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DECEMBER 2025 ■ USChess.org

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Danya
1995-2025

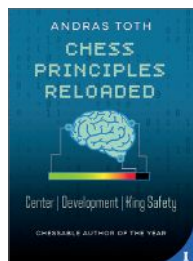


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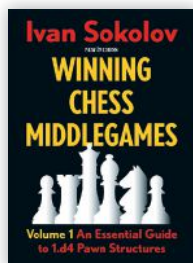
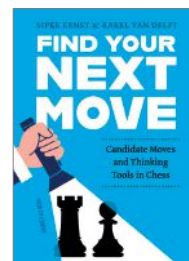
Andras Toth

IM Andras Toth's coaching experience has taught him that a common weakness among ambitious improvers, club players, and even seasoned experts is their failure to fully grasp some basic chess principles or their tendency to neglect them. This book will help make you more confident in your decision-making by reviving the most essential principles of the game.

Find Your Next Move

GM Sipke Ernst and Karel van Delft

The candidate move is perhaps the most elusive concept in chess theory. It seems straightforward and methodical enough: when considering a move, you make a list of 'candidates' in your mind, compare their merits, and make your choice. But how do you determine what a candidate move is, and how do you proceed from there?



Winning Chess Middlegames – Revised Edition

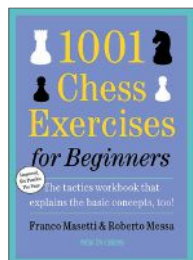
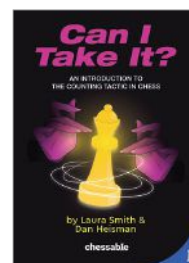
GM Ivan Sokolov

Ever wondered why grandmasters take only seconds to see what's really going on in a chess position? It's all about structures, as Ivan Sokolov explains in this groundbreaking book. It addresses the often ignored but extremely important topic of pawn structures, divided into four main types: doubled pawns, isolated pawns, hanging pawns and pawn majorities.

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.



1001 Chess Exercises for Beginners

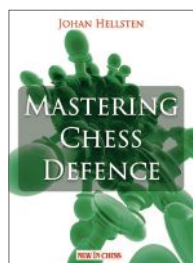
Franco Masetti & Roberto Messa

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.

Ulf – The Attacker!

Thomas Enqvist

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.



Mastering Chess Defence

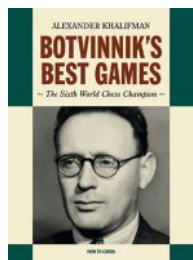
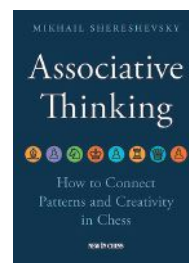
Johan Hellsten

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.

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?



Botvinnik's Best Games

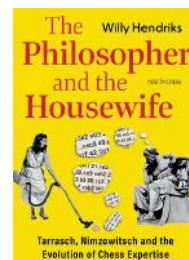
Alexander Khalifman

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.

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.



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14 COVER STORY

DANYA

GM Daniel Naroditsky
1995-2025

BY FM MIKE KLEIN

22 COVER STORY

THE PLAY'S THE THING

Daniel Naroditsky:
Selected Games

ANNOTATIONS BY A TEAM
OF DANYA'S FRIENDS AND
ADMIRERS



14



FM MIKE KLEIN

(Cover Story) is an award-winning chess player, coach, and journalist, and also the voice of ChessKid.com. He is now much better known as

"FunMasterMike." A three-time Chess Journalist of the Year, he has taken his first steps into the world of Chessable publishing with his new course, "Down but Not Out: Fighting Back in Losing Positions."

GAME ANNOTATIONS

Aronian, Caruana, Donaldson, Gelfand, Giannatos, Lee, Moradiabadi, Nemcova, Magesh, Ramesh, Rensch, Tang, and Topalov

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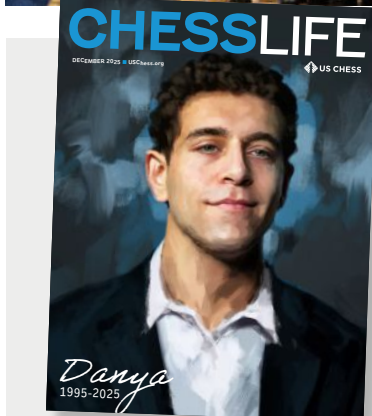
The KID

BY BRUCE PANDOLFINI

48 ENDGAME SCHOOL

Remembering Danya

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN



ON THE COVER

The chess world suffered a tremendous loss with the death of GM Daniel Naroditsky. "Danya" was among the strongest American players of his generation and one of the faces of online chess streaming and commentary. May his memory be a blessing.

PAINTING BY IVANA BESEVIC



US CHESS

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Happy Holidays

from the Saint Louis Chess Campus



A Letter from the Editor

▶ DANIEL NARODITSKY'S DEATH WAS A tragedy on so many levels: for his family and his friends first, but also for his countless fans around the globe, and for chess itself. Through his writing, streaming, and commentary, he became a fixture in the modern chess ecosystem, a familiar face and voice making the mysterious a bit more mundane. I think that's why everyone referred to him using the diminutive form of his name. "Danya": It's what you would call a dear friend or brother.

National and international press outlets picked up the story of Naroditsky's passing almost immediately. Perhaps that was a sign of how chess continues to permeate public consciousness beyond rated play. Perhaps it was recognition of the particular sorrow that comes with the death of someone so young. Perhaps it had to do with the smear campaign led by Vladimir Kramnik, about which I will only say that as we go to press FIDE has opened an ethics complaint against the former world champion over his conduct.

I did not know Naroditsky except in passing. But our bylines appeared together in dozens of *Chess Life* issues, and as its

current editor, I felt a crushing obligation when I learned of his death. We needed to honor him and his legacy in our pages, and we had to get this right.

Fortunately, FM Mike Klein reached out and asked whether he could write the obituary for his friend. And not only that — Mike used his network to connect us with friends of Danya from around the world, resulting in the annotated games section that accompanies his obituary. Thanks to Mike, and to the folks at the Charlotte Chess Center, for doing so much to help us while still themselves grieving. My condolences go out to them all.

Probably the thing I struggle with most when thinking about Naroditsky's death is the senselessness of it all: a young man at the top of his field and with his whole life ahead of him. As I'm writing this, we do not know what exactly happened, and his passing seems to lack all rhyme and reason.

As it turns out, I'm writing these words on Nov. 13: World Kindness Day, which asks us to remember to be kind to ourselves and to one another. Perhaps that's one takeaway — to recall that words can hurt, that people carry

suffering invisible to the outside eye, that a kind turn costs little but means everything.

We might also recall what GM Vasyl Ivanchuk had to say about Naroditsky at the 2025 World Cup. After recalling their wild game in the 2024 World Blitz, where Danya famously sat with Ivanchuk quietly after the latter's devastating loss on time, witnessing his pain, the Ukrainian grandmaster said:

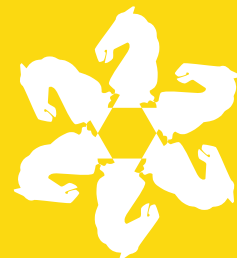
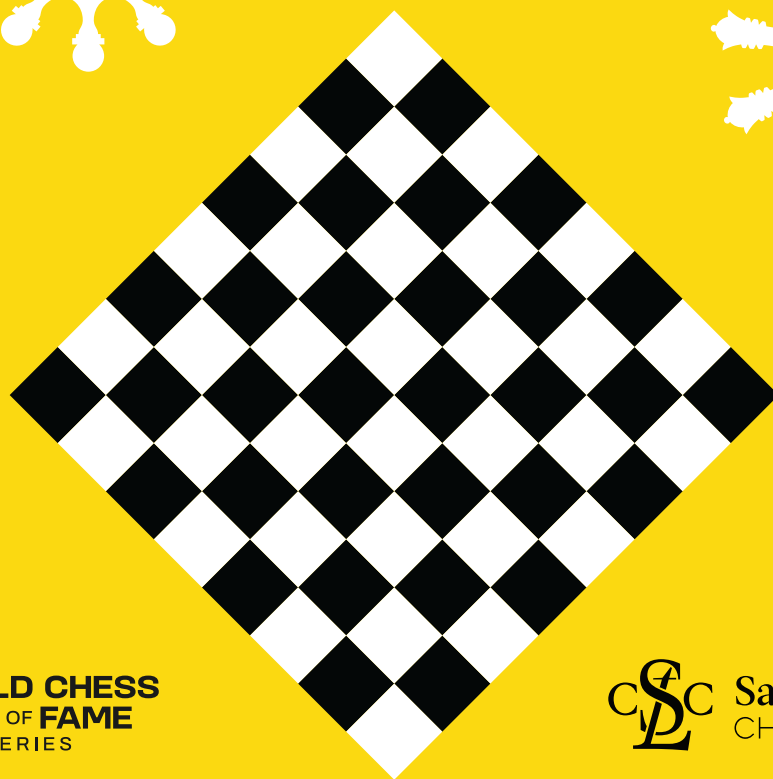
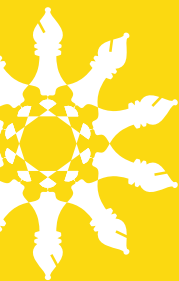
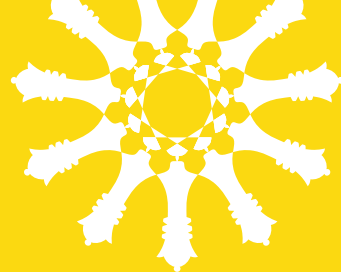
... about Daniel, probably the best present for him now, what we can do, [is] just see his games, analyze them, find interesting ideas, and admire his talent and creativity.

That sounds about right to me.

I would like to thank our art director, Natasha Roberts, and our assistant editor, Rick Massimo, for their work on this issue. It wasn't quite a "stop the presses" situation, but we did have to pivot quickly, and they both did yeoman's work to see this through. Any errors or oversights remain my responsibility.

— John Hartmann





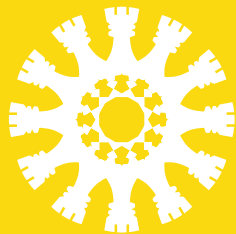
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By Dr. Jeanne Cairns Sinquefield



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Guadalupe Returns

▶ WITH RANAE BARTLETT'S DEPARTURE FROM US CHESS TO become the next mayor of Madison, Ala., the US Chess Executive Board has named Francisco (Franc) Guadalupe as the interim executive director effective Oct. 13.

Guadalupe's appointment as interim executive director is for a 90-day term. The Executive Board is currently conducting a national search for a new executive director, with a desired start date by Jan. 15, 2026.

Guadalupe returns to US Chess after retiring at the end of 2017 after many years of service, including three and a half years as director of events. Guadalupe also previously served as interim executive director from June 2013 through October 2013.

Guadalupe's decorated career includes several distinctions, awards, and achievements. In 2009, Guadalupe won the Tournament Director of the Year award from US Chess. In 2010, he was named zonal president, representing US Chess at FIDE Congresses around the world through 2016.

Guadalupe is also a FIDE International Arbiter and International Organizer with a Category A arbiter classification. He served as deputy chief arbiter for the 2016 World Championship match in New York between GM Magnus Carlsen and GM Sergey Karjakin. ♠



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The 2025 Year-End Trivia Quiz

Time to put all that useless knowledge to work!

BY **GM ANDY SOLTIS**



THE YEAR 2025 WENT BY WITHOUT a world championship match, an Olympiad or even a major cheating scandal. But for fans of the oddities of chess, it was another bumper crop year of trivia.

Here is our annual quiz to see how many thoroughly irrelevant facts you've stored in your long-term memory when you should have been studying the Sicilian Defense.

There are no prizes, rating points or loyalty program awards to be gained. But if you answer more than six questions correctly you can consider yourself an expert trivia-
alist. Solutions on page 63.

1. A record-setting more than 1 million people followed these moves as they were played last spring: 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 c5 4. Bb5+ Bd7 5. Bxd7+ Nxd7 6. exd5 exd5 7. dxc5 Bxc5 8. Nb3 Bb6 9. Qxd5 Ngf6



10. Qxb7? 0-0 11. Ne2? Re8! 12. Qf3? Ne5 13. Qh3 Nfg4! 14. 0-0 Nxf2 15. Rxf2 Qd1 mate.

They were watching:

- (a) The finals of the first World Under-5 Championship
- (b) A flashback scene in a video for the upcoming *The Queen's Gambit* sequel
- (c) A reality TV series modeled after a cake-baking competition
- (d) The launch of *CelebrityBullet.com*

2. "What do you think?" Pal Benko was asked by a prominent 47-year-old. "If I studied chess for one or two years I would become a GM?"

Not likely at your age, Benko replied. He was talking to:

- (a) Steve Jobs
- (b) Donald Trump
- (c) Bill Gates
- (d) Elon Musk

3. It sold for \$36,100 in March. It is:

- (a) Bobby Fischer's signed scoresheet from his last game
- (b) The manuscript of Boris Spassky's unpublished memoirs
- (c) A pair of Magnus Carlsen's pants
- (d) The chess set President Jimmy Carter used at Camp David

4. Max Euwe was born 62 years before his great successor Garry Kasparov. Yet Euwe played dozens of games against opponents who also played Kasparov. Other world champions had few op-

ponents in common. How many people could say they played both Bobby Fischer and Magnus Carlsen?

- (a) None
- (b) Only one
- (c) More

5. In the year that gave us *The World's Most Boring Chess Book*, which of these was also published?

- (a) *The Freestyle Chess Bible*
- (b) The first book of a trilogy about chess and astrology
- (c) *The 100 Dumbest Moves You Must Know*
- (d) *The Absolutely Ultimatest of Ultimate Chess Lessons!*

6. The games of the 1972 Bobby Fischer – Boris Spassky world championship match have been annotated dozens of times by other players. When was one of the games first annotated by Fischer or Spassky?

- (a) 1977 by Spassky
- (b) 1993 by Fischer
- (c) 2001 by Spassky
- (d) Never

7. A chess set became the topic of conversation in a 2025 Oscar nominee for Best Picture. The main character spoke of using the set to play an opponent who "was always eight moves ahead." The

QUIZ FOR DECEMBER

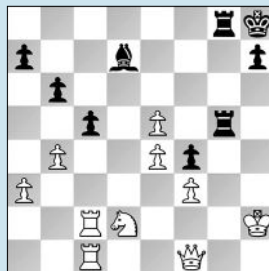
THIS MONTH'S QUIZ IS AN illustration of how hope springs eternal.

In each of these six positions a player resigned when faced with an opponent's apparently fatal winning threat or plan. But there was a way in each case to play on with good chances to draw – or even win.

Your task is to find the way to save the game. Here is a helpful clue: Start by looking for the enemy threat. Then consider every move that prevents its execution. Solutions on page 63.

PROBLEM 1

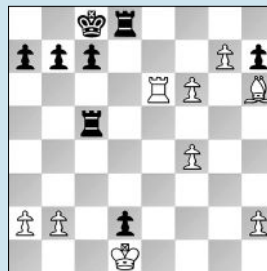
Igor Samarin
GM Vladimir Antoshin



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2

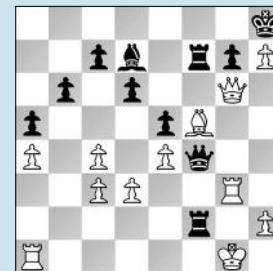
Carlos Torre
Frank Parker



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3

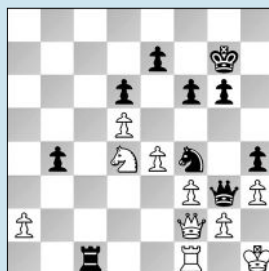
IM Kick Langeweg
Tim Krabbe



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4

IM Marjan Mitkov
GM Vladimir Georgiev



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5

IM Antonio Martorelli
IM Antonio Antunes



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6

GM Gennady Kuzmin
IM Slim Bouaziz



BLACK TO MOVE

movie was:

- (a) *Conclave*
- (b) *Dune Part Two*
- (c) *The Brutalist*
- (d) *A Complete Unknown*

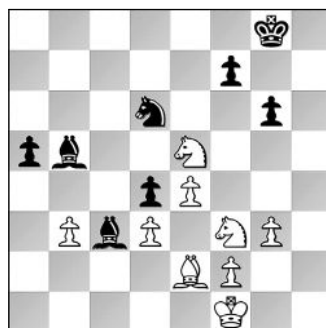
8. Before *The Queen's Gambit* was published, the best-known American novel about a chess master was written by:

- (a) The owner of Paul Morphy's ancestral home
- (b) A poet rated 1750
- (c) The widow of a U.S. senator
- (d) A veteran assistant tournament director

9. When GM Vlastimil Hort died in May, this encounter was remembered:

DRAW?

GM Bobby Fischer
GM Vlastimil Hort
FIDE Olympiad, Siegen, 09.23.1970



WHITE TO MOVE

"I don't know who is better, Bobby," Hort said. "But I offer you a draw." Fischer refused by saying:

- (a) "I don't know who is better either. But I have an extra pawn."
- (b) "Ask me again in 40 moves."
- (c) "I'm the one who offers draws, not you."

10. In May *The New York Times* recalled how Garry Kasparov once cited "the greatest game in the history of chess." Which game was he talking about?

- (a) Paul Morphy's famous miniature

- (b) Fischer's "Game of the Century"
- (c) Alexander Alekhine's 1922 "Immortal"
- (d) Kasparov versus "The World" (1999)

11. The announcement that there would be a Broadway revival of *Chess* this year underlined the connection of the game to past icons of musical theater.

One of them was not yet 13 when he taught another famous songwriter how to play chess. He was:

- (a) George Gershwin, teaching his brother Ira
- (b) Stephen Sondheim, teaching Oscar Hammerstein II
- (c) Tim Rice, teaching Andrew Lloyd Webber

12. New commercial products launched this year included:

- (a) "The Rolls-Royce Chess Set," which "incorporates the same materials used to craft the interior" of the luxury automobile
- (b) "The Reti Collection," a wristwatch

inscribed with moves of a Richard Reti game

- (c) “Mind Games,” a “chess-inspired” fragrance brand for women and men
- (d) “The Magnus Mitt,” a cushioned glove for injury-free pounding of the board after a loss

13. GM Robert Hübner, a professional papyrologist, was the last of the world-class chess amateurs when he passed away in January. Match his great predecessors with their day jobs:

Players:

- (a) Max Euwe
- (b) Siegbert Tarrasch
- (c) Ossip Bernstein
- (d) Mikhail Botvinnik
- (e) Milan Vidmar

Day Jobs:

- (1) financial lawyer
- (2) teacher

- (3) electrical engineer
- (4) medical doctor

14. And which of those players said he only played serious chess during his vacations, yet was able to become “world tournament champion”?

15. This year, Roman Shogdzhev, of Russia, became the fourth player in history to be awarded the international master title before the age of 11.

Has there ever been a world champion who didn’t even know how the pieces move before he was 11?

16. Speaking of the international master title:

When was it created in 1950, the youngest IM was former prodigy Arturo Pomar of Spain. Who was the next youngest that year?

- (a) Boris Spassky
- (b) Bent Larsen

- (c) Fridrik Olafsson
- (d) Arthur Bisguier

17. Games of World Championship matches were held in more than 40 cities in the 20th century. Which of these cities did *not* host a championship game?

- (a) Washington, D.C.
- (b) Paris
- (c) Montreal
- (d) Memphis

18. Despite the magical advances in AI, their chatbots have a lot to learn before they can play great chess.

In June it was reported that ChatGPT had lost badly to:

- (a) Play Magnus, simulating how Magnus Carlsen played at age 6
- (b) A revived version of Deep Blue
- (c) The chess program of a nearly 50-year-old video game

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MAKE YOUR MOVE

BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

THESE PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM THE EUROPEAN TEAM Championship in Batumi, Georgia, in October. Some of the puzzles may seem difficult, but that's the intention. So, take your time and don't get discouraged if you fail to find the right moves 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 first to solve the puzzle before reading the text at the bottom of the page. If you're unsuccessful, play through the solution, but return to the puzzle in 1-2 weeks to try to 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; you will only cheat yourself out of improving your game. Solutions are on page 63. 

TACTIC 1.



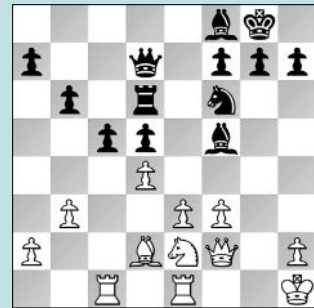
WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 2.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 3.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 4.



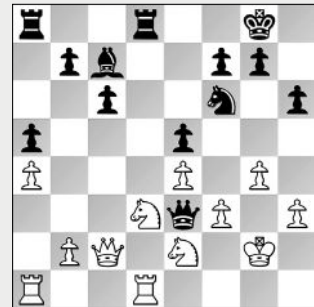
WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 5.



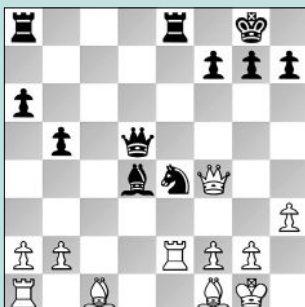
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TACTIC 6.



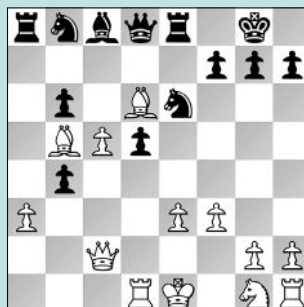
BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 7.



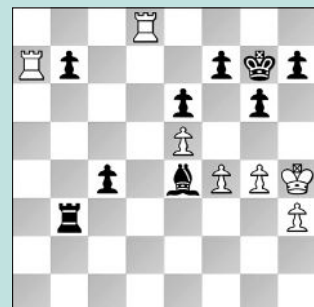
BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 8.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



BLACK TO MOVE

Position 1: PINS DO THE TRICK

Position 2: NO LURE, ALL SNARE

Position 3: COMPLEX ISSUES

Position 4: CREATE A WAVE

Position 5: BRUTAL INCISIONS

Position 6: CLEAR UP

Position 7: PINS, PINS, PINS

Position 8: LOOSE PIECES AND PINS

Position 9: TRAP, NO STALEMATE

Turn the Tide

Positional Exchange sacrifices, Part 4

BY **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**

W

WE WILL END THIS SERIES (and the year!) with one final column on Exchange sacrifices, this time with the idea of defense. Sacrificing material to defend an inferior position is not exactly a revolutionary idea, but it can take many forms — giving back material, giving up a pawn or a piece for counterplay or even a fortress of some kind.

When I think about Exchange sacrifices, the very first example that comes to my mind is Petrosian's sacrifice against Reshevsky. I cannot quite remember the first time someone showed me this position, but I feel as though I have known it for as long as I can remember. Perhaps it's a kind of rite of passage in the Armenian school of chess.

THE CLASSIC EXAMPLE

GM Samuel Reshevsky

GM Tigran Petrosian

Candidates (2), Zürich, 08.31.1953



BLACK TO MOVE

Black is in a very tough situation. White's idea is to play Bg4-f3, followed by d4-d5 and marching the pawns forward. Black would love to take the c6-knight and place it on d5, but currently there is no route available; the b4-square is covered and moving the e7-rook

to clear the square for the knight invites the e5-e6 pawn push. What to do?

25. ... Re6!!

A brilliant idea to reroute the knight to d5 and stop e5-e6. Petrosian doesn't mind giving up the material; without the light-squared bishop, many of White's threats will simply disappear.

Let's use a filler move like 25. ... a4 to look at the threats in the position: 26. Bf3 Na5 and White can create problems on the kingside before pushing in the center with 27. h4!. Black has to stop the h4-h5 threat with 27. ... h5 (27. ... Nb3 would be worse after 28. h5 Bd3 29. h6, when the dark squares fall apart and Black won't be able to fend off the attack) 28. d5 Nb3 29. d6 Re6 30. Bd5 and White's position is crushing. Black can't really do anything, while White has several ideas, such as playing for g2-g4 or moving the e3-rook and bringing the b2-bishop into the game. At a convenient moment, White will also capture the Exchange.

Preparing the knight maneuver with 25. ... Ra7 is too slow because of 26. e6!. Without the rook on e7, Black has no control of the e-file. White's attack will push through.

26. a4 Ne7

The knight is happily headed to d5.

27. Bxe6 fxe6 28. Qf1 Nd5

Black is doing well here. The king is safe; the knight on d5 is strong; the g6-bishop is better than its counterpart; there are no more pawn breaks to worry about in the center, and it is Black who can start thinking about creating problems on the queenside with ... b5-b4.

29. Rf3 Bd3 30. Rxd3

Reshevsky quickly realized that things are getting out of control and he could end up much worse. After 30. Qf2 b4! Black is making progress on the queenside. Both the c3-

and a4-pawns are hanging and trading on b4 would be disastrous: 31. cxb4 axb4 and the pawns will just march forward.

30. ... cxd3 31. Qxd3 b4 32. cxb4 axb4 33. a5

The d5-knight is the better minor piece, but at least now Black doesn't have two connected passed pawns.

33. ... Ra8 34. Ra1 Qc6 35. Bc1 Qc7 36. a6 Qb6 37. Bd2 b3 38. Qc4 h6 39. h3 b2 40. Rb1 Kh8 41. Be1, draw.

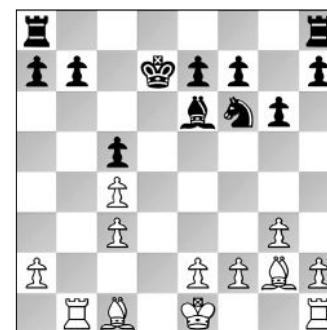
Petrosian gave up the Exchange to stop his position from collapsing. White had some very direct threats and he found a creative way of dealing with them. Not all threats are so direct. Keeping the position intact can also be a long-term investment, and sometimes maintaining a pawn structure is worth more than the material.

FOR THE WIN

GM Etienne Bacrot (2594)

GM Veselin Topalov (2702)

Sarajevo (7), 05.24.2000



BLACK TO MOVE

Black really does not want to lose the b7-pawn with a check. If this pawn falls, White's

rook will invade, and even without the queens on the board the black king won't feel very safe. The presence of the bishop pair would greatly benefit White.

12. ... b6!

The integrity of the pawn structure is more important than the Exchange.

The engine plays 12. ... Bxc4 in cold blood, but inviting the enemy rook onto the seventh rank and opening up the position when the opponent has the two bishops is not a practical decision: 13. Rxb7+ Kd6 14. 0-0 and the only move is 14. ... Nd5, as White was threatening 15. Rd1+. Black seems to be doing OK after 15. Rd1 Ke6, but I'm not sure how easy this is to play over the board.

13. Bxa8 Rxa8

Let's compare positions. White has given up the light-squared bishop, and because of the pawn structure, particularly the a7-c5 pawn chain, the dark-squared bishop is not going to be very effective. On the other hand, the c4-pawn is a major weakness. Black will also be able to reroute the knight to a better future. There's only one open file on the board, and even if White manages to double on the file, there are no entry squares for the rooks.

14. f3 Ne8

Topalov decides to maneuver the knight immediately, but by doing so he also accepts the fact that White can trade the bishop for it. He could have played 14. ... Bxc4 15. a4 Kc6 16. Kf2 Nd7 aiming to put pawns on f6 and e5 and trying to restrict the c1-bishop.

15. Bf4 Bxc4 16. Rb2 Kc6 17. Rd2 Nd6 18. Bxd6 exd6 19. Kf2 d5

Black should be happy about this turn of events, as he now has a pawn for the Exchange and a very healthy structure. There are no weaknesses in his camp and White's rooks are quite ineffective.

20. e4 dxe4 21. fxe4 Re8 22. Re1 Be6 23. Kf3 Kb5

Already, it is much easier to play Black here. The king will go to c4, attacking c3, followed by advancing the queenside pawns.

24. Kf4 Kc4 25. Re3 a5 26. Kg5 b5 27. Kh6 b4 28. cxb4?

Opening the a-file only helps Black, as the a2-pawn becomes a major weakness. It is already very difficult for White to play here.

The game would continue after 28. Kxh7 bxc3 (28. ... b3 29. axb3+ Kxb3 also looks dangerous for White with that menacing passed pawn on a5) 29. Rc2 Kd4 30. Rxc3 c4.

28. ... axb4 29. Kxh7 Ra8 30. Kg7 Kb5 31. h4 c4 32. g4 c3 33. Rg2 Rxa2, White resigned.

The pawns will be unstoppable.

During my brainstorming sessions for this column, I often came across Daniel Naroditsky's excellent articles on *Chess.com* from about a decade ago. Not only did I learn a great deal from them, but I always felt a sense of validation whenever I saw my chosen examples in his articles.

Unsurprisingly, Danya had an article entitled *Tigran Petrosian's Breathtaking Exchange Sacrifices*. He described Petrosian's 25. ... Re6 against Reshevsky as "the hallmark of a true positional virtuoso." At the end of the article, Danya shared his own game alongside a story that inspired him to play a positional Exchange sacrifice in his own game. Although the example doesn't quite fit with the theme of this particular column, I would like to pay a small tribute by including that game by an 11-year-old Danya.

In his own words: "Many years ago, I attended an excellent U.S. Chess School camp led by GM Gregory Kaidanov. On the last day, after presenting several of Petrosian's finest Exchange sacrifices, he challenged every student to sacrifice an Exchange (and win) before the camp met again in six months. I took up the gauntlet and, a few months later, this happened:"

SICILIAN DEFENSE, SOZIN VARIATION (B87)

David Petty (1917)
Daniel Naroditsky (2170)
Tuesday Night Marathon (3),
San Francisco, 08.21.2007

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Bc4 e6 7. Bb3 b5 8. a3 Bb7 9. 0-0 Nc6 10. f4 Be7 11. Be3 Nxd4 12. Qxd4 0-0 13. Kh1 Rc8 14. Rae1

So far, it looks like a pretty standard Sicilian position.



14. ... Rxc3

A classic Sicilian sacrifice!

15. bxc3?!

White should keep his pawn structure intact: 15. Qxc3 Bxe4 is a better version of this position for White.

15. ... Bxe4 16. c4 Qa8!

Another nice move, activating the queen from the corner.

17. Re2 bxc4

It would have been better to keep White's bishop on the ineffective b3-square with 17. ... Rc8 18. cxb5 axb5.

18. Bxc4 Rc8 19. Bd3 d5 20. Bxe4?

White shouldn't hurry with this trade. Black will never capture on d3 and allow a recapture with the pawn, because a big battle is brewing over the e4-square.

20. ... Nxe4 21. f5 Bf6 22. Qb6 Qc6!?

It's interesting to me that at such a young age Danya preferred the endgame rather than keeping the queens on the board. I wonder whether it was because he found the white queen annoying on b6 or because he evaluated the endgame as more favorable for him because of the c2-pawn weakness.

Black had a huge edge after 22. ... e5, due to the big threats of either ... d5-d4 or ... Ne4-c3. White might have to part ways with the c2-pawn at some point.

23. fxe6 fxe6 24. Rb1 Nc3 25. Qxc6 Rxc6 26. Rb8+ Kf7 27. Re1 Nb5 28. a4 Na3 29. Rb7+ Kg6 30. Ra7

I must defer to my silicon friend to find a defense for White, who has to look for some concrete ideas such as 30. Rb6.

30. ... Nxc2

Now White's position is collapsing.

31. Rc1 Bb2 32. Rxa6 Rxa6 33. Rxc2 Bf6 34. Ra2 d4 35. Bd2 e5 36. Kg1 e4 37. Bb4 Rb6 38. Bc5 Rc6 39. Ba7 d3, White resigned.

Even at such a tender age, Danya had a good feel and understanding of the Sicilian structures.

His beautiful win against Ortiz Suarez, which included two Exchange sacrifices — a game he described as the best of his career — is featured on page 35 with annotations by former world champion Topalov. It's well worth studying. ♠





D A N Y A

*FM Daniel
Naroditsky*
1995-2025

BY **FM MIKE KLEIN**



ANIEL “DANYA” NARODITSKY was a talented grandmaster, a young author, a gifted commentator, a keen historian, and a loyal friend. He loved vocabulary and humility, so let’s try that again in the way he might have said it:

Danya was a respectable grandmaster, a precocious author, a sesquipedalian commentator, an erudite historian, and a convivial friend.

Naroditsky died in late October at his home in Charlotte, N.C. He was 29. He is by far the youngest grandmaster in American history to pass away, but he leaves behind one of the largest legacies. In the days following the announcement of his death just weeks before his 30th birthday, members of the chess community ranging from world champions to past students told heartfelt stories of what Naroditsky meant to them. They also tried to come to terms with a prodigious life and life force cut far too short.

He was the Renaissance chessplayer/communicator of his generation. Naroditsky was nonpareil.

‘I was ensnared’

Long before becoming a phenom, Naroditsky grew up in the Bay Area and learned chess at 6 from his father, Vladimir, and older brother, Alan. His mother, Lena Schuman, an esteemed piano teacher at a music conservatory, helped pass on to her youngest son a love of the humanities and, likely, a blueprint for becoming an empathetic teacher and coach. But long before that, the young Naroditsky was simply hooked on the game. In his own writing, naturally, he used a better word: ensnared.

“At first chess was nothing but a pleasant diversion, but as I improved and our games became more competitive, Lego and Monopoly began to seem rather boring in comparison,” Naroditsky wrote on *Chess.com* about those early years. “On the weekends, my dad would read a Russian translation of Capablanca’s *Chess Fundamentals* aloud to us, and I was spellbound by every word. Chess is an unexplored world, a bloodless war, an infinitely complex mental and psychological challenge. Put simply, I was ensnared.”

Fairly soon after learning the game, he became a regular at the Mechanics’ Institute, in San Francisco. IM John Donaldson recalls that Naroditsky was about 7 when they met, and he would become a fixture there for the next dozen years. Naroditsky was originally small

for his age, eating an early diet consisting largely of buckwheat and needing to sit on something to see over the board. He would go on to tower well over 6 feet as an adult, and enjoy spicy foods — just several of the many curiosities in his life.

“Daniel enjoyed everything about chess, whether it was playing, studying or learning about the history of the game,” Donaldson said. “He was a voracious reader of chess literature. The Mechanics’ Institute has several thousand chess books in its library, and Daniel was constantly checking out game collections and tournament books. His father Vlad often brought back Russian-language chess books from his business trips to the former Soviet Union which would be added to Daniel’s ever-growing library.”

Along with books, sometimes the verbal lore of the Soviet days would come to him. One of his earliest teachers was GM Gregory Kaidanov, who visited Naroditsky at his house several times.

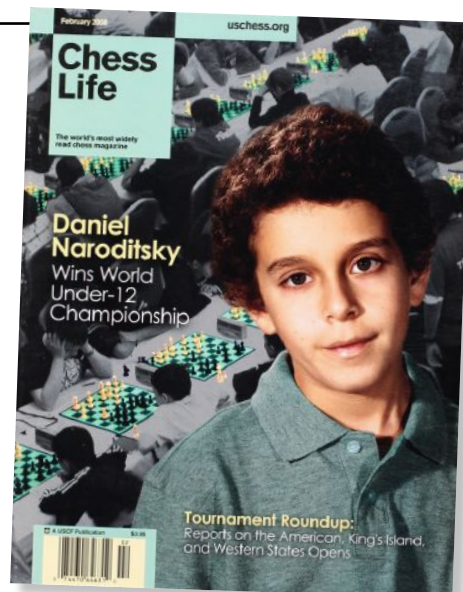
“He not only loved chess; he loved everything about chess,” Kaidanov said. “He would ask me endless questions about different chessplayers — their styles, where they lived, and so on. This was all before Google, of course.”

Naroditsky loved books so much that he contributed to chess literature at the tender age of 14, becoming the youngest published chess author. And this was no simple puzzle collection — that would not be Naroditsky’s style. *Mastering Positional Chess* was the weighty topic, and it would be followed by *Mastering Complex Endgames* three years later.

“Who writes a book about positional chess at the age of 14?” IM Danny Rensch wrote in his remembrance. “And a great book at that! The answer is nobody but Danya Naroditsky.”

“Some questioned how it was possible for someone so young to write so well, but if you knew Daniel it was no surprise,” Donaldson said. Naroditsky would go on to write chess columns for this magazine, for *Chess.com*, and for *The New York Times*. He often drew on his own experiences. Instead of the “highs and lows” of chess, he wrote of the “zeniths and nadirs.” When reading him you had to have your chessboard set up and your dictionary handy.

Kaidanov remembered clearly seeing Naroditsky’s competitiveness at an early age, both on and off the board. After their chess sessions, they would play basketball — one of Naroditsky’s lifelong loves and one area



in which he could already beat his teacher.

Naroditsky’s tournament victories included the World Youth U-12 Championship in 2007 and the U.S. Junior Championship in 2013. That same year, he became a grandmaster at age 17.

GM Lev Psakhis worked with Naroditsky on and off from 2009 to 2014. “Dani was a phenomenal student, and at times it was almost impossible to tear him away from the board!” Psakhis said. “I would give him quite challenging assignments. He didn’t always manage to find the right answer — but he tried so hard. One vivid example: In 2014, I set up a cunning and very complex rook



With his mother, Lena Schuman, in 2010



endgame position. Dani figured it out, but it took him one hour and 35 minutes, and it was simply impossible to pull him away from the board until he found the correct solution!”

Naroditsky continued to succeed, from the Samford to Stanford. He was awarded the Samford Chess Fellowship in 2014 and quickly zoomed from 2500 to 2600 FIDE. The next year, he represented the U.S. for the first time at the 2015 World Team Championship in Armenia. It would be his only tournament with the U.S. National Team as an adult player, but Donaldson, the captain of that team, called the event his “proudest moment” in his years of watching Naroditsky, as the teenager’s plus score helped an outgunned American squad tie for fourth place despite being ranked next-to-last at the outset. “It clearly indicated he was a world top-50 player,” Donaldson said.

Soon after, Naroditsky enrolled in university close to home. At Stanford University he devoured books, focusing on modern European history. College friend Philip Weiss, who would later also become his roommate in Kimball Hall, recalled his many late-night study sessions, which were followed by even later online blitz sessions. All through his life the nyctophile Naroditsky would thrive after sunset, going from the Hundred Years’ War to playing a hundred bullet games.

“I remember being astounded by his ability to juggle a demanding course load at

Stanford with his chess life, and also making time for his family and friends,” Weiss said. “Daniel thrived in the chaos.”

To Charlotte and coaching

Naroditsky faced a pivotal choice upon graduating in 2019. He seemed destined for academia, with his love of knowledge and of language (he spoke English, Russian, and Spanish fluently). He loved learning so much that he did indeed make that his career, but in the chess club, not the classroom. This also put his own chess ambitions largely on hold. That was a tradeoff he was comfortable with, and the decision came at a fortuitous time.

Naroditsky met FM Peter Giannatos, founder of the Charlotte Chess Center, at the Castle Chess Camp, in Atlanta. Giannatos was so taken with the grandmaster’s teaching ability and friendly personality that he offered to carve out a position for him — the first-ever grandmaster-in-residence at the fledgling chess club. Naroditsky accepted, and moved to Charlotte in 2019.

Whereas a lot of top players might seek out a city that could help their own careers, Naroditsky wanted to help a community. He

was the first top player to take a chance on Charlotte, and only after he helped build the club’s prestige did many other GMs and IMs follow. Giannatos in his eulogy called Naroditsky the “light of the Charlotte chess community.”



Kaidanov, himself one of the most esteemed coaches of our generation, last saw Naroditsky in May at SuperNationals VIII, in Orlando, where he complimented his former student on “how good a chess teacher he had become. In fact,” Kaidanov said, “he became exceptional at everything he pursued.”

Just how effective and dedicated of a teacher was Naroditsky? World top-5 GM Alireza Firouzja hired him to be his coach at the 2025 FIDE Grand Swiss. Naroditsky, who had said in 2024 that he no longer wanted to travel far from home, jumped on a plane with only a few hours’ notice, heading all the way from Charlotte to Uzbekistan to help the Frenchman tie for second.

“That’s who he was, always there, never hesitating to help,” Firouzja wrote. The student returned his teacher’s devotion, flying from Paris to California on short notice for the funeral. “We spent an amazing half month together. I’ll always be grateful for those days and everything I learned from him. Danya was the most genuine person I have ever known.”

Numerous students of all levels have come forward to explain how gentle and non-judgmental he was in his coaching. He would boost a student’s confidence with just the right words to explain how they could improve. Naroditsky never placed himself on any pedestal; in mixed company or in one-on-one lessons he didn’t think his title

or his skills conveyed any superiority or virtue. He loved learning, and he wanted you to love it, too.

At a blitz tournament at the Charlotte Chess Center in July, he sat down opposite GM Pia Cramling and immediately told the legendary player what an honor it was to have her in his city. She returned by praising his commentary, and he reflexively moved back in his chair, accepting the compliment reluctantly. Needing to cement the idea that he admired her more, Naroditsky gave another compliment to Cramling. His reverence bordered on obsequiousness as he asked her whether his water cup was OK at the corner of the table, and would she like him to throw it away? After winning the game convincingly, Naroditsky immediately praised one of her defensive moves. Cramling thought initially that he was pointing out a blunder, as the stronger player often does. Naroditsky had to repeat, “No, ... f5 was really nice.”

After his passing, several podcast hosts and chess historians proudly showed off private messages where Naroditsky offered them his fandom and praise, too. Usually these messages came out of the blue, and to those in the chess universe who thought themselves beneath the grandmaster. But Naroditsky just didn’t think in those terms. If you had a platform that served chess, he wanted you to know that he valued you and your work.

Going online

The decision to go to the Charlotte Chess Center turned out to be auspicious. A few months after moving, the world locked down for the COVID-19 pandemic, and he fell in quickly with a very tight friend group.

They cooked together, played blitz together, and that community cheered him on as he began his online streaming career. “We were so close we even had our own language,” Giannatos said in his eulogy. When it was time to depart, his friends never said “Good night” to Naroditsky. Instead they said, “See you on stream!”

This would prove to be the medium that mixed all Naroditsky’s skills in the perfect balance. Naroditsky could show off his blitz prowess; he could allude to Beethoven and Bogoljubov, and he could break down a position for a 200 or a 2000 — sometimes all in the same stream. He gained hundreds of thousands of subscribers and students by doing what his brother Alan said he did so well — showing the world that you can marry intellect and warmth.

When Naroditsky commentated on a top-level match, you had to tune in, no matter the players. Seeing him call the action in a time scramble was poetic. Watching him execute expert tactical vision and heightening the moment with just the right voice inflection and cultural references — no one



could match his frenetic eloquence. His demeanor was like putting the announcer Gus Johnson, the player Hikaru Nakamura, and the historian Doris Kearns Goodwin all in front of one microphone.

His favorite sidekick as a commentator was GM Robert Hess. “We shared a deep bond and passion for the game,” Hess wrote in a remembrance, also noting Naroditsky’s love of language. “He was a human thesaurus who casually dropped words like ‘mellifluous’ and ‘gallimaufry,’ all while playing elite tactical chess with seconds on his clock.” Hess added they were also “kindred spirits” in their love of history. “He was a student of life, always hungry to learn.”

In the past year, Naroditsky largely stepped back from commentary, but not from coaching or helping kids. And he never lost his sharp wit. Shortly before an event on *Chess.com* in early 2025 where he faced four IM-strength kids in a frenzied clock simul, he realized it was also the same day that his beloved Golden State Warriors were in town to play the Charlotte Hornets. His hometown team only came once per year, and he never missed that game.

“But I’m super pumped about the simul and that obviously takes precedence,” he texted to me. I then pointed out that it was theoretically possible to play very quickly and perhaps still make it to the game. “Hehe inshallah four out of the five players will experience time pressure... They’re about to experience the Naroditsky school of simul giving!” He won the match faster than anyone in the history of the series and made tip-off comfortably. Coincidentally, his favorite player was Stephen Curry, who went in the opposite direction to Danya, growing up in Charlotte before playing his entire career in the Bay Area. Naroditsky got to see him one last time; Curry dropped in 21 points to lift the Warriors over the Hornets.

Naroditsky’s speedruns garnered him the fandom of even the very best. “He was always, first of all, a great opponent,” GM Magnus Carlsen told the *Take Take Take* podcast, “but also very respectful, very nice. I spent many, many hours not only watching his games but also watching his streams, which were ... exciting for his incredible game play but also great explanations.”

Carlsen then smiled, remembering that Naroditsky was a part of two of the most special days in his life. The two played a few games online on Carlsen’s wedding night after wife Ella Carlsen had gone to sleep. They played again on the day Ella gave birth, while Magnus was waiting with

her in the hospital.

GM Judit Polgar taught alongside Naroditsky at several chess camps in Charlotte in recent years. “Daniel was a true artist of chess,” Polgar said, “a bright, imaginative player who loved every aspect of the game, from blistering bullet to deep strategic play. ... His attacking tactics, dazzling combinations and fierce creativity made chess his language and his home.”

He loved playing so much that he amassed more than 140,000 games alone on *Chess.com*, the eighth-most ever amongst titled players. Polgar said he showed “creative brilliance” and indeed he produced more than 22,000 “brilliant” moves on the server in those games, denoted by a double exclamation. “His values and warm personality will be long remembered,” she said.

GM Hikaru Nakamura was responsible for exactly 3,001 of those games, the most of any opponent. Their history goes back even further, to many more games played in the days of the original Internet Chess Club.

They would become not just competitors but fellow streamers. Naroditsky gained nearly one million followers on Twitch and YouTube, without any gimmicks or grand ambitions to be the largest channel. He just wanted to teach and play.

“You can talk about algorithms, you can talk about getting the most views,” Nakamura said in a stream right after Danya’s passing was announced, “... but at the end of the day, I always did believe that if you were an intermediate player who was trying to improve at the game, then Daniel’s videos were objectively the best, I felt, of anybody — better than mine.”

Naroditsky peaked at 2647 FIDE, but Nakamura felt that he could have reached 2700. In the last year of his life, Naroditsky expressed to some friends a desire to return to competitive chess. He played in the 2025 U.S. Open, largely to try to earn the automatic qualifier back to the U.S. Championship, which he played in several times, including a famous win [see page 38 ~ed.] over GM Fabiano Caruana in 2021. While he didn’t earn that spot, he did sweep the U.S. Open Blitz with a perfect 14/14.

After his passing, Naroditsky fans shared one specific moment more than any other that encapsulated the man they admired so much. And despite all of their hero’s loquaciousness, that moment required no words and no moves.

Late in the 2024 World Blitz Championship, Naroditsky was paired with someone else who has given his life to chess, GM Vasyl Ivanchuk. After a tense time scramble,

Ivanchuk flagged and immediately began sobbing at the board with his head in his hands. Naroditsky instinctually felt the pain of a legendary player that he had doubtless studied and emulated. He then also covered his face while slumping in his chair to reduce his tall frame. Naroditsky looked down and away from the camera, making sure not to make eye contact or trivialize what Ivanchuk was feeling. Only after more than one minute of near motionlessness does Naroditsky place the kings in the center, quiet as a church mouse and graceful in his solemnity.

Honor at stake

The empathy and support Naroditsky showed others was not universally returned. As many online content creators have experienced, the internet is a space that can lend itself to the worst qualities amongst us. He struggled to deal with certain attacks on his character. While it remained unblemished, he was not.

“This stuff that was going on, it deeply affected him,” Nakamura said on stream, explaining that he also can get affected by the negativity of the online space. “There is a lot of toxicity ... It took a massive toll on Danya.”

GM Vladimir Kramnik, a former childhood idol of Naroditsky, led a very public campaign to question Naroditsky’s fair play. Other prominent GMs were known to join a cabal in more private channels. In this case, Naroditsky’s love of Russian history and language worked against him — he was tormented by the impugnation in two languages.

While there is no evidence at of press time to directly connect the harassment with his passing, friends spoke about how much the quest to clear his name bothered Naroditsky and affected his emotional state. Neither defensiveness nor aggressiveness would allow him comfort in an effort to clear his name. He was online constantly, and he read every word.

Former World Champion Garry Kasparov scoffed at the allegations, telling the *Guardian* that Naroditsky was “one of the most transparent players online — he streamed, he explained every move, he played blitz at 3000+ for years. To accuse him on the basis of some statistical model that even its creator says is preliminary? That’s not serious chess analysis, that’s character assassination.”

"The Fair Play team keeps close tabs and runs automated checks frequently on all the top players," a *Chess.com* Fair Play spokesperson said in a statement. "We never had any reason to question Danya's integrity during his 140,000 games on the site."

The torment lasted for the final two years of his life, with doubters wondering how he could show such online acumen without playing much over the board. After failing to reason with his accusers, who micro-analyzed every brilliant move and even his eye movements, the normally demure and restrained Naroditsky did several interviews vigorously asserting that it had to stop.

"I don't think I'm ... thick-skinned enough to say honestly that that isn't affecting me at all," he said at the 2024 World Rapid and Blitz to interviewer IM Levy Rozman. He acknowledged that some would look to his performance as possible ammunition for more allegations. Naroditsky finished in a 10-way tie for first in the Swiss portion of the blitz but did not qualify for the knockout due to tiebreaks. "I've been nice and civil and courteous to this army of troglodyte lowlifes for way too long," Naroditsky said. "I'm really sick of it. I'm not going to tolerate any of the hate any longer. ... To do what Kramnik has done and what everybody who supports him have done, in my mind, morally it makes you worse than dirt."

"I've sort of been less nice about the particular individuals driving this agenda forward over time," he said in another interview with WGM Ketj Tsatsalashvili. "I gave them the benefit of the doubt the first month. The second month I was a little more firm. ... The fact that this has been going on for as long as it has been, it's deeply frustrating to me."

He added, "When the history of chess is going to be written, this will be a very, very dark chapter. ... Not just because Vlad [Kramnik] has been allowed to go on with his nonsense for as long as he has, but because behind the scenes some top players are not outspoken enough to make it clear that the patients are not running the insane asylum." After being forced to defend himself once again, he was then asked for one of his famous impressions. In true Naroditsky style, he seamlessly produced a spot-on Wesley So that transitioned into a flawless Garry Kasparov, nailing the staccato of both despite a hint of sadness in his eyes.

The torment didn't stop in the 10 months that followed those interviews. Even in his next-to-last stream, Naroditsky noted that his results would always be questioned. He feared winning blitz games when not streaming. But even when he broadcasted,

no number of cameras could silence Kramnik and other detractors.

Naroditsky had said previously during an interview that nothing was more important to him than his honor. In that penultimate stream, he continued to express fear that it was being tarnished. Despite this, with his voice cracking, he still signed off thinking about others more than himself: "Thanks everybody. Be well, be healthy, be safe, and I'll see you guys, win or lose, after the match. Bye."

Despite some online chatter to the contrary, the community he helped build in Charlotte was very much there to help him as best they could, all the way until his final hours. While his cause of death has not been determined by authorities at of press time, the devotion that Giannatos, GM Olexandr Bortnyk, and others at the Charlotte Chess Center showed was revealed in private conversations and remembrances. Bortnyk, who said he moved to Charlotte specifically because of Naroditsky, celebrated his birthday on the weekend of his passing; that day, he said, his final words to his friend were "Danya, don't worry about anything. I love you so much." He added later that "I'm happy my last words were supportive." (Bortnyk won the first Titled Tuesday tournament on *Chess.com* to be held after the funeral, and dedicated his victory to Danya.)

Perhaps inspired by their friend the wordsmith, several close friends who rarely post publicly wrote glowing missives online. In the end, Naroditsky also inspired his friends to be writers.

Grant Oen, a longtime staff member of the Charlotte Chess Center, wrote a lengthy tribute where he explained, "If anything, his success made him value his friends, family, and relationships even more." Naroditsky, the famous person at the party, would also be the one to volunteer to do the coffee runs. "Danya, you were an amazing friend and the best person I've ever known," Oen said.

Top players also tried to buoy him in his final days, even ones who had never met him in person. Naroditsky's final games were against GM Nihal Sarin, who has never been to the U.S. but has played thousands of games against Naroditsky and has also been the subject of accusations. They exchanged more than games during that session: Naroditsky confided to Sarin the "immense stress he was under." Sarin said Naroditsky promised to share more, and even later after that Sarin followed up with a supportive message. "I can imagine the pain he was going through for a very long time," Sarin wrote.

As for me, one of my final support messages was a four-minute voice note that I sent him, noting that the call was coming from the obscure South Pacific island of Maupiti. I knew he loved geography as well as history, and IM Greg Shahade later shared that Naroditsky had "memorized all of the islands of the world" at age 11. But Naroditsky was not on an island himself. While he didn't always get back to you right away, he acknowledged your support when you saw him, and made sure you knew that it mattered.

The Comet

Several years after moving to Charlotte, Naroditsky told me that he loved the city and he never wanted to live anywhere else. I'm a Charlotte native and extremely prideful of my city, so I was honored. But even I admit that it doesn't have the identity or culture of the Bay Area. He was even living in a fairly nondescript neighborhood in Charlotte, more known for good schools than good times. I was never quite able to get him to explain his reasoning. Only at the funeral did it become clear — he wasn't talking about love for the city of Charlotte; he was talking about his friends at the Charlotte Chess Center. He had conflated his friends with the town itself. They were that close.

"We will honor his memory by carrying forward the passion, generosity, and the joy he shared so freely," Giannatos said.

Daniel Naroditsky taught us so much in less than three decades. He showed us that talent can be tied to humility. That you can build community locally and globally. That a voice can be sonorous and empathetic at the same time. That teaching is honorable and itself an art. That your rating doesn't define you and doesn't elevate you over your peers. That there is a perfect word for a situation, and even if you don't find it in English, maybe you'll learn another language where it exists. That even in a sport so defined by our skill level, there is dignity in all of us who play this game and who attempt to improve and grow.

He'll be remembered for his preternatural ability to inspire everyone, from the casual fan to the tournament player. We all adored him.

His final chess event, played only hours before his passing, was fittingly called the Comet Open. Some people burn bright but leave us too soon, with no one else like them to be seen in a lifetime. ♠





The Play's the Thing

DANIEL NARODITSKY'S talent was so bright in so many areas — the written word, real-time commentary, spot-on impressions, teaching young players — that it can be easy to overlook just how good a chessplayer he really was.

His peers never forgot. They knew Danya was a creative, dynamic player who could hang with the very best of them. They saw him demolish the world's elite with speed, style, and that wry smile.

So much has been said about Danya's legacy, but it all starts with his play. Here are 29 of his games, spanning from his first moves right through his final days. The annotators of these games range from Charlotte locals to American legends to world champions, and that's testimony to the number of very different lives in chess that Daniel Naroditsky touched.

FOUR KNIGHTS GAME (C48)

Daniel Naroditsky (1042)

Gary R. Gray (1134)

Early Summer Swiss (4), Burlingame, 06.19.2003

An early effort from his seventh tournament. Naroditsky earned his first official rating in this event. It was 1090.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. Nc3 Bc5
5. 0-0 Nd4 6. Nxd4 Bxd4 7. d3 h6 8. Bd2 c6
9. Ba4 0-0 10. h3 d5 11. exd5 cxd5 12. Qf3

Daniel Naroditsky: Selected Games

ANNOTATIONS BY **ARONIAN, CARUANA, DONALDSON, GELFAND, GIANNATOS, LEE, MORADIABADI, NEMCOVA, MAGESH, RAMESH, RENSCH, TANG, AND TOPALOV**

Be6 13. Nd1 Bc5 14. Ne3 Qc8 15. Bb3 Rd8
16. Rac1 Bxe3 17. Bxe3 Qc6



18. Bxh6 gxh6 19. Qxf6 Rd6 20. Qxe5
Bxh3 21. Qg3+ Kf8 22. Qxh3 Rg6 23. c4
d4 24. Bd1 Re8 25. Bf3 Qf6 26. Rce1 Rxe1
27. Rxe1 Kg7 28. Re4 Kh7 29. Re1 Rg5 30.
Be4+ Kg7 31. Qf3 Qd6 32. g3 Qe6 33. Qh1
Qe5 34. Kf1 Qf6 35. Qh4 Qd6 36. Qf4 Qd7
37. Qh4 Qd6 38. Bd5 Qg6 39. Be4 f5 40.
Bf3 f4 41. Qxf4 Rf5 42. Be4 Kf6 43. Qxf5+
Qxf5 44. Bxf5 Kxf5, and Black resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, ALAPIN VARIATION (B22)

Daniel Naroditsky (1671)
Steven J. Svoboda (1912)
Tuesday Night Marathon (5),
San Francisco, 11.30.2004

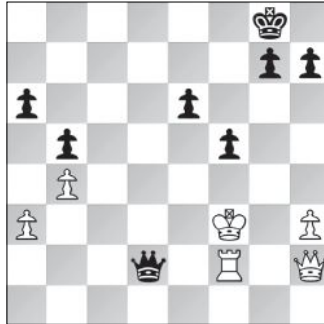
1. e4 c5 2. c3 Nf6 3. e5 Nd5 4. d4 cxd4 5.
Nf3 Nc6 6. cxd4 d6 7. Bc4 dxe5 8. dxe5
Ndb4 9. Qb3 e6 10. 0-0 Be7 11. Nc3 0-0
12. Rd1 Qc7 13. Nb5 Qb8 14. Nd6 Nxe5 15.
Bf4 Bxd6 16. Rxd6 Qxd6 17. Nxe5 Nd5 18.
Bg3 f5 19. Bxd5 Qxd5 20. Qe3 Rd8 21. h4
Bd7 22. Qg5 Bc6 23. Bf4 Rf8 24. h5 Qd8
25. Qg3 Be8 26. h6 g6 27. Bg5 Qd6 28. Qc3
Rc8 29. Qxc8 Bc6 30. Be7 Qxe7 31. Nxc6
bxc6 32. Qxc6 Rd8 33. Rc1 Qd6 34. Qxd6
Rxd6 35. Rc8+ Kf7 36. Rc7+ Kf6 37. Rxa7
Rd1+ 38. Kh2 Rd2 39. b4 Rxf2 40. Rxh7 e5
41. Ra7, Black resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, SOZIN VARIATION (B86)

Steven Zierk (1490)
Daniel Naroditsky (1865)
CalNorth Youth Ch (4), San Jose,
04.17.2005

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 a6 6. Bc4 e6 7. 0-0 Be7 8. f4 0-0 9.
Be3 b5 10. Bd3 Bb7 11. a3 Nbd7 12. b4
Rc8 13. Qd2 Qc7 14. Nde2 Ng4 15. Nd1 Bf6
16. c3 Nb6 17. h3 Nxe3 18. Qxe3 Na4 19.
Rc1 Nb6 20. Nf2 Nc4 21. Bxc4 Qxc4 22. e5

Qc6 23. Qg3 dxe5 24. fxe5 Bxe5 25. Qg4 f5
26. Qg5 Bf6 27. Qg3 Bh4 28. Qh2 Rf6 29.
Nd4 Qd5 30. Nf3 Bxf2+ 31. Rxf2 Rg6 32.
Ne5 Rxc3 33. Rxc3 Qd1+ 34. Rf1 Qd4+ 35.
Kh1 Rxg2 36. Rc8+ Bxc8 37. Kxg2 Qd2+
38. Rf2 Bb7+ 39. Nf3 Bxf3+ 40. Kxf3



40. ... Qd5+ 41. Kg3 Qe5+ 42. Kg2 Qe4+ 43.
Kg1 Qe1+ 44. Rf1 Qe3+ 45. Kh1 Qxa3 46.
Qe2 Qxh3+ 47. Kg1 Qg3+ 48. Qg2 Qe3+ 49.
Kh1 Qh6+ 50. Qh2 Qe3 51. Qd6 Qe4+ 52.
Kg1 Qe3+ 53. Rf2 Qe1+ 54. Kg2 Qe4+ 55.
Rf3 Qe2+ 56. Kg3 Qe1+ 57. Kf4 Qh4+ 58.
Ke3 Qe1+ 59. Kf4 Qc1+ 60. Re3 g5+ 61. Kf3
Qf1+ 62. Kg3 f4+ 63. Kg4 fxe3 64. Qxe6+
Qf7 65. Qc8+ Kg7 66. Qc3+ Kg6 67. Qc6+
Kg7 68. Qc3+ Kf8 69. Qc8+ Ke7 70. Qc7+
Kf8 71. Qd8+ Qe8 72. Qd6+ Kf7 73. Qd4 e2
74. Qf2+ Kg8 75. Qe1 h6 76. Kf5 Qf7+ 77.
Kg4 Qf4+ 78. Kh5 Qh4+, White resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, ALAPIN VARIATION (B22)

Daniel Naroditsky (1599 FIDE)
Jorge Cori (2080 FIDE)
World U10 Ch (4), Belfort, 07.23.2005

1. e4 c5 2. c3 d5 3. exd5 Qxd5 4. d4 Nc6 5.
Nf3 Bg4 6. Be2 e6 7. 0-0 0-0 8. Be3 cxd4
9. cxd4 Bb4 10. Nc3 Qd6 11. Rc1 a6 12.
Qa4 Bxf3 13. Bxf3 Nge7 14. Ne4 Qc7 15.
Ng5 Nd5 16. Bxd5 Rxd5 17. Rxc6 bxc6 18.
Qxb4 Rb5 19. Qc3 Rd8 20. Rc1 Kb7 21. g3
h6 22. Nxf7 Rc8 23. Ne5 Qa5 24. Qc4 Rxb2
25. Nxc6 Qc7 26. Na5+ Kb6, and Black
resigned in a few moves.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, ACCELER- ATED DRAGON (B34)

Daniel Naroditsky (2002)
Frank Thornally (2200)
Tuesday Night Marathon (2),
San Francisco, 01.17.2006

This was Naroditsky's first win against a
master in US Chess rated play.

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 g6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6
5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Be2 0-0 8. 0-0 d5
9. Nxc6 bxc6 10. e5 Nd7 11. f4 Qa5 12. a3
Ba6 13. b4 Bxe2 14. Qxe2 Qc7 15. Rad1 a5



California State
Championship, 2007

Coaching the
Oakland A's, 2008

circa 2010

16. b5 e6 17. a4 c5 18. Bc1 Rfe8 19. Qf3 Nb6 20. Ne2 f6 21. exf6 Bxf6 22. g4 Kh8 23. g5 Bg7 24. h4 e5 25. h5 exf4 26. Nxf4 Rf8 27. hxc6 Qe5 28. Qh5, Black resigned.

The next two games appear in the February 2008 issue of *Chess Life* (available at uschess.org) with Naroditsky's annotations.

RUY LOPEZ, BREYER VARIATION (C95)

Jurica Srbis (2055)
Daniel Naroditsky (2124)
World U12 Ch (5), Antalya, 11.22.2007

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 0-0 9. h3 Nb8 10. d4 Nbd7 11. Nbd2 Bb7 12. Bc2 Re8 13. Nf1 Bf8 14. Ng3 g6 15. Nh2 h5 16. Bg5 Be7 17. a4 c5 18. d5 Nh7 19. Bxe7 Rxe7 20. Qe2 c4 21. axb5 axb5 22. b3 cxb3 23. Bxb3 Nc5 24. Bc2 Ba6 25. Qe3 Rea7 26. f4 Qf6 27. fxe5 Qxe5 28. Ne2 Re7 29. Nf3 Qxd5 30. Nf4 Qb7 31. Nd5 Re6 32. Qf4 Rae8 33. Ng5 Nxc5 34. Qxc5 Kg7 35. Nf4 Re5 36. Nxc5+ Kf8 37. Qh6+ Ke7 38. Nf4 Kd8 39. Rad1 Qb6 40. Kh1 Bb7 41. Rd4 Bxe4 42. Bxe4 Nxe4 43. Kh2 Nxc3 44. Rxe5 Qxd4 45. Qh4+ Kd7 46. Rg5 Re4 47. Qg4+ Kc7 48. Qf3 Rxf4 49. Qa8 Rf5 50. Rg3 Ne2 51. Qa5+ Kb7 52. Qe1 Nxc3 53. Qe7+ Ka6, White resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B90)

Ivan Bukavshin (2248)
Daniel Naroditsky (2124)
World U12 Ch (11), Antalya, 11.28.2007

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Be3 e5 7. Nf3 Be7 8. Bc4 0-0 9. 0-0 Qc7 10. Nd5 Nxd5 11. Bxd5 Nd7 12. Nd2 Nf6 13. Bb3 b5 14. Bg5 Bb7 15. Bxf6 Bxf6 16. Qe2 a5 17. Qxb5 Ba6 18. Qa4 Bxf1 19. Nxf1 Bg5 20. Rd1 Kh8 21. Qa3 a4 22. Bxa4 Qc4 23. b4 Qa6 24. Qg3 Bf4, White resigned.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E70)

IM John Grefe (2384)
FM Daniel Naroditsky (2366)
Benson Memorial IM Norm (9),
San Francisco, 08.19.2008
Annotations by FM Andy Lee

I first met Daniel Naroditsky when he was a diminutive prodigy, elevated by a cushion to see over the chess tables at the Mechanics' Institute Chess Club in San Francisco. He was fresh off the biggest success of his young career, first place in the U12 division of the World Youth Championships, when we played in the spring of 2008.

He beat me that evening after I had the poor judgment to turn down a draw, then gave me a few more lessons over the board before he grew too strong for local events. He was a tremendously gracious winner, quick to point out how hard I'd fought back from whatever self-inflicted damage I'd done to my position. And he was a fixture in the Bay Area chess community for years, returning to play in blitz events and anchoring the Mechanics' PRO Chess League team.

I chose to annotate another of Danya's games from his days at the Mechanics', an impressive attacking effort in his beloved King's Indian Defense. Danya finished a point shy of an IM norm, but this game, against Bay Area legend and former U.S. Champion John Grefe, felt at the time like a passing of the torch, from age and experience to the vigor of youth.

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Bd3 Grefe plays something a little unusual to test the kid's preparation in his favorite opening.

5. ... Nc6 6. Nge2 0-0 7. 0-0 Nd7 8. Be3 e5 9. d5 Ne7

True to character, Danya aims for the sharpest lines rather than simplifying with the more common 9. ... Nd4.

10. b4?!

Thematic (and new in this particular position), but it hasn't been played since. White's minor pieces are better placed to weaken

and restrict Black's center, as in the variation 10. Qd2 f5 11. exf5 gxf5 12. f4.

10. ... f5 11. f3 f4 12. Bf2 Nf6 13. c5 g5 14. cxd6 cxd6

With White's knight on e2 instead of the bishop (as in the main lines of the King's Indian), Black's attack comes very quickly. Under pressure, Grete sends his other knight to be entombed on a7.

15. Nb5?! a6 16. Na7 Bd7 17. Qb3 Kh8

Stepping out of any Na7-c6 tricks on the diagonal, but Black's position would have also been quite good after 17. ... g4 18. Nc6 Qe8.

18. b5 Qb8?

Danya tries to force his venerable opponent to close the queenside before switching back to the plan of routing his queen to h5 via e8.

19. b6?



And fortunately for him, it works. The best way to justify the stranded knight is to sacrifice it, either by 19. Nc6 or the profoundly tricky 19. bxa6 Rxa7 20. Rfb1!.

19. ... g4!

Now Black is back in the driver's seat.

20. Rac1 gxf3 21. gxf3 Bh3 22. Kh1!?

Rather than play 22. Rfe1 only to have to follow up with Kg1-h1 and Re1-g1, Grete cunningly offers the Exchange. Without the light-squared bishop Black's attack is much less serious, so Danya elects to keep it on the board.

22. ... Qe8 23. Rg1

Having offered the Exchange once, White might be better off offering it again with 23. Ng1.

23. ... Qh5 24. Bb1 Nd7!

Very direct. Black is planning ... Rf8-f6-h6 in light of the terrible weakness of h2.

25. Rc7 Rf6 26. Nc6

This knight sacrifice has been on the table for a while now, but it's too little too late, as Black can safely ignore it.

26. ... Rh6!



27. Rxc7

Danya's attack cannot be stopped, only slowed. Accepting the knight offering on e7 leads to a pretty mate — 27. Nxe7 Bf1! 28. h4 Qxh4+! 29. Bxh4 Rxh4 mate — so Grete clears g1 for his king.

27. ... Bg4?!

Flashy, but I suspect that with a year or two more experience Danya would have found the cleaner 27. ... Kxg7 28. Nxe7 Kf7!.

28. Kg1

Time to get out of Dodge.

28. ... Bxf3 29. Rxd7?!

29. Nxe7 would have put up more resistance, though Black should still win.

29. ... Bxe2

Renewing the threat of mate on h2.

30. Rg2 Rg8!, White resigned.

Danya eliminates the last defender of the king. After 31. Rxc8+ Nxc8 32. Bg3 Qh3! there is no good way to stop ... Qh3-f1 mate, so White gave up.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE, CLASSICAL VARIATION (E94)

FM Daniel Naroditsky (2356 FIDE)

GM Yuri Vovk (2567 FIDE)

Leiden LCT Open (5), Leiden, 07.14.2009

This was Naroditsky's first win against a grandmaster.

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. d4 0-0 6. Be2 e5 7. 0-0 Nbd7 8. Be3 Re8 9. d5 Nh5 10. g3 Bf8 11. Ne1 Ng7 12. Ng2 f5 13. exf5 Nxf5 14. Ne4 Be7 15. f3 Nf6 16.

Bf2 Bf8 17. Bd3 Bh6 18. g4 Nxe4 19. Bxe4 Ne7 20. Qd3 Rf8 21. Bg3 Rf7 22. Qe2 Qf8 23. Rad1 Bd7 24. c5 a6 25. Qc2 Re8 26. Qb3 dxc5 27. Bxe5 Nc8 28. Bxc7 Nd6 29. Bxd6 Qxd6 30. Qc2 b5 31. Rfe1 Bg7 32. b3 Be5 33. Ne3 Ref8 34. Qg2 Kh8 35. Kh1 Rc8 36. Rc1 Qf6 37. d6 Qxd6 38. Rcd1 Qf8 39. Nd5 Bd4 40. b4 Rd8 41. bxc5 Qxc5 42. Qd2 Bg7 43. Qg5 Re8 44. Qh4 Kg8 45. g5 Be6 46. Rc1 Qa3 47. Nf6+ Bxf6 48. gxf6 Ref8 49. Rc6 Bxa2 50. Qg5 Re8 51. Re3 Qf8 52. Bxg6 hxg6 53. Qxg6+ Kh8 54. Rc5, Black resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF POISONED PAWN (B97)

Daniel Naroditsky

"Dolgoruki"

Blitz, Internet Chess Club, 09.03.2009

Naroditsky published this game in multiple *Chess.com* columns, calling it "one of my fondest blitz memories" and "one of the watershed moments in my blitz addiction."

1. Nf3 c5 2. e4 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Bg5 e6 7. f4 Qb6 8. Qd2 Qxb2 9. Rb1 Qa3 10. e5 dxe5 11. fxe5 Nfd7 12. Bc4 Qc5



13. Bxe6 Qxe5+ 14. Kd1 fxe6 15. Re1 Qa5 16. Nxe6 Kf7 17. Nd8+ Kg6 18. Rb5 axb5 19. Re6+ Nf6 20. Qd3+ Kh5 21. g4+ Nxg4 22. Qh3+ Kxg5 23. Ne4+ Kf5 24. Qf3 mate.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B92)

GM Alexander Shabalov (2678)

FM Daniel Naroditsky (2373)

North American Open (4), Las Vegas, 12.28.2009

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Be2 e5 7. Nb3 Be7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. Re1 Be6 10. Bf3 Nbd7 11. a4 Qc7 12. a5 b5 13. axb6 e.p. Nxb6 14. Na5 Nc4 15. Nxc4 Bxc4 16. Bd2 Rfc8 17. b3 Be6 18. Ra2

Qb7 19. Qe2 Bd8 20. Rea1 Bb6 21. Na4 Bd4 22. Rd1 d5 23. exd5 Bxd5 24. Bxd5 Nxd5 25. Qf3 Rab8 26. Be1 Rd8 27. Nb2 Qa7 28. Nc4 e4 29. Qe2 Nf4 30. Qg4 Ne6 31. Kf1 Qb7 32. Na5 Qc7 33. g3 e3 34. fxe3 Bxe3 35. Rxd8+ Rxd8 36. Nc4 Ba7 37. Ba5 Qc5, White resigned.

RUY LOPEZ (C77)

FM Daniel Naroditsky (2423)

GM Magesh Panchanathan (2521)

National Open (3), Las Vegas, 06.12.2010

Annotations by GM Magesh Panchanathan

This was my first game against Danya. He was just 14 years old and I was already a grandmaster. I had no idea I was facing a young genius who would write books, study at Stanford, become an elite GM, and eventually rank among the top blitz and bullet players in the world.

We ended up drawing this game, but I felt like I had narrowly escaped suffering an embarrassing loss to a young kid. My impression of him was that he played very good moves but lacked the confidence at that stage to finish off a grandmaster —

which made sense, given how I managed to hold the draw.

As I got to know Danya better, I realized he wasn't lacking confidence at all. It was simply his nature to appear calm and unassuming. Even when he was completely crushing you, he would sit there quietly, looking as if he were still figuring things out, and afterward talk about the game as though it had been an equal fight. That's just who he was — humble, gracious, and always comforting his opponents, even after demolishing them over the board.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. d3

Back then, this move wasn't as popular as it is today, but it was still considered a solid setup for White.

5. ... d6

This has always been one of my favorite setups. One of my early coaches taught me to avoid the pin with Bc1-g5 by placing the bishop on e7, and I've essentially stuck with that idea ever since.

That said, for the setup I was planning it was better to go with the move order 5. ... b5, as it forces the white bishop to go to b3 and then to c2, rather than going in

one move. If 7. 0-0 d6 8. c3 0-0 9. Nbd2 Na5 10. Bc2 Black has reached the same position as in the game, but with an extra move because of the Ba4-b3-c2 maneuver. It's true that 5. ... b5 gives White an extra option in 6. Bb3 Be7 7. a4, but Black has 7. ... b4 with a regular game.

6. c3 Be7

The most popular, and best, option here is 6. ... g6 7. 0-0 Bg7 8. Re1 0-0.

7. 0-0 0-0 8. Nbd2 b5

Now the white bishop can move directly to c2. A wiser setup for Black in this move order is 8. ... Re8 9. Re1 Bf8 10. Nf1 h6.

9. Bc2 Na5?!

A better idea for Black here is 9. ... Re8 10. Re1 Bf8 11. Nf1 g6 12. h3 Bg7 13. Ng3 d5, as in Abdusattorov – Maghsoodloo, Tata Steel 2023, even though in this game White gained a considerable advantage and went on to win.

The direct 9. ... d5 is also preferable, looking to open the d-file and play the symmetrical pawn structure. One example is 10. Re1 dxe4 11. dxe4 Be6 12. Qe2 Qc8, which was drawn in Carlsen – Abdusattorov, Toronto 2023.

10. d4 Nd7 11. a4?!

A missed opportunity to capitalize on the lost tempo. After 11. b4! Nc6 12. a4 Black can't play ... c7-c5, which is clearly a problem.

11. ... b4

Correctly avoiding 11. ... c5, which runs into 12. axb5 axb5 13. b4. Now Black still has a fighting chance.

12. cxb4 Nc6 13. Nc4 exd4 14. Nxd4 Nxb4



Black has regained the pawn and has good control of the b4-square, but Black's weak light squares and White's piece activity gives him a healthy edge.

15. Bd2

Danya rightly decides to give up the bishop



Quebec Open, 2012

pair for swift development and an initiative.

White could save the bishop with 15. Bb1, but that gives Black an important tempo to regroup: 15. ... Re8 16. Bd2 d5! 17. Bxb4 Bxb4 18. Nc6 Qf6 19. Nxb4 (19. exd5 Bf8 leaves Black with good compensation for the pawn) 19. ... dxc4 and Black achieves dynamic equality.

15. ... Nxc2 16. Nc6

16. Qxc2 is also possible, when play could go 16. ... Bf6 17. Nc6 Qe8 18. Rfe1 Bb7 19. N4a5 and White keeps the pressure on.

16. ... Qe8 17. Nxe7+ Qxe7 18. Qxc2 Nc5 19. Rfe1 Be6 20. b4 Nd7 21. Ne3

Better was 21. Na5 c5 22. Nc6 Qe8 (or 22. ... Qf6 23. Bc3) 23. Qd3 and the pressure on the d6-pawn is a big problem for Black.

21. ... c5

At this point, I was still struggling to equalize but hoping to capitalize on any possible mistake from my young opponent to seize the initiative — though that mistake hadn't arrived yet!

22. f4 Rfc8 23. Qd3 a5?

Poor judgment on my part — White can obtain a significant advantage with almost any continuation.

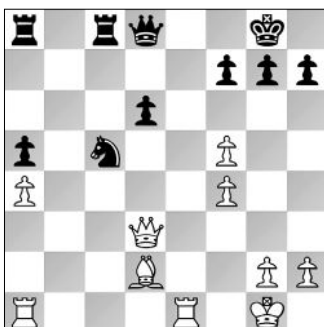
24. Nf5?

Another missed opportunity for White.

If 24. bxa5 c4 25. Qa3 f6 26. Rec1, and the problem for Black is that I cannot move the bishop easily to attack the e4-pawn because the white knight is ready to jump in to f5 or d5 anytime. For example, 26. ... Bf7 27. Nf5 Qxe4 28. Nxd6 wins.

White also had 24. b5 c4 25. Qa3 f6 (25. ... Nc5 26. f5 Bd7 27. Nd5 wins) 26. Rac1, and White does not need the rook to be on the a-file since it's closed. Meanwhile, Black's problems remain the same: The bishop on e6 is a bit stuck while White will slowly improve his position.

24. ... Bxf5 25. exf5 Qd8 26. bxc5 Nxc5



I breathed a sigh of relief here. I knew I had a better pawn structure and could try to push gradually.

27. Qd5 Qb6 28. Be3 Qb4 29. f6 Qe4 30. Qg5 Qg6?!

I could have kept the game double-edged with 30. ... Ne6 31. Qg3 g6, but I felt I was finally out of danger and preferred to simplify the position and play for a risk-free win. It's not what happened!

31. fxg7 Qxg5 32. fxg5 Ne6 33. Red1 Ra6 34. Rd5 Kxg7 35. Rf1 Rc4 36. Rb5 Ra8 37. Rbf5 Rc7 38. Bb6 Rd7 39. Rd5 Kf8 40. Bxa5?!

Exchanging pawns on the queenside favors Black, as it leaves me with one less structural weakness to suffer. White is better after 40. h4 Ra6 41. Bf2 Nc7 42. Rd3 Ne6 43. Kh2.

40. ... Ke7

I embarked on the wrong plan here, leaving my king unnecessarily exposed in the center. It's still defendable after 40. ... Rda7 41. Bd2 Rxa4 42. Rxd6 Kg8, with all the pawns on the same side.

41. Bc3?!

Danya seems to simplify too quickly here.

After 41. h4 Kf8 (41. ... Rda7 is not as good anymore, because the black king will be stuck in the center: 42. Bb4 Rxa4 43. Bxd6+ Ke8 44. Rdf5 Nd8 45. g3) the best thing for me to do is undo my last few moves and take the king back to g7, although 42. Kh2 leaves White with good winning chances.

41. ... Rxa4 42. Bf6+ Kf8 43. Rb1 Ra8 44. Rbd1 Ra6 45. Rb1 Ra8 46. Rbd1 Ra6 47. Rb1, draw.

I was well aware of how close I came to being in serious trouble in this game, so I was quite happy to escape with a draw in the end.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE, CLASSICAL VARIATION (E94)

GM Sam Shankland (2601 FIDE)
IM Daniel Naroditsky (2483 FIDE)
Imre Konig Memorial rapid (1), San Francisco, 09.22.2012

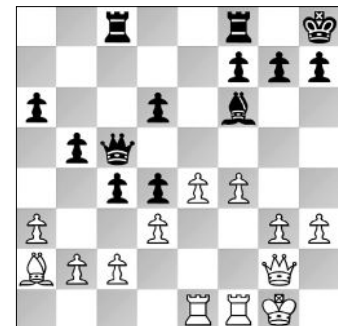
An early win over his most frequent opponent in slow time controls. (Across all time controls, Naroditsky played the most US Chess-rated games with GM Oleksandr Bortnyk.)

1. c4 g6 2. d4 Bg7 3. e4 d6 4. Nc3 Nf6 5. Nf3 O-O 6. Be2 e5 7. O-O Na6 8. Be3 Ng4

9. Bg5 Qe8 10. dxe5 dxe5 11. Qc1 c6 12. h3 Nf6 13. Bh6 Qe7 14. Rd1 Nc5 15. Bxg7 Kxg7 16. Qe3 a5 17. Rd2 b6 18. Rad1 Bb7 19. b3 Rab8 20. Bf1 Ba8 21. g3 Rbc8 22. h4 b5 23. cxb5 cxb5 24. Nd5 Bxd5 25. exd5 Nce4 26. d6 Qb7 27. d7 Nxd2 28. dxc8=Q Nxf3+ 29. Qxf3 Qxf3 30. Qc2 b4 31. Rd3 Qf5 32. Qd1 e4 33. Rd6 e3 34. f3 Rc8 35. Rd4 Qc2 36. Qxc2 Rxc2 37. Bc4 Rxa2 38. g4 Rd2 39. Rf4 Nd5 40. Re4 Nb6 41. Bf1 a4 42. bxa4 b3 43. Rxe3 b2 44. Rb3 Nxa4, White resigned.

BRILLIANT!

GM Isan Reynaldo Ortiz Suarez (2697)
GM Daniel Naroditsky (2696)
Millionaire Open (4), Las Vegas,
10.10.2014
Annotations by GM Levon Aronian



BLACK TO MOVE

24. ... g5!

A brilliant concept. The weakness of the white squares does not matter much, since the weakness of the g3-pawn makes the white king uncomfortable.

25. fxg5

White is a strong grandmaster who was champion of Cuba and a member of their national team, but this move is inaccurate and the next few moves show the psychological effect of the surprising 24. ... g5. White desperately needs to get counterplay, and the best move was not easy to find: After 25. b4 Black has to either free up the a2-bishop or retreat the queen to c7, after which the attack on the g3-pawn is delayed.

25. ... Qxg5 26. Rf5 Qh6 27. Kh2

This is a mistake. The task of defending against the cloud of black pieces was very difficult and required deep calculation and courage! It was absolutely necessary to activate the e1-rook by playing 27. Ref1 Be5 28. g4!. It looks losing due to 28. ... cxd3 (28. ... f6 allows White to survive with rook exchanges

after 29. g5) 29. cxd3 Qe3+ 30. Kh1 Qxd3, but White survives through a miracle: 31. Bxf7 Rc2 32. Bc4!!.

27. ... Be5

Now things are very grim for White. After Black fortifies the bishop on e5, the rooks will double on the c-file and penetrate the seventh or eighth rank.

28. Qe2

White had to play 28. Rg1, although Black should slowly win after 28. ... Rc7 and doubling on the c-file.

28. ... Rg8 29. Rxe5

My guess is that Ortiz Suarez blundered that after 29. Rg1 Black wins with 29. ... Qe3, since after 30. Qxe3 dxe3 White can't stop the ... e3-e2 and ... c4xd3 ideas in an acceptable way.

29. ... dxe5 30. dxc4 Qe6

Naroditsky makes a few inaccuracies from here, but the outcome is never in doubt.

31. b3 bxc4 32. bxc4 Rg6 33. Rf1 Rcg8 34. Rf3 Rg5 35. Bb3 Qg6 36. Qe1 f5 37. exf5 Rxf5 38. Rxf5 Qxf5 39. c5 Rf8 40. c6 e4, White resigned.

TROMPOWSKY OPENING (A45)

GM Loek van Wely (2663 FIDE)
GM Daniel Naroditsky (2620 FIDE)
London Classic rapid (9), London,
12.07.2014

1. d4 Nf6 2. Bg5 Ne4 3. Bf4 Nc6 4. Nf3 d5 5. e3 Bg4 6. h3 Bxf3 7. gxf3 Nf6 8. c4 e6 9. Qb3 Bb4+ 10. Nc3 0-0 11. 0-0-0 dxc4 12. Qxc4 Bxc3 13. bxc3 Nd5 14. Bg3 Qe7 15. Kb2 a5 16. e4 Nb6 17. Qb3 a4 18. Qa3 Qd7 19. c4 Na5 20. Qc5



20. ... a3+ 21. Ka1 Qa4 22. Rc1 Qb3 23. Qb5 Qxf3 24. Rg1 Qxe4 25. Qe5 Qxe5 26. Bxe5 f6 27. Bxc7 Nd7 28. Bg2 Rfc8 29. Bxa5 Rxa5 30. Bxb7 Rc7 31. Bf3 e5 32. Rgd1 exd4 33. Rxd4 Kf8 34. Bd5 Nb6 35. Be4 Rac5 36.

Bxb7 Nxc4 37. Rd3 g6 38. Bxg6 Ne5 39. Rxc5 Rxc5 40. Rxa3 Nxc6 41. Kb2 Ne5 42. Rc3 Rd5 43. a4, and White resigned.

RETI OPENING (A09)

GM Baskaran Adhiban (2630)
GM Daniel Naroditsky (2622)
Gibraltar Masters (7), Caleta,
02.02.2015

Annotations by GM RB Ramesh

I had the honor of working online with Danya regularly for a few months during the COVID-19 lockdown. He was heavily into streaming and during our time together I was amazed by his drive and energy on camera. I remember warning him about the risks of becoming an online celebrity — such a role brings loss of privacy along with comments and insinuations from practically everyone it seems.

Danya had an infinite hunger for analysis, and we had a few sessions with Praggnanandhaa, Karthikeyan Murali, and Aravindh Chithambaram among others during that time. He was very strong over the board, and even then he had expressed his wish to return to tournament play.

I have chosen to annotate this game in part because I have worked with Adhiban as well and so I understand a bit about both players and their enterprising styles.

1. Nf3 d5 2. c4 d4 3. b4

What can one expect when two creative players face each other? Fireworks from the beginning!

3. ... Bg4

What happened to knights before bishops?

4. Ne5

Now White moves an already-developed piece again, and on Move 4?

4. ... Bf5 5. e3 Qd6!?

I thought we weren't supposed to bring the queen out too early! 5. ... dxe3 6. fxe3 e6 would have led to normal-looking positions.

6. Nf3

Both players are giving themselves space to show their creativity from the word go. Such battles are a treat to watch! Nevertheless, we should note that White might have considered 6. f4!? with an advantage.

6. ... e5?!

After 6. ... dxe3 7. fxe3 Qxb4 8. Nc3 Nf6 White still has to show his compensation on the board.

7. c5

Now the e5-d4 pawn chain comes under scrutiny from the white pieces.

7. ... Qd5



8. Bb5+!?

8. Bb2 gives White a solid advantage, while after 8. Qb3!? Qxb3 9. axb3 f6 10. exd4 (10. Bb5+! is the engine suggestion, but we would need more analysis to understand this!) 10. ... Bxb1 11. Rxb1 e4 12. Ng1 Nc6 we have reached an interesting position.

8. ... c6 9. Ba4!

Very provocative moves from both players!

9. ... Bg4!?

All three minor pieces that are developed have moved more than once already!

If 9. ... Bd3 10. Bb3! Qe4 11. Bxf7+! Kd8! 12. Na3! with the idea of Bf7-c4, getting rid of the thorn on d3, followed by Qd1-b3.

10. Bb3! Bxf3 11. gxf3 Qd8

After 11 moves, both sides have managed to get ONE minor piece off the first rank!

12. Na3?!

12. f4! exf4 13. Bb2 dxe3 14. 0-0! is not for the faint of heart! I like to examine such ideas as possible training material for my students.

12. ... Na6!

Invoking distant opposition of the knights!

13. Nc4 Nxb4 14. Nxe5

Taking aim at f7.

14. ... Nh6!

Is there one opening principle that the players have not broken in this game?!

15. d3?

Too meek for a player called "The Beast"! 15. f4 f6 16. Ba3!? Bxc5 17. Qh5+ g6 18. Qxh6 fxe5 19. Qg7 is a total mess.

15. ... Bxc5?!

Black's play is easier after 15. ... f6 16. Nc4 Bxc5 17. e4 Nf7.

16. e4

It might appear that the h6-knight is feeling the heat, but Danya has understood the position very deeply.

16. ... Qe7 17. f4

Better is 17. Bxh6 Qxe5 18. f4! leading to complications that appear to favor White.

17. ... f6

Allowing Qd1-h5+. Possibly better was 17. ... 0-0-0 18. 0-0 f6.

18. Nf3

White passes up the chance to make use of the premature ... f7-f6 with 18. Qh5+ g6 19. Qxh6 fxe5 20. Ke2!, a clean way to defend the d3-weakness and connect the rooks! After 20. ... exf4 21. Bxf4 Rf6 22. Rag1 a5 Black is trying to create chances on the queenside, but now the computers note the cold-blooded only-move 23. Rxg6! hxg6 24. Qxg6+ Kd7 25. Qg4+! Ke8 when White can force a draw.

18. ... Nd5!?

I would not be surprised if the spectators were expecting 18. ... 0-0-0 instead.

19. Nh4!?

Both players feel it is best behavior to move their knights when the opponent does the same! 19. Kf1 Nc3 20. Qc2 0-0-0 appears to be the logical continuation for both sides.

19. ... 0-0-0

Finally someone castles ...

20. Kf1

... but the rule of symmetry only goes so far for Adhiban!

20. ... f5!?

Does anyone understand what is going on here?

21. exd5! Qxh4 22. h3



Preventing ... Qh4-h3+ and also keeping the h6-knight under control.

22. ... Bb4!?

Provocative to the core. Black is not worried about 23. dxc6 weakening his king position. Alternatively, the position after 22. ... Rhe8 is unclear.

23. Bb2??

The decisive mistake.

White should have accepted the challenge with 23. dxc6! bxc6 24. Bd2 and now Black has to find 24. ... Ng4! to justify his earlier play: 25. Qf3 Qxf2+! 26. Qxf2 Nxf2 27. Bxb4 Nxb4 28. Kg2 Rhe8! 29. Kxh1 Re3 with an unclear position.

23. ... c5

White has two bishops AND two doubled pawns! The main difference is in the king positions: Black feels extremely safe.

24. Rc1 Qxf4

Don't forget that Black also has two healthy extra pawns.

25. a3 Bc3! 26. Bxc3 dxc3 27. Rxc3 Qd4

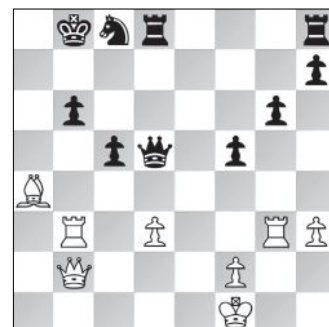
28. Qc2 b6

Black is quickly consolidating his position while White's pieces lack harmony and are scattered. The h1-rook is particularly sad.

29. Rg1 Kb8

The game is practically over for White at this point. Let's see how Danya brings home the win.

30. a4 Nf7 31. a5 Nd6 32. axb6 axb6 33. Ba4 Qxd5 34. Qb2 Nc8! 35. Rb3 g6 36. Rg3



Black has a decisive advantage after 36. Rxb6+ Nxb6 37. Qxb6+ Qb7.

36. ... f4?

A big mistake, letting White back into the game. Instead 36. ... Rhf8 keeps the pressure on.

37. Rg5! Qd6

Other possibilities here include 37. ... Qh1+ 38. Ke2 c4! 39. Qe5+! Kb7! 40. Rc3 Nd6! 41. Qd5+ Qxd5 42. Rxd5 cxd3+ 43. Rxd3 Kc7 44. Rc3+ Kb8 45. Rcd3 Nb7 46. Rxd8+ Rxd8 47. Rxd8+ Nxd8 48. Kf3 Ne6 49. Bd7 Nc5 50. Bb5 with counterplay, while 37. ... Qxg5



38. Rxb6+ Nxb6 39. Qxb6+ Kc8 leads to a perpetual.

38. Rb5?!

Strongest was 38. Rc3! Qd4 (38. ... Kc7? 39. Qb4! gives White lots of threats) 39. Rgxc5 Qxa4! 40. Rb3! Kb7 41. Rc4! when, despite being a full piece down, White has sufficient counterplay against the black king. If 41. ... Qd7 42. Rxc8! Kxc8 43. Rxb6.

38. ... Rhe8 39. Rgxc5 f3

Danya plays for mate with the idea of ... Qd6-h2 next, but the stronger 39. ... Qxd3+ 40. Kg1 Re6 really puts Black back in the driver's seat.

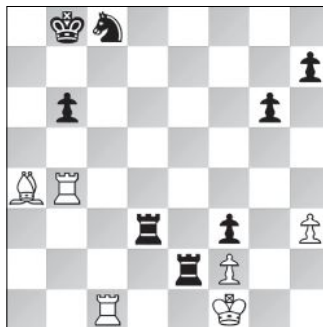
40. Rc1?

Another Move 40 blunder! White can give stiff resistance with 40. Qb4! Qxd3+ 41. Kg1 Re6 42. Qf4+.

40. ... Re2 41. Qb4 Qxb4?

41. ... Rxf2+! would have led to a pretty win for Black: 42. Kxf2 Qh2+ 43. Ke3 (43. Kxf3 Rxd3+ with mate soon) 43. ... Re8+! 44. Kxf3 (44. Kd4 Qf4+) 44. ... Qe2+ 45. Kf4 Rf8+! 46. Qxf8 Qf2+ and so forth.

42. Rxb4 Rxd3



It appears that Black should win easily with his two extra pawns, but the engine shows that it's not as simple as it looks.

43. Rf4!

Threatening both Rf4-f8 and Rf4xf3.

43. ... Re5 44. Rf8 Rc5 45. Rxc5?!

45. Rb1 Kc7 46. Rf7+ gives White counterplay.

45. ... bxc5 46. Ke1 Rd4 47. Bd1! Kc7 48.

Bxf3?!

It's perfectly understandable to decide to win back one pawn after being two pawns

down for so long. Still, the right move was 48. Rf7+! Rd7 49. Rxf3 Nd6 50. h4 when White has enough counterplay to hold.

48. ... Nb6?

48. ... Nd6! 49. Rh8 Rh4 is a cleaner advantage.

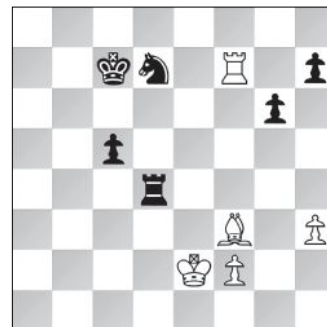
49. Ke2?!

49. Rf7+! Rd7 50. Rf8 is only a little better for Black.

49. ... Nd7?!

Stronger was 49. ... c4! 50. Rf6 Na4!.

50. Rf7!



U.S. Championship, 2015

Now the position is equal once again.

50. ... c4 51. Bg4??

The last mistake. 51. Ke3! Rd3+ 52. Ke2 would have kept the balance.

51. ... Kc6!

Now Danya finishes things cleanly and leaves Adhiban no chances.

52. Rxh7 Nc5! 53. Rg7 Rd6 54. Ra7 c3

White's bishop is unable to join the battle to stop the advancing c-pawn.

55. Ra3 Rd2+ 56. Ke3 Rd3+! 57. Ke2 c2 58. Ra1 Rc3 59. Kd2 Rc4 60. Be6 Nb3+ 61. Kd3 Nxa1, White resigned.

A very interesting fight, testing both players' nerves to the utmost. We will miss you Danya!

GIUOCO PIANO (C54)

GM Daniel Naroditsky (2633 FIDE)
GM Dmitry Jakovenko (2744 FIDE)
World Team Ch (4), Tsaghkadzor,
04.22.2015

Annotations by IM John Donaldson

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4

Daniel invariably played the Ruy Lopez in games played at classical time controls. In blitz and rapid he often experimented with 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. g3 and 4. d4 exd4 5. Nd5. So what is he doing here? The explanation is that Daniel had played Jakovenko as White in Gibraltar earlier in the year, and the latter had drawn comfortably with his favorite Berlin Defense to the Ruy Lopez. Knowing he needed to put the Russian grandmaster, who was rated in the top 20 in the world at the time, under pressure, Daniel, for the first and only time in his career, plays the modern version of the Italian Game, hoping to surprise his opponent.

3. ... Bc5 4. d3 Nf6 5. 0-0 0-0 6. Re1

This move is not as popular as 6. c3, 6. Bg5, 6. h3, 6. Nc3 or 6. Nbd2, but the idea was to avoid the sequence 6. c3 d5 7. exd5 Nxd5, which was doing well for Black 10 years ago. Today, it's still a reasonable choice for Black, but not as fashionable.

6. ... d6

6. ... Ng4 7. Re2 Kh8 8. h3 f5 is one reason 6. Re1 is not seen so often. The piece offer cannot be accepted as 9. hxc4? fxc4 10. Ng5 g3 provides Black with more than ample compensation.

7. c3 a6 8. Bb3 Ba7

Jakovenko anticipates the advance d3-d4 by getting his bishop out of the way.

9. h3

This prophylactic move is needed, as after 9. Nbd2 Black gets good play with 9. ... Ng4 10. Re2 Kh8 11. h3 Nh6 12. Nf1 f5 13. Bxh6 gxh6, when Black's active pieces and attacking chances compensate for the ragged pawn structure.

9. ... h6 10. Nbd2 Re8 11. Nf1 Be6 12. Bc2

Keeping the light-squared bishops on the board is Daniel's most aggressive option, retaining a potentially important attacking piece. A year earlier Gata Kamsky had played 12. Ng3 against Jakovenko, a game that Daniel was well aware of.

12. ... d5 13. Qe2



In his notes to the game, published in the July 2015 issue of *Chess Life*, Daniel wrote: "I was aiming for this type of position in my preparation. Black has an impressive space advantage, but no clear plan of action. White has no objective advantage, but I could sense that Jakovenko was out of his comfort zone." White's position is in some ways like an improved Philidor Defense with colors reversed, as the bishop on c2 has more potential than one on e7.

13. ... b5

This aggressive move sets White a problem, as the natural 14. Ng3?! is met by 14. ... dxe4 15. dxe4 Bc4!, which forces White to offer the trade of queens. This would have ended any hopes Daniel had to put Black under pressure, as Jakovenko has always been an exceptional player in simplified positions.

14. Rd1

This move signals White is thinking of playing d3-d4, which explains Jakovenko's next move.

14. ... d4 15. Ng3 a5 16. Bb3

This move might seem like a waste of time after White's 12th move, which specifically

avoided the trade of bishops, but the position has changed — Black was threatening to shut it out with ... a5-a4, so now it's the right decision.

16. ... a4 17. Bxe6 Rxe6 18. Nf5



Daniel writes: "A critical position. The cold-blooded 18. ... Ne7 would have kept the position balanced, but my opponent — after quite a bit of vacillation — decides to strike immediately."

18. ... a3

Jakovenko is looking for active counterplay on the opposite side.

Daniel writes that Jakovenko evidently rejected 18. ... Ne7 because of 19. Bxh6!? (19. N3h4 "would probably have been my choice") 19. ... gxh6 20. Nxh6+ Kg7 21. Ng5 Qe8 22. Nxf7 Ng6 23. Nxe6+ Qxe6 24. Ng5 Qd7 and "Black is definitely not worse."

19. Qc2

"Now, Black is compelled to release the central tension."

19. ... axb2 20. Bxb2 dxc3 21. Bxc3 Qe8 22. Qb2 Rb8 23. Rac1 Kh7 24. a3



"Timely prophylaxis against ... b5-b4. White's pieces are ideally placed, and the pressure has reached a zenith. With mutual time trouble approaching, my opponent desperately tries to alter the game." Black is doomed to a passive defense, though the position remains very solid.

24. ... g6?!

Dmitry manages to push the knight away, but his king is not completely safe anyway.

Black could also try 24. ... Rb7 hoping to follow up with ... Nf6-g8-e7, or even the immediate 24. ... Ng8. Both these moves leave Black very solid, but White with the easier, more active position to play. The move played by Jakovenko is easy to understand — it's awkward when your opponent has a knight on f5 — but this move and the next weaken Black's position.

25. Ne3 Bxe3?!

This move reduces Daniel's attacking pieces but at the cost of once again allowing White the long-term plan d3-d4. 25. ... Rb7 26. Nd5 Nd7 was better, if passive.

26. fxe3 Nd7 27. Be1!

This multipurpose move opens the c-file while preparing the bishop to get to a superior square on g3.

27. ... Rb6 28. Bg3 b4

Jakovenko is trying to activate his pieces, but Daniel doesn't let him.

29. a4!

Best! The immediate 29. d4 initially looks crushing but allows Black to escape with 29. ... exd4 30. exd4 Rxe4 31. Bxc7 Re2 32. Qb3 Na5 33. Qd3 Re3 34. Qf1 Rf6 35. axb4 Nb3 36. Rc2 Nxd4 37. Rxd4 Rxf3 38. Rf2 Rxf2 39. Qxf2 Re2 40. Qf3 Re3 and Black is holding.

29. ... Ra6 30. Qb3

The immediate 30. d4!? exd4 31. exd4 Rxe4 32. Qb3! Re3 33. Qc4 is even stronger, but Daniel's move is also good as Black cannot stop d3-d4 in any case.

30. ... Rb6

Black has hopes of obtaining counterplay by advancing his b-pawn, but this is too optimistic an approach. Instead he should have tried to stand his ground with 30. ... Qe7 31. d4 Na5 32. Qb2 Rec6, although after 33. Qe2

White retains a big advantage.

31. d4!**31. ... exd4?**

Opening up the position is a decisive mistake. Sidestepping d4-d5 with 31. ... Re7 was forced, although after 32. Rf1 f6 33. Qd5 Black is getting squeezed.

32. exd4 Na5

White wins after 32. ... Rxe4 33. Bxc7 Ra6 34. Qd3 because 34. ... Ndb8 is met by 35. Be5 trapping the rook.

33. Qd5

It's now a question of how White wants to win. Here 33. Qd3! was possibly a bit cleaner: 33. ... c5 34. dxc5 Rb7 35. Nd4 Ne5 36. Bxe5 Rxe5 37. Qa6 Rxe4 38. c6 wins material immediately.

33. ... c5 34. dxc5 Nf6

Dmitry has managed to activate his knights, but the position is still terrible.

35. Qd8

In time pressure, Daniel strives to keep the position under control by simplifying. 35. Qd3 Rb7 36. Nd4 Rxe4 37. c6 was also winning.



U.S. Championship, 2015

35. ... Ra6 36. Qxe8 Rxe8

Or 36. ... Nxe8 37. Nd4 Rxe4 38. c6 and the passed c-pawn decides the game.

37. Rd6! Rc6

37. ... Rea8 was more stubborn, although after 38. Nd2 Ne8 39. Rb6 Nc6 40. Nc4 White still has a dominating position.

38. Ne5

This breaks the blockade. Now the d-pawn is a monster.

38. ... Rxd6 39. cxd6 Nxe4

On 39. ... b3 40. d7 Rd8 41. Be1! wins.

40. d7 Rd8

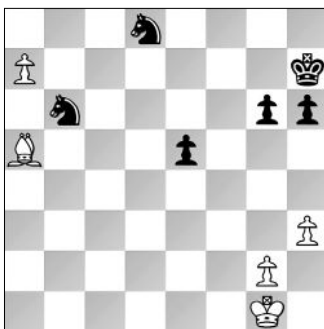


“Deep breath. With 30 minutes added after Move 40, I had all the time in the world to calculate, double-check, and quintuple-check. Many roads lead to Rome, but one stood out among the others.”

41. Be1! f6 42. Rc8 Nb7 43. Rxd8 Nxd8 44. Bxb4

“The ‘academic’ 44. Nd3 b3 45. Ba5 wins as well, of course, but I could not resist.”

44. ... fxe5 45. a5 Nf6 46. a6 Nxd7 47. a7 Nb6 48. Ba5!



The fulcrum on which everything stands. To stop the pawn, Black must not only give up a knight, but relegate the other one to passivity.

48. ... Na8 49. Bxd8

The resulting endgame is hopeless since White is effectively a piece up.

49. ... Kg7 50. Kf2 Kf7 51. Ke3, Black resigned.

“Needless to say, I was elated after this win, which enabled Team USA to tie the match. It was also my first victory over a super-grandmaster; hopefully, it is not my last (fingers crossed).”

SICILIAN DEFENCE, MARÓCZY BIND (B38)

GM Daniel Naroditsky (2708)

GM Andrey Gorovets (2585)

Chicago Open (8), Chicago, 05.25.2015

Annotations by GM Levon Aronian

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

5. c4 Bg7 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Nc3 d6

This more passive way of handling the Maróczy has lately been relegated to blitz. Nowadays people don't like to give away space and the center without any concrete ideas, so the normal way to play is either 5. ... Nf6 6. Nc3 Nxd4 7. Qxd4 d6 (at least not letting White take on d4 with the bishop, which they would rather do), or trying tricks with 6. ... Qb6 or 7. ... Ng4.

8. Be2 0-0 9. 0-0 Bd7

Black players generally use this line against inexperienced Maróczy players, but this game is a great example of Danya's positional understanding. From looking at Naroditsky's games I feel that, because of his big experience in King's Indian structures, he understood very well the role of space, and showed much better results in the games where he had a space advantage.

It's simpler and sounder to play 9. ... Nxd4 10. Bxd4 Bd7, and you will soon see why.

10. Nc2

The best move. One rule that applies to most positions where one side has a solid positional grip is, the side with the advantage must try and keep more pieces on the board. Control of space or the center means that you have more squares to maneuver and improve the placement of your pieces.

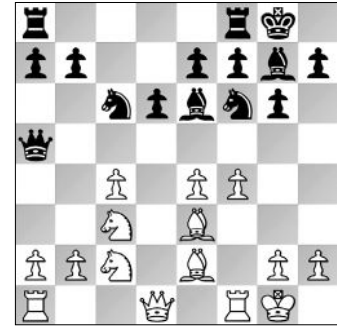
10. ... Be6

Black is vacating d7 for a typical maneuver of the f6-knight to c5, as well as planning ... a7-a6/... b7-b5 or ... a7-a5-a4.

11. f4

Stopping ... Nf6-d7 and underlining Black's space problem.

11. ... Qa5



Naturally, Black is trying to quickly get the f8-rook to c8 and start counterplay with ... a7-a6 and ... b7-b5. The engine suggests a very sad way to play for Black: 11. ... Na5 with the idea of meeting 12. b3 with 12. ... Ng4 exchanging some pieces. But I don't think people play King's Indian or offbeat Sicilian structures to suffer for a draw in some passive and slightly worse position.

12. g4

Bold, brave and original! White is trying to use the time factor in his favor.

12. ... Rfc8

This move looks OK, but in hindsight Black could play the other rook to c8 and be better prepared for Danya's idea.

13. f5

Played without any hesitation or doubt!

13. ... Bd7 14. g5 Ne8

Black might have been better off with the passive option 14. ... Nxe4 although, as I mentioned before, it would work better with a rook still on f8. One line could go 15. Nxe4 Bxf5 16. Ng3 Bh3 17. Rf2 Bxb2 18. Rb1 Bg7 19. Rxb7 Rab8 20. Rxb8 Rxb8 21. Qd5 Qxd5 22. cxd5 Rb1+ and Black is fighting for a draw in the endgame.

15. Nd5

This whole sequence is the reason I chose this game. If I didn't know that White was a GM, I would think they have no clue about handling Maróczy structures. How many times do we see people go beast mode in this opening?

15. ... e6

Logical. Very few people would dare to take on b2 and allow the rook to b7, but surprisingly it does not kill Black. The best way to react against 15. ... Bxb2 is 16. Rb1 Bg7 17. Nd4 Qd8 18. h4, continuing the siege on the kingside.

16. fxc6 hxc6

16. ... fxc6 is not a consideration: After 17. Nf6+ Bxf6 18. gxf6 the threat of f6-f7 forces Black to waste two moves putting the c6-knight on f7 which leads to a passive and lost position. Having two knights in a passive position can't lead anywhere good.

17. Nf6+ Bxf6

Correct again. After 17. ... Nxf6 18. gxf6 Bf8 19. Rf2 Black's position is close to hopeless: White's plan is to transfer the queen to h3 and threaten to put the bishop on h6 and/or swing the rook to f4 and h4.

18. gxf6 Qe5

This move is fine objectively but leads Gorovets to trouble. After 18. ... Ne5 19. b3 Bc6 20. Rf4 Nd7 White has many interesting options for aggressive play, but Black's position looks harmonious.

19. Bd3

Another excellent move.

19. ... Nxf6

This tempting move loses the game in spectacular fashion. Black had two decent options:

(a) 19. ... Qh5 is hard to assess. It looks losing after 20. Qxh5 gxh5 21. Bf4 Ne5 22. Bxe5 dxe5 23. Rae1, headed to e3 and either g3 or h3, but Black gets counterplay with 23. ... b5.

(b) The more human option is 19. ... a6, although after 20. Qf3 b5 21. c5 dxc5 22. Rad1 Black has to resort to winter fattening with 22. ... Qxb2 because they'll eventually have to sacrifice a piece on f6 and a tough defense is coming.

20. Qf3 Kg7 21. Rf2

White has the nasty threat of pushing the b-pawn to b5 and then playing Be3-d4. It's impossible to stop without material losses.

21. ... Rf8 22. b4 d5

There are many ways to win after 22. ... Nxb4 but the easiest is 23. Bd4 Qg5+ 24. Rg2 Nxc2

25. Bxc2 Qh4 26. Rg4 Qxg4+ 27. Qxg4 e5 28. Qg3 exd4 29. Qxd6.

It seems like Black could survive until we realize that after (a) 29. ... Bc6 White can play 30. e5 followed by 31. e6, weakening the king's fortress, and after (b) 29. ... Rad8 Black loses slowly with 30. Rf1 Nh5 31. Qxd4+ Kg8 32. Qxa7 Bc6 33. Qe3 and White can eventually play c4-c5, e4-e5, Bc2-b3 and e5-e6.

23. b5 dxe4 24. Bxe4 Nxe4 25. bxc6 Bxc6

Gorovets is trying his best to fight against the inevitable, but Danya's play is very precise.

26. Bd4 f6 27. Bxe5 fxe5 28. Qxf8+ Rxf8**29. Rxf8 Kxf8 30. Nb4**

If not for this move, Black could hope to save the game, but since the black pawns will fall like ripe plums without the bishop, there is no choice but to allow White to get the knight to the dominant position on e5.

30. ... Ba4 31. Nd3

The rest of the game is a good example of immaculate technique and does not require further comment. Naroditsky's play is a great example of an energetic and undogmatic approach in well-known structures.

31. ... Ke7 32. Re1 Ng5 33. Nxe5 Bc2 34. h4 Nf7 35. Nf3 Bd3 36. c5 Bc4 37. a3 Bd5 38. Kf2 Kf6 39. Kg3 Nh6 40. Ng5 Nf5+ 41. Kg4 e5 42. Ne4+ Ke6 43. Kg5 Bc6 44. Nd6 Nd4 45. Kxg6 Nf3 46. Rh1 b6 47. h5 bxc5 48. Nc4 Be4+ 49. Kg7 Kd5 50. Rc1 Ng5 51. h6 Bd3 52. Rg1 Ne6+ 53. Kf6 Nf8 54. Ne3+ Ke4 55. Re1 Nh7+ 56. Kg7 Kd4 57. Ng4 Ng5 58. Nxe5 c4 59. Nxd3 cxd3 60. Kg6 Nf3 61. Rd1 Ne5+ 62. Kg7 Kd5, and Black resigned.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E90)

GM Georgi Margvelashvili (2530)

GM Daniel Naroditsky (2616)

PRO League Stage (4), Chess.com, 01.30.2019

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Nf3 0-0 6. h3 e5 7. d5 Nh5 8. Nh2 Qe8 9. Be2 Nf4 10. Bf3 f5 11. g3 Nhx3 12. Bg2 fxe4 13. Be3 Nf4 14. gxf4 exf4 15. Bd4 f3 16. Bf1 Be5 17. Qd2 Bf5 18. 0-0-0 Nd7 19. Qe3 Nf6 20. Bxe5 Qxe5 21. c5 a6 22. Bc4 b5 23. cxb6 e.p. cxb6 24. Qxb6 Qf4+ 25. Qe3 Qxe3+ 26. fxe3 g5 27. Rdg1 g4 28. Nf1 h5 29. Ng3 Bg6 30. Kd2 Kg7 31. Bb3 Kh6 32. Bc2 Rae8 33. Ke1 Kg5 34. Kf2 h4 35. Nf1 g3+ 36. Nxc3 Ng4+ 37. Kf1 Nxe3+ 38. Kf2 Ng4+ 39. Kf1 hxc3 40. Rxc3 Kf4 41. Rhg1 Ne3+ 42. Kf2 Nxc2 43. Rg4+ Ke5 44. Rxc3 e3+ 45. Kg3 f2 46. Rf1 Nd4 47. Rg5+

Rf5 48. Rxf5+ Kxf5 49. Nd1 e2 50. Rxf2+ Kg6 51. Rxe2 Rxe2, White resigned.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E70)

GM Le Quang Liem (2714)

GM Daniel Naroditsky (2616)

PRO League Stage (7), Chess.com, 02.20.2019

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Nge2 0-0 6. Ng3 a6 7. h4 h5 8. Bg5 Nc6 9. d5 Ne5 10. Qd2 c6 11. 0-0-0 cxd5 12. cxd5 b5 13. Kb1 b4 14. Nce2 Nc4 15. Qxb4 Nxb2 16. Rd2 Nxe4 17. Qxe4 Rb8 18. Nd4 Nc4+ 19. Nb3 Nxd2+ 20. Bxd2 a5 21. Qa4 Bd7 22. Qxa5 Qc8 23. Bd3 Ra8 24. Qb6 Ba4 25. Rc1 Qg4 26. Rc4 Qd1+ 27. Rc1 Qg4 28. Rc4 Qd1+ 29. Rc1 Qg4 30. Rc4 Qd7 31. Rc7 Qd8 32. Rb7 Qc8 33. Na5 Qg4 34. Be2 Qxh4 35. Qb4 Qf6 36. Qxa4 Rfc8 37. Bc4 Rab8 38. Kc2 Rxb7 39. Nxb7 Qb2+ 40. Kd3 Qd4+ 41. Ke2 Rxc4 42. Qa8+ Kh7 43. Na5 Rc2 44. Nb3 Qc4+ 45. Kd1 Rb2 46. Qc6 Qd3 47. Ne2 Rxa2 48. Nec1 Qf1+ 49. Be1 Rxf2 50. g3 Rg2 51. Nd2 Qf5 52. Qc4 Bh6 53. Qe4 Rxd2+ 54. Bxd2 Qxe4, White resigned.

KING'S INDIAN ATTACK (C00)

GM Daniel Naroditsky (2615)

GM Hikaru Nakamura (2763)

PRO League Stage (10), Chess.com, 03.13.2019

Annotations by GM Boris Gelfand

Even though I didn't know Danya personally so well, in 2017 I helped prepare him online for the U.S. Championship and I highly enjoyed our training and our conversations. This summer, we were coaching together at a camp in Charlotte, where we had some wonderful dinners together with other members of the camp.

Every time we met, I was touched by his kindness, modesty, and love for chess. He was a big fan of blitz, and I regret that we didn't have a chance to play during my last visit to Charlotte. He will be dearly missed.

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. g3 d5 3. Bg2 e6 4. 0-0 Be7 5. d3 b6 6. Nbd2 Bb7 7. e4 c5 8. Re1

Danya is a big expert on the King's Indian, so I guess he felt comfortable playing it with reversed colors.

8. ... Nc6 9. Qe2

If White starts with 9. e5 Nd7 10. h4 Qc7 11. Qe2, Black will not hurry to castle short into White's attack: 11. ... b5 12. Nf1 (12. c4!?) 12. ... a5 13. N1h2 b4.

9. ... Qc7 10. Nf1 d4

Hikaru is also looking for a fight. Black could simplify a bit with 10. ... dxe4 11. dxe4 Nd4 12. Nxd4 cxd4 13. e5 Nd5, leading to a balanced game.

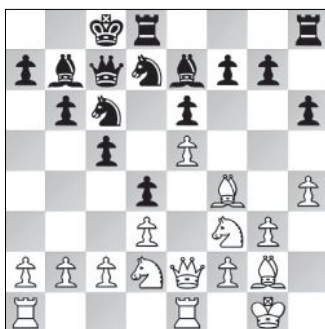
11. e5 Nd7

I would rather prefer 11. ... Nd5 12. h4 h6 13. N1d2, but it's a matter of taste.

12. Bf4 h6 13. h4 0-0-0!

Correct decision! 13. ... 0-0? 14. N1h2 will allow White to start a direct attack with 14. ... Rfe8 15. Ng4 (15. g4!?!; 15. a3!?) 15. ... Bf8 16. Qd2 Kh7 17. c3.

14. N1d2



14. ... Nb4?

This is the only mistake in the game, but a serious one. Black had to look for counterplay with 14. ... g5! 15. hxg5 hxg5 16. Nxg5 Bxg5 17. Bxg5 Rdg8 18. Bf4 Ne7 (18. ... Kb8!?) with full compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

15. Nc4 Nd5 16. Bd2

Now begins a direct attack against the king, and Danya conducts it almost flawlessly.

16. ... Nb8

Or 16. ... b5 17. Nd6+ Bxd6 18. exd6 Qxd6 19. c3 dxc3 20. bxc3 and Black's king is also weak.

17. a4 Ba6

Black is also in trouble after 17. ... Nc6 18. a5 b5 19. Nd6+ Bxd6 20. exd6 Rxd6 21. a6 Ba8 22. c3.

18. c3 dxc3 19. bxc3 Nc6 20. a5

The engine claims this is an inaccuracy and prefers 20. Reb1 and 20. Na3! but I will not criticize Danya for playing in the most direct way.

20. ... b5 21. Nd6+ Bxd6 22. exd6 Qxd6 23. c4 Nc7

It doesn't help to play 23. ... Ndb4 because of 24. Bxb4 cxb4 25. cxb5 Bxb5 26. Rec1 Kb8 27. Qe3. The more stubborn defense was

23. ... bxc4 24. dxc4 Rhe8 25. Rad1 Qc7, but it's hard to find, especially in a rapid game.

24. cxb5 Nxb5 25. Rac1 g5 26. hxg5 hxg5 27. Bxg5 Nbd4 28. Nxd4 Nxd4 29. Qe4 Kd7 30. Bf4 Qd5 31. Qxd5+ exd5 32. Rxc5



Black could already resign here.

32. ... Ne6 33. Rxd5+ Ke7 34. Bg5+ f6 35. Rxd8 Rxd8 36. Be3 Bxd3 37. Bxa7 Kf7 38. Bb6 Rd6 39. Rd1 Ke7 40. Bf1 Be4 41. Rxd6 Kxd6 42. a6 Ng5 43. f4 Nf3+ 44. Kf2 Nh2 45. Be2 f5 46. a7 Ng4+ 47. Ke1 Ba8 48. Bd3 Ke6 49. Kd2 Nf6 50. Bf2 Ne4+ 51. Ke3 Kd6 52. Bxe4 Bxe4 53. g4 Bc6 54. gxf5 Ke7 55. Bh4+ Kd6 56. Kd4 Bf3 57. f6 Ke6 58. Kc5 Bd5 59. f7 Kd7 60. Kxd5, Black resigned.

An impressive victory against one of the strongest players in the world.

LONDON SYSTEM, JOBAVA VARIATION (D00)

GM Daniel Naroditsky (2683)

GM Isan Reynaldo Ortiz Suarez (2662)

U.S. Masters (7), Greensboro, 08.24.2019

Annotations by GM Veselin Topalov

Daniel's tragic death will have a strong impact in the chess world for sure. I shared time with him during the three occasions I visited Charlotte for their summer camps. He was very polite and educated, and the kids adored him. But he had bad luck.

Some people are just born "honest" and with "integrity," and from that moment on it does not matter what they do, they will *always* be honest and 100 percent right. Vladimir Kramnik is such a person. Daniel had a dispute with Kramnik, but as I understand it, from the very beginning it was an impossible dispute to win.

In 1928, Ilf and Petrov published the novel *The 12 Chairs*, featuring the character Ostap Bender. During one of his many adventures through the vast Soviet Union, Bender visits

the small town of Vasjuki, claiming he is a famous grandmaster. During a press conference, if I remember correctly, Bender proclaimed, "The blond guy will always play better than the brunette and no amount of training can change that" (my translation). With Kramnik we have the same situation: No matter what he says, he is right. Except that Kramnik is not blond.

1. d4 d5 2. Nc3 Nf6 3. Bf4 e6 4. Nb5 Na6 5. e3 Be7 6. Nf3 0-0 7. a3

7. h3 gives the bishop on f4 a place to hide after a future ... Nf6-h5, while 7. Be2 makes sense as well. But Daniel has a different plan.

7. ... Nh5 8. Be5!



Bay Area International, 2019

I remember as a kid reading the books of Botvinnik, who said in a line in the Exchange Slav that Black's move ... Nf6-h5 should be met by Bf4-e5.

8. ... f6 9. Bg3 c5?



10. c4!

Suddenly White already has a serious advantage. At first glance it looks like Black did nothing wrong; he developed his pieces and went for the dark-squared bishop. But the knight on a6 is misplaced and the pawn structure, especially the pawn on e6, will be weak.

10. ... g6 11. Bd3 cxd4 12. exd4 Nb8

Too slow. It would have been better to wait for White to castle, exchange on g3, and put the knight on c7.

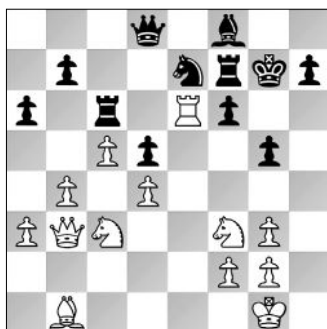
13. 0-0 Nc6 14. Re1 Nxd3 15. hxg3 Rf7 16. Nc3 Bf8 17. b4 Ne7 18. Qb3 Kg7 19. Re2

White has a big advantage and many good moves. Daniel prepares a typical Exchange sacrifice on e6, a strike that will completely destroy the black pawn structure.

19. ... Bd7 20. Rae1 Rc8

What I like about this game is that it shows how playing "normal" moves does not save one from trouble. Black didn't make any incredible mistake, and still he is objectively lost.

21. c5 g5 22. Rxe6! Bxe6 23. Rxe6 a6 24. Bb1 Rc6



25. Rxe7!

White did not need to do that, but it is a very elegant way to finish. Personally, the Exchange sacrifice is my trademark, and that's why I chose this game.

25. ... Qxe7 26. Nxd5 Qe6 27. Qd3 Kh8 28. Ne3 Rc8 29. d5 Qd7 30. d6

Full domination.

30. ... Bxd6 31. cxd6 Rc1+ 32. Kh2 Rxb1 33. Qxb1 Qxd6 34. Nf5 Qe6 35. Qd3 h5 36. N3d4 Qe5 37. Nh6 Rf8 38. Ndf5 Qe6 39. Qf3 Qe8 40. Qxb7 Qg6 41. Qe7, Black resigned.

Rest in peace, Daniel.

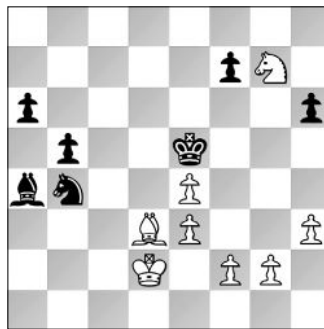
BULLET MONA LISA

DrNykkerstein (3273)

RebeccaHarris (3126)

Rated bullet game, *Lichess.org*, 05.04.2020

Annotations by IM Danny Rensch



WHITE TO MOVE

Danya's brilliance and "practical wit" was perhaps best on display when he played bullet chess. He was second to almost nobody when the seconds were running down! Obviously there are so many games that show Danya's strength both over the board and online, but like so many of his online fans, I remember his late-night streams where he'd go on long winning streaks, swindling his way to one victory after another in the fastest time controls.

I'll never forget one game in particular, played on his anonymous (and infamous!) RebeccaHarris account on *Lichess.org*. After being outplayed by DrNykkerstein (Magnus Carlsen) all game, Danya sensed an opportunity to pressure his opponent and shift the game down a path where White would have to find an impossible only-move to save himself.

39. f4+ Kd6!

I give this an exclamation point precisely BECAUSE it's bullet chess and in spite of the engine recommendation. Trying to hold with a move like 39. ... Kf6 would have been a sure way to get checked, tortured, and flagged. This shift at the right moment, ensuring there would be a pawn race where the bishop might be stronger ... it was perfect.

40. Nf5+ Kc5 41. Nxe6

You could almost argue that White should have kept the d3-bishop in a bullet game and not entered the passed pawn madness that would ensue. In situations like these, it's not how many pawns you have, but which ones will promote first. Astute analysts will note that White is still winning for the next few moves, but he's entering very dangerous territory from a practical perspective. Humans can assess context, and (with the eval bar off!) you might already sense the tides turning.

41. ... Nxd3 42. Kxd3 b4!

If I could manually control *Chess.com's* Game Review, I'd give this a "!!" (brilliant!!) symbol. Trying to hold onto the pawn with 42. ... Bb3 just invites White to start bringing the king over. You have to be ready to push the pawns and create the chance for a tempo move (... Ba4-b5+) to get going.

43. Nxf7 Bb5+ 44. Kc2 a5 45. h4 a4 46. Ne5 a3 47. h5 Ba4+ 48. Kb1 b3

The last few moves play themselves — almost literally given the speed of their input! — and once you see that White has to find one of two difficult paths to victory it's clear that Danya was already winning under the laws of bullet chess!

49. h6

So far, so good.

The second path was 49. Nd3+ Kc4 and now only 50. Nb2+!, which is so counter-intuitive during a time scramble that even bullet elite would struggle to find it. After 50. ... axb2 51. h6 White promotes in time to stop any checkmate threats.

For example: (a) 51. ... Kc3 52. h7 Bb5 53. h8=Q+ and White promotes with check just in time to stop ... Bb5-d3 mate and claim victory for himself.

Alternatively, if (b) 51. ... Bc6 52. Kxb2 (52. h7?? Bxe4+ 53. Kxb2 Bxb7 is a Black win, although anything might happen in a bullet scramble!) 52. ... Bxe4 53. g4 Bh7 54. f5 Kd3 (54. ... Kd5 55. e4+ Ke5 56. g5 Kxe4 (56. ... Bg8 57. g6) 57. f6 Bg6 58. f7 Bxf7 59. h7 and White wins) 55. f6 and the pawns are too much for Danya's bishop to handle.

Why is it so important to play this move first? One of the most underrated skills



22. R5f4! f5!**23. b4!**

A brilliant move. If 23. Rxf5?? Ng3+ 24. hxxg3 Bxxg2+ 25. Qxxg2 Rh6+ leads to checkmate, so White deflects the bishop and enables the c4-knight to land on e3 and target f5.

23. ... Bxb4??

The losing mistake. Black is still holding with 23. ... b5! 24. Bxe4 Bxe4 25. Nd2 Bxb4 26. Nxe4 fxe4 27. Qxb5 a5 28. Rxe4 h6. To my “old school” GM-eye, this looks like a healthy pawn up after 29. Re2, but then the engine comfortably plays 29. ... Qc6 and claims

equality. It does make sense: The e5-pawn is well-contained, and Black can create active play on the queenside.

24. Ne3?!

24. Rxf5 wins material: 24. ... Rh6 (24. ... Bc5 25. R5f4 and the knight is trapped; the tactic doesn't work because ... Re6-h6+ is answered by Rf4-h4) 25. Bxe4! Bxe4 26. R5f4 Bd5 27. Ne3 Be7 28. Qd3 Be6 29. Nf5 Bxf5 30. Qxf5 with e5-e6 coming up.

24. ... g6 25. a3 Be7 26. Nxd5 Qxd5 27. Qf3!

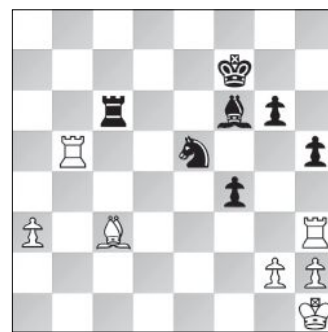
A key tactical nuance. Now White has the serious threat of taking on e4 followed by Rf4-f8+.

27. ... Nc3

If 27. ... Rc8 28. g4! and White's initiative will keep growing.

28. Bc4?!

Good enough: 28. Bc2!! Qxf3 29. R4xf3 Ne4 30. Bb3 is not that easy to find.

28. ... Rxc4 29. Qxd5 Nxd5 30. Rxc4 b5 31. Rc8+ Kf7 32. Rf3 Nb6 33. Rc7 Nc4 34. Bc3**Nxe5 35. Rh3 h5 36. Rxa7 f4 37. Rb7 Rc6 38. Rxb5 Bf6**

White is winning. Danya's conversion technique is nothing less than perfect from here onward.

39. Rb1 Ng4 40. Be1!

The only move.

40. ... Rc2 41. Rf3 g5 42. h3 Ne5 43. Rf2 Rc4 44. Ra2!

Rook behind the passed pawn.

44. ... f3 45. a4 Re4 46. Bg3 fxg2+ 47. Kxxg2 Nd3 48. a5 h4 49. a6 hxxg3 50. a7 Nf4+ 51. Kxxg3 Re3+ 52. Kg4, Black resigned.

A classy finish.

RUY LOPEZ, STEINITZ DEFENSE DEFERRED(C72)

GM Fabiano Caruana (2871)

GM Daniel Naroditsky (2702)

U.S. Championship (5), St. Louis, 10.11.2021

Annotations by GM Fabiano Caruana

This game from the 2021 U.S. Championship was the last time I faced Danya in classical chess. We both had a slow start in the tournament and were eager for a big fight.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 d6

Danya was known for his varied and often unusual opening repertoire. His preference in particular was for more strategic opening variations, with less emphasis on concrete preparation. He was one of the greatest experts in the King's Indian Defense, which also explains his choice of opening for this game — the Steinitz Deferred shares many similar themes with the KID.

5. 0-0 Bd7 6. c3 Nf6 7. Re1 g6 8. d4 Bg7

This is the major starting point for the modern theory of the Steinitz. After this game, I was inspired to pick the opening up myself,



After defeating Caruana, U.S. Championship, 2021

and played it in more than a dozen games, including in a match against MVL. We can see the similarities with Danya's beloved KID, as White often will push d4-d5 with a structure identical to that of the classical King's Indian variations.

9. Nbd2

Because of Danya's response to this move, it is now considered theoretically harmless. The modern approach to play for an opening advantage is 9. h3! 0-0 10. Bc2.

9. ... exd4!

Black can also castle first and capture next, in almost all cases transposing. Either way, this is an impressive hypermodern idea: Black completely cedes the center, and will instead attack the vulnerable white pawns from a distance, with the pride of Black's position — the bishop on g7 — bearing down on d4.

10. cxd4 0-0



Danya had four games from this position and won all of them!

11. h3

Some prophylaxis against future ... Bd7-g4 ideas.

11. ... Nb4!

Very timely! This knight is aiming for d3, and will temporarily distract White with this threat. The trade of one pair of pieces is also useful, as Black suffers a slight space disadvantage.

12. Bxd7

12. Bb3 allows 12. ... Nd3, when Black gains the advantage of the bishop pair.

12. ... Qxd7!

Now Black has ideas of both ... Nb4-d3 and ... c7-c5. It looks logical to uncover the bishop with 12. ... Nxd7, but it removes pressure on the e4-pawn, and after 13. Nb3! White is able to consolidate.

13. Qb3

Preventing ... Nb4-d3 and gaining a tempo on the knight.

Now 13. Nb3 can be met by 13. ... Qa4!. The queen cannot be removed from this square, and puts a lot of pressure on White's queenside. Next, Black can continue by attacking the e4-pawn with 14. ... Rfe8.

13. Nf1 is logical, to maneuver the knight to g3, and Black must act quickly: 13. ... c5! 14. a3 (14. d5? c4! and the knight invades on d3) 14. ... Nc6 15. d5 and now 15. ... Nd4! is a dynamic pawn sac. After 16. Nxd4 cxd4 17. Qxd4 Rfe8 the threat is 18. ... Nxe4. White is up a pawn, but Black's activity fully compensates for it. Play could go 18. Qd3 Qb5! 19. Qxb5 axb5 20. Ng3 Nxd5! and due to the pin on the e4-pawn, Black regains the pawn and is at least no worse.

13. ... a5!

It is very useful to get this move in before retreating, as Black will later gain space on the queenside with ... a5-a4. We will see in the game how important this is.

14. a3 Nc6 15. Nf1

Getting the knight around to g3 is logical, but perhaps it was more critical to maneuver the knight to c3 via b1.

15. ... a4! 16. Qd3 Na5!

The point of 13. ... a5 is making itself felt. The knight is ready to position itself on the beautiful b3-square, where it is outposted and also attacks d4.

17. Bg5

I was generally happy to exchange off bishop for knight, as this takes some pressure off my center.

17. ... Nb3

There is nothing wrong with this, but my engine prefers 17. ... b5 with ideas of ... Na5-c4. It is also possible to stay flexible with 17. ... h6!? and only later decide where to place Black's a5-knight.

18. Rad1 h6

Logically, Danya did not want to tolerate my bishop on g5 for too long.

19. Bxf6 Bxf6 20. N1d2

Attempting to simplify the position, although this trade does not harm Black. 20. Ne3!?, aiming for the d5-square, was perhaps a better choice.

20. ... Na5!?

Keeping it complicated! An interesting

choice, but it's fully in Danya's style to retain more tension in the position. 20. ... Nxd2 21. Qxd2 Bg7 was a perfectly fine choice. White has the center, but Black has a strong, unopposed bishop and a superior queenside structure. The position is roughly equal.

21. Nb1

Continuing to maneuver, but this gives Black time to expand and consolidate the bind on the queenside. It was a good time to act concretely with 21. e5!? dxe5 22. Ne4. After 22. ... Bg7 23. Nxe5 Qd5 I wouldn't be counting on any real advantage here, but I would probably have survived this game!

21. ... b5!

Black's knight looks to the c4-square.

22. Qc2 Bg7 23. Nc3 c6



Black has an excellent queenside structure. Although I was still not worse here, we will see how the weakness of b2 haunts me in the future.

24. e5!?

It is very logical to break free, as all my pieces were ideally placed and it's hard to imagine how to improve them. On the other hand, opening the position is generally beneficial to the side with the bishop.

24. ... Rfe8

This prevents any e5-e6 ideas I may have been aiming for.

25. Ne4 Nc4!

The knight is beautiful here.

26. exd6 Nxd6 27. Ne5

I remember being somewhat excited here, as my pieces are very active. Although that is true, Black is very solid and has excellent pieces as well. You can rarely break a healthy position with activity alone. Danya's understanding of the position was excellent — Black was never even slightly worse in this game.

27. ... Qf5!

Instructive! Black utilizes the pin on the e4-knight to provoke the weakening g2-g4.

28. g4

A must, as I have no way to tolerate this pin.

28. ... Qe6 29. Nc3?!

Not a big mistake, but certainly a step in the wrong direction. I was trying to keep the position complex, but my ambition led me astray.

29. Nxd6 Qxd6 30. Nxc6 wins a pawn. However, Black has enough compensation after a variety of quiet moves such as 30. ... Bf6!?, planning ... Kg8-g7 and eventually looking to take the c-file. The issue for White is that if the d-pawn ever advances, b2 becomes very weak. Black has full compensation, although objectively White should also not be risking much.

29. ... Rac8

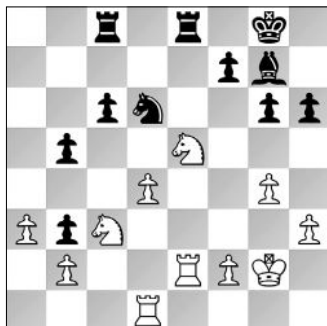
Defending c6 and preparing Black's next move.

30. Re2

I try to double on the e-file.

30. ... Qb3!

A trade of queens and the appearance of a pawn on b3 is strategically dangerous for White, but I didn't want to let the queen live on b3.

31. Qxb3 axb3 32. Kg2?!

This is the first really careless move in what was up to now a very well-played game. After this I will face a great deal of danger.

In hindsight, 32. f4! would have been safer, supporting the knight and preparing against ... Bg7xe5/... Nd6-c4 ideas.

32. ... c5!

An impressive, dynamic sacrifice! This must have been so tempting for a natural King's Indian player, opening the way for the monster on g7. Danya's eyes were set on the weakness of the b2-pawn.

33. dxc5 Nc4! 34. Nxc4 Rxe2

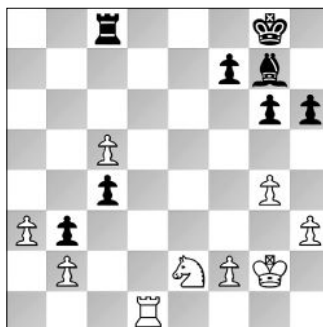
The pressure was very much on now. I could still save this game, but I'd have to calculate very well under time pressure.

35. Nxe2?

This is probably the decisive mistake.

35. Nd6! would hold: 35. ... Bxc3 36. Nxc8 Rxb2 (36. ... Bxb2 37. Rd3! eliminates the dangerous b3-pawn. After 37. ... Bxa3 38. Rxb3 Bxc5 39. Rxb5 Rxf2+ Black is up a pawn and White still has to be accurate to hold, but objectively White is fine) 37. c6! and Black has a tremendous passed pawn, but so does White!

Now 37. ... Be5 prevents c6-c7, but then White has 38. Ne7+ Kf8 39. Nd5! Rc2 40. Nb4!, the only move to hold! The wayward knight finally comes home: 40. ... Rc4 41. Rb1 b2 42. Nd3, and finally White will eliminate this dangerous pawn and save the game.

35. ... bxc4**36. Rc1?**

After this natural move all hope is lost.

White would have chances to hold, although perhaps not many, after 36. Nc3! Rxc5 (36. ... Bxc3 37. bxc3 is also a highly dangerous endgame, but objectively White can hold this. I'll spare the variations, but suffice to say White will have to play a series of very difficult only-moves to survive) 37. Rd8+! (37. Rc1 Kf8! is just slowly lost for White — without activity, the long-term weakness of b2 is decisive) 37. ... Kh7 38. Rb8! when the rook is ideally placed behind Black's b-pawn. After 38. ... Bxc3 39. bxc3 Re5! the rook comes to e1, and most likely Black will win. For reasons difficult to comprehend, the rook must be on e1 and not d1. A very complex endgame!

36. ... Bxb2 37. Rxc4 Bxa3

Now there is no way to eliminate Black's b-pawn.

38. c6 b2 39. Nc3 Bf8!

A nice maneuver. The bishop cleaned up

on the queenside and is now coming back home! On g7, the bishop will defend the passed b-pawn.

40. Nb1 Bg7

White has b2 blockaded, but the pawn can never be eliminated. Now Black's only task is to round up the c6-pawn.

41. Kf3 Kf8!

The king comes in to assist.

42. h4

White could activate the king with 42. Ke4 Ke7 43. Kd5, but it allows Black's rook to invade: 43. ... Rd8+! 44. Kc5 Rd1, winning a piece (or more).

42. ... Ke7 43. h5 Kd6

The c6-pawn is falling, and the rest is trivial. I tried to hang on as long as possible, but we both knew what would happen.

44. hxg6 fxg6 45. Rb4 Rxc6 46. Rb7 Be5**47. Nd2 Rc2 48. Ke3 Kc6 49. Rb3 Rc3+**

A final simplification. Without rooks, the knight is eternally tied to guarding the b2-pawn.

50. Rxc3+ Bxc3 51. Nb1 Bb4 52. f4 Kd5 53. Kd3 h5

The h-pawn will fatally distract White's king.

54. f5 hxg4 55. fxg6 Ke6 56. Ke4 g3 57. Kf3 Bd6, White resigned.

Seeing no way to continue, I resigned. A phenomenal game from Danya! Precise opening play, good strategic vision and accurate technique crowned this achievement.

FRENCH DEFENSE (C02)

GM Daniel Naroditsky (2701)

IM Michael Bodek (2497)

U.S. Masters (9), Charlotte, 11.28.2021

Annotations by FM Peter Giannatos

1. Nf3 e6 2. e4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. d4

By transposition we get to a rare line of the Advance French. There was a time that I was playing this quite regularly online and in over-the-board blitz games, and it caught Danya's eye. We had some chats about the variation; soon he began playing it quite a bit online and, as we see here, OTB. He affectionately began calling this line the Giannatos Variation. While I was flattered, I knew that this was an idea of Aron Nimzovich and was more than 100 years old.

4. ... cxd4 5. Bd3

This is the main idea — a temporary sacrifice of the d4-pawn in order to accelerate development. The e5-pawn is a thorn in Black's position and hampers their development, so White seeks swift piece play on the kingside and in the center.

5. ... Nc6 6. 0-0 Qc7

In my view, the best lines for Black involve a quick ... f7-f6, challenging control of the e5-square. It can be played on this turn, or Black can play 6. ... a6 to prevent 7. Bb5 first.

7. Bf4 h6

Here Bodek goes for an ambitious, albeit risky, approach, seeking to expand on the kingside and to work around the e5-pawn.

8. Bg3 g5 9. Nbd2

A typical scheme in this line. White completes development and brings the knight to b3 to gang up on the d4-pawn.

9. ... Bg7 10. Nb3

Danya welcomes the capture of his e5-pawn, should Black like to open lines in front of his king!

10. ... Nge7

Technically 10. ... Nxe5!? is possible, but understandably Bodek doesn't want to open the floodgates: 11. Nbx4 Nxf3+ (11. ... Ne7 is better but still risky) 12. Qxf3 e5 13. Nb5 Qd8 14. Rae1 is a disaster for Black.

11. Nfxd4

The correct capture, giving the white queen some action on the kingside.

11. ... Bxe5

Bodek wants to remain a pawn up. He understands that he is behind in development, but his position remains solid. He's looking for a fight.

12. Qh5!

A natural follow-up to White's 11th. This places a lot of pressure on the kingside and pins the f7-pawn, opening up doors against e6. It also helps connect the rooks, which can race to the center of the board.

12. ... Qb6

12. ... Bxg3 13. fxxg3 only accelerates the attack.

13. c3 Bd7 14. f4!

Danya was a natural attacker. These moves didn't have to be questioned, but the real idea will be seen next move.

14. ... gxf4



Or 14. ... Bxf4 15. Bf2 with similar ideas.

15. Bf2!!

The whole idea — now there are fatal discoveries in the air. Black must retreat, costing him time that he does not have.

15. ... Qc7

Not 15. ... Nxd4?? 16. Qxe5, while after 15. ... Bxd4?! 16. Nxd4 nothing has changed except Black has given away the dark squares.

16. Nb5 Qb8

Now Black cannot castle queenside, which he would have desperately wanted to do. White must now act with great force to justify his play.

17. Rae1

A natural good move.

17. ... Bg7?

The final mistake. Kicking the knight out with 17. ... a6 was by far the best option here, although Black is still under heavy pressure: 18. N5d4 Qd6 19. Nxc6 Nxc6 20. Bb6 prevents queenside castling and ensures White massive compensation.

18. Bc5

Another tempo; White threatens 19. Bd6.

18. ... Nc8 19. N3d4

Threatening 20. Nxe6, thanks to the pin on the f7-pawn. Black's position is crumbling.

19. ... Ne5 20. Rxf4

Danya's pieces are at their maximum, and Black can no longer provide resistance.

20. ... b6



21. Rxf7!!



L to R: Ramesh, Topalov, Giannatos, Polgar, and Naroditsky; Charlotte, 2024

The final blow, or, as we'd call it in Charlotte, a CDF. For now, I will not share what the acronym stands for. Let's just say it's similar to *coup de grâce*.



World Rapid and Blitz Championship, 2024



U.S. Masters, 2023

21. ... Nxf7 22. Nxe6

The floodgates have opened.

22. ... bxc5 23. Ng5+ Ne7 24. Qxf7+ Kd8

25. Qxe7+ Kc8 26. Qxc5+, Black resigned.
A really fantastic attacking game by Danya, and one true to his style. Might others begin to take up the Gianna... I mean, the Nimzovich Variation, in the future? Time will tell!

CARO-KANN DEFENSE (B10)

IM Brian Escalante Ramirez (2557)

GM Daniel Naroditsky (2700)

U.S. Masters (4), Charlotte, 11.25.2022

Annotations by WGM Katerina Nemcova

Danya had a way with words. That's what struck me the most when I first met him, and what kept astonishing me over the years. Whether he was trash-talking during a casual game, commenting on a broadcast, or just having a conversation in any of the languages he knew, his poetic sentences, witty remarks, and the speed at which he created them felt unreal.

Along with his brilliance in chess and language, Danya was incredibly kind and genuine. Once after I suffered a tough draw at the U.S. Championship a few of us hung out and went over it together. With Danya's commentary, it turned into one of the funniest analysis sessions I've ever experienced. I remember how the frustration of the game faded, and I was simply grateful to be surrounded by such amazing people in the chess world.

I chose to annotate this game because it captures the wide range of Danya's chess abilities — his patience, deep positional understanding, and sense of when to strike and when to sacrifice. It's one of those games that is not only instructive but a work of art.

Danya dedicated so much of his life to the chess world. He gave us beauty and inspiration and became one of the most influential voices in modern chess. He deserved so much more in return. Thank you for everything, Danya. We were lucky to have you.

1. e4 c6 2. Nf3 d5 3. exd5 cxd5 4. Ne5!?

An interesting idea in this opening. White usually responds with 4. d4 to control the center. However, this early knight jump avoids future pins with ... Bc8-g4 and complicates the development of Black's c8-bishop.

4. ... Nc6

4. ... f6?? fails tactically to 5. Qh5+ g6 6. Nxc6! hxc6 7. Qxh8.

5. d4 a6!?

Stopping any pins with Bf1-b5.

The main continuation here is 5. ... Nf6. Daniel was well familiar with this position, as he had it at least seven times with the white pieces against players such as Firouzja, Abdusattorov, and Vachier-Lagrave. For example, 6. Bb5 Bd7 7. Nxd7 Qxd7 8. c3 e6 9. 0-0 Bd6 10. Nd2 (Naroditsky – Abdusattorov, World Rapid Ch, New York 2024) and I think White is a little better with the bishop pair.

6. c4 e6 7. Nxc6 bxc6 8. Bd3 Bd6 9. 0-0 Ne7

A great square for the knight, as Daniel's plan is to challenge the center with ... f7-f6.

9. ... Nf6?! is not good here — the knight will be pinned, both bishops are restricted, and there's no counterplay in the center after 10. c5! Bc7 11. Bg5 0-0 12. Re1.

But 9. ... Qh4!? is interesting. White can meet the double attack with 10. f4 Qf6 11. Be3 Ne7 and a double-edged position. White has more space and better development but some issues with an awkward e3-bishop. Black will finish development and target the b-file and the central pawns.

10. c5 Bc7 11. Nd2 0-0 12. Nf3

12. f4! is probably more accurate, preventing central breaks and blunting the c7-bishop. The game will show how powerful such an attack can become.

12. ... Ng6

The cagey 12. ... f6!? might improve, as it stops White from taking a knight on g6 for another move.

13. Re1

Perhaps continuing development with 13. Bd2!? is better, and there's a concrete trick: if 13. ... f6? 14. Bxg6! hxc6 15. Nh4 and Black is in trouble. A sample line is 15. ... Qe8?! 16. Qc2 Kh7?! 17. f4! Bd7 18. Rae1.

13. ... f6! 14. Qc2

The immediate 14. Bxg6?! is a mistake, as after 14. ... hxc6 15. Nh4 Qe8 16. Qc2 Kh7 Black is better with the ... e6-e5 push coming and great diagonals for the bishops.

14. ... Qe8!?

Patience is a quality of a master. Daniel does not rush to break in the center but prepares patiently while improving his army first.

14. ... e5 creates complications, but there's no clear advantage after 15. dxe5 fxe5 16. Bxg6 hxc6 17. Nxe5 Bf5 18. Qc3 Be4 19. f3 Qf6! 20. Ng4 Qh4.

15. h4!?

It's easy to look at this position and think White is for choice, with the coming h4-h5 push and a potential kingside attack. But Black is actually totally fine. Let's see how Daniel turned things around.

15. ... Kh8!

Prophylaxis, avoiding any checks on h7.

16. Bd2 Qf7

Another patient move, inviting White to push the h-pawn. Now Black can double on the f-file and consider the ... e6-e5 push in the center.

17. h5?

Invitation accepted, but it's a mistake!

17. ... Ne7! 18. h6

18. Bxh7? isn't check, giving Black time for 18. ... Qxh5 19. Bd3 g5 20. Re2 Kg7! 21. Rae1 Rh8.

18. ... g5!

Now an avalanche of pawns rushes towards the white king. The rest of the game is a masterclass in growing an initiative and understanding pawn structures.

19. g3 Qh5! 20. Kg2?



Inviting the capture of the h6-pawn, but likely overlooking Daniel's different — and incredibly strong — tactical idea.

After 20. Nh2 Qxh6 21. b4 Bd7 White is still worse, but it requires some skill to convert the advantage. Here Black plans ... Qh6-g7 and the ... e6-e5 push.

20. ... e5!!

Brilliant! Black advances his e-pawn while creating threats, taking space, and freeing up his light-squared bishop. All the black pieces are suddenly invested in checkmating the white king. Of course 20. ... Qxh6?? loses to 21. Rh1.

21. Rh1 Qf7 22. Ne1

Played to avoid the powerful ... e5-e4 fork. 22. dxe5? only helps Black to open the f-file.

22. ... e4!

Played anyway!

23. Be2 f5!?

Time to roll! Giving up the g-pawn is a small price to pay for the central pawn wedge. The more conservative 23. ... Ng6 first also makes a lot of sense.

24. Bxf5?



White's boldness knows no bounds! Let's see how greed is punished.

24. ... f4! 25. Bh5

Taking another pawn is too much: 25. gxf4 Ng6! (no need to recapture immediately!) 26. Kg1 Bxf4 27. Bxf4 Nxf4 and with the open g-file the end is near.

25. ... Ng6 26. g4 f3+!

This pawn chain belongs in a museum with other works of art.

27. Kf1 a5!

Mixing a tactical mindset with positional play, shifting from the kingside to the queenside. It is time to improve the placement of pieces, especially the light-squared bishop. The a6-f1 diagonal looks perfect.

28. Qd2 Ba6+ 29. Kg1 Qe6!

Another quiet hammer blow, removing the queen from a pin to target the g4-pawn and freeing the g6-knight to attack.

30. Nc2 Nf4!



Everything is in place for the invasion.

31. Bxf4

If White doesn't take the knight, it becomes an attacking force: 31. Ne3 Ne2+! 32. Kf1 Rg8! (a powerful intermediate move to control the g-file) 33. Bh4 Ng3+! 34. Kg1 Nxf5! and Black wins.

31. ... Rxf4! 32. Ne3 Rg8!

Such piece harmony! Daniel makes attacking chess look effortless.

33. Rh4 Qxh6

Now there are dangerous pins on the h5-bishop and the e3-knight.

34. Qc1



34. ... Rfxg4+!

Take a moment to savor this position — the coordination of Black's army is a wonder.

35. Nxg4

Mate is unstoppable after 35. Rxf4 Rxf4+ (35. ... Qxh5 works too) 36. Nxg4 Qxh5.

35. ... Rxf4+! 36. Rxf4

36. Bxf4 Qxh4 is mate in 3.

36. ... Qxh5!

Black is down two Exchanges, but the bishops rule the board. Mate on h2 is the current threat.

37. Rg3

If 37. Rf4 Qg5+ 38. Kh1 Qg2 mate.

37. ... Bxf3 38. fxf3 f2+!

The final touch of this masterpiece. Now the queen and bishop collaborate to lure the king into mate.

39. Kxf2 Qh2+ 40. Ke3

Or 40. Ke1 Qe2 mate.

40. ... Qxg3+, White resigned.

For the record: 41. Kd2 Qd3+ 42. Ke1 Qe2 mate.



U.S. Open, 2025

QUEEN'S PAWN OPENING (A41)

penguimgm1 (2979)

DanielNaroditsky (3124)

Rated blitz, Chess.com, 01.24.2023

Annotations by GM Andrew Tang

Like so many in the chess community, I knew Danya as a great man, player, commentator, and educator. On a more personal level, I knew Danya as someone who was genuine, had a great sense of empathy, and treasured chess more than anyone else I know.

There really aren't many people who love speed chess more than I do, but Danya was always ready to go for a bullet marathon. When I was a typical college student with a degenerate sleep schedule, Danya would still outlast me until I had to beg him to stop playing so I could get enough sleep to make it through class the next day (our lifetime record is as even as it gets, with almost 5,000 games on *Chess.com* alone). He loved online chess and speed chess so much that I thought it was fitting to honor him with

one out of his many memorable attacking blitz wins against me.

1. d4 d6 2. c4 Nd7 3. Nc3 e5 4. e4 g6 5.

Nge2 Bg7 6. f3

Danya loved attacking with the King's Indian Defense, and I would stubbornly defend with my Sämisch. We probably played over a thousand games in Sämisch structures over the years.

6. ... Ne7 7. Bg5

A typical developing plan, hoping to provoke ... h7-h6 and then gain a tempo attacking the pawn with Qd1-d2.

7. h4 is another common idea when Black chooses setups with the knight on e7. Since there's one less defender on h5, a quick h4-h5 makes a lot of sense. And if 7. ... h5 the g5-square is weakened. White has a nice position after 8. Bg5.

7. ... h6 8. Be3 0-0 9. Qd2 Kh7 10. d5 f5

11. h3 a5

It was probably preferable to keep the option of ... b7-b5 alive, aiming to thwart what I was cooking up with 11. h3. After 11. ... a6 12. g4! b5! White's center is too loose as it is attacked from all angles.

12. g4!

With ... b7-b5 nearly ruled out, I can get away with this, threatening to bust open the kingside and attack.

12. ... f4 13. Bf2 b6

The opening has been a success for me — I can shut down Black's kingside ideas by playing h3-h4, and with my space advantage in the center and on the queenside I should be the only one who can play for a win.

14. Nc1 Nc5 15. Nd3 Ba6 16. b3 Qd7 17.

Rb1 Rfb8 18. Qc2 Ng8 19. Be2 Bf6



Both players have been reasonably rearranging their pieces, but now I play a careless move that lets Danya take the initiative and never let it go.

20. 0-0?

Too focused on beginning action on the queenside, I relax my control over the h4-square.

20. ... Qe7!

I had no idea I was already worse! Danya takes impressive control of the kingside.

21. Kg2 Bh4 22. Bg1

It was probably time to grovel and defend with 22. Rh1 Bxf2 23. Nxf2 Qh4 24. Rbg1 when I am very passive but reasonably solid.

22. ... Bg3

Inching his way into my position. With the queen coming to h4, dislodging this bishop is actually a very difficult task.

23. Nf2 h5 24. a3

Trying to begin some counterplay on the queenside, but Danya does not care.

24. ... hxg4 25. hxg4 Qh4 26. b4 Kg7!!

An incredibly strong idea in a blitz game, played in 13 seconds. While the engine thinks 26. ... Nd7 is equally strong, 27. c5 allows me to regain some counterplay; for example: 27. ... Bxe2 28. Qxe2 Kg7 29. c6 Ndf6 30. Nb5 and at least I have prospects on the queenside.

27. bxc5 Nf6! 28. Rfc1

After 28. cxd6? Rh8! there is no good defense to ... Bg3xf2 followed by mate.

28. ... Rh8



29. Kf1?

This is a serious blunder, trying to get my king to safety. 29. Ncd1 was necessary, when my kingside is barely hanging together, but my pieces have almost no moves. Black is still better despite being down a piece.

29. ... Bxf2!

As usual, Danya does not miss tactical opportunities.

30. Bxf2 Qh1+ 31. Bg1 Rh2!

The idea is ... Qh2-g2+ followed by ... Qg2xg1+, when my position is falling apart.

32. Qd3 Rah8!

Clinical. Danya gains a tempo by threatening ... Qh1xg1+, followed by ... Rh2-h1+ and ... Rh8-h2 mate.

33. Ke1 Qxg1+ 34. Kd2 Qxc5 35. Na4 Qf2 36. Rf1 Qg3 37. Rg1 Rg2 38. Rxxg2 Qxxg2 39. Nxb6

Desperation — might as well try something in a blitz game.

39. ... cxb6 40. Rxb6 Bc8 41. Rxd6 Nxxg4 42. c5

Or 42. fxg4 Bxxg4 followed by ... f4-f3.

42. ... Rh1! 43. Rb6 Rd1+!, White lost on time.

With ... Ng4-f2+ coming, Danya finds the nicest way to cap off a typically impressive performance. Even in blitz, Danya was capable of producing inspired attacks that the rest of us would be proud to have played in a classical game.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, CLOSED VARIATION (B23)

DanielNaroditsky (3107)

Dr_Tyger (3068)

Rated blitz, Chess.com, 10.18.2025

Seen on his penultimate stream, this bril-

liant attacking effort is one of Naroditsky's final games.

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. Nc3 Nd4 5. e5 Nxb5 6. Nxb5 Nd5 7. Qe2 a6 8. Nd6+ exd6 9. exd6+ Be7 10. d4 cxd4 11. Bg5 f6 12. Bd2 0-0 13. Qc4 Rf7 14. Qxd5 Bf8 15. 0-0-0 Qb6 16. Bf4 Qc6 17. Qxd4 b6 18. Rhe1 Bb7 19. Re3 Qb5 20. Rb3 Qf5 21. Rxb6 Bc6 22. Rxc6 dxc6 23. Qc4 c5 24. Be3 Rd8 25. Bxc5 g6 26. b4 Kg7 27. Rd5 Qd7 28. Nd4 Kg8 29. Kb2 f5 30. f4 Bg7 31. Re5 Kf8 32. Ne6+ Kg8 33. Nxd8, Black resigned. ♠

Daniel Naroditsky was a Chess Life columnist from 2014-2020. Check out his columns in our Digital Archive at uschess.org.



The KID

GM Daniel Naroditsky displays his skill in the King's Indian.

BY **BRUCE PANDOLFINI**



THE TRAGIC PASSING OF Grandmaster Daniel Naroditsky has touched the entire chess community. One of America's strongest players, "Danya" was a much-admired coach, commentator, and writer, as well as a universal wellspring of creative ideas. His dynamic and informed videos, often elucidating his thoughts as he was playing, attracted as many as a half-million followers worldwide. As a competitor, he had a profound grasp of positional play and an attuned awareness for tactical precision and subtlety. This 2025 game with Maciej Sroczynski in a *Chess.com* Titled Tuesday event is an illustrative encounter.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E94)

Maciej Sroczynski

GM Daniel Naroditsky

Titled Tuesday, *Chess.com*, 06.03.2025

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6
5. Nf3



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

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

5. **Par Score 5** **0-0**
The standard setup for the King's Indian Defense. Black is now ready for action.

6. **Be2**
In turn, White prepares kingside castling. **

6. **Par Score 5** **Na6**
You may accept *full credit* for 6. ... e5.

7. **0-0**
Tucking the king away to safety. **

7. **Par Score 5** **e5**
This is the usual counter for Black.

8. **Re1**
White has various moves here, such as 8. Be3 and 8. Bg5. On 8. d5, play might continue 8. ... Nc5, and if 9. Qc2, then 9. ... a5. **

8. **Par Score 5** **Bg4**
Seen slightly more often is 8. ... c6 (*full credit*). With 8. ... Bg4, Black's intention is to trade off this less-useful bishop.

9. **Be3**
White develops and bolsters his center. **

9. **Par Score 5** **exd4**
Black opens the long diagonal for the g7-bishop. You may accept *full credit* for 9. ... Bxf3.

10. **Nxd4****

10. **Par Score 5** **Bxe2**
Naturally, Black is happy to swap bishops.

11. **Qxe2****

11. **Par Score 5** **Re8**
Black starts his assault against the only pawn on a central square. You may accept *full credit* for 11. ... c6 or 11. ... Nc5, both of which are consistent with Black's plans.

12. **f3**
White slightly weakens e3 to secure his e-pawn. The position is about even. **

12. **Par Score 5** **c6**
A typical move in similar complexes. You may accept *full credit* for 12. ... Nd7 or 12. ... Nc5.

13. **Qf2**
This eyes a kingside attack and gets the queen off the e-file, though it does soften the square d3. **

13. **Par Score 5** **Nd7**
Unveiling the long diagonal and planning to shift the knight to e5. You may accept *full credit* for 13. ... Nc5.

14. **Rad1**
Sroczynski activates his last piece, trying to exploit the half-open d-file. **

14. **Par Score 5** **Ne5**
Black assumes this nice post and is ready for some coordinated piece play.

15. **b3**
White protects c4, though he does weaken security along the a1-g7 diagonal. **

15. **Par Score 5** **Nc5**
And now the other knight comes into play, with a fork threat at d3.

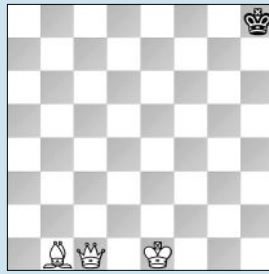
16. **Qc2**

ABCS OF CHESS

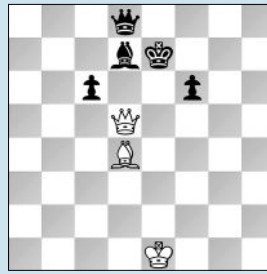
THESE PROBLEMS ARE all related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 63.

DECEMBER EXERCISE: Whenever you go through a lengthy calculation, there's always a chance you've missed something. So it's best to look again with fresh eyes as a final check. You will be surprised how often this catches something critical. As Daniel Naroditsky wrote: "Time and again, players lose because they make rash decisions. Therefore, you always have to remind yourself — don't hurry."

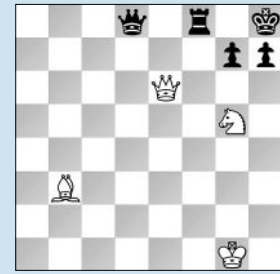
PROBLEM 1 Mating net



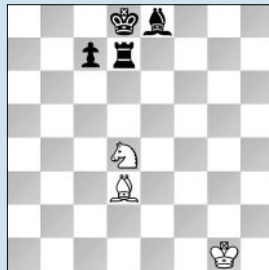
PROBLEM 2 Mating net



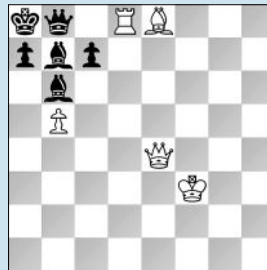
PROBLEM 3 Mating net



PROBLEM 4 Mating net



PROBLEM 5 Mating net



PROBLEM 6 Mating net



The white queen avoids the fork, while trying to hold the fort. **

16. Par Score 5 Qa5
Thematic here is 16. ... a5 (*full credit*), but Danya has his eye on some foreseeable tactics.

17. Nde2
White removes a potential target on d4 and reinforces c3, while hitting at the unguarded d6-pawn. **

17. Par Score 5 Rad8
Black protects d6 and now has all his pieces poised for warfare.

18. Bg5
This is a mistake. It's walking right into Danya's skillful deployment. Safer was 18. Bf2. **

18. Par Score 7 Ncd3
Oops! This is made possible because of the black queen's surprise assault on g5.

19. Bxd8
White takes the Exchange, but there's more to it. **

19. Par Score 7 Qc5+
Black doesn't take back quite yet, but instead inserts a strong in-between move. White must jettison a piece.

20. Nd4
To be sure, 20. Kf1 is met by 20. ... Qf2 mate, while 20. Kh1 leads to 20. ... Nf2+ 21. Kg1 Nxd1+, and Black winds up at least a piece ahead. **

20. Par Score 3 Qxd4+

21. Kf1
Clearly, the retreat 21. Kh1 fails to 21. ... Nf2+. **

21. Par Score 6 Nxe1
With both queens now hanging, Black is safe from 22. Rxd4 Nxc2.

22. Kxe1
If instead 22. Rxe1 Rxd8, Black is up a bishop. **

22. Par Score 6 Qg1+
Now on 23. Ke2, there follows 23. ... Qxg2+ 24. Ke1 Nxf3 mate (*1 bonus point*).

23. Kd2
But this doesn't save the day. **

23. Par Score 6 Bh6+
And this forces mate, which can only be delayed: 24. Bg5 Bxg5+ 25. f4 Bxf4+ 26. Ke2 Qxg2+ 27. Ke1 Nf3 is mate, and a very nice little gem indeed. Therefore ...

24. White resigned.



POSITION AFTER 23. ... Bh6+

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

Remembering Danya

A conversation, a book, and a column elicit unexpected connections.

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN



THE CHESS WORLD LOST A valued player, author, and streamer when GM Daniel Naroditsky passed away in October at age 29. I knew Danya mostly by reputation, though I met him when he was a young boy at the World Youth Championships in Belfort, France, in 2005. As he grew up and his career blossomed, I retreated to a family life. Living on opposite coasts, our paths rarely crossed.

But we did have a meaningful encounter at the FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Championships in New York in December 2024. That tournament produced an iconic image of Naroditsky at the end of his win over Vasyl Ivanchuk. While the veteran GM was wailing in despair, Danya had no thoughts of celebrating his noteworthy victory. He sat solemnly with his head down, clearly feeling his opponent's pain.

I wrote in the May 2025 issue about the many heart-warming conversations I had in the players' lounge during the event. My chat with Danya was much in my mind when I wrote those words. He approached me to discuss a game I had included in my book *Liquidation on the Chessboard*. It was from the late, great U.S. Chess League in 2014; Danya was a young but well-established grandmaster at the time, as was his opponent, Conrad Holt.

Danya admired how I had extracted hidden truth about the endgame. I was proud of my work, too, but it is easier to find great resources with assistance from a chess engine.

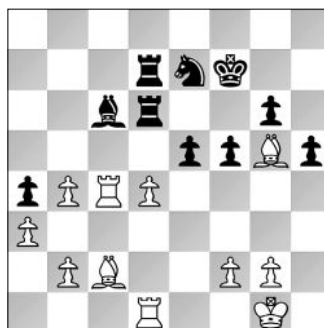
FRENCH DEFENSE, TARRASCH VARIATION (C06)

GM Daniel Naroditsky (2587)

GM Conrad Holt (2574)

U.S. Chess League, 2014

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 Be7 4. Ngf3 Nf6
5. e5 Nfd7 6. Bd3 c5 7. c3 Nc6 8. 0-0 c4 9.
Bc2 b5 10. Re1 b4 11. Nf1 a5 12. Ng3 h5
13. h4 Bxh4 14. Nxh4 Qxh4 15. Be3 Nb6
16. Qd2 Qe7 17. Bg5 Qf8 18. Qf4 a4 19.
Nf5 exf5 20. e6 fxe6 21. Qc7 Ne7 22. Qxb6
Kf7 23. cxb4 Bd7 24. Qd6 Qd8 25. Re5 g6
26. Rxd5 Bc6 27. Qxd8 Rhxd8 28. Rc5 Rd6
29. Rxc4 Ra7 30. a3 Rad7 31. Rd1 e5



Danya has emerged on top in this spirited duel. White should preserve his assets with 32. Rc5! exd4 33. b5 Bb7 34. Bxa4, when the bishop pair should shepherd home White's queenside passers.

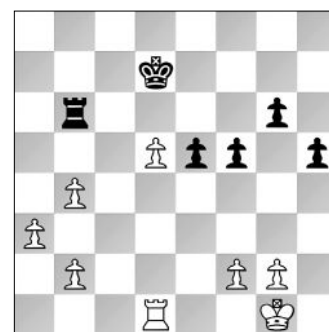
32. Bxe7?

Another case of how simplifying can complicate matters!

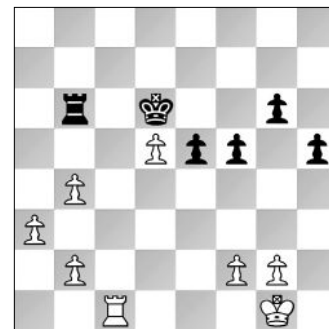
32. ... Kxe7 33. Rxc6 Rxc6 34. Bxa4 Rcd6
35. Bxd7 Kxd7 36. d5 Rb6

(see diagram top of next column)

White now has four extra pawns on the queenside, but they're stuck in the mud. Black's two-pawn majority should not be underestimated, but with accurate play White should be able to win. 37. g3 would be a good start, e.g. 37. ... Kd6 (37. ... g5 38. Rh1 or 37. ... e4 38. f3) 38. f4.



37. Rc1?! Kd6



38. Rc6+??

Naroditsky follows through on his faulty plan. Liquidating into the pawn ending often produces a direct line to the end of the game; this move not only fails to win, it should actually lose with best play!

There was still time to change course with something like 38. Rc4 Kxd5 39. b3 followed by advancing the queenside pawns. Even this is on a razor's edge, as White needs to play precisely: 38. ... Rc6 39. b5 Rxc4+ 40. bxc4+ Kc5 41. f4! or 38. ... g5 39. a4 Rc6 40. a5! Rxc4 41. bxc4+ Kc6 42. Kh2!. In both cases, White needs the exclaim move to win.

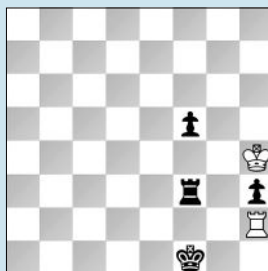
38. ... Rxc6 39. dxc6 Kxc6?

Take first, ask questions later! Who wouldn't automatically remove this pawn before

LIQUIDATING WITH DANYA

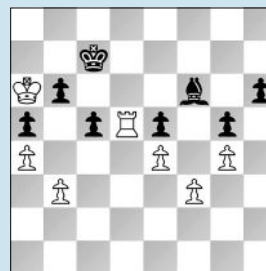
▶ IT WOULDN'T BE ENDGAME School without a bit of homework. Test your mettle on these positions taken from games played by Daniel Naroditsky. Try your hand at these two problems. Can you find the right moves? The answers appear on page 63.

PROBLEM 1 How does Black proceed?



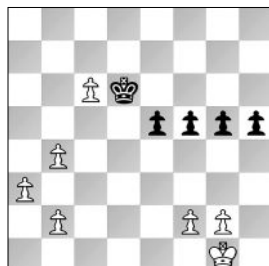
BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2 Find the right move for White.



WHITE TO MOVE

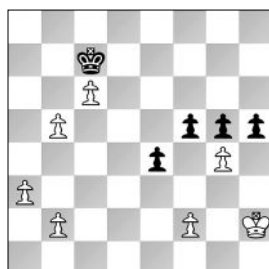
b4-b5 consolidates three connected passers? Yet there was a higher priority — the fine point Danya alluded to. Black can create a decisive phalanx of pawns with 39. ... g5!!.



POSITION AFTER 39. ... g5

This move is especially remarkable because the four queenside pawns will force a promotion if Black is reduced to king moves, but White cannot get there: 40. b5 e4! 41. a4 (it doesn't help to approach with the king, e.g. 41. Kf1 h4 42. Ke2 g4 or 41. Kh2 f4! [see note below] 42. Kh3 g4+ 43. Kh4 g3 44. fxg3 e3) 41. ... h4 42. a5 Kc7 and Black clinches the point. While Black's king has stopped White's bubble of pawns, the white king cannot deal with imminent passers on the e- and h-files.

There is one subtlety worth mentioning here. If Black dawdles with 41. ... Kc7? in the note above, White has the amazing resource 42. g4!!.



POSITION AFTER 42. g4

Either capture is met by 43. Kg3. Having successfully “bunched” Black's majority, White turns the tables and wins!

40. f4!

The idea behind the liquidation. White clusters the black pawns together to cover them with the king. Black would have had a decisive advantage if White allowed 40. ... g5.

40. ... exf4!

40. ... e4? makes a protected passed pawn, but Black has to do more than just shield his pawns from capture.

41. Kf2 Kb5 42. b3 g5 43. Kf3 h4 44. Ke2

White cannot force Black's king to give ground without moving his own, enabling the black pawns to get where they need to go.

44. ... g4 45. Kf2 Kc6 46. a4 Kb6 47. b5

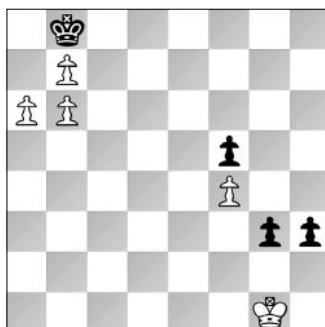
Kc5 48. b4+ Kb6 49. Kg1

49. Kf1 f3! 50. gxf3 h3! 51. Kf2 h2 52. Kg2 g3 draws as in the game.

49. ... g3!

Now if 49. ... f3? 50. gxf3 g3 51. Kg2 and wins.

50. Kf1 f3! 51. gxf3 h3 52. f4 Kb7 53. a5 Ka7 54. b6+ Kb7 55. b5 Kb8 56. a6 Ka8 57. b7+ Ka7 58. Kg1 Kb8 59. Kh1 Ka7 60. b6+ Kb8 61. Kg1



With his king moves exhausted, Black is finally forced to burn his kingside pawns. The problem is that the pawns have advanced too far, and White will not have time to release the stalemate with a6-a7+.

61. ... h2+ 62. Kh1 g2+ 63. Kxg2 h1=Q+ 64. Kxh1, draw.

The dialogue in New York demonstrated our shared appreciation of endgame subtleties. But the bond goes deeper, as Naroditsky was my immediate predecessor in the stewardship of the *Chess Life* endgame column.

This magazine boasts a great tradition in its coverage of this vital phase of the game. I began my tenure in June 2022 with reverence for the great work of Pal Benko and Edmar Mednis from my childhood. Danya's column was entitled “The Practical Endgame,” in homage to Mednis' long running column.

I was not really following *Chess Life* for much of Naroditsky's tenure (2014-2020). I have just belatedly pored through Danya's columns with admiration. He utilized a great selection of classic and contemporary (sometimes personal) games with great topic selection, clear explanations, and refreshing doses of wit. It's amazing when you consider Danya was still a teenager when he started writing the column.

Only now do I see that he gave my book a shoutout in his November 2015 column “The Art of Liquidation.” He wrote that he read *Liquidation on the Chessboard* with “great eagerness” and opined that the book “tackles one of the most important (and underappreciated) aspects of endgame practice.”

The respect goes in both directions. Danya, I wish I had known you better. ♠

For all of Daniel Naroditsky's *Chess Life* endgame columns, visit our Digital Archive at uschess.org.

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TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

new.uschess.org/national-events-calendar

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

Nationals

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 National K-12 Grade Chess Championships

DECEMBER 12-14, 2025 — WA TLA# 53295
Site: Spokane Convention Center Address: 334 W Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, WA 99201 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: US Chess Federation • nationalevents@uschess.org • new.uschess.org/k12-2025-championships

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2026 US Amateur Team South

JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL TLA# 53017
Site: Westgate Lakes Resort & Spa Address: 9500 Turkey Lake Road, Orlando, FL 32819 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Charles W Hatherill • kingsgambit50@earthlink.net • 7027430305 • thevillageschessclub.org

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • HERITAGE EVENT

2026 World Amateur Team & U.S. Team East

FEBRUARY 14-16, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52576
Site: Parsippany Hilton Address: 1 Hilton Ct., Parsippany, NJ 07054 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: New Jersey Chess Federation • esdoyle@aol.com • njscf.org

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

21st Annual KCF All-Girls National Championships

APRIL 10-12, 2026 — IL TLA# 52639
Site: Hyatt Regency McCormick Place Address: 2233 S Dr Martin Luther King Jr Dr., Chicago, IL 60616 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Renaissance Knights Chess Foundation • david.heiser@renaissanceknights.org • allgirls.knights.org

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

2026 National Open

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540
Site: Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino Address: 3000 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, NV 89109 Overall Prize

Fund: \$125,000 GP Pts: 200 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Vegas Chess Festival • vegashess@gmail.com • 702-930-9550 • vegashessfestival.com

Grand Prix

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

2025 US CHESS GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

Name	State/Ctry	Pts
1. GM JIANCHAO ZHOU	MA	616.00
2. EMMANUEL CARTER	NC	145.00
3. THOMAS FANG	NC	112.00
4. GM FIDEL CORRALES JIMINEZ	CA	105.00
5. FM DANILA POLIANNIKOV	MA	105.00
6. GM ALEXANDER IVANOV	MA	97.00
7. GM SEMEN KHANIN	TX	97.00
8. GM AWONDER LIANG	WI	89.00
9. GM PRAVEEN BALAKRISHNAN	VA	85.00
10. IM SAM SCHMAKEL	IL	83.00

2025 Awards

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

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

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

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess International Civil Aviation Day Grand Prix

DECEMBER 7, 2025 — NC TLA# 52458
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,228 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

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

2025 Rhode Island State Chess Championship

DECEMBER 13, 2025 — RI TLA# 52980
Site: New England Institute of Technology Address: 1 New England Tech Blvd., East Greenwich, RI 02818 Overall Prize Fund: \$2,000 GP Pts: 30 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Ocean State Chess Association • frank@oceanstatechess.com • (401) 212-1335 • oceanstatechess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess World Choral Day Grand Prix

DECEMBER 14, 2025 — NC TLA# 52459
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,228 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

2nd Annual Dragon Knight Chess Winter Solstice Grand Prix

DECEMBER 21, 2025 — NC TLA# 52981
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,228 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.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 • chess-tour.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 • chess-tour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

16th annual Eastern Open Blitz Championship

DECEMBER 28, 2025 — VA TLA# 50762
Site: Hyatt Regency Crystal City Address: 2799 Richmond Highway, Arlington VA 22202 Overall Prize Fund: \$500 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chess-tour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

2nd Annual Dragon Knight Chess National Chocolate Candy Day Grand Prix

DECEMBER 28, 2025 — NC TLA# 52985
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,228 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

34th annual North American Blitz Championship

DECEMBER 29, 2025 — NV TLA# 50984
Site: Horseshoe Casino Resort (formerly Bally's) Address: 3645 Las Vegas Blvd. S, Las Vegas, NV 89103 Overall Prize Fund: \$3,000 GP Pts: 30 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chess-tour.com

ccessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chess-tour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

New Year's Day 2026 Ticks (3rd Annual) Jeff Jones Memorial GP

JANUARY 1, 2026 — NC TLA# 52993
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall Prize Fund: \$764 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.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 • chess-tour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
Site: Embassy Suites by Hilton Address: 10450 Corkscrew Commons Drive, Estero, FL 33928 Overall Prize Fund: \$10,600 GP Pts: 40 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Jon Haskel • jon@bocachess.com • 561-302-4377 • bocachess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

2nd Annual Dragon Knight Chess National Spaghetti Day Grand Prix

JANUARY 4, 2026 — NC TLA# 52990
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,228 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.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 • kingregistration.com/event/timjust26

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess National Milk Day Grand Prix

JANUARY 11, 2026 — NC TLA# 52992
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,228 GP Pts: 10 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

CFCC 2026 Winter Open & Scholastic

JANUARY 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 53026
Site: Holiday Inn Orlando Lake Buena Vista Address: 13351 State Road 535, Orlando, FL 32821 Overall Prize Fund: \$2,000 GP Pts: 40 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Central Florida Chess Club (CFCC) • info@centralflchess.org • (407) 312-6237 • centralflchess.org/cfcc-2026-winter-open-and-scholastic-week-end-tournamentnd Ptx: Enhanced rand

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

17th annual Golden State Open

JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — CA-N 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 • chess-tour.com

PLEASE NOTE

DEADLINE FOR PRINT TLA SUBMISSIONS

TLAs appearing in *Chess Life* must be uploaded online on the 10th, two months prior to the issue cover date in which the ad is to appear. (For example, October TLAs must be uploaded no later than August 10th.) TLAs uploaded past this deadline cannot be published without special approval by US Chess.

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: \$4000-2000-1000-800-600-500-400-300-300.

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.

Top 6 sections entry fee: \$245 at 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 Bring set, board, clock if possible- none supplied.

USCF membership required; see chessevents.us for special rates.

Special room rate at Horseshoe \$109-139. Use link at chessevents.us or 800-833-3308. Rooms may sell out by mid-Nov.

Entry: chessaction.com. No mail entries, no checks. Refunds, \$15 service charge.

Questions, email: chesstour.info, director@chess.us.

Blitz tournament 12/29 10:30 pm. Enter online by 7 pm 12/29 for lowest fee.

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. 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.

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 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 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 for more rules, info.

Hotel rates: \$137-137-162-187, link at chessevents.us, reserve by 12/4 or rate may increase.

Entry: chessaction.com. \$15 charge for refunds. No mail entries.

Email: director@chess.us.

Blitz tournament 12/28 9:30 pm, enter at site 12/28 by 9:10 pm.

17th annual Southwest Class Championships

Feb 12-16, 13-16 or 14-16, 2026 (Presidents Weekend), Irving, Texas

\$35,000 guaranteed prizes, GM & IM norms possible!

Master Section: 9-SS, Feb 12-16, 40/80, SD/30; d30. **Expert through Class E:** 7 rounds, Feb 13-16 or 14-16, 40/80, SD/30; d10 (3-day rds 1-2 G/60, d10).

Westin Dallas Fort Worth Airport, 4545 W John Carpenter Fwy, Irving TX 75063. Free parking, free airport shuttle. **A US Chess American Classic Tournament!**

In 7 sections, top 3 FIDE-rated. Unr may enter A-E. See peakrating.us.

Master (USCF 2100/up or FIDE 2000/up): \$4000-2000-1500-1200-1000-800-600, clear/tiebreak 1st \$200, FIDE U2300/Unr \$1800-900. FIDE ratings used, 200 GPP (Enhanced).

Expert (1900-2199), **Class A** (1700-1999), **Class B** (1500-1799): each \$2000-1000-500-300-200.

Class C (1300-1599), \$1600-800-500-300-200.

Class D (Under 1400), **Class E** (Under 1200): \$800-400-300-200-100.

Unrated prize limits: E \$100, D \$200, C \$300, B \$400, A \$500.

Mixed Doubles: \$1000-600-400. All sections OK, rds. 1-7, must average under 2200. **See chessevents.us.**

FIDE ratings used in Master. In **Expert/below:** Feb official ratings used, unofficial USCF ratings or USCF Online Regular ratings usually used if otherwise unrated; **cannot play** below USCF Online Reg. rating-100 points.

Master Section entry fee: \$278 at chessaction.com by 2/11, \$300 later or at site by 6 pm 2/12. **Titled/foreign entry & minimum prizes:** see chessevents.us.

Expert to Class C entry fee: \$168 at chessaction.com by 2/11, \$190 later or at site until 1 hour before rd 1.

Class D or E sections: Entry fees \$70 less than Expert through C.

Re-entry (except Master): \$80.

No checks at site, credit cards OK. USCF membership required. See chessevents.us for special USCF dues with magazine if paid online with entry.

No Cellphone possession during play (in bag near table OK).

5-day schedule (Master): Reg. ends Thu 6 pm, Thu 7, Fri 1 & 7, Sat 11 & 5, Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 3:30.

4-day schedule: Reg. ends Fri 6 pm, Rds Fri 7 pm, Sat 11 & 5, Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 3:30 (no 4-day Master).

3-day schedule: Reg. ends Sat 10 am, rds Sat 11, 2 & 5, Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 3:30 (no 3-day Master).

Half point byes OK all, limit 2; must commit before rd 3.

All: Bring clock, set, board if possible- none supplied. **See chessevents.us** for rules, details.

Hotel rates: \$132-132, use link at chessevents.us or 972-929-4500, reserve by 1/27 or rate may increase.

Entry: chessaction.com. \$15 service charge for refunds.

Email: director@chess.us.

Blitz tournament Sun. 9:30 pm, enter at site Sun. by 9:10 pm.

The Atlantic City Open— A New CCA Event!

April 1-5, 2-5 or 3-5, 2026 (Easter Weekend), Tropicana Casino & Resort

\$40,000 Guaranteed Prizes with GM and IM norms possible!

Open Section: 9 rounds, Apr 1-5, 40/80, SD/30, d30, FIDE rated.

Other sections: 7 rounds, Apr 2-5 or 3-5, 40/80, SD/30; d30 (3-day option, rds 1-2 G/60 d10). U2200 & U2000 Sections also FIDE rated.

Tropicana Casino And Resort Hotel, 2831 Boardwalk, Atlantic City, NJ 08401. Free self-parking.

In 7 sections:

Open: \$5000-2500-1500-1200-1000-800-500, clear or tiebreak 1st \$200 bonus, top FIDE U2300/Unr \$2000-1000. 200 Grand Prix Points.

Under 2200, Under 2000, Under 1800 Sections: each \$2000-1000-600-500-300-200.

Under 1600 Section: \$1600-800-500-300-200-100.

Under 1400 Section: \$1200-600-400-300-200-100.

Under 1100: \$800-400-300-200.

FIDE ratings used in Open, Apr. **official** USCF in others. Unofficial or USCF Online Regular ratings usually used if otherwise unrated in Under 2200/below. USCF memb. required: see chessevents.us for special rates.

Mixed Doubles Bonus Prizes:

Best male+female combined 2-player team scores in Rounds 1-7 among all sections: \$1200-600-400-300. Teams must average under 2200, may play in different sections, register before both begin round 2.

Unrated limits: \$200 U1100, \$400 U1400, \$500 U1600. \$800 U1800. **Cannot play** below USCF Online Regular Rating - 100 points **Reentry** \$100, except Open.

U1400 through U2200 Section EF: \$188 at chessaction.com by 3/30, \$210 later or at site until 1 hr before rd 1. **U1100 Section** \$80 less.

Open Section EF: \$218 online at chessaction.com by 3/30, \$240 later or at site until 6 pm Wed (\$500 extra in Open Section unless 2200+ USCF or 2000+ FIDE). US IMs/WGMs, foreign FIDE 2000+ in Open: \$100 less, GMs, foreign IMs/WGMs in Open: **free.**

Seniors 65/over in Under 1400/up: \$50 less. No mail entries

Foreign titled minimum prize guarantees: see chessevents.us.

5-day Schedule (Open Section only), reg. ends Wed 6 pm, rounds Wed 7 pm, Thu 1 pm & 7 pm, Fri 11 & 5, Sat 10 & 4, Sun 10 & 3:30.

4-day (no Open Section), reg. ends Thu 6 pm, round Thu 7 pm, Fri 11 & 5, Sat 10 & 4, Sun 10 & 3:30.

3-day (no Open Section), reg. ends Fri 10 am, rds Fri 11, 2 & 5, merges with 4-day Fri at 5 pm.

Half-point byes: OK all, limit 3, must commit before rd 3.

See chessevents.us for more rules. No checks, credit cards OK.

Bring set, board, clock if possible- none supplied.

Special Chess Hotel Rates: Sun-Thu \$59, Fri \$149, Sat \$209, \$25 extra for 3-4 in room, \$10/night additional resort fee. Reserve by 3/17 or rate may go up (see chessevents.us) or 609-340-4000.

Email: director@chess.us.

Enter online (and see advance entry list) at: chessaction.com. \$15 charge for refunds.

Blitz tournament Sat 9:30 pm, enter at site Sat. by 8:45 pm.

JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 51868
17th annual Golden State Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MARCH 6-8, 2026 — CA-S TLA# 52914
33rd annual Western Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540
2026 National Open
 See National Events.

JUNE 13, 2026 — NV TLA# 52998
Walter Browne Memorial National Open Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix.

COLORADO
DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV TLA# 50756
35th annual North American Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
 See Grand Prix.

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

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — MA TLA# 51000
14th annual Boston Chess Congress
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
 See Grand Prix.

FEB. 28-MAR. 1, 2026 — NY TLA# 52920
58th annual New York State High School Championship
 See New York.

FEB. 28-MAR. 1, 2026 — NY TLA# 52921
New York State Senior Championship (With Young Adult/Middle Age Section)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MARCH 7-8, 2026 — NY TLA# 52923
58th annual New York State Scholastic Championships, OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY
 See New York.

DELAWARE
JANUARY 10-11, 2026 — DE TLA# 52331
Sussex County Open
 Site: National Guard Readiness Center Address: 109 W Pine Street Georgetown DE 19947 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,500 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Delaware Chess Association • aa.legolas@gmail.com • 410-219-3179 • delawarechessassociation.org

MARCH 7-8, 2026 — DE TLA# 52572
Delaware State Championship New Castle County
 Site: Ramada Inn Address: 260 Champman Road, Newark, DE 19702 Overall Prize Fund: See online TLA GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Delaware Chess Association • aa.legolas@gmail.com • 410-219-3179 • delawarechessassociation.org

DIST. OF COLUMBIA
DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA TLA# 50760
50th annual Eastern Open!
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 28, 2025 — VA TLA# 50762
16th annual Eastern Open Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FLORIDA
DECEMBER 19-21, 2025 — FL TLA# 52818
The FIDE Forum
 Site: Courtyard by Marriott Address: 620 N University Drive, Coral Springs, FL 33071 Overall Prize Fund: \$825 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: 954Chess INC • info@954chess.com • www.954chess.com

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
 See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 53026
CFCC 2026 Winter Open & Scholastic
 See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 17, 2026 — FL TLA# 53027
CFCC 2026 Winter Open Saturday Night Open Blitz
 Site: Holiday Inn Orlando Lake Buena Vista Address: 13351 State Road 535, Orlando, FL 32821 Overall Prize Fund: \$500 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Central Florida Chess Club (CFCC) • info@centralflchess.org • (407) 312-6237 • centralflchess.org/cfcc-2026-winter-open-and-scholastic-week-end-tournamentn

JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL TLA# 53017
2026 US Amateur Team South
 See Nationals.

FEBRUARY 21, 2026 — FL TLA# 52387
2026 FSCL South Regional Tournament
 Site: Hialeah Gardens High School Address: 11700 Hialeah Gardens Blvd., Hialeah Gardens, FL 33018 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Florida Scholastic Chess League • liz@fsclchess.org • 786-755-FSCL (3725) • fsclchess.org

APRIL 24-26, 2026 — FL TLA# 53028
31st Space Coast Open Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

GEORGIA
JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
 See Grand Prix.

JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL TLA# 53017
2026 US Amateur Team South
 See Nationals.

APRIL 24-26, 2026 — FL TLA# 53028
31st Space Coast Open Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

HAWAII
DECEMBER 28-31, 2025 — HI 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 • 7149253195 • hanleychessacademy.com/2025WCF-Hawaii.html

IDAHO
MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
 See Grand Prix.

ILLINOIS
JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
 See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL TLA# 51956
Tim Just Winter Open XLII
 See Grand Prix.

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO TLA# 52913
30th annual Mid-America Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

INDIANA
JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL TLA# 51956
Tim Just Winter Open XLII
 See Grand Prix.

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO TLA# 52913
30th annual Mid-America Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

IOWA
DECEMBER 27, 2025 — NE TLA# 52855
3rd Hall of Fame Memorial
 See Nebraska.

JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL TLA# 51956
Tim Just Winter Open XLII
 See Grand Prix.

KANSAS
DECEMBER 27, 2025 — NE TLA# 52855
3rd Hall of Fame Memorial
 See Nebraska.

KENTUCKY
JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL TLA# 53017
2026 US Amateur Team South
 See Nationals.

LOUISIANA
JANUARY 17-19, 2026 — LA TLA# 52718
\$4,000 FIDE-rated Carnival Classic
 See Grand Prix.

JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL TLA# 53017
2026 US Amateur Team South
 See Nationals.

FEBRUARY 12-16, 2026 — TX TLA# 52346
17th annual Southwest Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FEBRUARY 21, 2026 — LA TLA# 52339
The Baton Rouge Dual
 See Grand Prix.

MARYLAND
DECEMBER 21, 2025 — MD TLA# 53032
The Charm City CC 2025 December Open Tournament
 Site: The DoubleTree Hilton Hotel Address: 4 W University Parkway #2, Baltimore, MD 21218 Overall Prize Fund: see online TLA GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Alan Horowitz • CharmCityChess@gmail.com • 9175735775 • charmcitychess.com/new_tournament

DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA TLA# 50760
50th annual Eastern Open!
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
 See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — PA TLA# 51826
58th annual Liberty Bell Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FEB. 27-MAR. 1, 2026 — VA TLA# 52348
10th annual George Washington Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FEBRUARY 28, 2026 — VA TLA# 52295
George Washington Saturday 11 AM Satellite Octos
 See Virginia.

APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52908
Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MASSACHUSETTS
JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — MA TLA# 51000
14th annual Boston Chess Congress
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
 See Grand Prix.

FEB. 28-MAR. 1, 2026 — NY TLA# 52920
58th annual New York State High School Championship
 See New York.

FEB. 28-MAR. 1, 2026 — NY TLA# 52921
New York State Senior Championship (With Young Adult/Middle Age Section)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MARCH 7-8, 2026 — NY TLA# 52923
58th annual New York State Scholastic Championships, OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY
 See New York.

APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52908
Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MICHIGAN
JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL TLA# 51956
Tim Just Winter Open XLII
 See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 17-18, 2026 — MI TLA# 52567
2026 Michigan Master/Expert & Class Championships
 See Grand Prix.

MINNESOTA
JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL TLA# 51956
Tim Just Winter Open XLII
 See Grand Prix.

MISSISSIPPI
JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL TLA# 53017
2026 US Amateur Team South
 See Nationals.

MISSOURI
DECEMBER 27, 2025 — NE TLA# 52855
3rd Hall of Fame Memorial
 See Nebraska.

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO TLA# 52913
30th annual Mid-America Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MONTANA
MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
 See Grand Prix.

NEBRASKA
DECEMBER 27, 2025 — NE TLA# 52855
3rd Hall of Fame Memorial
 Site: DoubleTree by Hilton Omaha Southwest Address: 3650 S 72nd St., Omaha, NE 68124 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Bruce G Draney • bruceykins49@hotmail.com • 4023126335 • kingregistration.com

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

NEVADA

DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV TLA# 50756
35th annual North American Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

DECEMBER 29, 2025 — NV TLA# 50984
34th annual North American Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 51868
17th annual Golden State Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

MARCH 6-8, 2026 — CA-S TLA# 52914
33rd annual Western Class Championships
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540
2026 National Open
See National Events.

JUNE 13, 2026 — NV TLA# 52998
Walter Browne Memorial National Open Blitz Championship
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.

DECEMBER 19-21, 2025 — FL TLA# 52818
The FIDE Forum
See Florida.

DECEMBER 20, 2025 — NJ TLA# 47761
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 • edmondou@aol.com • 6097582326 • hamiltonchessclub.com

DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA TLA# 50760
50th annual Eastern Open!
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — MA TLA# 51000
14th annual Boston Chess Congress
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — PA TLA# 51826
58th annual Liberty Bell Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

FEB. 28-MAR. 1, 2026 — NY TLA# 52920
58th annual New York State High School Championship
See New York.

FEB. 28-MAR. 1, 2026 — NY TLA# 52921
New York State Senior Championship (With Young Adult/Middle Age Section)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

MARCH 7-8, 2026 — NY TLA# 52923
58th annual New York State Scholastic Championships, OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY
See New York.

APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52908
Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

NEW MEXICO

DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV TLA# 50756
35th annual North American Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

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, director@magnusleague.org • <http://www.magnusleague.org/>

DECEMBER 19-21, 2025 — FL TLA# 52818
The FIDE Forum
See Florida.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA TLA# 50760
50th annual Eastern Open!
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — MA TLA# 51000
14th annual Boston Chess Congress
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
See Grand Prix.

REGIONALS

JANUARY 3-4, 2026 — NY TLA# 52439
Official Chess 1st Annual New York Metro Area Scholastic Chess Championships
Site: New York Marriott Marquis, Times Square **Address:** 1535 Broadway, New York, NY 10036 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N Accessible: Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Official Chess • info@officialchess.org • officialchess.org/event/2026metros

JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — PA TLA# 51826
58th annual Liberty Bell Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

HERITAGE EVENT • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

FEB. 28-MAR. 1, 2026 — NY TLA# 52920
58th annual New York State High School Championship
Site: Saratoga Hilton Hotel **Address:** 534 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,550 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N Accessible: Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

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See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 7-8, 2026 — NY TLA# 52923
58th annual New York State Scholastic Championships, OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY
Site: Saratoga Hilton Hotel and 3 other nearby locations **Address:** Hilton Hotel: 534 Broadway; Saratoga City Center: 522 Broadway; Saratoga Courtyard Marriott: 11 Excelsior Ave, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N Accessible: Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52908
Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

NORTH CAROLINA

DECEMBER 7, 2025 — NC TLA# 52458
Dragon Knight Chess International Civil Aviation Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 14, 2025 — NC TLA# 52459
Dragon Knight Chess World Choral Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 21, 2025 — NC TLA# 52981
2nd Annual Dragon Knight Chess Winter Solstice Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 28, 2025 — NC TLA# 52985
2nd Annual Dragon Knight Chess National Chocolate Candy Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA TLA# 50760
50th annual Eastern Open!
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JANUARY 1, 2026 — NC TLA# 52993
New Year's Day 2026 Ticks (3rd Annual) Jeff Jones Memorial GP
See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 4, 2026 — NC TLA# 52990
2nd Annual Dragon Knight Chess National Spaghetti Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 11, 2026 — NC TLA# 52992
Dragon Knight Chess National Milk Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — NC TLA# 52425
2026 Charlotte Open
See Grand Prix.

JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL TLA# 53017
2026 US Amateur Team South
See Nationals.

JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — NC TLA# 50591
Land of the Sky XXXVIII
See Grand Prix.

NORTH DAKOTA

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

OHIO

JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — OH TLA# 52649
The 2026 Cardinal Open
See Grand Prix.

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO TLA# 52913
30th annual Mid-America Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

OKLAHOMA

FEBRUARY 12-16, 2026 — TX TLA# 52346
17th annual Southwest Class Championships
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

OREGON

DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV TLA# 50756
35th annual North American Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540
2026 National Open
See National Events.

PENNSYLVANIA

DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA TLA# 50760
50th annual Eastern Open!
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — PA TLA# 51826
58th annual Liberty Bell Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JANUARY 18, 2026 — PA TLA# 51828
13th annual Liberty Bell Open Blitz Championship (Sunday Night)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

FEB. 27-MAR. 1, 2026 — VA TLA# 52348
10th annual George Washington Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

FEB. 28-MAR. 1, 2026 — NY TLA# 52921
New York State Senior Championship (With Young Adult/Middle Age Section)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

FEBRUARY 28, 2026 — VA TLA# 52295
George Washington Saturday 11 AM Satellite Octos
See Virginia.

APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52908
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See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

PUERTO RICO

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
See Grand Prix.

RHODE ISLAND

DECEMBER 13, 2025 — RI TLA# 52980
2025 Rhode Island State Chess Championship
See Grand Prix.

SOUTH CAROLINA

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
See Grand Prix.

SOUTH DAKOTA

JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL TLA# 53017
2026 US Amateur Team South
See Nationals.

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
See Grand Prix.

TENNESSEE

JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL TLA# 53017
2026 US Amateur Team South
See Nationals.

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO TLA# 52913
30th annual Mid-America Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

TEXAS

DECEMBER 19-21, 2025 — FL TLA# 52818
The FIDE Forum
 See Florida.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV TLA# 50756
35th annual North American Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
 See Grand Prix.

FEBRUARY 12-16, 2026 — TX TLA# 52346
17th annual Southwest Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FEBRUARY 15, 2026 — TX TLA# 52347
10th annual Southwest Class Blitz Championships (Sunday Night)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FEBRUARY 21, 2026 — TX TLA# 52786
Texas Action Championship 2026
 See Grand Prix.

MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO TLA# 52913
30th annual Mid-America Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540
2026 National Open
 See National Events.

UTAH

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540
2026 National Open
 See National Events.

JUNE 13, 2026 — NV TLA# 52998
Walter Browne Memorial National Open Blitz Championship
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VERMONT

FEB. 28-MAR. 1, 2026 — NY TLA# 52920
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MARCH 7-8, 2026 — NY TLA# 52923
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 See New York.

VIRGINIA

DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA TLA# 50760
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DECEMBER 28, 2025 — VA TLA# 50762
16th annual Eastern Open Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
 See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — PA TLA# 51826
58th annual Liberty Bell Open
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FEB. 27-MAR. 1, 2026 — VA TLA# 52348
10th annual George Washington Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

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George Washington Saturday 11 AM Satellite Octos
 Site: Washington Dulles Marriott Hotel Address: 45020 Aviation Dr, Dulles, VA 20166 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chessour.com

APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ TLA# 52908
Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)
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WASHINGTON

DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV TLA# 50756
35th annual North American Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 51868
17th annual Golden State Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 10-14, 2026 — NV TLA# 52540
2026 National Open
 See National Events.

WISCONSIN

JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL TLA# 52938
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open
 See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL TLA# 51956
Tim Just Winter Open XLII
 See Grand Prix.

HERITAGE EVENT • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

JAN. 31-FEB. 1, 2026 — WI TLA# 52685
Michael A. Selig Memorial/59th NorthEastern Open
 Site: Holiday Inn Manitowoc Address: 4601 Calumet Ave., Manitowoc, WI 54220 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,400 b/70 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Mike Neitman • mike.neitman@charter.net • 608-467-8510 • www.wisChess.org

WYOMING

MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY TLA# 52295
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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)

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- ☐ Golden Knights EF: \$35
 ☐ Palciauskas ICCF EF: \$5
 ☐ Muir ICCF Quad EF: \$10
 2-player matches, EF: \$5 per entry, see above for options
☐ Electronic Knights EF: \$35
 ☐ Collins Quad EF: \$10
 Postal Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐
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☐ 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

PAGES 8-10 QUIZ

1. c. The BBC's *Chess Masters: The Endgame* failed to earn the viewer ratings of the BBC's long-running *The Great British Bake Off*. **2. b.** This happened in 1994 according to Benko in *New in Chess*, issue 3/2016. **3. c.** The famously banned size-32 jeans he wore at the 2024 World Blitz Championship were auctioned for charity on eBay. **4. c.** Viktor Korchnoi, Ulf Andersson and Lajos Portisch. **5. b.** *Ice Eclipse*, subtitled *Chess-Astrology, Book 1*, by Barbara Richards. **6. d. 7. a.** Thanks to chess-movie maven Bob Basalla. He also points out that early in b. Christopher Walken plays a chess-like game, and Bob Dylan's "Only a Pawn in their Game" is heard in d. **8. a.** and c. Frances Parkinson Keyes wrote the 1960 bestseller *The Chess Players*, about Morphy. She bought the New Orleans home of Morphy's grandfather. **9. a.**, according to the tournament book. They drew in 60 moves. **10. d. 11. b.** Sondheim was "11 or 12" and Hammerstein nearly 50 at the time, according to the Hammerstein biography *Getting to Know Him*. **12. a. b. and c.** are real products but were available in 2024 and 2022, respectively. **13. a-2, b-4, c-1, d-3 and also e-3. 14. Tarrasch. 15.** The last was Tigran Petrosian. **16. d.** Bisguier was 20. Spassky later broke the record at age 16 in 1953. **17. b.** and c. The 1907 Frank Marshall-Emanuel Lasker match was played in a. and d., among other cities. **18. c.** An "emulation" of the Atari 2600 "video chess cartridge," on the beginner level, "absolutely wrecked" ChatGPT.

PAGE 9 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. White can foil the threat of ... Rg5-h5+ with **37. e6!** **Bxe6 38. Rxc5! bxc5 39. Rxc5. PROBLEM 2. 30. Rd6!** wins after 30. ... cxd6 31. f7! or 30. ... Rxd6 31. g8=Q+ Rd8 32. Qxd8+! Kxd8 33. f7. **PROBLEM 3. 32. ... Rc2 or 32. ... Rb2** threatens ... Qf4xf2+ and favors Black. **PROBLEM 4.** White averts 43. Qxg3? Rxc1+ with **43. Nf5+! gxf5 44. Qxg3+** and 45. Rxc1 wins. **PROBLEM 5. 39. ... Qf7!** and 40. ... Qg8 leaves Black a knight ahead (40. Rxf7? Rxd1+ and 41. ... Rxf7). **PROBLEM 6. 71. ... Kd4! 72. a4 Bc4! 73. d7 Bxf1! 74. d8=Q+ Ke3** is a draw.

PAGE 11 MAKE YOUR MOVE

TACTIC 1: 15. Nxe4! Bxd4 The main point is that if Black recaptures with 15. ... Qxe4+, White wins after 16. Qxe4 Bxe4 17. Rc3, and the pin on the bishop on c5 decides the game. **16. Nd6+ Kf8 17. Qxd4, Black resigned.** Gavrilescu – Qalichava, European Teams Ch 2025. **TACTIC 2: 18. Qf1!** The snare is already around the black queen. White's next move will be 19. Bd1 unless Black finds a solution. **18. ... Nxd3** No solution, just desperation. **19. Qxd3 Ne5 20. Qd4 Rfe8 21. Ba4 c5 22. Qxd6 Nxc4 23. Qf4, Black resigned.** Lodici – Hamitevici, European Teams Ch 2025. **TACTIC 3: 23. ... Ne4!** White is forced to capture the knight because the bishop on d2 is unprotected, but after the capture the light squares around White's king become fatally weak, and Black's attacking forces zoom in to take advantage of that. **24. fxe4 Bxe4+ 25. Kg1 Rg6+ 26. Ng3 Bd6** Adding another attacking piece, but also 26. ... h5

would do the job. **27. Rf1** Seeking counterplay on the f-file! **27. ... f6** No counterplay for you! **28. Be1 Qh3** The lethal threat is 29. ... Bxg3, and the remaining moves by White are pointless desperation. **29. Qf3 Bxf3 30. Rxf3 h5 31. dxc5 bxc5, White resigned.** Akhvediani – Samunenkov, European Teams Ch 2025. **TACTIC 4: 27. Nxd5! Nbx4** If Black captures the knight with 27. ... exd5, the wave of pawns doesn't roll right away, but will be preceded by 28. Qc2 Rf7 29. Qg6+ Kf8 30. e6, and Black can resign. In the game White won safely with 28. Ne7+, but the more spectacular move was **28. Qxd4!** BOOM! If 28. ... Nxd4, then 29. Ne7+ Kf7 30. Bg6 mate is a rather beautiful conclusion. Olsen – Hamitevici, European Teams Ch 2025 (analysis). **TACTIC 5: 24. Nxf7! Rxe3** If 24. ... Bc8, then 25. Rxe6 Qxf7 26. Bc4 Nxc4 27. Re8+ Kh7 28. Qe4+ Bf5 29. Qxa8 wins for White. **25. Nxb6+ Kh8 26. Rxe3 gxh6** Black is up a piece, but his king is short on defenders, and all of White's remaining pieces are ready for the assault. **27. Re5 Nf7 28. Qf5** Not 28. Qg6?? Qg8 and Black survives. **28. ... Qg7 29. Rg6** This is the point — the queen is attacked, and the mating threat against g2 is stopped at the same time. **29. ... Nd6 30. Qh5 30.** Qe6 followed by 31. Rxh6+ would also do the job. **30. ... Nf7** Tantamount to resignation. **31. Rxf7 Kxf7 32. Qg6+ Kf8 33. Bc4 Nd6 34. Qxh6+ Ke7 35. Qg7+, Black resigned.** Sonis – Sanikidze, European Teams Ch 2025. **TACTIC 6: 24. ... Nxe4!** The Azeri player cleans up the center pawns to prepare her breakthrough. White's pieces are sufficiently tied up, and the king is just vulnerable enough that it works. **25. fxe4 Qxe4+ 26. Kh2** If 26. Kg1, then 26. ... Bb6+ 27. Kh2, and now the "silent" killer 27. ... Qe3, threatening ... e5-e4, forcing White's knight away from the protection of the f2-square, leaving the king impossible to defend. **26. ... Qf3** Threatening ... e5-e4+, winning the knight on d3. **27. Ne1 e4+ 28. Kg1 Qxh3 29. Qxe4 Re8** Another way to win was 29. ... Bb6+ 30. Nd4 Re8 31. Qg2 Rxe1+ 32. Rxe1 Bxd4+ 33. Kf1 Qd3+ 34. Qe2 (or 34. Re2 Bxb2 35. Rae1 Bc3 and Black is winning) 34. ... Qg3 35. Qg2 Qf4+ 36. Ke2 Bxb2, and White will not survive for long. **30. Qf3** Or 30. Qg2 Qxg2+ 31. Nxd2 Rxe2, and Black would be three pawns up. **30. ... Bb6+ 31. Nd4 Rxe1+ 32. Kf2 Bxd4+, White resigned.** She will lose either a rook or the queen. Unuk – Fataliyeva, European Women's Teams Ch 2025. **TACTIC 7: 22. ... Nxf2!** White thought he had protected himself against this capture by playing 22. Re2 on the previous move, but that apparently was an optical illusion. **23. Be3** If 23. Rxf2, then 23. ... Re1, pinning both of White's bishops while also keeping the rook on f2 pinned, decides the game, e.g., 24. a4 Rc8 25. axb5 axb5 and White is without useful moves. **23. ... Rxe3! 24. Rxe3** Or 24. Rxf2 Re4, and White loses material. **24. ... Nd1** BOOM! White resigned as he would end up with a lost endgame. Ribeiro – Boruchovsky, European Teams Ch 2025. **TACTIC 8: 16. ... Bd7!** Boom! 16. ... Nd7 was also playable, but the text move wins for Black. **17. c6** If 17. Bxd7, then 17. ... Nxd7 18. c6 Ndc5 19. axb4 Qxd6 20. bxc5 Qxc6! 21. Ne2, and it looks like White has ridden out the storm, only losing a pawn, but then 21. ... d4! Boom! 22. Nxd4 Nxd4 23. Rxd4 Ra1+ 24. Rd1 Rxd1+ 25. Qxd1 Rxe3+ 26. Kf1 Qb5+ 27. Kf2 Qxc5, and Black

wins. **17. ... Nxc6!** BOOM! **18. Bxc6 b3!** Ahh! That was the point. **19. Qd2** If 19. Qc3, then 19. ... Rc8 with a pin wins. **19. ... Bxc6 20. Bb4** Or 20. Be5 Nc5 21. f4 Bb5 22. Nf3 Rxa3, and Black wins. **20. ... d4 21. e4 Bb5 22. Rb1 Nc5 23. Ne2** Or 23. Bxc5 bxc5 24. Rxb3 Bc4, which is also a disaster for White. **23. ... Nd3+ 24. Kf1 Rc8 25. Rxb3 Nc1!, White resigned.** A brutal defeat for Bluebaum right after he had qualified for the Candidates. Bluebaum – Volokitin, European Teams Ch 2025. **TACTIC 9:** In the game, Black instead played 37. ... Bg2??, but the way to win is **37. ... g5+!!** BOOM! **38. Kxg5** Or 38. fxg5 Bg2 39. g6 h6 40. g5 Rxh3+ 41. Kg4 h5+ 42. Kf4 Bc6, and White's king is trapped once more. **38. ... h6+ 39. Kh4 Bg2 40. g5 Rxh3+ 41. Kg4 h5 mate.** Boyer – Ivic, European Teams Ch 2025 (analysis).

PAGE 47 SOLITAIRE CHESS

PROBLEM 1: Black is finished in 2: **1. Qh6+ Kg8 2. Ba2 mate. PROBLEM 2:** Black is flummoxed in 2 with **1. Bc5+ Ke8 2. Qg8 mate. PROBLEM 3:** Black is vaporized in 2: **1. Qg8+ Rxd8 2. Nf7 mate. PROBLEM 4:** Black is blasted in 2: **1. Nc6+ Kc8 2. Ba6 mate. PROBLEM 5:** Black is rollercoasted in 2: **1. Qxb7+ Kxb7 2. Bc6 mate. PROBLEM 6:** Black is bludgeoned in 2: **1. Qh8+ Kf7 2. Ng5 mate.**

PAGE 49 ENDGAME SCHOOL

PROBLEM 1: White resigned after **78. ... Kg1!** as 79. Rxh3 is met by 79. ... Kg2! or 79. ... Rxh3+ 80. Kxh3 Kf2. (Khachiyan – Naroditsky, U.S. Chess League 2012) **PROBLEM 2: 47. b4! axb4 48. a5 bxa5 49. Rxc5+ Kd6 50. Rd5+ Ke6 51. Kxa5 Be7 52. Rb5 Bd6 53. Rxb4 Bc5 54. Rb6+ and Black resigned** as the e5-pawn will drop from *zugzwang* in the pawn ending. (Naroditsky – Siva, Qatar Masters 2015)

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