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# CHESSLIFE

OCTOBER 2025 ■ USChess.org

## The Next Step

IM Carissa Yip  
wins the 2025  
Cairns Cup



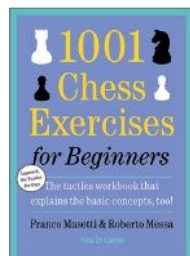


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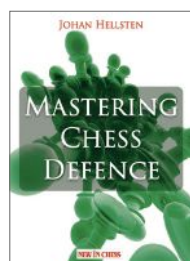


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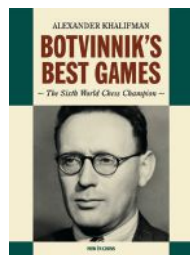
## **1001 Chess Exercises for Beginners** *Franco Masetti & Roberto Messa*

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



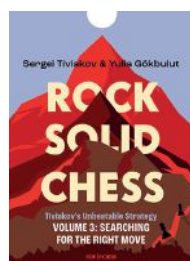
## **Mastering Chess Defence** *Johan Hellsten*

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



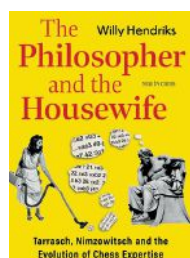
## **Botvinnik's Best Games** *Alexander Khalifman*

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.



## **Rock Solid Chess - Volume 3** *Sergey Tiviakov & Yulia Gokbulut*

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.



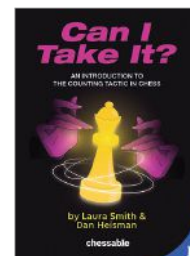
## **The Philosopher and the Housewife** *Willy Hendriks*

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.

## **Can I Take It?**

*Dan Heisman & Laura Smith*

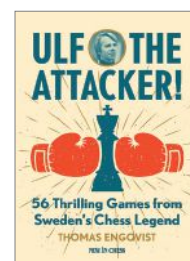
This Beginner's Guide to Capturing in Chess teaches you the most basic skills of chess tactics and strategy. You won't just learn if you can take an opponent's piece. You'll also learn how to take that piece, which can make the difference between winning and losing a game! In particular, you'll learn how to evaluate every piece trade you make easily.



## **Ulf – The Attacker!**

*Thomas Engqvist*

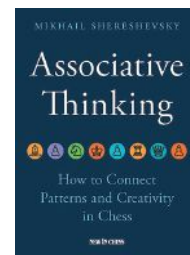
Swedish chess legend Ulf Andersson was a positional genius with a crystal clear style. The former world number 4 rarely lost a game and consistently scored victories from quiet positions. But he could also be a fierce attacker. This book offers 56 thrilling games, both entertaining and instructive.



## **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?.



## **Chess artistry to enjoy and learn from**

*Jan Timman*

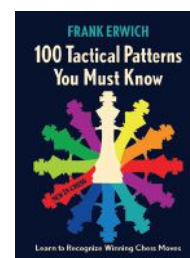
Perhaps the greatest beauty in chess can be found in endgame studies. Delightful twists and turns on the board are combined into true works of art. Chess is distilled to its purest form, with all pieces making only the essential moves. Jan Timman guides you through masterpieces of increasing difficulty.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



## **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.



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## ON THE COVER

Winning the 2025 Cairns Cup was an important moment in IM Carissa Yip's career. She got her second GM norm, boosted her rating, and took home \$65,000 for her troubles. But success is a team effort, and with her dad Percy, her coach GM Awonder Liang (seen above), and her many friends and admirers behind her, we suspect this is just the next step in her climb.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LENNART OOTES

# CHESSLIFE *October*

## 20 EVENTS U.S. SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

### **Tournament of Legends**

The U.S. Senior champion on his competitors  
BY GM ALEX FISHBEIN

## 27 EVENTS NATIONAL OPEN

### **Down to the Wire**

The National Open came down to the last round.  
BY WGM ZOEY TANG

## 32 COVER STORY

### **NEXT LEVEL**

IM Carissa Yip takes a step up at the Cairns Cup.

BY IM CARISSA YIP

## 44 EVENTS U.S. CADET CHAMPIONSHIP

### **From Last to First**

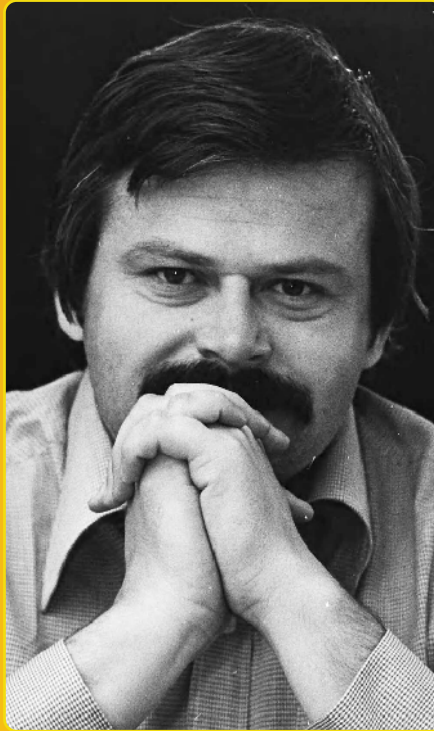
IM Tani Adewumi just won his second straight Cadet championship, but it hasn't always been easy.

BY DANIAL WILSON

## WORLD CHESS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



**Pia Cramling**



**Vlastimil Hort**



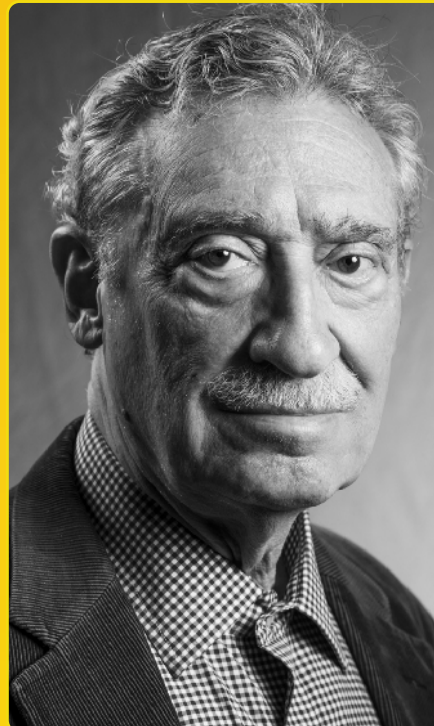
**Jan Timman**

# CONGRATS TO THE 2025 INDUCTEES

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**Irina Krush**



**Bruce Pandolfini**



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### COLUMNS

#### 14 CHESS TO ENJOY

**Your Learning Curve**

BY GM ANDY SOLTIS

#### 16 GETTING TO WORK

**Some Restrictions Apply**

BY WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN

#### 18 SOLITAIRE CHESS

**Being Bogoljubow**

BY BRUCE PANDOLFINI

#### 47 PUZZLES

**Make Your Move!**

BY FM CARSTEN HANSEN

#### 48 ENDGAME SCHOOL

**Riding the Rapids**

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN

#### 51 BOOKS AND BEYOND

**Enter the (Accelerated) Dragon**

BY IM JOHN DONALDSON



44



20



27



32

### DEPARTMENTS

#### 5 COUNTERPLAY

READERS RESPOND

#### 6 FIRST MOVES

CHESS NEWS FROM AROUND THE U.S.

#### 10 IN PASSING

#### 13 US CHESS AFFAIRS

NEWS FOR OUR MEMBERS

#### 54 TOURNAMENT LIFE

#### 62 CLASSIFIEDS

#### 63 SOLUTIONS

#### 64 MY BEST MOVE

PERSONALITIES  
MARK SCHULINKAMP

### CONTRIBUTORS



#### IM CARISSA YIP

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

ly taking a sabbatical from her studies at Stanford University to focus on chess. Find her on Twitter at @carissayipchess.



#### GM ALEX FISHBEIN

(U.S. Senior Ch) was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, but moved to Wyoming at age 11. Taught chess by his father and later GM Dmitry Gurevich, he shot up the junior rating charts, winning the first Denker Tournament of High School Champions in 1985. After becoming a grandmaster in 1992, he went into finance, with chess serving as a pleasant diversion. Today he is a regular on the tournament circuit and a busy chess author.



#### WGM ZOHEY TANG

(National Open) is a two-time Oregon state champion and a 2025 Samford Fellow. She is second on the Girls U21 rating list as of September 2025. She is the founder and president of Puddletown Chess in Portland, Oregon.



#### DANIAL WILSON

(U.S. Cadet Ch) is a financial analyst, chess coach, and the assistant program director for the Chicago Chess Foundation. He has directed four consecutive Cadet Championships.

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## Hard Floors

I am requesting that the executive board consider adding a ratings floor to accommodate non-scholastic players with at least five years' experience and who have never been rated above 1200.

I am among the many older players who feel cheated that we were not given a proper ratings floor when US Chess did so for higher rated players. All the other rated players have established floors, except for those U1200.

New players are playing at a higher skill level than when I started chess in the late 1990s. This has greatly raised the bar for all of us, and made it that much harder to gain points.

The majority of players are rated above the Class E level and privileged to have a floor to rely upon. This has allowed them to continue to play tournament chess without the embarrassment and shame of continuing to fall below their normal class. If you review current US Chess ratings you will notice a surprisingly high percentage of players with ratings ending in 00. They are floored.

I believe US Chess would retain more memberships were this change made.

**Tim Staley**  
Via email

## Looking Back

The September "First Moves" piece about a move to make chess a varsity sport in New York City's public high schools reminded me of my high school days in the late 1960s at a small high school in Michigan's remote Upper Peninsula. We had no chess team, so as a 14-year-old I wrote an impassioned letter to our principal extolling the benefits of chess.

Much to my delight, one of

our math teachers stepped forward to be our faculty advisor. Before long we had a dozen students playing chess in his classroom during lunch and after school.

During my senior year we won the first-ever Marquette County High School Chess Championship, besting three other schools. As an acknowledgement that meant a lot to our entire team, we presented our trophy to the principal at an all-school assembly. It was a thrill I will always remember.

I wrote a second impassioned letter to our principal to convince him that chess players' achievements should be recognized by awarding major and minor letters, just as they did for every other sport. Unfortunately, this request fell on deaf ears.

I went on to become treasurer of the Lake Superior Chess Association, and two years ago I formed the Sturgeon Bay Chess Club here in Wisconsin where my wife and I retired. I've also taught chess classes through our local Learning in Retirement chapter.

Old chess players like this 73-year-old may fade away, but we keep playing while we can for the love of the game. I never advanced above a mid-1500 rating, but I've enjoyed pushing pawns since receiving my first chess set at age 10. Go Caissa!

**John Koski**  
Via email

## Errata

Floyd R. Kirk wrote to tell us that the game dates in the August "Endgame School" were incorrect. Ngo – Schvarts took place on May 9, while Adewumi – Gaw, Venkatesh – Santiago, Zhang – Paragua, and Xu – Haripradeep were played on May 10. We regret the errors.

Send your letters to [letters@uschess.org](mailto:letters@uschess.org). Letters are subject to editing for style, length, and content.

# Back in Action

IM Sal Matera is going from the history books to the World Senior.

BY AL LAWRENCE

**I**F YOU REMEMBER WHEN g2-g4 was considered an impetuous move to make in the opening, you might not see IM Sal Matera as old. But he's one of the last direct links to what I consider the greatest period of modern chess history, even sharing a coach and a couch with Bobby Fischer. And after decades away from the game, he's headed back to the board.

## A steak dinner and an extroverted dad

In 1959, as a schoolkid of only 8, Sal learned side-by-side with Bobby Fischer, Bill Lombardy, and Robert and Donald Byrne at John W. Collins' legendary "Hawthorne Chess Club" (actually the Collins' living room in Brooklyn).

"I learned chess in December of 1958, when I was still 7," Matera remembers. "Early the next year, my parents and I went to Peter's Backyard, a Greenwich Village

steakhouse. So we're walking down West 10th Street, when my dad sees this placard for the Marshall Club. He knocks on the door and talks his way in and asks if someone could recommend a chess teacher for his son." That led to contacting the legendary Collins, who lived only blocks from the Materas' apartment in Brooklyn. "Serendipity!"

Collins played a test game with little Sal, and even as a rank beginner, Sal showed a glimmer of the gift hidden within. Collins offered to teach Sal for free, but only after a "reverse negotiation" between him and Sal's father. In the weeks to follow, Sal would spend most of a Saturday at the Collins' apartment, drink a six-pack of small sodas and eat a snack, and maybe even a dinner, with Collins and his sister Ethel. "For that, my proud working-class father paid \$3."

"Jack would teach me some openings, one or two openings, basically columns from MCO-9, which he had completely revised

and updated," Sal says. They'd work on combinations, using J. du Mont's *Basis of Combination in Chess*, "and Jack was big on learning rook and pawn endings."

After that, Collins would play an odds game with Sal, working down from queen odds to pawn odds. After a few years, they played with even material. "But I never forgot," Sal remembers, "what Jack said to me when we first started: 'I will never throw a game to you because you will know that if you beat me, you really beat me,' which I thought was very good." There was homework, of course, and it was serious. "He had me go over at least 100 games played by each of the world champions."

Sal's father developed his own special relationship with Bobby Fischer. "Both men had prodigious appetites," Sal says. "Bobby was thin but could virtually inhale food." After a Saturday training day was finished and Sal's dad had shuttled everyone else



Sal in between fellow prodigies Bill Lombardy and Bobby Fischer



Sal ready to make a move in the 1960s

ALL PHOTOS: COURTESY SAL MATERA

home, Mr. Matera and Bobby would head to Manhattan's Little Italy or Chinatown about midnight for an eating fest lasting into the wee hours.

Fifteen years after their first meeting, Matera was featured in Collins' famous 1975 book, *My Seven Chess Prodigies*, along with Fischer, and six others. Talk about good company!

Besides the future world champ and his couch mates, New Yorker Matera played or met the who's who of American chess: Bisguier, Benko, Benjamin, Browne, Brady — to cite only a few of the B's. The list goes all the way through to "Z" for Zuckerman, Fischer's onetime opening researcher. The Hawthorne Club was a salon of 1960s mid-century culture that drew world-famous amateur players as well — such as the composer John Cage and the artist Marcel Duchamp.

About the time Fischer flashed lightning on the international scene, his clubmate, eight years younger, was beginning to make his own mark on national chess. In 1967, the year Fischer was leading but withdrew from the 1967 Sousse Interzonal, Matera won the second U.S. Junior Invitational and represented the U.S. in the World Junior Championship, in Jerusalem. In 1971, while Fischer was tearing through Candidates matches, Matera led Columbia to victory at the Pan-American Collegiate championship. And the year after Bobby's triumphant world championship showdown with Boris Spassky in Reykjavik, Matera won the 1973 Marshall Chess Club Championship, one of the most difficult club championships in the world to win. Later the same year, Matera beat George Kramer, a U.S. Championship veteran, Olympiad bronze-medal winner and champ of the crosstown rival Manhattan Club, 2½-½ in a match televised on PBS. Matera then won the Marshall championship again in 1975.

Thanks to the Fischer boom, he was able to become a chess pro: "I spent 1972-1983 playing, teaching, writing articles for *Chess Life*, lecturing and giving simulms." He even

gave lessons to a kid named Joel Benjamin, who went on to win just about every major American title, including three U.S. Championships. In the next two years, he made all of his IM norms and, in 1978, a single but memorable GM norm.

## Running from a bull and into love

Sal spent a July weekend in 1978 at a party in the Berkshires with friends and a woman named Ann whom he didn't know, but quickly realized he'd like to. The next morning, Sal was up early for his run.

*"He kept saying, 'You play amazing chess,'" Sal says, "and I kept saying, 'No — I played amazing chess.'"*

"I'm jogging along this country road," Sal recalls, "and I look out and I think, that's a big cow over there! And then I wonder why that big cow is not on the other side of the fence from me. And the big cow seemed to have horns."

It was a bull, of course. And it lowered its horns and ran at Sal — a lot faster than Sal could get away. "I finally came to a big oak and slowly ran around the

tree," he remembers. The bull got confused and quit following him, and Sal ran into the house, empty except for Ann, standing in the kitchen. His adrenaline still pumping, Sal babbled his way through a torrential recap of his misadventure. "A year or two later, Ann told me her thought at the time: 'That's the guy I'm gonna spend the rest of my life with.'" They became a couple soon after.

Sal was still living the life of a chess pro and knew Ann had no special interest in chess. He was playing a Swedish IM in a New York Swiss tournament, in a crucial game for an all-important GM norm. He remembers, "All of a sudden, I realized I'm winning this game!" He converted his advantage, and afterward "sitting in the ballroom and I'm getting emotional. And I look up and Ann's there. Somehow she got to the Hotel McAlpin and showed up at exactly the time I was making the norm. It was a special moment."

They were married in 1986.

Sal was an only child, and by the time they married both his parents had passed. Ann already had children, and he became a patriarch to a large family of children, cousins and eventually grandchildren. "So I suddenly went from family rags to riches. And that was her gift to me. She made our home beautiful. And we just ... we had a really good time."

Sal decided that he should look for a career that offered a more dependable income.

He went back to Columbia, earned a degree in computer science, and took "a series of jobs in banking," moving up the corporate ladder on the technology side. "I don't know why I was a good manager," Sal says — chessplayers weren't generally known for their people skills back in the day — but he started to lead bigger and bigger projects.

He didn't have time for playing chess over the next four decades. He read chess magazines and kept up, as well as going over old games, but as a family man, "I wasn't going to disappear on weekends."

Still, in hindsight, he says, "I believe that my chess, not my chess strength necessarily," was at the heart of his success in business. Sal had to lead \$25 million projects that would go for three years with lots of pressure, lots of decision-making, and no real blueprint. That required what he calls "the discipline of knowing you have to make a decision, even when you don't have enough time, and you can't know all the facts. Most people freeze. They will not

Ann and Sal in front of the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey



make a decision if they don't know everything. As we all know as chessplayers, we can't often see all the possibilities."

In 2015, it seemed the right time to retire. Ann and Sal enjoyed the good life with a loving family and a wide circle of friends. They had a beautiful home on a scenic river in the Hudson Valley with a striking interior designed by Ann, as well as an apartment in New York City. They traveled the world together — France, Italy, England, Turkey, and many other destinations. But tragically, in the winter of 2023, Ann died after a struggle with cancer that saw Sal at her side at every step of the journey.

## Return to chess

It took time after that for Matera to come back to the chess world, bringing his experiences in leadership with him. He visited the Marshall Chess Club, got involved, and

was elected to the board of governors. "I'm still on the board of governors of the club," he says. "I'm also the president of the Marshall Chess Foundation. I'm very proud of my biggest achievement, selling the Fischer Archive to the World Chess Hall of Fame." That helped ease some of the monetary pressures on the Club and made sure the historic Fischer memorabilia would be professionally looked after and available to be properly displayed for chess aficionados to enjoy long into the future. As usual, chess isn't his only interest; one new one is ballroom dancing: "It's like chess in the respect that as soon as you think you've got the moves down, they add a new variation."

Eventually, of course, the urge to compete was inevitable and undeniable. He participated in a five-night chess camp for strong players given by GM Djurabek Khamrakulov, a former club champion whom Sal calls "a great guy and an incredibly good teacher."

After the camp, Matera told the teacher he was thinking of playing in the World

Senior Championship and asked him to be his coach. Khamrakulov instantly said yes: It turned out he had found Sal's old games on the database and been using them in his lessons.

"He kept saying, 'You play amazing chess,'" Sal says, "and I kept saying, 'No — I played amazing chess.'" But his new coach was encouraging, telling him the passage of time didn't matter. "You don't lose your chess culture," Sal says he was told. "You just need to learn how to calculate again."

So in a few months, Sal will be in Italy, the land of his heritage, playing chess, the game of his youth. I'll be watching for a 21st-century trophy on his mantle. ♠

### SICILIAN DEFENSE, TAIMANOV VARIATION (B47)

Milan Vukceovich

Sal Matera

Reykjavik (12), 1976

Annotations by IM Sal Matera, except those in italics by Al Lawrence

Milan Vukceovich was a very strong player and achieved the title of international grandmaster of composition. This game was played toward the end of the tournament; we both knew the winner would have a chance for an IM norm and the loser would be eliminated. Milan attacked my Sicilian and was taking no prisoners. I found a series of only moves, eventually turned the tide and won a very exciting game.

**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 a6 5. Nc3 Qc7 6. g3 Nf6 7. Bg2 Be7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. Be3 Nc6 10. f4 d6 11. Kh1 Rb8 12. a4 Re8** Leaving defence of the f7-pawn was like waving a red flag in front of a bull, and Milan charged.

**13. e5 dxe5 14. Nxc6 bxc6 15. fxe5 Nd5 16. Bd4 c5 17. Rxf7**

(see diagram top of next column)

As it turns out, this is not sound, but it was definitely scary with the clock ticking.



POSITION AFTER 17. Rx f7

#### 17. ... cxd4!

*The only move that wins for Black! White wins immediately after 17. ... Kxf7 18. Qh5+ Kg8 19. Qxe8+ and has a slight advantage after 17. ... Bb7 18. Qh5 Nxc3 19. Bxc3 Bxg2+ 20. Kxg2 Rf8.*

#### 18. Qh5 Nxc3 19. Raf1

Threatening 20. Rxg7+ with a quick mate.

#### 19. ... Rf8 20. bxc3 Bb7

White is running out of pieces and the attack is over.

**21. cxd4 Bxg2+ 22. Kxg2 Qxc2+ 23. Kg1 Qd3 24. R1f4 Ba3 25. Kg2 Rb2+ 26. Kh3 Qg6 27. Rxf8+ Bxf8 28. Qf3 Qh6+ 29. Kg4 g6 30. h4 Rh2 31. Rf6 Qh5+ 32. Kf4 Bh6+ 33. Ke4 Re2+ 34. Kd3 Re3+, White resigned.** ♠





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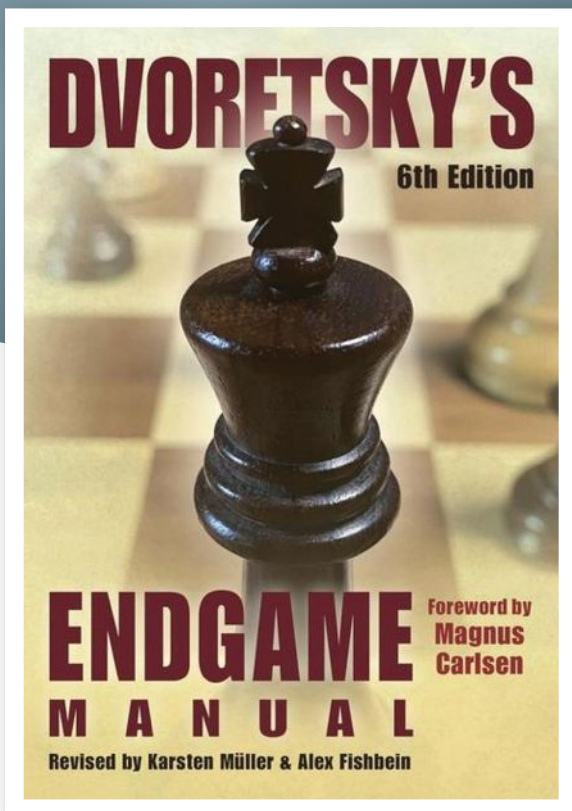
When it appeared in 2003, the first edition of Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual was immediately recognized by novice and master alike as one of the best books ever published on the endgame.

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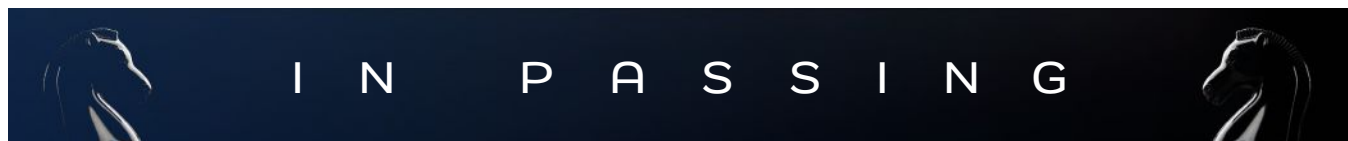


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## Alan Glasscoe 1943-2025

BY FM ANDY LEE

I CUT MY TEETH AS A TOURNAMENT player at the Berkeley Chess Club in the mid-1990s. In those days the BCC met at the Berkeley City Club on Friday nights, an elegant, castle-like building designed by Julia Morgan in the 1920s. It was a strange place to find the chessplayers of the greater Bay Area, who were normally relegated to parks and cafes, but every week during my high school years the word “chess” was enough to get buzzed through the front door to the elegant lobby, where Alan Glasscoe was waiting at a card table to take your two bucks for entry into that night’s round.

The world of chess is full of colorful char-

acters, and Alan Glasscoe was one of the best. He had a glass eye from a childhood accident, a moderately terrifying scar on his forehead, and a knack for pairing a tournament quickly by hand. He ran the Berkeley Chess Club from about 1980 until his death in June, basically the span of my entire life. If you lost, he would be quick to console you with

his favorite line, “Looks like you came in second place tonight.” If you played him he might lean over after making a move, not to offer a draw, but to ask whether you were scared yet.

The Berkeley Chess Club was an incredible place to come of age as a chessplayer, and I didn’t appreciate until years later how much of it was due to Alan. If your average weekend Swiss is big and anonymous, a well-run local chess club is like an episode of *Cheers*, with Norms and Cliffs and Woodys playing speed chess and kibitzing well above their rating class. In that analogy, Alan was the bartender, the Sam Malone figure. He embodied the club and lent it his manic energy. But he also saved it by finding new location after new location once the City Club tired of us in the early 2000s.

We club players spent a lot of energy debating the merits of various opening systems. Back in 1996 I was firmly on the side of the closed games, a believer in the London System and the French Defense. One

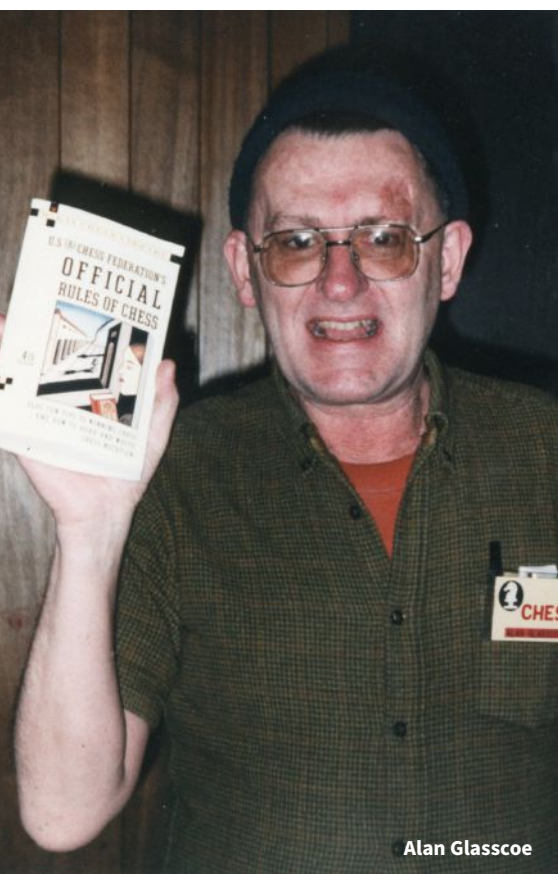
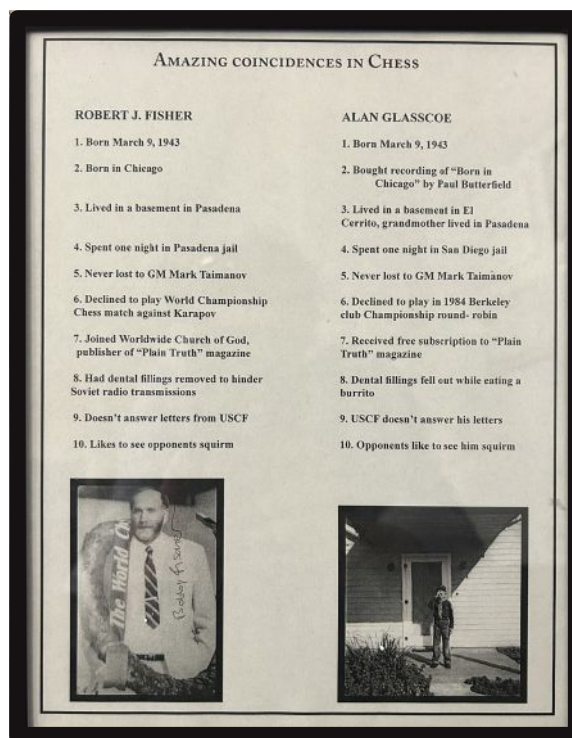
night I was paired with Craig Andries, another French enthusiast, and decided that I could risk 1. e4. Alan wandered over to the game, did an exaggerated double-take, and quickly grabbed my score-sheet. “What is this?” I wondered, but he quickly returned it with an annotation: 1. e4!!

Alan’s memorial last weekend was full of

these kinds of stories, recollections of his dry wit. One of his claims to fame was as Bobby Fischer’s astrological twin — they were both born on March 9, 1943, you see — and this fact led him to write up a set of “Amazing Coincidences in Chess.” (See the image above for these coincidences. ~ed.)

Alan wasn’t just a longtime tournament director: He trained me and countless other teenagers who were part of the Berkeley Chess School program to keep track of the pairing cards, check for due color, and all the other minutiae needed to run a tournament. (According to another BCS alum, the method of pairing that Alan taught us was as unorthodox as his approach to chess.)

He also passed along the most important trick of the tournament director, to be used only on hysterical chess parents or bad losers: If anyone takes you to task for a decision you make, flip to a random page in the *Official Rules of Chess* (he always kept a copy nearby) and pretend to consult it at length. Then explain that the rulebook confirmed



Alan Glasscoe

your decision and don't waste any more time on them. Of course, Alan could get away with this — he knew the whole book cover to cover anyway.

Alan was a lover of strange openings and unsound gambits. He was fond of writing letters to Kurt Jacobs' *Berkeley Chess Club Bulletin* under pseudonyms such as "A Former Budapest Player" and "E.J. Diemer's Illegitimate Stepson." His games almost always involved an early Nb1-c3 or ... Nb8-c6, often on Move 1. (One friend joked that he was just in a hurry to get his queen's knight to the kingside as quickly as possible so that it could join in the attack.) And Alan wasn't content with transposing back into normal positions: After 1. e4 Nc6 2. Nf3, rather than 2. ... e5, Alan would often play 2. ... f5, the so-called Colorado Countergambit. It's no surprise that he was most comfortable attacking the king, as demonstrated by this fine effort:

## LARSEN'S OPENING (A01)

Bill Wall

Alan Glasscoe

LERA, Sunnyvale, 1985

### 1. b3 Nc6

One aficionado of unusual openings meets another.

### 2. Bb2 e5 3. c4 f5 4. e3 Nf6 5. d4 Bb4+ 6. Nd2

White is already in serious trouble.

### 6. ... d6 7. Be2 0-0



Alan could have played for ... Nf6-e4 ideas, but he chose instead to finish his development.

### 8. dxe5

White probably passed on 8. Ngf3 because of 8. ... e4, but with the position closed he would have been out of the most serious danger. Instead, he opened lines for Black's pieces.

### 8. ... dxe5 9. Ngf3 Ne4 10. a3 Bc3 11. Qc2 Bxb2 12. Qxb2 Nxd2 13. Nxd2 f4 14. e4

Another mistake; the knight should not be allowed this wonderful square in the center.

### 14. ... Nd4 15. Bf3



Alan co-authored a book about the Budapest Gambit, and here his knowledge of these structures came in handy.

### 15. ... a5

Preparing a rook lift along the third rank.

### 16. 0-0 Ra6 17. g3 Bh3 18. Bg2 Bxg2 19. Kxg2 Qg5



White's position is rather desperate.

### 20. f3

Stopping the threat of ... f4-f3+, but it's no real help.

### 20. ... f3 21. f4

Avoiding mate for the moment. White couldn't play 21. hxg3 because of 21. ... Rg6 22. g4 Rxf3.

### 21. ... Qg4 22. hxg3 exf4 23. Qc3 Rh6 24. Rh1 Qe2+ 25. Kg1 f3, White resigned.

Alan missed a few chances early on, but after he got in his Budapest move, ... a7-a5, he played just about perfectly.

No one becomes a tournament director for the fame and fortune, a few do it for the

small sense of power it can bring, but most TDs are there because they love chess and they love — or at least are able to tolerate — chess players. It can be a thankless task, but it's one that Alan did week in and week out for over four decades. If you'd like to honor his memory, consider showing your appreciation to the next tournament director you see, or opening your next game with your queen's knight.

The world is a little less silly and strange without Alan in it (a little less musical too; I didn't learn until his memorial service that he was an excellent steel guitar player). I'm glad I got to know him and learn from him. ♠

## L. Thad Rogers 1952-2025

BY DAN LUCAS

THE CHESS WORLD LOST A REMARKABLE leader and tireless advocate with the death of L. Thad Rogers, who died in his sleep on July 20 at home in Macon, Georgia. He was 72; his wife, Janet, shared that his death followed a prolonged illness. Thad's death leaves a profound void in the Georgia



and U.S. chess communities, where his influence has been felt for more than 50 years.

Born Dec. 23, 1952, in Canton, Ohio, Rogers started playing chess at the age of 10. After meeting Janet in Erie, Pennsylvania, the couple relocated in 1973 to Macon. Thad's peak over-the-board rating was 1555; he found his strongest competitive success in correspondence chess, where he earned the title of postal master.

By the mid-1970s, Thad had discovered his true passion — tournament direction and organization. He became a national tournament director in 1979 and earned the title of international arbiter from FIDE in 1981. Over the decades, he played a central role in shaping organized chess in Georgia and beyond. Thad's leadership in the Georgia Chess Association spanned multiple terms as president from 1976 through 2003; he returned to the role this year. Innovations continued late in life: Thad co-founded the GCA Hall of Fame in 2023 with Kent Meadows, a development that influenced neighboring states to do the same.

Rogers' legacy includes directing hundreds of tournaments at the state and national levels. Among the highlights were the 1980 U.S. Open in Atlanta, the 1991 National High School, and the 1999 National Junior High. His decades of service were recognized by US Chess with numerous accolades, including the Meritorious Service Award and Distinguished Volunteer Award

in 1982, the Special Services Award in 1983, the Outstanding Career Achievement Award in 2003, and the Tournament Director Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014. He also received a Distinguished Service Award at the U.S. Open in Middleton, Wisc., in August.

Perhaps Thad's most influential contribution was the creation of the Atlanta Chess and Game Center in 1992. Known ironically as the "House of Pain," the club was a major location for chess in the South until it closed in 2012 after hosting 3,622 rated events (and being named US Chess Club of the Year in 2007). The facility housed his American Chess Promotions book and equipment business as well; he continued to sell books at events as recently as the 2025 Georgia State Championship. Former GCA board member Colin Potts recalled, "The Atlanta Chess Center was a haven for chess players in Atlanta throughout the '90s and early '00s."

Thad's dedication was deeply personal. Former US Chess President Beatriz Marinello remembers, "Thad loved chess and gave so much of himself to help others enjoy the game. A cancer survivor, he continued to be involved in the chess world during those difficult years, even while fighting for his life."

Peter Giannatos, executive director and founder of the Charlotte Chess Center, recalled, "Thad wasn't just running his own events — he was helping others run theirs. Over time, Thad became more than just a tournament organizer to me; he became 'Chess Grandpa Thad.'"

Beyond chess, Thad's warmth, generosity, and unwavering belief in the power of the game to connect people defined his life's work. As the GCA announcement of his death stated, "Thad was more than a leader — he was a legend in the Georgia chess community. His events were never just about competition; they were about building community."

*This obituary draws heavily from Kent Meadows' Georgia Chess Hall of Fame research and write-up, which can be found at [georgiachess.org](http://georgiachess.org).*

## FM Tibor Weinberger 1932-2025

BY **IM JOHN DONALDSON**

US CHESS SENIOR MASTER AND FIDE Master Tibor Weinberger, of Santa Monica, California, passed away Aug. 28.

Born Nov. 27, 1932, in Budapest, Weinberger survived the horrors of World War II and the Hungarian Revolution before settling in the United States.

Tibor first came to the attention of American chessplayers by winning the 1957 Milwaukee City Championship as well as the New Jersey Open and Nebraska State Championship in 1958, but it was only after settling in Los Angeles later that year that he really made his mark. He would become one of the dominant players in the Southland over the next two decades, winning the area's most important events — the California State Championship, the California Open and the Pacific Southwest Open — on multiple occasions. Only the American Open title eluded him.

Weinberger's greatest success was tying for second with William Lombardy in the 1968 National Open, held at Lake Tahoe. His 6/7 score included wins over World Junior Champion Julio Kaplan (a 20-move miniature) and Larry Evans (his second victory over Evans) and a draw with the winner of the event, Pal Benko. This result raised Weinberger's rating to 2440, which made him the 14th-ranked player in the U.S. at the time, earning him a spot in the 1968 U.S. Championship.

Tibor had another fine result in the 1975 Western Futurity Qualifying Tournament, held at the Chess Set, the home of Lina Grumette, in Hollywood. A last-minute replacement for Jude Acers and the lowest-rated player in the field, Tibor was the surprise of the event, finishing second behind James Tarjan, but ahead of several IMs. His score of 6½/9 qualified him to play in a GM tournament in Cleveland later that year — not a bad performance for a mechanical engineer and income property owner who was never a chess professional.

Weinberger continued to maintain a master rating into his 80s and in 2014 scored 3/6 in the open section of the National Open, with wins over WGM Anjelina Belakovskaya and FM Alisa Melekhina. He played in his last tournament, the 2019 North American Open, at the age of 87.

Tibor was also a patron of the game who sponsored four strong round-robin tournaments in honor of his good friend IM Imre Konig. Held at the Mechanics' Institute Chess Club in San Francisco, they featured a who's who of top U.S. players including GMs Hikaru Nakamura, Alex Yermolinsky, John Fedorowicz, Yuri Shulman, Varuzhan Akobian, Sam Shankland and Daniel Naroditsky.

Weinberger had a keen appreciation and respect for chess history. Thanks to his ef-



FM Tibor Weinberger

forts a book was published on König, the author of the classic *Chess from Morphy to Botvinnik*. A member of the Santa Monica Bay Chess Club for over 60 years, Weinberger's well-written and heartfelt work on the history of the club is available at [smb-chess.com/history](http://smb-chess.com/history). He was recognized by US Chess for a lifetime of chess achievement with the Outstanding Player Achievement Award in 2023.

IM Jack Peters writes: "Tibor had a peculiar feature in his playing style. He never seemed to worry about doubled pawns. Two of his favorite openings were the Caro-Kann with 4. ... Nf6 5. Nxf6+ exf6 and the Berlin Defense. When he played them, they were regarded as suspect. Now they are considered reliable for Black. He was ahead of his time!" He also provided a game he felt could properly represent Tibor and his many contributions to our game.

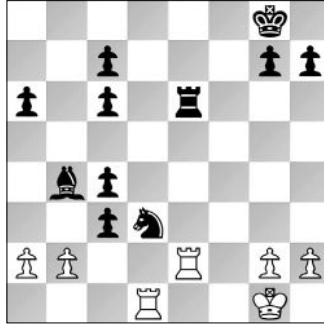
### **RUY LOPEZ, BERLIN VARIATION (C67)**

**Daniel Lee (2383)**

**FM Tibor Weinberger (2296)**

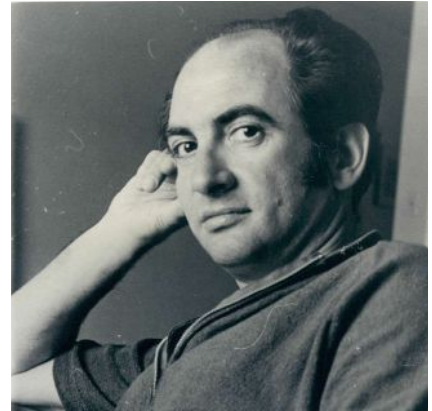
**American Open (8), Los Angeles, 11.26.1995**

**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. 0-0 Nxe4 5. d4 Be7 6. dxe5 d5 7. c4 a6 8. Ba4 dxc4 9. Qe2 Qd3 10. Re1 Nc5 11. Bxc6+ bxc6 12. Be3 Be6 13. Nc3 Qxe2 14. Rxe2 Nd3 15. Rd1 0-0 16. Nd4 Bd5 17. Nf5 Rfe8 18. Red2 Bb4 19. f4 f6 20. Bd4 Be6 21. Ne3 Rad8 22. f5 Rxd4 23. fxe6 fxe5 24. Nf5 Rxe6 25. Nxd4 exd4 26. Re2 dxc3**



**27. Rxe6 cxb2 28. Rb1 c3 29. Re2 Bc5+ 30. Kf1 Bd4 31. a3 c5 32. Rc2 Kf7 33. Ke2 Ne5, White resigned.♠**

*For more on FM Tibor Weinberger, including an obituary by his son Michael, please visit [new.uschess.org/news/fm-tibor-weinberger-1932-2025](http://new.uschess.org/news/fm-tibor-weinberger-1932-2025).*



# Mayor Bartlett

## Executive Director Ranae Bartlett departs US Chess to become mayor of Madison, Ala.

BY **JOHN HARTMANN**

▶ IT IS SAID THAT NO ONE CAN SERVE two masters. And so US Chess Executive Director Ranae Bartlett is trading Caïssa for the people of Madison, Alabama.

After serving on the Madison Board of Education (2011-2020) and City Council (2020-current), Bartlett won the Aug. 26 mayoral election with more than 56% of the vote. She will be inaugurated Nov. 3.

Bartlett was named US Chess director of operations in September 2023, and became our executive director in March 2024. She departs US Chess on Oct. 21, but she'll keep her hand in the chess world.

Newly elected to the Alabama Chess Hall of Fame, Bartlett will help run a chess class at a Madison elementary school beginning in January, and she plans to continue

to host and direct the Alabama All-Girls Championship.

US Chess President Kevin Pryor tells *Chess Life*: "Ranae Bartlett has established herself as a tremendous ambassador for US Chess while managing our organization's day-to-day operations. She has demonstrated a tireless work ethic and an amazing ability to stay on top of everything while serving the chess community, leading her team, and working with the executive board. We were fortunate to have someone so talented and skilled as executive director and she will be greatly missed. We wish Ranae all the best in her new role as the Honorable Mayor of Madison, Alabama."

Visit *Chess Life Online* for transition plans as announced by the Executive Board. ♠



# Your Learning Curve

## Plateaus, surges, and late-career peaks

BY **GM ANDY SOLTIS**



**YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD** of the bell curve. It depicts the “normal distribution” of naturally occurring data, such as

the varying IQs, heights, even shoe sizes, of a large number of people.

When plotted on a graph, there will be a few size-5-shoe people on the graph's lower left, a few size-15 people on the lower right, and a huge mass of average-shoe people in the middle, forming a bell.

Why bring this up? Because if we make a graph of chess ratings, it also looks like a bell.

The vast majority of USCF members, about two-thirds, are in the 600-to-1700 range. They form a rounded bulge at the top of the bell. The finished graph shows where you stand in the American chess community.

But you can create another graph just about you. It will depict how your rating has changed — and may hint at your bell-shaped future:

The horizontal axis along the graph's bottom will be the time line since your first tournament. The vertical axis on the left will represent your rating gains.

Make a dot near the lower left corner to represent your first rating. Add another dot to the right of it for each rating gain you earn. When you connect the dots it will probably show a rising arc.

It may rise slowly. That's normal. Learning a lot more about chess doesn't translate immediately into a lot more rating points. The celebrated teacher Mark Dvoretsky called this stage the “latent accumulation of skills.”

But a lucky few begin their rating journey with a dramatic surge. For example, Alice Lee's first rating was 480, at age 6. She gained more than 750 points in three months and eventually became a WGM and an IM. Her colleague Carissa Yip went from

unrated to 2131 in three years and is now an IM. At 10 she made history by beating a grandmaster.

### MODERN DEFENSE (B06)

**Carissa Yip**

**GM Alexander Ivanov**

**New England Open, 08.30.2014**

**1. e4 g6 2. d4 Bg7 3. Nc3 c6 4. Be3 Qb6 5.**

**a3! d6 6. f4 e5 7. Nf3 exd4 8. Nxd4 Qd8**

The b-pawn was not hanging (8. ... Qxb2?? 9. Na4). Now the Black d6-pawn will be chronically weak.

**9. Qd2 Nf6 10. 0-0-0 0-0 11. Nf3! Qe8 12.**

**e5 Ng4 13. Bg1 dxe5 14. h3 Nf6 15. Bc5**

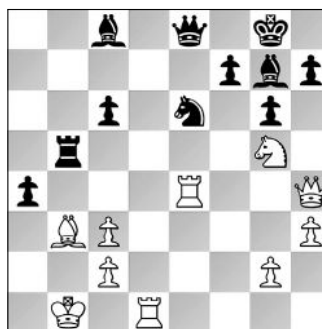
**exf4 16. Qxf4 Nbd7 17. Bxf8 Nxf8 18. Bc4**

**Ne6 19. Qh4 b5 20. Bb3 a5 21. Kb1 Rb8**

**22. Rhe1 b4 23. Qg3 Rb7 24. axb4 Rxb4**

**25. Ng5 Nd5 26. Re4! Nxc3+ 27. bxc3 Rb5**

**28. Qh4 a4**



If 29. Qxh7+ Kf8 White would need to find 30. Qh4! axb3 31. Rd8! to win. Better is:

**29. Nxe6! Bxe6 30. Rd8 Qxd8 31. Qxd8+ Bf8 32. Rxa4, Black resigned.**

Whether your rating rises slowly or quickly, there is no guarantee that it will keep rising.

Consider what happens to adolescent stars:

Since the annual World Under-10 Championship tournaments began, there have been 40 winners of the Open Section. Each winner seemed likely to reach the Candidates stage of the adult world championship. So far, only two have — and they weren't Magnus Carlsen. (They were GMs Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu and Etienne Bacrot.) Carlsen was virtually “a beginner” at 9, his father has said. In contrast, Ian Nepomniachtchi, a future GM born the same year as Magnus, was already a master.

But at 13, Nepomniachtchi's rating flatlined. He experienced the frustrating, mysterious pause known to players of all strengths as a plateau.

Meanwhile, Carlsen went from expert to 2500 in about two years. However, Magnus hit his own plateau and it lasted a year and a half, with games like this:

### SICILIAN DEFENSE, TAIMANOV VARIATION (B46)

**GM Magnus Carlsen**

**GM Oleg Korneev**

**European Championship, Zegrze, 6.29.2005**

**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Be3 Nf6 7. g4 h6 8. Bg2 d5 9. 0-0 Bb4 10. exd5 exd5 11. h3 0-0 12. Nce2 Re8 13. Nxc6? bxc6 14. c4 a5 15. Nd4 Ra6 16. Qd3 c5 17. Nf5?? d4! 18. Bf4 a4! 19. Bf3 a3 20. b3 Bxf5 21. Qxf5 Rae6 22. Rad1 Ne4 23. Bxe4 Rxe4 24. Bd2 g6 25. Qf3 Bxd2 26. Rxd2 h5! 27. Qg3 hxg4 28. hxg4 Qg5 29. f4 Re3**

(see diagram top of next column)

Now 30. fxg5 Rxg3+ or 30. Qxe3 Qxg4+ 31. Rg2 Qxg2+ is lost.

# QUIZ FOR OCTOBER

**GREAT PLAYERS OF THE past** are often confused with one another. This is the case of the two Wolfgangs of post-World War II Germany. Wolfgang Unzicker, born 100 years ago, dominated West German chess with his tactical play. Wolfgang Uhlmann, born 90 years ago, did the same in East Germany, with a more positional style. In this month's quiz you are asked to find the fastest way to win six positions from games of the two great Wolfgangs. This will usually mean the forced win of a decisive amount of material. Solutions are on page 63.

## PROBLEM 1

Wolfgang Uhlmann  
Ion Balanel



WHITE TO MOVE

## PROBLEM 2

Wolfgang Unzicker  
Friedrich Saemisch



WHITE TO MOVE

## PROBLEM 3

Jaroslav Jezek  
Wolfgang Uhlmann



BLACK TO MOVE

## PROBLEM 4

Wolfgang Unzicker  
Theo van Scheltinga



WHITE TO MOVE

## PROBLEM 5

Wolfgang Uhlmann  
Klaus Darga



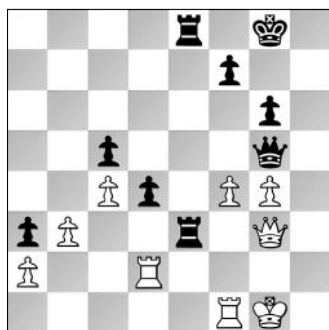
WHITE TO MOVE

## PROBLEM 6

Wolfgang Uhlmann  
Ortvin Sarapu



WHITE TO MOVE



POSITION AFTER 29. ... Re3

30. Qh2 Qxg4+ 31. Rg2 Qf5 32. Rg5 Qd3 33. Qh4 Rh3 34. Qg4 Rh1+, White resigned.

Why do we have plateaus? The best explanation is that talent will only get you so far. You need to acquire new skills to level up.

"I think everybody has a level of strength which they may attain without working too hard," GM Joel Benjamin said. With his great natural talent he reached Expert at age 11. Then he hit his first plateau and it lasted two years. "I got stuck at various levels," Benjamin recalled to *Inside Chess* magazine after becoming U.S. Champion.

Everyone gets stuck. That's when many

ask: Is this my ceiling? Is this the best I can be?

One of my earliest *Chess Life* columns analyzed the career of players of varying strength. I found that most people reach 90 percent of their potential rating after eight years of tournaments. They can still improve but probably by no more than one class (200 points). That's the right side of the bell curve — your rating gains slow down.

But nowadays kids start much earlier and have more pre-adult time to study chess. Also, adults have shown greater ability to surge — for reasons that are unclear.

GM Robert Byrne credited his intense study for his 100-plus point surge at age 43. But Anatoly Karpov had no explanation for why he had his own best-ever result at age 42.

A psychologist, GM Nikolai Krogius, concluded that a player can have a "second peak" even later. Boris Spassky was enjoying a surge when he played this game — at 61.

## SCOTCH GAME (C45)

GM Tal Shaked  
GM Boris Spassky  
Cannes, 1988

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 exd4 4. Nxd4

Nxd4 5. Qxd4 Ne7 6. Nc3 Nc6 7. Qe3 g6 8. Bd2 Bg7 9. O-O Qf6 10. f4 0-0!

Spassky dared his opponent, who had just won the World Junior Championship, to seize more space with 11. g4 or 11. e5.

11. e5 Qe6 12. Qe4? d6 13. Bc4 Qe8! 14. Nd5 Bf5 15. Qe3 dxe5! 16. Nxc7? Qc8



Now 17. Nxa8 Nd4! favors Black.

17. Nd5 Re8! 18. Bc3 Nd4 19. fxe5 Qxc4 20. Qxd4? Qxa2 21. Qh4 h5 22. Qg5 Rad8 23. Ne7+ Kh7, White resigned.

Chess has another bell-shaped arc — and it may occur in every one of your games, as I'll explain next month. ♠

# Some Restrictions Apply

## Positional Exchange sacrifices, Part 2

BY **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**



LAST MONTH, WE SAW SOME examples of a minor piece being better than the opposing rook in a normal position.

Now we will see examples of positional domination, where the minor piece dominates the rook or an Exchange is sacrificed to dominate one of the opponent's pieces. The most prominent example is a win by World Champion Garry Kasparov over GM Alexei Shirov.

### HOLDING BACK

GM Garry Kasparov (2805)

GM Alexei Shirov (2740)

Horgen, 1994



WHITE TO MOVE

**17. Rxb7**

Kasparov sacrifices the Exchange.

**17. ... Nxb7 18. b4!**

Now that major changes have happened, it's time to do a summary. White has sacrificed the Exchange. With his last move, he is controlling the b7-knight. The white knight on d5 is on an outpost and cannot be kicked away, and it protects the c3-pawn, White's only potential weakness. From f1, the bishop attacks the a6-pawn. If Black ever plays ... a6-a5, the b4-pawn will become a passed pawn. Black's position is still fine; his king is safe and the bishop can get a good diagonal on g5. The engine gives White only a slight edge here. But practically, it is a lot easier to play with white.

**18. ... Bg5 19. Na3**

White is not in a hurry to get castled; there is no way for Black to create any sort of threats against the white king. Instead, Kasparov improves his minor pieces.

**19. ... 0-0 20. Nc4 a5 21. Bd3**

Of course, Kasparov wants to keep a pawn on b4 in order to keep the b7-knight out of the game. If 21. b5? Black would immediately be doing much better with 21. ... Nc5, when the knight on c5 is suddenly an excellent piece.

**21. ... axb4 22. cxb4 Qb8?**

The queen is headed to a7, but Black will start walking into forks. A waiting move such as 22. ... Kh8 would have been better. A typical idea in these structures for Black is to play ... g7-g6 followed by ... f7-f5.

**23. h4**

A useful move, kicking the bishop away from the d8-h4 diagonal.

**23. ... Bh6 24. Ncb6 Ra2**



**25. 0-0**

A calm and patient move. The immediate 25. Nd7 would run into 25. ... Bd2+! 26. Kf1 Qa7 and suddenly, Black's got a lot of activity. The queen is eyeing the f2-pawn and that's not all.

**25. ... Rd2 26. Qf3 Qa7 27. Nd7**

The white pieces have now entered Black's camp. Because of the opposite-colored bishops, there is also a potential for an attack. Once the d3-bishop gets to c4, the f7-pawn will be targeted.

**27. ... Nd8?**

Finally, the knight rejoins the game; Shirov decides to give back the Exchange. Black could have hung on to the material with 27. ... Ra8.

**28. Nxf8 Kxf8 29. b5**

Now that the material is equal, the passed pawn marches on. White is winning here and Kasparov converts the advantage without any issues.

**29. ... Qa3 30. Qf5 Ke8 31. Bc4 Rc2 32.**

**Qxh7 Rxc4 33. Qg8+ Kd7 34. Nb6+ Ke7**

**35. Nxc4 Qc5 36. Ra1 Qd4 37. Ra3 Bc1 38.**

**Ne3, Black resigned.**

Kasparov sacrificed the Exchange in order to keep one of his opponent's minor pieces out of the game. As we saw, the black knight was unable to rejoin the game until it was too late. Kasparov's play was patient, focused on improving his pieces; despite the material advantage, Shirov was the one with the long-term headache.

One of my favorite games involving this theme comes from the 2018 Grand Chess Tour. Although it's a blitz game, it's a very high-quality win by GM Alexander Grischuk over GM Fabiano Caruana.

## FAST BUT PATIENT

GM Alexander Grischuk (2766)

GM Fabiano Caruana (2816)

GCT Leuven (blitz), 06.15.2018



WHITE TO MOVE

14. Rxf6! Qxe2+ 15. Kxe2 gxf6 16. Bxf6 Rg8 17. e5

Grischuk has entered the endgame by sacrificing the Exchange. The f6-bishop is an extremely annoying piece — it controls d8, the only square the a8-rook could use to join the game. The g8-rook also cannot really do anything: Black would love to exchange it for the dark-squared bishop, but if the rook goes to g6 it's the d3-bishop that will capture it. Again, White's play is very easy here; Black cannot bring his pieces into the game.

17. ... h5 18. Rd1 Bd7 19. Be4 Rb8 20. Bf3!

The h5-pawn is a clear target, and Black cannot hang on to it.

20. ... c5 21. Rd6 Bc6 22. Bxh5

White has won a pawn and the black pieces are completely useless.

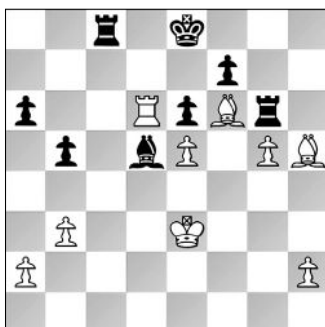
22. ... Bd5 23. b3 c4

White was threatening to play 24. c4 himself.

24. Ke3 Rc8 25. g4

The white pawns march forward.

25. ... b5 26. g5 cxb3 27. cxb3 Rg6



28. Kd4

White doesn't even want the Exchange back. The alternative 28. Bxg6 is possible, but after 28. ... fxg6 the h-pawn wouldn't be passed anymore, and that pawn is going to win the game.

28. ... Kf8 29. h4 Kg8 30. Be2 b4 31. h5

Rxf6 32. exf6, Black resigned.

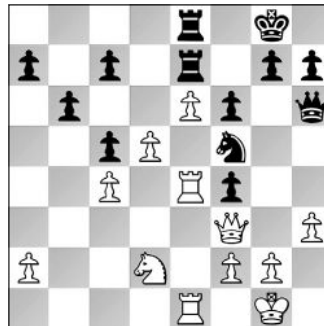
Here's a more recent example from the 2023 World Championship match. It seemed as though the Exchange sacrifice wasn't on Nepomniachtchi's radar at all.

## TOP LEVEL

GM Ding Liren (2829)

GM Ian Nepomniachtchi (2761)

FIDE World Championship (4), Astana, 04.13.2023



BLACK TO MOVE

28. ... Nd4?

Black's position is already tough, but the Exchange sacrifice must have been a blind spot for Nepomniachtchi.

29. Rxd4 cxd4 30. Nb3

Again, Black simply cannot move and the pieces are useless.

30. ... g5

Trying to create some squares for the e7-rook.

31. Nxd4 Qg6 32. g4!

White is determined to creating an outpost on f5 for the knight.

32. ... fxg3 e.p.

Capturing *en passant* will not deter the knight from landing on the desired square.

33. fxg3 h5 34. Nf5 Rh7 35. Qe4 Kh8 36. e7

White will get the material back thanks to the advanced passed pawn. The rest is rather straightforward.

36. ... Qf7 37. d6 cxd6 38. Nxd6 Qg8 39.

Nxe8 Qxe8 40. Qe6 Kg7 41. Rf1 Rh6 42.

Rd1 f5 43. Qe5+ Kf7 44. Qxf5+ Rf6 45.

Qh7+ Ke6 46. Qg7 Rg6 47. Qf8, Black resigned.

I recently had the chance to execute this in one of my own games.

## SWING AND A MISS

WGM Tatev Abrahamyan (2342)

Thomas Thiel (2184)

Dortmund Open (7), 08.08.2025



WHITE TO MOVE

18. Rxh7

I was, of course, very tempted by this sacrifice. Grabbing the rook with 18. ... Kxh7? and letting the d3-bishop live will lead to checkmate. 19. Nxe5 fxe5 20. Qh5+ Kg8 21. Bxg6 Rf6 22. Qh7+ Kf8 23. Bh6 with checkmate on h8 next. But I played 18. Bh6 and went on to win on move 35. I rejected the sacrifice because of ...

18. ... Nxd3

... but what I missed is an intermezzo Exchange sacrifice:

19. Rxg7+ Kxg7 20. cxd3

Next, I will play Nf3-d4 and Qe2-g4, with a pretty straightforward attack. The black pieces are pretty useless here; the c8-bishop cannot join the game.

Even with all the research I've done and the games I have looked through for my writing, I still missed this idea. I suppose I really should start reading my own columns!

Once again, I hope these games challenge you to rethink the assigned value of the pieces and think about their potential in any given position. We will wrap up our discussion of this theme in the next column by examining Exchange sacrifices on an outpost. ♠

# Being Bogoljubow

Efim Bogoljubow won with both colors – for different reasons.

BY **BRUCE PANDOLFINI**



THE RUSSIAN-BORN GERMAN grandmaster Efim Bogoljubow (1889-1952) had an outstanding career, playing in two World Championship matches with Alexander Alekhine, though losing both (in 1929, by a score of 15½-9½, and 1934, by 15½-10½). Never shy in his comments, he will forever be remembered for the quote: “When I am White I win because I am White. When I am Black I win because I am Bogoljubow.” In this month’s encounter, Bogoljubow indeed shows us how to win as Black by virtue of being Bogoljubow.

## QUEEN’S GAMBIT DECLINED, EXCHANGE VARIATION (D35)

Alfred Brinckmann  
Efim Bogoljubow  
Triberg 1921

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bg5



Now ensure that the position above is set up on your chessboard. As you play through the remaining moves in this game, use a piece of paper to cover the article, exposing Black’s next move only after trying to guess it. If you guess correctly, give yourself the par

score. Sometimes points are also awarded for second-best moves, and there may even be bonus points — or deductions — for other moves and variations. Note that \*\* means that Black’s move is on the next line. \*\*

**4. Par Score 6 Nbd7**  
Setting up the possibility of an old trap. You may accept **full credit** for 4. ... Be7 or 4. ... c6.

**5. e3**  
White was OK with 5. cxd5 exd5, but not 6. Nxd5?, falling into 6. ... Nxd5 7. Bxd8 Bb4+ (**1 bonus point**). \*\*

**5. Par Score 5 c6**  
You may accept **full credit** for 5. ... h6 or 5. ... Be7.

**6. cxd5**  
White decides to reduce the tension by exchanging pawns. \*\*

**6. Par Score 4 exd5**  
By taking back with the e-pawn, Black opens the e-file and clears the way for the c8-bishop.

**7. Bd3**  
This development is more energetic than 7. Be2. \*\*

**7. Par Score 5 Bd6**  
Black in turn selects an active deployment for the f8-bishop, though you may accept **full credit** for 7. ... Be7 or 7. ... h6.

**8. Nf3\*\***

**8. Par Score 5 0-0**  
Accept **full credit** for 8. ... h6, “putting the question” to White’s bishop.

**9. 0-0**

The text is fine, though 9. Qc2 would have been slightly preferable. \*\*

**9. Par Score 5 Re8**  
Bogoljubow seizes the half-open e-file, though, again, accept **full credit** for 9. ... h6.

**10. Ne2**  
White plans to shift this knight to the king-side. Another idea in similar positions is to play for a minority attack, preparing the advance of the b2-pawn with 10. Rb1. \*\*

**10. Par Score 5 Nf8**  
This repositioning is typical. Black unblocks the c8-bishop and strengthens the kingside.

**11. Ng3**  
The knight may look good here, but it actually cuts White’s options. \*\*

**11. Par Score 5 h6**  
White is essentially compelled to exchange on f6.

**12. Bxf6**  
On 12. Bh4 g5, White is forced to sacrifice a piece. \*\*

**12. Par Score 3 Qxf6**

**13. Qc2\*\***

**13. Par Score 5 Bg4**  
Black has the initiative and a threat.

**14. Nd2**  
The intrusion 14. Nf5 was possible, but White opts for safety. \*\*

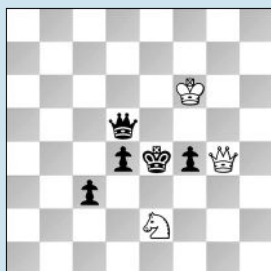
**14. Par Score 5 g6**

## 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.

**OCTOBER EXERCISE:** Emanuel Lasker supposedly once said, "If you see a good move, look for a better one." If you think of an attractive move, even if it seems to work, look for another move that does all the same stuff and possibly more. Now, you may not find one. You might find several. But wherever your exploration takes you, you will appreciate that much of chess thinking revolves around making comparisons.

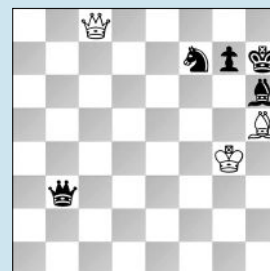
**PROBLEM 1**  
Mating net



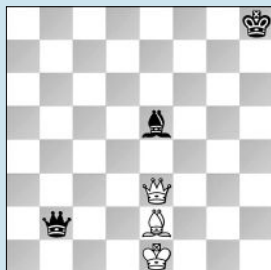
**PROBLEM 2**  
Mating net



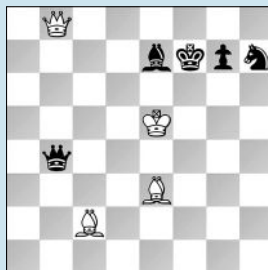
**PROBLEM 3**  
Mating net



**PROBLEM 4**  
Mating net



**PROBLEM 5**  
Mating net



**PROBLEM 6**  
Mating net



Bogoljubow secures f5 against invasion.

### 15. Rae1

White strengthens the e-pawn in preparation for moving the f-pawn. Another thought was 15. Nb3. \*\*

### 15. Par Score 6

Re7

Black prepares to double on the e-file. You may accept **full credit** for 15. ... h5 or 15. ... Rac8.

### 16. f4

This is aggressive, but unnecessarily weakens e3. As before, 16. Nb3 was safer. \*\*

### 16. Par Score 5

Rae8

Now the e3-pawn is menaced.

### 17. f5

An active advance, for sure, but Black still comes away with the advantage. \*\*

### 17. Par Score 6

g5

Bogoljubow plays it safely, but you may accept **full credit** for 17. ... Rxe3, when 18. Rxe3 Rxe3 19. fxe6 Qxd4 is crushing.

### 18. Kf2

White naturally tries to uphold his e-pawn. \*\*

### 18. Par Score 8

Rxe3

A devastating breakthrough. Nevertheless,

you may accept **full credit** for 18. ... Bf4, which is also strong.

### 19. Rxe3\*\*

### 19. Par Score 5

Rxe3

### 20. Kxe3\*\*

### 20. Par Score 6

Bf4+

This check forces White's response.

### 21. Rxf4

If instead 21. Kf2, then 21. ... Qxd4+ is decisive. \*\*

### 21. Par Score 5

gxf4+

White's king is lured into the great unknown.

### 22. Kxf4

On 22. Kf2, Black has 22. ... Qxd4+ 23. Kf1 fxe3. \*\*

### 22. Par Score 6

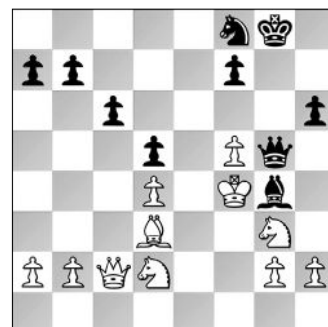
Qg5+

### 23. White resigned.

White is finished. If 23. Ke5, Bogoljubow has 23. ... Ng6+ 24. Kd6 Qe7 mate!

(see diagram top of next column)

We'll never know for certain whether he won because he was Bogoljubow. But it certainly didn't hurt! ♠



POSITION AFTER 22. ... Qg5+

## SOLITAIRE CHESS SCORING:

Total your score to determine your approximate rating below

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

# Tournament of LEGENDS

The U.S. Senior champion on his competitors

BY **GM ALEX FISHBEIN**

**T**HE U.S. SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP, held every summer at the Saint Louis Chess Club, is like no other on the calendar. Where else will you see a round robin featuring GMs who make up a big part of chess history of the last half-century?

The closely contested 2025 edition ended with GMs Vladimir Akopian, Alexander

Shabalov, and myself tied for first with 5½ out of 9. After a rapid playoff, your author emerged as the champion.

Rather than a traditional wrapup, I have selected highlights for each player, with some personal observations. We begin with those who received less than their share of luck from Caïssa, and end with the winners.

## IM Timothy Taylor

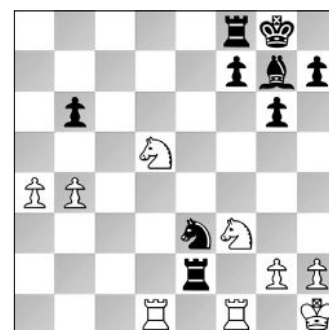
Tim was the only non-GM in the field, but his peak FIDE rating of 2480 in 1985 had put him near the world's top 100. He had a number of good games, including this one from Round 5:

### BACK AND FORTH

IM Timothy Taylor (2283)

GM Maxim Dlugy (2586)

U.S. Senior Ch (5), St. Louis, 07.19.2025



WHITE TO MOVE

#### 26. Ng1!

This unusual knight retreat appears to have confused Max.

#### 26. ... Nxf1?

Black should have taken the other rook, or taken the knight on d5 followed by ... Nd5-e3, with equality in either case.

27. Nxe2 Re8 28. Rxf1 Rxe2 29. Nxb6 Rb2  
30. Nd5 Bf8 31. b5

And White won.



## GM Maxim Dlugy

I first met Max in 1984, and he won the World Junior Championship the next year. He immediately struck me as a subtle positional player and endgame specialist. I lost often to Max, and after each game he could explain to me why. He now shares his deep understanding at his Chess Max Academy for a generation of future champions.

In the last round against Larry Christiansen, Max showed the danger of letting him near your king:

### SMASHING THROUGH

GM Larry Christiansen (2640)

GM Maxim Dlugy (2586)

U.S. Senior Ch (9), St. Louis, 07.24.2025



BLACK TO MOVE

Dlugy unleashes a ferocious assault.

15. ... Nxd4!! 16. exd4 e3! 17. Nf3

17. fxe3 Qg3+ 18. Ke2 Rae8 followed by ... Be6-d5 is hopeless for White.

17. ... exf2+ 18. Kxf2 Ne4+ 19. Ke3 Bxb3

Max's move looks good, but 19. ... Rae8! first was more precise. Now Larry can escape.

20. Ne5

After 20. Qxb3 Rfe8 it looks bleak for White, because 21. Ne5 runs into 21. ... Qg3+, but White can throw in 21. Rg1! and now 22. Ne5 can come next, so Black would have to trade into a slightly better ending with 21. ... Qxg1+ 22. Nxg1 Nc5+ 23. Kf2 Nxb3 24. Rb1 Nxc1 25. Rxc1.

20. ... Qg3+ 21. Qf3 Qe1+ 22. Qe2 Qc3+

23. Qd3 Qxa1

Black is up an Exchange and on the road to victory. Larry created many bumps for his opponent, but in the end could not hold a difficult queen ending.

## GM Gregory Kaidanov

Kaidanov's tournament results in the early 1990s brought him one step from the world's upper echelon, but I think by then Gregory was already better known as America's premier chess coach. He pioneered remote learning decades before Zoom existed and

brought a unique, personalized approach that alleviated weaknesses — and not just in chess. He helped me quite a bit when I studied with him back in the day.

Kaidanov's tactical vision and alertness decided his Round 2 game:

### A NICE SHOT

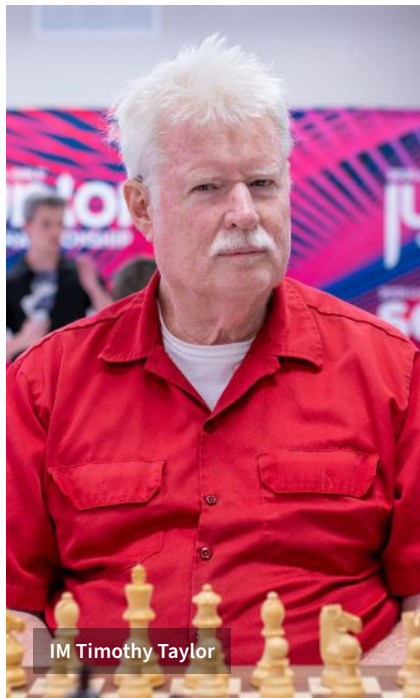
GM Gregory Kaidanov (2562)

GM Maxim Dlugy (2586)

U.S. Senior Ch (2), St. Louis, 07.16. 2025



GM Gregory Kaidanov



IM Timothy Taylor



GM Max Dlugy is always up for a blitz challenge!



GM Igor Novikov



GM Joel Benjamin



GM Alexander Goldin



WHITE TO MOVE

**24. Bg5! Qd7**

24. ... Bxg5 would lose to 25. Rxd5! Rxd5 26. Re8+ Kf7 27. Qe6 mate.

**25. Bxf6 Nxc3+ 26. bxc3 Qxd1+ 27. Qxd1 Rxd1+ 28. Kc2 Rd7 29. Bd4**

With a winning material advantage.

**GM Igor Novikov**

Novikov played in U.S. Championships in the 2000s but now lives in Ukraine. When I asked him whether that was difficult, he just shrugged his shoulders. A man's love for his war-ravaged home country puts chess and other matters into proper perspective.

**WHO'S PINNING WHOM?**

GM Alexander Fishbein (2459)

GM Igor Novikov (2542)

U.S. Senior Ch (1), St. Louis, 07.15.2025



BLACK TO MOVE

With my last move, 34. Ra1?, I thought I was lining up my rook to attack Black's queen, but Igor shows it's the other way around!

**34. ... d4! 35. Nb5**

35. Rxd4 loses to the a-file pin after 35. ... Rxd4 36. Qxd4 Nxb6.

**35. ... Nxb6**

Black is winning after 35. ... d3, but we were both in time trouble.

**36. axb6 Qb7 37. Nxd4 Qxb6 38. Qxb6 Rxb6 39. Rac1? Ba4!**

And Black won.

**GM Joel Benjamin**

Joel has won the U.S. Junior, the U.S. Championship (three times) and the U.S. Senior. I have always admired his distinctive approach to chess, one which combines precise logic with practical psychology, and his students inherit this from him.

Joel brought his A-game and had real chances of winning, but the competitive breaks didn't go his way and he ended up a point back of first place.

**A NEAR MISS**

GM Joel Benjamin (2552)

GM Alexander Goldin (2587)

U.S. Senior Ch (4), St. Louis, 07.18.2025



WHITE TO MOVE

**16. Bxc5!!**

Keeping the enemy king in the center is worth a piece.

**16. ... dxc5 17. Qh6 Bd6 18. Nxc6 Kf7 19. Nh4! Bc8 20. e5!**

Opening the road for the next knight.

**20. ... fxe5 21. Ne4 Qf8 22. Qf6+?**

Joel finds the right idea — an Exchange sacrifice — but guesses wrongly how to execute it. After 22. Qh5+! Ke7 23. Qg5+ Ke8 24. Rxd6! cxd6 25. Rd1 the black monarch cannot safely cross the d-file: 25. ... Kd7 26. Rxd6+ Kc7 27. Qxe5 etc.

**22. ... Ke8 23. Rxd6 cxd6 24. Nxd6+ Kd7 25. Nf7 Kc7 26. Qxe5+ Kb7 27. Nxc8 Bd7**

**28. Qe4+ Kc7 29. Qe5+, draw.**

It's a perpetual.

## GM Alexander Goldin

Although he rarely plays in OTB tournaments now, Alex stays in shape and is always a serious contender. He is also a highly regarded coach, with students up to and including grandmaster level.

Goldin's specialty is refuting over-optimistic play with precise tactics:

### BACKFIRING

**IM Timothy Taylor (2283)**

**GM Alexander Goldin (2587)**

**U.S. Senior Ch (1), St. Louis, 07.15.2025**



**WHITE TO MOVE**

**8. d5? 0-0! 9. dxc6 Nxe4 10. Qe2 a6!**

Preparing the e8-square for the rook.

**11. Bd3**

If 11. Ba4 Nc5!.

**11. ... Nf2 12. Rf1 Re8 13. Rxf2 Bxf2+ 14.**

**Kxf2 Rxe2+ 15. Bxe2 bxc6**

White's three minor pieces were no match for Alex's queen and two pawns.

## GM Larry Christiansen

When I arrived at the hotel, I happened to see Larry before the other players. He was ready! He informed me that the hotel rooms had kitchens, and how to get to the nearest store that had healthy food. During the tournament, Larry walked on the treadmill every morning.

In Round 8, the three-time U.S. champion showed how a defensive move can propel a furious attack:

### ON THE ATTACK

**GM Gregory Kaidanov (2562)**

**GM Larry Christiansen (2640)**

**U.S. Senior Ch (8), St. Louis, 07.23.2025**



**BLACK TO MOVE**

**43. ... Bf8!**

Covering the back rank. The immediate 43. ... Qg4? would run into 44. Rxe3 and if 44. ... Rxd4? 45. Rxe8+.

**44. h3?!**

Trying to keep the black queen out of g4, White jumps from the frying pan into the fire.

**44. ... g4! 45. Rh1 Bh6 46. b4 Bg5 47. b5**

**gxh3+ 48. Rxh3 Qg4! 49. Bc3 Rf4 50. Rb2**

**Qf3+ 51. Kg1 e2 52. Qxf3 Rxf3 53. Bb4 Bxf6 54. Rc2 Bd4+ 55. Kh1 Rf1+ 56. Kg2 Rf2+, White resigned.**

This victory put Larry within sight of first place, but a last-round loss (see above) dashed those hopes. He finished tied for 4th-5th with Alex Goldin, who suffered his own last-round misfortune, as we shall see.



GM Larry Christiansen



The players shake hands before the first round.



GM Alexander Shabalov

## GM Alexander Shabalov

The four-time U.S. champion and current world senior champion started slowly but gathered steam. Here is Shabba at his best in Round 8:

### TAL-STYLE

GM Alexander Shabalov (2524)

GM Igor Novikov (2542)

U.S. Senior Ch (8), St. Louis, 07.23.2025



WHITE TO MOVE

Black has attacked the knight on c3, but Alex is not about to move it.

**14. f5! bxc3 15. fxe6 fxe6 16. Nxe6**

Alex's mentor Mikhail Tal showed that a knight on e6 is worth at least two pieces if the enemy king is still on e8.

**16. ... Nh5?**

16. ... Nxe4 would hold things together.

**17. Qe1! Ndf6 18. Qxc3 Bd7 19. Nc7+ Kd8**

**20. Nxa8 Qxa8 21. e5 dxe5 22. Qxe5 Qc6**

**23. Ba4, Black resigned.**

In the last round, Shabalov, from a winning ending, gave his opponent a lucky chance, which Alex Goldin didn't find:

### ONE SLIP-UP

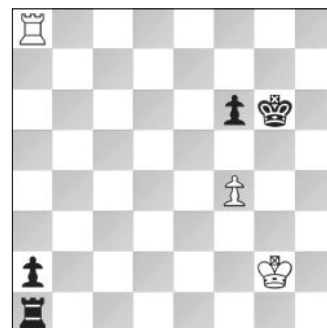
GM Alexander Goldin (2587)

GM Alexander Shabalov (2524)

U.S. Senior Ch (9), St. Louis, 07.24.2025

(see diagram top of next column)

Both players certainly knew the theoretical position with the pawns on f4 and f5, where Black wins by *zugzwang*. But here we have an unusual case, where the king gets pinned on the short side of its pawn.



WHITE TO MOVE

**74. Ra5?**

After 74. Ra6! Kf5 75. Ra4 Kg4 (75. ... Ke6 76. Ra6+! Kd5 77. f5! and with these pawns there is no *zugzwang*) 76. Kh2 f5 77. Kg2 Kh5 78. Ra6! the black king cannot escape. This is how close Goldin came to joining the first-place tie instead of Shabalov.

**74. ... f5! 75. Kh2 Kf6 76. Kg2 Ke6 77. Kh2 Kd6 78. Kg2 Kc6 79. Ra8 Kc5 80. Ra7 Kc4 81. Ra8 Kd4 82. Ra7 Ke4!, White resigned.**

After 83. Ra4+ Ke3 84. Kh2 Kf3 White loses the f-pawn.

## GM Vladimir Akopian

The defending champion had the highest career peak of all of us: Akopian was FIDE vice-champion in 1999 and played at the 2700 level for many years. He won the Southern California Invitational earlier this year.

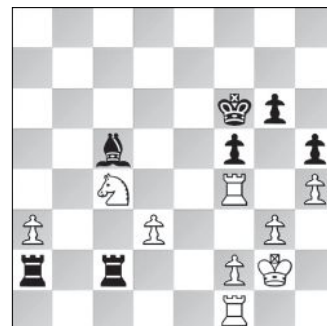
Early on, it looked like he might romp through this championship.

### PRECISION

GM Vladimir Akopian (2655)

GM Alexander Fishbein (2459)

U.S. Senior Ch (4), St. Louis, 07.18.2025



BLACK TO MOVE



GM Vladimir Akopian

I thought White was confined to defending the f2-pawn, but Vladimir had seen deeper.

**43. ... Ba7 44. a4 Kg7 45. a5 Kf6 46. Rf3 Re2 47. Nd6 Rxa5?!**  
47. ... Kg7! 48. Nb5 Rxa5 is safer.

**48. Ne4+!**

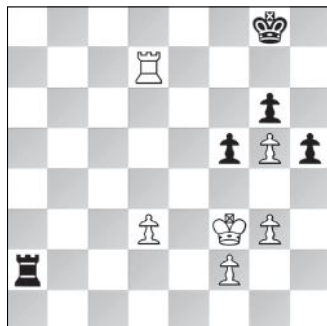
The knight comes to h3 to defend the f2-pawn.

**48. ... Kg7 49. Ng5 Raa2 50. Nh3 Red2 51. Rc1 Rac2?!**

I was afraid his rook would attack the g6-pawn.

**52. Rxc2 Rxc2 53. Rf4! Rd2 54. Rc4 Bb6 55. Rc6 Bd4 56. Rd6 Bc5 57. Rd5 Be3?**  
57. ... Be7 still offered drawing chances.

**58. Kf3! Bh6 59. Ng5 Bxg5 60. hxg5 Ra2 61. Rd7+ Kg8**



My king is hopelessly cut off.

**62. d4 Rd2 63. Ke3 Rd1 64. Kf4 Re1 65. f3 Kf8 66. d5 Re2 67. Rc7 Re1 68. d6 Ke8 69. d7+! Kd8 70. Rc6 Kxd7 71. Rxg6 Rf1 72. Rh6 Ke7 73. Rxh5 Kf7, and Black resigned.**

This game epitomizes Akopian's style of play, which originates from Tigran Petrosian: tactical alertness and technical perfection. However, Vladimir drew his remaining games and ended up in the three-way playoff.

## GM Alexander Fishbein

I had a dismal lifetime score against this field, having never beaten Shabalov, Kaidanov, Goldin, or Dlugy in a classical game. But I hoped that my recent flurry of activity in the trench warfare of weekend Swisses had improved my stamina. I have also tried new

methods of training visualization skills. My best game was in Round 3.

### THE WINNER

**GM Alexander Fishbein (2459)**  
**GM Larry Christiansen (2640)**  
**U.S. Senior Ch (3), St. Louis, 07.17.2025**



WHITE TO MOVE

To keep the advantage, I need the queens on the board.

**31. Qa8+ Qe8**

Black is threatening to win the knight on c1. But White can sacrifice it!

**32. Qxa7! Ne4**

After 32. ... Qe1+ 33. Kg2 h5! is the only chance to survive, because 33. ... Qxc1 34. Ne6! Bh6 (34. ... Qh6 35. Qb8+ Ng8 36. Ng5 leads to smothered mate) 35. Qb8+! Ng8 36. Qe5+ wins.

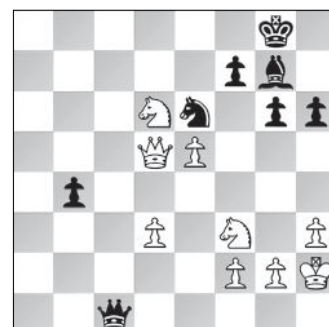
**33. Qxb6 Nxc3 34. Ne6! d4 35. Nd3 Qa8 36. Nxc7 Ne2+ 37. Kf1 Qf3 38. Qb8+ Kxg7 39. Qe5+ Kf7 40. Ne1! Nxc3+ 41. Qxc3 Qh1+ 42. Ke2, Black resigned.**

I later defeated Kaidanov, Shabalov, and Benjamin to qualify for the playoff, in spite of my two early losses.

In the G/15+10 playoff, I got some lucky breaks. In the first game, Shabalov drew a winning rook ending against Akopian. In Round 2 against me, Shabba misplayed a winning middlegame and then took a big risk in a worse ending. After that win, I needed to draw against Vladimir:

### FOR THE TITLE

**GM Vladimir Akopian (2655)**  
**GM Alexander Fishbein (2459)**  
**U.S. Senior Ch rapid playoff, St. Louis, 07.25.2025**



BLACK TO MOVE



A happy warrior: Fishbein after winning the playoff

I had sacrificed a pawn for active play on the queenside and obtained a good position, but later, Akopian didn't take advantage of a chance to trade into a promising ending. Here, I found the draw I needed:

**35. ... b3! 36. Qxb3 Bxe5+! 37. Nxe5 Qf4+ 38. Kg1 Qc1+ 39. Kh2 Qf4+ 40. Kg1 Qc1+**

**41. Kh2 Qf4+, draw.**

The U.S. Senior Championship was superbly directed by Chris Bird, Grant Oen, and Karen Pennock. We all thank the Sinquefelds for their vision and support.

The tournament was held in the same room as the U.S. Junior and U.S. Girls' Junior

Championships, and I could see that America's future legends appreciated the level of chess that we old guys can still show. Indeed, chess can and should be a lifelong passion. ♣

For more on the 2025 U.S. Senior, including as-it-happened reporting, visit [new.uschess.org/2025-national-championships](https://new.uschess.org/2025-national-championships).

# HOW I TRAINED FOR THE U.S. SENIOR

BY GM ALEX FISHBEIN

My preparation for the 2025 U.S. Senior encompassed three main elements: (1) an active tournament schedule; (2) targeted training to eliminate deficiencies, and (3) specific work to improve calculation and visualization.

(1) and (2) are related. You cannot eliminate weaknesses in your play unless you know what they are, and for that you need a large sample. Online blitz serves important purposes, but it requires different skills than what you need in slower games. I played many tournaments — maybe even too many! — in the run-up to the U.S. Senior: 68 classical games in the first six months of the year. This helped build my endurance, but also informed me what I needed to work on.

I annotated my games as soon as possible after each tournament, while I still remembered my thoughts during the game, and note what misperceptions led to the mistakes I made. Then I would categorize these mistakes. It could be as specific as being afraid to trade into a certain type of ending; sometimes it was poor combinational vision; at times it was positional impatience. I would often use a method similar to Bruce Pandolfini's *Solitaire Chess* to help eliminate these weaknesses: Working on something as general as positional play, for example, I might choose games by Anatoly Karpov. When it was more nuanced, I would ask my son Mitch, a master, to pick out relevant games from a larger set.

In "You're Only Human," Billy Joel sings, "You're not the only one who's made mistakes but they're the only thing that you can truly call your own." We all have unique patterns in when and how we go

astray; therefore, targeted training is the best training.

My third technique, and perhaps the "secret sauce," arose from some concrete things I discovered for myself about what skills suffer the most as we age. It's not news to say that calculation becomes much harder, but I learned more about exactly how this happens. In my experience, I noticed I was forgetting variations I had just calculated, getting flustered when facing a complicated choice, and having trouble visualizing positions a few moves ahead. I went back to some old books written by serious analysts, such as Lev Polugaevsky and Paul Keres. I selected critical positions with deep variations in the books, set up a board and clock and, without moving the pieces, tried to find mistakes in the analysis (on average, about 50% of complicated lines in pre-computer books had mistakes).

This method may not work for everyone, but I found it effective. I felt that my calculation level during the U.S. Senior was comparable to when I was young.

All this work gave me a chance to win. Ultimately, I needed some luck, including getting favorable colors, seeing a couple of mistakes near the end go unpunished, and some favorable results in other games. All you can do is put yourself in position to win; sometimes, destiny will smile on you.

You can see an example of GM Fishbein's method in the current issue (2025:6) of *New in Chess*. ♣

# 2025 U.S. Senior Championship

ST. LOUIS | JULY 15-25, 2025

|    |                       |      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |      |
|----|-----------------------|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|------|
| 1  | GM Alexander Fishbein | 2459 | * | 0 | 1 | 1 | ½ | 0 | 1 | ½ | 1 | ½  | 5½/9 |
| 2  | GM Vladimir Akopian   | 2655 | 1 | * | ½ | ½ | ½ | ½ | ½ | ½ | ½ | 1  | 5½/9 |
| 3  | GM Alexander Shabalov | 2524 | 0 | ½ | * | 0 | 1 | 1 | ½ | ½ | 1 | 1  | 5½/9 |
| 4  | GM Larry Christiansen | 2640 | 0 | ½ | 1 | * | ½ | 1 | ½ | 0 | 1 | ½  | 5/9  |
| 5  | GM Alexander Goldin   | 2587 | ½ | ½ | 0 | ½ | * | ½ | ½ | 1 | ½ | 1  | 5/9  |
| 6  | GM Igor Novikov       | 2542 | 1 | ½ | 0 | 0 | ½ | * | ½ | ½ | ½ | 1  | 4½/9 |
| 7  | GM Joel Benjamin      | 2552 | 0 | ½ | ½ | ½ | ½ | ½ | * | ½ | ½ | 1  | 4½/9 |
| 8  | GM Maxim Dlugy        | 2586 | ½ | ½ | ½ | 1 | 0 | ½ | ½ | * | 0 | 0  | 3½/9 |
| 9  | GM Gregory Kaidanov   | 2562 | 0 | ½ | 0 | 0 | ½ | ½ | ½ | 1 | * | ½  | 3½/9 |
| 10 | IM Timothy Taylor     | 2283 | ½ | 0 | 0 | ½ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | ½ | *  | 2½/9 |

# Down to the Wire

The National Open came down to the last round.

BY **WGM ZOEY TANG**

**M**

ANY WEST COAST PLAYERS, myself included, make a point of heading to the National Open every June.

Held in Las Vegas, it's one of the few big tournaments on this side of the U.S., and it's also unique and beloved for its fun traditions: In addition to myriad side events, all players with plus scores (5/9 in the Open and 4/7 in the other sections) get \$50 gift certificates. Boards and sets are provided, and winners of last-round games get to keep them as a memento.

This year, GM Viktor Matviishen took the early lead in the Open Section and was alone at the top after Round 5, but he then drew two games in a row, allowing three other players to catch up. Going into the last day, there was a four-way tie for

first among Matviishen, fellow GMs Bilel Bellahcene, Arman Mikaelyan, and IM Oleksii Bilych, who looked to be on track for his first GM norm.

The four leaders were paired against each other in Round 8. Perhaps surprisingly, both games were Sicilians, and both were decisive. Bellahcene – Bilych took the more “traditional” attacking form:

## SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B95)

**GM Bilel Bellahcene (2579)**  
**IM Oleksii Bilych (2522)**  
**National Open (8), Las Vegas,**  
**06.08.2025**

**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6**

## 5. Nc3 a6

Clearly both sides are in the mood for a fight; there are very few drawish or forced-draw lines in the Sicilian.

## 6. Bg5 e6 7. Qf3

An uncommon move; White is no longer able to play the typical f4-f5 break. This is a slower setup, with ideas of putting the queen on g3 in the future.

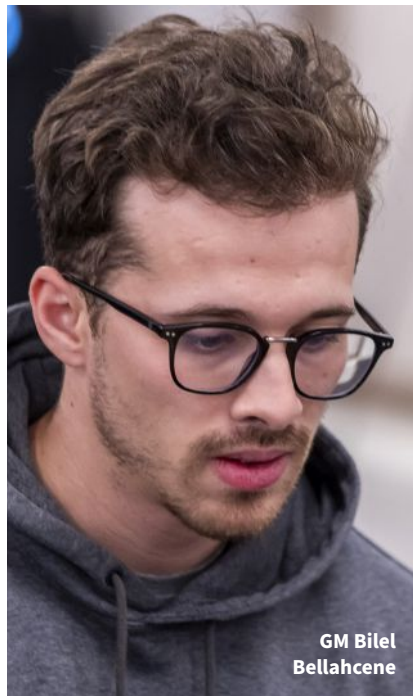
## 7. ... h6 8. Be3 e5 9. Nb3 Be7 10. h3 Be6?!

Looks natural, but the bishop is actually misplaced here, as we'll see. Curiously, Bilych spent just 12 seconds on this — perhaps a case of misremembered preparation?

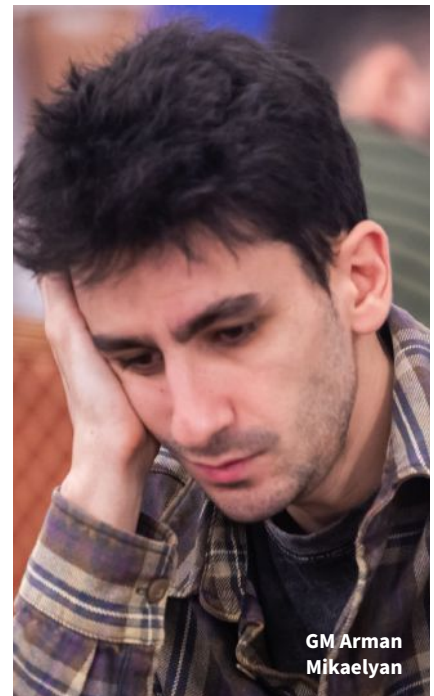
In contrast, after 10. ... b5 11. 0-0-0 b4 12. Nd5 Black is free to play 12. ... Nxd5 13. exd5 without losing a tempo.



GM Viktor  
Matviishen



GM Bilel  
Bellahcene



GM Arman  
Mikaelyan

**11. 0-0-0 b5 12. Kb1 b4 13. Nd5**

Already White's position is quite pleasant.

**13. ... Nxd5**

Black's other option of 13. ... Bxd5 isn't great either, as after 14. exd5 Nbd7 15. g4 White's attack comes too quickly; the h6-pawn acts as a hook.

**14. exd5 Bc8**

Each move is valuable in attacking positions. The bishop would rather have stayed on c8 and not lost this tempo.

**15. Bd3 a5****16. g4**

There's already a curious win here, though it's nearly impossible for a human to find: 16. Nc5! 0-0 (16. ... dxc5 17. d6 and White is winning, with a discovered attack on the rook) and now the key move is 17. Ne6!. Without this there would be no real point to 16. Nc5. Now comes 17. ... fxe6 18. Qe4



IM Oleksii  
Bilych

and Black's kingside is in shambles and a8 is still vulnerable. After 18. ... Bf6 19. dxe6 White is winning.

**16. ... Nd7 17. Nd2**

Rerouting the knight and avoiding ... a5-a4 with tempo.

**17. ... a4 18. Ne4 Ba6!?**

Natural and practical, but not the best. The engine's preference is 18. ... Qa5 19. h4 Bb7 20. g5 Qxd5 21. gxh6 gxh6 22. Rhg1, although to human eyes Black is still under lots of pressure.

**19. Bxa6 Rxa6 20. h4 Qc7 21. Rc1**

The more solid choice. White ends up on top after 21. g5, but it invites complications that Bellahcene probably didn't want to be bothered with. Black can't passively defend: (a) 21. ... h5 22. g6 f6 23. Ng3 and 24. Nf5 will be decisive.

After (b) 21. ... b3 22. cxb3 axb3 White needs the key in-between move 23. Rc1! (23. a3?? immediately runs into 23. ... Qc2+). After 23. ... Qb7 (23. ... bxa2+ is not scary; after 24. Ka1 Black's a2-pawn is actually better at shielding the king than White's a2-pawn was!) 24. a3 Black's attack has fizzled out while White still has the initiative.

**21. ... Qb7****22. Ng3?**

A bit slow; Black gets a chance to get back into the game.

Although it looks risky, 22. Rhd1 was the better choice, as after 22. ... Bxh4 (the d5-pawn is actually still defended: 22. ... Ra5 23. g5 Rxd5?? 24. Nxd6+ and the Exchange is lost) 23. Qh1 Be7 24. f4 Black's extra pawn will barely be felt, while all the focus will be on the soon-to-open center files leading to Black's king.

**22. ... a3?**

This typical attacking move seems innocent enough, but it gives White an extra option later. Black's best was 22. ... Nf6, changing

targets right away! White won't be able to guard d5: 23. Rhd1 Ra5 24. c4? bxc3 e.p.

**23. b3 Nf6 24. Rhd1 Qc8?**

Black should still play 24. ... Ra5, though now White has 25. c4 bxc3 e.p. 26. Nf5! because the b3-pawn shelters the king. After 26. ... Rxd5 27. Nxg7+ Kd7 28. Qf5+ Kd8 29. f3 the position is mostly balanced.

**25. c3!**

Preventing ... Qc8-c3.

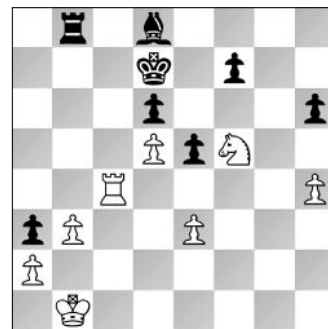
**25. ... Qxg4 26. Qxg4 Nxg4 27. cxb4**

Many sharp middlegames eventually reach imbalanced endgames. Here, White has good control over the c-file, and Black's h8-rook still needs time to get out.

**27. ... Kd7 28. Nf5 Nxe3 29. fxe3 Rb6 30. Rc4?!**

Not the most precise, though White still has pressure.

After 30. Rf1 Black is not able to take: 30. ... Rxb4? (30. ... Bf6? allows 31. Nxg7! with a fork to follow) 31. Nxe7 Kxe7 32. Rc7+ and White will soon have "pigs on the seventh."

**30. ... Rhb8 31. Rdc1 Bd8 32. Nxg7 Rxb4 33. Nf5 Rxc4 34. Rxc4****34. ... h5?!**

Black's last chance was the spectacular 34. ... e4!, sacrificing a pawn just to deactivate White's rook. 35. Rxe4 Rb5 is the point: White can't play e3-e4 anymore, so 36. Rd4 is forced. Then after 36. ... Bf6 37. Rd1 h5 White's rook is no longer able to attack the annoying a3-pawn, so Black is "just" down a pawn, with some drawing chances.

**35. Kc2**

35. Ra4 would prevent all future ... e5-e4 worries, but likely both players overlooked this resource.

**35. ... Ba5**

Once again 35. ... e4! was best.

### 36. Kd3

Bellahcene converts smoothly from here.

**36. ... Bb4 37. e4 Be1 38. Ra4 Bb4 39. Kc4 Bc5 40. b4 Bb6 41. Rxa3 Rg8 42. Ra6 Kc7 43. a4 Rg4 44. Kb5, Black resigned.**

Meanwhile, Matviishen chose a Maróczy Bind formation, putting continuous positional pressure on Mikaelyan:

## SICILIAN DEFENSE, ACCELERATED DRAGON (B36)

GM Viktor Matviishen (2603)

GM Arman Mikaelyan (2585)

National Open (8), Las Vegas, 06.08.2025

**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5. c4**

The Maróczy Bind. White will play for restriction: Black's typical pawn break on d5 is all but impossible.

Another common alternative is 5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Bc4 0-0 8. Bb3 d6 9. f3, when White will eventually castle queenside and enter positions that resemble the more typical Sicilian messes.

**5. ... Nf6 6. Nc3 Nxd4 7. Qxd4 d6 8. Be2 Bg7 9. Be3**

No need to be afraid of the discovery. Black's bishop is still hanging, so options are limited.

**9. ... 0-0 10. Qd3**

Reinforcing the e4-pawn. The main line is 10. Qd2, preparing potential Be3-h6 ideas.

**10. ... a5 11. 0-0 a4**

Coordinating with the fianchettoed bishop on the long diagonal. Lacking feasible pawn breaks, Black's middlegame plan should be to continue trading minor pieces, mitigating White's space advantage.

**12. Bd4 Bd7 13. b4**

A great move, clearing the diagonal now that the d4-bishop blocks any inconvenient a1-g7 alignments.

**13. ... axb3 e.p.**

Forced. Something slow like 13. ... Be6 will leave Black with even less room to maneuver: 14. Rac1 Nd7 15. Bxg7 Kxg7 16. Qd4+ Kg8 17. Nd5 and there's not much counterplay.

**14. axb3 Qc7 15. f4 Bc6 16. b4 b6 17. Qe3 Nd7 18. Nd5 Bxd5**



POSITION AFTER 18. ... Bxd5

**19. Bxg7!**

Correctly deciding that White's queen is better placed on e3 than d4, since the e7-pawn will be backward.

The alternative 19. exd5 Bxd4 20. Qxd4 is less forcing and gives Black the chance to play 20. ... Qb7 21. Qe3 Nf6, regrouping and potentially preparing mass trades on the a-file.

**19. ... Kxg7 20. exd5 Nf6 21. g4**

This feels like it shouldn't be possible — there is already an open file on the queen-side and White's pawns are all very advanced. Yet despite the airiness in White's position, this kingside space grab is justified, as long as the goal is not mate (which is indeed very unlikely).

**21. ... Rxa1 22. Rxa1 Re8**

Guarding the e7-square and preparing a possible ... e7-e6 to open the center.

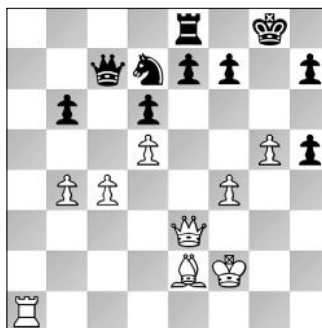
**23. g5 Nd7 24. h4 Kg8**

The immediate 24. ... e6? fails to 25. dxe6 Rxe6 26. Qd4+ Kg8 27. Ra8+ and White's pieces infiltrate.

**25. h5 gxh5**

Much better than allowing White to play h5-h6 and Qe3-d4.

**26. Kf2**



**26. ... e6?**

Black's first (and only) mistake of the game

after playing under pressure for so long. Opening the center to facilitate trades is logically sound, but unfortunately the e-file is not powerful enough to counter the weakening of the back rank.

Instead, 26. ... Nf8 was better, preparing ... e7-e6 by getting ready to retake with the knight. If White plays for restraint with 27. f5, Black switches gears with 27. ... Nd7 aiming for e5, and then after 28. Qh3 the only move is 28. ... b5!.

Intuiting the right timing to break is the difficult part of defending. Now if 29. Qxh5?! (29. cxb5 is a big mistake after 29. ... Qc2, but Black has to see that there's a perpetual after 29. Bxh5 Nf8 30. Bxf7+ Kxf7 31. Qh5+ Kg8 32. Qxe8 Qxc4) 29. ... Qb6+ 30. Kg2 Qd4 Black is slightly better, as White's extended structure can be punished.

**27. dxe6 Rxe6 28. Ra8+ Nf8 29. Qd4**

Now Black's knight will forever be pinned and the king can't escape. White is winning.



FM Issac Wang



GM Jianchao Zhou

**29. ... Qe7?!**

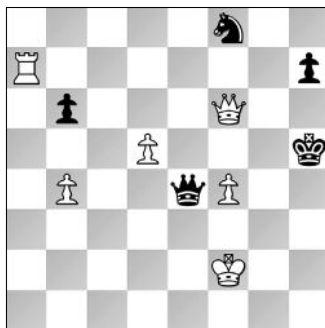
The best chance was 29. ... Qd7, though Black is still losing after 30. Bxh5 Re8 31. Bg4! Qe7 32. Rxe8 Qxe8 33. Qxb6.

**30. Bxh5**

The e-file is completely useless for Black, sadly; he's basically completely stuck.

**30. ... d5 31. cxd5 Rd6 32. Bf3 f6 33. Bg4**  
Headed for e6.

**33. ... Kg7 34. Qa1 Qe4 35. gxf6+ Rxf6 36. Ra7+ Kg6 37. Bh5+ Kxh5 38. Qxf6**



A perpetual looks possible, but Matviishen had everything calculated and under control.

**38. ... Qc2+ 39. Ke3 Qb3+ 40. Kd2 Qxd5+ 41. Kc3 Qf3+ 42. Kb2 Qe2+ 43. Ka3 Qe3+ 44. Ka4 Qe8+ 45. Kb3 Qe3+ 46. Qc3 Qxf4 47. Qh3+ Kg5 48. Qg2+ Kh5 49. Re7 b5 50. Qh1+ Kg5 51. Qd5+ Kh6 52. Qxb5 Qf3+ 53. Kc2 Ng6 54. Re2 Nf4 55. Rd2 Qe4+ 56. Kb2 Qe3 57. Qc6+ Ng6 58. Qc3 Qf4 59. Qd4 Qg3 60. Qd6 Qe3 61. b5 Kg5**



WGM Zoey Tang

**62. Rd5+ Kh6 63. Qh2+ Kg7 64. Qc7+ Ne7 65. Qe5+ Qxe5+ 66. Rxe5 Kf6 67. Rc5, Black resigned.**

When the dust cleared, Bellahcene and Matviishen went into the last round as co-leaders with 6½/8. They drew quickly, leaving the door open for any of four players — GMs Jianchao Zhou, Emilio Cordova, and Vladimir Akopian, and IM Sebastian Kostolansky — to join a tie for first with a win, but only Zhou managed, winning over Cordova with an opening pawn sacrifice that led to a great endgame.

**A SHARE OF THE LEAD**

**GM Emilio Cordova (2598)**

**GM Jianchao Zhou (2652)**

**National Open (9), Las Vegas, 06.08.2025**



**WHITE TO MOVE**

This position is quite interesting. White is up a clean pawn and appears to be on the cusp of trading queens. Yet Black dominates the only open file in the position and can also attack a4. On balance, Black is better and has a much easier position to play.

**21. e4?!**

The attempt to create counterplay with e4-e5 is logical, but Black has a refutation.

Surprisingly, White's best chance is to give back the extra pawn: After 21. Rad1 Qc2 22. e4 Qxa4 23. Qxa4 Nxa4 24. Ra1 Nxc3 25. Rxa7 Kf8 Black is still better, but it's not easy to convert.

**21. ... Qxd4!**

White's pawns are too weak; the endgame will be hugely favorable for Black.

**22. cxd4 Nb3 23. Ra3 a5**

No need to rush — the d4-pawn will fall eventually.

**24. Rd1 Rb4 25. Bf1 Nxd4 26. Bb5**

There is no other way to guard the a4-pawn. The pawn may appear to be sufficiently defended, but White's rook on a3 is not safe: 26. Kg2 Nc2 27. Rc3 Rxa4 and the passed a-pawn will be decisive.

**26. ... Nxb5 27. axb5 Rxe4**

Again a good decision. The passed b-pawn is nothing to worry about. Black can still win after 27. ... Rxb5, but it's less clean. The kingside structure is highly symmetrical, creating potential risks in the future.

**28. Rxa5 Ree2 29. Rf1 Kg7**

Patience is important for good technique! There are always tricks in rook endgames, and after 29. ... Red2? 30. Ra8+ Kg7 31. Ra7 Kf6?! 32. b6! Rxb6 33. Re1 White is suddenly back in the game!

**30. h4 Kf6 31. Kg2 Red2 32. b6 Rxb6**

See the differences between this and the line in the previous note? Black is soon just up two pawns, and the win is a matter of technique.

**33. g4 h6 34. Ra7 Rxd5 35. Re1 Re5 36.**

**Rxe5 dxe5 37. Ra8 Rb4 38. Kg3 h5 39.**

**gxh5 gxh5 40. Rh8 Rg4+ 41. Kh3 Rf4**

**42. Kg3 Kg7**

A cute trick.

**43. Re8**

After 43. Rxh5? f6 44. Kg2 e6! White's rook is completely stuck, and Black has plenty of time to walk over and take it: 45. Kg3 Rd4 46. Kg2 Rd8 47. Kg3 Kg6.

**43. ... Rg4+ 44. Kh3 e6 45. f3 Ra4 46. Rb8**

**e4 47. fxe4 Rxe4, White resigned.**

In the end, Matviishen, Bellahcene, and Zhou each won \$5,834 for sharing first; Matviishen won the Edmondson Cup on tiebreaks and received the title of National Open Champion.

Other players with notable results include Kostolansky, who earned his first GM norm, and FM Isaac Wang, who earned his third and final IM norm. Having crossed 2400 FIDE previously, Wang is now an IM-elect.

Personally, I didn't do as well as I'd hoped, but I still had fun. An excerpt from my favorite game:

**AN ENDGAME SQUEEZE**

**Yanis Warnier (2197)**

**WGM Zoey Tang (2393)**

**National Open (4), Las Vegas, 06.06.2025**



WHITE TO MOVE

I've cut the beginning of this game because I can (author's privilege!). Basically, I got mercilessly attacked the whole time, but eventually managed to reach this endgame. Black's position is easier to play — White has

the bishop pair, but the c4-pawn is weak and the passed d-pawn is strong. Still, the objective evaluation is a draw.

#### 27. Bd5 Bd8 28. Bf4?

The bishop looks more menacing on d6, but it's actually far less useful.

White should instead focus on his own counterplay: After 28. a4 Kf8 29. Kf1 f6 30. a5 the bishop on d2 is perfectly placed both to blockade Black's passed pawn and support White's. It's truly equal after 30. ... Ke7 31. a6 Bb6 32. Ke2.

#### 28. ... Nd3 29. Bd6 Bb6 30. Kf1

It's too late for 30. a4? now: 30. ... Nb2 31. a5 Bxa5 32. Bxc5 d3 and promotion is unstoppable.

#### 30. ... Nb2 31. Bf4

The position is already difficult to play; White is trying to get the bishop back to where it already was. A natural move like 31. Ke2?? loses on the spot to 31. ... d3+ 32. Ke3 Ba5 and Black promotes.

#### 31. ... Ba5

Not allowing the bishop to come back to its ideal square.

#### 32. Bc1 Nd3 33. Ba3 Bb4



#### 34. Bxb4?

More challenging was 34. Be4, forcing my knight onto a suboptimal square. After 34. ... Ne5 (34. ... Bxa3? 35. Bxd3 is an easy opposite-colored bishops draw) 35. Bxb4 cxb4 36. c5 the c-pawn offers at least some chances of holding.

#### 34. ... cxb4 35. Ke2 Nc5

Very important! Now White can only shuffle while I improve all my pieces to their maximum.

#### 36. Kd2 Kf8 37. Kc2 Ke7 38. Kb2 f5

Because my pawns are advanced enough, I will have two passed pawns while White functionally has none.

#### 39. a3 Nd3+ 40. Kb3 bxa3 41. Kxa3 Kd6

Setting a trap to finish things off.

#### 42. Bg8 h6 43. Bh7 Ke5 44. g4

The f5-pawn is pinned and seemingly doomed, but White's bishop has stepped onto the very strange h7-square to enable this.

#### 44. ... Nf2

Suddenly nothing can stop the pawn!

#### 45. Bxf5 d3 46. c5 d2 47. Bc2 d1=Q 48.

Bxd1 Nxd1 49. Kb4 Kd5, White resigned.

This year's National Open was once again a pleasure to play in and a delight to watch, with many fighting games and decisive results. The result was never clear, and each player who tied for first played spectacular games to get there. Congratulations to the winners and norm-earners! ♠

Want to play in the 2026 National Open? It will be held from June 10-14 at the Westgate Resort in Las Vegas. Put it on your calendar!



First on tiebreaks, Matviishen takes home the trophy

## 2025 NATIONAL OPEN AT A GLANCE

### JUNE 4-8, 2025 | LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

**OPEN:** 1st-3rd: GMs Viktor Matviishen, Bilel Bellahcene, Jianchao Zhou, 7/9. 4th-7th: IMs Sebastian Kostolansky, Oleksii Bilych; GMs Gabor Nagy, Vladimir Akopian, Arman Mikaelyan, 6½. **U2300:** Hakob Hakobyan, 6½/7. **U2100:** 1st-3rd: Leo Creger V, Lance Rheiniel Geslani Manalo, Sargis Niazyan, 6/7. **U1900:** Davit Aleksanyan, 6½/7. **U1700:** Ivan Tam, 6½/7. **U1500:** David Slowik, 6½/7. **U1250:** 1st-2nd: Ju-Hoon Lee, Altansoyombo Davaadorj, 6½/7. **WOMEN'S OPEN:** 1st-2nd: WFM's Rachael Li, Tsogtsaikhan Saikhanchimeg, 4½/5. **WALTER BROWNE BLITZ, OPEN:** IM Eric Chang Liu, 10½/12. **WALTER BROWNE BLITZ, U1900:** Maximiliano Aragon Frago, 11/12.

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## IM Carissa Yip takes a step up at the Cairns Cup. BY IM CARISSA YIP

*If IM Carissa Yip's victory at the Cairns Cup wasn't the biggest international performance by an American woman, the list ahead of her isn't long. Yip, 21 at the time, outpaced the field in one of the strongest women's tournaments in the world. Yip finished ahead of six grandmasters, including recent women's world championship runner-up Tan Zhongyi, former Women's World Champion Mariya Muzychuk, and current world women's rapid champion Humpy Koneru — as well as three fellow IMs, including 15-year-old American Alice Lee, who came in second by a half-point.*

*Yip also picked up her second grandmaster norm in the event and got her gap year, during which she's taking time off from Stanford to concentrate on chess full-time, off to a rollicking start. Here she gives an overview of her tournament, including her inauspicious ½/2 start and her step-by-step climb into the top of the crosstable. ~ed.*

**M**Y FIRST CAIRNS CUP, five years ago, was also my first women's event on the top-level international stage. I was 16 years old then, both thrilled and nervous to join this new standard of elite competition. In the event, I started with a remarkable 0/4 (!!), but after shaking off some nerves and getting my head on straight, I managed to bounce back with 4/5 in the second half. For this reason, it's one of the tournaments I'm proudest of.

I came into my second Cairns Cup in June at 21 years old and two months into a gap year from Stanford. Last spring, I'd decided I wanted to focus on chess full-time and moved from California to St. Louis (of course, the ideal place for an American chess player!).

Allowing myself this break from college

was a luxury, but I also felt it made this a make-or-break year. People have been asking me whether I wanted to go pro since I was 12, and although life as a chessplayer is uncertain, I realized I needed to see chess through somehow — either by trying and failing, or by proving I have what it takes.

I spent the two months between leaving school and Cairns finally getting to spend consistent time training, playing, and living in an environment of chess. I was certainly more prepared and more experienced than my 16-year-old self, but the pressure was on — I had a lot to prove.

Of course, the Cairns Cup was the ideal tournament to begin this trajectory of being a “chess professional”: a 10-player field of the best women players in the world, held on my new home soil of St. Louis. I was a bit nervous for my second appearance in the



strongest women's invitational in the world, but honestly, I couldn't be too nervous: I had a brilliant team behind me.

Unfortunately, I got off to a rough start again. I left the opening dinner early because of illness and went back to my hotel room to pass out for 15 hours. The next day, I piled myself up with painkillers for the first round only to lose a drawn endgame in the longest game of the day, and I nearly fainted from pain on the walk back. My dad took me to a doctor, who prescribed antibiotics and recommended a week of rest; my dad recommended withdrawing. But I've always been quite stubborn in this regard, and I refused.

Round 3 brought me my first win, and while I was waiting for my postgame interview, I nearly collapsed and had to be helped up by two people (thanks guys!).

Unfortunately, this happened in front of my fifth-round opponent — I'd hoped that she thought I had just tripped.

But by Round 5, I'd figured out a system: I would text my coach, GM Awonder Liang, my medicine schedule, which involved thousands of milligrams of painkillers distributed carefully throughout the day to avoid overdose. I'd go to sleep around 11 p.m., wake up at 4 a.m. on the dot from the physical pain, pop 1000 mg of some over-the-counter analgesic, and go back to sleep until 9 a.m. Awonder and I would prep around my schedule. My dad would make sure I had everything I needed. I'd gulp painkillers an hour before the round, and take another dose after time control.

In this manner, my first six games were like a fever dream. Still, I managed to score a few nice wins.

## GIUOCO PIANO (C50)

IM Carissa Yip (2516)

GM Nino Batsiashvili (FIDE 2462)

Cairns Cup (3), St. Louis, 06.12.2025

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

**5. Nc3 d6 6. Na4 Bb6 7. Nxb6 axb6**

An opening idea to try to get some kind of advantage by winning the bishop pair. While Black gives up the dark-squared bishop, she gains a very solid queenside.

**8. c3 h6 9. 0-0 0-0 10. Re1 Re8**



**11. Bd2**

A bit slow; perhaps White should start gaining space on the queenside with 11. a4 Be6 12. Bxe6 Rxe6 13. c4. Trading the light-squared bishops and pushing c3-c4 is a thematic idea: White obtains a grip on the center, stops the immediate ... d6-d5, and looks to play Bc1-d2 and b2-b4 to gain even more space.

**11. ... Be6 12. Bb5 Bd7 13. a3**

Again, 13. a4 is more accurate and more ambitious. Black will soon exchange off the bishops, and then we will be happy to put our pawns on light squares, allowing our remaining dark-squared bishop free rein. White gets a better version of the game with 13. ... Ne7 14. Bxd7 Qxd7 15. c4.

**13. ... Ne7 14. Bxd7 Qxd7 15. c4 Ng6 16.**

**h3 b5**

Now we can see why White should have played a2-a4 at various points: Black gets to trade off one of the doubled b-pawns for a critical central pawn.

**17. Qb3 bxc4 18. dxc4**

White wants to play Ra1-d1 and c4-c5, but Black dashes all those hopes. The other capture, 18. Qxc4, runs into a nice idea: 18. ... Ra6 and now Black wants to play ... d6-d5 and transfer the rook easily along their third rank.

**18. ... b6 19. a4**

With the idea of creating a passed a-pawn after sidestepping the queen and pushing b4-b4 and a4-a5.

#### 19. ... Nh5 20. Qb5

A bit too eager, and it brings the queen away from where it's needed. It was better to keep the queen close with 20. Qc2, but I underestimated Black's attack. After 20. ... Nh4 21. b4 White is supporting potential pawn breaks on both a5 and c5.

#### 20. ... Qe6 21. Qd5

Already an inaccuracy.

(a) The best move is 21. Qb3 — even though it admits White's last move was foolish, an extra two tempi doesn't make much of a difference in a fairly slow-paced position. White contains Black's attack first, and then focuses on the queenside. After 21. ... Ngf4 White has to play 22. Nh4! to keep the queen out of g6. Then after 22. ... g6 (or 22. ... Qf6 23. Nf5 Qg6 24. Qf3 when White has a pleasant position) 23. Ra3 Kh7 24. Qc2 Black's attack is going nowhere and we are ready to start pushing our queenside pawns.

(b) 21. Qc6 Ngf4 22. Bxf4 Nxf4 23. Qxc7 Qg6 transposes to the game.

#### 21. ... Qf6 22. Qc6



POSITION AFTER 22. Qc6

Now it gets sharp; White goes pawn-grabbing on the queenside, but Black will have an attack on the kingside.

#### 22. ... Ngf4 23. Bxf4 Nxf4 24. Qxc7 Qg6

I was hoping for 24. ... Nxh3+, when White can defend adequately: 25. gxh3 Qxf3 26. Qxb6 (26. Re3 is also reasonable) 26. ... Qxh3 27. Qe3 leads to a sharp position, but I felt Black would have to be more precise than White by virtue of my strong, connected queenside passers.

#### 25. g3 Nxh3+ 26. Kf1 Re6 27. Ra3

I had calculated this far and expected that the rest of my pieces could defend the kingside adequately while the queen was off gobbling.

#### 27. ... Rf6 28. Qd7

Now White has time to bring the queen back around. After 28. Qxb6 Black will be pretty happy with 28. ... Rxa4 29. Rxa4 Rxf3 when all their pieces are in the attack.

#### 28. ... Qh5 29. Kg2 Nxf2 30. Kxf2 Qh2+ 31. Ke3



I'd seen this after 28. Qd7, but it was only until this position was on the board that I noticed what looked like a clear win for Black. The only move was 31. Kf1, allowing a perpetual (31. ... Qh1+ 32. Kf2 Qh2+ 33. Kf1), although Black could play on with a complicated game after 31. ... Qxg3 32. Ree3.

#### 31. ... Qxg3



The field, L to R: Lee, Tan, Dronavalli, Yip, Kashlinskaya, Assaubayeva, Dzagnidze, M. Muzychuk, Koneru, Batsiashvili

I was very happy to see this move on the board; White can defend now.

(a) It looks like 31. ... Qg2 wins for Black as it looks like there is no good way to defend the knight. After the natural (and forced) 32. Qg4



32. ... h5 33. Qxh5 g6 34. Qg4 Rf4 and Black is winning at least the queen. But it turns out that there was a fascinating engine save lurking: White can defend with 34. Re2! Qxe2+ (34. ... Qxg3 35. Qh1 is an easier hold due to the extra material) 35. Kxe2 gxh5 36. Nh4! and while I look at this and can't believe that Black isn't crushing, the engine thinks that when the knight gets to f5 everything will hold together!

(b) Black's best move — the one I was worried about during the game — was 31. ... Qxb2 with the same idea as the immediate 31. ... Qg2, but now White has to waste a tempo to defend the rook: 32. Rd3 Qg2 and Black has the same threats but they've picked up an extra pawn. Now comes 33. Qg4 h5 34. Qxh5 g6 35. Qg4 (35. Re2 doesn't work in this variation because without the b-pawn to shore up the queenside pawns Black has too many targets) 35. ... Rf4.

### 32. Rf1

Now White's next few moves are Ke3-e2, Rf1-g1, and Qd7-g4.

### 32. ... g5

Falling into a trap I'd inadvertently set.

### 33. Ke2 g4 34. Rg1

Black loses material by force.

### 34. ... gxf3+

Black also loses after 34. ... Qf4 35. Rxg4+ or 34. ... Qh3 35. Rxg4+ Kh7 36. Rg7+ Kxg7 37. Qxh3.

### 35. Kf1

Black's queen is lost, and the rest is a matter of technique.

35. ... Qxg1+ 36. Kxg1 f2+ 37. Kf1 Kh7 38. Rg3 b5 39. Qg4 Rg6 40. Qf5, Black resigned.

## SICILIAN DEFENSE, O'KELLY VARIATION (B28)

IM Carissa Yip (2516)

GM Nana Dzagnidze (2560)

Cairns Cup (5), St. Louis, 06.14.2025

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 a6 3. c3 d5 4. exd5 Qxd5 5. d4 e6 6. Be3 Nd7 7. c4 Qc6 8. Nc3 Ngf6 9. h3 cxd4 10. Nxd4 Qc7 11. Be2 b6 12. Bf3 Bb7 13. Bf4 Qc8 14. O-O Bc5 15. Nb3 Be7 16. Bxb7 Qxb7 17. Bd6 Rc8 18. Bxe7 Kxe7 19. Qe2 Rhd8 20. Rad1 Qc6 21. Nd5+ Kf8



### 22. Nd4

Giving up a pawn to ruin Black's kingside structure. It might be too ambitious, but I thought I'd have enough dynamic compensation.

### 22. ... Qxc4 23. Nxf6 gxf6

Taking with the knight fails tactically: 23. ... Nxf6 24. Qxc4 Rxc4 25. Nxe6+ fxe6 26. Rxd8+.

### 24. Qh5 Kg7 25. b3 Qc5 26. Qg4+ Qg5?

After 26. ... Kh8 Black's king will be very safe here, and Black will be pressing while White will have to be precise to maintain equality.

### 27. Nxe6+!

The trick!

### 27. ... fxe6 28. Qxe6

Now Black has no way to avoid giving the piece back.

### 28. ... Ne5

The best try. Black is busted after 28. ... Nf8 29. Qe7+ Kg8 30. Rxd8 Rxd8 31. Qxd8 and after 28. ... Qb5 29. a4 Qc6 30. Rd6 Qc7 31. Rfd1, when, if the knight moves, we take on f6 and then win material on d8.

### 29. Rxd8?!

Of course not 29. Qe7+? Nf7 defending everything.

I'd seen the winning idea 29. f4!, but had a bit of a brain fart.

(a) After 29. ... Nf3+ 30. Rxf3 Rxd1+ 31.

Kh2 Qc5, if Black tries to defend the rook with the queen, she ends up checkmated by 32. Rg3+ Kf8. I'd seen up to this point, but had somehow missed that 33. Rg8 is mate!

(b) 29. ... Qg3 is best, but leads into a losing endgame: 30. fxe5 Qxe5 31. Rd7+ Kh8 (31. ... Rxd7 32. Qxd7+ wins) 32. Rxd8+ Rxd8 33. Qxf6+ Qxf6 34. Rxf6 and Black has to make the rook passive to avoid losing a second pawn. After 34. ... Rb8 White just brings the king in; otherwise, the pawns are just too weak for Black to activate: 35. Kf2 Rc8 36. a3 Rc2+ 37. Kg1 Ra2 38. a4 b5 39. axb5 axb5 40. Rb6.

### 29. ... Rxd8 30. f4

I thought I was avoiding the ... Ne5-f3+ trick, but this is theoretically still defensible for Black, although it's still quite difficult and requires very accurate play.

### 30. ... Qg3 31. fxe5 Qxe5 32. Qxb6 Rd6 33. Qc7+ Kg6 34. Qc8 h5 35. Qg8+ Kh6

A resourceful find from Black! The king is safest on h6 with the pawn in front on h5.

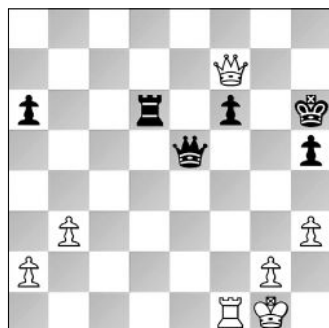
### 36. Qf7

(see diagram next page)

### 36. ... Qd4+

But now Black goes astray — this is the wrong defensive plan. In the game I got to play b3-b4, fixing the weak a6-pawn; Black needed to prevent it with 36. ... a5!. Now,





POSITION AFTER 36. Qf7

to make progress, White will have to play a2-a3 before b3-b4, and Black can at least exchange off one of her weak pawns.

### 37. Kh1 Qe5

It's too late for 37. ... a5 38. Rf5.

### 38. b4

Now Black's pieces are all tied down to defending f6 and a6, and this is already winning.

### 38. ... Qe6 39. Qxe6 Rxe6 40. Rf5

Another brain fart! Rooks belong behind passed pawns — even future passed pawns! White wins after 40. Rb1:

(a) If 40. ... Kg5 41. a4 Rb6 42. b5 a5 43. Kg1 f5 44. Kf2.

(b) 40. ... Rb6 41. a4 Kg6 42. b5 axb5 43. axb5 Kf5 44. Kg1 is also a trivially winning endgame: If Black's king stays on the kingside, then my king will run around to the queenside and promote the pawn. If Black's king tries to run to the queenside, then my king will head over to eat all the pawns on the kingside. Black's rook is always tied down, and she has no way to prevent my plan.

### 40. ... Kg6 41. Ra5

OK, now I've made my job a bit more difficult than it needs to be, but this is still a very tricky endgame to defend.

### 41. ... h4

Very accurate, fixing my kingside pawns.

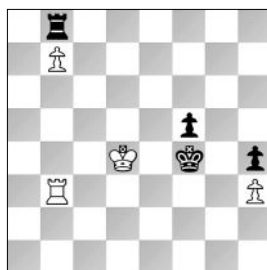
### 42. Kg1 Rb6 43. a3 Rd6 44. Kf2 f5 45. Ke3 Kg5 46. a4 Re6+ 47. Kd3?

Now Black really has drawing chances. The winning move was 47. Kd4 and now:

(a) 47. ... Re4+ 48. Kc5 Kf4 49. Rxa6 Kg3 50. Rg6+;

(b) 47. ... Re2 48. Rxa6 Rxc2 49. Ra8 Kf4 50. a5;

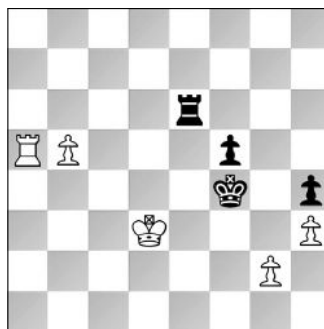
(c) 47. ... Kf4 48. b5 axb5 49. axb5 Re2 50. b6 Rxc2 51. Rb5 Rg8 52. b7 Rb8 53. Rb3!.



POSITION AFTER 53. Rb3

This is the key idea, ensuring Black's king cannot advance. Now Black is in a form of *zugzwang* — every move worsens her position! (The king cannot run just yet: 53. Kc5 Kg3 54. Kc6 f4 and Black has more than enough time to draw.) One way to win after 53. Rb3! is 53. ... Kg5 54. Kc5 f4 55. Kc6 Kf5 56. Kc7 Rxb7+ 57. Rxb7 f3 58. Kd6 Kf4 59. Kd5 f2 60. Rf7+ Kg3 61. Ke4 Kg2 62. Ke3 f1=Q 63. Rxf1 Kxf1 64. Kf3.

### 47. ... Kf4 48. b5 axb5 49. axb5



### 49. ... Re3+

It was critical for Black to cut my king off with 49. ... Re4. After 50. b6 Rb4 51. Ra6 Kg3 Black is fine; I could play 50. Kc3 trying to control the b4-square, but Black can hold with 50. ... Kg3 51. Ra2 (If 51. b6 Re8 52. b7 Rb8 53. Rb5 Kxc2 and the kingside pawns are fast enough to hold the draw) 51. ... f4 52. b6 f3 53. gxf3 and now 53. ... Kxf3 loses to 54. b7 Re8 55. Ra8, but 53. ... Re8 is the only move to hold! After 54. b7 Rb8 55. Rb2 Kxc3 the h-pawn is far advanced enough for Black to draw.

### 50. Kc4

Now it's all over.

### 50. ... Ke5

After 50. ... Kg3 51. Ra2 the king and pawn will run down the queenside, and if 50. ... Re2 51. b6 Rxc2 52. b7 Rb2 53. Rb5.

### 51. b6+ Kd6 52. Rxf5 Kc6 53. Rf6+ Kb7

54. Rg6 Re2 55. Kd3 Re1 56. Rg4 Kxb6 57. Rxh4 Kc5 58. Re4 Rg1 59. Re2 Kd5 60. Ke3

Rf1 61. Rf2 Ra1 62. Kf4 Ke6 63. Kg5 Ra3 64. Rf3 Ra8 65. g4 Ke7 66. Kh4 Rh8+ 67. Kg3 Ke6 68. h4, Black resigned.

## LONDON SYSTEM (D00)

GM Tan Zhongyi (2621)

IM Carissa Yip (2516)

Cairns Cup (6), St. Louis, 06.16.2025

### 1. d4 Nf6 2. Nc3 d5 3. Bf4 a6 4. e3 g6 5.

Be2 Bg7 6. h4 h5 7. Nf3 c5 8. dxc5 Qa5 9.

Nd2 Qxc5 10. Nb3 Qb6 11. 0-0 e6 12. a4

Nc6 13. a5 Qd8 14. Na4 Nd7



After an interesting opening, we've reached a position where White has two hanging pawns. Which to save? White is doing perfectly fine, with a massive lead in development, but things are about to get messy.

### 15. Qd2

Maintaining the queenside grip. Black is perfectly fine after 15. Bg5 Bf6 16. Bxf6 Qxf6 17. g3 0-0, with a healthy center.

### 15. ... Qxh4 16. Rfd1 0-0 17. e4

It seems clear White should strike in the center, but with which pawn? The game move is very tempting, because the pawn is untouchable; however, according to our silicon friend, 17. c4 was the way to go: After 17. ... dxc4 18. Nd4 (or 18. Bxc4 e5) 18. ... Nce5 the position is far from convincing for White, but the engine insists on equality after some combination of Ra1-c1 and Qd2-b4, likely because Black's queenside is so underdeveloped.

### 17. ... d4

Not 17. ... dxe4 18. Bg5.

### 18. c3 e5 19. Bg3 Qe7

It's also tempting to take with 19. ... Qxe4, but I think not as challenging for White. I didn't want to allow the simplification after 20. cxd4 exd4 21. Bf3 Qe7 22. Bxc6 bxc6 23. Nxd4.

### 20. cxd4 exd4 21. Bc4 h4 22. Bh2 Qxe4

Now it's safe to take the pawn!

**23. Re1 Qf5 24. Bd3 Qd5 25. Ra3 h3**

Provoking a weakness on the kingside.

**26. Be4 Qh5**

I should have knocked the bishop back first with 26. ... Qb5 27. Bd3 Qh5 28. Be2 Qh8, since the bishop is worse on e2 than f3.

**27. Bf3 Qh8**



A bit too fancy, but how could I resist?

**28. Bd6**

Probably the best try is 28. Bxc6 bxc6 29. Nb6 Nxb6 30. axb6, when the b-pawn is very strong in tying down the Black queenside. Still, Black should be winning.

**28. ... Nde5!**

Sacrificing the Exchange to get the rest of the pieces into the attack! As soon as Black's queenside gets into the game, it's all over — White's king is far too weak.

**29. Bxf8 Bxf8 30. Nbc5 hxc2 31. Bxg2 Bg4 32. Rg3 Qh5 33. Ne4**

White's last try for simplification was 33. Bxc6. It's very unintuitive, because White's light squares become weak, but it's necessary in order to force Black's pieces back. After 33. ... bxc6 (if 33. ... Nxc6 34. Qf4) 34. Rxe5 Qxe5 35. Rxg4 Bxc5 36. Nxc5 Qxc5 37. Qxd4 Qxa5 White is holding this major-piece endgame despite being two pawns down, because Black's king is a little weak!

The key resource is 38. Rh4! and now 38. ... Qg5+ 39. Kf1 f6 40. Qe4. White must be rather precise to get to this point, but she is holding because Black has a weak king and a weak pawn on c6. In particular White is threatening both 41. Rg4 and 41. Qe6+ at this moment, forcing a draw on the spot.

**33. ... Be7**

(see diagram top of next column)

Now, though, White has no good way to liquidate the position. The immediate threat is



POSITION AFTER 33. ... Be7

34. ... Nf3+, taking advantage of the light-square weakness to win material on the spot. In the slightly longer term, Black wants to play ... Kg8-g7 followed by ... Ra8-h8, and the white king will be feeling exceptionally vulnerable.

**34. Qf4 f5 35. f3 fxe4 36. fxg4 Qh4**

A nice tactical find. Black threatens 37. ... Rf8, and all of White's pieces are totally paralyzed. There's no way for White to avoid losing material — the center pawns cover the squares that White's queen would want to go to in order to keep the g3-rook defended. Meanwhile, the g3-rook cannot move out of the line of attack because the e1-rook is hanging. It's difficult to even suggest a move for White!

**37. Bxe4**

If 37. Rh3 Qxe1+, or 37. Rxe4 Rf8 38. Rh3 Rxf4 39. Rxh4 Rxe4 40. Bxe4 Bxh4.



IM Alice Lee



GM Humpy Koneru

**37. ... Rf8 38. Bd5+ Kg7**

White has nothing better than to give up the queen.

**39. Qxf8+ Bxf8 40. Kg2 Nxf4 41. Rh1 Ne3+ 42. Kf2 Ng4+ 43. Kg2 Qg5, White resigned.**

When I faced off against Humpy with the white pieces in Round 7, I realized I suddenly had the opportunity to catch the lead after sitting in the back seat for much of the event. I had to lock in.

**RUY LOPEZ, OPEN VARIATION (C80)**

**IM Carissa Yip (2516)**

**GM Humpy Koneru (2620)**

**Cairns Cup (7), St. Louis, 06.17.2025**

**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. O-O Nxe4 6. Re1 Nc5 7. Bxc6 dxc6 8. Nxe5 Be7 9. d4 Ne6 10. Be3 O-O 11. c4 f6**

**12. Nf3 Re8 13. Nc3 Nf8 14. Qb3 Bg4 15. Qxb7 Bxf3 16. gxf3**

Black has sacrificed a pawn to weaken White's king position, but if White can consolidate and maintain this extra pawn, she will be quite happy.

**16. ... Qd7 17. d5**

A central break to get the queen back to the defense of the kingside via the long diagonal.

**17. ... Bd6 18. Ne4 Be5 19. Qxc6 Qf5**

Black wins one pawn back on f3.

**20. Ng3**

Not 20. Kg2 Ng6 when the knight will join the attack with tempo, and White is lost.

**20. ... Qxf3 21. Bc5**

Clearing out the e3-square for the rook, and more importantly planning d5-d6 once the black queen is off the long diagonal. Once the white queen is back in play, the kingside will cease to be meaningfully weak and White will just be up a clean pawn.

**21. ... Ng6**

Another idea for Black is 21. ... h5 22. Re3 Qg4 23. Re4 Qh3 (not 23. ... Qf3, which allows the other rook into the game: 24. Rae1 h4 25. R1e3 Qd1+ 26. Nf1 and White's pieces are ideally placed) 24. Bxf8 Kxf8 25. Rae1 h4 26. Nf1 Qf5, when the light squares are weak enough for Black to draw — in fact, ... h4-h3 is coming, and if White is not careful, it could become unpleasant.

**22. Re3 Qg4 23. d6 Qxc4**

A bit inaccurate. The engine claims Black is OK after 23. ... cxd6 24. Bxd6 Rad8 25. c5, but I think this is a very difficult position to play. The king will be very well defended once the queen gets back, and the c-pawn will soon become strong.

**24. d7 Red8 25. Rd1**

Now Black has to deal with this unpleasant passed d-pawn.

**25. ... Rab8**

Black's best is 25. ... Kf7, but of course it's very hard to play this with the queens still on the board!

**26. b3 Qg4****27. Rd4**

I missed that 27. Qd5+ wins on the spot after 27. ... Kh8 28. h3!!, a brilliant tactic deflecting the queen from the f3-square. After

28. ... Qxh3 29. Ba7 White takes advantage of Black's back-rank problems with the help of the d-pawn! Now play can take a few paths:

(a) If 29. ... Nf4 30. Qf3 keeping an eye on a8 as well as the knight on f4: 30. ... Rb4 (30. ... Rb5 31. Qxf4) 31. a3!! (Notice that 31. Qa8 doesn't work anymore, because the knight has rerouted: Black is much better after 31. ... Ne6). Now Black's rook cannot stay on the fourth rank, and we can see that the bishop is overloaded: 31. ... Rb5 32. Qxf4 Bxf4 33. Re8+ Rxe8 34. dxe8=Q mate;

(b) 29. ... Rb4 30. Qa8! and Black surprisingly has no way to defend the rook: 30. ... Rxa8 31. d8=Q+ Rxd8 32. Rxd8+;

(c) 29. ... Ra8 30. Qxa8 Rxa8 31. d8=Q+ Rxd8 32. Rxd8+.

## 27. ... Ne7

Lucky for me, my opponent was low on time and blundered back. She and I both missed the key 27. ... Bxd4 28. Re8+ Nf8! (a) 29. Bxf8 and now Black wins with the first in a string of only moves: 29. ... Bxf2+! 30. Kg2 (White gets mated after 30. Kxf2 Rxd7 31. Rxb8 Rd2+), another only move, 30. ... Rxd7 31. Rxb8, and one more only move, 31. ... Ba7!. With the bishop attacking the rook, White has no good discovered checks, and Black is also threatening a quick mate with ... Rd7-d2+.

So unfortunately White has to go for (b) 29. Bxd4 Qxd4 30. Qe6+ Kh8 31. Qf7 Rxe8 32. dxe8=Q Rxe8 33. Qxe8 Qd1+ 34. Kg2 Qd5+ 35. Kg1 Kg8, when Black is a comfortable pawn up and it will be very difficult for White to hold.

## 28. Bxe7 Bxd4

After 28. ... Qxd4 I have the important intermediate move 29. Qe6+ and White wins with 29. ... Kh8 30. Bxd8 Rxd8 31. Qe8+.

## 29. Qc4+

Another nice intermediate move, pinning the bishop to the queen.

## 29. ... Kh8 30. Bxd8 Qd1+ 31. Qf1, Black resigned.

After 31. ... Qxf1+ 32. Nxf1 Bxe3 33. Bxc7 White takes the bishop, followed by promotion.

Alice had a nice win against IM Alina Kashlinskaya, after which we had both caught up to Humpy's lead.

## BOGO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E11)

IM Alice Lee (2471)

IM Alina Kashlinskaya (FIDE 2459)

Cairns Cup (7), St. Louis, 06.17.2025

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 Bb4+ 4. Bd2 Qe7 5. g3 Bxd2+ 6. Qxd2 Nc6 7. b3 Ne4 8. Qb2 f5 9. Bg2 0-0 10. Nc3 d6 11. d5 Nxc3 12. Qxc3 Nd8 13. dxe6 Nxe6 14. 0-0 Bd7 15. Nd4 Nc5 16. Rad1 a5 17. Rfe1 f4 18. e4 Qe5 19. Qd2 Kh8 20. a3 Rf6 21. b4 axb4 22. axb4 Ne6 23. Nf3!



Now comes a great sequence.

## 23. ... Qh5 24. e5

White will win more than a pawn here. Black's minor pieces are shielding themselves behind the closed d- and e-files, once those are blown open, the pieces' lack of coordination will prove fatal.

## 24. ... Rff8 25. exd6 cxd6 26. Qxd6 fxd3

## 27. hxg3 Bc6

If 27. ... Rad8 28. Rxe6 Bxe6 29. Qxd8 Rxd8 30. Rxd8+ Bg8 31. Nh2 and 32. Bd5 is unstoppable.

## 28. Re5 Qg4

Black should have tried 28. ... Qf7, but the resulting rook endgame is still totally losing after 29. Qxe6 Qxe6 30. Rxe6 Bxf3 31. Bxf3 Rxf3 32. Re7. The rooks will double on the seventh.

## 29. Nh2

White wins a clean piece, and Alice finishes the game with good technique.

29. ... Qxc4 30. Qxe6 Qc2 31. Rf1 h6 32. Bxc6 bxc6 33. Rc5 Qb2 34. Rxc6 Qxb4 35. Qe5 Qd2 36. Rd6 Rae8 37. Qxg7+, Black resigned.

In the eighth round, I somehow won my fourth game in a row; Alice made a draw, and Humpy suffered a stunning defeat.

## RUY LOPEZ, MODERN STEINITZ DEFENSE (C76)

IM Bibisara Assaubayeva (2542)

IM Carissa Yip (2516)

Cairns Cup (8), St. Louis, 06.18.2025

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 d6 5. 0-0 Bd7 6. c3 g6 7. d4 Bg7 8. Re1 Nge7 9. Be3 0-0 10. Nbd2 Qe8 11. Bb3 Kh8 12. dxe5 dxe5 13. Bc5 b6 14. Ba3 Rd8 15. Qe2 Na5 16. Bc2 Bb5 17. Qe3 Qd7 18. Rad1 Qe6 19. b3 c5 20. Bb2 Ng8 21. Qg5 f6 22. Qg3





AFTER 22. Qg3

**22. ... Bh6**

A great rerouting of the bishop, forcing White into a bad endgame.

**23. Nf1 Rxd1 24. Bxd1**

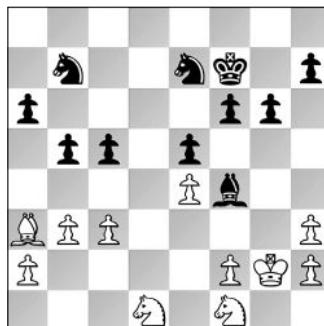
There was a little trick after 24. Rxd1: 24. ... Bf4 25. Qh3 Qxh3 26. gxh3 Be2 and Black wins.

IM Bibisara  
AssaubayevaGM Humpy  
Koneru**24. ... Bf4 25. Qh3 Qxh3 26. gxh3 Bd3**

Black's bishops are completely dominating, and the kingside pawn structure is difficult for White to manage.

**27. N3d2 Rd8 28. Be2 Ne7 29. Ne3 b5 30. Ba3 Nb7**

I could have won cleanly with 30. ... Bxe2 31. Rxe2 Bxe3 32. fxe3 Nb7, but I was a bit hesitant to exchange off such excellent bishops!

**31. Bxd3 Rxd3 32. Ndf1 Kg7 33. Kg2 Kf7 34. Rd1 Rxd1 35. Nxd1**

White theoretically should be relieved after exchanging off the last major piece, but the minor piece endgame is still quite difficult! Again, the weak kingside structure makes it difficult to push, and White's pieces are very restricted.

**35. ... Ke6 36. Nde3 f5 37. Kf3 Bg5 38. Ng2 Nc6 39. h4 Bh6 40. h5**

Right before the time control, White makes a mistake.

**40. ... b4 41. Bb2**

Very natural, but it loses.

Surprisingly, White's only hope is giving up the piece with 41. hxg6, when she can hold after 41. ... bxa3 42. exf5+ Kxf5 43. gxh7 Bg7 44. Nge3+!

Throwing in 41. cxb4 first loses to some nice geometry: 41. ... Nd6 42. exf5+ gxf5 43. bxc5 Nd4+ 44. Kg3 Ne4+ 45. Kh3 Nxf2+ 46. Kg3 Ne4+ 47. Kh3 Ne2 and White has to give up material to stop 48. ... Ng1+ and 49. ... Bg5 mate. If the g2-knight moves to create space for the king, 48. ... Nf4 also leads to mate!

**41. ... bxc3 42. Bxc3 Nd4+ 43. Bxd4**

If 43. Kg3 Ne2+.

**43. ... cxd4**

The passed d-pawn will decide.

**44. hxg6 hxg6 45. Ng3 d3 46. Nh4 Nd6, White resigned.**

White has no way to stop a pawn from get-

ting to e4, forcing the king away from f3. Once the king no longer has access to e2, the d-pawn will promote.

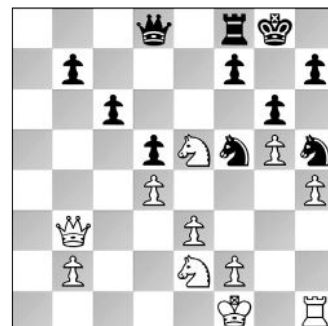
**QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, EXCHANGE VARIATION (D35)**

GM Humpy Koneru (2620)

GM Nino Batsiashvili (FIDE 2462)

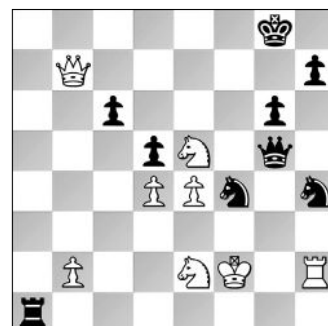
Cairns Cup (8), St. Louis, 06.18.2025

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. Nc3 Be7 5. cxd5 exd5 6. Bf4 Nh5 7. Bd2 Nf6 8. h3 Bd6 9. Qc2 c6 10. g4 Na6 11. g5 Nb4 12. Qb1 Nh5 13. a3 Na6 14. Qc2 Nc7 15. e3 g6 16. Bd3 0-0 17. Ne2 Ne6 18. h4 Neg7 19. Bb4 Bxb4+ 20. axb4 Bf5 21. Bxf5 Nxf5 22. Ne5 a5 23. bxa5 Rxa5 24. Rxa5 Qxa5+ 25. Kf1 Qd8 26. Qb3

**26. ... f6**

A critical break! Ignoring the threat to the queenside, Black chooses to go on the offensive against White's weak king.

27. gxf6 Qxf6 28. Rh2 Qe7 29. Ng1 Nxh4 30. e4 Qg5 31. Ne2 Ra8 32. f4 Nxf4 33. Qxb7 Ra1+ 34. Kf2

**34. ... Nh3+**

The winning tactic! Black wins material and chases the king to the queenside. There is still some work to be done, but Nino doesn't give any chances.

35. Rxh3 Qg2+ 36. Ke3 Qxh3+ 37. Kd2 Nf3+ 38. Nxf3 Qxf3 39. e5 Rf1 40. Qxc6

**Qe4 41. b4 h5 42. Qa6 Kh7 43. b5 Rb1 44. Qa3 Qf5 45. b6 Qf1 46. Nc3 Qf2+ 47. Ne2 Kh6 48. Qe3+ Qxe3+ 49. Kxe3 Rxb6 50. Nf4 Rb3+ 51. Kf2 Rb4 52. Ke3 Rb3+ 53. Kf2 g5 54. Nxd5 Kg6 55. e6 h4 56. Ne3 Kf6 57. d5 Rb4 58. Kf3 Rf4+ 59. Ke2 h3 60. Nf1 Ke7 61. Nh2 g4, White resigned.**

Now, it was just Alice and me in contention for the title, and we were set to face each other in a dramatic all-American last-round finale. Both of us were also chasing a GM norm; since I was at 5½/8, Alice was at 5/8, and the GM norm was at 6 points, one of us — only one — would make it. With this norm and the Cairns Champion title on the line, Alice and I would both give it our all.

## FOUR KNIGHTS OPENING (C47)

**IM Carissa Yip (2516)**

**IM Alice Lee (2471)**

**Cairns Cup (9), St. Louis, 06.19.2025**

**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. d4 exd4 5. Nxd4 Bb4 6. Nxc6 bxc6 7. Bd3 0-0 8. 0-0 Re8 9. Re1 d6**

Avoiding trades with the main line 9. ... d5 10. exd5 cxd5 11. Rxe8+ Qxe8 12. Bg5, when things will be simplified soon.

**10. Bg5 h6 11. Bh4 Rb8 12. h3 g5**

Black inevitably has to break the pin, but during the game I thought this was too hasty.

**13. Bg3 Nd7 14. e5!**

Taking advantage of a tactical motif to open up the center, and now Black's king is feeling vulnerable. Already here I was feeling pretty happy with my position — it is objectively fine for Black, but difficult to play perfectly in practice.

**14. ... Nxe5**

If 14. ... dxe5 15. Bxe5 and the piece is untouchable: 15. ... Nxe5 16. Rxe5 Rxe5 17. Bh7+.

**15. Bxe5 dxe5 16. Rxe5 Be6**

I thought 16. ... Bd6 17. Rxe8+ Qxe8 18. Ne4 Be5 was the best continuation, but Black's king will be feeling some heat after 19. Qh5. It is also difficult because Alice should try to avoid exchanges in this must-win situation.

**17. Qf3**

(see diagram top of next column)

The engine calls this position equal, but I think it is practically difficult for Black.



POSITION AFTER 17. Qf3

**17. ... Bf8**

For instance: The right defensive plan is 17. ... Bd6 18. Re2 Rxb2, but after 19. Rae1 Black has to find an only move, and a difficult one: 19. ... Kg7! 20. Bc4 Qf6! and Black is holding everything together.

**18. Rd1 Bg7**

Black can try to go back to the previous line with 18. ... Bd6, but it would mean admitting 17. ... Bf8 was incorrect and giving White an extra tempo. After 19. Re3 Rxb2 20. Ne4 White's pieces are quite well coordinated and Black will have a tough time defending.

**19. Bh7+ Kxh7 20. Rxd8 Rxd8 21. Re2?**

The right move is 21. b3!, which restricts Black's rooks, after which the game is near-

ly over: After 21. ... Bxe5 22. Qe4+ Kg8 23. Qxe5 Black's queenside pawn structure is in tatters, the rooks have very little room to infiltrate given the weakness of the Black king, and the bishop is also restricted and the wrong color as White's main weaknesses are on the dark squares.

White's main plan will be to bring the knight into the kingside attack, forcing Black's king to run to the queenside if it wants to survive; then, White will collect the kingside pawns. Black has no counterplay. Even before enacting this plan, White can spend some time collecting the available queenside pawns because the kingside dark squares are perpetually weak. During the game, I simply wanted to hold on to my material advantage, but if I'd done an in-depth analysis of this position, it would become clear that White is winning here. Some example lines: 23. ... a5 (23. ... Bd5 stops Nc3-e4 immediately, but the knight will find its way to f6 anyway: 24. Qxc7 a6 25. Kh2 Ra8 26. Na4 Re8 27. c4 Be4 28. Nc5) 24. Ne4 a4 25. Kh2 axb3 26. axb3 Rbc8 27. Nf6+ Kf8 28. Qc5+ Kg7 29. Nh5+ Kg8 30. Qe5 Kf8 31. Qf6 Rd5 32. f4.

**21. ... Rxb2**

Now Black can continue fighting.

**22. Qe4+ Kh8 23. Qxc6 Rb4 24. Qc5 Rc4 25. Qe7 Rb8 26. Ne4 Rc6 27. Rd2**





POSITION AFTER 27. Rd2

White's main plan is to exchange the knight for one of the bishops, in which case Black will have either a dark-squared weakness on the kingside or a very weak f-pawn while being unable to prevent an invasion on d7.

### 27. ... Kh7

Responding to the threat of 28. Nc5, as now Black has 28. ... Bf8 without worrying about Rd2-d8 in response.

### 28. Nf6+ Kg6 29. Nd7 Rc8

After some maneuvering, Black's pieces are nearly paralyzed because of the weak king. But there are still tricks in the position!

### 30. Re2

The best move was 30. h4, as Black's pieces cannot do much. After this I could play Rd2-e2, since what happened in the game would no longer be an issue. It is very difficult for Black to even make a move here — almost everything would weaken the position. Some lines for Black: 30. ... gxh4 31. Qxh4; 30. ... Bxa2 31. Qe4+, or 30. ... Rg8 31. Re2.

### 30. ... Rd6!

A fantastic resource from Alice.

### 31. Ne5+ Bxe5 32. Rxe5 Bd7!

Suddenly, my queen will be trapped after ... Rc8-e8! I was very lucky to have a resource of my own.

### 33. Rd5 Rxd5 34. Qe4+ Rf5 35. g4

Now we'll enter an endgame with technically equal material. Matters have become a bit more complicated, but the endgame will still be tough for Black to hold because of the weak queenside pawns.

### 35. ... c6 36. Kh2 h5 37. gxf5+ Bxf5 38.

### Qc4 f6 39. h4 gxh4 40. Qxh4 Bxc2 41.

### Qg3+ Kf7 42. Qh3

Inaccurate. I'm going after the wrong pawn. 42. Qe3 forces the c-pawn up, and then after 42. ... c5 (42. ... Rc7 43. Qf4) 43. Qf3 Rd8 44. Qc6 Black's pieces are uncoordinated, and White will win the c5- and a7-pawns.

### 42. ... Rc7 43. Qxh5+ Bg6 44. Qa5 Re7 45. f3

Preventing the rerouting of the bishop to d5 via e4. Now Black's pieces are doomed to passivity, and my plan is to bring the king in to f4. After that, Black will be unable to defend all the pawns.

### 45. ... Kg7 46. a4 Be8 47. Qc5 Kf7 48. Kg3

### Ke6 49. Qc4+ Kd6 50. Kf4 Bf7 51. Qb4+ c5

### 52. Qb8+ Kd5 53. Qd8+ Ke6 54. Qd3

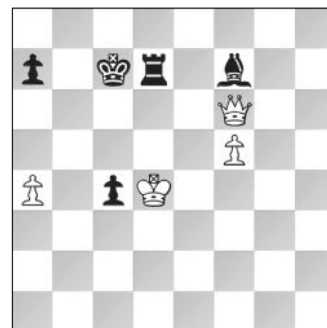
Now Black has to choose which pawn she is willing to lose.

### 54. ... Rc7 55. Qa6+ Kd5

Black correctly chooses to give up the f-pawn, as now her pieces have a hope of activity.

### 56. Qxf6 Rd7 57. Ke3 c4 58. f4 Kc5 59. Qa6

### Re7+ 60. Kd2 Rd7+ 61. Kc3 Rd3+ 62. Kc2 Rd7 63. f5 Bd5 64. Kc3 Bf7 65. Qc8+ Kd6 66. Kd4 Rc7 67. Qh8 Rd7 68. Qf6+ Kc7+



### 69. Kc5!?

Again an inaccuracy, though it doesn't throw away the win. The best was 69. Kc3, when Black has no time to push ... a7-a5 like in the game, and White's plan is to go a4-a5-a6 with mating ideas. Black's pieces are helpless to defend, as they are tied down to the passed f-pawn. For example: 69. ... Kc8 70. a5 Rd3+ 71. Kb4 Rd7 72. a6 Kc7 73. Qe5+ Kc8 (73. ... Kc6 74. Qc5 mate; 73. ... Kd8 74. f6 with mate on b8 coming; 73. ... Rd6 74. Kc5) 74. f6. With both pawns on the sixth rank, White will force Black's king up to c7 again and win the a7-pawn: 74. ... Rc7 75. Qd6 Rd7 76. Qf8+ Kc7 77. Kc5 threatening 78. Qa8. Now comes 77. ... Bd5 (77. ... c3 78. Kb4 followed by 79. Qc5 and Black loses the c-pawn; 77. ... Rd5+ 78. Kxc4 and Black has no good discovery) 78. Qh8 Bf7 79. Qa8 Rd5+ 80. Kb4 and Black loses a7 and the game.

### 69. ... Rd5+ 70. Kb4 a5+ 71. Kc3 Rd3+ 72. Kc2 Bd5 73. Qa6

Now the win is difficult.

The critical position arises after 73. Qe7+ Kc6 74. f6 Rf3 75. Kd1 c3 76. Kc2.



POSITION AFTER 76. Kc2

This actually occurred in the game after move 78, but the key is that this position is a mutual zugzwang, with both White and Black's pieces are ideally placed. I unfortunately didn't realize this until move 79, but by then, there was surprisingly no way for White to figure out how to lose a tempo and



give Black the move. In this position, White's queen prevents Black's king from moving; the black bishop cannot go anywhere without giving up significant material via a queen fork, and Black's rook is tied down to protecting the c-pawn and preventing the push of the f-pawn. Because White has successfully employed a brief king twirl (Kc2-d1-c2), it is Black to move here, and Black who is in *zugzwang*. For example, 76. ... Ba2 77. Qe4+ Bd5 78. Qxf3! Bxf3 79. f7 and White promotes.

### 73. ... Rf3 74. f6

The only win for White now is to give up the f-pawn for the c-pawn with 74. Qxa5+. It's not easy to see that this endgame is winning, though! The point is that Black's pieces have total control over the a8-square, but because the Black king will be forced out into the open away from the queenside, White will actually go in with the king and checkmate Black. For example: 74. ... Kd6 75. Qb6+ Ke5 76. Qc5 Rxf5 77. a5 Rg5 78. a6 Rg8 79. a7 Ra8 80. Kc3 Ke6 81. Kd4 Bg2 82. Kxc4 Rg8 83. Qb6+ Kf5 84. Kd4 and Black will eventually need to take her rook off the back rank to defend her king; then we can win the bishop. We would continue into a queen-versus-rook endgame, but that one would be a fair bit easier than the game so far!

### 74. ... c3 75. Qe2 Kd6 76. Qe7+ Kc6 77.

### Qe2 Kd6 78. Qe7+ Kc6

The same position as the last diagram, but with White to move!

### 79. Qe5

The move that throws away the win for good. But again, one would have to realize that the endgame with the queen and a-pawn against rook, bishop, and king in the center is winning.

### 79. ... Kc5 80. f7 Rf2+ 81. Kxc3 Rxf7 82.

### Qe3+ Kc6 83. Kd4

White will win the a5-pawn, but with the black king safe on the queenside, this one is a clear draw.

### 83. ... Rd7 84. Qc3+ Kb7 85. Qxa5 Kb8 86.

### Qb5+ Kc8 87. Kc5 Bb7 88. Qb4 Rc7+ 89.

### Kd4 Rc6 90. Qf8+ Kc7 91. Qe7+ Kb8 92.

### Qd8+ Ka7 93. Qa5+ Kb8 94. Qe5+ Ka7 95.

### Qa5+ Kb8 96. Qe5+ Ka7 97. Qa5+ Kb8 98.

### Qe5+ Ka7, draw.

What a game!

Though I was a bit disappointed I couldn't finish with a win, my Cairns Cup was defined by missed chances from both sides in many decisive games. I considered myself quite lucky to come out on top after everything, and of course, I was thrilled with the result: the best in my career thus far!

Moreover, I'd shown myself that I was capable of good and fighting chess amongst the best in the world. As always, my thanks to everyone at the Saint Louis Chess Club for their unwavering support and for running a fantastic event. I'd like to end with thanks also to my friends, coaches, and parents, all of whom are my best supporters when I stumble and my greatest contributors when I succeed. ♠



Carissa and her father Percy with the GM norm certificate

## 5th Cairns Cup

ST. LOUIS, JUNE 8-21, 2025

|    |                         |           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |      |
|----|-------------------------|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|------|
| 1  | IM Carissa Yip          | 2516      | * | ½ | 0 | 1 | 1 | ½ | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1  | 6/9  |
| 2  | IM Alice Lee            | 2471      | ½ | * | ½ | ½ | 0 | 1 | ½ | 1 | ½ | 1  | 5½/9 |
| 3  | GM Harika Dronavalli    | 2498      | 1 | ½ | * | 0 | ½ | ½ | 1 | ½ | ½ | ½  | 5/9  |
| 4  | GM Humpy Koneru         | 2620      | 0 | ½ | 1 | * | 1 | ½ | 1 | 0 | ½ | 0  | 4½/9 |
| 5  | IM Bibisara Assaubayeva | 2542      | 0 | 1 | ½ | 0 | * | ½ | 0 | 1 | ½ | 1  | 4½/9 |
| 6  | IM Alina Kashlinskaya   | 2459 FIDE | ½ | 0 | ½ | ½ | ½ | * | 0 | 1 | 1 | ½  | 4½/9 |
| 7  | GM Nana Dzagnidze       | 2560      | 0 | ½ | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | * | ½ | ½ | 1  | 4½/9 |
| 8  | GM Mariya Muzychuk      | 2598      | 1 | 0 | ½ | 1 | 0 | 0 | ½ | * | ½ | ½  | 4/9  |
| 9  | GM Tan Zhongyi          | 2621      | 0 | ½ | ½ | ½ | ½ | 0 | ½ | ½ | * | ½  | 3½/9 |
| 10 | GM Nino Batsiashvili    | 2462 FIDE | 0 | 0 | ½ | 1 | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ | ½ | *  | 3/9  |

# From Last to First

IM Tani Adewumi just won his second straight Cadet championship, but it hasn't always been easy.

BY **DANIAL WILSON**

**I**N 2023, TANITOLUWA Adewumi played in his first U.S. Cadet Championship, an eight-player round robin featuring the strongest players under 16 years of age. He finished last. This year, Tani, now an international master, won the event undefeated with a round to spare for the second year in a row — see the August 2024 issue for a report on his first victory. Afterward, he was kind enough to help us get the perspective of what it takes to face the struggles of going from a hard tournament with a poor performance to coming back better prepared.

We started our conversation by going all the way back to when Tani started playing chess. He practiced a lot, was captivated by the game and really enjoyed playing and competing at tournaments. His passion and curiosity for the game led to his quick rise, but then, like most chessplayers, he hit a wall and needed to adapt.

It is hard for any chessplayer to cover every topic in their training, and sometimes to break a barrier we need to fill the gaps with the topics we are covering least. When Tani was trying to break 2200 FIDE but got stuck, he had to reevaluate what he was working on. He was already a very tactical player and found that he needed to improve his positional play. Tani's advice for any player who finds themselves in his shoes, struggling to break through any rating level, is to really look deep into your own games to understand what is missing. Once you do that, improving your skills becomes much easier.

How do you keep chess fun? Tani said he enjoys winning, but also sets goals for himself both big and small. He sets personal rewards; for example, if he completes a goal then he can watch TV or go play basketball. By doing this he tackles a large goal by taking small bites. His long-term goal is

to become a grandmaster. With the right work ethic and determination, he will go far toward achieving this goal.

At Tani's first U.S. Cadet, he was expecting a decent tournament and to gain some rating points. Instead, he finished with 1½/7. I asked Tani how to keep your head straight and fight in each game, even when you're having a hard tournament; he replied that while he sometimes finds himself spiraling, he now tries to keep his focus just on the next round, trying not to carry the pressure from the previous game into the next.

He shared a great example: In the first round of the 2025 Philadelphia International, Tani hung his queen to a lower-rated player, and he started with 1½/4 and severely damaged norm chances. He realized that he was thinking too much, so he let go of the previous games and went on to win the next five rounds, to tie for second with 6½/9.

Here is a game from the 2023 U.S. Cadet annotated by Tani.

## FOUR KNIGHTS (C48)

**FM Tanitoluwa Adewumi (2393)**

**IM Evan Park (2487)**

**U.S. Cadet Ch (2), 06.23.2023**

*Annotations by IM Tani Adewumi*

**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bb5 Bd6 5. d3 a6 6. Bxc6**

I tried to play too solidly and just forgot 6. Ba4 is a better move.

**6. ... dxc6 7. h3 0-0 8. 0-0 Nd7 9. Ne2 Re8 10. Ng3**

A simple reroute, but it's not really effective.

**10. ... Nf8 11. Be3 c5 12. Nd2 Ne6 13. Nc4 Nf4 14. Qf3**

My position was starting to pick up some pace.

**14. ... Ne6 15. Kh1**



POSITION AFTER 15. Kh1

Another path was 15. Nxd6 cxd6 16. Rae1 with ideas of eventually playing f2-f4. If Black tries the other recapture, 15. ... Qxd6, there follows 16. Nh5 Nd4 17. Qd1 Qg6 18. Ng3. With Kg1-h2 and f2-f4 coming, Black has to play 18. ... f5 19. Bxd4 cxd4 20. exf5 Bxf5 21. Qf3, and now Black has holes to deal with.

**15. ... Nd4 16. Qd1 Be6 17. c3 Nc6 18. Nxd6 Qxd6 19. f4 f6 20. Qe2 Rad8 21. Rad1 b6 22. a3 a5 23. Qf2 Rf8 24. Qf3 a4 25. Nh5 Bf7 26. Qg4 Bxh5 27. Qxh5**  
I'm not making any progress.

**27. ... Qe6 28. f5 Qb3 29. Qe2 c4**



**30. dxc4**

I missed 30. d4, which would have taken me from slightly worse to slightly better.

For example, after 30. ... exd4 31. cxd4 Rfe8 32. e5 fxe5 33. f6 gxf6 34. Rxf6 White breaks through to the king.

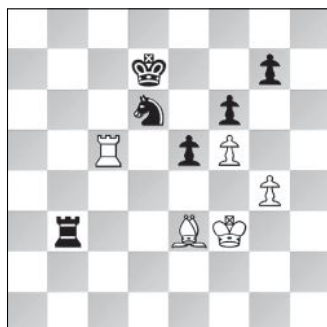
**30. ... Na5 31. c5 Nc4 32. Rxd8 Rxd8 33. cxb6 cxb6 34. Bc1**

I'm up a pawn, but Black is totally dominating the light squares.

**34. ... Qb5 35. Re1 Nxa3 36. Qxb5 Nxb5 37. Be3 Rd6 38. Kg1 Rc6 39. Ra1 a3 40. bxa3 Nxc3 41. a4 Nxe4 42. g4 Nc3 43. a5 bxa5 44. Rxa5 Rc7 45. Ra8+ Kf7 46. Bd2 h5 47. Kg2 hxg4 48. hxg4 Nd5 49. Rd8 Ne7** It's still technically a draw, but this is hard to defend.

**50. Kf3 Nc6 51. Rh8 Rb7 52. Be3 Rb3 53. Rc8 Ne7 54. Rc7 Ke8 55. Rc5 Kd7 56. Ke4 Nc8 57. Kf3 Nd6 58. Ke2 Rb2+** Black's best was 58. ... Rb4 59. Kf3 Nc4 60. Bc1 Kd6 61. Rc8 Rb3+ 62. Kf2 (62. Ke4 Rc3) 62. ... Kd5 and the king gets in.

**59. Kf3 Rb3**



**60. Ke2 Ne4 61. Rd5+ Kc6 62. Rd8 Nc3+ 63. Ke1 Nd5**

And now my pawns fall.

**64. Bf2 Rb4 65. g5 Re4+ 66. Kf1 Rf4 67. Rc8+ Kd7 68. Rg8 Ne3+ 69. Ke2 Nxf5 70. gxf6 gxf6 71. Bc5 Rc4 72. Ba3 Rc3 73. Bb4 Nd4+ 74. Kd2 Rh3 75. Bc3 Ne6 76. Ra8 Ng5 77. Kc2 Ke6 78. Rf8 Ne4 79. Be1 Kf5 80. Kd1 Rh2 81. Rg8 Kf4 82. Rg6 Ke3 83. Ba5 Kd3, White resigned.**

My calculation and evaluation of positions were very poor in this game.

Tani said the biggest thing he changed after that experience was better preparation for the specific invited players in the next two Cadets. He also said that his skill level was just not there yet in 2023, and that drove him to work harder on calculation and preparation.

Here is a game from the 2025 U.S. Cadet, also annotated by Tani.

## KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE, BY TRANSPOSITION (E60)

**IM Tanitoluwa Adewumi (2461)**

**FM Andrew Jiang (2295)**

**U.S. Cadet Ch (3), 06.20.2025**

*Annotations by IM Tani Adewumi*

**1. Nf3 d5 2. b3 c5 3. e3 Nf6 4. Bb2 g6 5. c4 dxc4 6. Bxc4 Bg7 7. 0-0 0-0 8. d4 cxd4 9. Nxd4 a6 10. a4 Bg4 11. Be2 Bxe2 12. Qxe2 e5 13. Nf3 e4 14. Ne5 Qc7 15. Rc1 Qe7**

(see diagram top of next column)

Andrew played the opening really fast; he was definitely in prep until now.

**16. Nc4 Qe6 17. Rd1 Nbd7**

Black's other option was 17. ... Nc6 18. Rd6 Qg4 19. Qxg4 Nxg4 20. Bxg7 Kxg7 21. Nc3, when I have a nice position with more space



**POSITION AFTER 15. ... Qe7**

and control.

**18. Nc3 Nc5 19. Rd6 Qg4**

If Black tries 19. ... Qf5 20. Rad1 it's a mistake to take the pawn with 20. ... Nxb3; White wins a piece with 21. Nd5 Nxd5 22. R1xd5 Qc8 23. Bxg7 Kxg7 24. Qb2+. Black's best is 20. ... Nd3 21. Nxe4 Nxb2 22. Nxf6+ Bxf6 23. Nxb2, though White is still better.

**20. Rxf6 Qxe2 21. Nxe2 b5 22. Na5**

I should have played 22. Nb6 Rad8 23. b4 Rd2 24. Bc3 Bxf6 (not 24. ... Rxe2 25. bxc5 Bxf6 26. Bxf6) 25. bxc5 Bxc3 (25. ... Rxe2 26. Bxf6 is just losing for Black) 26. Nxc3.

**22. ... Rfd8 23. Bc3**

Keeping Black out of d2.

**23. ... Rd3 24. Rc1 Rad8 25. g4 Rd1+ 26. Rxd1 Rxd1+ 27. Kg2 Bxf6 28. Bxf6 Rd2 29. Ng3**

Better was 29. axb5 when Black has to play 29. ... axb5, and I keep a pawn and my advantage. If Black tries 29. ... Rxe2, my pawns become unstoppable — 30. Bd4 and now:

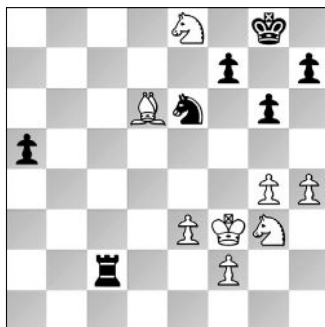
(a) 30. ... Nxb3 31. bxa6 Nxa5 (31. ... Ra2 32. Nxb3) 32. a7;



The field (plus organizer and TD) for the 2025 Cadet

(b) 30. ... Nd7 31. bxa6 Rc2 32. b4;  
(c) 30. ... Ne6 31. bxa6 Nc7 32. a7 Ra2 33.  
b4 Ra4 34. b5 Rxa5 35. b6.

29. ... bxa4 30. bxa4 Ra2 31. Nc4 Rxa4  
32. Nd2 Kf8 33. Bd4 Ne6 34. Be5 Ra2 35.  
Ndx4 a5 36. Kf3 Rc2 37. Bd6+ Kg8 38.  
Nf6+ Kg7 39. Ne8+ Kg8 40. h4



40. ... h6

The better try was 40. ... f5. After 41. gxf5  
gxf5 42. Nf6+ Kf7 43. Nd7 I have a slight ad-  
vantage, but it's already very tricky.

41. Nf6+ Kg7 42. Nge4

Now Black is blocked.

42. ... Rc8

He was probably worried there was some  
kind of mate after Nf6-e8 and Ne4-f6, which  
makes sense.

43. Be5 Kf8 44. Bd6+ Kg7 45. Nd5 Rc6 46.  
Ba3 Rc2 47. Nec3 f5 48. gxf5 gxf5 49. Nb5  
Rd2 50. Nb6 Kg6 51. Nc4 Rc2 52. Nxa5  
Kh5 53. Be7 Rd2 54. Nc6 f4 55. Nbd4 Ng5+  
56. hxc5, Black resigned.

My calculation has improved since two  
years ago!

I finished the interview with Tani with some  
rapid-fire questions:

**Favorite chess piece?** Knight

**Favorite chess player?** Hikaru Nakamura

**Blitz or Bughouse?** Blitz, with trash talking!

**Favorite board game other than chess?**  
Scrabble

**You just won the world chess champion-  
ship! Where are you going to eat?** Korean  
BBQ

**Favorite dessert?** Ice cream — anything  
caramel

**Last book you read not for school?** *Rumple  
Buttercup*

**Favorite music genre?** Rap

**Bills, Jets, or Giants?** Bills

**Dream car?** Ferrari

Invitations to the Cadets are based on rating,  
plus a spot that's reserved for the winner of  
the previous year's Dewain Barber National  
Tournament of Middle School State Champi-  
ons. The average rating has been 2400 over  
the last four years. Over the last few years,  
the U.S. Cadet has been held near Chicago;  
the first-place prize is a \$10,000 scholarship  
— \$5,000 from the Dewain Barber Founda-  
tion and \$5,000 from US Chess — along with  
\$1,000 in cash. Thanks to these sponsors for  
their commitment to junior chess!

I am very proud to have co-organized this  
tournament alongside Bill Buklis over the  
last few years. We have gotten the privilege  
of seeing many of these young talented  
players not only play amazing chess but  
also see them grow up. Some players are  
entering high school; others are entering  
college, but it has been an honor to host  
all the Cadets. ♠

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FM Tanitoluwa  
Adewumi



## 2025 U.S. CADET CHAMPIONSHIP AT A GLANCE

JUNE 19-22, 2025 | SCHAUMBURG, IL

1st: IM Tanitoluwa Adewumi, 6/7. 2nd: FM Andrew Jiang, 5.  
3rd: FM Ros Atwell, 4½. 4th-5th: FM Henry Deng, FM Linxi  
Zhu, 3½. 6th: FM Julian Colville, 2½. 7th: FM Bryan Enming  
Lin, 2. 8th: CM Anjaneya Sripathy Rao, 1.

For more information and results, visit: [www.kingregistration.com/event/uscadet2025](http://www.kingregistration.com/event/uscadet2025)

# MAKE YOUR MOVE

BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM GAMES PLAYED at the Women's World Cup in Batumi, Georgia, in July. Some of the puzzles may seem a little trickier than usual — they are! Take your time and don't get discouraged if you fail to solve it right away.

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

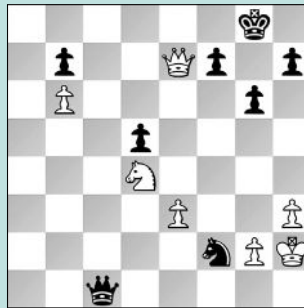
Try to solve the puzzle before reading the text at the bottom of the page. If you're unsuccessful, play through the solution, but return to the puzzle in a week or two to see whether you can now solve it. That way, you gradually expand your tactical vision and you'll be more likely to spot tactics in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

**TACTIC 1.**



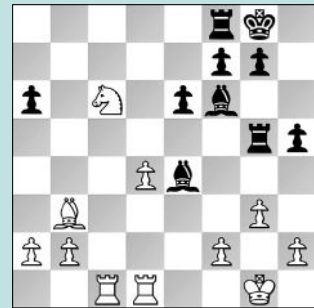
BLACK TO MOVE

**TACTIC 2.**



WHITE TO MOVE

**TACTIC 3.**



WHITE TO MOVE

**TACTIC 4.**



BLACK TO MOVE

**TACTIC 5.**



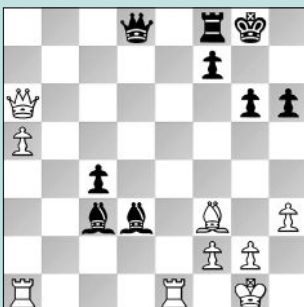
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**TACTIC 6.**



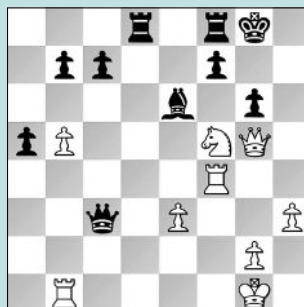
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**TACTIC 7.**



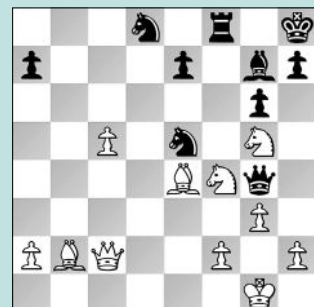
BLACK TO MOVE

**TACTIC 8.**



WHITE TO MOVE

**TACTIC 9.**



WHITE TO MOVE

**Position 1:** OVERWORKED PIECE

**Position 2:** UNSTOPPABLE

**Position 3:** CLOSING THE DOOR

**Position 4:** LOOSE PIECES ...

**Position 5:** COMBINE THREATS

**Position 6:** DIRECT THREATS

**Position 7:** THE RIGHT CAPTURE

**Position 8:** NOT ENOUGH DEFENSE

**Position 9:** INDIRECT THREATS

# Riding the Rapids

Carlsen hits the highs and lows of endgame play at the SuperBet Rapid and Blitz.

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN

W

WORLD NUMBER ONE MAGNUS Carlsen has been vocal in his support of faster chess, which does seem to produce more decisive games. Precision in the endgame, however, is often a casualty. When players reach this critical part of the game, they often have very little time to make important decisions.

In a game with young star GM Alireza Firouzja, Carlsen managed to hold a worse endgame, but only after a shocking number of potentially game-changing blunders by both sides!

## Comedy of Errors

### QUEEN'S PAWN GAME (D02)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2837)

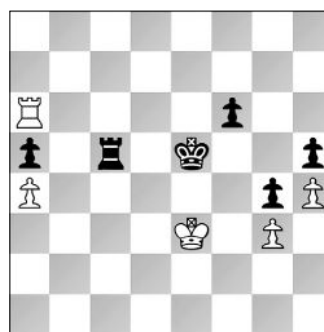
GM Alireza Firouzja (2766)

SuperBet Croatia Rapid (4), Zagreb, 2025

1. Nf3 d5 2. g3 c5 3. Bg2 Nc6 4. d4 e6 5. 0-0 Nf6 6. b3 Bd7 7. e3 Rc8 8. c4 cxd4 9. exd4 dxc4 10. bxc4 Na5 11. Nbd2 Bb4 12. Ne5 Bc3 13. Rb1 Bxd4 14. Ndf3 Bxe5 15. Nxe5 0-0 16. Ba3 Re8 17. Bxb7 Nxb7 18. Rxb7 Rc7 19. Rb1 Qa8 20. Qd4 Bc6 21. Bd6 Rcc8 22. Qf4 Be4 23. Rb3 Bg6 24. f3 a5 25. Rb5 Qa6 26. Rd1 Nd5 27. Qd4 Qxd6 28. cxd5 exd5 29. Rxd5 Qa3 30. Rd2 f6 31. Nxg6 Qxf3 32. Ne7+ Rxe7 33. Rd8+ Rxd8 34. Qxd8+ Kf7 35. Qd5+ Qxd5 36. Rxd5 Re5 37. Rd7+ Kg6 38. Ra7 h5 39. a4 Kh6 40. h4 g5 41. Kf2 g4 42. Ra6 Kg6 43. Ra7 Kf5 44. Ra6 Rc5 45. Ke3 Ke5

(see diagram top of next column)

46. Ra8?



POSITION AFTER 45. ... Ke5

The first howler of the day puts Black in the driver's seat, while the fairly simple 46. Kd3 would keep Black from making progress.

46. ... Rc3+ 47. Kf2 Ke4 48. Re8+ Kf5 49. Ra8 Ke4?!

Firouzja wants to activate his king, but really he just needs it to defend the kingside pawns.

Black nabs the g-pawn with 49. ... Rc2+ 50. Ke3 (otherwise Black's king rolls in) 50. ... Rg2 51. Rxa5+ Kg6 and wins routinely, e.g. 52. Kf4 Rf2+ 53. Ke4 Rf3 54. Ra8 Rxc3 55. a5 Ra3 56. a6 Ra4+ and Black's pawns are rolling.

50. Re8+ Kd4?

Passing up one last chance to return to the win given above with 50. ... Kf5 51. Ra8 Rc2+.

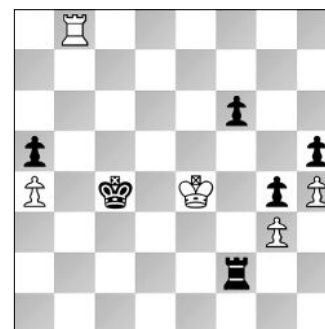
51. Rd8+ Kc4 52. Rh8 Rf3+ 53. Kg2 Rf5 54. Rb8! Rd5 55. Kf2?

55. Rb6! would maintain the draw: 55. ... f5 (55. ... Rd2+ 56. Kg1 is the key point) 56. Rh6 Kb4 57. Rxh5 Kxa4 58. Rh8 and, as in many variations we will see, the advance of the h-pawn will secure the draw.

55. ... Rd2+ 56. Ke3

If the king retreats, Black's king penetrates after 56. ... Kd4.

56. ... Rg2 57. Kf4 Rf2+ 58. Ke4

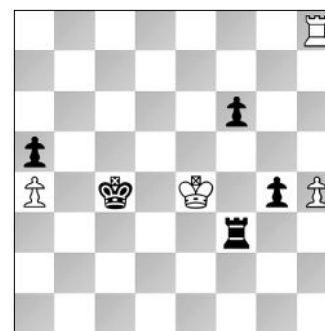


58. ... Rf3?

Again the winning path involves better coordination of the rook and king: 58. ... f5+ 59. Ke5 Kd3! 60. Rb5 Ke3 61. Rxa5 (61. Rb3+ Ke2 doesn't help) 61. ... f4 62. gxf4 Rxf4 63. Ra8 g3 etc.

59. Rh8 Rxc3 60. Rxh5 Rf3 61. Rh8?

If one is good, two are better! The draw was still there with 61. Rxa5 f5+ 62. Ke5 g3 63. Ra8 f4 64. Rg8 Rf2 65. a5 Kb5 66. h5 and the h-pawn is too fast for Black to queen a pawn.



61. ... f5+?

Pushing the pawns together is natural but too slow. Black needs to eliminate the h-pawn to gain time to nurse his advantage. The right way is 61. ... Rf1!! 62. h5 (62. Rg8

*Kb3 63. h5 Kxa4 64. h6 Rh1 65. Rg6 Kb5! 66. Rxf6 a4 and Black wins) 62. ... g3 63. Rg8 Rh1 64. Rg3 Rxh5 65. Ke3 Re5+ 66. Kd2 f5 67. Rf3 Kd4 68. Rf4+ Kd5 69. Kd3 Ke6. White has saved the a-pawn, but with his king cut off, the f-pawn is too powerful.*

**62. Ke5 g3 63. Rg8 f4 64. h5 Rf2 65. h6 Rh2 66. Kxf4 Rxh6 67. Rxg3 Kb4**

Rook pawns offer a lot of leeway to the defender — 67. ... Re6 cuts off the king for but a move after 68. Re3.

**68. Ke3 Kxa4 69. Kd2 Rc6 70. Rc3 Rxc3 71. Kxc3 Kb5 72. Kb2 a4 73. Ka1 a3 74. Ka2 Kc5 75. Kxa3, draw.**

While Carlsen may be just as human as other players in complex endings, there is another side of the coin. In technical endings, faster rates of play may augment his powers of winning when he has nothing. Perfect defense is nearly impossible, and Carlsen exploits subtle mistakes like no one else.

## Don't Sleep on the Bishop Pair

### ENGLISH OPENING (A14)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2837)

GM Wesley So (2745)

SuperBet Croatia Rapid (2), Zagreb, 2025

**1. Nf3 d5 2. c4 e6 3. g3 Nf6 4. Bg2 Be7 5. O-O O-O 6. b3 c5 7. cxd5 Nxd5 8. Nc3 Nc6 9. Bb2 Nxc3 10. dxc3 Qc7 11. Qc2 b6 12. Rad1 Bb7 13. Bc1!?**



While not objectively stronger than the stereotyped 13. c4 Rad8, Magnus' choice is rather more testing.

**13. ... Rad8**

13. ... h6 14. Bf4 Qc8 is slightly awkward, though White has no real advantage here.

**14. Bf4 Qc8 15. Ng5 Bxg5**

Stockfish 17 even gives Black a tiny edge after 15. ... f5. The text is equal, too, but the bishop pair gives White a glimmer of hope to win.

**16. Bxg5 f6 17. Bf4 Rxd1**

Trading the rooks is not really a priority. I prefer 17. ... e5 18. Be3 Ne7, when White can only avoid the bishop trade with the ugly 19. f3.

**18. Rxd1 Rd8 19. h4 e5 20. Bc1 Rxd1+ 21. Qxd1 Qd8**

Here too I would prefer 21. ... Ne7, as the queen often works well with a knight.



**22. Qd3!?**

Carlsen creates long-term chances by producing asymmetry in the pawn structure.

**22. ... Qxd3 23. exd3 Nd8 24. f3**

The bishops are totally inactive, but without other pieces, White has plenty of time to maneuver.

**24. ... h5 25. Kf2 Kf7 26. Bh3 Ne6 27. f4 Nc7 28. fxe5 fxe5 29. Bb2 Nb5 30. a3 g6 31. Bd7 Nd6**

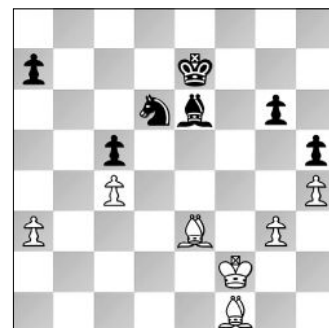
It might have been harder for White to get off the ground after 31. ... Ba6, as 32. Bxb5 Bxb5 33. c4 Bc6 34. Bxe5 Ke6 35. Bb8 Kd7 draws comfortably with the opposite-colored bishops.

**32. c4 Kf6 33. b4 Ke7 34. Ba4 e4 35. Bc2 exd3 36. Bxd3 Be4 37. Bf1 Bf5 38. bxc5 bxc5 39. Bc1 Be6 40. Be3**

(see diagram top of next column)

**40. ... Bxc4?!**

Carlsen has succeeded in opening and stretching the board, giving power to his bishop pair. So's routine capture opens the door, while a subtly stronger possibility



POSITION AFTER 40. Be3

would have sealed the deal: 40. ... Kf6! 41. Bg2 (41. Bxc5? Ne4+) 41. ... Kf5! 42. Bxc5 (42. ... Bh3+ Ke5 43. Bf4+ Kf6 is also equal) 42. ... Ne4+ etc.

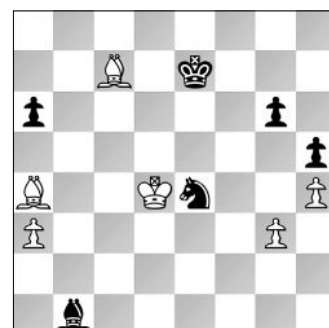
**41. Bg2 a6?**

This is only the second objective mistake for So and he is dangerously close to lost. The line 41. ... Ke6 42. Bxc5 a5! 43. Ke3 Nf5+ 44. Kf4 Bd3 45. Bb6 a4 is not all that obvious, but there the a-pawn is a lot harder to attack.

**42. Bxc5 Ke6 43. Ke3 Nf5+ 44. Kf4 Bd3?**

44. ... a5 was still the right idea.

**45. Bb4 Bb5 46. Be4 Be2 47. Bc2 Bc4 48. Be4 Be2 49. Bb1 Bc4 50. Bc2 Be2 51. Bb3+ Kf6 52. Bc3+ Ke7 53. Be5 Bd3 54. Kg5 Ne3 55. Bf6+ Kf8 56. Bd4 Nc4 57. Kf6 Ke8 58. Bc5 Nd2 59. Ba4+ Kd8 60. Ke5 Ne4 61. Bb6+ Ke7 62. Kd4 Bb1 63. Bc7**



**63. ... g5**

63. ... Nd6 looks promising as 64. Kc5 Nb5! is a kick save. But 64. Bb8 Nb5+ 65. Ke5 holds everything. Black tries to liquidate, but the h-pawn will be a terrible weakness.

**64. Bd1 gxh4 65. gxh4 Nf6 66. Be2**

One of the rook pawns drops now.

**66. ... Ne8 67. Be5 Nd6 68. Bxd6+ Kxd6 69. Bxa6 Bg6 70. a4 Kc6 71. a5 Bf5 72. Be2 Bc8 73. Ke5 Kc5 74. Bxh5 Ba6 75. Bf3, Black resigned.**

Black can win the a-pawn but his bishop can't stop the h-pawn, as it will be chased off the b1-h7 diagonal. Big bishops can come from humble beginnings!

In blitz the margin for error is razor-thin. In Zagreb, Carlsen may have won his biggest "nothingburger" to date.

## It's About Nothing

### FOUR KNIGHTS OPENING (C48)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2839)

GM Gukesh Dommaraju (2776)

SuperBet Croatia Blitz (4), Zagreb, 2025

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. d3 Bc5 5. Nc3 0-0 6. Bxc6 dxc6 7. Be3 Bd6 8. Bg5 h6 9. Bh4 Bg4 10. h3 Bxf3 11. Qxf3 Be7 12. Bxf6 Bxf6 13. g3



White has a clean pawn structure and a knight versus bishop in a closed position. But before you try to copy Magnus' moves, do you really think you would make anything of this?

13. ... Qd7 14. h4 Be7 15. 0-0 Bc5 16. Kg2 Bd4 17. Ne2 Bb6 18. g4 g6 19. Ng3 Qe7 20. Rh1 Rad8 21. a4 a5

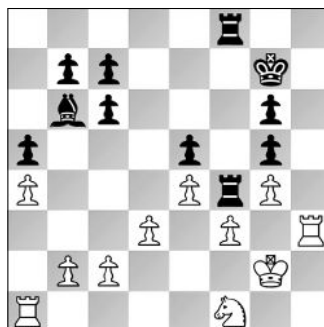
This blocks up the queenside, but Black could regret fixing this pawn on a dark square.

22. Qe2 Rd6 23. Qd2 Kg7 24. h5 Qg5 25. Qxg5 hxg5 26. Nf1 Rf6 27. f3 Rf4 28. hxg6 My first thought was "Why rush this exchange?" But doubling on the h-file would get to the same place, e.g. 28. Ng3 Rf6 29. Rae1 Rh8 30. Rh3 Rh6 31. Reh1 Bc5.

28. ... fxg6

Doubling the pawns is a far lesser evil than handing over the f5-square with 28. ... Kxg6?? 29. Ng3.

29. Rh3



29. ... Rh8??

Very bad timing! After 29. ... Bd4 White's advantage is still pretty minimal.

30. Rxh8 Kxh8 31. Nd2 Rf6

There's no time to get the bishop off b6: 31. ... Bd4 32. c3 Bc5 33. Nc4 and Black cannot defend both the attacked pawns.

32. Nc4 Re6 33. Rb1!

33. Ra3? Bc5 gives Black a critical tempo to defend.

33. ... c5 34. Rh1+ Kg7 35. Kf2 Ba7

36. Nxa5!

After 36. Ke2 b6 I doubt Black could hold, as his bishop is sadly reduced to a checkers man. But there is no reason not to take the pawn.

36. ... c4+ 37. Ke2 cxd3+ 38. Kxd3!

38. cxd3? Ra6 would hold: 39. Nxb7 Rb6!.

38. ... Rd6+

Now 38. ... Ra6 39. Nxb7 is easy.

39. Kc4 Ra6

On 39. ... Rd2 40. Kb3 defends everything.

40. Nxb7 Rxa4+ 41. b4 Ra6 42. Rd1 Rc6+

43. Kb3 Bd4 44. Rd3 Kf6 45. c3 Bf2 46.

Rd7 Rb6 47. Rxc7, Black resigned.

47. Nd8 forces mate but Black has no reason to continue anyway. ♠



# Enter the (Accelerated) Dragon

Does GM Nigel Davies bring the Accelerated Dragon into the 21st century?

BY **IM JOHN DONALDSON**



THE ACCELERATED Dragon variation of the Sicilian has never received the attention given to its more

famous cousin, but it has long enjoyed a reputation as a reliable and theoretically manageable defense to 1. e4. There is not a huge body of literature on it, making the recent publication of GM Nigel Davies' *Chess Opening Repertoire: Accelerated Dragon* welcome news.

Davies' book is not a theoretical work covering all lines of the Accelerated Dragon. Instead, he offers a repertoire for Black, presenting the reader with, in most cases, one line against each of White's main tries. This book is structured around 97 well-annotated model games and includes a series of questions for the reader, following the format made famous by Everyman (now Popular) Chess.

The primary idea of the Accelerated is to play ... d7-d5 in one move, with a dream scenario being **1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Be3 Nf6 7. f3 0-0 8. Qd2 d5!**.



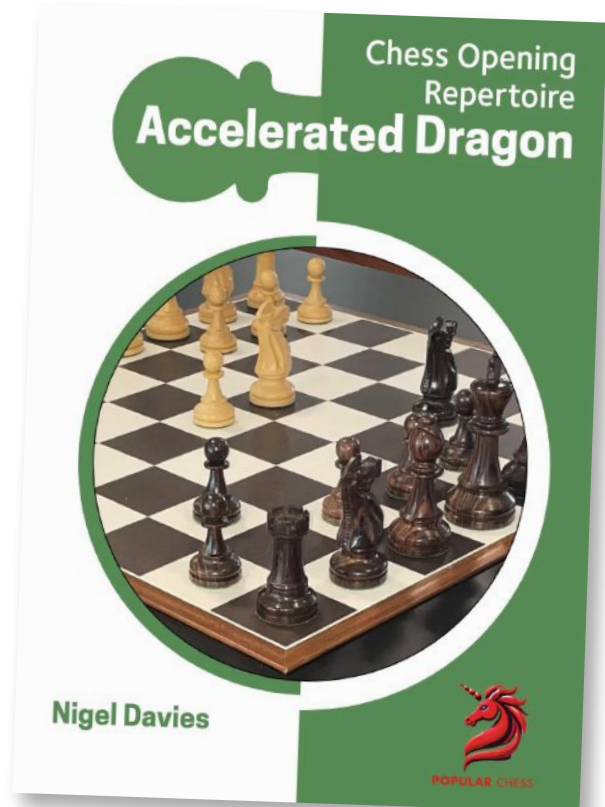
Black is a full tempo ahead of a main line

in the Dragon.

If White hopes to obtain an advantage against the Accelerated, he needs to prevent ... d7-d5, and there are three main ways to do this: (a) **5. c4**; (b) **5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Bc4**, and (c) **5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Nxc6**.

Finding a good answer to the Maróczy Bind (5. c4) is perhaps the biggest challenge Black faces when playing the Accelerated. Black can choose between plans based on breaks with ... f7-f5 or ... b7-b5 or playing for pressure on the dark squares with ... Nc6xd4, ... Bd7-c6, ... a7-a5 and ... Nd7-c5. Unless White has removed his knight from the center (with Nd4-c2 for example) or otherwise lost time, playing ... f7-f5 is much more likely to hurt than help Black. Playing on the dark squares is solid, but often passive. I believe Davies has made the right choice in recommending the Gurgendize system, where Black aims for the break ... b7-b5.

The effectiveness of this system was strengthened by a strong novelty that arises after **1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5. c4 Nf6 6. Nc3 d6 7. f3 Nxd4 8. Qxd4 Bg7 9. Be3 0-0 10. Qd2 Be6 11. Rac1 Qa5 12. b3 Rfc8 13. Be2 a6 14. Na4** (14. 0-0 b5 promises White nothing) **14. ... Qxd2+ 15. Kxd2 Nd7 16. g4**.



Here the traditional **16. ... f5** has been superseded by **16. ... Rcb8!**, used by the Polish super-GM Jan-Krzysztof Duda on several

occasions with excellent results. Now after **17. Nc3 b5 18. Nd5 Bxd5 19. cxd5 Nc5! 20. g5** (Davies points out that after **20. Bxc5 dxc5 21. Rxc5 Bh6+ 22. Kd3 Bf4** Black has excellent compensation for the pawn) **20. ... Bb2! 21. Rc2 Ba3 22. Rb1 a5** (stopping White's intended b3-b4) Black was fine in Aronian – Duda, Stavanger 2020.

While the Gurgendize system — named after the Georgian grandmaster Bukhuti Gurgendize, who successfully used it in the late 1950s and early 1960s — is holding up well, it has one practical drawback: Davies doesn't hide the fact White can pretty much force a draw in many positions by playing Nc3-d5. This is not like the Exchange variations of the French and Slav, where Black can take consolation in a board full of pieces. That is not the case here.

Consider the position reached in the fourth game of the match between Petrosian and Fischer in 1971: **1. c4 c5 2. Nf3 g6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. e4 Nf6 6. Nc3 d6 7. f3 Nxd4 8. Qxd4 Bg7 9. Be3 0-0 10. Qd2 Qa5 11. Rc1 Be6 12. b3 Rfc8 13. Be2 a6 14. Nd5 Qxd2+ 15. Kxd2 Nxd5 16. cxd5 Bd7 17. Rxc8+ Rxc8 18. Rc1 Rxc1 19. Kxc1.**



In less than 20 moves, White has succeeded in hoovering almost all the pieces off the board; even a grandmaster facing an amateur would be hard-pressed to generate winning chances for Black. Davies has a possible solution to avoid this predicament, but more about that later.

Another of White's major tries against the Accelerated is **5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Bc4.**



Here, Black has several choices including **7. ... Qa5** and transposing into a Dragon with **7. ... d6**. Davies prefers **7. ... 0-0 8. Bb3 Re8**, a line invented by Vadim Zvjaginsev and championed by fellow Russian grandmaster Daniil Dubov. The idea, like **7. ... Qa5**, is to force White to castle short, and in so doing avoid the Yugoslav Attack in the Dragon, where White castles queenside and throws his kingside pawns forward. Black will play ... d7-d5 or ... e7-e6 and ... d7-d5 depending on how White reacts.



POSITION AFTER 8. ... Re8

White can meet **8. ... Re8** in a variety of ways, but if he tries to steer into a Yugoslav Attack with **9. f3** Black is ready with **9. ... d5**, which leads to interesting play after **10. exd5 Nb4 11. Nde2 e6 12. Bd4 exd5**. Here one of the points behind the mysterious-looking **8. ... Re8** is revealed: The rook is now perfectly placed.

White can deaden the play with **9. Nxc6** which forces Black to answer with **9. ... dxc6** (**9. ... bxc6 10. e5** is no fun for Black). As Davies points out, the queenless middlegame that arises after **10. Qxd8 Rxd8 11. f3** is not particularly exciting for Black, but not that threatening either. In any event, unlike in the Maróczy, Black has sound alternatives to spice things up. One option is to transpose to a Dragon, as the most dangerous lines, with White castling early on the queenside and keeping the bishop on f1, have been avoided.

The third theoretically challenging option for White is **7. Nxc6 bxc6 8. e5.**



Here Davies recommends **8. ... Ng8** (**8. ... Nd5** has been rendered unplayable by the engines), meeting **9. f4** with **9. ... Nh6** and **9. Bd4** with **9. ... Qa5**. The play in the latter line is not quite as rich as after **9. ... f6**, but it is definitely easier to learn and generally safer for Black. This holds true for most of the author's suggested repertoire.

Having dealt with White's three most principled lines, Davies goes on to cover other tries by the first player, with the Classical Dragon receiving a particularly in-depth look. After **1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Nb3 Nf6 7. Be2 0-0 8. Be3** (or **8. 0-0**) ...



Black can stick to the Accelerated with **8. ... a5**, aiming to meet **9. a4** with ... Nc6-b4 and ... d7-d5, but Davies prefers a transposition to the Dragon proper with ... d7-d6. This is not really a concession: Lines with Bf1-e2 and kingside castling, while respectable, are not as challenging as those where the bishop is developed to c4.

Davies varies from most previous works on the Accelerated in his advocacy for the move order **1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 g6**. He is not the first to propose this sequence: Canadian IM Raja Panjwani was the first to champion it in his original and thought-provoking work *The Hyper Accelerated Dragon* (Thinkers Publishing 2017), an excellent book with much original analysis, but one which curiously offers almost no coverage of **1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Nxc6**. Davies and Panjwani both recommend **3. ... cxd4** after **1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 g6 3. d4**, which is no surprise. It would be wonderful news if Black could play **3. ... Bg7** but Davies correctly points out that both **4. d5**, and particularly **4. dxc5 Qa5+ 5. c3 Qxc5 6. Na3**, leave the second player struggling.

Davies' motivation in advocating for this move order is not hard to guess — to avoid the Rossolimo (**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5**), which has skyrocketed in popularity this century, to the point that it is seen almost as much as **3. d4**. The increased popularity of **3. Bb5** can be partly attributed to the

excellent theoretical status of the Sveshnikov Sicilian, which White players often choose to avoid.

The question for Accelerated Dragon players is a simple one: Is avoiding the Rossolimo by **2. ... g6** followed by **3. ... cxd4** worth the trouble? I believe it to be the case, if not theoretically then practically.

Playing **1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 g6** allows White a number of options. Davies covers **3. h4**, **3. Bc4**, and **3. c3** where he opts for **3. ... d5 4. exd5** (4. e5 is not covered), but the main emphasis is correctly centered on **3. d4 cxd4 4. Qxd4** when after **4. ... Nf6 5. Bb5** the solid **5. ... Nc6 6. Bxc6 dxc6** receives preference over 5. ... a6.

White has a second possibility in the popular **5. Nc3** (which can also arise after **1. e4 c5 2. Nc3 g6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Qxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3**) which Davies suggests be met by **5. ... Nc6 6. Qa4 d6 7. e5 dxe5 8. Nxe5 Bg7!**.



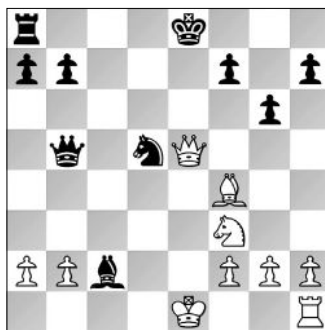
Black sacrifices a pawn but emerges with good compensation, though White may keep a small advantage.

The first player's sharpest try is unquestionably the straightforward **5. e5**. After **5. ... Nc6 6. Qa4 Nd5 7. Qe4** both **7. ... Ndb4** and **7. ... Nc7** have been found wanting. That leaves only **7. ... Nb6**.



While this move is theoretically Black's best choice, and holds up fine, it has the practical defect that unlike the rest of the repertoire it leads to razor-sharp play. Not only this, but the forcing main line ends in a draw by perpetual check: **8. Nc3 Bg7 9. Bf4 d5**

**10. exd6 e.p. Bf5 11. dxe7 Qd7 12. Qe3 Nb4 13. Rc1 Nxc2+ 14. Rxc2 Bxc2 15. Bb5 Bxc3+ 16. Qxc3 Qxb5 17. Qxh8+ Kxe7 18. Qd4 Nd5 19. Qe5+ Kd7 20. Qd6+ Ke8 21. Qe5+.**



It's not easy to avoid this sequence, as the engines point to it as best play by both sides. All openings have drawish lines, but there is a world of difference between simplified equal positions where one can play on and a forced draw by perpetual check.

One can certainly vary with Panjwani's suggestion of **11. ... Bxc3+**, when after **12. bxc3 Bxe4 13. exd8=Q+ Rxd8** Black has no worries with ample compensation for the pawn. That said, generating winning chances from this position will not be easy after **14. Nd4**.

Davies' idea of answering **1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 g6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4** with **4. ... Bg7**, instead of **4. ... Nc6**, offers Black the option of meeting **5. c4** with **5. ... Qb6**. The motivation here is different from the trendy line **5. ... Nc6 6. Be3 Qb6**.



Here Black is looking to meet a future Nb1-c3 with **... Bg7xc3+**, unbalancing the position. This idea is still in its infancy, and Davies acknowledges it's risky, but it does offer Black more fighting chances than normal lines against the Maróczy. Of course, to play this line, Black must start with the **2. ... g6** and **4. ... Bg7** move order.

One line not addressed in this book, but not to be underestimated, is **1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 g6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Bg7 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Nxc6!?**.



POSITION AFTER 6. Nxc6!?

Such exchanges (or developing a knight on c3 or c6 in front of the c-pawn) were once considered heresy, but the engines have proven such judgments to be superficial. After **6. ... bxc6 7. Bc4 d6 8. 0-0 Nf6 9. e5** White hopes for a small edge in the ensuing endgame. This line, recommended in *Reimagining 1. e4* by Nikolaos Ntirlis (Quality Chess, 2024), is becoming increasingly popular.

The Accelerated Dragon is not the only variation covered by Davies. He also presents a repertoire against anti-Sicilian lines, meeting **2. Nc3** with **2. ... g6** and **2. c3** by **2. ... d5 3. exd5 Qxd5 4. d4 g6**, as well as the English and King's Indian Attack, using Botvinnik's favorite setup of **... c7-c5, ... Nb8-c6, ... g7-g6, ... Bf8-g7** and **... e7-e5**.

*Chess Opening Repertoire: Accelerated Dragon* is a useful book aimed primarily at players rated between 1800 and 2200. The author covers a lot of ground (everything but coverage of 1. d4) from Black's perspective and provides plenty of explanatory prose so it's understandable that sometimes a more detailed treatment is not always possible. Though the book is written from the second player's perspective, Davies is reasonably objective (though one might question the author's assertion that after **1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Bc4 0-0 8. f3 Qb6 9. Bb3 Nxe4 10. Nd5 Qa5+ 11. c3 Nc5 12. Nxc6 dxc6 13. Nxe7+ Kh8 14. Nxc8 Raxc8** Black already has the more comfortable game: Dead equal and drawish is more like it).

This book, like others in the Popular Chess line, is a handsome book, neatly laid out, printed on good quality paper and reasonably priced. ♠

*Davies, Nigel. Chess Opening Repertoire: Accelerated Dragon. Popular Chess, 2024. 320pp. ISBN 9781836840039. PB \$24.95, USCF Sales product code B0007PC.*

*IM John Watson will return to reviewing books next month.*

# TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

[new.uschess.org/national-events-calendar](http://new.uschess.org/national-events-calendar)

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

## Nationals

### NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • GRAND PRIX

#### 2025 US Masters

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
Site: Hilton Charlotte University Place Address: 8629 JM Keynes Drive, Charlotte, NC 28262 Overall Prize Fund: \$25,000 GP Pts: 150 FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Charlotte Chess Center • [www.charlottechesscenter.org/events/](http://www.charlottechesscenter.org/events/)

### NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

#### 2026 Pan-American Intercollegiate Championship

**JANUARY 2-5, 2026 — IL** TLA# 52063  
Site: Hilton Chicago/Oak Brook Hills Resort & Conference Center Address: 3500 Midwest Road, Oak Brook IL 60523 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Chess Weekend Inc. • [glenn@chessweekend.com](http://glenn@chessweekend.com) • [www.chessweekend.com/](http://www.chessweekend.com/)

## Grand Prix

The Grand Prix point totals reflect all rated event information as of September 15, 2025, for the 2025 Grand Prix. These standings are updated regularly, but should be considered unofficial. Visit [www.uschess.org/datapage/GP-standings.php](http://www.uschess.org/datapage/GP-standings.php) for up-to-date information.

### 2025 US CHESS GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

| Name                         | State/Ctry | Pts     |
|------------------------------|------------|---------|
| 1. GM JIANCHAO ZHOU          | MA         | 611.608 |
| 2. EMMANUEL CARTER           | NC         | 124.133 |
| 3. GM FIDEL CORRALES JIMENEZ | CA         | 113.75  |
| 4. THOMAS FANG               | NC         | 112.5   |
| 5. GM SEMEN KHANIN           | FIDE       | 112     |
| 6. GM ALEXANDER IVANOV       | MA         | 98.167  |
| 7. GM AWONDER LIANG          | WI         | 97.389  |
| 8. IM SAM SCHMAKEL           | IL         | 93.333  |
| 9. GM PRAVEEN BALAKRISHNAN   | VA         | 89.333  |
| 10. FM DANILA POLIANNIKOV    | MA         | 86.833  |

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### DEADLINE FOR PRINT TLA SUBMISSIONS

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

## 2025 Awards

\$12,500 in cash prizes

First Prize \$5,000

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

The Grand Prix continues in 2025. For information visit [new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program](http://new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program)

### 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@chesstour.com](http://director@chesstour.com)

### 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](http://director@chesstour.com)

### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

#### 3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51289  
Site: Embassy Suites Hotel Address: 10450 Corkscrew Commons Drive, Estero, FL 33928 Overall Prize Fund: \$9,000 GP Pts: 40 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Jon Haskel • [jon@bocachess.com](http://jon@bocachess.com) • 561-302-4377 • [www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

### GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

#### 2025 Michigan Bottom Half Class Championships

### OCTOBER 11-12, 2025 — MI TLA# 50809

Site: Wyndham Garden Ann Arbor Address: 2900 Jackson Ave., Ann Arbor, MI, 48103 Overall Prize Fund: \$2,575 GP Pts: 15 FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Michigan Chess Association • [jeffchess64@gmail.com](mailto:jeffchess64@gmail.com) • 810-955-7271 • [www.michess.org](http://www.michess.org)

### ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

#### 12th annual Midwest Class Blitz Championship

**OCTOBER 11, 2025 — IL** TLA# 50085  
Site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel Address: 601 North Milwaukee Ave., Wheeling, IL 60090 Overall Prize Fund: \$500 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chesstour.com](mailto:director@chesstour.com)

### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

#### Dragon Knight Chess Father-Daughter Day Grand Prix

**OCTOBER 12, 2025 — NC** TLA# 51307  
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,000 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • [jon@dragonknightchess.com](mailto:jon@dragonknightchess.com) • (919) 422-2535 • [www.dragonknightchess.com](http://www.dragonknightchess.com)

### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

#### 2025 Thad Rogers Memorial Georgia Class Championships

**OCTOBER 17-19, 2025 — GA** TLA# 51066  
Site: DoubleTree by Hilton Atlanta Perimeter Dunwoody Address: 4386 Chamblee Dunwoody Road, Atlanta, Georgia, 30341 Overall Prize Fund: \$7,500 GP Pts: 50 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: [www.georgiachess.org](http://www.georgiachess.org)

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

#### 74th New Hampshire Open

**OCTOBER 18-19, 2025 — NH** TLA# 50841  
Site: DoubleTree Hotel Address: 700 Elm St, Manchester, NH 03101 Overall Prize Fund: \$3,114 GP Pts: 20 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: John P Elmore • [johnpelmor@yahoo.com](mailto:johnpelmor@yahoo.com) • 603-918-0386 • [www.nhchess.org](http://www.nhchess.org)

### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

#### Dragon Knight Chess World Toy Camera Day Grand Prix

**OCTOBER 19, 2025 — NC** TLA# 51894  
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,000 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • [jon@dragonknightchess.com](mailto:jon@dragonknightchess.com) • (919) 422-2535 • [www.dragonknightchess.com](http://www.dragonknightchess.com)

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

#### 29th annual Eastern Chess Congress

**OCTOBER 24-26, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 50642  
Site: Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village Address: 201 Village Blvd, Princeton, NJ 08540 Overall Prize Fund: \$25,000 GP Pts: 150 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chesstour.com](mailto:director@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 • [chcunglo@aol.com](mailto:chcunglo@aol.com) • (858) 432-8006 • [www.sandiegochessclub.org](http://www.sandiegochessclub.org)

### HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

#### 2025 Fredericksburg Open

**OCTOBER 25-26, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50693

Site: Country Inn & Suites by Radisson Fredericksburg, VA 22408 Overall Prize Fund: \$4,700 GP Pts: 20 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Mike Hoffpauir, NTD/IA • [mhoffpauir@aol.com](mailto:mhoffpauir@aol.com) • 757-846-4805 • [www.vachess.org](http://www.vachess.org)

### GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

#### Texas Chess Triathlon

**OCTOBER 25, 2025 — TX** TLA# 51164  
Site: The Houston Chess Studio Address: 250 Patton St, Suite H, Houston, TX 77009 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,000 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Edgar Acosta • [poisonpawnschessclub@gmail.com](mailto:poisonpawnschessclub@gmail.com) • 281-844-4139 • [www.poisonpawns.club](http://www.poisonpawns.club)

### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

#### 12th annual Eastern Chess Congress Blitz Championship

**OCTOBER 25, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 50645  
Site: Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village Address: 201 Village Blvd, Princeton, NJ 08540 Overall Prize Fund: \$500 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chesstour.com](mailto:director@chesstour.com)

### GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

#### 2025 PA State Action Chess Championship - West

**OCTOBER 25, 2025 — PA** TLA# 50853  
Site: William Pitt Union, Univ. of Pittsburgh Address: 5th Ave. & Bigelow Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15213 Overall Prize Fund: \$690 GP Pts: 6 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Tom M Martinak • [martinak\\_tom@hotmail.com](mailto:martinak_tom@hotmail.com) • 412-908-0286 • [www.pschess.org/clearinghouse/](http://www.pschess.org/clearinghouse/)

### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

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**OCTOBER 25, 2025 — NC** TLA# 51896  
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### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

#### 2025 New London County & City Championships

**OCTOBER 26, 2025 — CT** TLA# 51487  
Site: Connecticut College Address: 270 Mohegan Avenue, Crozier Williams, New London, CT 06320 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,000 GP Pts: 15 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Connecticut State Chess Association • [chess.CSAC@gmail.com](mailto:chess.CSAC@gmail.com) • 8605930225 • [www.ChessCT.org](http://www.ChessCT.org)

### HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

#### 90th Greater Boston Open

**OCTOBER 26, 2025 — MA** TLA# 51274  
Site: Westford Regency Inn and Conference Center Address: 219 Littleton Rd., Westford MA 01886 Overall Prize Fund: \$3,000 GP Pts: 15 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Massachusetts Chess Association • [info@masschess.org](mailto:info@masschess.org) • 603-891-2484 • [www.masschess.org](http://www.masschess.org)

### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

#### Chicago Fall Open

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — IL** TLA# 51313  
Site: Hyatt Regency Schaumburg Address: 1800 E Golf Rd, Schaumburg, IL 60173 Overall Prize Fund: \$10,000 GP Pts: 50 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: King Registration • [info@kingregistration.com](mailto:info@kingregistration.com) • [www.kingregistration.com/event/fallopen25](http://www.kingregistration.com/event/fallopen25)

### GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

#### Central States Master Challenge

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — WI** TLA# 51290  
Site: Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield Hotel Address:

375 S. Moorland Road, Brookfield, WI 53005 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$11,000 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** All Americas Chess • [allamericaschess@gmail.com](mailto:allamericaschess@gmail.com)

#### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### Dragon Knight Chess Zero Tasking Day Grand Prix

**NOVEMBER 2, 2025 — NC** TLA# 51897  
**Site:** Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,000 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • [jon@dragonknightchess.com](mailto:jon@dragonknightchess.com) • (919) 422-2535 • [www.dragonknightchess.com](http://www.dragonknightchess.com)

#### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 20th annual Los Angeles Open

**NOVEMBER 7-9, 2025 — CA-S** TLA# 50643  
**Site:** Hilton Orange County Airport **Address:** 18800 Macarthur Blvd, Irvine CA 92612 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

#### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### 10th annual Los Angeles Open Blitz Championship

**NOVEMBER 8, 2025 — CA-S** TLA# 50646  
**Site:** Hilton Orange County Airport **Address:** 18800 Macarthur Blvd, Irvine CA 92612 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$500 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

#### 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](mailto:info@downriverchess.com) • [www.downriverchess.com](http://www.downriverchess.com)

#### GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

### 2025 PA State G/15 Championship - West

**NOVEMBER 8, 2025 — PA** TLA# 50854  
**Site:** William Pitt Union, Univ. of Pittsburgh **Address:** 5th Ave. & Bigelow Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15213 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$690 **GP Pts:** 6 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Tom M Martinak • [martinak\\_tom\\_m@hotmail.com](mailto:martinak_tom_m@hotmail.com) • 412-908-0286 • [www.pscfchess.org/clearinghouse/](http://www.pscfchess.org/clearinghouse/)

#### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### Dragon Knight Chess International Tongue Twister Day Grand Prix

**NOVEMBER 9, 2025 — NC** TLA# 51902  
**Site:** Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,000 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • [jon@dragonknightchess.com](mailto:jon@dragonknightchess.com) • (919) 422-2535 • [www.dragonknightchess.com](http://www.dragonknightchess.com)

#### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 23rd Annual Turkey Bowl

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**Site:** Fort Lauderdale Marriott North **Address:** 6650 North Andrews Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$12,000 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Jon Haskel • [jon@bocachess.com](mailto:jon@bocachess.com) • 561-302-4377 • [www.bocachess.com](http://www.bocachess.com)

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

### 34th annual Kings Island Open

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — OH** TLA# 50644  
**Site:** Embassy Suites Cincinnati NE **Address:** 4554 Lake Forest Dr, Blue Ash OH 45242 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$25,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

#### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### 13th annual Kings Island Open Blitz Championship

#### NOVEMBER 15, 2025 — OH TLA# 50647

**Site:** Embassy Suites Cincinnati NE **Address:** 4554 Lake Forest Dr, Blue Ash OH 45242 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$500 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

#### GRAND PRIX

### 19th Annual SPICE Cup Open

**NOVEMBER 19-24, 2025 — WA** TLA# 51858  
**Site:** Hilton Bellevue **Address:** 300 112th Ave SE, Bellevue, WA 98004 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$12,500 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Josh Sinanan • [WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com](mailto:WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com) • 2067693757 • [www.wachess.com/](http://www.wachess.com/)

#### GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

### 2025 Illinois Class State Championship

**NOVEMBER 23, 2025 — IL** TLA# 50284  
**Site:** Hyatt Regency Schaumburg **Address:** 1800 E. Golf Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60173 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$6,000 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Glenn Panner • [glenn@chessweekend.com](mailto:glenn@chessweekend.com) • [www.chessweekend.com/](http://www.chessweekend.com/)

#### HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIX

### 60th American Open Chess Championship

**NOVEMBER 24-30, 2025 — CA** TLA# 51934  
**Site:** Hyatt Regency Orange County **Address:** 11999 Harbor Blvd., Garden Grove, CA 92640 **Overall Prize Fund:** see online TLA **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** American Open Chess Championship • [play@americanopen.org](mailto:play@americanopen.org) • 714-643-8828 • [www.americanopen.org/](http://www.americanopen.org/)

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

### 56th annual National Chess Congress

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — PA** TLA# 50757  
**Site:** Loews Hotel **Address:** 1200 Market St, Philadelphia PA 19107 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$45,000 **GP Pts:**

200 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

#### GRAND PRIX

### 2025 NC Open

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**Site:** Hilton Charlotte University Place **Address:** 8629 JM Keynes Drive, Charlotte, NC 28262 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$12,500 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Charlotte Chess Center • [www.charlottechesscenter.org/events/](http://www.charlottechesscenter.org/events/)

#### GRAND PRIX

### 9th Annual Sevan Memorial

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — IL** TLA# 51968  
**Site:** Hyatt Regency Schaumburg **Address:** 1800 E. Golf Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60173 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$12,000 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Glenn Panner • [glennpan@gmail.com](mailto:glennpan@gmail.com) • 8159554793 • [www.chessweekend.com](http://www.chessweekend.com)

#### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### Motor City Open

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — MI** TLA# 51922  
**Site:** Crowne Plaza - Auburn Hills **Address:** 1500 B. Opdyke Rd, Auburn Hills, MI 48326 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$9,000 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Edward Mandell • [eman@aol.com](mailto:eman@aol.com) • 2486352375

#### GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### 16th annual National Chess Congress Blitz Championship

**NOVEMBER 29, 2025 — PA** TLA# 50761  
**Site:** Loews Hotel **Address:** 1200 Market St, Philadelphia PA 19107 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$500 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

#### GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

### 2025 Michigan Action Championship

**DECEMBER 6, 2025 — MI** TLA# 51075  
**Site:** Oakland Center **Address:** 312 Meadow Brook Rd, Rochester, MI, 48309 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,250 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:**

## 56th annual NATIONAL CHESS CONGRESS

6 rounds, Nov 28-30 or Nov 29-30, 2025 - Loews Philadelphia Hotel

\$45,000 prize fund guaranteed, 20 plaques, free entries!

6 rounds, 40/80, SD/30; d30 (2-day option, rds 1-3 G/40 d10). U800 & U600 sections play separate 2-day schedule only, 11/29-30, G/40 d10. Top 3 sections are FIDE rated.

Loews Philadelphia Hotel, 1200 Market St, Philadelphia PA 19107. Hotel rates \$122-122-147-172, use link at [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us), reserve by 11/12.

In 10 sections (see [peakrating.us](http://peakrating.us)):

**Premier Section:** Open to 2000/over. Prizes \$4000-2400-1200-800-500, clear/tiebreak win \$200, USCF U2400 \$2000-1000. 200 GPP.  
**U2200, U2000:** Each \$2500-1300-700-500-300.

**U1800:** \$2400-1200-600-400-300.

**U1600:** \$2000-1000-600-400-300.

**U1400:** \$1600-800-500-300-200.

**U1200:** \$1400-700-400-300-200.

**U1000:** \$1200-600-400-300-200..

**U800, U600:** Each, plaques to top 10. CCA free entry prizes to top 4.

**Unrated prize limits:** U1000 \$200, U1200 \$300, U1400 \$400, U1600 \$500, U1800 \$600, U2000 \$700.

**Mixed doubles prizes:** Best male+female 2-player combined score among all sections, averaging under 2200: \$2000-1000-600-400. May enter different sections, register before both begin round 2, teams including an unrated limited to \$400.

**November official ratings used;** unofficial or Online Regular USCF ratings usually used if otherwise unrated. **Cannot play** below USCF Online Regular rating - 100 points.

**Top 8 sections entry fee:** \$138 online at [chessaction.com](http://chessaction.com) by 11/25, \$160 later online or at site, until 1 hour before round 1.

**U800, U600 sections entry fee:** \$52 online by 11/25, \$70 later, at site or online, until 9 am 11/29.

**All:** No checks at site, credit cards OK. Re-entry (except Premier) \$60.

**Special USCF membership dues** with magazine if paid online with entry fee: see chess events.us. USCF membership required.

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

**2-day U1000/up schedule:** Reg Sat to 9 am, rds Sat 10, 12:45, 3:30 & 6; Sun 10 & 3:30.

**2-day U800 & U600 sections:** Reg Sat to 9 am, rds 10, 12:45 & 3:30 each day.

**Half point byes** OK all rds, limit 3, must commit before rd 3.

See [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us) for more rules and information.

**Bring set, board, clock** if possible—none supplied.

**Cellphones:** No possession during play; in bag near your table OK.

**Parking:** Loews valet 25% off regular rate (about \$60). Gateway Garage, 3/5 mile away at 1540 Spring St, about \$12/day Sat & Sun, \$30 other days.

**Entry:** [chessaction.com](http://chessaction.com). No mail entries. \$15 charge for refunds.

**Email:** [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us)

**Blitz tournament** Sat 10:30 pm, enter by 10 pm.

Michigan Chess Association • [jeffchess64@gmail.com](mailto:jeffchess64@gmail.com) • 810-955-7271 • [www.michess.com](http://www.michess.com)

## HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX •

**Harry Nelson Pillsbury Memorial**  
**DECEMBER 7, 2025 — MA** TLA# 51890  
**Site:** Westford Regency Inn and Conference Center  
**Address:** 219 Littleton Road, Westford, MA 01886  
**Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,500 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Massachusetts Chess Association • [info@masschess.org](mailto:info@masschess.org) • 603-891-2484 • [www.masschess.com](http://www.masschess.com)

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

**35th annual North American Open**  
**DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV** TLA# 50756  
**Site:** Horseshoe Casino Resort (formerly Bally's) **Address:** 3645 Las Vegas Blvd. S, Las Vegas, NV 89103  
**Overall Prize Fund:** \$130,000 **GP Pts:** 300 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

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

**50th annual Eastern Open!**  
**DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50760  
**Site:** Hyatt Regency Crystal City **Address:** 2799 Richmond Highway, Arlington VA 22202 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

## GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

**14th annual Boston Chess Congress**  
**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — MA** TLA# 51000  
**Site:** Hyatt Regency Boston Harbor **Address:** 101 Harborside Dr, Boston MA 02128 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$12,000 **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

## HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

**Tim Just Winter Open XLII**  
**JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL** TLA# 51956  
**Site:** Hyatt Regency Schaumburg **Address:** 1800 E. Golf Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60173 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** King Registration • [info@kingregistration.com](mailto:info@kingregistration.com) • [www.kingregistration.com/event/timjust26](http://www.kingregistration.com/event/timjust26)

## GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

**17th annual Golden State Open**  
**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — CA** TLA# 51868  
**Site:** Hilton Concord Hotel **Address:** 1970 Diamond Blvd., Concord, CA 94520 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$25,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

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

**58th annual Liberty Bell Open**  
**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — PA** TLA# 51826  
**Site:** Sonesta Hotel **Address:** 1800 Market St, Philadelphia 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$25,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

## ALABAMA

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51289  
**3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**23rd Annual Turkey Bowl**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
 See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

## ARKANSAS

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
 See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

## ARIZONA

**NOVEMBER 7-9, 2025 — CA-S** TLA# 50643  
**20th annual Los Angeles Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 24-30, 2025 — CA** TLA# 51934  
**60th American Open Chess Championship**  
 See Grand Prix.

**DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV** TLA# 50756  
**35th annual North American Open**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**DECEMBER 28-31, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51141  
**2025 World Chess Festival - Hawaii**  
 See Hawaii.

**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — CA** TLA# 51868  
**17th annual Golden State Open**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

## CALIFORNIA

**OCTOBER 24-26, 2025 — CA** TLA# 49993

**San Diego Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 25, 2025 — CA** TLA# 50842  
**USC Invitational Chess Tournament, Joseph D. Atkinson III Memorial**  
**Site:** University of Southern California, Tutor Campus Center, Room 350 / 351 / 352 **Address:** 3607 Trousdale Pkwy., Los Angeles, CA 90089 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Ben Eubanks, USC '78 • [ben.eubanks@alumni.usc.edu](mailto:ben.eubanks@alumni.usc.edu) • (310) 968-4459

**NOVEMBER 7-9, 2025 — CA-S** TLA# 50643  
**20th annual Los Angeles Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 8, 2025 — CA-S** TLA# 50646  
**10th annual Los Angeles Open Blitz Championship**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 24-30, 2025 — CA** TLA# 51934  
**60th American Open Chess Championship**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
 See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV** TLA# 50756  
**35th annual North American Open**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**DECEMBER 28-31, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51141  
**2025 World Chess Festival - Hawaii**  
 See Hawaii.

**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — CA** TLA# 51868  
**17th annual Golden State Open**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

# Regional

## 35th annual NORTH AMERICAN OPEN

**Dec 26-30, 26-29 or 27-29, 2025, Las Vegas - GM & IM norms possible!**  
**\$130,000 PRIZE FUND UNCONDITIONALLY GUARANTEED!**

**Open Section:** 9 rounds, Dec 26-30, 40/90, SD/30; d30.

**Other sections:** 7 rounds, Dec 26-29 or 27-29, 40/90, SD/30; d30 (3-day option, rds 1-2 G/60 d10).

**At Horseshoe Casino Resort,** 3645 Las Vegas Blvd So, Las Vegas NV 89103. Free parking for guests.

**In 8 sections.** Open Section uses December FIDE ratings, other sections Dec official USCF ratings. Top 3 sections are also FIDE rated.

**Open Section:** \$10000-5000-3000-2000-1300-1000-800-700-600-500, clear/tiebreak win \$300 bonus, top FIDE U2400/Unr \$3000-2000-1000, 300 GPP.

**Under 2300, Under 2100, Under 1900:** Each \$7000-4000-2000-1200-800-600-500-500-400-400.

**Under 1700:** \$6000-3000-1500-1000-800-600-500-500-400-400.

**Under 1500:** \$5000-2500-1300-1000-700-600-500-400-300-300.

**Under 1300:** \$4000-2000-1000-800-600-500-400-400-300-300.

**Under 1000:** \$1500-1000-600-400-300-300-200-200-200.

**Prize limits:** 1) Unrated limit U1000 \$300, U1300 \$500, U1500 \$700, U1700 \$1000, U1900 \$1500, U2100 \$2000. 2) Under 26 games by Dec. list, limit U1000 \$800, U1300 \$1500, U1500 or U1700 \$3000. 3) If any USCF post-event Regular OTB or Regular Online rating from events ending 12/20/24-12/20/25, or current Online Regular rating, was more than 40 points over section maximum, limit \$1500. 4) Balance of any limited prize goes to next player(s) in line.

**Cannot play** below Online Regular rating minus 100 points.

**Mixed doubles:** \$2000-1000-500-300-200. See [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**Top 6 sections entry fee:** \$245 at [chessaction.com](http://chessaction.com) by 9/20, \$275 by 12/23, \$300 later online or at site until 1 hour before round 1. **Open Section \$800 additional fee unless** USCF-rated 2300+ or FIDE rated 2100+.

**Special entry fee:** U1000 Section \$150 less, Senior 65/over in U1300/up, \$100 less. Re-entry (no Open) \$120.

**Unofficial USCF** or Online Regular USCF ratings usually used if otherwise unrated.

**5-day late reg.** ends 12/26 10 am, rds 12/26-28 11 & 6, 12/29 10 & 4:30, 12/30 10 am (Open Section).

**4-day late reg.** ends 12/26 5 pm, rounds 12/26 6 pm, 12/27-28 11 & 6, 12/29 10 am & 4:30 pm.

**3-day late reg.** ends 12/27 10 am, rounds 12/27 11, 2:30 & 6, 12/28 11 & 6, 12/29 10 & 4:30.

**1/2-pt byes** OK all, limit 3 (limit 2 in last 4 rds). Must commit before round 3.

**More rules at [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us)** **Bring set, board, clock** if possible- none supplied.

**USCF membership** required; see [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us) for special rates.

**Special room rate at Horseshoe** \$109-139. Use link at [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us) or 800-833-3308. Rooms may sell out by mid-Nov.

**Entry:** [chessaction.com](http://chessaction.com). No mail entries, no checks. Refunds, \$15 service charge.

**Questions, email:** [chesstour.info](mailto:chesstour.info), [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us).

**Blitz tournament** 12/29 10:30 pm. Enter online by 7 pm 12/29 for lowest fee.

## COLORADO

NOVEMBER 24-30, 2025 — CA TLA# 51934

### 60th American Open Chess Championship

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC TLA# 52078

### 2025 US Masters

See National Events.

NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC TLA# 52080

### 2025 NC Open

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV TLA# 50756

### 35th annual North American Open

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

## CONNECTICUT

OCT.8, 2025-APR. 26, 2026 — NY TLA# 51272

### 11th Annual New York State Magnus High School and Junior High Chess League (Out of state welcome!)

See New York

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — MA TLA# 50123

### 14th annual Hartford Open

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL TLA# 51289

### 3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event

See Grand Prix..

OCTOBER 26, 2025 — CT TLA# 51487

### 2025 New London County & City Championships

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL TLA# 51293

### 23rd Annual Turkey Bowl

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 15-16, 2025 — NY TLA# 50845

### 9th Annual New York State Girls Championship!

See New York.

DECEMBER 7, 2025 — MA TLA# 51246

### 1st Auburn Winter Swiss

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — MA TLA# 51000

### 14th annual Boston Chess Congress

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

## DELAWARE

NOVEMBER 22-23, 2025 TLA# 51843

### Delaware Capital Open 2025

Site: Delaware Agricultural Museum Address: 866 North DuPont Hwy, Dover DE 19901 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,500 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Delaware Chess Association • [aa.legolas@gmail.com](mailto:aa.legolas@gmail.com) • 4102193179 • <https://delawarechessassociation.org/>

## DIST. OF COLUMBIA

OCTOBER 25-26, 2025 — VA TLA# 50693

### 2025 Fredericksburg Open

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC TLA# 52078

### 2025 US Masters

See National Events.

NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC TLA# 52080

### 2025 NC Open

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA TLA# 50760

### 50th annual Eastern Open!

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

## FLORIDA

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL TLA# 51289

### 3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL TLA# 51293

### 23rd Annual Turkey Bowl

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 24-30, 2025 — CA TLA# 51934

### 60th American Open Chess Championship

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC TLA# 52078

### 2025 US Masters

See National Events.

NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC TLA# 52080

### 2025 NC Open

See Grand Prix.

## GEORGIA

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL TLA# 51289

### 3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 17-19, 2025 — GA TLA# 51066

### 2025 Thad Rogers Memorial Georgia Class Championships

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL TLA# 51293

### 23rd Annual Turkey Bowl

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC TLA# 52078

### 2025 US Masters

See National Events.

NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC TLA# 52080

### 2025 NC Open

See Grand Prix.

## HAWAII

NOVEMBER 24-30, 2025 — CA TLA# 51934

### 60th American Open Chess Championship

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 28-31, 2025 — FL TLA# 51141

### 2025 World Chess Festival - Hawaii

Site: Neal Blaisdell Center Address: 777 Ward Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96814 Overall Prize Fund: \$5,000 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Joe Hanley) • [hanleychessacademy@gmail.com](mailto:hanleychessacademy@gmail.com) • 7149253195 • [www.hanleychessacademy.com/2025WCFHawaii.html](http://www.hanleychessacademy.com/2025WCFHawaii.html)

## ILLINOIS

OCTOBER 4, 2025 — IL TLA# 51910

### Chicago Scholastic Chess Open

Site: University of Illinois Chicago Student Services Building Address: 11200 W. Harrison St., Chicago, IL 60607 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity • [chicagoscholasticopen1906@gmail.com](mailto:chicagoscholasticopen1906@gmail.com) • 4403396340 • [ynotchess.org/chess-tournaments](https://ynotchess.org/chess-tournaments)

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL TLA# 51289

### 3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — IL TLA# 50084

### 33rd annual Midwest Class Championships

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

OCTOBER 11, 2025 — IL TLA# 50085

### 12th annual Midwest Class Blitz Championship

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

OCTOBER 25, 2025 — IL TLA# 51588

### Springfield Jackolantern Open

Site: Southern View Village Hall Address: 3410 South

# 50th annual Eastern Open

December 26-29, 27-29 or 28-29, 2025 - 8 rounds, Hyatt Regency Crystal City

**\$30,000 GUARANTEED including \$2,500 in Senior prizes!**

**8-rd Swiss**, Hyatt Regency Crystal City, 2799 Richmond Highway, Arlington VA 22202. Parking: see [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us). Free airport shuttle. In 6 sections: Premier 12/26-29, U2200 to U1300 12/26-29 or 27-29, U1000 12/28-29.

**Premier** (2000/up): \$3000-1500-800-500-400, clear/tiebreak 1st \$100 bonus, top USCF U2300 \$1000-500. FIDE, 150 GPP. See [peakrating.us](https://peakrating.us).

**U2200**: \$1700-900-500-400-300, top U2000 \$600-300. FIDE rated.

**U1900**: \$1700-900-500-400-300, top U1700 \$400-200.

**U1600**: \$1400-700-500-300-200, top U1400 \$400-200.

**U1300**: \$1300-700-400-300-200, top U1100 \$300.

**U1000**: \$800-500-300-200-100.

**Cannot play** below Online Regular rating minus 100 points.

**Unrated prize limits**: U1000 \$150, U1300 \$300, U1600 \$450, U1900 \$750, Senior prize \$200.

**Senior, age 50+ bonus prizes**: Top born by 12/29/75, across all sections combined, \$1200-600-400-300.

**Mixed Doubles**: Best male/female 2-player team (average under 2200) combined score: \$1000-500-300. May play in different sections; register before both players begin rd 2.

**Top 5 sections entry fee**: \$148 at [chessaction.com](https://chessaction.com) by 12/23, \$170 (no checks, credit cards OK) at site or online until an hour before round 1.

**Under 1000 Section**: all \$50 less.

**Re-entry** (except Premier): \$80.

**December Official ratings** used. **Unofficial** or Online Regular USCF ratings usually used if otherwise unrated. **USCF membership** required. See [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us) for special rates.

**4-day**: 40/80, SD/30; d30. Reg. ends 12/26 12 noon, rds. 12/26 1 & 7, 12/27-28 11 & 5, 12/29 10 & 4.

**3-day**: Rds 1-3 G/30, d10. Reg. ends 12/27 10 am, rds 12/27 11, 1, 3 & 5, merges with 4-day at 5 pm.

**2-day**: G/30, d10. Reg. ends 12/28 10 am, rds. 12/28 11, 1, 3 & 5, 12/29 10, 12, 2 & 4. U1000 only.

**1/2 pt bye** OK all (limit 3), must commit before rd 3.

**Bring set, board, & clock** if possible- none supplied. See [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us) for more rules, info.

**Hotel rates**: \$137-137-162-187, link at [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us), reserve by 12/4 or rate may increase.

**Entry**: [chessaction.com](https://chessaction.com). \$15 charge for refunds. No mail entries.

**Email**: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us).

**Blitz tournament** 12/28 9:30 pm, enter at site 12/28 by 9:10 pm.

5th St., Springfield, IL 62703 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$400  
b/30 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N  
**Org:** David Long • 217-726-2584 • [www.springfield-chessclub.com](http://www.springfield-chessclub.com)

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — IL** TLA# 51313  
**Chicago Fall Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — WI** TLA# 51290  
**Central States Master Challenge**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — OH** TLA# 50644  
**34th annual Kings Island Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**23rd Annual Turkey Bowl**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 23, 2025 — IL** TLA# 50284  
**2025 Illinois Class State Championship**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 24-30, 2025 — CA** TLA# 51934  
**60th American Open Chess Championship**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — IL** TLA# 51968  
**9th Annual Sevan Memorial**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — MI** TLA# 51922  
**Motor City Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL** TLA# 51956  
**Tim Just Winter Open XLII**  
See Grand Prix.

## INDIANA

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — IL** TLA# 50084  
**33rd annual Midwest Class Championships**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**OCTOBER 11, 2025 — KY** TLA# 51232  
**The Butch Mosby National Chess Day Classic**  
See Kentucky.

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — IL** TLA# 51313  
**Chicago Fall Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — WI** TLA# 51290  
**Central States Master Challenge**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — OH** TLA# 50644  
**34th annual Kings Island Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**NOVEMBER 23, 2025 — IL** TLA# 50284  
**2025 Illinois Class State Championship**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — MI** TLA# 51922  
**Motor City Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL** TLA# 51956  
**Tim Just Winter Open XLII**  
See Grand Prix.

## IOWA

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — IL** TLA# 51313

**Chicago Fall Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — WI** TLA# 51290  
**Central States Master Challenge**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 23, 2025 — IL** TLA# 50284  
**2025 Illinois Class State Championship**  
See Grand Prix.

**JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL** TLA# 51956  
**Tim Just Winter Open XLII**  
See Grand Prix.

## KENTUCKY

**OCTOBER 11, 2025 — KY** TLA# 51911  
**Louisville Scholastic Chess Open, National Chess Day**  
**Site:** GE Appliance Park, Monogram Hall **Address:** 4000 Buechel Bank Rd, Louisville, KY 40218 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity • [louisvillescholasticopen@gmail.com](mailto:louisvillescholasticopen@gmail.com) • 4403396340 • [ynotchess.org/chess-tournaments](http://ynotchess.org/chess-tournaments)

**OCTOBER 11, 2025 — KY** TLA# 51232  
**The Butch Mosby National Chess Day Classic**  
**Site:** Roots101 Museum **Address:** 124 North 1st Street, Louisville, KY 40202 **Overall Prize Fund:** see online TLA **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Corbin Seavers • [urbanlouisvillechess@yahoo.com](mailto:urbanlouisvillechess@yahoo.com) • 5023656369

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — OH** TLA# 50644  
**34th annual Kings Island Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
See Grand Prix.

## LOUISIANA

**NOVEMBER 8-9, 2025 — LA** TLA# 4981  
**The 2025 Downriver Classic**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
See Grand Prix.

## MAINE

**OCTOBER 18-19, 2025 — NH** TLA# 50841  
**74th New Hampshire Open**  
See Grand Prix.

## MARYLAND

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51289  
**3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 24-26, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 50642  
**29th annual Eastern Chess Congress**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**OCTOBER 25-26, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50693  
**2025 Fredericksburg Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**23rd Annual Turkey Bowl**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — PA** TLA# 50757  
**56th annual National Chess Congress**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50760  
**50th annual Eastern Open!**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — PA** TLA# 51826  
**58th annual Liberty Bell Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

## MASSACHUSETTS

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — MA** TLA# 50123  
**14th annual Hartford Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51289  
**3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 18-19, 2025 — NH** TLA# 50841  
**74th New Hampshire Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 26, 2025 — MA** TLA# 51274  
**90th Greater Boston Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**23rd Annual Turkey Bowl**  
See Grand Prix.

### REGIONALS

**NOVEMBER 22, 2025 — MA** TLA# 48648  
**2nd Mayflower Open**  
**Site:** St. John's Lutheran Church **Address:** 60 Broad Street, Westfield, MA 01085 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$600  
b/30 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N  
**Org:** Greater Baystate Chess • [greater.baystate.chess@gmail.com](mailto:greater.baystate.chess@gmail.com) • 4133560303 • [www.greaterbay-statechess.com](http://www.greaterbay-statechess.com)

**DECEMBER 7, 2025 — MA** TLA# 51890  
**Harry Nelson Pillsbury Memorial**  
See Grand Prix.

### REGIONALS

**DECEMBER 7, 2025 — MA** TLA# 51246  
**1st Auburn Winter Swiss**  
**Site:** Century Sportsman's Club **Address:** 531 Rochdale St., Auburn, MA 01501 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$700  
b/30 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N  
**Org:** Greater Baystate Chess • [greater.baystate.chess@gmail.com](mailto:greater.baystate.chess@gmail.com) • 4133560303 • [www.greaterbay-statechess.com](http://www.greaterbay-statechess.com)

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — MA** TLA# 51000  
**14th annual Boston Chess Congress**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

## MICHIGAN

**OCTOBER 11-12, 2025 — MI** TLA# 50809  
**2025 Michigan Bottom Half Class Championships**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — IL** TLA# 51313  
**Chicago Fall Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — WI** TLA# 51290  
**Central States Master Challenge**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — OH** TLA# 50644  
**34th annual Kings Island Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

### STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

**NOVEMBER 22, 2025 — MI** TLA# 51074

**2025 Michigan Scholastic Club Championships**

**Site:** Lansing Center **Address:** 333 E Michigan Ave, Lansing, MI, 48933 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Michigan Chess Association • [jeffchess64@gmail.com](mailto:jeffchess64@gmail.com) • 810-955-7271 • [www.michess.com](http://www.michess.com)

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — MI** TLA# 51922  
**Motor City Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**DECEMBER 6, 2025 — MI** TLA# 51075  
**2025 Michigan Action Championship**  
See Grand Prix.

**JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL** TLA# 51956  
**Tim Just Winter Open XLII**  
See Grand Prix.

## MINNESOTA

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — WI** TLA# 51290  
**Central States Master Challenge**  
See Grand Prix.

**JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL** TLA# 51956  
**Tim Just Winter Open XLII**  
See Grand Prix.

## MISSISSIPPI

### STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

**OCTOBER 18-19, 2025 — MS** TLA# 51247  
**2025 Mississippi State Championship**  
**Site:** Nissan Training Center **Address:** 300 Nissan Drive, Gate 1, Canton, MS 39046 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N  
**Org:** Mississippi Chess Association • [mark@mcchess.org](mailto:mark@mcchess.org) • 615-631-3876 • [www.mcchess.org](http://www.mcchess.org)

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
See Grand Prix.

## MISSOURI

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — WI** TLA# 51290  
**Central States Master Challenge**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
See Grand Prix.

## MONTANA

**NOVEMBER 15-16, 2025 — MT** TLA# 51961  
**2025 Missoula Turkey Open**  
**Site:** Holiday Inn Missoula Downtown **Address:** 200 S Pattee St, Missoula, MT 59802 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3,000 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N  
**Org:** Missoula Chess Club • [missoulachessclub@gmail.com](mailto:missoulachessclub@gmail.com) • 4068309524 • [www.missoulachess.com/](http://www.missoulachess.com/)

## NEVADA

**NOVEMBER 7-9, 2025 — CA-S** TLA# 50643  
**20th annual Los Angeles Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 24-30, 2025 — CA** TLA# 51934  
**60th American Open Chess Championship**  
See Grand Prix.

**DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV** TLA# 50756  
**35th annual North American Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — CA** TLA# 51868  
**17th annual Golden State Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

**OCTOBER 18-19, 2025 — NH** TLA# 50841  
**74th New Hampshire Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**DECEMBER 7, 2025 — MA** TLA# 51246  
**1st Auburn Winter Swiss**  
See Grand Prix.

## NEW JERSEY

**OCT.8, 2025-APR. 26, 2026 — NY** TLA# 51272  
**11th Annual New York State Magnus High School and Junior High Chess League (Out of state welcome)!**  
See New York.

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — MA** TLA# 50123  
**14th annual Hartford Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51289  
**3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 18, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 47758  
**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](mailto:edmendou@aol.com) • 6097582326 • <https://hamiltonchessclub.com>

**OCTOBER 24-26, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 50642  
**29th annual Eastern Chess Congress**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**OCTOBER 25, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 50645  
**12th annual Eastern Chess Congress Blitz Championship**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**OCTOBER 25-26, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50693  
**2025 Fredericksburg Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**23rd Annual Turkey Bowl**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 15, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 47759  
**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](mailto:edmendou@aol.com) • 6097582326 • <https://hamiltonchessclub.com>

**NOVEMBER 15-16, 2025 — NY** TLA# 50845  
**9th Annual New York State Girls Championship!**  
See New York.

### STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

**NOVEMBER 23, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 51938  
**2025 New Jersey K-12 Championships**  
Site: Brookdale Community College Address: 765 Newman Springs Rd, Lincroft, NJ 07738 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Alessandro De Marchi-Blumstein • [tournaments.njscf@gmail.com](mailto:tournaments.njscf@gmail.com) • [www.njscf.org/2025-k-12-championships/](http://www.njscf.org/2025-k-12-championships/)

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — PA** TLA# 50757  
**56th annual National Chess Congress**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**NOVEMBER 29, 2025 — PA** TLA# 50761  
**16th annual National Chess Congress Blitz Championship**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50760  
**50th annual Eastern Open!**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — MA** TLA# 51000  
**14th annual Boston Chess Congress**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — PA** TLA# 51826  
**58th annual Liberty Bell Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

## NEW MEXICO

**DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV** TLA# 50756  
**35th annual North American Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

## NEW YORK

**OCT.8, 2025-APR. 26, 2026 — NY** TLA# 51272  
**11th Annual New York State Magnus High School and Junior High Chess League (Out of state welcome)!**  
Site: Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School Address: 36 West 93rd Street, New York, NY 10025 Overall Prize Fund: \$7,050 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Chess Center Of New York • [chesscentr@gmail.com](mailto:chesscentr@gmail.com), [director@magnusleague.org](mailto:director@magnusleague.org) • <http://www.magnusleague.org/>

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — MA** TLA# 50123  
**14th annual Hartford Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51289  
**3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 11, 2025 — NY** TLA# 51695  
**23rd Annual Arkport Open**  
Site: Arkport Village Hall Address: 6 Park Ave., Arkport, NY 14807 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Southern Tier Chess Club • [16thompson@gmail.com](mailto:16thompson@gmail.com) • 5858086896

**OCTOBER 24-26, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 50642  
**29th annual Eastern Chess Congress**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**OCTOBER 25-26, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50693  
**2025 Fredericksburg Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**23rd Annual Turkey Bowl**  
See Grand Prix.

### JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

**NOVEMBER 15-16, 2025 — NY** TLA# 50845  
**9th Annual New York State Girls Championship!**  
Site: Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School Address: 36 West 93rd Street, New York, NY 10025 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,000 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Chess Center Of New York • [director@chessgirls.win](mailto:director@chessgirls.win), [chesscentr@gmail.com](mailto:chesscentr@gmail.com) • [www.chessgirls.win](http://www.chessgirls.win)

**NOVEMBER 23, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 51938  
**2025 New Jersey K-12 Championships**  
See New Jersey.

**NOVEMBER 24-30, 2025 — CA** TLA# 51934  
**60th American Open Chess Championship**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — PA** TLA# 50757  
**56th annual National Chess Congress**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**DECEMBER 7, 2025 — MA** TLA# 51246  
**1st Auburn Winter Swiss**  
See Grand Prix.

**DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50760  
**50th annual Eastern Open!**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — MA** TLA# 51000  
**14th annual Boston Chess Congress**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — PA** TLA# 51826  
**58th annual Liberty Bell Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

## NORTH CAROLINA

**OCTOBER 4-26, 2025 — VA** TLA# 52121  
**Quads at the Meadowdale Public Library**  
See Virginia.

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51289  
**3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 12, 2025 — NC** TLA# 51307  
**Dragon Knight Chess Father-Daughter Day Grand Prix**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 19, 2025 — NC** TLA# 51894  
**Dragon Knight Chess World Toy Camera Day Grand Prix**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 25-26, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50693  
**2025 Fredericksburg Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 25, 2025 — NC** TLA# 51896  
**Dragon Knight Chess Mother-In-Law Day Grand Prix**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 2, 2025 — NC** TLA# 51897  
**Dragon Knight Chess Zero Tasking Day Grand Prix**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 9, 2025 — NC** TLA# 51902  
**Dragon Knight Chess International Tongue Twister Day Grand Prix**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**23rd Annual Turkey Bowl**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50760  
**50th annual Eastern Open!**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

## OHIO

**OCTOBER 11, 2025 — OH** TLA# 51909  
**Cleveland Scholastic Chess Open**  
Site: Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) Alex B. Johnson Campus Center (MCC) Room 201 Address: 2900 Community College Ave, Cleveland, OH 44115 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity • [clevelandscholasticopen1906@gmail.com](mailto:clevelandscholasticopen1906@gmail.com) • 4403396340 • [ymotchess.org/chess-tournaments](https://ymotchess.org/chess-tournaments)

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — OH** TLA# 50644  
**34th annual Kings Island Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**NOVEMBER 15, 2025 — OH** TLA# 50647  
**13th annual Kings Island Open Blitz Championship**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — MI** TLA# 51922  
**Motor City Open**  
See Grand Prix.

## OREGON

**NOVEMBER 24-30, 2025 — CA** TLA# 51934  
**60th American Open Chess Championship**  
See Grand Prix.

**DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV** TLA# 50756  
**35th annual North American Open**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

## PENNSYLVANIA

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51289  
**3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 24-26, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 50642  
**29th annual Eastern Chess Congress**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**OCTOBER 25, 2025 — PA** TLA# 50853  
**2025 PA State Action Chess Championship - West**  
See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 25-26, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50693  
**2025 Fredericksburg Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 8, 2025 — PA** TLA# 50854  
**2025 PA State Game/15 Championship - West**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**23rd Annual Turkey Bowl**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 15-16, 2025 — NY** TLA# 50845  
**9th Annual New York State Girls Championship!**  
See New York.

**NOVEMBER 23, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 51938  
**2025 New Jersey K-12 Championships**  
See New Jersey.

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — PA** TLA# 50757  
**56th annual National Chess Congress**  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — MI** TLA# 51922  
**Motor City Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 29, 2025 — PA** TLA# 50761  
**16th annual National Chess Congress Blitz Championship**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50760  
**50th annual Eastern Open!**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — PA** TLA# 51826  
**58th annual Liberty Bell Open**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**PUERTO RICO**  
**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51289  
**3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**23rd Annual Turkey Bowl**  
 See Grand Prix.

**RHODE ISLAND**  
**DECEMBER 7, 2025 — MA** TLA# 51246  
**1st Auburn Winter Swiss**  
 See Grand Prix.

**SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**MONTHLY — SC** TLA# 51018  
**Lowcountry Scholastic Grand Prix Quads**  
 Site: Chess for Everyone - Summerville Academy Address: 901 Old Trolley Rd Suite A, Summerville, SC 29485 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Chess for Everyone • [admin@chess4everyone.com](mailto:admin@chess4everyone.com) • (929) 769-7177 • [www.chessgirls.win](http://www.chessgirls.win)

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51289  
**3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**23rd Annual Turkey Bowl**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
 See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**SOUTH DAKOTA**  
**STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT**  
**NOVEMBER 8-9, 2025 — SD** TLA# 51406  
**2025 Closed South Dakota State Chess Championship**  
 Site: HyVee Grocery Store Address: 3000 S. Minnesota Ave., 2nd Floor, Sioux Falls, SD 57105 Overall Prize Fund: \$475 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: Y Org: South Dakota Chess Association • [gryschst@hotmail.com](mailto:gryschst@hotmail.com) • 605-400-4116 • [www.sdchess.org](http://www.sdchess.org)

**TENNESSEE**  
**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
 See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**TEXAS**  
**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51289  
**3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event**  
 See Grand Prix.

**STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT**  
**OCTOBER 17-19, 2025 — TX** TLA# 51586  
**28th Annual Texas North/Central Grade Championships**  
 Site: Houston Marriott Westchase Address: 2900 Briarpark Drive, Houston Texas, 77042 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Barbara Swafford • [barbrounds@gmail.com](mailto:barbrounds@gmail.com) • 214-533-0061 • [www.dallascchess.com](http://www.dallascchess.com)

**OCTOBER 25, 2025 — TX** TLA# 51164  
**Texas Chess Triathlon**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**23rd Annual Turkey Bowl**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 24-30, 2025 — CA** TLA# 51934  
**60th American Open Chess Championship**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
 See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV** TLA# 50756  
**35th annual North American Open**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**UTAH**  
**NOVEMBER 24-30, 2025 — CA** TLA# 51934  
**60th American Open Chess Championship**  
 See Grand Prix.

**VERMONT**  
**OCTOBER 4, 2025 — VT** TLA# 51807  
**Bennington Fall Open**  
 Site: Bennington Free Library Address: 101 Silver St., Bennington, VT 05201 Overall Prize Fund: \$700 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Andrew Palmer • [palmera62@hotmail.com](mailto:palmera62@hotmail.com) • 8026815417

**OCTOBER 18-19, 2025 — NH** TLA# 50841  
**74th New Hampshire Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**DECEMBER 7, 2025 — MA** TLA# 51246  
**1st Auburn Winter Swiss**  
 See Grand Prix.

**VIRGINIA**  
**OCTOBER 4-26, 2025 — VA** TLA# 52121  
**Quads at the Meadowdale Public Library**  
 Site: Meadowdale Public Library Address: 4301 Meadowdale Blvd., North Chesterfield, VA 23234 Overall Prize Fund: \$140 per quad GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Mike Hoffpauir, NTD/IA • [mhoffpauir@aol.com](mailto:mhoffpauir@aol.com) • 757-846-4805 • [www.vachess.org](http://www.vachess.org)

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51289  
**3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event**  
 See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 24-26, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 50642  
**29th annual Eastern Chess Congress**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**OCTOBER 25-26, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50693  
**2025 Fredericksburg Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**23rd Annual Turkey Bowl**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
 See National Events.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52080  
**2025 NC Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 28-30, 2025 — PA** TLA# 50757  
**56th annual National Chess Congress**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50760  
**50th annual Eastern Open!**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — PA** TLA# 51826  
**58th annual Liberty Bell Open**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**WASHINGTON**  
**NOVEMBER 19-24, 2025 — WA** TLA# 51858  
**19th Annual SPICE Cup Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 24-30, 2025 — CA** TLA# 51934  
**60th American Open Chess Championship**  
 See Grand Prix.

**DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV** TLA# 50756  
**35th annual North American Open**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — CA** TLA# 51868  
**17th annual Golden State Open**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**WEST VIRGINIA**  
**OCTOBER 25-26, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50693  
**2025 Fredericksburg Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 27-30, 2025 — NC** TLA# 52078  
**2025 US Masters**  
 See National Events.

**WISCONSIN**  
**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — IL** TLA# 50084  
**33rd annual Midwest Class Championships**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51289  
**3rd Gulf Coast Open, A National Chess Day Event**  
 See Grand Prix.

**OCTOBER 11, 2025 — WI** TLA# 51912  
**Milwaukee Scholastic Chess Open, National Chess Day**  
 Site: Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) Walter Schroeder Library Address: 500 E Kilbourn Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53202 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity • [milwaukeechesstournament@gmail.com](mailto:milwaukeechesstournament@gmail.com) • 4403396340 • [mitchess.org/chess-tournaments](http://mitchess.org/chess-tournaments)

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — IL** TLA# 51313  
**Chicago Fall Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**OCT. 31-NOV. 2, 2025 — WI** TLA# 51290  
**Central States Master Challenge**  
 See Grand Prix.

**STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT**  
**NOVEMBER 8-9, 2025** TLA# 50051  
**2025-2026 Wisconsin Junior Open**  
 Site: Holiday Inn Manitowoc Address: 4601 Calumet Ave, Manitowoc, WI 54220 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Steve Erbach • [terranchess@gmail.com](mailto:terranchess@gmail.com) • 920-279-5688 • [www.wisChess.org](http://www.wisChess.org)

**NOVEMBER 8-9, 2025** TLA# 51262  
**2025 WCA Veterans Tournament**  
 Site: Holiday Inn Manitowoc Address: 4601 Calumet Ave, Manitowoc, WI 54220 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,350 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Mike Nietman • [mike.nietman@charter.net](mailto:mike.nietman@charter.net) • 608-467-8510 • [www.wisChess.org](http://www.wisChess.org)

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025 — FL** TLA# 51293  
**23rd Annual Turkey Bowl**  
 See Grand Prix.

**NOVEMBER 23, 2025 — IL** TLA# 50284  
**2025 Illinois Class State Championship**  
 See Grand Prix.

**DECEMBER 6-7, 2025** TLA# 51891  
**The Wisconsin Memorial**  
 Site: Hilton Garden Inn Address: 1801 Deming Way, Middleton, WI 53562 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,200 b/80 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Mike Nietman • [mike.nietman@charter.net](mailto:mike.nietman@charter.net) • 608-467-8510 • [www.wisChess.org](http://www.wisChess.org)

**JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL** TLA# 51956  
**Tim Just Winter Open XLII**  
 See Grand Prix.



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# Gold & Silver Affiliates



US CHESS would like to recognize and thank  
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[www.bayareachess.com](http://www.bayareachess.com)

### CHESSanity

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917.678.2077  
[www.chessanity.org](http://www.chessanity.org)

### Manasota Chess Center

Sarasota, FL  
941.900.3296  
[www.manasotachess.org](http://www.manasotachess.org)

### Ocean State Chess Association

Riverside, R.I.  
401.212.1335  
[oceanstatechess.com/](http://oceanstatechess.com/)

### Berkeley Chess School

Berkeley, CA  
510.384.1507  
[www.berkeleychessschool.org](http://www.berkeleychessschool.org)

### Continental Chess Association

Pelham, NY  
201-347-2269  
[www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

### Marshall Chess Club

New York, NY  
212.477.3716  
[www.marshallchessclub.org](http://www.marshallchessclub.org)

### PaperClip Pairings

Brownsville, TX  
956.621.0377  
[rferrari@bisd.us](mailto:rferrari@bisd.us)

### Capital Area Chess

Centreville VA  
703-627-5314  
[www.capitalareachess.com](http://www.capitalareachess.com)

### Hamden Chess Club

Hamden, CT  
203.680.8456  
[www.playmorechess.com/](http://www.playmorechess.com/)

### New York State Chess Association

New York, NY  
646-232-3155  
[nysca.net/](http://nysca.net/)

### San Diego Chess Club

San Diego, CA  
619.752.4377  
[www.sandiegochessclub.org](http://www.sandiegochessclub.org)

### Caveman Chess, LLC

Park Ridge, IL  
224-985-5244  
[www.cavemanchess.com](http://www.cavemanchess.com)

### King Registration

Chicago, IL  
773.317.8347  
[www.kingregistration.com](http://www.kingregistration.com)

### Saint Louis Chess Club

Saint Louis, MO  
314.361.CHESS (2437)  
[saintlouischessclub.org/](http://saintlouischessclub.org/)

### Charlotte Chess Center

Charlotte, NC  
980-265-1156  
[www.charlottechesscenter.org](http://www.charlottechesscenter.org)

### Washington Chess Federation

Redmond, WA  
206.769.3757  
[www.wachess.com](http://www.wachess.com)

## US CHESS SILVER AFFILIATES

### Boca Raton Chess Club (FL)

[www.bocachess.com](http://www.bocachess.com)

### Cincinnati Scholastic Chess (OH)

[www.chesscincinnati.com](http://www.chesscincinnati.com)

### Michigan Chess Association (MI)

[www.michess.org](http://www.michess.org)

### CDA Collin County Chess Club (TX)

[www.coramdeoacademy.org/chess](http://www.coramdeoacademy.org/chess)

### Downriver Chess Club (LA)

[www.downriverchess.com](http://www.downriverchess.com)

### Rochester Chess Center (NY)

[www.chessset.com](http://www.chessset.com)

### ChessPalace (CA)

[www.chesspalace.com](http://www.chesspalace.com)

### Evangel Chess Club (AL)

[evangelchurch.me](http://evangelchurch.me)

### Texas Chess Center (TX)

[www.texaschesscenter.com](http://www.texaschesscenter.com)

### Chess Core (TX)

[chesscore@yahoo.com](mailto:chesscore@yahoo.com)

### Little House of Chess, Inc. (NY)

[littlehouseofchess.org](http://littlehouseofchess.org)

### TLA CHESS (VA)

[jack.scheible@verizon.net](mailto:jack.scheible@verizon.net)

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# CORRESPONDENCE CHESS

*Check out these US Chess Rated Events!*

## 7-Player Championship Events

### 2025 Golden Knights (Postal) | 2025 Electronic Knights

**FORMAT:** Players play 6 games as single round robin, groupings based on order entries received. Players start in Preliminary round and qualify for Semi-final and then Final rounds based on scores in previous round. **ENTRY FEE:** \$35 per entry. Players can enter up to a maximum of 10 times per event. **PRIZES:** Prize fund of \$2300 based on 200 entries. \$15 correspondence chess gift certificate to players knocked out in Preliminary round.

## 7-Player Round Robins

### Victor Palciauskas Tournament (ICCF Server)

**FORMAT:** Players play 6 games as single round robin, groupings based on ratings. **ENTRY FEE:** \$5 per entry. **PRIZES:** 1st place receives a signed certificate.

## 4-Player Quads

### John W. Collins Memorial (Postal) | Walter Muir E-Quads (ICCF Server)

**FORMAT:** Players play 6 games as double round robin, groupings based on ratings. **ENTRY FEE:** \$10 per entry. **PRIZES:** 1st place receives \$25 correspondence chess gift certificate and signed certificate.

## 2-Player Matches (Postal or Email)

**FORMAT:** Players play either 2, 4, or 6 games against the same opponent. Selecting multiple options may facilitate faster pairings. Pairings based on ratings or players may name their own opponent.

**ENTRY FEE:** \$5 per entry. **PRIZES:** None.

## Two ways to enter:

- Visit us online at [uschess.org](http://uschess.org)
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- US Chess membership must remain current for the duration of all events.
- Postal events are open only to US Chess members who reside on the contiguous USA, Alaska, Hawaii or have an APO/ FPO postal address.
- Email events are open to all US Chess members with an accessible email account.
- ICCF Server events are open to all US Chess members with access to the ICCF internet based correspondence chess server and an ICCF account (free to create) in good standing.
- For events with groupings based on ratings, the following rating classes will be used:
 

|                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| o Class A: 1800 and above | o Class C: 1200-1699      |
| o Class B: 1500-1999      | o Class D: 1399 and below |
- If you do not have an existing correspondence rating, please estimate your playing strength when submitting your entry.
- Correspondence chess gift certificate prizes can be used on correspondence chess entries only. They cannot be used for membership renewals or at US Chess Sales.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ USCHESSID# \_\_\_\_\_ Est. Rating \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Golden Knights EF: \$35   
 ☐ Palciauskas ICCF EF: \$5   
 ☐ Muir ICCF Quad EF: \$10   
 2-player matches, EF: \$5 per entry, see above for options  
☐ Electronic Knights EF: \$35   
 ☐ Collins Quad EF: \$10   
 Postal Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐   
 Email Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐  
☐ Check here if you do not wish to have an opponent who is incarcerated (note that this may slow down your assignment).

**Make checks payable to US CHESS and mail to: US Chess Correspondence Chess, PO Box 775308, St. Louis, MO 63177**

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# SOLUTIONS

## PAGE 15 CHESS TO ENJOY

**PROBLEM 1.** 17. Qxd8!, Black resigned. If 17. ... Bxd8 18. Nd6+ and 19. Nxb7. **PROBLEM 2.** 21. Rxd7! Kxd7 22. Be3 followed by 23. Bxb6 or 23. Rxf7+. **PROBLEM 3.** White resigned after 29. ... Nxe3! 30. Bxe3 Qxe3! in view of 31. Rxe3 f2. If 30. Rxe3 Bg2+. **PROBLEM 4.** Good enough to win is 23. Bh6! Bxh6 24. Qc3+ or 23. ... Rg8 24. Ng5!. But the game continuation was the fastest: 23. Rxf7! Now if 23. ... Kxg7 24. Qc3+ and mates. The game went 23. ... Qxe6 24. Rxh7+ Kg8 25. Bd4, Black resigned, but 24. Bd4 might have been even better. **PROBLEM 5.** 29. Rxd6! wins, because of 29. ... Bxe2 30. Rxd8+ Nxd8 31. Rxd8+! Qxd8 32. e7+. The prettiest line takes off from the game continuation: 29. ... Rxd6 30. Rxd6!, Black resigned, because of 30. ... Bxe2 31. Rxc6 Ba6 32. Bf6 Qxf6 33. e7+ Kg8 34. e8=N+!. **PROBLEM 6.** 17. Bf4! keeps the extra piece because the game continuation 17. ... Nxf4 allowed smothered mate: 18. Qxf7+ Kh8 19. Qg8+! and Black resigned because of 19. ... Rxg8 20. Nf7 mate.

## PAGE 19 ABCS OF CHESS

**PROBLEM 1.** Mating net: Black is undone in 2: 1. Ng3+ Kd3 (or 1. ... Ke3) 2. Qe2 mate. **PROBLEM 2.** Mating net: Black is disposed of in 2: 1. Qxd5+ Kxd5 2. Bb3 mate. **PROBLEM 3.** Mating net: Black is vaporized in 2: 1. Bg6+ Kxg6 2. Qf5 mate. **PROBLEM 4.** Mating net: Black is diagonalized in 2: 1. Qh6+ Kg8 2. Bc4 mate. **PROBLEM 5.** Mating net: Black is discarded in 2: 1. Bg6+ Kxg6 2. Qe8 mate. **PROBLEM 6.** Mating net: Black's end is clarified in 2: 1. Qf8+ Kxf8 2. Ne6 mate.

## PAGE 47 MAKE YOUR MOVE

**TACTIC 1.** 24. ... Nh3! Threatening mate on f2. 25. Rf1 Nf2+ Anyway! Forcing the rook away from the back rank, leaving the rook on c1 unguarded. 26. Rxf2 Qxc1+ 27. Kg2 Qg5+ 28. Kh1 Qc1+ 29. Kg2 Qg5+ A repetition of moves to get closer to the time control. 30. Kf1 Qc1+ Black only needs a repetition to move to the next round, but this is a winning position, and 30. ... Rbe8 is probably best. 31. Nd1 White is in the opposite position — this is the only move to avoid the draw, but it's hardly a winning attempt. 31. ... Qxd1+ 32. Kg2 Qd2 Black is a full rook up and White could have resigned at this point. 33. h4 Qxb2 34. Qc7 Rbe8 35. Bc6 Qxe5 36. Qd7 Rd8 37. Qb7 Bd5+, White resigned. Yip – Vaishali, Women's World Cup 2025. **TACTIC 2.** Black is a pawn up, but White has a neat tactical trick available: 34. Qd8+! Kg7 35. Ne6+!! Boom! 35. ... fxe6 35. ... Kh6 is met by 36. Qg5 mate. 36. Qc7+! The point! Black resigned. She must exchange queens, which would leave White with an unstoppable c-pawn. Vantika – Ushenina, Women's World Cup 2025. **TACTIC 3.** 24. Ne5! Closing the door on Black's "active" rook on g5. 24. ... h4 If 24. ... Bxe5 then 25. dxe5 Rg4 (or 25. ... Rxe5 26. Re1 and the pin on the bishop will cost Black a piece) 26. f4 and the rook is entombed on the kingside, leaving White with a winning position, e.g., 26. ... h4 27. Rd4 Ba8 28. Kf2 Rg6 29. Rc7 and White

wins the endgame. 25. f4 Rf5 26. Re1 Ba8 27. Bd1 Now Black can't stop Bd1-g4, winning the Exchange. 27. ... hxxg3 28. hxxg3 Bd8 29. Bg4 Bb6 30. Red1 Rd8 31. Bxf5 exf5 32. Nc6 Re8 33. Kf1 Kh7 34. d5 Re3 35. Rc3 Re4 36. Rb3 Bc5 37. Rb8 Bxc6 38. dxc6, Black resigned. Gaponenko – Urh, Women's World Cup 2025. **TACTIC 4.** It looks like White has a scary attack against Black's king, but Black has a strong counter up her sleeve ... 29. ... Nxc3! Boom! 30. Rg1 White can't take the queen: 30. Bxc6 Bxc6+ 31. Kg1 Ne2+ would leave White a whole rook down. 30. ... Ne2! Anyway! 31. Qd2 Nxd4?! There was an easier win with 31. ... Qc7 32. Rf1 Bxg2+ 33. Kxg2 Qc4. 32. Nxd4 Qd7 33. Nxe6 fxe6 Still, Black is two pawns up and should win. 34. h4 Rf8 35. Kh2 Bxg2 36. Rxxg2 e5?? 36. ... d5 would have won the game. After the text move, White is back in the mix again. 37. g6 Rf4?? 37. ... Qe7 would have kept a small advantage for Black; after the text move, she lost quickly. 38. Qd5+ This was undoubtedly what Black had overlooked. 38. ... Kg7 39. gxxh7+ Kxxh7 40. Qg8+, Black resigned. A heartbreaking loss. Arabidze – Efroimski, Women's World Cup 2025. **TACTIC 5.** 14. ... Qh5! Taking advantage of White's vulnerable king thanks to the absence of the light-squared bishop. In the game, Black missed her chance but eventually won the game anyway. 15. f3 Or 15. Bf4 Qh3 16. f3 Ng4 and White will be forced to give up the Exchange to avoid mate. 15. ... Qc5+ 16. Qxc5 Bxc5+, and Black wins the knight on b4. Miranda Llanes – Tokhirjonova, Women's World Cup 2025 (analysis). **TACTIC 6.** 26. ... Ne2+! In the game, Black missed this continuation, but won nonetheless. 27. Kh1 Nxxg3+! The point; Black now breaks through. 28. hxxg3 Qxxg3 29. Nd2 Nf2+! 30. Kg1 Black also wins after 30. Rxf2 Qxf2 31. Rd1 Qe2 32. Bf3 Qxe3. 30. ... Ng4 31. Rf3 Qh2+ 32. Kf1 Nxe3+ 33. Rxe3 Rxf4+ 34. Rf3 Rxd2 35. Qxd2 Rxf3+ and Black wins. Shukhman – Kamalidenova, Women's World Cup 2025 (analysis). **TACTIC 7.** In the game, Black captured the a1-rook and eventually won after a blunder from White, but the win is forced with 27. ... Bxe1 28. Rxe1 c3 29. Qb6 Or 29. Qb7 Re8 30. Rxe8+ Qxe8 31. a6 c2 and Black is clearly winning, e.g., 32. a7 c1=Q+ 33. Kh2 Be4! 34. Qb8 Qcc8 and the a-pawn is stopped. 29. ... c2 30. Qxd8 Rxd8 followed by ... Rb8 and ... Rb1 and Black wins. Mkrtchian – Maltsevskaya, Women's World Cup 2025 (analysis). **TACTIC 8.** 29. Ne7+! The only winning move. In the game, White chose a much more tragic path with 29. Nd4?? and resigned after 29. ... Qxe3+. 29. ... Kg7 30. Rbf1 Qxe3+ 31. Kh2 Qc3 32. R1f3 Qb2 33. Rg3 and Black cannot stop 34. Nxxg6 with a decisive breakthrough. Tsolakidou – Dronavalli, Women's World Cup 2025. **TACTIC 9.** 28. Qc1! In the game, Krush chose the less accurate 28. Bc1?! and lost despite Black's mistaken 28. ... h6?, though 28. ... Nec6 would have given Black a playable position. 28. ... Nec6 The knight on g5, of course, cannot be touched: 28. ... Qxxg5 29. Nxxg6+, winning Black's queen. 29. h3! Qc8 30. Bxxg7+ Kxxg7 31. Qc3+ Rf6 Or 31. ... Kh6 32. Qe3 Kg7 33. Bxc6 Nxc6 34. Nfe6+ and White wins. 32. Nd5 with a decisive advantage for White. Krush – Yip, Women's World Cup 2025 (analysis).



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## MARK SCHULINGKAMP

NEW ORLEANS, LA



I STARTED PLAYING TOURNAMENT chess in the late 1970s, when I was 12, at Jesuit High School in New Orleans, and quickly became one of the most booked-up players in Louisiana. My biggest strength was calculation, and I've only ever had four lessons (from NM Dennis Baker, who along with NM Alberto Prieto were my chess mentors).

I got about 20 points short of becoming a master when I put chess on hold for college, with the exception of tying for first in the Louisiana championship in the mid-1980s (that tournament included a last-round draw with IM Mark Diesen). After college, I gained the master title, but I stopped playing in 2002 to focus on work.

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina wiped out nearly all of my possessions, including a massive chess library of more than 200 books and pamphlets, many overflowing with my added annotations, notes, and cross-references. I've only recently resumed playing a few years ago, and now I try instead to take opponents out of preparation. My recent favorite players are Hikaru Nakamura, Ju Wenjun, Sara Khadem, and the unstoppable Divya Deshmukh.

I played this game in the 2025 Louisiana Championship, which GM Nakamura won with a 7/7 score (including a win over me). Dex is one of the nicest individuals, not just chessplayers, I've ever met, and another Jesuit High grad. He's a former state champion, and I had gleaned just a few things from seeing his games in progress over the past couple of years.

### SICILIAN DEFENSE, KAN VARIATION (B41)

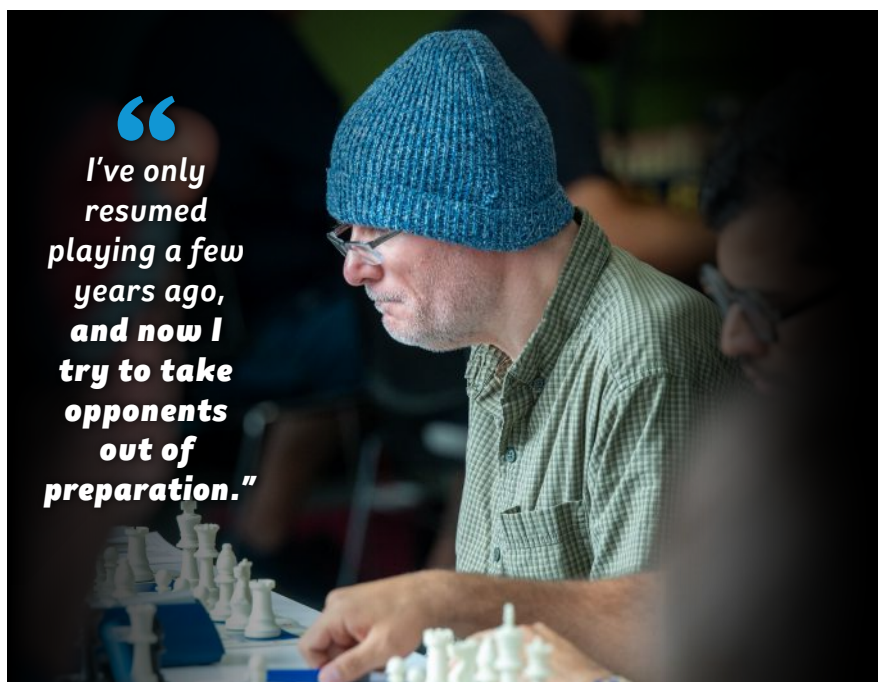
Mark Schulingkamp (2088)

Dex Webster (2258)

Louisiana State Ch (4), 08.31.2025

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 a6 5. g3 d5 6. Be3 dxe4 7. Nd2 Nf6 8. Bg2 e5 9. Ne2 Bf5 10. 0-0 Nc6 11. Nc3 Qc7 12. f3!?

The simple recapture on e4 is obvious and objectively best, recovering the gambited pawn and giving White a small advantage due to development. But 11. ... Qc7 immediately struck me as slightly inaccurate be-



cause of the weakness on d5, so I began to think about how to undermine the f6-knight, which controls the square.

#### 12. ... exf3 13. Qxf3

White doesn't really have anything for the pawn after 13. Bxf3, and 13. Rxf3 obviously runs into 13. ... Bg4, but I had already seen the sacrifice; it certainly looked sound/viable, and a little relatively quick calculation seemed to confirm this.

#### 13. ... Bg4

Now for My Best Move:



#### 14. Qxf6! gxf6 15. Nd5 Qd8

The lines get complicated, but it appears that Black can get equality after 15. ... Qc8.

#### 16. Nxf6+ Ke7

White's only slightly better after 16. ... Qxf6 17. Rxf6 Be6.

#### 17. Nxg4 Ke6

In for a penny, in for a pound. Black threatens to shelter his king with ... f7-f5.

#### 18. c4

Best was 18. Ne4, eyeing g5.

#### 18. ... Nb4 19. Be4 h5 20. Bf5+ Kd6 21. Ne4+ Kc7 22. Nxe5

Quite a visual.

#### 22. ... Bg7

22. ... Bh6 looks like Black's best try.

#### 23. Nxf7

23. Nd7 looks even stronger. The threat is 24. Bb6+, and if 23. ... Kc6 24. Rad1.

#### 23. ... Qd3 24. Bf4+ Kb6 25. Rad1 Bd4+ 26. Kh1 Qxc4 27. Nfd6 Qd5 28. Be6

A bit counterintuitive as White generally wants to avoid piece exchanges, and now the king becomes more exposed and vulnerable. But I have found that most everything in life is a tradeoff.

#### 28. ... Qxe6 29. Rxd4 Nd5

Black is better after 29. ... Nc6.

#### 30. Be5 Rhf8 31. Rfd1 Ne3 32. Rb4+ Ka5 33. Bc3 Rf1+, Black lost on time.

Later I heard that GM Nakamura showed this game on his YouTube recap. I didn't watch before writing this, partially because I didn't want to unintentionally plagiarize. Time to check it out! ♠

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