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CHESSLIFE

SEPTEMBER 2024 ■ USChess.org

 US CHESS

**Tan
Zhongyi
Wins
Cairns Cup**

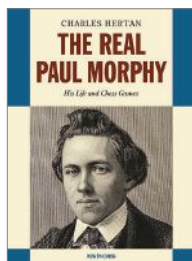




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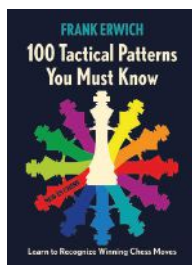


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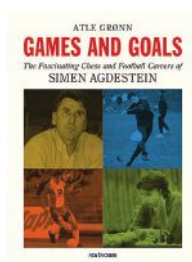
Life and games of Paul Morphy
Charles Hertan

A comprehensive biography that delves deep into Morphy's fascinating career, unearthing new information about his origins, intertwined with an in-depth exploration of his games. Hertan uses his experience as a professional psychotherapist to shed new light on Morphy's tragic mental deterioration and also examines the state of chess before Morphy.



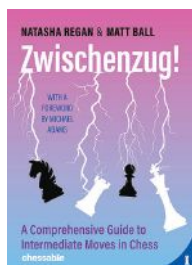
100 Tactical Patterns You Must Know
Frank Erwich

The long-awaited middlegame companion to the bestseller *100 Endgames You Must Know*. Experienced chess trainer Frank Erwich teaches the most frequent and easy-to-learn tactical patterns. The book offers clear, concise, and easy-to-follow chess tactics instruction, ideal for post-beginners, club players, and candidate masters.



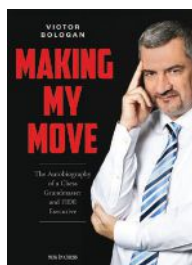
Simen Agdestein: A unique double talent
Atle Grønn

At the age of eighteen, Simen Agdestein became the youngest grandmaster in the world. He reached his peak as the world's number 12. His talent extended to football, where he played for the Norwegian national team. "I can't choose between my left and my right arm," he once remarked, referring to his passion for both chess and football.



Looking for the unexpected
Natasha Regan & Matt Ball

The first-ever comprehensive guide to the chess tactic also known as the intermediate move, or intermezzo. This exciting manoeuvre can catch opponents off guard because it is against the expected run of play. You will learn how to spot Zwischenzugs, when to look out for them, and how to set them up in your games. On Chessable, the course was awarded 4.82 out of a five stars.



Making My Move
Victor Bologan

Victor Bologan is renowned as a strong GM, but he has also made a career in world chess and Moldovan politics. This autobiography gives a vivid account of his journey, detailing his collaborations with coaches like Chebanenko, Lanka and Dvoretsky, as well as alliances with players like Morozevich, Ponomarev, Kramnik and Kasparov. Central is his chess career, with extensive analysis of his most attractive games.

Murder at the North Sea Chess Tournament
Fred Das & Jeroen Terlingen

The North Sea Chess Tournament unfolds with dramatic twists as secret services interfere in the competition. The plot thickens when an American player is found dead, prompting the sponsor to step in and salvage the tournament. The story draws inspiration from the real-life experiences of a sponsor involved in the Tata Steel tournament for over a decade.

Practical exercises to spot the key moves
Frank Erwich

The workbook accompanying *100 Tactical Patterns You Must Know*. Erwich not only identified the most important tactical patterns, he also collected over 500 exercises to help you train them. While it is recommended to study the manual and workbook together, the workbook can be used as a stand-alone training tool since each pattern is summarized.

The profound influence of Mark Dvoretsky
Vladimir Barsky

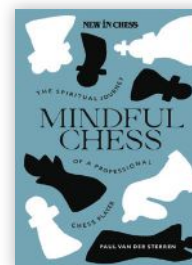
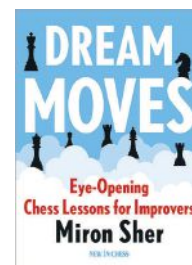
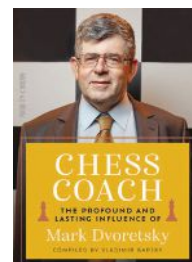
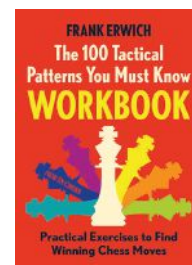
When Mark Dvoretsky started coaching, he became a kind of doctor, quickly identifying what his students needed help with. He made them better chess players, but also better people. In this book, students such as Yusupov, Kasparov, Anand, Topalov and Carlsen, to name but a few, pay tribute to the most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

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.

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?



20 EVENTS NATIONAL OPEN Put It All On Black (and White)

The vagaries of the Vegas Chess Festival

BY IM MARK HEIMANN

27 EVENTS CONTINENTAL CHAMPIONSHIP Ambassadors Abroad

The 2024 American Continental Championship

BY IM MAXIMILLIAN LU

32 COVER STORY QUEENS OF THE GAME Tan wins 2024 Cairns Cup; Krush is first Cairns Queen winner.

BY GM IRINA KRUSH

40 FEATURE CAVEMAN CHESS Games, Guidance, and Grub with Grandmasters

The Caveman Chess Camp mixes tournament play with intense instruction.

BY ROBERT IRONS

42 EVENTS AMATEUR TEAMS North, South, West

Which amateur teams played the best?

BY US CHESS

ON THE COVER

The former, and perhaps future, women's world champion came to St. Louis to win. And win she did! After her victory in the 2024 Women's Candidates, Tan Zhongyi continued her rich vein of form with a terrific performance at the 2024 Cairns Cup. This photo by Lennart Ootes captures her triumph beautifully.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LENNART OOTES



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Association*

CHESSLIFE

September

COLUMNS

14 CHESS TO ENJOY ENTERTAINMENT

Idea Tossing

BY GM ANDY SOLTIS

16 GETTING TO WORK INSTRUCTION

Have a Good Knight

BY WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN

19 PUZZLES MAKE YOUR MOVE!

BY FM CARSTEN HANSEN

50 SOLITAIRE CHESS INSTRUCTION

More Tal Magic

BY BRUCE PANDOLFINI

52 ENDGAME SCHOOL INSTRUCTION

History Never Repeats

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN

54 BOOKS AND BEYOND SHOULD I BUY IT?

More Life, More Games

BY IM JOHN WATSON



DEPARTMENTS

5 COUNTERPLAY READERS RESPOND

6 FIRST MOVES CHESS NEWS FROM AROUND THE U.S.

8 US CHESS AFFAIRS NEWS FOR OUR MEMBERS

48 IN THE NEWS

56 TOURNAMENT LIFE

62 CLASSIFIEDS

63 SOLUTIONS

64 MY BEST MOVE PERSONALITIES MATT CLIBANOFF



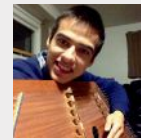
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GM IRINA KRUSH

(Cover Story) is an eight-time U.S. Women's champion and a two-time winner of the American Cup. A member of international U.S. Women's teams for more than two

decades, she was the subject of a *Chess Life* retrospective in March 2021. Visit her YouTube channel for instructive videos: www.youtube.com/@irina_krush



IM MARK HEIMANN

(National Open) is a staff scientist in the Center for Applied Scientific Computing at Lawrence Livermore

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IM MAXIMILLIAN LU

(Continental Championship) has won multiple national and international scholastic tournaments

and is a 10-time US Chess All-America team member. He is also an experienced ski instructor. He will attend Yale University in the fall.



ROBERT IRONS

(Caveman Chess) teaches finance in the School of Business and Economics at Illinois Wesleyan Univer-

sity in Bloomington, Illinois. He was the correspondence chess editor for US Chess from November 2022 until March 2024. His first chess book, an analysis of the games from San Sebastian 1911, is due out from Russell Enterprises in October.



FM DAVIS ZONG

(First Moves) is the winner of multiple New York scholastic titles. He is a newly minted FIDE master and

one of the co-founders of *Chess Connections* magazine. He will attend Yale University in the fall.



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**Youngest-Ever USA
Female to Earn the IM Title!**

Alice Lee

"I'd like to thank the U.S. Chess Trust for their support in my chess career. I have had the honor of receiving the prestigious Samford Fellowship, which has given me encouragement and support for my chess."



The Trust is a separate 501(c)(3) organization operating independently of US Chess.

COUNTERPLAY



it in the proper perspective? Just my two cents.

Mark Steddom
Via email

WAIT A MINUTE...

I was playing through the problems in GM Andy Soltis' July quiz, and I had a question about Andy's first puzzle.



BLACK TO MOVE

While Black is winning in the diagram, there is no mate or win of big material after 22. ... Nc3 (the proposed solution) since 23. Qf1 guards the mate. I normally solve these just by looking at the diagram and found 23. ... Nxa2 or 23. ... Nxb5, but in both cases, after White recaptures, Black takes the bishop on f8. It's true that Black remains a pawn up, but I don't see a crushing win. Indeed, when I enter the position into the computer it thinks Black's best move is 22. ... Rxf8 or 22. ... Kxf8.

So what am I missing?

Dale Sharp
Via email

John Hartmann responds:

You're not missing anything. Black has a better game after all the three moves you mention (22. ... Rxf8, 22. ... Kxf8, 22. ... Nc3), but there's no hammer blow after any of them. I suspect we may be guilty of a bit of confirmation bias in giving only 22. ... Nc3 as a correct solution. ♠

LEADERSHIP

I have been a chess player and fan for more than 40 years, and I am also an active stock investor.

After reading the April 2024 issue of *Chess Life* which featured GM Maurice Ashley, I was very pleasantly surprised to see GM Ashley featured in *Investor's Business Daily* under their "Success and Leadership" column.

It's just another indication that chess is truly becoming mainstream, and that great leaders of the game (like GM Ashley) are a big part of the reason!

I'm also looking forward to the upcoming TV series based on his life.

Anthony Benenati
Via email

ANOTHER FROWN

Regarding Erick Porter's letter in the July issue: I agree with him 100 percent! Most books show the position incorrectly as *Chess Life* does. When I see this, I typically move to a different puzzle or article as it aggravates me. If it's a position that really interests me I'll put it on one of my chess boards and check it out.

Is it that much trouble to put

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

Spreading the Love of Chess

National Scholastic Chess Foundation welcomes a new director.

BY **FM DAVIS ZONG JR.**



AFTER OVER THREE DECADES as founding and executive director of the National Scholastic Chess Foundation (NSCF), FM Sunil Weeramantry has passed the torch to Matan Prilleltensky, a tireless coach who has taught countless students and instructors alike.

I met Prilleltensky when I was a first grader at NEST+m who barely knew the rules of the game. I instantly fell in love with his passionate energy — the way he would display the power of principled development in Stenitz's masterpieces move by move on the demo board and compile hundreds of variations of opening repertoires into organized packets. He was never afraid to dream big, and he had the dedication and put in the hard work to back up his ambitions.

I still vividly remember the mixture of shock and excitement my teammates and I felt when he approached us after our first tournament and said, "We're going to make you all national champions." To us, a group of kids finishing their first few games, bringing home the national title seemed far away, but the prospect encouraged us. From then on, we eagerly yearned to absorb new knowledge, and Prilleltensky became even more meticulous with his training.

The morning practice program was my favorite part. A few times a week, we would wake up before dawn and take the 6:22 bus to school, studying chess for an hour

in an empty classroom before the rest of the school day started. Later, I learned that Prilleltensky himself woke up even earlier, often at 4 a.m. His commitment to providing fresh and intriguing material led him to spend sleepless nights filtering and scrolling through countless games in the Mega Database to find the most relevant and instructive positions to teach. Every practice, we would take home a new sheet of hand-created puzzles, ranging from basic themes such as ladder mates and helper mates to more advanced themes such as *zugzwang* and prophylaxis.

On weekends, Prilleltensky took valuable time out of his day, commuting to faraway boroughs of the city to watch us play at local tournaments. At larger events such as the World Open and World Cadet Championships, he was happy to cheer us on, often sending over detailed opening preparation files even if he was in a different time zone. Thanks to Prilleltensky, my teammates and I improved rapidly, and going into third grade our team was among the rating favorites at most scholastic events. We not only won nationals, as Prilleltensky had predicted years back, but also the city and state championships, culminating in a rare triple crown.

Prilleltensky was ready for more, and at chess programs in Speyer and Scarsdale he further honed his teaching skills, fine-tuning his lessons and guiding even more students who would ultimately reach expert, master, and beyond. Not surprisingly, Prilleltensky calls enthusiasm one of the most important aspects of teaching: "The students match your energy, so if you're passionate, they will respond with that same energy." Thanks to his lively lessons, the top places of local





Facing: FM Sunil Weeramantry, Matan and Sunil. This page: Weeramantry in his natural habitat, and the new director of NSCF.

tournaments were commonly taken by his present and former students.

The National Scholastic Chess Foundation is dedicated to providing the benefits of chess education to kids of all ages. Originally founded in 1990 by Weeramantry, a nationally recognized figure in chess teaching, NSCF has grown to serve more than 60 schools in greater New York and Broward County, Florida, kickstarting the chess careers of thousands of students.

It all started at my alma mater, Hunter College High School, even before the organization's founding. As Jamaal Abdul-Alim detailed in his September 2019 *Chess Life* article "Four Decades of Chess," a young Weeramantry showed up at the brick castle in 1979 for his first teaching interview, where he was tasked on the spot to deliver a 15-minute lesson to a classroom of elementary school kids. Weeramantry successfully improvised, just as a chess player does when faced with an opening novelty.

In the early days of the foundation, Weeramantry worked for a long time without a salary, writing lessons and brainstorming future plans for the organization. He told the Saint Louis Chess Club in an interview that one of NSCF's missions is to enlist parent support to help teach the kids. "We have to help the parents understand that it's good for their kid to play chess," says Weeramantry. One key element of NSCF's mission is to impart the value of learning chess apart

from seeking tournament success.

Weeramantry retains his passion for playing chess and spreading the love of the game. Every April, he coaches and accompanies Hunter's team at scholastic nationals, reviewing players' games in the team room and coordinating inspirational team meetings before each round. In July 2024, I had the pleasure of seeing Weeramantry again at the World Open. Even playing nine long rounds of chess with notoriously intensive double-round days, he still made the time to chat with aspiring chess stars and their parents, imparting his lifelong coaching and playing experience to the next generation.

Now, as Weeramantry passes the baton at NSCF, the future under Prilleltensky looks bright. "I worked with so many amazing kids in my life," says Prilleltensky, "and most of the kids I worked with have had, for various reasons, a lot of opportunities, whether the reason is very involved parents, great schools, family with resources, or all of the above. One thing that I think sometimes is that there are also so many kids who would love to play chess and who would have their lives so enriched by chess, who don't get the opportunity for whatever reason. So the thing that I was most inspired by was the idea to try to bring these types of experiences to kids who wouldn't otherwise have had them."

Transforming numerous students' lives at NEST+m, Speyer, and Scarsdale is merely the beginning of Prilleltensky's teaching journey. Now as the executive director of NSCF, he seeks to continue to bring the benefits and joy of chess to a wider audience. Making

arrangements with PTAs at local schools, he hopes to maintain and introduce programs that make learning chess accessible for any kid who wants to. In his vision for the future of the organization, Prilleltensky said the goal is to help students go as far in chess as they want. "So if a kid wants to learn how to play, I want us to be able to teach him/her how to play in the absolute best way possible. If a kid wants to play really seriously, we want to help them go to the next level, whether it is coaching, preparation, or starting a school team. I hope to introduce chess to all these kids out there who would absolutely love to play who would have this whole world opened up to them, who may not even know that chess exists."

Finally, the newly minted director has one last piece of advice for kids in the 8-by-8 world, whether they are just starting to move the pieces or are seasoned masters: "Enjoy the process. Working on chess by yourself and improving is a beautiful thing."



2024 Chess Journalist of America Awards

US CHESS WRITERS AND CREATORS took home the lion's share of awards at the 2024 Chess Journalists of America (CJA) meeting, held August 1 at the U.S. Open in Norfolk, Virginia.

With 33 of the 83 named winners or honorable mentions found in US Chess publications, we are understandably proud of the work that our contributors have done. But we are most delighted by new Digital Editor J.J. Lang's being named 2024 Chess Journalist of the Year.

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

Top Awards

CHESS JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

J.J. LANG

BEST STORY OF THE YEAR, HM

MICHAEL TISSERAND, "BEING JUDE ACERS"
(CHESS LIFE, APRIL 2024)

Print

BEST FEATURE ARTICLE

LARRY KAUFMAN, "WHAT YOUR ENGINE IS TRYING TO TELL YOU, PART I AND II"
(CHESS LIFE, MARCH / APRIL 2024)

BEST INTERVIEW, HM

STEVE SHEINKIN, "AN ADVANCED BEGINNER"
(CHESS LIFE, APRIL 2024)

BEST NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT REPORT

CARISSA YIP, "C YOU IN ST. LOUIS"
(CHESS LIFE, JANUARY 2024)

BEST NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT REPORT, HM

GREGORY KAIDANOV, "IN THE ARENA"
(CHESS LIFE, JANUARY 2024)

BEST STATE / LOCAL TOURNAMENT REPORT

JOHN HARTMANN, "THE MEDNIS MEMORIAL"
(CHESS LIFE, JANUARY 2024)

BEST STATE / LOCAL TOURNAMENT REPORT, HM

JOEL BENJAMIN, "IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BENJAMINS (AND KLEMPNERS)"
(CHESS LIFE, JULY 2023)

BEST SINGLE ARTICLE OF LOCAL INTEREST

MICHAEL FITZGERALD, "THE GREAT BERKELEY CHESS RAID"
(CHESS LIFE, FEBRUARY 2024)

BEST INSTRUCTIVE LESSON

TATEV ABRAHAMYAN, "ANALYZING YOUR GAMES" (CHESS LIFE, JULY 2023)

BEST REVIEW

JOHN WATSON, "STREAMERS AND THE KING'S PAWN, PART I, II AND III"
(CHESS LIFE, JULY-SEPTEMBER 2023)

BEST ANALYSIS, HM

JESPER THYBO, "CONTROL THE CATALAN"
(CHESS LIFE, FEBRUARY 2024)



BEST HISTORICAL ARTICLE

JOSHUA ANDERSON, "A PLEASANT DIVERSION" (CHESS LIFE, DECEMBER 2023)

BEST HUMOROUS CONTRIBUTION

MIKE KLEIN AND KINGA POLAK, "DING LASSO" (CHESS LIFE, AUGUST 2023)

BEST PERSONAL NARRATIVE

ARTHUR GUO, "ACHIEVING MY AIM"
(CHESS LIFE, MAY 2024)

Visual Arts

BEST PHOTOJOURNALISM ARTICLE

JAMES CULLEN / MICHAEL TISSERAND, "BEING JUDE ACERS" (CHESS LIFE, APRIL 2024)

BEST CARTOON

ALICE CHOVANEC, "9 TYPES" (CHESS LIFE KIDS, FEBRUARY-APRIL 2024)

BEST CARTOON, HM

NICO BARRIOS / NATASHA ROBERTS, "CHESS ADVENTURES" (CHESS LIFE KIDS, NOVEMBER 2023)



PHOTO: JAMES CULLEN FOR US CHESS (ACERS), LISA NALVEN FOR US CHESS (COVER)



BEST ANALYSIS, HM
TATEV ABRAHAMYAN, "CANDIDATES 2024:
ROUND 11"

BEST ANALYSIS, HM
ROBERT SHLYAKHTENKO, "CANDIDATES
2024: ROUND SIX"

BEST HISTORICAL ARTICLE
JOHN DONALDSON, "IM JEREMY SILMAN
(1954-2023)"

BEST HISTORICAL ARTICLE, HM
ANTHONY SAIDY, "FM OREST POPOVYCH
(1933-2024)"

BEST PERSONAL NARRATIVE
CARISSA YIP, "REFLECTIONS ON A ROLLER
COASTER OF A U.S. WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP"

BEST NON-INSTRUCTIVE VIDEO
US CHESS, "AN INTERVIEW WITH THE FOUR
LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL
CHAMPIONSHIP"

Junior

BEST PRINT ARTICLE
CARISSA YIP, "C YOU IN ST. LOUIS" (*CHESS
LIFE*, JANUARY 2024)

BEST ONLINE ARTICLE
DAVIS ZONG JR., "OCEANS APART, SAME
CHESSBOARD"

BEST PERSONAL NARRATIVE
ARTHUR GUO, "ACHIEVING MY AIM"
(*CHESS LIFE*, MAY 2024)



BEST SINGLE CHESS MAGAZINE COVER

LISA NALVEN / NATASHA ROBERTS
(*CHESS LIFE*, APRIL 2024)

Online

BEST NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT REPORT, HM

US CHESS, "2023 U.S. SENIOR
WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP"

BEST STATE / LOCAL TOURNAMENT REPORT

J.J. LANG, "'CHESS GIRLS ROCK' COM-
BINES COMPETITION WITH CAMARADE-
RIE IN VIRGINIA" AND "THREE NORMS
EARNED IN NEW YORK OVER PRESIDENT'S
DAY WEEKEND" (TIE)

BEST STATE / LOCAL TOURNAMENT REPORT, HM

ALLYSON WONG, "EMPOWERING GIRLS
THROUGH CHESS: FEMCHESS HOSTS
SUCCESSFUL ALL-GIRLS SCHOLASTIC
TOURNAMENT"

BEST ANALYSIS

GULRUKBEGIM TOKHIRJONOVA,
"GUKESH, TAN WIN FIDE CANDIDATES
TOURNAMENT ON DRAMATIC FINAL DAY"



NATIONAL CHESS DAY WEEK

THERE HAVE BEEN SOME updates to the 2024 National Chess Day (or Week) promotion. Please be advised that:

- The tournament must have “NCD,” “NCW,” “National Chess Day” or “National Chess Week” in the event name. (Upper/lower case should not matter.)
- The event must start no earlier than

Saturday, October 5, 2024, and start no later than Saturday, October 12, 2024.

- The event must end no earlier than Saturday, October 5, 2024, and end no later than Sunday, October 13, 2024. (That’s to cover a Saturday-Sunday event that would end on the 13th.)
- The waiver code is now **NCW2024FREE**. (Note that the code has changed.)

■ Each affiliate will be allowed one tournament using this waiver code.

■ The waiver code covers ratings fees only, not \$10 correction fees, FIDE fees or Grand Prix fees. (Two-month trial memberships can no longer be submitted through the tournament submission process, so they are paid for separately.)



Dan Lucas Departs US Chess after 18 Years

BY JOHN HARTMANN

THERE WAS NO WAY TO KNOW JUST HOW important Dan Lucas would be to the growth and success of US Chess when he was hired as director of publications in 2005.

After an award-winning stint as editor of *Georgia Chess*, it was clear that Dan could handle the technical parts of his job. Serving as *Chess Life* editor from 2005 through 2018, his tenure is the second-longest in our history, with only Burt Hochberg spending more time in the hot seat.

But it was his skillful way of managing others, along with his steady, affable demeanor, that cemented his legacy with the organization.

Dan led a thorough revamp of our publications, bringing them fully into the 21st century. He oversaw our first steps into digital media with *Chess Life Online*, our social media channels, and YouTube.

With his promotion to senior director of strategic communication in 2018, Dan helped guide the organization through the COVID-19 pandemic with aplomb, culminat-

ing in the record-setting growth in membership seen in the past year. With his consistent attention to developing junior staff, and his careful counsel for his reportees, Dan has prepared his team to continue without him — the true mark of an effective leader.

US Chess owes Dan Lucas a tremendous debt of gratitude for his service to the organization. With his departure, we are losing his institutional knowledge, his wisdom, and his humor; more than this, we are losing a friend.

On a personal note, it was Dan who took a shot on an unknown chess book blogger way back in 2013, giving me my first byline in the magazine. He continued to mentor me over the years as I became first a columnist, then *Chess Life Online* editor, and now editor of *Chess Life* and *Chess Life Kids*. I would not be where I am without his support and encouragement.

After 18 years of service, Dan is taking on a leadership role with Kid Chess, a leading Atlanta-area chess education company.



Above: This *Chess Life* cover (August 2007) was Dan’s favorite from his time as editor.

Please join me in wishing him the very best as he completes his tour of duty.

2024 US Chess Awards



Andy Ansel



Carol Meyer



Carissa Yip



Anand Dommalapati



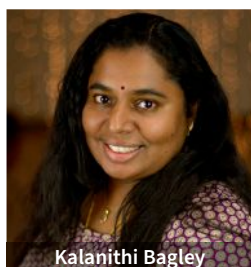
Craig Timmons



Christina Schweiss



Jon Edwards



Kalanithi Bagley



Jeff Bulington



Hikaru Nakamura

THE US CHESS FEDERATION is pleased to announce the 2024 Annual Award recipients. Congratulations to all of these individuals and organizations who are advancing our mission to “empower people, enrich lives, and enhance communities through chess.” ♦

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James Rachels (posthumously)
Carol Meyer

OUTSTANDING CAREER ACHIEVEMENT

FA/IO Luis A. Salinas (posthumously)

MERITORIOUS SERVICE

Ernest Nix
Jim Hollingsworth
Christina Schweiss
Kalanithi Bagley
Robin Ramson
IA Andre Harding (posthumously)

SPECIAL SERVICE

ICCF GM Jon Edwards
Andrew M. “Andy” Ansel

FRANK J. MARSHALL AWARD

CM Jude Acers

ORGANIZER OF THE YEAR

IA/IO Anand Dommalapati

CHESS CLUB OF THE YEAR

Charleston Chess Club (SC)

OUTSTANDING TEAM ACHIEVEMENT

2023 U.S. Senior Team

GM OF THE YEAR

GM Fabiano Caruana
GM Hikaru Nakamura

WOMAN PLAYER OF THE YEAR

WGM/IM Carissa Yip

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SCHOLASTIC SERVICE AWARD: INDIVIDUAL

Jeff Bulington

SCHOLASTIC SERVICE AWARD: ORGANIZATION

The Right Move (NY)

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KOLTANOWSKI GOLD AWARD

Dewain and Sue Barber
John D. Rockefeller V

KOLTANOWSKI SILVER AWARD

David and Maureen Grimaud

DAN HEISMAN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN CHESS INSTRUCTION

Tim Tusing

TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

Jeff L. Smith

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IA Maya Myers

LIFETIME TOURNAMENT ACHIEVEMENT

IA/IO Alan Losoff

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Craig Timmons

CHESS CITY OF THE YEAR

Orlando



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Daily Rounds at 1PM

10.11 Round 1	10.12 Round 2	10.13 Round 3	10.14 Round 4	10.15 Rest Day	10.16 Round 5
10.17 Round 6	10.18 Round 7	10.19 Round 8	10.20 Rest Day	10.21 Round 9	10.22 Round 10
10.23 Round 11	10.24 Playoff (If Necessary) 6PM – 10PM Closing Ceremony				

I N P A S S I N G

Bernard Parham

1946-2024

BY **GEORGE KVAKOVSKY**

BERNARD PARHAM BEAT ME BLINDFOLDED. “It’s easy! I sleep with a chessboard taped above my bed,” he said.

Bernard, a physics major, was the strongest player in the Purdue University Chess Club when I met him. He tutored a dozen chess students, including the kids of some of his professors, and never went anywhere without his dog-eared copy of *Chess Praxis* by Aron Nimzovich. He had memorized all the games and often quoted the arcane language from the book as though he were reciting scripture.

Parham was the 1967 Indiana state champion and became a master in 1975. He was a longtime champion of the Parham Attack (1. e4 e5 2. Qh5), which he played throughout his career. Shock value aside, Bernard be-

lieved the opening was solid and could also lead to some spectacular kingside attacks. Occasionally he would answer other first-move responses by Black, such as 1. ... c6, by 2. Qh5. Sitting at the next board in such a situation, I once heard Bernard mumble, “Caro-can’t!”

Here’s a favorite example of the Parham Attack in action, played by its author.

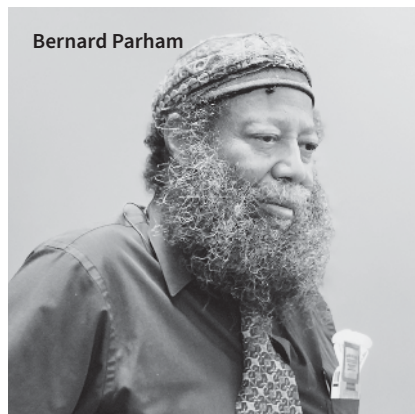
PARHAM ATTACK (C20)

Bernard Parham (2103)
Romeo Soriano (1865)
Scarborough Peace Games, 08.10.1996

1. e4 e5 2. Qh5 d6 3. Bc4 g6 4. Qf3 Nf6
5. Ne2 Bg7 6. Nbc3 0-0 7. d3 Be6 8. h4
Bxc4 9. dxc4 Qd7 10. Bg5 Qe6 11. 0-0-0
Nbd7 12. Ng3 h6 13. Bd2 b5 14. cxb5 a6
15. b6 cxb6 16. h5 b5 17. Nd5 Nxd5
18. exd5 Qf6 19. Qa3 Nc5 20. Qe3 Na4
21. Ne4 Qd8 22. hxg6 f5 23. Rxh6 fxe4
24. Qh3 Rxf2 25. Rh8+, Black resigned.

With a great mathematical mind, Parham began to develop his “Matrix” system for attacking chess while at Purdue. Rooted in

Bernard Parham



geometry and vector analysis, this understanding of tactics and structure was emblematic of Bernard’s approach to the game.

Bernard didn’t smoke or drink. I never heard him swear or lose his temper. My enduring memory of him is watching him playing five-minute chess with his 3-year-old daughter on his shoulders.

Bernard was 77 when he died June 19, 2024, in Lafayette, Indiana, due to complications from diabetes. He leaves behind a wife, Lugenia (Genie), and two children, Lugenia and Bernard II. He will be missed.

FA / IO Luis Salinas

1956-2024

BY **JOHN HARTMANN**

LUIS SALINAS LIVED A LIFE OF SERVICE.

After growing up in Laredo, Texas, where he learned chess (after a few attempts!) from his uncle, Luis graduated from high school in 1975 and joined the Navy, serving for six years as an electronics technician and achieving the rank of petty officer second class.

Luis returned to Texas after his honorable discharge and took advantage of the G.I. Bill to attend the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M, where he earned a bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering in 1987, specializing in microwave technol-

ogies. (He was also the Aggies’ chess club president.) His skill and knowledge led him to work in the defense industry for almost two decades.

Chess was always a part of Luis’s life: He earned a US Chess expert rating in 1992 and also became a FIDE arbiter and an international organizer. But more than anything else, Luis Salinas was Texas chess.

He was one of America’s busiest tournament directors: The US Chess MSA page lists him as having worked more than 2,500 tournaments since January 1991, which surely puts him in the top echelon. In 2008, US Chess recognized Luis’s prodigious efforts by naming him Tournament Director of the Year.

He was a longtime board member of the Texas Chess Association, president of the Dallas Chess Club, and assistant director of the University of Texas at Dallas Chess Club from 2002 until his retirement in 2020.

Luis shepherded players through their first

Luis Salinas



tournaments and taught many tournament directors and organizers what they needed to know to succeed. The growth of chess in Texas is, in no small part, attributable to him.

Luis passed away on March 11, 2024. He is survived two brothers, a sister-in-law, a niece, a nephew, and extended family. We offer them our condolences. ♠

Idea Tossing

How we became nosy spectators

BY GM ANDY SOLTIS

IT WAS INEVITABLE, BUT STILL shocking, when a former world champion said it earlier this year.

"I'm not even trying to come up with new ideas myself now," Viswanathan Anand admitted.

He was talking about the way humans and computers worked together for decades to make discoveries in chess, whether it was a new move in the Najdorf Sicilian or a what-if variation in a game we'd played.

The relationship was simple: We came up with the idea. The computers verified it. We were acting like scientists formulating a hypothesis: "Is this true?" The machines did the lab work to find the answer.

But at the Artificial Intelligence conference MLDS 2024, Anand revealed that the relationship had fundamentally changed: "The computer gives me the idea. I use it to navigate the lines of moves ahead and reason it out."

When the best players began to ask computers "Is this true?", they acknowledged the relationship was a limited collaboration. Former world champion Vasily Smyslov said in 2000 that machines "can render some assistance" in analysis. But "only in forcing variations!", he added.

Like his colleagues, he did not trust engines to evaluate quiet, non-tactical positions. Or to judge whether there was compensation when material is imbalanced. "From computers you need variations," Boris Spassky said. "The evaluations you can forget."

Masters treated computers like a nosy but tactically talented spectator looking over their shoulder as they analyzed. "I use computers, as we all do, to help analyzing, as a background check," GM Peter Svidler said in 2006. "You analyze and have the computer running in the background, to

keep your analysis relatively blunder-free. And that's about it."

But by the 2020s elite players gave machines a seat at the table. When a GM clicked up a puzzling position, he let the computer start the conversation by recommending a move.

This changed the way opening theory evolved. It became rare for a player, rather than a program, to come up with a new idea, especially in the first 10 moves.

ENGLISH OPENING (A18)

GM Jorden van Foreest

GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly

FIDE Grand Swiss, Riga, 10.30.2021

1. c4 Nf6 2. Nc3 e6 3. e4 d5 4. e5 d4
5. exf6 dxc3 6. bxc3 Qxf6 7. Nf3 b6



The book move was 8. d4; it's backed by general principles, and computers say it confers a small White advantage. Databases show several other moves have been tried, including 8. g3, 8. Qc2, 8. Be2, 8. Bd3, 8. Rb1, and even 8. h4.

8. c5!

White said he prepared for this game by looking for a move his opponent would not expect, and hardly anyone would expect this.

Opening the f1-a6 diagonal for the bishop, or the b-file for his rook after 8. ... bxc5 9 Rb1 and 9. d4 cxd4 10. Rb1, should not be worth a pawn.

8. ... Bxc5 9. d4 Bd6 10. Bd3 h6

Black had to avoid the queen-trapping 11. Bg5. Computers begin to see ample compensation for White's missing pawn by now.

11. Be4 c6 12. O-O O-O 13. Re1 Rd8?

And they see a major White edge after 14.g4! preparing g4-g5. But even with the modest build-up van Foreest chose, his pressure proved more than sufficient.

14. c4 Bb7 15. Rb1 Nd7 16. Rb3 Rac8

17. Bb2 Re8 18. c5 Bf8 19. h4 Qd8 20. Bb1 Rc7 21. Qc2 f5 22. Rbe3 Bc8 23. Qb3 Nf6 24. Bxf5! Nd5 25. Bb1 Nxe3 26. Rxe3 Be7? 27. Qc2! Bf6 28. Qh7+ Kf8 29. Ne5 Bxe5 30. dxe5 Qxh4 31. Bg6 Bd7 32. Rd3, Black resigned.

Of course, anyone can come up with an idea. But in the past, the greatest ideas came from great players. They had a wonderful capacity to imagine.

That ability was often stronger than their ability to execute. Some chess immortals tossed out brilliant ideas the way Leonardo da Vinci thought up ingenious projects. He never completed many of them.

World champion Emanuel Lasker was one of our da Vincis. When Lasker fled Hitler's Germany he was welcomed in Russia, and said he wanted to use his training as a mathematics researcher to benefit the Soviet Union.

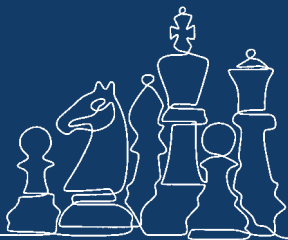
But he did little real research during his two years in Moscow, according to Grigory Levenfish, a world-class player with close ties to Soviet academia. "He was content to 'throw out ideas,'" the British master Gerald Abrahams wrote, remembering what Levenfish told him about Lasker.

Another idea-tosser was world champion Mikhail Botvinnik. In his final years, Botvinnik worked on a chess-playing program, Pioneer. Since he was not a programmer he recruited software designers to hear his many suggestions. "Someone was needed to give him feedback on all the ideas he was generating," Boris Stillman, one of the designers, told me when I was researching Botvinnik's life.

Botvinnik's remarkable ability to come up with chess ideas is confirmed by the notes he made to himself about openings. He suggested new moves or new evaluations in more than 100 variations during the 1950s.

QUIZ FOR SEPTEMBER

THERE IS NO SINGLE ALL-
Pro team in chess. Instead, Germany's Bundesliga manages to showcase several all-star squads each year. This year's 16-team round robin lasted six months and featured elite GMs such as Hikaru Nakamura and Levon Aronian, veterans including Gata Kamsky and dozens of others. In each of the six diagrams from the Bundesliga you are asked to find the fastest winning line of play. This will usually mean the forced win of a decisive amount of material, such as a minor piece or rook. For solutions, see Page 63.



PROBLEM 1
FM Karl-Jasmin Muranyi
GM Zdenko Kozul



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2
GM Alexander Donchenko
GM Adam Kozak



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3
GM Etienne Bacrot
GM Pawel Jaracz



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4
GM Matthias Bluebaum
GM Antonios Pavlidis



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5
IM Stefan Walter
GM Leon Mendonca



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6
GM Luke McShane
IM Valentin Baidetskyi



WHITE TO MOVE

They remained secret until published after his death.

Several ideas proved powerful. For example, he analyzed a trendy variation of the Nimzo-Indian: **1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 b6 5. Nge2 Ba6 6. a3 Be7 7. Nf4 d5 8. cxd5 Bxf1 9. Kxf1 exd5**



He said he found **10. g4!** and its powerful threat of **11. g5** "in the quiet of my study." His note ended after **10. ... c6 11. g5 Nfd7 12. h4 and 13. e4** with the comment "Black faces problems." Smyslov played straight into his analysis in the second game of the 1957 world championship match and was losing one move later.

But many items in Botvinnik's notebook look today like Post-it notes. They reminded him to do more thorough analysis: "To be tested," he wrote about one innovation. "Play a training game," said the note about another.

Today, no testing is needed; we just ask a computer. This would have saved Botvinnik a lot of time when he examined **1. c4 e5 2. Nf3 e4 3. Nd4 Nc6**.



Based on a postal game of his friend Vyacheslav Ragozin, he awarded **4. Nb5** an exclamation point and wrote that **4. ... Bc5 5. N5c3 Nf6 6. g3** is "in White's favor."

He gave only one continuation, **6. ... Ne5**

7. Qc2 0-0 8. Bg2 Nxc4 9. Na4 Bxf2+ 10. Kxf2 Ng4+ 11. Ke1 d5.



Today, a tournament player wouldn't waste a minute on **4. Nb5?** or the continuation. He would feed this position to a computer and receive an instant answer: Black is a bit better after **12. Nbc3 Re8**, for example.

Should we care that engines have reversed our relationship with computers? Do we mind that we have become the nosy spectator?

Anand gave us an answer long ago. "It's a bit like asking an astronomer, does he mind that a telescope does all the work?" ♦

Have a Good Knight

The difference between good and bad knights is harder to explain than with bishops, but it's just as important.

BY **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**

T

HE FINAL INSTALLMENT OF my minor-piece series looks at the difference between good and bad knights. There isn't a

lot of literature on this particular subject, and no catchphrases come immediately to mind, other than Siegbert Tarrasch's wisdom that "a knight on the rim is dim." Ideally, we want our knight to be centralized, on an outpost (a square that can't be attacked by an opponent's pawns) and, most importantly, eyeing key squares in our opponent's camp. Keep in mind that knights are not long-range pieces like bishops: They don't mind closed positions, but they're still not always easy to maneuver around. If you place your knight on a square where it is only visually good but is not really part of the main action, it might be difficult to bring back into the game.

IN THE MIDDLE-GAME

A perfect example of a useful knight against a pretty yet useless one comes from this well-known game. See IM Robert Shlyakhtenko's May article for more on the opening.

A CLASSIC

Mikhail Botvinnik
Jose Raul Capablanca
AVRO Netherlands (11), 11.22.1938

(see diagram top of next column)

Black is up a pawn, and the knight on b3 looks like an ideal piece — it has an outpost, it's deep in White's position, and it is controlling the dark-squared bishop. However,



WHITE TO MOVE

the main action is going to take place on the kingside once White starts marching the f-pawn down the board. The knight on g3, on the other hand, is going to be a major participant in the attack, as it has access to both f5 and h5, targeting the g7-pawn either way. Neither black knight has a way of assisting the king against the incoming onslaught.

21. Qf2!

The direct pawn push 21. f4 would allow Capablanca to improve his knight through tactical means: After 21. ... Nbc5 22. Qe2 Nd3 the knight is on a far better square, interfering with the harmony of White's pieces.

21. ... g6 22. f4 f5 23. exf6 e.p. Nxf6

The pawn structure has changed, helping the d7-knight to activate. Alas, it comes at the cost of weakening the black king's position.

24. f5 Rxe1 25. Rxe1 Re8 26. Re6!

White cannot avoid trades, but he finds a way to keep the pressure.

26. ... Rxe6 27. fxe6 Kg7

With few pieces left on the board, White

focuses on tying down Black's pieces and using the passed e-pawn.

28. Qf4 Qe8 29. Qe5 Qe7



30. Ba3!!

It's no surprise that White has a tactical shot after placing his pieces on their optimal squares. The black king will lack defenders.

30. ... Qxa3 31. Nh5+ gxh5 32. Qg5+ Kf8

33. Qxf6+ Kg8 34. e7

There's no stopping the pawn. Black has a few checks, but the white king will run away to h4. Notice that the b3-knight never participated in the game.

34. ... Qc1+ 35. Kf2 Qc2+ 36. Kg3 Qd3+

Black also runs out of checks after 36. ... Qxc3+ 37. Kh4 Qe1+ 38. Kh3 Qe3+ 39. g3.

37. Kh4 Qe4+ 38. Kxh5 Qe2+ 39. Kh4 Qe4+ 40. g4 Qe1+ 41. Kh5, Black resigned.

TRADING KNIGHTS

The art of trading pieces is a topic of its own.

When considering trading knights, keep in mind the concept of superfluous knights — two knights that fight for the same square. Trading off your opponent's superfluous knight is generally helpful for them. Also, take into consideration the long-term potential of the knights and which side has the space advantage.

NO THANKS!

GM Leonid Stein
Samuel Schweber
Mar del Plata International (15),
03.31.1966



WHITE TO MOVE

With his last move, Black offered a knight trade. White can either capture, allow a trade on g5, or retreat.

21. Nf3!

The knight on h7 is a sad piece with no future — the best it can do is guard the g5-square, stopping the f3-knight from going back and pressuring the f7-pawn. Trading the knights would have solved a big problem for Black and also made it more difficult to attack Black's king if it ran to the kingside.

21. ... Qd8

If Black tries 21. ... 0-0 22. Qd2 Kg7 White repositions the knight with 23. Ne1! intending Ne1-g2-f4, where it will assist White's plan of attacking via g3-g4.

22. Qd2 Kd7 23. Rfb1 Nf5

That knight is on a good square, but White can remove it whenever he wants.

24. Bc5 Kc6 25. Qc1 Rg8 26. Rxa4 bxa4 27. Qa3 Qa5 28. Bxf5 Rab8 29. Rxb8

29. Rb4 would have made White's life easier.

29. ... Rxb8 30. Bh3 Kd7 31. Bb4 Qb5 32. Kg2 a5 33. Bd6 Rb6 34. Qc1

White shifts gears and decides to infiltrate from the other side. Things get a bit ad-

venturous from here, but Stein remains in control.

34. ... Qb2 35. Qf4 f5 36. Qh6 a3 37. Qxh7+
 The sad knight finally falls. Since the trade rejection on move 22, it was never able to participate in the game.

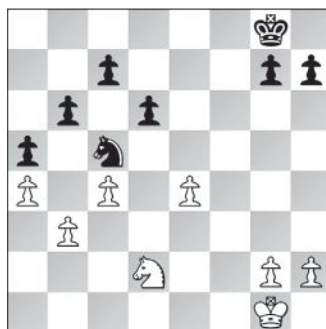
37. ... Kc6 38. Qc7+ Kb5 39. Bc5 Ka4 40.

Bxb6 a2 41. Bxa5 Qxc2

If Black promotes with 41. ... a1=Q, White wins with 42. Qa7.

42. Qb6 Qb1 43. Bb4 a1=Q 44. Qa5+ Kb3 45. Nd2+ Kc2 46. Nxb1, Black resigned.

IN THE ENDGAME

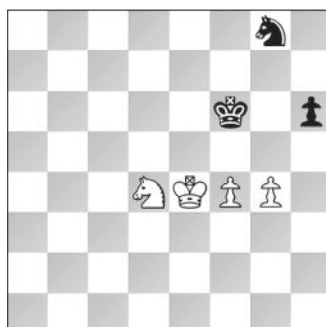


Here, Black's knight is clearly the better piece, targeting weak pawns on b3 and e4. Because those pawns are too far apart for White's king to defend both, White's knight is forced to stay in passive defense.

Even with a limited number of pawns on the board, a poorly placed knight can lead to trouble, as Caruana found out in June:

FINISHING UP

GM Praggnanandhaa
Rameshbabu (2747)
GM Fabiano Caruana (2805)
Norway Chess (9), Stavanger, 06.01.2024



WHITE TO MOVE

67. Nf5 Ke6 68. Kd4

Black is in *zugzwang*.

68. ... Kf6

The trick of giving up the knight for the pawns with 68. ... Nf6 doesn't work out: After 69. Nxh6 Nxg4 70. Nxg4 Kf5 71. Ke3! White wins the pawn endgame with 71. ... Kxg4 72. Ke4.

69. Nxh6! Ne7

White wins easily after 69. ... Nxh6 70. g5+ Kg6 71. gxh6 Kxh6 72. Ke5.

70. Ke4 Kg6 71. g5

White shouldn't be too hasty to trade: 71. Nf5?? blunders away the win. After 71. ... Nxf5 72. gxf5+ Kf6 White will have to give up the pawn in the worst way and it's a draw.

71. ... Kh5 72. Nf7

White has several ways to make progress.

72. ... Ng6 73. Kf5 Ne7+ 74. Ke6 Nc6 75. f5 Nd4+ 76. Kf6 Kg4 77. Nd6, Black resigned.

When I was a young player, I was taught that the correct way to evaluate a knight endgame is to mentally take the knights off the board and evaluate the pawn endgame. If one side would be winning without the knights on the board, that means that the knight endgame is also winning. I am not sure how true this is, given that 3-versus-2 pawn endgames are winning but should be drawn with the addition of knights. However, if the defending side cannot enter a pawn endgame and must avoid trades at all costs, that's a huge advantage for the side that is pressing.

SLOW IMPROVEMENTS

GM Roman Hernandez Onna (2460)
Zequir Sula (2390)
26th Olympiad (9), Thessaloniki,
11.28.1984



WHITE TO MOVE

White is pushing for the win, with the an-

noying knight on e6 and soon a more active king. It looks like Black might be able to set up some kind of fortress, though — it's not so easy to break through. But the black knight is not only bad in this position; it has no path for improvement: All the squares are controlled by the pawns. Even if the black knight goes to c7, it cannot improve from that point.

33. Kf2

White does not mind a trade on e6.

33. ... Ne8

Black would love to trade the knights with 33. ... Nxe6, but the resulting position is lost. After 34. dxe6 Kg8 35. Qf5 the black queen is paralyzed by the e-pawn, and White can improve his position by fixing the queenside with a4-a5, pushing his h-pawn and slowly bringing up his king, after which Black will eventually run out of useful moves. This is also basically what happens in the game.

34. a5!

If we took the queens off the board, White would immediately be winning after putting the knight on d8, as the black knight won't be able to defend the crucial b7 weakness.

34. ... Kg8 35. Kf3 Qd7 36. Qg4+ Kh8

37. h4!

As Black cannot really do much, White is also fixing a weakness on h7. White can trade queens at any point, but first he improves his position as much as possible.

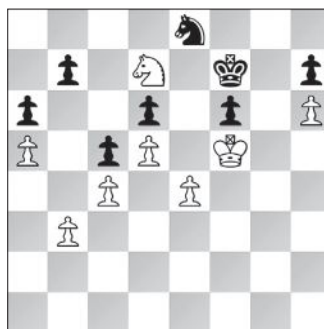
37. ... Qc8 38. h5 Qd7 39. h6 Qc8 40. Kf4

Qd7 41. Qh5 Kg8 42. Qg4+ Kh8 43. Nf8

Qf7 44. Nd7 Qg8 45. Qxg8+ Kxg8

Finally the queens come off the board. White has done as much as he could to improve his position and has completely dominated the black knight, which cannot move at all.

46. Kf5 Kf7



47. Nf8!!

White finds a way to infiltrate by giving away his knight and taking advantage of Black's dominated knight.

47. ... Kxf8 48. Ke6 Ng7+

Out of desperation, Black enters a pawn endgame. Unfortunately for him, White is winning with the more advanced pawn and the better king. If Black tries to keep the extra piece with 48. ... Nc7+ White picks up two pawns with 49. Kxd6 Ne8+ 50. Ke6 Nc7+ 51. Kxf6 and will march them down the board next, while Black's knight still cannot activate.

49. hxc7+ Kxc7 50. Kxd6 h5 51. Ke7 h4 52. d6

h3 53. d7 h2 54. d8=Q h1=Q 55. Qf8+ Kh7 56.

Qf7+ Kh8 57. Qxf6+ Kh7, and Black resigned.

After 58. Kf7, Black can stave off immediate mate with 58. ... Qh5+ 59. Kf8 Qg4, but then comes 60. Qf5+ forcing the exchange of queens with an easy win. ♠

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C. Martin Bradford	Bill Goichberg	Robert D. Messenger	Danny Rosa	Bill Witmer
John J. Brendel	Bernard Goodman	Andrew Metrick	Timothy M. Sawyer	Bernard Wojnowski
William H Brock	Calvin Halsey	Timur Milgrom	Michael Schulte	Edward Wycoff
Kate Canessa	Stephen David Hansley	David C. Miller	Edward Seid	Brian Yang
David E. Carter	Robert E. Hux	Michael A. Miller	Daryl Skinner	
Fabiano Caruana	In Memory of David Kaplan	Daniel Mohamed Mihid	Phillip Smith	
Carl Cohen	David Kochman	Parker Montgomery	Christopher P. Snell	
Bill N. Costaras	Vincent E. Kreutz, Jr.	Brian Mullis	Adam Christopher Snow	



US CHESS

MAKE YOUR MOVE

BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM VARIOUS OVER-the-board events played in June and July 2024.

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.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 2.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 3.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 4.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 5.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 6.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 7.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 8.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



BLACK TO MOVE

Position 1: DISTRACTION

Position 2: INTRUSIVE VISITORS

Position 3: CLEAR ACCESS

Position 4: KILLER BEES SWARM

Position 5: OPEN PATH

Position 6: FIND THE DOOR

Position 7: GO FOR THE THROAT

Position 8: NOW ADD STEAM

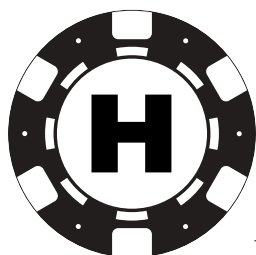
Position 9: STAB THE GUT

**Put It
All On** **BLACK**
(and White)



The vagaries of the Vegas Chess Festival

BY IM MARK HEIMANN



OPEFULS OF ALL kinds have long flocked to Las Vegas for their chance at making it big, and every June thousands of chess enthusiasts head to

Vegas to go all in on their hunt for prize money, rating points, title norms, and glory.

The National Open, held June 5-9 at the Flamingo Hotel and Resort, acts as the centerpiece of the Las Vegas International Chess Festival, which includes class sections, the U.S. Women's Open Championship, the Walter Browne Memorial blitz championship, simuls, chess camps — even a poker tournament for the chess players.

Two years ago, I revived my chess career at the National Open. I'd put the game on the back burner for most of my adult life, but I was lured back just one more time (so I thought) by the chance for a crazy crossover: simultaneously playing chess in the 2022 National Open and competing in the national powerlifting championship next door. I did just OK, but I realized once again how much I loved the thrill of high-stakes, high-level chess. Inspired by my experience there, I went on to earn three international master norms (and the title), make a GM norm, and gain 50 rating points over the next two years. I looked forward to returning to the National Open as a more seasoned competitor.

But Vegas is full of sharks — and not just card sharks. In the first round, I faced Rishabh Gokhale, rated just 2079 FIDE — almost

400 points below me. Easy win, right? Well, I did pull out the victory, but my opponent went on to score six points in his remaining eight games to earn an IM norm. This was supposed to be my easiest game, and I was facing an opponent capable of putting up such a performance! It was a relief to make it past the first shark of many.

Indeed, other sharks in the waters quickly began to reveal themselves. Fourteen-year-old IM Ryo Chen beat two grandmasters in a row, putting himself atop the tournament standings at the halfway mark and establishing himself as a leading contender for a grandmaster norm. He kick-started his hot streak with a nice attacking victory over GM Balaji Daggupati's solid Sveshnikov Sicilian:

SICILIAN DEFENSE, SVESHNIKOV VARIATION (B33)

IM Ryo Chen (2468)

GM Balaji Daggupati (2566)

National Open, Las Vegas (3), 06.06.2024

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Ndb5 d6 7. Bf4 e5 8. Bg5

After starting out as a Four Knights Sicilian, a variation in which GM Daggupati is an expert, the game has transposed into a Sveshnikov. Many Black players like to use this move order, as it cuts out several testing anti-Sveshnikov tries, including the Rossolimo Sicilian with 3. Bb5 and lines where White forgoes Bc1-g5 and plays an early Nc3-d5.

8. ... a6 9. Na3 b5 10. Nd5 Be7 11. Bxf6 Bxf6 12. c4 b4 13. Nc2 a5 14. g3 0-0 15. h4 g6 16. Bh3 Be6 17. Kf1 h5 18. Kg2 Bg7 19. Qe2 Nb8 20. Rag1 Na6



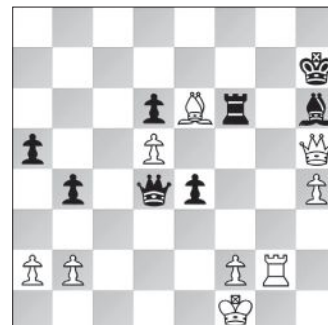
Until now, the game has been fairly balanced. White's last move, placing his rook opposite the black king, has just signaled his intention to rip open the kingside. The game continuation is playable, but 20. ... Nd7, keeping the knight a little more central, was a little safer and is preferred by the engine.

21. g4 hxg4 22. Bxg4 f5 23. exf5 gxf5 24. Bh5 Nc7 25. Nce3 f4 26. Nxc7 Qxc7 27. Nd5 Qa7 28. Kf1 Bxd5 29. cxd5 f3



With White's light-square play looking scary, Black decides to sacrifice a pawn to open some lines of his own. However, by activating the queenside pieces with 29. ... Qd4 or 29. ... Rac8, Black could still maintain approximate equality.

30. Bxf3 Rf4 31. Bg4 Kh7 32. Be6 Bh6 33. Rg4 Raf8 34. Rxf4 Rxf4 35. Rg1 Qd4 36. Rg2 e4 37. Qh5 Rf6??



After several moves of accurate defense, Black finally gives White a chance. The queen on d4 is poorly placed to defend the vulnerable black king. Now the youngster pounces.

38. Bf5+ Kh8 39. Rg5!

White is now winning, as the rook can come to the h-file to deliver a decisive blow if needed. Black is helpless.

39. ... e3 40. Qe8+ Rf8 41. Qg6 Qd1+ 42. Kg2 Qxd5+ 43. f3, Black resigned.

All it took was one mistake on the part of the grandmaster for Ryo to come crashing through!

Another talented youngster, Eric Li, began his hot streak in the second round with an upset of one of the tournament's top seeds, Singapore's GM Jingyao Tin, before taking down a strong IM and drawing a GM.

Left: GM Vasif Durarbayli is all smiles as he claims his reward for winning the 2024 National Open: the Edmondson Cup.

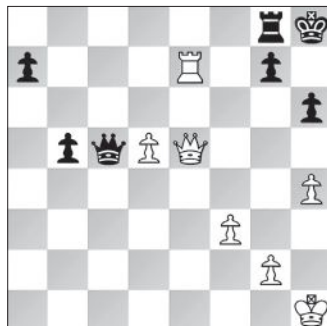
Some of us, however, found ourselves on the other side of the upsets. By just the second round, my own tournament looked headed straight for disaster:

A TIME-PRESSURE 180

IM Mark Heimann (2521)

FM Rose Atwell (2330)

National Open, Las Vegas (2),
06.06. 2024



WHITE TO MOVE

49. Re6

After some ups and downs over the preceding hours of play, I have managed to get a winning position against my lower-rated opponent: The powerful d-pawn and threats to Black's king should be too much to defend. However, Black defends stubbornly against my threats and has passed pawns of her own ...

49. ... Kh7 50. Qe4+ Kh8 51. d6

Perhaps it would have been worthwhile to repeat moves with 51. Qe5, gaining a minute on the clock thanks to the 30-second increment per move. Instead, the lack of time would go on to cost me.

51. ... b4 52. d7 Qc1+ 53. Kh2

Perhaps 53. Qe1 is simpler, intending 54. Re8 to usher in the d-pawn with or without a trade of queens.

53. ... b3 54. Qe5 b2 55. Re8??

Throwing away the win. My original intention was 55. f4, cutting off Black's defense of the h-pawn. Then I noticed that after 55. ... b1=Q, 56. Rxh6+ is not checkmate as Black's newly promoted queen can block with 56. ... Qh7. Of course, this only prolongs checkmate for one more move (57. Rxh7+ Kxh7 58. Qh5 mate), but in time trouble I panicked.

55. ... b1=Q 56. d8=Q??

Now I throw away the other half-point. I was still trying to bamboozle my opponent with the multitude of heavy pieces, but I was the one who lost his way.

56. ... Qh1+ 57. Kg3 Qg6+

Oops! The basic principle "Look for checks" applies here, and I had simply missed this move.

58. Kf4 Qh2+, White resigned.

Black will follow up with 59. ... Qxe5+ and

60. ... Rxd8, winning both my queens for the price of one. A complete 180-degree turnaround in a matter of minutes!

"Bad beats" are inevitable in chess as in poker: You can have a strong hand (being the stronger player, having the stronger position) and still end up losing. In many ways, the test of a successful competitor is what happens next.

The eventual tournament winner, Azerbaijani GM Vasif Durarbayli, was nicked for a draw in the second round by a "mere" IM and went on to reel off five straight wins, basically wrapping up the tournament before the final day. But it's easy in both chess and poker to "go on tilt" and make progressively more unhinged and costly decisions.

Many players, after one bad move, collapse with another (as I did against Rose, blundering into a loss after blundering away the win). And after one bad game, like a gambler digging themselves deep into a hole of debt, it is all too easy to spiral in future games, tanking the tournament and bleeding rating points. Indeed, holding a junk hand of a tournament less than a quarter of the way through, I was already thinking about cutting my losses. Was it time to fold?

I kept going, but I viewed myself as simply doing damage control now. My main goal, a grandmaster norm, seemed impossible to reach, so I set a much more modest goal: to simply regain the rating points I had lost. After all, in order to become a grandmaster

THE 2024 U.S. WOMEN'S OPEN

BY JOHN HARTMANN

THE U.S. WOMEN'S OPEN is one of the biggest women-only events on the American chess calendar.

The 2024 edition of the Women's Open drew 65 players to the Flamingo Hotel & Casino to try their luck, and when the dust settled, there was a two-way tie for first place. WCM Avery Yu and WFM Olivia Smith each finished with 5/6, with Yu (seen in the two bottom photos to the right) taking home the trophy on tiebreaks. Six FIDE titled players competed in the event.

For results from the Women's Open, visit:
www.vegaschessfestival.com/live/results/?section=Womens&YEAR=2024.



I also need to increase my rating, so this would be a productive step (plus practice in resilience).

I achieved my initial goal almost immediately, winning my third and fourth games against two international masters. But in the fifth round, facing GM Jingyao Tin on Friday night, I simply messed up the black side of an ambitious opening and was lost after 15 moves.

Saturday morning, needing to clear my head, I stuck to my usual mid-tournament routine: I went to the gym. Although the Flamingo Hotel had its own fitness center, sometimes nothing beats going to a full gym with barbells and barbell-slanging enthusiasts.

I realized it was mathematically possible for me to score a grandmaster norm, but I would likely need to win all my remaining games, including at least two against grandmasters. Possible? Technically. Likely? Absolutely not. Where there's life there's hope, but where there's an unrealistic expectation, there's crippling pressure leading to rash decisions. Winning four games in a row was too tall an order to contemplate, so I decided I'd focus on winning one game, four times.

I was expecting the Berlin Defense in round six and I broke it down in the last game to finish of the entire round. That night, I had another difficult but winnable matchup with Black against another seasoned international master. I was happy to see him essay the King's Indian Attack, which would give us a strategically complex position where both of us could play for a win. Indeed, I prevailed, putting me in positive rating territory for the first time since the second round and giving me a slim shot at some very high stakes going into the final day. But there was a narrow and terrifying path to the GM norm: I would need to play two sufficiently strong grandmasters on the last day and win both games.

I wasn't the only one with high hopes for that final day. GM Durarbayli had begun to run away with the tournament, beating last year's champion, GM Illia Nyzhnyk, in round seven and entering Sunday a point and a half ahead of the field.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, SCHEVENINGEN VARIATION (B84)

GM Vasif Durarbayli (2688)

GM Illia Nyzhnyk (2638)

National Open Las Vegas (7), 06.08.2024

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

5. Nc3 a6 6. Be2 e6

While many players opt to claim some central territory with 6. ... e5, Nyzhnyk chooses a more flexible Scheveningen setup, possibly signaling his intention to seek a complex game.

7. Be3 Qc7 8. Qd2 Nc6 9. 0-0-0 Be7 10. f4 Nxd4 11. Qxd4 b5?!

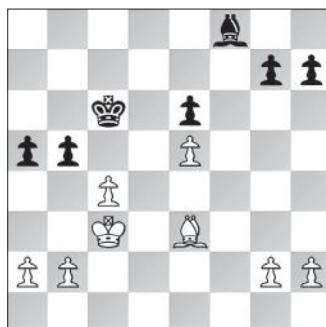


It was safer to castle. Now White crashes through in the center.

12. e5 dxe5 13. Qxe5 Qxe5 14. fxe5 Nd5

Already Nyzhnyk has to give up a pawn and try to hold the resulting endgame. It's a sad necessity, but 14. ... Nd7 can be met by 15. Bf3 Rb8 16. Ba7, trapping the rook.

15. Nxd5 exd5 16. Bf3 Be6 17. Bxd5 0-0-0 18. Bxe6+ fxe6 19. Rhf1 Rhf8 20. Rxd8+ Kxd8 21. Rxf8+ Bxf8 22. Kd2 Kd7 23. c4 Kc6 24. Kc3 a5?



Until this move, it wasn't clear how White's king could penetrate. Now, however, Durarbayli uses tactical means to secure an ideal outpost.

25. cxb5+ Kxb5 26. a4+, Black resigned.

After 26. ... Kxa4 the king is entombed and there's no defense to 27. Kc4 followed by 28. Bc1 and 29. b3 mate. If Black retreats the king, White's king can help create a queenside passed pawn to hold Black down while the king cleans out Black's kingside pawns. Stockfish needs time to realize the strength

IM Ryo Chen



GM Balaji Daggupati



FM Rose Atwell





IM Mark Heimann

of White's position, but Nyzhnyk clearly envisioned better ways to spend a Saturday night in Vegas than mounting a hopeless defense.

But thousands of dollars in prizes were still up for grabs, and a score of 7/9 (which I would obtain if I beat the grandmasters I needed to for the norm) would likely claim a sizable portion of that pot. This also meant that the GMs I faced would have considerable financial motivation to do their best against me. Meanwhile, several live hands remained in the race for GM norms: in addition to Chen and your author, IMs Joseph Levine and Sandeep Sethuraman, along with FMs Grayson Rorrer and Eric Li (the latter two of whom were also vying for IM norms).

Sunday morning I got a quick pump in at the hotel fitness center before facing GM Varuzhan Akobian, a veteran commentator and coach of the Saint Louis University chess club. Playing white in this go-big-or-go-home affair, I went all in:

FRENCH DEFENSE, STEINITZ VARIATION (C11)

IM Mark Heimann (2521)

GM Varuzhan Akobian (2627)

National Open, Las Vegas (8), 06.09.2024

1. e4 e6

This was not a surprise, as Akobian is a well-known expert in the French Defense. I figured there would be no way to catch such a veteran completely outside his comfort zone, so in a must-win situation I went for the sharpest lines possible.

2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. e5 Nfd7 5. f4 c5 6. Nf3 Nc6 7. Be3 a6 8. Ne2

The most common continuation is probably 8. Qd2, inviting Black to eventually capture on d4 with a Sicilian-like pawn structure. Instead, I went with this, which tangles up my pieces but prepares to support my center with c2-c3.

8. ... b5 9. h4 Qa5+ 10. c3 b4



The battle lines are drawn. White has cemented a large center and attacking potential on the kingside. Black will open lines on the queenside, where he has extra space and I will have weak pawns on a2 and c3.

11. Kf2 bxc3 12. bxc3 Nb6 13. Nd2 c4 14. g4

It might have been more prudent to play the prophylactic 14. a4, taking the a3- and a4-squares from Black's pieces and delaying the queenside invasion. But I was seeing red.

14. ... h5 15. gxh5 Rxh5 16. Nf3 Na4 17. Bd2 Rb8 18. Kg1 Bd7 19. Bh3 Rh8 20. Rh2 Ba3 21. Qe1 Ne7 22. Bc1?



Here I should have stuck to my guns and continued throwing the kitchen sink at Black. The engine wants the pawn sacrifice 22. f5!? clearing the f4 square for my knight. The problem with my move is that although I exchange off one of Black's attackers, the remaining pieces are free to quickly invade along the b-file (in particular, the queen's path has now been opened via the a-file).

22. ... Bxc1 23. Rxc1 Nb2 24. Rb1 Rb5 25. Nc1 Na4 26. Rxb5 axb5

Skillful play by Akobian, as I have now been forced into a positional concession. Black now has a superior pawn structure, as the new b-pawn can be used to chip at my center and create a passed c-pawn with an eventual ... b5-b4.

27. Ne2 Nb2 28. Nc1

I offered a repetition, though I didn't expect Akobian to take it. If he had for some reason, I wasn't sure whether I would try for heroics and keep the game and my GM norm chances alive or take the gift of escaping a strategically worse position.

28. ... Qa3 29. Bg4 Na4 30. Rc2 Nc6 31. h5 b4

Black now engineers a positionally desirable pawn break and crumbles my queenside. With Black's powerful protected passed



GM Illia Nyzhnyk



GM Varuzhan Akobian

c-pawn and my weak a2-pawn, I knew that virtually all endgames would be losing for me. It was do or die: I had to checkmate him.

32. cxb4 Qxb4 33. Qe3 Qb1 34. Rf2 Kd8?



Black has built a sizeable advantage by simply utilizing his assets, pushing his passed pawn down my throat with 34. ... c3! However, Var's clock was starting to run down, making my attack look formidable, and by taking the time to run his king away Black lets me already achieve approximate equality.

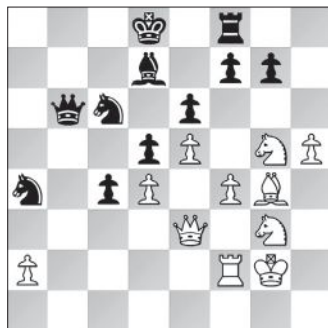
35. Ng5 Rf8 36. Kg2 Qb6 37. Ne2 Nb2 38. Nc1 Na4 39. Ne2

A bluff. I was no longer thinking about a draw by repetition, but I wanted to make him think I was still uncomfortable with my position — and burn time considering whether there was a good way to deviate.

39. ... Ne7

The time Var took to consider the repetition somewhat canceled out the minute or so he gained from the 30-second increment per move. In the end, the veteran grandmaster boldly declined it. With considerable prize money at stake, he was looking to cash in his substantial positional chips.

40. Ng3 Nc6??



But in time pressure, Var collapses, letting my attack crash through.

41. f5!

I can let my center fall, as the kingside is blowing open. I sensed victory here; Var had seconds left on the clock to my several minutes. The engine says this is winning, but even if it didn't, I thought it would be almost impossible to defend in practice with so little time.

41. ... exf5 42. Bxf5 Qxd4 43. Qa3

Perhaps Var had missed this move or my next.

43. ... Nc5 44. Nf3

Forcing the queen away from the defense of the knight and winning material. Meanwhile Black's king remains weak.

44. ... Qd1 45. Qxc5 Re8 46. Bxd7 Kxd7 47. Qd6+, Black resigned.

This time I "sucked out" — I had the weaker hand, in terms of my chess strength as well as my position — but luck went my way and I ultimately came home with the victory.



GOING IRL IN LV

BY KAMRYN HELLMAN

THE 2024 NATIONAL OPEN WAS the biggest chess tournament I'd ever attended, my first time flying to play chess, and my first time livestreaming my over-the-board games!

I arrived a few days before the tournament started and was glad for the extra time to be a tourist trudging through the heat wave. I had to work my regular non-chess job from the hotel room, but still had plenty of time to walk through the casinos and stores along the Strip.

And then the chess began. The energy in the enormous playing hall, lined with rows of event-provided sets, was like nothing I'd experienced before. My tournament experience was a bit unusual: Although I obviously wanted to play my best, my concern was not so much with my performance but my livestream.

Once the tournament began, I quickly realized I had nothing to worry about. The event organizers made things easy by providing me with a DGT board and an assigned seat "behind the ropes" at the front of the room. This was next to tables filled with grandmasters, which was pretty exciting.

Plus, my stream was in the capable hands of my commentators, Ian Harris and Omar Mills, with a couple appearances from FM Nate Solon. I had a camera aimed at my table so viewers could see what a big "irl" chess tournament looked like, and all my opponents were great sports in agreeing to be on camera.

Between the long classical games (and mine seemed particularly long — I was often one of the last few to finish

up), I got to meet up with other content creators. It was crazy to learn that those faces on the screen are real people! They were all cool, down-to-earth chess lovers. I'm a huge introvert, but at this event, I felt right at home in every conversation.

My chess itself wasn't anything to write home about. I scored 3/7, with two wins, two draws, and three losses. I played "up" in all my games, which was frankly a welcome change from my typical Midwest tournament, where the player pool is so small that I often play a 900 and a 1900 in the same event.

After some of my games, I would have preferred to crawl into a hole and never think about chess again, but I faced the camera and talked to my commentators and viewers. Resilience became a key theme.

No matter the results, I hope my viewers saw the importance of fighting on. In amateur chess, anything can happen, so it's worth making things as difficult as possible for your opponent.

Thank you to the Las Vegas organizers for putting on a fabulous tournament — with more than 1,000 players of all levels, an excellent fair play team, a great location, and lots of fun side events, I'd highly recommend it!

For more from Kamryn on the National Open, please visit her YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/@kamrynheidi



Put it all on black, I said, as I went into my final game playing that color against Indian GM Rahul Peddi. Luck was in my favor, I hoped, as Peddi's rating was just high enough to get me a GM norm with a win.

Unfortunately, while Durarbayli secured the overall tournament victory with an easy final draw to finish at 7½/9, in my game the proven grandmaster prevailed. Peddi's well-prepared response to my Nimzo-Indian brought him the victory, and with it a tie for second place and a little over \$3,000 for his efforts.

Chen, the only other player in contention for a GM norm in the final round, also needed to win, but fell to grandmaster Armen Mikaelyan in a topsy-turvy game:

RUY LOPEZ (C70)

IM Ryo Chen (2468)

GM Arman Mikaelyan (2624)

National Open Las Vegas (9), 06.09.2024

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nge7

With thousands of dollars at stake, GM Mikaelyan is also playing for a win, choosing an offbeat sideline rather than the more solid main line with 4. ... Nf6. Needing a win for his grandmaster norm, Chen must have been glad to see his opponent taking risks early on.

5. c3 Ng6 6. h4 d5 7. h5 Nf4 8. d4 Nxc3+

(see diagram top of next column)

Already the position has become wildly complicated. Objectively White has a significant advantage, as Black will have to cede significant central control to rescue the

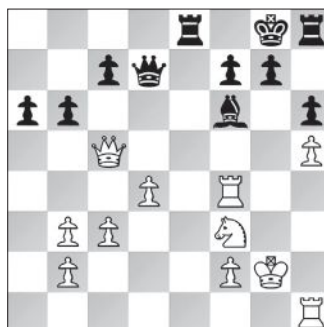


far-flung knight. On the other hand, Black is a pawn up and White can no longer castle, so both sides have chances.

9. Kf1 Bg4 10. Qd3 Nf4 11. Bxf4 exf4 12. Nbd2 Be7 13. Re1 Kf8 14. Bb3 dxe4 15. Nxe4 Qd7 16. Neg5 Bxf3 17. Nxf3 Bf6 18. Re4

White prepares to regain the pawn and enjoy a strong center and pressure on Black's kingside. The engine gives White a sizable advantage here, but it is not easy to cash in.

18. ... Na5 19. Rxf4 Nxb3 20. axb3 h6 21. Kg2 Re8 22. Qc4 Kg8 23. Qc5 b6



Over the last several moves, Mikaelyan has regained equality with accurate defense.

24. Qf5 Qxf5 25. Rxf5 Re2 26. Rb1 Kh7 27. Kf1 Rhe8 28. Ne5 Rc2 29. Nd3 Rd2 30. Rf3?!

It is natural to try to keep the knight on d3, where it defends b2 and f2. However, to do so White has left the h-pawn vulnerable and Mikaelyan takes the chance to apply some pressure for the first time in the game.

30. ... Re4 31. Re1 Rh4 32. Re8 Rh1+ 33. Kg2 Rdd1 34. Rfe3 Rxb5 35. Rc8 Rg5+?



The computer gives Black a near-winning advantage after 35. ... Bg5, but it is hard to choose between several reasonable-looking moves over the board. Now Chen regains equality.

36. Kf3 c5 37. dxc5 bxc5 38. Nxc5 Rf5+ 39. Ke2 Rb1 40. Nd3 h5 41. Rc7 Bg5 42. Rf3 Rxf3 43. Kxf3 f5 44. Rc5 Rd1 45. Rd5 h4 46. Nf4 Rb1 47. Rxf5 Bxf4 48. Rxf4 g5 49. Rf7+ Kg6 50. Ra7 Kh5 51. Rxa6 Rxb2 52. b4 g4+ 53. Ke3 h3 54. Ra8 Rc2 55. Rh8+ Kg5 56. Rg8+ Kf5 57. Rf8+ Ke6 58. Rh8 Rxc3+ 59. Kf4 Rc4+ 60. Kg3 Rxb4 61. f3, draw.

The pawns are liquidated. Chen did a nice defensive job in the endgame: Even after it became clear he would not achieve the win he needed for a GM norm, he kept his head and didn't let the game completely turn against him — not easy to do against a grandmaster doing anything possible to net some serious prize money!

However, a few IM norms were earned, including by Eric Li and my first-round opponent, Rishabh Gokhale. Meanwhile, IM Joseph Levine fell short of a GM norm after a Sunday-morning draw, but did win a clutch last round game to earn the \$2,400 prize as the top player rated under 2400.

Luck may not be written into the rules of chess, but we're to a degree beholden to it. Perhaps we enjoy the fact that we play a game that is too deep and rich to lie completely in our control — and even when we walk away with no windfall, we can't help but be eager to ante up for the next time. ♠

2024 NATIONAL OPEN CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP AT A GLANCE

JUNE 5-9, 2024 | LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

OPEN: 1st: GM Vasif Durarbayli, 7½/9. 2nd-4th: GMs Illia Nyzhnyk, Daniel Fernandez, Rahul Srivatsav Peddi, 7. 4th-7th: GMs Jianchou Zhou, Emilio Cordova Daza, Neuris Delgado, IM Joseph Levine, 6½. **U2300:** Esther Jou, 6½/7. **U2100:** Eric Hon, Dane Zagar, David Paez, Tigran Agh Petrosyan, 6. **U1900:** Mark Johnson, Kenneth Sallings, 6½/7. **U1700:** Mongolin Davaadorj, Krishna Rajagopalan, 6½/7. **U1500:** Paul McCaffrey, 6½/7. **U1250:** Carson Ziccardi, 6½/7. **WOMEN'S OPEN:** WCM Avery Yu, WFM Olivia Smith, 5/5. **WALTER BROWNE BLITZ, OPEN:** GM Robby Kevlishvili, 10½/12. **WALTER BROWNE BLITZ, U1900:** Dallas Wayne Elkins, Gavin Tjipto, 10½/12.

For more information and results, visit: www.vegaschessfestival.com/live/results/

AMBASSADORS ABROAD

The 2024 American Continental Championship

BY IM MAXIMILLIAN LU

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EDELLIN, COLOMBIA, is always loud, boisterous, and colorful, with no shortage of things to do. But even with a casino next to the playing venue and at

least four or five nightclubs and bars within two blocks, chess emerged as the primary attraction during the American Continental Championship, held May 24-June 2.

The opening ceremonies featured simulms by legends Veselin Topalov and Alexei Shirov, as well as regional stars Brazilian GM Alexandr Fier and Argentinian WGM Candela Francisco. Perhaps the most memorable moment was an official lighting of the Olympic Torch commemorating FIDE's centennial — and where else to hold the ceremony than at Medellin's Parque de Ajedrez (Chess Park)? The public square, nestled in the Olympic-sized training complex for every sport imaginable located in the Estadio (Stadium) neighborhood, serves as a reminder that Colombians really do consider chess a sport.

The ceremony began four hours late, and as I patiently waited, soaking in the atmosphere and casually conversing with fans milling about, I was surprised by how many locals asked me for a photo and to autograph their chessboard, including a group of hearing-impaired chess aficionados who signaled their interest in a photo through sign

language. So many of them assumed I had to be a grandmaster! It was heartwarming to see such widespread respect for chess.

That respect was rewarded when Colombia's own GM Roberto García Pantoja took clear first with 9½/11, winning \$8,000 in prize money and a spot in the next World Cup.

Ten players, including four Americans, tied for second with 8½ points — last year's World Cup qualifiers GM Fidel Corrales Jimenez and IM Kirk Ghazarian, as well as GM Jeffery Xiong and IM Justin Wang. Xiong and Ghazarian secured the second and fourth qualification spots, respectively, on tiebreaks.

I finished a half-point behind with 8/11, along with fellow Americans GM Alexander Shabalov and IM Justus Williams — a respectable score, but modest sounding, given some of the chaotic games I played. As early as round two, I found myself thoroughly perplexed and mildly infuriated at how I'd essentially won the game twice only to throw it both times.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E35)

Juan Esteban Martinez Serna (2004)

IM Maximillian Lu (2372)

XVII American Continental Ch (2),

05.25.2024

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. Nc3 Bb4 5. cxd5 exd5 6. Qc2!

A rare choice, perhaps because it's unclear

this early in the opening whether the c2-square is the best spot for the queen.

6. ... c5 7. Bg5 h6 8. Bxf6 Qxf6 9. e3 0-0
10. Be2 Nc6 11. 0-0 Bf5 12. Bd3



12. ... Be6

Opting to keep the bishop pair and hoping to take advantage of the slightly exposed White bishop on d3.

Black could also have tried to build a pawn wedge on the queenside with 12. ... Bxd3. After 13. Qxd3 c4 14. Qc2 Rfd8 15. a3 Bxc3 16. bxc3 (16. Qxc3 b5 17. b3 Rac8 18. bxc4 dxc4! and White's center is less mobile than Black's queenside mass) 16. ... b5 Black has more space.

13. dxc5 Bxc5 14. Nb5 Bb6 15. Qc3 Qe7
16. Nbd4 Rac8 17. Qb3 Na5 18. Qb5 Nc4
19. Rac1 Rc5 20. Qb3 Rfc8 21. Rc2 Bd7

Looking to use the awkward positioning

of White's queen while also preserving the bishop pair.

22. h3?!

A sign that White lacks a clear plan.

22. ... Qe8



White's queen is now threatened with a skewer and a potential trap.

23. Bf5?

White's only move to maintain the balance was 23. Re2. After 23. ... Ba4 24. Qb4 a5 (if 24. ... Ba5 25. Qxb7 R8c7 26. Qa6 and White's queen barely escapes) 25. Qe1 White hangs on, though Black is for choice.

23. ... Ba4 24. Qb4 Ba5 25. Qxb7 R8c7 26. Qa6 Bxc2 27. Nxc2



I missed an opportunity to win White's queen here. Can you find it?

27. ... Nxb2?

A natural move, but after 27. ... Rb5! White's queen is trapped for good as ... Rb5-b6 is unstoppable.

28. Rb1 Bc3 29. Ncd4 g6 30. Bd3 Ra5?!

The beginning of a misguided plan born of complacency and carelessness.

Left: IM Kirk Ghazarian meets GM Veselin Topalov. Below: the four World Cup qualifiers (Ghazarian, Henriques Villagra, García Pantoja, Xiong).

31. Qd6 Rd7?

Sloppy. I should have forced a queen trade with 31. ... Qd7, followed by winning White's a-pawn with an easy conversion to follow.

32. Qc6 Bxd4 33. Bb5

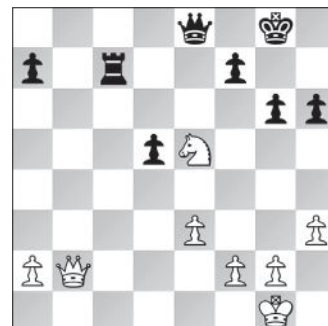
33. Bf5! would have been even more awkward. After 33. ... gxf5 34. Nxd4 (or 34. exd4 Nc4 35. Re1 Qd8 36. Qxh6) 34. ... Rxa2 35. Qxh6 White would have an annoying and persistent attack.

33. ... Rxb5 34. Qxb5 Bf6 35. Rxb2 Bxb2

36. Qxb2

The complications are over and now it should be a simple conversion ... or so I thought.

36. ... Rc7 37. Ne5



37. ... Re7??

My brain went on autopilot and I missed White's idea completely! I hadn't faced any threats against my king the whole game, but as soon as I hit the clock, I spotted White's obvious (and only) idea. I should have kept it simple with 37. ... h5.

38. Ng4 Re6

Unfortunately forced. Three and a half hours of work for nothing!

39. Nf6+ Rxf6 40. Qxf6 Qe4 41. Qd8+ Kg7 42. Qa5 Qb1+ 43. Kh2 Qb8+ 44. g3 Qb2 45. Kg2 Qb7 46. Kh2 h5 47. Qc3+ Kg8 48. Qd4 a5 49. h4 Qb5 50. Kg2 a4

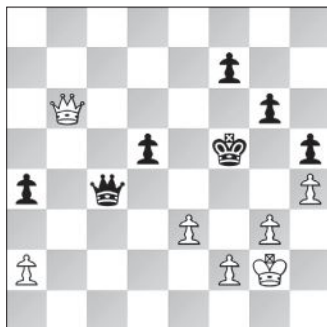
Gaining queenside space. You never know when an advanced a-pawn could come in handy!

51. Qe5 Qc4 52. Qe8+ Kg7 53. Qe5+ Kg8 54. Qe8+ Kg7 55. Qe5+ Kf8 56. Qb8+ Ke7 57. Qa7+ Ke6 58. Qb6+ Kf5

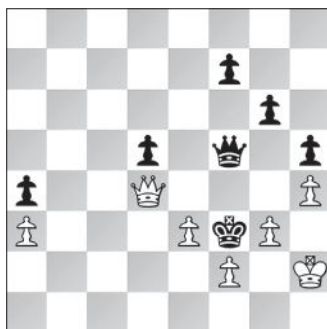
(see diagram top of next column)

Suddenly, White has run out of checks and his queen is decentralized. The light squares, on the other hand, look ripe for a king invasion!





59. a3 Qe4+ 60. Kh2 Qc2 61. Kg2 Qe4+ 62. Kh2 Qf3 63. Qb2 Kg4 64. Qd4+ Kf5 65. Qb2 Kg4 66. Qd4+ Qe4 67. Qf6 Qf5 68. Qd4+ Kf3



My queen slowly chaperones the king into White's territory. Incredibly, White already only has one move to save the position.

69. Qd2?

After 69. Qxa4! Kxf2 70. Qd4 the a-pawn generates enough counterplay, though it looks like White's position is hanging by a thread.

69. ... Qe4

Putting White in his first *zugzwang*.

70. Qb2

If 70. Kg1 Black wins with 70. ... Qb1+ 71. Kh2 f5! 72. Qxd5+ Kxf2 73. Qd2+ Kf3 and the king hides among the enemy pawns.

70. ... f5

Preventing any checks on the f6-square.

71. Qd2 Qc4?

I could have put White in *zugzwang* again with 71. ... Qb1!.

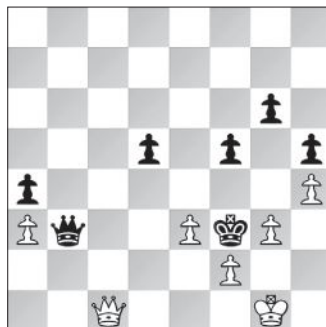
72. Kg1 Qb3 73. Qc1

(see diagram top of next column)

73. ... Qd3?

I thought it was another *zugzwang*, but I missed a resource.

The key move was 73. ... Ke2!. The king



POSITION AFTER 73. Qc1

infiltrates deep into the White camp, threatening ... Qd3-b3-d1+ followed by coming over to the queenside to win the a-pawn. It's *zugzwang* again after 74. Kg2 Qd3, and Black wins with 75. Qf1+ Kd2 76. Qa1 Kc2.

74. Qa1 Qe2?

Missing 74. ... Ke2 again!

75. Qf1

Forced.

75. ... Qxf1+ 76. Kxf1 f4 77. gxf4 d4

I can still blunder with 77. ... Kg4?? 78. Kg2 Kxh4 79. f3 and now Black is in *zugzwang*!

78. exd4 Ke4 79. Ke2 Kxd4 80. f3 Kc3 81. Ke3 Kb3 82. Kd3 Kxa3 83. Kc3 Ka2 84. Kc2 Ka1 85. Kc1 Ka2 86. Kc2 a3 87. f5!

This is what I missed. White wastes a tempo to regain the opposition and force a self-stalemate.

87. ... gxf5 88. f4 Ka1 89. Kc1 a2 90. Kc2, stalemate.

Putting the frustration behind me, I shifted my attention to interviewing IM Diego Flores from Peru (in Spanish) as part of a project for a more general (non-chess playing) audience. I first played Diego 11 years ago at the 2013 U8 World Youth Championships in Dubai. Since then, we've faced off several times, and while I'd become familiar with Diego over the years, I hadn't known too much about his experience with chess and his perspective on the chess scene in Peru. An aspiring chess professional, Diego shared his hopes for greater coordinated efforts among players to improve conditions, especially anti-cheating measures.

Back at the board, I rebounded with two wins to move to 3½/4, though a heavy sigh was in order when I saw my next round opponent: GM Fidel Corrales. Fidel is not only a great friend but one of last year's World Cup qualifiers. (In this round, six of the top eight

Americans were paired against each other — what were the odds?) Nonetheless, I was determined to redeem myself from my lousy second round. I knew I'd be in for a fight, but I wasn't prepared for what unfolded.

GRÜNFELD DEFENSE, NEO-GRÜNFELD VARIATION (D79)

IM Maximillian Lu (2372)

GM Fidel Corrales Jimenez (2545)

XVII American Continental Ch (5), 05.27.2024

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 c6 4. Bg2 d5 5. cxd5 cxd5 6. Nf3 Bg7 7. Ne5 0-0 8. Nc3 e6 9. 0-0 Nfd7 10. f4 Nc6 11. Be3 Ndx5?!

Somewhat of a concession, allowing me to solidify the center and gain space without consequence.



12. fxe5

The stronger recapture was 12. dxe5!, opening up White's two bishops to pressure Black's queenside. After 12. ... d4 13. Bxc6 dxc3 14. Bf3 cxb2 15. Rb1 f6 16. Rxb2 Qxd1 17. Rxd1 fxe5 18. fxe5 Bxe5 19. Rbd2 White's two bishops and doubled rooks dominate Black's position, leaving him with few useful moves.

12. ... Bd7 13. Qd2 f6 14. exf6 Bxf6 15. Rf2?!

The best plan was probably 15. Bf2, preparing the e2-e4 pawn break and taking advantage of Black's comparatively passive bishops.

15. ... Bg7 16. Raf1 Qe7 17. Bh3?!

I still hadn't found the e2-e4 idea.

17. ... Rxf2 18. Bxf2

Finally discovering the e2-e4 break, but I've wasted several tempi, so Black is now much better positioned to stymie the break and generate his own activity.

18. ... Rd8 19. Rd1 Be8



GM Fidel Corrales Jimenez

Removing the bishop from the contested h3-c8 diagonal. The h3-bishop is now awkwardly out of place, and my wasting the last five moves has allowed Black to centralize all his pieces.

20. Bg2 g5 21. Re1 Bg6 22. g4 h6 23. h3 Kh8 24. Kh1 e5 25. e3



An admission of defeat. I was hoping to have this position with colors reversed. It was possible to play 25. Nxd5 Qf7 26. e4 exd4 27. b4 but Black would be very comfortable with an advanced d-pawn, an outpost on e5, and generally more active pieces.

25. ... e4

The most principled approach, grabbing space and blunting both my bishops.

26. Bg3?!

It was probably more prudent to play 26. a3 to prevent Black's knight from infiltrating. I was worried about 26. ... Na5 27. Bg3 Nc4 but I can just ignore it with 28. Qc1.

26. ... Nb4 27. Rc1 Nd3 28. Rc2 h5 29. gxh5 Bxh5 30. Nd1 Qe6 31. Nf2 Nxf2+ 32. Qxf2 Rf8 33. Qg1 Bf3 34. Kh2 g4 35. Rc7 Qh6

Up to this point, Fidel's play has been constricting and precise.

36. Bf1?



After suffering (but maintaining a rough balance) for some time, I finally cracked and made this natural-looking mistake. Can you find Black's best move?

36. ... Rf5

Low on time, Fidel misses his opportunity, allowing me some breathing room. He's winning after the beautiful tempo-gaining deflection tactic 36. ... Be2!! 37. Bg2 gxh3 38. Bxh3 (38. Bh1 Rf1 traps the queen) 38. ... Bf1! when there is no defense to 39. ... Qxh3+.

37. Bf4 Qh5

Black had to try 37. ... Rxf4 38. exf4 Kg8 when White is almost in zugzwang and will have to give back the Exchange.

38. Qg3

Now all is safe again and I'm on the brink of regaining the initiative.

38. ... Qg6?

One wasted tempo and now Black is in trouble!

39. Qh4+ Rh5 40. Qd8+ Kh7



41. Be5?

Pursuing exchanges too hastily. I was eager to liquidate after being under pressure for so long, but I should've followed the classic Soviet maxim "Do not rush." I could have stopped Black's attack for good with 41. h4! leaving him with no moves. Kh2-g3 is next and White will be the only one with an attack.

41. ... Rxe5 42. dxe5 g3+ 43. Kg1 Qh6 44. Rxc7+

An unfortunate necessity. If 44. Rc3 Bxe5 and only Black can win.

44. ... Kxc7 45. Qe7+ Kg6 46. Qf6+?

The wrong check! The primary goal should've been to prevent Black's king from walking up the board, even at the cost of a pawn.

Black's king can't escape the checks after 46. Qe8+ Kf5 47. Qf7+ Kxe5 48. Qe7+ Qe6 49. Qc7+ Qd6 50. Qg7+.

46. ... Kh5 47. Qf5+ Kh4 48. Qf6+ Qg5?

The wrong plan. He could have traded into a winning endgame with 48. ... Qxf6. After



IM Maximillian Lu



GM Jeffery Xiong

49. exf6 Bh5 50. Be2 Bf7 51. Bg4 d4 52. exd4 e3 the two passed pawns will overwhelm my king and bishop.

49. Bb5



49. ... d4??

The right idea, but in the wrong position and based on a simple oversight. The pawn break is powerful after trading queens but loses potency with Black's queen still pinned. Black is still winning after 49. ... Qxf6 50. exf6 Bh5 51. Bd7 d4.

50. exd4 a6 51. Bc4 b5 52. Bd5

The move Fidel missed. Now, all Black's ... e4-e3 ideas are put to rest and I simply have two connected passed pawns.

52. ... b4 53. Bc6 a5 54. a3 bxa3 55. bxa3 a4 56. Bd5 g2 57. Bc6

Putting Black in *zugzwang*.

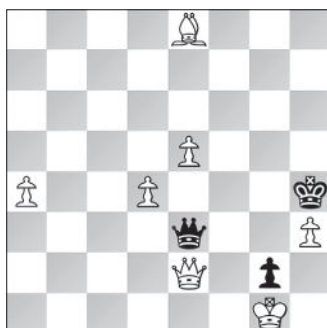
57. ... Kh5 58. Be8+

It would have been much easier after 58. Qh8+ Qh6 (58. ... Kg6 59. Be8+ Kf5 60. Qf8+ Ke6 61. Qf7 mate) 59. Qxh6+ Kxh6 60. e6 and the e-pawn is unstoppable.

58. ... Kh4 59. Bc6 Kh5 60. Be8+ Kh4 61. Bxa4 Kh5

Now 61. ... Qxf6 is too late: 62. exf6 e3 63. Bb5 Bd5 64. f7 Bxf7 65. Kxg2 Bd5+ 66. Kf1 and White wins.

62. Be8+ Kh4 63. Bc6 Kh5 64. Be8+ Kh4 65. a4 e3 66. Qxf3 e2 67. Qxe2 Qe3+



A nice final trick! I originally missed it, but thankfully I can easily sidestep the stalemate.

68. Qf2+, Black resigned.

Quite a relief and boost to my confidence! I'd gotten lucky, but it seemed I'd finally found my stride. In the sixth round, I outplayed IM Justin Wang only to once again blow my advantage, ending with a draw. Still, not a bad result against a strong player.

Round seven was a sucker punch. If the second round was like failing to make a field goal from the 10-yard line, this round was like a fumble at the 1-yard line that the defense runs back for a touchdown. Below is the game's critical moment.

A PAINFUL REVERSAL

GM Alexandr Fier (2574)

IM Maximillian Lu (2372)

XVII American Continental Ch (7),
05.28.2024



BLACK TO MOVE

35. ... Qe6??

A terrible move! Intuition says 35. ... Bxg2+! has to be played, but the follow-up is not so easy. After 36. Kh2 (what I missed during the game was 36. Kxg2 Rxb2+ 37. Kh1 Qf3+! 38. Rxf3 Re1+ 39. Rf1) 36. ... Bd5 37. Rxf7+ (if 37. Nxd5 Rxb2+ 38. Kh1 Qf3+ with mate in two) 37. ... Bxf7 and Black wins.

I could also have played 35. ... Re7, which isn't as good but would've maintained the balance.

So what is White's crushing blow?

36. Bxf5!

Now White is completely winning — a complete (and painful) reversal.

36. ... Bxg2+

If 36. ... gxf5 37. Rxf7+ Qxf7 38. Rxf5 winning the queen with a dangerous and persistent attack.

37. Kg1 Qf6 38. Kxg2 Rxb2+ 39. Kh1 gxf5 40. Nd5 Rh2+ 41. Kxh2 Qb2+ 42. Kh1, Black resigned.

Such an incredible opportunity lost — to take the lead by beating a strong GM with the black pieces. After the game, two arbiters ran into the elevator, forcing the doors open and demanding to take my opponent into a separate room for a full cheating inspection. It turned out to be just another part of the organizer's robust anti-cheating measures, which included four arbiters scanning each player on entry to the tournament room, a re-scan every time a player returned from the bathroom and arbiters prowling the aisles with signal detectors and regular checks of the toilet tanks! I burst out laughing at one point, but on reflection, while I wouldn't want that job, I'm grateful someone was doing it. (I elaborated on the security measures in my article for *Chess Life Online*.)

Determined to prove my resiliency, I finished strong in the last three rounds, defeating Cuban GM Omar Almeida in the last round to finish on a high note. At the closing ceremony, I was fortunate enough to be presented my 16th-place prize of \$255 by none other than former World Champion Topalov himself. It was a great honor to meet him, and I'm excited to see what celebrity appearance will be organized for the next Continental (last year it was the President of the Dominican Republic)!

The Continental Championship is always one of my favorite events. Beyond the allure of World Cup qualification or the various festivities and side events, I relish the opportunity to practice my Spanish while reconnecting with old friends and meeting new ones.

I was conducting a post-tournament interview with GM Xiong when a young boy and his interpreter approached our table. Like many of the local aficionados, he asked us to sign his board and take a group photo. After snapping a few photos, his interpreter began to tear up as she conveyed the boy's gratitude and explained they were part of the Colombian Chess Inclusiveness Initiative, dedicated to advancing chess among people with disabilities and special needs.

I was particularly struck by the boy's curiosity, enthusiasm, and determination despite being unable to hear or speak — a reminder that chess is a common unifier and can truly be enjoyed by anyone, even in the face of significant adversity. Stories like these demonstrate the scope and impact that ambassadors for chess can have. ♣



QUEENS OF THE GAME



TAN WINS 2024
CAIRNS CUP;
KRUSH IS FIRST
CAIRNS QUEENS
WINNER.

BY **GM IRINA KRUSH**

THE ANNUAL CAIRNS Cup, organized by the Saint Louis Chess Club since 2019 and named in honor of Dr. Jeanne Cairns Sinuefield, is the strongest tournament for women held on U.S. soil and features a field of 10 top female players from around the world and from the United States. For this year's tournament, held June 12-23 at the Saint Louis Chess Club, a third American was invited, and the debut of 14-year-old IM Alice Lee was one of the biggest stories of the event.

I think Alice can be pleased with her performance; she lost three games and won two, but still wound up gaining rating points, and won arguably the most exciting game of the tournament, upsetting former Women's World Champion GM Alexandra Kosteniuk with the black pieces in round four.

PETROFF DEFENSE (C42)

GM Alexandra Kosteniuk (2632)
IM Alice Lee (2436)
2024 Cairns Cup (4), Saint Louis,
06.16.2024

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6

The Petroff appeared in Alice's repertoire in early 2023, so the opening was not a surprise for Kosteniuk.

3. Nxe5 d6 4. Nf3 Nxe4 5. Nc3

Kosteniuk has rarely employed this move, and usually in rapid or blitz games. So it may have been a bit of a surprise.

5. ... Nxc3 6. dxc3 Be7 7. Bf4

And this move has appeared in her games only once, at the Foxwoods Open in 2003! (The more popular move is 7. Be3.)

7. ... 0-0 8. Qd2 Nd7 9. 0-0-0 Nc5

(see diagram top of next column)

The first opening crossroads. White goes for a kingside pawn advance, which is a bit uncommon but aligns with Alexandra's aggressive style.

10. h4 Re8

It's hard to call this natural and common



POSITION AFTER 9. ... Nc5

move a mistake, but without concrete preparation it would have been better to choose an alternative like 10. ... Bg4 or 10. ... c6. Now White forces Black to confront the unpleasant task of fighting off her initiative.

11. Ng5 h6 12. Bc4



It's no fun to see this move appear on the board! Just a casual glance at the position and the clock time made it obvious that Alice had walked into some kind of prep.

12. ... Be6

This is the kind of move you know is a concession, as you're giving up the bishop pair, but it also sidesteps the very forcing alternatives, so I can understand why Alice played it. She also spent 27 minutes on this important decision and was now 40 minutes behind on the clock. In the post-game interview, Alice said the opening hadn't gone too well for her, but she was happy she managed not to lose directly out of it. About 12. ... Be6 she said: "I feel it's more practical to go for a position that's slightly worse but at least she wouldn't still be in prep."

Taking the knight looks suicidal unless you're a cold-blooded computer: 12. ... hxg5 13. hxg5 and now there are plenty of ways to go wrong. For example, (a) 13. ... Ne4? 14. g6! Nxd2 15. Bxf7+ Kf8 16. Rh8 mate, while White also crashes through after (b) 13. ... Be6? 14. Rh2! Bxc4 15. Rdh1 f5 16. g6.

(c) 13. ... d5!? is the computer's tricky way to try to survive. The idea is if you take with 14. Bxd5, then 14. ... Be6 can at least get you a queen trade. Alice mentioned calculating (d) 13. ... Bxg5 14. Bxg5 Ne4 but felt it was too dangerous to enter with all the Rh1-h8+ and Bc4xf7 mating ideas lurking.

The computer indicates that 12. ... Bxg5 13. hxg5 Ne4 is the best try, with an evaluation of 0.00, but the position is enormously complicated, and without knowing the eval in advance, it's very hard to go for this.

13. Nxe6 Nxe6

Here Alexandra faced a big choice. Should she take the knight and compromise the pawn structure a bit, or stick with the bishop pair? It's hard not to like the engine's prophylactic choice of 14. Kb1. Seeing how the game played out, it seems like the decision to give up the bishop pair made it harder for White to retain the initiative, and over the next few moves Kosteniuk starts to lose the thread.

14. Bxe6

The hasty 14. g4 runs into 14. ... Bxh4 and there's no real way to punish this pawn snatch. The aforementioned 14. Kb1 (with the idea of an imminent g2-g4) 14. ... Bxh4 15. Bxh6! is one illustration of the value of tucking the king away — otherwise you always have ... Bh4-g5 concerns.

14. ... fxe6 15. Kb1 Rf8 16. Qe3

This feels a bit slow to me.

16. ... Qc8

This is a nice way of both protecting the e6-pawn and getting out of the pin on the d-file.

17. Qe4

After 17. g4 e5 we see the point of 16. ... Qc8 — there is no Bf4xe5.

17. ... Rf7

I'm not sure why Alice didn't like 17. ... e5.

18. c4 Rb8!? 19. Be3 b5



Facing, clockwise from top: the tournament field, Krush is *verklemt*, Kosteniuk observes all, and a hug for the winner.

We can see that Black is developing real counterplay. Now the onus is on White to control it.

20. cxb5

The engine wants to keep the b-file closed at all costs, so it offers the sensible 20. c5! dxc5 21. g4 when White still holds the initiative.

20. ... Rxb5

Here Black is fully back in the game. Of course, White doesn't have to lose, but Black has play on the b- and f-files, plus a nice-looking center.

21. c4?!

Weakening the queenside too much.

21. ... Rb4 22. Qc2 c5!?

Perhaps 22. ... Bf6 was an alternative, but maybe Alice didn't like the idea of trading the bishops after 23. Bd4.

23. g4

Finally White gets around to this move, but Black has made so much progress with her counterplay. In his commentary, GM Yasser Seirawan wondered why this move hadn't been played 10 moves earlier!

23. ... Qa6

The engine is so pessimistic about White's position that it wants to play 24. g5 and give up the c4-pawn, but it's not easy to give up all hopes of winning the game, especially when you know what kind of advantage you had out of the opening.

24. b3 d5!



Alice plays this part of the game with a lot of energy and precision. Black is better, but time was an issue — she had seven minutes left for the rest of the game while Alexandra had 40.

25. cxd5 c4 26. g5 exd5 27. Rh3 Qe6!

At this point Alice had a bit more than three minutes remaining.

28. Rg3 Bd6! 29. f4 Rc7!

Alice was down to 90 seconds, but Alexandra was under 10 minutes by this point. Defending against Black's onslaught had caused the time gap to narrow.

30. gxh6 cxb3 31. Qg6 bxa2+ 32. Ka1



32. ... Be5+!

The key winning move, played with eight seconds on the clock. Black unleashes the final attack on the white king. (There was an increment, but with a time control of G/120+30, the time pressure was permanent!)

33. Kxa2

After 33. fxe5 Qxe5+ 34. Bd4 Rxd4 White lacks checks to stop the coming mate.

33. ... Rb2+ 34. Ka1 Rd2+ 35. fxe5 Qxe5+, White resigned.

An impressive turning of the tables after Alice was caught out in the opening, made all the more exciting by the time situation. In her post-game interview, Alice was all smiles and "super happy" about her victory.

Women's Candidates tournament winner GM Tan Zhongyi won the Cairns Cup convincingly in her first tournament in the United States. She took the sole lead after a win in round four and never relinquished it. Her score of 6/9 indicates the closeness of the field (Valentina Gunina's 7/9 in the inaugural edition still stands as the top winning score). In fact, even though Tan was a point ahead of the pack going into the final round, there was a chance for a multi-person playoff if Kosteniuk could pull off a win against her with the Black pieces. Unfortunately, that game never got off the ground; Alexandra played a Slav, inviting Tan to trade pawns on d5, and the suspense soon turned to whether anyone would get sole second place. That happy person turned out to be Anna Muzychuk, who determinedly eked out an endgame win against Lee.

Tan has a wide repertoire and opens with both 1. e4 and 1. d4. Her speed of play is an asset that allows her to put a lot of clock pressure on her opponents, but sometimes it almost backfired: At one point in her game against GM Anna Muzychuk, she was an hour ahead on the clock and had only used 30 minutes but had reached quite a bad endgame down a pawn! Tan was in pretty serious trouble in three games, but her combination of resourcefulness and time management allowed her to hold these positions without much suffering and finish undefeated.

FRENCH DEFENSE, BURN VARIATION (C13)

GM Tan Zhongyi (2540 FIDE)

IM Anna Zatonskih (2390)

2024 Cairns Cup, Saint Louis (4),
06.16.2024



This game against the winner of the 2023 Cairns Cup showcases Tan's risk-taking and enterprising style.

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bg5 dxe4 5. Nxe4 Be7 6. Bxf6 Bxf6 7. Nf3 O-O 8. Nxf6+ Qxf6 9. Bd3 c5

A critical moment arises early in the game.

10. dxc5

This move, offering the b2-pawn, seems like an aggressive strategy, but Tan explained that she didn't expect her opponent to take it!

Tan mentioned that the prosaic 10. c3 cxd4 11. Nxd4 e5 would give Black an easy life. She also looked at ways to sacrifice the d4 pawn, such as 10. Qd2 cxd4 11. O-O-O, but decided against them because Black has ... e6-e5.

10. ... Qxb2

Anna goes for a very principled move, but it will cost her time for development.

Tan expected 10. ... Nd7 11. O-O Nxc5 and Black is more than OK here; moreover, the position is very hard for White to spice up. In hindsight, this would've been a much better path for Anna to take.

11. O-O Nd7 12. Rb1!?

Tan gives up the a2-pawn.

12. ... Qxa2 13. Rb4



Watching the game, I felt that Black must be doing well, as she was up a pawn with the c5-pawn weak as well. But White has a definite initiative; practically speaking, the position is much harder for Black to play.

13. ... Qd5

It's incredible, but this utterly natural move is a bit of a mistake.

The unintuitive 13. ... Qa5 is best according to the engine. The idea is that compared to the game, when you take on c5 with the knight, the queen doesn't get hit with Re1-e5, and White's queen can't go to d2. For example, if 14. Rh4 h6 15. Re1 Nxc5 White's attack is apparently over.

14. Re1 h6

A reasonable alternative was 14. ... Qxc5 15. Rh4 h6 16. Qd2 Qe7 preparing to defend against the rook sac on h6.

15. Qd2 Nxc5?

In Tan's own words: "The main problem is that the knight left the king. Once Anna did that, I knew I was going to win."

16. Re5

The engine shows that 16. Rg4 is even stronger, but it's a line where White sacrifices a rook and needs to calculate very precisely. After 16. ... f5 17. Qxh6 fxe4 18. Qh7+ Kf7 19. Bg6+ Kf6 20. Ne5 the threat of Qh7-h4+ forces Black to give up her queen: 20. ... Qxe5 21. Rxe5 Kxe5 22. Qxg7+ Rf6 and Black has two rooks and a knight for the queen. Is it obvious that White is winning? Only to the engine! This is why Tan went for the more practical move.

16. ... Qc6?

The last chance for Black was the queen sacrifice with 16. ... Nxd3! 17. Rxd5 Nxb4 and White would need to be precise to show any advantage: 18. Rd8 Nc6 19. Rxf8+ Kxf8 20. Ne5 Ke8 21. Nc4 e5 22. Nd6+ Kf8 and despite the engine eval of +1, it's an open question as to whether White could convert.

17. Rg4



Now the black king really is defenseless. It's important to note how the White rooks have used the fourth and fifth ranks to put themselves into attacking positions.

17. ... Nxd3 18. Qxh6 g6 19. Rxe6+ fxe6 20. Qxg6+, Black resigned.

Tan won the 2017 Women's Knockout World Championship; has already played one world championship match, losing by a point to GM Ju Wenjun in 2018; and will face Ju again for the title in the first quarter of next year. Despite all these accomplishments, she's not well known to the broader

chess community, possibly because of the language barrier. Luckily, her interviews in St. Louis were translated by Alice Lee's mom, Vanessa. Before the tournament, WGM Begim Tokhirjonova asked Tan about her interests outside of chess, and Tan replied, "I have a lot of interests: I like science; reading novels; I enjoy history, both Chinese and world history; and I also like (clothing) design. I enjoy spending time with my friends, so some days I could spend the whole day with them, talking about various things, but I could also spend time all by myself for an entire day. There are many different ways of spending my time. I enjoy them all. I think this world is really wonderful; I'm glad to be alive during this time."

Alexandra Kosteniuk was the most com-

GM Tan Zhongyi



IM Anna Zatonskih



bative player in the event; until the last round, she'd only drawn once in eight games. That was against me, and it easily could have been a decisive game too:

ONE THAT GOT AWAY

GM Irina Krush (2481)

GM Alexandra Kosteniuk (2632)

2024 Cairns Cup, Saint Louis (5),
06.17.2024

(see diagram top of next column)

33. Nd4

I liked my position quite a bit here, and with my last move I am enticing Black to try to attack my king, which (surprisingly) leaves her own king weak.



WHITE TO MOVE

33. ... Rc1+

Saving the knight from capture with 33. ... Nf8 was the best way to go, when Black still has a holdable position.

34. Rxc1 Rxc1+ 35. Kf2 Nf8 36. Nxb5 axb5 37. Qb8

Now I felt like I was very close to winning. The b5-pawn is hanging and a back-rank infiltration looms.

37. ... Qc4?

The active approach is a fatal mistake, but it wasn't easy to follow the computer's advice and just give up the b5-pawn!

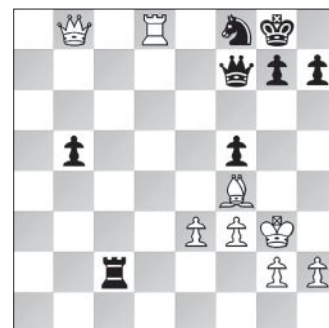
After the silicon recommendation 37. ... Qf6 38. Qxb5 h5 it's not easy for White to convert the extra pawn, as the black knight is getting out to g6.

38. Rd8

Left: WGM Gulrukhbegim "Begim" Tokhirjonova was an on-site reporter. Below: Kosteniuk concentrates against Krush.

I considered all the checks from f1, c2, etc., but finally I realized her best shot was to just check and go back to f7.

38. ... Rc2+ 39. Kg3 Qf7



To win, I need to prepare a way to play Bf4-d6 without allowing counterplay against my king.

40. h4

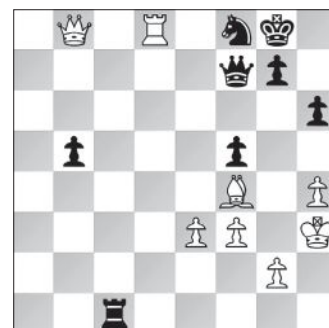
Note that 40. Bd6? immediately is premature as Black still has the h6-square for the queen: 40. ... Qg6+ 41. Kf4 Qh6+ and Black wins.

40. ... h6 41. Kh3

Just one move away from Bf4-d6 ...

Note I can't play it yet, because after 41. Bd6 Qg6+ 42. Kf4 there is no check on h6, but there is one on c4 that miraculously leads to a perpetual: 42. ... Rc4+ 43. e4 Rxe4+ 44. fxe4 Qg4+ 45. Ke3 Qxe4+ and the black queen chases the king all around the board.

41. ... Rc1!



This move was a real cold shower — not because it objectively saves Black, but because it created a situation where in order to win, I had to find a paradoxical solution. I'd been focused on getting my bishop to d6, but now it's not possible. Meanwhile, Black is threatening to play ... Rc1-h1+ and put the queen on f6 or e7, attacking h4.

42. Bd6

Acquiescing to the draw after I'd spent my

whole bank of time fruitlessly searching for a knockout blow.

Ironically, I can still win with 42. Qd6!! even though it blocks my bishop from accessing d6 and apparently gives up on the idea of winning the knight. Why, then, am I winning? Because Black is paralyzed; I've taken away the g6, f6, and e7 squares from the black queen, and I'll eventually win by transferring the bishop via e5 to the a3-f8 diagonal.

42. ... Rh1+ 43. Kg3 f4+

This is the source of the draw: The h7-b1 diagonal is cleared by force.

44. exf4 Qg6+ 45. Kf2 Qc2+ 46. Kg3 Qg6+ 47. Kf2 Qc2+ 48. Kg3 Qg6+, draw.

Zatonskih had a chance to create the most beautiful win of the tournament in round seven:

A BRILLIANCY UNPLAYED

IM Anna Zatonskih (2390)

GM Alexandra Kosteniuk (2632)

2024 Cairns Cup (7), Saint Louis,

06.20.2024



BLACK TO MOVE

Black is already worse, but now provokes White into opening her kingside.

19. ... g5 20. Nxg5! hxg5 21. Bxg5 e4 22. Rh3 Qe5 23. f4 Qf5 24. g4!? Qxg4+

The engine advises 24. ... Nxg4, but who would go for this after seeing 25. Rg3? Still, there is a cold-blooded defense available with 25. ... f6 26. Rxg4? (26. Bh4 Kf7 27. Qxg4 Qxg4 28. Rxg4) 26. ... Kf7! and Black would even be better, with ... Re8-g8 coming.

25. Rg3 Qxd1 26. Bxf6+ Kh7 27. Rxd1 e3

(see diagram top of next column)

28. Rf3?



POSITION AFTER 27. ... e3

Overlooking a beautiful possibility.

With 28. f5!! the concept is to set up a cage for the black king. After 28. ... Bxg3 29. hxg3 there is no good way to avoid Kg1-g2 and Rd1-h1 mate. Black has two moves and still can't save the king — how amazing! The only way to survive is to start giving away pieces, e.g. 29. ... e2 30. Re1 Kh6 31. Kf2 Kh5 32. Kf3 and now Black has to pitch the e8-rook to continue. Incredible, but unfortunately brilliancies are often a bit hidden!

28. ... Kg6 29. Bc3 Kf5

Now Black has the better side of this position, and she went on to win the endgame.

30. Be5 Ke4 31. Rff1 Bxe5 32. fxe5 Rxe5 33. Rxf7 e2 34. Ra1 Ke3 35. Rg7 Kd2 36. Rg2 Rf8 37. h4 Ref5 38. d6 Rf1+ 39. Rxf1 Rxf1+ 40. Kh2 Ke3 41. d7 e1=Q 42. Rg3+ Kf4, White resigned.

My tournament started with six draws, although it wasn't due to lack of winning chances. After three misses, my fourth big chance came in round seven, and you could

NONA!

Five-time women's world champion and the first female grandmaster in history, Nona Gaprindashvili was a special guest at this year's Cairns Cup. She certainly made the most of her time in St. Louis!

After pushing pawns in the "Ultimate Moves" blitz exhibition and offering brief remarks at the opening ceremony, the 83-year-old Georgian rang the ceremonial bell to open the first day of play.

Later that evening she was interviewed at a "Ladies' Knight with Nona Gaprindashvili" event at the World Chess Hall of Fame, her niece serving as translator for questions from WGM Thalia Cervantes. And with an all-girls simul two days later, Gaprindashvili gave a new generation of players memories that will last a lifetime.



say the result of this game sealed my final standing, as I didn't get any more chances to win in the last two rounds.

ANOTHER ONE THAT GOT AWAY

GM Irina Krush (2481)

GM Nana Dzagnidze (2563)

2024 Cairns Cup, Saint Louis (7),
06.20.2024



WHITE TO MOVE

Black has just played 20. ... Qd7-d6. I knew my position was good, but the winning blow was completely beyond my field of vision:

21. Qh3?

So what did I overlook? 21. Nf6+!! — that's why you should always look for checks, captures, and threats! After 21. ... Bxf6 (or 21. ... Rxf6 22. e5) 22. Bxf6, e4-e5 is coming next, with total domination of the dark squares. Black doesn't have much of a choice, and best would have been 22. ... Rxf6 23. e5 when White is clearly winning.

21. ... Rce8

Here White was still better, but I allowed Black to sacrifice on e4 and lost control of the position.

22. f5 Rxe4 23. Bxe4 Rxe4 24. Nc3 Re8 25. Qf3?

The only move that retained chances was 25. Nb5 but the game is double-edged now.

25. ... gxf5 26. Nb5

If 26. Qxf5? Re5.

26. ... Qg6 27. Bf4 Re4 28. Bg3 Ne5 29. Bxe5 Bxe5 30. Nxd4 Re1+ 31. Rxe1 Bxd4+ 32. Kh1 Bxf3 33. gxf3 Qh5, White resigned.

Psychologically, it's hard to go for six games without a win; you feel like nothing is happening and that you're not doing particularly well, when in reality you may still have chances to win the tournament. Anna

Muzychuk drew her first seven games, but by winning her last two, came within half a point of first place! Sometimes a lot of patience is required before success comes; it's a question of not losing hope on the way.

The opening ceremony featured a historic announcement by Dr. Cairns Sinquefield, who spoke about how so few of the grandmasters in the world are women (around 40, as opposed to 2,000 men). To encourage more American women to aim for the title, she announced that the Saint Louis Chess Club will provide a \$100,000 award for up to five American women who earn the title in the next five years (until July 1, 2029).

As I listened, it wasn't completely clear to me whether the award was \$100,000 for each woman or \$100,000 to be divided among up to five women. It didn't seem to apply to me, anyway, as my timing was a little off: I made my GM title more than a decade ago. Imagine my surprise when Dr. Jeanne invited me on stage as the first recipient of the Cairns Queens Award, and when I realized

the \$100,000 check was made out to me! It's pretty amazing to be gifted such a sum, but the best thing is that it's now much easier for me to go back to what I love: studying and playing chess. A week after I got home from the Cairns Cup, I started the kind of training sessions I haven't done in years.

Such a big move in support of women in chess is incredible, but if anyone could orchestrate it, it would be the Saint Louis Chess Club: Under the patronage of Rex Sinquefield and Dr. Jeanne Cairns Sinquefield, they've done so much for American chess in the last 15 years. I'm sure the award will inspire the coming generation of girls to aim higher, and has the potential to be one of the most impactful investments the club has ever made. Thank you to the Club and Rex and Jeanne for their vision and generosity!

In September, the American women's team heads to the Olympiad in Budapest, where Carissa Yip, Begim Tokhirjonova, Anna Zatonskih, and I will be joined by Alice Lee in her Olympiad debut. Root for us! ♠



GM NONA GAPRINDASHVILI

THE WORLD'S FIRST FEMALE GRANDMASTER

VISITS SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI



Photo by Crystal Fuller, World Chess Hall of Fame

The Saint Louis Chess Campus was honored to host World Chess Champion and World Chess Hall of Fame Inductee Nona Caprindashvili during a special visit to the United States Chess Capital.

GM Caprindashvili participated in an all-girls simul match featuring area chess students from our Scholastic Chess Initiative, was the guest speaker at the 2024 Cairns Cup Opening Ceremony, played against the entire Cairns Cup field during Ultimate Moves, engaged with fans at a special Ladies Knight event, and sat down with the WCHOF for an interview in the current exhibition, **Clash for the Crown: Celebrating Chess Champions**.



Photo by Lennart Ootes, Saint Louis Chess Club

Saint Louis Chess Club (STLCC) Co-founder Dr. Jeanne Cairns Sinquefield announced the Cairns Chess Queens Award to encourage more US women chess players to become grandmasters. The STLCC will award \$100,000 each for up to five players over the next five years who earn the grandmaster title. GM Irina Krush became the first recipient of the Cairns Chess Queens Award at the 2024 Cairns Cup Opening Ceremony. Krush became the first woman player to earn the title while playing for the United States in 2013.



It is the mission of the Saint Louis Chess Club, an educational organization, to maintain a formal program of instruction to teach the game of chess and to promote and support its educational program through community outreach and local and national partnerships to increase the awareness of the educational value of chess.

The STLCC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, citizenship, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, pregnancy, disability, and any other category protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws or regulations in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and grant programs, events, programs, or activities.

The STLCC complies with the Internal Revenue Service's guidelines regarding publication of its non-discrimination policy in its brochures, catalogs, advertisements and otherwise making it known to the general community.

The mission of the World Chess Hall of Fame is to educate visitors, fans, players, and scholars by preserving, exhibiting and interpreting the game of chess and its continuing cultural and artistic significance.

The Museum does not discriminate or permit harassment or discrimination on the basis of gender, race, color, national and ethnic origin in the treatment of individuals with respect to employment, or admission or access to Museum facilities, programs or activities.

Games, Guidance, and Grub with Grandmasters

The Caveman Chess Camp mixes tournament play with intense instruction.

BY ROBERT IRONS

G

M YURY SHULMAN TELLS A young student, “You played h2-h3. This is a good move! Why?”

“To prevent the bishop from developing to g4,” the student replies.

“Yes, very good!” The grandmaster then demonstrates for the group gathered around the table: “Without this move Black gains the advantage this way,” Shulman says while redirecting Black’s dark-squared bishop to the long diagonal and rerouting both knights to central squares. The students erupt in comments, questions, and smiles.

The Caveman Chess Camp has been running annually since 1997, in coordination since its second year with the Wisconsin Chess Association. National master Kevin “Caveman” Bachler (nicknamed for the late FM Al Chow’s assessment of his playing style) and his wife, Deborah Socha, have changed formats over the years, always trying new ways to entertain and educate the students (Blitz on a Boat was just one idea). This year’s camp was held at the Hilton Hotel in Northbrook, Illinois, from July 14-19. It was the first year Kevin and Deb staged the camp in a hotel, and the response from the students and the instructors was quite positive.

The camp mixes practical play with study, starting with Sunday-night simulms after check-in and dinner. Students are assigned to teams and instructors based on their rating and level of experience. Lower-rated or less-experienced students are assigned to the Chess Explorer group, which focuses

on the fundamentals of the game, including a study of the four elements of chess and Steinitz’s six meta-principles.

The tournament begins Monday morning, with one round Monday through Wednesday mornings, followed by a class before lunch. During the tournament, students who have finished their games can bring them to the analysis rooms, where the instructors will analyze them on a screen. They use Chess-Base, but analysis is done by the instructor, not the engine — although occasionally the engine finds something the instructor overlooked, leading to a valuable learning moment. GM Dmitry Gurevich pointed out to one student that a move that he (Gurevich) previously thought weak was in fact much better than he realized. He emphasized that mistakes are common, even at the grandmaster level, and such words coming from a world-class player create a positive learning environment for everyone.

The afternoon offers two or three classes with a break in between, and some physical activity to keep the students fresh. After dinner, Intensive Study classes are followed by another activity before students are required to return to their rooms.

The camp really shines in the Intensive Study classes, with sections for advanced youths and advanced adults, for advanced girls and women (to encourage female camaraderie), for adults learning the fundamentals, and a master class for serious players of any age or gender.

Thursday sees the last two rounds of the tournament, one in the morning and another after lunch, along with more classes and another Intensive Study session. Friday morning offers a survivor simul against the group of instructors, with prizes for the survivors (those who win, draw or last until quitting time) followed by the closing ceremonies.

“I have enjoyed this camp for 30 years,” Gurevich said. “Kevin and Deb make it en-



OVERHEARD DURING ANALYSIS

I ATTENDED AN ANALYSIS SESSION with GM Gurevich and was immediately struck by his familiarity with the students, calling them by name and briefly discussing their games from the previous day. It was during this session that he shared a delightful piece of wisdom on castling for beginners versus veteran players: “Kids go to sleep early; old men go to sleep late.”

GM Yuri Shulman offered two bon mots: “Pawn tension tends to favor the player who waits the longest to resolve it,” and “Your hand shouldn’t allow you to play such moves!”

joyable to teach.” Students “can play and right away get comments on their games” from a teaching staff that included himself, Shulman, and GMs Boris Avrukh and Nikola Mitkov. “It’s the best way to learn.”

After analyzing a few games, he gave the students the chance to play an online game using his *Chess.com* account — a slugfest that held the group’s attention until the bitter end.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, SMITH-MORRA GAMBIT (B21)

GM Dmitry Gurevich and Team (2372)
“OnePunchMan210” (2350)
Chess.com, 07.18.2024

1. e4 c5 2. d4 cxd4 3. c3 dxc3 4. Nxc3 e6 5. Nf3 a6 6. Bc4 Nc6 7. 0-0 Nge7 8. Ng5 h6 9. Nxf7 Kxf7 10. f4 Kg8 11. f5 Kh7 12. Qh5 d5
At about this time, GM Gurevich chose to take over the decisions.

13. exd5 Nxf5 14. dxe6 Qd4+ 15. Kh1 g6 16. Qe2 Bg7 17. Rf4 Qd6 18. Bd2 Re8 19. Ne4 Qe7 20. Rxf5 gxf5 21. Qh5 fxe4 22. Rf1
Around here Gurevich declared that it would take a “big mistake” for White to avoid losing.

22. ... Bxe6 23. Bxh6 Bxh6 24. Bxe6 Rf8 25. Bf5+ Rxf5 26. Qxf5+ Kg7 27. Qg4+ Bg5 28. Rf5 Kg6

(see diagram top of next column)

And here it is! The pin had to be avoided with 28. ... Kh6.

29. h4 Rh8 30. Rxcg5+ Qxcg5 31. Qxcg5+ Kf7 32. Qf5+ Kg7 33. Qg5+ Kf7 34. Qf5+ Ke7 35. Qxe4+ Kd7



POSITION AFTER 28. ... Kg6

By now the entire team was up on their feet and cheering.

36. g3 Kc7 37. Qf4+ Kb6 38. Qe3+ Kc7 39. Qf4+ Kc8 40. Kg2 Rd8 41. h5 Nd4 42. Qg4+ Kb8 43. h6 Rh8 44. h7 Nc6 45. Qg7 Rc8, **Black won on time.**

These instructors are extremely comfortable working with groups of kids. One young girl referred to GM Yury Shulman as “Mr. Silly Man” — his neon orange tennis shoes may have had something to do with that.

There were also several students at or approaching my age, and all were meeting new friends, while some were reuniting with old friends. First-time student Thomas Hupp hadn’t played actively since the 1980s but enjoyed the experience: “With the chance to play against similar-level players, I get to measure where I’m at and knock off the rust. And then learn from your games on your own and with your opponent and get a professional review of those games.”

I had a wonderful time just watching, and I hope to be a part of the camp in the future. ♠



Tom Hupp





NORTH, SOUTH, WEST

Which amateur teams
played the best?

BY **US CHESS**

A LONG WITH THE U.S. AMATEUR Team East — see the report in our May issue — the remaining three regional competitions in the U.S. Amateur Teams also wrapped up in February. The three winning teams will face off in a play-off later this year.

NORTH

For the second straight year, more than 100 teams headed to Schaumburg, Illinois, for the U.S. Amateur Team North (USATN), and while the name was changed the winner was the same.

The University of Chicago B team won the previous two USATN titles, and while this year they were relegated to C-team status, they won again with a 5/5 match score, defeating top-rated Northwestern A in the last round. The core of the team remained the same — a “stacked” roster with GMs Awonder Liang and Praveen Balakrishnan followed by

ART: FREEPIK

IM Kapil Chandran, with this year's fourth board, 621-rated Bradley Li, keeping the team under the 2200 barrier. The three top boards all tied for board prizes — Liang with a perfect score and Balakrishnan and Chandran with 4½ each.

The Under-1600 section went to the team known as “horsy,” who scored a perfect 5/5 — a remarkable feat, given that three of their five players were competing in their first rated event. In the one-day Under-1000 section, the team Kings Indian won with a 4/4 score.

WEST

Meanwhile, the Amateur Team West attracted 55 teams comprising 235 players to Milpitas, California Feb. 17-19, along with 31 teams (and 130 players) in two scholastic sections.

In the U2200 section, the aptly named Team 1 won the title on tiebreaks over the Monta Vista Matadors. Both teams finished with a 5/6 score. The Matadors' Luke Widjaja achieved the section's only perfect score.

In the U1600 section, Reno Goldfish took clear first in the Under-1600 section by a full point with a 5½/6 score; in the U1000 section, King's Indian (not Kings Indian from the North!) finished clear first, and Shoreview Gamma won the U600 section.

Among the many stars of this tourna-

ment was FM Derek Wu, the captain of Team 1.

TWO KNIGHTS' DEFENSE (C58)

FM Derek Wu (2347)

Abhishek Handigol (2172)

U.S. Amateur Team West (1), Milpitas,

02.17.2024

Annotations by FM Derek Wu

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. Ng5 d5 5. exd5 Na5 6. Bb5+ c6 7. dxc6 bxc6 8. Bd3 Nd5 9. Nf3 Bd6 10. 0-0 Nf4 11. Be2? Obviously I forgot the move order.

11. ... Nxg2 12. Kxg2 e4 13. d4 exf3+ 14. Bxf3



14. ... 0-0

I'm basically checkmated after 14. ... Qh4.

15. h4 Qxh4 16. Rh1 Qf6 17. Qd2

At this point I'm just relieved I haven't lost already.



Right: U Chicago B faces off against Northwestern A at USATN. Below: Team 1 is number one at the Amateur Team West.



17. ... Bc7 18. Qg5 Qxd4 19. Nc3 Qe5 20. Qh4 Bf5 21. Bg5 Rfe8 22. Rae1 Qd6 23. b4 f6 24. Be3



The first three rounds were held at a faster time control. Around here he had five minutes left to my seven.

24. ... g5

I'm winning after 24. ... Nb7 25. Qc4+ Kh8 26. Qxc6.

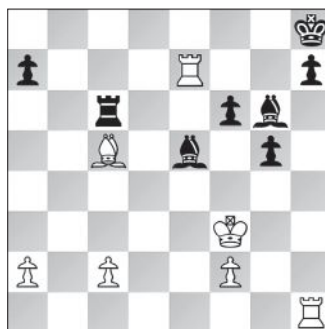
25. Qh5 Nc4

Black sidesteps the blunder 25. ... Qxb4? 26. Bc5 Qxc5 27. Rxe8+.

26. Bc5 Qd7 27. b5 Ne5 28. bxc6 Qg7 29. Nd5 Bg6 30. Qh6 Nxf3 31. Qxg7+ Kxg7 32. Kxf3

He had around one minute left and I had three.

32. ... Be5 33. Rb1 Rac8 34. Rb7+ Kh8 35. Ne7 Rxe7 36. Rxe7 Rxc6



Now I think he was playing on increment while I had one minute left.

37. Be3 Rxc2 38. Rxa7 Rc4 39. Rc1 Be4+ 40. Kg4 h5+ 41. Kxh5 Bf3+ 42. Kg6 Be4+ 43. Kh6 Rxc1 44. Bxc1 Kg8 45. Bxg5 fxg5 46. Re7, Black resigned.

IM Matthew Larson, playing for Stanford Thesis Defense, finished his win over IM Keaton Kiewra with a puzzle-worthy tactic:

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED (D30)

IM Matthew Larson (2446)

IM Keaton Kiewra (2366)

U.S. Amateur Team West (1), Milpitas, 02.17.2024

Annotations by Chris Torres

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 a6 4. g3 dxc4 5. Bg2 b5 6. Ne5 Ra7 7. 0-0 Bb7 8. e4 Nf6 9. a4 Bxe4



This pawn is too dangerous to take. White has only a slight advantage after 9. ... Ra8 10. axb5 axb5 11. Rxa8 Bxa8 12. Nc3 c6 13. d5.

10. Bxe4 Nxe4 11. axb5 Be7 12. Qg4 Nd6 13. Nc3 0-0



14. Rd1

A little too slow. White is winning after 14. d5! Bf6 15. Be3 Ra8 16. Bf4 and Black can't move: 16. ... exd5 17. Rfd1 Re8 18. Rxd5.

14. ... Qc8 15. Be3 Nf5 16. Nxc4 Qb7?!

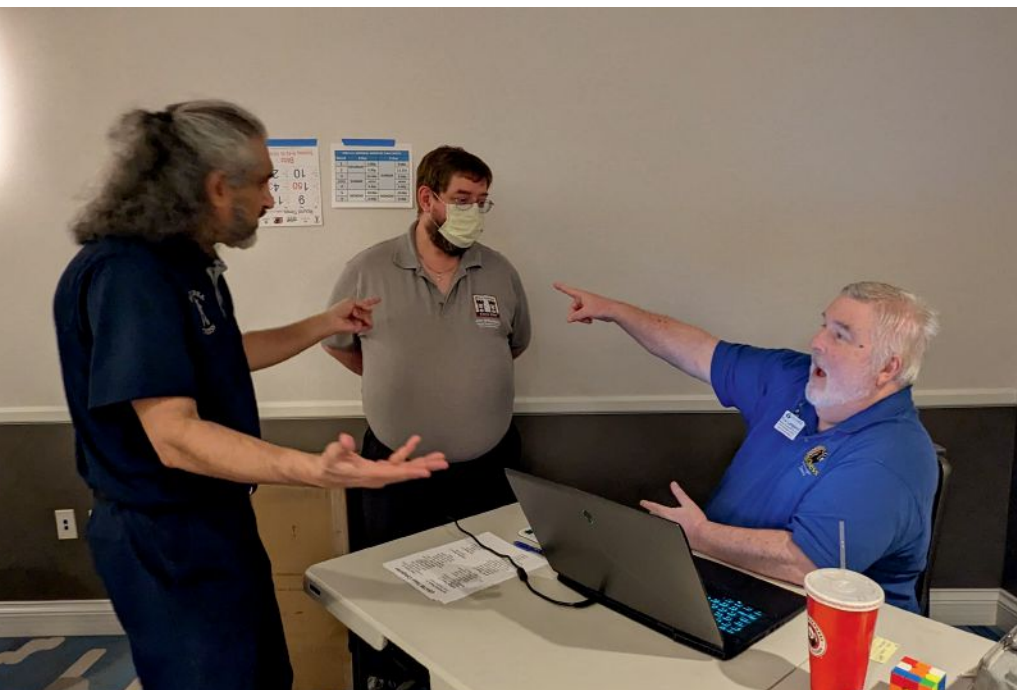
After 16. ... Rb7! 17. bxa6 Ra7 18. d5 Rxa6 Black is unwinding.

17. d5 Nxe3 18. Nxe3 f5 19. Qc4 f4 20. gxf4 axb5



21. Nxb5

Left: "Hey Salman, it's all HIS fault! I had nothing to do with whatever you are concerned about!"



21. Rxa7 is another way and probably cleaner: After 21. ... Qxa7 22. Nxb5 Qc5 23. Qxc5 Bxc5 24. dxe6 c6 (24. ... Rxf4 25. Nxc7 and somehow Black is losing a piece) 25. Nd6 White is winning.

21. ... Rxa1 22. Rxa1 c6 23. d6 cxb5 24. Qxe6+ Rf7 25. dxe7 Qxe7 26. Qd5



There is no good way to defend.

26. ... Kh8

After 26. ... h6 27. Ra8 Qc7 28. Qxb5 Rf8 29. f5 Black can't unpin and White's king is safe. And 26. ... Qb7 leaves Black in *zugzwang* after 27. Ra8 b4 28. f5. If 28. ... h6 29. h3 Kh7 30. Rxb8.

27. Ra7 Nd7 28. Qxd7, Black resigned.

SOUTH

The U.S. Amateur Team South was held a week later than the other three regionals — February 23-25 at The Villages, Florida, with a record 46 teams comprising 191 players from 11 states in the U2200 division and 13 teams (and 55 players) in the Scholastic section.

Deviprasath's Doomsayers won their last round match with Deviprasath Disciples to tie with the Villages A-Team at a perfect 5/5 and take first prize on tiebreak. With both teams namechecking IM Sharvesh Deviprasath, we couldn't help but include one of his games. Here's his round three battle with Shama Yisrael, who in July became the first female African-American master.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E73)

Shama Yisrael (2152)

IM Sharvesh Deviprasath (2496)

U.S. Amateur Team South (3), Orlando, 02.24.2024

Annotations by John Hartmann

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Be2 0-0 6. Be3

Whether it's called the Karpov, the lesser Averbakh, or the Avrukh variation, this line against the King's Indian is very trendy. Deviprasath chooses one of the more critical replies.

6. ... Nc6 7. d5 Ne5 8. f4 Neg4 9. Bd2 Nh6 10. h3

Slightly more common is 10. Nf3 c6 11. a4 e6 12. dxe6 Bxe6 13. 0-0 when White was a bit better in Sevian – Yakubboev, Sharjah 2023.

10. ... e6



11. g4

With the intent of g4-g5 and a double attack. But White's lack of development signals potential trouble.

11. ... exd5 12. cxd5

Here 12. g5? can't be played right away due to 12. ... d4! 13. gxf6 dxc3 14. fxc7 cxd2+

Right: The game between Yisrael and Deviprasath. Below: Deviprasath's Doomsayers saying some doom.

15. Qxd2 and now 15. ... Re8! and there's no good way to defend the e-pawn. If 16. Bf3 Bf5!

12. ... Re8 13. Qc2

Play gets complicated after 13. g5 Nxe4 14. Nxe4 Rxe4 15. gxh6 Qh4+ 16. Kf1 Bxb2 when Black has two pawns and an attack for the piece, but it appears that White can survive.

13. ... c6 14. dxc6

14. g5? is not viable on this move (or the next) due to 14. ... Nxe4 15. Nxe4 Bf5.

14. ... bxc6 15. 0-0-0 Rb8

(see diagram next page)

16. g5?

The lure of the fork was too strong to resist,





POSITION AFTER 15. ... Rb8

but the IM had calculated everything and was prepared. Instead 16. Bd3 followed by Ng1-f3 gave White a reasonable position.

16. ... Nxe4! 17. gxf6 Nf2 18. hxf7 Bf5!

Bringing another piece into play. White's pieces are so passively placed that the material deficit doesn't matter.

19. Qa4 Rxe2! 20. Qa3

Dodging 20. Nxe2 Nd3+ 21. Kb1 Nxb2+.

20. ... Nd3+ 21. Kb1 Nb4+ 22. Kc1 Nd3+ 23. Kb1 Rxb2+ 24. Ka1 Rxd2 25. Nf3 Rg2 26. Nd4 Qf6

Every black piece is in the attack.

27. Qxa7 Nb4 28. Rhe1 Nc2+ 29. Kxb2

Or 29. Nxc2 Qxc3 with mate to come.

29. ... Nxd4+ 30. Ka3 Nb5+ 31. Nxb5 Qb2+, White resigned. ♠

This article was produced with reporting from Jiten Patel, Chris Torres, Tom Langland, Salman Azar, Kevin Pryor, John Hartmann, J.J. Lang, and Rick Massimo.



Three of the four members of Deviprasath's Doomsayers

US AMATEUR TEAM NORTH AT A GLANCE

FEBRUARY 17-19, 2024 | SCHAMBERG, IL

WINNERS

1ST: UChicago C (GMs Awonder Liang, Praveen Balakrishnan, IM Kapil Chandran, Bradley Li). **2ND:** Northwestern A (FM Dache Lin, FM Milind Maiti, Elijah Samuel Platnick, Aria Hoesley. **3RD:** Game of Throws (Avi Harrison Kaplan, Nicholas Ladan, Hersh Singh, Oliver Dusk Rubenstein).

CLASS PRIZES

U2000: dreamy knights. **U1800:** For a Few Tempis More.

UNDER 1600 SECTION

1ST: horsy. **2ND:** Beauties and the Beasts. **U1400:** Selling Harts for Kash. **U1200:** Board 1s and Andrew.

UNDER 1000 SECTION

1ST: Kings Indian. **2ND:** This Is the Way!

THE TOPS

TOP SENIOR TEAM: Old Age and Treachery. **TOP JUNIOR TEAM:** Grindmasters. **TOP FEMALE TEAM:** Lady Knights. **TOP MIXED DOUBLES TEAM:** Three Millers Say Cheers. **TOP COLLEGE TEAM:** UIUC 1. **TOP HIGH SCHOOL TEAM:** Jumbo Jigs. **TOP K-8 TEAM:** Powerful Pawn Stormers. **BEST TEAM NAME:** Schrodinger's Compensation. **BEST THEME:** MGIS Schachverein.

US AMATEUR TEAM SOUTH AT A GLANCE

FEBRUARY 23-25, 2024 | THE VILLAGES, FL

WINNERS

1ST (TIEBREAK): Deviprasath's Doomsayers (Marvin Gao, Ngo Bach, Aniket Shulka, Quintin Tanksley). **2ND:** Villages A (Doug McClintock, Oscar Williams, Alan Schalk, Mike Kind, Heriberto Menendez).

CLASS PRIZES

U1900: JAX Chess Academy. **U1600:** University of Florida B. **U1300:** The Tactical Team.

THE TOPS

TOP SENIOR TEAM: The Village Knights. **TOP COLLEGE TEAM:** Georgia Tech. **TOP FEMALE TEAM:** Queens Reign. **TOP CLUB TEAM:** Manasota Chess Club.

US AMATEUR TEAM WEST AT A GLANCE

FEBRUARY 17-19, 2024 | MILPITAS, CA

WINNERS

1ST (TIEBREAK): Team 1 (FM Derek Wu, WGM Rochelle Wu, Brandon Yang Xia, Jayden Xu). **2ND:** Monta Vista Matadors (Krishna Nathan, Xuli Dai, Aryan Achuthan, Luke Widjaja). **3RD:** UC Davis B (Abhishek Handigol, Manas Manu, Hari Rakul Ambethkar, Jason Fu). **U1800:** All Hands No Brains.

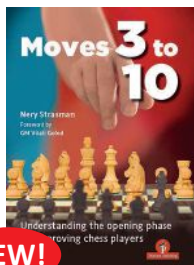
THE TOPS:

TOP COLLEGE TEAM: Stanford Thesis Defense. **TOP K-12 SCHOOL:** SoCal Chess League. **TOP CLUB:** Kolty Chess Club. **TOP ALL-FEMALE TEAM:** Chess Queens United.

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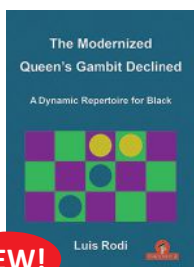


NEW!

MOVES 3 to 10

Nery Strasman - \$ 46.95

A few years ago, the author decided to start playing again. This time, there were a lot of resources at hand – computer analysis, streamers, commentators everywhere. Nery realized that the key to any improvement, before memorizing endless variations, lay in understanding the opening phase better and practicing as much as possible.

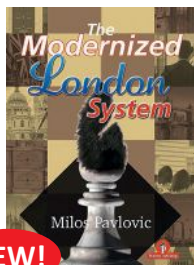


NEW!

The MODERNIZED QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED

Louis Rodi - \$ 49.95

The Queen's Gambit Declined – or Refused – is, together with the Slav, the main defense in the universe of queenside openings, and shares with the aforementioned defense a well-earned reputation for being a reliable and very solid scheme. The main aim of the present work is to show that Black can indeed obtain positions where all three results are possible. The Queen's Gambit Declined, about a century after its golden age, is still a reliable and lively defense!

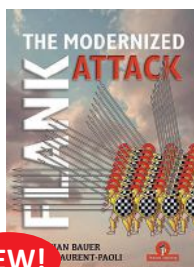


NEW!

The MODERNIZED LONDON SYSTEM

Milos Pavlovic - \$ 46.95

The system's various move orders and the resulting transpositions make it unique, adding a layer of complexity not as prevalent in other openings. Like any opening, it can lead to both good and bad games, but the London System has undeniably become a significant part of 1.d4 theory.

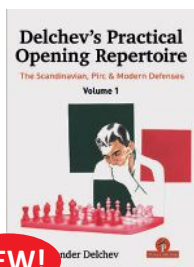


NEW!

The MODERNIZED FLANK ATTACK

Christian Bauer – Pierre Laurent-Paoli - \$ 48.95

Over the 50 games that we picked, there are 3 main reasons why the g-pawn is being launched. The more you dive into the examples, the more you'll see that it's a mix of the 3, with one reason prevailing. We wish you happy reading and hope that you'll implement some of these lines into your play!



NEW!

DELCHEV'S PRACTICAL OPENING REPERTOIRE

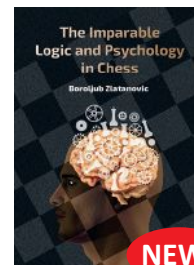
Volume 1 – The Scandinavian – Pirc & Modern Defenses - *Alexander Delchev* - \$ 48.95

What does it take to become an expert in opening preparation? The method of opening preparation I have used throughout my entire chess-playing career allowed me, with relatively little effort, luring my opponents into prepared opening tricks and traps was great fun! In the method which I will introduce you to in this book, you will soon understand why I developed this method.

The IMPARABLE LOGIC AND PSYCHOLOGY IN CHESS

Boroljub Zlatanovic - \$ 46.95

Modern generations have their first connection with chess through computers, not books, and that is wrong of course! Young players prefer to memorize than to understand; they follow some fashionable line even if they do not know what is going on! Logic must be the most important part of that education process. Understanding and logic are everything you need with a static position on the board.

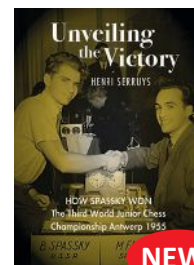


NEW!

UNVEILING VICTORY – How Spassky won the Third World Junior Championship Antwerp 1955

Henri Serruys - \$ 49.95

The Belgian chess historian Henri Serruys traces back how Spassky became the first Soviet World Junior Chess Champion in Antwerp 1955. Would the favorites come through the preliminary rounds? Serruys digs into contemporary sources and contacted all the participants, in so far as they are still alive. He presents the key games of the tournament and unearthed a couple of hitherto unknown games of Spassky.

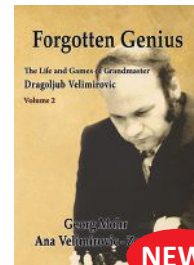


NEW!

FORGOTTEN GENIUS – The Life and Games of Grandmaster Dragoljub Velimirovic - Volume 2

George Mohr – Ana Velimirovic - \$ 49.95

I sincerely hope that you will enjoy the wonderful masterpieces you will find in this book. Thanks to all those who participated in this project. To the contemporaries, friends, and comrades-in-arms of "Boss" who remember this or that anecdote, this or that event, this or that memory. This second volume covers Drasko's life and chess from 1976 until 2011.

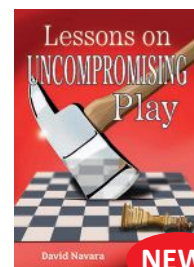


NEW!

LESSONS ON UNCOMPROMISING PLAY

David Navara - \$ 48.95

Chess has evolved significantly over the past few years. Talented teenagers are playing better than ever, top players possess even deeper theoretical knowledge and make fewer mistakes, and preparation now demands more time and energy. Most of the advice in this book remains applicable even when you are tired, though in such cases, it's usually better to play more solidly if you're primarily aiming for a good result.



NEW!

FIDE PRESIDENT FOLKE ROGARD – The lawyer who organized modern chess in the shadow of the war

Henrik Malm Lindberg - \$ 56.95

This book is, in one way, a biography of Folke Rogard, focusing mostly on his roles as FIDE President and organizer of modern chess. The portrayal of Rogard primarily centers on his organization of chess and his presidency of FIDE, a position he held for more than two decades. Being in that genre, it aims to capture his personality – what his driving forces were and the constraints that held him back.



NEW!

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\$25.00 Minimum - Excludes Clearance, Shopworn and Items Otherwise Marked



Casablanca Chess

Do you know your chess history? Do you think studying the classics could ever help you over the board? At a recent tournament, doing your homework could pay big dividends.

The Casablanca Chess tournament, held May 18-19 as part of Morocco Chess Week, staged another experiment in avoiding opening theory. Instead of randomizing piece configurations, as in Chess960, here the opening positions were drawn from historical games and chosen by experts, fans, and the players themselves.

Played at a time control of G/15+10, the double round-robin event featured four of the world's elite — GMs Bassem Amin, Viswanathan Anand, Magnus Carlsen, and Hikaru Nakamura. Fireworks were nearly guaranteed, and in the very first round Carlsen made good use of his legendary memory, getting the better of Anand in a position from the 1889 world championship match between Steinitz and Chigorin.

EVANS GAMBIT (C52)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2830)

GM Viswanathan Anand (2751)

Casablanca Chess (1), Casablanca, 05.18.2024

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. b4 Bxb4
5. c3 Ba5 6. 0-0 Qf6 7. d4 Nge7 8. Bg5 Qd6
9. Qb3 0-0 10. Rd1 Bb6



This position, chosen by GM Jan Gustafsson, first appeared in game five of the 1889 world championship match. Today's engines deem it completely equal, but White's pressure proves difficult to deal with at rapid time controls!

11. Na3

Chigorin played 11. dxe5 Qg6 12. Qa3 Re8 13. Nbd2 d6 14. exd6 cxd6 15. Bf4 Bc5 16. Qc1 Bg4 17. Bg3 Rad8 18. h3 Bxf3 19. Nxf3 Qxg3 20. Kh1 Qg6 21. Rd3 Qf6 22. Qd2 Ng6 23. Ng5 Nce5 24. Rf3 Nxf3 25. Bxf7+ Qxf7 26. gxf3 Qc4 and White resigned in Chigorin – Steinitz, WCh (5), Havana 1889.

Meanwhile, Nakamura chose 11. Bf1 exd4 12. cxd4 Ng6 13. Nc3 Nxd4 and proceeded to victory in spectacular fashion with 14. Rxd4! Bxd4 15. Nb5! Bxa1 16. Nxd6 cxd6 17. h4 d5 18. Qd1 Bb2 19. Qb3 Ba1 20. Qb1 Bc3 21. Qc1 d4 22. h5 Nh8 23. e5 Re8 24. Bf6! h6 25. Qf4 Bb4 26. Bd3 d5 27. Bxg7 Kxg7 28. Qf6+ and Black resigned in Nakamura – Amin, Casablanca 2024.

11. ... Na5 12. Qa4 Nec6 13. dxe5 Qc5? 14. Rd5

Whoops. The queen suddenly is running out of squares.

14. ... Qxf2+ 15. Kh1

Now Ra1-f1 threatens to trap the queen. Anand grabs as much material as he can, but it's of no use.

15. ... Qb2 16. Rb1 Qxa3

If 16. ... Qxc3 17. Rd3.

17. Qxa3 Nxc4 18. Qa4 Ne3 19. Rxb6 Nxd5 20. Rxc6, Black resigned.

Top: Carlsen and Nakamura face off. Middle: A very pleased event winner. Bottom: Chess fans are the same all around the world!

Carlsen won the event without much difficulty, scoring 4½/6 to finish a point ahead of Nakamura at 3½. Anand had an even score, while Amin managed one draw against each of the world champions.

Sharjah Masters

After some months in the proverbial wilderness, GM Sam Shankland returned to form with a shared first-place finish at the Sharjah Masters. The tournament, held from May 13-23 in the United Arab Emirates, has become one of the major open events on the international tournament calendar. This year's field included GMs Vladimir Artemiev, Arjun Erigaisi, Andrey Esipenko, Parham Maghsoodloo, Teimour Radjabov, M. Amin Tabatabaei, and Yu Yangyi, among others.

At 6½/9, Shankland split top honors with GMs Bardiya Daneshvar, Volodar Murzin, and Shamsiddin Vokhidov. Never one to mince words, the 32-year-old Californian posted a frank celebratory message to Facebook after the final round, noting the relative youth of his co-winners, and the fact that he was the only player over 30 to finish with a plus score.

Readers of GM Joel Benjamin's column were already treated to analysis of Shankland's win over GM Hans Niemann in the August issue, but it wasn't only endgame prowess that led to Shankland's success. Check out these two wins with the black pieces, both coming in an opening — the King's Indian — that Shankland had never played with Black in serious games.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E94)

GM Mittal Aditya (2608)
GM Sam Shankland (2671)
Sharjah Masters (3), Sharjah,
05.16.2024

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 g6 3. c4 Bg7 4. Nc3 0-0 5. e4 d6 6. Be2 e5 7. 0-0 Bg4 8. d5 a5 9. h3 Bxf3 10. Bxf3 Nbd7 11. Rb1 h5 12. Bg5 Qe8 13. a3 Nh7 14. Be3 Bf6 15. g3 Bg5 16. Bxg5 Nxd7 17. Bg2 Qe7 18. f4 Nh7 19. f5 Kh8 20. Kh2 Rg8 21. Qd2 a4 22. Nb5 Ndf6 23. c5 dxc5 24. d6 cxd6 25. Qxd6 Rge8 26. Rfd1 Ra6 27. Qd2 Kg7 28. Rbc1 Rc8 29. Rc4 Rcc6 30. Qc3 Nd7 31. Qd2 Nhf6 32. Bf1 Nb6 33. Rc2 Nxe4 34. Qe2 Nf6 35. Bg2 e4 36. Nc3 gxf5 37. Rf1 Qe5 38. Qe3 Kg6 39. Rcf2 Nbd5 40. Qc1 Ne7 41. Ne2 Rab6 42. Nf4+ Kh7 43. Qc4 Kg7 44. Qxa4 h4 45. gxh4 Ng6 46. Kg1 Rxb2 47. Nh5+ Nxh5 48. Rxf5 Rxg2+ 49. Kxg2 Nxh4+, White resigned.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E94)

GM Mohammad Muradli (2561)
GM Sam Shankland (2671)
Sharjah Masters (5), Sharjah,
05.18.2024

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Nf3 0-0 6. Be2 e5 7. 0-0 Na6 8. Re1 Bg4 9. Be3 exd4 10. Nxd4 Bxe2 11. Qxe2 Re8 12. f3 c6 13. Rad1 Nd7 14. Rd2 Qe7 15. Qd1 Rad8 16. Nde2 Ne5 17. b3 Nc5 18. Qc2 a6 19. Bf2 b5 20. cxb5 axb5 21. a4 bxa4 22. Nxa4 Na6 23. h3 d5 24. exd5 Nb4 25. Qd1 Nxd5 26. Kh1 Bh6 27. Bc5 Qf6 28. f4 Nxf4 29. Nxf4 Bxf4 30. Rxd8 Rxd8 31. Qe2 Rd2 32. Qf1 Qg5 33. Re4 Bg3 34. Rd4 h5 35. Nc3 Rxd4 36. Bxd4 Qd2 37. Qd1 Qxd1+ 38. Nxd1 Nd3 39. Nc3 f5 40. Kg1 Kf7 41. Kf1 Ke6 42. Be3 h4 43. Ke2 Ne1 44. Kf1 Nc2 45. Ke2 Be5 46. Nb1 Nxe3 47. Kxe3 g5 48. Kd3 g4 49. Nd2 Kd5 50. Nc4 Bd4 51. Nd2 Ba7 52. Nc4 Bc5 53. Nd2 Ke5 54. Ke2 Kf4 55. hxg4 fxg4 56. Kf1 h3 57. gxh3 gxh3 58. b4 Be3 59. Nc4 Kf3, White resigned.

Other Americans in the Masters included GMs Abhimanyu Mishra (6/9, 12th place), Niemann (5½/9, 15th place), and Sam Sevian (5/9, 29th place). IM Ali Farahat (26th place) and FM Shubh Jayesh Laddha (29th place) both competed in the Challengers section, each scoring 5/9.

Chicago Open

Without a livestream or DGT boards broadcasting top games, the 2024 Chicago Open (May 23-27, 2024, Wheeling, Illinois) flew a bit under the radar this year. But it was an event to remember for GM Mikhail Antipov, who took home \$10,300 for his five days of work. At 7½/9, he finished a full point ahead of six players — GMs John Michael Burke, Robby Kevlishvili, Semen Khanin, Arman Mikaelyan, Tuan Mihn Le, and Jianchao Zhou — who tied for second place with 6½ points. Nine players finished in a logjam for eighth through 16th place with 6/9.

Other first-place finishers: Nelson Wilfredo Fernandez, James Neal, and Kenneth T. Wallace in the U2300; Dane Zagar in the U2100; Miles Thomas Brown in the U1900; Zachary Jacob Thayer in the U1700; Joshua Wang in the U1500; and Patrick Edward McDonnell in the U1300. The Mixed Doubles prize went to Dane Zagar and Ksenija A. Matus. FM Liam Henry Putnam won the Open Blitz, while Lance A. Winters took top honors in the U1900 Blitz.

New Titles

Finally, hearty congratulations to these Americans who received new FIDE titles between May 14 and Aug. 8, 2024.

- CM: Tyson Brady, Avi Harrison Kaplan, Andrew Metrick, Michael Omori, Maxwell Yang
- WCM: Whitney Tse, Aparna Yellamraju, Abigail Zhou
- FM: James Chirilov, Vedant Talwalker
- IM: Eric Liu, Varun Krishnan



GM Sam Shankland



GM Mikhail Antipov

More Tal Magic

Another trip into the deep, dark forest

BY **BRUCE PANDOLFINI**

IN COMPLICATED, UNCLEAR positions, one typical course of action is to choose a plan that keeps the draw in hand. You're not necessarily playing for a draw, but it's nice to know you can essentially force one wherever the situation takes you. This kind of thinking sometimes went out the window when facing Mikhail Tal. At any point he could turn the logic of things upside down by a sudden sacrifice. Take, for instance, this month's game, played in the 1961 European Championship against IM Roman Toran Albero (White). Just when Toran perhaps thought he had a perpetual check, he suddenly had to appreciate he didn't.

ENGLISH OPENING (A21)

IM Roman Toran Albero

GM Mikhail Tal

European Championship, 1961

1. c4 e5 2. Nc3 d6 3. g3 f5 4. d4 e4 5. f3 Nf6 6. Bg2 exf3 7. Nxf3



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

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

7. Par Score 5 g6
The position so far favors White, with a space edge and slightly more promising attacking possibilities. You may accept **full credit** for either 7. ... Be7 or 7. ... Nc6.

8. 0-0
White gets the king out of the center and is now ready to pursue a kingside assault. ******

8. Par Score 5 Bg7
Having played 7. ... g6, Black should complete the fianchetto.

9. e4
Ahead in development, White pushes his attack. ******

9. Par Score 5 fxe4
This is better than 9. ... Nxe4 10. Nxe4 fxe4 11. Ng5, when Black's position seems more vulnerable.

10. Ng5
White gets the pawn back. ******

10. Par Score 4 0-0
By castling, Black has more or less equalized.

11. Ngxe4
For the sake of furthering a kingside initiative, 11. Ncxe4 was preferable. Either way, exchanges are likely to ensue. ******

11. Par Score 5 Nxe4

12. Rxf8+
It was also reasonable to simply recapture

with 12. Nxe4. ******

12. Par Score 5 Qxf8
Black's pieces are starting to get some activity.

13. Nxe4
With a centralized knight, White's position doesn't look too bad. ******

13. Par Score 5 Nc6
Black develops with a threat.

14. Be3
Developing and defending, though the opening of the position has given Black a few prospects. ******

14. Par Score 5 Bf5
The game is really even at this point.

15. Qd2
White tries to secure the e3-bishop, while clearing the way for his undeveloped rook. ******

15. Par Score 5 Re8
Of course, Black has a rook, too, and wastes no time getting it into action.

16. Ng5
Threatening a pesky check at d5. Give yourself **1 bonus point** if you had considered 16. Rf1, pinning the f5-bishop. ******

16. Par Score 6 Rxe3
On the surface, an easy move to play. Obviously, 17. Qxe3 is met by 17. ... Bxd4, but has Tal missed or undervalued something?

17. Bd5+
Black's response is essentially forced. ******

17. Par Score 4 Kh8

18. Nf7+

ABCS OF CHESS

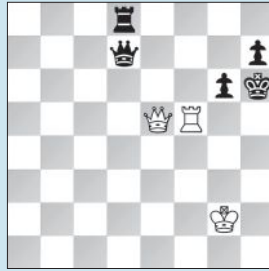
THESE PROBLEMS ARE ALL related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 63.

SEPTEMBER EXERCISE:

Here's a way to improve your defense while practicing your tactics: Work with a collection of winning shots — it could be a book of stratagems or a tactical database. Begin analyzing a position from the winning side, trying to find the solution. Then see whether you can find a way to avert the looming tactic. As you thwart example after example, you should begin to develop a greater sensitivity to potential threats and start becoming more of a two-way player.

PROBLEM 1

Mating net



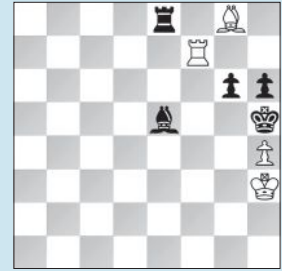
PROBLEM 2

Mating net



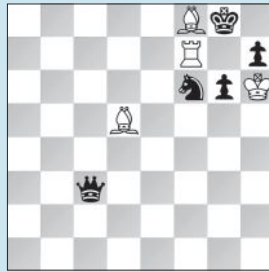
PROBLEM 3

Mating net



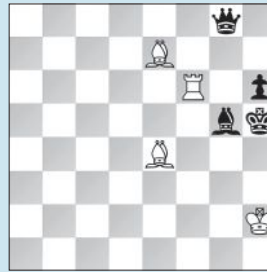
PROBLEM 4

Mating net



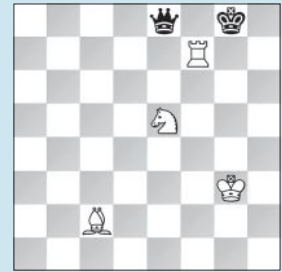
PROBLEM 5

Mating net



PROBLEM 6

Mating net



Perhaps White had expected 18. ... Kg8 19. Nh6+ Kh8 20. Nf7+ with a perpetual. **

18. Par Score 8 Qxf7
But he's playing Tal! Besides, sacrificing the queen objectively gets enough play.

19. Bxf7 **

19. Par Score 6 Rd3
Saving the rook with a gain of time, while acquiring the d4-pawn with check.

20. Qe2
The move 20. Qe1 would have led to a similar situation. **

20. Par Score 5 Bxd4+

21. Kg2
If 21. Kf1, then 21. ... Bh3+ 22. Ke1 Re3 wins back the queen. And after 21. Kh1 Re3, Black is threatening the crushing 22. ... Be4+. Add **1 bonus point** for seeing both of those lines. **

21. Par Score 5 Ne5
Tal has bishop, knight and pawn for the queen, and he's threatening to get a third minor piece.

22. Rd1
If 22. ... Rxd1 23. Qxd1 Nxf7 24. Qxd4+. **

22. Par Score 6 Re3
This keeps various threats alive. White must save his queen once again.

23. Qf1
It's hard to say what White should have done. Possibly 23. Qd2 was a tad better, possibly not. **

23. Par Score 5 Be4+
White must make a run for it.

24. Kh3
On 24. Kg1, there follows 24. ... Rxd3 mate; on 24. Kf2, Black wins by 24. ... Ng4+ 25. Kg1 Rxd3 mate (add **1 bonus point** for seeing both of those). **

24. Par Score 6 Rf3
Both sides have a bishop under fire, but so is White's queen.

25. Qe2
The try 25. Qe1 wasn't any better. **

25. Par Score 5 Bf5+
If 26. Kg2 Rf2+ 27. Qxf2 Bxf2 28. Kxf2 Nxf7, Black has a bishop, knight and pawn for a rook, with an easy-enough win. And on 26. Kh4 Be3 (or 26. ... Rf2), White isn't long for the world. Add **1 bonus point** for seeing all of that.

26. White resigns

Another lovely example of Tal being Tal. ♠



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

History Never Repeats

...or sometimes it does, if you don't read my column.

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN

T

HE 2024 NORWAY CHESS event used an interesting format to combat the prevalence of draws in 21st-century chess.

Soccer-style scoring awarded winners three points. A draw earned each player one, but then an Armageddon game decided which player would get a one-point bonus. In such fast-twitch games, instinct (or at least very quick calculation) has to be well-honed. In this regard, it seems that amateurs are not the only players I can help!

Praggnanandhaa missed many chances to earn the bonus point by saving his eighth-round Armageddon game against Carlsen, but the last opportunity was an eerie *doppelgänger* to a game that had appeared in these very pages.

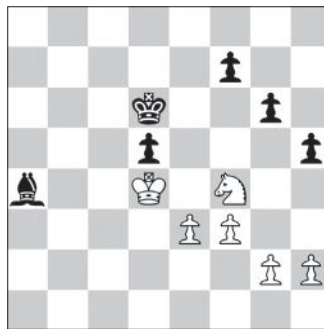
QUEEN'S PAWN OPENING (D00)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2830)

GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu (2747)
12th Norway Chess, Armageddon
Stavanger (8), 06.04.2024

1. d4 Nf6 2. Bf4 d5 3. e3 Bf5 4. c4 e6 5. Nc3 Bd6 6. Bxd6 Qxd6 7. Qb3 b6 8. Nf3 O-O 9. Be2 dxc4 10. Qxc4 a6 11. O-O Nbd7 12. Rfd1 b5 13. Qb3 c5 14. dxc5 Qxc5 15. Nd4 Bg6 16. Bf3 Ra7 17. Rac1 Qg5 18. Nc6 Ne5 19. Nxe5 Qxe5 20. a4 bxa4 21. Qb6 Qb8 22. Nxa4 h6 23. Be2 Nd5 24. Qd4 a5 25. Nc5 Qb6 26. Bf3 Rb8 27. Bxd5 exd5 28. b3 Rc7 29. Ne6 Qxd4 30. Nxd4 Rbc8 31. Ra1 Bc2 32. Rdc1 Bd3 33. Rxc7 Rxc7 34. f3 Rc5 35. Kf2 h5 36. Ke1 g6 37. Kd2 Bf5 38. Rc1 Rxc1 39. Kxc1 Bd7 40. Kb2 Kf8 41. Kc3

41. ... Ke7 42. Ne2 Kd6 43. Kd4 a4 44. bxa4 Bxa4 45. Nf4



There is no question which minor piece rules in this endgame, but with the limited pawn count Black may just hold on by his fingernails.

45. ... Bb3

The isolated d-pawn will have to be abandoned, but for now waiting is objectively the best course. Still, after 45. ... h4!? 46. Nxd5 Ke6 White would hardly be able to advance his pawns without allowing pawn trades.

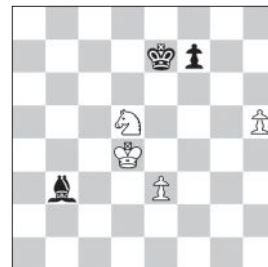
46. h4!

By fixing Black's pawns in place, White ensures Black will have to worry about an outside passed pawn.

46. ... Ba2 47. g4 hxg4 48. fxg4 Ke7?!

On the surface it seems this game is decided by one gross blunder at the end, because that is the story engines often tell us: A position is drawn until it isn't. Yet Pragg's loss was more a descent down

the slippery slope. Here patient waiting would lead to a more forcibly drawn position: (a) 48. ... Bb3! 49. h5 (otherwise Black maintains the d5-pawn) 49. ... gxh5 50. gxh5 Ke7 51. Nxd5+ and now:



POSITION AFTER 51. Nxd5+

(a1) The most direct path to a draw is actually 51. ... Bxd5, but boys and girls please remember that trading into the pawn ending when behind will be the wrong move unless you can prove it is right! Here the finish can be calculated: 52. Kxd5 Kf6 53. Kd6 Kg5 54. Ke7 Kxh5 55. Kxf7 Kg4! and Black eliminates the last pawn.

(a2) After 51. ... Kf8 (51. ... Ke6?? 52. h6 Bc2 53. e4 queens the pawn — stopping the h-pawn is priority one!) 52. h6 and now there are two paths: 52. ... f5 53. Ke5 Kf7 54. Ne7 Bc2 55. Nxf5 Kg6 56. e4 Bb1, or 52. ... Kg8 53. Nf6+ Kh8. In both cases White cannot force any further progress.

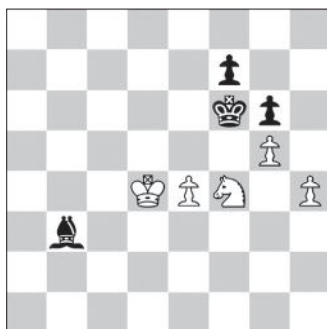
Black could also hold easily with a surprising pawn sacrifice: (b) 48. ... g5!? 49. hxg5 Bb3 50. g6 fxe6 51. Nxg6 Ke6 52. Nf4+ Kf6 and once White is down to his last pawn the bishop will be poised to give its life for it.

49. Nxd5+ Ke6 50. e4 Bb3 51. Nf4+

It's not for nothing that in *World Champion Chess for Juniors* I dubbed Magnus the "Master of Nothing." He wins so many objectively drawn positions because he always seems to find the way to give his opponents the greatest opportunity to err.

Here the direct approach comes up short (though in this case, Stockfish has trouble seeing the fortress): 51. h5 gxh5 52. gxh5 f6 53. h6 Kf7 54. h7 Kg7 55. Nxf6 Bf7 and again Black establishes a fortress. White can win the bishop with the e-pawn, but with his knight tethered to the h-pawn the best he can do is stalemate.

51. ... Kf6 52. g5+



52...Kg7?

This decision does not move the needle, as it's a correctable error, but it shows Pragg does not know which way his king should go.

For reasons that will become clear, 52. ... Ke7 is the right call.

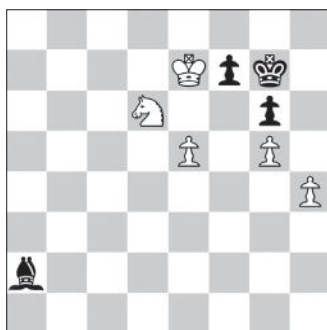
53. Ke5 Bc2 54. Nd5 Bd3??

This miscue is the game-changer. After 54. ... Kf8! White can't get the king to d6 without losing the e-pawn.

55. Nf6 Kf8 56. Kd6 Bb1 57. Kd7 Bc2 58. Kd8 Bb1 59. Nd7+ Kg7 60. e5 Bf5 61. Ke7 Bb1

It's a similar conclusion after 61. ... Bxd7 62. Kxd7 Kf8 63. e6.

62. Nc5 Bc2 63. Nb7 Bb1 64. Nd6 Ba2



65. Nxf7! Bxf7 66. e6 Bg8 67. Kd7, Black resigned.

After the bishop goes he will lose the g6-pawn to zugzwang.

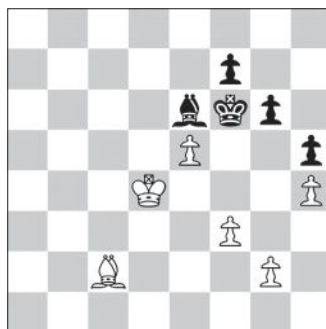
The final stages of the above game produced an unlikely thematic match with a game from our June 2023 Endgame School "class."

GHOSTLY DOUBLE

GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly (2609)

GM Yasser Quesada Perez (2579)

Capablanca Memorial Elite (2), Havana, 04.20.2022



BLACK TO MOVE

The pawn structure is a bit altered, and White has a different minor piece. But just watch...

34. ... Kg7??

Here another grandmaster erroneously chooses to hug his pawns rather than

contest invasion squares. Black still has to play with some accuracy after 34. ... Ke7, but, as my analysis showed, he would be able to hold.

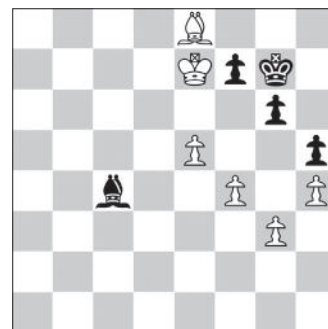
35. Kc5 Ba2

Black goes down hard after 35. ... f6 36. Kd6 Kf7 37. Bxg6+.

36. Kd6 Bc4

And here 36. ... Kf8 37. e6! Bxe6 38. Bxg6 wins easily as the pawn ending is hopeless, but the alternative is to shed the h-pawn.

37. Ke7 Be6 38. Be4 Bc4 39. f4 Bb3 40. Bc6 Bc4 41. g3 Bb3 42. Be8 Bc4



43. Bxf7! Bxf7 44. e6 Bg8 45. Kd7 Bf7

46. e7!, Black resigned.

The difference in the kingside pawns produces one final nicety here. White has to avoid 46. exf7? Kxf7 drawing, but now 46. ... Kf6 47. e8=Q Bxe8+ 48. Kxe8 Ke6 49. Kf8 Kf6 50. Kg8 wins. ♠

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More Life, More Games

Victor Bologan updates his autobiography.

BY IM JOHN WATSON

IN 2007, RUSSELL ENTERPRISES published *Victor Bologan: Selected Games 1985-2004*.

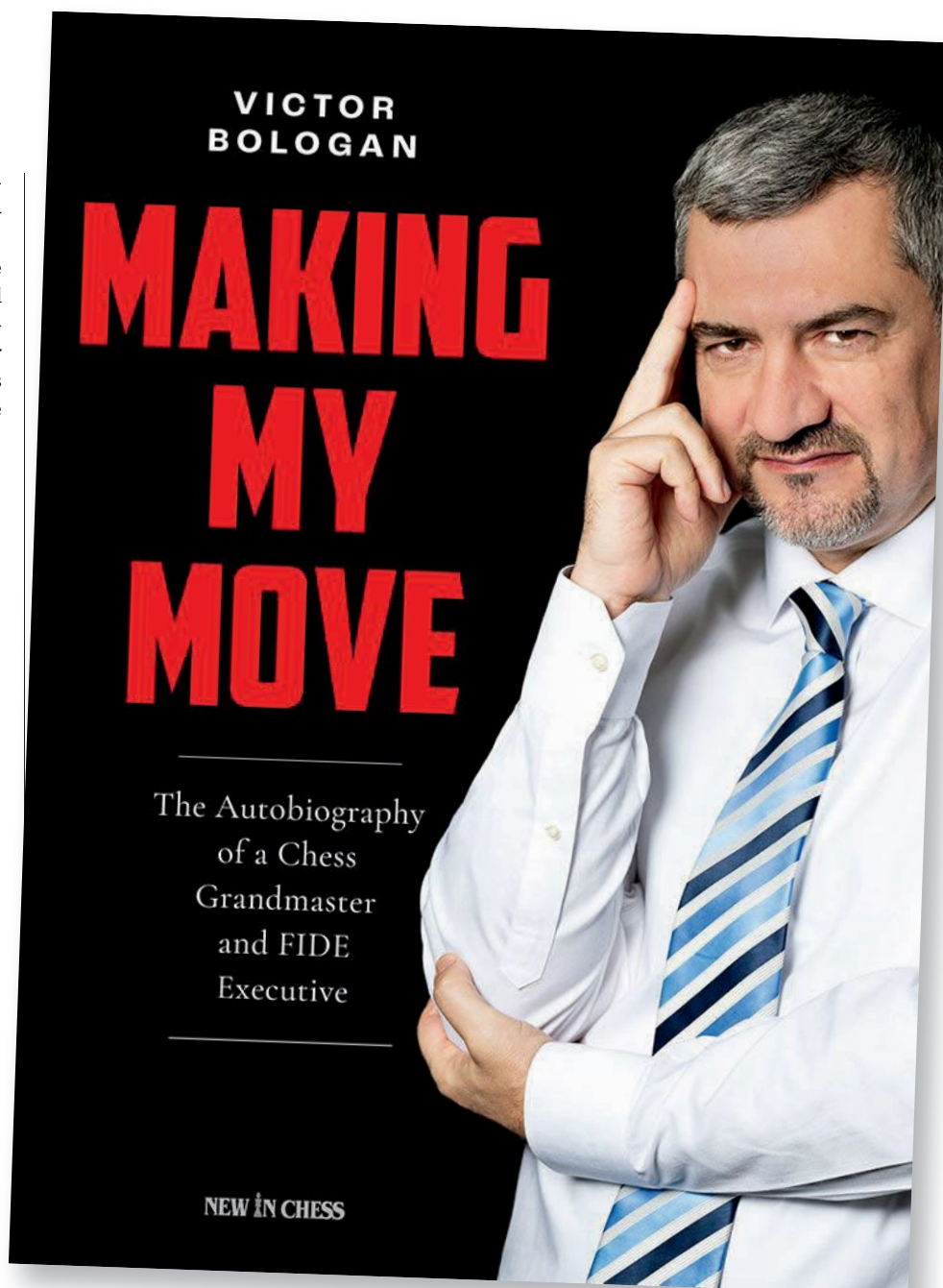
This was an unusual choice for a U.S. publisher: Although Bologan had worked his way into the world's top 20 players, he was far from famous and, as a player from Moldova, not at all well known in this country. Happily, the book turned out to be an entertaining autobiography and games collection featuring an array of exciting battles against leading players, with many personal anecdotes and observations. I reviewed the book favorably for *The Week in Chess* but, predictably, it didn't attract much attention and became a sort of lost masterpiece.

Now, 17 years later, Bologan has put out a greatly expanded edition of his book, covering his later chess career as well as his ventures into chess politics and Moldovan political life. The material on his family background, childhood, and chess development remains, and the original 52 games are still here, with the annotations updated based on computer analysis. To this, Bologan has added 36 games from 2005 through 2018.

He retains the original format, with "lessons" at the end of each game on significant factors affecting the play, psychological elements, and advanced tips about structures, opening advice, critical moments, using the pieces optimally, and the like. In his foreword, Garry Kasparov praises the annotations for Bologan's ability to associate specific moves and plans with a general concept and to connect his personal feelings in

the tensest moments with the decisions he ultimately made.

Throughout the book, Bologan emphasizes that he learned about chess and kept up with the game's developments through his trainers and sessions with other players. He describes his coaches in detail, including well-known figures such as Viacheslav Chebanenko, Zigurds Lanka, Mark Dvoretsky and Mikhail Podgaets. There are many references and a special section devoted to Chebanenko, whom he calls the "founder of the Moldovan chess school." Chebanenko is perhaps best known for his development of the Slav Defense system with an early ... a7-a6, which bears his name to this day, as



well as Bf1-b5(+) in the Sicilian. Bologan, who has become a prolific chess author, has written books about both these subjects.

Bologan's emphasis on working with other competitors strikes me as particularly important for young players today. Although he sometimes works alone, he says it's "much more convenient for me to study in pairs: Alexei Shirov, Viorel Iordachescu, Alexey Fedorov, Igor Lysyj, Anatoly Karpov, Garry Kasparov, Alexander Morozevich, Borki Predojevic, Alexander Onischuk, Alexander Riazantsev, Ruslan Ponomarev, Vladimir Kramnik, Dmitry Svetushkin, Judit Polgar, Ernesto Inarkiev, Alexander Motylev — the list could be continued for a long time." The book benefits from descriptions of these luminaries and the discoveries they came up with. I wonder whether today's players, for all the benefits of home study with databases and engines, lose something from the spontaneity and creativity that comes with bouncing ideas off a study partner.

Most of the games in this collection are complex affairs, too lengthy to show here. I've chosen a couple of shorter excerpts:

EXCHANGE SAC

GM Victor Bologan (2585)
GM Eduardas Rozentalis (2575)
Belfort, 1998



WHITE TO MOVE

Bologan loved to play with an isolated queen's pawn. Black's position looks pretty solid, but White finds a dynamic continuation that causes lasting problems for his opponent:

17. Rxe6!

Bologan: "Forward into the abyss! By sacrificing a whole Exchange, I was well aware that I could come unstuck, but after all, chess is just a game! This sacrifice was inspired by one of Anand's games with Yusupov. After us, Topalov sacrificed an

Exchange against Anand in a similar way in 2003."

17. ... fxe6 18. Bg6 Rf8 19. Qe2 Nc7?!

Bologan suggests 19. ... Qd7 20. Re1 Bd6, when 21. Bb1! has ideas of Ne4 or Qd3 with an attack that fully compensates for the Exchange.

20. Re1 Bd6 21. Bb1 Qe7?!

This is an unfortunate square, but White stands better in any case.

22. Ne5 Bxe5 23. dxe5 Nfd5 24. Nxd5

Nxd5 25. Qe4 g5 26. Qg6+ Qg7 27. Qxe6+ Kh8 28. h4! Nf4 29. Qc4 Rad8 30. Bc3 Nd5 31. hxc5 hxc5 32. Bd2 Nf4 33. Bb4 Qf7? White's attack is too strong anyway — 33. ... Rfe8 34. e6 Rd4 35. Qb3 Nd5 36. Bd6.

34. e6 Nxe6 35. Bxf8, Black resigned.

Bologan's accurate calculation was one thing that made him such a dangerous attacker:

A QUICK WIPEOUT

GM Victor Bologan (2659)
GM Rafael Vaganian (2587)
European Club Cup (3), Fuegen,
10.12.2006



BLACK TO MOVE

14. ... Nxe5 15. Qg3 Nxd3?

Tempting, but this loses. Bologan gives 15. ... Ng4! 16. Qxg4 f5, when his 17. Qg3 is ultimately good, and 17. Qh4! c4 18. Bf6! cxd3+ 19. cxd3 Kf7 20. Be5 Qd8 21. Qf4 is easier still.

16. Bf6! Nf4+

(see diagram top of next column)

Black had seen thus far but missed White's idea. Instead, 16. ... g6 17. hxc6 fxc6 18. Rxh7! wins.

17. Kd2!



POSITION AFTER 16. ... Nxf4+

The only move. Black had prepared 17. Qxf4?? e5! followed by 18. ... Qa6+! and 19. ... Qxf6, winning. Also wrong was 17. Ke1? Ng6 18. hxc6 fxc6 with an equal position.

17. ... Ng6 18. hxc6 fxc6

Or 18. ... hxc6 19. Rah1 and mate next.

19. Rxh7!, Black resigned.

After 19. ... Kxh7 20. Rh1+ Kg8 21. Qxg6 he gets mated. Simple but lovely.

Bologan was active professionally through 2018, and still plays a lot of blitz and rapid chess, but in recent years has turned his attention to politics. Elected to the Parliament of Moldova, he served on the commission for culture, sports, and education, and then as chair of the Moldovan delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Council in Geneva. In the chess realm, he helped get Arkady Dvorkovich elected and reelected as FIDE president, and serves as FIDE executive director. Although Bologan describes FIDE elections in some detail, he doesn't discuss any controversial issues — perhaps understandable, but disappointing for the reader.

While Bologan's games are naturally central to this book, he puts his career in context of his family and life. He has spent many years away from Moldova, notably in Russia and Qatar, and describes his experiences in these environments. Bologan has served in a wide variety of roles in the chess world, and these experiences put his life in a broader context that should make it more accessible to the average reader.

I can freely recommend this book to every fan of games collections and chess culture, with the hope that it will inspire more players to write about their games and lives. ♠

Bologan, Victor. Making My Move: The Autobiography of a Chess Grandmaster and FIDE Executive. New In Chess, 2024. ISBN 978-9083406466, 424 pp. (Available at uscf-sales.com, product code B0315NIC, \$29.95.)

TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

Nationals

HERITAGE EVENT • NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

65th Annual U.S. Armed Forces Open Chess Championship

OCTOBER 12-14, 2024, MARYLAND

Event site: United States Naval Academy Address: 121 Blake Road, Annapolis, MD 22485 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Robert Getty Email: chess@gettyfamily.com Phone: 540-990-3250 Website: <https://vachess.org> TLA ID: 44568

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 MIKHAELIAN	--	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	

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DEADLINE FOR PRINT TLA SUBMISSIONS

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

The Grand Prix continues in 2024. For information visit new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight September Sundays Classic SEPTEMBER 1-29, 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 Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 919-422-2535 Website: DragonKnightChess.com TLA ID: 44579

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight National Hummingbird Day Classic SEPTEMBER 7, 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 Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 919-422-2535 Website: DragonKnightChess.com TLA ID: 44576

GRAND PRIX

5-SS Late Summer Futurity Swiss SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2024, MICHIGAN

Event site: Ed Mandell Chess Club Address: 22011 Coolidge Hwy, Oak Park, IL 48237 Overall prize fund: \$2,500 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Edward Mandell Email: eman.1943@aol.com Phone: 2486352375 Website: n/a TLA ID: 44974

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight "I Wanna Iguana" Day Classic SEPTEMBER 14, 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 Email: Jon@DragonKnightChess.com Phone: 919-422-2535 Website: DragonKnightChess.com TLA ID: 44577

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Big September Dragon Knight Classic SEPTEMBER 21, 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 Email: Jon@DragonKnightChess.com Phone: 919-422-2535 Website: DragonKnightChess.com TLA ID: 44973

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

2024 Annual Harold Steen Memorial Cup SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2024, MICHIGAN

Event site: Crowne Plaza Auburn Hills Address: 1500 N. Opdyke Rd., Auburn Hills, MI 48326 Overall prize fund: \$6,000 GP Points: 40 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Edward Mandell Email: eman.1943@aol.com Phone: 2486352375 Website: n/a TLA ID: 45067

GRAND PRIX

CFCC 2024 Autumn Open & Scholastic SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2024, FLORIDA

Event site: Holiday Inn Resort Lake Buena Vista Address: 13351 State Road 535, Orlando, FL 32821 Overall prize fund: \$8,500 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Larry Storch Email: larrystorch88@gmail.com Phone: n/a Website: n/a TLA ID: 44608

GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

78th Peter P. Lahde Tennessee OPEN and State Championship! (2024) SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2024, TENNESSEE

Event site: Memphis Chess Club Address: 195 Madison Avenue, Memphis, TN 38103 Overall prize fund: \$6,025 GP Points: 15 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Memphis Chess Club Email: info@memphischessclub.com Phone: n/a Website: memphischessclub.com TLA ID: 44142

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

2024 National North Carolina Day Classic SEPTEMBER 28, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$764 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Email: Jon@DragonKnightChess.com Phone: 919-422-2535 Website: DragonKnightChess.com TLA ID: 44977

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2024 PA State Game/60 Championship - West SEPTEMBER 28, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: William Pitt Union, Univ. of Pittsburgh Address: 5th Ave. & Bigelow Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15213 Overall prize fund: \$695 GP Points: 6 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Tom M Martinak Email: martinak_tom_m@hotmail.com Phone: 412-908-0286 Website: psfchess.org/clearinghouse TLA ID: 44561

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

41st Annual Reno Western States Open OCTOBER 4-6, 2024, NEVADA

Event site: CIRCUS CIRCUS RENO HOTEL/CASINO, Address: 500 N. Sierra Street, Reno, NV 89503 Overall prize fund: \$27,500 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Jerry Weikel Email: wackykl@aol.com Phone: 775-354-8728 Website: renochoess.org TLA ID: 44252

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

3rd Skyline Open

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024, VIRGINIA

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

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

32nd annual Midwest Class Championships OCTOBER 11-13, 2024, ILLINOIS

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

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2024 Michigan Bottom Half Class Championships

OCTOBER 12-13, 2024, MICHIGAN

Event site: Wyndham Garden Ann Arbor Address: 2900 Jackson Ave, Ann Arbor, MI, 48103 Overall prize fund: \$2,575 GP Points: 15 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Michigan Chess Association Email: jeffchess64@gmail.com Phone: 8109557271 Website: <https://www.michess.org/> TLA ID: 44991

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2024 SPICE Cup Open

OCTOBER 13-18, 2024, MISSOURI

Event site: Drury Inn & Suites St. Louis Forest Park Address: 2111 Sulphur Ave, St. Louis, MO 63139 Overall prize fund: see online TLA GP Points: 200 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Webster University Email: awzyzywan@webster.edu Phone: 3142468075 Website: <http://www.webster.edu/spice/> TLA ID: 45111

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

89th Greater Boston Open

OCTOBER 13, 2024, MASSACHUSETTS

Event site: Westford Regency Inn & Conference Center Address: 219 Littleton Rd., Westford MA 01886 Overall prize fund: \$3,000 GP Points: 15 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Massachusetts Chess Association Email: info@masschess.org Phone: 603-891-2484 Website: masschess.org TLA ID: 44737

GRAND PRIX

2024 South Dakota Governor's Cup OCTOBER 18-20, 2024, SOUTH DAKOTA

Event site: Holiday Inn City Centre Address: 100 W. 8th St., Sioux Falls, SD 57104 Overall prize fund: \$12,000 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Glenn Panner Email: glenn@chessweekend.com Phone: n/a Website: <https://www.chessweekend.com/> TLA ID: 43161

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

13th annual Hartford Open

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024, CONNECTICUT

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

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

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

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

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

1st Origami Open!

OCTOBER 25-27, 2024, MASSACHUSETTS

Event site: Westford Regency Inn & Conference Center Address: 219 Littleton Road, Westford, MA 01886 Overall prize fund: \$5,500 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: N

Handicap accessible: N **Residency restriction:** N
Organizer: Northern New England Chess Association
Email: josephtruelson@gmail.com **Phone:** 651-443-6341 **Website:** newenglandchess.org **TLA ID:** 44314

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX

2024 Fredericksburg Open
OCTOBER 26-27, 2024, VIRGINIA
Event site: Country Inn & Suites South **Address:** 10358 Patriot Highway, Fredericksburg, VA 22408
Overall prize fund: \$4,000 **GP Points:** 20 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Mike Hoffpauir, NTD **Email:** mhoffpauir@aol.com **Phone:** 757-846-4805 **Website:** https://www.vachess.org **TLA ID:** 44136

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

11th annual Eastern Chess Congress Blitz Championship
OCTOBER 26, 2024, NEW JERSEY
Event site: Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village **Address:** 201 Village Blvd, Princeton, NJ 08540 **Overall prize fund:** \$500 **GP Points:** 50 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 44906

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2024 PA State Action Chess Championship - West
OCTOBER 26, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA
Event site: William Pitt Union, Univ. of Pittsburgh **Address:** 5th Ave. & Bigelow Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15213 **Overall prize fund:** \$690 **GP Points:** 6 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Tom M Martinak **Email:** martinak_tom_m@hotmail.com **Phone:** 412-908-0286 **Website:** pscfchess.org/clearinghouse **TLA ID:** 44970

GRAND PRIX

GM Alex Sherzer Memorial Mid-Atlantic Masters
NOVEMBER 1-3, 2024, VIRGINIA
Event site: Executive Conference Center Dulles **Address:** 22685 Holiday Park Dr. Suite 60, Sterling, VA 20166 **Overall prize fund:** \$7,000 **GP Points:** 120 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** David Mehler **Email:** Dmehler@chessctr.org **Phone:** n/a **Website:** https://chessctr.org/midatlanticmasters/ **TLA ID:** 45203

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

19th annual Los Angeles Open
NOVEMBER 1-3, 2024, CALIFORNIA, S.
Event site: Hilton Orange County Airport **Address:** 18800 MacArthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612 **Overall prize fund:** \$20,000 **GP Points:** 120 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 44671

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

9th annual Los Angeles Open Blitz Championship
NOVEMBER 2, 2024, CALIFORNIA, S.
Event site: Hilton Orange County Airport **Address:** 18800 MacArthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612 **Overall prize fund:** \$500 **GP Points:** 10 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 44912

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

33rd annual Kings Island Open
NOVEMBER 15-17, 2024, OHIO
Event site: Embassy Suites Cincinnati NE **Address:** 4554 Lake Forest Dr., Blue Ash, OH 45242 **Overall prize fund:** \$25,000 **GP Points:** 300 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 44793

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

59th American Open
NOVEMBER 26-DECEMBER 1, 2024, CALIFORNIA, S.
Event site: Hyatt Regency Orange County **Address:** 11999 Harbor Blvd, Garden Grove, CA 92840 **Overall**

prize fund: see online **TLA GP Points:** 150 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** ChessPalace **Email:** play@americanopen.org **Phone:** 714-643-8828 **Website:** americanopen.org **TLA ID:** 44595

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

55th annual National Chess Congress
NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 1, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA
Event site: Loews Hotel **Address:** 11200 Market St., Philadelphia, PA 19107 **Overall prize fund:** \$45,000 **GP Points:** 200 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 44794

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

49th annual Eastern Open
DECEMBER 26-29, 2024, VIRGINIA
Event site: Hyatt Regency Crystal City **Address:** 2799 Richmond Highway, Arlington, VA 22202 **Overall prize fund:** \$30,000 **GP Points:** 150 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.co **TLA ID:** 44795

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

34th annual North American Open
DECEMBER 26-30, 2024, NEVADA
Event site: Horseshoe Casino Resort (formerly Bally's) **Address:** 3645 Las Vegas Blvd. S, Las Vegas, NV 89103 **Overall prize fund:** \$130,000 **GP Points:** 300 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 44741

GRAND PRIX

2nd World Chess Festival
DECEMBER 28-31, 2024, HAWAII
Event site: Neal Blaisdell Center **Address:** 777 Ward Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96814 **Overall prize fund:** \$5,000 **GP Points:** 30 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Joe Hanley **Email:** hanleychessacademy@gmail.com **Phone:** 7149253195 **Website:** http://hanleychessacademy.com/2ndWCF.html **TLA ID:** 45182

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

33rd annual North American Blitz Championship
DECEMBER 29, 2024, NEVADA
Event site: Horseshoe Casino Resort (formerly Bally's) **Address:** 3645 Las Vegas Blvd. S, Las Vegas, NV 89103 **Overall prize fund:** \$3,000 **GP Points:** 30 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 44904

Regional

ALABAMA

SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2024
78th Peter P. Lahde Tennessee OPEN and State Championship! (2024) (TN)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024
3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

ALASKA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024
3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 12, 2024

National Chess Day in Soldotna, Alaska!
Event site: Cook Inlet Academy **Address:** 145872 Kalifornsky Beach Rd, Soldotna, AK 99669 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Alaska Arctic Chess Club **Email:** alaskaarcticchessclub@fastmail.com **Phone:** n/a **Website:** twitter.com/ArcticChessClub **TLA ID:** 44724

AMERICAN SAMOA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024
3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

ARIZONA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024
3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 1-3, 2024

19th annual Los Angeles Open (CA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 28-31, 2024

2nd World Chess Festival (HI)
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 29, 2024

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

ARKANSAS

SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2024
78th Peter P. Lahde Tennessee OPEN and State Championship! (2024) (TN)
See Grand Prix

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

CALIFORNIA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024
3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 1-3, 2024

19th annual Los Angeles Open (CA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 2, 2024

9th annual Los Angeles Open Blitz Championship (CA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 28-31, 2024

2nd World Chess Festival (HI)
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 29, 2024

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

COLORADO

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024
3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

2024 South Dakota Governor's Cup (SD)
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

CONNECTICUT

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024
3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

13th annual Hartford Open (CT)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

2024 - 41st Annual Reno-Western States Open

An American Classic & Heritage Event!

Oct 4-6 & Oct 5-6 (3-day & 2-day schedules)

6SS; 6 Sect; Open-FIDE Rated; A Weikel Tourney

NEW LOCATION: CIRCUS CIRCUS HOTEL/CASINO, RENO, NV

Hotel Rates: Sun-Thu. \$81.32; Fri \$139.21; Sat \$177.80

Hotel Link before 9/17: https://book.passkey.com/go/SRRWS4

PRIZE FUND \$27,500 (b/275) Gtd. \$17,000

IM John Donaldson: "A Weikel Tournament is like a chess festival!"

Just Look! Wed.: GM Kudrin Clock Simul/Analysis! (only \$30)

Thu.: 6-7:15P Premier Chess Lecturer IM Donaldson (FREE)

7:30P GM Khachiyan - Simul (\$20); 7:30P Blitz Tourney (\$25)

Sat.: 3-4:30P IM Donaldson FREE Game/Position Analysis

Plus: Trophies, Sets & boards provided, Wall charts,

5 Demo boards, Entry under \$195!, and site of

tourney is located within a 3-hotel/casino complex

which offers many choices for food and activities!

Player: "I've played all over the US; this is the best organized chess tournament I've seen."

INFO: Email wackyyl@aol.com or Web: www.renochess.org

SEE TLA on page 56

NOVEMBER 9-10, 2024

8th Annual New York State Girls Championship! (NY)
See New York.

DELAWARE

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 26-27, 2024

2024 Fredericksburg Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

DIST. OF COLUMBIA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 26-27, 2024

2024 Fredericksburg Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

FLORIDA

SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2024

CFCC 2024 Autumn Open & Scholastic (FL)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
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 Phone: 770.744.8595 Website: mythinkchess.com/ TLA ID: 37216

SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2024

78th Peter P. Lahde Tennessee OPEN and State Championship! (2024) (TN)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

GUAM

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

HAWAII

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 28-31, 2024

2nd World Chess Festival (HI)
See Grand Prix.

IDAHO

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

ILLINOIS

SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2024

5-SS Late Summer Futurity Swiss (MI)
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2024

2024 Annual Harold Steen Memorial Cup (MI)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 11-13, 2024

32nd annual Midwest Class Championships (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 15-17, 2024

33rd annual Kings Island Open (OH)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

INDIANA

SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2024

5-SS Late Summer Futurity Swiss (MI)
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2024

2024 Annual Harold Steen Memorial Cup (MI)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 15-17, 2024

33rd annual Kings Island Open (OH)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 11-13, 2024

32nd annual Midwest Class Championships (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

IOWA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

2024 South Dakota Governor's Cup (SD)
See Grand Prix.

KANSAS

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

2024 South Dakota Governor's Cup (SD)
See Grand Prix.

KENTUCKY

SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2024

78th Peter P. Lahde Tennessee OPEN and State Championship! (2024) (TN)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 15-17, 2024

33rd annual Kings Island Open (OH)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

LOUISIANA

SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2024

78th Peter P. Lahde Tennessee OPEN and State Championship! (2024) (TN)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 12, 2024, LOUISIANA

Chess Day Swiss
Event site: Louisiana Bridge Association Address: 2709 Edenborn Ave, Metairie, LA 70002 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Downriver Chess Club of New Orleans Email: info@downriverchess.com Phone: 6(202) 656-9754 Website: <https://downriverchess.com> TLA ID: 44965

MAINE

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

MARYLAND

MARYLAND CHESS TOURNAMENTS (NORTH PENN CHESS CLUB)

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

SEPTEMBER 22, 2024

The Charm City CC 2024 Fall Action Tournament

Event site: The DoubleTree Hilton Hotel Address: 4 W University Parkway, Apt 2, Baltimore, MD 21218 Overall prize fund: see online TLA GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Alan Horowitz Email: icharmcitychess@gmail.com Phone: 9175735775 Website: https://charmcitychess.com/new_tournament TLA ID: 45001

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 25-27, 2024

28th annual Eastern Chess Congress (NJ)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 26-27, 2024

2024 Fredericksburg Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 16-17, 2024

PA Team Championship (PA)
See Pennsylvania.

NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 1, 2024

55th annual National Chess Congress (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2024

49th annual Eastern Open (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MASSACHUSETTS

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

13th annual Hartford Open (CT)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MICHIGAN

SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2024

5-SS Late Summer Futurity Swiss (MI)
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2024

2024 Annual Harold Steen Memorial Cup (MI)
See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

OCTOBER 5, 2024, MICHIGAN

2024 Michigan Women's Championship & Men's Side Event

Event site: Twin Knights Gaming Address: 4955 Rochester Rd, Troy, MI 48065 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Michigan Chess Association Email: jeffchess64@gmail.com Phone: 8109557271 Website: <https://www.michess.org/> TLA ID: 44848

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

NOVEMBER 2, 2024, MICHIGAN

2024 Michigan Scholastic Club Championships

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

NOVEMBER 15-17, 2024

33rd annual Kings Island Open (OH)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MINNESOTA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

2024 South Dakota Governor's Cup (SD)
See Grand Prix.

MISSISSIPPI

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

SEPTEMBER 14, 2024, MISSISSIPPI

2024 Mississippi State Women's Championship

Event site: Nissan Training Center Address: 300 Nissan Dr, Gate 1, Canton, MS 39047 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mark Nicholas Email: mark@mcachess.org Phone: 615-631-3876 Website: mcachess.org TLA ID: 44567

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

OCTOBER 19-20, 2024, MISSISSIPPI

2024 Mississippi State Chess Championship

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

MISSOURI

SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2024

78th Peter P. Lahde Tennessee OPEN and State Championship! (2024) (TN)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 13-18, 2024

2024 SPICE Cup Open (MO)
See Grand Prix.

MONTANA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

2024 South Dakota Governor's Cup (SD)
See Grand Prix.

NEBRASKA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

2024 South Dakota Governor's Cup (SD)
See Grand Prix.

NEVADA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 1-3, 2024

19th annual Los Angeles Open (CA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 28-31, 2024

2nd World Chess Festival (HI)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 29, 2024

33rd annual North American Blitz Championship (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

NEW JERSEY

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

13th annual Hartford Open (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 26, 2024

11th annual Eastern Chess Congress Blitz Championship (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 25-27, 2024

28th annual Eastern Chess Congress (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 9-10, 2024

8th Annual New York State Girls Championship! (NY)

See New York.

NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 1, 2024

55th annual National Chess Congress (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2024

49th annual Eastern Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW MEXICO

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW YORK

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

13th annual Hartford Open (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 25-27, 2024

28th annual Eastern Chess Congress (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 26, 2024

11th annual Eastern Chess Congress Blitz Championship (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 26-27, 2024

2024 Fredericksburg Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2024

49th annual Eastern Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

NOVEMBER 9-10, 2024, NEW YORK

8th Annual New York State Girls Championship!

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

NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 1, 2024

55th annual National Chess Congress (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NORTH CAROLINA

SEPTEMBER 1-29, 2024

Dragon Knight September Sundays Classic (NC)

See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

Dragon Knight National Hummingbird Classic (NC)

See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 14, 2024

Dragon Knight "I Wanna Iguana" Day Classic (NC)

See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 21, 2024

Big September Dragon Knight Classic (NC)

See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 28, 2024

2024 National North Carolina Day Classic (NC)

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 26-27, 2024

2024 Fredericksburg Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2024

49th annual Eastern Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NORTH DAKOTA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

2024 South Dakota Governor's Cup (SD)

See Grand Prix.

N. MARINA ISLANDS

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

OHIO

SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2024

5-SS Late Summer Futurity Swiss (MI)

See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 14-15, 2024

2024 Annual Harold Steen Memorial Cup (MI)

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 15-17, 2024

33rd annual Kings Island Open (OH)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

SEPTEMBER 28-29, 2024

9th Annual Golden Buckeye Senior Open & Adult U1800 Chess Tournament

Event site: Salt Fork State Park Address: 14755 Cadiz Rd, Lore City, OH 43755 Overall prize fund: \$0 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Grant Neilley Email: grant@neilley.com Phone: n/a Website: neilley.com/chess TLA ID: 44543

OKLAHOMA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

OREGON

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 28-31, 2024

2nd World Chess Festival (HI)

See Grand Prix.

PENNSYLVANIA

North Penn Chess Club

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

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3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 25-27, 2024

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OCTOBER 26, 2024

11th annual Eastern Chess Congress Blitz Championship (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 26-27, 2024

2024 Fredericksburg Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 16-17, 2024

PA Team Championship

Event site: Tuscarora Room, Shippensburg University Address: 110 Lancaster Dr., Shippensburg, PA 17257 Overall prize fund: \$1,000 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Nathan Zeigler Email: nathzeig@gmail.com Phone: 6197481751 Website: tickettailor.com/events/shippensburguniversitychessclub/1262655 TLA ID: 43247

NOVEMBER 9-10, 2024

8th Annual New York State Girls Championship! (NY)

See New York.

NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 1, 2024

55th annual National Chess Congress (PA)

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DECEMBER 26-29, 2024

49th annual Eastern Open (VA)

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PUERTO RICO

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

RHODE ISLAND

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

SOUTH CAROLINA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

HERITAGE EVENT

OCTOBER 18, 2024

85th Klaus Pohl Memorial South Carolina State Championships 2024

Event site: Hilton Garden Inn Columbia/Harbison Address: 434 Columbiana Drive, Columbia, SC 29212 Overall prize fund: \$2675 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Ernest E. Nix, Jr. Email: eenixjr@yahoo.com Phone: 864-905-2406 Website: <https://www.sc-chess.org/TLAID:44960>

TENNESSEE

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

TEXAS

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

U.S. MIN. ISLANDS

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

UTAH

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 28-31, 2024

2nd World Chess Festival (HI)

See Grand Prix.

VERMONT

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • HERITAGE EVENT

NOVEMBER 16-17, 2024

Vermont Open

Event site: University of Vermont, Old Mill #325 Address: 94 University Place, Burlington, VT 05405 Overall prize fund: \$2,000 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Walter M Chesnut Email: wmmc@wmchesnut.com Phone: 8028815602 Website: n/a TLA ID: 45070

VIRGIN ISLANDS, U.S.

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

VIRGINIA

SEPTEMBER 28, 2024

Fall Quads at the Meadowdale Public Library

Event site: Meadowdale Public Library Address: 4301 Meadowdale Blvd., North Chesterfield, VA 23234 Overall prize fund: \$110 per Quad GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mike Hoffpauir Email:

mhoffpauir@aol.com Phone: 757-846-4805 Website: vachess.org TLA ID: 44042

SEPTEMBER 28, 2024

Fall Scholastic Chess Tournament at the Meadowdale Public Library

Event site: Meadowdale Public Library Address: 4301 Meadowdale Blvd., North Chesterfield, VA 23234 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mike Hoffpauir Email: mhoffpauir@aol.com Phone: 757-846-4805 Website: vachess.org TLA ID: 44043

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 25-27, 2024

28th annual Eastern Chess Congress (NJ)

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NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 1, 2024

55th annual National Chess Congress (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2024

49th annual Eastern Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

WASHINGTON

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 28-31, 2024

2nd World Chess Festival (HI)

See Grand Prix.

WEST VIRGINIA

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

OCTOBER 19, 2024

10th WVCA Senior Championship

Event site: Best Western Plus Bridgeport Inn Address: 100 Lodgeville Rd., Bridgeport, WV 26330 Overall prize fund: \$250 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Harrison County Chess Club Email: greerlaw@aol.com Phone: 3046419241 Website: n/a TLA ID: 44156

OCTOBER 26-27, 2024

2024 Fredericksburg Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

WISCONSIN

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 11-13, 2024

32nd annual Midwest Class Championships (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

2024 South Dakota Governor's Cup (SD)

See Grand Prix.

WYOMING

OCTOBER 10-14, 2024

3rd Skyline Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 18-20, 2024

2024 South Dakota Governor's Cup (SD)

See Grand Prix.

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State	Dec22	Dec23	PCT
AR	64	109	70.31
VT	194	269	38.66
HI	296	388	31.08
UT	688	894	29.94
KS	776	981	26.42
LA	674	823	22.11
OR	798	929	16.42
MI	1,971	2,280	15.68
MA	303	336	10.89
MN	1,131	1,243	9.90

Name	State	Count	Name	State	Count
Overall Affiliate Standings			State Chapter Affiliate Standings		
CONTINENTAL CHESS ASSOCIATION	NY	1,882	WASHINGTON CHESS FEDERATION	WA	242
PAPERCLIP PAIRINGS	TX	555	MINNESOTA STATE CHESS ASSOC.	MN	191
BERKELEY CHESS SCHOOL	CA	372	MICHIGAN CHESS ASSOCIATION	MI	93
SAN DIEGO CHESS CLUB	CA	368	UTAH CHESS ASSOCIATION	UT	84
BAY AREA CHESS	CA	350	MASSACHUSETTS CHESS ASSOC.	MA	77
TEXAS CHESS CENTER	TX	314	NEW JERSEY STATE CHESS FED.	NJ	68
BOCA RATON CHESS CLUB	FL	282	MARYLAND CHESS ASSOCIATION	MD	66
SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB	MO	251	FLORIDA CHESS ASSOCIATION	FL	57
WASHINGTON CHESS FEDERATION	WA	242	VIRGINIA CHESS ASSOCIATION	VA	45
CHESS CORE	TX	216	TENNESSEE CHESS ASSOCIATION	TN	31
Scholastic and Youth Membership Standings					
CONTINENTAL CHESS ASSOCIATION	NY	955			
PAPERCLIP PAIRINGS	TX	554			
BERKELEY CHESS SCHOOL	CA	341			
BAY AREA CHESS	CA	280			
TEXAS CHESS CENTER	TX	265			
BOCA RATON CHESS CLUB	FL	225			
CHESS CORE	TX	189			
TRI-STATE CHESS	NY	173			
COPPELL CHESS CLUB	TX	167			
WASHINGTON CHESS FEDERATION	WA	164			
Small State Affiliate Standings			Adult Membership Standings		
OCEAN STATE CHESS ASSOCIATION	RI	97	CONTINENTAL CHESS ASSOCIATION	NY	927
HARRISON COUNTY CHESS CLUB	WV	36	SAN DIEGO CHESS CLUB	CA	225
WVSCA	WV	32	SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB	MO	212
NEW HAMPSHIRE CHESS ASSOC.	NH	27	ROCHESTER CHESS CENTER	NY	131
MAINE CHESS ASSOCIATION	ME	26	MARSHALL CHESS CLUB	NY	82
KNIGHTS CHESS CLUB	NH	25	WASHINGTON CHESS FEDERATION	WA	78
SOUTH DAKOTA CHESS ASSOC.	SD	24	CHESS PALACE	CA	74
HAWAII CHESS FEDERATION	HI	22	BAY AREA CHESS	CA	70
IDAHO CHESS ASSOCIATION	ID	20	DOWNRIVER CHESS CLUB	LA	70
CHESS ROCKERZ (TIE)	NE	19	1000 GM	CA	69
FARGO CHESS CLUB (TIE)	ND	19			
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www.michess.org

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www.OCFchess.org

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www.regentsaustin.org/chess

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www.chessset.com

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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.

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 ☐ Collins Quad EF: \$10
 Postal Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐
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Solutions

PAGE 15 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. 40. ... Ra4! threatens 41. ... Rxc4! 42. bxc4 Rxb2+, Black also wins after 41. Be2 Rxb3. **PROBLEM 2.** 43. Rxf6! so that 43. ... Rxf6 44. Qe8+ Kh7 45. Bg8+ Kh8 46. Bf7+! and mates. Or 43. ... gxf6 44. Qxh6+ Qh7 45. Qxf8+. **PROBLEM 3.** White wins eventually after 42. c6 Kxe4 43. c7 Kxf4 44. c8=Q. But much faster is 42. Nd6+! Rxd6 43. Bxd6! Kxe4 44. c6 and the pawn promotes. **PROBLEM 4.** 37. Rxd7! Qxh4 38. Rxd8+ Kh7 39. Rcc8, and Black resigned. For example, 39. ... Qxf2+ 40. Kh2 g5 41. Rh8+ Kg7 42. Rcg8 mate. **PROBLEM 5.** White resigned after 27. ... Nxc3! 28. bxc3 Na4 29. Rc1 Ba3 in view of 30. Re1 Nxc3 and ... b3-b2. Black also wins after 28. Rc1 Nb5 and ... Be7-b4. **PROBLEM 6.** Black resigned after 24. Bc5+! Qxc5 25. Nxe6+! fxe6 26. Qf6+ Ke8 27. Qxe6+ Kd8 28. Qxg8+. For example, 28. ... Kc7 29. Qxh7+ Kb6 30. Qb7+ Ka5 31. Ra1+ Ba3 32. b4+.

PAGE 19 MAKE YOUR MOVE

TACTIC 1. 24. ... Rg2!, and here White played 25. Bc4 and resigned without waiting for Black's move. If 25. Be2, then 25. ... Rxe2 26. Qxe2 Qc3 with mate to follow. If 25. Qd3, then 25. ... Qxc2+ 26. Qxc2 Rxc2, and Black is winning. (Asadli – Narayanan, Baku 2024) **TACTIC 2.** 16. Nxc6! fxc6 17. Qe5! The point behind the previous move. The rook on h8 is in trouble. 17. ... Qe7 Or 17. ... Rg8 18. Qxe6+ Ne7 19. Nf6 mate. 18. Qxh8 Kd7 19. d4 and the Icelandic grandmaster had enough. Black resigned in Adams – Hjartarson, World Senior Teams 2024. **TACTIC 3.** 13. Bf4! This move loosens Black's position in a way that is most unwelcome for Black; the key is that White gains access to the e7-square. 13. ... g6 Or 13. ... Bxf4 14. Ne7+ Kh8 15. Ng6+ Kg8 16. Nxf8 and White is winning. 14. Qh6 Bxf4 15. Qxf4 g5 The alternatives also do not work: 15. ... d6 16. Re7, or 15. ... c6 16. Re7 cxd5 17. Rae1 when Black cannot stop the decisive penetration of the white queen. 16. Qxd4 Rf7 17. b6! White switches focus to the queenside. 17. ... cxb6 18. Nxb6 18. Ra3 was even stronger, but the text move more than suffices. 18. ... Rb8 19. Qd6 Qxb6 20. Re8+, Black resigned. (Galperin – Ostlund, Swedish Ch 2024) **TACTIC 4.** 18. ... Qa5! Black ignores the attack on the f6-knight to start his own attack against White's king. 19. Nb1 Or 19. Qd3 Nd7 20. Qxa6 Bxg5+ 21. Kb1 Rxb2+ 22. Kxb2 Qb4+ and Black wins, in fact, he forces mate. 19. ... Nxe4! The game went 19. ... Rfb8 20. gxf6 Bxf6 21. b3? (21. Be3 was better) 21. ... Bxb3 (21. ... Qa2! is even stronger) 22. cxb3 Bg5! 23. Qxg5 (or 23. Be3 Rc8+ 24. Bc4 Rxc4+! 25. bxc4 Bxe3 26. Qxe3 Qa2!, forcing mate.) 23. ... Rxb3 24. Bd3 Rc8+ 25. Bc2 Rxc2+ and White resigned before he would get mated in Stefansson – Colbow, Ceske Budejovice 2024. 20. fxe4 Rfb8 21. Be3 Or 21. Rg1 Qa1 22. b3 Rxb3 23. cxb3 Rc8+ and Black wins. 21. ... Qa1 22. b3 Bxb3 and Black wins. **TACTIC 5.** 21. Nb5! Nxb5?! Or 21. ... axb5 22. Qc3 e5 23. Qxe5 Kf7 24. Qg7+ Ke6 25. Qxh7 and White is winning. 22. cxb5 Bd6 23. Qc3 The game continuation was 23. 0-0-0 c4 24. Qc3 e5 25. Nxc4 Nxc4 26. Bxc4+ Kf8 27. Rxd6 Qxd6 28. fxe5 Qc5 29. Kb1 Be4+ 30. Ka1 Ke7 31.

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e6 Ra7 32. Rd1 Rf8 33. Qf6+ and Black resigned; there is mate in two. (Zhou Jianchao – Griffith, Philadelphia 2024) 23. ... e5 24. a4 Bd5 25. Nf3 Bxf3 26. Bxf3 Rad8 27. Kf2 with a decisive advantage and attack for White. **TACTIC 6.** 21. ... b5! Black could also insert 21. ... f6 22. Nh3 before playing 22. ... b5! which also leads to a similar advantage for Black. 22. b4 The alternatives also leave White crumbled: 22. axb5 Rxb5 23. Kc1 Bxa3 and Black wins. Or 22. Nxb5 f6 23. Nh3 Rxb5 24. axb5 Rxa1 25. bxc6+ bxc6 and Black is winning. 22. ... Nxb4! 23. cxb4 Bxb4+ 24. Kc1 Or 24. Ke2 Bxa3 25. Rxa3 b4 26. Ra1 b3 and Black wins on the queenside. 24. ... f6 25. Nh3 Bc3 26. Ra2 b4 27. Bg3 b3 and White resigned in Van den Doel – Bok, Dutch Ch KO 2024. **TACTIC 7.** 17. Rg3! White starts attacking with no regard to material and Black's position simply cannot resist the rapid mobilization. 17. ... Kh7 Or 17. ... fxe4 18. Qg4 Bf6 19. Bxh6 Qe7 20. Bxg7 Bxg7 21. h6 and White wins. 18. Rg6 fxe4 19. Qxe4 Kh8 20. Rxg7! The game continuation was similarly brutal but not as pretty: 20. Rxe6 Rc8 21. Ng6+ and Black resigned in Borrmann – Neuman, Ceske Budejovice 2024. 20. ... Kxg7 21. Bxh6+! Kh8 22. Bxf8 and Black can resign. **TACTIC 8.** 13. ... d4! This is much stronger than 13. ... Qxb2+ 14. Kf3 d4 15. cxd4 Nf5 16. Bb5 0-0-0 which "only" gives Black a clear advantage. 14. Rb3 Or 14. cxd4 Nf5! 15. d5 Qxb2+ 16. Qd2 Nfd4+ 17. Bxd4 Nxd4+ 18. Kd3 Qxb1+ 19. Kxd4 Bf2+ and Black wins. 14. ... Qa6+ 15. Kd2 If 15. Kf3, then 15. ... Nxe5+ 16. fxe5 Qc6+ and Black is winning. 15. ... dxe3+ 16. Kc2 Qa7 and Black was winning. The conclusion of the game was: 17. Qg4 Bf2 18. Qxg7 Rg8 19. Qxh7 Qc5 20. Na3 Nd4+ 21. Kb1 Nxb3 22. Bb5+ Kf8 23. Ka2 Nd2 24. e6 fxe6 25. Qh6+ Kf7 and White resigned in Lanka – Stremavicius, Cesis 2024. **TACTIC 9.** 20. ... Bg1! A nasty move, threatening 21. ... g4+ and when the king retreats with 22. Kg2, then 22. ... Qf2 mate. 21. Qe1 If 21. Bxa6, then 21. ... g4+ 22. Kh4 Rf5! forces mate. 21. ... Bf2 22. Qd1 Bb7! This is stronger than the game continuation in Durarbayli – Rahul (Philadelphia 2024), where Black nevertheless won after 22. ... g4+ 23. Kg2 Bb7 24. Be2 Be3 25. Bxg4 Bxd2 26. Bxh5 Bxf4 27. Qg4+ Kh8 28. Rhf1 Bh6 29. Bf7 Qe3 30. Rf6 c5+ 31. Kh3 Qg5 32. Raf1 Bg2+ and White resigned. 23. Bd3 g4+ 24. Kg2 Bd4! 25. Qe2 c5+ 26. Be4 Ba6 27. Qd1 Or 27. Bd3 Bxd3 28. Qxd3 Qb7+ and wins. 27. ... Bxa1 28. Qxa1 Bb7 and Black is winning.

PAGE 51 ABCS OF CHESS

PROBLEM 1. Mating net: It is mate in 2 for White by

1. Rh5+ gxh5 2. Qf6 mate. **PROBLEM 2.** Mating net: White mates in 2: 1. Ng5+ Kg8 2. Rxg6 mate. **PROBLEM 3.** Mating net: Black is mated in 2: 1. Rf5+ gxf5 (or 1... g5 2. Bf7 mate) 2. Bf7 mate. **PROBLEM 4.** Mating net: White mates in 2: 1. Rxf6+ Kh8 2. Bg7 mate. **PROBLEM 5.** Mating net: Black is mated in 2: 1. Bf3+ Kh4 2. Rf4 mate. **PROBLEM 6.** Mating net: White mates in 2: 1. Bh7+ Kh8 2. Ng6 mate.

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MY BEST MOVE

MATT CLIBANOFF CHESS TUTOR

I SUPPOSE MY CHESS CAREER technically began in college, when I drunkenly told a friend who had beaten me several games in a row that “I’m going to get good enough to beat those guys in the park.” I began playing online and studying in a serious way, working with coaches to deepen my understanding of the game.

Eventually, through the magic of at-will employment, I found myself without a job in the summer of 2021 and decided to try my luck hustling chess in Washington Square Park rather than apply for new jobs. It wasn’t very lucrative at first, but eventually my table became popular for lessons with kids, and I realized I had a knack for teaching. From there I started advertising beginner lessons online and slowly built a small coaching practice of my own.

My greatest joys in chess have come from watching my students compete and improve. That said, my own best move felt pretty good as well.

I played this game in a tournament at the Marshall Chess Club with one round every Thursday. I had won in the previous two rounds and was feeling good heading into the back half of the tournament, but also nervous when I learned I’d be playing Rochelle Ballantyne — this was my first game against someone with a Wikipedia entry. Luckily for me, the version of myself who knows how to play chess showed up to the club that night.

CARO-KANN DEFENSE (B10)

Matt Clibanoff (1535)

Rochelle Ballantyne (1983)

Marshall Thursday Open (4), 08.02.2024

1. c4 c6 2. e4 d5 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. exd5 Nf6 5. Nc3 Nxd5 6. Bc4 Nf6?!

Black could retreat the knight with 6. ... Nb6 and gain a tempo on the bishop.

7. Nf3 e6 8. 0-0 Bd6 9. d4 0-0 10. Bg5 Nbd7 11. Re1 a6?! 12. d5!

The classic isolani break.

“*My greatest joys in chess have come from watching my students compete and improve.*”



12. ... e5?

Already here I figured I was winning a pawn.

13. Ne4! Bb8 14. Nxf6+ gxf6?

She probably wanted to avoid losing a pawn with 14. ... Nxf6 15. Nxe5, but this is too greedy.

15. Bh6 Re8 16. Nd4 Nf8 17. Qe2 Bd7?

Stockfish says things are roughly equal after 17. ... f5.



18. Ne6!!

MY BEST MOVE! Black is busted no matter what she plays here.

18. ... fxe6

What else could she have tried? 18. ... Qc8 loses to 19. Qf3 (threatening Qf3xf6) 19. ... f5 20. Nxf8 e4 21. Qh5. Meanwhile, 18. ... Rxe6 loses to 19. Qg4+ Ng6 20. dxe6 Bxe6 21. Bxe6 and Black can’t take the bishop. Finally, 18. ... Nxe6 19. dxe6 Bxe6 20. Bxe6 and 21. Qg4+ is next.

19. Qg4+

Adding pressure to the e6 pawn and forcing 19. ... Ng6, which removes a defender.

19. ... Ng6 20. dxe6 Bxe6 21. Bxe6+ Kh8 22. Rad1

A logical continuation, bringing in the final piece.

22. ... Qe7 23. Rd7!, Black resigned.

Black either loses the queen or gets mated. If 23. ... Qxe6, 24. Qxe6 Rxe6 25. Rd8+. ♠

You can read archival copies of “My Best Move” on uschess.org, click on “Chess Life Magazine,” and then “Archives.”

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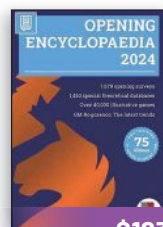
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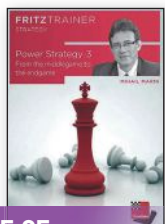
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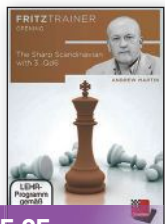
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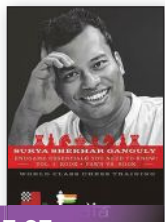
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