

CHICAGO OPEN ■ TATEV'S CHESSABLE COURSE! ■ WOMEN'S WCh

CHESSLIFE

JULY 2025 ■ USChess.org

THE NEW YORK SCHOOL

A Look Inside the NYC Scholastic Scene

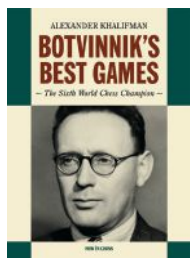




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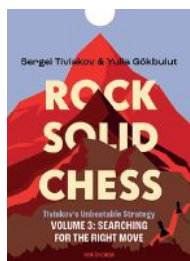
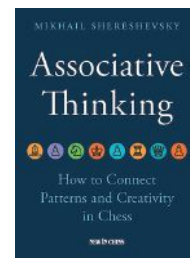


Botvinnik's Best Games *Alexander Khalifman*

Mikhail Botvinnik is widely regarded as one of the greatest chess players ever. He was the World Champion from 1948 until 1963, with two short interruptions. For this modern biography, the Russian grandmaster Alexander Khalifman has selected and annotated more than fifty of Botvinnik's best games.

Associative Thinking *Mikhail Shereshevsky*

One of the most respected chess trainers in the world introduces an important but little-explored topic: associative thinking. It is not about specific pawn structures, but about more abstract things. For example, what is the best interaction between knight and pawn?

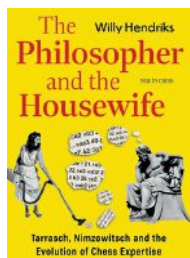
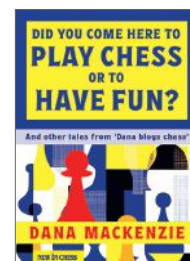


Rock Solid Chess - Volume 3 *Sergey Tiviakov & Yulia Gokbulat*

Choosing a move is an eternal dilemma for a chess player. How can we recognize the right solution in any position? How can we gain confidence in our decisions? Where do we direct our pieces and pawns? In ten chapters, Tiviakov explains clearly and uniquely how a single move can strengthen your position, weaken your opponent's position, or simply avoid trouble.

Did You Come Here to Play Chess or to Have Fun? *Dana Mackenzie*

Dana Mackenzie celebrates the joy of chess – the ordinary, everyday chess we amateurs play. He has selected 40 of his favorite posts from his award-winning chess blog, including a diverse mix of stories, philosophical musings, chess improvement tips, and game analysis. In each story, the fun leaps off the page.

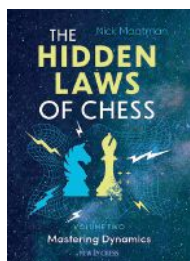
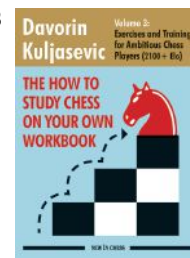


The Philosopher and the Housewife *Willy Hendriks*

This is the fascinating story of the lifelong rivalry between the two most vain chess players in history: Siegbert Tarrasch and Aron Nimzowitsch. They clashed as personalities, players, and chess writers, both searching for the truth in chess but with very different perspectives. IM Willy Hendriks offers a fantastic and often highly entertaining look at this great controversy.

The How to Study Chess on Your Own Workbook – Volume 3 *Davorin Kuljasevic*

The bestselling *How to Study Chess on Your Own* by GM Kuljasevic offers a structured approach and training plans. Due to popular demand, Kuljasevic has created a series of accompanying Workbooks with exercises and tools a chess student can use to start training immediately. Most workbooks offer only puzzles, but Kuljasevic has used his coaching experience to create a broader, more exciting training schedule.

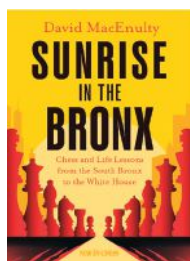
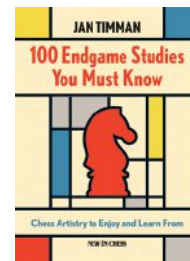


The Hidden Laws of Chess – Volume 2 *Nick Maatman*

In the first volume of this series, International Master Nick Maatman explored the deeper patterns behind pawn structures. In his second chess book, Maatman explains how to improve one's understanding of dynamics. He discusses themes such as material imbalance and quality versus quantity and introduces concepts such as the field of vision, the impact of error, and the price of a move.

Chess artistry to enjoy and learn from *Jan Timman*

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

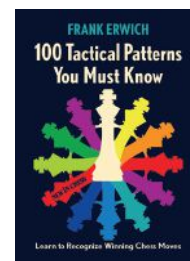


Chess and Life Lessons *David MacEntulty*

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

100 Tactical Patterns You Must Know *Frank Erwich*

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



Free Ground Shipping On All Books, Software and DVDs at US Chess Sales
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ON THE COVER

Why are there so many scholastic players and programs in New York City? And why are they doing so well in national competitions? Jack Moore talks to the movers and shakers in the NYC scholastic scene to find out what's behind their success.

PHOTO COURTESY ICN



**AUGUST
10 – 16**

GRAND CHESS TOUR

SLC Saint Louis
CHESS CLUB

SUPERBET
FOUNDATION



WATCH ONLINE
GRANDCHESSTOUR.ORG



8.11 Rapid Rounds 1-3	8.12 Rapid Rounds 4-6	8.13 Rapid Rounds 7-9	8.14 Blitz Day 1	8.15 Blitz Day 2
Playoff (if necessary) 8.15 5:00 p.m.			All Rounds 12:00PM	

**AUGUST
16 – 28**

GRAND CHESS TOUR

SLC Saint Louis
CHESS CLUB

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**SINQUEFIELD
CUP**

WATCH ONLINE
GRANDCHESSTOUR.ORG



8.18 Round 1	8.19 Round 2	8.20 Round 3	8.21 Round 4	8.22 Round 5	8.23 Rest Day
8.24 Round 6	8.25 Round 7	8.26 Round 8	8.27 Round 9	8.28 Playoff	All Rounds 12:00PM

It is the mission of the Saint Louis Chess Club, an educational organization, to maintain a formal program of instruction to teach the game of chess and to promote and support its educational program through community outreach and local and national partnerships to increase the awareness of the educational value of chess.

The Saint Louis Chess Club does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, citizenship, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, pregnancy, disability, and any other category protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws or regulations in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and grant programs, events, programs, or activities.

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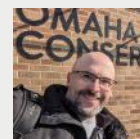
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JACK MOORE

(Cover Story) is an experienced digital reporter, writer, editor, and podcast creator. A graduate of The Ohio State University, he has worked in a variety of newsrooms and outlets, with his

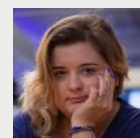
most recent stop being ABC News. This is his first article for *Chess Life*.



JOHN HARTMANN

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

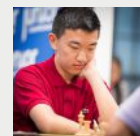
Chess "when things slow down" this summer, and he was excited to write the cover story for the June 2025 *Chess Life Kids*. In his "free time" he is learning to play the piano.



WGM SABINA FOISOR

(Women's WCh) was born in Romania to a chess-playing family. In 2008 she moved to the

United States to begin studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and immediately saw success. The 2017 U.S. Women's Champion, she has represented the United States at the Olympiad and World Team Championships. Visit her teaching site, www.chessevolve.com, and her Twitch stream, www.twitch.tv/sabin-foisor.



IM JASON LIANG

(Chicago Open) is the 2022 Grand Prix winner, with victories at multiple youth and scholastic champion-

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



GM YURI AVERBAKH

(Instruction) was a Russian grandmaster, journalist, and chess politician. Also known for contributions

in the openings and for his multi-volume series on theoretical endgames, he was among the strongest players of his time. He died in 2022 in Moscow at the age of 100.

CITY OF SAINT LOUIS TORNADO RELIEF FUND



Donate now to support the City of Saint Louis' efforts to provide immediate relief and long-term rebuilding efforts to provide immediate relief and long-term rebuilding of areas impacted by the May 16, 2025, tornado.

We invite everyone - from local city supporters to chess fans worldwide - to stand with Saint Louis.

To make a matched donation online please write **CHESS** in the special instructions box. To mail in a donation please make your checks to the St. Louis Community Foundation and write **City Chess** in the memo line. All checks can be mailed to the St. Louis Community Foundation at 2 Oak Knoll Park, St. Louis, MO 63105

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It is the mission of the Saint Louis Chess Club, an educational organization, to maintain a formal program of instruction to teach the game of chess and to promote and support its educational program through community outreach and local and national partnerships to increase the awareness of the educational value of chess.

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The STLCC complies with the Internal Revenue Service's guidelines regarding publication of its non-discrimination policy in its brochures, catalogs, advertisements and otherwise making it known to the general community.

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

The Museum does not discriminate or permit harassment or discrimination on the basis of gender, race, color, national and ethnic origin in the treatment of individuals with respect to employment, or admission or access to Museum facilities, programs or activities.



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U.S. CHESS TRUST



**Youngest-Ever USA
Female to Earn the IM Title!**

Alice Lee

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



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

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PHOTO: US CHESS ARCHIVES

REMEMBERING VLASTIMIL HORT

Jaroslav Hasek's *The Good Soldier Schweik*, a satirical gem of world literature, was known to Vlastimil Hort and every other Czech school child. The central character survives World War I by appearing naive.

One night in Prague over half a century ago, my pal GM Hort was chauffeuring me around town. (He must have thought I was a good player, as I had held him to a draw in our first encounter. Don't ask me about the next three.)

Suddenly he became agitated, exclaiming "Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh!"

"What's the matter?"

He had taken the wrong turn down a one-way street. And a cop was on top of us right away.

"Wait here," Hort said, and got out of the car.

The minutes ticked on. There I was alone in a Communist country, an accomplice to crime, about to be abandoned



to the fates!

Eventually he got back in the car, all smiles. "What happened?" I asked.

"The fellow is a chess fan. He recognized me. He asked me a lot of questions about Bobby Fischer." We drove on.

Only in Eastern Europe.

Goodbye, friend.

IM Anthony Saidy
via email

ONLY FIVE?

In the May "First Moves" devoted to the late Bill Williams, the author states that "winning a state title in five different decades might be a record; it should be."

While that feat is indeed quite difficult and surely rare, it is not even close to the record. I believe I hold the record now at seven decades, though perhaps someone else has done the same.

I won titles in Massachusetts as a student twice in the 1960s, Maryland in the '70s, Florida in the 1980s and '90s, and Maryland in multiple decades since then, including my most recent win in 2024. My current count is a total of 14 state championships over seven decades.

I doubt that I can make it eight decades, as I will be 82 in 2030, but maybe science will find a way to reverse the effects of aging by then!

GM Larry Kaufman
Via email

FINGERFEHLER

WIM Alexey Root, Ph.D., notes: "IM Carissa Yip wrote in the February issue of *Chess Life* that '[t]here hasn't been a clean sweep in either the Open or Women's section in 60 years.' As I detailed in *United States Women's Chess Champions, 1937-2020*, WGM Anna Aksharumova won the 1987 U.S. Women's Championship with a perfect 9/9 score."

This is correct, and we regret the error.

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



▶ National Chess Day is Saturday, Oct. 11. For any event that includes “National Chess Day” in the event title and is held that day, US Chess is offering:

- A free email blast. Make sure that “National Chess Day” is part of your subject line. On the payment screen, select “No charge.” Also, make sure the demographic you are sending this to is reasonable; generally, this will be

local or regional. Do not send to the entire membership.

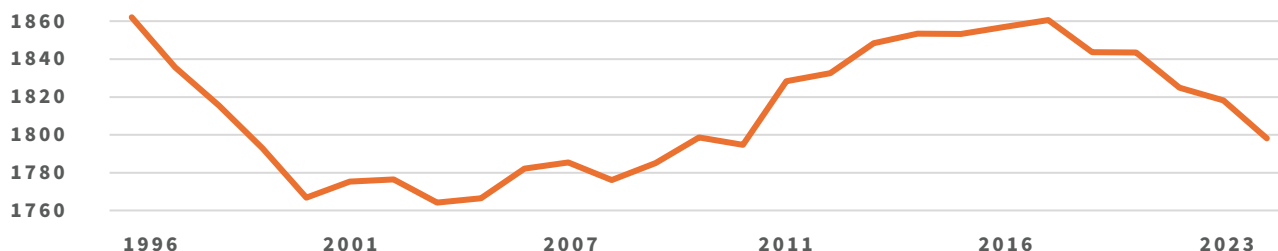
- Free rating fees. Use the payment code NCD2025FREE. This is case-sensitive.
- Free online TLA. Online TLAs are always free, of course, not just for National Chess Day. But we want to make sure you are aware of this option too as you promote your event. See “How

to Create a TLA” at new.uschess.org/information-new-members.

Another way to celebrate National Chess Day is by making a gift to US Chess! What better way to celebrate National Chess Day than by sharing your passion and love for the game? Your donation will help ensure that the chess programs and events that you care so much about will continue for years to come and advance our mission to “empower people, enrich lives, and enhance communities through chess.” To make a tax-deductible gift to US Chess, just click on DONATE at uschess.org, and choose the program or fund that you would like to support. Thank you for the impact you are making on so many lives, and for your commitment to US Chess!

Please direct any questions to John Hartmann at john.hartmann@uschess.org, and feel free to send him your best photos for possible use in *Chess Life*, *Chess Life Kids*, and *Chess Life Online*. On social media, use the hashtag #NationalChessDay.

Here’s to a successful National Chess Day for all!



The committee studied average ratings for active players age 35-45 who had established ratings in the current and previous four years.

BONUS POINTS THRESHOLD LOWERED

▶ Excellent tournament performances will be getting extra rating recognition as the result of a change to the bonus points system.

The change was effective in early June and was retroactively applied to all tournaments that ended on or after Jan. 1 of this year. Some players saw increases in their ratings.

The change follows a recommendation from the Ratings Committee earlier this year, after they found “ratings on average continue[d] to deflate over time and are well below rating levels at the end of 1997.”

The specific change made to the bonus threshold is a lowering of the constant “B” that appears in the final two formulas of Section 4. The value of this constant was previously lowered (from 14 to 12) in 2023, and has now been lowered from 12 to 10.

The constant is a factor in determining how many points you need in a tournament to qualify for bonus points. Generally speaking, take the square root of the number of games you played in an event; multiply it by the constant B, and that’s the threshold for earning bonus points. A lower constant will mean a lower threshold. Some restrictions and caveats are covered in the recommendation, which can be found in the 2025 Ratings Committee report available at new.uschess.org/2025-committee-reports-0.

BOYD REED DEPARTS

▶ Director of Events Boyd Reed has resigned to pursue another opportunity outside of chess. His last day was May 20, and US Chess wishes him every success in his new position.

Reed started at US Chess in April 2016 as assistant director of events. He was promoted to director of events in January 2018, a role he held until his departure.

During Reed’s nine years with US Chess, he oversaw record-setting growth and the successful execution of dozens of national events. His leadership during the challenges of the COVID era was especially valuable.

Pete Karagianis has assumed the position of director of events. Congratulations to Pete!

2025 Samford Fellowship Winners Announced

The winners of the 39th annual Frank P. Samford Jr. Chess Fellowship are:

Grandmasters Abhimanyu Mishra, of Englishtown, New Jersey; Andy Woodward, of McKinney, Texas; Andrew Hong, of Saratoga, California, and Brewington Hardaway, of New York City; International Masters Dimitar Mardov, of Lake Zurich, Illinois; Carissa Yip, of St. Louis, and Alice Lee, of North Oaks, Minnesota; Woman Grandmaster Zoey Tang of Portland, Oregon, and National Master Megan Paragua, of New York City.

The Samford is the most important chess fellowship in the United States, having awarded more than \$2.5 million to promising young chessplayers since 1987.

The total value of the fellowships has been increased several times over the years and is now \$70,000 annually. Mishra will receive \$15,000; Yip, \$12,000; Woodward, \$10,000; Hong, \$8,000, and Hardaway, Lee, Mardov, Paragua, and Tang \$5,000 each. Fellows are eligible to receive up to a maximum of \$84,000 in total support. The winners' terms began June 1, 2025.

Samford Winners:

1987 JOEL BENJAMIN

1988 MAXIM DLUGY

1989 PATRICK WOLFF

1990 ALEX FISHBEIN

1991 ILYA GUREVICH

1992 ALEX SHERZER

1993 BEN FINEGOLD

1994 GATA KAMSKY

1995 JOSH WAITZKIN

1996 TAL SHAKED

1997 BORIS KREIMAN

1998 DEAN IPPOLITO

1999 GREG SHAHADE

2000 MICHAEL MULYAR

2001 EUGENE PERELSHTYEN

2002 VARUZHAN AKOBIAN

2003 DMITRY SCHNEIDER

2004 RUSUDAN GOLETIANI

2005 HIKARU NAKAMURA

2006 DAVID PRUESS

2007 JOSH FRIEDEL

2008 VINAY BHAT

2008 IRINA KRUSH

2009 RAY ROBSON

2010 ROBERT HESS

2011 ALEX LENDERMAN

2012 TIMUR GAREYEV

2012 ALEJANDRO RAMIREZ

2013 SAM SHANKLAND

2014 DANIEL NARODITSKY

2015 SAMUEL SEVIAN

2015 KAYDEN TROFF

2016 WESLEY SO

2017 JEFFREY XIONG

2018 AWONDER LIANG

2018 SAMUEL SEVIAN

2019 AWONDER LIANG

2019 SAM SEVIAN

2019 CHRISTOPHER YOO

2020 NICOLAS CHECA

2020 AWONDER LIANG

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2022 CHRISTOPHER YOO

2023 ALICE LEE

2023 JASON LIANG

2023 ABHIMANYU MISHRA

2023 HANS NIEMANN

2023 CARISSA YIP

2023 CHRISTOPHER YOO

2023 JENNIFER YU

2024 ABHIMANYU MISHRA

2024 ANDY WOODWARD

2024 CHRISTOPHER YOO

2024 ANDREW HONG

2024 BRYCE TIGLON

2024 CARISSA YIP

2024 ALICE LEE

2024 GULRUKHBEGIM

TOKHIRJONOVA

2025 ABHIMANYU MISHRA

2025 CARISSA YIP

2025 ANDY WOODWARD

2025 ANDREW HONG

2025 ALICE LEE

2025 BREWINGTON

HARDAWAY

2025 DIMITAR MARDOV

2025 ZOXY TANG

2025 MEGAN PARAGUA

IN THE NEWS

BY JOHN HARTMANN

Here we go!

The organizers at the Saint Louis Chess Club have released fields and schedules for the 2025 U.S. Senior, Junior and Girls' Junior Championships.

With renovations to the club ongoing, the 10-player round-robins will be held "off-campus" in Richmond Heights, Mo., July 14-25. Play begins on Tuesday, July 15, with the first moves at noon. Rounds proceed daily, with a rest day on Sunday, July 20, and any playoffs on Friday, July 25.

GM Yasser Seirawan will lead live commentary on the club's YouTube and Twitch channels. There is no in-person access or coverage; spectators hoping to catch a glimpse of old-guard stars and the young lions of tomorrow will have to wait until the U.S. Championship this fall, when it is rumored that the club aims to celebrate its reopening.

The prize funds total \$225,000, with \$100,000 for the Senior, \$75,000 for the Juniors and \$50,000 for the Girls. This is a significant increase over last year's total of just over \$135,000.

For more, visit saintlouischessclub.org/event/2025-u-s-national-championships. We will also have coverage on *Chess Life Online*.

U.S. Senior

GMs Vladimir Akopian, Larry Christiansen,

Gregory Kaidanov, Joel Benjamin, Alexander Goldin, Alex Fishbein, Maxim Dlugy, Igor Novikov, and Alexander Shabalov, and IM Tim Taylor.

U.S. Junior

GMs Abhimanyu Mishra, Andy Woodward, and Brewington Hardaway; IMs Justin Wang, Kirk Ghazarian, Sandeep Sethuraman, Ryo Chen, and Nico Chasin, and FMs Evan Park and Sharvesh Deviprasath.

U.S. Girls' Junior

WGM Rochelle Wu; WIMs Iris Mou and Chloe Gaw; FMs Zoey Tang and Megan Paragua; WFM Rachael Li and Laurie Qiu, and NMs Rose Atwell, Ruiyang Yan, and Jasmine Zu.

Cleveland rocks!

Held by the Cleveland Public Library, the John G. White Collection of Chess and Checkers has long been one of the preeminent chess archives in the world.

With a recent donation from noted collector David DeLucia, it just got better.

DeLucia, 72, has spent the better part of the last four decades building his celebrated collection of books, photographs, and ephemera. His donation to the Cleveland Public Library — valued at over \$5 million

for IRS purposes — includes materials related to Capablanca, Fischer, and Lasker; with it, what was once only available through private showings will be accessible by scholars and the public.

The John G. White Collection began as the private collection of Cleveland lawyer and philanthropist John G. White (1845-1928). White's bequest included his extensive library along with an endowment to grow and maintain the Collection in perpetuity.

Today the Collection resides on the third floor of the main branch of the Cleveland Public Library. While much of its work is done online for researchers around the world, interested parties can visit the John G. White Reading Room by contacting Special Collections. To learn more, check out our December 2012 cover story on the Collection by Mark Taylor, and visit cpl.org/special-collections.

Sharjah Masters

The Sharjah Masters, now in its eighth year, is one of the strongest Opens on the international circuit, attracting top GMs from around the world to compete for \$75,000 in prizes. *Chess Life* readers will recall that GM Sam Shankland climbed the podium in 2024, sharing first with a score of 6½/9. (For the details, check out "In the News" in the September 2024 issue.)

This year it was GM Anish Giri's turn to shine. The five-time Dutch champion grabbed a share of the lead in Round 3 and never looked back, finishing at 7/9 to land a half-point ahead of GMs Nodirbek Abdusattorov and Aleksandar Indijic.

Giri's Round 6 battle with GM Parham Maghsoodloo caught the eye.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT (D30)

GM Parham Maghsoodloo (2706)

GM Anish Giri (2738)

8th Sharjah Masters (6), Sharjah, 05.22.2025

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. e3 e6 5. Nbd2 Be7 6. Bd3 O-O 7. O-O Nbd7 8. Qc2 h6 9. Rd1 c5 10. dxc5 Nxc5 11. Be2 b6 12. a3 Bb7 13. b4 Ncd7 14. cxd5 Nxd5 15. Bb2 Rc8 16. Qb3 Qc7 17. Bb5 N5f6 18. Rac1



**Qb8 19. Qa4 Rxc1 20. Rxc1 Rd8 21. h3 a5
22. bxa5 Nc5**



23. Rxc5!?

A bit unsound per the engine, but very tricky to face at the board. The a-pawn looks ominous!

23. ... bxc5 24. a6 Ba8 25. Nc4 Nd5 26. Nfe5 Nb6 27. Nxb6 Qxb6 28. Nc4 Qa7 29. Bc3?!

29. Be5 Bf6 30. Bd6 keeps the pressure in a totally unclear position.

29. ... Bf6 30. Ba5 Rb8 31. Nd6? Be5!

Attacking the knight, and played with Black's next move in mind.

32. Nc4 Qxa6!

Obviously the queen is *verböten*: if 33. Bxa6? Rb1+.

33. Nb6 Qa7 34. Bd3 Bc7 35. Nc4 Bd5, White resigned.

Now the material will tell, so White threw in the towel.

Four Americans made the trip to the UAE. In the Open, GMs Sam Sevian and Andy Woodward scored 5½/9, while GM Varuzhan Akobian finished with 4 points. For Woodward, this was one of his best performances to date: He returns home with a 2708 performance rating and 20 FIDE rating points.

Benjamin Dy ended with +1 (5/9) in the C section.

In Bloom

GMs Titas Stremavicius and Luka Budisavljevic “got their flowers” at the 2025 Cherry Blossom Classic, each taking home \$3,400 for their shared first place finish. Armenian GM Manuel Petrosyan finished third, a half-point behind the leaders at 6½/9.

Budisavljevic took the lead in Round 8 with a win over Petrosyan's countryman, GM



GM Anish Giri

Karen Grigoryan, but his blink-and-you'll-miss-it final-round draw with IM Susal de Silva allowed Stremavicius to catch him by defeating GM Gil Popilski on Board 2.

One of the most interesting games of the event was this Round 5 pairing between Budisavljevic and GM Safal Bora.

GIUOCO PIANO (C55)

GM Luka Budisavljevic (2574)

GM Safal Bora (2590)

Cherry Blossom Classic (5), Sterling, 05.24.2025

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3 Be7

5. a4 0-0 6. Nc3 d6 7. a5

A bit of a rare move championed by GM Mikhail Antipov, who is considered an expert in these positions.

7. ... Be6 8. a6 b6 9. Nd5 Bxd5 10. exd5 Nb4 11. Bb5!

An improvement over 11. c3 Nbx5 12. Bb5 c5 13. 0-0 as seen in Antipov – Artemiev, *Chess.com* 2025, as Black will lack time to play ... c7-c5.

11. ... Nbx5 12. Bc6 Rb8 13. c3 b5 14. Qb3 Nb6 15. 0-0 b4?!

The pawn will eventually fall, but giving it back this way isn't desirable.

16. cxb4!

Perhaps Black expected 16. Qxb4 when Black can generate some activity with 16. ... Nbd7 17. Qc4 Rb6 18. b4 Nc5!.

16. ... Qc8 17. Re1 h6 18. Bd2 Qe6 19. Qc2 Nbd5 20. Bb7 Qd7 21. Ra5 c6 22. Bxc6!?

This allows Black a whiff of counterplay, but Budisavljevic keeps everything under control.

22. ... Rfc8 23. b5 Bd8 24. Ra4 Bb6 25. Rc4 Qf5 26. h3 Ne7 27. Bb4?!



27. ... Rd8

In this complex position 27. ... Nxc6! 28. bxc6 Bc7 followed by ... Rb8-b6 would have given Bora real hope for survival.

28. Nxe5! Ned5 29. Bxd5 dxe5 30. Bb7 Rxd3 31. Bc5 Bxc5 32. Rxc5 Rbd8 33. b6! Qf4 34. Rc8 Qb4

Bora desperately fights to survive, but Budisavljevic navigates the tactics and brings home the full point.

35. Qxd3 Rxc8 36. Bxc8 Qxe1+ 37. Qf1 Qe4 38. b7 Qb4 39. Qc1 g5 40. Qc3 Qd6 41. Bg4 Kg7 42. Qc8 Nxg4 43. hxg4 Qd1+ 44. Kh2, Black resigned.

Held over Memorial Day weekend in Sterling, Virginia, this was the 12th edition of the Cherry Blossom, and 176 players came out to do battle across five sections. WGM Sabina Foisor handled the livestreaming duties on her Twitch channel (twitch.tv/sabinafoisor). ♠

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

Logic Tells Us ...

Problems that aren't problematic

BY **GM ANDY SOLTIS**



WHEN YOU DISCOVERED CHESS, you may have been struck by its powerful underpinning of logic: This is a game of reasoning and common sense, you thought.

But then you tried solving a composed problem and found it so ... irrational. The pieces and pawns were on bizarre squares. How did they get there?

Fortunately there are problems based on simple logic. For example:

How many knights can you place on an empty board so that no knight attacks a square occupied by another knight?

What's your guess? Eight? Ten? Twelve?

Solving it by looking at an empty diagram seems impossible. You could use an actual board and search for knights from several sets.

But with logic you can solve it with your eyes closed: You start by realizing that a knight on a dark square can only attack light squares. When it moves to a light square (which it has to), it only attacks dark squares.

Therefore the answer is 32 knights, each placed on a square of the same color.

Logic is also your friend if you try the "8Qs problem":

Place eight queens on an empty board so that no queen attacks another queen.

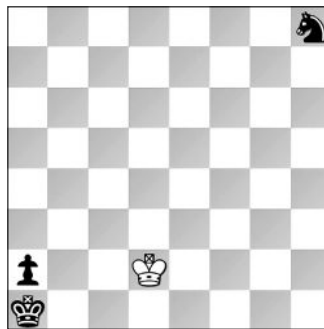
Mathematicians have worked this theme for more than a century. One of the first discoveries is there are 92 different solutions.

But even if you learned the moves yesterday, you might solve it soon after you start putting queens on a board. For example, if you begin with a queen on c1, another could be on b3, others on a5 and d2. That's half of the eight and you have plenty of room left.

By then you will have noticed a pattern.

Each queen is a knight move away from another queen. (The rest of the queens can be in the other sector of the board, at h4, g6, f8 and d7 — again, a knight move away from the nearest queen.)

Another example of knight-logic is this:



WHITE TO PLAY AND DRAW

Black wins if he is allowed to move his king because then he can queen the pawn. White draws if he can stop that by shifting his king between c1 and c2.

Elementary logic tells us the solution begins with either 1. Kc1 or 1. Kc2. The next level of logic says Black can only win with *zugzwang*.

For example, if the white king is on c1, and Black plays ... Nd4 or ... Ne3, White cannot reply with Kc2. He loses.

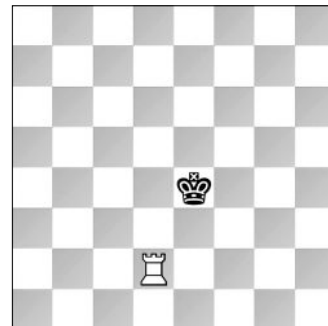
That gives you a huge clue: White draws by constantly moving to a square of the same color as the Black knight. Therefore the solution is 1. Kc1! followed by Kc2-c1-c2, etc.

Another logic-friendly puzzle comes from a former *Chess Life* editor. Burt Hochberg recalled how he arranged a meeting of elite grandmasters to get them to contribute to a book. Before the latecomers arrived he showed the GMs a position with a single

piece — a black king on d5. Here's the task.

Place a white rook on the board giving check. After the king moves, place a second white rook, again giving check. Repeat until a fourth white rook gives mate.

Hochberg said it stumped the GMs until Paul Keres came up with the logical solution: White builds a cage of four files. For example, 1. Rd2+ Ke4.



Now 2. Rg4+ seals the sides of the cage. On 2. ... Kf5 a third rook checks from f4. The fourth rook mates on the e-file.

Another genre of logic-friendly problems is construction tasks. The goal is to create a game that fits a specified condition. A vintage example:

What is the shortest game ending in mate if Black must copy White's moves?

Logic says the mate is likely to be delivered by the queen. One solution is **1. d4 d5 2. Qd3 Qd6 3. Qh3 Qh6 4. Qxc8 mate**. Fine, but let's make it harder.

What is the fastest mate with a rook, if Black must copy White's moves?

Logic tells us the most likely mating move would be a check on the eighth rank. But you may need a big hint: The first two moves are **1. Nf3 Nf6 2. Ng5 Ng4** — and White mates with his sixth move.

QUIZ FOR JULY

► **RATMIR Kholmov** WAS one of the very few players to win games from both Garry Kasparov and Bobby Fischer. But despite being one of the world's top 10 players, he rarely played outside his native Soviet Union until the end of the Cold War. To honor the 100th anniversary of his birth, our quiz features six Kholmov finishes. Your task is to find the fastest win in each diagram. For solutions, see page 63.

PROBLEM 1 Ratmir Kholmov Janis Klavins



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2 Ratmir Kholmov Alexander Beliavsky



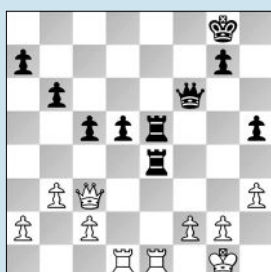
WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3 Evgeny Sveshnikov Ratmir Kholmov



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4 Vladimir Bagirov Ratmir Kholmov



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5 Ratmir Kholmov Nathan Zilberman



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6 Ratmir Kholmov Anatoly Bannik



WHITE TO MOVE



Logic says the mating move should be 6. Rxh8. If you can't find the other three White moves, the answer is on page 63.

If you want to test your logical thinking further, see whether you can find a six-move game ending with a white knight delivering mate, again with Black copying White's moves.

If you pass that test, try to find a seven-move mate with a white pawn. Logic tells us the most likely mating square is f7.

Another mate-in-seven can be done with the f1-bishop. A hint from logic: The probable mating move is 7. Bh5 or 7. Bg6.

Yet another puzzle is a mate in seven with the c1-bishop. And the toughest of all:

What is the shortest game ending with a king move, if Black copies White's moves?

Let's play Socrates:

Question: How can a king move deliver mate?

Answer: By discovering a check.

Question: A check by what kind of piece?

Answer: Hmm. Probably a queen or a rook.

Question: Along a file or rank?

Answer: Must be a file.

Question: Very good. Here is another big hint: White can mate in nine moves. The first five are **1. d3 d6 2. Kd2 Kd7 3. Kc3 Kc6 4. Kb3 Kb6 5. Ka3 Ka6**. Which piece will deliver check?



Answer: Logically, it must be the a1-rook.

If you are still stumped, the solution is on page 63. ♠



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**all children under age 19 living in a household at the same address

Look Again

Sometimes, the automatic can be traumatic.

BY **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**



LET'S WRAP UP OUR SERIES ON hard-to-find moves by talking about the opposite: automatic moves.

For inveterate time-trouble addicts such as myself, making easy moves instantly can be a real lifesaver as we anxiously try to get to move 40 unscathed, but playing automatic moves can also lead to missed opportunities. Finding the balance between saving time and looking for options is a fine line to walk.

In this column, we will take a look at common automatic moves, how they can backfire, and strategies for looking beyond them.

AUTOMATIC RECAPTURES

The most common automatic move is the recapture. The instinct to take back the captured piece immediately is natural and a great time saver. The biggest antithesis to automatic moves is, of course, intermediate moves. Instead of playing the obvious move, we play another tempo move, usually a check.

In this position, White has just captured on g6, opening the h-file. Of course, the natural response would be to recapture and keep the king safe.

DON'T TOUCH THAT PAWN!

Lev Guldin

Anatoly Ufimtsev

USSR Championship Semifinal (11),
Gorky, 1950



BLACK TO MOVE

20. ... Nf2!!

An unexpected move that turns the tables and takes advantage of White's poorly placed king. According to the engine, 20. ... hxg6 is very good for Black too, but the game move leads to a decisive advantage.

21. gxh7+

The knight is untouchable: 21. Kxf2? fxe4+ wins the queen.

21. ... Kh8

Picking up the pawn with check doesn't give White any more compensation for the rook that is about to drop, as the black king is happy to hide behind the pawn.

22. Qf3 fxe4 23. Nf4

Cute trick, but Black doesn't fall for it.

23. ... Rxf4

Not 23. ... exf3?? 24. Ng6 mate.

24. Qxf4 Nxe1 25. Qh2 Nd5 26. Qxe1 e3, White resigned.

One of the most famous examples that comes to mind comes from a Mikhail Tal simul game played in 1958. Black's last move

was capturing the rook on h1. In a blitz game, the recapture would be automatic — and in fact would still be a good move. But Tal had calculated better.

FROM THE MASTER

GM Mikhail Tal

Arthur Feuerstein

Simultaneous Exhibition, Stuttgart,
10.25.1958



WHITE TO MOVE

16. gxf6!

Given that this is a forcing move, we should at least consider this in our calculations, even though 16. Rxh1 Nh5 17. Nb3 Qd8 18. Bd4 still leaves White with great attacking prospects.

16. ... Rxd1+ 17. Nxd1!!

This is the key to the whole line. White had to calculate this whole line accurately in order to capture on f6. It can be done by brute force, considering every legal move for White. The routine recaptures 17. Qxd1 or 17. Bxd1 simply leave Black up material after 17. ... Bxf6.

17. ... Qxd2 18. fxg7!

The pawn is unstoppable. Surprisingly, the white king is perfectly safe: The queen has infiltrated the second rank but has no checks. Again, we can get to this point by brute force. White only has two moves here that make sense: capturing the bishop or capturing the queen. In our calculation, after capturing the bishop on g7, we would need to pause and check every tempo move by Black. Since our threat is to promote and checkmate, Black's options are rather limited.

Black is winning after 18. Bxd2 Bxf6. If this is the conclusion of the line, then capturing on f6 in the first place wouldn't have made any sense.

18. ... Kd8 19. g8=Q+ Kc7 20. Qxc8+ Kxc8 21. Bxd2, Black resigned.

The two examples above were more straightforward, because they included tempo moves, which we can force ourselves to find by looking at every forcing option before committing to a move. The following game from the 2024 Olympiad illustrates how difficult it can be to avoid automatic moves and look for alternatives. Again, the last move was a capture, but the alternative to the recapture required much deeper calculation.

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

GM Alexander Fier (2551)
GM Jorden van Foreest (2696)
45th FIDE Olympiad (9), Budapest,
09.20.2024



BLACK TO MOVE

In the game, White's previous move was 25. cxd5, so Black instantly replied 25. ... cxd5 here. We can't blame van Foreest for playing this natural move; it doesn't change the nature of the position, and he went on to win the game on move 66. But he missed something better.

25. ... Nh4!!

In and of itself, I don't think this move is hard to spot. Black's last move was 24. ... Qd7-d6, so trying to distract the defender of the h2-square is completely in line what he is trying to do. The threat is simply to capture on f3, followed by ... Qd6-h2+ with mate to follow.

26. Ne5

This is the most challenging move. Refuting it requires some deep calculation, full board vision, and, speaking frankly, a belief in Black's attack. None of the alternatives work:

(a) 26. Nxh4 gets checkmated by force: 26. ... Qh2+ 27. Kf1 Nxd2+ 28. Qxd2 Qh1 mate.

(b) If 26. Bxe4 Nxf3+ Black will follow with his plan: 27. gxf3 Qh2+ 28. Kf1 fxe4 and the pawn cannot be captured. It is easy to see that Black has a huge attack here. If 29. Rxe4 (29. fxe4 Qxf2 mate) Black simply picks up the rook with 29. ... Qh1+ 30. Ke2 Qxf3+.

(c) 26. Kf1 Nxf3 27. gxf3 Qh2 28. Bxe4 fxe4 transposes to the 26. Bxe4 line.

26. ... Nxd2

It looks like 26. ... Rxe5 is a logical continuation for Black, but after 27. dxe5 Qxe5 28. f4! White survives and Black runs out of steam: 28. ... Qd4+ 29. Be3.

27. Qxd2 Rxe5!!

After 25. ... Nh4, the g2-pawn and square also became weak. Taking on d2 first made all the difference, as we'll see.

28. dxe5 Qg6

With the double threat of mate on g2 and a knight fork on f3.

29. g3 Nf3+ 30. Kg2 Nxd2 ...

Black wins.

If the diagram position was in a puzzle book, I'm sure van Foreest would have found the solution in seconds. But how realistic is it to find these lines in a tournament game? After all, the whole point of training is to improve our chances of finding better moves in an actual game.

In this particular situation, I think van Foreest could have found this line if he really believed in his attack and felt that there must be something in the position. After all, his last few moves were setting up the battery on the diagonal and reinforcing the e4-knight. Everything he had done up to that point was setting up for a big attack, but recapturing the pawn on d5 must have felt like the most natural move.

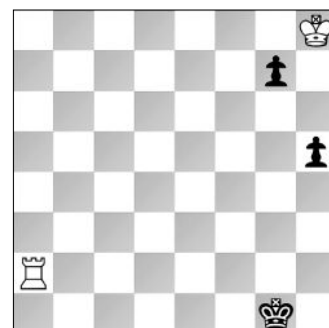
I just released a Chessable course called *Chess Studies: Solve to Evolve*, so it won't surprise you that I think studies can also require us to look beyond automatic moves.

THE PAWNS NOT TAKEN

In this famous position, Josef Moravec demonstrates why capturing more material is not always the way to go.

White has to bring in the king and has two options.

J. Moravec, 1912



WHITE TO MOVE

1. Kh7!

The pawns cannot actually be stopped, and we need the g7-pawn to stay alive so we can dominate the queen on h1 after the pawn promotes.

The natural capture 1. Kxg7 can be eliminated by this forcing line: 1. ... h4 2. Kg6 h3 3. Kg5 h2 4. Kg4 h1=Q 5. Kg3?? (White can still draw with 5. Ra1+ Kg2 6. Rxh1 Kxh1 but this loses) 5. ... Qh8 and the queen stops the checkmate. This is why we need to let the pawn on g7 be.

1. ... h4 2. Kg6 h3 3. Kg5

The king is headed to g3.

3. ... h2 4. Kg4 h1=Q

Black can underpromote with 4. ... h1=N, but since the knight is on the edge of the board, it will eventually get trapped. After 5. Kf3 g5 6. Rd2 White will wait around until Black is forced to give up the pawn, and this is the best square for the rook as it will prevent the knight from running away.

Play continues 6. ... g4+ 7. Kxg4 Nf2+ 8. Kf3 and now that the d3-square is not safe, the knight is forced to go back. After 8. ... Nh1 9. Ra2 White wins.

5. Kg3!

With the pawn on g7, the queen cannot defend the a1-square from h8. The queen is dominated.

The fact that this is a study automatically makes me consider 1. Kh7 ahead of 1. Kxg7. Why would anyone make a puzzle where capturing the pawn and then marching your king down is the solution? It seems too simple, so my inclination is to look for something less obvious.

In a game, though, I would have to calculate both and compare the two. With no time on the clock, capturing the pawn would be the safest move.

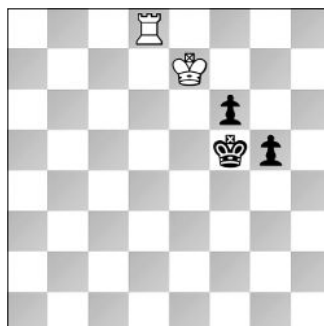
Our next position comes from the 2024 Women's Candidates battle between GMs Anna Muzychuk and Lei Tingjie. It yet again demonstrates the difficulty of finding complicated solutions over-the-board without a hint.

THE RIGHT PAWN

GM Anna Muzychuk (2520)

GM Lei Tingjie (2550)

Women's Candidates (4), Toronto,
04.07.2024



BLACK TO MOVE

53. Rg8!

White should go after the more advanced pawn. While the first move makes sense, the follow-up is the tough part.

In the game, Muzychuk, after nine minutes thought, decided on the immediate pawn grab and to try her luck in the rook versus knight endgame. But after 53. Rd5+ Kf4 54. Kxf6 g4 55. Rd4+ Kf3 56. Kf5 g3 57. Rd3+ Kf2 58. Kg4 g2 59. Rd2+ Kf1 60. Kf3 g1=N+ 61. Ke3 Nh3 Lei defended this endgame and the game ended in a draw on move 75.

Note that White could have transposed to the winning variation with 53. Kf7 g4 54. Rg8 Kf4 55. Kg6!!.

53. ... g4 54. Kf7 Kf4 55. Kg6!!

A study-like solution! Again, White should avoid capturing the pawn, as that would simply result in the king being shouldered away.

After 55. Kxf6 g3 the black pawn marches on and the white king is useless here. Black is right on time after 56. Kg6 Kf3 57. Kh5 g2 58. Kh4 Kf2 with a draw.

55. ... f5 56. Kh5 Kf3 57. Kh4

Now that the white king is next to the pawns, it's only a matter of time until they fall.

57. ... Kf4 58. Rg5!

Black has to either give up a pawn or let the white king get in front of the pawn.

58. ... Ke4 59. Kg3 Ke5 60. Rg8 Ke4**61. Re8+ ...**

White wins.

As you can see, even grandmasters are privy to these mistakes. Playing the easy moves fast is a great time saver; in a game, we cannot afford to spend a significant amount of time on every decision. But these examples show that knowing when to avoid the temptation of automaticity can help us score important points. ♠

GAME ▶▶▶▶ ON.

For full information including updates, schedules, meetings, and other special events and happenings please see uschess.org/tournaments/2025/usopen/.

Middleton, Wisconsin

125th U.S. OPEN


July 28 - August 3, 2025

2025 U.S. OPEN WORKSHOPS AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS SCHEDULE

31
THUR

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING (CLOSED)

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

CHESS JOURNALISTS OF AMERICA

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

U.S. CHESS TRUST

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

RULES COMMITTEE

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**NATIONAL STATE INVITATIONALS
COMMITTEE**

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

CLUBS COMMITTEE

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

US CHESS DEVELOPMENT

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

MILITARY CHESS COMMITTEE

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING (OPEN)

3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

INVITATIONALS AWARDS

4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

02
FRI

SCHOLASTIC COUNCIL & COMMITTEE

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

U.S. OPEN COMMITTEE

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

BYLAWS COMMITTEE

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

SENIOR COMMITTEE

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**FINANCE, INVESTMENTS, AND LMA
TRUST**

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

COLLEGE COMMITTEE

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**STAFF FORUM/GENERAL
MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

03
SAT

DELEGATES MEETING

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

LUNCH BREAK AT NOON

04
SUN

DELEGATES MEETING

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING (CLOSED)

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING (OPEN)

6:00 p.m.

Workshop schedule subject to change. Watch for more information about when these events will be held here: new.uschess.org/2025-annual-meeting-middleton-wi-n

'Every Piece is There for a Reason'

Chess Life columnist WGM Tatev Abrahamyan on her Chessable course regarding endgame studies

BY JOHN HARTMANN



WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN recently released her second Chessable course, called *Chess Studies: Solve to Evolve!*. Readers of her *Chess Life* column, where she often focuses on unusual, counter-intuitive moves that can decide games, won't be too surprised to learn she's a devotee of the endgame study. Here, she explains her fascination with studying studies — why they're beautiful and why they're worthwhile.

Chess Life: What exactly is a study? What makes it different from other kinds of puzzles?

Tatev Abrahamyan: Studies are entirely composed; every piece is there for a reason. They are not positions that occur in a normal game. The solutions are creative and often very beautiful. Sometimes after I solve a particularly beautiful study, I am left stunned wondering how someone could come up with such a masterpiece.

Why are they so useful for improving players?

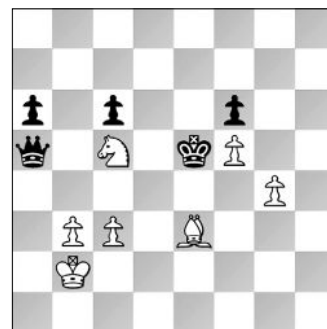
In general, I think most solving is good for improving players. There are many pawn or rook endgame studies that are also practical. The studies that I enjoy fall more on the creative side. I think these can be useful too, because the solver has to push the limits of their imagination and force themselves to think in new ways, even if it doesn't come naturally.

Domination is an important theme in your course. What is it? Can you give us an example of what domination looks like?

This is definitely the most challenging chapter in my course. Perhaps most players who are not too familiar with studies have heard of Kasparyan's *Domination in 2,545 Studies* book and felt intimidated by it.

Explaining this concept is actually quite difficult. A domination study is one where there is a material imbalance on the board and a battle against a higher valued piece, usually a queen. For example: two minor pieces versus a queen; rook and a knight versus a queen, rook and bishop versus a queen, even pawns versus a queen! In the solution, the combination of "lesser" pieces manages to get the queen by putting Black in a situation where no matter what they do, the queen falls. It usually involves attraction or *zugzwang*.

L. Kubbel, 1917



WHITE TO MOVE

This is a pretty classical example of domination: two minor pieces against a queen. Whenever there is a knight on the board in a study, we want to keep an eye out for forks. We should also notice that the king and queen are both on dark squares — the optimal scenario for a fork. So how to actually solve this study? It is still chess, so we want to consider our opponent's moves. Black only has one move that doesn't lose the queen — ... Qa5-b5. With this approach, our first move becomes logical. (This is the end of a longer solution that set up this position, but we're picking it up where the domination really comes in.)

5. c4!

The quiet move gets the job done. No matter where the queen goes, it will run into a fork.

5. ... Qd8

The only move that can resist. Every other

queen move runs into a fork: 5. ... Qb4 6. Nd3+; 5. ... Qb6 6. Nd7+, and 5. ... Qe1 6. Nd3+, while 5. ... Qc7 is similar to our main line: 6. Bf4+! A skewer leading to a fork. 6. ... Kxf4 7. Ne6+ and White wins.

6. Bf4+!

A typical maneuver for studies: luring the king onto a square so the knight can fork. No matter where the king goes, our next move is the same.

6. ... Kxf4

Or 6. ... Kd4 7. Ne6+.

7. Ne6+

The queen has been dominated and White wins.

There are other examples, such as queen and a knight or a bishop dominating a queen. Normally, these endgames end in a draw, but there are exceptions. Of course, it is also possible to dominate a rook or a minor piece.

Studies have a reputation for being very difficult to solve. How does your course make them understandable? Do you need to know a lot of endgame theory to be a good solver?

I think the level of difficulty can vary. There are tons of studies, especially pawn and rook endgames, which are pretty straightforward. I think the reason they are intimidating is because many players have never heard of them and don't know how to approach them. These aren't regular puzzles, and thus require a slightly different approach, such as looking for ways to avoid stalemate or considering underpromotions.

I have structured my course keeping this in mind. My goal was to make the first level (1600-1800) the foundation and build up from there. In the videos, I go through plenty of examples, focusing on how to approach each study and also going over the incorrect lines which I think many players might find logical. I have made the annotations more thorough for this level and I focused more on explaining the typical concepts. The checkmate, stalemate, and domination chapters have some recurring themes, with several examples each.

When it comes to theoretical knowledge of endgames, I have found in my coaching experience that the level of knowledge varies vastly. Sometimes I am truly shocked to see a higher-rated tournament player who doesn't know what I consider a basic king and pawn endgame. In the Armenian school of chess, we learned endgame theory early on, but

it doesn't seem to be the case for many players. For this reason, my course starts out with simple pawn endgames and I build up on this knowledge in the future chapters.

How did you come to love studies?

Do you still use them in your training?

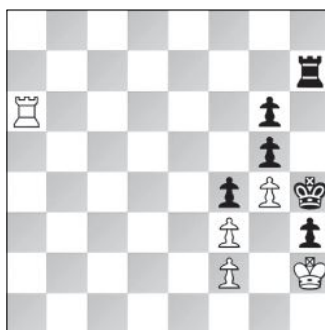
I can't think of a specific study that made me love them so much, but I have been solving studies for a long time. I find solving extremely difficult studies extremely fulfilling. Lately, I went through Aagaard and Nielsen's *Endgame Labyrinths* before both the U.S. Championship and the American Cup as part of my training regimen, and I feel inspired to do more now.

Do you have any favorite composers? What is about their studies that you particularly like?

Yes! I have several favorite composers but my top two are Wotawa and of course Kasparian. I don't find many of Wotawa's studies to be particularly difficult but I find the solutions to be just so pretty.

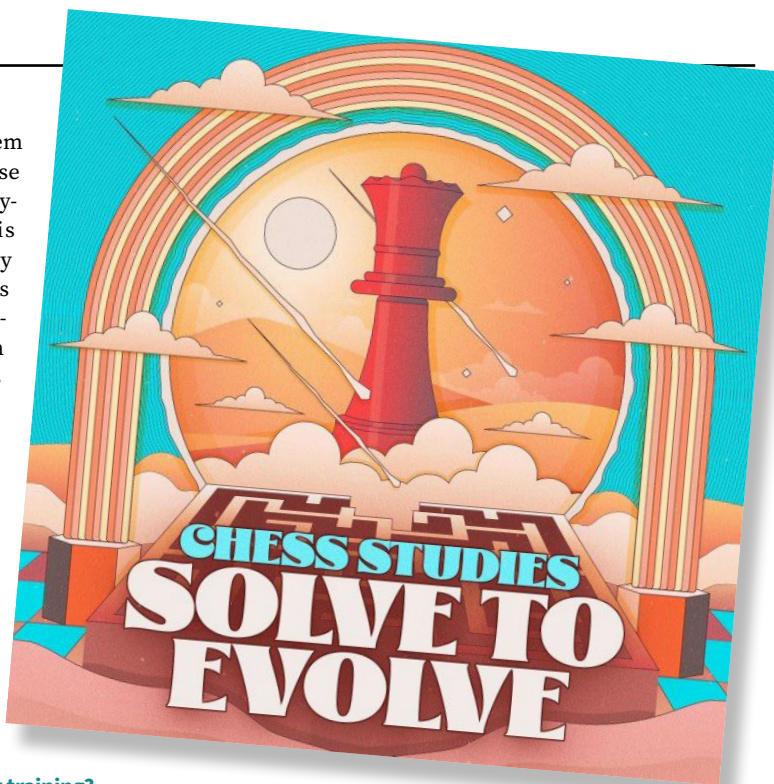
For example, this Wotawa 1935 study:

A. Wotawa, 1935



WHITE TO MOVE

How to actually checkmate the king? We'd like to check on the h-file, but the black



rook can defend. We have to push ourselves to look for other ways to check the king. What other piece on the board can possibly even do it?

1. Ra8!

The idea is to put the rook on g3, but first, White has to restrict the black rook.

Notice that 1. Ra1? is too hasty. Black has 1. ... Rb7 and if 2. Rg1?? Black actually wins with 2. ... Rb2 as the pawns fall one by one. And White can't just go back and correct their mistake with 2. Ra8 because of 2. ... Rb8!! with a typical study-like defense — a stalemating trick! If 3. Ra7 the black rook is happy to follow the white rook until it takes: 3. ... Rb7 4. Rxb7 stalemate.

1. ... Rh6 2. Ra1!

Now the rook can head to g3.

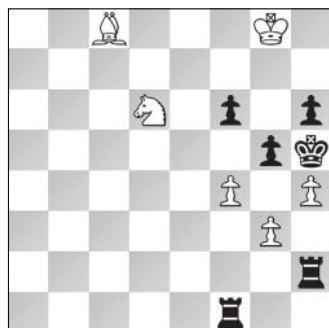
2. ... Rh8 3. Rg1 Ra8 4. Rg3 fxc3+ 5. fxc3 mate.

A beautiful checkmate! The king is completely surrounded by pawns.

This classic Kasparian study, on the other hand, is much more difficult but oh so beautiful:

G. Kasparian, 1935

Although this study is absolutely stunning, it relies more on calculation than the previous one. The black king is trapped, but White must coordinate the pieces accurately.



WHITE TO MOVE

1. Ne8!

With the big threat of Ne8-g7 and Bc8-f5 mate. I think this move can be challenging to find.



Alois
Wotawa



Genrikh
Kasparyan

1. ... Kg6

The only fighting move. If 1. ... f5 2. Bxf5 gxf4 3. Ng7 mate.

2. h5+!

The pawn sacrifice lures the rook to an important escape square for the king. If 2. Ng7? f5 and the king runs away; Black will play for the win.

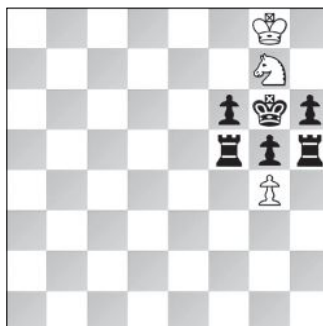
2. ... Rxh5

If 2. ... Kxh5 3. Ng7+ Kg6 4. Bf5 mate.

3. f5+! Rxf5 4. g4! Re5 5. Bf5+!

Again, not 5. Ng7? f5!

5. ... Rxf5 6. Ng7!



This is one of the most beautiful positions ever — it is just so aesthetically pleasing. All the pieces are on one side of the board and the black king is completely surrounded.

6. ... Rf1

Or 6. ... Rh1 with the same idea: 7. gxf5 mate.

7. gxh5 mate.

Tell us about the process involved in making a Chessable course. How long does it take? Do they provide recording equipment?

I think it took about a year from the day I reached out to Chessable about my idea to the day the course was finally out. Tournaments and life in general got in the way, which made the process longer, but now that

it is out it feels very rewarding. It has been a long time since I have worked on such a big project. I have worked extremely hard on this course and I feel proud of the work I have done.

After my idea was approved, I started working on putting the chapters together, finding the puzzles, putting them in the appropriate level, and then annotating them thoroughly. After everything was finalized, I emailed them all the PGNs. Once they receive the files, they go through quality checks and then import them into the Chessable format.

After that is done, then we move on to the final stage, which is the recording. I had some equipment and borrowed the green screen and the lights. They were very helpful with helping me set up everything correctly and answering questions. Once the recording was done, I gave them a list of edits to make in the videos and that was it.

What's your next project?

Currently, I am working on creating lessons for a smart chessboard called ChessUp. The lessons take place on the board via an app. When the user is asked to either set up a position or make a move, the board lights up instructing them where to place the pieces, and the video stops until they perform the task. There is very little reliance on the app besides the audio, so the focus is on the board.

It's a cool project as it combines the classical way of studying on a board with modern technology. I am in charge of making lessons for the higher levels and also approving of any other lessons by other creators. There are lessons for different levels and include all stages of the game — I have lessons that teach someone how the pawn moves but also on the games from the 2024 World Championship match.

Other than that, I am starting to feel more motivated to work on my own chess after some years of stagnation. ♠

MAKE → YOUR → MOVE

BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

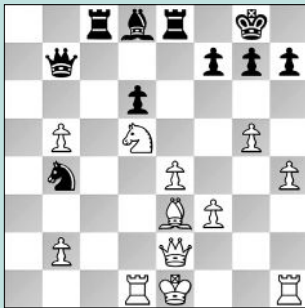
THIS MONTH'S PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM GAMES PLAYED at various tournaments around the world in May, including the French Team Championships and the Sharjah Masters.

The puzzles start off easy and gradually become more difficult. It is worth noting that "easy" is a relative term. If you are new to the game, the easy ones can also represent a challenge.

Try first to solve the puzzle before reading the text at the bottom

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

TACTIC 1.



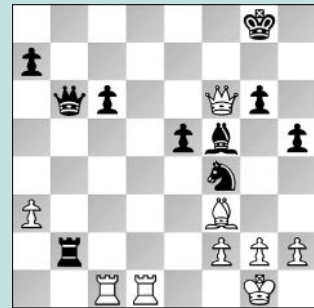
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TACTIC 2.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 3.



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TACTIC 4.



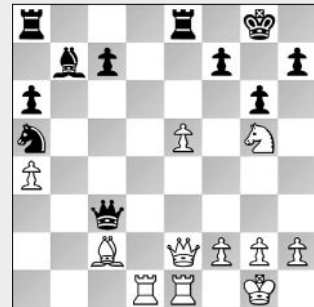
WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 5.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 6.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 7.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 8.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



BLACK TO MOVE

Position 1: DEEP INCISION

Position 2: NO RIGHT DEFENDER

Position 3: CUTTING TO THE CORE

Position 4: NO SQUARES

Position 5: A HOLE TO CRAWL IN

Position 6: LOOSEN THE DEFENSE

Position 7: NO ROOM TO WRIGGLE

Position 8: OVERWORKED ATTACKERS

Position 9: PUNCH AFTER PUNCH



Match Points

Lessons from the
Women's World
Championship
Match

BY **WGM SABINA
FOISOR**

THE WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP Match held in April between champion GM Ju Wenjun and challenger GM Tan Zhongyi was scheduled for a potential 12 games — six in Ju's hometown of Shanghai followed by six in Tan's native Chongqing.

But it didn't go the distance, as Ju wrapped up the match in nine games, scoring $6\frac{1}{2}$ – $2\frac{1}{2}$. It's even more impressive because Tan took an early lead by capitalizing on Ju's time pressure and unexpected endgame error to win the second game. But Ju rebounded strongly, demonstrating nerves of steel and psychological resilience under pressure. She secured four consecutive victories from

Games 5 to 8 before playing conservatively to draw the last game and retain the title, which she won from Tan in 2018.

I followed the event and annotated the games for *Chess Life Online* and watched all the postgame interviews with the players, and it brought me a different perspective on the match. I thought it was highly instructive, and I want to highlight some broader lessons we can all take from it. Below are six key takeaways:

1. Keep objectivity and evaluate your position often!

It is crucial to stay objective throughout the game. It doesn't matter who the opponent is

or how we feel about needing to win — we can only take advantage of the opportunities that are given to us. In Game 2 it seemed that Ju overpressed and made a crucial mistake, leading to her defeat.

TRYING TOO HARD

GM Tan Zhongyi (2555)
GM Ju Wenjun (2561)
Women's World Championship Match
(2), Shanghai, 04.04.2025

(see diagram top of next column)

This endgame is equal, and the game could



BLACK TO MOVE

be settled in just a few moves. But Ju tries to create a passed pawn and continue fighting for a win — a decision that does not seem objective.

31. ... c5

The fastest way to draw for Black was 31. ... b4 — no pressure; just trade the pawns. After 32. cxb4 Rd8 33. Rc7 Rxd4 34. Rxc6 Rxb4 it's an easy draw.

And 32. c4 doesn't help: 32. ... Rb8 33. Ra1 b3 34. Rb1 Rb4 and the trade of the queen-side pawns is inevitable, leading to a draw. White can even lose if she's not careful: 35. d5? cxd5 36. cxd5 Kf8 37. Kf3 b2 38. Ke3 Ke7 39. Kd3 Kd6 40. Kc3 Rb5 41. Rxb2 Rxb2 42. Kxb2 Kxd5 43. Kc3 Ke4.

32. Kf3 cxd4 33. cxd4

Ju may have overestimated the possibility that Tan could make a mistake. It does feel that Black could be slightly better given that the b-pawn is further away, but the d-pawn is more advanced, and White's rook and king are both more active.

33. ... Kf8

It seems more natural to put the rook behind the pawn with 33. ... Rb8, but it's still a draw after 34. Ke4 b4 35. Ra2 f6 36. Kd5 Kf7.

34. Rb7 Rc3+ 35. Ke4 Rc2 36. Ke3 Rc3+ 37. Kd2 Rf3

The correct approach was 37. ... Rb3; Black has to be careful not to lose the b-pawn. Play can continue 38. d5 Ke8 39. d6 (or 39. Ke2 b4 40. h4 Rb2+ with more activity) and now 39. ... Rf3! to keep the f-pawn protected. As soon as White captures the b-pawn, Black can play ... Ke8-d7 and simplify to a draw.

38. Ke2 Rf5?

It looks like the will to win made Ju lose objectivity. Ju places her rook to the side of the pawn, and although it's protected, its advance is slowed down. Black is not lost in this position, but she has to be cautious.

With little time on the clock (around five minutes, compared to more than 30 for her opponent), this was probably the wrong call.

There was still a draw with 38. ... Rb3! followed by the activation of the king: 39. d5 Ke8.

39. Ke3 h5 40. f4 Ke8??

On the last move of the time control and with two and a half minutes on the clock, Ju rushed this move out almost instantaneously, and it proves fatal. The only way to free Black's king and rook was by giving up the b-pawn with 40. ... b4! 41. Rxb4 (41. Ke4 Ra5 42. Rxb4 f5+ 43. Kd3 h4 weakens White's pawn structure and tries to make trades; Black has to be a bit careful, but the draw is still in the cards) 41. ... Ke7 42. Rb7+ Kf6!, keeping the f-pawn protected and allowing the rook to get active with ... Rf5-a5-a2.

41. Ke4! Rf6 42. Rxb5

The difference now is that Black cannot bring the king to f6 while keeping her pawn protected. Tan plays masterfully without giving her opponent any comeback chances from here on.

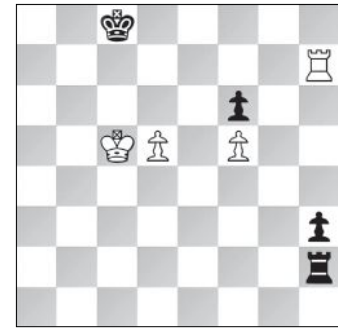
42. ... g6 43. d5 Ra6 44. Ke5 f6+ 45. Kd4 Ra2 One way to survive a rook endgame is to stay active and try to create a passed pawn of your own, but this is too little, too late.

46. Kc5 Rxb2 47. Rb8+ Kd7 48. Rb7+ Kc8 49. Rg7

49. Rf7 would have been slightly more precise: (a) 49. ... f5 50. Rg7 Rc2+ 51. Kd6 Rg2 52. Rxb6 h4 53. Ke6 Rxb3 54. Rh6 or (b) 49.

... g5 50. f5! h4 51. gxh4 gxh4 52. Rxf6.

49. ... g5 50. f5 h4 51. gxh4 gxh4 52. Rh7 h3



53. Kd6!

The only winning way. Tan spent about 22 minutes in this position making sure 53. ... Rh1 wouldn't lead to a draw.

Wasting a move with 53. Kc6?? would allow Black to draw; after 53. ... Rc2+ 54. Kd6 h2 55. Ke6 Kd8 56. Rh8+ Kc7 57. Kxf6 Kd6 there is no way for White to progress further, as Black would continue giving checks from the back.

53. ... Kb8

White also wins after 53. ... Rh1 54. Ke6 (54. Ke7 followed by taking on f6 would lead to the same thing) 54. ... h2 (54. ... Rd1 55. Rxb3 Kd8 56. d6 Re1+ 57. Kxf6 Kd7 58. Kf7) 55. Kxf6 Kd8 56. d6 Ke8 57. Re7+ Kd8 58. Re2! Kd7 59. Rd2 Kd8 60. d7 and White wins.

54. Kd7 Kb7 55. d6 Kb6 56. Kd8 Rh1 57. d7 h2 58. Rh3 Kb7 59. Rb3+ Ka7 60. Rb2 Ka6 61. Re2 Kb7 62. Ke7, Black resigned.



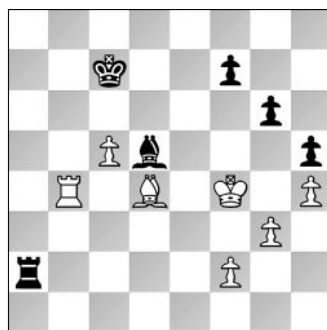
2. Endgames with opposite-colored bishops are not always drawn!

DEFENSIVE LAPSE

GM Ju Wenjun (2561)

GM Tan Zhongyi (2555)

Women's World Championship Match
(3), Shanghai, 04.06.2025



BLACK TO MOVE

Playing a pawn down is not easy, and while opposite-colored bishops can help, having the rooks on the board can help the side with the extra material push through for further improvement. It seemed that Tan had created a fortress, but moving the bishop away from the protection of the f7-pawn was wrong.

60. ... Bc6??

It is important to keep the bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal, the king in front of the c-pawn, and the rook active either on the e- or a-file to keep White's king from infiltrating and winning the f-pawn. After 60. ... Re2 61. Kg5 Re4 62. Kh6 Kd7 63. Ra4

Kc6 Black still has to be careful, but the fortress seems to have been created.

61. Kg5 Ra4 62. Be5+ Kd7 63. Rb2 Ke6 64. Bf4 Rc4?!

Black could have posed a few more problems with 64. ... Kd5, though after 65. Be3 Ra7 66. Rb4 Ke6 67. Kh6 Ra4 68. Rb6 Kd5 69. Kg7 Ra7 70. Rb4 Ke6 71. Rf4 followed by Rf4-f6+, White should be winning the f-pawn and the game.

65. Be3 Ke5 66. Rb8 Bd7 67. Rd8 Be6 68. Rd6!

This is one of those beautiful "domination" moves that keeps Black's king cut off from the c-pawn. Now White continues her king march to win the f-pawn or circle around to escort the c-pawn to promotion.

68. ... Rc2 69. Kh6 Kf6 70. Rd1 Rc4 71. Rd6 Rc2 72. Bd4+ Kf5

Now that Black's bishop cannot reach the d5-square, it is almost time to push the c-pawn. But first:

73. f3!

White sets up a mating net!

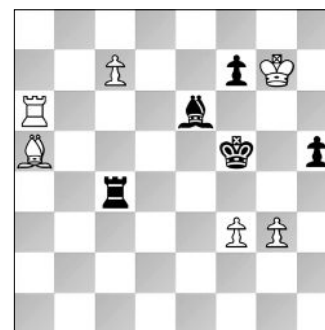
73. ... Rc4 74. c6 Rc2 75. Kg7 g5

The engine suggests 75. ... Rc4, but White's winning idea is clear: 76. Kf8 Rc2 77. Ke7 Rc4 78. Kd8 followed by c6-c7, and White is on the verge of promoting.

76. hxg5 Kxg5 77. Bb6

Ju could have continued with the mating-net idea by playing 77. Bf6+!, but she followed her initial plan. After 77. ... Kf5 78. Rd4 Black has to give up material or allow 78. ... Ba2 79. Re4 Rc5 80. c7 Be6 81. Rf4 mate.

77. ... Kf5 78. c7 Rc3 79. Ba5 Rc5 80. Ra6 Rc4



81. Kf8

This move could have slowed Ju down a bit. It's easier after 81. Bd2!, as the bishop is placed on f4 to keep the c-pawn protected. White wins after 81. ... Bc8 82. Rf6+ Ke5 83. Bf4+ Kd4 84. Rd6+ Kc3 85. Be5+ Kb4 86. f4 Kb5 87. Rd8.

81. ... Bd5

There was one more chance to create counterplay with 81. ... h4, though White could still improve the position of her bishop: 82. gxh4 Rxh4 83. Be1 Rc4 84. Bg3 followed by Kf8-e7-d8.

82. Ke7

Now it's just a matter of time.

82. ... h4 83. Rf6+ Ke5 84. gxh4 Be6 85. h5 Rc5 86. h6 Bc8 87. h7, Black resigned.

3. Know when to leave your home analysis at home!

SICILIAN DEFENSE, KAN VARIATION (B42)

GM Ju Wenjun (2561)

GM Tan Zhongyi (2555)

Women's World Championship Match
(5), Shanghai, 04.09.2025

This was my favorite game of the match from a psychological perspective, as well as for Ju's find 10. c5!?, taking her opponent out of her comfort zone and starting a strategic game where Tan wasn't able to find the right resources to equalize.

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 a6 5. Bd3 Bc5

The typical response is 5. ... Nf6, waiting before committing the bishop; Black keeps the option of ... d7-d6 or even ... d7-d5. Of course, if Black has the mindset of playing the Kan, the move order played in the game is what one can expect.



6. Nb3 Ba7 7. 0-0

Ju seemed still in her home preparation, as she played this relatively fast. But 7. Qe2 has been essayed in a number of games. Play can go 7. ... Nc6 8. Be3 to challenge the black bishop's control of the d4-square. After 8. ... d6 9. 0-0 we have a totally different game, and White can consider castling queenside as well.

7. ... Ne7

The more typical approach is 7. ... Nc6.

8. c4 Nbc6 9. Nc3 Ne5!?

This was an interesting choice which seems to have played before by IM Lou Yiping, but Tan said in the post-game press conference that she wasn't aware of that game.

9. ... 0-0 feels a bit more natural, when play could go 10. Qe2 d6 11. Be3 e5 12. Bxa7 Rxa7 13. Rfd1 Be6 14. Rac1 b6 and although Black's position is a bit passive, after regrouping with maybe ... Qd8-b8, ... Rf8-d8, and ... Ra7-c7, Black should be able to equalize with a ... b6-b5 break.



10. c5!?

Ju spent only about five minutes on this move, but it's a very creative idea, and it paid off, as it seems to have disoriented her opponent.

There was an interesting alternative with 10. Qe2, proceeding with development since White doesn't mind losing the light-squared bishop. Play could go 10. ... 0-0 (10. ... Nxd3 only helps White focus on the d6-weakness and backward d-pawn: 11. Qxd3 0-0 12. Bf4 and White is slightly better) 11. Be3 Bxe3 12. Qxe3 Qc7 13. Rac1 b6 14. Be2 f5.

White could also play 10. Be2 d6 11. Bf4 N7g6 12. Bg3 f5, but this position is very likely something Tan was trying to get into. This is why I found 10. c5 a great response against 9. ... Ne5.

10. ... N7g6 11. Be2 b5?

As I mentioned earlier, in the Kan Black's a7-bishop tends to be a piece that White

wants to trade off, as it controls the center. But Ju was able to temporarily neutralize it by playing c4-c5, although that was supposed to only be temporary since Black can fight to get the g1-a7 diagonal opened once again. This is the reason for my question mark here — Tan seems to have followed the typical ideas in the Kan, but hasn't fully focused on taking care of this unpleasant c5-pawn, which restricts Black's development and keeps Black without much space.

11. ... b6! is the only way for Black to fight for equality in my opinion. That pawn on c5 cannot be allowed to remain there for much longer. Black is OK after 12. Be3 (or 12. cxb6 Bxb6 13. Qd6 Ba7 followed by ... Qd8-e7) 12. ... bxc5 13. f4 Nc6 14. Bxc5 Bxc5+ 15. Nxc5 d6 16. Nb3 0-0.

12. f4 Nc4

It doesn't look ideal to go back with 12. ... Nc6, but if that is the only way to avoid a worse position, we have to take our chances. White of course maintains the pressure after 13. Be3 0-0 14. Qe1 followed by Ra1-d1, when Black is going to struggle with the weaknesses on the d-file, but at least she doesn't lose material.

13. a4

There was also 13. Qd4!? 0-0 14. a4 b4 15. Bxc4 bxc3 16. f5! with a huge advantage for White, as she will continue with f5-f6 and the attack may be unstoppable. In addition, having the dark-squared bishop stuck on a7 (with its counterpart stuck on c8) is far from ideal.

13. ... b4 14. Bxc4 bxc3 15. bxc3?!

It was surprising to see Ju make this move almost instantly. She missed a way to gain a big advantage with 15. Qd4!? cxb2 (15. ... f6 16. Qxc3 0-0 17. Be3) 16. Bxb2 f6 17. f5 Ne5 18. fxe6 Nxc4 (18. ... dxe6 is basically losing after 19. Qxd8+ Kxd8 20. Bxe5 fxe5 21. Rf7) 19. Qxc4 dxe6 20. Kh1 0-0 21. c6.

15. ... Bb7 16. Qe2?

Ju lets go of a large part of her advantage, but her position is still dominating due to the extra pawn and Black's difficulty with untangling the d-pawn.

It was still possible to play 16. Qd4, though it is not as powerful now since White's pawn structure is slightly weaker: After 16. ... Qc7 (16. ... f6 17. f5!) 17. f5 exf5 (White wins after 17. ... Ne7 18. fxe6 dxe6 19. Qxg7 0-0-0 20. Qxf7) there's the really cute sacrifice 18. Bxf7+! to open Black's king. After 18. ... Kxf7 19. Rxf5+ Kg8 20. Qc4+ d5 21. exd5 White has three pawns for the piece, but what pawns!

White's position is dominating.

16. ... 0-0 17. Bd3



17. ... f5?

Tan follows with the same plan she probably had in her preparation, but the position is different now. A big lesson for me is to always double-check what you think you



know and compare it to what you get over the board. Sometimes positions are similar, but a small nuance, like the pawn on c5 here, could change the evaluation and thus require a different response.

Black had to play 17. ... Qc7! instead. After 18. Be3 (18. Qf2 d6 19. Be3 dxc5 20. c4 f5 and Black is OK) Black has the beautiful 18. ... e5!, a key idea to take some space back! After 19. f5 Nf4 20. Bxf4 exf4 Black's bishop pair will finally pay off, while White's pawn structure has been weakened.

18. exf5 exf5 19. Be3 Qc7?

Black needed to play the prophylactic 19. ... Kh8 to protect the a6-pawn. White maintains the advantage with 20. Rad1, but if 20. Bxa6 Bxa6 21. Qxa6 Bxc5 22. Qe2 Bxe3+ 23. Qxe3 Re8 Black has good compensation.

20. Bxa6 Rfe8

Now, though, if 20. ... Bxa6 21. Qxa6 Bxc5 White has 22. Qc4+ Kh8 23. Qxc5 winning a piece!

21. Bxb7 Qxb7 22. Qc4+ Kh8 23. Bd4

From here on, the position is difficult for Black to defend. White is up two pawns and the position is dominant.

23. ... Re6 24. h3 Rae8 25. Rf2 Bb8 26. Raf1 Nxf4

Tan has tried a final resource to complicate matters, but it wasn't enough to save the game, since the queen with two minor

pieces and the passed a-pawn are simply too difficult to stop.

27. Rxf4 Bxf4 28. Rxf4

White might have been able to win a bit faster by taking advantage of some tactical motifs in the position with 28. c6!?: (a) The threat is 28. ... dxc6 29. Nc5!; (b) if 28. ... Rxc6 White wins with 29. Qf7; (c) Black loses after 28. ... Qc7 29. Rxf4 Qxf4?? 30. Bxg7+, and (d) 28. ... Qxc6 29. Qxc6 dxc6 30. Rxf4 could have been an easier endgame to win.

28. ... Re1+ 29. Rf1 Rxf1+ 30. Kxf1 Qe4 31. Kg1 Qb1+ 32. Kh2 Re1 33. Qd5

Centralizing the queen to keep g2 protected. From here it was just a matter of technique for Ju.

33. ... h6 34. Nd2 Rh1+ 35. Kg3 Qe1+ 36. Bf2 Qe2 37. Qd4 Rd1 38. Be3 Kh7 39. a5 Re1 40. Bf2 Rd1 41. Be3 Re1 42. Nc4 Ra1 43. Nd6 Ra2 44. Bf2 Qe6 45. Qf4 Kg6 46. Kh2 Qf6 47. Nc4 Kh7 48. Bd4 Qe6 49. Nd6 Qg6 50. Qf3 f4 51. a6 Rxa6 52. Qxf4 Ra2 53. Qf3 Qe6 54. Nf5 g5 55. Ne3 d6 56. c6 Ra8 57. Nd5 Rc8 58. Qd3+ Kg8 59. Ne7+, Black resigned.

4. Keep your eyes on the prize!

FOLLOWING THE RULES

GM Tan Zhongyi (2555)

GM Ju Wenjun (2561)

Women's World Championship Match (6), Shanghai, 04.10.2025



BLACK TO MOVE

This game was a shocker — even though it was a well-played game, seeing Tan lose back-to-back (and this game with the White pieces) was surprising. Regardless of the result we want or the tournament/match situation, we always have to stay objective and take the chances our opponent is giving us without overthinking.

22. ... Bf6?

Ju said after the game that she didn't spend enough time on this position, and in fact she missed an opportunity for a bigger advantage. Either ... c5-c4 or ... g5-g4 were the engine's top choices, but Ju's decision is more human. After the ... g7-g5 push, it feels as if the long diagonal could cause Black some trouble. However, it doesn't seem that White has anything concrete, so we can safely say that this move wasn't really necessary yet.

With 22. ... c4! (22. ... g4 23. Qe2 c4 is similar) Black gets a counterplay-free position: 23. bxc4 bxc4 24. Rxd8 Rxd8 25. Bd4 g4 26. Qe2 Bb4 and Black is in the driver's seat, with the c-passed pawn and more active pieces.

23. Bxf6

Tan was given a second chance to reach a balanced position; unlike the previous game, she followed through with the best sequence.

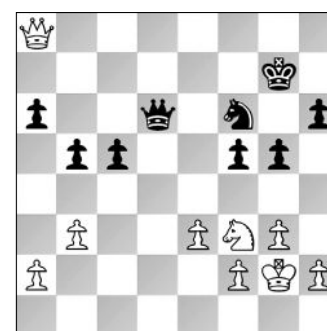
23. ... Qxf6 24. Rxd8 Rxd8 25. Rd1 Rxd1 26. Qxd1

With less space, trading the rooks is important. Now, White can focus on infiltrating with the queen and then trying to take advantage of Black's weaker king and queenside pawns.

26. ... Qd6 27. Qh5! Kg7 28. Qe8 a6 29. Nf3

The knight has found a good square at last!

29. ... Nf6 30. Qa8 h6



This was an important moment for Tan, and she failed to choose the right side of the board to attack on.

31. h4??

The move that sealed White's fate. White holds the balance with 31. a4! This was maybe counterintuitive, because we learn that we have to push the pawns on the side of the board where we have the majority. But as I always like to remind my students:



GM Ju Wenjun

We learn things a certain way, but we have to be ready to unlearn them. We have to apply our knowledge to each position in itself, and judge what we are given, not just go by a rule that is given to us.

After 31. ... bxa4 (it's equal after 31. ... Qd3 32. axb5 axb5 33. Qa7+ Qd7 34. Qxc5 Qb7 35. e4 Qxe4 36. Qe3 Qxe3 37. fxe3) 32. bxa4 White has helped create a c-passed pawn for Black, but at the same time both the a- and c-pawns are vulnerable to queen forks.

Play could go 32. ... Ne4 (after 32. ... Qe6 33. Qa7+ Qf7 34. Qxc5 Qb7! 35. e4! White has to give the pawn back to avoid losing a piece, but that's OK: 35. ... Qxe4 36. Qe3 and it's still a game, but one where White doesn't risk much) 33. Qb7+ Kf6 34. h3 (the h4-square has to be free in some cases to meet ... g5-g4 with Nf3-h4) 34. ... h5 (34. ... c4?! only helps White to gain a great outpost in the center with 35. Nd4) 35. Qh7 g4 36. hxg4 hxg4 37. Qh8+ Ke6 38. Nh4 and White is holding.

31. ... g4 32. Qb7+

The main alternative, 32. Ne1, would transpose to something similar to the game. Black is winning after 32. ... Qd5+ 33. Qxd5 Nxd5 34. Kf1 Nb4 35. a3 Na2 36. Nd3 c4 37. bxc4 bxc4 38. Nf4 c3.

32. ... Qd7 33. Qxd7+ Nxd7 34. Nd2 Kf6 35. f4?

The position is already difficult for White, but this blocks White's own majority and creates a weakness on g3.

There was a temporary fortress with 35. f3, and Black has to find a way to infiltrate White's territory, though it is possible to do it just by finding natural, improving moves: 35. ... Ke5 36. Kf2 gxf3 37. Nxf3+ Ke4 38. Ke2 Nf6 39. Nd2+ Kd5 40. Kf3 Ne4 41. Nb1 Ke5 42. g4 b4! and Black wins.

35. ... Ke6

From here it was just a matter of technique to convert the game.

36. e4 fxe4 37. Nxe4 Kd5 38. Nf2 Nf6 39. Kf1 Kd4 40. Ke2 h5 41. a4 Kc3 42. axb5 axb5 43. Nd3 Ne4 44. Ke3 Nxc3 45. Nxc5 Nf5+ 46. Ke4 Nxc4 47. Ke5 Kb4 48. Ne4 Kxb3 49. Kf6 Nf3 50. f5 h4 51. Ke7 g3 52. f6 g2, White resigned.

5. Piece activity often trumps material!

MISSED BREAKOUT

GM Ju Wenjun (2561)
GM Tan Zhongyi (2555)
Women's World Championship Match
(7), Chongqing, 04.13.2025

(see diagram top of next column)

Being two points down in a match is difficult, but in this game Tan continued to show spot-on preparation and confidence as she repeated a similar pawn structure from



BLACK TO MOVE

previous games. This was the moment Tan had to focus on keeping her pieces active, rather than saving the c-pawn and allowing the bishop on b7 to be dominated by White's knight on c5 — an idea that Ju didn't fail to capitalize on.

35. ... Bb7?

Black needed to give the pawn back and free up her bishop with 35. ... Kg7. Now after 36. Nc5 (36. Rxc6 Bb7 37. Rc7 Bxe4 38. Kxe4 Bb4 would likely end in a draw) 36. ... Rb4 37. Ke4 Kg6, if White continues to block the king though f5. In difficult positions, finding active plans can give better chances of drawing the game than staying passive and being in an "only move" situation.

36. Bc5 Bxc5 37. Nxc5 Kg7 38. Kg5

From here on it was impossible for Black to



The aftermath of the Game 7 battle between Ju and Tan

activate the b7-bishop and, slowly, Ju won many of Black's pawns and went on to win the game.

38. ... Ba8?!

Maybe 38. ... a4 was Black's final try. At least one more pawn is traded instead of being lost after 39. Rc4 axb3 40. axb3 Bc8 41. b4 Rb8 42. Rd4, but it is difficult for Black to hold either way.

39. Kxh5 Rb8 40. Rc4 Rh8+ 41. Kg4 Rh2?! 42. Kg3 Rh5 43. Rg4+ Kf8 44. Ra4 Ke7 45. Rxa5 Rxe5 46. Ra7+ Kd6 47. b4, Black resigned.

6. Don't let go of your confidence, regardless of the results!

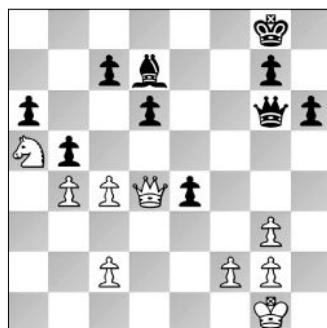
This is much easier said than done, but staying on top of your game and knowing what you can do is important whether you are playing a match, an open tournament or a closed one. Tan appeared to lose confidence after her early success, while Ju seemed to grow stronger with every game. Confidence feeds performance, and performance reinforces confidence.

THE FINAL TOUCH

GM Tan Zhongyi (2555)

GM Ju Wenjun (2561)

Women's World Championship Match (8), Chongqing, 04.14.2025



BLACK TO MOVE

Tan needed an opening that could offer more direct winning chances, so for this game she retired the English in favor of 1. e4 and here transposing to an Italian Game. But Ju was able to neutralize Tan's opening preparation and outplay her. Check out her final *coup de grâce*! Black finds a way to activate her queen and create a nice attack on White's king!

28. ... e3!

A beautiful find by Ju!

29. Qxe3 Qxc2

From here on it is possible that Tan changed her mindset and decided to fight for a draw, but it was too little and too late.

30. Qa7

After 30. cxb5 axb5 31. Qa7 Kh7 Black is up a pawn and has the compensation.

30. ... bxc4 31. Qxc7 Bb5 32. Nb7

If 32. Qxd6 Black just plays 32. ... Qd3 and White's checks don't lead to much, while Black simply supports her c-pawn to promotion: 33. Qe6+ Kh8 34. Qc8+ Kh7 and Black wins.

32. ... c3 33. Nxd6 Qd3 34. Qf7+ Kh7 35. Nf5

A final attempt to create counterplay.

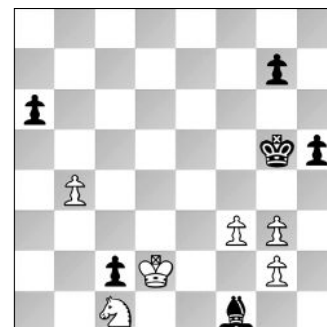
35. ... Qd7 36. Qxd7?

The final objective mistake. After the trade of the queens, White cannot expect to survive this endgame, as the bishop with pawns on both sides of the board is much stronger. In addition, Black has a monster on c3!

There was a final try with 36. Ne7, but after 36. ... Qe8 37. Qf5+ g6 38. Qc5 c2 White loses the knight.

36. ... Bxd7 37. Nd4 Ba4 38. Ne2 c2 39. f3 Kg6 40. Kf2 Bb5 41. Nc1 h5 42. Ke3 Kg5

43. Kd2 Bf1

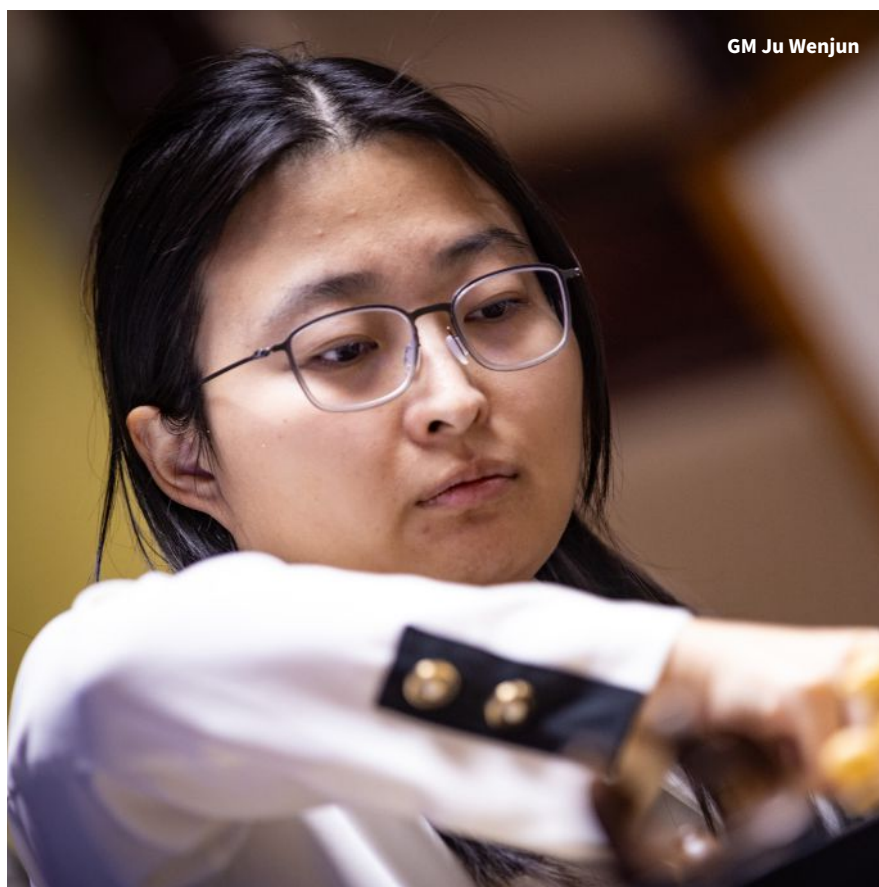


44. Nb3

White could have tried to build a fortress with 44. Kxc2, but it would probably only delay the result: 44. ... Bxg2 45. Kd2 Bxf3 46. Ke3 Bd5 47. Ne2 Kf5 48. Nf4 Bf7 49. Nd3 Bc4 50. Nf2 Ke5 followed by the creation of a passed pawn. White's only hope would be to get rid of the knight and trade the g-pawn for Black's g- and h-pawns and hope to draw as the a-pawn promotes on the wrong color for Black's remaining bishop.

44. ... Bxg2 45. Nd4 Bxf3 46. Nxf3+ Kg4 47. Nd4 Kxg3 48. Nf5+ Kg4 49. Ne3+ Kf3 50. Nxc2 h4 51. Ne1+ Kg3 52. Ke3 h3 53. Nf3 h2, White resigned. ♠

For full coverage of the 2025 Women's World Championship match, visit new.uschess.org/2025-fide-womens-world-championship.



GM Ju Wenjun



2025 U.S. GIRLS'

junior

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Under Pressure

More great games from the
World Rapid & Blitz

ANALYSIS BY **GM ANDY WOODWARD,**
WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN, AND
GM ELSHAN MORADIABADI

W

we're wrapping up our presentation of games from last December's World Rapid and Blitz with a slugfest victory by GM Andy Woodward, two examples of attacking play by *Chess Life* columnist WGM Tatev Abrahamyan, and a wild draw from GM Elshan Moradiabadi. Enjoy!

GRÜNFELD DEFENSE, EXCHANGE VARIATION (D87)

GM A.R. Saleh Salem (2622)

GM Andy Woodward (2530)

World Rapid (3), New York, 12.26.2024

Annotations by GM Andy Woodward

This game was played in Round 3 of the Rapid; we both had 1½/2.

**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 e6**

A slightly less popular line than the main moves 10. ... Qc7, 10. ... Bg4, and 10. ... b6.

11. Rc1 b6 12. Qd2

Black would have sufficient compensation

for the pawn after 12. dxc5!? Ne5 13. Bb5 Bb7 14. cxb6 axb6 15. f4 Bc6 due to the weak white pawns.

12. ... Bb7 13. Rfd1 Na5 14. Bd3 Rc8



15. Bg5!?

Another typical idea here is 15. h4!? with the intention of pushing forward to h5 and possibly later to h6. Play could go 15. ... cxd4 (Black can't take the pawn: 15. ... Qxh4?? 16. Bg5! and the queen is trapped after 16. ... Qh5 17. Ng3 Qg4 18. Be2 or 16. ... Qg4 17. f3 Qh5 18. Ng3) 16. cxd4 Qxh4!? 17. Bg5 Qg4 18. f3 Qh5 19. e5 (the queen doesn't get trapped after 19. Ng3 because of 19. ... Bxd4+ 20. Kf1 Qh2 or 20. Be3 Qg5, winning in either case)

19. ... Rxc1 20. Rxc1 f6 21. exf6 Bxf6 22. Bxf6 Rxf6 23. Qe3 Qd5 with equality.

15. ... Qd7 16. e5

Here Black has activity, but it is not easy to use it.

16. ... cxd4!

Trading off both sets of rooks helps activate Black's pieces. I can't play 16. ... Qd5?! because it runs into 17. Nf4!, and the French-style pawn break 16. ... f6?! doesn't really help Black because after 17. exf6 Bxf6 18. Bxf6 Rxf6 19. f3 Black's dark squares are weak and the a5-knight is misplaced.

17. cxd4 Rxc1 18. Rxc1 Rc8 19. Rxc8+ Qxc8

Now I've comfortably equalized, and I would say the queenside pawn majority makes it easier for Black to play here.

20. h4 Ba6!?

A good move practically, but it's unnecessary: Black could have continued with 20. ... Nc6 21. Qc3 Qd7.

21. Bxa6 Qxa6 22. h5 Qc4 23. Ng3 Nc6!

Now that the knight has finished its job on a5, it reroutes back to the center targeting

the backward d4-pawn.

24. Be3 f5!?

It was also good to blockade the pawn with 24. ... Nb4 25. Ne4 Nd5.

25. exf6 e.p. Bxf6 26. hxc6!?

The engine is fine with this move, but I don't like it too much. It releases the tension, and I no longer have to worry every move about White playing hxc6. It's unclear after 26. Ne4! Bxd4 27. Bh6 Qd5 28. Qf4.

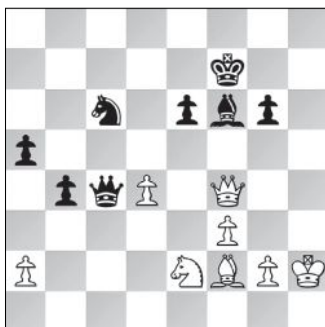
26. ... hxc6 27. Ne2!?

It's still equal after 27. Ne4! Bxd4 28. Bxd4 Qxd4 29. Qc2.

27. ... Kf7!

Now all my pieces are in their best places, so I can start pushing the majority on the queenside.

28. f3 b5 29. Kh2 b4 30. Bf2 a5 31. Qf4?



White had to try to get some activity with 31. Ng3! even though Black is still slightly better after 31. ... Nxd4 32. Ne4 Qd5! 33. Qe3! (not 33. Nxf6?? Nxf3+! 34. gxf3 Qxd2) 33. ... Nc6 34. Nxf6 Kxf6.

31. ... e5!

White can't take on e5 because it leads to a losing endgame, while other moves lose more material. Not 31. ... Qxe2?? when 32. Bh4! equalizes.

32. Qe4 exd4 33. Nf4 Ne7!

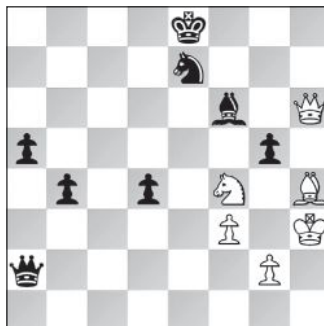
Black needed to see this in advance, defending the g6-pawn and keeping everything under control.

34. Kh3 Qxa2 35. Bh4 g5?!

I'm still winning, but this allowed a lot of complications. The easiest way to convert was 35. ... Bxh4! 36. Kxh4 Qf2+ 37. Kg4 Qe3 38. Qc2 Qc3.

36. Qh7+ Ke8 37. Qh6!?

Not 37. Nh5? Qe6+.



37. ... Qf7

There was a sneaky but smart way to win on the spot: 37. ... Qb1!! 38. Qxf6 (38. Kh2 Qf5) 38. ... Qh1+ with mate next move.

38. Nh5

We were both down to seconds, so there were lots of blunders the rest of the way.

38. ... Ng8??

38. ... Be5! wins cleanly: The queens come off after 39. Qxg5 Qf5+ and Black wins the queen after 39. Bxg5 Qf5+ 40. Kh4 Ng6+ 41. Qxg6+ Qxg6.

39. Nxf6+ Qxf6 40. Qh5+

The only move to keep the queens on.

40. ... Kd7 41. Bxg5 Qf5+ 42. Kh2 b3?!

It's a win after 42. ... Ne7! 43. Qh4 Nc6!.

43. Qh4!

White is being very resourceful, posing problems for Black with every move.

43. ... Qd5

Black could still win after 43. ... b2?, but only after maneuvering through this forced line of only-moves: 44. Qxd4+ Kc6 45. Qc4+ Kb7 46. Qb3+ Ka6 47. Qc4+ Qb5 48. Qe6+ Qb6 49. Qe2+ Kb7 50. Qe4+ Qc6 51. Qb1 Qd6+ 52. Kh3 Qe6+ 53. Kg3 Qe5+ 54. f4 Qc3+ 55. Kg4 Nf6+ 56. Bxf6 Qxf6.

44. Qg4+ Kc6

It was much simpler to just play 44. ... Qe6!. If 45. Qxd4+? Qd6+ forces the queens off.

45. Qc8+ Kb5 46. Qe8+ Kc4 47. Bc1 Nf6 48. Qe2+ d3 49. Qe1 Kb5 50. Qc3 Nd7 51. f4 Nc5?

Much easier was 51. ... Qh5+! 52. Kg3 (52. Kg1 Qc5+!) 52. ... Nc5.

52. Bd2!

Once again he poses a problem!

52. ... Kc6 53. Qxa5 b2! 54. Qa8+ Nb7! 55. Qe8+ Kc7?

Black's completely winning after 55. ... Kb6! 56. Be3+ Ka5! 57. Bd2+ Ka6 58. Qa4+ Na5 59. Bxa5 b1=Q. Any discovered checks are just answered with 60. ... Kb7.

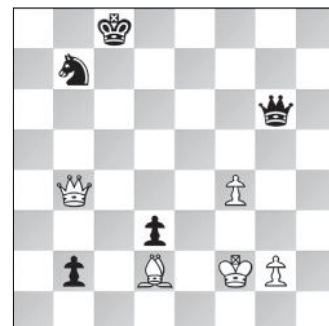
56. Qe7+ Kc8

I still could have blown the win with 56. ... Kc6?? 57. Qf6+!, 56. ... Kb6?? 57. Qf6+!, or 56. ... Qd7?? 57. Qe5+!.

57. Qb4 Qh5+! 58. Kg3 Qg6+?

Apparently Black is winning after 58. ... Nc5! 59. f5 Qxf5 60. Qxb2 Ne4+ 61. Kh2 Qh5+! 62. Kg1 Qd1+ 63. Kh2 Qxd2 64. Qh8+ Kd7 65. Qh7+ Kd6 66. Qxe4 Qc3!, but in a practical game it's almost impossible to understand why.

59. Kf2



59. ... Qf6??



GM Andy Woodward

This should have cost me the win! It was still there with 59. ... Qg7!! 60. Bc3 (or 60. Ke3 Nd6!! 61. Kf2 [61. Qc5+ Qc7] 61. ... Ne4+! 62. Qxe4 b1=Q 63. Qa8+ Qb8) 60. ... b1=Q 61. Qc4+ Qc7 — that's the key difference, as we'll see next move.

60. Ke3??

White had 60. Bc3!! b1=Q 61. Qc4+! because now the queen can't go to c7. After 61. ... Kd7 62. Bxf6 Qc2+ 63. Qxc2 dxc2 64. Bb2! it's a draw.

60. ... Qe6+! 61. Kf3

Black skewers the white king and queen after 61. Kxd3? b1=Q+! 62. Qxb1 Qf5+.

61. ... Qe2+ 62. Kg3 b1=Q 63. Qxb1 Qxd2

The rest is clear.

64. Kh3 Qe3+ 65. g3 d2 66. Qf5+ Kc7 67. Qc2+ Nc5 68. f5 Qd4 69. Qd1 Qd3 70. f6 Ne4 71. Qg1 Ng5+, White resigned.

This was my favorite game from the tournament because it emphasizes how exciting and full of blunders the games can be, even at higher levels, in rapid and blitz!

FRENCH DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (C02)

WGM Tatev Abrahamyan (2304)

WGM Priyanka Nutakki (2296)

World Women's Blitz (10), New York, 12.30.2024

Annotations by WGM Tatev Abrahamyan

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3 Nc6 5. Nf3 Bd7 6. Bd3 Qb6 7. 0-0 cxd4 8. Re1

Having suffered some painful losses on the black side of this line, including one just a few rounds prior, I decided this was a good weapon to try in blitz.

8. ... Nge7 9. h4 Rc8 10. h5 h6 11. a3 dxc3 12. Nxc3 Na5 13. Be3

After a 30-second think, I blundered something simple.

13. ... Qxb2

This was an unpleasant surprise.

(see diagram top of next column)

14. Nb5!

I thought she couldn't take my pawn because of 14. Na4, but I completely missed that she can simply play 14. ... Qb3 and now White is in huge trouble, as a queen trade is forced. Fortunately for me, years of playing the French helped me find another resource.



POSITION AFTER 13. ... Qxb2

14. ... Bxb5 15. Rb1

Giving up another pawn.

15. ... Qxa3 16. Bxb5+ Nac6?

A huge mistake. According to the engine, I am already winning after this, even though I am down three pawns. The engine evaluates the position after 16. ... Nec6 at 0.00 after most of White's moves! Black shouldn't worry about the material and needs to hurry up and get the king to safety.

17. Nd4

During the game I did not think I was objectively winning here; I just thought I was causing problems for my opponent by preventing her from developing her pieces. But opening a path for the rook with 17. Ba4 would have been much stronger.

17. ... Qa5 18. Ra1 Qc7 19. Rxa7

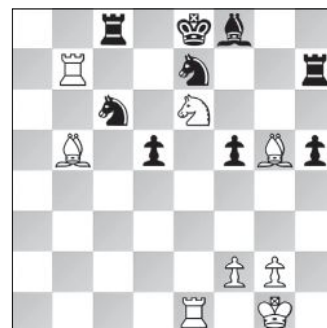
With my rook on the seventh and the b7-pawn pinned, Black's position is starting to fall apart. She can't finish her development, so her king is stuck in the center. Now if Black

does nothing I can just pile on the c6-knight.

19. ... g6 20. hxc6 fxc6 21. Nxe6 Qb8 22. Qg4 Qxe5 23. Rxb7 h5 24. Qh3 Qf5 25. Qxf5

The queen trade allows me to win material utilizing the multiple pins in the position.

25. ... gxf5 26. Bg5 Rh7



There are three different pins now: on the e-file, on the seventh rank, and on the a4-e8 diagonal. Black's pieces start to fall.

27. Nxf8 Kxf8 28. Bxc6 Rxc6 29. Bxe7+

I converted the material advantage without any difficulty.

29. ... Kg8 30. Rb8+ Kf7 31. Rf8+ Kg7 32. Rxf5 d4 33. Rd5 Rc4 34. Bd6 Kg6 35. Be5 Re7 36. f4 Rc2 37. Rxd4 Kf5 38. Rd6 Rf7 39. Rh6 Kg4 40. Rg6+ Kf5 41. Rg5+ Ke6 42. Rxh5 Rb7 43. Rh6+ Kf5 44. Rf6+ Kg4 45. Rg6+ Kh5 46. Rg5+ Kh6 47. Bd4 Rc6 48. Re3 Kh7 49. Rh3+ Rh6 50. Rxh6+ Kxh6 51. Kh2 Rd7 52. Be5 Rb7 53. Kh3 Rb3+ 54. g3 Rb7 55. Kh4 Rd7 56. f5 Rb7 57. Rh5 mate.



WGM Tatev Abrahamyan

IRRESISTIBLE

WGM Tatev Abrahamyan (2305)
WGM Uurtsaikh Uuriintuya (2188)
World Women's Rapid (6), New York,
12.27.2024
Annotations by WGM Tatev Abrahamyan



WHITE TO MOVE

25. Qa3!

I couldn't resist playing this move. Conveniently, it is also the best move in the position. The black king is now stuck in the center, as the queen prevents it from castling.

25. ... Rc8

Of course not 25. ... Rxa3 26. Rd8 mate.

26. Ne2

My opponent has two major problems here: Their king is stuck in the center and their queen is almost trapped.

26. ... Qe4 27. Ned4

Black's pieces are overworked. Now the defender of the checkmate, the f5-knight, also comes under attack.

27. ... Nxd4

With seconds left on the clock, my opponent panicked but there was no hope left anyway. After 27. ... Qd5 28. Nxf5 all Black's pieces are hanging.

28. Qe7 mate.

CARO-KANN DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (B12)

IM Rishi Sardana (2466)
GM Elshan Moradiabadi (2512)
World Rapid (8), New York, 12.27.2024
Annotations by GM Elshan Moradiabadi

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 Bf5 4. Bd3

My opponent surprised me with this move. It looks rather benign, but over the board

in rapid, it is harder to meet than it seems.

4. ... Bxd3 5. Qxd3 e6 6. Ne2 a6?!

A waste of time. The normal way is 6. ... c5 7. c3 (I was afraid of 7. dxc5?!, but Black is slightly better already after 7. ... Nc6) 7. ... Qb6 8. 0-0.

7. 0-0 c5 8. c3 Nc6 9. Nd2 Nge7 10. Nf3 Nf5 11. Nf4?!

White could claim a slight edge with 11. Kh1! preparing g2-g4. Play could go 11. ... cxd4 (White was clearly better after 11. ... Be7? 12. g4 Nh4 13. Nxh4 Bxh4 14. f4 Be7 15. f5 in Hracek – Berchtenbreiter, Austria 2024) 12. cxd4 Rc8 13. Bd2 Qb6 14. g4 Nfe7 15. Ng3 Qb5 16. Qb1!

11. ... cxd4 12. cxd4 h5!

Now White doesn't have any activity on the kingside. Black has comfortably equalized.

13. g3 Be7 14. h4 g6 15. Be3?! Qb6 16. Rfc1 Kd7?!

The natural move is 16. ... 0-0.

17. Rc3 Bb4?

Black is better after the simple, effective 17. ... Na5, stopping Rc3-b3.

18. Rb3

Here I realized I had made a gross mistake. Tactical oversights were my problem throughout the event.

18. ... Nxe3

It's too late for 18. ... Na5?!, as White is winning after 19. Bd2! Nxb3 20. Qxb3 a5 21. a3.

19. Qxe3 Na5



20. Nxd5?!

Hasty, but a good practical choice for a rapid game. The best way was 20. Rd3 Be7 21. Rb1 Rac8 22. Nh3! and the f7-square will be vulnerable in the long run.

20. ... exd5 21. e6+ fxe6 22. Ne5+ Ke8 23. Qg5 Nxb3 24. Qxg6+ Kd8 25. Qf6+ Kc7?!



I should have played 25. ... Be7! 26. Qxh8+ Kc7, but for some reason I thought he had 27. Rc1+! (Of course the knight solves that problem!) After the correct 27. Qxa8 Nxa1 28. Qe8 Qd6 29. Qxh5 Nc2 I have enough counterplay.

26. Qg7+ Kb8??

A miscalculation! I just wanted to play fast and pressure my opponent on time. It's unclear after 26. ... Kc8! 27. Qxh8+ Qd8 28. Qxd8+ Kxd8 29. axb3 Rc8.

27. Nd7+ Ka7 28. Nxb6 Rag8



I thought he had to give a perpetual check at this point.

29. Nc8+ Ka8 30. Nb6+ Ka7 31. Nc8+ Ka8 32. Nb6+ Ka7, draw.

My opponent believed me, but after 29. Qc7!! Nxa1 30. Na4 Bd2 31. b4 Rc8 32. Qb6+ Ka8 33. Nc5 Rh7 34. b5 axb5 35. Qxb5 it's a great example of domination by White's queen and knight over Black's four uncoordinated pieces. White's winning after 35. ... Re7 36. Qb2 Ba5 37. Qxa1. ♠

THE NEW YORK School





New York City's scholastic chess scene is 'bursting at the seams' with programs and clubs, and city teams keep winning big at national competitions. Some of the people fueling the boom explain what's happening.

BY **JACK MOORE**



"BOOM-SHAKA-LAKA." Chess instructor Jonathan Corbblah swipes a piece across the board with a flourish. "Everybody cross your arms and say 'De-fense!'"

"De-fense!," about a dozen piping voices echo through the cafeteria.

It's a Monday afternoon at the Trinity School, a private school in a sprawling half-block Gothic compound on New York City's Upper West Side. It is the oldest continually operated school in the city; tuition runs about \$60,000, and it's home to one of the city's many elite chess programs for young players.



Over the next hour and half, the cafeteria is a whirl of activity. The Monday group is mostly beginners, many of them kindergartners, who have only recently learned how all the pieces move. Corbblah, in a fuzzy sweater and Timberland boots, races from table to table observing games between the young players. Suddenly, another young voice calls out, "Coach Johnny, I just checkmated!"

With everyone gathered around the board in question, Corbblah points out how the young player has pinned in his opponent with a bishop at one end of the board and a queen at the other.

"Now twist your mustaches," he says, giving a loud, devious laugh. The students follow suit, twirling nonexistent mustaches and trying to imitate Corbblah's chortle. "You see, chess players must be sneaky," he counsels.

Corbblah, an exuberant 45, has taught chess in New York City schools for more than 20 years, at times juggling simultaneous gigs at public and private schools. With boundless energy, zany catchphrases — and M&Ms frequently dispensed as prizes — he doesn't so much control the chaos of a room full of 5- and 6-year-olds as he rides the wave.

After the checkmate review, it's back to their one-on-one sessions and, later, a worksheet.

"When did you learn chess?" I ask a kin-

Jonathan Corbblah, chess instructor at the Trinity School, along with assistant instructor Kamellia Sharuda inside the school's cafeteria where after-school chess classes are held.



dergartner with a mop of curly hair. "Did you just learn to play in kindergarten?"

"No; I learned in Pre-K," he replies, as he goes back to filling out his "Mate in 1" worksheet. His name trails across the top of the page, the letters still uncertainly formed.

'Magnitude era'

New York has long been known as a chess city. There's Bobby Fischer, the Marshall Club, and the chessboards in the parks from Washington Square to Central Park — not to mention the colorful characters who sit at them with their dollar bets and daring tactics.

Perhaps, then, it should be no surprise that chess in New York City schools also has a rich backstory. It was back in 1979 that FM Sunil Weeramantry, the stepfather of five-time U.S. champion GM Hikaru Nakamura, first walked through the doors of the Hunter College Campus School, an innovative and highly selective public school for gifted students, and started what is believed to be the first "curriculum" chess class in the city — chess taught by a teacher during the school day, in the same way art, music, or math is taught.

In the early days, he faced some skepticism from school administrators and had to teach himself how to teach chess to a broad student population — coaching the precocious, highly interested players as well as the 50% of students who "could take it or leave it," he says in an interview via Zoom.

The other big development of the era came in the mid-1980s, when a pioneering nonprofit, Chess in the Schools, opened its doors with a mission of bringing high-quality chess instruction into inner-city schools.

Both Hunter and Chess in the Schools are still going strong, and are now part of a vibrant scene of schools, clubs and tournaments. In fact, everyone seems to agree the scholastic chess scene in New York City right now is booming like never before.

Online streaming and pop culture representations such as Netflix's wildly successful *The Queen's Gambit* have brought chess to new audiences worldwide and nationally — US Chess has seen memberships swell to record numbers.

But the trend seems to be turbocharged in New York City, where the scholastic chess scene is “bursting at the seams,” Corbblah says. “It’s never, ever been bigger. It’s like tulip mania. We’re in a magnitude era of chess.”

The vibrancy of the New York City chess scene shows in the results: At the 2024 National K-12 Grade Championships in Maryland last December, chess teams from New York City schools dominated in every category.

Across nearly every grade level, from kindergarten to 12th grade, New York City schools — public, private and charter — accounted for at least half the top 10 finishers in each category. In the 8th grade category, seven of the top 10 teams were from New York. In the 6th and 7th grade category, all of them were.

That wasn’t a one-off phenomenon. At national tournaments all across the country, New York City schools show up, and turn in impressive performances.

In the K-8 championship at SuperNationals VIII, held in May in Orlando, Florida, seven of the top 10 schools in the team standings hailed from New York City. At the K-6 level, all top six schools were from New York. In the K-1 level, four of the top five finishers were from New York City, including Corbblah’s crop of kindergartners and first graders, who took the K-1 championship.

Why does New York City dominate?

Those who follow the scene closely point to the large numbers of “chess schools”

across the city and the healthy culture of competition that has been fostered, as well as the abundance of talent (among players and coaches) and a robust ecosystem of organizations hosting regular tournaments for young players to face off over the board.

“The reason New York does so well is because we have such a thriving chess community and we’re constantly playing chess against each other — and getting better by playing each other,” says Sean O’Hanlon, who helped build the highly competitive chess program at the city’s Success Academy network of charter schools and now teaches at Speyer Legacy School, a \$60,000-a-year K-8 school on Manhattan’s West Side.

His colorful classroom is filled with cartoon illustrations of chess pieces, inspirational quotes from chess champions — and plenty of trophies. His students took home the K-6 Championship in Columbus last year, came in second in the K-8 Championship in Atlanta and took home the K-6 Championship at the May SuperNationals.

Rivalries among New York City school programs can run deep, but such fierce competition helps keep teams conditioned.

Corbblah frames the dynamic with a *Star Wars* reference: “You need the Sith and the Jedi, you know what I mean?” (He also is fond of *Star Trek* references and has appeared on *Jeopardy* and *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* In other words, he gets competition.) “The worthy adversary is what sharpens your blade and it also is what keeps the programs going,” he says. “New York has tons and tons and tons of them. Every single time one drops, another one pops up.”

The Impact Coaching Network is one of the newer and more vibrant players in the current chess scene. ICN aims to create “chess communities” in the schools it works in by building a sense of team identity around chess — aiming to instill a pep-rally spirit into the chess world similar to the way “Friday Night Lights” football in Texas or Ohio can give a whole town something to cheer for.

“We’re really trying to focus on that team success, bringing those trophies back to the school, giving those schools something to be proud of, something to celebrate,” says ICN co-founder Russell Makovsky.

To be sure, the city’s chess ecosystem can feel a little crowded at times. There are professional rivalries, allegations of talent poaching, internecine squabbling — even

a few lawsuits. This is New York City, after all. But nobody would go on the record airing the dirty laundry for this article. For as big as New York is — and for as bustling as the community chess is — it still feels small in many ways.

In fact, underneath the long-running success story of New York City scholastic chess, there remains the feeling that everything runs on the energy of a relatively small band of passionate, overworked, extremely dedicated people.

“With all good chess programs,” says WFM Elizabeth Spiegel, the long-time chess instructor at Intermediate School 318 in Brooklyn, “there’s one person who’s, like, crazy about it behind the scenes.”



Sean O’Hanlon in the chess classroom at Speyer Legacy



'Snap, crackle and pop'

I first meet Spiegel on a winter Saturday morning. A tournament run by Chess in the Schools is in full, frenetic swing, and Spiegel hovers over a chessboard in the middle of a fourth-floor classroom abuzz with activity. Deep in concentration, she scans the scoresheet of the crestfallen eighth-grader in the hoodie across from her who has just finished his game in another classroom. A loss.

"It lacks a certain aggressiveness," she says, evaluating one of his moves. She has shoulder-length brown hair, graying at the roots and streaked with bluish-green highlights. "A snap, crackle and pop."

Throughout the morning, players stream in and out of the classroom, which has been set up as the team headquarters for I.S. 318.

Even as she scrutinizes one player's move, Spiegel's head is on a constant swivel. "Do you need your game looked at?" she calls out as more students enter, clutching their scoresheets. "Who needs their game reviewed?"

Another student sits down across from her, presenting their game. Spiegel's brow knits. Then she moves into action, sweeping pieces across the board, first recreating her student's moves, then imagining alter-

nate possibilities: What if you moved here instead? What would your opponent have done if you tried this?

"I think you need to be a little bit angry," she tells another student whose scoresheet also betrays a perhaps too-hesitant style. "A little bit of anger is not a bad thing."

Later, another student enters the classroom, boasting that he's just beaten a lower-rated player.

But Spiegel sees warning signs between the moves right away. Perhaps lulled by the gap in their ratings, the student had played an opening he'd never studied before.

"You can't play an opening you're totally unfamiliar with because you think your opponent's an idiot," she says. "That's the kind of thing that will always come back and get you in trouble."

"But he didn't defend it," the student protests.

"I'm not saying he's not an idiot," Spiegel says. "I'm saying, assuming that is very dangerous."

'Recalibrating' at 318

Spiegel, 49, has taught at I.S. 318 in some form for more than 25 years. She first walked through the doors in 1999 as a part-time chess teacher with Chess in the Schools. By the end of her first year there, she took eight students to their first national competition in Tucson, Arizona, where, somewhat unexpectedly, they won the section for players

Left: Scenes from tournaments run by Chess in the Schools in recent years. Below: CIS instructor Joseph Otero introduces the royal game to a class at P.S. 375 in Brooklyn.



PHOTOS: COURTESY CIS

with ratings under 750.

“To us at the time, it was like the biggest achievement,” assistant principal John Galvin recalls one recent morning, sitting in his third-floor office crammed with trophies won by the chess team stacked so high that they look almost like pipes from a giant church organ. “Nothing breeds success like success,” he says. “And then we wanted to just keep that going.”

Eventually, Spiegel got her teaching license, and the school hired her full-time as a chess teacher. Nearly 20 years later, she remains likely the only full-time public school teacher who is a dedicated chess instructor teaching chess as part of the curriculum, Galvin says.

“There’s lots of music teachers. There’s art teachers ... there’s ceramics teachers,” Galvin says. “But there are not that many chess teachers.”

I.S. 318 is a squat three-story building of green panels and grid-like windows in the rapidly gentrifying neighborhood of Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Inside Spiegel’s third-floor classroom, signs advertise Chess Lunch and Early Morning Chess, and a sign in colorful all-capital letters advises: “THINK ABOUT EVERY MOVE.”

When the bell sounds, a chatty sixth-grade class enters and takes their seats in a mismatched collection of desk chairs, stools — even a bouncing-ball chair that squeaks insistently as a student bobs up and down on it.

Today, Spiegel is teaching the Catalan, the opening first played in Barcelona in the 1920s that has been adopted by grandmasters ever since.



Elizabeth Spiegel

“Don’t say anything. Just raise your hand if you play the Catalan game,” she says. “Bro,” a muffled voice comes from the back row as chatter begins to ripple through the classroom. “Don’t say ‘bro,’” she says. “Just raise your hand.”

Outside the classroom, Spiegel is outspoken about the stratification in the city’s scholastic chess scene.

In some ways, the various schools and programs in the city remain on separate orbits. I.S. 318’s team mostly attends the free tournaments run by Chess in the Schools. Hunter, a public school for gifted students, has its own tournament schedule, but they come with a registration fee: \$50 a pop. Sometimes it’s not until national competitions that some of the top New York City teams will actually sit down and play against each other.

Spiegel is equally frank about what she sees as the advantages enjoyed by private schools in the city’s chess scene, including the general practice of holding back students in private schools, sometimes known as “red-shirting,” which often leads to competitions between private school students who are several months older than their public school counterparts, even though they’re at the same grade level. At that age, those few months can be a significant advantage.

At national competitions — which already pose a financial burden, given the need to book plane tickets and hotel rooms — there are even more overt signs of the class divide. Many of the private schools have team rooms filled with lavish perks.

“Our kids are eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and you see a team room down the hall and they’ve got a catered lunch,” Galvin laughs.

Still Galvin is sanguine about it all: “Privilege exists in our society at all different kinds of levels,” he says, “and it’s not surprising that it exists in the chess world, too.”

Spiegel, once a regular diarist of the school’s chess program on her personal blog, pulls no punches in calling out what she sees as inequities in the system, especially policy decisions by the US Chess Scholastic Council, which, she says, has tended to advantage private schools. Spiegel was once a member of the council, but she was removed in 2018. She says she was told she was taken off the council because there was too much of a New York focus on the panel.

When I tell her she has a reputation of being a truth-teller in the chess community, she gives out a loud guffaw and slaps the desk.

“I used to be harsher than I am,” she

says. “Since I’ve had children and gone on antidepressants, I’m a lot nicer.”

Still, a few minutes later, when I mention another figure in the chess community, she rolls her eyes and mouths, “He’s full of shit.”

In 2012, two events helped put I.S. 318 on the map: The documentary *Brooklyn Castle* became a breakout hit, chronicling the rise of Spiegel’s chess team as a powerhouse player on the national scene amid the threat of steep budget cuts during the Great Recession.

That same year, Spiegel, with a team of middle-school students, competed in the high school championships and won the top prize. It was a feat never accomplished before — or since.

“That was definitely a peak of my life,” Spiegel says.

These days, the trophies don’t come quite as frequently. In part that’s because I.S. 318 now faces more competition for budding young talent from other chess schools that have emerged in the city’s burgeoning scene.

“Our pipeline is being choked off a little bit,” Galvin says. Students in elementary schools who show chess talent now have more potential options for middle school — including private schools that can offer financial aid for gifted students.

“We’ve been successful for so long that no one’s going to feel sorry for us,” Galvin says. Now, the school is “recalibrating” its approach, Galvin says. “Whether or not we win the Open section isn’t really our goal anymore right now. Our goal is to be competitive in many sections.”

That new approach was put to the test at last year’s National Middle School Championships in Atlanta. In the Open section, I.S. 318 came in sixth overall — behind New York City private school chess heavyweights such as Speyer Legacy and Columbia Grammar and Prep. But in the Under 1400 and Under 1100 sections, I.S. 318 won the top prizes. Spiegel’s crew had similar success this year at SuperNationals — I.S. 318 won the top spot for K-8 teams under 1700 and third place in the Under 1100.

“I’ve done this for 25 years. How much we win or lose doesn’t affect me emotionally as much as it might have,” Spiegel says.

There are other measures of success. For one, the school’s chess team continues to attract interested, eager students. At more than 90 members, it’s bigger than it’s ever been.

And if talented kids are getting scooped up by private schools, Spiegel is hardly dismayed. “I think that’s a good thing,” she says — in fact, she’s helped connect some

of her students to private school chess instructors she knows. “I feel like that’s chess as a vehicle of social equity.”

She wrote about her new focus in a post on her blog last May after returning from Nationals in Atlanta. “I just no longer measure my performance by the top section,” she wrote. “We won’t win again, and that’s ok. I think being able to win two Under sections every year with random neighborhood kids is what a chess program should aspire to, because that’s what a public school is about: offering great education to everyone in your classroom. I can take a random child who doesn’t play chess, teach them in a class of 30, and they score 5/7 and feel on top of the world.”

‘A real team thing’

Sitting at a table in an auxiliary space above St. Luke’s Lutheran Church near Times Square, Russell Makovsky recalls his early days of playing chess. His Grandma Margaret was a chess player, taught him how to play and bought him his first set when he was a kid growing up in Mastic Beach, a hamlet on Long Island’s South Shore. Every once in a while, his dad would drive him into

the city, to the famed boards at Washington Square Park. But he never connected to what he calls a “chess community,” and by the time he reached high school, he felt the lure of sports where he found community — tennis, basketball, and cross country.

After earning a business degree, the 2008 financial crisis struck, and he found himself coaching a basketball team at a school on Manhattan’s Upper West Side.

“I was really building these incredible sporting teams,” Makovsky, 40, recalls. “I was really good at creating culture, enthusiasm, inspiring the kids to be great at something.”

But he never gave up his early love of chess.

Then came the “germination” of an idea: to bring the raucous team-spirit energy of scholastic sports to a school chess team. Thus, the Impact Coaching Network. Founded in 2016, ICN started off in just four elementary schools. It’s now in 40, and continuing to grow.

“What we’ve really proved is that if you bring the game of chess in a thoughtful way — with thoughtful educators and [engaging] the community — any school can be great at the game of chess; any child can be great at the game of chess,” Makovsky says, in jeans, a hoodie and wool hat, looking every bit the casually rumpled youth sports coach.

“Kids are surrounded by teachers. They’re surrounded by educators. But the coaching relationship is very powerful,” Makovsky says. “You can get a little bit tougher with the kids. You can get a little bit more emotional, connected. You can drive them a little bit more ... Teachers disseminate information. Coaches drive you.”

As it happens, many of the coaches, and other personnel at ICN, are former I.S. 318 students. Angel Lopez, who co-founded ICN with Makovsky and now oversees a number of school programs as a program director, is one of them.

Lopez, 35, grew up in a tough neighborhood in the Bed-Stuy area of Brooklyn, he says. “Chess wasn’t really big there,” he says. It was in Spiegel’s class that he first learned chess — and he’s the first to acknowledge he didn’t take to it right away.

“I’m a big believer that there’s a lot of tools that you learn from chess, whether you play competitively or you play casually, that apply to life,” he says. “And for me too. When I started, I wasn’t the greatest student. I was kind of on a rocky road in school. I saw a big difference with chess.”

Now he uses his story to motivate kids in ICN’s programs, imparting the lessons of hard work, resilience, and team spirit.

“It’s just like being part of a basketball



Impact Chess Network teams and coaches at SN VIII

PHOTO: COURTESY ICN

team in our schools or a football team or track team. Our kids go to their schools every day with their shirts on,” Lopez says, adding, “It’s a real team thing.”

Not everyone may see the value — or perhaps the appeal — of the “rah-rah-rah, hands in on three, *Friday Night Lights*” style of chess coaching, Makovsky acknowledges. But he adds, “Our results speak for themselves. We win.”

City schools with chess programs run by ICN brought a total of 300 students to the Grade Nationals in December, and won over 30% of the national awards, he says.

Perhaps fittingly for an organization run by an MBA, the organization is fueled by an entrepreneurial spirit and a drive for “relentless” improvement, including in the performance of the young participants themselves.

“We track their ratings, their progress, how well they’re doing compared to their peers,” Makovsky says. He refers to “measurables” and “immediate feedback loops,” using buzzy lingo that could be lifted from the earnings call of a Silicon Valley startup.

“Every time you play a tournament, you get a rating change,” Makovsky says. “And the kids know what their rating is now, where they want to be six months from now, where they want to be a year from now, where they want to be five years from now.”

In the beginning, the group set its sights on regularly coaching elementary students to reach a 1000 rating. Now, the group is striving to get young players in its elementary school programs over 2000 “at scale,” Makovsky says.

ICN, which is a fee-based organization, charges \$49 for tournaments, on par with other paid tournaments in the city. The organization regularly provides complimentary access. The cost of running the school programs is set out in financial arrangements with each of the schools and includes some fees paid by parents, parent-teacher associations and booster programs.

Makovsky stresses that any child who wants to participate and shows an aptitude for the game will have access.

He points to one of ICN’s greatest success stories as a case in point: Tani Adewumi, whose family came to the U.S. from Nigeria as refugees fleeing Boko Haram, was living with his family in a New York City shelter when he learned how to play in an ICN program. In 2019, he won the K-3 New York State Chess Championship. The story garnered international headlines, and in March he brought his rating past 2400, the final step toward becoming an international master.

“It was a very significant story for, not just our program, but for chess,” Makovsky recalls. “I was on the *Today* show with Tani live in front of America, talking about what chess means as a tool for opportunity in education.”

While the line between haves and have-nots is often stark in New York City, Makovsky said he believes chess is a “great equalizer.” He adds, “We believe every child has the ability to be great at the game of chess. And our goal is to extract that. Give them all the resources, support, opportunities to be great.”

The organization remains in an expansion stage. About a year ago, Makovsky and his team moved into the space at St. Luke’s, three creaky flights of stairs above the church on 46th Street, the city’s famed Restaurant Row.

Spread across the room sit orderly rows of tables topped with chessboards. One of them is a large rough block of pebblecrete with sun-faded black and white squares — a relic from Washington Square Park that Makovsky salvaged when some of the iconic boards were being removed and replaced.

The organization continues to expand, often the result of schools — or, more often, parents — seeing the group’s success and wanting to put it in place at their schools.

“We don’t go hunting; they come to us,” says Ian West, who had a thriving business teaching chess in Brooklyn before joining forces with Makovsky and ICN. He’s now the group’s director of programs.

Still, every good entrepreneur understands the fight for market share, the need to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

“There’s a lot of egos ... A lot of people have been doing chess for a very long time,” Makovsky acknowledges. But he doesn’t see much cutthroat competition or angling over turf.

“I like to believe we’re very well-liked by everybody,” he says. “Because we believe in elevating the game of chess for everybody ... If the chess community grows, we all grow.”

‘The best 45 minutes of chess education’

A digital chessboard lights up the screen. A few fingers of sunlight streak in through the edges of the turned-down window shades.

It’s a Friday morning at P.S. 180 in Borough Park, a neighborhood in southwest Brooklyn of low-slung brick apartment buildings and auto body shops. The thirty or so sixth graders gathered in the darkened classroom are about to get a lesson in castling.

At the computer is IM Yuri Lapshun, a portly, steel-haired man in his 50s with deep-set eyes. He’s a long-time instructor with Chess in the Schools — one of several international masters on their roster.

P.S. 180, also known as the SEEALL Academy (Students Educationally Enriched As Learning Leaders), is a “chess school”: It’s home to a thriving after-school club with a winning record.

Before the class files in, Lapshun shows me a local news clipping on the computer from a few years ago, titled “Brooklyn students take 1st place in National Chess Championships for 2nd year.” It’s an article recording the chess team’s success at the 2023 National Middle School Championships in Round Rock, Texas, where they won first place in the Under 1400 section and second in the Under 1100 section.

During the lesson, Lapshun maneuvers the pieces on the screen, showing the students the rules of castling. In the back of the room, Ron Boocock watches quietly. Boocock, a tall, broad-cheeked man with white hair, is the director of the organization’s school program. He visits the schools to observe the teachers and see how the classes are going.

“For us, we want the kids to get the best 45 minutes of chess education,” Boocock says in an interview a few days before the school visit.



Ron Boocock

Chess in the Schools, which was founded in 1986, operates in Title I schools — those with a significant portion of students from low-income families. Instructors teach five classes a day and then help run after-school chess clubs.

“A child comes in, doesn’t know what chess is, has no idea,” says Boocock, who speaks in a deliberate, quiet voice with a British accent. “So we teach them how to play the game of chess. And then, it grows. It grows from them, not from us. We give them the opportunity.”

There may be more organizations teaching chess to New York City students these days, but none of them has had the long track record of Chess in the Schools — or the impact.

Corbblah, the chess instructor at Trinity, likens the organization to “the fertile crescent” for its outsized impact on the city’s scholastic chess scene, borrowing the anthropology term for the region that gave birth to some of the world’s earliest civilizations.

Corbblah got his start there. So did Spiegel, the chess teacher at I.S. 318; Sean O’Hanlon, the chess teacher at Speyer Legacy, and chess teacher David McEnulty, who later wrote about his chess-teaching experiences in *Knights of the South Bronx*, which was adapted into a TV movie starring Ted Danson.

In the early 2000s, Boocock was teaching art at a Catholic school in the East Village when he saw an ad in the Sunday New York Times: “Chess in the schools’ — I thought, that’s a great idea,” he recalls from his office on the 22nd floor of an office building in Midtown Manhattan.

Boocock had lived a sort of wanderer’s existence before landing in New York: London, Paris and Berlin. When he started teaching chess, he wondered whether he might finally start running in posher circles.

“I thought, I’ll go to schools on the Upper East Side and make tons of money,” he says. “The next minute I’m in the South Bronx. Like, what?”

His first day came the week of the Sept. 11 terror attacks: “So I walked into a classroom and I was very nervous, because I was wondering how the kids were going to react, because that was a big one. And I walked through the door and they all cheered and said, ‘Yay, chess!’ So I said, ‘Cool. I’ll take the lead from the kids. Let’s just enjoy chess.’”

The son of a dockworker, he felt an affinity for the students he was teaching in Washington Heights and the South Bronx.

“I’m from Liverpool; that’s basically the Bronx of Great Britain, OK?” he says. “And I got out through education — I went to college — and now I’m doing that with these kids.”

For years, the organization’s free monthly tournaments have been, in many ways, the cornerstone of the city’s scholastic chess scene. In the classroom, though, teachers try to meet kids at their level.

“We’re not forcing them,” Boocock says, launching into a bit of reenactment. “Do you like chess? Do you want to join the chess club? Fantastic. Would you like to go to a tournament?’ It’s very holistic. We’re not stuffing kids through a pipe.”

When Boocock joined the organization,



the organization was supported by the munificence of investment banker and New York arts patron Lewis Cullman, who championed the organization as an “Angel Benefactor” and funded many of its programs. Cullman died in 2019.

“Fundraising was quite straightforward with Lewis around. Now, it’s a bit more challenging,” Boocock says.

While the program’s offerings for students are free for students, they’re not cheap to operate. The organization charges schools some fees, but overall spends more than \$1.2 million to run its schools program, and about half that much to put on its free monthly tournaments and run its “College-Bound” program, which engages high school students

to help run the monthly competitions, takes them on college visits and helps with the college application process.

The disruptions of COVID-19 on the school system took a toll on the organization. And then there’s the search for teaching talent.

At its peak, before the Great Recession, Chess in the Schools operated in more than 100 schools all across the city; they operate in less than half that many now. They had more than 40 instructors on staff; now, there are 12.

In part, that’s because the organization shifted its staffing models: All instructors are on salary and receive benefits, in addition to regular training and professional development opportunities. That provides more stability and a better quality of life for instructors, but makes having a larger staff much more expensive. There’s also more competition for hiring chess teachers, with so many more organizations all vying for talent to run their programs.

“It’s not easy,” Boocock acknowledges. “We’re doing OK.”

Coming up on 40 years in operation, Chess In the Schools organizers are still thinking of new ways to bring chess to New York City’s young people, including a recently launched digital offering for kids in schools where the organization doesn’t have programs.

Under the direction of CEO Jenny Ingber, who took over in 2023 after running education programs at the American Museum of Natural History, the organization has commissioned a study to evaluate the impact of its chess programming on educational outcomes of students.

“We’re still looking for different ways to expand, to grow,” Boocock says.

Back at P.S. 180, the lesson on castling has ended; the lights flip back on. Out come roll-up boards and Ziploc bags full of chess pieces. For the rest of the 45-minute class period, the students get a chance to play. Yuri Lapshun and Boocock circulate around the tables, offering guidance, refereeing a few disputes.

Boocock takes on a quiet, philosophical tone when I ask what the kids in the program learn from chess — about the game and about life.

“You’re on your own. It’s you on a board against someone else,” he says. “And you have the same material when you start a game of chess, and then it’s about what you’ve learned and how strong you are as a student. ... The more you take it seriously, the more you enjoy it.” ♦

Khanin Ball

GM Semen Khanin rolls to victory at the Chicago Open.

BY **IM JASON LIANG**



THE 34TH ANNUAL CHICAGO Open drew nearly 900 players to the Westin Chicago

North Shore Hotel over Memorial Day weekend, and while the 110-player Open Section was stacked with more than 40 titled players, one player took the \$10,000 first prize by storm.

GM Semen Khanin was unscathed in the first seven rounds, scoring victory after victory, the last of which came over the young Canadian talent IM Anthony Atanasov, who had just tied for first at the Ontario Open a week prior.



PHOTO: CAROLINE KING FOR US CHESS

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, EXCHANGE VARIATION (D35)

GM Semen Khanin (2669)

IM Anthony Atanasov (2490)

Chicago Open (7), 05.25.2025

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. cxd5 exd5 5. Bg5 Be7 6. e3 0-0 7. Bd3 Re8 8. Nf3 Bg4 9. Qc2 Nbd7 10. Ne5 Be6?!

Black would have kept the material balance with a reasonable position after 10. ... h6.

11. Nxd7 Qxd7 12. Bxf6 Bxf6 13. Bxh7+ Kf8 14. Bd3!

Preparing to meet 14. ... c5 with 15. Bb5!.

14. ... Rec8 15. Ne2 b6 16. 0-0 c5 17. Qd2 c4 18. Bc2 b5 19. Nf4 a5 20. e4?!



A bit rushed. White could continue slowly

2025 CHICAGO OPEN AT A GLANCE

MAY 22-26, 2025
WHEELING, ILLINOIS

OPEN: GM Semen Khanin, 8/9.

U2300: FM Julio A. Morella, Ekansh Mehotra, Dylan Sunjic, Sho Glashauser, 6/7. **U2100:** Kai Tsuei, 6½/7. **U1900:** Owen Zhang, 6½/7. **U1700:** Vaibhav Parihar, 6½/7. **U1500:** Christian A. Turk, Gavin Robert Decicco, 6½/7.

U1300: Ian Wan, 7/7. **U1000:** Richard Chhay, 6½/7. **MIXED DOUBLES:** Aderemi Taiwo Adekola and Abiola Adekola, 11. **BLITZ:** Ethan Thomas Sheehan, 9/10. **BLITZ U1900:** Varun Iyengar, 8½/10.

For complete results, visit
chessevents.com/event/chicagoopen.

with 20. Nxe6+ Qxe6 21. g3 followed by Kg1-g2, Rf1-h1, and h2-h4, while Black's queenside majority isn't going anywhere.

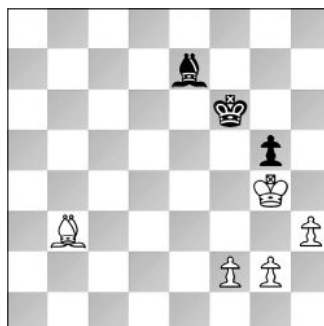
20. ... dxe4 21. Bxe4 Ra6 22. Nxe6+ fxe6 23. Rd1 Rd6?!

Black would eventually get the pawn back after 23. ... Rd8.

24. Qxa5 Rxd4 25. Rxd4 Qxd4 26. Bg6 Qg4 27. Bb1 Qg5 28. a4 bxa4 29. Qxa4 Qc5 30. Re1 c3 31. bxc3 Qxc3 32. Qe4 Qe5! 33. Qb4+ Be7 34. Qd2 Qxe1+

34. ... Bg5!? was perhaps simpler. After 35. Qb4+ Be7 36. Rxe5 Bxb4 37. Bd3 Rc1+ 38. Bf1 Ke7, Black saves the e-pawn and the draw is straightforward.

35. Qxe1 Ba3 36. Ba2 Rc1 37. Qxc1 Bxc1 38. Bxe6 Ke7 39. Bb3 Kf6 40. Kf1 Ba3 41. Ke2 g5 42. Kf3 Bc5 43. h3 Be7 44. Kg4



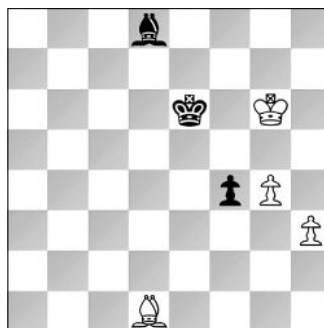
44. ... Ke5

With this setup, Black is aiming to prevent White from getting two connected passed pawns. If 44. ... Kg6 45. Bc2+ Kh6 46. g3 Bc5 47. f3 Bd6 48. h4 gxh4 49. Kxh4 White gets connected passers, and that's never an easy decision to make, but Black's resulting defensive setup is actually quite straightforward: 49. ... Be7+ 50. Kg4 Bd6 51. f4 Kg7 52. Kf5 Be7 just waiting for the pawns to advance. Play could go 53. g4 Bd8 54. g5 Be7 55. Ke6 Bd8 56. Kd7 Ba5 57. f5 Bd2 58. f6+ Kf7 59. Bb3+ Kg6.

45. g3 Bd8 46. Bc2 Ke6 47. Bb3+ Ke5 48. Ba4 Ke6 49. Bc6 Bb6 50. f3 Bd8 51. Bb7 Be7 52. Bc8+ Ke5 53. Kh5 Bf6 54. Kg6 Bd8 55. Bb7 Ke6 56. Be4 Be7 57. Bd3 Ke5 58. Bc2 Bd8 59. Bd1

White has achieved their ideal setup and is prepared for the key breakthrough.

59. ... Ke6 60. f4 gxf4 61. g4!



It turns out Black has one saving resource!

61. ... Bh4??

It's a draw after 61. ... f3!., deflecting the bishop away from the a2-g8 diagonal! Now comes 62. Bxf3 (or 62. g5 Bxg5 with a wrong rook pawn, and if 63. Bb3+ Ke7 64. Kxg5 f2 65. Bc4 f1=Q 66. Bxf1 Kf7) 62. ... Bh4 63. Kh5 Be1 64. g5 Kf7 65. Kh6 Kg8 and Black holds.

62. Bb3+! Ke7 63. Kh5 Be1 64. g5 f3 65. Kh6 f2 66. Bc4 Kf8 67. Kh7 Bc3 68. g6, Black resigned.

After that, Khanin cooled down with two

draws — the last one coming after he'd clinched first — to finish the event on 8/9 and earn the \$10,000 plus a \$300 bonus for coming in clear first.

Two-time Grand Prix Champion GM Jianchao Zhou had a rough start, with ½/2 against lower-rated opponents, including a second-round loss to Andrew Lewis Titus (2176). He then went on a tear, entering the last round with 6/8, and didn't stop there:

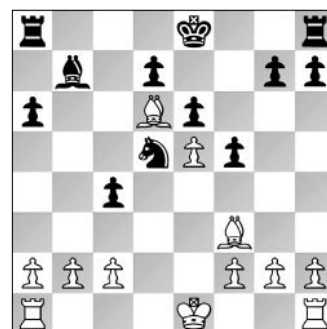
SICILIAN DEFENSE, TAIMANOV VARIATION (B48)

GM Robby Kevlishvili (2628)

GM Jianchao Zhou (2663)

Chicago Open (9), 05.26.2025

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. Nc3 Qc7 6. Be3 a6 7. Bd3 Nf6 8. Qe2 b5 9. Nxc6 Qxc6 10. e5 Nd5 11. Be4 Bb4 12. Bd2 Bxc3 13. Bxc3 Bb7 14. Bb4 Qc4 15. Qxc4 bxc4 16. Bd6 f5 17. Bf3



White would love to get in h2-h4 and squeeze Black, but it was better to play 17. exf6 *e.p.* gxf6 18. 0-0-0 Kf7 19. Rd4 Rac8 20. Bf3 h5 21. Rhd1 h4 22. a4, when Black always has to keep an eye on the weak c- and h-pawns.

17. ... g5!

Zhou doesn't miss his chance to claim space.

18. g3 g4 19. Bg2 0-0-0 20. 0-0-0 Nb6 21. Bxb7+ Kxb7 22. Bc5 Nd5 23. Rd4 c3 24. b3 Leaving the pawn on c3 makes d5 a crucial outpost for the knight. White should have considered 24. Bb4 to have the option of c2-c4 later on, though Black is still fine after 24. ... cxb2+ 25. Kxb2 Rc8.

24. ... h5 25. h4 Rh7 26. Rhd1 Re8 27. R1d3 Rf7 28. Kd1 Rh7 29. Ra4 Rf7 30. Rc4 Rc8 31. Bd4 Rxc4 32. bxc4 Nb4 33. Rxc3 Nc6 34. Rb3+ Ka8

(see diagram top of next column)

What should White do about the hanging



IM Jason Liang



POSITION AFTER 34. ... Ka8

bishop, the weak e5-pawn, and the lingering threat of ... f5-f4?

35. Bb2?!

White should have prevented the activation of Black's rook with 35. Be3!? White loses a central pawn, but will activate their bishop as a result: 35. ... Nxe5 36. Bf4 Nc6 (If 36. ... Nxc4 37. Rb4 and now Black should aim to simplify with 37. ... e5 38. Rxc4 exf4 39. Rxf4 before White can swing the rook to h8 and collect the h-pawn) 37. Bd6 e5 38. Rb6 f4 39. Rxa6+ Kb7 40. Ra3 f3 41. f3 Nd4 42. Ra5 and compared to the game, White has greater piece activity and more targets.

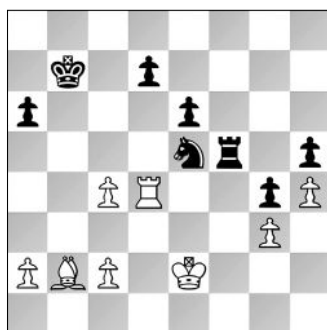
35. ... f4 36. Ke2 Rf5 37. Rd3?

Once again, piece activity is of the essence in the endgame: 37. Kd3 f3 38. f3 Rf2 (or 38. ... Nxe5+ 39. Bxe5 Rxe5 40. Kd4 Re2 41. Kc5 Rxc2 42. Kd6 and White can't be worse with such an active king) 39. a4 a5 40. Ke4 Rxc2 41. Kf4 is one way of using piece activity to counter Black's better structure.

37. ... Nxe5 38. Rd4?

38. Bxe5 was a necessity: 38. ... Rxe5+ 39. Kd2 f3 40. Re3! Ra5 41. Rd3! and the king on a8 is too far away to protect the d-pawn, ensuring White enough counterplay.

38. ... f3 39. f3 Kb7



All of a sudden, White is lost due to their immobile structure and lack of targets.

40. Bc1 Kc6 41. Bf4 d6 42. Re4?!

Black's task would have been a bit tougher after 42. a3.

42. ... Nf3! 43. Be3 e5 44. c5 d5 45. Rb4 d4 46. Bf2 Kxc5 47. c3 Kd5 48. cxd4 exd4 49. Ra4 Rf6 50. Ra5+ Ke4 51. Rxh5 Rb6 52. Rh8 d3+, White resigned.

Three other players went into the last round on 6/8: GM Emilio Cordova and IM Samrug Narayanan drew quickly, while GM Harsha Bharathakoti defended resiliently to draw against Khanin, allowing Jianchao to distance himself from the pack with 7/9 and take home \$5,000.

Eight players entered the last round with 5½, and another 17 with 5, so big ties looked likely, and even in a tournament with 19 grandmasters, several IMs were in high contention. One of them, Sam Schmakel, won against GM Fidel Corrales Jimenez to join Cordova, Narayanan, and Bharathakoti with a final score of 6½. Another — Nico Chasin, the freshly minted New York State high school champion — ran into GM Cristhian Cruz in the last round. Cruz dominated from the opening until a rook endgame that was filled with intricacies, including a couple of moments for Nico to save what seemed to be a dead lost game. In the end, though, Cruz came out on top to join the five-way tie for 3rd-7th.

CATALAN OPENING (E06)

GM Cristhian Cruz (2548)

IM Nico Chasin (2533)

Chicago Open (9), 05.26.2025

1. c4 Nf6 2. g3 e6 3. Bg2 d5 4. Nf3 Be7 5. d4 0-0 6. Nc3 a5 7. 0-0 dxc4 8. Ne5 Nc6 9. Bxc6 bxc6 10. Qa4 Qe8 11. Bg5 Kh8?

I'm not sure what this move accomplishes; Black should've struck immediately with 11. ... c5, when he's OK after 12. Qxe8 (12. dxc5 h6) 12. ... Rxe8 13. Nb5 Bd8 14. dxc5 a4 followed by ... Ra8-a5.

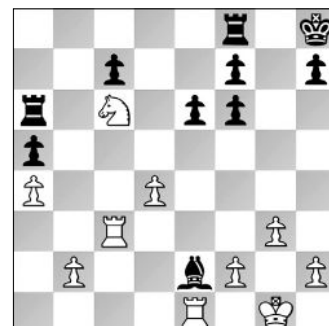
12. Qxc4 Ba6 13. Qxc6 Qxc6 14. Nxc6 Bb4 15. Bxf6 gxf6 16. Rfc1 Bxc3 17. Rxc3 Bxe2 18. a4 Ra6

White has played flawlessly up to this point; the weak a5-pawn and clunky coordination of Black's pieces give Cruz a decisive advantage.

19. Re1?

(see diagram top of next column)

White should have prevented counterplay with 19. Rac1!. Then they can slowly improve the



POSITION AFTER 19. Re1

position, and the a5-pawn will eventually fall.

19. ... Bf3!

Black doesn't miss the opportunity to trade minor pieces, after which his rooks will have greater mobility.

20. Rxf3

Black's fine after 20. Ne7 Ba8 21. Rec1 Rb6 22. R1c2 Rd8.

20. ... Rxc6 21. Rxf6 Kg7 22. Rf4 f6

Black was better off going for immediate counterplay: 22. ... Rd8 23. Re5 Rc4 24. Rxa5 Rdx4, with good drawing chances.

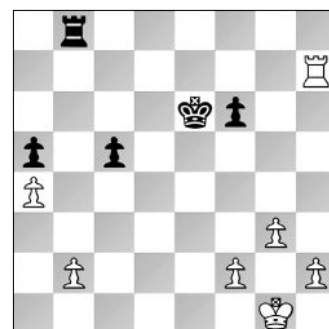
23. Re3 Kf7?

Now White is winning; 23. ... h5 gave better drawing chances.

24. Re5 Ra6 25. d5 Ke7 26. Rxe6+?!

This doesn't spoil the win, but now White should be more precise. Two rooks attack better than one! White's winning easily after 26. Rh5! e5 27. Rxh7+ Kd6 28. Rc4 Kxd5 29. Rhxc7 Rb8 30. R7c5+ Ke6 31. Rb5.

26. ... Rxe6 27. dxe6 Kxe6 28. Rh4 c5 29. Rxh7 Rb8



30. Rh5?

This gives Black a chance to save the c-pawn, his main source of counterplay. The win was there with 30. h4! Rxb2 31. h5 c4 (31. ... Rb8 32. h6 Kd6 33. Rf7 Ke6 34. Ra7 c4 35. Rc7 also

wins) 32. Rc7 Kd5. If Black tries to promote the pawn, White will simply give up the rook and win with the king and kingside pawns: 33. h6 Kd4 34. h7 Rb8 35. Kg2 and White's king will march up and gobble the f6-pawn.

30. ... c4?

Black misses a probable draw in turn: 30. ... Kd6! 31. Rf5 Rxb2 32. Kf1 c4 33. Ke1 and now the key move is 33. ... Ra2!, when White has to give up either the a4-pawn or the f2-pawn. Black draws after 34. h4 (or 34. Rxa5 c3 35. Kd1 Rxf2) 34. ... Rxa4 35. Rxf6+ Kc5!, again focusing on counterplay: 36. h5 Ra1+ 37. Kd2 a4 38. h6 a3 39. Ra6 Kb4.

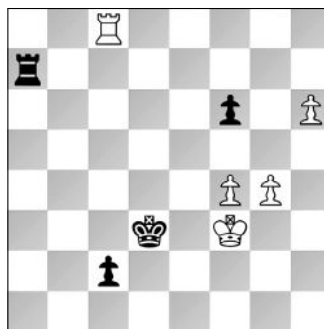
31. Rxa5 Rxb2 32. Rc5 Rb4 33. Kf1 Rxa4 34. Ke2?

Allows another draw. The winning line was 34. h4! Kd6 35. Rf5 Ke6 (or 35. ... c3 36. Ke2 Ke6 37. Rf4! is the same idea) 36. Rf4! controlling everything.

34. ... Ra2+ 35. Ke3 Ra3+ 36. Ke4 Ra2 37. Rc6+ Ke7 38. Kf3 Ra3+ 39. Kg2 c3 40. h4 Kd7 41. Rc4 Kd6 42. h5 Kd5 43. Rc8 Kd4 44. g4 Kd3 45. h6 Ra7 46. f4 c2

Black's play has more or less been forced up to here.

47. Kf3!



It looks winning for White, but Black has a remarkable defense.

47. ... Ra1??

It's possible both players thought Black was busted here, but there's a beautiful draw after 47. ... Rf7!! temporarily stopping g4-g5. After 48. Kg3 the defense is anything but straightforward: Black must find 48. ... Rf8!!.

It's very hard to understand from afar, but White can't take now that the White king is no longer shouldering Black's king, as we'll see in the note to the next move.

If White doesn't take after 48. ... Rf8, play goes 49. Rc7 and 49. ... Re8! (49. ... Rf7?? fails in a familiar way: 50. Rxc2 Kxc2 51. g5 fxc5 52. fxc5 Kd3 53. g6 Rf6 54. g7) is another tough move to find. White can continue in a few ways:

(a) The main idea is 50. g5 fxc5 51. fxc5 Re3+ 52. Kf4 Re4+ 53. Kf5 Rc4 54. Rxc4 Kxc4 55. h7 c1=Q 56. h8=Q Qb1+ and White can't escape the checks;

(b) Black draws after 50. Kh4 Re1 51. Kh5 c1=Q 52. Rxc1 Rxc1 53. Kg6 Ke4;

(c) 50. Rxc2 Kxc2 51. g5 fxc5 52. fxc5 and 52. ... Rh8 is the point! Now 53. Kg4 Kd3 54. Kh5 Ke4 55. g6 Kf5 56. g7 Ra8 57. h7 Ra1 58. Kh4 Kf4 59. Kh3 Kf3 60. Kh2 Ra2+ 61. Kh3 Ra1 is an amusing draw.

Nota bene: there seems to be the same idea after 48. ... Re7??, but the rook needs to be on e8 for it to work: 49. Rxc2!! Kxc2 50. g5 Kd3 51. g6 Re3+ 52. Kf2 Re2+ 53. Kf1 and White wins.

48. h7! Rf1+

This was the difference: White wins after 48. ... Rh1 49. h8=Q Rxh8 50. Rxh8 c1=Q 51. Rd8+! Kc2 52. Rc8+.

49. Kg2, Black resigned.

Twelve of the players going into the last round with five points were under 2400, making the competition for that prize fierce.

Only FM Tugstumur Yesuntumur and your author were able to win in the last round, though, each taking home \$1,500.

Endgame play played a pivotal role on many of the top boards, and as we saw in the previous games, piece activity often trumps material. One of Narayanan's nice victories followed this theme as well.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, MOSCOW VARIATION (B51)

IM Sebastian Kostolansky (2417)

IM Samrug Narayanan (2513)

Chicago Open (8), 05.26.2025

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. Bb5+ Nd7 4. Ba4 Ngf6

5. 0-0 e6 6. d3 Be7 7. c4 0-0 8. Nc3 a6 9.

h3 Qc7 10. Nh2 d5!? 11. cxd5 exd5 12. f4

White was better off with 12. exd5 b5 13. Bb3 Bb7 14. Ng4. Now Black has to play 14. ... b4 to regain the pawn, which weakens some light squares.

12. ... d4 13. Ne2 b5 14. Bc2 Bb7 15. Ng3

Rfe8 16. Ng4 Bf8 17. Bd2 Nxc4 18. Qxc4 c4

Now Black is taking over the initiative, while White has no real attack on the kingside.

19. Nh5 Kh8 20. Rac1 Rad8 21. dxc4 Qb6

22. Kh2 bxc4 23. Ba4 Re6 24. Bxd7 Rxd7

25. Rxc4 Qxb2?



Looks logical, but it allows a countershot based on the fact that the f8-bishop is the only thing stopping mate. Black was close to winning after 25. ... Qb5!, guarding the d7-rook so e4 can be captured: 26. Rfc1 (26. b3 Rxe4) 26. ... g6! 27. Ng3 h5! when ... h5-h4 is coming and the e4-pawn falls.

26. Rfc1!! Rd8

Not 26. ... Qxd2?? 27. Qxc7+ Bxc7 28. Rc8+ and mates.

27. R1c2 Qb5 28. Bb4! Qe8 29. Bxf8 Qxf8

30. e5 Rg6 31. Qd1 d3 32. Rb2 Qe7 33. Ng3

The tide has turned! White's knight is eyeing f5 and then d6, and the d3-pawn may fall.



GM Jianchao
Zhou

33. ... h6?

A mistake; 33. ... Qd7 holds the balance.

34. Nf5?

Missing a simple opportunity: 34. Rc3! followed by 35. Rd2 would've picked up the d-pawn.

34. ... Qe6 35. Ne3 Ba8 36. Rcb4 Kh7 37. Rb8 Rxb8 38. Rxb8 Be4 39. Rb4 Qc6 40. Qd2 a5

Missing 40. ... f5! stopping f4-f5 from White and anchoring the e4-bishop.

41. Rd4 f6?

Again, 41. ... f5!.

42. f5 Rg5 43. g4

Now the g5-rook is stuck, so Black has to try and open the kingside.

43. ... h5 44. Rc4 Qb7

(see diagram top of next column)

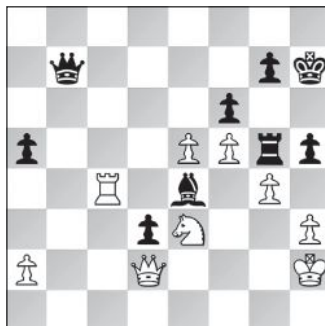
What to do about the caged rook on g5?

45. Kg3

Not 45. h4?? Rxc4 46. Nxc4 hxc4 and Black wins.

45. ... Bh1 46. h4??

It is tempting to win the Exchange like this,



POSITION AFTER 44. ... Qb7

but it still doesn't work. White's king becomes totally exposed and Black gets too many pawns.

White would have kept a slight edge with 46. exf6! gxf6 47. Qxd3 Qf3+ 48. Kh2 Rg7 49. Rd4! to as to meet 49. ... Re7 with 50. Rd7; there's also 46. e6 Qb8+ 47. Kh4, which is complex, but with better prospects for White.

46. ... Qf3+ 47. Kh2 Rxc4 48. Nxc4 hxc4 49. Kg1 Qh3 50. Qh2 fxe5!

(see diagram top of next column)

Well spotted! The bishop is untouchable thanks to the passed d-pawn.

51. Qxh3?!

The best try was 51. Rc7! Bd5 52. Rxc7+!,



POSITION AFTER 50. ... fxe5

but Black still wins after 52. ... Kh8! (52. ... Kxc7? 53. Qxe5+ with a perpetual) 53. Rd7 Qe3+ 54. Qf2 Qc1+ 55. Qf1 Qc5+ 56. Kh2 (if 56. Qf2 d2!! White will be mated soon) 56. ... g3+! further exposing the king: 57. Kh3 (57. Kxc3 d2) 57. ... g2 58. Qe1 and there's only one way for Black to win: 58. ... g1=N+!, not giving White a moment to breathe! It's over after 59. Kg3 Qd4.

51. ... gxh3 52. Rc7 Bd5 53. Rd7 Bc4 54. f6 e4 55. Kh2 Kg6 56. fxg7 Kh7! 57. h5 e3 58. h6 e2 59. Re7 d2 60. Re8 Bg8, White resigned. ♠

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LOOKING AHEAD

SuperNationals VIII was amazing! With over 4,500 kids coming to Orlando, Florida, from around the country, it was a tremendous success. Look for extensive coverage of SuperNationals in our September issue. We'll have all the results, annotated games, and plenty of photos!

Not Often Encountered

Averbakh's 1956 theoretical on a very rare endgame

BY **GM YURI AVERBAKH**

TRANSLATED BY **DOUGLAS GRIFFIN**

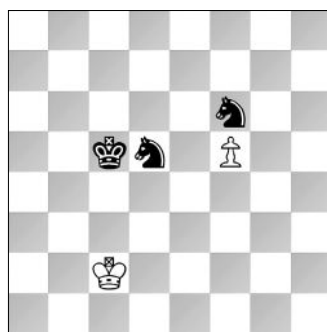
R

ECENTLY I PLAYED IN THE Moscow semi-final of the 23rd Soviet Championship. More than half of the tournament

was already over, and my results were nothing to be proud of. There were seven rounds remaining until the end of the event, and in order to qualify for the final, it was necessary to collect, from these seven games, at least as many points as I had from the first 10.

In the 12th round I faced the master Shishov. After five hours of play the game was adjourned with a positional advantage on my side.

The resumption proceeded in extremely tense fashion. Shishov defended resourcefully, continually seeking out new resources, and ultimately the game reached the following position:



1: BLACK TO MOVE

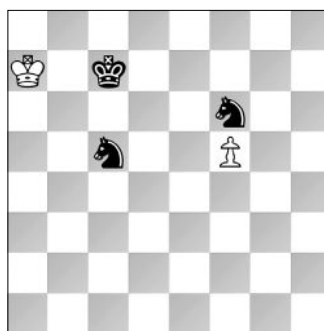
The ending with two knights against a lone pawn is encountered extremely rarely in practice, and most chessplayers are not familiar with it. It was occurring for the first time in my chess practice, and just when I absolutely had to win the game. Admittedly, I knew something of the theory of this endgame.

Approximately a year before, I had edited an article by Vitaly Chekhov entitled

“Two Knights Against a Pawn.” When the position in the diagram appeared on the demonstration board the arbiters raised their eyebrows, and one of them said “The resumption of this game will last another two days.” Indeed, it is considered that in the endgame of two knights against a pawn more than 50 moves are sometimes required, and the method of driving back the king is fairly complicated. But I hoped for the best and I got down to business by marking on my scoresheet the point at which 50 moves would be reached.

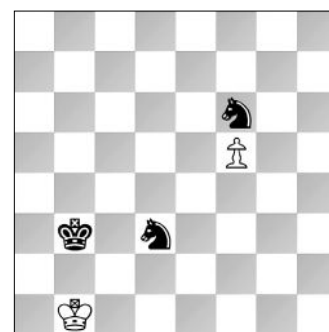
Black’s plan consists in driving the opponent’s king into a corner, limiting the sphere of its maneuverability to two squares. Then the knight which had been blocking the pawn comes into play. While the pawn promotes to a queen, Black should have time to give mate.

The first thing that must be determined is where the king should be driven to; in other words, in which corner will it be possible to deliver mate. A simple analysis shows that mate is possible on the squares a1, h1 and a8.



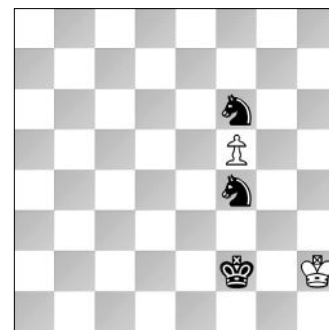
2: BLACK TO MOVE

In the position in Diagram 2, Black to play mates in five moves: 1. ... Nd5 (or 1. ... Nf4) 2. f6 Nb6 3. f7 Nc8+ 4. Ka8 Nd7 5. f8=Q Ndb6 mate.



3: BLACK TO MOVE

In the position in Diagram 3, with the king on b1, it’s mate in four: 1. ... Ne4 2. f6 Nc3+ 3. Ka1 Nb4 4. f7 Nc2 mate.



4: BLACK TO MOVE

In the position in Diagram 4 it is mate in three moves: 1. ... Ng4+ 2. Kh1 Ne2 3. f6 Ng3 mate.

Only in the h8-corner is it impossible to mate: Here the encirclement of the white king leads to stalemate.

From the position in Diagram 1, play continued as follows:

1. ... Kd4 2. Kb3

If White had played 2. Kd2, then possible is 2. ... Nc3 3. Kc2 Nce4, aiming to drive the

king to a1, as is 2. ... Ne3 3. Ke2 Nc4, aiming to drive the king to h1.

2. ... Kd3 3. Kb2 Ne3 4. Kb3 Nc2 5. Ka4

White tries to release his king from the danger zone.

5. ... Kc4 6. Ka5 Kc5 7. Ka4 Kc4

Also possible was 7. ... Nd4, but Black had decided to drive the white king to the a8-corner.

8. Ka5 Nd4 9. Kb6

The king breaks out from the edge of the board, but not for long. After 9. Ka4 Nb5 10. Ka5 Nc3 11. Kb6 Kb4 12. Kc6 Nb5 13. Kb6 Nd4 the same position as in the game is reached.

9. ... Kb4 10. Ka6

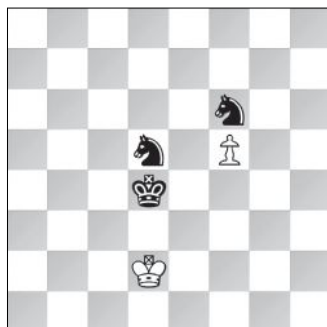
It transpires that after 10. Kc7 Kc5 11. Kd8 Nc6+ 12. Kc7 Nb4 13. Kd8 Nbd5 White's king cannot escape from the a8-corner. On 14. Kc8 there follows 14. ... Kc6 15. Kd8 Kd6 16. Kc8 Nb6+ 17. Kb7 Nc4 18. Ka6 Kc6 19. Ka7 Nd6 20. Ka6 Nb7 21. Ka7 Nc5, and Black achieves his goal.

10. ... Nc6 11. Kb6 Ne7 12. Kc7

The remainder is so simple that it does not need explanation.

12. ... Kc5 13. Kb7 Ned5 14. Ka6 Kb4! 15. Ka7 Ka5 16. Kb7 Kb5 17. Ka7 Nb4 18. Kb7 Na6 19. Kc8 Kc6 20. Kd8 Kd6 21. Kc8 Nc5 22. Kb8 Kd7 23. Ka8 Kc8 24. Ka7 Kc7 25. Ka8 Nfd7 26. Ka7 Nb8, White resigned.

But perhaps White made Black's play easier by voluntarily heading to a1 with the king? We will test this. Instead of 2. Kb3 let us play 2. Kd2 and now direct White's king to the h1-corner.



5: BLACK TO MOVE

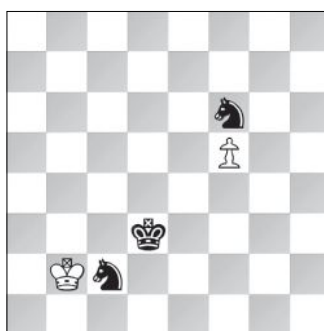
2. ... Ne3 3. Ke2 3. Kc1 leads to mate in the a1-corner after 3. ... Kc3 4. Kb1 Nc4 5. Kc1 Nb2 6. Kb1 Nd3 7. Ka2 Kb4. **3. ... Nc4 4. Kf3 Ke5! 5. Kg3 Ke4 6. Kf2 Nd2 7. Ke2 Nf3 8. Kf2** Or 8. Kd1 Kd3 9. Kc1 Kc3 10. Kd1 Nd4 11. Kc1



GM Yuri Averbakh,
Wijk aan Zee, 1963

Ne2+ 12. Kd1 Kd3 13. Ke1 Nc3. **8. ... Nd4 9. Ke1 Kd3! 10. Kd1 Ne2 11. Ke1 Nc3 12. Kf1 Ke4 13. Kf2 Kf4 14. Kg2 Nce4 15. Kh3 Nf2+ 16. Kh4 Nd3 17. Kh3 Ne1 18. Kh4 Ng2+ 19. Kh3 Kf3 20. Kh2 Nf4**, and White's king is in the h1-corner.

Let us suppose that instead of 5. Ka4, White played (in the continuation from the first diagram) 5. Kb2.



6: BLACK TO MOVE

Then Black plays **5. ... Nd4**, depriving the white king of the b3-square. **6. Kc1** Or 6. Ka3 Kc4 7. Ka4 Nb5 8. Ka5 Nc3. **6. ... Kc3 7. Kd1 Nc2 8. Ke2 Nb4 9. Kd1 Nbd5! 10. Ke2 Kc2 11. Ke1 Nc3 12. Kf2 Kd2 13. Kf3 Ncd5 14. Kf2 Nb4 15. Kf3 Nd3 16. Kg2 Ke2 17. Kg3 Ke3 18. Kh4 Kf4 19. Kh3 Ne1 20. Kh4 Ng2+ 21.**

Kh3 Kf3 22. Kh2 Nf4, and the white king is in the h1-corner.

We note that the method of driving back the king is the same for the a8-corner as it is for the h1-corner.

What may be concluded? — the reader has the right to ask.

The conclusion is as follows: The endgame with two knights against a pawn, in particular the case (with the pawn on f5) which occurred in the game Shishov – Averbakh, is quite simple. It is only necessary to know how to drive back the king, and to consistently carry out the plan. ♠

GM Yuri Averbakh (1922-2022) was a Candidate for the world championship at Zurich 1953 and a Soviet champion. He was also a noted chess journalist, serving as the editor of both Shakhmaty v SSSR and Shakhmatny Bulletin. But Averbakh was perhaps best known for his multi-volume works on theoretical endgames, which were lugged from tournament to tournament by the world's elite in the days before engines.

This article, "Polozhenie, kotoroe ne chasto vstrechaetsya," was published in Shakhmaty v SSSR (#3, 1956). It appears here without corrections — it is accurate (if not exhaustive) according to the tablebases!

A Caffeine Fix

Johannes Zukertort knew there was a time and place for coffeehouse chess.

BY **BRUCE PANDOLFINI**

In an infamous 1964 essay, Bobby Fischer described Emanuel Lasker as a “coffeehouse player,” saying that Lasker knew nothing about openings and didn’t understand positional chess. Fischer later revised his thinking on Lasker, but the point is that for many the term “coffeehouse chess” conjures up the image of a player who relies on tactics and risky traps at the expense of sound positional play.

Such dicey play can occur practically anywhere combative amateurs play chess, but it does also occur in coffeehouses. In this month’s encounter, we see a game Carl Mayet and Johannes Zukertort (Black) played in 1868 in coffeehouse style — and in an actual Berlin café.

KING’S GAMBIT ACCEPTED (C33)

C. Mayet

J.H. Zukertort

Berlin Café, 1868

1. e4 e5 2. f4 exf4 3. Bc4 d5 4. exd5 Qh4+ 5. Kf1



BLACK TO MOVE

Now ensure that the position above is set up on your chessboard. As you play through the

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

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

Black defends the f-pawn and develops soundly. The g8-knight now has the option of going to e7.

6. **Nf3**

This is a natural developing move, attacking the queen. **

6. **Par Score 4** **Qh6**

Black retreats the queen to safety, while keeping the f4-pawn bolstered.

7. **d4**

White continues with development. In time, he will have to worry about his king. **

7. **Par Score 5** **Ne7**

Black develops to avoid being checked on the e-file. From e7, the knight has access to f5 and g6.

8. **Bb5+**

Giving a check is potentially trickier, but 8. Nc3, getting out a new piece, made more sense. **

8. **Par Score 5** **Bd7**

This is fine, but you may accept **full credit** for 8. ... c6, getting into the spirit of things.

9. **Bxd7+****

9. **Par Score 5** **Nxd7**

White’s last few moves have sped up Black’s development.

10. **c4**

After this advance White threatens to snare the d6-bishop. **

10. **Par Score 5** **c5**

The active response, but you may accept **full credit** for 10. ... b6.

11. **dx6 e.p.**

White eradicates his doubled pawn. **

11. **Par Score 5** **Nxc6**

You may accept **full credit** for 11. ... bxc6, which may be a tad safer.

12. **c5**

White forges ahead with his own assault. After all, it’s Berlin; it’s 1868, and it’s a coffee house. **

12. **Par Score 6** **Bc7**

Black does not get quite enough play to justify 12. ... Bxc5, but you may accept **full credit** for 12. ... Be7, obstructing the e-file from checks.

13. **Nc3**

Having gone this route, White might have continued 13. Qe2+. **

13. **Par Score 5** **O-O-O**

Zukertort extricates his king from the center and does so with a threat (14. ... Nxc5).

14. **Qe2**

White in turn gets his queen off the d-file. **

14. **Par Score 6** **Nf6**

Black redeploys this knight toward the king-side. You may accept **full credit** for either 14. ... Rhe8 or 14. ... g5. Black is simply better.

ABCS OF CHESS

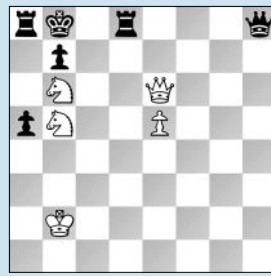
THESE PROBLEMS ARE ALL related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 63.

JULY EXERCISE:

When you learn a new technique or system, try explaining it to someone else. This will tell you how well you really know it. If you're struggling to clarify things, if you're unsure of the logic of what you've been working on, it will be obvious to you and your listeners. You can revisit what you've studied, and maybe you'll find out something else — that you enjoy teaching as well.

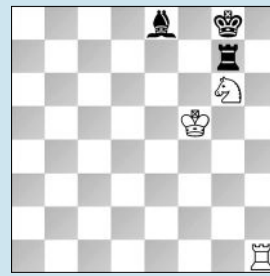
PROBLEM 1

Mating net



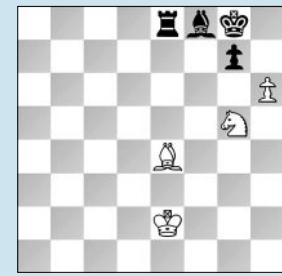
PROBLEM 2

Mating net



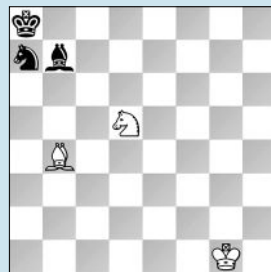
PROBLEM 3

Mating net



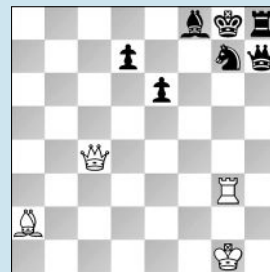
PROBLEM 4

Mating net



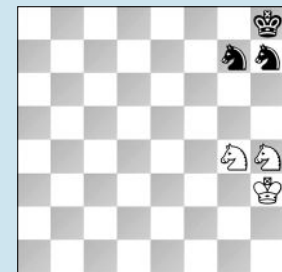
PROBLEM 5

Mating net



PROBLEM 6

Mating net



15. Qc4

White upholds d4, while eyeballing the f7-pawn. **

15. Par Score 6

Rhe8

Best, activating Black's last piece.

16. b4

White correctly decides that 16. Qxf7 Nxd4 is not to his taste. **

16. Par Score 5

Ng4

This is more in the coffeehouse style, but you may accept **full credit** for 16. ... Qg6, guarding f7 and positioning the queen for invasion.

17. b5

Having already played the b-pawn, White uses it to advance his attack. **

17. Par Score 6

Nxd4

What's this about? Doesn't it sac a piece?

18. h4

Black's last move was a deflection sacrifice. On 18. Nxd4, there follows 18. ... Qh4 (**1 bonus point**). The text stops that possibility, but now the g3-square is weak. **

18. Par Score 4

Nf5

White is clearly lost. His rooks and bishop occupy their original squares and deadly knight checks are menaced.

19. Qxf7

A dying man can eat anything, in and out of a coffeehouse. **

19. Par Score 5

Ng3+

20. Kg1 **

20. Par Score 7

Qd6

Zukertort didn't need caffeine to find this move. If 21. cxd6, then 21. ... Bb6+ mates (**1 bonus point**).

21. Ba3

Finally, White's a1-rook can get into action. But it's too late. **

21. Par Score 5

Qd3

Various threats are in the air, including 22. ... Qe3 mate.

22. Nd5

Nothing could have saved White. This deals with the threat on e3, but it doesn't save the day. **

22. Par Score 7

Qf1+!

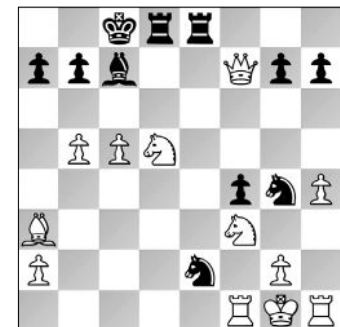
A scintillating conclusion!

23. Rxf1 **

23. Par Score 5

Ne2 mate!

Johannes Hermann Zukertort really knew how to light up a room. ♠



POSITION AFTER 23. ... Ne2 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

ChukIRL

A chess legend returns to the top 100 with a dominant performance.

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN



IF YOU'RE A SPORTS FAN like me, you might be enjoying the commercials where "ChuckIRL" (basketball hall-of-famer Charles Barkley) is tormented by his AI alter ego, "ChuckGPT." Well, an AI version of Ukrainian grandmaster Vasyl Ivanchuk would be awfully knowledgeable about chess, but the real-life version is on a pretty good roll. A busy 19-day span concluded with a stunning 8/9 in the Menorca Open, enabling "ChukIRL" to pump 40 points into his FIDE rating, jumping to 2644 — an impressive mark for a man of 56.

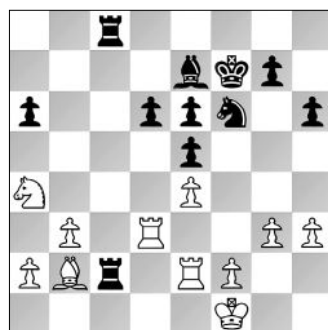
Ivanchuk had some particularly interesting endgame adventures in Menorca, all of which ended in his favor. In the fourth round he won a long struggle over a Cuban grandmaster 30 years his junior.

EXPERIENCE COUNTS

GM Vasyl Ivanchuk (2604)

GM Dylan Isidro Berdayes Ason (2478)

Menorca Open (4), 04.24.2025



WHITE TO MOVE

38. Nc3?

This careless move should have been replaced by 38. Rc3 with an equal game.

38. ... Rxe2 39. Kxe2 d5! 40. f3 d4 41. Na4 Nh5

White's position looks great, except he can't defend the g3-pawn.

42. Kd1 Nxb3 43. Nb6 Rc7 44. Nc4 Kf6 45. Rd2 g5 46. Rc2 Bd8 47. Ba3 Be7 48. Bc1 Bd8 49. Rh2



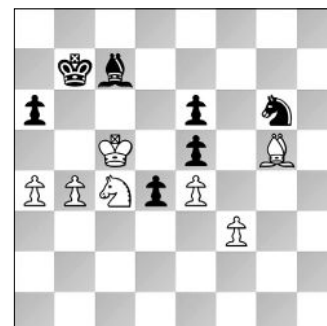
49. ... Rg7?

It seems that Ivanchuk was the one pressing for the win despite the pawn minus. But 49. ... Rh7, preventing White's next move, would have retained an advantage.

50. h4! gxh4 51. Bxh6 Rg8 52. Rxh4 Bc7 53. Ke1 Kg6 54. Rg4+ Kf7 55. Rxg8 Kxg8 56. a4 Nh5 57. Bg5 Kf7 58. b4 Ke8 59. Ke2 Kd7 60. Kd2 Kc6 61. Kd3 Bb8 62. Na5+ Kb6 63. Bd8+ Ka7 64. Kc4 Nf4?

This is the first moment where White's advantage reaches decisive proportions. Black needed to play 64. ... Bd6 to stop further penetration.

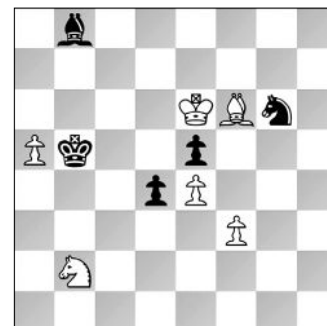
65. Bg5 Ng6 66. Kc5 Bc7 67. Nc4 Kb7



68. a5?

This looks reasonable, but it lets Black off the hook. Only 68. Bf6!! gives White more than a slight advantage, but it puts Black in a kind of *zugzwang*. (It gets two exclaims because I am surprised it is so much stronger than other moves.) Black's defenses fall short, e.g. 68. ... d3 69. Bg5 Nf8 70. Nb2 White picks up the d-pawn and comes back for more, or 68. ... Bb8 69. b5 axb5 70. axb5 Bc7 71. b6 Bb8 72. Kb5 wins. Alternatively, 68. b5 axb5 69. axb5 (69. Kxb5 Nf4 is equal) 69. ... Nf8 doesn't get the job done.

68. ... Bb8 69. b5 axb5 70. Kxb5 Bc7 71. Bf6 Ka7 72. Kc6 Bb8 73. Kd7 Ka6 74. Kxe6 Kb5 75. Nb2



75. ... Kxa5?

Black needed to free his knight with 75. ... Nf8+ 76. Kf5 Nd7 77. Bg7 Kxa5 78. Ke6 Nc5+ 79. Kd5 Kb4 (active defense is necessary; Black gets squeezed after 79. ... Nd7 80. Kc6 Nb6 81. Bf8 Ka6 82. Bc5 Nc8 83. Nd3 Na7+ 84. Kd5 Nb5 85. Nxe5) 80. Bxe5 Bxe5 81. Kxe5 Kc3 82. Nd1+ Kc4 with a draw.

76. Kf5 Nf4 77. Bxe5 Bxe5 78. Kxe5 Ne2 79. f4 Kb4 80. f5 Kc3 81. Na4+

White can start choosing between ways to win. Ivanchuk didn't want to bother with queen versus knight, but 81. f6 Kxb2 82. f7 d3 83. f8=Q d2 84. Qb4+ Kc2 85. Qa4+ Kc1 86. Qc4+ Kd1 87. Kd6 Ke1 88. Qb4 wins easily enough.

81. ... Kb4 82. Nb6

It's an even better moment for 82. f6 Kxa4 83. f7 d3 84. f8=Q d2 85. Qd8.

82. ... d3 83. Nd5+ Kc5 84. f6 d2 85. f7 d1=Q 86. f8=Q+ Kc4

Chukky finishes with style. Any other king move allows forced mate.

87. Ne3+, Black resigned.

The queen drops.

After besting the top seed GM Nihal Sarin in Round 5 (in an endgame, naturally), Ivanchuk slid into the last round with 7/8. Playing against a talented 18-year-old Indian grandmaster, Ivanchuk made his experience count, albeit only after a few anxious moments.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, KAN VARIATION (B43)

GM M. Pranesh (2572)

GM Vasyl Ivanchuk (2604)

Menorca (9), 04.27.2025

1. e4 c5 2. Nc3 e6 3. Nf3 a6 4. d4 cxd4 5. Nxd4 Qc7 6. Bd3 Bc5 7. Nb3 Be7 8. Qg4 Bf6 9. Bf4 Bxc3+ 10. bxc3 Qxc3+ 11. Kf1

White would have strong compensation after 11. Bd2. Chukky slithers into an endgame quite nicely from here.

11. ... Nc6 12. Bd6 h5 13. Qg5 Qf6 14. Qc5 e5 15. Nd2 b6 16. Qa3 Rh6 17. Nc4 b5 18. Nb6 Qxd6 19. Qxd6 Rxd6 20. Nxa8 Nb4 21. Nc7+

The not-at-all-obvious computer recommendation is 21. a4 Bb7 22. axb5 Bxa8 23. bxa6, and Stockfish claims the a-pawn balances the fact that Black now has two pieces for a rook.

21. ... Kd8 22. Nd5 Nxd3

I like this a bit better than 22. ... Nxd5 23. exd5 Rxd5.

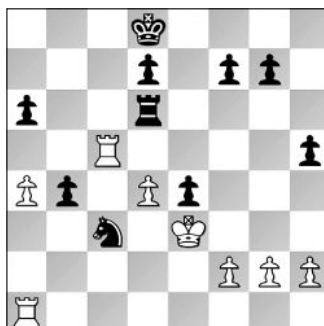
23. cxd3 Bb7 24. a4 Bxd5 25. exd5 b4 26. d4 e4!?

White is rather desperately trying to carve open lines for his rooks. The engine says to take on d4, but Ivanchuk is hoping to keep his structure intact.

27. Ke2 Ne7 28. Rhc1

Black's formidable pawn phalanx would be neutralized somewhat by 28. f3 exf3+ 29. Kxf3.

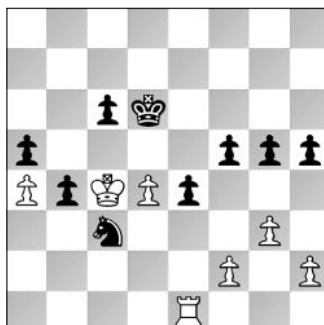
28. ... Nxd5 29. Rc5 Nc3+ 30. Ke3



30. ... Rc6!?

This decision intrigues me, as the conventional wisdom is to keep a pair of rooks on the board when you are down the Exchange. Arguably, 30. ... Rg6 is more powerful, and yet Ivanchuk's move does produce an airtight winning formation.

31. Rxc6 dxc6 32. Kd2 a5 33. Kc2 Kd7 34. Kb3 Kd6 35. Kc4 f5 36. g3 g5 37. Re1 Nd5 38. Kb3 Nc3 39. Kc4



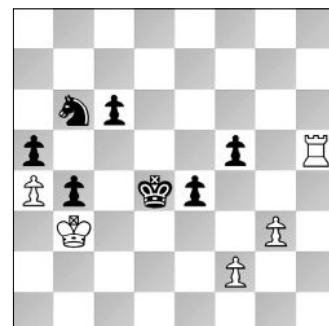
39. ... g4?

I don't want to give Vasyl two question marks for this move, which I cannot at all comprehend. Black simply gives away an important asset, the ability to make a passed pawn through the middle. There was a pretty straightforward path to victory with 39. ... Nxa4, taking a pawn on the queenside to get his other pawns blasting forward. If 40. Ra1 Nb2+ 41. Kb3 Nd3 42. Rxa5 f4 43. Rxc5 e3 (more direct than 43. ... f3) 44. fxe3 fxe3 45. Rxh5 e2 46. Rh6+ Kd5 47. Rh5+ Kxd4 48. Rh4+ Kd5 49. Rh5+ Ne5 makes a queen, and if 40. Kb3 Nc3 41. Ra1 f4 42. Rxa5 f3 43. Rxc5 Nd1! and two advanced passed pawns will crash through, e.g. 44. Rxh5 Nxf2 45. Re5 Nd3.

40. Rh1 Nd5 41. h3 Nb6+ 42. Kb3 gxh3?

Ivanchuk probably noticed that 42. ... Kd5 43. hxg4 hxg4 44. Rh6! (44. Rc1 loses to 44. ... Nd7) 44. ... Nc4 45. Rf6 is only equal. The text leads to huge complications but objectively White should come out on top.

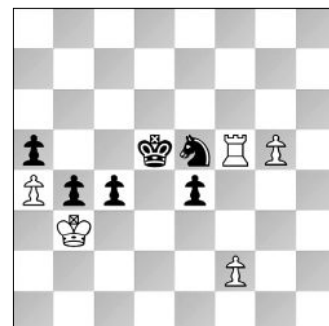
43. Rxh3 Kd5 44. Rxh5 Kxd4



45. Rh6!

This move turns the tables, as the pin slows Black down considerably. 45. Rxf5 c5 would flow much better for Black, but one move — 46. Kc2!! — would be good enough for a draw.

45. ... Kd5 46. Rf6 Nc4 47. Rxf5+ Ne5 48. g4 c5 49. g5 c4+



50. Kc2?

With hindsight it is easy to see why it is important to not allow ... b4-b3+ with check; perhaps White was pressured by the clock to make a quick decision. Correct was 50. Kb2! Kd4 51. Rf8 Nd3+ 52. Kb1 b3 53. Rd8+! (53. g6 c3 54. Rc8 c2+ 55. Rxc2 bxc2+ 56. Kxc2 Nb4+ and the knight stops the pawn) 50. ... Ke5 54. Rc8 Kf5 (but White is in time after 54. ... Kd4 56. g6) 55. Rxc4 Nxf2 56. Rc5+ Kg6 57. Rxa5 and the a-pawn will win the game.

In a further irony, the final king move produces the third result: 50. Ka2 b3+ 51. Ka3 Kd4 52. g6! Nxc6 53. Rxa5 Ne5 54. Ra8 with a draw in the offing.

50. ... Kd4 51. Rf6 b3+ 52. Kb2 Nd3+ 53. Ka3 Kc3 54. Rh6

54. g6 b2 55. Rb6 Nb4 wins.

54. ... b2

Ivanchuk again gets to choose his style: 54. ... e3 55. Rh1 (55. fxe3 Ne1) 55. ... e2 56. g6 e1=Q 57. Rxe1 Nxe1 and mate next.

55. Rh1 Nc1, White resigned.

On 56. g6 Black could underpromote for maximum fun: 56. ... b1=N mate. ♠

Beef and Burns from Days Gone By

Willy Hendriks looks at another rivalry from days past over the direction of chess.



WILLY HENDRIKS HAS WRITTEN some of the most original and entertaining books of the last 15 years. His controversial *Move First, Think Later* is a critique of instructional chess

books which incorporates a great deal of commentary on how the mind of a chess-player works; *The Ink War* is a historical book about the journalistic rivalry between William Steinitz and Johannes Zukertort. I reviewed *On the Origin of Good Moves*, a fine book about the evolution of chess style, in the November 2020 issue of *Chess Life*. All these works are entertaining and thought-provoking.

The Philosopher and the Housewife is also historical, centered on the lives and rivalry of chess legends Aron Nimzowitsch and Siegbert Tarrasch. Hendriks walks us through their careers, unifying his story by presenting all 12 games played between the two over 25 years. Fortunately these are all full of fight and content, with only one fairly uneventful draw.

Hendriks first looks in some detail at the development of chess up to Tarrasch and Nimzowitsch's time, including commentary on Steinitz, Chigorin, Lasker, and others, with an emphasis on their styles. In anticipation of what he later says about his main protagonists, Hendriks shows in detail that the many claims of "philosophic" or "psychological" motivations for the moves of these players are implausible at best, and that chess evolved organically rather than

through major conceptual leaps.

This leads into the main theme of the book. Tarrasch's books *Dreihundert Schachpartien* (1895) and *Die moderne Schachpartie* (1912) sets forth the general principles of strategy which can be applied to practical play. Hendriks quotes Tarrasch's preface to the latter book: "I do not limit myself to the game at hand ... most often I abstract from the specific case to the general and I set up a number of principles and doctrines, whose knowledge will improve the level of play enormously." It's fair to say that Tarrasch's books were the closest thing to a thorough compilation of strategic principles through the first two decades of the 20th century.

In his masterpiece *My System* (first published in 1925), Nimzowitsch claims to have overturned Tarrasch's precepts with another set of principles and laws, saying, "Never before has even the slightest attempt been made to fathom and formulate the laws of chess strategy ... since Tarrasch's postulates ... can really make no such claim; at best they are 'practical hints from an experienced housewife,' as I call them ... what I want to offer here is a harmoniously structured series of laws on chess strategy."

Note the moniker "housewife," which Hendriks refers to in his title; one of the entertaining aspects of his work consists of the (dated) insults and bitter attacks his protagonists engage in. In any case, Hendriks devotes a large amount of this work examining claims both Tarrasch and

Nimzowitsch make, and positions which relate to their areas of disagreement. These investigations are arguably the most instructive parts of the book and would repay study by any student bent upon improvement. Hendriks also compares how later "modern" and "hypermodern" players such as Reti and Bogoljubow dealt with the same issues.

A third major character comes into his own in the middle chapters of the book. Chapter 13, called "The Theoretician," introduces Semyon Alapin, a Russian who, as Hendriks puts it, "participated in many top tournaments during his long career, usually finishing somewhere in the middle." Alapin wrote a lot about chess, with strong views and an opinionated style. He fits in perfectly with this book, because he not only rejected the theoretical claims of both Tarrasch and Nimzowitsch but questioned their entire framework of describing chess "laws" and "principles" and "systems."

To Alapin, putting the general truths of chess into words was at best only a guide and often meaningless unless expressed in terms of concrete variations: "The most important difficulty here, in my opinion, is the far too great power of 'words' on our mind, which, captivated by the enchanting sound of an easily grasped, elegant, and fascinating dialectic, almost always allows itself to be carried away into overestimating the practical value of general considerations." Alapin, who also didn't get along with numerous players and wasn't content with polite argumentation, overtly ridiculed both Tarrasch and Nimzowitsch in his articles.

Nimzowitsch responded in kind, saying, for example, "One fine day someone comes up to me with the attempt to refute!!! my laws — by variations!!! But if Mr. Alapin, for he was the hero, believed that I and my laws would be fatally struck ... by variations, arbitrarily thrown together without any connecting principle, one can only marvel at the naivety of this 'artist' of variations."

Referring to this quote, Hendriks notes: "Inadvertently, Nimzowitsch thereby described very precisely how the engine has handled chess." A good point. Ultimately, general principles can get in the way of optimal play (such as modern 3700-rated engines achieve), but on the other hand they offer the developing student a way to get a handle on the complexities of chess without going insane.

The Philosopher and the Housewife devotes much of three chapters to the published arguments of these three players, which, although less extensive, resemble the bitter

disputes between Zukertort and Steinitz described in *The Ink War*. Interestingly, the latter were also concerned with “modern chess” and Steinitz’s claims to have revolutionized chess and formed a new “school.” The irony is that, although both Tarrasch and Nimzowitsch were much stronger players and contributed many more original ideas to chess, Hendriks clearly feels that Alapin was correct in his fundamental criticism of their comprehensive claims to have described chess in terms of rules and systems and general principles.

Describing the search for new ideas, Hendriks says “In that constant competition, driven by opening innovations, a lot of human ingenuity is active. But that ingenuity does not consist of ‘big ideas’ from which new variations follow. Those big ideas are, at best, very modest signposts. The dynamics of competitive practice are much more characterized by experimentation, trial and error and, often, improvisation and accidental inspiration.” In the last chapter, he says, “Nimzowitsch’s attempt to turn his ideas into a conceptual system did not really succeed. However, that isn’t necessary at all, because those ideas are not ‘behind’ the moves — they are the moves!” Indeed, Hendriks’ own *Move First, Think Later* might be said to revive Alapin’s fundamental philosophy, albeit with much more detailed evidence and research than Alapin himself could offer.

One idea that pervades the book is that the styles of great players are often stereotyped, as if they only understood or preferred a limited range of positional types. Hendriks talks about how someone whom chess commentators characterize a “classical” or “romantic” player actually understands how to play a wide variety of “modern” positions, and how the stylistic boundaries between players are surprisingly flexible. Tarrasch, for example, readily absorbed new ideas. Even at age 64, he played the fashionable (and non-classical) Budapest Gambit, Queen’s Indian, Bogo-Indian and Nimzo-Indian, including these games:

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E21)

Karl Gilg
Siegbert Tarrasch
Semmering, 1926

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Nf3 Ne4
5. Qd3 f5 6. g3 b6 7. Bg2 Bb7 8. 0-0 Nxc3
9. bxc3 Be4 10. Qd2 Be7 11. Ne1 Bxg2 12.
Nxc2 0-0 13. Qd3 Nc6 14. Re1 Na5! 15.
Be3 Qc8!



A standard plan to exploit White’s queenside light-square weaknesses. Black intends to put the queen on a6.

16. c5 d5! 17. cxd6 e.p. cxd6 18. Bd2 d5
19. f3 Qc4 20. Qe3 Qc6 21. Qd3 Nc4 22.
Bf4 g5!?

22. ... Bf6 was simpler, with the idea 23. e4?
dxe4 24. fxe4 e5! 25. dxe5 Rad8.

23. Bc1 Rf7!

Hendriks: “Prophylaxis! Black anticipates White’s next advance.”

24. e4 fxe4 25. fxe4 Raf8 26. e5? Rf3 27.
Be3 g4 28. Qe2 Nxe3 29. Nxe3 Qxc3 30.
Rad1 h5 31. Rd3 Qc7 32. Rdd1 Bg5 33. Ng2
Qc3 34. Qb5 Rf2, White resigned.

Hendriks: “A Nimzo-Indian model game. This game would not have been out of place in *My System*.”

Here’s Tarrasch’s next-to-last encounter with Nimzowitsch, where he dares to use the hypermodern’s own ideas against him:

BOGO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E11)

Aron Nimzowitsch
Siegbert Tarrasch
Semmering, 1926

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. d4 Bb4+ 4. Bd2
Bxd2+ 5. Nbx d2 d6 6. e4 0-0 7. Bd3 Qe7
8. a3 e5 9. d5



A Bogo-Indian with KID-like features.

9. ... Nh5! 10. g3

10. 0-0 Nf4 11. Bc2 Bg4 is unclear.

10. ... g6 11. 0-0 Ng7 12. Re1

Aimed at preventing Black’s next move.

12. ... f5!?

12. ... a5 and 12. ... Bg4 are more solid alternatives.

13. c5! f4

Not 13. ... dxc5? 14. exf5 and 15. Nxe5, or 13. ... fxe4 14. Nxe4 Bg4 15. Be2.

14. cxd6 cxd6 15. Rc1 Bg4 16. Be2 Ne8 17. Nc4!?

White gets a small but definite advantage after 17. Nh4! Bxe2 (17. ... Bh3 18. Bg4) 18. Qxe2.

17. ... Nd7 18. b4 Qf6

Black had 18. ... Nb6!.

19. Kg2 g5

Black still had 19. ... Nb6!.

20. h3 Bh5 21. g4 Bg6 22. Nfd2 Qg7 23. Na5!?

Ndf6 24. f3 Rf7
The position is sufficiently locked for Black to draw.

25. Rc3 Rc7 26. Rxc7 Qxc7 27. Qc1 Qd7
28. Qb2 Rc8 29. Rc1 Rc7 30. Rc4 Rxc4 31.
Ndx c4 h5 32. gxh5!?, draw.

A slightly odd finish, but a fair result to a game that would fit well into tournament play in the 1950s and later.

I love this book, but I’m a little hesitant to recommend it to young players, who might be bored by chess history or feel that the ideas being discussed are only marginally relevant to what they encounter in today’s game. Probably only a subset of intellectually inclined young students will find it inspiring, although some in that subset might feel that it’s one of the best chess books they’ve ever encountered. In any case, I’m much more confident in saying that almost all lovers of chess history will be delighted by Hendriks’ deep research and relaxed and story-telling style. Moreover, many older and experienced players will be fascinated, as I was, by the look back into the historical development of chess thought and how it evolved into today’s game. Congratulations to Willy Hendriks for another superb effort. ♠

Hendriks, Willy. *The Philosopher and the Housewife. Alkmaar: New in Chess, 2025. 392 pp. ISBN 978-9083483351, \$29.95.*

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

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Nationals

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

US Blind Open Championship

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49554
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook Address: 2855 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 Overall Prize Fund: \$5,000 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Kevin Bachler • Contact@cavemanchess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

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JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49551
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook Address: 2855 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 Overall Prize Fund: \$13,000 GP Pts: 120 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Kevin Bachler • Contact@cavemanchess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

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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

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 US National G30 and G60 Chess Championship Tournament

SEPTEMBER 27-28, 2025 — IA TLA# 49959
Site: Holiday Inn & Suites@Ameristar Address: 2202

River Road, Council Bluffs, IA 51501 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Seetharaman Renganathan • chess-rockerz@gmail.com • www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089563144798

Grand Prix

The Grand Prix point totals reflect all rated event information as of June 13, 2025, for the 2025 Grand Prix. These standings are updated regularly, but should be considered unofficial. Visit www.uschess.org/data-page/GP-standings.php for up-to-date information.

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

2nd: \$2,500	3rd: \$1,000
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10th: \$200	

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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

Texas Chess Open

JULY 4-6, 2025 — TX TLA# 49732
Site: Sheraton DFW Airport Hotel Address: 4440 West John Carpenter Frwy, Irving, TX 75063 Overall

Prize Fund: \$4,050 GP Pts: 30 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Coppell Chess Club • scoppell.chessclub@gmail.com • 2145346730 • coppellchessclub.com/tournaments/texas-state-open-chess-tournament%2E%80%93july-4-2025

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@sbcglobal.net • 916-524-9479 • sacramentochessclub.org/index.htm

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Big July Dragon Knight Grand Prix

JULY 5, 2025 — NC TLA# 49876
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,124 GP Pts: 15 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • www.dragonknightchess.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

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Dragon Knight Paper Bag Day Grand Prix

JULY 12, 2025 — NC TLA# 49875
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

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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

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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

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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

GRAND PRIX

Caveman Chess Festival

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook Address: 2855

Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 Overall Prize Fund: \$40,000 GP Pts: 370 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Kevin Bachler • Contact@cavemanchess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

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Dragon Knight World Chess Day Grand Prix

JULY 20, 2025 — NC TLA# 50287
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

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JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49550
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook Address: 2855 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 Overall Prize Fund: \$10,000 GP Pts: 100 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Kevin Bachler • Contact@cavemanchess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

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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

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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

GRAND PRIX

2nd Annual Wilkins Cup

AUGUST 2, 2025 — NE TLA# 49653
Site: Ovation Heartwood Preserve Address: 470 Maxwell PLZ, Omaha, NE 68154 Overall Prize Fund: \$2,500 GP Pts: 30 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Bruce G Draney • gambiteer49@yahoo.com • 4023126335 • kingregistration.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess Friendship Day Grand Prix

AUGUST 3, 2025 — NC TLA# 50289
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

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

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August 8-10 or 9-10, 2025 - \$30,000 guaranteed prizes!

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

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Best Western Royal Plaza, 181 Boston Post Road W, Marlborough MA 01752. Free parking. 7 sections.

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U2100, U1900, U1700 sections: Prizes each section \$2000-1000-500-300-200. Under 2100 is also FIDE rated.

U1500, U1300 sections: Prizes each section \$1400-800-400-300-200.

U1100 section: \$800-500-300-200-100.

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Mixed doubles: best male/female 2-player team combined score (team average under 2200) among all sections: \$1000-500-300. May play different sections and schedules; register (no extra fee) before both players begin round 2.

Cannot play below Online Regular rating minus 100 points. August Official ratings used, unofficial or Online Regular ratings usually used if otherwise unrated. Players scoring 8 or more in 2025 World Open U2200 or below must play in higher section than World Open.

Top 6 sections entry fee: \$158 online by 8/12, \$180 later online or at site until 1 hour before round 1. GMs free, \$150 from prize. Re-entry \$80; no Premier to Premier.

U1100 Section EF: all \$40 less than top 6 sections fee. U1100 re-entry \$60. No checks, credit cards OK.

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

Online entry fee \$5 less to MACA members, join/renew at masschess.org.

4-day schedule: Reg Thu to 6 pm, rds Thu 7, Fri 11 & 5, Sat & Sun 10 & 4.

3-day schedule: Reg. Fri to 10 am, rds Fri 11, 2 & 5, merges with 4-day, Fri 5 pm.

2-day schedule (Under 1300, Under 1100 only): Reg. Sat to 9, rds Sat 10, 1, 4, 7, Sun 10, 1 & 4.

Half-point byes OK all rds (limit 2, must commit before rd 3). Bring set, board, clock if possible- **none supplied.**

Hotel rates: \$134-134, includes hot breakfast, use link at chessevents.us or call 508-460-0700, reserve by 7/30.

Enter online: Chessaction.com. No mail entry. Refunds, \$15 service charge.

Email: director@chess.us (also see chesstour.info, chessevents.us).

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

Fund: \$30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y
Residency: N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com
chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX

The 5th Annual Joe Yun Memorial

AUGUST 8-10, 2025 — OH TLA# 50588
Site: The Hilton Garden Inn Akron **Address:** 1307 East Market Street, Akron, OH, 44305 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 60 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y
Residency: N **Org:** Progress With Chess • eliot@progresswithchess.org • (914) 434-2557 • www.progresswithchess.org/jun

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

2025 DKC Heart of the Carolinas FIDE Summer Classic

AUGUST 8-10, 2025 — NC TLA# 50328
Site: Winston-Salem Marriott **Address:** 425 North Cherry Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101 **Overall Prize Fund:** see online TLA **GP Pts:** 60 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y
Residency: N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • www.dragonknightchess.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:** N **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@chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

11th annual Continental Open Blitz Championship

AUGUST 16, 2025 — MA TLA# 49053
Site: Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel **Address:** 181 Boston Post Road W, Marlborough, MA 01752 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$500 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y
Residency: N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@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 46241 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 100 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y
Residency: N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@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@chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX

4th Nashville Summer Classic

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — TN TLA# 50205
Site: Millennium Maxwell House Hotel **Address:** 2025 Rosa L Parks Blvd, Nashville, TN 37228 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 60 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Nashville Chess Center • director@nashvillechess.org • 6292544737 • ncc.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=4091&club_id=1648444&item_id=2562865 **Heritage Event • Grand Prix • cd**

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@chesstour.com • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 Michigan Open

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — MI TLA# 49877
Site: Clarion Lansing Hotel & Conference Center **Address:** 7501 W Saginaw Hwy, Lansing, MI 48917 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$5,100 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Michigan Chess Association • jeffchess64@gmail.com • 8109557271 • www.michess.org/

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

2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
Site: Holiday Inn Resort **Address:** 3011 Mailing Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34747 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$11,500 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Boca Raton Chess Club • jon@bocachess.com • 561-302-4377 • www.bocachess.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!

AUG. 29-SEPT. 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@chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

Louisiana State Championship

AUG. 30-SEPT. 1, 2025 — LA TLA# 47837
Site: Loyola University **Address:** 6363 St Charles Ave,

New Orleans, LA 70118 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3,000 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Downriver Chess Club & Louisiana Chess Association • info@downriverchess.com • 202-656-9754 • downriverchess.com

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 Michigan Speed Championship

AUGUST 30, 2025 — MI TLA# 49878
Site: Clarion Lansing Hotel & Conference Center **Address:** 7501 W Saginaw Hwy, Lansing, MI 48917 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$600 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Michigan Chess Association • jeffchess64@gmail.com • 8109557271 • www.michess.org

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

11th annual New York State Blitz Championship

AUGUST 31, 2025 — NY TLA# 49023
Site: Albany Marriott **Address:** 189 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12205 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$800 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 Peter P. Lahde Tennessee Open & Blitz Championship

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2025 — TN TLA# 49640
Site: The Center at Fairfield Glade **Address:** 128 Stonehenge Dr, Crossville, TN 38558 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Cumberland County Chess Club • cumberlandcountychessclub@gmail.com • (931) 200-0875

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

14th annual Hartford Open

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — CT TLA# 50123
Site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel At Bradley International Airport **Address:** 1 Bradley Airport, Windsor Locks, CT 06096 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 60 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com

57th annual Atlantic Open

August 22-24 or 23-24, 2025 - Omni Shoreham Hotel, DC

A Heritage Event With \$30,000 GUARANTEED PRIZES!

5-round Swiss, 40/80, SD/30; d30
(2-day option, rds 1-2 G/60 d10),
Omni Shoreham Hotel, 2500 Calvert
St. NW, Washington, DC 20008.

7 sections. 150 Grand Prix Points.
Major Section (1900/up): \$3000-
1500-700-400-300, clear/tiebreak 1st
\$100 bonus, top USCF Under 2300
\$1300-700. FIDE rated.

U2100: \$2000-1000-500-400-300.
FIDE rated.

U1900: \$2000-1000-500-400-300.

U1700: \$1800-900-500-300-200.

U1500: \$1500-800-400-300-200.

U1300: \$1300-700-400-300-200.

U1000: \$800-400-300-200-100.

Unrated prize limits: U1000
\$150, U1300 \$300, U1500 \$450,
U1700 \$600, U1900 \$750.

Mixed doubles: best male+female
2-player team combined score (team
average under 2200): \$1000-500-300-
200. Different sections, schedules OK;
register (no extra fee) by 2 pm Sat.

Top 6 sections entry fee: \$148 at
chessaction.com by 8/19, \$170 later or at
site until 1 hour before round 1 (no checks,
credit cards OK). GMs: \$130 from prize.
Under 1000 Section: all \$20 less.

Re-entry \$70 (no Major to Major).

Cannot play below Online Regular
Rating - 100 points. Aug. official ratings
used; unofficial or Online Regular USCF
ratings usually used if otherwise unrated.
Players scoring 8 or more in 2025 World
Open U2200 or below must play in higher
section than World Open.

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

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

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

1/2-point byes OK all (limit 2),
must commit before round 2.

Bring set, board, & clock if
possible- none supplied.

Hotel rates: \$169-169, use link at
chessevents.us or call 202-234-0700,
reserve by 8/7 or rate may increase.
Hotel parking is valet only: \$45/day;
see chessevents.us for more parking .

Enter online: Chessaction.com.
\$15 service charge for refunds.

Email: director@chesstour.com. (see
also: chessevents.us, chesstour.info).
Blitz Sat 9:30 pm, enter Sat by 9:10.

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED
GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX**33rd annual Midwest Class
Championships**

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — IL TLA# 50084
Site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 North Milwaukee Ave., Wheeling, IL 60090 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX

San Diego Open

OCTOBER 24-26, 2025 — CA TLA# 49993
Site: Marriott San Diego Airport/Liberty Station **Address:** 2592 Laning Rd, San Diego, CA 92106 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Charles Ensey • chucnglo@aol.com • (858) 432-8006 • www.sandiegochessclub.org

GRAND PRIX

The 2025 Downriver Classic

NOVEMBER 8-9, 2025 — LA TLA# 49811
Site: Louisiana Bridge Association **Address:** 2709 Edenborn Ave, Metairie, LA 70002. **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3,000 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Downriver Chess • info@downriverchess.com • www.downriverchess.com

Regional

ALABAMA

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

JULY 19, 2025 — AL TLA# 49723
Alabama Dual-Rated State Chess Championship

Site: Evangel Church **Address:** 3975 Vaughn Rd, Montgomery, AL 36106 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,350 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Doug Strout • evangelchess@yahoo.com • www.facebook.com/evangelchessclub

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — FL TLA# 48867
33rd Annual Southern Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

ARIZONA

JULY 4-6, 2025 — CA TLA# 49355
27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8-10, 2025 — CA TLA# 48968
30th Annual Pacific Coast Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

CALIFORNIA

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 4-6, 2025 — CA TLA# 49355
27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8-10, 2025 — CA TLA# 48968
30th Annual Pacific Coast Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 — MD TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — CA TLA# 49352
15th Annual Central California Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

CONNECTICUT

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 12, 2025 — MA TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — CT TLA# 48871
30th Annual Bradley Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 — MD TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 14-17, 2025 — MA TLA# 48969
55th Annual Continental Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — MA TLA# 50123
14th annual Hartford Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DELAWARE

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 11-SEPT. 13, 2025 - MONTHLY ON FRI. AND SAT. — DE TLA# 50388
Dover Elks Rapid Swiss Open
Site: Dover Elks Lodge **Address:** 200 S Saulsbury Rd, Dover, DE 19904 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$300 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Delaware Chess Association • aa.legolas@gmail.com • 4102193179 • <https://delawarechessassociation.org/>

DIST. OF COLUMBIA

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — DC TLA# 49021
57th Annual Atlantic Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FLORIDA

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 10-13, 2025 — FL TLA# 50020
2025 World Chess Festival (Orlando)
Site: Hilton Garden Inn at Sea World Hotel **Address:** 6850 Westwood Blvd, Orlando, FL 32821 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Joe Hanley • hanleychessacademy@gmail.com • [hanleychessacademy.com/2025WCF\(East\).html](http://hanleychessacademy.com/2025WCF(East).html)

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49551
US Senior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — FL TLA# 48867
33rd Annual Southern Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 — MD TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

GEORGIA

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49551
US Senior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — FL TLA# 48867
33rd Annual Southern Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — LL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

IDAHO

JULY 4-6, 2025 — CA TLA# 49355
27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
 See Grand Prix.

ILLINOIS

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025 — IL TLA# 48868
18th Annual Chicago Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 19, 2025 — IL TLA# 48869
10th Annual Chicago Class Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25, 2025 — IL TLA# 50418
Friday Fun Open
Site: Northbrook Hilton **Address:** 2855 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Kevin Bachler • Contact@cavemanchess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

JULY 26, 2025 — IL TLA# 49548
Caveman Beginner Open #1
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook **Address:** 2855 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Kevin Bachler • Contact@cavemanchess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

JULY 26, 2025 — IL TLA# 49555
Junior Open Blitz
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook **Address:** 2855 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,000 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Kevin Bachler • Contact@cavemanchess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

JULY 26, 2025 — IL TLA# 49557
Senior Open and Caveman Medior Quick
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook **Address:** 2855 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,000 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Kevin Bachler • Contact@cavemanchess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

JULY 27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49549
Caveman Beginner Open #2
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook **Address:** 2855 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Kevin Bachler • Contact@cavemanchess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — IN TLA# 49375
20th Annual Indianapolis Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 — MD TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — IL TLA# 50084
33rd annual Midwest Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

INDIANA

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025 — IL TLA# 48868
18th Annual Chicago Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49551
US Senior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 9550
Caveman Medior Open (Ages 21 thru 49 and Masters)
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 26, 2025 — IL TLA# 49548
Caveman Beginner Open #1
 See Illinois.

JULY 27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49549
Caveman Beginner Open #2
 See Illinois.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — IN TLA# 49375
20th Annual Indianapolis Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — IL TLA# 50084
33rd annual Midwest Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

IOWA

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49551
US Senior Open Championship
See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 9550
Caveman Medior Open (Ages 21 thru 49 and Masters)
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 2, 2025 — NE TLA# 49653
2nd Annual Wilkins Cup
See Grand Prix.

KANSAS

AUGUST 2, 2025 — NE TLA# 49653
2nd Annual Wilkins Cup
See Grand Prix.

KENTUCKY

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49551
US Senior Open Championship
See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 9550
Caveman Medior Open (Ages 21 thru 49 and Masters)
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — IN TLA# 49375
20th Annual Indianapolis Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAINE

JULY 12, 2025 — MA TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
See Grand Prix.

MARYLAND

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — MD TLA# 49562
12th Annual Potomac Open
Site: Rockville Hilton Address: 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852 Overall Prize Fund: see online TLA GP Pts: n/a FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Michael W Regan • mregan@stsci.edu • 4104195130 • www.mdchess.com

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 — MD TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — DC TLA# 49021
57th Annual Atlantic Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
See Grand Prix.

MASSACHUSETTS

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 12, 2025 — MA TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — CT TLA# 48871
30th Annual Bradley Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 — MD TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 14-17, 2025 — MA TLA# 48969
55th Annual Continental Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 16, 2025 — MA TLA# 49053
11th annual Continental Open Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
See Grand Prix.

REGIONALS

SEPTEMBER 6, 2025 — MA TLA# 48662
1ST Richard Zyra Memorial
Site: St. John's Lutheran Church Address: 60 Broad Street, Westfield, MA 01085 Overall Prize Fund: \$750 b/30 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Greater Baystate Chess • greater.baystate.chess@gmail.com • 4133560303 • www.greaterbay-statechess.com

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — MA TLA# 50123
14th annual Hartford Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MICHIGAN

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49551
US Senior Open Championship
See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 9550
Caveman Medior Open (Ages 21 thru 49 and Masters)
See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

AUGUST 16-17, 2025 — MI TLA# 50241
2025 Michigan Upper Peninsula Open
Site: Bay Mills Community College, Adikameg Hall Address: 12214 W Lakeshore Drive, Brimley, MI, 49715 Overall Prize Fund: see online TLA GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Jim Sawaski • jsawaski@yahoo.com • www.michess.org/

MINNESOTA

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49551
US Senior Open Championship
See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 9550
Caveman Medior Open (Ages 21 thru 49 and Masters)
See Grand Prix.

MISSOURI

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 2, 2025 — NE TLA# 49653
2nd Annual Wilkins Cup
See Grand Prix.

NEBRASKA

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
See Grand Prix.

NEVADA

JULY 4-6, 2025 — CA TLA# 49355
27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8-10, 2025 — CA TLA# 48968
30th Annual Pacific Coast Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — CA TLA# 49352
15th Annual Central California Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

JULY 12, 2025 — MD TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
See Grand Prix.

NEW JERSEY

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 6, 2025 — PA TLA# 48880
36th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — MD TLA# 49562
12th Annual Potomac Open
See Maryland.

JULY 26, 2025 — NJ TLA# 47752
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 • www.hamiltonchessclub.com

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 — MD TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 14-17, 2025 — MA TLA# 48969
55th Annual Continental Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — DC TLA# 49021
57th Annual Atlantic Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — MA TLA# 50123
14th annual Hartford Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW YORK

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 6, 2025 — PA TLA# 48880
36th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025 — PA TLA# 48870
26th Annual Pittsburgh Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 20, 2025 — NY TLA# 50765
Sunday Night Staunton Quick Chess — July
Site: Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church Address: 175 Fifth Avenue, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Alan LeCours • alecours1@hotmail.com • 5189444450

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49551
US Senior Open Championship
See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — CT TLA# 48871
30th Annual Bradley Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — MD TLA# 49562
12th Annual Potomac Open
See Maryland.

AUGUST 10, 2025 — NY TLA# 50766
Sunday Night Staunton Quick Chess — August
Site: Saratoga Springs United Methodist Church Address: 175 Fifth Avenue, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Alan LeCours • alecours1@hotmail.com • 5189444450

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 — MD TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 14-17, 2025 — MA TLA# 48969
55th Annual Continental Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — DC TLA# 49021
57th Annual Atlantic Open
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STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — NY TLA# 49022
147th Annual New York State Chess Championship — America's Oldest Annual Tournament!
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STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 31, 2025 — NY TLA# 49023
11th annual New York State Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — MA TLA# 50123
14th annual Hartford Open
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NORTH CAROLINA

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 5, 2025 — NC TLA# 49876
Big Jy Dragon Knight Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 12, 2025 — NC TLA# 49875
Dragon Knight Paper Bag Day Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 20, 2025 — NC TLA# 50287
Dragon Knight World Chess Day Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 27, 2025 — NC TLA# 50288
Dragon Knight Chess Parents' Day Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 3, 2025 — NC TLA# 50289
Dragon Knight Chess Friendship Day Grand Prix
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8-10, 2025 — NC TLA# 50328
2025 DKC Heart of the Carolinas FIDE Summer Classic
 See Grand Prix.

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

OHIO

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025 — PA TLA# 48870
26th Annual Pittsburgh Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — PA TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — PA TLA# 49551
US Senior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — PA TLA# 9550
Caveman Medior Open (Ages 21 thru 49 and Masters)
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — IN TLA# 49375
20th Annual Indianapolis Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OREGON

JULY 4-6, 2025 — CA TLA# 49355
27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

PENNSYLVANIA

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 6, 2025 — PA TLA# 48880
36th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025 — PA TLA# 48870
26th Annual Pittsburgh Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49551
US Senior Open Championship
 See National Events.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 — MD TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — DC TLA# 49021
57th Annual Atlantic Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT
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AUGUST 31, 2025 — NY TLA# 49023
11th annual New York State Blitz Championship
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PUERTO RICO

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

RHODE ISLAND

JULY 12, 2025 — MA TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

SOUTH CAROLINA

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

SOUTH DAKOTA

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

TENNESSEE

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49551
US Senior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 9550
Caveman Medior Open (Ages 21 thru 49 and Masters)
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 16, 2025 — TN TLA# 50677
Johnson City Swiss
Site: Mulligan's Gaming Pub **Address:** 308 E. Main St, Johnson City, TN 37601 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$350 **b/30 GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Johnson City Chess Club • johnsoncitychess-club@gmail.com • 5619290856

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2025 — TN TLA# 49640
2025 Peter P. Lahde Tennessee Open & Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix.

TEXAS

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 4-6, 2025 — TX TLA# 49732
Texas Chess Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49551
US Senior Open Championship
 See National Events.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 — MD TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

VERMONT

JULY 12, 2025 — MA TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

VIRGINIA

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — MD TLA# 49562
12th Annual Potomac Open
 See Maryland.

AUGUST 9-13, 2025 — MD TLA# 47444
12th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — DC TLA# 49021
57th Annual Atlantic Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • HERITAGE EVENT

AUG. 30-SEPT. 1, 2025 — VA TLA# 50330
2025 (86th) Virginia Closed
Site: Hilton Garden Inn - Innsbrook **Address:** 4050 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$5,000 **b/90 GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** Y **Org:** Mike Hoffpauir, NTD/IA • mhoffpauir@aol.com • 757-846-4805 • www.vachess.org

WASHINGTON

JULY 4-6, 2025 — CA TLA# 49355
27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8-10, 2025 — CA TLA# 48968
30th Annual Pacific Coast Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

WISCONSIN

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA TLA# 46655
53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18-20, 2025 — IL TLA# 48868
18th Annual Chicago Class Championships.
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49551
US Senior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 9550
Caveman Medior Open (Ages 21 thru 49 and Masters)
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 26, 2025 — IL TLA# 49548
Caveman Beginner Open #1
 See Illinois.

JULY 27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49549
Caveman Beginner Open #2
 See Illinois.

AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — IL TLA# 50084
33rd annual Midwest Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

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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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- ☐ Golden Knights EF: \$35 ☐ Palciauskas ICCF EF: \$5 ☐ Muir ICCF Quad EF: \$10 2-player matches, EF: \$5 per entry, see above for options
☐ Electronic Knights EF: \$35 ☐ Collins Quad EF: \$10 Postal Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐ Email Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐
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www.oceanstatechess.com

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Solutions

PAGE 11 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. 20. Qxh7+! Qxh7 21. Nf7 mate. **PROBLEM 2.** 20. h4! seals the queen's escape route and threatens 21. g4!, e.g. 20. ... f5 21. Be2 f4 22. g4 fxg3 e.p. 23. f4. **PROBLEM 3.** The main threat of 19. ... Bc5! is 20. ... Ra7!, trapping the queen. **PROBLEM 4.** White resigned after 24. ... Rxe1+ 25. Rxe1 Re2! because of 26. Qxf6 Rxe1+. **PROBLEM 5.** 23. Nxc7! Kxc7 24. Rh7+!, Black resigned. If 24. ... Kxh7 25. Qxf7+ and mates, while 23. ... Bxf3 24. Nxe6+ fxe6 25. Rh8+ and 26. Rxd8 wins a piece. **PROBLEM 6.** 24 Be6! threatens Qc2xg6+. The rest was 24. ... Kg7 25. Bh6+! Kxh6 26. Nf5+! gxf5 27. Qd2+ Bg5 28. Rh3+ Kg6 29. Bxf5+, Black resigned.

CONSTRUCTION SOLUTIONS: SHORTEST GAME ROOK MATE: 3. Nxh7 Nxh2 4. Nxf8 Nxf1 5. Kxf1 Kxf8 6. Rxh8 mate. **KNIGHT MATE:** 1. Nc3 Nc6 2. Ne4 Ne5 3. e3 e6 4. Ne2 Ne7 5. g3 g6 6. Nf6 mate; **F1-BISHOP MATE:** 1.e4 e5 2. f4 f5 3. exf5 exf4 4. f6 f3 5. fxg7 fxg2 6. Be2 Be7 7. Bh5 mate; **C1-BISHOP MATE:** 1. d4 d5 2. Kd2 Kd7 3. Kd3 Kd6 4. Be3 Be6 5. c3 c6 6. Qd2 Qd7 7. Bf4 mate; **PAWN MATE:** 1. g4 g5 2. h4 h5 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. Ne5 Ne4 5. hxg5 hxg4 6. g6 g3 7. gxf7 mate; **KING MATE:** 1. d3 d6 2. Kd2 Kd7 3. Kc3 Kc6 4. Kb3 Kb6 5. Ka3 Ka6 6. Be3 Be6 7. Bb6 Bb3 8. axb3 axb6 9. Kb4 mate. There are other move orders, and you can try to find completely different solutions.

PAGE 19 MAKE YOUR MOVE

TACTIC 1. 25. ... Rc2!, White resigned, because after 26. Rd2 comes 26. ... Rc1+ (or 26. ... Rxd2, when 27. Qxd2 Nxd5 28. exd5 Bb6 wins for Black) 27. Rd1 Rxd1+ 28. Kxd1 (after

28. Qxd1 Nxd5, the bishop on e3 will be left hanging) 28. ... Nxd5 29. exd5 Qxd5+ followed by ... Bd8-b6 and Black wins. Svidler – Matlakov, Moscow 2025. **TACTIC 2.** 15. Qe3! White would likely also win after 15. Bxc6+!?, but it quickly becomes more complicated, for instance, 15. ... Bxc6 16. Qe3 Bd7 (16. ... Qc8 transposes to the game continuation; while White wins after 16. ... Nd7 17. e6) 17. Bf6 0-0 18. Bxg7 Kxg7 19. e6 fxe6 20. Ne5 and White has a winning advantage. 15. ... Qc8 If 15. ... Nd7, then 16. e6 and White is winning. 16. Bxc6+ Bxc6 17. Qc5, Black resigned due to the dual threats against c6 and e7. Schmider – Moussard, French Team Ch, Belfort 2025. **TACTIC 3.** White threatens all sorts of nasty stuff, but Black has a strong counter: 25. ... Nh3+!, White resigned. White can neither capture the knight nor leave it there: 26. gxf3 Qxf2+ with mate next move, or 26. Kh1 Nxf2+ 27. Kg1 Nh3+ 28. Kh1 Qg1+ 29. Rxf1 Nf2 mate. Nice! Degraeve – Maurizzi, French Team Ch, Belfort 2025. **TACTIC 4.** 19. Nc5! Ouch! The threat is Qa1-a7, exploiting that Black's queen has nowhere to go. This also explains Ivanchuk's response. 19. ... Bxb3 Not 19. ... dxc5 20. Nxc6 when an eventual Bh2xe5 is crushing. 20. gxf3?! Not the most accurate move, but it suffices to win. White's best move was 20. Nxc6! bxc6 (20. ... Nxc6 of course runs into 21. Qxh8+) 21. Qa7 0-0 22. Qxe7 Qxb6 23. Bxe5 dxe5 24. gxf3 and White is simply up a piece. The game continued 20. ... dxc5 21. Bxe5 Qxe5 and now White had 22. Qa8+! Bd8 23. Nxc6! Qd6 Or 23. ... bxc6 24. b7 and White wins. 24. Rd1! 0-0 25. Be2 and White wins. But the game went 22. Nxc6? Qxa1 23. Rxa1 Kd7 24. Na5 Ra8 25. Bb5+, Black resigned, which makes very little sense because White is only marginally better after 25. ... Ke6 26. Ra4 Rb8 27. Bc4+ Kf6 28. Bd5 Nf4. Rapport – Ivanchuk, Malmö 2025. **TACTIC 5.** 25. ... Nxc2! 26. Bxh7+ White cannot capture the knight: 26. Kxg2 Nf4+ 27. Bxf4 Qxf3+ 28. Kg1 Qh1+ 29. Kf2 Qg2+ 30. Ke3 exf4+ 31. Kxf4 Qf3 mate. 26. ... Kh8! 27. Bg6 Or 27. Qf5 Qxf5 28. Bxf5 Nxe1 29. Rxe1 Ne7 and Black is winning. 27. ... Nxe1 28. Bxh5 Nxc2 29. Rxc2 g5 30. Bg4 Nf4, White resigned. Vescovi – Malek, Sharjah 2025. **TACTIC 6.** 26. e6! White has several good moves, but this is by far the best — Black's kingside now gets ripped apart. 26. ... fxe6 If 26. ... f5, then 27. e7 and White is winning; for instance, 27. ... Qf6 28. Qd2 h6 29. Nh3 Nc6 30. Qxh6 and Black's position falls apart. 27. Rd3 Even stronger is 27. Nxh7! Kxh7 28. Rd3 Qb2 29. Rd7+ Kg8 30. Qg4 Qxc2 31. Qh4, and Black cannot prevent mate. 27. ... Qc4 28. Nxh7! Red8 29. Nf6+, Black resigned. Harikrishna – Suleymanli, French Team Ch, Belfort 2025. **TACTIC 7.** 19. ... Qd2! After this move, White is completely tied up and cannot release himself without giving up material or making serious positional concessions. 20. Rfe1 Probably the best White can do is 20. Bg4 Be4 21. Rac1 Nxc4 22. hxg4 Rad8 23. f3 (23. Rfe1 Rd6 24. g5 Rd5 and White has no good way of meeting the threat of 25. ... Rxc5) 23. ... Bxc2 24. Qxc2 Qxe3+ 25. Rf2 Qd4 and White has lost just one pawn. 20. ... Be4 21. Rac1 Re6! With the ideas of 22. ... Rg6 and 22. ... Rf6 followed by 23. ... Nd3. Unfortunately for White, there is no good way out of this mess. 22. f3? Or 22. h4 Rae8 23. h5 Bd3 and Black wins. 22. ... Nxf3+ 23. gxf3 Rg6+ 24. Kf2 Or 24. Kf1 Qd7! and Black wins. 24. ... Qd6 25. f4 Rg2+ 26. Kf1 Qh6 27. Bg4 Rxc4 28. hxg4 Qh1+, White resigned.

Demuth – Puranik, French Team Ch, Belfort 2025. **TACTIC 8.** 23. h4! Very nice and quite sneaky. Suddenly, Black's active pieces go from being attackers to being loose pieces, which, as we know, drop off. 23. ... Qxh4 24. g3 The point. The knight is forced to h3. 24. ... Nh3+ 25. Kh2 Note that Black saves himself after 25. Kg2?? Qg4 26. Qxg4 Bxg4 27. Rxe8+ Rxe8 with equal chances in the endgame. 25. ... Qg4 26. Rxe6! The extended point! In the previous line, this was not possible, as Black's next move would be with check. Note that the knight on d4 protects the queen on f3. 26. ... Qxf3 27. Rxe8+ Rxe8 28. Nxf3 White has won a piece, albeit for two pawns, but the win is easy. 28. ... Nxf2 29. Re1 Rc8 30. Bf5, Black resigned. Abdusattorov – Nigmatov, Sharjah 2025. **TACTIC 9.** 21. ... Bg5! Black also wins after 21. ... Bxa4!, but that line can transpose into the game continuation, and some of the main points are only uncovered later — and those are what makes this puzzle complicated. 22. Qd3 Or 22. Qb2 Bxa4 23. bxa4 Qc7 24. Bb4 Rxf2!! (BOOM!!) 25. Kxf2 Qxh2 26. Bf3 Rf8 with an irresistible attack; for instance, 27. Rd3 is met by 27. ... Qxg2 mate! 22. ... Qc7 23. g3 Bb5! Boom! 24. Qxb5 Be3 BOOM!! 25. Kh1 Rxf2 The impressive fireworks are over; now, the murder hornets zoom in to finish the job! 26. Rg1 Nef5 27. Nf1 Rxf1, White resigned. Ganguly – Eugene, French Team Ch, Belfort 2025.

PAGE 49 ABCS OF CHESS

PROBLEM 1. Mating net: White's surprise is 1. Qc8+ Rxc8 2. Nd7 mate. **PROBLEM 2.** Mating net: White wins in 2: 1. Rh8+ Kf7 2. Rf8 mate. **PROBLEM 3.** Mating net: It's over for Black in 2: 1. h7+ Kh8 2. Nf7 mate. **PROBLEM 4.** Mating net: White vanquishes in 2: 1. Nb6+ Kb8 2. Bd6 mate. **PROBLEM 5.** Mating net: Black is mated in 2: 1. Qxe6+ dxe6 2. Bxe6 mate. **PROBLEM 6.** Mating net: Black is terminated in 2: 1. Ng6+ Kg8 2. Nh6 mate.

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NKOSI NKULULEKO

CHESS TEACHER, POET

"A

MONG THE OUTSTANDING GRANDmasters in the world there have been and there still are just as many poets," Mikhail Tal wrote in

the journal *Schach - Journal*. I remember my mother introducing me to chess at the age of 3 beside a lamplight, a library of books behind us. Years later, I'd accompany my father to St. Nick's Park in Harlem, where men who looked like me blitzed into midnight hours. I obsessed over chess, dreamed of becoming world champion, and always carried my broken-spined, signed copy of Kasparov's *My Great Predecessors: Fischer*. Of course, I grew up to be a poet "who put much value," as Tal continued in his essay, "on a characteristic such as fantasy." Years were spent with variations of poetic language and the poetic language of chess variations.

For nearly a decade, I've taught in these two fields and write square poems inspired by each piece. Teaching fulfills me beyond belief; it allows me to share what it means to learn from our failures, our grief.

Here's a game I played in a Premier Open at the Marshall Chess Club, in New York. It's riddled with mistakes. I fumbled in the opening but sacrificed a knight for counterplay. The risk I often take in chess is looking for dangerous art.

DANGEROUS ART

Nkosi Nkululeko (2056)

William Safranek (2181)

Marshall January Premier (4),
New York, 01.07.2024



32. c5



I played this "bad" move for the aesthetics. My knight will pressure d6 from c4 and its tactical threats will haunt the center.

32. ... bxc5

Both of us missed a simple pawn push to dispel the ghosts: 32. ... b5 33. axb5 axb5 34. Ra1 Bxc5 and Black, a piece up, is starting to unravel.

33. Nc4 Rb8 34. Qa2

Not the best, but the black king still feels my queen's glare.

34. ... Qc7 35. Rd1 Rd8



36. Bd2

I loved 32. c5?!! but I have to credit this bishop maneuver as **My Best Move**. This introduces a potential skewer on the a5-d8 diagonal; Nc4xe5 still haunts, and the d6-pawn remains a target.

36. ... Bb6

I saw some favorable variations after 36. ... Rd7, and worst of all, 36. ... Qc6 leads to a pretty resolution: 37. Ba5 Rd7 38. Rxd6 and the knight threatens to capture on e5 or d6 depending on Black's response.

37. Bc3 Ke7 38. Qd2?!

A dubious move during time pressure.

38. ... Nh7

He had a chance to take over with 38. ... Nd7 39. Ne3 Qc6.

39. Nxb6 Qxb6 40. Ba5

And I won eventually after this final blow.

This game makes me fall in love with chess. I couldn't arrive here, my flaws illuminated, without fire on the board. It reminds me of a haiku by Mizuta Masuhide: "My storehouse burned down— / now nothing stands between me / and the moon above." ♡

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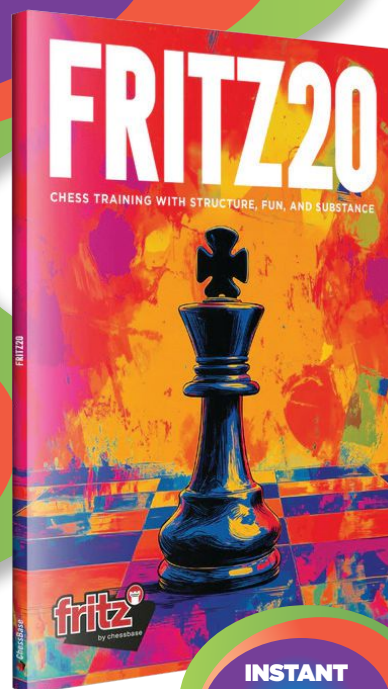
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