

AMERICAN CUP ■ CHESS IN TRANSLATION ■ HIKARU GETS MARRIED

CHESSLIFE

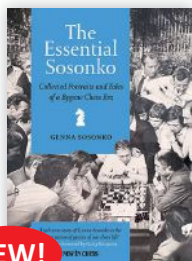


Amazing *Anna!*

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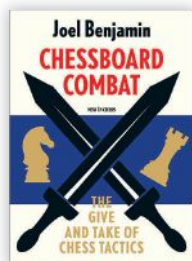
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NEW!

Tales of a Bygone Chess Era Genna Sosonko

'Each new story of Genna Sosonko is the preservation of grains of our chess life', says Garry Kasparov. No writer can tell you more about legends such as Tal, Korchnoi or Bronstein and personalities such as Chepukaitis or Nikolaev. This 840-page hardcover edition is a collection of the portraits Sosonko wrote for New In Chess, plus 100 pages of stories published elsewhere. A must-have for every chess aficionado.



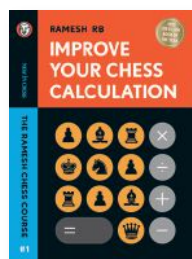
The Give and Take of Chess Tactics Joel Benjamin

A chess tactics manual with a twist. Usually, tactics training involves puzzles with a clear solution. White wins brilliantly, or Black wins. But in real life, chess is messy. Sometimes tactics work, and sometimes they don't. That's why former US Champion Joel Benjamin tells the complete story of attack, defence, and counterattack!



A White Repertoire vs the Open Sicilian Ivan Saric

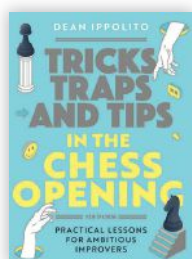
The Open Sicilian is not a phonebook crammed with computer lines, but a textbook full of 21st-century chess wisdom. GM Ivan Saric covers the entire range of Sicilians, from obscure sidelines to the main lines: the Najdorf, the Taimanov, the Rauzer, the Kan, the Sveshnikov and the Dragons. His approach is very ambitious, and he supports his claims with deep analysis and illuminating verbal explanation.



Chess.com 2022 Book of the Year Ramesh RB

Coach Ramesh has won the 2022 *Chess.com Book of the Year Award*, in a vote with thousands of chess players. It is well deserved. But beware! It is a tough book that will require some real effort. Are you up for the challenge?

"An absolute divine masterpiece" – Andras Toth.

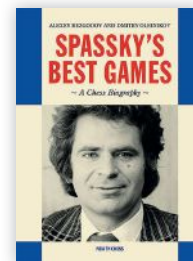


Exciting Opening Tactics Dean Ippolito

This book introduces you to exciting weapons such as the *Fried Liver Attack* and the *Center Fork Trick*. Experienced American chess coach Dean Ippolito knows how adult improvers should play the opening, and what they can expect from your opponent. The tactical fireworks will also help you to develop your general understanding of the opening.

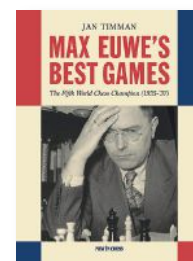
Spassky's Best Games – A Chess Biography Alexey Bezgodov & Dmitry Oleinikov

World Champion Boris Spassky was a chess genius and a perfect gentleman. He was, for example, gracious in defeat after he lost his title to the American Bobby Fischer in 1972. This wonderful new biography includes more than sixty of his best games and a biographical sketch of more than a hundred pages.



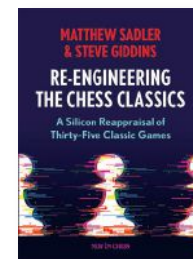
Tribute to the Fifth World Champion Jan Timman

The first outstanding collection of games of this 'efficient, man-eating tiger', as American master William Napier once called Euwe, World Champion from 1935 until 1937. It offers eighty of his games annotated by Jan Timman, who knew Euwe very well. Timman made many discoveries in Euwe's most famous games but has also unearthed several lesser-known brilliancies.



New Insights in Classic Games Matthew Sadler & Steve Giddins

Matthew Sadler and Steve Giddins used the collective power of Leela, Komodo, and Stockfish to re-engineer classic games of fan favorites such as Fischer, Spassky, Larsen, and Capablanca. With these modern engines, the authors have generated dozens of new insights and positional chess lessons that will help every club player and expert to improve their game.

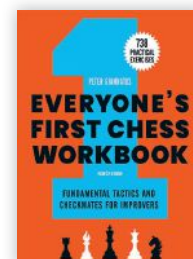


Fundamental Tactics and Checkmates for Improvers Peter Giannatos

The perfect first chess workbook for adult improvers and other beginners. Coaches might find the book, with 738 exercises, very useful as well. It features a complete set of fundamental tactics and checkmate patterns.

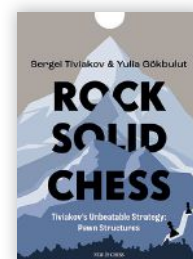
'Beautifully formatted with 3 diagrams per page and tremendous examples.'

Fred Wilson, *The Marshall Spectator*



The unbeaten grandmaster Sergei Tiviakov

Sergei Tiviakov was unbeaten for a consecutive 110 professional chess games as a grandmaster. Who better to teach you rock-solid chess strategy than Tiviakov? In his first book, he explains everything he knows about the fundamentals of chess strategy: pawn structures.



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CHESSLIFE

September

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Chess in Translation

After cutting her teeth in Iowa, our author goes global in Dortmund.

BY ELISE BICKFORD

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A Ringside Seat

Krush and Nakamura take top spots at the American Cup.

BY JOHN BREZINA

ANNOTATIONS BY GM

ELSHAN MORADIABADI

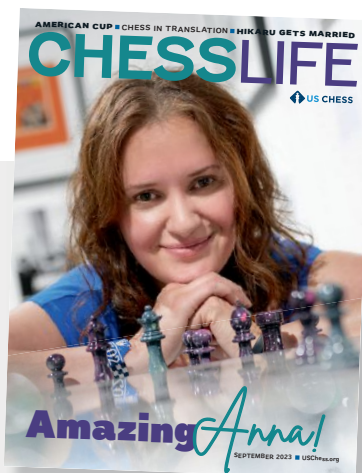
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CAIRNS CUP

Amazing Anna!

Zatonskih steps up to win 2023 Cairns Cup.

BY IM CARISSA YIP

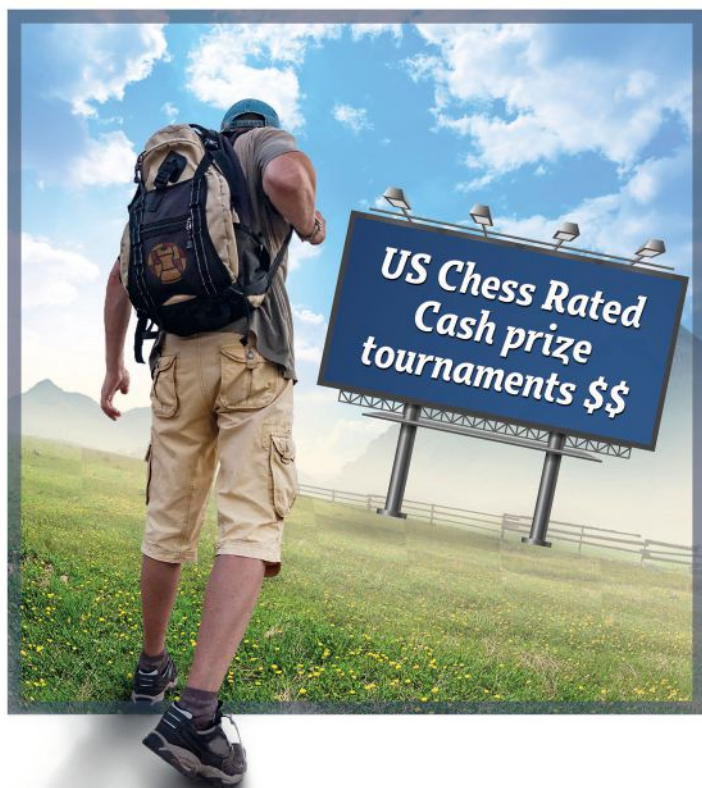


ON THE COVER

It's hard to think of four-time U.S. Women's Champion IM Anna Zatonskih as an underdog, but after some diffident performances, few were picking her to win the 2023 Cairns Cup. But champions persist, and that's what Anna did, finishing first in a very strong event.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRYSTAL FULLER





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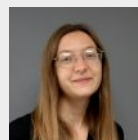


CONTRIBUTORS



IM CARISSA YIP
(Cover Story)
is a three-time
U.S. Girls' Junior
Champion and the
2021 U.S. Women's
Champion. Original-
ly from Andover,
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is ranked number

two among women and first among girls
on the July US Chess rating lists. Currently
she is a student at Stanford University.



ELISE BICKFORD
(Dortmund) began her
over-the-board career at
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Informant and the organiz-
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his article in this month's *Chess Life*.



GM ELSHAN MORADIABADI
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qualified for the U.S. Championship at the
2019 and 2022 U.S. Opens. He was proud
to be named the 2022 Chess Journalist of
the Year by the Chess Journalists of Amer-
ica. Visit his website for more information:
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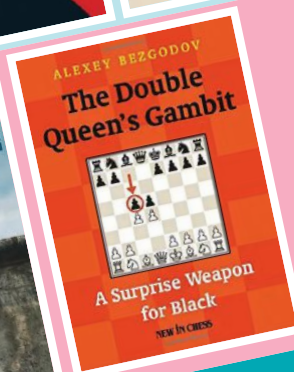
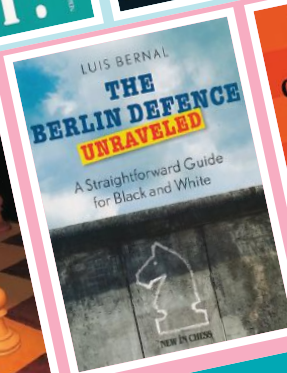
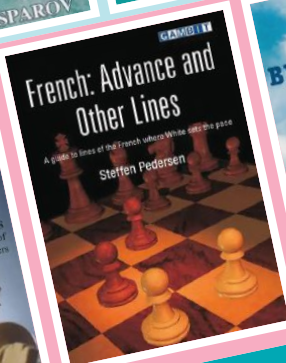
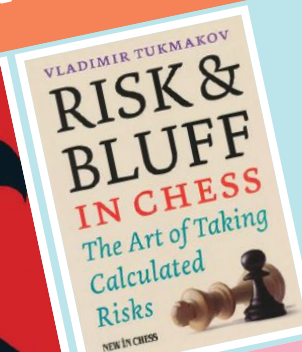
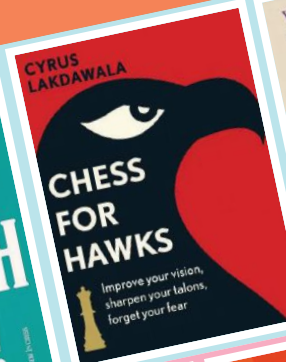
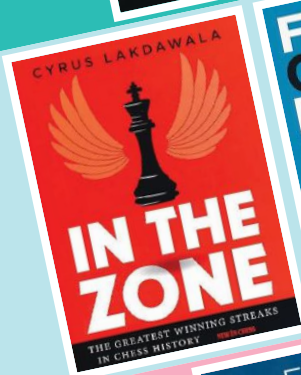
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"I'd like to thank the U.S. Chess Trust for their support in my chess career.

I have had the honor of receiving the prestigious Samford Fellowship, which has given me encouragement and support for my chess."

U.S. Chess Trust Samford Fellow
& Ursula Foster Award Winner

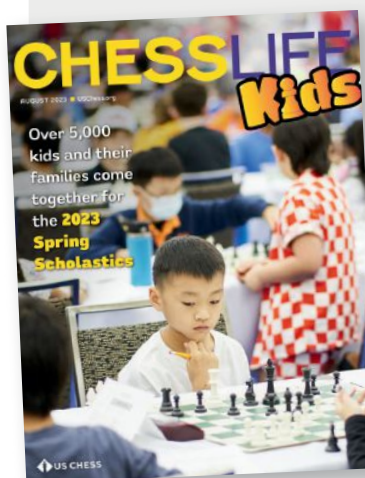


Alice Lee



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COUNTERPLAY



TOO MUCH?

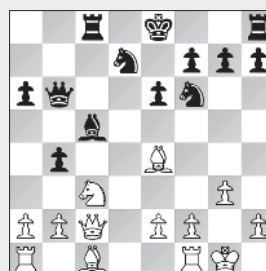
Your contributions in the August issue of *Chess Life Kids* are commendable to say the least. I think, however, that naming such editions for "kids" is misleading. "Juniors" is perhaps better. There are rare gifted children (4-10) who enjoy chess analysis at the depth given in contents such as the current issue. I think a true magazine for "children" would focus mostly on basics, rules, and puzzles.

Oh well, critics are a dime a dozen. Keep up the good work!

Mike Carney
Via email

PIN TO WIN?

Regarding the solution to the first of Soltis' problems in the June issue: the solution says that after 14. ... b4, Black "wins the pinned knight."



WHITE TO MOVE

But what if White plays 15. Na4? What is to prevent White from either removing the pesky bishop or exchanging into a relatively equal endgame? After all, in this scenario, if queen's are exchanged, the threatened bishop on e4 can capture the rook!

Ron Gravatt
Via email

John Hartmann responds:

Thanks for your note, Ron, and for taking the time to work through the problems! Here I think you missed a trick: if 15. Na4 Black plays 15. ... Bxf2+ with a discovery on the queen. Play continues 16. Rxf2 Rxc2 17. Nxb6 Nxe4 and Black is up a pawn and soon more.

John Hartmann responds:

Thanks for writing, Mike. We have three target audiences in mind with CLK: scholastic players from 8 to 13, their parents, and their coaches. We're finding that beginner-level adults are reading the magazine too.

Some of what's in the August issue is advanced indeed, but other material isn't quite as demanding. The opening material is accompanied by online studies and videos to help with digestibility. We're always trying to modulate our complexity and voice, so we'll take your comments under advisement.

We welcome other opinions on the ongoing revamp of CLK. As a US Chess member, you can always read the digital version, even if you don't take the CLK print add-on.

OUR BAD

We had a few gremlins creep into the August issue. First, we misspelled "Yakubboev" on page 11... right above a correct spelling of the same name. We misspelled WFM Kinga Polak's first name on our table of contents. And we have no good explanation for the font, spacing, and editorial issues in the center of page 46. Apologies to all.

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

The Camp That Could

Chess and community in Huntington, West Virginia

BY **BENU RELLAN**



WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN you cross 18 young chess enthusiasts, one grandmaster, a 100-year-old chess club, 62

bottles of Gatorade, and one pair of broken eyeglasses?

Answer: a chess camp!

Our story begins in the 1920s, when a chess club convened in Huntington, West Virginia. By the 1950s, the club was firmly ensconced at the local YMCA. Those were the days when Siegfried Werthammer, M.D. — winner of 13 state championships, a record yet to be broken — served as the unofficial head of the club until he passed away in 1978. The 1980s welcomed Dan O’Hanlon, a newly-minted circuit court judge and Marshall University chess champion, to the club. Around the same time, Mark Hathaway — who would win the state championship seven times and earn his national master title in 1992 — returned to the club and began informally coaching O’Hanlon. In 1993, O’Hanlon became part of the winning team at the U.S. Amateur Team Championship.

The club continued to meet weekly at the YMCA through the early 2000s. Hathaway coached a high school chess team in Columbus and mentored other members of the club. However, in 2019, Hathaway recalls that he “was ready to quit.” But O’Hanlon had another idea. He told Hathaway that he knew a kid who needed coaching: John Boylin.

Boylin learned chess from his grandfather, Dev Rellan, M.D., on Saturday mornings. O’Hanlon happened to be at Rellan’s home one such morning, challenging the then-11-year-old Boylin to a chess game and inviting him to attend the club.

Soon Boylin visited the club for a few

hours. The following week, he stayed for a few hours more. That March, O’Hanlon suggested that Boylin compete in the 50th West Virginia Chess Association Championship for grades K-5, where Boylin finished in a three-way tie for second place. A few months later, in September 2019, Boylin won the West Virginia Junior Championship. In 2020 and 2022, Boylin represented West Virginia at the Dewain Barber National Tournament of Middle School State Champions. He participated in the Arnold Denker National Tournament of High School State Champions this year in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Full disclosure: John Boylin is my son. The club calls me its “chess mom.” “The guys” (as I call the club’s members) forgive my noisy entrances and exits, my lack of understanding of the intricacies of the game, and my clumsy efforts to speak chess. They have all supported, encouraged, and taught my son as he began competing in chess. At the club, Hathaway is the teacher; O’Hanlon, the sage advisor. Both are endless fonts of chess history, strategy, and talent.

So, when O’Hanlon told me to take John to St. Louis for chess camp in the summer of 2021, I did. O’Hanlon had attended a few such camps and assured me that the trip would be a game- and life- changing experience. As always, he was correct.

John was taught in St. Louis by GM Dariusz Swiercz, one of the top players in the United States. Swiercz became a GM at the age of 14 and has a US Chess rating over 2700. He won the U20 World Champion in 2011 and the U18 World Champion in 2012. He won Millionaire Chess in 2016 and

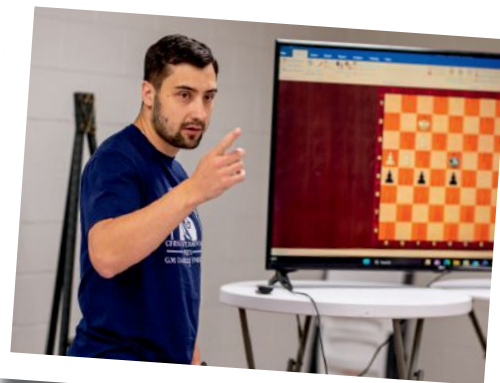
participated in the storied Sinquefeld Cup in 2021. He has authored a few books and more recently created a Chessable course. He also happens to be a really great guy. For John, learning from GM Swiercz for a week was — just as O’Hanlon promised — both game- and life-changing.

Upon our return from St. Louis, O’Hanlon and Hathaway revealed that they had been hoping to run a chess camp in Huntington. Indeed, the club hosting a camp was something they had envisioned for 35 years. I immediately rolled up my sleeves...

Over the next nine months, the Huntington YMCA Chess Club Camp came into being. First, I asked GM Swiercz if he could teach. Then we got down to details. Always ready to assist the club and the community, the YMCA provided the space. Wade Midkiff, a local hotel owner who plays chess, offered accommodations for our guest GM. Generous donors, including O’Hanlon, Mountain Health, and Camden Park contributed to defray the costs of the camp. Paris Signs donated signs. The club was excited; I was cautiously optimistic.

On a hot, humid morning in June of 2022, 14 middle and high school chess fanatics gathered at the YMCA to work with GM Swiercz for three days. It was incredible! When it was over, we asked ourselves, “Would we do it again?” The answer was a resounding, “Why not?”

By January 2023, GM Swiercz had com-



PHOTOS: COURTESY SHOUTEN SINGER

mitted to the second round of camp. The YMCA once again offered a home for the camp. The donors returned, joined by WV Chess. O'Hanlon contributed t-shirts for the campers, and Mrs. Brewster, whose late husband was a member of the club, donated snacks. Camden Park, the only amusement park in the state, even provided free admission passes to the campers.

Registration for the 2023 session of chess camp was full before I even had a chance to advertise. For a brief time in March, we even had a waiting list. At one point during the preparations, I looked up and asked the spirit of Dr. Werthammer, "Can you believe this?"

Fast forward to June 29, 2023: We've just wrapped up our second year of the camp. Eighteen middle school and high school students have spent 3½ days with GM Swiercz solving puzzles and learning

tactics and strategies. There's been a simul, more puzzles, discussions, and challenges, culminating in an end-of-camp tournament. And, of course, we had snacks — lots of snacks. Thank you, Mrs. Brewster!

I observed the camp both years, from beginning to end. There was concentration and laughter, determination and humor. Kids at every level learned, grew, and formed friendships. First-time camper Natasha Bradley, age 12, said, "I learned how to correctly calculate moves and I had a lot of fun." Clay Thompson, 14, who has attended the camp twice, said, "Camp was a great experience thanks to GM Swiercz." John Boylin, now 15, said, "Camp was fantastic, and everyone learned a lot from it." Every single camper said they want to come back next year — even the one whose eyeglasses were broken during a brief basketball recess!

As the only chess camp in West Virginia

and the surrounding area, we are trying to answer a need in our chess community. To have an instructor of GM Swiercz's talent and ability is an unprecedented and amazing opportunity for these young players. As Craig Timmons, vice president of the West Virginia Chess Association noted, "It's really exciting that we are able to have a grandmaster come to West Virginia and teach scholastic players. It significantly helps raise the quality of play and interest in over-the-board chess."

Still, we are intensely aware that there would be no camp without the club. The club carries a century-old torch of friendship, mentoring, and a pure love of the game. Together with the community, the club founders created something that had only been imagined. Looking back, we see that, as is frequently the case in chess, the will became the way. ♠



2023 Chess Journalist of America Awards

Writers, columnists, photographers and analysts from US Chess had much to celebrate at the annual Chess Journalists of America (CJA) meeting on August 2 in Grand Rapids. US Chess took home 27 awards, including two of the “big three” – John Hartmann won Best Story of the Year for his January 2023 “L’affaire Niemann,” while WGM Tatev Abrahamyan was awarded the Best Column prize in her first year of eligibility.

Here is the full list of awards won by US Chess. For complete results, visit the CJA website at chessjournalism.org. Congratulations to all!

TOP AWARDS

BEST STORY OF THE YEAR, WINNER:

JOHN HARTMANN, “L’AFFAIRE NIEMANN”
(CHESS LIFE, JANUARY 2023)

BEST STORY OF THE YEAR, HONORABLE MENTION:

IM ROBERT SHLYAKHTENKO, “FISCHER VERSUS SPASSKY, 50 YEARS ON” (CHESS LIFE, AUGUST 2022)

BEST COLUMN, WINNER:

WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN, “GETTING TO WORK” (CHESS LIFE)

PRINT

BEST FEATURE ARTICLE, WINNER:

JOHN HARTMANN, “L’AFFAIRE NIEMANN”
(CHESS LIFE, JANUARY 2023)

BEST SINGLE ARTICLE OF LOCAL INTEREST, WINNER:

STEVE ERBACH, “THE GREEN BAY OPEN”
(CHESS LIFE, JUNE 2022)

BEST INTERVIEW, HONORABLE MENTION:

JOHN HARTMANN, “HIKARU NAKAMURA”
(CHESS LIFE, JUNE 2022)

JOHN HARTMANN, “ANDY WOODWARD”
(CHESS LIFE, NOVEMBER 2022)

BEST INSTRUCTIVE LESSON, WINNER:

WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN, “HOW TO STUDY TACTICS” (CHESS LIFE, FEBRUARY 2023)

BEST REVIEW, WINNER:

IM JOHN WATSON, “BUT DOES IT ACTUALLY WORK?” (CHESS LIFE, SEPTEMBER 2022)

VISUAL ARTS

BEST PHOTOJOURNALISM ARTICLE, WINNER:

IM SANDEEP SETHURAMAN / DAVID LLADA, “RECORD AND RIVALRIES” (CHESS LIFE, MARCH 2023)

BEST ART, HONORABLE MENTION:

NATASHA ROBERTS, “100K!” (CHESS LIFE, MAY 2023)

BEST COMIC, WINNER:

NICOLAS BARRIOS, MELINDA MATTHEWS, NATASHA ROBERTS, “THAT NAKAMURA LIFE” (CHESS LIFE KIDS, FEBRUARY 2023)

BEST SINGLE CHESS MAGAZINE COVER, WINNER:

DAVID LLADA / NATASHA ROBERTS, “THE K-12 GRADES” (CHESS LIFE KIDS, APRIL 2023)

ONLINE

BEST OVERALL CHESS WEBSITE, WINNER:

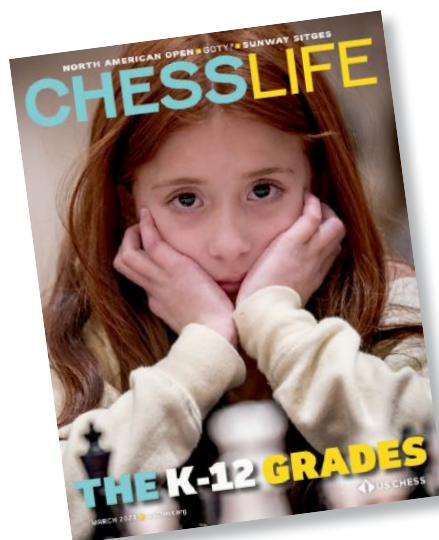
USCHESS.ORG

BEST NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT REPORT, WINNER:

JJ LANG, “LAST MINUTE SUBSTITUTE WINS MOST PRESTIGIOUS ONLINE EVENT OF THE YEAR”

BEST NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT REPORT, HONORABLE MENTION:

AAKAASH MEDURI, “WHEN GAMBLING PAYS OFF: MEDURI GOES ALL-IN ON VEGAS”



BEST STATE / LOCAL TOURNAMENT REPORT, HONORABLE MENTION:

BRIAN KUEHL, "SHERIDAN OPEN BRINGS BIG CHESS TO SMALL TOWN"

BEST SINGLE PODCAST, WINNER:

WGM JENNIFER SHAHADE, "LADIES KNIGHT / LAUREL ARONIAN"

BEST PERSONAL NARRATIVE, WINNER:

ABHINAV SURESH, "OUR MAN IN MADRID"

BEST EDUCATIONAL LESSON, CO-WINNERS:

JOHN HARTMANN, "GRANDMASTER VERSUS AMATEURS: LESSONS FROM THE 2022 U.S. OPEN"

JJ LANG, "15 TEACHABLE MOMENTS FROM THE PRO CHESS LEAGUE"

BEST TOURNAMENT / MATCH COVERAGE, WINNER:

CLO COVERAGE OF THE 2023 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

JUNIOR

BEST ONLINE ARTICLE BY A JUNIOR, WINNER:

IM MAX LU, "MR. PRESIDENT, SEÑOR PRESIDENTE! 3 AMERICANS WIN SPOTS AT THE WORLD CUP!"

BEST ONLINE ARTICLE BY A JUNIOR, HONORABLE MENTION:

DAVIS ZONG, "USATE 2023 - TWO TEAMS AT TOP"

BEST PERSONAL NARRATIVE BY A JUNIOR, WINNER:

IM ANDY WOODWARD, "ANDY WOODWARD'S IM TITLE QUEST"

BEST PERSONAL NARRATIVE BY A JUNIOR, HONORABLE MENTION:

IM MAX LU, "MR. PRESIDENT, SEÑOR PRESIDENTE! 3 AMERICANS WIN SPOTS AT THE WORLD CUP!"

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

US CHESS, "FACES" | NEW.USCHESS.ORG/FACES-US-CHESS

US CHESS, 2023 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP COVERAGE | NEW.USCHESS.ORG/2023-FIDE-WORLD-CHAMPIONSHIP



L'affaire Niemann

Chess is overshadowed by off-the-board controversy at three flagship St. Louis events.

BY JOHN HARTMANN

What is to be known as the "Niemann effect" is a complex and controversial debate within modern chess circles that can be traced to a single player.

It was a surprise, then, that the 2022 U.S. Open, the first of three flagship events, was overshadowed by off-the-board controversy at three flagship St. Louis events.

It was a surprise, then, that the 2022 U.S. Open, the first of three flagship events, was overshadowed by off-the-board controversy at three flagship St. Louis events.



Fischer vs Spassky. 50 YEARS ON



US Chess to Require Safe Play Training

US CHESS HAS ENTERED INTO PARTNERSHIP with the U.S. Center for SafeSport, a Congressionally chartered organization that is dedicated exclusively to ending sexual, physical, and emotional abuse on behalf of athletes everywhere. It was established in 2017 to help abuse prevention, education, and accountability take root in every sport covered by the U.S. Olympic movement. The U.S. Center for SafeSport makes its training and education resources available to other organizations outside of the Olympic movement.

Beginning October 1, 2023, US Chess will require all US Chess certified Tournament Directors to complete the authorized core training from the U.S. Center for SafeSport, with annual refresher training required thereafter. This policy applies to persons who already hold Tournament Director credentials and those who are seeking certification. According to the U.S. Center for SafeSport, “the core training offers a comprehensive 90-minute overview of facts, principles, and strategies to help you provide safe and positive sport environments.” Units include:

- Sexual Misconduct Awareness and Education
- Mandatory Reporting
- Physical and Emotional Misconduct (including bullying, hazing, and harassment)

Tournament Directors and candidate directors will complete the core training online. The required annual refresher training is shorter and also completed online. Both types of training require questions to be answered and scored before advancing to the next topic. By June 1, 2024, only Tournament Directors who have completed the required training will be able to direct US Chess rated tournaments. Any certified Tournament Director, contractor, vendor, or volunteer working a US Chess National Event beginning on or after October 1, 2023 is required to have their training completed one week before the event begins. This includes US Chess National events awarded to third parties. For National events run di-

rectly by US Chess, all Tournament Directors must complete the training before a contract will be offered.

The U.S. Center for SafeSport offers a variety of free resources for minor players and their families. US Chess will provide information on how to access the training as soon as our account is fully established at the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is US Chess requiring SafeSport training?

US Chess adopted Safe Play Guidelines in 2019. Training was always envisioned to be part of the program. Recent safe play violations have highlighted the ongoing need for education and awareness about providing a safe environment for all chess players.

Note: US Chess adopted Safe Play Guidelines that are modeled after the SafeSport code. As a non-Olympic sport, US Chess is ineligible to access the full resources offered by the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Therefore, all reporting, investigations, and sanctions will come from US Chess.

Who is required to take the training?

- All US Chess Certified Tournament Directors, regardless of level
- any independent contractor working at a US Chess National Event
- all US Chess employees
- Certified Chess Coaches

Are there age requirements associated with this training? If so, how does it affect certified TDs?

To take the training a person must be at least 13 years old. Furthermore, parental consent is required from ages 13- through 17-years-old due to the explicit nature of the course. Effective October 1, 2023, US Chess will suspend Certified TDs who are under 13 years old until they reach the age of 13 and complete the required training. US Chess

will no longer accept TD applications for persons who are not at least 13 years old.

When a US Chess National event is awarded to a third party, who must complete the training?

- The Organizer, their employees and/or contract staff, and all tournament directors
- Independent Contractors and volunteers working at the event for the Organizer

How often is the training required?

Annually, beginning October 1, 2023.

For alleged violations of the US Chess Safe Play Guidelines, to what organization do complainants report the allegations — US Chess or the Center for Safe Sport?

US Chess will continue to receive complaints about violations of the Safe Play Guidelines and will apply its internal procedures to reviewing and imposing sanctions, if warranted. As an organization that is outside the formal Olympic movement, US Chess is not eligible for having the U.S. Center for SafeSport review, investigate, and sanction its members.

What is the cost of the training?

- \$19 for the core course
- \$9 annually thereafter, provided that your training is current when you take the refresher

Who pays for the training?

The covered person pays for the training.

If you are made to feel unsafe at a US Chess sanctioned event, please report this under the US Chess Safe Play Guidelines. You have three options for reporting:

- Email: abuse@uschess.org
- Phone: 314.661.9500, extension 8
- By Web: use the reporting form available at new.uschess.org/us-chess-safe-play-guidelines

2023 Executive Board Election Results

AFTER OVERSEEING THE COUNTING OF ballots on July 14 in Smyrna, Georgia, and after a recount on July 19 due to the close margins between two nominees, 2023 Election Chief Teller Ben Johnson reported the final vote tally to the Elections Committee and the office.

DAVID HATER, 1008 VOTES
JOHN FERNANDEZ, 872 VOTES
VISH VISWANATH, 819 VOTES
LEILA D'AQUIN, 789 VOTES
FUN FONG, 746 VOTES
DAVID DAY, 696 VOTES

The top four vote getters are thereby elected to four-year terms, contingent upon the certification of the election results at the 2023 US Chess Delegates Meeting on August 5 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

NEW US CHESS BOARD

After the 2023 Delegates Meeting was completed on August 6, 2023, the Executive Board elected the following officers:

PRESIDENT: RANDY BAUER
VICE PRESIDENT: KEVIN PRYOR
VICE PRESIDENT OF FINANCE: CHUCK UNRUH
SECRETARY: MIKE HOFFPAUIR

COMPLETING THE NINE-MEMBER BOARD ARE:

MEMBER-AT-LARGE: LEILA D'AQUIN
MEMBER-AT-LARGE: JOHN FERNANDEZ
MEMBER-AT-LARGE: DAVID HATER
MEMBER-AT-LARGE: LAKSHMANA "VISH" VISWANATH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: CAROL MEYER

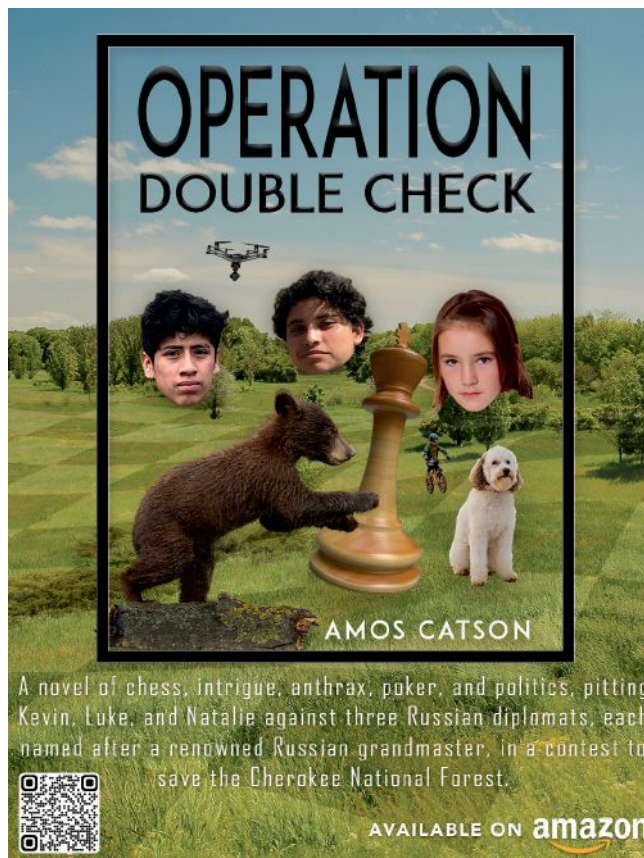
Please visit new.uschess.org/about/board for more information about the Board and its responsibilities.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT!

As an individual, community club, nonprofit, small business, or state affiliate, there are many ways to express your love for chess! Host a tournament, a special club meeting, a chess festival, a community lesson, volunteer locally, or just play a game or two with friends. Connect with us to share your event details, see what others are doing, and find ideas and resources.



new.uschess.org/news/celebrate-national-chess-day
social@uschess.org #NATIONALCHESSDAY





Mergers and Milestones

Congratulations to GM Hikaru Nakamura and WGM Atousa Pourkashian, whose marriage was announced on the bride's Instagram account (seen above) on July 26, 2023.

At 2787 and 2310 FIDE, respectively, Nakamura and Pourkashian are almost certainly the most highly-rated chess couple in the United States. They still have a bit of work to do to catch GM Alexander Grischuk (2736) and GM Kateryna Lagno (2552), who are generally assumed to be the highest-rated married couple in the world.

Congratulations are also in order for Mark Crowther, the driving force behind the indispensable *The Week in Chess* (TWIC) website. Each week Crowther, seen at right, produces a summary of recent tournament and match results along with a downloadable file of edited games, completely free of charge. He delivered his 1,500th consecutive issue on August 7, 2023.

It is hard to overstate just how critical



TWIC has been for modern chess players. Former world champion GM Vladimir Kramnik, for example, is said to have played through every single game in each edition for years, and it is one of the main sources used by the US Chess editorial team in creating both print and online content.

For more on the history of TWIC, or to make a donation to help support Crowther's continued efforts, visit theweekinchess.com.

Robson Wins Prague Masters



GM Ray Robson took top honors at the 2023 Prague Masters (June 21-30, 2023) after winning a two-game tiebreak against GM Bogdan-Daniel Deac. Both finished with $5\frac{1}{2}/9$, a half-point ahead of third-place finisher GM Pentala Harikrishna. American GM Sam Shankland was one of four players with an even score in the 10-player round-robin.

With three wins and one loss (to Deac), Robson's play in Prague was ambitious. His first victory came at the expense of former world championship challenger GM Boris Gelfand.

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B40)

GM Ray Robson (2689)

GM Boris Gelfand (2668)

5th Prague Masters (3), Prague, 06.23.2023

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Nxc6 bxc6 7. e5 Nd5 8. Ne4 Bb7 9. Nd6+!?

A very rare move, almost never played before Robson chose it here. Since then he has played this idea twice more — including once by transposition — and has an overall score of $2\frac{1}{2}/3$ with it!

9. ... Bxd6 10. exd6 c5 11. c4 Nb4 12. a3 Nc6 13. Be3 Qf6 14. Qd2 Rb8! 15. Bxc5 Qe5+ 16. Be3 Ba6 17. Rb1 Rb3 18. Bd3 0-0 19. Bc2 Rfb8 20. Bxb3 Rxb3 21. Rc1 Rxb2 22. Qc3 Qxc3+ 23. Rxc3

(see diagram top of next column)

White is up the Exchange, but has poor pawns and worse pieces. It is instructive to



see how Robson soaks up the pressure and makes the material count.

23. ... f6 24. 0-0 Kf7 25. h3 h5 26. f4 Kg6 27. Rf2 Rb1+ 28. Kh2 h4 29. Bc1 Kf5 30. Rb2 Rxb2 31. Bxb2 Kxf4 32. g3+ Kf5 33. gxh4 Kg6 34. Bc1 e5 35. c5 Be2 36. Rb3 Kf7 37. Rb7 Ke6 38. Rc7 Bh5 39. Rc8 Kd5 40. Rg8 g6 41. Rg7 Kxc5 42. Rxd7 Kd5 43. Be3 Ke6 44. Rb7 Kxd6 45. Bxa7 f5 46. a4 f4 47. Bb6 Ke6 48. a5 Be2 49. Bc7 Kd5 50. Rb6 Kc5 51. a6 Bd3 52. Kg1 e4 53. a7 Nxa7 54. Rxg6 e3 55. Rg5+ Kc4 56. Bxf4 e2 57. Kf2 Nc6 58. h5 Nd4 59. Bd2 Be4 60. Ke3, Black resigned.

Niemann First at Foisor Memorial



After a few months away from the board early this year, GM Hans Niemann's collection of frequent flyer miles is growing once more. The latest feather in his cap is a first-place finish at the Cristina Foisor Memorial (August 5-6, 2023) in Timisoara, Romania. The tournament honors the five-time Romanian women's champion (and mother of frequent *Chess Life* contributor WGM Sabina Foisor) who sadly passed away in 2017 at the age of 49.

Niemann scored a thunderous 9½/10, a full point ahead of second-place finisher GM Haik Martirosyan. Only GM Shant Sargsyan was able to hold him to a draw.

Here's one of Niemann's games from the Foisor Memorial that is not (as of yet) in the

databases, a back-and-forth battle that is typical of rapid time controls.

RUY LOPEZ, COZIO DEFERRED (C70)

GM Hans Niemann (2577)

GM Viorel Iordachescu (2498)

Foisor Memorial Rapid (5), Timisoara, 08.06.2023

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nge7 5. Nc3 g6 6. h4 h6 7. d4 exd4 8. Nxd4 Bg7 9. Be3 Ne5 10. Bb3 d6 11. a4 Ng4 12. Bf4 Nc6 13. Nxc6 bxc6 14. Qe2 0-0 15. Bg3 h5 16. 0-0-0 Rb8 17. f4 Qe8 18. Rhe1 Be6 19. Bxe6 Qxe6 20. e5 dxe5 21. fxe5 Rb4 22. b3 Rfb8 23. Ne4 Qe7 24. Nc3 Bh6+ 25. Kb2 Ne3 26. Rd3 Nc4+ 27. Ka1 R4b7 28. Nb1 Nb6 29. e6 Nd5 30. exf7+ Qxf7 31. Rf3 Bg7+ 32. Be5 Bxe5+ 33. Qxe5 Qg7 34. Na3 Qxe5+ 35. Rxe5 Rf8 36. Rxf8+ Kxf8 37. Nc4 Kf7 38. Rg5 Kf6 39. Ne5 Ne7 40. Nd7+ Kf7 41. Nc5 Rb4 42. Nxa6 Rxh4 43. Nxc7 Nf5 44. a5 Kf6 45. a6 Rd4 46. a7 Rd8 47. b4 Rc8 48. Rxf5+ gxf5 49. c4 f4 50. b5 f3 51. gxf3 h4 52. b6 h3 53. b7 h2 54. bxc8=Q h1=Q+ 55. Ka2 Qg2+ 56. Ka3 Qxf3+ 57. Kb4, Black resigned.

The only other player competing under the American flag was Jeevan Karamsetty, who finished with a solid 6½ points and an approximate 26 FIDE rapid rating points gained.

GM Aleksandar Matanovic (1930-2023)



We learned of the passing of GM Aleksandar Matanovic as we were going to press.

Matanovic was a three-time Yugoslav champion, and a four-time runner-up. The winner of many international tournaments, he participated in four Interzonals and competed in 11 Olympiads. He was, at time of death on August 9, the world's oldest grandmaster.

Matanovic was one of the founders of the *Chess Informant*, which revolutionized the world of chess information when the first volume was released in 1966. Using a system of languageless symbols to represent key chess terms, each issue featured annotations by leading players that could be read by fans around the globe.

Asked about his life in May for the Serbian newspaper *Politika*, Matanovic wrote:

"When you set out on a journey of no return, who and what you are depends on what you leave behind. When my time comes, I will leave behind my wife, son, three grandchildren, three daughters-in-law, four great-grandchildren, the chess language, and countless games played..."

And the hope that everything that directed our lives will be better than it was."

Here is one of Matanovic's lesser-known games, a lovely positional victory that was analyzed in *Informant* #2.

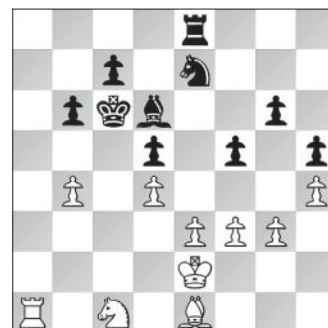
QUEEN'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E12)

Burkhard Malich

GM Aleksandar Matanovic

Havana Olympiad, 1966

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 b6 4. a3 Bb7 5. Nc3 d5 6. cxd5 Nxd5 7. e3 Nd7 8. Nxd5 exd5 9. Bd3 Bd6 10. 0-0 0-0 11. b4 Qe7 12. Qc2 g6 13. Bb5 a5 14. Bd2 axb4 15. axb4 Nf6 16. Bc6 Bxc6 17. Qxc6 Qe8 18. Qxe8 Rfxe8 19. Rfc1 Ne4 20. Be1 f6 21. g3 Kf7 22. Kg2 Ke6 23. Ng1 f5 24. Ne2 Kd7 25. h3 h5 26. h4 Rxa1 27. Rxa1 Kc6 28. f3 Nf6 29. Kf2 Rc8 30. Nc1 Kb5 31. Nd3 Re8 32. Ke2 Ng8 33. Nc1 Ne7 34. Na2 Kc6 35. Nc1



35. ... f4! 36. exf4 Nf5+ 37. Kf2 Nxd4 38. Bc3 Nc2 39. Rb1 d4 40. Bd2 Na3 41. Ra1 Nc4 42. Be1 Nb2 43. Bd2 Kd5 44. Ra2 Nd1+, White resigned. ♠

O Say, Can You See?

Looking at the board takes many skills.

BY GM ANDY SOLTIS

T

WO PLAYERS SIT AT THE same table. They look at the same pieces on the same board. And yet they play moves based on seeing very different things. Why?

Because there are different kinds of chess vision. Each is a different skill to learn. First — and most important — is “quick sight.” This is the ability to look at a position you’ve never seen before and speedily notice the most important features.

SEE CLEARLY

GM Magnus Carlsen
GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov
World Rapid Championship, Almaty,
12.26.2022



BLACK TO MOVE

A beginner who clicks on this position on a website would be overwhelmed. There is an awful lot of information for his eyes to take in. He might not even realize immediately that Black is in check.

A more experienced player would recognize that quickly, as well as the other vital elements of the position. Black is ahead in material, to the tune of a bishop. And his knight has forked all three of White's

heavy pieces.

The faster you see the check and those other big-deal factors, the faster you can improve as a player. It's not just important in blitz chess. A Soviet-era grandmaster, Grigory Levenfish, said quick sight is simply “the foundation of chess.”

Fortunately, it is one of the easiest chess skills to acquire. You can train yourself by clicking on a game on a friendly website. Scroll down 20 or 30 moves to a random position. Look at it. What do your eyes tell you? If it is White's move, can he deliver check? What could he capture? Checks and captures are the most forcing moves. That makes them the building blocks of tactics.

Next on the priority list are threats. How many different moves can White make that threaten to do something serious? And which attractive-looking White moves *cannot* be played because they would immediately lose material?

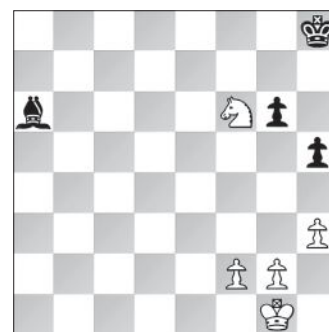
This may sound like calculation. But true calculation examines what can happen two or more moves into the future. Quick sight looks at the present.

In the last diagram, Black has only two legal replies to the knight check. Even if you have excellent quick sight you might not quickly see how 29. ... Kg8 is far better than 29. ... Qxf7. It takes calculation to see how 29. ... Kg8? loses to 30. Qc4!.

Quick sight and calculation are two kinds of chess vision. A third is visualization. It is distantly related to calculation because it does not rely on forcing moves. It foresees a position several *quiet* moves into the future.

NO FREEZE

GM Peter Leko
GM Michael Adams
Dortmund, 2001



WHITE TO MOVE

Quick sight and calculation yield nothing. There are no checks, captures, or threats to be made.

But visualization tells us a lot. White would make huge progress if his king reaches a key square such as g5 without trading any pawns.

Then he would have a good winning plan. He could advance his f-pawn and trade it for the g6-pawn. Then the black h5-pawn would almost certainly be lost. With two connected passed pawns, White would win.

Once White visualizes that, he might see why, for example, 37. f3? or 37. Kh2? would endanger the win after 37. ... h4!. But winning was fairly easy after 37. h4!.

The rest was 37. ... Kg7 38. Ne4 Kf7 39. Kh2 Bd3 40. f3 Bf1 41. Kg3 Ke6 42. Nd2 Bd3 43. Kf4 Kf6 44. Ne4+ Kf7 45. Kg5 Bf1 46. g3 Be2 47. Nd2 Kg7 48. f4 Bd1 49. Nc4.

(see diagram top of next column)

Here **Black resigned** because of what *he* could visualize. White can advance f4-f5. After a trade of pawns he would win the h5-pawn. For example, 49. ... Bc2 50. Ne3 Be4 51. f5 gxf5 52. Nxf5+ Kh7 53. Nd4 followed by Nd4-e2/e6-f4xh5.

Yet another kind of vision is the ability to see the invisible. To be more exact, it's the

QUIZ FOR SEPTEMBER

FOR FIVE DECADES OREST Popovych was one of America's foremost amateur masters. He blended a career as a college professor, accomplished musician, and authority on Ukrainian culture with a history as a fearless attacking player. His long list of victims included grandmasters like Pal Benko and William Lombardy. This month's quiz honors Popovych, who died at age 90 in March. (See IM Tony Saidy's obituary in the June issue for more. ~ed.) In each of the six diagrams you are asked to find the fastest winning line of play. Solutions are on page 63.



PROBLEM 1
Orest Popovych
Gary Lane



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2
Orest Popovych
Marc Diesen



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3
Edward Durrant
Orest Popovych



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4
Orest Popovych
Jack O'Keefe



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5
Spartaco Sartori
Orest Popovych

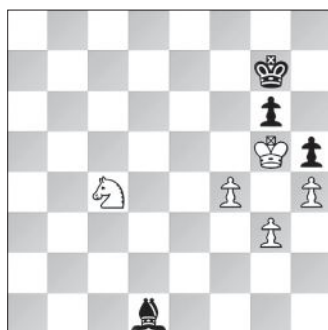


BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6
Orest Popovych
John Jacobs



WHITE TO MOVE



ability to see the implausible.

These are moves that put a piece or pawn on a square where it can be taken. Players who are strong in other vision skills can be at a disadvantage here.

BREAKING BAD

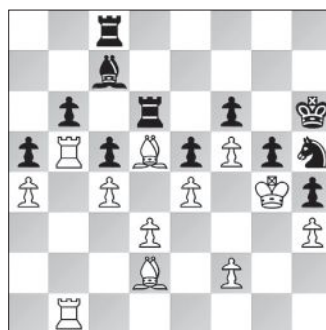
GM Le Quang Liem

GM Daniil Dubov

Gibraltar Masters (10), 02.01.2018

(see diagram top of next column)

A player with quick sight would see that Black has protected all of his potential weak



WHITE TO MOVE

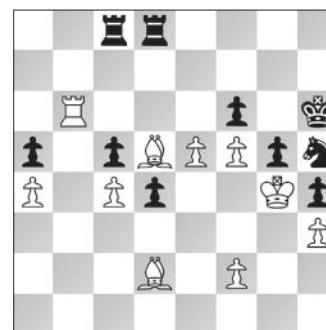
points. A player with good visualization skills would appreciate how Black's blockade discourages invasion of any white pieces.

Both of those players might move on and try to calculate the sacrifice 45. Bxa5 bxa5 46. Rxc5.

A third player would look instead at the implausible possibility, 45. d4!

Then 45. ... cxd4 would allow a crushing 46. c5! bxc5 47. Rxc5, with a c-file pin that wins after Rb1-c1, for example.

In the game, White was victorious after 45. ... exd4 46. e5! Rdd8 47. Rxb6! Bxb6 48. Rxb6.



If you have been training your board sight, you will note the threat of Bd2xg5+.

Dubov certainly did, playing 48. ... Nf4 to stop that threat, but soon resigning after 49. Rxf6+ Kg7 50. Bxf4 gxf4 51. Kxf4 d3 52. Ke3 Rb8 53. Rg6+ Kh7 54. e6 Rg8 55. Rxc8.

There's a feast for your eyes in every position if you take the time to look. As that noted scholar Lawrence Peter Berra put it, "You can observe a lot just by watching." ♦

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

Now for Rook Endings

Part one of a multi-issue look

BY **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**

R

ROOK ENDGAMES ARE DIFFICULT to master — and even more difficult to play. While it is possible to calculate king and pawn endgames to their conclusions, the addition of this powerful piece makes matters much more complicated, and often gives the defensive side additional resources to save the game.

There are key theoretical positions that you need to know, some of which I will cover in this column and those following. I would again recommend practicing them to the point where you feel confident that you can execute them properly in a real game. *Chess.com* has a section dedicated to rook endgames under the learn tab that will allow you to play out known positions. The *Chess.com* drills are another excellent tool to practice various positions that may happen in your game. Lichess also has a special section for rook endgames in its puzzles database.

The good news is that learning these endgames well will help you save many points from worse positions. Keep in mind some key elements of rook endgames:

ACTIVITY OF THE ROOK IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE

There are many scenarios when giving up a pawn is better than accepting a long-term inferior placement of the rook. Even with an extra pawn, many of the positions are drawn or at the very least, tricky to win.

CUTTING OFF YOUR OPPONENT'S KING ON THE SEVENTH AND SECOND RANKS

This is a huge achievement. As there are

only a limited number of pieces, eliminating your opponent's king from the action will give you a big advantage. As an added bonus, on the second or seventh rank the rook will be attacking your opponent's pawns.

ROOK BEHIND PASSED PAWNS

This is the optimal placement of the rook, whether it is your or your opponent's passed pawn. If it is your passed pawn (the “attacking side”), the rook will assist in pushing it and still remain active. If it is your opponent's passed pawn (the “defending side”), your rook can stop the pawn from queen-ing while remaining an active piece.

PASSED PAWNS MUST BE PUSHED

The farther advanced the pawns are, the more dangerous they become. Ideally, you would have your rook behind the passed pawn, pushing it down the board and paralyzing your opponent's rook. If you are on the defending side, it is better to have your king blocking your opponent's passed pawn and keeping your rook active for counter play.

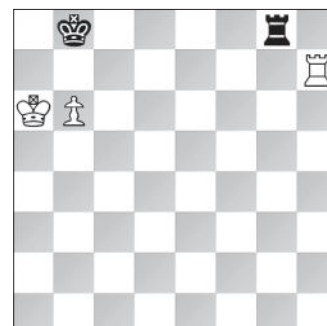
MAINTAIN AT LEAST THREE SQUARES BETWEEN YOUR ROOK AND THE OPPONENT'S KING

This is a rule for a defense mechanism where the rook keeps checking the opponent's king to prevent a passed pawn from promoting. Being three squares or files from the king allows the rook to check when the king is disconnected from the pawn.

Ideally, the rook would take an active

role when on the defensive side, but let's take a look at an example where passive defense (keeping the rook on the back rank) is sufficient.

PASSIVE DEFENSE #1



WHITE TO MOVE

1. b7

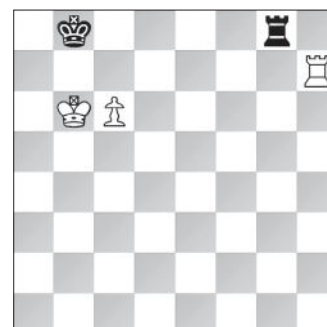
A check doesn't help: if 1. Rb7+ Ka8 2. Ra7+ Kb8 and now if 3. b7?? Rg6+ wins the rook.

1. ... Rg6+ 2. Kb5

Black can either keep checking the king or simply wait on the sixth rank. White can't make progress with the knight's pawn.

Now, let's shift everything to the right by one file.

PASSIVE DEFENSE #2



WHITE TO MOVE

1. Rb7+

The additional file gives White an extra option.

1. ... Kc8

Here running to the corner doesn't help: 1. ... Ka8 2. Ra7+ Kb8 3. c7+ Kc8 4. Ra8+ Kd7 5. Rxg8 and wins.

2. Ra7

Threatening checkmate from the other side.

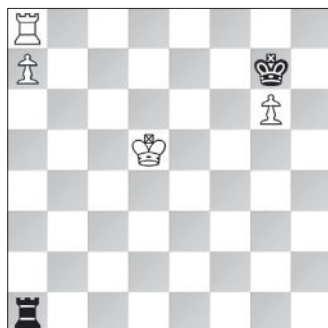
2. ... Kb8 3. c7+ Kc8 4. Ra8+

Winning the rook. Two takeaways: (1) this is a typical pattern, so know it; (2) passive

defense does not work against bishop or central pawns. In order to defend here, Black would need the rook to check the white king from behind.

In some positions, two extra pawns are not enough to compensate for a poorly placed rook.

STAY SAFE KING!



BLACK TO MOVE

All Black has to do here is wait behind the pawn along the a-file while not moving the king. This position is also drawn if White's extra pawn is on the h-file, when the black king would simply stand on h7 and the rook would shift up and down the a-file. As long as Black has the g7 and h7 squares available for the king, he is safe.

1. ... Ra2

Remember the typical mistake 1. ... Kxg6?? — now the white rook moves off a8 with check, and wins with 2. Rg8+ Kf7 3. a8=Q.

2. Kc6

White tries to have the king defend the pawn, allowing the rook to move and the pawn to queen. But Black can thwart that plan.

2. ... Ra1

Continuing to mark time, far from the black king.

Losing is 2. ... Ra6+?? 3. Kb7 as Black must be able to check the king when it touches the pawn. Now after 3. ... Ra1 4. Rb8 Rb1+ 5. Kc6 Rc1+ 6. Kd5 the king will zigzag towards the rook and promote the a-pawn when Black runs out of checks.

3. Kb7 Rb1+

As soon as the king defends the pawn, freeing the rook, Black needs to deliver a check, separate the king from the pawn.

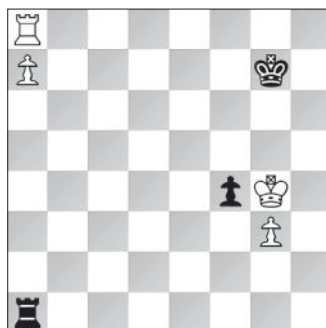
4. Ka6 Ra1+ 5. Kb6 Rb1+ 6. Kc5 Ra1

And so on.

This drawing technique only works with

the extra g- and h- pawns, as every other pawn is a simple win. Knowing this helps us understand the next example.

TWO CAPTURES



WHITE TO MOVE

1. gxf4!

Choosing an f-pawn over a g-pawn. If 1. Kxf4 we use our knowledge of the above position and hold the draw.

1. ... Ra2?

Pinning the pawn with 1. ... Ra4 only postpones the inevitable, as the king will zigzag closer to the black rook: 2. Kf3 Ra3+ 3. Ke4 Ra4+ 4. Kd3 and so forth. The f4-pawn is untouchable, of course: if 4. ... Rxf4? 5. Rb8.

2. f5 Ra1 3. f6+

Now the black king is driven from the safe g7- and h7-squares.

3. ... Kf7

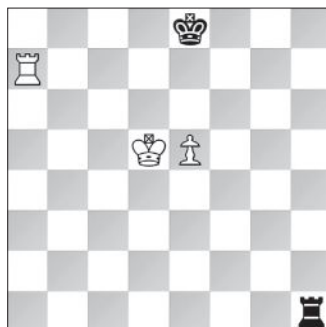
Now we see another typical motif. Note that if 3. ... Kxf6 4. Rf8+ and wins.

4. Rh8 Rxa7 5. Rh7+

With a winning skewer or x-ray.

There are two absolutely critical positions you must know, and learning them will pay great dividends in your chess-playing career. The first is the Philidor position.

PHILIDOR



BLACK TO MOVE

White's idea is to play Kd5-d6, followed by Ra7-a8+, e5-e6 and promote the pawn. But Black can shut everything down with the following.

1. ... Rh6!

The key move in the Philidor position. By cutting the king off on the sixth rank, Black stops White from advancing and using the pawn as a shield from checks.

It's useful to see why the natural 1. ... Rd1+ fails. After 2. Ke6 Kf8 3. Ra8+ Kg7 4. Ke7 clears the path for the pawn. Black can look for activity with 4. ... Rb1 5. e6 Rb7+ but because the distance between the king and rook is only two squares / files, the checks will soon run out, i.e., 6. Kd6 Rb6+ 7. Kd7 Rb7+ 8. Kc6 Rb1 9. e7.

2. e6

If White tries to pass the move to Black, the rook simply shifts on the sixth: 2. Rb7 Rg6 3. Rh7 Ra6 etc.

2. ... Rh1

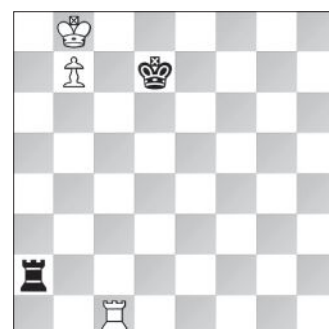
Now that the pawn has advanced, Black returns to active defense with checks from behind. The white king can no longer hide behind the pawn.

3. Kd6 Rd1+ 4. Ke5 Re1+

With an easy draw.

The Lucena position is as important a position as it is instructive. Again, I would highly recommend practicing this endgame to the point where you can execute the win quickly and without hiccups.

LUCENA



WHITE TO MOVE

The white king is boxed in: the rook is covering the a-file and the black king is covering the c-file. But White can drive it away.

1. Rd1+ Ke6

(continued on page 52)

CHESS IN TRANSLATION



After cutting her teeth in Iowa, our author goes global in Germany.

BY **ELISE BICKFORD**



I AM A PRODUCT OF the pandemic chess boom, one of the many adults who got into the game at the height of COVID-19 after watching “The Queen’s Gambit” on Netflix. For most of us, chess began as a solitary, online pursuit. It was a personal escape and a distraction to while away the time in isolation. I learned the game by watching videos, playing against bots, and reading whatever books I could find in my dusty basement or local library. Maybe there would be a few over-the-board games here and there, but most people in my small social bubble were reluctant to play and quickly grew tired of my constant requests.

For seasoned players, the recent re-opening of in-person chess events meant the return of something old and familiar. But for me, over-the-board (OTB) chess tournaments were a new and alluring endeavor. After my first Rated Beginners Open at the University of Iowa in 2021, I soon found myself traveling to US Chess tournaments within whatever radius friends or even random acquaintances were willing to drive me, whenever my schedule as a graduate student allowed it.

My travels brought me to mall basements, student unions, chain hotels, a high school library with a large and foreboding oil painting of Kramer from Seinfeld, and even a medical practice. I saw adults playing against kids who needed stacks of seat cushions to reach the board. I eavesdropped on sore losers and gloating winners recounting their games in a passionate flurry of alphanumeric coordinates. I had conversations about science, history, etymology, travel, and politics with people from small towns I had never heard of.

It was fascinating to uncover new aspects of the game of chess. For the first time, I had to read my opponents’ psychology, make complex plans, and manage stress over longer time controls. But just as fascinating was the atmosphere. It wasn’t merely the desire to improve my chess that kept bringing me back. There was some other ambient reason, one I couldn’t quite articulate to myself but that I often would ponder while staring out onto the barren I-80 highway or some Marriott lobby between games. Maybe it was my amazement at the fact that a bunch of amateurs who could be doing anything else with their lives decided, again and again, to mentally exhaust themselves for a weekend in some fluorescently lit architectural night-

mare just for the sake of a game. Maybe I kept returning with the hope that I might finally understand what this unlikely mix of people doing this unlikely activity all amounted to.

Fast forward to earlier this summer. I was still playing chess, and my studies in literature and translation brought me to Berlin, Germany, where of course I wanted to find some OTB tournaments. One of my close friends suggested I play in the Sparkassen Chess Trophy. She had grown up in Dortmund, the city where it was hosted, and her parents had helped run the event since she was a kid. Her stepdad even played in the higher-rated Open A section before he got sick with brain cancer and had to retire.

My friend told her parents I was interested in participating, and they were generous enough to open their home to me during the nine-day event, the only caveat being that they didn’t speak any English. This would be a bit of a hurdle, as I can read and understand German fluently, but I speak with the linguistic sophistication of a third grader. Still, I booked my travel and tried to spend some of early June training.

When it was time to head west to Dortmund, I worried the weather was a bad omen. Most of Germany got slammed with torrential rain. I had to slosh my way to the Hauptbahnhof (Berlin Central Station) in a hurry, since my train’s departure time had been pushed back by two hours, probably to compensate for all the delays that were to come (the stereotype that German trains are punctual is a total lie). I arrived at Uwe and Najeeba’s house so much later than expected that there was only enough time to say “Hallo,” eat a quick dinner, and glance at some of Uwe’s antique chess sets and books.

The next day I forced myself out of bed at 6:30 to make it across town to Westfallenhallen in time for Anmeldung (registration) for the Open B tournament. I wasn’t sure what to expect, but what I certainly did not anticipate seeing was a convention center filled with droves of Jehovah’s Witnesses alongside all the chess players. Emerging from the metro, the first thing that came into my view was a giant sign that said: “Übt Geduld” (Practice Patience), the theme of their nearby conference. *Not terrible advice for the lot of us*, I thought. At various points during the tournament, it was tempting to sneak in and observe their event. I refrained, but after a particularly rough loss later in the week, I did spend some time loitering next to a parking attendant who was listening to a radio broadcast of a speech from inside — a

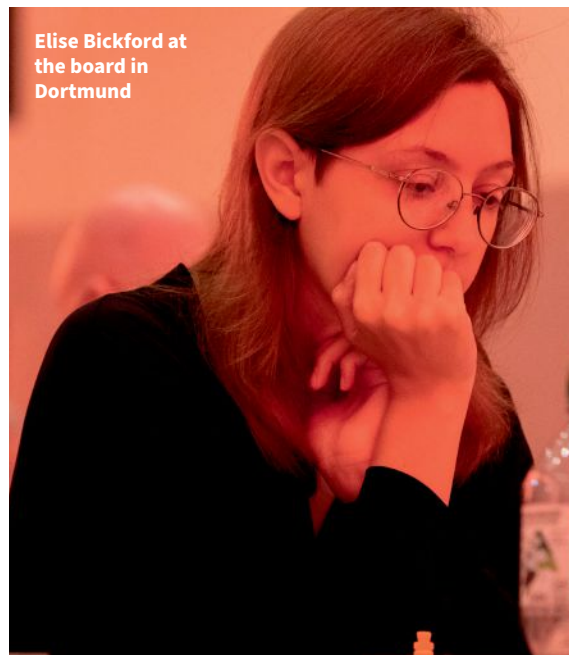
dramatic story in German about God putting the first seed into the earth.

As I entered the playing venue, I was immediately overwhelmed by the sheer number of chess boards. The first hundred or so were in a giant auditorium, with the top five elevated on a big stage with a DGT display behind. The hall was lit with a dim red light that was moody but slightly impractical — so much so, that later in the week, an older participant brought his own janky setup of reading lamps to better illuminate his board. The outside lobby was filled with even more boards. As I’ve come to learn at these events, the worse you play, the more likely you are to be relegated to uglier, noisier environments.

We powered down our phones, took our seats, and after a quick greeting from the arbiters in German and tersely translated English, the round started. I had never been around so many chess games played at once. I felt like I was inside the mind of an engine that was crunching variations. I wanted to walk around and take it all in, but I was too stressed. My opponent had a FIDE rating of around 1600, and back in the U.S., I had played primarily in reserve tournaments with a rating limit of only 1500.

I decided to play the Scotch and was hit with an early ... Qd8-h4 sideline that I hadn’t studied too closely beforehand. I ran down my clock in the opening trying to figure out what to do and got a decent position, but when things simplified, I was in serious time trouble (I probably practiced too much Geduld) and played inaccurately, losing a

Elise Bickford at the board in Dortmund



few pawns, and allowing my position to crumble. Not the best start, but my opponent was very kind, so it was hard to be too upset. He offered me some of his mints halfway through the game and chatted with me in German after. He was excited to hear that I came all the way from the U.S., and he made a point to wish me “Viel Erfolg” (Germans wish you “much success” instead of “good luck”) before each coming round.

After finishing my early morning round, I decided to stay and watch the games starting in the afternoon. Around 3 p.m., hundreds of strong and titled players flooded the convention center for the Open A tournament, the closed NRW Cup, and the No Castling Masters event. I was starstruck and didn’t know where to look. Fortunately, after telling this to Uwe, he brought me upstairs, where GM Klaus Bischoff was providing excellent live commentary in German that gave a narrative arc to the tournament.

The iconoclasts — GMs Fabiano Caruana, Pavel Eljanov, Vladimir Kramnik, and Dmitrij Kollars — explored new intricacies and ideas in no-castling chess. In the Open A section, English GM Michael Adams consistently remained dominant, playing almost all his games on board three. Germany’s #2 and #3 players, GMs Matthias Bluebaum and Alexander Donchenko, also had a close fight for the top; on a later day, after Donchenko made a quick draw, he wandered into the commentary room, looked at a random analysis board for a half-second, launched into a mile-a-minute, theoretical explanation

of the Two Knights Caro-Kann, and then wandered out with a little wave. In the NRW Cup, 12-year-old FM Hussain Besou was competing formidably against much more experienced players, including the famed German streamer IM Georgios Souleidis, also known as “The Big Greek.” WGM Dinara Wagner and IM Ruben Gideon Koellner also put up thrilling fights in an attempt to secure GM norms.

I came to enjoy the cadences and peculiarities of German chess-speak. Exchange sacrifices were quality sacrifices or “Qualitätsopfer.” Castling was “Rochieren,” a word historically linked to the word rook, which the Germans strangely refer to instead as the “Turm” or tower. A draw was a “Remis,” derived from the French but close to the English remit. You don’t play on the kingside but in the elegant sounding “Königsflügel,” the “king’s wing.” Pieces “schlagen” or strike each other rather than taking or capturing. When doing post-game analysis with my opponents, I kept having to remind myself to use the word “Dame” rather than “Königin” (to my chagrin, the Germans say “lady” rather than “queen”). Little phrases from den Klaus got stuck in my head. *Geht’s schon los. Das kommt nicht in Frage. Schwer zu sagen, wer hier besser steht.* I would repeat them to myself while I was playing. *Er sagt sich da drüben, bin ich in Sicherheit. Es ist noch nicht ganz zu Ende. Es ist schon vorbei.*

The days to come followed a roughly similar pattern. In the morning, I would play

a round, always bookended by some chit-chat, mostly in German. Over the course of my rounds, I met a few fellow graduate students from around Nordrhein-Westfalen, including one who was going to move to the Midwest soon for a Ph.D. in mathematics. I also talked with a man whose wife was a literature professor up near Rostock and an engineer who studied technical English in the 1960s.

One pre-game interaction was slightly less cordial after I accidentally addressed my opponent with the informal *du* instead of the formal *Sie*. I couldn’t tell if he was offended, but he almost crushed my hand with a forceful handshake afterward, and I think he was upset later when I beat him in a tricky bishop and pawn endgame. I had fun discussing the Catalan with one of my other opponents but was a bit shocked to hear him say that during our game, he kept trying to remember if it was true that Stephen King came from Maine, and was wondering if I was from the same part of Maine as Stephen King, thinking, “*Hmm, she is also a writer, it would be cool if she knew him, but she probably doesn’t do that kind of writing, who knows?*”

Meanwhile, I felt like I was on the ropes and couldn’t let my mind stray from the board for one moment. Chess is cruelly nonreciprocal.

On the days when I was too tired and downtrodden to bear hanging around the playing hall, I would walk, zombie-like, into town to acquire some cake or other refined carbs. As I ate them in the park to the faint sound of a trombone, I thought I was hallucinating my own circus background music until I spotted the street musician producing the noise through some distant trees. Otherwise, I would linger around the playing hall, where I entered my games into Lichess or looked at the chess books on display until the afternoon rounds began. After watching the commentary for a few hours, I would take the metro back out to the suburbs and go to sleep almost immediately, with the hopes that somehow, I could restore enough energy to continue playing the next day.

One welcome wrinkle in my routine was my dinner with fellow American players WGM Tatev Abrahamyan, WGM Gulrukhbegim “Begim” Tokhirjonova, and GM Fabiano Caruana. We all decided to meet for a late meal on Sunday, the hottest day of the week, and Germany’s Ruhetag (rest day), when many restaurants and businesses are closed. It was over 80 degrees with what felt like 80% humidity. After my long metro ride to their hotel, we walked for more than a half



A blindfold exhibition
at the closing
ceremony for 2023

PHOTO: COURTESY SPARKASSEN CHESS TROPHY / LUNIG



Kramnik (L) and Caruana (R) as seen from the trenches.



Bickford (center) at her first tournament in 2021

hour in search of a place to eat.

First, we followed Fabiano's lead in the direction of a good Italian restaurant he remembered going to in 2016. (I was going to make a joke that I felt like a human chess piece, but I thought that would be weird.) The restaurant did exist, and he impressively got us there without the help of a map, but it wasn't open. We continued to wander until we found a Tunisian restaurant where the waiter only spoke German (and French, but that helped none of us). I was somewhat grateful for this since it meant that my existence was not entirely superfluous. As I translated what the appetizer of the day was, and that, no, the waiter said Fabi couldn't have the Arabic coffee now, because it is best served after dinner, I wondered what my life would be like if I had come to the game of kings earlier.

I wish I could say that we had a deep conversation about chess, philosophy, and life, but I felt on the verge of a heat stroke and didn't want to be irksome by turning the dinner into an interview. So we talked a bit about cheating scandals, openings that are good when castling is off-limits, Begim's upcoming game against former world champion Ponomarev, *Friends*, and Marvel movies. Tatev and Fabi sat facing the window and were distracted by a man on the upper floor of the building across the street who was cleaning his house in his underwear. When the waiter asked me how Begim wanted her steak cooked, the necessary words exited my mind, and I ended up saying something like "with an average level of bloodiness."

I was finding it hard to justify to the group exactly why I was there, in Dortmund, playing chess and writing this article. The label

"freelance writer" doesn't carry much prestige, and it was difficult to tell a bunch of chess professionals that I was interested in their sport mainly by accident, after following some vague, yet consuming, aesthetic whim. At that time, I thought maybe a more noble angle for the article could be chess and translation or "Chess as a Multilingual Nexus."

On my walk back to the metro, I chatted with Begim about our shared love of languages. She learned chess in Uzbek, then Russian, then English, and she said she always enjoyed hearing a mix of different vocabularies at tournaments and trying to decipher what people were saying. I completely agreed and felt excited when I heard stray bits of Polish or French or Dutch — languages I had a bit of familiarity with — at this tournament. But while I had a messy, interesting bilingual experience in Dortmund, one that I hope to have someday in other countries with other languages, I don't know if it was universal. Chess, like any sport, is a way to bring speakers of many languages together, but it is not always a place of much linguistic exchange. At chess tournaments, people make things work with the often-limited bandwidth and language resources that they have.

As the tournament came to a close, I felt both disappointment and relief. My performance was middling, but I was proud of the decent chess I played before hitting my wall of tiredness around game six. Now that I've built more stamina, I'm excited to play in further FIDE tournaments — next stop, the Kieler Open.

Before dispersing, we all came together to celebrate the victors and the 50th anni-

versary of the Sparkassen tournament. The closing ceremony was half entertainment variety show and half chess laudation. Serious German speeches by various public officials about the importance and value of the game were interspersed with puzzles from Sparkassen games of old and bullet and blindfold exhibitions played by GMs Artur Yusupov, Klaus Bischoff, and WIM Fiona Steil-Antoni. I couldn't help but chuckle internally when the mayor of Dortmund referred to the city as a chess "Hochburg" (stronghold), which sounds eerily like "Hüpfburg" (bouncy castle).

And despite my love for the game, some of the well-meaning remarks about how "exciting" it was to finally see more women in attendance (as if it was some divine accident, and not the result of a hard struggle for equity), and remarks about how chess could be a diplomatic alternative to war, rang hollow. Obviously, we should champion fairness and peace, but whether anything we accomplish over the board can bring about any real social or material change, and whether successes in the chess world can ever reflect something greater — well, let's say that I am skeptical.

Regardless of where it takes place, amateur chess strikes me as a fundamentally marginal activity. Chess is a prime excuse, really, for people like me to dwell on the edge of real life, if only for a short while. If anything became clearer to me over these nine days, it's that the amateur chess tournament doesn't have to be a utopia where the ideals of contemplation and restraint are fully realized. It is a place of useless and exceptional interactions, mostly awkward and alienating, but sometimes profound, and that is enough. ♠

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U.S. CHESS
CHAMPIONSHIP
2023

OCTOBER 4-18

U.S. WOMEN'S CHESS
CHAMPIONSHIP
2023

SCHEDULE

Opening Ceremony

10.4 | 6 pm

Round 1

10.5 | 1 pm

Round 2

10.6 | 1 pm

Round 3

10.7 | 1 pm

Round 4

10.8 | 1 pm

Rest Day

10.9

Round 5

10.10 | 1 pm

Round 6

10.11 | 1 pm

Round 7

10.12 | 1 pm

Round 8

10.13 | 1 pm

Rest Day

10.14

Round 9

10.15 | 1 pm

Round 10

10.16 | 1 pm

Round 11

10.17 | 1 pm

Playoff

10.18 | 1 pm

Closing Ceremony | 6 pm

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A RINGSIDE SEAT

Krush and Nakamura take top spots at the American Cup.

BY **JOHN BREZINA**

ANNOTATIONS BY **GM ELSHAN MORADIABADI**

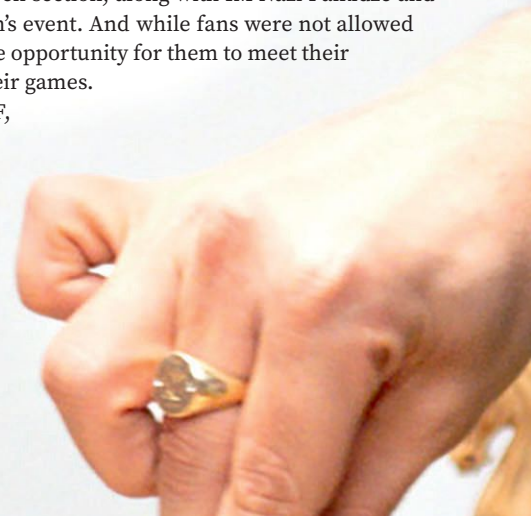
THE AMERICAN CUP RETURNED FOR A SECOND YEAR TO the Saint Louis Chess Club in what has become the strongest tournament for American players. With its unique double elimination format, featuring classical time controls in the championship bracket and rapid time controls in the elimination bracket, it's one of my favorite events on the chess calendar.

Last year's inaugural American Cup was the first to have spectators return to the club after COVID-19. This year no spectators were allowed, but for good reason — the club is going through a major expansion and was forced to move the playing hall across the street to the World Chess Hall of Fame (WCHOF), limiting the space for fans to get up close. As the editor of the Colorado Chess Informant, I was fortunate to obtain a media pass, allowing me access to the playing hall to photograph the players.

I always enjoy making my way to the Central West End, where chess is a neighborhood activity. The club is open seven days a week, with many chess tables for one to find an old friend or a game. There is seating in front of a large television, allowing fans to follow the excellent commentary team (IM Jovanka Houska and GM Yasser Seirawan, with GM Cristian Chirila on the analysis board) covering the American Cup.

This year's fields were much the same as last year's, with three new players joining for 2023: GM Hikaru Nakamura in the open section, along with IM Nazi Paikidze and WGM Atousa Pourkashiyani in the women's event. And while fans were not allowed into the playing hall, there was still ample opportunity for them to meet their favorite players either before or after their games.

Many fans waited outside the WCHOF, near the world's largest chess piece, hoping to catch an autograph as the players made their entrances. Others hung out in front of the club, hoping to meet the players after their post-game interviews to ask for a photo. This kind of access is what makes events in St. Louis





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Informational plaque text, partially legible.



GM Levon Aronian



WGM Katerina Nemcova

so compelling — the chance to meet the best players in the world, up close and personal.

All players started in the championship bracket, playing two game classical matches over two days. If those matches were drawn, the players would immediately move to a series of rapid tiebreaks, with the result that half the field would get knocked out and be moved to the elimination bracket, which involved one day rapid matches. Number one seed Nakamura won his first match against GM Sam Sevian, his first step as he cruised to the Open finals. On day three the first rapid elimination rounds took place, with GM Levon Aronian sending Sevian home, while GM Sam Shankland defeated GM Ray Robson after an epic struggle.

In the women's elimination bracket, WGM Tatev Abrahamyan scored two victories, sending WGM Katerina Nemcova home, while newcomer Pourkashiyev won her second game and eliminated four-time women's champion IM Anna Zatonskih. One of the interesting features of the American Cup is that the brackets run concurrently — while all these exciting games were taking place on the elimination side, the other side of the room featured the championship bracket players competing. For me, having all three formats (classical, rapid, and blitz) taking place at once was a real feast.

On the Championship side of the tournament, Nakamura and GM Wesley So faced

off in the first Open final, while — in an echo of last year's event — number one seed and defending champion GM Irina Krush faced the young IM-elect Alice Lee in the first women's final. Nakamura and Krush won, sending Lee and So over to the elimination bracket, where Aronian and Paikidze were waiting for them.

The American Cup is a long event — ten days in all! — and I could not stay for the whole thing. But I managed to get back on March 25 for the final weekend, where Nakamura met So in the Open “Grand” Final, while it was a rematch between Krush and Lee in the Women’s “Grand” Final. The format for these final showdowns was the same as the champion's bracket: two classical time-control games, followed by a rapid showdown immediately thereafter. Because this was a double elimination event, a final “elimination match” would be required if the elimination bracket seed was at first victorious.

I returned in time to see Krush defend her American Cup title in a rapid playoff. After winning the first classical game, she was defeated by the indefatigable Lee in the return pairing, forcing a rapid playoff on the spot. Krush won the first game with Black and held a draw in the second game to claim victory. I watched as a jubilant Krush and a saddened but even-keeled Lee analyzed for a moment before Irina headed across the street for her interview.

On the other side of the room, Nakamura and So were locked in intense battle. After two classical time-control draws, it was time for rapid chess. So struck first, winning the

Below: Lennart Ootes photographs Alice Lee and Irina Krush (R); Brezina photographs Ootes photographing Lee and Krush (L).



first game, and then Nakamura went too far in a must-win game, and had to resign. But because this was his first match loss in the event, he got “another life,” with the result being a final, winner-take-all rapid match on Sunday the 26th.

Kicking off at the same time as the American Cup Blitz tournament, held at the Chase (or should it be “Chess?”) Park Plaza, Nakamura and So drew the first two rapid games, played at a leisurely G/25+10 time control. This required the players to move to a two-game G/10+5 match, where Nakamura held with black in the first game and then won in short order after So’s queen got trapped.

These two champions know each other well and have played many games together. They both sat and analyzed after all was said and done, but soon it was time to go. Nakamura’s stepfather, FM Sunil Weeramantry, congratulated the new American Cup champion, and together they headed off for the post-match interview with Yaz and the gang.

Last year’s Open champion, Fabiano Caruana, did not have his best event in this go-around, but “Fabi” was able to console himself with an outstanding showing at the American Cup Blitz. At a tremendous 8½/9, a full point ahead of second-place finisher GM Levon Aronian and two points ahead of GM Leinier Dominguez Perez, who finished in sole possession of third, Caruana dominated a star-studded field that included no fewer than 29 grandmasters. His only draw came in round six against Aronian.

They say that timing is everything, and I experienced another example of that maxim’s truth that Sunday. One of the hallmarks of a Saint Louis Chess Club event is the closing ceremony, often held at a restaurant nearby the club. I ran into Krush, who was in great spirits and dressed to the nines, outside the WCHOF as she posed for photos taken by Lennart Ootes; immediately I grabbed my camera, and captured it all in a very “meta” moment. Friends like Houska, Lee, So, and GM Var Akobian stopped to chat as they passed by, making for some truly memorable photos.

What the Sinquefelds and the team at the Saint Louis Chess Club have created for American chess is nothing short of amazing. My visit there, some 10 years ago, brought me back to our beloved game; since then, I’ve been inspired to open my own chess club, to return to photograph the players, and now, to share my passion for the game through the written word. I can’t wait for next year’s event to begin!

SICILIAN DEFENSE, KAN VARIATION (B43)

WGM Tatev Abrahamyan (2403)

GM Irina Krush (2515)

American Cup (Match 1.2), St. Louis, 03.18.2023

I like this game for a number of reasons, but primary among them is this: both players stuck to their repertoires despite the match situation, which was a must-win for Abrahamyan and a “draw is ok” for Krush.

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 a6 5. Nc3 b5

An uncommon choice by Krush. This line was considered risky when I became a GM, but thanks to modern engines, Black is considered safe here. It might also be seen as a good psychological choice by Krush, as it plays against Tatev’s usual repertoire choices.

6. Bd3 Bb7 7. 0-0 Nc6 8. Nxc6 Bxc6 9. a4

More critical is 9. Re1!, but one cannot play this without prior preparation. Black has three main options: (a) 9. ... Ne7 10. Bf1! (10. Qh5 Ng6 11. a4 bxa4 [11. ... Bb4 is also good] was seen in Sevan – Smirin, St. Louis 2022) 10. ... Ng6 11. Be3 f6 12. Nd5 Kf7 13. c4! with advantage to White; (b) 9. ... Bc5 10. Qh5; (c) 9. ... Qb8 is quite playable, with Black getting counterplay after 10. a4 b4 11. Nd5 Bd6 12. Qh5 Nf6 13. Nxf6+ gxf6 14. b3 Be5 15. Rb1 Rg8 16. g3 Bd4.

9. ... b4 10. Nb1!

Correct! The knight is heading to c4 via the d2-square.

10. ... Bc5 11. Nd2 Ne7?!

Here 11. ... Qh4! is necessary per the engines, but has not been tested yet. Play might continue 12. Nf3 (if 12. Nc4 Nf6 and Black plays for an attack with ... h7-h5 and ... Nf6-g4, or she can castle and prepare the ... d7-d5 break.) 12. ... Qh5 13. Qe2 Nf6 14. a5 0-0 15. h3 h6 16. Re1 d6 17. Bd2 Rfb8 18. Qf1 Nd7! with counterplay.

12. Nb3

I think 12. Qh5 Ba7 13. Nc4 0-0 14. Bd2 would have been more promising.

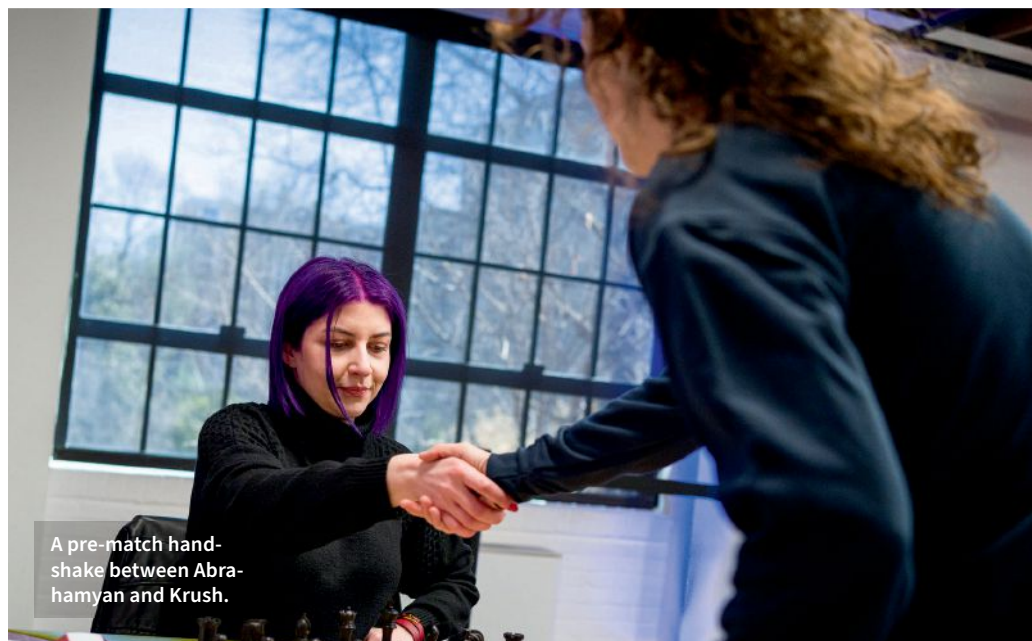
12. ... Bd6 13. Qe2

Here 13. Qh5 could still give chances for White. Now the move Nb3-a5 is also an option for White. Instead, Abrahamyan sticks to the traditional setup.

13. ... Ng6 14. f4 0-0 15. a5?!



Thematic, but ill-timed. Instead, 15. g3 was necessary, covering the f4-square.



A pre-match handshake between Abrahamyan and Krush.

15. ... Qb8?

Also thematic, but ill-timed!

The right move was 15. ... e5!, when Black turns the tables after 16. f5 Nf4 17. Qf3 Nxd3 18. cxd3 Bb5 and she plays for the win. Her plans include ... f7-f6, ending any hopes of a kingside attack, followed by putting a rook on c8 and rerouting the dark-squared bishop to the a7-g1 diagonal, preparing ... d7-d5.

16. e5?

A mistake that is not immediately evident. One can see that White might not get much after ... Bd6-e7 and ... d7-d6, but I was really surprised to see the engines give White an advantage after 16. g3 Re8 17. h4 and White is much better after continuing to improve her pieces. Perhaps an expert in this position would be able to note the weaknesses in Black's camp, but for me, it's another example of how incredibly nuanced our game can be in all types of positions! All too often the window of good options is narrow for both sides.

16. ... Be7 17. Be3 d6 18. exd6 Bxd6 19. Qh5

With her advantage gone, and desperate for a win, Abrahamyan begins to take risks.

19. ... Qb7 20. Rf2 Be4 21. Rd1 Be7 22. Bxe4

The stronger 22. Nc5 Bxc5 23. Bxc5 Rfe8 24. Bxe4 Qxe4 25. Rd4 Qe1+ 26. Rf1 Qe3+ 27. Kh1 was surely uncomfortable for Black, but this was hard to see!

22. ... Qxe4 23. Qf3 Qxf3 24. Rxf3 Bf6 25. Bd4 Rfd8 26. g3 e5 27. fxe5 Nxe5 28. Rff1 Rac8 29. c3 bxc3 30. bxc3 Rd5**31. Bxe5?**

With time pressure approaching, this is a mistake. Now White's queenside falls apart. Instead, White would have headed for a draw with 31. Bb6 Rxd1 32. Rxd1 Rxc3 33. Nc5 Rc2 34. Rd5.

31. ... Rxe5 32. Rf3

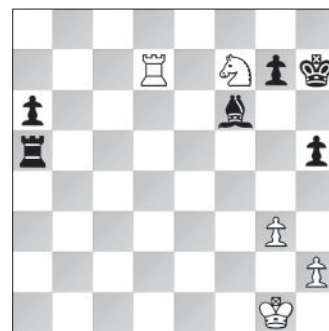
White could have perhaps saved the game (but not the match) with 32. Rd6!! Re6 33. Rfd1 Kf8 34. Rxe6 fxe6 35. Nd4 Ke7 36. Re1 Kd7! 37. Kf2 e5 38. Nc2! Rxc3 39. Nb4, winning the a-pawn and substantially reducing Black's winning chances.

32. ... Rb5?!

Rushing a bit. The prophylactic 32. ... h6! was better, with ... Re5-b5 to follow.

33. Nd4?

Here 33. c4 Rxc4 34. Rd6 h5 35. Rxa6 Ra4 is hard to play over the board, but White has good drawing chances with Ra6-b6, h2-h4, and Kg1-g2 to come. For example, the position is equal after 36. h4 Be5 37. Rb6 Rxb6 38. axb6 Rb4 39. Kg2 Rxb6 40. Nc1.

33. ... Rxa5 34. Nf5 h5 35. Rd7 Rxc3 36. Nh6+ Kh7 37. Rxc3 Bxc3 38. Nxf7 Bf6

The a-pawn is the key factor in Black's advantage.

39. h4 Kg6 40. Kg2 Ra2+ 41. Kh3 Re2 42. Ra7 Re7!

Good technique! Make it simple!

43. Nh8+ Kh7 44. Ra8 Rd7 45. Kg2 Rd8 46. Rxd8 Bxd8 47. Nf7 Bc7 48. Ng5+ Kg6 49. Ne6 Bd6 50. Kf3 a5 51. g4 hxg4+ 52. Kxg4 a4, White resigned.

A good win for Krush. Abrahamyan had her share of chances, but Black's opening choice worked out well.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, KALASHNIKOV VARIATION (B32)

GM Leinier Dominguez (2811)

GM Hikaru Nakamura (2855)

American Cup (Match 7.2), St. Louis, 03.20.2023

With only two decisive classical games, both won by the eventual winner, Hikaru Nakamura, I chose the one with greater strategic intrigue. It's interesting to see how Nakamura's mastery of shorter time controls pushes his opponents to really go for it with White in classical games.

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6

A bit of a surprise. Nakamura usually opts for the Najdorf, but ok, the Sveshnikov is not an uncommon choice among the world's elite...

3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 e5

But instead, we get the Lowenthal-Kalashnikov! This has gained popularity in recent years, in no small part to avoid well-trod Sveshnikov lines like 4. ... Nf6 5. Nc3 e5 6. Ndb5 d6 7. Nd5 or 7. Bg5 a6 8. Na3 b5 9. Bxf6.

5. Nb5 d6 6. N1c3

Players interested in this opening with either



Dominguez and Nakamura wait for the round to begin.

color must analyze the engine favorite 6. c4. Look at games by Radjabov and Maghsoodloo.

6. ... a6 7. Na3 Be6!?

A slick psychological choice! I'm sure Dominguez didn't expect this move; probably he thought Nakamura would transpose to the Sveshnikov with 7. ... Nf6 8. Bg5.

8. Nc4 Rb8 9. Nd5 Bxd5 10. exd5 Nce7 11. g3

This is the most common way of playing, but there are other options.

Stockfish is adamant about 11. a4 Nf6 and now 12. g4!!, which is a lovely idea. White is willing to lose the d5-pawn for the sake of active play on the light squares.

11. ... b5 12. Ne3 g6 13. a4 Nf6 14. axb5 axb5 15. Bg2 Bh6!



Nakamura has outprepared his opponent. Now the position is totally balanced.

16. 0-0 0-0 17. Qd3 Nd7 18. Bd2 Nc5 19. Qe2 Qc7

Here 19. ... b4, securing the knight on c5, was more solid.

20. b4 Nd7 21. Ra5 Bxe3!

This move shows deep understanding, and required accurate calculation.

22. Bxe3 Nf5 23. Ra7 Rb7 24. Rxb7 Qxb7 25. Bd2 Ra8



This is a fascinating position, and it takes significant positional understanding to rec-

ognize that the two bishops will not cause Black any trouble.

26. Qd3 Ra2 27. Rd1 Nf6 28. Bg5 Kg7 29. Bh3 Nd4 30. c3 Nc2 31. Qf3

White would acquiesce to a draw with 31. Rd2 Ra1+ 32. Rd1.

31. ... Ng8 32. Bf1 Ra3 33. Bc1

A sign that Dominguez still plays for the win!

33. ... Rb3 34. Qe4?



A mistake, losing a pawn without gaining any counterplay in return.

34. ... Rxc3 35. Bb2 Nf6

It is possible that Dominguez had forgotten about this move and was counting on 35. ... Rc7 36. Bxe5+, which is equal.

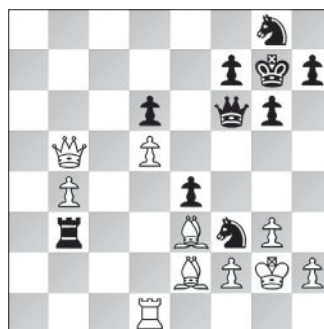
36. Qh4??

And now a blunder in perpetual time pressure. (With a time control of G/90+30, there was no move 40 safe haven available.)

36. ... Rb3?!

The stronger 36. ... Rf3 37. Bc1 h5 would have sealed the deal more quickly, as the white queen is completely offside. For example, 38. g4 Qc8 39. gxh5 Nxh5 and Black wins.

37. Bc1 Ng8 38. Qd8! Qe7 39. Qa5 Nd4 40. Be3 Nf3+ 41. Kg2 Qf6 42. Be2 e4 43. Qxb5



Losing, but it's hard to suggest anything else with such little time on the clock.

43. ... Qb2??

Nakamura mixes up the move order. After the correct 43. ... Rxe3 44. fxe3 Black has the wonderful 44. ... Nh6!!, when two knights dominate the board. Mate follows after 45. Qa4 Ng4 46. Qb3 Ne1+.

44. Qa6

White could have held with 44. Bf4! Nd4 45. Rxd4 Qxd4 46. Bxd6, but this is a big ask with the remaining seconds ticking away.

44. ... Nf6 45. h3 h5 46. Kf1 Qe5 47. Kg2 Rxe3!

Nakamura doesn't miss this the second time around!

48. fxe3 h4 49. gxh4 Qh2+, White resigned.

A fine victory for the American number one.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT, CATALAN OPENING (E06)

IM Nazi Paikidze (2403)

WGM Gulrukhbegim Tokhirjonova

(2417)

American Cup (Match 12.4), St. Louis, 03.22.2023

This game caught my eye because of the strategic battle on display: if Black manages to play ... c6-c5, she achieves complete equality. For her part, White can secure a large advantage by preventing the black pawn advance. It's an entertaining and educational battle.

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 d5 4. Nf3 Be7 5. Bg2 0-0 6. Nc3!?

Provoking Black's next move.

6. ... dxc4 7. Ne5 c6?!

Here 7. ... Qd6! 8. Nxc4 Qa6 9. Ne5 Rd8 appears to be the best response for Black. 10. Qc2! Nbd7 (10. ... Rxd4 is possible too) 11. Bf4 was seen in Svane – Deac, Dortmund, 2022, and here 11. ... Nd5 is an interesting option.

8. Nxc4 b5 9. Ne5



9. ... Qb6?!

Black is already in trouble. After 9. ... Bb7 10. 0-0 Qc8 (10. ... Qb6 11. Be3) 11. Be3 Nbd7 12. Nxd7 Qxd7 13. Qc2 Rac8 14. Ne4 Nxe4 15. Bxe4 h6 16. Rac1 White is better because Black cannot free her pieces with ... c6-c5 for the foreseeable future.

10. 0-0 Rd8 11. Qc2!?

I think 11. Be3! would have ensured a more promising advantage for White after 11. ... Nd5 12. Rc1 Bb7 13. Ne4 Nd7 14. Nxd7 Rxd7 15. Nc5 Bxc5 16. Rxc5. Black's light-squared bishop is not going to see the light of the day anytime soon!

11. ... Bb7 12. Rd1?

Not concrete enough — now Black could equalize. Here 12. Be3 would have transposed to the line I suggested above.

12. ... Na6

Good enough but it leaves the burden of proof on Black.

Mamedyarov equalized with 12. ... Nbd7 against So, i.e., 13. Be3 Nd5 14. Nxd5 cxd5 15. Rac1 Rac8 16. Qd3 b4 (So – Mamedyarov, Berlin 2018).

13. e3 Rac8

More principled was 13. ... Nd7, here or on the next move. Black needs to take all reasonable measures to play ... c6-c5!

14. Qe2 Nb4?! 15. Bd2 a6?

This was the last moment for 15. ... c5, and while it wasn't enough for equality anymore, it would have led to a much more comfortable game than occurred over the board! After 16. Bxb7 Qxb7 17. Qxb5 Qa8! 18. dxc5 Nc2 19. Rac1 Rxc5 20. Qa4 Rxe5 21. Qxc2 (21. Rxc2 is probably more accurate but a bit artificial feeling) 21. ... h5 Black is down a pawn, but she has practical chances.

16. a3?!

This only helps Black. White should have started with a thematic maneuver that puts an end to Black's hope to unwind with ... c6-c5: 16. Ne4! Nxe4 (16. ... c5? does not work because of 17. dxc5) 17. Bxe4 g6 (17. ... c5? loses to the “Greek Gift” beginning with 18. Bxh7+) 18. Qf3 f5 19. Bxb4 Bxb4 20. Rac1! and now taking the bishop with 20. ... fxe4 fails to 21. Qf7+ Kh8 22. Qf6+ Kg8 23. Qxe6+ Kg7 24. Qf7+ Kh8 25. Qf6+ Kg8 26. d5!.

16. ... Nbd5 17. Ne4?!

Perhaps a bit untimely in this particular position.

17. ... a5?

Back to a losing position. Here Black must try 17. ... Nxe4 18. Bxe4 c5! and now 19. Bxh7+ Kxh7 only leads to a perpetual, something I missed in my initial review of the game. Not an easy line to see!

18. Ng5

Also strong is 18. Nc5.

18. ... Rf8 19. e4 Nc7 20. Be3 c5

27. Qg4 Bf8 28. b4 axb4 29. axb4 h5
30. Qf3! g6 31. g4! hxg4 32. Qxg4 Rc7



33. bxc5?

Stronger is 33. Qh4 Be7 34. Qg3 Bd6 35. Qg2 with h2-h4-h5 coming.

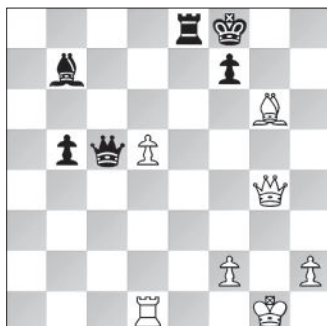
33. ... Nxc5 34. Nxc5?!

Again 34. Qh4! gives decent winning chances after 34. ... Rxe4 35. Qxe4 Nxe4 36. Bxb6 Rxc1 37. Rxc1 Bxd5 38. Rc8 f6 39. Nf4 Bf7 40. f3.

34. ... Bxc5 35. Bxc5

White needed to try 35. Rxc5 Rxc5 36. Bd4 with a scary, if fizzling, attack.

35. ... Rxc5 36. Rxc5 Qxc5 37. Bxg6 Kf8?



Of course, 37. ... fxg6 38. Qxg6+ Kf8 is just a perpetual. Now time pressure induces errors.

38. Bxf7?!

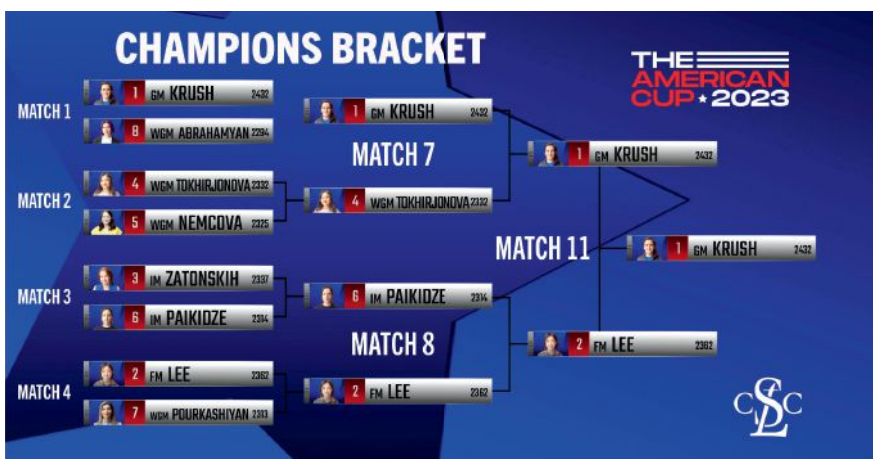
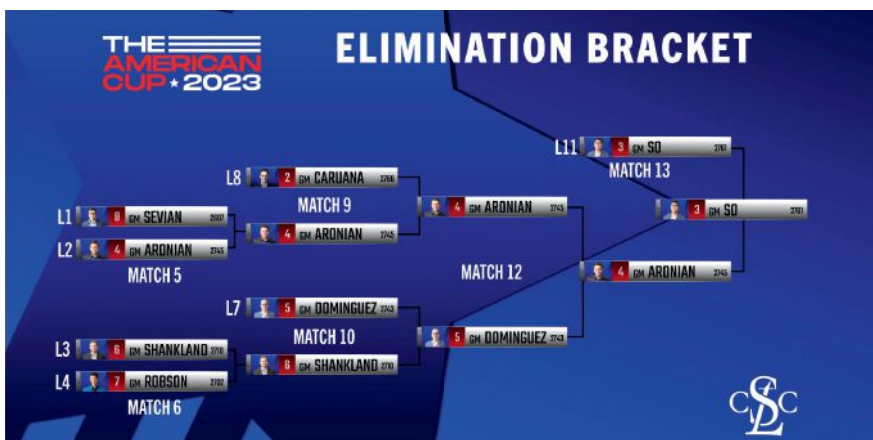
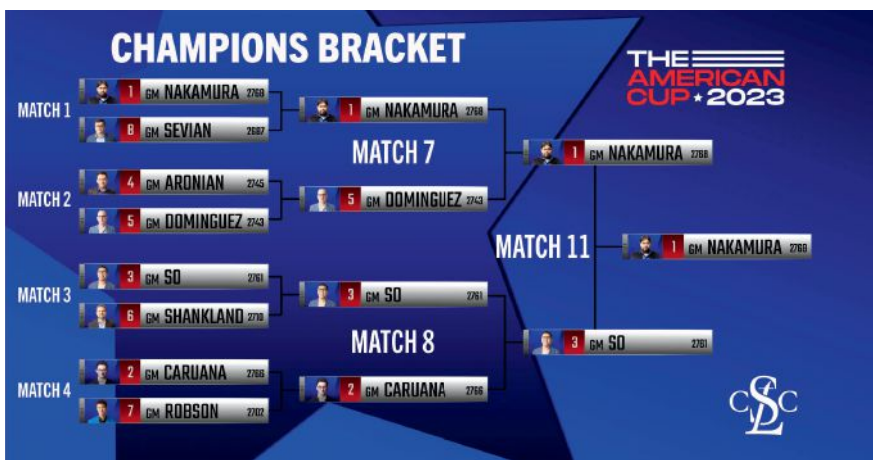
38. Qf4! introduces unstoppable threats.

38. ... Kxf7 39. Qf5+ Kg7?

There's no win (here or on move 41) after 39. ... Kg8! 40. Rd3 Re1+ 41. Kg2 Qe7 42. Rg3+ Kh8, etc.

40. Qg5+? Kf7 41. Qf5+ Ke7?? 42. d6+ Kd8
43. Qxc5, Black resigned. ♠

For more on the American Cup, check out our online coverage at new.uschess.org/2023-american-cup.



AMAZING

Anna!



Zatonskih steps up to win 2023 Cairns Cup.

BY IM CARISSA YIP



CAIRNS CUP

SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI



A

AFTER BEING SHUT DOWN for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the third edition of the Cairns Cup was held in St. Louis in early June. Ten of the best women chess players in the world, from rising young talents to veterans and even world champions, did battle at the World Chess Hall of Fame for bragging rights and a \$180,000 prize fund.

Hosted by the Saint Louis Chess Club, and with its name honoring club co-founder Dr. Jeanne Sinsquefield's maiden name, the Cairns Cup is perhaps the most prestigious women's event on the international chess calendar. This year's tournament had a

bit of everything, from brilliant games to heartbreaking misses, along with bit of controversy and an unexpected winner. Let's dive right in and see what happened.

Round one began with four out of five decisive games — an early harbinger of the fighting chess in store. GM Alexandra Kosteniuk, the 12th women's world champion, started well with a great win over GM Humpy Koneru, the world's second highest-rated female player.

ITALIAN GAME (C55)

GM Alexandra Kosteniuk (2523)

GM Humpy Koneru (2567)

Cairns Cup (1), St. Louis, 06.03.2023

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3 d5

A rare move! Though Black typically waits on this break, opting first for dark-squared bishop development on e7 or c5, the early center strike leads to some more forcing lines.

5. exd5 Nxd5 6. 0-0 Be7 7. Re1 f6 8. d4 Nb6 9. Bb3

Here 9. Bb5 is more common, where the game may continue 9. ... 0-0 10. Bxc6 bxc6 11. dxe5 Qxd1 12. Rxd1 Bg4. Despite Black's lacking pawn structure and the loss of material, White's pieces are underdeveloped and Black's bishops wreak havoc.

9. ... Nxd4 10. Nxd4 Qxd4 11. Qxd4 exd4 12. Bf4 Bf5 13. Bxc7 Kd7 14. Nd2 Bc5 15. Bxb6 axb6

Black must generate the most dynamic play possible in order to maintain the balance.

While the pawn structure is less than ideal, Black has play along the a-file and with the two bishops.

16. Ne4 Rhe8 17. Ng3 Bg6



18. h4

Kosteniuk's play is instructive. With the dark-squared bishop locked down on c5, and White's strong light-squared bishop, she begins gaining more space on the kingside, seeking to damage the Black kingside pawn structure. Here is the first critical point of the game.

18. ... Re5?!

Allowing the push to continue. Instead 18. ... h6 would have been more precise, keeping the bishop on the important c2-h7 diagonal. White's knight should not be allowed into Black's position via e4 or f5, and this stops the h5-h6 push as well. After 19. h5 Bh7 White has trouble remanuevering the knight; for example: 20. Ne2 (or 20. Rxe8 Kxe8 21. Re1+ Kf8 with ... Ra8-e8 coming in this equal position) 20. ... Re4 with equality.

19. h5 Be8 20. h6

Now the power of the e4-knight becomes clear. By undermining the pawn chain with h5-h6, the f6-square becomes an easy target.

20. ... gxh6

Case in point: if 20. ... g5 21. Ne4 with an advantage.

21. Ne4 Bg6 22. Nxf6+ Kd6



White has improved her position, while Black's position has become practically difficult. All of Black's pawns are now doubled or isolated; further, the knight on f6 proves annoying to dislodge. Here ... Ra8-f8 is impossible because of Re1xe5 followed by a fork on d7, while moving the e5-rook off the file allows Re1-e6.

23. Rad1 h5 24. g3 Rd8

Engines suggest 24. ... Rxe1+, which leads to a more active defense at the cost of material. Play continues 25. Rxe1 Rf8 26. Re6+ Kc7 27. Nd5+ Kd7 28. Nxb6+ Kd8 and after this forcing sequence, Black has ideas with ... d4-d3 and the weak f2-square which are difficult to stop.

To this human eye, however, it feels a bit dubious. Still, after 29. Na4 Be7 the position looks unpleasant, but Black has just enough resources to keep the balance. ... h5-h4 comes, while the knight on a4 is misplaced, and the two bishops have an open board to generate play.

25. Kg2 Rf5

With the rook on d8, this is possible as White does not have Nf6-d5 after Re1-e6+ and ... Kd6-c7.

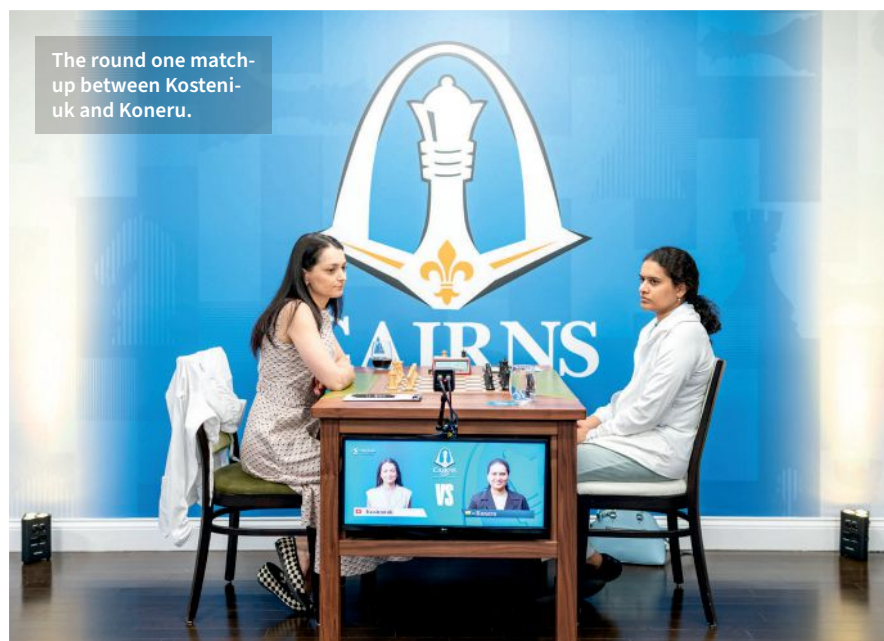
26. Ne4+

The position is level after 26. Re6+ Kc7 27. Ne4 Rdf8.

26. ... Kc7 27. f4!

Eyeing Ne4-g5. Here, Black has only one move to hold equality.

27. ... Be7?!



The round one match-up between Kosteniuk and Koneru.

Missing White's threat of c3, giving her knight more squares and opening up lines in front of the weak black king.

Necessary was 27. ... Bb4, stopping c2-c3. After 28. Re2 h4 the tactics work out because ... Bg6-h5 is a threat. 29. Ng5 Rxc5 30. fxc5 Bh5 with equality.

28. c3 dxc3 29. Nxc3

Once the knight reaches d5, White's position is dominating. Black's king also proves to be surprisingly vulnerable.

29. ... Rxd1 30. Rxd1 Bc5 31. Nb5+ Kc6 32. Na7+ Kc7 33. Nb5+ Kc6 34. Ba4!

Driving Black's king out into the center.

34. ... Rf8 35. Nd4+ Kd5 36. Bb3+ Ke4 37. Ne6 Rc8 38. Bc2+ Ke3 39. f5

Finishing up with a nice tactic and mating combination.

39. ... Be7 40. Rd3+ Ke2 41. Nd4+, Black resigned.

If 41. ... Ke1 42. Rd1 mate. A brilliant win!

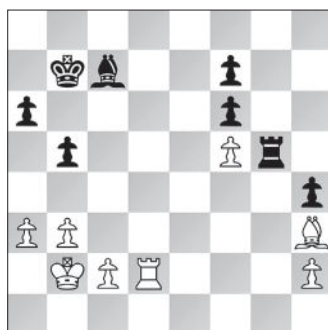
Another intriguing game was American number one GM Irina Krush's matchup against the young Kazakstani star IM Zhansaya Abdumalik. After a tumultuous middlegame, the two entered a fascinating opposite-colored bishops endgame where Krush instructively outplayed her opponent to eke out the win.

EXPERIENCE COUNTS

IM Zhansaya Abdumalik (2497)

GM Irina Krush (2436)

Cairns Cup (1), St. Louis, 06.03.2023



BLACK TO PLAY

After a topsy-turvy middlegame, we enter a rook and opposite-colored bishops endgame with equal material. It seems, at first glance, to be a draw, but this is much less straightforward in reality. Let's see how Krush demonstrates her technique!

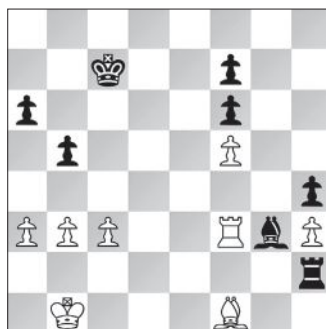
38. ... Be5+ 39. c3

The only move. After 39. Ka2? Rg1 we see the danger of opposite-colored bishops: they are absolute killers when the king is vulnerable.

39. ... Kc7 40. Rf2 Rg1

Krush comes for the h2-pawn.

41. Bf1 Rh1 42. h3 Bg3 43. Rf3 Rh2+ 44. Kb1



It seems White is holding her position together with this defense, but more active measures must be undertaken shortly.

44. ... Kd6 45. c4! bxc4 46. Bxc4 a5

Or 46. ... Rxh3 47. Bxa6.

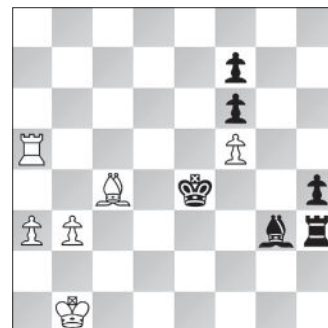
47. Rd3+ Ke5 48. Rd5+

An inaccuracy. The rook cannot wander to capture the queenside pawn, as it must stay close to defend.

White should have started pushing her own passer on the queenside with 48. b4 with the point that White is almost able to

force an exchange of rooks into a drawn endgame: 48. ... axb4 49. axb4 Rxh3 50. Kc2! (preparing the exchange) 50. ... Rh2+ (if 50. ... Rh1 51. Rd1) 51. Rd2 Rxd2+ 52. Kxd2 h3 53. Bf1 h2 54. Bg2 with equality.

48. ... Ke4 49. Rxa5 Rxh3



50. Bxf7?

The final mistake; now White cannot stop the passer.

Necessary was 50. Bd5+, as White can bring the rook back to the defense via Ra5-a4-c4, while keeping the bishop locked on the promotion square. Here's a sample of how play might continue:

(a) 50. ... Kd3 51. Ra4 Rh2 52. Rg4 with equality.

(b) 50. ... Kd4 51. Bb7 Rh2 52. Rd5+ Ke3 53. Rc5 and the rook heads back to the first and second ranks to exchange itself off.

(c) 50. ... Ke3 51. Rc5 Kd4 (or 51. ... Be5 when 52. Rc4! is most precise, not allowing the rook to get off the h-file) 52. Bg2 Rh2 53. Rc2 h3 54. Bb7.



IA Chris Bird watches the game between Abdumalik and Krush.



GM Bella Khotenashvili



GM Harika Dronavalli



GM Alexandra Kosteniuk

50. ... Rh1+ 51. Kc2 Rh2+ 52. Kb1 h3 53. Be8 Be5!

Black has the passed h-pawn, while White has the problem of a weak king. Krush expertly deploys all her pieces (rook, bishop, and king) to torture White with checkmate threats.

54. Bc6+ Kd3 55. Rd5+

Black also wins after 55. Ba8 Rb2+ 56. Kc1 Rxb3 as, with ... Be5-f4+ coming next, White's king is too weak: 57. Ra4 Bb2+ 58. Kd1 Bd4 etc.

55. ... Bd4 56. Rd6 Rb2+ 57. Kc1 Rc2+ 58. Kb1

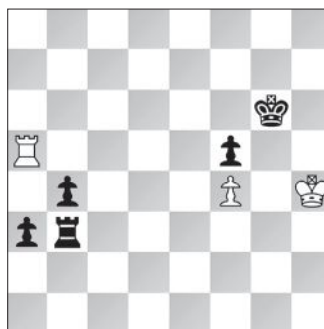
Black has one last shot to wrap up the game.

58. ... Rxc6! 59. Rxc6 h2 60. Rc1 Bg1, White resigned.

Round two saw an interesting finish to the game between GM Bella Khotenashvili and four-time American champion IM Anna Zatonskih. After a few inaccuracies by Khotenashvili, both players missed how Khotenashvili could have saved a half-point in the following position.

NEAR-MISS

GM Bella Khotenashvili (2470)
IM Anna Zatonskih (2327)
Cairns Cup (2), St. Louis, 06.04.2023



WHITE TO MOVE

62. Ra6+??

Instead the correct 62. Rxa3! Rb2 (capturing the rook is stalemate) 63. Ra6+ Kf7 64. Kg5 is a well-known draw.

62. ... Kf7 63. Kg5 Rb2 64. Kxf5 a2 65. Ra7+ Ke8 66. Ke6 Re2+ 67. Kd5 b3 68. Kc4 Re1, White resigned.

Meanwhile, Kosteniuk took the early lead with a win over GM Harika Dronavalli. After posing many practical difficulties to her

opponent in an opposite-colored bishops endgame, Kosteniuk demonstrated great technique in her endgame conversion.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, TAIMANOV VARIATION (B45)

GM Alexandra Kosteniuk (2523)

GM Harika Dronavalli (2510)

Cairns Cup (2), St. Louis, 06.04.2023

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. Nc3 Nf6 6. Nxc6 bxc6 7. e5 Nd5 8. Ne4 Bb7

Uncommon, but gaining in popularity recently.

9. Be2 c5 10. 0-0 Qc7 11. c4 Ne3 12. Nd6+

More common is 12. Bxe3 Bxe4 13. Bf4, when White seeks to generate play on the kingside and along the d-file with the strong e5-pawn.

12. ... Bxd6 13. exd6 Qc6 14. Bf3 Nxd1 15. Bxc6 Bxc6 16. Rxd1



We have reached an equal, opposite-colored bishops endgame with rooks on the board. But the game is far from dead and dry; White hopes that the queenside pawns, particularly on c5, will be a weakness. Meanwhile, Black can try something with ... f7-f6, ... e6-e5, and ... Ke8-f7 when the d6-pawn becomes a weakness once the c1-bishop cannot protect it.

16. ... 0-0 17. Be3 Rfc8 18. Rd2

If 18. Bxc5? Ba4 with serious advantage.

18. ... Bb7 19. Rc1 a5 20. Rc3 a4 21. Ra3 f6 22. f3 Kf7 23. Kf2 e5

Black is taking over.

24. f4 Ke6?!

It would have been more accurate (and advantageous) for Black to retake on e5 with a rook, beginning action in the center while White's pieces are jumbled, i.e., 24. ... Re8 25. fxe5 Rxe5 with a clear edge.

25. g4 g6 26. fxe5 fxe5 27. Bh6 Rc6

28. Rad3 Rb6 29. Ke1 Rb4 30. Rc3 Rb6 31. Re3

White declines the implicit draw offer in favor of playing against the weak e5-pawn!

31. ... e4 32. Rh3

Switching gears to eye the kingside pawns.

32. ... Ba6 33. Re3 Bb7 34. Rh3 Ba6 35. b3 axb3 36. axb3 Rxd6

Another possibility was 36. ... Bb7, attempting to bring the a8-rook into the game. Perhaps Harika was afraid of 37. Bf4 h5 38. gxh5 gxh5 39. Rxh5 Rxb3 40. Rxc5, which does look dicey, but Black generates enough play with the active rooks and White's less-than-ideal king. Call it equal after 40. ... Ra1+ 41. Ke2 Rf3 42. Bg3 Rg1.

37. Rxd6+ Kxd6 38. Bf4+ Kc6 39. Rxh7



While the engine calls this equal, Black faces practical challenges. The king is too far away to really defend the kingside pawns, and the bishop is misplaced on a6. Meanwhile, Black must be on the lookout for the loose g6-pawn and White's fast-marching h-pawn.

39. ... Rf8 40. Bg3 Rf3

Perhaps postponing ... Rf8-f3 would be safer. With 40. ... Rf6 first, Black sets to defend the g6-pawn, and White cannot play h2-h4 as then ... Rf8-f3 comes with tempo. At some point, Black will plan to play either ... d7-d6 and then reroute the bishop via c8, or ... d7-d5 (when there is no Rh7-c7 possible). For instance: 41. Rh8 (41. h4? Rf3 42. Be5 Rxb3 and wins) 41. ... d5 42. cxd5+ Kxd5 43. Rd8+ Ke6 is equal.

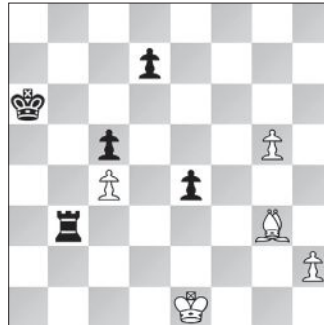
41. Rg7 Rxb3?!

Now things get very rough for Black; though not losing just yet, she must find some very difficult moves!

Here 41. ... Re3+ should be played first if Black wants to take on b3! The very discreet point is difficult to see from afar, but at the very end of the variation, Black has a check, allowing her to bring the rook back

to the eighth rank and prevent the pawn from queening. To wit: 42. Kd1 Rxb3 43. Rxc6+ d6! (opening up the d-file later for the rook to reroute via ... Rb3-d3-d8) 44. Rxd6+ Kb7 45. Rxa6 Kxa6 46. g5 Kb7 47. g6 Kc6 48. g7 Rd3+ 49. Ke2 Rd8 and Black makes it in time!

42. Rxc6+ Kb7 43. Rxa6 Kxa6 44. g5



Black to play and save the game.

44. ... d5

The right move was 44. ... Rb6! 45. h4 d5!, when Black's idea is to only play ... d7-d5 when White's bishop is no longer defended by the h-pawn; that way, Black can successfully drive the white king over to the kingside and then start pushing the c-pawn. For instance: 46. cxd5 Rb1+ 47. Ke2 Rb2+ 48. Ke3 (or 48. Kf1 Rb1+ 49. Be1 c4) 48. ... Rb3+ 49. Kf4 (here 49. Kf2 Rf3+ 50. Kg2 c4 51. g6 c3 is also equal) 49. ... c4 50. g6 c3 and the position is balanced after both sides promote.

45. cxd5 Re3+

Note that the idea in the analysis above is not

as effective with the g3-bishop protected: 45. ... Rb1+ 46. Kd2 Rb2+ 47. Ke3 Rb3+ 48. Kxe4.

46. Kf2 Rd3 47. g6

White's win is simple once the g-pawn reaches the seventh rank.

47. ... Rxd5 48. g7 Rg5 49. Be5 Kb5 50.

Ke3 Kc6 51. h4 Rg4 52. Bf6 Rg6 53. h5 Rg4 54. h6, Black resigned.

The bloodbath slowed in round three, with "only" two decisive games instead of the previous precedent of four, but the sharp positions prevailed once more in round four. Khotenashvili defeated Krush in an attacking game, and Zatonskih took over the lead with a key victory over Kosteniuk. Though caught off-guard with an opening surprise, Zatonskih played a brilliant French Defense — trading off light-squared bishops, dominating the c4-square, and showing some classic positional prowess.

FRENCH DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (C02)

[GM Alexandra Kosteniuk \(2523\)](#)

[IM Anna Zatonskih \(2327\)](#)

[Cairns Cup \(4\), St. Louis, 06.06.2023](#)

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3 Nc6 5. Nf3 Qb6 6. Na3

A very rare move, designed to catch Zatonskih off-guard in her favored French Defense.

6. ... cxd4 7. cxd4 Bd7 8. Be2



Zatonskih defends the French against Kosteniuk.



More common is 8. Nc2, preventing ... Bf8-b4+ and perhaps rerouting the knight to e3.

8. ... Bb4+ 9. Kf1 Bxa3 10. bxa3

It's typically risky to give up the dark-squared bishop in the French, as there are critical weaknesses in the black position that the bishop can defend. But if Black can generate enough play before White consolidates, then she will be doing well.

10. ... Na5

Now White must figure out a plan, and two are viable. The first is to play on the kingside, developing the rook via h2-h4 and Rh1-h3, while the second is to try to get play on the queenside with the dark-squared bishop.

11. Qd3

Both 11. a4 Ne7 12. Ba3 and 11. Bd2 Ne7 12. Rb1 Qc7 13. Bb4 are equal.

11. ... Ba4 12. Bd2 Nc4 13. Rb1 Qc6

Now Black is threatening ... Ba4-c2!

14. Qc3

Kosteniuk tries to get play on the queenside, but this is the wrong idea. Better is 14. Kg1 Ne7 15. h4 Rc8 16. Rh3, completing development. White must start playing dynamically on the kingside, as she is positionally worse on the queenside.

14. ... Ne7 15. Qb4 Rc8 16. Bg5 Rc7

This page: the event namesake rings in play (below), as does the next generation (above).



17. Bd1??

The decisive mistake in an already tricky position, allowing Black to dominate the queenside with the c4-knight.

White needed to try 17. Kg1 Nf5 18. g4 Ne7 19. h4 with the renewed idea to play on the kingside.

17. ... Bxd1 18. Rxd1 Qa6

Now White loses the a3-pawn and Black enters a winning endgame.

19. Kg1 Nc6 20. Qb3 Qxa3 21. h4 Qxb3 22. axb3 Na3 23. h5 h6 24. Bd2 Nb5 25. Rh4 0-0 26. Rg4 Kh7 27. Be1 Rfc8

Readying the invasion on the c-file.

28. Rd3 Ne7 29. Bd2 Rc2 30. Bb4 Nc6 31. Bd2 Ne7 32. Bb4 R8c7 33. Nh4 Nc3 34. Bd6 Rd7 35. Bb4 Rc7 36. Bd6 Rd7 37. Bb4 Ne4

A nice rerouting of the knight to a key central square.

38. Rf4 Nc6 39. Ba3 Ra2 40. b4 a6 41. f3 Ng3 42. Rg4 Nxh5 43. b5 axb5 44. Bc5 g5 45. f4 Nxf4

Refusing to grant White even a sniff of counterplay by taking the free piece, although Black is still totally winning after 45. ... gxh4 46. Rxh4 Ng7 47. g4 Ne7.

46. Re3 Ne7 47. Nf3 Nf5 48. Rb3 Kg6 49. Kh2 Kh5 50. Rxf4 gxf4

Zatonskih wraps things up nicely.

51. Ne1 Ne3 52. Kh3 Kg5 53. g3 Nf5 54. Nf3+ Kg6 55. gxf4 Rf2 56. Bb6 Re7 57. Ba5 Re8 58. Be1 Re2 59. Rxb5 Ra8 60. Ba5 b6 61. Bb4 Re3, White resigned.

A shock reverberated throughout the tournament room before the fifth round got underway: Koneru was forced to withdraw for health reasons. As it was before the halfway point, and following FIDE regulations, none of her results would count for the tournament standings; instead, everyone would be granted a "free round." This worked to Dronavalli and Krush's advantage, as they'd



drawn with Koneru, but Dzagnidze and Kosteniuk's wins were annulled.

The effect was that Kosteniuk dropped from second place to sixth in the standings; speaking after both her round five draw with Abdulmalik and her round nine win over GM Elisabeth Paehtz, she did not hide her irritation. For her part, Dzagnidze was similarly displeased, calling the ruling about Koneru's games "nonsense" after round seven.

With the leaders all drawing in a subdued fifth round, the excitement began to ramp back up in round six. Playing with the black pieces, Zatonskih defeated Mammadzada with an advantage straight out of the opening.

CATALAN OPENING (E05)

IM Gunay Mammadzada (2456)

IM Anna Zatonskih (2327)

Cairns Cup (6), St. Louis, 06.09.2023

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. g3 Nf6 4. Bg2 Be7 5.

Nf3 0-0 6. 0-0 dxc4 7. Qc2 a6 8. a4 Nc6

A bit offbeat. The main move is 8. ... Bd7 which is played 10 times more frequently according to the database!

9. Na3

A novelty that Mammadzada cooked up on the spot, but not a good one.

A typical idea would be 9. Qxc4 Qd5 10. Nbd2 Rd8 11. e3 Qh5. Here Black is always looking at possible ... e6-e5 or ... b7-b5 breaks to fight back against White's space advantage. But this might be difficult to navigate without having seen this position

previously, prompting Mammadzada to play her new move.

Perhaps a more accurate try is 9. Nbd2 Nxd4 10. Nxd4 Qxd4 11. Nxc4 Nd5 12. Rd1 Qf6 13. e4 when White gets active play as compensation for the pawn.

9. ... b5 10. Ne5 Nb4 11. Qd1 Rb8

Now Black has both a pawn and the advantage.

12. axb5 axb5



Let's pause and consider White's possible plans. Right now, her advantage is in development, along with Black's slightly discombobulated pieces. Therefore, the best idea is for White to capitalize on the fact that the b5-pawn is a bit weak and the issues in developing Black's bishop normally.

13. b3

This makes it too simple for Black to continue development.

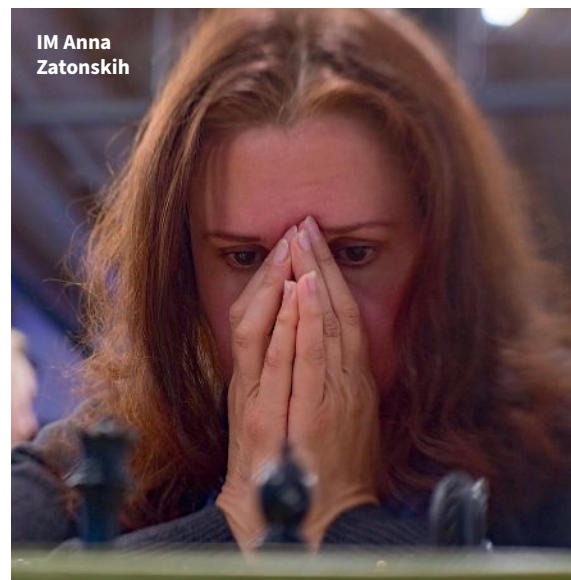
White must utilize dynamics to keep the game in a closer balance, ensuring Black's pieces cannot develop normally. Therefore:

13. Bc6 Ba6 14. Nc2 Rb6 15. Nxb4 Bxb4 16. e4 and the game remains sharp, but Black has the upper hand. After 16. ... Bd6 17. Qf3 Ne8 18. Rxa6 Rxa6 19. Bxb5 Rb6 20. Bxc4 White sacrifices an Exchange for a pawn and the two bishops along with the strong center pawns. It is by no means simple for Black to convert the material advantage.

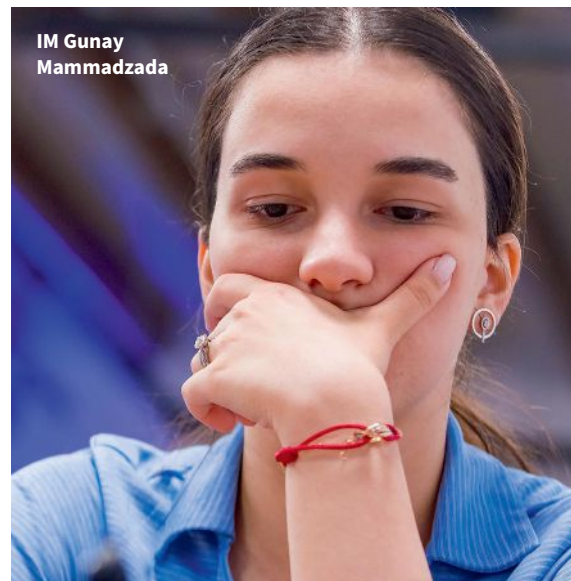
13. ... cxb3

Note that 13. ... c3 does not work for tactical reasons: 14. Nc2 Bb7 (14. ... Nxc2 15. Qxc2 is equal; White wants both Ne5-c6 and Qc2xc3, and Black can't stop both at once) 15. Bxb7 Nxc2 (15. ... Rxb7? 16. Nxb4 Bxb4 17. Nc6 Qd6 18. Nxb4 Qxb4 19. Ba3 and White wins) is the only move, as trying to avoid the knight exchange does not work. Play continues 16. Qxc2 Rxb7 17. Qxc3 with equality.

IM Anna
Zatonskih



IM Gunay
Mammadzada



A deep-in-thought
Irina Krush ponders
her next move.

**14. Bb2 Bb7 15. Qxb3 Bxg2 16. Kxg2 Rb6**

With her development completed, Black can focus on converting the extra pawn.

17. Rfc1 Nd7 18. Nf3 Qb8 19. Nb1

Rerouting the knight back into the epicenter of the game.

19. ... Nd5 20. Nbd2 c5 21. dxc5 Nxc5 22. Qc2 Rb7?!

Better to keep the pressure on White with 22. ... Rc6 23. Be5 Qb7 24. Qb2 f6 25. Bd4 Na4 and a healthy edge.

23. e4

Here 23. Be5 equalizes on the spot, taking advantage of the misplaced b7-rook: 23. ... Qd8 24. Qb2 Nf6 25. Bd4. This forces the knight back, as Black can't play ... Nc5-a4 due to the pin. We continue 25. ... Qd5 26. Bxc5 Bxc5 27. e4 Qh5 28. e5 and with the

This page: scenes from the player's meeting, held the day before play began.

black queen cut off, White manages to hold everything on the queenside.

23. ... Nb6 24. Be5 Qd8 25. Nb3 Nc4 26. Rd1 Qc8 27. Bd4?

A mistake, as the real danger is the c4-knight. So it is necessary to remove it with 27. Na5.

27. ... Nxb3 28. Qxb3 Bc5?

Returning the favor. Generally speaking, it's easier to hold a rook endgame a pawn down than a rook and minor piece ending.

Black should aim to keep the dark-squared bishops (and the dynamism) on the board with 28. ... Qc6, which supports the ... b5-b4 push. After 29. Re1 Rc8 Black prepares to push the pawn and keeps pieces on the board.

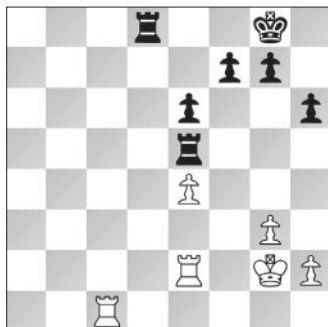
29. Rac1 Qc6 30. Qc3 Bxd4 31. Qxd4 Qb6 32. Qxb6 Rxb6 33. Nd4

White should have activated the rook with 33. Rd7 for better drawing chances, i.e., 33. ... Rfb8 34. Nd4 h6 35. Rc7 Nd2 36. Re1 b4 37. Rc2 with chances to hold.

33. ... h6 34. Re1 Rfb8 35. Re2 Ne5 36. f4 Rd8 37. Nxb5 Rxb5

The engine deems 37. ... Nd3 38. Rb1 Rdb8 39. Rd1 Nxf4+ 40. gxf4 Rxb5 to be winning for Black, but it's unclear to humans just how to proceed. The idea seems to be to put pressure on the weak h-pawn, and then break with a timely ... g7-g5 or ... e6-e5 to separate the pawns further.

38. fxe5 Rxe5



White should hold with best play, but (this is becoming a theme in this article) it's a difficult task, practically speaking.

39. Rce1

Passive defense. Instead White should have pulled out the stops and activated her pieces with 39. Rc7! f6 (if 39. ... Rd4 White plays 40. Ra2!, giving up the e-pawn to get to the f-pawn: 40. ... f6 41. Ra8+ Kh7 42. Rf8 Rd2+ [42. ... Kg6 43. Rg8 is equal] 43. Kf3 Rxe2 44. Rxf6 and while Black is still better, the game goes on) 40. Rc3 Rd4 41. Kf3 Kf7 (41. ... g5 allows 42. Rc7! which was the point of provoking ... f7-f6! Now the black king cannot get out after 42. ... h5 43. Rb2) 42. Re3 Kg6 43. h4. Here, by forcing the black king to g6 and stopping the advance of the g5-pawn, White holds on.

39. ... g5

Now Zatonskih systematically improves her position.

40. Rf2 Rd4 41. Ref1 Rd7 42. Re1 Kg7 43. Rfe2 Rd4 44. Kf3 Ra4 45. Kg2 Kg6 46. Kf2 h5 47. Kg1 g4 48. Kg2 f6 49. Kg1 Kg5 50. Kg2 Rb4

At some point, Black will break with ... h5-h4 and the position will fall apart.

51. Kg1 Reb5 52. Rf1 Rb2 53. Rxb2 Rxb2

The task is simple after the exchange of rooks.

54. Ra1 Re2 55. Ra4 e5 56. Rb4 h4 57. Ra4 h3 58. Rb4 Kg6 59. Ra4 Rg2+ 60. Kh1 Rd2 61. Kg1 Rd4 62. Ra8 Rxe4 63. Kf2 Rb4 64. Ra2 Rb1 65. Ke3 Re1+ 66. Kd3 Kf5 67. Rf2+ Ke6 68. Ra2 Rg1 69. Ke4 f5+ 70. Ke3 Rg2 71. Ra6+ Kf7 72. Ra5 Kf6 73. Ra6+ Kg5, White resigned.

At 4½/6 with two games (and a "free day") remaining, the leader Zatonskih needed just one point for a GM norm. Close behind her were Khotenashvili and Kosteniuk, each with three points, but also with all three games remaining.

But the seventh round was not good for

Kosteniuk, who could not keep pace after losing to Dzagnidze. Meanwhile, Khotenashvili defeated Paehtz to land at 4/6, just a half-point behind Zatonskih.

In the penultimate round, Kosteniuk caught up to Khotenashvili by defeating her; both were now at 4/7 along with Krush. But it no longer mattered for first place — Zatonskih defeated Abdumalik in one of the most impressive games of her tournament, clinching not only the GM norm, but also the Cairns Cup title!

NIMZO-INDIAN, CAPABLANCA VARIATION (E32)

IM Anna Zatonskih (2327)

GM Zhansaya Abdumalik (2497)

Cairns Cup (8), St. Louis, 06.11.2023

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Qc2 0-0 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. Qxc3 b6 7. Bg5 c5

A rare move, meant to catch Zatonskih off-guard. By striking earlier than usual in the center, Black offers White the chance to break up her pawn structure in return for more dynamic play.

The more typical continuation is 7. ... Bb7 8. f3 h6 9. Bh4 d5 10. e3 with a perfectly playable position for both sides.

8. dxc5 bxc5 9. Nh3

Another rare move, and one that likely gets Abdumalik out of prep. With what follows she decides to head to the endgame.

9. ... h6 10. Bxf6 Qxf6 11. Qxf6 gxf6 12. Nf4 Nc6 13. Nh5



Now we reach the first key moment. Black played very naturally so far, trying to hold the f6-pawn. But instead, she should have been focusing on rapid development and getting the pieces to active squares; otherwise, White gets too much pressure (as we see in the game!).

13. ... f5

The engine suggests 13. ... Rd8 14. Nxf6+ Kf8 15. 0-0-0 d6 16. Ne4 Ke7 17. e3 Rb8, which at first glance, I did not find terribly convincing for Black. Now I think she gets just enough play with her pieces, and combined with the open b-file, there's sufficient pressure for the pawn.

14. 0-0-0 f6

Another natural move, with White threatening Nh5xf6+ to get to the d7-pawn. But active play was still best: 14. ... Na5 gets the knight off the awkward c6-square, avoiding what happens in the game. After 15. Nf6+ (15. e3 Rd8 is equal, as g2-g4 is not dangerous) 15. ... Kg7 16. Nxd7 Bxd7 17. Rxd7 Nxc4 Black is doing fine with such an active knight.



Zatonskih concentrates in her game against GM Abdumalik.

**15. g4!**

With this pawn sacrifice White gets a tempo to demolish Black's queenside structure due to the pin on the long diagonal.

15. ... fxg4 16. Bg2 Kf7

Worse are 16. ... Bb7 17. Rxd7 and; 16. ... Rb8 17. Bxc6 dxc6 18. h3 gxh3 19. Rxh3 when Black's pawns and king are weak, and the bishop is poor compared to the h5-knight.

17. h3! Rg8

Here 17. ... gxh3 nearly loses, as the king is weak. Black must avoid opening the kingside files unless it's on her terms. To wit: 18. Rxh3 Rb8 19. Bxc6 dxc6 20. Rg3 with a fantastic position.

18. Nf4?!

This misplaces the knight and gives Black a chance to get back into the game. After 18. Ng3 Rb8 19. Bxc6 dxc6 20. Ne4 the knight is dominating the bishop.

18. ... g3

The correct 18. ... Rb8! equalizes immediately, as it forces White to decide whether or not to capture on c6. Both options work for Black: (a) 19. Bxc6 dxc6 20. Nd3 e5 unleashes an attack on the h3-pawn and grabs the initiative, while (b) 19. hxg4 19. ... Rxg4 20. e3 Ne5 is at least equal.

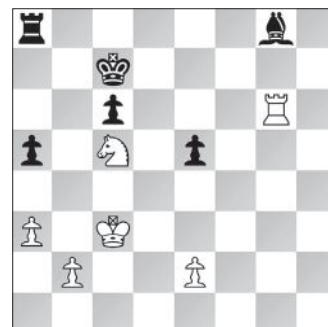
**19. fxg3 Rxg3 20. Bxc6 dxc6 21. Rd6 e5
22. Nh5 Rxh3 23. Rxf6+ Ke7 24. Rxh3
Bxh3 25. Rxh6 Be6**

Black has managed to fight back to equality, but she is not out of the woods yet!

26. Rh7+ Kd6 27. Ng3

Perhaps a bit premature. Instead 27. b3 was more challenging. Now if 27. ... a5? (27. ... Rg8 is the only move, stopping knight jumps after 28. Nf6 Bf5) 28. Ng3 is crushing.

**27. ... Bxc4 28. Ne4+ Kd5 29. Nc3+ Kd6
30. Ne4+ Kd5 31. Rh4 Ba6 32. Nc3+ Kd6
33. Rh6+ Kd7 34. Kd2 Bc4 35. Ne4 Kc7 36.
Nxc5 Bg8 37. Kc3 a5 38. Rg6**

**38. ... Bd5??**

By allowing White's rook onto the seventh rank, Black risks becoming ensnared in a dangerous net with the knight and rook.

It was necessary to block the seventh with 38. ... Bf7 39. Rg7 Kd6 40. b4 axb4+ 41. axb4 Ra3+ 42. Kb2 Ra7 with an equal position.

39. Rg7+ Kb6

White is winning after 39. ... Kc8 40. e4 Ba2 41. b3, threatening both Kc3-b2 and Rg7-g8+.

40. b4??

A stumble!

The right move is 40. Nd7+!, with a lovely geometric motif. Black's bishop is in a precarious state. 40. ... Kc7 (40. ... Ka6 41. e4 Bg8 42. a4 sets up a mating net, and Black has to pitch pawns to avoid losing on the spot) 41. e4 Ba2 (if 41. ... Bxe4 42. Nc5+, while 41. ... Be6 42. Nc5+ Kd6 43. Nb7 mate is an unexpected but beautiful idea) 42. Nc5+ Kb6 43. Na4+ Ka6 44. b3 and now the bishop is trapped. White wraps things up with 44. ... Bb1 (or 44. ... Rb8 45. Nc5+ Kb6 46. Nd7+) 45. Kb2 Bd3 46. Nc5+.

40. ... axb4+??

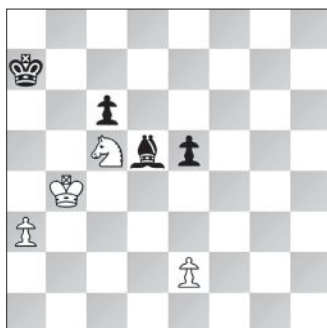
And a stumble in return. White now forces a winning minor piece ending.

The most stubborn defense was 40. ... Ra7 41. Rxa7 (41. bxa5+ Rxa5 42. Nd7+ Kb5 is equal) 41. ... Kxa7 42. bxa5 Bf7 43. Nd7 (43. e4 Bg6) 43. ... Be8 44. Nxe5 Ka6 and with

This page: scenes from the dramatic final round game between Krush and Zatonikh.

the black king getting into the game and pressuring the a3-pawn (after taking on a5) there's enough to hold the draw.

41. Kxb4 Ra7 42. Rxa7 Kxa7



43. e3??

Giving Black one last chance.

White has to try to grab the pawn immediately, as every tempo matters. Therefore the correct path is 43. Nd7 Bh1 (43. ... e4 44. Nf6 picks up the pawn and covers the c5-square as well) 44. Nxe5 Ka6 45. Nd3 controlling c5, and not allowing the black king to get to a5.

Why is it so important for the knight to defend the c5-square exactly when the black king lands on a6? Here's an illustrative line: after 45. e3 c5+ 46. Kxc5 Ka5 Black can sacrifice the bishop for the e-pawn and pick up the a-pawn with the king, achieving the draw.

43. ... Ba2 44. Nd7 e4?

Missing the drawing idea. Now White doesn't let the win go.

Necessary was 44. ... Ka6 45. Nxe5 c5+ 46. Kxc5 (46. Ka4 Bd5 is equal) 46. ... Ka5 and the king grabs the a3-pawn.

45. Nc5 Bb1

The bishop soon runs out of squares.

The sterner 45. ... Bd5 loses as well, as Black runs out of tempi with the bishop's defense of the e4-pawn, while also trying to keep the king ready to go to a6. For instance, 46. a4 Kb6 47. a5+ Ka7 48. Kc3 Kb8 49. Kd4 Ka7 50. Ke5! Black can't get to the a-pawn, and White wins the e-pawn.

46. a4 Kb6 47. a5+ Ka7 48. Kb3 Bd3

49. Nxd3 exd3 50. e4 Ka6 51. e5, Black resigned.

The last round, then, became a battle for second place. With Khotenashvili drawing Dronavalli, and Kosteniuk defeating Paheztz, the score to aim for was 5/8. Now, it was up to Krush to secure herself a shared second,

facing off against her perpetual opponent, Zatonskih.

In a long game where she was pressing an opposite-colored bishops endgame, Zatonskih defended admirably and held the draw.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT, TARRASCH VARIATION (D33)

GM Irina Krush (2436)

IM Anna Zatonskih (2327)

Cairns Cup (9), 06.12.2023

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 c5 4. cxd5 exd5 5. Nf3 Nc6 6. g3 Nf6 7. Bg2 cxd4 8. Nxd4 Bc5 9. Nxc6 bxc6 10. 0-0 0-0 11. Na4 Bb6 12. Qc2 Bd7 13. b3 Qe7 14. Bb2 Rfe8 15. e3 Ne4 16. Nxb6 axb6



Black has a strong knight on e4, but has given up the two bishops. White's kingside is a bit vulnerable as it lacks a knight on f3, and Black has ideas of ... h7-h5-h4 which are promptly enacted.

17. Rfd1 h5 18. h4 Rac8 19. Re1 Bf5 20.

Qd1

Clever, pressuring Black via the weak b6- and g7-pawns. For her part, Black cannot avoid material loss, but she can count on excellent counterplay on the kingside.

20. ... Qe6 21. Qd4 Qf6

The alternative 21. ... Qg6 also works, holding through dynamic play. It's admittedly not easy to see in advance, but Black gets a fantastic attack on the king with a sacrifice on g3: 22. Qxb6 Re6 23. Qd4 Rce8 24. Rf1 Nxc3 25. fxg3 Be4 and here White should bail out into an equal ending via 26. Qxg7+ (if instead she tries to hold the material with 26. Kh2, she won't get far: 26. ... Bxg2 27. Kxg2 Rxe3 and now forced is 28. Qxg7+ Qxg7 29. Bxg7 Kxg7) 26. ... Qxg7 27. Bxg7 Kxg7 with equality.

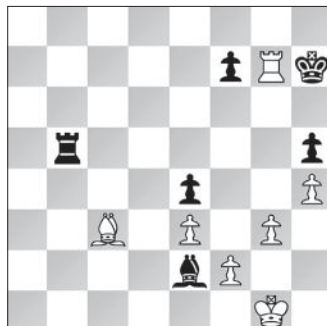
This page: the winner, seen alone (below) and with Dr. Jeanne Sinuefield (above).



22. Bxe4 dxe4 23. Qxf6 gxf6 24. Bxf6 Bg4
Rerouting the bishop to the f3-square, where it will pressure the king for the long run.

25. b4 b5 26. a4 bxa4 27. Rxa4 c5 28. b5 Rb8 29. Rb1 Re6 30. Bc3 Reb6 31. Rc4 Be2
Here 31. ... Rxb5 would also have worked: 32. Rxb5 Rxb5 33. Rxe4 Bf3 34. Re8+ Kh7 35. g4 hxg4 with equality.

32. Rxc5 Rxb5 33. Rg5+ Kh7 34. Rxb5 Rxb5 35. Rg7+



White wins a pawn, but Black regains it with the mating threats.

35. ... Kh6 36. Rxf7 Bf3 37. Kh2

If 37. Be1 Rb1 38. Kf1 Kg6 White can't improve the position despite being two pawns up.

37. ... Rc5 38. Bd4 Rc2 39. g4 Rxf2+ 40.

Kg3 Rg2+ 41. Kf4 Rxe4+ 42. Kf5
Now material is equal, but White's pieces are menacing the black king. Some precision is required.

42. ... Rg8

For instance: 42. ... Rg1? 43. Be5 Bg4+ 44. Kf6 and Be5-f4+ is unstoppable.

43. Be5 Bg4+ 44. Kxe4

Note that if White tries the same checkmate idea now, it fails: 44. Kf6?? Rg6+ followed by ... Rg6-e6+.

44. ... Re8 45. Kf4 Re6

And with White's king forced back, Black just needs to hold the opposite-colored bishops endgame.

46. e4 Kg6 47. Rg7+ Kh6 48. Rg8 Kh7 49.

Rb8 Kg6 50. Rb5 Ra6 51. Bd4 Re6 52.

Rg5+ Kh6 53. Ra5 Kg6 54. Ra7 Kh6 55. e5

Rc6 56. Ke4 Kg6 57. Ra3 Re6 58. Ra2 Rc6

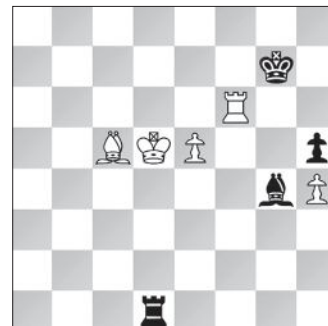
59. Rf2 Ra6 60. Kd5 Be6+ 61. Kc5 Bf5 62.

Bc3 Re6 63. Ra2 Bg4 64. Ra8 Kf7 65. Kd4

Kg6 66. Bb4 Rb6 67. Kc5 Re6 68. Kd4 Rb6 69. Bc5 Rb1

While this is still a draw, it was much easier to defend by keeping the rook posted on the sixth rank, with the bishop covering the e6-square. Now White brings in the king and it gets more difficult.

70. Ra6+ Kf7 71. Rf6+ Kg7 72. Kd5 Rd1+?



This move misplaces the rook, and allows the pawn to march forward. Black is still fine after the correct 72. ... Rb8 73. Rd6 Bf3+ 74. Kd4 Re8.

Below: the players at the opening ceremony.



“
... **Zatonskih dominated
a field of legends to finish
undefeated ...**”

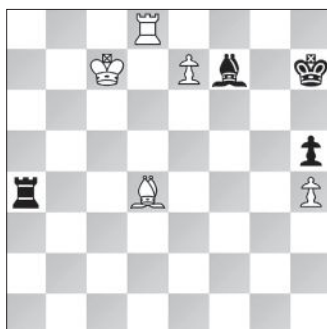
73. Bd4 Re1 74. e6 Kg8 75. Rg6+

Here 75. Rh6 Kf8 76. Kd6 wins on the spot due to the mate threat on h8.

75. ... Kh7 76. Rg7+ Kh6 77. e7 Bd7 78. Kd6 Ba4

After 78. ... Rd1 79. Kxd7 Rxd4+ 80. Kc7 Re4 81. Rf7 Kg6 Black's king is in time for the rook to win the e7-pawn.

79. Rg8 Rd1 80. Kc5 Re1 81. Bf6 Kh7 82. Ra8 Kg6 83. Bg5 Bd7 84. Kd6 Bb5 85. Ra5 Be8 86. Kc7 Bf7 87. Ra6+ Kh7 88. Rh6+ Kg7 89. Rd6 Rb1 90. Bf6+ Kh7 91. Bd4 Rb4 92. Bf6 Be8 93. Rd8 Kg6 94. Bg5 Rc4+ 95. Kb6 Kf7 96. Rd2 Re4 97. Rf2+ Kg6 98. Kc7 Bf7 99. Rf6+ Kg7 100. Rd6 Ra4 101. Bf6+ Kh7 102. Bd4 Be8 103. Rd8 Bf7



104. Bf6

After a flourish of moves, with both players in time trouble, this is White's final chance to win the game. Rather than give Black time with Bd4-f6 and ... Kh7-g6, she should have first cut off the e-file with 104. Be5! Ra7+ (or



IM Nazi Paikidze (L) and GM Yasser Seirawan (R) in the studio

104. ... Rxh4 105. Rf8 Kg6 [105. ... Bg6 106. Rh8 mate] 106. Rxf7 Kxf7 107. Kd7) 105. Kd6 Ra6+ 106. Kd7 Ra7+ 107. Bc7 and promotion cannot be prevented.

104. ... Kg6 105. Bg5 Rc4+

Now Black takes control of the e8-square, and doesn't let it go (after kicking the White king back first).

106. Kd7 Rd4+ 107. Kc6 Rc4+ 108. Kd6 Re4 109. Rb8 Kg7 110. Rb7 Re1 111. Kd7 Rd1+ 112. Kc7 Re1 113. Rb6 Rd1 114. Bf6+ Kh7 115. Rc6 Be8 116. Ra6 Rd7+ 117. Kc8 Kg8 118. Bg5 Rd4 119. Rf6 Bf7 120. Rf1 Rc4+ 121. Kd7 Rd4+ 122. Kc6 Rc4+ 123. Kd6 Rd4+ 124. Ke5 Rd5+ 125. Ke4 Ra5 126. Rf6 Ra4+ 127. Ke5 Ra5+

128. Kd6 Ra6+ 129. Kd7 Ra7+ 130. Kd8, draw.

Speaking to IM Almira Skripchenko after the game, Zatonskih described the tournament as "the best achievement of my career," and it's hard not to agree. The lowest-rated seed entering play, Zatonskih dominated a field of legends to finish undefeated, achieve a performance over 2600 FIDE, and make history as the first American to be crowned a Cairns Cup champion. ♠

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

3rd Cairns Cup

JUNE 3-13, 2023

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1	IM Anna Zatonskih	2327	*	1	1	½	½	½	½	1	1		6/8
2	GM Alexandra Kosteniuk	2535	0	*	1	1	0	1	1	½	½	1	5/8 (6/9)
3	GM Bella Khotenashvili	2478	0	0	*	1	1	½	1	0	1		4½/8
4	GM Irina Krush	2436	½	0	0	*	1	1	½	½	1	½	4½/8 (5/9)
5	GM Nana Dzagnidze	2513	½	1	0	0	*	½	0	1	1	1	4/8 (5/9)
6	GM Harika Dronavalli	2501	½	0	½	0	½	*	1	½	½	½	3½/8 (4/9)
7	GM Elisabeth Paehtz	2479	½	0	0	½	1	0	*	1	½		3½/8
8	IM Gunay Mammadzada	2449	0	½	1	½	0	½	0	*	½		3/8
9	GM Zhansaya Abdumalik	2497	0	½	0	0	0	½	½	½	*		2/8
10	GM Humpy Koneru	2567		0		½	0	½				*	1/4

Decisions, Decisions

Using what you know to guide your moves

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN

D

ECISION MAKING IS A CRUCIAL part of endgame technique. Amateur players often

gravitate towards “move-by-move” play, often leading into unexpected and undesired situations. Quality endgame play involves assessing where you want to get to. It often helps to step back and consider the greatest strengths of your position, which can help in preserving and maximizing these advantages.

The following game is full of transformations and the vital decisions that accompany these possibilities.

ENGLISH OPENING (A34)

GM Vladimir Belous (2587)

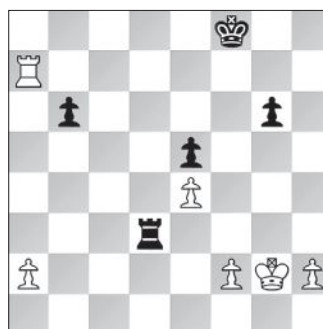
IM Zhansaya Abdumalik (2420)

Saint Louis Spring-B (5), 05.20.2017

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5 5. g3 Nc6 6. Bg2 g6 7. Qa4 Bg7 8. Ng5 e6 9. Nge4 Bf8 10. d3 Be7 11. Bh6 Nb6 12. Qd1 Nd4 13. 0-0 Nf5 14. Qc1 f6 15. Be3 Nd4 16. b4 cxb4 17. Bxd4 bxc3 18. Bxc3 Na4 19. Bd2 Bd7 20. Bh6 Kf7 21. Qf4 Nb6 22. Rfc1 Qb8 23. Qf3 Nd5 24. Ng5+ Ke8 25. e4 Nf4 26. gxf4 fxe5 27. Bxg5 Bxg5 28. fxe5 Rf8 29. Qg3 e5 30. Rc5 Rf4 31. Rac1 b6 32. Rc7 Qd8 33. Bh3 Bxh3 34. Qxh3 Qxg5+ 35. Kh1 Qg4 36. Qxg4 Rxg4 37. Rxh7 Rf4 38. Kg2 Rf7 39. Rh8+ Rf8 40. Rxf8+ Kxf8 41. Rc7 Rd8 42. Rxa7 Rxd3

(see diagram top of next column)

I used this game in *Better Thinking, Better*



Chess to illustrate decision making in endgames, but started from the position two moves later. But this is actually a very critical moment in the ending. White can force a win by appreciating what his best assets are.

43. Rb7?

Even grandmasters can be lured by natural but incorrect moves. In lessons my students always chose this move first; I believe the instinct to play direct moves like attacks and captures in endgames is strong and difficult to overcome. In reality this move is worse than not moving at all!

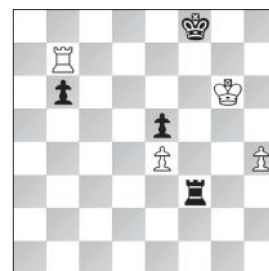
White is positioned very strongly on the kingside. The extra pawn is the obvious feature, but the confinement of Black's king to the back rank gives White tremendous opportunities to press an attack in the sector. White has a natural and potentially fruitful plan of invading with his king, though it is not trivial to execute it correctly. 43. f3 would be a good start: 43. ... Rd2+ 44. Kg3 Rb2 (Black can't advance the b-pawn because White would gain access to the e5-pawn, e.g.

44. ... b5 45. Rb7 Rb2 46. a4 b4 47. Rb5) 45. a4 Ra2 46. h4 Ra1.



POSITION AFTER 46. ... Ra1

This could be a stumbling block for amateurs, who tend to think to take pawns at every opportunity. The b6-pawn doesn't matter much, but distracting the Black rook from checking away White's king is paramount. After 47. Rb7! Rxa4 48. Kg4! (not 48. Rxb6? Kf7 and Black can defend his remaining pawns) 48. ... Ra3 49. Kg5 Rxf3 50. Kxg6 it is surprising how helpless Black is with only two White pawns on the board.



POSITION AFTER 50. Kxg6

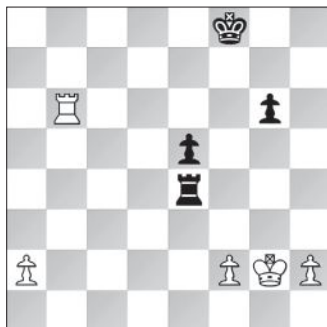
The stark difference in the king position makes all the difference. A few possibilities:

- a) After 50. ... Rf4 51. h5 Rxe4 52. Rb8+ (even 52. h6 Rg4+ 53. Kh5 Rg1 54. h7 Rh1+ 55. Kg6 Rg1+ 56. Kf6 Rf1+ 57. Ke6! Rh1 58. Rf7+! Ke8 59. Rg7 wins) 52. ... Ke7 53. h6 Rg4+ 54. Kh5 Rg1 55. h7 the h-pawn costs Black her rook.
- b) If 50. ... Kg8 51. Rb8+ Rf8 52. Rxf8+ Kxf8 53. Kf6 b5 54. Kxe5 Kf7 55. Kd4 Ke6 56. Kc5 Ke5 57. h5! Kf6 58. Kxb5 and the king escorts the e-pawn home.
- c) The best try is 50. ... Rg3+ 51. Kf6 Kg8 as 52. Rxb6? Rg4 is drawable. But 52. Rb8+ Kh7 53. Kxe5 Rg4 54. Kd5 leaves the e-pawn unstoppable.

43. ... Rd4!!

Belous may have only accounted for 43. ... Rd6 44. Kg3 and White will advance as he likes. But now it's too late to shift gears, as after 44. Kf3 Rd3+ 45. Kg4 Rd2 White can't defend his pawns.

44. Rxb6 Rxe4



Quality of pawns matters! After 45. Rxg6 Ra4 46. Rg5 Rxa2 47. Rxe5 White has the infamous rook, f-, and -h-pawn versus rook ending. It may not be critical to study the ending (I've never reached it in a serious game) but if you know it is drawn with proper play, you know whether to avoid it or run for it! As long as Black does not let her king get pinned to the back-rank she should be able to hold.

Belous decided his practical winning chances would be greater by keeping the a-pawn on the board. Given the ultimate result, it seems he made the right decision.

45. Ra6 Kg7 46. a4 Rf4 47. Ra7+ Kh6 48. Ra8 Kg7 49. a5 Ra4 50. a6



Pushing a rook pawn with the rook in front is a hit-or-miss strategy. White will either reach a lethal *zugzwang* or hit a wall. White has only one other decent pawn (on f2) left, so Black has some margin for error here.

50. ... Ra3

This does not harm anything but Black could reach a fortress with 50. ... e4. As 51. Kg3 g5! (51. ... Ra2 also holds) would keep White's king walled in, 51. Kf1 is the route to take. White's king will escape its prison, but the necessary *zugzwang* will elude him. Play continues 51. ... Ra2 52. Ke1 Kh7 53. a7 (otherwise the king cannot go further) 53. ... Kg7 54. Kd1 Kh7 55. Kc1 Kg7 56. Kb1 Ra4 57. Kb2 Kh7 58. Kb3 Ra1 59. Kb4 Kg7 60. Kc5 Kh7 61. Kd5 Ra4 62. Ke5 Kg7.



POSITION AFTER 62. ... Kg7

Here White can tempo the king to f6, but then the e-pawn is not attacked and Black can move her rook. With the king on e5, Black can always shuffle her king between the g7- and h7-squares.

51. f3 Kh7??

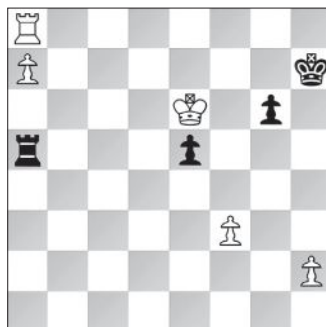
White now has a straightforward win. The last chance to hold was 51. ... Ra2+! 52. Kg3 (52. Kg1 Ra1+ stymies White; the pawn has not reached a7 yet, so Black's rook will grab the h-pawn when the king escapes checks) Kf6 53. a7 Kg7 54. h4 Kh7



POSITION AFTER 54. ... Kh7

White's king is walled in, and the attempt to break out comes up short: 55. h5 gxh5 56. Kh4 Ra5! with an instant draw, though even 56. ... Ra4+ 57. Kxh5 Ra3 58. Kg5 Kg7 denies White's king a path to cross over.

52. a7 Kg7 53. Kf2 Kh7 54. Ke2 Kg7 55. Kd2 Kh7 56. Kc2 Kg7 57. Kb2 Ra6 58. Kb3 Kh7 59. Kb4 Kg7 60. Kb5 Ra2 61. Kb6 Rb2+ 62. Kc6 Ra2 63. Kd6 Ra5 64. Ke6 Kh7



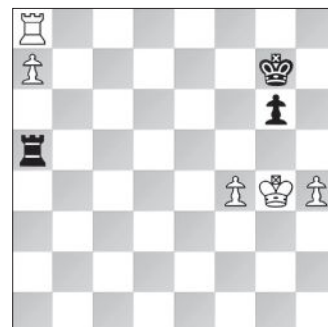
In this position 64. ... g5 65. Kf5 e4+ 66. Kxe4

Ra3 would be an interesting try. White would have to avoid the impatient 67. Kf5?? as he must preserve the f-pawn to be able to dislodge Black's king. But the king could walk to Black's rook — say, 67. Kd4 — come back to the kingside and win with an eventual h2-h4.

65. Kf6

We have a legit *zugzwang* here because the White king can freeze both the rook and the king at the same time.

65. ... Ra6+ 66. Kxe5 Kg7 67. Kf4 Ra4+ 68. Kg3 Kh7 69. h4 Kg7 70. f4 Ra3+ 71. Kg4 Ra5



Here again knowledge of endgame fundamentals helps solve a complicated endgame.

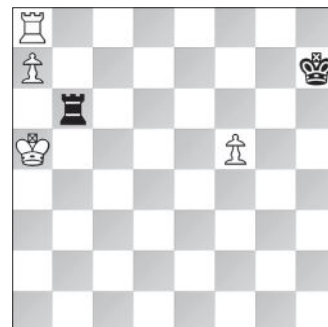
72. h5! gxh5+

It is worth mentioning, as so many of my students fail this test, that 72. ... Rxh5 should not be met by 73. Rg8+ with a complicated queen versus rook ending, but with 73. Rb8 which produces a rook against nothing!

73. Kh4 Kh7 74. f5 Ra4+ 75. Kxh5 Ra5 76. Kg4 Ra4+ 77. Kf3 Ra3+ 78. Ke4 Ra4+ 79. Kd3 Ra3+ 80. Kc4 Ra4+ 81. Kb3 Ra6 82. Kb4 Rb6+

After 82. ... Ra1 83. f6+ Kf7 84. Rh8! Black loses her rook.

83. Ka5, Black resigned.



Surprisingly the a-pawn wins on its own after 83. ... Rb1 84. Rb8. ♠

Alekhine the Magician

The fourth world champion conjures a fine victory.

BY BRUCE PANDOLFINI

A

ALEXANDER ALEKHINE (1892-1946) was a deadly attacking player. Once he got going, his initiative could be-

come overwhelming. Nonetheless, his openings could be bland and not threatening at all. Opponents might get complacent, seemingly falling asleep at the board. But then, just like that, a mental switch was turned on and Alekhine would shift gears and begin to go about mounting an attack. It might seem innocent at first, but one harmless move after the other and suddenly the opponent was hit with a surprise finish. Consider this 1921 game played in Triberg against Alfred Brinckmann (White). After an innocuous beginning, with a roughly equal position, Alekhine the magician abracadabras his way to a pretty finale.

QUEEN'S INDIAN DEFENSE (A47)

Alfred Brinckmann
Alexander Alekhine
Triberg, 1921

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 b6 3. g3 Bb7 4. Bg2 d6 5. b3 Nbd7 6. Bb2 e5 7. dxe5

(see diagram top of next column)

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. **

7. **Par Score 4** **dx e5**
Black avoids a simplifying trade of queens and clears the way for the dark-squared bishop, but you may accept **full credit** for 7. ... Nxe5.

8. **0-0**
By castling, White protects the g2-bishop, which means the e5-pawn is now threatened. **

8. **Par Score 5** **e4**
Black saves the pawn with a threat. Accept **full credit** for 8. ... Bd6.

9. **Ne5**
White is not averse to trading a few pieces. **

9. **Par Score 5** **Bd6**
Alekhine develops and threatens, while readying kingside castling. Accept **full credit** for either 9. ... Nxe5 or 9. ... Bc5.

10. **Nxd7**
As expected, knights are traded, though 10. Nc4 was possibly a little better. **

10. **Par Score 4** **Qxd7**
Alekhine has a nice position. His advanced e-pawn gives him more space and some opportunities for a kingside attack.

11. **Nd2**
White develops, with an eye on the e-pawn. **

11. **Par Score 5** **Qe6**
Black adds some protection to the e4-square, but a more promising way was 11. ... Qf5, with greater kingside prospects. Give yourself **1 bonus point** if your realized White was threatening to win the e-pawn, starting with 12. Bxf6.

12. **e3**
This fixes the black e-pawn but spawns light square weaknesses. Alekhine wastes no time trying to exploit them. **

12. **Par Score 6** **h5**
Alekhine finally gets going. He plans to open the h-file. You may accept **full credit** for 12. ... 0-0-0 or 12. ... Be5.

13. **Qe2**
White connects the rooks. He instead might have tried 13. Nc4. **

13. **Par Score 5** **h4**
The attack proceeds. The h-file is going to be opened. You may indeed accept **full credit** for 13. ... 0-0-0.

14. **Nc4**
It's natural for White to think of trading off some pieces. **

14. **Par Score 5** **Bc5**
Black wants to keep the dark-squared bishop, thinking it might still be useful. Accept **full credit** for 14. ... Be7.

15. **Rfd1**
This stops Black from castling queenside, while also clearing f1, in case White's king needs to run away. **

15. **Par Score 5** **Bd5**
A good centralizing move that possibly threatens to take the knight and enables queenside castling.

16. **Na3**

ABCS OF CHESS

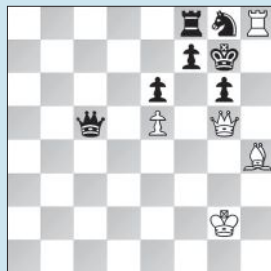
THESE PROBLEMS ARE ALL related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 63.

SEPTEMBER EXERCISE:

There's a right way to do things, but there's also personal style. Each of us prefers certain types of positions, opening variations, etc. At the same time, there are setups and situations liked by others that we don't like. To broaden your overall game, try to become better aware of your likes and dislikes. Prepare yourself to contest reasonable positions in which you're uncomfortable. That way, opening, middlegame, endgame, you're ready no matter what.

PROBLEM 1

Mating net



PROBLEM 2

Mating net



PROBLEM 3

Mating net



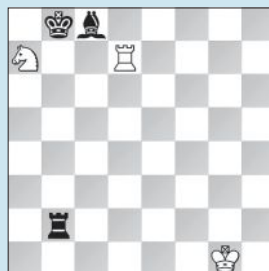
PROBLEM 4

Mating net



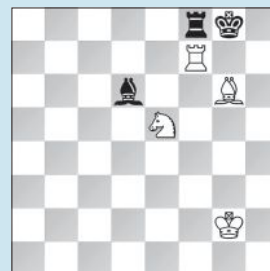
PROBLEM 5

Mating net



PROBLEM 6

Mating net



White has visions of an attack (Qe2-a6+) if Black plays 16. ... 0-0-0. But it's not going to work. **

16. Par Score 5 hxg3
Alekhine opens the h-file as planned.

17. hxg3
Taking back with the f-pawn isn't any better. It might even be worse.

17. Par Score 6 a6
For now, this stops queen and knight invasions so Black can move ahead with his kingside campaign.

18. c4
White pries open the d-file, stopping queen-side castling. He's ready to shift his knight to c2 and then d4.

18. Par Score 5 Bb7
This is a bit better than 18. ... Bc6 since it secures the a6-pawn, just in case.

19. Nc2 **

19. Par Score 5 Qf5
Black gets ready for further kingside operations. You certainly may accept *full credit* for 19. ... Ng4.

20. Ba3

Better to remove the knight with 20. Bxf6. **

20. Par Score 5 Bxa3
This trades pieces, but it's good for Black, since White winds up wasting time with his displaced knight.

21. Nxa3 **

21. Par Score 6 Ng4
As expected, the knight invades.

22. Nc2
White tries to get his knight back for defense and attack. **

22. Par Score 6 Rh2
A rook on the 7th!

23. Qd2
On 23. Nd4, Alekhine had 23. ... Qh5, threatening 24. ... Rh1+ (*1 bonus point*). **

23. Par Score 6 Ke7
Alekhine clears the home rank, preparing to double on the h-file.

24. Nb4
With the idea of being able to check on d5. **

24. Par Score 5 Rah8
The threat is 25. ... Rxg2+, followed by 26. ... Qf3+ (*1 bonus point*).

25. Qe2

The queen comes back to where it was, hoping to keep out Black's queen. **

25. Par Score 7 Qf3
But no deal! Mate is threatened at g2, and taking the black queen doesn't save the day. On 26. Bxf3 exf3, White has no defense against the looming rook check at h1. A rather nice conclusion. But you may accept *full credit* for 25. ... Rh1+, which also forces mate.

26. White resigned. ↗

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

Streamers on the King's Pawn, Part III

Wrapping up with Kraai and Rozman

BY IM JOHN WATSON

IN THIS COLUMN I CONCLUDE my review of the 1. e4 repertoires on Chessable by IM Levy Rozman (Gotham Chess on the web) and GM Jesse Kraai (of Chess Dojo) by looking at their solutions to defenses other than 1. ... e5 and 1. ... c5. It's not possible to give a lot of detail here for reasons of space, but I'll show a few typical variations and then make some general comments on these repertoire courses.

Against the Scandinavian Defense, **1. e4 d5**, both Rozman and Kraai opt for main lines:

2. exd5 Qxd5

Here they show ways to get some advantage after 2. ... Nf6 3. d4 Nxd5, while Rozman also covers 3. ... Bg4.

3. Nc3 Qd6

The move 3. ... Qd8 is sound and gets considerable analysis from both.

The old main line is 3. ... Qa5 4. d4 Nf6 5. Nf3, when Kraai meets 5. ... c6 with 6. Bd2 Bf5 7. Bc4 and Rozman gives the most attention to 5. ... Bf5, continuing with the frequently-played variation 6. Ne5 c6 7. Bc4 e6 8. g4 Bg6 9. h4 Nbd7 10. Nxd7 Nxd7 11. h5 Be4 12. 0-0 Bd5 13. Nxd5 cxd5 14. Bd3 Bd6 15. a4 Qc7 16. Qf3. This is roughly equal; arguably White has more long-term chances due to the bishop pair. You will have to do some independent study in this line.

4. d4 Nf6 5. Nf3

Now both authors cover 5. ... a6 well, but only Rozman analyses the solid move:

5. ... c6

His main line continues:

6. Ne5 Nbd7 7. Nc4 Qc7 8. a4 Nb6!?

The alternatives 8. ... g6 and 8. ... Nd5 have been played with better results.

9. Ne5 a5 10. Bf4 Qd8 11. Be2 g6 12. 0-0 Bg7 13. Qd2 0-0 14. Rad1

This is the kind of classical development that serves well for a repertoire. White's space advantage ensures comfortable play.

Against the Alekhine Defense, **1. e4 Nf6**, Rozman chooses the Four Pawns Attack **2. e5 Nd5 3. d4 d6 4. c4 Nb6 5. f4 dxe5**. Although this is a strong line, well-analyzed, and very much in line with his tactical proclivities, it may not be appropriate for everyone, since it requires an awful lot of memorization.

The average player might prefer Kraai's **2. e5 Nd5 3. d4 d6 4. Nf3**, the traditional main line. Still, like Rozman, Kraai sometimes assumes a high level of skill and/or knowledge from his reader. Take, for example, **4. ... g6 5. Bc4 Nb6 6. Bb3 Bg7 7. Ng5 e6 8. Qf3**.



8. ... 0-0

Kraai shows only this defense, but 8. ... Qe7 has been by far the main move over the years, and the most successful one (even recently), so he

should have analyzed it. In particular, there have been hundreds of hard-fought battles after 9. Ne4 dxe5 10. Bg5 (the rarer 10. dxe5 may well be better) 10. ... Qb4+ 11. c3 Qa5, a position that rewards deep preparation.

9. Qh3 h6 10. Nf3

Kraai stops here and says, "It's a very terrible situation for Black and there is no counter-play. You will get this position." Fair enough, but in that case, one shouldn't go in blind. In practice, for example, even masters have failed to find the best moves after **10. ... dxe5**, when many ideas have been tried, but what is likely the best sequence, **11. dxe5 c5 12. Bxh6! c4**, is a piece sacrifice that only works out due to **13. Be3! cxb3 14. Ng5** and although it's still messy, the attack should succeed.

For the Caro-Kann, **1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5**, Rozman and Kraai make choices that are ambitious but not too theory-laden. Rozman uses **3. f3**, the Fantasy Variation, which has gained acceptance among masters after years as an "irregular" line. He backs it up with plenty of analysis, sufficient to get White to a fully playable game with chances for both sides.

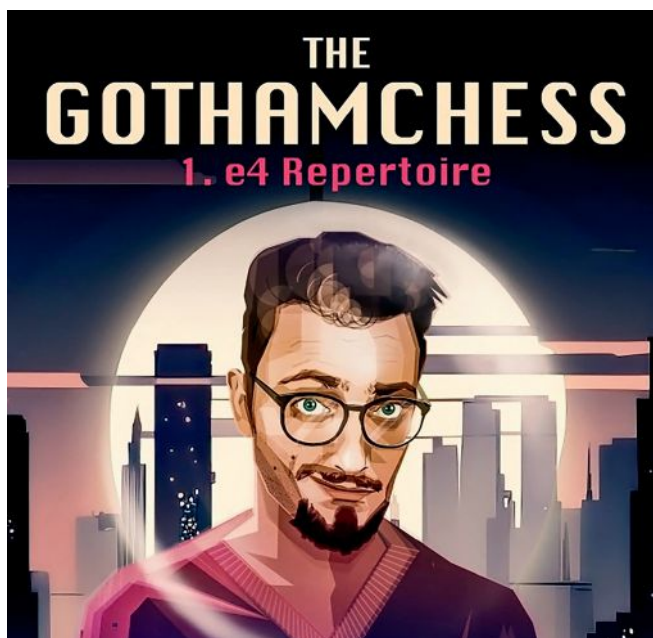
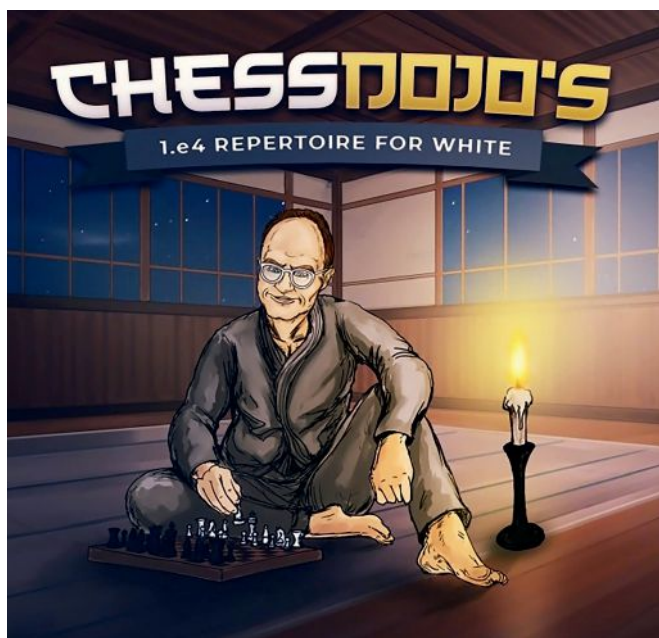
Kraai recommends **3. e5 Bf5 4. h4**, which became very popular about a decade ago and is currently hotly contested:

(see diagram top of next column)

Let's take a look at his sharp main line:

4. ... h5

Kraai directs his attention to this and 4. ... h6, which is met by 5. g4! and is the subject of thousands of games. After 4. ... Qb6, he suggests 5. g4 Bd7 6. c4 and says merely, "White



is clearly much better.” That is probably true on the super-grandmaster or silicon level, but White lags in development and I wonder how practical it is to play such a position without deeper analysis and a lot of examples.

5. Bg5

Kraai’s favorite. Much more popular are 5. c4 and 5. Bd3. It’s always nice to have options if your main line doesn’t work out.

5. ... Qb6 6. Bd3!

A fun gambit. This is practically the only move White ever tries.

6. ... Qxd4

Here 6. ... Bxd3 7. Qxd3 is often played, when the thematic 7. ... Qa6 8. Qh3 e6 is complex, e.g., 9. Nc3 Nh6 10. Nge2 Nf5.

7. Nf3 Qg4

Black shouldn’t even consider trying to defend the position after 7. ... Qxb2 8. Bxf5 Qxa1 9. e6!.

8. Bxf5 Qxf5 9. 0-0

Kraai says that this is well-tested on his

ChessDojo site. White is intending to go for broke after 9. ... f6 10. c4 fxg5 11. cxd5 cxd5 12. Nc3! with a strong attack for the piece, which Kraai analyses in detail.

On the other hand, I notice that in several recent games Black has done well with 9. ... Nd7, a natural developing move Kraai doesn’t mention. Then 10. c4 is again critical, e.g., 10. ... e6 11. Nc3 Be7 or 11. ... dxc4 12. Re1 Ne7 13. Ne4 Nd5. These positions are messy and unclear.

In the French Defense, **1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5**, Kraai explains that 3. Nd2 and 3. Nc3 give Black too many options, so he opts for **3. e5**, as does Rozman. In fact, nine of the 1. e4 repertoire authors in Chessable make the same choice, although they take varied approaches.

After **3. ... c5 4. c3 Nc6 5. Nf3**, for example, Giri, who has the luxury of extra videos with which to do detailed analysis, picks well-established main lines with 5. ... Bd7 6. Be2 and 5. ... Qb6 6. a3. But most of the others who choose 3. e5, including Rozman and Kraai, recommend one or another of the fashionable and aggressive 6. Bd3 gambit variations. Here are a few examples:

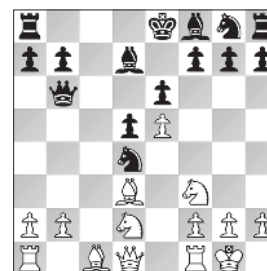
5. ... Qb6

After 5. ... Bd7, the authors go in different directions:

- a) Kraai suggests 6. dxc5 Bxc5 7. b4 Bb6 8. b5 Na5 9. Bd3, which is unbalanced, e.g., 9. ... Ne7 (or 9. ... Qc7, one double-edged line going 10. 0-0 Nc4 11. a4 Nxe5 12. Bf4 Nxf3+ 13. Qxf3 Qd8 14. Qg3 Nf6! 15. Qxg7 Rg8 16. Qh6 Ng4 17. Qxh7 Nf6 18. Qh4 Rg4, which is ultimately

equal) 10. 0-0 Rc8 (one of several setups) 11. a4 Ng6 12. g3 (12. Ba3 Nf4) 12. ... Qe7 13 Ba3 Bc5 with equality.

- b) Rozman turns to the gambit idea 6. Bd3 cxd4 7. cxd4 (7. 0-0 dxc3 8. Nxc3 Nge7 is another version of the gambit beginning with 5. ... Qb6 6 Bd3 cxd4 7 0-0; this has been contested quite a bit, but I think Black’s chances are better without having used a tempo and exposed the queen with ... Qd8-b6) 7. ... Qb6 8. 0-0 Nxd4 (the Milner-Barry Gambit) 9. Nbd2.



POSITION AFTER 9. Nbd2

Rozman calls 9. Nbd2 the “Smerdon Gambit.” He gives massive analysis; a couple of the simpler playable lines for Black are 9. ... Nxf3+ 10. Nxf3 Bb5 11. Be3 Qa6 12. Bxb5+ Qxb5 13. Rc1 Qd7 with equality, and 9. ... Bc5 10. Nxd4 (10. b4 Nxf3+ 11. Nxf3 Qxb4 12. Rb1 Qa4 13. Qxa4 Bxa4 14. Rxb7 Ne7) 10. ... Bxd4 11. Qh5 Ne7 (11. ... Bb5 is also satisfactory) 12. Nf3 Ng6 13. Bd2 Rc8. As you might guess, these positions are wide-open for creative play.

6. Bd3 cxd4 7. 0-0

Introducing the fashionable “Hector Gam-

bit.” The traditional 7. cxd4 Bd7 8. 0-0 Nxd4 is the Milner-Barry Gambit given above.

7. ... Bd7 8. Re1 Nge7 9. h4

This move, discouraging ... Ne7-g6, has become the main line and is recommended by both authors. There is a great deal of theory after 9. Nbd2 Ng6 and I see untrodden paths like 9. ... dxc3 10. bxc3 Qc7!? 11. Nb3 Nc8 with the idea ... Nc8-b6.



9. ... h6

Both sides have useful slow moves, including 9. ... Rc8.

After 9. ... a6, Rozman gives (a) 10. Nbd2 dxc3 11. bxc3 Ng6 12. Nb3 Qc7 13. Qe2 f6 14. exf6 gxf6 15. c4 0-0-0 16. cxd5 exd5 17. Be3, although this is only equal after 17. ... Nf4 (or 17. ... Rg8) 18. Bxf4 Qxf4 19. Bxa6 Rg8, when 20. Bxb7+ Kxb7 21. Qb5+ Kc7 22. Nbd4 Rxc2+ leads to a draw. The other main move (b) 10. h5 might even be met by 10. ... g6!, e.g., 11. Nbd2 gxh5 12. Nb3 dxc3 13. bxc3 Ng6 14. Rb1 Qc7 15. Nbd4 h4 16. Nxc6 Bxc6 17. Nd4 Bd7 with equality or 17. ... Rg8.

10. h5 Rc8

Another of Rozman's main lines here is 10. ... a6 11. a3 Rc8 12. b4 dxc3 13. Nxc3 Nxb4 14. Na4 Bxa4 15. Qxa4+ Nbc6 16. Rb1, and here instead of 16. ... Qa5?!, Black can try the solid 16. ... Qc7! 17. Bd2 Qd7.

11. Nbd2

The alternative 11. Na3 a6 12. Nc2 dxc3 13. bxc3 Na5 14. Be3 Qc7 15. Rb1 looks great after 15. ... b5? 16. a4! (Rozman), but Black can get satisfactory play with 15. ... Ba4! 16. Nfd4 Nc4, or even the greedy 16. ... Qxc3 17. Qe2 Bxc2.

11. ... dxc3 12. bxc3 Na5 13. Rb1 Qc7 14. Ba3 Qxc3 15. Nb3 Nxb3 16. Rxb3 Qa5

We have reached a position that has arisen several times: Rozman gives 17. Qb1 (17. Qa1 Nc6 18. Bxf8 Rxf8! 19. Rxb7 Nb4 20. Qd4 Nxd3 21. Qxd3 Rc3 22. Qb1 Ke7 is equal) 17. ... Rc3 18. Rxc3 Qxc3 19. Qxb7 Qxd3 20. Rc1 Nc6 21. Rxc6 Bxa3 22. Rc8+ Bxc8 23. Qxc8+ Ke7 24. Qc7+ Ke8 with equality.

These solutions to moves other than 1. ... e5 and 1. ... c5 generally fulfill their purpose well without being too demanding. In a few instances both authors can't resist committing to entertaining but forcing lines that aren't very flexible. In those cases, if Black is well-prepared, it's difficult for White to create difficulties without risk. Perhaps that problem is simply in the nature of the modern game, and still more of an issue with 1. e4.

These two Chessable courses are advertised as “recommended for intermediate and advanced players.” That seems right, since they are too advanced for beginners and not always well suited for the professional player. I think that players in the 2000-2400 range could find much of the analysis useful, however, with the proviso that they will only want to use selected lines and have alternatives so as not to become an easy target.

Chessable products can be purchased with or without the full-length video. If you buy the MoveTrainer course with the free video, which is much shorter than the full-length version, you still get all the moves in the repertoire with exercises and sample games, but only a very limited amount of direct guidance and explanation from the instructor.

This saves money, and it's all you might need if your main purpose is to see what moves are recommended. For these two courses, however, the full-length videos have a great deal to offer. Seeing all of these complex lines played out on the screen makes them easier to understand and learn.

Both presenters take a great deal of time explaining weaker alternatives and Rozman emphasizes which parts need to be memorized, with useful recaps. His pace can be rather frenetic, because he wants to leave no stone unturned.

By contrast, Kraai presents the concrete continuations more slowly and in somewhat less detail, but also discusses the reasoning behind the moves as they're presented, with an emphasis on pawn structure. He is more concerned with giving the reader a grasp upon the position than covering all the bases. Both courses can teach the developing player a great deal, while providing some serious weapons for practical use. ♠

Kraai, Jesse. ChessDojo's 1. e4 Repertoire for White. 24,167 words, 250 variations. 9:02 paid video, 1:07 free video. Available from Chessable.com.

Rozman, Levy. The GothamChess 1. e4 Repertoire. 175,812 words. 1085 trainable variations. 17:12 paid video, 2:03 free video. Available from Chessable.com.

NOW FOR ROOK ENDINGS

BY WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN

(continued from page 17)

Having forced the king away from the pawn, White still needs a way to give the king cover from the active black rook. The way to do this is by “building a bridge.”

2. Rd4

Here the rook can serve as a shield from checks.

Trying to win straightforwardly with 2. Kc7 fails as the rook can check the king indefinitely, i.e., 2. ... Rc2+ 3. Kb6 Rb2+ 4. Kc6 Rc2+ 5. Kb5 Rb2+ and the king cannot separate from the pawn. (Note that the black rook is more than three squares / ranks from the white king!) If this happens in your game, don't worry: you can always go back to b8 and restart the winning method!

2. ... Ra1

If Black attacks the rook with 2. ... Ke5 White can play 3. Rc4 and grab control of the c-file.



POSITION AFTER 3. Rc4

The winning method now is 3. ... Kd5 4. Rc1 Rf2 5. Ra1! taking control of the a-file. The king will go to a8 and the pawn will promote.

3. Kc7 Rc1+ 4. Kb6 Rb1+ 5. Kc6 Rc1+
Or 5. ... Ke5 6. Rd5+ Ke4 7. Rb5.

6. Kb5 Rb1+ 7. Rb4

The bridge is built, and the rook blocks the checks. Promotion cannot be stopped.

One benefit to knowing these theoretical positions is that it assists with your decision making, as you will begin to recognize which positions to avoid and which to strive for.

We'll continue with more rook and pawn versus rook positions next month. In the meantime, practice what you have learned! ♠

MAKE YOUR MOVE

BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM VARIOUS ONLINE and over-the-board events in July 2023.

The puzzles start from easy and gradually move toward being 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 unsuccessful, play through the solution, but return to the puzzle in one or two weeks to see if you can now solve it. That way you gradually expand your tactical vision, and it will be more likely that you will spot tactics as they occur in your own games. Whatever you do, do not use an engine to solve the puzzles. You will only cheat yourself out of improving your game. Solutions are on page 63. ♠

TACTIC 1.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 2.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 3.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 4.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 5.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 6.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 7.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 8.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



WHITE TO MOVE

Position 1: NO ROOM TO ESCAPE

Position 2: BREAK THAT WALL

Position 3: HER MAJESTY IN PERIL

Position 4: TRAPPED MAJESTY

Position 5: BRUTE FORCE

Position 6: PRECISE MOBILIZATION

Position 7: DIRECT, THREAT-BY-THREAT

Position 8: OPEN FILES

Position 9: OBVIOUS START, AND THEN?

TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Board authorizes a temporary change in the US Chess Grand Prix (GP) rules for the period March 4, 2020 through September 30, 2023 out of concern for the unforeseeable impacts the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) could have on participation in GP events. The change allows organizers with guaranteed prize funds to change the status of their prize fund without first seeking US Chess permission to make the change. More specifically, organizers who have announced "XXXX in Guaranteed prizes" (or similar words) for their GP events shall be allowed to re-state their prize funds in their publicity as "XXXX in Projected prizes based on ### players," where ### represents the number of players in last year's event rounded to the nearest five players. For new GP events lacking historical attendance data, the organizer shall specify a "based on" number of players as part of the Projected Prize Fund language in their publicity. This decision includes all GP tournaments that already have been advertised in Chess Life. For any GP events being publicly advertised (whether by TLA, another website, flyers, emails, social media, etc.), organizers shall take all necessary steps to ensure their revised pre-tournament announcements call attention to this change in prize fund status and provide the appropriate "Projected based on XXX players" in the language of their updated publicity. US Chess asks that the chess community support this temporary change in the spirit that it is intended. The Executive Board shall revisit this matter as necessary.

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 end of each TLA.

Nationals

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

2023 U.S. Class Championship SEPTEMBER 22-24, 2023, CALIFORNIA, SOUTHERN

Event site: Sonesta LAX Address: 5985 W Century Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90045 Overall prize fund: \$25,100 b/297 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: BayAreaChess Email: events@bayareachess.com Phone: 408.409.6596 (voicemail/text only) Website: <http://bayareachess.com/usclass> TLA ID: 38947

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • HERITAGE EVENT

2023 U.S. Armed Forces Open Chess Championship OCTOBER 7-9, 2023, VIRGINIA

Event site: Washington Dulles Airport Marriott Address: 45020 Aviation Dr., Dulles, VA 20166 Overall prize fund: Trophies GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: John F. Farrell, USMC (Ret.) Email: john.f.farrell1@usmc.mil Phone: n/a Website: <http://www.vachess.org> TLA ID: 39368

Grand Prix

The Grand Prix continues in 2023. For information visit new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program

GRAND PRIX

Charm City Chess Club 2023 Fall Action Tournament

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023, MARYLAND
Event site: The DoubleTree Hilton Hotel Address: 4 W University Parkway, Baltimore, MD 21218 Overall prize

fund: see TLA GP Points: 6 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Alan Horowitz Email: charcitychess@gmail.com Phone: 917.573.7575 Website: n/a TLA ID: 39135

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2023 Peter P. Lahde Tennessee Open SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2023, TENNESSEE

Event site: UTK Student Union Address: 1502 Cumberland Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37996 Overall prize fund: \$4,000 GP Points: 15 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Danny Mullinax Email: dcmullinax@gmail.com Phone: 865.292.9701 Website: <https://tnchess.us> TLA ID: 38862

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2023 PA State Game/60 Championship SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2023, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: William Pitt Union, Univ. of Pittsburgh Address: 5th Ave. & Bigelow Blvd., Pittsburgh PA 15213 Overall prize fund: \$695 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.pscfchess.org/clearinghouse/> TLA ID: 38401

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Columbia Tunnelvision XII SEPTEMBER 16, 2023, SOUTH CAROLINA

Event site: First Church of the Nazarene Address: 901 St Andrews Rd, Columbia, SC 29210 Overall prize fund: \$1,000 gtd GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Columbia Chess Club Email: info@columbiachess.org Phone: 803.569.0938 Website: <https://columbiatunnelvision.com> TLA ID: 38151

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

9th annual Central New York Open SEPTEMBER 22-24, 2023, NEW YORK

Event site: Quality Inn & Suites Fairgrounds Address: 100 Farrell Road, Syracuse, NY 13209 Overall

prize fund: \$5,000 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: director@chess.us Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 38561

GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

31st David Zofchak Memorial Open SEPTEMBER 23-24, 2023, VIRGINIA

Event site: Sleep Inn Lake Wright Address: 1521 Premium Outlets Blvd, Norfolk, VA 23502 Overall prize fund: \$3,750 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Christina Schweiss Email: cschweiss2@gmail.com Phone: 757.535.3880 Website: <https://hrchessclub.org/> TLA ID: 39213

GRAND PRIX

CFCC 2023 Autumn Open & Scholastic SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 1, 2023, FLORIDA

Event site: Holiday Inn at Lake Buena Vista Address: 13351 State Road 535 Orlando, FL 32821 Overall prize fund: \$9,000 GP Points: 50 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Larry Storch Email: larrystorch8@gmail.com Phone: 407-312-6237 Website: <https://www.centralflchess.org> TLA ID: 38641

GRAND PRIX

5th Annual LVCA Ruben Shocron Memorial \$1050 Gtd. (2 Sections) SEPTEMBER 30, 2023, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: College Hill Moravian Church Address: 72 W. Laurel St, Bethlehem, PA 18018 Overall prize fund: \$1,050 GP Points: 15 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Bruce R Davis Sr Email: bdavis@lehighvalleychessclub.org Phone: 484.866.3045 Website: <http://www.lehighvalleychessclub.org/> TLA ID: 38850

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2023 Skyline Open

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023, VIRGINIA

Event site: Washington Dulles Airport Marriott Address: 45020 Aviation Dr., Dulles, VA 20166 Overall prize fund: \$12,500 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Anand Dommallapati Email: bsa2023@capitalareachess.com Phone: 703.627.5314 Website: <https://www.capitalareachess.com/Skyline-Open> TLA ID: 38992

HERITAGE EVENT • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • GRAND PRIX

84th Klaus Pohl Memorial South Carolina State Championships 2023 OCTOBER 6-8, 2023, SOUTH CAROLINA

Event site: Hilton Garden Inn Columbia/Harborson Address: 434 Columbian Dr., Columbia, SC 29212 Overall prize fund: see TLA GP Points: 6 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Ernest E. Nix, Jr. Email: eenix@yahoo.com Phone: 864.905.2406 Website: <https://www.schess.org/> TLA ID: 39249

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Harold Steen Memorial OCTOBER 6-8, 2023, MICHIGAN

Event site: Crowne Plaza Address: 1500 N. Opdyke Rd., Auburn Hills, MI 48326 Overall prize fund: \$6,000 - 2/3 gtd. GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible:

Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mandell Chess Club Email: eman.1943@aol.com Phone: 248-635-2375 Website: <http://www.tla-id.com> TLA ID: 39177

HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIX

40th Annual Reno Western States Open OCTOBER 6-8, 2023, NEVADA

Event site: Circus Circus Reno Hotel Casino Address: 500 N. Sierra Street, Reno, NV 89503 Overall prize fund: \$27,500 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Jerome V. Weikel Email: wackyjk@aol.com Phone: 775-747-1405 Website: <http://www.renochess.org> TLA ID: 38535

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

12th annual Hartford Open OCTOBER 6-8, 2023, CONNECTICUT

Event site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel at Bradley Airport Address: 1 Bradley Airport (visible at airport entrance), Windsor Locks CT 06096 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 60 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: director@chess.us Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 38519

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

31st annual Midwest Class Championships OCTOBER 6-8, 2023, 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: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: director@chess.us Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 38522

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

9th annual Midwest Class Blitz OCTOBER 7, 2023, ILLINOIS

Event site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel Address: 601 North Milwaukee Ave., Wheeling, IL 60090 Overall prize fund: \$500 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: director@chess.us Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 39350

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Gulf Coast October Open, A National Chess Day Event OCTOBER 13-15, 2023, FLORIDA

Event site: Embassy Suites Hotel Address: 10450 Corkscrew Commons Drive, Estero, FL 33928 Overall prize fund: \$8,500 GP Points: 40 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Jon Haskel Email: jon@bocachess.com Phone: 561-302-4377 Website: <http://www.bocachess.com> TLA ID: 39333

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Columbia Tunnelvision XIII OCTOBER 14, 2023, SOUTH CAROLINA

Event site: First Church of the Nazarene Address: 901 St Andrews Rd, Columbia, SC 29210 Overall prize fund: \$1,000 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N

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.

Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Columbia Chess Club Email: info@columbiachess.org Phone: 8035690938 Website: https://columbiatunnelvision.com/tunnelvision-xiii-oct2023 TLA ID: 39263

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2023 Illinois Quick Chess Championship
OCTOBER 14, 2023, ILLINOIS

Event site: Joliet Junior College Address: 1215 Houbolt Rd, Building J lower floor, Joliet, IL 60431 Overall prize fund: \$2,000 b/100 pd entries GP Points: 6 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Joshua Flores Email: squarehopper@gmail.com Phone: 8156505960 Website: https://www.facebook.com/groups/squarehopperchess TLA ID: 39332

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

13th annual Washington Chess Congress

OCTOBER 20-22, 2023, VIRGINIA
Event site: Sheraton Reston Hotel Address: 11810 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston VA 20191 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: director@chess.us Website: http://www.chessevents.us TLA ID: 38550

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

8th annual Washington Chess Congress Blitz

OCTOBER 21, 2023, VIRGINIA
Event site: Sheraton Reston Hotel Address: 11810 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston VA 20191 Overall prize fund: \$500 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: director@chess.us Website: http://www.chessevents.us TLA ID: 39362

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2023 PA State Action Chess Championship

OCTOBER 21, 2023, 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: dmartinak.tom_m@hotmail.com Phone: 412-908-0286 Website: http://www.pscchess.org/clearinghouse TLA ID: 39230

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

27th annual Eastern Chess Congress
OCTOBER 27-29, 2023, 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: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: director@chess.us Website: http://www.chessevents.us TLA ID: 38532

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

10th annual Eastern Chess Congress Blitz

OCTOBER 28, 2023, NEW JERSEY
Event site: Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village Address: 201 Village Blvd, Princeton, NJ 08540 Overall prize fund: \$500 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: director@chess.us Website: http://www.chessevents.us TLA ID: 39378

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

18th annual Los Angeles Open
NOVEMBER 3-5, 2023, CALIFORNIA, SOUTHERN

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: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: director@chess.us Website: http://www.chessevents.us TLA ID: 38547

GRAND PRIX

2023 Dan Marble Memorial
NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023, CALIFORNIA, SOUTHERN

Event site: Bakersfield Racquet Club Address: 1660 Pine St, Bakersfield, CA 93301 Overall prize fund: \$5,000 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: John Marble Email: marblus@pacbell.net Phone: 661-421-8568 Website: http://dmmchessopen.com TLA ID: 39546

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

32nd annual Kings Island Open
NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023, OHIO

Event site: Embassy Suites Cincinnati NE Address: 4554 Lake Forest Dr, Blue Ash OH 45242 Overall prize fund: \$25,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: director@chess.us Website: http://www.chessevents.us TLA ID: 38563

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2023 PA State Game/15 Championship
NOVEMBER 11, 2023, 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: 39231

GRAND PRIX

Turkey Shoot

NOVEMBER 17-19, 2023, TEXAS

Event site: La Quinta by Wyndham San Antonio Riverwalk Address: 303 Blum Street, San Antonio, TX 78205 Overall prize fund: \$5,200 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Jesse Lozano Email: CompleteChess@gmail.com Phone: (210) 393-3056 Website: https://completechesseducation.com/event/turkey-shoot-2023/ TLA ID: 39443

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Columbia Tunnelvision XIV
NOVEMBER 18, 2023, SOUTH CAROLINA

Event site: First Church of the Nazarene Address: 901 St Andrews Rd, Columbia, SC 29210 Overall prize fund: \$1,000 gtd GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Columbia Chess Club Email: info@columbiachess.org Phone: 8035690938 Website: https://columbiatunnelvision.com/tunnelvision-xiv-nov-2023 TLA ID: 39264

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

58th American Open

NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023, CALIFORNIA, S.

Event site: Hyatt Regency Orange County Address: 11999 Harbor Boulevard, Garden Grove, CA 92840 Overall prize fund: See TLA GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: ChessPalace Email: play@americanopen.org Phone: 714-643-8828 Website: https://americanopen.org TLA ID: 38900

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

54th annual National Chess Congress

NOVEMBER 24-26, 2023, PHILADELPHIA

Event site: Loews Hotel Address: 1200 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 Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: director@chess.us Website: http://www.chessevents.us TLA ID: 38941

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Columbia Tunnelvision XV

DECEMBER 16, 2023, SOUTH CAROLINA

Event site: First Church of the Nazarene Address: 901 St Andrews Rd, Columbia, SC 29210 Overall prize fund: \$1,000 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Columbia Chess Club Email: info@

Continental Chess OTB Tournament Schedule

See www.chessevents.us for details, possible changes, other events

CENTRAL NEW YORK OPEN, Sept 22-24, Quality Inn Fairgrounds, Syracuse. \$5,000 guaranteed prizes.

MIDWEST CLASS, Oct 6-8, Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel. \$20,000 guaranteed prizes.

HARTFORD OPEN, Oct 6-8, Sheraton Hartford Hotel at Bradley Airport. \$10,000 guaranteed prizes.

WASHINGTON CHESS CONGRESS, Oct 20-22, Sheraton Reston Hotel, near Washington, DC. \$20,000 guaranteed prizes.

EASTERN CHESS CONGRESS, Oct 27-29, Westin at Forrestal Village, Princeton, NJ. \$25,000 guaranteed prizes.

LOS ANGELES OPEN, Nov 3-5, Hilton Orange County Airport, Irvine. \$20,000 guaranteed prizes.

KINGS ISLAND OPEN, Nov 10-12, Embassy Suites Cincinnati Northeast, Blue Ash, Ohio. \$25,000 guaranteed prizes.

NATIONAL CHESS CONGRESS, Nov 24-26, Loews Philadelphia. 6 rounds, \$45,000 guaranteed.

EASTERN OPEN, Dec 26-29, Hyatt Regency Crystal City, near DC. 8 rounds, \$30,000 guaranteed.

NORTH AMERICAN OPEN, Dec 26-30, Horseshoe Las Vegas. Open 9 rounds, others 7 rounds. \$130,000 guaranteed prizes, norms possible.

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.

columbiachess.org Phone: 8035690938 Web-site: <https://columbiatunnelvision.com/tunnelvision-xv-dec-2023> TLA ID: 39265

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

33rd annual North American Open
DECEMBER 26-30, 2023, 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: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [7027351234](tel:7027351234) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 38602

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

48th annual Eastern Open
DECEMBER 26-29, 2023, NEVADA
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: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [7027351234](tel:7027351234) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 39208

GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2023 World Chess Festival
DECEMBER 28-31, 2023, HAWAII
Event site: Neal Blaisdell Center Address: 777 Ward Avenue, Honolulu, HI 90630 Overall prize fund: \$5,000 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Joe Hanley Email: hanleychessacademy@gmail.com Phone: [8085331234](tel:8085331234)

714 925 3195 Website: <http://hanleychessacademy.com/2023WCF.html> TLA ID: 38682

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

32nd annual North American Blitz
DECEMBER 29, 2023, NEVADA
Event site: Horseshoe Casino Resort (formerly Bally's) Address: 3645 Las Vegas Blvd. S, Las Vegas, NV 89103 Overall prize fund: \$3,000 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [7027351234](tel:7027351234) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 39363

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

12th annual Boston Chess Congress
JANUARY 5-7, 2024, 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 Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [7027351234](tel:7027351234) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 39219

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

56th annual Liberty Bell Open
JANUARY 12-15, 2024, PHILADELPHIA
Event site: Sonesta Hotel Address: 1800 Market St, Philadelphia 19103 Overall prize fund: \$25,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [7027351234](tel:7027351234) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 39349

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

15th annual Golden State Open
JANUARY 12-15, 2024, CALIFORNIA, NORTHERN
Event site: Embassy Suites San Rafael Marin County Address: 101 McInnis Pkwy, San Rafael CA 94903 Overall prize fund: \$25,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [7027351234](tel:7027351234) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 39226

Regional

ALABAMA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

ALASKA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 14, 2023
Fairbanks National Chess Day Tournament

Event site: University of Alaska, Wood Center, Carol Brown Ballroom Address: 1731 S Chandalar, Fairbanks, AK 99709 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Fairbanks Chess Club Email: fairbankschessclub@gmail.com Phone: [9074521234](tel:9074521234) Website: <https://www.facebook.com/ChessFairbanks> TLA ID: 39675

AMERICAN SAMOA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

ARIZONA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix

NOVEMBER 3-5, 2023

18th annual Los Angeles Open (CA-S)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023

58th American Open (CA-S)
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023

33rd annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 29, 2023

32nd annual North American Blitz (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 12-15, 2024

15th annual Golden State Open (CA-N)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

ARKANSAS

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 19, 2021-ONGOING
PCC LBX Hangar Sunday Action
Event site: LBX Hangar Building (inside and out) Address: 4150 McGowan St, Long Beach CA 90808 Overall prize fund: 80% of total entry fee GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency

54th annual NATIONAL CHESS CONGRESS

6 rounds, Nov 24-26 or 25-26, Loews Philadelphia Hotel
\$45,000 prize fund guaranteed, 20 plaques, free entries!

6 rounds, 40/80, SD/30, d30 (2-day option, rds 1-3 G/40 d10). U800 & U600 sections play separate 2-day schedule only, 11/25-26, G/40 d10. Top 3 sections are FIDE rated.

Loews Philadelphia Hotel, 1200 Market St, Philadelphia PA 19107. Hotel rates \$118-118-143, use link at chessevents.us, reserve by 11/10.

In 10 sections (see peakrating.us):
Premier Section: Open to 2000/over. Prizes \$4000-2400-1200-800-500, clear/tiebreak win \$200, USCF U2400 \$2000-1000. 200 GPP.
U2200, U2000: Each \$2500-1300-700-500-300.

U1800: \$2400-1200-600-400-300.

U1600: \$2000-1000-600-400-300.

U1400: \$1600-800-500-300-200.

U1200: \$1400-700-400-300-200.

U1000: \$1200-600-400-300-200.

U800, U600: Each, plaques to top 10. CCA free entry prizes to top 4.

Unrated prize limits: U1000 \$200, U1200 \$300, U1400 \$400, U1600 \$500, U1800 \$600, U2000 \$700.

Mixed doubles prizes: Best male-female 2-player combined score among all sections, averaging under 2200: \$2000-1000-600-400. May enter different sections, register before both begin round 2, teams including an unrated limited to \$400.

Unofficial or Online Regular ratings usually used if otherwise unrated.

Cannot play below USCF Online Regular rating minus 100 points.

Top 8 sections entry fee: \$138 online at chessaction.com by 11/22, \$160 at site, or online until 1 hour before round 1.

U800, U600 sections entry fee: \$52 online by 11/22, \$70 at site or online until 9 am 11/25.

All: No checks at site, credit cards OK. Re-entry (except Premier) \$60.

Special USCF membership with magazine if paid online with entry fee: Adult \$43, Young Adult \$26, Youth \$19. USCF membership required.

3-day schedule: Reg. Fri to 11 am, rds Fri 12 & 6, Sat 12 & 6, Sun 10 & 3:30.

2-day U1000/up schedule: Reg Sat to 9 am, rds Sat 10, 12:45, 3:30 & 6; Sun 10 & 3:30.

2-day U800 & U600 sections: Reg Sat to 9 am, rds 10, 12:45 & 3:30 each day.

Half point byes OK all rds, limit 3, must commit before rd 3.

Bring set, board, clock if possible—none supplied.

Cellphones: No possession during play; in bag near your table OK.

Parking: Loews valet 25% off regular (about \$38). Gateway Gatage, 3/5 mile away at 1540 Spring St, about \$11/day Sat & Sun, \$28 other days.

Entry: chessaction.com. No mailed entries. \$15 charge for refunds. Entries posted at chessaction.com (click "entry list" after entering).

Blitz tournament Sat 10:30 pm, enter by 10 pm.

restriction: N Organizer: John Tan Email: paramountchessclub@gmail.com Phone: 3107356871 Website: n/a TLAID: 31701

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 28, 2023
9th Annual USC Invitational Chess Tournament
Event site: University of Southern California, Michelson Center 101 & 102 Address: 1002 Childs Way, Los Angeles, CA 90089 Overall prize fund: 70% of collected GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Ben Eubanks Email: ben.eubanks@alumni.usc.edu Phone: (310) 968-4459 Website: n/a TLAID: 39206

NOVEMBER 3-5, 2023
18th annual Los Angeles Open (CA-S)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023
2023 Dan Marble Memorial (CA-S)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023
58th American Open (CA-S)
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 29, 2023
32nd annual North American Blitz (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 12-15, 2024
15th annual Golden State Open (CA-N)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

COLORADO

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023
33rd annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

CONNECTICUT

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023
12th annual Hartford Open (CT)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 5-7, 2024
12th annual Boston Chess Congress (MA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DELAWARE

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023
Charm City Chess Club 2023 Fall Action Tournament (MD)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

DIST. OF COLUMBIA

SEPTEMBER 9, 2023
2023 Emory Tate Prize for American Scholastic Chess
Event site: The Willard Office Building Address: 1455 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 1125, Washington, DC 20004 Overall prize fund: \$900 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Malik F. Johnson Email: iconchess@aol.com Phone: 2025578266 Website: <https://caissachess.net/online-registration/index/2858> TLAID: 38864

SEPTEMBER 9, 2023
2023 Emory Tate World Series of Blitz Skills Challenge
Event site: The Willard Office Building Address:

1455 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 1125, Washington, DC 20004 Overall prize fund: TBD GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Malik F. Johnson Email: iconchess@aol.com Phone: 2025578266 Website: <https://caissachess.net/online-registration/index/2858> TLAID: 38863

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

FLORIDA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 14, 2023
2023 FSCL National Chess Day
Event site: Hialeah Gardens High School Address: 11700 Hialeah Gardens Blvd, Hialeah Gardens, FL 33018 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Florida Scholastic Chess League (FSCL) Email: tejada@fscchess.org Phone: 786 755 3725 Website: <https://www.fscchess.org> TLAID: 39366

GEORGIA

APRIL 8, 2023-ONGOING MONTHLY
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: <https://mythinkchess.com/> TLAID: 37216

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 13-15, 2023
2023 "Thad Rogers Georgia Class Championships"
Event site: The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel - Northlake Address: 4156 LaVista Road, Tucker, GA 30084 Overall prize fund: \$8,000 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Georgia Chess Association Email: gaclass@georgiachess.org Phone: 770.744.8595 Website: <http://www.georgiachess.org> TLAID: 39297

OCTOBER 13-15, 2023
Gulf Coast October Open, A National Chess Day Event (FL)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 14, 2023
2023 "Georgia Class Championships Scholastics"
Event site: The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel - Northlake Address: 4156 LaVista Road, Tucker, GA 30084 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Georgia Chess Association Email: gastatechamp@georgiachess.org Phone: 770.744.8595 Website: <http://www.georgiachess.org> TLAID: 39298

GUAM

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

HAWAII

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

IDAHO

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

ILLINOIS

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023
Harold Steen Memorial (MI)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023
31st annual Midwest Class Championships (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 7, 2023
9th annual Midwest Class Blitz (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 13-15, 2023
Gulf Coast October Open, A National Chess Day Event (FL)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023
32nd annual Kings Island Open (OH)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023
33rd annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

INDIANA

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 1, 2023
2023 Golden Buckeye Senior Open & Adult U1800 (OH)
See Ohio.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023
31st annual Midwest Class Championships (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023
Harold Steen Memorial (MI)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 14, 2023
2023 Illinois Quick Chess Championship (IL)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023
32nd annual Kings Island Open (OH)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

IOWA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

KANSAS

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

KENTUCKY

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 1, 2023
2023 Golden Buckeye Senior Open & Adult U1800 (OH)
See Ohio.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023
32nd annual Kings Island Open (OH)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

LOUISIANA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MAINE

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
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.

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023
Charm City Chess Club 2023 Fall Action Tournament (MD)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 13-15, 2023
Gulf Coast October Open, A National Chess Day Event (FL)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 14, 2023
MCA Rockville Quads for K-12
Event site: Bender Jewish Community Center Address: 6125 Montrose Rd, Rockville, MD 20852 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Magnus Chess Academy Email: divyanshu@chessacademy.com Phone: n/a Website: <https://chessacademy.com/tournaments> TLAID: 39023

OCTOBER 20-22, 2023
13th annual Washington Chess Congress (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 27-29, 2023
27th annual Eastern Chess Congress (NJ)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 24-26, 2023
54th annual National Chess Congress (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2023
48th annual Eastern Open (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 5-7, 2024
12th annual Boston Chess Congress (MA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 12-15, 2024
56th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MASSACHUSETTS

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023
2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023
12th annual Hartford Open (CT)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

REGIONALS
OCTOBER 21, 2023
1st Pioneer Valley Autumn Class
Event site: St. John's Lutheran Church Address:

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.

60 Broad Street, Westfield, MA 01085 Overall prize fund: \$1,000 prizes based on 30 entries GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Western Massachusetts Chess Association Email: dgbompastore@gmail.com Phone: 4133560303 Website: <http://www.wmass-chess.us/> TLA ID: 38674

JANUARY 5-7, 2024

12th annual Boston Chess Congress (MA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MICHIGAN

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

2023 Michigan Women's Championship & Men's Side Event

Event site: Twin Knights Gaming Address: 4955 Rochester Rd, Troy, MI, 48065 Overall prize fund: see TLA GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Michigan Chess Association Email: jeffchess64@gmail.com Phone: 810-955-7271 Website: <https://www.michess.org/> TLA ID: 39310

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 1, 2023

2023 Golden Buckeye Senior Open & Adult U1800 (OH)

See Ohio.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

Harold Steen Memorial (MI)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 14, 2023

2023 Illinois Quick Chess Championship (IL)

See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

OCTOBER 14, 2023

2023 Michigan Scholastic Club Championships

Event site: Lansing Center Address: 4333 E Michigan Ave, Lansing, MI 48933 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Michigan Chess Association Email: jeffchess64@gmail.com Phone: 810-955-7271 Website: <https://www.michess.org/> TLA ID: 39019

NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023

32nd annual Kings Island Open (OH)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MINNESOTA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MISSISSIPPI

SEPTEMBER 23, 2023

MS Action Championship

Event site: Franklin Chess Center Address: 63 Main Street, Meadville, MS 39653 Overall prize fund: 75% of entry fees returned as prizes GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mark Nicholas Email: mark@mcchess.org Phone: 6156313876 Website: <https://www.mcchess.org> TLA ID: 39257

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MISSOURI

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MONTANA

SEPTEMBER 16-17, 2023

Big Sky Country Open

Event site: Red Lion Hotel Address: 20 North Main Street, Kalispell, MT 59901 Overall prize fund: Cash prizes based on entries GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Montana Chess Association Email: gl.solson@yahoo.com Phone: 406-253-3883 Website: www.montanachess.org TLA ID: 38919

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 1, 2023

2023 Golden Buckeye Senior Open & Adult U1800 (OH)

See Ohio.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 11-12, 2023

41st Missoula Turkey Open

Event site: Holiday Inn Missoula Downtown Address: 200 S Pattee St, Missoula, MT 59802 Overall prize fund: \$2,000 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Eric Walthall Email: eric.m.walthall@gmail.com Phone: 4068309524 Website: <https://missoulachess.com/> TLA ID: 38320

NEBRASKA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

NEVADA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 3-5, 2023

18th annual Los Angeles Open (CA-S)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023

58th American Open (CA-S)
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023

33rd annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 29, 2023

32nd annual North American Blitz (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 12-15, 2024

15th annual Golden State Open (CA-N)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

NEW JERSEY

JANUARY 14-DECEMBER 30, 2023

Hamilton Chess Club Quads

Dates: Feb. 11, Mar. 18, Apr. 29, May 20, Jun. 3, Aug. 19, Sep. 30, Oct. 21, Nov. 18, Dec. 30. Event site: Switlik Park Pavilion Address: Fischer Place/Joe Dimaggio Drive, Hamilton, NJ 08610 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Edward Sytnik Email: edmendou@aol.com Phone: 609-758-2326 Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/hamiltonchessclub/> TLA ID: 35704

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

12th annual Hartford Open (CT)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 13-15, 2023

Gulf Coast October Open, A National Chess Day Event (FL)

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 20-22, 2023

13th annual Washington Chess Congress (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 27-29, 2023

27th annual Eastern Chess Congress (NJ)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 28, 2023

10th annual Eastern Chess Congress Blitz (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 19, 2023

2023 New Jersey Grade School Championship

Event site: Brookdale Community College Address: Lot #7, Arena Dr., Lincroft, NJ 07738 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Alessandro De Marchi-Blumstein Email: tournaments.njsct@gmail.com Phone: n/a Website: <http://www.njsct.org> TLA ID: 38879

NOVEMBER 24-26, 2023

54th annual National Chess Congress (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2023

48th annual Eastern Open (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 5-7, 2024

12th annual Boston Chess Congress (MA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 12-15, 2024

56th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW MEXICO

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 1, 2023

2023 Golden Buckeye Senior Open & Adult U1800 (OH)

See Ohio.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

12th annual Hartford Open (CT)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 13-15, 2023

Gulf Coast October Open, A National Chess Day Event (FL)

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 20-22, 2023

13th annual Washington Chess Congress (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 27-29, 2023

27th annual Eastern Chess Congress (NJ)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 28, 2023

10th annual Eastern Chess Congress Blitz (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

The 40th!! Annual Reno-Western States Open

An American Classic & Heritage Event!

Oct 6-8 & Oct 7-8 (3-day & 2-day schedules)

6SS; 6 Sect; Open-FIDE Rated; A Weikel Tourney

NEW LOCATION: CIRCUS CIRCUS HOTEL/CASINO, RENO, NV

PRIZE FUND \$27,500 (b/275) Gtd. \$17,000

A great tournament - Yes!... But so much more...

IM John Donaldson: "A Weikel Tournament is like a chess festival!"

Just Look! Wed.: GM Kudrin Clock Simul/Analysis! (only \$30)

Thu.: 6-7:15P Lecture by GM Nick de Firmian (FREE)

7:30P GM Khachiyan - Simul (\$20); 7:30P Blitz Tourney (\$25)

Sat.: 3-4:30P GM de Firmian FREE Game/Position Analysis

Plus: Trophies, Sets & boards provided, Wall charts,

5 Demo boards, Entry under \$190!, and site of

tourney is located within a 3-hotel/casino complex

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Player: "I've played all over the US: this is the best organized chess tournament I've seen."

INFO: Email wackykyk@aol.com or Web: www.renochess.org

SEE TLA on page **54**

NOVEMBER 24-26, 2023

54th annual National Chess Congress (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2023

48th annual Eastern Open (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 5-7, 2024

12th annual Boston Chess Congress (MA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 12-15, 2024

56th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

📍 NORTH CAROLINA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

📍 NORTH DAKOTA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

📍 N. MARIANA ISLANDS

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

📍 OHIO

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 1, 2023

2023 Golden Buckeye Senior Open & Adult U1800

Event site: Salt Fork State Park Lodge Address: 14755 Cadiz Rd, Lore City, OH 43755 Overall prize fund: Trophies GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Grant Neilley Email: grant@neilley.com Phone: 6143141102 Website: <http://www.neilley.com/chess> TLA ID: 39242

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

Harold Steen Memorial (MI)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 14, 2023

2023 Illinois Quick Chess Championship (IL)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023

32nd annual Kings Island Open (OH)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

📍 OKLAHOMA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

📍 OREGON

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023

58th American Open (CA-S)
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

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

Charm City Chess Club 2023 Fall Action Tournament (MD)
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 1, 2023

2023 Golden Buckeye Senior Open & Adult U1800 (OH)
See Ohio.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

Harold Steen Memorial (MI)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 13-15, 2023

Gulf Coast October Open, A National Chess Day Event (FL)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 27-29, 2023

27th annual Eastern Chess Congress (NJ)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 28, 2023

10th annual Eastern Chess Congress Blitz (NJ)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 24-26, 2023

54th annual National Chess Congress (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2023

48th annual Eastern Open (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 12-15, 2024

56th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

📍 PUERTO RICO

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

📍 RHODE ISLAND

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 20-22, 2023

13th annual Washington Chess Congress (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

📍 SOUTH CAROLINA

SEPTEMBER 16, 2023

Columbia Tunnelvision XII (SC)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 14, 2023

Columbia Tunnelvision XIII (SC)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 18, 2023

Columbia Tunnelvision XIV (SC)
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 16, 2023

Columbia Tunnelvision XV (SC)
See Grand Prix.

📍 SOUTH DAKOTA

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

OCTOBER 14-15, 2023

South Dakota Closed

Event site: Hy Vee Grocery Store Address: 3000 S Minnesota Ave, Sioux Falls, SD 57105 Overall prize fund: Trophies, medals GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: Y Organizer: South Dakota Chess Association Email: terryandjillikens@gmail.com Phone: cell; 605-593-7337, main phone; 605-753-5464 Website: n/a TLA ID: 39660

📍 TENNESSEE

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2023

2023 Peter P. Lahde Tennessee Open
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

📍 TEXAS

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023

58th American Open (CA-S)
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023

33rd annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

📍 U.S. MINOR OL ISLS.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

📍 UTAH

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023

33rd annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

📍 VERMONT

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

📍 VIRGIN ISLANDS, U.S.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

📍 VIRGINIA

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

Charm City Chess Club 2023 Fall Action Tournament (MD)
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 1, 2023

2023 Golden Buckeye Senior Open & Adult U1800 (OH)
See Ohio.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 13-15, 2023

Gulf Coast October Open, A National Chess Day Event (FL)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 20-22, 2023

13th annual Washington Chess Congress (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 21, 2023

8th annual Washington Chess Congress Blitz (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 27-29, 2023

27th annual Eastern Chess Congress (NJ)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 24-26, 2023

54th annual National Chess Congress (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2023

48th annual Eastern Open (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

📍 WASHINGTON

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023

58th American Open (CA-S)
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023

33rd annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 12-15, 2024

15th annual Golden State Open (CA-N)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

📍 WEST VIRGINIA

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

Charm City Chess Club 2023 Fall Action Tournament (MD)
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 1, 2023

2023 Golden Buckeye Senior Open & Adult U1800 (OH)
See Ohio.

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 12-15, 2024

56th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

📍 WISCONSIN

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

31st annual Midwest Class Championships (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

Harold Steen Memorial (MI)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 14, 2023

2023 Illinois Quick Chess Championship (IL)
See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

NOVEMBER 4-5, 2023

2023-2024 Wisconsin Junior Open

Event site: Gruenhagen Conference Center, UW-Oshkosh Address: 208 Osceola Street, Oshkosh, WI 54901 Overall prize fund: Trophies GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mike Nietman Email: mike.nietman@charter.net Phone: 16084678510 Website: <https://www.wisconsinchess.org/> TLA ID: 39077

NOVEMBER 4-5, 2023

WCA Veterans' Tournament

Event site: Gruenhagen Conference Center, UW-Oshkosh Address: 208 Osceola Street, Oshkosh, WI 54901 Overall prize fund: \$875 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rat-

ed: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mike Nietman Email: mike.nietman@charter.net Phone: 16084678510 Website: <https://www.uschess.org/> TLA ID: 39079

WYOMING

OCTOBER 5-9, 2023

2023 Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

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US CHESS



MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION PROGRAM

(MAP)

US Chess gratefully acknowledges the support of our our Affiliates and Members and offers congratulations to these 2021 MAP Winners. Look for an upcoming article about the winners in Chess Life.

Name	State	Count	Name	State	Count	Name	State	Count
Overall Affiliate Standings			State Chapter Affiliate Standings			Scholastic and Youth Membership Standings		
CONTINENTAL CHESS ASSOC	NY	1,666	WASHINGTON CHESS FEDERATION	WA	269	CONTINENTAL CHESS ASSOC	NY	483
BAY AREA CHESS	CA	332	MICHIGAN CHESS ASSOCIATION	MI	113	BAY AREA CHESS	CA	295
CHESS CLUB AND SCHOLASTIC CTR	MO	279	MINNESOTA STATE CHESS ASSOC	MN	44	WASHINGTON CHESS FEDERATION	WA	194
WASHINGTON CHESS FEDERATION	WA	269	MASSACHUSETTS CHESS ASSOC	MA	33	NEW ENGLAND CHESS SCHOOL	MA	157
CHESSPALACE	CA	218	IOWA STATE CHESS ASSOC	IA	29	CHESS CENTER OF NEW YORK	NY	143
NEW ENGLAND CHESS SCHOOL	MA	160	OREGON CHESS FEDERATION	OR	28	CHESSPALACE	CA	142
CHESS CENTER OF NEW YORK	NY	156	MARYLAND CHESS ASSOC	MD	27	CINCINNATI SCHOLASTIC CHESS	OH	112
BOCA RATON CHESS CLUB	FL	153	PENNSYLVANIA ST CHESS FED	PA	18	BOCA RATON CHESS CLUB	FL	108
SAN DIEGO CHESS CLUB	CA	151	MAINE CHESS ASSOCIATION	ME	17	CHESS CLUB AND SCHOLASTIC CTR	MO	96
ROCHESTER CHESS CENTER	NY	145	ARKANSAS CHESS ASSOCIATION	AR	14	HAMPTON ROADS CHESS ASSOC	VA	96

Small State Affiliate Standings			Adult Membership Standings			Member Standings		
ENDGAME CHESS	NM	25	CONTINENTAL CHESS ASSOC	NY	1,183	CARTER LARSON	NC	1
TOURNAMENT IN A BOX	NH	22	CHESS CLUB AND SCHOLASTIC CTR	MO	183			
KNIGHTS CHESS CLUB	NH	20	SAN DIEGO CHESS CLUB	CA	119			
MAINE CHESS ASSOCIATION	ME	17	ROCHESTER CHESS CENTER	NY	109			
LIKENS CHESS	SD	9	VEGAS CHESS FESTIVALS	NV	82			
HAWAII PHOENIX CHESS	HI	7	CHESSPALACE	CA	76			
WVSCA	WV	7	WASHINGTON CHESS FEDERATION	WA	71			
OMAHA CHESS COMMUNITY	NE	4	SOUTH MIAMI CHESS CLUB	FL	47			
HARRISON COUNTY CHESS CLUB	WV	4	TWIN KNIGHTS CHESS CLUB	MI	47			
NORTH DAKOTA CHESS ASSOC	ND	3	BOCA RATON CHESS CLUB	FL	45			
			DOWNRIVER CHESS CLUB	LA	45			



US CHESS

PCT GAIN STANDINGS			
State	Dec20	Dec21	PCT
DE	148	423	185.81
ND	64	130	103.13
MT	87	127	45.98
AR	193	274	41.97
SD	59	81	37.29
OK	358	482	34.64
WY	52	68	30.77
LA	409	511	24.94
IA	413	511	23.73
NE	221	273	23.53



Gold & Silver Affiliates



US CHESS would like to recognize and thank
all of our Affiliates for their commitment and hard work.

US CHESS GOLD AFFILIATES

Bay Area Chess

San Jose, CA
408-409-6596
www.bayareachess.com

Berkeley Chess School

Berkeley, CA
510-843-0150
www.berkeleychessschool.org

Capital Area Chess

Centreville VA
703-627-5314
www.capitalareachess.com

Caveman Chess, LLC

Park Ridge, IL
224-985-5244
www.cavemanchess.com

Charlotte Chess Center

Charlotte, NC
980-265-1156
<https://www.charlottechess-center.org/>

ChessNYC.com

New York, NY
212-475-8130
www.chessnyc.com

Continental Chess Association

Pelham, NY
201-347-2269
www.chesstour.com

Manasota Chess Center

Sarasota, FL
941-900-3296
www.manasotachess.org

Marshall Chess Club New York, NY

212-477-3716
www.marshallchessclub.org

New Millennium Chess LLC

New York, NY
212-475-8130
www.NewMillenniumChess.org

Ocean State Chess Association

Riverside, RI
401-212-1335
www.oceanstatechess.com

PaperClip Pairings

Brownsville, TX
956-621-0377
rrferrari@bisd.us

Sacred Heart Uni- versity Chess Club Fairfield, CT

203-365-4827
www.sacredheartclubsports.com/sports/Chess

Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis

St. Louis, MO
314-361-CHESS
www.saintlouischessclub.org

San Diego Chess Club San Diego, CA

619-752-4377
www.sandiegochessclub.org

Washington Chess Federation

Redmond, WA
206.769.3757
www.wachess.com

Williamsburg Tutoring.com

Brooklyn NY
www.WilliamsburgTutoring.com

US CHESS SILVER AFFILIATES

Chess Center of New York (NY)

www.chesscenter.cc

CHESS4u (GA)

770-939-5030

Dark Knight Chess Club (TX)

www.dkchess.com

En Passant Chess Club (TX)

td_edg@twc.com

Evangel Chess Club (AL)

www.evangelchurch.me

Jersey Shore HS Chess League (NJ)

shorehschessleague@yahoo.com

Little House of Chess, Inc. (NY)

littlehouseofchess.com

Long Island Chess Nuts (NY)

516-739-3907

Mechanics' Institute (CA)

www.milibrary.org/chess

Michigan Chess Association (MI)

www.michess.org

Oklahoma Chess Foundation (OK)

www.OCFchess.org

Regents School of Austin Chess Club (TX)

www.regentsaustin.org/chess

Rochester Chess Center (NY)

www.chessset.com

Sparta Chess Club (NJ)

www.spartachessclub.org

TLA CHESS (VA)

tla.chess.llc@gmail.com

For all information on becoming a Gold or Silver Affiliate, please visit <https://new.uschess.org/gold-and-silver-affiliates>.

CORRESPONDENCE CHESS

Check out these US Chess Rated Events!

7-Player Championship Events

2023 Golden Knights (Postal) | 2023 Electronic Knights (Email)

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:** \$25 per entry. Players can enter up to a maximum of 10 times per event. **PRIZES:** Prize fund of \$2300 based on 200 entries. \$10 correspondence chess gift certificate to players knocked out in Preliminary round.

7-Player Round Robins

Victor Palciauskas Tournament (ICCF Server)

FORMAT: Players play 6 games as single round robin, groupings based on ratings. **ENTRY FEE:** \$5 per entry. **PRIZES:** 1st place receives a signed certificate.

4-Player Quads

John W. Collins Memorial (Postal) | Walter Muir E-Quads (ICCF Server)

FORMAT: Players play 6 games as double round robin, groupings based on ratings. **ENTRY FEE:** \$10 per entry. **PRIZES:** 1st place receives \$25 correspondence chess gift certificate and signed certificate.

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Solutions

PAGE 15 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. 29. Nd2! followed by Rd4-d8 makes a queen. **PROBLEM 2.** 31. Bc4! Kf8 32. Rd8+ Ke7 33. Qxh7+ mates (but Black resigned after 33. Rd5). Also 31. ... Qxc4 32. Rd8+ Kf7 33. Qxh7+ leads to mate. **PROBLEM 3.** White resigned after 49. ... Rh6+ 50. Kc7 fxc4 51. Rxe4 Rg6! because the g-pawn can freely advance. **PROBLEM 4.** Take credit for both 21. Rd1! (followed by 22 Rxc6!) and the immediate 21. Rxc6! Bxc6 22. Bf3 or 22. Bb5. **PROBLEM 5.** Black wins with 26. ... Be5! followed by a sacrifice on g2. For example, 27. Qe2 Bxg2! 28. Bxg2 Rxc2+! 29. Kxg2 Rg8+. **PROBLEM 6.** Don't take full credit for 17. Rxf7+! (17. ... Rxf7 18. Ne6+ and Ne6xc7) unless you also saw 17. ... Kg8! 18. Rg7+! Kh8 19. Rxh7+ Kg8 20. Rg7+! Kh8 21. Rxc6, when Black resigned.

PAGE 49 ABCS OF CHESS

PROBLEM 1. Mating net: White mates in two, one of two ways: **1. Qf6+ Nxf6 2. Bxf6 mate** or **1. Qh6+ Nxf6 2. Bf6 mate**. **PROBLEM 2. Mating net:** White wins in two moves: **1. Rh8+ Bxh8 2. Rxh8 mate**. **PROBLEM 3. Mating net:** White scores in two: **1. Ra8+ Bxa8 2. Qa7 mate**. **PROBLEM 4. Mating net:** Black loses in two: **1. 1. Rxc7+ Kxc7 2. Qh7 mate**. **PROBLEM 5. Mating net:** It's mate in two with: **1. Nc6+ Ka8 2. Ra7 mate**. This is known as the Arabian mate. **PROBLEM 6. Mating net:** White mates in two: **1. Bh7+ Kh8 2. Ng6 mate**.

PAGE 53 MAKE YOUR MOVE

TACTIC 1. 22. Bxd6! A queen sacrifice! But with Black's king trapped, the consequences are easily calculated. **22. ... Qxg4 23. Rc7+** and **Black resigned**. The finish could have been 23. Rc7+ Kd8 (or 23. ... Kb8 24. Rxc4+, winning Black's queen) 24. Ne5 Qf4 25. Rxb7 threatening Rb7-b8 mate, ending the game. Akash – Stalmach, Prague Challengers, 2023. **TACTIC 2. 22. f5** Straight for the heart of Black's position. **22. ... Rd7** If Black takes the knight, it is soon over: 22. ... hxc5 23. Qh3 Bg7 24. Bxg7 Kxg7 25. f6+ and Black gets mated. **23. Ne6! fxe6 24. Qxg6+ Rg7 25. Bxg7** and **Black resigned** in Martinez Alcantara – Kevlishvili, Aimchess Rapid, 2023. **TACTIC 3. 19. Bc2!** Black's queen is surprisingly vulnerable, in part because of the loose bishop on c5. **19. ... Qh6** Or 19. ... Qg4 20. Re5, threatening the bishop and Rg5, 20. ... Qc4 21. Bb3 and the bishop falls. **20. Bd2 Qh5 21. Re5** A fork to the bishop and queen. **21. ... Bxf2+ 22. Kf1!** Not 22. Kxf2? Ng4+ and Black is still in the game. **22. ... Qg4 23. Kxf2** Now there is no knight fork on g4. **23. ... h6 24. Rae1 Qc4 25. Kg1 Bg4 26. Bb3 Qc6 27. Nd4 Qb6 28. Ba5** and **Black resigned**. Ponkratov – Vetokhin, Russian Higher League, 2023. **TACTIC 4. 24. ... Qh3! 25.**

Qxd5 With Black's bishop hanging on d5, it would also be logical to consider running with the king, but that runs into a brutal refutation: 25. Kf2 Bxf3 26. exf3 Rxf3+ 27. Kxf3 Qxf1+ 28. Ke3 Qe1+ 29. Kf3 g4+ 30. Kxg4 Qd1+ 31. Kh3 Qh1+ 32. Kg4 Qh5 mate. **25. ... Qxg3+ 26. Kh1 Rf5!** The game continuation was 26. ... **Rc2?? 27. Qe4??** (27. Ra2 defends!) **27. ... Kh7??** (27. ... Rc7 wins) **28. Nb5?? Rh8!** and **White resigned** in Pantsulaia – Gledura, Aimchess Rapid, 2023. Black needs to double the rooks on the f-file, but 26. ... Rcf6? is not the way to do it either, as White has 27. f4!! exf4 28. Qg2 and White survives. **27. Bd2** If 27. f4, then 27. ... e4 28. Qxe4 gxf4 and Black wins. **27. ... Rcf6 28. Be1** Or 28. f4 Qh4+! 29. Kg2 exf4 30. Qe4 Qg3+ 31. Kh1 f3 and Black wins **28. ... Qh3+ 29. Kg1 e4! 30. Qxe4 Rf4** and thanks to the threat of ... Rf4-g4+, Black wins White's queen. **TACTIC 5. 26. Ne4! Nxe4** Black has no good alternative. **27. Rxf7!** Now White forces mate. **27. ... Kxf7 28. Qxh7+ Kf6 29. Qxg6+** and **Black resigned** in Andriasan – Niemann, Philadelphia Intl., 2023. **TACTIC 6. 23. Kg2!** Preparing to add the rook via h1 to the attack on Black's king. **23. ... Rac8** The alternatives also do not work: 23. ... Qc7 24. Rac1! Rxc1 25. Rxc1 Qd7 26. Nh5 Rc8 27. Rxc8! Qxc8 28. Bh6 Kf7 29. Qf4+ Ke8 30. Nf6+ Kd8 31. Ng8 and White wins, or 23. ... Kf7 24. Rh1 Ke8 25. Rxh7 Nxf7 26. Qxg6+ Kd7 27. Qxc2 and White wins easily. **24. Rh1 R8c3 25. Rxh7!** Boom! **25. ... Kxh7 26. Rh1+ Kg7 27. Nxg6 Kf7** Or 27. ... Nxg6 28. Rh6 with forced mate. **28. Nxf8 Ke8 29. Nxe6 Kd7 30. Nf4+** and **Black resigned** on account of 30. Nf4+ Kc6 31. Rh6+ and it is over for Black. Koellner – Saltaev, Dortmund, 2023. **TACTIC 7. 19. h5!** **Ne7 20. Ng5** It seems slow, but once the attacking train is in motion, there is no stopping it. **20. ... g6 21. hxc6 Nxg6** Or 21. ... hxc6 22. Qd3 Kg7 23. Qg3 and all of a sudden, Black, despite his solid-looking position, is defenseless, for instance, 23. ... Nc6 24. Rxe6 fxe6 25. Qc7+ Kf6 26. Nh7+ Kf5 27. Re1 and Black gets mated. **22. f4 Rae8 23. f5 exf5 24. Rxe8 Rxe8 25. Qxf5 Re7 26. Nxf7** Black's position is completely falling apart. The conclusion comes swiftly. **26. ... Qxb2 27. Qxd5 Qb6 28. Nh6+ Kh8 29. Qg8, mate.** Abdusattorov – So, Aimchess Rapid, 2023. **TACTIC 8. 18. ... Bc5!!** The conclusion of the game saw **18. ... Rfe8 19. Be3 Rad8 20. exf5 Nxd4 21. Qxd4 Qxf3 22. Rg1 Bg3!** Game over. **23. hxc3 Rxd4 24. gxf4 Rxe3+ 25. fxe3 Qxe3+ 26. Ne2 Rd2 27. Rg2 Rxe2+** and **White resigned** (Karthik – Souleidis, Dortmund, 2023). **19. dxc5** Or 19. exf5 Rfe8+ 20. Be3 Nxd4 21. Be4 Rad8 22. Rg1 Rxe4 23. Nxe4 Nf3+ 24. Qxf3 Qxf3 25. Nxc5 Re8 and Black has a decisive advantage. **19. ... Rad8 20. exf5 Rfe8+ 21. Be2 Rxd1+ 22. Kxd1 Rd8+** and Black is winning. **TACTIC 9. 24. Rd1!!** The game conclusion was **24. Ng3 h5??** (24. ... Nd3 25. Qd2 h5 was correct with chances to both sides) **25. Rd1??** (White should have played 25. Qc2 h4 26. Rd1 with a large advantage) **25. ... Nd3 26. Rxd3 Qxd3 27. Re8+ Kh7 28. Nxf5 Rc7 29. Qf1 Qf5 30. Bd4 Qxh5** and **White resigned** in Khubukshanov – Kobalia, Russian Higher League, 2023. **24. ... Qxf5** Or 24. ... Nd3 25. Qc4 and White wins. **25. Rd8+ Rf8 26. Qc4+ Qf7** Or 26. ... Kh8 27. Ree8 Ne6 28. Rxf8+ Nxf8 29. Qc3 Qb1+ 30. Qc1 Qf5 (also 30. ... Qxc1+ 31. Bxc1 Kg8 32. Ba3 wins) 31. Ba3 and White wins material **27. Ree8!** Boom! **27. ... Nd7 28. Rxd7** BOOM! White forces mate.


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MY BEST MOVE

PAUL GOLD

NATIONAL MASTER, CHESS
TEACHER, ORGANIZER

M

Y FATHER TAUGHT ME HOW to play chess around age eight; I would eventually compete in high school events in the 1970s.

I started playing rated chess relatively late, earning my first US Chess rating (1493!) at age 17. After that it took me four years to break expert and another four to make it over 2200. I also tutored students during those years.

Not long after I reached my peak rating of 2347, I began organizing events — chess gave me a lot and I wanted to give back. I also wrote articles and tournament reports for *Chess Life*. By the time I played this game with a young Jesse Kraai, there would be just a few tournaments left for me, but I have never gotten chess out of my system. I still enjoy playing online blitz, watching chess videos, and reading *Chess Life* every month. After a career in aerospace work, I now publish short run regional art books in Tucson.

BOGO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E11)

Jesse Kraai (2373)

Paul Gold (2256)

Ye Olde Pueblo Open (3), Tucson,
07.18.1992

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 Bb4+ 4. Bd2 Qe7
5. g3 Nc6 6. Bg2 Bxd2+ 7. Nbx d2 d6 8. 0-0
0-0 9. e4 e5 10. d5 Nd8

The other move is 10. ... Nb8. Databases cite many games here, with White on top in most.

11. Ne1 Ne8 12. Nd3 f5 13. exf5

More common is 13. b4 with White planning to roll on the queenside.

13. ... Bxf5 14. Ne4 Nf6 15. f3 c6 16. Qb3
Kh8 17. Ndf2 c5

Perhaps I could have tried 17. ... cxd5 18. cxd5 b6, followed by ... Nd8-b7-c5.

18. Qc3 Nf7 19. a3 Rac8 20. Rfd1 b6



21. Rac1 Nxe4 22. fxe4 Bd7 23. b4 Ng5
24. Qe3 Qf6 25. Rc3 h6 26. h4 Nh7 27. Nd3
Rg8 28. Rf1 Qe7 29. bxc5 bxc5 30. Rb3 g5
31. h5 Nf6 32. Rb7 Rgf8 33. Bh3 Rcd8
34. Rxa7 Kg7 35. Be6 Ra8 36. Rb7 Rab8
37. Rfb1 Rxb7 38. Rxb7 Qe8 39. Nf2

A bit of a miss in time pressure? A line like
39. Nxe5 dxe5 40. Qxc5 Qxh5 41. Qe7+ Rf7
42. Qxf7+ Qxf7 43. Bxf7 Kxf7 44. a4 looks
fatal for Black.

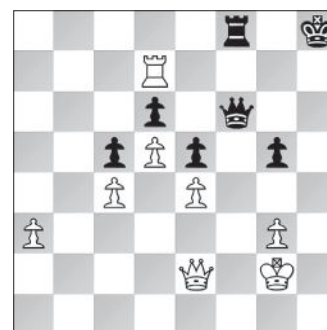
39. ... Qc8 40. Ra7 Kh8 41. Bxd7 Nxd7 42.
Ng4 Qe8 43. Nxh6 Qxh5 44. Rxd7 Qxh6 45.
Kg2 Qf6 46. Kh3?

Here 46. Qe2 looked forced, and would have
led to **MY BEST MOVE**:

(see analysis diagram top of next column)

I planned 46. ... g4!, and a spectacular draw
could have resulted after 47. a4 Qh6 48. Qxg4
Rf2+ 49. Kxf2 Qe3+ 50. Kg2 Qxg3+, but in-
stead White perished.

46. ... Qf1+ 47. Kg4 Qd1+ 48. Kxg5 Rg8+
49. Kf6 Qf1+ 50. Ke6 Rg6+, White resigned.



POSITION AFTER 46. Qe2

A very fortunate result on my part. I've heard
people say that there is no luck in chess, but
to me, I was lucky at least twice in this game.
Today, of course, Kraai is a grandmaster and
a founder of a very interesting website, the
Chess Dojo <www.chessdojo.club>. ♠

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