ shortest victories. In each there are strong moves. Your task is to finding the fastest winning line of play. For solutions, see page 63.

PROBLEM 1

Paul Keres
Laega Storm Herseth



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2

GM Paul Keres
IM Robert G. Wade



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3

Dieter Keller
GM Paul Keres



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4

GM Paul Keres
GM Jan Hein Donner



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5

GM Paul Keres
GM Boris Spassky



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6

GM Paul Keres
IM Istvan Csom



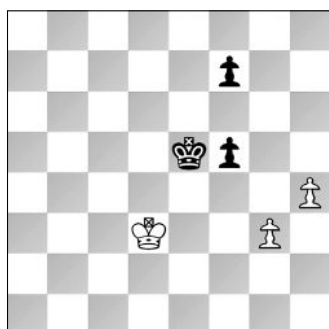
WHITE TO MOVE

OPTICAL ILLUSION

GM Garry Kasparov (2817)

GM Etienne Bacrot (2675)

Armenia vs. Rest of the World, Moscow,
06.12.2004



WHITE TO MOVE

A beginner learns a basic principle of pawn endings: Take the opposition. It (almost always) works. Here that means 64. Ke3.

Black can regain the opposition with 64. ... Ke6 65. Kf4 Kf6. But then a second key principle of pawn endings — *zugzwang* — takes over. White puts Black in fatal *zugzwang* with 66. h5!.

However, after 64. Ke3 Black has a trick:

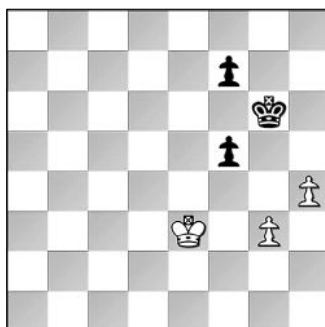
64. ... f4+! 65. gxf4+ Kf6. Then comes 66. Kf3 Kg6 67. Kg4 f5+! and it's a draw.

So the position in the diagram is a draw with best play. But there is a best try. The former world champion set a clever trap with **64. Ke2!?**

Instinctively, we don't want to play 64. ... Ke4 or 64. ... Kd4. Obviously, they both take Black's king away from the queening square, h8.

But they are the only drawing moves. They succeed because the king remains “in the square.” After 64. ... Ke4! 65. Kf2 Kd4 66. h5 Black moves along the hypotenuse — 66. ... Ke5! 67. h6 Kf6 — and wins the h-pawn.

Black played the more natural **64. ... Kf6**, because it is closer to h8. Play went **65. Ke3! Kg6**.



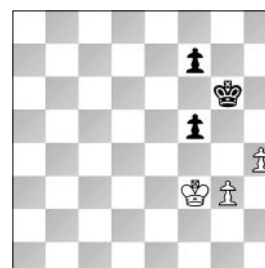
Now 66. Kf4 would create a winning *zugzwang* position — if it weren't for 66. ... f6.

Then the best try, 67. h5+!, would win after 67. ... Kxh5 68. Kxf5 and 69. Kxf6.

But Black would still draw if he found 67. ... Kh6!. This puts White in *zugzwang*: 68. Kxf5 Kxh5 69. Kxf6 Kg4 (or 69. g4+ Kh4).

In the game, White played **66. Kd4** and conceded a draw after **66. ... Kh5**.

End of story? No: 65. ... Kg6 was a blunder — the next-to-last. White could have won with 66. Kf3!.



POSITION AFTER 66. Kf3

Then Black is the one in *zugzwang* after 66. ... Kf6 67. Kf4 Kg6 68. Ke5. ♠

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

Side to Side

The powerful effect of changing flanks

BY **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**



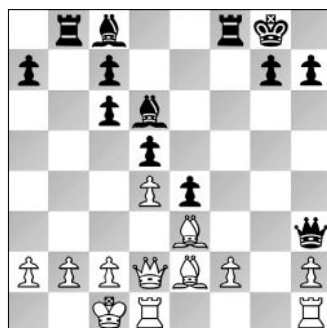
EVERY NOW AND THEN I'LL submit a column and start finding games and examples that would have fit the topic perfectly, all played right after I hit send (even when I miss my deadlines!). It's as if the players are doing it on purpose. It is particularly annoying when I think of an interesting topic but struggle to find enough examples, and then, magically, two weeks later they're everywhere.

Back in January, when I started this series on hard-to-find moves, changing flanks was a subcategory of the larger theme of backward moves, but it deserves a column of its own, because full-board vision is such an important aspect of developing a tactical sense.

In this Morphy game, it looks like Black has the potential of building an attack: The rook is on the semi-open b-file and the dark-squared bishop is ready to jump to a3. But what is the black queen doing on h3, so far away from the queenside?

A CLASSIC

Henry Bird
Paul Morphy
London, 1858



BLACK TO MOVE

17. ... Rxf2

This move comes out of nowhere; there doesn't seem to be a particularly good reason for it. Although objectively not the best move according to the engines, aesthetically it is quite pleasing.

18. Bxf2 Qa3!!

Clearly Morphy agreed that the queen would accomplish more on the queenside!

19. c3

Obviously, 19. bxa3 Bxa3 is mate; meanwhile, 19. Qc3 fails to 19. ... Qxa2 with the threat of ... Bd6-b4 and ... Qa2-a1 mate.

19. ... Qxa2 20. b4 Qa1+ 21. Kc2 Qa4+ 22. Kb2

White collapses. Bird could have put up better resistance with 22. Kc1: After 22. ... a5 23. Qc2 Qa3+ 24. Qb2 axb4 25. Qxa3 bxa3 White is up a rook for four pawns, but the white king is weak and the passed pawns are menacing. Still, Black needs to find 26. Bg3 Be7! keeping the important bishop on the board and maintaining the threat of checking on the c1-h6 diagonal.

22. ... Bxb4

It's all over now.

23. cxb4 Rxb4+ 24. Qxb4 Qxb4+ 25. Kc2 e3 26. Bxe3 Bf5+ 27. Rd3 Qc4+ 28. Kd2 Qa2+ 29. Kd1 Qb1+, White resigned.

Morphy certainly set the bar high with his flashy queen sacrifice, but the rest of the examples are more practical.

In the next example, the f7-pawn is a clear target. So far, there is only one attacker and Black has enough defenders, so White needs to find a way to bring in her forces. I think everyone's first instinct would be 24. Qg6, both utilizing the pin and adding another

attacker. But how to make the idea even more forcing?

SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS

Rosa Ratsma (2097)

Alik Tikranian (2148)

Dutch U21 Ch (8), 05.08.2015



WHITE TO MOVE

24. Rc6

After the immediate 24. Qg6 Be6! Black simultaneously defends the pawn, trades the annoying light-squared bishop on b3 and gains a tempo on the queen. Black is quite happy after 25. Bxe6 Rxe6 26. Qc2 Rae8 as the king is safe and he controls the open e-file.

24. ... Qa5

After 24. ... Qd8 25. Rd1 White brings in more pieces with tempo, and takes the seventh rank with 25. ... Qe7 26. Rc7, winning. To wit:

(a) After 26. ... Nd7 White has many tempting options, but the nicest is 27. Qg6! when the bishop on g4 is starting to run out of squares. If 27. ... Bxf3 28. gxf3 and Black can't break out of the pin and save the knight, and it's over after 28. ... Rad8 29. Qf5.

(b) If 26. ... Bd7 White has 27. Nh5! removing the guard! Black is running out of ways to defend the bishop. After 27. ... Rad8 28. Nxf6+ gxf6 (28. ... Qxf6 loses to 29. Rcx d7 Rxd7 30. Rxd7 when the back rank is defended thanks to the f3-knight) 29. Qg6+ Bg7 30. Qd3 the bishop will fall.

25. Rxf6!

The king's main defender is gone, and the queen will go to g6 with check.

25. ... gxf6 26. Qg6+ Kh8 27. Bxf7, Black resigned.

The next game was a candidate for the *Chess.com* award for the best game of 2024.

It did not win, but GM Rafael Leitao called it a “hidden gem” in his top-10 list. (So did John Hartmann in January 2025 article on “hidden gems” from the Women’s Olympiad. ~ed.) Leitao is right that the chess world is full of spectacular games, many of which go unnoticed because they were not played by super-GMs.

Have a look at the diagrammed position below: it’s a complete mess. Anna Sargsyan finds a way to unleash an unexpected attack against her 14-year-old opponent.

A SIDEWAYS SACRIFICE

IM Anna Sargsyan (2364)

IM Lu Miaoyi (2438)

45th Women’s Olympiad (5), Budapest, 09.15.2024



WHITE TO MOVE

22. Rc6!

Building upon the previous example, the rook infiltrates via the sixth rank and proves to be an annoying piece. White has the simple threat of capturing on e6 with the rook, then winning the knight on a2.

22. ... Bxb3 23. Rxb3 Qa4 24. Rxf6!

The consequences of this sacrifice are not as straightforward as the previous example. Nonetheless, Black will find her king in a vulnerable situation.

24. ... gxf6 25. Nf5

A typical move against a weakened king. Next, White will look for ways to get the queen on the g-file or to h6.

25. ... Ree8

Black could have held it together with 25. ... Kf8! but one has to have nerves of steel to play this.

26. d4!

Cutting the Black queen off along the fourth rank and preparing to bring the White queen in via e4.

26. ... exd4

If 26. ... e4 27. N3h4 with the idea of Qb1-d1-g4.

27. N3xd4 Rad8 28. Nxe6+ Kf8

After 28. ... Kg7 29. Ndf5+ Kh8 30. Nxf7+ White will win the material back and continue with the attack.

29. Qh7

With the white queen joining the attack, Black’s king is helpless.

29. ... Re1+ 30. Kh2 Qc4 31. Nhf5

It’s actually more accurate to control the d-file with 31. Rd3.

31. ... Ke8 32. Rd3 Kd7

Black loses the queen after 32. ... Qxd3 33. Ng7+ Ke7 34. Qxd3, but 32. ... Rd6! was Black’s last chance to fight back. The idea is to give up material in order to get rid of one of the annoying knights, and then hide behind the d6-pawn. After 33. Nxd6+ cxd6 34. Rd2 the black king is still not happy but is at least surviving.

33. Ne6+ Kxe6 34. Rxd8 Qf4+ 35. Ng3 Re5 36. Qc2

The queen comes back! The king is now in the center and the queenside is more vulnerable, so the queen quickly changes flanks.

36. ... Nb4 37. Qxc7 Re4 38. Qd7+, Black resigned.

Although U.S. Women’s Champion IM Carissa Yip’s performance in her first American Cup was below her standards, she did play one of the most memorable games in this year’s tournament.

SAC AND SAC AGAIN

FM Thalia Cervantes Landeiro (2292)

IM Carissa Yip (2408)

American Cup (1), St. Louis, 03.15.2025



BLACK TO MOVE

23. ... Rb3!?

By now, the theme should be familiar, but given that the rook on f8 is under attack, this is the most unusual example so far.

24. Bxf8 Rxf3!!

Carissa one-ups Anna Sargsyan in the previous example with a double Exchange sacrifice!

25. gxf3?

Thalia had a miracle save with 25. Bxg7!. If Black plays similarly to the game with (a) 25. ... Kxg7 26. gxf3 Nf4 27. d5 Qe8 28. Kh1 Qh5 White has 29. Rg1+! and unlike in the game, the rook joins the defense with a check. One could probably find this line if it was in a puzzle book and they had an infinite amount of time. White’s winning after 29. ... Kf8 30. Rg3. Going back, it’s equal according to the engine after (b) 25. ... Nf4 26. d5 exd5 27. Bf6 d4 28. Rxd4 Rc3 29. Rd8+ Kf7 30. Rd7+ with a perpetual.

25. ... Nf4 26. d5 Qe8

The queen quickly changes flanks and runs to the kingside.

27. Kh1 Qh5 28. Qc3 Nxd5

Black is down a rook and an Exchange, but the white king is miserable along the long diagonal.

29. Rxd5 Bxd5 30. Bb4 Bxf3+ 31. Qxf3 Qxf3+ 32. Kg1 h5

Carissa converted this position without any issues.

33. Rc1 Qg4+ 34. Kf1 h4 35. Rc3 f4 36. h3 Qd1+ 37. Kg2 Qd5+ 38. Kg1 Kf7 39. Rc1 Qd3 40. Rc3 Qd1+ 41. Kh2 Qd4 42. Kg1 Qe4 43. Kh2 g5 44. Rc1 f3 45. Kg1 g4 46. Re1 Qg6, White resigned.

As I was watching the game live across the playing hall, I made a quick mental note to include it in this column. I also felt vindicated as my procrastination was finally rewarded right in front of my eyes.

I would say the main takeaway of these examples — especially for we chess mortals — is the importance of full-board awareness. Just because we have placed a piece on a certain square or have assigned a specific job to it, that does not mean that piece is condemned to that role for the rest of the game. ♠

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Top Secrets

A world-class second on operational security at world championship matches

BY GM PETER HEINE NIELSEN

T

HE STAKES DON'T GET HIGHER in chess than the world championship, and the contenders pick assistants they can trust. In the

digital age, that means more than just finding someone who won't blab your opening prep to the other team at the bar. A team needs to keep their preparations, their conversations, sometimes even their roster, secret for as long as they can, and if they're working together remotely, there's a whole invisible layer of threats to their communications.

GM Peter Heine Nielsen knows what it takes: He acted as a second on the winning side of seven straight world championship matches, working for Viswanathan Anand from 2006 to 2012 and for Magnus Carlsen since 2013. He recently shared with Chess Life some of his experiences, and reflected on how the challenges have changed in the battles for the crown.

My introduction to basic operational security came at the 2007 World Championship Tournament in Mexico, where I was GM Viswanathan Anand's second. He told me to at least lock my computer when leaving my

hotel room, so anyone trying to access my computer would have to enter the Windows password. After I got back from Mexico, with Vishy being the new world champion, and me having lots of free time with no urgent opening work to do, I decided to see how quickly I could get access to my own computer without using the password.

All it took was a simple Google search. I downloaded a Linux disk image, burned it onto a DVD, and booted my computer with the DVD in the drive. Soon I could see and change the password, and I had access to the file structure. Start to finish, it took me less than an hour.

The intruder

By the 2010 world championship match in Sofia, things had changed. I was headed out for dinner with the other seconds one night and realized I had forgotten something in our work room. When I went back to get

it, I was surprised to find all the lights had been turned off, and someone was walking around the room with a small flashlight.

To my surprise, and relief, it was one of our team members. I had been told he was there to help with "practical matters," but as it turned out, he was responsible for security. Anand was defending his title against GM Veselin Topalov on the challenger's home ground in Bulgaria, and our guy was checking the work room for bugging devices. (He told us he used to work for either the CIA or FBI, as I recall, and he did have a jacket with their name on it, although I assume that can be bought in any souvenir shop, and it is entirely possible he was just joking.)

I am not really of the suspicious type, so the possibility that we'd been bugged hadn't crossed my mind. But after Game 2 I had a short conversation with fellow second GM Rustam Kasimdzhanov, where we discussed the fact that our opponent had hit exactly at two very weak spots in our preparation. Did they actually have access to our pre-match notes? It was a time when several people had

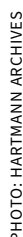
As far as security went, it was a success — but it interfered considerably with our workflow. In a team of five seconds, we exchange files constantly, and using a secure system becomes a nuisance. The IBM sponsorship included access to cloud computing power, but that required logging on and off whenever

Social media self-owns

It's not as well known, but we had our own incident in Team Carlsen: Before the match, the media team published a video from a training camp which included a few seconds of GM Daniil Dubov sitting on a sofa. Dubov is perhaps the world's leading

Other online accidents

Once again, internal, accidental leaks were the relevant issue: During one of the games it turned out that someone was leaving “footprints” in the ChessBase “Let’s Check” database!



“Let’s Check” is an optional ChessBase feature that allows users to contribute engine evaluations to a global database of positions. What happened was simple: Someone had forgotten to unclick the “connect automatically” setting in “Let’s Check,” and they left traces of their analysis in the cloud database for anyone to see. It’s a fun tool if the idea is general growth of the game, but it’s obviously problematic for people wanting secrecy!

(Team Ding came up with their own “improved” version of this blunder for the 2023 match, having played training games on the Lichess server using anonymous accounts. The problem was, they had forgotten to consider that once one of the ideas from the training games was used in the actual match, a simple search in the Lichess database would expose the training games in the line, and by checking the games of the account who played the idea, a number of ideas not yet implemented could be found.)

Back to 2021: As mentioned, we decided not to overthink our operational security. I knew what the top levels of security were like — my wife, GM and former European women’s champion Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen, was speaker of the Lithuanian Parliament, and was under 24/7 protection by the state. It was obvious that the security resources for her were completely unrealistic for a chess team of five seconds living in different countries and collaborating on laptops, phones and more.

I was told to research a bit and use com-

mon sense, based on the understanding that if someone seriously tried to gain access, they would succeed anyway. I was just told to have a very basic layer of security and try to make sure there were no accidental leaks.

Just in case

Some COVID-19 restrictions were still in place at the time, so we had some backup plans — we set up a B-team, or, rather, a B-person. Our concept was that the seconds would stay in Thailand, while the match was played in Dubai, but there was a risk: If the seconds tested positive, they might be quarantined by the state, or become so sick that they could not work.

So we hired GM Grzegorz Gajewski as a backup, without the knowledge of the other seconds, and had some rudimentary opening alternatives ready in case the seconds in Thailand were quarantined. But we considered Gajewski a further insurance policy in case our team preparation was exposed. No one knew about him except for Magnus and me.

As on Team Anand, my role was to spend a lot of time coordinating tasks and files, and always making sure we had a set of up to date and “clean” notes — also difficult with five people working independently at the same time, and sometimes on the same files. It very quickly becomes a mess

if not properly coordinated; files and (even worse) conclusions about various lines can get messed up.

Splitting up the work

I was in effect the leader of the team, even though no such formal role existed; I was the person with access to Magnus, and it was my role to act as a bridge between him and the seconds.

The work routine was that after a game, on days when another game was scheduled the next day, I would have a short conversation with Magnus about his intentions for the next game, during which I might pitch a few recommendations from the seconds. Then I would go to my room and call the seconds in Thailand to brief them on Magnus’ wishes, debate which direction we should take, and delegate the work.

Thailand is three hours ahead of Dubai, so while it was night at the playing venue, and Magnus (and even I!) could get some sleep, the seconds could keep working during the day at their location. I would then wake up in the morning and get in touch with the other seconds, who would brief me on where things were. Unless there was some severe crisis, I would go and have breakfast before returning for the final stretch until the agreed deadline, when Magnus had to be emailed the files containing our joint work.

Our basic security level included new, dedicated email addresses on the encrypted Proton Mail server from Switzerland. But of course, during the last hours before the deadline, email discussions were too slow. We used a group chat to make sure all the details were correct. Sometimes it was methodical; sometimes, it was chaotic. But in many ways they were some of my most memorable work experiences, with everybody being completely in the zone, obviously scared to make mistakes, working together to get the files ready and to the point.

Part of the problem is that Magnus had a limited amount of time to look at the material before each game, and we had to strike a balance between making sure the information was complete enough while also limited and understandable. Seconds will sometimes get into a fight over this; they’re protective of their ideas, or perhaps they want to overexplain them, fearing getting the responsibility if something goes wrong



Nielsen (center left) and Carlsen (center right) in 2016

in their line. Some will send a new idea well after I said the files were “closed,” and we needed to focus on rechecking.

You are NOT invited to the chat

What is written in such a chat, a few hours before a world championship game, obviously is extremely sensitive — we discuss the sore spots of our preparation, what we must fear, and what parts of our concept are pure bluff. Having access to our pre-match notes of course would be a blow, but having access to our group chat in real time could be match-deciding.

But I am proud to state that we were well ahead of our time — we used the encrypted Signal app that’s been in the news so much recently. And we managed to avoid adding any chess journalists to the chat! ♠

OPSEC FOR AMATEURS

by John Hartmann

MOST PEOPLE DON’T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT SPIES STEALING THEIR opening files, but everyone could tighten up their online security a bit.

You already know the basics: Don’t share passwords with others, and try not to repeat them on too many websites. Be sure that the links you click actually take you where you’re trying to go — one popular scam involves redirecting URLs to websites that look like your bank or PayPal, but are really fakes.

Sometimes people aren’t who they appear to be online. If “Vladimir Kramnik” messages you out of the blue and asks you, his “biggest fan,” to send money to fund his anti-cheating initiatives, I assure you it’s not really him. The real “police” will not ask you to buy an Apple gift card to settle an outstanding warrant, and you can’t fix a “jury duty summons” with them either. Anytime anyone you don’t know asks you to buy/send gift cards, it’s a giant red flag.

Chess players should take the same general precautions in protecting their chess data as they would with other important files. Regular backups are a must, both in the cloud and in an off-site location. One idea is to copy critical data to a flash drive every month and stash it in your desk at work, just in case disaster strikes your home.

ChessBase users should take special care when working with files that are stored in the cloud. If your opening analysis lives on Dropbox or OneDrive, you should pause those services while you are writing to the files or saving new data. Otherwise your files could become corrupted when you write to them.

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MAN (Plus Knight) VERSUS MACHINE

A GM gets knight odds and barely pulls out the match. How much longer before that's too much to ask?

BY **GM LARRY KAUFMAN**

K

NIGHT-ODDS CHESS HAS been a significant part of the history and tradition of the game. White removes either the b1- or g1-knight as a handicap before play starts; b1 was usual until 1870, then g1 became more popular. Paul Morphy offered knight odds to any other American player starting in 1859 (after beating the best players in the world on even terms), and indeed made plus scores against the three top Americans who accepted. George MacKenzie and Wilhelm Steinitz kept the tradition alive through the 1800s, while IM Al Horowitz was the top exponent in the mid-1900s, giving the g1-knight to young experts and even masters in 10-seconds-per-move games. Bobby Fischer once beat IM Hans Ree in a blitz game giving knight odds.

Odds play made a comeback after the match between Hydra and GM Michael Adams match in 2005 (5½-½) and between Deep Fritz and World Champion Vladimir Kramnik (4-2) in 2006 brought an end to straight-up competition between man and machine. Rybka, the top engine in 2007, started playing matches giving pawn odds to grandmasters at G/45+15, with good results. In 2015, Komodo (then the number one engine) resumed the practice, increasing

the odds to f7-pawn and two moves, or rook for knight or two pawns, again with good results. I was part of the Rybka and Komodo teams and the main organizer of these matches.

But knight odds was too much: Rybka lost 4 to 0 without a chance giving knight odds to FM John Meyer (then rated 2276) in G/30+30 games. Komodo at first was only able to give knight odds to players rated around 2000 in rapid, but eventually managed to score well against floored masters. After 2020, when Komodo became much stronger due to neural networks (or “nets”), it gave knight odds in rapid to three “par” (near 2500 FIDE) GMs, scoring 33% in each match.

The idea of winning a match at knight odds against a “par” grandmaster at a classical time control seemed impossible. It was generally accepted that grandmasters simply didn't normally make enough errors with a classical time limit to offset the advantage of an extra piece from the start.

All this changed in October 2024, with the advent of nets for Leela (Lc0) specially trained to play various odds well against a computer opponent that was itself trained to play as much like a human grandmaster playing rapid as possible. Free bots on Lichess utilized these special nets and achieved amaz-

ing results against all challengers in bullet, blitz, and even rapid games.

Grandmasters were losing overwhelmingly with knight odds in bullet and blitz, and by smaller margins in rapid play. Last Dec. 12, GM Awonder Liang (2687 FIDE, world number 42) won a match by 2½ to

1½ in rapid but lost at G/3+2 blitz by a score of 8-2. After that, super-GM Anish Giri lost 20 to 3 at G/3+2 in practice games. This was achieved by playing wild chess — always pushing for attack, or at least space and activity, even at the cost of more material. Results were so good that we started to think that a match with a “par” GM at a classical time limit might be a tossup!

My involvement was to help run the engine games needed for training, to tune the parameters for best performance against GM-level human opponents, to write an opening book for odds play to provide the needed variety while still playing decent moves, and to run the bots on my home computer. I also selected opponents for special matches. I chose GM Joel Benjamin for this classical match for several reasons.

Joel is a three-time U.S. champion and a six-time World Open champ, but at age 60 his FIDE rating has dropped a bit below the 2500 rating required to earn the title, so I thought he might be down to “par” GM level now. Joel also has vast experience in serious play against the best engines: Deep Blue in 1997, Rybka (at pawn odds) in 2007, Komodo (at odds averaging around two pawns) in 2017, and hundreds of practice rapid (G/10+3) games against Leela with knight,



rook, and even queen odds (the latter just for fun/relaxation). I don't think any other opponent would have been as familiar with playing engines with odds.

Our time control was G/60+30 — well within the classical or standard range. But Leela still played at her usual bullet chess speed: about one second per move on the first day and 1½ seconds after an adjustment for the last two days — so the handicap was really something like 60 to 1 time odds on top of the knight odds! Our testing showed that when giving large handicaps, it is not helpful for the engine to think too long, since it will just start to see and worry about lines that are too deep and obscure for a human to find anyway!

The eight-game was hosted on Lichess Jan. 25-27; GM Matthew Sadler, England's former number one, broadcast his commentary on the match live on his Silicon Road YouTube channel, with Joel joining the show after each game to comment.

The match started with two convincing wins for Joel, and most observers assumed that it was a mismatch. Remarkably, Joel didn't win another game after that, but drew five games and lost only one to win by 4½-3½. (To be fair, I should point out that in all five draws Joel kept his winning advantage for a long time, but would eventually allow some surprising drawing idea or would repeat when the risk seemed high.)

Joel expected that the hard part would be surviving the middlegame without overlooking some tactics, but it turned out to be converting winning endgames or late middlegames when still up significant material! With more time, his winning margin would have been larger. The openings were pleasant for Joel in all the games except the one he lost. We alternated between b1-knight and g1-knight odds, with Leela breaking even at g1 but losing by one game at b1 odds. This is contrast to Leela's preference to give g1 while actually scoring better giving b1!

The match was clearly a success for Leela in that it proved that beating a GM in a classical knight-odds match was a realistic goal, even if we didn't succeed this time. It resulted in a huge surge in popularity for the Lichess odds bots. There have been 90 blitz games (G/3+2 minimum) against FIDE top-50 grandmasters at knight odds with the match version, mostly in the two weeks after the match, with 64 Leela wins, 26 draws, and not a single loss!

Humans make much larger and more frequent errors in blitz than in classical, and it certainly looks like top GMs need rook odds in blitz. In G/1+1 bullet chess they need

queen odds, and in pure G/1 bullet even a queen isn't enough! This all sounds crazy, but anyone can check the Lichess database to confirm the above.

I've annotated one win for each player, incorporating Joel's comments to Sadler, with the help of the Leela version that played the match. The engine "assumes" that the opponent is a human GM (simulated by another Leela net), so that it estimates the chances at knight odds to be roughly even. Objective evaluation, say by Stockfish, would just say everything is losing!

Joel's win features a nice positional Exchange sacrifice. Leela's win started with a relatively favorable opening, and when Joel decided to head for a draw with a pawn-down "fortress," Leela proved that it wasn't really a fortress after all. (Ironically, in one of the draws, Joel allowed an endgame with bishops of opposite colors because he was three pawns ahead, only to learn that Leela had a fortress draw! Leela is much better than standard engines such as Stockfish when it comes to fortresses.)

REMOVE B1-KNIGHT

Leela

GM Joel Benjamin

Knight odds match (2), *Lichess.org*, 01.25.2025



1. Nf3 Nf6 2. b4

This move, here or on move 1, is much better at b1-knight odds than in standard chess, since Ra1-b1 is available to support the pawn or to use the b-file if it is exchanged. Another good first move is 1. f4, since it's hard to use the b1-knight in the Bird; the same applies to 1. b3. On the other hand, 1. e4 is a bit questionable due to 1. ... d5 when there is no knight to repel the queen after 2. exd5 Qxd5; 1. c4 is rather silly without a knight that can come to c3, but 1. d4 and 1. Nf3 are OK.

2. ... g6 3. g3 Bg7 4. Bg2 0-0 5. a4 d6

6. Bb2 e5 7. d3 a5

Leela recommends 7. ... e4 instead.

8. b5 Nbd7 9. 0-0 Nc5

Again Leela prefers 9. ... e4, with the idea of initiating trades.

10. Ra3 h6

Planning ... Bc8-e6, but Leela doesn't like that idea.

11. Nd2 Rb8 12. Re1 Be6 13. e3 Re8 14.

Qa1 Ncd7 15. Rc1 Bd5 16. e4 Be6 17. c4 b6 18. Nf1 Nc5 19. Ne3?! 20. Nd5

Joel criticized this move as leading to an exchange, which favors the side with the extra piece, and suggested 19. h3. Leela agrees with the criticism (it moved too quickly) but prefers 19. Qb1.

19. ... Ng4! 20. Nd5



Joel called this an error, allowing simplification, while Leela thinks it is already too late to choose a different plan. Leela loves to win a good bishop pair for a knight, while Joel feels the position is too closed for this to be important.

20. ... Bxd5

Leela prefers an immediate 20. ... f5.

21. cxd5 f5 22. Re1 Qd7 23. f3 Nf6 24. Bh3 Nh7 25. Qd1 Qf7 26. Bc1 Rf8 27. Kh1 Rbe8 28. Rf1 Re7 29. Ra2 Qe8 30. Re2 Kh8 31. Ree1 Qd8 32. Be3 Ref7 33. Bc1



White “passes” because all their pieces are optimally placed, but Black has a winning plan.

33. ... f4!

This is only justified by the Exchange sacrifice on f4 after the intermezzo ... Qd8-h4. Joel commented that this type of sacrifice is pretty routine at grandmaster level, since the position is closed and the bishop won is the “good” one, but still it requires some courage and confidence to surrender the Exchange voluntarily on purely positional grounds. Joel correctly judged that two knights for a rook would be enough for him to win in such a closed position despite the enormous strength gap, and Leela fully agrees! With unassailable outpost squares on c5, f4, d4, and h4, Black’s knights are monsters.

34. gxf4 Qh4! 35. Bg2 Rxf4!

Much better than the materialistic 35. ... exf4? 36. d4, with equal practical chances given the rating gap of more than 1,000 points!

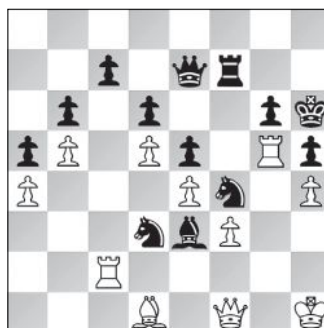
36. Bxf4 Qxf4 37. Rf2 Nf6 38. Ra2 Nh5 39. Rg1 Qh4

There was a much quicker win to be had with 39. ... Qe3!

40. Bf1 Nf4 41. Rg4 Qf6 42. Rg1 Kh7 43. Ra3 Qf7 44. Rg4 Nh5 45. Be2 Bf6 46. Qe1 Bg5 47. Bd1 Bc1 48. Ra2 Nf4 49. Qg1 Ncxd3 50. Rc2 Ba3

Heading for d4 with 50. ... Bb2! was a quicker way to win.

51. Qf1 Bb4 52. Rg3 Nc5 53. Rc4 Ba3 54. Rc2 Bb4 55. Rc4 Qe7 56. Rg4 Rf6 57. Rg3 Rf7 58. Rg4 Qf6 59. Rg3 Nh5 60. Rg4 Nf4 61. Rg3 Qd8 62. Rc1 Bd2 63. Rc2 Be3 64. Ra2 Ncd3 65. Rg4 Qe7 66. Rc2 Kg7 67. h4 Nc5 68. Rh2 h5 69. Rg3 Nfd3 70. Rgh3 Nf4 71. Rg3 Ncd3 72. Rg5 Kh6 73. Rc2



73. ... Nf2+!

A nice move, and something Leela didn’t expect him to see.

74. Rxf2 Bxf2 75. Qxf2 Nh3 76. Rxc6+ Kxc6 77. Qg3+ Ng5 78. Be2 Rf4 79. Kh2 Rxc6+ 80. Kg2 Rf4 81. Kf2 Kh6 82. Ke3 Qf6 83. Qg2 Rxf3+

Joel liquidates to a trivially winning pawn endgame — as one would expect from the author of a book on the topic!

84. Bxf3 Qxf3+ 85. Qxf3 Nxf3 86. Kxf3 Kg5 87. Kg3 h4+ 88. Kf3 Kh5 89. Kf2 Kg4 90. Kg2 h3+ 91. Kh2 Kh4 92. Kg1 Kg3 93. Kh1 Kf3, and Black eventually won.

White should resign, but was programmed to play it out to mate at bullet speed, so it didn’t waste much time. Mate was delivered on move 117.

REMOVE G1-KNIGHT

Leela

GM Joel Benjamin

Knight-odds match (5), [Lichess.org](https://lichess.org/01.26.2025), 01.26.2025

(see diagram top of next column)

1. e4 d5

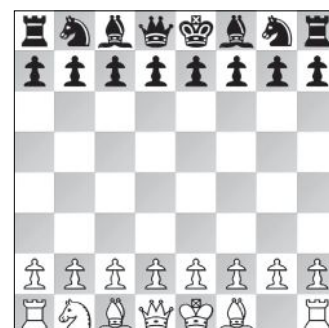
A good defense at knight odds, even g1.

2. exd5 Nf6 3. Bb5+ Nbd7

Leela prefers the gambit 3. ... c6.

4. 0-0 Nxd5 5. Re1 c6

Leela faults this move, saying it merely



INITIAL POSITION

chases the bishop to an ideal square on f1.

6. Bf1 e6

Leela would play 6. ... g6! to avoid blocking in the c8-bishop.

7. c4 Nc7?!

It was better to retreat to f6.

8. d4 Be7 9. Nc3 0-0 10. Qf3 c5 11. dxc5 Bxc5 12. Qg3 Nf6?!

An error. Black missed 12. ... e5!

13. Bg5 Bd4?

The unnatural 13. ... Nce8! was the only way to keep the full piece advantage.

14. Rad1



The pin will cost Black something. He is still winning objectively, but Leela evaluates the position as winning for White (+1.65)!

14. ... e5 15. Rxe5 Bxe5 16. Qxe5 Bd7 17. Bxf6 Qxf6

Black was objectively winning with 17. ... gxf6 but it probably requires superhuman defense to prove that.

18. Qxf6 gxf6 19. Rxd7 Rac8 20. Rd2!

Objectively not good, but the best way to play for a win given the Elo gap. White must avoid the rook trade to win.

20. ... Rfd8 21. Rc2 Na6??

The obvious 21. ... Rd4! was much better, to double rooks and trade on d2. That would win against an equal opponent, and probably draw against Leela. Joel was upset that he didn't do this.

22. a3 Nc5 23. Nd5 Kg7

Better was 23. ... Kf8!.

24. b4 Ne4 25. Bd3

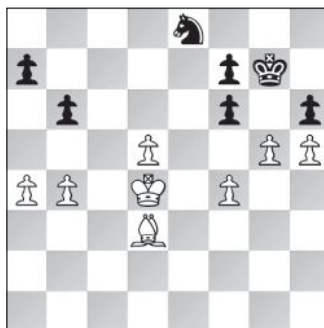


25. ... Rxd5??

Black has the better of the draw in theory, and might be able to draw Leela, after 25. ... Nc3! 26. Rxc3 Rxd5. Benjamin chose the sacrifice instead thinking it was a fortress draw, as did Matthew Sadler, but they were both wrong!

26. cxd5 Rxc2 27. Bxc2 Nd6 28. Kf1 h6

29. Ke2 Kf8 30. Bd3 Ke7 31. Ke3 Kf8 32. Kd4 b6 33. g4 Ke7 34. f4 Kf8 35. h4 Ke8 36. h5 Kf8 37. a4 Kg7 38. g5 Ne8



39. d6 Nxd6 40. Kd5 Nc8 41. gxh6+ Kxh6 42. Kc6 Ne7+ 43. Kb7 Nd5 44. Kxa7 Nxb4 45. Bc4 Kxh5 46. Kxb6 Kg4 47. Kc5 Nc2 48. a5, Black resigned.

One final question: What should we take away from all of this?

Conclusions

- It's surprisingly difficult to win with an extra piece against a stronger opponent, even in some endgames, when the stronger player aims for complications.
- Trade pieces, especially major pieces, when ahead, but don't concede too much to achieve this.
- Open positions favor the stronger player, but very closed ones are often drawn even a piece ahead. To beat a stronger player with a material advantage, open positions tend to allow more trades.

■ To learn "technique" (winning won games), play the odds bots at whatever odds you need to be competitive, which for most players means queen odds (or more)! The "LeelaPieceOdds" bot allows for larger odds.

■ Don't resign easily. To learn how to resist in losing positions, give odds to moderately weaker players. I have played thousands of such games; it's worked for me.

■ There is still much room for improvement in the bots. Most valuable would be finding a way to use more time productively when giving odds. Ideas are being tested. I wouldn't rule out the possibility that bots may challenge "par" grandmasters at classical time controls giving rook odds, or elite GMs at knight odds, wild as that might sound!

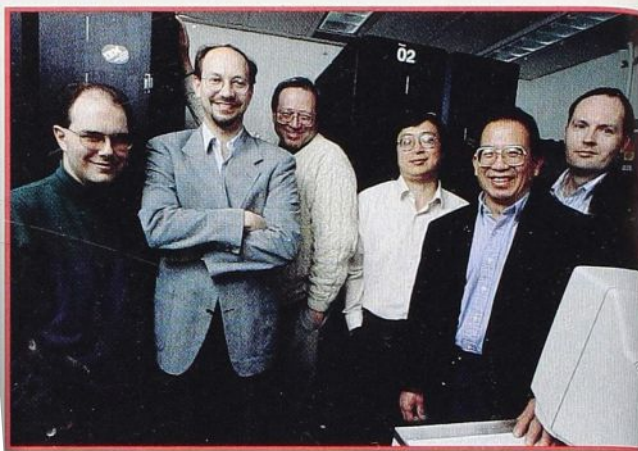
■ The bots are revolutionizing our materialistic view of chess. They play so many long-term "positional" sacrifices that GMs wouldn't consider, which work incredibly well against human GMs. Of course a human might not be able to follow up many of these sacrifices properly, but perhaps we can learn which ones we are capable of playing well. GMs have a lot to learn from these bots!

■ The idea that it's almost impossible to beat super-prepared top-10 players is nonsense. If you are much stronger, you can play all sorts of rubbish and still beat them! The problem is just that between equals, no one wants to be the one that makes the concession of playing an inferior move to leave book early. Engines may be unbeatable with good openings, but all humans make many errors once out of book. ♠

GAME 2

The World Champion again plays out of his style in electing to play the rather timid Ruy Lopez, Smyslov Variation. The center becomes blocked, but Deep Blue does not make any obvious errors. Kasparov creates no counterplay for Black and drifts into a rather passive position. Deep Blue surprisingly finds the necessary pawn moves to make inroads on the Queenside (b4 and a4) as well as via the subcenter (f4). In subsequently avoiding certain complications Deep Blue also demonstrates tre-

Joel Benjamin "took Deep Blue from kindergarten through college in just 10 months" according to C. J. Tan.



The winning team: Joe Horne, Joel Benjamin, Jerry Brody, Feng-Hsiung Hsu, C. J. Tan, Murray Campbell.

Left: We covered Deep Blue's historic match win over Kasparov in our Summer 1997 issue. Joel Benjamin's contributions to the victory were particularly valued by Team IBM.



The Winter Hotspot

Pushing pawns and visiting friends at USATE

BY **FM DAVIS ZONG**



"I'm Batman!"

The crowd erupted in laughter and applause as four passionate cosplayers dressed up in Dark Knight costumes performed their best Bruce Wayne impressions in front of hundreds of boards. The round was scheduled to start at 6 p.m. and the clock already read 6:10, but the whole hall sat patiently, watching probably the most anticipated pregame theatrics of the United States Amateur Team East, more commonly known as the Amateur Team East or just USATE.

Bookmarked by Valentine's Day and Presidents Day, USATE has become chess canon. The three-day event unites chess lovers across places and times. From old friends having a 45-year reunion to a college cohort looking for some last-minute holiday fun to a group of young, energetic kids making their chess debuts, USATE is truly a tournament for all players.

This year's edition in Parsippany, N.J., marked the 55th anniversary of the tournament, and the 50th year for tireless organizer IA Steve Doyle, who spearheads the herculean effort of planning the tournament's logistics and publicity. Doyle started out as a player in USATE in 1974, joined the board of directors in 1975, and has never turned back. "I see people every year that keep coming back, and they say they would never miss it," Doyle says. "They start when they're teenagers; some of them are in their 50s and 60s now, and they come every year."

Although ranked 27th by rating entering the tournament, En-Passant Empire (2135), composed of CM Narayan Venkatesh, Maahir Patel, Sah Aravindakshan, and Vihaan Saxena, was the only team to finish with a perfect 6-0 score. All their members are 15 or younger, but they're all team tournament veterans, with several team members having played USATE for more than five years. In fact, the four competed as a team last year, and while they were all rated under 2100, they scored 4½ points.

As the team recounted, their first three rounds were relatively smooth sailing, but both rounds on the final day were uphill battles, against One Cuckoo Flew Over the Rest in Round 5, whose 2197 rating average was just two points shy of the highest possible, and Pawnkebobers (2185) in Round 6. While the top three boards held crucial draws against higher-rated opponents including

several titled players, it was Vihaan Saxena who clutched the decisive point in both final-day rounds, rounding out a perfect 6-0 run for the Board 4 prize.

Here's a game from Board 1 Venkatesh, who scored a key win against a similarly rated opponent with the black pieces in Round 2.

RÉTI OPENING (A06)

NM Jordan Groff (2272)

CM Narayan Venkatesh (2273)

USATE (2), Parsippany, 02.15.2025

Annotations by CM Narayan Venkatesh

1. Nf3

NM Jordan Groff is a talented player and coach from Connecticut whom I have seen play in tournaments before, but this was my first time playing him.

1. ... d5 2. e3 c5 3. c4

Now it becomes a reverse Benoni.

3. ... d4 4. exd4 cxd4 5. g3 Nc6 6. Bg2 e5 7. d3 Be7

I wasn't very prepared for this line, so I played simply. It's slightly better to play 7. ... Nf6 though.

8. 0-0 Nf6 9. Bg5 Nd7?!

This is a slight inaccuracy. Black should keep the bishop and allow White to take on f6. After 9. ... 0-0 10. Re1 (the immediate 10. Bxf6 Bxf6 11. Nbd2 Be7 12. Rc1 Be6 13. a3 a5 14. Re1 f6 gives Black a slight edge) 10. ... h6 11. Bxf6 Bxf6 12. Nbd2 a5 13. Rc1 Be6 14. a3 a4 it's a pretty unclear position that can go either way. Black might try for something on the kingside like ... g7-g5 while White will try to play c4-c5 and activate their pieces.

10. Bxe7 Qxe7 11. Re1 0-0 12. a3 a5 13. Nbd2 a4!?

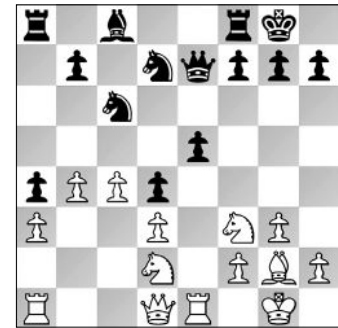
Larsen once said, "If you don't know what to do, push the h-pawn." In this case I pushed the a-pawn, but it is a committal move.

It was probably better to play 13. ... Ra6; it's less committal and improves the rook's position. There's not much after 14. Rb1 a4 15. Nh4 g6 16. Bd5 Kg7 — both sides will have to keep making moves until a concrete plan or weakness is formed.

14. b4!?

(see diagram top of next column)

I was considering 14. Nxe5 for White, but it really doesn't accomplish anything major



POSITION AFTER 14. b4

aside from slightly weakening the kingside structure, while Black untangles in the process: 14. ... Ndx5 15. f4 Bg4 16. Qc2 Ra5 17. fxe5 Rxe5 and Black is in great shape.

14. ... axb3 e.p. 15. Nxb3 Qd6

I didn't think 14. b4 was possible because of 15. ... Rxa3. I knew he had 16. Nbx4 but I didn't think it was too potent at first. But here I realized I had I definitely underestimated it.

16. Qe2 f6

Solidifying the center.

17. Nfd2 Nc5?!

This is just not a good move. I am wasting time trading off a bad knight and letting him get a knight to e4 with tempo.

The computer's top choice is 17. ... Kh8, with equality and a waiting game after 18. a4 Qc7 19. Rf1 Ra6, but basically any other decent move for Black works just fine. My move just gives him too much play.

18. Nxc5 Qxc5 19. Ne4 Qe7 20. c5!

I knew I was worse after this move. I have no space and my b7-pawn is a huge target which can be easily attacked on the open file.

20. ... Ra5

A futile effort to put pressure on the strong c5-pawn.

21. Rec1 Be6 22. Nd6 Rb8 23. Qb2

The slow grind begins for White.

23. ... Qc7 24. Rab1 Ra6 25. Qb5 Na7 26. Qb4 Nc6 27. Qb5 Na7 28. Qb2 Nc6

My opponent repeated moves for a few moves here which gave me some hope that I could hold this. I don't have a clear plan, but my position is solid and hard to break through.

29. h4

My opponent had an interesting idea for



the past few moves: 29. f4, which weakens the kingside pawn structure and creates more holes. After 29. ... exf4 30. gxf4 h6 31. Re1 Bf7 32. Qe2 White simply transfers his pieces to the newly opened e-file and starts to apply pressure there too. Black has too many holes and all I can do is wait.

29. ... Na5?!

I was already running low on time so I wanted to make a fast decision. The problem with this is his next move. Black should simply keep waiting here with 29. ... h6 or any other noncommittal move. It will be tough for White to find a breakthrough.

30. Qb5!

I had missed this move; now I can't force the queen back by putting the knight on a7. I can only do it by moving the bishop on e6, weakening my king.

30. ... Bd7!

The only good response that doesn't lose material. I had to trust that my king would be safe even with the a2-g8 diagonal exposed.

31. Bd5+ Kf8 32. Qb2 Bc6 33. Qa2 Rba8?!

A little too slow. Black will never get any play on the a-file and should keep his eyes on the center with a move like 33. ... Rd8 34. Bg8 g6 35. Bd5 Kg7 36. h5, even though Black is still getting squeezed.

34. Bxc6 Rxc6 35. Qd5

Total dominance by White here: None of my pieces can move and the knight on d6 takes away all my squares.

35. ... Rd8 36. Kg2

Stopping any ... Rd8xd6 tricks: Taking the

rook would no longer be with check and my queen would be hanging.

36. ... Rd7



37. Rb5??

This leaves the rook on c1 unprotected and loses all of White's advantage. Now I can put pressure on his strong c5-pawn, the only thing anchoring his pieces.

The final dagger would have been 37. f4! Black is getting outplayed on all sides of the board and once the center collapses, the game will be over. One line is 37. ... exf4 38. Qe4! Rd8 39. Re1 Rcx d6 40. cxd6 Qxd6 41. Qxh7 Qd5+ 42. Qe4 when Black is down an Exchange with no real compensation.

37. ... b6!

A relatively simple move to play — just undermine the pawn. But it's still the only move.

38. cxb6?

Now Black is pushing for the win. White does eventually manage to win back the knight, but the d3-pawn becomes loose after all the trades.

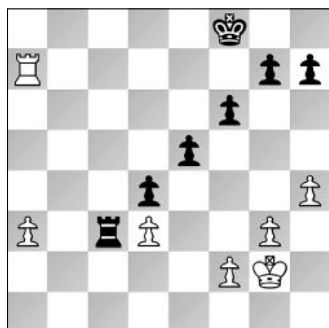
A normal move such as 38. a4 is preferable since it keeps the tension, even though it is very scary to play with low time. He only had about a minute on his clock and was still three moves away from getting to the sudden-death second time control. After 38. ... bxc5 39. Rxa5 Qxd6 40. Qxd6+ Rxd6 41. Raxc5 Rxc5 42. Rxc5 Ra6 43. Rc4 Kf7 it's a dead draw.

38. ... Qxd6 39. Qxd6+ Rxd6 40. b7 Nxb7 41. Rxc6 Rxc6 42. Rxb7 Rc3 43. Ra7

(see diagram top of next page)

Apparently, this endgame is still a draw, but White needs to be extremely careful.

Top: FM and author Davis Zong. Middle: FM Nate Solon. Bottom: the NYPD Chess Club.



POSITION AFTER 43. Ra7

43. ... Rxd3 44. h5?

Now White is lost because Black can play ... e5-e4. During the game, I underestimated how crucial a move that was, and I assume he did too, because he never tried to stop my e-pawn from moving forward.

44. ... Rb3?

Missing the plan. I'm winning after 44. ... e4! 45. g4 h6 46. a4 Ra3 47. a5 d3 48. Ra8+ Ke7 49. Ra7+ Ke6.

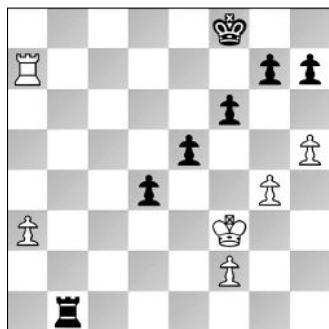
45. g4!

This helps stop my pawns from rolling forward. 45. f3 doesn't work here, but for a very hard-to-find reason: After 45. ... Rb2+ 46. Kf1 the only winning move is 46. ... Ke8!! followed by ... d4-d3. For example, 47. Rxc7 d3 48. Ke1 Re2+ 49. Kd1 Rf2 50. Rxh7 Rxf3 51. Rh8+ Kf7 52. a4 e4 53. Rd8 Ke7 54. Rd4 f5.

45. ... Rb1?!

Spending a move taking control of the back rank to help promote the d-pawn, but this move also basically loses all of the advantage Black had left.

46. Kf3??



This loses. It makes sense, but it is understandable that with low time and after many hours, my opponent missed my response. White had only one move to hold: 46. f3!, stopping the momentum of the e-pawn and preventing the pair of pawns from coming

to d3 and e4. It works now, when it didn't the previous move, because of the pawn on g4: 46. ... Rb2+ 47. Kf1 Ke8 48. Rxg7 d3 49. Ke1 Re2+ 50. Kd1 Rf2 51. Rxh7 Rxf3 52. Rh8+ Kf7 53. a4 e4 54. Rd8 Ke7 55. Rd4.

46. ... Re1!

This allows the pair to advance and wins the game on the spot. Now the position is hopeless for White, but he still went for different traps and never gave up, which he deserves credit for.

47. g5!?

An interesting move, allowing his king to advance and try to set some checkmate traps. It's understandable that he went for this, because it's hopeless for White after 47. Rd7 Ke8 48. Rd5 Ke7 when he's going to get squeezed over the next few moves.

47. ... fxg5 48. Kg4 d3 49. Kf5 h6!

The only move, and good prophylaxis against Kf5-e6. There was a tragic blunder waiting to happen: 49. ... d2?? 50. Ke6 g6 51. h6! when Black is caught in a mating net.

50. Rd7

Now if 50. Ke6 I can just go 50. ... Kg8 51. Ra8+ Kh7 when Black's king is totally safe here, but there are still a few tricks: 52. Kf7 Re4 (again, rushing with 52. ... d2?? causes Black trouble: 53. Rg8! and it's a draw by repetition after 53. ... d1=Q 54. Rxc7+ Kh8 55. Rg8+ Kh7 56. Rg7+) 53. Rd8 Rf4+ followed by ... Rf4-d4.

50. ... e4 51. a4 Re2

Sacrificing the central duo to win White's f- and a-pawns is the cleanest and simplest path to victory. Black will eventually either win the h5-pawn on trade it, giving him a 2-0 on the kingside.

52. a5 Rxf2+ 53. Kxe4 Ra2 54. Kf5 Rxa5+ 55. Kg6 g4 56. Rxc7!?

A nice stalemate trap, but it sadly doesn't work!

56. ... Rg5+ 57. Kxh6 Rxh5+!, White resigned.

After a grueling last-day fight, three teams ended the tournament with 5½ match points to place 2nd-4th: They're Eating the Pawns (2158), featuring FM Dylan McClain, NM Lawyer Times, NM Carey Theil, and Alan Price, took fourth; Deepseeking a Prize (2075), featuring NM Kiren Nasta, NM Jack Levine, Ian Nicholson, and Hema Vikas, brought home third, and Indian Oreo (2179),

featuring NM Ansh Shah, NM Roman Rychkov, NM Sameer Mujumdar, and Vikas Rama, ended in second.

The members of Deepseeking A Prize attend my alma mater, Hunter College High School, and were my teammates at USATE 2023, where we finished as top high school team with 4½/6. This year, supported by Vikas on Board 4, they came back even stronger, finishing in third place overall with an undefeated 5½/6. Here's a game by Jack Levine, who was one of two Board 2 players to sweep with a perfect 6/6.

CARO-KANN DEFENSE (B15)

NM Jack Levine (2205)

NM Mike Zalzenny (2223)

USATE (2), Parsippany, 02.15.2025

Annotations by NM Jack Levine

My team was already playing up against a very strong team with an average rating of 2176. On Board 2 with White against an opponent near my rating, this was a must-win game for me and my team. Before the game I had done some preparation and had prepared a very tricky Pirc line; I was a little disoriented when he instead opted for the Caro-Kann.

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 dxe4 4. Nxe4 Nf6 5. Nxf6+ exf6 6. c3 Bd6 7. Bd3 0-0 8. Qc2 Re8+ 9. Ne2 h5 10. Be3 Nd7



Here I thought for a while before I decided to take my opponent off his preparation by playing a slightly inaccurate move.

11. Ng3

Looking back, I probably should have just continued with 11. c4 or 11. 0-0 and followed the main line.

11. ... Nb6 12. Nxf5 Bg4 13. Ng3 Nd5

My opponent finds the strongest continuation and manages to equalize the position.

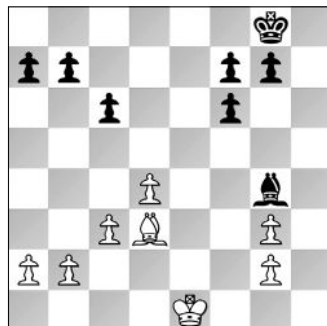
14. 0-0

I considered playing 14. Nf1 holding onto the pawn, but after 14. ... Qa5 followed up by an eventual ... c6-c5, like after 15. h3 Bd7 16. g3 c5, White's pieces are in disharmony and the king is stuck in the middle of the board.

14. ... Bxg3 15. hxg3 Nxe3 16. fxe3 Rxe3 17. Kf2

The only move to keep equality.

17. ... Qe7 18. Qd2 Re8 19. Rae1 Rxe1 20. Rxe1 Qxe1+ 21. Qxe1 Rxe1 22. Kxe1



Looking around at my teammates' positions, our chances were grim. Our Board 1 was fighting for a draw against a 2500 GM while our Boards 3 and 4 both were worse and down on time. If we wanted any chance of getting something from this match, I would have to find a way to win this endgame. White does have a few things in their favor here: (1) White has a queenside majority and a strong control of the center. (2) White's strongest pawns are placed on dark squares, while Black has queenside pawns positioned on light squares, putting them in the reach of White's bishop. (3) Most importantly, if the bishops were ever to be traded off, Black's kingside majority can never break through by itself. While I was certain the endgame was a draw, I had no choice but to keep playing.

22. ... Kf8 23. Kf2 Ke7 24. c4 Kd6

Here I had a few options: Bring the king to e3; play c4-c5+, or continue pushing pawns with b2-b4. I didn't like my winning chances after 25. Ke3 c5 so I ruled that out. I knew I wanted to permanently fix Black's pawns on light squares, and I also wanted to isolate the c6-pawn so I could threaten it. I then realized I could play 25. b4, provoking Black to play 25. ... b6 leaving the c6-pawn as a weakness.

25. b4 b6 26. c5+

Now the pawn is fixed on c6.

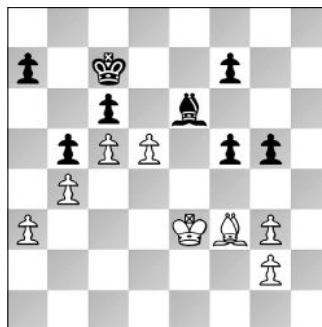
26. ... Kc7 27. a3

Now almost all White's pawns are on dark squares.

27. ... Be6 28. Ke3 g5 29. Be4

Provoking another weakness for Black to protect.

29. ... f5 30. Bf3 b5 31. d5



A very tricky move, forcing Black to make a decision. White's king looks sure to invade through the dark squares and rampage Black's kingside. What is the only way for Black to force a draw?

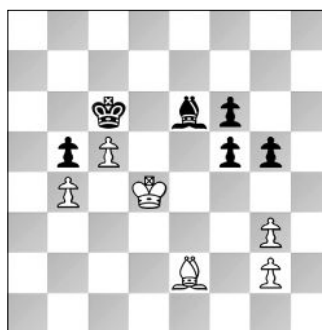
31. ... cxd5

The first inaccuracy by Black. Black loses after (a) 31. ... Bd7 32. dxc6 Bxc6 33. Bxc6 Kxc6 34. Kd4 f6 35. g4! fxg4 36. Ke4 g3 37. Kf5 and White collects all the pawns, but it's a draw after (b) 31. ... Bxd5 32. Bxd5 cxd5 33. Kd4 Kc6 34. Ke5 and now the saving move is 34. ... f6+!. There's no breakthrough for White or Black after 35. Kxf5 Kd7 36. Kg4 Ke6 37. Kf3 Ke5 38. g4 d4 39. Ke2 Kd5 40. Kd3 Ke5 41. g3 Kd5.

32. Kd4 f6 33. Bxd5 Bd7 34. Bf3 Be6 35. Bd1

Looking to play a3-a4 and give Black an isolated b5-pawn.

35. ... Kc6 36. a4 a6 37. axb5+ axb5 38. Be2



Another tricky position. Black has only one move that saves the game. Can you find it?

38. ... Bc8??

Black can hold after 38. ... Bf7 with correct play: 39. Bf3+ Kc7 40. Bd5 Be8 41. Be6 Bc6 42. Bxf5 Bxg2 43. Bd3 Bc6 44. Bg6 Bd7 45. Kd5 f5 46. Ke5 f4 47. gxf4 gxf4 48. Kxf4.

39. Bf3+ Kd7

Black plans to meet 40. Kd5 with 40. ... Bb7+, kicking the king back. But Black missed ...

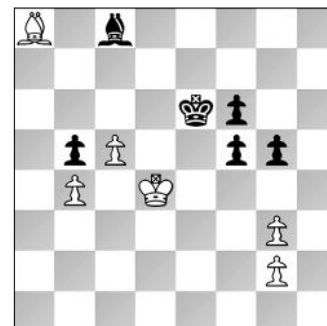
40. Ba8!

Now White is threatening to bring the king to d5.

40. ... Ke6 41. Bc6 Ba6

The bishop is now tied to the pawn and out of place.

42. Bf3 Bc8 43. Ba8!



Black is out of moves! If the king moves, White plays 44. Kd5. If the pawns move, White relocates the king to start attacking them, and if 43. ... Ba6, White responds with 44. c6 followed up by 45. Bb7 forcing a trade and winning.

43. ... Kd7 44. Kd5 Kc7 45. Bc6 Ba6 46. Be8 f4 47. gxf4 gxf4 48. Bc6

Waiting.

48. ... f5 49. Be8 Kd8 50. Bh5, Black resigned.

Now c5-c6 is unstoppable and White will then collect the b5-pawn.

Planning one of the largest three-day indoors conventions in New Jersey involves unwavering work on many different ends. Players have to act fast, as hotels typically sell out as early as October of the previous year, a whole four months before the tournament! Local food joints accommodated more than 1,500 chess players by ordering more supplies and hiring more workers in advance.

It takes a massive staff working in a variety of roles to ensure the smooth running of the event. There were the tournament directors, who not only helped set clocks

and find boards, but also stayed late-night shifts to the end of every match. “With so many players, especially at the start of each round, you have to be ready for a lot of different types of questions: time controls, round times, rules, setting the clocks,” said IA Steve Immitt, who served as tournament director for the USATE many times since the late 1990s. Photographers skillfully took close-up photos of the players in their deepest focus stages and brought the inside of tournament halls to life for outside readers. Mike Somers, who has taken photos for the tournament for 14 years now, said that one of his favorite parts of taking pictures is “getting to take closeups of top players.”

Whereas players at many open tournaments have no problem arriving late to a round in order to do a little more preparing for their opponent, most Amateur East participants arrived early, because who doesn’t like free and fun giveaways? Doyle kept the crowd entertained and rewarded the early birds with his jokes, and free souvenirs for the lucky and daring: “First one with a New York library card, come to the stage for a prize!” “Anyone without a chess clock? You have one now!” “Who was born in exactly the year 1956?” With so many people in the room, chances were at least one person would excitedly scurry onto the stage to claim their prize after each question!

In Round 2, all the players were greeted at the chessboard with a free copy of a beautiful book by GM Lev Alburt and NM Jon Cru-miller on the 2016 Carlsen – Karjakin match. Though we had to resist the temptation to read the book during the round, it certainly made for an amazing post-round activity.

These gimmicks and giveaways, as well as the social environment, are what bring people back year after year. NM Mubassar Uddin first played USATE as a seventh grader, and it’s still one of his favorite tournaments. “I think it’s really cool we get to play in a team format, and I’ve been to almost every single one ever since,” Uddin said. “It’s such a social event, and I get to see many people that I haven’t seen in ages.” Ayden Spellman, who played Board 4 for Uddin’s team, is just 10 years old, but when his coach promised he could join their team if he broke 1500, he delivered! Spellman played his first-grade nationals in December, and says his favorite part about the tournament is getting to “play alongside his coaches.”

The tournament started by honoring our country with a flag ceremony, in which a Marine color guard marched up the aisle as rhythmically as passed pawns during pawn races. Then came two patriotic songs: “America the Beautiful,” delivered beautifully by Laila Faerman, and the national anthem, sung by FM Nathan Resika. Resika is also a bass soloist at Carnegie Hall, and his clarion voice reverberated through the hall to start the first round with a bang.

The Army-Navy match, in which two United States military teams clash over the chessboard, is always a highlight of the event. The teams appeared in their dress uniforms for the entire round, the games played on the ceremonial Board 1 for everyone to watch in all their glory. The soldiers and sailors fought intensely for superiority over the black-and-white battlefield, and all four games ended decisively, with the match result settling into a 2-2 tie. “There’s always something special about these two teams going head-to-head against each other,” said Kade Riddle, who has been in the Army for two years. “Being able to play the Navy is kind of the peak of why we’re here.”

The camaraderie and energy of USATE never ceases to amaze. The whole hallway from the hotel lobby to the playing hall was perpetually filled with a symphonized chorus of chit-chat, laughs, and heated discussions of chess moves. Players and spectators filled every square inch of every table near the bar and lobby with chess boards and clocks, engaging in a mix of opening study, game review, and of course, blitz and bullet! Across the thin alley connecting the neighboring Hampton Inn to the host Hilton, yet more coaches and students lounged in the other hotel lobby.



Top: GM Mac Molner. Middle: GM Joel Benjamin. Bottom: Yet Another Bacon, Egg, and Cheese *en Passant* Please couldn’t quite three-peat.

Among the Hampton Inn dwellers were many students and alumni from Chess in the Schools, a nonprofit organization aiming to foster the intellectual and social development of low-income youth through chess education. "Our students work hard throughout the year to practice for tournaments, USATE is like the event of the year that everyone wants to go to," said Shaun Smith, the director of Chess in the Schools. Sponsoring and arranging the travel, lodgings, and entries of more than a dozen teams every year is a monumental project, and also a great way to ensure that more young players catch the chess bug! For many CIS kids, it was their first time at USATE, but judging from their smiles and laughs while playing blitz in the skittles area, it is likely that we will see many of them back in future years.

The excitement of the playing hall truly

heated up at the beginning of Round 4 for the awarding of the prizes for best team name and best team gimmick, emceed by Doyle and decided by the applause and cheers from the players. As teams lined up behind the stage dressed in all sorts of costumes, the normally tense room buzzing with excited whispers, I felt fortunate and honored to be part of a chess tournament that turns the pin-drop silence of a ballroom into a party floor. True to their names, the Ohio Check Mateys ascended the stage waving pirate flags, while the squad of onyx-black cloaked Bruce-Wayne actors took the floor as the Dark Knights. The Dark Knights would ultimately be one of two teams to be awarded Best Gimmick.

The remaining winners' names were inspired by core memories from the 2024 FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Championships,

an event filled with high-quality chess and high-quality drama, leaving a lasting mark in the hearts of many chess players and fans. The other Best Gimmick award went to Let's All Be Co-Champions, a not-so-subtle reference to Carlsen and Nepomniachtchi's agreement to share the World Blitz title. Meanwhile, for the Best Team Name prize, If the Jeans Don't Fit, Magnus Must Quit won the applause vote by a landslide. A historical chess moment witnessed by dozens onsite and thousands in the news, it is hard for chess fans to forget the moment the former world champion was ejected from the World Rapid for improper attire.

As the last day approached, the games grew more intense as teams began to become more evenly matched and every half-point mattered more. Many chess players are night owls, especially the ones pulling late shifts in the 7:30 p.m. round on the first day and the 11 p.m. bughouse tournament on the second. But the players had to harness their inner larks, as the morning round on the last day started bright and early at 9 a.m.

Although the addition of 30 minutes at move 40 gave players a slight sanctuary from time trouble, there were still some high-pressure situations where players were living on the five-second delay. Nathaniel Shuman, who was on the winning team for the past two years, also finished strongly this year with an undefeated individual performance of $5\frac{1}{2}/6$, and he ended on a dramatic note, winning on time in the last round with just one second remaining on



Round 6: En-Passant Empire versus Pawnkebobers

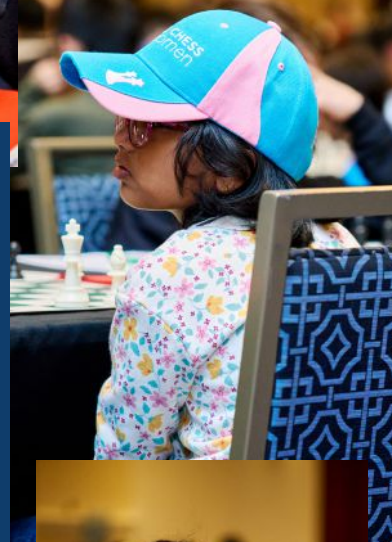


The big room was packed at the 2025 Amateur Team East



LOOKING BACK

With more than 2,700 players in attendance from 45 states, the 2024 K-12 Grade Championships set an attendance record! Here are a few of our favorite photos from National Harbor.



2024 K-12 GRADE CHAMPIONSHIPS AT A GLANCE

DEC. 6-8, 2024 | NATIONAL HARBOR, MD

INDIVIDUAL

KINDERGARTEN: Francis Zhou (NY), 7.
GRADE 1: Yicheng Zhang (NY), Matthew Wang (CA), 6½. **GRADE 2:** Winston Chen (NY), 7. **GRADE 3:** Aiden Li (IL), 6½. **GRADE 4:** Advik Manchanda (TX), 6½. **GRADE 5:** Ariv Debmisra (PA), Lev Shagin (NY), Lucas Yang (NY), Shiv Dubey (NY), Julian Ma (NJ), Jacob Wang (CA), Samuel Le (PA), Logan Freiman (NY), 6. **GRADE 6:** Kyle Dong (NY), Elliot Goodrich (NY), 6. **Grade 7:** Bryan Lin (NY), 7. **GRADE 8:** Yiding Lu (WA), Andrew Jiang (GA), Kyle Zhuang (VA), Oscar Izzy Williams (FL), 6. **GRADE 9:** Nikash Vemparala (WA), 7. **GRADE 10:** IM Erick Zhao (PA), 6½; **GRADE 11:** IM Evan Park (PA), IM Liran Zhou (NY), William Saffranek (NY), Jed Sloan (NY), 6. **GRADE 12:** FM Avi Kaplan (IL), Arnav Gupta (VA), 6.

TEAM

KINDERGARTEN: Oak Hall (FL), 13½. **GRADE 1:** Oak Hall (FL), 15. **GRADE 2:** Elizabeth M. Baker Elementary (NY), 14½. **GRADE 3:** Speyer Legacy School (NY), 17. **GRADE 4:** P.S. 77 - Lower Lab (NY), 16½. **GRADE 5:** Speyer Legacy School (NY), 17½. **GRADE 6:** Dalton (NY), 16. **GRADE 7:** Hunter College Campus School (NY), 18½. **GRADE 8:** Millburn MS (NJ), 15. **GRADE 9:** Ardrey Kell HS (NC), 14½. **GRADE 10:** The Frasier School (FL), 14½. **GRADE 11:** American Heritage School (FL), Stuyvesant HS (NY), Livingston HS (NJ), 15. **GRADE 12:** Thomas Jefferson HS (VA), 16½.

For full standings and reports, visit new.uschess.org/2024-national-scholastics.

PHOTOS: CAROLINE KING





Down to the Wire

Last-round drama at the 2024 Saint Louis Masters.

BY IM JOSIAH STEARMAN | ANNOTATIONS BY GM LUKA BUDISAVLJEVIC

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HE INAUGURAL SAINT LOUIS Masters drew 59 players from numerous countries to the Royal Sonesta Chase Park Plaza Hotel Dec. 3-7 in search of prize money, norms, and more.

The prize fund was \$100,000, with \$20,000 going to the first-place finisher; with 34 grandmasters in the field, plenty of norm chances were available. And with the 2024 FIDE Circuit coming to an end Dec. 15, the tournament was of special importance to U.S. Champion Fabiano Caruana: A first-place finish would vault him to the top of the standings and give him the inside track to a place in the 2025 Candidates Tournament.

Pretty much from the start it seemed everything was going Caruana's way. He was winning at will with the white pieces and an impenetrable force with black. His second-round game is a good illustration of how he was dismantling strong opponents even in complex battles.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, ROSSOLIMO VARIATION (B51)

GM Fabiano Caruana (2805)

GM Robby Kevlishvili (2556)

Saint Louis Masters (2), St. Louis, 12.03.2024

In the second round, GM Caruana had a tough challenge against GM Kevlishvili, the new captain of Saint Louis University, who has been on a great run lately. The game was a true rollercoaster, and mutual time pressure could have easily led to a different result.

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5

As expected, Fabi goes for the Rossolimo, a variation in which he's made his mark, mostly with the black pieces. It promises White a long strategic game, which Caruana desires.

3. ... d6

Robby goes for a sideline which Fabi has played in the past, though in shorter time formats. The more popular alternatives are 3. ... g6 and 3. ... e6.

4. 0-0 Bd7 5. Re1 Nf6 6. c3 a6 7. Bf1 Bg4 8. h3

White plays safely, and gets the bishop pair. The sharper alternative is 8. d4 cxd4 9. cxd4 e5 10. d5 Nd4 11. Be3 Nxf3+ 12. gxf3 Bd7, and here White has many ways to continue, some of them promising a slight edge.

8. ... Bxf3 9. Qxf3 e6 10. d3 Be7 11. Nd2

The alternative 11. Qg3 has been very popular lately, but Black has a very creative response: 11. ... Rg8!? preparing ... g7-g5. Play could go 12. f4 g5 13. fxg5 h6 with an unclear position.

11. ... 0-0 12. Qd1 d5 13. e5 Nd7 14. Nf3



PHOTO: COURTESY SLCC / A. FULLER



White's goal is to push d3-d4 and achieve an Advance French pawn structure, promising a great fight. Black would certainly be fine there, since he has gotten rid of the light-squared bishop, which is usually his main weakness in this structure.

14. ... d4

Black stops White's pawn push and stops White's bishop from reaching the b1-h7 diagonal, where it would be a big attacking asset, but puts more central pawns on dark squares, limiting the bishop's potential. Black could play 14. ... b5 15. d4 c4, playing on the queenside, while White needs to generate an attack on Black's king.

15. g3 a5 16. a4 Qb8 17. Qe2 b5!

A very good decision by Robby; he needs to create some active play on the queenside.

18. axb5 Qxb5 19. c4 Qb8 20. h4 Bd8 21. Bf4 Ra6 22. h5

White is advancing on the kingside, and h5-h6, permanently weakening Black's king, is a valid threat. However, this move also occupies h5 and loosens control over g5, stopping White from pursuing an immediate mating attack.

22. ... Rb6

Human players tend to underestimate the h5-h6 push, but the engines rightly fear it. Black should have played 22. ... h6!?

23. Qe4

It would have been interesting after 23. h6 Rxb2 24. Qe4 Nb4 25. hxc7.

23. ... Qc8 24. Re2 Re8 25. Bh3

Fabi is doing his best to improve all his pieces while not making any committal moves.

25. ... Qb7 26. Nh2 Nb4!?

Since White's plan is a kingside attack, it makes sense for Black to trade queens.

27. Qxb7 Rxb7 28. Ra3 Bc7 29. Ng4 Nc6

It's Black's last chance to stop White's idea with 29. ... h6.

30. h6



Finally, White decides to weaken Black's dark squares. Here Black is already in quite some trouble.

30. ... g6 31. Bg2 Rb6

White decides to change his focus to the queenside and attack there.

32. Bd2 Ra8 33. f4 Ra6 34. Bc1

Fabi once again chooses the slower plan of improving pieces rather than trying to immediately strike. He could have played 34. Bxc6! Rxc6 35. Re1 when Black has no way to defend the a5-pawn. Once he loses that, his position will collapse.

34. ... Ne7 35. Bf3 Kf8 36. Kg2 Ng8 37. b3

Things are obviously going Caruana's way, so Robby had to complicate immediately.

37. ... f5! 38. exf6 e.p. Ndx6 39. Nxf6 Nxf6 40. Rea2 Rb8 41. g4 Ng8 42. g5 Ne7 43. Bd2

The a5-pawn is going to fall, but now Black can take the f4-pawn in return. Black needs to try to put his pieces in the best defensive positions possible to survive.

43. ... Nf5?

The best chance was 43. ... Ke8 44. Be4 Kd7 45. Bxa5 Bxf4 46. Be1 Rxa3 47. Rxa3 Bxg5 48. Bg3.

44. Be4 Kg8 45. Kf3!

White protects the f4-pawn; the a5-pawn isn't going anywhere.

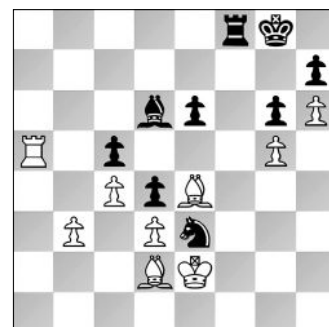
45. ... Ne3 46. Bxa5 Bd6 47. Bd2?!

White should win with ease after 47. b4! cxb4 48. Bxb4 Rxa3 49. Bxa3.

47. ... Rxa3 48. Rxa3 Rf8!

Suddenly Black has some counterplay.

49. Ke2 Bxf4 50. Ra5 Bd6



51. b4?

Both players were in time trouble here, so it's hard to expect them to find all the best moves, but 51. Ra6! was much better here: After 51. ... Be7 (51. ... Rd8?? loses material to 52. Ba5) 52. Rxe6 Bxg5 53. Bxg6 White's winning.

51. ... cxb4 52. c5 Bg3 53. Bf3

After two careless moves by White, Black is completely back in the game. However, the time situation leads to more mistakes.

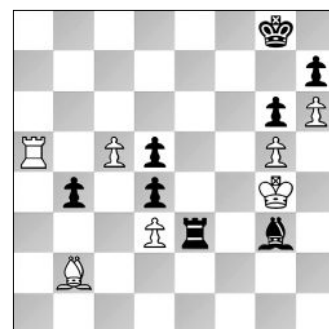
53. ... Rb8 54. Bc1 Nd5 55. Bxd5 exd5 56. Bb2 Re8+

Black must use his biggest asset: 56. ... b3!.

57. Kf3

White should use his king to stop the passed pawn with 57. Kd1!.

57. ... Re3+ 58. Kg4



The final critical moment of the game.

58. ... Kf7??

Black leaves the d4- and h7-pawns hanging. After 58. ... Be5 White doesn't have time to

take the h7-pawn. Play could go 59. c6 Rxd3 60. Rxd5 (going straight after the h7-pawn actually loses after 60. Ra8+ Kf7 61. Ra7+ Ke6 62. Rxh7 Rg3+ 63. Kh4 Rg2 64. Ba1 Ra2) 60. ... Rg3+ 61. Kh4 Re3 62. Bxd4 Rd3 63. Rd7 Bxd4 64. c7 Rc3 65. Rd8+ Kf7 66. c8=Q Rxc8 67. Rxc8 b3 and it's a draw.

59. Ra7+ Ke6 60. Bxd4 Rxd3 61. Bf6 d4 62. Rxh7 Bf2 63. Re7+ Kd5 64. h7 Rg3+ 65. Kf4 Rh3 66. h8=Q Rxh8 67. Bxh8, Black resigned.

GM Kevlishvili managed to bounce back and have a great event, which culminated in defeating the best Croatian player ever, GM Ivan Saric.

Meanwhile, what appeared to be the race for second was heating up one riveting game at a time, and German GM Alexander Donchenko kept pace. Ranked number six in his country and a strong and principled player, Donchenko's tournament included a model game against GM Illia Nyzhnyk.



QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, SEMI-SLAV VARIATION (D45)

GM Alexander Donchenko (2618)

GM Illia Nyzhnyk (2564)

Saint Louis Masters (5), St. Louis, 12.05.2024

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. e3 e6 5. Bd3!? Nbd7 6. b3 Bd6 7. Bb2 b6 8. 0-0 Bb7 9. Nc3 0-0 10. Qc2 h6 11. Rad1 dxc4 12. bxc4 c5?! 13. d5! exd5 14. Nxd5! Re8 15. e4 Bxd5 16. cxd5 a6 17. a4 Qc7 18. Rfe1 c4!? 19. Bxc4 Rac8 20. Rc1 Bf4 21. d6! Qxd6 22. e5 Qb4 23. exf6 Bxc1 24. Rxe8+ Rxe8 25. Qxc1 b5 26. axb5 axb5 27. Bf1 gxf6 28. h3, Black resigned.

Still, after eight rounds in a grueling four days, Caruana found himself with 6½ points and a full point lead over the field. With white in round 9 against Donchenko, another first place for Caruana seemed like a foregone conclusion. After all, Caruana had just come off a blistering 8/9 U.S. Masters victory and is widely regarded to be one of the most solid and practical players in the world ...

SICILIAN DEFENSE, MOSCOW VARIATION (B51)

GM Fabiano Caruana (2805)

GM Alexander Donchenko (2618)

Saint Louis Masters (9), St. Louis 12.07.2024

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. Bb5+

GM Donchenko usually plays the Najdorf, against which White has many ways to ensure he doesn't lose the game. But Fabi had more ambitious plans.

3. ... Nd7 4. 0-0 a6 5. Be2!?

A very trendy line that leads to double-edged positions. The more popular moves are 5. Bd3 and 5. Bxd7+.

5. ... Ngf6 6. d3 g6 7. c4 Bg7 8. Nc3

After setting a bind with c2-c4 and protecting the e4 pawn with the knight, White wants to push d3-d4 and get a significant space advantage.

8. ... e5 9. Ne1 Nf8!

While 9. ... 0-0 seems the most logical move, Black has a misplaced knight on d7, which

he needs to activate in order to develop his queenside. Thus, he has the time to prioritize improving the knight, since his king is in no danger.

10. f4

Since Black is delaying castling, White's first instinct is to open up the center. He also wants to get f2-f4 in before Black plays ... Nf8-e6 to stop the idea. However, this move is extremely risky, since it opens up the long diagonal, activating the black bishop on g7.

10. ... exf4 11. Bxf4 Ne6 12. Be3 0-0

Black has completely equalized: He has no weaknesses and all of his pieces have good potential, while White will always struggle with his blocked light-squared bishop.

13. Qd2



The last piece Black needs to activate is the c8-bishop. Alex finds a very precise and bold way to do it.

13. ... b5! 14. Rd1

Accepting the pawn sacrifice with 14. cxb5 would have given Black a tremendous initiative: After 14. ... axb5 15. Nxb5 Rb8 16. Nc3 d5 Black has undermined the center and made White's position extremely difficult.

14. ... Rb8 15. b3 b4 16. Na4 Bd7

Black has gained space on the queenside, developed all of his pieces, and is making threats. On the other hand, White is struggling to find good squares for his knights and the e2-bishop is a lost cause. It is becoming obvious that Black has taken over and White needs to be precise to defend the position.

17. e5!

A nice resource, hoping to change the nature of the position and unlock the light-squared bishop.

17. ... Ne8 18. exd6?

A logical move, but after this it is safe to say White never had a chance to get back

Top: Caruana considers his move against Kevlishvili. Bottom: A happy Mark Heimann is interviewed after his third GM norm.

in the game. Black's moves are very easy to play, while White is struggling to come up with a plan.

Caruana had to sacrifice a pawn to get rid of the bad bishop with 18. Bg4! It is extremely hard to evaluate the position after 18. ... Bxe5 19. Bxe6 fxe6 20. Rxf8+ Kxf8 21. Nf3 Bf6 22. d4, but this is clearly the best White can do.

18. ... Bxa4 19. bxa4 Bc3 20. Qc1 Nxd6

21. Bg4

Trying to trade away the bishop, but it's too late.

21. ... f5

The other way, with 21. ... Nd4, was also very good.

22. Bf3 f4 23. Bd2 Bxd2 24. Qxd2 Nd4

Black's pieces dominate the position; he has a much more mobile pawn majority and better king safety, which will prove to be crucial very soon. The game is very close to over.

25. Bd5+ Kg7 26. Nf3

White is trying to trade some pieces since he lacks space. However, this trade also makes his dark-square weaknesses even more apparent, as White is left with no pieces to protect them.

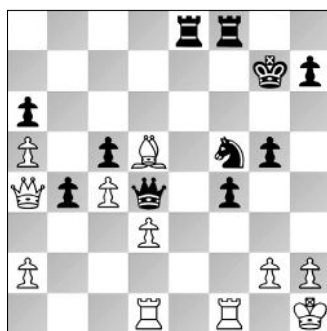
26. ... Qf6 27. Kh1 Rbe8

Black keeps playing simple moves, improving the position and increasing the advantage.

28. Nxd4 Qxd4 29. a5 g5

Protecting the f4-pawn and preparing ... Nd6-f5. Meanwhile, White still can't find a plan.

30. Qc2 Nf5 31. Qa4



After playing many improving moves, Black spots the winning combination. Since his opponent is such an elite player, Donchenko spent quite some time rechecking it and making sure he didn't blunder anything.

31. ... Rf6!

Finishing the game in style with a rook sacrifice.

32. h3

A sacrifice Caruana can't take: 32. Qxe8?? fails to 32. ... Ng3+ 33. hxxg3 Rh6+ 34. Qh5 Rxh5 mate.

32. ... Ng3+ 33. Kh2 Nxf1+ 34. Rxf1 Re7

Black is up a clear Exchange; White has no compensation and an exposed king. The rest was merely a formality.

35. Qd1 Qe5 36. Kh1 Qe2 37. Qa1 Qxd3

38. Bf3 Qxc4 39. Rc1 Qd4 40. Qb1 Rfe6

41. Rf1 Qc3 42. Qf5 Re5 43. Qg4 Qd3 44.

Rd1 Qf5 45. Qxf5 Rxf5 46. Rd6 c4, White

resigned.

The grandmasters and heavy hitters of the event weren't the only ones who had stunning performances. International Master Mark Heimann came into the event ranked 38th out of 59 players, but hot off his second GM norm from the U.S. Masters, and he pulled off an early upset over GM Grigoriy Oparin in round one with the black pieces. He would go on to upset two more grandmasters, finishing with 5/9, securing a GM norm with three (!) rounds to spare, and securing the 2500 FIDE rating needed to officially cement himself as one of America's newest grandmasters.

International Master Isik Can, a Mizzou freshman hailing from Turkey, was even more of a shock, with an undefeated 6/9. Isik had secured the GM title during the U.S. Masters, and started off slow by taking a half-point bye in round one to rest and catch up on schoolwork. He went on to upset three grandmasters along the way, including former U.S. champion Sam Shankland. Though Isik ended a half-point behind the leaders and in a tie for third place, he concluded the event with the highest tournament performance rating with 2766! Isik's dominant victory in round two over Indian GM Aryan Chopra was just one of his highlights.

GIUOCO PIANO (C24)

GM Aryan Chopra (2637)

IM Isik Can (2499)

Saint Louis Masters (2), St. Louis, 12.03.2024

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. d3 Nf6 5. 0-0 0-0 6. h3 d5!? 7. exd5 Nxd5 8. Re1 Be6! 9. c3 a6 10. Nbd2 f6 11. d4! Ba7 12. dxe5 Nxe5 13. Nxe5?! fxe5 14. Ne4 Kh8

15. Bg5 Qd7 16. Bh4 Qc6! 17. Bd3 Bf5 18. Kh2 Nf4! 19. Bc2?



Black has five attacking pieces while White only has two defenders. Thus, Black correctly recognized that it's time to strike!

19. ... Nxh3!!

Black could also play 19. ... Nxg2! with the same idea, but the game move is much more natural.

20. Qd2

White tries to keep the game going down a pawn, but king safety is a much bigger concern here. Taking isn't possible: 20. gxh3 fails to 20. ... Qh6 exploiting the unprotected bishop. After 21. Bg3 comes 21. ... Qxh3+ 22. Kg1 Bxe4 23. Bxe4 Qxg3+ utilizing the pin along the a7-g1 diagonal. Mate is coming up.

20. ... Nf4

Threatening ... Qc6-h6.

21. Bg5 Rad8!!

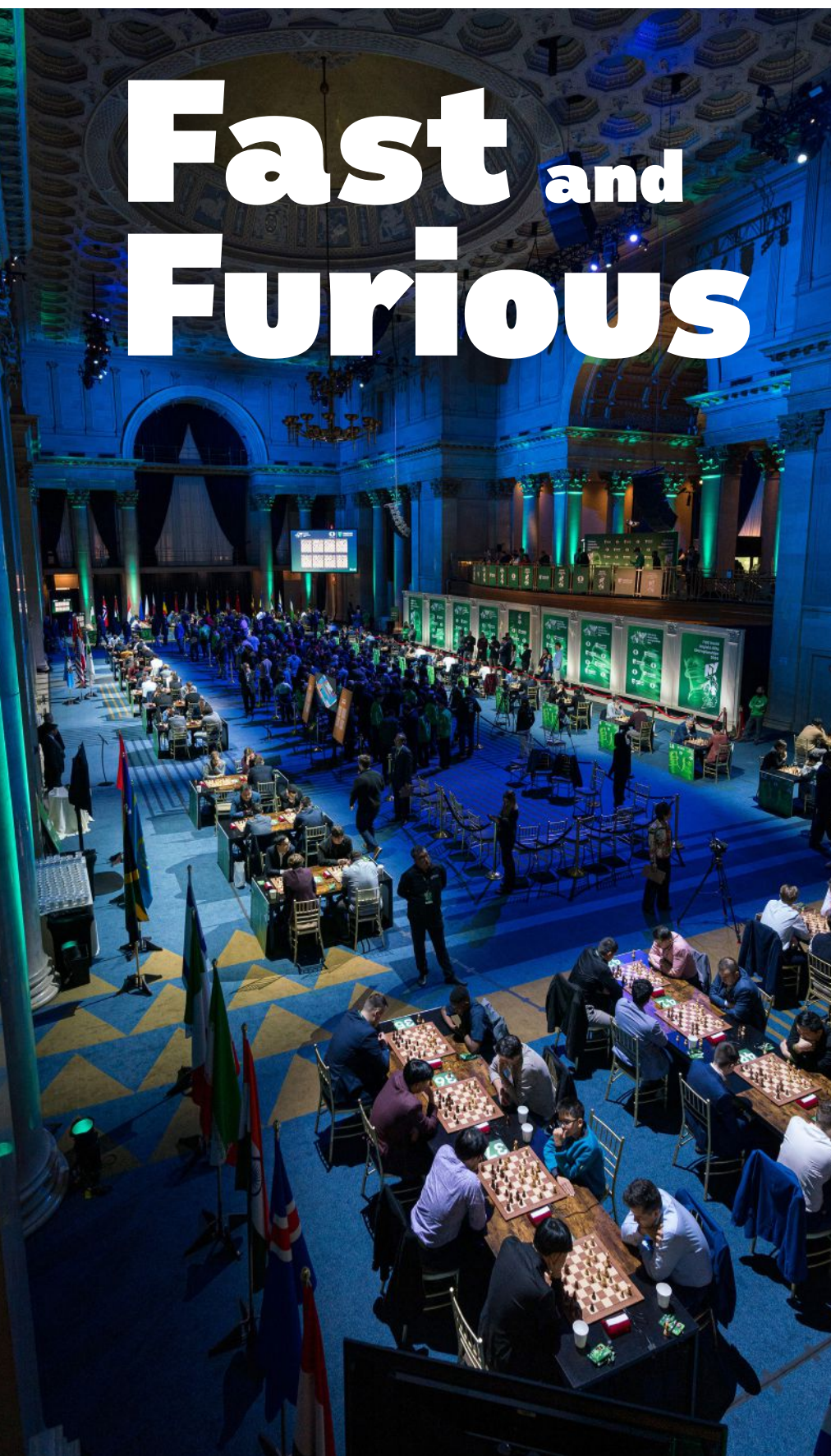
An amazing sacrifice, distracting the white bishop.

22. Bxd8 Qh6+ 23. Kg1 Bxe4!

Removing the queen's defender.

24. Bxe4 Nh3+, White resigned.

The event was well organized: Leading the staff were International Arbiter and Organizer Tony Rich, alongside International Arbiter Chris Bird and FIDE Arbiter Richard Pointer. Their efforts and those of their team made for a pleasant playing experience for all involved. The daily commentary team comprised GM Yasser Seirawan, IM Nazi Paikidze, and WGM Katerina Nemcova, and throughout the event you could also see WGM Sabina Foisor diligently heading up social media and interviewing players. The overall professionalism of the event is exactly what one would expect of the Saint Louis Chess Club which hosts top-tier events year in and year out. ♠



Fast and Furious

More games from the World Rapid & Blitz

ANNOTATIONS BY
**BENJAMIN,
HARDAWAY, SO, AND
LEE**

Strong players plus a fast time control usually equals wild chess, and the 2024 World Rapid and Blitz Championships

were no exception to the rule. The tournaments held last December in New York attracted 47 Americans including Olympians past and present, top juniors, and many “working-class” titled players who took their chance to face off with the world’s elite.

We asked a number of the American competitors and to annotate their favorite games from the events, and we’re proud to bring them to you here and in the months to come. All ratings given are from the FIDE December 2024 rating list for the time control used in the game.

GIUOCO PIANO (C50)

GM Ian Nepomniachtchi (2770)

GM Wesley So (2803)

World Blitz Final KO (2.1), New York,
12.31.2024

Annotations by GM Wesley So

This was my first World Rapid and Blitz, and in general it was quite an experience for me. You have to win a lot of games in order to have any chance at a prize!

This game was played in the semifinals of the World Blitz. In general I feel I played well in the blitz section, compared to a nightmare situation in the rapid (7/13, after trying too hard to force wins in a few games). The blitz section went far more smoothly for me. I won my first three games and qualified for the knockout rounds comfortably, with 9½ points out of 13. In the quarterfinals I faced Firouzja, and won the match thanks mainly to tricks in a fast time scramble in Game 3. Next I faced Nepom-

PHOTO: COURTESY FIDE / LENNART OOTES

This is just as popular as 3. Bb5 nowadays, if not more, and Ian has played it many times, especially recently.

Against Firouzja I played 4. ... Be7, which is also a solid variation. I got a slightly worse but pretty solid position after 5. 0-0 0-0 6. Nc3 d6 7. a4 Na5 8. Ba2 c5 9. Bg5 Qd6 10. Bxf6 Bxf6 11. Nd5 g6 12. c3 Bg7 13. Nc2 Bg4 14. Qe3 Rc8 15. h3 Be6 followed by ... Nc6-e7.

This move in the Italian was pretty fashionable in this tournament, with Sindarov, Nakamura, and Nepo using it in a few games. (See also Hardaway's game at the end of this article. ~ed.)

One of the famous games of the tournament, Nakamura – Niemann, went 5. ... a6 6. Nd5 h6 7. Be3 d6 8. Bxc5 dxc5 9. Ne3 0-0 10. 0-0 Re8 11. a4 b6 12. h3 Rb8 13. c3 Qd6 14. Qe2 g6 (Black should start first with 14. ... b5 15. axb5 axb5 as without a rook on d1, taking on b5 does not work) 15. Rad1 b5? (falling for the trick; 15. ... Kg7 is better although White has a slight advantage after 16. Rfe1 thanks to his better pawn structure) 16. axb5 axb5 17. Bxb5! Rxb5 18. d4 and White won material; nevertheless, the game went on.

One main attractions of the Nc3 Italian is its flexibility. In this position White can also start with 6. 0-0 or play 6. a4 or 6. a3. The idea of the game move is to think about starting a kingside attack with g2-g4 in some cases.

If I play like Niemann with 6. ... a6, then 7. Nd5 requires some care from Black, since 7. ... h6 runs into 8. c3 d6 9. Nxf6+ Qxf6 10. g4! with a strong initiative for White.

I wasn't particularly concerned about giving up the bishop pair here; it's not like his dark-squared bishop can get active anytime soon. Awonder Liang won a good game like this in the U.S. Championships just a couple of months earlier, and his play was convincing.

Also possible is 8. ... Be6 9. Bxe6 fxe6 10. 0-0 Qd7 11. c3 Ne7 when Black is only a little bit worse.

It makes sense to start with 10. Re1 first, in order to get more options. For example, 10. ... c6 11. Nxb6 axb6 12. d4 is another way to play, trying to take control of the center.

This position also arose in the fifth and last game of the match, and Ian played 12. Bd2 c6 13. Nxb6 axb6 14. a4 Be6 (14. ... d5 was even an easier way to equalize: 15. exd5 cxd5 16. Bb3 Qd6) 15. Bxe6 Rxe6 16. c4 Qd7 17. Be3 b5 18. axb5 Rxa1 19. Qxa1 cxb5 20. Nd2 bxc4 21. dxc4. The position is around equal, but here I got too overconfident and ambitious: 21. ... Nh5 22. Qd1 (22. g3 followed by Kg1-h2 protects the kingside well and keeps a slight advantage) 22. ... Ngf4 23. Kh2 Rg6 24. g4 Rf6?! (I could have generated sufficient counterplay with 24. ... Qe6 25. Rg1 Nf6) 25. c5 d5? 26. Nf3 and my knight was trapped on h5. White won easily.



The Awonder game, against GM Grigoriy Oparin, went 12. ... c6 13. Nxb6 axb6 14. a4 Be6 15. c4 c5 16. Bd2 Nd7 17. Nh2 Nb8 18. a5? (18. b5! Nd7 19. Qf3 followed by 20. Bd1 was the way to play) 18. ... cxb4 19. axb6 Rxa1 20. Qxa1 Qxb6 and Black won a pawn and converted the game very beautifully.

I was quite pleased with the outcome of the opening; by playing natural moves, I got a completely equal position with no problems.

It's also equal after 16. Bb2 Od7 17. a4 b5.

Gaining space is not bad, but even easier is 17. ... dxe4 18. dxe4 c5 when Black is for choice. Black's pieces are better coordinated and White can have problems defending the pawns on c4 or e4.

18. c5?

White should play 18. Bd2 c5 (18. ... Nd7 19. Qd1 and now 19. ... Qf8!, with the idea of ... f7-f5, is unclear) 19. b5 with a very complicated position. The computer now suggests ... Nf6-e8-d6.

18. ... b5?

I didn't mind closing the position, but this is a mistake. I should have played the strong 18. ... bxc5 19. bxc5 Nd7! 20. Ba3 (20. Qc4? Rf6) 20. ... Rf6 and when the knight comes to f4 it will be hard for White to defend all his weaknesses. After 18. ... Nd7 19. cxb6 Qxb6 20. Bd2 is a little better for White, with the easy idea to gain space on the queenside by pushing the pawns to a5 and b5.

19. Bd2

The computer likes 19. a5 and gives White a considerable advantage. It looks fine for Black at first, but it's not easy to get counterplay. After 19. ... Nh7 20. Rf1 White can play on the kingside starting with Bc1-d2 and Qb3-d1.

19. ... bxa4 20. Rxa4 Ne8

This knight finds a good, stable home on the b5-square.

Black can also start first with 20. ... Rxa4 21. Qxa4 Ne8, which will look very similar to the game.

21. Rea1

White is a little better as usual after 21. Rxa8 Qxa8 22. g3 Qc8 23. Kg2 Nc7, thanks to his slight space advantage, but not by that much.

21. ... Rxa4 22. Rxa4 Nc7 23. Qa2 Re8

Once the knight gets on b5 Black solves all his problems.

24. Nh2

Black also equalizes after 24. g3 Qd7 25. Kg2 Kh7 with the idea of ... f7-f5.

24. ... Nb5 25. Ra5 Qd7 26. Nf1 Kh7 27. Ng3 Nf8

Even easier was 27. ... Nh4 and ... f7-f5; for example, 28. Be1 f5 29. exf5 Nxf5 30. Ne4 Nh4.

28. Nf5 Ne6 29. Qb3

It's equal after 29. h4 h5.

29. ... h5!

Just in time, before White can play 30. Qd1. Now I am able to kick his powerful knight away from f5.

30. Qd1 g6 31. Nh4 Kg7

It was slightly more precise to play 31. ... f6 32. Qf3 Qf7 when Black is ready to play ... g6-g5.

32. Qc1

It was more to the point to play 32. g3, preparing a quick f2-f4. This could cause Black some problems.

32. ... f6 33. Kh2 Kf7 34. Kh1

The text does nothing, but after 34. g3 g5 35. Nf5 Ng7 Black is just in time to meet White's threats. White gets nothing more than equality after 36. Nxg7 Kxg7 37. Bxg5 fxg5 38. Qxg5+ Kf8 39. Qxh5 Qf7.

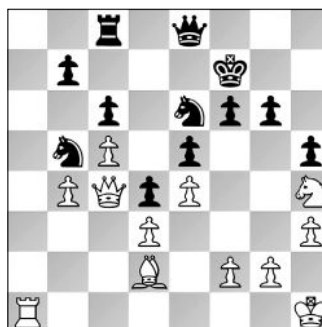
34. ... Rc8

I was better off playing 34. ... g5 35. Nf5 Ng7 with equality, because the piece sacrifice does not lead anywhere: 36. Nxg7 Kxg7 37. Bxg5 fxg5 38. Qxg5+ Kf8 39. Qxh5 Qg7.

35. Ra1 Qe8

With the obvious idea of trading rooks with ... Rc8-a8.

36. Qc4



The position can become very closed after 36. g3 g5 37. Nf5 Ng7 38. Qc4+ Kg6 39. Nxg7 Kxg7 40. f4 Qe7 41. Rf1 Rf8.

36. ... Ra8!

An accurate move to fight for control of the only open file.

37. Ra2

I needed to calculate 37. Rxa8 Qxa8 38. Nxg6, but Black is OK. The easiest probably is 38. ... Qa1+ 39. Kh2 Qb2 when Black has enough counterplay and White does not have anything more than a draw after 40. Nf8 (40. Bh6 Qxf2 or 40. Be1 Qe2) 40. ... Nbc7.

37. ... Rxa2 38. Qxa2 Ke7

Completely closing the position with 38. ... g5 39. Nf5 h4 is even easier: 40. g3 hxg3 41. fxc3 Kg6 followed by ... Ne6-g7.

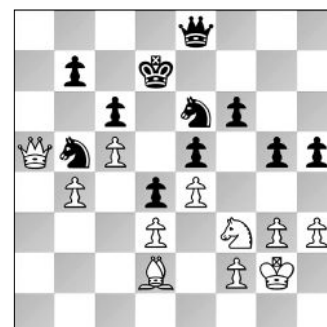
39. Qa5?!

This is pointless, since the queen was ideally placed already on a2. White would still have a slight advantage after 39. g3 with the idea of f2-f4.

39. ... Kd7 40. g3 Ng7 41. Kg2

Now I finally get ... g6-g5 in, since 41. f4 is bad because of 41. ... Qe6.

41. ... g5 42. Nf3 Ne6



I'm quite pleased with my position here: My knights are posted on excellent squares and I have ideas to open the kingside with ... h5-h4 or ... g5-g4.

43. Be1 h4

It was also worth looking at 43. ... Qg8!? with the idea of ... g5-g4.

44. Nd2?

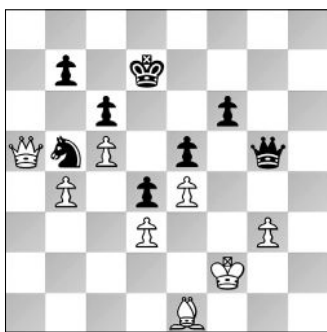
The wrong direction. It made more sense to play 44. Nh2 heading for g4.

44. ... hxg3 45. fxg3 Qh5

Suddenly I start a strong attack on the kingside out of nowhere.



46. Nf3 g4 47. hxg4 Qxg4 48. Kf2 Ng5 49. Nxe5 Qxe5



50. Qa8?

This loses, since White is not threatening perpetual check. White can still save the game with 50. Qa2! protecting the second rank and threatening a perpetual with Qa2-f7+ at the same time. Not an easy move to spot when you only have a few seconds left! Play could go 50. ... Qe3+ (50. ... Ke7 51. Bd2) 51. Kg2 Qxe1 (51. ... Ke7 52. Qg8 is equal) 52. Qf7+ Kc8 53. Qe8+ Kc7 54. Qe7+ and Black cannot escape the checks: 54. ... Kb8 55. Qd8+ Ka7 56. Qa5+.

50. ... Qe3+ 51. Kg2 Qxe1 52. Qxb7+ Nc7
I'm a clear piece up. White can safely resign here, but in blitz Ian never does.

53. b5 Qe2+ 54. Kh3 cxb5 55. Qb6 Qh5+

Although 55. ... Qxd3 56. Qd6+ Kc8 57. c6 with the threat of 58. Qd7 could make the win very tricky, 55. ... Qa2 with the threat of ... Qa6-e6+, forcing off the queens, is cleanest.

56. Kg2 Qf7 57. Qd6+ Kc8 58. c6 Qe6 59. Qf8+ Qe8

Or 59. ... Ne8 60. Qc5 Kc7.

60. Qxf6 b4 61. Qd6 b3 62. Qb4 Qxc6 63. Qxb3 Qc3 64. Qb1 Kd7 65. Kh3 Qc6 66. Kg2 Qb5 67. Qd1 Ne6 68. Qf3 Kd6 69. Kh2 Qb2+ 70. Kg1 Qc1+ 71. Kh2 Qd2+ 72. Kh1 Qe3 73. Qf1!

A nice trick, protecting all the pawns for the moment.

73. ... Qg5

If I take on g3 White has a stalemate trick: 73. ... Qxg3 74. Qf8+! Kd7 75. Qe7+.

74. Kh2 Qh6+ 75. Kg2 Qg7 76. Kh2 Qf8 77. Qe1 Qf3 78. Qb4+ Kd7 79. Qb5+ Ke7 80. Qxe5 Qxd3 81. Qd5 Qe2+ 82. Kh3 Qf1+ 83. Kh2 Qf2+ 84. Kh3 Qe3

Or 84. ... Qf3 85. Kh2 d3.

85. e5 Nf4+, White resigned.

It took a long time, but finally I was able to convert my extra piece. This was a great start to the match for me, and put me in a good position to win the semifinals. Unfortunately, after a safe draw in the next game Ian managed to trick me in Game 3, winning a completely drawn ending with rook and a minor piece plus two pawns each, equalizing the score and taking over the initiative.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, RAGOZIN DEFENSE (D38)

WCM Bat-Erdene Mungunzul (2281)

IM Alice Lee (2415)

World Rapid Championship (11), New York, 12.28.2024

Annotations by IM Alice Lee

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Nf3 Bb4 5. Bg5 h6 6. Bxf6 Qxf6 7. Qb3

Not the most common move, but I luckily remembered the correct way to play.

7. ... c5 8. cxd5 exd5 9. e3 0-0 10. dxc5 Bxc3+ 11. Qxc3 Qxc3+ 12. bxc3



We have already reached an endgame. There have been slightly more than 300 games from this position, nearly all of them ending in draws. Ultimately, Black will win the pawn on c5, but White always has the option to liquidate with c3-c4.

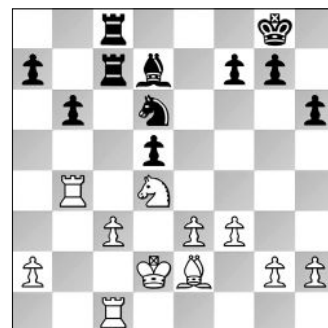
12. ... Nd7 13. Rd1 Nf6 14. Bd3 Be6 15. Nd4 Rfc8 16. Rb1 Nd7

I was quite pleased with this move; ... Nd7xc5 is inevitable.

17. Kd2

White could also play 17. c6, closing the c-file to protect the weak pawn on c3 and making c3-c4 for White a stronger potential idea in the future. On the other hand, the d4-square will no longer be an outpost.

17. ... Nxc5 18. Rb4 b6 19. f3 Rc7 20. Rc1 Rac8 21. Be2 Bd7 22. Bd1 Nb7 23. Be2 Nd6



The engine gives this position as 0.00, but I strongly prefer Black's position. White's c3-pawn is a weakness that her pieces will always be tied to, while White has no physical way to even threaten the d5-pawn. Black will slowly maneuver and at some point expand on the queenside with ... b6-b5 and ... a7-a5.

24. g4 Rc5 25. Nb3 R5c7 26. Nd4 Rb8 27. Rcb1 g6 28. Bd3 Kg7 29. Ne2

This is not a bad move, but it makes things harder. The knight is ideally placed on d4. On e2 it defends the c3-pawn, but in this closed position, White would rather tie a rook, which cannot do too much, to defense than a nimble knight.

29. ... Rc5 30. Nd4 Rbc8 31. Rc1 b5



IM Alice Lee

32. Nb3 R5c7 33. Rd4?!

The knight is best on d4! After 33. Nd4 a6 I like the idea 34. h4, so whenever Black plays ... h6-h5, White can play g4-g5 without fearing ... h5-h4. Whenever Black plays ... g6-g5, White can play h4-h5. Either way, this idea both gains space and prevents immediate kingside play.

33. ... Nc4+ 34. Ke2

When calculating 34. Bxc4 I was originally looking at 34. ... dxc4, but after 35. Na1 a5



GM Joel Benjamin

GM Brewington
Hardaway

36. Nc2 White's knight will get to d4, and with the c3-pawn no longer a weakness, I would honestly prefer to play White. The less conventional-looking 34. ... bxc4 becomes very attractive, but eventually I realized 34. ... bxc4! 35. Na1 Rb8 is crushing: Black gets complete control over the only open file; White can never seriously consider taking the d-pawn due to ... Bc6xf3, or if 36. Rxd5 Bc6 37. Rc5 Rd7+ 38. Ke2 Ba4.

34. ... Nb6 35. Kd2 a6 36. Rc2 Na4?!

It made more sense to just defend the d5-pawn with 36. ... Be6 first, making ... Nb6-a4 a threat that simply wins a pawn after 37. Rb4 Na4 38. Nd4 Nxc3. I thought I could play it immediately because I didn't take 37. Rxd5 seriously. While Black's position is still pleasant, 36. ... Be6 was such a crushing move.

37. Rxd5 Bc6 38. Rd6?!

White's best strategy is to liquidate — more specifically, to get rid of that c3-pawn. After 38. Rd4 Bxf3 39. c4 Nb2! 40. Rxb2 bxc4 41. Rc2 cxd3 42. Rxc7 Rxc7 43. Kxd3 g5 Black is better, but White has chances to hold.

38. ... Bxf3 39. Rxa6 Nxc3 40. Nd4 Bxg4 41. Rb6 Bd7

I could have simply won material with 41. ... Bd1! 42. Rc1 (42. Rb2 Na4) 42. ... Ne4+.

42. Rd6 b4 43. Rb2 Ra8 44. Rxb4

The last chance to stay in the game was 44. Nc2.

44. ... Rxa2+ 45. Ke1 Ne4 46. Ne6+ Bxe6 47. Bxe4 Rxh2 48. Rbd4 Bb3 49. Rc6 Ra7 50. Rc1 Raa2 51. Kf1 Be6 52. Re1 Rh4 53. Bf3 Rxd4 54. exd4 Bc4+ 55. Kg1 Rd2 56. Rd1 Rxd1+ 57. Bxd1 Bd5 58. Kf2 f5 59. Bc2 Kf6 60. Kg3 g5 61. Bd3 h5, White resigned.

RUY LOPEZ, STEINITZ DEFERRED (C78)

GM Alder Escobar Forero (2409)

GM Joel Benjamin (2473)

World Rapid (13), New York 12.28.2024

Annotations by GM Joel Benjamin

The placement of the 2024 World Rapid and Blitz Championships in New York City provided a last-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me to compete with the elite players in the world. My poor performance limited me to playing only a couple of superstars, but I especially enjoyed my time in the players' lounge, meeting great players who emerged after my prime playing career passed. I was

also touched by several players who related to me how something I did in my career impacted the development of theirs in some meaningful way.

The chess part was a disaster, and I finished both tournaments with a string of losses. In the Rapid I went into the last round with hopes of producing one final piece of quality, and came up inches short of the brilliancy of a lifetime.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 d6 6. Re1 Bd7 7. c4 Be7 8. Nc3 0-0 9. d3 b5

I had nothing to lose, so I figured I might as well have some fun here.

10. cxb5 Nd4 11. bxa6 Bg4!

Black's initiative more than compensates for the sacrifice.

12. Be3 Rxa6 13. Bxd4 exd4 14. Ne2 Bxf3 15. gxf3 Nh5 16. f4 Bh4 17. Bb3 d5! 18. f5

This is apparently the only way to prevent the rook from swinging to g6, but it just makes things worse.

Probably the best was 18. Ng3 Nxf4 19. exd5, though Black retains a nice initiative.

18. ... Qg5+ 19. Kf1

Ugly but necessary, as 19. Ng3 Bxg3 20. fxxg3 Nxxg3 leads to collapse.

**19. ... Bxf2!?**

I thought I was going out a hero with this move.

20. Kxf2 Rg6!

This was the attraction of the bishop move! But, alas, it doesn't actually win.

21. Rg1!

Found with just a few seconds to spare! White avoids 21. fxxg6 fxxg6+ 22. Nf4 and all captures win for Black.

21. ... Qe3+ 22. Kf1 Qh3+ 23. Ke1 Rxxg1+ 24. Nxxg1 Qxxh2?

The machine says 24. ... Qg2 is equal.

25. Nf3 Qf4 26. Nxd4?

Hanging flag again — 26. Bxd5 was strong.

26. ... Qe3+ 27. Ne2 Nf4 28. Qd2!

Another forced move found just before time runs out.

28. ... Nxd3+ 29. Kd1 Qxe4 30. Nc1! Nf4

31. Ne2 Qh1+ 32. Kc2!

I thought at the time 32. Qe1 Qf3 would be curtains, but that wasn't forced.

32. ... Qe4+

Black still could have had some advantage after 32. ... Qxa1 33. Qxf4 Qh1.

33. Kd1 Ng2 34. Nc3 Qg4+ 35. Kc1 c6 36. a4

White is objectively winning, but I'm not done yet.

36. ... Re8 37. Bd1 Qg3 38. a5 Ne3 39. a6 Nc4 40. a7?

Both 40. Ne2 and 40. Qd4 should win.



40. ... Nxd2 41. a8=Q Qe3!

Here I should be winning, objectively and practically.

42. Kc2 Nc4 43. Ra2 h5 44. Qxc6 Qf2+?

It was pretty much over after 44. ... Qd2+ 45. Kb1 Rb8.

45. Kb1 Re1? 46. Qxd5

I'm back to losing!

46. ... Ne3 47. Qd3 h4 48. f6 g6? 49. Qd8+ Kh7 50. Ra8 Kh6 51. Qd4??

I don't even remember this position, but 51. Qf8+ Kg5 52. Ne4+ ends all resistance.

(see diagram top of next column)

51. ... Qf5+??

I somehow missed 51. ... Nxd1!. I may have already flagged, as somewhere around here I looked over and saw the bad news.



POSITION AFTER 51. Qd4

52. Ka2 Kg5 53. Ne4+ Kf4 54. Nd6+, Black resigned.

While musing about the game in my head, it occurred to me I could have played the move 19 combination in a different order. What about 19. ... Rg6 without sacrificing the bishop? Then 20. fxg6 fxg6 21. Ng3 Nxb3+ 22. hxb3 Rxf2+! 23. Kxf2 Qxg3+ 24. Ke2 Qf2 mates with style. I could picture 20. Ng3 Bxg3 21. Qf3! (21. hxb3 Nxb3+ 22. fxg3 Qxg3 mates) but when I checked with the engine I saw the confirmation: 21. ... Bxb2 22. fxg6 Nf4! 23. Qh1 Qh5 24. gxh7+ Kh8 25. f3 Qh3+ 26. Kf2 Nxd3+ 27. Ke2 dxe4 with an overwhelming position for Black. It seems extremely unlikely White could have survived in this case, but with my luck, who knows?

GIUOCO PIANO (C50)

IM Brewington Hardaway (2181)

GM Mads Andersen (2512)

World Rapid (13), New York, 12.28.2024

Annotations by (now) GM Brewington Hardaway

This was the final round of the World Rapid. My opponent is a strong Danish GM rated about 2600 in classical chess.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3 Bc5 5. Nc3

Of course the Italian usually includes c2-c3, but I like Nb1-c3 in quicker time controls to get a simpler game. I played this many times throughout the Rapid and the Blitz.

5. ... a6

To avoid giving up the bishop on c5. If 5. ... d6 6. Na4.

6. a4 d6 7. h3 h6 8. Be3

I have no problem giving myself doubled pawns since I get the open f-file as a result.

8. ... 0-0 9. 0-0 Bxe3 10. fxe3 Be6 11. b3 d5 12. exd5 Nxd5 13. Qe1 Qd7 14. Ne4 Qe7?!



Perhaps my opponent thought this prevented Nf3-h4, but ...

15. Nh4!

Now Black is already in a bit of trouble.

15. ... Rad8?

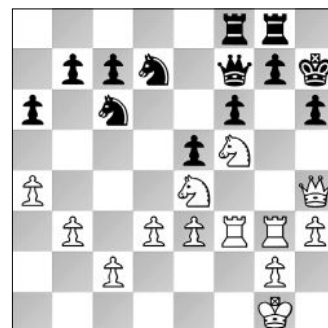
A natural move, but my opponent did not realize how dangerous the position was. White now has a decisive advantage!

I think my opponent thought he had the tactic 15. ... Nxe3, but I have the nice intermezzo 16. Nf6+! gxf6 17. Qxe3 when I'm already winning. I am down a pawn for the moment, but soon all my pieces will swarm Black's weakened king position.

16. Qg3 Kh7 17. Rf2 Nb6 18. Bxe6 Qxe6 19. Raf1 Nd7 20. Nf5 Qg6 21. Qh4 f6 22. Rf3 Rg8 23. Rg3 Qf7 24. Rff3!

Setting up an unavoidable tactic.

24. ... Rdf8



25. Rxf7+! Rxf7 26. Qxh6+ Kg8 27. Nxb7 Qxg7 28. Rg3!

Now we see the idea of bringing the rooks to f3 and g3! White is up a significant amount of material and the game is over.

28. ... Qxg3 29. Nxb7 30. Qh5 Nb6

31. Nf5 Nxf5 32. Qxf5 Kf7 33. a5, Black resigned.

This was probably my highest-quality game of the event! This game also brought me to a final score of 7/13, which was way past my expectations going into the event. ♦

MASTER OF PLAY

MASTER OF PLAY

MASTER OF PLAY

Charles Houska

MASTER OF PLAY



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**ON VIEW May 1, 2025
THROUGH April 5, 2026**

Charles Houska: Master of Play is a retrospective of the artist's work over his impressive 25+ year career in Saint Louis and beyond, including brand-new chess-themed commissions and an impressive 3-D printed chess set. Showcased inside an incredibly vibrant and immersive environment filled with his iconic floral, animal, and portrait motifs, this exhibition boasts more than 75 of Houska's artworks.

The mission of the World Chess Hall of Fame is to educate visitors, fans, players, and scholars by preserving, exhibiting and interpreting the game of chess and its continuing cultural and artistic significance.

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MAKE YOUR MOVE

BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM GAMES PLAYED at the European Individual Championship which was held in Eforie Nord, Romania, in March 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 63. 

TACTIC 1.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 2.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 3.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 4.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 5.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 6.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 7.



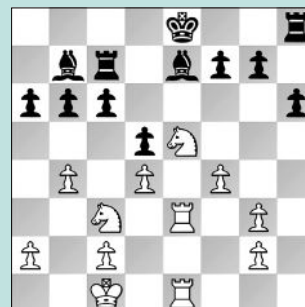
BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 8.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



WHITE TO MOVE

Position 1: FIND A WAY IN

Position 2: NO GUARDS

Position 3: LAST DEFENDER

Position 4: CLEAR THE SPACE

Position 5: LOOSE PIECES

Position 6: OPEN THE DOOR

Position 7: INTERFERENCE

Position 8: DISTRACTION

Position 9: BLACK CANNOT CASTLE!

Check and Mate!

Watch Dr. Siegbert Tarrasch make the two bishops sing.

BY **BRUCE PANDOLFINI**



THE GERMAN MASTER DR. Siegbert Tarrasch (1862-1934) was a prominent player for more than 20 years, from the 1890s through World War I. He could not quite topple World Champion Dr. Emanuel Lasker, though he supposedly once said to him, "To you, Dr. Lasker, I have only three words, check and mate." Tarrasch was an outstanding teacher and theoretician who liked open games and weapons such as the two bishops. Against an amateur in Munich in 1915, we see Tarrasch's use of an opening variation named after him and a pretty finale using both of his prized diagonal weapons. The encounter began with the Open Ruy Lopez, also known as the Tarrasch Variation.

RUY LOPEZ, OPEN VARIATION (C83)

NN

Siegbert Tarrasch
Munich, 1915

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Nxe4 6. d4 b5 7. Bb3 d5 8. dxe5



Now ensure that the position above is set up on your chessboard. As you play through the remaining moves in this game, use a piece of paper to cover the article, exposing Black's next move only after trying to guess it. If you guess correctly, give yourself the par score. Sometimes points are also awarded for second-best moves, and there may even be bonus points — or deductions — for other moves and variations. Note that ** means that Black's move is on the next line.**

8. **Par Score 4** **Be6**

Black develops and protects the d-pawn. Although this variation is characterized as an open game, the e-file actually becomes blocked up.

9. **c3**

This advance gives White the possibility of keeping the Lopez bishop by retreating it to c2. **

9. **Par Score 5** **Be7**

Tarrasch prepares to castle kingside. You may also accept **full credit** for 9. ... Bc5, which tends to produce more active positions.

10. **Re1**

More usual here is either 10. Nbd2 or 10. Be3. **

10. **Par Score 5** **0-0**

By castling, Black gets ready for business. The position is about even.

11. **Nd4**

This aggressive move is playable, but

11. Nbd2, getting out a new piece, makes more sense. **

11. **Par Score 5** **Nxe5**

Tarrasch takes the e-pawn, lining up four of his minor pieces on the e-file.

12. **f3**

This is White's point: The e4-knight is pinned. **

12. **Par Score 5** **Bd6**

And this is Black's point: The loss of the knight may be offset by a gain in attacking chances. You may accept **full credit** for analyzing 12. ... Bh4 13. g3 c5 14. Nxe6 fxe6 15. fxe4 c4, with complications and approximate equality.

13. **fxe4 ****

13. **Par Score 5** **Bg4**

It's natural for Tarrasch to save his bishop (which works wonderfully later), but you may accept **full credit** for 13. ... c5.

14. **Qc2**

This deals with Black's immediate threat, but 14. Qd2 might have been a little better. **

14. **Par Score 4** **Qh4**

Black sets up possibilities against both e1 and h2. You may also accept **full credit** for 14. ... c5.

15. **Rf1**

This gets the rook out of attack. Add a total of **1 bonus point** for seeing that 15. Qf2 Qxf2+ 16. Kxf2 Nd3+ and 15. Qd2 Nc4 are worse than the text. **

15. **Par Score 5** **c5**

This advance attacks the knight and threatens 16. ... c4, trapping the b3-bishop.

16. **Bxd5**

White settles for winning the Exchange, though Black still has a kingside attack. **

16. **Par Score 5** **cx d4**

17. **Bxa8 ****

17. **Par Score 5** **Rxa8**

You may accept **full credit** for 17. ... d3, though 18. Qf2 leads to an exchange of queens.

18. **cx d4 ****

18. **Par Score 4** **Rc8**

ABCS OF CHESS

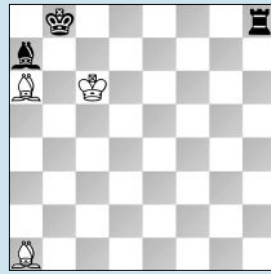
THESE PROBLEMS ARE ALL related to key positions in this May's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 63.

MAY EXERCISE:

Asking the right questions can help you to make practical and effective plans. They needn't be deep: What would I like to do? How can I do it? Can I be stopped? Is there something I should be doing first? So forth and so on. As with anything, the more you do this, the better you get at it. It's platitudinous, but it's true: If you ask the right question, you essentially have the answer.

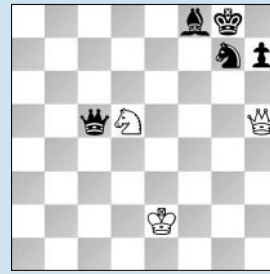
PROBLEM 1

Mating net



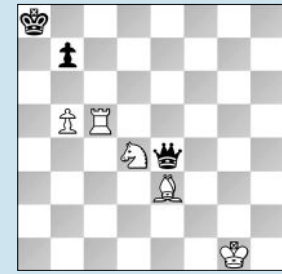
PROBLEM 2

Mating net



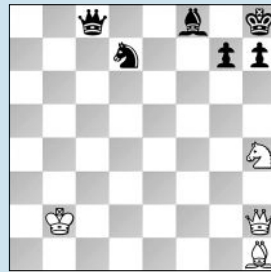
PROBLEM 3

Mating net



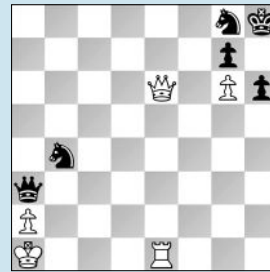
PROBLEM 4

Mating net



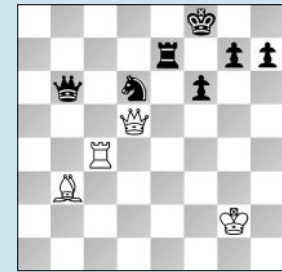
PROBLEM 5

Mating net



PROBLEM 6

Mating net



Tarrasch loves open files, so he takes the c-file with tempo. But you may accept **full credit** for the stronger reply 18. ... Nc6. If 19. Qxc6, then 19. ... Bxh2+ 20. Kh1 Bg3+ 21. Kg1 Qh2 mate (**1 bonus point**); and if 19. e5, then 19. ... Nxd4 20. Qf2 Ne2+ 21. Kh1 Qxf2 22. Rxf2 Bxe5 is good for Black (**1 bonus point**).

19. Nc3

White handles the threat by developing a new piece. **

19. Par Score 5

Nc6

20. e5

White should have tried 20. Bf4, when 20. ... Nxd4 21. Qf2 is good for White. **

20. Par Score 6

Nxd4

This takes a pawn and menaces the white queen. **

21. Qe4

Centralization is often the right idea, but here 21. Qf2 led to a safer position. **

21. Par Score 7

Rxc3

A nice shot! The rook can't be taken, 22. bxc3 (if 22. Qxd4, then 22. ... Bc5), since that leads to 22. ... Ne2+ 23. Kh1 Ng3+, winning the queen (**1 bonus point**).

22. Rf4

On the surface this looks good, but 22. Rf2 was safer. **

22. Par Score 6

Ne2+

23. Qxe2

If 23. Kh1, then 23. ... Ng3+ wins the queen; if 23. Kf1, then 23. ... Ng3+ 24. hxg3 Qh1+ 25. Kf2 Bc5+ 26. Be3 Bxe3+ 27. Qxe3 Rc2+ is devastating. Add **1 bonus point** for seeing all of that. **

23. Par Score 6

Bc5+

Black chases the king to the corner. Is there anything can White do?

24. Kh1

For the moment, White's queen seems untouchable, since 24. ... Bxe2 is answered by 25. Rxh4. **

24. Par Score 8

Rh3

Plain and simple, the threat is mate.

25. gxh3

White stops the mate. But that allows ... **

25. Par Score 5

Bxe2

26. Rxh4

White wins back the queen, but loses his king. **

26. Par Score 5

Bf3 mate!

In the end, Tarrasch has his vaunted two bishops and they do the trick!



POSITION AFTER 26. ... Bf3 MATE

SOLITARE CHESS SCORING:

Total your score to determine your approximate rating below

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

Boris' Bishops

Spassky, the universal player, knew a thing or two about technique.

BY **GM JOEL BENJAMIN**



THE CHESS WORLD LOST A legendary figure when Boris Spassky passed away in February at age 88. For me and others

of a certain age, Spassky is indelibly linked to our origin story — Bobby Fischer's conquest of the World Championship in 1972. Spassky was by nature an attacking player in the style of Tal, as Garry Kasparov wrote in tribute, but he did of course register some important wins in the endgame.

Spassky notched some noteworthy victories in a particular kind of endgame, demonstrating the advantages the bishop has over the knight. One such win came, rather ironically, over Fischer, who was better with bishops in the endgame than any player in history. This victory enabled Spassky to edge out Fischer for first place in the last tournament Fischer completed and didn't come first.

BEATING BOBBY

GRÜNFELD DEFENSE, EXCHANGE VARIATION (D87)

GM Boris Spassky

GM Bobby Fischer

2nd Piatigorsky Cup (8), Santa Monica, 07.28.1966

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5 5. e4 Nxc3 6. bxc3 Bg7 7. Bc4 c5 8. Ne2 Nc6 9. Be3 0-0 10. 0-0 Qc7 11. Rc1 Rd8 12. Qe1 e6 13. f4 Na5 14. Bd3 f5 15. Rd1 b6 16. Qf2 cxd4 17. Bxd4 Bxd4 18. cxd4 Bb7 19. Ng3 Qf7 20. d5 fxe4 21. dxe6 Qxe6 22. f5 Qf7 23. Bxe4 Rxd1 24. Rxd1 Rf8 25. Bb1 Qf6 26. Qc2 Kh8 27. fxg6 hxg6 28. Qd2

Spassky misses a chance for a decisive attack beginning with 28. Nh5!.

28. ... Kg7 29. Rf1 Qe7 30. Qd4+ Rf6



31. Ne4

Spassky could have speculated with 31. Bxg6!? Kxg6 32. Qg4+ Kf7 33. Nf5 Qf8. Black will be all right with careful defense, while White doesn't really risk anything. Instead, he opts to put Fischer in the unfamiliar position of defending with a knight against a bishop on an open board.

31. ... Bxe4 32. Bxe4 Qc5

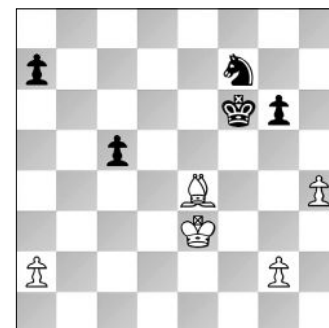
Fischer eases the pressure by liquidating. He hopes the limited number of pawns will mitigate the minor-piece difference.

33. Qxc5 Rxf1+ 34. Kxf1 bxc5 35. h4 Nc4 36. Ke2 Ne5 37. Ke3 Kf6 38. Kf4 Nf7 39. Ke3??

I'm not sure why Spassky backtracked here, when 39. Bd3 would open up a lane for the king to go to the queenside.

(see diagram top of next column)

39. ... g5?



POSITION AFTER 39. Ke3

The idea — to get the pawn onto a dark square and thus free the king — is logical enough, but Fischer's execution is off. Black can hold with 39. ... Nh6 40. Kf4 (40. Kd3 Nf5 41. Kc4 Nxc4 42. Kxc5 Ke5 and the Black king follows to the queenside while the knight eyes the g-pawn) 40. ... Nf5! 41. h5 (41. Bxf5 gxf5 is drawn, as White runs into the pesky rook-pawn problem; 41. g3 c4 is also a brick wall) 41. ... g5+ 42. Kf3 Nh6 and this time Black has a successful fortress as he can keep White's king from penetrating. There's also 39. ... Nd6, which is fine, intending 40. g4 g5 41. h5 Nc4+!.

40. h5 Nh6 41. Kd3 Ke5 42. Ba8 Kd6 43. Kc4

Black cannot defend both the c-pawn and the a-pawn with his king, and the knight is just a bystander.

43. ... g4 44. a4 Ng8 45. a5 Nh6 46. Be4 g3 47. Kb5 Ng8 48. Bb1 Nh6 49. Ka6 Kc6 50. Ba2, Black resigned.

While Spassky did not unseat Petrosian on the first try, he showed he could beat him not only with brutal attacking play, but strategic finesse as well.

TECHNICAL KNOCKOUT

FRENCH DEFENSE (C13)

GM Boris Spassky

GM Tigran Petrosian

World Championship (23), Moscow, 06.06.1966

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bg5 dxe4 5. Nxe4 Be7 6. Bxf6 Bxf6 7. Nf3 Bd7 8. Qd2 Bc6 9. Nxf6+ Qxf6 10. Ne5!

Utilizing the awkward position of the bishop and making it hard to develop normally.

10. ... 0-0 11. 0-0-0 Nd7?!

Somewhat better, though still unpleasant for Black, was 11. ... Rd8 12. Qe3! Be8 13. g3 Nd7 14. Bg2 in Spassky – Donner, Leiden 1970. Petrosian's pawn weaknesses lead to a surprisingly swift downfall.

12. Nxc6 bxc6 13. h4!

This looks like an attacking gesture, but Spassky is actually activating his rook in the most efficient way.

13. ... Rab8 14. Rh3 c5?

Black is not in position to liquidate his doubled pawns because the White rooks will swarm with the opening of the center.



15. Qg5! cxd4

The tactical point is 15. ... Qxf2? 16. Rf3 traps the queen, while 15. ... Rfd8 16. Rhd3 leaves Black in a similar predicament to the game.

16. Qxf6 Nxf6 17. Rxd4 Rb7 18. Rb3!

The exclamation is for the simplicity of this move, leaving no complications at all.

18. ... Rxb3 19. axb3 Ra8 20. Rc4 Ne8 21. Ra4 Nd6 22. g3!



The bishop is only preparing to get out of bed at move 22, yet its emergence signals that the game is over! Black has to cough up a pawn.

22. ... Kf8

It's just as hopeless after either 22. ... Nc8 23. Rc4 or 22. ... a5 23. b4.

23. Bg2 Rc8 24. Rxa7 Ke7 25. Kd2 h6 26. c4 g5 27. hxg5 hxg5 28. Kc3 Kd7 29. b4 Rh8 30. b5 Rh2 31. Bc6+ Kd8 and Black resigned.

After 32. c5 Nf5 33. b6 the b-pawn coasts through. Even the mistaken 32. b6?! cxb6 33. Rd7+ Kc8 34. Rxd6 Kc7 35. Rd7+ Kxc6 36. Rxf7 should win.

Our final game is not spectacular but Spassky's play is so smooth that his opponent felt under pressure the whole way.

PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE

OLD INDIAN DEFENSE (A53)

GM Boris Spassky
GM Florin Gheorghiu
FIDE Olympiad (8), Siegen, 09.22.1970

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 d6 3. Nc3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. Qxd8+ Kxd8 6. Nf3

I'm reminded of the time I defended a Berlin endgame against Judit Polgar to prevent her from checkmating me. That didn't work either.

6. ... Nfd7 7. Bd2 c6 8. g4

This is a very effective plan for White, though Gheorghiu hangs in there pretty well.

8. ... a5 9. g5 Na6 10. h4 Nac5 11. Be3 f5 12. gxf6 e.p. gxf6 13. 0-0-0 Ke8 14. Bh3 Nb6 15. Bxc8

Spassky's play is not entirely accurate; 15. Nd2 leaves Black a long way from equalizing.

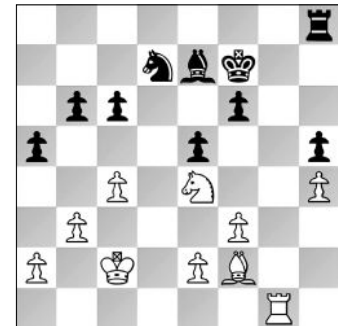
15. ... Rxc8 16. b3 h5 17. Rhg1 Nbd7 18. Nd2 Kf7 19. Nde4 Ke6 20. Kb2 Be7 21. Rg7 Nxe4 22. Nxe4 Rcg8 23. Rdg1 Rxc7 24. Rxc7 Bf8 25. Rg1 b6 26. Kc2 Be7 27. f3 Kf7 28. Bf2

White is perhaps indicating a plan of Ne4-g3, e2-e4, and Ng3-f5, though it's doubtful he should really be able to execute this plan successfully. But Gheorghiu tires of waiting and self-destructs in two moves.

(see diagram top of next column)

28. ... f5?! 29. Ng5+ Bxc5?

Better was 29. ... Ke8, after which 30. f4 will force a little accuracy from Black, though the Stockfish needle hasn't moved much yet.



POSITION AFTER 28. Bf2

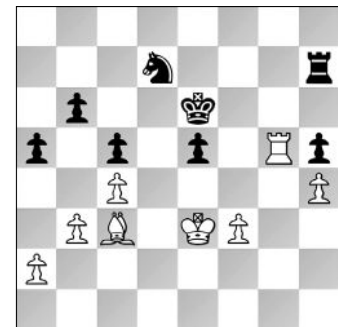
30. Rxc5 f4 31. e3

Perhaps a bit rushed, though the plan works to perfection. 31. a4 Rh6 (if 31. ... c5 32. e3 is much stronger) 32. c5 is another way.

31. ... fxe3 32. Bxe3 Rh7 33. Kd3 c5?!

Black is hoping for a fortress, but his pawn structure is too brittle now.

34. Bd2 Kf6 35. Bc3 Ke6 36. Ke3!



Spassky finds a nice tempo move to get the Black rook onto an inferior square. There's a similar effect after 36. Ke4 Nf6+ 37. Ke3 Nd7 38. a4!

36. ... Rh8

Or 36. ... Rh6 37. f4 exf4+ 38. Kxf4 and White will penetrate further.

37. Ke4 Nf6+ 38. Kd3 Nd7 39. f4

The e5-pawn is unfortunately pinned now.

39. ... Rd8 40. fxe5 Nf6+

Black ends up resigning after giving this discovered check, but even double check with 40. ... Nxe5+ would offer zero hope after 41. Ke4.

41. Kc2, Black resigned.

He will lose another pawn immediately. ♠

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The One That Started It All

A revised look at one of the most important tournaments ever held

BY IM JOHN WATSON

M

ANY LEGENDARY TOURNAMENTS in chess history were more closely contested than the 1948 World Chess Cham-

pionship, but few, if any, had its historical significance and influence. After 62 years of a system in which an “official” World Champion would privately agree to a match with an opponent of his choosing (not always the strongest opponent by any means), the 1948 event was the first time a tournament was used to decide the champion and introduce a systematic method for choosing future challengers under the auspices of an internationally accepted chess organization. The resulting Interzonal tournaments and Candidates tournaments (the latter soon to become elimination matches) were among

the most exciting and competitive events in history, and the basic championship structure, albeit modified, has survived to this day.

Published in Estonian in 1949, Paul Keres’ *World Chess Championship 1948* was translated into English by Jan Verendel and published in 2016; the revised and expanded third edition came out last year. The author, Estonian Paul Keres, was a legend of the game — a Candidates finalist four times and an elite star from the mid-1930s to the mid-1960s. He was one of the five participants in the 1948 tournament, along with Dutch ex-champion Max Euwe, Russians Mikhail Botvinnik and Vasily Smyslov, and American Sammy Reshevsky. Reuben Fine was invited, but declined to play.

Jeff Sonas’ historical ratings site *Chessmetrics* shows that these five players were the very best of the immediate pre-war and post-war era (say, 1936-1948), with Argentine Miguel Najdorf being the only comparably rated player (Najdorf was strongly considered by the organizers, but passed over). We also have the unusual situation of three world champions playing against two of the very strongest players in history who never won the championship.

Keres’ commentary forms the essence of the book. The 500 pages are devoted to 50 games, with typically three to five diagrams per contest, which gives you an indication of how extensive his notes are. I think the lasting appeal of this book, and one reason why it deserves a high recommendation, is that Keres explains even more with words than with variations and addresses the average player. There is plenty of analysis, occasionally extended, but Keres is particularly good at explaining the motivations for moves, and why they succeed or fall short. This

is a very pleasant (and somewhat old-fashioned) style that allows the reader to relax and makes it possible to follow the game without constantly having to move pieces around — although you’ll want to play over the more complex lines at key points of each game.

With such lengthy commentary it’s impossible to show Keres’ notes to any games in full, but here’s a look at one of his wins. His opponent, Euwe, wrote another fine book on the championship: *The Hague-Moscow 1948*, also written in 1949 (Russell Enterprises published an English translation in 2013 with extensive background material on the players). Euwe’s notes are generally less thorough, but I’ll make reference to a few of them just to see what the two greats thought about some key positions.

RUY LOPEZ, OPEN VARIATION (C81)

GM Paul Keres

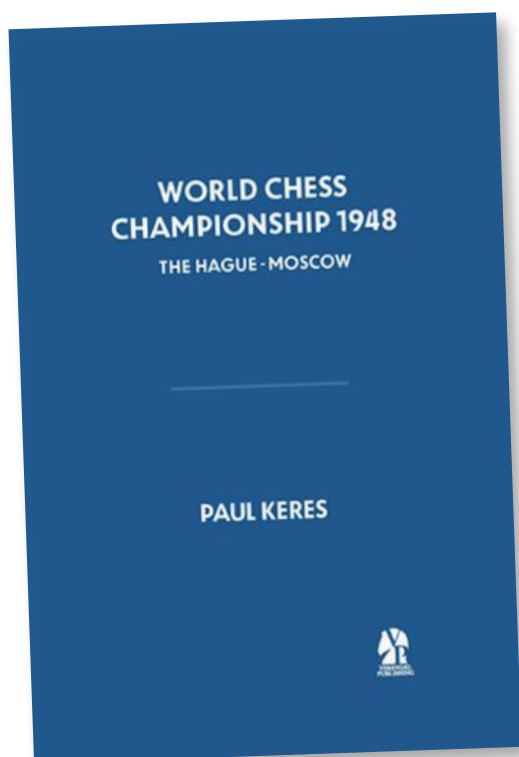
GM Max Euwe

World Ch Tournament (16), The Hague/Moscow 1948

Annotations in quotes are by Keres; otherwise, by IM John Watson

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Nxe4

“Years ago Euwe only played this Open line of the Ruy Lopez, but he later refrained from this in favor of the closed method of play. However, the closed lines have not yielded him any positive results in this tournament, so he returns to his former favorite variation. Since Euwe is considered one of the greatest experts on the Open Spanish, this decision is fully justified from a psychological perspective. However, from the chess theory point of view, it is quite a risky experiment because, against this opening



line, several new systems of attack have emerged in recent years, making it look dubious for Black.”

6. d4 b5 7. Bb3 d5 8. dxe5 Be6 9. Qe2 Be7
Later in the tournament, 9. ... Nc5 was played once by Euwe and twice by Reshevsky. It is still a main line, played in the recent game Carlsen – Mamedyarov, World Rapid Team Ch 2024, which continued 10. Rd1 Nxb3 11. axb3 Be7 12. c4 b4. I think that with care Black can fully equalize in that position.

10. Rd1 O-O 11. c4 bxc4 12. Bxc4 Bc5 13. Be3 Bxe3 14. Qxe3 Qb8



“This appears to be the chief idea behind Black’s system of defense. White cannot now capture on d5 as there would follow a later ... Qb8xb2, and after 15. Bb3 Black can play 15. ... Na5 trading off White’s strong attacking bishop. However, it seems that Black did not consider that he has still not gotten rid of the main positional drawback of the Open Spanish, namely, the weakness of the d4- and c5-squares. It is the weakness of these squares that subsequently yields White a clear positional advantage.”

15. Bb3 Na5 16. Nbd2!

“Weak, on the other hand, was 16. Nd4? c5! 17. Nxe6 fxe6 18. f3 c4 and Black avoids becoming worse by tactical means. With the text-move White starts to take control over the important d4- and c5-squares and thus secures a positional advantage.”

16. ... Nxd2

No comment here by either Keres or Euwe, but over the following 75-plus years, hundreds of contests have followed this stem game, and modern players have done well with 16. ... Qa7, as well as with 16. ... Nxb3 17. Nxb3 (17. axb3 c5! 18. Nxe4 dxe4 19. Qxe4 h6 is equal) 17. ... c5! 18. Nxc5 Nxc5 19. Qxc5 Qxb2, leading to equality. Needless to say, we can’t fault Euwe, seeing this all for the first time while playing for the world cham-

pionship, for playing an only slightly inferior and natural move.

17. Rxd2

“After 17. Nxd2, Black can avoid the worst consequences by the combination 17. ... d4! (or 17. ... Rd8 — Watson) 18. Qxd4 Bxb3 19. axb3 Nxb3 20. Nxb3 Qxb3.”

17. ... Nxb3 18. axb3



“A position has arisen where White stands better owing to his control of the central dark squares, although Black has certain counter-chances due to the pawn weaknesses on the b-file. But holding a position where the defender is left with several lines that all lead to a slightly worse game is very difficult in practice, and the defender usually loses. The same thing also happens here, and it is hard to claim which method of play would have offered Black the best saving chances. In the game Black decides to keep on the queens and finally loses to a kingside attack. Hence, many analysts have recommended that Black play 18 ... Qb6 at

this point, to force an exchange of queens. But the endgame after 18. ... Qb6 19. Qxb6 cxb6 20. Nd4 Rfc8 21. f4 followed by Kg1-f2 is also clearly better for White.”

In this line, Euwe gives 20. Rc1 Rac8 21. Rdc2! Rxc2 22. Rxc2, but then 22. ... d4! 23. Nxd4 Rd8 24. Rd2 g5! gives Black good drawing chances.

18. ... Rc8 19. Rc1 c5!

“The best counter-chance for Black, although White now gets rid of a pawn weakness on the b-file. In the event of a passive defense, White would play 20. Rc5 followed by Nf3-d4 and thus eliminate all counterplay on the queenside, and thereafter decide the game by an attack against the enemy king.”

This is all logical and instructive, but the specifics are not straightforward. For one thing, Leela finds the arguably more accurate 19. ... Qb4! 20. Rc5 Rab8, when 21. Rd3 Rb5 (21. ... c6!?) 22. Rc6 Rb6 23. Nd4 Bd7 24. Rcc3 Qe7 looks quite playable for Black.

20. Rxc5 Rxc5 21. Qxc5 Qxb3 22. Nd4



Keres prepares to face Euwe in Round 1; Keres won in 55 moves.

22. ... Qb7

"After this retreat, Black remains with a passive defense for a long time and without counterplay."

Both players suggest that 22. ... Qc4! deserved consideration. In fact, analysis demonstrates that even White's excellent play has by no means guaranteed much of an advantage. Euwe gives the line 23. Qxc4 dxc4 24. f4 c3 (giving this an exclamation) 25. bxc3 Bc4 and calls Black's drawing chances "excellent." Here 24. ... a5 is also playable, e.g., 25. f5 (25. Rc2 Rb8) 25. ... Bd7 26. e6 fxe6 27. fxe6 Be8 28. Kf2 Kf8 29. Ke3 a4 30. Rc2 a3.

Keres intended to play 23. Rc2 Qxc5 24. Rxc5 Rb8 25. Rc2 Rb4 26. Rd2 and says that White "still retains a clearly better endgame." But White's weak b-pawn limits his prospects, for example, 26. ... a5 27. f4 g6 28. Kf2 Kg7 29. Kf3 h5 30. Kg3 a4 31. Kh4 Kh6 with equality. Finally, Keres gives 22. ... Qa2 23. h3 Qb1+ (23. ... Qc4!) 24. Kh2 Qe4 25. Re2 Qf4+ 26. g3 Qh6 27. h4 as "not fully satisfactory" for Black; indeed, White has too many threats in the center and on the queenside.

23. h3 Rd8

Euwe points out the cute line 23. ... Rc8 24. Qd6 Qc7?! 25. Rc2 Qxd6 26. exd6 Rxc2?? 27. Nxe6! Rxb2 28. d7 and wins.

24. Kh2 g6 25. f4 h5

This exposes Black to a serious attack. Better is 25. ... Rb8! 26. Rd3 Qc8!? which optimizes Black's pieces. White can gain a pawn by 27. Qxc8+ Bxc8 28. Nc6 Rb7 29. Rxd5 Kg7, but this looks very difficult to win.

After 25. ... h5, Keres comments: "Black has indeed initially defended himself against the threat of f4-f5, but in doing so he had to considerably weaken the position of his king. White now takes action on the queenside and first brings his rook into the play."

26. Rd3! Qd7

After 26. ... Qxb2, White wins with 27. Qe7! (27. Nxe6 fxe6 28. Qe7 Rf8! is very unclear here) 27. ... Rf8 (27. ... Qb8 28. Rb3 Qc8 29. Qf6 Re8 30. Rg3! wins) 28. f5!.

"With 26. ... Qd7, Black strengthens his control over the f5-square to ward off the threat of a possible f4-f5. But now there follows an attack against the a-pawn."

27. Qb6 Ra8 28. Ra3 Qa7 29. Qb4?

"White overestimates his position and hopes to win by an attack against the king. However, this prospect is unrealistic, and enables Black to generate disruptive counterplay. Correct was 29. Qxa7 Rxa7 30. Kg3 with a clearly better endgame for White."

29. ... Qd7?

"After this mistake, White's attack is back on track. However, much more troublesome for White was the continuation 29. ... Rc8." Then Keres recommends 30. Qd2 Rc4 31. Rd3 with a positional advantage. In fact, after 31. ... Qc7! Black controls the c-file, can play ... Qc7-c8 for defense, and shouldn't have many problems.

30. Qa5

"Simpler was 30. Qb6 Qa7 31. Qxa7."

30. ... Bf5?

"The transfer of the bishop to e4 is unfavorable for Black since it clears the way for White's e-pawn to advance, and the text-move loses at least a pawn. The passive defense 30. ... Qa7 would have offered Black better prospects, even though White in this event retains his marked positional edge after 31. Ra4."

31. Rc3

Natural and, it turns out, highly effective. But 31. b4! Be4 32. b5 is simple and better still.

31. ... Ra7 32. Rc5 Be4

"32. ... Be6 33. Rc6 also fails to save Black, since at least one pawn would be lost. Now however Black falls under a mating attack."

33. Qc3 Qe7?

"A blunder in a lost position. Black intends to answer 34. e6 by 34 ... Qf6, but is not paying attention to the simple reply 34. Nc6. However, White's attack would have been decisive even against the best defense because it was no longer possible to prevent the penetration of the white rook onto the 7th or 8th rank."

34. Nc6, Black resigned.

Keres kept the pressure on until the end, and Euwe didn't play badly considering that he had an unusual number of difficult decisions to make with limited time in an unfamiliar position. The game has a certain thematic unity in that White's control of dark squares in all three sectors of the board is a theme throughout.



The players (L to R):
Euwe, Smyslov, Keres,
Botvinnik, Reshevsky.

World Chess Championship 1948 will be enjoyed by anyone with a taste for reading about the great players and their games. It includes 16 pages of photos from the event, an overview of the openings used in the tournament, and career records of all the players. Any young player or club player looking to improve will benefit from Keres' instructive commentary, which will appeal to those tired of memorization and looking for the key ideas and strategies behind moves. Thanks to Verendel Publishing for undertaking this ambitious project, an historical contribution similar to their translation of Razuvaev and Murakhveri's volume on Akiba Rubinstein, which I reviewed here in November 2023. ♠

Paul Keres. World Chess Championship 1948, 3rd English edition, translated by Jan Verendel. Verendel Publishing 2024. 544 pp. ISBN 978-9198366501.

TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

new.uschess.org/national-events-calendar

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

Nationals

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

Supernationals VIII

MAY 8-11, 2025 — FL TLA# 47674
Site: Orange County Convention Center - West Concourse **Address:** 9800 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** Y **Org:** US Chess Federation • nationalevents@uschess.org • www.uschess.org/tournaments/2025/sn8

HERITAGE EVENT • NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

78th Annual US Amateur East Individual

MAY 24-26, 2025 — NJ TLA# 48857
Site: Delta Hotels Woodbridge **Address:** 515 US Highway 1 South, Iselin, NJ 08830 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Aaron Kiedes • akiedes@gmail.com • njscf.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 U.S. Women's Open

JUNE 4-5, 2025 — NV TLA# 47549
Site: Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino **Address:** 3555 S Las Vegas Blvd, Las Vegas, NV 89109 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3,500 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Vegas Chess Festivals • vegaschess@gmail.com • 702-930-9550 • vegaschessfestival.com

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

2025 National Open

JUNE 4-8, 2025 — NV TLA# 47460
Site: Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino **Address:** 3555 S Las Vegas Blvd, Las Vegas, NV 89109 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$125,000 **GP Pts:** 200 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Vegas Chess Festivals • vegaschess@gmail.com • 702-930-9550 • vegaschessfestival.com

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

125th Annual U.S. Open Championship

JULY 28-AUGUST 3, 2025 — WI TLA# 49051
Site: Madison Marriott West **Address:** 1313 John Q. Hammons Drive, Middleton, WI 53562 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$60,000 **GP Pts:** 300 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** US Chess Federation • nationalevents@uschess.org • www.uschess.org/tournaments/2025/usopen

Grand Prix

The Grand Prix point totals reflect all rated event information as of April 14, 2025, for the 2025 Grand Prix. These standings are updated regularly, but should be considered unofficial. Visit www.uschess.org/datapage/GP-standings.php for up-to-date information.

2025 US CHESS GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

Name	State/Ctry	Pts
1. GM JIANCHAO ZHOU	MA	130.5
2. THOMAS FANG	NC	60.5
3. GM FIDEL CORRALES JIMINEZ	NY	48
4. GM AWONDER LIANG	WI	46.722
5. GM MIKHAIL ANTIPOV	MO	44
6. GM EMIN OHANYAN	MO	39
7. GM GLEB DUDIN	FOR	34
8. GM JOHN MICHAEL BURKE	NJ	34
9. ANSH SHAH	NJ	30.4
10. IM SANDEEP SETHURAMAN	AZ	30

2025 Awards

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

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

The Grand Prix continues in 2025. For information visit new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

5th Annual Niagara Falls Open

MAY 2-4, 2025 — NY TLA# 47243
Site: Sheraton Niagara Falls Hotel **Address:** 300 3rd Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14303 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Big May Dragon Knight Grand Prix

MAY 3, 2025 — NC TLA# 48877
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1124 **GP Pts:** 15 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • www.dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Windmill Day Grand Prix

MAY 10, 2025 — NC TLA# 48876
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$764 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • www.dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight National River Cleanup Day Grand Prix

MAY 17, 2025 — NC TLA# 49379
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$764 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • www.dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

12th Cherry Blossom Classic

MAY 22-26, 2025 — VA TLA# 47970
Site: Executive Conference And Training Center **Address:** 22685 Holiday Park Dr, Suite 60, Sterling, VA 20166 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$27,000 **GP Pts:** 200 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Anand Dommalapati • cbs2025@capitalareachess.com • 1-703-627-5314 • www.capitalareachess.com/CherryBlossom

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

34th Annual Chicago Open

MAY 22-26, 2025 — IL TLA# 46255
Site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 North Milwaukee Ave., Wheeling, IL 60090 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$100,000 **GP Pts:** 200 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

Luis Salinas Memorial 80th Annual Texas State And Amateur Championships

MAY 23-26, 2025 — TX TLA# 49370
Site: The Vista (formerly Vista Ridge And/or Music City Mall) **Address:** 2401 S. Stemmons Freeway, Lewisville, TX 75067 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Tarrant County Chess Club • tcrane5000@gmail.com • 8172964287 • tarrantcountychessclub.org

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX

45th Annual Lina Grumette Memorial Day Classic

MAY 24-26, 2025 — CA TLA# 48885
Site: Airtel Plaza Hotel **Address:** 7277 Valjean Ave, Van Nuys, CA 91406 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$17,000 **GP Pts:** 60 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Randall Hough • randallhough@gmail.com • 6262827412 • www.schess.com

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

93rd Massachusetts Open

MAY 24-26, 2025 — MA TLA# 48865
Site: Westford Regency Inn & Conference Center **Address:** 219 Littleton Road, Westford, MA 01886 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$7,500 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Massachusetts Chess Association • info@masschess.org • 603-891-2484 (day of the tournament call 603-557-1732) • www.masschess.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight International Jazz Day Grand Prix

MAY 24, 2025 — NC TLA# 49381
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$764 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y

Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • www.dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

14th Annual Chicago Open Blitz

MAY 25, 2025 — IL TLA# 48873
Site: Westin North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 North Milwaukee Ave, Wheeling, IL 60090 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,500 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 Virginia Senior Open

MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025 — VA TLA# 48327
Site: Country Inn & Suites By Radisson **Address:** 10358 Patriot Highway, Fredericksburg, VA 22408 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,200 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Mike Hoffpauir, Ntd/ja • mhoffpauir@aol.com • 757-846-4805 • www.vachess.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration Of The 1975 U.S. Open

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025 — NE TLA# 48412
Site: Graduate Hotel **Address:** 141 N 9th St, Lincoln, NE 68508 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Bruce G Draney • bruceykins49@hotmail.com • 4023126335 • kingregistration.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight World Parrot Day Grand Prix

MAY 31, 2025 — NC TLA# 49383
Site: Dragon Knight Chess **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$764 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • www.dragonknightchess.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

Orchard Lake XXVII

MAY 31, 2025 — NC TLA# 47718
Site: Orchard Lake Campground **Address:** 460 Orchard Lake Rd, Saluda, NC 28773 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$51061 based on prizes by section **GP Pts:** 6 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Kevin Hyde • chess@achievementtesting.info • achievementtesting.info/chess

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

33rd Annual Eastern Class Championships

JUNE 6-8, 2025 — CT TLA# 47565
Site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel At Bradley International Airport **Address:** 1 Bradley Airport, Windsor Locks, CT 06096 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

PLEASE NOTE DEADLINE FOR PRINT TLA SUBMISSIONS

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

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Big June Dragon Knight Grand Prix

JUNE 7, 2025 — NC TLA# 49385
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1124 **GP Pts:** 15 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess Center • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • www.dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX

2025 Carolinas Classic

JUNE 13-15, 2025 — NC TLA# 49424
Site: Hilton Charlotte University Place **Address:** 8629 J M Keynes Drive, Charlotte, NC 28262 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Charlotte Chess Center • charlottechesscenter.org • www.charlottechesscenter.org/events/classic

GRAND PRIX

CFCC 2025 Sunshine Open & Scholastic

JUNE 13-15, 2025 — FL TLA# 48777
Site: Holiday Inn At Lake Buena Vista **Address:** 13351 State Road 535, Orlando, FL 32821 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$8500 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Charles W Hatherill • kingsgam-bit50@earthlink.net • 7027430305 • www.centrafl-chess.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

18th Continental Chess Cleveland Open

JUNE 13-15, 2025 — OH TLA# 48167
Site: Crowne Plaza Cleveland Airport Hotel **Address:** 7230 Engle Road, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Dog Dad's Day Grand Prix

JUNE 14, 2025 — NC TLA# 49384

Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$764 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • www.dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2025 Chicago Summer Open

JUNE 20-22, 2025 — IL TLA# 48866
Site: Hyatt Regency Schaumburg **Address:** 1800 E Golf Rd, Schaumburg, IL 60173 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10000 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** King Registration And Wilson Chess • info@kingregistration.com • www.kingregistration.com/event/Chisummeropen25

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

29th Annual New York State Open And Senior Amateur

JUNE 20-22, 2025 — NY TLA# 48665
Site: Tiki Resort **Address:** 2 Canada Street, Lake George, NY 12845 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3,300 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open

JUNE 21-22, 2025 — OH TLA# 49364
Site: Holiday Inn Express Akron NW - Fairlawn **Address:** 3150 West Market Street, Akron, OH 44333 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10000 b/190 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Kalanithi Bagley • kalanithi@discoverychess.org • 330 475 2964 • discoverychess.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

18th Annual Philadelphia International

JUNE 26-30, 2025 — PA TLA# 46651
Site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 200 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Res-**

idency: N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

19th Annual Philadelphia Open

JUNE 27-29, 2025 — PA TLA# 47567
Site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

12th Summer Solstice Open

JUNE 27-29, 2025 — FL TLA# 49367
Site: Embassy Suites Hotel **Address:** 10450 Corkscrew Commons Drive, Estero, FL 33928 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$9,000.00 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Jon Haskel • jon@bocachess.com • 561-302-4377 • www.bocachess.com

GRAND PRIX

Nebraska Summer Open 2025

JUNE 28-29, 2025 — NE TLA# 48547
Site: Comfort Inn & Suites Central **Address:** 7007 Grover Street, Omaha Ne 68106, Omaha, NE 68106 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1000 **GP Pts:** 6 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Seetharaman Renganathan • chessrockez@gmail.com • 6303623047

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

48th Annual Green Bay Open

JUNE 28-29, 2025 — WI TLA# 49226
Site: Oneida Hotel (formerly Radisson Hotel) **Address:** 2040 Airport Drive, Green Bay, WI 54313 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3,000 **Guaranteed GP Pts:** 15 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Luke A Ludwig • lukeludwig@aol.com • 9204659859 • www.greenbaychess.net

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

14th Annual World Open Women's Championship

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 — PA TLA# 49121
Site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,000 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX

3rd Annual Independence Day Open

JULY 2-6, 2025 — VA TLA# 47912
Site: Washington Dulles Airport Marriott **Address:** 45020 Aviation Dr., Dulles, VA 20166 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Atlantic Chess Association • director@atlanticchessassociation.com

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

53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
Site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel **Address:** 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$208,000 **GP Pts:** 300 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

14th Annual World Open Game/7 Blitz Championship

JULY 2, 2025 — PA TLA# 48878
Site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown, 201 N 17th Street, Pa **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,500 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

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.

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX

27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship

JULY 4-6, 2025 — CA TLA# 49355
Site: Holiday Inn Express And Suites **Address:** 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$12,500 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** John Mccumiskey • sactoChess@sbcgloba.net • 916-524-9479 • sacramentochessclub.org/index.htm

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

33rd Annual World Open G/10 Championship

JULY 5, 2025 — PA TLA# 48879
Site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,200 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

36th Annual World Open Blitz Championship

JULY 6, 2025 — PA TLA# 48880
Site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3,000 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX

1st Greater Baystate Summer Open

JULY 12, 2025 — MA TLA# 49155
Site: Auburn/ Webster Elks Lodge **Address:** 754 Southbridge Street, Auburn, MA 01501 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **B/O 60 Rated Paid Entries GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Greater Baystate Chess • greater.baystate.chess@gmail.com • 4133560303 • www.greaterbaystatechess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

18th Annual Chicago Class Championships

JULY 18-20, 2025 — IL TLA# 48868
Site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 N Milwaukee Avenue, Wheeling, IL 60090 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

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

26th Annual Pittsburgh Open

JULY 18-20, 2025 — PA TLA# 48870
Site: Doubletree Green Tree **Address:** 500 Mansfield Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15205 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$13,000 **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

10th Annual Chicago Class Blitz Championship

JULY 19, 2025 — IL TLA# 48869
Site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 N Milwaukee Avenue, Wheeling, IL 60090 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$500 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

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

30th Annual Bradley Open

JULY 25-27, 2025 — CT TLA# 48871
Site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel At Bradley Airport **Address:** 1 Bradley Airport, Windsor Locks, CT 06096 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

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

33rd Annual Southern Open

JULY 25-27, 2025 — FL TLA# 48867
Site: Delta Hotels Orlando Celebration **Address:** 2900 Parkway Boulevard, Kissimmee, FL 34747 **Overall**

Prize Fund: \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

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

30th Annual Pacific Coast Open

AUGUST 8-10, 2025 — CA TLA# 48968
Site: Hilton Orange County Airport Hotel **Address:** 18800 Macarthur Blvd., Irvine, CA 92612 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX

12th Annual Washington International

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 — MD TLA# 47444
Site: Rockville Hilton **Address:** 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$45725 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Michael W Regan • mregan@stsci.edu • 4104195130 • mdchess.com

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

55th Annual Continental Open

AUGUST 14-17, 2025 — MA TLA# 48969
Site: Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel **Address:** 181 Boston Post Road W, Marlborough, MA 01752 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

15th Annual Central California Open

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — CA TLA# 49352
Site: Doubletree Hotel **Address:** 2233 Ventura St, Fresno, CA 93710 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 100 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

20th Annual Indianapolis Open

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — IN TLA# 49375
Site: Hilton Garden Inn Indianapolis Airport **Address:** 8910 Hatfield Drive, Indianapolis, IN 42641 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 100 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

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

57th Annual Atlantic Open

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — DC TLA# 49021
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel **Address:** 2500 Calvert St. NW, Washington, DC 20008 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

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

147th Annual New York State Championship—America's Oldest Annual Tournament!

AUGUST 29-SEPTEMBER 1, 2025 — NY TLA# 49022
Site: Albany Marriott **Address:** 189 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12205 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$18,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

Regional

ALABAMA

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424
2025 Carolinas Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367
12th Summer Solstice Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 TLA# 48867
33rd Annual Southern Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

ALASKA

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

AMER. SAMOA

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

ARIZONA

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025 TLA# 47460
2025 National Open
 See National Events.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 4-6, 2025 TLA# 49355
27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8-10, 2025 TLA# 48968
30th Annual Pacific Coast Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

ARKANSAS

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

CALIFORNIA

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255
34th Annual Chicago Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 24, 2025 TLA# 48886
MDC Scholastics
Site: Airtel Plaza Hotel **Address:** 7277 Valjean Ave, Van Nuys, CA 91406 **Overall Prize Fund:** Trophies **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Randall Hough • randallough@gmail.com • 6262827412 • www.scchess.com

JUNE 4-8, 2025 TLA# 47460
2025 National Open
 See National Events.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424
2025 Carolinas Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
 See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 4-6, 2025 TLA# 49355
27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8-10, 2025 TLA# 48968
30th Annual Pacific Coast Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 TLA# 49352
15th Annual Central California Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

COLORADO

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025 TLA# 48412
HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration Of The 1975 U.S. Open
 See Grand Prix.

CONNECTICUT

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 6-8, 2025 TLA# 47565
33rd Annual Eastern Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 20-22, 2025 TLA# 48665
29th Annual New York State Open And Senior Amateur
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367
12th Summer Solstice Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
 See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 12, 2025 TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 TLA# 48871
30th Annual Bradley Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 14-17, 2025 TLA# 48969
55th Annual Continental Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DELAWARE**STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT****MAY 3, 2025** TLA# 48790**Delaware State Scholastic Championship**

Site: Bellevue Community Center **Address:** 500 Duncan Road, Wilmington, DE 19809 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** Y
Org: Delaware Chess Association • connect@delawarechessassociation.org • 302-593-3752 • delawarechessassociation.org

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970**12th Cherry Blossom Classic**

See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT**MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025** TLA# 48327**2025 Virginia Senior Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX**JUNE 27-29, 2025** TLA# 46653**53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections**

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655**53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DIST. OF COLUMBIA**MAY 22-26, 2025** TLA# 47970**12th Cherry Blossom Classic**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424**2025 Carolinas Classic**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 TLA# 49021**57th Annual Atlantic Open**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FLORIDA**MAY 22-26, 2025** TLA# 47970**12th Cherry Blossom Classic**

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255**34th Annual Chicago Open**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424**2025 Carolinas Classic**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367**12th Summer Solstice Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX**JUNE 27-29, 2025** TLA# 46653**53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections**

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655**53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-27, 2025 TLA# 48867**33rd Annual Southern Open**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 TLA# 47444**12th Annual Washington International**

See Grand Prix.

GEORGIA**JUNE 13-15, 2025** TLA# 49424**2025 Carolinas Classic**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367**12th Summer Solstice Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX**JUNE 27-29, 2025** TLA# 46653**53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections**

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655**53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-27, 2025 TLA# 48867**33rd Annual Southern Open**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

GUAM**JUNE 21-22, 2025** TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

HAWAII**JUNE 21-22, 2025** TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

IDAHO**MAY 22-26, 2025** TLA# 47970**12th Cherry Blossom Classic**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025 TLA# 47460**2025 National Open**

See National Events.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

JULY 4-6, 2025 TLA# 49355**27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship**

See Grand Prix.

ILLINOIS**MAY 16-18, 2025** TLA# 49246**2025-16-17-18_EMCC-Spring-Swiss**

See Michigan.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970**12th Cherry Blossom Classic**

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255**34th Annual Chicago Open**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 25, 2025 TLA# 48873**14th Annual Chicago Open Blitz**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424**2025 Carolinas Classic**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 20-22, 2025 TLA# 48866**2025 Chicago Summer Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367**12th Summer Solstice Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX**JUNE 27-29, 2025** TLA# 46653**53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections**

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655**53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025 TLA# 48868**18th Annual Chicago Class Championships**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 19, 2025 TLA# 48869**10th Annual Chicago Class Blitz Championship**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 TLA# 49375**20th Annual Indianapolis Open**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 TLA# 47444**12th Annual Washington International**

See Grand Prix.

INDIANA**MAY 16-18, 2025** TLA# 49246**2025-16-17-18_EMCC-Spring-Swiss**

See Michigan.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255**34th Annual Chicago Open**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 20-22, 2025 TLA# 48866**2025 Chicago Summer Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX**JUNE 27-29, 2025** TLA# 46653**53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections**

See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655**53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025 TLA# 48868**18th Annual Chicago Class Championships**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 TLA# 49375**20th Annual Indianapolis Open**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

IOWA**MAY 22-26, 2025** TLA# 47970**12th Cherry Blossom Classic**

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255**34th Annual Chicago Open**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025 TLA# 48412**HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration Of The 1975 U.S. Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 20-22, 2025 TLA# 48866**2025 Chicago Summer Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

KANSAS**MAY 22-26, 2025** TLA# 47970**12th Cherry Blossom Classic**

See Grand Prix.

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025 TLA# 48412**HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration Of The 1975 U.S. Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

KENTUCKY**MAY 22-26, 2025** TLA# 47970**12th Cherry Blossom Classic**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424**2025 Carolinas Classic**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 TLA# 49375**20th Annual Indianapolis Open**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

LOUISIANA**MAY 22-26, 2025** TLA# 47970**12th Cherry Blossom Classic**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424**2025 Carolinas Classic**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

MAINE**MAY 22-26, 2025** TLA# 47970**12th Cherry Blossom Classic**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364**2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open**

See Grand Prix.

JULY 12, 2025 TLA# 49155**1st Greater Baystate Summer Open**

See Grand Prix.

MARYLAND**MAY 22-26, 2025** TLA# 47970**12th Cherry Blossom Classic**

See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT**MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025** TLA# 48327**2025 Virginia Senior Open**

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424
2025 Carolinas Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-30, 2025 TLA# 46651
18th Annual Philadelphia International
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 47567
19th Annual Philadelphia Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367
12th Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49121
14th Annual World Open Women's Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See Pennsylvania.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49119
17th Annual World Open Under 13 Championship
See Pennsylvania.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49120
4th Annual World Open Amateur Championship
See Pennsylvania.

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49122
15th Annual World Open Senior Amateur
See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 TLA# 49021
57th Annual Atlantic Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MASSACHUSETTS
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT
MAY 24-26, 2025 TLA# 48865
93rd Massachusetts Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 6-8, 2025 TLA# 47565
33rd Annual Eastern Class Championships
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 20-22, 2025 TLA# 48665
29th Annual New York State Open And Senior Amateur
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-30, 2025 TLA# 46651
18th Annual Philadelphia International
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367
12th Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See Pennsylvania.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 47567
19th Annual Philadelphia Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49119
17th Annual World Open Under 13 Championship.
See Pennsylvania.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49120
4th Annual World Open Amateur Championship
See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 12, 2025 TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 TLA# 48871
30th Annual Bradley Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 14-17, 2025 TLA# 48969
55th Annual Continental Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MICHIGAN
MAY 16-18, 2025 TLA# 49246
2025-16-17-18 EMCC-Spring-Swiss
Site: Mandell Chess Club Address: 22011 Coolidge, Oak Park, MI 48237 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Edward Mandell • EMAN.1943@AOL.COM • 2486352375

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255
34th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT
JUNE 7-8, 2025 TLA# 47762
2025 Michigan Amateur
Site: Hilton Garden Inn Grand Rapids East Address: 2321 E Beltline Ave Se, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Michigan Chess Association • jeff.chess64@gmail.com • 810-955-7271 • www.michess.org

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 48167
18th Continental Chess Cleveland Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 20-22, 2025 TLA# 48866
2025 Chicago Summer Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MINNESOTA
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255
34th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025 TLA# 48412
HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration Of The 1975 U.S. Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

MISSISSIPPI
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424
2025 Carolinas Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

MISSOURI
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255
34th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025 TLA# 48412
HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration Of The 1975 U.S. Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424
2025 Carolinas Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MONTANA
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

NEBRASKA
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025 TLA# 48412
HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration Of The 1975 U.S. Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

NEVADA
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025 TLA# 47460
2025 National Open
See National Events.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 4-6, 2025 TLA# 49355
27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8-10, 2025 TLA# 48968
30th Annual Pacific Coast Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 TLA# 49352
15th Annual Central California Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW HAMPSHIRE
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 12, 2025 TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
See Grand Prix.

NEW JERSEY
MAY 2-4, 2025 TLA# 47243
5th Annual Niagara Falls Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 17, 2025 TLA# 47749
Hamilton Chess Club Quads
Site: Switlik Park Pavilion Address: Fisher Place/Joe Dimaggio Drive, Hamilton, NJ 08610 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Edward Sytnik • edmendou@aol.com • 6097582326 • hamiltonchessclub.com

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255
34th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 24, 2025 TLA# 48858
2025 US Amateur East K-8 Scholastic
Site: Delta Hotels Woodbridge Address: 515 Us Highway 1 South, Iselin, NJ 08830 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Aaron Kiedes • akiedes@gmail.com • njscf.org

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT
MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025 TLA# 48327
2025 Virginia Senior Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 6-8, 2025 TLA# 47565
33rd Annual Eastern Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-30, 2025 TLA# 46651
18th Annual Philadelphia International
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 47567
19th Annual Philadelphia Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367
12th Summer Solstice Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
 See Pennsylvania.

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49121
14th Annual World Open Women's Championship
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49119
17th Annual World Open Under 13 Championship
 See Pennsylvania.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49120
4th Annual World Open Amateur Championship
 See Pennsylvania.

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49122
15th Annual World Open Senior Amateur
 See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 6, 2025 TLA# 48880
36th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 14-17, 2025 TLA# 48969
55th Annual Continental Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 TLA# 49021
57th Annual Atlantic Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW MEXICO
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025 TLA# 47460
2025 National Open
 See National Events.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

NEW YORK
MAY 2-4, 2025 TLA# 47243
5th Annual Niagara Falls Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255
34th Annual Chicago Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT
MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025 TLA# 48327
2025 Virginia Senior Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 6-8, 2025 TLA# 47565
33rd Annual Eastern Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424
2025 Carolinas Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 48167
18th Continental Chess Cleveland Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 20-22, 2025 TLA# 48665
29th Annual New York State Open And Senior Amateur
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-30, 2025 TLA# 46651
18th Annual Philadelphia International
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 47567
19th Annual Philadelphia Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367
12th Summer Solstice Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
 See Pennsylvania.

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49121
14th Annual World Open Women's Championship
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49119
17th Annual World Open Under 13 Championship
 See Pennsylvania.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49120
4th Annual World Open Amateur Championship
 See Pennsylvania.

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49122
15th Annual World Open Senior Amateur
 See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 6, 2025 TLA# 48880
36th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025 TLA# 48870
26th Annual Pittsburgh Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-27, 2025 TLA# 48871
30th Annual Bradley Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 14-17, 2025 TLA# 48969
55th Annual Continental Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 TLA# 49021
57th Annual Atlantic Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT
AUGUST 29-SEPTEMBER 1, 2025 TLA# 49022
147th Annual New York State Championship- America's Oldest Annual Tournament!
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NORTH CAROLINA
MAY 3, 2025 TLA# 48877
Big May Dragon Knight Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 10, 2025 TLA# 48876
Dragon Knight Windmill Day Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 17, 2025 TLA# 49379
Dragon Knight National River Cleanup Day Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 24, 2025 TLA# 49381
Dragon Knight International Jazz Day Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT
MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025 TLA# 48327
2025 Virginia Senior Open
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 31, 2025 TLA# 47718
Orchard Lake XXVII
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 31, 2025 TLA# 49383
Dragon Knight World Parrot Day Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 7, 2025 TLA# 49385
Big June Dragon Knight Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424
2025 Carolinas Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 14, 2025 TLA# 49384
Dragon Knight Dog Dad's Day Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367
12th Summer Solstice Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
 See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NORTH DAKOTA
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

N. MARIANA ISL.
JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

OHIO
MAY 2-4, 2025 TLA# 47243
5th Annual Niagara Falls Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 16-18, 2025 TLA# 49246
2025-16-17-18_EMCC-Spring-Swiss
 See Michigan.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255
34th Annual Chicago Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 48167
18th Continental Chess Cleveland Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
 See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025 TLA# 48870
26th Annual Pittsburgh Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 TLA# 49375
20th Annual Indianapolis Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OKLAHOMA
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

OREGON
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025 TLA# 47460
2025 National Open
 See National Events.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 4-6, 2025 TLA# 49355
27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
See Grand Prix.

◆ PENNSYLVANIA

MAY 2-4, 2025 TLA# 47243
5th Annual Niagara Falls Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255
34th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT
MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025 TLA# 48327
2025 Virginia Senior Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424
2025 Carolinas Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 48167
18th Continental Chess Cleveland Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-30, 2025 TLA# 46651
18th Annual Philadelphia International
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367
12th Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 47567
19th Annual Philadelphia Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
Site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$17,000 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • **director@chess.us** • **www.chesstour.com**

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49121
14th Annual World Open Women's Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49119
17th Annual World Open Under 13 Championship.
Site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • **director@chess.us** • **www.chesstour.com**

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49120
4th Annual World Open Amateur Championship
Site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3,000 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • **director@chess.us** • **www.chesstour.com**

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49122
15th Annual World Open Senior Amateur
Site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel **Ad-**

dress: 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,000 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • **director@chess.us** • **www.chesstour.com**

JULY 2, 2025 TLA# 48878
14th Annual World Open Game/7 Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 5, 2025 TLA# 48879
33rd Annual World Open G/10 Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 6, 2025 TLA# 48880
36th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025 TLA# 48870
26th Annual Pittsburgh Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 TLA# 49021
57th Annual Atlantic Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT
AUGUST 29-SEPTEMBER 1, 2025 TLA# 49022
147th Annual New York State Championship- America's Oldest Annual Tournament
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

◆ PUERTO RICO

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367
12th Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

◆ RHODE ISLAND

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 12, 2025 TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
See Grand Prix.

◆ SOUTH CAROLINA

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424
2025 Carolinas Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367
12th Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

◆ SOUTH DAKOTA

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 31-JUNE 1, 2025 TLA# 48412
HOF 50th Anniversary Celebration Of The 1975 U.S. Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

◆ TENNESSEE

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 24, 2025 TLA# 48924
Tri-cities G/30 Swiss
Site: The Philosopher's House **Address:** 117 W. Fairview Ave., Johnson City, TN 37615 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$150 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** David Fischler • **dfischler@verizon.net** • 6189442892 • **www.facebook.com/groups/1190356468262776**

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424
2025 Carolinas Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

◆ TEXAS

Weekly on Sunday TLA# 42647
Cyga Academy Sunday USCF-rated Tournament
Site: 4920 River Falls Drive Sugarland Tx 77479 **Address:** 4920 River Falls Drive, Sugarland, TX 77479 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Wei Yang • **contact@cyga-academy.org** • 281-832-6159

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255
34th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT
MAY 23-26, 2025 TLA# 49370
Luis Salinas Memorial 80th Annual Texas State And Amateur Championships
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025 TLA# 47460
2025 National Open
See National Events.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424
2025 Carolinas Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367
12th Summer Solstice Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

◆ U.S. MIN. OUT. ISL.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

◆ UTAH

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025 TLA# 47460
2025 National Open
See National Events.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

◆ VERMONT

MAY 3, 2025 TLA# 48621
Bennington Spring Open
Site: Bennington Free Library **Address:** 101 Silver St., Bennington, VT 05201 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Andrew Palmer • **palmerar62@hotmail.com** • 8026815417

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 20-22, 2025 TLA# 48665
29th Annual New York State Open And Senior Amateur
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 12, 2025 TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
See Grand Prix.

◆ VIRGINIA

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255
34th Annual Chicago Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT
MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2025 TLA# 48327
2025 Virginia Senior Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 13-15, 2025 TLA# 49424
2025 Carolinas Classic
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 26-30, 2025 TLA# 46651
18th Annual Philadelphia International
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 47567
19th Annual Philadelphia Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367
12th Summer Solstice Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
 See Pennsylvania.

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49121
14th Annual World Open Women's Championship
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49119
17th Annual World Open Under 13 Championship.
 See Pennsylvania.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49120
4th Annual World Open Amateur Championship
 See Pennsylvania.

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 TLA# 49122
15th Annual World Open Senior Amateur
 See Pennsylvania.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 TLA# 49021
57th Annual Atlantic Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

VIRGIN ISL., U.S.
JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

WASHINGTON
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 4-8, 2025 TLA# 47460
2025 National Open
 See National Events.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 4-6, 2025 TLA# 49355
27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8-10, 2025 TLA# 48968
30th Annual Pacific Coast Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

WEST VIRGINIA
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

WISCONSIN
STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT
MAY 17, 2025 TLA# 48207
2025 Wisconsin Rapid And Blitz State Championships
 Site: Courtyard By Marriott Address: 2266 Deming Way, Middleton, WI 53562 Overall Prize Fund: \$1300 b/100 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Mike Nietman • mike.nietman@charter.net • 608-467-8510 • www.wis chess.org

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX
JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
 See Pennsylvania.

MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 46255
34th Annual Chicago Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 20-22, 2025 TLA# 48866
2025 Chicago Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 49367
12th Summer Solstice Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-29, 2025 TLA# 46653
53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections
 See Pennsylvania.

JUNE 28-29, 2025 TLA# 49226
48th Annual Green Bay Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 2-6, 2025 TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025 TLA# 48868
18th Annual Chicago Class Championships.
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

WYOMING
MAY 22-26, 2025 TLA# 47970
12th Cherry Blossom Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-22, 2025 TLA# 49364
2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open
 See Grand Prix..

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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.

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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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Solutions

PAGE 13 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. Mate follows **19. Rxe6+!** fxe6 20. Qxe6+. Or 19. ... Be7 20. Rxe7+! (or 20. Rb6!) 20. ... Kxe7 21. Ba3+. **PROBLEM 2.** Black resigned after **16. Rh1+ Kg8 17. Rh8+!** in light of 17. ... Kxh8 18. Ng6+ winning the queen, or 17. ... Kf7 18. Qh5+. **PROBLEM 3. 18... Rxb2!** so that 19. Kxh2 Qh4+ 20. Kg1 Rh8 threatens ... Qh4-h1 mate. The game went 19. Qa6+ Kb8 20. Kxh2 Qh4+ 21. Kg1 Rh8 22. Rf8+ Rxf8 23. Nd2 Ng3, White resigned. **PROBLEM 4.** Black resigned after **23. Bf7!** threatening 24. Bf6 mate. Black is lost after 23. ... Kg7 24. Bh6+ Kh8 25. Bxf8 Rxf8 26. Bxg6. **PROBLEM 5. 25. Rf2!** Black resigned in view of 26. Bf1, trapping the queen. **PROBLEM 6.** Black resigned after **21. f3** but the fastest is **21. Ng6+! hxc6 22. h5** and 23. hxc6+. **SOLUTION TO ZARKOV: 1. Nf3 Nf6 2. Ng5 Nd5 3. Ne6 Nf4 4. Nxf8 Ng6 5. Ne6 Nf8 6. Nxf7 mate.**

PAGE 45 MAKE YOUR MOVE

TACTIC 1. 13. ... Nh4! This is even better than the game continuation, which saw **13. ... Nf4!? 14. Ndx4 exf4 15. Nxd4?** (it was better to play 15. Qb3, even if 15. ... Bxe2 16. Kxe2 Qg5 17. g4 Qh4 18. Raf1 Qg3 19. Bf3 Rxb3 wins for Black) **15. ... Bxd1 16. Rxd1 Nxd4 17. Bxd4 Qg5 18. g4 c5 19. Bf2 cxb4** and Black eventually won. **14. Kf1** Or 14. Rh2 Nxc2+ 15. Rxc2 Bf3 16. Rh2 Bg1 and Black wins. **14. ... 0-0! 15. gxf4 f5 16. Nxd4 fxe4+ 17. Kg1 Bxd1 18. Ne6 Qxh4** and Black is winning. Goroshkov – J. van Foreest (analysis), European Individual Ch, Eforie Nord 2025. **TACTIC 2. 20. Ng5+! hxc6 21. Qxc6, Black resigned.** There is no good way to meet the threat of Qg5-h5+. Kosakowski – Maltsevskaya, European Individual Ch, Eforie Nord 2025. **TACTIC 3. 35. Nd4! g6** Obviously, Black cannot capture the knight with 35. ... Rxd4 as White promptly mates with 36. Qxf7+. **36. Qh3!, Black resigned.** After 36. Qh3, Black still cannot capture the knight with 36. ... Rxd4 on account of 37. Rxf7 Bg7 38. Rxc7+ Kxc7 39. Qh6+ Kg8 40. Rf8 mate. Martirosyan – Yilmaz, European Individual Ch, Eforie Nord 2025. **TACTIC 4. 20. Rxb7!** White clears away the bishop in order to get the c6-square for the knight. **20. ... Rxb7 21. Nc6 Qc8 22. Ndx7+ Rbxe7 23. Nxe7+ Rxe7 24. Qxd6 Qc7 25. Rd1, Black resigned.** The endgame is hopeless. Tari – Nemec, European Individual Ch, Eforie Nord 2025. **TACTIC 5. 30. ... f6!** This move works due to White's loose knights on h5 and b3. **31. Qxd5+ Qxd5 32. Rxd5 Bf7** Skewering the rook and knight. **33. Rd7** Has White saved himself with this threat? **33. ... Bb8** No! Both knights are unprotected and White will lose one of them. **34. Nxf6+ gxf6 35. Nxa5 b3 36. Rb7 Bd5 37. Rb5 Re8 38. Kf1 Bc7 39. g3 Bf3 40. Nxb3 Rd8** and, facing mate in a few moves, **White resigned.** Zhou Yang-Fan – Kantor, European Individual Ch, Eforie Nord 2025. **TACTIC 6. 19. d5!** Is White just hanging a pawn? What's the point? **19. ... Bxd5** Or 19. ... cxd5 20. Bb5 Qxc5 (both 20. ... Nd7 21. Nxe6 fxe6 22. Rxe6 and 20. ... Bd7 21. Qc3 win for White.) **20. Qc3** No, it's the dark squares that White targets. **20. ... f6 21. Bxf8 Bxf8 22.**

Nxg6 Black's kingside is collapsing. **22. ... f4 23. Qxf6 Qg7 24. Qxf4 Bxc5 25. Qxh4** White is winning, but Black carries on a bit longer. **25. ... Bd6 26. Re3 Rf8 27. Be4 Rf6 28. Bxd5+ cxd5 29. Ne5, Black resigned.** Gurel – Alonso Rosell, European Individual Ch, Eforie Nord 2025. **TACTIC 7. 24. ... Be3! Boom! 25. h4** If 25. Qd3 fxc3 26. hxc3 Rxf3 27. Kxf3 Rf8+ and it is curtains for White. The critical line is 25. Qe2, when Black continues 25. ... fxc3 26. hxc3 (or 26. fxc3 Rxf3 27. Qxf3 Rf8) 26. ... Bxf2!! 27. Qxf2 Rxf3 28. Qxf3 Re3 and Black is winning. **25. ... Qe5** In the game, Black continued less accurately: **25. ... Qg4? 26. Qe2 fxc3?** (26. ... Re5 would have kept a clear advantage for Black) **27. fxe3 Qe4 28. Re1 Re5 29. Qd1** (29. Bd3!) **29. ... Ref5** (29. ... Rxf3!) **30. Be2 Qxh4 31. Rh1 Qe4 32. c4? Rxf3 33. Bxf3 Rxf3??** (Black would have been better after 33. ... Qxe3 34. Bd4 Nf4+ 35. Kxg3 Nh5+; now, however, he lost) **34. Qxf3 Qc2+ 35. Kh3 Qxb2 36. Rf1 Qg7 37. Qg4 Qe7 38. Qe6+, Black resigned.** Dotzer – Blohberger, European Individual Ch, Eforie Nord 2025. **26. Qd1 fxc3 27. Bxe8 Nf4+ 28. Rxf4** Or 28. Kf1 g2+ 29. Kg1 Bxf2+ 30. Kxf2 Qe7!! and Black wins. **28. ... Rxf4 29. f3 Rxb4** and Black wins. **TACTIC 8. 19. ... Ba4! 20. Qxa4??** White should have played 20. Qc1 but 20. ... Nc2 21. Ra2 Rfc8 22. Rf1 Qe5 23. Bf3 exd5 24. Bg4 Rc3 is clearly better for Black. **20. ... Nxe2+ 21. Kf1** To meet 21. ... Qxd2 with 22. Rxe2. **21. ... Rxf2+ Boom!** 21. ... Nd4 would also give Black a decisive advantage, but the text move is much stronger. **22. Kxf2 Qxd2 23. Rxe2 Rf8+ 24. Kg3** Or 24. Kg1 Qd4+ with mate. **24. ... Qxe2 24. ... Qd3+** was a faster path to mate. **25. Qd1 Qe3+ 26. Kh4 Rf4+ 27. g4 Qf2+ 28. Kg5 h6+ 29. Kh5 Qxh2+ 30. Kg6 Rf6 mate.** Szpar – Vogel, European Individual Ch, Eforie Nord 2025. **TACTIC 9. 21. Na4! b5** Or 21. ... Kf8 22. a3 b5 23. Nb6 Bd6 24. Ng6+ and White wins. **22. Nb6!** 22. Nc5 also wins, but the text move is best. **22. ... Rg8 23. Ned7!** Black can no longer defend the bishop on e7, and attempts to survive fail. **23. ... Kd8 24. Rxe7 Bc8 25. Nxc8 Rxd7 26. Na7! Rxe7 27. Nxc6+ Kd7 28. Nxe7 Re8 29. Re5 Rxe7 30. Rxd5+ Kc6 31. Re5 Rd7 32. c3 f6 33. Re8 Kd5 34. Kc2 Ra7 and Black resigned.** Sebenik – Risteski, European Individual Ch, Eforie Nord 2025.

PAGE 47 ABCS OF CHESS

PROBLEM 1. Mating net: Black loses all hope after **1. Be5+ Ka8 2. Bb7 mate. PROBLEM 2. Mating net:** White wins in 2: **1. Nf6+ Kh8 2. Qxh7 mate. PROBLEM 3. Mating net:** White bludgeons Black with **1. Rc8+ Ka7 2. Nc6 mate. PROBLEM 4. Mating net:** It's bad news

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for Black after **1. Ng6+ Kg8 2. Bd5 mate. PROBLEM 5. Mating net:** White mates in 2: **1. Qxg8+ Kxg8 2. Re8 mate. PROBLEM 6. Mating net:** White scores in 2: **1. Qg8+ Kxg8 2. Re8 mate.**

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DANIIL KOZYREV

ATLANTA CHESS COACH,
FORMER AWARD-WINNING
HUMAN RIGHTS ATTORNEY
IN RUSSIA

I LEARNED CHESS IN THE FORMER Soviet Union as a 5-year-old kindergartner. My parents recall how I would wake up early to run to school and play with a friend I'm still friends with. Ultimately I attended a specialized chess school up to three times a week and studied independently at home. While I can't claim any significant competitive achievements compared to my peers, my love for the game never wavered.

After starting university, chess moved to the back burner — even more so as I pursued a career in law. However, I maintained contact with my coaches and chess-playing friends, and remained a member of the regional federation.

In the mid-2010s the idea of holding a corporate chess tournament in Russia, which had been dormant since the 1980s, was revived within my professional circle of lawyers, and I became involved in promoting chess among my colleagues. I participated in these championships and even won twice — once individually and once as part of a team. These tournaments were quite competitive, featuring CMs, FMs, IMs, and even two GMs (one specializing in chess composition).

In 2015, I received an award as a lawyer in the field of human rights protection and, on the same day, won a national chess tournament. From the stage, I remarked that I was facing a choice between my two passions: law and chess. Today, after my forced move to the U.S. due to my human rights work in Putin's Russia, that choice is even more stark.

Having only spoken English for a few years now, it's challenging to try and revive a law career here, but chess has been my salvation. Having carried my love of chess throughout my life, I've become a children's coach at Kid Chess in Atlanta, as well as at a couple of other chess teaching companies, communicating with students through the language of chess.

I'm still undecided whether to resume my legal career after improving my language skills or continue coaching children in chess. About 70 of my students participated in a recent large scholastic tournament. They all excitedly shared their victories



“
Regarding My
Best Move,
I believe it's
still ahead
of me ...”

and sheepishly hid their defeats, which was incredibly touching.

In Russia, clients often gave me gifts like whiskey or cognac as a small token of appreciation after completing a case. Here, children frequently bring me cards, drawings, and other small gifts for no particular reason. I honestly don't know which is more gratifying, which is why I'm struggling to make a final decision about my future.

Regarding My Best Move, I believe it's still ahead of me, and perhaps one of my students will execute it. In the meantime, I'll share a game where I particularly liked the idea and the combination of moves, rather than a single move:

ENGLISH OPENING (A17)

Robert Roszkowiak (2000)

Daniil Kozyrev (2191)

Georgia State Ch (4), 04.21.2024

1. Nf3 d5 2. c4 e6 3. e3 Nf6 4. Nc3 Be7
5. b3 c5 6. Bb2 Nc6 7. cxd5 exd5 8. d4 0-0
9. Bb5 Bg4 10. Bxc6 bxc6 11. Ne2 cxd4

Taking on f3 seems dangerous, as White will simply hide his king on f1 and use the g-file for a direct attack on my king. For example, 11. ... Bxf3 12. gxf3 cxd4 13. Nxd4 c5 14. Nf5.

12. Qxd4 c5

The strength of my hanging pawns lies in their dynamic mobility — plus, I saw an idea that would keep his king centralized and not give him time to castle.

13. Qf4?!

This allowed my idea to come to fruition.

13. ... Qa5+ 14. Bc3

And now **My Best Move**:



14. ... Qa6!

I like the whole series of moves, but this is the best single move of the sequence. I could also have played 14. ... Qb5 with the same idea, but I wanted to control the sixth rank and hide the queen from potential threats such as a2-a4 or an eventual Ne2-c3. White's best reply is 15. Qa4, but in that case I would happily jump to the endgame with 15. ... Qxa4 16. bxa4 Ne4.

15. h3 Bh5

The engine suggests 15. ... Bd7, but I wanted to keep the pin as well as provoke g2-g4.

16. g4 Bg6 17. Ng3 d4

The position plays itself here. Such are the consequences of not castling in a timely fashion!

18. Bd2 Bd6 19. Qg5 Ne4 20. Qd5 Bxg3 21. fxf3 Nxf3 22. Kf2 Nxf1+ 23. Rxh1 Rfe8

It means nothing to be ahead in material if you don't activate all your pieces. This is a good lesson for players of all ratings!

24. Re1 Be4 25. Qxc5 Qf6, White resigned.

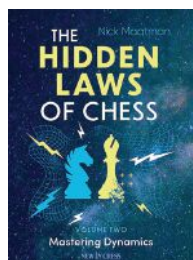
Thanks to Dan Lucas for his help in polishing my thoughts. ♡



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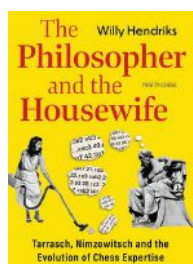


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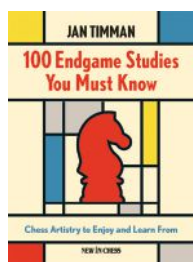
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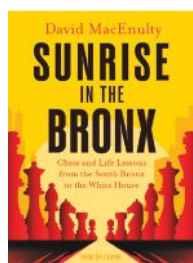
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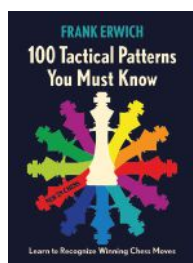
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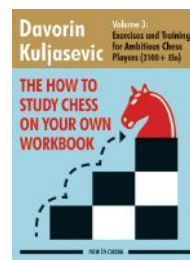


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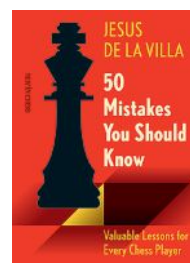
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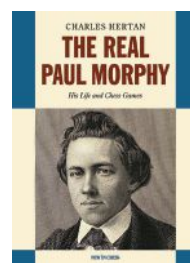
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Half point byes OK all, limit 3 (limit 2 in last 4 rounds). Must commit before round 4.

PAST WINNERS

1973 Walter Browne **1974** Bent Larsen **1975** Pal Benko **1976** Anatoly Lein **1977** John Fedorowicz **1978** Peter Biyiasas **1979** Haukur Angantýsson **1980** Larry Christiansen **1981** Igor Ivanov **1982** Nick de Firmian **1983** Kevin Spraggett **1984** Joel Benjamin **1985** Maxim Dlugy **1986** Nick de Firmian **1987** Boris Gulko **1988** Maxim Dlugy **1989** Mikhail Gurevich **1990** Igor Glek **1991** Gata Kamsky **1992** Gregory Kaidanov **1993** Alex Yermolinsky **1994** Artashes Minasian **1995** Alex Yermolinsky **1996** Alex Yermolinsky **1997** Alex Shabalov **1998** Alex Goldin **1999** Gregory Serper **2000** Joel Benjamin **2001** Alex Goldin **2002** Kamil Miton **2003** Jaan 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 Iniyen **2021** Hans Niemann **2022** Mikhail Antipov **2023** Fidel Corrales Jimenez **2024** Awonder Liang