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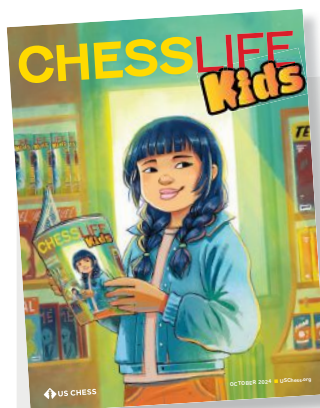
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ON THE COVER

Kyla Zhao describes *May the Best Player Win* as a “family-friendly version of *The Queen’s Gambit*.” So when we were thinking about a cover for this month’s issue, we wondered what May Li would look like in a famous image from the Netflix series. With the help of Chelen Ecja,

who did the cover art for *May the Best Player Win*, we were able to bring our idea to life!

ORIGINAL ART: CHELEN ECJA



Fight the Fianchetto!

BY JOHN HARTMANN

HAVING MADE OUR way through many of Black's replies to 1. e4, we are nearing the end of our White repertoire! This month we'll offer ideas for when Black tries to fianchetto their bishops beginning on the first move. We'll wrap up in December with a few remaining odds and ends.

We'll also kick off a new series about a Black opening repertoire in the new year. Do you have thoughts about what you'd like to see analyzed here? Email me at john.hartmann@uschess.org with your recommendations, and maybe you'll see your ideas come to life in *Chess Life Kids*!

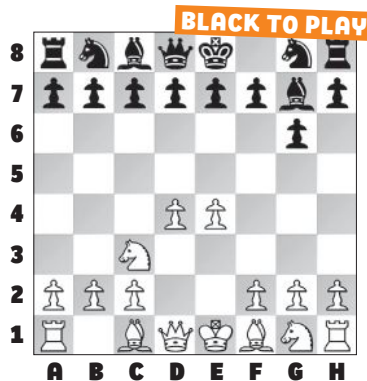
The Modern

1. e4 g6 2. d4 Bg7

Black holds off on playing ... Ng8-f6 in the Modern Defense. By leaving the knight on its original square, Black prevents White from exchanging off the dark-squared bishops, and instead uses time to attack White's center

from the wing with the g7-bishop attacking the d4-pawn. Sometimes Black's piece development is slow, however, and White can either keep a solid center and expand, or try to attack using the standard plan we discussed last month.

3. Nc3



3. ... d6

Black can immediately hit back in the center with (a) 3. ... c5, but we keep developing: 4. Be3 cxd4 5. Bxd4 Nf6 6. e5! and the knight has no good squares. If (a1) 6. ... Ng8 7. e6! (7. Bc4 first also works) leaves White ahead after 7. ... Nf6 8. exf7+ Kxf7 9. Nf3, while (a2) 6. ... Nh5 7. Nge2! threatens g2-g4, trapping the knight.

The positions after (b) 3. ... d5 4. exd5 Nf6 5. Bb5+ are similar to some of our anti-Scandinavian lines. If 5. ... Bd7, remember to play 6. Be2!

4. Be3 a6

This is called "Tiger's Modern" — what a fun name for an opening!

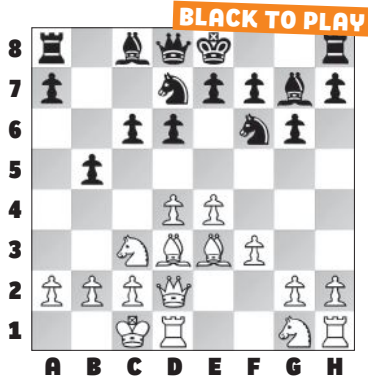
A major alternative is (a) 4. ... c6 5. Qd2 b5 and now 6. Bd3! (6. 0-0-0 is aggressive but OK) develops and solidifies the center before we decide where to castle.



Here (a1) 6. ... Nf6?! lets us trade off the dark-squared bishops with 7. Bh6, but (a2) 6. ... Nd7 is a deceptively good move, keeping White's bishop off h6 while preparing queenside and central

action.

(a2a) Now **7. f3** is a little slow here, as the e4-pawn is in no danger. Still, it follows the basic plan and can't be wrong. After **7. ... Ngf6! 8. 0-0-0** we secure the king before playing Be3-h6 and trying to open the h-file.



White has to watch out for ... e7-e5xd4 followed by ... Nd7-e5, so in this line it may make sense to leave the bishop on e3 and play Be3xd4, challenging the g7-bishop from another angle.

(a2b) White can try other moves here. **7. Nf3!** misplaces the knight a bit, but e4 is defended, and we still have our plan of Be3-h6 followed by h2-h4.

(a2c) It might be even stronger to play **7. f4!**, but this takes us away from our basic plan.

Naturally (b) **4. ... Nf6** is the Pirc, and after (c) **4. ... Nd7 5. Qd2** we follow the standard plan. A sample line is **5. ... e5** (or 5. ... Ngf6 6. Bh6; and if 5. ... c6 6. h4 h5 7. Nh3 with the idea of Nh3-g5) **6. 0-0-0 Ne7 7. dxe5 Nxe5 8. Bh6** when White is doing well as the black kingside is weak without a knight on f6.

5. Qd2 b5

Black can also play (a) **5. ... e6** reaching a version of the "Hippopotamus." We follow the plan: **6. h4 h6** (6. ... b5 7. h5) **7. h5** and if **7. ... g5 8. f4!** attacking the hook on g5.

White plays similarly after (b) **5. ... Nd7 6. h4 h5** (6. ... h6 7. h5 g5 8. 0-0-0! with f2-f4 coming, cracking the kingside) **7. Nh3** and we reach the following position.



The idea is Nh3-g5, since it can't easily be kicked with ... f7-f6 as it leaves a hole on e6. Play continues **7. ... b5 8. Ng5 Bb7 9. f3** and White is doing well.

If Black plays (c) **5. ... Nc6** we again continue **6. h4 Nf6 7. f3** (or 7. h5!? Nxh5 8. 0-0-0) **7. ... h5 8. 0-0-0**.

Finally, after (d) **5. ... Nf6** we of course follow the standard plan of **6. Bh6 Bxh6 7. Qxh6 b5** (if 7. ... e5 8. dxe5 dxe5 9. Nf3) and now **8. e5!**.

6. 0-0-0 Bb7

After 6. ... Nd7 we attack with **7. h4 h5 8. Nh3**.

7. h4 b4

The alternatives should seem familiar by now: **7. ... h5 8. Nh3 Nd7 9. Ng5; 7. ... Nd7 8. h5; and 7. ... h6 8. h5 g5 9. f4**.

8. Nce2

Offering a pawn sac. If Black doesn't grab the e-pawn, we defend it with f2-f3. If they do grab it ...

8. ... Bxe4 9. h5

Black is stuck for good moves. The g8-knight defends h6, but it is stopping Black from castling, and the b4-pawn is currently undefended.

1. ... b6

1. e4 b6 2. d4 Bb7

Black's play is all based on attacking e4 and using the a8-h1 diagonal. Still, if we develop our pieces normally and focus on defending the center, we should get an advantage.

3. Nc3

An alternative is **3. Bd3 f5?!**, trying to open the diagonal and win the g2-pawn. The positions that follow are bad for Black, but it's very tricky, and Black will have studied this. Instead we want to play simple developing moves that prevent Black's favorite tactics.

3. ... e6

The double fianchetto with **3. ... g6** allows us to develop towards the center and / or play for h2-h4-h5 with **4. Nf3 Bg7 5. h4!?** (5. Be3 followed by Qd1-d2 is fine too) **5. ... d6 6. h5**.

4. Bd3 Bb4



This pin looks worrisome, but in fact, it is easily dealt with. Meanwhile the black kingside may feel a little drafty! What else can Black try here?

(a) Sometimes Black develops the knight first. After **4. ... Nf6 5. Nge2 Bb4 6. 0-0 0-0:**

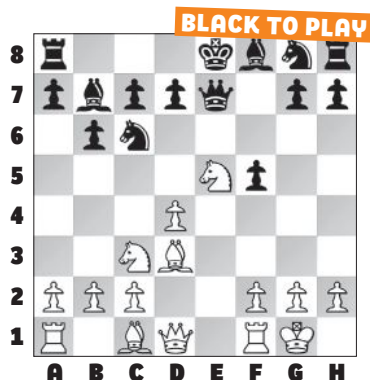


Now **7. e5!** frees the bishop and removes a kingside defender: **7. ... Nd5? 8. Nxd5 Bxd5 9. Nf4 Bb7 10. Nh5** leads to a huge attack.

(b) Pushing the f-pawn with **4. ... f5?** is now a mistake. After **5. exf5 exf5** (5. ... Bxg2? 6. Qh5+ g6 7. fxg6 **6. Nf3 Qe7+ 7. Ne5! Nc6 8. 0-0**

(see diagram top next column)

White has a huge development advantage. If **8. ... Nxd4 9. Re1**



9. ... 0-0-0 10. Bc4 and Black can't avoid all the threats.

5. Nge2!

Defending the c3-knight and getting ready to castle.

5. ... d5

After (a) **5. ... Nf6 6. 0-0** we reach a position we looked at in the analysis of 4. ... Nf6. White has the center and a good game. If Black tries (b) **5. ... Bxc3+ 6. Nxc3**

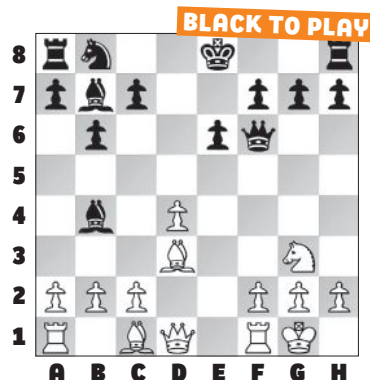
Nf6 7. e5 Nd5 8. Nxd5 Bxd5 9. Qg4
White has a tremendous position.

6. 0-0 dxe4 7. Nxe4 Nf6

Or **7. ... Nd7 8. c3 Be7 9. Nf4.**

After **7. ... Nf6**, White can gain the initiative with:

8. Nxf6+ Qxf6 9. Ng3



Bringing another attacker to the kingside and preparing Qd1-g4. If **9. ... Qxd4 10. Bb5+.** ♠

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Tactics Tune-Up

This month's Tactics Tuneup features games from the 2024 FIDE Olympiad, which is underway as this issue goes to press. Your task is listed under each diagram. Pay special attention to the final three positions, where your job is to find the best way to get out of check. You might want to use a board for the last one — it's not easy! Answers are on page 23.

1.

WHITE TO PLAY



A B C D E F G H

MATE IN ONE

2.

BLACK TO PLAY



A B C D E F G H

MATE IN TWO

3.

BLACK TO PLAY



A B C D E F G H

MATE IN THREE

4.

BLACK TO PLAY



A B C D E F G H

WIN MATERIAL

5.

WHITE TO PLAY



A B C D E F G H

WIN MATERIAL

6.

WHITE TO PLAY



A B C D E F G H

WIN MATERIAL

7.

BLACK TO PLAY



A B C D E F G H

GET OUT OF CHECK

8.

BLACK TO PLAY

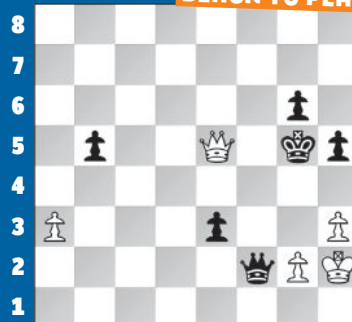


A B C D E F G H

GET OUT OF CHECK

9.

BLACK TO PLAY



A B C D E F G H

GET OUT OF CHECK



SURPRISE – You Won a \$1,000 Prize!

BY AL LAWRENCE

WOULDN'T YOU BE surprised if US

Chess suddenly told you that you won \$1,000 in a nationwide contest? Anirudh Anand was — he didn't even know the contest existed!

Ani, as his friends call him, is just 9



junior player who has been the most successful against players rated higher than themselves. Playing stronger players in events with longer time controls is the best way to improve, so the Junior Grand Prix awards points based on “upsets.” For example, drawing someone rated 100 points higher gets a player 100 points. But if they beat that same opponent, they get 200. US Chess keeps track of the points.

At the end of the contest, Ani had collected 10,400 points. That's a lot of upsets! His biggest upset was a win against a player rated nearly 1700 at the 2023 Michigan Open.

Above: Ani at the 2023 Eastern Open. Left: Receiving the JGP award at the 2024 U.S. Open.

years old. But he discovered that he had won the year-long 2024 Junior Grand Prix (or JGP) for tournament chessplayers up to 21 years old with ratings up to 1800.

Every year, US Chess awards this prize to the

BLACKMAR-DIEMER GAMBIT (BY TRANSPOSITION) (D00)

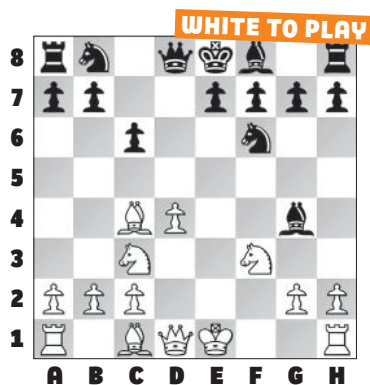
Anirudh Anand (1198)

Hamin Song (1685)

Michigan Open (5), Grand Rapids, 09.04.2023

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 dxe4 4. Bc4?! Nf6 5. f3 exf3 6. Nxf3 Bg4?



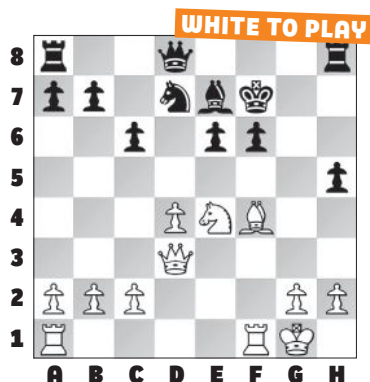


Black thinks this pin freezes White's f3-knight, but Ani has a surprise in store.

7. Bxf7+!

7. Ne5! is also good. If Black grabs White's queen, do you see the one-move checkmate?

7. ... Kxf7 8. Ne5+! Kg8 9. Nxf6 e6 10. 0-0 Be7?! 11. Bg5 h6 12. Nxf6+?! gxf6 13. Bf4 h5 14. Qd3 Kf7 15. Ne4 Nd7?!



Material is even, but Black's king is at risk on the semi-open f-file. How does Ani break open the pawn defenses?

16. Ng5+!, Black resigned.

It's hopeless for Black. Taking the knight with 16. ... fxe5 allows the discovered check 17. Bc7+, winning Black's queen. Can you see the other tries by Black and work out why they all lose too?

Ani is from Troy, Michigan, and learned the moves when he was

Right: Ani earning his senior yellow belt in Tae Kwon Do in 2022!

only 7. "During COVID, my dad taught me," he said; "it inspired me to play in tournaments." His first big event was the Michigan State Elementary Team Championship. "I was feeling nervous and a bit afraid but somehow managed to win four out of five games."

His mom and dad travel with him to tournaments. "Ani likes to travel outside Michigan," his mom said. "He played in the National Grade Championship last year in Orlando, Florida." He has competed in the last two U.S. Open chess championships — last year's, in Grand Rapids, in his home state, and this year's, in distant Norfolk, Virginia. Ani said, "I got a chance to play with high-rated players," and he liked the challenge.

In the future, he'd like to qualify to represent Michigan in the annual John D. Rockefeller III National Tournament of Elementary School State Champions that's held every year during the U.S. Open. Ani also wants to continue to improve his results at the National Elementary Championships. Last year he improved his standing in the huge event from 22nd place to 15th in his division without losing a game,



and says, "I'm trying my best to be in the top five this year!"

Another goal is to reach an official rating of 2000 — that would make him an expert.

Ani has plenty of other interests. He likes math, plays the violin and has earned his blue belt in karate — making him a fourth-level martial arts student.

He also plays chess at the Avondale GATE Magnet School near his hometown: "I love to play long games with classical time controls rather than short ones. I enjoy tournaments when I play as a team representing my school. I spent more hours last year practicing chess, which helped me to win the Junior Grand Prix."

Ani says, "Hard work never fails!" And sometimes the results are surprising. ♦



Force and Pawn Structure

BY TIM MCGREW

ONE OF THE first things every coach teaches new players is the value of individual pieces. A very common list of values runs: pawn = 1, knight and bishop each = 3, rook = 5, queen = 9. We could argue about these numbers (does this list slightly undervalue a bishop and overvalue a rook?), but they are good enough to do what they are supposed to do — keep beginners from trading knights for pawns or queens for bishops, thinking that any swap of one piece for another must be a good move.

But when you give people a list with numbers attached, it is easy to give them the wrong idea. Some people think that the values of the pieces are constant. A knight is always worth three pawns, right? And we can also give the misimpression that, besides checkmate, the values of the pieces are the only objective values on the board.

Both ideas are mistaken. The values of the pieces are only *approximate*, and they are *averages*. Pawns might become stronger as they surge across the board — or they might get weaker. Sometimes a knight is worth much more

than its average value; sometimes a bishop is worth much less. Sometimes two pawns beat any power on earth. And sometimes a massive advantage in “force,” which is our term for an advantage in material, doesn’t matter a bit.

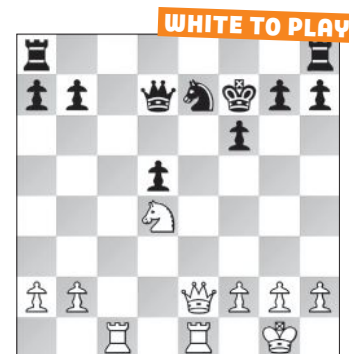
Look at this position from the game Morphy – Paulsen, New York 1857, after the moves **1. e4 c5 2. d4 cxd4 3. Nf3 e6 4. Nxd4 Bc5!? 5. Nb3 Bb6 6. Nc3 Ne7 7. Bf4 0-0?!:**



Castling was an automatic move. But it gives White a chance to make the bishop on f4 vastly more powerful with **8. Bd6! f5 9. e5!**. Now the bishop blocks Black’s d-pawn, which blocks in the bishop on c8, which traps the rook on a8. In short, the bishop on d6 is causing a traffic jam. It is worth far more than that “average” three pawns.

Think it couldn’t happen today? The same position came up in the game Timman – Basman, Hastings 1973. And in Shchekachev – Bauer, Metz 2006. And in more than 100 games on *Lichess* where the average rating of the players was over 2200.

Knights also love advanced posts in enemy territory. Here is a classic example from the game Steinitz – von Bardeleben, Hastings 1895:



Two moves ago, Steinitz sacrificed a pawn to free up the d4-square for his knight. Next stop: **19. Ne6!** and Black’s position fell apart so spectacularly over the next seven moves that, according to one version of the story, von Bardeleben left the board without resigning and didn’t return. Maybe he left in disgust at his position; some say he left because the spectators’ applause when a game ended disturbed his concentration. But the point we need to see is that a knight on e6 is worth more than a rook in this position. And putting it on e6 is the *only* way for White to get any advantage. Nothing else works.

Once we know that some minor pieces have superpowers while others are miserable shadows of what they might be, we can start thinking about trades in a deeper way. Sometimes, an exchange of a bishop for a knight really is just

about even. A good example occurs in a major line of the Spanish after **1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6:**



Here, White can take the knight with **4. Bxc6** or back up with **4. Ba4**. Both moves have been played by world champions. We may safely assume that the bishop and the knight are about equal in value here. (Exercise: If you haven't seen this before, try to work out why White doesn't really win a pawn from here with **4. Bxc6 dxc6 5. Nxe5**.)

But sometimes the minor pieces are not at all equal in value. Consider this position from Jeremy Kane's *Chessable* course on the Trompowsky after **1. d4 Nf6 2. Bg5 e6 3. Nd2 h6 4. Bh4 d5 5. e3 c5 6. c3 Nc6 7. f4 Be7 8. Bd3 b6**.



White's "Stonewall" pawn center is wildly imbalanced: There is a gaping hole on e4, but White has a death grip on the e5-square. The hole on e4 will be a problem if, and only if, Black can drop a

minor piece there. The bishop on h4 isn't worth less than three pawns, but the knight on f6 could be worth more. Getting rid of the knight before it could hop to e4 made great sense. So in this online game, Kane continued **9. Bxf6!?** and after **9. ... Bxf6 10. Ngf3 Bb7 11. 0-0 0-0 12. Ne5 ...**



White's knight on e5 dominates the board. He won in half a dozen more moves with a brisk kingside attack.

When minor pieces are worth much more or much less than their average value, it is almost always because of the pawn structure. It is easier to figure out when that structure is frozen in place. But pawn structures can change. And figuring out how to change a pawn structure can change the evaluation of an entire opening system.

Look at this position from the Stonewall Dutch after **1. d4 f5 2. g3 Nf6 3. Bg2 e6 4. c4 c6 5. Nf3 d5 6. 0-0 Bd6 7. b3 Qe7 8. Bb2:**



Thirty years ago, "everyone knew" that Black has problems because of his wretched bishop on c8. The old plan of getting it out by ... Bc8-d7-e8-h5 seemed too slow. But then top players discovered that the Stonewall pawn structure doesn't have to be quite that rigid. The diagrammed position is from Caruana – Carlsen, Gashimov Memorial 2015. Carlsen simply played **8. ... b6 9. Ne5 Bb7**. The bishop looks a little bit more dynamic here than on c8; White might even have to calculate the consequences of ... c6-c5 at some point. Caruana couldn't figure out how to make something out of his control of e5, and Carlsen eventually outplayed him in the endgame.

Understanding the element of force requires you to understand how pieces and pawns interact. Think about these factors as you study master games and as you review your own games. ♦

CHESS LIFE AND CHESS LIFE KIDS

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Staying in the Game

BY IM CARISSA YIP



THINGS SEEM TO be going great for May: She's just won a prize for being the top girl finisher at her state championship, she's been profiled in an international chess magazine, and her school's team is headed to nationals.

But like so many things in chess, it's not that simple. She's hyperfocused on beating her rival to become captain of her team — a former friend who's been making rude comments about how girls can't play chess. And just when achieving her goals is going to require even more work than she's already put in, she's starting to realize she really likes hanging with her new friend who doesn't know

anything about pushing pawns.

Before long, it's all unraveling: Her game is suffering, her friends aren't talking to her, and she's starting to wonder whether she even really likes chess. Right when it's time to pick a captain and head to nationals.

That's the scenario of *May the Best Player Win*, by Kyla Zhao, and she knows what she's talking about — she used to play, and was once a member of Singapore's national junior team.

I interviewed Zhao for *Chess Life Kids* about her book and how May's situation was a lot like her own.

"This was a story that I wished I could have read when I was younger," Zhao said. "As a child, I was incredibly passionate about chess, but eventually dropped out of the competitive circuit due to performance anxiety and the loneliness of being in a small, dwindling group of female players." The book is for middle grade readers, and Zhao thinks that's a time when a lot of kids might be "second-guessing their love for an activity."

That's what happened to Zhao. She learned chess from

her grandfather at age 6, “and I just really, really enjoyed it. Then, naturally, I just started participating in competitions. But in middle school, I fell out of love with chess.”

A few things happened to make her feel that way: “First, I started questioning if chess is a sport for girls: This was a combination of not seeing many girls around me, some things that top players were saying about female chess players at the time, and not seeing many female role models in high-level chess. So those sowed the seed of doubt about whether competitive chess was really the right place for me. Also, I really enjoyed the social component of learning chess, but with more of my female friends dropping out, I wasn’t really getting the social aspect anymore.”

She also started to wonder what she was doing it all for. At one point in the book, May’s mother asks her, “Are you playing chess to win medals and impress other people, or are you playing chess because you really enjoy it?”

That was a tough question for Zhao too. “Another big reason why my love for chess waned was because I became too focused on winning,” she said. “My pursuit of medals and trophies overshadowed the joy the game used to bring me, until I started feeling anxious every time I sat down in front of a chessboard. It wasn’t a healthy mindset, so I made the decision to stop participating in competitions.”

The same thing starts happening to May too — she fakes being sick to skip her chess lessons and she thinks about withdrawing from the tournament that’s supposed to determine the team captain.

Zhao found a way to stay

involved in the game: “Even after I stopped playing chess competitively, I still followed it closely as a spectator. In high school, I interned at the Singapore Chess Federation. I also organized a national tournament for girls there. In hindsight, I think taking a step back from competitive chess is probably why I still love the game now. I needed some distance from it to remember

why I loved it in the first place.”

May the Best Player Win is Zhao’s third book, and her first for kids, but she has a full-time job in the tech field and she doesn’t see herself making writing her full-time career. “It’s a passion and a hobby for me,” she said. “If it were to become my only source of income, I would lose some of the joy in writing; I would see it as ‘work-work,’ and I would feel



pressure to write what sells.” She explained that her books are all very different, and that’s not what publishers and agents are necessarily looking for.

She started writing *May the Best Player Win* when she saw a lot of her friends playing chess online during the pandemic. “And it hit me that my college friends don’t even know I used to play chess — I kept that part of myself locked away for so long. So I

started reminiscing about all my years in competitive chess, and I wondered: ‘What would have happened if I continued in chess?’ Which led to another question: ‘Why didn’t I continue in chess?’ And so, I started writing to reflect and sort out my own thoughts.”

She’s glad she wrote *May the Best Player Win*, even though it wasn’t easy and took the same kind of dedicated effort that chess does.

“Of all my books, this one makes

me feel the most vulnerable, because it explores something I went through personally,” she said. “After finishing the first draft, I put it to the side and didn’t think about it for a long time. But now it’s finally coming out, four years after I started writing it! ... If I read the first draft now, I might not even recognize it.

“It took a long time before I felt like it was ready to be shared, and I hope this story can help and resonate with people.”

May’s problems come to a head, but she works them out by remembering what she loved about chess in the first place, and Zhao hopes that lesson sticks with readers.

“I hope it reminds players, and even non-players, to hold on to their passions, regardless of other people’s expectations and opinions. I hope they always pursue what brings them joy.” 🏆

Left: Kyla Zhao with her book.
Below: IM Carissa Yip, who got to know Zhao at Stanford University!

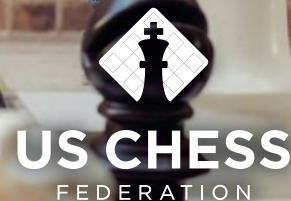


PHOTOS: COURTESY SUBJECT (ZHAO), COURTESY SLCC / OOTES (YIP)

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DING AND GUKESH

BY RICK MASSIMO



BEFORE THE END of the year, we could see a teenage world champion. The World Chess Championship starts Nov. 25 in Singapore, and 18-year-old GM Gukesh Dommaraju, of India, is looking to take the crown from champion GM Ding Liren.

If he wins, Gukesh would be the youngest world champion ever, breaking the record set by GM Garry Kasparov, who was 22 when he won it in 1985. And Gukesh was only 17 when he won the right to challenge Ding by winning the 2024 Candidates Tournament, held in Toronto, Canada.

The championship could last up to three weeks. Ding and Gukesh will play up to 14 classical games: 40 moves in two hours. If they

go past move 40, they'll each get another 30 minutes added to whatever time they have left, and they'll get a 30-second increment added to their clocks after each move — and that's it for the rest of the game.

The goal is to get to $7\frac{1}{2}$ points. If someone gets there before Game 14, it's all over. If they finish tied at 7-7, they start playing tiebreak games with faster and faster time controls. The world championship could come down to blitz!

The two have played three classical games before: Ding has won twice with Black at the Tata Steel supertournament last year and again this year, and they drew with Gukesh taking Black at the Sinquefeld Cup, in St. Louis, this summer. They knew by then that

they'd be facing off for the title, so they may not have pulled out all the stops.

ITALIAN GAME (C50)

GM Ding Liren (2745)

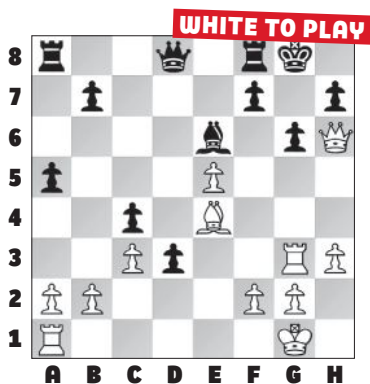
GM Gukesh Dommaraju (2766)

Sinquefeld Cup (1), St. Louis, 08.19.2024

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. 0-0 Nf6 5. d3 d6 6. c3 a5 7. Re1 0-0 8. h3 Be6 9. Bb5 Ba7 10. Be3 Bxe3 11. Rxe3 Ne7 12. d4 Ng6 13. Bf1 d5 14. Nbd2 Nxe4 15. Nxe5 Nxe5 16. dxe5 Nxd2 17. Qxd2 c5 18. Rg3 d4 19. Qh6 g6 20. Bd3 c4 21. Be4 d3

(see diagram top of next column)

After an interesting early middlegame, Ding forces a draw.



22. Bxg6 fxg6 23. Rxd6+ hxg6 24. Qxg6+ Kh8 25. Qh6+ Kg8 26. Qg6+ Kh8 27. Qh6+ Kg8 28. Qg6+, draw.

It wasn't easy for Gukesh to get into the Candidates Tournament. He had to win the 2023 FIDE Circuit, and even then he only finished second — but he advanced because the winner of the circuit, American GM Fabiano Caruana, was already qualified for the Candidates Tournament so they needed another player. But none of that matters now — Gukesh has made it almost to the top, and if he beats Ding no one will question whether he

deserved the chance.

Ding became world champion last year, also in an unusual way: He only finished second in the 2022 Candidates Tournament, but the champion at that time, Norwegian GM Magnus Carlsen (who is still the world's highest-rated player), decided a few weeks later that he didn't want to defend the title. So Ding got to play Candidates winner Russian GM Ian Nepomniachtchi, and he won in a thriller that went down to tiebreaks.

2024 WORLD CHAMPS

DING

LIREN

THE CHAMPION

#15

CURRENT*
WORLD
RANKING:

CURRENT*
FIDE RATING: 2736

PEAK FIDE RATING
(NOVEMBER 2018): 2816

PEAK WORLD RANKING
(NOVEMBER 2021):

#2

AWARDED GRANDMASTER
TITLE: 2009 (AGE 17)

BECAME WORLD CHAMPION
IN 2023



GUKESH

DOMMARAJU

THE CHALLENGER

#7

CURRENT*
WORLD
RANKING:

CURRENT*
FIDE RATING:

2764

PEAK FIDE
RATING (AUGUST
2024):

2766

PEAK WORLD
RANKING
(MAY 2024):

#6

AWARDED
GRANDMASTER
TITLE: 2019 (AGE 12)

YOUNGEST
CHALLENGER IN
HISTORY



THE ROAD TO SINGAPORE

GM Gukesh Dommaraju wasn't a favorite to win the 2024 Candidates Tournament, but he didn't let other people's expectations stop him. Here's one of his most interesting wins from the Candidates, with annotations by GM Eugene Perelshteyn. For the complete game, including extended notes from Eugene, check out the July 2024 issue of *Chess Life*.

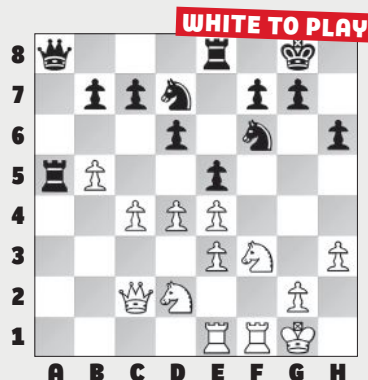
A KEY STEP

GM Vidit Santosh Gujrathi (2727)

GM Gukesh Dommaraju (2743)

FIDE Candidates (8), Toronto,
04.13.2024

Annotations by GM Eugene Perelshteyn



Black has come out of the opening well, while White is still struggling to come up with a plan.

20. Kh2 b6 21. Rf2 Ra2 22. Qd3 Ra3 23. Qb1 Qa4 24. Nh4

White's last hope for counterplay is to put the knight on f5, but in reality, even that knight would be just a paper tiger. Meanwhile Gukesh continues with straightforward play on the queenside.

24. ... Ra8!

Letting White do his worst.

Perhaps 24. ... g6 25. Ref1 Kg7 would be a more prudent approach, when Black is still clearly better.

25. Nf5



25. ... Kf8!

An amazing move. The idea is simple: Black stops any Nf5-e7+ counterplay and is ready to invade with ... Ra3-a1 next.

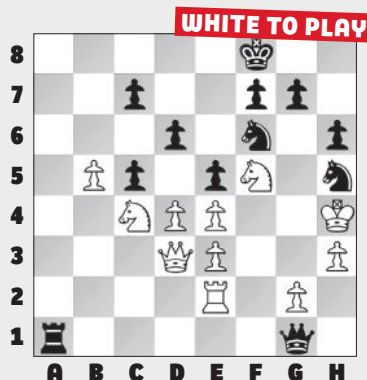
26. Ref1 Ra1 27. Qd3 Qb4 28. Rxa1 Rxa1 29. c5?

A move that smacks of desperation, but it's hard to give White good advice here.

29. ... bxc5 30. Nc4 Qe1!

All of a sudden, White's king finds himself in a mating net. There's no defense against ... Qe1-g1+ and ... Nf6-h5+.

31. Re2 Qg1+ 32. Kg3 Nh5+ 33. Kh4 Ndf6



34. Nxe6 Qh2!



The most direct win, although there was nothing wrong with taking the knight.

35. Nf5 Rf1 36. g4

The central capture 36. dxe5 would give Black a choice of which checkmate to execute: 36. ... Rf4+ (or 36. ... Rxf5 37. exf5 Qg3 mate) 37. exf4 (alternatives: 37. g4 Rxf4 mate; 37. Kg5 Rg4+! 38. hxg4 Nh7 mate is another attractive checkmate) 37. ... Qxf4+ 38. g4 g5 mate.

36. ... Rxf5! 37. exf5

If 37. Rxh2 g5 is a pretty mate! Some players would be happy to allow fans the joy of seeing this mate played out on the board.

37. ... Qg3+ 38. Kg5 Nh7+, White resigned. ♠

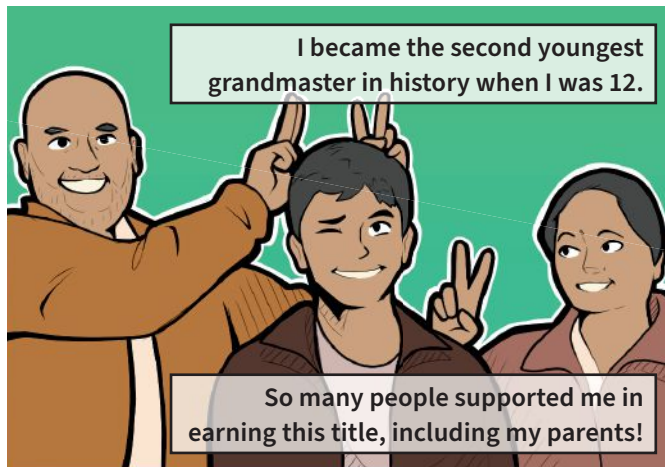
CHESS ADVENTURES

WITH GUKESH DOMMARAJU

I was born in Chennai, India, in 2006. I learned to play chess at school when I was 7.



It turned out that I was good at this game! I started winning tournaments; in 2015, after playing for just two years, I won a gold medal at the World School Championships!



I became the second youngest grandmaster in history when I was 12.

So many people supported me in earning this title, including my parents!

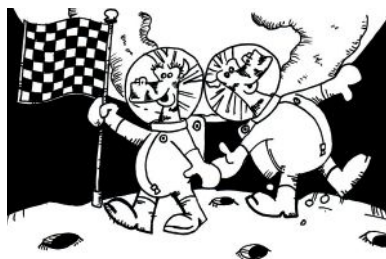
I also had the support of the Indian chess community. Many of the best players helped me, and I got to attend a special camp for top juniors with GMs Vladimir Kramnik and Boris Gelfand!



But my greatest success came at the 2024 Candidates Tournament, where I earned the right to challenge GM Ding Liren for the World Championship. I'm the youngest person to play for the world title! Will I win? There's only one way to find out. See you in Singapore!

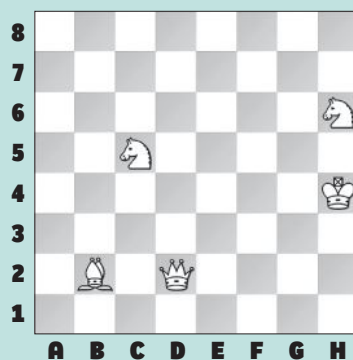
Puzzle Me THIS ➡ Puzzle Me THAT

BY JEFF COAKLEY



Hey, kids! Here's a riddle. *What's more fun than a zebra on the moon?* Hopefully you'll have fun with these new puzzles too. A little bit of this and a little bit of that. Some have special rules. Others are the standard kind of positions that might happen in your own games. Good luck!

1. Triple Loyd



Place the black king on the board so that:

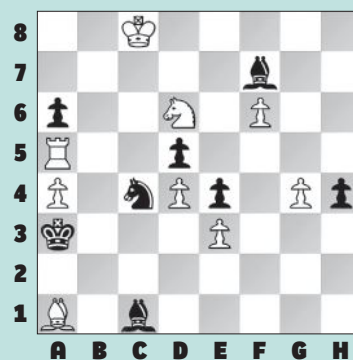
- Black is in checkmate.
- Black is in stalemate.
- White has mate in one.

2. Proof Game



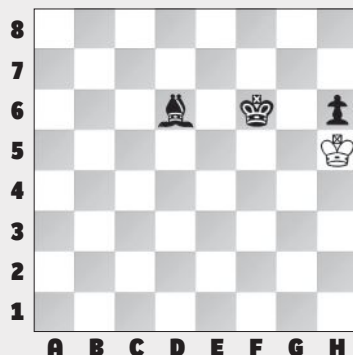
This position was reached after Black's fourth turn. What were the moves?

3. Maze Race



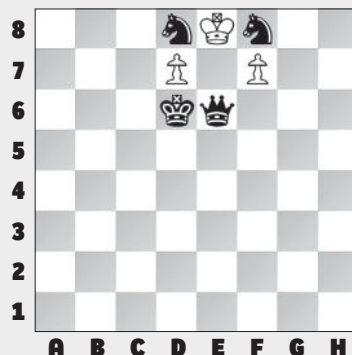
Only one white piece (rook, bishop, or knight) may move. Black does not get a turn. Capture the black king without taking any pieces or moving to a square guarded by Black. Which piece is the fastest? Which is slowest?

4. Inverted Loyd



Add a white queen and bishop so that White has mate in one.

5. Series-Mate in 11



White plays 11 moves in a row to checkmate Black. Only the final move may give check. Captures are allowed. Black does not get a turn. White may not place their own king in check, even if they get it out of check on the next move.

6. Mate in 4



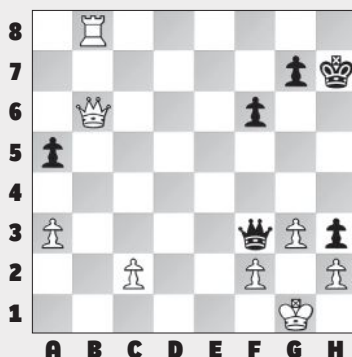
White to play. Mate in four.

7. Combo



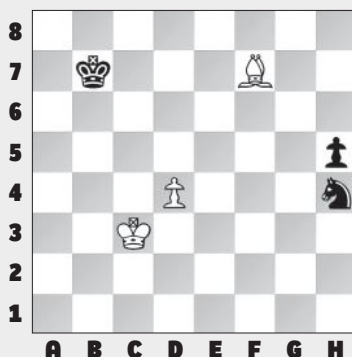
White to play and win material.

8. Defense



White to play and not lose.

9. Endgame



White to play and win.

10. Synthetic game

Make up a game in which White wins with the non-capture 5. Nf7 mate.

Answers:

Riddle) Two zebras on the moon!

1) A. Ke5, mate. B. Kf3, stalemate. C. Kf8, allowing 1. Qd8 mate. **2)** 1. d3 Na6 2. Bg5 Nc5 3. Bxe7 Nf6 4. Bxc5 Bxc5. **3)** The knight is fastest. The bishop is slowest. Here are the lines: Nd6-b7-c5-d7-f8-h7-g5-h3-f4-g2-e1-c2xa3 (12 moves), Ra5-c5-c7-d7-d8-h8-h7-g7-g5-f5-f2-c2-c3xa3 (13), Ba1-c3-e1-f2-g1-h2-f4-h6-f8-e7-d8-c7-b8-a7-c5xa3 (15). **4)** Add Qd7 Bf8 for 1. Bg7 mate. **5)** 1. Kxd8 2. Kc8 3. Kb7 4. d8=N 5. Nxe6 6. Nxf8 7. Ng6 8. Ne7 9. f8=Q 10. Qf5 11. Nc8 mate. **6)** 1. Qd7+

Wow! How cool is this sacrifice? 1. ...Kb8 2. Qxd8 mate is easy to see, but what if Black captures the queen? There are two choices. Taking with 1. ... Rxd7 deflects the rook from the eighth rank. **2. Re8+ Rd8 3. Bf5+** The bishop *clears* the d-file with tempo. **3. ... Qxf5** (or 3. ... Kb8) 4. Rxd8 (or 4. Rxd8) mate. Taking with **1. ... Kxd7** exposes the king to a deadly *double check*. **2. Bb5+ Kc8 3. Rxd8+ Kxd8 4. Re8 mate**. Against 1. Bf5+?, Black defends with 1. ... Qxf5! 2. Rxd8+ Kxd8 3. Qd4+ Qd7. **7)** 1. Rxe7 White

sacrifices the Exchange to *remove the guard* of the black g-pawn. **1. ... Qxe7 2. Qxg6+** Did you notice that the black f-pawn is *pinned* by the white bishop? **2. ... Kh8 3. Qxh6+ Kg8 4. Rd3!** This *rook lift* threatens 5. Rg3+. The only way for Black to avoid a quick mate is to give up their queen. For example, 4. ... Qe5 5. Rg3+ Qxg3 6. fxg3 when White has a winning material advantage. **8)** White is up a rook and a pawn, but Black threatens mate by 1. ... Qg2 or 1. ... Qd1. White avoids defeat by giving back the extra rook. **1. Rh8+ Kxh8 2. Qd8+ Kh7** White could hold a draw at this point with 3. Kf1 but forcing a queen trade is even better. **3. Qd3+ Qxd3 4. cxd3** White has a winning pawn endgame. If Black declines the rook sacrifice by **1. ... Kg6**, White plays **2. Rxh3** with an easy victory. For example, **2. ... Qd1+ 3. Kg2 Qd5+ 4. f3 Qd2+ 5. Qf2**. **9)** The obvious 1. Bxh5? only leads to a draw after 1. ... Nf5 because Black can easily sacrifice their knight for the white pawn. Instead White traps the black knight along the side of the board. **1. Bd5+ Kc7 2. Be4** Now the knight has nowhere safe to move and Black has no way to stop the advance of the d-pawn. **2. ... Kd6 3. Kc4 Ke6 4. Kc5!** If 4. d5+? Ke5, Black draws after 5. Kd3 Nf5 or even wins if White tries 5. Kc5? Kxe4 6. d6 Nf3 7. d7 Ng5!. **4. ... Nf5** Another way to lose is 4. ... Kd7 5. d5 Kc7 6. d6+ Kd7 7. Kd5. **5. d5+!** This check, before taking the knight, gives White the necessary tempo to win the *pawn race*. **5. ... Ke5 6. Bxf5 Kxf5 7. d6** White will get a new queen. Black will not. **10)** 1. e3 f6 2. Nf3 Kf7 3. Ng5+ Kg6 4. Qg4 Kh6 5. Nf7 mate. White can switch their first two moves or substitute 4. Bd3+. Also possible are 1. e4 or 1. ... f5 or 2. Nh3. ♠

TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Effective April 30, 2024, the Executive Board moved to remove the temporary change to US Chess Grand Prix rules implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic and to return to previous Grand Prix requirements. The Executive Board also moved to allow tournaments limited to seniors, juniors, women, or college students to be eligible for the US Chess Federation Grand Prix, provided they satisfy the other Grand Prix requirements, effectively immediately. Please refer to the Tournament Life Announcement section in *Chess Life* for more information.

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

Nationals

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2024 National K-12 Grade Championships DECEMBER 6-8, 2024, MARYLAND

Event site: Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center Address: 201 Waterfront St., National Harbor, MD 20745 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Boyd Reed Email: nationalevents@uschess.org Phone: n/a Website: <http://www.uschess.org/tournaments/2024/k12> TLA ID: 45443

Grand Prix

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

3rd Skyline Open

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024, VIRGINIA

Event site: Washington Dulles Airport Marriott Address: 45020 Aviation Drive, Dulles, VA 20166 Overall prize fund: \$11,500 GP Points: 100 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Anand Dommalapati Email: so2024@capitalareachess.com Phone: 7036275314 Website: <https://www.capitalareachess.com/SkylineOpen> TLA ID: 44786

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

32nd annual Midwest Class Championships

OCTOBER 11-13, 2024, ILLINOIS

Event site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel Address: 601 North Milwaukee Ave., Wheeling, IL 60090 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 44668

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2024 SPICE Cup Open

OCTOBER 13-18, 2024, MISSOURI

Event site: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel St. Louis - Chesterfield Address: 16625 Swingley Ridge Rd,

Chesterfield, MO 63017 Overall prize fund: see online TLA GP Points: 200 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Webster University Email: awyzywany@webster.edu Phone: 3142468075 Website: <https://www.webster.edu/spice/> TLA ID: 45111

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

13th annual Hartford Open

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024, CONNECTICUT

Event site: Sheraton Hotel Address: 1 Bradley Airport, Windsor Locks, CT 06096 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 60 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 44669

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

28th annual Eastern Chess Congress OCTOBER 25-27, 2024, NEW JERSEY

Event site: Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village Address: 201 Village Blvd, Princeton, NJ 08540 Overall prize fund: \$25,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 44670

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

11th annual Eastern Chess Congress Blitz Championship

OCTOBER 26, 2024, NEW JERSEY

Event site: Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village Address: 201 Village Blvd, Princeton, NJ 08540 Overall prize fund: \$500 GP Points: 50 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 44906

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • GRAND PRIX

2024 PA State Action Chess Championship - West

OCTOBER 26, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: William Pitt Union, Univ. of Pittsburgh Address: 5th Ave. & Bigelow Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15213 Overall prize fund: \$690 GP Points: 6 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Tom Martinak Email: martinak_tom_m@hotmail.com

hotmail.com Phone: 412-908-0286 Website: <http://www.pscchess.org/clearinghouse/> TLA ID: 44970

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

19th annual Los Angeles Open

NOVEMBER 1-3, 2024, CALIFORNIA, S.

Event site: Hilton Orange County Airport Address: 18800 MacArthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 44671

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

9th annual Los Angeles Open Blitz Championship

NOVEMBER 2, 2024, CALIFORNIA, S.

Event site: Hilton Orange County Airport Address: 18800 MacArthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612 Overall prize fund: \$500 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 44912

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

33rd annual Kings Island Open NOVEMBER 15-17, 2024, OHIO

Event site: Embassy Suites Cincinnati NE Address: 4554 Lake Forest Dr., Blue Ash, OH 45242 Overall prize fund: \$25,000 GP Points: 300 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 44793

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • GRAND PRIX

2024 PA State Game/15 Championship - West

NOVEMBER 17, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: William Pitt Union, Univ. of Pittsburgh Address: 5th Ave. & Bigelow Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15213 Overall prize fund: \$690 GP Points: 6 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Tom Martinak Email: martinak_tom_m@hotmail.com Phone: 412-908-0286 Website: <http://www.pscchess.org/clearinghouse/> TLA ID: 44971

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • GRAND PRIX

2024 Illinois Class State Championship NOVEMBER 24, 2024, ILLINOIS

Event site: Hyatt Regency Schaumburg Address: 1800 E. Golf Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60173 Overall prize fund: \$6,000 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Glenn Panner Email: glenn@chessweekend.com Phone: n/a Website: <https://www.chessweekend.com/> TLA ID: 45421

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

55th annual National Chess Congress NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 1, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Loews Hotel Address: 11200 Market St., Philadelphia, PA 19107 Overall prize fund: \$45,000 GP Points: 200 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 44794

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

49th annual Eastern Open DECEMBER 26-29, 2024, VIRGINIA

Event site: Hyatt Regency Crystal City Address: 2799 Richmond Highway, Arlington, VA 22202 Overall prize fund: \$30,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 44795

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

34th annual North American Open

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024, NEVADA

Event site: Horseshoe Casino Resort (formerly Bally's) Address: 3645 Las Vegas Blvd. S., Las Vegas, NV 89103 Overall prize fund: \$130,000 GP Points: 300 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 44741

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

13th annual Boston Chess Congress JANUARY 3-5, 2025, MASSACHUSETTS

Event site: Hyatt Regency Boston Harbor Address: 101 Harborside Dr, Boston, MA 02128 Overall prize fund: \$12,000 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 45408

HERITAGE EVENT • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • GRAND PRIX

2025 Tim Just Winter Open

JANUARY 3-5, 2025, ILLINOIS

Event site: Hyatt Regency Schaumburg Address: 1800 E. Golf Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60173 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 40 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: King Registration Email: bill@kingregistration.com Phone: n/a Website: <https://www.kingregistration.com/event/timjust25/> TLA ID: 45433

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

57th annual Liberty Bell Open

JANUARY 17-20, 2025, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Sonesta Philadelphia Rittenhouse Hotel Address: 1800 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$25,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 45412

Regional

CONNECTICUT

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

DELAWARE

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

DIST. OF COLUMBIA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

FLORIDA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

PLEASE NOTE

DEADLINE FOR PRINT TLA SUBMISSIONS

TLAs appearing in *Chess Life Kids* 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.

GEORGIA**APRIL 8, 2024-MONTHLY ON SATURDAY****Pizza Scholastic**

Event site: The Boardroom Address: 1675 Peachtree Pkwy, Suite #180, Cumming, Georgia 30041 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: ThinkChess, LLC Email: info@myThinkChess.com Phone: 770.744.8595 Website: mythinkchess.com/TLAID: 37216

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024**3rd Skyline Open (VA)**

See Grand Prix.

ILLINOIS**JANUARY 3-5, 2025****2025 Tim Just Winter Open (IL)**

See Grand Prix.

INDIANA**JANUARY 3-5, 2025****2025 Tim Just Winter Open (IL)**

See Grand Prix.

MARYLAND**MARYLAND CHESS TOURNAMENTS (NORTH PENN CHESS CLUB)**

Maryland Chess runs 21+ annual K-12 tournaments every other Saturday from September through June & 12+ annual 1-day or multi-day open tournaments for adults & K-12 players on weekends. See www.MD-Chess.org for tournament announcements, registration for tournaments, updated wallcharts, live standings, sign up for K-12 & open e-newsletters, lists of coaches & clubs, camp announcements, & news. K-12 MD players who compete in the Varsity section (for players rated 1600+) of 1 of 8+ annual MD-Sweet-16 Qualifiers can qualify for the \$48,000+ scholarship to the University of Maryland, Baltimore County awarded annually. UMBC is a perennial top-10 contender for the collegiate national chess championship.

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024**3rd Skyline Open (VA)**

See Grand Prix.

MICHIGAN**STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT****NOVEMBER 2, 2024, MICHIGAN****2024 Michigan Scholastic Club Championships**

Event site: Lansing Center Address: 333 E Michigan Ave, Lansing, MI, 48933 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Michigan Chess Association Email: jeffchess64@gmail.com Phone: 8109557271 Website: <https://www.michess.org/> TLAID: 44992

MISSISSIPPI**STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT****OCTOBER 19-20, 2024, MISSISSIPPI****2024 Mississippi State Chess Championship**

Event site: CSpire Address: 1000 Highland Colony Pkwy, Ridgeland, MS 39157 Overall prize fund: \$0 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mississippi Chess Association Email: mark@mcchess.org Phone: 615-631-3876 Website: mcchess.org/TLAID: 44331

NEW JERSEY**OCTOBER 10-14, 2024****3rd Skyline Open (VA)**

See Grand Prix.

NEW YORK**OCTOBER 10-14, 2024****3rd Skyline Open (VA)**

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 13, 2024-APRIL 27, 2025**10th Annual New York State Magnus High School and Junior High Chess****League (Out of state welcome!)**

Event site: Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School Address: 36 West 93rd St., New York, NY 10025 Overall prize fund: \$6,200 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Chess Center of New York Email: chesscenter@gmail.com Phone: n/a Website: <https://www.magnusleague.org> TLAID: 45418

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • JUNIOR GRAND PRIZ**NOVEMBER 9-10, 2024, NEW YORK****8th Annual New York State Girls Championship!**

Event site: Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School Address: 36 West 93rd St., New York, NY 10025 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Chess Center of New York Email: chesscenter@gmail.com Phone: n/a Website: <https://www.chessgirls.win> TLAID: 44899

NORTH CAROLINA**OCTOBER 10-14, 2024****3rd Skyline Open (VA)**

See Grand Prix.

OHIO**OCTOBER 10-14, 2024****3rd Skyline Open (VA)**

See Grand Prix.

PENNSYLVANIA**North Penn Chess Club**

Main & Richardson - St. John's UCC, 500 West Main St., Lansdale, PA 19446. See www.northpennchessclub.org for schedules & info or 215-699-8418

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024**3rd Skyline Open (VA)**

See Grand Prix.

SOUTH CAROLINA**OCTOBER 10-14, 2024****3rd Skyline Open (VA)**

See Grand Prix.

VIRGINIA**OCTOBER 10-14, 2024****3rd Skyline Open (VA)**

See Grand Prix.

WEST VIRGINIA**OCTOBER 10-14, 2024****3rd Skyline Open (VA)**

See Grand Prix.

WISCONSIN**JANUARY 3-5, 2025****2025 Tim Just Winter Open (IL)**

See Grand Prix.

Solutions**PAGE 7 TACTICS TUNEUP**

(1) White used the pin on the bishop to deliver mate in one with **15. Qxc8 mate**. (Oviedo Acosta – Homsombath, Women's Olympiad 2024) (2) **26. ... Bxf3** Threatening ... Qh2-h1 mate. If White tries to make the e2-square safe with **27. gxf3** White wins with **27. ... Qf2**

mate. (Aicha Mahamat Bagamla – Vilhete, Women's Olympiad 2024)

(3) A pattern you should know!

20. ... Bxa2+ 21. Ka1 Bb3+ 22. Kb1 Qb2 mate. (Aini Munthazim – Mutisya, Women's Olympiad 2024)

(4) A very typical double attack, but here it's a triple attack (king, bishop, knight)! After White's best move **6. ... Qa5+ 7. Nc3**, defending the bishop and hoping Black falls asleep, Maradiaga took the free piece with **7. ... Qxe5** and won on move 60. (Aayat Amsi – Maradiaga, Women's Olympiad 2024) (5) White wins material with **13. Bb6! Qc8** and now the double attack **14. Nc7+ Kf8 15. Nxa8 Qxa8**. White went on to win on move 53. (Rakotomaharavo – Guillaume, Open Olympiad 2024) (6) White makes use of his piece activity with the strong **33. Rxf5+! gxf5** Both 33. ... Kg8 and 33. ... Kg7 are met by **34. Rfe5** when White is just up a rook for two pawns. **34. Qh5+!** with an x-ray attack on the king and rook. (Kantor – Laohawirapap, Open Olympiad 2024) (7) How should Black get out of check? **7. ... g6?** This gives up a pawn for no good reason. **7. ... Ke7** is OK but it stops Black's pieces from developing easily, while the best **7. ... Kd7!** allows the bishop to

develop. After **8. Qxg6+** the king has to run anyway, and after **8. ... Kd7 9. Nf3** White is up a pawn with a good position. (Fatime Ali Moustapha – Sankya Tracie, Women's Olympiad 2024) (8) How to get out of check? **15. ... Nxc5?** is a mistake. Both **15. ... f6!** and **15. ... Nf6!** leave Black a piece ahead. After **16. Qxg5+ Kf8** and now the correct **17. Qxg4!** Black is only slightly better. In the game, White took with **17. Qxd8?** Raxd8 leaving Black a clean piece ahead. (Frisoni – Davida Hanna Ebu Mabel Korom, Women's Olympiad 2024) (9) Black is up a passed pawn. White is trying to hold on, delivering check after check. How does she get out of them? Answer: She doesn't, not if she doesn't want to lose! **61. ... Qf5??** A terrible mistake that is quickly punished. Here **61. ... Kh4??** loses to **62. Qe7+ g5 63. Qe4+ Qf4+ (63. ... g4 64. Qe7+ Qf6 65. Qxf6 mate) 64. g3 mate**. Only **61. ... Kh6!** keeps the game going, but now White saves the draw with **62. Qh8+ Kg5 63. Qe5+ Kh6. 62. h4+!, Black resigned**. Mate cannot be avoided: **62. h4+ Kh6 (if 62. ... Kg4 63. Qg3 mate, and if 62. ... Kxh4 63. Qg3 mate) 63. Qh8 mate**. (Pham – Mammadzada, Women's Olympiad 2024)

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