

WORLD RAPID AND BLITZ ■ YOUTH MEDALS ■ MORE NIMZO

# CHESSLIFE

JUNE 2024 ■ USChess.org

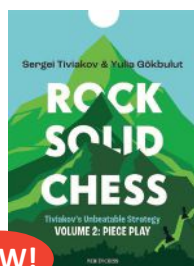
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and Lee  
win at  
American  
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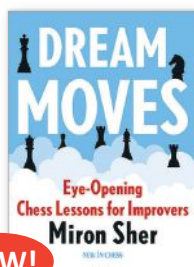


NEW!

## Rock Solid 2

Sergei Tiviakov & Yulia Gökbulut

The acclaimed first volume of his strategy trilogy dealt with pawn structures. In this second volume, Sergei discusses piece play, covering the value of pieces, the bishop pair, opposite-colored bishops, centralization, and more. Sergei Tiviakov was unbeaten in a streak of more than 100 games as a prof player. Who better to share the secrets of Rock Solid Chess and the activity and value of pieces?

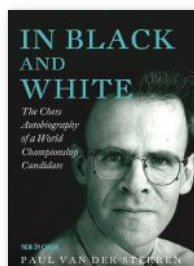


NEW!

## Eye-Opening Lessons for Improvers

Miron Sher

Legendary chess coach Miron Sher, who trained GMs Robert Hess and Fabiano Caruana, collected hundreds of instructive positions for his students. This book focuses on five topics that Sher considered important for chess improvement, including Dream Moves. If you can dream about the final, decisive move that leads to a winning position, you will find your way there.

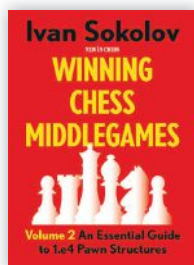


## 'The finest chess book I've ever read'

Matthew Sadler in *New In Chess*

In this brutally honest autobiography, Dutch GM Paul van der Sterren describes his rise to the chess elite and his struggle to get better, with all the uncertainties and difficulties on his path. From his very first moves to his match against Gata Kamsky, everything is described in great detail and with the greatest frankness.

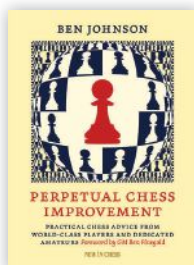
Be warned: 768 pages!



## Winning Middlegames with 1.e4

Ivan Sokolov

In his 2010 bestseller *Winning Chess Middlegames*, GM Ivan Sokolov focused on 1.d4 openings. Now, with Volume 2, 1.e4 players get their turn. A dozen topical structures are covered (in the Ruy Lopez, the Italian, the Petroff, the Rauzer Sicilian, the Maroczy Bind, the Hedgehog, the Sveshnikov, the French Winawer and more). Deeply analyzed top-level games illustrate the motifs in all these structures.



## The best practical advice

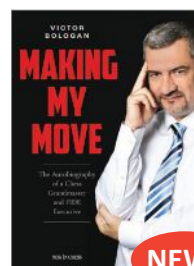
Ben Johnson

Ben Johnson hosts the *Perpetual Chess Podcast*, in which he is talking chess with many of the world's top players, trainers and passionate improvers. In this book, Ben looks for common ground and shared principles in all chess advice on the podcast. You will familiarize yourself with the collected wisdom of guests such as Anand, Nakamura, Ramesh, Hendriks, Aagaard, Christof Sielecki and Neal Bruce.

## Making My Move

Victor Bologan

Victor Bologan is not only a strong and creative GM, he has also made a career in world chess and Moldovan politics. This autobiography gives a vivid account of his path, highlighting his work with coaches such as Chebanenko, Lanka and Dvoretsky, and players like Morozevich, Ponomarev, Kramnik and Kasparov. Central in this book are his extensive annotations of 88 of his most attractive games.

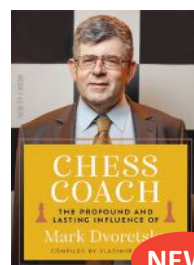


NEW!

## The profound influence of Mark Dvoretsky

Vladimir Barsky

When Mark Dvoretsky started coaching, he became a kind of doctor, quickly identifying what his students needed help with. He made them better chess players, but also better people. In this book, students such as Yusupov, Kasparov, Anand, Topalov and Carlsen, to name but a few, pay tribute to the most inspiring chess coach of his generation.

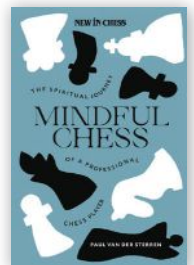


NEW!

## Mindful Chess

Paul van der Sterren

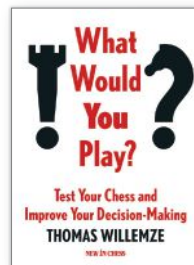
Van der Sterren was a professional chess player for more than twenty years. He met with both victory and defeat, joy and suffering. When, later in life, he discovered vipassana meditation, he approached meditation with the same devotion as his chess. In only 128 pages, the reader follows his two journeys, asking questions such as: What is chess? What is meditation? Who am I?



## Improve Your Decision-Making

Thomas Willemze

The best chess training closely resembles the activity you're training for. This book provides a chess player with an essential component – decision-making in the crucial positions of a real chess game, played by club players rather than grandmasters. You have to answer the same questions that you face when you stare at the chessboard and have to find a move.



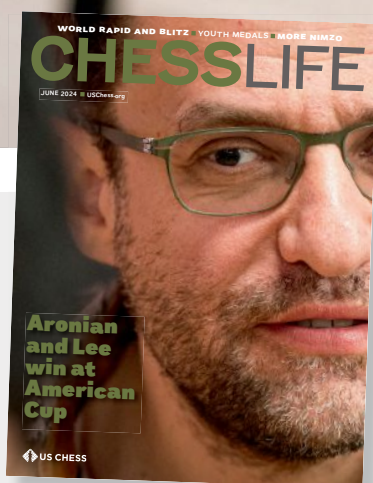
## A Rich and Dynamic Opening Repertoire for White

Christof Sielecki

Coach Christof Sielecki has thoroughly revised and updated his 2018 chess opening manual, one of New In Chess' all-time bestselling opening books. This new 632-page hardcover edition contains everything you need to know to play 1.e4 with confidence. The repertoire is suited for players of all levels and the variations are easy to remember and require little or no maintenance.



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## ON THE COVER

GM Levon Aronian is one of the strongest players in the world, and a favorite of both fans and his peers. After a period of transition, both personally and professionally, Aronian reminded everyone of his excellence with a victory at the American Cup. While we suspect none of his opponents were happy to lose, we'd bet they were glad that it was Levon who won.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LENNART OOTES

# CHESSLIFE

## June

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Controversies raged and great chess was played at the 2023 World Rapid and Blitz Championships.

BY WGM JENNIFER YU

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#### Returning Serve

Key games and concrete analysis are essential to learning openings.

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#### The Kids are Alright

Team USA brings home six medals from the World Rapid Cadet and Blitz and World School Chess Championships

BY JOHN HARTMANN

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US Chess is currently undergoing an audit of its print *Chess Life* and *Chess Life Kids* subscriptions. If you have not purchased the print subscription add-on to your membership, this may be your last issue. Please contact the Membership Department staff at [membership@uschess.org](mailto:membership@uschess.org) if you have any questions.



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LAUREN GOODKIND

## CONTRIBUTORS



### WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN

(Cover Story) is an Armenian-American woman grandmaster. After moving to the United States in 2001, she has been a regular participant in U.S. Women's

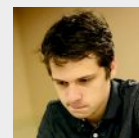
Championships and a stalwart member of our international teams. In 2023 she won the "Best Column" award from the Chess Journalists of America for her *Chess Life* column entitled "Getting to Work," which is devoted to questions of improvement and instruction.



### WGM JENNIFER YU

(World Rapid and Blitz) is a two-time U.S. Women's Champion, with victories in 2019 and 2022. She also

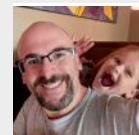
won the U.S. Girls' Junior Championship in 2022, giving her a rare "double" title. Currently a student at Harvard University, she has competed for the U.S. in international team play, and in 2021 she participated in the Women's World Cup in Sochi, Russia.



### IM ROBERT SHLYAKHTENKO

(Learning the Nimzo) has just completed his first year of undergraduate

work in mathematics at Brown University. He is currently the 19th ranked (with IM Gus Huston) American junior as of the May 2024 US Chess rating list. In 2023 he won a Chess Journalists of America honorable mention for "Best Story of the Year."



### JOHN HARTMANN

(International Youth Championships) is the editor of *Chess Life* and a two-time winner of the

"Journalist of the Year" award from the Chess Journalists of America. His most recent achievement was helping to coach his daughter's youth volleyball team, the "Boomcrushers," to an undefeated spring season.



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## 2024 US Chess Federation Oral History Project

US Chess is compiling a unique oral history archive, uniting US Chess members across generations, professions, geography, and life experiences.

US Chess has partnered with Publishing Concepts, Inc. to help collect stories from as many members as possible and produce the **2024 US Chess Federation Oral History Project**.

By sharing your memory, you'll ensure that the rich history of US Chess will be preserved for generations to come.

***Thanks for your participation!***

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**Saturday:**  
8 AM–4:45 PM (CT)

**Closed Sunday**





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*Alice Lee*

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# COUNTERPLAY



## BRAVO!

Just finished Michael Tisserand's thoroughly absorbing profile of Jude Acers in the April issue. It was a joy to read, and a joy to more fully appreciate the verve and vitality of this true American chess legend. Bravo to Jude and Michael for reminding us there's more to chess tales than diagrams and analysis of what might have been. So glad to have spent that day appreciating simply being in the moment with him.

**Frank Elley**  
Chess Life Editor, Emeritus  
Via email

## GILDING THE LILY?



**WHITE TO MOVE**

In his April letter, IM Anthony Saidy opined that in the above diagram from the game between GM Gregory Kaidanov and IM Witalis Sapis, Saidy's

two move mate, 21. Qxd7+ Rxd7 22. Rb8 mate, was more beautiful than the game continuation 21. Qc8+ (with the idea 21. ... Kxc8 22. Rb8 mate).

I believe GM Kaidanov got it right. The queen sacrifices itself on c8 as a decoy to force the black king to the poisoned c8-square. At the same time, the black knight is rendered useless by the pin from the h3-bishop, enabling White to play 22. Rb8 mate.

Chess is just not an art, but also a science. When you do the math, isn't it more impressive to sacrifice the queen for no material? Another Morphy-like sequence is 21. Rb8+ Nxb8 22. Qc8 mate, but this sequence is not as impressive as the others because only a rook is sacrificed.

I don't want to belabor this point, because I could also be accused of gilding the lily. Anyway, a beautiful finish by GM Kaidanov!

**Louis M. Leiggi**  
Via email

## DUAL SOLUTION

I enjoyed Steve Sheinkin's interview of Maurice Ashley in the April 2024 issue, and I particularly interested in the retelling of Anna's insight into the puzzle.

After seeing the solution labeled "Anna's Mate," I wondered: why are so many pawns needed? That led me to use the white king more effectively: put the white king on e7, white pawns on d4, e4, e3, and f3, and the black king on e5. Mate!

**Bruce Moskowitz**  
Via email

## John Hartmann responds:

We received two letters on this topic, the second being from Benjamin Emmanuel, who sent in the same cook. Both Bruce and Benjamin are correct. Thanks for keeping us honest! ♡

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

# A Lifetime of Service

Georgia Chess Association inducts familiar faces into its Hall of Fame.

BY **MELINDA MATTHEWS**



**O**N APRIL 20, 2024, THE Georgia Chess Association (GCA) inducted 12 Georgia chess luminaries, including

several well-known to US Chess, into its brand-new Hall of Fame.

Dan Lucas, Senior Director of Strategic Communication for US Chess, was recognized for his significant contributions to chess journalism, both in Georgia and on the national stage. In 1999, Lucas became editor of *Georgia Chess*, the GCA's magazine of record, and soon the small state newsletter was transformed into a polished, award-winning publication. By raising the professionalism and quality of the magazine, Lucas set a high bar for subsequent *Georgia Chess* editors, becoming, according to the nomination, "the longest-serving and greatest editor in GCA history." Lucas stepped down as *Georgia Chess* editor in 2005 to join US Chess as its Director of Publications. He was promoted to his current position in 2018.

During his time with the GCA, Lucas also

served as president of the Chess Journalists of America and was the GCA website librarian for eight years. Lucas was active in GCA governance as well, holding the positions of second member-at-large on the GCA Board of Directors and US Chess delegate for Georgia.

Lucas' wife Kristin Balcerzak and daughter Katie Lucas were on hand to celebrate his induction. After the ceremony, Lucas expressed his gratitude, saying, "I am deeply honored by this recognition from the GCA. It was amazing to hear my name mentioned at the same ceremony where so many other accomplished chess personalities and players were named. I'm also grateful to the Hall of Fame Nomination Committee for understanding the importance of chess journalism."

Fellow inductee WIM Dr. Carolina Blanco is another well-known US Chess ally. One of the earliest supporters of the US Chess Women's Initiative, Blanco has become a fixture at national scholastic events for US Chess, most notably as the titled guest in the popular Girls Club rooms. She is recognized as a teacher, coach, and tireless advocate for women and girls in chess.

After moving to Georgia, Blanco quickly made her mark, winning the Georgia state women's championship three times. In 2007, *Georgia Chess* editor David Woolf tapped Blanco to write a regular scholastics column, which eventually switched to a general instructional column. Blanco's seven years with *Georgia Chess* ended upon the magazine's demise in 2013, and her column ranked among the longest running in *Georgia Chess* history.

When introducing Blanco, emcee Kent Meadows quipped that she had canceled



plans to attend "some little tournament in Toronto" so she could accept her plaque in person. Blanco confirmed Meadows' anecdote and emphasized how important the ceremony was to her. "I'm grateful and deeply humbly by this award," she said. "Georgia has been my home for the last 18 years and I felt welcomed by the Georgia chess community as soon as I moved here from my native country of Venezuela." She dedicated her award to her family, friends, students, and "everyone who in some way contributes to and follows my chess career." (By the way, that "little tournament in Toronto" was the Candidates.)

L. Thad Rogers is another inductee whose roots may be in Georgia, but whose impact has been felt throughout US Chess. Georgia chess enthusiasts reminisce fondly about Rogers' Atlanta Chess and Games Center, which operated from 1992-2012 and was US Chess' 2007 Chess Club of the Year. The club hosted 3,622 tournaments over its storied 20-year history and launched many of Georgia's top scholastic players. Rogers also served as GCA president for more than a dozen years, held numerous other state and regional offices, and owned and operated





American Chess Promotions.

Rogers is also a national tournament director and FIDE international arbiter. He has been honored multiple times by US Chess, receiving (among others) awards for Meritorious Service (1982), Special Services (1983), Outstanding Career Achievement (2003), and Tournament Director Lifetime Achievement (2014).

Rogers, decked out in a spiffy steampunk top hat, said he felt overwhelmed by the honor. "I've worked so hard to make people happy at tournaments," he said, "and they've all become like distant relatives to me. I have parents who visit me at tournaments with their kids, and they tell their kids, 'I bought my first chess book from Thad Rogers.' I get stuff like that on and off nowadays, and it's very humbling to me."

An influential mix of past and present Georgians comprised the other honorees. They included Paul Donehoo, Boris Markovich Kogan, Isaac Edward Orchard, Scott Parker, Guillermo Alejandro Ruiz Cerda, Steve Schneider, William Alexander Scott III, Adolph Ferdinand Wurm, and Alonso Zapata Ramirez. (see sidebar) David Spinks, who has directed more than 2,300 tournaments, was also honored with a Meritorious Service award.

The ceremony kicked off before round two of the 2024 Phillip O'Neal Taylor Georgia State Championship. All inductees spoke briefly after receiving their individual plaques, delaying the round start time significantly. The late start led Chief TD David Hater, a US Chess Executive Board member, to jokingly lament, "The inductees all made the Hall of Fame. But I'm going to make the Hall of Shame for starting the round 33 minutes late — a personal failure on my part!" Despite the blot on his usual impeccable record, Hater added, "In this case, I made an exception. It was well worth it."

Much appreciation goes to the Hall of

## MEET THE 2024 GEORGIA CHESS ASSOCIATION HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



**DR. MARIA CAROLINA BLANCO ACEVEDO:** woman international master (WIM); three-time Georgia state women's

champion; seven-year columnist for *Georgia Chess*



**PAUL DONEHOO†:** Georgia's first documented blind chess player of note who used chess to encourage those with

disabilities



**BORIS MARKOVICH KOGAN†:** won a record nine Georgia state championships; played in six U.S. Championships



**DAN LUCAS:** transformed *Georgia Chess* into an award-winning magazine and was its longest-serving editor;

former president of Chess Journalists of America



**ISAAC EDWARD ORCHARD†:** organized the Atlanta Chess Club in 1883 (later renewed as Atlanta Chess and Checkers

Club); brought national recognition to Atlanta with his many contributions as a player, organizer, and promoter



**SCOTT PARKER:** 18-year GCA board member, including eight years as president; over 200 rated tournaments in Georgia

as Chief TD, including 15 state championships; *Georgia Chess* copy editor and contributor; Castle Chess camp founding director

†deceased

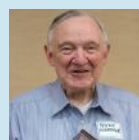


**L. THAD ROGERS:** 20-year owner and operator of Atlanta Chess and Game Center, named US Chess Club of the Year

in 2007; held multiple GCA and regional offices since 1976; recipient of numerous national awards from US Chess



**GUILLERMO ALEJANDRO RUIZ CERDA:** GCA Special Service Award recipient (2002); three-time Georgia state champion



**STEVE SCHNEIDER:** scholastic chess organizer, teacher, and entrepreneur; held multiple offices with the GGA;

served as US Chess regional vice president (Southeast) from 1982-1984



**WILLIAM ALEXANDER SCOTT III†:** African American Atlantan who broke the color line in the Southern Chess Association

in 1951 and the GCA in the 1960s; Atlanta Chess Association vice president (1963) and president (1965-1967); organizer, journalist, and instructor



**ADOLPH FERDINAND WURM†:** dominated Georgia chess from the late 1870s until 1891, variously called the Champi-

on of Atlanta, the Champion of Georgia, and the Champion of the South; chess journalist for eight years



**ALONSO ZAPATA RAMIREZ:** five-time Georgia state champion; three-time Interzonal qualifier; instructor,

coach, author

To read more about the inductees, visit <https://www.georgiachess.org/> and click on "History." (Please note that the page may still be under construction.)

Fame committee — Kent Meadows, chair, and Jeffrey A. Kidd, Justin Morrison, L. Thad Rogers, Stephen A. Schneider, and Mark N. Taylor — for their hard work in identifying, researching, and presenting the nominees to the GCA board. GCA president



Fun Fong and the GCA Board of Directors enthusiastically championed the initiative as well. Fong, a former US Chess Executive Board member, downplayed his role in the process: "A number of people wanted to

make this happen. I basically gave them the green light and they responded in kind with great energy."

Committee chair Kent Meadows deserves special recognition for his efforts in getting the Hall of Fame off the ground. About a year and a half ago, Meadows started the process by drafting charters for both the Hall of Fame and Recognition Awards. After the GCA Board of Directors approved both charters, a Hall of Fame committee was formed to develop and submit a nomination list to the board by December 31, 2023. "Chess was something of a salvation for me in my youth," Meadows said, "and I wanted to give something back. I can't play like I used to, so now in my retirement, this is something to keep my mind active and to make a contribution."

Meadows also sponsored a lunch reception prior to the ceremony, giving honorees and their families and friends time to meet and exchange stories.

In addition to the individual plaques, a larger perpetual plaque listing the 2024 honorees (with room for more!) will hang at Chess Zone, an Atlanta-area brick-and-mortar chess club owned and operated by committee member Justin Morrison. Individual plaques granted posthumously to



those who have no living relatives will also be displayed at Chess Zone.

As the ceremony wound down, Fong summed up the general sentiment in the room: "I'm so happy this happened today. We need to recognize all the people who have made contributions and on whose shoulders we stand upon."

Thank you to Georgia Chess Association for celebrating history by honoring those who helped shape it. And congratulations to the inaugural members of the Georgia Chess Hall of Fame. ♠



Front (L to R): Alexis Scott (daughter of William A. Scott), Dan Lucas, Scott Parker, Carolina Blanco, Stephen Schneider, L. Thad Rogers

## ChessBase 17

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This column has on a bit of a hiatus in recent months, as we've put our page space to good use in other ways.

This month, however, we'll try to catch up on a number of interesting tournaments that have not yet made it into our pages, and highlight a number of spectacular games that deserve your attention.

## Tata Steel

The annual Tata Steel Chess Festival in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands, is one of the most anticipated events on the chess calendar. The A group is carefully constructed by organizers to pit the world's elite against emerging talents and hometown heroes. This usually results in exciting games and fighting chess — and the 86th edition, held from January 13-28, 2024, was no exception.

This year's field included new world champ Ding Liren in one of his first post-victory events, along with five of the 2024 Candidates — GMs Gukesh Dommaraju, Alireza Firouzja, Vidit Santosh Gujrathi, Ian Nepomniachtchi, and Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu. Internet sharps might have deemed any of these players potential winners; if not them, perhaps Dutch number one GM Anish Giri or the ever-improving GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov?

There's an old saying in punditry, though. Anyone can be a favorite on paper, but ultimately, paper doesn't matter: "That's why they play the game." This truism was confirmed yet again in Wijk when GM Wei Yi emerged from a four-person playoff to take home top honors.

At 2740 FIDE entering the tournament, Wei Yi was not quite an underdog, but he certainly wasn't a favorite. And after a slow start — two draws and a loss in the first three rounds — most prognosticators were focusing on Abdusattorov and Giri.

But this round 11 win made everyone pay attention.

## VIENNA GAME (C24)

GM Wei Yi (2740)

GM Max Warmerdam (2625)

86th Tata Steel Masters (11), Wijk aan Zee, 01.26.2024

1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. d3 Bc5 4. Nc3 c6  
5. f4 d5 6. exd5 Ng4 7. Nf3 0-0 8. fxe5 Nf2  
9. Qe2 Nxh1



In his annotations for *New in Chess*, Wei Yi says that he was effectively out of book on move six, when he burned 50 minutes deciding that this sacrifice was forced.

10. Bg5! Qa5! 11. d6 Bg4 12. Be7 Nd7  
13. e6! Ba3! 14. exf7+ Kh8 15. 0-0-0  
Castling into it... literally!

15. ... Qxc3 16. bxa3 Bxf3 17. gxf3 Ne5?



Now Black is lost. He had to try 17. ... Qxa3+ 18. Kb1 Qb4+ 19. Bb3 Rxf7 but White now regains some material with 20. Rxh1 and also retains all the attacking chances.

18. Kb1 Qd4 19. Rxh1 Nxc4 20. dxc4 Qb6+  
21. Kc1 Rxf7

The rook is safe, but the position is lost. The d-pawn is ready to move!

22. Rd1 Rff8 23. d7 Rg8 24. Qe5 Rad8  
25. f4 c5 26. Bxd8 Qxd8 27. Qxc5, Black  
resigned.

After Abdusattorov fell to Vidit in the penultimate round, no fewer than five players — Abdusattorov, Giri, Gukesh, Vidit, and Wei

Yi — found themselves tied for first place with 7½/12 and one round to go. Only Vidit failed to win and keep pace, and that was due to another masterpiece from Wei Yi.

## COLLE SYSTEM (D05)

GM Wei Yi (2740)

GM Vidit Santosh Gujrathi (2742)

86th Tata Steel Masters (13) Wijk aan Zee, 01.28.2024

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. e3 c5 4. c3 e6 5. Bd3  
Nbd7 6. Nbd2 Bd6 7. 0-0 0-0 8. Re1 Qc7 9.  
e4 cxd4 10. cxd4 dxe4 11. Nxe4 b6 12. Bg5  
Nxe4 13. Rxe4 Bb7 14. Rc1 Qb8 15. Rh4



Somewhere the spirit of George Koltanowski is smiling.

15. ... f5 16. Bc4 Qe8 17. Qb3 Kh8 18. Re1  
Be4 19. Bxe6 Qg6 20. Bd2 Nf6 21. Ng5 f4  
22. Rxh7+ Nxh7 23. Nxe4 f3 24. g3 Be7 25.  
d5 Rad8 26. Qa4 a5 27. Qc6 Bb4 28. Bxb4  
axb4 29. h4 Ra8 30. Nd6 Ra7 31. Qxb6  
Rxa2 32. Qc7 Nf6 33. Nf7+ Kh7 34. Ne5  
Qh6 35. Qc2+ g6 36. Nxe6 Rfa8 37. Ne5+  
Kg7 38. Qc7+, Black resigned.

So it was a blitz playoff for all the marbles, with Giri meeting Gukesh in the first semi-final, and Wei Yi taking on Abdusattorov. The future Challenger knocked out the Dutch hero, while Abdusattorov fell to Wei Yi. And after the Chinese number two defeated Gukesh in the final, he was once again the toast of the chess world, and the first Chinese player to win in Wijk aan Zee.

(Oh, and about Ding Liren? He suffered a rough event indeed, muddling his way to a midtable score of 6/13. Coupled with an abysmal performance at a Chess960 event in February, and a disappointing finish at the Grenke Chess Classic Rapid, it's not clear

that the new world champion has recovered from the stresses of his title victory. Something to keep an eye on as the year progresses.)

As the winner, Wei Yi is invited to return for the 2025 edition. So is 18-year-old GM Leon Luke Mendonca, who took the top spot in the B section with a score of 9½/13, a half-point ahead of GMs Daniel Dardha and Marc'Andria Maurizzi. The lone American in the field, GM Hans Niemann, struggled in the middle of the tournament but stabilized to finish at +1 (7/13).

## Prague Masters

Abdusattorov may have been saddened to stumble so close to the finish at Tata Steel, but he more than made up for it at the 2024 Prague Masters, held from February 27 through March 7. He overpowered the field to win by a cool point and a half over GMs Parham Maghsoodloo, Thai Dai Van Nguyen, and Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu.

Abdusattorov's 6½/9 does not tell the full tale of his tournament; aside from a slip against Pragg in round six, he was fully in control throughout. His eighth round victory over Maghsoodloo was perhaps the game of the tournament.

### WHAT A POSITION!

**GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov (2744)**  
**GM Parham Maghsoodloo (2715)**  
**6th Prague Masters (8), Prague,**  
**03.06.2024**



WHITE TO MOVE

After a back-and-forth battle, White finds a wonderful idea to grab the advantage.

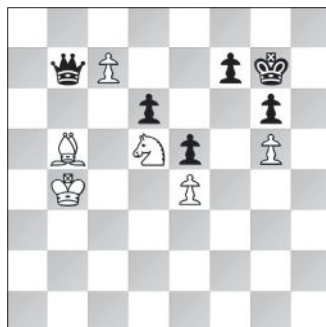
**38. Nf1 Nc2 39. Rc3! Nb4 40. Nxh2 Nxc6**  
**41. dxc6 Ne6**

White has rook and bishop for the queen, but perhaps more important is the clear



path for the c-pawn. Will the material or the compensation win out? What follows is not perfect play, but it is fun to analyze!

**42. Bc4 Nc7 43. Nf1 Qe8 44. Bd5 b5! 45. Ne3 bxa4 46. Rc2 Qb8 47. Bc4 a3 48. Nd5 Ne6 49. b3? Nd4? 50. c7 Qh8 51. Rd2 Qh1+ 52. Ka2 Qc1 53. Rh2 a4 54. g5 Nxf3 55. Rf2 axb3+ 56. Bxb3 Nd2 57. Rxd2! Qxd2+ 58. Kxa3 Qa5+ 59. Ba4 Qa6 60. Kb4 Qb7+ 61. Bb5**



What a position! The queen is little match for the two minor pieces. The position might be objectively equal, but Leela's +0.87 evaluation is evidence of White's strong practical chances.

**61. ... Kh7? 62. Kc4 Kg7 63. Bd7 Qa6+ 64. Kb3 Qb7+ 65. Kc2 Qa6 66. c8=Q Qe2+ 67. Kb3 Qxe4 68. Qg8+, Black resigned.**

While there were no Americans in this year's Masters, GM Abhimanyu Mishra competed in the Prague Challengers, finishing in shared third place with 5½/9, while the precocious Aayansh Guntaka scored a respectable 3½/9 in the Futures event. Read more about Guntaka in our piece on the

World School Championships beginning on page 45 of this issue.

## Shenzhen Masters

Prague wasn't the only game in town (so to speak) in early March. The Shenzhen Masters featured four top Chinese talents and four foreign GMs in an eight-player round robin from February 29 through March 7.

The tournament saw a three-way tie at the top, with GMs Bu Xiangzhi, Yu Yangyi, and Arjun Erigaisi all a point clear of the field at 4½/7, with Bu finishing first among equals via tiebreaks.

GM Daniil Dubov ended the tournament in the middle of the pack with 3½ points, but his win over Giri, who stumbled to a seventh-place finish, will be in contention for game of the year.

### GRÜNFELD DEFENSE, EXCHANGE VARIATION (D85)

**GM Daniil Dubov (2708)**  
**GM Anish Giri (2762)**  
**Shenzhen Chess Masters (2),**  
**Shenzhen, 03.01.2024**

**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5 5. e4 Nxc3 6. bxc3 Bg7 7. Nf3 c5 8. Bb5+ Nc6 9. 0-0 0-0 10. Bxc6 bxc6 11. Qc2 cxd4 12. cxd4 Bg4 13. Ne5 Qxd4 14. Bb2 Qb6 15. Rab1 Bxe5 16. Bxe5**

We have reached a popular tabiya. Black has a pawn, but the dark squares around his king are weak, and White has a nagging initiative.

**16. ... Qa5**

Here 16. ... Qa6 has also been tried, and White follows with 17. Qc5 and full compensation.

**17. Bc3 Qc5 18. h3 Be6**



**19. Kh2**

This is Dubov's innovation for this game. After a quick engine check, we discover that it is not in the top seven moves of either Stockfish 16.1 or Leela! How deep the rabbit hole of top-level chess goes.

**19. ... Rab8 20. Rbc1 Qc4 21. f4**

Presumably the idea behind 19. Kh2 — now White offers another pawn, banking on his piece activity and threats.

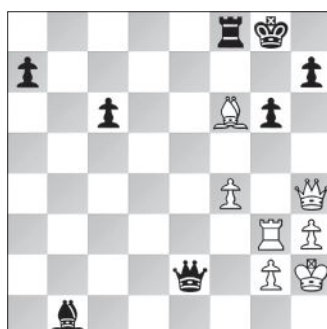
**21. ... Qxa2 22. Qd1 Bc4 23. Rf3 f6**

We see one idea behind the rook lift after 23. ... Rfd8 24. Qe1 Rd3 25. Rxd3 Bxd3 26. Qe3 Rd8 27. f5 with compensation.

**24. Qe1 Qe2 25. Qh4 Bd3?!**

Giving White a key tempo.

**26. e5! Be4 27. Rg3 Rb1 28. Rxb1 Bxb1 29. exf6 exf6 30. Bxf6**



**30. ... Qe6**

After 30. ... Qe8 Stockfish finds a beautiful reorganization on the long diagonal: 31. Ba1! c5 (controlling the d4-square) 32. Qh5 (or 32. Qg4) 32. ... Bf5 33. Qf3! Qe4 34. Qc3 Qd4 35. Qc1.

**31. Be5**



**Alexandra Botez** @alexandrabotez · Apr 29

It's happening. First time we have ever been paired against each other in classical.



177

306

13K

712K

13K

Here too 31. Ba1!? is possible.

**31. ... Be4 32. Ra3 Qd7 33. Qf2 Qe7?**

Necessary was 33. ... Rf7 34. Ra4 Bd5 35. Ba1! but now the king can run, i.e., 35. ... Kf8 and the game is still on.

**34. Qe3 Rf7 35. Bb2 Qb4?! 36. Rb3! Qc4 37. Rb8+ Rf8 38. Qxa7 Qf7 39. Qd4**

Dubov's gun!

**39. ... Qxf4+ 40. g3, Black resigned.**

## Sardinia World Chess Festival

Along with her sister, Andrea, WFM Alexandra Botez is perhaps the world's best known chess streamer not named Hikaru. And while there are those who might question her pawnpushing *bona fides*, any such doubts were put to rest at the 2024 Sardinia World Chess Festival, held in Orosei, Italy from April 27 through May 4.

The fifth ranked player in the B (U2000) Open at 1970 FIDE, the elder Botez scorched her opponents to finish in sole first place, her score of 8½/9 a point and a half ahead of the field, and good enough for a performance rating of over 2300.

Both sisters brought equipment to stream their games for their many fans, with GM Jon Ludwig Hammer — later revealed to be

Alexandra's coach for the event — and WGM Dina Belenkaya doing live commentary on their Twitch channel. While thousands of fans tuned in for every move, it was the long-awaited over-the-board battle between Andrea and Alexandra that broke the chess internet.

## LONDON SYSTEM (D02)

**Andrea Botez (1879)**

**WFM Alexandra Botez (1971)**

**Sardinia Group B Open (3), 05.01.2024**

**1. d4 Nf6 2. Bf4 e6 3. e3 d5 4. Nf3 c5 5. c3 Nc6 6. Nbd2 Bd6 7. Bg3 0-0 8. Bd3 b6 9. Ne5 Qc7 10. f4**



A critical position in the London. Now a well-prepared Alexandra plays the computer's recommendation.

**10. ... cxd4 11. exd4 g6**

Blunting the d3-diagonal's influence, and preparing ... Nf6-h5.

**12. Bf2 a5 13. Qe2 Nh5 14. g3 Nb8 15. a4 f6**



**16. Nxg6?! hxg6 17. Bxg6**

A tiger cannot change its stripes, and Andrea's aggressive style shows itself! Unfortunately, this sacrifice is not fully sound.

**17. ... Ng7 18. h4 Nc6 19. h5 e5!? 20. h6 Ne6 21. Qg4 Kh8 22. f5 Ng5**

White is going to have a tough time getting at the king.

**23. 0-0 Ne7 24. dxe5 Bxe5 25. Qe2 Bxf5**

**26. Bxf5 Nxf5 27. Kg2 Bxg3 28. Bxb6 Nh4+ 29. Kh1 Qxb6 30. Qd3 Be5 31. Qxd5 Rad8 32. Nc4 Rxd5 33. Nxb6 Rd2, White resigned.**

Undoubtedly there are those who will read this and think I'm having a bit of a laugh, reporting on the Sardinia B Open alongside the likes of Tata Steel. Let me assure you: nothing could be further from the truth.

With 1.3 million followers on Twitch, and another 1.55 million on YouTube, the Botez sisters are some of the most prominent ambassadors for our game, bringing in new eyeballs every time they turn on their cameras.

Alexandra Botez had a tremendous performance in Sardinia. Her fans around the world enjoyed it with her. It's a win for chess all around.

## New Titles

Finally, our hearty congratulations to these new American FIDE title holders, awarded between December 2, 2023, and May 13, 2024.

■ GM: Arthur Guo, Bryce Tiglon

■ WGM: Alice Lee

■ IM: Kapil Chandran, Brewington Hardaway, Gus Huston, Aaron Jacobson, Alice Lee, Joseph Levine, Bach Ngo, Gulrukhbegim "Begim" Tokhirjonova, Anish Vivekananthan, Liran Zhou

■ WIM: Ruiyang Yan

■ FM: Havish Sripada, Danial Wilson, Grant Xu

■ WFM: Jocelyn Chen, Crystal Jiuzhou Gu, Angela Liu

■ CM: Derin Goktepe, Henry He, Carter Ho

■ WCM: Vanessa G. Zhou

■ IA: Bryon Doyle, Charles Hatherill, Enrique Huerta, Glenn Panner, Louis Reed, Sam Shoykhet, Abel Talamantez, Jeff Wiewel

■ FA: Larry Bell, Carlos Chavez, Peter Craney, Scott Mason, Jacob Mayer, Yuen Ng, Adam Rubinberg

## 2024 National Junior Chess Congress

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**July 13-14, 2024**

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Orlando, Florida | July 15-20, 2024

US CHESS

DEADLINE FOR U.S. AND CANADIAN registration is June 21. International registration has ended.

# Lopsided

When your learning curves diverge

BY GM ANDY SOLTIS

O

KAY, YOU'VE HEARD A STORY like this before. A young player gets much better at tactics and achieves a master rating. This version is different:

The youngster's gain of 400 points was actually a bit disappointing. And the reason is a lesson for anyone who wants to raise their rating.

The "youngster" was the pioneering computer program Belle. When it reached 1900, its software designer, Ken Thompson, made remarkable improvements. It was soon able to use superior tactical skill to beat rival programs.

## TWO KNIGHTS DEFENSE (C58)

White: Cray Blitz

Black: Belle

Los Angeles, 11.11.1981

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. Ng5 d5 5. exd5 Na5 6. Bb5+ c6 7. dxc6 bxc6 8. Qf3 Rb8 9. Bxc6+ Nxc6 10. Qxc6+ Nd7

A rare opening position in 1981 — and in 2024. Play becomes ragged now.

11. d3 Be7 12. Ne4 Bb7 13. Qa4? Qc7? 14. Nbc3 Bc6 15. Qc4 Qc8 16. Nd5! Bxd5 17. Qxd5 Qxc2 18. O-O f6? 19. f4 Nb6! 20. Qa5? Qxd3 21. Qxa7 O-O 22. Qxe7 Qxe4 23. Qe6+ Kh8 24. fxe5 fxe5

White is better after 25. Bg5. But we are entering the kind of double-edged world in which the better tactician is the prohibitive favorite.

25. Rxf8+ Rxf8 26. h3 Qe1+ 27. Kh2

(see diagram top of next column)

27... h6! 28. Qxb6?

White could have drawn by perpetual check after 28. Bxh6! Qxa1 29. Qg6!.



28. ... Rf1! 29. Qd8+ Kh7 30. Qd3+ e4 31. Qxf1 Qxf1 32. a3 e3 33. Bxe3 Qxa1 34. Bd4 h5 35. Bc3 g5 36. Be5 Qe1 37. Bc3 Qf2 38. Kh1 g4 39. hxc4 hxc4 40. Kh2 Qh4+ 41. Kg1 g3 42. Kf1 Kg6, White resigned.

After the upgraded Belle reached 2120, Thompson felt it would gain enough rating points to qualify for the world's most famous Swiss System tournament, at Lone Pine, California. Only strong masters got to play in it, but there was a lower rating requirement for juniors. And after all, Thompson told me, the new Belle was "only eight months old."

Belle didn't get to Lone Pine. But it made history when it became the world's first program with a master rating. Thompson thought it could keep improving and reach 2400. It never did.

Thompson explained why it didn't in an influential paper that appeared in *Advances in Computer Chess 3*: The new Belle was 500 points stronger — in tactics. But its other skills apparently had not improved as much, he wrote.

Improving players often experience something similar. They learn some skills much faster than others. They become "lopsided."

For example, suppose you find studying openings fun. Soon you discover that you play the first 10 moves of tournament games about 200 points better than you play the middlegame — and 400 points better than you play endgames.

The opening, middlegame, and ending are not the only skill departments with different learning curves. For example, attacking is easier to learn than defending. Calculating forcing moves may come to you faster than evaluating quiet positions. You can develop a knack for handling an open center but remain clueless when the center is closed.

A top Russian trainer, GM Yuri Razuvaev, said of his students, "I know many young players who say 'I can calculate variations — but I don't know how to choose a move.'"

When Bobby Fischer was 13 his rating launched like a rocket. It went from 1726 to master in a year, during which he won his "Game of the Century." But his play could be shockingly uneven.

Here is a previously unpublished example of Fischer at 14, when he went over 2400. His opponent was a Hungarian master who had just fled his homeland, during the failed anti-Communist revolt of 1956, and settled in Cleveland.

## FRENCH DEFENSE, RUBINSTEIN VARIATION (C10)

Bobby Fischer

Lajos Szedlaczek

North Central Championship, Milwaukee, 12.01.1957

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 dxe4 4. Nxe4 Nd7 5. Nf3 Be7 6. Bd3 Ngf6 7. O-O O-O 8. Nxf6+ Bxf6 9. Qe2 c5 10. Be3 Qe7 11. c3 e5 12. dxe5 Nxe5 13. Nxe5 Qxe5 14. Qf3! g5? 15. Rfe1

Did Bobby really overlook 15. Bxc5 (and after 15. ... Qxc5 16. Qxf6)? The moves are accurate because they come from Fischer's own scoresheet. Computers indicate White has a big edge in any case.

15. ... g4 16. Qe4 Qxe4 17. Bxe4 c4 18. Bd5 Bf5 19. Bxc4 Rfd8 20. Rad1 b6 21. Bb3 Kg7 22. g3 h5

# QUIZ FOR JUNE

▶ **LET'S SEE IF YOU ARE** lopsided in the stage of a game called the "late opening." Here are six of the shortest recent games from master events. None lasted longer than 15 moves. Your task is to find the fastest winning line of play. This will usually mean the forced win of a decisive amount of material, such as a rook or minor piece. For solutions, see page 63.



**PROBLEM 1**  
Benjamin Thomas  
David Zhu



BLACK TO MOVE

**PROBLEM 2**  
Ali Elier  
GM Victor Bologan



BLACK TO MOVE

**PROBLEM 3**  
GM Jergus Pechac  
GM Mladen Palac



WHITE TO MOVE

**PROBLEM 4**  
Peter Lalic  
IM Chris Baker



WHITE TO MOVE

**PROBLEM 5**  
FM Pijus Stremavicius  
Rick Lahaye



WHITE TO MOVE

**PROBLEM 6**  
GM Simon Williams  
GM David Paravryan



BLACK TO MOVE



A pawn up, White can choose from among several promising plans. One is f2-f3 and Kg1-f2. For example, 23. f3 gxf3? 24. Kf2 Bg4 25. Bd5 followed by Bd5xf3 with a winning endgame.

This was played in the last round of a Thanksgiving weekend Swiss, when Fischer was still in contention for a prize. The time control of 45 moves in two hours was probably not a factor. Yet a different Fischer seemed to take over White's position. He played the next phase about 300 rating points below his overall strength.

**23. Bd4? Bxd4 24. Rxd4? Rxd4 25. cxd4 Kf6 26. f3 gxf3 27. Kf2 Rd8 28. Rd1 Be4**

**29. Rd2 h4! 30. Ke3?! hxg3!**  
So that 31. Kxe4?? g2 and Black wins.

**31. hxg3 Re8 32. Kf4 Bb7 33. Bd1!**



Black was threatening to win with 33. ... Re2. Fischer realized his advantage had vanished. He managed to draw after **33. ... f2 34. Rxf2 Re4+ 35. Kf3 Kg5 36. Kg2 Rxd4+ 37. Bf3.**

Less than three weeks later Fischer entered his first U.S. Championship. This time his endgame play was not exploited. He won the tournament in a major upset and became a grandmaster 10 months later. By then he was bringing his endgame skill up to GM

speed. He was eventually seen as one of the world's best in rook-and-bishop endgames.

This raises an age-old question: Is it better to correct your weaknesses than to enhance your strengths? The knee-jerk answer is "Yes." But in Bobby's case, being lopsided was more of an asset than a liability when he was a 1700 player.

Why? Because at 1700 he didn't have to know sophisticated endgame analysis. Mastering the Najdorf Sicilian mattered more to him — because he could deliver mate well before queens went off the board.

There's another factor that muddies the strengths-or-weaknesses question. A law of diminishing returns kicks in when one of your skills rises sharply.

Belle's big surge came when it was able to calculate four or more moves into the future, as in the Cray Blitz game. Ken Thompson's paper said his experiments showed a computer gains about 250 points in strength for every additional half move it can analyze.

But over the years, we learned that benefit diminishes as a player gets stronger. Today, you can watch on-line engines as they peer more than ten moves into the future. Have they reached 4000? No, at least not yet. ♠

# The Bishop Pair

How to use it, and when to cash it in

BY **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**

**T**

HE ADVANTAGE OF HAVING the bishop pair has been well established. The bishops thrive in open positions, or positions

with no central pawns to hamper them. On the other hand, if the position is closed and your bishops get stuck behind the pawn chain, they can become useless.

The bishop pair can be menacing in all parts of the game. Imagine two bishops staring at your kingside or the fianchettoed g2-bishop aimed at your queenside, preventing you from developing your pieces. It's for this reason that exchanging a bishop for a knight can be a serious decision with long term consequences. Even if in the position is one where the bishop isn't a strong piece, I think it's important to always consider the potential of the bishops and what is lost in exchanging one of them.

One of the more common mistakes made by amateurs is casually capturing a pinned knight with a bishop, especially if unprompted. Unlike knights, bishops have the potential of becoming powerful pieces if the pawn structure can potentially change and the position becomes open. Let's look at a few examples where the bishops thrive.

## BISHOP PAIR AS AN ATTACKING FORCE

The bishop pair works particularly well in an attack on the king. You are probably familiar with the classical double bishop sacrifice on the h7 and g7 squares, completely demolishing the defense of the enemy king. The two bishops are also excellent at creating targets near the king, forcing weaknesses and keeping his majesty squarely in the kill zone.

## ON THE ATTACK

**GM Sergey Karjakin (2778)**

**GM Fabiano Caruana (2773)**

**Grand Slam Final (2), Sao Paulo, 09.25.2012**



**26. ... Nxe4!**

Caruana sacrifices the Exchange to open the e-file and let his pieces in. His bishop pair is preventing the white pieces from effectively joining the king's defense. The bishops are also ready to reroute and attack the vulnerable white king given the chance.

**27. Nxe4 Rxe4 28. Bxe4 Rxe4 29. Qc2 Qe7 30. Rg1 Rxe3!**

Removing the last obstacle to victory.

**31. fxe3 Qxe3 32. Rbf1 Be2**

Now the light-squared bishop joins the action. Although the white king appears to have plenty of defenders surrounding him, both diagonals are open and the black bishops will quickly become unstoppable.

**33. Qf5 Bd3 34. Qd7 Be5+ 35. Kh1**

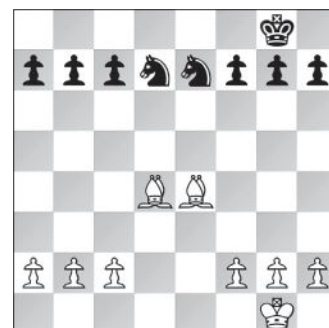
After 35. Nxe5 Qxe5+ 36. Kh1 Qe4+ 37. Kh2 Qe2+ 38. Kg3 Qe5+ 39. Kg2 Nh4+ mate will soon follow.

**35. ... Be4 36. Qe8+ Nf8, White resigned.**

White is completely dominated. A beautiful attack from Caruana!

## BISHOP PAIR IN THE ENDGAME

Don't shy away from entering endgames with the bishop pair; their strength can really be felt with fewer pieces on the board. The bishops have particularly good potential if there are pawns on both flanks, even in endings that seem somewhat harmless.



## BISHOPS AND KNIGHTS

Unlike knights, which can't easily hop from one side of the board to the other, the bishops can target pawns from the a- to the h-file. In the above position, it is still possible to defend the pawns, but Black will eventually need to make certain concessions. Note that if we remove the pawns from one flank and leave both with, for example, only kingside pawns, then the power of the bishop pair will significantly wane.

## COMPLICATIONS

WGM Tatev Abrahamyan (2358)

WIM Thalia Cervantes Landeiro (2311)

U.S. Women's Championship (1),

Lichess.org, 10.21.2020



We have reached the critical moment in the game, as the tension in the center is about to get resolved. Many different captures and move orders are possible, requiring precision from the players.

**18. ... Nxe4 19. Nxe4 dxe4 20. Nxe5 Bxe5?**

This innocent-looking exchange was the beginning of trouble for my talented opponent.

**21. dxe5 Qxd2 22. Bxd2**

Here 22. Rxd2 was more accurate.

**22. ... Rfd8**



The endgame looks equal, and objectively, Black should be fine with good play, but the bishop pair gives me great fighting chances, requiring Black to find a home for her knight.

**23. Bc1 Nxe5 24. Bxe4+ g6 25. Bc2 Nc4?**

Another innocent-looking move that leads to trouble. Optically, this might seem an active square for the knight, but it is about to get kicked around.

Exchanging a pair of rooks with 25. ... Rxd1 26. Rxd1 Re8 can alleviate some of Black's suffering, but giving up the only

open file is an extremely difficult decision to make.

**26. b3 Nb6 27. c4!**

There is no outpost for the knight on d5, and it will have to retreat again after Bc1-e3. Additionally, the dark squares around the black king are weak. It is hard to prove anything without a queen, of course, but the black king will suffer some discomfort, especially as it can easily get cut off by the dark-squared bishop.

**27. ... Nd7 28. Ba3 c5**

Black's position falls apart after an inconspicuous move like 28. ... Kg7. White should win after 29. Be7 Re8 30. Rxe6 fxe6 31. Rxd7.

**29. Rd6**

Now there is the big threat of Re1-d1. Black has to give up material.

**29. ... Nf6 30. Bxc5 Ne8 31. Rxd8 Rxd8 32.**

**Rd1 Ra8 33. Bb6 Nf6 34. Rd8 Ra6 35. Bd4**

The weak dark squares have become an issue, and the king fears for its life!

**35. ... Kg7 36. Be5 Rc6 37. Rb8 Rb6 38.**

**Bc7 Rc6 39. Bxa5 Bc8 40. Bc3 b6 41. Be4**

**Re6 42. Bd5 Re8 43. Rxb6 Be6 44. Bxe6,**

**Black resigned.**

## EXCHANGING AT THE RIGHT TIME

We already saw a few examples in the April column where the exchange of a bishop for a knight allows a player to enter an advantageous position with opposite-colored bishops. Since it is easier for a bishop to hunt down a knight and force a trade, the side with the bishop pair can often trade one of the bishops for a knight for a more favorable pawn structure. Here's a clear demonstration of this theme by Ulf Andersson.

## TECHNIQUE

GM Ulf Andersson

GM Laszlo Hazai

Zonal (12), Pula, 11.06.1975

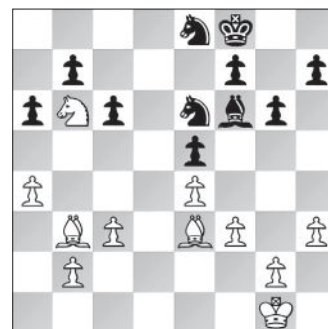
(see diagram top of next column)

**27. Bxe6!**

This exchange leaves Black with a permanent weakness in doubled pawns which can be easily targeted.

**27. ... fxe6 28. Bc5+ Kf7**

If 28. ... Be7 29. Nd7+ wins the e5-pawn immediately.



**29. Nd7 Kg7**

Unfortunately, 29. ... Nc7 isn't possible, as the knight is needed to defend the d6-square. After 30. Bd6 the e5-pawn falls.

**30. Kf2 Bh4+ 31. g3 Bf6 32. Ke2 Bd8**

**33. Bf2**

A patient move by White, which leads to his winning a clean pawn.

After 33. Nxe5 Bc7 White either has to give up the g3-pawn or allow some counterplay. A sample line is 34. f4 (not 34. Bd4?? c5) 34. ... Nf6 35. Kf3 Bxe5 36. fxe5 Nd7 and Black has created a blockade.

**33. ... Bf6 34. Nc5 Nd6 35. Nxe6+ Kf7 36.**

**Nc5 Bd8 37. b3 Ba5 38. b4 Bc7 39. a5 Bb8**

**40. Be3, Black resigned.**

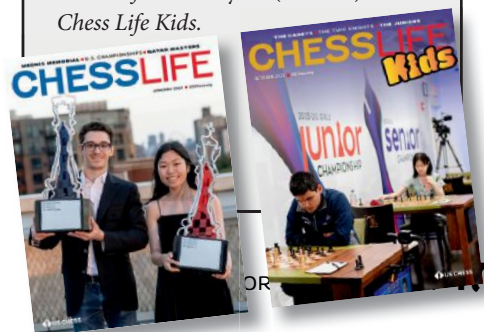
Hopefully, the next time you have the bishop pair, you will more critically consider if and when to part with it! ♠

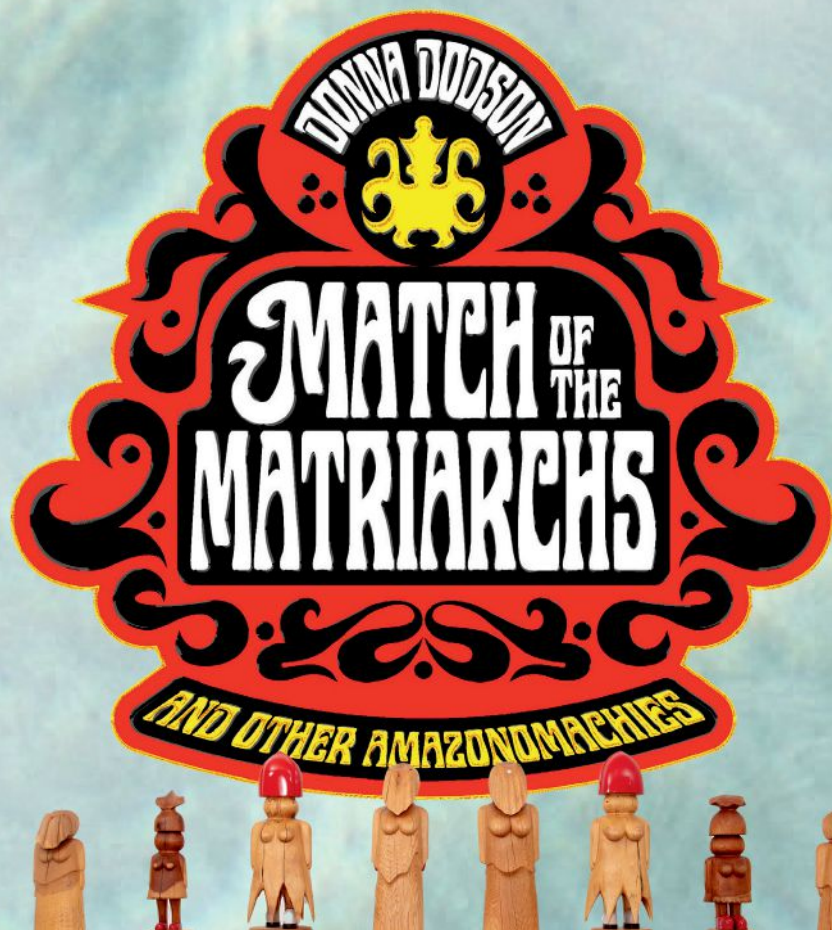
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**ON VIEW**  
**February 15 –**  
**September 15, 2024**

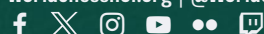
*Donna Dodson: Match of the Matriarchs and other Amazonomachies* is the first solo exhibition by a woman artist hosted by the World Chess Hall of Fame. Centering on women's stories, women's lives, and their place in the history of chess, the show includes Dodson's monumental, life-sized chess set *Match of the Matriarchs*—32-large scale wooden sculptures representing all-female representations of cephalopods battling cetaceans.



**ON VIEW**  
**April 11, 2024 –**  
**January 12, 2025**

*Clash for the Crown: Celebrating Chess Champions* explores the histories of the World Chess Championship and Women's World Chess Championship. This exhibition coincides with the 100th anniversary of FIDE's founding and includes never-before-exhibited artifacts related to many of the game's most accomplished players.

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# No End to the Excitement!

Controversies raged and great chess was played at the 2023 World Rapid and Blitz Championships.

BY **WGM JENNIFER YU**



PHOTOS: COURTESY FIDE / KOROLKOVA (CARLSEN, NIEMANN) FIDE / OOTES (BOADNARUK, VIDIT)



**T**HE WORLD RAPID AND BLITZ Championships is one of the most viewed events every year, drawing top grandmasters from all over the world. In a curious turn of events, it has become must-watch holiday television viewing in Norway. (I can't imagine why!)

The 2023 edition took place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from December 25-30. Over the last few years, tournaments like these, featuring faster time controls, have surged in popularity as time scrambles and heartbreaking blunders thrilled fans across the globe.

This tournament has been on my bucket list for years, as it's a unique opportunity to compete in a World Championship event with many of my favorite top players. After

many attempts, my schedule finally worked out, so I grabbed the opportunity to trek to Uzbekistan and one of the world's oldest cities. Samarkand, a historic gem located on the ancient Silk Road trade route, is renowned for its stunning mosques and mausoleums, offering a rich backdrop to this high-stakes tournament.

The tournament format features three days of rapid chess followed by two days of blitz. With a total prize fund of one million dollars — \$700,000 allocated for the Open and \$300,000 for the Women's category — and the allure of World Champion titles, many of the world's top players were in attendance. The Open Rapid featured 13 games of G/15+10 over three days, while the Women's Rapid included 11 games. The Open Blitz was contested over 21 games (17 for the women) across two days, with a time control of G/3+2.

So the basic facts are easy to report. GM Magnus Carlsen won his fifth World Rapid title, and in a thrilling playoff, IM Anastasia

Bodnaruk defeated GM Humpy Koneru to secure her first Women's World Rapid championship. Carlsen continued his dominance by also winning the blitz segment, while GM Valentina Gunina took home the title in the Women's.

But this thumbnail overlooks a lot of what made this event so interesting. In contrast to the classical international tournaments I usually play, the fast-paced nature of these games deliver results quickly, leaving no time to rest. The constant action is great for spectators, but it poses a unique challenge for players, who must swiftly bounce back from their previous battles and prepare for the next within minutes.

And with the faster time controls, drama is never far behind. Each day in Samarkand was packed with excitement: games were delayed due to disputes and appeals, a controversial dress code policy regarding shoes sparked a frenzy online, and a game was forfeited due to conspiracy.

To make things even spicier, both the Rapid and the Blitz offered players points towards their FIDE Circuit standings, a qualification path to the 2024 Candidates. Both GMs Arjun Erigaisi and Anish Giri were on the hunt for points; for Giri, a top-three finish in the Rapid or a win in the Blitz, would be enough to qualify.

Here's how it all went down.

## OPEN RAPID

On the opening day of the tournament, Magnus Carlsen tied for the lead with a score of 4½/5 after drawing his first-round match



Photos, clockwise from top left of spread: Carlsen cannot hide his disgust while resetting the pieces; Vidit reacts to his blunder in round 12 of the Open Rapid tournament; Nepomniachtchi thinks he's so witty for agreeing to a knight dance with Dubov; young phenom Roman Shogdzhiyev had a breakout performance in Samarkand; American GM Andrew Hong argues his case with an arbiter after his formal protest over a clock issue was denied; IM Anastasia Bodnaruk is relieved to win the tiebreak with GM Humpy Koneru; and GM Hans Niemann tweets away.

against Nikita Petrov and then winning his following games. Joining him at the top of the early leaderboard were Arjun Erigaisi, Yu Yangyi, Vidit Santosh Gujrathi, and Ivan Cheparinov. Cheparinov dramatically captured a share of the lead after a miniature fifth-round victory over Rapport.

## CARO-KANN DEFENSE (B10)

GM Ivan Cheparinov (2618)

GM Richard Rapport (2735)

World Rapid Ch (5), Samarkand,  
12.26.2023

1. e4 c6 2. Nf3 d5 3. d3 Qc7 4. Nc3 dxe4  
5. dxe4 Nd7 6. a4 Ngf6 7. Bc4 Nb6 8. Bb3  
Bg4 9. h3 Bxf3 10. Qxf3 e6 11. Bg5 Nbd7  
12. 0-0 Bd6 13. Rad1 h6 14. Be3 g5 15.  
Rfe1 Rg8 16. Bd4



After an unconventional opening, we've reached a strange position where the black king is still stuck in the center, but the white king isn't safe either as the black pieces are lined up to break through its defenses with the early ... g7-g5 push.

### 16. ... Rg6?!

Here 16. ... g4! is the natural continuation, as 17. hxg4 Nxg4 gives massive threats against the white king.

### 17. Qe2

Now the pawn sacrifice 17. e5! is timely, opening up the center to attack the black king. For example, 17. ... Nxe5 18. Qe3 Nfd7 (not 18. ... Ned7?? 19. Bxe6! fxe6 20. Qxe6+ Kf8 21. Ne4 and wins) 19. Ne4 Be7 20. Ng3 Bd6 21. Bxe5 Nxe5 22. Rxd6 Qxd6 23. Qxe5 and White is much better.

### 17. ... Be5 18. Nd5!

This thematic knight sacrifice blows up the center. The computer evaluation is equal here, but I think it looks quite dangerous for Black. The pressure might have gotten to Rapport, as makes an inexplicable blunder in a few moves...

18. ... cxd5 19. exd5 Bxd4 20. dxe6



### 20. ... Bxf2??

This looks like panic to me. After this the black king is undefendable.

Here 20. ... Nc5 21. Rxd4 fxe6 looks incredibly dangerous, so it's understandable why Rapport might not want to enter into this option. However, Black can quickly tuck the king on f8 and the rooks can come in time to defend everything.

Another idea is 20. ... Be5 21. exd7+ Nxd7 22. Rxd7 Kxd7 23. Qb5+ Rc6 24. Qd5+ Qd6 25. Qxf7+ Qe7 26. Qd5+ Qd6 with equality.

21. Qxf2 Nc5 22. exf7+ Kf8 23. Qf5 Kg7 24. Re8 Rxe8 25. Qxf6+, Black resigned.

Giri's campaign to earn FIDE Circuit points faced early difficulties following a first-round upset.

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT, DECLINED (D37)

GM Klementy Sychev (2481)

GM Anish Giri (2698)

World Rapid Ch (1), Samarkand,  
12.26.2023

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. c4 e6 4. Nc3 Nbd7 5. e3 a6 6. cxd5 exd5 7. Bd3 Bd6 8. 0-0 0-0 9. Qc2 Re8 10. Re1 c6 11. h3 Nf8 12. Bd2 Bd7 13. Re2 Rc8 14. Rae1 c5 15. dxc5 Bxc5 16. Qb3 b5 17. Nxd5 Bxh3 18. Nf4 Bg4 19. Ng5 Qe7 20. f3 Bd7 21. Ne4 Nxe4 22. Bxe4 Qh4 23. Bb4 Ba7 24. Bxf8 Kxf8 25. Nd5 Bb8 26. g4??

(see diagram top of next column)

### 26. ... Rxe4! 27. fxe4 Bxg4

Stronger was 27. ... Qg3+ 28. Kf1 Bxg4 29. Qb4+ Bd6 when White must incur huge material losses to stop the ... Bg4-h3+ threat.

### 28. Qb4+ Kg8??

A huge blunder, giving away the rook with-out enough to create mate threats in return.



Now we see why an earlier ... Qh4-g3+ would be better; here, the move can be defended with Re2-g2, as the b4-queen defends the e1-rook.

Surprisingly the king is safe in the middle of the board. After 28. ... Ke8 Black will soon win against the naked white king!

29. Ne7+ Kh8 30. Nxc8 Qg3+ 31. Rg2, Black resigned.

Several other top players, including the recent World Championship challenger GM Ian Nepomniachtchi, also encountered early difficulties in the tournament. After nearly drawing against a 2000-rated opponent, he lost in the third round to GM Sergey Grigoriants.

Nepomniachtchi was also at the center of an early controversy, complaining via Twitter after day one that Carlsen had exclusive access to a special lounge and a computer between rounds — advantages not offered to other competitors. His concerns were echoed by GMs Fabiano Caruana and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave.

Carlsen's team responded with a denial of the claims about computer access, but did not address anything about a special lounge. It has been noted that since 2016, Carlsen has been offered a private rest area by tournament directors, which perhaps explains why I never saw him in the common player waiting area!

One of the highlights of this tournament is the annual showcasing of young talent from around the world. On day two, 17-year-old GM Volodar Murzin scored 3½/4 against the likes of GMs Dubov, Nepomniachtchi, Praggnanandhaa, and Radjabov. And eight-year-old Roman Shogdzhiyev defeated two GMs in the rapid tournament, setting an age record in the process. He continued to impress by defeating three grandmasters in the blitz, marking him as one to watch in the years to come.

In the end Carlsen clinched his fifth World Rapid Championship with an undefeated score of 10/13, while GMs Vladimir Fedoseev

(9½/13) and Yu Yangyi (9/13) finished second and third respectively. A pivotal moment came in round 10, where Carlsen's decisive win against Fedoseev distanced him from the chasing pack.

## NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E21)

GM Vladimir Fedoseev (2716)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2818)

World Rapid Ch (10), Samarkand,

12.28.2023

**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Nf3 Bxc3+ 5. bxc3 d6 6. Qc2 Qe7 7. a4 c5 8. e4 e5 9. d5 Nbd7 10. h4**

An interesting idea to gain space on the kingside and perhaps launch an attack in that direction. Carlsen responds with his own original plan.

**10. ... h6 11. Be2 Kd8**

Surprisingly, Carlsen opts to manually move the king to the queenside and out of potential harm's way. Now he is free to open up the kingside.

**12. Nd2 Kc7 13. Nf1**

Here 13. a5 is a good move to throw in, gaining space and preventing Black from playing ... a7-a5 himself.

**13. ... g6 14. g4 a5 15. h5 gxh5 16. gxh5 Nb6**



This position is deceptive. It looks like there are multiple holes in the black camp, especially on b5 and f5, but it's not easy for White to take advantage of these weaknesses as they are either guarded or inaccessible. In fact, Black has a small positional advantage. He will soon deploy his pieces towards the kingside, while White has no clear plan.

**17. Ng3 Bd7 18. Qb3 Ne8 19. Be3 Ng7 20. Kd2 f5 21. exf5 Nxf5 22. Rab1 Ra6 23. Nxf5 Bxf5 24. Rb2 Qg7 25. Qd1 Rg8 26. Kc1 Qh7 27. Ra2**



Now that the b6-knight has done its job of keeping the b-file closed, it is time to put it somewhere more useful.

**27. ... Nd7 28. Rb2 Nf6 29. Rg1 Rxd1 30. Qxg1**

Now it's time to improve the rook!

**30. ... Ra8 31. f4 Rg8 32. Qh2 e4 33. Rb1 Qd7 34. Bd1 Bg4 35. Bc2 Qf5 36. Kb2 Bxh5 37. Re1 b6 38. Kb3 Rg6 39. Qh1 Rg3 40. Qh4 Rh3 41. Qf2 Bf3 42. Rg1 Ng4 43. Qe1 h5 44. Bc1 Rh2 45. Qg3 Be2 46. Re1 Bxc4+! 47. Kxc4 Rxc2 48. Qh4 Kd7 49. Be3 Rg2 50. Qh1 Rg3 51. Bc1 Nf6 52. Rd1 Rd3 53. Rxd3 exd3 54. Kb5 Qxd5 55. Qh3+ Kc7 56. c4 Qc6+ 57. Ka6 b5+, White resigned.**

A beautiful ending to a stunning positional game by Magnus Carlsen.

It was perhaps GM Vidit Santosh Gujrathi who posed the most threat to Carlsen for the Championship title, trailing by just half a point after 11 rounds. In an intense 12th round, Vidit was pushing against Fedoseev,



Anish Giri

close to a victory that would have tied him with Carlsen for the lead. However, in a heartbreaking turn of events, he squandered his winning position and blundered a bishop, dashing his hopes for a medal and simultaneously reviving Fedoseev's campaign. This underscores the exhilarat-



Nodirbek Abdusattorov



Magnus Carlsen

ing yet unforgiving nature of rapid chess, where dreams can be made and shattered in the blink of an eye.

## SEMI-SLAV DEFENSE, MERAN VARIATION (D46)

GM Vidit Santosh Gujrathi (2691)

GM Vladimir Fedoseev (2716)

World Rapid Ch (12), Samarkand, 12.28.2023

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. Nc3 e6 5. e3 Nbd7 6. Bd3 dxc4 7. Bxc4 Bd6 8. e4 e5 9. dxe5 Nxe5 10. Nxe5 Bxe5 11. Qxd8+ Kxd8



Vladimir Fedoseev

12. Bxf7 Bxc3+ 13. bxc3 Nxe4 14. 0-0

Let's assess the opening. Material is equal, but Vidit has a huge lead in development, and the bishop pair gives him a sizable positional advantage.

14. ... Bd7

If 14. ... Nxc3 15. Re1 Bf5 16. Bb2 and White will the g7-pawn back with initiative.

15. Re1 Rf8 16. Bb3 Re8 17. f3 Nxc3 18.

Bb2 Nd5 19. Bxg7 Be6 20. Re4 Kd7 21.

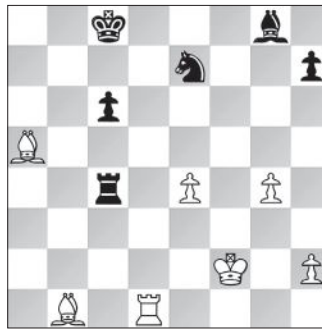
Rd1 a5 22. a4 Bg8 23. Kf2 Re7 24. Bc3 b6

25. Bd4 Rb8 26. g4 b5 27. axb5 Rxb5 28.

Ba4 Rxe4 29. fxe4 Rb4 30. Bc2 Rc4 31. Bb1

Stronger was 31. Rd2.

31. ... Ne7 32. Bb6+ Kc8 33. Bxa5



With an extra pawn and a dominant position, White nearly has the full point. However, you can't let your guard down in top-level chess for even a second. Fedoseev uses the tricks up his sleeve and fights on.

33. ... Ra4 34. Rd8+ Kb7 35. Bc3

I think 35. Rd7+ Ka6 36. Bc3 Ng6 37. Bd4 is a better alternative. The black king is sidelined and White has multiple threats against the king, bishop, and pawn.

35. ... Kc7 36. Re8 Kd7 37. Rb8 Ba2 38. Bd3 Ng6 39. e5?

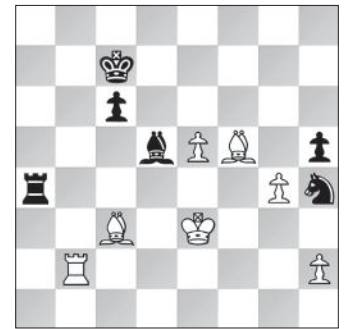
This is a mistake that allows the white rook to be pushed back.

After 39. Rb7+ Kd6 40. Rxh7 Ne5 41. Be2 Rxe4 White has two solid passed pawns to push for the win.

39. ... Kc7 40. Rb2 Bd5?!

The position is fairly equal after 40. ... Be6 41. h3 Nf4.

41. Bf5 Nh4 42. Ke3 h5?



A mistake, allowing White to push the passed e-pawn!

43. e6! Ra3 44. Kd2?

White wins after 44. e7 Bf7 45. Be6!! Be8 (if 45. ... Rxc3+ 46. Kd4 and wins) 46. Bb3 hxg4 47. Be5+ Kb7 (worse is 47. ... Kd7 48. Rd2+ Kxe7 49. Bd6+) 48. Bg3 Nf5+ 49. Kf4 Nxe7 50. Bf7+.

44. ... Nf3+ 45. Kc2 hxg4 46. e7 Bf7 47. Bxg4??

A heartbreaking blunder — losing a bishop after winning for most of the game and crushing Vidit's hopes to be on the podium.

47. ... Bg6+ 48. Kd1 Rxc3 49. Re2 Be8

50. h3 Nd4 51. Re4 c5 52. h4 Rg3 53. h5

Kd6 54. Ke1 Rg2 55. Kf1 Rh2 56. Kg1 Rh4

57. Kf2 Kd5 58. Rf4 Kd6 59. Kg3 Rh1 60.

Re4 Rf1 61. Kh4 Kd5 62. Bh3 Rh1 63. Rf4

Bd7 64. Rg4 Nf5+ 65. Kg5 Rxh3, White

resigned.



Vidit Santosh Gujrathi after round 12

## WOMEN'S RAPID

In the Women's rapid tournament, the tone was immediately set when none of the top seeds in the first seven boards managed to

win their opening games. There were only two decisive upsets: WGM Gergana Pecheva's victory over GM Alexandra Kosteniuk and my own win against GM Mariya Muzychuk! This highlights one of the most exciting aspects of this tournament — the chance to face and possibly defeat some of the world's top female players, including former world champions.

As day one closed, just two players, IM Nurgul Salimova and GM Zhu Jiner, remained perfect with scores of 4/4. Both are players my age that I've grown up competing with and against. Their strong performances indicate the rise of the new generation of top-level female chess talent, especially after Salimova's runner-up finish at the World Cup a few months earlier.

## CARO-KANN DEFENSE, EXCHANGE VARIATION (B13)

WGM Turmunkh Munkhzul (2279)

IM Nurgul Salimova (2371)

World Women's Rapid Ch (4),

Samarkand, 12.26.2023

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. exd5 cxd5 4. Bd3 Nf6 5. c3 Bg4 6. Qb3 Qc7 7. f3?!

Here the main move 7. h3 is better as it allows the knight to be developed on f3. As we see in the game, a lot of White's issues arose because of the lack of defense on the kingside.

7. ... Bd7 8. Ne2 Nc6 9. Bf4 e5 10. dxe5 Nxe5 11. Bb5 Bd6 12. Bxd7+ Qxd7 13. 0-0 0-0 14. Bg5 Qf5



The queen is ready to wreak some havoc, while the black knight is preparing to jump to e3 via c4, highlighting the weaknesses created by the early f2-f3.

15. Bh4 Nc4 16. Nd4 Qh5 17. Bg3 Bxg3 18. hxg3 Qg5 19. g4 h5 20. Qc2 hxg4 21. Qf5 Qe3+ 22. Kh2 Qh6+ 23. Kg1 Ne3 24. Qe5 Rae8 25. Qg3 Nxf1, White resigned.

A cute miniature by Salimova, displaying

her impressive positional and attacking skills to punish her opponent's weaknesses.

On the second day, IM Anastasia Bodnaruk emerged as the leader in the Women's event at 7/8, overtaking the initial leaders Salimova and Zhu Jiner. With back-to-back victories over Salimova and Zhu (the latter win played in striking fashion), Bodnaruk was in a great position for the final day of the tournament.

## SICILIAN DEFENSE (B23)

IM Anastasia Bodnaruk (2265)

GM Zhu Jiner (2431)

World Women's Rapid Ch (8),

Samarkand, 12.27.2023

1. e4 c5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nd4 4. Bc4 e6 5. Nge2 Qc7 6. d3 a6 7. Nxd4 cxd4 8. Ne2 b5 9. Bb3 Bc5 10. c3 dxc3 11. bxc3 Ne7 12. 0-0 Bb7 13. d4 Bb6 14. Bc2 d6 15. Be3 0-0 16. Rc1 e5 17. Ng3 Rad8 18. Qh5 Ng6 19. Nf5 Rfe8 20. Qg4 Qxc3??

Falling for White's trap!

21. Bb3 Qb4 22. dxe5 Bxe3



23. Bxf7+!!

The c7-square is no longer defended, letting the white rook enter with a bang.

23. ... Kxf7 24. Rc7+ Kg8 25. Rxc7+ Kf8 26. fxe3

Tripled e-pawns — wild! The introduction of the f-rook into the fray will end the game.

26. ... Qxe4 27. Rxc6

Here 27. Rxh7!! is a particularly nice mate. If 27. ... Qxc4 28. Nh6+ Qf3 29. Rxf3+ Bxf3, then 30. Rf7 is mate.

27. ... Qxc4 28. Rxc6 Rxe5 29. Nxd6+ Ke7 30. Nxb7 Rd2 31. e4 h5 32. Rg7+ Ke6 33. Rgf7 Rg5 34. R7f2 Rd7 35. Rf6+ Ke5 36. Nc5 Rd2 37. Re6+ Kd4 38. Nb3+, Black resigned.

The second day of the tournament brought

its own share of drama, but this time over shoes!

Popular streamer and FM Anna-Maja Kazarian took to Twitter to reveal she had been fined 100 euros for wearing sneakers — supposedly in violation of the dress code. The footwear in question were a pair of Burberry sneakers!

This sparked a flurry of debate on social media about the appropriateness of various types of footwear and the relevance of having a dress code in chess tournaments. Having been dress-coded multiple times for wearing sneakers at tournaments in my youth, I've learned that it's always better to err on the side of caution. Consequently, this tournament was one of the rare occasions I set aside my favorite pair!

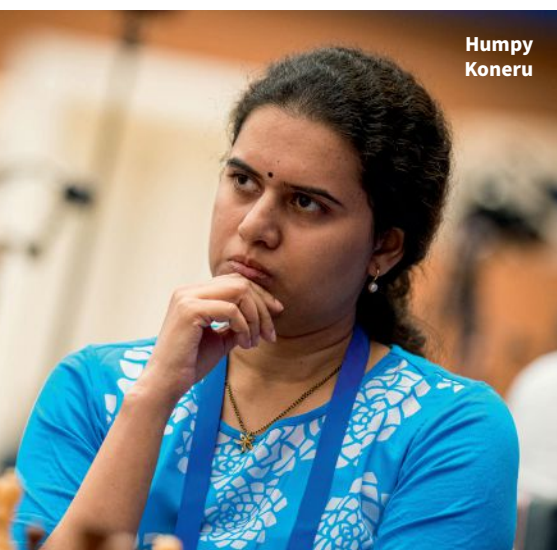
The event concluded in dramatic fashion when IM Anastasia Bodnaruk became the first international master to win the Women's World Rapid Championship, defeating GM Koneru Humpy in a playoff. GM Lei Tingjie also finished strongly, tying with them at 8½ but missing out on the playoffs due to tiebreak rules.

Here too there was a bit of controversy, as it turned out that the tiebreaks in the Women's event differed from that of the Open. These tiebreaks only sent two players to a playoff, a fact that I suspect Lei was unaware of given her early draw offer (with White) to Bodnaruk in the penultimate round.

After two chaotic blitz games, the playoff went to sudden death games where whoever won first would be declared champion. Following a draw, Bodnaruk won the next game by flagging Humpy, claiming the



Jennifer Yu

Humpy  
KoneruAnastasia  
Bodnaruk

championship title. This was a fitting end to a wildly unpredictable tournament. It's not often you witness a world champion being crowned due to a flag!

### RETI OPENING (A06)

GM Humpy Koneru (2444)

IM Anastasia Bodnaruk (2265)

World Women's Rapid Ch (15),  
Samarkand, 12.28.2023

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. b3 Bg7 4. Bb2 0-0 5. e3 d5 6. cxd5 Nxd5 7. Bxg7 Kxg7 8. d4 c5 9. Bc4 cxd4 10. Qxd4+ Nf6 11. 0-0 Nc6 12. Qb2 Bg4 13. Ne5 Nxe5 14. Qxe5 Rc8 15. h3 Bf5 16. Nc3 a6 17. e4 Bd7 18. a4 Qc7 19. Qxc7 Rxc7 20. e5 Nh5 21. Nd5 Rc5 22. g4 e6??

This is the wrong way to attack the d5-knight. Now the h5-knight will be lost, but Bodnaruk keeps fighting till the end.

Stronger in this position was 22. ... Be6 with the idea 23. Nxe7?? (23. Rfd1 b5 24. axb5 axb5 25. Ra5 Bxd5 26. Rxd5 Rxd5 27. Bxd5 Nf4 is equal) 23. ... Nf4 and Black is nearly winning.

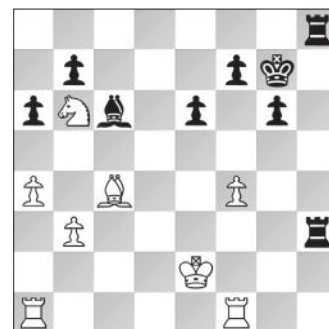
23. Nb6 Bc6 24. gxh5 Rxe5 25. f4 Re3 26. hxxg6

Better was 26. Kh2, preventing Black from gaining counterplay from an open h-file.

26. ... hxxg6 27. Kf2 Rxh3 28. Ke2 Rfh8

(see diagram top of next column)

With the active black rooks, it's not so easy for White to make progress. Worse, Koneru



is solely playing with increment at this point, so there's no time to think.

29. Rf2 Rc3 30. Rd1 Rhh3 31. Rd3 Rc2+ 32. Rd2 Rc1 33. a5 Rhh1 34. Kd3 Rh3+ 35. Kd4 Re1 36. Kc5 Rc1 37. Kd6 Be4 38. Kc7??

Dropping a pawn. Instead 38. Nd7 and steadily maneuvering the pieces will lead to a simple win for White. Her extra piece and active king will come out on top.

38. ... Rxb3! 39. Rd4 Bd5, White lost on time.

After a shocking blunder, Koneru flagged here, and the tournament was over. IM Anastasia Bodnaruk is the Women's World Rapid Champion!

## OPEN BLITZ

Fresh from his victory in the rapid, Carlsen continued his winning streak by claiming his seventh World Blitz title with a score of 16/21. GM Daniil Dubov was hot on his heels, finishing a close second with 15½ points, while GM Vladislav Artemiev secured third

Spectators huddle  
around the dramatic  
Women's Rapid playoff.

place with 15 points, having led or been near the lead for much of the tournament.

Blitz chess is particularly entertaining due to the pressure it puts on even the top players, leading to silly and funny mistakes. The tournament was peppered with blunders and it saw the use of many unconventional openings, such as Carlsen's 1. ... a6 in the third round. Artemiev captured the early lead by winning his sixth-round game against Praggnanandhaa, achieving a perfect score of 6/6 with a half-point lead over Carlsen, who had drawn his second round.

## QUEEN'S PAWN OPENING (D02)

GM Vladislav Artemiev (2799)  
GM Praggnanandhaa R. (2665)  
World Blitz Ch (6), Samarkand,  
12.29.2023

1. Nf3 d5 2. g3 c5 3. Bg2 Nc6 4. d4 e6  
5. 0-0 cxd4 6. Nxd4 Bc5 7. Nb3 Bb6 8. e4  
d4 9. c3 e5 10. cxd4 exd4 11. Na3 Nge7  
12. Bf4 0-0 13. Nc4 Be6 14. Rc1 Ng6  
15. Qd2 Nxf4 16. Qxf4? Qe7?

Instead 16. ... Nb4! would have picked up either the a2-pawn or the Exchange.

17. Qd6 Qf6 18. e5 Qh6 19. Nxb6 axb6  
20. Rcd1 Rad8 21. Qc7 Bg4 22. Rd2 d3 23.  
Qxb6



23. ... Qh5?

Black needed to take the opportunity to get rid of the e5-pawn via 23. ... Nxe5 24. Qxh6 gxh6 25. Rc1. Now White has time to defend himself, while the black pawns on b7 and d3 will become huge targets.

24. f4 Be2 25. Rf2 Qh6 26. Nc1 Qe6 27.  
Qb3 Qe7 28. Bxc6 bxc6 29. Nxe2 dxe2 30.  
Rfxe2

White is up two solid pawns.

30. ... Qc5+ 31. Kg2 Rb8 32. Qc3 Qb5 33.  
b3 c5 34. f5 Rfe8 35. h4 h5 36. Qc4 Qc6+

37. Qe4 Qc7 38. e6 fxe6 39. fxe6 Rb4  
40. Qg6 Qc6+ 41. Kg1 Rg4 42. Qf7+, Black  
resigned.

With Qf7xh5+gx4 coming, Black threw in the towel.

While the tournament had been running smoothly with rounds starting on time, a few disputes during the blitz segment caused delays. One came after round six when GM Andrew Hong challenged his loss on time to GM Yu Yangyi, citing a clock malfunction.

This appeal led to a one-hour delay, which seemed to alter the energy of the games for the rest of the day, with a number of quick draws. However, this unexpected delay had a silver lining as it provided an excellent opportunity for players to socialize. I made several new friends during the times in between rounds throughout the tournament. Play eventually resumed after the appeal was decided in Yu's favor.

By round 10, Carlsen and Dubov had caught up to Artemiev. And in round 11, one of the most memorable moments of the event took place in the game between Dubov and Nepomniachtchi. They played a 12-move draw where the knights moved across the board to end up at their original squares.

## IRREGULAR OPENING (A00)

GM Daniil Dubov (2763)  
GM Ian Nepomniachtchi (2795)  
World Blitz Ch (11), Samarkand,  
12.29.2023

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. Nd4 Nd5 3. Nb3 Nb6 4. Nc3  
Nc6 5. Ne4 Ne5 6. Ng5 Ng4 7. Nf3 Nf6 8.  
Ng1 Ng8 9. Nc5 Nc4 10. Na4 Na5 11. Nc3  
Nc6 12. Nb1 Nb8, draw.

Quick grandmaster draws are not uncommon, but this particular instance was especially notable as the players were caught on camera discussing how they would maneuver the knights to make the draw. Faced with this evidence, FIDE scored the game as a double-forfeit due to prearrangement.

Although this fact could have been inferred from watching the game, their overt discussion made it impossible for the organizers not to act, and the players faced criticism for undermining the integrity of the game. This incident had a significant impact on the tournament standings, as both players lost their share of first place.

With this excitement out of the way, day two began with Vachier-Lagrave handing Carlsen his first and only loss of the event, outmaneuvering him in an endgame.

## SICILIAN DEFENSE, SVESHNIKOV VARIATION (B33)

GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (2748)  
GM Magnus Carlsen (2887)  
World Blitz Ch (13), Samarkand,  
12.30.2023

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6  
5. Nc3 e5 6. Ndb5 d6 7. Nd5 Nxd5 8. exd5  
Ne7 9. a4 Ng6 10. a5 Be7 11. Be3 0-0 12.  
Bxa7 Bd7 13. Bb6 Qc8 14. Ra3 Bxb5 15.  
Bxb5 Bd8 16. Bxd8 Rxd8 17. 0-0 Qc5



The opening has left MVL up a pawn, but Carlsen will create counterplay with his active queen and knight.

18. c4 Qb4 19. Qa1 Nf4

With the idea to transfer the knight to d4 via the e2-square.

20. Re1 Qd2 21. Kf1 e4?!

An interesting concept, trying to gain more space and create a bit of play. MVL in turn decides to simplify the position, leaving himself with a positional advantage.

22. Qc1

The black queen is Carlsen's most active piece, so it is logical to exchange it off.

22. ... Qxc1 23. Rxc1 Nd3



24. Rxd3!

MVL is happy to snap off the active black knight for the rook. After this, Black's position is weakened.

tion is stuck, and it's hard to see what can Carlsen do.

**24. ... exd3 25. b4 Rac8 26. Rd1 Rc7 27. Rxd3 Re7 28. Re3 Kf8 29. Ke2 f5 30. Kd3 Rxe3+ 31. fxe3**

The bishop and two pawns are significantly stronger than the rook. In a few moves, MVL will be ready to create his passed pawns.

**31. ... Ke7 32. Kd4 Rf8 33. c5 f4 34. e4 f3 35. gxf3 Rf4 36. a6 bxa6 37. Bxa6 g5 38. b5 g4 39. b6 dxc5+ 40. Kxc5 gxf3 41. d6+ Kd7 42. Bb5+ Ke6 43. Bc4+ Ke5 44. b7 Rf8 45. d7 f2 46. Kc6 Kd4 47. Bf1, Black resigned.**

Despite this setback, Carlsen quickly re-

bounded, using the defeat as motivation to win his next six games in a row. This winning streak propelled him into a solo lead by the 18th round after defeating GM Jan-Krzysztof Duda, while Artemiev suffered a defeat at the hands of GM Aleksandar Indjic.

Meanwhile, Dubov's unexpected forfeit didn't seem to faze him, as he kept up the pace and stayed within half point reach of Carlsen by round 18. But Nepomniachtchi didn't fare quite as well, as a blunder against Erigaisi caused him to slip further down the leaderboard.

Carlsen, Dubov, and Artemiev each won their round 19 games against Rapport, Yu, and Mameydarov respectively. Carlsen and Dubov played strategic draws in round 20, but Artemiev continued to press aggressively for a win. However, in a shocking mistake, he missed a two-move checkmate against GM Alexey Sarana. This missed opportunity would have elevated him to 15/20, tying with Dubov and putting him within striking distance of Carlsen as they headed into the final round.

## NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E48)

**GM Alexey Sarana (2707)**

**GM Vladislav Artemiev (2799)**

**World Blitz Ch (20), Samarkand, 12.30.2023**

Left: Carlsen and Dubov converse before the final round. Below: spectators take in the Blitz events from a safe distance.

**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 0-0 5. Bd3 Re8 6. Nge2 d5 7. a3 Bf8 8. b4 c6 9. 0-0 b6 10. e4 dxe4 11. Nxe4 Nbd7 12. Bf4 e5 13. Bg5 h6 14. Bh4 exd4 15. Nxf6+ Nxf6 16. Nxd4 c5 17. bxc5 Bxc5 18. Nb3 Bg4 19. Qc2 g5 20. Bg3 Nh5 21. Nxc5 bxc5 22. Be4 Nxc3 23. hxc3 Rb8 24. Bd5 Qf6 25. Qa4 Re7 26. Qa5 Qd4 27. Qa6 Rb6 28. Qa5 Kg7 29. Kh2 Be2 30. Rfb1 Qxf2 31. Rxb6 axb6 32. Qxb6 Re3 33. Qc7 h5 34. Rb1 h4 35. gxh4**



### 35. ... g4

Artemiev missed the two-move checkmate 35. ... Rh3+!! 36. Kxh3 Qxh4 mate but his position is still crushing.

### 36. Kh1 Bd3 37. Rd1 Qxh4+

After 37. ... g3! there is no good way to stop the threat of back-rank mate, i.e., 38. Qxc5 (after 38. Qa5 Qf6 mate is coming) 38. ... Re1+ 39. Rxe1 Qxc5 and Black wins.

### 38. Qh2 Re1??

Artemiev blunders away the win when he was so close, but of course these things happen in blitz! With 38. ... Qf6! Black is still



easily winning with the threat of ... g4-g3 and swinging a rook to the h-file

**39. Rxe1 Qxe1+ 40. Qg1 Qh4+ 41. Qh2 Qe1+ 42. Qg1 Qh4+ 43. Qh2 Qe1+, draw.**

In the final round, all three leading players settled for unexciting draws, which solidified their positions on the podium. The other key chase — for the required FIDE circuit points to earn Candidates qualification — did not end well for either Giri or Erigiasi. And so it was that GM Gukesh Dommaraju secured his spot in the Candidates, which as we now know ended very happily for the young Indian talent.

## WOMEN'S BLITZ

GM Valentina Gunina became Women's World Blitz Champion with a dominating performance, maintaining the lead throughout the event and finishing with an impressive 14/17. GM Alexandra Kosteniuk secured second place with 13½ points, while GM Zhu Jiner took third with 12½ points. Notably, she was the only player to defeat Gunina during the tournament.

Gunina's excellence was clear from the outset, as she racked up 8½/9 on the first day of play. She showed off her solid play, grabbing opportunities to create simple tactics that are exceptionally deadly in blitz. An early pivotal victory came in round six against Kosteniuk, who later emerged as her primary challenger for the title.

## RETI OPENING (A07)

**GM Alexandra Kosteniuk (2455)**  
**GM Valentina Gunina (2348)**  
**World Women's Blitz Ch (6),**  
**Samarkand, 12.29.2023**

**1. Nf3 d5 2. g3 c6 3. Bg2 Bg4 4. d4 Nd7 5. c4 e6 6. cxd5 exd5 7. 0-0 Bd6 8. Nc3 Ngf6 9. Qd3 0-0 10. Nh4 Re8 11. Re1 Bb4 12. h3 Bh5 13. g4 Ne4 14. Nf5 Bg6 15. f3 Nd6 16. Bd2 Nc4 17. Bc1 Qf6 18. e4 Bxf5 19. gxf5 Qh4 20. Re2**

Perhaps 20. Rf1 is a better try because it allows Nc3-e2 to add another defender for the white king. Another possibility is Bc1-e3-f2. The rook disrupts the harmony of the white pieces on e2.

**20. ... Nf6 21. b3? Nd6**  
One of the pawns now falls.

**22. e5**

Black has a great position after 22. Bb2 Bxc3 23. Bxc3 dxe4 24. fxe4 Ndxe4.

**22. ... Bxc3 23. Qxc3 Nxf5 24. Be3 Nxe3 25. Rxe3 Nh5**



With an extra pawn and active pieces that will soon trouble the white king, Black is absolutely crushing. White's g2-bishop is a tall pawn!

**26. Rae1 Re6 27. Qd2 Rf8 28. Kh1 Rh6 29. e6 fxe6 30. Rxe6 Rxe6 31. Rxe6 Ng3+ 32. Kg1 Nf5 33. f4 g6 34. Re5 Ng7 35. Qe3 Qxf4 36. a4 Qxe3+ 37. Rxe3 Nf5**



From here Gunina converts the endgame flawlessly.

**38. Rd3 a5 39. Bf1 Re8 40. b4 axb4 41. Rb3 Re7 42. Rxb4 Kg7 43. a5 Kf6 44. Bd3 Kg5 45. Kf2 Kf4 46. a6 bxa6 47. Bxa6 Re4 48. Rb7 Rxd4 49. Rxh7 Rd2+ 50. Ke1 Ra2 51. Bb7 Nd4 52. Re7 g5 53. Kd1 Ra3 54. Bc8 Rd3+ 55. Kc1 c5 56. Bg4 Re3 57. Rd7 Re5 58. Kd2 c4 59. Kc3 Nf5 60. Rf7 Ke4 61. Rf8 Nd6 62. Kd2 Re7 63. Rg8 d4 64. Rxd4 65. Rg6 Ra2+ 66. Kc1 Nb5 67. Rc6 c3 68. Be6 Rh2 69. Rc5 Na3 70. Bf5+ Ke3 71. Re5+ Kf4 72. Re4+ Kxf5 73. Rxd4 Rh1+, White resigned.**

Gunina won in day one's last round against Bodnaruk, the newly crowned World Rapid Champion, after a misstep in the late midgame. This win extended her lead to a comfortable 1½ points, with Kosteniuk and

four other players — Bodnaruk, GM Harika Dronavalli, IM Leya Garifullina, and GM Kateryna Lagno — each trailing at 7 points.

## CARO-KANN DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (B12)

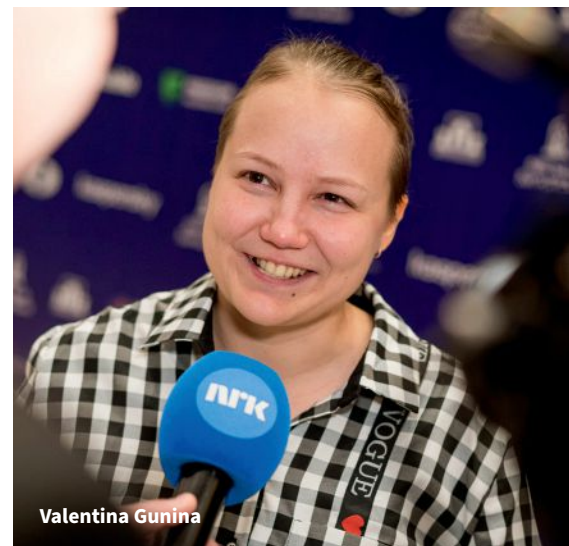
**IM Anastasia Bodnaruk (2260)**  
**GM Valentina Gunina (2348)**  
**World Women's Blitz Ch (9),**  
**Samarkand, 12.29.2023**

**1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3 Nc6 5. Be2 a6 6. Nf3 Bg4 7. 0-0 e6 8. Be3 cxd4 9. cxd4 Nge7 10. h3 Bxf3 11. Bxf3 Nf5 12. Nc3 Be7 13. Bg4 Nxe3 14. fxe3 0-0 15. Be2 Bg5**  
Gunina targets Bodnaruk's weaknesses over the next few moves, provoking her to create more targets that are easier to attack.

**16. Qd2 Qb6 17. Kh1 Rac8 18. Rac1 Qb4 19. a3 Qe7 20. b4 f6**

A well-timed pawn break, creating more play on the kingside now that White has developed on the queenside.

**21. exf6 Rxf6 22. Na4 Rcf8 23. Nc5 Rf2 24. Rxf2 Rxf2 25. Nd3 Rf8 26. Nc5 e5 27. dxe5 Qxe5 28. Nd7 Qxe3 29. Qxd5+ Kh8**



**30. Rc2??**

This nonchalant move loses the game! We have another example of how difficult it is to play defensive positions in fast time controls. Back-rank ideas and the dark-square weaknesses around the white king decide the game.

The position is equal after 30. Rf1 Rxf1+ 31. Bxf1.

**30. ... Rd8 31. Qf7 Bf4 32. Nf8 Rd1+ 33. Bxd1 Qe1, mate.**

Gunina had established a significant lead heading into the second and final day. In round 15, she hit a bit of a speedbump against Zhu, suffered her only loss of the tournament after blundering her queen in the endgame.

## CARO-KANN DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (B12)

GM Zhu Jiner (2384)

GM Valentina Gunina (2348)

World Women's Blitz Ch (15),  
Samarkand, 12.30.2023

**1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. dxc5 e6 5. Nf3 Bxc5 6. Bd3 Nc6 7. a3 f6 8. b4 Be7 9. Bb2 Nh6 10. 0-0 0-0 11. c4 a5 12. b5 Nxe5 13. Nxe5 fxe5 14. Bxe5**

As opposed to the majority of her games, Gunina got a slightly worse position out of the opening here. Zhu has activity, development, and it's significantly easier for her to make good moves.

**14. ... Bf6 15. Qe2 Nf7 16. Bxf6 Qxf6 17. Nd2 b6 18. cxd5**

Better was 18. Rae1, keeping pressure on the weak e6-pawn.

**18. ... exd5 19. Rae1 Bf5 20. Bxf5 Qxf5 21. Nf3 Nd6 22. Nd4 Qf6 23. Qd3 Rfe8 24. Nc6!**

Defending the isolated d5-pawn will now become a challenge, and the dangerous c6-knight is in prime position to create tactical opportunities.

**24. ... Qf7 25. a4 Nc4 26. Qd4 h6 27. h3?!**

Too slow, giving Gunina enough time to hide away her king. The right move was 27. Ne7+! Kh8 (worse is 27. ... Rxe7 28. Rxe7 Qxe7 29. Qxd5+ Kh7 30. Qxa8 with a winning position) 28. Nxd5 Red8 29. Qxc4 Rxd5 30. Qc6 with a serious advantage.

**27. ... Kh8 28. f4 Rxe1 29. Rxe1 Re8 30. Rxe8+ Qxe8 31. Qxd5 Qe3+ 32. Kh1 Qc1+**

**33. Kh2 Qxf4+ 34. Kh1 Ne3**

Passing up the perpetual — an interesting, but respectable, decision to push for the win!

**35. Qd8+ Kh7 36. Qd3+ Kg8 37. Qd8+ Kf7 38. Qd7+ Kg6 39. Qd3+ Kh5 40. Qe2+ Kg5 41. Kg1 Nf5**

**42. Ne5?? Qxa4??**

Now Gunina's ambition bites her back. With the queen's leaving the defense of the black king, White now has the opportunity to attack and win the knight.

The right move was 42. ... Qe3+! 43. Qxe3+ Nxe3 with a winning endgame! It's extremely difficult to make these decisions under time pressure, but the knight will be able to capture the white pawns while the active black king goes to the rescue of Black's pawns. After 44. Nd7 Nc4 45. Kf2 Kf5 46. Ke2 Ke6 47. Nf8+ Kd5 and the a4-pawn will soon fall.

**43. Qd2+**

Of course 43. Nf3+ Kf6 44. Qe5+ Kg6 45. Qe6+ Kh7 46. Qxf5+ is simpler.

**43. ... Kf6 44. Nf3 Qc4 45. Qd8+ Ke6??**

Blundering the queen.

After 45. ... Ne7 46. Qxb6+ Qe6 47. Qc7 White has an advantage with the advanced passed pawn, but the game is far from being over.

**46. Qg8+, Black resigned.**

This loss allowed GM Alexandra Kosteniuk to close in on Gunina, trailing by just half a point with two rounds remaining. For Zhu, this was an excellent way to end the event as she scored an impressive 6/7 in her last games, including a streak of five consecutive wins.

With all three top players having already faced each other, their final standings depended entirely on their performances against other competitors. Impressively, all three players won out against formidable opponents, ensuring their places on the podium and concluding the tournament on a high note. ♠

## 2023 WORLD RAPID AND BLITZ CHAMPIONSHIPS AT A GLANCE

DECEMBER 26-30,  
2023 | SAMARKAND,  
UZBEKISTAN

**OPEN RAPID:**

**1ST:** GM Magnus Carlsen, 10/13. **2ND:** GM Vladimir Fedoseev, 9½. **3RD-14TH:** GMs Yu Yangyi, Vidit Santosh Gujrathi, Volodar Murzin, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Daniil Dubov, Praggnanandhaa R., Dmitry Andreikin, Alexander Grischuk, Nodirbek Abdusattorov, Peter Svidler, Fabiano Caruana, Parham Maghsoodloo, 9.

**OTHER AMERICANS:**

GM Hans Moke Niemann, 8½. GM Levon Aronian, 8. GMs Conrad Holt and Andrew Hong, 7½.

**WOMEN'S RAPID:**

**1ST-3RD:** IM Anastasia Bodnaruk (playoff winner), GM Humpy Koneru, Lei Tingjie, 8½/11. **4TH-7TH:** IM Nurgul Salimova, WGM Zhai Mo, GM Ju Wenjun, GM Valentina Gunina, 8.

**AMERICANS:**

WGM Jennifer Yu, 7½. GM Irina Krush, WGM Atousa Pourkashian, 6. WGM Gulrukhbegim Tokhirjonova, 5.

**OPEN BLITZ:**

**1ST:** GM Magnus Carlsen, 16/21. **2ND:** GM Daniil Dubov, 15½. **3RD:** GM Vladislav Artemiev, 15.

**AMERICANS:**

GMs Levon Aronian and Fabiano Caruana, 14. GM Hans Moke Niemann, 13. GM Andrew Hong, 9½. GM Conrad Holt, 6.

**WOMEN'S BLITZ:**

**1ST:** GM Valentina Gunina 14/17. **2ND:** GM Alexandra Kosteniuk, 13½. **3RD:** GM Zhu Jiner, 12½.

**AMERICANS:**

WGM Atousa Pourkashian, 9. GM Irina Krush, 7½. WGM Jennifer Yu, 7. WGM Gulrukhbegim Tokhirjonova, 6½.

# MAKE YOUR MOVE

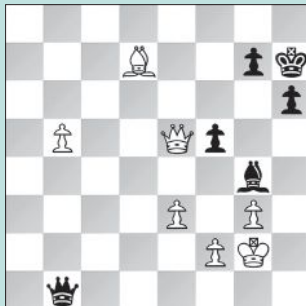
BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM THE AMERICAN Cup that took place in St. Louis in March.

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.**



WHITE TO MOVE

**TACTIC 5.**



BLACK TO MOVE

**TACTIC 6.**



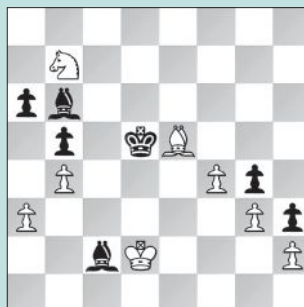
WHITE TO MOVE

**TACTIC 7.**



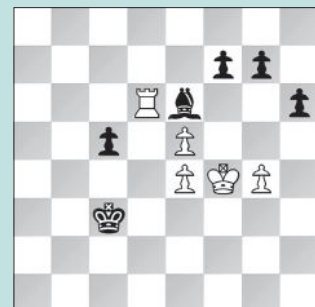
WHITE TO MOVE

**TACTIC 8.**



BLACK TO MOVE

**TACTIC 9.**



WHITE TO MOVE

**Position 1:** INTERFERENCE AND PIN

**Position 2:** ATTACK FROM THE ROOT

**Position 3:** LOOSEN PLUS PIN

**Position 4:** SURPRISING VULNERABILITY

**Position 5:** LIFT TO BOOM

**Position 6:** LIFT TO FINESSE

**Position 7:** BRUTE FORCE TRY

**Position 8:** POINT PRECISION

**Position 9:** PRECISION DANCE



# A Return to Form and Another Step on the Ladder

Aronian and Lee celebrate wins at the 2024 American Cup. BY **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**

PHOTOS (COMBINED) COURTESY SLCC / LENNART OOTES



**N**OW IN ITS THIRD year of existence, the American Cup has already become one of my absolute favorite tournaments to play in. The unique double elimination format guarantees excitement and drama for the spectators, while giving the players a welcome chance to come back after a bad start.

Before diving deeper into this year's event and a few of the games, I think it's useful to work through the format, as this year's edition saw some changes. The tournament is an eight-player double elimination featuring the top players in the country in Open and Women's sections. Featuring a knockout-style format, the top seeded player faces the lowest seed, the second seed is paired

with the seventh ranked player, and so on.

After the first match, the winners stay in the Championship Bracket and the losers move to the Elimination Bracket, where they have a chance for a comeback by winning all their matches and challenging the winner of the Championship Bracket for the ultimate prize. The caveat is that the winner of the Elimination Bracket has only "one life" and has to beat the winner of the Championship Bracket twice.

The Open section was missing last year's winner, GM Hikaru Nakamura, but it otherwise included all the usual suspects, including GMs Levon Aronian, Fabiano Caruana, and Wesley So. The Women's section was also missing one of its stars, IM Carissa Yip. But two-time U.S. Women's Champion WGM Jennifer Yu was finally able to join the action alongside another fresh face, FM Zoey Tang.

In the first two American Cups, the two-game matches in the Championship Bracket were played in a classical time control of G/90+30, with no additional time after move 40. The time control in the Elimination Bracket was G/25+10. Both sections moved to shorter rapid, then blitz, and finally Armageddon if needed to produce a winner.

The Saint Louis Chess Club uncorked two novelties for the 2024 edition of the Cup. The first was to increase the number of games from two to four in each match, and in both sections. The second was the addition of two rapid games in the Championship Bracket. This meant playing one classical game at 1 p.m., a rapid game at 5 p.m. with opposite colors, and repeating the pattern (with reversed colors) again the next day. The Armageddon tiebreak was replaced with two game blitz matches, until a winner was determined.

This year's edition also saw a generous increase of \$50,000 in prize fund in each section, with the winner of the Open section taking home \$75,000 and \$40,000 going to the winner of the Women's section.

I was at first rather excited about the addition of the rapid time control. I thought the mixed time controls would make the tournament more exciting, and it made me feel more optimistic about my own chances. After the event — and here I may be jaded by my poor showing — I have to admit to having mixed feelings about it. It felt a bit strange to play just one rapid game per day and have the rapid games count the same as the classical ones in the match score.

Although we had received several emails encouraging us to read the regulations carefully, it became clear during the pre-tournament players meeting that these reminders mostly went unnoticed. As IA Chris Bird was going through the regulations, many expressed surprise when they were told that the highest rated player always plays with the white pieces in the first game.

This meant that the highest rated player would play with White in the first classical game, with Black in the evening rapid game. They would then return the next day and play with the black pieces again in the second classical game.

The real issue, I think, was that this rule also applied to the Elimination Bracket, meaning that the highest rated player would get two blacks in a row in games two and three. Some of the players tried to change this rule, but as a unanimous decision was not reached, we moved on to the opening ceremony.

With the first two American Cups operating under stricter COVID-19 protocols, this was the first year we had a proper opening ceremony, and it was fantastic. For this occasion, the World Chess Hall of Fame (WCHOF) received a gift from the Mongolian Khaan Chess Company — the “Friendship Chess” chess set, representing the friendship between Ghengis Khan and Gur-Khan Jamukh. This lavish set is now part of the WCHOF's permanent collection. The Khaan Chess company also generously donated chess sets as trophies for the winners of each section.

And with that, it was time to play chess.

As the Saint Louis Chess Club is undergoing expansion, the WCHOF has become the *de facto* playing hall for major events in St. Louis. It is a stunning building, and feels quite spacious with only 16 players in the field. Spectators are still not allowed in the playing hall but GMs Yasser Seirawan, Cristian Chirila, and WGM Anastasia Kar-

lovych provided live commentary with a 30-minute delay with from the off-site studio, with IM Kostya Kavutskiy conducting interviews from the venue. One admission here — even with all my years of playing in St. Louis, I still find playing with cameras on and live commentary more than a little nerve-racking.

There were no surprises in the first matches in the Women's section, as all the favorites came out on top. The final results don't always tell the full story, though, especially in a winner-takes-all event like this one. GM Irina Krush had to overcome a first-round loss to Zoey Tang — her first win against a grandmaster — in order to advance. But Irina bounced back immediately by winning the evening rapid game and then the next two games the following day.

In the Open section, GM Ray Robson started his hot streak with a win over GM Leinier Dominguez. After losing the first classical game, he went on to score two and a half points in the next three games to stay in the Championship Bracket.

The only match that went into blitz tie-breaks was the one between GMs Sam Sevian and Levon Aronian. Down a point, Sam missed a golden opportunity to even the score in the second blitz game in a position that will surely make an appearance in many puzzle books.

## MISSED OPPORTUNITY

**GM Samuel Sevian (2729)**

**GM Levon Aronian (2901)**

**American Cup (blitz), St. Louis,  
03.13.2024**



WHITE TO MOVE

### 45. Nd5

Here Sam missed the stunning 45. Qxh7+!! Nxh7 46. Ng6+ Kg8 47. Bd5 mate. Of course, Sam would have spotted this in a second in a book, but with the clock ticking away in a high-pressure game, it is not so easy!

**45. ... R4c5 46. Qh3 Bg5 47. f4 Bh6 48. Qf5 Ng6 49. Kh1 Rf8 50. Qd7 Nxf4 51. Nxf4 Bxf4 52. Bf3 Bxc1, White resigned.**

My match against the young phenom Alice Lee was disastrous. After losing the first two games, I had little hope left in the match. Using some deep preparation in the Petroff in our third game, I managed to surprise her in the opening. But much to my chagrin, Alice solved the problems over the board and secured her match victory with a draw.

Day three was the first day of the Elimination Bracket, which meant that eight players were fighting for their lives, and four of us would go home. The two brackets run concurrently, so that there would be classical, rapid, and possibly blitz games contested at the same time — quite the rollercoaster for the commentators!

Alas, this was my shortest showing in the American Cup and one of the saddest results of my chess career. I lost my match against WGM Jennifer Yu with a score of ½-2½. I didn't particularly enjoy playing two back-to-back games with the black pieces, despite better prepared and reaching pretty decent positions out of the opening. Jennifer is a great fighter, so all credit to her for advancing, but for me, finishing a tournament with zero wins definitely stung.

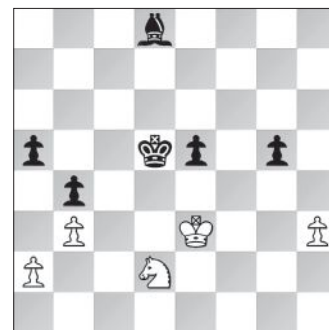
The big upset in the Women's section was Zoey's win over IM Anna Zatonskih. I particularly like this instructional moment from their first game.

## ONE FOR JOEL

**IM Anna Zatonskih (2421)**

**FM Zoey Tang (2355)**

**American Cup, St. Louis, 03.14.2024**



BLACK TO MOVE

### 65. ... g4!

Zoey quickly spotted the winning idea. If she had played a waiting move like 65. ... Bc7, for example, after 66. Ne4 Bd8 67. Kd3 there is no way for Black to make progress.

**66. hxg4 Bg5+ 67. Kd3 Bxd2 68. Kxd2 Ke4**  
Now Black correctly traded into a king and pawn endgame. Even though White has the outside passed pawn, Black's active king will win the game.

**69. Ke2 Kf4 70. Kd3 e4+ 71. Kd4 e3 72. g5 e2, White resigned.**

In the Open Elimination Bracket, GM Sam Sevian comfortably defeated GM Grigoriy Oparin, while GMs Leinier Dominguez and Sam Shankland had quite the battle. Sam won on demand to take the match to blitz tiebreaks, then again in the second blitz game to keep his chances alive. Leinier went on to win the next two blitz games.

It was in this round that we experienced a rare disturbance — a tornado warning was issued by the City of St. Louis three and a half hours into the day. All the clocks were stopped and the players moved to the first floor of the WCHOF, waiting for the warning to end.

The air inside the room was heavy as the players spread around the first-floor exhibitions, thinking about their games. The last time I recall this happening was during the 2011 match between GMs Hikaru Nakamura and Ruslan Ponomarev, when the players moved to the basement to wait for the storms to pass. The unexpected adjournment didn't seem to affect the games, however, as the results were as expected based on the positions the players left on the board.

One of the curious features of this schedule and format is that there's one day off in each bracket, but the players have to lose at the "right time" to get a day off. Day four was

a day off for the survivors of the Elimination Bracket as they waited for their opponents from the Championship Bracket.

The second match in the Championship Bracket is always more interesting in such a small tournament, as the gap between the ratings closes. Levon seemed to have figured out a successful strategy early: with the exception of one game, the rest of his classical games ended in a draw and the results were settled either in the rapid or blitz games. This time, his victim was Fabiano, who lost both blitz games.

The hero of the day was again Ray, who eliminated the super solid GM Wesley So. Levon and Ray were thus set to meet in the final of the Championship Bracket, with the winner taking home the Championship Bracket Bonus of \$15,000.

In the Women's section, Irina and Alice overcame IM Nazi Paikidze and Gulrukhbegim ("Begim") Tokhirjnova respectively. This meant that Alice and Irina would meet in the finals of the Championship Bracket for the third year in a row, battling it out for the Championship Bracket Bonus of \$9,000.

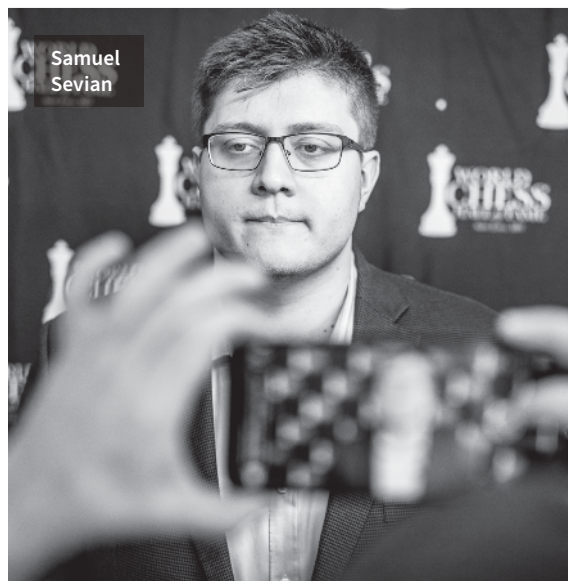
The most epic battle took place in the Women's Elimination Bracket on day four. Nazi and Jennifer played a marathon 10-game match with nine decisive results. Jennifer was down two points in the first two games, then went on to score two clutch victories. The players then split the points in the blitz games, with Jennifer ultimately knocking out Nazi with a draw in game nine and a victory in the final game. The most instructive moment was this must-know endgame, which could have made it to the "Tragicomedies" section of *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*.



Anna  
Zatonskih



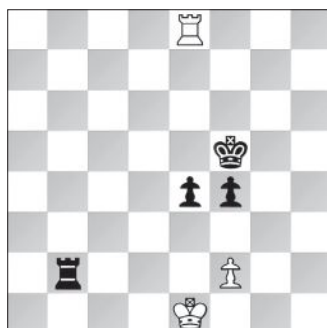
Zoey Tang



Samuel  
Sevian

## TRAGICOMEDY

IM Nazi Paikidze (2344)  
WGM Jennifer Yu (2088)  
American Cup (blitz), St. Louis,  
03.16.2024



WHITE TO MOVE



How can White hold?

**63. Re7?**

This is one of the trickier two versus one rook endgames. The key is not to let the king get to f3, as Black is happy to exchange the e-pawn for the f-pawn and get the Lucena position. Therefore, the right idea is 63. Rg8! f3 64. Rf8+ Kg4 65. Re8 and Black can't make progress here. The white rook is active and will check the enemy king or attack the e4-pawn.

**63. ... Rb4?**

With just 20 seconds on the clock, Jennifer hesitates to give up the pawn. After the brave 63. ... Kg4! 64. Rxe4 Kf3 65. Re8 Rb1+ 66. Kd2 Kxf2 Black will build a bridge as is well known from Lucena.

**64. Ke2?**

The last chance to hold was 64. Rg7.

**64. ... f3+!**

Presented with a second chance, Jennifer doesn't miss her shot.

**65. Ke1 Rb1+ 66. Kd2 Rb2+ 67. Ke1 Re2+ 68. Kf1 Ra2 69. Ke1 Ra1+ 70. Kd2 Rf1 71. Ke3 Re1+ 72. Kd4 Rd1+ 73. Kc3 Rf1 74. Kd4 Rd1+ 75. Kc3 Kf4 76. Rf7+ Kg4 77. Re7 Kh3 78. Rg7 e3 79. fxe3 f2, White resigned.**

Levon and Irina both won their matches against Ray and Alice with a comfortable score of 2½-½, securing their bonuses and earning a much-deserved rest day. Their work, however, was not done — the beauty of the American Cup is that their opponents had one more chance to upend their coronations.

While the winners in the Championship Bracket were stepping forward, the carnage continued in the Elimination Brackets, where ever more players were getting knocked out. The last players standing were Wesley and Begim, who faced Ray and Alice respectively in the Elimination finals. A win would send them to the Grand Final, while a loss would send them packing. With such a grueling schedule, especially for the players who did not lose at the "right time" to snag a rest day, it almost feels as though the winners of this bracket deserve a bonus prize!

In the end, Ray's heroic run came to an end in a nail biting final. Trailing by a point, Wesley won the final must-win rapid game, then dominated in blitz. This left Wesley and Levon to meet in the Grand Final, with Wesley having the unenviable task of defeating Levon in two matches if he wanted to win the event.

Levon's path to victory felt like smooth sailing. The first three draws were uneventful. In the final rapid game, Levon took some risks in the opening, and they paid off handsomely. After the game, it was interesting to hear Levon say that he enjoys looking at openings that don't really work, a trait he claims to have learned from Fabiano.

## NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE, CLASSICAL VARIATION (E32)

GM Wesley So (2702)

GM Levon Aronian (2796)

American Cup (rapid), St. Louis,  
03.19.2024

**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Qc2 0-0 5. e4 c5?!**



A risky choice that is objectively bad for Black, but forces White to make some difficult decisions.

**6. e5**

The most principled response.

Less testing is 6. dxc5 Nc6 7. Nf3 Bxc5 as in Xu – Aronian, World Blitz Ch, 2023. There

Levon got a bit adventurous in the opening but went on to win the game.

**6. ... cxd4 7. a3 Ba5 8. exf6 dxc3 9. b4 Bc7 10. fxg7 Re8 11. Nf3**

Wesley played this move in seconds, suggesting that he was (or believed he was) still in preparation.

Here 11. Bd3! f5 12. Nf3 Qf6 13. Bg5 Qxg7 14. g4 would pose some very difficult questions for Black and keep White's initiative humming.

**11. ... d5**

More accurate was 11. ... Qf6, bringing a defender to the kingside. After 12. Bd3 Qxg7 we see that because Black didn't have to play ... f7-f5, his king is safer compared to the line beginning with 11. Bd3.

**12. Qxc3**

Here again 12. Ng5, provoking ... f7-f5, helps White, as it creates more weaknesses in the Black camp, i.e., 12. ... f5 13. Qxc3 d4 14. Qh3! and Black has to pitch material to continue.

**12. ... e5!**

A very logical move by Levon, playing in the center where he has the advantage, and where the enemy king is!

**13. cxd5 e4 14. Nd4 Be5 15. Bb2 Nd7 16. Bb5 a6**



**17. Bxd7**

I would prefer to keep the bishop pair with 17. Ba4, but Wesley must have been eager to castle. Play continues 17. ... b5 18. Bb3 and now perhaps 18. ... Nb6 was of concern for Wesley, which is why he decided to eliminate the enemy knight. After 19. 0-0 Bb7 20. Qh3 material will soon equalize, and both the d5- and g7-pawns will fall. White can put the rooks in the center and try Bb2-a1 followed by Nd4-f5. Here I prefer White due to Black's permanently weakened king.

**17. ... Bxd7 18. 0-0 Qh4**

Black should have tried 18. ... Bb5!, using the pin to bring the bishop to an active square. After 19. Rfd1 Qf6 20. Qe3 Rad8 the pin along the long diagonal is extremely annoying for White, giving Black enough time to take on d5 with a rook and further pressure the pinned knight. Here Black enjoys a big advantage with the bishop pair and the active pieces. He is also not in a rush to pick up the g7-pawn, which currently serves as a useful shield for the king!

**19. g3 Qh3 20. f4 Bf6 21. Qe3 Bg4 22. Rf2 Rad8 23. Nb3 Rxd5**



**24. Re1**

Here 24. Bxf6? Rd3 25. Qe1 Rxb3, going for opposite-colored bishops, would be disastrous for White as his king is extremely weak and the e4-pawn is ready to march down the board.

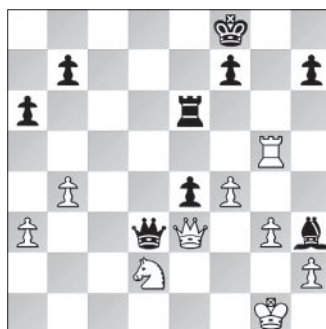
**24. ... Bxb2 25. Rxb2 Qh6**

With this, Levon realizes the queen has done her job on the kingside and it's time to bring her back into the game.

**26. Rd2 Qd6 27. Rxd5 Qxd5 28. Nd2 Bf5 29. Nf1 Bh3 30. Nd2 Re6**

At this point it looked like Wesley was ready to make a draw with repetition, but Levon decided to keep the game going.

**31. Rc1 Kxg7 32. Rc5 Qd3 33. Rg5+ Kf8**



**34. Qc5??**

This harmless looking check cost Wesley

the game and the match.

Instead 34. Qxd3 exd3 35. Re5 would have kept the game level, i.e., 35. ... Rxe5 36. fxe5 Ke7 37. Kf2 Ke6 38. Ke3 Kxe5 39. Kxd3.

**34. ... Rd6**

An unexpected self-pin, reminiscent of 46. ... Rg6 in the final game of the Nepomniachtchi – Ding World Championship match. Now the d2-knight will fall.

**35. Rh5 Qxd2 36. Rxh3 b6, White resigned.**

White gave up as he cannot avoid checkmate or loss of material. For instance, 37. Qc8+ Rd8 38. Qc4 Qe3+ 39. Kg2 Rd2+ 40. Kf1 Qf2 mate.

I recall writing Levon's chess biography for the Grand Chess Tour some years ago, not knowing which of his victories should be highlighted from his long list of accomplishments. It's clear that this win was very meaningful for him, coming after a long dip in performance.

I was shocked to hear Levon say in the postgame interview that he doesn't have many upcoming tournaments, with invites having dried up due to his diminished rating. I hope that this victory is the beginning of a new upswing and that his email is filled with invitations. After all, as former world champion GM Garry Kasparov once said, the chess world is a better place when Levon is playing well!

In the Women's section, Alice also had to recover from a first game loss. And recover she did, with three consecutive wins. Again, for the third year in a row, the comeback kid was set to meet Irina in the Grand Final. And as they say, third time's the charm.

The Grand Final in the Women's section was in complete contrast to the Open Grand Final. It felt as though Irina had unlocked the key to winning the American Cup. Already having defeated Alice once in this tournament, and with an extra "life" coming from the Championship Bracket, she must have been feeling confident.

That's why I suspect the first match was a real cold shower for Irina, who suffered her first-ever match loss in the American Cup. Already down a point, Irina created trouble for herself in the second classical game.

## A QUEASY QUEEN

IM Alice Lee (2421)

GM Irina Krush (2500)

American Cup, St. Louis, 03.20.2024



BLACK TO MOVE

**31. ... Qh6?**

Irina understandably tries to utilize the open h-file, but instead gets her queen in trouble.

The correct way to proceed was 31. ... Rh4 32. Ne2 (White doesn't have to go all out; something like 32. a5 Qh6 33. Bf3 with an equal position is possible) 32. ... Qh6 33. Qb3 Nf6 and we get a better version of what Irina was trying to achieve in the game continuation. Here, however, her queen is safe, and Alice's pawns would start to fall: 34. Qxb7 Rxb7.

**32. Ne2!**

This move carries the threat of both Ne2-g3 and Rf1-h1, as well as swinging the queen to the queenside with Qe3-b3.

**32. ... b5**

Perhaps it was panic, or an effort to look for counterplay, but this only helps White. Now she will have entry squares for her queen after Black is forced to relinquish hers.

**33. Ng3 f6 34. axb5 axb5 35. Qa3**

White doesn't have to rush with Rf1-h1 as the

threat cannot be stopped. Black's position is very difficult.

**35. ... Kf7 36. Qa7 Ke7****37. Rh1**

Here 37. cxb5 would have been even easier as Black cannot deal with this passed pawn: 37. ... Qf8 38. b6 Nh6 39. Ba4 Qd8 40. b7 and wins.

**37. ... Qxh1 38. Nxh1 Rxh1 39. cxb5 Rxd1+ 40. Ka2 Rd4 41. b6 Rxe4 42. b7 Rb4 43. b8=Q Rxb8 44. Qxb8**

Now it's a matter of breaking the fortress, and Alice is up to the task.

**44. ... Nh6 45. b4 cxb4 46. Qxb4 Nf7 47. Kb3 Be8 48. Qb8 Bd7 49. Qc7 Ke8 50. Kb4 Ke7 51. Ka5 Ke8 52. Kb6 Ke7 53. Qc4 Be8 54. Kc7 Bd7 55. Qb4 Be8 56. Qb7 Bd7 57. Qb8 e4 58. Qb4 Be8 59. Qxe4+ Ne5 60. Qb4 Nf7 61. Qb8 Bd7 62. Qa8 Ne5 63. Qd8+ Kf7 64. Qxd7+, Black resigned.**

With this result, it was now anyone's tournament to win. The players would contest a four-game rapid match, with the winner tak-

ing home the title. Coming off of a victory, Alice's energy felt like it was supercharged and confident.

It was a back-and-forth affair, with all four games settled decisively. Irina spilled the first blood, only for Alice to even the score immediately. Irina won again, forcing Alice to compel a tiebreak with another clutch victory.

Everything came down to blitz and to whoever could muster her nerves and composure under pressure. Alice had no rest days in the tournament, but her fatigue was mitigated by her youthful energy and her uncanny ability to keep the pressure.

In the first blitz game, Alice outplayed her more experienced opponent. The second game was decided in a time scramble in a true game of nerves.

**BLITZ MODE**

IM Alice Lee (2191)

GM Irina Krush (2473)

American Cup (blitz), St. Louis, 03.21.2024



WHITE TO MOVE



PHOTO: COURTESY SLCC / LENNART OOTES

## 27. Bb5??

With 15 seconds on the clock, Alice makes the first mistake.

## 27. ... Nf3+ 28. Kg2 Nxd4 29. Rxd4 Bxd4 30. Rd1!

Objectively this move does not save White, but I give it an exclamation mark because of this practical value. Black is still winning, but with just seconds on the clock, Irina clearly panicked when faced with an unexpected move.

Here 30. Bxd7 Qxd7 31. Rd1 Bg7 32. Rxd5 Qf7 could have transposed to lines after 30. Rd1, but this move order gives Black easy moves, simplifying her conversion task.

## 30. ... Qf6

Now 30. ... Bg7 is one of many moves that win.

## 31. Bxd7 Qxf2+ 32. Kh1

(see diagram top of next column)

## 32. ... Rf8??

The win was there with 32. ... Kh8, stepping out of the way. Irina would have spotted this move immediately under normal circumstances. Black simply wants to play ... Ra8-f8-f3, while the white queen cannot move, i.e., 33. Qxd5? Qf3+ 34. Kh2 Qe2+ with mate to come.



## 33. Qxd5+ Kh8??

The last chance to save the game was 33. ... Rf7, which was still a draw with correct play. That wouldn't have changed the match situation, but it would have forced Alice to find some only moves: 34. Qxd4 Qf3+ 35. Kh2 Qe2+ 36. Kg3 Rxd7! 37. Qxd7 Qe3+ 38. Kh4 Qh6+ 39. Kg3 Qe3+ 40. Kg2 Qe2+ with a perpetual.

## 34. Qxd4+, Black resigned.

After the handshake, Alice could be seen on camera trying hard to suppress her smile. Overcome with great joy, she seemed unsure of where to go or what to do until the production crew and organizers rushed into the room for the awards ceremony.

And so 14-year-old Alice Lee made history by becoming the first player to win the American Cup from the Elimination Bracket. Perhaps more importantly, she became the

youngest American female player to win a major tournament since Irina's U.S. Women's Championship win, also at the age of 14.

Alice and I were teammates last September at the Women's World Team Championship, where she scored a gold medal on first board in her first appearance as a team member. I got to know her and her mother, who often accompanies her to tournaments, and it is good to see that our young female chess talents have both familial and financial support. Both are crucial for chess success. We will hear more about Alice in the months to come as she continues climbing up the ranks and helps the U.S. Olympiad team to a medal this coming September in Budapest.

There's one final tradition that accompanies the American Cup: the final day blitz tournament that includes many local GMs along with American Cup participants. The small tournament was packed with many super-GMs, allowing many of the women a rare chance to face off against some of the world's elite. The highlight of the tournament for me was playing Leinier in the first round, despite the game not going my way.

Top honors went to repeat winner Fabiano Caruana, who took home \$5,000 for his efforts. This was followed by the closing ceremony and players' dinner. Later, we enjoyed a smaller get together with our friends and many games of bughouse. What else would chess players do after a tournament? ♠



# Returning Serve

Key games and concrete analysis are essential to learning openings. Part two of a multi-issue series.

BY IM ROBERT SHLYAKHTENKO



LAST MONTH WE TOOK A look at a key position in the Nimzo-Indian, arising after the moves **1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6**

**3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 d5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 c5 7. cxd5 exd5.**



Through careful interrogation of two games — Botvinnik – Capablanca (AVRO, 1938) and Kotov – Unzicker (Saltsjobaden Iz, 1952) — we traced a history of various approaches to this key tabiya, showing a number of ideas for both sides along the way.

One of the reasons for this detailed analysis is to offer a model of what I have found to be proper opening study. By tracing the development of a variation from inception to modern-day practice, we can see how ideas and maneuvers we currently take for granted emerged in historical context. In doing so, we can gain a deeper understanding of the opening that we might through rote memorization of variations.

We left things last month in Black's court. Is the position after 14. Bb2 just worse for Black, or have solutions been developed that allow Black to fight back? Again, the point here is not to turn on the engine and have the answer given to us; by looking at theoretically important games with a historical lens, we can grasp the reasons for the relative strength or weakness of key moves.

## NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE, BOTVINNIK VARIATION (E49)

GM Alexander Grischuk (2758)

GM Parham Maghsoodloo (2701)

Chess.com Rapid Week 7 (3),  
03.26.2022

**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 0-0 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 c5 7. Bd3 d5 8. cxd5 exd5 9. Ne2 b6 10. 0-0 Ba6 11. f3 Re8 12. Ng3 Bxd3 13. Qxd3 Nc6 14. Bb2**



### 14. ... h5!

Let's take a moment to appreciate how revolutionary this move is. Black creates a significant weakness in his own position for purely prophylactic reasons. In some cases he is willing to sacrifice the h-pawn because he realizes that it is much more important to slow down White's plan of e3-e4. Compare this concrete play with the slow, abstract move 14. ... Rac8 that we saw in the Unzicker game last month.

The remainder of this month's article will be fairly dense and theoretical, but I hope that will not detract from the marvel of this concept.

### 15. Rae1

The immediate 15. e4!? is much more violent — Black has to play carefully and remember

some specific lines. GM Alexey Sarana is a specialist in this position and has scored many quick wins as White. We consider two continuations:

(a) One path begins **15. ... h4 16. Nf5 dxe4 17. fxe4** and now



POSITION AFTER 17. fxe4

(a1) **17. ... Rxe4?** is a natural, but very costly mistake! Play continues **18. Nxe4! Ne5** (we see the point after 18. ... Kxe7 19. Rxf6!; while 18. ... c4 19. Qd2! is also bad for Black) **19. Qh3!**. This is the best square for White's queen. (Black holds after 19. Qc2? cxd4 20. cxd4 Rc8! 21. Qb3 Neg4 22. Nf5 Qd5 as in Bu – Wang, Chinese Team Ch, 2017 with unclear play) **19. ... Nc4?** (relatively best is 19. ... cxd4 20. cxd4 Nc4, but after 21. Nf5 Nxb2 22. Qb3! [Sarana – Najer, Chess.com 2022] White wins back the piece, while Black's king remains weak) and here **20. Bc1!** is the typical rerouting of the bishop. Note that this move is possible only because Black twice refused the preliminary trade on d4. After **20. ... Qd7 21. Nh5! Ng4 22. Qxh4 Qd6 23. Bf4** as in Sarana – Lintchevski, Russian Cup Final 2021. Black resigned in view of 23. ... Qg6 24. Qxg4!.

(a2) Instead **17. ... cxd4! 18. cxd4** (18. Nxe4!? Ne5 19. Qh3 Kxe7 20. cxd4 Nc4! holds for Black) **18. ... Rxe4** is correct. The position is razor-sharp, but Black is able to defend. We continue **19. Nxe4** (19. Nh6+ gxh6 20. Rxf6 Qxf6 21. Qxe4 Qg6 22. Qxh4 Re8! is not

worse for Black — the point is 23. d5? Re2!; while 19. Qf3 Re6 20. d5! Qxd5 21. Nxc7 Qxf3 22. Rxf3 Kxc7 23. Rf1 Kg8 24. Bxf6 Ne5 also turns out to be fine) 19. ... Nxd4! and now we see the difference: in the 17. ... Rxe4 line, Black doesn't have access to this move. The critical move is 20. Kh1



POSITION AFTER 20. Kh1

... stepping out of ... Nd4-e2+. Now multiple Black pieces are under attack. What to do? The answer is 20. ... h3!!, when once again, this pawn is the hero! After 21. Qxh3! (too risky is 21. Rxf6 hxc2+ 22. Kxc2; despite the piece deficit, Black has several good continuations — 22. ... Re2+, 22. ... Rg4+, and 22. ... Qd5 — all are complicated, but lead to better endgames in each case) 21. ... Kxc7 Black has very strong centralization and this enables him to parry White's threats, despite his weak king. The position remains unclear.

(b) The alternative 15. ... c4!? is a solid try: Black wants to first block the b2-bishop and only then capture the e4-pawn. This move has been seen mostly in correspondence games; the main line continues 16. Qc2 h4 17. Nf5 dxe4 18. fxe4 Nxe4 19. Rf4 Nd6 20. Raf1 Ne7 21. Nxd6 Qxd6 22. Rxf7 with a complex position.

#### 15. ... h4

While ... h7-h5 is unsurprisingly a very modern conception, there is one notable early game: Petrosian – Fridstein from the 1947 Soviet Semifinal. There, Black played 15. ... cxd4 first: 16. cxd4 h4 17. Nf5 h3 18. g4 Ne7 19. Ng3 Qd7 20. Rf2.



POSITION AFTER 20. Rf2

Fridstein's play has been impeccable to this point, but now he made his first inaccuracy:

20. ... Rac8?! (Black should play 20. ... Ng6 21. Qf1 Nh7! 22. Qxh3 Ng5 23. Qf1 Nh4 with excellent compensation) 21. Qf1! Petrosian shows the drawback of 14. ... h5: the weak h-pawn is now lost. Although this position is still not very clear-cut, Petrosian soon gained a clear advantage and won the game.

Note that here 15. ... c4? is a mistake, since after 16. Qc2 White is well-prepared for e3-e4.

#### 16. Nf5 h3



A critical position for this variation. By rushing the h-pawn forward, Black has induced some discoordination in White's forces and no longer fears a direct attack. Now White faces a wide choice:

#### 17. Re2!?

A novelty, but a not very successful one.

(a) Positionally speaking, the most principled choice is 17. g4, intending to eventually pick up the h3-pawn. But, just as in Petrosian – Fridstein above, Black is in time to generate counterplay with 17. ... Ne7! 18. Ng3 Rc8 and the position is, if anything, easier to play for Black. White can consider sacrificing a pawn with 19. e4!?, but objectively this gives White no advantage.

(b) If 17. e4!?, then 17. ... hxc2 18. Rf2 Ne7! (the typical maneuver!) 19. e5, and now 19. ... Nh5! (the most common move in correspondence; 19. ... Nxf5 20. Qxf5 Qd7 might be a safer option) 20. Rxc2 Nxf5 21. Qxf5 Qh4 22. Rf1 g6 23. f4 Ng7 24. Qd3 Kf8!, preparing ... Ng7-f5. Black's king is somewhat weak, but in the long-term he has a superior pawn structure and the better minor piece. The position is very tense, but objectively balanced, e.g., 25. dxc5 Nf5 with significant counterplay.

(c) The most common move in practice has been 17. Ng3 — White resumes preparations for e3-e4. My overall impression is that this position is easier for White to play, but Black can hold the balance with some amount of precision: 17. ... hxc2 18. Kxc2 and now:

(c1) 18. ... Ne7 19. e4 (19. dxc5 is not very

effective in view of the pawn sacrifice 19. ... Rc8! 20. cxb6 Qxb6 and Black's position is already preferable) 19. ... Ng6 20. Kh1 Qd7



POSITION AFTER 20. ... Qd7

A typical position: Black needs to defend very meticulously, but if he manages to do so, his long-term assets will come into play. A sample line is 21. e5 Nf4! 22. Qd2 N6h5



Alexander Grischuk



Parham Maghsoodloo

**23. Nxh5 Nxh5 24. Qg5 g6 25. f4 Qf5! 26. Qxf5 gxf5** with equality.

(c2) The alternative is **18. ... Qd7**. After **19. e4 dxe4 20. fxe4 Ne5 21. Qe2 Ng6!** (it's important to keep the b2-bishop locked in; therefore, Black doesn't capture on d4) **22. Kh1 Rad8** Black is fully coordinated and is objectively not worse. However, in a practical game I would be worried about **23. Rxf6!? gxf6 24. d5** and Black has to be very careful not to fall into a positional bind.

(d) Finally, **17. gxh3 Ne7 18. Ng3 Qd7** is alright for Black, where **19. dxc5** can again be met by **19. ... Rec8!? 20. cxb6 axb6**.

## 17. ... Rc8?!

A somewhat strange move, allowing e3-e4 without challenge.

The most consistent continuation would have been (once again) **17. ... cxd4 18. cxd4 Ne7 19. Ng3 Ng6** and Black is completely fine. The value of the move **17. Re2** is not completely clear here — thanks to the knight on g6, it's not easy for White to transfer the rook to the g-file.

By the way, Black could have played **17. ... Ne7** without trading the c-pawns — there is no substantial difference in this case.

## 18. e4

Now taking on g2 is reckless, as it only activates the g2-rook.

## 18. ... cxd4 19. cxd4 Ne7 20. e5?!

A miscalculation, after which White is on the defensive. Correct was **20. Nxe7+! Qxe7 21. e5** with some advantage.

## 20. ... Nxf5 21. Qxf5 Qd7!

My guess is that Grischuk simply missed

this move (let's not forget that this was a rapid game).

## 22. g4

The alternatives were not better.

We see Black's dream scenario after **22. Qxh3?! Qxh3 23. gxh3 Nh5 24. f4?! f5!**. White's light squares are very weak, which makes it very easy for Black to attack White's dark-square targets.

Also unpleasant is **22. Qd3?! Nh5 23. f4 Qg4 24. g3 Nf6!** and the knight will dominate the bishop.

## 22. ... Qxf5 23. gxf5 Nh5 24. f4 Rc4



Although the h3-pawn is likely to fall, it's clear that Black is the one playing for an advantage; all the same, the position should not be difficult to hold for White. However, both players traded mistakes:

## 25. Re3?! Rc2?!

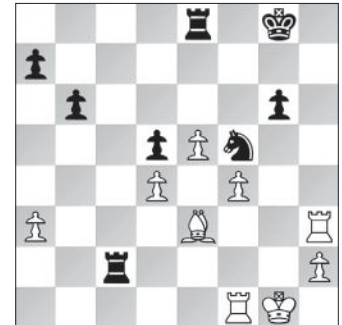
Missing a tactical opportunity to transfer the knight to the center with **25. ... Nf6!**, and in case of **26. Rxh3?! Ne4** White's position is very difficult — Black will invade on the c-file.

## 26. Rxh3 g6 27. Bc1!?

White trusts in the solidity of his position.

I would prefer the more active **27. fxg6 fxg6 28. Bc3**, where White does not risk losing. For example, **28. ... Ng7** (if **28. ... Rf8 29. f5!**; or **28. ... Rc8 29. Bb4 Ng7 30. Rh6 Kf7 31. Rh7** with sufficient counterplay, e.g., **31. ... R8c4 32. Bd6 Rxd4? 33. e6+! Kxe6 34. Be5 29. Rf2! Rc1+ 30. Rf1**, forcing the trade of Black's rook.

## 27. ... Ng7 28. fxg6 fxg6 29. Be3 Nf5



Black enjoys definite pressure, as White's bad dark-squared bishop cannot fight against the light-square invasion. Meanwhile, White's extra passed e-pawn does not count for much. I will not analyze the rest of the game in significant detail, as it's not directly relevant to our topic, and will only stop to point out the major turning points.

## 30. Bf2 Rec8 31. Rd3 R8c3 32. Rfd1 Kf7

## 33. Kf1 Ke6 34. Ke1 Ng7!?

Intending **... Ke6-f5** followed by **... Ng7-e6**.

## 35. Rg3!

Encouraging Black to mend White's pawn structure.

## 35. ... Rxg3

The enterprising **35. ... Kf5!?** **36. Rg5+ Ke4 37. Rxg6 Nf5** deserved attention.

## 36. hxg3 Kf5 37. Rd2 Rc3 38. Ra2 Ne6 39. Kd2 Rf3 40. Ke2 Ke4 41. a4 Rc3 42. a5?!

It was better to continue passive defense: **42. Kd2 Rd3+ 43. Ke2**, and Black has no clear way to improve his position. Taking on d4 is always dangerous in view of White's e-pawn.

## 42. ... b5! 43. a6 b4 44. Rb2 b3 45. Kd2 Rf3 46. Ke2?

By now **46. Kc1!** was the only move — White wants to block the b-pawn with the king: **46. ... Nc7 47. e6! Nxe6 48. Re2+ Kf5 49. Kb2**.

## 46. ... Rd3

Even stronger was **46. ... Nc7!**.



Sam Shankland at the 2016 Olympiad

47. Rd2 Rc3 48. Kd1



The rest of the game was clearly played in time pressure.

48. ... Kf3 49. Be1 Re3 50. Bf2 Rc3 51. Be1 Ke4 52. Bf2?

Instead 52. Re2+! Re3 53. Rxe3+ Kxe3 54. Kc1 holds.

52. ... g5?!

Here 52. ... Rc4! improves.

53. fxg5 Nxg5 54. Re2+? Kf3?

Decisive is 54. ... Kd3! 55. Be1 (or 55. e6 Nxe6!) 55. ... Rc2.

55. Be1!

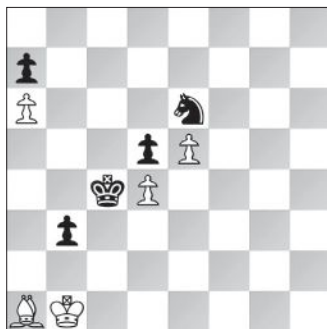
Again 55. e6? is met by 55. ... Nxe6.

55. ... Rd3+ 56. Rd2 Re3 57. Rf2+ Kxg3

58. Re2+ Kf3 59. Rxe3+ Kxe3 60. Bc3 Ne4

61. Bb2 Ng5 62. Kc1 Kd3 63. Kb1 Ne6 64.

Ba1 Kc4



65. Kc1?

White had to activate the bishop: 65. Bb2! Nc7 (or 65. ... Kb4 66. Bc1!) 66. Ba3 Kxd4 67. Bd6, and White's counterplay is in time.

65. ... Kb5?

Now 65. ... Nc7! would win.

66. Kd2?

The last chance to draw was 66. Bc3!.

66. ... Kb4!

The king dominates the bishop, and the game is over.

67. Bb2 Nc7 68. Kd3 Nxa6 69. e6 Nc7 70. e7 a5 71. Bc3+ Ka3 72. Bxa5 b2, White resigned.

The lines with ... h7-h5 are now the main theoretical battleground in this variation. Black can also close the center by playing 14. ... c4 first, and only then ... h7-h5, but I find this approach less flexible. Some of the main differences are discussed in the next game:

## NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE, BOTVINNIK VARIATION (E49)

GM Sam Shankland (2679)

GM Tornike Sanikidze (2497)

42nd Olympiad (10), Baku, 09.12.2016

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 0-0 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 c5 7. Bd3 d5 8. cxd5 exd5 9. Ne2 b6 10. 0-0 Ba6 11. f3 Re8 12. Ng3 Bxd3 13. Qxd3 Nc6 14. Bb2



14. ... c4 15. Qd2

Here 15. Qe2 does not change much, since after 15. ... b5 (note that 15. ... h5 16. Qf2 is a transposition to 15. Qd2) 16. e4 dxe4 17. fxe4 Black has the crucial trick 17. ... Nxe4! 18. Nxe4 Qd5, equalizing.

15. ... h5

The thrust 15. ... b5 seems too straightforward; once again, Black should be cautious about allowing e3-e4. After 16. Rae1 Re6 17. Bc1! (17. Qf2!? is also good; however, 17. e4?! allows the typical shot 17. ... dxe4 18. fxe4 Ne5! and the knight will cause havoc once it arrives on d3) is a vital preparatory move. Play continues 17. ... a5 18. e4 Ne7 (here 18. ... b4 19. e5 Ne8 20. f4 bxc3 21. Qxc3 Qb6 22. Rd1 also does not give Black enough counterplay) 19. e5 Ne8 20. Qc2! White should not allow Black to blockade the position with ... f7-f5. After 20. ... b4 (20. ... g6 is met by 21. Bg5!) 21. f4 b3

22. Qb1 White's kingside play starts to look menacing.

16. Qf2!



An important prophylactic move, directed against ... h5-h4. Shankland was the first person to play this move over the board, and although not everyone has adopted it, I think it is best.

The essential point of Black's play is that after 16. Rae1 h4 17. Nf5 Ne7! White cannot capture on h4 in view of ... g7-g5, trapping the knight. Black is completely fine here.

16. ... Qd7

Taking the f5-square under control; now after ... h5-h4 White's knight may have to retreat to h1. However, it turns out that White doesn't fear this temporary inconvenience — the knight can go to f2, or, if Black plays ... h4-h3, back to g3. Moreover, 16. ... Qd7 has some downsides — it does nothing to further overprotect the e4-square, and Black's queen can no longer defend the h-pawn once it reaches h4.

(a) Another idea of 16. Qf2 is revealed after 16. ... h4 17. Nf5.

(a1) Now 17. ... Ne7? is bad due to 18. Nxe4 g5 19. Qg3!.

(a2) Also insufficient is 17. ... h3?. The following beautiful line shows how all of White's pieces can come into play: 18. Qg3 g6 19. e4 dxe4 20. fxe4 Rxe4 21. Bc1! Qd5 22. Nh6+ Kg7 23. Ra2! with a strong initiative.

(a3) Maybe Black should try 17. ... Qd7!? 18. Nxe4 b5, sacrificing a pawn, but significantly slowing down White's attack: with the knight misplaced on h4, it's much harder to prepare e3-e4.

(b) 16. ... b5?! is inconsistent; after 17. Rae1 h4 18. Nf5 h3 19. Qg3! g6 20. e4 (as in Le – Aleksandrov, FIDE World Cup 2019) White was clearly better.

(c) Recently the Ukrainian grandmaster Konstantin Tarlev attempted to improve Black's play with 16. ... Re6!?. Play continued 17. Rae1 (here 17. e4!?, in the spirit of Sarana, is worth a try) 17. ... Ne7

**18. e4** (also possible is 18. Bc1!? h4 19. Nh1 Ng6 20. Qc2 with the idea of Nh1-f2 and then e3-e4, after which White's pieces are perfectly harmonized. As usual, there is a tactical point: trying to triple pieces on the e-file with 20. ... Qe7?! runs into 21. e4! dxe4 22. f4! Nf8 23. f5 Rc6 24. Nf2 Re8 25. Bg5!, with a clear advantage.) **18. ... h4 19. Nh1 Ng6**



POSITION AFTER 19. ... Ng6

**20. Bc1** (the pawn sacrifice 20. e5 Nh5 21. f4 initially looks very strong, but now Black reveals his ingenious idea: 21. ... Ngxf4 22. Bc1 Nh3+! 23. gxh3 Rg6+ 24. Ng3 hxg3 25. Qxf7+ Kh7 with an unclear position) **20. ... dxe4 21. fxe4.**

So far, both sides have played well, but now Black makes a serious error: **21. ... Qd7?** (correct is 21. ... Qe8! 22. e5 Nd5 with a decent blockading position) **22. Qf5!** (a strong consolidating move) **22. ... Rae8 23. Nf2 R6e7 24. Qf3 Qb7 25. Bg5 Re6 26. Bxf6 Rxf6 27. Qg4 Nf4 28. Qxh4 Nd3 29. Re3 Rf4;** this is Indjic – Tarlev from the Bosnia and Herzegovina Teams in 2023. Despite Black's creative attempts to create counterplay, White has handled the complications irreproachably and now could have capped off his play with 30. Qg5!. The deep point is 30. ... Rxf2 31. Rxf2 Nxf2 32. Kxf2 Rxe4 33. Qd8+ Kh7 34. Rh3+ Kg6 35. Qd6+ f6 36. Qg3+! Kf7 37. Rh7 Kg8 38. Qh3! Qd5 39. Rh5! and wins.

## 17. Rae1 Ne7

To reposition the knight Black has to block the e8-rook for one move, and White seizes his chance to play the long-desired central break.

Black doesn't achieve much with 17. ... h4 18. Nh1 h3 19. Ng3; in fact, it is White who may benefit from the soon-to-be-opened g-file. Indeed, after the moves 19. ... Ne7 20. e4 Ng6 21. Bc1 Nh4 22. gxh3 Qxh3 23. Kh1 (Vocaturo – Postny, Chania Open 2019) White had a clear advantage in view of his solid center and prospects for a kingside initiative. Black's own kingside play failed to gain anything.

Too risky is 17. ... b5?; after 18. e4! dxe4?

19. fxe4 h4 20. Nf5 Nxe4 21. Qf4! (if 21. Qxh4? Nd6!) 21. ... Qd5 22. Qg4 and wins.

## 18. e4 h4 19. Nh1



## 19. ... Ng6?

The first real mistake. Now Black will have problems with the f6-knight.

Instead 19. ... dxe4! was necessary. After 20. fxe4 Ng6 21. e5 Nd5 22. Qf3 Re6 (22. ... h3!? is also possible) 23. Nf2 f6 Black gets good counterplay in the center. Now White should play the counterintuitive 24. Nh3!, taking the f4-square under and control and preventing 24. ... fxe5 in view of 25. Ng5. The position is complex but Black is certainly fighting hard. Note that the more natural 24. Ne4 is bad in view of 24. ... Rf8!

## 20. e5 Nh5?

A second, essentially decisive error.

Black should try to block the position with 20. ... Nh7 21. f4 f5. In general, this kind of structure is fine for Black and is the ideal way of meeting e4-e5. However, after the energetic 22. g4! Rf8 23. Bc1 Black is worse, as the h7-knight cannot get to the desired e6-square.

## 21. Bc1!

This regrouping, useful for White in so many contexts, should by now be very familiar. Now it's clear that Black is big trouble -- f3-f4 is coming.

## 21. ... Nhf4

Desperation, but the alternative 21. ... f5 22. f4 leaves the h5-knight unhappy.

## 22. Bxf4 Nxf4 23. Qxh4 Nd3 24. Re3

(see diagram top next column)

White has an advantage in material and position. The game is already over.

**24. ... Re6 25. f4 Rh6 26. Qg3 Qa4 27. Nf2** White could not care less about the a3-pawn.



**27. ... Nxf2 28. Qxf2 Qxa3 29. f5 a5 30. Rg3 Kh8 31. Qf4 Qf8 32. f6 gxf6** Or 32. ... g6 33. Rff3.

## 33. exf6 Re8 34. Qf5

34. Rff3 is more convincing, but the text move suffices.

**34. ... Rh7 35. Rh3 Qg8 36. Rff3 Re1+ 37. Kf2 Re2+ 38. Kxe2 Qxg2+ 39. Ke1, Black resigned.**

Eight decades have passed since Botvinnik – Capablanca, and the way Black approaches this pawn structure has changed remarkably. Rather than relying on abstract concepts (Capablanca's 17. ... Na5? or Unzicker's 15. ... Rac8?), today's players understand that the evaluation of the position primarily rests on Black's success in preempting e3-e4 and are ready to undertake concrete measures (... h7-h5) to achieve this goal.

I think this quite convincingly shows the benefits of my proposed approach to opening study. Only by working through the history of a variation, by seeing how players grappled with problems over time, can we really understand the radical ideas behind moves we now take for granted. Today, armed with modern engines and databases, it's easy to lose appreciation for how groundbreaking moves like ... h7-h5 actually are.

While the position is objectively equal, the variation remains very much alive: there are few absolutely forced lines, and it's not at all easy for Black to dry out the game. So, I think this line remains a recommendable choice for White players. I have made it a core part of my repertoire ever since I began playing 1. d4 and have yet to lose a tournament game as White – despite never making a formal study of the theory! After all, memorization teaches you to react only in familiar situations; understanding allows you to play well even in unfamiliar ones.

Next month, in our final installment, we will apply what we have learned by analyzing a few contemporary games, and also by solving a number of thematic positions. ♠

# The Kids are Alright

Team USA brings home six medals from the World Rapid Cadet and Blitz and World School Chess Championships.

BY **JOHN HARTMANN**

**S**

OME OF AMERICA'S TOP youth brought home six medals from the recently completed World Cadet

Rapid and Blitz Championships (Durres, Albania; April 25-29, 2024) and World School Chess Championships (Lima, Peru; May 1-9, 2024).

WFM Megan Paragua led the way with two first place finishes in the Girls Under 12 sections of the Cadet Rapid and Blitz, scoring a strong 9½/11 in both cases. As the top seed, she was surely targeted by her fellow players for an upset, but Paragua — seen on our March 2022 cover — handled the pressure and brought home double gold.

Here is perhaps her most interesting game from the two events, a win in the Rapid with the black pieces. Paragua shows excellent technique in bringing home the full point.



Albanian President Bajram Begaj with his new BFF Megan Paragua

## CATALAN OPENING, OPEN VARIATION (E05)

**Nika Venskaya (1785)**

**WFM Megan Paragua (1964)**

**Cadet Girls U12 Rapid (7), Durres, 04.27.2024**

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 d5 3. g3 e6 4. Bg2 Be7 5. 0-0 0-0 6. c4 dxc4 7. Qc2 a6 8. a4 Nc6 9. Qxc4 Qd5 10. Nbd2 Rb8 11. e3 Rd8 12. Ne1 Qxc4 13. Nxc4 Nd5 14. Nd3 b6 15. Bd2 Bb7 16. Rfc1 Kf8 17. Nce5 Nxe5 18. Nxe5 c5 19. Bc3 f6 20. Nf3 Nxc3 21. bxc3 h6 22. Rab1 Bd5 23. h4 h5 24. Rd1 Kf7 25. Kh2 g6 26. Kg1 Rdc8 27. Rdc1 Kg7 28. Nd2 Bxg2 29. Kxg2 Kf7 30. Kf3 c4 31. Rc2 b5 32. axb5 axb5 33. Ke2 g5 34. Nf3 g4 35. Nd2 Kg6 36. Ne4 f5 37. Nd2 Bd6 38. Kd1



38. ... e5 39. Ke2 exd4 40. exd4 f4! 41. Nf1 Rc7

Even stronger was 41. ... Re8+! 42. Kd1 fxg3 43. Nxg3 Bxg3 44. fxg3 Re3!

**42. Ra2?**

It's not immediately clear that this is a mistake, but now Black's pieces swarm the White position.

Black can try to press after something like 42. gxf4 Bxf4 43. Ne3, but White's defensive task is not overwhelming.

42. ... Re7+! 43. Kd2 b4! 44. Ra6 bxc3+ 45. Kc2 Re2+ 46. Kxc3 Rxb1 47. Rxd6+ Kf7 48. Nd2 Rc1+ 49. Kb2 Rd1, White resigned.

With a final score of 9/11, Aiden Li brought home the gold in the Open Under 8 Blitz on tiebreaks. By its nature, blitz can be chaotic, but Li showed poise beyond his years to take the top spot on the podium. Witness his final round victory that clinched first place.

## PETROFF DEFENSE (C42)

**Aiden Li (1771)**

**Kirill Aleks Morozovich (1542)**

**Cadet Open U8 Blitz (11), Durres, 04.28.2024**

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nxe5 d6 4. Nf3 Nxe4 5. Nc3 Nxc3 6. dxc3 Be7 7. Bf4 0-0 8. Qd2 c6 9. 0-0-0 d5 10. h4 Nd7 11. Bd3 Nc5 12. Rde1 Re8 13. Ng5 g6 14. Nf3

Here 14. h5! is very tempting.

14. ... Qa5 15. Kb1 Na4 16. Bd6 Be6

Not 16. ... Kf8? 17. Qh6+ with mate to follow.

17. Bxe7 Rxe7 18. h5 d4 19. hxg6 Nxc3+ 20. Kc1 Nxa2+ 21. Kd1 Qxd2+ 22. Kxd2 fxg6?



Now Li uses simple tactics to win material.

With the correct 22. ... hxc6! the position is thoroughly unclear.

**23. Nxd4 Rae8 24. Nxe6 Rxe6 25. Rxe6 Rxe6 26. Bc4 Kf7 27. Bxa2 h5 28. Re1, Black resigned.**

Kicking off mere days after the final pawns were pushed in Albania, the 2024 World School Chess Championships saw Team USA double their medal count.

Maxwell Yang won the Open Under 13 section with a score of 7½/9. With this victory, he becomes a FIDE master via FIDE's direct title regulations. In the following game, a key win against second-place finisher Matias Martinez Flores, Yang collects the full point after Black pushes too hard.

## MAXIMIZING CHANCES

**Maxwell Yang (1973)**  
**Matias Martinez Flores (2034)**  
**World School Ch U13 (7), Lima,**  
**05.07.2024**



**BLACK TO MOVE**

Starting the round in shared first place, Black is surely playing for the win. He is higher rated than his opponent and arguably has at least equality despite being down a pawn. The move that Black likely wants to play is 41. ... R8b2 (41. ... R1b2 leads to easy equality) but it looks like 42. R5xc4? just holds everything together.

Here Black should have remembered the Shankland Rule — “what if I play it anyway? can I make it work?” — and found the winning 42. ... Bb5! 43. R4c3 (if the rook moves elsewhere, Black has another idea, i.e., 43. Rc8 Bd3!) 43. ... a3! (the hard move to see!) and now, with ... Bb5-a4 coming, White is lost.

It's true that White can claim equality with 42. Rxb2 Rxb2 43. a3 Ra2 but even here, there are pitfalls. There's a passed a-pawn looming once Black takes on a3, and if 44. Rxc4? Bb5! it's game over.



Above: Team USA represents in Albania. Right: Aiden Li stands proudly atop the podium.

**41. ... Bb5? 42. Nc3!**

Now White wins a pawn, and soon more, via tactical means.

**42. ... Rb4 43. a3**

Or 43. Nxb5 R8xb5 44. Rxb5 Rxb5 and now 45. Ke3!.

**43. ... Rb3 44. Nxb5 R8xb5 45. Rxb5 Rxb5 46. Rxc4 Rb2+ 47. Kg1 Rb1+ 48. Kh2 Kf7 49. Rxa4 Ra1 50. Ra6 Rd1 51. d5 Ra1 52. Ra7+ Ke8 53. a4 Kf8 54. a5 Ke8 55. a6 Kf8 56. Ra8+ Kf7 57. a7 Kg7 58. d6 Rd1 59. Rg8+ Kxg8 60. a8=Q+, Black resigned.**

The Open Under 9 section saw two Americans on the podium. Aayansh Guntaka scored a blistering 8½/9 to win the gold, while Advik Manchanda brought home silver on tiebreaks with 7½ points. In the process, both players also earned their Candidate Master titles from FIDE.

Our two medalists faced off in round seven, with Guntaka coming out on top in this encounter.

## FRENCH DEFENSE, WINAWER VARIATION (C18)

**Advik Manchanda (1673)**  
**Aayansh Guntaka (1803)**  
**World School Ch U09 (7), Lima,**  
**05.07.2024**

**1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Ba5**

The Armenian variation of the Winawer.

**6. b4 cxd4 7. Qg4 Ne7 8. Nb5**

Here 8. bxa5 dxc3 9. Qxg7 Rg8 10. Qxh7 gives

White a serious advantage.

**8. ... Bc7 9. Qxg7 Rg8 10. Qxh7 a6 11. Nxd4**

Perhaps a bit inferior to the more usual 11. Nxc7+ Qxc7 12. Ne2.

**11. ... Bxe5 12. Ngf3 Bxd4 13. Nxd4 e5**

Black is down a pawn but boasts a huge center and easy development. He doesn't just have compensation here; he's better!

**14. Nf3 Bf5 15. Qh5 Qc7 16. Bd2 Nbc6 17. c3**



**17. ... d4!?**

I was initially drawn to 17. ... 0-0-0 18. Qxf7

Rdf8 when Black's position is a French player's dream, but here Guntaka seems to have set a trap that Manchanda slips into.

### 18. cxd4? Bg4!

Crunch! Now Black's pieces spring into action.

19. Qh7 Bxf3 20. gxf3 Nxd4 21. Rc1 Nxf3+ 22. Kd1 Qd6 23. Qd3 Qxd3

Surely Black could keep the queens on, and keep attacking, with 23. ... Qf6, but the game continuation wins as well.

24. Bxd3 Rd8 25. Ke2 Nxd2 26. Kxd2 e4 27. Rc3 Rxd3+ 28. Rxd3 exd3 29. Kxd3 Rh8 30. h4 Ng6 31. h5 Rxh5 32. Re1+ Kd7 33. Kc4 Rh3 34. a4 Rf3 35. Kc5 Kc7 36. Re2 b6+ 37. Kc4 Kd6 38. Rd2+ Ke6 39. Re2+ Ne5+ 40. Kd4 Rd3+ 41. Ke4 f5+ 42. Kf4 Kf6 43. Re3 Rd4+ 44. Kg3 f4+ 45. Kg2 fxe3 46. fxe3 Rxb4 47. Kf2 Rxa4 48. Ke2 b5 49. Kd2 b4 50. Kc2 Ra3 51. e4 Nc4 52. Kc1 b3 53. Kb1 Ra2 54. e5+ Ke6, White resigned. ♠

Middle: Our Open U09 school champions. Bottom: Maxwell Yang wins gold. Right: Megan Paragua brings home the hardware!



## WORLD CADET RAPID AND BLITZ AMERICANS AT A GLANCE

APRIL 25-29, 2024 | DURRES, ALBANIA

### RAPID

**OPEN U08:** Alexander Joseph, 7½. Aiden Linyan Li, 7. Daniel Tokmachov, 4½. **OPEN U10:** Lev Shangin, 6. Jairaj Desai, 5. **GIRLS U10:** Alicia Zhu, 7. WCM Romi Milner, 6½. Alisa Joseph, 4½. **OPEN U12:** Matthew Tikhomirov, 6. Rai Mukherji, 5½. Martin Lenoks, Jr. 4. **GIRLS U12:** WFM Megan Paragua, 9½ — gold medal. Lucia Huang, 6.

### BLITZ

**OPEN U08:** Aiden Linyuan Li, 9 — gold medal. Alexander Joseph, 7. Daniel Tokmachov, 6. **OPEN U10:** Lev Shangin, 7½. Jairaj Desai, 5. **GIRLS U10:** Alicia Zhu, 6. WCM Romi Milner, 6. Alisa Joseph, 5. **OPEN U12:** Matthew Tikhomirov, 6. Rai Mukherji, 5. Martin Lenoks, Jr. 4. **GIRLS U12:** WFM Megan Paragua, 9½ — gold medal. Lucia Huang, 6.

For complete results and additional photos, visit [worldcadetrb2024.fide.com](https://worldcadetrb2024.fide.com).

## WORLD SCHOOL CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP AMERICANS AT A GLANCE

MAY 1-9, 2024 | LIMA, PERU

**OPEN U07:** Harrison Cai, 6. Theo Divaris, 5. **OPEN U09:** Aayansh Guntaka, 8½ — gold medal. Advik Manchanda, 7½ — silver medal. **OPEN U13:** Maxwell Yang, 7½ — gold medal. Felix Guo, 6½. Alexander Sukhiashvili, 6.

For complete results and additional photos, visit [www.fide.com/news/3016](https://www.fide.com/news/3016).

# Not Quite Evergreen 2

An exciting, if not quite immortal, game from Anderssen

BY BRUCE PANDOLFINI

# A

DOLF ANDERSSSEN (1818-1879) was a German chess master, among the best players in the world from the 1850s to the

1870s. He had a distinguished career, winning the London International Tournaments of 1851 and 1862. During those years he lost two celebrated matches, one to Paul Morphy in 1858 and the other to Wilhelm Steinitz in 1866. He also won two of the most famous chess games of all time: the Immortal Game against Kieseritzky and the Evergreen Game against his student Jean Dufresne. This month's encounter, an offhand game played in Berlin in 1851, was also played by Anderssen (Black) against Dufresne. It features the same kind of wildly spirited attack that characterized Anderssen's most exciting games.

## SCOTCH GAMBIT (C45)

Jean Dufresne  
Adolf Anderssen  
Berlin 1851

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4



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. \*\*

3. **Par Score 5** **Nf6**

So far it's the Two Knights Defense, but reasonable transpositions are still possible. You may accept **full credit** for 3. ... Bc5.

4. **d4**

White plays to open the center. \*\*

4. **Par Score 5** **exd4**

This is best. Slightly less good is 4. ... Nxe4.

5. **e5**

Dufresne begins to attack, but Black is fine. \*\*

5. **Par Score 6** **d5**

Anderssen plays objectively the best move, pursuing development and aiming to steal the initiative. You may accept **full credit** for 5. ... Ng4. Add **1 bonus point** if you evaluated 5. ... Ng4 6. Bxf7+ Kxf7 7. Ng5+ Kg8 8. Qxg4 h6 as being good for Black.

6. **Bb5**

Black does even better after 6. exf6 dxc4. \*\*

6. **Par Score 5** **Ne4**

Anderssen keeps his knight centralized and active.

7. **0-0**

Castling is best here. White avoids a possible check at b4 and removes his king from the center. \*\*

7. **Par Score 6** **Bc5**

Black prepares kingside castling, though you may accept **full credit** for 7. ... Bg4.

8. **b4**

White sacs a pawn for the initiative, but better was the simpler 8. Nxd4. \*\*

8. **Par Score 5** **Bb6**

This is perhaps more consistent with Anderssen's style, it being gladiatorially better to offer gambits than to accept them, though you may accept **full credit** for just taking the pawn, 8. ... Bxb4.

9. **Nxd4**

White takes back the pawn and now pressures c6. \*\*

9. **Par Score 6** **Bd7**

With this direct defense, Black comes away with a slight edge.

10. **Bxc6**

White takes with the bishop to avoid loss of time, which would ensue from 10. Nxc6 bxc6. \*\*

10. **Par Score 4** **bxc6**

Anderssen refrains from further trades (10. ... Bxc6 11. Nxc6 bxc6), since he's still hoping to mount an attack by keeping potential weapons.

11. **f4**

This turns out to be a mistake. It would have been better to kick out the knight with 11. f3. \*\*

11. **Par Score 6** **Bg4**

A surprisingly nice rejoinder, since 12. Qxg4 would be met by 12. ... Bxd4+.

12. **Qd3**

Slightly better would be to sacrifice the Exchange now with 12. Rf3. With either move, however (whether 12. Qd3 or 12. Rf3), Black has a winning advantage. \*\*

12. **Par Score 6** **Be2**

Once again, Anderssen exploits White's overloaded queen.

13. **Qe3**

Dufresne manages to keep the d4-knight defended, but he could not avoid loss of the Exchange. \*\*

# ABCS OF CHESS

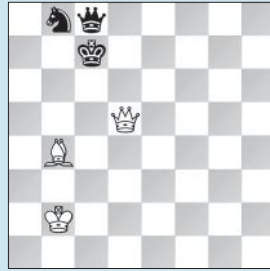
THESE PROBLEMS ARE ALL related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 63.

## JUNE EXERCISE:

It's generally a good idea to review our games, to see what we did right and where we went wrong. We tend to focus on our losses, figuring those are the games from which we can learn the most. But we should also analyze our victories. It's natural to think we've played well simply because we've won. But why we've won may have less to do with our own play and more to do with our opponent's errors. Win or lose, always try to analyze with the same objectivity.

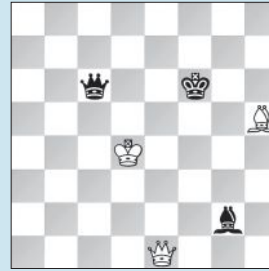
### PROBLEM 1

Mating net



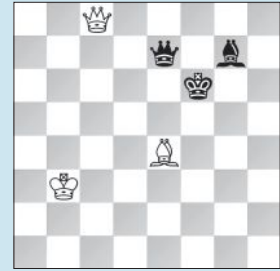
### PROBLEM 2

Mating net



### PROBLEM 3

Mating net



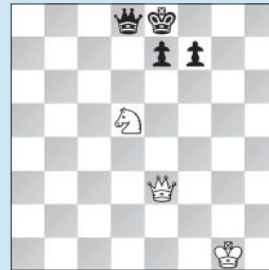
### PROBLEM 4

Mating net



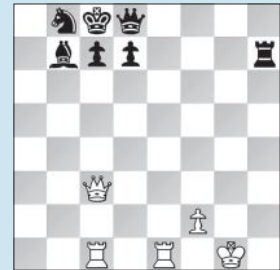
### PROBLEM 5

Mating net



### PROBLEM 6

Mating net



13. **Par Score 5** Bxf1

14. **Kxf1\*\***

14. **Par Score 4** Qh4  
Black's queen is annoyingly placed here, but you may accept **full credit** for 14. ... f6, when 15. e6 Qd6 is also strong.

15. **Bb2**  
White overprotects his vulnerable d4-knight. On 15. h3, Black has 15. ... Ng3+, and both 16. Ke1 Nf5+ and 16. Kg1 Bxd4 17. Qxd4 Ne2+ are crushing (**1 bonus point** for seeing it all). \*\*

15. **Par Score 5** Qxh2  
The only question now is how soon Dufresne will resign.

16. **Nd2**  
White tries to complete his development, neglecting the g-pawn. But 16. Qf3 was only marginally better. He still would be dead lost. \*\*

16. **Par Score 5** Qh1+

17. **Ke2\*\***

17. **Par Score 4** Qxg2+  
Moving in for the kill.

18. **Kd3**

As bad as 18. Ke1 or 18. Kd1 were, this is worse. \*\*

18. **Par Score 5** Nxd2  
This seems to be best, though you may accept **full credit** for 18. ... Nf2+, when 19. Kc3 is met by 19. ... c5.

19. **Qxd2**  
White could have tried 19. Rg1, but it wouldn't have helped after 19. ... Qh2. \*\*

19. **Par Score 6** Qe4+  
Black's powerful centralization wins the day.

20. **Kc3\*\***

20. **Par Score 6** c5  
A little pawn move, but a devastating one.

21. **bxc5**  
White delays the inevitable. On 21. Ne2, for example, Black has 21. ... Qc4 mate. \*\*

21. **Par Score 4** Ba5+  
This check does more than win the queen. A quick mate should follow. An exemplary line might be 22. Kb3 Rb8+ 23. Ka4 Bxd2 24. Rb1 Rxb2 25. Rxb2 Qxd4+ 26. Ka3 Qxc5+ 27. Ka4 Qa5+ 28. Kb3 Qb4 mate (**1 bonus point**).

22. **White resigned.**  
A typically brilliant Anderssen effort. ♠



POSITION AFTER 21. ... Ba5+

## 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     |

# From the Attic

Two pawn endings that deserve to see the light of day.

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN

W

WHEN I PRODUCED THE REVISED edition of *Liquidation on the Chessboard* I was able to add about 80 pages of new material,

but it was inevitable that some great endgames were going to arise a bit late for publication. This month I clean out the attic with two of my favorite near-misses.

## PAWN RACES

GM Aravindh Chithambaram (2601)  
GM Eltaj Safarli (2681)  
Aeroflot Open (2), Moscow, 2019



BLACK TO MOVE

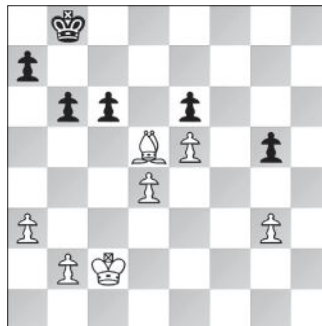
The diagram shows how suddenly a tense pawn ending can appear on the board. Black should have kept pieces on with 27. ... Bc8 when I think White has to work a bit harder to maintain the balance.

27. ... b6?! 28. Nxe6 fxe6 29. e5 Nd5+

Here 29. ... Nh5 is playable for those afraid of pawn endings.

30. Bxd5 Rxc2+ 31. Kxc2

Recapturing presents Black an enormous decision.

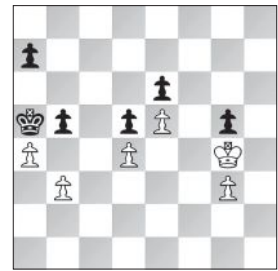


31. ... exd5!

This provides a clear path to a draw with accurate play.

The alternative 31. ... cxd5 is hardly a practical choice, but it leads to fascinating races and instructive queen endings. Play continues 32. Kd3 and now:

a) 32. ... Kc7 33. Ke3 (not 33. a4 Kd7 and Black plugs up the kingside) 33. ... Kc6 34. a4! (It is not easy to see that this is stronger than 34. Kf3; after 34. ... Kb5 35. b3 a5! Black crashes through the blockade just in time: 36. Kg4 a4 37. bxa4+ Kc4! 38. Kxg5 Kxd4 39. Kf6 Kc3 and both 40. Kxe6 d4 41. Kf6 d3 42. e6 d2 43. e7 d1=Q 44. e8=Q Qf3+ and 40. g4 d4 41. g5 d3 42. g6 d2 43. g7 d1=Q 44. g8=Q Qf3+! 45. Kxe6 Qc6+ lead to a draw) 34. ... b5! 35. b3 (This seems stronger than 35. Kf3 which we will see is also probably good enough after 35. ... bxa4 36. Kg4 Kb5 37. Kxg5 Kc4 38. g4 Kb3) 35. ... Kb6 36. Kf3 Ka5 37. Kg4 (37. axb5? Kb4 costs a critical tempo) and now:



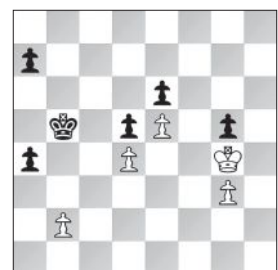
POSITION AFTER 37. Kg4

Here again we face a crossroads.

a1) 37. ... Kb4 38. Kxg5 Kc3 (38. ... Kxb3 39. axb5 Kc3 40. g4 Kxd4 41. Kf4 (if 41. Kf6 Kc5) 41. ... Kc3 is another tablebase win) 39. Kf6 Kxd4 40. g4 (40. Kxe6 bxa4 41. bxa4 Kc4 also works) 40. ... Ke4 41. g5 d4 42. g6 d3 43. g7 d2 44. g8=Q d1=Q 45. Qh7+ (45. Qxe6? Qd8+ 46. Kg6 Qf8!! with a miracle draw. The Black king has to be chased away from the e-pawn) 45. ... Kf4 46. Qh4+ (46. Qxa7? Qd8+ 47. Kxe6 Qe8+ 48. Qe7 Qxe7+ 49. Kxe7 bxa4 50. bxa4 Kxe5 draws) 46. ... Ke3 47. Qb4 bxa4 48. bxa4 Qd5 49. Qe1+ and White will use a series of checks to pick up either the a-pawn or the e-pawn.

a2) Black complicates matters by leaving the b-pawns on the board; therefore: 37. ... bxa4 38. bxa4 Kb4 (38. ... Kxa4 39. Kxg5 a5 40. Kf6 Kb4 41. Kxe6 a4 42. Kxd5 a3 43. e6 a2 44. e7 a1=Q 45. e8=Q wins routinely) 39. Kxg5 Kc4 40. Kf6 Kxd4 41. g4 Kc3 (41. ... Ke4 42. g5 d4 43. g6 d3 44. g7 d2 45. g8=Q d1=Q 46. Qh7+ Kf4 47. Qh4+ Ke3 48. Kxe6 and White wins) 42. g5 d4 43. g6 d3 44. g7 d2 45. g8=Q d1=Q 46. Qxe6 Qxa4 (46. ... Qd8+ 47. Kf7 Qc7+ 48. Qe7) 47. Qh3+ Kb2 48. Qh2+ Kb1 49. Qg1+ Ka2 50. Qf2+ Kb1 51. e6 with a tablebase win which is far from trivial for humans.

b) 32. ... Kb7 33. a4 (White can't fully close the queenside because 33. b4 Kc6! 34. a4 Kd7 covers the kingside, and we have already seen Black hold after 33. Ke3 Ka6 34. Kf3 Kb5 35. b3 a5) 33. ... b5! (if 33. ... Kc6 34. Ke3) 34. Ke3 Kb6 35. Kf3 bxa4 36. Kg4 Kb5 and this transposes into the alternative to 34. a4 from the 32. ... Kc7 line:



POSITION AFTER 36. ... Kb5

**37. Kxg5 Kc4 38. g4!** (after 38. Kf6 Kxd4! 39. g4 Ke4 40. g5 d4 41. g6 d3 42. g7 d2 43. g8=Q d1=Q 44. Qh7+ Ke3 45. Kxe6 Qd4! Black draws)  
**38. ... Kb3** (if 38. ... Kxd4? 39. Kf4! Kc4 40. g5 d4 41. g6 d3 42. Ke3 a3 43. bxa3 Kc3 44. g7 d2 45. g8=Q d1=Q 46. Qxe6 and White should win)  
**39. Kf6 Kxb2 40. g5 a3 41. g6 a2 42. g7 a1=Q 43. g8=Q a5 44. Kxe6 a4 45. Qg2+ Kc3** (45. ... Kb1 46. Qh1+ Kb2 47. Qxa1+ Kxa1 48. Kxd5 is a win)  
**46. Kxd5** with a tablebase win, though Black is not without chances.

It may not be humanly possible to work out which queen ending versions are most favorable, but it is clear that White is faster, and Black made the correct call.

### 32. b4 Kc7 33. a4 a5!

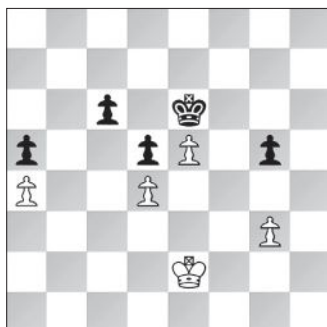
Here 33. ... Kd7? 34. b5! leaves Black busted as 34. ... c5 35. dxc5 bxc5 36. a5 creates separated majorities that will produce a queen. If Black leaves the pawn on c6 and waits, White will just bring his king to the kingside.

### 34. bxa5

Avoiding 34. b5 cxb5 35. axb5 when White's king can't stray too far from Black's protected passed a-pawn.

### 34. ... bxa5 35. Kd3 Kd7 36. Ke3 Ke6 37. Ke2!

This stutter-step provides a path to the kingside for White's monarch, but the ... c6-c5 break offers sufficient counterplay.



### 37. ... c5

This is sufficient but actually any move draws here with the proper follow-up. To wit:

a) After 37. ... g4 38. Kd2 Kf5 39. Ke3 Kg5 40. e6 Kf6 41. Kf4 Kxe6 42. Kxg4 Kd6 43. Kf3 c5 44. dxc5+ Kxc5 45. g4 Kd6 the outside passed pawn is not enough to win because Black will get his king back to the corner.

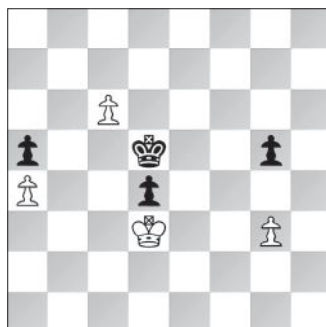
b) If 37. ... Ke7 38. Kf3 Ke6 39. Kg4 c5 40. dxc5 Kxe5 41. Kxg5 d4 42. Kg4 (42. c6 Kd6 43. Kf4 Kxc6 44. Ke4 Kc5 45. Kd3 Kd5 46. g4 Ke5 47. g5 Kf5 48. Kxd4 Kxg5 49. Kc5 Kf6 50. Kb5 Ke7 51. Kxa5 Kd7 52. Kb6 Kc8 is equal) 42. ... Kd5 (not 42. ... Ke4? 43. c6 d3 44. c7 d2 45. c8=Q d1=Q+ 46. Kh4 with winning

chances in the queen ending) 43. Kf3 Kxc5 44. Ke2 Kd5 45. Kd3 Ke5 46. g4 Kf4 draws as we've seen before.

### 38. dxc5 Kxe5 39. Ke3

On 39. Kd3 Black draws with 39. ... g4 (or 39. ... d4 40. Kc4 Ke4 41. c6 d3) 40. Ke3 d4+ 41. Kd3 Kd5 42. c6 Kxc6 43. Kxd4 Kd6.

### 39. ... d4+ 40. Kd3 Kd5 41. c6



### 41. ... Kxc6??

Surely there is no option but to take the pawn? But timing, as they say, is everything.

In this position Black draws with 41. ... Kd6! 42. Kc4 Kc7!! 43. Kxd4 Kxc6 44. g4 (here 44. Ke5 Kc5 45. Kf5 Kb4 gets queens for both sides, and if 44. Kc4 g4 45. Kd4 Kd6 and whichever way the White king goes, the race is a tie) 44. ... Kd6 and Black can maintain the opposition, though he is still even if he chooses to race.

### 42. Kxd4 Kd6 43. Kc4, Black resigned.

Now 43. ... Ke5 44. Kb5 is too slow for Black, but 43. ... Kc6 44. g4 is a fatal Zugzwang.

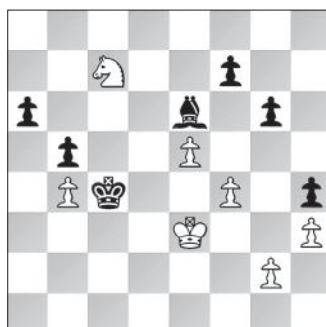
Let's cool down with something "simpler."

## BREAK ON THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE

GM Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (2790)

GM Ding Liren (2812)

Gashimov Memorial (7), Shamkir, 2019



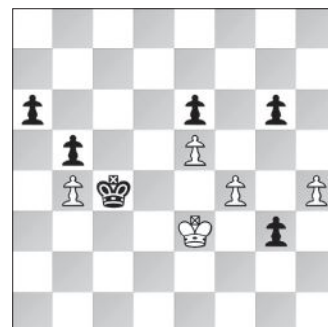
WHITE TO MOVE

### 36. Nxe6!

White would find his knight not so nimble after 36. Nxa6 Bc8 37. Nc7 Kxb4 with a dangerous outside passer.

### 36. ... fxe6 37. g4! hxc3 e.p. 38. h4!

This is the key breakthrough idea. Now 38. ... Kxb4? 39. h5 gxh5 40. f5 is right out, so Black will have to lose time to get a passed pawn rolling on the queenside.



### 38. ... Kd5

Too hasty is 38. ... a5?. After 39. bxa5 b4 40. a6 b3 41. a7 g2! 42. Kf2 b2 43. a8=Q g1=Q+ 44. Kxg1 b1=Q+ 45. Kf2, Black has to defend a pawn-down queen ending.

### 39. Kf3 Kc6!

Again the future World Champion exercises restraint. After 39. ... a5 40. bxa5 b4 41. a6 Kc6 42. h5 gxh5 43. f5 b3 44. fxe6 b2 45. a7 Kb7 46. e7 b1=Q 47. a8=Q+ Kxa8 48. e8=Q+ is drawn, though if anyone has chances, it will be White.

### 40. Kxg3 a5 41. bxa5 b4 42. h5 gxh5 43. f5 b3

Having saved a tempo with his king, Black has time to take, though not without one of the white pawns getting through: 43. ... exf5 44. e6 b3 45. e7 Kd7 46. a6 b2 47. a7 b1=Q 48. e8=Q+ Kxe8 49. a8=Q+ and Black has no effective way to evade the torrent of checks.

### 44. f6! b2 45. f7 b1=Q 46. f8=Q Qg1+ 47. Kh3

This is the only square for the king, but it suffices to deny Black any winning chances.

### 47. ... Qg4+ 48. Kh2 Qe2+ 49. Kh3 Qxe5 50. Qb4

Another option is 50. Qa8+ Kb5 51. a6.

### 50. ... Qb5 51. Qe4+ Qd5 52. Qb4 Qb5

If 52. ... Qc5 we could see another pawn ending, as White is in time to draw after 53. Qxc5+ Kxc5 54. Kh4.

### 53. Qe4+ Qd5 54. Qb4 Qb5, draw. ♠

# Now for the Defense...

Two new electronic products aim to burnish your defensive skills.

BY IM JOHN WATSON

**B**

OOKS ABOUT ATTACK IN chess greatly outnumber those about defense, and books that try to systematize defensive

techniques are rare indeed. That's understandable when one considers that a defender begins in the dark about what his opponent's next move might be, opening up a wide variety of ideas and strategies that might potentially need defending against, with no initial control over which will actually appear on the board. The attacker, by contrast, is able to define the battle by picking the move that initiates the action. It may still be difficult to choose the right move order and calculate precise consequences in an attack, of course, but it's easier to give advice about what to look for when one is in control of the direction of play.

The first chapter of GM Johan Hellsten's new Chessable course, *Mastering Chess Defense*, confronts this issue. "Detecting the Threat" essentially consists of tactical exercises, but with a twist. Instead of looking for tactics that you can play, the exercises have you looking for threats the opponent has, especially counterintuitive ones, and threats that may soon arise.

In the video portion, Hellsten shows a string of examples concerning how you can spot and prevent, or counter, such threats. Then, in 15 additional exercises, the reader is tasked with solving such positions.

In the next few chapters, Hellsten continues with this theme by showing examples with particular defensive techniques; for example, surprising intermediate moves that are easy to miss on defense, and counterthreats. For each chapter, there are scores

of exercises to hone your skills. The ability to anticipate threats is a practical skill, and the examples are taken from games involving players of all strengths.

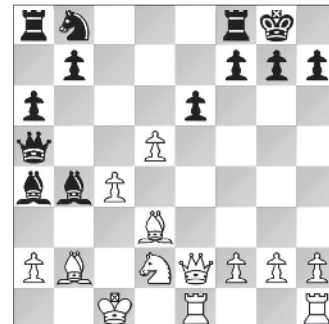
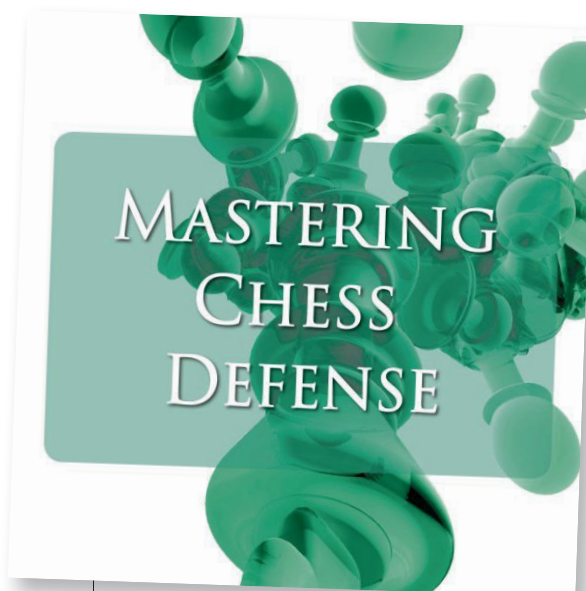
Several chapters have to do with specific defensive techniques, e.g., exploiting pins, using the threat of perpetual check, and some more general methods such as obstruction and distraction (which is related to deflection), and "making space" (for the king).

More sophisticated ideas fall under "smart defense," where one can defend in various ways, but there is a move that allows you to fight for the advantage, supported by tactics. The "Lifeline" technique involves freeing your own game when you have an attacked piece by counterattacking a loose piece and bailing out your own piece in the process. This is fun because it's a way in which you can sometimes dig your way out of an apparently lost position. It's also interesting to note that Hellsten primarily uses examples from last five years.

Midway in the course, he gives many examples of what he calls "Heroic Defense," which concerns defensive resourcefulness and persistence. Here's an advanced example of how it's always worth calculating even when all appears lost:

## I NEED A HERO

IM Jesper Thybo  
IM Karsten Rasmussen  
Danish Championship, Skorping, 2017



WHITE TO MOVE

Look at those bishops aiming at Black's king. What's more, Black has few defenders in that area and is behind in development. So White brings another piece into the attack:

### 16. Ne4!

A stereotypical example of a beautiful White attack. This looks just awful for the defender, with threats like Qe2-g4, Qe2-h5, and Ne4-f6+. After 16. ... Bxe1?, 17. Nf6+! Kh8 (if 17. ... gxf6 18. Qg4+) 18. Rxe1 is overwhelming, with Qe2-e4 one unstoppable threat.

Black probably felt that he was simply lost, and put up little resistance in the game after 16. ... exd5? 17. Nf6+! Kh8 18. Qh5! Bd2+ (if 18. ... h6 19. Qf5 Bd2+ 20. Kb1 g6 21. Nxd5+ Bc3 22. Qh3 Kh7 23. Bxc3) 19. Kb1 h6

## 20. Qf5 and Black resigned.

A typical attacking exercise, right? Rasmussen is a strong IM, and doubtless calculated **16. ... Nd7 17. Ng5! g6 18. Qh5!**



With a well-known mating attack, when 18. ... gxh5 19. Bxh7 is mate, and 18. ... Bd2+ 19 Kb1 Bxg5 20 Qxg5 can't possibly hold. But had he a "heroic" mindset on this occasion, he might have persisted and noticed that in this line, **18. ... Nf6!!** saves the day, the point being **19. Bxf6 Bd2+ 20. Kb1 Qb4+! 21. Bb2 Qxb2+! 22. Kxb2 gxh5** and this position actually favors Black! For example, there is 23. Nxh7 Bxe1 24. Nxf8 Bxf2 25. Nh7 Bd4+ 26. Ka3 b5. I can easily imagine being White and losing such a game, or being Black and failing to see 18. ... Nf6.

*Mastering Chess Defense* has a huge amount of material, including 576 trainable variations and 500 puzzles. There are over 35 hours of video content on the paid video version, but it is vastly more expensive than the "free" version, which still includes 4½ hours of video.

IM Harald Schneider-Zinner's *Fortify Your Defences* is a ChessBase Fritztrainer

ebook, available as a download or a DVD. There are some advantages to this format. You get a database with all the games and exercises analyzed, so that you can use ChessBase training functions, study the examples with an engine (or play against it), and include your own notes to the games you play through. I count 104 videos which correspond to games with analysis in the database, with some extra examples that don't include video.

In many ways, Schneider-Zinner's approach is similar to Hellsten's. He organizes his chapters according to various types of defense, giving many examples of each. However, his chapter and section titles have limited overlap with Hellsten's, partially because he focuses upon mental approaches to defending a position and doesn't limit himself to techniques (although both of these approaches are important in each author's discussion).

For example, whereas Hellsten has sections on "the back-rank motif," perpetuals, pins, pawn breaks, "making space for the king," prophylaxis, and blockade, Schneider-Zinner's sections are called "Resilience," "Playing on and on," "Sense of danger," "Finding only moves," "Bucking the trend," "Creating phantoms," "A fortress motif," and the like. Thus Hellsten's lessons focus more on nuts-and-bolts, sometimes resembling a typical tactics course, whereas Schneider-Zinner covers much of the same material, but presents it in terms of constructing an optimal defensive mindset.

Schneider-Zinner is a certified psychological trainer in real life, and in his video commentary he addresses the mental causes of mistakes as he analyses the positions. He discusses examples of time mismanagement and points out factors such as how the downward 'trend' of a game can provoke mistakes, even from the best players.

I like these products very much. They are definitely not for beginners, but I would think that anyone from, say, 1400 to grandmaster should be able to get value from them. Hellsten's work is more extensive with many more examples, but I do like being able to download material in the Chessbase format that the Schneider-Zinner material comes in.

The factors that the two authors emphasize are different enough that you will get plenty

of value from both. I'm also glad that they use realistic examples from practical play. Studies can be beautiful and intriguing, but probably won't teach you as much as seeing the back-and-forth of real-world battles. Both authors have done extensive research and found uniquely instructive examples, reflecting situations that can't be memorized in advance. It's encouraging to see such original thought in an area of chess theory that has been largely neglected. ♠

*Schneider-Zinner, Harald. Fritztrainer: Fortify your defenses. Download or DVD, 5:10 video runtime. (Available at uscfsales.com, product code WIN0698CB. \$38.95)*

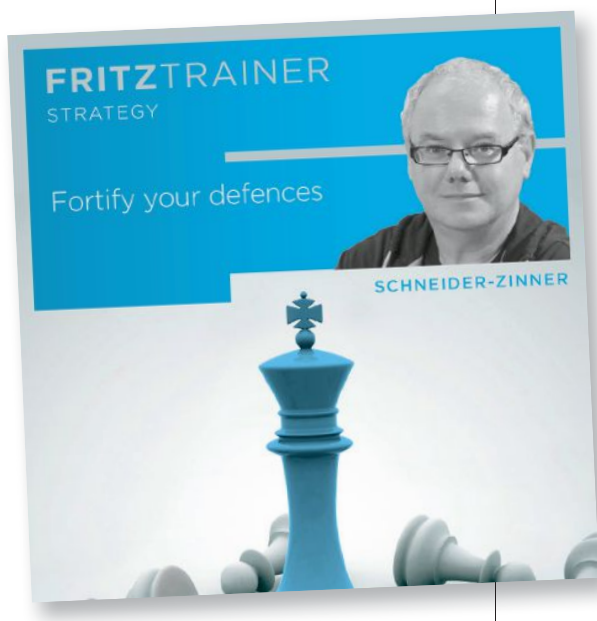
*Hellsten, Johan. Mastering Chess Defense. 546 variations, 512 puzzles. 35:14 paid video, 4:34 free video. Available at chessable.com.*

## Chess Life and Chess Life Kids

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# CAVEMAN CHESS



## FESTIVAL

### *Tournaments and Camp*

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AND TROPHIES

**JULY 12-19, 2024**

Location: Hilton Chicago/Northbrook, Northbrook, IL (15 minutes from O'Hare, just north of Chicago)

### TOURNAMENTS

**JULY 12-14**

- ✓ US Senior Open (Nat'l Championship **\$13k**)
- ✓ Caveman Medior Open **\$10k**
- ✓ US Junior Open (Nat'l Championship **\$10k**)
- ✓ US Blind (Nat'l Championship **\$5k**)
- ✓ Caveman Beginner Open 1 on 7/13
- ✓ Caveman Beginner Open 2 on 7/14
- ✓ Junior Blitz **\$1k**, 7/13
- ✓ Senior/Medior Quick **\$1k**, 7/13
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- ✓ Master Class- GM instruction only
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- ✓ Family and chaperone registrations to  
accompany young campers
- ✓ Intensive Study classes for  
advanced players
- ✓ Some classes for adults only

### PAST INSTRUCTORS



GM Kaidanov



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GM Shulman



GM Goldin



GM Gurevich

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Onischuk, Novikov, Finegold, IMs  
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Wallach, Szpisjak and many others

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# TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

At their March 16-17, 2024 meeting, the Executive Board made the following changes to the Grand Prix program:

1. Effective April 30, 2024, the Executive Board moved to remove the temporary change to US Chess Grand Prix rules implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic and to return to previous Grand Prix requirements. Motion Passed 8-0.
2. Effective immediately, the Executive Board moved to allow tournaments limited to seniors, juniors, women, or college students to be eligible for the US Chess Federation Grand Prix, provided they satisfy the other Grand Prix requirements. Motion Passed 8-0.

For complete information on the Grand Prix program, please visit [new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program](https://new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program)

**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](https://new.uschess.org/national-events-calendar)

For complete details on individual events, please visit [new.uschess.org/node/\[TLA ID\]](https://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 • HERITAGE  
EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX  
• JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### U.S. Junior Open Championship

JULY 12-14, 2024, ILLINOIS

Event site: Hilton Chicago/Northbrook Address: 2855 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Northbrook, IL 60062 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Kevin Bachler Email: [kevin\\_bachler@cavemanchess.com](mailto:kevin_bachler@cavemanchess.com) Phone: 224-985-5245 Website: [cavemanchess.com](https://cavemanchess.com) TLA ID: 43470

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

### U.S. Blind Open Championship

JULY 12-14, 2024, ILLINOIS

Event site: Hilton Chicago/Northbrook Address: 2855 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Northbrook, IL 60062 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Kevin Bachler Email: [kevin\\_bachler@cavemanchess.com](mailto:kevin_bachler@cavemanchess.com) Phone: n/a Website: [cavemanchess.com](https://cavemanchess.com) TLA ID: 43472

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • HERITAGE  
EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### U.S. Senior Open Championship

JULY 12-14, 2024, ILLINOIS

Event site: Hilton Chicago/Northbrook Address: 2855 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Northbrook, IL 60062 Overall prize fund: \$13,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Kevin Bachler Email: [kevin\\_bachler@cavemanchess.com](mailto:kevin_bachler@cavemanchess.com) Phone: 224-985-5245 Website: [cavemanchess.com](https://cavemanchess.com) TLA ID: 43473

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

### 124th Annual U.S. Open Championship

JULY 27-AUGUST 4, 2024, VIRGINIA

Event site: Norfolk Sheraton Waterside Hotel Address: 777 Waterside Drive, Norfolk, VA 23510 Overall prize fund: \$60,000 GP Points: 300 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Boyd Reed Email: [nationalevents@uschess.org](mailto:nationalevents@uschess.org) Phone: n/a Website: <http://www.uschess.org/tournaments/2024/usopen> TLA ID: 42683

## Grand Prix

The Grand Prix point totals reflect all rated event information as of December 31, 2023 for the 2023 Grand Prix.

### FINAL 2023 GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

Congratulations to the 2023 Grand Prix Champion

### GM JIANCHAO ZHOU

| Name                         | State/Ctry | Pts    |
|------------------------------|------------|--------|
| 1. GM JIANCHAO ZHOU          | MA         | 562.94 |
| 2. GM FIDEL CORRALES JIMENEZ | NY         | 481.29 |
| 3. GM MIKHAIL ANTIPOV        | MO         | 194.33 |
| 4. GM ARMAN MIKAELIAN        | --         | 157.10 |
| 5. GM RAHUL P SRIVATSHAV     | --         | 128.74 |
| 6. FM SHARVESH R DEVIPRASATH | TX         | 121.10 |
| 7. IM SAFAL BORA             | MI         | 115.33 |
| 8. GM ALEXANDER FISHBEIN     | TN         | 111.47 |
| 9. IM JUSTIN WANG            | TX         | 108.62 |
| 10. GM VIKTOR MATVIISHEN     | TX         | 106.09 |

## 2023 Awards

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

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

The Grand Prix continues in 2024. For information visit [new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program](https://new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program)

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### Dragon Knight International Tabletop Game Day Classic

JUNE 1, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$580 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Center Email: [jon@dragonknightchess.com](mailto:jon@dragonknightchess.com) Phone: 9194222535 Website: [DragonKnightChess.com](https://DragonKnightChess.com) TLA ID: 43061

GRAND PRIX

### Rea Hayes Open Chess Tournament

JUNE 1, 2024, TENNESSEE

Event site: Chattanooga Christian School Address: 3354 Charger Dr., Chattanooga, TN 37409 Overall prize fund: \$1,000 GP Points: 6 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Travis Deere Email: [TDeere@gmail.com](mailto:TDeere@gmail.com) Phone: 423-785-6582 Website: n/a TLA ID: 43052

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX •  
JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 17th Annual Continental Chess Cleveland Open

JUNE 7-9, 2024, OHIO

Event site: Crowne Plaza Cleveland Airport Address: 7230 Engle Road, Middleburg Heights OH 44130 Overall prize fund: \$15,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: [chess.tour.com](https://chess.tour.com) TLA ID: 42531

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

### 32nd Annual Eastern Class Championships

JUNE 7-9, 2024, CONNECTICUT

Event site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel At Bradley International Airport Address: One Airport Drive, Windsor Locks CT 06096 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: [chess.tour.com](https://chess.tour.com) TLA ID: 42489

GRAND PRIX

### Texas Golden Open - \$10,000

JUNE 7-9, 2024, TEXAS

Event site: Vista Ridge Mall Lewisville Address: 2401 S Stemmons Fwy, Lewisville, TX 75067 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 60 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Blakeman Chess Email: [BlakemanChess@gmail.com](mailto:BlakemanChess@gmail.com) Phone: n/a Website: n/a TLA ID: 43849

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### Dragon Knight Oceans Day Classic

JUNE 8, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$580 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Center Email: [jon@dragonknightchess.com](mailto:jon@dragonknightchess.com) Phone: 9194222535 Website: [DragonKnightChess.com](https://DragonKnightChess.com) TLA ID: 43070

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

### 28th Annual New York State Open

JUNE 14-16, 2024, NEW YORK

Event site: Tiki Resort Address: 2 Canada St., Lake George, NY 12845 Overall prize fund: \$3,300 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: [chess.tour.com](https://chess.tour.com) TLA ID: 42490

GRAND PRIX

### CFCC 2024 Sunshine Open & Scholastic

JUNE 14-16, 2024, FLORIDA

Event site: Holiday Inn at Lake Buena Vista Address: 13351 State Road 535 Orlando, Florida, 32821 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Center Email: [jon@dragonknightchess.com](mailto:jon@dragonknightchess.com) Phone: 9194222535 Website: [DragonKnightChess.com](https://DragonKnightChess.com) TLA ID: 43649

all prize fund: \$8,500 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Larry Storch Email: [larrystorch88@gmail.com](mailto:larrystorch88@gmail.com) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: [chess.tour.com](https://chess.tour.com) TLA ID: 42491

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### Dragon Knight Flag/Father's Saturday Classic

JUNE 15, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$580 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Center Email: [jon@dragonknightchess.com](mailto:jon@dragonknightchess.com) Phone: 9194222535 Website: [DragonKnightChess.com](https://DragonKnightChess.com) TLA ID: 43071

GRAND PRIX

### \$150,000 Universal Open

JUNE 20-23, 2024, TEXAS

Event site: NYTEX Sports Centre Address: 8851 Ice House Dr., North Richland Hills, TX 76180 Overall prize fund: \$150,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Universal Chess Tour Email: [UniversalChessTour@gmail.com](mailto:UniversalChessTour@gmail.com) Phone: n/a Website: n/a TLA ID: 43868

GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 2024 Chicago Summer Open

JUNE 21-23, 2024, ILLINOIS

Event site: DoubleTree by Hilton Lisle-Naperville Address: 3003 Corporate W Dr, Lisle, IL 60532 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: King Registration and Wilson Chess Email: [bill@kingregistration.com](mailto:bill@kingregistration.com) Phone: n/a Website: [kingregistration.com](https://kingregistration.com) TLA ID: 43130

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### Eastern North Carolina Open Championship

JUNE 22, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$1,390 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Center Email: [jon@dragonknightchess.com](mailto:jon@dragonknightchess.com) Phone: 9194222535 Website: [DragonKnightChess.com](https://DragonKnightChess.com) TLA ID: 43649

## 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.

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.

## GRAND PRIX

### Summer Swiss

#### JUNE 22, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Louisiana Bridge Association Address: 2709 Edenborn Ave, Metairie, LA 70002 Overall prize fund: \$1,000 GP Points: 6 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Downriver Chess Club of New Orleans Email: [info@downriverchess.com](mailto:info@downriverchess.com) Phone: n/a Website: [downriverchess.com](http://downriverchess.com) TLA ID: 43594

## GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 17th Annual Philadelphia International

#### JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 200 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 41569

## GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 18th Annual Philadelphia Open

#### JUNE 28-30, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 200 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 41570

## GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 2024 Castle Chess Grand Prix

#### JUNE 28-30, 2024, GEORGIA

Event site: Emory University - Emory Student Center Address: 605 Asbury Circle, Atlanta, GA 30322 Overall prize fund: \$12,000 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Castle Chess Email: [tournament@castlechess.org](mailto:tournament@castlechess.org) Phone: n/a Website: <https://castlechess.org/grandprix> TLA ID: 42413

## GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### Dragon Knight Midsummer Day Classic

#### JUNE 29, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$580 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Center Email: [jon@dragonknightchess.com](mailto:jon@dragonknightchess.com) Phone: 9194222535 Website: [DragonKnightChess.com](http://DragonKnightChess.com) TLA ID: 43650

## GRAND PRIX

### Nebraska Summer Open 2024

#### JUNE 29-30, 2024, NEBRASKA

Event site: Marriott Fairfield Inn & Suites Address: 17240 Wright St, Omaha, NE 68130 Overall prize fund: \$1,000 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Seetharaman Renganathan Email: [jchessrockez@gmail.com](mailto:jchessrockez@gmail.com) Phone: 6303623047 Website: n/a TLA ID: 43682

## GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 13th Annual World Open Women's Championship!

#### JULY 1-2, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$2,000 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 42670

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

### 52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections

#### JULY 3-7, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103

Overall prize fund: \$208,000 GP Points: 300 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 41566

## GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### 13th Annual World Open Game/7 Championship

#### JULY 3, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$1,500 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 42569

## HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX

### 26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship

#### JULY 5-7, 2024, CALIFORNIA, N.

Event site: Holiday Inn Express & Suites Address: 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821 Overall prize fund: \$11,000 GP Points: 40 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: John P McCumiskey Email: [sactochess@sacglobal.net](mailto:sactochess@sacglobal.net) Phone: 916-524-9479 Website: [sacmentochessclub.org](http://sacmentochessclub.org) TLA ID: 42062

## HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

### Pacific Southwest Open

#### JULY 5-7, 2024, CALIFORNIA, S.

Event site: Hilton Irvine Orange County Airport Address: 18800 MacArthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612 Overall prize fund: \$13,000 GP Points: 40 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Charles Ensey Email: [chucnglo@aol.com](mailto:chucnglo@aol.com) Phone: (858)432-8006 Website: n/a TLA ID: 42739

## GRAND PRIX

### The 2nd Annual Independence Day Open

#### JULY 5-7, 2024, VIRGINIA

Event site: Washington Dulles Airport Marriott Address: 45020 Aviation Dr, Dulles, VA 20166 Overall prize fund: \$5,800 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Atlantic Chess Association Email: [director@atlanticchessassociation.com](mailto:director@atlanticchessassociation.com) Phone: 7039756032 Website: [atlanticchessassociation.com](http://atlanticchessassociation.com) TLA ID: 43270

## HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 47th Annual Green Bay Open

#### JULY 6-7, 2024, WISCONSIN

Event site: Oneida Hotel (Formerly Radisson Hotel) Address: 2040 Airport Drive, Green Bay, WI 54313 Overall prize fund: \$2,545 GP Points: 15 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Luke A Ludwig Email: [lukeludwig@aol.com](mailto:lukeludwig@aol.com) Phone: 9204659859 Website: n/a TLA ID: 42969

## HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### 32nd Annual World Open Game/10 Championship

#### JULY 6, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$2,200 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 42570

## GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • REGIONALS

### 35th Annual World Open Blitz Championship

#### JULY 7, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$3,000 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 42571

## GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 7th Annual Queen City of the Prairie Open including Tarrant County & Fort Worth Championships

#### JULY 19-21, 2024, TEXAS

Event site: Radisson Hotel Fort Worth North-Fossil Creek Address: 2540 Meacham Blvd, Fort Worth, TX 76106 Overall prize fund: \$3,600 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Louis Reed Email: [alliancechess@gmail.com](mailto:alliancechess@gmail.com) Phone: 8177524788 Website: [facebook.com/events/695302329815920](https://facebook.com/events/695302329815920) TLA ID: 42565

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

### 29th Annual Pacific Coast Open

#### JULY 19-21, 2024, CALIFORNIA, S.

Event site: Hilton Orange County Airport Address: 18800 MacArthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612 Overall prize fund: \$30,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 42922

## GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 17th Annual Chicago Class Championships

#### JULY 19-21, 2024, ILLINOIS

Event site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel Address: 601 N Milwaukee Avenue, Wheeling, IL 60090 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](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 42770

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

### 32nd Annual Southern Open

#### JULY 19-21, 2024, FLORIDA

Event site: Wyndham Orlando Resort Address: 8001 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 42771

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

### 25th Annual Pittsburgh Open

#### JULY 26-28, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Doubletree Green Tree Hotel Address: 500 Mansfield Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15205 Overall prize fund: \$13,000 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 43154

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

### 29th Annual Bradley Open

#### JULY 26-28, 2024, CONNECTICUT

Event site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel at Bradley International Airport Address: 1 Bradley Airport, Windsor Locks CT 06096 Overall prize fund: \$15,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 43155

## GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 14th annual Central California Open

#### AUGUST 9-11, 2024, CALIFORNIA

Event site: Doubletree Hotel Address: 2233 Ventura St, Fresno CA 93710 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 100 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 43685

## GRAND PRIX

### 11th Annual Washington International

#### AUGUST 10-14, 2024, MARYLAND

Event site: Rockville Hilton Address: 21750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852 Overall prize fund: \$40,650

GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Michael W Regan Email: [mregan@stsci.edu](mailto:mregan@stsci.edu) Phone: 4104195130 Website: <https://mdchess.com> TLA ID: 42528

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

### 54th Annual Continental Open

#### AUGUST 15-18, 2024, MASSACHUSETTS

Event site: Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel Address: 181 Boston Post Road W, Marlborough MA 01752 Overall prize fund: \$30,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 43659

## STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • GRAND PRIX

### 96th Wisconsin Closed Championship / Marshall Rohland Memorial

#### AUGUST 16-18, 2024, WISCONSIN

Event site: Holiday Inn - Manitowoc Address: 4601 Calumet Ave., Manitowoc, WI 54220 Overall prize fund: \$4,500 GP Points: 40 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: Y Organizer: Terran Chess Federation Email: [terranchess@gmail.com](mailto:terranchess@gmail.com) Phone: 920-279-5688 Website: n/a TLA ID: 41708

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

### 56th annual Atlantic Open

#### AUGUST 23-25, 2024, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Event site: Omni Shoreham Hotel Address: 2500 Calvert St, NW, Washington, DC 20008 Overall prize fund: \$30,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 43683

## GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 19th annual Indianapolis Open

#### AUGUST 23-25, 2024, INDIANA

Event site: Hilton Garden Inn Indianapolis Airport Address: 8910 Hatfield Drive, Indianapolis IN 46241 Overall prize fund: \$15,000 GP Points: 100 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 43684

## GRAND PRIX

### 3rd Annual Nashville Summer Classic (FIDE Championship)

#### AUGUST 26-SEPTEMBER 1, 2024, TENNESSEE

Event site: Nashville Chess Center (Rds. 1-4), Millennium Maxwell House Hotel (Rds. 5-9) Address: 2911 Belmont Blvd, Nashville, TN 37212 (Rds. 1-4), 2025 Rosa Parks Blvd, Nashville, TN 37208 (Rds. 5-9) Overall prize fund: \$13,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Nashville Chess Center Email: [director@nashvillechess.org](mailto:director@nashvillechess.org) Phone: 629-254-4737 Website: [nashvillechess.org](http://nashvillechess.org) TLA ID: 43450

## GRAND PRIX

### 3rd Annual Nashville Summer Classic (Weekend Event)

#### AUGUST 30-SEPTEMBER 1, 2024, TENNESSEE

Event site: Millennium Maxwell House Hotel Address: 2025 Rosa Parks Blvd, Nashville, TN 37208 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 40 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Nashville Chess Center Email: [director@nashvillechess.org](mailto:director@nashvillechess.org) Phone: 629-254-4737 Website: [nashvillechess.org](http://nashvillechess.org) TLA ID: 43452

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

### 146th annual New York State Championship- America's oldest annual tournament!

#### AUGUST 30-SEPTEMBER 2, 2024, NEW YORK

Event site: Albany Marriott Address: 189 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12205 Overall prize fund: \$18,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [2155247888](tel:2155247888) Website: [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com) TLA ID: 43687

# Regional

## ALABAMA

JUNE 1, 2024

**Rea Hayes Open Chess Tournament (TN)**  
See Grand Prix.

### STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

JULY 20, 2024

**Alabama Dual-Rated State Chess Championship**

**Event site:** Evangel Church **Address:** 3975 Vaughn Rd, Montgomery, AL 36106 **Overall prize fund:** \$1,350 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Doug Strout **Email:** [evangelchess@yahoo.com](mailto:evangelchess@yahoo.com) **Phone:** n/a **Website:** [facebook.com/evangelchessclub](https://facebook.com/evangelchessclub) **TLA ID:** 43282

## ARIZONA

JULY 5-7, 2024

**26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)**  
See Grand Prix.

JULY 19-21, 2024

**29th Annual Pacific Coast Open (CA-S)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## ARKANSAS

### STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

AUGUST 16-18, 2024

**2024 Arkansas State Chess Championship**

**Event site:** Courtyard by Marriott **Address:** 154 E Aspen Lane, Russellville, AR 72802 **Overall prize fund:** \$5,000 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Tony W. Davis **Email:** [tony64davis@yahoo.com](mailto:tony64davis@yahoo.com) **Phone:** 5017444911 **Website:** n/a **TLA ID:** 43947

## CALIFORNIA

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 5-7, 2024

**26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)**  
See Grand Prix.

JULY 5-7, 2024

**Pacific Southwest Open (CA-S)**  
See Grand Prix.

JULY 19-21, 2024

**29th Annual Pacific Coast Open (CA-S)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-11, 2024

**14th annual Central California Open (CA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

**11th Annual Washington International (MD)**  
See Grand Prix.

## CONNECTICUT

JUNE 7-9, 2024

**32nd Annual Eastern Class Championships (CT)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 14-16, 2024

**28th Annual New York State Open (NY)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 26-28, 2024

**29th Annual Bradley Open (CT)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

**11th Annual Washington International (MD)**  
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 15-18, 2024

**54th Annual Continental Open (MA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## DELAWARE

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## FLORIDA

JUNE 14-16, 2024

**CFCC 2024 Sunshine Open & Scholastic (FL)**  
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

**17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 19-21, 2024

**32nd Annual Southern Open (FL)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

**11th Annual Washington International (MD)**  
See Grand Prix.

## GEORGIA

APRIL 8, 2024-MONTHLY ON SATURDAY

**Pizza Scholastic**

**Event site:** The Boardroom **Address:** 1675 Peachtree Pkwy, Suite #180, Cumming Georgia 30041 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** ThinkChess, LLC **Email:** [info@myThinkChess.com](mailto:info@myThinkChess.com) **Phone:** 770.744.8595 **Website:** <https://mythinkchess.com/> **TLA ID:** 37216

JUNE 1, 2024

**Rea Hayes Open Chess Tournament (TN)**  
See Grand Prix.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 19-21, 2024

**32nd Annual Southern Open (FL)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

**11th Annual Washington International (MD)**  
See Grand Prix.

## IDAHO

JULY 5-7, 2024

**26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)**  
See Grand Prix.

## ILLINOIS

JUNE 7-9, 2024

**Late Spring Swiss (MI)**  
See Michigan.

JUNE 21-23, 2024

**2024 Chicago Summer Open (IL)**  
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 29, 2024

**Springfield Mid Year Open**

**Event site:** Southern View Village Hall **Address:** 13410 South 5th St, Springfield, IL 62703 **Overall prize fund:** \$400 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** David Long **Email:** n/a **Phone:** 217-726-2584 **Website:** [springfieldchessclub.com](https://springfieldchessclub.com) **TLA ID:** 43230

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Junior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Senior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**Caveman Medior Open**

**Event site:** Hilton Chicago/Northbrook **Address:** 2855 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall prize fund:** \$10,000 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Kevin Bachler **Email:** [kevin\\_bachler@cavemanchess.com](mailto:kevin_bachler@cavemanchess.com) **Phone:** 224-985-5245 **Website:** [cavemanchess.com](https://cavemanchess.com) **TLA ID:** 43474

JULY 13, 2024

**2024 US Junior Blitz -- \$1K Prizes Guaranteed**

**Event site:** Hilton Chicago/Northbrook **Address:** 2855 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall prize fund:** \$1,000 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Kevin Bachler **Email:** [kevin\\_bachler@cavemanchess.com](mailto:kevin_bachler@cavemanchess.com) **Phone:** 224-985-5245 **Website:** [cavemanchess.com](https://cavemanchess.com) **TLA ID:** 43483

JULY 13, 2024

**2024 US Senior and Caveman Medior Quick Chess -- \$1K guaranteed!**

**Event site:** Hilton Chicago/Northbrook **Address:** 2855 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall prize fund:** \$1,000 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Kevin Bachler **Email:** [kevin\\_bachler@cavemanchess.com](mailto:kevin_bachler@cavemanchess.com) **Phone:** 224-985-5245 **Website:** [cavemanchess.com](https://cavemanchess.com) **TLA ID:** 43484

JULY 13, 2024

**Caveman Beginner Open #1 (7-13-24)**

**Event site:** Hilton Chicago/Northbrook **Address:** 2855 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Kevin Bachler **Email:** [kevin\\_bachler@cavemanchess.com](mailto:kevin_bachler@cavemanchess.com) **Phone:** 224-985-5245 **Website:** [cavemanchess.com](https://cavemanchess.com) **TLA ID:** 43489

JULY 14, 2024

**Caveman Beginner Open #2 (7-14-24)**

**Event site:** Hilton Chicago/Northbrook **Address:** 2855 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Kevin Bachler **Email:** [kevin\\_bachler@cavemanchess.com](mailto:kevin_bachler@cavemanchess.com) **Phone:** 224-985-5245 **Website:** [cavemanchess.com](https://cavemanchess.com) **TLA ID:** 43490

JULY 19-21, 2024

**17th Annual Chicago Class Championships (IL)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

**11th Annual Washington International (MD)**  
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 23-25, 2024

**19th annual Indianapolis Open (IN)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## INDIANA

JUNE 7-9, 2024

**Late Spring Swiss (MI)**  
See Michigan.

JUNE 21-23, 2024

**2024 Chicago Summer Open (IL)**  
See Grand Prix.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Junior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Senior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**Caveman Medior Open (IL)**  
See Illinois.

JULY 19-21, 2024

**17th Annual Chicago Class Championships (IL)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 23-25, 2024

**19th annual Indianapolis Open (IN)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## IOWA

JUNE 21-23, 2024

**2024 Chicago Summer Open (IL)**  
See Grand Prix.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Junior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

## KENTUCKY

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Junior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Senior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**Caveman Medior Open (IL)**  
See Illinois.

AUGUST 23-25, 2024

**19th annual Indianapolis Open (IN)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## 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](https://www.MD-Chess.org) for tournament announcements, registration for tournaments, updated wallcharts, live standings, signup 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.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

**17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

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.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**3rd Annual World Open Amateur Championship (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**13th Annual World Open Women's Championship! (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 23-25, 2024

**56th annual Atlantic Open (DC)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## MASSACHUSETTS

JUNE 7-9, 2024

**32nd Annual Eastern Class Championships (CT)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 14-16, 2024

**28th Annual New York State Open (NY)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

**17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**2nd Annual World Open Junior Championship (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**3rd Annual World Open Amateur Championship (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**14th Annual World Open Senior Amateur (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 26-28, 2024

**29th Annual Bradley Open (CT)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

**11th Annual Washington International (MD)**  
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 15-18, 2024

**54th Annual Continental Open (MA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## MICHIGAN

JUNE 7-9, 2024

**Late Spring Swiss**  
Event site: Best Western - Okemos/East Lansing  
Address: 2209 University Park Drive, Okemos, MI 48864 Overall prize fund: \$3,500 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Edward Mandell Email: [eman.1943@aol.com](mailto:eman.1943@aol.com) Phone: 2486352375 Website: [n/a](http://n/a) TLA ID: 43116

JUNE 7-9, 2024

**17th Annual Continental Chess Cleveland Open (OH)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**3rd Annual World Open Amateur Championship (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Junior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Senior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**Caveman Medior Open (IL)**  
See Illinois.

## MINNESOTA

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Junior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Senior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**Caveman Medior Open (IL)**  
See Illinois.

## MISSOURI

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Junior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Senior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**Caveman Medior Open (IL)**  
See Illinois.

## NEVADA

JULY 5-7, 2024

**26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)**  
See Grand Prix

JULY 19-21, 2024

**29th Annual Pacific Coast Open (CA-S)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 9-11, 2024

**14th annual Central California Open (CA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## NEW JERSEY

JANUARY 14-DECEMBER 31, 2024

**Hamilton Chess Club Quads**

Dates: Jan. 13, Feb. 10, Mar. 9, Apr. 20, May 18, Jun. 8, Aug. 17, Sep. 21, Oct. 19, Nov. 16, Dec. 21. 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](mailto:edmendou@aol.com) Phone: 609-351-2437 text Website: <http://hamiltonchessclub.com> TLA ID: 40988

JUNE 7-9, 2024

**32nd Annual Eastern Class Championships (CT)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 14-16, 2024

**28th Annual New York State Open (NY)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 15, 2024

**King's Chess Club Free Youth/Young Adult Quads**

Event site: Grace Church Bethlehem Campus Address: 758 Route 10.Randolph, NJ 07869 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Bob McAdams Email: [efambright@optonline.net](mailto:efambright@optonline.net) Phone: 9736943988 Website: [n/a](http://n/a) TLA ID: 43660

JUNE 21-23, 2024

**2024 Chicago Summer Open (IL)**  
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

**17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**2nd Annual World Open Junior Championship (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**3rd Annual World Open Amateur Championship (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**13th Annual World Open Women's Championship! (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**14th Annual World Open Senior Amateur (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

**11th Annual Washington International (MD)**  
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 15-18, 2024

**54th Annual Continental Open (MA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 23-25, 2024

**56th annual Atlantic Open (DC)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## NEW YORK

JUNE 7-9, 2024

**32nd Annual Eastern Class Championships (CT)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 14-16, 2024

**28th Annual New York State Open (NY)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

**17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**2nd Annual World Open Junior Championship (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**3rd Annual World Open Amateur Championship (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**13th Annual World Open Women's Championship! (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**14th Annual World Open Senior Amateur (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 26-28, 2024

**25th Annual Pittsburgh Open (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 26-28, 2024

**29th Annual Bradley Open (CT)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

**11th Annual Washington International (MD)**  
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 15-18, 2024

**54th Annual Continental Open (MA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 23-25, 2024

**56th annual Atlantic Open (DC)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 30-SEPTEMBER 2, 2024

**146th annual New York State Championship- America's oldest annual tournament! (NY)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## NORTH CAROLINA

JUNE 1, 2024

**Dragon Knight International Tabletop Game Day Classic (NC)**  
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 8, 2024

**Dragon Knight Oceans Day Classic (NC)**  
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 15, 2024

**Dragon Knight Flag/Father's Saturday Classic (NC)**  
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 22, 2024

**Eastern North Carolina Open Championship (NC)**  
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 29, 2024

**Dragon Knight Midsummer Day Classic (NC)**  
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

**17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

**11th Annual Washington International (MD)**  
See Grand Prix.

## OHIO

JUNE 7-9, 2024

**Late Spring Swiss (MI)**  
See Michigan.

JUNE 7-9, 2024

**17th Annual Continental Chess Cleveland Open (OH)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Junior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Senior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**Caveman Medior Open (IL)**  
See Illinois.

JULY 26-28, 2024

**25th Annual Pittsburgh Open (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 23-25, 2024

**19th annual Indianapolis Open (IN)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## OREGON

JUNE 5-6, 2024

**2024 U.S. Women's Open (NV)**  
See National Events.

JULY 5-7, 2024

**26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)**  
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](http://www.northpennchessclub.org) for schedules & info or 215-699-8418

JUNE 7-9, 2024

**17th Annual Continental Chess Cleveland Open (OH)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

**17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

JUNE 26-27 2024

**16th Annual World Open Under 13 Championship (PA)**  
Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel  
Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103  
Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N  
Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N  
Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [215-699-8418](tel:2156998418) Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLAID: 42674

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections**  
Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel  
Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103  
Overall prize fund: \$17,000 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N  
Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N  
Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [215-699-8418](tel:2156998418) Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLAID: 41567

## TEXAS

FEBRUARY 18, 2024-WEEKLY

**CYGA Academy Sunday USCF-Rated Tournament**

Event site: CYGA Academy Address: 4920 River Falls Drive, Sugarland, TX 77479 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N  
Residency restriction: N Organizer: Wei Yang Email: [contact@cyga-academy.org](mailto:contact@cyga-academy.org) Phone: 281-832-6159  
Website: n/a TLAID: 42647

JUNE 7-9, 2024

**San Antonio City Championship 2024**  
Event site: n/a Address: 303 Blum Street, San Antonio, TX 78205 Overall prize fund: \$4,600 GP Points: n/a  
FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N  
Organizer: Jesse James Lozano Email: [completechess@gmail.com](mailto:completechess@gmail.com) Phone: 2103933056  
Website: [completechesseducation.com/event/san-antonio-city-championship-2024/](http://completechesseducation.com/event/san-antonio-city-championship-2024/) TLAID: 43436

JUNE 7-9, 2024

**Texas Golden Open - \$10,000 (TX)**  
See Grand Prix.

JUNE 20-23, 2024

**\$150,000 Universal Open (TX)**  
See Grand Prix.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 19-21, 2024

**7th Annual Queen City of the Prairie Open including Tarrant County & Fort Worth Championships (TX)**  
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

**11th Annual Washington International (MD)**  
See Grand Prix.

## UTAH

SEPTEMBER 7, 2023-ONGOING WEEKLY

**Chess Knight**

Event site: Kiln (Lehi) Address: 2701 N Thanksgiving Way #100, Lehi, UT 84043 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y  
Residency restriction: N Organizer: Rob Harker Email: [utahchessknight@gmail.com](mailto:utahchessknight@gmail.com) Phone: n/a Website: n/a TLAID: 39726

JULY 5-7, 2024

**26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)**  
See Grand Prix

## VIRGINIA

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

**17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**3rd Annual World Open Amateur Championship (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**13th Annual World Open Women's Championship! (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

**14th Annual World Open Senior Amateur (PA)**  
See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

**11th Annual Washington International (MD)**  
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 23-25, 2024

**56th annual Atlantic Open (DC)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## WASHINGTON

JULY 5-7, 2024

**26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)**  
See Grand Prix.

JULY 19-21, 2024

**29th Annual Pacific Coast Open (CA-S)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

## WISCONSIN

JUNE 21-23, 2024

**2024 Chicago Summer Open (IL)**  
See Grand Prix.

JULY 3-7, 2024

**52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 6-7, 2024

**47th Annual Green Bay Open (WI)**  
See Grand Prix.

JULY 12-14, 2024

**U.S. Junior Open Championship (IL)**  
See National Events.

JULY 19-21, 2024

**17th Annual Chicago Class Championships (IL)**  
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 16-18, 2024

**96th Wisconsin Closed Championship / Marshall Rohland Memorial (WI)**  
See Grand Prix.

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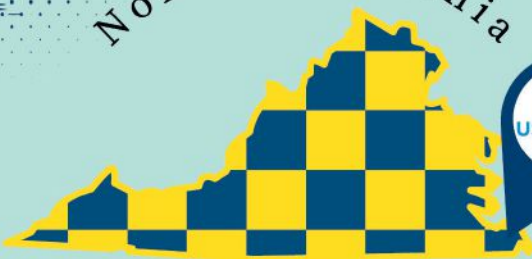
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# GAME ON.

Norfolk, Virginia




For full information including updates, schedules, meetings, and other special events and happenings please see [uschess.org/tournaments/2024/usopen/](https://uschess.org/tournaments/2024/usopen/).

## 124th U.S. OPEN

July 27 - August 4, 2024



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[www.bayareachess.com](http://www.bayareachess.com)

### Berkeley Chess School

Berkeley, CA  
510-843-0150  
[www.berkeleychessschool.org](http://www.berkeleychessschool.org)

### Capital Area Chess

Centreville VA  
703-627-5314  
[www.capitalareachess.com](http://www.capitalareachess.com)

### Caveman Chess, LLC

Park Ridge, IL  
224-985-5244  
[www.cavemanchess.com](http://www.cavemanchess.com)

### Charlotte Chess Center

Charlotte, NC  
980-265-1156  
[www.charlottechesscenter.org/](http://www.charlottechesscenter.org/)

### CHESSanity

Jericho, NY  
917-678-2077  
[www.chessanity.org](http://www.chessanity.org)

### Continental Chess Association

Pelham, NY  
201-347-2269  
[www.chesstour.com](http://www.chesstour.com)

### Hamden Chess Club

Hamden, CT  
203-680-8456  
[www.playmorechess.com](http://www.playmorechess.com)

### King Registration

Chicago, IL  
773-317-8347  
[www.kingregistration.com](http://www.kingregistration.com)

### Manasota Chess Center

Sarasota, FL  
941-900-3296  
[www.manasotachess.org](http://www.manasotachess.org)

### Marshall Chess Club

New York, NY  
212-477-3716  
[www.marshallchessclub.org](http://www.marshallchessclub.org)

### Ocean State Chess Association

Riverside, RI  
401-212-1335  
[www.oceanstatechess.com](http://www.oceanstatechess.com)

### PaperClip Pairings

Brownsville, TX  
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[rrferrari@bisd.us](mailto:rrferrari@bisd.us)

### Sacred Heart University Chess Club

Fairfield, CT  
203-365-4827  
[www.sacredheartclub-sports.com/sports/Chess](http://www.sacredheartclub-sports.com/sports/Chess)

### Saint Louis Chess Club

St. Louis, MO  
314-361-CHESS (2437)  
[www.saintlouischessclub.org](http://www.saintlouischessclub.org)

### San Diego Chess Club

San Diego, CA  
619-752-4377  
[www.sandiegochessclub.org](http://www.sandiegochessclub.org)

### Washington Chess Federation

Redmond, WA  
206-769-3757  
[www.wachess.com](http://www.wachess.com)

## US CHESS SILVER AFFILIATES

### Boca Raton Chess Club (FL)

[www.bocachess.com](http://www.bocachess.com)

### CDA Collin County Chess Club (TX)

[www.coramdeoacademy.org/chess](http://www.coramdeoacademy.org/chess)

### ChessPalace (CA)

[www.chesspalace.com](http://www.chesspalace.com)

### Downriver Chess Club (LA)

[www.downriverchess.com](http://www.downriverchess.com)

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[www.evangelchurch.me](http://www.evangelchurch.me)

### Little House of Chess, Inc. (NY)

[littlehouseofchess.org](http://littlehouseofchess.org)

### Michigan Chess Association (MI)

[www.michess.org](http://www.michess.org)

### Rochester Chess Center (NY)

[www.chessset.com](http://www.chessset.com)

### Sparta Chess Club (NJ)

[www.spartachessclub.org](http://www.spartachessclub.org)

### TLA Chess (VA)

[jack.scheible@verizon.net](mailto:jack.scheible@verizon.net)

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!

## Two ways to enter:

- Visit us online at [uschess.org](http://uschess.org)
- Mail in the form below

### 7-Player Championship Events

#### 2024 Golden Knights (Postal) | 2024 Electronic Knights

**FORMAT:** Players play 6 games as single round robin, groupings based on order entries received. Players start in Preliminary round and qualify for Semi-final and then Final rounds based on scores in previous round. **ENTRY FEE:** \$35 per entry. Players can enter up to a maximum of 10 times per event. **PRIZES:** Prize fund of \$2300 based on 200 entries. \$15 correspondence chess gift certificate to players knocked out in Preliminary round.

### 7-Player Round Robins

#### Victor Palciauskas Tournament (ICCF Server)

**FORMAT:** Players play 6 games as single round robin, groupings based on ratings. **ENTRY FEE:** \$5 per entry. **PRIZES:** 1st place receives a signed certificate.

### 4-Player Quads

#### John W. Collins Memorial (Postal) | Walter Muir E-Quads (ICCF Server)

**FORMAT:** Players play 6 games as double round robin, groupings based on ratings. **ENTRY FEE:** \$10 per entry. **PRIZES:** 1st place receives \$25 correspondence chess gift certificate and signed certificate.

### 2-Player Matches (Postal or Email)

**FORMAT:** Players play either 2, 4, or 6 games against the same opponent. Selecting multiple options may facilitate faster pairings. Pairings based on ratings or players may name their own opponent. **ENTRY FEE:** \$5 per entry. **PRIZES:** None.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- US Chess membership must remain current for the duration of all events.
- Postal events are open only to US Chess members who reside on the contiguous USA, Alaska, Hawaii or have an APO/ FPO postal address.
- Email events are open to all US Chess members with an accessible email account.
- ICCF Server events are open to all US Chess members with access to the ICCF internet based correspondence chess server and an ICCF account (free to create) in good standing.
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  - o Class C: 1200-1699
  - o Class D: 1399 and below
- If you do not have an existing correspondence rating, please estimate your playing strength when submitting your entry.
- Correspondence chess gift certificate prizes can be used on correspondence chess entries only. They cannot be used for membership renewals or at US Chess Sales.

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- ☐ Golden Knights EF: \$35    ☐ Palciauskas ICCF EF: \$5    ☐ Muir ICCF Quad EF: \$10 | 2-player matches, EF: \$5 per entry, see above for options  
☐ Electronic Knights EF: \$35    ☐ Collins Quad EF: \$10    Postal Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐    Email Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐  
☐ Check here if you do not wish to have an opponent who is incarcerated (note that this may slow down your assignment).

**Make checks payable to US CHESS and mail to: US Chess Correspondence Chess, PO Box 775308, St. Louis, MO 63177**

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## Solutions

### PAGE 15 CHESS TO ENJOY

**PROBLEM 1.** White resigned after 9. ... Nxd3 10. Qxd3 e4! 11. Nxe4 Nxe4 because ... Bg7xa1 was threatened. **PROBLEM 2.** 14. ... Ng4! 15. Qe2 Qc7! mates (via ... Qc7-h2) or wins the queen. **PROBLEM 3.** 15. Qh5! forced resignation because 15. ... gxf5 16. Rg3+ mates while 15. ... f6 16. Bxd6 wins a piece. **PROBLEM 4.** White wins with either 10. Nxe5! or 10. dxc6 bxc6 11. Nxe5! dxe5 12. Bxc6! (if 12. ... Qxc6 13. Qd8 mate). **PROBLEM 5.** One more time: 15. Bxh7+ Kxh7 16. Qh4+ Kg8 17. Ng5 followed by Qh4-h7 mate. Or 15. ... Kh8 16. Qh4 Be7 17. Qh5. **PROBLEM 6.** Don't take full credit for 10. ... Nxc3 unless you saw 11. Qd2 can be met by 11. ... Nc6!, keeping Black's extra material, e.g. 12. Nc4 Qxc5 13. bxc3 Rxd8 14. Bd3 b5.

### PAGE 31 MAKE YOUR MOVE

**TACTIC 1.** 44. e4! Black's queen is separated from the defense of the f5-pawn and with the g4-bishop unprotected after 44. ... Qxe4+ 45. Qxe4 fxe4 46. Bxg4, Black will either have to weaken his king shelter or lose another pawn. 44. ... g6 Obviously, after 44. ... Bh3+, White cannot capture the bishop due to ... Qb1-h1 mate. But after 45. Kh2, White wins easily. 45. Qe7+ Kh8 46. Qf6+ Kh7 47. Qe7+ Kh8 48. exf5 Bxf5 49. Qf8+ Or 49. Bc6, winning quickly for White. 49. ... Kh7 50. Qf7+ Kh8 51. Qf8+ Kh7 52. Bxf5 gxf5 53. Qf7+ Kh8 54. Qe8+ Kg7 55. Qd7+ Kg6 56. Qc6+ Kg5 57. f4+ Kh5 58. Qe8+ and with mate next move, Black resigned in Lee – Krush, American Cup 2024. **TACTIC 2.** 17. Rxe7! Nxe7 If 17. ... Qxe7 then 18. Bxd6 and White wins the Exchange back with interest. 18. Nxd6 White can also capture on d6 with the bishop, e.g., 18. Bxd6 Rf7 19. Bc7 Qc8 20. Bg3 when the threat of Nb5-d6 wins for White. 18. ... Ba6 19. Re1 Ra7 Or 19. ... Ng6 20. Bxf5 and White is winning. 20. Ndb5 Rd7 21. Bc7 Rxc7 22. Nxc7 Qxc7 23. d6 White is winning and soon took home the full point. 23. ... Qd8 24. Rxe7 Bxc4 25. Qf4 Bf7 26. Qxf5 g6 27. Qf4 Nc6 28. Qf6 Nd4 29. Ne4 Ne6 30. Bb3 c4 31. Bxc4 Qc8 32. Qxe6 Qxc4 33. Nf6+, Black resigned. (Lee – Tokhirjonova, American Cup 2024) **TACTIC 3.** 21. g5! The threat of f5-f6 forces Black to take action. 21. ... gxf5 If 21. ... b3 22. a3 gxf5 23. exf5 Bxf5 24. Nxd4 is similar to the game continuation. Against 21. ... f6, White would play 22. h5! gxf5 (the alternatives are no better, for instance, 22. ... fxf5 23. hxf6 h6 24. Nh2 Rf6 25. Bf3, or 22. ... gxf5 23. h6 Bh8 24. exf5 fxf5 25. Nxd4 and White is winning in both cases) 23. Rxf5 fxf5 24. Nxf5 h6 25. Nf3 22. exf5 Bxf5 23. Nxd4 White has a decisive positional advantage along with a dangerous attack on the kingside. 23. ... Bd7 24. h5! h6 25. gxf6 Bf6 26. Bh3 Or 26. Be4! Kh8 27. Reg1 Rg8 28. Nf3 Rxf1+ 29. Rxf1 and White is crashing through. 26. ... Kh7 27. Bxd7! The game continued: 27. Qf2 Bg5 28. Bf5+ Kh8 29. Bxd7 Qxd7 30. Qf5 Qxf5 31. Nxf5 Rb6 32. Rhg1 f6 33. d4 b3 34. axb3 Rxb3 35. Nxd6 Bxb6 36. d5 Kh7 37. c5 Rfb8 38. Rg2 Bf8 39. Ne4 Bg7 40. c6 f5 41. Ng5+ Kh6 42. Ne6 Bh8 43. c7 Rc8 44. Rh1 and Black resigned in Paikidze – Krush, American Cup 2024. 27. ... Qxd7 28.

Rhf1 Bh4 29. Qg2 and White is completely winning. **TACTIC 4.** 30. Rxb4! In the game, White missed his chance, and after 30. Nd5 Rxc2 31. Rxb4 Ne2+ 32. Kh2 Kf8 33. Rb8+ Kg7 34. Nxe7 h6 35. gxf6+ e.p. Kxf6, the chances were even, although Black even managed to win in the end in So – Robson, American Cup 2024. 30. ... Nxc2 Black can avoid the attack with 30. ... Ne6, but after 31. Kf2 Kg7 32. g3, White should win the endgame without problems. 31. Rb8+ Kg7 32. Ng4! The point! The threat is Ng4-h6 followed by Rb8-g8 mate. Black's answer is forced. 32. ... h5 33. gxf6+ e.p. Kh7 34. Rf8 f6 35. Rf7+ Kh8 36. Rxe7 and White would win easily. **TACTIC 5.** 32. ... Re4! The idea is not difficult to spot but harder to deal with. Black wants to capture on h4. 33. Rd1 After 33. Qd3, Black should play 33. ... Bf5! (not 33. ... Rxf4 34. gxf4 Qxf4 35. Bf4 Qxf4 36. Kf1 and while Black should still win, White is still alive) 34. Qa6 h6! (there is still no rush to capture on h4) 35. Qxc6, and now Black penetrates with a series of deliberate threats: 35. ... Qg4 36. Qxd5+ Kh7 37. Qd3 Rd4 38. Qf1 Bd3 39. Qd1 Qh3 40. Qxf3 Be4 and Black wins. 33. ... Rxf4 34. gxf4 Qg4+ 35. Kh2 Qxf4+ 36. Kg1 Bh3 37. Rd4 Qh5 38. Qd3 Bg2 and, facing mate in a few moves, White resigned in Sevan – So, American Cup 2024. **TACTIC 6.** 20. Rd3! White's idea, like in the previous position, is the straightforward Rd3-h3 and checkmate before Black's king can get away. 20. ... Qe7 21. Rh3 h6 Or 21. ... Kf8 22. Rg3 g6 23. Qxh7 and White wins. 22. Bg5! White lets Black off the hook with 22. Bxh6 gxf6 23. Kh1 (not 23. Qxf6 Ng6 and Black is much better) 23. ... Nc4 24. Qxf6 Bg7 25. Rg3 f5 26. Nf6+ Kf8 27. Nh7+ Kg8 28. Nf6+ with perpetual check. 22. ... Qe7 23. Bxh6! Now, and only now! White's attack crashes through. 23. ... Ng6 Or 23. ... Nc4 24. Bxg7 Bxg7 25. Qh7+ Kf8 26. Rg3 and White wins. 24. Bg5! f6 Also, 24. ... f5 25. Bxd8 Rxd8 26. Qxf5 and White wins. 25. Re1! Ra7 26. Nxf6+ Bxf6 27. Rxe6 Game over! 27. ... Qf7 28. Rxf6 gxf6 29. Qxg6+ Kf8 30. Rh8+ and Black resigned in Robson – So, American Cup 2024. **TACTIC 7.** 27. Nf5! Qe6 28. Rxf7!! In the game, So missed this shot and instead played 28. Qh4? h5 29. g4 Nd3! with just a slight advantage for White, although he eventually won the game. (So – Robson, American Cup 2024) 28. ... Qxf5 If 28. ... Kxf7, then 29. Qh4+ Kg8 30. Ne7+ wins for White. 29. Qh4 Nxe5 30. Rh8+ If 30. Qh6, then 30. ... Qf6. Another option for White is 30. Bd2! Rfe8 31. Bc3 d4 32. Bxd4 Nd5 33. Rh8+ Kg7 34. Qh6+ Kf6 35. Rxe8 Rxe8 36. f4 and White is winning. 30. ... Kg7 31. Bxe5+ Qxe5 32. Qh6+ Kf6 33. Rxf8 Rxf8 34. Qxf8 and White is winning. **TACTIC 8.** 45. ... Bf2! The game instead continued 45. ... Bg1 46. Kxc2?? (A terrible blunder — White had a draw by playing 46. Ke2!! Bd3+! 47. Ke1! and Black will not be able to make progress, as 47. ... Bxh2? loses to 48. Kf2) 46. ... Bxh2 47. Bb8 and White resigned at the same time, as Black wins easily by playing 47. ... Bxg3 followed by ... h3-h2. (Robson – So, American Cup 2024) 46. Nd6 Or 46. Kxc2 Bxg3 47. Nd6 Bxh2 48. Ne8 g3 49. Nf6+ Ke6 50. Ne4 g2 51. Ng5+ Kf5 52. Nxf3 Kg4 and Black wins. 46. ... Bxg3 47. Kxc2 Bxh2 48. Kd3 g3 49. Ne4 g2 50. Nc3+ Kc6 51. Ne2 Bg3 or 51. ... g1=Q 52. Nxf1 Bxg1 53. f5 h2 and Black wins. 52. Bd4 h2 and Black is winning. **TACTIC 9.** 40. g5! hxf5+ 41. Ke3!! Only so! This way,

White avoids that Black gets connected passed pawns on the g- and h-files. The doubled g-pawns are much more manageable and allows White to stop Black's pawn. In the game, White went wrong and lost after 41. Kxg5?? c4 42. Kf4 Kb2 43. Ke3 c3 44. Rb6+ Bb3 45. Rc6 g5 46. e6 fxe6 in Shankland – So, American Cup 2024. 41. ... c4 42. Rd1! 42. Rd2 would also have done the job. 42. ... g4 43. Rc1+ Kb4 Or 43. ... Kb2 44. Kd2 g3 45. Rc2+ Kb3 46. Rc3+ Kb2 47. Rxf3 and neither side will be able to win. 44. Kd2 g3 In order to advance the c-pawn, Black will need to use his front g-pawn to try to distract White from covering the c3-square. 45. Rg1 c3+ 46. Kc2 Kc4 47. Rxf3 g6 If 47. ... Kd4, then 48. Rxf3 Kxe4 49. Kxc3 Kxe5 with a draw. 48. Rd3 Bg4 49. Rg3 Be6 50. Rd3 Bg4 51. Rg3 with a drawn position.

### PAGE 49 ABCS OF CHESS

**PROBLEM 1. Mating net:** White mates on the move by 1. Ba5 mate. **PROBLEM 2. Mating net:** Black is mated at once by 1. Qe5 mate. **PROBLEM 3. Mating net:** White mates immediately: 1. Qf5 mate. **PROBLEM 4. Mating net:** White wins in two: 1. Qxe6+ fxe6 2. Bg6 mate. **PROBLEM 5. Mating net:** It's mate in two: 1. Nf6+ Kf8 2. Qh6 mate. **PROBLEM 6. Mating net:** White wins in two: 1. Qxc7+ Qxc7 2. Re8 mate.



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# MY BEST MOVE

## LAUREN GOODKIND

CHESS COACH, AUTHOR,  
CROCHETER



I STARTED PLAYING IN US CHESS rated tournaments when I was 15 years old in high school. For the past 11 years, I have been teaching chess to kids and adults. I'm happy to be a woman chess teacher and am trying my best to inspire other women and girls to play chess.

I am the author of two chess books, *Queen for a Day: The Girl's Guide to Chess Mastery*, and *50 Poison Pieces: Solve 50 Puzzles where the Unprotected Piece is Toxic*. Both are available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

My latest project, finished in March 2024, is an approximately 501-foot-long chess scarf, which broke the initial Guinness Book of World Records for the longest crocheted scarf by an individual. I used about 35 miles of yarn to create this 75-pound scarf. My dream is to display the scarf in a public place, like a major airport, in the belief that it will inspire others to play chess.

I'm looking for help in achieving this dream, so please reach out if you have ideas about displaying it. For more about the scarf, visit my website, [www.chessbylauren.com](https://www.chessbylauren.com), and feel free to email me at [laurengoodkind-chess@gmail.com](mailto:laurengoodkind-chess@gmail.com).

This scarf might be my best achievement, but I've played some pretty good moves on the board as well. Below is a game that I played at the 2018 Amateur Team West that I particularly like.

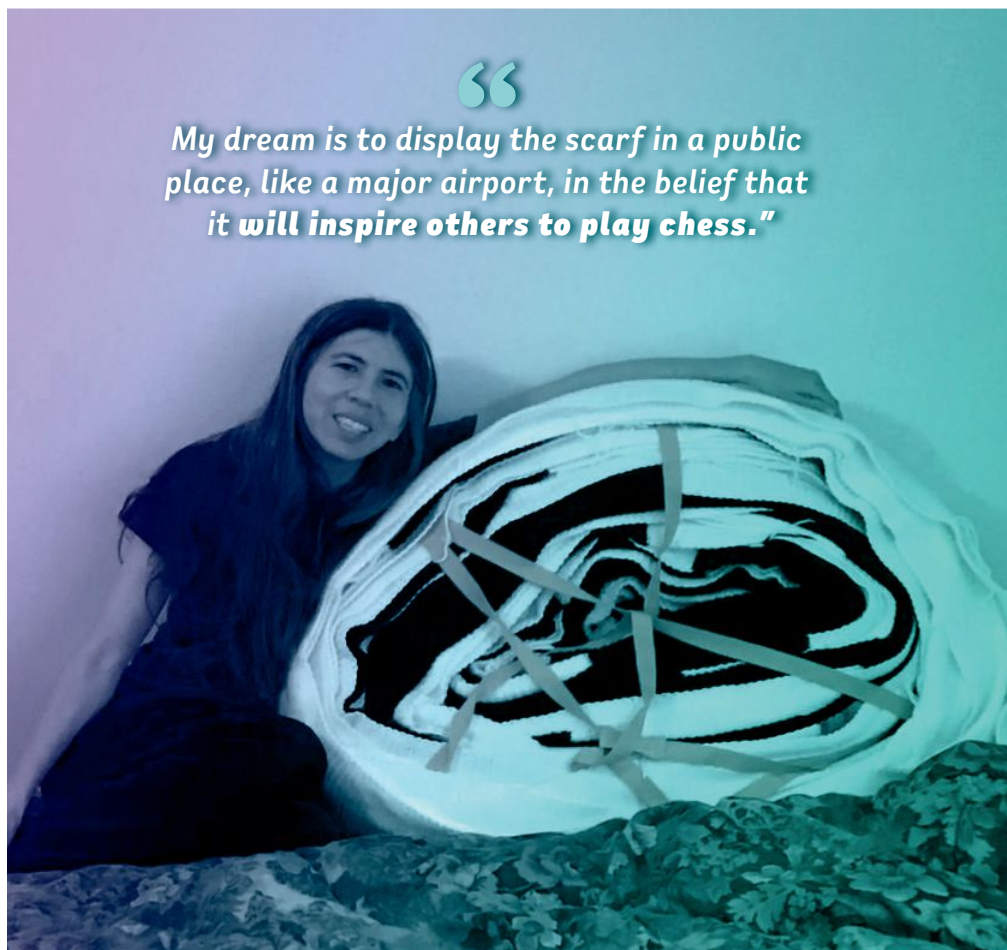
### SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B90)

Lauren Goodkind (1849)

Vlad-Bogdan Ghita (2028)

Amateur Team West (4), Santa Clara, 2018

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Bc4 Nbd7 7. h3 Qc7 8. Qe2 b5 9. Bb3 Bb7 10. a3 Nc5 11. f3 e6 12. 0-0 Be7 13. Be3 Rc8 14. Bf2 0-0 15. Rad1 Rfd8



“

My dream is to display the scarf in a public place, like a major airport, in the belief that it will inspire others to play chess.”

16. Ba2 d5 17. e5 Nfd7 18. Bg3 Nb6 19. Nb1

Even though this might be my weirdest looking move ever, it actually improves my position.

19. ... Nca4 20. c3 Bc6 21. f4 Nc5 22. Nd2 Nc4 23. Nxc4 dxc4 24. Bb1

Mission accomplished... due to that weird knight move!

24. ... g6 25. Bc2 Bd5 26. Qg4 Qb7 27. Rd2 Ne4 28. Bxe4 Bxe4 29. Bh4 Bxh4 30. Qxh4 a5 31. Qf6 Qb6 32. Kh2

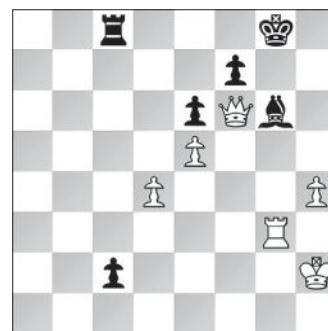
Unpinning the d4-knight.

32. ... Bd3 33. Rf3 b4 34. axb4 axb4 35. f5 With my ominous queen on the f6-square, it's time to attack!

35. ... Rxd4 36. fxe6 Bxe6 37. Rxd4 bxc3 38. bxc3 Qc6 39. h4 h5 40. g4 hxg4 41. Rxe4 Qd7 42. Rd4 Qxd4

Desperately sacrificing his queen for a passed pawn.

43. cxd4 c3 44. Rg3 c2



Vlad's pawn continues to march, and now he is threatening to promote. Fortunately I had MY BEST MOVE up my sleeve.

45. Rxe6+ fxe6 46. Qxe6+, Black resigned. Black resigned here because my queen is forking his king and his unprotected c8-rook. After he gets out of check, my queen will capture his rook, and if he promotes his pawn on c1, I can just grab it. This was a nice upset win for me! ♠



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